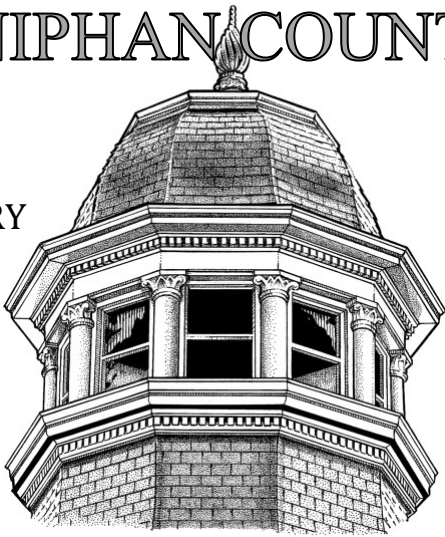


DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY
2025

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No. 1



News Notes

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JANUARY MEETING

Show and Tell

January 23, 6:00 pm

Troy Pioneer Center, 137 W Walnut St, Troy

Check your closets, your cabinets, your sheds and your garages. What interesting artifact do you have that you'd like to share? You are guaranteed to see something that will spark a memory from your youth, or make you think "What in the world was THAT used for?"

Join us for Show and Tell on January 23 at the Pioneer Center in Troy. Everyone is encouraged to bring one relic to present. After the Show and Tell, we will enjoy refreshments and hold a brief business meeting.



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TREASURER'S REPORT

JANUARY 12, 2025

NOV 13 BALANCE \$34,391.79

INCOME:

December interest 5.78

Dues 10.00

Income total: \$15.78

EXPENDITURES:

Cricket Wireless 55.00

Expenditures total: \$55.00

JAN 12 BALANCE \$34,352.57

CD #7175 \$7,039.44

CD #6519 (for Save Our Liberty Project) \$7,871.86

MEETING MINUTES

December 1, 2024

A large group of Historical Society members and friends gathered at the Baker House Sunday, December 1 for our annual soup supper. The fireplaces provided warmth and the lanterns provided light for the group. Many varieties of soup and desserts were enjoyed by everyone.

Jason Midyette welcomed everyone, providing some history of the Baker House and why we gather on December 1st at this location.

Allison Ryan entertained the group with her musical numbers on the violin.

To start 2025, our first meeting will be Thursday, January 23, 2025 at 6 pm at the Troy Senior Center. Please bring your items for the annual Show and Tell presentation.

HATTIE PEELER, THE POETESS OF SEVERANCE

By Jason Midyette

Recently, Cindy (Jones) Hoverson elected to part with some of her extensive collection of books. Amongst the potential treasures was a well worn volume whose cover had been jacketed in 1930's-to-1940's-era floral print wrapping paper many decades ago. Flipping the book open revealed the title page which identified the book as "Golden Bells of Memory, and Other Poems" by Hattie E. Peeler, and, perhaps most interesting, indicated that it had been printed in Severance, Kansas by the town newspaper, the "Severance News". Unfortunately, the book itself offered no more information as to its origin - there was no publication date or biographical information to be found within its pages. That said, the book's 176 pages contain 123 poems, cataloged alphabetically in a four page Table of Contents.

Clearly Mrs. Peeler was a prolific author of poetry, but who was she and when was the book published?

Thankfully, some inscriptions inside the front cover shed a bit of light on these questions. Some pencil writing on the inside of the cover indicated that the book had been a Christmas gift in 1909. Unfortunately, the "to" and "from" bits had been thoroughly erased at

some point, but the date of "Dec. 25, 1909" was still there. So that is pretty strong evidence that the book was published in 1909.

Some writing in ink on the frontpiece (that random blank page that some books have inbetween the cover and the title page), was able to tell at least a little bit about Mrs. Peeler. At some point, the book had been re-gifted to Hallie M. Peters by Alice Hutchinson. Below the gift inscription, Mrs. Peters wrote a bit about Mrs. Peeler; "The writer, Mrs. Peeler, was a Severance woman, edited the Severance News and a writer of prose and verse extensively. We knew her during our very young years in growing up in Severance. Signed H.M.P."

While the inscriptions in the book shed some light on Hattie Peeler, they really brought up more questions than they answered. A bit of searching on Ancestry.com was able to provide a few more answers:

Hattie Peeler was born Harriet E. Jenks in Sodus, New York on December 9, 1847. By 1870, she had married Myron H. Peeler. The couple resided in New York until 1880, when they moved to Kansas. The 1880 Census lists them as living in Eureka, Kansas and states that Myron was a "Seed Grower". The couple moved to Severance in 1891. Myron died in 1895. The 1900 and 1910 Censuses show Hattie living in Severance and employed as a "Sewer" and "Seamstress" respectively. Hattie appears to have been well known in Severance for her poetry. She died on April 28, 1925 and the May 1, 1925 edition of the Severance News carried her obituary on the front page, above the fold, under the headline "Mrs. Hattie E. Peeler, Author - Poetess Dead". Both she and Myron are buried in Severance's Oak Hill Cemetery.

As for Alice Hutchinson, I was not able to figure out much. Turns out there were quite a few "Alice Hutchinsons" who might have been the right age to give the book to Mrs. Peters and I was not able to find a



An undated photo of Hattie Peeler from her 1925 obituary.

connection that pointed to any of them being “the” Alice Hutchinson mentioned in the inscription.

Luckily Hallie M. Peters was easier to track down. (As an aside it is remarkable how close in name the author (Hattie Peeler) and owner (Hallie Peters) of the book are in name.). Mrs. Peters was born Hallie M. Eaton in 1885 and seems to have lived her entire life in Severance, save for a stint in Kentucky around 1920. Her husband, Richard F. Peters came from Tennessee, was born in 1879 and died in 1945. The 1930 census lists Hallie as living in Severance and working for the newspaper, while Richard’s 1942 Draft Registration lists him as living in Topeka, working for the Kansas Highway Department as a mining engineer while his next of kin, Hallie, is listed as living in Severance. Hallie Peters died in 1965 and is buried in Severance’s Oak Hill Cemetery, along with her husband.

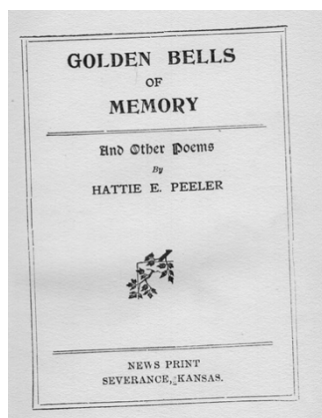
And what of Hattie’s poetry? As evidenced by the sheer number of poems in the book, Hallie Peters was quite correct in her observation that Hattie Peeler was “a writer of prose and verse extensively”. The poems cover many subjects, from holidays to life advice to remembrances and everything inbetween. As might be expected of a writer from her generation, the Civil War and remembrances of those who died in it were a popular subject for her to write about.

Let’s look at a few of the works:

First an excerpt from a piece entitled “Study It Over”:
 “Have you something you mean to do; Some plan or change for the future in view, Study it over. Always look before you leap, Or you may alight in a crumpled heap, So Study it over.”

Next, the opening from “Our Heroes”, an ode to those Union Soldiers who died in and thus remained in the South: “For away where the river is flowing, And the south wind is gentle and calm; Where magnolias in beauty are growing, ‘Neath the shade of palmetto and palm, There rest our brave lads. Countless numbers; Secure from life’s turmoil and fears, No bugle call wakes them from their slumber, They heed not the swift passing years.”

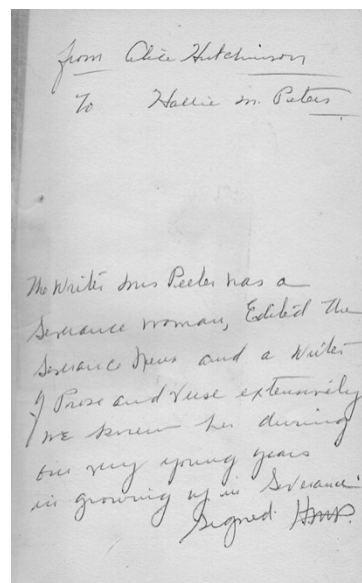
Next up, perhaps fittingly for a January newsletter, is the opening from “The Old Year”: The night is still, the air is chill, The world is in repose. The fire burns clear, your chair you draw near, Let’s watch the old year close. With song and glee, right merrily We hailed his coming



The book’s title page.

in, so it is but right that this last night We watch with him again.”

Last but not least, we shall end our look at Mrs. Peeler’s poetry with the closing verse of “The Auto”; “And an Auto with danger is fraught too; Yes really too much for my mind, And if suicide I shall be brought to, Some pleasanter method I’ll find. So I’ve given up buying an auto, They’re loaded and stylish you see, Hitch a mule to a cart and t’will draw two, And that’s how we’ll ride, him and me.”



Hallie Peters’ inscription on the frontispiece.

2025 MEETINGS

Meetings are always held the fourth Thursday of the month at 6:00. Board members are in the planning stage for 2025 so watch your newsletter for more info. Plan to be at the February meeting on February 27.

LOCAL PROGRAMS

BLEEDING KANSAS PROGRAM – HISTORIC LECOMPTON

Each year starting on the last Sunday in January at 2 pm, the Bleeding Kansas program series begins at Constitution Hall in Lecompton Kansas. The programs are a series of talks and dramatic interpretations over the issue of slavery in Kansas and the nation from 1854 to 1865. Thanks again to Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area for helping to sponsor this year’s series.

Jan. 26 **Kansas Day** by Patrick Zollner.

Feb. 2 **The Tale Of Two Buttons:** Territorial Kansas Southern Militia Buttons Found Near Lecompton by Andrew Peterson.

Feb. 9 **From Slave To Buffalo Soldier** by George Pettigrew.

Feb. 16 **Quantrill Comes To Town** by Tim Talbott.

Feb. 23 **Frontier Justice And Politics In Bleeding Kansas; A Deputy U.S. Marshall Is Killed** by Bryce Benedict, J.D.

Mar. 2 **From The Kaw To The Potomac: The Story Of Charles Curtis** by Debra Goodrich,.

Suggested donation \$5 adults. 785-887-6520

TUESDAY NIGHT TALKS

Tuesday Night Talks (TNT) is a weekly lecture series in January and February on topics related to the 1800's and history of St. Joseph. Doors open at 6:00 P.M. Speakers begin at 7:00 P.M. All talks held in the Pony Express Museum Community Room, 914 Penn Street, St. Joseph, MO 816-279-505. SPONSORED BY: COMMERCE BANK

1-14-25 "Barn – Find Canoe in St. Joseph" Greg Hatten, Explorer & Consultant

1-21-25 "Buell: How the Mormon Migration Brought the Finest Makers of Indian Trade Blankets to St. Joseph, MO" Sara Wilson

1-28-25 "The Pony Express – It's History & Legacy" Jackie Lewin & Sarah Elder, Pony Express Historians

2-4-25 "Merci Train "French – Thank You" Joed Hill, MO State Quester

2-11-25 "St. Joseph's Architectural Heritage in Houses of Worship" David Lewis

2-18-25 "Sons of the American Revolution" Eric Montegna, V.P. of SAR

Please continue to support your Doniphan County Historical Society. *Your membership is greatly appreciated.* Please consider receiving this newsletter by email to keep our mailing costs low.

DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Detach and mail with payment to: Anna Midyette, PO Box 197, Bendena, KS 66008

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