



Champaign County Historical Society and Museum
Est. 1934

March/April 2026

CHAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

ANNUAL MEETING

At our annual meeting in January, the membership voted in the new slate of trustees and officers. We also filled the vacant spot on the board, electing Ann Kiser. Her appointment gives us the required nine-member board. The board of trustees for the next two years is:

Officers:

Dusty Hurst, President
Terry Koster, Vice President
Kim Snyder, Treasurer
Candy Gilliam, Secretary

Trustees:

Becky Pyle
Amy Forrest
Ann Kiser
Gary Schenkel
Marty Livingston

This board is excited about our future and would love to hear from you! Our next annual meeting will be held on December 6, 2026, as part of our annual dinner. We hope to see you all there!

Cheryl Ogden
Museum Director

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EXPLORE HISTORY WITH US AT THESE FREE PROGRAMS

Please join us at the CCHS Museum for an intriguing, educational series of free history programs. Presentations over the next few months include:

□ March 28 at 2 p.m. – Richard Stanhope, a free black man and landowner who lived in Concord Township of Champaign County and served as General George Washington’s valet during the American Revolution and as chief of servants at Washington’s estate, Mount Vernon. His story will be presented by Kim Snyder, CCHS treasurer and registrar of the Urbana Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

□ April 11 at 2 p.m. – The history of pony wagons in St. Paris, presented by Rick Burnside, director of the Pony Wagon Museum in St. Paris. While at the CCHS Museum you can look at our collection of pony wagons and horse carriages that were built in St. Paris, Mechanicsburg and Urbana.

□ May 2 at 2 p.m. – A presentation on the tragic May 4, 1970, shootings of Kent State University students by members of the National Guard. Celesta Dunn, a CCHS volunteer and member of our Collections and Exhibits Committee, will share her memories of witnessing the shootings as a Kent State student.

□ May 16 at 2 p.m. – Carol Miller, a CCHS volunteer who helps preserve textiles in our collection, will provide practical advice on caring for and conserving your family’s treasured textiles.



Amanda Goodwin, Urbana Middle School history teacher, spoke in February at the CCHS Museum on Shawnee history from our area. She recently guided her students in a project called “The Lost Voices of the Shawnee.”

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT: WARD FAMILY GRANDFATHER CLOCK



Earlier this year, the Champaign County Historical Society received this grandfather clock as a gift from Gary Walters. We are absolutely thrilled to have it—especially because it once belonged to William Ward Sr., one of the founders of Urbana. This is exactly the kind of moment we had in mind when we pushed for updating the museum’s layout.

Just two short years ago, we wouldn’t have been able to accept this gift. There simply wasn’t space for an item of this size or significance. But thanks to the new display cases and the reconfigured layout, we can now give this important piece the home it deserves.

Sometimes the work really does pay off!



THE TERRELL FAMILY: A SAGA OF HARDSHIP, HEARTBREAK, & RESILIENCE

By Cheryl Ogden
CCHS Director

The story of the Terrell family is not simply a sequence of dates and events—it's a sweeping, emotional chronicle of ordinary people swept up in extraordinary turmoil. Set against the backdrop of rural Ohio in the late 19th century, it unfolds with all the twists and turns of a Victorian drama: young love, tragedy, scandal, violence, and ultimately, survival.



A modern ariel view of Springhills

What follows is the story of a family that endured more than its share of heartbreak, yet still managed to carry on.

In the bustling little community of Springhills, Elason Foster Lawson Terrell worked as a farmhand and grocer—two jobs that kept him closely tied to the happenings of his town. On August 3, 1876, Lawson, age 25, married 16-year-old Mary Joanne Smith, beginning a marriage that would eventually become both fruitful and tumultuous.

In 13 years, the couple welcomed eight children:

- Cleo (1878)
- Alice (1879)
- Albert (1881)
- Iza (1883)
- James (1884)
- Maude (1885)
- Pheobe (1888)
- Bertha (1891)

Their joy, however, was tempered by sorrow. Cleo and James died before reaching their first birthdays, losses that undoubtedly weighed heavily on the family.

By 1893, the marriage had deteriorated. Mary left Lawson, taking five of the children with her. Fourteen-year-old Alice stayed behind with her father. The estrangement would be short-lived, however, as tragedy struck that same year.

Contemporary reports, by November 1893, described Lawson's behavior as increasingly agitated. Alice later said she was too frightened to remain in the house. Around two in the morning on November 15, 1893, she dressed quietly and left, intending to reach her grandfather's home about two miles away. Instead, she wandered in the woods until dawn—exhausted, confused, and afraid her father might carry out repeated threats of self-harm.

At daybreak, fearing the worst, Alice returned. The house was unnervingly still. Looking through a window, she saw her father's body lying across her bed. The floor was slick with blood from a devastating gunshot wound to his forehead.

Neighbors gathered quickly; the air still smelled of powder, suggesting the shot had been fired only shortly before the discovery. Investigators found that Lawson's revolver had a broken main spring and would not fire normally. A heavy hammer rested on his chest; the pistol lay nearby.

The conclusion was grim and precise: Unable to pull the trigger in the usual way, Lawson had placed the gun, set the hammer against the trigger, and struck it to ignite the cartridge. The bullet entered at the top of his forehead and exited near the back of his head, causing instant death. A penciled note on brown paper, addressed to Alice, said that if she had not left, he

Marriage license dated Dec. 30, 1893

Probate Court, Champaign County, Ohio.
 IN THE MATTER OF }
 Samuel E. Rose and Mrs. Mary Terrell }
 No. 2111 }
 MARRIAGE LICENSE.
 Be it Remembered, that on the 30 day of Dec. 1893, Samuel E. Rose filed in said Court his application for a Marriage License; Whereupon the following proceedings were had: Said application being in words and figures following, to-wit:
 APPLICATION FOR MARRIAGE LICENSE.
 In the Matter of }
 Samuel E. Rose and Mrs. Mary Terrell }
 Probate Court, Champaign County, Ohio }
 Marriage License Application.
 To the Hon. Probate Judge of said County:
 The undersigned respectfully makes application for a Marriage License for said parties, and being duly sworn, says that said _____
 Samuel E. Rose has no wife living, and is not under the age of twenty-one years; that said _____
 Mrs. Mary Terrell is a resident of said County, that she has no husband living, and is not under the age of eighteen years; that said parties are not nearer of kin than second cousins, and that there is no legal impediment to their marriage.
 Sworn to before me and signed in my presence, this 30 day of Dec. 1893.
 L. S. By Joseph B. Berthoyer Probate Judge
 E. Conrad McAdams Deputy Clerk
 And thereupon the Court ordered and decreed as follows:
 In the Matter of }
 Samuel E. Rose and Mrs. Mary Terrell }
 Probate Court, Dec. 30 1893 }
 Marriage License Order.
 This day _____ appeared in open Court and made application for a Marriage License for said parties; and the Judge having inquired of said applicant, under oath, relative to the legality of such contemplated Marriage; and being satisfied there is no legal impediment thereto; it is ordered that such Marriage License be granted; that this proceeding be recorded, and that said applicant pay the costs herein, taxed at \$ _____. Costs paid.
 Said Marriage License issued, is in words and figures following, to-wit:
 No. 2111 }
 MARRIAGE LICENSE.
 THE STATE OF OHIO, CHAMPAIGN CO., ss. To any person authorized to solemnize Marriages in said County:
 You are hereby authorized to solemnize the Marriage Contract between Mr. Samuel E. Rose and Mrs. Mary Terrell in Testimony Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Probate Court of said County, this 30 day of December Eighteen Hundred and Ninety Three.
 L. S. By Joseph B. Berthoyer Probate Judge
 E. Conrad McAdams Deputy Clerk
 And afterwards, to-wit, on the 3 day of Jan. 1894 the following Certificate of Marriage was filed herein, to-wit:
 No. 2111 }
 THE STATE OF OHIO, CHAMPAIGN COUNTY, ss. This is to Certify, that by authority of a License under the seal of the Probate Court of said County, Mr. Samuel E. Rose and Mrs. Mary Terrell were by me, on the 3 day of December 1893, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Ninety Three, legally united as Husband and Wife.
 In the Matter of }
 Samuel E. Rose and Mrs. Mary Terrell }
 Probate Court, Jan. 3 1894 }
 Marriage License. Order to Record Certificate.
 This day the Certificate of the Marriage of said parties was filed herein: It is ordered that the same be reported in the records of this office.
 Joseph B. Berthoyer Probate Judge

DOMESTIC TROUBLES

Drove Lawson Terrell to a Suicide,

WHICH WAS ALMOST UNPARALLELED IN ITS EXECUTION.

The Revolver Fails to Fire on Account of a Broken Main Spring.

would not have committed the act. The inquest—conducted by Squire J. R. Downer—returned a verdict of death by his own hand, noting Lawson's brooding over domestic troubles and diminished circumstances.

Within weeks of Lawson's death, Mary remarried—wedding Samuel Edward "Ed" Rose in December 1893. Rumors swirled that the pair had been involved prior to Lawson's passing. Whatever the truth, the marriage collapsed with astonishing speed. The couple

TERRELL CONTINUED



Blue Bell Tavern, (Circa 1890), located five miles west of Urbana on U.S. Route 36 near the intersection of Runkle Road. This is believed to be the “Depot” where Ed and Mary spent the night.

separated after only three days. Over the following months, they tried repeatedly to reconcile and parted just as often. By midsummer, they attempted one last fragile truce.

Near midnight on Saturday, July 21, the pair took a room at the Depot restaurant. Around seven the next morning they ate breakfast and, by eight, were seen walking west toward Mary’s parents’ home. Somewhere along the way they paused on a fallen log to talk. The conversation soured. Mary rose to leave. Ed drew a pistol and shot her in the

back—then again in the left side as she turned. A struggle followed; more shots rang out. When he emptied the weapon, he beat her with the pistol and left her in the field. Around eleven, Ed stopped at the Loudenback home to wash his hands. On Miami Street, he met an acquaintance and confessed, “I’ve done something terrible... I’ve killed my wife,” giving jealousy as his reason. Meanwhile, Mary—bloodied and unrecognizable—had crawled from the wheat to a fence. Bystanders summoned her father and Dr. McLaughlin of Westville. More than an hour passed from the attack to the arrival of aid; Mary died shortly after reaching her parents’ house.

Dr. McLaughlin later described five gunshot wounds and roughly fifteen blunt-force head injuries, several of them severe. After five days of trial, Ed changed his plea to guilty of second-degree murder. He received a life sentence, later commuted to eighteen and a half years; he ultimately served less than thirteen. By 1907, he was reportedly back in Urbana.

Orphaned by violence and scandal, the Terrell children were scattered across homes and institutions. While four would go on to build steady, ordinary lives, two—Albert and



The Girl's Industrial School, Delaware, Ohio

Maude—struggled in the shadow of chaos.

Albert Terrell: Arson, Theft, and a Foiled Escape

At nineteen, Albert robbed and then set fire to Poorman's Dry Goods Store in St. Paris. He was captured at his uncle's house. While in custody he attempted to escape; when caught, he claimed it had been merely a jest.

Maude "Maudy" May: Restless Years, Hard Lessons

After Mary's death, Maude was placed with a Bellefontaine family who found her difficult to manage. She was sent to the Children's Home, where she was accused of thefts, became known for frequent runaways, and was eventually transferred to an industrial school. In time, she steadied, married, and raised children of her own.

Amid the upheaval, four of the Terrell children managed to chart calmer paths—working, marrying, and creating the stable households that had eluded their early years. Their lives, largely ordinary by design, formed the lasting counterpoint to the dramas that preceded them.

Poorman's Dry Goods Store located in St. Paris.



MISSION
STATEMENT

The Champaign County Historical Society collects, preserves, and interprets relevant artifacts, documents, and other resources from Champaign County to educate current and future generations about our history.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Janet Sherman

Lori Fraley

Michael Boggs

Andrew Young

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