



WAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Newsletter

Don't let local history be a mystery!

SPRING
2023



Historical Society

70th Anniversary

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

1953—2023

From the beginning, the duty of the Historical Society has been to collect and preserve materials for the study of the past; to inspire local historians, and to instill pride in all Wayne County citizens for the accomplishments of our forbears.

The 1953 members of the Wayne County Historical Society envisioned an organization busy with meetings, lectures, programs, research, tours and parties. The early group could only dream of a day when filing cabinets were over-flowing with printed information and museum spaces rotated items for public viewing.

The Early History Museum and the Hanna House Museum are open Saturdays from 10am—2pm.

Everyone is invited to the April Historical Society meeting at 6pm on April 20 at the Courthouse Bandstand as we award the first Heritage Landmarks Award.

Planning meetings have begun for the 2023 Historical Society Cemetery Tour. The Big EVENT will be held September 8 and 9, 2023. The next planning meeting will be Saturday, April 29th at 10:30am at the Fairfield Library meeting room. Everyone welcome to attend.

A Historical Society's strength lies in its members. Membership is open to anyone and is only \$15 annually.

January Meeting

To kick off 2023, the Historical Society met in January at the library for a meeting and a display of paintings by Wasson Lawrence. Mr. Lawrence was the first president of the Historical Society in 1953. He was a graduate of FCHS and the University of Illinois. He was an engineer and served one term as mayor of Fairfield. Painting was his pastime. He painted several pictures of the people and places around Fairfield. He was instrumental in building the library, the meeting room and the museum room. He painted and installed the mural in the library meeting room.



February Meeting

“The Story of the Staircase that Found a Home” was the topic of the February Historical Society meeting. When the Society leased the old Fairfield Medical Clinic, the original central staircase from the 1876 home had been removed. The clinic workers used a narrow back stairway to access the upstairs offices.

Remodeling the clinic into a museum took over two years and the central hallway was particularly challenging. The medical clinic had lined the halls with cabinets, sinks, a reception desk, and shelving. The original staircase had been destroyed after its removal. The gaping hole between the two levels seemed destined to be a permanent problem. Then an unusual offer of a dismantled and stored staircase came to the Society. The ornate staircase was painstakingly rebuilt at the Hanna House.



March Meeting

Members of the society met in March at the Lebanon North CP Church. The group enjoyed a nice potluck meal and learned about the 150-year history of the church from some of its members.

The history of the church began in 1871 with members meeting in homes. In the 1880s the group met in the neighborhood schoolhouse. The first church building was erected in 1895 and was used until 1956 when the current brick sanctuary was built. The kitchen and fellowship room were added in 2003.

This event helped to kick off the society’s current project of recording and preserving the history of the many churches in Wayne County.



Author views Shelton items at Hanna House

Mike Stafford, an author from Columbus, Indiana, visited the Hanna House during a private tour in March. He was in town gathering photographs and information about a book that he is currently writing on Wayne County’s famous Shelton gang. He said that his book, while fiction, will have many events based on historic facts concerning the Shelton brothers and their relationship with Charlie “Blackie” Harris, and others in and around the Fairfield community. Mr. Stafford stated that his book was currently being read by a producer in Los Angeles and could perhaps be turned into a type of limited series for Netflix.



Framed print of General Anthony Wayne

Our thanks to Donald Garrison for the donation of the framed print of General Anthony Wayne. Wayne County is named after the Revolutionary war general, sometimes referred to as “Mad” Anthony Wayne.

Wayne County officially became a separate county on March 26, 1819.



Wayne County Historical Society HERITAGE PROJECT

*Recognition of the People, Places, and Events
of Wayne County, Illinois*



HERITAGE LANDMARK Award, Recognition and Plaque

Lang Hotel built 1881 2023 Joe's Body Shop

Corner of East 4th and Main Street—Fairfield, Illinois

The Wayne County Historical Society's HERITAGE Landmark program is designed to recognize buildings of community importance that are being restored or maintained, thereby increasing public awareness and appreciation of our county's rich historical heritage.

The large, three-story building was built in the 1881 and operated as a hotel until 1918. With the arrival of motor cars, the building served as a showroom for several different dealerships.

Our thanks to the present owners; Joe's Body Shop, for maintaining this important architectural landmark that anchors the eastern corner of the courthouse square.

Plan to attend the April 20th meeting of the Wayne County Historical Society at 6pm for the presentation of the Award. The meeting will be held outside at the Wayne County Courthouse Bandstand, in view of Joe's Body Shop. Everyone is welcome to attend.



Heritage Churches

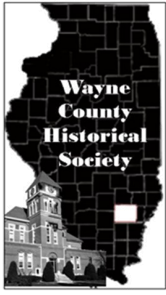
This year one of priorities is to collect the histories of the churches of Wayne County. We cannot do this without the help of congregations and individuals who can collaborate with us on specific churches. We are especially interested, too, in churches that are no longer active. In those cases, we need help finding people to talk to about the old churches.

We can work with groups or individuals to collect information. We hope to put as much information, photographs, or records about the churches of Wayne County into our permanent and secure archives for public use for years to come. We hope to create a book of Wayne County Churches.

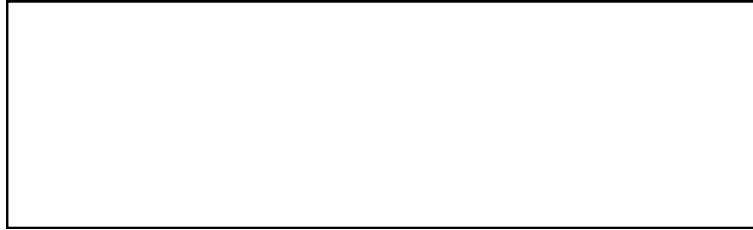
We certainly appreciate your consideration of this work. We believe it is important to get this material collected and preserved for the future. To submit Church History information you can contact us by mail or email.

Mail: WC Historical Society, 300 S.E. 2nd, Fairfield, IL 62837

E Mail: wcihs@gmail.com



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



Judith Puckett, President DeLanna McDuffee, Vice President Jala Morris, Secretary Judy Griswold, Treasurer
Trustees: Doug Aman Donna Savage David Land
Archivists: Niki Roethe Jami Roethe Donna Savage

WAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER SPRING 2023



Don't let local history be a mystery! Support the Wayne County Historical Society.

*Use the following form for **NEW** and **RENEWAL** memberships. Thank you!*

2023 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