



# Johnston (Station) Historical Society

*Discovering and Preserving Johnston History, for Tomorrow*

**JOHNSTON**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 30 • Issue 2

Summer 2022

## From the President...

We are moving into a post COVID new normal and JSHS hopes to meet some of the challenges by further increasing our online presence and creating online access to much of our collection. Our members can also see our recent events online.

We have been hosting 1902 Simpson House events in conjunction with nearby city events, like Kites on the Green. It has proved to be a much more effective way to create more visitor experiences, than being open on a specific time each week or each month.

Visit our **Johnston Station Historical Society and Museum** page on Facebook to follow our events. The 1902 Simpson House continues to be open by appointment for a personal guided tours. Our members also have access to the Simpson house for small gatherings for just the cost of their membership. Contact us for availability.

Thank you for your support in preserving and presenting Johnston area history.

**John Brown, President**

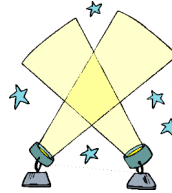
## 1902 Simpson House Video

A short video tour of the house that was posted on the State Local History network site in 2018 can be viewed at:

<https://www.facebook.com/IowaHistory/videos/925822240920506/>

## Our 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.



## Volunteer Spotlight Tom Leffler

By John Brown

Tom Leffler is a lifelong resident of Johnston. He is a Class of 1964 Johnston High School graduate. He's retired from Pioneer, former City Council member and a volunteer with JSHS, Lions Club and other community organizations.

In addition to being a JSHS Board member, he volunteers as a Simpson House tour guide and is helping with our transition to the PastPerfect museum software.

We are grateful to Tom for his generosity of time and talents to JSHS and the community.



## Archives Inventory and Digitization Project

A second summer intern will continue the work to update our inventory spreadsheet, noting what artifacts should be retained, need better preservation or should be considered for deaccession (donation or sale). She will be assisted by Johnston High School volunteers and JSHS member volunteers.

Once that inventory is completed, the artifact list, along with pictures, photo and documents scanned images will be publicly available on-line using our website or the Johnston Library website. We thank Prairie Meadows and State Historical Society of Iowa, Inc. for funding this project.

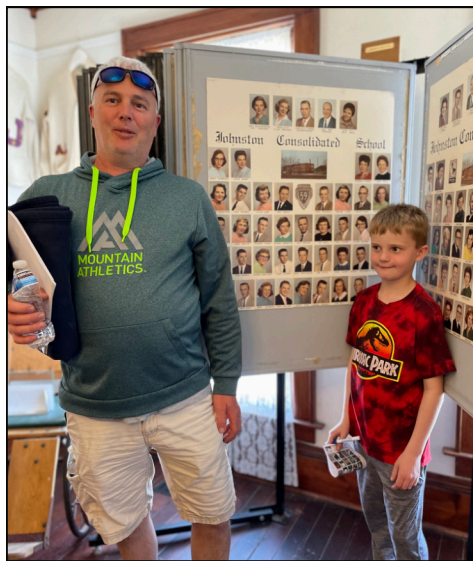
The Upstairs research room has moved to the first floor office room, to facilitate member history and genealogical research. Automating many of our office functions has allowed JSHS to consolidate its two former office rooms. A new exhibit will be created for the former upstairs research room.

# Kites of the Green Open House Saturday, May 7th

Johnston Historical Society held an open house during the Kites on the Green events May 7th. We were pleased to have visitors who toured our beautiful 1902 Simpson House Museum.

Children played the Simpson House Bingo, where they have a bingo sheet with 25 pictures of items in the house. They go through the house and try to find all the pictures on their sheet. Also, the Metsons found pictures of their family members in the high school room. They found pictures in both year books and class pictures. Cookies, coffee and lemonade were enjoyed by our guests

We are grateful to the volunteers that helped give tours of the 1902 Simpson House Museum. We were able to be open all 7 hours of the event. A constant stream of over 200 visitors, young and old, toured the house. Thanks to the City of Johnston for publicizing the event.



## Be a Volunteer in 2022

Please consider becoming a Johnston Historical Society volunteer. That service can be as limited or as extensive as you want, to fit your interests and other obligations. Volunteer activities include tours, an update of the artifacts and documents, inventory spreadsheet and PastPerfect Online database, clerical support, 1902 Simpson House museum maintenance and improvements,

expanding our online digital information offerings and member and community outreach events.

Contact us at [JohnstonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:JohnstonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com) if you are interested in a volunteer opportunity.

## Recent Donors

We are grateful to Aleko, LLC for their donation. Aleko is the film production company that used the house for the Simon Estes documentary.

# Simon Estes Documentary filming at JSHS

A film crew came to the 1902 Simpson House on May 3rd and filmed three scenes for a documentary on the life of opera star Simon Estes. Simon Estes was born in Centerville, Iowa, but one of his childhood homes has been torn down and the other home was not available for use in the film. The producer liked the layout, woodwork and floors of the 1902 Simpson House and his film production company joined the Johnston Historical Society as a business member. Once the documentary film is made, it will be offered to streaming services, like Amazon or Netflix. A future newsletter will tell you how to see that documentary.



Simon Estes' Grandparents



Actors playing young Simon Estes and his mother, Ruth Jeter Estes



## Tell Us Your Johnston Story

The Johnston area history that needs to be documented and preserved is not limited to what happened 100 or more years ago. It includes much more recent events and life experiences. It even includes how we and our families have endured the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Please send us your Johnston stories to:*  
**JohnstonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com**

*or mail them to us at:*

6161 Northglenn, Johnston, Iowa 50131.

## Have you given us your e-mail?

The quarterly member newsletter is sent to all members who have given us their e-mail address. If you get this newsletter in the regular mail, and regularly use e-mail, please consider sending us your email address to:

**JohnstonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com**

E-mailing helps us manage the cost of postage and volunteer time needed to provide our newsletters.

Also, please send us any changes in e-mail address, home address or phone number.

## Support JSHS

In addition to member dues, Johnston Station Historical Society's mission is supported by additional contributions from members, special project grants, and donations of artifacts, documents and photos that relate to our mission. As a Internal Revenue Code 501(c)(3) organization, monetary gifts, along with the value of donated artifacts, documents and photos, can be deductible from income taxable by the state and federal governments.

Your donation to the Johnston Historical Society goes directly to support its mission. As an all-volunteer organization, we have no paid staff. Unlike some charities with staff expenses, your contributions go entirely toward the 1902 Simpson House museum and our local history preservation and presentation initiatives, like our recently installed historical markers at Ridgedale Cemetery, Stage Coach Stop at NW Beaver Drive and 66th and Ray Schleih's Park on NW 55<sup>th</sup> Ave.

A benefit of membership is occasional free use of the 1902 Simpson House for meetings and special small events. The first floor meeting space can accommodate up to 20 people. Contact us for details. [JohnstonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:JohnstonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com)

## We now have PayPal

For the convenience of member and donors, JSHS now accepts PayPal when paying annual membership dues or making gifts to help preserve Johnston History. When using PayPal, it is as simple as using our email address as a payment destination.

[JohnstonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com](mailto:JohnstonHistoricalSociety@gmail.com)  
or scan the following QR code

Enter the desired payment amount, add a note telling us what it is for and you are done. It is that simple.



## Obituaries

Obituaries are compiled by Nancy Budrevich. If you know of others, please contact JSHS. Contact information on this page.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Death date</u>	<u>Class of</u>
Wanda Louise Slauon and former JSHS Board member	1-23-2022	1949
Ricky Lee Main	1-2-2022	1978
Frances Sandegren Badgley	2-1-2022	1940
James A VrMeer,	6-4-2015	1952

## Ben Dewey Park Renovation and Historical Marker

This newsletter has recently included articles about Ben Dewey, who was a founder of the Johnston School District and a long-time Polk County Board member. He really helped shape and create Johnston as we know it today. He also helped create the city park that is now known as Dewey Park.

The City plans to renovate the shelters, restroom and playground equipment at that park. That created an opportunity to buy and install a historical marker describing the fascinating life of the park's namesake. A Polk County Community Betterment grant application has been approved by the Board of Supervisors. The grant will be used to purchase a two-sided historical marker about Ben Dewey, and a marker post, to be installed by the City at the park. The marker will include a one paragraph description of his life, and a QR code box. Using a smartphone, that can be used to get more details about his life on the JSHS site.

## Board Members and Officers

The Johnston Historical Society is very fortunate to have a group of board members and officers with valuable knowledge, talents and experience. That includes, in addition to an interest in local history, expertise in city government, information technology, accounting, insurance, business operations and law.

Board members: Tom Leffler, Mary Jane Paez, Al Tokheim. A.J. Simpson and John Brown.

### Officers

John Brown .....President and Archivist  
Mary Jane Paez ..... Vice President  
A.J. Simpson .....Secretary  
Al Tokheim .....Treasurer and Information  
Technology/Communications Officer

Please consider serving on the board of directors, as an officer or as a volunteer. The Board meets monthly on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM at the 1902 Simpson House Museum and with the Zoom video meeting service.



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