

Early History of Avondale

Adair County was organized in 1854 and was divided in two townships, Washington and Harrison, later being diminished to the present township forms.

The first to come to make a home was Thomas Johnson on Section 4 (now the John Bowers place) in the spring of 1849. The first school held was in their home taught by Dianthe Richardson (Mrs. Joshua Chapman) in the winter of 1851-52. He also had the first post office in his home in 1855 and held the first religious services there in 1858. He also erected a grist mill in 1854 and had a hand mill for bolting flour. He moved to Oregon in 1861. Their daughter Margaret was the first white child born in Washington township in May 1850. The first death was also one of their children.

In June 1854, a man by the name of Bowers came and settled on what was later known as the Shelby Garner farm. Soon he opened up a blacksmith shop, the first of its kind in the county.

In July 1854, James and John Stanley came but only James stayed. He built a log house and raised seven children. His father, Rev. Harris Stanley, followed him here. He was a minister of the denomination commonly known as the "campbellites," being the first resident minister although services were occasionally held by a Methodist minister who was not a resident.

At this time, there were only five families living in Washington township and not a bridge of any kind. There are now 26 bridges of 20 ft. span or over, eight miles put to permanent grade, 3 miles being put to permanent and 8 miles surfaced with crushed rock.

Monroe Winn came from Indiana and settled on Section 31 in 1854. The place is still known as the "Winn farm." In November 1854, Shelby Garner settled in Washington township and to date, one of his direct heirs still resides on part of the home place. Elizah B. Sullivan came in December 1854, built a log cabin and moved his family to this place in January 1855. With him came his brothers Titus and J. B. Hugh McCall entered land on Section 25 in 1855. Entered the army during the Civil War in 1862 served in Co. D. 29th Iowa. When discharged, returned to his farm, married in 1866 and raised 3 children, two of whom reside nearby and a grandson in the Avondale community.

Joseph Dunlap settled on NW ¼ Section 24 in 1855. (This is what is now John McDermott's farm where Clayton and Burt now live.) Mary L. Dunlap became the wife of J. H. Hulbert. Thos. Kembery came in 1861. J. G. Hendry in 1869. Royal Guile in Feb. 1865 to Greenfield then to farm in Washington township in 1869. S. C. Bloom in 1869, James Moar came from Scotland in 1872, bought a farm in Washington township. In 1876, he married Millie Sullivan, daughter of one of the first settlers. Much of their farm was kept in its virgin state and several truckloads of prairie hay were made late last summer by Wilber Steward from a pasture which was recently purchased by Mr. Kriens from the estate. Benjamin Briggs came in 1870. Of this family, we still have resident descendants, the Baymans.

The first marriage in Washington township was that of Manoah S. Sullivan and Sarah A. Stanley, Nov. 7. 1855.

In Richland township, the S. E. Smith family settled in 1865. Only one house was between their home and Nevinville, that of Jim Stewart. The McClures, Dave Edwards, Hayden Edwards, Seley Hoskins, Ford and others soon followed.

H. C. Steward came to Adair county in 1871, later moving to the Avondale community. John Brown came from Ohio in 1877 and settled on Section 23. J. C. Johnston came from Indiana in 1870 and bought a farm from the government in Section 22 and 40 A of this farm is still owned by his daughter, Aunt Hat Brown. He was a minister and a carpenter and served the community in both a great many years. He built the barn on the Avondale farm and it is still in use.

John R. Sullivan, born in Washington township, April 29 1857, is one of the oldest pioneer families. His wife, who passed away recently was also of an old pioneer family. She went to school in the first schoolhouse in the township, the one built on Section 9 of logs.

E. E. Johnson was born May 1863 in Washington township. John came to Adair county in 1853 and six years later married Rachel Davis, their marriage being the 13th to be performed in the county. He erected a log cabin which he covered with Walnut shingles and here the family made their home for 27 years. He cast his first vote for Abe Lincoln. Years later, when the James boys robbed the train near Adair, they brought their loot down to the Johnson farm and divided it. Each of the Johnson girls had a ring for quite a while then turned them back to the government. They

never came back after the loot which they had hidden and when it was discovered by the Johnson family, they turned it over to the government.

E. H. Sullivan, born in Jackson township July 1861, married Jan. 13, 1887. Father John B. worked in Washington for J. E. Dunlap and on the 16th of October wedded Margaret Jane Roberts who had come from Indiana to Clarke county in 1851. He bought land in 1854, Section 33 Jackson township and 40 in Washington at \$1.25 per A. but did not locate on this until the fall of 1856.

J. H. Hulbert came in 1867, later purchasing his father-in-law's place. He called the farm Avondale. He raised many cattle and employed considerable help about the farm. He has been known to have had fifty men at work at one time making hay. He increased his acres until nearly all of the land two miles north and about a mile east and west beside most of what the McDermott farm were his. He kept a general store and the post office was also there for some time.

The children of these early pioneers went to school at what was called the "Hazel Green" school, located on the east side of the Nodaway river and nearly a mile south. Here the Johnston, the Lilly, the Carter, the Harrington, the Edwards and Smith children and perhaps others came to learn their 3 R's. The late Frank G. Fuller was a teacher at one time. J. C. Johnston was minister at this schoolhouse for several years when they could have church.

Miss Jane A. Dennis, mother of Mrs. Ross Woodside, was one of the pioneer teachers at Washington Center. She rode a mule back from her home 3 2/3 miles east of Fisk to make her application. One pupil, Cap (Frank) Smith, still lives east of Avondale.

Sometime between 1870 and 1875, the people decided they needed a new schoolhouse and petitioned the government for one. The land all around was beginning to be more thickly settled so the schoolhouses must be nearer together and so the schoolhouses were put on a line two miles apart. This placed the schoolhouse on its present location. Church and Sabbath school were held irregularly in the old schoolhouse and Mr. Hulbert asked that the new schoolhouse be made larger to accommodate them there and financed it accordingly.

At this new schoolhouse on a winter night at the close of a Christmas program, Miss Ellen Smith and Freeman Leach were married before the gathering there.

These people lived more than fifty years together and the home was broken up by the death of Mrs. Leach in 1936. This was the first public wedding in Avondale.

It was not so much of a task to raise a crop or raise farm stock but to market it was difficult. Much of the meat was dressed and taken to Creston or Des Moines. We are told Mr. McClure dressed several hogs, took their eggs, butter, etc. and drove to Des Moines to market. He sold the things alright but found out next morning that the money he received was worth less. He didn't have enough money to buy his breakfast from all his load of produce.

In the earliest pioneer days, the settlers had to go to Maryville, Mo to mill. Mr. Johnson built a mill to grind corn and later the mill was built at Mt. Etna. A herd lot was located where the Ray Fuller home is in Richland township. Here the people gathered to get their cows to milk each evening after the cows had run on the open range all day. Imagine going four or five miles or maybe more each evening to get the cows.

After the building of the schoolhouse, church and Sunday school were held here regularly, the first regular minister was Mr. Nye, a Methodist. He was followed by Mr. McDermott, a Presbyterian after which the Evangelist church had charge of the services until the present Avondale church was built.

The Avondale cemetery must have been started about the time the schoolhouse was built for the oldest headstone is that of Arthur Bright who died February 25, 1872. The next was Roscoe Hulbert, son of J. H. Hulbert, who died September 22, 1875 at the age of 4 years. The next was the infant child of Mr. and Mrs. John Colwell soon after.

Perhaps the most tragic and sorrowful event that had ever happened in this neighborhood was the steam boiler explosion in March 1878 when seven men were instantly killed, among them, Charley Chaney, who was the father of Mrs. Charley Steward.

When the need of a church building was felt, a canvass was made to see who could help out. Mr. Hulbert offered to finance one half of it if it were built at Avondale and change it in a Methodist organization. Another generous offer was made by N. R. Newton where the ground and \$100 was offered. The people thought Mr. Hulbert's offer best suited them and they generously gave of their time and labor

until the building was completed. In December 1909 the church was dedicated and in Dec. 1939, thirty years had passed by. All this time we have received our ministers from the Methodist conference and services have been held regularly except when roads and weather would not permit.

One day in the winter of 1914, a group of women of the Avondale vicinity met at Mrs. Tom Dwyer's for a rag carpet sewing. They decided they should form a club and called themselves the Sunshine Club. This club is still going strong under the same name and quite a few of the charter members are in it. Its success was largely due to the generous help given it by Mrs. Anna Reed who was the president for many years.

In the fall of 1915, a successful revival meeting was held in the church under the leadership of Rev. Harwood. These meetings closed at Thanksgiving and as there was so much to be thankful for, they decided to have a basket dinner that day and the women decided they should have a bazaar with an oyster social at night. The dinner was so well enjoyed it was decided to repeat it the following year. Each year since except one when the roads were too muddy, this dinner has been repeated.

The first dinner was held in the schoolhouse as the church had no plans for such a feast day. The basement was built in the year 1916. Work, time, and money being generously shared by the whole community.

During the World War, there were at least six or seven boys who entered service for their country from families near Avondale while the men bought Liberty Bonds and the women knit and rolled bandages for the Red Cross and all tried to save the foods and clothing that the boys might be better cared for over there. The Sunshine Club gave a bazaar's receipts to the Red Cross on Thanksgiving during that time.

The first funeral service to be preached in the church was that of the small son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Stuva in March 1910.

Avondale now has about 30 active church members besides many people around here who can be depended upon to help out at all times when called upon. Its cradle roll numbers 13. There are five classes in the Sunday school and we have a pre-school class organized by Mrs. Newton and Mrs. Ritchard about a year ago. Church and Sunday school are held every Sunday with evening services each alternate Sunday.

A copy of the minutes of what was probably the first Sabbath school ever held in the schoolhouse was that of Sept 7, 1878. One of them, just as it was written in the secretary's book.

(These reports run through to the first of the year 1881.)

Sabbath school Sept. 7, 1878

Avondale Union Sabbath school met at half past nine o'clock and was open by singing and by prayer. The number of officers were four. The number of persons present were thirty-one. The name of persons were: Mr. John Brown, Thomer Brown, Lant Brown, S. D. Hulbert, H. Hulbert, Wesley Brown, William Rainy, Mr. Lilly, Frank Hulbert, John Colwell, T. B. Bright, Miss Mary Brown and Miss Emma Carter, Miss Martha Carter, Miss Viola Spain, Miss Ella Sharp, Miss Ida Sharp, Miss Vie McCall, Miss Ruth Rainy, Miss Ada Carter, Mrs. Bright, Emma Lilly, Rebecca Tripp, Ella Pannell, Gerta Carter, Miss Clara Bright and Mary Bright.

The first male class were 7.

The second male class were 6.

The first female class were 5.

The second female class were 12.

A motion that Mr. Lilly be appointed to assist the librarian carried. Question for next Sabbath: How many kings were there that went with Beuhadad, the King of Syria to besiege Samaria? Sam Hulbert. On motion that J. H. Hulbert be appointed martial of the day of picnic, by vote. J. H. Hulbert and Mr. Lilly were appointed on committee of arrangements. No name is signed to this report.

The next report doesn't say whether they had their picnic or not. Later on in the reports where the penny collection was taken and reported, I see the words "and a button". So some one must have his little joke.

Other names added in the reports in a few weeks were those of Carrie Lilly, Elwood Johnston, Jane Bloom, Laura Bloom. J. H. Hulbert, H. H. Hulbert, Miss Emma Carter, E. Pool, A. J. McCall, S. M. Hulbert, D. A. Hires, A. E. Harrington were names signed as having served as secretary for the school. George Lilly was superintendent of that time.