



Champaign County Historical Society and Museum
Est. 1934

May/June 2022

CHAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

From the Director's Desk

Over the last three years there have been a lot of changes made to the Historical Society. Many of which are very visible, the new paint and arrangement in the military gallery, the Judith Borst Smith exhibit, and many new faces volunteering on a weekly basis. This is only a part of what is happening. There are more things happening that aren't as obvious. Our basement archives are getting organized to enable our staff and volunteers to locate items for researchers and exhibits more quickly. We have been working extremely hard to update our database so the information is correct and easily accessible to everyone through our website. We are one of the few organizations of this size in the area to have our entire collection available online! Genealogical researchers can look-up specific people through the advanced search feature and find out all the information we have that pertains to that individual. This is a big deal for anyone who has tried to find their ancestors. We are also looking into filling gaps in our collection through a photo collection project. We are reaching out to people that have been active in their communities and have large collections of pictures asking if they will allow us to add their collection to our digital collection. This enables them to keep the original while making them accessible to the whole community! All of these improvements are continuing efforts to improve our ability to serve our community!

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*Photo credit (banner photo)
Robert Ogden

The Champaign County Children's Home

by Hayala Parker

As you know, the Champaign County Historical Museum sits on the original site of the Champaign County Children's Home. However, we have no exhibit commemorating that important part of Champaign County's history.

I remember going to school with kids from the Children's Home. I didn't know why they lived there and not at home with their parents like I did. Gradually, I did learn more. As chair of the Educational Outreach Committee, I would like to learn even more by researching the history of the building itself and those who lived and worked there.



I am hoping there are others among you who share that curiosity. Did you know anyone who lived there? Do you have any contacts that might help with this research? Do you have any pictures or other memories that you can share?

I have a former high school classmate that I plan to contact, and I am going to search the Champaign County Library archives for any information that might be available. Ultimately, I hope to collect materials to create an exhibit for the Museum, and I appreciate any assistance you can provide.

You can contact me at either reader1941@gmail.com or 937-508-5162.



Upcoming Events

The 3rd Annual Antiques Appraisal Fair

“What is it worth?” do you have an old object, art antique, or a family heirloom that you want to know more about? We may have a solution for you! The Champaign County Historical Museum is hosting the third annual Antiques Appraisal Fair between 2 and 5 pm on Sunday, May 15, 2022.

Advance tickets are \$20. each and are available at The Peoples Savings Bank, Park National Bank (Urbana), Farmers and Merchants Bank, The Chamber of Commerce office and the Historical Society Museum, located at 809 East Lawn Ave., Urbana. Tickets may also be purchased on the evening of the event for \$25.00.

For the price of admission guests will receive a verbal appraisal for one item. Current CCHS members may have two objects appraised. If you are not a member of the CCHS, you may have a second item appraised for \$10.00. In addition, you will receive a complimentary glass of wine and “bistro” style refreshments hosted by Freshwater Farms of Urbana.

New for 2022 is prize money for the oldest item and most valuable item presented. Search your treasures and you might win the \$50.00 prize!

Also new for 2022 is presentation of appraised items on the big screen in the social hall and a game of “What Is It?” This activity includes photos of items found in the Museum which had an unusual purpose. Can you describe the purpose? See if you and your friends can come up with the right answers!

Don’t miss this opportunity to discover the value of your “treasures” and visit with friends on a relaxing Sunday afternoon!

The proceeds from the event support the operations of the Champaign County Historical Society Museum.



Marion Ross and Andrews Raiders by Candy Gilliam



Marion Ross, Co. B, 2nd O.V.I.

Shortly after serving in the War of 1812, the Ross family moved from Virginia to Champaign County, OH. Levi and Mary (Ruffner) Ross settled near Christiansburg along the banks of Honey Creek, where they built their log home, barns, planted an orchard, and raised their nine children. Levi Ross was one of the founding members of the Mt. Olivet Masonic Lodge, helping to organize this lodge in 1852. His oldest son, Marion Ross, joined the lodge in 1855, raising to the degree of Master Mason. Marion was a handsome and intelligent young man. He had been a student of Antioch Preparatory Academy in Yellow Springs, OH, from 1853-1855, as well as an active member of the Antioch Musical Association where he played in the orchestra. He had a marvelous singing voice. He became librarian of the organization in 1859, then the president in 1860. He was a quiet, bookish fellow who was considered to be a ladies' man with his yellow, silky hair. When the Civil War broke out in April, 1861, he was one of the first young men to enlist from Champaign County, being stationed at Camp Dennison near Cincinnati. Shortly afterwards, he was promoted to Sergeant Major of Company B, 2nd Ohio Volunteer Infantry, and then volunteered to join civilian scout James Andrews, along with 20 other enlisted men, on an unknown mission in Tennessee. James Andrews had laid out a daring plan to

capture Chattanooga, TN, and disrupt enemy transportation and supplies along the line to Atlanta, GA. If successful, this raid would render the Confederate supply lines useless. So it was with surprise when Sergeant Marion Ross offered to be a part of the secret mission. Ross was considered by his peers to be a sentimental character, neat and dandy, fond of pomp and glitter, which caused him to be teased often. James Andrews and these men later became known as Andrews Raiders.

Their journey began in April, 1862, with all the volunteers traveling to Georgia posing as new southern recruits. Once the men reached Marietta, GA, Sergeant Major Ross, who was the highest ranking noncommissioned officer, openly challenged and questioned James Andrews about this plan. Andrews refused to give credit to the questions and diminished Ross's role in the raid by putting him in the last line of men when he should have been in the front. Although engaged in this mission, it was hard for Sgt. Ross to recognize Andrews being in command since he held no military title. The volunteers boarded a northbound train named the *General*, and rode until it stopped in Big Shanty, GA. While passengers disembarked for breakfast, Andrews and his men quietly uncoupled the passenger cars from the

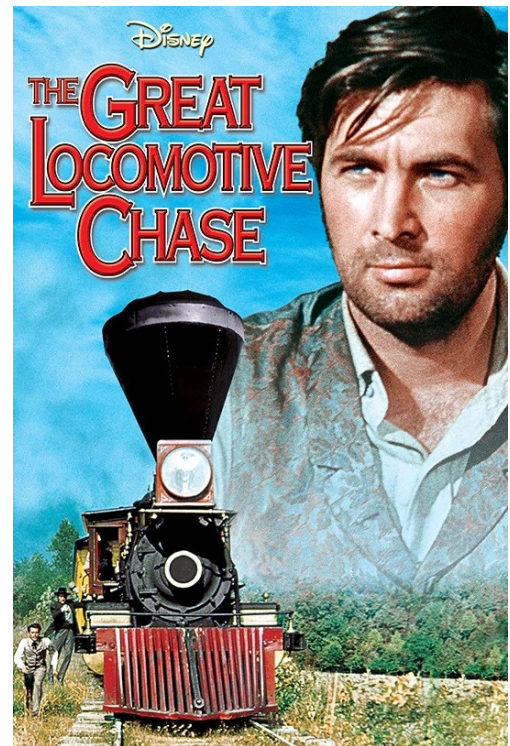
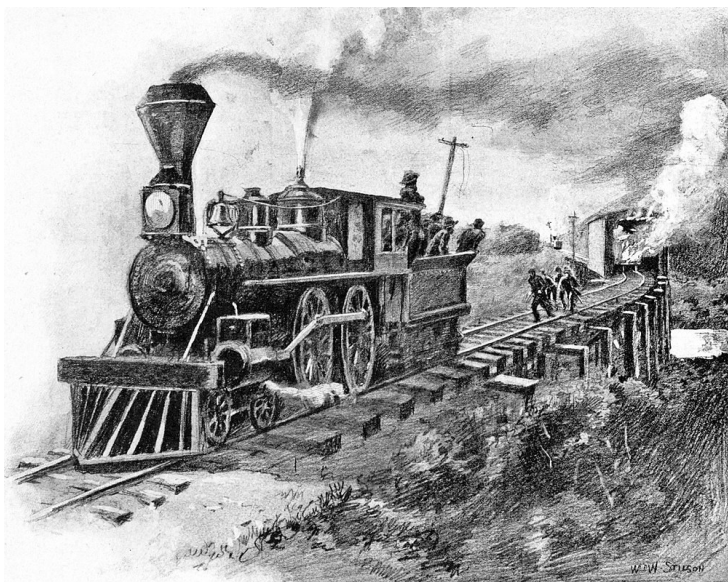
The Association of American Railroads published a comic book featuring the event in 1960.



engine and empty boxcars. Minutes later, with the volunteers hidden in the boxcars, the *General* dashed away from town, much to the surprise of the Confederate soldiers around them. Believing the greatest danger was the actual train heist, Andrews men were convinced the remainder of their mission of destruction would be easy. Trying not to arouse suspicion while traveling north, Andrews kept the speed of the *General* to a normal pace, approximately 15 mph. They wanted to proceed through the train stations without warnings that something was amiss. Andrews told the stations his train was a special ammunition resupply unit to support operations against the Union, and this answer was sufficient for the dispatchers to let him pass on through. But what these dispatchers did not know was that Andrews had been stopping along the path northwards so his soldiers could cut telegraph wires and damage the steel tracks every chance they could.

Meanwhile, back in Big Shanty, GA, the Confederates had no way to give warning of the stolen train to the next nearest towns. At first, the Rebel soldiers set off on foot after the *General* before finding a crude handcar to give a chase. With the handcar not being fast enough, the conductor, William Fuller, found another locomotive along the line to use instead. And this began the "Great Locomotive Chase" for the next seven hours. Miles ahead at Kingston, GA, James Andrews and his men had to stop for an hour due to oncoming trains heading south. With only one track to travel on, the dispatchers in Kingston refused to allow Andrews to continue north with

Depiction of the Great Locomotive Chase



The Walt Disney Company made a movie about Andrews Raiders.

his travels, putting the Raiders in a desperate situation. They finally pulled out of Kingston only moments before William Fuller arrived. Lucky for Fuller, that hour delay had given him the time needed to shorten the long distance with the *General*! Unaware the Confederates were closing in so quickly, Andrews continued making stops to tear up tracks or cut telegraph wires. This was a slow process as they were poorly equipped with proper tools to do sufficient damage. Of course, this again slowed down Mr. Fuller, who had to stop at each point of destroyed track to fix the missing rails. Eventually the damage was too much, and he was forced to abandon the locomotive and continue his chase on foot. Soon Mr. Fuller met with an engine called the *Texas*, and after explaining the emergency, the engineer agreed to help. They raced the engine --that was facing backwards-- at full speed. Because the Raiders were going slowly, this new locomotive gave the

Marion Ross by Candy Gilliam

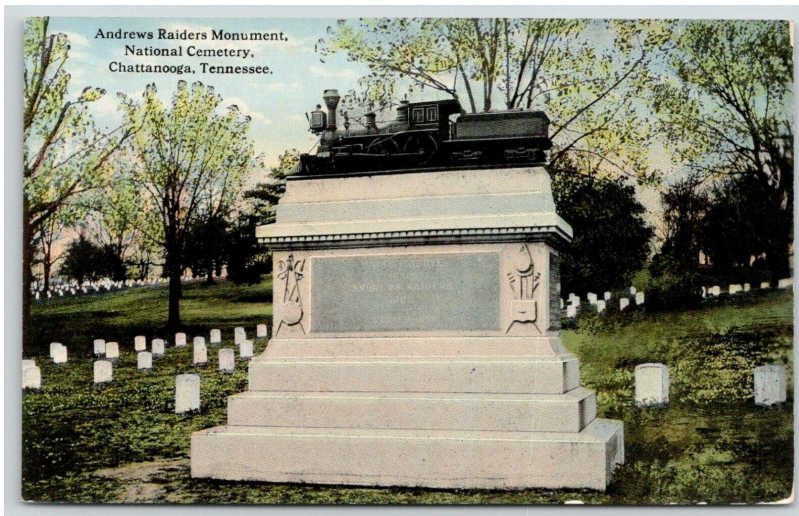
Confederates a chance to really catch up, and soon they were within sight of the *General*. Hearing the whistle of the southern train following in the distance and realizing the sudden danger, James Andrews and his men pushed the *General* to its maximum speed limit. The Raiders panicked and decided to drop two of the boxcars still attached to the *General*. This did not faze Mr. Fuller, as he just coupled the boxcars to the *Texas* and continued his chase, pushing the extra cars ahead of him. The Raiders next attempt to stop the Confederates was to set fire to the last boxcar and leave it burning on the track. Although covered in oil, the wood was too wet due to recent rains, and the boxcar just sat smoldering. Again, Mr. Fuller was unfazed as he just pushed the smoking boxcar aside and continued on. By this time, the *General* is running out of wood for fuel. Near Dalton, GA, the raiders cut more telegraph wires but it was too late. The authorities in Chattanooga had already been warned of the approaching stolen engine. At this point, the Raiders were struggling, and the Confederates were fast on their heels. Just past Ringgold, GA, the *General* ran out of steam after an 89 mile run. They were only 18 miles from their destination in Chattanooga. The *Texas* caught up to the *General* after following it for 48 miles.



*Depiction of the hanging of Andrews
Raiders in Atlanta, GA, June 18, 1862*

When the *Texas* approached, Andrews and his men scattered into the woods, every man for himself. It took two weeks, but eventually all the Raiders were captured and jailed together in Chattanooga to await their trials. Confederate forces charged all the Raiders with unlawful belligerency and spying. James Andrews was the first to be tried and found guilty of spying and treason. He was hung on June 7, 1862. The remaining Raiders were transferred to Atlanta, GA, where seven were found guilty of being spies, including Marion Ross. While incarcerated, Marion learned an old schoolmate from Antioch College was living nearby. He wrote asking if she would please speak on his behalf, but her loyalties were with the south, and she refused to help save his life. Most of the

convicted men were hopeful the charges would be dismissed, however, Ross was not. He might have been a high-standing Mason, but he became mournful and depressed, as if he knew there was no hope for them. And he was correct. Suddenly on June 18, 1862, with no previous announcement, these seven men were quickly executed. As Marion Ross was being led to the gallows, his attitude changed. He stood erect and said in a clear voice, "Tell them at home that I died for my country and did not regret it". William Fuller, who had chased the Raiders, was present at the hanging. Oddly, the two men had become friends. Fuller shook Marion's





Historical Marker located in Christiansburg, OH

The General when it came through Urbana in 1963 before being taken to its permanent display in Kennesaw, GA. -Courtesy of Paul Sullenberger



hand and promised to notify his father Levi Ross of his burial spot.

Nearly a year later in 1863, a fellow Raider wrote the U.S. Secretary of War detailing this secret mission. After interviews and testimonies, it was announced the Raiders would be receiving the newly approved Medal of Honor. Marion Ross was the first man to be issued the Medal of Honor posthumously. In 1866, Marion Ross's body was removed from his unmarked grave in Atlanta, then transferred to Chattanooga National Cemetery and buried next to the other executed Raiders. In a last letter by Marion Ross to a friend, he wrote, "When danger threatens, I do not hesitate to make the sacrifice". And in the end, he made the biggest sacrifice of all for his country. While Andrews Raid was a failure, it went down in history as a great example of determination and bravery.



The Medal of Honor awarded posthumously to Marion Ross on display at the Champaign County Historical Society.

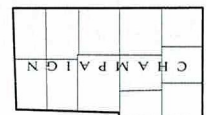
Mission Statement

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

Daniel Shinton

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM



Est. 1934

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