

The Henry County Historian



The Newsletter of the Henry County Historical Society

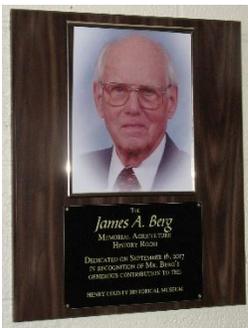
The Henry County Historical Society – Bishop Hill, IL
61419 – 309-927-3528

Fall 2017

BERG AND LEONHART HONORED AT ROOM NAMING EVENT

On September 16, 2017, the Henry County Historical Society, in Bishop Hill, held a Room Naming Event to honor James A. Berg for his generous bequest to the Society.

There was a short program preceding the unveiling of the plaque at the entrance to the



James A. Berg Agricultural History Room. The husband of Mary Carter, James Berg's niece, and Patty Varner, representing the Historical Society, spoke at the event.

Also honored was Helen Leonhart for her past sizeable donation. Her plaque adorns the entrance to Room A. Unfortunately, no family members are left in this area, but our memories of Helen's generous contributions to the Museum will always be remembered.



Refreshments were served at the end of the program. The event honored two individuals whose memory will now be noted by all visitors entering their designated rooms.

JAMES A. BERG PHILANTHROPIST & GENTLEMAN

Relatives of James Berg gathered to give us a portrait of this very benevolent man. He was born February 7, 1925, in Peoria, Illinois, the son of Alfred and Frances Berg. He was half Irish, half Swedish. He moved from Wyoming to Geneseo and graduated from Geneseo High School in 1942. He attended Augustana College.

He was a very quiet, gentle man who was conservative, hardworking, and never sick. He was a long time member of Geneseo Kiwanis and served as their treasurer. He was also a member of Hayden Hikers walking group. He loved to argue politics with his brother-in-law and taught senior citizens The Rules of the Road.

He worked at the John Deere Harvester Works in Moline as an accountant for 38 years. He retired in 1982.

He was well to do, but frugal. He didn't waste. He loved to read **The Wall Street Journal**, **Time**, **Newsweek**, and investment advice. He always drove a Cadillac because they were American made.

James was devoted to his family and had taken care of his mother and sister. He attended Mass every Sunday. Though James had traveled the world he did not let people know of his wealth and didn't seek publicity or fame.

This charitable man has proven to be a true blessing to The Henry County Museum. Mr. Berg's generosity has already initiated needed improvements to HCM: elderly friendly sidewalks, blinds, shadowbox, gutters, carpet in the military room, mural, and reinforcement for the basement wall. And this is only the beginning! Thank you James A. Berg for your bequest. Your generosity will continue to ensure that the past will have meaning long into the future!

THIRD MURAL UNVEILED

On Saturday, September 23rd, the final mural was unveiled at the Henry County Museum. The ceremony was attended by fifty + individuals who were eagerly anticipating the revelation.



The mural depicts young Bishop Hill farmers, Ben Strand (far left) and Greg Peck (2nd from left), on hay racks using pitch forks to throw oats onto a conveyor belt and a threshing machine. Ryan Ruhl (2nd from right) and Roger Anderson (far right) were in the field observing the process. The north side of the building now looks complete.

Kudos must be given to three important participants. Sue Schulz headed up the project, Lauren Schroeder is the talented artist, and Wilbur Nelson and his crew hung the mural. Their hard work and contributions are greatly appreciated. We want to encourage you to drive by and take a look. Our three murals give homage to an important Henry County legacy - -

farming. This artistic endeavor adds class to the past!

NEW ACQUISITIONS RECEIVED BY THE HENRY COUNTY MUSEUM

The Henry County Museum continues to evolve as upgrades and acquisitions occur. Recently, due to the generosity of HCM supporters, some valued objects from the past have graced our museum's present.

Here are some objects recently received. Trudy Johnson of Cambridge gave the museum her husband Ben's military paraphernalia. Ben ended his career as Lt. Col. in the Air Force. He and Trudy were faithful volunteers for many years and Ben served on the Board. Wayne Nordstrom's family donated an autoharp and accordion that were both used by Wayne. They are displayed with Wayne's bottle collection that had been given to the museum several years ago. Numerous pairs of 1850 spectacles came from Dr. Maginal. Dorothy Nelson donated a Dough Boy Soldier World War 1 doll that had been found in her husband's Donald's family home. The family of Gerald Snyder Jr. presented the museum with



several pieces of clothing that he had worn in the Viet Nam War. Nancy Green, from Denver, Colorado, donated the Anderson Family Bible written in Swedish in memory of her grandparents. It is to be noted that her mother, Arline Green, was a long-time volunteer here at HCHS Museum.

The Henry County Historical Society sends a big "thank you" to all of those in the past and the present who have so generously donated. You have greatly enhanced the history presented at The Henry County Museum. We are now hoping that all will come and check out what's new from the past.

ACQUISITION PROCEDURE FOR DONATIONS TO THE HENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Henry County Historical Society accepts donated articles of interest from the public ***if the articles are artifacts that the Society can use in its collection***. However, the Society **does not** accept articles brought to the Henry County Historical Museum unless the donor has contacted the Museum first and spoken with the Acquisitions Committee Chairperson. Volunteers in charge of the Museum for a day will not accept any articles. Volunteers at the Museum will take the potential donor's name, address, and phone number so the Acquisitions Committee Chairperson can contact the potential donor and discuss the suitability of the donation of the donor's property to the Henry County Historical Society. A deed of gift agreement will be signed by the donor and the Acquisitions Committee Chairman if the donated article is accepted by the Society. Once an article is deeded to the Henry County Historical Society it becomes the property of the Society; the Society will determine its future use, including disposing of it.

The Henry County Historical Society does not accept articles that are duplicates of artifacts already in our collection, articles that are in poor condition, or articles that do not have a connection to the history of Henry County.

BETTER-BILT ON THE MOVE!

On September 16th and 17th Henry County Museum's Better-Bilt manure tank was on display at the Atkinson Farm Show. The tank's prestigious history made it an impressive focal point.

It is the first manure tank built by Better-Bilt in Galva, Illinois. Leland and Vernon Pearson founded The Pearson Brothers Company in 1961. They were pioneers in the liquid waste industry.

HCM's tank is the first liquid manure spreader they designed and built. They combined a donated axis, a tank found in a junk yard, and an old pump. But it worked, and about 30,000 more tanks and \$100 million in sales of tanks and commercial vacuum trucks followed.

Later Leland sold the Better-Bilt to a Chicago family in 1984. After that the tank was owned by three other companies. Leland hadn't seen it for many years. Then he found the spreader at an auction in Iowa. It cost less than 100 dollars to build, but he paid more to buy it back.

Leland Pearson was honored as one of the 25 industry pioneers in the 2004 issue of Pumper Magazine. Pearson eventually donated the manure spreader to the Henry County Historical Society Museum in Bishop Hill, where it is now proudly displayed.

SINCERE GRATITUDE!

2017 has proven to be another successful year for the Henry County Museum. The Henry County Historical Society extends their most sincere gratitude to their members and volunteers. You are the back-bone and main stay of the success of this year's season. Your dedication and consistency has been nothing less than awesome! We applaud you, thank you, and look forward to your continued service next year!

The 2017 volunteers are: Pat Hurd; Lavonne Keim; Ila Cunningham; Shirley Bent; Jean Mann; Carol Knighton; Dorothy Ericson; Kay Down; Judy Middleton; Dick Edwards; Lorna Dauw; Dan Dauw; Karen Renoud; Sue Busenbark; Patty Varner; Cindy Glaser; Ernie Jackson; Evelyn Troline; Leandra Parrish; Connie Anderson; Barb Pittard; Megan Sloan; Carolyn Cauwells; Roger Anderson; Cinda Anderson; Roland Krause; Linda Owens; Kathy Edwards; Sharon Peer; Sue Schulz; Eldon Menken; and, Marty Ray.

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

FAMILY: \$25

SPONSOR: \$50

PATRON: \$100

Please provide the following information and send with your payment.

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