

Clayton County Pioneer Cemetery Commission

Meeting: July 19, 2025

The monthly meeting of the commission was called to order shortly after 9:00 AM. at the Elkader Genealogy Society office in Elkader.

The commission members present were Chairperson Lee Embretson, David Beck, Bruce Collins and Ellen Collins. Commission member Sue Meyer was absent. Others in attendance included Sara Gunderson from Monumental Restoration and Judy Siebrecht, a friend of the commission.

The minutes from our last meeting were reviewed and summarized by Bruce Collins. After a brief discussion the minutes were approved as presented on a motion from David Beck and seconded by Ellen Collins.

The treasurer's report was then given by Bruce Collins. Since July 01 was the beginning of the fiscal year for the county, a \$2,000 budget was again allotted to the commission by the county supervisors for the fiscal year, and out of that budgeted amount, \$252 was disbursed to Zach Marmann for repair/replacement of the fabricated metal sign at the Meenan Cemetery, leaving a balance in that fund of \$1,748.00.

The bank balance in the commission's account at Freedom Bank remains the same as last month, \$1,399.21 since there was no activity in the account since that time.

The treasurer's report was approved and passed on a motion by Ellen Collins and seconded by David Beck.

Barnum Cemetery

Bruce Collins presented the bill and disbursement request in the amount of \$75.00 for the sign which will be attached to the Barnum Cemetery sign that was approved at our June meeting. This disbursement request is reimbursing Bruce Collins for the payment he made to thINK Custom Printing for making the sign.

Bruce Collins said he would ask his neighbor, Charles Jaster, a skilled handyman, to help him install the Barnum Cemetery sign, but he requested that the commission members go to the cemetery site after this meeting so that he could place a marker where the commission members agreed as to where the sign should go. Chairperson Lee Embretson thought it was too wet and muddy to be going to the cemetery site today. So, after some discussion it was the consensus of the commission members that they would be okay with letting Bruce Collins make the decision as to where to place the sign. Lee

Embretson said that he would have someone mow the area and then notify Bruce Collins that he could put up the sign.

Discussed next was the time-line for installing the gravestones at Barnum. Since Sara Gunderson is our lead person for this project, she suggested that for our August meeting we have a defined list of all the gravestones we have for this cemetery and have a plan or make a plan for how they are going to be placed at the site. Then in September the on site work starts for installing the gravestones. There was some concern/question by Bruce Collins if there is going to be enough manpower to do the physical labor that is required to do this work? The answer was –yes.

County Map Book

Ellen Collins talked about the Clayton County 911 Rural Road Atlas that was prepared by the Upper Iowa Explorerland Regional Planning Commission a few years-ago, which she obtained from the county auditor's office. This atlas contains maps for each township in the county with the streets/roads in each township listed next to the township map. An atlas was distributed to each commission member, which may be helpful in doing pioneer cemetery work.

County Attorney Visit

Ellen Collins said she spoke with County Attorney Zach Herrmann and thanked him for doing the legal work on the Barnum Cemetery easement. Zach was appreciative of the comments and said that this was a non-adversarial transaction with the landowners, the Coulters.

It was suggested that Lee as our chairperson contact the Coulters on behalf of the commission thanking them for making the Barnum Cemetery restoration possible.

SAPIC Idea

In July of 2026 our country will be celebrating 250 years as a country and Ellen Collins noted that as part of that celebration the idea was presented by Mildred Stewart of the State Association for Pioneer Iowa Cemeteries (SAPIC) to have some sort of memorial service here in our county at the gravesite of someone that took part in the Revolutionary War or the War of 1812. Since Mildred Stewart is also a clerk for Sperry Township she is aware of a grave in Reed Cemetery in Sperry Township for a veteran of the War of 1812.

Doing something related to the above is of interest to our commission since we have a person on our commission, David Beck, that has the talent and interest of portraying

historical people. Going forward, more discussion and planning will be needed regarding this project, which will take place during the spring and summer of 2026, the 250th anniversary year of our country.

Other Happenings

Ellen Collins said she is spending some time on Thursdays going through the documents that Myra Voss has donated to the geneolgy office.

A question was raised related to a gravestone that George Leonard had for a Veronica Hall as to who she was. David Beck was able to answer that question from research he had previously done.

We (our commission) were tentatively scheduled at this meeting to make a visit to the possible location of the Chinese grave site, but Sue Meyer was unable to make contact with the owner of the property to get permission for us to visit.

At this time there is nothing new to report related to the 911 address signs being placed at pioneer cemeteries.

Lee Embretson noted that he has been busy and has not yet had the time to install the new sign that the commission had made for the Winkowitsch Cemetery near Farmersburg.

Our next meeting is scheduled for August 9, 2025

A motion was made and passed for this meeting to end at 10:45 a.m.

Bruce Collins
Secretary/Treasurer
CCPCC