

# REFLECTIONS

May—June 2012

## MCHS Has Another Successful Banquet

The banquet of the Marshall County Historical Society at the Club LaCon on Monday evening, April 23, was another in a long line of successful annual banquets for the Society.

More than 125 people turned out for the outstanding program presented by local historian Rick Keating on the "Forgotten Cemeteries of Marshall County". Keating's narrative was enhanced by the superb photographs taken by his wife Debbie.

The numerous "forgotten" cemeteries that Keating discussed included the Babb Cemetery, Bonham Cemetery, Goetz Cemetery, Blackstone (Hall) Cemetery, Harris-Freeman Cemetery, Mead Cemetery, Russell Cemetery, and Myers Cemetery in Marshall County, and the Mt. Palatine Cemetery in Putnam County.



*Babb Cemetery*



*Harris-Freeman Cemetery*

Keating made special note of the Harris-Freeman Cemetery in rural Lacon and called on family member Glenda Ziegler to tell about the 300 hours of maintenance work she and her sister Paula Pickrel have done to improve the appearance of the cemetery. Keating said that no one is responsible for the upkeep of the cemetery, and so it fell to family members to pitch in and do it.



Dr. Robert Myers was present and made some incisive comments to add to Keating's discussion of the Myers Family Cemetery.

Some of the family cemeteries have just a few graves. Keating talked of some of the early burials in these cemeteries.

Keating also commented on the prairie grass, wild flowers, and zinc grave markers in the various cemeteries.



*Zinc marker in Bonham Cemetery*

Debbie Keating read a poem entitled "Dash" at the beginning of the program. Dash in this instance refers to the dates of birth and death on gravestones which are separated to represent the events of the deceased person's life.

Ed Glaser, president of the Society, was the emcee for the program, which was preceded by the Club LaCon's delicious fried chicken dinner. Entertainment was provided by the Second Wind Quartet consisting of John Wabel, an active volunteer at the Society's Museum in Lacon; Ron Wall; Dale Wheeler; and Dale Fiste. Ken Williamson led in the traditional singing of "Illinois".

The MCHS was founded back in 1956 by Eleanor Bussell. The managing director is Jean Davis. The Museum is open on Tuesday and Wednesday morning and also on Saturday morning by appointment. All personnel at the Museum are volunteers.

## 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

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

### MEMBERSHIP

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

### MCHS 2012 BOARD MEETINGS

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

January 21 (Annual/Board Meeting)

March 17

May 19

July 21

September 15

November 17

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

### NEW MEMBERS

Cathy Moore

Robert & Alta Myers

Tim & Harriet Cowell

T J Cowell

Beth McCormick Ciullo



# OBITUARIES

**Edith R. Pettett**, 91, formerly of Lacon, Sparland and Chillicothe, IL, passed away April 7, 2012, at her son's residence in Hardin, KY, where she had been living. Edith was born on Feb. 26, 1921, in Lacon, IL to Francis Everett Ramp and Irlene Mae Tidmarsh Ramp. She had retired as a bookkeeper from the First National Bank at Chillicothe. Mrs. Pettett was a member of the Lacon Congregational United Church of Christ in Lacon, IL and a member of the Congregational Church of the Valley in Chandler, AZ. She was a member of the Order of Eastern Star for over 70 years in Magnolia, IL. She was a life member of the Historical Society. Edith married Herbert Louis "Bert" Pettett on June 23, 1940, in Varna, IL, and he preceded her in death on Dec. 27, 2005. They had been tour escorts with the Peoria Charter Coach for many years. Survivors include two sons, Herbert E. "Gene" Pettett of Hardin, KY, and Norman A. Pettett of Mesa, AZ, five granddaughters; one step granddaughter; five great-grand-children; and one brother, Rusty Ramp of Merrifield, MN. She was preceded in death by one son, Gary L. Pettett and her parents.

### Museum Wish List:

Thank you to those who have provided some things from our last request. All donations are tax deductible.

1. Small Color TV 14" to 19"
2. DVD player for a TV
3. Flat Panel computer monitor 15" to 22"
4. External Hard Drive – connects to USB port
5. Flash drive (memory stick) – 2 GB or more
6. Microsoft Office - 2007 or later
7. 3 ring binders, 1", 2", 3", or 4"
8. Clear sheet protectors for a 3 ring binder.

### Probate & Estate Filing Fee Books



Several old court documents were donated to the Museum years ago. The indexes in these books were recently copied and put in a file for ease of research. Names and dates of the transaction is recorded.

Probate Fee Book A –1859-1873  
Probate Fee Book E –1881-1892  
Probate Fee Book G –1892-1902  
Probate Fee Book H –1903-1909  
Estate Fee Book I – 1909-1911  
Estate Fee Book K – 1911-1923

**Read the newsletter online:  
[www.marshallcountyhistory.org](http://www.marshallcountyhistory.org)**

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

# Donations Are Lifblood Of Historical Museum

Donations of artifacts have long been the lifblood of the Museum of the Marshall County Historical Society in Lacon.

The Historical Society has recently received several more significant donations.

The Russell Litchfield family has recently given the Museum a 1915 Staver Buggy that has been on loan to the Museum and has anchored the ag department.



The buggy was a Toluca High School Graduation gift to Orville Litchfield and subsequently owned by Anna and Russell Litchfield of Toluca. The buggy was restored in 1993. The belly sleigh bells belonged to Wm. R. Thomas.



Don Christ, also of Toluca, has donated a laptop computer and accessories for use in the Museum at Lacon.



Also Kandy Baumgardner has donated a television set for use with the local cable TV station and Tim Watkins is donating a desktop computer.

The Historical Society is an all-volunteer organization. The donation of historical items is welcomed. The Museum is also manned by volunteers from all sections of Marshall County. And, of course, the MCHS is dependent for funds from the modest membership fees and other cash donations from the public.

The Museum is known for outstanding window displays. The new display in the east window recognizes the 175th anniversary of the Lacon Congregational Church and features many pictures of the church's organizations and an interactive television set.

The new display in the west window features a spring-time gardening theme.

Volunteers are also "sprucing up" and re-arranging numerous display cases on the first floor of the Museum.



*Displays by Community*

Museum personnel are concerned about the condition of the building two doors to the west where barricades have been placed on the sidewalk.

There are constantly many activities going on at the Museum. Just one example is the file of obituaries of Marshall County residents. Entries are being added constantly. It is the most complete source of information on former citizens of the county.



*Obituary & Cemetery Collection*

The successful annual banquet of the MCHS was held at the Club LaCon on Monday evening, April 23, and featured a presentation on the "Forgotten Cemeteries of Marshall County" by historians Rick and Debbie Keating of Varna.



Planning has already begun for next year's banquet with a meeting at the Museum last week. The committee for the 2013 banquet is comprised of Florence and Moby Finfgeld, chairpersons, and Val Hawksworth, Rosana Benson, Bev Meils, Evelyn Edge, John Wabel, and Theresa Timmes. This committee will meet again at the Museum at 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 22.



## SUGAR GROVE and NIBLOCK SCHOOLS

by *Alba McDonald*

These two schools began as the usual one room schools located in their respective districts in Whitefield Township.

Sugar Grove was in section 10 and sat on the west side of the north-south road that ran through the center of the township. It was built in 1853 and had been a well known landmark. It was over 90 years old and in addition to serving as a school it also had been a well known community center. The building had always been kept in excellent condition. The interior had been redecorated in the summer of 1942 and wired for electricity. No pictures are available of Sugar Grove school.

Niblock school was located in section 15 approximately 1 1/2 miles farther south. It also sat on the west side of the same road. This building was rather small with only three windows along each side. There was no entryway or porch to cover the door. However a 1930 picture shows a well kept building that appeared to have been freshly painted.



This school had been vacant for several years.

The event that linked the two schools was a fire.

Early on Friday morning January 20, 1943, Mrs. Harley Songer who had been taking care of the stove for the teacher went to the school house.

She found smoke so dense when she opened the door she could not enter. Help was called and soon arrived, but the fire was coming out around the fire escape door by then and no one could enter the building. Everything was burned even the small coal house. Marjorie Kunkle was the teacher and she lost several personal items.

The Niblock school district quickly and generously offered their school for the students and their teacher. They met there on Monday morning and were able to finish the term.

Each rural school was an individual entity. They left many memories but only through the generosity of those who have shared them can their stories be told. Pictures, mementos and old news articles are most helpful.

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In 1912, there were 74 rural schools throughout the 12 townships . A few years later, 40 schools closed and students were consolidated into other rural schools or town schools. By 1947, there were only 22 rural school still open. The last one to close was the Doyle School.

## The War Without a Loser

**The War of 1812** used to be called the forgotten war. The bicentenary of the three-year conflict between the United States and Britain, now upon us, has finally begun to inspire historians to shed more light on it.

For even after 200 years it is not agreed who won—or, rather, there are still significant differences in national viewpoints. Among the participants, the Canadians have typically seen the war as their heroic stand against American aggression, during which they turned back repeated invasion attempts by President James Madison's army and American militiamen.

The British, when they have not overlooked the conflict entirely because of their preoccupation with the concurrent Napoleonic wars, have seen the war as a British victory that prevented America from incorporating Canada.

American historians have often looked back on the war as a glorious naval event, highlighted by a series of frigate victories under the leadership of heroic captains such as Joshua Barney, Isaac Hull, John Rodgers and Thomas Truxton and by the two fleet victories in miniature on the Great Lakes led by Thomas Macdonough and Oliver Hazard Perry. Indeed, the War of 1812 was long regarded by Americans as a victorious second war of independence from Britain. For more information go to this pbs site:

[War of 1812 Historic Sites](#)

## Story of the Star Spangled Banner Banner by Steven Kroll

“Between 1792 and 1814, France, led by the power-hungry Napoleon, waged war against many European countries.

On June 18, 1812, a poorly prepared United States declared war on Great Britain. For almost 2 years there were battles on land and sea. Then in March 1814, Napoleon was defeated in Europe, and Britain turned full attention to America.

British forces reached the shores of America of that year and defeated the inexperienced American militia at Bladensburg, Maryland, burned a defenseless Washington and returned to their ships.

The burning of the Executive Mansion (now called the White House) took place at that time.

Frances Scott Key was a well-known Washington lawyer. He lived just outside the city in Georgetown and was a lieutenant in the Light Artillery there.

He mounted his horse and rode to Washington. The smell of burning was everywhere. The Capitol was gone, along with the Executive Mansion.

Francis was commissioned on a mission trip to negotiate the return of prisoner of war, Dr. Beanes. He was on one of Britain’s ships as it crept up Chesapeake Bay to attack Ft McHenry as he and others had been detained until after the attack on Baltimore.

As they watched through the night, Francis kept checking on the battle and they could see the new flag of 42 ft. with 15 stars and 15 strips still flying over the fort. They had not been defeated yet.

As the bombardment began at dawn, they could still see the flag. That evening, the rainy night sky suddenly lit up and in that moment Francis could see the flag again. It was soaked and drooping, but it was still there. By dawn the rain had stopped and the fight was over. The flag was still there.

Francis had written poetry all his life. He reached into his pocket and found an old letter and scribbled down the words, ‘O say can you see--- by the dawn’s early light.’” with the tune of “To Anacreon in Heaven” in mind.



*The Star Spangled Banner Sheet Music*

It was first called, ‘The Defense of Fort McHenry’ but it wasn’t long before everyone was singing what had become known as, “The Star Spangled Banner.”

In 1890 it became the official song of the Army and Navy. In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson ordered that it be played on official occasions, but not until 1931 did the Congress, by decree, make the song the national anthem of the United States of America.”



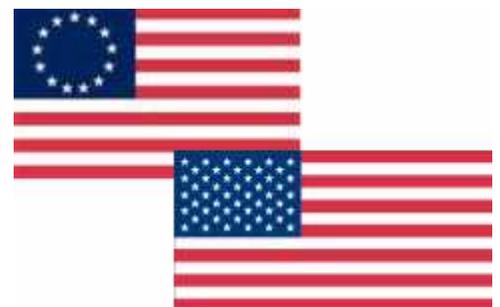
### SHOW YOUR COLORS...

In the United States **Flag Day** is celebrated on **June 14**. It commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States, which happened that day by resolution of the Second Continental Congress in 1777.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day; in August 1949, National Flag Day was established by an Act of Congress.

### Remember...fly your flag on June 14 with pride.

The American Flag has changed many times over the past 236 years. It started out with 13 stripes and 13 stars representing the original colonies. .



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Calvert & Froelich Memorial  
Home- Toluca  
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Home- Henry  
City of Henry  
City of Lacon  
City of Toluca  
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Henry State Bank  
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Marshall County  
Meta Tec, Inc  
Jackie Padesky State Farm Agency  
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***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*