

Jefferson County Historical Society
Oskaloosa, Kansas
April 2019 Newsletter

Repair, Replace, Rehabilitate

has been the trend at Old Jefferson Town for the past few months. Due to the extent of the completed and pending repair projects, the Society is soliciting funds to bolster the General Repair Fund. Please direct donations to Mary J. Luse, Treasurer, 16786 126th Street, Winchester, Ks 66097. Remember that JCHS is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, so your contributions are tax-deductible.

In October 2018, while repairs were being made on the exterior of Wellman School, it was discovered that the school bell tower was severely deteriorated. It was deemed necessary to replace the bell tower which was done by B & L Solutions, of Lawrence. In addition, Plexiglass was installed over openings where birds had access to build nests.

The annual meeting of the Jefferson County Historical Society was held Nov. 4, 2018 in Edmonds Chapel at Old Jefferson Town. Following the business meeting, Jim Hoy of Kansas Humanities gave a presentation on Kansas Legends, Myths and Folktales. 33 individuals were present. It was voted to cancel December board meeting.

Keep in touch with us! Find us on Facebook at Jefferson County Historical Society, Oskaloosa, Kansas,
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/255368121254017/>

On Nov. 11, the Dunkard Church bell at Old Jefferson Town was rung 21 times by David Drummond, of Winchester, a veteran of the Vietnam War, to mark the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. The bell was salvaged by John D. Bower from the Church of the Brethren, also known as the Dunkard Church, when the church was demolished in the 1970's and has resided at Old Jefferson Town since. John Bower served twelve terms in the Kansas Legislature from 1953-1976, was associated with the Church of the Brethren and a lifetime member of the Jefferson County Historical Society.

While David Schmalstieg replaced a rotten rope (donated by Rosco Keesling, whose father was a WWI veteran) and during the bell ringing, it was discovered that the church bell tower was precariously shaky, and in need of replacement. The new tower was built by B & L Outdoor Solutions of Lawrence, aided by a winch truck to lift the bell which was provided by King's Construction, Oskaloosa. Further repairs to the wheel that allows the bell to rotate are pending.

In mid-December it was discovered that the furnace in the Curry House not working. It was the original furnace and over 27 years old. Since climate control is a critical element in preserving the Curry artifacts, the board decided by an e-vote to take immediate action. Replacement of the furnace was estimated at \$2500, with a

portion of that amount reimbursable from grant monies from KSU. Harrington Brothers Heating and Cooling of Shawnee, KS installed the new unit.

Other maintenance projects pending include replacing the Map Sign on the grounds, painting at the Ninceheler House and Bandstand, complete the treatment of the boardwalk and railings, additional repair on west side of Wellman School and repairing the door of the jail.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee will be meeting, and they always note items that need repair. Their report is anticipated at a future board meeting.

While we genuinely appreciate the many volunteer hours donated to Old Jefferson Town, the Board needs more individuals to show up and support the activities and goals of the Society. Part of the time, there are not enough members present to conduct business at board meetings. The current board members all wear multiple “hats”, serving on many committees simultaneously. We need community representatives, newsletter editors, Buildings & Grounds committee members, Events Committee members, fundraiser organizers, and cleaning crews to clean buildings before opening, among others. If you have an interest in saving Jefferson County’s history, please consider volunteering your time so the current members do not get burned out. Contact Leanne Chapman, President at 785-691-6751 or chapmanfarm94@yahoo.com

Upcoming Events

- April 20 – Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt
- April 27-28 – Annual High School Art Show
- May 4-5 – Display of bridal dresses & quilts
- May 4- June 2 – Margaret Whittemore art
- June 15-16 – tentative Architectural Display
- May 25-July 7 – Military Display, uniforms, memorabilia and history of Company B, National Guard 35th Infantry, WWI
- May 26 – Dedication of reconstructed Dunkard Church Bell Tower
- June 22-23 – Old Settlers Weekend. Art by Gary Shupe; Blacksmith demo; Old Settlers memorabilia; all buildings open; tentative car show. Special hours on June 22 from 10 am -4 pm
- July – Artist Frank Riddle with lathe wood items.
- July – Display featuring Critchfield mansion and family history
- August – Display of Lowman family history
- August – Clothing display in Tibbot building
- September – featured artist will display Halloween art during the entire month.
- Sept 14 – Tractor Drive and Country Dinner fundraiser
- Sept 28-19 – Closing weekend. Blacksmithing demo
- Oct 12 – Kansas State Shutterbug Event
- Nov 3 – Annual Meeting & Soup Supper

