**Jefferson County Historical Society Newsletter**

**Oskaloosa, Kansas**

**April 2020**

Oh, do we have plans for you! This year promises to be an exciting time at Old Jefferson Town. As I write this, the porch on the Reynolds Building is in process of being torn out and replaced. We received lumber from Evergy to help with the costs of replacing the porch and thank them for their generous contribution.

Margaret Dick applied for a grant to replace windows in the Nincehelser house, but unfortunately we were notified that we were not awarded the grant. We will just have to find another way to finance that necessary repair.

Mary Luse is busy fundraising to replace the roof and false front on the library building. The bid received is in excess of $11,000. Contributions to the society are always welcome. Maintaining old buildings is expensive!

Deb Case and Ardie Grimes are currently working on writing a grant to allow the Society to catalog and digitize photos, records, and information about artifacts in our collection. Along with a proposed web site, this project will allow access to historical and genealogical records from the comfort of home or across the country.

April 24-25 is the annual High School Art Show at Old Jefferson Town. Please contact Virginia Winsor for more information. 620-437-6875

Opening weekend is May 2-3. We are celebrating **50 Years at Old Jefferson Town**! 50 years ago, the first buildings were moved onto the property donated by Bill & Betty Leech. The Reynolds building was the first one moved to

the location quickly followed by the Wellman School and the Edmonds Chapel. We are in process of creating a new display of the events at OJT over the last 50 years and invite you to join in the celebration.

May 16-17 will feature a display celebrating the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale, along with celebrating International Nurse’s Day on May 12.

May 25, Memorial Day weekend will feature a display of military uniforms and ringing of the bell and reading of names of Jefferson County veterans who have served our country.

June 27-28 is Old Settlers weekend in Oskaloosa. Displays at Old Jefferson town will include a quilt show; Austin Hillrich will demonstrate blacksmithing skills; information about Oskaloosa’s “Petticoat Council”, the first city to have both a female mayor and a female city council; and Harland Schuster will be exhibiting his photographs.

Recently, uniforms of the Richter brothers of Perry who served during WWII were donated to the society. We are currently researching their military service and will have their uniforms on display from June 27th through July 4th.

July 17-18 we are planning an auction of donated items (no clothing or shoes) to be held in the air-conditioned Oskaloosa City Hall. All proceeds from the auction will be used to maintain the buildings and grounds at Old Jefferson town. Be thinking about all the items you no longer use or need and donate them to the cause!!

August is the 100th Anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, women’s right to vote. There are plans in the works to celebrate this anniversary.

This year is also the 160th anniversary of the first publication of the Oskaloosa Independent. We will be opening the basement where some of the old presses are located and commemorating the illustrious history of the newspaper and its contribution to the community and county.

August 29 will be the annual Tractor Drive, our major fundraising event of the year. Mary Luse, our treasurer, oversees this event once again, so please give generously when she contacts you.

September 26-27 will be the closing weekend of the season.

**What does the Historical Society do for you and your community?**

As a repository for items relating to the history of Jefferson County, Kansas, the Society preserves artifacts, buildings, photos, books, and many other items from deterioration, attempting to maintain the items in the condition in which they were received.

Local history contains a wealth of details and stories that help reveal how societal changes impacted the lives of ordinary people. How did the Petticoat Council affect the lives of the citizens of Oskaloosa? How many veterans from Jefferson County have served their country? How many died as a result of that service? How did the Great Depression impact the citizens of our county? How did the building of Perry Dam and Lake impact our people?

The objects and information found in our museum is knowledge often not found anywhere else, and we have a huge responsibility to take care of it to the best of our ability.

**What can YOU do for your Historical Society?**

Get involved; ask what needs to be done. We need younger individuals to become involved, so that the torch may be passed when the current board members are no longer able to participate. This has been driven home in the past year with the loss of two of our valuable members, Richard Wellman and Raymond Riley and the illnesses of two of our current board members.

Volunteer your time. Contribute your unique skills – we need house cleaners, tree trimmers, squirrel catchers, building repairs, electrical repairs, grading & dirt work, gravel road work, data input, clerical work, digital scanner operator, volunteers in the library, gardening and grounds work, provide food for events, the list could go on and on.

Attend board meetings

Pay your annual dues

Give a cash donation. JCHS is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; your donations are tax deductible.

Donate artifacts, books, photos, etc.

Remember the Historical Society as a bequest in your will.

If you purchase items from Amazon, please enroll in **Amazon Smile**, which donates .5% of your purchase to JCHS. Log in to smile.amazon.com and choose Jefferson County Historical Society, Inc. with a Winchester, KS address.

As I’m making the final edits on this newsletter, I am reminded that the corona virus pandemic may possibly affect our planned activities for the coming season. If you have questions about an event, please check our Facebook page or send an email to [jcgs1979@yahoo.com](mailto:jcgs1979@yahoo.com).

*Ardie Grimes, JCHS Newsletter Editor*