

GRAVE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES
21813 170TH ST. BIRMINGHAM, IA 52535 www.rootsweb.com/~iasapc/
VOLUME 12 ISSUE #2 April, 2007

The July 14, 2007 meeting of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries will be held at the nature center at Fontana Park, 9 miles north of Independence, or 1 miles south of Hazelton, Iowa on Highway 150. Brown signs are posted on the highway for the turn to Fontana Park. It is just off the highway, behind the cemetery. Coffee and cookies will be served before the meeting. A catered lunch will be available on site for \$5.00. Reservations are not needed. Before and after the 10:00 a.m. business meeting, a DVD that was made by the Buchanan County Pioneer Cemetery Commission will be played. Following lunch, an explanation of the GNIS system will be presented by Brian Hoffman and the members of the Buchanan County Pioneer Cemetery Association will demonstrate the method they use to make replacement stone markers for graves. Overnight accommodations are available in Independence at the Rush Park Motel (319-334-2577) near the west edge of town on 1st street, the Super 8 Motel, or Country Inn in the same area. A new Heartland Acres and Agribution Center museum by the MHI exit off highway 20 may be open at that time. Items of interest at Fontana Park include interpretive displays in the Nature Center and outdoor exhibits of wolves, badgers, fox, bears, cougars, deer, bison, birds, etc. For more information, contact Bill Reedy, 3046 Everly Ave., Brandon, IA 52210, Telephone 319-474-2443.
E-mail: reedypart@jtt.net

SAPIC has a limited number of grants available for individuals or groups that are in the process of restoring a pioneer cemetery and have had difficulty in obtaining funds. The form for applying for a grant is in the October, 2006 issue of *Grave News*. The deadline has been extended to July 1. If you do not have that issue, contact Pat Shaw.

Quote from Mark Twain: "Somebody has said that in order to know a community, one must observe the style of its funerals and know what manner of men they bury with most ceremony." Mark Twain, *Roughing It*, ed. Harriet Elinor Smith, Edgar Marquess Branch, et al., The Mark Twain Library (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 308. {First sentence in chapter 47.}

The Iowa House unanimously approved Senate File 559 during the last legislative session. The bill focuses on consumers who purchased pre-need funeral and cemetery services. After a recent incident in Charles City where over a hundred Iowans were defrauded, the Iowa Legislature moved to protect consumers who enter into these types of agreements. The bill includes stricter reporting requirements and harsher punishments for those who knowingly defraud the public.

If your genealogical or historical society or cemetery commission has a table or booth at a local expo, fair, or other gathering, SAPIC will provide brochures or newsletters to distribute, if you wish.

Saved by the bell?

When our ancestors realized they were burying a great many people before they were dead, they came up with a solution. They tied a string to the "dead" person's hand, buried them, tied the other end of the string to a bell and then tied it to a nearby tree branch. If the person revived enough to ring the bell, their survivors would rush out and dig them up.

Hence ... "saved by the bell."
(From the *Family Tree*, Moultrie, GA, Oct./Nov. issue.)

And you thought it was a boxing term!

SAPIC OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President: Pat Shaw
21813 170th St.
Birmingham, Iowa 52535
319-293-3899 patshaw@netins.net

Vice-President: Willis Hoffman
505 W. chestnut St.
Bloomfield, IA 52537-2852 641-664-2852
E-mail: wilcar@netins.net

Secretary: Larry D. Davis
5716 Kingman Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50311-2006
515-277-4917 LD2mstone@aol.com

Treasurer: Valerie Ogren
108 N. Oak
Jefferson, IA 50129
515-386-4784 vjogren@netins.net

Molly Beason, Board of Trustees, Expires 2007
106 East 11th Street
Tama, IA 52339
mollyb@iowatelecom.net 641-484-6061

Tony Bengston, Board of Trustees
Term expires 2010
1006 150th St.
Fairbank, IA 50629-8611 319-415-5275

Frieda Davis, Board of Trustees
Term expires 2009
216 Riverview Dr.
Vinton, IA 52349-2360
319-472-5348 davisduo2@mebbs.com

Julie A. Eckenrod, Board of Trustees
Term Expires 2009
2211 S. Linn Ave.
New Hampton, Ia 50659
641-394-3967 jjeck@rconnect.com

Michael Magee, Board of Trustees
Term Expires 2006
638 Englewood
Waterloo, IA 50701
319-232-8762 Digger4045@yahoo.com

Marva Rowe. Board of Trustees
Term expires 2009
905 S. 21st St.
Ft. Dodge, IA 50501-5910
marvaj@frontiernet.net

Steve Story, Board of Trustees, Expires 2007
18883 250th St. Hawkeye, IA 52147
563-427-5354 dstory@netins.net

Connie Street, Web Page Manager
325 Franklin St. Wapello, Iowa 52653
ckcasey@louisacomm.net

Jo Vernooy, Board of Trustees
Term Expires 2007
1240 235th St.
Leighton, IA 50143
641-673-8122 mahcem@kdsi.net

WHERE TO GET PROBES

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

WHERE TO GET EPOXY

GRANQUARTZ Stone Tools and Equipment
P.O. BOX 2206
Tucker, GA 30085-2206
1-800-458-6222
http://www.granquartz.com

3-M 1838 B/A TAN EPOXY
PRAXAIR - GENEX 1700 2nd Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50314
515-244-3131

GCT Stone Epoxy and Hardener
Granite City Tool Co.
PO Box 411 11 Blackwell St.
Barre, VT 05641 1-800-451-4570
granitecitytoolvt.com mkewinter@aol.com

WHERE TO GET SIGNS

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

VETERANS' HEADSTONES

See <http://www.cem.va.gov/hm.htm>
Or telephone 1-800-697-6947

STATE CEMETERY REGULATOR

Dennis N. Britson, Director
Regulated Industries Unit
Iowa Securities Bureau
340 Maple St.; Des Moines, IA 50319
Dennis.Britson@comm6.state.ia.us
515-281-4441

OFFICE OF THE STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

Shirley J. Schermer, Director, Burials
Program
700 Clinton Street Building
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1030
319-384-0740 shirley-schermer@uiowa.edu

Dues for membership in SAPIC are:

Individual	(yearly)	\$10
Household	(yearly)	\$15
Business or organization	(yearly)	\$20
Individual lifetime		\$100

**State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries (SAPIC)
Board Meeting Minutes
April 21, 2007**

President Pat Shaw called the meeting to order at 2:30 p.m. at the Stoney Creek Inn in Johnston, Iowa with 24 members and guests present.

The minutes of the January 13, 2007 meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer's report was presented and accepted illustrating a March 31, 2007 balance of \$11,843.22 consisting of \$2,614.83 in the working account, \$4,228.39 in the reserve account, and \$5,000 in certificate of deposits.

Membership: Valerie Ogren reported the membership now stands at 142 including 50 life members.

Cemetery Reporting Form: Tony Bengston reviewed the current draft of a cemetery reporting form. After a brief discussion, Brian Hoffman moved that the cemetery reporting form be approved and accepted. Seconded by Valerie Ogren. Motion carried.

It was noted that the State of Iowa also has adopted a reporting form that will be used til December 31, 2007 and that SAPI C members may choose to use that form til then.

Legislative Report: Pat Shaw noted that SAPIC had chosen to promote stronger penalties for cemetery vandalism, and Representative Jeff Kauffmann had indicated interest in sponsoring such legislation. However, Representative Kauffmann has researched that area and determined there are enough laws currently on record to handle this concern.

Keith Street Memorial: It was reported that the family of Keith Street has been considering developing a financial scholarship or award for youth who have worked in cemeteries. Final details are not complete at this time, but the family is considering financing and administering the program.

SAPIC Grants: Pat Shaw reported one \$200.00 grant application had been received from Sharon Sturek representing the Price Cemetery in Marshall County. Moved by Mike Magee that a \$200.00 grant be issued to Sharon Sturek for renovation work in Price Cemetery and that the application period be extended 90 days to accommodate additional applications for the four remaining grants. Seconded by Frieda Davis. Motion carried.

Nominations for 2008 Officers and Board Members: Pat Shaw urged members to consider serving in an officer position or as a board member. A nominating committee will soon be appointed.

Miscellaneous:

Copies of the proclamation signed by Governor Chester J. Culver proclaiming the month of May as Cemetery Appreciation Month were distributed.

Members were reminded to submit applications for the Robert Carter Award.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be in Buchanan County, July 14, 2007 at the Fontana Nature Center.

The Meeting adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

Larry Davis
Secretary

STATE ASSOCIATION for the PRESERVATION of IOWA CEMETERIES

Treasurer's Report for 1st Quarter - 1 January thru 31 March 2007

Balance in "Working Account" 31 December 2006, Home State Bank, Jefferson \$ 6,884.17

Income

Dues \$815.00

Donations 25.00

Conference Registrations 175.00

Reimbursement for copies 2.37

Interest 1/31/07 4.84

Interest 2/28/07 1.76

Interest 3/31/07 1.93

Total Income \$ 1,025.90

Expense

Transfer to CD's \$5,000.00

Transfer to Reserve Account - Robert Carter Award
to Hoffman's 100.00

Ck #192 - Pat Shaw - Newsletter 77.65, Conf. 117.59 195.24

Total Expense \$5,295.24

Balance in "Working Account" 31 March 2007 \$ 2,614.83

Balance in "Reserve Account" 31 December 2006, Home State Bank, Jefferson \$ 4,028.39

Income -

Willis, Carol & Brian Hoffman - Lifetime Membership \$ 100.00

Doug Jones - Lifetime Membership 100.00

Total Income \$ 200.00

Balance in "Reserve Account" 31 March 2007 \$ 4,228.39

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 31 March 2007 \$ 6,843.22

Plus additional funds:

182 day CD - \$1,000.00 - 5% - matures 7/17/2007

12 month CD - \$4,000.00 - 5.25% - matures 1/16/2008

Respectfully submitted,

Valerie Ogren, Treasurer

108 N. Oak

Jefferson IA 50129-1841

Ph 1-515-386-4784

E-mail: <vjogren@netins.net>

Please send nominations to Pat Shaw, 21813 170th St., Birmingham, IA 52535 by July 1.

STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES
AWARD CRITERIA

1. The award shall be called the Robert L. Carter Memorial Award.
2. The Robert L. Carter Memorial Award shall be given only once each year.
3. The State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries President shall appoint an Ad Hoc committee of the Board of Trustees to act as an Awards Selection Committee. This Awards Selection Committee shall serve a term of one year, although individual Board members may be appointed to it for succeeding years.
4. The Award Selection Committee shall come to a decision prior to each State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries' annual meeting as to whether or not an award shall be given that year, and if so, to whom or what.
5. The Award Selection Committee shall make its recommendation to the full Board of Trustees at the Board meeting immediately preceding the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries' annual meeting*.
6. Eligibility for the Robert L. Carter Memorial Award:
 - a. any individual, group, association, organization, institution, or governmental agency or unit is eligible for consideration.
 - b. to be considered for the award, a nominee must have demonstrated an achievement or activity above and beyond what is expected under ordinary circumstances.
 - c. a nominee must have been involved in or responsible for an achievement or activity that significantly extends or expands the education about preservation, protection, maintenance, appreciation, or understanding of Iowa cemeteries, graveyards, burying grounds, single burials, monuments, tombs, mausoleums, grave markers, or other aspects of material culture related to or associated with Iowa cemeteries.
 - d. one award may be given for service; one award for cemetery education.
7. Any member of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries, including Board members, may nominate persons or other eligible recipients as described in 6a.
8. Members of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries, including Board members, are eligible to receive the Robert L. Carter Memorial Award.
9. Nominations for the Robert L. Carter Memorial Award shall include the following in order to be eligible:
 - a. a letter naming the nominee that summarizes the relevant achievement or activity, and signed by the nominator.
 - b. at least one letter of support from a person or group other than a member of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries.
 - c. appropriate supporting materials such as photographs, newspaper articles, printed matter, or other documentation explaining the relevant achievement or activity and its significance.
10. Nominations must be in the hands of the Award Selection Committee no later than 90 days prior to the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries' annual meeting.

11. The Robert L. Carter Memorial Award shall be presented to the recipient at the annual meeting of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries, or at another time deemed appropriate.

*July 10, 1999 Meeting

Criteria prepared by Loren Horton

REPORT OF NEGLECTED IOWA CEMETERY

*This form is available as a MS Word document.
Email to maria.luttrell-murphy@iid.state.ia.us or file with
Iowa Insurance Division, 340 Maple Street, Des Moines, IA 50319-0066*

1. Name and location.
 - a. Name or names of cemetery:
 - b. Legal description of property, if known:
 - c. Closest city, town, community:
 - d. County: _____ Township: _____
 - e. Latitude: _____ Longitude: _____
 - f. USGS topographic map info (attach map if available):
 - g. Highway, street address or intersection:
2. Classification & Categories. (Public Private
 - a. Pioneer cemetery: Y N Date of last known burial: _____
 - b. Federal State County City Township Religious
Family/Private Native American Other (explain): _____
 - c. Owner(s) of adjoining real estate/cemetery and their address/contact information
(attach sheet if necessary): _____
3. Is cemetery listed in published cemetery survey? Y N
If yes, please identify survey: _____
4. Describe the historical or other special significance of this cemetery, if any. _____
5. Is cemetery accessible to the public? Y N By road? Y N
Comment: _____
6. Is area identifiable as a cemetery/burial site? Y N
If area is marked or enclosed by a fence, hedge, trees, etc., please describe: _____
Are grave markers and monuments present? Y N
Number of interments/burials, if known: _____

Describe the general condition of the cemetery.

7. Please set forth any additional comments/observations:

8. Insurance Division comments/observations:

Submitted by:

Date:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Definitions:

Neglected Cemetery means "a cemetery where there has been a failure to cut grass or weeds or care for graves, memorials or memorialization, walls, fences, driveways, and buildings, or for which proper records of interments have not been maintained."

Pioneer Cemetery means "a cemetery where there were six or fewer burials in the preceding fifty years."

An new form for reporting cemeteries has been developed by a committee of SAPIC members, Tony Bengston (chairman), Brian Hoffman, and Larry Davis. This form will be available on the SAPIC web site. If you do not have Internet access, a copy may be obtained from Tony Bengston, 1006 150th St., Fairbank, IA 50629-8611.

Thanks to Larry Davis, organizer of the SAPIC Cemetery Conference that was held on April 21, 2007 in Des Moines. The presentations, facility, and food were excellent. Douglas W. Jones, Archaeologist, State Historic Preservation Office, State Historical Society of Iowa, opened with "Cemeteries, Burial Places, and the National Register of Historic Places: An Iowa Perspective." Dennis Britson, Director, Regulated Industries Unit, Iowa Securities Bureau, presented "Legal Remedies for Pioneer Cemeteries." A form for reporting neglected cemeteries to that office follows. This form is in effect only until December, 2007. The afternoon session, "Pioneer Cemetery Commissions," was presented by representatives from Benton, Buchanan, Davis, Fayette, Jones, and Winneshiek counties. Ideas, suggestions, and possible pitfalls for establishing county commissions were given. If you have suggestions for future conferences, please let Larry know.

The death of Phyllis Carter on May 19 is a great loss to SAPIC and to many of its members, personally. Phyllis was a charter member of SAPIC. She created the Robert Carter Award that has been presented annually to a deserving cemetery worker in memory of her late husband. Robert and Phyllis had a special interest in "tree stump" grave markers and spent many hours searching out these unique stones in Iowa cemeteries. They went to great lengths to have a tree stump marker created for themselves before Robert's death. Phyllis had a delightful slide presentation on the subject that she showed at many genealogical and historical meetings. She was also greatly interested in the symbolism on stone markers. SAPIC members will be asked to consider renaming the Robert Carter Award to read the "Robert and Phyllis Carter Award" at the next meeting. Like Phyllis, the "celebration of life" that was held on May 22 at the Washington (Iowa) Community Theater Building was special. The one and one-half hour program consisted of narration about her many interests and accomplishments, along with beautiful music and displays of her lovely quilts and other handiwork. A "sunset burial" was held following the service.

COUNTY REPORTS

Allamakee

From *The Standard*, April 9, 2007, Waukon, Iowa: "Supervisors hear from department heads and concerned citizens," by Mike Martin. During the time set aside for public comment at the March 5 meeting, Doug Mullen spoke to the Board about the care and maintenance of two cemeteries in Lafayette Township -- Village Creek Cemetery and another at the corner of Lansing Harpers Ferry Road and Sweet Ridge Drive. Residents have expressed concerns about upkeep at the cemeteries and both are classified as pioneer. The Board agreed they need a legal opinion from the county attorney before proceeding further.

Benton

From the *Cedar Valley Daily Times*, April 5, 2007, Vinton, Iowa: "Cemetery Commission under new leadership -- Chairman Davis resigns due to health concerns," by Dean Close. Pictured is SAPIC member, Gene Davis, as he demonstrates how to dowse for graves and how to use powder to make inscriptions on old, worn stones easier to read. A history of the Benton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission is given from the beginning when Gene saw Paul Maddy on Iowa Public Television talking about restoring pioneer cemeteries to the present time when 30 cemeteries in Benton County have been restored. Gene credits SAPIC member Mike Magee and the Tama County Cemetery Commission, plus many volunteers from Benton County, for helping with the work. Martha Long will become chairperson of the commission in 2008. Also included in the article are excerpts from the *LaPorte City Progress* on the topic of cemetery care from the 1800's.

From the *Vinton Eagle*, April 25, 2007, "Martha Long named 'Woman of the Year.'" Pictured is Martha accepting special recognition from the Vinton Women's club for her community involvement, including the updating of records of cemeteries in Iowa and for her tireless work in preserving Benton County history. She is a member of the Benton County Pioneer Cemetery Association and has worked closely with Gene and Frieda Davis at the Bear Creek Cemetery and assisting them with cemetery records.

From the *Vinton Eagle* and the *Waterloo Courier*, May 16, 2007: "May is Cemetery Appreciation Month in Iowa," Letter to the Editor by Frieda Davis. In a well-written letter, Frieda lists the reasons why we need to take care of our cemeteries. She also suggests that the reader should take a walk through a cemetery this Memorial Day and appreciate the art, history, and stories recorded there.

Blackhawk

From the *Waterloo Courier*, April 9, 2007, "Tombstones damaged at Cedar Falls cemetery." Vandals destroyed several tombstones and other items, including flower pots, at Fairview Cemetery in Cedar Falls over the weekend.

From the *Waterloo Courier*, April 18, 2007, "Two accused of cemetery vandalism." Two teenagers were taken into custody for allegedly vandalizing tombstones at Fairview Cemetery. They were charged with third-degree criminal mischief, released to their parents, and referred to juvenile court services.

Mike Magee reports that he has been assisting the caretaker with stone repair at the Waterloo Cemetery.

Boone

On March 26, Boone county residents, Tina Kiester and Larry Adams, along with SAPIC member, Pat Shaw, met with the Boone County Supervisors about the possibility of establishing a pioneer cemetery commission and an archives commission. The county supervisors from neighboring Greene County faxed a letter of support to Boone County telling of the positive aspects of having a cemetery commission. SAPIC member, Valerie Ogren, contributed information for the formation of the letter that outlined the history and accomplishments of the Greene County Commission that has been in existence since 2000.

Buchanan

County Report from Commission Chairman, Bill Reedy: This summer, the Buchanan County Pioneer Cemetery Commission celebrates its fourth birthday. We began with a running start, as the Genealogical Society had already done considerable work recording and identifying the pioneer cemeteries some twenty-five years previously. Some of the commission members had been involved in that work, and we were all familiar with it. During our first year, we erected large signs at most of the pioneer cemeteries, giving a brief history of each. We also researched titles and descriptions for all pioneer cemeteries, so that we would know the boundaries accurately, and to be prepared for any questions that might arise over ownership. Some of this research continues, as we are still able to fill in some of the holes in our information. In the course of our work, the county has received title to two cemeteries, we have corrected a title mistake affecting ownership of another, and updated an access easement to one landlocked cemetery. After three years of negotiation, we have just this spring concluded an access easement agreement

to another. Now, for the brawn part -- we have been clearing brush, leveling ground, building fence, repairing fence, resetting stones, repairing stones, and replacing stones.

As we have a large number of stones that are either too badly broken to be repaired or are missing entirely, we have been replacing many. Because of the number involved, we have purchased equipment and supplies to manufacture the stones we need. After taking lessons from the local Amish tombstone maker, we think we have mastered the art. This equipment and process will be demonstrated at the July SAPIC meeting.

From the *Cedar Valley Daily Times*, April 9, 2007, "County pioneer cemetery group seeks volunteers," by John Kiotzbach. The article relates the story of David Schwartz who was kidnapped and later reunited with his family. His captors renamed him "David Black." His grave is in a Buchanan County cemetery.

There are about seventeen known pioneer burial sites in Buchanan County and most are more than 150 years old. Sadly, a few have succumbed to the natural development of the area. They lay beneath fields or under buildings. In 2003, the Buchanan County Pioneer Cemetery Commission was formed by the Supervisors. The commission consists of nine members divided into three classes each serving staggered three-year terms. Members are from around the county and appointed by the Supervisors. Bill Reedy of Brandon is the Chair. They are members of SAPIC.

The commission is responsible for the control and maintenance of the pioneer cemeteries. The commission relies on members and volunteers to do the work. The commission will be happy to present a program to service groups, including a DVD that contains the following quote: "We owe it to the earlier settlers of the county and to those who passed away on their way west the respect of maintaining their burial sites." Settlers like David Black.

Cedar

From the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, April, 2007: "Men work to save church of ancestors," by Dave Rasdal. Two members of the Red Oak Grove Presbyterian Church located 5 miles west of Tipton are trying to preserve the church that was founded in 1841 and closed in 2006. The two men, Cecil Mathias and Bob Rickard, now want to turn ownership of the church building over to the cemetery board, which is financially healthy. They are working to ensure that the cemetery remains viable as a perpetual care burial site.

Chickasaw

The *Chickasaw County Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 24, #1, First Quarter, 2007 lists new updated records for the New Hampton St. Mary's and the New Hampton Cemeteries, as well as other cemeteries. All publications of records are available from the CCGS, PO Box 434, New Hampton, IA 50659.

A copy of an article sent by Jeanette Kottke dated April 23, 2007 shows members of the Chickasaw County Cemetery Commission as they accept a grant in the amount of \$1250 awarded to the Commission by the Waterloo and Northeast Iowa Community Foundation. Members shown are Thelma Allen, Betty Tylee, Verlaine Maher, Jeanette Kottke and Fred Reisner. Absent was Jerry Tieskotter, President of the Commission. To date four pioneer cemeteries have been cleared of brush, stones repaired, fenced and grassed. They are Stapleton, Pearl Rock, Cagley, and Jacksonville Twp. They are presently working on the Garden of Memories Dresden Twp. cemetery.

A Memorial Day event is planned at the New Hampton Township Union Cemetery to recognize 150 years of origin. Commission members will assist with this event.

SAPIC member, Carol Bottin, has received a report of several graves in a woods near Nashua that they will check out this spring. One grave may be that of a Civil War Veteran.

Clayton

From an e-mail message dated April 12, 2007, "Maintaining Hallowed Ground," by Ron Harris. In an extensive article written for publication during Cemetery Appreciation Month, Harris mentions the reasons for preserving pioneer cemeteries, recent legislation regarding cemeteries, and the formation of SAPIC and county commissions. The entire article will be included in this newsletter.

Davis

From the Davis County Pioneer Cemetery Commission, Carol Hoffman, reporting: As you all probably know, the weather hasn't cooperated with us to get out in our pioneer cemeteries. Maybe now we can get into our sites and do what we all are addicted to. Regardless of what the weather has dealt, we have found other ways to get things accomplished.

We have had two money makers. The first event was to raise funds to buy a used trailer to store and haul our equipment. We had a soup supper and baked goods auction which raised enough to buy a 1999 Wells cargo enclosed trailer. Then I baked homemade pies for Mother's Day. This will help with incidentals not covered by our budget.

After 3 long years, we have finally seen a new

fence installed around one of our cemeteries. When we first saw this site the multi flora rose was over 8 feet tall. So after many hours of hired labor and volunteer help, we got a new cattle panel fence installed on the Friday before Mother's Day. On Saturday the 3 of us worked and got the mowing and first spraying of the weeds taken care of. The rest will have to wait until the beans come out this fall and then we will go back in and work as long as the weather permits.

We had leftover cattle panels and posts so these have been moved to another site that has been neglected for many years. Our daughter calls these sites "pick another," but hard work pays off in the end.

Dubuque

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, March 21, 2007: "Coffins and candy keep Dubuque abbey afloat," by Mary Nevans-Pederson. Trappist order monks and nuns in the Dubuque area are resorting to making coffins from the wood on their land and caramel candy to sustain their life style. They used to rely on farming operations when there was a larger population of younger monks. Last year, they shipped 850 caskets and have contracts for 1,700 more. Each casket and every piece of candy is blessed before being shipped.

Fayette

From the *Fayette Leader*, March 7, 2007: "Newbery Honor award given to book that has Arlington roots," by Janell Bradley, Editor. Pictured is retired school teacher, Alice Miller, as she holds her copy of the book, "Hattie Big Sky," which tells of a 16-year old woman leaving Arlington, Iowa to homestead in Montana. Author Kirby Larson tells the fictionalized story of her great grandmother, Hattie Brooks, who moved west about 1917 to homestead a cabin that was left to her in a will. Hattie, an orphan, was raised by various relatives. Hattie's sisters still lived at Arlington when their parents died in Oklahoma. The book was recently named one of just three Newbery Honor selections. Alice Miller researched the Brooks family and sent volumes of information to the author. The gravestone of Hattie's grandfather, John Brooks, is pictured as it rests in the Brooks Cemetery in Fayette County. Alice Miller, SAPIC member Steve Story, and the Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery Commission watched for burial sites and finally found grave markers that had been tossed over the fence. The markers were cleaned and placed in the cemetery. Landowner, Mark Fedeler, donated fencing to preserve the site and planted an oak tree there. Steve says, "We are glad we restored the cemetery which now has some FAME."

From *The Union*, March 28, 2007: "Nutting Family Cemetery first pioneer project of 2007." The Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery workers list their restoration and improvement projects for 2007. The volunteer crew will start at the Nutting Family Cemetery near Eagle Road off the Great River Road along the Dover-Clermont Township border. Work began at this site last fall, ending with the first major frost. Another cemetery that will soon receive attention is the Center Grove near Twin Bridges Park. Bill Moellering will be the "work crew chief" in 2007. Vergie Bruening is the president; Donal Boie, vice-president; and Frances Graham, secretary-treasurer. Appreciation was expressed to the hunters, hikers and snowmobile operators for the care and information they supply about the conditions they might notice in the cemeteries.

From *The Fayette County Union*, May 9, 2007: "Major Pioneer Cemetery renovations soon to be history," by Mike Van Sickle, *Union News Editor*. Pictured in color on the front page is Harvey Ungerer of Hawkeye as he displays one of the gravestones to be put back in its proper place after the commission volunteers completed restoration last week of Nutting Cemetery in Clermont Township. Center Grove Cemetery, located south of Randalia will be the last of Fayette County's 18 Pioneer Cemeteries to be enhanced by the volunteers who serve on the Commission. Pictured inside the paper are the Commission members who completed Nutting Cemetery on May 2.

From the *Elgin Echo* and *The Fayette Leader*, May 23, 2007: "Remembering Elvira, others buried in pioneer cemeteries," by Meghan Powers. Pictured in both newspapers are the Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery Commission members who work at the Nutting Cemetery. The writer uses the headstone engraved simply with the name, "Elvira L," to ask how many people ever stop to think about the lives of those buried under monuments covered with lichen and with engravings that are nearly illegible? Some believe that Elvira may have been the daughter of Mr. Nutting, who purchased land for the cemetery. She may have eaten wild parsnips and been poisoned, resulting in the first death in Clermont township in 1850. Examples of satisfying and interesting experiences in the Windsor and Pitts Cemeteries are also related in the article and several photos of the restoration process are included.

From *The Union*, May 23, 2007: Letter to the Editor from the Commission Chairman, Virgie Bruening (who is also chair of the county genealogical society). Virgie writes with pride of

the well kept and beautiful cemeteries of Fayette County and praises the tremendous work of the caretakers. The letter mentions Cemetery Appreciation Month, the work of the restoration crew, and the signs that identify the pioneer cemeteries. She expresses appreciation to the work crew and the editor of the newspaper for excellent coverage.

Hamilton

From the *Daily Freeman-Journal*, Webster City, March 22, 2007: "Hunting for history," by Tracy Runneberg, Staff Writer. Rebecca Mines, a member of The Hamilton County Heritage Hunters, is planning to identify and catalog Graceland cemetery digitally. She has taken maps provided by city records, will photograph each tombstone, and compile as much information as she can about each marker and plot. Mines has always been interested in cemeteries and the information and history they can provide. She came up with the idea to document the cemetery after seeing the devastation that nature and even people can provide. She treats each stone as if it belongs to one of her family members. There are at least 15,000 gravestones in Graceland and several smaller cemeteries in the county. The documentation will benefit many people now and in the future.

Jefferson

From the *Fairfield Ledger*, May 17, 2007: "Genealogical Highlights," by Verda Baird. The column tells of Cemetery Appreciation Month in Iowa, including the fact that Jefferson County has 79 cemeteries and 49 of these burial sites have been designated as "pioneer cemeteries." 24 have had no burials for more than 100 years. The genealogical section of the Fairfield Public Library has a two-volume set of alphabetized burials in all county cemeteries. The newest addition contains the computerized records of the Fell Cemetery donated by Don Wingate of Libertyville. Several histories of Jefferson county towns and villages are in the library, as well as the two-volume set of Lillian Thada's "Reminiscing" columns which span 21 years and were published in the *Fairfield Town Crier*.

Johnson

Stuart Druivenga has spent over 300 hours restoring the Alt Cemetery as his Eagle Scout Project. A huge part of the project has been tree removal. He and his father, Paul, have spent a great deal of time on head/foot stone restoration and have found many buried bases that they have matched with stones. The Legion will be doing a short ceremony at the Alt Cemetery on Memorial Day. There are two Civil War veterans buried in

the cemetery. Local Scouts will be in attendance. This will be the finale to Stuart's project. He has been interviewed by the local newspaper and an article will be in the paper prior to Memorial Day. A Cedar Rapids TV station may film a segment on his project.

Jones

Steve and Donna Story worked in Madison Center Cemetery clearing weeds and brush on May 23. They began work in this cemetery in June of 1980. Steve replaced 2 fence posts at Pleasant Valley and reports that it still looks great.

The Jones County Pioneer Cemetery Commission will start on May 31 at Evergreen and East Wayne Cemeteries located in the north part of the county.

Lee

From the Lee County Pioneer Cemetery Association newsletter, "Preserving Our Past," Spring Issue, 2007. Association president, Terry Altheide, writes in his president's address on the first page about the emotion he feels as he views the graves in baby land at Keokuk's Oakland Cemetery. He observes that scores of children's graves are found in pioneer cemeteries, many of their stones buried under several inches of dirt for years and found during restoration. He quotes Doug Manning from the book, "The Funeral," in which he says, "We need to know how much our loved one meant to others. That is why we have funerals. A funeral is a time for folks to gather and share with us the fact that they, too, loved our loved one. They too have suffered a loss. Nothing feels better to a person than this discovery, 'Someone else thought my loved one was significant.'"

Terry's message for 2007 is to ask the question, "What do these stones mean?" Do we just clean pioneer cemeteries because it just seems so right? Or do we go about our cleanups thinking, "I AM that someone else who thinks their loved one was/is significant."

Also included in the newsletter is a schedule of events, a poem, information about a project to document all veterans' graves in the county, and a spotlight on the Hyde Cemetery.

Louisa

Dean Gipple, who resides in an assisted living facility in Washington, Iowa, submitted several epitaphs that were printed in the *Des Moines Register* in Ken Fuson's column that runs on Friday. Several will be printed in this newsletter and others in future issues. Dean says he is adjusting to "this type of living" and that "any day above ground is a good day!"

Ken Fuson was prompted to think about

epitaphs following the recent death of author Kurt Vonnegut who taught for a short time at the Iowa Writer's Workshop at the University of Iowa. Vonnegut is quoted as saying, "If I should ever die, God forbid, let this be my epitaph:

THE ONLY PROOF HE NEEDED FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD WAS MUSIC."

Fuson lists examples of several unique epitaphs and proposes a contest titled, "What would you like on your tombstone?" The winning entry will get a Tombstone pizza. Or I (Fuson) can sing at your funeral. Your choice.

Kfuson@dmreg.com

Bette Davis's epitaph: SHE DID IT THE HARD WAY

Dean Martin's: EVERYBODY LOVES SOMEBODY
SOMETIME.

Mel Blanc's (the voice of Bugs Bunny):
THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

An unknown dentist: STRANGER! APPROACH
THIS SPOT WITH GRAVITY!
JOHN BROWN IS FILLING
HIS LAST CAVITY

A nameless tombstone in Kansas:
HE CALLED PETE SMITH A LIAR

Fuson has narrowed his choices down to the following:

I'VE CHANGED MY MIND ABOUT CLONING
IF MY FRIENDS TRULY LIKED ME,
THIS STONE WOULD BE BIGGER
DID THE CUBS EVER WIN?
SEND SUNSCREEN! AND FINGERNAIL
CLIPPERS!

THE GUY TWO PLOTS OVER SNORES
I'LL DO BETTER NEXT TIME
THERE'S A MILLION BUCKS IN MY PANTS
HEAVEN COULDN'T WAIT
YOU CALL THAT A FLOWER?
IT WASN'T MY FAULT!
TELL MY EDITOR THE COLUMN'S GONNA
LATE

BUT I QUIT SMOKING!
MEMO FROM HELL: THE BABE'S STILL FAT
QUIT CALLING MY CELL PHONE
TAKE YOUR POSTHUMOUS PULITZER
AND SHOVE IT

THAT'S NOT FUNNY!
WHO WON 'AMERICAN IDOL'?
IT'S A BEAUTIFUL CASKET. TRUST ME
DID YOU HEAR THAT?
IF I COULD DO IT OVER, I WOULD HAVE
SKIPPED TRIGONOMETRY

GOD BLES COPY EDITURS

Madison

SAPIC member, Ben Mayer, of Architectural Stone Sales in Urbandale, reports that he will be demonstrating 19th century carving at the Centerville Civil War Days on Father's Day

weekend. He plans to use some period markers from the 1860's that a client is having him re-engage and repair from the Patterson Cemetery in Madison County.

Ben is willing, for a slight consideration, to make replacement markers out of Indiana Limestone from many pieces of stone that he has on hand and through his carving business that he has on the side. Contact him at his home: 317 E. Green St., Winterset, IA 50273. Telephone: 515-462-5841. He can also do custom stones.

Mahaska

From Jo Vernooy, chairperson of the Mahaska County Pioneer Cemetery Commission: It is an exciting time for us in the Mahaska County Pioneer Cemetery Commission. A matter involving a landlocked Pioneer Cemetery has been resolved, and a truly historic Pioneer Cemetery which had been only marginally worked on, will hopefully receive TLC from a local couple. Gorsuch Cemetery is right on the border of the Mahaska/Poweshiek County line. It has some mid-1800 gravestones. Prior to the Commission's intervention, one of the descendants attempted to get to the cemetery to clean it up and decorate the stones, but it was rented to an individual who wanted hunting privileges in exchange for access to the cemetery. When the descendant declined to let him hunt coyotes on the property, the renter refused to let the descendant go to the graves. Since then, the property has been sold. We worked with the attorney handling the sale in order to get an easement to prevent this from ever happening again. We have also erected a fence with a large gate, to allow access for mowing. Also, we are working with the new buyers, who respect the graves. How wonderful that this Memorial Day, the descendant can visit and decorate the graves. This is what we strive to achieve.

We are also working with a couple who are interested in the Muchakinock Pioneer Cemetery. For those of you familiar with Buxton, the Town of Muchakinock was the place from which the buildings, etc. were moved on skids to Buxton after the mine "played out" at Muchakinock. The Muchakinock Pioneer Cemetery is actually the largest Pioneer Cemetery in Mahaska County, but you couldn't tell that by looking at it. It is overgrown and very few gravestones are standing. The Eddyville FFA has been building a fence to go around the Cemetery, and we are so grateful to them for their tenacity, working on it year after year. Mr Pat Powers, instructor, and his groups of FFA young men and women, are to be commended. The next Grave News Report, I

hope to report that great things are being done at the Muchakinock Pioneer Cemetery. We are hoping to get enough history on the Town and Cemetery of Muchakinock to be included in the Coal Mining Days' celebration held in Oskaloosa in October of each year.

We also submitted an article to *The Oskaloosa Herald* about Cemetery Appreciation Month, and, in turn, expressed our appreciation to our volunteers and Board of Supervisors for their vision and desire for preservation.

We are still looking for someone to repair the "flat (table top) stones" in Smith Cemetery. We have contacted several individuals, but are still awaiting a response from someone suggested by Loren Horton. We HAVE to get to work on these stones, or soon there will be nothing left to repair. If you, or anyone you know, has any experience with the repair of these stones, please, please let us know. We want skilled workers who know the historical value of these stones and want to help us preserve them. We are not asking for unpaid workers, we are willing to hire someone, but we just don't know who to hire! Please contact Jo Vernooy at 641-660-432.

From the *Ottumwa Courier, Progress 2007*, March 10, 2007: "Pat Powers -- Challenging students to do more," by Lori Faybik. The article lists the awards won by Mr. Power's students on the local, state, and national levels in his tenure as FFA Advisor during his 23-year teaching career. Although not mentioned in the article, one of the community service projects undertaken by the Eddyville-Blakesburg FFA Chapter has been the fencing of the Muchakinock Pioneer Cemetery.

Ben Mayer, former member of the Mahaska Pioneer Cemetery Commission, who now lives at Winterset, will be spending Memorial Day repairing monuments at the Bedwell Cemetery in Monroe Township in Mahaska County. Although not a pioneer cemetery, the trustees of Bedwell are to be commended for keeping their responsibilities in regard to their burial grounds.

Marshall

Sharon Sturek, who has been trying to get the Price Cemetery restored for years, is elated to report that the cemetery has been fenced by landowner, Gary Buck. Sharon, representing the Price Cemetery, received a SAPIC grant for the burial site to help offset restoration expenses this summer.

Mitchell

In an e-mail message dated May 15, Neal DuShane of the Mitchell County Pioneer Cemetery Restoration Project responds to an inquiry about the disappearance of a gravestone

from the Dudley Cemetery. DuShane and members of the Association are aware of the missing stone and the descendant who now has it in her possession. He says that her intention is to place it back in the cemetery IF the cemetery is going to be restored, preserved, and maintained. The stone was the subject of a story in the local newspaper a few years ago. He is hopeful that she will identify exactly which grave on which it belongs. He goes on to stress that there is a need to document, record, and log these sites so they aren't completely lost to history. Volunteers and financial donations are also needed to help preserve these sites.

Monroe

From Rosalie Mullinix: Monroe County Pioneer Cemetery commission report -- we have had five cemeteries fenced. Hogeland and O'Brien which were very much in need of fencing as cows were in around the stones. Now it will be safe to repair and reset the stones. Brandon and Potts/Welsh had a protective fence kept up by landowners who are glad of a good fence around those cemeteries. Buxton, our most popular cemetery now has a good fence even though no cows were around it, it looks much better with a full tight fence around it. We have decided to put the stones, which are creek stones used as grave markers, up on a small cement foundation.

Carol Gillaspie, a charter member had to retire last fall due to health reasons and she has been replaced by Richard Hauesier. We were asked to help locate an unmarked unnamed cemetery and document it. This was to help Ernie Corso with state requirement for getting the mining town of Hocking back on the Iowa map. The cemetery is located in Hocking and has Manley children buried there. We had two people with to confirm the location, then gave the state written facts to verify all information on this cemetery. Our Commission was glad to be notified of these burials.

Trussell Cemetery has had the trees and brush on two sides taken out and along with the third side will be fenced this year. The fourth side was fenced in recent years so will remain. The cemetery was witted to establish correct boundaries because we had a report of graves outside the fence, but found that just the head of one grave is a little past fence line but so close that we feel it will never be disturbed so will not move the fence.

Polk

From the *Des Moines Register*, May 18, 2007: "Remains of mystery man, an Iowa pioneer, laid to rest -- Archaeologists: He might have been a hardworking farmer," by Grant Schulte, Register

Staff Writer. Pictured is Hamilton's Funeral Home director Johnny Moller as he hands a small casket containing the remains of a 19th-century pioneer to Scott Watts, with Watts Vault and Monument for burial in a small grave at the Booneville Cemetery on May 17. The remains were unearthed by accident a year ago by Regency Land Development, which was building a housing development in West Des Moines. State archaeologists examined the remains of the man who probably died in the 1850's, was a Euro-American between 50 and 60 years old, who led a rigorous and labor-heavy life, and may have smoked a pipe. Other items found with the remains -- 92 square nails, remnants of a wooden coffin, buttons from his clothing -- helped date the original burial. The man's headstone may read something to the effect of: "Booneville Area Pioneer, 1800s. Remnants Found in May 2006. Reburied May 2007."

Story

In an e-mail message from Loren Larson dated April 26, 2007: Since I haven't sent you any information on the Ballard Grove Cemetery in a long time I thought that you might like an update. Some friends helped me to locate the corners of the cemetery and fence a portion. We cut down trees and removed brush. A couple of years ago we had a monument placed in the cleared area. Last summer I received a call asking if I were the person that had been working on the cemetery. I was informed that Huxley had formed a historical society and the cemetery was one of the projects. When they finally located the cemetery they were surprised to find the fence and the monument. I showed them the corner posts and offered to work with them. They then informed me that the township trustees had agreed to pay for maintenance once the cemetery was cleaned up.

They have done more cleaning and I have removed additional trees. My desire is to clear off as much of the cemetery as I can and relocate the fence to surround that part of the cemetery. Prior to the historical society I didn't know what would become of the cemetery if I didn't keep it up. Now there is hope on the horizon that it will have perpetual care due to the trustees' commitment.

Van Buren

From the *Van Buren County Register*, Keosauqua, April 26, 2007, "Cemetery Appreciation Month." The proclamation dated April 10 and signed by Governor Chester Culver, is printed, along with information about the number of pioneer cemeteries within the county and a definition of pioneer cemeteries. Don Aldrich heads a cemetery work crew there.

Washington

My apologies to Arlen Nickolan for failing to include information about his recent restoration project in the last newsletter. Arlen submitted this information on January 19. Arlen's first cemetery restoration was the Kupka Cemetery near Riverside. He is now undertaking the restoration of the Patterson aka Hawthorne Cemetery that sits within the properties of Sam and George Gerot. Both are neighbors and wholeheartedly support the project. There are 22 verified burials, the earliest seemingly in 1847. Arlen included several pictures of the site and completed a Cemetery Survey Form. He has contacted the county engineer's office for possible help in cleaning the cemetery and will inquire about the possibility of using labor from offenders who need to complete community service. Arlen states that he and his wife enjoy the manual labor and the self-satisfaction that each project brings. Many future genealogists and historians will benefit from the efforts of such dedicated preservationists.

Winneshiek

In e-mail messages from Kevin Lee dated May 16 and 23: The Winneshiek County Pioneer Cemetery Commission has recovered a grave marker from a ravine near Burr Oak. On Saturday, May 5th members of the Winneshiek County Pioneer Cemetery Commission met at the Roland Hansen farm to recover the Ellen Ryan gravestone and transported it to the Crossroads Cemetery. Crossroads Cemetery is a reclaimed and newly fenced cemetery in section 30 of Burr Oak Township. Ellen was 80 years old and her death date is illegible, but the date seems to be 1853. The marker is 6 ft. tall and weighs approximately 800 lbs. With Alan Breitsprecher, his tractor and volunteers Charlie Emory, Bob Brimacomb, Tony Meyer and Kevin Lee, the marker now lays in a secure Pioneer Cemetery. At a later date the marker will be erected onto a recovered base and gently cleaned. The marker has been displaced for an undefined period and the lineage of Ellen is not known and the original burial site is unknown. Anyone with information about Ellen Ryan may contact a member of the Cemetery Commission at 563-382-6290.

A special Thank You goes out to Roland and Alan for their help in recovering this marker.

The Winneshiek County Pioneer Cemetery Commission was formed in 1997 and celebrates its 10 year in existence this year.

Commission members are appointed by the Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors and are volunteers in service.

Kevin Lee (chairperson)

Bob Brimacomb (vice chair)
Lorraine Houck (treasurer)
Susan Jacobson (secretary)
Carlton Haugen (board member)
Vicky Harvey (board member)
Tony Meyer (board member)
Donna Eberling (board member)

Over the past 10 years, the Commission has performed preservation activities and maintained 13 Pioneer Cemeteries, fenced 7, and surveyed 5 Pioneer Cemeteries.

A Pioneer Cemetery by statute law is defined as a cemetery with 6 or fewer burials in the past 50 years. Governor Culver has proclaimed May as Cemetery Appreciation Month.

Included in the message is a photo of Charlie Emory, Bob Brimacomb, Tony Meyer and Allan Breitsprecher with the Ellen Ryan marker.

OUT OF IOWA

Ohio: From the *Westside Messenger*, November 21, 2006: "Beautiful memories linger after two centuries," by Rick Palsgrove, editor of the *Southeast Messenger*. The author writes eloquently of the unique stone of Catherine G., consort of John C. Richardson, M.D. and imagines that she must have been vibrant, warm, kind, good hearted, and beautiful; maybe possessing a gentle smile and a soft laugh that might still be heard on the breeze. A bright ember of life snuffed out in the January (1809) cold. Her distinctive marker is a hexagonal shaped coffin and lies over the length of her grave. A unique marker that no doubt took great effort and care to create and place. He writes that Catherine left this world nearly 200 years ago, but is remembered still as she lies in the northeast corner of the Groveport Cemetery. In death she gave birth to a sacred place as the graves reach out from her grassy spot like an extended family, as others, recognizing the wonder of this place found so long ago, followed suit.

Contributed by SAPIC member, Carol Bottin.

Nebraska: From the *Lincoln Journal Star*, May 21, 2007: "Mental Institutions pushed to release names of dead," by Eric Olson. Located at the Hastings Regional Center cemetery are nearly 1000 graves with small gray stones marking each one. No names or dates are given, as they contain the remains of "inmates" who were judged insane. Only patient numbers are on the stones. The Nebraska Health and Human Services System said that privacy laws prevent it from releasing the names. Historical and mental health advocacy groups are asking that the names be

made public, as has been done in some other states. In Washington state, a coalition of mental health groups will complete plans for a memorial garden at St. Elizabeth's Hospital that will honor the anonymous dead. Clinical psychologist Pat Deegan advocated getting states to release the names of deceased mental patients. "This, for us, is about dignity and respect and combating stigma," Deegan said.

From the *Lincoln Journal Star*, May 22, 2007: "Bruning: Regional center burial records private," by Eric Olson. An opinion by the Nebraska Attorney General's Office upheld a policy that prohibits the Hastings Regional Center from making public the names of 957 people buried in the institution's cemetery. Three statutes were cited in denying access to the burial records. Attorney Thomas Burke who represents the Adams County Historical Society and had asked the state to release burial records, says he will pursue the matter in the legislature.

New books from Amazon.com:

Gone Home: Southern Folk Gravestone Art (paperback) by Jack Solomon (Author), Olivia Solomon (Author), Suzannah Solomon (Photographer).

Price \$15.56 & eligible for free super saver shipping on orders over \$25.

Guardians of the Soul: Angels and Innocents, Mourners and Saints -- Indiana's Remarkable Cemetery Sculpture (paperback) by John Bower. Price \$20.90.

Thanks to the members and friends of SAPIC who contribute news articles, information, and stories to the newsletter. If you wish to have a copy of any complete news article that was summarized in this newsletter, contact Pat Shaw.

Pioneer Cemeteries
by Merlin Begalske 1999

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 home 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 was an active member of the Fayette County Pioneer Cemetery Commission from its inception until his death.

Maintaining Hallowed Ground

by Ron Harris

As spring approaches, cemetery sextons are getting equipment ready for another season of mowing, trimming, straightening tombstones, planning for holiday commemorations, and assisting families and historians find long lost gravesites.

In Iowa, the month of May has been designated Cemetery Appreciation Month to recognize the important repository of historical data cemeteries provide, as well as for their memorial value to loved ones.

Besides the larger burial grounds, smaller, often neglected sites, are scattered throughout the state. Realizing that these old records of the earliest settlers were in danger of being destroyed by the elements and human activity, Iowa legislators drafted a law that authorizes counties to set up Pioneer Cemetery Commissions, to be operated by volunteers, to supervise the restoration of neglected or abandoned cemeteries.

At the state level, The State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries is Iowa's volunteer pioneer cemetery group. (21813 170th St., Birmingham, IA 52535 <http://www.rootsweb.com/~iasapc/>) This organization provides information and support for local restoration efforts and works with the state to draft new laws and provide government oversight of burial sites. The state Association has issued a draft report form to be used to report cemeteries that are in need of restoration. Last year a new law was passed that permits access to cemeteries by researchers or restorers, whether or not the location is on private land

Locally, Clayton County is one of 24 counties (Iowa has 99 counties) to establish such a Pioneer Board. A few sites in the County have been destroyed by roads or farming practices, but most are still identifiable

The Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission was established in 1999 by action of the County Board of Supervisors. The first meeting was held January 11 of 2000 with appointees Lawrence Fox, Donald Sass, Tom Amling, Herbert Kann, and Myra Voss attending.

The current Commission is made up of Lawrence Fox, President (St. Olaf); Myra Voss, Secretary (Elkader); Donald Sass, (Luana); Gene Ruegnitz, (Garber); LeRoy Bolsinger, Colesburg. Former members include Herb Kann, Tom Amling, and Ken Werges.

Ten years before the Pioneer Commission was established, a dedicated group of volunteers had already been going about locating and restoring old graveyards, of which there are abundance in Clayton County. The establishment of a Pioneer Commission provides a small budget and legal sanction for the volunteers' work. Members of the Commission receive no compensation for their work. Some supplies are provided by donations and the yearly budget provided by the County.

The Commission has identified 99 Pioneer cemeteries in Clayton County out of a total of 169 cemeteries. There are 70 active cemetery associations. State law provides that "A county board of supervisors may levy a tax of six and three fourths cents per thousand dollars of assessed value of taxable property to repair and maintain all cemeteries under its jurisdiction, including pioneer cemeteries." (Iowa Code § 331.424B) In practice, townships actually collect the money and maintain the cemeteries. In Clayton County, all townships except Mendon provide funds for cemeteries not maintained by associations, families, churches or other

entities. After the recent restoration of the Eastman Cemetery in Mendon Township, the trustees were asked to establish an assessment to provide funds for maintenance of the Eastman site, but declined to take action.

Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission Secretary Myra Voss stated that each year the Pioneer Commission works on at least five cemeteries, and each year puts up at least two signs to designate a cemetery's name. The Commission has conducted extensive research on County cemeteries and maintains an archive of records and photographs.

Accurate burial records are often difficult to locate. The WPA (Works Progress Administration) set up by President Roosevelt in the 1930s sponsored a Cemetery Recording Project that gave unemployed people the job of traveling about, recording the names and locations of cemeteries and taking down a list of those buried therein.

Records provided by Ms. Voss and Michele Pettit of the McGregor Library listed the Point Ann Cemetery, Walton Cemetery, Chapin Cemetery, and James McGregor burials as the small, very old sites within the city limits.

There is no disagreement about the James McGregor burial—it is marked by the large obelisk next to the McGregor School building. The status of some other sites is not so straightforward.

One set of records shows J. G. (sometime written as J. C.) Walton buried in the Walton Cemetery, another that he is buried in the Chapin Cemetery. The Walton Cemetery listing also includes Martin Overley, son of Martin Jr. and Emily Overley, who died in 1855 at three years of age; J. G. Walton was husband of Nancy Walton, and his death is listed as being March 24, 1867.

Tombstones for Overley and Walton were found on what may be the Walton Cemetery site located near 1202 Buell Avenue. An additional piece of tombstone was found bearing the first name, "Alolphis." It is not known whether this may have been an Overley or Walton or someone else. This site is believed to be now on state property, part of Pikes Peak State Park. According to Gregory Jones of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources in Des Moines, a survey is scheduled for this summer to establish definite property boundaries.

It is probable the listing for Walton being buried in the Chapin Cemetery was because the land was previously owned by McGregor Attorney, Asahel Chapin (1846-1922), and was not the "official" name. There is no evidence (except the note on the Clayton County Cemetery website) of an actual "Chapin" Cemetery—Asahel Chapin is buried in Pleasant Grove Cemetery.

Ms. Voss provided this from Commission records, dated 1968: "As you are leaving McGregor, Iowa, going west. In back of Slaughter's Trading Post to the left in the wooded area near the new home that is being built is a cemetery. There are approximately 12 people buried there, we were only able to find 2, Mr. Lynn Johnson, president of McGregor Historical Society will again check this fall when the leaves are gone." [The two found were Overly and Walton.]

The Monona Historical Society has records that show Martin Overley (father of the boy, Martin Overley, buried in the Walton Cemetery in McGregor) died in 1872 and is buried in Monona. He was married seven times.

Several local sources believe the "Point Ann Cemetery" is the present Catholic Cemetery that is located on the hill north of the school in McGregor, even though that location is not a part of Point Ann, which is east of town along the River. Records of the Pioneer Commission say the Point Ann Cemetery is a "lost" site. Some older McGregor residents report that the present parking area near Point Ann was a burial site for horses in the days of the horse and buggy.

One McGregor cemetery that did exist, but moved, is that of the City's founder, Alexander MacGregor. After he died in 1858, according to his wishes, he was buried in a plot that is now located on the McGregor Heights, on the bluff above where his house was located. When Alexander's brother James died in 1867, and was going to be buried in the same plot, Alexander's wife had Alexander and his young son, who was also buried there, exhumed and moved to Evergreen Cemetery in Prairie du Chien. She did not have a high regard for James! James ended up being buried in the Buell Park site next to the present school in McGregor, the obelisk marking his grave provided by James McGregor's nephew, James Buell. There are no other burials at this site.

As usual, research into local history often brings up more questions than answers. Who else is buried in the Walton Cemetery? When was it established and by whom? Who was J. G. Walton? Is Walton Avenue named after J. G. Walton? Is there a Chapin Cemetery? Is there a lost Point Ann Cemetery? Why was James McGregor buried alone in the Buell Park site? Answers to these questions, if found, will be reported in a future article.

Those wishing more information on county burial sites or wish to volunteer in researching and restoring county cemeteries may contact the Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission in Elkader. Lawrence Fox, president—563-245-1926; Myra Voss, secretary—563-245-1065.

McGregor librarian Michele Pettit provided photos for this story, in addition to factual research. Lowell Siegele provided close-up photos of the tombstones found at the Buell Ave. (Walton?) site. Myra Voss of the County Pioneer Cemetery Commission provided additional information on the burial sites and actions of the Commission. Matt Tschirgi of Pikes Peak State Park provided information on state ownership of property around McGregor.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION New Renewal Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ - _____

E-Mail address _____ Telephone _____

Individual \$10 Household \$15 Organization \$20 Lifetime \$100

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

Mail to SAPIC, c/o Valerie Ogren, Treasurer; 108 N. Oak; Jefferson, IA 50129

GOALS OF OUR ORGANIZATION

- * To identify all cemeteries in Iowa
- * To take such measures as are necessary, possible, and reasonable to protect these cemeteries and the monuments contained in them from danger from natural causes and from human encroachment.
- * To provide guidance and educational materials for use by the people entrusted with the preservation of these cemeteries and the monuments contained in them.
- * To compile and distribute information about the proper maintenance techniques for these cemeteries and the monuments contained in them.
- * To provide advice and information to legislative bodies empowered to pass legislation creating a legal framework for the protection, the preservation, and the maintenance of these cemeteries and the monuments contained in them.
- * To act as a monitor for the administrative and management personnel of these cemeteries, to ensure that the legal measures for the protection, preservation, and maintenance of these cemeteries and the monuments contained in them are enforced.

SAPIC HISTORY

The State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries (SAPIC) was formed in 1996 as a result of legislation that allowed for each of Iowa's ninety-nine 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.

**EACH YEAR, THE MONTH OF
MAY IS PROCLAIMED
'CEMETERY APPRECIATION
MONTH BY THE GOVERNOR
OF THE STATE OF IOWA.**

Meetings

Meetings are held on the second Saturdays of January, April and July. The last meeting of the year is held in conjunction with the Iowa Genealogical Society's Annual Conference in October. Meetings are held in various locations in the state of Iowa. Places are announced in the quarterly newsletters.

Membership

Membership is open to anyone interested in the restoration and maintenance of pioneer cemeteries in Iowa.

Membership entitles each member a subscription to the quarterly newsletter and rights to hold office and vote at meetings.

QUESTIONS?

Phone 319-293-3899
E-mail: patshaw@netins.net
Visit our web site at:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~iasapc/>