

Jefferson County Historical Society
Oskaloosa, Kansas
October 2018 Newsletter

The society was saddened by the death of long-time society member, Dixie Elkinton of Oskaloosa on Dec. 7, 2017. We extend our sincere condolences to her husband, Larry and family.

It's been a busy season at Old Jefferson Town, beginning with students from John Dewey Learning Academy cleaning the grounds in preparation for the Easter Egg hunt on March 31, held annually, and cleaning of Edmonds Chapel in preparation for the Sunrise Services, which was held on April 1. Additional clean up of grounds and buildings was done by the Jolly Junior 4-H Club and Jason Clough and Richard Wyrick, who cut down dead trees near the school. There is no paid staff at Old Jefferson Town; everyone is a volunteer and each one is appreciated greatly for their many contributions.

The Jefferson County High School Art Display and Scholarship Contest were held in the Reynolds Building on April 28-29. Three of the six Jefferson County high schools were represented by 68 entries. Kaylie Flowers of Oskaloosa High was awarded Best of Show for her self portrait done in charcoal. The \$500 scholarship was awarded to Skylar Scott, daughter of Greg & Alena Scott, Ozawie. Skylar plans to attend Emporia State.

Opening weekend was May 5-6, with special activities including an open house and membership drive, blacksmithing demonstration by Austin Hillrich of Holton

and a display of history from the 1930's – WPA Wells and Poor Farm History.

May 26 – July 1 featured an exhibit of uniforms from WWI through Vietnam.

June 21-23, Old Settlers weekend included demonstrations of butter making and clothes washing; blacksmith demonstration by Austin Hillrich of Holton and Jim Dwyer of Oskaloosa with his collection of railroad artifacts to discuss with Austin how they were constructed and used, Living History of Schoolhouses presented in the Wellman School by Melynda Swoyer, a selfie station with hats and accessories, display of barn quilts created by historical society members and art work displayed and sold by former Oskaloosa resident, Peg Liebert, now of Overland Park.

On July 14-15, Virginia Winsor and Martha Ostrander of Winchester, and Patty Boldridge with Myrna McConaughy of Atchison County presented their creative work in the Curry House at Old Jefferson Town. Virginia is also responsible for organizing the High School Art Display and Scholarship Contest, and for finding artists to display their work. She is always open to suggestions for new artists to showcase.

Also opening in July was Leanne Chapman's carefully researched exhibit on the Poor Farms located in Jefferson County. It will be available for viewing through the end of the season. Leanne also presented her findings at the March meeting of the National

Association of Retired and Active Federal Employees (NARFE).

James Caldwell, Oskaloosa's Junior-Senior High art instructor, exhibited his landscapes, portraits and other work from August 11-26.

August 25 was the date of the annual JCHS fundraiser. The society chose to host a



Tractor Ride and Show this year. Twenty tractors and their operators gathered at Old Jefferson Town, drove to the John Steuart Curry Community Center in Winchester and back to Old Jefferson town for a lunch of fried chicken, pulled pork and side dishes prepared by society members, including pie and brownies. In addition to the tractors participating in the Ride, Bob Cozad brought some of his miniature tractors, toys and wagons for display.

September 2 unveiled a display of photos of John Steuart Curry as a baby, his siblings, his mother, high school athletics at Winchester High School and later years with family in the 1940's. Also in the display are early photos of Old Jefferson Town and relatives of John's in the past 40+ years as well as John's impersonator, Don Lambert. It will be available for viewing through the end of September.

A new (to us) acquisition has made many people very happy. In April 2018, the Winchester Public Library donated a used Minolta MS 6000 microfilm reader/printer to JCHS and JCGS. While many Jefferson County newspapers prior to about 1923 are readily available online free for Kansas residents at newspapers.com, after that date, access is mostly available by microfilm. Prior to April the individuals had the capability to read the film, but not to print. In addition to newspapers on microfilm, there are also census records, Jefferson county records such as probate, court, and marriage records, plus an assortment of other film including records from adjoining counties, passenger lists, Revolutionary War pension records, books, etc.

As is common with old buildings, there are always repairs that need to be done. Electrical work included running electricity to the blacksmith shop, replacing sensors at the Curry House seating areas; replacement of fans in the Reynolds Building; replace ballasts in lights in library and adding solar lighting along the boardwalk and sidewalk.

New curtains were made for Wellman School by Margaret Dick and her granddaughters, Addison & Brynlynn and Melynda Swoyer and her granddaughters, Charlotte & Josephine. Burlap wall covering was replaced at the teacher's area. Repair/replacement of some donated flooring in the entry way is pending, as is a coat/hat rack. The school building also received new siding on the north and west sides and a fresh coat of paint inside in March.

The bandstand received new steps, and is awaiting replacement of the skirting.

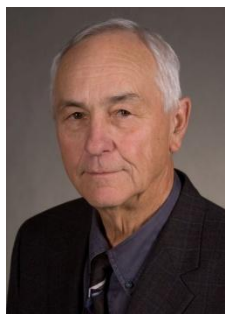
A handicap toilet was installed in the women's bathroom at the rear of the Curry House. It has new signage with a gender free ADA sign. Portable handicap parking signs have been completed and are used when large attendance is expected.

The Reynolds building needed repairs on the east exterior of the building and some boards on the boardwalk were replaced.

The Plum Kilgour building required replacement of the north door threshold and frame, which then was caulked and painted.

Several other maintenance and repair projects are pending. If you have time or talents to volunteer, we can certainly utilize them. Please contact Leanne Chapman, President at 785-691-6751 or chapmanfarm94@yahoo.com

The annual meeting will be held Nov. 4 in Edmonds Chapel. The business meeting will



begin at 3 pm, followed by a presentation by Jim Hoy, who teaches folklore and literature at Emporia State. He will speak on **Kansas Legends and Folktales**. "This talk will explore some of the many

Kansas legends and folktales and help audiences decipher between a myth (folk religion), legend (folk history), and tale (folk literature). When possible, local legends and folk tales—and what they say about that particular community—will be discussed." Following the presentation, a free will meal will be served in the Reynolds Building. Please mark your calendar and follow us on Facebook for further details.

The Jefferson County Genealogical Society research library will be open **Saturdays ONLY from October 6 through April 27**.

For research at other times, please contact Marilyn Sharkey, 785-691-5480 or mjshark59@gmail.com; Frank Shrimplin, 785-945-3354 or fr2nk27@yahoo.com; Raymond Riley at raymondriley54@yahoo.com or Ardie Grimes at mad_genealogist@yahoo.com. There will be no monthly Genealogical Society meetings from December 2018 through March 2019.

Wish List of Donations

Quilts are always welcome. Our quilt display is always popular, featuring "signature " quilts from various clubs, churches and schools.

We would like **photos of the 1930 and 1960 tornadoes and damage** in Jefferson County. If you don't want to give up your originals, please arrange with us to have them scanned.

We have **photos**, history and artifacts from a few **clubs and organizations**, including church, extension or local community clubs. We would like to expand that collection.

Yearbooks from any Jefferson County schools are always welcome.

Other donations will be gladly reviewed and considered for acceptance. We focus on artifacts and documents relating to Jefferson County and its citizens.

Tax deductible Donations are always welcome. Please make out to Jefferson County Historical Society and send to Mary J. Luse, Treasurer, 16786 126th Street, Winchester, Ks 66097