

Historical Society holds annual dinner meeting

Written by Wauneta Breeze

Friday, 20 September 2013 17:15 -



Attendees of the Chase County Historical Society's annual dinner meeting perused old photographs that had been enlarged to show detail. One of the Historical Society's projects is to digitally preserve old photos. They have found by enlarging the photos many details that were hidden at the photo's original size come to light. (Sheri Hink-Wagner | The Wauneta Breeze)

By Sheri Hink-Wagner

The Wauneta Breeze

Just over 50 individuals interested in Chase County's history attended the annual dinner meeting of the Chase County Historical Society on Sunday, Sept. 15. The event was held at

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the Champion Community Center.

The event started with dinner entertainment provided by Morayah Cupp, daughter of Ed and Arlys Cupp of Champion. Cupp sang two songs for the crowd, one dedicated to her mother and one to her best friend.

After the meal, Gene Morris of McCook provided the keynote address. Morris is the former publisher of the McCook Gazette and Benkelman Post. Morris' speaker fees were paid by Humanities Nebraska.

Morris' talk was very timely in light of the flooding in Colorado and western Nebraska along the Platte River. He focused his talk on the work Harry Strunk did to advocate dams along the Republican River, including the Enders Dam.

Morris told stories of heroism that took place during the flood of 1935. He said when the Republican River flooded in May 1935 the devastation was massive—113 people were killed, over 40,000 livestock were lost, 361 miles of roads and 307 bridges were washed away.

He emphasized that thanks to Strunk's dedication and the hard work of the Republican Valley Conservation Association, which started in 1940, devastation such as that has never again been an issue for those of us that live along the Republican River.

Funds were allocated for Enders Dam in 1946, part of a total \$175 million funding for several dams along the Republican River.

Morris said thanks to their efforts, the area has seen no major floods along the Republican River valley in the past 78 years.

Morris also commended the members of the Chase County Historical Society, saying stories of heroism from the 1935 flood, "underscores the importance of preserving and recording history."

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After Morris' talk, Ted Tietjen of Grant with the Great Western Cattle Trail gave attendees an update of the GWCT's efforts in the area as well as encouraged them to attend an upcoming conference in Ogallala on Nov. 8 and 9.

The Champion Junior Women's Club catered the meal of turkey, mashed potatoes, peas and salads.

Annual meeting

President Charley Colton oversaw the annual business meeting of the Historical Society, which took place immediately following the dinner and program.

In his address he indicated the Chase County Museum had 607 signed guests during the 2013 season. During 2013 the museum was open 16 Sundays and for two family reunions.

The museum's top weekend, the Ice Cream Social, boasted 110 visitors.

Colton also gave an overview of the upcoming changes in the museum, stating that displays were to be rearranged before the 2014 season to provide more room for the weekly presenters.

"I was impressed at the incredible diversity of local collectors and artists we were honored to have share their passion and collections with us this year," said Colton in his annual report.

He and the other members of the Historical Society's board thanked the volunteers who work at

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the museum each weekend, welcoming guests.

He described the Historical Society as, "A lot of fun, great people and a lot of great stories."

Colton also provided an overview of the Historical Society's finances, which he said were "in good shape."

At the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2013, the Historical Society had \$37,977.75 between their memorial, building and general funds. They have an additional \$5,829.48 in a CD for building expenses.

New officers elected

During their election, Colton was elected to another one-year term as president. Carol Maddux was elected to a one-year term as vice president. Diann Schilke was elected to serve a one-year term as secretary. Neva Molzer was elected to a three-year term as treasurer.

Becky Carman, Stan Cross and Jeannine Cox were all elected as directors. Cox' three-year term began in 2011, Cross' in 2012 and Carman's in 2013.

Merril Humphreys stepped down as a director after serving in the position for several years.

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