

## JOHNSTON

The Alpha Omega Chapter, Alpha Delta State, of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International, an honorary women educators' group, in co-operation with the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, presents a brief history of Johnston Township and a focus on its early schools.

Johnston Township is located in northeast Trumbull County. It was drawn by practically the same shareholders in the Connecticut Land Company who drew Canfield Township in Mahoning County. Johnston was number six in the second range and was surveyed by Nathan Moore in 1802. It was laid out in 100-acre lots and was originally considered as the county seat of Trumbull County. The seven original owners paid a total price of \$13,526 for the township. It was named for one of these original owners, Captain James Johnston of Salisbury, Connecticut, who never made a trip to see the land which bore his name.

Historians tell that Captain James Bradley and his family of Salisbury, Connecticut, were the first settlers. They left Salisbury in June 1803, and came by way of Pittsburgh to Canfield. They moved very slowly because they had to clear a path wide enough for their teams to pass through, and they camped in unbroken forests. It took them over five weeks to journey from Canfield to Johnston, about 35 miles. Today the same trip can be made in less than an hour by car.

The Bradley family settled about a quarter of a mile west of the Johnston Center on the east bank of a brook later named Perry Brook.

Jared Hill and James Skinner, two young men, came next to live in Johnston in 1804. They built a sawmill and went away during the winter. Each married a woman from Canfield. They were very handy with tools, and were much in demand for their work. Their wives were often left alone for long periods of time, which was frightening to them since they lived near a group of Indians. It was also in 1804 that Mr. Jaqua arrived with his wife and five children -- two sons and three daughters. The first township marriage united Charity Jaqua and Solomon Brainard. Mr. Jaqua was chosen as the township's first magistrate. The two Jaqua sons died of typhus fever in 1811, and the family moved soon afterwards to Pennsylvania.

Most of the early settlers of Johnston Township came from Connecticut, but in 1830 a number of Protestant Irish emigrants came into the northwest corner of the township. Ten years later, in 1840, another group settled in the southeast corner. The first Scotchman was Mr. Robert Hamilton.

The first school was taught by Miss Elizabeth Hine, who later became Mrs. Thaddeus Bradley. This school met in a house built by a Mr. Zebulon Walker on the corner east of the center. It was built of logs and was used both as a school and meeting house. The first school was torn down in the early 1830's. Another schoolhouse was situated at what is now Corinth, east of the bend in the road, north of the church. A third

school was put up on the road south of the east corner, and a fourth school one half mile west of Bradley Corners, on the north side of the road. In this schoolhouse Laura Barstow, who would later marry Ariel Bradley, taught 15 scholars for one term. Miss Sally Neft taught at a school erected on West Street near the Fowler Township line. To care for the children further from the center, a school was built on the Cortland Road. In 1846 this was replaced by a frame school building -- ending the era of log school houses in Johnston -- a period of about forty years. Then came another period of 40 years, the time of the little red brick schoolhouses. After the red brick schools came the white frame schoolhouses -- bringing the history of Johnston's schools to the year 1900. The people of Johnston voted to centralize their schools in 1901, and the board of education issued bonds amounting to \$4,000 for the erection of a school building. This building was in use until 1929.

One of the teachers in Johnston's first centralized school was Mary Kistler, now Mrs. Mary Kistler Grant, a retired teacher living in Warren. She provides valuable firsthand information on the Johnston school when she taught there in 1918 and 1919.

The first year Mary Kistler taught in Johnston she boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Dwight Sunbury. Mrs. Sunbury served very proper meals, and Mr. Sunbury always said grace. Mary had a beautiful large bedroom that contained a double bed, dropleaf table, wash stand, and dresser. The Sunbury house was walking distance from the school, which made it very convenient.

The frame school building contained grades one through high school. There was one teacher for grades one and two, three and four, five and six, seven and eight, and three teachers for the high school. Mr. Drinkwater was superintendent and taught high school. Mr. Treloar was principal of the high school and also taught. The two high school women teachers were Ruby Schaad and Ruby Lynn.

There were about 30 pupils in grades one and two. They came each morning in a horse drawn van. School took up at 8:30 a.m. and closed at 3:00 p.m.

Some of the children were very shy. One little girl would tiptoe into the room, slide along the wall, and then run to her seat. Her fear of school came from the tales her grandfather had told her about his school experiences. She eventually learned to enjoy school, her teacher, and schoolmates. One little boy loved to draw big pictures on the chalkboard. He later became an artist.

The subjects taught were reading, writing, arithmetic, language, music, art, and games. A music supervisor taught music once a week and laid out plans for one week's work. The teacher stayed with the pupils during the noon hour. After the pupils ate their packed lunches, the teachers would have them play circle and singing games. The school rooms were quite large, so that when the weather was bad games could be played in the classroom.

The people in the community were very friendly and often entertained the teachers in their homes.

In 1961 Johnston Schools were consolidated with Mecca and Greene Local Schools to form the present Maplewood School District.

Although there were a few attempts to gather the settlers together on the Sabbath for religious meetings, nothing of a lasting nature happened until the arrival of Md. Amasa Hamlin in 1810. He was a respected Methodist; and with his help, religious meetings were conducted with prayer, singing, and reading of the Bible. Ministers of all denominations, traveling through Johnston, occasionally preached a sermon. About 1812 a Methodist circuit minister, Rev. James McMahan, was provided for the people of Johnston. The Presbyterian Church was organized in 1814 under Rev. William Hanford, a missionary from Connecticut.

Johnston was originally united with Vernon, Hartford, and Fowler with the elections being held in Hartford. Later, Mecca and Bazetta were attached to Johnston, which formed a new election district. The first election for this new district was held in Johnston on October 9, 1916.

The first 25 years of Johnston Township found a population of about 60 families and 400 people. They brought with them the love and respect of their native homes and the traits and character they had inherited from worthy ancestors. They bravely worked together to build their homes, raise their families, subdue the forests, and ready the fields for the plow. They built schools and churches, erected mills to saw their lumber, and built roads to communicate with one another. The first pioneers in Johnston, the Bradley family, opened a new Trumbull County township in the same year that the state of Ohio joined the union of states, 1803. These pioneers worked to do everything possible which could make life worth living and leave behind a worthy heritage.

*The script by Sarah Grant, narration by Gene Roberts. These programs were prepared by the Delta Kappa Gamma Society, in cooperation with the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation, to promote a better understanding of the history of the townships of Trumbull County with a focus on early education and the role of the woman educator.*