

GRAVE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
IOWA CEMETERIES

VOLUME #3 ISSUE #3

JULY, 1998

No Stone unturned.....

SAPIC had a successful meeting in beautiful western Iowa thanks to the friendly and enthusiastic people in Sioux City and surrounding areas! Special thanks to the Woodbury County Genealogical Society and its president, Janet Jolin, for arranging the roomy, comfortable meeting room with a public address system.

Glen Pollock, President of the Iowa Prairie Network, provided us with an informative slide presentation about the use of pioneer cemeteries for prairie grass and flower plantings. Glen pointed out that our pioneer forbearers needed burial places immediately upon their arrival to the Iowa prairie and would usually choose the most beautiful site in the area, oftentimes on a hilltop with lovely prairie flowers, for their loved ones burial places. It seems appropriate that Iowa's natural prairie vegetation should be returned in some degree to these particular places. Glen's slides gave us an idea of how to achieve a balance between those who might wish their ancestors' graves maintained in compliance with today's standards and those who believe that a total prairie preserve is more acceptable. His knowledge of cemeteries and burial practices throughout the world, along with his deep appreciation of Iowa's natural heritage, greatly enhanced our meeting. Contact an IPN representative in your area for information about obtaining a speaker, grant money for seeds, or signs to identify a prairie preserve. They are listed in the April, 1998 SAPIC newsletter or visit the IPN web site:

<http://www.netins.net/showcase/bluestem/ipnapp.htm>

Louisa County is working with its local school district to create such a place! Story, p. 2.

Chris Feistner of Villisca in southwestern Iowa is interested in compiling a book that lists resources for dealing with the problems of cemetery preservation and for eventually seeing an annual state-wide conference take place relating to this topic. As Chris presented his ideas at our meeting, we were impressed with his youthful enthusiasm and reminded of how fortunate we are to have young people interested in cemetery preservation. Chris's questionnaire is located in this newsletter on page 5. You can support his efforts by completing and mailing it to him. The information may be used to plan future events, supplement our web site, and compile a resource booklet. Thanks, Chris!

Speaking of web sites, the membership approved the purchase of a registered web site address for SAPIC! Pat Palmer, Hampton, has been working with the creator of our original web site, Ray Bowler of Carlisle, to transfer our SAPIC information. Check it out and see the progress we're making:

<http://www.sapic.org>.

IF YOU KNOW OF A REPUTABLE MONUMENT DEALER, SUBMIT HIS OR HER NAME FOR INCLUSION IN THE SAPIC WEB PAGE. IN OUR MOBILE SOCIETY CONCERNED DESCENDANTS SELDOM LIVE NEAR THEIR ANCESTORS' BURIAL SITES, AND THEY OFTEN NEED TO HIRE SOMEONE TO REPAIR THE GRAVESTONES.

*Do not wait for leaders; do it alone, person to person
--Mother Teresa*

Tennessee Cemetery to become prairie again

by Linda Wenger
Gazette staff

The pioneering legacy of some of the Columbus community's early settlers will live on in more meaningful ways with the plans to return the Tennessee Cemetery landscape similar to the way they found it in the early 1840s.

Dean Gipple of Columbus Junction and the members the Louisa Cemetery Association are initiating a long term plan to plant prairie grasses, wildflowers and a variety of trees native to Iowa and the midwest during this summer and fall. Other members of the committee are Elmer Thomas, Columbus Junction; Bill Matthews, Wapello; Eleanor Jones, Wapello; Keith Street, Wapello; Richard Lehnert, Oakville; Richard Utter, Columbus Junction; Royce Bonnicksen, Columbus Junction; and Larry Boysen, Wapello.

In order to proceed with the plan Gipple secured grants and donations totaling about \$7,000. The total is comprised of a \$3,000 grant from Trees Forever, a \$2,900 grant from the Iowa Dept. of Transportation, a \$250 donation from Monsanto, an IBP donation, and a donation from the Columbus Community FFA. In addition, the commission has received pledges of donated labor and use of equipment.

In the application for the grants and donations, Gipple said, "The goal of the project is to create a low maintenance sustainable landscape that will serve to honor the individuals buried in the pioneer Tennessee Cemetery."

Those pioneers, a group of about eight families left their homes in Tennessee in 1842, and settled in this area in order to escape a slave state and live in the free state of Iowa. The Tennessee Cemetery, which is located on Springer St., was established in 1857 on land donated by Joseph and Louisa Tedford.

Another goal of the project is to use the cemetery and the renovated landscape as an outdoor classroom for the Columbus Community Schools. Gipple said, "The site has been used in the past by Columbus Community teachers as an outdoor classroom to learn more about the settlers of the area. It is our goal to enhance this opportunity by creating a landscape of native trees, prairie grasses, and wild flowers. This will help the students realize what the landscape was like when these pioneers first moved to the area. The plants and trees will be used in identification exercises and many other learning opportunities."

In turn, the Columbus Community Schools has offered its support to the

effort. A letter from Supt. Tom O'Toole accompanied the grant applications. He wrote, in part, "We at the Columbus Community Schools are very supportive of the work that you have done as the Louisa County Cemetery Commission. You have proven to be a concerned group of citizens that have dedicated themselves to preserving our local history. Our school's Board of Directors was unanimous in their support of your ongoing projects as well . . . We will continue to work with the Commission."

In addition, the Cemetery Board will use the Tennessee Cemetery as a prototype for the remaining pioneer cemeteries in the county. Gipple explained that returning to land to near native conditions will cut maintenance expenses substantially. Gipple expects to the new landscaping will cut the costs of mowing, etc. from about \$1,200 per year to about \$40. However, some mowing will be done at Tennessee to create "interpretive trails to allow ease of access for the public."

Another new feature will be the planting of a grove of walnut trees, which Gipple describes as an "investment forest." The trees will be

Cemetery, cont. on page 13

from page 1

genetically selected and developed by the Iowa Nut Growers Association and planted at the perimeter of the cemetery.

He hopes that when the trees start producing nuts, they will be sold for continued funding for various projects. Once the trees are fully mature, the plan calls for their harvest as lumber. The funds raised from the lumber sales would be earmarked "for some future 'green' community purpose," Gipple said.

Some of the seed that is on hand for planting includes the following varieties: little bluestem, buffalograss, leadplant, sky blue aster, prairie coreopsis, pale purple coneflower, rough blazingstar, cardinal flower, wild bergamot, ratibida pinnata, and blackeyed susan.

"It will probably take about three years for the flowers and grass to develop and get established," Gipple explained. "Then students will be able to harvest wildflower seed for other areas and for sale."

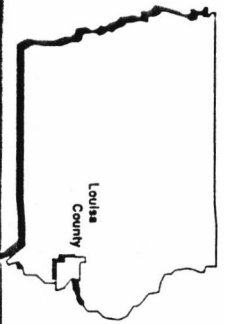
He has enlisted the aid of the Sparklers 4-H Club to help plant some of the flowers.

This entire project was begun about six years ago and is expected to be completed in 1999.

An earlier phase of the project was the purchase and installation of a stainless steel sign identifying the name of the cemetery. It was erected by the Columbus FFA.

Gipple has worked tirelessly to create the plans. He has been in the Governor's office on more than one occasion to witness the signing into law of state legislation for pioneer cemeteries and to receive recognition for his efforts.

Rich
Gipple
Columbus Junction



LOUISA COUNTY CEMETERY COMMISSION
307 Flat Iron Drive
Columbus Junction, Ia. 52738

This is the number to call if you need a grave marker for a veteran:

1-800-827-1000

Please note to double check all spelling; once the marker is received, you are stuck with it. Replacement markers can be requested if the original marker is broken. The cemetery officials must sign the form to indicate that they will allow the marker to be placed on the grave. A family member or other interested party must sign the application as the requester. The cost of placing the marker is your responsibility. In our area this is usually \$70-\$150. Submitted by:

FRANKLIN C. BERGQUIST, SFC U.S. ARMY RET.
15TH DISTRICT NATIONAL EXECUTIVE
COMMITTEEMAN 1997-1998
ADJUTANT-TREASURER
DEPARTMENT OF KANSAS
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Check out this site for a listing of newspapers online, especially helpful if looking for articles about cemetery restoration (or any topic):

<www.newslink.org/statnews.html>

A Day in the Life of a Cemetery Restorer

(Many of us can relate to this experience of Ben Mayer, member of the Mahaska County Commission for the Preservation of Pioneer Cemeteries)

It was cloudy and drizzly all morning. I went out to visit with Judy Swanson's husband, Gary, who gave me 6 posts. I borrowed my dad's pickup for this. We chewed the fat for about an hour, then I went out to "my cemetery" (Sand Point Cemetery) which is on land owned by the Mahaska Co Conservation Board on a little knob with bluffs on three sides of it. You have to walk up a path through prairie and into the woods to get there. I just fenced it this past winter. I went out there to get another post that I had stashed out there, and while I was there I got

out the weed whip to do some trimming, and the limb loppers to clear some low branches. I heard thunder far away, and I leisurely continued my work. When I saw lightning, I decided to head back to town. This was a small isolated storm, and I stayed dry by leaving the area before it struck. On my way back to town, I stopped at another cemetery. The stones were just fine, and I copied the info to enter into my ledger. Meanwhile, the storm got closer again!

Now I raced the storm back to town, beat it, and started to unload posts. Then it started to rain lightly. So I went in and got a slicker to finish my work in. As soon as I got my hands on another post, the sky opened up, and what was done was done, so I finished the job in the downpour, laughing at myself (My dad needed the truck back at a certain time, and it couldn't be delayed.) As soon as I was done, the rain basically stopped. I showered and changed my clothes, but the water warped my steel-toed boots. This was the worst part. I am a mechanic for the grounds shop at ISU, and I had to wear the boots as was. They did a number on my middle toes this week!

BTW, the Conservation Board bestowed the title of Sexton on me, and they have given complete authority in all matters concerning the cemetery. One interesting thing that has happened was that during the flood of '93, the local drug dealers moved their marijuana plants out of the bottom lands and planted a bunch in my cemetery. I made sure that the Sheriff knew that I wasn't playing "Farmer Ben!!" We watched for them to return over the next month (the Sheriff made sure that I armed myself), but we never caught them, so I destroyed the plants on my burn pile.





Although I've not used this skin cleaning product and SAPIC does not endorse it, it's worth a try if you are susceptible to poison ivy, which seems to be prevalent in our Iowa pioneer cemeteries: **TECNU Oak-N-Ivy** outdoor skin cleanser made by Tec Laboratories, Inc.; Albany, OR 97321. Ph # 1.800.itching

AAAAAAAAAAAAA

A "Global Positioning" hand held unit can be an asset in locating the exact site of any cemetery (and could keep you from getting lost!) These units are becoming very common, especially among hikers and auto drivers, and they are relatively inexpensive.



AAAAAAAAAAAAA

Welcome to all of our new members!

Want to join SAPIC?

Send your name, address, phone number, county(s) in which you live or have cemeteries, email address, and \$20 to:

Harley E. Crain, Treasurer
17126 68th Ave. W.
Edmunds, WA 98026

SYMBOLIC TREES AND PLANTS

Trees and other plants that are carved on headstones, left by the grave side, or planted near the grave usually have special meanings.

- ALMOND** - favor from God; Virgin birth
- APPLE** - sin; Eve
- BELL FLOWER** - gratitude
- BOUQUETS** - condolences; grief
- BUDS** - renewal of life
- CEDAR** - strong faith; length of days; success
- CYPRESS** - sorrow; death, eternal life, Roman symbol for mourning
- EASTER LILY** - modern flower symbolic of resurrection
- EVERGREENS** - immortality
- FLOWERS** - brevity of earthly existence; sorrow
- FLOWER, BROKEN** - premature death
- FRUIT** - eternal plenty
- FRUIT AND VINE** - Jesus Christ; the Christian Church
- GOURDS** - the coming to be and passing away of all earthly matters
- IVY** - abiding memory, friendship, fidelity
- LAUREL** - victory, triumph, glory
- LILY** - lilies; resurrection, purity
- OAK** - supernatural power and strength; eternity
- OLIVE** - peace; healing faith
- PALM** - spiritual victory over death; martyrdom; reward of the righteous; peace; plant whose leaves resemble a hand
- PINEAPPLE** - hospitality
- POMEGRANATE** - immortality; resurrection; unity; nourishment of the soul
- POPPY** - symbolic of sleep; therefore, death
- ROSE** - condolence; sorrow; brevity of earthly existence; of English descent (Tudor Rose)
- SHEAVES of WHEAT** - time, the divine harvest
- STRAWBERRY** - righteousness; humility
- THISTLE** - of Scottish descent; the inevitability of death; remembrance
- TREE** - faith; life; the Tree of Life
- TREE TRUNK , BROKEN** - premature death
- VINE** - Christian Church; Christ; wine (which represents the symbolic blood of Jesus); the sacraments.
- WILLOW** - weeping; grief; death; earthly sorrow; human sadness; nature's lament
- WREATH** - victory in death, eternity; indestructible crown worn by triumphant Christian; eternity
- WREATH on SKULL** - victory over death

Chris Feistner's Questionnaire:

1. Your name or group Larry D. Davis
2. Your phone number, address 5716 Kingman Ave., Des Moines, IA 50311-2006
Phone (515) 277-4917

3. What areas of cemetery work are you interested? Check one or more.

- A. Genealogy
 B. Markers (Wooden, stone or other)
 C. Cemetery Symbolism, motifs, etc.
 D. Obelisks, cairn, Mounds, etc.
 E. Trees, flowers, grasses, or other cemetery plant life
 F. Preservation of cemeteries in part or whole
 G. Racial or social data (what peoples moved into the state, e.g. Russians, Swedish, and why they moved here.)
 H. War Veterans or veterans and their families
 I. Social groups (e.g. Masons, teachers guilds, monks or other religions, etc.)
 J. Cemetery artwork, (e.g. stone work, gargoyles, walls, gates, or paintings that have or about cemeteries.)
 K. Other Gravestone Repair

4. What is your area of expertise or experience in dealing with cemeteries?

Note: you don't have to be a professional to answer this question.

Repairing Gravestones, especially those installed during the mid 1800's to early 1900's.

5. If you could have a yearly conference on cemeteries, what would be some topics that you would choose? financial responsibility for gravestone repair from townships, cities, cemetery commissions + boards, etc.
access to remote pioneer cemeteries.

6. Would you be interested in a yearly conference that would feature new information about cemeteries, workshops, lectures, and a place to air problems about cemeteries (e.g. livestock, indifference, poor laws)

Y N

7. If not, why not?

8. Comments:

P.S. The book would be referenced county by county and then cross referenced by activity. As an example you could look up Indian Mounds and find out who in the state is knowledgeable about this subject. Also when you give me your town or address please add in your county name so that I don't put you somewhere you are not supposed to be. If there are any questions please call me at 712-826-2440, either early morning 7-9 a.m. or late afternoon or evening as I work nights. I also have an answering machine and it will hopefully leave me your message. Again thank you for taking the time to read this and I will be expecting your answers soon.

Chris S. Feistner
P.O. Box 71
Villisca, Iowa 50864

Restoring Old Cemeteries

by Hilda M. Fife, Theodore Brown and Lyle Littlefield

edited by Jonathan D. McKallip

published by The Maine Old Cemetery Association

Planning and Equipment

- Choose a cemetery to work on; secure permission from owners of land or town officials.
- Take pictures "before" starting work, "during," and "after."
- Possible equipment:

lawn mowers	saws
grass clippers	axe, for tree roots
scythe	hand trowel
weeding tool	garden spade
edging tool	crowbar
rakes (light weight)	probe
pruning shears	brushes (nylon or fiber bristle)
rope	burlap (or plastic) bags
buckets	

- Clothing suitable for protection against heavy growth and sometimes poison ivy. Don't forget insect repellent, drinking water, lunch, other personal needs.

Procedure:

- DO NOT discard fieldstones - they are probably markers.
- Cut weeds and tall grass. Trim about stones.
- Rake up clippings, leaves, trash; put in bags and remove bags.
- Clear out brush, small "scrub" trees; remove. DO NOT burn trash, brush or leaves in cemetery.
- Prune or cut trees in moderation.
- Axe out any tree roots that are heaving or breaking stones.
- Repair and straighten fences, rock walls, plot-border stones.
- Clean stones with brushes and water only. (For stubborn dirt and stains consult an authority on safe materials.)
- Reset stones, repair where necessary.
- Level up stones by hand (first loosen dirt with trowel or spade), or by gently lifting foundation with a crowbar.
- Obtain the advice of a local monument dealer.
- Probe for fallen stones. If a probe goes down the same depth (3-10 inches) at several locations, there probably is a stone buried under the soil.
- Fill in sunken graves and reseed.
- Provide for a maintenance program. Form a "cemetery" or "Memorial Association" is necessary.
- Record cemetery location and inscriptions if not already done. Check MOCA Inscription Project.
- Promote your project in the local news media.

The month of May, 1999, will be proclaimed "Cemetery Appreciation Month." Plan now to have an appropriate activity to commemorate this observance. Some suggestions: An article or letter to the editor in your local newspaper, a cemetery walk or tour, a reenactment of some pioneers buried in your pioneer cemeteries, demonstrating how to make rubbings from grave markers (contact your local monument dealer or funeral director for special paper) to students, or showing the SAPIC video, "Gravestone Repair 101" to community groups.



Signing ceremony naming the month of May as "Cemetery Appreciation Month."
Governor's Office, State Capitol Building
April 14, 1998

Left to right:

Dean Gipple, Columbus Junction, Louisa County, IA

Valerie Ogren, Jefferson, Greene County, IA

State Representative Barry Brauns, 47 District

Patricia Shaw, Anamosa, Jones County, IA

Marietta Southwood, Davenport, Scott County, IA

Governor Terry Branstad

Don Southwood, President of the Iowa Genealogical Society

Pat Palmer, Hampton, Franklin County, IA

Michael Magee, Waterloo, Blackhawk County, IA

Calvin McVay, Winterset, Madison County, IA

Ethel McVay, Madison County Genealogical Society

THANKS to *SAPIC* members Valerie Ogren, Don Clark, and Shirley Clark all of Jefferson, Iowa for being the demonstrators of stone repair methods in the "Gravestone Repair 101" video

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The Jackson County Cemetery Commission sponsored a 2-day workshop in June to renovate a pioneer cemetery.

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Want to know more about the Iowa Prairie Network or get one of their newsletters?

Contact: Iowa Prairie Network
1800 Grand Ave., Apt. #43
West Des Moines, IA 50265

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A tour of the town cemetery in Steamboat Rock, Iowa was held July 16, including impersonations of 11 historic figures relating to the town's past.

A reenactment of Moses Barto and his two wives, Mahala and Eliza Mann will be held at the Cherry Grove Cemetery in Jones County at 1:00 p.m. on August 16. Contact Pat Shaw at 319-489-3361 for information.

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Quote from a purchaser of our video:

"I purchased the SAPIC video - it is great. It is so much easier to understand the procedures when you can see them being done.....we are such a 'visual' society, it is certainly helpful to see the work completed 'hands on.' Please pass on my positive comments to Pat Palmer and Paul Maddy. They are invaluable to us!"

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"One of the best ways to imagine the future is to preserve what we value of our past for the new millennium. Our history and culture are literally disintegrating at our historic sites and monuments."

--President Clinton announcing the White House Millennium Program to Save American's Treasures, February, 1998

SOS! (Save Outdoor Sculpture!) is a joint venture of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Art and Heritage Preservation (formerly the National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property). Your cemetery sculpture on headstones could qualify for a grant through this source. Call 888-SOS-SCULP (202-625-1495) for a special cemetery packet or log on to the SOS! home page:

<www.nic.org/SOS/SOS.html>

It is no small thing to outwit time.

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From the *Waterloo Courier*, July 13, 1887:

W. G. Cole, the sexton of Elmwood cemetery, reports that several time of late, parties have been buried in that cemetery without reporting to him. The friends go to the cemetery, dig the grave themselves, and bury the body without letting the sexton know of it. Our people should remember that there is a State Law requiring that burial permits be furnished to the sexton before corpses are interred and this law should be observed.

--A bit of history contributed by Mike Magee, Waterloo, Iowa.

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The drawings on the next pages are of the same cemetery, Olney Churchyard in England. This site was recently visited by SAPIC members, Steve and Donna Story of West Union. The trail guides point out types of stone used for monuments as well as plants. A great idea for use of a burial ground for educational purposes!

Explore the Living Churchyard



5. Colourful patterns of lichens, mosses and liverworts on stones indicate low levels of atmospheric pollution and little disturbance.

4. Summer flowering area is cut once in late August and then raked to distribute wild flower seeds.

6. Church spire makes an excellent roosting spot for birds and bats which feed on creatures living amongst the churchyard plants.

3. Heat generated by the compost heap makes it the ideal spot for hibernating slow worms and hedgehogs.

7. Fossil shells in the church walls were deposited on a sea bed which covered Olney during the Jurassic period, some 170 million years ago.

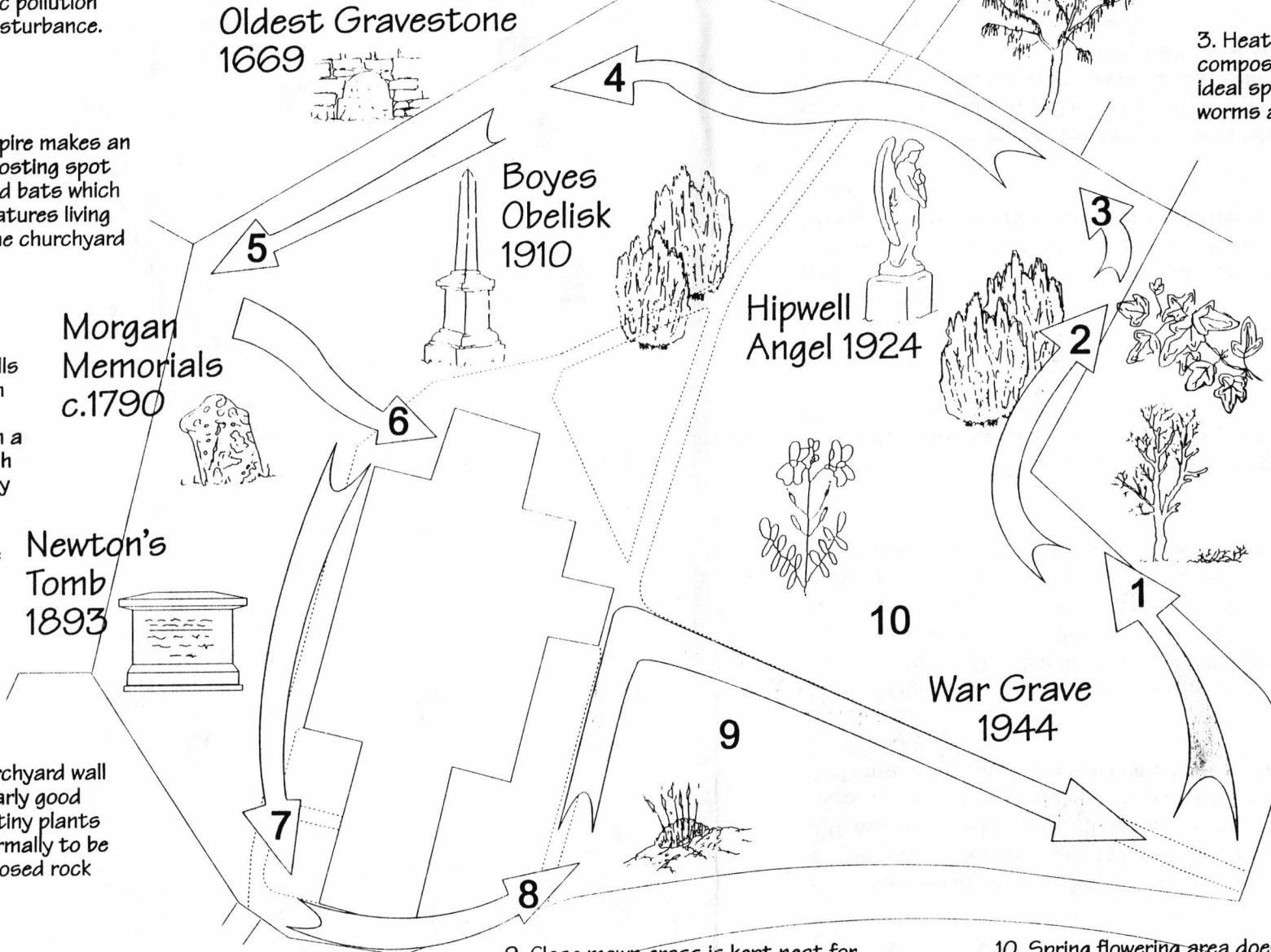
2. Dense Ivy hedge provides food and shelter for nesting birds and small mammals.

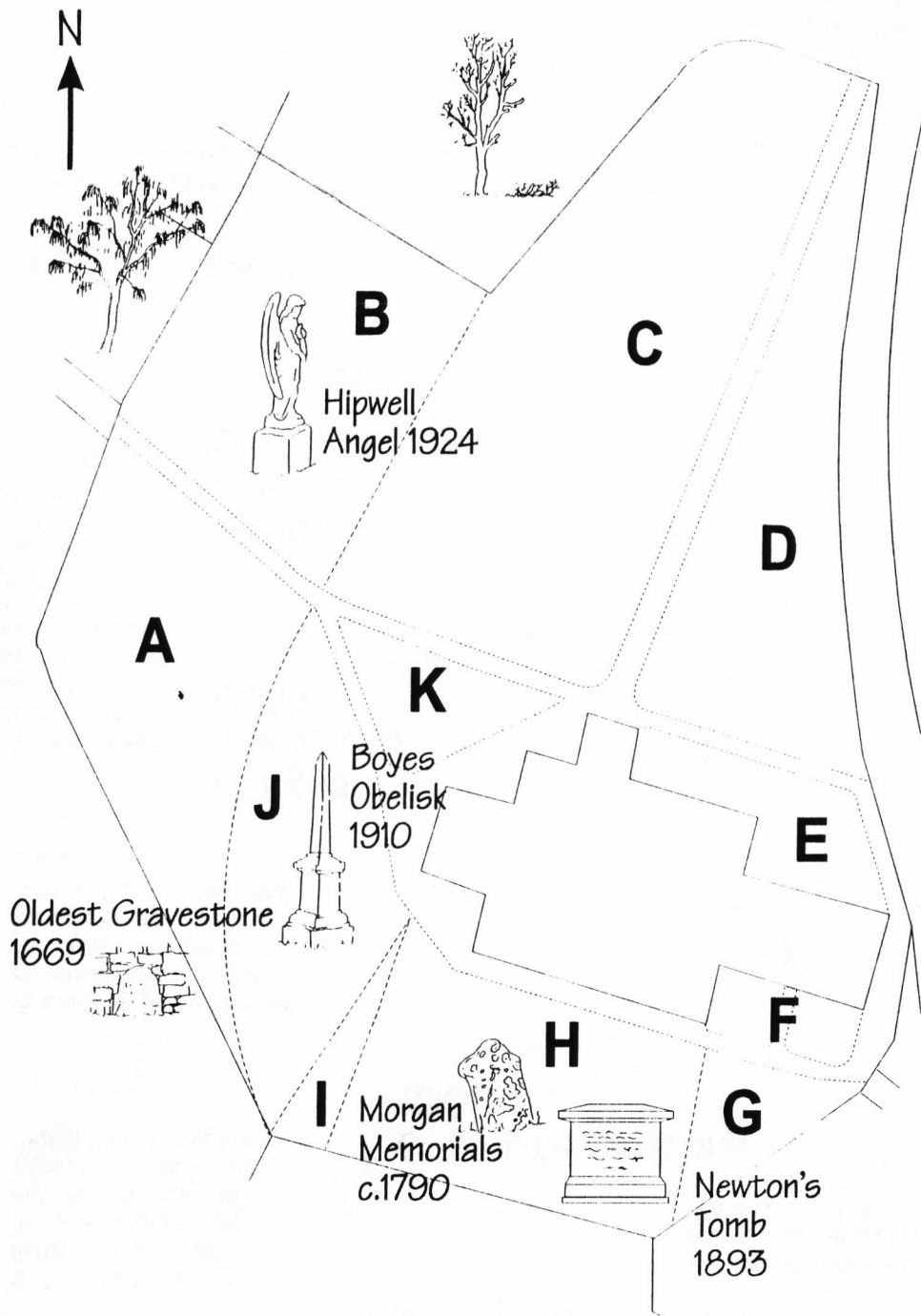
1. Trees have been pruned for safety, but remaining dead wood and hollows create homes for insects and bats.

8. East Churchyard wall is a particularly good spot to see tiny plants which are normally to be found on exposed rock faces.

9. Close mown grass is kept neat for wedding photographs and other ceremonies, but has a cheerful show of bulbs beside the path and wall.

10. Spring flowering area does not have its grass cut until May, once the bulbs have gone over and early flowers have set their seeds.





ROCK HUNTING IN OLNEY CHURCHYARD

Buckinghamshire does not have a great variety of rocks so Olney churchyard is a good place to see many different stones without travelling long distances. These rocks are seen as memorials. As you rock hunt you will find most of the stones are from far afield and unlike the local limestone.

Most of Olney town lies upon a limestone belt of the Jurassic period. The church and some of the older houses are constructed of this limestone. In the past, numerous small quarries served Olney and the surrounding district, such as those at the Dells, Warrington and Weston Underwood; the latter is still functioning.

The churchyard is 0.75ha.in extent, and for the purposes of this trail, has been divided into sections A - K as shown on the plan.

There are 637 memorials comprising the following types; gravestones, ledger slabs, chest tombs, obelisks, crosses and statues. Numerous memorials have perished, some have been removed from their original sites and erected elsewhere or lie broken whilst a few have sunk into the earth where it is impossible to examine them.

Look for the dates on the memorials and note which have lasted longest and still have readable inscriptions. The trail will point out examples of the different kinds of rock you will meet in most churchyards; see if you can go on to identify some for yourself.

Patricia Osborn
Olney, 1996.

MAHASKA COUNTY COMMISSION FOR THE PRESERVATION
OF PIONEER CEMETERIES
June 16, 1998

The members of our Commission are excited about the progress we have made and the enthusiasm generated by the public in our area. We have written letters to all of the Township Trustees expressing our desire to work together with them, not to usurp their "authority." We have applied to the George Daily Family Trust for matching funds to purchase a computer. We have contacted those who have approached us about various Pioneer Cemeteries. We are setting up "work days" with family members and interested persons. (We intend to request that they view the "Gravestone Restoration 101" video underwritten by SAPIC, prior to doing any repair on the gravestones.) Our Eagle Scout has sent his information to his superiors for approval, and will work on "his" cemetery soon.

I keep in contact with the Board of Supervisors and wrote a letter to the editor of the local newspaper publicly thanking them for their support. Without them, our Commission would not be, period.

I wrote a letter last week to the Mahaska County Attorney about "access." We are encountering problems with farmers who believe that they can set the rules about access. After talking with Elizabeth Osenbaugh at the Expo on Saturday, (another benefit of the Expo - networking), I have a better understanding of what we need to do to establish a precedence regarding access. I would encourage SAPIC and Pioneer Cemetery Commission members to talk to those family members still living regarding how they traveled to the cemeteries - in a car, on foot, etc., and what road or roads they used to get there. **Get it in writing and have them sign it!** We can then use these statements to establish access and obtain easements, if necessary. It was great to talk with Elizabeth - I believe we have a real ally in her!

Four of our members attended the Iowa Expo on Saturday, as you know. We believe that education is **so** important! We all felt that the information learned was worth the time and expense - in fact, it was a tremendous bargain. Once again, I was reminded that the Mahaska Commission members are so diverse in their talents and abilities - how lucky I feel to have them working with me!!

I have been requested to give talks at the local Democratic Women meeting and Mahaska County Historical Society. I have accepted, of course, the more exposure our Commission has, the better. Also, every letter I receive is answered - if people are interested enough to write - it is the least I can do.

Keep up the good work!!



Hear Ye! Hear
Ye!

SAPIC HAS A GREAT VIDEO FOR SALE!

This is a training video for beginning cemetery restorers. If you are recruiting volunteers to help with your gravestone repair activities, this is the video to show them. Includes methods for straightening leaning stones and for gluing broken stones, types of epoxy to use, and simple procedures that can improve the appearance of any burial site.

Every public and genealogical library should have one!

Features interviews and demonstrations by well-known gravestone repairer, Paul Maddy.

Yes, I want to order "Gravestone Repair 101!"

Name: _____

Address: _____

Town, city, zip code: _____

Send this information (you don't need to clip the order form and ruin your newsletter) and a check for only \$25.00 plus \$5.00 postage and handling (\$30.00 total) to: (Or buy it from Pat at the IGS Conference for \$25.00).

Pat Palmer
114 3rd Avenue NE
Hampton, IA 50441

Make check out to SAPIC. THANK YOU!

Stories TOLD WITH silence

Huston Cemetery is in the middle of the road in Dallas County's Boone Township.



By JANE BURNS
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

This is the day "Taps" is played at cemeteries across the United States. It's the day Girl Scouts lay wreaths on tombstones and flowers surround graves of loved ones whether or not they went to war.

A trumpet won't sound in every Iowa cemetery, however. For many little-known cemeteries, Memorial Day is the same quiet day the rest are. But that doesn't make those places any less important.

"A cemetery is a cemetery whether there's six stones or 700 or more," said Dorothy Goldizen, who has charted the cemeteries of Davis County.

In many cemeteries around Iowa, there aren't many stones at all. Pat Shaw, president of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries, estimates that each of Iowa's 99 counties has 15 to 20 rural cemeteries in addition to the public or church cemeteries in the communities. Many were once connected with a church or family that is no longer there; many are pioneer cemeteries — graves of those who originally settled in Iowa or those who died en route to locations farther west.

"Some are so old, there's no record of it in the courthouse — but they're there," Shaw said. "That's our biggest concern. Who owns them?"

It's a complicated issue. The Iowa code has made provisions to allow counties to form cemetery commissions, to levy taxes, to specify that the cemeteries are the responsibility of township trustees. None of that, however, guarantees what care and access

the cemeteries actually receive.

"It's an issue that will be with us for a while," said Dennis Britson, director of the regulated industries unit of the insurance division of the Iowa Securities Bureau. "We get a few cases each year where someone contacts the government and says, 'We don't have enough money, can you take care of that?'"

One challenge to cemetery care is that so many of the willing volunteers are older. Shaw, from Marion, talks to 4-H groups in her area and knows of FFA groups that have adopted rural cemeteries.

"The young people, that's who we need to get excited about these," Shaw said. "Most of us doing the research now are retired people and 30 years from now, we need somebody else to do it."

The issues surrounding cemeteries are complicated because each has its own set of challenges. Like the people buried in them, each cemetery has a story of its own to tell. The following are some of the unique places in Iowa.

Since this is Iowa, things popping up in middle of the road isn't an unusual thing. But generally it's a squished squirrel, a rusty muffler or a bunch of beer cans.

At the intersection of east-west County Road F68 in Dallas County and north-south 88th Street, however, what pops up in the middle of the road is a cemetery. Huston Cemetery, with 11 burials, gives the state what is likely its only roundabout.

Huston Cemetery is a quaint reminder of history, but it's also losing its peacefulness as new homes and more traffic spring up in the area. What used to be an out-of-the-way road south of Interstate 80 now has a traffic count of 600 vehicles a day.



BOB NANDELL / REGISTER PHOTO

Orval Kinsey shows grave sites that have been at least partially restored in the Kinsey Cemetery near Johnston.

Not all of Iowa's burying places are tidy grounds with neat parallel markers. Some are obscure, forgotten or loved in a special way.

"That's pretty heavy traffic for a county road," said Dallas County Engineer Jim George. "We try to keep it visible."

Few of the stones are still legible, but some of the now-blank stones have flowers set upon them by someone who cares. The cemetery is tended by the trustees of Boone township.

The cemetery's first burials were in 1847, when two small daughters of the Harper family died going by wagon train to California. Later, it became the private cemetery of the J.B. Huston family.

He died in 1889.

As the area became less remote and roads were built, the county supervisor ordered that the cemetery be moved. But J.B. Huston's living sons proved that the cemetery had been recorded years before in Adel. So the roads went around the cemetery.

That hasn't made a happy ending for the cemetery. One tree stands where there once were six, most victims of car accidents. It's a dilemma for the families

Stories told with silence

CEMETERIES

Continued from Page 5M

of those buried there and those who drive by unaware of the cemetery. There are no current plans for a solution.

"We certainly respect the folks rights out there, but we're also concerned about the safety of the traffic public," George said.

Like many soldiers, the Macy brothers of Davis County will get flags on their graves this Memorial Day. But the Macys weren't veterans of a recent war, being remembered by surviving relatives. The brothers were killed in the Civil War and are buried in a remote cemetery in the middle of a farm field.

Getting to where they are buried will be the challenge. It takes a keen eye, a detailed map and, probably, an all-terrain vehicle to find the Shuman Cemetery near Bloomfield. It's on a muddy path off a gravel road off a county road off of Highway 63.

Despite those challenges, the veterans there will get their due on this day because of the work of volunteers in the area. Dorothy Goldizen of rural Pulaski spent eight years on a project to track and detail the 96 rural cemeteries in the county.

"Cemeteries are quite interesting places to visit," she said. "I love to go to the old cemeteries. There's a lot of different history in the cemeteries — they tell stories."

The oldest burial in Shuman Cemetery (which is also on record as being called Shumen and Shunam) is from 1852. Most are from the 1860s and 1870s. Another cemetery in the county, Patterson Cemetery, has a

burial from 1828, when there were few white men in the area.

Goldizen tells some of those stories to history classes and local organizations.

"I always tell them if it weren't for those stones there, we wouldn't be here," Goldizen said. "Those were the pioneers."

Unlike other cemeteries in the city of Des Moines, Oak Grove has managed to avoid the problems of vandalism, loitering or partying.

The reason is simple. No one can find it.

Tucked in behind a city block of homes on the southwest side, Oak Grove's gate is usually crossed only by those visiting their loved ones or the people who are paid to mow it. It's a public cemetery on two acres between Southwest 30th and Southwest 31st streets, maintained by the city's Parks Department.

Oak Grove is part of the past and present. Burials date back to the 1860s and plots are reserved for some still living.

Mostly, however, it's just part of the residential neighborhood that surrounds it.

"I had mixed emotions when we were thinking about buying this house 25 years ago, but the cemetery's no problem," said Vincent Rodgers, who lives next door to it on Southwest 31st Street. "I've got a big picture window and with all the trees, the cemetery is an enjoyable sight."

Shortly after the Rodgers moved in, he did worry some about the graveyard next door. As he worked on his swimming pool, Rodgers kept hearing a popping sound.

"I thought kids were throwing

rocks at me," he said. "This went on for several days, it got kind of spooky."

Finally, he got his explanation. The lights in his pool were popping as he drained it. It had nothing to do with the neighbors.

"I can't tell you what was going through my mind when I couldn't figure that out," he said.

Burials are infrequent at Oak Grove. There are still plots available, but they're along fence lines or the bottom of a hill, which gets kind of mushy when it rains. There is room to expand, but neighbors objected to it.

It wasn't because they don't like having the cemetery, but the expansion would have taken Oak Grove to Southwest 31st Street. As it is now, that open area is a slope that hides the cemetery behind it. The park board turned down the expansion.

Many cemeteries are forgotten because the family members are gone. The Kinsey Cemetery outside of Johnston, however, had one of its own looking out for it.

Vandals and parties had done enough damage to the place over the years. Mother Nature wasn't much help either, and after a particularly bad storm about a decade ago, the cemetery was a mess.

"You couldn't drive up to it, you couldn't get there," said Orval Kinsey, who lives nearby.

Kinsey's grandfather and great-grandfather are buried there, and their monuments were safe. Others weren't as fortunate. Many monuments were tipped or broken. The cemetery was overgrown and there were piles of brush everywhere.

Kinsey had seen enough.

"He made an impassioned plea for the city to help him," said Mary Jane Paez, a member of the Johnston City Council and president of the local historical society. "It didn't fall on deaf ears. We felt the same way."

The city took over care of the cemeteries from the townships whose responsibility it had been. At Kinsey Cemetery, a historical society member designed a gate that the city paid for. The city also picked up the tab for headstones missing from veterans' graves. Volunteers tracked the names and locations of the graves.

What was once a dumping ground for branches and a playground for vandals is now a pleasant cemetery.

"It's just not the same situation anymore," Kinsey said. "It's nice for a country cemetery."

A little cemetery tucked in the Loess Hills has no official name, and no known descendants are in the area. Yet the graveyard's history is as unique as it is mysterious.

In Jordan Township, near the small town of Soldier, lie the remains of approximately 20 people who lived in the area. They came to the Loess Hills around the time of the Civil War. They lived there, they died there and they were black.

"We have absolutely no idea why they came," said Betty Gorham, who gives tours of the area.

The land belonged to Adam Miers, a farmer who came to the area in 1856. There is some speculation that those buried in the cemetery came to work for him after the Emancipation Proclamation, or before that via the Underground Railroad, but no one knows for sure. The only fact the locals have to go on is that the 1880 census said there were 88 black people in Monona County.

The cemetery never had an official name, and changes in appropriate language have changed its name over the years.

"We didn't know whether to call it the Negro Cemetery, the Black Cemetery, the African-American Cemetery," said Gorham, 78. "It's been known as the Black Cemetery most of my life."

Years ago, Gorham brought a group of 4-H members to the cemetery to plant day lilies and irises.

"I love to think of those girls planting the flowers," Gorham said. "Those same girls check the cemetery now and they're 50 years old."

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The STATE ASSOCIATION for the PRESERVATION of IOWA CEMETERIES

TREASURER REPORT 2nd Qtr.: 4/1 - 6/30/98

Balance On Hand, 4/1/98: \$2,039.42
 Checking Acct. No. 361585, Mahaska SB, Oskaloosa

<u>Income:</u>			529.84
Membership Dues		240.00	
Deposit, 4/28	40.00		
do 5/7	60.00		
do 5/22	40.00		
do 6/1	40.00		
do 6/22 (M)	40.00		
do 6/30 (M)	20.00		
Interest		10.16	
4/20	3.92		
5/18	3.21		
6/15	3.03		
Video Sales		250.00	
Receipt, 6/30	250.00		
Donations		29.68	
Treasurer Office Expense	29.68		
			<hr/>
		Total On Hand & Gain:	2,569.26

<u>Expense:</u>			-772.48
Patricia I. Shaw, Pres.		240.04	
5/18 (108) c 100.80, m 49.00,	221.60		
photos 28.76, mc 43.04			
6/30 (114) c 6.59, m 11.85	18.44		
Video Production		502.76	
6/1 (109) Pat Palmer, Tape	144.90		
do (110) Bob Dittert, Producer	100.00		
do (111) Pegasus TV, Studio	50.00		
do (112) Kevin Sayles, Dub/Mail	50.00		
6/3 (113) Pat Palmer, Mileage	150.00		
6/30(114) do Mail	7.86		
H. E. Crain, Treasurer		29.68	
copy .59, mail 24.61, telephone 4.48			

Balance On Hand, 6/30/98: \$1,796.78

Respectfully submitted:

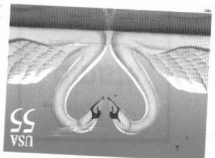
H. E. Crain
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Anamosa, IA 52205



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NON SEQUITUR



For Non Sequitur book, "Survival Guide for the Nineties," call 1-800-642-6480 & mention The Cedar Rapids Gazette. Price: \$9.95 + \$2 SH.

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2-9

You may soon be able to purchase a computer chip to install in/on your gravestone that will tell all about your life. What a boon for genealogists! Of course, the information may vary depending on whether you supply the information before your demise or someone else does it afterwards!

DEAR ANCESTOR

Your tombstone stands among the rest;
Neglected and alone.
The name and date are chiseled out
On polished, marbled stone.
It reaches out to all who care
It is too late to mourn.
You did not know that I exist
You died and I was born.
Yet each of us are cells of you
In flesh, in blood, in bone.
Our blood contracts and beats a pulse
Entirely not our own.
Dear Ancestor, the place you filled
One hundred years ago
Spreads out among the ones you left
Who would have loved you so.
I wonder if you lived and loved,
I wonder if you knew
That someday I would find this spot,
And come to visit you.

Author Unknown