

DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MAY
2025

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News Notes

2025 OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

JASON MIDYETTE

PO Box 197, Bendena, KS 66008

785-988-0796

amjm@indra.com

VICE PRESIDENT

SUSAN HOLT

1608 Ash Point Rd, Highland 66035

785-741-3903

seholt64@gmail.com

SECRETARY

VICKI JONES

634 Highway, Bendena KS 66008

785-226-3995

vljonesrs@gmail.com

TREASURER &

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

ANNA MIDYETTE

PO Box 197, Bendena, KS 66008

303-506-8283

annam2807@gmail.com

MAY MEETING

Kansas City Southern Railroad Photo Archives

By Jason Midyette

May 22, 6:00 pm

St. John's Lutheran Church, 102 Commercial, Bendena

Due to unforeseen circumstances, we won't be able to learn more about the Orphan Trains as originally planned.

As a last minute replacement, Jason will share photos of the Kansas City Southern railroad that he purchased at an auction. There are thousands of negatives taken in the 1920s and 1930s. Some of the negatives are in delicate condition, but he's been able to scan some of them. Though the railroad has nothing to do with Doniphan County, the photos are an interesting look at the times. The photos seem to be a project to document all railroad property, so you will see depots, speeders, berry sheds and cotton platforms.

All are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be served.

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510 Fremont St, Wathena, KS 66090

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MARVIN SMITH

785-850-0063

1288 Peck Rd Troy KS 66087

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816-591-8898

6108 Kentucky Ave, Raytown, MO

THE APPLE BLOSSOM FESTIVAL

By Glendon E. Hartman

On May 3, 2025, I attended the 101th Apple Blossom Parade in St. Joseph with a friend. I hadn't been to a parade in years. I noticed Doug Pohl and Joel Euler were in separate vehicles/rigs in this year's event. The theme was "Heroes" and important jobs that help others.

I saw the Apple Blossom Parade a number of times when the parade was held on a Friday. We were dismissed after lunch from the Wathena Grade School if we wanted to go. We had to find our own way to the parade. I would ride with my Granddad Dan Wilson and my family in his 1949 Pontiac. He parked near the United Store. Some of the students had brothers and sisters who marched in the band.

When I was in high school, the Doniphan County Apple Festival was at the Troy High School. The five schools (Elwood, Wathena, Troy, Highland, and Midway) voted for their Queen Candidates. I sang in the Wathena Mixed Ensemble. Each music teacher selected two numbers for the high school music students. At Wathena, Mrs. Karen Ann Boos and Mr. Brad Mathers selected our music. The candidates were: Debbie Davis from Elwood High School, Janet Blevins from Highland High School, Anita Bauman, Wathena High School, Pat Reeder, Troy High School, and Kathy Pauly, Midway High School. The Troy Kiwanis Club sponsored the Contest and Festival. Miss Pat Reeder of Troy High School was crowned the 1971 Apple Blossom Festival Queen.

The tradition of the Apple Blossom Festival goes back to April 1924 when the first one was held. It's difficult to find information about this event.

The Kansas Chief, April 30, 1925, stated the second Apple Blossom Festival was sponsored by Buchanan County, Missouri and Doniphan County, Kansas and was held on Saturday, April 25, 1925. The tour in St. Joseph, Missouri, started at Market Square at 10:00 A.M. The first drive was south of St. Joseph City to Kenmore, Hunt Brothers, and Connett Orchards crossing with about 20 automobiles. The goal was to reach Kansas and the George Groh Orchard near Wathena at noon. Dinner was prepared by the ladies of the Methodist Aid Society and served in the basement of the church in Wathena. L.A. Libel was the Toast Master and other speakers entertained the crowd. The afternoon drive was visiting the Hunt Brothers and Brazelton orchards. Then they continued to visit the Troy apple orchards of: F.W. Kotsch, E.H. Ludwig, J.P. Zimmerman and G.W. Kinkaid.

Upon arrival in Troy, guests enjoyed a program at the Troy M.E. Church. The women served a meal. Mrs. Clark Norman sang a solo, and Mrs. G.W. Kinkaid read a poem. I.D. Park., from St. Joe, was the Toast Master. There were different speakers. Mr. Asleigh of Missouri said, "We have more young orchards than any state in the middle west." Someone said at Troy, "All in town a great success

about 50 different cars were in during the day." Railroad representatives were there: U.P.C. and I and P., Great Western, Santa Fe, C.B. and Q., and the Kansas City Southern. The U.P. included the Grand Island.

The third Apple Blossom Festival was on Thursday, April 29, 1926. It began with a parade through the principal St. Joseph streets, and then past the bridge into Kansas. The apple blossoms were in full bloom as it is the center of the apple industry in the middle west.

The Committees planned to make the most elaborate of any Apple Blossom Festival in 1926. The first stop in Doniphan County was the old Chautauqua Grounds where the coronation ceremonies were held. Miss Eulalia Gabriel was crowned Queen of the Apple Blossom Festival by Mayor Stigal of St. Joseph. An old-fashioned barbeque of pork and an open barrel of apples was distributed. The parade continued at Troy at 1:30. Floats paraded and passed by a reviewing stand. They toured the Troy orchards, and had a banquet at the Troy M.E. Church. School children in the County will be dismissed to see the parade. A dance will be held at the Troy Opera House. The S.L.K. and Farmers Bureau had floats. The Troy floats were led by the Troy School Band.

When Eulalia Gabriel Poirer was the first Queen in 1926, she was 16 years old. In an article written by Allen (Sonny) Seifert, he stated that Mrs. Poirer's daughter, Donna Bracken, remembered there were Wathena and Troy girls as candidates for queen. All floats were made of apple blossoms. The outside of the Campbell house (Ida Pinger-Becky Bond Residence), was used as a stage for the Apple Blossom Queen. Beulah Gurwell Cox told Mr. Hartman the school children were dismissed to attend the parade. In her earlier days of teaching at Troy Grade School, the Apple Blossom Parade was encouraged. The May Pole Dance and May basket production were a part of her third grade teaching. A little later, Evelyne Burr Haupt said her music classes danced around the May Pole at Troy Grade School. At the Wathena Grade School, Juliet Miller, said elementary students danced to the May Pole with the song, "Country Gardens." Mrs. Miller said they had May Plays. Melva Johnson Blakely said that they had a May Pole Dance at Highland. Sue Baskins Bartley had a May Pole Dance at Elwood School. Agnes Quinn Mallows said Miss Irene Gilford did the May Pole Dance in Elwood School.

James Senter Brazelton wrote in the article "The Apple Fetes Planned for St. Joseph And Troy" for the Kansas Farmer in April 1940:

"It is understood that the various high schools in Doniphan have been asked to send candidates for the queen in an effort to make this event a county-wide affair. An invitation has been sent out, it is said, from the Office of the County Superintendent asking each grade and rural school in the county to send a flower girl to Troy for this occasion. The parents, friends, and neighbors of these children, and the high school girls

should help to swell the crowd of interested spectators. (article from Mary Helen Brazelton Loroff's scrapbook clippings.)

Erma Sharp Snodgrass, a former teacher, told Mr. Hartman that she was a flower girl for the Apple Blossom Festival when she was in the first grade. Her teacher was Garnet Livingston Adams at LaGrange School, most likely in April 1940.

The Apple Blossom Parade, May baskets, and the May pole dances are truly a part of "The Merry Month of May."

MEETING MINUTES

April 24, 2025

Twenty-six persons gathered at the Community of Christ Church in Fanning to hear the program "Waste Not, Want Not: Reimagining Fashion through Thrift Style." Anna Midyette introduced our presenter, Marla Day, curator of Kansas State University's Historic Costume and Textile Museum in Manhattan, KS. The program was made possible by Humanities Kansas. Thank you to Kent and Marsha Symns for the refreshments. And a big thank you to the Fanning Church and the individual that ran the projection system (Ruth Twombly).

Marla has been responsible for numerous curated exhibits including Thrift Style, an exhibition focused on the history of feed sacks which is currently touring the nation, managed by Exhibits USA; Pulp Sensations: 1960s Paper Fashions; and Nelly Don: Dresses that Worked for Women among many others. She manages exhibits of over 18,000 pieces of clothing for the museum. Marla serves as a consultant to the Save Our African American Treasures Program, for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture since 2011. She is an active member of the Kansas Museum Association serving as the Vice President; and is on the board of trustees for the Riley County Historical Museum.

The Museum recently launched their online collection enabling the public to view and search through the museum's holdings at a click of the button. <https://www.lhs.k-state.edu/hctm/>

Tonight's presentation centered on the history of feed sacks and their use in clothing, aprons, tea towels, quilts, doll clothes, rag rugs, etc. Some companies even developed patterns for feed sack clothing such as Butterick patterns. Singer Sewing Machines sponsored competitions.

Feed sacks were not rationed during WW II. Milled products transitioned from wooden barrels to the sacks which were easier to handle and lighter in weight. There is a specific exhibit of feed sacks that has traveled through the United States for five years and is scheduled for another two years.

Personal memories were shared of family members and the uses of the feed sacks. None of the feed sack was wasted; even the thread used in the lock stitching system

to sew the bags was carefully ripped out, saved and reused. The instructions were printed on the bag of how to unravel the thread. Some of the needle tracks were permanently in the material, resulting in creative ways to place the material when assembling into another piece.

The feed sacks were in different prints and colors and patterns. One family who operated an elevator had shared with Marla their remembrances of having to move the feed sacks full of product if someone wanted several of the same color and patterns, often with those specific ones at the bottom of the stack. There were over 15 million feed sacks made. Many sacks had logos stamped on them with each color being stamped separately with printing plates. Ways to remove the ink from the sacks were published.

Slides during the presentation showed various mills throughout Kansas that used the feed sacks.

Feed sack clothing is currently sold in Salina. And, of course, as the popularity has grown, so has the price increased for feed sacks with some having private collections. Some gourmet foods are still sold in cloth bags.

In the 1960's, feed sacks began to be phased out as paper was cheaper and more sanitary.

There was no business meeting held.

Vicki Jones, Secretary

TREASURER'S REPORT

April 14, 2025

| | |
|---|-------------|
| APR 14 BALANCE | \$35,096.36 |
| INCOME: | |
| Dues | 90.00 |
| April interest | 5.91 |
| Income total: | \$95.91 |
| EXPENDITURES: | |
| Cricket Wireless | 55.00 |
| Community of Christ Church | 50.00 |
| Expenditures total: | \$105.00 |
| MAY 14 BALANCE | \$35,087.27 |
| CD #7175 | \$7,196.97 |
| CD #6519 (for Save Our Liberty Project) | \$7,871.86 |

NICE NOTE

Our April meeting was held at the Community of Christ Church in Fanning. As we usually do, we made a donation of \$50 for use of the facilities. We received this nice note:

Thank you for the Historical Society's donatin for the use of our facility for the April meeting. Payment is never expected, but your thoughtfulness is appreciated. The program was informative and well-presented; the refreshments were delicious, and the visiting was enjoyed! The Historical Society is welcome to use our building anytime.

Thank you, Ruth Twombly.

2025 MEETINGS

*All meetings at 6:00 unless otherwise noted. **Presenters/topics/locations subject to change.***

May 22 – *Kansas City Southern Railroad Archives* by Jason Midyette. St. John's Lutheran Church, 102 Commercial Street, Bendena, **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.

Other local events:

June 7 – 6:30 pm. St John's in Doniphan annual Mass and potluck. All are invited.

June 17 – Lammers Murders, 7:00 pm, troy Library. Adults only.

July 3 – Marvin Irvin Murders, 7:00 pm. Troy Library. Adults only.

July 9 – Kansas Music History, 6:30 pm, Troy Library. Adults only. Sponsored by Humanities Kansas

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
OR email your name, address and email to annam2807@gmail.com and pay by Venmo
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Doniphan County Historical Society
PO Box 197
Bendena, KS 66008

Your subscription will expire
in December 2025.

Anne Cash
615 Pottawatomie St
Hiawatha KS 66434