



# LHS News

A Newsletter for Members & Friends of the Lenexa Historical Society  
July/August 2001

Volume 19, Number 4

## *The Presidents Corner*

Greetings:

The past two months have seen some great things happening for the Lenexa Historical Society!

On June 1st we moved a large part of our archival collection to the Meritex cave storage facility in western Lenexa. Thanks to all of those persons who volunteered. The move was accomplished in a short time with safety and efficiency. Legler Barn Museum Director Peggy Stanton made it easy for us by spending a great deal of time organizing the artifacts in advance. She pre-labeled the storage shelves in the containers at the caves as well as the artifacts being moved, so it was easy to place the items in their correct storage location. Our LHS volunteers were assisted by several Lenexa Parks and Recreation employees who hoisted many of the larger items. Thanks to Parks and Recreation Director Bill Nicks for lending their services to LHS.

Once again, LHS ran some of the parking for the annual Barbeque Championships at SarKoPar Park. The Society netted almost \$1,400 for two days' work. Thanks go to Rita DeBrabander, Pat Lierly, Bob Lillie, Bob Rose, Dorothy Rose, Jean Seifert, and Nancey Spaith for making this fundraiser such a great success!!!

LHS was represented in the Lenexa Fourth of July parade again this year by Bill and Pat Lierly in their vintage 1962 Corvair.

Finally, the 1st Annual Gandy Dancers' Ball, which will be held at the Lenexa Holiday Inn on Saturday, November 3, is coming together nicely with the hard work of Katie Evans, Doug Bartley, Walt McKenzie, and Jim Peterson.

We are very lucky to have so many great volunteers in our organization!

I look forward to seeing you at the annual LHS picnic on Thursday, July 26, at the picnic area by the Depot in SarKoPar Park. We will eat at 6:30 p.m., with a program on Amelia Earhart following at 7 p.m.

Jim Spaith

## **July General Meeting**

Thursday, July 26, 2001

Annual Picnic by the Depot  
in SarKoPar Park

**BRING A DISH  
TO SHARE**

(drinks & tableware will be provided)

**6:30pm**

Amelia Earhart Program  
**7pm**

## Meanderings

by Norm Keech

### Gunboat, Battleship and Bomber Were Named "Kansas"

The first "Kansas" was named after the Kansas River. She was built at the Philadelphia Navy Yard with machinery taken from prize steamer "Princess Royal"; sponsored by Miss Annie McClellan; and commissioned at Philadelphia December 21, 1863, Lt. Comdr. Pendleton G. Watmough in command. Her tonnage 625; length 129'6"; beam 29'; draft 10' 6"; speed 12 knots; complement of 108 men; armament was one 150-pounder rifle, two 121-pounder rifles, two 20-pounder Dahlgren rifles, and two 9" Dahlgren smoothbores.

In March 1864 the gunboat was stationed at Wilmington, North Carolina, where she served during the remainder of the Civil War chasing blockade-runners and participating in several bombardments supporting Union troops. In the years after the Civil War, the "Kansas" performed various missions throughout the Atlantic Ocean and on August 10, 1875, was decommissioned and sold.

The second "Kansas" (BB-21) was launched by New York Shipbuilding Corp. August 12, 1905, and was sponsored by Miss Anna Hoch, daughter of the Governor of Kansas. The ship was then commissioned in Philadelphia Navy Yard April 18, 1907, Captain Charles B. Vreeland in command. She carried a compliment of 42 officers, 785 enlisted men and the usual variety of battleship armament.

After the shakedown cruise and alterations, the "Kansas" joined the "Great White Fleet" at Hampton Roads, VA, and passed in review before Teddy Roosevelt while

getting underway on the fleet's world cruise. After the cruise, the battleship carried out numerous missions for the Navy but spent most of her time in World War I as an engineering training ship. Her name was struck from the Navy List August 24, 1923, and was sold for scrap.

The third "Kansas" is the B-2 multi-role bomber "The Spirit of Kansas" which is capable of low visibility (stealth). It carries two pilots, a payload of 40,000 pounds, its range is intercontinental - un-refueled, delivers both conventional and nuclear munitions, unit cost is \$1.3 million.

Whiteman AFB, MO, is the B-2's only operational base. The first aircraft, Spirit of Missouri, was delivered December 17, 1993. The B-2 bomber was in combat during Desert Storm and performed to expectation. Undoubtedly, the Air Force has used it for other missions.

The source for this information is [www.greatwhitefleet.org](http://www.greatwhitefleet.org).

## Legler Barn Gift Shop

The Gift Shop has a great variety of cook books and books on Kansas and local history for all age readers. There are also post cards, note cards, magnets, and thimbles with the Barn logo, blue glass birds from Arkansas and pottery from the Flint Hills. L.H.S. members get a 10% discount, and all proceeds go directly to the Society. Buying at the Gift Shop helps L.H.S. to conduct its programs.

## KANSAS TRIVIA

By Trivia Master Walt McKenzie

Name the most famous black person to have lived in Olathe:

- a. Harriett Tubman
- b. George Washington Carver
- c. Paul Robeson
- d. Satchel Paige

Only one of these famous Kansas People was ever a United States Congressman. Who was it:

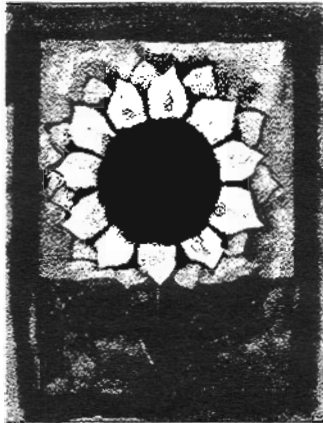
- a. William Allen White
- b. William F. Cody
- c. James Ryan
- d. Rich Becker

Kansas borders how many states:

- a. 5
- b. 6
- c. 7
- d. 4

### The Kansas Sunflower

By Mary Kay Smith



The symbol of Alf Landon's Campaign in 1936 was the Kansas sunflower. Franklin Roosevelt told reporters, strictly off the record, that the sunflower was yellow, had a black heart, and was only good for feeding parrots. Roosevelt supporters flooded the country with bumper stickers that said, "Sunflowers Die in November".

## NEW BOARD MEMBER

Due to the resignation of Johnna Lingle from the LHS Board of Directors, a special election was held at the June board meeting to select a replacement to fill out her term.

Our new director is Wilbert "Sonny" Miller. Wilbert grew up on West 87<sup>th</sup> Street, just inside Overland Park. He married Judy Reents, granddaughter of Carl Taeschner. Wilbert is semi-retired from MCC Mechanical of New Orleans. He's traveled and done projects all over the Southeastern U.S. and the World. Wilbert & Judy have three grown children: a son in Overland Park, a daughter in Des Moines, and another son in Frankfort, Germany.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE FORMED

The LHS Board of Directors voted to create an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee at the July board meeting. Now that the Society is no longer responsible for running the Legler Barn Museum, it was felt by the board that the Society need to set new short-term, mid-term, and long-term goals.

Heading the seven-member committee will be new board member Sonny Miller.

Also serving will be immediate past president Mary Kay Smith and LHS member Peggy Stanton. There are four more positions to be filled. Any member who is interested in serving on the Strategic Planning Committee should contact LHS president Jim Spait at either 913-631-9541 or 913-220-4787, or by e-mail at "jmspaitb@aol.com".

## **Gandy Dancers' Ball Update**

By Katie Evans

Plans for the first Gandy Dancers' Ball are coming along. Cookbook Publishers of Lenexa has donated the printing and materials for almost 600 cards to hand out to begin publicizing the ball. The cards are meant to be small enough to tuck into a pocket or purse, or mail. The plan for those is to give them to people we think would be most likely to come as a "save this date" advertisement. Ball committee members are making a list of friends and business associates to give the cards to. If any LHS member has a suggestion for personal friends or colleagues, call me at 268-4606. I am beginning to compile a mailing list now.

The committee has discussed the possibility of having a noted guest host for the ball. Bill Kalahurka, host of "Kansas City Crossroads," was the unanimous first choice. Alas, he is out of town that weekend, but said he would be glad to do it next year, if we so desire. Other names were tossed out, and it is my responsibility to make the calls. I hope to have an update for you by the membership meeting.

Doug Bartley is still working on getting recipes from old Lenexa families. He says that is going slowly, and would appreciate any recipes from your family. He has plenty of dessert recipes. He needs meat and side dish recipes. The recipes will be used to make the dinner served at the ball. Each dish will bear the name of the family, such as "Wedd Broccoli," for example.

Peggy Stanton was nice enough to make a web page for the ball. You can find it at [www.grapevine.net/~lshkc/gndydncrsball.html](http://www.grapevine.net/~lshkc/gndydncrsball.html), or at the Legler Barn website at [www.grapevine.net/~lshkc](http://www.grapevine.net/~lshkc). More

information will be added to it as it comes available.

If you have any questions or suggestions about the ball, feel free to call me.

## **"What are gandy dancers? - you ask.**

By Sharon Hammontree

"Gandy Dancers" were railroad track laborers of the 19th century who moved and aligned sections of railroad track. Their back-breaking task of extending railroad tracks into the frontier was unrelenting and tedious, however, they knew that they were building something of lasting significance. Teamwork was required to get the job done and rich occupational music tradition developed around their work songs.

Coordinated by these rhythms it would look as if members of the crew were dancing with tools made predominantly by Gandy Manufacturing of Chicago - thus "Gandy Dancers".

### **CLIP THIS "COUPON"....**

**Save this as a reminder to send Doug Bartley "historically significant" recipes saved from Lenexa's Founding Family's Cookbooks!!**

**We will honor as many Recipes as possible by preparing them for the Dinner of the Gandy Dancers Ball.**

**Please call Doug Bartley at 541-8267 for further information....PLEASE!!  
DEADLINE IS AUGUST 31, 2001**

## From Allison....

Even though, I have only official been at the Barn for a little over three months Peggy and Beryl have both found more than enough for me to do. I am enjoying working in a smaller museum with an opportunity to roll up my sleeves and dive into the mess, as they say. Part of my responsibilities will be educational programming and coordinating volunteers. Although, numerous other tasks are on the list I will be devoting a lot of energy in this direction.

Many of you will be receiving letters describing the numerous volunteer opportunities available at the Legler Barn Museum and with the historical society. Please do not throw them away! Your response is important to me. I have even prepaid the postage for your return postcards. All you have to do is fill them out and drop them in the mail. The historical society is always in need of individuals to promote the importance of preserving our local history.

I understand that the only thing many of us are shorter on that money is time. However, many of the volunteer activities are on an irregular basis and you many accept or decline each date as you are contacted. The letter you will receive is by no way a definitive list of the opportunities available. Even if you did not receive a letter, but would still like to volunteer please call me at the museum, or drop me a line by mail. (E-mail is also possible at: aelliott@ci.lenexa.ks.us) THANK YOU!

## Verse by the Side of the Road

By Mary Kay Smith

How many of you are old enough to remember the Burma-Shave signs that were along the roads in every state except Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada and Massachusetts? In 1925, a young man by the name of Allan Odell conceived the idea of using consecutive, road side signs to promote the sale of Burma-Shave, a brushless shaving cream. In 1963, when the last signs were taken down, the most famous outdoor advertising project that there ever was, came to an end.

Following are two of the 600 jingles that appeared:

1938 IF YOU HAVE  
A DOUBLE CHIN  
YOU'VE TWO  
GOOD REASONS  
TO BEING USING  
BURMA-SHAVE

1963 THE CHICK  
HE WED  
LET OUT A WHOOP  
FELT HIS CHIN AND  
FLEW THE COOP  
BURMA-SHAVE

All of the jingles are indexed in the book THE VERSE BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD, by Frank Rowsome, Jr. (Available in Legler Barn Gift Shop, \$5.95). Reading preferably outloud, will remind you of roadside diners, cabin motels, and cars like Nash, Studebaker, Essex, & Packard.

**BARN EXHIBITS:** Now through August 6....both Amelia Earhart: Taking Flight in Kansas, and The Great Lenexa BBQ Battle: 20 years of Competition.  
August 18- October 25, 2001 Belgians & Spinach History in Lenexa

## WHY DO WE TAKE VACATIONS?

By Sharon Hammontree

The human body cannot operate at full efficiency without frequent rest. Doctors have long recognized that many illnesses of the body and nervous system can best be cured by a rest from normal, everyday activity. A change in routine that helps restore people's bodies, minds, and spirits is called a VACATION.

To young persons, a vacation usually means the summer months when they do not have to attend school. For the average adult, a vacation is a definite period of time when he does not have to work at his regular job. The custom of giving employees a regular vacation with pay began with the development of factories, large stores, and large business offices. During the 1800's, employers discovered employees worked more efficiently after a vacation. Many labor union contracts require that employees be given annual vacations.

Things to do on a vacation are almost countless. Present-day transportation has made it possible for vacationers to travel to almost any place in the world.

Have a great holiday! This is what they call a vacation in France.

## A Member's Passing

By Beryl Hennigh

THERESA CATHERINE (RENNER) SCHWEIGER, 90, passed away on Monday, July 2, 2001, at the Garden Terrace of Overland Park following her 5-year residency there. She was the daughter of Ludwig "Pop" and Mary Schrantz Renner of rural Lenexa. Mrs. Schweiger and her late

husband Clarence Maxmillian Schweiger were Charter members of the Lenexa Historical Society.

Theresa was born in Kansas City, MO, in 1911 and moved to Lenexa in the late 1920's to a farm a little east of Pflumm Road, on 87<sup>th</sup> Street Parkway.

She married Clarence M. Schweiger in 1933. Following their marriage, Clarence built the fine two-story stone residence on the southeast corner of 87<sup>th</sup> and Pflumm Road. Recently the home was razed for commercial development.

The Schweigers lived here and reared their family of 10 children until 1983 when they moved a short distance north to the Indian Woods Subdivision. This subdivision is on the original John Schweiger Farm who purchased that corner in 1903. The family were members of the Holy Trinity Parish in Downtown Lenexa.

Also, in 1983, the family observed their 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding anniversary. Relatives and friends created a beautiful commemorative quilt depicting the history of the family. This unique quilt was displayed at the Legler Barn Museum in the early 1980's.

Clarence Schweiger engaged in general farming on his father's farm on the northwest corner of the 87<sup>th</sup> & Pflumm intersection and was also involved in the family operation of the Crystal Springs Dairy there for a number of years. Theresa's hobbies included flower and vegetable gardening at the lovely country home and in winter months she enjoyed handwork crocheting.

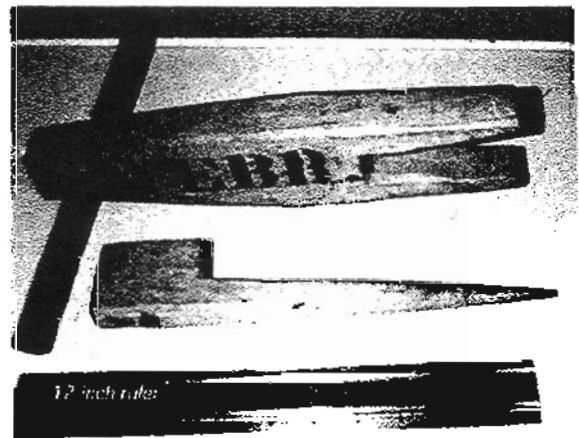
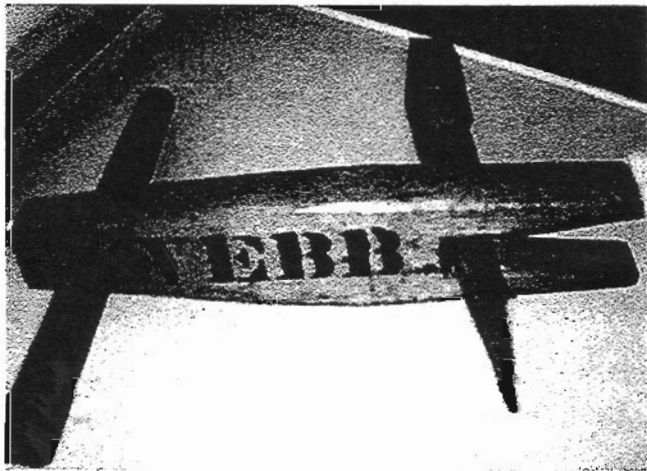
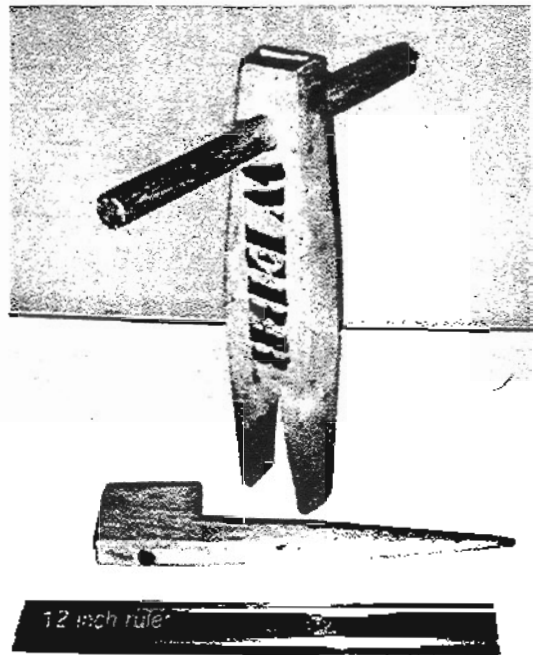
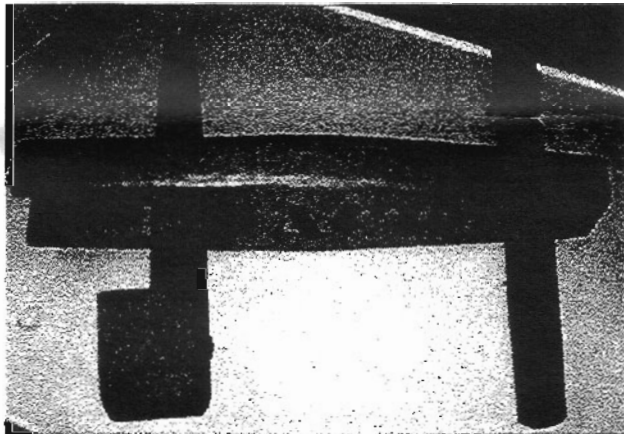
Theresa is survived by her children: Joe Schweiger and Dorothy Schweiger McClain of Osawatomie; Helen S. Eckerberg, Carl

Schweiger, Joan S. Norman, all of Overland Park; Tom Schweiger of Laurie, MO, Clarence Schweiger, Jr. of Lenexa, Mary S. Rice of Wellsville, Bernard Schweiger of Olathe. Another daughter Barbara S. Eckerberg, passed in 1979. Also surviving are three sisters: Grace Weber, of Loveland, CO, Margaret Wiggin, of Olathe, and Helen Hofer of Shawnee; and one brother Leo Renner, of Olathe. Her husband Clarence passed away in July of 1996.

Services were held on Friday July 6<sup>th</sup> from the Holy Trinity Parish with burial in the St. John's Catholic Cemetery.

**Can anyone help to ID the below artifact??**

**Please see further description on the last page of this newsletter.**



## Need to Call an Officer Or Board Member??

(all area codes 913)

President Jim Spaith	631-2502
Pres Elect Bob Lillie	888-1476
VP Mary Kay Smith	888-0144
Sec Walt McKenzie	888-0666
Treasurer Norm Keech	648-0438
Board Mbr Rick Hoffman	894-0279
Board Mbr Wilbert Miller	888-3762

Next Deadline for  
**LHS News**  
Will be 2pm  
Saturday, September 8,  
2001

During the preparation for the recent move of many artifacts to off-site storage some interesting items were discovered. This piece, listed in the database as "boot jack" is one such artifact. We have no other information on the object. No donor name, no description, nothing. Can anyone give us some help?

It appears to be hand carved from oak. On one side "JACK" is stenciled in black lettering and on the other side "WEBB" is stenciled in the same lettering. The odd pointed piece of wood, also hand carved, seems to fit best in the base of the "V" shape that is whittled in the larger piece. If this is indeed a boot jack, the boot must be quite small for the distance between the open arms of the "V" is less than 2 inches.

This piece does bear some resemblance to the common boot jack, cut from a piece of 1x6 and raised with a 2x2 nailed on its bottom side, to allow one to wedge the heel of a boot into the "V". However, the staff is baffled as to how this piece would serve such a purpose. And, what is the purpose of the pointed piece?

If you can shed some light on this artifact, please call the museum and advise us about it. Can you identify the donor? Can you demonstrate to us how it works? We will bring it to the picnic meeting on July 26, 2001 seeking the collective wisdom of Historical Society Members.

**LHS News** is published by the Lenexa Historical Society.

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