

# GRAVE NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES  
21813 170TH ST. BIRMINGHAM, IOWA 52535  
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~iasapc/>

VOLUME 18 ISSUE #3

July, 2013

The next SAPIC meeting will be Saturday, **October 12, 2013 at 10:00 AM** at the Stanhope Community Building in Stanhope, Hamilton County. The Stanhope building is at 600 Main St., right on Hwy 17. It houses the library, holds a good number of people, has kitchenette facilities and good bathrooms. Coffee and rolls will be available in the morning. Lunch to be determined. Contact organizer Jean Ann Ripley for details: [jbripley2@gmail.com](mailto:jbripley2@gmail.com)

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The SAPIC Facebook page can be found by this link

<https://www.facebook.com/SAPICiowa>  
or by searching State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries.

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**Try everything twice.**

**On one woman's tombstone she said she wanted this epitaph:**

**"Tried everything twice. Loved it both times!"**

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From the *Sumner Gazette*, April 27, 1967, Hee Haw News, Published in the Interest of the Sumner Community by W. H. Heyer Sons: Did you know that old grave diggers never die; they just spade away.

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The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) will be presenting two day-long workshops in October. One on How to Apply for the State Tax Credit program on October 17 and How to Complete a National Register of Historic Places Nomination on October 18, 2013. The

workshops will be held in the Heritage Classrooms, First floor, in the Historical Building, 600 E. Locust Street, Des Moines, Iowa. Attached is the workshop information and registration forms. These will be our last workshops until spring of 2014.

Beth

Elizabeth Foster Hill

National Register/Tax Incentive Programs Manager

600 E. Locust Street

Des Moines, IA 50319

[Beth.Foster@iowa.gov](mailto:Beth.Foster@iowa.gov)

515/281-4137 FAX 515/282-0502

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Poetry found on gravestones in Jackson County by Emily Haas of Maquoketa (see story under Jackson County Report):

*Sorrow -- "Rest, Mother, rest in quiet sleep while friends in sorrow o'er thee weep"*

*Victory -- "His toils are past, his work is done, he fought the fight, the victory won"*

*"Sweet Adelbert, into earth a little time was given. He plumed his wings for flight and soared away to heaven"*

*"Although I am dead I am speaking to you. My language is thus that bid my followers adieu. all tears and all sighing are now wiped away. While my body lies mouldering and turning to clay."*

## SAPIC OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President and Web Page: Tony Bengston  
1503 River Road Blvd.  
Independence, IA 50644  
319-415-1175 tonybengston@yahoo.com

Vice-president: William Reedy  
3046 Everly Ave  
Brandon IA 52210  
319-474-2443 reedyart@jtt.net

Secretary: Frieda Davis  
216 Riverview Dr.  
Vinton, IA 52349-2360  
319-472-5348 davisduo85@gmail.com

Treasurer: Valerie Ogren  
108 N. Oak  
Jefferson, IA 50129-1841  
319-386-4784 vjogren@netins.net

Board Member (2013): Molly Beason  
106 East 11th St.  
Tama, IA 52339  
641-484-6061 neecnwy@iowatelecom.net

Board Member (2013): Pat Shaw  
21813 170th St.  
Birmingham, IA 52535  
319-293-3899 patshaw@netins.net

Board Member (2014): Larry Davis  
5716 Kingman Ave.  
Des Moines, IA 50311-2006  
319-277-4917 ld2mstone@q.com

Board Member (2015): Mike Magee  
638 Englewood  
Waterloo, IA 50701  
319-232-8762 Digger4045@yahoo.com

Board Member (2015): Julie A. Eckenrod  
2211 Linn Ave.  
New Hampton, IA 50659  
641-394-3967 jjeck@myclearwave.net

Board Member (2013): Steve Story  
18883 250th St.  
Hawkeye, IA 52147  
563-427-5354 dstory@netins.net

Board Member (2015): Carol Hoffman  
505 W. Chestnut St.  
Bloomfield, IA 52537-1921  
641-226-3093 wilcar@netins.net

Board Member (2014): Vera Heck  
4256 235th St.  
Guernsey, IA 52221  
319-685-4366 vmheck@netins.net

Board Member (2015): Benjamin Mayer  
317 E. Green St.  
Winterset, IA 50273  
319-462-5841 mayer\_ben@yahoo.com

## WHERE TO GET SUPPLIES

**Probes:** Farm Supply Store or a Forestry Supply --  
Suggest length 48 inches

**Basic Stone Cleaners:** Ammonia (non-scented) --  
purchase locally

**Biological Cleaners:** Materials Cooperation,  
1-800-425-2214 (Wisconsin); Granite City Tool Co.,  
1-800-328-7094 (Minnesota); R.I.P., Ltd.  
1-217-898-2422.

**Scrub Brushes** (white-soft, bristle): -- purchase  
locally

**Epoxy:** (clear-knife grade) Miles Supply, St. Cloud,  
MN, 1-800-789-0815

**Setting Compound:** (light grey) Miles Supply

**Setting Cushions:** (1/16 inch) Miles Supply  
-- Suggestions by John Heider jheider@mchsi.com

Note: SAPIC does not endorse products. Contact  
John Heider if you have questions.

A lending library of books and other materials  
related to cemetery preservation can be found on the  
SAPIC web site.

## WHERE TO GET SIGNS

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

## VETERANS' HEADSTONES

<http://www.cem.va.gov/>  
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  
E-Mail: Dennis.Britson@iid.iowa.gov  
(515) 281-5705 or toll-free (877)-955-1212

## OFFICE OF THE STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

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

## SAPIC dues:

Individual for one year: \$10.00  
Household for one year: \$15.00  
Business or organization for one year: \$20.00  
Lifetime individual: \$100.00  
Donations welcome and tax deductible.  
Send dues to Valerie Ogren, 108 N. Oak  
Jefferson, IA 50129-1841

THANKS FOR SUPPORTING SAPIC!

# STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES

The regular quarterly meeting of SAPIC met Saturday July 13, 2013 at the Community Room, Independence Public Library, Independence, Iowa. Meeting was called to order at 10:00 am by Tony Bengston, president. All were welcomed and thanks extended to the Library for hosting the meeting.

Introductions were made by the twenty two persons present. Thank you also extended to Tony Bengston for providing snacks.

Minute's read by Frieda Davis. Motion to accept by Mike Magee, seconded by Bill Reedy, **Passed**

Treasurer's report by Valerie Ogren. Motion to accept and file for audit by John Heider, seconded by Mike Magee, **Passed**.

## Old business:

- Virden burial ground aka Platt's Nursery: Mike Magee reported on the history. Historical Society will search for remains after buildings are all demolished. Reports of two burials beside the 2 year old.

- Jacob Binkerd military marker in Jasper Co. Mike Magee reported that the stone has been replaced with the properly engraved tombstone.

- Oak Grove, Leheigh in Webster Co. No money to repair Mike M. suggests that the best resolve would be to move the graves as nature will keep washing away the 'cliff'.

- Alger Cemetery – Clinton Co. reported about <sup>39</sup>35 burials with 8 <sup>24</sup>24 markers

- Duff Cemetery in Clayton Co. One stone present. The cemetery is still in the family and is supposed to be one acre in size.

- Matrom Elmore-

- Leroy Vokes – Priscilla Reisner reported Leroy was in the cavalry for Buffalo Bill in NE. He was a Medal of Honor recipient. Were able to get a new marker for his grave. Discussion of how many markers do arrive with chips or cracks. Marker was dedicated.

- Mention of an all black cemetery near Ankeny but unable to find death records of whom is buried there. They were primarily mine workers.

- Steve ~~Story~~ reported there is an all black cemetery by highway 150 that were farmers. There are many people in Fayette Co. that have and have relatives with black blood.

- Cemetery workshop. John Heider suggested that SAPIC set a ~~schedule~~ schedule for work/clinics. Referenced many books available for check out on ~~basics~~ basics. Suggested that you need written permission to clean stones. Need to know what people want or don't want. Never use a substance to clean stones that has sodium or acid in their contents. Valerie Ogren made motion to have

SAPIC sponsor an annual clinic on the preservation and care of gravestones.

Seconded by Jean Ripley. **Passed**

- **Grant and Wayne Blessing Grant applications:** Valerie Ogren reported on (1) Hasting Cemetery Association application, in Mills Co. Not a pioneer cemetery. Request grant to install section markers and directory board. Sherri Bacon (Is not a SAPIC member); (2) Fackler Grove, Ely Community Historical Society, Big Grove Trustees. In Johnson Co. Request grant to restore and clean up Fackler Grove. Have a blog on Facebook. Clary Illian signed application. (3) Cottage Hill Cemetery Association, Rickardsville, in Dubuque Co. Request for side three of fencing of the cemetery. Will tear out the old and put in barbed wire. Margaret Harvey. They have 11 veterans in this cemetery. Valerie recommendation by committee to pay \$200 grant to each of these three, seconded by Duane Ogren, **Passed**. Larry Davis presented (4) application from Brendan Finan to renew significance of the Watkins Cemetery, Marian Co. 2-3 miles outside of Knoxville as an Eagle Scout project. Plan to restore gravestones, cleaning site around cemetery and put up signage. Recommendation by committee to pay \$200 to this applicant as a Wayne and Jo Blessing grant to a young person, seconded by Mike Magee. **Passed**. Suggested that the recipients receive a letter asking for a picture or documentation after the work has been completed.

- **Facebook:** Motion to put SAPIC on Facebook by Mike Magee, seconded by Bill Reedy, **Passed**.

### **New Business:**

- Carter, Robert and Phyllis, Award- no applications. Recipients receive a life-time membership to SAPIC = \$100.

- Nominations committee – the president asks for volunteers to serve on this committee. Spring will come soon. Please let him know if you are interested or willing.

- Brian and Jean Ripley brought suggestions for T-shirts for SAPIC October meeting discussion; suggested inviting a politician to the meeting.

Jean Ripley extended in invitation to Webster City in Hamilton Co. Motion by Bill Reedy to accept invitation to Webster City in October, seconded by Valerie Ogren, **Passed**.

Next meeting October 12, 2013

Motion to adjourn by Mike Magee, seconded by John Heider. **Passed**  
Meeting adjourned at 12:10 pm by president, Tony Bengston

Respectfully submitted by Frieda Davis, Secretary.

**STATE ASSOCIATION for the PRESERVATION of IOWA CEMETERIES**

Treasurer's Report for 2nd Quarter – April 1, 2013 thru June 30, 2013

Balance in "Working Account" 31 March 2013, Home State Bank, Jefferson \$ 4198.99

Income

Dues	\$ 170.00
Interest 4/30/13	.36
Interest 5/31/13	.36
Interest 6/30/13	.32
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 171.04</b>

Expense

Ck # 271 - Pat Shaw – newsletter expense	\$ 67.36
Ck #272 – Pat Shaw – reimburse ½ meeting room rent	37.50
	<b>\$ 104.86</b>

Balance in "Working Account" 30 June 2013 \$ 4,265.17

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Balance in "Reserve Account" 31 March 2013, Home State Bank, Jefferson \$ 4,028.39  
April 17 - Life Membership, Shirley Miller \$100.00

Balance in "Reserve Account" 30 June 2013 \$ 4,128.39

I am keeping an accounting of the amounts 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 June 2013** \$ **\$8,393.56**

**Plus additional funds:**

A CD in the amount of \$5,831.45

Rate of interest is 1.41% - matures 6/24/2014

Respectfully submitted,  
*Valerie Ogren, Treasurer*  
108 N. Oak  
Jefferson IA 50129-1841  
Ph 1-515-386-4784  
E-mail: [vjogren@netins.net](mailto:vjogren@netins.net)

Wednesday, July 10, 2013

From [www.PARADE.COM/GETTYSBURG](http://www.PARADE.COM/GETTYSBURG): To revisit the turning point of the American Civil War, fought July 1st through 3rd in 1863, check out these new reads on bookstore shelves.

***Gettysburg: The Last Invasion***

From the book's early pages, the reader is immersed in the grime, heat, gunpowder, and chaos of one of the most important battles in American history. Author Allen C. Guelzo, a Civil War scholar and professor at Gettysburg College, brings new depth to the three-day clash by describing it in visceral detail through the perspective of ordinary Union and Confederate soldiers. The highly readable narrative (which approaches 700 pages) paints a compelling portrait of the war's defining moments.

***Disunion: Modern Historians Revisit and Reconsider The Civil War from Lincoln's Election to the Emancipation Proclamation***

Did you know that regiments from the North and South kept pets—including bears, eagles, badgers, even a camel—as mascots? Or that a significant percentage of Civil War soldiers were under the age of 18? In this eclectic collection of modern commentary on the Civil War (culled from the *New York Times*' blog of the same name), scholars and historians explore the conflict from new angles. Their subjects include the roles of women in the war (at home and on the battlefields), as well as the experiences of African Americans, both slaves and freed man. There's an essay with excerpts from Walt Whitman's diary that convey his pride in the swelling Union ranks; another details Lincoln's failed plan to purchase all the slaves in Delaware with government bonds. The book is a must-read for anyone seeking to understand the war in all its complexities.

***The Civil War in 50 Objects***

A small pair of wrist shackles intended for an infant slave. A newspaper printed by Confederate POWs. Grant's handwritten terms of surrender at Appomattox. These are some of the evocative items Harold Holzer uses to illustrate the conflict that splintered America. In his visual history, Holzer explains the importance of each object, as well as its broader historical context. The collection of 50 things adds a dose of humanity to a war that often feels larger than life.

***TIME Gettysburg: Turning Point of the Civil War***

To commemorate the battle's anniversary, TIME published this beautifully illustrated, oversized book. In nearly 200 pages, it offers an impressive collection of classic war photographs, as well as insights from historians and a series of noted TIME

writers on the events that shaped the battle's outcome.

For reviews go to: [PARADE.COM/GETTYSBURG](http://PARADE.COM/GETTYSBURG)

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Congratulations to SAPIC member, Steve Hanken! E-mail dated July 23, 2013:  
Steve Hanken,

It is my great pleasure to inform you that on 15 June 2013 at the combined annual meeting of the Iowa Society of the Sons of the American Revolution and the General Society of the War of 1812 in the State of Iowa, you were awarded the attached

Certificate of Appreciation in recognition of outstanding support given to the SAR (and GSW 1812).

Specifically your tireless efforts to find, identify, document and share the grave sites of 100's of veterans buried in the State of Iowa.

I apologize for the late delivery but the certificate was just picked up today from the calligrapher (it will be mailed tomorrow).

Steve, thank you as this is but a small public recognition of your outstanding efforts.

Respectfully,

Mike Rowley

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From the *Waterloo Courier*, May 24, 2013: Based on a recent list of American war casualties compiled by the Congressional Research Service, total war deaths (including those directly in battle and other related deaths) include: Revolutionary War, 2,446; World War I, 116,516; World War II, 405,399; Korea, 36,574; Vietnam, 58,220; Persian Gulf, 383; Iraq and Afghanistan, 6,648 (ongoing). Many historians think the number of Civil War dead has traditionally been underestimated and may really have been 620,000 to 750,000, including the many soldiers who died of illness and infection.

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COUNTY REPORTS

BENTON

From the *Vinton Eagle*, October 30, 2012:

"Honoring the Memory of the Fallen," by Angie McFarland. Several photos included in a nearly half-page article document the rededication of the Soldiers Memorial monument in the Evergreen Cemetery in Vinton. Alex Vasques, eighth grade history teacher at Vinton Shellsburg High School was instrumental in organizing the event that brought together people from multiple reenactment groups along with members of the Vinton American Legion, the Vinton Community Band and students from the Vinton Shellsburg band departments. Speakers that are descendants of participants in the original ceremony were part of the rededication event.

From the *Vinton Eagle*, May 14, 2013: "SAPIC honors cemetery appreciation month with restoration, education." In an article submitted by SAPIC secretary Frieda Davis and written by SAPIC president, Tony Bengston, readers are reminded of the purpose of Memorial Day -- to set aside time to honor deceased family members. The article also mentions the purposes and goals of SAPIC.

From the Marengo newspaper, August, 2013:

Sept. 20: Oak Hill Cemetery Walk featuring gravesites of some of Belle Plaine's most prominent and interesting citizens, sponsored by the Belle Plaine Historical Society. Meet at the Belle Plaine Area Museum, 901 12th St., at 1 p.m. Freewill donation appreciated.

### BLACK HAWK

From Jo Porter of the Cedar Valley Roundtable: At the 20 June meeting, the Roundtable voted to send \$250 to Civil War Preservation Trust that would be applied to the purchase of an additional 11 acres for the Vicksburg Military Park. That parcel is directly behind the Iowa Monument and threatened with highway expansion and commercial development. Donations for the purchase of this land may be made online at: [www.civilwar.org/](http://www.civilwar.org/) or payment may be mailed to Civil War Preservation Trust, 1156 15th Street NW - Suite 900, Washington DC 20005. Specify that the funds are to be used for the purchase of Vicksburg land. Rededication ceremony of the Iowa Monument may be viewed at: [www.c-spanarchives.org/program/StateMemo](http://www.c-spanarchives.org/program/StateMemo)

From the *Waterloo Courier*, August 18, 2013:

"Possible pioneer grave studied," by Pat Kinney.

Archaeologists monitor gas station construction along University Avenue in Waterloo. A portion of a construction site is being explored to see if it contains the 165-year-old gravesite of a pioneer family child. The investigation is focused on the grounds of the former Platt's Nursery where Hy-Vee is building a gas station. It is the result of an inquiry by local historian (and SAPIC member) Michael Magee based on a 53-year-old *Courier* article in which Dean Platt alluded to the possibility of a child's grave. Platt had found a stone marker "surmounted by the carving of a lamb" and dated 1848. Mike informed the Office of the State Archaeologist and several months later, archaeologists with Tallgrass Historians of Iowa City came on the scene. The location of the possible burial has been defined and an attempt will be made to recover remains, if evidence of a grave can be found. Identification of the subject will not be made until surviving relatives are notified.

From the KWVL.COM in Waterloo, August 18,

2013: "Historic discovery in Waterloo," by Michael Crowe, Multimedia Journalist: One of the founding daughters of Waterloo may have been found -- at a construction site. Work crews have been stopped because they may have found the burial site of a 2-year-old pioneer girl, buried there in the 1800s.

There's a stain in the ground that has the shape of a small burial plot indicating that it may be an intact burial site, but not yet confirmed. "I thought it was an important part of Black Hawk county history that this little girl be known and have a proper burial," said Mike Magee. He hopes she is found so that she can be moved and buried with her parents.

From the *Waterloo Courier*, September 1, 2013: "Experts confirm pioneer graves near Platt's," by Pat Kinney. Evidence of graves of an infant brother and sister from the 1860s have been removed from a University Avenue construction site for burial by their family elsewhere. Gravestones associated with the two burials also were found, so identification could be made and relatives notified. The graves were tied to a family not listed among the early pioneer settlers of Waterloo.

### BREMER

From the *Bremer County Browsers*, Genealogical Society Newsletter, ISSN - 0896-7415, July, August, September 2013, p. 1: Members of the Bremer County Genealogical Society are shown getting their new cemetery books ready for distribution. They have been working for over three years gathering data from 46 cemeteries in Bremer County to include in reference books. This meant several members walking cemeteries with pencil and pad in hand to record information from gravestones. Additional information was gathered from cemetery record books where available. Then the monumental task of typing all the information into a readable format began. Karlyn Armstrong was thanked for typing the information and getting the manuscript ready for the publisher. The data filled two volumes, a total of 1,010 pages. Included is a map showing where each cemetery is located. Copies have been placed in each library in the county. Copies may be purchased for \$50 each. Contact Mary Buls: 319-276-4753.

## BUCHANAN

From the *Otter Creek Quarterly*, Autumn, 2013, Vol. 28 No. 3, p. 4. A newsletter of the Buchanan county Conservation

Board:

Enjoy a meal of beef roast, stewed tomatoes, fingerling potatoes, peppers, and Amish bread. Tony Bengston of Independence will present a program about Pioneer Cemeteries. Meals are served in the 1851 Richardson-Jakway House! The program raises funds for the Historic Site. Checks should be made payable to the Richardson-Jakway Foundation, which sponsors the event. Registration is limited to 26 people.

## CARROLL

From *The News Gazette of Central Iowa, Publishing*, May 30, 2013: "May is Cemetery Appreciation Month." Pictured is Kenneth Teter of Coon Rapids checking out the graves at the pioneer cemetery, Tuttle Grove, in Orange Township. His great grandfather, William Hopson, named the cemetery "God's Acre" in 1857 when he donated an acre of land for that purpose in 1870. His one-year-old son, Wm A. Hopson, who died in 1857 was buried there. The article, submitted by SAPIC members, Mary and Larry Richards of Cooper, mentions the proclamation by Governor Terry Branstad naming the month of May as "Cemetery Appreciation Month" and lists the goals and accomplishments of SAPIC.

## CHICKASAW

From the *Waterloo Courier*, May 27, 2013: "Remembering a hero," by Pat Kinney. Pictured is Dave Jacobson, Fredericksburg AMVETS Post 90 commander and Chickasaw County Veterans Affairs director, as he stands by a new grave marker honoring U. S. Army cavalryman and Medal of Honor winner LeRoy Vokes, in the Rose Hill cemetery in Fredericksburg. The grave was previously unmarked and its location was determined by genealogist Jeanette Kottke. Vokes won the nation's highest honor fighting alongside "Buffalo Bill" Cody in 1872.

From the *Waterloo Courier*, June 21, 2013: "Tribute to U.S. cavalryman set Saturday," by Pat Kinney. Pictured is a close-up of the new marker that was placed on the grave of LeRoy Vokes, a U.S. Medal of Honor winner from the Indian Wars. Speakers at the event included Iowa National Guard honor guard and retired Iowa National Guard Col. Robert King, Senator Dennis Black, and Paula Ellsworth who is a grandniece of LeRoy Vokes.

From the *Waterloo Courier*, June 23, 2013: "Iowa Medal of Honor hero honored at ceremony," by Linh Ta. For over eighty years, the burial spot of LeRoy Vokes laid barren without any recognition of his bravery or even his name. Vokes passed away at the Old Soldiers Home in Washington D.C. in 1924 and his body was shipped to New Hampton for burial in a family plot. He was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Ulysses S. Grant for "Gallantry in Action" by attacking a party of Minneconjou Sioux in Nebraska

in 1872.

## DECATUR

From the *Leon Journal-Reporter*, May 29, 2013: "May is Cemetery Appreciation Month," by Mary Richards. Under the aegis of educator Rosa Sondag, 46 FFA students and 11 adults came together last fall to help preserve the Trullinger-Reynolds Pioneer Cemetery south of Garden Grove, Iowa. A marker and flag were obtained for the Civil War soldier buried in this pioneer cemetery. Gratitude goes out to the trustees who care for the pioneer cemetery and to those who worked so diligently. The article concludes with the mention of "Cemetery Appreciation Month" and the goals and activities of SAPIC. A photo of the people who worked in the cemetery was published in the *Leon Journal-Reporter*.

## DELAWARE

From the *Waterloo Daily Courier*, May 12, 1968: "Woman's Skeleton Found: Violent Death Suspected." Bones of a human skeleton uncovered April 10 on the Gilbert Heims farm north of Greeley, are believed to have been buried 90 to 125 years ago, according to a report by Helen Dawson, associate professor of anatomy at the University of Iowa college of Medicine. The human remains were uncovered by the Heims' sons while digging a hole to bury a dead calf a short distance from the Heims barn. It was impossible to determine the cause of death, but the position of the skull and absence of some bones indicate that "death by violent means cannot be ruled out."

## DES MOINES

From the *Burlington Hawkeye*, July 10, 1962: "Slaves Buried in Aspen Grove." Aspen Grove cemetery, at the west end of Corse Street, one of the oldest burial grounds in Iowa, was incorporated by the Legislature of the Territory of Iowa on Dec. 18, 1845. The Potter memorial, a massive granite arch over the main gateway on Corse, was erected in 1907 in memory of Mary E. Potter, a prominent Burlington citizen. Buried to the left of the main gate were "Aunt Kitty" and "Uncle Ben," Negro slaves. The stones tell that they were born in slavery and were later able to purchase their freedom.

## HUMBOLDT

From the *Humboldt Independent*, January 28, 1974: "Cemeteries trace pioneer lives; Indians fight near Gotch Park." Two articles about pioneer burial sites are reprinted from the *Republican Centennial Edition* in an effort to solicit contributions of historical data from the public for the Mid Iowa Development Association's (MIDAS) Inventory of historical sites. Interesting facts about the Oakwood, Union, and Indian Mound cemeteries are included. A story about the discovery of hundreds of human bones in a gravel pit on the road to Gotch Park, believed to be the remains of a fierce Indian battle between the Pottawattamies and



the Sioux shortly after 1850 was also printed in the article.

### IOWA

From the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 14, 2013: "Discover pioneer cemeteries." Gail Brown, associate professor of geographic information systems at Kirkwood Community College, spoke to the Iowa County Genealogical Society about Iowa's pioneer cemeteries in August. She began mapping pioneer cemeteries to verify that settlers came into Iowa through major tributaries along the Mississippi River.

### JACKSON

From the *Des Moines Register*, ca 1960s, "Girl Reads Headstones for Poetry," by Thomas Ryder. Pictured is 17-year-old Emily Haas of Maquoketa as she checks a tombstone in a Maquoketa area cemetery for an epitaph. Her pastime is hunting down and deciphering eroded epitaphs on old tombstones. "I have always been interested in poetry and I find great delight in the search for these gems of antique poetry on aging gravestones," she explained. Emily's father suggested that she look for more unusual epitaphs on old gravestones in long-forgotten, grown-over cemeteries. Her methods of deciphering the tombstone poetry include working on one letter at a time, standing to one side using the shadows, and the "rubbing method" in which soft charcoal is rubbed over paper placed over the verse. She feels her hobby is preserving in a small way a part of American poetry that is slipping away. See examples of the poetry she has found on page 1 of this newsletter.

### JOHNSON

From *The Gazette* (Cedar Rapids), July 31, 2013: "County officials hope to learn more about cemetery," by Mark Carlson. The Johnson County Supervisors are seeking historic information about the cemetery at the Johnson County Poor Farm located west of Highway 218 near Iowa City in order to nominate it for the National Register of Historic Places. The Johnson County Asylum, which still stands, is already on the National Register. Pictured is the burial site that is only marked with a wooden cross at present. They would like to have the area investigated and try to properly honor the people who lived and died there. It may be the resting place of more than 100 former residents.

From the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, Sept. 3, 2013: "Cemetery Records now online," by Heather Hubbs. The article relates the 30-year search by Joan Dinnel into her family's past, using paper records, microfilm, and writing letters. Modern technology, such as a new online database at Oakland Cemetery, has made the hunt for history much easier. Anyone curious about the more than 20,000 people buried at the cemetery can search by name, locate a burial site and view copies of cemetery records. Russell Buffington, the cemetery supervisor, says, "We want people to find mistakes. We welcome those, we want our records to be correct." It took Oakland more than seven years to

scan the more than 20,000 records into the database. The web site is updated quarterly.

### LEE

From the *Daily Gate City*, April 30, 2013: "Civil War vet Hart remembered," by Celia Malm. Maj. Verling Hart, a Civil War veteran buried in Oakland Cemetery in Keokuk, was honored April 27 at the Lee County Veterans Project's sixth annual memorial ceremony. About 50 people attended. Included in the ceremony was a brief history of Hart's military service by author Walt Cross, who wrote Hart's biography in the book, "Out West with Custer and Crook." Hart joined the Union Army in 1861 and served two years before being captured during the Battle of Chickamauga. He was held in Confederate prisons more than a year before escaping and reaching Union lines. After the Civil War, he served with Gen. George Custer in the 7th U.S. Cavalry. He missed the Battle of the Little Big Horn as a result of being on sick leave. He was then transferred to the 5th U.S. Cavalry. In 1883, while commanding Fort McKinney in Wyoming, he suffered a heart attack and died. For information about Cross's books, see web site:

[www.lulu.com/greenpheon7](http://www.lulu.com/greenpheon7)

From the *Daily Gate City*, May 13, 2013: "Fabled Keokukians are brought back to life," by Celia Malm. Nine individuals were showcased in the fifth annual Veterans Cemetery Tour on May 11 at Keokuk's Oakland Cemetery, a presentation of the Lee County Veterans Project. In addition to offering people a chance to know more about those who are buried in Keokuk's cemeteries, the tour raises funds to help the American Legion add local veterans' names to the memorial in Oakland Cemetery. At stops on the tour, the following individuals were portrayed or described: Annie Wittenmyer, Edward Caldwell, Mary Collins, Erie Leech, Capt. Leo LeBron, Oliver Conn, Verling Hart, Harriet Townsend, and Hannah Tasker. During the tour, Ernie Paulsen and his wife Joy Kirkpatrick displayed a family album about Capt. Leo LeBron, who died in WWI. Kirkpatrick is LeBron's great-grand-niece.

### LINN

From the *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, Sept. 6, 1970: "Around the Town" column. Imagine the surprise of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Maresh when they recently discovered that a large flat-surfaced stone outside their back door was something more than just a convenient surface on which to step on the way to the garage. The Mareshes contracted to have the driveway widened at their home and the job involved digging around the present driveway and removal of the smooth stone outside their back door. When the stone was dug up and turned over, it became apparent that it was, in fact, a very old grave marker. Further digging also uncovered two small shiny marble markers. The large marker may

be from Civil War days and is inscribed: "Norris Richmond, Co. D, 126th Ill. Inf." The two small stones are inscribed "Pearl" and "Rainbow."

### MAHASKA

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, July 6, 2013: "Fremont flag ceremony was wonderful." Letter to editor from Connie and George Steel, Cedar Rapids. We and many Fremont friends and family truly enjoyed the dedication of The Avenue of the Flags at the Fremont Memorial Cemetery July 3. We heard beautiful music and the history of the American Flag. The presentation of the colors by the American Legion Post 34 of Oskaloosa was so touching. They also honored the deceased veterans with a 21-gun salute and "Taps." We would like to thank the cemetery trustees and all the men and women that helped to make a dream come true! A lovely evening well spent by all who attended.

### MARSHALL

From the *Times Republican*, August 31, 2013: "Grave of Civil War veteran marked with tombstone," by Mike Donahey. In Riverside Cemetery in Marshalltown, several volunteers worked to ensure that William O. Woodard's grave would have a proper marker and his Civil War service would not be forgotten. The ground held a surprise as they dug -- the original grave marker had worked its way underground after 150 years and, therefore, they knew they had the correct location of Woodard's grave. Woodard served in the 5th Iowa Infantry, Company D. At the battle of Iuka (Mississippi) he was badly wounded and lingered in pain several months before he died Jan. 25, 1863. Jay McCann, a Marshalltown historian and writer, has been engaged in a volunteer quest over several years to make sure all Marshall county residents who served in the Civil War are given a proper grave marker. He was assisted by cemetery workers Jim Dobbins and Rolly Danner and Danielle Plaehn, the cemetery's general manager. Jody Anderson, a U. S. Army veteran, learned of McCann's efforts and volunteered to pay the stone installation fees and also for five other Civil War veterans buried at Riverside.

### MARION

The Parsons cemetery is surrounded by a stone "fence" about 30 inches high & 12 feet square. The east wall has collapsed & about 20 stones of all sizes need removed & put back. I saw no evidence of cattle being in the cemetery; no tracks & no cow pies. There is a large hickory tree by the north wall which has partly uprooted that wall as well. If the tree was cut down, it would remove the shade and the cattle wouldn't hang around, but it would be impossible to remove the stump & correct the north wall. There is 15 feet from the east wall to the property line fence to the east. The owners have a hay field which they need to access from a 50 foot "gate" also on the east side. This "gate" is two strands of barbed wire strung on two iron posts. If you want to get into the field you take out the two posts & pull the wire back & then put

it back. And hope the ground is soft enough to pound the posts back in. There is enough room that they can get farm equipment into this field from the north by going around the west and south sides of the cemetery, even if some access is cut off by the cemetery.

Owner of the surrounding land is willing to try & do all the work with some help with some guys he works with. He does construction work in addition to farming. He has an endloader & said when the dirt dried out (if it ever will on that shady east side) he will try to push aside the fallen stones & try to dig out the foundation stones on the east side which have tipped, put in some dirt (he said he has all the dirt needed), & try to lift the stones back.

This is his main concern (and ours)--can he put those big stones back without them being in a jumble again. All the stones in place were mortared in when his grandfather De Hamer did it years ago. Some of those stones can be manhandled with one or two men. Some are so big and heavy, only the endloader could handle them. I told him we have to try. I don't see any role for us as a group except maybe some manpower to help move stones. And maybe find someone with some experience in laying a stone fence like you find all over New England. After this, then we can put a 15 foot fence from the northeast corner of the cemetery to the corner post east (Mahaska County line) & another fence, from the southeast corner of the cemetery to the same corner post, as to leave room for the owners to get into their field. This would keep cattle away from the east side. I offered for our group to pay for this fence, but the landowner said he could take care of that as well. I don't think putting a fence around the entire cemetery would look good. There just aren't any cemeteries like this one & we should try to keep it looking like it is. There also would be no way to put a fence around the south side & part of the east side without cutting off access to the owner's field.

Note: This is a great example of what one person can do to preserve a unique, historic burial site. Thanks to Carl Nollen of the Marion Co Pioneer Cemetery Commission!

### MUSCATINE

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, August 10, 2013: "Iowa man opts for melon grave memorial." At age 79, a southeast Iowa man says he's nearing the end of his life and wanted a unique grave memorial. On Thursday in Fruitland, John Hoopes watched as workers installed what certainly is the cemetery's only marker topped by granite appearing to be a giant slice of watermelon.

Hoopes sold watermelon for decades at Hoopes Melon Stand in Fruitland, south of Muscatine. He told the *Muscatine Journal* he wanted a memorial that reminded him of the family business his great-grandfather began nearly 140 years ago.

Hoopes says he liked the 4,561-pound monument the moment a memorial company suggested the design.

## SHELBY

From the *Harlan Shelby County Republican and Tribune*, ca 1962: "Unfold mystery of old Defiance grave marker." A metal plate intended to mark a grave of Eutia Homer who died in 1884 was unearthed when digging a sewer line in Defiance, Iowa. Harlan newspaper reporter Dick Gilbert began researching old records and talking to Defiance residents to unfold the mystery of the marker. When Defiance grocer, Charles Lehan, found the Latter Day Saints cemetery west of town while mushroom hunting a few days later, a tall pyramid metal marker caught his eye with the family name, "Homer." There was a place where an insert should go and he recalled reading about the find of the metal plate in the article written by Gilbert. Lehan returned to the cemetery and found the plate to be a perfect fit. The two returned to the cemetery later and discovered the metal monument to be hollow. After groping inside, they found another metal plate inside with a different spelling -- "Eulia" instead of "Eutia." They speculated that the first marker was incorrect and was probably made by Frank McQuire who ran a hardware store and had a funeral parlor as a sideline. He had once lived where the marker was found.

## TAMA

From the *Gladbrook Tama Northern*, August 12, 1956: "History of Badger Hill Cemetery" The sketch of the history of Badger Hill was taken from one prepared by Abbie Bright Achenbach and made from minutes of a few meetings that were held and the few records that exist. The cemetery was created earlier than 1868. A small child of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Cole who died Dec. 30, 1868 was buried there. In 1879 the first sexton was hired. He was paid \$2.00 per grave digging.

## VAN BUREN

From the *Van Buren County Register*, July 4, 2013: "Friendly 4 Corners 4-H Club donates to genealogical society." In the past few years the Friendly 4 Corners 4-H Club has been working with the Genealogical Society restoring pioneer cemeteries in Chequest Township. The club (pictured) decided that they would like to help out by making a monetary donation to assist with future restoration projects. The Genealogical Society provides rock foundations, special glues and bricks to restore broken tombstones to the best possible condition. A check for \$300 was presented to Don Aldrich, cemetery crew chairman, by club member Wayne Mast.

From the *Van Buren County Register*, July 25, 2013: Pictured are Don Aldrich, Stan Knipfer and Marvin Daneil as they work on a large stone that had toppled at Wolfe Cemetery in Vernon Township. They used a Webber Gravestone Lift, Model W 4.1 designed and manufactured by Keith Webber, well know metal and story fabricator in the Stockport area, that he donated to the Pioneer Gravestone work project.

## WAPELLO

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, August, 2013: "The Forest People," by Sue Parrish. In an endearing and insightful account of her early pioneer life among the Sac and Fox Indians, Mary Ann Maulsby Mills tells of her childhood experiences with the Indians who gave the family food, deerskins for moccasins, and lead for her father's gun. Her account was published in 2010 as "A True Pioneer Story: Memories of a Pioneer Girl." The book reveals touching incidents that took place including the Sac and Fox sharing the family's grief when a baby died not long after its birth. Shortly after Mr. Maulsby placed in their yard the little coffin he had made, all of the Indians in the area suddenly appeared and set their guns against the cabin, leaving Mary Ann with the memory that she had never seen so many guns in one place. She estimated there were 1,500 in attendance, with footnotes collaborating this estimate, knowing the number of camps in the area at the time. Hundreds of Indians sat on the ground with Sac Chief Hard Fish sitting next to the coffin, offering prayers to the Great Spirit for the family. The Indians then chanted hymns, after which Hardfish picked up the coffin and, cradling it in his arms, walked to the gravesite under an oak tree where he placed the little coffin in the grave and buried it.

## WINNESHIEK

From the *Postville Herald*, June 18, 1969: "Pagin Pioneer Cemetery." The Winneshiek County Historical Museum at Frankville has received an original deed to a lot now known as Pagin Cemetery. It was issued to A. C. Kingsbury, whose infant daughter, Nancy, is buried there. Mr. Kingsbury was a butter maker at the creamery which was located near the cemetery site. The cemetery land was donated by Mrs. William Beard and was dedicated on July 4, 1852, although burials of immigrants who traveled through Iowa along nearby pioneer roads, occurred earlier. The cemetery was originally called the Washington Prairie Cemetery Association, but later came to be known for members of the Pagin family who are buried there. A tombstone marking the grave of little Nancy Kingsbury, who died in 1889, was placed at the site in the 1960s.

## OUT OF IOWA

### ILLINOIS

This past week (July 22-26) has been delightful. During the hot weather, we were only able to work half-days. Started early in AM, stopped about noon, and then went back at 5 PM till dark. In three days, we (my granddaughter) repaired and reset thirty-five (35) grave markers and still have another dozen large, multi-layer monuments to go. Will likely return and finish the cemetery sometime in early August.

Almost have finished with a State IDNR cemetery that is a challenge--rules, rules,

paperwork, and then more paperwork. Originally it was a cemetery, but local residents "donated" to the IDNR for maintenance. They turned it into a "little maintenance" natural prairie and have strict guidelines about the restoration efforts upon their plants. I took an aerial photograph to document my low impact work upon the cemetery. (Contact John Heider for a copy of the photograph). That project has quite a learning curve.

Finished a small Illinois Mennonite cemetery for relatives who live in Arizona and Bavaria (Germany). Correspondence with Arizona-no problem, Bavaria emails occasionally have to be interpreted. For being so far away, the gentleman has done an amazing job of documenting that cemetery.

-- John Heider jheider@mchsi.com

### MINNESOTA

From the *American Profile* magazine, August, 2013: Voices from the Past Cemetery Walk -- Winona, Oct. 12-13. Actors portray local residents and tell stories about the past during this event themed "Lures and Lore, Life on the Mississippi." Woodlawn Cemetery (507) 454-2713

### NEBRASKA

From the *Council Bluffs Nonpariel*, Dec. 3, 1954: A body apparently was removed from a grave at Irvington (Nebraska), Sheriff's Capt. Victory Novotny said Thursday. Earlier in the week, Irvington residents reported a fresh mound of earth in an abandoned private cemetery where someone had apparently filled in a sunken grave. Further investigation showed the 50-year-old grave was opened. Rotten boards and what appeared to be a neck bone and finger bone were all that remained. There is no record of the person buried in the old grave. It may be a case of grave looting. An investigation continues.

From the *Lincoln Journal Star* online, August 4, 2013: "Scout project unearths, identifies long-lost grave markers," by Emily Nitcher. Ethan Cecava, a 15-year-old Boy Scout, decided to build a kiosk listing the names of residents of the former Nebraska Hospital for the Insane whose graves are in the Calvert Street Cemetery, now part of the Lincoln Regional Center. The residents graves were marked with stones engraved with a number only. In 2009, the Nebraska Supreme Court ruled that the state's mental hospitals were allowed to release names of patients. Ethan's kiosk will contain a map showing the burial sites and listing the names of all 467 persons buried there -- from Charles W. Adams, who died July 27, 1924, to Lafayette Young, who died February 12, 1885. Ethan -- with some paperwork left to complete before hopefully attaining his Eagle Scout goal -- said he saw the project as a way to bring dignity to the people buried there. "A way to give them their life back."

### NORTH DAKOTA

From the *Farm and Ranch Guide*, July 2, 2013: "Ranchers work to get county road from covering burials," by Lauren Donovan. There are bones of babies and adults beneath the wildflowers and waving grass on a rocky hilltop far south of Golden Valley. And some, sadly, are beneath the gravel road that runs through those hills like the herky-jerky track on a roller coaster. A hand-lettered sign warns travelers: "You are now driving on unmarked graves." A handful of local ranch families are intent on giving those burials the peace and respect they deserve. The Mercer County Commission will approve a change to a \$900,000 contract it awarded to widen, flatten and straighten that stretch of road, but it will take a curve to the south and bypass the boundary of the burials, thanks to Gary Gierk and other ranch families in the area. A local ranch woman, Peggy Wolff, witched the area and found nearly 200 burials. They named the area "Johannes Gemeinde" for the old -time German Lutheran group that met in nearby schoolhouses. None of the neighbors have burials there and the graves will remain unidentified. The burials are a reminder of hard times. A reminder of the epidemics that snuffed lives of parents and children, childhood diseases that snatched children from the sickbed to the graves within a few heart-wrenching hours, of pioneering men crushed under wagon wheels and women dead in childbirth, and of the blessed old ones who lived a long life. "There's no one here to defend their final resting place," said Janet Connolly, a ranch neighbor.

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### CHINA

From the *Waterloo Courier*, May 17, 2013: "Back from the dead." In Lianjiang City, China, in January, Peng Xinhua, 101, joined a long line of returns-from-the-dead. Following a fall, she had become stiff and without a heartbeat, her two daughters said, and burial was scheduled. Just before the funeral, as relatives and friends were washing her body, Peng opened her eyes and calmly greeted them.

### IRELAND

From the *Orange News*, Ireland: **quirky news** 17 July 2013.

**Funeral directors offer woolen coffins**  
An Inverness funeral director is offering a new take on eco-friendly funerals - by making caskets made out of wool.

**John Fraser and Sons** is offering the woolen coffins as an alternative to the traditional wooden casket, reports *The Scotsman*. They say the environmentally-friendly caskets are surprisingly strong - and can support a body weighing up to 42 stone.