

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 2018

WWI INVADES 2018

One HCHS highlight occurred on August 26, 2018. Dan Dauw, a WWI historian, presented an hour long program on the “War to End All Wars.”



Dan’s presentation was packed with important information. This “Great War” that claimed ten million souls, both military and civilian, began in 1914 all because a chauffeur made a wrong turn!

“The chauffeur was driving Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, and his wife, when the chauffeur accidentally stopped to turn around. A young Bosnian, Gavrilo Princip, who was part of a group of men who hated Ferdinand, happened to be at the right place at the right time. As the open aired vehicle was having a difficult time turning around in the street, Princip fired his small, Browning pistol at point blank range and killed both Ferdinand and his wife.” A whole series of strange events occurred that led

Germany and her allies to declare war on Russia, France, and Belgium. Germany believed the war would end in less than a month. However, it lasted four long years!

WWI is credited with introducing some of our modern weapons like the airplane, tanks, submarines, flamethrowers, poison gas, barbed wire, artillery and the modern machine gun. Also used were handguns, landmines, grenades, tunnel explosives, and bayonets.

“Trench warfare was the norm for both sides during the entire four years. When the officer blew his whistle, ‘over the bags’ (sandbags on top of the trenches) the soldiers would climb out of their trenches, rifle with bayonet pointed towards the enemy, and charge. It was often pure suicide.”

“Often wire communications would be cut or fail, and ‘runners’ were sent out to some headquarters. Many never made it to their destination. A young Adolph Hitler, a corporal, was a runner and once was shot in the leg.”

Dan presented so many important and interesting facts: “British soldiers were called Tommies. German soldiers were the Hun or Boche. French soldiers were Polus (hairy man), and American soldiers were Doughboys. The Rock Island Arsenal made howitzer shells, haversacks, mess kits, Springfield rifles and other items for the war effort. Tanks were originally called Landships, and Harry Truman (a US President) was captain of a WWI artillery unit.”

Then on the 11th month, on the 11th day, at 11am in 1918 WWI ended. The last American soldier to die in combat was Private Henry

Gunther. Ironically he was a German-American. He died at 10:59am, one minute before the armistice.

All of the above information came from excerpts of Dan Dauw's HCHS Presentation. He is a speaker extraordinaire! The 2018 WWI invasion began and ended in one hour and all attending history buffs left victoriously fulfilled.

HILLCREST HOME HAS A RICH HISTORY OF SERVICE



Thanks to the dedicated research of Sue Schulz, we have a wealth of information about the history of Hillcrest Home which goes back to the mid 1800's! It all started with the following laws:

1. 1819 – The General Assembly of Illinois passed a law mandating care of the poor.
2. 1839 – County commissioners were authorized to establish county poorhouses.
3. 1874 – Law required all keepers of county poorhouses to keep books of account showing each person admitted to the county poorhouse and when they were discharged.

As a result of these laws the Henry County Poor House came into existence. It was located in Munson Township, north of Cambridge, the county seat, on Illinois Route 82. It was designated for those who had no place to turn.

In the 1850's a small house was built on the original 120 acres of land. By 1871 more space was needed. A new \$50,000 building was constructed and named the Henry County Infirmary. The people living at the infirmary were responsible for farming the land. The initial cost to feed and clothe a person was \$20.75 for 13 weeks.

On July 28, 1912 the Henry County Infirmary accidentally burnt to the ground. They were trying to smoke out chimney swallows, and/or pigeons. Not to worry because a new "fire proof" structure was planned in September of 1912. The cost would be \$110,000.

In 1919 a law was passed stating that all poor farms would be called county homes. It was a "same place but different name" situation.

The 1940's brought about more transformation. The name was changed to the Henry County Convalescent Home. In 1949 the Public Assistance code passed. It decreed that the relief of the indigent came from the department of welfare.

By 1952 the prices for paying customers had also evolved – up! Now one would pay \$80.00 a month. The farm operation was leased out in 1957 and remains leased to this day.

Further changes include: 1967 – Public-Aid Code repealed county home laws, 1970 – The facility was renamed Hillcrest Home, 1998 – It became Medicare Certified, 2009 – The old facility was torn down, and in 2012 – the renovation project was completed.

Today the once Henry County Poor House stands proudly as a modern nursing home facility. It touts 106 beds, air conditioning, private rooms, cable tv, buffet dining, attendant therapy, and recreational activities. One thing though remains constant. Through all of its renovations and changes, the facility remains steadfast in its purpose. It was and is dedicated to the service of the Henry County community.

For all in need Hillcrest has offered help, security, and hope. On Route 82 you will find this historic structure still ever ready to serve.

CLEAN UP DAY AT THE MUSEUM

So often I hear visitors comment, "The museum is so wonderful", or "The museum is so well kept", and, "This is a museum full of meaningful memories." All are very true statements. Just know that there are a bevy of volunteers that make such responses possible!

One such example of volunteer power took place on Tuesday, October 9th, 2018. Ten energized, motivated individuals met to honor and facilitate the momentous *Clean Up Day at the Museum*. They lifted, carried, and organized. Their dedication was inspirational. These hard-working, devoted volunteers were: Dick Edwards, Kathy Edwards, Dan Dauw, Lorna Dauw, Linda Owens, Bill Owens, Jean Mann, Eldon Menken, Patty Varner, and Roger Anderson.



We salute and thank them for a job well done. They have made a difference. Now the positive feedback will continue. It certainly does "take a village", or maybe just ten!

COMPLETED RENOVATIONS TO BE REVEALED IN 2019!

The Ag. History Room is being transformed and will be ready for your viewing enjoyment during the 2019 season. The impetus for this

major update is the acquisition of Richard Carlson's toy tractor collection. The display will tout over 40 pieces and should bring delight to both young and old.

Updates to be seen include a new permanent wall, new wood laminate flooring, and a place of honor for the toy tractor collection. A special dedication is planned for the spring of 2019. Be sure to plan a visit to see all that's new!

VOLUNTEERS SUCCEED IN 2018

This year, as in years past, we stand in awe of our dedicated volunteers. At their appointed time they show up to meet, greet, inform, and shine. The past influencing the present is a part of their philosophy. The museum could not be successful without their willingness to make each visitors' experience positive. To them we owe much gratitude and a great big, "Thank You!"

On Oct. 31st that "thank you" became tangible. The volunteers were treated to a special luncheon catered by the Filling Station. Linda Owens credited the success of the museum to the dedication of the volunteers.

All agreed 2018 was a successful year. The past smoothly flowed into the present and from this vantage point the volunteers anticipate even more success in 2019.

Following is a list of HCHS volunteers: Pat Hurd, Kay Down, Shirley Bent, Shirley Crisco, Carol Knighton, Dorothy Ericson, Cheryl Anderson, Roger Peterson, Dick Edwards, Lorna Dauw, Dan Dauw, Karen Renoud, Sue Busenbark, Madelyn Green, Cindy Glaser, Ernie Jackson, Evelyn Troline, Jean Mann, Connie Anderson, Kathy Fargher, Barb Pittard, Megan Sloan, Carolyn Cauwels, Roger Anderson, Linda Owens, Sue Youngstrom, Roland Krause, Kathy Edwards, Sue Schulz, Patty Varner, and Diana Whitney.

FYI, WE ARE ALWAYS IN NEED OF VOLUNTEERS FOR STAFFING AND AS BOARD MEMBERS. IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE CALL LINDA OWENS @ 309-932-2585.

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

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