

CARNEGIE ECHOS

Did you know that buildings on Main street burned multiple times?

That until the 1930's the telephone book gave addresses as "Main Street", "Bryan Street" etc?

That the post office renumbered the whole town of Bryan in 1925 – no splitting of even and odd numbers to different sides of the street, just a row of numbers up one side and down the other. [By the next Sanborn map, things were back to normal.]

Identification of what building was where (downtown) has long been a puzzle crying out to be solved. In September Ms. Ferguson and I began to lay the framework of a local history building database by using the telephone books and city directories from the 1930's to enter information on the downtown area and the owners and occupants of various buildings. To say the least, this project will not be completed on our watch (Ms. Ferguson retires 21 January 2010), but will be carried on by future library staff members. Local building history is fascinating and frustrating but the "Ah, Ha!" moments far, far out weigh the down moments.

In his notes "North Main Street in Downtown Bryan", Bill Page tells of large fires in February, March and August of 1874, May of 1875, March of 1909, and November of 1914 (just to name a few.) The same notes also tempt us with facts like "the old brick building, formerly owned by Mrs. John B. Mike and recently purchased by Allen Smith, on North Main Street, is being wrecked...", "the Sam Lorea building, formerly occupied by the Oriental Café...", "Woodyard Building...", "tree planting sponsored by the late Col. J. W. Tabor in 1872, and which at one time provided luxuriant shade for delight of man and beast along Main Street...[cottonwood trees, last cut down in 1932...", and " Jo-Nel Coffee Shop at 2135 North Main Street, a new location...", are just a few of the local history snippets that beg to be located on a city map and in our local history.

For those of you who enjoy the internet, come see the Carnegie Center's Facebook page...not all technology is always bad.

Nancy Ross
5 October 2009