

Have You Visited the Newly Updated Lebanon Museum and History Center? By [Lee Rennick](#) - August 2, 2022

During the spring of 2021, the Lebanon Museum and History Center reopened after an almost six-month make-over after ten years without a curator. In much need of a face-lift, the new curator, Kathleen Vail, is excited to share the history the updated museum tells of the growth of the City of Lebanon from its early beginning as Sinking Spring.

Housed in the basement of the Lebanon Administration Building on Castle Heights Avenue, the museum is filled with an eclectic brew of artifacts. Because it is owned by the city, many of the displays focus on the changes and growth of the city through time. There are also items from local businesses, schools, and even the old post office.

Janice Phillips was the curator for the first ten years, but when she left the position ten years ago, no one person was assigned to keep up with the museum and its contents. Vail is happy to be able to modernize the displays and the types of interactions available with visitors as the new curator.



photo by Jim Wood

One new display is called "FOCUS ON". It will show the change in some features of the city. The first display was about industry in the city, including items representing Lux Clock, Texas Boot, Perfection Dairy, Cracker Barrel and the

Lebanon Ax Handle Company. The next display offered more than 400 photos on rotation of the Wilson County Fair, including some from when the fair grounds were located on Coles Ferry Pike. Other topics have been weather, old advertising and movie theaters.

Vail oversaw the addition of modernizing elements like the placement of hundreds of old photographs of what life used to be like in the city on large monitors, QR codes that can be scanned for additional historical information about displays, and a game for kids using an old pigeon-hole mailbox.

The museum is also getting more involved in community events, like Spring Fling when the Storm Water Department did their spring tree giveaway. The museum had representatives there to present demonstrations and provide learning stations. It also took part in the 13th Annual Historic Places Tour.

Refocusing on the museum's mission of educating and enlightening the future of Lebanon by bringing together the past is what Vail is hoping to do. Recently, 72 fourth graders from Jones Brummett Elementary School came for Lebanon History Day. They learned about everything from caves to the journey of the Longhunters. Another school, Friendship Christian, participated in a museum scavenger hunt.

There are lots of interesting displays, like one on firefighting equipment beginning in the 1830s that was recently visited by Lucy Nelson, the first female firefighter for the City of Lebanon Fire Department. According to their Facebook page, "She first applied when she was 19. Being persistent she obtained her goal and was hired in 2008. Mrs. Nelson has dutifully served the citizens of Lebanon these past 14 years and is currently one of our most tenured Engineers. She has paved the way for other female personnel presently employed in the Lebanon Fire Department."

One of the strangest objects found in the museum is the Sugar Flat Road Creature. No one really knows what it is, but it looks like the head of a Bigfoot. It came to the museum after having disappeared for a number of years. Previous to that it sat in an antique store window. The story is that two teenagers ran over the creature with a truck in 1989 and only the head was preserved.

As their website says, "Whether you've lived here all your life or just moved into the City of Cedars, an expedition to the refreshed City of Lebanon Museum with its displays and fascinating collection of vintage objects and historic photographs will guide you down the path to Lebanon's yesteryear."

Article by WILSON COUNTY SOURCE