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- Museum
- Police Station
- Pool
- Post Office
- Park/Playground
- Railroad
- School
- Shelter House
- Skate Park
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Hanlontown



Hanlontown owes its beginning to the building of the Iowa Minnesota and North Western Railroad by W. E. Brice and associates. As land was acquired, fourteen townsites were out along the line. The line was sold to the Chicago Northwestern Railroad before construction began but Brice and associates retained rights to the townsites organizing themselves as the Iowa-Minnesota Townsite Company. Hanlontown was plated on October 9, 1899 and named for Frank J. Hanlon who was secretary of the Townsite Company. Official incorporation occurred in 1902.

Today, Hanlontown maintains its ideal location on Iowa Highway 9, as it is located 2 hours north of Des Moines, 2 hours south of Minneapolis, and 3 miles west of Interstate 35. The population is around 200 and has sustained that number since it was founded.

The residents of Hanlontown are a strong community brought together through various clubs and organizations. One of these is the Community Club, which offers membership to anyone that lives in the area. The club is responsible for operating the Ice Cream Parlor at Heritage Park in Forest City. With the earnings from ice cream sales, the club sponsors an annual Easter Egg Hunt and Halloween Costume Party. They have also provided many community improvements such as the Hanlontown sign at Hwy. 9 and Main Street. Additionally, between the years of 1999 and 2020, they awarded \$22,600 in scholarships to Hanlontown area high school graduates.

Another club in town is the Garden Club, which is a social and learning group centered around gardening, growth, care, and activities centered around plants and nature's rewards. The club is open to all ages and meets in the Community Center, with an occasional visit to surrounding points of interest. The club is partnered with the town's Park Board to take on the responsibility of maintaining the City Park and town sign. To encourage youth in gardening, the club also hosts an "Adopt-A-Planter" competition for Main Street during the summer.

POP, or Preserving Our Past, is another important organization in Hanlontown and has taken the responsibility for making the Citizens Saving Bank building and the Sime-Oswald Log Cabin available to the public. It also operates a local history museum within the Citizens Savings Bank building.

Hanlontown also has its own publication called The Sundowner, a newsletter that has been active since 1980 which helps many former residents maintain a connection with the community that they once lived in. This connection is reflected in the letters sent to The Sundowner.

Religion exists within many denominations throughout the area. While Hanlontown has one church, many other churches are located within 15 miles of town. Hope United Lutheran Parish (ELCA) consists of Grace Lutheran Church of Hanlontown and Bethlehem Lutheran Church



of Manly, Iowa. Brush Point Cemetery is located between Hanlontown and Fertile, Iowa on Hwy. 9. It is owned and operated by Grace Lutheran and Fertile Lutheran.

Hanlontown has one traditional annual celebration which has been in place since 1980, when the town began to honor the Summer Solstice. Here, the sun sets between the rails of the Union Pacific Railroad line that runs through the community. This event is celebrated in June and on the evening of the Summer Solstice when Ice Cream Sundays are served at the tracks. Everyone agrees that the biggest of all these Sundown celebrations was in 2001 when Bill Geist of CBS produced a segment on Sundown Days for CBS Sunday Morning. This segment may be seen at the Citizens Savings Bank Museum in town.

One of the town's most valued amenities is the Hanlontown Fire Department, which was organized in 1901 as the Hanlontown Hook and Ladder Company. Originally, this organization was staffed by volunteers equipped with only ladders and buckets to fight the flames within the town. Today, the Hanlontown Fire Department is an ISO Class 6 fire department and is the best rated of its kind in Worth County. Though it is still staffed with volunteers, the department has many more responsibilities. Along with providing fire protection, a number of volunteers also provide emergency medical services and technical rescue services for a 55 square mile fire district in Worth and Cerro Gordo Counties.

While home to one of the best fire departments, Hanlontown is also home to some of the finest parks of any community our size in northern Iowa. The parks are administered by the Park Board and are a result of countless hours of volunteer time. Therefore, they attract many families, groups, and travelers each year.

One such park is the Mini Rock Park located near the museum. The park's rock structures remain alongside William Loveless' fish pond and miniature church that he built behind his butcher shop in 1935 after visiting the Grotto in West Bend. In 1967, the Blossom Belles Garden Club cleaned up the area and Henry Doebel suggested the name. As a result, Mini Rock Park was born.

Photo of lighted tree submitted by Clayton Rye; a tree is lit up along Hwy 9



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NEWSLETTER

SUNDOWNER

PO Box 202

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Local businesses support the newsletter with ads. It is usually prepared for printing by dedicated volunteers on the last Thursday of each month and assembled for mailing by a larger group of volunteers on the following Wednesday morning. Between ten and twelve issues are published each year. Suggested annual donation is \$5.00

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ORGANIZATIONS & UTILITIES

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The Cabin and Savings Bank Museum are normally open from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Sundays during the months of June, July, and August. However, it is closed when the 4th of July falls on a Sunday as well the third weekend of June when it is open on Saturday between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. and closed on Sunday. The building is one of the Worth County Historical Society sites.

This project might not have been completed without the efforts of volunteer Arden Bergan as the cabin reconstruction was much more costly and required more labor than anticipated. After 7 years of fundraising, contract labor, and hundreds of volunteer hours, the cabin is once more open to the public. While there are still things to be finished, members of the Hanlontown Fire Department and POP cleaned and moved furnishings that had been stored in the basement of the museum into the cabin on July 12th of 2012. The cabin was also dedicated on that same day.

Leo and Jen's son, the late Andy Oswald and his wife Pat donated the cabin and much of the furnishings they had collected to Hanlontown's Preserving Our Past in 2005. The location before being moved to the late Leo and Jen Oswald farm west of Hanlontown.



SIME-OSWALD CABIN

The oak logs of this pioneer's cabin still bear the marks of the axe that split their length almost 150 years ago. They were to build it in 1869. "The skill, the work, the labor it took to do this - it is inconceivable to us today," Richard Holstad, a descendant of the cabin's builder, said. It is believed that the 18-by-30-foot, two-story cabin, which is large by most standards of early settler cabins, was built somewhere south of Highway 105 on or near the southbound lane on Interstate 35. It was most likely moved to a spot near that location before being moved to the late Leo and Jen Oswald farm west of Hanlontown.

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HANLONTOWN BUSINESS LISTINGS

Hanlontown IOWA



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The bank operated under the name "Citizens Savings Bank" until Sept. 1, 1981. It continued operating under various names until closing in Sept. 2000. The bank held the distinction of being the oldest bank in the county, and reportedly was one of two county Banks to survive the 1930's depression.

The museum is operated by Hanlontown's Preserving Our Past (POP). The museum focuses on Hanlontown history. This building is one of the Worth County Historical Society sites.

The former Citizens Savings Bank building was commissioned and financed by C. H. Macklader. The exterior of the building combines elements from a variety of architectural styles. The exterior is designed predominantly in the Classical Revival style. A closer look however reveals elements of other styles including Greek Revival and Art Deco. The interior is done in the Prairie School style, and abounds with oak woodwork, stained glass, and marble.

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