



WAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter



Don't let local history be a mystery!

Wayne County Historical Society
c/o 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.org

Facebook:
Wayne-County-Historical-Society



Happy New Year, 2022. from the Wayne County Historical Society

January Meeting

The Wayne County Historical Society will meet Thursday, January, 20, 2022 at 6pm at the Fairfield Public Library for the first meeting of the new year. The program will be presented by member/director, Don Wood about his recently published book of photos of Mill Shoals during the Flood of 1961. Everyone is welcome to attend. Please use the southwest museum back door to enter.

Time to JOIN or RENEW membership

The last page of this newsletter includes a membership form. Membership runs calendar year, so NOW is a great time to join the Historical Society. Yearly membership is ONLY \$15 and provides e-mail notification of events and activities. Renew your membership with the same form and donation. The Historical Society has amazing members from near and far. In 2021 we added 31 new members!

Stay connected with the Wayne County Historical Society **FACEBOOK PAGE!** The page often has interesting discussions sparked by the photos, tidbits, links and podcasts.

DEC 2021
JAN 2022

Historical Society Happenings



Hanna House

The Hanna House passed out treats the last Saturday of October for Halloween. The Museum is closed for the winter and will reopen in April. New decorative trees have been planted in the front yard thanks to a generous donation. Niki and Jami Roethe carried the Historical Society banner in the Fairfield Christmas parade and walked behind Mike Mossburger's classic car.

Mike Mossburger also organized the FREE SKATE during Christmas vacation. A total of 187 kids participated.

Early History Museum

Winter is a great time to visit the Early History Museum. Browse the displays or read an old newspaper. The archives include old plat books, family histories and old photographs. The Early History Museum is attached to the Fairfield Public Library and is open **Saturdays 10:30am—1:30pm** and by appointment.

Come in and look through the **Rinard Binder created by Ed McCormick**. The thick binder includes photographs of people and places in Rinard, Illinois from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Thanks to Linda Hanks Headley and family for a donation of photographs and documents.

Olive Branch Schoolhouse

The Olive Branch Schoolhouse was decorated and open during the VPF Saturday evening Christmas in the Park event. Over 70 visitors stopped by and imagined what the Holidays were like in a one room school.

Visitors received an orange or candy cane.



SARAH BOGGS BEQUEATHS GENEROUS GIFT

The officers and directors of the Wayne County Historical Society are excited to announce a bequeath of \$388,000 for the purpose of preserving and promoting the history of Wayne County.

The gift was made by the estate of Sarah Boggs, the daughters of John Boggs, M.D. and Corrinne (Steiner) Boggs.

Sarah Boggs and her sister Ruth attended FCHS in the 1940s. After college, Sarah obtained a PhD. and taught at the university level in St. Louis. Ruth taught English and earned a Masters of Library and information Science. She resided most of her adult life in Seattle, Washington. The sisters liked to travel. They also did extensive genealogy research over the years and donated several boxes of items to the Historical Society archives. The Historical Society was notified of the bequeath from Sarah Boggs this summer with the passing of her sister Ruth. Ruth's estate is still in probate at this time.

The generous gift will provide an endowment of funding for years to come allowing the Historical Society to maintain and improve their facilities and services.

The Sarah Boggs gift was announced at the December meeting of the Historical Society.



Officers Re-elected

The December meeting of the Historical Society included the re-election of the current officers. The nominating committee presented the slate of officers to the members. The 2022-2023 officers are Dave Morris, president, Donna Savage vice-president, Terry Prizer secretary, and Judy Griswold treasurer.

Henry Voltz Hanging

The November meeting of the Historical Society included a fascinating presentation by Judith Puckett on the hanging of Henry Voltz. A lively discussion followed the presentation. Judith has researched several different sources including court records of Wayne and White County. The following summary only scratches the surface of this mysterious event.

Henry Voltz, an immigrant peddler, was arrested when the body of his partner, named Lawler, was found murdered in White County in 1853. The controversial case was moved to Fairfield for the trial. The full account is sketchy and conflicting, but Voltz, who could not speak English well, was found guilty. He was hanged on May 24, 1853 on a gallows built on a hill west of Fairfield before a large crowd. Voltz's final words were recorded as, "I am an innocent man; the man who killed Lawler is in this crowd today; you are hanging an innocent man." He was buried beneath the scaffold with the rope still around his neck. At some point Voltz reportedly identified a man named Campbell as the killer. This man left the area and later died in Memphis, TN. On his deathbed Campbell apparently confessed that he had killed Lawler and that Voltz was innocent.

Member Memorials

George Willard

Dr. George Roderick Willard, Bradford, VT — On Thursday, June 24, 2021, surrounded by family and friends, Dr. George Roderick Willard passed away peacefully at home at the age of 82.

George was born August 25, 1938, to John and Irene (Poorman) Willard of New Kensington, PA.

George enjoyed reading, travelling (both internationally and to his farm in Fairfield, Illinois), spending time with his beloved Beagles, swimming, genealogy, history and completing the most challenging crossword puzzles he could find. After retiring from teaching, George divided his time between West Palm Beach, Florida and Newbury, Vermont where he became active with the First Congregational Church of Newbury and Newbury Historical Society.

George was predeceased by his wife Jane (Crowe) Willard; parents, John and Irene Willard; brother, Rev. Jack Willard; and nephew, Patrick Willard.

George is survived by nephew Erich and Jennifer Mann of Berkeley Heights, NJ; sister-in-law Mariolin D. Willard of Gibsonia, PA; nephew John and Emily Willard of Gibsonia, PA; nephew James Willard of

Hadley, PA; as well as numerous other nieces and nephews.



Mickey Borah

81-year-old Wayne M. "Mickey" Borah of Fairfield, died at 9:03am on Saturday, October 30, 2021 at his home.

Mickey was born on May 5, 1940, in Fairfield, to Wayne and Sylvia (Galbraith) Borah. On August 16, 1962, he and the love of his life, Emilie Kaye (Vaughn) Borah, eloped in Texas, for which he felt was his greatest accomplishment in life.



Mickey spent 30 years working at Airtex Products before taking his stand as a municipal leader. He worked his way up the ladder, beginning as a drill press operator, then becoming the machine shop foreman. He was then transferred to Allentown, PA where he worked at the industry's distribution manager for a few years. After returning home, he worked as the night superintendent and then moved to the day superintendent. In 1980, he became Airtex's general superintendent, a position he kept for 18 years before retiring.

Mickey served as the mayor of Fairfield from 2001 through 2013, making him one of only two mayors to be elected to a third term. While serving as mayor, he accomplished many things like securing the Sanyo building for Frontier Community College, selling the old Walmart building to Elastec, bringing the lamp post lighting to the downtown area, along with many other things. He had a heart for our local hospital and school systems and wanted to make sure they were taken care of. He was named Citizen of the Year in 2003 and also served on the board for the Career Development Center and served as the President of the Hands for the Handicapped for a time. Mickey was a member of the Ellen Moore United Methodist Church in Fairfield, where he served in many different positions over the years, one being Sunday School Superintendent, and was also a member of the choir.

Survivors include his wife Kaye Borah of Fairfield, one daughter Kelli Hixenbaugh of Fairfield, daughter-in-law: Shelly Borah, eleven grandchildren Elissa Suddarth, Heather Suddarth (Michael Masterson), Megan Borah, Madison Borah, Taylore Joslin (Jase Kiefer), Tallen Hixenbaugh, Alek Hixenbaugh, Adilynn Hixenbaugh, Emily (Logan) Meriwether, Grace Borah (Jake Pollard), and Wyatt Borah, five great grandchildren, one brother David Borah of Florida, and two sisters Sienna (Ted) Kelsey of Fairfield, and Billie Borah of Texas.

He was preceded in death by his parents, three sons Christopher Borah, Matt Borah, and Mike Borah, one daughter Michelle Borah, two brothers Tom Borah and Gary Borah, and one sister Shirley Pontius.

Don't let local history be a mystery!

The Historical Society has gathered a wealth of information concerning the people of Wayne County, but it should not cease to seek out more facts. It is an old saying that a people who have no pride in their past, cannot expect much of their future.

Our historical society has a vital duty to perform. Some may ask, "Why do people write local history, knowing in advance that it will take hours upon hours of research, and in the end produce little more than a few recorded stories, and no income?". That critic can hardly be expected to appreciate the answer that we might give, for it can be defined only as a love of our history, a love for one's community and a pride in the people who came before us.



The Society hopes to persuade you that the investigation of our local history and the reconstruction of the past is one of the most pleasant pastimes for anyone of any age. It is a hobby that can be worked on year-round at little or no expense.

The CURRENT members of the Historical Society suggest, as with any hobby, start small. We suggest you browse our Historical Society Facebook page or Website. Take a walk through the Early History Museum some Saturday. Begin to notice what interests you about the past. Spend some time looking through the archives, old newspapers, or old photographs. Begin to organize and document your research in a way that can be shared. And when you are inspired and motivated...."Share YOUR unique story of your personal past." We need your local story.....so that local history isn't a mystery!

Membership

Thank you for supporting the Wayne County Historical Society through your new membership or renewal. Your contribution is a key part of our ability to maintain an increasingly strong and dependable presence in the community and county. One goal for 2022 is to increase membership. We are so close to surpassing 200 members! That goal is attainable if current members renew their membership and invite a friend or family member. Adding members from all over the county strengthens our organization, so we want to hear from residents of Wayne City, Cisne, and Mt. Erie. Our members who live outside the county, or even outside the state love to stay connected with membership e-mails and mailings. The \$15 annual membership is so affordable, or make the leap to lifetime membership for a one-time donation of \$300. The Society is a not-for-profit, 501 (c) 3 organization and donations are tax deductible.

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Happy 2022!

David Morris, President

Donna Savage, Vice President Terry Prizer, Secretary Judy Griswold, Treasurer

Trustees: Judith Puckett Otis Brach Don Wood Doug Aman

Curators: Niki Roethe Jami Roethe Archivist: Donna Savage

Happy New Year!

2022 Wayne County Historical Society Membership Form

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State/Zip: _____

E-Mail: _____ Phone: _____

High School attended: _____ Graduation year: _____

Option: 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