Winter Edition December 2025

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

http://wchsutah.org

THE PRESIDENT'S PEN



Chad Bennion, President

To begin with, I want to thank everyone who made our sold-out Gala on Saturday, October 25, 2025 a huge success! (Please see more information on page 2.) It was a privilege to honor Dr. Richard Whitehead and Randy Wilkinson for all they have done through their years of service, to preserve, maintain, and add to the history of Utah's Dixie.

I especially want to thank Liberty Village as our Gold Sponsor, Southern Utah TV & Satellite as our Silver Sponsor, and Chef Alfredo's Italiano Restorante as our Bronze Sponsor. I also want to extend my thanks to the many businesses and individuals who provided items and artwork for our Silent Auction and Prize Drawing at the event.

I appreciate all the hard work and community support that went into the event. I particularly want to thank Brad Bennett as Chair of the Gala Committee and all our WCHS Board Members. The event was such a success that we are seeking a larger venue to host the Gala in 2026.

As the year comes to a close, it is important to look at the progress and growth WCHS is making. In 2025 we approved and updated our Bylaws, expanded project committees, oral history preservation, held numerous walking tours, expanded community outreach and added a new display booth for events, improved communication, held a successful Gala, increased efforts to preserve local history and historical items, kicked off the beginning of a capital campaign for a new museum and facilities to preserve our history and heritage, and funded an audit of our existing website to provide recommendations to preserve the data, improve it, and make the website more user friendly. We are looking forward to building upon these successes and efforts further in 2026.

Our WCHS Board Members, Loren Webb, Linda Shogren, Maureen Parks, Teresa Orton, George Cannon, Karl McMullin, Jesse Stocking, and Brad Bennett, do a terrific job and volunteer many hours to make all this happen. My heartfelt thanks to our WCHS Board.

My heart is also grateful for our community members, businesses, families and individuals who support and contribute to WCHS. It makes a difference!

Also, please note, our WCHS Annual Meeting and Elections will be held on Wednesday, January 28, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. in the Pioneer Museum, 145 N. 100 E. St. George, Utah.

As we take time to reflect upon the past year, I wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year in 2026!

IN THIS ISSUE

The President's Pen
Utah's Dixie History Preservation Gala
Meet Your Board Members
Committee Reports
Meetings Schedule
Historic Preservation
Upcoming Events

YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

President: Chad Bennion
1st Vice President: Loren Webb
2nd Vice President: Linda Shogren
Secretary: Maureen Parks
Treasurer: Teresa Orton
Webmaster: George Cannon
Members: Brad Bennett, Karl McMullin, Jesse Stocking

Washington County Historical Society

Utah's Dixie History Preservation

GALA

Our Gold Sponsor

Thank you!

LIBERTY VILLAGE

Our Silver Sponsor

Thank you!

Southern Utah TV & Satellite LLC

Home AV Specialists Since 1980

Our Bronze Sponsor

Thank you!



RISTORANTE ITALIANO CHEF ALFREDO

Silent Auction Sponsors

AGAVE JONES

ROWDYS RANGE

Milne Jewelry Co.

M&S TURQUOISE

GOLD ORE STORE

MAIN ST. ANTIQUES

DSUHC

LONGHORN STEAKHOUSE

BENJA'S THAI GARDEN

Drawing Sponsors

mojave

About Dental Care D. BRYCE ALLDREDGE, DMD

Southern Utah TV & Satellite LLC

PIG'S EAR american bistro

ROWDYS RANGE

STEAMROLLER

PAPA MURPHY'S

ETHEREAL SALON

Drawing Sponsors

uinta golf

THE PAINTED PONY

Feel Love Coffee

öken hem

Pizza

BOOK BUNGALOW

Judd's

PALETAS



Chad Bennion, President, and Brad Bennett, Marketing Committee Chair; Randy Wilkinson and Dr. Richard Whitehead, awardees; Tim Anderson, emcee.



Mr. & Mrs. Jimmie Hughes, winners of a silent auction item.

Commissioner Victor Iverson speaks to the attendees.





Beautiful music was enjoyed as the guests entered the venue, compliments of Sharon Snow.



Attendees enjoyed a delicious meal catered by Chef Alfredo.

MEET YOUR BOARD MEMBERS

Loren Webb, 1st Vice President and Program Coordinator



I am a native of St. George, and I serve as a board member on the Washington County Historical Society. I also serve as the coordinator of the Oral History Program, St. George Downtown Historic District Walking Tours, and Historic Field Trips.

I do historical research and periodically contribute completed historical research topics to the WCHS website and to the WCHS newsletter.

I am currently working on a joint WCHS/Sons of Utah Pioneers historic monument marker project on the Middleton Limestone Kiln which provided limestone for the St. George Temple, St. George Tabernacle and other public buildings in the mid to late 19th century.

Karl McMullin, Board Member



I am a six-generation descendant of early southern Utah pioneers from both Washington and Kane counties. Raised in Hurricane, I am a proud graduate of Hurricane High. After high school and a two-year church mission to Argentina, I attended several Utah colleges and universities. I am married to Vivian Hardy from Delta, Utah, and we have five children and seven grandchildren. We live in Santa Clara where we are involved in numerous activities.

I have a long time interest in the history of the area with family from Hurricane, Leeds, Grafton, Harrisburg, Santa Clara, Kanab, Alton, and spreading to nearly every town in Washington and Kane counties.

I am excited to be a board member of the Washington County Historical Society where I learn about the area's past and help protect its future.

Maureen Parks, Secretary



I am completing my second year of a two-year term on the Board of Directors where I am currently serving as Secretary and am responsible for the meeting minutes, newsletter, and other assigned tasks. By serving on the Board, I have had the opportunity to learn the history of Washington County and surrounding areas. I am also active in Daughters of Utah Pioneers and Daughters of the American Revolution.

A native of Idaho Falls, Idaho, my husband and I moved to Southern Utah in 2010 after having been snowbirds for two years, and we currently live in Ivins. We enjoy three children and four grandchildren.

Teresa Orton, Treasurer



I am currently serving as Treasurer on the Board of the WCHS, a position I have held for three years. I am a fifth-generation native of St. George whose early ancestors were among the first settlers in Washington County. I graduated from Dixie High School and attended Dixie Junior College. For most of my working career I was an executive administrator. I am the Director of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum in St. George and work to aid in the preservation of our Dixie heritage.

Linda Shogren, 2nd Vice President & Membership Committee Chair



The goal of the year was to have more of a presence in community events. We encourage those who would enjoy learning more about our Dixie history to join the Washington County Historical Society.

Materials we needed for our trade show booth were designed and ordered. The items included a banner, a tall pop-up banner, a tablecloth, and business cards. We had a presence at many events in 2025 using these items.

A new museum brochure highlighting all the museums in Washington County was designed, printed, and distributed. Watch for it at various locations throughout Washington County and other areas, as well.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

WEBSITE COMMITTEE



GEORGE CANNON, CHAIRMAN

TRANSITION AND VISION: THE FUTURE OF THE WCHS WEBSITE

As another year draws to a close, it is a time for reflection on past accomplishments and forward-looking planning. This year is particularly significant for me, as I must retire as the WCHS Webmaster by the end of 2026.

While I have deeply enjoyed this project, the increasing demands of the job—which will only grow as the website evolves—are coming into conflict with the realities of my advancing age. The rest of the WCHS Board and I are actively working on plans to facilitate a smooth and effective transition.

The Genesis of the Website

My involvement with the Washington County Historical Society (WCHS) began in January 2007, and I was immediately impressed by the rich history of the Utah Dixie area. I heard countless fascinating stories during lectures, meetings, and discussions, and it struck me that these narratives needed to be captured, preserved, and made easily accessible to the public.

- Oral Tradition: Spreading history by word-of-mouth is prone to changes and varying levels of accuracy.
- Print Documentation: Books provide stability but limit distribution and make updates difficult.

It became clear that a website was the ideal solution to solve these problems.

From Idea to Reality

When I began, I had little knowledge of the area's history and no experience with website authoring. Yet, as a newly retired and curious individual, I devoted myself to learning both.

In 2009, after a period of experimentation with platforms like Yahoo Groups, Elaine Tyler (WCHS Treasurer and Benefactor) volunteered to help us establish a regular website, drawing on her experience managing a foundation's web presence. The current website is a result of that long, evolutionary, piece-by-piece process. Because it grew organically over time—rather than through a formalized requirements, design, and development process—it lacks the uniformity of a newly built system.

COMMITTEE REPORTS (cont'd)

WEBSITE COMMITTEE (con'td)

The Next Generation Website

We have now reached a critical juncture where it is time to reassess our assets and define our future path. While the current website has served us well and must remain operational during the transition, we need to move toward a next-generation system that is:

- Easier to maintain by multiple people.
- Capable of handling a much larger volume and variety of artifacts.
- Equipped with superior search, retrieval, and attractive display capabilities.
- Built to manage the very large volume of data efficiently.
- Secured with features like access control and robust backup.

A Shared Vision for Historical Data

The model I envision is centered on collaboration and efficiency:

- Core System: A commercial, high-performance database management system (DBMS) capable of handling millions of artifacts and providing all the necessary features (search, capacity, security).
- Shared Data: The key idea is for multiple local organizations to share their common historical data within this core database, eliminating redundant effort.
- Local Interfaces: Each organization would maintain a smaller, specialized website to address its unique needs but would access the large comm**on** database to pull, process, and display the relevant historical information.

Looking further ahead, I believe the rapidly developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools (like Copilot, Gemini, or ChatGPT) will eventually become the next layer of access beyond our immediate next-generation system. Imagine simply asking your favorite AI, "On the WCHSUTAH website, tell me..." and getting an accurate, synthesized answer.

I encourage everyone with ideas for the current or future WCHS websites to please share them as we move into this exciting new phase.

DAVID H. & WILHELMENA CANNON STATUES UPDATE

The two life-sized bronze sculpture pieces of David H. & Wilhelmena Cannon will be placed in the courtyard plaza of the new city offices under construction at 61 South Main Street across from the St. George Children's Museum.



The City Hall grand opening celebration will be January 17, 2026. There will be free root beer floats and other refreshments.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS SCHEDULE

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND PLAN TO ATTEND

George Cannon asked AI to write a narrative about the Washington County Historical Society. Here is the result:

Step into the stories that shaped southern Utah with the Washington County Historical Society–your gateway to the rich pioneer heritage of St. George and beyond. Whether you're tracing family roots, exploring historic homes, or diving into the lives of early settlers, WCHS offers a treasure trove of photos, biographies, walking tours, and community events that bring the past to life. Run entirely by passionate volunteers, the society is a hub for preservation, education, and local pride. Join the effort, explore the archives, or attend a live reenactment–there's no better way to connect with the spirit of Dixie.

The monthly meetings are for WCHS officers, members, and any others interested in Washington County history. It is an opportunity to hear about what is going on with the WCHS and to exchange ideas with others who have similar interests.

Meet in the downstairs meeting room of the Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP) McQuarrie Memorial Museum, 145 North 100 East, St. George, UT. For more information, check the website at https://wchsutah.org, or e-mail info@wchsutah.org, or call and leave a message at (435) 275-7409.

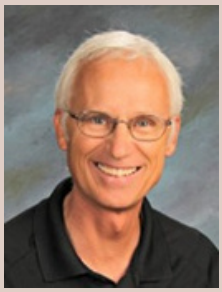
Washington County Historical Society Community Meetings Schedule

Annual Meeting & Election, Wednesday, January 28, 2026 - 10:00 a.m. - Noon
Wednesday, February 25, 2026 - 10:00 a.m. - Noon
Wednesday, March 25, 2026 - 10:00 a.m. - Noon

This and previous editions of the WCHS Newsletter can be found at https://wchsutah.org/documents/documents.php#wchs-newsletters

A comprehensive list of future historical events in Washington County can be found at https://wchsutah.org/calendar.php

HISTORIC PRESERVATION - WALKING TOURS



Submitted by Loren Webb
Walking Tours Coordinator

Four St. George Historic Walking Tours were held October 11 (two tours), October 18, and October 25. Participants on each of the walking tours gained insights into how the early pioneers lived and how they were able to build fine homes and public buildings while living in a mostly barter-based economy.

The **Ancestor Square Block Walking Tour** on October 11 was led by Loren Webb with 18 participants. The Town Square Block Walking Tour on October 11 was led by Tom McArthur with 5 participants. The Pioneer Courthouse Block Walking Tour on October 18 was led by Bruce Pickett with 12 adults and two children participating. The Green Gate Village Block Walking Tour on October 25 was led by Susan Crook with 23 participants.



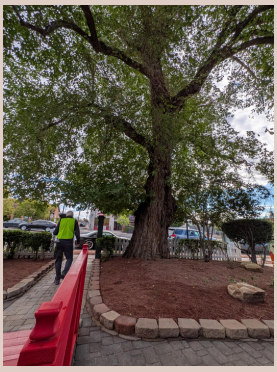
Tour guide, Loren Webb, tells about the Samuel Miles pioneer home.



Loren Webb tells about the Amelia and Brigham Young winter home.



Mulberry Inn employee, Patrice Baumgartner, explains the history of the pioneer home of Edward and Mary Woolley and Charles and Pamela Foster.



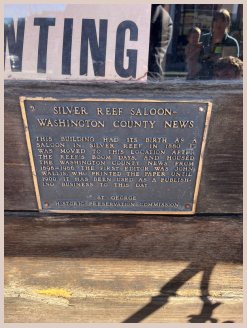
Tour guide Loren Webb walks past the second oldest tree in St. George while on the Ancestor Square Walking Tour.



Loren Webb talks about the Dr. Pike home.



Loren Webb answers a question about the Gardner Club building.



Tour participant Bailey Montgomery's reflection is seen above the historic marker for the Washington County News.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION - WALKING TOURS (cont'd)



Okenhem store owner, Heather Carson (right), explains the structural changes to her 51 N. Main building.



Bret Sevy, owner of M&S Turquoise, and daughter McKenna Walker tell the history of the jewelry store.



Neil and Lauree Cottam and Ruth Hines enjoy a tour of the former Dixie Academy Building 3rd floor ballroom.



Susan Crook tells about the Pratt and Bentley home.



Bruce Pickett tells about the Tithing Barn and Pickett Lumber wood storage area.



Bruce Pickett tells the history of the Pickett Lumber Building.



Tour guide Susan Crook explains the history of the Orpha Morris home.



Susan Crook explains the history of the pioneer building now occupied by Carmell's Cottage.

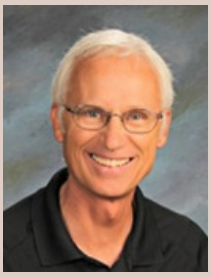


Tour participants view the Greater Zion mural located on a back alley street north of Tabernacle Street.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION - FIELD TRIP

DRIVING/WALKING HISTORICAL TOUR IN TOQUERVILLE, UTAH, DRAWS 40 PARTICIPANTS

Submitted by Loren Webb,
WCHS Board Member and
Field Trip Coordinator



A Washington County Historical Society-sponsored walking/driving tour of nine historic homes and a barn in Toquerville, Utah, drew 40 participants on Saturday, November 8, according to Washington County Historical Society Field Trip Coordinator, Loren Webb. The two-hour tour was led by Toquerville, Utah former mayor Lynn Chamberlain and his wife and lifelong Toquerville resident, Kay Chamberlain, who shared with participants interesting stories, anecdotes and even some folklore about the town's buildings and owner residents.

Historic homes and buildings visited on the walking portion of the tour included:
1. Daughters of Utah Pioneers monument, Levi Savage monument, Jail Rock and the Chief Toquer monument, all located in front of the Toquerville City Offices, 212 N. Toquer Boulevard.
2. Appleton Harmon home (Wes Larsen home) 248 N. Toquer Blvd.
3. Cotton Gin, 67 East Cotton Gin Ave.
4. John & Catherine Steele home (Greg and Jodi Turner home), 263 N. Toquer Blvd.
5. William A. Bringhurst and Selinda, first wife's home (Jeff and Shay Meyers' home) 245 N. Toquer Blvd.
6. Zion Co-op Store (Browning's home) 198 N. Toquer Blvd.
7. William A. Bringhurst and Suzanne Steele, second wife's home (Tomkinson's home) 188 N. Toquer Blvd.
8. William A. Bringhurst and Mary Stapley, third wife's home (Clinger's), 178 N. Toquer Blvd.

Homes visited as part of the driving tour were the following locations:
9. Richard Freyer/Presbyterian Mission (Steve Eberhard home) 10 N. Ash Creek Drive.
10. John Naegle Winery (Tyler and Jordan Whiting home), 110 S. Toquer Blvd.

Toquerville was settled in 1858 by six Mormon families adjacent to Ash Creek, who settled there at the invitation of Chief Toquer of the Paiute, Toquit or Toqurat Indians. The settlement, the fourth to be settled in Washington County, was named in Chief Toquer's honor.

Other individuals who helped with telling Toquerville's history were Lonnie Christensen and his son Levi Christensen, who were direct descendants of Levi Savage and gave a presentation in front of the Levi Savage monument; Neil Cottam at the Cotton Gin; Antone Bringhurst, at the William Bringhurst home, and Tyler and Jordan Whiting, at the John Naegle home and winery.

All photos by Loren Webb.

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION - FIELD TRIP (cont'd)



Tour participants stand in front of the historic Toquerville City Office Building during an 11-8-25 presentation by tour leaders Lynn and Kay Chamberlain.



Tour Guide Lynn Chamberlain tells WCHS field trip participants about the DUP monument, the Levi Savage monument, jail rock monument, and Chief Toquer monument at the Toquerville City Offices.



Tour guides Kay Chamberlain (second from left) and her husband Lynn Chamberlain (left), explain the history of the historic monuments at the Toquerville City Office complex.



Lonnie Christensen, left, and his son, Levi Christensen, read tributes about their ancestor, Levi Savage, in front of a monument dedicated to Savage.



Tour Guides Lynn and Kay Chamberlain, second and first from right, tell about the John and Catherine Steele home.



Toquerville Tour Guide Kay Chamberlain tells WCHS field trip participants about the historic Appleton Harmon home..



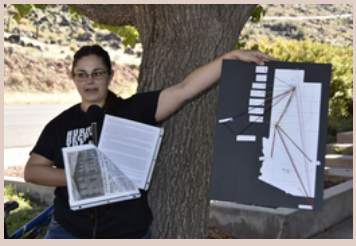
Tour Guide Kay Chamberlain, right, tells about the William and Selinda Bringhurst home.



Tour Guides Kay and Lynn Chamberlain, left and second from left, tell about the bizarre history of the Richard Fryer home.



Toquerville resident Neil Cottam, left, tells about a cotton gin building located on Cotton Gin Avenue.



Jordan Whiting, a co-owner of the former John Naegle home and Winery, shows a chart listing the many locations Naegle and his three polygamous wives lived in Arizona and Utah during the late 1800s.

MUSEUM EVENTS IN JANUARY, FEBRUARY, AND MARCH

McQuarrie Memorial Museum









Silver Reef Museum Schedule

January 24, 2026 - 10:00 a.m.
Paiutes in Southern Utah
Presenter: Gregg Woodall

February 28, 2026 - 10:00 a.m.
Zane Grey & the Mormons
Presenter: Fred Esplin

March 28, 2026 - 10:00 a.m.
From Isolation to Inundation: How Tourist Travel Changed Southern Utah
Presenter: Lisa Michele Church