The Hiawatha History Committee met on November 9, 2015, at Hiawatha City Hall in Conference Room D with Edie Wheeler as Chair calling the meeting to order at 1:30 P.M. Members present: Pat Semelroth, Sandy Brewer, Dick Larson, Don Earll, Bev Daws and Jerry Seifried. Guests: Bob Jones and Roberta Hamdorf.

Past History Committee Member Roberta Hamdorf stopped in for a visit.

Edie announced Veteran’s Day is coming up on Wednesday, November 11, 2015, so it is very fitting that the History Committee is interviewing Bob Jones from the Legion today. Edie also recited the following quote, “Our lives are like a book and it’s time to change the page to a new chapter.”

Edie mentioned getting a card and having all the History Committee members sign it for Mayor Theis.

The History Committee interviewed Bob Jones of Hiawatha American Legion Post 735 (referred to as Hiawatha Legion below). Highlights of the interview include the following information:

* Bob Jones is from Marengo, Iowa and his father moved them around a lot.
* Bob served in the Navy.
* Bob and his first wife moved to Hiawatha in 1972.
* When Bob came to Hiawatha, the City was considered the fastest growing community in Linn County.
* Bob moved out of Hiawatha in 1985 for five years and then moved back in 1992.
* Bob’s current wife is Sue.
* Bob’s kids attended Hiawatha Elementary School, Harding Middle School and Kennedy High School and had a positive experience in all three schools.
* Bob was not active in the community when he first came here. It was after his son played for the Kids League that Bob ended up coaching the team.
* Bob worked at Iowa Manufacturing until it closed down and then he went to work for Harnischfeger for 10 years until it closed. After this, he worked at Universal Nissen and then went to the Post Office where he retired in 2009, after 26 years.
* In 1997, Hiawatha Legion members applied for a charter for the Post and in January 1998, they received a temporary charter.
* The first organized meeting of Hiawatha Legion was December 1997. Bob was elected Chairman at this meeting.
* The original Hiawatha Legion members went door to door trying to recruit other members.
* On January 18, 1998, Hiawatha Legion received their official charter.
* The Hiawatha Legion had 34 members by the end of 1998, and today there are 125 members.
* The current Hiawatha Legion Commander is Rick Pierce.
* Bob was a past District Commander and is currently a Blue Cap.
* Clarence Sampson, past History Committee member was the second historian for the Hiawatha Legion.
* Hiawatha Legion started the bingo tent at Hog Wild Days in 2002.
* The Avenue of the Flags began in 2003. The Boy Scouts help with the Avenue of the Flags and the Legion pay them. The Hiawatha Legion also places 100 flags in Shiloh Cemetery, 25 flags in Buffalo Cemetery and approximately 12 flags in Morrison Cemetery.
* In July 2010, the Hiawatha Legion bought the property located at 207 Robins Road. Members Dick Larson and Don Earll did a lot of work fixing up the building themselves. This saved the Hiawatha Legion a lot of money.
* The Hiawatha Legion has storage garages and a house behind their property. They rent these as a way to make money.
* On December 7, 2011, the Hiawatha Legion added the Women’s Auxiliary where wives, widows and granddaughters of vets are eligible to join.
* The Hiawatha Legion sponsors a 5th grade essay contest at Hiawatha Elementary School and Nixon School.
* The Hiawatha Legion has Santa at the post for the kids.
* The Hiawatha Legion donated flagpoles to City Hall and the Hiawatha Legion along with the Rock Shop donated military plaques on the wall leading up to the front entrance of City Hall.
* The Hiawatha Legion sponsors a boys and girls Kids League team and funds a Citizenship Award presented to a Hiawatha child.
* Hiawatha Legion set up a fund to help pay for a guardian to attend the honor flights with a World War II Vets. There are two honor flights per year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Hy-Vee is a major sponsor of the honor flights. Almost every World War II Vet in the Hiawatha Legion Post has gone on this trip, now the Korean Vets need to go.
* The Hiawatha Legion has a Medal of Honor recipient Sal Giunta.
* Different levels of the Legion include County Commander, Vice Commander and District Commander. Bob Jones held all three.
* Members of the Hiawatha Legion meet every third Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m.

Business:

Bev Daws moved the approval of the agenda, seconded by Jerry Seifried. Motion carried. Jerry Seifried moved the approval of the October 12, 2015 meeting minutes, seconded by Dick Larson. Motion carried*.*

**Update on Interviews**

Upcoming interviews:

* Buffalo Cemetery and Shiloh Cemetery

**Hiawatha Insight Articles**

* Future newsletter articles – Hope Church and St. Elizabeth Church

**Other Business**

Don Earll gave an update on the Boy Scout that is working on a project to plot out all three cemeteries (Morrison, Buffalo and Shiloh) to mark the veteran burial locations. Don Earll said Joe Helle is coordinating this project and it may not be feasible to have the scout come to a meeting because he is a high school student. Don Earll said he would provide more information on this as he receives it.

Edie Wheeler mentioned the History Committee is planning to get together for a holiday dinner at Adelita’s on December 10, 2015. There will be no meeting for the month of December due to the holidays. Edie Wheeler suggested having a work session after the first of the year. Don Earll thought it might be good to have a work session instead of a meeting in January 2016.

The next History Committee meeting is January 11, 2016 at 1:30 p.m.

Bev Daws moved to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 p.m., seconded by Dick Larson. Motion carried.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Edie Wheeler, Chair