

BARN TALK

LENEXA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 13 Number 4

July - August 1996

BBQ Volunteer Thanks

Like all events that the LHS becomes involved with, its success depends on the people that volunteer their time, talents and efforts to make it work. The Historical Society was in charge of the parking lot again this year and it was a successful fund raiser for the Society.

Special Thanks to **Bernie McNichols** who spent a lot of her time calling people and setting up the schedule of volunteers to be parking lot attendants on Friday and Saturday. **Bernie and Jane Klein** volunteered for the graveyard shift - 10pm to 6 am !! That's dedication to the cause!! Other special people that were attendants included: **Joe Wilson, Bob Lillie, Jim Spaith, Eleanor Boley, Diane Linver, Bill Gagnon, Eldon Kleinsorge, Mike Culligan, Susan Suzuki, Dave Huff, Marie Hormann, Ernestine Johnson, Jennie and John Pumphrey, Pat White and Jeff Spangier.**

As you can see, it takes a lot of effort to do something as simple as running a parking lot! LHS also wishes to **thank the Park and Recreation department** for their help in setting up and tearing down tables and other paraphernalia. They are great people!

We also had the Barn, Caboose and Depot open during the festivities so other volunteers helped us staff these areas as well. **Mary Kay Smith** was our day long hostess in the Barn, **Norman and Mildred Hunt** hosted in the Depot and members of the **Lenexa Rotary Club** conducted people through the Caboose. **Many thanks to you all.**

1996 PROGRAMS & EVENTS

July 23 - General Membership Meeting
Picnic in the Park (behind the Barn)
Pot luck Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Program at 7:30 - Mr. Ross Murphy
"Compression of the Future"

July 27-28 - Great Heritage Trails Festival
Sar-Ko-Par Trails Park - Celebrating
the 175th Anniversary of the Santa Fe Trail
Admission Buttons available in
advance at the Barn for \$2.00
each. (\$3.00 at the Gate.)

Sept 7 - Spinach Festival - Craft Fair & Food
Crafters can still rent booth space.
Come out and enjoy the Great Spinach
Salad, Wimpy Bergers &
Spinach Garden Cafe

Sept 26 General Membership Meeting
at the Senior Center

Nov 19 General Membership Meeting
Legler Barn Museum

**Dec. 7 Sat. Children's Old Fashioned
Christmas Party**
Legler Barn Museum

The Lenexa Historical Society Archival Dept. is searching for obituaries of early Lenexa residents or newspaper articles about activities in the communities of these persons. If you have copies, please bring them in so we may copy them for our files.

Legler Barn Quilters

We are riding high as our quilt entry in the Quilters Unlimited Showcase won fourth place for the second year in a row. This year's quilt, "Blue Skies Over America's Heartland" was entered in the Kansas City Star pattern category at the show at Bartle Hall, Kansas City, Missouri, in May. It contains 120 squares plus border in all shades of blue print using the Kansas Troubles pattern. It will be our 1997 Spinach Festival quilt and hangs on the upper stairs at the Barn.

Our 1995 entry "Crow's Nest" (which also won fourth place and \$100 prize) has been returned to us after touring the U.S. all year. It is this year's Spinach Festival quilt and we will immediately be accepting donations toward the September 7th drawing. It is created with golden sunflower print, with accents of hunter green and embossed beige print. It hangs on the lower stairs at the Barn.

We proudly offer these two prize-winning quilts as fund raisers for capital improvements and the operation of the historical complex. There were hundreds of gorgeous quilts in the competition so we are feeling good!!!

One of our Quilters, Elaine Sparlin, entered her creation, "Horn of Plenty", in the Bartle Hall show and her quilt was awarded second place. Elaine has been designated a Kansas artist because of her beautiful original quilts. We're very proud of her even though she did even better than we did!!!

Thelma Moyer, Co-chairman

Community Day, July 4, 1996

Rain, rain, rain!! For the first time in 19 years the Fourth of July Parade was rained out. Our Prairie Schooner with the Hermes Nursery mules were ready to pull it in the parade. The Miss Lenexa candidates and Miss Lenexa 1995 were in their convertibles waiting to participate in the celebration. But it rained!

The afternoon and evening Street Fair went on as planned with the concessions and presentation of the award to the new 1996 Miss Lenexa, Kimberly Gencur. Lorraine Hill presided over the LHS Watermelon concession and along with other volunteers, Bob Rose, Velma Bogena, Sid and Diane Linver, Eleanor and Alan Boley. Thank you for your participation in making the evening a success.

Grant Received

The Lenexa Historical Society was the recipient of a \$250 Southwestern Bell Foundation grant recently. This grant was "earned" by Lorraine Hill, retired SW Bell Employee, through her volunteering 250 hours for the Lenexa Historical Society. This is the third grant of this kind that Lorraine has acquired for the Historical Society. Good job Lorraine.

Clematis Plants Donated

LHS member Peggy Jones has contributed funds for the purchase of Clematis plants for the Bud Thompson Arbor. The plants will grow on the arbor to bring added color and interest to the area next to the Herb Garden. Peggy is the sister of Bud and Elicia Thompson.

Historic Piano Donated to LHS

The Don and Bonnie Creasman family have donated the upright piano that once played during the silent movies that were shown in the Ryckert Theatre on the second floor of the building at 13444 Santa Fe Trail Drive in Lenexa. One of the piano players in the 1920's was Genevieve Williams.

The piano was moved to the Heritage Room from the Creasman residence by Fry Wagner Moving and Storage. We appreciate the fine work of the crew and thank Fry Wagner and the men for donating their services.

GREAT HEARTLAND TRAILS FESTIVAL

On July 27 and 28, the City of Lenexa will host the first annual Great Heartland Trails Festival. The Festival will provide family entertainment and a participatory educational fair. The Festival is based on the rich heritage of the westward trails which crossed the Kansas City Metropolitan area from 1820 - 1880.

Activities will include a Civil War Battle reenactment, trail life demonstrations, living history, handmade period crafts and assorted entertainment. There will be American Indian dancing, drumming and crafts. Story telling, TeePee tours and cattle drives are also planned. 1800's cooking demonstrations and music plus period clothing, wagon rides and pony rides will be available.

Saturday from 9 am to 9 pm there will be reenactments, living history and music. A 7 pm concert by the Alfred Packer Band and at 9pm a community wide camp-out. Sunday from 10 am to 5 pm the schedule will also include an 1860's military worship service at 9 am and at 10 am an American Indian worship service.

Admission is \$2.00 in advance (the buttons are available at the Barn), \$3.00 the day of the event.

LHS Membership Dinner Speaker

Mr. Ross Murphy's presentation is titled "Compression of the Future - 100 Years ago in Lenexa and today". The presentation will focus on the 100 years of technical advances the area has experienced.

Mr. Murphy is the owner of Business Data Systems. He has been involved in the computer industry since the days of punch cards. Ross is a consultant to other companies in the computer industry and specializes in solving sales and marketing problems.

Mr. Murphy has written several books and also writes two monthly columns for business publications.

The program will follow a pot luck picnic in the Park area behind the Legler Barn Museum. Members are asked to call the Barn 492-0038 to help us coordinate the food items.

Kimberly Gencur Chosen Miss Lenexa

Kimberly Gencur, 18, a senior at Shawnee Mission Northwest, was named Miss Lenexa 1996 at Community Days Street Fair on July 4th. Kimberly, who will attend Kansas University, is the daughter of Marilyn Gencur.

First runner-up was **Stephanie Nash**, 17, a junior at Shawnee Mission Northwest. Stephanie is the daughter of John and Celeste Nash.

Second runner-up was **Erin Robertson**, 17, a junior at Shawnee Mission West. Erin is the daughter of Steven & Jane Robertson.

Third runner-up was **Lani Feldman**, a junior at Shawnee Mission West. Lani is the daughter of Oscar & Lenora Feldman.

Runners-up were **Heather Chase**, 17, a junior at St. Thomas Aquinas, and **Emily Haefner**, 17, a junior at Shawnee Mission West. Heather is the daughter of Michael and Lynn Chase and Emily is the daughter of Ron & Kate Haefner.

Erin Robertson was named the winner of the first annual Amber Bendorf Award.

Miss Lenexa will receive a \$500 Savings Bond from the Historical Society and a \$400 cash scholarship from Premier Bank and Robert Brogden Auto Plaza.

The First Runner-up, Stephanie Nash will receive a \$200 US Savings Bond; Erin Robertson will receive a \$100 US Savings Bond, and Lani Feldman will receive a \$75 US Savings Bond; and Heather Chase and Emily Haefner will receive \$50 US Savings Bonds.

Miss Lenexa was selected by four judges, **Brenda Youness**, Hearts Design, **Steve Baska**, Sun Publications, and **Susan Majewski** and **Terri Bleam**, Lenexa residents.

On July 3rd, the Miss Lenexa candidates visited the State Capitol in Topeka. After a tour of the building, they had lunch with the President of the Senate, **Bud Burke** followed by a 30 minute audience with **Governor Bill Graves**.

Oscar Crockett and the Crockett Bit & Spur Co

The plant was located at 18800 West 87th Street, and is now a residence.

Oscar Crockett was born November 27, 1887, in Pecos, Texas, where he spent his early years. His father, J.B. Crockett, was a horse and cattle trader so they were on the move and often lived out of a wagon as they traveled to the areas of West Texas where the trading was the most profitable.

Oscar went to Kansas City with a train load of cattle from Magdalena, New Mexico, in 1910. He decided to stay and began working in a blacksmith shop during the day and made his own spurs and bits at night. When he had enough money, he opened his own shop. After a brief venture in Pawhuska, Oklahoma, in 1916, he moved to Bremerton, Washington, to work in the government shipyards.

After the end of World War I, he returned to Kansas City and worked for the Charles P. Shipley Saddlery & Mercantile Company. In 1920 Crockett bought the bit and spur segment of the Shipley business and set up his manufacturing and sales business at 1525 Genesee Street. Oscar's father and uncle peddled his spurs and bits across the country and his business grew until he had eight or ten men working for him. An illustration in his 1940 Catalog showed a plant (in Lenexa) of over 5000 square feet, with eighteen employees, 177 styles of spurs, 105 bits and a patented honda (for lariats) developed by Crockett.

About 1930 Oscar expanded his business by offering handmade boots to his customers but that line did not pay out so he dropped it. The business grew however, and they added on to the factory. They began making silver, engraved belt buckles and silver-mounted martingales. They took on a line of aluminum bits and spurs which were cut out by machine but the engraving and a lot of the work was still done by hand. He also continued the steel lines. In 1932, spurs were priced from \$3.50 to \$25 a pair.

Oscar and Hazel were married in 1932 and bought land near Lenexa and moved the factory there. They had 240 acres on one side of the road where the factory was and 40 acres on the other side where they had milk cows and chickens. They built a new house there in 1939.

When the United States entered World War II, Crockett began having trouble getting help in Lenexa. Because they liked Colorado, they began looking at relocating there. In 1943 they moved the shop and eight of the workers to Boulder. He found plenty of skilled, older men in the Boulder area to work as business mushroomed. Even though he had no government contracts during the war, he expanded his operation to 125 workers and one salesman. Most of his spurs were sold through jobbers and by mail order. His products were sold throughout the world and the 48 states.

Crockett stayed in tune with the bit and spur business by going to rodeos and jawing with the cowboys, taking orders and getting new ideas. Two things he refused to make were severe spade bits and sharp-roweled spurs.

When the man who had leased their Lenexa farm decided to move, the Crocketts decided to move back to Lenexa, the place where they had their happy times. They stayed in Kansas, returning to Colorado about every six weeks to check on the business. After a few such trips, Oscar decided to sell the business and retire to the farm in Lenexa. However, before the sale was made, Oscar died during a business trip to Boulder in 1949. Mrs. Crockett ran the company until 1951 when she sold out to James Renalde who continued to operate the business at the same location in Boulder. In 1965, Renalde bought the company of P.M. Kelly & Sons of El Paso, Texas and moved it to Boulder. After his father died, Jim Renalde discontinued the aluminum line of products and used the name of Crockett and Kelly—Bits & Spurs by Renalde.

In 1979 Jim Renalde sold the business, which was renamed Crockett & Kelly, Inc. and moved to Broomfield, Colorado. By the mid-1980's the company had closed. Perhaps success depended on a Crockett or a Kelly or a Renalde, who understood the needs of horse people and could supply the goods they liked. The making of Crockett spurs had come a long way from the days when Oscar Crockett's forge glowed red-hot and the ring of his hammer drifted on the western breeze. His spurs, like their maker, are now part of our country's history.

This information was researched and contributed by Rita DeBrabander, LHS Director from a book about the life of Oscar Crockett. This article has used this book as the basis for the information.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

ANNUAL MEMBERS

Michael Culligan
13402 W. 82nd St.
Lenexa, KS 66215 495-9810

Barbara C. Romano
13815 W. 78th St.
Lenexa, KS 66216 631-2247

Shafer, Kline & Warren, PA
Thomas Kirkwood, PE
11100 W. 91st St.
Overland Park, KS 66214 888-7800

Life Member

Valerie Jansen
9011 Pflumm
Lenexa, KS 66215 492-1191

Change of Address

Bernice Harvey
731 N. Somerset Terrace
Olathe, KS 66062 764-1597

Ella L. Kahle
8710 Caenen Lk. Rd. #102
Lenexa, KS 66215 492-8783

Correction to Directory

Bill & Joan Markman
ZIP Code is 66215

Mike Culligan-Computer Wiz

One of our newest members, **Mike Culligan**, has come to the rescue of the LHS business office. We were having computer problems. Explaining this to Mike as he completed his membership application, we learn that our new member has his own business, Diamond Computers. Mike solves computer problems for businesses and PC users.

Mike quickly pinpointed our problems and recommended the necessary changes which involved rebuilding the computer. Mike not only gave us back a better computer, he donated the charges for his time which saved the Historical Society several hundred dollars. Many thanks to Mike and Diamond Computers.

In Memory

Our sympathy to the families and friends of the following LHS Members who have died recently.

Marilyn Boehm, the mother of Mike Boehm, LHS member, passed away on May 28, 1996 and was buried in St John's Cemetery in Lenexa. Marilyn was a member of our Friends' Volunteer Service Group, giving of her time assisting the staff and the Special Mailing Committee. She was preceded in death by her husband Edward Boehm, a descendant of the early Lenexa families of Boehm and Hauser.

Clarence M. Schweiger, Sr., 91, passed away on July 7, 1996 at the Life Care Center in Overland Park. He was buried at St. John's Cemetery in Lenexa. Clarence and Theresa Renner Schweiger were married January 11, 1933, and built their stone residence that same year at the southeast corner of 87th St. and Pflumm Road. Clarence owned and operated the Crystal Springs Farm dairy. The Schweiger's were Charter members of the Lenexa Historical Society. He is survived by his wife, five sons, four daughters, 33 grandchildren and 23 great grandchildren.

Carl Rosner, 88, a Life Member of LHS, passed away on January 17, 1996 and is interred at St. John's Cemetery. He had been born on the farm of his parents John A. and Katherine S. Rosner where Carl later continued to farm. In his later years he continued his farming interest with vegetable gardening. He is survived by his 17 nieces and nephews.

Gas Lights Brighten Lenexa

In 1907, gas lights were installed in Lenexa. Frank Legler, Grandson of Adam Legler (builder of the Legler Barn - now museum) was the chairman of the City's Street Light Committee.

Sept. 7, 1996

Timeli

Spinach Festival

Lenexa Historical Society
14907 West 87th Street Parkway
Lenexa, KS 66212

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