

REFLECTIONS

April—May—June 2014

First National Bank of Lacon Celebrates 150 Years

Charter Number 347 was issued March 28, 1864. On April 11, the First National Bank of Lacon was open for business on the south side of 5th Street in the west half-block between Main and Washington Streets in the City of Lacon. The building had previously housed the Marshall County Bank, which had been liquidated a year earlier. Thirty stockholders provided the needed capital of \$50,000 to apply for the charter.



The Board of Directors included James B Martin, chairman; Phineas Stevens, President; Charles Eckley, Cashier; and Alonzo Roberts, William Fisher (former Lacon Mayor) and Hiram Thomson. The physical location of the bank changed in 1872 with a move into a new building erected by Col. Greenbury Fort on the southwest corner of 5th and Washington Streets. The bricks for the building were hauled from Samuel Buck's kilns in Richland Township.

J B Martin was elected President in 1871; Dr D E Thomas served as President for one year, followed by John S Thompson in 1884. John I Thompson succeeded his father in 1903 and remained in that position until 1907. Willis Ford was with First National for 54 years (21 years as President). Dr A W Bradford was elected President following the death of Mr. Ford in 1928.

In 1949 the bank moved again, their new location being the former Thompson Farm Loan building at 313 5th Street with Gerry D Scott at the helm. The bank continued to prosper, celebrating 100 years of service to the community in 1964.

Wilford A Nelson was President of the Bank in 1967 when the Board of Directors purchased the old Shafer Theatre and the Hacker Clothing Store buildings. The Shafer Theatre will be remembered by historians as the Rose Opera House in earlier times. The old landmarks were razed to make way for a new and modern bank building with a street address of 111 South Broad Street. Norman Nelson, succeeded his father as President of the bank in 1981 and continues in that position as the establishment celebrates 150 years serving the people of this area.

The Historical Society joins the entire community in congratulating the President and Board of Directors for an outstanding job serving the financial needs of the community and contributing to the growth and prosperity of the area.



As pictured in the 1873 Marshall County Atlas

Marshall County Historical Society

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President – Rick Keating
Vice President – Ed Glaser
Treasurer—Bob Weber
Rec. Sec. – Theresa Thimm
Managing Director – John Wabel
Editor—Connie Swanson

MEMBERSHIP

ANNUAL INDIVIDUAL – \$10
ANNUAL FAMILY—\$15
LIFE – \$150
LIFE HUSB/WIFE—\$200
AFFILIATE – \$25–\$100
Renewals are due in January

MCHS 2014 BOARD MEETINGS

**All meetings are on Saturday at
the museum at 10 am**

January 18 (Annual/Board Meeting)
April 19
June 21
Aug 16
Oct 18
Dec 13 (Annual/Board Meeting)
Closed Dec 14 thru Jan 12
*Committee Chairpersons may
schedule committee meetings at
9:30 or immediately following board
meeting if needed.*

NEW MEMBERS

Patricia Riggs
Jean Derry
Rebecca Shelton



OLD SETTLERS CORNER

William Zilm was a man held in great esteem in LaRose in the early 1900's. He was born in Mecklenburg, Germany, March 6, 1834. He left his native country in 1853 when but 19 years of age, attracted to the opportunities of the new world.

While residing in Henry, he became acquainted with Minnie Rinkenberger, also a native of Germany.

In 1857, Mr. Zilm went to LaRose and was employed on the farm of Abijah Sherwood.

Minnie later ended up in LaRose where they were married in 1857. After several years of hard work and dedication to his employer, he was able to purchase the farm where he had worked.

He was reliable and straightforward in all his dealings and his business integrity as well as his enterprise proved an important factor in his success. He was a generous man and he and his wife gave away as much as they kept for themselves.

Nine children were born to the worthy couple. They are William, Ellen Stuebing, Alvina Kopf, Fred, Charles, Martin, Anna Meredith, Edward, Josie Iliff.

Mr. Zilm died May 22, 1906 and is buried at Trinity Lutheran Cemetery in Bell Plain Township. His prominence in the community was indicated by the fact that school was closed for the day and business practically suspended during the hour of his funeral.

Over a thousand people were gathered at the church and on the lawn to pay their last tribute of respect to one whom they had known and honored.



Other old settlers in the Bell Plaine Township around Martin's Point were James Martin, 1829; Samuel Hawkins, 1830; Thomas Bennington, 1831; Jerry Black, Pierce Perry, Joseph and Robert Bennington, 1832; Daniel Hollenback, 1833; Nathan Patton, 1834; John Willson, 1835; Forsythe Hatton and James Clemens, 1836; David Hester and William Hendricks, 1838; Levi Wilcox and William Hester, 1844.

Record Of the Olden Time, 1880

**Read the newsletter online:
www.marshallcountyhistory.org**

MUSEUM HOURS:
TUES. & WED. 9 AM – 12 PM
SATURDAYS 10 AM – 12 PM
Or call the Museum for appointment
309-246-2349

Marshall County Historical Society and Museum

At a recent Board meeting, it was decided to change the name of the building where the museum is housed to "Marshall County Museum". This will provide a better means of advertising what the building actually contains and hopefully attract more visitors and volunteers.

This does not change the name of the Historical Society only the building.

New signs to identify the building are in the process of being updated.

Volunteers are always needed to help catalog and arrange our historical items.

Contact the Museum Director at 309-246-2349.

New Affiliates

Welcome to three new affiliate members this month.

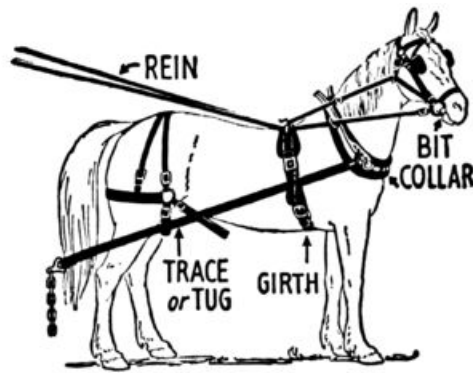
- * Burnell's Neat Wheat N' Wood
- * Charles Perdew Association
- * Edward Jones Investments

Please help support the Museum and our local history by becoming an Affiliate member and be listed on page 6.

Learned Young

In 1855, every boy in Wenona not only knew the name of every strap in a harness, but could "hitch up" as soon as he was tall enough to put the bit in the horses's mouth.

The Wenona Index



Marshall County Post Offices

After doing some research on the history of the Henry post office, I became curious as to when other post offices in the county were established. Looking in the old history books and going online, the following information has been found.

Lacon—1835 (then Columbia)

Henry—1839

Lawn Ridge—1850

Sparland—1857

Wenona—1883

Washburn—about 1856

Varna—1871

LaRose—by 1880

Toluca—1888

Camp Grove—?

There were also offices in Wilburn and Pattonsburg by 1860. There may have been other postal services in small settlements but were not named.

The first stage line through LaPrairie Township and western Marshall County was established in 1830. John P. Winters had the mail contract route from Peoria to Galena and ran stages from Northampton to Boyd's Grove.

In the early 1850's, a small boy riding his pony, delivered mail from Northampton to near by settlements. This was even before the origination of the Pony Express from St. Joseph, Missouri to California in 1860.



Can anyone identify this early town picture? Please contact the Historical Society if you can.

Sparland Summer Floods

LaRose History

LaRose is laid out in Belle Plain Township in Marshall County.

The village of LaRose was laid out September 1870 by Moses A. Gulick and wife. The town was first christened Montrose, then changed to Romance, and subsequently to LaRose.

During its early history, it was the principal shipping point in the township for the Chicago and Alton railroad, and usually sent to market large quantities of grain, stock and produce.

By 1907, it contained quite a number of residences and several stores, shops, etc., as well as a bank, mill, elevator, a school, a post office and churches.

By 1941, LaRose no longer had a bank but a station house had been added. It also had a grade school and high school. The schools were eventually closed and the children divided between Washburn and Toluca school district.

The village has two churches. One was started by the Trinity Lutheran Society in 1867. At that time they had about 25 members. The church building was built in the village 1872, at a cost of \$1,500, and the next year a parsonage costing \$1,100 was built.

The first preacher was Rev. Mr. Johannes, who delivered a discourse June 14, 1872, in the new church. In 1876 the Society built a neat school house.

During the early 1900's, across the highway near present LaRose, next to the cemetery, there was a Lutheran church, which had a large congregation drawn from the Swedish residents. The cemetery is attached to the church.

From Illinois Genealogy Trails



During one of the many Sparland floods, when Mrs. Chris Olson covered her head to begin her long walk home on an August afternoon, she didn't know that her hair would help to keep her alive that day. A heavy cloudburst had settled over Sparland for about eight hours the night before, shedding nearly seven inches of rain on the village. As Mrs. Olson and her husband used the Rock Island railroad bridge to cross Thenius Creek north of town, the steel rail gave beneath them. While the current carried Mr. Olson to the south bank where he was rescued, it carried Mrs. Olson east, and she sank twice before a daring rescuer pulled her by her hair to the shore.

Artificial respiration helped Mrs. Olsen to empty water from her lungs and live through the ordeal, just as residents in the lower part of town emptied water from their homes and carried on with life.

The 1924 storm that severely flooded Sparland was neither the first nor the last the village would see. Nearly every decade in Sparland history has seen a summer storm that came fast and furious, swelling creeks - especially Gimlet Creek - so fast it formed a great lake at the foot of the hill.

Families were often trapped in their homes before they realized the situation. And the floods always left a trail of mud, silt, sewage in their wake.

From the local papers:

1924: Flood wiped out nearly every bridge between Henry and Chillocothe and carried Bert Me's blacksmith shop - including the forge and anvils - right down the Illinois River.

1927: High school graduation ceremonies at the Methodist Church were conducted by lamp while water swirled running-board deep throughout the business district.

1941: Water weakened the trestle of the Rock Island railroad bridge over Gimlet Creek and halted the train service for a day or so.

1958: Flood waters left slime and mud in every door and yard and a gaping hole in a basement wall at the Wilbur Schupp residence.

1982: July 6th during the early morning hours of Wednesday, July 7th, three feet of mud and water got into several homes on Railroad Street after a 6 inch rainfall.

Following the flood in the mid '90's, property in the flood plain was purchased by the Federal government.

Taken from "Sparland: Crossroads of the Illinois River Valley, published 2005



Spring Window Displays



Our cheerful spring window displays a variety of unique umbrellas reminding us that the spring rains bring the beautiful spring flowers. An assortment of bird houses and straw hats round out the spring theme.



The First National Bank decorated our windows in March as they celebrated their 150 years of service to the Lacon community

Women of World War II

We would like to create a window display honoring Marshall County Women of WW II in July. If you have uniforms, pictures or memorabilia that you would loan the Museum just for this occasion, please contact Rita Simpkins (364-3205) or Florence Finfgeld (364-2041). Items needed by June 16.



The Annual Banquet of the Historical Society was held April 26. John Wabel provided the program on trains of Marshall County. Several people shared their interesting collections of train memorabilia for our window display.



Railroad Memories by Moby Finfgeld

After attending the Marshall County Historical Society annual banquet at the Lacon American Legion on April 26, I recalled some of my memories of Rock Island Railroad trains passing through Henry in my early days.

I attended both grade and high school in the old Henry School building on the site where Child Park is now located adjacent to the railroad tracks.

The Rock Island Rocket streamlined passenger with dining car made two round trips per day between Peoria and Chicago.

The Rocket passed by the school en route to Chicago at 7:30 a.m. It returned from Chicago headed to Peoria at 1 p.m.

On the second trip of the day to Chicago, it passed the school at 3:30 p.m. and returned at 9 p.m.

The Henry depot building had a pot-bellied stove in the waiting area. Passengers could buy train tickets from the station agent. There was also a Railway Express agent who had an office in the downtown business district.

Many times, we were playing ball on the old school grounds when the 6 o'clock steam passenger train went by on the way to Bureau Junction, and we would wave to the engineer and fireman as the train picked up speed.

When our family owned the weekly *Henry News-Republican*, there was always a race to get the papers to the Post Office, which was located across the alley to the north of the present Henry Dairy Queen.

The papers had to be in the Post Office in time for Tom Ransom to take them to the depot and get them on the steam passenger train with mail car which stopped at the Henry depot at 6 p.m.

At that time, the newspaper received railroad car loads of newsprint from Ontario, Canada, as it was less expensive to buy paper in carload quantities.

The rolls of newsprint were trucked downtown to the Duke Bros. store (now Read Bros.) for storage in their basement until they were needed in the *Henry News* building at 616 Second Street.

One time when coming back from Chicago on the Rocket, the train did not stop in Henry. I had to get off at Chillicothe.

My daughters remember going to Chicago on the train when they were in high school. They had to step onto tracks at the Henry depot and flag the train down.



OUR AFFILIATE MEMBERS

Gold Affiliate

Allen Partnership
Calvert, Johnson & McKittrick
Memorial Home- Henry
City of Henry
City of Lacon
City of Toluca
First National Bank of Lacon
Haworth & Company
Henry State Bank
Lenz Memorial Home
Marshall County
Meta Tec, Inc
Jackie Padesky State Farm Agency
Wilson Insurance Agency
Windsor Foods
Wyoming Monument Co

Silver Affiliate

JD Belcher Electric LLC
Classic Floor Covering
Country Financial Services- Ed Glaser
LaPrairie UP Women
Patrick Murphy, Atty at Law
Kenneth Poignant Bulldozing
& Excavating
Riddell Polled Herefords
Tanner's Orchard
Beverly & R Dale Bunch
LaPrairie Mutual Ins.
Edward Jones Investments

Bronze Affiliate

Heartland Bank
Columbia Antiques

Grasser's Plumbing & Heating Inc
Rice Farms & Trust
Animal Jim's
Kroeschen Plumbing & Heating
Jim's IGA
Julie's Comer Store
Marshall Co Publishing Co
Marshall County Title Co.
Mona's Italian Restaurant
Pontiac Granite Co, Inc
DeRubeis Insurance Agency Inc.
Lynn & Penny Kunkle
Charles Perdue Museum
Burnell's Neat Wheat & Wood

Platinum Affiliate

Club LaCon

Gold Affiliate

Marshall County Veterinary Clinic

Support the Marshall County Historical Society & Museum

Become an Affiliate Member of the Marshall County Historical Society. Contact Larry Leighty, Membership Chairman, or any Board Member to set up your Affiliate Membership

In 1852, Wenona was established as a shipping point for the Illinois Central Railroad. Before that time, the area was uninhabited.

The line from LaSalle to Bloomington was completed in 1853 and a station was built at Wenona.

The village of Wenona was established in 1855.

By 1856 Wenona had a population of 1,200 people, 300 homes, 2 churches, 3 schools, a hotel and a sawmill.

In 1865, coal was discovered and the mine employed 200 men.

In 1982, the railroad line was abandoned leaving 41 grain elevators and a brick yard with no rail service.