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Earlville Community Historical Society

136 S Ottawa St.
PO Box 683
Earlville, IL 60518

Newsletter #1 - Fall/Winter 2014

2015 OFFICERS

President	Rich Goodbred
Vice President	Stan Meloy
Secretary	Karen Wold
Treasurer	Carol Landers/Anna Svendsen
Directors	Bruce Carter, Tracy Smith, Doug Corrigan



MUSEUM HOURS

Winter Hours - Saturdays 10a-2p
Or by appointment
Call 815-343-8861

Purpose and Mission

Bringing together those people interested in history, and especially in the history of the Earlville community. The Society's major function is to discover and collect any materials which may help to establish or illustrate the history of the area and provide for the preservation and dissemination of the historical information.

The Earlville Community Historical Society is open to all residents and friends of the City of Earlville. We are committed to providing a welcoming environment for all of our members, volunteers and visitors.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BROUGHT ITEMS INTO THE MUSEUM!!

If you have been one of the generous souls who have contributed to the items on display at the Museum, we need to ask your help. We are required to identify which of the items are "DONATED" (owned by the Museum) and which are "LOANED" (owned by the lender). If you have not already been contacted, please stop in at the Museum to sign the appropriate paperwork. If you are from out-of-town and can't stop in, please contact Anna Svendsen at 815-246-9039.



"LIKE" US ON FACEBOOK!!

Visit our Facebook page and "like" us in order to stay up-to-date with all of the interesting "happenings." Just search for "Earlville Community Historical Society." We'll be posting our newsletters on this site in order to save on postage \$\$\$



There are a number of items for sale at the Museum:

- Replica Postcards with pictures of historical buildings
- Centennial Coins
- Items from the 150th Celebration (hats, T-shirts, wine glasses, koozies)
- Ornaments from the 125th Celebration

All sales benefit the Museum Fund!

EBA BUSINESS RALLY!

C'mon out and join us during the
Earlville Business Association's

Business Rally

Saturday

Dec. 6th, 2014

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Visit each of the participating Earlville businesses and enter to win prizes. The Museum will be open during those hours so be sure to stop in and enter to win our gift basket filled with items for a Family Fun Night! There will be light refreshments available in the Museum during the event.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!!

We are in need of member volunteers to help sort through, catalog and identify the numerous pictures that have been donated. We could also use some assistance in cleaning the 2nd floor of the museum (possibly late fall or early winter) in an effort to further expand our displays. If interested in helping, contact:
Anna Svendsen @ 815-246-9039.

We also need member volunteers to help staff the "open hours" of the museum. You would be assigned with another volunteer and the shifts are only 2 or 4 hour slots. If interested, stop in at the Museum on a Saturday and let us know.



"My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be."



CHRISTMAS HOUSE WALK

The Earlville Community Historical Society will sponsor a Christmas House Walk this year.

Saturday,

December 13th, 2014

12:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Tickets \$12 in advance

Five beautiful Earlville homes are featured:

Bob and Paula Goodbred

Tom and Maureen King

Bill and Sandi Lynd

Bruce and Jane Bauer

John and Dena Corrigan

Tickets will go on sale in November and can be purchased from any Historical Society Member or at the Museum between 10am-2pm on Saturdays. You can also mail your check to the following address and your tickets will be held at the Museum:

Earlville Community Historical Society

Attn: House Walk Tickets

136 S Ottawa St.

PO Box 683

Earlville, IL 60518

Tickets will be available at the Museum on the day of the House Walk for **\$15/person.**

Refreshments will be served at the Museum on that day for all ticket holders. **ALL PROCEEDS** will benefit the Museum Fund.

**In case of bad weather, the House Walk will be postponed until the following day, Sunday, December 14th.*



WE'RE STILL LOOKING FOR THE FOLLOWING ITEMS! CAN YOU HELP?

- **Memorabilia, OLD Pictures, etc.** from Marathon Electric, Earlville Golf Course. Dari Dip, Earlville Lake, A&W
- Military Uniform from the Air Force (WW II) and any military uniform worn by women.
- Someone who would take a current aerial picture of Earlville covering the same general area as previous pictures that are on display in the Museum



MUSEUM UPDATES

So much has happened since we moved from the Library to our new home on Ottawa Street. Here's a synopsis of those changes:

1. Purchased the building
2. Moved all of the items belonging to the Historical Society to the new location
3. Developed office space in the upstairs apartment area
4. Improved the back porch/loading dock and stairs.
5. Replaced and updated some of the lighting
6. Started to obtain estimates on roof repairs and bathroom updates
7. Prepared second floor for expansion of the Museum
8. Began work on inventory of all items

Thanks to those members who donated their time, talents (and wallets) to make this possible!

GARAGE SALE

Thanks to everyone who donated items for our Garage Sales during the spring and fall this past year. The Sales were held in the small building just south of the Museum during Earlville's Townwide Garage Sales. Between the two events we were able to raise approximately \$1200!! A SPECIAL thanks to everyone who helped during the sales - ESPECIALLY Dottie Cox who chaired the events!

GOT TALENT?

WE NEED A LOGO!

The Earlville Community Historical Society needs a logo that reflects our town and our mission, so we're having a CONTEST! If you are an Earlville resident (or former resident) please get those creative juices flowing and submit your entry on or by February 1st, 2015. There is no age restriction. Entries can be hand-drawn or created digitally but must be submitted on 8.5"x11" hard copy to the following address:

Earlville Community Historical Society
 Attn: Logo Submission
 136 S Ottawa St.
 PO Box 683
 Earlville, IL 60518

Please include:

Full name (including maiden name)

Address

Phone #

Email address

Current Resident or Former Resident

The winning logo designer will receive a \$50 Visa card and honorary lifetime membership to the Historical Society.



IMPORTANT DATES

2014

- Dec. 6 Earlville Business Rally
- Dec. 13 Christmas House Walk
FUNDRAISER!
- Dec. 31 Deadline for 2015
Membership dues

2015

- Feb.1 Deadline for Logo contest
submissions
- April
(TBA) Dueling Pianos
FUNDRAISER!



DID YOU KNOW...

The Museum has a library of resident interviews that have been recorded over the years. Recently, Member Jerry Englehart has been setting up more interviews to add to that collection. We currently have recordings of:

Nemer Kaleel	Dr. Otto Fischer
Jim Rowe	Margaret Bullock Johnson
Chuck Dyas	T.O. Zimmerman
Bob Cox	Bob Strong
George Gould	Herb Cook

Stop in the Museum and watch them on our TV or check them out. It's Earlville's history from the people who lived it!!!

\$\$\$DONATIONS\$\$\$

The Earlville Community Historical Society relies on membership dues and individual donations to support the costs (mortgage, utilities, insurance, building repairs, etc.). This organization is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization which means that any contribution that you make is tax-deductible!! Thanks in advance for any and all gifts, large and small!

REMINDER

DUES for 2015 ARE NOW BEING COLLECTED THROUGH THE END OF THIS CALENDAR YEAR!!

If you wish to become a member or renew your existing membership, please fill out the attached Membership Form and return it to the address provided.

It would be very helpful if you would share your email address and/or let us know if you are on Facebook as these are two ways that we can keep the information current and save on postage at the same time. **We will not share your email address with anyone.**

Thanks for your continued support!!



Earlville War Hemp Mill

(By Kris Goodbred)

In 1942 during WWII, the Japanese gained occupancy of the Philippines and the West Indian Islands. This was significant as those two areas were the primary growers of hemp (marijuana) which was used to produce rope, cord and twine. In an effort to meet the demand for these products by the armed forces, the U.S. Government established the War Hemp program. There would be 42 mills built in the Midwest with 10-15 being located in Illinois. The program would be assigned to the Department of Agriculture and directed by the Commodity Credit Corporation.

Edwin Packard Flickinger was already working for the government in the agricultural division when he was named manager of the Earlville Industrial War Hemp Mill. He lived with his family in Lanark, IL, and relocated to Earlville at that time. Construction of the mill began in August of 1942 on property south of town purchased from Mrs. Nora McGary. At the time, the road in front of that property was unpaved, and it seemed as though the mill was out in the middle of nowhere. That road eventually became the "new" Illinois Route 34. The cost of building the mills was approximately \$350,000.



The crop would be planted by "drilling" the seeds into the soil. Farmers would be asked to join the war effort and sign a contract to plant hemp on at least 10 acres of their ground. Many were skeptical fearing that there would not be enough available labor, that the prices would be lower than a corn crop, and that their yields would be low because of their inexperience with this type of crop. The seed would cost \$11/bushel, and the government would pay \$30-50/ton depending on the quality of the crop. Crops would be harvested, cut, retted and bound - much of the work being done by hand. In some areas to the north German prisoners of war were brought in to provide labor at the mills.

The plants grew to between 10-12 feet tall. After the crop was harvested, the farmers had to burn off their fields. There were unconfirmed reports of bystanders feeling a little "giddy" following that process 😊



Production at the mill began in June of 1943. Eventually, 250 local farmers signed a contract to grow hemp for the Earlville mill. The first growing season was in 1943. The mill operated 24 hours a day running two 12-hour shifts. There was a cafeteria

within the plant where employees could eat their meals. Peak employment was 135, and the workforce was made up of primarily women since most of the men were fighting the war. Laverle and Bruce Carter both worked at the mill. Laverle remembers riding to work on that dirt road in a Model A Coupe. Her job was called "hackling" where they combed and tied the fibers to get them ready to be loaded up and taken to the train cars. Peg Carter and Rosie (Hughes) Hanley served as secretaries. The office still stands and has been converted into a residence. Portions of the mill itself are still standing and used for storage.



Earlville proved to have the some of the most fertile soil providing high yields. The average returns for hemp were between \$110-\$115/acre. Maynard Martin had the highest yield (4.4 ton/acre) with a net return of over \$200/acre.

A total of 143 train carloads of fiber were shipped out of Earlville to Belgium as well as every port in the world via the U.S. Navy and Army. Earlville produced more fiber

than any other mill, and was one out of only 17 mills that produced TWO crops of hemp before closing.

As the war came to a close the importation of hemp products was restored. On the day that they received word that the war was over, the mill was temporarily shut down so that all of the employees could get into their trucks and parade through town, honking their horns and celebrating.

All of the U.S. mills were eventually closed with Earlville closing in March of 1946. Mr. Flickinger was asked to remain in town and open an ag implement business. The mill was sold to Union Asbestos and Rubber Company of Chicago in August of 1946. In 1955, George Gavora purchased the building and moved his business (Maize Industries) to the property until it closed in 1965.

The Museum has many artifacts from the Earlville Industrial Hemp Mill thanks to Keith Flickinger (E.P Flickinger's son) who still resides in Earlville. These include the original drawing of the mill layout, flyers announcing the Open House on July 27, 1944, and numerous newspaper articles related to the building and opening of the mill, production data and eventual sale of the building and property.

Thanks to Keith Flickinger and Laverle Carter for their contributions to this article!!



Earlville Community Historical Society

A Not-For-Profit 501(c)3 Organization

MEMBERSHIP FORM

New Member

Renewal

Membership Type/Dues (after initial payment, dues are collected each November)

Individual (\$10.00 annually)

Business/Institution (\$25.00 annually)

Family (\$20.00 annually)

Lifetime (\$100 one-time payment; no annual dues)

Member(s) Information

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address _____

Do you have a Facebook Account? Yes/No

If yes, please "like" our Facebook page by searching for:

Earlville Community Historical Society

***In order to save on postage we would like to send newsletters to your email account. We will also post them on our Facebook page.**

Send this form and your dues to the following address:

Earlville Community Historical Society

Attn: Membership

136 S Ottawa St.

Earlville IL 60518