

# Grave News

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES

21813 170th St. Birmingham, Iowa, 52535

Note new ↓  
[sapiciowa.org](http://sapiciowa.org)

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## Inside this issue:

County reports	2
Out of Iowa	3
New Column	7
Officers	7

**The April 14, 2018 meeting of the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries will be held in Burlington, Iowa.**

**The meeting will be held at 10:00 AM in the lower level of the Des Moines County Heritage Center at the NW corner of 4th and Columbia in Burlington.**

**It's the old Burlington Public Library building. Enter through the door on the south side of the building, the one on Columbia St.**

### Directions:

Take US 34 east to exit 263, the last exit before the river. At the bottom of the exit ramp, take the first right onto Columbia St. Drive on Columbia through three intersections and you'll have the Heritage Center immediately on your right.

*Coffee, juice, donuts, and cookies will be served*

## Call for Agenda Items

President John Heider is asking for agenda topics for the April 14th meeting in Burlington, Iowa. Several proposed agenda requests are:

Secretary: previous meeting minutes

Treasurer: treasurer financial report

A. Status of obtaining a SAPIC credit card

Report: State Cemetery Month Proclamation

Law: Changing the number of Pioneer Cemetery burials from 12 to 24;

Web Site: SAPIC web site information update

Recent workshop training grant:

Decorah, Winneshiek County Program:

Sutherland, O'Brien County conference SAPIC presentation;

Political dignitaries' gravestone project outlook:

Gaining legal access to landlocked cemeteries:

Additional topics are welcomed!

Please send your suggestions as early as possible to [jheider@mchsi.com](mailto:jheider@mchsi.com)

The July meeting will be in DeWitt, Clinton County. The October meeting will be held in [Decorah] Winneshiek County.

### LUNCH IN DOWNTOWN BURLINGTON

There are several places in downtown Burlington to have lunch. *Big Muddies* is in the old Rock Island freight house just north of the US 34 bridge and has a lovely view of the river.

*The Drake* is near the river as well. *Martini's* is atop the building at 410 N. 4th and has a lovely view of the river and downtown area. *Napoli Pizza* is on N. 3rd near the railroad tracks. *La Tavola* is a block and a half south of the Heritage Center in a building that once housed the stoneworks that created the first Civil War memorial monument in Iowa.

*Lindo Mexico* is at 8th & Jefferson.

## Burlington's Aspen Grove Cemetery



Attend a 15 minutes presentation on Burlington's Aspen Grove Cemetery which is 174 years old (3 years older than the state of Iowa) and houses:

two territorial governors;

two Iowa state governors;

four Civil War generals; and hundreds of Civil War veterans.

If anyone is interested and the weather cooperates, we'd be pleased to take people out to Aspen Grove before or after lunch for a brief tour.

Lunch is on your own - Plan to see this historic cemetery



### CEMETERY APPRECIATION MONTH

The Office of the Governor has reserved the date of April 11, 2018 at 2:40 PM for a formal proclamation signing ceremony naming the month of May as "Cemetery Appreciation Month." Any SAPIC member may attend the ceremony that will be held at the Capitol in Des Moines. A photo of the Governor signing the proclamation with SAPIC members will be available for submitting to local newspapers and other media. Attendees may also take their own photos of the ceremony. For more information, contact Pat Shaw.

### INTERESTING INFORMATIVE WEBSITE

From Facebook:  
Check it out!



<http://cemeteryconservatorsunit-edstandards.org>

## COUNTY REPORTS

### BREMER

The Bremer County Genealogical Society no longer has cemetery books to sell. Copies of the book are available in the libraries in Bremer County and the Iowa Genealogical Library in Des Moines.



### CHICKASAW



Last December at its Christmas Party, the Chickasaw County Pioneer Cemetery Commission chose to especially recognize and appreciate some of their members and friends for their outstanding work and service to the Commission! Volunteers recognized for their work were Mike Magee, Jeanette Kottke, Fred and Priscilla Reisner, Thelma Allen and Betty Tylee.

### CLINTON

Earl Paarmann, longtime member of the Clinton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission passed away on January 1, 2018. In lieu of other expressions of sympathy, memorials were designated to the Clinton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission.

### DES MOINES

Last summer Wendell Biggs cleaned the grave stones of former Iowa Governors Grimes and Gear that are located in the Aspen Grove Cemetery in Burlington. He reported that both stones are in good condition.

### FAYETTE

From the *Oelwein Daily Register*, February 27, 2018: "Eagle Scout project brings out the best in local teen," by Jake Blitsch. Last October, Seventeen-year-old Jerad Stewart set out to repair nameplates of veterans that are placed under the flags that line the road for the Avenue of Flags at the Woodlawn Cemetery in Oelwein. His intention was to repair only the nameplates that had been severely damaged, but he ended up deciding to repair all 662 nameplates. By repairing the nameplates rather than replacing them at a cost of \$30,000, he was able to finish the project in February, with hard work and long hours, at a cost of only \$1,500. Each nameplate was removed, disassembled, repaired and taken back to the cemetery and reattached to the flagpole holder. The Geilenfeld Funeral Home supported Stewart in his Eagle Scout project.



Donations can be sent to: Jerad Steward Scout Project, c/o Geilenfeld Funeral Home, 309 1st Ave. NE, Oelwein, IA 50662.

### UNION

From the Union County Genealogical Society newsletter, "Union Roots," January 16, 2018: The first cemetery of Afton was located directly north of the village, but in the early 1860s it was moved to its present location 3/4 mile northeast of the town. Among the first buried there were two soldiers of the Twenty-ninth Regiment Iowa Volunteer infantry, M. A. Day and J. H. Dual.

In May 1901, the ladies of Afton formed a cemetery association, the object being to care for and beautify the cemetery. The officers for the first year were: President, Mrs. D.R. Wright; Vice President, Mrs. Fred Fleming; Treasurer, Mrs. Anna Rowell; Recording Secretary, Mrs. Effie Bollinger; Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Carroll B. Williams; executive committee, Mrs. Glattly, Mrs. Lauder, Mrs. Dietrick, Mrs. Pollock, Mrs. Huff and Mrs. Scott. The cemetery was named Greenlawn and, after a few years of anxiety and hard work, they have succeeded in making it a beautiful place.

### WAPELLO

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, February 13, 2018: "Snowfall keeps local groundskeepers busy," by

AAryn Frazier. Maintenance and general care of the city-owned cemeteries in Ottumwa requires keeping the roads cleared for easy access for funerals and visits by loved ones. Two full-time maintenance workers are needed during the winter to accommodate funerals and burials, as well as snow removal to ensure access to family members. They take care to keep the grounds looking as good as possible.

From the *Ottumwa Courier*, February 14, 2018: "Concrete keepsake cements junior high love story," by Winona Whitaker. In 1956, 15-year-old Mel Anderson etched his initials and those of his 14-year-old girlfriend, Bonnie, into the concrete stairs at his junior high school. In 1959, the day after they graduated from high school, they were married. For their 50th anniversary, their sons, Bill and Mike, located the concrete slab with the initials and cut it out with a concrete saw. The school building site was developed into apartments in 2016. The keepsake will eventually cement their union eternally on their graves at the Drakesville Cemetery.

## OUT OF IOWA

### MISSOURI

From KTVO-TV, November 1, 2017: "Community working to give slaves a respect in death they were never afforded in life,"



by Jacqueline Schutte. PUTMAN COUNTY, MO -- More than 150 years after the Civil War, Ray Halley and his family are working together to let the memories of five former slaves rest in peace. Halley's great-great grandfather, Dinwiddie Halley, was a slave owner but allowed his five slaves to be buried in Thompson Cemetery, in the same row as his family, instead of being buried on the family farm or on the back end of the fence line of the cemetery. The slaves had only crude boulders for grave markers, so the community came together to put in cement bases and new headstones. If other graves of slaves are found in the cemetery, a stone will be donated and placed to mark their graves, also.

### NEW HAMPSHIRE

On February 24, a woman in New Hampshire posted on Civil War Talk on Facebook that she saw a CW Veteran's marker/flag holder for sale in an antique shop and posted a picture. Jo Porter from Waterloo responded that it might be illegal to sell this item. The woman returned to the shop and informed the owner who writes a column for the local newspaper. The owner was receptive to checking on the legality of selling the item and plans to write a column on the subject.





## OREGON

From the *Portland Tribune*, December 6, 2017: "Rules proposed for permits to restore cemeteries," by Paris Achen.



A bill was passed by the Oregon Legislature in 2017 that requires the Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation to establish a permit process to enable restoration and maintenance work at abandoned cemeteries. Sponsor of the bill, Rep. David Gomborg said, "Fewer people are using cemeteries; more people are having cremation. We are seeing an increase in abandoned cemeteries. The question has become how do we maintain these properties that contain our relatives and our history but are increasingly filled with trash, blackberries and graffiti." An abandoned cemetery is defined as one where no one has been buried for the past five years. An applicant for a permit must provide evidence that the cemetery has no known owner and document the intent of the group or organization interested in restoring an abandoned cemetery.

## PENNSYLVANIA

From the American Legion e-newsletter, September 14, 2017: "They're veterans, and they deserve



better." During a walk through the veterans section of the Greenwood Cemetery in New Castle, 15-year-old Jessica Dudo noticed many of the headstones had either been worn down, broken or were simply missing. With help from her father, Michael, a U.S. Navy Persian Gulf veteran, their mission is to ensure that every veteran's marker is repaired or replaced. Using the list of veterans' graves provided by the cemetery and a searchable data base, they have found more than half of the graves and are working to obtain a Department of Veterans Affairs marker with the veteran's name and military branch for each. They are planning on doing fundraising to obtain stone backings for the VA-provided bronze markers.

## VIRGINIA

From the Lucas County (Iowa) Countyan blog, "The rest of the 'Tombstone House' story." In the 1930s, the owner of an Italianate-style house located in Richmond, Virginia used parts of tombstones once located nearby in Poplar Grove National Cemetery to reface his home and to pave a sidewalk. The cemetery contains the remains of approximately 5,700 troops, most of them Union, who died in the Siege of Petersburg. The graves were originally marked by wooden head-



boards, and were replaced in the 1870s by marble for the 2,300 identified remains and by numbers carved into the tops of 6-inch-square blocks for 3,400 "unknowns." In 1933, the U.S. War Department transferred responsibility to the National Park Service that decided to pull up the upright marble tombstones, cut off the long bases, and drop the inscribed 12 inches of the stones flat to they could be mown over. The surplus marble was sold to the homeowner who used it to reface his home. After the flat stones deteriorated and were broken, more than 5,700 markers were replaced with new stones. That project was completed by Memorial Day 2017. The older damaged stones were ground up so they couldn't be inappropriately recycled. No more "tombstone houses."

From the American Legion web site, February 16, 2018: "Legion discusses future of Arlington National Cemetery."

A 2017 report to Congress noted that keeping Arlington National Cemetery active in the future requires evaluating three key options: redefining eligibility criteria for interment and inurnment; considerations for addition expansion opportunities beyond current boundaries of the cemetery; and alternative ideas for maximizing the current space within the cemetery's geographic foot-

print. According to Gerardo Avila, deputy director of The American Legion's National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Division, "If nothing is done within the next 23 years, Arlington will reach maximum burial capacity." More than 90 percent of respondents to a National Dialogue Survey felt strongly that eligibility criteria should be changed, limiting burial plots for Medal of Honor recipients and active-duty service members killed in action. Two expansion projects are currently being considered that will help prolong the life of the cemetery into the early 2040s.

### SCOTLAND

Morning Mix

400 children from Scottish orphanage of 'horrors' believed buried in mass grave, media report says

By Samantha Schmidt  
September 11, 2017

Smyllum Park orphanage (Courtesy White Flowers Alba).

The children taken to the notorious Smyllum Park orphanage in Lanarkshire, Scotland, came



from poor, working-class families and broken homes. About 11,600 children passed through the institution from its opening in 1864 through its closure in 1981, left in the care of an order of Catholic nuns.

Former residents have detailed allegations of being brutally beaten, kicked in the head, neglected and publicly humiliated by the orphanage's staff and being forced to take freezing cold showers, according to British and Scottish news outlets. One former resident's physical and psychological abuse was described in the Scotsman newspaper as "hideous treatment at the hands of nuns."

For many years, an unknown number of children were believed to have died in the home, but exactly how they perished — and where they were laid to rest — remained a mystery.

Then, in 2003, two former residents uncovered a troubling discovery: an overgrown, unmarked burial plot at a nearby cemetery, which they believed might be filled with the bodies of children. The religious organization that ran the home, the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent DePaul, confirmed that Smyllum residents were indeed buried there, according to the BBC and Scottish newspapers. In 2004, the group said records suggested that 120 children had died at the orphanage, and their re-

mains were buried in 158 compartments in the plot, located about a mile from Smyllum, at St. Mary's Cemetery in Lanark.

But the two former residents who found the unmarked graves believed the number of children buried was much higher. It turns out, they may have been correct. According to a lengthy joint investigation by the BBC and Scotland's Sunday Post published Sunday, up to 400 children are believed to be buried in the mass grave.

By sifting through archived death certificates, the BBC and Sunday Post found 402 certificates listing Smyllum as the place of death or normal residence. After checking with surrounding cemeteries and local authorities, the reporters found only two of those 402 were buried elsewhere, according to the BBC.

Based on the death records the reports cited, an average of one child died every three months at Smyllum. In some periods, the recorded death rate was about three times the average for children in Scotland, the Guardian reported. Most of the children died of natural causes, including diseases such as TB, pneumonia and pleurisy. it was claimed. About a third of those who died were age 5 or under, the BBC reported.

The revelations evoked comparisons to a home for mothers and children in Tuam, Ireland, where a forensic exami-

nation revealed 17 underground chambers containing "significant quantities of human remains," the remnants of young children of "unwed mothers" dating from 1925 to 1961. Estimates have put the number of bodies at Tuam at 700 to 800.

[The 'mother and baby home' at Tuam, Ireland, where friends just 'disappeared, one after the other']

"The true scale of the horrors of Smyllum long hidden by the Roman Catholic church are only being now revealed," the organization White Flowers Alba, which advocates for survivors of the orphanage, said in a statement to The Washington Post.

In an interview with The Post, the group's founder, Andi Lavery, said the residents at Smyllum were given a stipend from the Scottish government for food and proper medical treatment. Lavery said he read the death certificates cited by the BBC and Sunday Post, and said many causes of death included malnutrition and blunt trauma to the head.

### WALES

From Wales On line, February 16, 2018: A man has bought an entire graveyard to



stop anyone building on top of his ancestors. Richard Hopkins discovered five generations of his family were buried in the abandoned graveyard in Swansea. An abandoned Swansea graveyard has been bought by a man who wants to protect the graves of his ancestors.

Richard Hopkins has purchased the former Babell Chapel cemetery in [Cwmbwrla](#) for £6,000 after carrying out research into his family history and finding five generations of his family were buried there under the 'Thomas' name.

But he said he was shocked to discover the state it was in, and decided he had to take action after reading a [WalesOnline](#) report that it was going under the hammer. Mr Hopkins, who has since set up Babell Chapel Restoration Ltd, said: "I first came across the chapel and graveyard a year ago as part of research into family history. I was appalled by the state it was in.

"I put a speculative offer in and was pleased it was successful." He plans to repair his ancestors' graves, clear the vegetation and make walking paths so it can be enjoyed by the community. He said it would be a "long term project" that could take up to five years.

### Man-Made Winter Thaw

During Iowa's cold winter months, frost may penetrate ground to a depth of several feet and if a funeral was scheduled during long freezing periods, digging by hand or machine was hampered by frozen ground. Excavation was eased by using a



grave site ground warmer that was placed over the area for several days. Energy heat sources were charcoal, propane or fuel oil. This example used an internal diesel fuel heater.

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*Pushing Your Luck* by John Heider



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## New Column

In the past, Mike Magee has supplied the Grave News with many interesting articles from the past.

These historical reports will be sent as a separate news letter.

We may call it *Mike's Musings*.

Read these interesting stories from the past and compare how much the past is like the present.

If you have any comments or questions you can contact Mike at [Digger4045@yahoo.com](mailto:Digger4045@yahoo.com)



**SAPIC dues:**

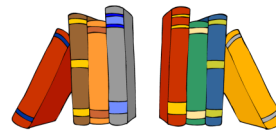
Individual for one year: \$25.00  
Household for one year: \$35.00  
Business or organization for one year: \$40.00  
Lifetime individuals: \$200.00

*Donations welcome and tax deductible.*

Send dues to:  
Brad Hughes, 308 NW Sunset Lane  
Grimes, IA 50111



SAPIC is on Facebook!



SAPIC Lending Library has books and other materials related to cemetery preservation; the list can be found on the SAPIC web site. [sapiciowa.org](http://sapiciowa.org)

Contact SAPIC president John Heider for a list of suggested cemetery supplies and where to purchase them.



Thanks to SAPIC member Tony Bengston for obtaining a new web site provider and for transferring the information to the new site. The web site is currently “under construction” but is available for use.

**WHERE TO GET SIGNS**

Iowa Prison Industries  
Box B  
Anamosa, IA 52205  
1-800-336-5863

**VETERANS’ HEADSTONES**

<http://www.cem.va.gov/>  
Telephone: 1-800-697-6947

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