



Wabaunsee County Historical Society

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3RD-4TH QUARTER NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2020

— HAPPENINGS AT THE MUSEUM —

Quilt Display Case

This fall a quilt display case arrived as a memorial to Veryl Meseke. Currently on display are two quilts. A Pinwheel Quilt pieced by Veryl when she was 12 years old. It was quilted by her grandmother Etta Horne. The quilt was donated by the Meseke Family. The other quilt, a Sunflower Sue, is over 100 years old and was restored and donated by Arlene Meyer.

One Room School House Book

Thomas Michael Rawson published *Pioneer Prairie: Learning 50 One Room School Houses in the Kansas Flint Hills*. Several school houses in Wabaunsee County are featured in the book – Including the cover of the book with a picture of the Volland School House. Mr. Rawson also gifted the museum with prints of the schools he took in Wabaunsee County. Stop by the museum and take a look! In January 2021, the photos will be on display in the Manhattan Art Center Gallery in Manhattan, Kansas.

New Exhibit Spring 2021

Work has begun on the new exhibit "Bountiful Harvest" which will open next spring. The exhibit is about Wabaunsee County and the traditions and importance of forage, hay, and harvest and ranching. We are looking forward to featuring photos of Wabaunsee County residents past and present in this important aspect of the local heritage.

Volunteer

Our newest volunteer, Stanley Russo, a senior at Wabaunsee High School, helps by fielding inquiries we receive through the website. Stanley researches the subject from our many resources at the museum and returns a summary to the person who posed the question. Stanley also helps maintain the exhibits.

Fall Tour

Despite a cold, rainy day a large crowd assembled at Alta Vista for the Fall Tour and annual meeting on September 27. Over 50 people attended and enjoyed seeing the Pearl Opera House with the large theater located upstairs where owner Reverend Chris Schultz shared the history of the building and the use of the venue. Board member Rob Meseke led the group on a sidewalk tour and talked about the changes he has seen in the last 40 years. The next stop was the old wooden viaduct bridge on the west side of town. It was built *circa* 1914 over the former Rock Island Railroad tracks. Several people told stories from their childhood and remembered sled riding on the steep east side. The final stop was the Ag Heritage Park. Visitors were free to walk around and check out the exhibits. Refreshments were served and then a short annual meeting was held. The board would like to thank Reverend Chris and Misty Schultz for access to The Pearl Theater and Kirby Zimmerman, and Hazel Zimmerman for hosting us at the Ag Heritage Park.

Wabaunsee County Historical Society

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Nyla Leonard – Curator, Alma

Marci Spaw – Assistant Curator, Volland

Dan Wagner – Outreach Facilitator,
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MUSEUM HOURS

DECEMBER 1-MARCH 1

Tuesday – Wednesday

10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

(Closed Over the Noon Hour)

**Closed Sundays, Mondays
and Holidays**

Story Of The Trivett Monument

Morgan Frances Trivett was born in North Carolina in 1845. He received his education in North Carolina where he graduated from "Physicians School." According to *Early History of Wabaunsee County* by Matt Thomson, published in 1901:

"After practicing [medicine] one year at Elk Cross Roads, North Carolina, came West in 1874 — driving overland. Was six months on the road. Was looking for a location and as his funds were exhausted concluded to stop — especially as the country in the vicinity of Eskridge seemed to possess all the requisites of an ideal home. Bought the Sam Waldo homestead, a half mile south of the "Corners," and engaged in farming in conjunction with the practice of his profession. Has been eminently successful as a physician. Was one of the organizers of the Eskridge State Bank and has ever since been a member of the board of directors



DR. M. F. TRIVETT,
Eskridge.

and a heavy stockholder of the bank. Besides several fine farms, Dr. Trivett owns many handsome homes in Eskridge and is ever at the front in advancing the material interests of the city — near which he located nearly thirty years ago in which he built the first house."

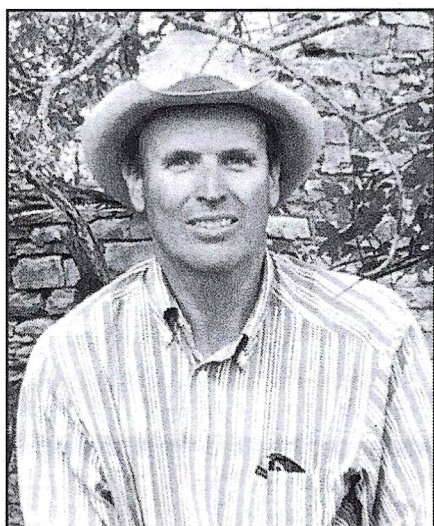
Apparently Dr. Trivett wanted to be "ever at the front in advancing material interests" at his final resting place too. The 37 ton monument placed at the head of M.F. Trivett's grave is adorned with the insignias of the Mason, as well as the Order of the Eastern Star. The monument stands approximately ten feet high, ten feet long, and eight feet across. At the front of the monument are smaller headstones for Trivett and his wife, Belle. When Dr. Trivett died in 1910 of pneumonia, *The Eskridge Tribune-Star* October 27, 1910, notes in the obituary:

"When the announcement of Dr. Trivett's death was made it caused a profound shock. Few there were who had believed the Doctor was in such a serious condition. They knew the man as a rugged type, who had withstood many years of exposures, and whose physique at sixty-five was one that a man of half that age might have envied. He knew his end was near and directed how his funeral should be conducted."

The necessity for the large monument includes a tidbit that is not able to be substantiated, but

does invite speculation: Dr. Trivett had a very good friend in Eskridge that he was in competition with all the time. The friend, sometimes identified as a banker, passed away and had a large grave marker installed at his final resting place. Dr. Trivett died after him and made sure his marker was bigger than the bankers. Perhaps the funeral arrangements he conducted on his deathbed included specifications for his huge grave marker.

Need an outing? Consider viewing Dr. M. F. Trivett's grave in person at the Eskridge City Cemetery. You can't miss it!



Meet Our Board Member

...
**Rob
Meseke**

Rob Meseke has served 2½ years on the board and takes a hands-on approach helping with building

maintenance, shoveling snow and setting-up exhibits. Rob was chosen to be on the committee to develop a new exhibit at the museum opening in March 2021. The exhibit is called *Bountiful Harvest: Our Tradition of Converting Forage into Protein*. The exhibit will feature local photos of putting up hay, grazing cattle and various methods of harvest. The opening of the exhibit will coincide with the traveling Smithsonian exhibit hosted at The Volland Store exhibit titled *Crossroads: Change in Rural America*.

All of Rob's grandparents were born and raised in Wabaunsee County. In 1857, his great-great grandfather, Herman Meseke, immigrated to the United States from Hummelspring, Prussia (modern day Germany.) The journey brought him through New York, and eventually to homestead north of Alta Vista in 1859. His maternal grandparents, the Mathies, homesteaded north of McFarland. Rob grew up near

Templin and Volland and enjoys the old stories of the area. His grandparents liked to talk about the good old days, reinforcing his interest in history and how stories carry the culture to future generations.

One of Rob's interests is researching the German settlers that settled in the county. He also likes the WWI-WWII era. Rob's grandmother, Iris Meseke, sent food and used clothing to a family named Buchwald in Germany after WWII. In the mid-1950's Rob's dad served in the army and visited the Buchwalds in Germany. The knowledge of the area and stories is apparent in his work as a tour guide for The Volland Store. Rob has led over 1,000 people on tours of barns, arched stone cellars, cemeteries and other points of interest in the County. Rob is also a fencing contractor working mainly in the hills of Wabaunsee County. Rob Meseke currently resides in Alma.

In the future, Rob would like to see the membership increase for the Historical Society. Rob wants residents from all regions of the county to take pride in the heritage of Wabaunsee County. He views the museum not only as a repository for relevant artifacts, but also as a great resource for research about the area with the extensive collection of published books, family histories, genealogy files and photos. Rob would also like to add narrated virtual tours of abandoned homesteads to the Historical Society's website. This place-based story telling would capture what physically remains of buildings and the stories of the people who established their homes in Wabaunsee County.



**Like us on Facebook at Wabaunsee County Historical Society and Museum.
You'll enjoy the "good old days" findings that Kathy Hendricks shares!**

Santa Fe Trail Within Wabaunsee County: Wilmington

— continued from last issue —

By Benetta "Bengie" Foster

Once again, we reconnect with Joe Johnson. Joe wrote 10 essays on his remembrance of the town of Wilmington which is situated along the Santa Fe Trail. During this time leading up to the 200th anniversary of the trail, we recall the experiences of early pioneers in Wabaunsee County.

April 5, 1905 — *Harveyville Monitor* — written by Joseph Johnson

A great many things that would be better unsaid, but a good memory is a good thing, also a good forgetfulness is a good thing too, so far as the peace of mind is concerned, possibly there might be a few things we might better have forgotten. Well we got down to farming, neither of us knowing a thing about it, but Pard knew the most, and he tried his hands with the elephants [oxen], but he soon became disgusted and I took charge, we got our piece of ground plowed and planted to corn, then broke out about a quarter of an acre on my claim, carried off the sod and replowed a great variety of vegetables, the hot sun and the new plowed ground forced them out rapidly, early Sunday morning I would go up and see them and I tickled them with the hoe, I think it was the Sunday before the Fourth of July, I took my hoe and went up to view and tickle, as I had been in the habit of doing. When I got near, the garden had changed appearance. Up to this time it had not rained, the small growth of prairie grass was as dead and dry as if in midwinter, touch a match to it and it would flash like powder. When I got close I saw the whole patch was covered with grass hoppers as large as my thumb and not a particle of vegetation in sight.

I realized that in a few days my old father, mother and little sister would be here and I felt the awful responsibility resting on me. I wished the earth would open and swallow me.

Oh desolation of desolation are there none to sympathize.

I cast my eyes up, the heavens were as brass, large tears coursed down my cheeks unbidden and unrestrained. There were a few bold hoppers remained close to me. I thought I could see tears in their eyes, be not deceived, they are not in sympathy with you, they are only crying because there is no more vegetables to eat. Oh you destroyers of my labors and blighters of my hopes. Oh why is this thus. I returned to the

cabin. Pard was writing a letter. I felt too sad to eat. In a little while as I laid on the bed we heard noises outside, pulling aside the blanket we saw two young men coming. They asked how far it was to next creek. We told them and they started on west. One of them had a hickory cane and at the upper end spiral rings were cut on it. Pard's horse was lariatied with a raw hide lariat, they went past him stopped and looked back at him, and went on. The next morning Pard's horse was gone. Close to the stake lay the cane one of the young men had the day before. We found tracks at the ford and the thief had gone north, Pard went over to a Mr. Wards on Soldier Creek, the captain of the Vigilance Committee we had formed for mutual protection. He saddled up a couple of young horses and they started on the trail. They saw two different parties that had seen him, at Leavenworth in a livery stable they found the horse and in a short search they found the thief. Mr. Ward went up to him and collared him. He was his prisoner. The fellow made no resistance, he had no arms on him. He was put in the jug as it was called at that time. In the morning they put him on the stolen horse and fetched him back. Mr. Ward went home leaving one of his horses for me to go and notify the rest of the Committee. We went to Mr. Wards and had a consultation. Mr. Ward said had he seemed very penitent as we got the horse back, and he said it was the first theft he had ever committed, it was decided to let him go.

The next night five masked men came and took him away and as I learned shortly after they took him a short distance north and told him to get out of the state and if they caught him again they would hang him.

The Fourth of July came and the settlers far and near met in the grove on Soldier Creek. A man by the name of Curtis had a claim on it. The grove is owned now by Henry Burns. This was the first Celebration that had ever been in this part of Kansas.

A few days after the Fourth of July, I went over to Mr. Curtises to borrow a frow to split shingles with, and in my absence, father, mother and little sister arrived. An old Negro man with a span of mules brought them from Leavenworth and some household goods. On my return when near the cabin a woman came out to me and before

we came to gather, she threw up her arms and said, My God, can this be a child of mine, why mother I guess it is, and we embraced each other. All seemed glad that we had got together again, father had brought a square tent with him, we soon put it up got the things inside. Mother prepared the meal. Pard, dogs and all of us had a big eat. Pard's wife and little girl remained in Leavenworth, and the next morning Pard took his horse and wagon and went after them. I remained with the old folks two days. I had borrowed a large wagon from a man that lived down the creek at the mail station.

Early in the morning I yoked up the oxen hitched them to the wagon told father what to do in case Indians came around and were troublesome. I rolled out for Leavenworth, arrived all right, found Pard and his family, got his goods and the balance of ours, and I camped just outside of town. Pard and family passed me early in the morning. The horse walked faster than the oxen. We all got home all right.

We compared accounts settled up and Pard and I dissolved partnership, each started out to paddle his own canoe.

We took down the tent, loaded our effects in the big wagon, hauled them up on my claim unloaded them and took the borrowed wagon home. When I got back father had put up the tent. Every thing was placed under shelter.

Dear reader up to this time no rain had fallen, being the latter part of July. Father sold a half acre of ground with a house on it in Peoria for eight hundred dollars. We ceased for a while to be on our uppers. Schuyler and Caniff had got their saw and grist mill in operation at Council City (now Burlingame) and we went and got boards enough to cover a temporary house, set poles in the ground, put on poles for plates, put on the board roof and tacked carpet on the sides.

Father brought some plain furniture with him, there we were at home again, under our own vine and fig tree (figuratively speaking), with no man to make us afraid, not even the red skin as we had ceased to fear him. We all went about doing the things most important.

Mr. Brain, the pard that had been, and I commenced breaking prairie on his claim. I drove, he held the breaking plow, all went well. One day I went to the creek for a drink, looked down from the bank and saw the water swarming with gars. I had a hoe in my hand, jumped in among them and slaughtered them right and left til I broke the hoe all to pieces. I gathered up an armful and went back. Brain was sitting on the

plow beam. I said, "O look here what a fine lot of Pike I got." He laughed till he nearly fell off the plow beam and said, "Why Joe them ain't pike, they are nothing by old gars", another slip twixt the cup and the lip.

We had not got a cow yet, time about the first of July, so one day near evening I took the ox team and went to our nearest neighbors Sam Devainy, his cabin stood in, the same place Eli Waltons house is now, and got a bucket of milk. Before I got back home there was a cloud burst, the water coming down in a solid mass. In our temporary house it seemed that it rained harder than outside. Mother had made a kettle of mush and the only way she could see to fill the bowls was when the lightening would flash. This was the first rain I had seen in Kansas. The corn I had planted in early May came up and how it did grow! Father planted a lot of vegetables, squashes, pumpkins and so on and how they did grow! Father said the corn grew so fast you could hear it cracking, the prairie grass came up again and by fall it was high enough to cut for hay. The corn made a large growth but the frost came too soon for it to mature, it just made good roasting ears, we cut it up for feed. The first light frost warned us for what was to come.

We bought a piece of timber from Devainy and cut and hauled the logs for our house, leaned them on one side, got all ready to raise and the neighbors came and helped. In a short time it was up to the square. I had made the shakes for the roof and put them on, built a large stone chimney with open fire place, hauled lots of firewood completed the house and moved in. Gentle reader was we happy? No king in a palace could be more so. Winter came and passed like many other winters we have had since then. Spring came, the prairie grass came up. We got George and Sam Harvey to break prairie for us while we followed after and planted sod corn, done by chopping holes between the sods with an axe and dropping two or three grains in the hill. Paid Harvey five dollars an acre for breaking.

Piece work we made five. The logs were hauled down to Schuylers mill at Burlingame like today and hauled back tomorrow. We would work it up to doors, sash and everything that went to make up a house. The dressing was done mostly with the jack and smoothing plane, a fore plane was used only on the edges. The flooring was sawed in six inch boards, and dressed, plowed and grooved by hand. Gentle reader if that wasn't work, I never struck anything that was.



A full buggy ready to roll at the Grimm-Schultz Farmstead.

National Register Of Historic Places

On October 5, 2020, the Grimm-Schultz Farmstead was officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Appreciation and gratitude is well deserved for current owner Laurie Hamilton and the Schultz Family for their dedication to preserving the heritage of Wabaunsee County. The following summary is from the National Register's inventory record:

"The Grimm-Schultz farmstead is a group of eight related structures and one related site on 18.5 acres located in Wabaunsee County, Kansas. The present collection of buildings is locally significant, representing early settlement and vernacular construction common in this area of Kansas. Henry and Caroline Grimm began purchasing tracts of land in Washington Township in the early 1870s. By 1875 they were living in a log house near this site and had constructed buildings — a barn and stone shed — to sup-

port a cattle operation. The Grimm family lived and worked here from 1875 to 1908. The Schultz family acquired the property in 1931 and used it as a working cattle farm until January 2020. The well-maintained structures have changed little since construction, retaining integrity of location, setting, materials, design, workmanship, feeling, and association of their planning and construction in Wabaunsee County and the Kansas Flint Hills. The Period of Significance begins in 1875 with the construction of the earliest farmstead buildings to 1950 when the property received electricity and entered into the modern era."

For more information about the Grimm-Schultz Farmstead listing, visit the website of National Register of Historic Places (US National Park Service) at [nps.org](https://www.nps.org) or the Kansas Historical Society at [kshs.org](https://www.kshs.org)

Predicaments Of The Past

From the *Alma News* January 3, 1883:

"The city of Alma, a long time ago ordered several fire ladders about twenty feet long, which for some reason have been used as a fence around a hay stack, of late, at Lawyer Asher's residence. One night last week a foraging cow pushed her horns through one of the ladders, in a way that it carried it around with her, punching the sides of the lawyer's house in the midnight air, in such a manner (as he covered himself up in bed) to cause him to reflect suddenly on all the good he had done in the world, and the family to imagine all and believe more than they had ever heard of spirit raptures. At daylight the next morning, the old cow with her ladder paid

a visit to the county surveyor, on the other side of town, who after viewing the situation, called a carpenter and had a rung sawed from the ladder. The cow relieved of her ornament and the gymnastic performance stopped. Thus ended the midnight terrors of our legal friend."

Thank you to our recent new members:

Phyllis Anderson (Lawrence, KS)

Tony Crawford (Manhattan, KS)

Larry Wolgast (Topeka, KS)

Your Membership Matters!

3rd and 4th Quarter — July - December 2020

We are pleased to recognize members who have generously made a recent donation to our Historical Society. These loyal contributors make it possible for us to continue our mission of preservation. Remember to take your donation deduction at tax time. Thank You.

Donor

(\$25 - \$49)

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(\$1,000 or more)

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**Wabaunsee County
Historical Society**

P.O. Box 387 • Alma, Kansas 66401

KANSAS CITY 640

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*From the
Wabaunsee County Historical Society
and Museum*

*We wish everyone a Merry Christmas
and
a Happy and Prosperous
New Year!*

