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# WHITE COUNTY HISTORIAN

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Volume 20, Issue 3

July - September, 2014

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"Preserving and  
Promoting our History"

2014

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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 3, 6 PM

MUSEUMS OPEN DURING  
WHITE COUNTY CHRISTMAS  
NOVEMBER

## NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

This is always a busy time for the Historical Society. We have had 5 classes of second graders visit the L. Haas Museum. They also went to the One Room School House for a lesson and recess.

Pioneer Days will be September 30 and October 1. We will have 4 classes of 5th graders from Carmi on Tuesday and Wednesday Grayville will have 1, Norris City 2 and Enfield 1. They will be coming to the Matsel Cabin for a tour, doing laundry in wash tubs with a hand wringer, wash board and lye soap, learn how to make butter, how to make brooms, how to dry, shell and grind corn into meal. Mary McRoy will be taking them on a walk through the Old Graveyard. We will have volunteers at the One Room School House to conduct a class and then they will go outside for recess. We appreciate all the volunteers who give so tirelessly of their time to educate the children.

We will once again have our Corn Tasting at the Ratcliff Inn on Corn Day, October 11. From 11 to 1 you can come and enjoy different corn dishes all for just \$1.00. Anyone who would like to bring a corn dish please feel free to do so.

I look forward to seeing you at the fall dinner meeting.

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

I would like to take you back in time to the year 1916!

- Taken from the White County Democrat 11-16-1916 (Blue Book 1915-1916)

Facts about Illinois

Illinois has given the Nation:

- two Presidents, Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant
- one vice president, Adlai E. Stevenson
- one Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, Melville W. Fuller
- one justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, David Davis
- seven Cabinet Ministers, Elihu B. Washburne, Orville H. Browning, John A. Rawlings, Robert T. Lincoln, Walter Q. Gresham, Franklin McVeigh, Walter L. Fisher

Illinois:

- manufactures yearly produce goods to the amount of more than one billion dollars
- yearly produces more than sixty million dollars worth of agricultural implements
- packs twice as many cattle and hogs as any other state
- has the greatest State fair on earth
- produced over two hundred and eighty million bushels of corn last year
- produced over forty-two million bushels of wheat last year
- possesses four of the eight banner agricultural counties in the United States: McLean, Iroquois, Livingston, and LaSalle
- produces over sixty-one million tons of coal
- pays more revenue to the Government than any other State except New York
- has more newspapers than any other state except New York
- has one revenue district-Peoria-which pays more money into the National Treasury than any other in the United States
- stands second in the number of automobiles
- has over three thousand miles of interurban railroads
- has no state debt
- has more miles of steam railroads than any other state
- has the second largest city in the United States

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.

## FLOOD OF '37

by: Gene Jordan

The flood of 1937 was a devastating period for the Ohio Valley to include many residents of Southern Illinois. The flood took place in late January and February 1937 with damage stretching from Pittsburgh to Cairo, Illinois. One million people were left homeless, with 385 dead and property losses reaching \$500 million (over \$8 billion in current dollars). Federal and state resources were strained to aid recovery, as the disaster occurred during the depths of the Great Depression and Dust Bowl of the 1930's. Flood waters in parts of Southern Illinois reached over 30 miles inland and Harrisburg was nearly destroyed. Most of Maunie was under water and the village of Shawneetown was completely inundated, forcing the residents to move to a tent city on the outskirts. Property damages in Southern Illinois amounted to more than \$75 million (over \$1 billion today). Over three hundred bridges were smashed, six schools were ruined, and twelve hundred homes submerged. Flood waters were recorded at 65.4 feet. Damage in Old Shawneetown was so cataclysmic the town relocated three miles inland to higher ground away from the river. Carmi was one of several staging areas for relief efforts.

The Library of Congress has a collection of photographs of the period showing the impact the floods had on the people and the region ([www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/coll/item/2004678082/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/coll/item/2004678082/)). The following two pictures are from that collection and were taken on Main Cross in Carmi and depict truckloads of corn sent as a gift from the farmers of Livingston County, Illinois to southeastern Illinois flood counties. The Robinson-Stewart house can be seen in the background on the one photo, and the courthouse and part of the "castle" on the other. ✍



## **FALL DINNER MEETING**

by: Suellen Smith

Monday, November 3, 2014 is our Fall Dinner. We will meet at the Christian Church and the dinner will start at 6:00 P.M. Our speaker will be Sue Berry from Henderson, Kentucky and she will be speaking on "Graveyard Art". The cost is \$15.00. We will also have a short business meeting for the purpose of electing board members. ✍

## **GRAVESTONE FOR JAMES WILKERSON YATES**

by: Michael Mossburger

A gravestone was placed on the burial sight of Civil War veteran James Wilkerson Yates in The Old City Cemetery. The marker was placed by a descendant Michael Mossburger and was provided by the Veterans Administration. The stone replaced the original which was broken and almost illegible. Bill Stendeback of Stendeback Funeral Home assisted in placing the grave marker. ✍

## **MAJOR AND MOCCASIN SCHOOLS - REQUEST FOR INFORMATION**

A visitor to the Mary Fay Smith Genealogy Library has requested information about Major School and Moccasin School. Moccasin school was ten miles northwest of Carmi, close to Centerville. Major School was in Burnt Prairie Township. The library has one picture of Moccasin school but would like more pictures and information especially from the 1940's & 1950's. Pictures and/or information can be brought to the library for the staff to make copies or sent by email. Please call the library if you have any questions. Refer to page 2 for library contact information. Thank you! ✍

## **200 TREES TO BE SOLD TO COMMEMORATE CARMI'S BICENTENNIAL**

Carmi Chamber of Commerce

To commemorate Carmi's 200th birthday, the Carmi Bicentennial Committee has approved the sale of 200 specially designated Bicentennial Trees. The trees, which will consist of white oak, bald cypress, hackberry, red bud, tulip poplar, and sugar maple, are all native to the Carmi area. They will come in five gallon containers and will be between four and seven feet tall. Anyone may purchase the trees, and they may be planted anywhere – residential areas, churches, schools, businesses, and public areas. The trees will be ordered from a nursery this winter, and will arrive ready to be planted in the fall of 2015. The Bicentennial Committee will arrange for the trees to be planted if buyers would rather not do the planting themselves. Orders will be taken beginning in October of 2014, and all orders must be pre-paid. "Final details are still being worked out, but complete ordering information will be available soon," noted Holly Healy, committee member. Please contact the Carmi Chamber of Commerce office at 382-7606 with questions. ✍

Go to [carmibicentennial.com](http://carmibicentennial.com) & click on Events

Facebook: Carmi Bicentennial Celebration

## **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  | Judy Cutchin                        |
| Secretary – Ranelle Hubele | Lecta Hortin                        |
| Treasurer – Jeff Bohleber  | Gene Jordan                         |
| David Brown                | Barbara Kearney                     |
| Marjorie Brown             | Henry Lewis                         |
| Glenn Coleman              | Honorary Member – Kent F. P. Boeger |
| Cindy Birk Conley          | Past President – Paula Pierson      |