



Mercer County Historical Society Newsletter

"Preserving Mercer County History"

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Editor: Mary Jane Sticklen

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Mercer County Historical Society &

Essley-Noble Museum
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Phone: 309/582-2280

Hours

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



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For Genealogy Queries write to:

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



Memberships available for \$20/household or \$300 for a lifetime membership

For correspondence, membership or change of address contact:



Essley-Noble Museum
Box 269
Aledo, IL 61231



Personal Views of the Civil War

By Bill Bertrand

Recently, MCHS received a request about the letters and diaries held at the museum from Civil War soldiers. Although we have all read about and have seen television and movie depictions of the battles and life during the war, much of what we know comes from research and descriptions compiled years after the war – from hindsight, rather than personal experience. It can be quite interesting to read the perspective of individuals who were living the war as it happened. Some of what was relayed would not be considered “politically correct” in today’s society, but accurately reflects attitudes common at the time. If you would like to step back and, perhaps, better understand ancestors of the Civil War era, below is a list of items available at the museum.

***Civil War Letters Written to McCreights of Mercer County by McCreight Soldiers** Looseleaf binder includes transcriptions of correspondence from **John W. Cavin**, Pvt. in Co. A, 30th IL Infantry; **W. P. Kimel**, Pvt. in Co. A, 30th IL Infantry; **E. P. McCreight**, Pvt. in Co. A, 30th IL Infantry; **Samuel McCreight**, Corporal advancing to 2nd Lt., Co. A, 30th IL Infantry; **Nathaniel Kirkpatrick**, 1st Lt., Co. A, 30th IL Infantry; **John S. McCreight**, Corporal, Co. G, 30th IL Infantry. Letters were sent to William R. McCreight.

***William Henry Prouty Civil War Letters.** Binder of transcribed letters from **William Henry Prouty**, Pvt., Co. G, 27th IL Infantry. Prouty’s relatives, Amos and John M. also served in Co. G. – Amos as a sergeant. William was captured at Franklin, TN, Nov. 30, 1864, and sent to Andersonville.

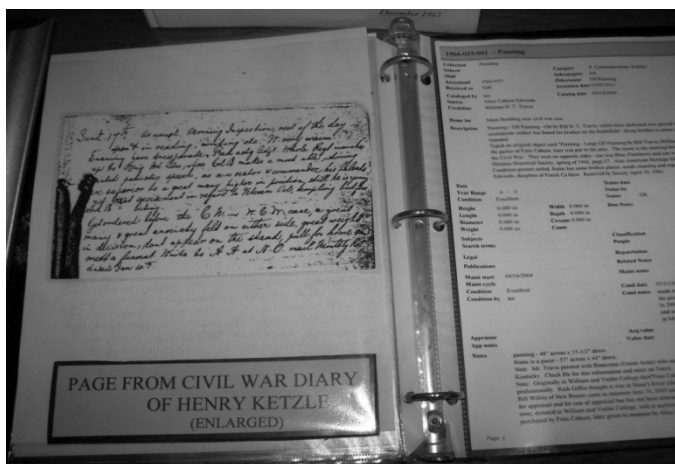
***Collection of Civil War Letters Written by Mercer County Soldiers.** Collection compiled by Gene Kelly in the 1970s, that includes letters to the local newspaper, as well as other letters. Correspondence from **S. B. Atwater**, Orderly Sgt., Co. G, 27th IL Infantry; **William J. Abdill**, 1st Sgt., Co. E, 102nd IL Infantry; **James Y. Merritt**, moving for 1st Sgt. to Captain in Co. K, 102nd IL Infantry; **William H. McCoy**, Pvt. Co. G, 27th IL Infantry; **O. G. Jack**, Wm. **Hamilton**, and **A. C. Higgins**. Also included in this collection is correspondence to the *Aledo Weekly Record* from **Edmun Spangler**, who was tried but found innocent of being one of the conspirators in Lincoln’s assassination, and **Assistant Surgeon, C. S. Taft’s** graphic description of Lincoln’s autopsy, published in newspapers.

***Diary of Reuben Shields** Transcription of diary of **Reuben Shields**, Pvt. in Co. K, 102nd IL Infantry.

***Diary of Thomas J. Simpson** Transcription of diary of **Thomas J. Simpson**, Corporal in Co. E, 102nd IL Infantry. Simpson was wounded at Averysboro, NC in March of 1865 and had an arm amputated.

Of the above list, the situation of Edmun Spangler is an example of how even casual association with the wrong people can cause great grief. Spangler knew John Wilkes Booth from work as a carpenter on

the Booth family home in the 1850s. While Spangler was employed as a stagehand at Ford Theater, Booth appeared in different productions there, and hired Spangler to tend to Booth's horse at a stable nearby. Spangler in turn, hired a boy named Peanut John, to exercise the horse when Booth was out of town. On the night of Lincoln's assassination, Booth asked Spangler to bring his horse to the theater prior to the play. Spangler had to work as a stagehand, so he told Peanut John to hold the horse outside the theater for Booth. Spangler knew nothing of the plot to kill Lincoln, but had been seen talking to Booth when Spangler brought Booth's horse to the theater. Spangler was one of eight people charged as conspiring to kill Lincoln, but the only one found innocent. He did receive a sentence of six years in prison for aiding Booth's escape, although he had no knowledge of Booth's intention when Spangler brought the horse to the theater.



Curator's Corner

We had to purchase a new computer in order to get Windows 10 and we have been busy getting it up to date. We are now up and running and learning a few new steps along the way. Our young historian, Kate, has been working on getting the school year books in better order. Some missing ones have been brought in so our list is now up to date. Several people have been interested in their records from the RMA Academy. A lot of visitors have been finding interesting information while working on their family histories. With the weather getting warmer, we will be doing more work in the machine shed and the new shed as well as accessing new items. **Please note:** the museum is currently closed, but when restrictions are lifted we will be back to our in-season hours of Thur., Fri., Sat. 1-5:00. We are looking forward to seeing you.

Nancy Hessman, Curator



50's at the Museum

Come to the museum for a time of family fun on June 28! You will be transported back to the 50's with music, games, and trivia throughout the whole museum. More details to come via The Times Record, WRMJ, Facebook, or call the museum closer to the date.



Rhubarb Fest

Donations of pies, cobblers, and crisps of rhubarb or other flavors are needed for the Mercer County Historical Society to sell at the Rhubarb Fest. Items are needed by Saturday June 6. If you can donate any of these home-baked goods, and/or can volunteer to work a shift in our booth in the pavilion in Central Park, please call Judy Redlinger 773-458-3899. All proceeds from this activity go to the Mercer County Historical Society and the Essley-Noble Museum.

What is It?

The item in the past newsletter was a cow tail holder. The clip was attached to the tail and the curved end around a hind leg, thus preventing being smacked in the face with the tail while milking. This mystery item is made of metal and approximately 5" in diameter. What is it?



The Spring open program has been postponed until an undetermined date, but to be sure to bring the family June 28th to our 50's at the Museum event.

Accessions for December 2019 through February 2020

Thank you to all who have donated. Come to the museum to view any of the items. Since some may be in the storeroom awaiting display, ask to see them. There is always something new.

Item

- Book "Faces of Brookings" by Betty L. Beer
- Philip Eshleman's RMA diploma 1948
- Binder of Exchange Club Freedom Shrine Project
- 3 Aledo Exchange Club scrapbooks 1955-1958
- 5' pike pole for moving ice blocks

Donor

Betty Beer Franklin

Philip Eshleman

Pricilla Kenney

Coming Events for 2020

Due to the evolving situation, some events may change or be canceled.

April 19

Lincoln poster contest awards

May 14-15

5th grade tours

June 6

Dessert in the park at Rhubarb Fest

Extended museum hours

June 28

50's at the Museum

PLEASE NOTE:

The annual Spring Program has been postponed until an undetermined date.

Available at the Museum

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

<u>Mercer County</u> (Arcadia Publishing)	\$21.99	Hardback reprint, 1005 pages, add \$4 postage	
Soft cover 9.25X6.5", 128 pages, 229 b&w photos		<u>Twelve Moons: A Year with the Sauk and Meskwaki</u>	\$13.00
Add \$4 for postage		Soft cover, 52 pages color, add \$4 postage	
<u>Mercer Remembers</u>	\$25.00	<u>1900 Mercer Co. Census & index</u>	\$20.00
Soft cover, 11X16", 119 pages		Approx. 3" thick, add \$4 postage	
Add \$8 for postage		<u>Bicentennial plate</u>	\$5.00
<u>Mercer County Cemeteries</u>	\$25.00	Designed by Suzy Bogguss..	
Locations/color photos, 87 pages, add \$3 postage		<u>Sesquicentennial plate</u>	\$.50.00
<u>1864 Mercer Co. Atlas</u>	\$35 members	For plates, inquire about shipping.	
Color, soft cover, 37 pages	\$40 nonmembers		
Add \$8 for postage			
<u>1882 History of Mercer County</u>	\$50.00		

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