



# NEWS



# NOTES

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JONES COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. Box 174 ANAMOSA, IA 52205

Nov-Dec. 1994

## A PIONEER CALLED.

William J. Merritt was born in the state of New York, August 15, 1836, and died at the home of his half brother, H. S. Merritt, near Olin, Iowa, at an early hour Monday, March 29, 1915, at an advanced age of 78 years, 7 months and 14 days.

While but a babe in his mother's arms, his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John Merritt responded to the call of the West, and on the 11th day of December, 1836, they started on their Westward journey. The long journey was continued at slow and easy stages, until the early fall of 1837, when they arrived at Clinton, and in November of the same year, the family arrived in Jones county. Being attracted by the beautiful Wapsie Valley West of Olin, Mr. Merritt took up a homestead there, and on this homestead, in the then wilds of Iowa, the deceased grew to manhood.

He was the fourth son of a family of seven children born to John and Catherine Merritt

In 1861, he was married to Elizabeth Kellogg, and continued to reside in this vicinity until the year 1882, when the call of the west came to the deceased, and he moved to Dakota. Later he moved to Montana, where his wife died, December 27, 1896. He continued to live in the west until a few years ago, when he came back to Iowa, where he made his home with his half brother H. S. Merritt until death called him.

On October 11, 1870, he was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason, in Ancient Landmark Lodge at Olin, and during all these years since, he has been a brother indeed. Besides being a good Mason, he was also a man among men. The spirit of the pioneer days never left him, and he was always endued with the spirit of hospitality. No friend or neighbor in need of help or assistance ever appealed to him in vain, in fact, he was often called the "Good Samaritan" of the

CONT:  
Wm J MERRITT

neighborhood. In his dealings with his fellowmen he was always honest and upright, and had the confidence of all who knew him. One of the most commendable traits of his character was his love for children, and he always took a great interest in them, and by his many acts of kindness and attention many a little heart was made glad.

His last sickness was of but short duration. Less than a week before he died, he was around in his usual good health, when he was suddenly stricken down by paralysis, and passed peacefully away to the great beyond.

He leaves to mourn his departure three brothers—H. N. Merritt, of the state of Washington; Joseph Merritt, of Sturgis, South Dakota, and J. J. Merritt, of Olin, Iowa. He also had seven half brothers and sisters as follows: Mrs. L. O. Hay, of Anamosa; Mrs. F. A. Byerly, deceased; Mrs. J. W. Whitmore, of Chicago; Mrs. W. E. Tallman, of Olin, Iowa; Mr. H. S. Merritt, of Olin, Iowa; Mr. C. W. Merritt, of Winner, South Dakota, and Mrs. U. G. Byerly, of Marion, Iowa.

The funeral services were held at the U. B. Church last Tuesday afternoon, conducted by the Rev. C. C. Hobson, assisted by the Rev. J. M. Smith, and the body was laid away in the family burying ground near the old Merritt homestead. The Masonic ritualistic service was rendered at the grave.

## MARRIED

At Iowa City, on the 12th day of October 1921, Mrs. Dora Switzer and Mr. Samuel Pieper were united in marriage the Rev. J. J. Kidder officiating.

The news of this marriage came as a surprise to many of the people of this vicinity where both parties are well known, but all will join with the Recorder in extending congratulations. Mr. Pieper has just purchased a fine new home in Cedar Rapids where they will commence housekeeping in a short time.

## MARRIED.

On Tuesday, June 20, 1916, at Maquoketa, Miss Iva Bently, of Monticello, and Mr. Martin Brickley, of Olin, were united in marriage, the Rev. Barathelamew officiating.

The bride was formerly one of the operators at the Olin telephone central, and is well known by many in town. She is a handsome young lady, and highly respected by all.

The groom is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Thompson Brickley, of this place, and at the present time is working for his brother Ralph in his repair shop.

The Recorder extends congratulations.

## MARRIED

Miss Gladys Pieper, of Olin, and Mr. Harry Bodkin, of Maquoketa, were united in marriage at Rock Island, Illinois, on July 4, with Rev. Henry O. First, officiating.

They were accompanied by Mr. and Mrs. F. W. McCoy, of Rock Island.

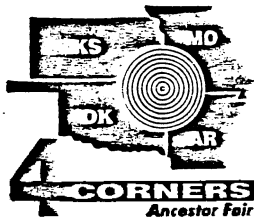
The bride is the only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. L. F. Pieper. She was born and raised near Olin and has always made her home with her parents. She will be a helpmate to her husband throughout the coming years of married life.

The groom is the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Howard Bodkin. He has worked in or near Olin for three years and has made many friends during that time, who wish them both happiness and success.

They will make their home at present with the bride's parent's on Residence street.

The Recorder wishes them much happiness and success throughout their married life.

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509 West Spring Street • Fayetteville, AR 72701 • (501) 521-2020

GENEALOGY & HISTORY PRESS RELEASE  
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 1994

Contact Person: Ann Sugg, (501) 521-2020

Plans are underway for the second annual 4 Corners Ancestor Fair to be held July 21 and 22 1995 in Springdale, Arkansas. Still exultant over the success of the 1994 fair which drew an estimated 1,000 attendance, representing 17 different states, the committee announced that larger and more comfortable quarters have been obtained. The site for 4 Corners '95 will be Holiday Inn Northwest Arkansas, which boasts over 12,000 square feet of well air conditioned exhibit space plus 6 smaller rooms for group meetings.

A new feature of the '95 fair will be a full day of genealogy workshops and social events on Friday. The Saturday fair will be open from 9 until 3, and will again feature the special consultants so well received at the '94 event.

According to Herb Lewis, president of the sponsoring Washington County Historical Society, "In only one year 4 Corners has already established itself as one of the premier genealogy and history swap meets in the country." Brochures are now being printed and will be available upon request to 4 Corners; 509 W. Spring St.; Fayetteville, AR 72701. Please send a self addressed stamped envelope. To phone call Ann Sugg (501) 521-2020.

*Sponsored by Washington County Historical Society*

QUERY:

NILES - POPE - BUTLER - TYLER - DeWITT - BROWN  
Would like to share family history with the descendants of Isadora "Dora" DeWITT and Willard NILES, Jr., married at Jones Co., Iowa, on Jan. 28, 1868. Daughter Lucy married a POPE, their son was Barton POPE. His daughter married Thyon? TYLER and had a daughter Susan. Harold "Husk" NILES, son of Isadora and Willard, married Ruth, and their daughter Margaret married a BUTLER. Leon D. NILES, son of Willard and Isadora, had a son Elden. Mildred NILES, daughter of Willard and Isadora, was born in 1888. Isadora DeWitt, born about 1852, was the daughter of Rev. Jeremiah V. DeWitt and Lucina R. BROWN, who came to Jones and Linn counties from Delaware Co., Ohio, about 1854. Any information about these names is appreciated.  
Marilyn Susoeff - 1063 Elizabeth Dr. - Bridgeville, PA, 15017.

# Merritts Came to Olin in '37

By Rex Conn.

**O**LIN—In January, 1837, nine New York men set out from Davenport to locate land for settlement. A few miles above Elkford on the Wapsipicon they stopped at a spring to drink.

John Merritt looked around carefully. Here was water, wood for fuel and housing and good rich level land on the river bottom. He made up his mind quickly.

"Here's where I'm going to locate," he announced to his companions.

At the Dubuque land office he bought the tract with the spring for the going price of \$1.25 per acre. As long as government land was available, whenever he could accumulate \$50 in cash Merritt would straddle his horse and set forth to Dubuque to buy another 40 acres. He eventually accumulated 1,000 acres, 200 of which are still owned by his grandson, Dell Merritt.

## To Davenport for Food.

The following year Merritt brought his wife and children out from Seneca, N. Y. The first night on the claim they camped on a little knoll a short distance from the spring. Soon a log cabin was built but another trouble overtook the pioneer family. They ran out of food.

John Merritt mounted his horse and set forth with all speed for Davenport. There he hailed a river steamer, paid his last dollar for a bushel of cornmeal and hastened back to the claim on the Wapsie.

Meanwhile, his wife had blazed away with the old musket at a flock of geese circling over the cabin and by a fortunate shot had brought down a bird to save the family from starvation until the father returned with the cornmeal.

In 1838 a cabin was built at Elkford. A little later a settlement grew up there which was named Rome. Still later the name of the thriving town was changed to Olin.

John Merritt and his wife had five sons and two daughters. One of the latter, Rebecca, is thought to have been the first white child born in what is now Jones county.

Game was plentiful in those first years—wild turkeys, prairie chickens and deer. Dell Merritt has the antlers of a buck shot by his grandfather about three miles west of where Olin now stands which measure two feet in length and with a two-foot spread between the points.

The Wapsie was clear in those days. Dell Merritt recalls hearing his father, Jerome, tell of

sitting on the banks of the river watching schools of fish swim against the current.

"The river is too muddy to see them now," Merritt commented last week. "That shows how much of our soil is getting away."

In December, 1855, John Merritt's wife fell ill. Before she died she requested that she be buried on the knoll near the spring where the family had camped that first night on the claim. Her request was followed and Merritt set aside four acres for cemetery purposes.

The following year, 1856, Merritt's 85-year-old mother died and was buried in the family cemetery. Other relatives and a few neighbors were buried on the knoll.

In 1884, two years before his death at the age of 80, John Merritt and his son, Jerome, enclosed the top of the knoll with a formal wrought-iron cemetery fence with the posts and braces set firmly in huge buried limestone slabs. That fence, neatly painted last year by Dell Merritt, is still staunch and sound to this day, even to the old-fashioned four-barb wire around the bottom to discourage persistent livestock.

The family cemetery is a hallowed spot for the Merritt family. Dell Merritt keeps it neatly mowed and looks after a couple of painted iron seats and a neat steel flagpole.

Tender care is lavished on the newest grave—that of 1st Lt. Sydney Allyn Story, 22-year-old air corps pilot killed in a training accident in California on Sept. 5, 1944. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. O. H. Story of Anamosa and grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Merritt.

The Merritts have two other daughters, Mrs. W. E. Williams of Olin and Mrs. Harold Parker of Iowa City. In 1920 the family moved to Olin and since that time Mr. Merritt has operated the farm with hired help.



—Gazette photos

**MERRITT CEMETERY**—Before John Merritt's wife died in 1855 she asked to be buried on the knoll where the family camped when they first came to the farm in 1838. Dell Merritt, grandson of the pioneer, stands in the gate of the wrought-iron fence erected in 1884. At right, the grave of First Lt. Sydney Allyn Story, World war II pilot, is near that of C. Merritt, Civil war veteran.

## MARRIED

Miss Ethel Cruse and Dr. A. R. Stephenson slipped away and went to Waterloo, where they were united in marriage last Tuesday.

The event was not a surprise to their friends, for it has been known for some time that they were "keeping company," and the event has been expected.

For the past few years the bride has been working in the First National Bank at this place, and is a young lady who is respected by everybody.

The groom is a well known veterinarian, who has been practicing at this place for the past few years.

The Recorder joins with a host of friends in extending congratulations.

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NEWS-  
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## Death of Mrs. Frank Gillette.

Many of our local readers will be pained to learn of the death of Mrs. Emily Spencer Gillette, the widow of the late Mr. Frank Gillette, formerly well known residents of Anamosa. She has been making her home for some years at Orlando, Florida, and was a neighbor of Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Niles. She passed away at her old home, Oneonta, N. Y., a few days after a long delayed operation. Two sisters, Mrs. J. C. Dietz and Mrs. Richard McDaniel, still living, are also well remembered here, and we believe that two other sisters and two brothers also survive. Further particulars may be expected later. Mrs. Gillette was a lady of marked attractiveness and refinement and her death will bring a sense of personal loss to all her friends in Anamosa.

# PASSED TO A HIGHER LIFE

1854-1912.

Colonel Davenport Gearhart was born near the town of Olin, Jones county, Iowa, on the 10th day of December, A. D., 1854, and passed peacefully away at his home in Olin, Iowa, February 8th, 1912, aged 57 years, 1 month and 29 days.

The deceased has lived in Olin and vicinity during his whole lifetime.

On the 10th day of September, 1879 he was united in marriage with Maranda Norton. To this union was born one son—Viril Gearhart, who is living at home.

The deceased was a son of the late Aaron Gearhart, who formerly lived in Hale township, in this county. He leaves besides his wife and son, three brothers and one sister—A. A. Gearhart, of Snyder, Colorado; Harvey W. Gearhart, of Mt. Vernon, Iowa; C. M. Gearhart, and Bell Gearhart, of Gretna, Nebraska. This in brief is the account of the birth, life and death of the departed.

Mr. Gearhart was an honest man, faithful and upright, and was highly esteemed by his friends, neighbors and the general public. His firmness in business matters and his cheerful, social nature together with his long residence in this community secured for him many friends. He had great faith in humanity; willing to trust his fellowmen; faithful to duty; careful in business; cheerful, kind hearted and true. To be brief, the story of his life is the story of the life of a plain, honest, manly, patriotic citizen. His bereft wife and son, with his other relatives and friends will always have a kindly and loving memory of his many good deeds and unselfish life. They will ever remember the many acts of kindness and wait with patience for the glorious reunion which will be theirs with him when they too, have laid aside this mortal casket of clay. A good man has gone to his reward. Peace be to his ashes.

"Oh God! we cannot understand

Thy wisdom in all this,  
Why you should take away from earth  
Those who in fondest bliss,  
Had lived through many year,  
The lives of each other to bless and cheer."

The funeral services were held at the home Monday forenoon, conducted by the Rev. J. J. Jones, of the Congregational church at Anamosa, and the remains were interred in the Olin cemetery.

# OBITUARY

"Death comes with reckless footsteps  
To the hall and but;  
Think you that death will tarry knocking  
Where the door is shut?"

"This only this subdued the fear of death

A pardon bought with blood, blood de-  
vine."

Fred D. Cruise, oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamine Cruise was born February 8, 1870, and died November 16, 1915, aged 45 years, 9 months and 8 days.

He was a patient sufferer for some months from arteriosclerosis. It was urged that an operation be resorted to upon his limb, to save his life, but the weakened vitality of life ebbed away before even this.

His early life was spent on the home in Jones county south of Hale on the farm. February 17, 1891, he was joined in marriage to Mrs. Minnie L. Wooder. They spent the first year of married life on the father's farm. Thence they moved to Clarence embarking in the dry goods business for awhile. In 1893, they moved to Hale, starting a hardware and meat market business. Eleven years later, in 1904, he engaged in the work of land drainage, in which he continued until his death.

In business he was energetic, and capable; in friendships, warm hearted and engaging; in home life, a kind loving father and husband; in all relations, dependable and brotherly.

He was converted in 1891, and joined the Free Will Baptist church at Pleasant Hill.

He leaves to mourn his departure, a large circle of relatives and friends. His aged mother, five brothers—Frank, of Olin; Charles, of Lost Nation; Ben, Wallace and Will, of Hale, and his brother-in-law, Frank S. Reyner, of Chicago, his sister having preceded him by but a few days to the other world. His two daughters, Miss Ina and Miss Ethel are left to mourn the guardian and protector and counselor of the home, while the broken-hearted widow, disconsolate, knows nowhere to find the balm to assuage and comfort save in the rock of ages, and in the memory of the loving companionship and tender memories of the years that are gone.

The sympathy of the community is extended to the sorrowing family. Our hearts beat with kindred sympathy, our grief is solaced in the thought that to all of us who are true to the Redeemer there shall be an eventide,

FRED D. CRUISE  
CONT.

"Only a moment of dark,  
A dream of the fleeting night  
And then the beautiful break of day  
And the quiet peace of light.  
And we find ourselves where we long  
to stand  
In the repose of the fatherland."

S. V. Williams.

The funeral services were held at the M. E. church last Friday forenoon, conducted by the Rev. S. V. Williams.

Mr. Cruise was a member of the Hale Camp, M. W. A., and held a policy of \$2,000.00. The Olin Camp assisted the Hale camp, and the members attended the funeral in a body, and a short burial service was rendered at the church at the close of the sermon. Members of the Hale Camp acted as pall bearers, and the body was interred in the Diamond cemetery.

## Death of William Nance.

The remains of William Nance, who died at Olin, were brought here Tuesday afternoon. They were taken to the Loder undertaking parlors, and yesterday morning were conveyed by auto hearse to Epworth for burial in High View cemetery beside the remains of his son. The funeral services were held at Olin on Tuesday. Mr. Nance was 81 years of age. Death followed a stroke of paralysis. He had lived in the vicinity of Olin for 30 years. He is survived by four grand-daughters, five great-grand-children and two nieces. The grand-daughters are: Mrs. Lawrence Streeter of Medford, Minnesota; Mrs. Carl Maxwell of Epworth; Mrs. Lloyd Rhoten of Racine, Minnesota; Mrs. F. D. Sinclair of Scotch Grove. These are all daughters of Mrs. C. H. Foster of Anamosa.

## Funeral of P. R. Neville.

The funeral of P. R. Neville, whose death was recorded last week, was held Saturday morning, from St. Patrick's church, interment following at Holy Cross cemetery. Mr. Neville died April 10. He had moved back to Anamosa with his wife and two children but a short time before, when his condition became such that his recovery was deemed impossible. Mr. Neville was born December 8, 1876. He conducted a meat market here in company with the late Louis Thoeming, a few years ago, and from here he went to conduct a like business at Maquoketa. From there the family moved to Minnesota, where he was engaged in farming until he was taken ill and returned to Anamosa.

**HAS ANSWERED THE LAST  
ROLL CALL**

**ALBERT GREEN A VETERAN OF THE  
CIVIL WAR HAS BEEN CALLED**

Albert E. Green was born in Ruggles, Ashland county, Ohio, on April the 9th, 1844, and died at his home in Olin, Iowa, March 3, 1918, aged 73 years, 10 months and 25 days.

He came to Iowa in 1854, when a boy of ten years and settled in Clinton county, near Delmar. Two years later the family moved to Oxford township in Jones county, where he grew to manhood. When the war came on he proved his patriotism by enlisting in Co. B, 9th Iowa Vol. Infantry. After one year and 4 days of fighting for his country, he was wounded in action, and seven days later was honorably discharged, March 30, 1865.

He was married to Ann E. Burwell January 1, 1866. To this union nine children were born, six of whom are still living. The eldest child, a daughter, died when a babe of only ten months old; Vina, Mrs. C. D. Boyd, died about seven years ago and Estella passed to the great beyond December 5, 1916. The living children are Mrs. Cora Wooder, of Hale; Mrs. Mary Moneypenny, of Olin; Mrs. Ellener Wilkins, of Clarence; Mrs. Eulalia Allen, of Bettendorf; Garfield Green, of Cherokee, Iowa, and Arthur Green, of Eureka, California.

Mr. Green has resided in Olin for 40 years, and his life of uprightness and accuracy among us as a tradesman and churchman, needs no words of ours to give it luster. He was a cristian and for many years has been president of the Board of Trustees of the U. B church, which office he held until his crowning.

He was stricken with paralysis over a year ago, and has gradually weakened in the struggle, yet was cheerfulness, warrior that he was, battled on until the end, which came Sunday morning when his triumphant spirit broke through the walls of clay, and on the wings of the christian's faith, went sweeping up to God.

Besides his wife, who for fifty-two years and more, has walked by his side, his children and grandchildren are left to mourn. A host of friends from every age and stage of life will feel a loss in the going of this good man.

The funeral services were held at the U. B. church last Tuesday afternoon, conducted by the pastor, the Rev. C. C. Dillavou, and the body was laid away in the Olin cemetery.

**DEATH OF CAPT. RENNE**

Lucius F. Renne was born at Madison, Ohio, August 5, 1834, and departed this life February 11, 1918, aged 83 years, 6 months and 6 days.

The deceased was bereft of his first wife at the close of the war, and in 1867 he was again married to Miss Adie Wright, of Blaine, Illinois, who passed away many years ago. To this union five children were born—Miss June Renne, of Boone, Iowa; Mrs. D. S. Rummel, of Clear Lake, Iowa; Mrs. M. A. DeVoe of Marion, Iowa; Mrs. W. L. Piggers, of Rochelle, Illinois and Mrs. W. S Rankin, of Mason City, Iowa, all of whom were present at his funeral. Neither his present wife, of Poplar Grove, nor the daughter of his first wife, Mrs. L. O. Young, of Salida, Colorado, were able to be present.

He was an indulgent father and a kind and thoughtful husband and brother.

His early life was spent in Crown Point, New York, where he made his home until after the Civil War. Later he came west, and spent some years in Illinois, Nebraska and Iowa, residing the past ten years at Poplar Grove, Illinois.

He was a veteran of the Civil War having enlisted in Co. H., 5th Regimental New York cavalry, serving three years and ten months, and went through all grades from private to Brevet Captain, for gallant and meritorious services. Among the battles he participated in were Gettysburg, Shiloh and Sheridan's Final charge at Winchester.

He was a member of the Masonic lodge, and has been an active member practically all his life.

His army relations and close touch with his Lord made him a good soldier for Christ. He will be greatly missed in his church, as God has called him to the better home.

The body was brought from his late home at Poplar Grove, Illinois to this place last Thursday, where a short funeral service was held at the home of Mrs. J. M. Rummel, conducted by the Rev. C. C. Dillavou, and the body was laid away to rest in the Olin cemetery.

**OBITUARY OF MRS. R. W. JOHNSON.**

**After Years of Suffering a Most  
Estimable Wife and Mother  
is At Rest.**

Sarah Burwell was born September 2, 1852, in Westerville, Ohio. When a year old her parents removed to Cedar county, Iowa, and a year later they settled in Pleasant Valley, in Jones county, southeast of Anamosa. Here she grew to young womanhood under the favorable conditions of a Christian home. In 1868 she was united in marriage to R. W. Johnson, which union proved to be a happy one. Through years of toil they have lived, and through all have been companions tender and helpful.

There were born to them eight children, one of whom died in infancy and another in early childhood. Those living are Harris, of this place, Mrs. Emma Lawson, of Olin; Mrs. Nellie Byerly, of Jackson; Mrs. Delilah Borschein, of Blair, Wis.; Mrs. Ida McCroskey, of this city; and Bert, of Eyota, Minn.

In 1882 she united with the Methodist Church and has lived an exemplary Christian life all these years.

It was while at a meeting of one of the church societies that she was stricken with the disease which proved fatal. At times she rallied and seemed to improve, yet after months of heroic struggle, suffering almost unbearable pain, she steadily grew worse and seemed to know the end was near. She calmly approached the close of her life in perfect peace, the very spirit in which she had lived.

The end came rather unexpectedly, and as quietly as sleep, in the evening of January 20th, having lived 55 years, 4 months and 18 days.

# First Water Plant Here Finest in America

When the Anamosa Water-Works Company was incorporated under private ownership February 20, 1875, it was said to be in a city the smallest of any in the United States to be so equipped. Water was taken from the river by an old wheel below the electric light plant by means of a centrifugal pump, at the outset, until a well was dug in later years and the city purchased the plant.

In the year preceding the establishment of the Water Works company, property holders had been anxious about their holdings because the city had no satisfactory protection against fires. Because of this insecurity, insurance rates were correspondingly high. Various enterprising leaders felt that the most economical procedure would be to provide for ample protection at once. Those who then organized the company were J. C. Dietz, C. H. Lull, N. S. Noble, B. F. Shaw, M. Heisey, T. W. Shapley, J. G. McGuire, T. R. Ercanbrack, E. B. Alderman, H. C. Metcalf, J. H. Williams, George Watters, E. Blakeslee and John Watters.

The company's capital stock was fixed at \$10,000 but with the privilege of increasing to \$20,000. April 26, the city council of Anamosa passed an ordinance granting to the Water Works company the "exclusive privilege for twenty years, and an equal right with all others thereafter, of supplying the city of Anamosa with water to be taken from the Wapsipinicon river." The company agreed to put in three hydrants on Main street, at the junctions with Garnavillo, Booth and Ford; and two others wherever they should deem it advisable.

#### Contract Specifies Water Minimum

The contract also specified that the minimum amount of water to be in the reservoir at one time should never be less than 20,000 gallons. The paid up capital stock of the company was \$6,500 with an indebtedness of \$8,500 of which \$6,000 was in ten-year bonds due

The company felt they would incur indebtedness rather than increase the capital stock, feeling confident that they could pay it off and then have stock that was truly valuable.

The managing officers were M. Heisey, president; E. Blakeslee, vice president; J. C. Dietz, secretary; and G. W. Russell, treasurer. The directors consisted of E. Blakeslee, H. C. Metcalf, E. C. Holt, M. Heisey, B. Huggins, J. C. Dietz, and D. A. Peet.

The brick reservoir, located on the hill between town and the river was 75 feet above Main street and had a pressure sufficient to throw a stream of water over the highest building. Its capacity in gallons was 100,000. The engine room was located below the light plant on the Wapsipinicon river. With the most inflammable fuel obtainable kept at the engine house, the engine could be put in operation just eighteen minutes after a fire alarm was turned in. The pressure could then be increased to carry 210 pounds to the square inch.

#### Size of System

By 1879, the company had laid one and three-fourths miles of plugs or hydrants. In addition to those placed on Main street as specified by contract, others were put on Ford and First streets, Garnavillo and Carroll, and at Doan's mill which stood where the Iowa Electric company now is. By that time, the company supplied water to the state penitentiary, one of the railroads and about 45 resident consumers.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, the company decided that water should no longer be taken from the river, so they decided to sink a well. Burrowing under the sandy top-soil, they drilled to 1,755 feet in the solid rock until they struck a supply in 1885 with 10 per cent interest. of water that would give a constant supply to the town. In later years, this well was increased to 1800 feet, the depth at which it remains at the present time.

After 1875, the stock of this

company gradually came into the hands of Charles Metcalf and Huggins and Griffith, wagon manufacturers. When Huggins died, the other two possessed the majority of the stock.

#### City Buys Company

In 1907 the question of the city's purchasing the Waterworks company was put before the qualified voters of the town at a special election. The majority being in favor \$30,000 worth of bonds were issued in denominations of \$500 and \$1000. Twenty per cent of them were to be paid in 25 years, 40 per cent in 10 years and the balance in 20 years with interest at 5 per cent payable semi-annually May 1 and November 1.

Transactions were made, and the Waterworks came into municipal ownership March 10, 1908 at a cost of \$20,000. Various ordinances passed subsequently provided for a tax of five mills on the dollar for the discharge of interest on the bonds. The proceeds of water rents collected were to go for maintenance, repair and cost of operation, the mayor was to appoint a waterworks commission of three men to have general supervision of the entire system.

Townpeople who wished to be served by the city supply had to file an application and give it to the council for approval. A special permit was needed for any extension or alteration of the pumping on any premises.

Since 1908, the system has been considerably extended. There are now an estimated six or seven miles of water mains and about 39 fire hydrants.

## Raymond Ellison Dies At Cedar Rapids Area On Monday, July 18th

CEDAR RAPIDS—Raymond E. Ellison, 1101 Nineteenth St. N.W., Cedar Rapids resident since 1928, died Monday, July 18, following a lingering illness.

#### Services Held

Funeral services were held Thursday, July 21, at 1:30 p.m., in Rohn Funeral home, Cedar Rapids. Burial was in Antioch cemetery, east of Anamosa.

He was born March 20, 1911, at Anamosa, son of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel S. Ellison. He was affiliated with the Congregational church.

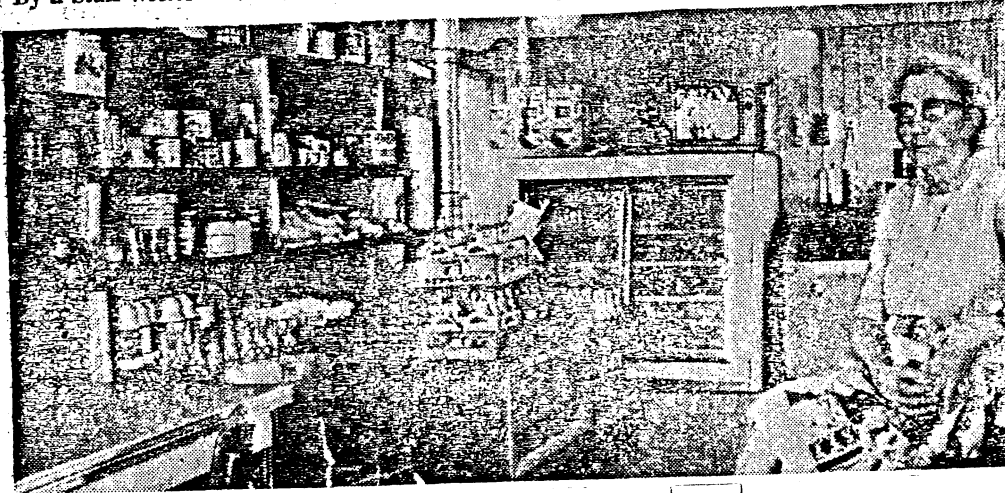
#### Survivors Listed

Survivors include his parents, and one sister, Mrs. Milo Dicus, all of Cedar Rapids.

# Tiny Canton's only store feels inflation's pinch

By a Staff Writer

SUNDAY REGISTER PHOTO BY LARRY NEIBERGALL



Mrs. Ella Ralston is shown in Ella's Store which she operates in Canton, about 15 miles northwest of Maquoketa. Oct. 1973

CANTON, IA. — The pressures of an inflationary economy have hit Canton.

Ella Ralston has raised the price of her ham burgers a dime, to 60 cents.



Mrs. Ralston operates Ella's Store here, one of two business places in the town of 50 persons. The other is a tavern.

"Store" seems an inadequate description of the place since about half the 18-foot by 52-foot interior is taken up by a lunch counter area.

At Ella's place one can buy a can of soup, breakfast cereal, lunch meat, bread, beer, pop and the like, and in the morning you can get coffee for a dime and donuts to go with it.

At noon she will slice lunch meat and make you a sandwich, or fry a hamburger. In the morning the kids in town sit on the benches on the front porch waiting for the school bus.

In the afternoon some visitors sit in chairs at the table across from the lunch counter and watch television and some evenings there is a card

game at the table. The place is open 5 a.m. to 9 p.m. seven days a week.

"We have a lot of hunters and boaters here early in the mornings," said Mrs. Ralston, explaining the early opening hour.

Mrs. Ralston says she buys her grocery stock at regular retail prices in a super-market at Maquoketa. "I just add a dime to everything," she said, explaining her price structure.

Mrs. Ralston does not have a tavern license so beer is sold only on a carry-out basis. "Some of the people around here have been after me to get a Sunday license so I can sell beer here, but I don't want it. We've got enough noise around here now," she said.

Mrs. Ralston, 60, does stock penny candy. She also keeps all her stock of smoking tobacco in the ice cream cooler, explaining that her husband Raymond has a theory that coolness keeps the tobacco fresh.

"This place keeps me busy, keeps my hands busy, and that's good because basically I'm a worrier," she said. "I never want to get rich at this. I just want to keep my health."

## Strawberry Hill Was Town Itself

Strawberry Hill was named for the quantities of strawberries covering its slopes when the first settlers made their home sites there.

The families of Roswell Crane, B. F. Smith, B. L. Matson, Mr. Olmstead, Frank Tanner, Albert Highby and Col. W. T. Shaw, and Mrs. Maria Tucker with her brother and sister, the Harringtons, were among the earliest. A two-room brick school house, a two-story iron foundry, the turntable and engine house of the Midland railroad, the brick works of B. F. Smith, and later the Presbyterian church constituted the community buildings along with a store or two and, at times, a saloon on Main street near the bridge that spans Fawn Creek.

April, 1872, the Independent school district of Strawberry Hill was set off from Anamosa school district by a vote of the Strawberry Hill electors at 23 to 2.

Later this community withdrew from the city corporation of Anamosa on the grounds of too much taxation without representation with little values received. Fawn creek was the boundary line between the two districts, but long since they have again become united in the bonds of school and other community interests.

# Old Canton School Was Once

# Symbol of Future

By John R. Adney

CANTON — In this restless age of clamor and confusion, a stately stone building on the south edge of town, tolerates the Twentieth century with unhurried pace.

The weathered structure, built as a schoolhouse in 1877, nestles beneath ancient oaks on the south fork of the Maquoketa river about 12 miles northwest of Maquoketa.

It is symbolic of a time when Canton was young and full of vigor, and full of belief in its glorious future.

It represents the skillful work of stonemasons with native materials and reflects a craftsmanship capable of useful existence for nearly a century.

There were 21 students and they came from a wide area of the rugged countryside surrounding Canton.

Once, the loudest sound in town was the peal of the bell in the ornate belfry. It rang before classes and again at the end of recess.

If you were one of the good guys, you got to pull the long rope that hung down from the belfry and was tied to a coat hook in the cloakroom.

It was quite a thrill to know you were the one who was sending that sonorous clanging across the countryside.

During warmer weather the students took their dinner buckets and spread out beneath the trees — each grade tending to congregate together, although some grades

numbered no more than two or three students.

Lunchtime lasted a full hour, but eventually the bell would ring to call everyone back inside. First came a warning bell, and finally the point-of-no-reprieve, the tardy bell.

There was always a noon baseball game, and quite often the teacher would take turns in joining the opposing teams.

Despite the confusion, the teacher somehow managed to instruct classes in the same room day after day and still retain her sanity. And it's a mystery how anyone ever managed to study when one class or other was reciting at all times.

But if you were alert, and had your own work done, you could eavesdrop on all the upper classes and know the subject matter pretty well by the time you graduated into them.

There were always great numbers of dogs of indeterminate breed hanging around the school — mutts who would follow their young masters there every day and wait for them until school was out in late afternoon.

At noon, the dogs would come around for their share of lunch. Since they were community property and on a first-name basis with everyone, they would fare pretty well. An occasional dogfight was a break in the monotony and none of the participants ever held a grudge for very long.

Dusting erasers was a form of award to

students who finished their studies before classes were dismissed. They would stand on the front steps, whacking the erasers together, raising great clouds of chalk dust, and leer at those still in their seats when they came back inside.

A chapter in Canton's history closed in May, 1966, when the school was consolidated with the Maquoketa school district.

The mission of Canton's school had been accomplished.

"Reorganization into more efficient units," the state department of public instruction declared, "was designed to give each child a better education."

"Today's society," it was said, "called for a new type of educational program and new methods of teaching, which in turn demanded new designs and facilities."

For a time, the old building — a landmark and a lodestone of fond memories for many — stood empty and silent.

Then one day, it got a new lease on life when it became the town's community center.

Again, there was joy and laughter in the old building that once echoed with students' recitations and "pieces" spoken at Christmas programs.

A building, like a body, can get mighty weary. But the old schoolhouse — a reminder of Canton's "golden era" — did it with more grace and style than the gristmill, general store and sawmill, that crumbled into dust long ago.

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## Margaret Alspaugh Credit to Community

Margaret Conney Alspaugh, of one of the prominent old families of Jackson township and Anamosa, was born in Campbellsville, Pennsylvania in 1844. She came to Jones county with her family in 1863.

The historic log school house with backless seats and other limited equipment provided her earliest opportunity for an education. This was supplemented by home instruction. Her father saw to it that every hour at home, when not at work, the children were at their studies. All her life Margaret Alspaugh was a student of the best in history, literature and religion. She was one of the first in this county to complete the four-year Chautauqua course in science, literature and art and to receive a diploma from that institution.

She married William Alspaugh after his return from the Civil war in 1866. Both were active in various official capacities in the Methodist Episcopal church to the time of their death. Mrs. Alspaugh served 17 years as secretary of the Home Missionary society of the Upper Iowa conference and nine years as secretary of the Bureau of Systematic Beneficence.

She was a lady greatly beloved. Her keen intellectual powers coupled with a sympathetic heart bent on doing good, made her an outstanding leader of all good works.

A half sister of Mrs. Alspaugh, Annie Conney Corcoran lives on South Garnaville street. Both Mr. and Mrs. Corcoran are from pioneer families who were part of the strong religious and educational influences in the country in the earlier days. Mr. Corcoran has done some good in scientific research work in this locality, particularly in geology and archeology.

Mr. Dirks died suddenly July 9 from a heart attack while working in his yard. He was born at Langworthy Dec. 7, 1899, the son of Gerd and Fredericka Dirks. He received his education in Jones county rural schools.

He married Alvina Kray Nov. 15, 1922 in Castle Grove township. The couple farmed until 1943, when Mr. Dirks became a correctional officer at the Iowa state reformatory. He retired four years ago.

He was preceded in death by his parents, two brothers and a sister. Survivors include: his wife; three children Marion G. of Monticello, Mrs. Emil (Deloris) Feldman of Monticello and Mrs. Darlene Volkenant of Amber; nine grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; two sisters, Mrs. Clara Oltmanns and Mrs. John Martensen of Anamosa; three brothers, John F. of Anamosa, August of Monticello and Rhinehart of Center Jct.

Casketbearers were Eugene Dirks, Robert Dirks, Merle Dirks, Melvin Dirks, Louie Harms and John Martensen.

## A SAD DEATH

Last Friday a gloom of sadness fell over the Byron McGuire family, of Hale township, when it was learned that the wife and mother had attempted to take her own life. For sometime she had been afflicted with insanity, and last Friday she took a pair of shears from the house and attempted to cut her throat with them. Failing in this, she gathered some paper together and set fire to it, and stood over it till her clothing caught fire. She was discovered in a short time by her daughter Bernice, but not until her clothing was all burned off her body, and she was so badly burned that she died a few hours later.

Belle Viola Brownell McGuire was born in Chatauqua county, New York, April 4, 1876, and at the time of her demise, March 7, 1919, she was almost 43 years old.

When only a baby she was brought by her parents, with two older sisters to this county, so that practically all her life has been lived in this vicinity. For a time she attended the Madison Center school, and later the schools in Wyoming.

On February 19, 1902, she was united in marriage with Byron McGuire. To this union one child was born, Etta Bernice.

## Clarence Grafft, <sup>1957</sup> Antioch Farmer, Succumbs May 27

Rev. James Officiates  
At Service May 30 In  
Goettsch Funeral Home

Funeral services for Clarence R. Grafft, life-long farmer in the Antioch area, were held at 2 p.m. Thursday, May 30, at the Goettsch funeral home. Rev. H. A. James, officiated. Burial was in Green cemetery.

Mr. Grafft died at Mercy hospital, Anamosa, at 9:20 p.m. Monday, May 27, following a lingering illness.

Born Sept. 2, 1887 near Anamosa, he was the son of J. H. and Amanda Jane Gilmore Grafft. He attended rural Jones county schools and Cedar Rapids Business college.

On Feb. 28, 1912, he married Bessie Byerly. He was a charter member of the Jones County Farm Bureau, serving as president in 1940 and 1941. He was the first member of the Anamosa Journal's Half-Century Farmer's club.

Survivors include one son, Delbert, Olin; one daughter, Mrs. Richard Blackford, Marion; three grandchildren; one brother, William Grafft, Central City; three sisters, Mrs. Mason Sperry, Omaha, Neb.; Mrs. Raleigh Schoop, Waterloo; and Mrs. Clayton Dripps, Olin.

He was preceded in death by his wife and two brothers.

## MARRIED

On Wednesday, January 24, 1928, Mr. Hans L. Ahrendsen led Miss Dorothy Laudell to the marriage altar at the U. B. parsonage in Olin, Iowa, where the Rev. C. C. Dillavou spoke the words that bound the lives of these two well known young people.

The bride is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Laudell, of this place, and is an accomplished and winsome young lady who has many friends in this vicinity.

The groom is a son of Mrs. Dorathea Ahrendsen, and is a young man who stands high in the estimation of all who know him.

Immediately after the ceremony had taken place, the newly-weds started on their honeymoon trip, and will be at home to their many friends on their return home.

The Recorder extends congratulations.

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# Village Blacksmith

July 19, 1964

He Learned Trade More Than 50 Years Ago

was 18. At 82, he is alert, healthy with a keen wit and an awareness of what's going on in the world. He admits that the blacksmith is on the way out, but doesn't know who or what will replace it.

Kinnan learned the trade when leather bellows six feet long were used to blow the fires. The anvil he now uses was old when he got it 50 years ago.

He lives next door to his shop in Amber where he has worked for over 30 years. When he speaks about union wages and Daylight Savings time he says "the country is going to the dogs" but he smiles when he says it.

## Special Coal

He doesn't drive a car. The last car he drove was a Model T, but friends drive him to Lamont where he buys his special blacksmith coal. He used to buy it in Cedar Rapids, but with the demand so small, the firm stopped handling it. House coal, he explained, burns too hot to work near it. Kinnan said, "This trade

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is a trade of its own. You can't learn it in the books. They try to teach it in the schools, after a fashion. I had a young boy come to me with a cold chisel he tried to make. You have to learn how to temper it.

"The apprentice in the old country used to get room and board the first year. The second year he got a little spending money and the third year a regular salary. After that he was on his own, but I've been at it over 60 years and I learn something new every day."

## No Horses

The blacksmith today shoes no horses but rather works with their replacement, the tractor and its counterparts, plus plows, blades, scyres, heavy chains, and general blacksmithing.

Kinnan, when asked if he ever was married, replied, "No, and I don't think I ever will." He lives alone, but has many visitors who stop in to pass the time of day plus those who need the service of a blacksmith in this age of rockets and planned space trips to the moon.

## A village in Jones county . . .

ONCE KNOWN AS BLUE CUT, the village of Amber is located in Wayne township in the central part of Jones county. The village adopted its present name in 1878, five years after its founding by W. H. Sanford. It was established near the Midland branch of the North Western railroad. Its original name was derived from a deep cut made in solid blue clay by railroad builders. The railroad was discontinued in 1949. Three

different religious denominations had churches in Amber at various times, but the last church closed its doors in 1964. The village is now a part of the Anamosa Community school district and its school house is used for a county special education class. Today Amber has a creamery, general store, garage, blacksmith shop, tavern and community-owned water system. Thirty-five families call the tiny village their home.

JONES COUNTY  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 174  
ANAMOSA, IA 52205

NON-PROFIT  
ORGANIZATION

