

DONIPHAN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May
2026
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News Notes

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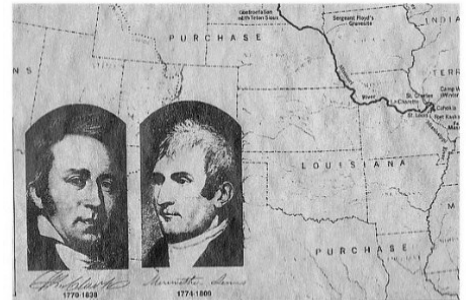
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Lewis & Clark

The May 28th meeting of the DCHS will be held at the Fanning Community of Christ Church starting at 6 pm. The program about Lewis and Clark will be presented by Jackie Lewin and Roger Gascoyne. The Twombly family will be bringing a scale model keel boat for display. It was made by former DCHS member Leonard Twombly, Sr. Afterwards, refreshments will be provided by Lillian and Ruth Twombly.

Jackie and Roger are members of the Gateway Chapter of the California-Oregon Trails Association. (<https://www.gateway-octa.org/>) Please note, Mr. Gascoyne will be involved with the reenactment of the Lewis and Clark Expedition at the Atchison, KS River Front Park. July 5th. Those interested in attending will be able to see a Lewis and Clark keel boat reproduction.

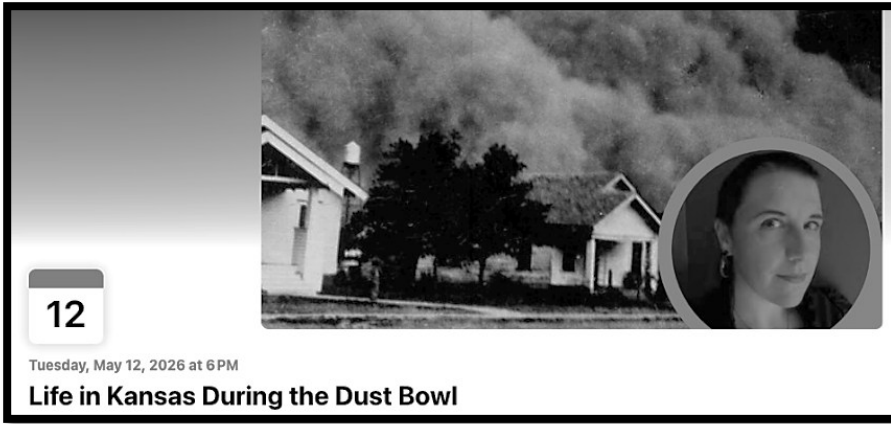


CREDIT: from a Lewis and Clark Expedition Map photograph by Charles Robinson (<https://fineartamerica.com/featured/lewis-and-clark-expedition-map-charles-robinson.html>)

UPCOMING MEETINGS

All meetings start at 6 pm

June 25	Gilmore Museum Tour by Keith Jaloma, Highland Community College Refreshments by Peggy Engeman and Sharon Peuker
July 25	Nothing Fancy Vehicle Show (White Cloud Main St) & Potluck at the White Cloud American Legion Vehicle Show coordinator Jason Midyette. More information to follow.
Aug 27	BBQ & live music hosted by the DCHS on the Museum grounds, Troy More information to follow
Sept 24	Chautauqua Tribe by Joan Oyerly, Wathena Community Building Refreshments by Joan Oyerly
Oct 22	Pony Express presented by Dr. Robert Corder, Elwood Community Center Refreshments by Nancy Furman
Nov	Historical Geology of NE Kansas by Betty Gleason, Oakland Valley Six Scale House, 578 HWY 7. Refreshments by Sarah Erpelding and Jan Falk
Dec 1	Annual Soup Supper, Baker Tennent House, Troy Soup etc. by DCHS members



Shared by Mary Winder:

The SLK will host an interesting program entitled “Life in Kansas During the Dust Bowl,” a presentation and discussion by Katie Keckeisen on Tuesday, May 12 at 6 p.m. at the meeting room in the Troy Library, at 105 N. Main St. in Troy, Kansas. Area residents are invited to attend the free program. Light refreshments will be served. This program is made possible by Humanities Kansas.

Black Sunday – April 14, 1935 – is an unforgettable moment in history. The photographs from that day of the dust storm in southwest Kansas made headlines across America. How did Kansans respond to this challenging moment in history? Using eyewitness accounts and photographs, this presentation explores the impact and the legacy of the drought and the “Dust Bowl” on life in Kansas during the 1930s and beyond.

Keckeisen is the local history librarian at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. She previously worked as the Collections Archivist at the Kansas Historical Society.

SLK President Jana Dominguez-Peucker is excited about the group hosting this special program for area residents. The SLK has hosted several other Humanities Kansas programs in past years, as well.

“Once again we are pleased to have a speaker through Humanities Kansas coming to Troy. The presentation is sure to be very interesting and will enlighten us all on the history of the Dust Bowl in Kansas,” she says. “We hope that lots of folks will be able to attend!”

“Life in Kansas During the Dust Bowl” is part of Humanities Kansas's Speakers Bureau, featuring humanities-based presentations designed to share stories that inspire, spark conversations that inform, and generate insights that strengthen civic engagement.

March 26 MEETING MINUTES

Wendall Ganstrom welcomed everyone to the Billups Gallery & Art Center in Robinson, Kansas. Thirty individuals were in attendance including members of the Robinson History Association.

Attendees toured the gallery containing many paintings and exhibits of Betty Billups and her husband, Robert Walton. Signed lithographs and prints were available. The building was purchased and remodeled to create an area to display the paintings. Presently, various groups rent the building for meetings and gatherings. Future plans include area artists having short term displays.

Wendall and his family have brought a few hundred of the paintings to Kansas with the goal to have them all in Robinson eventually. On July 6, 2025, a grand

opening was held at the Billups Gallery and Art Center in Robinson with Betty in attendance. There were over 100 visitors from five states. In January – February of 2025, her paintings were on exhibit at the Walter Yost Gallery at the Highland Community College. In December, 2026, she will have a showing at the Atchison Cultural Arts Center, Atchison, Kansas. Betty has completed close to 2000 paintings, many in her kitchen of her cabin in the Northern Idaho mountains. She made many of the frames herself.

Elizabeth Jean (Betty) Billups was born January 15, 1948. At first, her plans were to be an artistic illustrator. She studied at the Los Angeles Art Center College of Design and had her first one artist museum show at the Montana Historical Society in Helena. This was a result of doing research for a U.S. Army commission to create a painting of Sacajawea. The Army had seen a Billups watercolor in the U.S. Air

Force Collection called Nightengale depicting the C-9, a medical plane.

Betty is recognized as an American Plein Air Painter. Plein air painting is created on location, with all the elements: sun, wind, tides, and time, affecting that which is being depicted in the painting, thus forcing the artist to work quickly and observantly to capture the essence of the scene, before and even while, it changes.

Her first trip to Idaho and Montana inspired her to visit the Crow people of southeastern Montana who became the subject of many of her native themed oil paintings.

In appreciation of their willingness to be the subjects of her art, she now allocates a percentage of all sales to help provide scholarships to native students, especially those attending Haskell University in Lawrence, Kansas.

From 1986 – 1996, Betty was the ad chairperson of the Plein Air Painters of America, creating national ads in up to five art magazines per month promoting plein air painting, a style of impressionist painting. These ads were created with no compensation for Betty.

She authored a book entitled “Artist’s Projects You Can Paint – 10 Experiments with Impressionism En Plein Air,” a step-by-step guide to painting. The publisher went out of business before she was paid.

In 2001, she was the artist in residence at Glacier National Park, creating 35 plein air paintings. Her work is found in museums and collections around the United States, Canada, Israel, Africa and Japan. Some of her clients include Bank of America, Flour Corporation, Max Factor, Knot’s Berry Farm, Genstar Mortgage, St, John’s Hospital, and Santa Monica. Other commissioned art:

- 2007- 6X16’ Mural for Mount San Antonion College
- 1996-2003 - C. LM – Mural in a day, Toppenish, WA
- 1996-2002 - C.M. Russell Auction Quick Draw Artist
- 1996 10X8’ Mural for Plastic Model Engineering, Post Calls, ID
- 1998-99 – Bordello Murals, Toppenish, WA

The majority of Robert Walton’s paintings were purchased by the *Leinin’ Tree* greeting card company.

If you would like to view the exhibit or learn more information, please contact Wendall. This is a unique and interesting addition to Robinson.

Interest deposit	\$5.96	
Income Total		\$60.96
EXPENDITURES:		
St. John's Lutheran	\$50.00	
Office Supplies	\$13.70	
Teton Sunrise, LLC	\$50.00	
Expenditure Total		\$113.70
APRIL 30, 2026 BALANCE		\$36,208.96
CD #6519 (24 mo CD)		\$8,143.83
CD #7175 (12 mo CD)		
Save Our Liberty Project		\$7,413.11

BUSINESS MINUTES

Joan Oyerly called the meeting to order. She thanked the members of the Robinson History Association for the refreshments and to Wendall Ganstrom for hosting the meeting in this inspiring gallery.

Betty Gleason moved and Marsha Symns seconded the motion to approve the meeting notes of the March 26, 2026 and Treasurer’s report as presented in the newsletter. Motion carried.

Joan announced that the SLK group will be hosting a presentation on “Life in Kansas During the Dust Bowl” on Tuesday, May 12, 2026 at 6 pm at the Troy Library District #1. The program is free and everyone is invited to attend. The presentation will be by the Humanities Kansas. She advised the nonactive Venmo account remain that way at this time. If the need arises, this will be reviewed.

Plans are being formulated for an event either August 1 or August 8 at the museum with hands-on activities encouraging younger ones to attend. Volunteers would be needed throughout the museum and Baker’s House. Initial plans are for the hours to be 10 am to 2 pm with refreshments.

Corky and Larry are continuing work on improvement projects at the museum and Baker’s House. If you can help, they are at the museum on Saturdays from 10 am to noon. Joan has been working on organizing the books into categories such as biographies, cookbooks, etc. She also shared some books on architecture in Atchison, coloring books, etc.

Reminder: if you have an article of interest to share, please contact Betty Gleason, Newsletter Editor, for consideration. A thank you was received from the Pony Express in St Joseph, MO for the recent donation.

The next meeting will be Thursday, May 28, at the Fanning Church with the presentation on Lewis & Clark, by Jackie Lewin. Refreshments will be provided by Lillian and Ruth Twombly

Vicki Jones
Secretary/Treasurer

TREASURER’S REPORT		
MARCH 31, 2026 BALANCE		\$36,261.70
INCOME:		
Dues	\$45.00	
Donations	\$10.00	

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Betty Gleason 785-336-2202
1506 N 3rd Street, Atchison KS 66002

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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