

DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL
2025

Vol. 31
No. 4



News Notes

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APRIL MEETING

Waste Not, Want Not:

Reimagining Fashion through Thrift Style

By Marla Day

April 24, 6:00 pm

Community of Christ Church, 1548 Hwy 7,
Highland (Fanning)

Thrifting and upcycling are not new concepts. The practice of reusing empty feed sacks, flour sacks, and sugar sacks—also known as commodity bags—as raw material for clothing and other home goods was popular during the austere decades of the 1920s through the 1940s.

This program highlights a collection of sacks from Kansas mills, thoughtfully selected to honor a family with deep Kansas roots.

Presented by Marla Day, curator of Kansas State University's Historic Costume and Textile Museum in Manhattan.

All are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served. The program is made possible by Humanities Kansas.



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REMEMBERING DISTRICT #7, SYRACUSE SCHOOL

By Glendon E. Hartman

This year marks the 165th Anniversary of the Pony Express. The Pony Express started on April 3, 1860, and lasted until October 24, 1861 - just 18 months. Do you know what Doniphan County school has ties to the Pony Express?

Of course we know that the Pony Express started in St. Joseph, Missouri, crossed the river at Elwood, and continued on to Wathena. Jackie Lewin wrote in the 1997 *The Happenings* publication of the St. Joseph Museum and the Pony Express Museum that there were two routes: the Northern Route started at Troy, and the Southern Route split at Wathena.

The town of Syracuse (also called Lewis) was at Sec.T.4SP\19E. In this general area were also the Syracuse School and Cold Springs Ranch.

Lillie Vickery Ryan (Mrs. S.L.) came with her parents from New York in 1857, settling east of Denton near the Syracuse schoolhouse, which was named after Syracuse, New York. Mrs. Ryan's father, William Vickery, kept a store, and it was a stopping place for overland travel over the Pikes Peak Trail. The home was also a voting precinct for many years. In the early 1860's it supplied neighbors and travelers with bacon, brown sugar, and a drink in a "little brown jug." She attended the Syracuse School and recalled that "On the days that the rider went by at 9:00 A.M. the teacher did not start school until the rider passed!" Mrs. Ryan was interviewed on August 26, 1923, in *The St. Joseph Gazette*.

Mary Helen Loroff had a scrapbook of clippings from *The St. Joseph Gazette*, about 1923. W.R. Honnell identified Cold Springs Ranch as being located near Moray. There the four Dooley Girls baked cookies for Johnny Fry, especially donuts. The Dooley Girls also wanted a piece of his red shirt to make a quilt.

Pat Gray's *Doniphan County History of 1905*, discussed the earlier Syracuse School as located a mile north of its present location (1905). He also states that the school experienced an earthquake on April 27, 1867.

I wanted to find out who owned the land where the first Syracuse School was located, and also the owner of the second location (where the Midway School building was built in 1959.) I found at the Register of Deeds Office that on February 22, 1864, the State of Kansas sold land to Hannah Vickery. Today, Doniphan West Schools owns the Vickery land and former Midway School. In 1877, Syracuse District #7, was on Vickery land.

As a retired teacher and historian, I love to share about a Pony Express Rider that stopped near Syracuse School. J.H. Lusk wrote in the December

12, 1948 *Highland Vidette* that Syracuse was laid out for a big city of the west, and the town lots were sold in New York and Boston. It was a relay station for the famous Pony Express at Vickery Stables. The early families were: Vickerys, Cummings, Robbs, Prys, Fosters, Harpsters, Eatons, Bitners, Longs, Morley, Alfes, and Libels.

A deed from John Pry to District #7, on September 8, 1871, it was located 1 mile north of the current Doniphan West (Midway School.) A second deed on September 6, 1871, was 1 acre of land between G.J. Archer, G.H. Robb and J.H. Long, Board Of Directors of School District #7. Two of the earliest teachers were Betty Pry Robb and Mrs. James A. Campbell, Mr. Lusk said.

The second location of Syracuse School was on J.L. Maymes property according to the 1927 Doniphan County Atlas.

Leota Elliott Elder attended Syracuse School one year, and Miss Geraldine Rosenberger was her teacher. Mrs. Elder had heard that Syracuse School is where the Pony Express Rider would have stopped long ago. Her mother Christena Albers Elliot taught Syracuse School before she was married. Paul Roberts' mother, Loren Albers Roberts, attended school at Syracuse School. The following teachers told Mr. Hartman they taught at Syracuse School: Geraldine Rosenberger, Hilda Triplett, Merle McNemee, and Christine Albers Elliott. The last year that Syracuse School was held was in 1938-1939; Geraldine Rosenberger was the teacher. When the school closed, the students then attended Denton. After the closure the school house was a gun club and then a V.F.W. recreation center.

Hilda Denton-Triplett told Mr. Hartman that she taught at Syracuse School, and that the new Midway School was built there in 1959. Gerald W. Foley sold the Doniphan County Consolidated Rural High School on January 27, 1958 (Courthouse Records).



This 1910-11 Syracuse (2nd building, located at former Midway School area) picture belonged to the late Paul Dittimore and donated to the Doniphan County Library.

On September 18, 1979 (records) Foley Thomas Mayne's land was sold for the elementary and middle school at Midway.

Today, preschool through the sixth grades have classes at Doniphan West Elementary, located between Denton, Bendena and Severance.

THREADING THE NEEDLE: SEWING IN THE MACHINE AGE

For approximately 20,000 years, hand sewing with needles and thread made from various materials remained unchanged. When the sewing machine was first introduced to American homes in the 1850s, it was heralded as a laborsaving device that would transform the domestic lives of women everywhere. Sewing clothing and household linens, once a time consuming, never ending task, no longer had to be painstakingly completed by hand. The popular and influential Godey's Lady's Book soon coined the sewing machine "the queen of inventions" and declared that every family in the United States should own one.

Long before 1850, many inventors attempted to fabricate mechanical sewing devices. In 1790, the British inventor Thomas Saint patented a machine for sewing leather, though it was never manufactured. Forty years later in France, tailor Barthelemy Thimonnier (1793–1857) patented a sewing machine. When a clothing firm established a manufactory with eighty of his machines to sew uniforms for the French army, a mob of angry tailors who viewed the new invention as a threat to their livelihood destroyed them all.

New Yorker Walter Hunt (1796–1860), the inventor of the safety pin, developed an innovative sewing machine in 1834. It had an eye-pointed needle that used two spools of thread (one from above and one from below) to form a lockstitch. But Hunt neglected to patent his machine, and it was never manufactured due to production costs and pressure from many who felt the device would undermine the work of hand sewers. Unknowingly, Elias Howe (1819–67) of Massachusetts patented a similar sewing machine in 1846. Unsuccessful in marketing the device in America, Howe tried his luck in England. He returned penniless to find that many companies were not only selling sewing machines, but also infringing on parts of his 1846 patent. Howe successfully sued many of these manufacturers for royalties, including Isaac M. Singer (1811–75). He initially received five dollars for each machine sold in the United States and one dollar for each machine exported. Howe eventually collected over two million dollars before his patent expired in 1867.

Several other American inventors made important technical contributions to the development of the early sewing machine, but it was Isaac M. Singer patented the first truly, commercially successful sewing machine in

1851. His machine offered convenient features such as a foot treadle, which replaced the cumbersome hand crank to power the needle. Many more technological advances emerged during the Industrial Revolution that eased household sewing. For instance, power looms enabled retailers to offer vast quantities of fabrics by the yard, and easy-to-fit, mass-produced tissue paper patterns became available in standardized sizes.

Source: sfomuseum.org

MEETING MINUTES

March 27, 2025

Thank you to Steve Gingery for his presentation on James Henry Lane and to Susan and Mike Holt for refreshments. Lane was a complicated and controversial figure during the Bloody Kansas period.

Business Meeting

Anna Midyette reports the slides that were presented at the February meeting have been sent off. [Update: the digitization company expects to be finished in early May.]

Dues have been set at \$15 for new members in 2025. In 2026, dues will be \$15 for all members.

Continued discussion on the Iowa Point kiosk. It has been discussed that the signage should include information about the earliest inhabitants of the area. It has been difficult to get a response from anyone at the state.

Jason Midyette was asked if there had been any update about the sign for the Tenant Baker house. Anna motioned and Joan Oyerly seconded that Jason should get a quote for both signs in a stainless steel format.

Joan motioned for adjournment and Anna seconded.

TREASURER'S REPORT

April 14, 2025

MAR 13 BALANCE	\$35,233.36
INCOME:	
Dues	75.00
March interest	5.91
Income total:	\$80.91
EXPENDITURES:	
Cricket Wireless	55.00
ScanCafe (slide scanning)	118.49
Copy paper	44.42
Expenditures total:	\$217.91
APR 14 BALANCE	\$35,096.36
CD #7175	\$7,196.97
CD #6519 (for Save Our Liberty Project)	\$7,871.86

2025 MEETINGS

All meetings at 6:00 unless otherwise noted.

Presenters/topics/locations subject to change.

April 24 – *Waste Not, Want Not: Reimagining Fashion through*

Thrift Style by Marla Day, Humanities Kansas Speaker.
Community of Christ Church, 1548 Highway 7, Highland.
Refreshment volunteer needed.

May 22 – *Orphan Train* by Dixie Westervelt. *Refreshment volunteer needed.*

June 26 – *Denton Cemetery* with Paul Roberts. *Refreshment volunteer needed.*

July 26 – SATURDAY. Car Show and Pot Luck in White Cloud.

August 28 – *Trains, Trucks and Vintage Farm Equipment* by Jason Midyette at his home 544 Hwy 7, Bendena. *Refreshment volunteer needed.*

September 25 – *Wathena Chautauqua* by Joan Oyerly. Wathena Community Center, 303 E. St. Joseph. *Refreshment volunteer needed.*

October 23– *Geologic History of Northeast Kansas* by Betty Gleason. Jones Family Barn, 548 Hwy 7, Bendena. *Refreshment volunteer needed.*

November 20 – *Abraham Lincoln* by Larry Faulkner. Jones Family Barn, 548 Hwy 7, Bendena. *Refreshment volunteer needed.*

December 1 – Soup Supper.

CONTACT VICKI JONES IF YOU ARE WILLING TO PROVIDE REFRESHMENTS 785-226-3995.

Future meetings and topics are being finalized. Stay tuned.

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.

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