

The Henry County Historian



The Newsletter of the Henry County Historical Society

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

Spring 2019

Off to a Great Start!

And so it begins with our traditional send off. 2019 promises to be a very successful Henry County Historical Society year. With their purpose in mind, “to bring together those people interested in the history of Henry County and to collect and preserve articles of historical value,” the 56th Annual Dinner Meeting was held on April 28, 2019.

Dick Edwards, president, gave the welcome and invocation. The Filling Station catered a delicious buffet of chicken casserole or lasagna. All the usual trimmings were available including a choice for dessert, bread pudding or apple cobbler. The perfection continued right down to the napkins decorated with flowers and butterflies – a nod to the upcoming entertainment presentation.

The board meeting ensued, business was handled, and reports were given. This year’s officers are as follows: Dick Edwards, president; Kathy Edwards, vice president; Sue Busenbark, secretary; and Patty Varner, treasurer.

This year we have two new directors: Don Collinson of Galva and Mike DeWalt from Peoria. Both gentlemen have already attended their first meeting and are fast becoming vital to our endeavors. Mike, retired Vice President of Finance for Caterpillar, is quite knowledgeable in the area of mutual funds and money markets. Don has given a report on a possible 50’ x 50’ building that would be to the south of the museum. These gentlemen,

accompanied by their mega talents, are most welcome as directors.

Finally the dinner attendees were treated to a special program on the lifecycle of a Monarch Butterfly. Bree Summers, an elementary teacher at Central School in Kewanee, was the guest presenter. The program was enjoyable as well as appropriate. Butterflies are often thought to be a symbol for new beginnings, so with a flutter we begin our 2019 season.

Civil War Memories Revisited

On May 5th Dan Dauw, our in-house war historian, presented an hour program on artifacts from the Civil War. He was a wealth of information and captivated his audience. I thought it best to use Dan’s own words to describe his presentation: *“My Civil War presentation dealt more on Civil War uniforms, weaponry, medical procedures, and reasons why the North had bigger advantages such as more railroad lines, more industry, more population, thus more soldiers, and a larger Navy which was used early in the war to put in place a blockade.”*

He passed around a few Civil War artifacts for the attendees. He also showed an original Civil War musket, carbine, and revolver, two different type lanterns, Civil War brogans (shoes where there is no right shoe or left shoe. They were the same). The statue of Lincoln in Washington, DC is wearing brogans. The same as a Civil War soldier.

He also showed an original Civil War Medicine Machine dated 1858. Also shown was a Bible and a unique knife, fork, and spoon.

His impressive performance was thought to be a great success. As usual, Dan Dauw was on the winning side of war memories. All guests left with a greater understanding of America's Civil War era.

James Berg Ag. History Room Renovation Complete!

HCHS officers and directors are beaming with pride because of all that was accomplished in the James Berg Ag. History Room. The room was closed toward the end of the 2018 season. The plan was set in place and the work began and continued through the Fall and Winter months. The old, deteriorating tile floor was replaced with vinyl plank flooring, the walls and ceiling were painted, and new energy efficient lights were installed. Also very exciting, was the rearrangement of the exhibits and the addition of new treasures.

Some things to look for when you visit, and we hope to see you soon, would be the Wilson Dance Hall Stage Curtain hanging on display. Also the long awaited Richard Carlson Toy Tractor display is now complete and ready for viewing

Other displays slated to peak your interest would be a history of Ryan's Round Barn with photos., as well as a grouping of Henry County Fair photos. The old homestead drawing from the atlas with photos showing a homestead, out buildings, windmill, crops, animals, people, buggies, and even a family playing croquet will surely delight you when completed. Sue Schulz is energetically working to bring about these new and exciting displays.

The most common comment after viewing the new renovations is, "The room seems so large!" All of the hard work on this spacious face-lift will be worth it, if, when you visit, you are captivated, entertained, and remembering the "good old days" of not so long ago.

Wilson Dance Hall Stage Curtain on Display

Our newly renovated Ag. History Room now plays host to the renowned Wilson Dance Hall Strange Curtain. The curtain is rich with history and was donated by Brock Tumbleson.

This curtain could tell you who was at the party and where the bodies were buried! Years ago the funeral home in Annawan was the Wilson Funeral Home. They had a dance hall on the second floor. There, in that dance hall, hanging prestigiously was the curtain. It is guesstimated that the curtain proudly served the community by advertising local businesses and sponsors.

Over the years the funeral home changed hands several times and eventually evolved into the Schueneman – Stackhouse – Moore Funeral Home. Now the curtain resides in its forever home, here at the Henry County Museum.

The curtain acquisition, as told by Richard Edwards, is as follows: "As Schueneman became involved and remodeling was in process Brock was there and asked what they were going to do with the stage curtain. They were just going to dispose of it so, Brock being an antique lover and collector, took it home having no particular plans for it other than preserving the historical value. He had it for a long time and then one day Kathy and I saw Brock at an estate sale. We chatted a bit and during the conversation mentioned we were involved with HCHS. All of a sudden his face lit up and he said, 'I have something you should have!' It turned out to be the curtain.

We, here at HCHS, are proud of this new display and thankful for the generosity of its donor. When you stop in this season be sure to view "the curtain and the toy tractor display."

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

HCHS Happenings



Bree Summers, a Kewanee teacher, gave a presentation on monarch butterflies at the HCHS Annual Meeting



HCHS Board Member, Dan Dauw, gave a presentation on the Civil War to an interested audience.



Richard Carlson of Galva recently donated some of his toy tractor and farm equipment collection and it is on display in the newly remodeled Ag Room.



After the remodeling of the Museum's Ag Room, Rick Anderson (L) and Don Collinson (R) are putting the finishing touches on the farm implement displays. New displays are highlighted along with new flooring, new paint, and new ceiling in the recently renovated Agricultural/James Berg Room.



Brock Tumbleson recently donated a stage curtain from the Wilson Dance Hall located above the Annawan Funeral Home.

HENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
202 Park St.
P.O. Box 48
Bishop Hill, IL 61419

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

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