



Historical Highlights

Nov. 2009



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You Are Invited

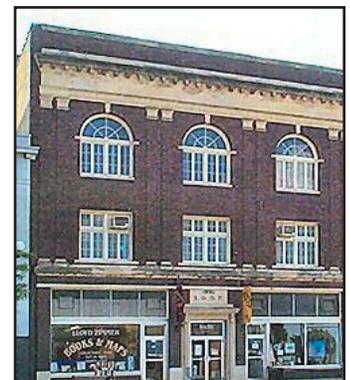
SCHS will hold our Annual Meeting for **Sunday, December 6, 2009**, at the **Sixth Avenue Ballroom**, 117 W. 6th Ave., Topeka, Kansas, 66603, from **2:00 to 4:00 p.m.**

This annual event will give the SCHS membership and friends an opportunity to share in the accomplishments of the SCHS throughout the year and inform them of upcoming events and plans. It also serves as the annual business meeting where new officers are elected. Every year at this event the SCHS showcases a particular topic of interest for presentation.

The SCHS bulletin for this year is a book chronicling the **Elmhurst Neighborhood**, therefore, this year's theme will focus on **Historic Neighborhoods in Topeka**. **Alan Bearman**, Associate Professor of History at Washburn University, will speak about **Charles Sheldon** and his contributions to neighborhood development in historic Topeka neighborhoods in the early twentieth century.

The program will include presentations from the **Central Park Neighborhood** and **Ward Meade Neighborhood**. This is a casual social event designed to inform our members, friends, and prospective members about the SCHS, There will be hors d'oeuvres served and a cash bar. Admission is free for everyone! We encourage you to come out and have a relaxing, and enjoyable time as we share our Historic Topeka Neighborhoods and SCHS activities.

- Historic Neighborhoods
- Charles Sheldon
- Central Park Neighborhood
- Ward Meade Neighborhood
- Elmhurst Bulletin
- Election of Officers
- Plans for 2010



2009 Preservation Awards

see also:
<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/aboutus/2009.html>



The third annual joint awards for preservation of the history of the county were presented by the Shawnee County Historical Society and the Topeka Landmarks Commission at the Warehouse 414, 414 SE 2nd St., on Sunday afternoon, May 17, 2009. The public was welcomed at the reception.

Ustaine Talley, President of The Prairie Heritage Institute, Inc., and Douglass Wallace, editor of Bulletin #83, *Bungalow Homes for the Nation: The L.F. Garlinghouse Co. of Topeka*, were speakers.

Greg Allen, representative of the Topeka Landmarks Commission, presented Landmark designations, which included:

- **The Dibble Building**, 121 SE 6th St., owned by **Midwest Health Management, Inc.**, Jim Klausman, president.
- **The Curtis Cemetery**, located in North Topeka just west of Topeka Boulevard at N.W. Harri-

son on the south side of Old Soldier Creek.

- **Frank Durein House**, 726 SW Clay St., honoring the restoration work of **Ted Mize** and his late wife, **Connie**.

Carlton Scroggins, **Shawnee County Historical Society** President, honored:

- **Dibble Building**, 121 SE 6th St., owned by **Midwest Health Management, Inc.**, Jim Klausman, president. Michael Mead accepted the award for Midwest Health Management.
- **Topeka Cemetery Association, Inc.**, 1601 SE 10th Ave.; the Topeka Cemetery, owned by the City of Topeka, is celebrating their 150th anniversary on Memorial Day, May 25, 2009.
- **West Union School**, 210 SW West Union Road, owned by **Stan and Theresa Langhofer**; for adaptive use of Historic Property as a residence. Elizabeth Taylor accept-

ed the award for the Langhofers.

- **Warehouse 414/Grandmontagne Design**, 414 SE 2nd St., owned by **John and Chris Grandmontagne**; for adaptive use of Historic Property as a business.

- **The Woodward Inns**, owned by **Elizabeth Taylor**, Historic Holiday Park Neighborhood.

- **SCHS's Historic Preservation Achievement Award** honored **Walter Knox Hillmer** for preserving the heritage of the Hillmer Family Fine Leather Goods, Topeka, and his continued support and commitment to Historic Preservation in Topeka and Shawnee County. Hi Stockwell accepted the award for Walt Hillmer.



left to right: Awards were presented at Warehouse 414. Carlton Scroggins, SCHS president, presents Preservation Award to the Grandmontagnes. Ustaine Talley and Doug Wallace spoke at this event.

Preservation Sites Honored:



above: The Dibble Building, Curtis Cemetery, Frank Durein House, Topeka Cemetery Assoc., West Union School, Woodward's newest restoration is 1269 SW Western, and Warehouse 414/Grandmontagne Design.

Elizabeth Taylor's **Woodward Inns** complex are seven properties, along SW Fillmore St. and Huntoon Av. in the Holiday Park area of Topeka. Cornerstone is the Woodward Mansion, 1272 SW Fillmore, built in 1924 by Chester & Frederica Woodward. www.thewoodward.com/

News Briefs

► The 2009 Bulletin (#64) is scheduled to cover Topeka's **Elmhurst Neighborhood**, including history of Lowman Hill Elementary School, Elmhurst Plaza the Methodist Home. Neighborhood borders include Boswell, Huntoon, Washburn Av., and 10th St.

Two future Bulletins may cover Shawnee County and the **Free State Capitol during Territorial Days** and tour historical **Shawnee County Eateries** (with recipes included).

► In May, 2009, economic hard times forced the Kansas State Historical Society to cut 12 full-time positions. They anticipated cutting programs as well. All six divisions of the society were affected by the job cuts, including administration, cultural resources, education and outreach, historic sites, museum and library, and archives. Before the cuts, the society had about 100 employees. The historical society was founded in 1875 by the Kansas Editors' and Publishers' Association to save present and past records.

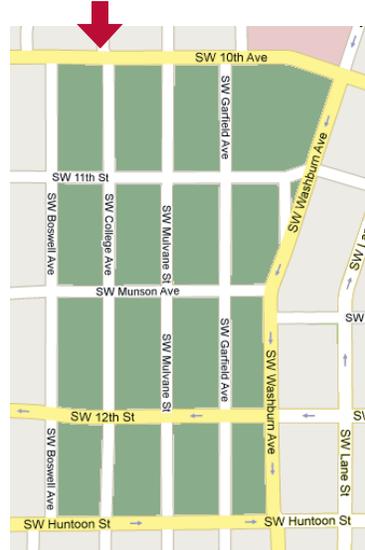
► In October, 1855, the Topeka (Free State) Constitutional Convention met in Constitution Hall, 427-429 S. Kansas Ave. For nearly three weeks, delegates worked writing the first of four constitutions seeking Kansas statehood. Most notably, this Topeka Consti-

tution stated, "There shall be no slavery in this state." It added that any person recognized as a slave in another state won't be recognized as such in Kansas. This Topeka Movement was in response to the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which Congress had passed 17 months earlier.

It led to the "Bleeding Kansas" era that pitted Southerners demanding that Kansas become a slave state against newly arrived Easterners and Northerners intent on Kansas becoming a Free State. Read Don Lambert's article, "Constitution Hall celebrates 154 years," in the *Topeka Capital-Journal*, October 23, 2009. There is a link to

this story from the SCHS Focus on History page.

► The historic portions of the Owen house north of Topeka — a stop on the Underground Railroad — may not have been destroyed by fire in mid-October, 2009, after all. Dee Puff, a local historian, said she visited the site and found the original part of the house, built about 1856, remained in "really good shape." She said the owner, Jack DeBacker, was planning to have the structure evaluated to determine whether it could be restored. Read details about ownership of this farm house and its role in the Underground Railroad in a story, "Burned house harbored slaves", by Mike Hall, in the *Topeka Capital Journal*, October 19, 2009. There is a link to this story from the SCHS Focus on History page.



150th Anniversary

of John Brown's Last Trip to Shawnee County, January 1859

Danger, cunning, and a keen sense of responsibility were required of those who chose to aid the unfortunate souls who were victims of slavery. Keeping Underground Railroad hideouts and trails secure and secret was never a simple task.

Jim Lane's road followed what is now Rochester Road, from the Kaw River at Topeka northward into Nebraska, focusing on Tabor, Iowa. Slaves worth thousands of dollars as personal property were transported illegally to Canada via this route.

John Brown and his lieutenants were constant users of this trail. Topeka had been designated as State Capitol by the Free State Government in 1855. John Brown's last visit in the Topeka area was in January, 1859 -- one hundred and fifty years ago this year.

Brown had gathered eleven slaves, mostly women and children, in western Missouri during December, 1858, during Christmas season while slave owners were distracted by celebrating the holidays. A baby was born among the slaves before the party reached Topeka.

Early one freezing morning in late January, 1859, Brown and the twelve fugitives arrived at Mrs. Sheridan's house, now in Highland Park at 2303 Pennsylvania. Some of those fleeing were barefoot and, despite cold weather, were wearing only summer-weight clothing. The slaves were offered breakfast and a chance to warm themselves by the fireplace.

Brown impatiently paced the floor, apprehensive as to his possible capture, while his assistants distributed the slaves to different depots around the city. The Negroes were given shelter, food, and warmer clothes.

They were kept hidden while arrangements were made to lead the party northward. Brown remained at Sheridan's home until arrangements were finalized to begin the journey northward.

Once the go-ahead was given, the fugitives gathered. Just after sundown a prairie schooner, a covered wagon drawn by horses, crossed the river at Pappan's Landing, assisted by several Topeka conductors. (It is said that such wagons had false bottoms where those fleeing slavery could be hidden if necessary.) Brown then said his goodbyes to his Shawnee Country friends and headed northward along the Lane road. They made their last stop within Shawnee County at the Owens (Packard) House, now 3212 Rochester Road, where they arrived in time for breakfast.

The party spent a portion of that day hiding out in the woods behind the farm. They then moved north to Holton where they met some resistance, ending in the historic "Battle of the Spurs." A posse sent to stop

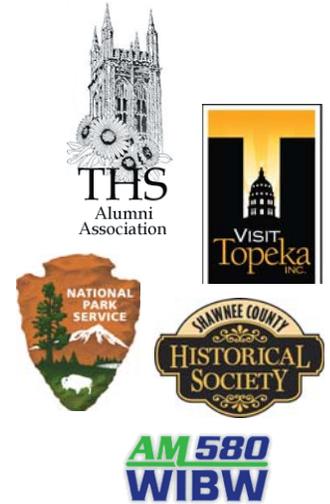


Brown dispersed, and no shots were fired. The rest of the trip was uneventful. The party arrived in Tabor, Iowa, on February 5, 1859. The slaves were taken on to freedom in Canada. Brown moved on to Harpers Ferry, Virginia, where he met his final fate in December, 1859.

By Dee Puff

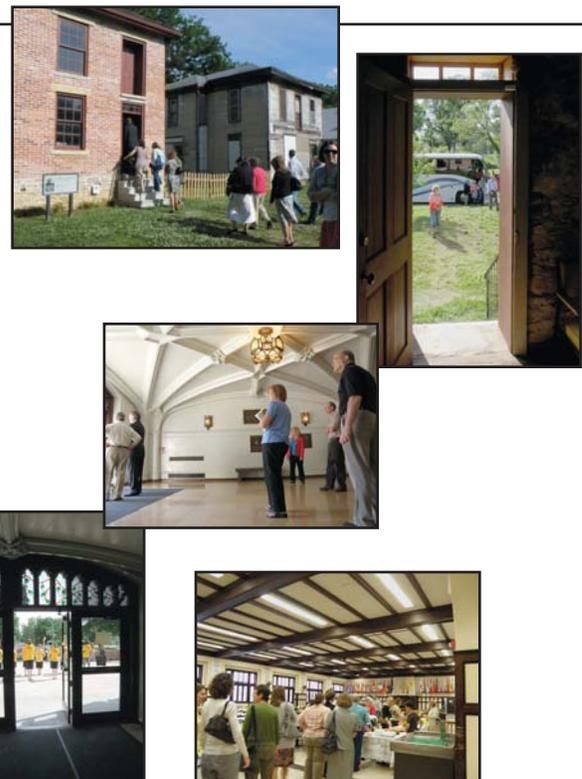
Separate, but Equal? A Panel Discussion

SCHS co-sponsored a panel discussion, held Thursday evening, Oct. 15, 2009, taking a look back at the history of two teams playing basketball for Topeka High School in 1949. Former members of both teams: the Ramblers with black players only, and the Trojans, with white players only. Panelists were Henry "Hank" Alberg, Class of 1949, Trojan; Jack Alexander, Class of 1949, Rambler; Bill Bunten, Topeka mayor, Class of 1948, Trojan; Donald Redmon, Class of 1947, Rambler; and Richard Ridley, Class of 1947, Rambler. Retired NC basketball coach and Topeka High grad Dean Smith sat in the audience. Other participants included Vince Frye, Topeka Shawnee Co. Sports Council; Linda Wiley, Principal, Topeka High School; Carlton Scroggins, Shawnee County Historical Society president; Dave Schafer, National Park Service; Debra Goodrich, Shawnee County Historical Society; and Bill Wagnon, Shawnee County Historical Society. Our web site includes links to several articles from the *Topeka Capital-Journal* and a photo archive of this well-attended event. SCHS hopes to acquire new members through their regional exposure in support of this event.



Preservation Bus Tour

The **Historic Ritchie House** was a stop on a bus tour of historic sites held as a part of the 2009 Kansas Preservation Conference, held in Topeka on May 3-5. Theme for the event was "Preservation in Times of Change." Sites visited by those registered for the conference included the Historic Ritchie House, the Kansas State Capitol, Topeka High School, the Topeka (Free State) Constitution Hall, and Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site. Included here are some photos from some of the stops on the tour.



Ritchie House News

► The Ritchie House, 1116 SE Madison, will conduct a series of Open House events each Saturday in November, 10 am to 2 pm, free admission. Scheduled events are listed on our web site. They include:

Nov. 7 & 14 - 11 AM – Black Colonies & Settlements in Kansas 1856-1896, given by Ustaine Talley; 1 PM – Fun for elementary ages with Laura Autrey reading *Almost To Freedom*. Followed by a discussion about the Underground Railroad in Kansas

Nov. 21 - 11 AM – The Underground Railroad in Kansas, a performance given by historian and educator Anne Hawkins, as Mary Jane Ritchie; 1 PM – The Trial of John Ritchie Upon The Shooting and Death of US Deputy Marshal Leonard Arms (April 20, 1860).

Capital Campaign Wraps Up

► Capital Campaign chairman Dale Anderson announced that Wichita's Hale Ritchie, great-grandson of John and Mary Jane Ritchie, has challenged the committee to match a Ritchie family pledge of \$100,000 to complete the capital campaign

Structural work has been completed on the Hale Ritchie House, one door south of John Ritchie's home on SE Madison St. Next spring further construction on the structure resumes, with expected completion by the fall of 2010. The Hale Ritchie House will enable the Society to conduct its celebrated education programs for area schools, stage events in keeping with the Society's commitment to the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area, and conduct operations of the Society. When the work is completed the facility will be available for small groups to reserve for social occasions.

SCHS Educational Initiative

► The Education Committee of SCHS has been busy hosting a variety of school and community groups throughout 2009. In addition, Robin Shrimplin, SCHS education consultant, spoke to Downtown Rotary luncheon on September 24, 2009, at their regular luncheon meeting at Ramada Inn Downtown.

This page includes photos from various activities occurring this year. These efforts have been supported by a gift from BP America for 2009.



Events included

History Day at Washburn University, Open House in April, presentations by Anne Hawkins as Mary Jane Ritchie and Tanner Carlson speaking on Kansas forts. Among visitors were Williams Magnet School, Rice Community Center, Chanute H.S. History Club, and Kansas State University students.

Topeka & Shawnee County Local History News

► Diane Miller of the United States Department of the Interior announces that the **National Park Service, National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom Program** is sponsoring a national conference on the historic Underground Railroad in Topeka on June 23-26, 2010. She writes. "This is an exciting opportunity to highlight, through a national conference, the important role that Kansas played in the Underground Railroad and freedom struggles," building on the national conferences that the Friends of the Network have hosted since 2007. The Network to Freedom planning team visited Topeka on November 5, 2009. The Ramada Inn, 420 Southeast 6th, will be the conference site. Anyone interested in becoming involved can contact Diane Miller at 402-661-1588 or diane_miller@nps.gov.

► Shawnee County is home to 61 sites officially listed on the National Register of Historical Properties. The site listed longest is St. Joseph Church, 235 SW Van Buren. Other sites include five bridges, two farms, an agricultural field, an archeological site and the mausoleum row at Topeka Cemetery. The December 28, 2008 *Topeka Capital-Journal* gives detailed information for seeking recognition of historic property on the national list, and includes hyper-links to the national site and on-line application forms. Check the Preservation page of our web site for a link to the digital version of this newspaper article. <http://skyways.lib.ks.us/orgs/schs/preservation/preservationnews.html>

► In July, 2009, twenty-four chandeliers (four original and 20 replicas) were installed in Topeka High School's cafeteria. Replicas are made of aluminum, safer and more economically feasible than the original cast brass. Tim Degginger, owner of Degginger's Foundry and THS alumnus, restored the originals and used fixture parts to make molds for the replicas. Funds were contributed by Topeka High alumna Jayne Allen Powell in memory of her brother, James Allen, also an alum.

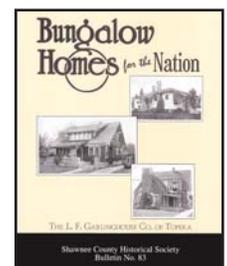


► In 2009 the SCHS web site has added photos of a number of **Shawnee County properties felt worthy of preservation**. We invite you to our Preservation page, where a link will take you to our Photo Archive. There are new photos on-line of: Baughman's Dairy, 2235 S.W. Buchanan; Dairy Queen, 1700 SW Med-

ford; Curtis Cemetery, just west of Topeka Blvd at N.W. Harrison (Preservation Award winner 2009); Dibble Building, 121 SE 6th St. (Preservation Award winner 2009); Federal Post Office, 424 S Kansas Avenue; Fire Station #1, 934 NE Quincy; Fire Station #7, 1215 SW Oakley (with complete tour of facility, photos by Janet Loebel); Frank Furein House, 726 SW Clay St. (Preservation Award winner 2009); former Grocery, SE corner, 8th & Clay; Methodist Home, 1135 SW College Blvd. (with complete tour of facility, photos by Janet Loebel); Topeka Cemetery, 1601 SE 10th Ave. (Preservation Award winner 2009); Warehouse 414, 414 SE 2nd Ave (former Rapid Transit Power Station, Preservation Award winner 2009); West Union School, 210 SW West Union Rd. (Preservation Award winner 2009); 1263 SW Western (part of the Woodward complex, Preservation Award winner 2009); and former Western Resources substation, 1201 SW Oakley. The site includes photos of dozens more properties of interest and a link to a Wish List of other properties SCHS could document with on-line photos. If you appreciate a site not currently listed, or can provide a digital photo of a property on our Wish List, contact us through our on-line e-mail link.

► The State of Kansas Court of Appeals heard summaries for the case of the City of Topeka vs. Friends of Bethany Place, Inc., on October 22, 2009. The state's Attorney General had joined FOBP in the suit against the City, and a representative of that office wrote briefs submitted to the Court of Appeals. Judges seemed to grasp the fundamental issue: cities are required to provide evidence to substantiate that no alternative exists prior to destroying an historic site. A decision in this case may not be made before the end of 2009. If FOBP wins this appeal, the City and Church may decide to take the case to the state's Supreme Court. Use of scarce tax monies by the City to fight the case may eventually become an issue of public debate.

► Staff at the Kansas State Historical Society reports about sales of SCHS Bulletin #63, **Bungalow Homes for the Nation**, "I am sending this book from our webstore from coast to coast. Many people lived in specific homes mentioned in the book when they lived in Topeka. Our preservation office has a copy also."



From the SCHS Mail Bag

► In 2009 the **Topeka Cemetery**, the state's first chartered cemetery, celebrated its 150th anniversary. A celebration was held at the cemetery on Saturday, October 3rd. Anne Hawkins reenacted Mary Jane Ritchie, wife of abolitionist John Ritichie. She elaborated on the ties the Ritchies had to the Underground Railroad through Kansas Territory. Don Lambert, of Kansas City, Kansas, portrayed Franklin Loomis Crane, a dental surgeon who moved to Kansas from Pennsylvania to work toward making Kansas a free state and founded the Topeka Cemetery in 1859. "Cemetery celebrates 150 years" is an article about the celebration by Adrielle Harvey, published in the October 4, 2009, *Topeka Capitol-Journal*. There is a link to the on-line version of this article on the SCHS Focus on History page.

► Matt Porubsky has worked with Gizmo Pictures Inc. of Topeka in producing a documentary film about his family's deli, begun in the "Little Russia" neighborhood of Topeka over 60 years ago by his grandparents. **CW Porubsky's Deli and Tavern** has survived natural disasters and business climate changes to become a culinary legend and meeting spot for the area's elite and thousands of fans of Porubsky's homemade chili and hot pickles. Free public viewings are being shown around NE Kansas during November. Google "transcendent deli" for specifics about this topic.

► West Virginia University, in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS) is currently working on a project to create a website to honor the **150th Anniversary of the American Civil War** and to encourage visitation to related sites across the county. This website is intended to address a wide audience of users for general and specific information relating to the Civil War and Civil War-related sites. This site will act as more than a road map, it will serve as a map for Civil War history on the web. Through the use of Geographic Imaging Systems (GIS) mapping technology, users will be able to find each site on a virtual map (a specialized version of Microsoft Virtual Earth). Through this map, they will be able to get directions to this site, obtain a short summary of the site, be provided with a link to the website administered by the owner website, and much more. Through this use of spatial data, this website will organize and link cultural resource data in

a variety of formats, including data from the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System, the NPS Focus Civil War Monument database, the American Battlefield Protection Program battle summaries, the National Register nominations, among others.

In mapping the sites in the state of Kansas, the university has included the John Ritchie House and is working with SCHS on permissions to include this site in their mapping application. There is no cost involved in partnering.

The new website will be launched next year, but fans of Civil War history are encouraged to visit the current NPS Civil War website (<http://www.nps.gov/civilwar/>), which includes information on this commemoration.

► Topeka Room staff at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library recently did some research on the name of nearby **Lowman Hill Elementary School** and the former **Lowman Hill Methodist Church** in the next block (now Topeka Bible Church). Both originated in what is now known as the Elmhurst neighborhood of Topeka. "Lowman" comes from the last name of a Methodist minister from Pittsburgh, PA. His oldest daughter married and settled in Topeka. The couple lived in the current Lowman Hill neighborhood before it was a part of Topeka. They had to travel far to go to church, so the husband suggested building a church on the southwest corner of Mulvane and Eleventh Streets. The church was named in the honor of the father of Mrs. Bartholomew, Rev. Lowman. At that time the church was on a hill, thus "Lowman Hill" Methodist Church. The first Lowman Hill School was built in 1887 at the corner of Jewell and Munson. The Lowman Hill area was annexed to the city in 1890. The frame school was destroyed by fire in 1900. (Some blamed the KKK for the fire.) Another school was built in 1901. The current Lowman Hill School is 1950s vintage. *Shared by Robert C. and Dorothy Harder, Topeka*

► Former Kansas governor **William H. (Bill) Avery, Sr.** passed away on November 4, 2009. Gov. Avery was honorary co-chair of the Ritchie House capital campaign. SCHS appreciates his devotion to the project, his advice and leadership. He was a great public-spirited fellow, a man who appreciated heritage education and awareness.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership is from January-December, annually

Please print and fill out this form, then send with payment to the address below. NOTE: The Shawnee County Historical Society and Historic Topeka have merged. We are called "Shawnee County Society," but now include historic preservation focus as well as documenting local history.

Our SCHS Membership Drive is coming. Beat the rush. **MAIL NOW** for your 2010 membership.

MEMBERSHIP FORM *(Please print)*

Yes! I wish to join the Society that preserves the past and celebrates our heritage.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Check type of membership: _____ Regular—\$35.00 _____ Patron—\$50.00
_____ Renovator—\$100.00

GIFT MEMBERSHIP *(Please print)*

_____ \$ Gift Membership for someone I know who will benefit from membership. (Photocopy this form for more than one. Use rates listed above.)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

I Wish to join the following committee:

- Nominations Membership Publications
- Annual Meeting/Socials Preservation
- Ritchie Project Education/Communications Public Relations

Name _____

(Make checks to "Shawnee County Historical Society")
Please send form(s) with your check to:
Shawnee County Historical Society, P.O. Box 2201, Topeka, KS 66601-2201
Your canceled check serves as your membership receipt.



P.O. Box 2201
TOPEKA KS 66601-2201

Mark Your Calendar:

2009 Annual Meeting of SCHS

Sunday, December 6, 2009

Focus on Historic Neighborhoods in Topeka

Descendants of **Potawatomi Chief Abram Burnett** were pleased to find a photo of their ancestor posed wrapped in an Indian blanket. Most photos of the chief record him wearing traditional white man's garb.

The family sees this photo as evidence that the chief continued to embrace Native American ways, even as he interpreted and counseled with representatives of the U.S. government. He is known to have traveled to Washington D.C. and to have met and admired Abraham Lincoln. Burnett died June 14, 1870, at the age of 58. He is buried in Topeka, southwest of 29th and Wanamaker.

Tidbits →

Historical Highlights

