



BARN TALK

LENEXA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume 13, Number 3

May - June 1996

NEW SIGNS IN LENEXA

**FT. LEAVENWORTH
MILITARY ROAD**
Gum Spring Route to the
SANTA FE TRAIL
Crossed Here

These signs, five in all, have been placed (2) east of 79th St and Quivira Rd., (2) east of 83rd St at 83rd Terrace and (1) in triangle on NW corner of the ramp off of I-35 at 87th St. These signs are the result of a concerted effort to define the exact route of the Military Road from Ft. Leavenworth through the various counties to Ft. Scott and into Oklahoma by the **Kansas City Area Historic Trails Association**.

At the regular Lenexa City Council meeting on May 16, 1996, Dorothy Kroh of the KC Area Historic Trails Association formally recognized the efforts of the City of Lenexa, the Lenexa Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Lenexa Historical Society for their involvement in the purchase and location of the five signs.

These signs help to identify the role that Lenexa played in the early history of the area with the proximity of the Military Trail and the Santa Fe Trail as they cut through the area.

1996 PROGRAMS & EVENTS

- May 23** - LHS Membership Meeting -
Note: Thursday at the Senior Center,
Downtown Lenexa
Pot luck dinner at 6:30 p.m.
Program 7:30 p.m. Bill Nicks, Lenexa Park
& Rec. speaks on Octave Chanute,
Lenexa's city platter of 1869.

- July 1-4 Community Days** - Miss Lenexa -
Parade Activities

- July 23** - General Membership Picnic Meeting
at the Park

- July 27-28** - Great Heritage Trails Festival

- Sept 7** - **Spinach Festival** - Craft Fair

- Sept 26 Thur** - General Membership Meeting at
the Senior Center

- Nov 19** General Membership Meeting
Legler Barn Museum

- Dec. 7 Sat.** Children's Old Fashioned
Christmas Party

The Lenexa Historical Society **Archival Dept.** is searching for obituaries of early Lenexa residents or newspaper articles about activities in the communities of these persons. If you have copies, please bring them in so we may copy them for our files.

Nicks Speaks of Chanute

Bill Nicks, Lenexa Park and Recreation Department, will present a thirty minute talk and slide show on Mr. Octave Chanute at the regular monthly meeting of the Lenexa Historical Society. The meeting will be held in the Lenexa Senior Center, on the SW corner of Pflumm and Santa Fe Trail Drive, on Thursday, May 23.

The Chanute talk will begin at 7:30 following a 6:30 potluck dinner. The public is invited to attend. RSVP to 492-0038.

In 1869, Chanute platted and owned Old Town Lenexa. He bought the acreage from Squire C.A. and Sarah Bradshaw in May of 1869 and sold it in August of 1869 after platting the original townsite.

An 1869 Harper's Weekly Magazine article described Kansas City, Missouri as "...a town near Leavenworth, Kansas." Who changed that point of view? It was Civil Engineer Octave Chanute, builder of the first railroad bridge to cross the Missouri River. The Hannibal Bridge established Kansas City as the commercial center of the area relegating Leavenworth to "...a town near Kansas City" status.

When Chanute retired from his engineering career he took up the challenge of powered flight. His cataloging of the worldwide flight experiments and his own glider experiments caused him to become a mentor to the Wright Brothers. Wilbur Wright wrote to him in 1899 seeking advice, thus beginning a ten year trail of correspondence, ending only with Chanute's death in 1910.

The man who tamed the Missouri River for the railroads, helped to also tame the air. Come hear the story at the Lenexa Historical Society meeting on May 23.

Spring Plant Sale a Success

Co-Chairs **Bernie McNichols** and **Irv Hoffmann** report that the LHS Spring Plant Sale was a great fund raiser for the Historical Society. "We wish to thank all of the Lenexa Historical Society members, their friends and neighbors who supported the '96 Plant Sale so vigorously. Your continued support and interest in our projects is appreciated. Profits will be around \$1200 this year. Thanks also to all the people who volunteered their time and energy to this annual spring event!!"Bernie and Irv.

Bernie and Brian McNichols were in bloom also during the Plant Sale as they showed off their granddaughter, Brandi Nichols. Brandi was born April 17, 1996, to their daughter and son-in-law, Peggy and Kip Nichols. Their son and daughter-in-law, Brian and Jennifer also presented the proud grandparents with a grand daughter on March 27th when Michelle Robin joined the family.

The MONTICELLO COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

is having a program on "Visions of the Past" on Saturday May 25 at 1pm, 2pm, 3pm, at the Monticello Cemetery. Society members will dress in period costumes and stand by the graves of those persons they are representing and recite their story.

FLAGS DONATED to LHS

The Lenexa Historical Society is the proud recipient of new flags being flown over the Legler Barn Museum. **Rita DeBrabander** presented a new American flag donated by the VFW/Auxiliary of Lenexa. **Representative Rich Becker** donated a Kansas flag that has flown over the Kansas State Capitol.

Please join us in thanking these people and organizations when you see them.

Our Legacy

Lenexa has a long and rich history which can be traced back to a time before the Shawnee Indians were moved to this area from Missouri and Ohio in the period from 1825 to the 1830's.

In 1724, Scein de Bourgmont, a white fur trader from New Orleans, was the first white man to visit the village of the Canzes [Kansa] Indians on the banks of the Kaw River. Over the next 100 years various Indian tribes lived in the area and were visited by white traders and travelers.

Lenexa came into being in the hectic days of railroad expansion and land speculation following the Civil War. The greatest issue facing the new territory of Kansas in 1854 was the availability of land. In 1854 when the Kansas-Nebraska Act opened these areas to settlement not one acre in what is now Johnson County was for sale. The land was allotted to the Shawnee Indians in return for ceding over 1 million acres of their Kansas Reservation to the United States Government. Each Shawnee man, woman, and child was given 200 acres with the stipulation that the land could not be sold without the permission of the President of the US. This restriction was intended to protect the Shawnee but the result was that it tied up the titles to the land for more than 30 years. Until 1857 Johnson County remained in the hands of the Office of Indian Affairs. A Johnson County government was not formed until the Indian Affairs Office submitted to the General Land Office a census of the Shawnee Indians and a survey of the lands allotted to them. Only then could speculators, settlers, and squatters legally enter the area.

Chief Blackhoof and his daughter, Len-ag-see, which means to combine or complete, lived in the area (87th and Pflumm) from 1832 to 1869. (Some sources say her name was Na-Nex-Se and she was Blackhoof's wife.) In 1866 the original site of "Old Town" was owned by the Stephens family who farmed the area and operated a fruit nursery.

The Stephens family sold the 160 acres (Old Town) to Charles Bradshaw Sr. of Trenton, Illinois. The Bradshaws took possession of the property in 1867 and two years later they gave the right-of-way through the tract and a 2 acre plot for a station to Kansas City Fort Scott, and Gulf Railroad. Shortly afterwards, the Bradshaws sold the area immediately north of the railroad right-of-way to Dr. George Bower and his son-in-law David Brickley for a town site. The Bradshaws also gave a one acre tract within the township to the Methodist Church.

In 1869 the town was platted and lots were sold. The first business was Lee Freeman's General store. The first post office was established in 1869 and Freeman became the town's first postmaster.

During the 1870-1890 period, many farmers and merchants moved to the area and helped build the town. In 1870 Henry Gillett built a blacksmith shop on the corner of Walnut and Pflumm and a home at 9344 Haskins Street. He later owned and operated the town's first hotel. In the 1870, the Bradshaws built a lumber yard. George Bower established a second general store in 1871. He was followed by Adam Legler and his family. Fred Legler, Adam's son, ran the variety store, served as the postmaster, and edited the first Lenexa newspaper. During the same period the Pflumm family moved to the area where they opened a blacksmith shop (1869) and later a grocery(1907).

In 1878 the Methodist Church was built. Two years later a Catholic Church was constructed, and in 1887 a Lutheran Church was constructed. Lenexa's first industrial project was the Fountainhead Mill, which was established in 1879. The mills capacity was 30 barrels of flour a day. There is no record of the first operator but at an early date it was owned by Mr. Earnshaw, father of Jack.

In 1897 Frank Bradshaw was chosen as the first rural mail carrier. He held that position for 13 years. The route was 24 miles in length and his salary was \$600 a Year. Around the turn of the century the Newcomer family opened a livery and hotel. In 1904 the Haskin family started the first bank and in 1907 the first volunteer fire department was organized.

In 1907, Lenexa was incorporated as third class city and E.M. Switzer was elected mayor. One year later the city received its telephone franchise and in the following year the Strang interurban railroad began operating from Kansas City to Lenexa.

In 1950 the population of Lenexa was only 800 people. By 1970 the population had grown to 5,240 and in 1975 to 10,400. In 1980 the population was 18,490. Today's population is approximately 38,000.

This paper was prepared by Mr. Irv Hoffmann, President Elect of the LHS Board of Directors.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Annual Members

Dorothy Bohr
8916 Twilight Lane
Lenexa, KS 66219 894-9470

Ardyce Plumlee
9330 Gollette
Lenexa, KS 66215 888-3585

James & Rebecca Coleman
9948 Westgate St.
Lenexa, KS 66215 541-8526

Arnold Cole
12020 W. 87th St.
Lenexa, KS 66215 897-1779
w-492-8882

Marshall & Mary Rimann
15117 W. 87th St Pkwy.
Lenexa, KS 66219 492-5462
w - 492-1604

Bob & Marilyn Stephan
14243 W. 84th Terrace
Lenexa, KS 66215 438-4483
w - 438-8515

Dennis & Katie Evans
7621 Constance
Lenexa, KS 66216 268-4606

Attn: Jim Holland
Holland Corporation
9131 Noland Rd.
Lenexa, KS 66215 w - 888-5277

Dr. Richrd and Pamela Wagner
11917 W. 92nd St.
Lenexa, KS 66215 492-4189
w - 492-1768

Attn: Thomas Kirkwood, P.A.
Shafer, Kline & Warren, P.A.
11100 W. 91st St.
Overland Park, KS 66214 w- 888-7800

Miss Lenexa 1996 Contest

LHS is accepting applications for the Miss Lenexa candidates and judges for 1996. Candidates must be residents of Lenexa and a sophomore, junior or senior in high school. Five judges will also be selected to evaluate the candidates and to select the 1996 Miss Lenexa. Candidates will be evaluated on scholastic achievements, leadership, community and school involvement, personality and poise by the judges.

Two new awards will be presented this year. Premier Bank of Lenexa and Robert Brogden Automotive Group of Olathe are sponsoring a \$400 scholarship for Miss Lenexa. "We are very excited over the participation of the two area business leaders, who are donating scholarship monies for the young women in our community", said Irv Hoffmann, Director of the Program. The Amber Bendorf Award, honoring the memory of Amber Bendorf, past president of the Historical Society, will be awarded to the candidate who typifies the qualities of Amber. The Lenexa Historical Society awards include: Miss Lenexa - \$500 Bond; First Runner-up - \$200 Bond; Second Runner-up - \$100 Bond; Third Runner-up - \$50 Bond; Fourth Runner-up - \$25 Bond.

The reigning Miss Lenexa, Amy Gagnon, is attending Kansas University; Miss Lenexa 1994, Amber Ellis, is a student at Oklahoma State University; Miss Lenexa 1993, Letitia Bugjo, is a student at Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

Applications for judges and candidates may be obtained at the Lenexa City Hall, the Community Center, Legler Barn at 87th and Lackman or by calling Irv Hoffmann, Program Director, at 894-5379. The deadline is May 31, 1996.

WANTED
BY MAY 31, 1996
CANDIDATES FOR
MISS LENEXA 1996
CALL 492-0038 FOR DETAILS!!

Lenexa Historical Society
14907 West 87th Street Parkway
Lenexa, KS 66212

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U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 57
SHAWNEE MISSION, KS

James & Erika Peterson
8200 W. 97th Terrace
Overland Park, KS 66212