

# OUR LEGACY

‘Creating a future for our past’

1ST QUARTER 2025



VOL. 54, NO. 1



## COMING EVENTS

### MONTHLY MEETING

April 16, 2025

4:00 p.m., Legacy Center,  
310 Gunsmoke

### SPECIAL EVENT

#### Landmark Arts Project Reception

May 8, 2025

5:00 to 6:30 p.m.  
Boot Hill Museum  
Mariah Gallery

### COMMUNITIES

- Bellefont
- Bloom
- Bucklin
- Dodge City
- Ford
- Fort Dodge
- Howell
- Kingsdown
- Spearville
- Wilroads Gardens
- Windthorst
- Wright

### OFFICERS

- Kent Stehlik**, president
- Mary Hendrix**, vice-president
- Sonya Hughes**, treasurer
- Sam Shipley**, secretary
- George Laughead**, past-president
- Aaron Fisher**, member at large

## LANDMARK ARTS PROJECT KICKOFF

Boot Hill Museum has been selected for the third annual Landmark Arts Project. Each year, a historic landmark in Ford County will be selected as the focus for the project. Area youth will be provided with historical information and tours of the location to inspire the creation of artwork related to the landmark.

Pieces created by students will provide an avenue for developing a connection with local history and art in the community as well as the opportunity to showcase their work.

The story of Boot Hill began with a cemetery in 1872, followed by two Third Ward School buildings. After the new City Hall building was constructed, the Dodge City Jaycees worked to capitalize on Dodge City’s wild and wooly past. The original museum building at the top of Boot Hill was completed in 1947.

‘Landmark’ continued on Page 3

## FCHS is Seeking Volunteers!

If you have an interest in preserving Ford County history and have time to give, we want you!

Docent/Greeting/Reception  
 Event Planning & Organization  
 Photography/Videography  
 Community Outreach  
 Youth Programs/Organization & Ideas  
 Housekeeping/Janitorial  
 Computer Input/Data Entry  
 Help w/Mailings/Labeling/Stuffing  
 Artifact Cleaning, Repair & Restoration  
 Carpentry/Woodworking  
 Oral Histories/Capturing/Transcribing  
 Help with Grant Writing  
 Exhibits/Set-Ups and Tear-Downs  
 Writing/Researching  
 Demonstrations



Photo by Josh Roesener

## 2025 FCHS ANNUAL MEETING

The FCHS Annual Meeting was held at the Ford County Legacy Center on February 26, 2025. President Kent Stehlik and member at large Aaron Fisher were reelected. Mary Hendrix was elected Vice-President and Sam Shipley was elected Secretary.

After the business meeting concluded, President Stehlik provided updates to our visitors and new members about various FCHS accomplishments as well as our ongoing projects. We are still hoping to have a new roof at the Legacy Center this Spring.

Assistant City Manager Melissa McCoy discussed Stan Herd's progress on the restoration of his iconic stagecoach mural as well as the City's purchase of the First National Bank building. We are thrilled to see this beautiful historic landmark receiving much needed attention.

Brad Smalley delivered an entertaining presentation about Dodge City's Saloon War and its Significance to Modern Tourism. Brad is a terrific speaker and we were delighted to hear amusing anecdotes from his time at Boot Hill Museum as well as tales from the Old West.

Schedules are very flexible and we do not require a lengthy commitment. Couples and families are welcome!

**For more information, please call 620-789-3247 or send a message to [media@fordcountyhistory.org](mailto:media@fordcountyhistory.org).**

## Did you know?

FCHS has a new website! Visit us at [fordcountyhistory.org](http://fordcountyhistory.org) to learn more about the people and communities of Ford County.

Be sure to check back regularly for updates about our projects, events, and collections.

## Share Your Story

Our yesterdays define our tomorrows differently when we understand the path that led us here...

- As a country
- As a community
- As a family
- As an individual

**We want to hear your story in your own words!**





## HAROLD AND MADELINE COOK COLLECTION

We recently received the first set of boxes containing materials which belonged to Harold and Madeline (Stofer) Cook. Harold grew up in Ford and became a special agent with the FBI. Madeline graduated from Bucklin High School in 1932. The large collection was purchased from a Denver antiques dealer in 1999 and the items are now being collated and shipped to the Legacy Center from San Francisco.

The collection includes hundreds of photos and negatives as well as newspaper articles about Harold's college athletic and theater careers, and such personal items as Madeline's filled dance cards from sorority balls and formals. The physical items include a beautiful locket with each of their photos inside.

We are extremely grateful to the generous donor who is painstakingly packing and shipping these items to Ford County where we can preserve and share the Cooks' stories.

---

### 'Landmark' continued from Page 1

The first six buildings of the Front Street Replica from Rath & Wright's General Outfitting Store to F. C. Zimmermann's Hardware Store were completed in 1958. 1964 brought the replica expansion to the Beatty & Kelley Restaurant. Many buildings and exhibits have been added to the museum complex over the years. The new gift shop and Mariah Gallery opened in 2020. Exhibits opened in the new building in 2021 and the Long Branch Saloon was recently remodeled.

Submissions will be on display in the Mariah Gallery at Boot Hill Museum from April 21 through May 8. Participating classes will each receive \$500 for art supplies. In addition, FCHS has created a scholarship fund for full-time Ford County students attending Dodge City Community College to further their education in the arts. Funding for this project was provided by the Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas and the Community Facilities Advisory Board.

Boot Hill Museum will host a reception for the exhibiting artists in partnership with FCHS on Thursday, May 8 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. in the Mariah Gallery. Awards will be presented at this time and the public is encouraged to attend.

**HOME OF STONE MUSEUM  
MUELLER-SCHMIDT HOUSE**

**SPRING 2025 HOURS**

**APRIL SATURDAY 1:00 P.M. TO 5:00 P.M.**

**MAY SATURDAY 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.**

**MEMORIAL DAY 10:00 A.M. TO 4:00 P.M.**



**CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTIONS AND GRANTORS**

Ford County Commission & Administration  
Kansas State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO)  
“Why Not Dodge” (CFAB)  
Community Foundation of Southwest Kansas  
Humanities Kansas  
Main Street Dodge City  
United Telephone and Communications  
IdeaTek

**CONTACT US**

**EMAIL** [media@fordcountyhistory.org](mailto:media@fordcountyhistory.org)

**MAIL** PO Box 131 Dodge City, KS 67801

**PHONE** 620-789-3247 **WEBSITE** [fordcountyhistory.org](http://fordcountyhistory.org)



[fordcountyhistory](mailto:media@fordcountyhistory.org)



[FordCountyHistory](#)  
[fordcolegacycenter](#)  
[muellerschmidthouse](#)  
[PreserveFtDodge](#)



[fordcountyhistory](#)

Ford County Historical Society  
PO Box 131  
Dodge City, KS 67801

