



IN THE 1970s, wood siding (above) was put over the bricks at the Last Indian Raid Museum to make the building look more rustic. Curator Sharleen Wurm (below) straightened up the front room of the museum last week.



Society bought land for museum in 1958

In 1958, the Decatur County Historical Society decided to buy two buildings and the land at the south end of Main Street, what was formerly an old lumber yard.

That purchase, 50 years ago, created the Decatur County Museum, which has now grown to include 12 buildings, most saved from destruction and moved in from around the county.

On Saturday, Oct. 4, the museum will celebrate 50 years of service during the annual Mini Sapa Celebration.

Curator Sharleen Wurm said the main office was built in 1952, locating it in the former Redman-Paddock Lumber Co., which the Foster Lumber Co. out of Kansas City later purchased. The society's purchase included the main building and the one to the south that houses the recreation of an old-fashioned general mercantile store.

The society auctioned off the rest of the buildings left by the lumber company, then started building and moving in historical buildings. The first addition, Mrs. Wurm said, was the sod house, built in the summer of 1958.

In 1960, the first annex, the addition to the main building, was built. In 1972, a second annex was built behind it.

Over the years, eight buildings were moved in, including:

- The Burlington Route depot from Oberlin in November 1984.
- The old Addleman School House in 1986.
- Decatur County's first jail in



KATHLEEN CLaar served as the first curator at the Last Indian Raid Museum.

October 1986.

- Duke's Grocery in November 1994.
- The Pauls Oil brick service station in 1996.
- The doctor's office and land office from Jennings in January 1997.
- The Old Bohemian Hall in April 2000.
- St. Mark's Lutheran Church from Norcatour in July 2005.

The museum, said Mrs. Wurm, has had eight curators: Kathleen Claar, then came Fred and Wilma Wallsmith, Sandy Russell, Fonda Farr, Kathy Almquist, Myrna Jones

and Mrs. Wurm.

During the 50th Anniversary, she said, the board plans to recognize each one.

The museum is overseen by an eight-member board, with the members elected during the annual meeting the first Thursday of April each year. Current board members are Chris Koerperich, Tami Shaw, Dick Carman, Byron Hale, Judith LaBash, Cheryl Votapka, Dana Marintzer and Betsy Jakowski.

A three-person staff, Mrs. Wurm, Ms. Jones and Michelle Hollars, works at the museum during the day.

Mrs. Wurm said the anniversary celebration will include a pancake feed, crafts on display, a parade down Main Street, the Koshare Indian Dancers from Colorado, lunch and the curator recognition, with the museum open to tour.

The theme of the parade hasn't been set, she said, but it will probably be chosen at the July board meeting.

For lunch, said Mrs. Wurm, they plan to serve buffalo burgers and foot-long hot dogs like those sold at the first Mini Sapa Day. Someone came to visit the museum, she said, who had been at the first Mini Sapa and told them about the big hot dogs. He was a kid at the time, she said, and the foot-long dogs must have been a big deal.

This will be a good time, said Mrs. Wurm, for people to come visit the museum. It should be cool outside and there's lots to see and do.



ASIGN (above) showing that Boy Scouts once met in the basement of the Decatur County Museum, used to hang over the south door back in 1958. The front room (left) has some of the same furniture today that it had in this view from the 1950s.