

Heritage



THE WICHITA - SEDGWICK COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM ASSOCIATION
SPRING 2026



In May of 1911, thousands of Wichitans made their way to Walnut Grove, a public recreation area right by the Little Arkansas just north of town. Some drove their automobile while others rode their horse to the event – and many took the Arkansas Valley Interurban Line which ran four cars to Walnut Grove every ten minutes. They were promised something spectacular: an exhibition of flying machines manned by daredevils. The Walnut Grove Air Meet and the newfound technology it presented – introduced to the public only three years previous – astonished some and inspired others. Those with the mind to build wonderous machines and the courage to take flight would soon transform Wichita into the Air Capital of the World. *(continued on page 3)*



From the Director

The greatness of any museum is attributable to its supporters. Let us give a tip of the hat to all those since 1939 who have contributed to making the Historical Museum one of the top local history museums in the United States. I personally acknowledge the Museum's capable professional staff that make every day part of our ongoing success story. Their enthusiasm and commitment to the Mission are daily exhibitions personified. The Museum's volunteer staff exhibit the same and include a diversity of talents from docents to committee members to those who prefer watching the Museum Shop or grooming Heritage Square. The Museum's governance is provided by volunteers as well: our Board of Trustees, who meet monthly and take fiduciary responsibility for the Museum.

Additionally, over one thousand members provide support by donating annually. The remainder of support comes through public operational funding fostered by the City of Wichita and Board of Commissioners of Sedgwick County. All are welcome and invited to the Membership Celebration at the Museum on Wednesday, May 20th 5-7pm.

Eric Cale
Museum Director

Vision - *To provide a world class Museum experience, advancing the understanding and exploration of the rich historical and cultural heritage of Wichita and Sedgwick County Kansas.*

Mission - *The Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum's mission is to educate the community and its visitors about local history by collecting, preserving, and interpreting materials reflecting the heritage of Wichita and Sedgwick County.*

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MEMBERSHIP CELEBRATION – Wednesday, May 20th 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Celebrate the Museum with music and refreshments in Heritage Square. See the exhibits, the Museum Shop, then take the opportunity to see the clock tower. Members are encouraged to bring friends, so invite them along – they might just end the evening as members.

FRIENDS

Friends of the Historical Museum meet each month with the Steering Committee to provide support to the Museum by fostering a dynamic connection to volunteers. Meetings occur in various locations at noon on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. At these meetings we coordinate most of the Museum's volunteer activities. Call the Museum Office to attend.

Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

Tuesday, May 19, 12pm – at the Museum!

Let's celebrate the spirit of volunteerism and community at the Friends of the Historical Museum Appreciation Lunch!

Thanks to the passion and generosity of volunteers, the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum is recognized as one of the finest museums the United States. Our volunteer docents engage and guide guests. Volunteers staff the Museum Shop, as well as support museum programming and events; and for governance we thank the Board of Trustees. These friends of the Museum provide nearly 5,000 volunteer hours each year.

If you volunteer, you are invited! Please contact the Museum to offer your RSVP!



(continued from cover)

With recently discovered folio of two dozen numbered photographs of the Walnut Grove Air Meet, the Museum has gained further insight into that time that cemented Wichita's destiny. These rare images, assembled in a makeshift album, had no known provenance. However, with the help of online resources and clues within the album, Curator Jami Frazier Tracy determined the photographs were collected and assembled by Orville Boyle, the event promoter.

The Historical Museum takes pride in Wichita's aviation history and has documented it thoroughly in the *Spirit of Wichita* exhibit on the 4th floor. The Museum finished construction of this core exhibit in 2003 to explore our local history of the early 20th century. Later this year, visitors can expect to see a new and improved video – featuring photographs and film discovered during the last 20 years – that explores Wichita aviation in the *Spirit of Wichita* Theater.

Kansas 1776: A Dynamic Landscape

with Adam Hodge, part of Humanities Kansas's Speakers Bureau. Sun. June 28, 2026, 2pm

The Charles and Joanne McIlwaine quarterly speakers' series

Free Admission, all presentations are at 2pm in the Museum's DeVore Auditorium

- A presentation of his new book "*All-American City: Bluster, Boom, and Bust in Wichita*" by Chase Billingham – Sat. March 21st
- *Remembering Civil War Veterans Who Settled Wichita and Sedgwick Co.* by Dr. Alfred Eckes – a demographic that guided the Nation's fastest growing city situated in the Great Soldier's State - Sat. April 11th
- *Stearman Centennial* by Historian & Author Ed Phillips – a deep dive into our fascinating aviation history - Sat. & Sun. July 11th & 12th
- *Black Women Who Changed the Course of Wichita History* by Historian Donna Rae Pearson – new history revealed - Sat. November 28th



Senior Wednesdays

Held on the 4th Wednesday at 10am January through October. Programs are followed by a related tour within the Museum's exhibits. Admission is free to members and their guests, and \$2 for non-members. Doors open at 9:30. The Museum's Senior Wednesday Programs are also sponsored by the Charles & Joanne McIlwaine Foundation.

•January 28 – *Kansas Day Celebration!*

- Celebrating Statehood in song and verse with Orin Friesen of the Diamond "W" Wranglers with Jennylou & the Buckaroos and special guests.

•February 25 – *Life in Kansas During the Dust Bowl* by Katie Keckeisen (Humanities Kansas)

- Exploring the impact of the drought and the "Dust Bowl" on life in Kansas during the 1930s.

•March 25 – *Last Stand at Rebel Creek: The Osage as Union Allies in Civil War Kansas* by Isaias McCaffery (Humanities Kansas)

- Exploring the Osage's contributions to the Union cause in Kansas during the Civil War.

•April 22 – *WSU Museum Studies Students Present on Their Exhibit "Service Beyond Barriers"*

- by WSU Museum Studies Students
- WSU students present on their exhibit examining local African Americans, Native Americans, and women and their essential role in shaping both military history and the broader American story.

•May 27 – *"Let's Talk Shop" Documentary Screening*

- by Sara and Charity Harmon
- WeHarmonSisters present on their newest documentary, highlighting the history of Wichita's two biggest department stores: Innes and Henry's.

•June 24 – *Frank Lloyd Wright in Wichita* by Nancy Davis

- This presentation focuses on architect Frank Lloyd Wright and why he came to Wichita and his influence on local architecture.

•July 22 – *Crime in 1800's Sedgwick County*

- by John Burchill
- Presenter John Burchill looks at those in Wichita who deviated from the embrace of law so they could dance with the devil.

•August 26 – *Shady Ladies of the Peerless Princess*

- by Ann Boll
- Learn how prostitution was controlled (or not) in the early days of Wichita.

•September 23 – *Before the Hillcrest in College Hill*

- by Mike Maxton
- The early history of the College Hill area revealed with a focus on the land where the Hillcrest Apartments building currently stands.

•October 28 - *Museum Docents Present Their Favorites*

- Museum docents present more of their favorite artifacts on exhibit and give an in-depth look at the museum's exhibits.

CITY & COUNTY BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AND ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Sunday, July 19th



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SOLD OUT
&
SUCCESSFUL



A FRIENDS OF THE HISTORICAL
MUSEUM FUNDRAISING EVENT

HERITAGE SQUARE CONCERT SERIES

Wednesdays
at Noon in
September

TORCHLIGHT TOUR

Oct 30th • 6-8pm

EXPLORE
IN THE

DARK

43rd ANNUAL WREATH FESTIVAL

November 19, 20, 21, 2026



Has it been a while since you visited? Do not fear the new parking system! It will even accept quarters and it is free on Sundays! Just ask Museum staff for help if needed.

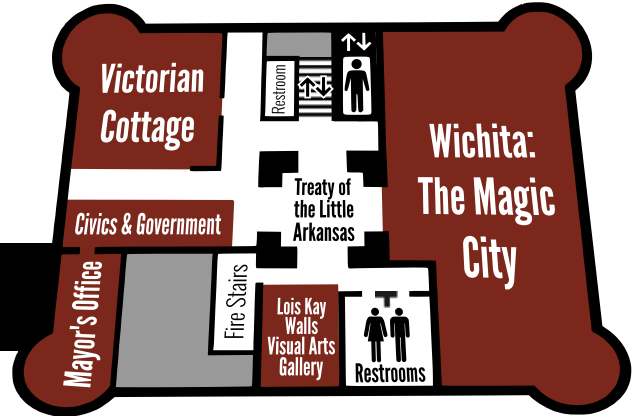
4TH FLOOR

Exhibits



3RD FLOOR

Restrooms & Exhibits



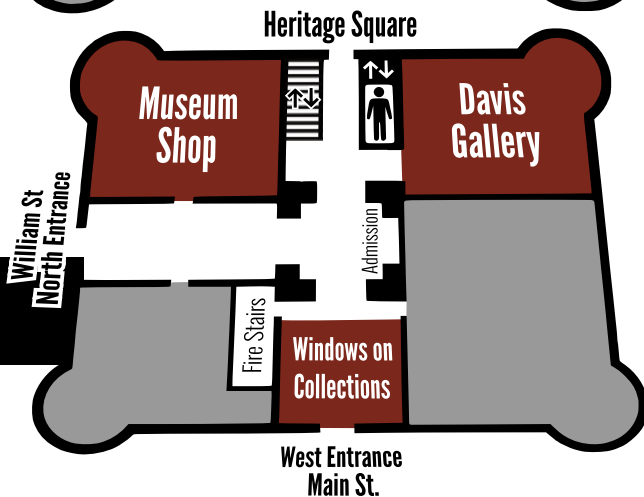
2ND FLOOR

Exhibits



1ST FLOOR

Street Level & Entrance to Heritage Square



New Special Exhibition featured in West Gallery

Students from the Museum Exhibition class at Wichita State University, under the direction of Holmes Museum of Anthropology Director and Instructor, Rachele Meinecke, working with the Historical Museum's exhibition staff, have created a new exhibition, *Service Beyond Barriers: Bravery and Sacrifice in the Face of Adversity*, now on view at the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum. A collaboration with The Kansas African American Museum, the Mid-American All-Indian Museum, the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum, and the Holmes Museum at WSU, *Service Beyond Barriers* explores the powerful and often overlooked stories of minority men and women who served in the military.

Focusing on the service of African Americans, Native Americans, and women, the exhibit showcases uniforms worn by Wichitans Marjorie Setter, Sharon Willits, and Luther C. McCarther, and shares the celebrated work of Native American Code Talkers. The exhibit also acknowledges the service of Jack Hubbard, a Friends University student and WWII conscientious objector, and highlights the important role of citizens on the "Home Front" including the Wichita Chapter of the Red Cross, and U.S. Army Mothers.

In the spirit of America's 250th birthday, this exhibition is a reflection on patriotism, sacrifice, and the meaning of service in America. Wichita State University students who created *Service Beyond Barriers* are: Makenna Guillory, Timmerie Joan Henke, Monika Hoffman, William Kirby, Christina McDaniel, Kali Moon, Kaitlyn Reis, and Amanda Smith.

Service Beyond Barriers: Bravery and Sacrifice in the Face of Adversity is on view at the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum through August 2026.



WHY HISTORY MUSEUMS COLLECT ART featured in Lois Kay Walls Gallery



Art is not just for art museums. Art can inhabit any space and tell a story. If a picture is worth a thousand words, then every artwork can be a window into the time and place that shaped it. In a museum of local history, art becomes more than something to admire -- it becomes something to investigate. Look closely and ask: How was this piece imagined? What materials and skills brought it to life? Who

chose to own it and why? Was it meant to inspire, to impress, or simply to be used? Each artwork holds clues. They reveal the people, values, and everyday moments of the past for you to discover.

This exhibition features artwork created by local artists Edmund J. Davison, Myrta Lee, Cecil McAlister, Bruce McGrew, Bruce Moore, John Noble, C.A. Seward, and Sarah Wolfe; all from the Museum's permanent collection

This exhibition is of the Lois Kay Walls visual art exhibition series. Produced by the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum. Objects exhibited are from the Museum's permanent collection. *Why History Museums Collect Art* will be on view through March 2027.

Summer Programs for Young Historians

When school is out, history doesn't take vacations! Summer programs abound in June and July.

This summer, kids can engage with the Museum, tour the clock tower, and broaden their perspective with a peek at the past. Amongst our popular youth & family programs, the Cursive Writing Workshop will be offered again. Call for more information and watch for more details and dates on our website www.wichitahistory.org and on our socials: @wichitahistory.



Programs and activities teach from the Museum's exhibits and the stories they tell. Tours and activities connect our young guests to the past and teach museum literacy, which enables them to take advantage of museum experiences anywhere.

Young Historians Awards & Celebration

Held at the Museum, Saturday, May 2 at 2:00 p.m.

Featuring: National History Day Projects, The DeVore Essay prize, scholarships, and a reception.

The Museum holds its 15th annual Young Historians Awards to celebrate student achievement of the past year. History projects from school, home, or created here at the Museum receive recognition and inspire further student effort. This year's keynote speaker is Historical Museum trustee & historian Krysti Calson-Goering.

History on a local level is especially relevant to young people and the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum is their portal to the past. We promote local history as a basis for their studies and projects. The Museum emphasizes the National History Day theme: "Revolution, Reaction, Reform in History." The DeVore Essay Contest challenges students to use this theme as it applies to local history.

The Museum works with others, year round, to engage students with the value of history. Friends University and the Museum sponsor our region's participation in the National History Day competition. The competition engages hundreds of area students by challenging them to interpret history through various mediums including exhibits, video documentary, website design, essay writing, and dramatic performance.



William and Ruth Heaston Educational Fund

The fund makes possible the Museum's work in supporting institutions of higher education with museum and local history studies for students. The Museum has provided local universities an educational setting for classes who learn from the Museum's professional staff. Additionally, students receive the Museum's support with guided projects and resources enabling them to realize special projects. Students may submit a letter of introduction, which includes areas of interest and educational goals, to the Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum, attention: Heaston Edu., 204 S. Main, Wichita, KS 67202.



Teens Through Time

Teens-Through-Time is a dynamic council of secondary school students involved with the Museum. Over the past year, under the direction of Museum Educators, they created an evening event “by teens, for teens.” This event attracted 65 guests and featured historic foods and drinks, teen-aged gallery guides stationed in the Museum’s various exhibits culminating with a clock tower experience for those successfully completing student directed time-travel. We are grateful for the support and participation of these young historians, as well as for the participation of the event’s supporting Friends volunteers. Funding for this event was made possible through the William and Ruth Heaston Educational Fund.

Be a history guide – volunteer as a Museum Docent

Interested in being a docent at the only museum in the world that explores the history of Wichita and Sedgwick County? Come, observe and see what it’s all about. Our docents welcome and orient visitors to the Museum, lead guided tours, help as gallery guides and meet with special groups to engage people with all the Museum has to offer. To participate please contact Museum Education: edu@wichitahistory.org



Recent Memorials

The following have been honored through gifts to the Museum made in their memory:

Mickey Armstrong

Sylvia Jackson

John Cyphert

Jerry Olson

Patrick Habkirk

Here, the Museum gratefully acknowledges much of the support received to sustain its work. Celebrating the support of the Business Community 2026

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- Uhlik Music
- Visit Wichita
- Watermark Books & Café
- Wichita Festivals

Business Supporters enjoy free admission to the Museum for employees and clients as well as other special recognition.



Also for the public operational funding invested over the years through the City of Wichita and the Sedgwick County Board of Commissioners.



The Association Elects Trustees

At the Museum's Annual Membership Meeting, held March 18, association members unanimously elected the slate submitted by the Nominating Committee.

The Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum Association is pleased to welcome a new trustee to serve a three-year term of service on the Museum's Board: Krysti Carlson-Goering

She joins trustees continuing to serve Dean Bradley, Steve Criser, Kianga Crowley, Ross DeVore, Lisa Dodson, Tom Dondlinger, Jay Fowler, Orin Friesen, Dr. Tera Hedrick, Dr. Robin Henry, Dr. Dan Housholder, Jack Kellogg, Robert Minter, Robert Moore, Dr. Lisa Parcell, Dr. Rana Razek, Lynn Rogers, Larry Solomon, Georgia Stevens, Laura Taylor, John Troutt, Gail Williams and Katherine Young.

At this meeting, Board President Lynn Rogers thanked the Nominating Committee for their work and Trustee Myra Devlin whose term ended after six years' service.

Following the membership meeting, the Museum Board elected officers for a term of one year:

Lynn Rogers President, Larry Solomon 1st Vice President, Georgia Stevens 2nd Vice President, Steve Criser Treasurer, and Gail Williams Secretary.

Museum Director Eric Cale expressed special appreciation to the Museum's Trustees, past and present, for their generosity in providing the essential, foundational support of governance.

2025 Museum Acquisitions

The Museum began collecting in 1939 building upon a collection assembled by the Wichita Pioneer Society. Today these objects are preserved in perpetuity for use in interpreting local history and number over 70,000 catalogued artifacts. We thank all those who have offered such gifts in consideration of the Museum and its unique mission.

Nick Aretakis – Wichita High School class photograph by Israel, 1897.

Estate of Mildred “Mickey” Armstrong – McCormick-Armstrong newsletters, 1930s-1960s, Jay McShann Orchestra photographs, including images of Charlie Parker, taken by Edward “Pete” Armstrong, 1940, scrapbooks, 1930s-1940s, Bye Lo Baby doll, circa 1925.

Deborah Bagby – Silhouette portrait, 1960.

Lois Gordon Carr – Collection of political buttons and memorabilia, 1896-1988.

Vickie Cospers – Woman’s gymnasium ensemble, circa 1895.

Ken Cotton – Lawrence Stadium baseball program, 1948.

Sandra Rugh Davidson – Family letters, 1917-1918.

Jean C. Eby – Rehearsal dinner dress and wedding dress purchased at Lewin’s, 1967.

J. Eric Engstrom – Attorney’s Schedule of Fees, Bar of Sedgwick County, 1872.

Orin Friesen – KFDI radio transmitter, circa 1967, and promotional buttons, 1980s-1990s.

Robert Gaeddert – Hand carved wooden toy pistol, early 20th century.

Sonia Greteman – Collection of Wichita posters with designs by Sonia Greteman, Gardner Greteman Mikulecky, Gardner + Greteman, and Greteman Group, 1989-2022.

Helen Hooper – Collection of cosmetic compacts, 1930s-1950s.

Eve Kahn – Ceramic tiles painted by Georgia Parr Babbitt, early 20th century, Wichita, Carey & Garst notice and letterhead, 1901, book, *Kansas at the World’s Fair*, 1893.

The Family of Helen N. Knight – Black velvet dress and black velvet coat retailed by The Model, Wichita, circa 1955.

Walter Lewis – Lady Sunbeam portable hair-dryer, 1968.

Carolyn Lindsey – Cold War era identification tag, early 1950s.

Vinene Logan – Wichita Police Department photograph, circa 1915, and Wichita Forum interior photograph, circa 1925.

Steven J. Manos – Collection of *Wichita Eagle* and *Wichita Beacon* printing press and press room photographs, 20th century.

Rebecca J. Martin – Stockemer Brothers Garage, St. Mark, and Biermann and Martin family photographs, 20th century.

James E. Mason – Collection of Wichita ephemera, photograph postcards, and photographs, 20th century.

Josh McCray – Commemorative newspaper, 1976.

Jeffrey P. Miller – Fairland Café and Union National Bank greeting cards, 1950s.

Hal N. Ottaway – Photographs of the Ritz Barber and Beauty Shop, circa 1941, Wichita barber registration cards, 1939-1943.

John Michael Pool – Steffen’s Dairy work clothing, 1950s-1960s.

Robert A. Puckett – Enameled bowl, 1960s, silver plate beverage set, 1947.

Forrest Richardson – Photograph of the Palace Block, 1950s.

Mark Rosenblum – Blue Moon nightclub menu, 1942.

Britt Rosencutter – Kirby’s Meat Festival poster, 2002.

Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Wichita postcards, early 20th century.

Christa Wentling Smith – Collection of fashion illustrations created by Crista Wentling Smith for Lewin’s in Wichita, 1980-1985.

Johnny Western – Telecaster Fender electric guitar, 1953, customized with “Paladin” emblem in 1960 by Johnny Western, entertainer and songwriter.

Nina Winter – Dress, “Weeping Winter Warrior” handmade by textile artist Nina Winter, 2025.



The Wichita-Sedgwick County
 Historical Museum Association
 204 South Main · Wichita, Kansas 67202
 316-265-9314 · www.wichitahistory.org

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Wichita-Sedgwick County
 Historical Museum activities are
 made possible in part by the
 City of Wichita and Sedgwick
 County Board of Commissioners

Care to Comment? From our Guestbook

I felt like I'm stepping through time
 - Aveline and Audrey

Amazing Historical Facts!! Thank you!!
 - Marie - Cebu, Philippines

1st time & it was a
 good time
 - Alex
 - Wichita, KS

Must visit site in Wichita
 - Delbert & Priscilla
 - Gardner, KS

Intriguing & Wonderful to
 experience Wichita like this
 - Geo - Wichita, KS

Well preserved and
 wonderful to experience
 - Dan & Agatha
 - Gainesville, GA

It's a great museum! Thank you
 and greetings from Poland!
 - Eveline - Warsaw, Poland

Thanks for a great
 adventure in time
 - Danielle
 - Wichita, KS

Great Museum! New
 Understanding of Wichita!
 - Chris & Karen
 - Albuquerque, NM

Very Interesting 😊 You need more
 than one visit to truly appreciate
 everything displayed!
 - Joe Hawkins - Wichita, KS

Amazing museum &
 gorgeous building!
 - Esualdo
 - Calais, ME

Totally Amazing
 - Matt & Michelle
 - Pensacola, FL

"This place was so well
 organized and informative!
 We really enjoyed it!"
 • Chavonne, 5-star
 Google Review

"This was such a fun visit! I was OBSESSED with
 the Victorian house replica- the attention to
 detail was amazing! Also the building itself is
 so beautiful, what a great local museum!"
 • Proud SJSU Spartan, 5-Star Google Review

"Nice place to visit and catch a
 presentation"
 • John, 5-star Google Review