

YESTERYEARS

A publication of

The Jefferson County

Historical Society

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The Jefferson County Historical Society and the Jefferson County Genealogical Society have merged. A Genealogy Committee now represents the interests of the former Genealogical Society.

Jefferson County Historical Society Officers

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Yesteryears editor, April 2021: Jane Hoskinson; primary source and research assistance, Liz Leech

Yesteryears is published online as a PDF document and made available on the Old Jefferson Town website. Primary source materials, including Jefferson County tax rolls from the 1860s, will also be available on the OJT website: <https://www.oldjeffersontown.com/>. For more information, contact the Jefferson County Historical Society, P.O. Box 146, Oskaloosa, KS 66066, email, oldjefftown@gmail.com.

Individual articles from past issues of *Yesteryears* are posted online at storiesofyesteryears.blogspot.com.

County Seat Wars, 1858-1864

The first territorial legislature of Kansas declared Osawkee¹ the county seat of Jefferson County in 1855. The territorial governor appointed county officers. This “bogus” legislature was fraudulently elected by proslavery “ruffians” from Missouri who entered Kansas to vote illegally. Its members intended to establish slavery in Kansas. Osawkee was the oldest settlement in Jefferson County. A majority of its population favored slavery.

In 1854 brothers George M. and William F. Dyer chose the site of Osawkee on the military road between Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley, near the place where the road crossed the Grasshopper (Delaware) River in Jefferson County. The location was part of the Delaware Reserve and not legally open to white settlement. The Dyer brothers built a trading post and moved to Kansas as squatters. An 1855 Kansas census indicated that William Dyer held three enslaved people. Brothers William H. and O.B. Tebbs soon joined them. William Tebbs had three enslaved people. The town of Osawkee was laid out in early 1855 and formally surveyed in October that year.

By A.G. Patrick in “Old Settler’s Corner,”
the *Oskaloosa Times*, April 18

Almost every town in the county has had a rival representing either free state or pro-slavery. Oskaloosa had a Jacksonville a mile or so to the east. Valley Falls had a Jefferson city near Cedar Falls. Osawkie had a rival in Pleasant Hill a mile or so to the west. Fairfield, Hickory Point and Hardtville were on the old Military road, but they are all dead now, and Winchester has taken their place. Perry, Williamstown, Centreville, Newman, and Medina sprung up on the building of the Pacific railroad, but outside of Perry, the other towns are practically dead, yet they were all lively towns 30 years ago, with a dozen or so of open saloons. Old Pap Weaver run a paper at Medina, but when the Santa Fe was built, moved his press to Valley Falls and started the *New Era*.

The Delaware lands were reduced after a survey, and members received land grants in a smaller, “diminished” reserve. The remaining lands were to be sold and the money held in trust for the Delaware Nation.

The Delaware Trust lands were sold at Osawkee in the summer of 1857. The first cabin built there served as the land office. It was guarded during the land sales by troops from Fort Leavenworth. The influx of people hoping to buy land created a wild west scene, complete with wagons, tents, gambling and, according to Thomas Gay², “a considerable amount of whiskey.” In the ensuing town boom, Osawkee gained many houses and cabins, several businesses and a two-story hotel. Its population grew to a reported 3,500. However, land speculation and tax issues soon turned the boom into a bust. Many squatters’ cabins were abandoned or stolen or burned in prairie fires.

Early in 1858 the new free-state legislature gave voters the right to choose a county seat at the next election. The winner was to be the place receiving the highest number of votes. The new law was framed to favor Grasshopper (Valley) Falls, a free-state settlement. The *Jefferson Crescent* reported that the town was anticipated to become “the most prominent point in the contemplated Railroad, from St. Joseph to Topeka.” The Falls had also prospered during the Delaware Trust land sales, when the town company began construction of a new hotel, the Cataract

House, and dedicated it with a grand ball. According to *The First Hundred Years of Jefferson County Kansas*, “The supper was doubtless the most elaborate ever sat down to in Jefferson county. The cakes alone cost over \$100 and were brought in from Leavenworth. About 75 couples were present, but room enough for only six set of cotillions.”

¹Osawkee was the original spelling. The spelling became Osawkie in the early 1880s. It changed to Ozawkie in the early 1900s.

²Thomas Gay moved to Jefferson County from Wisconsin in 1856, hoping to make Kansas a free state. He wrote about his experiences in 1894 for the *Chariton Herald* newspaper in Iowa.

The county seat election in spring 1858 fielded three more candidates. The most prominent contender, Oskaloosa, having doubled its population since 1857, believed its central position made it best qualified to be the county seat. A free-state town with ties to the Underground Railroad, it was in direct competition with proslavery Osawkee.

Hickory Point (or Hardtville), a proslavery town, also joined the contest. In March 1857 Hardtville advertised a public auction of shares in the town in the *Kansas Weekly Herald* of Leavenworth. The town touted its location on the military road, its rich land and never-failing water, and claimed it would “undoubtedly be the county seat.”

Fairfield, just west of Hickory Point on the military road, had three houses and a sawmill. It may have entered the county seat contest in competition with Hickory Point.

The 1858 county seat election resulted in victory for Oskaloosa with 177 votes. Grasshopper Falls received 173 votes, Osawkee 94, Hickory Point 50, and Fairfield 12. Journalist and politician A.G. Patrick recalled, “Grasshopper Falls was overconfident of winning and failed to make a proper effort. Seven or eight of her citizens did not vote, whereas Oskaloosa made a desperate fight, and spent some money winning by a close shave of 4 votes.”

Feeling ran high in the wake of the election. According to *The First Hundred Years of Jefferson County Kansas*, “A tale has persisted through the years that the county records were removed from Osawkee between dusk and day light. Here is the way the old tale was told in an historical edition of Ozawkie high school paper a few years ago, the item secured by student reporters:

“Walter N. Allen and Rube Meyers (*sic*) were responsible for the stealing of the records from the little log cabin which stood on the public square in Osawkee and was being used as the courthouse. One night Rube Meyers came to Osawkee, loaded the records in his government wagon, drawn by four yoke of oxen, and drove back to Oskaloosa.”

Walter Allen was appointed county attorney to replace “a fellow by the name of Ghee” of Ozawkie, who refused to accompany the county records to Oskaloosa. Reuben Myers was a teamster from Oskaloosa. He volunteered with the Kansas State Militia in 1863-64. He was captured at the Battle of Westport but later escaped and returned to Oskaloosa.

Writing in 1902, A.G. Patrick told an alternate, more colorful tale, “the citizens fairly run wild, and when it came to a removal from Ozawkie to Oskaloosa ‘Uncle’ Jesse Newell was on hand with a cart and two yoke of oxen, to render service in hauling the county seat over, and actually had Joe Speer and Judge J.W. Day as passengers, and the three made the welcome ring ‘Uncle’ Jess forcibly shouting out his favorite ‘world’s without end!’ ”

Jesse Newell and Joseph Fitzsimmons platted the town of Oskaloosa in 1857. They donated a block for a public square, possibly intended for a courthouse. Newell built a steam-powered sawmill. John Day was an attorney and probate judge in Jefferson County and managing editor of the *Oskaloosa Independent* from 1860 to 1862.

Joseph Speer moved to Kansas in 1854 and served as probate judge in Jefferson County in 1857-58. The *Oskaloosa Independent* recounted his story of the removal of the county seat in 1888: “Our recollection of it now is, it was in 1858 that the Oskaloosa boys came over and kidnapped from poor old Ozawkie the county records and took them to Oskaloosa, where the county seat has been ever since. Speer was probate judge at the time and had gone on his claim to spend the night and when he came down to his office the next morning the first inquiry of the judge was, ‘where in the hell is my court.’ Being informed it had gone to Oskaloosa, he stroked his beard, smiled and said, ‘Well, by —— I expected old Jess Newell would play the trick on us.’ Speer denied all knowledge of the plot, soon after tied his shirt and socks in his old bandanna and left for the present county seat of Jefferson county, which is now one of the most beautiful cities in the state, and a more Christian, hospitable community don’t inhabit any other city in Kansas.”

A.G. Patrick gave a lively account of the 1859 second county seat campaign in the *Oskaloosa Times*, Jun. 13, 1902

There was no choice at the first election, and the conflict was now between Grasshopper Falls and Oskaloosa. Each town had money to spend, and emissaries with plenty of the needful were sent to every precinct in the county. The writer of this and John Beland, in the interest of the Falls, were at Rising Sun, opposite Lecompton, and with the assistance of Louis Lutt and his partner, we got 40 odd votes. "Uncle Billie" Meredith and Henry Owens was there to combat us, and whisky was free on either side, and by the time we left in order to go home and vote, we thought everyone had as much as their hides could hold. Joe Cody and Bob Shanklin represented the Falls at Kaw City [east of present-day Grantville, near the Kansas River], and they had a little wagon loaded with tobacco and whisky, and came home empty. Phillip Allen was sent to Oskaloosa to watch how things were carried on, and just got home in time to vote, but full as a tick, and we could get nothing out of him, but he persisted in singing a song about a Frenchman on his road from Paris to Paradise, who promised to take a black mare to some woman's first husband way up in the skies, but the woman's second husband soon got after him, and meeting a boy, made inquiry. But the little fellow was bribed to tell the Frenchman and the mare went right straight up into the air and claiming he could see him yet cantering in the clouds. The Frenchman's song was made applicable to our case at the Falls, and we could deeply sympathize with the second husband in the loss of the black mare, for we had not only lost the county seat but four hundred dollars in borrowed money.

Phillip Allen and the boys put in a full night of it, singing about the old black mare, cantering through the air, occasionally throwing in the old bacchanalian rhyme:

He who goes to bed sober
Dies like the leaves in October,
But he who goes to bed mellow
Lives a long, jolly life,
And dies an honest fellow.

Oskaloosa won the county seat by forty votes.

In February 1859 Oskaloosa filed an Act of Incorporation with the territorial governor (see related article).

In 1859 the territorial legislature passed a bill, introduced by A.G. Patrick of Grasshopper Falls, requiring county seats to be chosen by a majority of all votes cast. If no town received a majority, a runoff election between the top two candidates was to be held a month later. In the first election Oskaloosa led with 294 votes but did not receive a majority. Grasshopper Falls received 271 votes, Hickory Point 170, Osawkee 103, and Defiance 8.

In the runoff election Oskaloosa edged out the Falls by 43 votes.

Osawkee's population dwindled after it lost the county seat. Before 1860 the Dyer brothers had moved on, William to Pottawatomie County, Kansas, and George to Oregon. The Tebbs brothers moved to Arkansas and fought for the Confederacy in the 3rd Arkansas Infantry Regiment.

Kansas entered the Union as a free state in 1861. In 1864 the state legislature once again opened the county seat question. Three candidates competed. Oskaloosa led with 402 votes but could not claim the majority. Grasshopper Falls received 269 and Osawkee 198. The occasion did not pass without contention, however.

The *Kansas Jeffersonian*, Grasshopper Falls, reported on March 30, 1864: "We understand that there was quite a row at Osawkee, on election day. As we hear it, the difficulty commenced between the two Stevensons, who live on Grasshopper [Delaware River], a few miles below town, and a couple of brothers named Blake, about some old jayhawking affair. The Stevensons and a man by the name of Griffiths were badly whipped, and two other men were shot—one in the jaw and the other in the knee. We presume the matter will be investigated."

In the runoff election in November 1864, Oskaloosa won with 579 votes. Grasshopper Falls received 335. This election finally settled the matter.

It's possible that winter weather influenced the results of both 1864 elections.

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Apr. 2, 1864

The County Seat

Monday was any thing but a pleasant day. It snowed and it blowed, and blowed and snowed from morning until night. Consequently many persons were deterred from coming to the polls; 50 voters in this township did not get out, and at least 200 in the County favorable to this place were kept at home by sickness and the weather, so that we may safely say that we would have had 150 more votes had the day been pleasant.

MORE WINTER.—We thought last week we had made a record of the last snow storm of the season; but such was not the case. On Monday and Monday night there was quite a fall of snow which drifted two feet deep in some places, and the cold was quite severe. It would seem as though some imp of the Arctic zone had opened his mouth and blew a blast over into Kansas, just to see what he could do.

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Nov. 12, 1864

Winter

Tuesday, like almost all former election days in Kansas, was stormy and disagreeable, sleeting, blowing and snowing. On Wednesday the snow continued to fall until it was several inches deep, and the face of the county wore a decidedly wintry aspect. Our winters are getting to come on earlier than in former times, and farmers will have to look out for their potatoes before the late autumn.

The ELECTION passed off in this place very quietly. We heard no noise during the day and not a drunken man was to be seen in town. This should always be the case. Men should be sober and calm when they exercise the right of franchise.

The sleighing was passably good, we are told, on Thursday evening. Some of the young people were out trying it.

County seat elections were contentious in many parts of Kansas. In Leavenworth County three towns, Leavenworth City, Kickapoo City and Delaware City, competed in 1855. Missouri voters flooded the polls, and a court battle ensued. Delaware City was declared the winner, but a second election and court fight in 1857 eventually settled the county seat at Leavenworth. Free-staters in Douglas and Shawnee counties objected to early proslavery county seats, officially moving them after statehood. Several Franklin County towns contended in elections and lawsuits in 1860-61. Ford, Grant, Gray, Hamilton, Russell, Seward, Stevens and other counties reported incidents of bribery, intimidation and violence during county seat campaigns following Kansas statehood.

Somehow the saga of the Jefferson county seat eventually reached Hollywood, inspiring a 1955 film called "The Second Greatest Sex." It can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wOxOQ5xW8o>

—by Jane Hoskinson, with research and editorial assistance from Liz Leech

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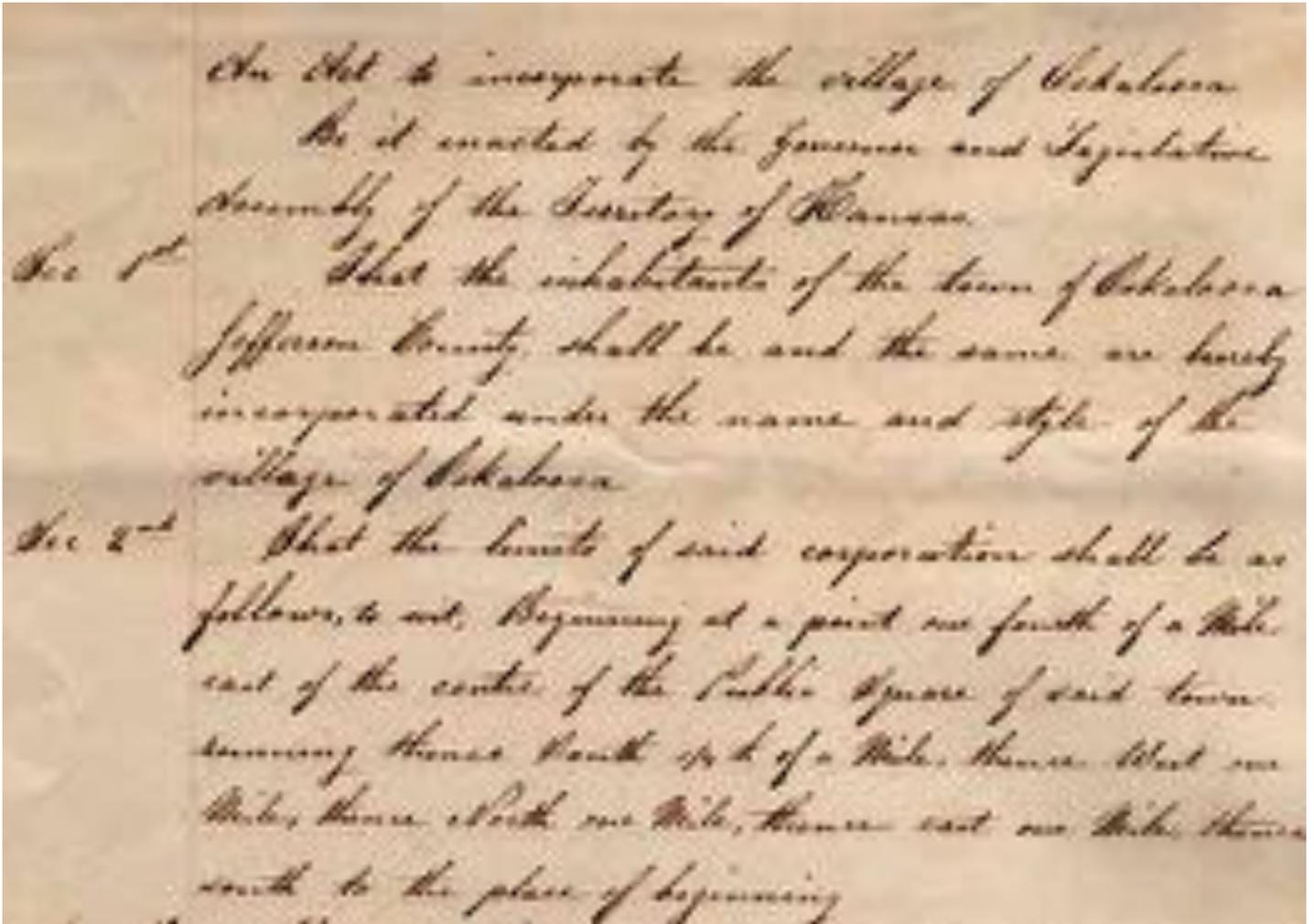
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“An Act to incorporate the village of Oskaloosa,” 1859

While she was sorting documents in the Old Jefferson Town Genealogical Library, JCHS Recording Secretary Ardie Grimes discovered a manila envelope. Inside, partially covered in cling wrap, was a hand-written copy of a document titled, “An Act to incorporate the village of Oskaloosa.” It was approved and signed by Territorial Governor S. Medary on February 8, 1859. The copy was certified by Hugh S. Walsh, Secretary of Kansas Territory, on February 26, 1859, in Lecompton, the territorial capital.



An Act to incorporate the village of Oskaloosa
As it enacted by the Governor and Legislative
Assembly of the Territory of Kansas.

Sec 1st That the inhabitants of the town of Oskaloosa
Jefferson County, shall be and the same are hereby
incorporated under the name and style of the
village of Oskaloosa.

Sec 2nd That the limits of said corporation shall be as
follows, to wit, Beginning at a point one fourth of a mile
east of the center of the Public Square of said town
running thence South 1/4 of a mile, thence West one
mile, thence North one mile, thence east one mile, thence
south to the place of beginning.

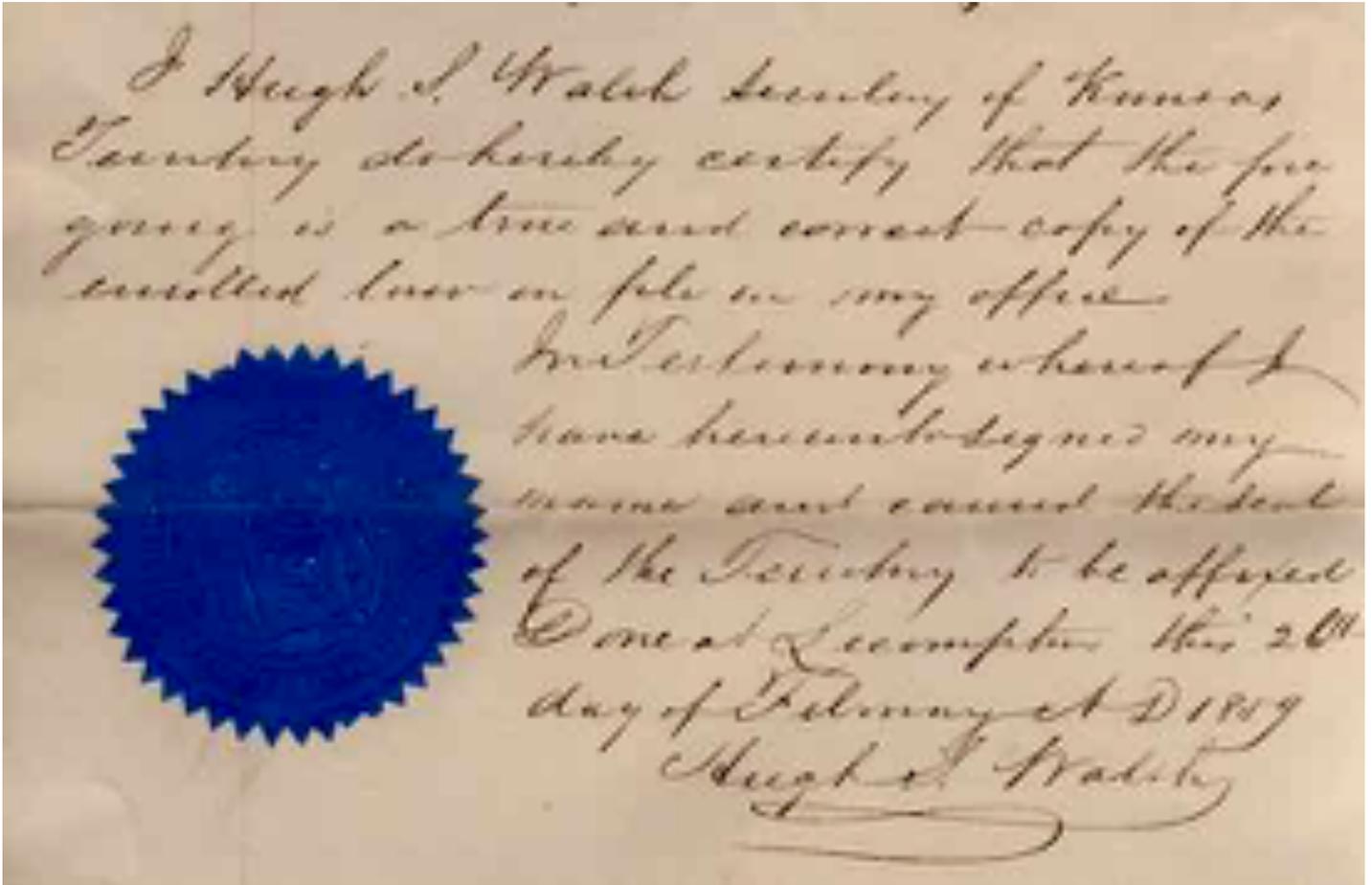
The act laid out the town boundaries and established its corporate authority, to be administered by a president, village clerk and a five-member board of trustees. The first Monday in April was established as the village's election day. Joseph Fitzsimmons, Jesse Newel (*sic*) and G.B. Carson were appointed “judges of election” and required to post notices of a special election to approve the act of incorporation, to be held on the third Monday of February 1859.

The president was to have the powers of a justice of the peace. The board of trustees would be the legislative body, authorized to pass city ordinances, levy and collect taxes and “remove nuisances.” Nuisance-removal duties included “to prevent and restrain bawdy, gambling and other disorderly houses, and to punish by fine the keepers thereof, to prevent or restrain tippling houses, dram shops, ten pin alleys, or other gambling device, and to prevent by fine the keepers of the same; to regulate circuses, shows, and other amusements, to prevent the discharge of fire-arms in the streets of said village; and to restrain or prevent the running at large of cattle, swine or other animals within the limits of said corporation; to protect property from fires; to prevent breaches of the peace and punish the same, and by ordinance to do all other acts necessary for the peace and well being of said village.”

In trials held under the jurisdiction of the board of trustees, either party could request “a jury of six persons good and lawful men.”

The complete act of incorporation document may be viewed on the Old Jefferson Town website:

<https://www.oldjeffersontown.com/forum/found-in-the-stacks/act-to-incorporate-the-village-of-oskaloosa>.



The 1859 territorial act of incorporation was drawn up about two months before the second of three elections conducted to determine the Jefferson county seat. Incorporation does not seem to have been a requirement for a town to compete in that election. Oskaloosa won the county seat in all three elections, 1858, 1859 and 1864 (see related article). The county courthouse was built in 1867-69.

On August 27, 1869, Oskaloosa was incorporated as a village under Kansas state government. The trustees were J.B. Johnson, J.N. Insley, G.W. Hogeboom, J.W. Roberts and T. Critchfield.

In April 1871 Oskaloosa was again incorporated, this time as a city, with Henry Keeler as mayor; S.S. King, police judge; and B.P. Stanley, L.J. Trower, Wm. Evans, H. Morley and D.M. Smith as councilmen.

Brothers-in-law Joseph Fitzsimmons and Jesse Newell came to Kansas from Oskaloosa, Iowa, in 1855, looking for a site for an anti-slavery town. They stayed with Missourian Dr. James Noble at his squatter's cabin before returning to Iowa. Newell's two oldest sons came with him and remained in Kansas. Fitzsimmons and Newell returned to Kansas in May 1856. Newell bought Dr. Noble's claim, and Fitzsimmons bought out Noble's daughter Maria. Early in 1857 they platted Oskaloosa, Kansas Territory, as a 40-acre, 15-block town. They reserved central block 8 for a public square, possibly hoping that it would be the site of a county courthouse.

Joseph Fitzsimmons was born in 1823 in Mifflin, Pennsylvania, and moved to Wapello County, Iowa, in the 1840s. In Oskaloosa, Kansas Territory, he opened a dry goods store and was the first postmaster. He served as the town's treasurer in 1861-62. With his first wife, Mary Ross, he had five children. Mary died in Oskaloosa, Kansas, in 1863. In 1864 he married Mary Finnicum, one of the first teachers in Oskaloosa. They had six children. In the mid-1860s Fitzsimmons moved his family to neighboring Jackson County, where he became a leading Republican. He later moved to Olathe, Kansas, where he died at the home of his daughter Georgia Griffiths in 1909.

Jesse Newell was born in 1812 in Ashland, Ohio, and moved to Mahaska County, Iowa, in 1848. With his first wife, Mary, he had eight children. After her death he married Rosanna Ross in Iowa in 1853. They had two children. He brought his family to Oskaloosa, Kansas Territory, in 1856. He built and operated a steam-powered sawmill and practiced as a physician. He was committed to making Kansas a free state and participated in the 1856 skirmishes at Slough Creek and Hickory Point. In the 1870s he moved with his family to Montgomery County, Kansas, where he died in 1881.

Gideon Blackburn Carson was born in Tennessee in 1828 and moved to Ray County, Missouri, with his parents in 1831. He came to Kansas in 1857, where he operated a store in Oskaloosa. He served one term as county treasurer. He served as quartermaster for Jefferson County's 4th regiment, Kansas State Militia, in 1863-64, supplying troops who participated in the Battle of Westport. In 1866 he moved to Perry and opened the first store there. He later moved to Joplin, Missouri, where he died in 1891.

Democrat Samuel Medary served four brief terms as Kansas territorial governor between 1858 and 1860. He was an Ohio politician and newspaper publisher who had also served as territorial governor of Minnesota. He resigned as Kansas governor in December 1860 and returned to Columbus, Ohio, where he published the *Crisis* until his death in 1864.

Hugh Sleight Walsh, a Democrat, served as private secretary to territorial governors Stanton and Denver. He became secretary of Kansas Territory in May 1858 and served as acting territorial governor four times. His biographical note in "Kansapedia" says, "Walsh was credited with aiding border ruffians as they suppressed James Montgomery's troops in Southeast Kansas." In June 1860 Walsh retired to farm near Grantville in Jefferson County, where he died in 1877.

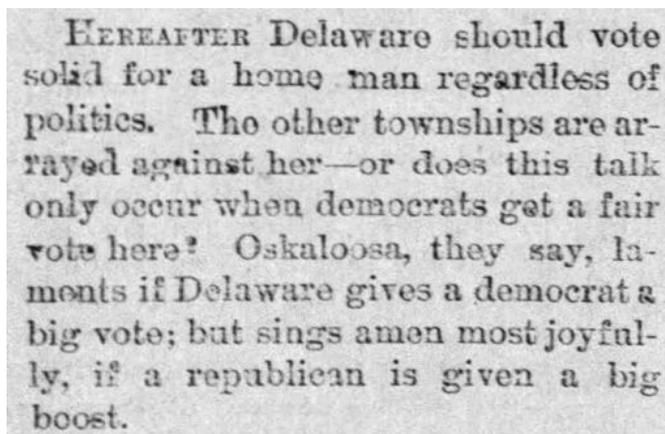
—by Jane Hoskinson, with research and editorial assistance from Ardie Grimes and Liz Leech

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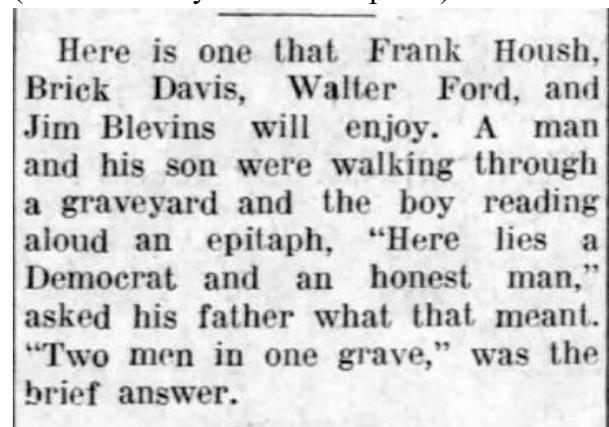
Partisan feeling ran high for many years after the conflicts of Kansas Territory and early statehood.

From the *Valley Falls Register*, Nov. 11, 1887



HEREAFTER Delaware should vote solid for a home man regardless of politics. The other townships are arrayed against her—or does this talk only occur when democrats get a fair vote here? Oskaloosa, they say, laments if Delaware gives a democrat a big vote; but sings amen most joyfully, if a republican is given a big boost.

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Feb. 3, 1911
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)



Here is one that Frank Housh, Brick Davis, Walter Ford, and Jim Blevins will enjoy. A man and his son were walking through a graveyard and the boy reading aloud an epitaph, "Here lies a Democrat and an honest man," asked his father what that meant. "Two men in one grave," was the brief answer.

Fads and Fancies

From the *Valley Falls Vindicator*, Oct. 5, 1906
By Minna Schatt Crawford

With the coming of cooler days the question of children's school frocks and their materials are of great interest. Checks and plaids continue to be prime favorites, and with abundant reason, for there is nothing so thoroughly childlike and pretty as the gay Scotch plaids. Panama cloth in the various weights, and in all colors of red, blue, green and brown has taken the place of both serge and mohair in the children's wardrobe. Its firm texture, its pliability, its lack of that tendency to ravel at cut edges which makes both serges and mohairs so difficult for the amateur sewer to handle; and, above all, its iron-like wearing qualities have won for it an abiding place in the affections of thrifty mothers. It is a splendid fabric for young girls' coat suits or blouse suits, and will be worn more than ever the coming season.



For the smaller girls, from four to twelve, challies, cashmere and albatross are mostly used, made into dainty frocks, mostly of the guimpe order, and worn with separate coats when days are chilly. The delightfully pretty frock here pictured was made of bright red, polka-dotted challis, with the guimpe yoke of French hand embroidery. The pattern No. 2105 is cut in sizes 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 years. Size 10 requires 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ yards of 36 inch material, with 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ yards of lawn and $\frac{1}{2}$ yard of all-over for the guimpe. Price 15 cents.



Boys' Russian suit, consisting of blouse and knickerbockers. May be made of either Panama cloth, serge or wash flannel. Pattern 2055 is cut in sizes 4, 6 and 8 years. Size 6 requires 3 yards of 42 inch material. Price 15 cents.



Ladies' smart walking suit of blue and black invisible plaid suiting. The coat is semi-fitted, with seams from the shoulder in front, and from the sides at the back. It fastens in double-breasted style, with either buttonholes or loops, and has a beautiful roll collar and turn-back cuffs of velvet. The coat pattern No. 2122 is cut in sizes 32, 34, 36, 38 and 40 inches bust measure. Price 15 cents.

The skirt is a plaited model in five gores, with stylish inverted plaits at front, sides and back. It is a beautiful model for either a separate skirt or as part of a costume. The pattern 2123 is cut in sizes 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 inches waist measure. Price 15 cents.



Ladies' shirt waist in dark blue and green checked flannel, finished with a belt and tie of green taffeta silk. The waist is made in a smart vest effect, with an inverted plait and two single plaits on each side of the front, and detachable collar and cuffs. There are three tucks at the center back. The pattern No. 2119 is cut in sizes 32, 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust measure. Size 36 requires 3 ¾ yards of 27 inch material Price 15 cents.

Love and Marriage

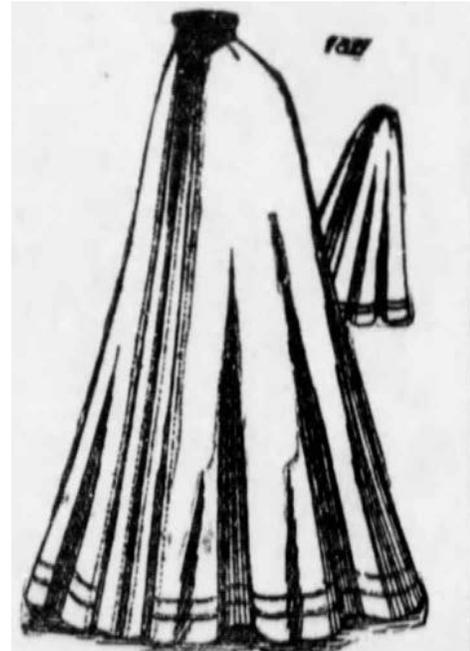
From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Nov. 12, 1864

MATRIMONIAL!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

If you wish to marry, address the undersigned who will send you without money and without price, valuable information that will enable you to marry happily and speedily, irrespective of age, wealth or beauty. This information will cost you nothing, and if you wish to marry, I will cheerfully assist you. All letters strictly confidential. The desired information sent by return mail, and no questions asked. Address

SARAH B. LAMBERT,
217 2m Greenpoint, Kings Co., New York



Ladies' skirt, with circular front and sides and tucked back gore. Pattern No. 1811 is cut in sizes 22, 24, 26, 28 and 30 inches waist measure. Price 15 cents.

Our readers may obtain these patterns by enclosing fifteen cents for each pattern desired and mailing direct to

FASHION CORRESPONDENT,
6032 Metropolitan Bldg., New York City.

Be careful to state correct size and number of patterns wanted.

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Dec. 8, 1899
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

Here Is a Real Romance.

Stephen E. Burch, who eloped with Mary Greenawalt, of Atchison county, November 20, turns out to be a wealthy farmer from Olathe. He feared to marry a woman who knew of his wealth, so he started out to find a girl who would love him for himself. He disguised himself as a farm hand, and for a few days worked for Peter Greenawalt near Huron. He fell in love with the daughter, and they eloped to Kansas City.

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Oct. 26, 1900
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

A romantic voyage is that just entered upon by Miss Agnes Curry of this county, daughter of Smith Curry, the well-known Republican committeeman of Norton township. A young soldier in the far-off Philippines has sent for his sweetheart, and she starts on her 10,000 mile trip by land and sea to meet her brave boy in blue. And then there will be a wedding under the palm trees by the sea. May much joy be with these young people!

From the *Topeka State Journal*, Oct. 13, 1911
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

MARRIED IN STORE.

Kansas Couple Agree on Carpet and Send for Minister.

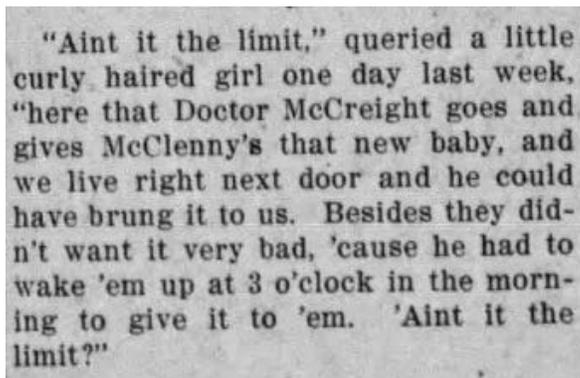
Kansas City, Oct. 13.—Frederick Aberhold and Capitola Smalley, both of Valley Falls, Kan., had been intending to get married for some time, but one thing after another had interfered. Finally Frederick told Capitola that he had enough money saved to furnish their house. They came to Kansas City yesterday to do their shopping.

After spending several hours in a store and buying various articles, they arrived at the momentous question of a carpet for the living room. Fred's heart became set on a pattern that resembled a sunset. Capitola was determined that after waiting so long she was going to have something she liked. And sunset carpets were not in her list of desirables. After a heated argument Capitola, as the cunning woman, had a brilliant idea.

"All right," assented Fred, when the matter was blushing broached by Capitola, "they seem to have everything else here, 'spose they've got someone to hook you up, too."

And of Course, Babies

From the *Oskaloosa Times*, Jan. 30, 1913



"Aint it the limit," queried a little curly haired girl one day last week, "here that Doctor McCreight goes and gives McClenny's that new baby, and we live right next door and he could have brung it to us. Besides they didn't want it very bad, 'cause he had to wake 'em up at 3 o'clock in the morning to give it to 'em. 'Aint it the limit?"

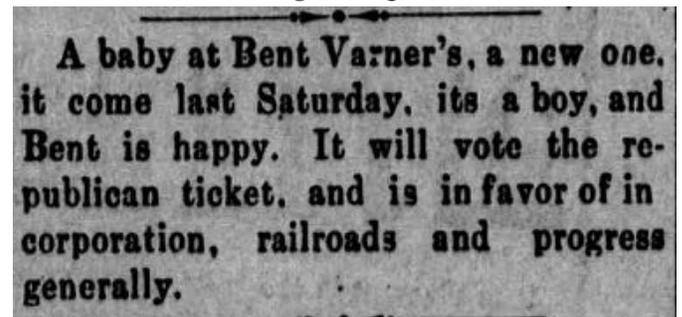
A floorwalker was asked where the minister was kept. He referred the couple to Chester L. Jones. Mr. Jones proved himself equal to the occasion by calling a clerk and sending him with the couple to the license clerk at the court house, with directions to return to his office. When the trio and the marriage license returned they found the Rev. W.A. Rex of St. Paul's Reformed church awaiting them. With the clerk and Mr. Jones as witnesses the couple was married, but when it was all over true love had overcome Capitola's rug-loving nature and they took the first train back to Valley Falls.

A Dream

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Oct. 26, 1900
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

The long delay in the arrival of the west-bound mail train on the Northwestern last Friday was caused by a disastrous wreck on the road just east of Bethel. A Maple Leaf passenger train ran head first into a freight train of the same company, badly damaging the engines and some of the cars and tearing up the track. The engine men on the freight saw the danger in time, jumped off and escaped injury; but those on the passenger jumped and each broke a right leg, the engineer being so badly hurt as to require amputation of the leg. A singular thing in connection with this accident is the following: The wife of the engineer, who lives in St. Joe, dreamed that her husband was in a wreck, and was so much impressed that she got up at about 5 a.m. and dressed to go to the round-house and make inquiry. As she was ready to go she heard the whistle of her husband's engine, a familiar salute that he was accustomed to give in passing thro' the city near his home. This reassured his wife, and she remained at home, only to hear in about two hours of her husband's accident.

From the *Winchester Argus*, Aug. 4, 1887



A baby at Bent Varner's, a new one, it come last Saturday, its a boy, and Bent is happy. It will vote the republican ticket, and is in favor of in corporation, railroads and progress generally.

A Scot's Impressions of Kansas

Charles Bain Visited Rev. Coulter of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Winchester

From the *Winchester Argus*, July 14, 1887
Winchester, Kan., July 14, '87

SIR:—I have been asked to give a short account of my experience and impressions of the west and especially of Kansas. My idea in first coming west, was to renew and get up my health, which had not been rugged for some time. This, I may say, I have succeeded in doing. Whether it is due to the good climate of which Kansas boasts, or the extreme kindness of the people, I don't know. Probably both together. The western part of the United States is so very different from Scotland that it would take a long time to enumerate the distinctive features. The greatest difference I think is the fruits of the earth. In Scotland to-day, you would see the grain scarcely in the ear; here you are already storing it in the barn. Your staple crop, corn, we never have, probably owing to the cool climate. One of the most beautiful sights which one can see as he drives through the country is the large and luxuriant fields of corn waving with their tall stalks already loaded with the grain. The principal crop which is raised in Scotland is oats. The staple food of the true Scotchman being oatmeal porridge, without which he would feel a decided want for his food. Barley is raised in good land to about forty bushels to the acre. Wheat is not grown much, but here and there you would find a stray field or so. Coming from country life we take a look at the towns. Here again the difference is seen. The houses with us are all built of rock, none of wood, substantial and strong. I have, however, never known much difference in comfort, and believe the houses here just as comfortable as those at home. My stay in the country has been most pleasant and profitable. If I were to make a selection of the place I would like to reside here in Kansas, I believe I would choose Winchester. Whether my acquaintance with my friend and Scotch brother, Mr. John Aitken, has anything to do with this feeling or not, I don't know, but since I came a few weeks ago to your little town, I have been treated by everyone with uniform kindness. I felt from the first day I came that feeling I have felt no where else scarcely, a feeling of being made at home, and while a guest at the house of your esteemed preacher, Mr. Coulter, was treated as a son. When a man is 5,000 miles



Reformed Presbyterian Church,
Winchester, Kansas, ca. 1910,
photo by Charles Forsyth

away from home and friends to be treated in this way is very gratifying and thus my stay in Kansas, and especially in Winchester, will remain with me as a bright time in my life. Mr. John Carson and I have had many chats about Scotland and although I could not tell a "Clyde" from a "Norman" yet I had great pleasure in viewing his fine animals which he has brought from the old land. But the man who brought Scotland nearest to me was John Aitken, and many an hour we had talking over experiences in the land of the "mountain and the flood." As to your people generally, all I can say they are open hearted and generous, welcome the stranger and if they find he is honest and trustworthy they treat him accordingly. The good people of Winchester tried to make an American of me, but I fear the traces of the British Lion are in me for in the sight of the stars and stripes and the dreadful grand army, I would persist in singing God save the Queen. I had intended to sing it to myself on the Glorious Fourth, but was hindered, spending the day on a couch, the result of the intense heat. I admired the spirit of independence, however, which was exhibited on that day, and it will become the American people who dwell in the "land of the free and home of the brave" to be loyal to their country. May she prosper, and grow, and enlarge her borders, having above all this the knowledge of Him "who rules above prime ministers" and that characteristic worthy of any people, the righteousness which exalteth a nation. One thing more and I have done. I rejoice that so much opportunity has been given me of preaching the gospel here, and I trust that the result of my words may yet be found to the glory of Him whom I would ever serve. I have to bid all my friends adieu, and here thank each of them for their kindness to the "Scotch Laddie" who came to dwell amongst them. In the providence of God I trust I may return again to Kansas, meanwhile I bid all my friends Good Bye.

CHARLES S. BAIN

“The Sub-Afro-American League of Kansas”

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Aug. 10, 1900
Colored Voters Unite.

The colored voters of the southern part of the county meet and organize for the coming campaign. They say that they will stand by one another. By the end of the month every voter will be enrolled in the League. The following resolutions were passed: Whereas, we, the colored voters of Jefferson county, find that being divided we gain little or no prestige.

Whereas, we believe that the colored voters have controlled either district or the county.

Whereas, the colored voter has not received just recognition.

Whereas, we deem it necessary to combine our votes and minds for the betterment of our condition; and

Whereas, we think it wise to be a branch of the Afro American League of Kansas,

Therefore be it resolved, that the name of this organization shall be “The Sub-Afro-American League of Kansas.”

Be it resolved that we endorse the McKinley administration and the Republican platform as adopted at Philadelphia.

Resolved, that we endorse the work of Hon. Chas. Curtis, and that we use our influence for his election.

Resolved that we use our influence in the way that it will better the condition of the Negroes of each district and the county. Their motto is “more work and less talk.”

Committee: G. Washington, G. Bradford, J. Williams.

The following officers were chosen: John Williams, Sr., Pres.; Eli Lee, Sr., vice-Pres.; Jesse Bryant, Sec’y; executive committee, C.B. Bryant, chairman, S. Asbury, G. Twates, J. Williams, Jr., H. James.

From the *Winchester Star*, Jan. 31, 1890

Fifty-First Congress New House Bills

Among new bills in the house are: . . . one by Kelly, of Kansas, (by request) appropriating \$100,000 to the erection of a monument to the negro soldiers, and sailors of the late war.

Decoration Day, 1888

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Jun. 2, 1888

Decoration services at Oskaloosa were attended by a good many people last Wednesday, though not as many were present from outside the city as at other like occasions. A large procession, headed by band and followed by Sabbath schools, Sons of Veterans, G.A.R. post and citizens in vehicles, went to the cemetery, where the usual impressive ceremonies were held and the graves of some 24 departed soldiers profusely decked with flowers. In the afternoon, Mr. D.C. Jordon of Leavenworth spoke for half an hour in an interesting manner, and was followed by short addresses from Messrs. L.D. Price, J.W. Roberts and Edwin Snyder, the speaking being interspersed with singing. The speaking and music was listened to by as many as could squeeze into the court-room, which was little more than half the crowd.

The following is a list of the soldiers buried in Pleasant View Cemetery, and two, Fairchild and Conwell, who were buried in the old burial grounds and never removed. The number is rapidly growing, there being 26 now:

A.W. Keeling, C, 60th Ohio;
T.J. Fitzsimmons, M, 5th Kan.;
F. Conner, 5th Iowa Cav.;
Wm. Stevenson, K, 6th Iowa;
J.K. Tedrick, K, 2nd Colorado;
W.B. Swain;
Eli Hampton, B, 2nd Kan.;
Henry Buckmaster, Surgeon, U.S. Vols.;
Jules L. Williams, H, 4th Mich.;
Perry Bates, B, 137th Penn.;
John Hinden, F, 10th N.Y.;
John Sands, 2nd Kan.;
T. McIntosh, K, 33d Iowa;
Sydney Hutcheson, 2d Kan. Col.;
L.J. Trower, B, 17th Kans.;
John Keplinger, B, 5th Iowa;
J.N. Harris, G, 101st Ill.;
Horace Gibbs, 2d Kan. Ind. Battalion;
Samuel Kemp, B, 17th Kans.;
T.M. Brown;
Benjamin Daniels;
John F. McClure, C, 18th Iowa;
James Wells, C, 13th Iowa;
Rocillous Conwell, E, 5th Kans.;
John Fairchild, H, 14th Iowa;
Thomas West, 2nd Kans. Ind. Batallion.

Weather Signs

From the *Winchester Star*, Jun. 24, 1910
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

When the next picnic day comes around and you are wondering anxiously whether it is going to rain or not, here are a few signs which are said to be infallible. Some can be applied only in the country, but others will do for city or country.

If there is lightning without thunder of an evening after a clear day, the fine weather will continue. Except rain or wind, and often both, when the stars appear larger and closer, or flickering in the sky Watch the stars on a clear summer night, and should there be no falling stars you may expect the fine weather to continue.

A clear and sunny morning in summer or in autumn foretells rain, and when rain falls while an east wind is blowing, you may expect the rain to last for four-and-twenty hours.

The weather will improve should a halo or ring form round the sun during bad weather, and if there are clouds in the east in the evening.

Rain before sunrise will give a fine afternoon.

Bees remain in their hives, or fly but short distances from them, when bad weather may be expected.

If sheep or goats fight more than they usually do, or jump about the fields, you may look for a bad change of weather. Also when cattle stop feeding and chase each other, when the dogs are dull and sleepy, or howl or bark to an unusual degree.

In the farmyard before bad weather cocks crow earlier and more than usual, peacocks and guinea fowls scream, turkeys gobble, and the fowls generally are noisy and restless.

In summer a red sky at sunrise foretells wind and showers, but in winter steady rain throughout that day.

Possum Bake

From the *Oskaloosa Times*, Jan. 24, 1907
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

It seems that we overlooked what was really the event of the season, the possum bake, given by Dr. Al D. Lowry at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Carter over a week ago. Dr. Knauer and F. Quiet were cooks and the Misses Zimmerman waitresses. There were five o'possums with oysters and hot-tamalás galore. Hon. Ben Johnson was toast-master and the host and hostess were given some valuable presents. There were 58 merry-makers at the feast.

Increasing Number of Men at Work on Highways

From the *Winchester Star*, Nov. 24, 1933
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

As construction on four major highway projects in Jefferson county gets under way an increasing number of men are going to work.

On the county-benefit district "Poor Farm" road 30 men are now on the job, with more to be called next week, it is thought. Calls from the contractors on State Highway 24 at Valley Falls and 92 at McLouth brought notification yesterday and today to close to 100 men from all sections of the county to report for work.

The Valley Falls-Effingham road, a county-benefit district project, will be started as soon as the last of the government red tape is unwound.—
Independent.

Jefferson County Poor Farm Suggested as P.O.W. Camp

From the *Winchester Star*, May 19, 1944
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

The Shawnee county poor farm is being leased to the government as a camp for prisoners of war. Jefferson county has a large poor farm building at present not in use, which could easily house many prisoners of war and their services could be used in the county to relieve the farm labor situation.

[*Ed. note: Jefferson County did not house a prisoner of war camp during World War II.*]

Of Rats and Cats

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Sept. 29, 1883
(contributed by Leanne Chapman)

A big rat story comes from W.D. Trapp, who moved the floor of a crib last Saturday. He and four or five others killed 135 rats in a short length of time, and more than that number escaped to the stone fences and other places of refuge. The rats had destroyed most of a crib of 100 bushels of corn. Speaking of this fact, James W. Shrader remarked that there were no rats or mice around his farm premises, owing to the vigilance of some 35 cats! This small army of felines have their quarters at his barn and are fed twice a day, with milk, as regularly as the days come and go. Mr. S. finds it much cheaper to feed the cats than the rats.

Sam Smith

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Jul. 9, 1887

Sam. Smith, son of Ed. Smith, the well-known farmer of Fairview twp., went out to New Mexico last March, (accompanying the first excursion to Colorado from this point to Lamar), and went to work for Baldwin and Brooks, on a sheep ranch some distance from Socorro. He had had a bad cough all winter, and thought the climate of New Mexico would help him, and so it did. But Brooks was an overbearing fellow and seemed to take pleasure in bullying Sam., at one time snatching an *Independent* from his hands and declaring with curses, epithets and threats that he shouldn't read that paper on his ranch.—Sam., who is a good-natured, industrious young fellow of about 18 years, bore with the abuse for some time, those who knew of it expressing wonder at his forbearance. Finally, one evening Brooks made an assault upon him for a trifling cause, was warned by the boy to keep hands off, but persisted and clutched him by the throat, when Sam. drew a pistol and shot his aggressor, who fell to the ground. Sam. went and told Baldwin what had occurred, the latter gave him part of the wages due him (all the money he had with him, as he told Sam.) and Sam. left for parts unknown. Mr. B. writes to Mr. Ed. Smith the particulars, and tells him that Brooks may get well, though he was very seriously wounded, the ball entering the abdomen and ranging downward, and so far not having been found by the surgeon. A Kansas man who fortunately happened to be visiting at the ranch, has also informed Mr. Smith of the particulars, in substance as we give them, and the partner of the wounded man writes that the "law can't touch Sam" for the act. It was clearly an act of self-defense, and although Sam's friends are sorry such a thing should occur, they can't blame Sam. much.

From the *Oskaloosa Independent*, Jul. 11, 1919

Even-Month Calendar Would Prevent Date-Mixing

CONGRESS is to be asked to substitute a million-year calendar for the present one. The Equal-Month Calendar association, with headquarters in Minneapolis, is pushing the movement. With the adoption of exactly four-weeks per month, there will be days enough pushed over from the present reckoning for another month of 28 days, which it is proposed to call Liberty and to insert between February and March. There will also be a day additional to make 365, and an extra day every four years, as in leap year.

The new plan will take care of the regular additional day by placing it between December 28 and January 1, unattached to any week or month, and calling it New Year's day. Similar provision would be made for Correction day, as the leap year extra would be called, which would be sandwiched between convenient dates, belonging to no month and having no day name of its own except Correction. Having thus disposed of all possible days and extras, the calendar would be perpetual and uniform through all the years.



McLouth Base Ball, 1887

From the *McLouth Times*, Jun. 17, 1887

Dan Taylor's face looks as though he come out second best in a prize fight, but it was caused by a foul ball.

Two more base ball accidents to record this week. On Sunday afternoon one man sprained an ankle quite badly, and on Tuesday night another split a finger while trying to stop a fly. We would recommend the boys to employ a surgeon for the season and have him present during every game.

The game of baseball between the McLouth and Hazel Ridge clubs was not played last Sunday on account of the non appearance of the McLouth boys.

From the *McLouth Times*, Jul. 1, 1887

BASEBALL.

Oskaloosa Wins a Game from McLouth by a Scratch.

On Friday night of last week a challenge was received here from the Oskaloosa ball tossers for a match game to come off on Saturday afternoon, which in the absence of an organized club was accepted by a few players who sent word to the challengers to come on.

As Saturday was a foggy day until afternoon no further thought was given to the matter until 2:30 p.m. when the players from Oskaloosa arrived. Then it took nearly an hour to find enough players in this man's town to make up a nine, but finally the task was accomplished, by taking a promiscuous lot of boys, not one of which belonged to the old first nine of last year, but despite these disadvantages they lost the game by only a score of 14 to 15.

The following is the score:

McLOUTH	R	O
Cunningham, s s	2	2
Karr, c	1	2
D. Taylor, c f	1	4
Myers, 1b	0	7
Howard, p	2	1
Tayson, 3b	2	3
Gibson, 2b	1	4
Chapman, l f	3	2
J. Vandruff, r f	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
	14	27

OSKALOOSA	R	O
J. Sands, 1b	3	2
F. Brown, s s	1	4
Smith, c f	1	4
Robinson, p & 3b	1	2
J. Brown, 2b	2	3
J. Wilson, l f	3	1
J.H. Brown, c	3	2
Brusenback, r f	0	5
R. Wilson, p & 3b	<u>1</u>	<u>4</u>
	15	27

Time of game, two hours.

Umpire, Wise.

Left on bases, Oskaloosa 4; McLouth 9.

Hit by pitched ball, Howard.

Bases on balls, Oskaloosa 2; McLouth 0.

DIAMOND DUST.

There was considerable kicking on the decisions of the umpire.

The Oskaloosa club was composed of the pick of not only the best players of that city, but also of a country club north of there.

The Oskaloosa first baseman is a dandy.

Ten players for Oskaloosa and an erroneous decision gave them the game.

Our boys worked like beavers and had they ever played together before would have beat the visitors out of sight.

It is safe to say that a different result will be recorded when the return game is played at Oskaloosa one week from to-morrow.

It is hard to umpire a game without making an error.

Dan Taylor can kick in spite of his broken toe.

It looks a little queer to have a base runner declared out while lying across the base, without being touched by the ball. How is it "Fatty?"

Lem Myers got so excited while coaching that he ran across the diamond to encourage a base runner.

Of course he was declared out.

A large number of people were out on the grounds to witness the game.

Will Howard made the only home run.

"Kansas" made a home run on a lost ball.

The visitors looked nice in their bright red suits.

Howard, McLouth's left handed twirler, was a puzzler to the visitors, and they could not hit his balls at all.

Ralph Wilson pitches a nice curve ball. Our boys will do some hard work when they visit Oskaloosa for the return game on Saturday afternoon, July 9th.

McLOUTH VS. SPRINGDALE.

On Saturday afternoon a match game of baseball will be played at Springdale between a nine from that place and one from this city. It will, no doubt, be an interesting and exciting game, and afford rare sport to those who witness it.

LEAVENWORTH.

Leavenworth has sold another player, and as usual it is a good one, Swartzel, her crack pitcher. This is the third sale in less than a month. The management ought to be kicked into the Missouri river, for its incapacity and imbecility. But that is the way when a club is managed by gamblers, the better class will not patronize the game.

HAZEL RIDGE VS. McLOUTH.

On Sunday last a game of ball was played at Hazel Ridge between a picked nine of that section and a scrub team from this place, which resulted in a victory for the McLouth boys by a score of 33 to 8. The following is the score:

HAZEL RIDGE	R	O
Ridgeway	3	0
Hoffman	2	1
Stewart	0	2
E. Anderson	0	3
Wm. Bell	1	2
H. Anderson	1	2
Bill Fiddler	0	3
Newby	0	2
Ryan	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>
	8	15
McLOUTH	R	O
R. Taylor	3	3
Crummel	3	1
Howard	3	3
George Goens	4	1
Chapman	4	1
Karr	5	1
Champ	5	0
Cunningham	3	2
Gibson	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
	33	12

The time for the return game has not yet been determined upon.

Everybody come to McLouth on the 4th and witness the match game of baseball for a purse of ten dollars.

From the *McLouth Times*, Jul. 15, 1887

BASEBALL.

A Number of Games with Varied Results.

The return game between the first nine of Oskaloosa and this city took place at the county seat last Saturday, at which the capital boys came out one ahead, by a score of 21 to 20, which was better than was expected when the boys went over there. All of the men and boys were so busy that only seven could be persuaded to go over, to help amuse the Oskaloosa fellows.

Below will be found the result of the game:

McLOUTH	R	O
Carnahan, c & 1b	3	3
Wit, 1 f	3	2
Trower, p	2	2
Shamp, 3b	2	3
Taylor, 2b	2	3
Goens, s s & r f	0	4
Karr, c & 1b	2	2
Osborne, c f	2	2
Kirkham, s s & r f	<u>4</u>	<u>0</u>
	20	21
OSKALOOSA	R	O
J. Sands, 1b	3	2
Morley, 3b	2	3
Smith, c f	3	2
Miller, 1 f	2	2
Brown, c	3	2
J. Wilson, s s	2	2
R. Wilson, p	3	1
Sable, r f	0	4
Conant, 2b	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>
	21	18

Umpire, Bernstein.

Time of game, 2 hours.

DIAMOND DUST.

Bernstein, the Oskaloosa umpire, is well qualified for the position, and gave satisfaction.

The colored player of Oskaloosa excited attention. Oskaloosa is now re-organizing her first nine club this week.

Grant Trower was pleased to fan out the colored player a couple of times.

The Oskaloosa club did not come over here to play yesterday, because Sands, their first baseman, had cut his finger.

Published May 18, 1878, Page 1,
in the *Oskaloosa Independent*
Mr. Bennet gives us Part II of his
encounter with loyal Union Kansas
Jayhawkers

Original Sketch

[Written for the *Independent*]

Early Recollections of Kansas

By J.H. Bennet

In writing this sketch and the one previous to this, I have no other object than to make a vivid pen picture of the lights and shadows of "Jayhawking." It was a free, wild life; at times badly spotted with crime, and at times bringing into existence and active operation some of the noblest impulses of the human character; at times grimly humorous and strangely affecting; at time perilous, and at times productive of stern retributive justice. Its participants, and they are among our most respected citizens, are not in the habit of relating incidents of this service; and if they continue this reticent policy, this peculiar phase of the war of the rebellion may be lost.

I left my friend George at Hiawatha, going north. I returned to Grasshopper Falls. I had not been missed, and the raid was very little talked of for a week or more. One evening, however, Will, came to my office with a great sorrow on his face. George had been arrested at Brownsville as a horse thief. They had taken his stock away from him, and kept him in jail two days. They refused to believe his story. They said it was not sufficient if true to justify his actions. They softened but slowly; first, they concluded not to kill him; after a while they took him out of the calaboose; then they said he might walk home and send the constable after the stock; and finally lent him the mule, and he came to Grasshopper Falls for help. Of course I helped him.

We went over the same ground again; crossed the Grasshopper at Half Mound crossing, took the ridge for some miles, the east side of a wide bottom, then Muscotah, then another high prairie road, some broken ground. Kinnekuk, a long prairie, Claytonville, Hiawatha, and Padonia. We left Padonia hoping to reach Falls City in the late evening, crossed the Walnut and went down on the west side. About a mile into Nebraska, and about two and a half miles due south of Falls City, there is a kind of mound, or outlying bluff covered on the west and north with timber and thick hazel brush. Around this mound Poney Creek makes a horse shoe curve, and only a short distance away. On the north-west side and nearly to the top stood a good hewed log house, then occupied by a tolerably well to do farmer, his wife and two children. When we were a mile or more away, we saw quite a body of soldier-looking mounted men, skirting the timber on Poney Creek, and disappearing behind the mound, going west. Without the least suspicion of evil we jogged along and pulled up at the house, just at dusk. A woman with a child in her arms and another clinging to her skirts was standing just outside the door. Her head and dress were in great disorder, and there were signs of deep emotion in her face. George had been there before, and she hurriedly and almost fiercely questioned and talked to him.

"Oh!! Oh!! They have broken all my dishes, and stolen everything, even a loaf of bread, and the butcher knife. They took the things out of that trunk, and carried off my children's dresses, and some pillow slips." *Who are they? Why, rebel Jayhawkers* of course, and they took John's saddle. "Oh, but they didn't get my man *Where is he?* Oh, I do wonder if they'll get him yet. Do you think they're gone? Do please, old man, ride to the top of the point and look over there," said she, pointing westward.

I hurried up the knoll, but I couldn't help thinking myself quite young, nevertheless. I was back in three minutes. It was too dark to see more than half a mile. The woman was still moaning, but not so bitterly. I took George's mule, and George hunted for an ax. The Nemaha River was too high to ford, and there was no crossing nearer than Salem, seven or eight miles to the west. The woman had some flour and fat bacon, and we were hungry, and were ready to work. I was just pulling the saddle off my horse, when the woman gave a scream. George, who was hacking a stick of wood, dropped his ax with almost a groan. I dropped my saddle, and every particle of strength went out of my knees. Down off that knoll came a mounted man, swinging a carbine in his hand and wearing two revolvers in his belt. He dashed round that house and drew up within ten feet of me. Two hundred yards away, advancing nearly as rapidly, and on the path we came, were 30 or 40 armed and mounted men. I was sure the rebels had returned. They had probably made a circuit of the brush and were now bringing in that poor woman's husband, to murder him in the presence of his wife and children. I held on to the white pony's mane for support, and shuddered with apprehension for myself and my friend.

This dread was of short duration. The woman stepped instantly to the side of the scout's horse, and a hurried whisper and a rapid gesture assured me that they were good friends, and that we were not to be prey for that band. I caught the last words: "Not a half hour gone," and the brave fellow plunged his spurs into his horse's sides and cantered off into the darkness. The body of men surrounded us almost immediately. Most of them dismounted for a drink of water. I did not yet understand. We attracted little notice. A man pounced on to my saddle, with a sudden cry of relief; "Whose is this?" Then

his eye fell on me, and he kept right on; "I want to ride this to-night. I'll bring it back after the fight." Suddenly a loud voice, shouted: "Where's Charley?" A man on a white horse, who was a little detached from the crowd, answered promptly: "He's ten minutes ahead, Capt. Sharp." I almost screamed, I was so glad. We were safe. These were Kansas Jayhawkers. They might rob us, but they would not kill us. I was not afraid of anything. I could call the names of too many of their kin for them to hurt me. "Mount, boys, we will have them yet," shouted the Capt. The man with the white horse started, two or three hundred feet ahead of the cavalcade, the hindmost man of which rode my saddle. They splashed through Poney Creek, across a little clay bottom, and out on to the prairie grass which so muffled the noise of the horses feet, that we tho't there was a great silence. As I turned to a renewed preparation of supper I felt that a mountain had lifted itself off my shoulders.

In a half hour they were all back, crazy for something to eat. My saddle man, in answer to my look of questioning, blurted out: "Too cussed dark. How many pancakes you got?" I divided my supper with him, went with him to the top of the knoll, stood picket with him two hours, made him talk, and went with him to a haystack, where we fed some horses and had a notion to sleep. "Too blank many fleas. What'll you take for that saddle?" I protested strongly, and for a few minutes thought he would have it any how. We were peeping into an open door of the house where the floor was covered with sleeping men, when he made me this proposition: "Jim Goodenow's will suit you as well." I'll "steal it and leave it in the brush for you, and give you fifteen dollars." Capt. Sharp and two men, were consulting near us, about looking in on some fellows they had passed late in the evening, and who had not reported; one of

these two men was Jim, himself; “No, by blank, you won’t, you blank scoundrel, you,” put an end to the saddle business. I crept back to the haystack and drove away some hogs, but couldn’t sleep for the cold; I caught lice enough though to last me three weeks. About four o’clock I was listening to Capt. Sharp’s last directions to a couple of scouts who were mounted and ready to reconnoiter “them fellers we passed,” and as they started out, the Captain said: “Old man, let’s bunk. I’ve got two bunkum blankets.” The Captain dropped straight to sleep. I laid still and listened. I heard the man of the house hail the guard, heard the words of greeting between him and his wife, the relation of the incidents of the robbery, and the curses, not loud but deep, which he heaped upon the robbers. His only crime had been the harboring of Sharp’s men. Poor fellow, he couldn’t help it. He had to choose, and he did not choose the rebellion.

In the early gray of morning I found George on picket duty, and relieved him. I stood there under the edge of a bank of clay, commanding Poney Creek ford and a hundred yards of bottom beyond. I could see the legs of the next sentry as he turned at the near end of his beat, and hear him crack his hands in assistance of the circulation. As the sun got up it was not so cold, and at last a couple of scouts rode past me, and directly afterwards I heard them tell the picket that there was hot coffee waiting somewhere, and so I came on up to the house. The river had fallen so much in the night that Capt. Sharp concluded to stay where he was till afternoon, and then try a ford on the “Falls of Nemaha,” rather than go to Salem to cross.

They did not enjoy their rest. A few were for swimming for it, but the flood looked too terrible. All were afraid their enemy would escape them, if he crossed the Nemaha. Charley, the lightest and

trustiest scout, was not yet in. Some fears were expressed as to his safety, and many wonderments as to the cause of his detention; the most probable suggestion was that he had lain down in the dark, and taken up the trail immediately upon the approach of daylight. About ten o’clock he astonished the whole crowd by dashing in from the knoll with the report that there was a large body of armed men coming in from the east. He knew the rebels had crossed the Nemaha at eleven o’clock the night before, and were irretrievably lost, but he never thought to say so; thinking only to prepare his captain for a new enemy, he rode swiftly back to his post. The captain himself, connecting Charley and the pursuit, and the rebels, so closely, thought the rebels had obtained a junction with reinforcements by a simple *detour* and that he was in a box; literally trapped. Every one of his men seemed to snatch at the same idea. Almost without orders horses were saddled, haversacks were examined, ammunition was skillfully divided, two or three men were up, and every one on the *qui vive*. The captain was two hundred yards east of the house, and could probably see the enemy. He came back on the double quick to about one hundred feet east of the house, and said, “We’ll fight ’em on foot here, and if we’re beaten we’ll take down that track, (pointing), and try the rocks just on the Falls. Rally, ‘boys.’” No regular troops ever moved with more certainly or celerity than these inexperienced soldiers of the prairie. The detail to hold horses fell in, (if that’s the expression) without any orders. The boys formed on the south of their captain, forty strong. Charley showed his head and shoulders, but his face was turned away. Some neighbor of this good man here, with two horses, a shackely wagon and his wife, drove rapidly down “that ‘track,’” and disappeared in the brush. The man of the house had a bundle in his hand and stood in the north

door. I myself had mounted the white pony and stood by the corner of the house, ready to join in the fight or run down that track. For the moment I had forgotten George; just now I looked round for him. He was at the corner of the house, leaning wearily against it for support, his face and hands, white, his finger nails and lips blue, and his teeth chattering and his every muscle quivering with true ague. The poor fellow looked pitiable, but I forgot him when Charley held up his hand. A mounted scout rode rapidly out there and stood by Charley's side, without showing the least excitement. The suspense was terrible for ten seconds; then the two scouts trotted toward us, a long line of the heads of mounted men appeared over the rise, and the report came in clear ringing tones; "Sac and Fox Indians going on a buffalo hunt." I remembered, then, that they had a little reservation just east of us, and while I was unsaddling I saw two of them seat themselves near the well, and there they remained in their gorgeous dresses and cockscombed shaven heads for two hours without speaking a word.

The day grew warm apace. The boys lounged and swore. There was no whiskey—no cards. A sudden and to me unaccountable commotion, away down in the hollow, in the tall hazel brush, sent a man up very hurriedly to the captain, announcing that they had found a dead body down there, and asking for a detail of men to hold an inquest on it. The detail was ordered promptly, but attracted little notice. A few followed them down in to the brush, but I darsent go. I watched and

waited, but got no clue to the mystery. It was a long, long time before the little procession headed by a rude bier covered with a white cloth, had labored up through the brush, and round the house to where the captain was sitting. The foreman presented the captain a paper, as they set the bier down, and he read it aloud with all due gravity.

"We the jury find that the deceased came to his death through the administration of a 'blue pill' administered by one Dr. Jayhawk. We also think he serve him right. John Brown, Corp."

By the living lightning but I was astonished when that white cloth was removed and I saw a big fat hog, neatly dressed and skinned.

I need not spin this yarn farther. The passage of the Nemaha was ridiculous, and cold, and wet; many a broken girth and wet jacket resulted therefrom. The journey to Brownsville was simply tiresome. The interview with the authorities was satisfactory, and not very costly. We got the three colts and the mule, and eventually marketed them, only a little to the loss of the rebel captain, and only a little to our own gain. There is at last one living witness of the truth of my story, and he is accessible. I have no pardon to ask of Gid. Thompson or of the public, and at this moment have no other feeling in the matter than one of thankfulness to the proprietors of the *Independent* for their courtesy in publishing the sketch.

Kansas Digital Access to Historical Records Grant Awarded to JCHS

The Jefferson County Historical and Genealogy Society has been awarded a \$3,000 grant from the Kansas State Historical Records Advisory Board (KSHRAB) to work toward bringing the Old Jefferson Town historical archives to a digitized format. If all goes well the digitized format will be available online around the first of June, not only to Jefferson County, but to others across the United States and world.

The Kansas State Historical Records Advisory Board (KSHRAB) seeks to encourage Kansas organizations and individuals to preserve records of the past by offering a digital grant to aid in the process of digitizing records into a shareable format to the public. Their funds are granted by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC).

Volunteers from the OJT museum began working January 10, 2021, to enter thousands of objects, photos, archives and library items into a software program purchased with the grant money. The Past Perfect software offers organization of the records that have been kept on paper for the past 50 years. The digitizing of the museum artifacts will make researching easier, not only at the museum, but also from the comfort of your home. The Past Perfect system also will allow us to locate items in the museum more quickly if you want to come and see an item in person.

Currently eleven volunteers are working consistently each week at getting data entered into Past Perfect. So far more than 5,000 objects, photos, books, paper documents, etc., have been entered into the system. We have inserted into the system more than 1,500 Jefferson County names that are linked to biographical information, objects, photos, books, maps and any documents that have been donated to the museum by that person or their family.

While the project is progressing much more quickly than ever imagined, please understand that this is a 3- to 5-year project. When working with each record entered, each item can take anywhere from 4 to 10 minutes to enter. That's a lot of volunteer hours. Just to give you an idea of what we have to work on . . . there are more than 30,000 photos in our file cabinet that need to be scanned and data documented. In the museum buildings alone, we estimate that there are at least 5,000 to 10,000 objects that will need to be photographed and data entered. Our genealogy library is growing each day; there are more than 5,000 books in the library. There are thousands of family files and obituaries that someday could be scanned and connected to families and names in our system.

There are some ways that you can become involved in this project. If you have an hour or two a week or every couple of weeks, we can keep you busy for a while. We are in need of volunteers who can scan photos and documents, file clippings, and assist with the cataloging of the numerous library books that we house in our genealogy library. No experience is necessary; we will train you.

Visit the Old Jefferson Town website, <https://www.oldjeffersontown.com/>.

Volunteer

Volunteer hours are Tuesdays 11:00 am to 4:00 pm and Saturdays 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm.

If you are interested in becoming a part of preserving Jefferson County's history, please email oldjefftown@gmail.com or call Deb Case at 785-249-0041.

Share History Online

Check out the Forum section of the Old Jefferson Town website: <https://www.oldjeffersontown.com/forum>. Ask questions, post pictures and family histories, communicate with other history buffs. Please join the conversations.

Farmers Market at Old Jefferson Town

Last summer's Farmers Market at Old Jefferson Town offered produce and goods from local farms on the grounds of the museum and library in Oskaloosa. Vendors brought vegetables, fruit, local honey, craft items and homemade baked goods each Saturday morning.

In 2021 the Old Jefferson Town Farmers Market will be open every Saturday from June 5 through September 4, from 9 a.m. to noon. Space for vendors is first-come, first-served. There is no fee for vendors. A donation to the Old Jefferson Town building repair fund would be appreciated but is not mandatory. Check the Old Jefferson Town website, <https://www.oldjeffersontown.com/>, or the JCHS Facebook group page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/255368121254017>, for more information.

New at the Genealogical Library

Newly catalogued items in the library at Old Jefferson Town:

Our Rich Land (history of Belle Center, Ohio)

Getting Started in Genealogy Online

Exploring Kansas: A New Look at the Sunflower State

125th Anniversary Battle of Westport Souvenir Program

McLouth Times Souvenir Edition, 1898

Missouri Newspapers on Microfilm

Abstracts of Records of Society of Friends in Indiana

Ella (Hull) Fulton (newspaper articles about her)

Kansas: the 34th Star

Mercer & Venango Counties, PA Area Key

"Windwagons West" (magazine article)

10,000 Vital Records of Central New York

You Can Write Your Family History

History of Early Greeley County, Kansas

The Royal "O", 1946 Oskaloosa High School yearbook

The Royal "O", 1947 Oskaloosa High School yearbook

A Museum of Early American Tools

Rural Schools and Schoolhouses of Douglas County, KS

The Outsider: The Life and Times of Roger Barker

Hey, I Didn't Sign Up for This (cancer survivor memoir)

Dear Aunt Sarah: Letters from Kansas...

Story of Hazel Meyer Dayton, 1892-1970

My Folks Claimed the Plains

My Folks and the One-Room Schoolhouse

Ellis Island: Tracing your Family History

Be a Volunteer

Old Jefferson Town would not be here if it weren't for its volunteers. For over 50 years, history keepers have helped to preserve Jefferson County history. Come and be a part!

Contact

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