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LHS News

A Newsletter for Members & Friends of the Lenexa Historical Society
May/June 2001 Volume 19, Number 3

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Greetings:

Due to the painstaking work of board member Walt McKenzie and the generosity of the LHS Quilters, our organization will soon have in place the solution to one of our most difficult challenges. We will have a way to safely store many of our artifacts which are not currently on display!

Lack of storage space has been a problem for some time. At the April meeting of the LHS Board, it was decided to purchase two used 20' x 8' x 8' cargo containers to be placed in cave storage in western Lenexa. Walt spent a great deal of time gathering detailed information on various storage options over the past few months, and made the recommendation which the board adopted.

The Quilters, who have amassed a considerable sum earmarked for LHS with their fundraising over the years, have agreed to let some of those funds be used for the capital expenditure for the containers, as well as the delivery and the set up costs. The monthly storage fee will be covered by current LHS funds.

Because our artifacts need a controlled environment, cave storage proved to be the best and most affordable solution. The containers will provide further protection and security. One will have shelving and be used for smaller items. The second container will be used for large items. Paper and textile artifacts will continue to be housed at the museum.

All of us who are interested in the long-term protection of artifacts from Lenexa's past should say a special thanks to Walt and to the great ladies of the Quilters the next time you see them!

I hope to see you at the general meeting!

Jim Spaith
LHS President

May Membership Meeting

Thursday May 24, 2001, 7pm

Lenexa United Methodist Church
9138 Caenen Lake Road, Old Town

Program by George Noble, of Liberty
"Puttin' on the Dog"
(Origin of Old Time Sayings)

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES

New membership directories will be distributed at the May membership meeting. After that, they will be available at the Legler Barn Museum. Please call May Kay Smith, 913-888-0144, if you need to receive yours by mail.

Please note that the directories reflect the new address and telephone number of Lenexa Historical Society after the LHS office is moved to the Depot.

Gandy Dancers' Ball Update

By Katie Evans

Plans are progressing for the November 3 Ball. Committee members are working to finalize decisions and to make the appropriate arrangements. A decision on the band should be made in the next week or so. The criteria for choosing a band included:

- playing music that ranges from swing to present day
- has a danceable sound
- is within a certain price range
- could dress formally

If their schedule permits, Strolling Strings, a group of students from SM West High School, will play period music during seating and dinner. The students are interested in the idea of dressing in period clothes and playing 19th century music. Their schedule isn't made out until the end of the school year, so we won't know of their availability until then.

We are planning on bringing the schooner to the ballroom to lend atmosphere. We are working on the logistics of accomplishing that. If you can help with that, please let us know.

The governor and lieutenant governor of Kansas had been invited as our guests, but

both have said they have scheduling conflicts.

The committee has discussed several ideas for food, but we liked Doug Bartley's suggestion. Doug suggested that it would be nice if descendants of the old Lenexa families would contribute a family recipe to be served at the Ball. He is asking people for their favorite recipes for meat, potatoes, vegetables, bread, and desserts. The family name will be included on the menu, such as "Bradshaw Scalloped Potatoes." We are also considering selling locally made sarsaparilla or root beer, in addition to having a cash bar.

The historical slide show is nearly completed. I am going through pictures at the Barn to make into slides to accompany the narrative. It is a whole new show, so even if you've seen the 20-minute presentation I do for organizations, the Ball slide show will be different. The people you will hear about are going to step off the screen to tell you about themselves. You'll learn things you never knew before!

At every meeting, new suggestions are discussed, so we'll keep you updated as to what is going to happen. We are trying to make this the most fun, talked-about event in Lenexa this year. You can help! If you have suggestions or would like to come to a committee meeting, call Doug Bartley, Walt McKenzie, Jim Peterson, or myself. We'd be happy to have you! Recent committee members are Becca Coleman and Sharon Hammontree.





A New Face at the Barn

By Peggy Stanton

If you should drop by the Barn and see a shining new face at the front desk, most likely it will be Allison Elliott. Allison was hired to fill the vacancy left by Jim Peterson.

Allison grew up on a farm near Chapman, Kansas, a small town near Abilene. She is the third of seven children with three brothers and two sisters. She attended elementary school in Enterprise, Kansas and graduated Chapman High School. Following high school she moved on to Kansas State University at Manhattan, where she majored in Political Science and History. Her research topic was the social history of the Nineteenth Century. Currently, she and her older brother share an apartment near Renner Road and 84th Street.

By choice, Allison and her brother do not have a television in their apartment, so she claims reading as one of her hobbies. She enjoys caring for her pansies, her airplane plant, her pathos and her dianthus. She likes to cook and her favorite foods are Italian.

Another of Allison's hobbies has endeared her to the "Legler Barn Quilters." When they learned she liked to quilt; they immediately took her under their collective wings. She is now an official "Legler Barn Quilter," and can be found Wednesday mornings quilting away with our favorite group of quilters.

Navy is her favorite color and her favorite movie of all time is "La Vita Bella," or "Life is Beautiful." She is a member of Holy Trinity Catholic Church.

During her college career, Allison served an internship at the Truman Library in Independence. She has also been employed at the Eisenhower Center in Abilene. Allison is intelligent, knowledgeable about museums, eager and generally a most favorable addition to the museum staff.

When asked about her position at Legler Barn Museum, Allison said, "I am enjoying being back in the Kansas City area. After my internship at the Truman Library, I have wanted to come back to this area. Everyone at Legler has been so wonderful in helping me acquaint myself with Lenexa and its history."

Along with routine museum duties, Allison will be involved in developing educational outreach and marketing for the museum. She has already attended two "Learning About Lenexa" programs at local elementary schools. The staff is very happy to have Allison working with us and looks forward to a long and productive relationship. Do drop by the museum to meet Allison and to view the temporary exhibit, "Coal Mining in the Kansas City Area," if you have not already seen it, because it will be coming down in June.

Next **LHS News**
Deadline
Will be 2pm on Saturday
July 7, 2001



Spinach Festival

The annual craft festival in conjunction with the Spinach Festival is in the planning stages. If you have a craft (sewing, woodworking, collectables, etc.) please consider renting a booth for the festival. Try to think of your friends or relatives who might enjoy a one-day opportunity to display and sell their crafts. Have them contact Walt McKenzie at 913-888-0666 for further information.

Young Visitor

by Beryl Hennigh

Dane Stotts, age 5, of Desoto, Ks., expressed his desires as to how he would like to spend his March Spring vacation recently, with his mother.

My wishes, announced the kindergarten student, for the week included:

1. Play in the dirt
2. Go to Desoto Library
3. Play with Lego's with mommy
4. Go to the "Cowboy & Indian Barn" (Legler Museum, Lenexa)
5. Visit ghost towns

Mrs. Stotts reports his interests include the library, soccer and baseball participation. In the future he would like to be a scientist or archeologist. He is very good in art and recently won a contest at this school. His parents are Ammon and Rolinde Stotts, and

his grandparents are Jim and Dorothy Stotts of Kearney, Mo., and Garold and Annette Johnston of Adrian, Oregon.

Meanderings by Norm Keech

Richard W. Hocker From "Album Johnson County Museums" newsletter of Summer 2000.

Richard Weaver Hocker, a major figure in the early development of Merriam, was well known in Kansas City banking and business circles in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Born in Kentucky in 1853, Hocker moved to Kansas City in the mid-1880s as vice president of Citizens' National Bank. In 1889 he helped to organize the Metropolitan National Bank and served as its president until 1895. Having retired from banking, Hocker continued to deal in real estate and investments, playing an instrumental role in suburban development in northern Johnson County.

Although continuing to live in Kansas City, Missouri, Hocker purchased a farm in the Merriam area and often visited there. He was said to have been among the first to bring an automobile into this rural area. In 1905, Hocker bought a large tract of land north of Johnson Drive and west of Turkey Creek, and two years later, he joined other area businessmen to establish the Kansas City and Olathe Railroad Company, with plans to build a line from Rosedale to Olathe. At the same time, he began to develop the Hocker Grove amusement park, accessible via the new "Hocker Line" trolleys. The park opened in 1908 and soon expanded, eventually accommodating all sorts of outdoor amusements from picnicking to baseball games. Hocker Grove drew crowds not only from all over Johnson County, but from Kansas City as well.

Plans for extending the trolley line to Olathe were soon abandoned, and by 1910, the completed railway reached through Shawnee to Mill Creek, a point about one-half mile east of the town of Zarah. Over the next ten years, the 17-mile rail line shuttled commuters to and from Kansas City, and brought pleasure seekers to Hocker Grove.

As the amusement park and rail line became well-established, Richard Hocker turned his attention to residential development, selling lots and homes in the Hocker Grove subdivision.

Prospective buyers were offered spacious stone homes on wooded lots within easy reach of rail transport into Kansas City.

In 1918, Hocker died, and his projects soon felt the pressure of continuing development in the area. In 1920-21, most of the amusement park buildings were dismantled to make way for expanding residential construction. As automobiles and buses gained popularity, the trolley business dwindled. The line was finally closed down in 1934.

Meet Rick Hoffman

Rick J. Hoffman is one of our newest Board Members. He is a CPA and a graduate of Kansas State University. He and his wife, Nancy, have two children. Jeff is a junior at Shawnee Mission Northwest and his daughter, Jennifer is a freshman at Shawnee Mission Northwest.

He is employed by Seaboard Farms, Inc. in Merriam, Kansas. Seaboard Farms is a company engaged in pork production and processing.

1981 to 1985 and is a former member of the Lenexa Planning Commission. In 1973, at the age of 18, he was appointed to the Lenexa Board of Zoning Appeals by Mayor Johnna Lingle.

With the exception of living in Bermuda from 1985 to 1987, Rick has lived in Lenexa all his life having grown up on Summit Street south of Lenexa Elementary School.

Mother's Day & Father's Day

By Sharon Hammontree

So where did the customs come from for celebrating Mother's Day in May, and Father's Day in June?

A woman named Anna Jarvis is considered the real founder of Mother's Day in America. She was born in 1864 and lived in Grafton, West Virginia during her youth.

The Civil War had ended when Anna heard her mother say many times that she hoped "sometime, somewhere, someone will found a Mother's Day." She was convinced that if the family honored their mother on a special day, the fighting and hatred would end.

When Anna's mother died, Anna made a promise to herself that she would be the "someone" to make her mother's wish come true. At her request the minister in Grafton, WV, held a Mothers Day service on May 12 1907. This service is remembered as the first Mother's Day celebration in the United States. Anna continued to write letters in support of a national Mother's Day on the second Sunday of May, and by 1909, almost every state was celebrating this special day. On May 9, 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed a proclamation declaring the

second Sunday in May as Mother's Day. Mother's Day is now observed in countries all around the world. Carnations are the Mother's Day flowers: pink to be worn for a living mother and white if the mother has died.

Father's Day is celebrated on the 3rd Sunday in June. The idea for creating a day for children to honor their fathers began in Spokane, Washington. A woman by the name of Sonora Smart Dodd thought of the idea for Father's Day while listening to a Mother's Day sermon in 1909. Her father, Henry Jackson Smart, raised Sonora after her mother died, and she wanted her father to know how special he was to her. It was her father that made all the parental sacrifices and was, in the eyes of his daughter, a courageous, selfless, and loving man. Sonora's father was born in June, so she chose to hold the first Father's Day celebration in Spokane on the 19th of June 1910. In 1924 President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed the third Sunday in June as Father's Day. Roses are the Father's Day flowers: red to be worn for a living father and white if the father has died.

Happy Mother's Day and Father's Day!!

LHS Office

By Mary Kay Smith

The Railroad Depot in Sar-Ko-Par Trails Park was built in 1912-1913 and was moved from Old Town Lenexa to the Park in 1987. There were two depots before this one; both were destroyed by fire.

The Depot now serves as a railroad museum. Lenexa Historical Society's office will soon be located in the freight rooms of the depot. It will be open for scheduled hours to be

announced. (Editors note: Watch for a detailed Depot feature in the near future)

LHS Gift Shop

The Gift Shop in the Legler Barn Museum is operated by the Lenexa historical Society. All proceeds go directly to LHS. There is a great variety of books, as well as magnets, pottery, thimbles, note cards, bluebirds, etc. When you make purchases at the Gift Shop, you help to support the LHS programs and activities. **LHS members receive a 10% discount.**

Historic Places Committee

By Mary Kay Smith

The LHS has a program of recognizing historic structures by the placement of bronze plaques on visible locations on the property.

The following five places have already received plaques:

The Chapel of Holy Trinity Church
(1911)
9138 Pflumm Road

Haskin House (1904)
9426 Pflumm Road

Lackman-Thompson Home (1889)
11180 Lackman Road

Crockett Bit & Spur Co. (1932)
18880 West 87th Street Pkwy

Sparlin Home (1900)
9318 Noland Road

The Salem Lutheran Church, The Lenexa United Methodist Church, and the Taeschner home at 13735 West 87th Street Pkwy will be recognized in the near future.

Becca Coleman, Wilbert and Judy Miller, and Mary Kay Smith are members of the Historic Places Committee. Becca formerly owned a business in historic old downtown Lenexa, and Judy Miller is the daughter of Hilda Reents. The Taeschner home was built in 1908-09 by Otto Taeschner and was occupied by his granddaughter Hilda Reents for many hears.

The committee welcomes suggestions of other places to be considered for recognition. Please call:

Becca Coleman	913-541-8526
Wilbert/Judy Miller	913-888-3762
Mary Kay Smith	913-888-0144

Atchison County Atlas

The Atchison County, Ks, Genealogical Society now has available the reprinted combined atlases of Atchison County, Ks., for 1903 & 1925. Order forms are available at the Barn.

Need to Call an Officer/Board Member? (all area codes 913)

President Jim Spaith.....	631-2502
President Elect Bob Lillie.....	888-1476
Vice President Mary Kay Smith....	888-0144
Secretary Walt McKenzie.....	888-0666
Treasurer Norman Keech.....	648-0438
Board Member Rick Hoffman.....	894-0279
Board Member Johnna Lingle.....	268-8468

Upcoming Exhibits at the Barn

Amelia Earhart

Brought to us by the Kansas Humanities Council. This Temporary exhibit will be on display from June 16 through August 6th. There will be a first person appearance on July 26. Times for this appearance are not yet known.

BAR B QUE

Created by Peggy Stanton, this temporary exhibit will feature the history and original founders of the Lenexa BBQ (Alan Uhl & Pat Dalton) and Metro KC information....including Gates and Bryant. This exhibit will be on display during June, July and August.

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