



WAYNE COUNTY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Don't let local history be a mystery!



**FALL
2022**

Wayne County Historical Society
Fairfield Public Library
300 S.E. 2nd Street
Fairfield, Illinois 62837

Early History Museum & Archives
300 S.E. 2nd Street, Fairfield
Open Saturdays year-round
10:00am - 2:00pm

Hanna House Museum
100 E. Center Street, Fairfield
Open Saturdays April-October
10:00am - 2:00pm

Olive Branch Schoolhouse
Leo French Park, Fairfield
Open by appointment

e-Mail:
wcilhs@gmail.com

Website:
wayneillinoishistory.org

Facebook:
[Wayne-County-Historical-Society](https://www.facebook.com/Wayne-County-Historical-Society)

Many families visited the Early History Museum and the Hanna House Museum this summer. The Museums will continue to be open this fall on Saturdays from 10–2pm. Watch for special events.

The Early History Museum participated with the Library Summer Story Hour held once a week in June. Each week had an attendance of over 100 family members, on the lawn, in the library and through the museum!



A large group from the *Kids in Motion* program also visited the museums and enjoyed a scavenger hunt for items on display at the museums.

The Hanna House Museum held a **History Camp** on July 22nd. What a fun event for 20 kids to explore the museums, listen to guest speakers, and learn about alpacas.

The museums house the donated artifacts that help record the history of Wayne County. The Early History Museum connected to the Fairfield Library, has items from the 1800s to 1940. The Hanna House Museum, on First Street in Fairfield has items from 1940s through the present. The museums have free admission and are maintained by the Wayne County Historical Society.



The Hanna House Museum, Early History Museum and the Olive Branch Schoolhouse are available for field trips, and groups of all ages. Call 618-842-3544 for more information.

...and don't let local history be a mystery!



Civil War Quartermaster ledger

The 87th Regiment, Illinois Infantry was organized at Shawneetown, Illinois, and mustered in October 3, 1862. From there, the unit headed south. Records at illinoisgenweb.org show that John H. Cooper of Fairfield was the Quartermaster keeping records for Wayne County soldiers in a large leather-bound book.

Various items were brought back to Wayne County following the Civil War. Fire-arms, bugles, uniforms, and ledgers were passed down among families. Two leather-bound record books found their way to the archives of the Wayne County Historical Society. In recent years the ledgers were part of a display of Civil War items at the Early History Museum at the Fairfield Library when they caught the eye of local lawyer, Matt Vaughn. Matt was doing some research on the Civil War at the local archives at the time.

Matt was immediately interested in the information within the ledger books, and thought the historians at the Illinois State Archives in Springfield might also be interested. They were extremely intrigued, and expressed an interest in the preservation and accessibility of the Civil War record books. Three staff members from the Illinois State Archives visited Fairfield in early June, 2022 and met with Matt Vaughn and Donna Savage at the Early History Museum. The books were transported to Springfield for repair and will be returned later this month.

Report from Alex Dixon, Illinois State Archives 8-29-2022 Conservation of Civil War records

The conservation process is completed on both the 62nd Illinois and 87th Illinois Civil War records. Both books went through a thorough surface cleaning using both Hepa filter vacuum and eraser powder to remove all surface contaminants. We removed any remaining binding material to safely detach the pages from the spine and covers. This allowed us to get a better idea of the damage on the pages. Both books received limited hydration and flattening as needed to relax the pages that were misshaped through tearing and folding. Once unbound and flattened, a second round of surface cleaning took place to remove any dirt revealed.

With the pages clean and flattened, the next step was to begin repair work. The 62nd Illinois book went quickly as only a couple of pages needed repaired. This was done using heat set tissue. The 87th Illinois book was in much worse condition and required two different methods to repair. On the first pages we used Japanese mending tissue since there were many tears along with the edge of the pages missing areas. Once the first few pages were repaired, we used heat set tissue again on the remaining pages to strengthen the

The final step completed was digitization. We had our micrographics department use their book scanners to create digital images of both books which were then placed onto CDs for your use. This step ensures these books can be kept in a safe environment and handled as little as possible in the future. I would recommend these be stored as much as possible and if put on display to limit their time to special engagements only. At the extreme I would say to allow display for no more than a month and then to be on rest for at least a year, preferably longer.



1970 Fall Fun Fest Moon Rock

Did you attend the Fall Fun Fest in the fall of 1970? If you did, you saw an unexpected attraction on display; a moon rock brought back to earth by Apollo 12 astronauts. T.O. Matthews, the Press editor at the time, had worked closely with NASA to arrange for the display.

The display included one rock about the size of a walnut, picked up from the surface of the moon by the Apollo 12 team. It was enclosed in a heavy glass case, triangular shaped, sealed in pure nitrogen. The case and its silver base were roped off, creating a four foot barrier between the rock and the public. The display sat in the center of the main Fall Fun Fest tent during viewing hours, and then kept in the vault of the local bank at night. The moon rock was guarded at all times.

Police Chief Mike Day helped with security. Mayor Sam Puckett commented, "This is a wonderful thing for our community. We should feel honored to have the display. Everyone should view it." School children were brought to downtown to view the moon rock. Big crowds walked the streets of Fairfield, or attended the evening entertainment after viewing the moon rock.



FAIRFIELD'S FALL FUN FEST

Before there was a Fall Fun Fest, there was "The Good Old Days" celebration in Fairfield. The Good Old Days celebrations of the mid 1950s were the immediate predecessor of the Fall Fun Fest. The Good Old Days featured parades, carnival rides, pageants, concerts, special exhibits, food, and fun. They were a huge hit with Fairfield residents of all ages and quickly became an annual tradition.

The 1956 Good Old Days drew record crowds to enjoy the dances, free hotdogs, barbershop quartets, and other festivities. For several years, a large variety show was held at the Fairfield High School with professional entertainment.

In 1968 Fairfield celebrated with a huge celebration that included a free meal for 1,000 people. The goal was to make the "Good Old Days even better." Bands from six towns were interspersed between the floats, and historic cars along with the parade entrants. The community participated by making their own historical costumes and several men grew beards for the event.



A NEW NAME

But even a great idea can run its course. In 1969, the merchants wanted the crowds and the entertainment, but they also wanted a fresh name for the event. People responded with dozens of creative suggestions about friendliness, autumn, chickens, fun, and history. The winning name was submitted by Pat Hearn Gregory with the name; "Fall Fun Fest", and it has been the name ever since.

FREE FRIED FRICKASEE

Many Wayne County residents can easily remember the free fried chicken dinner that was served for many years at the Fall Fun Fest on Saturday at lunch time. The lines to the serving tent began to form early in the morning and serving began at 11am. The menu was always the same; fried chicken, coleslaw, baked beans and a Pepsi product to drink.

During the late 70s and early 1980s the fried chicken feed required about 3,000 pounds of chicken. The food was prepared off site and brought to the down-town area. How do you serve 6000 people a hot lunch? The chicken was served out of galvanized trash cans.

Many civic organizations helped including the high school Home Ec classes, FFA, and the Boy Scouts. The Beta Eta ladies also helped with this huge task. Larry and Bryan Williams oversaw the serving lines.

It's funny how sitting on a street curb eating fried chicken on a sunny fall day can be such a fond memory. The Fairfield merchants had their final chicken dinner at the Fall Fun Fest in 1986 after 18 years of free chicken .

Music, food vendors, and carnival rides filled the streets. Sorority booths, clubs, school classes, and civic groups created the type of outdoor marketplace we recognize today to promote their activities. In 1975, the Prince and Princess contest began and proved to be an enduring tradition for the community. In 1975 the Fall Fun Fest featured the display of a rocket missile and a Liberty Bell replica. 1980 marked the first four-night festival and saw the beginning of Church Night on Wednesdays. It was also the first year for the Fall Fun Fest buttons which have carried on to the present day with new designs on the numbered buttons every year.



In 1985, the Fest added a 10K run. In 1988, the craft tent replaced the flea market. At one time, three long "big top" tents were used for all the various booths. The Chili Cook-off began in 1989. Throughout the years, various activities down-town, at the park and at the fair-grounds have also been added to the Fall lineup. The citizens of Wayne County, young and old, continue to come to the Fall Fun Fest. Our thanks to the organizers, businesses, merchants, organizations, clubs, civic groups and participants.

Dear Historical Society Member,

Your past membership with the Wayne County Historical Society reflects a support for our museums, activities, programs, publications, and social media. The strength of our membership has been the driving force of the Historical Society ever since it began in 1953. Membership ensures that you will receive our e-mails, mailings, notices and invitations to meetings and special events. Becoming a lifetime member guarantees that your membership will not lapse and shows a commitment to the future of the Historical Society. Please take a moment to fill out the individual membership form and return it to the Fairfield Public Library. By renewing in the fall, you are up to date for the current year, and the following calendar year.

In 2022, in coordination with the library remodel, the Early History Museum made several improvements. The electrical system was updated, and the ceiling was painted. The original linoleum floor was covered with new carpet. The Early History Museum houses artifacts from the 1800s and the early 1900s as well as the archives. The popular Hanna House Museum at the corner of South First Street and Center Street in Fairfield will be the focus of improvements in the next six months. Both museums experienced an increase in visitors this summer through youth and family activities.

Social media has expanded our reach and continues to be a valuable platform for sharing our history. The *History Mystery* radio spots air on WFIW at 6:45am and are also posted on the Historical Society Facebook page. Photos from the archives and members, posted to Facebook, generate lively discussions.

2023 will mark the 70th anniversary of the Historical Society. Several events will be planned for next year including a 2023 Cemetery Tour. A NEW Local Landmarks Project will highlight historical architecture, places, and churches. To continue the programs, events, museum displays, and archives the Society needs the involvement and support of members. Your input and knowledge are our greatest assets. We share an appreciation of the history of Wayne County, and we also feel an obligation to protect and promote local history for the community and for future generations.

- Join us at monthly meetings
- volunteer to help with activities and projects
- visit the museums and archives
- share your stories, knowledge, and insights of Wayne County

Thank you for choosing to be involved with the Historical Society.



The Historical Society purchased a small, full-featured copier for use by the members, museum staff, museum visitors, and archive researchers. In this digital age, it is still nice to have a paper copy. Within the past month, several people have visited the archives, found information, and been able to leave with a copy. Fragile scrapbook pages have been copied and filed for easier use. A museum visitor shared genealogical information, and we were able to make a copy for our files.

If you find something in the genealogy files or the museum archives files, we can make you a COPY.

The Archives has files on country schools, the military, civic clubs, local families, old photographs, old documents, past year books, old newspapers, ledgers, directories, old plat books, maps, etc.

Memorials

CHARLES PRESTON MATHEWS – FAIRFIELD May 28, 2022

Charles Preston Mathews, 79, co-owner and president of the Wayne County Press, passed away in his sleep Saturday evening at his Kincaid Acres home in Fairfield. Mr. Mathews had suffered from a serious liver condition for about two years. In recent months, his condition had deteriorated, requiring hospitalization for a week at St. Louis University Hospital. He returned home last Thursday, but had lost substantial weight and was in a weakened condition. The end was swift and unexpected for family members.

Funeral services were conducted with Rev. Melissa Garrison officiating. Burial in Maple Hill Cemetery. Memorials in his honor may be made to the Fairfield Park District to be used towards a splash pad.

Mr. Mathews was born in Washington, Ind., on June 18, 1942, the son of T. O. and Mabel (Cunningham) Mathews. He was educated in Fairfield's schools and attended briefly the University of Illinois and Murray State University. He married his high school sweetheart Reta Harlan on Oct. 6, 1963. Two children were born to them, and she and the children survive.

Mr. Mathews returned to Fairfield and took over operation of the newspaper's commercial printing plant, which he continued doing until his death. He was very active in community affairs and was a long-term member of the Fairfield Industrial Trust, the Fairfield Rotary Club, and the First United Methodist Church. Mr. Mathews served as chairman of the Fairfield National Bank board of directors. And in 1976, he helped form the Frontier Community College Foundation.



Surviving are his widow, Reta Mathews of Fairfield; one son, Tad of St. Louis, Mo.; one daughter, Angela Ash of Alpharetta, Ga.; two grandchildren, Ben Ash of Philadelphia, Pa., and Kate Ash of Alpharetta, Ga.; one brother, Tom Mathews Jr. of Fairfield.

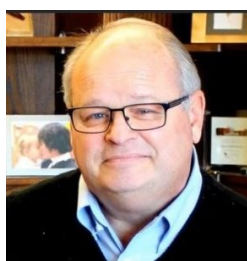
DR. MICHAEL DREITH – FAIRFIELD May 28, 2022

Dr. Michael Dreith, 65 of Fairfield passed away at 4:06 PM, Saturday, May 28, 2022, at Fairfield Memorial Hospital. Born on April 28, 1957, in Alton, IL to Lewis Dreith and Mary Etta (Hodge) Spalding, he married Carol Mayfield of Fairfield in July of 2005.

Mike was a founding stockholder in WBGZ radio in Alton, IL, and was Dean at Lewis and Clark Community College where he founded their radio program and their station, WLCA. He became the first graduate of a community college to become a community college president in Illinois when he came to Frontier Community College in 2001. He later went on to be president of Western Texas College in Snyder, TX, John A. Logan College in Carterville, IL, and provost at St. Louis Community College in Wildwood, MO. After semi retiring, he came back to Fairfield to be general manager of WFIW and WOKZ before becoming Mayor of Fairfield in May of 2021. Mike had also been a Trustee of the village of Bethalto, IL.

He was a member of the Cornerstone Community Church in Fairfield and had been a Sunday School Teacher at several churches throughout his life. Mike was a lifelong lover of Bassett Hounds, the St. Louis Cardinals, and the Kansas Jayhawks.

He is survived by his wife Carol Dreith of Fairfield, sons Andrew (Alicia) Dreith of Bethalto, Douglas (Katie) Dreith of Bethalto, and Alexander (Fiancé Chloe) Dreith of Springfield, MO, stepson Ryan Medder of Eagle Pass, TX, grandchildren Carson, Camden, Wyatt, Dempsey, and Millie Lou Dreith all of Bethalto, and Lexa Parsley of Heyworth, IL, his mother Mary Etta Spalding of Bethalto, and his sister Barbara (Bill) Watson of Bethalto. He was preceded in death by his father, and stepdaughter Rachel Parsley.



Funeral services for Mike Dreith were held in Fairfield, IL, with burial to follow in Maple Hill Cemetery. Memorials in his honor may be made to Frontier Community College Foundation, Cornerstone Community Church, Trimpe Middle School Athletic Department, or Guardian Angel Bassett Rescue.

Former Fairfield resident, **Martha “Marty” (Keith) Heflin**, 80, passed from this world to a better one on March 29, 2022 at 9 p.m. at her home in Franklin, TN. Born April 6, 1941 to Lewis and Ethel (Rickard) Keith in St. Louis, MO. She was a graduate of Fairfield Community High school (FCHS) Class of 1959. She graduated from Vanderbilt University with a BSN degree in 1963. Marty married Ron Heflin also of FCHS class of 1959, they had celebrated 59 years of marriage.



Marty worked as a registered nurse until 1970. After raising her two sons, she returned to college and received her Master's degree in Clinical Psychology in 1993 from University of Evansville. She then accepted a position as Administrator of the Wayne County Health Department, where she served 13 years until retirement in 2007. She was a member of Beta Eta chapter of Epsilon Sigma Alpha and a member of the Fairfield Memorial Hospital board.

Marty served her community in many ways. When her sons were young she was a Cub Scout den mother. In recent years as a member of First United Methodist Church she started the prayer shawl ministry “Knit Together”. She loved animals and was particularly fond of Terriers, owning Welsh and Border Terriers over the years including the locally renowned Welsh Terrier Dr. Pepper, a certified therapy dog that made many visits to the Fairfield nursing home. She was skilled in many crafts and loved sharing and teaching knitting and crocheting. An excellent public speaker, Marty shared her work at the Health Department, and her hobbies with various local groups.

Marty is survived by her husband Ronald W. Heflin of Franklin, TN; sons Keith (Debra) Heflin of Ridgecrest, CA and Floyd (May) Heflin of Franklin, TN. Also surviving are grandchildren Heather Dyson, Aiden Heflin, Claire Heflin, Emma Heflin, Jack Heflin, and Eliza Heflin; great grandchildren Honor Dyson, Wyatt Dyson, and Amelia Heflin; Sisters Connie (Rod) Reid and Lew Jean Rush of Fairfield along with many nieces and nephews.

Burial at Maple Hill Cemetery.

Christine Cable, 69, of Fairfield died on July 22, 2022, at Fairfield Memorial Hospital after a long struggle with Parkinson's disease, a struggle she faced with dignity and grace.

Chris was born in Haskell, Texas, on February 13, 1953, the second child of Warren and Annabelle Holman Cable. She was the salutatorian of Fairfield Community High School's class of 1971 and a graduate of St. Louis Christian College's class of 1975. She later earned a master's degree in counseling from SIU Edwardsville.

Chris is survived by her siblings Judy (Chuck) Griswold of Fairfield; Jim Cable of Dallas; and Cyndy (Kevin) Warren of Poughquag, NY, as well as nieces and nephews.

James Richard Griffith, Sr., age 87, passed away on June 1, 2022, at his home in Fairfield, IL.

Jim was born on February 5, 1935 to William and Irene Griffith in Fairfield, IL. He graduated from Fairfield Community High School's class of 1953. Jim retired from Country Companies Insurance as an agent in 1994. In his earlier years he worked for Griffith Motors, Independent Oil in the oilfields, and was owner/operator of the Dog N' Suds drive-in restaurant. Jim served as an Alderman for the Fairfield City Council for 32 years.

Grace Sullivan died peacefully Monday, May 30, 2022, in the Skilled Care Unit at Fairfield Memorial Hospital. Grace was born April 30, 1916, in her parents' house at 119 West Delaware Street in Fairfield, IL. She was one of four daughters of Lawrence (LA) and Winona J. Blackburn.

A determined student, Grace graduated with honors from Northwestern University in Evanston, IL in 1938 and worked as a Social Worker with Public Aid. In 1961, she began teaching 5th grade at Center Street School and taught for about 15 years. During her 106 years, Fairfield was home to Grace, and she dedicated her life to make an effort to give back to the community in which she lived.



She was active in the development of Fairfield Memorial Hospital and its renovations through the years. She was on the Board of the Fairfield Public Library and assisted in its expansion. Grace organized Meals on Wheels for the Fairfield area and was an active member and supporter of the First United Methodist Church as were her parents. Fairfield Chamber of Commerce honored her with the Community Service Award, and she also was named the Grand Marshall of the Kiwanis Christmas Parade. Grace's love of learning encouraged her to serve as the Campaign Chair for the Build a College Campaign, now named Frontier Community College. Like her father, she was always involved in bettering the City of Fairfield.

She enjoyed reading, gardening, traveling, sewing, playing bridge, being in The Every Wednesday Club, and above all else, spending time with her family.

Grace married the love of her life, the late Kenneth Sullivan, in 1940, and they had four children, Michael (Donna) Sullivan, Pat (Lee) Spade, Tim (Jane) Sullivan, Kathy (Jay) Burrus, 9 grandchildren, Tony Sullivan, Lori (Randy) Lofton, Todd (Misty) Burgie, Katy (Heath) O'Neal, Barbara (Kevin) Burgie Satterfield, Larry (Teresa) Sullivan, Kenn (Marie) Sullivan, Lindsay (Scot) Mitchell, and Julia (John) Pierson, 19 great grandchildren, and 1 step great great grandchild.

Burial in Maple Hill Cemetery.

Well-known 94-year-old Fairfield resident **Bob G. Johnson** passed away at 6:35 AM, Friday, July 1, 2022, at his home.

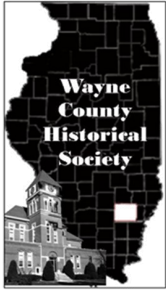
Born on July 26, 1927, in Broughton, IL to Harley and Beulah (Prince) Johnson. He graduated from Eldorado High School in 1945. Bob was a veteran of the US Army Air Force, where he served on a PT Boat and was stationed in Japan after World War II ended.

He went on to graduate from Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Chicago, IL in June of 1948 and marry Thelma Gholson of Eldorado on October 28, 1949. They moved to Fairfield in 1950 and he went to work at Dixon and Crippen Funeral Home. Bob remained with the business for the rest of his life, actively working until he was 90, during which it went on to become Dixon and Johnson Funeral Home in 1964, Johnson Funeral Home in 1977, and Johnson and Vaughn Funeral Home in 2008 when he turned over ownership to his grandson. He was very proud to serve the families of Wayne County for 72 years as a licensed Illinois Funeral Director and Embalmer.

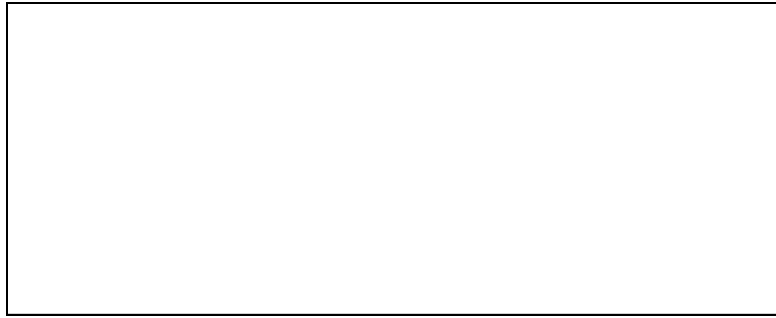
Bob served as Wayne County Coroner for 32 years, first being elected in 1956. He was also a longtime member of the First United Methodist Church, the Fairfield Rotary Club, and was an avid fisherman throughout his life.

Buddy (Bud) Ray Bashore, 85, of Fairfield passed away at 1:35PM on Friday May 27, 2022, at Deaconess Gateway Hospital in Newburgh, IN.

Bud worked at the local Kroger for 45 years, but also started and ran the Bashore Trash Hauling business during and after his Kroger years. While he was a hard worker, he always put family first. The kids in the family have many fun memories of their time spent with him. Survivors include one son- Nick (Gina) Bashore of Fairfield; two daughters- Tanya Ukena of Fairfield and Pam Smith of Geff; eight grandchildren; eight great grandchildren .



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Fairfield Public Library
300 S.E. 2nd Street
Fairfield, Illinois 62837



WAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER FALL 2022

Donna Savage, President DeLanna McDuffee, Vice President Jayla Morris, Secretary Judy Griswold, Treasurer
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Curators: Niki Roethe Jami Roethe Donna Savage



2022/2023 Wayne County Historical Society Membership Form

Individual First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

High School attended: _____ Graduation year: _____

_____ Annual \$15 _____ Lifetime \$300

Make checks payable to Wayne County Historical Society

Mail or drop off to:
Wayne County Historical Society Fairfield Public Library 300 S.E. 2nd Street Fairfield, Illinois 62837