

JEFFERSON COUNTY HISTORICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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A New Look for the Newsletter

We are trying a new format for the newsletters of both the genealogical and historical societies. Since one person is writing both, we are experimenting with combining the newsletters into one document. If you are a member of one of the two organizations, you will get news of both. Perhaps the activities will get you interested in becoming active in one of the organizations. We have a lot of ideas and are always open to suggestions, especially when they come with help!

Old Jefferson Town is the focus of both organizations. The genealogical society's activities are centered at the research library at the south end of the boardwalk. The library is open Saturdays from 1:00-5:00 year round, and Sundays from 1:30-5:00 from May through September. A volunteer is available during these hours to assist anyone doing historical or genealogical research in the library files, which include local newspapers on microfilm, federal and state census on microfilm, books, town and family files, school and cemetery data, and much more.

The historical society maintains the buildings and grounds and plans and sponsors special exhibits and events. Among the most prominent buildings on the site are the boyhood home of John Steuart Curry, the Victorian Nincehelser house, and the refurbished Edmonds Chapel. Maintaining these historic buildings is a labor of love for a dedicated group of volunteers. If you would like to participate in this effort, there is room for you!



Stocking the Reynolds Store

We would like to begin stocking the shelves of the Reynolds Store to reflect the items found in a general store in about 1890-1900. We welcome donations from members and other interested parties. The following list mentions some of the items a well-stocked kitchen of the period would need to purchase from a general store: *sieves, tubs, pails, rolling pins, colanders, coffee mills, kettles, ladles, granite ware dishes, churns*

We would also like to put an old (but nice) pot-bellied stove in the store, for appearance rather than use.

If you have questions about items you wish to donate, please contact Joy Lominska at 842-5697.

Reynolds Store Floor

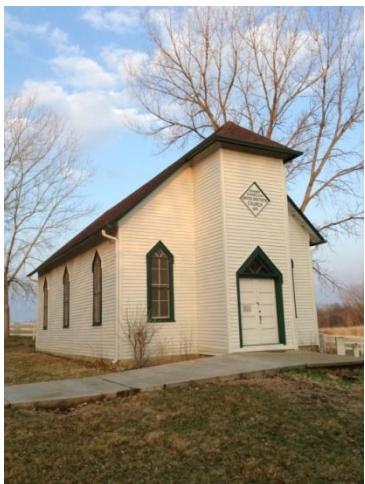
The wood floor on the Reynolds Store has buckled and needs to be renovated. JCHS has decided to level the current floor and screw it down to the joists, remove any rotted wood, then cover the old floor with a new wood floor of Douglas fir treated with oil. This will be close to the appearance of a wood floor a hundred years ago, dark and slightly oily rather than glossy with varnish. Remember when oiled sawdust was used to sweep in stores? The renovation will be authentic, safer than the current floor, and will look nice.

Old Jefferson Town Gets New Sign

The Jefferson Count Historical Society recently installed a new sign for the grounds of Old Jefferson Town. The new sign was painted by local artist René D.



Bryant. John Bryant and Dave Ketchum of Lakewood Hills, Ozawkie, completed the installation of the sign. Coordination of the project was led by historical society president Leanne Chapman. The sign gives recognition to the newly-renovated Edmonds Chapel and the boyhood home of John Steuart Curry.



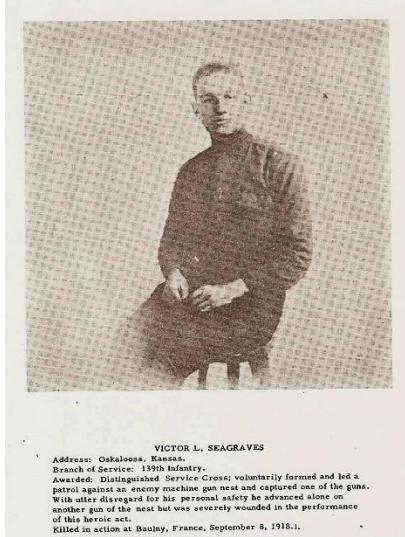
Edmonds Chapel Renovations

The Edmonds Chapel has had extensive renovations over the past year. With new paint, refinished floors, heating and air conditioning, the chapel has become a lovely setting for church services and weddings. Hand-crafted display cabinets are being planned for the entrance area.

Use of the chapel can be arranged by contacting Leanne Chapman at 785-691-6751.

Veterans' Display

The historical society is planning to have a display recognizing veterans from the Jefferson County area. All veterans, regardless of their branch of service, will be recognized. We also want to be sure to recognize those that have moved to Jefferson County. The display is planned to run from Memorial Day weekend until July 4 weekend. If you know of anyone who would like to participate with pictures, artifacts, or other memorabilia, please contact Mary Luse at 913-774-2759 or Leanne Chapman at 785-863-3257, or email mjluse@gmail.com. The above picture of WWI soldier Victor L. Seagraves, from the research library files, says that he "led a patrol



against an enemy machine gun nest and captured one of the guns. With utter disregard for his personal safety he advanced alone on another gun of the nest but was severely wounded in the performance of this heroic act. Killed in action at Baulny, France, September 8, 1918."

2014 Events at Old Jefferson Town

Opening Weekend, May 3 and 4:

Curry House—County-wide school art exhibit

Reynolds Store or Tibbot—Lynn Berning Ledbetter to display her work with gourds

Display to recognize veterans—military memorabilia

June—Old settlers' weekend—26,27,28

Curry House—Patty Boldridge's family will display their artwork

Todd-Boldridge reunion on grounds

Library—Old settlers' pictures and history on display

July—Curry House—TBA-watch Facebook for future announcements

Tibbot—Photography of the Seybold/Woodhead family

August—Curry House—TBA

Tibbot—Collections from donations

Edmonds Chapel—presenter from the Kansas Humanities Council

September—ending weekend of 27-28

Edmonds Chapel—Quilt show and christening dresses

Memorials

Several members of the historical community have passed away during the last year. Memorials have been established in the names of the following:

Richard Chapman—additional benches for the boardwalk and new sign

Bill Rhodes—use of funds in process

Joy Wellman—maintenance of the Wellman School

John Zachariah—use of funds in process

Our condolences to these families, and our thanks for having chosen to remember their loved ones with gifts that will enhance Old Jefferson Town.

Genealogical Society Activities

Acquisitions

The genealogical society has entered the twenty-first century, with a projector to show photos for presentations. The projector connects to a laptop and provides a show that the whole audience can easily see. The first use was at the February meeting for a talk on finding Polish relatives given by Joy Lominska (seen at right being greeted by a cousin in the village of Pajewo, Poland). We hope to use the projector frequently in the future.



Find a Grave

Raymond Riley, vice-president of the genealogical society, has been contributing to the records of Find a Grave. To date, he has photographed tombstones in almost all of the cemeteries in the Oskaloosa, Valley Falls, Meriden, Ozawkie, McLouth and Winchester areas. In addition, he has photographed in the Lancaster, Potter, Cummings, Arrington, Huron and Muscotah sites in Atchison County, plus selected tombstones in other cemeteries. Twenty thousand of his photographs are now online for researchers to view. This summer he plans to begin work in southern Jefferson County.

Recent Research Findings in the Library

The research library gets visitors from all over Kansas, the United States, and even some foreign countries. We have resources that are difficult to find online. A recent group of researchers was searching for the surname **Schellberg** in the Valley Falls area. They found a number of family obituaries in our files, one that gave information about the family owning a jewelry store in Valley Falls for over fifty years. Using the internet to look at the Sanborn Fire Insurance map collection at KU Spencer Research Library, they found the likely location of the

store. They can now go to the courthouse to view the real estate transactions to confirm the location.

We may not find the answer to all of your “brick walls,” but come by and check out our extensive records at Old Jefferson Town.

Programs

Due to inclement weather and holidays, the genealogical society had only two programs between October and April. In October, Sonja Boldridge talked about the women wrestlers in her family's history. Sonja's family has historic ties to Oskaloosa. In February, member Joy Lominska gave a talk about how she traced her husband's grandfather back to his village in eastern Poland, where they discovered relatives they did not know they had.

Upcoming programs include a discussion about Elizabeth Watkins, wife of banker J.B. Watkins and a major donor to the University of Kansas. The society generally meets on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:00 in the research library.

Heat Policy 2014

Due to a lack of visitors during very hot days, the historical society board has implemented the following policy: When temperatures are expected to be in the upper 90s by 11:00 A. M. (95 degrees and above) during Old Jefferson Town's normally-scheduled open time, there will be NOon-site tour guide available.

If you have come from a distance and wish to take a tour on one of these hot days, please call Leanne Chapman at 785-863-3257 or 785-691-6751 to see if a tour can be arranged. If an available tour guide can be found, he/she could be there in a few minutes to provide a tour.

On days when the historical society has sponsored special events, the above policy will not apply and the site will be open for tours that day by members of the society.

During the summer, the Jefferson County Genealogical Society has a volunteer in the air-conditioned library on both Saturday and Sunday afternoons. Their operating schedule is not affected by the heat policy.