

MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

December, 2009

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News!



Artist rendition of improvements to the Meade County Hysterical Museum. by Nancy Ohnick

Big Changes at the Museum!

The Board of Directors voted at the November board meeting to close up the front windows of the Museum.

We have several reasons for making this change. Not only are we considering the high cost of utilities, but also the destructive nature of natural light to museum artifacts. We considered tinting the windows, but decided to spend some of our savings to renovate the front of the building.

Greg Knott from Plains will be doing the work. We have accepted his bid for removing the glass, framing out the walls and installing drywall on the inside and a stucco finish on the outside to match the

color of the brick. This was to happen in early December, but winter weather has delayed it for a time. At some future date we would like to have a mural painted on the stucco... we feel this will be a great "facelift" for the property.

We are continuing work on a room in Building B to house the saddle collection currently displayed in the Goodnight Gallery. Olis Lauppe has been working on this room but he mentioned at the last board meeting that "it sure wouldn't hurt his feelings none" if someone wanted to pitch in there and get it framed up. He has milled cottonwood logs and built a floor

that is almost finished. What needs to be done next is framing in and finishing the walls. If any of our readers would like to help with this project, go down to the Museum and have Melissa let you in next door so you can take a look at it. We could sure use your help.

Another project we are in hopes someone will "adopt" is maintaining the old school and/or the farm lot. The school building could be used for things, but it needs some tender loving care. There must be someone out there who would like to look after it and make minor repairs. The board members are just too

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Meade County Historical Museum - 200 E. Carthage • Dalton Gang Hideout - 502 S. Pearllette

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burned out and stretched too thin to take on one more project.

In our last newsletter we suggested that members “adopt a room” at the Museum and help update and refresh the displays and we got two wonderful volunteers. Laura Eakes from Plains, a history major home from college, volunteered and she ended up taking on several rooms on the boardwalk... cleaned them up... changed them around and made them look very nice. Carolyn Meredith “adopted” the Elsie Chapel Church and has it looking fresh as new. Thanks Laura and Carolyn!

One big step we took this year was removing the admission to the Museum. We tried charging as a way to help make ends meet, but it just did not seem to be working. At the November meeting we decided that we would take in just as much with a “donation suggestion,” and after all... our mission is to share Meade County history with the world... so we went back to being a FREE Museum. We hope this will encourage you to visit more often and to bring your friends and relatives to the Museum when you have out-of-town guests.

Another major decision was to change our hours and close the Museum on Mondays. This is a typical practice for museums, and a way for us to lower our operating costs. Melissa now works from Tuesday through Saturday and we staff the Museum on Sunday with volunteers. If you would like to be one of those volunteers for a Sunday afternoon now and then, please call Nancy Ohnick @ 620-873-2764. It is only for four hours and it would be a big help to us.

**you can find this newsletter online
expanded and in color
at www.OldMeadeCounty.com
click the "Museum" tab**

Our first Jones & Plummer Trail marker installed at the Adams Ranch where the trail crossed the Cimarron River at Miles City.



Jones & Plummer Trail Markers

There has been much progress with the Jones & Plummer Trail markers since our last newsletter.

We have managed to find sponsors for every marker we plan to install in the first wave of this project. We wish to extend sincere appreciation to the following:

- ◆ Meade State Bank
- ◆ Fowler State Bank
- ◆ Marc Cottrell
- ◆ Craig Stratton & Kimberly Stevens
- ◆ Dave & Judy Adams
- ◆ J.W. & Paulette Vanderpool
- ◆ CMS Electric Cooperative & Fiddler-Orme-Bachman Mortuary

Because of the generosity of the above patrons, we have been able to buy the materials and order the signs for seven markers. The marker at the Adams ranch is already installed, and interpretive signs are on hand for all but three of the other markers. We are still working on finding the right location and getting landowner permission for the three.

Dalton Days Moved to New Date

Much news from the Dalton Days Committee... they have changed the date of the event to the last weekend in June. This was done to make the event more attractive to gunfighter groups and living historians who have provided great entertainment for Dalton Days the last few years. The first weekend in June is just too close to other popular

“gatherings” and Marc Ferguson is in hopes the change in date will bring us more contestants. Marc and his committee work so hard to organize this event and we really appreciate their efforts.

One group Marc is trying to get for our event is the Nicodemus Buffalo Soldiers from Nicodemus, KS. This group reenacts maneuvers of the black

Calvary troops that served the West after the days of the Civil War. Marc says it is really something to watch. I "googled" them and found a site called www.NicodemusKansas.com which isn't quite going, but has a photo of the Buffalo Soldiers.

The PARADE should improve next year... we have two new "go getters" on the parade committee, Rick Alexander and Kim Stevens. They are already working on the parade and promise to make it a show stopper in 2010. We are excited to have new people on the committee and new excitement about Dalton Days.

Mark your calendars now for June 26 & 27, 2010!

Spring History Tours

Our "Artisan Valley" tour in May was a real history lesson. It was well attended and Ellen Verelle did a great job in organizing the entire event.

We saw several historic Meade County homes. We were allowed to tour Dean and Mary Reese's Creek Side Farm B&B, as well as use their beautiful yard for our lunch stop. Mike and Rose Lee also allowed us access inside their amazing restored home.

At the other homes we stopped and looked around while we heard the story of the property.

We stopped at the Emerson Grove in the very northeast corner of the county, as well as the Congregational Church Cemetery. On the way back to Meade Sharon Stockton led us to her place to walk in some ruts of the old Jones & Plummer trail.

We wish to thank everyone who helped make our 2009 tour a success. You may get a full report of the tour as well as all the photos at www.OldMeadeCounty.com, click on the "Museum" Tab.



A stop on the "Artesian Valley" Spring History Tour

2010 History Tour Meade State Lake

Plans are being made for our history tour next spring. We plan to tour Meade State Lake and the old CCC Camp that is located within the park. The lake itself has a rich history... it was the first state lake in Kansas and the story of how it came to be is very interesting. We had some real "movers and shakers" back then that deserve total credit for securing the lake for us.

We thought we would start the tour in Meade by taking a look at the three WPA projects here... the stone work at the Meade City Park, the Dalton Gang Hideout and the old football field at the Meade Jr. High.

Then on to the lake where we will explore the old camp and hear the history of it, as well as the lake. There are plenty of places to lunch at the lake... perhaps in the new visitor's center! It promises to be a fun filled day. We will set the date at our next board meeting in January.

Meade County on PBS?

In August we worked with Susan Shumaker who is with a

production company who produces PBS documentaries for Ken Burns... you may have seen his most recent production about the National Parks. They are now working on a program for next year about the dust bowl days. Susan came to Meade and interviewed Dean Borth, Roy Twist and Clarence Ballard, all "survivors" of the dirty 30's and she seemed extremely interested in our CCC camp.

We pointed Susan in the direction of Mark Goldsberry who has been collecting data about the camp for many years. Mark tells us that he has been in touch with a Mr. Pascal who is investigating the camp.

One exciting possibility would be that we will get into the final cut and maybe get a little free publicity from this film. They were attracted to Meade because of Lawrence Svobida's book, "Farming the Dust Bowl." This is an excellent book about a man who tried to make a go of it here in Meade County in the 1930's.

We have this book for sale at the Museum, as well as many other titles pertaining to local history, some by local authors.

The Annual Meeting

We have set the date for the Annual Banquet for February 6, 2010. Time will be 6:30 PM at the Forst Center, W. Highway 54 in Meade. Heart & Home Catering will provide the meal of brisket with all the trimmings. The tickets will be \$12.50, and will be on sale in January at the Museum, the Hideout, and online at www.oldmeadecounty.com (click the Museum tab).

We are very excited about the program this year. Our speaker will be James Hoy, from Emporia State University. Mr. Hoy is an authority on Francis Marion Steele, the famous Western photographer who took many photos in Southwest Kansas and the Oklahoma Panhandle in the late 1800's and early 1900's. He is credited with leaving one of the best photographic histories of the West, and he was very connected to Meade. In May 1895, Steele married Pink Fletcher, a local girl, and twice had studios here... once on the Fletcher farm south of town and once when he rented the old Mosser Gallery in Meade.

Many of you have old photographs of your ancestors with the elaborate "F. M. Steele" logo stamped on the mounting board. Mr. Hoy is hoping that people will bring their photos to show.

We are told that even if you have heard Mr. Hoy's talk at other places, you will find he tailors his presentation to each unique location with his question and answer session and you always learn new things each time you hear him.

We will also have a traveling exhibit of Steele photos loaned to us by the Center for Great Plains Studies and the Kansas State Historical Society. The exhibit will remain in the Museum for a



James & Cathy Hoy

month or so, so if you miss the meeting, you can still enjoy the photo exhibit at the Museum.

Heritage Award

We have yet to choose a person or family for the Heritage Award for this year. If you have any suggestions, please call or email Nancy: 620-873-2764, nancy@prairiebooks.com.

Membership Drive

Well, it's that time again... time to ask for memberships for Meade County Historical Society. 2009 has been a good year and we are actually ending it with funds to cover our expenses... all thanks to you our faithful members! We won't be spending extra postage this year to send out letters, we are in hopes that you will respond to this request in the newsletter.

Please be aware that your memberships make the difference

in keeping our doors open and helping us with improvements to the properties. It is our wish that as a member you will take ownership in the Museum and Hideout and help us in our quest to preserve our heritage.

We have room for several more members on the Board of Directors. If you have any interest in serving in this capacity, please do not hesitate to come to the meetings which are held the first Monday of each month at 7:00 PM at the Museum. Please come... if only to give us an idea or some input... you are always welcome.

The nominating committee for 2010 executive officers is Bill Barby and Otis Meredith. Please contact them if you have suggestions. Our current slate of officers has agreed to run again, but would welcome "new blood" if any member would like to take their turn.

Tid Bits:

MCHS Board meetings are usually held at 7:00 PM, the First Monday of the month, at the Museum.

Nancy Ohnick just published the third edition of "Fifty Years on the Owl Hoot Trail."

The book is about Jim Herron, first Sheriff of Beaver County and an open-range cowboy in this area.

Jim was tried and convicted here in Meade on a bogus charge of cattle rustling... he escaped and from that day on he was wanted by the law... a situation the cowboys called being "on the owl hoot trail." This book is available at the Dalton Hideout, Meade County Museum, Hastings and www.prairiebooks.com

If we have sparked your interest in the Jones & Plummer Trail there is an excellent book titled "Trails South" by C. Robert Haywood that is the definitive history of the trail that crossed Meade County from one end to the other. "Trails South" is available at the Dalton Hideout, Meade County Museum, Hastings and www.prairiebooks.com

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MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Committee • PO Box 969 • Meade, Kansas 67864-0969

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- Pioneer\$50.00
- Homesteader\$100.00
- Trail Boss.....\$250.00
- Lifetime Member.....\$500.00
- Other _____

Please send this completed form along with your payment (made payable to the Meade County Historical Society) to the address above.

THANK YOU! Your support will help preserve Meade County history for generations to come.