

Pratt County Historical Society December 2010 Newsletter

208 S. Ninnescah Pratt, KS 67124 620-672-7874

Mon – Fri 1 to 4 Sat – Sun 1 to 3

Email: pchsmuseum@sctelcom.net Website: prattcountymuseum.org

President: Marji Buck

Secretary: Madeline Martin

Vice President: Don Fincham

Treasurer: Thad Henry

Other Board Members: Darrel Brehm, Marion Fiegel, Tim Kuhn, Marvin Proctor,
Jerry Seimens, Gary Skaggs and Ulanda Stiebben

Curator: Marsha Brown Office Manager: Sandra Hetrick PR Chairman: Eunice Proctor

BRING ON THE NEW YEAR !!

Events are already being planned for the museum in 2011. The new year will just be getting started when the American Association of University Women (AAUW) will have their monthly meeting Tuesday January 4th at the museum. The subject for the evening will be "Kansas Geology—Rocks, Minerals and Fossils". The guest speaker will be Jillian Aramowicz, a journalism major at K-State. She is also on the staff of the campus newspaper "The Collegian". As a child, she traveled with her parents, Jerry and Cindy Aramowicz, all over the state of Kansas, where she picked up specimens. She is an engaging speaker who will talk about the dangerous erosion of our soil, and to value the soil we have. In addition, she will present a trivia quiz about minerals. As guests of the AAUW, members of the historical society are invited to hear Jillian speak at 7:30 in the evening of Jan. 4th.

The last week of January, the museum and the members of the education committee, will be hosting Kansas day visits from area grade school students. Kansas will be celebrating its 150th birthday in 2011. The schools will be doing more activities than usual for Kansas Day, to help celebrate its big day. Each school will also get to fly a commemorative 34 star flag in honor of Kansas being the 34th state in the union.

Keeping the historic birthday of Kansas in mind, the Historical Society is changing up their plans for the annual meeting in March. Besides having the general membership meeting and voting of board members, we will be having a guest speaker from the Kansas Humanities Council. A news release from them is in the right-hand column of this newsletter. The meeting has been moved up a week, to Sunday March 13, to accommodate the speaker. More details about the meeting will be discussed in the March 2011 newsletter. So, get your calendars out and highlight Sunday March 13th for a special presentation at the museum.

Marsha already has some speaking engagements of her own, lined up for the coming year. She always likes to sing the praises of the museum and all it has to offer. The museum receives inquiries almost daily from people wanting to find the missing pieces of their family history, the story behind their house or buildings on Main Street, or just general questions about Pratt County's history. The museum is proud to have a large research library to help find the answers to those questions and Marsha is always eager to dig into the records and see what she can come up with. She's been heard saying, on more than one account, "It's the thrill of the hunt that I like!"

A big thing on the museum's "To-Do" list for 2011 is to finish out the old time Main Street gallery. It was scheduled to start this fall, but has gotten postponed a few times. Trying to get several guys lined up at the same time, has proved to be easier said than done. Now, that it is winter, it's pretty cold in that part of the museum and would make working in there a not-so-pleasant task, and with the upcoming annual meeting planned for in there, it may be postponed until the end of March. We've got most of the materials to do it, it's just getting everyone's busy lives to coordinate with each other long enough to get the project done.



PRESENTATION EXPLORES KANSAS FRONTIER PHOTOGRAPHER

The Pratt County Historical Society in Pratt will host *Kansas Through the Lens of F.M. Steele*, a presentation and discussion by Jim Hoy on March 13, 2011 at 2 p.m. at the Pratt County Historical Museum. Members of the community, including middle and high school history students, are invited to attend the free program. Contact the museum at 672-7874 for more information. The program is made possible by the Kansas Humanities Council.

In 1890, frontier photographer Francis Marion Steele set out for Dodge City to record cowboys, American Indians, wildlife, wheat harvesting, grain farming, sugar beet factories, railroad building, community celebrations and festivals, small-town life and studio portraits. Hoy's presentation examines how Steele's work provides visual documentation of the Kansas character. Pratt was a bustling city in 1890, having been incorporated in 1884. This program will help those attending to visualize what life might have been like in Pratt during this time.

Jim Hoy is a professor of English and director of the Center for Great Plains Studies at Emporia State University. He is an authority on the folklore of ranching, a topic on which he has lectured throughout the world. Hoy's publications include ten books and over 100 articles, and he is co-author of *Plains Folk*, a syndicated newspaper column.

"Francis Marion Steele arrived in Dodge City in 1890 and immediately set out onto the prairies in the dark-room mounted buggy to take photographs of cowboys" shared Hoy. "After the end of the open range, he photographed everything from wheat farming to railroad construction to small-town life, providing in the process, documentation of Kansas and the southwest plains in the transition from the open range to crop agriculture."

Kansas Through the Lens of F.M. Steele is part of the Kansas Humanities Council's Kansas 150 Speakers Bureau commemorating the Kansas sesquicentennial. The special edition Speakers Bureau features presentations and discussions about Kansas and what it means to be a Kansan over time and across generations.

The Kansas Humanities Council conducts and supports community-based programs, serves as a financial resource through an active grant-making program, and encourages Kansans to participate in the communities. For more information about KHC programs, contact the Kansas Humanities Council at 785-357-0359 or online at www.kansashumanities.org.

For more information about *Kansas Through the Lens of F.M. Steele* in Pratt, contact the Pratt County Historical Society Museum at 672-7874 or visit online at prattcountymuseum.org.

Who knows? You might even see people you know in the video!

A REVIEW OF MUSEUM HAPPENINGS IN 2010

Memorials given to the museum this year were for: Dena Dodson, Madeline Simmons, Pat Randle, Hosephine Strohl, Irene Eppler, Lois Crandall and Harland Humble. The museum thanks everyone who gave these memorials to honor those who have passed on.

The Curt and Beth Skaggs Estate set up trust funds for several Pratt area non-profit organizations this year, through the South Central Community Foundation. The Pratt County Historical Society Museum is one of those proud recipients. Monies from the trust fund are being held for future projects to come.

The museum was host to several group meetings, one of which was the annual state meeting of the Kansas Anthropological Association.

Don Stimpson, of the Kansas Meteorite Museum south of Brenham (between Haviland and Greensburg), gave a presentation on meteorites that have been found in that area. The star attraction of the day was our own "Sawyer" meteorite given to the museum on long-term loan by Mike McFall. It was discovered on his farm ground north east of Sawyer. Meteorites are named for the closest town to where they are found.

Nick Macaluso from Wichita State University talked about the "Pratt Complex" of Indian sites.

The Historical Society participated, once again, in the Pratt County Fair, in July. The theme for this year's fair was "Treasure Chest of the County's Best". And, what better treasure chest of the county's best, than the historical museum! Photos of some of Pratt County's "treasures" were shown. The new map of the 100 Year Family Farms of Pratt County was the center of attention in the booth.

Then, in September, Marvin and Eunice Proctor, Marji Buck and Dwight Adams manned the South Central Kansas Tourism Region booth at the State fair in Hutchinson for a day. While members of the SCKTR took their turn at the booth, they could promote THEIR attraction, so the Pratt County Historical Museum probably got talked about a lot!

While there were many items that were given to the museum this past year, there are a few BIG items that should be acknowledged: A newly repainted John Deere "R" tractor (diesel) from Bob Ahrens now sits beside the "D" tractor also from Bob, in the North Gallery.

The Pratt High School Victory Bell is now at home in the museum, thanks to Carter and Gary Barker and Don and Mark Fincham. The old bell, which was given to the high school by the class of 1958, was showing it's age and was no longer "ringable", thanks to a crack. Carter graciously bought a new one for the high school and chose to donate the old one to the museum.

And, let's not forget the "Sawyer" meteorite given by Mike McFall. A special display case was made for it, with the supervision of Jon Hartman, and it now graces the desk in the lobby on the museum.

MUSEUM TOUR ON DVD

In 2008, the Pratt County Historical Society had its 40th Anniversary, with an Open House at the museum. People were stationed around throughout, telling stories, demonstrating how things work and telling about their organizations.

Now, the Historical Society has made a video of that afternoon at the museum. Along with scenes of the museum, there are short clips of Dorothea Giannangelo telling the history of Skunk Johnson's cave, the history of dentistry and the weather flag at the Yapple Hotel.

The DVDs sell for \$ 10.81 (tax included). Or, \$15.81 if you would like one sent to you through the mail. Contact the museum for information on getting one.

MUSEUM BUILDING UPDATE

After some very trying times and hard work, Marvin Proctor finished installing the new ceiling in Gallery One. With the help of a few other guys once in awhile, he got the job done in a short time. A thank you to those who donated to the cause. And, a BIG thank you to Marvin for taking on such a big task!

Just as with our homes, the museum is always in need of some kind of repair. The bricks and mortar on the front of the building were needing just that. So, with the help of Sallee Masonry of St. John, that problem was taken care of and now the front of the building is looking much better.

Another project for the new year, that will also improve the front of the building, is to replace the large sliding door, closest to the front window. While it has been made to no longer slide, there is the walk-in door that was built into it years ago, to make easy access for museum usage. It is at the west end of the Old Time Main Street Gallery. The elements of Kansas weather have taken its toll on the wood of the door. For security and heating reasons, the problem must now be addressed. The facilities committee is looking into different options on the best way to replace the door. More on this, in the next newsletter.

Also on the facilities committee list, is a new and more energy-efficient heating system for the two north galleries. At the time this museum was being built, those galleries had been the open-air drive-throughs of the old Independent Lumber Company.

Through the years, the Society was able to enclose them to accommodate turning this building into a museum.

Ceiling mounted heaters were installed, but now through the years, have become not so energy efficient. They are very expensive to keep running like they should be, to heat such large areas as those two galleries. Because of that, they aren't turned on enough and those galleries remain very cold in the winter.

In the past few years, different kinds of energy-efficient heating systems have come on the market. The facilities committee is checking into what would be the best choice for the society.

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE

The Society wishes to thank ALL the people who show their support to the Society and the museum throughout the year.

To all the people who volunteer a few hours of their time, to come in and greet the visitors, THANK YOU!

To all the people who donate to the fund raisers so that the museum may have things that are needed, THANK YOU!

To all the people who participate in the education committee tours for school students, THANK YOU!

To all the people who donate items of interest to the museum to help preserve the history of Pratt County and its people, THANK YOU!

To all the people who pass "the word" that this is one of the best museums around, THANK YOU!

We could not do it without all of you !!! ☺

\$ \$ \$ MEMBERSHIP DUES \$ \$ \$

For those of you who renew your dues annually, they are due after the first of the new year.

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP: \$ 15.00

LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP: \$ 100.00