

Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission
Meeting March 11, 2023

A regular meeting of the CCPCC was called to order at 9:00 a.m. at the Clayton County Genealogy Office in Elkader.

Attending were Chairperson Lee Embretson, Ellen Collins, Bruce Collins and friends of the commission Dave Beck and Frank Phippen. Absent were Lee Lenth and our newest board member, Sue Meyer.

Myra Voss, a member of the commission since its inception, choose not to be reappointed as a commission member after her term expired in December. (Thank you Myra for all your work and dedication over many, many years to preserving our pioneer cemeteries.)

Agenda Approval

The first order of business was approving the agenda for this meeting. Ellen Collins made a motion to approve the agenda; Bruce Collins seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Minutes—Prior Month's Meeting

Secretary/Treasurer Bruce Collins read the minutes from the previous meeting. Ellen Collins made a motion to accept the minutes as read; Bruce Collins seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Secretary/Treasurer Bruce Collins reported that the bank balance at Freedom Bank was \$1,545.64 with two checks being issued since our last meeting related to work on the McClelland Cemetery. One check (\$167.36) to Lee Embretson reimbursing him for supplies used at that cemetery and another check (\$37.00) to Thoma's Restaurant in Garnavillo for lunch after the work session at this cemetery.

The balance of the county funds as of this date is \$1,232. Checks were issued totaling \$593 since our November meeting for mileage, supplies and cemetery mowing.

Garretson Cemetery

Kim Klocke, the owner of the land surrounding the Garretson Cemetery, advised Ellen Collins that another gravestone was found there. Frank Phippen said he would go get it and Dave Beck said he would like to go with him. Ellen will follow up with Kim Klocke to arrange the pick up.

Lee Embretson said the sign for this cemetery was picked up from thINK, the shop where it was made.

There also was some discussion as to where in the cemetery location the sign and existing gravestones would be placed. It was the consensus that the best location would be along the perimeter by an existing fence using cattle paneling to protect the sign and gravestones.

Cemetery Signs

Bruce Collins presented drafts for signs to be placed in three cemeteries: Dohrer, Barnum-King and McClelland.

For the Dohrer and Barnum-King Cemeteries, after review and discussion, with some edits and corrections made to the drafts on each, motions were made by Ellen Collins to have signs made. The motions were seconded by Bruce Collins and passed unanimously.

For the McClelland Cemetery, the draft for a sign at that cemetery was placed on hold. Frank Phippen is working with Nancy Biel, an ancestor of the McClelland's, on a sign made by the federal government for this site.

Grave Stones and Related

Frank Phippen said he has had sand blasting done on gravestones and said, if the committee wanted him to do so, he would pursue this for a gravestone from the Garretson Cemetery—a gravestone that is considered a foot stone—with no writing on it-- and have the name of one of the children buried there cut into the stone.

A motion was made by Ellen Collins for Frank to followup, Bruce Collins seconded the motion, the motion passed unanimously.

There was some discussion related to how to place restored gravestones back in the cemetery. It was concluded that this matter is best made as a work place decision based on the each stone's size, condition and related factors.

Other Projects

Griffith/Graham Cemeteries

Frank Phippen also said that he plans on doing some probing for grave stones at a burial site in Millville Twp know as the Griffith/Graham cemetery.

Schmidt Cemetery

There was some discussion related to the Schmidt burial site located near Rick and Julie Dengler's Barn on the Bluff Resort in Cox Creek Twp. Ellen Collins has had conversations with some of the descendants of those buried there as well as with George Leonard, who owns, or has owned property in that area, and George noted that a grouping of perennial flowers (probably daylilies) grows on or around this site. Ellen also spoke to Clayton County Resident Bob Griffith who as a child lived near this cemetery site and he had memories of fencing surrounding the site.

Friend of the commission, Dave Beck also gave a presentation about the Schmidt Cemetery. He showed the exact location of the cemetery using Beacon/Schneider maps and the 1886 Clayton County Plat Book. He visit the site with the current landowner Eli Garms and found two shallow depressions, which may be burial sites, and remnants of fencing, including a gate.

Dave said he also met with Elaine Grimes, the great, great grand daughter of Adam Schmidt, who is buried at this site. Elaine also told Dave about an article published in the *Clayton County Register* dated July 1, 1936 by Minnie (Schmidt) Gusta, the daughter of Adam Schmidt, telling about the death of five of her siblings within four weeks. These five children are probably buried at this site with

their parents, Adam and Dorothy Schmidt, who are buried here.
(Dave, thank you for this report.)

(On both of the above sites, going forward, the commission may consider doing more work to memorialize these locations.)

Correspondence with Township Trustees

In the last six weeks or so, Ellen Collins said she has sent correspondence to the trustee clerks in 21 of the 22 townships in Clayton County asking for information they have about pioneer cemeteries in their townships. (One township has no pioneer cemeteries.) Responses have been received from some of the townships and that information will be shared with the commission as it is received. Hopefully a data base of information will be received for the commission's perusal and possible followup.

Next Meeting

The next meeting has been scheduled for 9:00 a.m. Saturday April 08th at the Genealogy Office in Elkader.

A motion was made, seconded and passed to adjourn at 11:10 a.m.

Bruce Collins --Secretary/Treasurer