

Davis County Iowa Genealogy

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President's Notes

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2006 Meetings
7:00 PM @ Library
 March 16
 April 20
 May 18
 June 15
 July 20
 Aug 17
 Sept 21
 Oct 19
 Nov 16

1882 History Book Available

Taking Orders for the 1924 Reprint

By the time this reaches you, hopefully 2006 is off to a great start with new projects. Our February meeting was nill, as the ice kept most of us home. I have done some research on the Dieffenbach family, and added the file to the Surnames in the file cabinet. There is now an inventory of our Microfilm holdings on the website. While your browsing there, check out the new pages on Troy School. Always need input, History or Genealogy for the web pages. The more we get out to our researchers, the more they give back. This first issue of the year normally contains a full surname list. We are going to try to do the same in a different format, as many of our past researchers are no longer with us. So here we try to include current members and their information. Perhaps next month we will include a list of the 2005 visitors to our library.

Our Newsletter is now available in eFormat. Send your email to iadavis@mchsi.com to receive electronically. If you have email, please send, so we can include you in our mailing list.

Remember that May is Cemetery Appreciation Month.

**SAPIC LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN
 ACCESS BILL APPROVED BY SENATE
 COMMITTEE**

The State Association for the Preservation of Iowa Cemeteries legislative initiative has made a major move forward in the Iowa Senate.

The legislation, now Senate File 2208, was approved unanimously by the Senate Government Committee. SF 2208 now moves on for debate by the full Iowa Senate. The bill provides that if a public or private organization enters into an agreement with a governmental subdivision to preserve and protect a cemetery or burial site that is located on the property of another person within the jurisdiction of the governmental subdivision shall notify the property owner of the location of the cemetery or burial site and that the property owner is required to permit members of the organization reasonable ingress and egress for the purpose of preserving and protecting the cemetery or burial site. The bill also defines what constitutes reasonable ingress and egress for such purposes and provides that a governmental subdivision that enters into an agreement with a public or private organization for preservation of a cemetery or burial site is liable for any personal injury or property damage that occurs in connection with the cemetery or burial site or access to the cemetery or burial site.



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ABRAMS (ABRAHAMS)	B06	DAY	D04 P02
ALLEN	B02 P02 B08	DE BOLT	B06
ATHERTON	H04	DE HAVEN	T02
BAKER	M02	DE LONG	N01
BALES	D03	DEN HARTOG	D04
BALL	T03	DODD	M01
BARE (ER,AR,RR)	B06	DOOLEY	W02
BARKER	B01	DOWNING	D03 B01
BARTLETT	R04	DRURY	S02
BASS	P02	DUNNING	T01
BATEMAN	S01	EASTMAN	S03 M01
BELL	B08 B02	EIKER	P02
BENGE	B02	ELDER	M02
BIGBEE	N01	ELLIS	B08
BLACK	C03	EVANS	S01 B02
BLACKBURN	S03	FARR	M02
BLANKENSHIP	S02	FARRIS	H06
BLEW	G01	FEAGINS	B02
BLUE	G01	FEESE	H06
BOWLING	C04 R05	FICKEL	S01
BOYD	S03	FISK	B02
BRENNEMAN	P02	FLEENOR	C03
BREWER	S01	FLEMING	S01 W02
BRIDGEMAN	H04	FORD	W02
BRIDGES	H06	FORSYTH/FORSYTHE	M01
BROADWELL	P02	FREDERICK	H04
BROKAW	T01	FRENCH	S03 M01 R02 C03
BROWN	C03	FUNK	M02
BRUCE	S03 B02	GARRETSON	T01
BRUMLEY	H02 M01	GAY	G01
BRUNK	M01	GLADMAN	T03
BURGHER	N01	GLASSBURNER	T03
BURKHALTER	B06	GOOD	S03 R02
BURNS	S02	GOODFELLOW	S04
BUSICK	H06	GOSS	P02
BYBEE	T02	GOUDY	H04
CADE	R04	GRAVIT	T03
CARR	C03	GUTHRIE	M02
CARTER	C01 P02	HACKNEY	R01
CASSATT/COUSSAIRT	C03	HALL	R01
CHAMBERS	B02	HANES	D03
CHANCE	B06	HANNAH	D04
CHILCOTE	S03	HARPER	D04
CHRISMAN	R04	HASTINGS	P02
CHRISTY	D03	HAYDEN	P02
CLARK	T01	HELMS	T01
COGHLAN	M02	HENDERSON	L02
COMBS	S03	HENRY	H02 D01
CONNER	D03 S01	HERBERT	T03
CONOVER	R01	HILL	H06
COOP	H04	HINKLE	B02
CORRICK	S03 C03	HINSON	S03
COSEL	M01	HOBBS	W01
COX	L02	HOLLAND	T03
CRISMAN	R04	HOPKINS	S03
CUMMINGS	T03	HORN	M01
CUSTER	T01	HOWK/HOUK	H04 B06
DAHLSTROM	M01	HUBBARD	H06
DARNELL/DARNALL	S01	HUBLER	T01
DAVIS	B06 P02 B08	HUFFMAN	H04
		HUGGINS	W02

HUNGATE	H06	HULETT	S02
HUNT	H06	HULL	C03
INGRAM	B08	MULLIGAN	P02
IRELAN/IRELAND	D04	MURPHY	H06
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JESSOP	S02	NASH	N01
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JOHNSTON	B06	NEWLAND	M01
JONES	W02	NOEL	S01
JUSTIS	N01	NOGGLE (S)	H02 D01
KELLY	S01	OLINGER	D03
KENDRICK	P02	OSBORNE	S03
KINMAN	W02	OVERHORSER	P02
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KLINE	D04	OWEN	B06
KLINGER	G01	PARIS	T03
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LAWSON	L02	PERDUE	H04
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LEACH	N01	PICKENS	R01 W01
LEE	R01	PIERCE	T01
LEONARD	H04 D04 G01	PILCHER	G01
LEYDA	R04	PIPER	T02
LIMBERG	S03	PLUM	D04
LISTER	H02	PREVO	R01
LOCKE	D03	PULLEN	C03
LOCKHART	S03 N01	QUIGLEY	P02 T02
LOSEY	W02	RADER	R02
LUSE	H04	RAINES	D04
LYNCH	T01	RATLIFF	D04
MALLORY	P02	REED	B08
MARTENY	S03	RICHARDSON	S02
MARTIN	M01	RINEHART	D04
MARTINDALE	P02	ROBBINS	P02
MATHEWS	W02	ROBERTS	T01
MC CAULEY	P02	ROBERTSON	M01
MC CLAIN/MC CLANE	T03 R01	ROGERS	W02
MC CLURE	R01 T01	ROWLAND	T01
MC CONNELL	R04	RUNKLE	D01 T02
MC CORD	M01	RUSSELL	L02
MC CULLOUGH	S03 M01	SAMUEL	S03
MC DANIEL	H04	SANER	C03
MC ELDERRY	D04	SCARBOROUGH	S03
MC KAY	M02	SCARLET/SCARLETT	S02
MC LANE/MC LAIN	R01	SCHWARTZ	D04
MC LEAN	R04	SCOTT	G01
MC MURRAY	D04	SEDORE	T01
MC NAMEE	P02	SEXTON	M02
MC REYNOLDS	R04	SHADLE	P02
MELTON	W01	SHADLEY	B06
MILLER	T01	SHAFER	S02
MINNICK	T01 P02	SHARON	B08
MINTON	P02	SHELLEY	W01
MITCHELL	C03	SHELTON	S03
MOORE	S03	SHIELDS	R04
MOOTS	M02	SHIRK	P02
		SIDWELL	M02
		SIMMONS	G01

MORGAN	S01 B02	SKILLMON	S03
MORRISON	M02	SLOAN	B08
MORROW	T01	SMITH	S02 B02 H04
SPEER/SPEARS	R01	SPEES	M01
SPILMAN	S01	SPONSLER	S02
SPURGEON	C01	ST GEORGE	P02
STAFFORD	P02	STANDLEY	L02
STOBER	C03	STOCKER	R02
STOCKHAM	H02	STOGDILL	T03
STOVER	C03	STRENGER	S03
SWAYZE	P02	SWINGLE	R02
SCHWARTZ	H04	SWINNEY	P02
TAYLOR	R04 D03		
TEETER	B02	THARP	M02 L02
THOMAS	T01 C02	TOWNSEND	H04
TROXEL	T03	TRUE	R01
TURNER	M01	VAN HORN	S03
VERPLOEGH	D04	WADE	R04
WAGGONER	S04	WARE	H06
WATERHOUSE	M02	WEBB	P02
WEEKS	C03	WELLS	R01
WHEATON	W01	WHITE	S03
WIKER	P02	WILEY	S03
WILLCOXSON	W02	WILKINSON	B01
WILSON	P02 M01		
WOODCOCK	P02	WRIGHT	P02
WYCOFF	P02	YATES	S03
YOUNG	R02	ZIMMERMAN	M02

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ACCEPTING ORDERS FOR THE 1924 DILLON PAYNE HISTORY BOOK REPRINT

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THE ANNUAL PUBLIC LIBRARY AUCTION**

Religion

Civil War disrupts services

By LINDA VanHORN
Courier newsroom secretary

On Sunday, Harry Thomas will gather with several others for the annual service at the oldest log church still in use in the United States.

The Mars Hill Log Church — northwest of Floris in southern Wapello County — was built before the Civil War.

Its past members and neighbors gather for an annual meeting the third Sunday in July each year. This year's service will begin with a basket dinner at 1 p.m., followed by the 2 p.m. service. Speaking this year will be the Rev. Robert Lehman; the program also will include old-time music and gospel singing. Barbara Clark, the wife of a minister, in 1846 donated a plot of ground to be used for a church and a cemetery. The church was completed in 1856, and the ground was deeded to trustees of the Missionary Baptist Church on May 16, 1857.

The logs in the church were cut from a nearby forest, hauled to the crest of a hill, hand-hewn and fitted with wooden pins holding the logs together. The completed building was 28-by-36-by-10 feet.

Regular services were held at the church from 1858 until 1861, when the Civil War interrupted services. While some returned, families grew up, married and left the area. In 1873, the members who remained joined the Floris Baptist Church.

Thomas, who lives in Eldon and who will be 77 in October, remembers little about his early years at Mars Hill — "that's water under the bridge, you know" — but he remembers attending some services as a young child.

Most of his memories, however, are of church services held at the Fiedler School, which was about 2 1/2 miles from the Mars Hill Church.

Thomas recalls that his father, Matthew, and Uncle Elijah, were instrumental in keeping services

Mars Hill Log Church



PROPERTY OF DAVIS COUNTY GENERALIST SOCIETY

going at the schoolhouse. The men, whom Thomas describes as "a couple of farmers who thought the neighborhood needed a church," were joined by around seven or eight neighborhood families for an average attendance of 12 or 15. The county churches couldn't seem to compete with the automobiles, Thomas says, and more and more families began driving to town for church services.

In an article written several years ago for the Cedar Rapids Gazette, John Reynolds, who attended church services at Fiedler School as a youngster, recalled how the prayers he heard there had left a

lasting impression on his life. He remembers that Matthew and Elijah Thomas "talked to the Lord from their knees...gazing open-eyed at the ceiling and praying in the direction of the old Coleman lamps that hung in the chain chairs."

Reynolds remembered those men as "stout men with strong hearts and staunch convictions that everyone — themselves included — was a pretty rough sinner and would the Lord please do something about it." He stated that he knew these were "devout men who feared God."

He adds: "And so did I, as I listened. I trembled."

HISTORY OF MARS HILL CHURCH

August 10, 1981

It was before Civil War days that a group of Christians of the Baptist faith decided to build a church in their community in which they could worship the Lord.

Data has it that in 1846 a plot of ground was donated by a Mrs. Barbara Clark whose husband was a minister of the gospel. This plot of ground was to be used for a burial place and a church site. The oldest gravestone is dated 1846 and the name inscribed is John Clark, son of T. & B. Clark. It was not until May 16, 1857 that the ground was deeded by Mrs. Clark to the Trustees of the Missionary Baptist church, and was filed on May 22, 1857, Book J, Page 42, Wapello County, Iowa.

Trustees serving at that time were - S. A. Monroe, Abraham Smock and Andrew Clark.

Also data has it that a body of worshipers were organized in 1850, and shortly thereafter the edifice or building was started.

Logs for the church were furnished by S. A. Monroe and Abraham Smock. They were cut from the adjoining forest - hauled to the crest of the hill - and laboriously hand hewn and fitted, using wooden pins to hold them together. The building was 28x26x10 ft.

During the year 1856 the church was completed and regular services were held. The name given the church was MARS HILL. Acts 17:22.

The writer does not know just when the church was dedicated, but on Sept. 11, 1858, the First Baptist Association meeting was held by the Oskaloosa Association, later known as the Judson Association, now known as the American Baptist Assn. (However Mars Hill is no longer affiliated with the Baptist Assoc. and is independent). The speaker of the day was a Rev. Ferguson. At that time Abraham Smock was pastor of the church. His ashes lie buried in the church yard.

From 1858 to 1861 things went as usual in the community, and then came the Civil War and almost stripped the country community of its young men. To name a few - John and Edwin Duffield, James Peden, Hiram Greenup and John Hale, Joseph Ryan, T. J. Pilcher and Kees Clark. Altogether thirty-five young men answered the call of their country. Some returned to carry on for a while, and now lie buried in the church yard cemetery.

Families grew up, married, and left the area, and in 1873 those that were left took their membership to the Floris, Ia. Baptist church, for it was in that year that the Floris church was organized.

It was during, or soon after the year 1873, that the Oskaloosa Association dropped the old church from its records and it became inactive. It was used only occasionally for weddings, funerals and yearly gatherings.

In the year 1903 a group of men headed by Frank Agee of Ottumwa, Ia. now deceased, put flooring in the old church that remains today.

On Sept. 13, 1974 Mars Hill Church was entered in the State of Iowa Register of Historic Places.

On Sept. 24, 1974 Mars Hill Church was placed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The church must maintain at least a five member Board of Trustees, the board members are: Harry and Mary Thomas, Eldon; Donald and Carol Pilcher, Washington, Ia.; Fred and Isabelle Piper, Ottumwa; Colene Watts, Ottumwa; Bob Watts and Willard Watts, Ottumwa; John Knight and Dan Knight, Ottumwa. Marie Hartwig of Eldon is a lifetime member of the Board.

The church is supported by individual contributions and a free will offering at the annual service.

Due to the efforts of Earl Parker and his contact with Mr. DeVoss, president of the Southern Iowa Electric Co-op, Inc. of Bloomfield, a security light was installed in the fall of 1972.

The American Flag and flag pole in the yard were donated by Sutherland Lumber Co. of Ottumwa.

A silk flag and staff were donated by the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War and is on display during the annual service.

The Cross inside the church was given in memory of Francis Watts, past treasurer of the Board of Directors, by his family.

The Old Log Church

By Pearl Rupe Harness
(Now Deceased)

On an Iowa Hill, high above the fogs
Stands an old gray church men built of logs;
And there it has stood, over a hundred years
This old log church built by pioneers.

They chopped the logs and hewed them square
Laid them end on end as you see them there,
They morticed the corners to keep them in place
And chinked up the cracks to give them face.

Made of clapboard roof, and a puncheon floor
And from native lumber they made a door,
It was finished and high on an Iowa hill,
Was a place for worship, and it stands there still.

They made the building good and strong,
And, as they worked, praised God in song;
There it has stood, and stands there still,
The old Log Church they named MARS HILL.

In the year of 1919 the foundation of the church was laid by J. E. Crist and son Otis E., Dougless Clark, Dave Clark & George Gordon put a new foundation under the old structure. Besides the Crist family there were many supporters of the old church including the Pilchers, the Houks, Laughridges, and Thomas families and many others of that decade.

In the year 1916 Sunday School was again organized by J. E. Crist and son Otis and Mrs. Crist of Floris, Ia. Sunday School and preaching services were held for a few years, until World War I hit our country, and in 1917 many of the young men were called again into service.

The Crist family carried on for a few years. Young folks grew up, married, and left. Families moved away, and so few remained that it was impossible to keep the services going. Again the old church was closed except upon special occasions.

This brings us up to the year of 1956, when a new roof was needed. A group of workers headed by the late Otis E. Crist, then of Eldon, Ia. solicited money and work from those interested in the church, and a new roof was put on plus other repairs made to the outside of the building.

On Sunday, July 17th 1963 the late Dr. Paul Smith, Executive Secretary of the Baptist State Convention of Iowa, was the speaker of the afternoon. His message was Faith and History of Religious Efforts. He made this quote, "Mars Hill is the Mother Church of all Baptist Faiths West of the Mississippi River".

In 1963 the Keokuk Twp. Boys 4-H Club planted Spreading Junipers. In the summer of 1968 Henry Gruwell and his son-in-law Leonard Fiedler re-nailed and painted the ceiling, white washed the walls and painted the floor.

In 1969 the Iowa Chapter of the Daughters of American Colonists presented the church with a bronze plaque, honoring it as the "Oldest Log Church Still In Occupancy In The United States". The plaque was accepted on behalf of the Church by Mrs. Marie Hartwig.

The old structure has long passed its centennial birthday, and has withstood the elements of weather and time. It is the oldest log church still in occupancy in the nation.

Those who have given time and money to keep the place in repair hope to preserve it for posterity - for it is one of the most treasured of its time, with many visitors coming from all over the United States to see it.

In early days someone planted evergreens in the cemetery yard. There is one huge pine, which towers above the surrounding trees on the ridge like a Sentinel, and can be seen for a distance of several miles.

As you visit this historical and revered spot we hope you will leave with a refreshed and renewed devotion.

An annual meeting is held each summer with a basket dinner at 1:00 P.M. & church service at 2:00 P.M., the third Sunday in July.

Compiled from collected data of years past, by

Marie Hartwig
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Welcome To

Mars Hill Log Church



Since 1850

The oldest log church still in occupancy
in the United States.



Historical Souvenir

Davis County

Come and Explore

Beautiful Davis County



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Please complete and Mail.

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