



JOHNSTON
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Johnston (Station) Historical Society

Discovering and Preserving Johnston History, for Tomorrow

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Fall 2020

From the President...

The members of the Johnston Station Historical Society continue to work within reasonable COVID-19 restrictions and still discover, preserve and present Johnston history. The 1902 Simpson House remains open by appointment, with appropriate mask, contact and hand washing rules. In addition to the Spring Johnston parks and trails history scavenger hunt, we plan to offer a Johnston history webinar this Fall presented by the state historical Curator. We have continued to expand our community involvement, with initiatives like the plaque in Ray Schleihs park and the Johnston Historical Commission proposal. Our volunteers continue to be a key factor in our resilience and success.

John Brown, President

Spanish Flu Epidemic in 1918 at Camp Dodge

By Michael Vogt, Curator, Iowa Gold Star Military Museum

The influenza triggered a pandemic that killed an estimated 50 million people world-wide, including 600,000 in the United States. This was more than 10 times the number of military personnel that were killed in World War I. The flu killed more than 6,000 Iowans and 702 soldiers at Camp Dodge, about two percent of the post's 33,500 men stationed there at that time. The virus seemed to attack otherwise healthy people in their 20's and 30's. Symptoms included fever, aches and upper respiratory infection, often resulting in a severe pneumonia.

Camp Dodge saw its first case of Spanish Flu in September 1918, sweeping through the post until its decline in early November. The worst number of deaths occurred during October 8-16 when there were 50 deaths per day. In one 12-hour period there were 996 new cases to be handled [a 'case' in 1918 was a person with clinical symptoms, whereas today a 'case' is simply a person testing positive on a diagnostic test]. It was reported there were about 8,000 troops sick with the flu during this peak period.

The crush overwhelmed the camp hospital, with the barracks being converted to house the sick. The Red Cross called in medical personnel from around the area to help care for the sick soldiers. On October 10 there were 245 nurses on duty, only six days later the number of nurses had increased to 598. Doctors, nurses and other staff worked continuously and some of them also succumbed. All flu casualties in Camp Dodge received a death certificate and were transported to be buried at locations directed by family or at a military cemetery. There were no burials at Camp Dodge.

<https://www.goldstarmuseum.iowa.gov/documents/stories/influenza-pandemic.pdf>

<https://www.facebook.com/IowaGSMM/posts/1830970693706032>

Old City Hall

JSHS volunteers provided historical information and pictures from JSHS archives and Hy-Vee for the Johnston website and newsletter article on the city hall locations since the city founding in 1969.

www.cityofjohnston.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=914



The official retirement ceremony for the old city hall was held on Monday, October 12th.

More pictures from this event on page 3.

Johnston Historic Preservation Commission Proposal

JSHS President John Brown, and Paula Mohr, Architectural Historian & Certified Local Government Program manager for the Historic Preservation office of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs presented a proposal to City officials and the City Council on becoming a Certified Local Government. Benefits to the city would include the creation of a city historic preservation program, including a significant historical properties inventory (50 years old or more), a source of historical preservation expertise and eligibility for state Certified Local Governments and Historic Resource Development Program grants. To qualify, the city would adopt a historic preservation ordinance, appoint the Commission (minimum 3 members), store the Commission records, provide limited staff support, and provide a \$750 minimum budget. The city government would consult with the Historic Preservation Commission on city projects that impact historic preservation. The Commission would also assist the city staff in any state Certified Local Governments and Historic Resource Development Program grant applications, assist landowners with National Register of Historic Places nominations, meet at least 3 times a year and file an annual report. Commission members would attend annual training and provide volunteer assistance of grant funded projects.

The Johnston (Station) Historical Society (JSHS) would support the Commission by identifying potential Historical Preservation Commission members, provide meeting space, and assist in its historic preservation education efforts.

The city will be evaluating the proposal as part of its next comprehensive planning cycle.

Johnston buildings over 50 years old

You can help create a historic properties inventory by identifying Johnston homes and commercial buildings over 50 years old. Please send a description, the address, and date built to jshs@q.com

Lily Simpson – Student Advisory Member, Board of Directors JSHS

Lily is a sophomore at Johnston High School, whose studies include 2 history classes. As the great granddaughter of Laverne and Shirley Simpson, the donors of the 1902 Simpson House, Windmill and the Simpson Barn Community Center. Lily is continuing that legacy of community service along with her father, who is also a board member.

Board Members and Officers

Board members: Tom Leffler, Al Tokheim. A.J. Simpson, Lois Waggoner and John Brown. Student Advisory member: Lily Simpson

Officers

John Brown President and Archivist
Lois Waggoner Vice President & Assistant Archivist
A.J. Simpson Secretary
Al Tokheim .. Treasurer & Information Technology

Board Members Needed

Please consider serving on the board of directors. We have two vacancies the board can fill until the year end election by the members. The members can then confirm that appointment for a 3-year term. Board members can serve 2 terms. The Board meets monthly at 6:00 on the 4th Thursday (by Zoom meeting in 2020). If you are interested in serving on the board, please submit your name and contact information to us by mail or by email at jshs@q.com.

New Members

Please encourage those interested in supporting our mission and vision to become a member of the Johnston (Station) Historical Society. To become a member of the Johnston (Station) Historical Society, print the membership brochure on the website (<http://johnstoniowahistorical.org/>), complete the Membership Application and send it with your \$20 check to:

Johnston (Station) Historical Society
6161 Northglenn Drive
Johnston, Iowa 50131

MISSION STATEMENT:

The purpose of the Johnston (Station) Historical Society is to bring people together who are interested in the history and preservation of the Johnston area, which includes the early settlements of Johnston Station, Beaver Creek Settlement, Ridgedale, Huntsville, Herrold and Dodge City. To this goal, we work to get the community engaged and involved in Johnston's rich history by providing a museum and events to the public.

VISION STATEMENT:

Discovering and Preserving Johnston History Today, for Tomorrow

Ben Dewey Park

By Mary Jane Paez, former JSHS President

Ben Dewey, of Dewey Park fame, was quite a guy. Having been born in Pierre, South Dakota in 1886, he and his family moved to Indian territory in the Black Hills. His father was an attorney for the Sioux nation and Ben went with him to visit Sitting Bull. Ben also delivered newspapers to Calamity Jane. After finishing high school, he worked his way through college as a reporter for the Omaha Daily News and eventually for the Chicago Tribune. He finally moved to Des Moines to work for the Des Moines Register and Tribune. He moved to Johnston in 1910 to enjoy better health for his wife in the country. His home at 6309 N.W. 59th Ct. was the second home built in Johnston. At the time, Merle Hay Road was just a cow path.

He gave up his newspaper job because it was difficult to live in Johnston and work in Des Moines. He took a job to be the secretary for the Polk County Board of Supervisors. He did that job for 15 years. With all his county experience, he ran for Supervisor and was elected for three six-year terms. This was all before Johnston was incorporated and he used his office to take good care of Johnston's needs. In 1946, after his service to Polk County, he started his own insurance company.

Being a person who could get things done, he was a founding father of the Johnston School District. Four one-room schools were consolidated and a new kindergarten through ninth grade school was built in 1915. He served on the school board for 20 years. He also served on the County Board of Adjustment for 10 years. In 1917, when Camp Dodge became a training camp for World War I, he was instrumental in getting N.W. 58th St. (later Merle Hay Road) paved with bricks to accommodate military traffic.

He also acquired pieces of land. He owned much of the land on N.W. 59th Ct. and by 1935, built almost all of the houses on that street where he lived. In 1946, he acquired the land and building where the original Johnston Lions Club was located. He made a good deal with the Lions in 1947 that allowed them to pay him back slowly, as money became available.

In 1979, Dewey Park was dedicated and named for Bennett B. Dewey. The 9.8 acre land was purchased for the appraised value of \$50,000. \$25,150 was obtained with a federal grant and \$25,150 was to be paid by the city. Ben Dewey donated \$10,000 to make the purchase possible. He wanted to donate the land but that would have voided the grant.

During his 70 years in Johnston, he did more for the community than can be counted.

Artifacts and documents related to JSHS mission of preserving the history of the Johnston area, which includes the early settlements of Johnston Station, Beaver Creek Settlement, Ridgedale, Huntsville, Herrold and Dodge City can be donated to JSHS. These gifts will help save that history for others to enjoy, for years to come.

1902 Simpson House improvements.

In addition to roof repair after the summer derecho storm and the work on the Simpson house gardens, volunteers have upgraded the phone system, installed a new more extensive security system and computer "in the cloud" information back up. Thanks to A.J. Simpson, Al Tokheim and others for their time and talents.

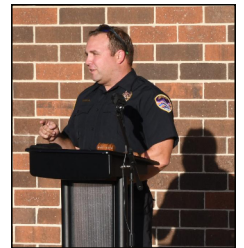
Volunteer in 2021

All of the projects that involve inside work or otherwise make social distancing difficult have been postponed until 2021. Please consider becoming a volunteer then. That service can be as limited or as extensive as fits your interest and other obligations. Activities that may be started in late 2021 include an update of the artifacts and documents inventory spreadsheet, 1902 Simpson House museum maintenance and improvements, expanding on-line digital information offerings and member and community outreach events. Please contact us a jshs@q.com if you are interested.

Closing Ceremony of Old City Hall



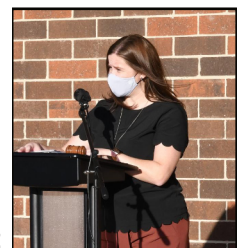
Paula Deerfeld
Mayor



Tyler Tompkins
Johnston Police Lt.



Mary Jane Paez



Katie Fiala
Library Board President

Ray Schliehs Park Plaque

By Mary Jane Paez, former JSHS President

JSHS will make a contribution toward the installation of a plaque at Ray Schliehs park in Johnston. It will summarize his lifetime of service to our community and our country. Raymond Schliehs led a very active life for 94 years. He grew up in Johnston and graduated from Johnston High School in 1934, with the title of "outstanding senior". During the Depression, he attended Iowa State College for two years, majoring in Engineering. He went to work for the Rock Island Railroad, inspired by his dad, Fred, who had also worked for the railroad. He trained in all kinds of railroading, traveling throughout the Midwest and living in the Quad Cities. He became a supervisor.

Just after he married Vivian Hockmuth, WWII started and Ray enlisted in the Army Air Corp. He became a B-17 bomber pilot stationed in England. He flew 35 bombing missions over Germany and other countries in Europe. He received the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster and many others.

His railroad career then continued and his family moved with each promotion, ending up in Boston as a Sales Director. In 1964, he started his own company in Johnston. Beaver Valley Industries sold freight car parts, air brakes and cushions for engines and cabooses.

Living in Johnston, Ray became involved with the community. He was a 45 year member of the Johnston Lions Club. He was active in the Fruitland Brennan Improvement League, American Legion, VFW, Chamber of Commerce, Board of Adjustment, and Planning and Zoning for Johnston. He was named Citizen of the Year in 1993 and to the Johnston School Alumni Hall of Fame in 1994. He was very involved with the committee for the WWII monument in Washington, DC. His WWII stories can be found in the book, "Heroes Among Us" and also were aired on PBS television.

With all his interest in Johnston, we became a founding committee member of the Johnston Historical Society. His main concern was to find a place for storing artifacts and historical papers. The 1st President of JSHS was Bob Otto, who was also on the Library Board. When the new library was being planned, Bob wanted a conference room dedicated to the vision of JSHS. Other members wanted a larger space. Ray and another member, Barb Zorn, approached Shirley Simpson about touring the home they had lived in from 1955 until they moved into a house they built across the street on NW 86th St. In 2001, the 2nd President, Mary Jane Paez, negotiated with the Simpson family and the City of Johnston to move the large farm

house built in 1902, the 1936 barn and the windmill to Johnston Commons near the library.

Ray died on May 25, 2011, leaving his wife of 69 years, 3 daughters, 7 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren. He also left an appreciative community for all his vision and hard work.

OBITUARIES

Obituaries are compiled by Nancy Budrevich. If you know of others, please contact Nancy

• **Mail:** 6161 Northglenn Dr. Johnston, IA 50131

• **Email:** jshs@q.com • **Phone:** 515-608-5730

Over 1,000 Johnston related obituaries are now on file at the museum.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Death date</u>	<u>Class of</u>
Michael "Mick" Blubaugh	5-11-2020	1973
Daniel Flannery	7-21-2020	1994
Ron Purcell	7-23-2020	1966
Patrick Riehl	7-29-2020	1980
Shawn M. Larson	8-4-2020	1998
Madeline Parker Wise	8-11-2020	2016
Virginia Martin Howsare	9-27-2020	1935
Sharon "Sherry" Smith		
Rorbakken	8-15-2020	1961
Evelyn Siever Wood	9-6-2020	1949
Virginia Martin Howsare	9-27-2020	1935
Oburn E. (Obie) Herrick	10-5-2020	

Oburn E. (Obie) Herrick passed on October 5, 2020. He was a former Johnston schools teacher (39 years), community volunteer and volunteer fireman (41 years).

A Big Thank You!

Johnston (Station) Historical Society would like to thank the City of Johnston for their generous contribution in July. These were funds were left from from the Johnston 50th Anniversary Celebration. JSHS created 10 historical banners shown in many parts of the city including all Johnston schools.



Johnston Historical Society
6161 Northglenn Drive
Johnston, IA 50131 515-608-5730
Email: jshs@q.com
Website: JohnstonIowaHistorical.org
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