

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 #5 Issue #3

JULY, 2000

No Stone Unturned.....

The leaves of corn wave gently in the soft Iowa breeze. It will be a good crop this year. This year, the rains have come in sufficient quantities to insure a profitable crop. The corn is tall, the tassles will be forming soon, the ears be full, and will hang in larger numbers on the sturdy stalks. This year, as in every year, a few fields of corn for which the great state of Iowa is so well-known, will have special elements deep in their fertile soil. Will these elements enhance the crops of corn and bring especially large profits for the enterprising farmers who planted them? Perhaps. For most of the readers of this newsletter, the "elements" represent the ultimate in disgust and revulsion, for they are the bones, bodies, and caskets of early Iowa pioneers. Pioneers whose burial sites deserve respect and reverence, but who have, instead, become the victims of apathy, neglect, and desecration. Because no one cared, they were allowed to be overgrown with weeds, magnanimously "cleaned up" by the adjacent landowner, then plowed and planted for his profit. Maybe he let his hogs or cattle in for a few years to hasten the demise of the cemetery with their destructive activities. Usually, the fence was allowed to fall down so the perimeter of the site became undefined. Still, no one seemed to care, so the farmer slowly continued to systematically and intentionally destroy this historic and sacred place. Once in awhile, someone would comment, "I remember an old cemetery in that area. What happened to it? Where was it exactly?" In the local coffee shop, people would shake their heads sadly. Only a few of the very old remembered. They would have been told about it by their grandparents.

Soon, no one will be sure it was ever there at all. The deed is finally done. It is completely obliterated. The farmer is "home free." He will say that it was already being farmed when he bought the property and he had no idea it was a cemetery. He will say that he has been paying taxes on it, so it's his to do with as he pleases. What he's really saying, though, is, "Who cares?"

This is an election year; find out who is running for county supervisor, state representative or senator, and township trustees positions in your area. If they are scheduled to appear in an open forum, attend and ask them what their views are on historical preservation. Ask your local newspaper to print their comments.

SAPIC members and others who attended the July meeting at Edinburgh Pioneer Village in Jones County will no doubt agree that our hosts, the Jones County Pioneer Cemetery Commission and the Jones County Historical Society, made us feel very welcome. We met in the Society's newest acquisition, a railroad depot that stood for many years in Anamosa. We were provided with a sumptuous brunch prepared by Cindy Gunther and Margaret Tallman. Several other Jones County citizens were present for the meeting and led a tour to the beautiful Johnstontown, Mineral Creek, and Cherry Grove Cemeteries.

Thanks, Jones County!!

The next SAPIC meeting will be held at the IGS conference in Marshalltown, Iowa on Sat., October 7 at 7:00 a.m. There will be no breakfast items at the meeting. SAPIC will sponsor a session at the conference at 1:15.

SAPIC OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President: Pat Shaw
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Page County Conservation Board Naturalist
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Clarinda, IA 51632 712-542-3864

Mary Dodson, Board of Trustees
309 S. Dewey
Osceola, IA 50213-1402 515-342-4871

Jo Vernooy, Board of Trustees, Chairperson of
Mahaska Co Comm for the Preservation of
Pioneer Cemeteries
1240 235th St.
Leighton, IA 50143 515-673-8122

Loren N. Horton, Board of Trustees
3367 Hanover Ct.
Iowa City, IA 52245

WHERE TO GET PROBES

Agri-Drain
340th St.
Adair, IA 50002
1-800-232-4742
Sizes range from 4 1/2' - 8'. Start at
\$18.50.

Paul Rohrbacher, blacksmith
14562 Hwy 38
Monticello, IA 52310
319-465-6369

WHERE TO GET EPOXY

FL-400 Liquid Nails, Construction Grade
Menards or most hardware
stores/lumber yards

3-M 1838 B/A TAN EPOXY
GENEX
1700 2nd Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50314
515-266-4656

GranQuartz I.P.
P.O. Box 33569
Decatur, GA 30033
1-800-458-6223 <http://www.granquartz.com>

Check with Jo Vernooy (address above) for
another good source of epoxy.

WHERE TO GET SIGNS

Iowa Prison Industries
Box B Anamosa, IA 52205
1-800-336-5863
Ask for Tammy Deseberg

Iowa Prairie Network
402-571-6230

SAPIC MEETING MINUTES
9 July 2000
Edinburgh Pioneer Village, Jones County, IA

The July meeting of S.A.P.I.C. was held at Edinburgh Pioneer Village in Jones County, IA. President Pat Shaw called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. There were 22 members and guests present.

The minutes of the April, 2000 meeting were read and approved with 2 corrections in spelling. Motion made to approve by Mike Magee, seconded by Calvin McVay. Motion approved by voice vote.

President Shaw read the treasurer's report, in the absence of Treasurer Valerie Ogren. Motion made by Calvin McVay to approve the treasurer's report, seconded by Mike Magee. Motion approved by voice vote.

President Pat Shaw reported that governor Vilsack had signed the Proclamation declaring May Cemetery Month. Although he did not have a public signing, he sent the Proclamation to President Shaw for her records.

Pat suggested everyone should contact their elected officials, asking for their views on cemetery preservation, then possibly publish their views in their local newspapers.

President Shaw stated a SAPIC member had copied the S.A.P.I.C. newsletters at no charge and had offered to do it again. She added, deserves a big thank you for undertaking this chore.

President Shaw suggested we work to get the words "abandoned cemetery" removed from the Iowa Code, as there is no such thing as "abandoned cemeteries." These are neglected cemeteries but not "abandoned." Contact your legislators and request this be done.

President Shaw reported that she had visited the web site on the Internet for Iowa Code 1999 supplement and there had been 38 hits on it already. She suggested anyone interested in this, to visit the web site.

She also presented a bill for \$35.00 for the registration of our Domain Name WWW.SAPIC.ORG for our web site. This is to prevent anyone else from using our web site name. Mike Magee made a motion to pay this bill, seconded by Calvin McVay. Motion approved by voice vote.

President Shaw announced that Sally Youngquist would be assisting Pat Palmer on the website. If you have not seen the new format you will be surprised when you bring the web site up. The site has been getting many hits. It now has a meter that track traffic to it.

In the absence of Loren Horton, President Shaw read the by laws of our organization that we had voted to change. This will be the third and final reading of these changes. The final vote will be held at the October 2000 meeting at the Iowa Valley Community College in Marshalltown, IA.

President Shaw reminded everybody, we need to work on the grave registration of all the pioneer cemeteries in Iowa. This was one of the many reasons our organization (SAPIC) was started and there is much work to be done yet on this project. So please get your Pioneer Cemetery Registrations in to her as soon as possible.

There will be a cemetery conference held in Charles City, IA September 8 & 9. This is not a SAPIC project but Pat Shaw will represent SAPIC at this conference.

IGS Conference will be October 6-7, 2000 in Marshalltown, IA. President Pat Shaw, Marilyn Finck, and Glenn Pollack will give a presentation at 1:15 PM on Saturday, October 7. Our SAPIC meeting will be held at 7:00 AM on October 7, 2000 at

Mike Magee will be giving a presentation on television concerning the care of pioneer cemeteries and repairing of broken gravestones. This will be on station KWWL.

The State Historical Society has requested copies of all of SAPIC newsletters. Pat Shaw will make copies of past newsletters and send one set each to State Historical Society in Des Moines, State Historical Library in Iowa City, IGS Library, and Allen County Indiana Library.

President Shaw reported on a catalog of Epoxy and other cemetery materials from GranQuartz Tools & Equipment Co. Telephone 320-274-2061; Internet addresses [HTTP://WWW.GranQuartz.Com](http://WWW.GranQuartz.Com). Following was an open discussion on the preferred ways of repairing stones and monuments.

Gene Davis gave a report on cemetery progress in Benton County.

Don Droeszler reported on dowsing to find unmarked graves.

Carol Botten reported that Chickasaw County has formed a cemetery commission.

President Pat Shaw reported that she had been advised that EBay would not sell cemetery-related items on the Internet. This is great news to everyone who cares about cemeteries.

President Shaw asked to please get county reports, submitted in writing, to her for newsletter.

President stated she thought maybe only one person has been nominated for the Robert Carter award this year. Be thinking about whom you will nominate next year. The rules for this nomination can be obtained from Pat Shaw.

Cindy Gunther and Margaret Tallman really out did themselves in serving a great lunch. We all express our appreciation to them.

Steve Story made motion to adjourn, seconded by Mary Dodson. Motion approved. Meeting adjourned at 12:00 PM.

Following the meeting many members were taken on a tour of Johnson Town, North Mineral (Doll Farm), and Cherry Grove cemeteries. These are all Pioneer Cemeteries that have been completely repaired and cleaned up. The workers who worked in these cemeteries are to be commended for their fine work. After the tour several members met in Anamosa for dinner.

MANY THANKS TO ETHEL McVAY FOR TAKING THE MINUTES AT THE JULY, 2000 MEETING! Calvin and Ethel never miss a SAPIC meeting; their dependability and loyalty make them among SAPIC's most valuable members.

Treasurer's Report:

A word of explanation: I am keeping an accounting of the amount which had been held in savings and have added Life Memberships and Memorials to it; however, all the money is in ONE account at the bank.

Combined Balance on Hand 30 Jun 2000

\$4330.84

Respectfully submitted,
Valerie Ogren, Treasurer
108 N. Oak
Jefferson IA 50129-1841
Ph 1-515-386-4784
E-mail: <vjogren@netins.net>

07 July 2000

If you'd like to host SAPIC in January, 2001, please let Pat Shaw or any other officer or board member know. We need a meeting room for 20-30 people. Although the hosts have usually provided drinks and refreshments, that is not a requirement. Winneshiek County will host SAPIC in April, 2001 and Poweshiek County will do so in July.

Mike McGinnis, a person who provides a news service to 50-75 radio stations in Iowa, interviewed Pat Shaw on May 27. Radio spots about SAPIC were aired over Memorial Day weekend. Several responses were received as a result.

Donna Story, an avid cemetery worker in Jones and Fayette Counties, is one of the organizers of a style show featuring century-old dresses that is held at the Montauk historic site in Clermont. The show impressed First Lady Christie Vilsack so much that she arranged a showing at Terrace Hill in June.

Iowa Code section 566.32 provides that "A person who knowingly and without authorization removes, destroys, or otherwise disturbs a burial site for which the person received notification under section 566.31 commits a simple misdemeanor."

Criminal mischief is defined in Iowa Code section 716.1 as "Any damage, defacing, alteration, or destruction of tangible property" that is done "intentionally by one who has no right to so act."

A person commits criminal mischief in the third degree, an aggravated misdemeanor, when they do either of

the following:

1. Intentionally disinters human remains from a burial site without lawful authority.
2. Intentionally disinters human remains that have state and national significance from an historical or scientific standpoint for the inspiration and benefit of the United States without the permission of the State Archaeologist.

Fifth degree criminal mischief is a simple misdemeanor.

Fourth degree criminal mischief, which is a serious misdemeanor, occurs, when the amount of damage exceeds \$100 dollars and does not exceed \$500 dollars.

Third degree criminal mischief, which is an aggravated misdemeanor, occurs when the amount of damage exceeds \$500 dollars but does not exceed \$1,000 dollars.

Second degree criminal mischief, which is a class "D" felony, occurs when the damage exceeds \$1,000 but does not exceed \$10,000.

First degree criminal mischief, which is a class "C" felony, occurs when the damage exceeds \$10,000.

-- Dennis N. Britson, Director
Regulated Industries Unit
Iowa Insurance Division

A genealogist, whose ancestors were buried in a seaside cemetery in Florida, was dismayed to find that birds had left their calling cards on the headstones. Eventually, it got so bad that the genealogist told neighborhood boys he would pay them to drive birds off of the gravestones with their sling-shots. He wanted to leave no "stern unstoned."

That's a little like the fitness business that didn't want to leave any "stern unstoned."

Reading old carvings on gravestones can often be successful by waiting for the sun to shine across the face of the gravestone which will throw all the carvings into light and shadow. Then take a black and white photo. If lack of sun is a problem, or if the stones are not aligned to enable the sun to shine across them, get a large, inexpensive mirror, such as you might hang from a closet door. Convince someone to hold it at the proper angle to shine the light across the face of the stone. You can even use flashlights or lanterns. Try shining them at various angles to find what works best.

When photographing gravestones, take a picture of the general, overall scene, showing other landmarks, if possible. Then, if you wish to locate the stone again or want to direct someone else to it, you can do so.

Recording or "reading" cemeteries using digital photography is fast and accurate. For a copy of an article that gives information about selecting the right camera and tips on using it effectively, contact Pat Shaw.

CDB (Cemetery DataBase) is a unique cemetery and burial information management system. The program was initially designed and written for the Gwinnett Historical Society in Lawrenceville, GA to produce a book on CD-ROM that they are selling (in addition to their hard copy book of "Gwinnett County Deaths"). This program helps you manage the adding, editing, and printing of cemetery/burial records and allows you to easily search and sort the data almost instantly.

The program is helpful in managing data for printing a book. It also allows the importing of any data already compiled from almost any format (Word, Excel, Quattro, Pro, etc.) for putting records on a CD-ROM.

Web site: www.adisd.com/software/cdb

Searching for graves? Try
www.findagrave.com

A division of the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Ecological Sciences Division, offers 25 simple things under the following headings that you can do to promote the public benefits of archaeology: Spread the word enthusiastically, Get the most out of the National Register of Historic Places, Get on the tourism train, Improve undergraduate and graduate education, Join advocacy groups in your area, Provide your insight as a professional, citizen, and constituent, Get involved with local communities, Build Bridges, & Build a constituency of teachers and students. This group is concerned with the state repatriation, reburial and grave protection laws. For more information, contact:

Society for Historical Archaeology
PO Box 30446
Tucson, AZ 85751
Phone: 520-886-8006
Fax: 520-886-0182
E-mail: sha@azstarnet.com

Cultural Resources Specialist
Sarah Bridges
NRCS, Ecological Sciences Division
PO Box 2890, Room 6165 South
Washington, DC 20013
E-mail: sarah.bridges@usda.gov
Phone: 202-720-4912

Recent articles about the effects of urban sprawl on old, historic burial sites:

U.S. News, Science & Ideas section
6/12/2000: "A Matter of Grave Import, Sprawl threatens historic cemeteries and the stories they tell" by Brendan I. Koerner. Mr. Koerner tells of examples of cemeteries and burial sites being disturbed for the purpose of commercial development all over the United States.

U.S. News, Science & Ideas section
6/20/2000: "Putting the brakes on suburban sprawl, The neotraditionalist movement comes of age," by Jay Tolson.

The mailing address to return completed petitions to is:

Saving Graves
4155 Lawrenceville Highway #8113
Lilburn, Georgia 30047

William Spurlock
<http://www.savinggraves.com>

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[View Current Signatures](#) - [Sign the Petition](#)

To: Ê United States Congress

To: The Congress of the United States of America

We the undersigned citizens, call upon the Congress of the United States of America to introduce and pass a National Cemetery Protection Act that would ensure the protection and preservation of our nations historic cemeteries by defining specific rules and regulations pertaining to

A) Cemetery Use, Care, Control and Protection, including but not limited to:

- A mandatory Dusk curfew.
- The mandatory recording of surveys and plats
- Record Keeping
- General cemetery care guidelines (including fences and upkeep)
- Regulations concerning the use of cemeteries on private land
- Regulations concerning the access of cemeteries on private land

B) Restricting, Limiting and Regulating the use of a cemetery, including but not limited to:

- Road/Railroad/Utility construction
- Establish conditions applying to the sale or transfer of cemetery property
- Regulations concerning Disinterment, Disentombment and other such removals.
- Regulations concerning Abandonment and Reburial
- Transfer of cemetery property from private to public status
- Restriction on alienation or condemnation

Such legislation would call for enforceable penalties including but not limited to monetary fines and/or jail time.

Sincerely,

The Undersigned

From the Indiana Pioneer Cemeteries
Restoration Project:

Sources to use to verify the existence of
cemeteries for documentation:

USGS topographical maps, any series
US Army Corps of Engineers study maps
County soils maps
Old survey books and records from the
County Sureyors Office
Newer reocrded surveys in Surveyors
and Auditors Offices.
Recorded deeds and plats
Historic county plat books
Current county plat books
Individual cemetery ledgers
County Veterans Service Officer, VFW
Auditors Transfer books
County Supervisors' Minutes Books
Local funeral directors
Local and surrounding county vault and
monument companies
Tax records in Assessors office
Circuit Court Order Books, family land
divisions
SAR and DAR records and persons
State Historical Sociey
Township Trustees
Historic atlas and maps, look for a cross
Towns lost to time, Recorder's Office
Word of mouth
List of early Catholic Bishops--cemeteries
were recorded in his name
Search neighboring counties and
townships as boundaries change over
time.

Suggestions for Your Cemetery
Restoration and Stone Repair Toolbox:

Site Cleaning --

Rakes

Shovels

Trowels

Clam-shell post hole digger

Probes

Machete

Chain Saw

Weed whippers

Trash Bags

Wheelbarrow

Hand-held grass clippers

Stone Repair --

Denatured alcohol and acetone for

cleaning broken surfaces; use rubber
gloves

Clean rags for applying acetone and
denatured alcohol

Epoxies:

Mastico available from Hilgartner
Natural Stone Company; 101 W. Cross
St., Baltimore, Maryland 21230; 410-752-
4832; www.hilgartner.com

Akepos 2010 Epoxy Transp L-Spec
(Honey) -- 2.25 Kg. Most economical
option. Available from GranQuartz; PO
Box 33569; Decatur, Georgia 30033; 800-
458-6222.

Barre Pak Epoxy -- 70 gram Kit (in Gray)
Miles Supply Company, Inc.; PO Box 237;
Barre, VT 05641-0237; 802-476-3963

Plastic margarine containers for mixing
epoxy

Tongue depressors for mixing epoxy

Duct tape

Clamps

Portable workbench

Portable drill and bits

Generator to power the drill

Turkey baster for blowing dust

Fiberglass or nylon pins

Scrap lumber for bracing stones

Lots and lots of water

Soft-bristled plastic or natural brush

Kodak Photo-Flo or Orvus soap by

Proctor & Gamble available at farm
supply stores for cleaning stones

Lichen-removing poultice: dry porcelain
clay mixed with water and glycerin

Plastic Wrap

Garbage Bags

String to secure garbage bags over stones

Large plastic buckets for mixing

Resetting Stones --

Shovels and spades

Crowbar

Garden Trowel

Tape measure

Board for tamping

Level

Sand and pea gravel

Wheelbarrow

Wooden Base Forms

Scrap Lumber

WOODLAND - ST. AMBROSE - EMANUEL - ODD FELLOWS CEMETERY

WOODLAND AVENUE AND M. L. KING PARKWAY
DES MOINES, IOWA

In 1993 the City of Des Moines appointed me as Tour Director of 152 year old Woodland Cemetery with its 65 acres in the very heart of Des Moines.

Since the City cannot by law help a private memorial, I immediately started to think up ways to obtain donated funds. A most effective way was done called, "The Adopt A Monument" whereby I took pictures of the monuments needing steam cleaning, and the Des Moines Register published a few of them. All of these monuments are marble.

In Woodland Cemetery we have two separate Civil War cemeteries: one established in 1863 for 27 killed in battle, and that area soon filled up with 100 more who died of natural causes after the War. Soon that area was filled and a new cemetery was established about a half mile away. We have a total of over 300 Federal markers in those two cemeteries. Totally, we have 400 Civil War markers as a number wanted to have their own private lots.

It was in the original Civil War cemetery where I first started restoration. Des Moines did not receive marble from New England until after the Civil War, so the marble in that cemetery is not a good quality. The cleaning there had to be done twice. After the workmen steam cleaned the markers, I directed them to put on a waterproofing liquid. That was a great error as it took some time to dry and dirt accumulated on all of the markers. After about two months the waterproofing turned a yellow. So, the second time, steam cleaning was all that was done, and they look great.

I wanted to get more information before I started on the World War I markers in 500 acre Glendale Cemetery. I wrote to the National Cemetery System of Veteran Affairs. They assured me that steam cleaning is the way to go. But, they warned because marble is so very delicate, not to exceed 800 pounds per square inch (PSI). They also said on marble no chemicals of any kind including waterproofing.

Here is how we will clean the World War markers in Glendale. Using a portable tanker with an L.P. attachment, the water is heated until steam. A mild soap is added such as for dishwashing. Brushing is started as the steam is applied. Marble attracts carbon out of the air which causes an "acid" reaction when it rains. Most of the marble markers after the steaming look just like snow. In some cases sodding or seeding is needed as the steam may kill the nearby grass. The company we use also has a special caulking for stone. If a marker needs caulking that is done after the steam cleaning. The company charges our Restoration Fund \$6.95 per marker.

While Des Moines passed an ordinance in 1938 prohibiting marble in all four of the City cemeteries, that law does not apply to Federal cemeteries.

Sincerely,

Gerald LaBlanc Woodland/Glendale





DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL CEMETERY SYSTEM
WASHINGTON DC 20420

OCT 15 1998

Mr. Gerald LaBlanc
8912 46th Avenue N. E.
Altoona, Iowa 50009

Dear Mr. LaBlanc:

I am responding to your letter asking for advice on cleaning World War I vintage marble markers in the Glendale Cemetery.

Marble, as you know, features a comparatively porous surface. The surface is susceptible to discoloration by pollutants and organic materials that are trapped in the small openings. This natural discoloration over time is acceptable in some communities. In other communities the natural whiteness of marble is favored.

In those instances, where the white character of marble is preferred, the markers may be steam cleaned. I agree with your position that no chemicals should be used, but you may want to consider pre-washing the markers with a mild soap and a soft brush followed by steam cleaning. In any event, the pressure of the steam cleaner should not exceed 800 pounds per square inch (PSI).

We do not recommend additional sealers such as Thompson's Waterproofing, as it also becomes part of the problem if not maintained on a regular basis.

I hope this information is helpful.

Sincerely,


Roger R. Rapp, Director
Office of Field Operations

This company was contracted to perform the cleaning at Glendale Cemetery in Des Moines, Iowa: All-Brite Steam Cleaning; Box 13323; Des Moines, IA 50310; Phone 515-243-6212

COUNTY REPORTS

If you have questions about a county report that is printed as submitted, please contact the person who wrote the report for information. Contact Pat Shaw for a copy of any article mentioned.

BENTON COUNTY

Submitted by Gene and Freda Davis

We have recently begun working to restore markers on the cemeteries in Benton County. We are also new members of SAPIC.

We were encouraged to get information in the paper because May was designated as "Cemetery Appreciation Month", which we were able to do. We are sending a copy which you may wish to include information about in the next newsletter. Whatever is appropriate.

The newspaper article has prompted interesting responses from the community. Two have given money donations, one has called to ask if we would help her restore the cemetery where her grandmother is buried, and several other calls expressing that they are happy that we are doing this work. We are finding that it is rather labor intensive and are actively looking for recruits to help.

Note: What great new members we have here! Gene and Freda attended the July SAPIC meeting and contributed much information. Gene showed us a wedge-shaped brace for old stones that he made from concrete. Mike Magee assisted the Davis's in their restoration efforts.

The article mentioned above appeared in the Cedar Valley Daily Times, Vinton, Iowa on May 23, 2000. It was written by Steve Meyer, a Civil War enthusiast from Garrison. Gene, Mike, and the Big Grove Cemetery made the front page with two large photographs and a story of considerable length. The story told of the neglected condition of the site, the restoration efforts of the Davis's, a listing of SAPIC's goals, and a plea for volunteer help in Benton County. Mike comments that since retirement, he has been "making dead people happy."

BREMER COUNTY

Submitted by Mike Magee

From the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier Friday, July 14, 2000:
"Tombstone back where it belongs" tells the story of the yellow sandstone tablet memorializing Charley Pickle, a 3-year old boy who died in 1879. Relatives apparently took the stone to Utah out of concern that it was in danger of being damaged or lost. Another relative learned where the stone was resting and arranged for it to be returned to the Alcock Cemetery near Frederika, Iowa. Charley's stone will rest next to the one marking his father's grave. --Bremer County Independent

Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier Sunday, May 21, 2000:
"Rebuilding the Past Cemetery's structure keeps history alive" by Rebecca Kline. The Waverly, Iowa Parks and Recreation Department is undertaking to preserve a unique structure in the Harlington Cemetery in Bremer County. It is a tomb, or "winter casket storage." The cavelike tomb is ventilated and was used to store up to 16 coffins until burials could be made when the ground was no longer frozen. The county's Historical Preservation commission members are looking for grants to finance the hiring of a talented mason to work with them on rebuilding a front facade or an entire restoration.

BLACK HAWK COUNTY
Submitted by Mike Magee

Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier Monday, June 19, 2000:
"Making a mark Retired Man chips in to preserve headstone, cemeteries" by Steve Meyer. A picture of Mike Magee in the Spring Creek Cemetery in southeast Black Hawk County, along with a story telling of this active cemetery restorer's activities, provides information about the methods he uses and the reasons that he does this. Mike has also helped preservationists in Fayette, Jackson, Jones, and Benton counties and is a board member of SAPIC. Information about SAPIC and Mike's goal to compile a listing of all Black Hawk County's Veterans of the War of 1812 are mentioned.

Mike Magee appeared on KWWL-TV on July 6, in a segment in which he demonstrated stone repair methods in the Spring Creek Cemetery. On July 15, Mike did a stone repair presentation in Buchanan County.

Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier Monday, June 5, 2000
"Scout helps research, restore old cemetery" by Jeff Reinitz
Eric Lage of Reinbeck is pictured smoothing out freshly poured concrete for the base of a bronze military plaque that will be placed next to the gravestone of a Civil War veteran buried at Voorhies/Lincoln Cemetery in Blackhawk County. The endeavor was part of Lage's Eagle Scout project. Eric has set more than a dozen such stones which has prepared him for his next role which will entail leading a group of Scouts as they add the markers at other cemeteries in Grundy County.

Members at the July meeting suggested that placing the following ad in local newspapers would promote SAPIC: Cemetery concerns? www.sapic.org

CHICKASAW COUNTY

Submitted by Carol Bottin

1989

STONE RABBIT MARKER SOLVED

Last April Mary Theis wrote the New Hampton Public Library requesting information on the Henry and Mary Ann Evans Robinson family. She had mentioned that an infant, Madonna Hebrank, was buried in the New Hampton Cemetery and we wrote that no stone had been found while canvassing the cemetery. She replied that there was no marker other than a stone rabbit marking her grave. Since those of us who had seen this little rabbit had always wondered about it, a card was mailed to her immediately and the following information was received with permission to use the story in our newsletter:

"Thank you for sending the card regarding Madonna Hebrank and the little rabbit on her grave. Perhaps I could offer some additional information. I just talked to my Mother and as in the past, she has come up with some additional information to help me.

As I told you previously, Madonna Hebrank was born 10 July, 1910 in Chickasaw Co., Iowa, and buried in New Hampton after she died 14 Feb 1911 from Polio. Joseph James and Susan May Robinson Hebrank were her parents. Times were real hard at that time. Joseph Hebrank went to the local banker to see about borrowing enough money for her burial and the banker turned him down. At that time, Susan's Mother, Mary Ann Evans Robinson, said to bury her at the foot of her place as that little girl wouldn't hurt anyone. What is ironic about the situation is that the banker's son also got polio and his son died. After that, he came to my grandfather, Joseph Hebrank, and begged for forgiveness for not lending him money for the burial of his little baby girl as he said you also had a son, (who was Roy Hebrank) who had polio too. Grandpa Hebrank wanted to move Madonna in later years after he had the money to do so and Great Grandma Robinson -- said no, leave that little girl in peace. So that is the story as to why Madonna lies at the foot of her grandmother's grave. The little bunny was placed on her grave to mark it. My Mother, Gertrude May Hebrank Memuey (Mrs. Ora) is the only living member of Joseph James Hebrank's family. Until her health got so bad, she used to go to the cemetery and paint the little rabbit. I would like to have it maintained but don't know if it would be possible to have someone paint it or not. Mother said she used alum. colored paint the last time she was there as knew it would probably be her last visit and thought that would last longer than the white paint she used to use.

Now, this also tells me the location of my great grandparents who I had requested information on in my 5 April 1989 letter. Henry Robinson and wife, Mary An Evans Robinson. They came to the United States from England in 1869. Madonna is buried on Mary Ann Evans Robinson's grave. Now all I need to do is to have someone go to the cemetery and take pictures of the tombstones for me. I will have to try and locate someone to do that. I try to put that in my Heritage Books so it is easier for future generations to make identities when and if they visit the graves of their ancestors."

The rabbit has been painted white the last two years by Eva Duneman. Although she knew nothing about the family she knew that the rabbit had previously been cared for and it needed a fresh coat of paint. Pictures of the Robinson graves and the rabbit have been sent to Mary.

We are so happy to have this mystery of the rabbit solved. Thanks, Mary, for this interesting story.

CHICKASAW COUNTY

Submitted by Carol Bottin

A meeting was held May 23 in New Hampton to organize a Cemetery Commission. Persons who had indicated an interest previously were invited to attend. After discussion it was decided to organize and suggest the following for officers to the County Board of Supervisors: Gerald Tieskotter, Lawler, Chairman, Ron Maher, New Hampton co-chairman, Fred Reisner, Fredericksburg, Treasurer, Mary Ann Crandall, New Hampton, Secretary.

We met with the Supervisors on June 6. After discussion they voted unanimously to form a Chickasaw County Pioneer Cemetery commission with the officers we had suggested.

Members decided to begin by working on the old Stapleton Township Cemetery. One of our members mowed it, brush needs to be removed and stones located.

New Hampton Tribune, May 30, 2000: "Chickasaw County Cemetery Commission is formed" This article reiterates the content of Carol's report, plus asks for the public's attendance at the next meeting. It also states that Carol, who is on the Board of Trustees for SAPIC, is serving in an advisory capacity for the newly-formed commission. In the same edition, Carol is pictured with Supervisor Jim Schueth as he signs the county proclamation naming the month of May as "Cemetery Appreciation Month."

Submitted by Jeanette Kottke

An e-mail message dated June 7 mentions the June 6 meeting with the County Supervisors, the use of *Grave News* for reference, and a gathering at the Stapleton Cemetery. Guidelines from the Louisa County Commission were used to form a draft of the Chickasaw County Commission.

DUBUQUE COUNTY

Submitted by Mike Magee

From *The Witness* May 28, 2000, page 8

As part of the Pilgrimage 2000 program, St. Joseph Church, Key West and Mount Olivet Cemetery hosted a tour of parish grounds and the cemetery on May 28. The two locations are among the oldest sections of the Dubuque Archdiocese, dating back to the 1840's, when the land was purchased from the government by Bishop Mathias Loras. The deed for the land was signed by President James K. Polk. Graves of bishops, priests, nuns, Civil War veterans, and people killed in a flash flood were featured.

GREENE COUNTY

Submitted by Valeria Ogren

From the *Jefferson Bee*

May 30, 2000

Front page feature "Preserving another part of the past" by Victoria Chargo

This quarter-page article tells of the 27 ceneteries in Greene county and features the eight that have been defined as "pioneer." The history of the cemeteries, their neglected condition, and the formation of the Greene County Pioneer Cemetery Commission, chaired by Lee Sloan, was given extensive coverage in the article. Cemeteries mentioned are the burial place of Truman Davis, the county's first settler, and his relatives, the old Cedar Cemetery, the Horan Cemetery, the Headley Cemetery, the old Franklin Cemetery, the Taylor-Winkleman site, the old German Cemetery (also pictured), the Gibson-Fleck Cemetery, and the old Rippey Cemetery. Shirley Clark, a member of the commission and SAPIC, summed up the reasons for preserving pioneer cemeteries: (1) "To me looking back, how else can we trace our lineage? One of the easiest ways is through old cemeteries, (2) to show respect for those who settled our county. "These people came here and settled our land to make it better for us. We should honor them for it." Governor Vilsack's statement on the proclamation naming the month of May as Cemetery Appreciation Month was also quoted: "Pride and respect for our pioneers leads to an interest in and concern for the future."

HARDIN COUNTY

Submitted by Mike Magee

Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier

Friday, June 16, 2000

Around the Area "Eldora cemetery full of stories and map helps you locate them"

Keeper of records at the Eldora Cemetery, Steve Wright, relates that people from all over the country stop at the cemetery looking for information. History buffs, researchers, those looking for long-lost relatives, and genealogists inquire about the graves of historical figures and others located at the site. Wright and public works crews have put up a new display at the cemetery that features a map marked with numbers and letters for each grave that match entries in an old ledger that Wright keeps in his office on the grounds. -- *Eldora Herald-Ledger*

The town of Steamboat Rock sponsored a walk through history at the town cemetery on June 15 and 16, in connection with the Rainsbarger Days celebration. The Rainsbargers were a well known gang, about whom many articles have been written.

HERK COUNTY

Submitted by Mike Magee

Evening Courier

Thursday, February 9, 1911

"Eccentric Physician Ordered Asbestos Shroud For His Burial"

A Dr. A. W. Buell, who died at Mt. Pleasant in 1911 at the age of 82, ordered that his tomb be opened once yearly and an admission be charged to view his body. He also left instructions with Burlington undertakers that his remains be kept for from three to ten weeks and then wrapped in asbestos before burial. It seems that Mr. Buell had in mind the perfect preservation of body after death so that in years to come, he could be seen in a state of perfect preservation. Inscriptions on his monument include information about his ancestors dating back to 1775 in England.

IOWA COUNTY

Submitted by the Iowa County Genealogy Society

The rededication of Old Marengo Cemetery was held July 9. The renovation of the site was a dream of the late Charles R. (Bob) Dillin, who researched information of the Civil War veterans in order to acquire new stones for their graves. Bob and his wife, Jean, along with many, many volunteers worked to replace the fence, repair and clean stones, clear trees and brush, construct a new walkway with flagpole, and replace the stones of some of the 21 Civil war veterans buried in the cemetery. The ceremony consisted of the Civil War Band playing, Gen. James Freeze speaking, and the announcing of the Civil War veterans who received new stones.

From the *Ottumwa Courier*

Monday, July 31, 2000:

"Concerns rise as burial sites emerge"

The article points out that it's becoming more common for Indian burial sites to be exposed by erosion. Erosion is being blamed for the unearthing of a Meskwaki Indian burial site along the banks of the Iowa river on land owned by the Amana Society last April. Society members, state archaeologists, and Meskwaki tribe members have stabilized the site and are keeping it secret. There are other intentionally unmarked Native American burial sites on the 26,000 acres of Amana land, many of which are along the Amana Society Nature trail. Intentionally unearthing a grave is illegal, punishable by fines as high as \$5,000 and two years in jail, according to state archaeologist, Bill Green.

JONES COUNTY

Submitted by Pat Shaw

From the *Midland Times*, Wyoming, Iowa May, 2000:

Two photos show the members of the Onslow Cornhuskers 4-H Club who worked to clear brush from the Mineral Creek Pioneer Cemetery northeast of Onslow on April 22. Spearheading the project was Daryl Wherry, a member of the Jones County Pioneer Cemetery Commission. The Midland FFA Chapter had cleaned and repaired the stones during the summer of 1998. The 4-H Club cleaned it again and are now maintaining the site.

From the *Anamosa Journal-Eureka* Thursday, May 25, 2000:

"Olin FFA restoring Spear-Graft cemetery" Tells of the Olin FFA starting to restore the Spear-Graft cemetery and continuing the project this summer. In the summer of 1997, this group restored the Cherry Grove Cemetery that was visited by SAPIC members July 8, 2000.

From the *Anamosa Journal-Eureka* Thursday, July 20, 2000:

"State cemetery preservation group meets at Edinburgh" SAPIC met July 8 at the recently acquired depot building in Edinburgh, Jones County's restored pioneer village. Attending were association members from Jones, Jackson, Benton, Chickasaw, Clark, Blackhawk, Fayette, Van Buren, Mahaska, and Madison counties and also Marilyn and Jerry Finke, who are associated with the regional branch of the National Archives in Kansas City, MO. A tour of restored cemeteries conducted by Jones County citizens followed the meeting.

Edinburgh Day in Jones County will be held September 10, 2000 at the restored pioneer village, hosted by the Jones County Historical Society. Included will be the following activities: church service, food stand, demonstrations and exhibits, antique tractor show, and oats threshing. The Jones County version of Antiques Roadshow, "Cherished Treasures," was held July 30. A model train exhibit and talk was available in the restored depot. The Jones County Historical Preservation Commission held a Rededication Celebration on July 11 at the newly restored Antioch School that the word-famous artist, Grant Wood, attended as a boy. Grant Wood painted "American Gothic," the third most recognized painting in the world. Some members of the Jones County Historical Society and the Preservation Commission are also members of the Cemetery Commission and SAPIC. This working relationship has been beneficial for all groups interested in historical preservation in Jones County.

LEE COUNTY

Submitted by Betty Giese

From the *Everton's Genealogical Helper* Jan-Feb 2000:

In response to "ASK YOU!" What is the most interesting cemetery that you have visited and why was it so interesting? Laura Tully of Florida recounts the visit that she made to the Whaley Cemetery located outside of Crawfordville, Florida. It is way back in the woods surrounded by a wrought iron fence. It contains 12 gravestones. Happening upon a mailbox nearby with the name "Whaley," she became acquainted with a distant cousin. Since the cemetery is surrounded by property owned by a neighbor, Laura investigated Florida laws and found that the cemetery cannot be disturbed and access must be provided as long as there is a living relative. Now relatives in the area visit annually to reaffirm the existence of the site and to see that it is maintained.

Jean King tells of the grave of her father-in-law located in Omey Island Cemetery near the village of Claddaghduff in Ireland. It is only accessible on a road beside the "Star of the Sea" Catholic Church at low tide.

From the *Everton's Genealogical Helper* Nov-Dec 1999:

Some "Gravestone Rubbings Do's and Don'ts" available in a leaflet that can be ordered from the Association for Gravestone Studies; 278 Main Street; Suite 207; Greenfield, MA 01301. A quarterly newsletter is available from *TOMB WITH A VIEW*; Katie Karrick, PO Box 24810; Lyndhurst, OH 44124-0810.

Judy Merschbrock and Sally Youngquist are assisting Betty Giese, who is a lifetime member of SAPIC from Chicago, with her efforts to restore and maintain the historic Wilson Cemetery in Lee County.

Contributed by Sally Youngquist and Erma DeRosear

From the *Donnellson STAR* Thursday, May 11, 2000:

"Local historians work to restore Bowman Cemetery" by Julie Peitz
A full front-page article tells of the extreme neglect at this very old cemetery in rural Charleston Township, which is also known as the Ennos, or Old Baptist Cemetery. A great deal of history associated with the site is related, and a plea from Sally and Erma, Donnellson Librarian, for volunteers to help and/or donate toward to restoration is made.

From the *Ft. Madison Daily Democrat* Monday, May 22, 2000

"FFA students join cemetery restoration crew" by Julie Peitz
Pictured are Central Lee FFA student Greg Wardlow and Sally Youngquist during a workday at the Scandinavian Cemetery near Summitville. Judy Merschbrock demonstrated and taught witching and basic stone repair methods were shown, as told in the article. Judy and Sally are members of SAPIC. Sally is preparing a presentation to be made to the Lee County Supervisors on Aug. 22 asking them to create a cemetery commission.

LOUISA COUNTY

Submitted by Dean Gipple

From the *Cedar Rapids Gazette* Friday, May 26, 2000:

"Pioneer cemetery spruced up" AP photo (caption)

Louisa-Muscatine High School Future Farmers of America members unload mulch to spread around newly planted flowers in the Newell Cemetery near Letts this week. The students are helping to spruce up the pioneer cemetery and install a memorial to people buried there.

Dean visited the Cline Cemetery in Johnson County that is being restored by the Jenn family of Riverside and members and friends of their daughters' 4-H Club. He reported that it is very neat, had just been mowed, and he suspects that there was a church there at one time.

Dean received a \$300 donation from Monsanto for Louisa County pioneer cemeteries.

He contacted the trustees of a non-pioneer cemetery, and they have agreed to cut some trees to protect a wrought-iron fence surrounding the site. He had donations to cover the cost of planting 2 silver Blue Spruce trees @ \$270. He will also buy a flag pole for them.

From the *Muscatine Journal* June, 2000:

"Cemetery caught in the middle of squabble" For the *Times* by Connie Street: This article relates some controversy that erupted over the restoration of the Newell Cemetery. The County Supervisors have returned the maintenance of the site to the township trustees, as a result.

MAHASKA COUNTY

Submitted by Judy Swanson

From the *Eddyville Tribune* Thursday, May 11, 2000:

"Agri-Power FFA Cleans Up a 'Mystery' Cemetery" by Chapter Reporter Paul VanZante. A photo accompanying the article shows FFA members locating a grave in the Muchakinock Cemetery that is located between Oskaloosa and Eddyville. On April 19 the Agri-Power FFA packed up all their chainsaws, brush cutters, shovels, and flags and went in pursuit to clean up this all black coal mining cemetery founded in the 1800's. Pat Shaw assisted in teaching members how to witch for graves, how to clean the standing gravestones, how to make the gravestones level, and how to epoxy the broken stones. The students plan to care for the cemetery over the next few years. Evelyn Den Hartog of the Keo-Mah Genealogical Society provided additional information about the site.

Submitted by Bob Kocur

From the *Oskaloosa Herald* Monday, July 10, 2000: "Pioneer cemetery history comes alive with young man's desire" by R.D.Keep. A full-page story

of Eagle Scout candidate, Steve Allison, and his efforts to restore the Center Grove Cemetery on the north edge of Oskaloosa was published. A rededication ceremony was held on July 8. A great deal of history of the cemetery was related. Photos of Steve, his Scoutmaster, Mike Shrader, and Mahaska County Commission for the Preservation of Pioneer Cemetery President, Jo Vernooy accompanied the story.

Submitted by Jo Vernooy

So many positive results to report! We rededicated the Center Grove Cemetery (a Friends cemetery) on July 8. What a wonderful experience! Our Eagle Scout candidate, Steve Allison, family and Troop 71 members, restored this Pioneer Cemetery. I went early, before anyone else, and just sat and got the "feel" of the Cemetery. It was so peaceful. I shut out the traffic noises and tried to clear my mind and just experience whatever emotions came up. Among other things, I felt gratitude to those who were buried there, for the legacy they left us, and thankfulness to Steve and those who helped him restore Center Grove. I felt grateful that the Board of Supervisors were forward thinking enough to establish the Commission to help save this Pioneer Cemetery. Many other emotions surfaced, but those were the ones that stand out. Shortly after 10:00 a.m., on a very hot and humid day (typical Iowa July weather) I gave a few remarks about the Cemetery, the Scout Master spoke, and the Clerk of the local Friends Church expressed his gratitude for the restoration of the Cemetery. The local newspaper was there. I was disappointed that they had neglected to get an article in previous to the rededication to let people know of the event, as they had promised; however, I was glad to see the reporter at the rededication ceremony and a good article appeared the following Monday. (One or two misquotes appeared, but I guess that is what happens when you deal with the press.) Then the minister of our local Friends Church offered a prayer and blessing. It was very moving. After the prayer, we noticed two baby raccoons who came from out of a nearby field. As soon as they saw us, they ran up a tree, but it was as if we were sent a sign. Another reason for preservation of Pioneer Cemeteries - habitat for wildlife! Since Eagle Scouts cannot do a project that is "ongoing", the College Avenue Friends Church in Oskaloosa stated that they would take over the mowing. This is another example of how working on these Pioneer Cemetery brings community members together.

The work at Muchakinock continues. I received word this week that Mr. Powers and his FFA group want to erect a picket fence around the Cemetery. They will do all of the work, building the fence and installing it, if we will pay for the materials. This is nearly a four-acre cemetery so will require a lot of work (and a lot of fence!). I am going to contact local businesses in the Oskaloosa and Eddyville areas for donations toward this expense. After the fence is installed, we will need to get in the Cemetery and probe. We know that the majority of the stones are buried, as only a few are standing. John Jacobs continues to look for contacts of the coal mining company and railroad in an attempt to locate burial records. A couple of contacts turned out to be "dead ends" but he has more leads, so we continue the search.

DeLong/Delashmutt Cemetery work also continues. Alice Veen, a descendant of those buried at DeLong, has been wonderful in keeping family members interested in the restoration of this Pioneer Cemetery. This Cemetery is a little different than other Pioneer Cemeteries that we work on, in that family members are alive and some are willing to help. Some Commission members help each workday. Members of the DeLong/Delashmutt families have sent donations, which we place in the Auditor's Office, designated as DeLong Cemetery funds. Our Auditor, Kay Swanson, and Colette Scott, who works in that office, are great to help us however they can. Colette is especially helpful in getting reports, checks, or whatever I need, on short notice. Another unsung hero (or should I say, "heroine"). Colette and another 4-H leader, and their 4-H group, adopted Berry Cemetery last year, and continue their restoration of that Pioneer Cemetery.

The other adopted cemeteries are being cared for by their adoptive groups and we are so thankful for each of them. The Smith Cemetery, a Pioneer Cemetery with very unusual gravestones, has been adopted by Scott Adair and his family of Oskaloosa. Scott has lived near the Cemetery all of his life and recounts going there as a child. He says it has always held a special place in his heart, and we know he will do a great job in restoring and maintaining it. His family already mows this Cemetery, but will now work on its restoration. To show you how dedicated he is -- I offered to place one of our R.I.P. signs at the Cemetery, letting all know that he and his sons were working on it. He said, "No, thank you. I want my sons to know that you don't do some things for recognition. You just do them because they are right." This is particularly refreshing when lately I have seen that some people feel they must have recognition for everything they do.

We are so grateful to Chris Snyder and the Youth Corp of the Mahaska Conservation Commission for all of their work on Centennial Cemetery. Chris and members of the Corp chopped all of the brush that had previously been cleared from the Cemetery, with the exception of some that was so compacted it will have to be burned, as well as clearing additional portions of

the Cemetery. They diligently worked on it for two days and performed miracles! Thanks Chris and young people!! Chris came to us at the Centennial Cemetery as a volunteer on our last workday and has truly been a Godsend. He works with the Mahaska County roadways, and, in his work, plants prairie grasses and wildflowers. Just as the Iowa Prairie Network members came just at the right time to help us on this Cemetery, it has always amazed me, since working with this Commission, how what you need is provided, and the people you need appear. Iowa Prairie Network is also a group devoted to preservation, and local members have helped us tremendously on this Cemetery. I am just thankful that we, as a Commission, can work with other dedicated people to help "rescue" these Pioneer Cemeteries. What a wonderful heritage would be lost if they were not reclaimed.

MONROE COUNTY

Submitted by Bob Kocur

Bob and his son-in-law, Bill Colwell, have cleaned and fenced the Foster Cemetery in Monroe County. The cemetery was associated with the coal mining town of Foster that is no longer in existence. Bob has been trying to get an access road to the cemetery. He met with the County Attorney who contacted the County Engineer. Bob is to meet with the township trustees to ask them to set up the access for visitors across a neighbor's property. The legal description clearly states that their land is subject to the right-of-way use of the cemetery. Bob says that as many as 50 people wish to visit the site. Pat Shaw had the pleasure of visiting this site that reflects the amazing accomplishments of two dedicated individuals.

From the *Albia UNION-REPUBLICAN* Thursday, May 25, 2000:

"Resting place for Union soldiers is restored -- Bernard Casebolt works 12 years to honor veterans" by Dave Paxton The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War joined Bernard Casebolt and John Brandon (one of the four known Iowa surviving sons of Civil War veterans), and the Melrose American Legion at Evans Cemetery for a special Memorial Day service last May. This half-page story on the front page tells of the history of the cemetery and of Mr. Casebolt's childhood in Lucas County. The cemetery was vandalized almost beyond recognition when he visited it twelve years ago and began to restore it. He used his skills from his years at Johnson Machine in Chariton to do metal work on a unique turnstyle that at one time ushered visitors into the cemetery. He was assisted by area genealogists in recording the names of every soldier on the large monument that was still standing. One of the names is John Evans, killed in 1863 at a place called Sandyville and buried where he fell.

Note: This is another example of the outstanding determination of one individual to bring respect to a historic and sacred resting place.

TAYLER COUNTY

Submitted by Charly Stevens and Pat Shaw

A "Living Cemetery Tour" was held Sunday, July 2, 2000 sponsored by the Design Committee, Bedford Chamber/Main Street & The Taylor county Historical Society. Portrayals of some people who were prominent in the history of Taylor County were held at the Fairview Cemetery.

From the *Leader-Record* (Farmington, Iowa) Thursday, May 25, 2000:
"Around the bend" By Mary Ovrom

My hometown of Bedford is having an all-school reunion July 1-4 which it does occasionally instead of having an annual alumni banquet as most Van Buren County towns do. And when Bedford puts one on, its a real event. They have decade dinners, a cemetery tour copied after Bonaparte's outstanding tour, walking tours, golf tournament and a special tabloid newspaper, *The Reunion Times*.

VAN BUREN COUNTY

Submitted by Pat Shaw

From the *Van Buren County Register* Thursday, May 4, 2000:

"Unique way to search for gravestones is making a comeback" by Cheryl Duke. Pictured are Jon Finney demonstrating his "witching" technique and the persons who helped to locate gravestones at a pioneer cemetery near the County Care facility: Max Wellborn, Jon Finney, Merle McDonald, and Steve Appleman. The only headstone found was for Jessie Walker, a veteran of the Civil War. Melva Workman, president of the Van Buren County Genealogical Society, has assisted the group by searching names and the history available about those buried there. Max Wellborn claims that the wires used for witching find a calcium chemical in the ground from the bones.

"Working to preserve cemeteries" This article was printed to publicize Cemetery Appreciation Month in Iowa. A summary of the goals and history of SAPIC, a mention of the action taken by the Van Buren County Board of Supervisors regarding cemetery preservation, and the governor's proclamation were printed in the article.

From the *Farmington Leader-Record* Thursday, May 25, 2000:

"Bonaparte's fifth annual Historic Cemetery Tour is June 3" Living history in the first person best describes this unique tour experience which educates, enlightens, and entertains guests. Local history and lore is gathered into script form by historian Dorothy Watson and the production is directed by Connie Meek. Bonaparte's cemetery tour has won honorable mention of the Loren Horton Community History Award for outstanding contributions to community history through a local project.

From the *Van Buren County Register*

Thursday, June 8, 2000:

"Searching for Holsworth Cemetery" by Don Aldrich

Pictured with this article is Warren Beatty of Keosauqua and Kenneth Smith of Crystal, MN, while attempting to read an inscription on a gravestone at Holsworth Cemetery. Mr. Smith traveled from Minnesota in 1999 to locate Holsworth, but despite the best of directions had walked fields, traversed fences, and crossed streams (falling into one, which he said "felt good"), in what he described as a 112 degree, no breeze, hot July, Iowa summer day. All of this and was unable to locate the cemetery! This year he called ahead to Warren Beatty and asked for assistance. The services of an experienced guide, Charles Randolph, was engaged. After the expedition reached the cemetery, Mr. Randolph said he had to return to his field work and, smiling, stated that for a small donation of \$25, he could come back and show them how to get out. Little did he know that Warren had been dropping kernels of corn during the 1 1/2 mile excursion! *(Do you suppose he heard the tale of Hansel and Gretel as a youth?)* The article ends with mention of Governor Vilsack proclaiming the month of May as Cemetery Appreciation Month in Iowa and an admonition that everyone should honor his/her ancestors by assisting with needed care in such sites.

"Van Buren County Genealogical Society News"

Pictured is Shirley

Aldrich at the Bethel Cemetery in Lick Creek Township. The article states that visiting a well kept and cared for cemetery is refreshing to members of Van Buren County Genealogical Society, as well as many others, and Memorial Day was visiting day for many of Van Buren County's 113 known cemeteries. Shirley is shown standing beside the all new weather protected display structure, completed by Hugh Shaw of rural Birmingham. Bethel Cemetery is well known for its being the burial place of the mother of Ann Rutledge, alleged sweetheart of Abraham Lincoln, Mary Ann Rutledge. The cemetery is adjacent to the home of Van Buren County Deputy Recorder, Ann Skaggs. Ann and her husband, Kris, clean, mow, and trim the area, as well as add personal touches such as flowers in the summer and red bows for the holiday season.

Van Buren County Register

Thursday, August 3, 2000:

Two photos show local residents, Greg Meyer and Bill Wenke, who have organized volunteers to make some improvements in the Vernon Cemetery. According to Walter Meyer, Keosauqua, two sections of brush have been cleared, new fences put in place, and stones were repositioned. More than 30 stones had new foundations poured and were reset. An new walk-in gate was also installed.

WAPELLO COUNTY

Submitted by Pat Shaw

From *Forever Young* (a publication of the *Ottumwa Courier*) June 5, 2000:

"Smith Cemetery: a time gone by -- Family graveyard give clues to area's history" by Helen Hannan, Courier Staff writer

A caption under the picture of the Smith Cemetery states: Smith Cemetery holds a cluster of graves, mostly dating back to the late 1890's. Many of the graves in Smith Cemetery are in small family groups, often with quite a bit of empty space between the clusters. The article tells of the history of this rural cemetery, located between Christiansburg and Munterville, that eventually grew from a family plot to a community cemetery. No church or town was associated with the burial site. According to local lore, there was once an Indian encampment beside Avery Creek, which flows through the little valley a short distance north and east of the cemetery. Numerous Indian artifacts found in the area lend credibility to the legend that it was originally an Indian burial ground and that many of the unmarked graves in the front area that appears to be vacant actually contain the bodies of Native Americans.

From the *Ottumwa Courier* Tuesday, June 6, 2000

"Eldon celebrates Gothic Days this weekend" by Judy Keieger

A photo along with the informational article shows George Conz who portrays Tanny Benson in the fourth annual Eldon Cemetery Tour. Gothic Days 2000 celebrated one of Eldon's claims to fame -- the famous Gothic House, which Iowa artist Grant Wood used as background for his famous painting, "American Gothic." The article lists the ten actors who portray Eldon residents of days gone by in the cemetery tour, "Eldon, Iowa -- Railroad City Extraordinaire!" The tour, held on June 10, was organized by Jo Eddy.

Note: I attended this tour and was impressed with the fun the actors had with this event. It was well-organized and most enjoyable!

From the *Ottumwa Courier* Tuesday, July 11, 2000

"Blakesburg Mayor stays put -- for now. After show of community support, Harold Johnson says he will postpone resignation decision" Johnson is frustrated with the lack of volunteerism in the town and the controversy over the erection of a fence around the community cemetery. Even though, according to Johnson, there were funds available to fence the site and the city council gave its verbal approval, they later voted to reject the move. The mayor moved forward with the fence project anyway because he wanted to curtail vandalism and traffic in the cemetery. He also authorized erection of a posted sign so arrests could be made.

From the *Ottumwa Courier* June, 2000:
Letter to the Editor: "Thanks for help with monument restoration"

Every so often, someone does a "special" thing for us, personally or for the community in which we live, that restores our faith in people. The negative is often printed, making headlines, while the positive goes unnoticed.

Several years ago, an attempt was made by a group in Eldon to restore a large white monument in our local cemetery. The monument was erected in 1953, a tribute to Max Jacobs, a pilot in the Air Force killed when his plane crashed during the Korean conflict. The attempt failed, for various unnecessary and disappointing reasons we won't go into.

On May 23, an Ottumwa man started a restoration effort on the monument. Memorial Day 2000, the monument is shiny white and looking again like in its original state. The monument was erected by Max Jacobs's parents, who are deceased.

Thank you, Dean Snakenberg, you've made Eldon proud. It is appreciated.

Joanne Maynard, Eldon

Laurie Smith, Weiser, Idaho, read an article in her local paper, ARGUS OBSERVER, on May 28 about two ornate tombstones in mint condition that were unearthed in an excavation in Huntington, Oregon. Names on the stones are Baldwin H. FINE (died 31 July 1897) and John E. RAGON (died 29 September 1897). E-mail Laurie at laurita@ruralnetwork.net if these surnames are familiar to you or if you'd like more information.

Know someone who would like to join SAPIC? Pass this form on to them:

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION NEW ___ RENEWAL ___ DATE ___

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

E-mail address _____ Telephone _____

Individual \$10 ___ Household \$15 ___ Organization \$20 ___ Lifetime ___

Donation or Memorial \$ _____ (List honoree, if desired) _____

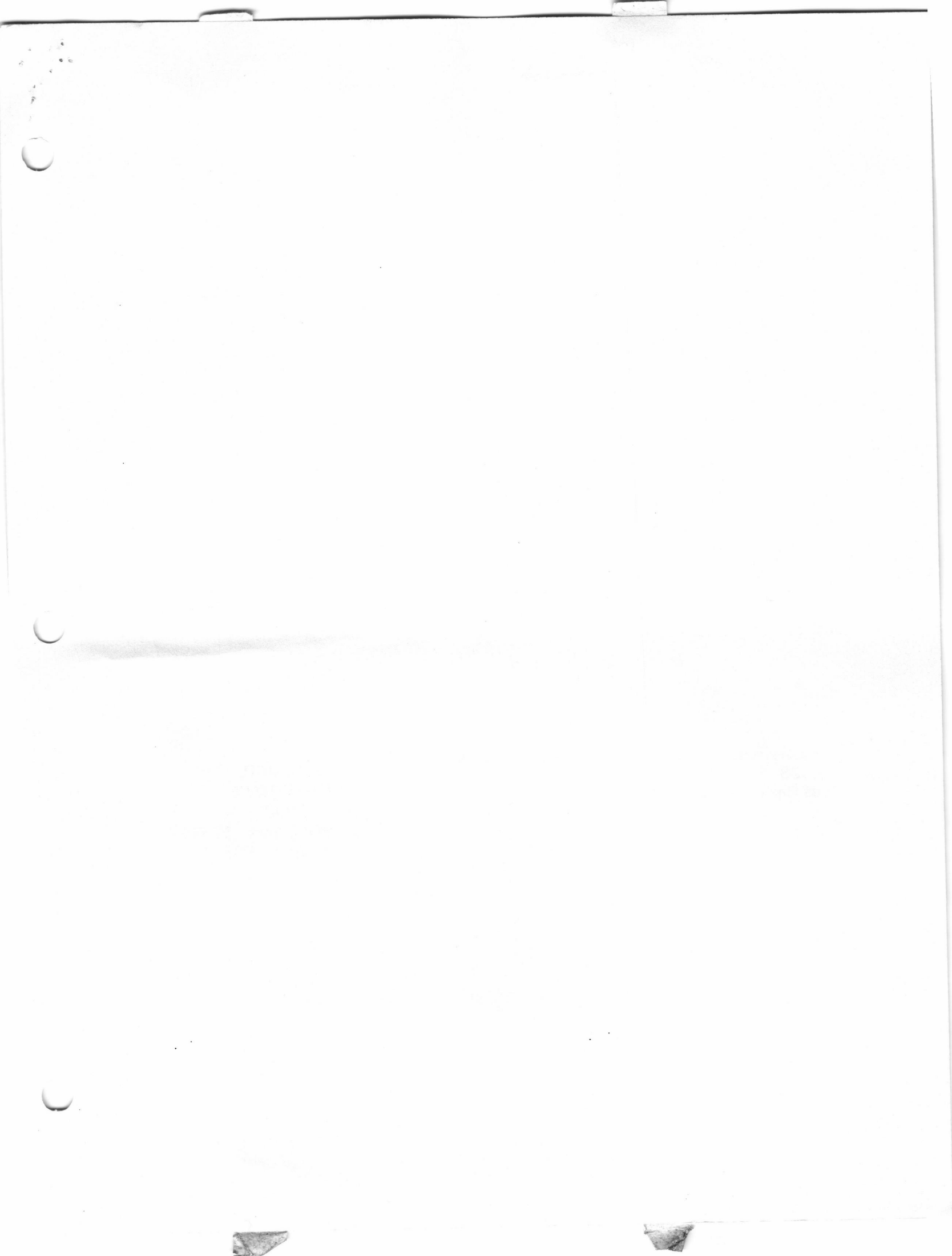
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From the column, *In Your Prime* by Bard Lindeman, 5428 Oxbow Road, Stone Mountain, GA 30087-1228. E-mail: beoutrageous.com

“Visiting grave sites: a dying tradition?”

Mr. Lindeman tells of the burial sites of his relatives and of his visits to the cemetery to set out flowers, cut grass, and shed tears as he remembers good times lost. He tells of the loss of this tradition by the present generation, including the opinions of his own cousin and wife, who consider “grave-etiquette” errant nonsense. He wonders about his own three grown children and if they will visit or bother themselves over their family’s graves. He tells of a friend in New Jersey, a widow, who visits the cemetery weekly following Sunday morning church services. She spends about an hour tidying up and making family graves presentable. Mr. Lindeman asks, “Pointless? Wasted time? Self-serving? Or, a necessary ritual, the crux of graveside etiquette? Do you have a routine for tending family graves?” He asks that you send your opinion to the above address.



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