

# The Preservationist

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## Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commissioners

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## Limestone (Hawkins) Cemetery Achieves Landmark Status

**O**n December 8, 2015, the Kankakee County Board officially designated the Limestone (Hawkins) Cemetery as a Kankakee County Landmark.

The cemetery was found to be significant under two criteria:

- It represents individuals in the categories of Exploration/Settlement, Agriculture, and Social History.
- It has important historic associations with Limestone Township's early period of settlement and reflects important aspects of community history.

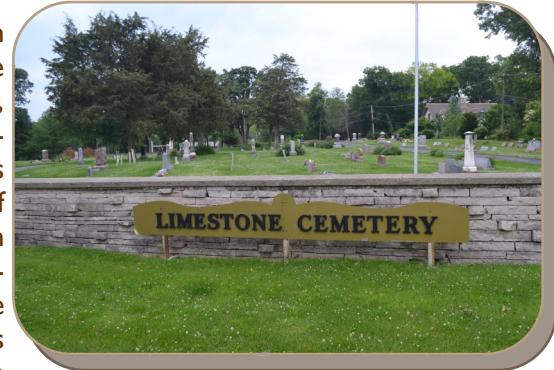
Limestone Cemetery is

located in Limestone Township, approximately 4 miles northwest of Kankakee on State Highway Route 113. It was established in 1835 on property owned at the time by Joel B. and Hester Hawkins. The first recorded burial was that of their baby daughter, Deiadama B.R. Hawkins, who died October 10, 1835. The Hawkins family later donated that portion of their land used for bur-

ials to Iroquois County (Kankakee County was not yet established).

Additional land was added to the cemetery in 1902 when Jefferson and Mary Koon donated land adjoining the Hawkins Cemetery. On December 26, 1902, the Limestone

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## Preserving Your Buildings Exterior

Taken from: "The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation"

**M**asonry features (such as brick cornices and door pediments, stone window molding, terra cotta brackets and railings) as well as masonry surfaces may be important in defining the historic character of a building...while masonry is among the most durable of historic building materials, it is also the most

susceptible to damage by improper maintenance or repair techniques and by harsh or abrasive cleaning methods.

- Provide proper drainage to prevent standing water.
- Clean masonry only when necessary.
- Remove damaged paint only to the next sound

layer using the gentlest method possible (e.g., handscraping) prior to repainting.

- Carefully remove deteriorated mortar and replace by duplicating the old in strength, composition, color, and texture.

For more info go to: [www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/masonry01.htm](http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/masonry01.htm)

## Kankakee County Historic Preservation Plan

**THANK YOU**  
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**T**he Kankakee County Historic Preservation Commission has begun a new phase toward the completion of a Preservation Plan for Kankakee County.

The first phase was to write the historic context of each township in the county. This historic context helps us to learn more about the settlement of the township. What type of culture that those early pioneers came from and why they settled where they did. Most often someone led the way, found fertile land for farming or other opportunities that would provide for their family. Word was sent back to their friends or relatives and they too immigrated to the area. In some cases the settlers came from Europe, but many came from the eastern states, and, of course, many French-Canadians traveled here from Canada.

It wasn't easy to break the prairie to develop a farm or to build those first cabins from the surrounding timber. It was most often their cultural background that influenced the construction of the houses and farm buildings. Whether they

were English, German or French-Canadian, those first structures were usually designed or copied from a style they were familiar with. Later architectural styles were chosen from pattern books, and building materials were shipped by rail.

As the Commission begins the second phase of the work needed to achieve a Preservation Plan, more people have been enlisted to help. Members of a Steering Committee are working to make sure our historic context is accurate. They and several key contact people in various townships are working to invite the residents of the 17 townships to join us at one of six village forums scheduled from January through May of this year.

The purpose of the village forums is to reach out to the residents and learn which structures, farms or sites are important to them and are historically relevant in their areas. With help from the public, we will be able to identify, evaluate, and register them. It will then be determined if those properties should be protected and how best to preserve

the history that they represent.

Our consultant, Ken Itle will be joining us to lead the discussion. We encourage you to please join us at any of the following:

1. Tues. - Jan. 26, 7:00 p.m., Earl D. Schoeffner Memorial Building, 105 E. 2nd St., Momence, IL.
2. Tues. - Feb. 2, 7:00 p.m., Leo Hassett Community Center, 211 N. Main St., Manteno, IL.
3. Tues. - Feb. 23, 7:00 p.m., Village Hall Conference Room, 2200 Lowe Rd., Aroma Park, IL.
4. Tues. - Mar. 22, 7:00 p.m. Village Hall, 272 East 2nd St., Herscher, IL.
5. Tues. - April 19, 7:00 p.m., Bourbonnais Public Library, White Oak Room, 250 W. John Casey Rd., Bourbonnais, IL.
6. Tues. - May 10, 6:30 p.m., Kankakee Public Library, 4th Floor Gallery, 201 E. Merchant St., Kankakee, IL.

## Limestone (Hawkins) Cemetery Achieves Landmark Status

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Cemetery Association was organized and the cemetery was officially renamed Limestone Cemetery. It received not-for-profit status in 1903.

The cemetery from 1902–2003 was cared for by volunteer residents. On January 19, 2003 it was legally conveyed to the Limestone Township association to ensure that in the future it would be properly cared for.

Early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the cemetery's appearance was described as follows by Burt Burroughs, a well-known historian in Kankakee County:

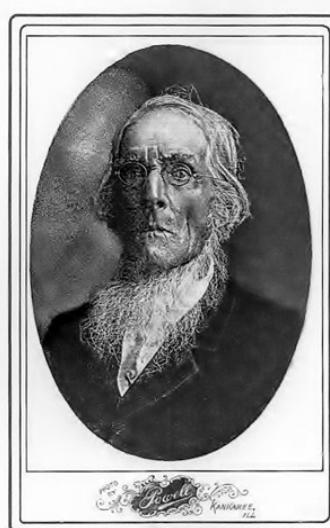
*"The old burial ground is one of the most beautiful and picturesque situations in Kankakee County today. Near to the river and surrounded by a rustic stone fence, its well-kept graves and lawns and leaning headstones give the place an air of untroubled repose and serenity. Long before the railroad came, and before Kankakee was, the pioneers of the countryside on their passing, were here interred. The spot is known today as "The Limestone Cemetery", but custom and tradition are*



*hard to displace. To most of us it is the Hawkins Cemetery still. That the members of the several Hawkins families were once numerous is still evident. On the western side of the plat the headstones stand in serried regimentation like soldiers, grim memorials of a race who have moved on into the shadow land of the spirit."*

and Joel Baldwin Hawkins, settled on adjoining property in 1834.

The Micah Jepson Hawkins Homestead is still owned by a descendant of the original Hawkins family. There has never been a mortgage recorded against the property, which is held by the original patent issued by the United States govern-



Micah Jepson Bates Hawkins

ment to Jepson Hawkins.

The early settlers/farmers of Limestone Township were significant contributors in the development of Kankakee County and assisted in the construction of the Illinois

Central Railroad through Kankakee County. Stone from the Wiley Creek area, along Hwy 113, was used to build the railroad bridge in Kankakee. Some of those early settlers buried in the Limestone cemetery are: Butz, Byrnes, Nichols, Heil, Falter, Koon, Powell, Rounsville, Vining, and Wiley.

It is also important to note that the cemetery is the final resting place for numerous veterans who served our country through times of war and peace, from the War of 1812 through the Vietnam War. All branches of the U. S. Military are included: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard.



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## The Preservationist

### Researching Your Kankakee County Property

You would like to compile the history of your house, maybe even consider applying for landmark status. Where do you begin?

If your house is located within an incorporated area your task may be easier than if it is in a rural area. Here are some steps that you can take during your research:

1. Go to the County Assessors Office to get the legal description of the property. It can also be obtained in the county plat books.

- In an incorporated area the property will have a lot number, block number, and plat name. (Example: Lot II, Block 8 of Evans 2nd addition)

- In rural areas, the townships are numbered. There are 36 sections, subdivided by halves and quarters and those sections are also subdivided. (Example: S 1/2, SW 1/4, Sec 25, T 25 N-R 2 E - which means the south one-half of the southwest one quarter of section 25, township 25 north, range 2 east).

2. With the address in hand go to your public library or your local historical society. They will have past city directories for you to trace the properties within incorporated areas. Street indexes were included in the early directories with the occupants listed by street address. You will also learn what the owner's occupation was and quite often the spouse's name. You may be able to follow the address back far enough to find an approximate date of construction.

3. Take that information to the County Recorder's Office. They maintain accurate information on a property's chain of title. Here you will need the legal description of the property that you have already ob-

tained. By tracing the history of the ownership, you may be able to narrow down the date of construction. You can usually tell when a structure was built on the property, as the sale price of the property increases substantially or you may find that a loan has been taken out for construction.

• **Warranty Deed** (WD) - is property changing hands from one owner to another.

• **Quit Claim Deed** (QCD) - is property usually transferred to one or more persons. For example a parent may QCD property to a child with no money exchanged.

• **Trust Deed**—Could be a mortgage or could be a trustee deed.

4. Sanborn Insurance maps are a good source of information on the appearance of the older structures and can often help determine the date of construction. They were drawn from 1880-1930 and documented a building's changes. Historical Societies often have those in their archives.

5. Newspapers are another source of information. Public libraries have those available on microfilm. You may find articles about a house when it was being built. If you know who the owners were, go to the county's vital records department to find out their date of death. Then you can look up their obituary. There may be family in the area that will have photos that they will share with you.

Regardless of the end result, you have gained information about the property that is important to you. If you think it is eligible as a county landmark or you would like it listed on the National Register of Historic Places, contact the Historic Preservation Commission to help you get started.