
WHITE COUNTY HISTORIAN

Volume 19, Issue 3

July - December, 2013



"Preserving and
Promoting our History"

2014 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SPRING DINNER MEETING
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
MARCH

SECOND GRADE TEA PARTY
ROBINSON-STEWART HOUSE
APRIL

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

CORN DAYS
OCTOBER

FALL DINNER MEETING
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER

MUSEUMS OPEN DURING
WHITE COUNTY CHRISTMAS
NOVEMBER

NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

President Paula Pierson is home and recovering.

The Society needs assistance in raising \$13,750 to replace the roof at the L. Haas Museum. Those able to help by making a donation are welcomed to mail checks to the Genealogy Library, P.O. Box 121, Carmi, Illinois 62821.

Suellen Smith, Vice 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

A story from *History of White County Illinois*.
The Hanging of William B. Ledbetter 1834

In April 1834, William B. Ledbetter was indicted for murder, on change of venue from Gallatin County. As it is, the only case of hanging, here in this County.

After the adjournment of court, the condemned man was guarded in the courthouse by armed men, of the county, the county having no jail. Colonel Hosea Pearce, the Sheriff of the county, selected the place of execution. On April 30, 1834, an immense crowd of people assembled in Carmi to witness the execution. At the appointed time, the armed militia formed at the courthouse, when the condemned man was brought out and seated in the wagon, the militia formed a hollow square around the wagon. The cortege moved in solemn step to the music to wit: the muffled drum and the shrill note of the fife playing the dead march. On arriving at the place of execution, the man walked up to the platform with unfaltering step and took his seat. After Rev. Charles Newcomb delivered a prayer, the hour had arrived when the immortal soul of Wm. B. Ledbetter should depart from this earth and appear before that tribunal from whose judgment there is no appeal. His arms were pinioned, the black cap drawn over his face, and his position taken on the fatal trap.

The Sheriff, failed to sever the cord that held the trap until he made the third blow, when down shot the body through the drop. He died without much struggling, and in about twenty-four minutes, the body was lowered and placed in a plain coffin, and delivered to the wife of the deceased. She with her little son, was there with a wagon, drawn by a yoke of small oxen, awaiting the sad results of making her a widow, and her children orphans. They started for home and that night they camped out beside the roadside, as no person would let them stay in their house all night.

The charge against William B. Ledbetter was for killing his brother, on Christmas Day at his father's house. He and his father had some dispute and William was ordered to leave the premises. When in the act of leaving, his brother took up the quarrel of his father, and the result was that he stabbed his brother with a knife, with fatal effect. ✍

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 annual spring dinner was held on November 4th at the First Christian Church. The following is reprinted with kind permission from WROY/WRUL News, www.wrul.com

by: Jc Tinsley

WHITE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS PROGRAM ON CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was a special work relief program for young men that were unemployed, age 18 – 25. It was part of Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal and the very first program to be rolled out. It operated from 1933 to 1942 and while it was a nationwide agency, Kay Rippelmeyer Tippy has focused her research on the 28 camps that were a part of southern Illinois.

Tippy spoke to about 90 attendees of Monday night’s Historical Society fall dinner. She’s written two books based on her research and interviews with over 100 former CCC workers. The first, published in 2010, was Giant City State Park and the Civilian Conservation Corps. Her latest, *The Civilian Conservation Corps in Southern Illinois*, will be published in the spring of 2014. It will cover the other 26 CCC camps in the lower 17 counties of southern Illinois.

Tippy has been researching since 1987 and began her presentation with slides of how the land looked following glacier movement. She noted that it stopped almost right along Route 13 and that’s why we have some of the beautiful hills and rock formations within the Shawnee National Forest. She’d explain that the timber industry had taken off following the conclusion of the Civil War and was the main economy in southern Illinois between 1900 and 1910.

The result of all that timber cutting was severe erosion. The top soil erosion made farming incredibly difficult and Tippy says that by 1930, Saline and Williamson Counties had somewhere around 40% unemployment rates (the highest in the nation). With the ag, timber and mining industries all languishing, a serious lobbying effort got underway to create the Shawnee National Forest.

With Roosevelt’s election in 1932, a New Deal was struck with the American people and the CCC camps (a program that Roosevelt had begun in his native New York on a smaller scale) didn’t take long to catch on. FDR was inaugurated in March, the first CCC camp was opened in April in Virginia and by June of 1933, the first southern Illinois CCC camp was opened in Granite City. The second would follow shortly after in Stonefort.

CCC camps gave manual labor jobs to young men and were first aimed at forest service. There were 200 men to a camp and each was run by the Army with tech advisors assisting. The 1934 dust storms that ripped even more top soil away and blew it all the way out into the Atlantic begot the birth of soil conservation camps. The Norris City and Grayville CCC’s were soil conservation focused.



Enlistment in the Civilian Conservation Corps camps was supposed to be limited to two 6 month stints, but partly due to the success of the program and partly due to the terrible state of things, many men turned those 12 months into 5 or 6 years.

Some of the work those men did is still visible today. For instance, there were no turkeys and no deer in southern Illinois in 1930 as difficult as that may be to believe. The CCC camps helped to reintroduce those animals. Art Saunders, a White County Historical Society member, noted that some of the culverts on his land (now his son's) are marked "CCC".

Southern Illinois CCC camps were also instrumental during the historic 1937 flooding. Enlistees were utilized to establish an emergency workforce. They helped sandbag and assisted in setting up refugee camps. Their hard work finally paid off when the Shawnee National Forest was officially proclaimed in 1939.

Tippy said that many of the men she interviewed recalled those 18 – 25 age years as some of the best of their lives. You can buy her first book online at <http://www.amazon.com/Giant-State-Civilian-Conservation-Corps/dp/0809329220>.

During the business portion of the dinner and meeting, Vice President Suellen Smith asked those in attendance to keep praying for President Paula Pierson as she continues to recover at Barnes Jewish Hospital in St. Louis. Smith recalled it had been a busy year with the 2nd grade tea party in April along with the plant sale. The society participated in the Lions Club Car Show in July and the silent auction of art on glass table tops was a huge hit. The Chris Vallilo concert was held in September at the Robinson-Stewart house and October brought Pioneer Days, Corn Day corn tasting events and open museums. There was also a work day involving garden mulching at the Robinson-Stewart house.

It was noted again that the Society does need assistance in raising funds to replace the roof at the L. Haas Museum. Those able to help by making a donation are welcomed to mail checks to the Genealogy Library, P.O. Box 121, Carmi, Illinois 62821. Smith did report that the Society luckily had enough funds to remove a fallen tree from the Old Graveyard.

The meeting began with a surprise for one Historical Society director. Debbie Hoskins was on hand to present a Daughters of the American Revolution Historical Preservation Award to Marjorie Fechtig. She'd been nominated by her fellow members and was recognized for her exemplary work.

Officers and Directors were also elected for the upcoming year. Suellen Smith will serve as president. Paula Pierson becomes immediate past-president. Ranelle Hubele will serve as secretary and the treasurer role will be handled by the able Jeff Bohleber. Directors include David Brown, Marjorie Brown, Glenn Coleman, Cindy Birk Conley, Judith Cutchin, Lecta Hortin, Marjorie Fechtig and Henry Lewis. Mr. Kent Boeger is an honorary Board Member. Kristin Land will continue as the Newsletter Chair and Barry Cleveland will serve as a Trustee.

✍

DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

by: Marjorie Brown

Daughters of the American Revolution is a non-profit, non political, volunteer women's service organization dedicated to patriotism, historic preservation, American History and education.

Any woman may join DAR by documenting her lineage to an ancestor, male or female, who materially aided in the cause of American independence, through military, civil, or patriotic service.

Wabash Chapter NSDAR was organized in Carmi in 1930. Bernice Rice (Mrs. Clarence) was the first member. The first meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Hugh Hale (now the Social House) in Carmi.

In 1936 a bronze plaque with names of Revolutionary War soldiers was dedicated and is now on a granite marker in Carmi's Veterans Memorial Park. Wabash Chapter places a wreath each memorial Day and Veteran's Day during special ceremonies held at the park.

A Revolutionary War Soldier's memorial in memory of Revolutionary War soldiers was dedicated in the Old Graveyard by Wabash Chapter in September 1964. Nineteen government stones with names of soldiers buried elsewhere are set on three arc shaped foundations.

Wabash Chapter joins White County Historical Society in many of its historical projects. The Chapter welcomes new members and is willing to help prospective members in tracing their ancestry. ✍



Marjorie Fechtig was honored at the historical society's fall meeting with an NSDAR National Historic Preservation Award. She has done so much for the society, from the 2nd grade teas to the 5th grade pioneer days to the Smithsonian exhibits that have brought hundreds to our museums. The award was presented by Debbie Conner Hoskins (left).

- by Cindy Birk Conley

MULCHING PARTY AT THE ROBINSON-STEWART HOUSE

by: Barbara Kearney

Saturday, October 19

Thanks to our volunteers, the garden at the Robinson-Stewart House is weeded, mulched, and beautiful! Debbie Bunting and Randy Bunting, Lana Anselment, Suellen M. Smith, Bruce Meriwether, and I worked all morning to put it back in shape.



Suellen Smith, Debbie & Randy Bunting



It was windy, cold & damp..... until we finished then the sun came out. - Lana Anselment

CHRIS VALLILLO

Chris Vallillo performed "Stephen Foster and the Rise of American Music" on September 14 on the Robinson Stewart House back porch.

From his first hit with "Oh Susannah" in 1848 through his death in 1864, Stephen Foster created music that touched millions and lives on to this very day. In his lifetime, his songs were known and sung around the world and played a large part in the creation of an emerging popular American culture. Looking back, they also reflect the complex, torturous relationship between black and white cultures of the young nation. Award-winning folksinger and songwriter Chris Vallillo presents the music of Stephen Foster and explores the impact of this legendary American icon and his music on American culture.

For more information visit his website at ginridge.com.

PIONEER DAYS

by: Valarie Berekashvili

Mrs. Bryant showed the kids how to make homemade butter which they got to eat on crackers. Most of the kids had seconds. She used cream in small jars which the kids shook until it made butter. Several kids asked her for the recipe and told me they were going to tell their Mom that they needed to start making their own butter. They said it was much better than store-bought. I'm not sure that went over well at home though.

In my area we had homemade lye soap. We talked about how it was made and let everyone try it. We used the washboard to scrub our "clothes" and then used the ringer to squeeze the excess water out. We talked about it being a whole day process to do laundry. Each child got a chance to do each part of the process - scrub the "clothes" on the washboard with the lye soap, turn the crank on the ringer and grab the material as it came out of the ringer. They loved the ringer and thought it was great fun. They weren't as sure about the lye soap. Most thought it smelled funny.

Gia, my son, is in fifth grade so he attended. He talked a lot about the game area. They had stilts to walk on and some kind of iron large ring that they rolled by pushing it with a stick. I think they had a game of washers, too. He also enjoyed the one-room schoolhouse..

Photos are from The Carmi Times Facebook page.

Lucas Sheckles rolls a hoop during one of the games at the One Room School House Wednesday, Oct. 2 at the "Pioneer Days" field trip.





Judy Williams gives a lesson on school in the 1800s at the One Room School House during Pioneer Days Wed. Oct. 2.

Kacee Fulkerson, left, and Marley Mallow, right, learn to wash clothes in a tub during "Pioneer Days. Valarie Berekashvili of the White County Historical Society provided the instruction and demonstration for the session outside the Matsel Cabin.



Students from Mrs. Steed's fifth grade class learn about corn dryers from the 1800s. Richard Raber, right, provided the information. Students on the front row, from left to right are Morgan Mercer, Julianna Bowles, Kaleigh Swangl. Back row, left to right, is Katie Dieg, Gabrielle Knox, Emilie Martin and Skyler Riden.



Mary McRoy of the White County Historical Society and the White County Retired Teachers Association provided a tour of the Old Graveyard for fifth graders during "Pioneer Days."

CORN DAY

The corn tasting was a big success again this year. Various corn dishes included salads, dips, breads, casseroles, and hominy. The museums were all open and everyone enjoyed seeing them.

Suellen Smith on Corn Day 2013 at the L. Haas Museum.



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 2013 BOARD:

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

White County Historical Society
PO Box 121
Carmi, IL 62821
Membership Information

Welcome To All: Renewing and New Members of the White County Historical Society

Through your membership in the White County Historical Society you will be assisting in the promotion and preservation of our history through a variety of fun and educational programs.

We are strongly encouraging our members to provide us with an email address. With this address we can keep in touch faster and our newsletter will reach you in a more timely fashion. With printing and postage cost rising each year your email will assist us in better budgeting of our money. PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS.... we will not share it with others.

We welcome everyone and we thank you in advance for your support!

Paula Pierson
Membership Chr.

2013 Membership Form

- () Life Member.....\$1000 () Sustaining Member.....\$50
(one time payment)
- () Contributing Member.....\$500 () Family Member.....\$35
- () Patron.....\$100 () Individual\$25

New Member _____

Renewal Member _____

NAME: _____

STREET: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE #: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____