

The Henry County Historian



The Newsletter of the Henry County Historical Society

The Henry County Historical Society – Bishop Hill, IL
61419 – 309-927-3528

Fall 2015

INDIANS IN HENRY COUNTY

Aya nuhka, have you hunted moohswa or mahkwa lately? Illini translation, “Hello friend, have you recently hunted deer or bear?”

Illiniwek is the word that the Illini Indians called themselves. It means, “The best people.” They were the original inhabitants of our modern-day Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, and Iowa.

The following will provide you with some interesting Indian facts:

“Illini mothers carried infants in cradleboards on their backs. The children played with small bows, arrows, and corn husk dolls.

They didn’t live in tepees, but in villages of large rectangular houses with walks of woven reeds.

The women wore skirts with leggings, men wore breechcloths all year long. Even in the winter the men did not wear long pants. They wore moccasins on their feet.

Their food consisted of soups, cornbread, and stews.

They wore beaded headbands with a few colored feathers in them. Women had long braids. The men shaved their heads in

Mohawk style. They painted their faces and tattooed themselves with permanent designs.

Illini made dugout canoes by hollowing out trees. On land they used dogs as pack animals. Dogs carried backpacks and pulled wooden drag sleds called travois.

They were farming people. The women did the farming, harvesting corn, beans, and squash. Men hunted deer, wild turkeys, and small game. They had communal buffalo hunts.

Their weapons were bows, arrows, spears, and clubs.

They were known for their quillwork, beadwork, and embroidery.”

The Illiniwek were a fascinating people. “The best people” would, no doubt, advise you to avoid angry aamaawia and take some time to catch a kiihkoneehsa. This would simply be to avoid bees and catch a fish. Happy hunting !

Native Languages of the Americas, dLaura Redish & Orrin Lewis

READ MORE ABOUT THE MUSEUM’S EXHIBIT ON INDIANS



HENRY COUNTY MUSEUM INDIAN EXHIBIT

The “Indians and their Tools” Exhibit in room A of the museum received an impressive evaluation from Roger Grant. Professor Grant was a professor in History Department of the University of Akron. The following is a portion of that review:

“Indians and their Tools” offers patrons of the Henry County Historical Society a solid, comprehensive over-view of the workaday objects commonly employed by pre-historic Native American peoples. Since Indian artifacts are popular with so many visitors, particularly school-age children, the value of this display is undeniable.”



BLACK HAWK HENRY COUNTY TRAILBLAZER!

“One famous Sauk Indian who passed through Henry County several times was Black Hawk. He was born in Sawkenauh Village in 1767 and became chief at the age of twenty when his father died. By 1830 he

was in his sixties and his refusal to leave the white man’s land caused the Black Hawk War. The war was practically ended before it started. Government troops destroyed most of Black Hawk’s force.

There was no fighting done in Henry County, but Black Hawk followed the Rock River north during part of the conflict so the county was prepared in case the war should make its way here.

After his defeat, Black Hawk and the other surviving Indians fled to the Winnebago tribes in Iowa who surrendered the great Indian to the white men. After he had served his imprisonment, he and his family were taken to a reservation near Fort Des Moines in Iowa where he died on October 3, 1838.

With the end of Black Hawk came the end of the Indians also. Most of them were shipped off like livestock. Of course there were a few left such as Indian Jim, a follower of Black Hawk who ended up living in Colona Township, and Chief Shabbona, a Winnebago Indian who was a great friend of the white settlers around Henry County. But for a very few, the Indian was gone from Henry County.”

Jane Resseguie, 10th grade, Galva High School, Award winning research paper!

A MUST SEE! - New Native American artifacts have been donated to the Henry County Historical Society Museum by Betty L. Heband daughter of Verne Jacobson. These items are estimated to be from 1,000 – 7,000 B.C. The most recent items were from around 600 A.D. The display currently resides in the meeting room. Plan your next visit because this is a “must see” exhibit!

GUN COLLECTION CLEANING AND PRESERVATION

The Henry County Historical Society (HCHS) Museum, located in Bishop Hill, has a nice collection of antique rifles, muskets, and pistols on display. Several weeks ago two retired Chicago area police officers, who happen be gun enthusiasts, visited the museum. They took special interest in the museum's gun collection, and asked if they could come back and perform a cleaning, and preservation project for us. After verifying their references, the museum board gratefully accepted their offer.

On Monday morning July 20th, Dick Edwards, HCHS Board Member, met Charles "Buzz" Hodges (Maple Park police department retired) and Lance Thompson (North Riverside police department retired) at the museum to tackle the project. During the all-day effort both men commented, several times, that they were "having the time of their lives" and thanked the museum board for allowing them to do this work. It should be noted, to the casual observer, these guns look no different now than they did before. The project was not intended to restore these guns in any way, but rather to preserve their current condition, and prevent any further deterioration.

Mr. Thompson is, in his own right, a very knowledgeable firearms historian. But, during the course of the project, he noticed several guns that he found to be of particular interest. He took notes; manufacturer, description, serial numbers, cartouche (government inspector acceptance stamp), etc., with intent to do some research. Suffice it to say the museum collection contains several very interesting guns.



Mr. Hodges (l), and Mr. Thompson (r) get started on the pistols

With the building located "off the beaten path" in the South-West corner of Bishop Hill the Henry County Museum is considered, at least among the HCHS members, to be the "best kept secret in Henry County". Many tourists, and even locals, visit the village and never make it to the museum. We are not state funded, we depend completely on membership, and donations to fund our operations. We do not charge admission but are very grateful for donations. The museum is staffed solely by volunteers. It is open seven days a week, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. May through October.



Mr. Thompson takes notes on one of the muskets

HENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Be a part of history. . .

SUPPORT THE HENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Henry County Historical Society and its museum exist solely through memberships, donations, and the support of its volunteers. We hope you'll join us in supporting our efforts to preserve and promote the history of Henry County. Memberships are due starting March 1 of each year. **Remember to Visit: www.historichenrycounty.com**

SINGLE: \$20

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