



# BROWN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Memorial Auditorium - Ag Museum & Windmill Lane  
785-742-3330 785-742-3702

611 Utah Street Hiawatha, KS66434

## “ENRICHING OUR FUTURE THROUGH OUR PAST”

March 19, 2019

Membership Individual \$15.00; Family \$30.00

Issue No. 1 for 2019

Business \$30.00; Life Membership \$200 per person

Website: <https://browncountyhistoricalsociety.com>

Like us on Facebook@BrownCountyHistoricalSocietyMemorialAuditorium

## COMING EVENTS

March 22: Brown County Historical Society annual meeting at Carwell Building. Steve Roberts is catering meal. Serving starts at 6 p.m. Make reservations by calling 785-742-3330 or email [bchsdirect@gmail.com](mailto:bchsdirect@gmail.com). Food selection: Pork Loin, chicken a la orange or fish. Price of meal is \$15.50 per person.

May 1: Memorial Auditorium, AG Museum and Windmill Lane opens.

May 2019: Veterans Memorial Day Program. Time and date to be announced.

July 3: Ice Cream Social, 5:30 pm. At Ag Museum, serving in Carwell Building.

August 9: Farmers Appreciation Dinner 6 p.m. Ag Museum, Carwell Building.

September 28: Heritage Days.

## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

Brown County Historical Society has been very busy and working hard to get things ready for the 2019 season. Brown County Historical Society has had many volunteers working on various projects. The museum is looking wonderful and many thanks to our

generous volunteers. Brown County Historical Society cannot say enough to express our gratitude to the people that donate their time and efforts to the museum mission.

If you are considering an activity please consider the museums as there are many wonderful treasures to explore and find on the museum grounds. If you are planning a function, the museum has space available to use as your venue please contact us for further information.

Museum happenings, recently, Brown County Historical Society had a donation of a porcelain doll collection and these little gems are a treasure to see. There are many other donations that have been made, please stop by and see for the artifacts for yourself.

The museum is always in need of volunteers so if you have community service hours and you are thinking of a place to spend your

time the museum would love to have you be a part of the museum effort. Brown County Historical Society is seeking additional members, if you know someone who might be interested in the historical society please share our information. Your efforts are greatly appreciated. I look forward to seeing all of you this year as we venture into the 2019 season. My Best, *Lynn Marie Allen*

## **HISTORY MYSTERY**

(By Lynn Marie)

It's large, possibly weighs 100 pounds or better and has become tarnished green over time, it has been known to make a large booming "bong" sound from time to time....

If you guessed a grand bell of some sort then you'd be correct.

A group of Hiawatha graduates had come together some time ago wondering what might have possibly happened to the "Hiawatha Academy" school bell. As it would happen, Wes Duesing had stopped by to see me at the Auditorium and we had been visiting about the present state of the bell and the bell housing. Wes and I discussed that updating the bell housing and roof material was needed due to its present state. A plaque might also be nice so when people visit they know some of the history of the bell.

The grand bell located in NW corner of memorial auditorium was researched by Dorothy Wright and Lucille Pennell.

The history of the large bell presently located on the NW corner of the Memorial Auditorium lawn was recently uncovered. The bell was thought to be placed in the bell tower

in 1888. The Hiawatha Academy was in operation from 1887-1915 in the latter years adding the Hoover Hall. Jim Meek, Class of 1954, contacted another former classmate residing in the Hiawatha area, enter Dorothy Wright.

Jim asked Dorothy if she might be aware of what happened to the Hiawatha Academy bell. Jim has a particular interest, in that, in 1968 Wayne Starr, class of 1939 coordinated with Jim, an architect in California, to erect a commemorative model of the bell to place on the high school grounds. Jim came to Hiawatha and took dimensions of the bell and met with the alumni board in 1968. There was a picture of the model that was on the front of the Alumni program book. In 1972 Wayne tragically passed away in a plane crash and the interest in the bell project dwindled into nonexistence. Of course, was left to wonder what happened to the original bell. The "bell" was verified by sending a photo of the bell to him and Jim stated "That's it!" Former Hiawatha High School Principal B. H. Pennel verified as he was the one to determine where the bell might exist. Plans are in the works for a plaque and restoration of the bell housing is in the works. Anyone interested in donating to this project your assistance would be greatly appreciated.

## **VISIT WITH CLARENCE**

A Brown County History Society member recently visited the historical society office in the auditorium museum after coming from a visit with Clarence Middendorf. Clarence, (97) is a former member of the board of directors and now makes his home

at Vintage Park, Kansas Avenue, Hiawatha. Clarence and his side kick, Lawrence Thonen, (90) spent a lot of their time on projects at Memorial Auditorium downtown Hiawatha; also at Ag Museum climbing and repairing most of the windmills.

The visiting board member thought a bit of information they learned from visiting Clarence should be shared with all. While reminiscing Clarence told about he and Lawrence repairing the windows in the big white barn at the Ag Museum soon after it was acquired.

The barn came with the purchase of the ag museum grounds. The windows on the barn were in bad condition with some needing new frames and there were a lot of windows. Money and help were in short supply but they did what they could with what they had, like using scrap lumber for a make due repair job. Windows are still in and make due job is still in tact more or less. They do get painted as does the barn.

I am to be sure and thank Clarence and Lawrence for the endeavoring work at the museum over the years. There was much more you both did in addition to the windows.

Editor's note: I hear from Clarence from time to time and he still misses helping the historical society.

## **HALLOWEEN FESTIVAL**

A donation from Betty Lewis of Highland, KS was a pamphlet of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hiawatha Halloween Festival Program. It brought back a lot of names of all the people, now deceased, who use to help with these festivities.

Betty says found the program when going through and organizing her collectibles, (things you feel a need to save but do not know why,) We do appreciate your donation Betty.

The Halloween activities started in 1914 and the October 29, 1964 program shows how formal the festivities were presented.

There were 18 queen candidates, this was before school consolidation. Cities and names of contestants: included Atchison, Jeannine Ann Kiehl; Bern, Susan Wittmer; Fairview, Floy Ann Lambertson; Falls City, Trula Elaine Buckminster; Hamlin, Sharon Faye Hartley; Hiawatha, Dolly Hatfield; Highland, Sonja Micheline Herring; Highland Jr. College, Azar Ghaneh; Holton, Marcia Eubanks; Horton, Janet Angle; Midway, Gail Diane Clark; Morrill, Linda Durell Curtin; Powhattan, Nanci Schumann; Reserve, Linda Gormley; Robinson, Reita Kay Weis; Sabetha, Mary Bahr; Troy, Marian K. Kostman; Willis, Donna Howard.

Major and Mrs. Harry Pepin of Bellevue, Nebraska and Mr. And Mrs. Robert Hinckley of St. Joseph, Missouri were judges. Cay Curless and Aleta Spaulding participated in the event as pages.

Dr. Arthur Nichols was the Master of Ceremonies. Jack Garvey was the organist.

Mayor Reese gave the welcome. A Parade of Queen Candidates wearing Casual Clothes was held. Dr. Nichols introduced Former Queens. Jack Garvey played Musical Tribute to Former Queens. Mr and Mrs. Jeff Anderson presented tunes from Westside Story.

Queen candidates did a parade modeling Formal Clothes. Jeff Anderson did a solo entitled "Picture Her With Golden Crown." during coronation of Cynthia Tilson, as the 1963 Queen and the solo, "Queen of Halloween" by Jeff Anderson ended the evening.

Organ courtesy of Hammond Organ Studio Kansas City and St. Joseph.

Mr and Mrs. Gerald Alkire were chairmen of Queen's Pageant Committee. Decoration committee included Mr. and Mrs. Richard Casselman, chairmen, Major and Mrs. William Weinberg; Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Lewis; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Parks; Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Redmon; Mr. and Mrs. James Johnson and Mrs. Leota Baird.

Queen Candidates committee included Mr. and Mrs. Bion Bierer, chairmen; Mr and Mrs. Charles Tice; Mr. and Mrs. Wayne Trapp; Mr and Mrs. William Schroth; Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Nolte. Mr and Mrs. Don Overfield, chairmen and Mr. and Mrs. J. P. Huckabay were in charge of ticket sales. Mrs. Stanley Wade, chairman and Mrs. Cecil Gannon were in charge of the Afternoon Tea for the event.

Rita Gatz, Karla Lehman, Jane Dale, Judy Parks, Ruth Ann Dannenberg, Linda Weaver and Florence Mathewson volunteered to be ushers.

Just a little history of the past ceremonies of naming a queen. Thank you for the donation of the program Betty.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

I m so pleased to have hot water in the ladies' and men's restrooms of the basement of the memorial auditorium. There is also hot water in the rest room on east side of the stage in auditorium. This is the restroom used by the performers and others entertaining the audience.

Four dehumidifiers were purchased with money donated for this purchase. There is a lot of moisture in the auditorium and this is not a good thing for clothing etc stored in the building. We have also had trouble with mold. Wes Duesing has been emptying the dehumidifiers

3 or 4 times a day when there was a lot of moisture. Probably have to start again with the weather the way it is. Wes took over for me and I am very grateful. Thank you Wes. Wes starts about 5:30. a.m. and makes several trips a day. I did not do that.

Lynn Allen started her position, Executive Director/curator in May 2018. She is busy getting us organized. Most of the stuff stored in the balcony has been removed. It looks so much better. Thanks to Lynn and helpers.

Sudbeck Painting and Siding did some work at Ag Museum. Barn has been painted, also corn crib and windows have been glazed. (Be sure to read about visit with Clarence on page 3).

New addition to Ag Museum grounds is a Monarch Butterfly Garden. This is a really neat addition. Anita Pfister got the ball rolling. She mentioned to the museum about wanting to have a place for the Monarch butterflies. Delores thought this was a good idea and got in touch with Anita. The lunching of the "Monarch Station" on August 25, went well with the kids being very excited. When weather is warmer please take a tour to the Ag Museum. Bring kids and grand kids they get so excited. Stop and get out of the car to look at everything.

## **ONE ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE**

School was in session October 15, 17, 22, 24, 26, 29 and 30, 2018. Classes were held in the one rom schoolhouse at the Ag Museum. In addition to students from Hiawatha Elementary school students came from Horton Elementary. Eric Oldham, who started this program when he was the

executive director assisted. Thank you Eric. It is a wonderful program. We always receive positive feedback. Mary Finley, retired school teacher, from Hiawatha, has helped the historical society since the program began. She was assisted by two missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

It is planned to again have classes in our one room school house this year. We are needing some new uniforms for the students. If you can and want to help us please call Lynn 785-742-3330. The students wear girls pinafores over their clothes and boys wear vests.

Just a little of what the museum is trying to accomplish. We are always looking for volunteers to help at our museums. People are needed to help with the tours, cleaning and re-arranging displays.

Have new water lines to both cook shacks getting ready for 2019. Annual meeting is March 22 at Carwell Building, at Ag Museum. Meal will be catered by Steve Roberts.

## ACQUISITIONS

George & Ida Bemice Ogden of Powhatan have donated a women's 1960 #2 basketball warm-up; 1970 basketball warm-up, white basketball shirt.

Lizabeth McKee White of Colorado Springs, Co., donated a 1986 Pink gown she wore when crowned queen at 1986 Halloween frolic. A photo of Elizabeth wearing her gown was also donated.

Second Battalion 130<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery donated a wood framed metal sign signifying the historical value and what the armory represents. This sign stood for decades in front of Hiawatha Armory.

The Historical Society recently received a porcelain doll collection from Mrs. Gene (Rose)

Howard. Twenty-one boxes of these dolls were delivered to the museum by Gary and his wife, Kathy Howard. These dolls are beautiful and we are so glad to have them. Our curator, Lynn, has them on display in the museum. They are shown on their swings and other accessories. Their hair looks so real. Thank you to the Howard family. especially Rose, for this beautiful and wonderful collection.

Thank you to everyone for their donations of clippings, photos. antique farm equipment etc. to help preserve our past. We love to tell all who visit the museums about the history of Brown County

## FIRST HOUSE BUILT

Seth Barnum, the father of Mrs. E. S. Peiffer, did not build the first house in Hiawatha. The town company erected the first building, on the Morrill & Janes bank corner and Seth Barnum kept hotel there a few months before he built the building on the lot west of this and which, later was moved to the Seth Barnum farm. The second house was built probably by H. R. Dutton, the first storekeeper, on the lot where the pharmacy stands now, and is found next to the library on east at this time. Mrs. E. J. Chance built the third house on the ground adjoining the C. H. Lawrence store building. It was removed many years ago to the rear of the Jacob King brick building on Utah Street, east of the rail-road tracks, by Dave Burger and later torn down.—Br Co World March 7, 1919.

## IMPORTANT DISCOVERY

Prof I. B. Morgan, former principal of Hiawatha High School, made important

discovery in Kansas City, Kans., where he is principal of night high school. He was not naturalized citizen and has applied thru regular channels as prescribed by law. Prof. Morgan has been leader in vocational and educational work among foreigners. He was born in Wales and came to this country when a child. Father was naturalized under old laws which were quite lax and when careful check of government came Prof. Morgan was surprised to find himself “technically” foreigner as government could find no naturalization of father.—Brown Co World March 7, 1919.

## **SHERIFF’S SALE**

Just because a farm is offered at sherrifs sale is no indication that land is not up to standard. Alley Cowley 80 acres, southeast of Robinson was sold at sheriff’s sale, and buyer John Oltjen handed Sheriff Sam Miller check for \$18,200; \$231 an acre.—Brown County World March 14, 1919.

## **EXCITING RUNAWAY**

A runaway, of the old fashioned kind, in which wagon is wrecked and driver is thrown out, was staged on Oregon street Wednesday afternoon when Al Beatty’s fractious team got from under his control and started west, at Sixth street. Wagon box was half filled with lumber and horses were checked in their wild run when wagon struck white way pole, snapping it off. This turned the horses and Mr. Beatty was thrown violently to the stone sidewalk, striking on arm and shoulder. He was stunned for a few seconds, but was soon on his feet. Wagon was demolished. Large crowd gathered and man came out of barber shop with lather on his face. Brown County World March 21, 1919

## **FIRE LITTLE DAMAGE**

A fire was discovered at the Aaron Rader home, known as the hospital building on Second street. Fire caught from flue burning out. The fire truck and chemical engine were called out. Several holes were burned in the roof but other no damage was done.—Brown County World March 21, 1919

## **LAND INTEREST**

David Davies has added to his land interests another 80 acres, bot from William Femler, paying \$19,000 for it—\$237.50 per acre. This land is located 9 miles from market—perhaps greatest distance any farm in Brown County is located from market. When David Davies came to Brown county 30 years ago he had about as much as the well known fellow with his belongings in a red bandana. Mr. Davies now owns 560 acres of as fine land as sun ever shone upon in Brown County.—Brown County World March 21, 1919

## **THIEVES CAUGHT**

Two young men called at the John Barnum home on South Sixth street and asked for something to eat. The fellows had a hard luck story: relatives dying in distant city or something like that and they were traveling on foot. Mrs. Barnum thot their story a true one and was touched by their appeal, so she set about preparing lunch for them. While she was doing this one of the strangers took a shirt from clothes line few feet from door and was in act of getting another one when John Barnum

appeared on scene. He made shirt thief put it back and as punishment stopped issuance of rations and the two men got away as soon as they could.—Brown County World March 21, 1919.

## **SCHOOL GIRL HIT**

Carried on cow catcher of Rock Island passenger train and then thrown into air, was thrilling experience of Irma Stricker, 13 years old, while returning home from school at Mercier. When train rounded curve at crossing engineer did not have time to check speed of train. It seemed that instant death was certain, but to surprise of engineer girl fell onto pilot and carried some distance before she was thrown clear of the track. Train was stopped and train crew put girl in baggage car and parents were notified after which she was taken to Horton hospital. Injured girl is in Mercier and is being cared for at home of Miss Carrie Schuetz.—Brown County World March 28, 1919.

## **BROWN COUNTY 1882**

The great improvement and development era in Brown county continued with increasing activity thruout this year, the flow of newcomers kept step with the activity of the boom. Many new farms have now been opened, multiplied acres have been added to the cultivated area of the farms. There is in view now a vast amount of new farm improvement on every hand as well as public improvement in the way of roads and useful bridges. So, now, about all traces of the once wild and newness of the county have disappeared and a phase of more age and solidity presents the present view. As to financial conditions a statement from County Clerk John E. Moon at the end of this year showed: Total credits, \$129,481.91 and total disbursements

\$116,159.90 leaving a balance cash of \$13,332.01.

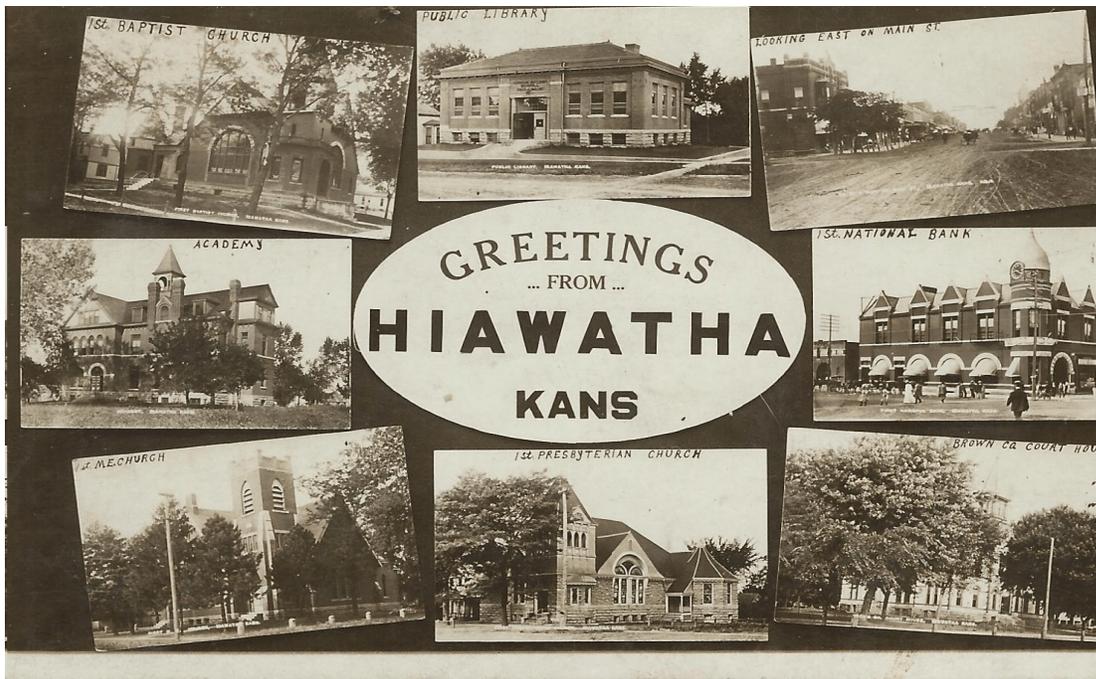
These brief figures are surely quite significant when it is considered that only 25 years had elapsed since the whole amount of taxable property was footed up, in the year 1857, at \$58. In fact the county was making great strides in aggressive progress now. The old prices of fine prairie land, at from \$10 to \$20 and improved farms at from \$25 to \$35 per acre, were bracing up—in fact had advanced so that several purchases near to Hiawatha farms were made this year at \$50 per acre. Not only has material improvements thus rapidly secured but school and church interests premeate the whole county and lodges, societies, other civic organizations are as plentiful as found in much older sections of the country. The county building had been done solidly and all over, therefore the county, at this time presented a picture not of only transcendent beauty, but of impressive substantiality as well. Just as these accomplishments were being enumerated the last rail on the Mo. Pac. Railroad extension, from Atchison to Omaha, filled the gap at Everest on June 1, with the final rail. This was added 32 more miles of railroad across the county from south to north, in addition to the pioneer G. I. Road, with its 30 miles from east to west, built 12 years earlier.

New towns sprang into existence. Everest, Willis, Baker in the south part; Reserve, north and they flourished for a number of years. Elevators were erected in each and thus were handy markets provided for the farmers instead of hauling their grain out of the county to the Central Branch railroad. — A.N. Ruley's History of Brown County

Brown County Historical Society  
611 Utah Street  
Hiawatha, Kansas 66434

Non-Profit.Org.  
U.S. Postage Paid  
Hiawatha, KS 66434  
Permit #27

Gary Shear.....President  
Larry Day.....Vice President  
Wesley Duesing.....Secretary  
Delors Waite.....Treasurer  
Donna Thonen.....Director/Editor  
Jere Bruning.....Director  
Dennis Greer.....Director  
Eugene Swearingen.....Director  
Larry Adcock..... Director  
Jim Gibbs.....Director  
Gil Bunning.....Director  
Joe Nigus.....Director



Do not know year this post card was taken.