



Historical Highlights



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TSCPL just after a July thunderstorm

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| President's Message | 1 |
| Educational Initiative Request | 2 |
| A Fresh Look at Gage Park History | 3-4 |
| Educational Initiative Update | 5 |
| History in the News | 6-7 |
| Ramblings from Early <i>Bulletins</i> | 8 |
| TSH Rotation, a Memory | 9-10 |
| Lively Elmhurst <i>Bulletin</i> | 10 |
| Membership Form | 11 |
| PayPal Option, Etc. | 11 |
| Capitols & Capitals Event | ... outside mailer |

President's Message

by *Chris Schultz*, SCHS President

It seems like it was only yesterday that we were wishing for the snow to stop, and now we are already sending the kids back to school after one of the longest heat spells in recent history. Where does the time go? Summer may have flown by, but I can assure you that history has been hard at work. The National Underground Railroad Conference was a huge success and turned out to be a gem for Topeka that will shine for years to come. A big THANK YOU goes out to all who tirelessly planned and carried it out with great style!

Earlier this summer, the Society approached the Shawnee County Commissioners with the results we were able to compile from our historic needs assessment surveys and public meetings. We asked them to establish some funding alternatives for heritage preservation. The results of our presentation urged **Commissioner Vic Miller** to invite us to speak at a meeting of **JEDO (Joint Economic Development Organization)**, where he made a motion to include funding for heritage preservation as a means of economic development for the city and county. This was simply a vote that would have allowed the committee to discuss the idea of using JEDO tax dollars to fund historic preservation efforts as a vehicle to fuel the economic development of our city/county. Unfortunately, the motion was defeated by only one vote. Committee members who voted in our favor were Commissioners **Vic Miller** and **Ted Ensley** as well as City Council member **Sylvia Ortiz**. The dissenting votes came from City Council members **Jeff Preisner** and **Deb Swank**, Commissioner **Shelly Buhler**, and Mayor **Bill Bunten**.



We obviously believe that our initiative should have been given a little more consideration. There is great documented evidence that heritage preservation has been a tremendous contributing factor to the (continued on p. 2)

President's Message —cont.

success of economic development in countless comparable cities and counties... And we want to share that message with our community leaders with a strong exclamation point! We are hopeful that another opportunity to address the JEDO board is just around the corner, but this time we would like to ask for your help to drive the importance of this issue home to them. As I write this, I am also making preparations for a public meeting that will address these strategies at the Topeka and Shawnee County

Public Library at 7:00 PM on Tuesday, August 17th. If you happen to get this by then, please feel free to drop by. If you are unable to attend, or you are reading this after the fact, please check our website for more information on how you can be a part of our voice to city leaders. If you happen to be Facebook savvy, please be sure to log on and join our group so we can all stay connected and hopefully score another victory for history.

— Sincerely, **Chris Schultz**

An Educational Initiative Request

by **Kim Morse Cordova**, Trustee & Educational Initiative Chair

We have the house. Now we need stuff to put in it. For many years SCHS has labored to first finish the work to reconstruct the Hale Ritchie House from the inside out. Much credit goes to Bill Wagon and the Ritchie House committee for raising the funds necessary for construction then overseeing the project. Daryl Nickels, our contractor, is a wonder. As the construction phase ends now we can turn our attention to what goes inside the house. The second floor will become much needed office space for the society. There will be plenty of storage space for the needs of Robin Shrimplin and all of the curriculum materials. The bulletins will have a dry home—not an oldy moldy basement.

Office space is boring, though. The exciting part is the museum and learning space on the main floor. We have been working with

Ed Scheele of Ed Scheele Designs to design an Orientation Room in the original parlor of the house. You may have seen Ed's work. He designed the Negro Leagues Hall of Fame. The Orientation Room will feature a room-sized interactive timeline that introduces all visitors to the important events and themes in Shawnee County history. Exhibits, some temporary and some permanent, in the rest of the house will add meat to the bones laid out in the timeline. We have drafted able and talented Washburn interns to help us with our research, but we need your help to provide the funds to finish the design and construction process of the all-important Orientation Room. It truly is the anchor piece to all of the public space in the Hale Ritchie House. Please consider a special donation to the Shawnee County Historical Society to support this

Mark your calendars!

All members are invited to a special **barebones sneak peek** of the **Hale Ritchie House** on **August 26** at **7pm**. We will show plans for the Orientation Room and all other exhibit and education space. Of course we welcome your comments, questions, and suggestions. Robin will be there to give tours of the John Ritchie house, too.

Ya'll come!



crucial project. In Kansas' 150th birthday year we would love to be able to bring hundreds (why not thousands?) of visitors through the houses, through the Orientation Room, and say that history happened in Shawnee County. It is a history defined by innovation, creativity, ingenuity, and diversity. Better yet, innovation, ingenuity, creativity, and diversity continue to define our present and will shape our future. Now THAT is something to get excited about. Help us tell that story with your support.

Send your contribution to:
Shawnee County Historical Society
P.O. Box 2201
Topeka, KS 66601-2201

Add "Orientation Room Contribution" to the memo line of your check.

Thank you, thank you, thank you!



A Fresh Look @ Gage Park History Our Bath House was a Bath House? New generations discover a facinating past

Jason Bivens uncovers and shares a entertaining history.



Jason Bivens



As a born and raised Topekan, I am from the young generation of residences that generally consider our capitol to be a boring, cultureless city. Usually, and unfortunately, Topeka residents have left this city due to the lack of culture and the stereotypes that seem to plague our capital. My brother, for example, left Topeka to join the Navy. While his service to our country is much appreciated, his lack of love for Topeka is what ultimately drove him to leave. I, however, have always loved this city and have come to appreciate its history and even the culture, despite our zip code (666) and the extreme beliefs of certain residences.

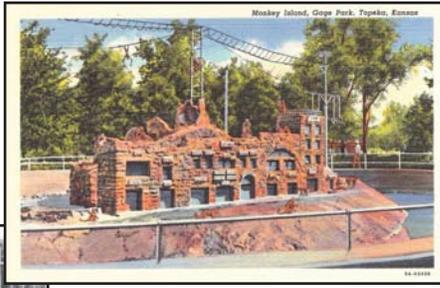
As a kid I was obsessed with world history, specifically that of ancient Greece. Over time, I've become obsessed with the history of WWII and U.S. history in general. Then, after graduating from

Washburn University with a degree in theater, I found myself working at Helen Hocker Theater. I've never thought much of it other than it's a job working in the theater and I love that every show brings a new challenge. But as the years have passed, five to be exact, I continually found myself drawn to the mysterious fireplace so awkwardly placed in a center meant for performing arts. What purpose does this fireplace serve other than a pain for me to cover up because the director doesn't want it to be seen? Why do we call the group of young actors the Bath House Players? When I found these answers, I found yet another reason for loving this city.

Every day I get to come to work to an 80-year-old building, which almost everyone from the Baby Boomer generation walked through in order to get to what was once considered the largest swim-

ming pool in the country. Are you kidding me?!?!?!? That's so cool! Why don't more Topekans know about this? Why is this information not being marketed around the city? It was at that point that my new passion for history, this time Topeka's history, began.

Since I started working at Helen Hocker Theater, which is funded through the City of Topeka's Parks and Recreation program, all I've heard about is if and when we will get a new theater. In this economy, however, it became clear to me that this was never going to happen. So, rather than wish for this glamorous new theater, why not accept that we exist in a beautiful piece of Topeka's history? Going a step further, I decided to make a lobby display so that the public could fully understand the significance of Helen Hocker Theater. I found old photos of the pool and uncovered an old wooden *(continued on p. 4)*



(continued from p. 3)

sign that warned swimmers not to use tanning oils because it polluted the pool. I placed these artifacts in the theater's lobby for patrons to see when coming to a production. The response was fantastic! The enthusiasm from the older generation was only matched by the enthusiasm from children who looked in amazement at what Gage Park's parking lot once was. It was this response that energized me to start my next project, which was once again prompted by tough economic times.

With budget cuts and city layoffs, Helen Hocker Theater was placed in charge of the Carousel and the Gage Park Mini-Train. When a friend loaned me a copy of the book *A Park in the Country*, I immediately knew what I wanted to do. The history of Gage Park is mind blowing. From the abandoned coal mine to Monkey Island to rounding Westlake in the mini-train and entering former Native-American territory to the stories of the park being a haven to sleep in during the blistering heat of the 1930s, I was fascinated with any and everything that had to do with the history of Gage Park. I started small, of course. I obtained scans of old post cards of the park and printed them as pictures and created another lobby display in the theater. I am currently acquiring several original post cards online. My ultimate goal is to have signs throughout the park with "Did You Know?" facts about Gage Park and maybe even free guided history tours. I would like to do more displays throughout the park like the ones I have done in the theater's lobby. Ultimately, I would like to do a documentary featuring interviews and stories told by the generations of patrons that have the fondest of memories of Gage Park.

This, of course, will all come in time with plenty of effort from me and other Topekans who find interest in my project. I would greatly appreciate participation from others. Participation can come in the way of story and photo sharing as well as any other ideas for how to get this project up and running. By sharing your stories and photos with me, I will be able to share them with the community and spark a civic pride with what we have in Gage Park.

If you have anything that you would like to donate to my project such as post cards, old photos, etc. your help would be greatly appreciated. You can send items or simply bring them by to the theater office located at



700 SW Zoo Parkway, Topeka, KS, 66606. If sending items, please make sure to address them to me, Jason Bivens, so that they find their way to my box. If you have any other ideas or ways you want to contribute do not hesitate to contact me. It's time to educate Generation X and make the Baby Boomers feel like kids again. This is the spark that is driving me to show Topekans all the great things that Gage Park has had and will continue to offer for generations to come. 🍷

Educational Initiative Update

by *Robin Shrimplin*, Education Consultant

This summer the Education Committee has not formally met, but many of us have remained busy. For July's conference, *Battleground for Freedom: The Underground Railroad on the Western Frontier*, **Ustaine Talley** and **Leon Graves** created a wonderful Power Point presentation on the Underground Railroad in Shawnee County. They did extensive research in the Topeka Room of the Topeka and Shawnee Co. Public Library, choosing old photographs, maps and illustrations. They recorded an accompanying narrative. If you missed seeing the presentation at the conference, watch for upcoming opportunities.

I presented our local history program on the Underground Railroad to scholars at **Freedom School**® twice in July. In this summer program children engage in learning activities that are appropriate to their developmental needs and interests. Our group had approximately 80 scholars, from the 1st through 10th grades. It was an exciting place! First, I spent an hour with the elementary scholars (1-5). We talked about Slavery and the Underground Railroad. I shared the book *Almost to Freedom* and displayed the wonderful dolls, donated by Beverly Radefeld, that accompany the story. My hour spent with the older scholars (6-10) included information about local Underground Railroad locations and the Territorial/Civil War period in Kansas. We used *Shall Kansas Be Free or Slave* and *Underground Railroad in Kansas* reading cards/activity sheets. For my return visit I spoke to the entire group. We listened to *Odyssey's Underground Railroad* CD--the journey of a slave family traveling along the Underground Railroad. Next, the younger scholars colored maps and the older scholars wrote and decoded secret Underground Railroad messages. What a fun experience! For more information about Freedom School visit <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/cdf-freedom-schools-program-description-2010.pdf>.

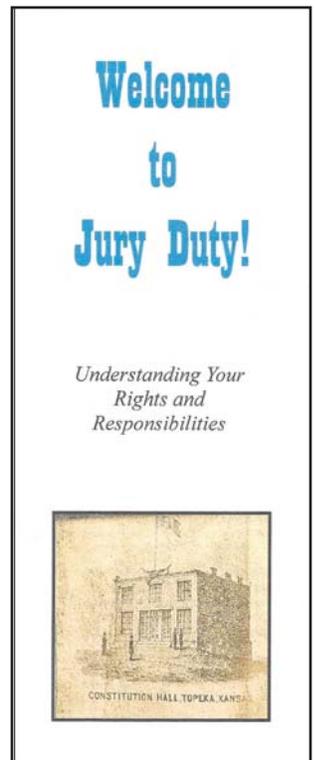
Throughout the summer I've given tours of the Ritchie house to groups of all ages. **Girl Scout Troop #7299** learned about the history of the Underground Railroad and **the community. George and Shirley Menken**, who were coming to Topeka in June for their family reunion, discovered the Ritchie house in

the Topeka's Visitor Guide and made arrangements for a tour. They brought along relatives from all across the United States. **Family Service and Guidance Center** brought their summer campers to tour and learn. If you, your family or a group would like to tour the Ritchie house, call me at 232-5622 and schedule an appointment.

In July a group of young history scholars, the **History Detectives**, spent an entire morning at the Ritchie house. They toured the home, learning about the Territorial Period in Kansas. Anne Hawkins, playing the role of Mary Jane Ritchie, explained how the Underground Railroad operated in the territory and told of her own experiences from that period. We ended the morning with a "history mystery"--the shooting death of U. S. Deputy Marshal Leonard Arms in the Ritchie house. The "detectives" got handouts with background information and a jury summons. We then proceeded into the east room, where students sat on our buffalo hide rug, and the "trial" began.

I assumed the role of Justice Miller and individual scholars/detectives were asked to participate as "witnesses," reading local newspaper accounts of the testimony. Once the testimony had been given and the exhibits examined, I left the jury to deliberate until they could come to a unanimous decision. It took a few minutes...there was one juror who initially wanted to convict, but was eventually swayed by others. In the end, the outcome was the same as in April of 1860. This "history mystery" is an actual lesson plan we have available on our web-site: <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/ritchie/education/lessonplans/lessonplans.htm>.

We have great plans in the works for the 2010/2011 school year. I invite you to become an active part of everything that's happening! Contact me at: robin.shrimplin@hotmail.com. ☺



History in the News

8 Wonders of Kansas: People

Nominations for a list sponsored by the Kansas Sampler Foundation were accepted July 1-31. A long list of names is currently being narrowed to a voting list of 24. The entire lists of names nominated is currently available on-line at www.8wonders.org

Criterion for nomination were as follows:

- There must be something to see in relation to the person nominated. This “something to see” must give some information about the nominee and help the public learn more about a particular person or group of people. The degree of “wow” factor for the display, memorial, statue, or attraction will be noted by the Selection Committee.
- In almost every case, it is likely the nominee will not be living. The exception is that the nominee be retired from work that placed him/her in the national spotlight and that a substantial and permanent display in Kansas tells about their life and work, i.e. the Robert Dole Institute.
- The nomination needs to be a “wow” and have a unique connection to Kansas or have attained a significant claim in the U.S. or world.
- The person does not have to have been born in Kansas but should have made some kind of reputation as a Kansan or contributed to Kansas in some significant manner.
- The person can be a musician, politician, businessman, scientist, chef, historic figure, athlete, etc. but the display has to feature what made them a significant figure. Having a building named after the person is not sufficient.

Listed here, alphabetically by first name, are some nominees from Shawnee County. Some are tied to Shawnee County through politics:

Charles Curtis, Topeka

Charles Robinson

Cyrus Holliday, Topeka

John Brown, Osawatomie

John & Mary Jane Ritchie, Topeka

John Steuart Curry, Winchester* (Curry’s mural of John Brown in the Kansas Capitol is already

designated one of the 8 Wonders of Kansas Art)

Margaret Hill McCarter

McDill “Huck” Boyd, Phillipsburg

Oliver Brown, Topeka

Robert Docking, Arkansas City

William Avery, Wakefield

William Gibson, Topeka

William & Karl Menninger, Topeka

Vote for your statewide favorites on or after Sept. 9 at www.8wonders.org

Anne Hawkins performs as Mary Jane Ritchie

The “Civil War on the Western Frontier” takes place in Lawrence each August. This year’s event began on Thursday (Aug. 5), ending on Aug. 21, the 147th anniversary of Confederate guerrilla William Clarke Quantrill’s raid on Lawrence. The raid left more than 140 dead and the fledgling town in ruins.

Historian Anne Hawkins brought Underground Railroad conductor Mary Jane Ritchie to life in “The Underground Railroad in Bleeding Kansas,” a first-person Chautauqua-style performance at the Library on Thursday, August 12. The performance was followed by an audience interaction session with Hawkins taking questions first in character as the historical Mrs. Ritchie, and then as an historian.

John and Mary Jane Ritchie arrived in Topeka in 1855 from Franklin, Ohio, to join the fight to keep Kansas a free state. They befriended John Brown while he was in Kansas and worked with him on the Underground Railroad, moving escaped slaves through Topeka to freedom in the north. After the Civil War, Ritchie made housing lots available to freed slaves and a neighborhood of African Americans sprang up near his home at 1116 SE Madison, Topeka.

National Underground R.R. Conference Wrap-up

“Battleground for Freedom, The Underground Railroad on the Western Frontier” was theme for this 4th Annual Underground Railroad Conference, held July 28-31, 2010, at the Maner Conference Center and Capitol Plaza Hotel and at sites all over our area. The event was a grand success. Well covered by newspapers and other media, the conference hosts

History in the News —cont.

included National Park Service Network to Freedom Program, The African American Experience Fund;



Kansas Humanities Council; Visit Topeka, Inc.; Brown Foundation for Educational Equity, Excellence and Research; Topeka & Shawnee County

Public Library; Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site; Kansas State Historical Society; Kansas Network to Freedom; Kansas City Public Library; Capitol Federal; and Shawnee Co. Historical Society.

Kicking off the conference was a viewing of *Negroes to Hire*, a documentary film of the slave culture in 1850s Missouri and Kansas. Filmmakers Gary Jenkins and Dr. Jimmy Johnson, descendants of slave masters and slaves, respectively, discussed this little

known slice of history and its effects on modern day race relations. The film was show at Marvin Auditorium at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library on Tuesday evening, July 27.



The conference included five keynote speakers, presentations, panel discussions and a banquet. On Wednesday, participants toured frontier battle grounds: Topeka, Clinton, Lawrence and Lecompton. Between 200 and 300 scholars, archivists, community researchers, student artists and enthusiasts from across the nation gathered in Topeka.

On Wednesday, participants toured frontier battle grounds: Topeka, Clinton, Lawrence and Lecompton. Between 200 and 300 scholars, archivists, community researchers, student artists and enthusiasts from across the nation gathered in Topeka.

SCHS trustee **Ustaine Tulley** took part in a panel discussion early in the conference.

Topeka historian **Dee Puff** also presented at the conference. Dee reports, "This was the first National Conference held west of the Mississippi. Many from other states and outside Topeka were surprised at the amount of untold history Topeka has. Shawnee County Historical Society had a great exhibit. I was proud of all the volunteers who made this happen. I interviewed several attending and they all thought the Kansas Conference was the best conference so far."

Quintard Taylor, a professor of American history at the University of Washington, says Kansas played a key role in fighting slavery. He cited abolitionist John Brown bringing slaves through the state and the the Brown v. Board of Education lawsuit.

James Morgans, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, who has written two books on the Underground Railroad, says Kansas was instrumental in stifling the spread of slavery, making Topeka an ideal place to hold the national conference for professors and historians.



above: Karen S. Campbell with family quilt and books



left: Dale Vaughn and books



above: Ritchie House in Nat'l Underground RR Network to Freedom

upper left of page: Doug Wallace at SCHS booth

Internet links to on-line media coverage of the 2010 Underground Railroad Conference:

http://cjonline.com/news/local/2010-07-28/conference_draws_hundreds

http://cjonline.com/news/local/2010-07-29/freedom_takes_root_in_kansas

<http://spotted.cjonline.com/photos/index.php?id=4699678&page=1>

<http://www.hutchnews.com/latestregionalnews/Conference-draws-teachers-and-historians-to-Topeka>

http://www.tscpl.org/programs/comments/kick_off_the_2010_national_underground_railroad_conference/

http://www.ktka.com/news/2010/jul/27/kids-show-their-feelings-about-underground-railroad/?topeka_news

Ramblings from early SCHS Bulletins (1946-1948)

by *Jeanne Mithen*, SCHS Trustee and Reference Librarian, Topeka Room, Topeka & Shawnee Co. Public Library

▶ The first building of the **State Hospital for the Insane at Topeka** was completed October 19, 1876.
[Bulletin v.2(2), June 1948, p.38]

▶ **March 6, 1877**, was advertised as the date of “Madame Renz’ Roaring, Red-hot Can-can and Leg Show,” at the Costa Opera House, but Topeka citizens objected so strenuously that the date was canceled.
[Bulletin v.2(2), June 1948, p.45]

▶ *The Daily Capital* of September 11, 1885, stated that on that date there was not a saloon in Topeka. The following day’s issue of the *State Journal* countered with the statement that fifty-four residents of Topeka held licenses from the U.S. Revenue collector’s office, to **sell liquor**.
[Bulletin v.2(2), June 1948, p. 55]

▶ John Armstrong, Col. John Ritchie, Col. Sam Wood and others established the **first “underground” station** for aiding fugitive slaves in Topeka in 1857.
[Bulletin v.1(3), June 1947, p. 96]

▶ **December 5 [1854]-** C.K. Holliday, Fry W. Giles, Daniel H. Horne, George Davis, Enoch Chase, J.B. Chase, M.C. Dickey, Dr. Charles Robinson, and L.G. Cleveland met in a log cabin in what later became the foot of Kansas Avenue and organized the town company of Topeka. As they laid it out the western boundary was Western Avenue; the southern boundary was Eleventh street; the eastern boundary was Madison street and the northern boundary was the Kaw river. C.K. Holliday was the first president of the company. Dr. Charles Robinson, one of the founders [and later first governor of the state of Kansas], was a representative of the New England Emigrant Aid Company and had accompanied Holliday to the site of the new town.... That same night the roof of the cabin used by Topeka’s founders caught fire from the fireplace and the grass roof was burned off- Topeka’s first fire.
[Bulletin v.1(1), December 1946, p.15]

▶ **A rat killing crusade** was staged throughout Topeka, May 28, 1869.
[Bulletin v.1(1), December 1946, p.31]

▶ **Jacob Smith**, an early hardware merchant, received an order from the legislature for a bucket, wash basin and cup for the members of the house of representatives. He refused to deliver the articles until the sergeant-at-arms appeared with the cash. “I’ve had some experience with the legislature,” said the merchant. [No date indicated]
[Bulletin v.1(1), December 1946, p. 31]

▶ **During one of the dry spells** in the early days of Topeka there came a good rain late in July. One of the Topeka papers announced, “The saloons kept open half an hour later than usual in honor of the rain.”
[Bulletin v.1(1), December 1946, p. 32]

▶ **The name “Shawnee”** was conferred upon this county by the Territory’s first legislature (which the Free State settlers referred to as the “bogus legislature”) in 1855, this being one of the few enactments of that body which proved acceptable to the Free State men.
[Bulletin v.1(4), December 1947, p.108]

Tidbits from Topeka Room files, TSCPL

▶ **Silver Lake** was created when the Kaw River cut off an oxbow bend. Before Kansas opened to white settlement, the Potawatomi developed a community there. The occasional silvery appearance of the surface of the water may account for the name.

▶ **The first newspaper** printed in Topeka appeared July 4, 1855 and was called the *Kansas Freeman*. Edward E.C.K. Garvey was the editor. The type was set up and the printing done in the shade of a tree until a building could be erected for the print shop.

Bill Wagon, Ritchie House Steering Committee chair, says, “Check out the Hale Ritchie House. Windows installed makes a world of difference. It’s rapidly turning from a Christmas package to a historic house.”



Topeka State Hospital Rotation, a Memory

by *Vera Webster*, R.N., Topeka

“Welcome to Topeka State Hospital”

It was February 1962 when I arrived at Topeka State Hospital. The day was cold and very windy as I opened the heavy door to the student nurse’s dormitory to begin my 13 week of psychiatric affiliation. As the wind slammed the door shut, I knew it was too late to retreat. The thought of 1000 plus patients there was both scary and intriguing. How did they end up here? What would they be like? Getting answers to questions like these was enough to keep me interested in staying.

One building I worked in was the Biddle building. It had a good reputation. The patients there seemed rational and wore street clothes. A group of women were discussing their wedding nights one day. They talked about how they kept their girdles on as long as they could. There was nervousness in the air. This particular group had a high level of anxiety. I was assigned to a young lady. My job was to encourage her to get dressed and go to her activities. As long as I was there for support she did fine.

On another unit some of us were accompanying patients on their walk outside to a dining hall. One of the young patients suddenly yelled out, fell to the ground, and suffered a seizure. Most of us ran over to him. One of the male aides later said to me, “Did you notice his glasses were lying off to the side of him? He faked that seizure.” The patient would get lots of attention this way. At times like that, I aged a couple years in knowledge.

Another time I worked on a locked unit. There a nurse or designated aide carried a large skeleton key and would put it in the lock, give a good twist, and open the door to another world. One day a new patient, a black man, was just admitted to the unit. He began to run around the unit, jerked the head nurse’s cap off, and sprayed water from a drinking fountain as aides and the nurse approached him. The aides hauled him off and took him to a seclusion room. Once he

was in they quickly locked the door. Shortly after a nurse came hurrying down the hall, entered, and with 2 aides holding the patient down, gave him a shot of thorazine. The door was locked and he was left to calm down. Welcome to Topeka State Hospital!

A list of male patients needing to be shaved was kept on a clip board. On this all male ward we students would check their names off after shaving them. One day a male aide, holding a clip board, asked me if I had bathed all these male patients. I told him I shaved those men. He told me I had checked their names off on the bath list! After that I checked the clip boards closer. On another day we students were told to boil the patient’s tooth brushes. We boiled each one for 10 minutes. I don’t remember how we kept them straight or where they were kept. The patients had few possessions allowed in their rooms. We did a room check each day while the patients were in the day room. We checked under each thin mattress that rested on springs. We looked in drawers for any “harmful objects”.

I found one table knife in all my checks. In the day room with the men we awaited clean laundry delivery. When it came we engaged a patient in helping us sort socks. (As could be imagined, this was a far cry from running the halls on a busy surgical unit!)

At Easter time those of us who remained at the dorm colored Easter eggs for all 1000 plus patients. The kitchen boiled the

(continued on p. 10)



Old Center building on what was Topeka State Hospital grounds was razed on 7/6/2010.

(continued from p. 9) eggs and delivered them to the dorm where we carried out this big project. This brings to mind the food in the employee cafeteria. It was worse than any hospital food I had ever eaten. One typical meal consisted of really tough meat. I was able to force the beef down only to find out later it was heart! I told other students it was probably from a patient! We had to have some humor to survive! We would get heckled by aides on our way to the cafeteria for early supper each night. We

lived in rooms with simple furnishings and brightly appliquéd colored butterfly curtains, which the patients had made.

On at least one unit a med aide kept a bottle of whiskey in a cabinet in the med room. On my last day I found out about this when he pulled out 2 med glasses with markings in drams and an ounce on them. He poured us each a drink and gave a toast to the last day of my rotation!

“Good Bye, Topeka State Hospital!” 🍷

► **J. Churchill “Church” Sargent** was born in Kansas City on July 16, 1895, and lived most of his life in Topeka. He was in partnership with his father in the Sargent Cut Stone Co., located at 812-830 Adams Street. The company supplied the stone used in many Kansas buildings, including Topeka High School, the Masonic Temple and the Municipal Auditorium. In later years he was involved in construction, real estate and the J. C. Sargent Mortgage & Investment Co., Inc.

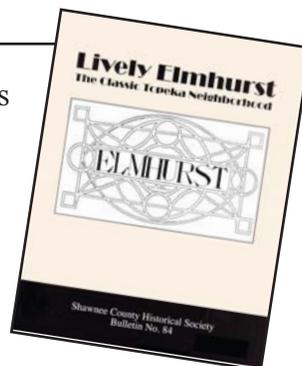
After his retirement, Mr. Sargent began working with wood.

He created carvings for the Hussey Insurance Company offices, including the carved door of the main office. He also carved the door of his offices at 2101 Jewell and for his apartment at the Trianon.

Mr. Sargent had just completed six flower panels for the Topeka Room at the Topeka & Shawnee County Public Library at the time of his death in 1974. The wood used in these carvings is soft pine. The carvings are still on display in the present Topeka Room on the 2nd floor of the TSCPL.

Bulletin #84 is now available. It covers Topeka’s Elmhurst Neighborhood, including history of Lowman Hill Elementary School, Elmhurst Plaza and Methodist Home. Neighborhood borders include Boswell, Huntoon, Washburn Av., and 10th St.

Lively Elmhurst is currently available for sale (\$20) at the Booktique at the Topeka and Shawnee Co. Public Library.



Dear Members of the Shawnee County Historical Society,

I so appreciated your welcome at your meeting last spring when I spoke to you about the Dillon House.

I owe you an update on what’s happening with that initiative.

The bill that would transfer the operations of the Dillon House to the Kansas Arts Commission and allow us to fundraise for its renovation was not voted upon during the last legislative session. It got caught up in a number of issues regarding state property. On the last day, they voted to move the bill to the floor, but then a final vote was never taken.

At this point, we need to have the bill reintroduced during the next session.

I am appearing before the Joint Committee on State Building Construction on August 18 and will discuss with them how the process will move forward. We hope to have the bill reintroduced early in the session.

Once that happens, I will be certain to ask for your help and support in this important step for historic preservation in Topeka, for the arts in Kansas and for the Kansas Arts Commission!

Thank you again for all your help and support.

With all best wishes,

Llewellyn Crain

Executive Director
Kansas Arts Commission
700 SW Jackson Street, Ste. 1004
Topeka, KS 66603-3761



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Our membership year is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 annually.
Make check to "Shawnee County Historical Society" and mail form w/ your check to:
Shawnee County Historical Society, P.O., Box 2201, Topeka, KS 66601-2201
PLEASE PRINT or TYPE info requested.

Choose type: Regular / \$35. Patron / \$50 Renovator / \$100

PERSONAL MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Email: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Email: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tax Deductable 501 (c)(3) DONATION Indicate amount: \$ _____

I wish to join this/these SCHS committee(s): Nominations Membership Publications
 Annual Meeting/Socials Public Relations Historic Preservation Education/Communications

SCHS is about to go High Tech AND save money by teaming with PayPal on-line to accept memberships, donations, and sales of our inventory of *Bulletins*. Links will appear on-line <http://www.shawneecountyhistory.org> to allow payment transactions via PayPal by credit or debit card on their secure payment service.
Watch our site for these updates, coming soon!



► **Anthony Bush** of the *Topeka Capital-Journal* led a group of 50 enthusiasts on a downtown adventure in photography, part of an annual Worldwide Photo Walk held Saturday morning, July 24, 2010. SCHS member **Carol Yoho** attended and has published 99 of her photos from her morning stroll on-line: <http://www.washburn.edu/cas/art/cyoho/archive/AroundTopeka/downtownJul2010/>

A reminder: Our SCHS on-line **Walking Tour of Downtown Topeka** has photos and text details to help you appreciate many downtown buildings:
<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/preservation/downtown.html>



Mark Your Calendar:

2010 Fall Public Program

Capitols & Capitals of Kansas

The History / Preservation / Future Plans for our Capitol

Sun., Oct. 24, 2010, House Chamber, KS Capitol, 2-4 PM

The capitols and capitals of Kansas will be the topic of the Society's fall public program from 2-4 PM, in the House chamber of the Kansas Capitol, Sunday, October 24, 2010. The public is invited to learn about the struggles associated with locating the capitol in Topeka and development of the building over time. The Capitol has become the state's premier historic site and platinum model of historic preservation.

The program will include talks by Judge Terry Bullock on the history of making Topeka the capital; by former Senator Dick Bond on the legislature's commitment to the preservation of the building; by Vance Kelley, Treanor Architects, and Barry Greis, State House Architect, on the challenges and triumphs of the latest preservation effort; and by Andrea Burton, site curator for the Capitol, about future interpretative plans for the building. Representative Annie Tietze is the legislative sponsor of the program.

Historical Highlights

Sept. 2010



P.O. Box 2201
TOPEKA KS 66601-2201