

# MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

September 2012

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# News!

## Completion of the Tack Room

by Nancy Ohnick

The most impressive thing that happened in the Museum this past year was the completion of the saddle room by Glenn Lauppe and his crew. Somewhere along the line we dubbed this display the "Tack Room," and it seemed to stick.

It was a long row to hoe for the guys... taking them literally years to finish this project. Glenn tells me that J.W. Vanderpool was the designer and original volunteer contractor on the job, but Glenn eventually took over and brought it to completion.

The room is built mostly with Cottonwood. They cut down the trees, milled the boards with Glenn's sawmill, then built the room. I say "mostly" because in December 2011, Larry Dewell came to the Museum and offered to give us a load of Aspen boards he had stacked on his property at Fowler. Glenn was glad to get them as his mill was down at the time, and this gift put new life into the project.

Glenn and his hands, Mike Meddock and Sherman Overbay, put in countless volunteer hours on this project. Other volunteers who occasionally pitched in were Ethan Overbay, Bob Lauppe, and Norman Dye. They worked in the heat... in the cold... and every condition in between.

In March of this year, the room was finally finished. Bud Bartlett asked that we spray fire



*Standing in the new Tack Room, pictured here on moving day are Mike Bartlett and his hands with board members, Glenn Lauppe and Norman Dye.*

retardant on the wood as a safety precaution, which we were glad to do. Bud purchased the chemical, and Glenn sprayed down the room.

Moving day was March 26. Mike Bartlett brought a couple of strapping young men with him that day, and they, along with Glenn and Norman, moved the saddles from the gallery to the front of the Museum. The old saddles look right at home in the Tack Room. I

like to tell visitors that it was built to look like "Grandpa might have built it," and everyone agrees it does. I always talk about the room about as much as I do the saddles in it... explaining to visitors how it came to be.

We put a little plaque up in the Tack Room to honor its builders, but it somehow doesn't seem adequate "thanks" for this job well done. ✍️

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## What... no history tour?

You might have noticed there was no history tour in 2012. Many of you called and came by the Museum to inquire about our plan, and we are so sorry... we simply could not think of a good tour!

Unfortunately, at this time, we don't have an idea for 2013 either, but we will surely come up with one before next spring. Hopefully the 2013 tour can be announced at the annual meeting. In the meantime, we will take suggestions, if any member has a good idea... please call, email or come by!

We are especially interested in going to the western part of the county as this area has not been included in a tour in a long time. ✍️

## The 2012 Annual Banquet

The annual banquet earlier this year was a great success. We had the meeting in Fowler and met February 4th at the grade school cafeteria for our meal, then moved to the auditorium for the program.

This was our best attended banquet in years; R&K Catering served 118 delicious meals which were enjoyed by all.

The Heritage Award was presented to the Sol & Nancy Zortman family. The Zortman family provided a nice display, and several family members were able to attend the meeting.

More than a few members expressed disappointment over our speaker, Nolan Sump, dust bowl farmer. What can we say, folks? We will attempt to tighten our screening process... in the meantime, if anyone has heard a speaker they think would be a good fit for us, call the Museum and leave their name. We have yet to book someone for next year, but we are on the hunt.

The 2013 Banquet will take place in Meade on February 2, 2013, at 6:30 PM. We hope to book the Forst Center for the venue as well as the same caterer as last year. Take the time now to mark your calendar and plan to attend.✍



*Left: Norman Dye presents the Heritage Award to Dale Zortman.*

*Below: Annual Banquet guests were greeted by the Museum staff, Rebecca Orth, Nancy Ohnick, Janae Rempel and Frances Elffner.*



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## KAA Meeting

Much to Norman's delight, and due to his invitation, the Kansas Anthropological Association (KAA) met at the Meade County Historical Museum for their annual meeting on Saturday, April 21st. Norman goes every year with this group of archeologists to dig somewhere in Kansas. We hosted close to 30 archeologists and provided them a place to meet in the gallery at the back of the Museum.

We not only received praise for a great meeting, but also received lots of free advice about how to care and protect our artifacts. Nancy bent the ear of two or three willing ladies, and admittedly learned more than she could ever retain. They were especially informative about our Indian teepee and how best to arrange that display. We have been wanting to make the display more authentic, and we received lots of advice that day.

We were told to add a fire ring in the center of the teepee and place the buffalo robes and people along the sides. Rod Calhoun has brought us a stack of rocks from his pasture for the fire ring, and we are hoping to get this display put together soon. Ken Weidner, a local area expert on the Cheyenne tribe, came by the Museum recently and gave us more advice and has offered to contribute to the endeavor. ✍



## Accessions in 2012:

It seems like every week we see someone stopping by the Museum with something to donate. Some things we accept... some we don't because we simply don't have the room, or we already have the item on display. Sometimes our hard-fast rule of "no loans, only gifts" discourages our benefactors.

Below is a list of things we received this last year:

Lena Doerksen - old quilt made by Sara Doerksen

Katherine Borger - Claude Hibbard books, 2 old salve tins

Carol Cordes - quilt from the Pleasant Valley School

Faye Hartshorn - Chamber memorabilia, photos, war stamps

Marvin & Marian Long - typewriter, dishpans, teakettle

Henry & Joan Siemens - wall map cabinet from the Oakland School

Raymon Hargett - glass-topped small collections

Faye Apple Hardaway - baby dresses, wedding dress, school books, photo

Nick Ediger - advertising memorabilia

Becky Nioce - coverlet, morning coat

Otis Meredith - wagon seat

Rod Calhoun - double tree

Ruth Dingess Estate - hair combs, wigs

Alan Feldman - oak rocking chair

Bill & Susan Bunyan - Bunyan Hotel serving dish, t-shirt, photos, book

Kay Ross Estate - linen dress, black print dress, black skirt and waistcoat, bonnet, 4 hats

Bob McCulloch - 7 books on early-day tractors



## Museum Sign

This August a piece of our sign was blown off the front of the Museum. We had received an estimate last year to have this sign repainted, but never felt we had the money to do it... but when a piece of it needed repair, it didn't seem prudent to fix a part of it and not fix the entire sign.

We originally got the estimate from Glen Feldman of Feldman Graphics, and we have him to thank for even finding the missing piece of our sign. He went up on the roof and looked everywhere, but it was nowhere to be found. He

just happened to get the idea to check at the Sheriff's office, and there it was. We don't even know how it got there. Glen took down the rest of the sign and took it to his shop where he fixed the broken piece, sanded it all down and repainted it.

When he reinstalled the sign he went into our wood pile in Building B and found all the lumber he needed to reinforce the thing, which actually fell off because of the rotting wood it was attached to.

We plan to have the sign on the west side of the Museum repainted as well... as soon as budget allows.✍

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## Jail Improvements

Thanks to the gift of a new "prisoner" from Jay Dorsey (Nancy's son), the jail has taken on a whole new persona. Nancy was telling her son about her desire to add a prisoner to the jail last winter and was asking his advice about forming "hands" to put on the bars. Jay started to work on the project, and before he knew it, he had built an entire man, who he donated to the Museum. We rummaged through our collection of men's clothing and came up with an outfit which kind of made him look like a gambler with a black derby hat. We dubbed him "One-eyed Jack" and put him behind bars.

After the man was added, the florescent light in the jail seemed way too bright, so Nancy asked Elmer Friesen to rewire an old schoolhouse light, and it was switched out for the fluorescent. The result is a more authentic display with just the right amount of "mystery." Thanks Jay and Elmer. ✍



## CURATOR'S CORNER

by Nancy Ohnick

So many things happen all year long around the Museum, one hardly knows where to start.

Frances Elffner, Janae Rempel and I are still sharing the hours at the Museum, each of us working two days a week and trading around as necessary. Rebecca Orth is no longer a regular, but still cleans every week and fills in when needed.

Our busiest time of the year has been when the school tours come in the spring. This year we had a record-breaking 400 students tour the Museum in April and May. Most of the students are from Liberal, as the Cottonwood School and Sunflower School each send all their 4th graders through. We also had groups from Cimarron, Minneola, Copeland and Moscow, as well as some groups of home-schooled students. Janae and I are getting pretty good at telling our story, and the kids are a delight to work with.

I have been trying to make small improvements around the Museum as I find time. One display I worked on this year was the Doctor's Office. I scanned all the old photos of Meade County doctors into the computer and made a more cohesive display of them on the wall. This also gave me scans to include in the family files of the doctors. Our files continue to grow and grow.

After the closet project of last year, many containers of

photographs ended up in the Library waiting to be organized. It was our good fortune this year to have KeAnne Langford volunteer to work with our photos. KeAnne is a graduate of Meade High School, working on her master's in museum science. She has been working at the Bob Dole Institute as an intern and asked if she could do some of her hours here. She has tackled the photograph collection and is teaching the rest of us a thing or two about how to handle and store the old photos. What a gift! It's been fun to have KeAnne around this summer.

Another job that finally got done this summer is tinting the front windows to keep out much of the heat and all of the UV rays. This will make us much kinder to all those photos in the lobby. I first put on a tint that was much too dark and we all agreed I should start over. Elmer and Eunice Friesen graciously volunteered to take the stuff off, so it wasn't too bad... just putting some "less intense" film back on. With this job now done, we won't feel hesitant about adding photo panels in the lobby. Glenn Lauppe fixed the frame to the new wall we made when we closed the windows off, so the panels are good and solidly attached, making a much nicer display.

A great deal of our time is spent sitting in front of the computer, something that easily fills in the hours between visitors. We have made great strides this year in the updating of the obituary books and the cemetery databases. I started posting the cemetery databases, along with maps, on our website, [www.oldmeadcounty.com](http://www.oldmeadcounty.com). As we get them updated, I update the website... so we constantly have it as up-to-date as possible. We have quite a system... Frances prints the obits from the microfilm, Janaescans them into the computer

and adds the paper name and date, then organizes them into books by decade. Alma Regier puts in countless hours on this, pouring over the obituaries and adding the names to the cemetery databases. Janette Friesen is good at spotting our typos and giving us new information. Cheryle Shelton is "researcher extraordinaire," helping Alma run down people and events. It's a good thing this is all so much fun for us... or it might seem like work.

In an effort to boost attendance, we plan to have some events this fall. On November 7, we plan to have "Night at the Museum." This will be a Wednesday evening in which you can tour the Museum... after dark... with only the kind of light our forefathers would have used. We will use oil lamps and candles (maybe some electricity cleverly disguised), and offer entertainment, refreshments and live "dummies" in the rooms. It's not intended to be scary... like Halloween... just a truly unique experience.

We also hope to have Barry Ward come some Sunday afternoon and present the video he made of his song, "Eli Crow." The footage for this video is shot at the Hideout, Museum and other parts of Meade County, and even includes some people you might recognize.

We will post a calendar on our web page at [OldMeadeCounty.com](http://OldMeadeCounty.com), or keep an eye on my column, "Week at the Museum" in the *Prairie Sun Weekly*, (and the events list in both papers) for announcements of other Sunday afternoon events. I figure if we are having the Museum open anyway, might as well share some history and have some fun! But don't wait for an event... stop by and visit... anytime!✍️





## 2012 Dalton Days / Meade County Ranch Rodeo

The combined Dalton Days and Meade County Ranch Rodeo was a hot time in Meade this past July 13th through the 15th. But not as hot as last year's Dalton Days when we hit 114. The Dalton Days and Ranch Rodeo weekend started on Friday evening with the first round of competition by the sixteen teams entered in the Rodeo. The action continued on Saturday evening with the finals. Both evenings the stands were filled with spectators, leaving a lot of people standing. Dale Schell puts on one of the best ranch rodeos in the area. Saturday started off with the Dalton Escape Fun Run and the Dalton Days Parade. Both of these events had a number of entries and spectators to watch.

The Reenactment Guild of America fast draw contest started the events at the Dalton Hideout with the gunfight and living history competition following in the afternoon.

After a couple of gunfights and living history presentations there's nothing like enjoying some homemade ice cream at the Ice Cream Crankoff. There was plenty of ice cream to be had with nine teams participating. Later in the afternoon, the "Way Out West off Broadway Players" presented the melodrama "Blazing Guns at Roaring Gulch" or "The Perfumed Badge."

I think next year we may have to move the melodrama to later in the evening as it was mighty hot on the stage with no air circulating. And I'm sure the audience was a touch warm also.

Also on Saturday afternoon, there were kid's games, a talent show, a free swim at the pool and some pickin' and singin' goin' on at the park. The street dance held at the city park had a great turnout,



and the temperature had cooled off to a tolerable level. It didn't take it long to heat up on Sunday morning with the sun bearing down on us.

Jerry Odle the minister from the Montezuma Methodist Church presided at Cowboy Church before the gunfighters and living historians performed one more time before the points were totaled and awards were given.

Wild & Woolly West from Wichita Falls, Texas, took 1st in the gunfights while there was a tie for 1st place in living history. Matt Woehrle, Kansas City, Kansas, as General Ulysses S. Grant and the

Colorado Trail Blazers from Divide, Colorado, portraying a meeting of famous Denver people at the stage stop, tied for 1st place. The prize money was combined and split between the two living history presentations. It was a fun weekend, and we couldn't have done it without a lot of new committee members who came on board and made Dalton Days 2012 a great success.

A lot of thanks go to our volunteers and committee members who made it a great Dalton Days and Meade County Fair Ranch Rodeo.✍



*In the photo above: Alice Ferguson interacts with the narrator, Matt Woehrle, on the newly-refurbished stage in the Hideout Park.*

*At left: A gunfight group performance by the "Wild & Woolly West" from Wichita Falls, TX*



## The Fate of the Schoolhouse and Farm Lot

The ill-repair of the Sunny Dale Schoolhouse has been the topic of many a board meeting discussions in the last few years. Our board members can only stretch themselves so far, and the same goes for our budget.

At one point last year we thought we had the help of a 4-H club that would adopt the school and help maintain it, but to date, nothing has been done. They said the roof leaked, and they did not want to do anything to it unless the roof was fixed. The board members feel like the ceiling stains were from an earlier time, and all we have done for two years is talk about it.

Nancy discussed the idea with Norman... and Norman, in turn, with the entire board... to move the schoolhouse to the lot north of the Museum, put the farm machinery in the Ag Museum we intend to create in Building B, and sell the lot on Pearlette Street. The board was in complete agreement that this idea would work. With the schoolhouse close to the Museum,

we could keep it open for the public to enjoy and create a really great experience for the hundreds of school children who come through every year. Where it is located at the present, it is simply "out of sight, out of mind" and a drain on our precious resources and volunteer time. We pay from \$300 to \$360 per year just for mowing both these lots.

We thought we would mention this idea in the Newsletter to get reaction from the membership. We fear it won't be long before the City of Meade gets after us for the eyesour the school is becoming, but none of us has the energy to try and fix it. Under ideal circumstances, the lot would bring in enough cash to pay for the moving of the school, or at least for matching funds to apply for a grant to complete the project.

This is just "food for thought." Please discuss it with any of our board members if you have an opinion one way or the other. Board members at present are: Norman Dye, Olis (Glen) Lauppe, Nancy Ohnick, Al Sawyer, Otis Meredith, Frances Elffner, and Don Wilson. ✍

## History in an Electronic Age

The girls at the Museum are working tirelessly to digitize *everything*. We are using our low-tech micro film to print off the obituaries, but then Janae scans them into the computer where they are eventually made into PDF files by decade. What you see in the Museum Library in a binder is also available for your computer in a PDF file that can be displayed by Acrobat Reader... a program free to everyone.

The same goes for the cemetery databases, maps, etc. You can go to the website and save them to your computer to have them at your fingertips. We have even provided the web address at the information center at Graceland Cemetery so that folks with a "smart" device can download the files right there to help them find a grave.

Nancy is also creating "e" books out of some of our history and selling them on CDs at the Museum. Current titles include, *Sullivan's History of Meade County*, the *1909 Plat Map*, and soon... *Buell Hampton*, a novel that took place in Meade written in 1909, by George Emerson. ✍



## Sampler Festival

We only had to go as far as Liberal to man our booth at the Kansas Sampler Festival this year. The event took place May 4th & 5th, and everyone who went to represent Meade County had a good time.

We have a very impressive booth that we set up at the festival every year. It was made by Rodger DeGarmo years ago out of weathered cedar fencing that serves as a backdrop behind three tables.

Rodger and Lila DeGarmo were there representing Meade County Economic Development. Norman Dye, Otis & Carolyn Meredith... and for a short time Janae Rempel... manned the Museum/Hideout booth, and Prairie Books had a booth in the middle where Nancy Ohnick and LaDonna Meyers sold a variety of books pertaining to Meade County history.

We certainly gave people from all over Kansas a "sample" of our constantly changing weather! Saturday was HOT, and Sunday was cloudy, cool and windy. There were thousands of people through the Wild West Country tent, and we got to tell our story many times. Add that to getting to see all our old friends in tourism and it makes for a great, but exhausting, weekend.

Next year the festival will once again be in Liberal the first weekend in May. It is a great place to go and see what there is to see, taste and experience in this great state of ours. ✍️



*Glenn and Norman prepare to set Rhodes' stone.*



## R.I.P. Jack Rhodes

Last November, Glenn Lauppe and Norman Dye set the stone Glenn purchased for Jack Rhodes' grave at Graceland Cemetery.

Jack Rhodes, who was shot by Deputy Sheriff Sam Givler in the fall of 1893, was the sidekick of Jim Herron. The Cattlemen's Association accused Herron and Rhodes of cattle rustling, and they were tried here in the Meade County Courthouse. On the day they were to be sentenced, they had horses saddled and waiting for them in the livery stable (about where the City building is now). Givler was escorting the two men to the courthouse when they bolted from him, mounted their horses and rode east on Carthage Avenue. Givler shot at them, wounding Rhodes, who fell off his horse near where the entrance is to Graceland Cemetery. He was

brought back to Meade and died three days later. He left a widow with small children, and his grave was never marked... maybe because he died in disgrace... maybe because there was no money for it.

The book, "Fifty Years on the Owl Hoot Trail," tells the full story of Jim Herron, his life in the panhandle, his trial along with Jack Rhodes at Meade, and their escape from custody. You will find it for sale at the Hideout and Museum gift shops.

This is the second grave Glenn has provided a marker for... the first was that of Emery Large, who was murdered in 1933... another long story involving cattle rustling. Glenn just finds it his mission to see that these graves get marked. These events are part of our history, and he feels it's important for us to know where the men are laid to rest. ✍️

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**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"**

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## It is time once again to ask for those annual memberships

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 (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 expense is 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 has been very tough. We have borrowed... paid back... and borrowed again just to keep things afloat. We plan to approach the County Commissioners again next year for more funds, as the cost of just existing has gone up so much... but that won't help us for

2013... we will have to operate on the existing budget.

Please know that your memberships are really needed, appreciated and put to good use... and consider sending in the membership form below with your yearly support.✍



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!

Hand-Crafted Jewelry • Bookmarks • Note Cards  
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## MEADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

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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.