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# WHITE COUNTY HISTORIAN

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Volume 20, Issue 2

April - June, 2014

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"Preserving and  
Promoting our History"

## 2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

ART SALE  
FLORAL HALL  
WHITE CO. FAIRGROUNDS  
JULY 4

PIONEER DAYS FOR WHITE  
COUNTY 5TH GRADERS  
WITH THE RETIRED TEACHER'S  
ASSOC.  
MATSEL CABIN  
OCTOBER

CORN DAYS  
OCTOBER 10-11

FALL DINNER MEETING  
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH  
NOVEMBER

MUSEUMS OPEN DURING  
WHITE COUNTY CHRISTMAS  
NOVEMBER

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

This has been a busy few months for the White County Historical Society. I am pleased to report that the project to replace the roof on the L. Haas Store Museum is complete. We thank everyone who has so generously donated to this project. We are still accepting donations to help pay for the repairs.

We had a very successful Art Show and Sale on June 7 at the Ratcliff Inn. The students at Southeastern Illinois College and two individuals donated sketches to be sold and the proceeds to be used for the cost of repairing the roof. We sold 36 prints and made \$1,205.00 profit. We want to thank everyone who donated art work and also who purchased the art work. We will also have the pieces for sale at the 4th of July Car Show (sponsored by the Lions Club) at the fairgrounds. We encourage everyone to come out and see the art and encourage the talented artists we have in White County.

We have purchased a banner for the White County Historical Society that the city is displaying all along Main Street. The banners are maroon and white in the school colors. Ours is hanging in front of Southern Illinois Insurance building, so it very close to the L. Haas Store Museum. Be sure to check it out when you go through town.

In conjunction with the Carmi Chamber of Commerce, we are a member of the Carmi Bi-Centennial Committee to celebrate Carmi's 200th anniversary in 2015. We are also celebrating White County's 200th anniversary in 2015. We welcome suggestions and donations to help make this a memorable celebration for our town and county. I will have more details later.

If anyone has any articles about White County History or about your White County family we would like to have them for the newsletter.

Suellen Smith, President ✍

NEWS FROM THE MARY SMITH FAY GENEALOGY LIBRARY  
by: Librarian Diane Waggoner

PO Box 121, 203 North Church St., Carmi, IL  
618-382-8425 email: w.c.h.s-genealogy@hotmail.com  
11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Tuesday - Friday

Genealogical Beatitudes

Blessed are the great-grandfathers who saved embarkation and citizenship papers,  
For they tell when they came.

Blessed are the great-grandmothers who hoarded newspaper clippings and old letters,  
For they tell the story of their time.

Blessed are all grandfathers who filed every legal document,  
For this provided the proof.

Blessed are grandmothers who preserved family Bibles and diaries,  
For this is our heritage.

Blessed are fathers who elect officials that answer letters of inquiry,  
For to some they are the only link to the past.

Blessed are mothers who relate family tradition and legend to the family,  
For one of her children will surely remember.

Blessed are relatives who fill in family sheets with extra data,  
For to them we owe the family history.

Blessed is any family whose member strives for the preservation of records,  
For theirs is a labor of love.

Author unknown-(Taken from minutes of the 1979 convention of the Daughters of the  
Pioneers of Washington)✍

**RESEARCH FEES**

If you would like us to do research for you (White County area only), please contact us.  
Cost of research is \$15 per hour. Copies are 20 - 25¢ each. Shipping & handling is \$5.

Come and visit us and we will help you do your research at no cost to you, all you pay for is  
the cost of copies.

## MARGE FECHTIG'S RESIGNATION

by: Suellen Smith

Marge Fechtig submitted her resignation to the board at our regularly scheduled meeting on June 10, 2014. Marge is a long time board member and will be truly missed. She started the Tea Parties for the 2nd graders and also the Pioneer Days for the 5th graders. She has been the head of our Education Committee. She has also been a tireless worker at the Robinson-Stewart House helping preserve the oldest house in Carmi for future generations. To say that Marge will be missed is an understatement. She is facing another back surgery and long recovery and did not feel she could give the time that the society deserved, but she will be glad to help in our activities in any way she can. ✍

## OLD GRAVEYARD STONE REPAIRS

by: Suellen M. Smith

On Wednesday, June 25th, several of the board members and I met at the Old Graveyard. A representative from Pyramid Monument Co., out of Effingham, met with us to discuss repairing some of the damaged stones. We have some money saved from our previous "Graveyard Walks". They are going to reset several stones and repair some. For a cost of \$400.00 we can have a black granite marker engraved and placed where some of the stones are missing. We have already received a generous donation toward these stones. Anyone wishing to make a donation toward this project may mail a check to me at 622 Montgomery Circles, Carmi, IL, 62821 and I will see that it gets to the proper account We are so pleased to be able to restore these final resting places of some of our original settlers. ✍



## **MATSEL CABIN**

by: Gene Jordan

The Matsel cabin dates to the 1850s and at the time of its purchase by the White County Historical Society in 1994, it was one of only two 19th century log houses still standing in White County. Following purchase, the cabin was transported from its original location approximately three miles south of Carmi to its present location in a lot behind the White County Farm Bureau building where it was restored with local donations and a matching tourism grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs.

The cabin served as the residence of a pioneer family who arrived during the wave of settlement to the White County area that ran from the early eighteen-teens through the early 1850s. It was an example of the traditional midland log home with a single square or rectangular unit called a “pen” with a loft area above for sleeping. The cabin also represents an example of what is referred to as a second generation type of log house. A framework of roughly squared and notched logs was constructed to be originally covered with shingles or weatherboard. As typical with similar structures of that period, framed additions and porches were subsequently added with cut lumber from local sawmills. The cabin served as a home for modest income families until the 1980s with relatively little negative impact to the integrity of its basic original construction.

Below are a few pictures from the Library of Congress (<http://loc.gov/pictures/item/il0717>) of what the structure looked like before its relocation and restoration:





Here are some photographs of the restored cabin at its current location:



Contact the White County Historical Society for more information concerning the Matsel Cabin and other historical museums and properties in White County. ✍



## ART SALE

July 4, at the Floral Hall, White County Fairgrounds

The White County Historical Society is holding a fund-raiser on the Fourth of July as part of the Carmi Lions Club 7th Annual Car, Truck and Motorcycle Show. The students from the art classes at SIC (the Carmi campus) and a couple of individuals have done drawings in pen and ink of different historical scenes in and around Carmi. The historical society will be taking pre-paid orders for copies which will be signed, matted and mailed to the buyer. Prices are \$25 and \$35. All the proceeds are going to help pay for the cost of repairing the leaking roof at the L. Haas Store Museum. Thank you to Dee Ann Maurer, Paula Pierson, and Barbara Kearney for organizing this fantastic fundraiser. ✍



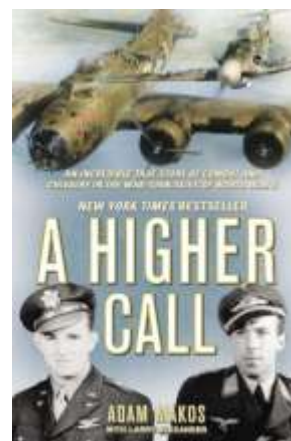
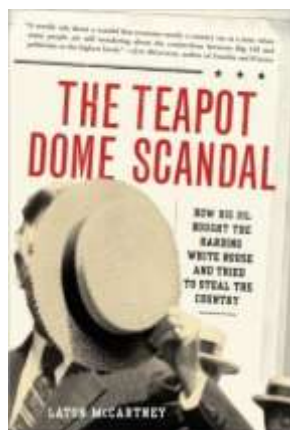
**BOOK REVIEW**

by: Kristin Land

I have found that I've come to prefer reading non-fiction more than fiction. It's not that fiction doesn't interest me but history is so much more fascinating because the people actually lived and the events actually happened. It's hard to believe someone didn't make it up because some of it seems unbelievable. Recently, I've had the opportunity to read 2 books (neither about historical clothing, which may shock some of you) and I would like to recommend them to you. Both are so well written that I didn't want to put them down. They were also so well documented that I wasn't left with nagging questions about the story. These, to me, are some of the biggest compliments I can say about a book. *The Teapot Dome Scandal: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country* is by Laton McCartney. The book reads more like a novel than a history text as the author introduces you to all the players, how they came to participate in such scandalous government corruption, and what followed after. The second book is *A Higher Call* by Adam Makos. It is a true story about an American B-17 captain and German fighter pilot during WWII. Again the author goes into great detail explaining the lead characters' lives, how they came to fly together over Germany and, more importantly, why the German saved the American's life.

I know these don't pertain specifically to White County's history, but I felt it gave me a better understanding of what life was like for my great-grandparents during the 1920's and how national politics would play a role in their lives, as well as, the political effects we still see today. As for the 2nd book, it was recommended to me by my dad. After I finished reading it, he shared with me stories about my great uncle who was a ball turret gunner in a B-17, shot down over Germany and spent the rest of the war as a POW. His brother, another of my great uncles, was a flight instructor in Texas. He died when the plane he was in crashed not long before the war's end. Their brother-in-law, my grandfather, went into France on the 2nd day of D-day and climbed up Omaha beach. He caught shrapnel in his arm during the Battle of the Bulge but was able to retreat on foot with the other troops when the Germans advanced. He got to a hospital but again had to flee on foot to avoid capture. Reading *A Higher Call* gave me a little bit more of an idea of what they went through and made me feel closer to them.

If you've read something historical that you couldn't put down, please write a short review to share here with others, especially if it involves local history. ✍



## **ESTATE GIFTS - SIMPLER THAN YOU THINK**

If you would really like to help the White County Historical Society but are not inclined to do so during your lifetime, you may be pleased to know that there are some simple ways to make a gift to the Society through your estate. Following are a few of the simplest and most popular ways to do so.

1. Simply instruct your attorney to name the White County Historical Society as a beneficiary in your will or trust using the language below.
2. List the White County Historical Society as a beneficiary of an insurance policy, retirement account or tax-deferred annuity. Simply request a "change of beneficiary form" and use the language below to fill it out.
3. Fill out a Transfer of Death (TOD) form where you hold your investments using the language below.
4. Request a Totten Trust form from your bank and list the White County Historical Society as a beneficiary of your account(s), once again using the language below.

"\_\_\_\_\_to the White County Historical Society to be used in the ongoing stewardship of its buildings and grounds, the conservation of its artifacts and the continuation of its educational programs."

## **GENEALOGY QUERY**

If you have a query, please send it to the Mary Smith Fay Genealogy Library and we can add it to the next newsletter.

## **WHAT'S YOUR STORY?**

We know that many of you have stories about a historical event of White County. We would welcome having your story to include in future editions of the White County Historian. Write your story, include your name, and mail it to Mary Smith Fay Genealogical Library at P.O.Box 121, Carmi, IL or email to [rshous@gmail.com](mailto:rshous@gmail.com). Then watch for it in future editions of the newsletter.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To preserve and promote the historical interest of White County through our stewardship of its artifacts and the historic sites and education programs and exhibits that we provide for its people

## **VISION STATEMENT**

To make the history of White County come alive for the people of White County



**MUSEUMS**



Ratcliff Inn  
218 E. Main Street

The L. Haas Museum  
219 E. Main Street

Robinson-Stewart House  
111- S. Main Cross Street

Matsel Cabin  
East Robinson Street

Our museums, located in Carmi, Illinois, are open on advertised dates or by appointment only:

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

- ✉ Mailing Address: White County Historical Society  
Mary Smith Fay Genealogy Library  
PO Box 121  
203 North Church Street  
Carmi, Illinois 62821-0121
- ✉ Email: [rshous@gmail.com](mailto:rshous@gmail.com)
- ✉ To make an appointment to visit our museums, contact the librarian at the Mary Smith Fay Genealogy Library: call 618-382-8425 or email [w.c.h.s-genealogy@hotmail.com](mailto:w.c.h.s-genealogy@hotmail.com)
- ✉ If you have an item you are interested in donating to the society, contact Suellen Smith at 618-384-5672
- ✉ Comments, suggestions or contributions for the newsletter can be mailed to the address above or to [rshous@gmail.com](mailto:rshous@gmail.com). Please include "newsletter" in the subject line.

**AFFILIATIONS**

The Society maintains memberships in the following:  
 Southern Illinois Association of Museums (SIAM)  
 Illinois Association of Museums (IAM)  
 American Association of State and Local History (AASLH)  
 Illinois Historic Preservation  
 Carmi Chamber of Commerce

**MEMBERS OF THE 2014 BOARD:**

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|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| President – Suellen Smith  | Cindy Birk Conley                   |
| Secretary – Ranelle Hubele | Judy Cutchin                        |
| Treasurer – Jeff Bohleber  | Lecta Hortin                        |
| David Brown                | Henry Lewis                         |
| Marjorie Brown             | Honorary Member – Kent F. P. Boeger |
| Glenn Coleman              | Past President – Paula Pierson      |