



## **SVHA News Archive 2018**

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### **November, 2018**

#### **Osborne Carnegie Research Library -- by Laura McClure**

The Carnegie Research Library, 317 West Main Street, Osborne, is instrumental in the preservation of Osborne County records and boasts a treasure trove of collections: family files, school annuals, 1875 homestead maps, obituaries, tax records, rural school records, Osborne county census records, community history, Hall of Fame books (newest OCHF of 2016 recently released), business ads from 1940-1951, assessment records, etc. Patrons also have access to Ancestry.com, Newspapers.com, and Fold3.com to further aid their genealogical research. The Carnegie Library welcomes all to use this local gem of a resource.

FamilySearch volunteers Dale and Margaret Smith are now at the Carnegie photographing and digitalizing over half a million documents. When the project is completed these records will be available, "free" at familysearch.org. FamilySearch believes in families. "The more one knows about their families helps them build a sense of belonging." Family- Search is a nonprofit organization sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

### **September, 2018**

#### **Waconda Visitor And Education Center -- by Linda Clover**

Volunteers from the area have joined the Glen Elder State Park in creating the Waconda Visitor and Education Center in the original visitor center which in 1969 was the only entrance to the Park. The project is part of a broader plan to create more recreational and tourist activities in the State Park and provide the history of early Waconda Springs (including American Indian cultures), the Waconda Springs Sanitarium/Hotel, the development of the Solomon River Valley, and the building of the Glen Elder Dam. The next phase will include repairs to the Waconda Springs Pool Replica and educational kiosks as visitors climb to see the Springs. This all began with Glen Elder State Park manager Tyler Bletscher having the idea of "simply having a building available to the public for viewing and learning of our local history and this committee has brought it to life."

The newly-formed Waconda Culture Committee received a grant from the Solomon

Valley Community Foundation and is now in the process for forming a 501(C)3 organization. The Waconda Culture Association also received financial support from Mitchell County Convention & Tourism and donations. The grant from the Solomon Valley Foundation was used for UV window film, an iPad kiosk available for verbal history and additional pictures, landscaping, and informational panels. More is scheduled in the future.

Renovations for the building included a new roof, air-conditioning/heating units, new security system, handicapped restrooms, several windows and door provided by the State Park. Master Gardeners under the direction of Cassie Homan, Kansas State Extension Horticulturist Specialist, joined with the Park Staff and volunteers to plant over 100 square feet of new landscaping designed by Joyce Benedick of Great Plains Landscape.

Previously, after the dam was built, the Waconda Heritage Association sought to preserve the history of the Waconda Springs by supporting the building of the Waconda Springs replica on a bluff just south of the current Park Office. The historical Hopewell Church was a part of their plan for a Waconda Heritage Village, along with the Hazeltine School which was destroyed by tornado just before it could be moved to the park area. The organization was terminated and little had been done to help visitors recall Waconda Springs history. Now it will be possible to tell those stories.

A full-sized Plains Indian in authentic attire, as well as many artifacts, is displayed in the center. A colorful, original mural painted by Jim Nelson from the earlier visitor center portraying one of the legends connected with Waconda Springs has been returned to its place in the center. Educational panels portray each of the topics along with maps, old and new. The iPad kiosk is available for verbal history and additional photographs of the area from the 1870s through building the dam in the 1960s and can be updated as more information becomes available.

An opening and ribbon cutting for the center was held June 30 at 10:00 a.m. for the public. Over 150 people attended activities, viewed displays and enjoyed refreshments on the patio. Kyle Peterson, director of the Mitchell County Historical Society Museum, shared the history of the area along with a song accompanying himself on an authentic drum belonging to Sharon Sahlfeld. Linda Clover portrayed Dr. Anna Bingesser and told the history of the Waconda Springs Sanitarium. Lucille Heller told the history of the Waconda Cultural Committee. Park Manager Tyler Bletscher welcomed everyone to the Center and cut the ceremonial ribbon.

Thus far, the Center has been used for Waconda at Sunset, the first event. To arrange events at the Center, please contact the State Park Office. The view is beautiful, and the Center and patio are available for use by all. It is hoped as visitors view the Center, that they might choose to share or loan articles for display. The Center was open every day during the summer and, now that the college / high school student workers have returned to school, the Glen Elder State Park Office must be called for an appointment: 785 545 3345. An annual Park pass or day Park pass is necessary with no additional charge to visit the center.

# June, 2018

## **SV24 Alliance Kiosk Renovation Project -- by Roger Hrabe**

Nearly 14 years ago SV24 Heritage Alliance took on a project to document the story of each member community from Glasco to Hoxie, using the Kansas Sampler Foundation's 8 Rural Cultural Elements as a guide: Architecture, Art, Commerce, Cuisine, Customs, Geography, History, and People of each community.

Kiosk structures were built by the inmates at the Stockton Correctional Facility and installed in nearly all of the communities, along with existing Kansas Department of Transportation kiosks in a few. Each kiosk was then fitted with laminated inserts that told the unique story of each community. On the other side of the kiosk the history of the Solomon Valley was documented.

Over the years, the inserts began to fade and some of the information became outdated. It was decided in 2017 to undertake a renovation project for the kiosks, update the information on each community and also upgrade the quality of the inserts. Instead of the laminated paper, the new inserts are a vinyl cover on an aluminum back, making them more visible and long-lasting. Repairs were also completed on the physical structure of the kiosks when required.

With big plans in mind, it would take some financing to complete the project. Enter the Dane G. Hansen Foundation which agreed to fund a grant application completed by the Alliance to cover the renovation project. Information was then updated and inserts printed. Installation of the kiosk inserts is ongoing and should be completed during the spring.

Information on the kiosks and locations can be found on our website.

## **Nicodemus Chautauqua**

The 2nd Annual Nicodemus Chautauqua was held on Saturday, May 26, under the big tent in Nicodemus. There was free food and refreshments for all. The big tent provided shade for the visitors and performers on a very hot day. Todd Tomar and his "Nicodemus Old New Timers Band" provided period musical entertainment between performances. Performers shared stories and history of Nicodemus's past. A number of historic characters shared the stories of the founding and development of this African-American community that survived to the present and is now a National Historic Site. This community is one of the treasures of the Solomon Valley Hwy24 Heritage Alliance and one of the five National Parks in Kansas. The following scenes from the Chautauqua are provided by Angela Bates, Nicodemus historian and director of the Nicodemus Historical Society.

## **March, 2018**

### **Notes From Water/Ways Events**

Mimicking the river itself, our Solomon Valley exhibit flowed from place to place, with the final event the program highlighted at the annual meeting, January 27 at Osborne.

Historian Leo Oliva dealt with aquifer facts, the realities of depending on ground water for communities and irrigation, and the consequences of not conserving. He challenged us to action, for water is life. He noted that a river is more than water.

Ron Parks concluded our series by taking us to the Solomon River in order to see its historic immersion in daily life. From boating, fishing, and picnicking to mills and baptisms, community life was along the river bank. The river drew people, who established towns. Parks stated "The river created this place."