



Mercer County Historical Society Newsletter

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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

April – Oct: Wed, Sat, Sun 1-5:00pm
Nov - March: Saturdays 12:00-4:00pm



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Dennis Henderson, Sunday Host



For Genealogy Queries write to:

MCHS Genealogy Dept.
PO Box 269
Aledo IL 61231-2504
Or: E-mail the museum

Email: mcmuseum@frontier.com



Please address all correspondence to:
PO Box 269

Memberships available for \$15/household

For membership or change of address contact:

Essley-Noble Museum
Box 269
Aledo, IL 61231



Website: www.mchsil.org
Email: mcmuseum@frontier.com

MCHS Board Seeks Resolution of Museum's Space Problem

As MCHS Board members met inside a vacant new building on September 18, 1958, George Accord is quoted as saying "Let's get Arah Dean down here and see what she can do - maybe in 25 years we can have a museum." Arah Dean Finch became the museum's first curator and worked hard to find items to put on display in the museum. Due to the tireless efforts of the board members and curator, and generosity of county residents, Mercer County had a respectable museum in just 10 years.

Contributions of artifacts continued to come in and soon we needed more space. The machine shed was added in 1973 to house items such as farm tools, implements, and those things that do not need a tightly controlled climate for protection from damage. In 1997 a storeroom addition was completed to the main museum building. Just this past year, in 2012, a financial donation from a former resident paid for an added room within the machine shed, allowing better use of the space there. The museum continues to accept items donated by residents or descendants of earlier residents, ranging in size anywhere from a postcard to farm implement, and we are faced once again with shortage of space for display and storage of these historical artifacts.

A meeting was held by MCHS board members on November 1 to discuss possible solutions to the space problem. The board rejected the idea of simply refusing to accept more donated artifacts. As one board member asked, "Are we simply going to say that history ends here?" All agreed that such an approach would soon make our museum stale and unappealing, as we would not be able to build new displays of as yet unseen items from Mercer County's past. The board also rejected the idea of buying or renting space somewhere else as a museum annex, due to the costs involved, which would include staffing, operation and maintenance.

The only solutions appearing acceptable to the board involve expansion of our space at or adjacent to the present location. Just what type of expansion and how we can proceed to get it done will be pursued at further meetings. The major roadblock will be obtaining the funding for such an expansion. Past additions were



Early display, Main Building

built after MCHS received generous donations to cover the costs of those additions.

The money MCHS presently has in certificates of deposit provides interest needed to help fund the annual operating expenses of the museum. That interest on savings plus membership dues and donations are what keep the museum open. Due to the recent recession, our returns on certificates of deposit have not been enough to completely cover our expenses when added to dues and donations.

Our savings are being reduced each year just to keep the museum open and board members feel further reduction of savings to pay for expansion would only result in more space in a closed museum. So, even though building additional space appears to be the best option to resolve our problem, financing construction remains an obstacle that board members will seek to address in the coming months of discussion as we gather more information on expansion costs. The MCHS board has voted to establish a "building and maintenance" account separate from our savings, to receive donations specifically marked for museum expansion.

That separate account will allow us to closely track progress towards our goal of building more space for the museum.

Compare the photo of the early museum display area and that of today, as well as the crowded condition of the machine shed today.



Mercer Remembers Available Again

To commemorate the 150th birthday of Mercer County in 1985, Patty Sackville compiled and edited a book entitled *Mercer Remembers: 1835-1985*.

The book was quite popular and quickly sold out. Since then, there have been countless requests from people still wanting one. As a result, Patty granted permission to the Mercer County Historical Society to have the book reprinted. New copies of the book are now available. Due to research by Patty and other authors (Mona Parsons, Evelyn Brown, and Cheryl McCaw, to name just a few), the book has information about each township in the county and contains photos and bits of history not reported in any of our other publications. The book sells for \$25 each and is available at the Essley-Noble Museum in Aledo during our winter hours and also at Wagner Pharmacy. It can be ordered from the museum and shipped by mail, but in that case, add \$8 for a mailer and postage, bringing the total to \$33. Pictured is Board member Twyla Holmes in front of a display of other books and items for sale at the museum.



Curator's Corner

Reprints of the 1835 Mercer Remembers are here and ready for you to review. Price of each book is \$25.00 if you pick them up and to mail a copy it will be \$33.00. For those of you that have not seen one, it gives a history of Mercer Co. with many good articles and photos from 1835-1985.

Welcome to our new members – Jeff and Tere Holmes of Colona, IL, Greg Bell of Viola, IL., Roger Maas of New Boston, IL, Karen Moore of Highland Park, IL, and Iris Paulson of Aledo. Membership helps to keep us open and we always appreciate newcomers in the society.

Davenport Iowa Family History Center on Wisconsin Ave. is providing free hour-long family history classes 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. on the second Saturday of every month, excluding April and Dec.

There is also a 39th Annual Quad Cities Genealogical Conference at the Viking Club of Moline, 1450 41st Street, Moline, IL on Sat. April 27 8-4:00. The topics will be: Military Service Records, Land Record look-ups, Ethnic Genealogy and, Building your Genealogy Toolbox. Fee for this is \$25.00 including handouts, coffee, and buffet luncheon. Our museum will have a booth to sell some of our books. Fliers with complete information will be available at the museum in February. Come and visit YOUR Mercer County Museum and have a great 2013.

Veda Meriwether, Curator

Photos Needed for Book

Board members Twyla Holmes and Stephanie Braucht are currently working on the historical society's next project, which is a pictorial history of Mercer County. They have signed a contract with Arcadia Publishing to create a book that will tell the history of the county and include between 180 and 240 pictures. Arcadia is the largest publisher of regional history books in the United States. Currently they publish over 6000 titles. The company's mission is to make local history available to everyone, reunite people with their past, and celebrate the faces and places that give America its spirit and its life. Twyla and Stephanie are in the process of identifying interesting photographs that will illustrate aspects of our county's past. There are many such photos in the museum's collection that can be used, but Twyla and Stephanie are putting out the call for any pictures you might allow them to scan and use. They need actual photographs, whether they were taken by a professional photographer or if they were snapshots taken with an individual's camera. A picture from a newspaper or some other publication will not meet the publisher's specifications. Twyla and Stephanie are looking for photos that show people, places, special events, and typical everyday activities from Mercer County's past. They will scan the photo into the museum's computer and you will keep the original. There will be a form for you to give written permission to use the picture for this one-time project and you retain the copyright of your picture. If anyone has any photographs you would like to share, please contact Twyla (309-582-5585) or Stephanie (309-584-4312). The book probably will be ready for sale in late summer or fall at the museum, at various historical society events, online at Arcadia's website, and hopefully at various retail locations around the county. Anticipated price will

be \$21.99. All proceeds from the book will go to the Mercer County Historical Society.



Items for Sale at the Museum

If not picked up at the museum, postage (book rate) is extra. Inquire for insurance or special shipping



- Mercer Remembers.....\$25.00**
Soft cover, 11X16", 119 pages
Add \$8 for postage
- 1864 Mercer Co. Atlas.....\$35 members**
Color, soft cover, 37 pages **\$40 nonmembers**
Add \$8 for postage
- 1882 History of Mercer County.....\$25.00**
Hardback reprint, 1005 pages, add \$4 postage
- 1900 Mercer Co. Census & index.....\$20.00**
Approx. 3" thick, add \$4 postage
- Mercer County Cemeteries\$25.00**
Locations/color photos, 87 pages, add \$3 postage
- Abe Lincoln in Mercer County.....\$5.00**
Soft cover, 51 pages, add \$3 postage
- Celebrating Yesterday-Viola 125 years.....\$10.00**
Soft cover, 110 pages, add \$3 postage
- Betty L. Beer note cards, pkg. of 6.....\$3.00.**
Indicate "False Spring" or "Nathan Listening"
\$1 postage for one or both
- RI Southern R.R. routes of Mercer Co.....\$5.00**
Circa 1914, 18.5"X18.5" map copy
Add \$4.75 for postage and shipping tube
- Bicentennial plate.....\$5.00**
Designed by Suzy Bogguss..
- Sesquicentennial plate.....\$5.00**
For plates, inquire about shipping.



Your Support is Vital!

Annual memberships expired December 31, 2012. Membership starts on Jan. 1, but if you are a new member and have paid near the end of the previous year, your membership will carry over. We count on dues and donations to provide necessary funds for our projects and for the maintenance of the Essley-Noble Museum complex. Thank you to all our patrons!

- () **Annual Membership** - \$15.00 (one household)
- () **Lifetime Membership** - \$300.00
- () **Corporate/Business Fee** - \$100.00

Send to: Essley-Noble Museum
Box 269
Aledo, IL 61231

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____

Calendar of Events for 2013:

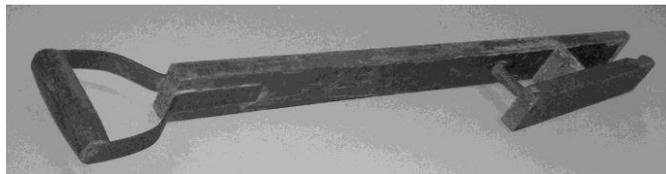
- April 3** Start of regular hours Wed. Sat. Sun
1:00-5:00pm
- April 15** Spring Open Meeting 7:00pm at the
Museum. Program TBA.
- May** 5th grade tours
- June 8** Dessert at the Rhubarb Fest



What is It?

The previous "What is It?" was the stirrup to a lady's sidesaddle.

This item is made of wood, about 4 feet long, with a spring at the base. What is it???



This newsletter sponsored by:

