
WHITE COUNTY HISTORIAN

Volume 20, Issue 4

October - December, 2014



"Preserving and
Promoting our History"

2015 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

APRIL

SECOND GRADE TEA PARTY
ROBINSON-STEWART
HOUSE

SPRING DINNER MEETING
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

MAY

ROBINSON-STEWART HOUSE
PLANT SALE

JULY 4

SALE
FLORAL HALL
WHITE CO. FAIRGROUNDS

OCTOBER

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

CORN DAYS

NOVEMBER

FALL DINNER MEETING
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH

MUSEUMS OPEN DURING
WHITE COUNTY CHRISTMAS

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

As the year draws to a close it is time to look back on the last three months at the Historical Society. In October we had Pioneer Days with beautiful weather, great volunteers and some of the best teachers and students we have ever hosted. Both days were fun and educational for the students, teachers and volunteers. On Corn Day we had three of our museums open to the public and had a nice turn out. The corn tasting at the Ratcliff Inn was a big success again and I appreciate Marge Brown and her helpers for overseeing that project. We ran out of food and that is a good thing at the corn tasting. Earlier this year, our long time board member Marge Fechtig, resigned due to health issues and as much as I miss her I am happy to report she is much improved.

We are welcoming a new board member next year, Mary McRoy, has agreed to fill an opening on our board. Mary has been helping for years with the tea parties and the Pioneer Days and will make a great asset to our board.

In January, I will be turning over my job as president to Gene Jordan. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to have served for the last 18 months. Our board of directors are a great bunch of people and have helped any time I have asked for help. Carmi is truly lucky to have so many individuals dedicated to preserving our history and heritage.

I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and look forward to seeing you at the spring dinner.

Suellen M. 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

Taken from the White County Democrat Feb. 8, 1900

In Old Kentucky

He was shot in Old Kentucky, where they make the mountain dew, and the mothers feed the babies on hot revolver stew, where you wake up in the morning shot full of bullet holes, and find your sole companions are disembodied souls.

He was shot in old Kentucky, where their aim was always true, and the principle amusement is shooting people through, where the doctors use as medicine, for all the human feels, a dose or two of bullets, instead of giving pills.

He was shot in old Kentucky, where "feuds" grow on the trees, and the bullets from the rifles buzz through the air like bees, where the instruments they play on, when they give a dance or hop, are their musical revolvers and they "call off" with a pop.

I have heard that old Kentucky is a fine old commonwealth, that the women are all noted for their beauty and their health, but I will stay in Illinois, where the women cut less figure, and the men are not so hasty nor so quick to pull the trigger!

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.

FALL DINNER MEETING

The Fall Dinner Meeting was held on Monday, November 3, 2014 at the Christian Church with the dinner starting at 6:00 P.M. Sue Berry from Henderson, Kentucky spoke about "Graveyard Art". There was a short business meeting after the meal for the purpose of electing board members. ✍



Front row: Judy Fieber Cutchin, Suellen Murdach Smith, Paula Pierson, Gene Jordan and Marge Brown
Back row: Lecta Hortin, Mary McRoy, Jeff Bohleber, Barb Kearney, Henry Lewis, Ranelle Hubele, Cindy Conley and David Brown.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING - OCTOBER 14

by: Ranelle Hubele, Board Secretary

White County Historical Society Board of Directors met Tuesday, Oct. 14, at the Genealogy Library with 10 members and 2 guests present. President Suellen Smith introduced Brad Lee, Unit 5 school superintendent and Clay Gray, Unit 5 parent and supporter, who explained the proposed one percent sales tax referendum and answered questions. The Board thanked Lee and Gray for their clear explanations.

Chairman Lecta Hortin reported the Genealogy Library was open 85 hours in September with 14 visitors and 4 letters being processed. Two volunteers worked 68 hours. Smith reported that additional volunteers worked 191 hours in September on other Society activities.

The Board heard reports that the museums received numerous visitors, interest, and monetary donations during Corn Day. The Ratcliff Inn welcomed over 100 to the popular Corn Tasting Event. Visitors to the L. Hass Museum saw many rearranged exhibits and two newly donated vintage wedding garments. The descendants of Louis Hass (who built the store) has donated the 1864 wedding gown, hat, shoes, and fan worn by his sister, Miss Byrd Haas. The gift was made by Judith Schiff, an out of state resident. The recently donated man's wedding suit from the Stocke family was also on display. Carmi Chamber of Commerce has donated the plaque from the 1916 Carmi bridge over the Little Wabash River.

The Board heard the report from the successful Pioneer Days on September 30-October 1. Members of the Historical Society, White County Retired Teachers, and many other volunteers assisted with directing 5th grade students through a day of what life would have been like in the 1850s.

Gene Jordan will be handling the identification of broken and hard to read Veteran's markers in The Old Graveyard and processing the paperwork with Veteran's Administration for replacement of those markers. Jordan also showed pictures of the recently replaced Elizabeth Graham stone in the Graveyard.

Cindy Conley reported her recent involvement and the upcoming events with SIAM and IAM (Southern Illinois Association of Museums and Illinois Association of Museums) as well as contact with the Mid-Atlantic Germanic Society. Given the high concentration of area person of German heritage, the Society will make a contact with them.

The Fall Dinner Meeting date is Monday, Nov. 3, with Sue Berry of Henderson, Ky., doing a program on Graveyard Art. Dinner reservations are open to the general public as well as members and are being accepted by Paula Pierson at 382-7633. ✍

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING - DECEMBER 9

by: Ranelle Hubele, Board Secretary

White County Historical Society Board of Directors met Tuesday, Dec. 9, at the Webb Hay House for a pot luck dinner and Board Meeting.

All Board members were present as well as incoming Board member, Mary McRoy, retiring members Glenn Coleman and Marjorie Fechtig, Honorary member Mr. Kent Boeger, and nine spouses and guests.

Outgoing president, Suellen Smith, conducted a brief board meeting to review routine reports and business.

The Genealogy Library was open 70 hours in November with 17 visitors and six letters being processed as reported by chairman Lecta Hortin. Two volunteers worked 50 hours. Smith reminded board members that The Illinois State Society of Colonial Dames of the XVII Century will hold a meeting in Carmi on March 21, 2015, to place a recognition plaque on The Mary Smith Fay Genealogy Library building. The organization's officers and several members will be present for this two day event, and board members are urged to attend.

Cindy Conley reported numerous contacts on the newly updated Facebook page for White County Historical Society.

Smith asked board members to submit information for the upcoming Newsletter. ✍

HISTORY OF FICKERT HARDWARE BUILDING

Excerpts from "On This Lot"

Posted by Darius Bryjka on February 13, 2012

<http://meskerbrothers.wordpress.com/2012/02/13/on-this-lot/>

No. 1 Smith Street in Carmi, Illinois

ca. 1887 – German immigrant Paul Fickert (1857-1922) erects a one-story wooden structure to house his hardware store named Fickert & Kokal Hardware.

ca. 1900 – As business prospers, Fickert & Kokal erect a two-story building beside the original one-story structure. In an attempt to unite the separate buildings and concurrently modernize the appearance, the owners choose a complete galvanized iron front by Mesker Brothers Iron Works from St. Louis, Missouri. Since the 1890s, Mesker Brothers are leading manufacturers of these cheap yet modern iron facades. The new storefront features Mesker Bros' patented steel columns, while the upper facade employs several of their characteristic motifs including engaged columns, rockface stone steel siding, swags, seashells, and the ubiquitous fleur-de-lis.



Early 1900s photo of Fickert & Kokal Hardware in Carmi, Illinois, with a full Mesker Brothers front over the original one-story building and the two-story expansion. Man on the left is Paul Fickert.



Fickert Hardware in the 1920s, with a storefront by International Steel and Iron Company and upper facade by Mesker Brothers Iron Works.

January 21, 1945 – A devastating fire completely destroys the building and its contents. Fickert Hardware is being operated by Gladys and Bob Dixon. Gladys, Paul Fickert's granddaughter, manages the store after the fire in a nearby building while her husband is serving with the U.S. Navy. Bob returns from the war and begins the store reconstruction efforts in the spring of 1946.



May 2, 1947 – Fickert Hardware holds an open house in its new building, rebuilt on the site of the original. The store is equipped with a modern front, with a 6 in. bulkhead without permanent window platforms to permit window display of major appliances, and structural glass blocks above the show windows and on the upper facade. The new store is 48 feet wide and 100 feet long and includes a basement, part of which is used for merchandise displays. The second floor is utilized for surplus stock and is equipped with modern type stock bins. Both first and second floors are concrete over wire-mesh form and steel joists. 24 in. I-beams span from wall to center column and provide approximately 200 lbs. per square foot load capacity on the second floor. Interior lighting consists of fluorescent fixtures while the woodwork and furnishings are all finished in natural wood. The finishing touch, a structural glass facade, is to be installed later in the summer. ✍

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. 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
- ✉ 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
- ✉ 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. 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 2015 BOARD:

President – Gene Jordan	Judy Cutchin
Vice President - Paula Pierson	Lecta Hortin
Secretary – Ranelle Hubele	Barbara Kearney
Treasurer – Jeff Bohleber	Henry Lewis
David Brown	Mary McRoy
Marjorie Brown	Honorary Member – Kent F. P. Boeger
Cindy Birk Conley	Past President – Suellen Smith