

MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

November, 2011

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News!

Museum news...

by Nancy Ohnick

The most significant thing that happened at the Museum in 2011 was the remodel to the building facade. Finally, May 19th, our carpenters, Ken Isaac and Barry Friesen, were able to work us into their busy schedule. We were closed for two weeks... the carpenters took a week to complete the structure, and it took us another week to put everything back in place.

The Board was extremely pleased with the work of the Isaac-Friesen team. We had been looking forward to this remodel for two long years, and it seemed like it was done in the blink of an eye.

Since we were closed, I felt it would be the ideal time to work on the photographer's studio display, so I spent that first week working in the back of the Museum. I put up new wallpaper, painted the trim, painted the floor, and painted a new scene on the old canvas backdrop. Barry helped me cut a new plywood shelf, and he and Ken put some drywall up over the brick wall on the west end. The entire display is now much more cohesive and has a fresh new look.

More display updates...

In February, Janae took up the project of updating the archaeology display from the Lundeen dig. We had done the Hibbard display last year with white-on-black lettering, and we were encouraged to do the other case. Janae got the story boards all prepared, but it wasn't until April that we worked together cleaning out the case and putting everything back in place. It gave it a nice fresh look and made the two cases match nicely.



Carpenters Ken Isaac and Barry Friesen work with Ralph Classen and Glen Feldman to remove the glass. The glass was used by Ralph and Glen to replace broken windows in their buildings down the street.



Janae working on the archaeology display. She changed all the graphics to white on black, then we lined the shelves with black felt to match the other case we had done.

We plan to continue these updates to the display cases... one case at a time. Sounds like a good project for next year!

We have applied for a grant from the Kansas Museum Association. This

grant is offered for museum enhancement, and we chose to apply for the "Dirty Thirties" display. The maximum grant is \$500 which would go a long way to refurbish the display and give it new impact.

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

PO Box 893 • Meade, Kansas 67864 • (620) 873-2359

Those darned closets...

Another big Museum project started in March and was just completed the last of October. The organization of the closets turned out to be a major hurdle, mainly because we simply have not had enough time to devote to it.

If you are not familiar with the Museum closets, they are two old walk-in coolers that were in the building when it was a grocery store. One is located on the west side next to the restroom, and the other is located behind the Goodnight Gallery where the saddles are displayed at this time. They are excellent storage because they are large and tight, where no light or dust can penetrate. Unfortunately, they both had an odor to them and were totally disorganized. Those of us who are currently involved with the Museum had no idea what those closets contained.

We rented a storage trailer from AJ Electric in March and had it placed on the lot north of the Museum. We had a work day and moved the contents of the west closet into the trailer, then proceeded to clean and fix the closet. We scrubbed and painted and purchased eight steel shelving units to line the walls. We then moved the contents of the east closet into the west closet and proceeded to scrub and paint again. We felt most of the shelving in the east closet was useable, so we just added some shelves and painted everything.

Then in late August, while we were moving contents back and forth, we found a leak in the floor of the west closet. We got plumbers in and discovered that, apparently since 2002, the air conditioner condensation has been running between the layers of concrete beneath that closet due to someone putting a nail through the pipe while building the livery stable display in the back. We had to jack-hammer

The West closet is now lined with steel shelving, and the documents stored in archive boxes fit neatly on the shelves.

We plan to keep a small table and a chair in the closet so that researchers will have an easy time when accessing the boxes.



By adding shelving and using plastic tubs to store clothing and hats... we actually have some room to grow in the east closet and things will be much easier to find.

part of the concrete floor up to dry it out. We also abandoned the old drains, then replaced the floor with plywood.

We returned the trailer the first of October and had to close the livery stable display so that we would have a place to go with the "stuff" until the job was done. There was no reason at this point to put things back without the organization which was our goal in the first place.

One thing about it... those of us involved in the Museum now know what we have and where it is. Nancy wanted to inventory and tag everything while we were at it, but that is something we had to put off for another day. For now we are putting it back in organized containers, clearly labeled and grouped. We are using the west closet with the new shelving mainly for document storage and the east closet for artifacts.

Jones & Plummer Trail marking project finished in Meade County

The last Jones & Plummer Trail marker went up late this spring. Norman and John Dye placed the marker on south 23 Highway in April, and soon after that, Glenn Lauppe placed the one for Fowler, which went up on the north end of town on the Walker property. This completes our project of placing seven markers from one end of Meade County to the other.

We learned from attending a trail meeting in Dodge City, that Ford County plans to put a marker at Mulberry Creek where several trails converged south of Dodge. They plan to recognize the Jones & Plummer Trail, so this will complete markers to the north as our first one is on the county line at Wilburn. Beaver County has its



interpretive signs like we do. We have not been in touch with the Texas Panhandle folks to see what they have done, but our hunch is they have done nothing so far.

Original plans were to make a brochure and a map of where the markers are, but that will have to wait until the other counties get their markers done.

This marker stands on south Highway 23. It is on the south side of the road as you descend into Crooked Creek Valley just east of Meade State Lake.



The tack room project is coming along nicely. Glenn Lauppe and Sherman Overbay have both put in countless hours on this and still have a long way to go.

We keep accepting donations for the “Ag Museum” we plan to put in Building B... but this tack room for the saddles is job one. Hopefully ranching will slow down a little and they can get back to it. They are doing a great job!

Preserving Private Archaeological Collections

We recently received an interesting brochure from the Association of Archaeologists of Kansas (PAK) detailing the value of privately held collections of archaeological artifacts, and the importance of preserving collections for future generations.

Currently, many privately-held collections are lost, or their value is greatly diminished when the original collector dies. Heirs sometimes do not appreciate the true value of the collections, and the collections often are either sold at auction or divided. Crucial information on where and when collections were found is often destroyed or separated from the artifacts.

This brochure informs avocational collectors and their families throughout the State of Kansas about issues that arise in passing on their collections to future generations. It discusses both legal and ethical considerations in assuring these collections are preserved, and provides concrete suggestions for owners of collections to use in estate planning. It discusses ways to make the collections accessible to the general public, and to assure that crucial data about where the objects were collected is not lost.

The brochure was financed in part with funds from the National Park Service, which are administered by the Kansas Historical Society. If you would like to obtain a copy of this brochure, stop by the Museum or give us a call at 873-2359.

MCHS Board Meetings are usually held the first Monday of each month, 7:00 PM at the Museum

Keep up with what’s happening at the Museum by reading Nancy’s weekly column “Week at the Museum” in *The Prairie Sun Weekly*

See this newsletter in FULL COLOR at www.OldMeadeCounty.com... click the Museum tab.

Accessions in 2011

This has been a very good year for the Museum, we have received many nice donations of artifacts...

- Vashti Seybert: milk bottle and mason jar
- Carmon Welch: clippings and 8 photographs
- Don Wilson: book, *The Great Drive of '95*
- Dortha Lee Kobs Hogue: 8 photographs
- Robert Gehle: several mementos from the Gruemken family, Stone School memory book
- Lance Kane: MHS football films from the 1960's
- Ann L. Classen: book, *Service for Peace 1945* VCR tape, *Last Ride of the Daltons*
- Raylene West: friendship quilt, "Families of the Fairview School"
- Robert Maberry: books, *Pearl Harber & USS Arizona Memorial*, *Ready Deck* and *USS Princeton CV-37*.
- Scott & Lori Crain: antique seed cleaner
- Raymond Hargett: books on barbed wire, barbed wire collection (478 strands) on 9 panels with stands, barbed wire collection in 2 white boxes, 2 panels mounted old wrenches & pliers, numerous old tools and fence stretchers, 2 restored corn shellers, collection of 15 brace & bit hand drills, 2 coffee pots, butter press, snout clipper, scythe, sharpening stone, 2 sad irons and stove plate, 2 oil cans, a Singr sewing machine
- Rosie Ediger: 10 Meade Bible Academy Yearbooks
- Larene Rose: artwork from her late husband, Eugene Rose, from Pratt. Carved and constructed model of the "Rose Farm" complete with several sheds, a house, and accessories. Carved and constructed model "Village" with a lumber yard, gas station, creamery, hardware store, scale house, barber shop, coal shed, saw mill, general merchandise store, livery, and various vehicles.



A record number of 615 kids came through the Museum this spring on school tours. Here Janae talks to a group of Meade students about the dust bowl days.



Raymond Hargett, our benefactor from Montezuma, standing in front of his barbed wire collection.



Just a small example of the "Village" display given to us by Larene Rose.

What's happening at the Hideout...

Dalton Days...

Howdy everyone and hope y'all had a great summer and fall. Even though it was boiling hot this past June for Dalton Days, we had a good time and great performers. There were three gunfight teams from Kansas, Colorado, and California, and five living historians from Kansas, California, and Colorado, that put on some of the best old west entertainment to be found anywhere.

The ice cream crank-off had nine teams that competed for the top prize of the Dalton Days traveling trophy. Lots of good ice cream was to be had on a hot day. After it cooled off a mite, later in the evening, the Way-Out-West-of-Broadway Players performed the Melodrama, "The Pony Express or The Villain Came to a Grinding Halt." About eighty people attended the melodrama. We hope to do another play next year if we can find enough actors to fill the parts. If you would like to try your hand at acting, get a hold of me at the Hideout.

The 2012 Dalton Days celebration will be held July 13, 14 and 15, in conjunction with the Meade County ranch rodeo. There has been a new Dalton Day's embellishment group formed to help make Dalton Days bigger and better. There have been a lot of good suggestions brought forth already, but we are always looking for more ideas and people to help with Dalton Days. Anyone who would like to participate in the embellishment group can contact me at the Dalton Hideout, Karrie Littrell-Ohnick at the Dusty Rose, or Michelle Ross at Prairie Images Photography. All help and suggestions are very welcome.

Dalton Gang Hideout...

If you haven't been to the Hideout lately, maybe it's time to come back and have a look at the new exhibits that have been done in the past year. We have



Last spring Marc Ferguson organized a trip to Adobe Walls and other points of interest in the Texas Panhandle. One of Marc's living history characters is Billy Dixon, who participated in the 1874 Indian battle at Adobe Walls.

Fourteen people participated in the tour, which included two museums and Palo Duro Canyon in addition to the Adobe Walls site. In the photo above l-r: Alfred Sawyer, Russ Ohnick, Sharla Swift, Mick Ohnick, Norman & Nancy Dye, John & Wynema Dye, Elaine Sawyer, Carolyn & Otis Meredith. In front: Alice & Marc Ferguson, Inga Ojala.

acquired a horse hair and leather bridle that was made by Emmett Dalton while he was in the Kansas State Penitentiary at Lansing, Kansas, from 1893 to 1907. Emmett was pardoned in 1907, and didn't get into any more scrapes with the law the rest of his life. Emmett sold the

bridle to G.B. Campbell who was one of the foremen on the 25,000 acre Sherman Ranch in Ellsworth County, Kansas. Come into the Hideout and say howdy sometime.

Happy Trails,
Marc Ferguson,
Dalton Hideout



In May, George Lucas, Marc & Alice Ferguson, Nancy Ohnick, and Otis & Carolyn Meredith took part in the "Dodge House Shoot Out" event in Dodge. In the photo at left are George and Marc standing in front of our booth.

The 2011 History Tour Dig Sites of Claude Hibbard

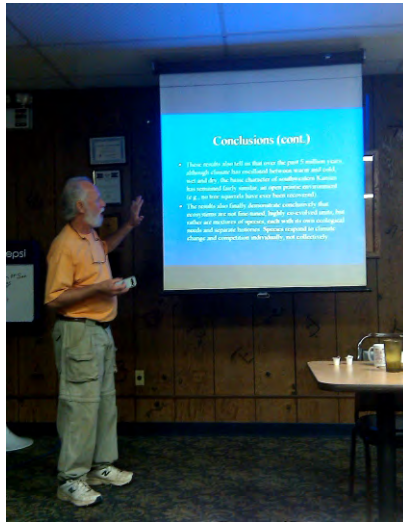
Our history tour this year took place on May 21. We usually have it earlier in the spring, but set the date to accommodate Bob Martin, a paleontologist who has worked for years in Meade County carrying on the work that Dr. Claude Hibbard started back in the 1930's, and devoted his life to.

We had fifty-five explorers participate in the tour this year with only twenty-eight being from Meade County. We even had four members of the Hibbard family as well as eight members of the Wichita Gem & Mineral Society... not to mention several of Norman's archaeology friends from around the state.

The tour started at the Chuckwagon Restaurant where we met for breakfast at 7:30. After the meal, Dr. Martin gave an excellent talk and slide presentation about Hibbard, who trained an important group of paleontologists who collectively laid the foundation for the current work being done in Southwest Kansas.

We learned that the "Meade Basin," as these scientists call it, is an ideal study system because it includes many fossiliferous localities spanning millions of years and that this is the only place in the world so ideal for this study. Mouths dropped open and eyes widened as Dr. Martin tried to impress on us that these sites in Meade County are priceless for understanding the last five million year history of mammal assemblages on the Central Great Plains.

After leaving the restaurant, we traveled north to the old Cudahy silica mine where we all got to dig a little and learn about the volcanic ash that fell in our county. Then we traveled back south through town to the Borchers/Nash 72 site which is near the county gravel pit on the way to the lake. Here we were guided by Dr. Martin and studied the earth exposed in the canyon with a new understanding of what those different layers are. We then traveled to the Deer Park site which was on state land near



the lake... we all got to dig again and found lots of souvenirs. We had our sack lunches at the shelter house near the old artesian well, then went on to visit Rexroad locations 2 and 3.

It was 5:00 PM before we got back to town... hot, gritty, tired and brimming with knowledge of the Meade Basin. This was undoubtedly one of our better history tours.

We have no ideas for the 2012 tour next spring... so if any of you have a suggestion, please call the Museum or talk to Norman Dye.



Access many more photos of the tour on www.oldmeadecounty.com. Click on the Museum tab and down at the bottom of the page are reports on all our recent tours.



2012 Annual Banquet will be in Fowler

Our Annual Banquet will be held Saturday, February 4, 2012. This time we will be meeting in Fowler at the Grade School cafeteria for the banquet, and going to the auditorium for our program.



Nolan Sump, Dust Bowl Farmer

We have booked Nolan Sump for the program. Nolan is a Kansas Humanities performer who portrays a "dust bowl farmer." Norman said, "We have had nothing but cowboys for the last few annual meetings, it's time we have something to do with farming!" Marc has seen this fellow's show and says he does an excellent job.

Mark your calendars now for February 4th... 6:30 PM in Fowler. We will send the membership postcards when tickets go on sale in January.

The Museum now takes credit cards, so we will be able to offer call-in ticket sales. We think that will be a real convenience for our members.

Watch for that postcard in January and mark your calendar now!

Curator's Corner

by Nancy Ohnick

I now have a year and a half under my belt as curator of the Museum. I have to say... this is the most fun job I have ever had.

Janae Rempel and Frances Elffner are still with us, and this summer we hired Rebecca Orth to work at the Museum and sometimes at the Hideout. Frances had to take a leave of absence for knee surgery, so Rebecca filled in her hours this summer, and has been filling some of the weekend hours since school started.

Rebecca is a junior at MHS and is doing a fine job for us. She was cleaning the Museum for us before we offered her this job, so she is very familiar with the place. She has helped on the computer with the cemetery files and is very good at keying in any story I leave for her.

Alma Regier is still our volunteer "star." She is still working on rural schools as we constantly find more clues about them, but lately her passion has been helping to update the Graceland Cemetery file. Irene Lemaster retired from this project in 1998, and since then, none of these files had been updated.

With Frances' help, Janae has been relentlessly working on creating obituary books from our microfilmed newspapers. She has now done from 1920 through 1949. As she gets a year done, Alma gets the obits and starts adding the deceased to our cemetery database. Janette Friesen works with us as well, checking our entries and adding information she has obtained. Once we have this database up to date, we will work on finding the grave locations and updating the rolodex at the cemetery.

Through gracious file sharing from Plains City we now have an up-to-date database for the Plains cemetery, and Frances is working diligently on the Fowler cemetery file. I can't tell you how handy it is to have these files up to date when folks are looking for their family history. We get so excited when a chain of resources we have created results in a "gem of information" for a seeker.

Other volunteers are Cheryle Shelton and Barbara Feldman. Sharon Stockton was a great help this year when we loaned one of our quilts to the Staught Museum in Montezuma. We so appreciate our volunteers!

The closing of the windows in the front of the Museum gave us a nice office wall with a door and about 10 feet of closet space. This was a much-needed improvement, as it keeps our "business" end tucked away out of sight.

We also ended up with some space for a gift shop. We had a "book island" built and expanded our selection of books for sale. About the only other merchandise we have at this time are consignment items and items the staff makes, but the gift shop already gives us a new source of revenue which we plan to expand on over time. Please keep us in mind when you need a history book or a unique one-of-a-kind gift item. Janae has made note cards with some of her photos of Southwest Kansas... all taken right here in Meade County, and I have made some with historical Meade County photos.

I am still writing "Week at the Museum" every week in *The Prairie Sun*, and maintaining the website, www.oldmeadecounty.com. I hope this helps keep you informed throughout the year as to what is happening at the Museum.

It is time once again to ask for those annual memberships

Just a reminder that our budget is made up of five types of income... donations (which include memorials, money in the "pot" at the Museum and gifts from individuals), admissions (these are from the Dalton Gang Hideout), retail sales (Hideout and Museum), funds from the County, and memberships.

It takes all these different sources to make us work. Our biggest expenses are payroll and everything associated with it. The next big expense is utilities and insurance. Usually there's not much left for projects or repairs, but we do our best to make each dollar stretch as far as it will go.

This year we took on several major projects in the Museum. We had money put aside for this, but now it is spent, and our budget is very tight for the rest of the year. Please know that your memberships are really needed, appreciated, and put to good use.

Please consider sending in the enclosed membership form with your yearly support.

contact us:
620-873-2359

meademuseums@yahoo.com



**Please remember our
GIFT SHOPS
at the Museum & Hideout for your
HOLIDAY SHOPPING!**

We have several book titles about Meade County history including local authors... as well as some unique gift items!

BOTH GIFT SHOPS NOW ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS!



MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Committee • PO Box 893 • Meade, Kansas 67864-0893

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Address _____

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Levels of Membership:

- Ranch Hand\$25.00
- 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.