



The Historical Society mourns the loss of Richard Wellman, who died April 11, 2019. Richard's vast knowledge of Jefferson County has been lost to future researchers, except for the collection of his written works. We were so fortunate to have known him and benefited from his many contributions to both the Historical and Genealogical Societies. Every week someone says, "We wish we could ask Richard about..." He left a huge gap in our knowledge.

Significant items donated to the museum since our last newsletter include a church pew from the Hebron Church near Winchester by Larry Wise of Leavenworth; Linda Stehlik donated a friendship quilt given to Rev. Thomas and Sarah McConnell from the women of the Methodist Episcopal church in Dickinson Co. Kansas. The date on the quilt is 1889. The McConnell's moved to Oskaloosa in 1898. Stan Copeland of Quinter, KS in honor of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Winchester, donated a Civil War era supply wagon, purchased from the Army and used as a chuck wagon in the late 1890's - early 1900's by the O'Neill Cattle and Mule Company of Winchester; the bell from the Wellman Church by Penny Illig, in memory of her parents Dennis M. and Ethel Hay Stevens; a wedding dress, military uniforms and other small items by Joan Clark of Meriden and two barn quilts installed on the front of the boardwalk by Doris Elrod and her husband, Jim. Thank you to each of these donors for saving a piece of Jefferson County history. Without donations, the society's displays would become stagnant, not to mention the loss of prized items of historical significance.



Penny Illig, with Wellman Church Bell

Special exhibits and events this season have included Oskaloosa Lions Club Easter Egg hunt; Jefferson County Art Show; display of bridal dresses and quilts from the museum collection; wood block prints by graphic artist Margaret Whittemore from the museum's collection; World War I military artifacts associated with Company B of the Third Kansas Infantry from the museum's collection; dedication of the Dunkard Church bell tower; Memorial Day ceremony during which names of 243 individuals currently listed on the Jefferson County military memorial board located in the Jefferson County Courthouse were read followed by ringing of the bell; architectural projects by Faith Schmalstieg; display of Old Settlers memorabilia curated by Leanne Chapman; display by Gary Shupe, blacksmith; blacksmith demonstrations by Austin Hillrich of Basehor; display of lathed wood items by Frank Riddle, formerly of Winchester; photos and information about the former Critchfield Mansion researched by Leanne Chapman;

information and photos of the Lowman family (Mary Lowman, first female mayor of Oskaloosa) researched by Leanne Chapman; a display featuring Halloween themed art by artist Myra McConnaughey of Atchison and the Tractor Drive and County Dinner fundraiser, organized by Mary Luse.

Events outside of the museum include a March 26th presentation by Leanne Chapman to the Tonganoxie Historical Society on the local history of orphan trains. Leanne also presented to the Oskaloosa City Council of framed photographs of Mary Lowman, Kansas second woman mayor, but the first woman mayor with an all-female council; the mayor and five women of the all women council; and a biographical sketch of Mary Lowman.

Leanne gave a presentation at the Oskaloosa Public Library on June 3 about the Old Settlers Festival and the 1955 Jefferson County Centennial Celebration. Additionally, Leanne worked with Jefferson County Sheriff Jeff Herrig to research George Burnau. Burnau, a WWI veteran and Jefferson County undersheriff, died April 29, 1920, while in pursuit of a man with known mental problems. Leanne and Sheriff Herrig attended the May 3rd ceremony in Topeka where Burnau's name was added to the Kansas Law Enforcement Memorial on the grounds of the Capitol. Burnau's name has also been added to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Treasurer Mary Luse has been working with the county commissioners to update the Jefferson County Memorial board located in the courthouse. The guidelines for inclusion on the board have been updated, and all the names posted on the board were read during the Memorial Day service held at Old Jefferson Town.

Ardie Grimes talked about Beginning Genealogy at the McLouth Public Library on June 7.

Virginia Winsor coordinated the Jefferson County Art Show held April 27-28. The three

“Best of Show” winners were Mckenna Steward of Oskaloosa High School, Sarah Wiseman of Jefferson County North High School and Maelina Turner of Jefferson West High School.

You can help us preserve and share Jefferson County's rich history. How, you may ask? Consider making a tax-deductible donation to support the preservation and conservation of our local history. Or looking to the future, consider making a bequest to the Jefferson County Historical Society. Other ways to support the society include become a member, donate items of historical significance, volunteer your efforts in ways that benefit the society, i.e., become a community representative and attend the board meetings, volunteer to help with events, spring cleaning, repairs and painting, accessioning, storage and maintenance of items in the collection, providing food for events, and many other ways to support and maintain the Society and its many items in the buildings and on the grounds. Contact Leanne Chapman for further information, 785-691-6751 or chapmanfarm94@yahoo.com



The annual meeting of the Jefferson County Historical Society will be Sunday, November 3 in the Edmonds Chapel, Old Jefferson Town. The business meeting will begin at 3 pm followed at 3:30 pm with Dave Loewenstein, artist and author, speaking on “If These Walls Could Talk: Kansas Murals” with a focus on the John Steuart Curry murals. His presentation will be followed by a soup supper in the Reynolds building.