



Mercer County Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 9, Issue 3

Editor: Mary Jane Sticklen

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Mercer County Historical Society & Essley-Noble Museum

1406 - SE 2nd Avenue
Aledo, IL 61231
Phone: 309/582-2280

Hours: 1:00 - 5:00 PM
Wed., Sat., & Sunday
April through the end of October.



Officers & Board of Directors

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Dick Stone

Shirley Crawford, Curator
Dennis Henderson, Sunday Host



For Genealogy Queries write to:

Cheryl McCaw/Shirley Crawford
MCHS Genealogy Dept.
1406 - SE 2nd Avenue
Aledo IL 61231-2504



For membership or change of address contact

Jim Runyon
756 State Hwy 94
Aledo, IL 61231
582-7762

ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Please be aware that we will **NOT** have our annual Ice Cream Social in **August** this year. We **WILL** have it in conjunction with the Sesquicentennial in September. The date will be **Saturday, September 17th** from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. at the Central Park Shelter. We will be serving alongside the Mason's as they have their Fish Fry.

Menu

- ◆ *Ice Cream (in bowls or cones),*
- ◆ *Homemade Pie & Cake*
- ◆ *Root Beer Floats*



Please join us then for dessert with your meal or have a root beer float or dessert as you are enjoying the Sesquicentennial activities.

If you would like to support the Historical Society by donating homemade pie or cake, let Bev Gray know. She can be contacted at bevgray@winco.net or 309-372-4407. We are hoping for a really good turnout, so will need lots of pies & cakes.



Prairie Preview

Come see our new and expanded prairie plot south of the main building. It is still in the making and will gradually transform, with the effort being spearheaded by Jim Runyon. He expanded the plot and tilled the ground and in June he, Leonard Kenny, Harold Bryant, and Mary Jane Sticklen came armed with shovels and trowels to remove excess and over-grown plants from the original plot and add a variety of new species. Leonard and Mary Jane contributed native prairie plants from their personal collections. There are



plans for a split rail fence and a pathway through the middle. There are temporary name tags and at some point in the future we are

hoping to put together an identification guide, as well as procure new plants. More about the prairie next time.

CURATOR'S CORNER

By Shirley Crawford

The Curator's Column will be in every newsletter so that members know some of the happenings at the Essley Noble Museum. Cheryl McCaw, Nancy Ferguson, and I have given tours for the Smith family reunion and the Peppy Partners 4-H Club. These arrangements were made ahead of time by calling the museum during our hours of 1:00-5:00 P.M. on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday.

Museum items approved at the July board meeting include artifacts from the descendants of David Fruit Noble and his wife Sarah Pratt Noble. Elizabeth Boruff and her brothers, Tom and Jack, brought in the large pictures of their ancestors and the 1875, 1892, and 1904 county plat books. Murray and Dorothy Patton donated the wood post office boxes from the Mannon Post Office. Various business forms and a Garden Club membership card were given to the museum by Mabel Mayhew. During the year we have received many items such as school books from Rose Ann Lee Hofer, a wedding dress dated 1858 from Wanda Ohaver, etc. A total list donations will be in the newsletter the first part of 2006. We appreciate all donations of your items as well as your volunteer work.

We also scanned an early 1900 photograph of the Thomas Cowan home in Aledo, now occupied by Laverne and Mae Riddell, and the interior of the Sunbeam Methodist Episcopal Church dated 1909. These can be seen at the museum.

DORIS LEE DISPLAY

Doris Lee, nationally known artist and illustrator, was born Doris Emrick, February 1, 1905, in Aledo, the daughter of Edward. E. and Nannie Love Emrick. She died June 16, 1933, and is buried in the Aledo cemetery.

She drew the illustrations for the book The Rodgers and Hart Song Book as well as being commissioned by Life magazine to do a picture story on the route from Algiers to Tunis in North Africa. Reproductions of her paintings were in Life for the Broadway musical Oklahoma. David

and Jo Swanson donated some Christmas cards that Doris Lee had designed and sent to her friends. The display for Doris Lee is now ready. using what items the museum had and has borrowed. If you would like to give anything to the museum regarding Doris Lee, we would appreciate it.

A NEW EDITOR

Our very talented former editor and president, Alicia Ives, has retired and I am attempting my first ever newsletter, so please bear with me. My name is Mary Jane Sticklen and I am a recent Board member. I will be counting on lots of help and would very much like our members and the public to send in personal reminiscences or stories about Mercer Co. history, places, events, people, etc. Start thinking of information that you, your friends or relatives could share. If there is a picture to go along with it I could scan it, and then return it to you. Contributions can be a page, or just a few sentences. Please send items for future newsletters to me at 1452 160th St., Aledo, email mjst@qconline, or call 582-5814.

A special HUGE thanks to Kim Sheese for helping me get started by setting up my computer program and advising on the baffling technical aspects. And to Alicia for providing me with information to get me started and lots of encouragement.



**Submitted for MCHS newsletter
by Alicia J. Ives:**

I wanted to let you know that after several years of volunteering my time at MCHS (1996-2005) and serving 5-1/2 years as President of the Mercer County Historical Society I have made a tough decision to retire. In November 2004, I was diagnosed with Diabetes and my doctor, Mark Hull MD, recommended that I keep my stress level at a low and step down as President. I have decided to retire quietly...

Thank You, to everyone. I have enjoyed working with you over the years. Have a good life!

Alicia J. Ives

Thank You Alicia

Thank you Alicia for all that you have done for the MC HS. As a Board member, President, and Editor of the Newsletter you have gone above and beyond in donating your time and expertise. Your passion was evident as you kept us moving into the future while preserving the past. We will miss your energy and presence, but wish you good health and all the best in the future.



A Sesquicentennial Bell made by Fenton Glass

It is green with the Court house on it. It is for sale by Main Street Antiques. They are \$40 each.



**5th GRADE TOURS
A RESOUNDING SUCCESS!**

In May the 5th graders of Aledo, Westmer, and Sherrard districts toured places of historical interest in Mercer Co., then met at the museum for hands-on activities such as rope making, blanket tying, weaving, corn shelling, wood sawing, and other activities that the pioneers experienced. Nearly 250 students, plus teachers and chaperones participated. This event is looked forward to and remembered long afterwards by all who attend.

Our very talented chairperson of the tours is Shirley Ball and a heartfelt **thanks of appreciation** to her from all. Shirley wishes to thank her committee of Alyce Robinson, Judy Bridgford, Joy Norton, Harriett Reynolds, Alicia Ives, Richard Bemis, and all who volunteered their time to work or donated materials such as food, wood, corn, ropes, etc. Shirley also wants to thank the personnel from Lock & Dam 17 and those from the school districts who helped coordinate this



huge, but very worthwhile effort.

Many volunteers will be needed for next year so please consider coming for some fun and education. Free on the job training!



Name the Tool Contest

The Mercer County Historical Society again “Went to the Fair,” taking the 2005 version of the “Name the Tools” contest.

The word “tool” is used loosely as some of the items aren’t really tools, but they are items from the Essley – Noble Museum. We like to become acquainted with you at the fair and hope that you will come and visit us at the museum. If you enjoyed playing the “Name the Tool” game, you will enjoy visiting ‘your’ museum at 1406 SE 2nd Avenue in Aledo. We house well over 5,000 artifacts to preserve the history of Mercer County. Come see us and view the displays telling the story of Mercer County, from ancient times to the present. The museum is open from 1 to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Saturday & Sunday, April through October.

The 2005 answers for the “Name the Tool” game are:

1. Apple butter paddle
2. Fire extinguisher
3. Folding metal drinking cup
4. Church collection
5. Ice grips
6. Hay bale or butchering hook
7. American Indian scraper
8. Popcorn popper
9. Fruit jar lifter
10. Hay fork

**Congratulations!
2005 Contest Winners**

The winners of this contest and recipients of an 1882 History of Mercer County reprint are:

1. Jo Lawson (all 10 correct)
2. Jo Dellitt (random drawing)

Thank you to Jim Runyon for putting the contest together.



IMAGES OF OUR PAST

We are gradually making our way through the challenging path of digitalizing the museum’s historic collection of photographs. Our purpose in making the digital images is to preserve the photographs themselves by reducing handling of the often brittle photos or having to take them off premise to be copied. They are in digital folders and subfolders on our computer and can be seen by visitors to the museum, though details of access and obtaining copies are still being worked out. Bear with us as we are in a learning process ourselves.

Another phase is to make digital copies of personal photos and post cards that those in the community are so generous to share. We will scan your photos at the museum and return them to you. We can arrange a time while you wait, or photos can be dropped off at the museum and returned or picked up later. We do ask that you realize that others may then have access to these images from

the computer and may want a copy, but this is a wonderful way to preserve and share our history. Although our photo archive is not available online, that option may be explored in the future.

Details are still being worked out and several generous people have already offered their collections to be scanned. We will be getting back to those people if we have not already done so. If you have photos to share you may contact the museum during hours open or contact Mary Jane Sticklen at 452 160th St., Aledo, email mjst@qconline, or call 582-5814.

We have scanned an early 1900 photograph of the Thomas Cowan home in Aledo, now occupied by Laverne and Mae Riddell, and the interior of the Sunbeam Methodist Episcopal Church dated 1909. Also, Verna DeClerck loaned us photos taken of the present Charles DeClerck house and barn after the devastating cyclone of 1908. These can be seen at the museum in our digital files.

- Fall open business meeting
- Neil Dahlstrom will discuss his book The John Deere Story

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Coming Events

September

- Aledo Sesquicentennial
 - Sept. 16th-Pioneer Days
 - Sept. 17th-Mason’s Fish Fry & MCHS ice cream and dessert in Central Park Pavilion
 - Parade: 2:00

October

Oct. 17 at 7:00PM

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