

A Brief History of Johnston

Johnston: Born on the edge of the Wisconsin glacial drift the emerging community was first known as Beaver Creek Settlement. The Interurban Railroad Development in 1905 caused the original name to be changed to Johnston Station after Station Agent John Johnston. After municipal incorporation in 1969 the name was changed to Johnston.

In the late 19th century and early 20th century public grade school was held for the children of the area at Lawson Grade School, located one mile east of the present elementary school. Also at Friar School which was located ¼ mile west of the new high school.

Ridgedale School was located just north of the Camp Dodge Water Tower. The fourth grade school in the area was Rider, located in the far SW corner of the present school district.

Students finishing grade school in these school could opt to attend a ninth grade unit at Herrold, tuition themselves to Des Moines or enter the work force.

1888. The first post office and grocery store, operated by Jake Randolph, were located on the current Harold Wigton property (near Camp Dodge). This post office was discontinued in 1903 when Grimes began R.F.D. in the area by horse and buggy.

1905. The Interurban began service, freight and passenger, from Des Moines to Perry, IA.

1907. Hyperion Golf Club opened for play.

1907. The business development continued with the Hayes Grocery Store which was built on the site of the present Johnston Barbershop. This year also brought telephone service from Grimes.

1908. Fruitland and Brennan Drives (55th and 57th) were developed and one of the oldest and still active organizations in Johnston – the Fruitland/Brennan League was formed in 1915.

1909. A post office was re-established with John C. Hays as postmaster.

1912. The post office was de-commissioned in Johnston.

1913. Genetic research was begun by H.A. Wallace and J.J. Newlin for Johnston's newest business – Pioneer Hi-Bred.

1914. In this year the second consolidated school district in Polk County was formed which included the previously listed four grade schools and the new district was called The Independent Consolidated School District of Webster and Jefferson Townships of Polk County, Iowa.

1918/1919. An addition was made to the school building (west wing) and the K8 unit was expanded to a K12 unit.

1920. Paul Alley builds a service station later to be known as Robinette's Garage.

1922. Otto's Service was opened for business.

1923. Pioneer's experimental farm began operation. The U.S. govt. re-established the Johnston Post Office with Bruce C. Carter as Postmaster.

For a more detailed history of Johnston ask to see the twenty-page brochure written by the Johnston History Committee in the summer of 1993 for the new Johnston Library.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF JOHNSTON !!

JOHNSTON: BORN ON THE EDGE OF THE WISCONSIN GLACIAL DRIFT THE EMERGING COMMUNITY WAS FIRST KNOWN AS BEAVER CREEK SETTLEMENT. THE INTERURBAN RAILROAD DEVELOPMENT IN 1905 CAUSED THE ORIGINAL NAME TO BE CHANGED TO JOHNSTON STATION AFTER STATION AGENT JOHN JOHNSTON. AFTER MUNICIPAL INCORPORATION IN 1969 THE NAME WAS CHANGED TO JOHNSTON!

IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY PUBLIC GRADE SCHOOL WAS HELD FOR THE CHILDREN OF THE AREA AT LAWSON GRADE SCHOOL, LOCATED ONE MILE EAST OF THE PRESENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. ALSO AT FRIAR SCHOOL WHICH WAS LOCATED 1/4 MILE WEST OF THE NEW HIGH SCHOOL.

RIDGEDALE SCHOOL WAS LOCATED JUST NORTH OF THE CAMP DODGE WATER TOWER. THE FOURTH GRADE SCHOOL IN THE AREA WAS RIDER, LOCATED IN THE FAR SW CORNER OF THE PRESENT SCHOOL DISTRICT.

STUDENTS FINISHING GRADE SCHOOL IN THESE SCHOOLS COULD OPT TO ATTEND A NINTH GRADE UNIT AT HERROLD, TUITION THEMSELVES TO DES MOINES OR ENTER THE WORK FORCE

1888. THE FIRST POST OFFICE AND GROCERY STORE, OPERATED BY JAKE RANDOLPH, WERE LOCATED ON THE CURRENT HAROLD WICKEN PROPERTY. (NEAR CAMP DODGE) THIS POST OFFICE WAS DISCONTINUED IN 1903 WHEN GRIMES BEGAN R.F.D. IN THE AREA BY HORSE AND BUGGY.

1905. THE INTERURBAN BEGAN SERVICE, FREIGHT AND PASSENGER, FROM DES MOINES TO PERRY, IA.

1907. HYPERION GOLF CLUB OPENED FOR PLAY.

1907. THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED WITH THE HAYES GROCERY STORE WHICH WAS BUILT ON THE SITE OF THE PRESENT JOHNSTON BARBERSHOP. THIS YEAR ALSO BROUGHT TELEPHONE SERVICE FROM GRIMES.

1908. FRUITLAND AND BRIMMAN DRIVES (55TH AND 57TH) WERE DEVELOPED AND ONE OF THE OLDEST AND STILL ACTIVE ORGANIZATION IN JOHNSTON -- THE FRUITLAND/BRIMMAN LEAGUE WAS FORMED IN 1915.

1909. A POST OFFICE WAS RE-ESTABLISHED WITH JOHN C. HAYS AS POSTMASTER.

1912. THE POST OFFICE WAS DE-COMMISSIONED IN JOHNSTON.

1913. GENETIC RESEARCH WAS BEGUN BY H.A. WALLACE AND J.J. NEWLIN FOR JOHNSTON'S NEWEST BUSINESS--PIONEER HI-BRED.

1914. IN THIS YEAR THE SECOND CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT IN POLK COUNTY WAS FORMED WHICH INCLUDED THE PREVIOUSLY LISTED FOUR GRADE SCHOOLS AND THE NEW DISTRICT WAS CALLED THE INDEPENDENT CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT OF WEBSTER AND JEFFERSON TOWNSHIPS OF POLK COUNTY, IOWA!

1918./1919 AN ADDITION WAS MADE TO THE SCHOOL BUILDING. (WEST WING) AND THE K8 UNIT WAS EXPANDED TO A K12 UNIT.

1920 PAUL ALLEY BUILDS A SERVICE STATION LATER TO BE KNOWN AS ROBINETTE'S GARAGE.

1922 OTTO'S SERVICE WAS OPENED FOR BUSINESS.

1923 PIONEER'S EXPERIMENTAL FARM BEGAN OPERATION. THE U.S. GOVT. RE-ESTABLISHED THE JOHNSTON POST OFFICE WITH BRUCE C. CARTER AS POSTMASTER

FOR A MORE DETAILED HISTORY OF JOHNSTON ASK TO SEE THE TWENTY PAGE BROCHURE WRITTEN BY THE JOHNSTON HISTORY COMMITTEE IN THE SUMMER OF 1993 FOR THE NEW JOHNSTON LIBRARY!!