

GRAVE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF STATE ASSOCIATION
for
PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES

Vol. 2 Issue 3

Date.. July 23, 1997

ANNUAL MEETING SCHEDULED

The Annual meeting of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries is scheduled to meet in Marshalltown, Iowa in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Iowa Genealogical Society. SAPIC's awards for notable work in the preservation of the Pioneer Cemeteries will be given at the banquet on Friday evening. Tickets for the banquet may be ordered from IGS for \$14 if postmarked by September 25th. Later, the price is \$17.00. At 7:30 on Saturday morning, SAPIC will hold their annual meeting following a continental breakfast---check with the information desk as to the meeting room. The dates are October 10th for the banquet and the 11th for the annual meeting. Election of officers and Board members will take place at that time.

By **TIM JAMISON**
Courier Staff Writer

WATERLOO

Bill Lemke was remembered by friends today as a man who gave of his time, vast knowledge and big heart to the residents of Waterloo.

Lemke, described by his friends and acquaintances as a walking history book, died of cancer Thursday at Covenant Medical Center. The former Waterloo City Council member was 68.

"He was just a real caring individual — he cared about people and about Waterloo," said Rose Angel, who served with Lemke on the City Council. "He's the kind of person that you're glad to say he was a friend."

Lemke had a long history of community service in Waterloo and Black Hawk County beyond his work as a city councilman and a member of numerous advisory groups.

A personable man with a flair for conversation and garb that usually included denim overalls, Lemke had farmed and, in the 1970s, operated the Waterloo Yellow Cab Co. He spent many hours researching Waterloo history, farm equipment and was an expert in rural cemeteries.

"He was extremely knowledge-

able, he was always enthusiastic and he was extraordinary in being a resource for other people and in his knowledge of the history of Waterloo and farm power issues," said Bill Appelgate, a spokesman for the Silos & Smokestacks agricultural tourism group.



Bill Lemke
avid historian

Lemke was a member of the Silos' Parade of Power committee and gave Silos several lengthy cassette tapes on local history.

Lemke served as a City Council member from May 1992 — when he was appointed to fill a vacancy — and was elected to a full year on the council in November 1993.

"Bill was a pleasure to work with," said former Mayor Al Manning. "He was a storehouse of knowledge and history of Waterloo, which sometimes led him off on a tangent during discussions. But he always tried to do what was fair and in the best interest of Waterloo."

Angel echoed those sentiments. "Bill was a 'down home' kind of guy with no pretensions," she said. "What you saw was what you got."

Private family services for Lemke are pending at Kearns, Huisman-Schumacher Chapel on Kimball Avenue.

SAPIC BOARD

MEMBER

BILL LEMKE

DIES OF

CANCER

WILLIAM HENRY LEMKE, 68, was born Dec. 5, 1928 in Waterloo, son of Henry William and Juliana Hornik Lemke. Bill farmed from 1949 to 1973 after which he operated the Yellow Cab Company. Bill was one of the founders of SAPIC serving on the board until his death. Bill is survived by a son Scott of Dallas; 3 grandchildren; and a sister Audrey.

A memorial has been sent to the Waterloo Historical Society in his memory.

From PAT SHAW:

These are the prices for signs ordered from the Anamosa State Penitentiary (formerly Iowa Men's Reformatory); IOWA STATE PRISON INDUSTRIAL N. High, Anamosa, IA 52205. (Ph 319 462-3547--ask for Tammy.)

- 24" x 24" \$26.00 for under 8 words
- 24" x 18" \$19.50
- 24" x 12" \$13.00

You may have 2, 3, or 4" letters. You have a choice of any color background or lettering.

If you order over \$100.00, delivery of signs is free. It will take about 2 weeks to fill an order.

The following COUNTIES have sent in their Pioneer Cemeteries lists: Fayette, Dubuque, Bremer, Winneshiek, Warren, Greene, Chickasaw, and Harrison.

(Remember---Search old land records for small family cemeteries. Where one body is buried, there is a cemetery.)

!! A Continental Breakfast will be served at the Annual meeting of SAPIC on Saturday morning at 7:30 AM in Marshalltown at the Community College. Your cost is a free will donation. See you all there!)

HISTORIC MAPPING

I will map cemeteries and historic sites to locate unmarked graves and former building locations. TWENTY years experience.

Write to: MICHAEL Zaks, 251 Harding Avenue Haskins, Ainsworth, IA 52201

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For your information--

There is a national Association for Gravestone Studies, 278 Main Street, Suite #207, Greenfield, MA 01301 (tel. 413-772-0836) Membership is \$25 per year--it includes a magazine 4 times a year, lending library, and reduced registration at the yearly conference held the third week in June.)

Nelson helps clear Pioneer Cemetery

Decorah Public Opinion - Weekly 1997

A pioneer cemetery of the Iowa River Church has been cleaned and mowed, with a new fence and flag pole erected.

Bud Nelson, Milton Iverson and Ernest Gavle were involved with the project. A previous story incorrectly stated Nelson's name.

Iverson also was instrumental in obtaining a marker for the Pioneer Cemetery, donated by the Lewiston Monument Co. of Lewiston, Minn.

The Pioneer Cemetery is located on Iverson Road in Allamakee County. Another cemetery sits at the former site of the church, just over the Winneshiek-Allamakee County line on Big Canoe blacktop. The church, built in 1885, was totally destroyed by fire after being struck by lightning July 3, 1937.

Century-old tombstones vandalized in Wyoming

The Cedar Rapids Gazette: Sat., July 19, 1997

By Steve Stepanek

Gazette news intern

WYOMING — Vandals who descended on the Wyoming Cemetery early Friday did more than topple 27 headstones — they damaged some valuable pieces of history.

"This cemetery was established in the mid-1800s, and several of the stones that were broken marked the graves of soldiers who served in the Civil War," said caretaker Rick Frankfurt.

"In fact, the large 7-foot stone they turned over marked where a veteran of the War of 1812 was buried."

The vandalism was reported to authorities around 10 a.m. Friday by motorists who had noticed pieces of gravestones along High-

way 136 just north of town, where the cemetery is located, said Frankfurt.

The Jones County Sheriff's Office is handling the case, and the investigation is expected to continue over the weekend, said Sheriff Mark Denniston.

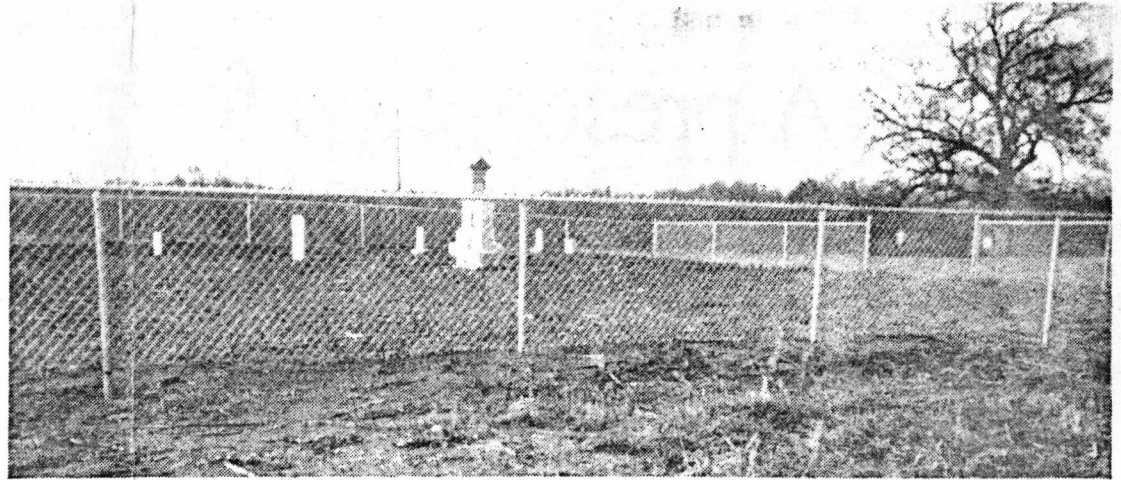
No estimate of the damage has been made, but immediate repairs will be accomplished using the cemetery's backhoe to reset the toppled monuments. "I will also have to use some epoxy to mend some of the broken stones," Frankfurt added.

The cemetery board is offering a \$100 reward for information leading to apprehension of the vandals, said Frankfurt. Anyone with information should call Frankfurt at (319) 488-3985.

At 82, he rescues graves from state



Greg Comstock in cemetery he saved.



Rescued Comstock family cemetery now is surrounded by a fence and features a new headstone. — Photos by Rex Williams

By Rex Williams

Many of my ancestors came from the southern part of Iowa and some still live there. Thus, when we discovered that the Iowa Department of Transportation was planning to rip up a family burial ground, we got mad.

Thanks to a senior citizen with a fighting spirit, the plot was saved. Greg Comstock, 82, of Eddyville, spearheaded the effort to preserve the little cemetery dating from the mid-1880s. He fought the state — and won.

The Comstock plot on the old family homestead has only five graves, insignificant in the eyes of the state. But the site and the loved ones buried there are important to the family.

The battle to preserve the plot was fought

for more than a year. The DOT intended to bulldoze it away in a Highway 23 rebuilding project. The plot is near the Chillicothe turnoff between Ottumwa and Eddyville in Wapello County.

The cemetery is particularly significant because it is the resting place of an early Southern Iowa country doctor, Dr. A.D. Comstock, who road horseback throughout the region caring for the ill and injured.

Greg Comstock has his great-grandfather's old medical satchel.

Greg's determination to save the plot is not unusual. He has long had a keen interest in the family's affairs. He has always taken care of family members and has collected family history facts and artifacts dating back to pre-Civil War days.

Rex Williams lives in Hiawatha.

MINUTES of the SAPIC
MEETING
July 19, 1997

The Board of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries met at the Silver Fox Restaurant in Waterloo, Iowa on July 19, 1997. The meeting was presided over by Vice-President Loren Horton in the absence of President Ted Sieck.

The meeting was called to order at 10:15 AM with the minutes of the previous meeting read and approved.

The Treasurer Keith Street reported a balance of \$1290.02. His report was approved as printed.

Due to the resignation of John Daehler, Pat Shaw was elected unananimously to fill out John's term on the board.

Pat Shaw reported on activities in Jones and Iowa County. Pat suggested that volunteer groups adopt a cemetery to care for. FFA chapters as well as Scout troupes work on civic projects for credits/badges.

Calvin McVay reported on Madison County. This was followed by a discussion on signs for cemeteries, and on vandalism.

Dean Gipple reported on his activities: Mowing and costs on some of the cemeteries in Louisa County cost \$1200 per year. The cost is down to \$100 per year using more efficient methods.

Paul Maddy reported on workshops in Jackson County and at Dawson.

Fran Jeffers reported on the SAPIC exhibit at the Iowa Heritage EXPO. The SAPIC display and materials handed out were well received by "booth visitors."

The following resolution was unananimously passed by the Board:

Bill Lemke has shown continuous and vigorous concern for the condition of Iowa Cemeteries. He fought battles over many years to protect and preserve them. He will be greatly missed by the SAPIC Board.

A motion was made that Mike Magee give the gift of \$50 to the Historical Society of which Bill Lemke had been an active member.
MSP

V-P Horton appointed Mike Magee and Keith Street on the nominating committee. The following positions need to be filled: Lemke, Macy, Street, and Zahs.

Keith and Dean reported on the nominee for the Canten Awards. Mike Zahs will contact Mrs. Canten regarding presenting the award.

Mike Magee will check on getting SAPIC on the Web Site or Home Page---cost and possibilities.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25.

Respectfully submitted,
Fran Jeffers, Secy.

(Someone forgot to notify the Waterloo Tech. School to open up for our meeting....so we all enjoyed the hospitality of the SILVER FOX RESTAURANT and all stayed for lunch there before departure.)

**STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES
TREASURER'S REPORT
JULY 19, 1997**

Balance Reported on May 3, 1997	\$1189.26
Deposited May 9, 1997	\$ 40.00
Deposited May 16, 1997	\$ 40.00
Deposited May 19, 1997	\$ 40.00
Deposited June 26, 1997	\$ 40.00
Deposited July 1, 1997	<u>\$ 20.00</u>
TOTAL DEPOSITS	<u>\$ 200.00</u>
 TOTAL OF PREVIOUS BALANCE AND DEPOSITS	 \$1389.26
 EXPENSES FROM MAY 3, 1997 TO JULY 19, 1997	
Check # 513, Fran Jeffers, EXPO	\$ <u>99.24</u>
 BALANCE ON HAND, JULY 19, 1997	 \$1290.02

EARLY CAPITAL CEMETERY NEGLECTED

The plight of the early Washington, DC, Congressional Cemetery, originally known as the Washington Parish Burial Ground, was detailed in a 12 January article in *The Seattle Times*.

The cemetery dates from at least the early 1800s and is owned by Christ Church. Its 35 acres, now in an undesirable area several miles southeast of the Capitol, hold an estimated 69,000 burials, most obscured by the tall grass and weeds of the benign neglect of a too-small budget and many showing damage from vandalism and age. The federal government and a few groups maintain some 250 graves of congressmen who died in office and some others, among them John Phillips Sousa, J. Edgar Hoover and Civil War photographer Mathew Brady. It lost favor as a burial ground when railroads made possible transport of the deceased to far-off cemeteries and when Arlington National Cemetery was opened in Virginia in 1864.

According to the article, the one dedicated employee, John Hanley, does his best with the funds available, funds including fees for use of a small chapel for weddings, parties, funerals and other events, and a

\$100 annual charge he makes to neighbors wanting to walk a dog there. His approaches to historic organizations and the Smithsonian Institution (which sponsors a Halloween tour in the cemetery) for financial help have been unsuccessful thus far.

Genealogists with ancestors buried in this historic ground might like to support efforts at taking better—and more dignified—care of it. ♦

LOOKING IN LOUISIANA?

A researcher in New Iberia, Louisiana, has offered to assist others seeking ancestral information in that area by searching her card file of cemetery transcriptions from Iberia and St. Martin Parishes. Write Karen Miller, 603 Dodson St., New Iberia, LA 70560-1825—PAF Users Unlimited.

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*Membership dues for the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries is \$20 per year for individuals and \$20 per year for associations allowing one vote. Send membership dues to:
Keith Street, 325 Franklin, Wapello IA 52653-1515.*

REMEMBER---ANNUAL MEETING October 11, 1997 in Marshalltown, IA at the IA Valley Continuing Education Conference Center at 7:70 AM. Continental Breakfast will be served prior to meeting.

For Friday evening banquet tickets @ \$14, order from IGS, P.O. Box 7735, Des Moines, IA 50322-7735 by Sept. 25th. The SAPIC "Carter Awards" will be presented there. See you all!!

Stones damaged in New Hampton cemetery

The Cedar Rapids Gazette: Sun., May 25, 1997 **23A**

NEW HAMPTON — Vandals damaged several gravestones and religious figures at St. Joseph's Calvary cemetery, 700 N. Pleasant Hill, sometime Friday or Saturday.

Cemetery custodian Kevin Ira said seven stones were damaged. Some were tipped over and others were chipped when items were thrown at them.

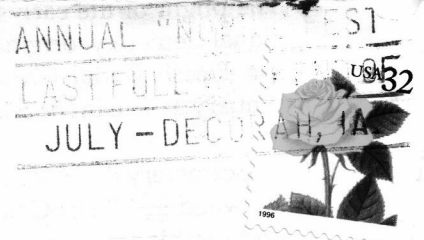
The damage was reported by a patron to the cemetery Saturday.

"We were surprised, something like that doesn't happen all the time," said Ira, who has maintained the cemetery for 17 years.

He did not have a cost estimate for the damage, but added alcohol bottles were found at the scene.

Police are seeking help from the public in the case. Anyone with information is asked to contact the New Hampton Police Department at (515) 394-3241 or their local law enforcement agency.

F. Jeffers, Editor
St. Assoc for the Preservation
of Iowa Cemeteries
507 Jefferson St.
Decorah, IA 52101-1711



ADDRESS _____

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5716 KINGMAN AVE.
DES MOINES, IA 50311