



Champaign County Historical Society and Museum
Est. 1934

July/August 2022

CHAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

From the Director's Desk

Fair time is fast approaching and once again the Champaign County Historical Society will be participating. We are going to be featuring aerial photographs of local farms at our booth in the Merchant's Building. We are still looking for more of these photos! If you have one or know of someone who does, we would love to scan the picture into our system and return the original to you. Please contact the museum at 937-653-6721 if you would be interested in sharing your photo with us. We are also going to be having an Ice Cream Social in July and a membership picnic in late August. There is information on the Ice Cream Social in this newsletter and the information on the membership picnic will be sent out at a later date. We looking forward to seeing everyone at our events this summer!

Inside this issue

Director's Desk	1
Upcoming Events	2
CCHS	3
New Members.....	6

Upcoming Events

Old Fashioned Ice Cream Social

Here's the scoop – the Historical Society is holding an old fashion ice cream social on July 24 from 2-5 pm on the lawn of the Museum. Don't miss this opportunity to relax under the trees and enjoy your favorite ice cream concoction. A variety of flavors and toppings will be offered along with your choice of cake or pie. There is no entry fee, just pay when you order your favorite sweet!

To ensure a successful event, help from the membership is needed. We need help with set up and tear down of the tables and the popup tents. Also, volunteers to serve the “sweets” and direct parking. For the bakers in the group, we invite you to donate a cake! Let's get those mixing bowls out and stir up a “taste of heaven”!

We will order pies from Stephens Orchard and will accept donations of \$12.00/pie if you would like to sponsor a pie. All donations are greatly appreciated!

Please contact event chairman, Sandy Gonzalez (937-408-4195) with any questions and to volunteer – we need your help! This is a fundraiser for the CCHS, spread the word!



Celebrate National Ice Cream Month the old fashion way – visiting friends under the shade trees while enjoying an ice cold treat on a lazy summer day!

See you July 24!

Champaign County Historical Society

by Candy Gilliam



Out of a need to preserve the rich history of Champaign County, a group of men gathered together to accomplish this feat. In April of 1934, over 25 men and women met at the Urbana Public Library to talk about their common interest in the preservation of local documents, antiquities, and to discuss the creation of a museum, marking revolutionary graves and tracing the pedigrees of Champaign County families. They discussed how historical groups in Clark and Logan Counties had created groups to maintain historical

objects and wanted to do the same here. Mr. Isaac Johnson of Urbana presided at this meeting, assigning a committee of three men to draft a constitution and by-laws. These three men were John H. James, Errett Lewis, and William VanNess. Other people in attendance were W.J. Knight, Herman Walborn, Kenneth Garrette and Laura Forward. They began by asking the public to contribute any historical items to their collection, to be displayed in the reading room at the library. And by the next month, the new Historical Society was given a wood frame settee that was part of the Ohio exhibit at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933. The settee is adorned with pictures and tells the story of Simon Kenton. In November, the museum was officially organized with William VanNess elected as the first president. They held their monthly meetings at the Urbana Public Library, while encouraging the public and other organizations interested in local history to attend. At that meeting, 16 new members were in attendance. Mr. VanNess said to this small audience, "we are living in one of the most historical regions in the United States and as an organization we could not plan to please only ourselves. Our primary interest is to arouse a present interest so that we may build for the future, with a museum for Urbana as our objective. A museum not to contain a lot of curiosities but a museum that will have a high educational value", then he gave a program on the pre-historic inhabitants of Ohio and showed many artifacts made of stone. The following year in 1935, a charter was drawn up on fine parchment paper, hand lettered by Mr. Ross and signed by 30 members. A monetary gift from Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Johnson of Urbana helped the Society add a room to the Urbana Public Library, thus making this a permanent place to house the many collections of artifacts, books and newspapers. Both the library and the new museum knew the benefit of using the extra room for educational purposes. Display cases and shelves were donated, and the historical society was becoming a great place for the citizens to visit while

1967 Champaign County Historical Society officers

Rodney Boydston, Sec; Errett Lewis, Curator; Lawrence Little, Treas; John Logan, Pres; Charlotte Hupp, Program Chair.



promoting the local history. Because there were no membership dues and no roll call, the Society passed a drinking cup at the monthly meeting for donations to cover expenses. This cup had originally hung by a chain from an old water pump in Monument Square in the early 1800's, then later was kept at the museum.

Unfortunately, the Historical Society briefly disbanded in the early 1950's, and the wonderful displays of smaller antiques were open to visitors only upon request. Mr. Errett Lewis, as the volunteer curator of the museum, continued to collect and store larger historical items in his private round barn, known as the Nutwood Place, filling it with carriages, buggies, clover hullers, old bellows, spinning wheels, early automobiles, stoves and guns. Although others also stored their personal pieces in his barn, Mr. Lewis owned over 90% of the items there. It was always his hope to eventually have a larger place to showcase his collection. In 1965, a small committee arranged by Errett Lewis & Edwin English of the Champaign County Historical Society, met again to discuss plans to reactivate the museum. This committee recommended there be a curator, trustees, and annual membership dues. With this renewed interest, the society immediately became involved in community events, such as entering local parades and judging at antique flea markets, pioneer days and reunions. They also did hobby shows, banquets and home tours. In 1968, the Historical Society sponsored the annual Tour of Homes in Urbana, while still trying to raise funds for the construction or purchase of a permanent building. Between 1968-1972, they hosted a "Collections and Hobbies Show" and an "Arts, Crafts and Collections Show" at the Ohio National Guard Armory as fundraisers. Finally in 1972, after years of waiting and anticipation, the Champaign County Commissioners granted use of a recently vacated property located on East Lawn Ave to the museum. The land had previously been the location of the Champaign County Children's Home. At the death of Lydia Humphrey in 1907, her will designated funds to build a new school for orphans, and in 1912, a large brick building was built in her honor. It became known as the Humphrey Memorial School, and was used until the growing student population made it too small, and the children were sent to public school. When the Champaign County Children's Home was officially discontinued in 1958, the Lawnview School for children with special needs moved into the vacated building. and they were there until 1972 when they moved to the south side of Urbana. The Champaign County Historical Society couldn't have been happier to finally have a building of their own to house their files and artifacts!

The summer of 1973 was spent renovating this old Children's Home. Many volunteers came together to clean the yard, plant flowers and bushes, the woman mopped floors and wiped walls, and the basement of the old home was redecorated into a new meeting room. All of this was in preparation for the first Oktoberfest Crafts and Antiques Fair to be held on the new Museum grounds. This annual Oktoberfest is held every fall, and it is the Historical Societies

From the Urbana Daily Citizen, Nov. 29, 2000

Making room for more local history



Photo by Brenda Burns

The Champaign County Historical Society, located on East Lawn Avenue in Urbana, broke ground on its new addition Tuesday afternoon. Pictured above, members of the historical society, Champaign County commissioners and the construction team look over the blueprints for the expansion, which is projected to be completed in April of 2001. Kapp Construction is building the new addition and Ted Kelly is the architect. In the photo are Kapp Construction's Steve Midgley and CCHS president Jerry Teets holding the building plans (front) and in back from left are CCHS member June Kiser, CCHS curator Dick Virts, CCHS member Don Skillman, CCHS trustee Barbara Sour, Commissioners Bob Corbett and Marilyn Foulk and CCHS treasurer Rocky Teets.

main fundraiser. This event is open to the public, and features artists demonstrating their special talents in chair caning, weaving, lace making, pottery, quilting, wood carving as well as showing antiques and selling a variety of food. By 1984, due to the hard-working efforts of the volunteers, enough funds were raised to erect an additional building in the back for the farm machinery and tools. Later, thanks to the estate of Helen Krout, more space was added with the addition of a 40'x32' meeting room, kitchenette, handicapped accessible restrooms, and display areas. However, with the fast-growing collections of county history, the museum still needed more space, and in 2001, construction began on a new edition to the side of the building. The goal was not only expanding the museum, but also reconstruction of the exhibits, enlarging the office space and establishing a conference room. Improvements were also made to the grounds. Oak trees were planted along the driveway, a flagpole was erected, and an iron fence was installed that had formally belonged to Grandview Cemetery.

The Champaign County Historical Society has been serving the area for almost 90 years. It's a wonderful, relaxing place to learn about the area history, the people who founded our county and the items used in their daily lives. The trustees, volunteers and members have been doing an excellent job of preserving our past for future generations to enjoy!

A rendering of proposed exterior changes to the Historical Society. These changes are proposed to enable us to carry out our mission into the future.



Mission Statement

The Mission of the Society is to tell the Champaign County story and to administer the collection, preservation, and display of our county's artifacts, documents, and other historical resources.

Welcome New Members

Anita L. Burton

Toni DePalma

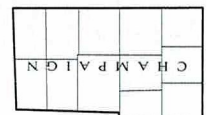
Julie Fairchild

Barry & Carol Brunner

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Urbana, OH 43078
Permit No. 67

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM



Est. 1934

809 East Lawn Ave.
Urbana, Ohio 43078
Phone: 937-653-6721
www.champaigncountymuseum.org
Email: champaignhistoricalsociety@cccn.net