

REFLECTIONS

October–December 2011

Conservation Group Visits Museum

The Illinois River Conservation Group of about 38 people visited the Historical Society Museum on Tuesday, October 4. As a part of their day-long bus tour, the group visited farms and orchards in the Central Illinois area. While in Lacon they enjoyed a luncheon at the American Legion; a visit to some of the shops and a tour of the museum. Volunteers Justin Meierkord, Bev Meils, John Wabel, President Ed Glaser, and Director Jean Davis were on hand to acquaint the visitors with a few tidbits of local history and answer questions about the artifacts and displays housed in the museum.



Looking Back at the 1st Annual Meeting

With the 2012 annual meeting just weeks away, we look back to the First Annual Meeting of MCHS held in 1957.

“The Marshall County Historical Society held its first anniversary meeting in the Lacon Methodist Church on January 22, 1957. The Society was formed in January, 1956.

Roscoe Ball, Myrtle Strawn, Lois Leigh, Harold R. Dawson, William Babington, and Frank Clift were re-elected directors, and Fay Ball and Charles Lundgren were elected as new members of the board.

The directors, including 16 whose terms have not expired, will elect the Society’s officers.

Miss Strawn presented the Society a plaque of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address and told of several incidents in which Lincoln and her grandfather, John Strawn, had figured.

Mrs. T. Val Wenk whistled two numbers, accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Rena Greene.

Secretary Eleanor Bussell and Treasurer Roscoe Ball gave reports. President Wayne Buck presided.

Speaker of the evening was Archaeologist Stuart Streuver, who gave an illustrated lecture on the excavations of a Hopewellian Indian Village on the Kuhne Farm west of McNabb, occupied about 850-750 B.C.

Streuver then outlined an investigation in which he is collaborating with Fr. Francis Borgia Steck of Quincy College and others leading to the conclusion that Fr. Claude Jean Allouez is entitled to the credit for much of the literary and missionary work generally credited to Fr. Jacques Marquette.”

The article above appeared in the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, Spring, 1957.

All members are invited to attend the Annual Meeting on Saturday, January 21, 2012 at 10:00 am at the Museum.

MARSHALL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

For the Christmas and New Years holiday season the museum will be closed for approximately 4 weeks from **December 17 through January 14, 2012** in order that our volunteers can enjoy the holiday season with their friends and family.

Marshall County Historical Society

314 Fifth Street P.O. Box 123
Lacon, IL 61540-0123

Phone: 309-246-2349

E-mail: marshallcountyhistory@gmail.com

Web: www.marshallcountyhistory.org

Hours—Tues. & Wed. 9-12
Group tours by appointment

President – Ed Glaser
Vice President – Larry Leighty
Asst. VP – Justin Meierkord
Rec. Sec. – Marge Watkins
Cor. Sec. –
Treasurer – Robert Weber
Managing Director – Jean Davis

MEMBERSHIP

LIFE – \$150

ANNUAL – \$10

AFFILIATE – \$25-\$100

Renewals are due in January

MCHS 2011 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

All meetings are on Saturday at
the museum at 10 am

November 19 – Board Meeting
January 21, 2012
(Annual & Board Meeting)

*Committee Chairpersons may
schedule committee meetings at
9:30 or immediately following
board meeting if needed.*

The following holidays will be
observed if they fall on a Tuesday
or Wednesday:

Presidents' Day, Memorial Day,
Independence Day, Labor Day,
Columbus Day, Veterans Day,
*The Museum is closed from mid-
December to mid-January*

NEW MEMBERS

Ronald Helander
Eldon McLaughlin
Jeff Jones
Ken Sendelbach
Margaret Ann Woodfill
Stan Johnson

OBITUARIES

Charles E. Fleming, age 86, of Lacon died on Saturday, Oct. 22, 2011, at his home. He was born on July 28, 1925, in Rutland, the son of Arthur E. and Dorothea (Gates) Fleming. He married Mamie L. Campbell on Nov. 17, 1946, in Sparland.

Charles owned and operated Fleming Standard Service in Lacon. He later worked for Hiram Walker until it closed and then for the maintenance department at Methodist Medical Center.

He was a WWII Army veteran and a member of the Lacon American Legion Post No. 593. He was an active member of the Lacon Masonic Lodge No. 61 and Henry Masonic Lodge No. 119.

Charlie was a regular volunteer at the Historical Society, preparing many banners for the various displays and assisting with the annual membership drive.

He will be missed by everyone who worked with him.

Margaret A. Tomlinson, 87, of Henry. She was born Nov. 26, 1923, in Spring Valley, Ill., to Russell C. and Anna R. (Toemmes) Tomlinson. Margaret was a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Henry and an active member of the Eastern Star and White Shrine. She volunteered for many years at the Henry Food Pantry. She was a registered nurse working in all areas of nursing and was affiliated with the Red Cross. After her retirement from nursing, she worked for 10 years at the United States Post Office in Putnam. She was a long time member of the Historical Society.

George L. Hunt, 70, of Varna passed away Friday, Oct. 28, 2011, at St. Mary's Hospital in Streator. He was the son of Leland H. and Jane (Kunkle) Hunt. He was ordained as a minister in 1968 and served the Presbyterian Church for 35 years. George sang with the Village Aires of Minonk; he was a member of Magnolia Masonic Lodge, Marshall County Historical Society and Royal Arch Masons of Ottawa.

Russell William Litchfield of rural Toluca passed away Nov. 6, 2011.

Russell was born on July 23, 1920, in Bennington Township, Marshall County, Ill., the elder son of Raymond and Mildred (Rithmiller) Litchfield. He served in the Third Army, 80th Division, 314th Field artillery in the European Theatre during World War II, attaining the rank of first lieutenant. He was engaged in farming in both Bennington and Bell Plain Townships.

Russell was an active member of the Antioch Christian Church in Toluca, where he served as elder, chairman of the board and adult Sunday school teacher. He was a director of the Evans Mutual Insurance Company and a member of the American Legion Post 440, the Marshall County Historical Society, Rotary International and the Marshall-Putnam Farm Bureau. He was an avid traveler, having visited 50 states with his beloved wife, Anna. They also participated in a 40th anniversary tour of the European battlefields and cemeteries in 1984.

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

**MUSEUM HOURS:
TUES. & WED. 9 AM – 12 PM
Open on select
SATURDAYS 10 AM – 1 PM**

**Call the Museum or check
the website for dates**

Marshall County Has Many Carvers



Charles Perdew decoy

Marshall County has many carvers of duck decoys, duck and crow calls, and song birds. Evidence of this is the large west window of the Marshall County Historical Society Museum where a new display features the work of numerous county carvers.

The display currently includes carvings by Bud Hinck, Curt Whited, Katie Perdew Seibert, Curt Bortolotti, Ken Ingram, Gary Hulin, Virgil Schlosser, Jr., Lyle Schumacher, Gene Randolph, Keith Laible, Wally Carlson, Jim Glatz,



West window decoy display

Edgar Read, Charles Ruggles, Lewie Simpkins, Ken Sona, Ken Miles, Joe Steele, Jerry Wilson, Carl Buettemeier, and, of course, Charlie Perdew, the county's best known carver.

The Museum window display committee emphasizes that additional carvings by county artists are also welcome to add to the present collection.

The smaller east window of the Museum contains another new display of works by Marshall County authors. Additional display items are also being accepted for the authors' window.

2012 DUES ARE DUE!

Please help us reduce our administrative costs by using this form to renew your membership in the Marshall County Historical Society & Museum. By returning this form with your check for the 2012 dues we will be able to save on mailing costs.

In a further effort to reduce our costs the board has decided to discontinue the membership cards since we don't require them for entrance to the museum or other functions.

2012 Dues

- Individual \$10.00 Family \$15.00
 Life \$150.00 Life – Husband & Wife \$200.00

Affiliate:

- Gold \$100.00 Silver \$50.00
 Bronze \$25.00 Platinum: in-kind services

Please check the appropriate box, fill out the form and mail to the Marshall County Historical Society.

Please Fill Out and Return

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

email _____

Phone _____

Make checks payable to:

Marshall County Historical Society

P.O. Box 123

Lacon, IL 61540-0123

THANK YOU!

Hull Rural Schools

by Alba McDonald

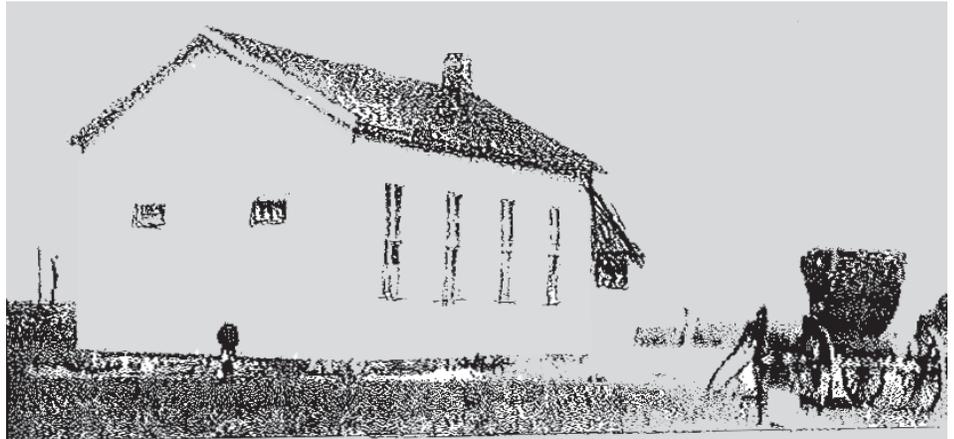
Marshall County once had two one-room schools named Hull. One was in LaPrairie Township and the other one was in Richland Township.

One-room schools were similar in many ways, yet each school had its own unique story to tell. Information on the Richland school was found in a single newspaper article dated May, 29, 1903. Each year a picnic was held at the end of the school year, and to be among the ones to receive an invitation was considered an honor. That year (1903) about 80 people came from Lacon, Varna, LaRose, and Washburn.

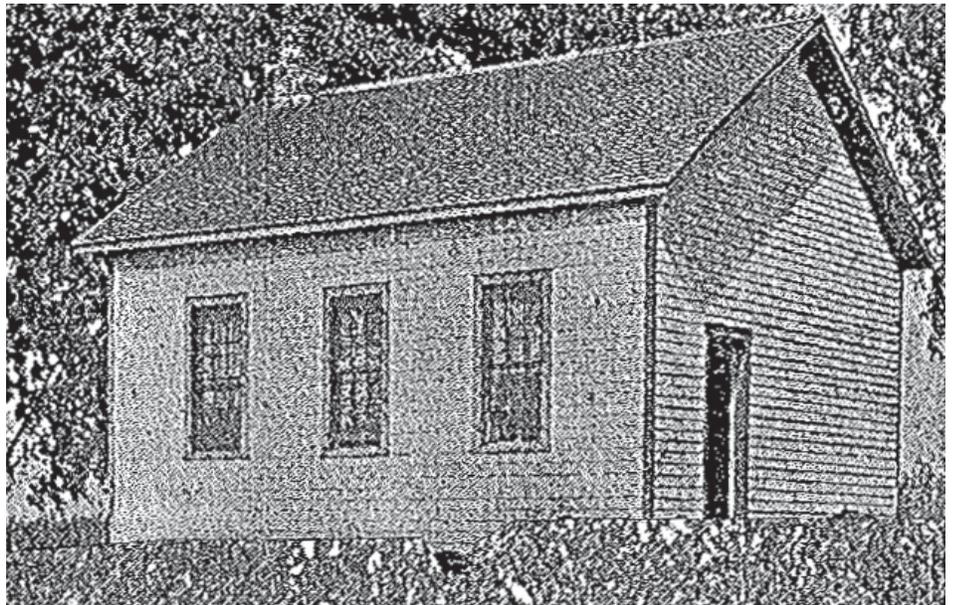
The guests met in a grove next to the school where long tables had been set up by the parents of the students. The ladies of that district were well known for their skill in the culinary arts, and the meal was all that could be desired.

After the meal a program consisting of recitations, reading and music was presented in the school building which had been decorated by the teacher and his students. The teacher that year was a Mr. Ganzer. The guests departed at 5 o'clock after a most pleasant day.

Information on the Hull School in LaPrairie Township was also found in old newspaper articles. They were not dated but appeared to be more recent. The pupils of this school were an active group of young people. One year they planted a garden of shrubs and flowers to honor Arbor Day. Another time three of the students were winners in a contest sponsored by the Chicago Daily News. During these activities their teacher was Kathryn Gandolfi Pucci. This school also held a picnic at the close of the school year. The students prepared an exhibit of their work done during the year for their guests to view.



Hull School, Richland Township.



Hull School, LaPrairie Township



Hull School, LaPrairie Township, Miss Laura Casey, teacher

This Old Scale

by Jim Frank

If this old Scale could talk,
what a story it would tell -
of all the things it weighed
varied merchandise to sell.

Thousands of pounds of nails
have been raked out of the bins -
by a hand-forged nail claw
that wore the wood bins thin.

The sound of clanking nails
falling into the brass pan,
tells the scale to get ready -
now the feel of the merchants hand.

Brass weight slides on balance beam,
the pan is set to weigh
exactly one pound of ten-penny nails,
without adding or taking away.

The customer exclaims surprise
at the accuracy of the guess.
After 44 years, Tom explains,
I very seldom miss.

The nails slide in a paper sack
strange packaging for today.
Now they come in a cardboard box
pre-packaged and pre-weighed.

The Scale has been made obsolete,
though, precisely it does weigh,
by a bar code and a computer scanner,
the customer - not to delay.

But, is it better now than then,
as small stores fade away?
Do you miss Margaret's voice
saying, can I help you today?

Yes, if this Scale could talk,
it would tell a tale
of weighing a little boy,
more fun, than work, for a Scale.

The boy would ask each time
Mommy, how much do I weigh?
And she would proudly announce
one more pound today.

Then the boy came no more
and the Scale wondered why.
But time marches on and change occurs,
to stop it, you needn't try.

The day came for the Scale to retire -
though accurate all the time.
It worried about rusting from lack of use -
this weighed heavy on its mind.



Tom and Margaret Frank pose behind the old scale.

Then the boy returned a man
and they weighed all things together.
Hundreds of jobs precisely done,
no one should work forever.

Now, the scale has told its tale,
in word pictures for all to see.
I know the images are lasting and true
for the little boy was me!

Presented at the Closeout Sale of
Frank's Hardware, Sparland, Illinois,
April 19, 1997.

Authored by :

Jim Frank who worked at Frank's
Hardware, becoming a licensed
plumber like his Father and
Grandfather before him.

From the Archives...

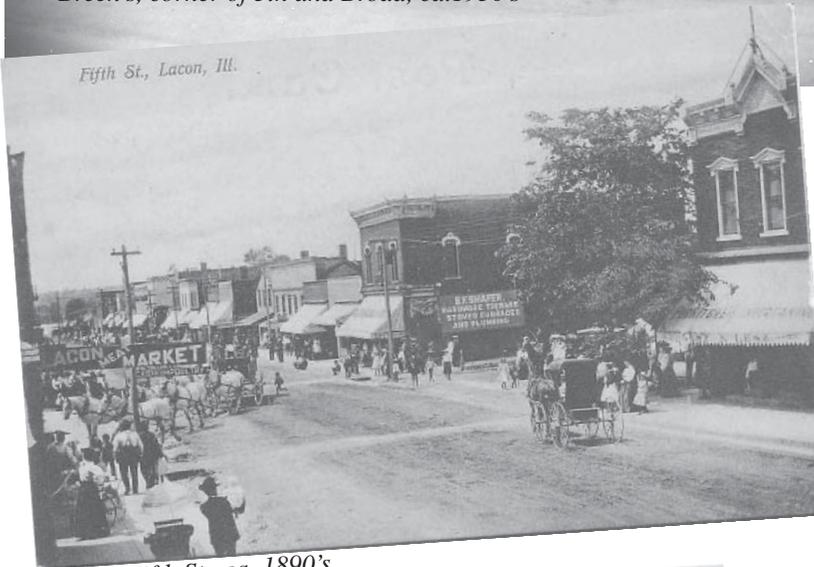
Old photos of Lacon



Breen's, corner of 5th and Broad, ca.1950's



J.H. Thompson Groceries



Fifth St., Lacon, Ill.

View of Fifth St., ca. 1890's



Old water tower near Ida and Fifth



View of Fifth St., 1910



Old ferry looking east toward Lacon

From the Editor...

It's been fun but it's time for me to move along to something else. I've decided to resign as editor of *Reflections* to pursue another project I've had on the back burner for a number of years.

There are numerous folks who have helped me with *Reflections* over the years and to all, thank you for the help. Most of all to my wife, Debbie, who has been my photographer, transcriber and sometime proofreader. Thanks for putting up with me.

Thanks to Jean Davis for allowing me to have free rein on the newsletter and supporting me on other projects.

In the time I've spent volunteering at the museum I've become a student of Marshall County history and all there is to learn. (And I'm still learning.) From visiting the cemeteries where the pioneers of the area are buried, to learning about their lives, to seeing some of the remaining homes where they lived, is to appreciate the history that surrounds us. And to lament that which has disappeared.

Debbie and I will spend the winter preparing a program for the Annual Banquet titled, "Forgotten Cemeteries of Marshall County." It includes a tour of old cemeteries which are no longer maintained by anyone. In the past few years we have run articles in *Reflections* about these cemeteries and will have new ones to add.

Connie Swanson, of Henry, has agreed to take over as editor of *Reflections*. I know Connie will do a great job.

Connie is a dedicated researcher and historian in her own right but she's going to need help assembling material for the newsletter just like I did. So if you have stories or photos to contribute you can mail them to the museum, or drop them off, or email them directly to Connie at barnlady61375@yahoo.com.

I want to wish Connie the best as she becomes the editor of *Reflections* and again, thanks to all who have helped me over the years.

Rick Keating

In your backyard...

Lucy Page Gaston

by David A. Dellinger



Marshall County has had some important people born, raised and even interred here. There are citizens who served within the military service during war or the community in politics, and a few in national politics. There is one individual, a locally unsung hero who lived here, taught school here and went off into the national public scene.

This is the story of Lucy Page Gaston. The Gaston family moved to Illinois from Ohio in 1860 and lived in Henry, IL for two years. By 1864 the family moved to Lacon, IL. Lucy's family lived in Lacon proper during 1864 to 1880. There is nothing showing what Lucy did during her adolescent life in the community.

It is a fact she must have been very smart as by 1865 her Junior year in school, Lucy was teaching in local schools. Records show she taught in the Strawn and Monahan one-room schoolhouses then left the area for college in Normal, IL and a bigger goal in life.

Her history has many blank spaces which someday will hopefully be filled. Yet for now the evidence of her adult life has the public eye on it. Lucy Page Gaston created the first anti-smoking movement in America and declared war on the establishment and big business of the late 1800's and early 1900's. Her campaign against cigarettes was first centered in Chicago

but eventually grew gaining national attention sporting membership of over 300,000. Ms Gaston knew Matilda Carse of the famed Women's Christian Temperance Union, Carry A. Nation (hatchet lady) of the Anti-Alcohol League, Henry Ford, John Harvey Kellogg and two Presidents.

In 1880 Lucy Gaston attacked local saloons in Normal, IL destroying furniture and alcohol which was a few years before the famous Carry Nation's same antics gained national notoriety, but was not the first.

Lucy Page Gaston's tragic death, in 1924, was written about in all majors newspapers of the time. On January 24, 1924 Lucy Page Gaston is hit by a trolley in Chicago, Illinois. The doctors see a problem in her throat, which turns out to be throat cancer.

Lucy Page Gaston dies August 20, 1924 at Hinsdale Hospital, Hinsdale, Illinois of throat cancer.

Few attend her funeral services and it was noted that four children stood by her coffin and recited the pledge to not smoke. (The body is cremated.)

1925 - Lucy Page Gaston's mother, Henretta Page Gaston, dies. Her remains are also cremated and both sets of ashes are transported to the family gravesite in Lacon, Illinois. Finally she and her family, father Alexander, a prominent figure in the community and mother Henrietta, an early member of the WCTU and both brothers William & Edward and Edward's wife are buried in the Lacon Cemetery. Also note that her brother Edward Gaston served in WWI as an officer, worked for the U.S. Government as a diplomat and was a noted world explorer/archeologist. He also knew two presidents and championed the anti-smoking coalition in England and Germany during the early 1900's.

MARSHALL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM
314 Fifth St.
P.O. Box 123
Lacon, IL 61540-0123

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Mona's Italian Restaurant
Pontiac Granite Co, Inc.
Rice Electric
Platinum Affiliate
Club LaCon
3 Times 1 Imprints

Support the Marshall County Historical Society & Museum

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