
WHITE COUNTY HISTORIAN

Volume 22, Issue 3

July - September, 2016



"Preserving and
Promoting our History"

2016 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

CORN DAYS
CORN TASTING &
MUSEUMS OPEN
OCTOBER 7 & 8

PIONEER DAYS FOR WHITE
COUNTY 5TH GRADERS
WITH THE RETIRED TEACHER'S
ASSOC.
MATSEL CABIN
OCTOBER 18 & 19

FALL DINNER MEETING
FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH
NOVEMBER 14, 6 PM

MUSEUMS OPEN DURING
WHITE COUNTY CHRISTMAS



NOTES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

I hope everyone had an enjoyable and safe summer as we now enter the final quarter of Carmi's Bicentennial year. The next couple of months will be busy ones for the Historical Society with Corn Days, Pioneer Days, and our Fall dinner and meeting all occurring within 30 days.

On Corn Day, we will open the L Haas, Ratcliff Inn, and Robinson-Stewart house museums from 10:00 to 2:00 pm for residents and out of town guests to visit and explore. Our very popular corn tasting will be held at the Ratcliff Inn from 11:00 to 1:00 pm. Please stop by and enjoy various corn-related dishes for just \$2.00. Additionally, in honor of Carmi's 200th birthday, the White County Historical Society has constructed a float for this year's Corn Day parade.

Pioneer Days will be October 18-19 and we will host close to 200 county 5th graders at the Matsel Cabin for lessons on early pioneer life in the area. Mary McRoy will be leading them through a walk and tour of the Old Graveyard. Volunteers with the White County Retired Teachers Association will introduce the students to early 20th century games and what rural school life might have been like with a lesson at the One Room School House. Educating our youth on our history and the importance of preserving it is a major objective of the White County Historical Society and I can't emphasize enough how much we appreciate the many volunteers who give their time in support of these programs.

The Fall Dinner meeting will be at 6pm on November 14 at the First Christian Church in Carmi. The program is "Abraham Lincoln in Song" by Chris Vallillo. Chris has entertained many of our members in the past and I'm sure like me, all of you are looking forward to this year's program.

On a final note, I hope everyone who purchased one of our Bicentennial shirts are pleased with it. Over 80 shirts were made and sold in honor of Carmi's Bicentennial. I look forward to seeing you during Corn Days and at our Fall dinner on the 14th of November.

Gene Jordan, 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

This was in the Carmi Weekly Courier, Dec. 19, 1872

Hurrying a funeral, a citizen of Chicago comes to life in his coffin.

(from the Chicago Times, Dec. 1)

One of the most remarkable episodes that has ever occurred in the life of Frank Muhlbesch happened yesterday.

A few days ago Mr Muhlbesch was taken suddenly ill at his residence. His disease was of a very acute nature, and in spite of all the efforts of his physicians, he died after a brief illness; and his sorrowing friends made ready for the funeral. An undertaker was summoned and the body properly laid out, and on yesterday the funeral services took place from his late residence. After the customary services had been performed and the sorrowing relatives had taken their last look of the deceased, the coffin lid was screwed down, and the funeral cottage moved slowly toward the quiet confines of Graceland Cemetery, where the body was finally lowered sadly into the grave which, had been prepared for it. The last prayer had been offered and the last solemn service repeated, when just as the sexton seized his spade and about to drop the first shovelful of earth upon the coffin, a sound, something like a stifled groan, followed by a scratching noise, as if the dead man was trying to release himself from the confines of his narrow house was heard proceeding from the still open grave. For an instant every heart stood still, and the blood of every listener seemed to curdle in his veins. The women screamed and hastened towards the carriages, while the men were not slow in following them. In an instant the sexton was the only man left at the grave, and he to trembled at hearing what he had never heard before. Finally he recovered presence of mind enough to descend into the grave and break open the rough box in which the coffin was encased. The noise was repeated, and he know that the occupant of the grave who in a few moments more would have been consigned to a horrible death, and whom his friends had already mourned as dead, was still alive and anxious to be set free. A screwdriver was soon procured from the undertaker present, and the coffin lid removed when its occupant, instead of being cold and dead as he had appeared when last seen, was found to be once more alive; His friends, who had by this time recovered courage enough to return to the grave were of course almost overjoyed, at this strange and unexpected turn of affairs, and hastened to rescue the late deceased from his unpleasant quarters and remove to one of the carriages in waiting, where he was rolled up in a plentiful supply of blankets and laprobes, and the friends who had lately followed him, sorrowing to the grave now hastened joyfully toward their homes. The rescued man was so overcome, on being rescued, from his perilous position, that he was for a long time unable to speak, and what his feelings were while undergoing burial, or whether he was conscious at all or not until the last moment when he managed to signify that he was still alive is not known.

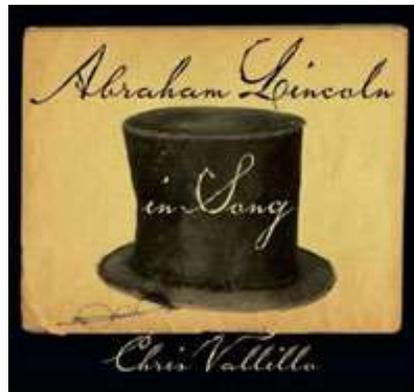
RESEARCH FEES

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 is at 6 PM at the First Christian Church in Carmi. The program is "Abraham Lincoln in Song" by Chris Vallillo. The program received the endorsement of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, as well as that of the Illinois, Kentucky and Pennsylvania Bicentennial Commissions. Mr. Vallillos says of the program "Abraham Lincoln's life spanned a period of great change, growth and struggle in our young nation, and the music of his era movingly characterizes these remarkable times. I chose the collection of music in this project to shed light on one of history's most beloved figures, not only as a remarkable leader, but as a man, who knew and loved many of these very songs himself."



Chris Vallillo is a nationally acclaimed singer/songwriter and folk musician who makes the people and places of "unmetropolitan" America come to life in song. Having spent the last 30 years in the rural Midwest, he has a natural affinity for American roots music. Performing on six-string and bottleneck slide guitars and harmonica, Vallillo weaves original, contemporary, and traditional songs and narratives into a compelling and entertaining portrait of the history and lifestyles of the Midwest. Dirty Linen magazine described the music as, "vivid, original story songs" delivered with an "eye for detail and a sense of history" while Folk Wax Magazine Editor, Arthur Wood said "Vallillo's guitar playing flows like warm honey and is a true aural delight." Source: ginridge.com

MUSEUMS OPEN FOR CORN DAYS

Three of our museums will be open during Corn Days and we will once again have our Corn Tasting at the Ratcliff Inn on Saturday, October 8. From 11 to 1 you can come and enjoy different corn dishes all for just \$2.00. If you would like to contribute a dish to the event please contact Marge Brown, 618-382-4010 or Paula Pierson, 618- 382-7633, for more information.

MANNEQUINS NEEDED

The White County Historical Society is in need a few full or torso mannequins for our clothing displays at the L. Haas Museum. Please contact Gene Jordan if you can help.

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Robin Hurwitz is looking for any relations/descendants of Creed Pankey or his suspected siblings (Minerva married to William Jesse Smith, Marinda Caroline married to James Addison Smith). She is trying to prove a relation between Creed and his siblings or potential parents. If you can help, please contact her directly at travelmaven@gmail.com. Thank you for any information you can provide!

SPRUCING UP MISS MARY JANE'S HOUSE

Thank you to all the volunteers who came out on September 10 to work on the Robinson-Stewart Museum.



ONE-ROOM SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE



Carmi Mayor, Jeff Pollard, conducting the Ribbon Cutting ceremony for the recently renovated White County One-Room School

Twenty years in the making. It was September, 1996, when the One-Room School, Inc. completed its relocation of the former Rudolph School to its permanent location on East Robinson Street in Carmi. The Trustees of the School determined after 20 years, it was time for an upgrade with interior and exterior renovations.

To celebrate that transformation, an Open House was held on Sunday, September 18 with a large crowd in attendance. The occasion opened with a ribbon cutting ceremony by Carmi's Mayor, Jeff Pollard, doing the honors. Several former one-room students attended along with one former one-room teacher, Mrs. Pauline Beck who taught in several one-room schools including her home school, Hadden.

Another former teacher in attendance was Mrs. Clara Pritchett of Grayville. Her husband, Charles, was instrumental in the initial selection process visiting several schools in White County to determine the most appropriate.

Of interest was one former student of the school, John Henry Fechter, who attended Rudolph School all eight years of grade school. Plaques documenting the memories of both Mrs. Beck and Mr. Fechter are displayed in the school.

The One-Room School, Inc. is a non-for-profit corp. To help maintain the school, a Friends of the One-Room School has been established. If anyone would like to become a contributing member, you may call Don Garrett, Treasurer of the school at 618-384-7835.

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 2016 BOARD:

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|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
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| Vice President - Paula Pierson | Judy Cutchin |
| Secretary – Ranelle Hubele | Lecta Hortin |
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