



Historical Highlights

v. 4, n. 1



Mar. 2015

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President's Message

by *David J. Heinemann*, SCHS President

Get ready for a great year. Planning is already underway for several events you will not want to miss. **Sunday, May 3rd at 2:00 p.m.** is the date and time set for our **2015 Historic Preservation Awards**. While most of the honorees are in the process of being selected, we already know one honoree because our event will take place at the historic Dillon House, located directly west of the statehouse. **Our friends at the Dillon House** have graciously volunteered to host the preservation awards event and continue our recent tradition of presenting the awards at the site of one of our honorees. This will also give you the opportunity to enjoy firsthand the wonderful restoration work that has taken place at this truly remarkable Topeka landmark.



Your trustees jumpstarted the year by holding a much overdue retreat to review our mission, assess our weaknesses and strengths, set our goals for 2015, and develop an action plan to achieve these goals. The “mission” of the Shawnee County Historical Society is **“to preserve, collect and interpret the history of Shawnee County, Kansas.”** It’s clear that one of our weaknesses has been the slow decline in memberships during the last 10 years, from approximately 350 to 200, in spite of a marked increase in program activities since the completion of the Ritchie House and the Cox Communication Learning Center. The addition of part-time staff in 2011 stabilized our education program to make it one of our key strengths. Our **heritage program** offerings for school children and tourists filled a void in Shawnee County and has helped the society form more partnerships, particularly with our schools in Shawnee County. The **Topeka Public Schools Foundation** in partnership with the society now provides the opportunity for 7th grade students to participate in our Rediscover Freedoms Pathway School Field Trip. Over 2,400 students participated in our 2014 program activities. We identified over a dozen other partnerships developed with community organizations such as the **National Park Service** and **Brown v. Board**,

—continued on p. 2

City of Topeka Landmark Commission, Downtown Topeka, Inc., etc.

A significant weakness that we identified is the lack of community awareness of what the society is doing, who it serves, and why it is important. Our programs only reach a fraction of our 200,000 fellow Shawnee County residents. The society's prior focus on the Ritchie story may have inadvertently given the impression that the society is Topeka oriented, not county oriented, in spite of the programs we have presented in other Shawnee county communities like Rossville. In addition, our communication strategies do not reach enough people. Our newsletter is only available by mail to members and to everyone on our webpage. It is clear that we need to improve our utilization of social media in order to reach a younger, but interested audience. We were informed that the Topeka History Geeks have over 9,000 members organized around their Facebook page.

Based upon the insights garnered from our retreat, your trustees adopted recommendations centered on **Five Strategic Areas**:

1. **Membership.** First, we need to do the obvious and retain members. Do not be surprised if you receive a survey from our Membership Committee seeking your advice and input on all issues involving the society from programming, communication, etc., to new ideas. We need to know what you think and listen to you when you respond. Second, we need to recruit more members from within our community. After our retreat, trustee John Hart immediately challenged the rest of us by quickly signing up 38 history students as new members.
2. **Fund Development.** Increased memberships will not be able to cover all of our programming and upkeep costs. The Fund Development Committee will work to develop a plan to cultivate donors who can make a long term commitment to fund specific programs, in addition to identifying governmental units, foundations, tribes, individuals and businesses for other funding. We have had recent successes with significant grants or donations from the City of Topeka, the Topeka Public Schools Foundation, Glenn and Claire Swogger, but much more needs to be done to sustain the society long term.
3. **Program.** Our Program Committee will be broadened to look at our entire program to create a county-wide focus. We, of course, will continue our heritage tour school programs, preservation awards, history summer camp, newsletter, etc.; however, the Program Commit-

tee is now charged to develop a Communities of Interest Program Series to cover the diverse and varied interests within Shawnee County. Ideas include events, such as the 1951 flood, 1966 tornado, Great Midland Trail Centennial, Mexican Fiesta and the Civil War; in addition to places, such as Union Town, Rossville, Willard Bridge and Potawatomie Citizens Band. Traveling programs can be developed for our retirement centers and other locales. It is suggested that we promote a Period Dance-Ball and Dinner event that can be held both as a fundraiser and program activity.

4. **Communications.** The Communications Committee will be tasked with addressing our most pressing need: effective communication with our members, the public, and specific segments of our community. Mail is expensive, particularly when bulk mail arrives late, sometimes after an advertised event. Our short term goal will be to evaluate our current methodologies and devise a new strategy that reflects a focus on the entire county and looks at the expansion of our use of electronic and social media. Many other ideas were suggested from initiating regular communication with our local elected officials at all levels, including school board members, city council members, county commissioners and legislators, to creating a network of history buffs on our Facebook page.
5. **Governance.** The society's committee structure will be revised to include the committees I have highlighted, in addition to three more to address our facility maintenance, finance and administration, and archival and records retention needs. Each committee, chaired by a trustee for reporting purposes to the board, should recruit non-board members to share the load and increase our pool of talent. The duties of each committee should be clearly spelled out.

I apologize for not going into more detail as each paragraph could easily have been expanded to a page, but I hope that you now have a better understanding of what your trustees learned from the retreat and how they have chosen to move forward. Again, your thoughts and ideas are always welcome. After all, **this is your society**. Only by working together can we make it more meaningful to all of Shawnee County and fulfill our mission "to preserve, collect and interpret the history of Shawnee County, Kansas."

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the leadership talents of **Joan Wagnon** who facilitated our most timely retreat. 

Educational Opportunities

by *Melinda Abitz*, Education Program Developer

School field trips are in full swing at the Historic Ritchie House. We have seen a record number of school students coming to the Historic Ritchie House complex to take part in our “Rediscover Freedom’s Pathway” themed school field trip. With our Brown v. Board of Education National Historic Site and Kansas State Capitol partners, we have been very busy. This all-day field trip has proven to be an asset for students of all ages learning of their Kansas Heritage.

Currently at press time for this March newsletter, the total number of students visiting for this school year is **1,011**. This number consists of thirteen schools with five schools coming from other cities in Kansas, and **1,328** more students are scheduled to round out the remainder of this school year ending in May. This consists of eleven schools with six schools coming from other cities.

With the increase in school field trips, this is an excellent opportunity to invite those interested in history and young people to help us with these school field trips. So far, we have three people that are consistently helping with this project. We are thrilled to see these students come through our doors but we do see a need to have more people involved in this endeavor. *If you would like to become part of this rewarding experience, we would love to talk to you. Please call the office at 785-234-6097.* This is guaranteed fun! Nothing beats seeing students light up as they learn about stories of the courageous pioneers of early Topeka.

We have added an important program this year to our school field trips. Along with our standard program/experience of the Underground Railroad we have added, for

7th and 8th grade students, the **Exoduster history** of our nation and its local stories. In correlation with the **Kansas State Standards for History** for middle schools, students learn of this Exoduster Movement with a direct relationship to Kansas history. This year, through a grant from the Topeka Public Schools Foundation, the Shawnee County Historical Society and the Historic Ritchie House have partnered with Topeka Public Schools with a special interest in 7th grade students to help meet those standards. This, along with our **Underground Railroad program**, aligns with those Kansas State History Standards to provide a treasured and educational experience for all students. *“Thank You” to Topeka Public Schools Foundation for this partnership.*

History Camp for Kids, an annual summer program for Topeka’s youth, is again under way. This year’s theme is **“The Trails of Shawnee County History.”** This 6-week summer history camp will run from June 1st through July 10th. Five community centers, learning organizations and academies are lined up to attend one time each week for this fun-filled summer program. Approximately 120 campers are scheduled to come each week of the camp. History Camp for Kids will end with an **old fashioned chuck wagon meal** experience served in true pioneer fashion to culminate the ending of our sessions.

Yee Haw!

Top photos, right: Kansas Day at the Kansas State Historical Society.

Right photo: Avondale West students at the Hale Ritchie House, 2015.

Far right photo: Underground Railroad escape, school field trip to Cox Communications Heritage Center.



District 3 History Day

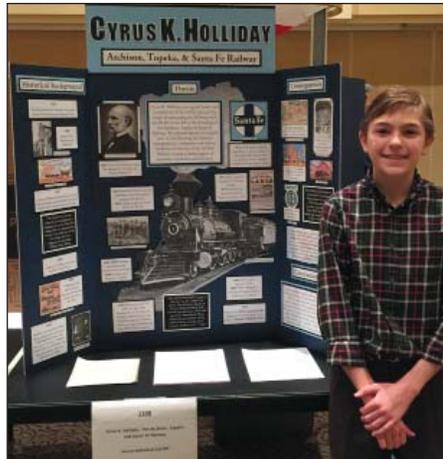
by *Rachel Goossen*, History Professor, **Washburn University**

On February 28, 2015, Washburn University's Department of History celebrated its thirty-fifth year hosting District 3 History Day. **More than 200 middle school and high school age students participated.** This year's theme, "*Leadership and Legacy in History*," drew entries in eighteen categories, including performances, exhibits, documentaries, websites, and papers, with students from Jardine Middle School, French Middle School, Christ the King, Mater Dei, Topeka Collegiate, Washburn Rural Middle School, Seaman Middle School, Washburn Rural High School, Topeka High School, Seaman High School, and Mission Valley High School. Two students, both juniors at Seaman High School, received scholarship awards: **Mollie Wendlandt**, from Washburn University's Office of Admissions, for her Senior Individual Exhibit on Gloria Steinem, and **Scott Monk** for his Senior Paper on Adolphus Busch. Monk's award, made possible by the Washburn University Foundation, is the inaugural Phil Morse Scholarship, honoring Washburn University

history alumnus and longtime History Day Papers judge Phil Morse.

Shawnee County Historical Society President **Dave Heinemann** was on hand to give out medals to 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place medal winners in each category; **seventy-five students advanced on to State History Day**, which will be held at **Washburn University** on **April 25**. The Shawnee County Historical Society's generous contributions have supported History Day in our community for many years, and Washburn University's Department of History relies on SCHS members and friends to serve as volunteer judges and to sustain this extraordinary opportunity for students in grades 6 through 12.

Anyone interested in inviting History Day students to make presentations at area events, or in volunteering with upcoming History Day events, may contact **Rachel Goossen**, coordinator of the regional History Day program, at rachel.goossen@washburn.edu.

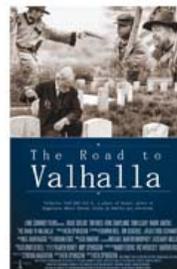


Baker Valley, student at Topeka Collegiate, with his award-winning Junior Individual Exhibit, "Cyrus K. Holliday: The Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway."

Wrap-up: The Road to Valhalla

The Road to Valhalla, a story of the Civil War, was shown on Sunday afternoon, November 6, 2014, at the Cox Communications Heritage Education Center, Hale Ritchie House.

A comments and question session was led by **Ken Spurgeon**, the film's producer/director. Ken was introduced by SCHS Board Member **George Bernheimer**, who appeared as an extra in the film.



SCHS joins Dillions Community Rewards Program

You can increase your support for the SCHS by grocery shopping. The Society has joined the new community **Rewards Program** offered through **Dillons Grocery Stores**. If you have a Dillons Plus card and designate the SCHS as the designated recipient, each time you use your Dillons Plus card, a percentage of your

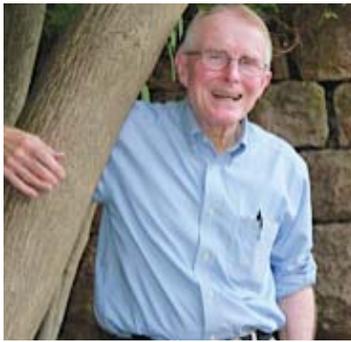
spending will be contributed to the SCHS by Dillons. This allows Dillons shoppers to designate recipients of what would be normally Dillons' charitable contribution as a corporation. It doesn't add anything to your grocery bill. Visit <https://www.dillons.com/communityrewards> and enroll. The SCHS NPO number is **33429**.

SCHS Highlight: Menninger Memories, My Twenty-Six Years with the Clinic

by Robert W. Conroy, M.D.

Part I of this article, focusing on the history of the Clinic before it expanded into the West Campus, was published in our November, 2014, SCHS newsletter. Read our Fall, 2014, newsletter online at www.shawneecountyhistory.org

There was a hierarchy at the clinic...and highest on the totem pole were the training analysts...a kind of exclusive senior club. It took at least a decade to become a training analyst...following completion of psychiatric training or psychology training at the Ph.D. level. The training



Robert W. Conroy, M.D.

was arduous and expensive. Training analysts were qualified to reproduce their kind by training those who wanted to be analysts. Only those who were analysts or training to be analysts were allowed couches in their offices. There was a pledge made at the beginning of analytic training that one would not

set oneself up as an analyst (and use a couch) without completing the training. At educational meetings, offered by the Topeka Institute for Psychoanalysis, front seats were reserved for the training analysts. They commanded the respect of the others and took their places, garnering the awe of the other staff. Many fantasies abounded about how mentally healthy they must be, since their primal conflicts were analyzed and fully understood. Obviously, staff were using a defense called, "primitive idealization." All of us are human, with our share of problems and disappointments.

As mentioned, mental health professionals working at the clinic were often in personal analysis or therapy. There was an unwritten rule that one's therapist or analyst was not to be invited to a social event if their analysis would be there. This led to some problems and complicated making a guest list. If for some reason one's therapist or analyst was attending a social event, it was not considered good form to approach such person, as that could complicate the analysis. Such meetings would have to be thoroughly discussed and might extend the process. Completing analysis (it took years) might call for an "end of analysis" party. One's analyst would definitely not be invited, just the friends of the happy analysand, who was now certified healthy and blissfully aware of his/her pesky psychological impediments.

Analysis or therapy was expensive, although therapeutic

analysis was covered by the federal insurance plan. Thus, those fortunate few who worked at the Topeka Veteran's Hospital had their analysis paid for...provided it was considered therapeutic and not simply "training." The rank and file, without insurance, were expected to pay \$1.00 per session for each \$1000 of income. Thus, a mental health professional in those days, making \$35,000 per year, was expected to pay \$35.00 per hour for analysis, which could be up to four sessions per week. This amounted to a large sum of money. In addition, if one were a student in the Topeka Institute for Psychoanalysis, there were also tuition fees and one was required to purchase a complete set of the Master's works (Freud)...an expensive investment. (Today a used edition of the 24 volume set is \$1,100.00.) For this reason, modestly-priced automobiles graced our parking lots. Better forget about that boat or fancy vacation a hard working staff member might be fantasizing about (of course, when not thinking about their analysis). Many staff were well-analyzed indigents...raising families on a modest salary, while supporting analytic training. No wonder parties were sometimes a part of the ending ritual.

Levity was needed because the work was demanding and difficult. Imagine a day spent listening and trying to understand



Activity Therapy staff on "Hat Day" at Menninger Clinic in Topeka [1989]. Photo used courtesy of the Kansas Historical Society, "Kansas Memories."

stand patients who brought in a plethora of problems. Many serious issues surfaced and staff members sincerely tried to help, calling on their excellent training. One's personal therapy, as well as consulting with senior supervisors, was helpful. Having worked in other places, I found Menninger staff uniquely well-trained in psychotherapy and frankly they were good at it. Many psychiatrists, outside of the organization, had turned to biological approaches almost exclusively.

Menninger staff, however, were interested in understanding their patients, and using so-called talking therapy. I will

Menninger Memories II, cont.

never forget a training I attended early in my career at Menninger called “Diagnosis and the Difference It Makes.” The Menninger approach demanded careful diagnosis and consultation, followed by a well-planned therapeutic approach. Staff were skilled at listening to their patients and understanding them. That approach made Menninger very special, indeed. Therapists leaving Menninger, to take their places as mental health professionals in all fifty states and twenty-seven foreign countries, had one thing in common...they could listen and talk to a patient and offer psychotherapy, based on compassion and understanding.

There was a bit of humor finding your way through the old Menninger campus, located on Sixth Street. The buildings were nestled in a wooded park-like setting with a little pond on the northwest corner. A pleasant walking path took one from the hospital, making a circle around the pond. There was a little footbridge and benches along the trail and on the spacious grounds, giving the setting a relaxed and peaceful feel. The many buildings were named...and the names were “directional” and “otherwise.” I am not sure how all the “otherwise” names were chosen. The directional names were Northwest Office, North Office, South Office, and West Office. In addition to East Office, there was East Hospital. There was White Cottage which was not white. There was also East Lodge. Just think about providing directions to a visitor on this campus. Being in front of East Hospital, you had to go north to get to East Office, and west to get to East Lodge. White Cottage was east of the Clinic Building. We had some good laughs about directions, but the old east campus was cozy and nice...with friendly little buildings...not a behemoth of a hospital...and just perfect for Freud and

ings had been built by the Knights and Ladies of Security, a fraternal organization which began in Topeka in 1892. In 1919, they merged with another fraternal order to become the Security Benefit Association. Collecting nickels from the membership, they built a hospital, an orphanage, a school, and an old-folks home on the site. They set aside a small plot on the northwest side for a cemetery which remains on the property to this day. A railroad line running along the Kansas River was located at the bottom of a large hill north of the hospital. Patients arriving in the early days of the “Security” hospital were taken up the winding road by pony cart. Health insurance, however, became widely available after the Second World War, and treatment was more efficient locally. The Security Benefit Hospital closed and the beautiful grounds and buildings sold to the Menninger Foundation. In the 1980s, through the hard work of Menninger president, Dr. Roy Menninger and his wife Beverly, funds were raised to build the new hospital. The old classic red brick buildings were preserved and several beautifully renovated. The new buildings were to be constructed also of brick. The building project, however, was of such magnitude that enough matching red bricks could not be obtained. As a result, the new buildings, with the poorly matched red brick, were painted white and allowed to fade. The new white buildings were beautiful and went well with the old red brick buildings.

The West Campus had many unique features, adding to the charm of Menninger. The Tower Building was one of the magnificent red brick buildings and was modeled after Independence Hall in Philadelphia. There was a four-faced clock, just below the tower’s cupola, which had mechanical works, one of the few large clocks of this nature left in the



friendliness. Sometimes it was nice to walk with a campus visitor to the building he/she was looking for...and have a nice little talk while walking. I loved the old campus.

The west campus was one of the most beautiful locations in northeast Kansas and at one time consisted of close to 1000 acres. A hilltop site was anchored by the Tower Building. The beautiful campus composed of red brick build-

country. It had to be electrified, however, as there were few clockmakers left, who were able to repair such clocks. There was an extraordinary museum in the Tower Building, featuring the history of psychiatry. Included was a Utica Crib, a kind of screened box, used in the early days of psychiatric treatment to contain patients. Thankfully, more modern treatments were available when the Menninger Sanitarium

Menninger Memories II, cont.

began. A benefactor, in his will, donated the original electroconvulsive therapy equipment, invented by Ugo Cerletti. It was of historic interest only and never used at Menninger. There was a tranquilizing chair, a device from the early days of psychiatry, designed to calm patients. There was art work done by state hospital patients, drawn on laundry slips, because there was no drawing paper available. Dr. Karl exhibited his collection of Native American rugs which graced the halls of the Tower Building's first floor. For years, there was a beautiful fountain outside the Tower building. As the clinic moved to modernize, the fountain was removed. Again, I suspect difficulty repairing the old pumps was the likely reason. The old buildings were well constructed and the former orphanage (when Knights of Security had the property) had beautiful sunrooms, hardwood interior window and door framing, and a commanding view of the valley. It was used by our After Care (Partial Hospitalization Services) team, clinicians who cared for patients as they transitioned from the hospital to outpatient care.

The walk down to the river was absolutely breathtaking. There was a little winding road through the woods with stately oak and walnut trees providing a canopy of green, a cathedral ceiling over the walkers. In autumn, the woods were alive with color. There was no better fall foliage tour anywhere. A little jewel of a pond about halfway down the winding road



and the Snowflakes dancing on the snowdrifts. I can't tell you how many wonderful walks we enjoyed in those woods.

There was a beautiful log house on the hilltop. It had a full porch on all sides and although not used in recent times, had been the summer home of a Topeka businessman. It was described as the coolest place near the city in the days before air conditioning. Sitting on that beautiful porch, catching the evening breeze, was certainly a wonderful way to spend an evening. In later days, the cabin was carefully dismantled and sold to a couple who wanted it for a lake home. Just south of the log cabin was a picnic pavilion, built for the Knights and Ladies. Hand-crafted picnic tables, with an Asian styled cover and lattice work overhead, shielded those early picnickers from the summer sun.

After the log cabin was sold, Topeka philanthropist Irene Nunemaker, a benefactor of Menninger, donated funds to build a spectacular chapel on that site. The chapel took advantage of the special light that seemed to float through the

trees. Patients and staff quickly grew to love this chapel, designed for all faiths. Upon entering, one experienced a deep sense of peace and recognized that this was sacred space. When the hilltop clinic had to be sold, Tim and Carole Etzel generously provided funds to move the chapel to the campus of Topeka's



was home to a bale of turtles. They could often be seen sunning on an opportune fallen willow. Waterfowl noiselessly rippled the quiet water. Deer were plentiful and at night, the patients loved seeing the deer peek out of the woods and tip toe out to graze in the meadows around the hospital. In winter, the woods were spectacular, covered with a comforter of new snow. If very quiet, one could imagine the Snow Queen

Washburn University. It is now located in the heart of the Washburn campus, providing a spiritual anchor for that great institution. It is now called Carole Chapel.

Menninger was a friendly place. When walking around the campus, staff greeted each other, unless the staff member was walking with a patient. In good weather, psychotherapy was often conducted outside and staff took advantage of

Menninger Memories II, cont.

Menninger's beautiful environment. The benches provided a great place to sit. I remember a participant, who came to one of our many seminars, shared with me how beautiful the grounds were. "It is like working in a park," was the way he worded it. There were beautiful beds of roses, and the horticulturist tending the roses would always confer one of the prettiest roses, if asked.

Broken items were repaired at Menninger. Menninger was about "repairing" and that emphasis carried over to items in the environment, as well. It was a clear principle. Broken items can be fixed and will be fixed.

While the beautiful West Campus operated, often close to full capacity, it was a joy to work in this special place. The dining room, called Thornlea Commons, was a wonderful place and staff took advantage of it. It was our time to be together to share ideas and friendships. If diners were conducting a private meeting about a work related issue, it would simply be said, "We are having a meeting," and the person would go to another table. Staff occupied the dining room from 12:20 pm until 1:00 pm and that was special staff time to be away from our patients. Table composition changed daily and staff frequently ate with new groups, which was really fun....other languages were spoken at some tables, but when an English speaker joined the table, English became the spoken language, out of respect and inclusion.

The food at Thornlea Commons was exceptional. It was like dining in a nice restaurant with a variety of excellently prepared, delicious food. There were special meals celebrating holidays and religious feasts including Thanksgiving, Christmas, Jewish Holidays, Cinco de Mayo, Oktoberfest, and others. Delicious meals were served three times a day, with brunch on Saturday and Sunday. Meal preparation was supervised by the executive chefs, Mr. Tommy Mikulka, and later Mr. Wolfgang Knipp. For special staff dinners, wine was served (not for the patients, because some had alcohol problems and also because of medication interactions). The wines were delicious. Tommy and Wolfgang, however, had a secret. When the wine was poured, the bottle was wrapped in a white towel, which disguised the vintner's label. The executive chefs knew that the price of the wine did not determine quality. Throughout the years, they found exquisite wines at nominal prices, which they served, garnering rave reviews. Thornlea Commons was one of the best places in town to eat.

There were occasional "miracles" that occurred at Menninger. One dark and stormy night, staff were looking for a troubled patient who had eloped (the term used when a patient left without permission). The staff called a "Grand

Search" which meant staff would begin a comprehensive search of the city including, of course, likely locations. After hours of looking, one of the staff searchers thought he saw a police car with a cherry top flashing. Drawn to that area, the staff member found no police car with flashing lights, but there was the patient who had fallen into a drainage ditch.

Do you think your minister, priest, or rabbi would benefit by knowing more about mental health? Menninger trained scores of clergy from many denominations in pastoral care and counseling. These clergy went on to serve their parishioners and congregants with new understanding of mental health issues. There were many training programs at Menninger, including residencies in psychiatry and child psychiatry, post-doctoral fellowships in clinical psychology, post-masters training in clinical social work, psychoanalytic

Do you think your minister, priest, or rabbi would benefit by knowing more about mental health? Menninger trained scores of clergy...

training, pastoral care and many others. Menninger also trained special students from the academic arena in the behavioral sciences. It was a very exciting and intellectually stimulating environment. The Karl Menninger School of Psychiatry offered a curriculum of superb classes, taught by an array of seasoned faculty. Their academic offerings rivaled the finest universities and it was an honor to teach in the School. When I traveled, I heard one testimonial after another from former staff members, grateful for the superb training they received at Menninger.

Menninger went through a drastic change as the twenty-first century approached. Over the years, patients became increasingly reliant on insurance to pay for treatment, and treatment costs rose exponentially. Unlike the early days, when many could pay for their own treatment, the cost of providing care became prohibitive. It is important to add, however, that the Menninger Clinic, over the years, provided untold numbers of patients with below-cost care. As time went on, this became a tremendous burden on the organization. I can remember personally calling hospital administration with patients in need, who could not afford treatment. Almost every time, I was told to keep treating the patient without charge or to lower fees. We also had access to a community clinic, which Menninger owned and operated.

The organization went out of its way to help those in need. As time went on, however, private insurance no longer covered adequate treatment. I began spending more time on the



Menninger Memories II, cont.

telephone answering questions from insurance carriers about treatment. I felt this was a privacy issue. Insurance personnel saw it as watching their bottom line. Long term residential treatment became almost impossible to fund. Alas, in time, the Menninger Clinic, a mental health pioneer for over 75 years, would have to close the door on treatment in Topeka. Affiliating with Baylor Medical School, thankfully, the clinic still survives in Houston.

I had a wonderful career at Menninger and now look back with gratitude for all the opportunities I was offered while a staff member there. The dedication of the staff was palpable and enthusiasm for the work pervaded every nook and cranny. For 26 years, I was a member of this iconic organization. Hopefully, I gave something back for all I received. ✍

Dr. Conroy practiced 26 years at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas and 12 years with the United States Army and the Veteran's Administration. While at Menninger, in addition to clinical duties, Dr. Conroy directed the Menninger Leadership Center, a business and organizational consulting group. After receiving his Bachelor of Science degree cum laude from the University of Saint Thomas in Saint Paul, Minnesota and his Doctor of Medicine from the University of Minnesota, he completed psychiatric training at Walter Reed General Hospital in Washington, D.C.. Dr. Conroy is board certified and a diplomat of the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology. As a writer, he has numerous publications to his credit both in the scientific and lay press. He and his wife Carolyn enjoy retired life in Topeka.

The Menninger Foundation, West Campus, photos by **Doug Jones**, originally published on the SCHS web site/Preservation Photos page.

2014 Annual Meeting Review

Members met on Sunday afternoon, December 7, 2014, at the Hale Ritchie House for our Annual Meeting. President **David J. Heinemann** reviewed the accomplishments of SCHS in 2014, including education and preservation efforts throughout the previous year: Ritchie House improvements, ice cream social in August, Capitol Iron Works tour in September, film showing in November, and plans for new historical signage on SCHS property of the two Ritchie houses. Society appreciation for financial support through a grant from the Topeka Public Schools Foundation, represented at our meeting by **Pamela Johnson-Betts**, Executive Director, and by **Ryan Hilmer**, President, was acknowledged. SCHS also has the commitment of a \$3500 financial gift from **Glenn and Claire Swogger**. Glenn attended, although Claire could not. All three guests present were given public thank-yous at the meeting. A new Ritchie House Education Program web site was also announced. Special guest speaker at the annual meeting was **Ronald D. Parks**, author of ***The Darkest Period: The Kanza Indians and Their Last Homeland, 1846-1873***. Ron signed books and the crowd chatted and enjoyed treats at the end of the meeting.



We were also honored to have the **great-great-great grandson of John Ritchie, Adam Ritchie** (left) attend this Annual Meeting. In this photo he sits near the sign about his ancestors that will be displayed on the Ritchie properties as part of the Pathways of Freedom network.

Membership Message:

As a recipient of this newsletter you have been or are a paid member of the Society. On March 1, ninety-one memberships had been activated for 2015. Active members are the life blood of the Society. Dues support the programs and facility of the Society. They endorse the worthiness of its programs, which in turn attract grants and foundation support to complement dues income. As a member you have been instrumental in:

- Cultivating the history of Shawnee County and disbursing knowledge about it through the newsletter, published four times a year.
- Fostering support for historical preservation in partnership with the city's Landmark Commission to recognize exemplary historic preservation projects, annually the first week of May.
- Engaging young people by experiencing early Kansas efforts to expand freedom, allied with the National Parks Service and the Kansas State Historical Society, through school heritage education tours. 2500 youngsters and their

teachers participated during the 2013-14 school year.

- Producing public heritage programs which bring the county's past alive to our contemporary community, such as the Willard Bridge crossing, historic significance.
- Contributing to the community's economic development through its heritage tourist experiences.
- Maintaining an important artifact of early Topeka history and interpreting it for the public's edification.
- Underwriting the annual district History Day at Washburn University where over 200 middle and high school students are engaged in the history enterprise."

If you have not already done so, please remit your dues for 2015 immediately by completing the form on p. 11 of this newsletter and mailing it with your check, or by going on-line (www.shawneecountyhistory.com) and renewing via PayPal.

Continuing this work depends on your being involved. Please support us!



Landmark Preservation Report

If you have driven by the Ritchie House at night, you have seen evidence of the historic preservation enhancement improvement grant from the city's heritage tourism program. While insulation of the stone house is not evident, the new handicap accessible ramp is evident, as is the exterior lighting. With the installation of lights on the outside of the Cox Center, the space between the two building is now illuminated each night to assist in security of the site. Adam Ritchie of LED in Lawrence has provided the lighting fixtures and Don Gigous of Greenwave Electric has provided the labor.

The next improvement at the site is to be a new monument and sign to be installed between the two structures, replacing the billboard explaining the site over the past 15 years. The billboard has simply worn out. *Photo (right) visualizes our marker plans.*

A new sign, supplied by the National Parks Service, will describe the John and Mary Ritchie historic house for its association with the Underground Railroad through Topeka in the late 1850s. A new monument and sculpture will be installed between the benches. It includes a sculpture flame, symbolic of the Society's role in lighting Freedom's Pathway, and a limestone slab emblazoned with the Society's logo together with the logo designating the site on the Network to Freedom and a partner in the Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area. The slab also will hold a plaque commemorating the Society and its programs:



"Shawnee County has played a vital role in America's enduring struggle for freedom. From the Free State movement of the 1850s that settled this place, to the public school integration movement of the 1950s, Shawnee County has been an arena where battles over the meaning of freedom are fought. Freedom's Pathway links the Historic John and Mary Ritchie House with the Kansas Capitol and the Brown v. Board National Historic Site, three places that illuminate the ongoing journey toward freedom that defines our community. The Shawnee County Historical Society spotlights and interprets these freedom struggles through education programs, encouraging the public to embrace and celebrate this heritage."

The monument sign's designer is **Zach Snethen** of **HTK architects**. The aluminum cast flame, symbolizing lighting freedom's pathway, has been designed by **Janet Zobel**, with casting supplied by **Degginger's Foundry**. **Michelle Hoferer** and **J. T. Lardner Cut Stone Inc.** will provide the limestone slab.



MEMBERSHIP FORM

Our membership year is Jan. 1 to Dec. 31 annually.

Make check to "Shawnee County Historical Society" and mail form w/ your check to: Shawnee County Historical Society, P.O., Box 2201, Topeka, KS 66601-2201

PLEASE PRINT or TYPE info requested.

Choose type: Regular / \$35 Patron / \$50 Renovator / \$100 Sustainers / \$150 (+)

PERSONAL MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

GIFT MEMBERSHIP

Name _____ Phone _____ E-mail _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Tax Deductible 501 (c)(3) DONATION Indicate amount: \$ _____

I wish to join this/these SCHS committee(s): Nominations Membership Publications
 Annual Meeting/Socials Public Relations Historic Preservation Education/Communications

SCHS has gone High Tech AND is saving members money by teaming with PayPal on-line to accept memberships and donations. We also hope to offer sales of our inventory of *Bulletins* with on-line payment via PayPal. Links now appear on-line <http://www.shawneecountyhistory.org> to allow payment transactions via PayPal by secure credit or debit card transaction.

SCHS dues year runs from January 1 to December 31, each year.

Now is the best time to join for 2015!



SCHS Board member

Stacie Torrez has a passion for the Topeka community evident in everything she does. Born and raised in the historic Oakland neighbourhood, she is rooted in its family values, educational system and community enrichment activities.



When not working at marketing for State Farm Insurance, Stacie promotes retail sale of Casa Del Sabor, a zesty sauce originated at family-run La Siesta Restaurant and made available at employee-run HyVee stores. Stacie is a graduate of Topeka's municipal college, Washburn University, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communications with dual emphases in Corporate and Health.

Stacie also serves as a volunteer for the Sheldon Head Start Policy Council, the District Citizens Advisory Council, the USD 501 Equity Council, the PTO of Scott Dual Language Elementary School and regularly volunteers in focus groups and other capacities which support the groups' organizational missions. Notably, in 2013, Stacie coordinated a community effort and successfully raised more than \$6,000 for the LULAC Senior Center when her twin six-year-olds ran for the organization's royalty crown. She is an active member of MANA, Mothers of Twins and Women's Empowerment, Inc.

Stacie resides in her childhood home in Oakland along with her long-time partner, Jessy Henderson and three children: daughters Santana Holbert, 11 and Aqua Henderson, 6 and a son Atchison Henderson, 6. When not busy with work, philanthropic work or running her children to various activities, Stacie enjoys Zumba and is a certified Zumba instructor.



P.O. Box 2201, TOPEKA KS 66601-2201

Lighting Freedom's Pathway;
Building Heritage Culture

Plan Now to Attend!

4 Member Events:

2015 Forging Freedom's Pathways Tour

Saturday, April 25, 2015

2 Bus Tours depart **Brown v Board NHS, 1515 SE Monroe St., Topeka, 10-11:45am and 1-2:30pm** — Reservations are recommended. Call Ranger Joan Wilson, 785-354-4273.

2015 SCHS Historic Preservation Awards

Sunday, May 3, 2015, 2-4 p.m.

@ **Dillon House, 404 SW 9th St., Topeka**

All members are welcome to attend!

2015 SCHS History Camp

June/July 2015

@ **Hale Ritchie House, 1118 SE Madison St., Topeka**

— Camp is designed for 4th -5th grade students w/ sessions on Mon. & Thurs. mornings. Call SCHS Education Director Melinda Abitz, 785-234-6097, for details.

Chuck Wagon Dinner

Friday, July 10, 2015

@ **Ritchie Houses, 1116 & 1118 SE Madison St., Topeka**

— A meal served from an authentic chuck wagon at the close of our SCHS History Camp. For campers and their parents. Call SCHS Education Director Melinda Abitz, 785-234-6097, for details.

Historical Highlights

Mar. 2015

