

Mission: The Harvey County Historical Museum & Archives celebrates a common history and culturally diverse community by sharing stories from the past, experiences of the present and possibilities for the future through creative and dynamic exploration of objects, documents and photos.

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Tuesday—Friday 10:00 AM—4:00 PM; Third Thursday ALSO 6:00—8:00 PM
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Harvey County Historical Museum & Archives
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Heritage & Now

Sharing Stories and Connecting Community
Harvey County Historical Museum & Archives
Winter 2016/2017

“No More Worthy Project:” Harvey County’s YMCA

by Kristine Schmucker, HCHM Curator

The new Harvey County YMCA opened on November 14, 2016. In an article on March 26, 2016, Shelly Conrady, vice president for marketing and communications at the Greater Wichita YMCA, noted that “this will not be the first YMCA in Newton.” In fact, the organization has a long history in Harvey County. The YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) began in Newton, Kansas in 1902. “No more worthy project was ever proposed and it is sincerely hoped that the initial steps which have been taken, will eventually culminate in a Young Men’s Christian Association for Newton.” (Evening Kansan Republican, 22 Jan. 1902, p. 1.)

The purpose of the YMCA was the “improvement of the spiritual, mental, social and physical condition of young men.” The YMCA movement was part of a larger “Era of Reform” in the late 19th century, with a focus on providing activities and instruction for working class men. The movement started in London in 1844, when the first YMCA was established. In Kansas, the first YMCA was formed in Topeka in 1879. The initial steps to form a YMCA in Newton were taken in January 1902, and the editor of the Evening Kansan Republican noted that there was “no more worthy project.” He credited “revival meetings, . . . in progress for the past three weeks,” with creating interest and support in the project. He



also noted that “it is very probable that should the citizens of the city show a disposition to raise three or four thousand . . . the Santa Fe will take hold of the matter and will double the amount raised.” By March 1902, four men indicated they would oversee the project of a YMCA. These “public spirited” men were D.S. Welsh, G.H. Welsh, W.J. Trousdale, and

Don Kinney. The location would be at the Welsh Livery on west 6th, Newton. The Tuesday, April 1, 1902 edition of the Evening Kansan Republican reported that the YMCA had been officially organized. An organizational meeting was held March 31 with nearly 150 men present. Those present “showed unmistakable evidence of earnestness and determination.” Officers were elected and the constitution and by-laws were adopted. Work on remodeling the Welsh Livery Barn started the next day. D.S. Welsh was a primary force behind the project, “pushing the work with the tireless energy characteristic of him.”

Several women’s clubs, like the W.C.T.U. (Women’s Christian Temperance Union), made significant contributions of time and skill. Through their efforts, funds were raised with chicken-pie dinners sold on the Fourth of July and other activities. Various groups also volunteered by “busily plying the needle and (continued page 2)

(continued from page 1) turning out with wonderful rapidity, sheets pillow-cases, spreads, towels, and other articles which will be used in furnishing the bed-rooms of the new institution." The building was complete by mid-July 1902. The YMCA featured sixteen "large and well-lighted and ventilated" sleeping-rooms, a lecture room, reading room, game room with a bowling alley, and a gymnasium. The bedrooms included "pictures, books, sofa pillows and numerous things that make a person's room homelike and inviting."

An open house for the YMCA building was held the evening of November 5 and roughly 1500 people came to see the "handsome new Y.M.C.A. building, the pride of all Newton." The reception "afforded the first opportunity to inspect . . . the unusually fine equipment in the gymnasium, reading room, parlors, and bed-rooms." The gymnasium was "one of the centers of attraction." An orchestra was brought in and "members of the gymnasium class contributed to the enjoyment of the evening with an exhibition drill." For the women of the community, this was their only opportunity to visit the facility. Several ladies expressed "regret that they too could not enjoy the privileges of the institution" even as they admired the "neatness of the rooms and the beauty of the interior."

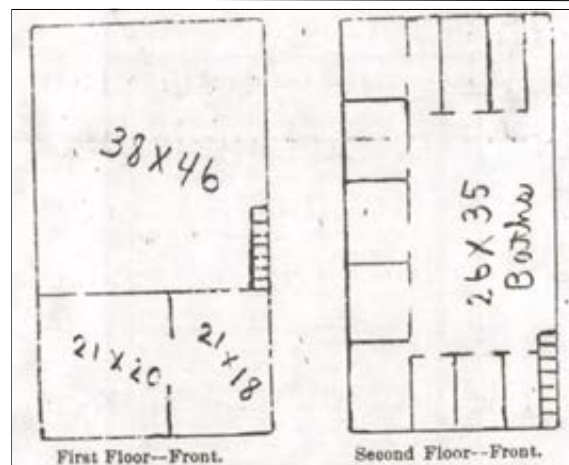
Establishing a YMCA in Harvey County was a community commitment, with various groups working together for the greater good. The editor of the Evening Kansan Republican noted that "one of the most gratifying features of the work of establishing . . . a strong Y.M.C.A. has been the hearty sympathy manifested by the public generally, irrespective of religious belief, in the cause. A sincere desire to do everything possible to make the work of the organization efficient has been exhibited on all sides." He concluded that "the completion of this useful public building marks another era in the story of Newton's progress along moral, intellectual and physical lines."

To raise the money needed for a new building, 15 teams were organized to solicit subscriptions.



The Evening Kansan Republican noted on Nov. 16, 1908 that YMCA building fund still needed \$5,000 to meet the goal. The amounts already committed for each team was published with a total of \$20,090.42. More people needed to step up to meet the goal. The editor observed that "few people seem to appreciate the gravity of the Y.M.C.A. building situation. Many similar campaigns . . . have failed at the crucial time, because the good people of the city have procrastinated and felt that even if they did not work or give that amount would be raised anyway." "The story of the faithfulness of Newton citizens during the closing hours of the great eleven day canvass will be told on the big thermometer. Each time \$500 in subscriptions is turned in at headquarters the Eagle mill whistle will blow." The 1908 campaign for a YMCA building in Newton was ultimately successful. In eleven days, the community raised \$30,000.

With the funds in place, plans for the building could go forward. Topeka architect J.C. Holland was hired and Wurster Construction Company, Wichita was chosen as general contractor. An open house for the community to see the progress on the new YMCA was held early in August 1910. Visitors were "shown through the structure from basement to garret." Two aspects of the building were especially important, the swimming pool and the gymnasium. "The swimming pool is one of the largest of its kind in Kansas, and certainly one of the most sanitary and best equipped. Its floor is of Venetian



Museum & Archives

Hours

Tuesday—Friday
10:00 AM—4:00 PM

Third Thursday
Also 6:00—8:00 PM

1st & 3rd Saturdays
10:00 AM—4:00 PM

Address & Contacts
PO Box 4; 203 N. Main
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(316) 283-2221
E-mail: info@hchm.org
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Harvey County Historical Society 2017 Membership Form

All memberships enjoy:

- Free or reduced admission to programs and events;
- 10% discount in the Carnegie Gift Shop;
- Four issues of *The Heritage & Now*, the official newsletter of the Society;
- A full year of benefits.

Choose from:

Individual (\$20)

Couple or Family (\$25)

- Member benefits apply for two adults listed on the membership and their minor children or grandchildren;

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- The member may pay member rate for a companion to attend events;
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Sustaining (\$50)

- Member benefits apply to up to two persons listed on the membership;
- One complimentary meeting rental at the museum for a business gathering, club or civic group meeting, reunion, religious group meeting or similar;

Corporate (\$100)

- Member benefits apply to up to four persons listed on the membership;
- One complimentary meeting rental at the museum for a business gathering, club or civic group meeting, reunion, religious group meeting or similar; OR one complimentary Speakers Bureau presentation at the museum or off-site.

Please return form with cash or check to:
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Thank you for your support!

2016 Membership Form

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Membership Amount: _____ **Additional donation:** _____

Total enclosed: _____

Select a membership category:

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Bethel Basketball Team Volunteers “Muscle Power”

Earlier in fall, HCHM received a donation of a metal cabinet/shelving unit from the county courthouse (as they digitize many items, some of the bulkier paper copies and books no longer need a shelf). The problem? It was heavy and bulky. So bulky, in fact, that it wouldn't make the turn on the interior stairs up to archives. The solution? After the unit visited for a while at the home of volunteer Ron Dietzel (for a new paint job), the Bethel College basket team “volunteered” (maybe WHERE volunteered?) to move it from Ron's to the upper floor at HCHM, which houses the archival research library. Students Jordan Manning, Jalal Gondal, Julian Jensen, Tanner Long, Elijah Wilson, Dakota Foster, Austin Mitchell, Christopher Robinson, Chase Banister, Sam Morgan first tried to move it up the inside stairs (which is how we discovered it would not fit!). The only other option was taking it up the STEEP fire escape that leads from the flat roof outside of archives down to the lawn. The unit was then reassembled (had been taken apart as it was too heavy to move in one piece) and placed in it's new home. A good workout was had, the team helped a community nonprofit, and donuts were consumed as a thank you. THANKS, GUYS—you were great!



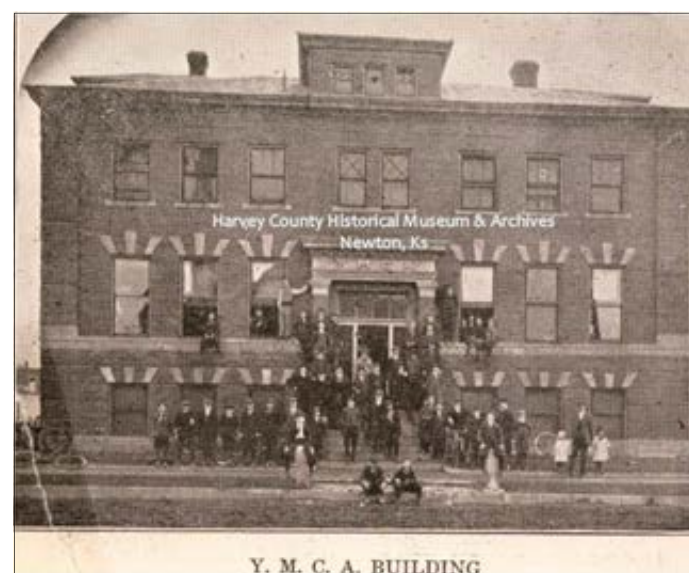
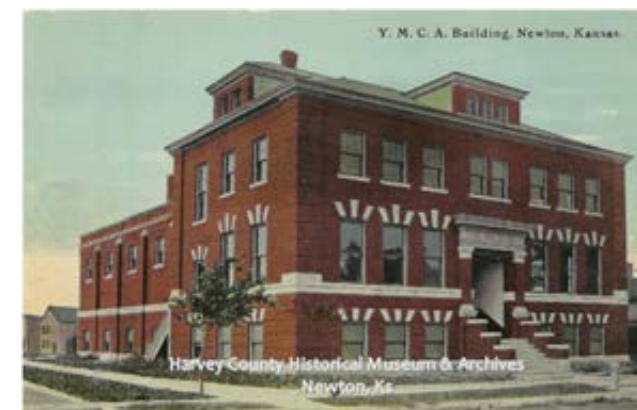
What Is It? Question Answered!

Last issue, when we were opening *Fathers of Invention*, we asked you to tell us what this object is. We got a lot of responses! This is a leather stitching pony or horse. It was held between the knees of a seated person, with saddle leather held between the clamps. This allowed the leather to be stitched without shifting, so basically this object acts like the foot mechanism on a sewing machine, only on a much larger scale! Our staff also recently saw a similar object on exhibit while on a field trip to the Kansas Oil Museum/Butler County History Center in El Dorado. Thanks for being such a well-informed membership!



(continued from page 2) tile, while the sidewalls are of glazed white brick.” The swimming pool measured 18 by 44 feet and was kept clean with a “skimmer,” which moved the water continually. “The gymnasium hall is extra large, well lighted and ventilated, and is equipped with dozens of different kinds of apparatus.” The gymnasium was 45 by 70 feet and “particularly appropriate for basket ball” with room for roughly one thousand spectators. In addition, there was a tennis court, room to play volleyball and “all kinds of calisthenics.” The YMCA Board also intended to hold track meets with teams from other cities. Space for “hurdling, pole vaulting, hammer-throwing and running of all kinds” was included in the new building.

At the core, the YMCA was to be a “place for the boys” a home away from home. The organization provided opportunities for physical, mental and spiritual growth to the young men. A 1912 annual report revealed a strong connection between the organization and the community to meet these needs. A religious committee provided Bible classes that met weekly. The study was led by Reverend Langenwaller from Bethel College, a man “who has made such a thorough study of the Bible, as to be most capable of teaching this class.” In addition, business classes were taught by several local men and churches took turns providing the evening meal.



The 1912 report also noted that the gymnasium saw use. In October – 796, and in November – 831, young men used the gym for gym classes. Swimming and bowling were also quite successful. Overall for the year, “the number of members that used the building for baths or physical activities” was over 1,500. The YMCA at west 6th continued to serve Harvey County through the early 1970s.
 ***Note: At the same time as the decision to establish a YMCA was made, the City of Newton received confirmation that they would receive funds from Andrew Carnegie for a library building.

Sources:

- Evening Kansan Republican: 22 Jan. 1902, 13 February 1902, 24 March 1902, 1 April 1902, 7 May 1902, 11 June 1902, 8 July 1902, 23 July 1902, 13 July 1902, 3 November 1902, 6 November 1902, 12 November 1908, 16 November 1908, 5 March 1909, 31 March 1909, 28 April 1909, 9 December 1909, 14 February 1910, 3 May 1910, 9 August 1910, 10 October 1910, 2 October 1911, 28 November 1911, 13 March 1912, 11 December 1912, 28 January 1921, 17 December 1921.
- Kansan: 21 May 2015.
- Harvey County Now: 6 October 2016.
- Hutchinson News: 26 March 2016.
- “YMCA,” Kansas State Historical Society, April 2009, updated October 2013.



Do you shop at Dillons? You can support HCHM at NO ADDITIONAL COST!

Dillons donates to local non-profits for customer who uses a shopper loyalty card, and the donation is ALL from Dillons, with NO COST to the shopper. This is a great deal! If you have not yet designated a donation site, you can do so by:

- Visiting www.dillons.com, selecting the "Community" tab on the top bar, and then selecting "Community Rewards."
- Select "Create an account." Proceed through the steps requested.
- When your account is set up, go to bottom of your new account page to the "Community Rewards" section and click on "Enroll."
- Either enter the museum ID number of **61990** OR search for Harvey County Historical Museum.
- Our name and address will appear—click on the circle beside it.
- You have now designated HCHM to receive the donation provided by Dillons. You will not pay any more for your purchases, but Dillons will take a percentage of the sale and donate to us. THANK YOU!!!!

If you have any questions of concerns, or would like help with the process of enrolling, please contact Debra at (316) 283-2221 or director@hchm.org. Thanks for your support! And thanks to Dillons for caring about their community!

Museum Support (August—October 2016)

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Harvey County Historical Museum Events Winter 2016/2017



December

December 3, 10:00-4:00—Five Places of Christmas. Our annual holiday open house in collaboration with Kauffman Museum, Warkentin House, Carriage Factory Art Gallery and Bethel College Women's Association. Decorating theme this year is "Handmade for the Holidays," and features handwork decorations. Free and open to the public.

December 15, 6:00-8:00—Third Thursday. Enjoy this come-and-go event at the museum and in the community! Featuring a snowflake craft (to use for winter decorating), refreshments and an open archives for researchers who can't make it during the day. Be sure to visit other community participants, including Carriage Factory Art Gallery, Warkentin House, Kauffman Museum, Grand Central, Clayworks Gallery and Prairie Harvest. Free and open to the public.

December 23 and 30—Holiday Closures. We will reopen the following Tuesdays at 10:00 AM. Wishing you and yours a happy and prosperous holiday!



January

January 15, 2:00—Pioneer and Indian Trails in the City of Newton. Join local historian Brian Stucky as he shares about the multitude of trails that ran right through town. A great way to kick off the 150th Anniversary of the Chisholm Trail! \$5 (members admitted for free).

January 19 6:00-8:00—Third Thursday. Enjoy this come-and-go event at the museum and an open archives for researchers who can't make it during the day. Be sure to visit other community participants, including Carriage Factory Art Gallery, Warkentin House, Kauffman Museum, Grand Central, Clayworks Gallery and Prairie Harvest. Free and open to the public.

February

February 16, 6:00-8:00—Third Thursday. Enjoy this come-and-go event at the museum and an open archives for researchers who can't make it during the day. Be sure to visit other community participants, including Carriage Factory Art Gallery, Warkentin House, Kauffman Museum, Grand Central, Clayworks Gallery and Prairie Harvest. Free and open to the public.



February 19, 2:00—Flour Power. During the period of the Mexican Revolution, many immigrants made their way to Kansas to raise their families and work in the railroad, agricultural, industrial and hospitality sectors of the state. A cultural offshoot of this in the Midwest was the search for the perfect tortilla, a staple of the Mexican cuisine. Because corn tortillas were difficult to make by hand, many restaurants and home cooks substituted wheat flour tortillas for their signature dishes. Join Gene T. Chavez to discuss the rich history of the Mexican immigration to Kansas and the journey of the humble but important tortilla. Underwritten by the Kansas Humanities Council, and admission is free.

