



# Monticello Historical Herald

*Dedicated to the appreciation, preservation and celebration of the history and heritage of the Monticello Community, Johnson County, Kansas*

September, October, 2007

## MONTICELLO COMMUNITY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

### 2007 Board of Directors

#### Officers

C. Ashby – President

B. Cameron – Vice President

J. Duran – Secretary

B. Hawkins – Treasurer

#### Board Members

D. Donaldson

H. Messinger

D. Wylie

### Calendar

*Sept. 8: Lenexa Spinach Festival, 87<sup>th</sup> & Lackman*

*Sept. 13: “Fort Leavenworth Through the Years”, J. Reichley, Fort Leavenworth Historical Society, 7 p.m.*

*Oct. 11: “American Currency – Its History & Symbolism”, B. Hawkins, 7 p.m.*

*Nov. 10: Liberty Memorial Tour, Kansas City – details in this issue*

*Dec. 13: Annual Meeting of MCHS – holiday program, pot luck dinner & election of officers, 6:30 p.m.*

*All meetings are held at the Monticello Historical Station, at Floyd Cline Hall, 23860 W. 83<sup>rd</sup> Street, (913) 667-3706, are free and open to the public.*

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***Mark your calendars so you don't miss these programs:***

***September 13: Fort Leavenworth Through the Years, 7 p.m.***

Fort Leavenworth, the oldest continually operating military base in the U.S., was founded in 1827 and has defended against Native American uprisings, insured safe passage for settlers bound for the Western U.S., and has trained some of our Country's leaders. It is also home of the only maximum security prison of the U.S. military. Presenter: J. Reichley, Fort Leavenworth Historical Society.

**October 11: American Currency – Its History & Symbolism, Why a Dollar is Still Worth a Dollar, 7 p.m.**

We use it every day, but how much do we know about the origin of American currency, and its evolution into the current greenbacks; and what do all those symbols on it mean – our very own B. Hawkins (founding member of MCHS) will enlighten us

**November 10: Tour of Liberty Memorial**

Fall and cooler temperatures are here at last, so we have planned a great field trip to the National WWI museum located at the Liberty Memorial, K.C. Mo. This museum has drawn rave reviews from all over the country. We plan to car pool from the MCHS station at 9:00 a.m. Saturday morning, and we are scheduled to start our tour at 10:00 a.m. when the museum opens. Our contact person asks that we have our money gathered together so it can be paid all at once. Charges: Adults - \$7.00; Seniors - \$6.00; Kids - \$3.00 (cash, check or credit card).

You can bring a camera, but no food or drinks are allowed, including gum, candy or bottled water and there is no food service available on-site. Be sure to wear comfortable shoes. There is a rest room in each building (single stall) and rest rooms are available in the lobby next to the museum store. Weather permitting, anyone who cares to may bring a lunch and eat on the lawn; since we are car pooling we can go to lunch wherever we like.

Come see the trenches where the soldiers lived, fought and died in the mud and check out the debris left from war. See the thousands of poppies that symbolize death, renewal and life. Experience the war through the eyes of those who lived it. This was the war to end all wars!

This should be a wonderful trip. (C. Frakes, Sept. 1 2007)



*Spinach Festival – Lenexa*  
*September 8 2007*

Lenexa was hailed as the “Spinach Capital of the World” during the 1930’s! Did you know that Belgian farmers grew Spinach in the Lenexa area and shipped it by rail? The Spinach Festival rolls all of the history surrounding Lenexa into a fun celebration!

Explore this period of Lenexa’s history during the 23rd Annual Lenexa Spinach Festival which is hosted by a partnership of the Lenexa Historical Society and the Lenexa Parks & Recreation Dept., and will be held on September 8 2007 at Sar-Ko-Par Trails Park in Lenexa (87<sup>th</sup> & Lackman) between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Our Society will have a booth located in the same place as last year, next to the museum, and will be selling brats, dogs, chips, lemonade & cookies.

This is a major fund-raiser for us, so we urge you let all your friends know about it – and come and support us that day. If you can volunteer a couple of hours on Saturday to help in the booth, or Friday evening to set up, please call C. Ashby.

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*Back then . . .*

**The Republican**, Lawrence, K.T. 27<sup>th</sup> August 1857

“The Weather – We are enjoying most delightful weather, after the heats of midsummer. The thermometer indicates a temperature of 70 degrees to 80 degrees at midday, and the nights are so refreshingly cool that a person can hardly help sleeping. In fact there have been but few nights this season when a blanket was not needed, if a room was ventilated. Most Kansas houses are admirably adapted to sleeping, for the air has a free circulation. Throw open the doors and windows, or knock some of the chinking out of your cabin, then, and our word for it, you will not awaken in the morning with the headache and ennui.”

The following report from **The Westport Border Star**, September 1859 newspaper describes the cabins built by squatters eager to stake a claim in the new territory:

“Rural Architecture  
Model Cottages for Squatter Sovereigns

This may be denominated the Primitive Order of Architecture, and is generally amply sufficient for the first year. It may be built of whatever comes handy, and covered in with the same. It consists of one room, which may be used as a bedroom, kitchen, dining room and parlor. Usually a shed is attached to the rear, and is found very convenient as cupboard, potato-hole and poultry roost. This building is ordinarily one story only but the more aristocratic squatters sometimes make it a story and a quarter, by arranging for a “loft”, to be entered by a ladder on the outside. The “loft” is very convenient as a barn, granary, hen-house, and on a pinch may serve as a lodging place for some unexpected guest.”

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## *The Harvest Moon*

The definition of a Harvest Moon is: the full moon closest to the fall equinox. The Harvest Moon was thus named because it rises within a half-hour of when the sun sets. In early days, when farmers had no tractors, it was essential that they work by the light of the moon to bring in the harvest. This moon is the fullest moon of the year. When you gaze at it, it looks very large and gives a lot of light throughout the entire night. No other lunar spectacle is as awesome as the Harvest Moon. (Harvest Moon lore)



*“By the light of the silvery moon,  
I want to spoon, to my honey I’ll croon love’s tune ...”*  
(Words by Edward Madden / Music by Gus Edwards)

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## *The Origins of Labor Day*

The observance of Labor Day began over 100 years ago, conceived by America’s labor unions as a testament to their cause, the legislation sanctioning the holiday was shepherded through Congress amid labor unrest and signed by President Grover Cleveland as a reluctant election-year compromise.

Pullman, Illinois was a company town, founded in 1880 by George Pullman, president of the railroad sleeping car company. Pullman designed and built the town to stand as a utopian workers’ community insulated from the moral (and political) seductions of nearby Chicago. The town was strictly, almost feudally, organized: row houses for the assembly and craft workers; modest Victorians for the managers; and a luxurious hotel where Pullman himself lived and where visiting customers, suppliers, and salesmen would lodge while in town.

Its residents all worked for the Pullman company, their paychecks drawn from Pullman Bank, and their rent, set by Pullman, deducted automatically from their weekly paychecks. The town, and the company, operated smoothly and successfully for more than a decade.

But in 1893, the Pullman company was caught in the nationwide economic depression. Orders for railroad sleeping cars declined, and George Pullman was forced to lay off hundreds of employees. Those who remained endured wage cuts, even while rents in Pullman remained consistent. Take-home paychecks plummeted.

And so the employees walked out, demanding lower rents and higher pay. The American Railway Union led by a young Eugene V. Debs, came to the cause of the striking workers, and railroad workers across the nation boycotted trains carrying Pullman cars. Rioting, pillaging, and burning of railroad cars soon ensued; mobs of non-union workers joined in.

The strike instantly became a national issue. President Grover Cleveland, faced with nervous railroad executives and interrupted mail trains, declared the strike a federal crime and deployed 12,000 troops to break the strike. Violence erupted, and two men were killed when U.S. deputy marshals fired on protesters in Kensington, near Chicago, but the strike was doomed.

On August 3 1894 the strike was declared over. Debs went to prison; his ARU was disbanded, and Pullman employees henceforth signed a pledge that they would never again unionize. Aside from the already existing American Federation of Labor and the various railroad brotherhoods, industrial workers' unions were effectively stamped out and remained so until the Great Depression.

The movement for a national Labor Day had been growing for some time. In September 1892 union workers in New York City took an unpaid day off and marched around Union Square in support of the holiday. But now, protests against President Cleveland's harsh methods made the appeasement of the nation's workers a top political priority. In the immediate wake of the strike, legislation was rushed unanimously through both houses of Congress, and the bill arrived on President Cleveland's desk just six days after his troops had broken the Pullman strike.

1894 was an election year. President Cleveland seized the chance at conciliation, and Labor Day was born. He was not re-elected.

In 1898 Samuel Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, called it "the day for which the toilers in past centuries looked forward, when their rights and their wrongs would be discussed ... that the workers of our day may not only lay down their tools of labor for a holiday, but upon which they may touch shoulders in marching phalanx and feel the stronger for it."

Almost a century since Gompers spoke those words, though, Labor Day is seen as the last long weekend of summer rather than a day for political organizing. In 1995, less than 15 percent of American workers belonged to unions, down from a high in the 1950's of nearly 50 percent, though nearly all have benefited from the victories of the Labor movement.

And everyone who can takes a vacation on the first Monday of September. Friends and families gather and clog the highways, and the picnic grounds, and their own backyards ... and bid farewell to summer.

*A NewsHour with Jim Lehrer transcript.*

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/september96/labor\\_day\\_9-2.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/business/september96/labor_day_9-2.html)

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## *President's Corner* by C. Ashby, President

Greetings: It's been a very busy summer of 2007.

After months of planning and hard work the Monticello Sesquicentennial Birthday Event on June 9 was a real success. Attended by approximately 200 people, starting with a flag raising by the US Marine Corps and biscuits and gravy and closing with Boy Scouts lowering the flag at 3:00PM; the whole day was wonderful. The weather was cooperative and the food was great. Our biggest fund raisers were breakfast and lunch, including the bean pot. We also sold some commemorative items, fourteen pies and auctioned two hand made quilts donated by Jenny Roseberry. The exhibitors were excellent, the children enjoyed activities all day and the highlights were the wonderful and interesting museum displays, set up by the Museum Committee, and the re-enactment of the founding of Monticello City in June of 1857. Our antique fire truck was sparkling clean and the ribbon cutting ceremony to inaugurate our newly renovated home went off without a hitch. The video recording of Monticello Memories was one of the busiest spots.

There were three tours that day of the newly restored Virginia School, with bus transportation from the Historical Station to the school attended by close to 70 people.. We had just received the good news that the National Parks Dept had approved the move of the school building and it will remain on both the State and National Historic Registers. There were many comments about how nice the school looks and how successful the renovation has been.

There is no way to express thanks and gratitude for a job well done to all the folks, both members and non-members, who volunteered countless hours of time and energy to make the day a success. We couldn't have pulled it off without all the dedicated workers. That is what makes this organization so special.

MCHS has been the lucky recipient of another grant from the Johnson County Heritage Trust Fund. Our grant of \$6,741 will be used to update and improve our museum display area, including new insulation and a new pedestrian door in the bay area. We have applied for another grant from the Kansas Humanities Society for some updated computer equipment and office supplies. A special thank you goes to R. Jones for her hard work and diligence in assisting MCHS with these grant applications.

Watch for more outside improvements on our building. We have a volunteer who will soon start some landscaping around our new sign in the front of the building. Some of the small rocks from the original Virginia School foundation will be used for a flower bed. Arbor Masters (formerly Shawnee Mission Tree Service) has provided lawn mowing and some exterminating service this summer in exchange for using the building for meetings and training. Don't forget that our meeting room and kitchen facility are available for rent for a nominal fee for members and any other group or person who would like to use the facility. Please contact me if you are interested in using the building for a party, meeting or reception.

Our next big event will be serving food at the Lenexa Spinach Festival on Saturday, Sept 8<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 to 5:00PM. This annual event is one of our biggest fund raisers and requires a lot of hard work. If you can spare a few hours, either morning or afternoon, to help cook and serve brats, hot dogs and lemonade, please give us a hand. Contact any Board member to sign up to help out. We really need the assistance.