



# The JEFFERSONIAN

## Newsletter

Jefferson County Historical Society

Volume 36 Issue 1 Winter 2023

### Message from the President

We are looking forward to 2023. Several developments and transitions are happening this year that, although presenting challenges, will keep our Society and its mission relevant and progressing.

The first development is our New Archives property which was the old Free Methodist Social Hall and camp-grounds on Pickering and Church Streets. We have a long-term lease for the property from the Borough of Brookville.

This is the most expensive project we've done since the Edelblute Building was restored 20 years ago. With the help of the community at that time we were able to complete an enviable museum and learning center. We believe that again, with the community's help, the New Archives will be an important tool for preserving and communicating our local history to all generations.

When completed this spring, the building will give us the necessary, safe space for our archives and records. Over the past decade we outgrew our current archives buildings on Jefferson Street, which were never ideal for the organized storage and retrieval of—and access to—our collections and searchable records.

The exciting bonus accompanying the new archives is the surrounding park-like property. We are planning seasonal school and community events to be held on the grounds.



We are an active organization with programs for our schools and community, award-winning exhibits, and exciting events, all made successful by a working Board of Directors who staff the committees overseeing our property, exhibits, education efforts, and events.

Complementing the Board are our newest members Deb Searls and Tracy Metherd who bring welcome skills. We are building our social media presence, a critical tool to make us relevant to a new online generation. We also welcome back our JCHS legend, Carole Briggs, who has accepted the task of editing our *Jeffersonian Journal*.

A major change for 2023 is the “semi-retirement” of Ken Burkett, Executive Director for the past 15 years, who has been paramount in the success of our organization. Ken's achievements as Director, manager, coach, fundraiser and motivator is way too long to list for this article. Ken will stay as part-time advisor for the near future—which we certainly welcome.

Day to day operations—including finances, marketing and membership and overseeing staff—will be assumed by the capable Kat Lyons our current Operations and Grants staff member.

*Eric Armstrong, President*

### NEWS BITES

**Bowditch Birthday  
Bash & New  
Exhibits Opening  
February 25th**



**PHMC Archival  
Records Grant**

**PHMC New Historic  
Marker**

**New Archives  
Update**

JCHC In the News

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The Jeffersonian Newsletter is published four times per year in February, May, August, and November. Submissions welcome. Mail to Kat Lyons, Editor or email [klyons-jchc@windstream.net](mailto:klyons-jchc@windstream.net)



2023 JCHS OFFICERS

**Eric Armstrong, President**  
**Tracy Zents, Vice President**  
**Colleen Cooney, Treasurer**  
**Deb Searls, Secretary**

NEW BOARD MEMBER

**Tracy Metherd** recently relocated to Brookville from Dallas, Texas. She and her husband were drawn to the area’s rich history, amazing landscapes and a beautiful 1857 Victorian that they fell in love with at first sight. Tracy brings a passion for archaeology and history and hopes to use her professional marketing experience to bring awareness to Jefferson County’s fascinating past.

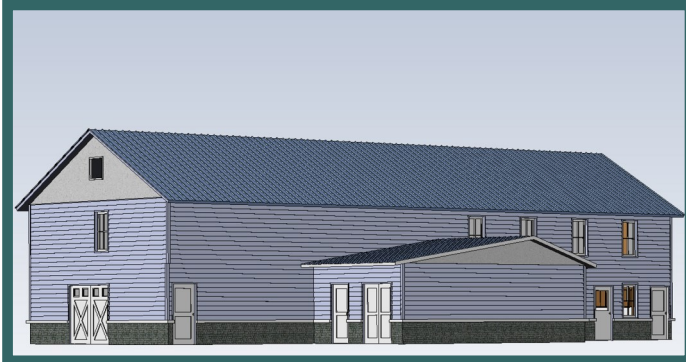


NEW PENN-WEST INTERN

**Max Stahlman** is a senior undergraduate History Major at Penn-West in Clarion (formerly Clarion University of Pennsylvania). He will be with us through spring semester, and is graduating in May. Max is assisting us with researching and installing new exhibits and other projects. Max will also be helping to move our collections from the Jefferson St. Archives to the New Archives Facility this spring.

**ANNUAL GIVING TOTAL \$26, 545 which exceeds our Goal of \$25,000**  
**A BIG Thank You to All Our Members and Patrons**

## JCHC In the NEWS



### NEW ARCHIVES FACILITY UPDATE

The 1st floor is completed, including the new office and research room for staff and visiting researchers. An ADA accessible restroom will be added in the near future.

Researchers wanting to access the 1st floor to conduct County Records research can now do so by appointment.

75% of the 2nd floor is now complete with new drywall and new paint. The Board Meeting Room on this floor will be complete soon. Spouting and gutters will be finished this month, and a small parking area with an ADA space and landscaping is set for this spring.

Approximately one-half of our entire archives and collections have been moved at this point from the Brady-Craig House and Margaret Johnson Archives building on Jefferson Street to the New Archives Facility. We will be moving the rest this spring. Volunteers appreciated! Watch for our website and facebook announcements.

Ken Burkett, Jack-of-All-Trades, is in charge of overseeing the renovation process through June and we plan to have it open to the public in July.

**To Donate, Go To [jchconline.org](http://jchconline.org)  
Or please send your check to  
JCHC, P.O. Box 51, Brookville, PA  
15825  
Or Call in a Credit Card**

### SAVE THE DATE!

A special event you won't want to miss is the upcoming Grand Opening on Saturday, July 15th, complete with hors'd'oeuvres, entertainment and Guests of Honor.



*Partial View of Office and Research Room with Conservation/Preservation Area (Counters and Sink)*



*1st Floor Storage in Archival Boxes*

## JCHC In the NEWS



### JCHS RECEIVES ARCHIVAL RECORDS CARE GRANT

JCHS is pleased to announce we are a recipient of a 2023 Historical & Archival Records Care Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission in Harrisburg.

This is a restricted grant, for preservation of our archival books and records, specifically the Jefferson County Record Books Collection we inherited from the County Courthouse and also the original Naturalization Books currently stored by the Prothonotary's office.

The County Records Collection covers early 19th to mid-20th century from 1824-1961, including court records, deeds, constable and sheriff's accounts, and commissioner's minutes, totaling 677 volumes. The Naturalization Records covers 1831-1910, a total of 41 volumes.



The grant funds cover the purchase of appropriate archival boxes, folders and protective sleeves to properly preserve and rehouse these records in our New Archives Facility. The project involves a re-inventory of the books, creating a "finding aid" for

research purposes, and evaluating the condition of each book to determine future conservation needs.

Our New Archives will also provide much easier access to these records for staff and researchers.

The County Records Collection contains a wealth of information. Some interesting titles include: Automotive Vehicle Registry (who owned the first car and the first 4WD in the county), a Bridge Book, a Record of Prisoners, a Protest Book, and even a Stallion Registry.

Naturalization Records of immigrants to our county preserve valuable genealogical research data, including country of origin, spouses and children's names and ages, and occupations. These records are also used by descendants applying for dual citizenship. JCHC works together with the Prothonotary's office on many requests per year for this service.

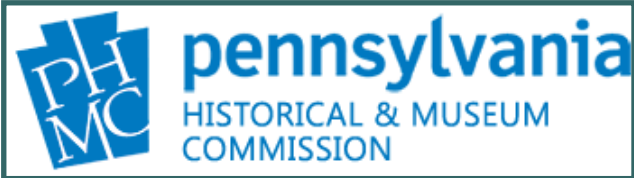
This will be a 1-2 year project beginning in spring for our current collections team and a training opportunity for our history major interns. The project will be overseen by Kenneth Burkett, "semi-retired" Executive Director and Kat Lyons, Operations Admin./Grants.

This is a joint project between JCHS and the County Commissioners as Collaborative Partner, and Tonya Geist, Prothonotary, current steward of the Naturalization Records.

"It is imperative that we continue to work to preserve our common history, so I was pleased to hear the Jefferson County Historical Society was awarded the 2023 Historical & Archival Records Care Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission," said Sen. Cris Dush (R-25). "These county historical documents will help us remember what has come before us, now and for generations to come."

To arrange a Special Tour or Program of the History Center, call us at 814-849-0077 or email [klyons-jchc@windstream.net](mailto:klyons-jchc@windstream.net). Don't forget to check our website, [jchconline.org](http://jchconline.org) and [facebook/jchconline](https://facebook.com/jchconline) for updates. Also find us on [Instagram.com/jchconline](https://Instagram.com/jchconline).

JCHS In the NEWS



**NEW PA HISTORICAL MARKER**

JCHS was just approved for a new historical marker on Dec 9<sup>th</sup> 2022 by the PHMC. 36 new historical markers were approved, selected from 91 applicants to join the more than 2,000 markers that showcase Pennsylvania historical people, places and events. The markers will be installed in 18 of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties, and Jefferson County is among them.

A logging railroad in Heath Township, engineered by Alfred Truman of Brookville, “pioneer stream engineer,” was one of the earliest, if not the first, logging locomotive railroads in Pennsylvania. It was built by Wright & Pier Co. in 1864 on the west branch of Callen Run in Jefferson County. This and other major innovations in early logging railroads significantly contributed to the expansion of the timber industry across the Commonwealth.

Readers may delve deeper into an article in the JCHS *Jeffersonian Journal*, 2022: “Alfred Truman, Pioneer Renaissance Man” by Mike Benigni, JCHC Pathstone staff, who applied for the marker. Installation and commemoration will be late summer/fall 2023 in Heath Township. Watch our website for exact date!



*Replica of the “Little Wonder,” Truman’s Steam Logging Locomotive. Photo credit: Herb A.*

**PHMC 2023 CULTURAL & HISTORIC SUPPORT GRANT**

JCHS was again awarded this annual grant of \$4000 in support of operations on December 22nd, 2022. The funds typically don’t arrive in our coffers until late spring or summer. So we really appreciate your donations and membership renewals coming in at this lean time of year which helps keep us afloat!

**JEFFERSON COUNTY HOTEL TAX 2023 MARKETING GRANT**

This grant is restrictive and funds long-distance JCHC and SRHP marketing to draw in tourists, and a full page advertisement in PA Great Outdoors (PAGO) Adventure Magazine. Ken and Kat write the grants, develop the graphics and text for the ad and for rack cards in-house, then send out to be printed. The rack cards are then distributed by PAGO to kiosks through-out 5 counties and also to “PA ON Display” Welcome Centers along the I-80 corridor. Our cost share is 25% of the total amount, which is a considerable savings for us financially. We thank the County Commissioners for their approval of these marketing grants, without which we wouldn’t be able to market our events outside of Jefferson County.



**FEBRUARY EVENTS: BOWDISH BIRTHDAY & NEW EXHIBITS**

**Bowdish Birthday  
Bash & New Exhibits**

**Saturday February 25th  
11 AM - 4 PM**

**BOWDISH MODEL RR &  
MINIATURES SHOW  
12 - 3 PM**

**ADAM GRUDA, CARTOONIST  
& ILLUSTRATOR**

**ABBIE NEAL, BAXTER'S  
COUNTRY-WESTERN STAR**

**SNOW DAY!**

**Jefferson County History Center  
172-176 Main St, Brookville  
814-849-0077**

**PARLOR RE-ENACTORS: VICTORIAN  
LIFE & CIVIL WAR MEDICINE**

Board Member Ron Shrewsbury and his wife Christina will perform for you in the Victorian Parlor once again during the Bowdish Birthday Bash. Christina specializes in Victorian dress and music of that era on guitar and piano/organ. Ron specializes in Civil War Medicine and will have his mysterious but authentic "medics bag" on hand.



## BOWDISH BIRTHDAY BASH & NEW EXHIBITS

Every year on the last Saturday of February, JCHC puts on the Bowdish Birthday Bash and New Exhibits Opening. Along with the Bowdish Show, JCHC premieres our new exhibits. We like to rotate out older exhibits and create new ones to keep our History Center “alive” and interesting for all ages.

**Adam Gruda, Jefferson County Cartoon Illustrator.** The Grande Hall will showcase a cartoon illustrator, Adam Gruda, who was also a fashion artist. His cartoons appeared in the New York Times and his drawings of 1930s—1940s women’s costumes in Cosmopolitan Magazine. Gruda immigrated from Poland with his parents and the family lived in Stumpcreek, a few miles south of Sykesville. Gruda covered World War II, politics and social commentary on many subjects as well as poking fun at football games and family life. He didn’t just do cartoons, however. He was an excellent pen and ink landscape artist, as shown by his many exquisitely detailed drawings of various locations.



**Abbie Neal, Local Country Western Star.** Abbie Neal and Her Ranch Girls was a very popular all-girl country-western band in the 1940s-1970s. Abbie was a Jefferson County girl from the little village of Baxter who acquired acclaim and admiration as the leader of the Ranch Girls. Prior to forming her own band, she played with several other groups on local TV and radio shows out of Pittsburgh, and also on the nationwide broadcast of Jamboree USA out of Wheeling, West Virginia. She even earned a star in the Walkway of Stars there for her contribution to the Jamboree.



In the late 1950s, her band was invited to play at casino resorts in Reno, Las Vegas and other major venues in Nevada.

We have acquired some of her items from her family for our archives and for our “Abbie Neal

Exhibit” – Her country western band outfits, and even her violin. She won a national fiddle contest at age 10 in 1928 and was considered a world-class fiddler! She acquired the title of “One of the Sweetest TV Cowgirls” nationally and “Queen of Country Music” by her local fans. She never forgot her roots and came back to perform at the Moonlite Drive-In during the 1950s.

On her 80th birthday, she received over 700 cards, including ones from then President and Mrs. Clinton, the governor of our state and the mayor of Pittsburgh! Come see this nostalgic exhibit of the home-grown girl from Baxter.



**Snow Day!** Toboggans, sleds, skates and skis! Remember those Snow Days off from school so long ago? Well, come and reminisce about those good ole days! Kids these days don’t even get to have snow days anymore, what with their school computers and on-line education. But at least they don’t have “make-up days” into June anymore!

## SRHP In the NEWS

### SCRIPTURE ROCKS HERITAGE PARK NEWS

The Park officially opens for the 2023 season on April 1st—Only 1.5 months away!—Which is the same amount of time that ole Groundhog Phil predicted the rest of winter to last. So Spring should appear on that very day. (Note: Although anyone can access the Park all winter—We never had enough snow that we had to close the gate).

Spring clean-up dates with our local scout troops, and anyone else who would like to help, is slated for late March. Watch our website and facebook and local newspapers for the day(s) and time(s).

The popular “Rockin It” Guided Tours will begin on the last Sunday of the month beginning in May.

We also will host Hickory Grove Elementary 4th Grade again this May at the Park, complete with professional tour guides and speakers.

Other schools and organizations are always welcome, both within and outside of Jefferson County. We can tailor our programs for different age groups and group size. Give us a call!



*Ken at Rockshelter teaching kids about  
Native American Life*

### DONATION ALERT

**We are seeking donations to help keep up the Park maintenance and pay for amenities such as Porta-Potty and security lighting. We receive no local, state or federal funding for this privately owned park. We rely on YOUR donations.**

**WE ARE IN NEED OF A RIDING MOWER  
IN GOOD CONDITION—  
DONATION OR LOW COST.**

**Checks designating the funds to be used for  
“SRHP” can be mailed to:  
JCHC, P.O. Box 51, Brookville, PA 15825**

**WE ALSO WELCOME VOLUNTEERS !!!**



*Wood Nymphs in the Park*

*To arrange a Special Tour or Program of the Park, Call us at the History Center 814-849-0077 or email [kburkett-jchc@windstream.net](mailto:kburkett-jchc@windstream.net) or [klyons-jchc@windstream.net](mailto:klyons-jchc@windstream.net). Don't forget to check our website, [jchconline.org](http://jchconline.org) and [facebook/jchconline](https://www.facebook.com/jchconline) for updates. Also find us on [Instagram.com/jchconline](https://www.instagram.com/jchconline).*



## JCHC WINTER HAPPENINGS: CREATING NEW EXHIBITS

**HAPPY WINTER DOLDRUMS!** It's that time of year again for the JCHC staff and Board. You mean a long winter's nap? Well, yes and NO... This time of year we are busier than ever.

In January and February we take down our revolving exhibits and install new exhibits for the upcoming Bowdish Birthday Bash. This is no small task. We typically begin bouncing ideas for upcoming exhibits off one another throughout the year, then finalize plans in December. Then the real work begins.

Exhibit artifacts must be reboxed and returned to the Archives. Gallery spaces are selected for the size of each planned exhibit, the history of the person, place or event is thoroughly researched, artifacts are chosen for each exhibit theme, items are arranged within each gallery space, and finally graphics and text are mounted on foam board and placed appropriately, describing the history behind the exhibit and the artifacts.

Gallery space ranges from a full-size room to glass enclosed cabinet spaces. Stones N' Bones was a 3-gallery exhibit that took one and a half years to research and complete. This award winning exhibit took several sponsors to cover the \$35,000 it cost to produce.

The First Peoples Archaeology exhibit in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Parker Gallery took many months, including creation of a replica longhouse and rock shelter models (by the talented Ken Burkett), and the assistance of our intern. Add to all this, the creation of megagraphic panels designed in-house and sent out to the printers to be done in a timely manner.

Artwork for the Grand Hall Gallery can usually be completed within a month. An exception was our Map exhibit, requiring extensive research, framing the maps, a loan of original 16<sup>th</sup>—17<sup>th</sup> century maps from a NY City art gallery and a board member's own framed original maps (thank you Arthur), and numerous graphics/text signage. This exhibit took 5 months from start to finish.

This time of year is also when the Bowdish Crew refurbishes the Bowdish Model RR & Miniatures Diorama in anticipation of the Birthday Bash. The wiring on the animations must be checked and repaired under the stage platform, and the train engines, cars and tracks cleaned and parts re-oiled by mid-February. The Crew then selects a new layout for the coming year, so the exhibit remains "new and fresh." For this reason, the Bowdish exhibit is closed during January and part of February.



*Jo Schrecongost of the Bowdish Crew getting ready for the Bowdish Birthday Bash*

If you like model trains and planes, mini-historic buildings and miniatures animation, this is the place for you! We welcome you to come volunteer and learn how it's all done. See how a realistic landscape is created or how the animated people and critters come to life, and how our iPad program controls multiple trains going different directions at varying speeds.

So much to do and so little time. But we promise to be ready with several new exhibits! Two of our exhibits feature Jefferson County people and their artistic careers that many of you will remember!

JCHS wishes you all a late Happy New Year and we'll see you at the Bowdish Birthday Bash & New Exhibits Opening on Saturday, February 25th!

## ARTIFACT OF THE MONTH



**DANIEL LONG VIOLIN.** Every month, we present a new artifact of the month in an exhibit case at the top of the Grande Staircase. We typically post it on facebook, and thought we would share it in the newsletter with all of you natives who live elsewhere who may not be facebookers!

Daniel Long was a talented local machinist. He quickly became known as a genius of sorts, being highly skilled with his hands and was an imaginative engineer. He built long-rifles and he is famously known for building the most accurate gun of its day.

Daniel also made violins, claiming his unique design of a solid back, instead of two halves to make the back, was an improvement upon the traditional style. This violin recently acquired by JCHS is No. 54, built in 1911 and was next to the last violin that he made.

**“OLD-TYME VALENTINES.”** These vintage valentines were given and sent among local residents and from students to their teachers. The oldest are dated 1909 and were presented to Miss Ila Anderson at the Punxsutawney Academy before her marriage to Roscoe Carrier in 1910.

Others were given to the now Mrs. Carrier by her students in Summerville where she taught from the 1920s to the 1950s, during the “Roaring Twenties,” the Depression of the “Dirty Thirties,” WWII, and the “Boom Times” that followed.



## Events Calendar

## Bowdish Model RR

## Board of Directors &amp; Staff

## 2023 Events Calendar

**Bowdish Birthday Bash &  
New Exhibits Opening**  
Saturday, February 25  
11 AM—4 PM

**Military Collectibles Show**  
Saturday, June 3  
9AM—3PM  
Jefferson County Fairgrounds

**Laurel Festival June 11-18**  
Historic Walking Tour  
Wednesday, June 14, 5:30 PM  
Friday, June 16, Sidewalk Sale

**New Archives Grand Opening**  
Saturday, July 15, Time TBA  
314 N. Pickering St

**JCHC @ Jefferson County Fair**  
July 16– 22 TBA

**JCHC @ Elk Fest**  
July 29-30  
Elk County Visitor Center

**Antique Firearms & Indian  
Artifacts Show**  
Saturday, September 2  
9AM—3PM  
Jefferson County Fairgrounds

**Family Bicycle Poker Run**  
Sunday, September 17  
11AM—5PM

**Escape Room**  
October TBA

**Annual Meeting & Dinner**  
Saturday, October 21  
Pinecrest Country Club

**Halloween Eerie Tales**  
October 28  
Main Street, Brookville

**Christmas Celebration**  
Friday Evening, Nov 24th

**Historic Church Tour**  
Saturday, December 9  
Brookville

2023 Model Railroad &  
Animated Miniatures

**Bowdish Birthday Bash**  
Saturday, February 25  
Noon—3PM  
172-176 Main St, Brookville

**Bowdish Show**  
Saturday, March 25  
12PM—3PM

**Saturday, April 29**  
12PM—3PM

**Saturday, May 27**  
12PM—3PM

**Laurel Festival, June XX**  
5PM—8PM

**Saturday, July 29**  
12PM—3PM

**Saturday, August 26**  
12PM—3PM

**Saturday, September 30**  
12PM—3PM

**Saturday, October**  
12PM—3PM

**Christmas Celebration  
(Light-Up Night)**  
Friday, November 24  
5PM—8PM

December, TBA

## JCHS Board of Directors

Eric Armstrong, President 2025  
*earnst43@gmail.com*

Tracy Zents, VP 2023

Colleen Cooney, Treasurer 2024

Deb Searls, Secretary 2024

Larry Anthony 2023

Linda Barnes 2023

Chris Headle 2024

Arthur McKinley 2023

Tracy Metherd 2025

Amy Salsgiver 2025

Ron Shrewsbury 2025

Dave Taylor 2024

JCHC STAFF

Kenneth Burkett, “Ex-Officio” Director  
*kburkett-jchc@windstream.net*

Kat Lyons, Operations | Grants | Newsletter  
*klyons-jchc@windstream.net*  
or *jchc@windstream.net*

Fay Williams, Shop/Projects

PATHSTONE STAFF

Jack Neale, Genealogy Research  
*research-jchc@windstream.net*

Linda Heriger-Smith, Collections/Shop  
Cyndi Morrison, Collections/Shop  
Mike Benigni, Projects/Shop

VOLUNTEERS

Emma Ankeny	Zach Ankeny
Carole Briggs	Jack Burkett
Cheryl Burkett	Tim Cooney
Jade Egelhoff	Dan Palmer
Austin Fields	Mandy Hoffman
Mark Kerr	Wayne Kocher
Bill McCracken	Fay Noonan
Jon Noonan	Jo Schrecongost
Art Schrecongost	Eric Shugarts
Victor Stahlman	Max Stahlman
Mike Tattersall	Jack Theisen
Valerie Zents	

The Jefferson County  
Historical Society  
172-176 Main St.  
P.O. Box 51  
Brookville, PA 15825

(814) 849-0077  
jchc@windstream.net

http://jchconline.org  
and scripturerocks.com

**Museum Hours:**  
Tuesday - Saturday  
11 AM - 4 PM

Closed Sundays  
Mondays and Holidays

We typically close when  
our schools close due to  
weather, and urge you to  
phone before traveling  
any distance.

**CALL AHEAD FOR  
COVID19  
RESTRICTION  
UPDATES**

**Exhibit Admission**

By Donation

JCHS Members - Free

Genealogy  
Contracted Research  
\$25 /Hour

(1 Hour minimum)

In-House Assisted  
Research  
\$25/Hour  
(after 1st 1/2 hour)

If you would like to  
receive our  
E-newsletter  
and announcements  
of events and  
activities at JCHC ,  
Please SIGN UP at  
jchconline.org

**NONPROFIT ORG.**

**U.S.POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT NO. 11**

**Jefferson County Historical Society  
Annual Membership Application**

Student \$10    Individual \$30    Family (Household) \$40    Life \$600.00

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Return with your check payable to JCHC at  
PO Box 51  
Brookville, PA 15825

Credit cards by phone or at jchconline.org

**Our Mission**

Our purpose is to engage people of all ages in the history of Jefferson County. We collect and care for relevant objects, images and documents and invite county residents and visitors to research our materials, interact with our exhibits, take part in our programs and read our publications, in order to encourage an understanding of our past and present and afford a vision for the future.