

Grave News

NEWSLETTER OF THE STATE ASSOCIATION FOR THE PRESERVATION OF IOWA CEMETERIES

31086 Crystal, Strawberry Point IA <http://sapiciowa.org/>

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July, August, September 2021

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Next Meeting

**October 9, at 10:00 AM
in Tama County,
at the Meskwaki
Event Center.**

Entrance is through the main casino entrance, where a security guard will direct you to the meeting room. Masking is recommended, and maybe required by tribal rules in some areas.

Barring scheduling problems, Jonathan Buffalo, tribal historian and Heritage Center Director, will share with us some of his experience with burial-site protection and access issues. If enough of us show interest, the tribal museum may be opened for us (it is normally closed on Saturday.)

Suggested agenda items should be submitted by October 2.

ELECTION

Annual Election of Board Members & Officers at October Meeting.

Nominees are needed for SAPIC Secretary and Treasurer. Would **you** help by keep meeting minutes for the four meetings a year? Please consider offering to be a nominee. Larry Davis has done a great job and could answer any questions about the Secretary's duties. If you are interested in meeting people across the state, would you help by collecting membership information, record payments and write checks for grants?

Brad Hughes has faithfully collected and recorded all expenditures and income as Treasurer and could provide answers to any questions you have about these responsibilities.

Volunteer to President Bill Reedy.



Ballot as of today

President: William Reedy
Vice President: John Heider
Board Members:
Brad Hughes
Russ Gardner
Kevin Lee
Milly Stewart
Jody Holland
Tony Bengston
Benjamin Mayer
Jean Ripley

SAPIC celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2021

In 1994, a small group of preservationists met with Loren Horton of the State Historical Society and formed a "steering committee" to work for greater protection of early and neglected cemeteries.

Others from around the state joined in the effort through 1995, forming the State Committee for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries. The group was successful in convincing the legislature to enact the laws that still form the framework for the preservation and protection of burial sites: defining "pioneer cemetery," making county supervisors respon-

sible for such cemeteries, and establishing commissions.

With its growth in numbers and expanding reach of its efforts, the committee became the State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries, and by 1996 was offering support and assistance to individuals and groups working for cemetery preservation.

Since that time, SAPIC continues to coordinate preservation efforts across the state; offer



grants and educational programs to those working to save cemeteries from encroachment or destruction; sponsor additional legislation to facilitate the protection of burial sites; and offer a range of assistance to any group or individual engaged in cemetery preservation efforts.

MEETING MINUTES

JULY 10, 2021

The State Association For The Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries (SAPIC) met Saturday, July 10, 2021 at the Buchanan County Senior Center in Independence, Iowa. President Bill Reedy called the meeting to order a 10:00 a.m.

Secretary Report: President Reedy stated that the minutes of the April 10, 2021 meeting were printed in the Grave News newsletter. A motion was made and seconded to approve the minutes of the last meeting as printed. Motion carried.

Treasurer Report: Treasurer, Brad Hughes presented the following treasure's report: Funds on hand as of June 30, 2021, consist of \$4,875.76 in a share draft (checking) account, \$5.00 in a reserve savings account, and \$9,511.22 in time certificates of deposit. These funds total \$14,391.98 and are above year-end balances of the last several years. Actual cash flow for year-to-date 2021 is \$678.06, above the annual budget of \$350.64. Account balances continue to accumulate and exceed those necessary for daily operations. As a non-profit entity, it would appear appropriate that funds exceeding that needed for daily operations be expended on fulfilling the SAPIC mission. Because of this, significantly increasing grant amounts is encouraged. The 2021 budget has yet to be approved because of quorum was not present the prior meeting in April. A motion was made and seconded to accept the treasurer's report and approve the 2021 budget. Motion carried

Grants: After considerable dis-

cussion a motion was made and seconded for grant applicants to request up to \$500 and not to exceeded four such grants. Motion carried.

It was also noted that there is a \$500 grant available each year for educational purposes, such as cemetery restoration, workshops, etc. It was also suggested that grant funds be issued to the applicant after the work is satisfactorily completed.

Nomination Committee: President Reedy appointed the following to be on the nominations committee: Mike Magee, Mary Richard, Donna Story

It was noted that all four officers and five board members will be elected at the October 9th meeting.

Miscellaneous: Status reports were given on restoration of cemetery damage from the Derecho. Considerable work has been done and arrangements have been made for completing most damaged areas. Questions were asked on insurance coverage for volunteers and cemetery commissions, whether its liability, health, or material damage. It was noted it varies by county and one should check with the county auditor for insurance questions. The issue of planting trees or shrubs in cemeteries was discussed. Older cemeteries did not have rules or restrictions; however, newer ones usually do.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.
Secretary, *Larry Davis*

Note: After the adjournment, members were invited to tour the museum at the State Mental Health Institute in Independence.



County Reports

Chickasaw County:

Submitted by Judy Liddle
The Chickasaw County Cemetery Commission has had an active summer so far. The North Cemetery repairs are complete. A sign with the names of those known to be buried there is currently being made.

The St John's German Lutheran Cemetery work was completed recently. A neighboring farmer assisted by providing a tractor and a backhoe to help resetting some large headstones and monuments. That assistance was greatly appreciated. These photos are from the work the commission did this year! We were fortunate and we had extra help and machinery from the church members. We were very appreciative of their help. They bought a white fence to go around the cemetery which really dressed it up! They also bought the grass seed and netting that was put down where the overgrowth was.



At Stapleton Cemetery and Union Cemetery some headstones were recently redone. People who live in the area were very impressed with the work done there.

The July 27, 2021 issue of the New Hampton Tribune had a very nice article about what the CCCC has been doing.

Des Moines County:

Submitted by Herbert Price
 Pioneer Cemetery Commission's work restoring large monument felled by a falling tree in **Sourwine Cemetery**. Fortunately, they were able to place it back together as the only damage from the falling tree was a small chip in the cap.



Fayette County:

Pioneer Commission's work in 2020:
 Submitted by Donald Bright

Labor is always very difficult to come up with since the original founding group have all moved on and another generation is trying to keep things going but it is difficult.

We continue to have eight of our cemeteries mowed as needed. We presently have approx. ten members but most of the labor has come from four. We have glued, cleaned, leveled stones plus maintained fence line weed control. As the

stones age some of the tops break off. One member of our group decided to do something about the missing tops. He made a mold and started making cement crosses which we then glue on in place of the original top they look pretty good. .



A handrail was installed to assist access to cemetery on a hillside.



We have placed 8-foot crosses at each of our cemeteries.

Muscatine County:

Submitted by Joe Furlong

When working in the three small rural cemeteries located in southern Muscatine County, I note birth dates of those buried to see if they are a veteran of a conflict. If there is nothing on *Find A Grave* I send the name to fellow SAPIC member, Tom Gaardt, who has the expertise to research. Tom has verified a handful for me as having served in the military; then a bronze flag holder designed for their specific war is installed.

John Helm and the Northwest



Bronze flag holder identifying war

Territory

Indian War

In Houtz Cemetery, which has only 34 names recorded, a marble tablet shows John Helm was born in 1773 so I thought there was a possibility he fought in the War of 1812 but he would have been around 40 years of age. Fortunately, his biography was on the internet and I was astonished to learn he had fought in the Northwest Territory Indian War (it goes by other names), a conflict I was unaware of, I don't believe it got covered in high school history.

After the Revolutionary War Britain ceded to the new government the Northwest Territory which today includes the states of Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, Indiana, Illinois, and land east of the Mississippi River in Minnesota. But the British maintained a hidden presence and urged Indian tribes in the territory to attack United States soldiers and settlers which they did, killing hundreds and burning several forts.

John Helm joined the army President George Washington assembled, led by General "Mad" Anthony Wayne, to subdue the Indians. Helm's biography notes he was a scout and wagon master for Wayne because of

his knowledge of trails and roads of the west (Ohio). When they reached one of the burned forts they found bones of hundreds of soldiers killed two years previous and had to push them aside to find a place to sleep.

The soldiers were attacked while rebuilding the destroyed forts with Helm involved in three major battles and had a horse shot out from under him.

Food was scarce and the men survived on half a pint of flour for a week then ate roots and acorns for another three weeks. The Legion of the United States eventually defeated the British led Indians with Helm serving for three years and "had a wound from the Indian wars that never properly healed." He spent four decades in Blacksburg, Virginia then emigrated to Iowa, living here until his death in 1854 at age 81.

To honor John Helm, next to his stone is a bronze flag holder and plaque noting he served in the Northwest Territory Indian War.

Polk County:

Military Stones

Submitted by Mike Rowley

At the start of 2020, 86-year-old retired Des Moines firefighter Bob Niffenegger, Tim Rowley and Mike Rowley had a goal of placing 5 granite military stones on the graves of unmarked veterans of the War of 1812.

By Memorial Day 2021 the three of us had researched, documented, applied for, received and installed 168 military stones in 18 months.

Most of the stones have been for Civil War veterans in Woodland Cemetery in Des Moines but they have also included stones for a Revolutionary War veteran (NC), as well as veterans of the War of 1812, Mexican/American War, Civil War, Indian Wars, Spanish/American War and WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and modern soldiers in conflicts around the world.

Many interesting stories have been discovered, including....

1. The grave robbery of Civil War veteran William Case in 1892 by a member of the Drake University Medical School.

<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/35886962/des-moines-tribune/>

2. Civil War veteran Henry Furry a convicted axe murderer who died a week before a planned parole after serving nearly 30 years in Anamosa

<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/35886962/des-moines-tribune/>

3. Elijah Wishart, a Civil War veteran and Des Moines Police officer The first Des Moines police officer killed in the line of duty

<https://www.newspapers.com/clip/35886962/des-moines-tribune/>

4. Hans Penney Nielson, the reported veteran of 5 wars and cousin of J.C. Penney spent weeks researching only to learn that his service was a total scam. See prison photo. Still buried with Sp/Am war vets in Glendale Cemetery

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/173096866/hans-penney-nielson>

5. Countless stories of great sacrifice by both the men and women who served AND their families.

6. Members of Company M of the 7th U.S. volunteers. A group made up entirely of Black soldiers with the exception of the Captain. Most of the Company never had stones in Glendale Cemetery.

<https://armyhistory.org/the-black-immune-regiments-in-the-spanish-american-war/>

7. Esther Allen a Civil War nurse who was many times recognized by her veteran peers as a veteran, only to be denied a VA stone. We had one made and noted her service.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/38963349/esther-eliza-allen>

8. James B. Morris, who graduated the first U.S. Army black officer candidate class at Fort Des Moines, Iowa in 1917. He led the 3rd Battalion, 92nd Division, 366th Infantry against Imperial Germany surviving two combat wounds in WWI France 1918.

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/83752921/james-braddie-morris>

You don't have to mark hundreds of graves. Preserving, repairing, or improving one makes a difference.

Last of all let me share something that just happened. Bob Niffenegger was out cleaning a stone in Woodland cemetery in Des Moines. A car with individuals from California was driving around looking for a grave of an ancestor. It was the very grave that Bob was cleaning at that very moment. Many would call it a crazy coincidence. Having seen several other situations like this I am not so sure.

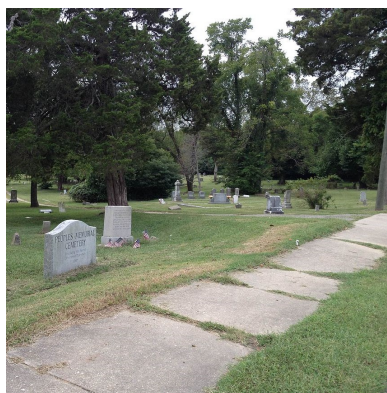
Thanks to all our members who have done and continue to do so

much.
Mike's list has 1242 veterans of all eras in Woodland (and adjoining IOOF, Emanuel & St. Ambrose) Cemetery in Des Moines, Iowa. Mike welcomes information from family members, friends or historians of veterans buried here that may have been missed. Mike Rowley, 1825 NW 129th Street, Clive, Iowa 50325, (515) 975-0498 MJR1825@gmail.com

See also ~ **New Way to Walk Through the Cemetery**

QR Codes link to videos recounting lives of pioneers

There is a new history project by Kristine Bartley at Woodland Cemetery. We think it is the 1st of its kind in the country.



https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-des-moines-97827fdf-c492-44c2-872c-8cb1dc3c4e83.html?chunk=2&utm_term=emshare#story2

(You may have to scroll to find the heading New Way to Walk Through the Cemetery.)

<https://www.kcci.com/article/iowa-cemeterys-qr-codes-bring-the-peoples-stories-to-life/36780578#>

Western Iowa Counties:
WIPCA – Western Iowa Pioneer Cemetery Association

Submitted by Valerie Ogren
This group just hosted a “Celebrate 175th Kanessville to Council Bluffs 1846 – 2021” History Symposium via Zoom August 20 – 21st. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/128805307161615/> There is also a shared link about Historical Markers Grant Program from Dan Rittel.

Woodbury County:
SERGEANT BLUFF CEMETERY
Committee explores moving local cemetery to new location
Story in Sioux City Journal and Des Moines Register
<https://www.siouxlandproud.com/news/local-news/siouxland-stories-committee-explores-moving-local-cemetery-to-new-location/>

Cemeteries are often referred to as a final resting place. However, that might not be the case for one Siouxland graveyard.

It's a hillside home for some 1,200 folks who have taken their last breath on Earth. What remains are names and numbers etched on ageing headstones and sits almost completely hidden. “The more we talk to community members they had no idea a cemetery existed there,” said Joe Hanson of Brickworks.

Since 1854, this land has served as the final resting place for some of the area's first settlers, Civil War veterans and everyday people. But for those remembered here, it is not a peaceful rest.

Today, Woodbury Township Cem-

etry in Sergeant Bluff is surrounded by the sprawling industrial operation of Brickwork. The Homan family started the now universally known brick maker more than a century ago. Cemetery in Sergeant Bluff is surrounded by the sprawling industrial operation of Brickwork. The Homan family started the now universally known brick maker more than a century ago.

“Homan is the first person to allow people to be buried there in the 1800's. That one grave led to 10 and 20 and have expanded over the years. It's not appropriate for the cemetery to exist where it is today and continue to have industrial operations all around it,” said Hanson.

Since the property has no remaining plots and is built on a hard to walk hillside and operates on gifts and volunteers, a cemetery expansion committee has partnered with Brickworks to explore moving the cemetery to a more acceptable area.

“That's my grandfather, great grandfather. I knew him well, he had a little house on the south side of Sioux City,” says Bonnie Stevenson.

Stevenson serves on the expansion committee. Family members, including her great-grandfather, are buried here.

“The opportunity to have a more appropriate accessible location for these plots is a blessing,” said Bonnie. “It's appropriate for their final resting place.”

It's an expensive undertaking. Brickworks, based in Australia, has pledged millions to the project.

Few understand the obstacles this piece of property is facing better than board member Jerry Logemann.

“It detreated through the years and now you have the problem who is going to repair this. How do you go about this when there is now money. It's just simply going to get worse,” said Jerry. “You are just struggling and struggling.”

It's one of those things everybody expects somebody else to take care of," he added.

So how might Woodbury County's oldest cemetery become the county's newest?

"You have to have a permit issued by the state, supervised by a funeral director, hiring a project manager and then we have a contractor with the advice of an archeologist," said Hanson.

The cemetery board will be asked to give its blessing to the project in October, as will the next of kin.

"We have hired a private investigator who's tracking down the next of kin for almost all the people that are currently buried there," said Joe Hanson.

If approved, the new cemetery would be built a short distance from the current site mirroring the current plot alignment with a designated section to honor veterans and their wives, a columbarium and be easily accessible with four times the number of plots.

"What we see here is an opportunity to open a bigger cemetery, grow with the community for many years," Joe said.

"The opportunity now my family will have to give honor to relatives, it's appropriate," said Bonnie.

SAPIC OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS

President: William Reedy 3046 Everly Ave. Brandon, IA 52210 319 -474 - 2443 reedypart@jtt.net

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SAPIC Treasurer

SAPIC deposit balances as of May 31, 2021:

Share Draft (checking)	\$4,875.76
Reserve Savings	\$5.00
Time	\$9,489.20
Total	\$14,369.96

Brad Hughes

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

Proper Cleaning Tools Submitted by Mike Magee

<https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/laurenstrapagiel/tiktok-headstone-cleaners-gravetok>
<https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/how-to-clean-gravestones>



SAPIC is on Facebook!

SAPIC Lending Library has books and other materials related to cemetery preservation; the list can be found on the



Cleaning Headstones

I recommend a chemical product called KEYSTONE that is very similar to D2, a comparable product. There are less expensive products, but if you're going to spend the effort and time, choose one of the following chemical cleaners:

D2 comes as a one gallon RTU product and cost about \$60 delivered.

KEYSTONE is a concentrate, comes in a quart, and makes 2 gallon of cleaner. Cost is \$25 delivered.

D2 may be ordered from Miles Supply, 1660 West Broadway, Rockville, MN 56369; 1-800-789-0813.

KEYSTONE may be ordered from R.I.P., Ltd., 988 Iron Horse Place, Monticello, IL 61856; 217-898-2422. --

John Heider

STATE CEMETERY REGULATOR

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