

GRAVE NEWS
NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
IOWA CEMETERIES

C/O IGS P.O. BOX 7735 Des Moines, IA 50322-7735
<http://www.sapic.org>

Volume #4 Issue # 3

No Stone Unturned.....

SAPIC members Jo Vernooy, Judy Swanson, John Jacobs, Sheila Takai, and Pat Shaw attended a Gravestone Preservation Workshop on May 8 held at Indian Hills Community College and the McCormick Cemetery in Wapello County. Instructor Beverly Bethune who follows the guidelines of the Association for Gravestone Studies makes these suggestions:

Don't: ever use any harsh chemicals or bleach on a stone; ever use shaving cream or magic marker on a stone; ever use polyester resins to glue stones back together; begin preservation projects without a full assessment of the situation; assume that any preservation techniques are OK; assume that time and nature have won and nothing can be done.

Do: use techniques recommended by AGS; promote gravestone preservation; use proper safety precautions; contact the cemetery trustees before beginning a project; remember that preservation of this type is relatively inexpensive and preserves an important piece of our material and cultural heritage.

Because of unseasonably cold weather, the time at the cemetery was cut short, but some instruction in reading, cleaning, and resetting stones was given.

July, 1999

SAPIC members also supported the organizers of a cemetery conference held in Des Moines on June 19. Presenters included David Gradwohl on the subject of Jewish Cemeteries, Shirley Schermer of the Office of the State Archaeologist, and SAPIC's own Phyllis Carter speaking on involving children in cemetery restoration. SAPIC acquired new members (including Mr. Gradwohl) as a result of contacts made at these events.

Thanks to Charly Stevens of the Page County Conservation Board and the staff of the beautiful Nodaway Valley Museum in Clarinda, Iowa for their hospitality at SAPIC's July 10 meeting. New members with fresh ideas who will contribute much to SAPIC also joined at this meeting.

The next meeting will be held Saturday, October 9 at 7:00 a.m. at the IGS Conference in Marshalltown, Iowa. Plan to attend! The Robert Carter Award will be given at the IGS banquet on Friday night.

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WHERE TO GET SIGNS

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1-800-336-5863
Ask for Tammy Deseberg

Iowa Prairie Network
402-571-6230

SAPIC MEETING

JULY 10 1999

THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES MET AT THE NODAWAY VALLEY MUSEUM IN CLARINDA, IA. PRESIDENT PAT SHAW CALLED THE MEETING TO ORDER AT 10:15 AM. SHE WELCOMED ALL AND THANKED THE MUSEUM STAFF FOR THEIR HOSPITALITY.

AS SECRETARY MARILYN SCHMITT WAS LATE IN COMING, PAT READ THE APRIL 10TH MINUTES. ETHEL MC VAY MOTIONED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS READ. MOTION WAS SECONDED AND CARRIED. ETHEL AGREED TO TAKE THE MINUTES.

PRESIDENT SHAW THEN READ THE TREASURERS REPORT. SEE ATTACHED COPY. MOTION TO ACCEPT REPORT WAS MADE BY VALERIE OGREN MS AND CARRIED

PAT REPORTED THAT THE GROUP MET IN THE GOVERNORS OFFICE AS HE SIGNED A PROCLAMATION TO DESIGNATE MAY AS CEMETERY APPRECIATION MONTH. VALERIE OGREN TOLD HOW SHE TYPED A PAPER AND PRESENTED IT TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND HAD THEM SIGN IT TO MAKE THE MONTH OF MAY CEMETERY APPRECIATION MONTH FOR GREENE COUNTY.

PHYLLIS ROTHLAUF MADE A CORRECTION TO THE APRIL MEETING DES MOINES COUNTY IS A COMMITTEE AND NOT A COMMISSION AS YET.

PAT SHAW GAVE A REPORT OF VAN BUREN COUNTY CEMETERIES.

JONES COUNTY WOULD LIKE TO HOST A SAPIC MEETING NEXT YEAR.

THE BOYS OF CHARLIE STEPHENS ACADEMY IN PAGE COUNTY ARE WORKING TO CLEANUP THE CEMETERIES. RON ROPE REPORTED THAT THEY CLEANED THE CEMETERY SOUTH OF YORK.

ROBERTA AMDOR REPORTED THAT WAYNE COUNTY GIVES A DINNER FOR MEMORIAL DAY.

HENRY RUBIN REPORTED THAT FINLEY CEMETERY NORTH OF VILLISCA IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY HAS GOOD MAINTAINENCE BUT THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO GET THE COURTHOUSE OFFICIALS TO ACKNOWLEDGE IT AS A PUBLIC CEMETERY.

VALERIE OGREN REPORTED THAT GREEN COUNTY HAS APPOINTED A CEMETERY COMMISION OF FIVE MEMBERS: 1 FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY, 1 FROM THE GENEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, 2 TRUSTEES, AND 1 FROM THE CONSERVATION BOARD. SHE EXPRESSED A CONCERN IN THE COUNTY ABOUT THE BILL THE STATED THAT THERE WOULD BE ACCESS TO DESCENDANTS ONLY TO SOME CEMETERIES

PHYLLIS ROTHLAUF REPORTED THAT DES MOINES COUNTY SENT THEIR PLAN TO THE COUNTY ATTORNEY AND HE SENT IT TO THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TO BE SIGNED AND HAS TWO SIGNATURES.

CALVIN MCVAY REPORTED THAT MADISON COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY BOUGHT FOUR SIGNS LAST YEAR AND EIGHT SIGNS THIS YEAR FOR CEMETERIES IN MADISON COUNTY.

TAYLOR COUNTY HELD A REEACTMENT AT THE CEMETERY IN JUNE . 190 PEOPLE ATTENDED AT \$3.00 EACH. THIS WAS REPORTED BY ROBERT HINCKLEY. PHYLLIS ROTHLAUF BROUGHT THE HISTORIAN BOOK AND TOLD ABOUT IT.

LEGISLATION MATERIAL IS IN THE NEWSLETTER. THE NEW LEGISLATION WAS SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR AND WENT INTO EFFECT 1 JULY 1999. WE WILL NOW TRY TO CHANGE THE TERM DESCENDANTS TO VISITORS.

PAT SHAW REPORTED THAT MEMBERSHIP INTEREST IS VERY GOOD . WE NOW SEND OUT 135 NEWSLETTERS.

PAT PALMER HAS SOLD SEVERAL FROM THE WEB PAGE ARTICLES. VALERIE OGREN SUGGESTED THAT A LIST OF ALL 99 COUNTIES WITH COMMISSIONS., NAMES AND WEB ADDRESS, BE POSTED.

AT THE REQUEST OF THE BOARD DEAN GIPPLE LISTED SOME OF HIS EXPENSES. VALERIE OGREN MOVED THAT HE BE GIVEN \$673.00 TO HELP WITH EXPENSES FOR HIS EFFORTS IN GETTING LEGISLATION PASSED. MOTION SECONDED AND CARRIED. THE GROUP EXPRESSED GREAT THANKS TO DEAN FOR ALL HE'S DONE.

MIKE MAGEE WILL CHAIR THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE.

VALERIE OGREN OFFERED JEFFERSON IN GREENE COUNTY FOR THE JANUARY MEETING.

SECRETARY PRO - TEM ETHEL MC VAY

" I CAME IN LATE AND WANT TO THANK ETHEL FOR THE EXELLENT JOB"

*Respectfully
Marilyn Schmitt*

SAPIC treasurer, Harley Crain, reported a balance on hand as of June 30, 1999 of \$2,529.12 in the checking account. In the special savings account for lifetime memberships, there is a balance of \$705.30.
Combined Balance on Hand: \$3,234.42

For an itemized account of the treasurer's report, contact Pat Shaw.

Ninety-three year old Bill Mathews called Pat Shaw last May to report that he cannot attend SAPIC meetings, but really enjoys the Grave News. *Thanks, Bill! Hope that you find items of interest to you in this one, too!*

Remember that SAPIC has a video available by mail order for \$30 on basic stone repair. Orders have been received from all parts of Iowa, plus Maryland, New Jersey, and Ohio! Contact Pat Palmer at

yankeez@willowtree.com

If you know of the burial of a Jewish person in your rural or non-Jewish Cemetery, please contact Professor David Gradwohl; 2003 Ashmore Drive; Ames, IA 50014.

Send your news articles, photos, cemetery walk/tour programs and any other information from your area to SAPIC historian, Phyllis Rothlauf. She had the two well-arranged historian books on display at the July meeting. Thanks to Phyllis for the time and effort she has expended to preserve the story of SAPIC.

The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it.

-- *Moliere*

These counties have established pioneer cemetery commissions:

Delaware Mr. Fred Phelps
221 Main St.; Colesburg, IA 52035
319-856-2025

Fayette Laura Westendorf
25067 Johnson's Mill Rd.;
Waucoma, IA 52171
319-429-2892

Hardin Dick Stone
1301 5th St.; Eldora, IA 50627
515-858-3925 or 515-858-3164

Iowa Bob Wagner
406 Madison St.; Williamsburg, IA
52361 319-668-9406

Jackson Joann Caven
12901 119th Ave.; Maquoketa, IA
52060 319-652-2516

Jasper Marilyn Schmitt
13059 S. 52nd Ave. W.;
Mitchellville, IA 50169
515-674-3956

Jones Rosalie Ahrendsen
7922 Jungle Town Rd.; Oxford
Junction, IA 52323 319-488-3138

Louisa Dean Gipple
307 Flat Iron Dr.; Columbus
Junction, IA 52738 319-728-2344

Mahaska Jo Vernooy
1240 235th Ave.; Leighton, IA
50143 515-673-8122

Tama Joyce A. Wiese
2160 310th St.; Toledo, IA 52342
515-484-2599

Winneshiek Kevin Lee
1672 Old Stage Rd.; Decorah, IA
52101

These counties have commissions pending: Clarke, Clayton, Des Moines, Greene, Sac. *Good luck to them!*

Arrangements have been made to have Continental breakfast items at the 7:00 a.m. meeting in Marshalltown. You may help defray the cost of this service to SAPIC by a donation, if you wish. Thanks to Mr. Everett Geurink for making the arrangements for the meeting room and breakfast.

The dedication of SAPIC members to refining the craft of gravestone restoration is impressive. One county commission, the Mahaska, is worthy of note; most of its members attended two educational events held this summer related to that topic! Of course, this was in addition to the "hands-on" activities in cemeteries that most SAPIC members do. SAPIC member Larry Davis from Des Moines also had an informative display of his work at a cemetery conference in June. Others drove long distances from across Iowa, Indiana, Nebraska, and Missouri to attend. These examples reflect the open-mindedness and sincere desire of these attendees to constantly improve their methods. At this point in its existence, SAPIC neither endorses nor maligns the past and present work of sincere individuals who truly care about neglected burial sites. Through the video, newsletter, workshops, and speaking engagements, SAPIC members present information with the attitude that we are all in the learning process. Present-day "experts" may find that their methods will be outdated in the future.

When asked by her husband what she wanted for her birthday, Judy Swanson of Oskaloosa said she wanted a Lifetime Membership in SAPIC!

Your support is appreciated, Judy!

Tireless cemetery advocate Lois Mauk from Indiana has collected many newspaper articles and web sites pertaining to cemetery

preservation. A few from Lois and other sources are listed here:

www.roanoke.com/roatimes/news/story69903.html
Virginia Department of Transportation prepared to widen Hollins Road and found the 700-year-old grave of Monacan Indian

detnews.com:80/1999/oakland/9907/25/07250031.htm
Detroit -- Controversy over plans to restore a 10" X 12" cemetery dating to 1835 may end up in court as a fight over the townshp master plan and the landowner's property rights.

www7.mercurycenter.com:80/premium/local/docs/cleantomb18.htm
San Jose, CA -- 30-year-old tradition of cleaning cemetery by Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin

www.binghamtonpress.com:80/binghamtonnews/local/Sunews4.html
New York -- Volunteers repair vandalism to Whitney Point Cemetery's graves.

<http://politicalgraveyard.com>
A commentary by Lawrence Kestenbaum arguing that the world does not need the land on which old cemeteries are located for freeways, development, etc.

hometown.aol.cm/vikkigray/index.htm
Colorado -- Vicki Gray's "Tip of the Week" tells how to take an impression of a gravestone.

www.rootsweb.com/~inpcrp
A description of the cemetery preservation law that took effect on July 1, 1999 in Indiana.

www.ohio.com/bj/news/ohio/docs/011740.htm
Delaware, Ohio -- Discovery of cemetery delays construction of office building.

www.seattle-pi/local/bury17.shtml
Seattle, Washington -- Memorial Park is being planned for cemetery neglected for 60 years.

www2.startribune.com/stOnLine/cgi-bin/article?thisStory+75832642
Minneapolis -- Father and son charged with stealing cemetery urns.

Campngrani@aol.com
Posting of a charming story of a family that started a tradition of having the children care for the grave of a stranger.

www.rootsweb.com/~wapsgs/
Washington State Cemetery Association

www.northscape.com/news/docs/0525/26B527D.htm
Fisher, Minnesota -- Moving 200 graves to prevent them from slipping into the Red Lake River.

www2.legis.state.ia.us/GA/78GABillHistory/HF/00400/HF00472.html
Tracing a bill from committee to passage.

www.cr.nps.gov/nr/
Details on getting a cemetery on the National Register.

ejustice@bellatlantic.net
Email address of Carolyn Jacobi, consumer advocate for cemeteries

members.aol.com/savegrave/
Web site of "Save Texas Cemeteries"

www.jsonline.com
Milwaukee -- Conflict between Milwaukee and Glendale over which one should maintain a cemetery.

www.ohio.com/bj/news/ohio/docs/034932.htm
Acron, Ohio -- New law stiffens penalties for desecration of churches, cemeteries.

asherman@pioneerpress.com
Email address of reporter who wrote "A Question of Preservation" about cemetery in Dakota Co. MN.

www.sitrib.com/05011999/utah/102073.htm
Salt Lake City -- Cemetery volunteer honored.

www.elmwoodscemetery.org
Oldest organized cemetery in Memphis, TN.

www.post-gazette.com/regionstate/19990522finalseries2.asp
Pittsburgh -- 4-part series on the funeral business.

expressnews.com/news/save/0101bata.shtml
San Antonio -- Cemeteries face own threats to survival.

www.judicial.state.ia.us
Entire version of every opinion of the Iowa Court of Appeals.

www.nationaltrust.org/
National Trust for Historic Preservation
Deals with historic sites in the U.S. that are in danger of disappearing and those that have been saved.

If you have problems accessing any of these sites, don't have Internet access, or if the story is no longer available on-line, contact Pat Shaw, who has print-outs of most of them.

An article appeared in the May, 1999 *Kiplinger Magazine* about the cemetery industry.

The Prosoco Company makes a water REPELLANT, not a water PROOFER, that is available through masonry supply stores. It is breathable and allows moisture to escape, yet helps bond the stone together.

A new organization, "The National Cemetery Conservation Foundation" has been formed. Address: P.O. Box 13568; New Orleans, LA 70185-3568 Telephone 504-866-4480.

A booklet from the IRS on tax-exempt status for cemetery associations is available: 501(c)(3)

Seven booklets written by and about 8th grade students who clean up a cemetery each year are available from their teacher:

Tommy Allen
510 Wanda Lane
Tullahoma, Tennessee 37388

Each costs \$5, plus \$1.75 postage.

Iowa Code and many other resources can be accessed through the State of Iowa home page:

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

It's not our job to see through each other.
It's our job to see one another through.

County Reports: In an effort to reduce postage costs, some news articles have been summarized. This is being done with much inner conflict on the part of the newsletter editor, as contributions to the newsletter are so greatly appreciated. All articles will be copied and will be available for anyone requesting the entire article. The originals will be placed in the SAPIC Historian Book. It was suggested by new member Bob Henke of Clarinda that newsletters should be sent to all County Supervisors. This would bring our mailing list to over 200, which would entitle us to bulk mailing privileges and thus reduce postage costs. I will have information available at the October meeting. *Thanks for that suggestion, Bob!*

BLACK HAWK COUNTY

SUBMITTED BY MIKE MAGEE

Black Hawk County, IA Area - There have been no reports of any cemetery vandalism in this area lately. Recently one of the members of the Northeast Iowa Genealogical Society made me aware of the existence of a cemetery in Poyner Twp. Section 1. It is shown on a 1887 & 1910 map of that township. I approached a man in Gilbertville who knows most of the people in that area. He told me who owns the property around this cemetery and that he thought the person would not be very agreeable to inquiries about it. I am working on a strategy for approaching him about it. This cemetery has no name and is listed as a family cemetery at the Black Hawk County Accessors Office. I hope to someday go to this cemetery and photograph and probe the area for evidence of gravemarkers. Have not done any cemetery restoration work yet. Lots of rain and high temperatures lately. Hope to get at it when it cools off some. Our local TV station does a short story about the history of neighboring towns every day. On July 8th they did a story about Dunkerton, IA. The Lester Twp. Cemetery which is nearby was shown briefly and it included some of the gravemarkers that have been repaired. At Elmwood Cemetery here in Waterloo, the monument for Governor Boies is leaning badly. It is quite large and needs a professional to correct it. I gave to the sexton the business card from the man who operates Terry's Cemetery Restoration & Repair. They have been looking for someone in that line of business and were glad to get the information on him. He is insured and bonded.

I stopped by Jim Jackson's Auction today in Cedar Falls. He has orders from the attorney to complete the sale of the estate that had the two gravemarkers. They did not sell them at the previous auction and now has orders to finalize the sale of any remaining items so that the estate can be settled.

On August 28, 1999 they will be placed up for auction.
Lula Beagle, d/o W. H. & J. F. Beagle, she died May 2, 1882, 4 months, nineteen days.

The other gravemarker is for Richard Filkins, 6 - 28 - 1805 to 7 - 2 - 1869. At Waterloo Cemetery there is a gravemarker for this person, it also has the names of other persons named Filkins who are buried in the same plot. I am convinced that the stone being auctioned was replaced by the one that is in place now.

Any chance of this information getting in the SAPIC newsletter prior to this auction?

You may use me as the contact person.

Mike

Pioneer Cemetery

By MELODY PARKER
Courier Lifestyles Editor

BLACK HAWK COUNTY

A small American flag snaps to attention in the brisk prairie wind sweeping through the 1864 Pioneer Cemetery.

In late May, buds appear on the peony bush planted years ago next to John Adams' Civil War marker. A veteran of Company K, 112th Illinois Infantry, the soldier survived to tell his children stories about the War Between the States and find a final resting place in this peaceful, rural Iowa cemetery.

A venerable, massive oak tree sways above tombstones. It would be the perfect climbing tree, but here it's a shady place for contemplation. It is joined by an equally ancient cedar tree, which looks as if it has been here since the first German immigrants began moving across the Midwestern prairie to settle in Bennington Township, Black Hawk County.

"We love those trees. We're not sure how old they are but they've been here as long as I can remember. You can tell they're very old," says Marian Greene, an officer on the Pioneer Cemetery Association board whose great-grandfather, August Burk Sr., is buried here.

For Memorial Day, association members plant flags on war veterans' graves and place pots of geraniums in front of towering tombstones of ancestors and loved ones. It is a tradition that will be carried out in cemeteries across Iowa and the United States during this holiday weekend, but the practice is a particularly poignant one at the Pioneer Cemetery.

"We're trying to keep the connection into the next generation. That's the whole thing of it, so they can keep it looking as pretty as it is," says Greene.

"It's of historical importance to the area and so many people have told us how

beautiful it is, but it's hard getting younger generations interested in preserving it," says Evelyn Meier. Greene and Meier share Burk as a great-grandfather, and Meier's uncle and grandparents were also laid to rest in the cemetery.

In 1852, a German immigrant named Conrad Fritz purchased a section of land in Bennington Township. With his wife, Wilhemina, and their three children, the family built a sod house on a low slope, surrounded by prairie grass and wildflowers, with a small creek nearby to provide water.

As the story goes, in 1864 a pregnant Wilhemina accompanied her husband on the 10-mile trek south to Waterloo for supplies. One of the horses drawing the wagon had left behind a young foal and the ride home across the rough prairie, hastened by the anxious nursing mare, proved detrimental to Wilhemina, who gave birth prematurely and died May 16, 1864.

She was buried in a grave dug a short distance from her sod home. Her newborn son, Frederick, grieved for his mother, crying and refusing to eat. He died a week later and was buried next to his mother. The graves lie a short distance to the southeast of the gate at the present cemetery.

This was the beginning of the German Burial Ground, now the 1864 Pioneer Cemetery. As later deaths occurred in the community, requests were made to bury bodies near the first two graves: Heinrich Paul, April 6, 1867; Philip Nottger, in 1872; Anna E. Burk, who died from burns received when she fell into a tub of hot water, July 15, 1872.

"Conrad's second wife didn't want the first wife buried right outside her front door, so he built another house across the road," says Grace Keough, 89. Most of her family members, including her mother and father, grandparents, husband, great-grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins are buried at Pioneer Cemetery.

"And that's where I'll be buried too. I won't be buried anywhere else. To me, it's family," she explains. "The cemetery is important because it honors the pioneers who settled here."

She has countless stories to tell about the deaths of family members, including the tragic death of a 17-year-old boy who worked at a creamery. "There was a milk can of buttermilk set out and everyone would drink it from a ladle. One day somebody changed it and when he

thought he was taking a drink of buttermilk, it was actually lye. It burned him all the way down and he died, but that was before I was born," Keough recalls.

Finally, the idea occurred to designate a permanent burial ground. On June 9, 1873, families gathered to organize an association. At the time, lots usually cost \$5 per person.

Greene says after World War I interest in the cemetery waned until the association was revived in 1924 and the cemetery's name was changed. In 1946, 1948, 1949 and 1951, memorial services took place at the cemetery.

Today association membership dues are charged and lots cost \$75.

All Association members, including officers Jim Burton, Dorothy Bloom, Evelyn Meier and Greene, have relatives buried at the Pioneer Cemetery. There are about 50 members who pay dues to help maintain the site, including mowing the grounds and repairing tombstones, if necessary.

Old tombstones are often inscribed in German. Carvings, such as a lamb, designate children's graves, and many of the older tombstones are topped with urn-shaped finials. Some markers have sunk into the ground and only the tops are visible.

"We've pulled some of them up and reset them, but some of them are actually that size," says David Greene. "We've also had to cement some of the urns back on top of the markers."

Today there are lots for sale, says Meier, and it is no longer a prerequisite that a person desiring burial here must have an ancestor in the cemetery.



Photos by BRANDON POLLOCK/Courier staff photographer

left, Pioneer Cemetery, located on Gresham Road west of Waterloo, was established in 1864 by German immigrants. Prior to establishing a cemetery, family members were buried in the yard near settlers' houses. Middle, she served as angels of grief symbolizing the graves of soldiers and children in Pioneer Cemetery. Century-old tombstones have other markings, such as clasped hands, a different meanings. Below, David Greene places a pot of geraniums at one of the tombstones in Pioneer Cemetery, accompanied by Jim Burton.



Right, this marker shows settler John Adams served in the Illinois Infantry during the Civil War. The marker was placed next to his tombstone, and flags adorn the grave on Memorial Day, placed by Pioneer Cemetery.

Mike was also involved in a clean-up day at Lester Twp. Cemetery on April 30. Old cedar trees were removed and correct placement for a previously unknown stone was achieved. Mike is an expert researcher in Blackhawk County archives and extracts many "tidbits" that indicate that cemetery problems, conflicts, and concerns are not unique to the 20th century.

Nov. 6, 1863: Concern about establishing a new cemetery and/or fencing the old Fairview Cemetery.

Dec. 8, 1865: Request from the Bd. of Directors of Fairview Cemetery that lots be paid for in advance of need.

Dec. 6, 1867: Request for funds and volunteers for cleaning the Greenwood Cemetery and making it more attractive.

May 21, 1875: A new house to be built on the grounds of the Fairview Cemetery for the person in charge of the site.

Oct. 30, 1874: A complaint lodged about horses being allowed to graze in the Fairview Cemetery.

Sept. 11, 1874: A letter to the editor about the condition and disrespect shown by youth at the Greenwood Cemetery.

Sept. 22, 1871: An editorial urging citizens to volunteer to beautify the local sacred burial sites.

Oct. 29, 1875: Appointment of a sexton and an order to refrain from cutting trees in the Greenwood Cemetery.

April 23, 1975: Article about Mr. Chapman installing a fence around his family plot in Greenwood Cemetery and urging others to follow suit.

July 22, 1871: Article emotionally berating the city of Waterloo for allowing the harvesting of hay in the city cemetery.

May 11, 1877: An article about the advantages of the "Cincinnati Corpse Prserver" and use of embalming fluid.

July 17, 1870: An announcement of the completion of ditching which will keep the Waterloo Cemetery completely dry.

April, 1869: Financial report and intended improvement of the Waterloo Cemetery by its newly elected Board.

June 17, 1869: An editorial that asks for opinions on whether Waterloo needs a new cemetery and, if so, where?

Note: Mike journeyed to Mayport, FL at the invitation of the captain of the U.S.S. The Sullivans for a cruise on that ship on June 8. Mike was on the commissioning committee for the ship and helped do research for a book about the five Sullivan Brothers from Waterloo who died while serving in the Navy in WW II.

Chickawaw County

Submitted by Jeanette Kottke

The County Genealogical Society inserted copies of the SAPIC brochure in each of the 350 newsletters that are sent to its members and also to 36 township trustees. This Society also sent SAPIC a monetary donation for 23 SAPIC newsletters, pre-addressed labels for them, and a note from the Society soliciting interest in cemetery preservation from funeral homes and other persons in Chickasaw County. This support is greatly appreciated!

Dickinson County

Article in the Des Moines Register, April 23, 1999

A moving story about Everett Morrow of Spirit Lake and his determination not to be forced to relocate the body of his son so that a frontage road can be built to allow easier access to a handful of local businesses, including Wal-Mart. Local residents were collecting signatures in support of Mr. Morrow. The grave is located on the south edge of Spirit Lake Cemetery.

Reporter Jason Clayworth 515-699-7043 or Email at clayworth@news.dmreg.com

Fayette County

Submitted by **Steve and Donna Story**



401 Smith Street
West Union, Iowa 52175-1132
USA

Home Phone 1-319-422-3143 or 1-319-484-2603
e-mail dstory@trxinc.com

August 03, 1999

Dear Pat:

We have enclosed a recent news feature in the Fayette County Union (West Union) about the first cemetery project by the Pioneer Cemetery Commission. The article was written before we finished the project (in fact, we will remove two more forms today). We used more than the stated ten bags of concrete- we actually used over 80 bags. The Pioneer Commission has hired a local farmer to mow the 'Boale' Cemetery at Commission expense, and we will order signs at our meeting tomorrow.

We recommended this particular cemetery to the commission first, as it is on a county road intersection and easily accessible, relatively flat, highly visible meaning that our work would be immediately be seen by the neighbors and public, and was desperately in need of work. This has proven to be true, as people in the community have gone out to view it, talk to us about it in the stores and shops, etc. Our work crew is unchanged, as the four men that have spent the most time with us are our age or older, all retired. We started last Wednesday on the second pioneer cemetery project (Dover Public) on Iowa highway 150. This cemetery has few burials in a fairly large space with brush and weeds infringing into the cemetery. The heat was so bad that we worked only one-half day, and will go back again Wed. August 11th.

Yesterday, we worked in a very old cemetery on US 18 west of West Union. It does not qualify as a Pioneer Cemetery, but one of our volunteers is also clerk of the township and has asked us to witch it for unmarked graves. He has a problem as he is not sure where all the burials might be, and burials are still taking place in the cemetery! We have taught another volunteer how to 'witch' or more properly, 'divine', and between the three of us, we found (and double-checked) 24 unmarked burials!! We are about 2/3 done. Of course, Donna also glued broken stones while there. We only worked from 9-12, but got a lot done. This morning, we had a phone call from a lady who plans to be buried there, and she was so happy that we

were working there. This cemetery is mowed, has a new fence, but has the problems of unmarked burials and some broken stones. Everyone traveling busy US 18 yesterday drove past this cemetery, of course, so we had plenty of 'gapers'.

Yes, we do have a life away from cemetery work, but honestly it is taking more of our time than ever. The people working with us are great, and they appreciate the fact that the two of us are in these cemeteries many times before the work crew ever starts, getting things organized.

So, our Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery Commission is 'off and running' and will as long as about five or six of us keep our health. We are really trying to find some younger people that might develop and interest in these projects. We do miss seeing Hugh and you and need to get back to some of the needed work in Jones County. We have been gluing broken stones on an occasional basis at Olin town cemetery. As soon as crops are out, we will 'hit' Sweet and Doll Cemeteries in Jones County.

Pat,

One of the persons helping with a Pioneer Cemetery here in Fayette county is also a poet. We asked him to write a poem about Pioneer Cemeteries and this is what he gave us. You are welcome to share it.

Pioneer Cemeteries

They stand alone neglected
In a sad state of decay:
The pioneer cemeteries
We see along the road today.

They broke up the prairies-
Building roads, their homes and towns;
Now they lay forgotten
On some lonely piece of ground.

The tombstones tell a story-
They just did not survive;
A graveyard filled with markers
Of children - one to five.

Stones lay piled in a corner -
The inscriptions old and worn;
A farmer could not leave them -
He wanted one more row of corn!

In the hills and on the prairies,
Stones once stood in a row;
But now some stones are missing -
Who's buried there we do not know.

Is there no one to protect them?
Who will keep them up today?
Or like the many farmsteads
Will they just pass away?

Merlin Begalske (1999)

The following are excerpts from the story that appeared in the July 28, 1999 edition of *The Fayette County Union* newspaper. Wonderful coverage and story written by Jack Swanson! Fayette County has one of Iowa's most recently established commissions, but the Story's are long-time cemetery restorers who have worked in many burial sites in Jones County where their ancestors' graves are located.

INSIDE FRONT

Making sure stones are all in a row



■ Pioneer Cemetery Commission completes restoration project

By Jack Swanson
 Union Ass't News Editor
 Several days of "witching" and many hours of work have finally paid off for the Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery Commission.

No they didn't find the legendary ghost of Dutton's Cave or Brainard Hollow or Shin Bone Valley, or from any of the other early settlers' sites. What they may have done though is finally placed some of the county's early pioneers in their final resting-places, permanently.

The commission, which was formed last winter to find, research and restore pioneer cemeteries in Fayette County, recently completed their first cemetery restoration project.

The cemetery, now known as Boale's Cemetery, is located about two miles north of West Union in Auburn Township. Taking the first left turn off of Highway 150 as you go north out of West Union and then taking the first right on M Avenue and going about a mile will get you there.

At the Boale's Cemetery lie the graves of at least 70 souls. Among the dead there, lie adventurers, soldiers, children, elderly, farmers, couples, entire families, and others, that now, nobody knows who they really were. As the years past, many of them are just names in the birth or death certificates that rest in the vault of the Fayette County Courthouse. They're not even a shadow in anyone's memories anymore because of the generations that have passed since they first set foot on Fayette County soil.

But there are some people that know about them, and those people are the members of the Pioneer Cemetery Commission, who have now put their gravestones back in place and made their names legible again, if at all possible.

The commission picked the Boale's Cemetery first they said because it was a fairly easy cemetery to start out with, being relatively flat so it could be easily mowed. It is also a highly visible site, sitting on a high rise in the southwest corner of a three-way intersection.

The name Boale was picked for the cemetery because several of the

buried have stones marked with that name. One of those is James Boale, who died March 2, 1863. He was 48 years old.

The first burials were started in the 1850s and the last burial was in 1909, a D. Gray.

Commission member Virgie Bruening first mapped the cemetery in 1992, who noted and marked the standing stones.

The cemetery includes a total of 16 rows of graves, but many of these graves were unmarked when the commission started its task in early summer of restoring the cemetery.

Heading up the restoration was Steve and Donna Story, who have been doing this type of work as a pastime for several years.

Story, a long-time and now former North Fayette High School principal, said he and his wife got started in the cemetery restoration process in Jones County, their home

county, in 1980, while doing genealogy research.

Steve's expertise is in the art of "witching" or "divining" for unmarked graves.

"The popular term is 'witching' but I think 'divining' is a better term," Steve explained, pointing out that there is really nothing magical or bewitching about the process.

Loosely holding two metal rods outstretched in each arm, Steve passes over what has been platted as a row of gravesites. Suddenly, without warning, the rods start to pull together and cross in front of him.

"It's caused by a break in the magnetic flow of the earth's core. Wherever the earth's been disturbed, the wires should cross," he said.

This way they can determine the location and even almost the exact size of a gravesite. Sometimes the

CEMETERY RESTORATION
 continued on pg. B-5

Project volunteers

Among the project volunteers who recently completed restoring the Boale's Cemetery were (kneeling l-r) Donna Story, Steve Story, Mirco Korremans; (standing) Paul Begalske, Merlin Begalske, Don Boie.



Before...

This is what the Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery Commission had to start with when they began the task of restoring the Boale's Cemetery. Many of the stones were buried under several inches of dirt and were broken in several pieces. Ten sacks of cement and a lot of glue were used in the process of putting the stones back in place.



Spreading glue

Pioneer Cemetery Commission members (l-r) Paul Begalske and Donna Story spread a special adhesive on the base of a grave headstone prior to setting the headstone back in place.

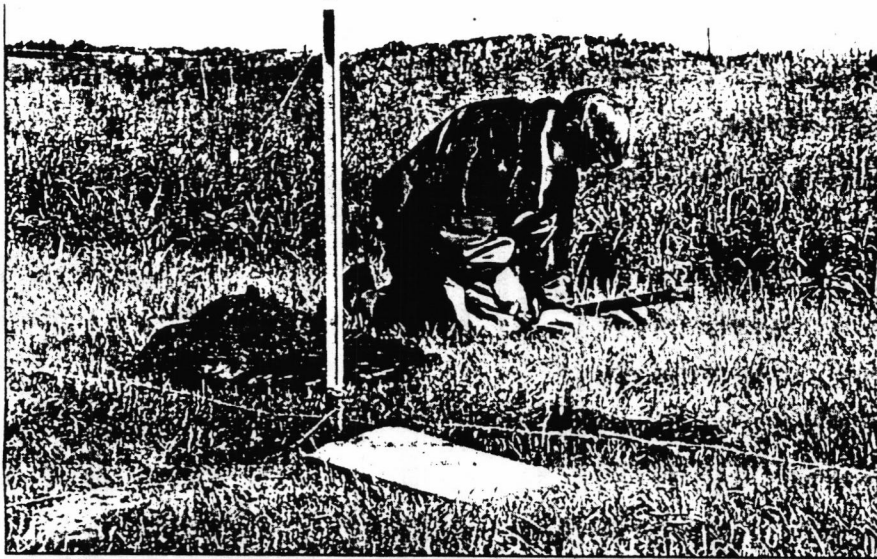
gravestones are found buried a few inches below the dirt that has settled over the broken headstone in the passing years, but a pile of stones in one corner of the abandoned cemetery could also belong to whoever's buried there. Sometimes the stones can be matched up by finding out who's buried around that individual, sometimes not, but the stone, with a person's name is reset by the commission crew.

Sometimes the stones can be reset, using glue and cement. If they can't be set up right again, they are laid flat and slightly elevated to make them more visible.

When asked if there was once a town nearby that would constitute the formation of a cemetery, Story said, "In the early days of the Iowa frontier, farmers weren't spread out as much as they are now. There might have been two or three settlers living in the same mile. Most homesteads averaged 40 to 80 acres. A lot of these early settlers walked up here from Dubuque to stake their claims."

Many of these close-knit settlers, who relied on one another almost as much as they relied on themselves, formed their own little communities.

These cemeteries also have their own stories to tell: from the young mother who died in childbirth, to the siblings that all contracted the same illness and died only days apart, to the young recruit killed in the Civil War, to the first ground breaker who managed to see his twilight years from his homestead in Fayette County. These, and others, all have their final resting-place at the Boale's Cemetery.



Young volunteer

Nick Lauer of West Union was one of the volunteers that helped in the restoration of the Boale's Cemetery. He is shown here preparing the base of a headstone for resetting.



Soldier's grave

The Boale's Cemetery contains the grave of a soldier killed in the Civil War. This is the grave of Thomas J. Cummings, a private in the Iowa Infantry.



Probing for stone

Pioneer Cemetery Commission member Merlin Begalske (left) of West Union uses a metal rod to probe for a buried headstone, while other commission members Paul Begalske and Don Boie, both of Hawkeye, assist in recovering the stone.



Divining

Steve Story is shown "divining" for a grave site at the Boale's Cemetery. When the two steel rods come together, Story knows he has found the outline of a burial. He said that any deep disturbance in ground disturbs the earth's magnetic force. Once the gravesites have been determined, the volunteers look for broken gravestones which are usually found a few inches under the ground at the head of the grave. They do not do any excavating of the graves.

Submitted by Charlotte Marvin

Humboldt County Genealogical Society is a member of SAPIC and one of its most loyal supporters. Its members have placed the SAPIC video, stone repair manuals by Paul Maddy, and copies of SAPIC newsletters in the Humboldt Public Library, as well as their own cemetery books and obituaries. They sponsored a booth at the county fair with "cemeteries" as its theme this year. Having the mayor of the county seat sign a proclamation similar to the one signed by Governor Vilsack brings Cemetery Preservation Month to the attention of local citizens in an effective way. Valerie Ogren of Greene County persuaded the chair of that County Board of Supervisors to do likewise. These are suggestions to keep in mind for the year 2000!

Note: *Charlotte had triple by-pass surgery just 4 days after this picture was taken. She's an amazing lady!*



Humboldt Mayor Steve Samuels signs a proclamation declaring May as Cemetery Preservation Month, a statewide effort. Looking

on are members of the Genealogical Society, from left: Carol Fortner, Earl Vought and Charlotte Marvin.

May is Cemetery Preservation Month

The Humboldt County Genealogical Society, along with the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries (SAPIC), proclaim May as Cemetery Preservation Month. It is our Society's concern that our county cemeteries are kept in good condition.

Many older markers are in need of repair in Humboldt and over the state of Iowa. The SAPIC is a state organization that encourages everyone to take the initiative and help wherever they can to restore and repair any cemetery that needs to be improved.

Vandals have destroyed cemeteries all over the state of Iowa. It is also a concern that people have access to older cemeteries that are not

each of Iowa's counties to create a County Cemetery Commission. The focus of these commissions was to rescue untended pioneer graves and cemeteries and to take responsibility for the upkeep of such sites.

Cemeteries are, or at least should be, cared for by everyone who cares about their city and their heritage and ancestry.

A durable sign for an abandoned cemetery can be purchased from the Iowa Prison Industries, at a reasonable cost. The Humboldt County Genealogical Society has much information in their section at the Humboldt Public Library.

There are records of all the county cemeteries and where they are located. The Genealogical Society has walked two cemeteries, the Union Cemetery at Liver-

more is a video that shows step-by-step the process of repairing and resetting old markers.

The library also has copies of obituaries, dating from the late 1800s to 1999, along with many funeral folders. If you think you might have a relative buried in Humboldt County, you might find it in one of these books, and find out which cemetery that person is buried in.

The SAPIC is encouraging all Iowa counties to take part in preserving all cemeteries. Newsletters from the SAPIC can be found in the library, for anyone to read. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in restoration and maintaining pioneer and

all cemeteries. Cost for membership is \$10 a year.

The Genealogical Society plans to have this theme for their fair booth this year. Come see what the Society has to offer. Books, obituaries, pictures, etc. will be on display.

Any help anyone can give the Society will be appreciated. Also, everyone is welcome to attend any of their meetings, which are held at the library on the first Wednesday of the month, at 9:30 a.m. in the Springvale Room.

For more information about this project, please call one of the following committee members: Charlotte Marvin, Carol Fortner, Bill Verbrugge, or Earl Vought.

Thanks to the counties that promoted SAPIC by allowing articles to their local newspapers during May, Cemetery Appreciation Month!



Elmer Thomas of Columbus Junction stands next to the new Tennessee Cemetery marble plaque erected recently. River Products donated funds for the plaque and Ideal Ready Mix donated the cement.—Gazette photo

River Products, Ideal Ready Mix aid Tennessee Cemetery effort

By John Carpenter
Gazette Staff

A new marble plaque commemorating the early pioneers who settled in this area has been erected at the Tennessee cemetery. River Products donated the funds for the plaque, and the cement was donated by Ideal Ready Mix.

The plaque reads:

As you visit this cemetery, let your heritage be remembered as a memory, treasure and blessing.

This cemetery is named in respect of families, who in the early 1840's, moved here from Tennessee over the issue of slavery. The Andrew Jackson Duncan family and others from their former community traveled here by covered wagon, railroad and riverboat. Others who made the enduring trip were the Acheson, Blair, Bright, Calhoun, Cotter, Edwards, Johnson, Orr, Robertson, Stapp, and Tedford families.

Although there were burials as early as 1842, it was not until the Joseph Tedford family donated the land in 1857 that it was officially recognized as a cemetery.

The religious faith that bonded these families was the Associated Church of North America. In 1912, the church was sold to the Free Meth-

odist Church congregation of Columbus City.

Let us maintain and care for this cemetery with pride and respect in its natural setting as it was originally established.—1999

Sixty genetically selected walnut trees were planted at the cemetery in 1999. It is hoped that the F.F.A. and other organizations can eventually derive some income from these trees.

Wildflowers have been planted between the monuments. The F.F.A. is growing additional wildflowers in their new quonset nursery for futher plantings at the cemetery.

Prairie grass has been seeded several times, and there is now evidence that some is growing. "According to all of the research papers that I have read, the experts say that it is important to be patient when trying to grow prairie grass," said Dean Gipple. New tiling has been completed this week which should help the growth of the grass and flowers.

"Becky Quigley and other teachers walk their students to the cemetery to study our history," said Gipple, "and you need to see the enthusiasm in the students' faces to appreciate the importance of this renovation."

The Greene County Genealogical Society has graciously extended an invitation to SAPIC to have its January, 2000 meeting in Jefferson, Iowa. The Jones County Pioneer Cemetery Commission has invited SAPIC to east central Iowa in July, 2000. Thanks to both of these groups for hosting a SAPIC meeting.

8 10/20/00

JONES COUNTY

Submitted by Rosalie Ahrendsen

The Jones County Cemetery Commission met on June 23, 1999 at the Center Junction Fire Station. Reports were given on the progress of restoration efforts at the Nicols/North Mineral, Sweet, Olin, Grafft, and an unnamed cemetery on Richard Smith farm. Rosalie attended a cemetery conference in Des Moines on June 19. SAPIC has been invited to hold its July, 2000 meeting in Jones County. Ron Ruess, co-chair of the commission along with Rosalie, reported that the county had a culvert installed to allow access to the Cherry Grove Cemetery that was restored by the Olin FFA in 1997. The Olin FFA Chapter members are now working in the Grafft Cemetery.

MAHASKA COUNTY

Submitted by Jo Vernooy

Articles about Cemetery Appreciation Month appeared in the *Oskaloosa Herald* newspaper and the *Bussey Flyer* newsletter. The Mahaska Commission continues to receive excellent news coverage of its activities.

Tuesday, May 11, 1999

OSKALOOSA HERALD

Cemetery crusaders work to preserve local history

By TOM HARDESTY
The Oskaloosa Herald

May has been designated "Cemetery Appreciation Month" thanks to a proclamation signed April 22 by Gov. Vilsack during a ceremony to honor the memories and resting places of Iowa's pioneer ancestors.

Attending the ceremony were Jo Vernooy, Benjamin Mayer and Judy Swanson, three members of the Mahaska County Commission for the Preservation of Pioneer Cemeteries, as well as Mabel Daniels of the Keo-Mah Genealogical Society.

In keeping with the occasion was a quotation from William Gladstone (1809-1897), three-time prime minister of England: "Show me the manner in which a nation or community cares for its dead, and I will measure with mathematical exactness the tender mercies of its people, their respect for the laws of the land, and their loyalty to high ideals."

"This is something I truly believe in," said Jo Vernooy, chairman of the Mahaska County Commission.

Also present April 22 were members of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries, an organization which was established in 1996 to focus attention on old cemeteries, particularly those

in which six or fewer burials have occurred in the past 50 years.

"Such sites are often untended," Vernooy said, "with no one taking responsibility for their upkeep. Since the state association was formed, they have been instrumental in supporting legislation designed to make the proper elected officials responsible for the care and maintenance of these pioneer graves and cemeteries."

Crusading for cemeteries is not new to Vernooy. Only a couple of years ago, farming was being conducted over gravesites at Olivet Cemetery. She worked with Scott Township trustees and later with the county attorney's office and the board of supervisors to get the farming stopped.

"Grass was sown where the crops had been," she said, "and the entire cemetery was fenced in. I feel that the dead deserve undisturbed rest."

Membership in the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries (SAPIC) is open to all persons who are interested in rescuing pioneer burial sites in Iowa. The wide interests and varied backgrounds of volunteers is evidence that many people are interested in cemetery preservation, although it might not seem to be your average person's hobby. For more information, call 1-319-293-3899.

"Musco and Marv Smith signs, as well as the Daily Trust, are great supporters of the Pioneer Cemetery Commission," Vernooy said, "and I would like to publicly thank them for their dedication to the community and the county. Our mission, as it is printed on our letterhead, is 'Preserving the Past for Future Generations.' All those who help us are part of that mission."

Vernooy pointed out that a bill adopted by the 1996 Iowa Legislature allows for the board of supervisors in each of Iowa's 99 counties to create County Cemetery Commissions that would report directly to them.

"A provision in the law also seeks to equalize the tax base for cemetery support," she said, "and to reduce the present unfairness which forces a township with low population to financially support all the cemeteries within its boundaries."

SAPIC has been very active this year in the Iowa Legislature, according to Vernooy, who added that "special thanks go to Sen. Andy McKean, 28th District, who was so helpful in getting these bills passed."

House File 472, which became Section 558.69 and 566.35 of the 1999 Code of Iowa, has given those interested in the preservation of Pioneer Cemeteries some support



Restoring the long overgrown DeLong Cemetery, one of many pioneer cemeteries located in Mahaska County, required sometimes heroic efforts by the volunteers who pitted their best efforts against nature gone to seed and neglect. After boundaries were hacked out, setting fence posts to protect the cemetery was the next job. Refreshments and fellowship came during the

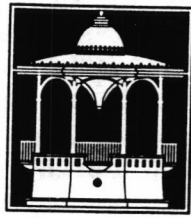
in the areas of reporting of private burial sites and for "reasonable ingress and egress" to

burial sites.

"Those disobeying these laws may have a visit from law

enforcement authorities

See CEMETERIES



Old cemetery sparks friendships

Living can learn from the dead

By TOM HARDESTY
The Oskaloosa Herald

By following her interest in the past, Alice Veen of Woodward has become a full-fledged family historian and something more than that.

These days, she is beating the brush to scare up other people's interest in old cemeteries which in so many places are forgotten, lost from view and completely overgrown with poison ivy.

As a descendant of the Edward and Rachel DeLong family in Mahaska County, her

great-great-great-grandparents, Veen has worked with a group of equally concerned relatives and friends in the brush-cutting, fencing and restoration of the long neglected DeLong-DeLashmutt Cemetery, a Pioneer Cemetery.

"My initial interest was purely for our family," the homemaker said. "I've always been interested in family history, but I never had time to follow my interest before this. Now, both my children are in school. I went to visit the cemetery a few years ago — and it was so sad, with cattle in there. The Hoyt and DeLong families have worked together on this. They're the kind of people that will go to bat for you."

Veen's connection to Mahaska County is her late father, Keith Hoyt, originally from here. She spent the past winter trying to

learn the life stories of the people whose names appear on the often broken tombstones still hidden under grass 3 feet high.

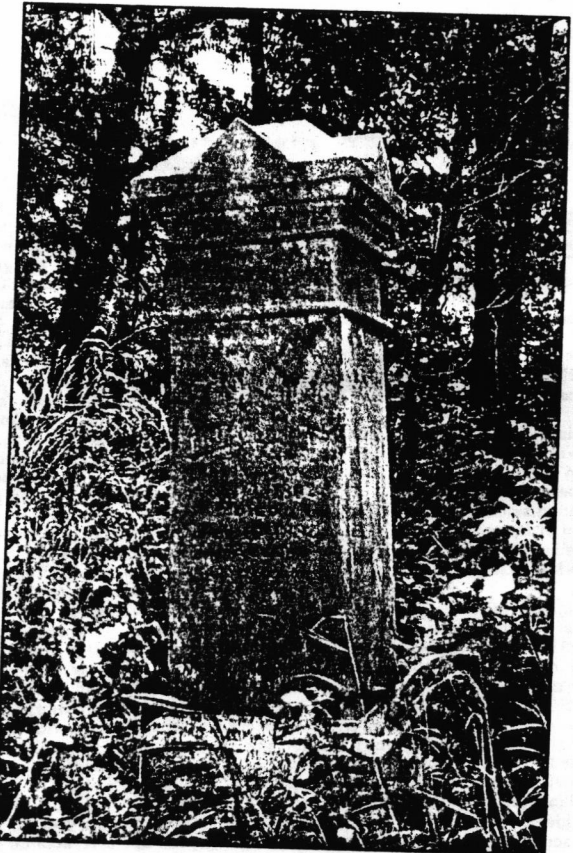
"Their stories interested me just as much as my own family's stories," Veen said. "They endured so much. It's a shame they are forgotten."

Only last year, Veen learned about the existence of the recently organized Pioneer Cemetery Commission, headed by Jo Vernooy of Leighton.

"I didn't know any of my DeLong relatives," Veen said, "but pretty soon I had a dozen names I could call on."

One look at the broken grave-stones hidden in a thicket is enough to set most people thinking about what must have hap-

See CEMETERY, Page 2



Herald Photos By Tom Hardesty

HIDDEN HISTORY. (Above) In the DeLong-DeLashmutt Cemetery, a tall monument marks the graves of early settlers Van and Martha DeLashmutt. The worn lettering is hard to read. He was: "born in Va., Jan. 4, 1802, died Feb. 16, 1882." (Left) Nearby, several flat broken stones are propped up against a tree. The smallest stone, on the right, is the marker for little Mary Jackson who died Nov. 1, 1853, at the age of three months and eight days. Except for the names of her parents in the inscription, nothing else is known about her — not even her final resting place.



Section B October 30, 1998

Office 515-753-6611
Fax 515-753-7221
Toll-Free 1-800-542-7893

Family reunited after 133 years

LAMOILLE (AP) — James Benson is back with his loved one almost 133 years after his death.

A memorial service will be held Sunday at the small Marshall County cemetery where his remains were moved last summer. He now shares a plot a tombstone with his wife and kids.

The Benson family migrated to Iowa but he was separated from them at his son acquired a parcel of Marshall County farmland after the Civil War.

Benson was in his 60s when he died in Wisconsin in 1866, six years after he arrived in America from England.

His wife and four children are buried at Elmwood Cemetery in Lamolille.

Two years ago, family members used Civil War records and historical documents to track down his grave which is about northeast of Dubuque in Willow Springs Township, Wis.

Exhuming the body required more research and legal permission.

The heirs agreed James Benson should be reunited with his family.

WATERLOO-CEDAR FALLS COURIER SUNDAY, JULY

Times-Republican

CENTRAL IOWA

TODAY

Inside...

The Iowa Appeals Court refuses to tamper with latest conviction.

Page 3B

Marshalltown, Iowa

'Forgotten people' rest in unnoticed cemetery



Staff Photo by Chuck Friend

Kathy Paul of Laurel (left) and Bev Cross of Baxter search for information on an old tombstone at the Marshall County Home Cemetery.

By CHUCK FRIEND
T-R Staff Writer

Thousands of motorists travel west of Marshalltown on Highway 30 everyday. However as they speed along, most of them are unaware they are passing a peaceful cemetery which was created for Marshall County's "forgotten people."

This original "potter's field" (a burial grounds for paupers or unknown people) lies virtually unnoticed along the north side of Highway 30 about 8.5 miles west of Marshalltown.

In fact, very few residents of Marshall County are even aware a Marshall County Home cemetery ever existed.

The quiet, yet forlorn, little burial plot sits approximately one-half mile west of the old care facility building site in a corner of the 320-acre site which is owned by the county.

One reason very few county residents and travelers know it is there, is because there are no signs or markers to serve as a memorial to those unknown people.

Two people who know about this cemetery are Kathy Paul of Laurel and Bev Cross of Baxter, who currently are walking and recording the history of all of the cemeteries in Marshall County.

The two are members of the Central Iowa Genealogical Society. Their findings from the 60 cemeteries in Marshall County will be sent to the Iowa Genealogical Society where they will be included in a

Transportation before anything could be placed there now. It still could be looked into."

An article written for the Times-Republican in 1978 reported 31 burials in the potter's field from 1896 through 1898.

Paul indicated the pair have currently obtained a list of 49 people who have reportedly been buried there. The earliest burial they have found dates back to 1896 and the latest was in 1945, although there are no tombstones to prove these facts.

"A group of five or six ladies helped us sort through the infirmary record books when the care facility closed in October 1997. We had the permission of the administration to research the books for our records," Paul remarked.

"We are combining and proofing all of the lists we were able to obtain. In the event a public marker would ever be erected, all of the names would be available to be included," Cross said. "If anyone knows of a friend or relative who was buried there, I would appreciate hearing from them," she added.

Cross can be reached by writing to Box 93, Baxter, Iowa 50028.

Paul noted she was told by the former caretaker of the care facility he felt the cemetery could have been in a different location at one point in time. "He said his father told him that graves were found during the construction of the buildings at the care facility site," Paul said.

Paul and Cross have used various

in the potter's field including insanity (12 times), sickness, old age and poor health, leg amputation, St. Vitus Dance, frozen toes, typhoid and malaria.

Some less scientific causes of death were as follows: "poverty brought on by a rupture," "pregnancy (listed 22 times also as in a "family way" or "delicate health,") "fits," "an old soldier," "left leg cut off by a train" and "no work — Democratic administration."

Also listed in the 1978 article among the deceased, was a tramp with a \$6 pension from the Civil War and a resident who was shot in the shoulder.



Staff Photo by Chuck Friend

The hands of Kathy Paul clearly show how information is gained through aluminum foil rubbing.

Although the complete list of those who were buried in the potter's field is not yet complete,

PAGE COUNTY

Ron Rope wrote on 7-12-99:

Please find a copy of our latest newsletter of happenings at Polesley Cemetery. Maybe this would be helpful to others seeking help with their cemetery. We started out small and with good communication with other people it has () to be very successful. Our future is to keep improving with one project at a time.

Note: Ron attended the July SAPP meeting at Clarinda and made meaningful contributions to the discussions. His devotion to this cemetery demonstrates what one person who truly cares can accomplish.

Polesley ♥ Cemetery

Hello,

This is the first newsletter of the Polesley Cemetery Committee. As many of you know, a group organized in February of 99 for long overdue improvements and preservation in the Polesley Cemetery. It was decided that a new wider driveway was needed, and that was done. A fund drive was launched to install white fiber glass fencing in the front of the Cemetery. The money was raised and it is to be installed by Memorial Day "99."

Future plans are for an overhead entry sign, trees planted in front, possibly an annual cleanup day, information center for plots, and also signs on roads leading to the Cemetery. Donations are needed for these projects which will take time to do, but can be completed if we all try to work together.

If you have any ideas, suggestions, or comments, please contact or attend the annual meeting which will be held on November 9, 1999 at 7:00 p.m. at Yorktown City Hall.

Sincerely yours,
Polesley Cemetery Committee

FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE
A GOOD CHOICE FOR MEMORIALS
ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS WELCOME

Send donations or comments to:

Polesley Cemetery Fund
P.O. Box 177
Yorktown, IA 51656
%Ron Rope phone 712 542-3842

or

Elsie Annan
RR 3
Clarinda, IA 51632
phone-712 542-2451

POLK COUNTY

An article in the *Des Moines Register* May 30, 1999 edition about SAPIC member, Larry Davis.

RESURRECTING GRAVESTONES

Larry Davis saves cemeteries and pieces of history by repairing tombstones.

By JANE BURNS
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

Menlo, Ia. — On a hillside cemetery in Guthrie County, a worn headstone sits perfectly upright in the soft ground.

The name has worn off. So has the date. Just one sentence remains to mark the life of the person buried there.

Gone, but not forgotten.

Whoever that was hasn't been forgotten because of Larry Davis. The Des Moines man never knew the person and didn't even know the cemetery existed until recently. Yet he tends to older stones like that of the nameless soul because nobody else does.

Davis has a one-man operation he calls Pioneer Gravestone Repair Company. Rural cemeteries are the legal responsibilities of township trustees, and they hire Davis to repair stones as old as Iowa's statehood.

"The belief was that it was the responsibility of the family to take care of the plots and the gravestones," he said. "But it's not the law. With about 90 percent of these old graves, the family has died or left the area. There's nobody to contact to see if they want to repair it."

Davis' memorials to these early Iowans aren't made with flowers or wreaths; they're made with epoxy, caulk and sod.

"If the stone is leaning, I'll straighten it," he said. "If the stone has fallen, I'll reset it. If it's broken, I'll fix it."

Davis, 60, has been in the business for six years. The career change came when he lost his job as director of administration for the Soil and Water Conservation Society in a company reorganization.

With time on his hands and an interest in genealogy, the Nebraska native headed for Iowa cemeteries in which relatives were buried. He saw the disrepair of the cemeteries, which inspired the idea for a new career.

"People would ask what I was doing now, and when I'd say I'd started a little company called the Pioneer Gravestone Repair Company, I could



BILL NEIBERGALL/THE REGISTER

This tombstone in a cemetery near Menlo had broken in half. Larry Davis repaired it with epoxy.

always tell who my friends were by their answer," he said. "My friends would say, 'Well, I think that's fascinating, tell me more about it.' Some of the others, there would be a moment of silence and they'd say, 'How's the family?'"

Davis admits he's taken a cut in pay, but the work is intriguing — and peaceful. Earlier this month, he worked at the Glendon Cemetery north of Menlo with red-tailed hawks hovering

and geese honking from a nearby pond. The cemetery is split in half by a path, and it's clear on which half Davis has completed his work.

He reset three headstones marked "infant" near a family plot. An 1880s granite stone for Ida List and her sister had toppled over, and Davis repaired the three pieces that make up

“One of the sadder things is the infants' and children's graves. Some families will have rows of headstones for ages 6 months through 7 years, and you can just figure a disease went through the entire community. **”** — Larry Davis

Article from the July 25 edition of the *Waterloo Courier* submitted by Mike Magee



AP PHOTO

Jeff and Dawn Bulechek stand at the cemetery Dawn found while mowing hay last fall at the Atlee Yoder residence in Kalona. The brother and sister, along with their 4-H club, have restored the old cemetery.

4-H Club refurbishes 1850s' cemetery

KALONA (AP) — All Dawn Bulechek wanted to do was mow some hay. Instead, the 15-year-old uncovered some history.

What Bulechek found was a cemetery dating back more than a century. And with research, she even found some descendants of those buried there.

Bulechek said she was working in a field with her father at a residence in Kalona when they spotted an old wire fence lying in the high grass.

"I wanted to go investigate," she said.

Her closer look led to the discovery of a cemetery measuring 48 feet by 48 feet, with the oldest stone dated 1856. Four adults, several children and a couple of unmarked graves make up the Wertz cemetery's history.

Bulechek, her brother and the rest

of their 4-H Club, the Deer Creek Ramblers, have been removing weeds and cleaning headstones since May. They recently finished putting a new vinyl fence around the cemetery, thanks to many donations.

The forgotten children's graves were one of the main reasons Bulechek became interested in restoring the cemetery.

"That wasn't really fair to them," she said.

Bulechek said she now wants to raise more money to replace the missing headstones at the unmarked graves.

After talking to a local historian to find out the history of the people buried there, Bulechek called some of their descendants.

One such descendent is Sam Miller of Iowa City. He said he knew about the cemetery and had

wanted to fix it up, but didn't have the money.

"When this 4-H Club got interested in this type of project, we really got busy and did something," said Miller, whose great-grandfather was a homesteader in the area.

Researching the cemetery, Bulechek found out that the first Amish settlers west of the Mississippi are buried there and that the first Amish person born in the eastern half of Iowa is buried somewhere in the timber near the cemetery, but she doesn't know exactly where.

Bulechek's great-great-uncle also is interred in the cemetery.

Miller said he appreciates the time and energy that people have put into fixing up the cemetery.

"You can't imagine what it was worth to me," Miller said. "It's sure more pleasant to go to."

LEE COUNTY

Submitted by Lois Heine Greene, coordinator for the Lee County GenWeb project

An article by Julie Peitz in a Lee County newspaper (possibly Fort Madison) details the possible discovery of the "Sugar Creek Encampment" Mormon Cemetery located one mile east of Sugar Creek on county road J72 by Mike Foley, an organizer of the Iowa Mormon Trails Association wagon train re-enactment across Iowa. Foley, along with SAPIC member Loren Horton of Iowa City, believes the site to have significant archeological and historical finds. Shirley Schermer, Burials Program Director at the Office of the State Archaeologist, has paid a brief visit to the site and has had conversations with Mr. Foley. Ms. Schermer feels that Regular "Phase I" archaeological testing is needed. The site is near the town of Montrose, Iowa.

An article by Brian Plath tells of another historical find in a Lee County Cemetery -- the West Point City cemetery that contains the grave of Samuel Clemens's great-grandmother, Jane Montgomery Casey. She died in 1844 at the age of 83. The West Point City Council has discussed making a path to the grave site more accessible by installing a culvert or building a bridge over a ditch that divides the cemetery.

VAN BUREN COUNTY

Submitted by Pat Shaw

A Bonaparte Cemetery Tour, sponsored by the Bonaparte Main Street, Inc. and The Bonaparte Cemetery Association was held June 5, 1999. Re-enactments of the lives of seventeen Van Buren County pioneers interred in this cemetery were presented by local residents, along with some vocal renditions.

Van Buren County Auditor, Jon Finney who is a genealogist, is researching county records to determine the ownership of all 108 cemeteries in the county. Mr. Finney actively promotes preservation of many types of historical sites within the county. What would we give to have a county official like this in every county in Iowa? The Van Buren County Genealogical Society is assisting Mr. Finney in his efforts.

Ella Ream McDermott from Chariton, her sister, her niece, and Pat Shaw visited the Alfrey Cemetery near Farmington on July 29. Ella sent well-written letters to the *Van Buren County Register* and the *Farmington Newspaper* regarding the neglected condition of this site. Her persistence demonstrates the effectiveness of such actions by descendants.

The *Van Buren County Register* also published news articles about Cemetery Appreciation Month.

MONONA COUNTY

Larry DuVal, another historically-minded public official, is doing research in preparation for making a presentation to the Board of Supervisors on the creation of a pioneer cemetery commission in Monona County. Due to his inquiry and at the suggestion of Valerie Ogren, a list of those counties with commissions has been printed in this newsletter and will be on the SAPIC web site shortly. A copy of a presentation that was made to the Jones County Supervisors was sent to Larry.

Dear Abby: With all the discussion of the difficulties that might occur because of the Y2K problem, it's easy for most people to assume that it's only a computer problem —but it isn't.

Thirty years ago, when my mother died, my father purchased cemetery lots and headstones for our entire family. My headstone reads, "Born 1939, Died 19()."

Abby, I'm sure you can see the problem. If I live beyond the last day of December, I'll have to have that headstone refilled and recut with "Died 20()."
DONALD SCHAFFER, SAN DIEGO

Dear Donald: Consider yourself blessed to have such a problem. Why not add a line? For example: "19() ... to be continued." Or, "Just couldn't leave. Stuck around until 20()." With a sense of humor, the possibilities are endless.

The Chicora Foundation in South Carolina reports that police dealt with vandalism in the Patterson Cemetery in Loris, SC by treating it like the felony that it was. They documented the crime scene and collected evidence. This quick action led to the arrest of two youths responsible for the vandalism. Every community should learn from Loris. The way to deal with cemetery vandalism is to confront it, make sure the vandals are caught and prosecuted, and then recover damages. The Chicora Foundation assisted the community with stone repairs. The full account (with photos) is available at: <http://www.chicora.org/Current%20projects.htm>

State Association for the Preservation of
Iowa Cemeteries
c/o IGS P.O. Box 7735
Des Moines, IA 50322-7735

Davis, Larry
5716 Kingman Ave.
Des Moines IA 50311

The Recording of a Cemetery

Today we walked where others walked
On a lonely, windswept hill;
Today we talked where others cried
For Loved Ones whose lives are stilled.

Today our hearts were touched
By graves of tiny babies;
Snatched from the arms of loving kin,
In the heatbeak of the ages.

Today we saw where the grandparents lay
In the last sleep of their time;
Lying under the trees and clouds -
Their beds kissed by the sun and wind.

Today we wondered about an unmarked spot;
Who lies beneath this hollowed ground?
Was it a babe, child, young or old?
No indication could be found.

Today we saw where Mom and Dad lay.
We had been here once before
On a day we'd all like to forget,
But will remember forever more.

Today we recorded for kith and kin
The graves of ancestors past;
To be treasured for generations hence,
A record we hope will last.

Cherish it, my friend; preserve it, my friend,
For stones sometimes crumble to dust
And generations of folks yet to come
Will be grateful for your trust.

--Thelma Greene Reagan

