

HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2020

ROARING INTO 2020

The Wayne County Historical Society was busy as 2019 came to a close. Over 80 people visited the Olive Branch Schoolhouse on Saturday, December 21 to view the vintage Christmas décor and the pictures on display. The Schoolhouse was open as part of the Festival of Lights event. Jami and Niki Roethe were dressed in traditional “school marm” attire and Gina Bashore provided slates and chalk for the many children who visited.

One hundred and thirty-seven skaters attended the Historical Society skating party on Friday, December 27th. Prizes were given to those students in period costume.

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
10:30am – 1:30pm

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

Olive Branch Schoolhouse
Leo French Park, Fairfield
Open various times
And by appointment

e-Mail:
wayneillinoishistory@gmail.com

Website:
wayneillinoishistory.com

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

The Wayne County Historical Society began 2020 with a new slate of officers. David Morris will serve as the new president, Donna Savage vice-president, Terry Prizer as secretary, and Judy Griswold as treasurer. Historical Society trustees are Judith Puckett, Otis Brach, Don Wood and Doug Aman. Museum curators are Gina Bashore, Niki Roethe, and Jami Roethe.



Mike Mossburger, Dave Morris, Terry Prizer, Judy Griswold, Donna Savage

The Society offers Annual and Life Memberships. Annual Memberships are \$15 and run from January through December. Lifetime membership is a one-time payment for permanent membership for \$300. The organization currently meets on the third Thursday of every month at 6pm.

The Early History Museum & Archives is housed at the library. The Hannah House Museum is a few blocks from the Library, and the Olive Branch Schoolhouse is at Leo French Park. These museums are maintained by the organization. Various program and annual events are also conducted by The Historical Society.

2020 MAPLE HILL CEMETERY TOUR

Planning is underway for the Historical Society Cemetery Tour at Maple Hill Cemetery east of Fairfield. Due to the popularity of last year's inaugural event, organizers are planning for another big production for 2020.

The title of this year's tour will be “The Famous and The Infamous.” Of course, the infamous Shelton Gang will be included. Other interesting profiles will also be highlighted. Those attending the event will enjoy the gentle wagon ride around the cemetery and the wonderful actor vignettes along the way. All stories involve notable people buried at Maple Hill Cemetery, or past citizens of Fairfield, or famous people with a tie to Wayne County.

It takes the support and hard work of many society members and volunteers to present the Cemetery Tour. Everyone will learn something about the history of Wayne County by attending or helping with the Cemetery tour. Volunteers and actors are still needed. For more information contact Donna Savage at donnagreensavage@yahoo.com or Terry Prizer at seprizer@gmail.com

In light of the COVID 19 Pandemic consult Facebook, WFIW Community Connection and the Wayne County Press for 2020 Cemetery Tour Dates.

2020 JANUARY MEETING AT COURT HOUSE

The Wayne County Historical Society met on Thursday, January 16th at 6 p.m. at the Wayne County Courthouse with 24 members in attendance. A tour of the historical photographs on the main floor was conducted then the members moved to the Wayne County boardroom.

The meeting began with Judith Puckett providing a program on the history of the courthouse. It was an informative and extremely interesting presentation. Thank you Judith!

Upcoming projects for the Society include some work on the display cases at the Early History Museum. The cases will receive new lighting and a new coat of paint. There was also some discussion about the state of the fire prevention system at the Hanna House. Both are ongoing projects that will be in the works for a while. There were several new members at the meeting.



WAYNE COUNTY COURTHOUSE TIMELINE

- 1819 Illinois becomes a state. Fairfield named the county seat.
- 1821 The first courthouse was built of logs and only about 18 feet square.
- 1836 Two story brick courthouse built. Visited by Lincoln.
- 1853 Henry Voltz hanging.
- 1860 Additional brick building built on the southwest corner. "Fireproof" building was used for records storage. This building burned November 1886. Many county records were destroyed in the fire.
- 1891 The current courthouse was built. The imposing clock tower remained without a timepiece until 1912.
- 1916 Frank Kirby, The Human Fly climbed the courthouse steeple during a street fair event. He fell, but survived the fall.
- 1923 The bandstand was added.
- 1939 The Lincoln Monument was dedicated.
- 1943 The Honor Roll Arch dedicated.
- 1950s Additions were constructed on both sides of the courthouse.
- 1965 The clock tower was repaired and made shorter.
- 1997 Addition and handicap elevator added.
- 2012 Metal detectors added to the elevator entrance.

The southwest corner of the courthouse lawn has always been a busy spot. The big tree, probably planted after the "fireproof" fire, provides wonderful shade in the summer months. Benches have always provided a place to sit and rest and watch downtown traffic go by. An early era movie theater was across the street to the west, for many years and the popcorn wagon sat on the courthouse lawn. During the 60's and 70's Santa's house sat on that corner. More recently, the corner is the popular spot for Saturday porkburger sales.



FEBRUARY MEETING

The Wayne County Historical Society held its monthly meeting Thursday, February 20th at 6 p.m. at the Fairfield Public Library with 21 members in attendance. Refreshments were provided by Donna Savage, Jami & Niki Roethe. The meeting was opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Dave Morris reported that he was able to meet with Brian Banovz concerning the fire extinguishers and smoke detectors at the Hanna House Museum. After discussion, the society will purchase three new fire extinguishers and hire Mr. Banovz to annually inspect, update and tag the extinguishers.

The display cases at the Early History Museum are being updated with LED bulbs and a bright coat of paint. Curator Gina Bashore reported that one case has been painted along with installation of new LED lighting. Progress will continue on the remaining cases, one at a time. It is a vast improvement and makes the items easier to see. Come by the EHM to see Gina and Dave's case improvements.

In honor of President's Day, Niki and Jami Roethe gave a presentation about George Washington. Several members shared interesting facts about our first President.



HANNA HOUSE LEASE EXTENDED

At the Historical Society meeting in December 2019, members unanimously approved continuing to lease the Hanna House for an additional 10 year lease. Society President Dave Morris will contact the city attorney to conclude any official signature that might be needed.

On February 11th, 2020, the Fairfield city council unanimously extended the lease on the Hanna House Museum at 100 East Center Street in Fairfield for an additional 10 years at \$50 a year.

The Hanna House Museum contains artifacts from the 1950s through the present. The Museum is open April through October. Jami Roethe and Niki Roethe are the museum curators.



VINTAGE DRESS ON DISPLAY FOR VALENTINE'S DAY

This beautiful dress was owned by Lucretia Bonham Creighton. She wore it when she graduated from Cincinnati Wesleyan College in 1886.

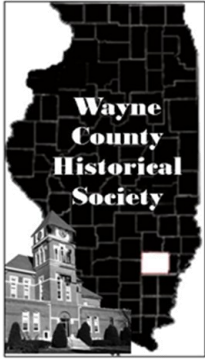
Lucretia was the first woman to graduate college from Wayne County, Illinois. She and her husband, Judge Jacob R. Creighton, built the house in 1895, now known as *The Victorian on Main, Bed and Breakfast*.

The Victorian on Main was honored to welcome Lucretia Bonham Creighton's dress "home" as part of the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce "How Sweet It Is" Valentine's Dinner.

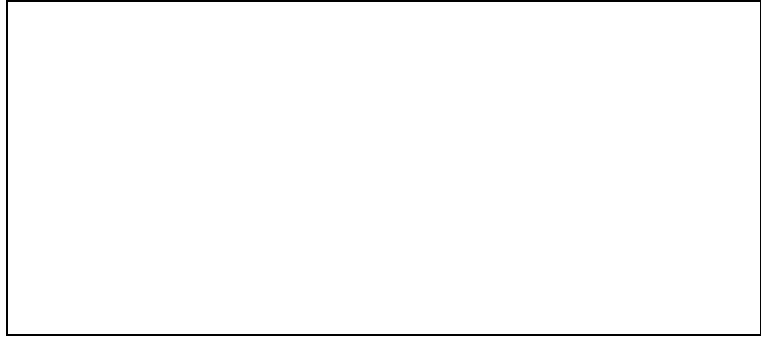
After being on display at the *Victorian on Main*, the lovely dress returned to its current home at the Early History Museum, at the Fairfield Public Library. Curator Gina Bashore assisted with preparing and staging the dress.

The Early History Museum has several wonderful articles of vintage clothing on display including men's, women's and military attire. The museum is open most Saturdays 10:30-1:30pm.





Don't Let History be a Mystery!



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



WAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY 2020 FIRST QUARTER NEWSLETTER



Court House, Fairfield, Illinois.

In this newsletter;

- *January Meeting highlights*
- *February Meeting highlights*
- *History of the Wayne County Courthouse timeline*
- *Wayne County Historical Society 2020 Cemetery Tour*
- *Lucretia Bonham Creighton Dress*

COVID-19 Pandemic of 2020

On March 16, 2020, in response to the epidemic sweeping the globe, the White House announced a program called “15 Days to Slow the Spread”. On March 20, 2020 the State of Illinois released an executive “Stay at Home” order in response to the virus. All persons are requested to limit personal contact. Schools and non-essential businesses are closed. It was necessary to cancel the March and April meetings of the Wayne County Historical Society. Programs and activities have been postponed.

Wayne County Historical Society officers and board members met by phone and in person before the state-wide “stay at home” mandate began. Several decisions were made and a strategy developed to help our organization and members through the next weeks and months. Members will be kept apprised of any changes or updates through email, Facebook, WFIW community connection and the Wayne County Press.