

# Newspaper faithfully prints weekly

## Publication continues to cover community news since 1879

By MARY LOU OLSON  
ml.olson@nwkansas.com

*The Oberlin Herald* printed its first issue on June 19, 1879, and has continued faithfully as a weekly publication since that time.

The following was taken from the first issue:

*"The Oberlin Herald*, Published every Thursday morning at Oberlin, Decatur County, Kansas, by Humphrey and Counter. Subscription \$1.50 per annum in advance; \$2 if not paid.

Salutatory:

Having undertook to furnish the citizens of Decatur county with a newspaper, we do not deem it necessary to launch forth with a column or two of promises and pledges liable to be broken (as is too often the case), nor to assert anything we do not intend to stand up to or abide by, but will simply say that our chief aim is to furnish the citizens a live, local paper, to be conducted in the interests of the patrons and the people of Decatur county at large, and of the thriving and prosperous town in which it is published.

Being ever ready to support the educational, agricultural, religious and temperance interests of the county, we invite the general public to a free use of its columns for the advancement of the same, feeling that such interests are essentially necessary in the welfare of prosperity of a community, and more especially in one so new and rapidly developing as this.

Politically we shall adhere to the true principles of Republicanism, and will support the party so long as it maintains the pure and spotless record it bears today, at the same time considering it but a duty to expose any rottenness or shystering should such ever be discovered within its ranks.

Considering this about all the pledges necessary to lay before an intelligent people on this particular point, we now launch forth the first number of *The Oberlin Herald*, trusting the reader will not criticize too harshly our efforts, but look upon it, though small as yet, as one of the growing institutions of the county."

A story in the first edition stated: "It is of interest to note here that M.E. Mix, who later was to become so well-known as a buyer, feeder and shipper of livestock, and as president of the Farmers National Bank, was in the freighting business in 1879 and told us of having taken a wagon load of bones to Buffalo Park on the Union Pacific Railway, and there loading up

the Washington hand press and other printing material spoken of in Mr. Counter's letter, and bringing them to Oberlin. In crossing the Sappa at what is called the Bliss Crossing, the wagon nearly upset and the press and material came near having a watery baptism. Mr. Mix also helped set up the press and helped with printing the first issue."

Columnist Dorothy Kelley, "Sunflower Sue," who wrote "Out with the Hillbillies" for the Herald for many years, said in the June 29, 1939, 60th anniversary of the newspaper, "Our congratulations to *The Oberlin Herald*! Sixty years is a mighty long time for any institution to keep going, much less to improve, as the Herald has done. None of the original writers are with the paper, but we hope that some of the present staff will still be there when they celebrate their 100th anniversary. We'll be a little tottery perhaps, but we'll probably know a lot more than we do today and that will be sumthin'!"

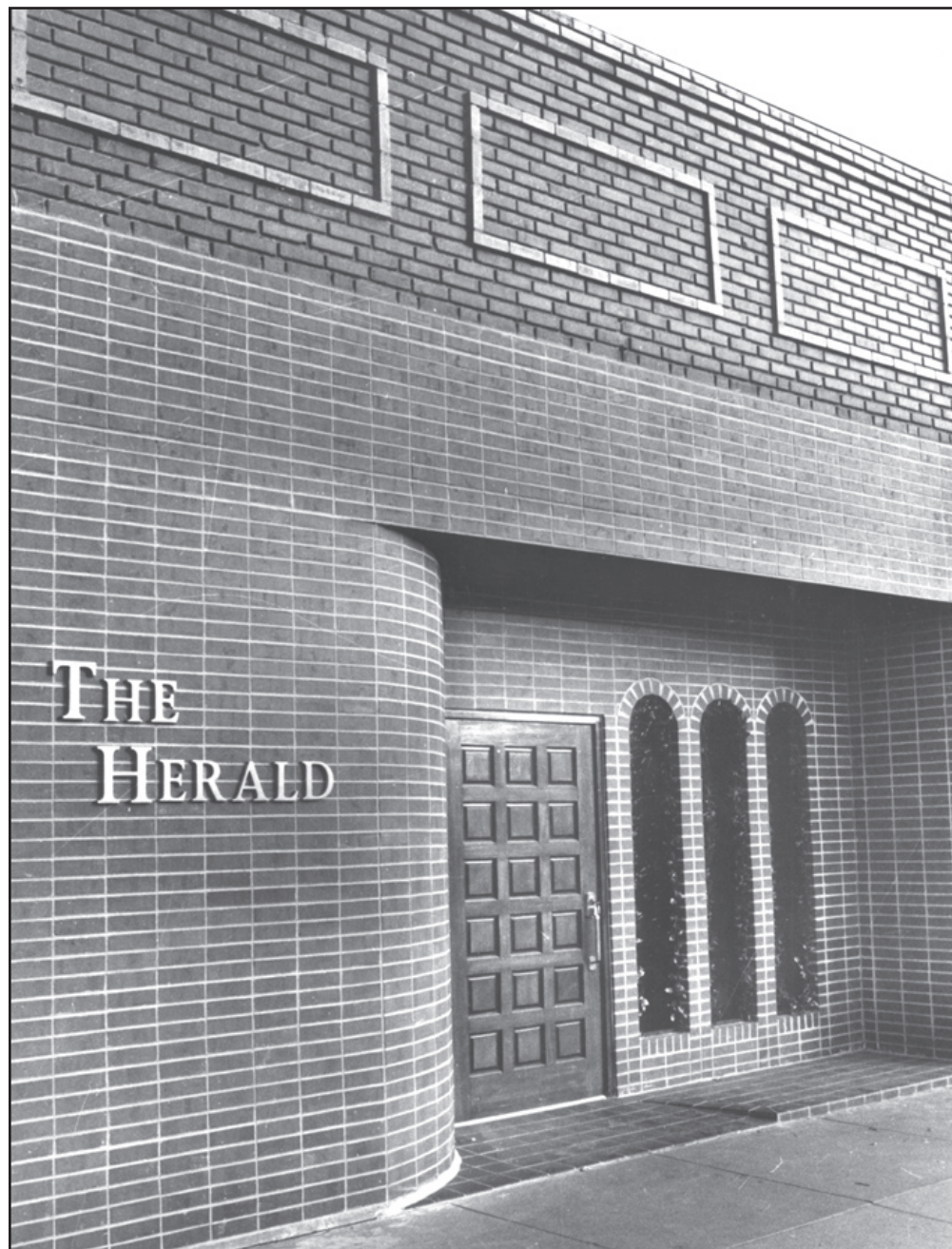
And as it turned out, she was the only writer from the early 1930s who was still living when the Centennial Edition was printed in June, 1979 and contributed stories in that issue. Since her death in 1999, her daughter, Carolyn Kelley Plotts, took over, and writes the weekly column, "Outback," for *The Oberlin Herald*.

Randall Braden was editor when the Centennial Edition was printed in June 1979 and co-editors were Helen Riepl and Mary Lou Olson. Others who assisted were Delbert Shields, Lloyd Shields, Jill Anderson Reichert, Jody Betts, Connie Grafel, Doris Miller, Karen Mondero and Marian Pachner.

Editors who followed J.C. Humphrey and J.N. Counter included William D. Street, F. L. Henshaw, Dr. W. B. Mead, E.M. Coldren, E. W. "Ned" Coldren, E. R. Woodward, Howard D. Kessinger, Mr. Braden and the present publisher/owner, Steven L. Haynes.

By reporting about people, places and events, *The Oberlin Herald* has continued to write the county history since 1879.

The Herald's current staff includes: Steve Haynes, publisher and co-owner; Kimberly Davis, associate publisher; Mary Lou Olson, society editor, Mrs. Plotts, columnist, Joan Betts, historian, Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and business manager, Pat Cozad, classifieds and circulation, Tim Davis, advertising representative, Leslie Nolette, advertising makeup and Nancy Robinson, proofreader.



**THE OBERLIN HERALD** office (above) was remodeled with a new brick front when Howard Kessinger was editor. A familiar sight at The Oberlin Herald for many years was Delbert Shields, seated, working at the old-fashioned linotype. He was shop foreman after Elmer Carman died and both began working in the shop for E. R. Woodward.

