

# Newsletter

Volume VIII Number 2

March 2001

President: Mary Jane Paez

Treasurer: Donald Zarley

Vice-Pres. & Program: Judy Bogaard

Membership: Ferne Michael

Secretary: Madilyn Allender

Newsletter: Selma Duvick

**MARCH MEETING**  
**SUNDAY, MARCH 25**  
4:00 p.m.  
Crown Point Meeting Room  
On Pioneer Parkway, Johnston

Program: **Jerry Gorden,**  
Director, Gold Star Museum  
Camp Dodge

Speaking on the  
**History of Camp Dodge**  
**AND**

**We will have a Pot-luck Meal**  
Bring your place settings and  
A dish to share

## FROM THE PRESIDENT.....

**S**ince my last column in January, a lot of things have happened. The Simpsons have signed an agreement with the Historical Society donating to us their house, barn and windmill.

We have talked with a mover that specializes in big houses and barns. Both structures will have to be moved next winter over frozen ground. Jack Sullivan, local architect, and Dale Belknap, local engineer, are donating their consulting about structural needs and costs.

We are looking into possible grants for which we could be eligible; we are also going to be contacting corporations for help. Members of the society will make presentations to service organizations making them aware of the project.

Descendants of the Bauman family and the Garlock family who built and lived in the house have contacted us telling us about the wonderful

Note:

Not everyone enjoys pot-luck meals. If you want to skip the meal, and attend the meeting, please do feel welcome to come a bit late, have a cup of coffee with your fellow members and guests, and then enjoy the program.



memories they have of this beautiful old house. The house lends itself so well to being a museum because of the traffic flow from room to room. There are six bedrooms upstairs that also flow easily one to another.

In order to make this project a success we must work together; we need your help Let us know what you are willing to offer. Whether you give your ideas, your sweat, your money or your memories, all are worthy and welcome.

As an IRS code 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, any donation to the Johnston (Station) Historical Society is tax-deductible.

We will be having fund-raising projects such as the Silent Auction at the Johnston Green Days, of June 16. Set aside your donation and contact Margaret Pennington at 279-5321 and let her know what you plan to donate.

**It's all up to us!**

Mary Jane Paez



#### **JANUARY MEETING :**

A few hardy members braved the cold and snow, on Sunday, January 28, and gathered at Crown Point to hear about the proposal from the Simpson family to give to the JSHS the house and barn from their property on 86<sup>th</sup> Street. The house and barn

would be moved, by the Society, to the Johnston Commons area on Merle Hay Road. After some discussion, the membership present unanimously approved accepting the Simpson's offer.

#### **SPECIAL MEETING :**

On Wednesday, February 21 members of the JSHS met at Crown Point to receive information on the progress of the acquisition of the Simpson / Garlock / Bauman house, which was approved at the January meeting.. Members present approved some additional stipulations to the agreement requested by the Simpsons. President Mary Jane Paez brought digital photos taken inside the house and barn, which were displayed on a TV screen. Both structures have potential to be beautiful and worthy restorations.

All voted to accept the additional stipulations to the agreement requested by the Simpsons. General discussion concerned setting up of committees, fund raising, and other steps necessary to make this project a success.

#### **FEBRUARY MEETING:**

Members gathered on February 28, 2001 to hear Jerry Miller, a restoration painter. Jerry presented a series of slides, depicting various stages of the restoration of the interiors of our State Capitol Building, which has been ongoing for a number of years.

He spoke of the history of the building itself, and of the changes which have been made in the structure over time. The restoration has as its goal the return of the decorative, and some architectural, elements of the building which made it a place of beauty.

Depicted in the slides were some of the techniques which Jerry and his associates used to discover the original designs and colors on the walls of various rooms in the building which had been covered over, and how they were able to duplicate them, restoring their original design.

Jerry commented on the loss of some elements in the building during redecoration and remodeling in the past, such as the removal of some beautiful chandeliers. One room that has kept its character over the years is the State Law Library with its winding staircases—a feast for the eyes.

On your next visit to the State Capitol, look around you to see and enjoy this remarkable restoration of our history.

Jerry also worked on the restoration of Terrace Hill, and we hope to have him present his slides and commentary on that restoration at a meeting later this year.



## Looking Ahead.....

### **Our next meeting is**

**Tuesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m.**  
At Crown Point Meeting Room

### **This is our Annual Meeting.**

Program: Election of Officers and other business of the Society

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### **May Meeting:**

**Wednesday, May 23, 4:00 p.m.**  
Crown Point Meeting Room.  
Program: To be announced



## New Members

The Johnston Station Historical Society welcomes the following new members:

Leona Haub  
Johnston, IA



## RENEWALS

**If you are a Member, and think you need to renew, check the date following your name on the mailing label. If your label reads 99 or 00, you need to renew, and a renewal form is enclosed with your NEWSLETTER..**

Do send your check for \$10 (single) or \$12 (family) to Johnston Station Historical Society, P.O. Box 109, Johnston, IA. 50131.

**If you want to make a gift to the society** (say, for our up-coming “move the house and barn” drive), be aware that your gifts are tax-deductible under IRS code 501 (c) (3).



## Gifts to the Society

The following members and friends have made contributions to the JSHS.

**We thank them!!**

Elaine Berry

Troutdale, OR

Evelyn Bachman

Ankeny, IA

JoAnn & George Young

Grant City, MO

Martha Stevenson  
Nahant, MA  
Russell & Wanda Slauson  
Grimes, IA  
The Pioneer Sons and Daughters  
For the Moving Fund



### In Memoriam

#### Dr. Charles Howe

Dr. Charles Howe Jr. of Woodward died on January 18, 2001, in Des Moines. He was born in Des Moines, grew up in Johnston, and graduated from Johnston High School in 1952. He had also lived in Waukee., where was Mayor. He was employed for some years as veterinarian by Hy-Line International in Dallas Center and also had a private veterinary practice.

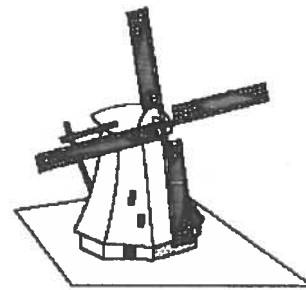
Dr. Howe was active in public service in civic organizations in Woodward, where he served as mayor, and, in past years, on the Woodward-Granger School Board. He was a member of the Johnston Station Historical Society, whose members send sympathy to his family and friends.

#### William (Bill) Wagner

William Wagner, of Dallas Center, local and Iowa architect and advocate for preservation and restoration of historic buildings, died on January 23 as the result of an auto accident. He left a lasting legacy of his work in the preservation and restoration of historic buildings in Iowa: Terrace Hill, Living History Farms 1900 farm, and the Church of the Land, Marshall and Dallas county courthouses, Herbert Hoover Gravesite, among many others.

Ferne Michael called on Bill Wagner when the JSHS sought to date the old farm house on the Rittgers Property in Johnston, now the "Rittgers Oaks" housing development. He gave of his time and expertise, and concluded that though part of the house could possibly be dated to the 1850's, and to the earliest Rittgers occupanacy, most of it was of 1880's vintage.. (Since the building was in very bad condition, the JSHS decided not to pursue efforts to acquire it. See May 1998 Newsletter).

In appreciation for his help, the JSHS made Mr. Wagner a life member. The society sends its sympathy to his friends and family.



### "OLD DUTCH" A JOHNSTON LANDMARK

If there is a landmark which has been associated with the Johnston area in the past, surely it must be the windmill located at what was at one time called the "YMCA Boy's Home" (now Youth Homes of Mid-America). "Ol' Dutch", as it was sometimes called, was constructed at the top of the hill near the intersection of NW. Beaver Drive and Merle Hay Road, in 1924, and a blustery Iowa wind took it down on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1984.

Frank Waterbury, who built the windmill, was a Des Moines businessman whose firm

made and sold chemicals. No doubt he made trips to Camp Dodge during WWI, when the camp was at its most active. He was attracted to the 55-acre farm located along the Beaver Drive ridge, at the top of the hill on Merle Hay Road, and wanted to build a summer home there.

When he approached the owner of the land he found him willing to sell—but he insisted on being paid in “hard money”, for he was blind, and wanted to be able to feel what he was getting. Mr. Waterbury then brought him \$50 in silver dollar coins, and paid the balance by check. The owner was pleased, and the deal was closed, in 1922.

During that period after WWI, Camp Dodge was being dismantled, and small housing units known as “Camp Dodge huts” were available. Mr. Waterbury moved one to his farm for tool and equipment storage. He also built a small log house from trees cut on the property; this was used for picnics on weekends when family and friends gathered at the farm.

Then Mr. Waterbury acquired two old streetcars that were being sold by the Des Moines Railway Company, and these also served as shelter for summer camping. Later he built a room between the two to make a pleasant country home..

A salesman from Mr. Waterbury's firm visited him on his farm, and having just returned from a visit to the Netherlands, was moved to remark that the location on the ridge would be a fine spot on which to build a windmill. The visitor said he had met a man in Holland who had a windmill that he needed to sell, and suggested that it could be dismantled, shipped to Iowa, and someone from the Dutch community in Iowa could be found to put it together.

Though Mr. Waterbury had traveled widely, he had never visited Holland. But he had seen pictures of windmills, and the idea appealed to him. Accordingly, the sweeps and the machinery came from Holland. A craftsman from Pella, a Mr. Herren, assembled the works, and constructed the 80-foot windmill. By 1925 it was in place as a “picturesque” and a landmark. At one time gardens of tulips and other flowers graced the area around the base; the long “sweeps”, or sails, were fastened down,

But though the windmill was not used in the traditional way, it provided a novel venue for other activities. There were 7 floors; the ground floor was used for parties, a workshop, and later, for storage. A playroom for the children was located on the second floor, and the third contained a water storage tank for farm use.

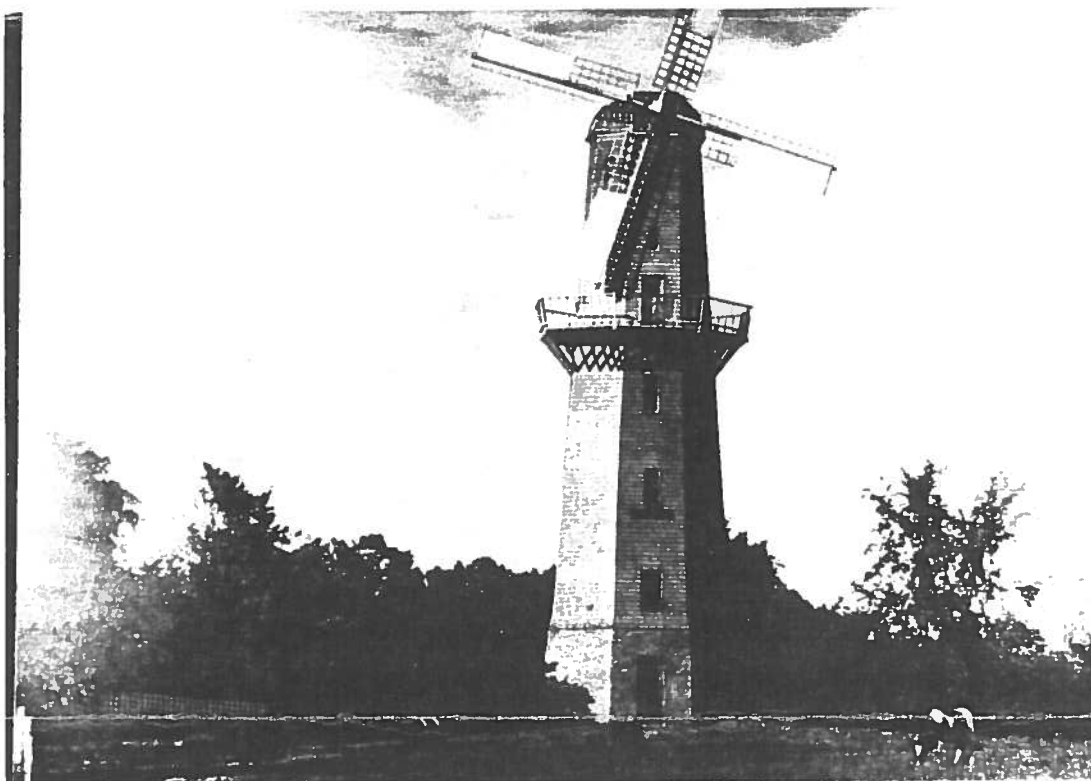
Windows on each floor opened to the view. One could go from the first to the fourth floor by a metal circular stairway and from there climb a ladder to the fifth floor, and step out onto the balcony to view the countryside. Mr. Waterbury's daughter Chloris (Mrs. Robert Colflesh) remembered that the family and guests would watch the 4<sup>th</sup> of July fireworks at Hyperion from this balcony. Really adventurous souls could continue the climb by ladder to the very top.

In 1928, Mrs. Colflesh moved out to the farm. There she built a brick residence, which is still a part of the Youth Homes campus. In 1942 the Waterbury family sold the property and buildings to Hobart A. Ross. Mr. Ross in turn gave the farm to the YMCA, and since that time it has been a home for boys. The windmill was a part of their campus for many years, and its picture served as a logo, or insignia for the YMCA Boy's Home.

Interest in Johnston in renovating the old mill, which had fallen into some disrepair, led to the formation, in 1983, of a "Save the Windmill" committee. Members were in the process of making plans to raise funds for this renovation when someone from the community interrupted their meeting on April 28, 1984 to tell them that strong April winds the night before had essentially demolished the structure.

There was some interest in re-building the windmill as a tourist attraction and educational center, but it soon became apparent that there would be little or no financial support for it.

(Sources: Mrs. Eunice Heard in the Northern Polk County News, October 15, 1970; Des Moines Tribune (no date), Des Moines Register, May 4, 1994; Communications from Mrs. Robert Colflesh  
Photo: Ray Schlehs)



"OLD DUTCH "  
PROBABLY IN THE 1920'S .  
NOTE THE COWS IN THE FOREGROUND OF THE PHOTO