



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

December 2015

The Newsletter of the Pioneer & Historical Society of Muskingum County

MUSEUMS OF THE PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MUSKINGUM COUNTY

The Stone Academy Historic Site & Museum
115 Jefferson Street
Zanesville, Ohio

Dr. Increase Mathews House Museum
304 Woodlawn Avenue
Zanesville, Ohio

Both museums are open by appointment October through April. Regular hours will resume May 1.

To schedule a tour, call the museum office at the Stone Academy at 740-454-9500 or contact us through our website www.Muskingumhistory.org.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 2015

Dear Members and supporters of the Pioneer and Historical Society of Muskingum County,

First let me wish you all a Happy Holiday! This will be my final President's message. I am passing the role of leadership to Mitch Taylor. After eight years I am somewhat tired and need a break. Mitch has had that same amount of time to recover from his last term as President. I will assume the office of Vice-President of P&HS starting in 2016. Like all groups, after a while we need some new leadership, with new ideas and ambitions or at least a break now and then. I do not envision many changes in things for now at least. We continue to operate and maintain our buildings and collection of artifacts. I hope you would agree that progress is continuing to be

made in our mission of educating our residents and protecting our buildings and collections for future generations. I wish to thank the many people that have assisted me in my term of office. Jim Geyer was essential as was Mitch Taylor. The Board of Trustees was supportive and willing to share the work load when asked to do so. The Friends of P&HS were also very helpful in their financial support, lots of cookies and their many programs. We have been fortunate to receive financial support from many individuals, various grants and trusts. Without that financial support we would have had to hang out For Sale signs a long time ago. So, a very heartfelt thank you to all of you who helped during the terms of my presidency. I could not have accomplished anything without your help.

Recently, we have acquired many interesting documents, photos and background information from the *Times Recorder* which sold their downtown office and needed to eliminate most of their archival materials. We were happy to accept them. Many are reels of microfilm of most of all their paper editions, many documents, and hundreds of photos of events, people and places in Muskingum County. They provided us with the machinery to read the microfilm as well, which was all very generous of them. It will take many years to organize, catalog and protect this information for future generations. It is certainly worth maintaining for the future. We do not currently have adequate space to store everything the way we would like to but for now they are protected. We also had our reed organ repaired and made usable again, something we have talked about for several years. We plan to put it to good use very soon.

Wishing all of you a healthy and prosperous New Year for 2016. It has been an honor to work with this organization.

Respectfully yours,

Bob Jenkins, PRESIDENT, PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Probably Not a Good Idea (part two)

Jim Geyer, Museum Director

NOTE: The title of this article and much of the information comes from the *Local History Notebook*, a publication of the Local History Office of the Ohio History Connection.

Wearing Items from the Clothing Collection

As we prepare to launch a new Living History initiative in 2016 there will likely be renewed inquiries regarding the use of items from our clothing collection. We hope to have several living history presenters available to appear, in character and in authentic period clothing, at events, programs, and motor coach tours. It would seem that the museum's clothing collection would be a valuable asset available for this new initiative. The temptation to allow our living historians access to the clothing collection is certainly a strong one. But it's probably NOT a good idea.

To allow clothing items to be worn would be putting the collection at risk. The Society board, as reflected in the P&HS Collections Policy, sees the protection of the collection as a serious responsibility. Allowing clothing to be worn implies that clothing artifacts are either sturdier or less important than other objects in the collection. That is not the case.

Clothing artifacts help describe culture in a way that people can easily understand. They are also extremely fragile and have a limited lifespan. People were smaller and built differently in earlier times. Fabrics weaken over time and are more subject to strain. There is also the probability of transferring soil and bodily oils to the fabric. Wearing an item even once shortens its existence. Karyn Jean Harris, in her book *Costume Display Techniques*, says that wearing a piece of historical clothing is probably the worst possible treatment it could receive.

(The complete P&HS Collections Policy is available on our website, www.muskingumhistory.org. Click on "About Us" and scroll down to "Governing Documents")

Exhibiting All of the Collection

Continuous exhibition of museum artifacts shortens their lifespan. The rationale given by historical societies and museums for exhibiting everything

in their collection focuses on the expectation of donors. Many organizations operate on the premise that donors want to see their items on display and worry that if they don't, additional gifts may be withheld. But a museum's priority must be to protect its collection, not to please (or appease) donors or potential donors. According to G. Ellis Burcaw (*Introduction to Museum Work*) the results of putting everything on display include poor exhibits, too little space for storage of collections as they grow, and poor management of stored collections.

History museums often have the reputation of displaying the same old stuff in the same old way, without ever making changes. People who visit such museums rarely return for a second visit. The key to overcoming such a reputation may be the use of temporary exhibits that combine artifacts in different ways to bring out different aspects of local history. This is not possible if all of the collection is on display all the time.

Renting Out the Museum

Like many small local history organizations, P&HS continues to address issues related to the use of its historic buildings to generate income and the use of its buildings by outside groups. In the past, especially when the budget was tight, the Stone Academy has been rented out to generate income for operations and programming. We've also allowed outside groups to use our buildings. **Preservation responsibilities** should always be a major consideration in any discussions or decisions regarding the use of our museums.

In her article, "Using Historic Sites for Generating Revenue: A Case for Restraint", Anne W. Ackerson suggests that pressure to use museums to generate income or for use as a service to other community groups usually comes from those who do not understand historic preservation. She suggests that when making decisions about using museums for special events it is important to consider the sponsor, the purpose, on the location of such events.

The P&HS policy for use of our buildings by non-affiliated groups is available on our website. That policy includes the following guidelines:

- Protection of the buildings and artifacts is an important prerequisite for all activities.
- The nature of events and activities that take place in the buildings should be consistent with the purpose of the Pioneer and Historical Society of Muskingum County.

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- Our museums are operated and maintained as a service to our community. Use by non-affiliated groups should be consistent with this principle.
- It is not our desire to use the buildings to generate income unrelated to the purpose of the organization.

NOTE: This two-part article was not intended to be a comprehensive account of all practices and procedures associated with operating local history museums. Its purpose was to begin a discussion, not to be the final word. We continue to look for better ways to operate our organization and take care of our historic artifacts and buildings.

As always, if you have questions, comments, or concerns call or send an email. I look forward to hearing from you.

P&HS RECEIVES *TIMES RECORDER* ARCHIVES

The world of newspaper publishing is changing rapidly. As readership shrinks so has the physical size of many papers. New technology means that the same amount of paper can be produced with a smaller staff and by using the internet, the content of a paper can be transmitted to a printing press in a nearby city allowing several different papers to be printed in one facility. The *Zanesville Times Recorder* had been written and printed at the Zanesville Publishing Company's building on South Fourth Street since the mid-1920s but changes in the newspaper business caused the paper's current owner, the Gannett Company, to tell the *Times Recorder* that they needed to find smaller quarters. Accordingly, in November of this year the TR left downtown Zanesville for the Northpointe Center in the north end of Zanesville. The downsizing meant that many things had to be left behind. The Historical Society is very grateful that *Times Recorder* Editor Pam James offered the entire *Times Recorder* archives to us.

Among items in the archives are microfilms of Zanesville newspapers going back to 1812 (a similar collection of newspapers on film is available at the McIntire Library), metal plates used to print photos in the paper, 8x10 B&W glossy photos from the 1950s to 1970s, B&W negatives, a clippings file, scrapbooks, mounted studio photos, and books including city and county directories, histories and govern-

ment publications. These are valuable resources whose research value will increase through the years.

The archives are a wonderful gift to us but they are also a challenge. The first problem was finding a place to store 14 filing cabinets and many books and loose photos. For research purposes it would have been best to have all of these materials in one location but that was not possible and they are now split between our two museums. The former Manufacturing Room at the Increase Mathews House has been emptied and after the room has been painted and cleaned some of the lesser used archives from the Stone Academy library will be moved there, opening up space in the library. Most of the books have been incorporated into our current library holdings.

The photographic plates and negatives are particular challenges. Some of the plates with half-tone dots can be scanned and manipulated to produce useable prints but others cannot be used with any methods available to us at this time. The techniques used to produce prints from B&W negatives have changed since the advent of digital photography and now it involves photographing the negative and then scanning the photograph. Special equipment is needed so we will store the negatives until technology changes.

Clippings files have a built-in conservation problem because modern high-acid newsprint is inherently unstable and degrades quickly. Some of the clippings can only be unfolded a few times before they will fall apart.

The microfilms and photographs will be the first archival materials to be available for use but they need to be sorted and catalogued and we need to find a better work space in which to use them.

The *Times Recorder* archives is the largest collection of research material ever donated to the Pioneer and Historical Society and we are honored that they have been entrusted to us. We have already started to make use of the archives but much work lies ahead of us before they will be made available to the public. With our limited personnel we cannot honor requests from the public to research particular topics. As the situation changes we will let you know through this newsletter and on our Facebook page.

FAMOUS FOLK FROM OUR FAIR CITY

In the September 2015 issue of this newsletter we reprinted a *Times Recorder* article describing Zane Grey's return to his home town in 1921. Grey was honored at a dinner complete with speechifying and hometown boosterism. The print edition of our newsletter had a shortened version of the article but in the digital edition [available at Musk-ingumhistory.org; click on "About Us" and then "Read Our Newsletter Online"] we were able to present the entire article including an address by Mrs. O. N. Townsend entitled "To the Men and Women of Zanesville—Where'er They Live" in which she imagined what "these illustrious sons and daughters might do for Zanesville if their aptitudes were turned loose here at home." Some of her "famous" people are well-known to most of us but others are more obscure. Let us take a look at them.

Cass Gilbert



Born in Zanesville in 1859, died in 1934. Gilbert's family moved to Minnesota when he was nine years old and Zanesville seems to have held little importance to him. As an architect he is known for the evolution of the skyscraper and for many grand

public buildings that he designed including the United Supreme Court building and the capitols of West Virginia and Minnesota.

Alfred Granger

Born in Zanesville in 1867, died 19139. Granger was an architect practicing principally in Chicago. He was the son of Judge Moses Granger and the brother of Ethel Granger Schultz for whom he designed the Schultz Mansion on Putnam Avenue, a wedding present from her husband.

Ralph Mershon

Ralph Davenport Mershon was born in Zanesville in 1868, the son of Ralph Smith Mershon, a jeweler and watch maker. He was an electrical engineer with many patents in the areas of electrical transmission and radio. He left a large part of his estate to his alma mater, Ohio State University, which used some of the funds to build Mershon Auditorium.



Walter Aston

Born in 1873 in Zanesville, died in 1931. All we can find about him is that he was a civil engineer.

Zane Grey

Born in Zanesville in 1872, died in 1939. You read his books this fall as part of On the Same Page Musk-ingum.

Elizabeth Robins

Born in Louisville, Kentucky, in 1862, died in 1952. Robins grew up in her grandmother's house, the Stone Academy. She first acted in a stage play in Zanesville but received her greatest fame while living in England where she was an actress, author, playwright and suffragette. As an example of the level of drama in her family's life, her husband committed suicide by wading into the Charles River while wearing a full suite of theatrical armor leaving behind a note reading "I will not stand in your light any longer."



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Howard Chandler Christy



Christy was born in Morgan County in 1873 and died in 1952. We can claim him since he lived in Muskingum County as a child and maintained a home and studio, The Barracks, south of Duncan Falls. He first gained fame for his sketches of the Spanish American War and for magazine covers but later became known for portraits of society ladies and grand historical works.

Charles Gebst

Born at Madison, Indiana, in 1873, his family moved to Zanesville in 1883 where his father was a music teacher. Gebst was an arranger and conductor for George M. Cohan.

Otis Harlan



Born in Zanesville in 1865, died in 1940. Harlan first acted in vaudeville and then moved to motion pictures. He is best remembered today as the voice of Happy in "Snow White

and the Seven Dwarfs."

Hugh Wiley

Born in 1884 in Zanesville, died in 1968. Wiley was the author of the Mr. Wong series of pulp detective stories about a Chinese-American agent of the US Treasury Department. Boris Karloff portrayed Mr. Wong in several films. He also wrote for *Colliers* and *The Saturday Evening Post* and was the author of several novels.

Wilbur Farley

All we could find about him is that he was a writer for the *New York Times*.

Chauncey Olcott



Born in Buffalo, New York in 1858, died in 1932. Olcott lived in Zanesville for three years in his youth, working as a stable boy on Hugh Jewett's farm. He sang in the choir at St. James church and became famous as a composer of popular songs and as an Irish singer. He wrote "My Wild Irish Rose", "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" and "Mother Machree."

Harry Bulger

Born 1872, died in 1926. A composer and actor in vaudeville. He had lived in Zanesville in his youth but doesn't appear to have been born here. His first stage appearance was at Black's Music Hall in Zanesville, he appeared in travelling shows at the Weller Theater and at the time of his death his sister was living in Zanesville. His son made newspaper headlines when he was found to be a "heroin fiend."

Billie Burke

The actress Billie Burke is best remembered today as the wife of Florenz Ziegfeld and as Glinda the Good witch in *The Wizard of Oz*. She had no connection to Zanesville other than that her mother and grandmother had lived here. Norris Schneider thought that Mrs. Townsend might have confused Billie Burke with William Burkhart, a local saloon keeper who acted in amateur productions under the name Billy Burke.

Bob & Harry Wolfe

Brothers who purchased the *Columbus Dispatch* in 1905. Harry was born in Guernsey County in 1872 and Bob was born in Zanesville in 1861.

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William Dillon

Mrs. Townsend referred to him as a "newsprint broker" and we can find nothing else about him.

John Voll

Born in Zanesville in 1868, died in Atlantic City, NJ, in 1924, buried at Mt. Calvary Cemetery, Zanesville. Voll was president of the International Green Glass Blowers Association. He is the only person on this list to have been born and buried in Zanesville.

Raymond Robins

Born on Staten Island in 1873, died in 1954. Raymond was a younger brother of Elizabeth Robins and for the first five years of his life lived at his grandmother's house, the Stone Academy. He is one of the most interesting people to have lived in Zanesville. Among the highlights of his life: he orga-



nized coal miners in Tennessee and Colorado, despite never having graduated from high school he graduated from Columbian University (now George Washington University) with a law degree, he

practiced law in San Francisco, he went to Alaska to prospect for gold, while in Alaska he "got religion" and became a missionary of the Congregational Church, cared for the sick and poor and cleaned up political corruption in Nome, he was active in the settlement house work in Chicago, he served with the American Red Cross delegation to the Soviet Union during World War I and was the United States' unofficial ambassador to the Bolshevik government, he spoke on the Lyceum and Chautauqua circuits, and he campaigned for recognition of the Soviet government. Along the

way he was the subject of a nationwide manhunt when he disappeared while suffering amnesia. He could be the subject of a made for TV movie but it wouldn't be believable.

Billy Burns

William J Burns was born in Baltimore, Maryland, in 1861 and died in 1932 but he lived in Zanesville from 1869-1875 when he father worked as a tailor. As a detective he was known as America's Sherlock Holmes. He served as Director of the Bureau of Investigation, the predecessor to the FBI. He became well-known through write-ups in detective magazines and newspapers.

Charles Marvin

Born in Zanesville in 1858, died in 1943. He was a meteorologist and Chief of the US Weather Bureau.

NEW OFFICERS FOR 2016

At their November meeting the Board of Trustees elected officers for the coming year. In 2016 Mitch Taylor will serve as president of the Pioneer & Historical Society and current president Bob Jenkins will be vice-president. The immediate past-president also serves as parliamentarian so Bob will have the added responsibility of keeping order during disputatious meetings. Janet James was reelected Secretary and Donna Taylor was reelected Treasurer. The two ladies have earned the trust of the Board through many terms in their positions and it was felt best to follow the old adage of "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

In October the Board welcomed new Trustee Devon Johnston who is replacing Jim McDonald. Jim will be greatly missed and Devon might not yet realize that replacing Jim means he is expected to oversee building maintenance, conduct tours and be available at a moment's notice. We will start him on a program of gradual acclimatization so as to not scare him off.



SOCIETY INSTRUMENTS RETURNED TO SERVICE

This fall the Society had its reed organ and melodeon refurbished by Rechel Piano Company of Cincinnati. The work was supported by generous donations from John Chalfant, Lloyd Barnes and Sandy Turner. The Mason & Hamlin melodeon has been displayed and played at the Mathews House since it was donated by Miss Adelaide Black in 1980 but persistent problems with its bellows have limited its use in recent years. Amateur attempts at repairs were appreciated but the results were always transitory. The repairs done by Rechel should hold us for many years.

The melodeon has no local connections but the 4½ octave Cornish reed organ was donated by the Busche family who used it in their family home at the Moose Eye Orchard. Rechel was able to get all 18 stops back in operation, repair the bellows and replace some missing stop labels from their supply of vintage labels.

An electric blower will be installed in the organ after the first of the year so that it can be played without pumping the bellows, which should make playing it attractive to a wider number of organists. For those wanting the full pump organ experience, the blower can be turned off and it can be played as it was during the reed organ's heyday in the 19th century.

We would like to have an organ recital next year to show off our instruments and we would welcome inquiries from qualified organists and melodeonists who want to connect with their counterparts from an earlier time.



This postcard was sold by the Art Manufacturing Company of Zanesville. The company, which was located at the corner of Lincoln Street and Moxahala Avenue, had previously been in Amelia, Ohio, and was only in Zanesville for a few years.

The company might have been short-lived but the sentiment carries on through the years **and is our wish for you.**

Pioneer & Historical Society
of Muskingum County
115 Jefferson St
Zanesville, OH 43701

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TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN YOUR LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership renewal notices were mailed out to all of our annual members at the end of November and if you have not yet responded we hope you will do so soon. Without the need for annual membership forms it is easy for us to lose touch with our Life Members so all of you also received information from us. Along with your letters, both groups received a photo montage of different activities that the P&HS was a part of in 2015. Photos show our own activities such as school tours and improvements to our historic properties and also the monthly meetings of the **Muskingum County Civil War Roundtable** held at the Stone Academy, our partnership with **On the Same Page Muskingum** and the **Putnam 5K Restoration Run**, and one of the three artifacts that we loaned to a wonderful exhibit at the **Decorative Arts Center of Ohio** in Lancaster. The photos represent some of the many ways in which we try to move beyond the static display of museum artifacts and reach the public on different levels. To these we could add our publication of **Muskingum Journal** and our frequent **Facebook** posts which are ways to disseminate the written word and archival photos.

When you send in your membership renewal we hope you will supply us with your email address so that we can continue to move this newsletter to a digital format. We are doing this partly to save money but also so we can deliver a better product. Our digital newsletter has color photos and it gives us the opportunity to provide expanded content. The matter of timely delivery has also become an issue with the most recent *Muskingum Journal* taking 13 days to be delivered. We will not sell our mailing list nor will we spam you. If you have already sent in your renewal you can give us your email address through the Contact Us tab on our website, Muskingumhistory.org.