

ALBUM

JOHNSON COUNTY MUSEUM

Volume XV Number 2

Spring 2007



Formal dedication of the Olathe Naval Air Station, October 1, 1942. JCM Collection.

OLATHE NAVAL AIR STATION: SAILORS ON THE PLAINS

From humble beginnings, the Olathe Naval Air Station grew from a small county airport to a formidable force stationed at the heart of a nation at war. The Olathe Naval Air Station (ONAS) was born from the sheer need to train new pilots for World War II. ONAS beginnings trace to the first naval reserve air base in our area, Fairfax Field in Kansas City, KS (site of the current Fairfax General Motors Plant). Naval presence at this airfield started in July of 1935. Under the threat of an impending war, in 1939 President Roosevelt called for immediate steps to bolster the defense of the United States "with as great speed as possible." He specifically called for more than half a billion dollars for the Army and Navy, particularly for military and naval aircraft and the training of additional air pilots.

From Fairfax to Olathe

In 1941, a Presidential executive order called all Navy Reservists to active duty. In response, training programs for aviators in Kansas City

changed from summer months to year-round programs. Fairfax Field was well equipped to handle the reserve force until increased transport traffic and the new North American Bomber Production Plant on the west side of the airport made the frequent training flights increasingly hazardous. Obviously it was easier to relocate the training pilots than the bomber plant, so officials sought a new home for the air base. Frank Knox, Secretary of the Navy, sought civilian airports that could rapidly be modified for naval use. Luckily, a local county airport in Olathe fit the bill. The Johnson County Commissioners had originally dedicated the land use to the Civil Aeronautic Administration (CAA) for the purpose of constructing an auxiliary airport with a rotating beacon light to serve the southwestern Kansas City region terminals.

The Olathe Mirror noted on December, 18, 1941, that Naval interest was serious when Lieutenant Commander R.V. Murison of the Naval Reserve's civil engineering corps came to inspect the Johnson

continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

2
New Acquisitions

3
**Museum Notes
Olathe's George Hodges
House**

6
**Fun Facts
Peek into the Past
for Kids**

7
**History Mystery
Overland Park Garden
Club**

 **JOHNSON
COUNTY
MUSEUMS**
Preserving & Sharing the Community's Memory

DONORS TO THE COLLECTION

The Johnson County Museum thanks the many generous people and organizations whose donations have been added to the permanent collection since the last newsletter.

- Barbara Altenhafen
- Barbara Baker
- Bob Blackwell
- Bob Bliss
- Ellen Burd
- Richard Carter
- Floraine Cowherd
- Elwyn Davis
- Paul and Dorcas Doering
- Cal Englemann
- Charles Fisher
- Martha Fletcher
- Opal Fritts
- Albert Goller
- Gary and Melanie Hannah
- Stephanie Hashagen
- Virginia Hermes
- Glenna Johnson
- Sandy Jones
- Elisabeth Kanter
- Nancy Kennedy
- Dick and Joan Korek
- Dorothy Kroh
- Rob Lane
- Russell Leffel
- Georgeann Mai
- Opal Marshall
- Freelyn McGee
- Muriel Mellott
- Harold and Lillian Milford
- Dennis Mullen
- Elinor Mullen
- Cassie Mundt
- Elizabeth A. Oldham
- Janet Phipps
- Jay and Patrice Rollins
- Mary Savage
- Neal and Donna Sawyer
- Jerry Tremmel
- Joe Vaughan

continued on page 5

Johnson County Museum

- Friends Board of Trustees**
- Heather Woodson, President
 - Andy Zalucki, Vice-President
 - Caroline Wake, Secretary
 - Linda Leeper, Treasurer
 - John Andrade
 - Calvin Engelmänn
 - Diane Linver
 - Mindi Love
 - Jennie Stolper
 - Andy Zalucki

- Museum Advisory Council**
- Nancy Wallerstein, Chair
 - Ben Mann, Vice-Chair
 - Bill Anthony
 - Cal Engelmänn
 - Heather Woodson

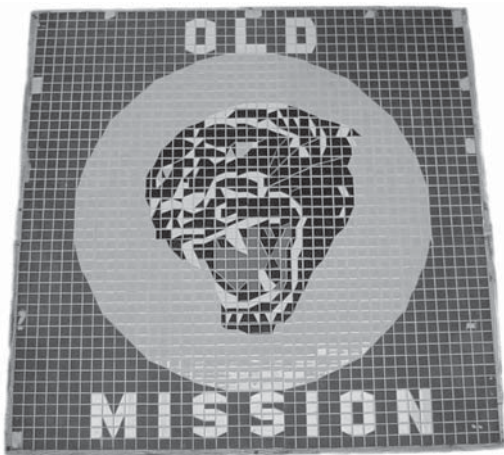
- Museum Staff**
- Mindi Love, Director
 - Kathy Daniels, Curator of Collections & Exhibits
 - Russ Czaplewski, Collection Manager
 - Tom McCabe, Office Manager
 - Stephanie Clayton, Lanesfield School Manager
 - Andy Davis, Historical Interpreter
 - Andrew Dunehoo, Historical Interpreter
 - Sara Zarnstorff, Historical Interpreter

NEW ACQUISITIONS

The Johnson County Museum collects artifacts from all periods of the county’s history, from early settlement through the present day. The following items are among the many recent donations to the permanent collection.

GO PANTHERS!

Featuring the school mascot—a panther—this tile mosaic was prominently displayed in the lobby of the Old Mission Junior High School, part of the Shawnee Mission School District. The school closed in 1986. Received from Richard Carter, a former assistant principal with the school.



BUY LOCAL!

This undated ruler promoted shopping in Mission with the phrase: “It’s a GOOD RULE to Shop in MISSION.” The metal ruler was made for the Mission Chamber of Commerce.



LOCAL SATIRE

Bob Bliss, a notable cartoonist hailing from Prairie Village, worked for *Sun Publications* creating political cartoons about local, regional, and occasionally national issues, from 1991-2002. He published the first year’s series in the book, *Fun in the Sun: A Year of Editorial Cartoons by Bob Bliss*, and over the years sold original drawings to interested individuals. In 2006, he donated 67 original drawings, an autographed copy of his book, and two photographs to the Museum.

DRIVE ON UP

The O.W. Fisher Chevrolet dealership opened in 1919 at 415 Main Street in Shawnee (today the southeast corner of Nieman Road and Johnson Drive). This view dates from about 1944. Donated by Charles Fisher, grandson of the business’s founder.



WISH LIST

The museum is seeking photographs, documents and artifacts pertaining to the 1960s and 1970s in Johnson County for an upcoming exhibit entitled *Coming of Age in Johnson County: 1960-1976*, scheduled to open in November of 2007. We’re especially interested in youth culture, popular culture, politics, the Civil Rights, the Vietnam War, and local commercial and residential developments. If you have materials you’d be willing to share, please contact Melissa Fisher-Isaacs, Assistant Curator, at 913-715-2553.


MUSEUM NOTES

MUSEUM UNVEILS NEW PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

After nearly two years of work, the Museum boards and staff unveiled its plan for the future of the Johnson County Museum to the Johnson County Board of Commissioners in June of 2006. The five-year plan calls for a new 50,000 square foot facility (at a location yet to be determined) and a greater emphasis on the county’s growth as a national suburban leader. New gallery spaces will allow for an enhancement of the museum’s current permanent exhibit, *Seeking the Good Life*, a complementary hands-on children’s gallery, and multiple temporary and traveling exhibit areas. The new facility will also house a new research facility, the Center for Suburban Studies. The museum hopes to partner with a major higher education institution to develop a unique center to study both local history and the suburban phenomenon, especially as it relates to policy decisions in suburb communities built immediately following World War II, often referred to as first-tier suburbs. Finally, the new facility will provide for increased and improved storage areas for our ever-growing collection of artifacts related to Johnson County’s rich history. As members, you will appreciate knowing that the emphasis on suburban issues will not deter us from collecting and interpreting all aspects of the county’s history. We are still committed to sharing all the county’s diverse history. And thank you to all that participated in the Museum’s strategic planning process by completing the member survey, attending a town hall meeting, or simply sharing your ideas with us. We sincerely appreciate all the feedback we received and the Museum leadership carefully considered all the comments shared during our deliberations. We are very grateful for your continued support of the Johnson County Museum. Thank you!!

Note: Visit www.jocomuseum.org to download a full copy of the Museum’s new strategic plan.

JoCoHistory.net: A BIG SUCCESS!

In October of 2006 the Museum launched its most recent web resource, www.JoCoHistory.net, in collaboration with the Johnson County Library, Olathe Public Library, and Johnson County Archives. The project, funded by a \$90,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, has received overwhelming visitation in the seven short months it has been active. Over 2.4 million images have been viewed! The site has also garnered a great deal of feedback from the public, which is another rewarding benefit. Over 400 images have been more fully identified by individuals who have browsed the site. With permission from the sender, the shared information is posted on the web site within the image's record in a unique field called "Public Comments" so that the information is available to anyone viewing the images. It is also added to the Museum's internal database, once verified by our curatorial staff. We have also received some heartfelt feedback, like that from a Louisiana gentleman who lost all of his possessions during Hurricane Katrina. Originally from Olathe, a family friend emailed him the link to the JoCoHistory.net site where he discovered a photograph of his father, who had passed away. The site provided the opportunity for this gentleman to reconnect with family images he thought forever lost. We’re very proud and humbled by such experiences, and hope the site continues to be a point of connection for many people. If you haven’t taken an opportunity to browse the site, we invite you to do so! 

ANNUAL CAMPAIGN PARTNERS

Many thanks to the following corporations and foundations who have contributed to the success of the Museum in 2006-07 by making a contribution to the Annual Campaign to fund the educational programming at the Johnson County Museum sites.

SPONSORS

(\$1,000 and above)
Commerce Bancshares
Frederick & Louise Hartwig Family Fund
H.O. Peet Foundation
J.B. Reynolds Foundation
Stinson, Morrison & Hecker

PATRONS

(\$500 and above)
Kay and John Callison
Deffenbaugh Industries
Lenexa Optimist Club
Olathe Medical Center
Shawnee Steel & Welding
Smith & Loveless

CONTRIBUTORS

(\$250 and above)
Varnum-Armstrong-Deeter LLC

PARTNERS

(\$100 and above)
Cloud Family Foundation
Metcalf Bank
Overland Park Heritage Foundation

ENDOWMENT GIFTS

We would also like to thank those who invested in the Museum's future in 2006 and 2007 with a donation to the Endowment Fund.

Eliot and Marcia Berkley
Rick and Emily Boeshaar
Paul and Dorcas Doering
ExxonMobil Foundation, matching gift of Richard and Gloria Haberkorn
Ginny Fisher in memory of Ruth Hervey
Paul and Barbara Gorman in memory of Ruth Hervey
Margie Lundy
Charlyne Rothman
Sprint matching gifts:
John Jenia
Monica Moll
Peter and Pamela Steitz
Joan Barkley Wells in memory of Marguerite M. Barkley
Donna Williams

Additional endowment gifts on page 7

THE GEORGE HODGES HOUSE

The George Hodges House, located at 425 South Harrison Street in Olathe, stands as a reminder of the self-made man whose business acumen and sense of civic duty won him election to the Kansas governorship.

George Hartshorn Hodges was born in Wisconsin in 1866. In 1869, his parents resettled the family, via prairie schooner, in Olathe. When his schoolteacher father died a few years later, George and his older brother Frank were left to support their mother and sister. The two brothers joined forces in a number of ventures, first herding cattle, then lathing houses, and finally founding the Hodges Brothers Lumber Company in 1889. Although the business initially struggled, it eventually grew to include fourteen builder’s supply yards in communities across Johnson County. The 1892 construction of the George Hodges House and the subsequent construction of Frank Hodges’ home at 432 South Waters Street—the close-knit siblings built their homes on back-to-back lots—testify to their increasing affluence.

Throughout his political career, Democrat George Hodges was an advocate for progressive platforms such as the Good Roads Movement, education reform, and women’s suffrage. At the

age of twenty-one, he won his first public post as an Olathe city councilman. From 1904 to 1912, he served as a Kansas state senator. His 1912 defeat of Arthur Capper was the closest governor’s race in the state’s history. The following gubernatorial election, Capper defeated Hodges. Ill health eventually brought his campaigning days to an end,

but George Hodges remained active in public life until his death in 1947.



This 1996 photograph of the George Hodges House illustrates the Tudor style which was popular in the 1920s. JCM Collection.

Hodges favored lap siding, and the original structure featured multiple-gabled rooflines and door openings. Over the years, alterations were made to the Tudor style house. During the 1920 and 1930s, the home was reconfigured to reflect the tastes of the day. Hodges favored

The First Commander: Capt. D.W. Tomlinson (April 28, 1897 - January 7, 1996)

Over the years, the Olathe Naval Air Station (ONAS) brought to the Olathe and Gardner communities people from all over the nation including those who would become famous. Astronaut and Ohio senator John Glenn and television personality Bob Barker both received early flight training at ONAS. However, fame came to ONAS from the very beginning in Captain D.W. Tomlinson, the first commander of the base.

Captain Tomlinson commanded the new base during its initial planning, construction and commissioning. He graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1917, and flew as a naval aviator during World War I. Inspired watching a noted army officer fly a daring aviation aerobatic act for the public, Tomlinson started the first official Navy flight demonstration team after World War I. In January of 1928, he and two others made their first appearance flying Boeing F2B-1 fighters in San Francisco, CA. Due to their daring stunts, they were known as the “Suicide Trio” before being given the official name of the “Three Seahawks.” In 1930s, Tomlinson published a book titled *The Sky’s the Limit* about his experiences.

Between the two world wars, he flew for Transcontinental and Western Air, INC (TWA) and was known for setting several highest altitude records. On April 30, 1935, he broke the record for the fastest transcontinental flight from Los Angeles to New York. The flight logged 11 hours and 5 minutes in a DC-1 called “Sky Chief.” Heralded as a naval ace, he returned to the Navy as our nation geared up for the Second World War.

One of the lasting legacies of Captain Tomlinson related to our community is not quite as well known. He was the inspiration behind the official insignia for the Olathe Naval Air Station. The flying jawhawk insignia was designed by artists at Walt Disney Studios based on the commander’s nickname “Injun Joe.” The October 16, 1942, issue of the station’s official newsletter, *The Flying Jayhawk*, explained the connection between the captain and the logo design. The artists also connected the image to Kansas by including the outline of the State of Kansas and the state flower, the sunflower. Ironically, a few days after the base was commissioned in October of 1942, the commander was reassigned. Captain D.W. Tomlinson continued with his naval career and became the commander of the Naval Air Transport Service (NATS) Pacific in 1943.

See insignia on page 6

continued from page 1

County airport site and to meet with county commissioners. In January of 1942, the Navy officially purchased the airport and some surrounding land, a total of 640 acres, for \$72,343.01. In March of that year, Commander D.W. Tomlinson addressed the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce and complimented the Johnson County Board of Commissioners for their foresight in obtaining land level enough for a base when the need arose. At one of the highest elevations in Johnson County (approximately 1,080 feet above sea level), the land was ideal for an airport and the military base.

The Creation of ONAS

Construction of the air base started on January 5, 1942. In the beginning, the base was to house 2,000 enlisted men and about 100 officers. The contract was awarded to a private builder on a cost-plus-fixed fee contract. The priority for construction included a hangar, an assembly/repair shop, barracks, mess hall, and ground-school building and storage facilities for gasoline. In addition to the purchase price, an additional \$12,234,527.41 was spent building the base. Three runways were constructed and property was acquired for 5 auxiliary fields. Later, land was leased from local farmers and landowners to comprise a total of 14 auxiliary fields within a 13 mile radius. Four of these fields were leased from local farmers. These auxiliary fields were described to the public as additional “school rooms” for teaching elementary maneuvers. An additional 120 acres was procured along the western boundary in March 1943.



The Administration building under construction at ONAS, September 11, 1942. The building still stands at 1 New Century Parkway, known today as the Johnson County Airport Commission Administration Building. JCM Collection.

By July 1942, enough construction at the base was complete for the transfer of 8 officers, 24 enlisted men and 5 civilians. Later that month, 100 enlisted men and 72 cadets transferred from Fairfax Field. The base was officially known as the United States Naval Aviation Reserve Base, Olathe, Kansas, when it was commissioned on October 1, 1942, under the command of Captain D.W. Tomlinson. *The Olathe Mirror* noted that the ceremony for the commissioning was a mere four minute affair announced by a shrill bugle and the roar of training planes. Its name change to the United States Naval Air Station occurred in January of 1943, giving it a status similar to other naval bases in the nation.

The construction of buildings continued after the official commissioning. The hospital opened on January 16, 1943. One of the most impressive buildings was a 37,000 square-foot field house called Kinnick Hall. The hall housed the first Olympic-sized pool west of the Mississippi and a basketball court where the base team, the Olathe Naval Clippers, played against other teams from the Big 6. It was also known as the place to be,

since many dances were held there. In the recreation hall, soldiers bowled, played ping pong, watched movies and attended church services. Other improvements included a chapel, built at a cost of \$40,000 in April of 1944.



A dance at the legendary Kinnick Hall, mid 1940s. JCM Collection.

By 1948, there were approximately 19 permanent buildings including a water filtration plant, pump houses, central power plant, sewage disposal plant, administration building, hangars, control tower, a parachute overhaul building, garage central store and issue building as well as a cold storage building. Other buildings included barracks, drill hall, armory, a flight simulator building, laundry, fire station and public works.

ONAS Soars

The main mission of ONAS was to provide primary flight training to cadets and quarters for traveling officials. Stearman N2S two-seater biplanes were used for training the cadets. They were sufficient for the difficult task of training future aviators and chosen for their easy field upkeep. The sturdy engines were easily maintained and if necessary, could be completely replaced in two hours. Navy regulations required that all training planes be painted yellow. Because of their color, they were commonly nicknamed by the training pilots as “yellow perils.”

For the next two years, the mission of the base was to serve as the primary training facility for cadets. On November 17, 1942, the very first cadets to complete their primary flight training left ONAS. From there they continued their advanced training at other bases. During this critical phase, a peak of 1,100 pilots were in training during the spring and fall of 1943. From July 1942 to September 1944, ONAS trained nearly 4,550 cadets, with a toll of 25 training fatalities. In addition, WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service) trained at ONAS, arriving in July of 1943. The first group of the 15 women were ranked yeoman 3rd class and had been in the Navy for 6 months. They came to Olathe from the naval air station at Lambert Field, St. Louis.

A New Mission: Transport

The April 1944 issue of *The Flying Jayhawk*, the official newsletter for the station, noted that R4D transport planes were a more frequent presence on the great plains of Kansas. These transports planes, called a “fleet of sleek giants” by the newsletter, heralded a significant change for the station. No longer was the primary mission of ONAS to provide flight training for cadets. The new mission was to train transport pilots and to provide the supporting facilities to the Naval Air Transport Service (NATS). By August of 1944, the enrollment and training of cadets for initial flight training was reduced and those cadets transferred to an air station in Norman, OK.

continued from page 4

NATS was created on December 12, 1941, merely a few days after the attack on Pearl Harbor. NATS fulfilled the need for rapid transport of critical equipment and Navy personnel around the globe. It became one of the largest transport operations in the nation, with 28 regularly scheduled



WAVES en route to Naval Air Station, Olathe, Kansas, in a Douglas R4D transport plane. From left to right: LtJG N. J. Merrill; Yeoman 2nd Class Carolyn Fish; Seaman 2nd Class Gale Collier; Seaman 2nd Class Margaret Chapman; Seaman 2nd Class Gloria Marx; Yeoman 2nd Class Helen Niravelli; Seaman 2nd Class Marilyn Wheeler; and Seaman 2nd Class Helen Ranlett. They came to Olathe from the naval air station at Lambert Field, St. Louis. Official U.S. Navy photograph, Courtesy of the National Archives.

flights daily within the continental United States. They flew crew and transported cargo, mail, additional men and needed blood to both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters during World War II.

ONAS became the home of Squadron Three (VR-3) and VR-9, created for maintenance and support of VR-3 in 1944. It truly became known as a mid-continent hub for transport operating as the largest air transport base in the country. They connected the various continental naval stations, training centers and supply bases. VR-3 flew both R4D and R5D transport planes and was the first to operate “Air Evacuation” flights to fly injured and ill servicemen across the continent. The Olathe Naval Air station served the role as squadron’s main base through the end of World War II.

After World War II: Naval Reserves

The end of World War II signaled a busy time for ONAS, as soldiers and supplies were brought home from around the world. As post-war time needs were met, VR-3 was relocated to Patuxent River, MD, in 1946. As the nation adjusted to life after World War II, ONAS’s mission again changed. The new purpose was to support the Naval Air Reserve and the Marine Air Reserve training programs in the Kansas City metropolitan area. In the fall of 1946, the station also became responsible for the Naval Air Technical Training Unit, commissioned for the purpose of providing training for reservists, air control men and ground approach operators.

By 1948, ONAS remained a commanding presence in the community, representing the sixth largest payroll in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Over \$3,500,000 annually was dispersed to 2,400 Naval personnel that year. During the Korean War, three squadrons of Navy Reservists were called to active duty from ONAS. During this same period, the 2472d Air Force Reserve Training Command established a presence at the base.

ONAS and the community

While its contributions to the nation were great, ONAS also sparked development and community growth in Johnson County. In 1942, the state of Kansas expanded Highway 50 to four concrete

lanes after Frank Knox, Secretary of the U. S. Navy, requested the improvement.

Housing proved to be in high demand, as military families and civilian support staff sought housing off-base. The modest homes in southeast Olathe's Highland Park, a subdivision nicknamed “Navy Hill,” met the needs of some. Another twenty-five duplexes was added in 1943 by W.H. Shackelford, Jr.

Beyond providing an economic stimulus, ONAS and its personnel played an integral part in Johnson County's soical life. ONAS commemorated its 10th anniversary with the “greatest Aviation Exposition” ever staged in the Midwest. The Navy’s Blue Angels thrilled onlookers with their precision flying during the anniversary celebration on October 5, 1952. Other attractions included exhibits by both civilian and military organizations, mock attacks, mock dive-bombing demonstrations, fire-fighting demonstrations and simulated air craft carrier take-offs and landings. An air show and carnival in November of 1954 brought the community into the base once again. The Blue Angels again displayed their maneuvers as well as the Air Force jet aerial acrobatic team, the Thunderbirds. Among the attractions, kids could get their photograph taken in the cockpits of real jets.

In 1959, the Johnson County Parks and Recreation District received a gift of a World War II era Corsair Navy fighter plane in 1959 and installed it at Antioch Park. Years of wear and tear eventually forced its removal. A jet was donated in 1963 to Centennial Park in Lawrence, KS, for the same purpose.

A Rebirth: New Century AirCenter

On October 29, 1969, the Navy announced the closure of ONAS, in its efforts to reduce military spending. Spanning a little over 27 years, the base was officially decommissioned in July of 1970. The



A group of men posing at ONAS about 1955. Leo Thomas Brougham, a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy during World War II, is identified as the man in the back row at left. JCM Collection.

Johnson County Airport Commission acquired the site back from the Navy in 1973 with the stipulation that the land be used as a public airport, and renamed it the Johnson County Industrial Airport. Efforts were made to modify the existing base for its original use as a local county airport. Today, the airport is known as the New Century AirCenter and serves as a business park offering a multi-modal transportation hub with access by air, rail and interstate highway. It operates as a full-service airport, ranking as the fourth busiest general aviation park in the Kansas City area.

TO LEARN MORE...

Hurt, R. Douglas. "Naval Air Stations in Kansas during World War II." *Kansas Historical Quarterly*. Autumn, 1977. (Vol. 43, No. 3)

Krause, Eric William. *U.S. Naval Air Station Olathe, Kansas: a brief history 1942-1945*. Kansas: E.W. Krause, 1992.

Combat Air Museum
Hangars 602-604 “J” Street
Forbes Field
Topeka, KS
785-862-3303

Once located on the Olathe base, the Olathe Naval Air Station Museum officially closed its doors in recent years. The collection of artifacts, photographs and papers was transferred to the Combat Air Museum in Topeka, KS.

DONORS TO THE COLLECTION

continued from page 2

Marilyn Webber
James Wheat
Glen and Dixie Wheaton
Vivian Wilkerson
Melvin Wisner
Mark Worley

4-Leaf Quoters Public Speaking
City of Merriam
Franklin Camp Sons of the Union Veterans
Gill Studios
Jackson County (Mo) Historical Society
Johnson County Emergency Management
Johnson County Library
Lee Jeans
Merriam Homemakers Club
Olathe Daughters of the American Revolution
Optimist Club of Shawnee Mission
Shawnee Fire Department
Shawnee Town
Velvet Creme
Vita Craft Corporation

FAST FACTS ABOUT OLATHE NAVAL AIR STATION

Plans that expanded the imagination of the local men interested in Johnson County’s airport were intimated in developments this week. Sound indications are that the navy air corps will take over this airport and transform it into a training base with a large expansion in facilities. An appropriation may be made soon for the completion of runways, building hangars and construction of administration building and barracks.

The Olathe Mirror
December 18, 1941

The Johnson County naval air base will soon be rapidly progressing on the road to becoming a reality. A four-million-dollar contract with the Swenson Construction company of Kansas City for hangars, barracks, school, administration and other necessary buildings will be signed in another few days. But by the time this huge major air base is ready for operation ten million dollars or more will have been expended for its completion.

The Olathe Mirror
January 29, 1942

Commander Tomlinson outlined the complete inception of the naval air base for its present location. He told the Kansas City men that the Johnson County Board of Commissioners had been far sighted enough to get land together...to which they had the title and were ready when the need came.

The Commander himself is a veteran pilot. He has spent a lifetime at the controls of many years in the development of aviation as an industry. He said the new plans for training war pilots called for three months in colleges which would consist of a toughening process for student pilots. At the new base there would be a 400-foot square to be used for physical development. A corps of physical instructors will be used. Men will be required to hike twenty or thirty miles in the toughening process.

The Olathe Mirror
March 5, 1942

PEEK INTO THE PAST... TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Test your skills with this word scramble. All words relate to Olathe Naval Air Station.



1. vyan

2. ari nasttio

3. elohat

4. lipto

5. SAVWE

6. yfglni khjwkaay

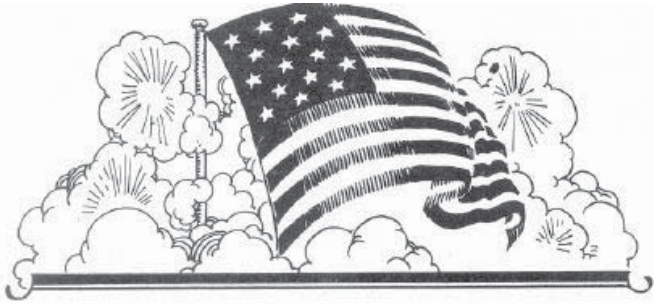
Find the answers on page 7.

DID YOU KNOW?

The insignia for the Olathe Naval Air Station was created by artists at the Walt Disney Studios in Burbank, California, around August of 1942.



Courtesy Olathe Naval Air Station.



TO LEARN MORE...


Check out these children's book about World War II!

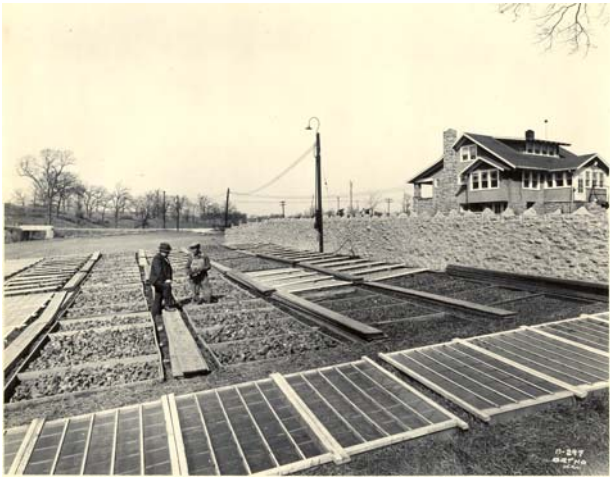
Welcome to Molly’s World 1944: Growing Up in World War Two America, The American Girls Collection.

World War II for Kids by Richard Panchyk. This history of World War II comes with 21 activities that you can try at home!

World War II Days: Discovering the Past with Exciting Projects, Games, Activities, and Recipes by David C. King.

HISTORY MYSTERY

This view of a truck farm, about 1930, features an expanse of hotbeds and cold frames for starting vegetables. The rather distinctive stone wall at the right may help in the identification of this garden plot. In the distance at the left is a road that crosses a bridge. Even an outdoor light was available for those working in this garden and perhaps the owner lived in the stone and stucco bungalow on the other side of the fence. If you have specific information about this photo, please contact the Museum’s Collection Manager, Russ Czaplewski, at 913-715-2554. 



"LEARN TO GROW AND GROW TO LEARN"

Gardening became a popular pasttime for many Johnson County residents, so popular in fact that several garden clubs formed in the 1940s. One such group, the Overland Garden Club, had its start in February of 1940 in the home of Mrs. Max McKay at 5300 West 74th Street. By the end of that year the group had 25 members—an actual size limit set for the early years of the club. Membership dues were fifty cents per year for the group that focused on flower gardening. The club got off to a good start its first year, earning a second place ribbon from the annual show held by the Kansas City Garden Club.




The county’s oldest garden club, the Shawnee-Mission Garden Club, was host to this 1944 Victory Garden and Flower Show at the Shawnee-Mission High School. JCM Collection.

The following year the club had its first experience in staging a show, held at the American Legion in Overland Park.

In 1942 the group began a project to plant trees in the community and trees were planted near the Overland Park school and the Santa Fe Trail marker. With the entry of the United States into World War II, much gardening interest focused on the war effort and that meant a switch from flower gardening to primarily vegetable gardening. The Overland Garden Club joined the work on the home front, hosting speakers on “Canning for Defense” and joining five other garden clubs in a “Victory Garden Show.”

The group continued to meet through the war, holding programs in 1943 on food production, conservation, and home canning. Harold Garver, a key figure in the Future Farmers of America club in Johnson County, spoke to the group on “war gardening.” In 1944 similar programs were offered. A family picnic was held in the summer and club members took flowers to the Olathe Naval Base hospital. That year a motto was adopted by the club: “Learn to grow and grow to learn.” The group participated in the Third Victory Garden Show that year.

The final year of the war found increased interest in the club’s programs and the conclusion of its wartime projects. One speech, by Reuben Corbin of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, was moved to the Overland Park school to allow for a larger than expected turnout. In December of 1945 the club conducted a canned food drive for overseas relief. The Overland Garden Club adapted well to the nation’s wartime needs. 

ENDOWMENTS GIFTS IN MEMORY OF BARTON P. COHEN

(December 11, 1930 - December 11, 2006)

The Johnson County Museum lost a dear friend and member on December 11, 2006. A long-time supporter of the museum, Barton P. Cohen, of Leawood, served on the Johnson County Museum Advisory Council beginning in 2005 and worked tirelessly with the staff and boards to craft the current strategic plan. Bart also served on the Johnson County Heritage Trust Fund Grant Review Board since its inception in 2002. A advocate for history across the state, Bart also served on the Kansas State Historical Society's Board of Directors and was instrumental in researching the contributions of Jewish Kansans with his wife, Mary Davidson Cohen. He will be dearly missed by the entire historical community and the museum would like to thank the following individuals and organizations who contributed to the museum's endowment fund in memory of Bart. We sincerely appreciate their gifts.

Colleen Adams
Blackwell Sanders Peper & Martin
Harvey S. Bodker
Dick and Sue Bond
Ralph and Pamela Bosco
John and Janie Carper
Ben Craig
R.B. and Nancy Dickson
Edwin and Janice Eilert
Sidney Fink
Dan and Helen Guckenheimer
Mr. and Mrs. Allan Hall
Donald and Rita Jacobmeyer
Jay R. Jennings II
Johnson County Bar Association
Neal Johnson, Office of the Inspector General
Joseph and Kristin Leighton
Dee Larson
Shirley Levine
Mindi C. Love
Benjamin and Elaine Mann
John D. Mandelbaum
Jan and Louis Meyers
Jim and Virginia Moffett
Richard and Barbara Mullen
James and Rosalie O'Connell
Overland Park Chamber of Commerce
Ronald and Cynthia Regier
Rotary Club of Overland Park
Sanders Conkright & Warren
John Shrader, Commerce Bank
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Shteamer
April Steven
Straub Construction
Roger and Carolyn Warren

Answers from page 6:

1. Navy
2. air station
3. Olathe
4. pilot
5. WAVES
6. Flying Jayhawk

JOIN US!

We invite you to be part of the Museum’s future by joining the Friends of Johnson County Museum. The Friends support exhibit development, educational programs and special events. Your membership and other contributions are tax deductible.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____
Zip _____ Phone _____

☐ Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ payable to **Friends of Johnson County Museum.**

☐ Please charge \$ _____ to my credit card.
☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

Acct. Number _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Your membership brings you the following annual benefits:

- **Free admission to The 1950s All-Electric House**
- **Quarterly newsletter, ALBUM**
- **10% off gift shop purchases & 50% off program fees**
- **Invitations to Members’ Only events**
- **Enrollment in national Time Travelers program**

☐ \$25-49 **Friend**
☐ \$50-99 **Good Friend**
☐ \$100-249 **Really Good Friend**
☐ \$250 and up **Best Friend**

☐ I am making an additional contribution of \$ _____ in honor/memory of _____

☐ My company matches charitable donations. The matching form is enclosed.
☐ Please send me information about volunteer opportunities.

Return to 6305 Lackman Road, Shawnee, KS 66217.

MUSEUM OF HISTORY

6305 Lackman Road
Shawnee, KS 66217
(913) 715-2550
Fax: (913) 715-2565
Email: jcmuseum@jocogov.org
www.jocomuseum.org
Tues-Sat 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 - 4:30 p.m.
ADMISSION IS FREE

THE 1950s ALL-ELECTRIC HOUSE

6305 Lackman Road
Shawnee, KS 66217
(913) 715-2550
www.jocomuseum.org
Tues - Sun 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.,
guided tours every half hour
ADMISSION: \$2 for adults;
\$1 for 3-12 children.

LANESFIELD SCHOOL HISTORIC SITE

18745 S. Dillie Road
Edgerton, KS 66021
(913) 893-6645
www.jocomuseum.org
Tues - Sun 1:00 - 5:00 p.m.
ADMISSION IS FREE

A PICTORIAL HISTORY OF SHAWNEE:
CELEBRATING SHAWNEE'S
SESQUICENTENNIAL, 1856-2006



Sunflower Publishing,
2006.

Broken up into chapters
by decade, *A Pictorial
History of Shawnee*
covers each period in
history in no more than a

dozen pages making this book an easy and pleasant
read. However, some readers may find themselves
spending more time looking at the wonderful images
than reading it! The nearly 280 photographs in the
book's 150 pages chronicle the history of Shawnee in a
way that words cannot.

Featured throughout the photographs are Shawnee's
noteworthy people, families, structures, events and
places. People such as William Clarke Quantrill,
Charles Bluejacket, Bob Dole and Ronald Reagan
represent figures associated with Shawnee on a national
scope and local people and families such as the Peter
Wertz family; the Wagon Master Dick Williams; and
the Riekes, Pflumms, Garretts and McAnanys along
with numerous other families who have called Shawnee
home. Also represented are events that have dotted
Shawnee's landscape, such as Quantrill's 1862 raid and
the centennial celebration in 1956 to name but a few.

Also featured are the city's numerous historic
structures, some which have given way to progress and

others that have stood the test of time.
Structures such as the Wagon Master's house
at 6515 Nieman Road, Pete and Pauline's
Tavern & Restaurant on the southwest corner
of present-day Shawnee Mission Parkway and
Nieman, and the Shawnee Drive-In located on
the southwest corner of Long Street and
Highway 10 all were torn down in the name of
progress. However, historic structures are still
numerous throughout town as evidenced by the
restoration of sites such as the Monticello
Township Hall, the "Governor's Mansion"
Restaurant & Catering which served as
Governor Andrew Reeder's territorial mansion,
and the Virginia School, now located on the
grounds of Mize Elementary School.

Shawnee's past is extremely storied and one
only needs to take a look at this book to have
that point proven. The photographs are
numerous and unique, many never before
published, and will have you longing for the days
of yesteryear. A popular title locally, the book is
already in its second printing. Limited copies are
still available, but only in a few select locations.
The Museum of History's Museum Store is one
such place, so be sure to pick up your copy
before it sells out!



*Editor's note: This book is for sale in the Museum of History's
Museum Store. Members get a 10% discount.*

ALBUM
JOHNSON COUNTY MUSEUM

6305 Lackman Road
Shawnee, KS 66217

NONPROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

SHAWNEE MISSION, KS

PERMIT NO. 1395



Printed on
recycled paper

This newsletter is also available in alter-
nate formats for the visually impaired.