



Newsletter #5

Spring 2016

136 S Ottawa St.
PO Box 683
Earlville IL 60518

Email - earlville.history@yahoo.com

Website - www.earlvillehistory.org

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Earlville Community Historical Society

2016 OFFICERS

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



"I'm so forgetful I could plan
my own surprise party!"



TICK TOCK!!
It's Time
To Renew
Your Membership!

If you are a member with an **"ANNUAL"** membership, it's time to renew for 2016! All annual memberships (new or renewal) are due January 1st and can be paid any time after November 1st.

If you are a **"LIFETIME"** member there is no need to "renew."

An annual membership is a mere \$10 PER PERSON and Lifetime Membership is \$100 PER PERSON.

We hope that you will continue to support our efforts. If you are not currently a member, please consider joining us!

There is **NO OBLIGATION** to your membership. Just a great way to help support the cause!!

Please use the membership form on the last page of this newsletter. Providing your email address (if you have one) is important as it allows us to send the newsletters out without the cost of postage. THANKS!!

RECENT GIFTS/LOANS TO THE MUSEUM

It seems as though every day we are the recipients of some great new "finds" at the Museum. It's impossible to list everything, but thought that you might be interested in some of the new "old" things:

*Marine "Dress Blues" uniform worn by Jim Malley - *Jo Malley*

*4H skirt - *Wanda Kofoed*

*Info on Ramona Gast's military career and Grace Kaminky's hair donation during WWII - *Dolores Kaminky*

History of the Earlville Community Historical Society

The Earlville Community Historical Society began in 1985 at the suggestion of Maureen (Madden) Corrigan. The first meeting was held on March 25th, 1985 in the basement of the Earlville Public Library. The purpose of the Society was to bring together those people interested in the history of the Earlville Community and to collect and preserve any material that may help to establish or illustrate that history. The Society established a small museum in the basement of the library, but rapidly outgrew the space. In 2013, during the community's 150th anniversary celebration, several artifacts were put on display at the celebration headquarters in a vacant building in the business district. Much interest was sparked during that celebration, and that building at 136 S. Ottawa St. was purchased thanks to the generous donations of our friends.



Scrubbing, patching, sanding, painting, refinishing, polishing - you name it, we've done it! The second floor is nearly completed. The remaining electrical work and other minor touch-ups will be done over the next couple of months. Here's a little "Before and After" pictures to give you an idea of what we've been doing...





IMPORTANT DATES

2015-2016

Dec. 10	Hist. Soc. Mtg (6:30p)
Jan. 14	Hist. Soc. Mtg (6:30p)
Feb. 11	Hist. Soc. Mtg (6:30p)
Mar. 10	Hist. Soc. Mtg (6:30p)

DID YOU KNOW....?

We had over 400 visitors to the Museum since the first of the year representing numerous points in Illinois, as well as 9 different states! We'd love to double that number in 2016!

INTERVIEWS!

Over the years, members of the ECHS have conducted (and recorded) interviews of a number of citizens who have shared their memories of growing up, living or doing business in Earlville. You can view them at the Museum or purchase them for \$15 each. Those of file currently include:

Chuck Dyas	Nemer Kaleel
George Gould	Bob Strong
Bob Cox	Margaret Johnson
Jim Rowe	T.O. Zimmerman
Herb Cook	Bruce/LaVerle Carter
Gene Steinke	Bob Jornlin
Shirley Bauer	Keith/Margie Harris
Gene Schrecengost	Ken Stockley

Contact us by using our email if you are interested in purchasing.

earlville.history@yahoo.com

MUSEUM HOURS

Winter Hours during DECEMBER!

Saturdays 10a-2p

MUSEUM will be CLOSED during JANUARY and FEBRUARY

But will be opened upon request!

Just call **815-246-7076** or **815-246-9778**

If you are in town for a special get-together with friends, reunion or family gathering, please give us a call! We'd be happy to open up the Museum for you!

PLEASE CONSIDER US AS A TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATION THIS YEAR!

We exist solely through memberships and donations.

Expenses such as mortgage, utilities, upkeep and improvements are paid through those means.

We also have the need for the following so that we can continue our research and help others requesting our assistance:

1. New computer
2. Software specific for museum
3. Flatscreen TV
4. VCR
5. WiFi service

Donations of \$100 or more earn you a plaque on our Recognition Board.



NEXT FUNDRAISER!
SPRING ART SHOW!!



During the Spring of 2016 (probably May) we will be sponsoring an Art Exhibit featuring current and past artists from Earlville. We will be looking for oil, watercolor or charcoal artwork - NO crafts or other items. Of particular interest (although not required) would be paintings of buildings or scenery around our community - past or present.

If you or one of your parents, grandparents or great-grandparents were artists, we'd love to hear from you. We will be featuring paintings from Loretta Tillman, wife of Dr. A.C. Tillman (local veterinarian and mayor) who lived in Earlville during the early 1900's and still has living relatives in town.

Our space may be restricted so based on the response we may have to limit the entrees. If you have an interest, or know someone who may be interested please contact us using our email: earlville.history@yahoo.com or call Kris Goodbred 815-252-9380

ORPHAN TRAIN
PRESENTATION

On Sunday, October 20th, the Earlville Community Historical Society hosted a program on the subject of "Orphan Trains". This was the largest child migration project in history, relocating children of immigrants from the East Coast primarily to the Midwest, but eventually to every state in the nation during the late 1800s and early 1900s. Carol Chandler from the Lee County Genealogical Society was the speaker. The attendance far exceeded our expectations totaling around 85 persons at the Earl Township Building that day.

Extra handouts and information on this subject are available at the Museum. Feel free to contact us if you are interested.

Thanks to those who took the time to attend this program and for all of the volunteers who baked, helped set up/tear down or "man" the Museum following the program.



...from all of us at the Earlville Community Historical Society!

History of Dodge Park

Ralph T. Dodge was born in Earlville in 1872, son of Dr. and Mrs. W.F. Dodge. He was always an industrious young man. At age 14 he took a position as messenger for the First National Bank and continued to work for the bank until he left for Chicago in 1893. He became very successful in the business of medicinals and toiletries with the Marvello Toilet Company.

In the early 1930's he helped finance the development of the Earlville Country Club, and, upon his death in 1936, forgave that debt completely. He further demonstrated his love for his hometown by bequeathing a portion of his estate to the City of Earlville suggesting that the funds be used "to beautify" the city.

Shortly after his death, the City voted to develop a park on the corner of Ottawa and Winthrop Streets and name it in his memory – Dodge Memorial Park. In 1938 Mayor Tillman announced a plan to develop the park into a "real community playground" which would include curbs and gutters on Ottawa and Winthrop streets, tennis courts, a small wading pool with a fountain, and a shelter house with a fireplace.

The bandstand (also referred to as the Gazebo) which sits on the northwest corner of the park, has its own history some 20 years prior to Dodge's bequest. In 1916 Jacob A. Dupee, a prominent local businessman, donated the \$1,200 necessary to construct the bandstand. The site was selected carefully by Dupee, making sure that it would be situated at the south end of Main Street so that train passengers would be able to see it as they passed by. Unfortunately, he never saw the finished product as he died in December before it was completed. Part of Mayor Tillman's plan in 1938 included excavating two feet below that bandstand in order to build a woman's restroom.

The Universalist Ladies Social Society donated the funds for the construction of a drinking fountain under a brick enclosure on the northwest corner of the park. Local masons, Cole and Kerins, provided the brickwork, and an engraved stone gives credit to the donors.



In 1940, the City Council started searching for "suitable memorial marker" for Dodge. The minutes of the City Council Meeting state, "By fortunate chain of circumstances, a red granite boulder weighing about five tons prepared for the Wild Bill Hickok memorial was available." This boulder remains in the park today with an engraved plaque – "Ralph T. Dodge 1872-1936." At this same time, a marker was erected to memorialize the establishment of Earlville's woman's suffrage society which was the very first organized in state of Illinois. These markers were paid for by the Dodge estate, The Woman's Club, and the City of Earlville.



During World War II (1943) an “Honor Roll” bearing names of Earlville soldiers created and mounted in park. At Christmastime, the City placed a tree in the bandstand and lit it for three days surrounding the holiday. During this same timeframe, the city residents were surveyed asking their opinion as to whether part of the park property should be sold to make way for a new Post Office. Based on the result of that survey, the park property was not sold.

1947 brought a movement to rename Ottawa Street to Dodge Avenue. Dodge’s family home was on Ottawa Street. Alice Tabor of the Leader suggested this change and others chimed in stating that “Ottawa Street has no significance other than it is the road to Ottawa. It’s a lovely elm-bordered thoroughfare, the main entrance to the city, and should have the name of its own to suit its dignified personality.” There were also some less-serious responses suggesting that, “Stilson Ave should be changed to Dodge Ave. High school drivers use Stilson as a sort of race track, and pedestrian students have to ‘dodge’ the drivers when they cross the street.” Today the street remains as Ottawa Street.

In 1953 Tage Nielsen, a local mason, was contracted by to build a memorial stone honoring our veterans.



Between 1959-1968 the area businesses sponsored a Santa’s Workshop by enclosing the area around the water fountain. As many as 500 children would stop to visit with Santa, tell him what was on their lists, and walk away with a bag of candy. The Earlville Jaycees brought back the Santa’s Workshop between 1974-1977, and Rudy Timmerman was on hand to take pictures.

In 1960 the Earlville Lion’s Club provided an opportunity for ice skating by flooding the tennis courts in the park. It was also around this time that the Fun Days celebrations began.

The Earlville Jayceette chapter formed a Park Beautification committee in 1982 in order to rejuvenate the appearance of the park. Flowers were planted and maintained, some new playground equipment was purchased, and the Lion’s Club put up a new shelter. In 2000, a group of citizens raised funds and erected a beautiful playground. The park seems alive with children again.

A few things you may not know about Dodge Park –

1. A large mansion owned by D.A. Town (owned one of Earlville's first banks) was once located where the current water fountain stands. Large stone slabs from that house were used to make benches for the park.
2. A memorial tombstone (no grave) for Elizabeth "Lizzie" Stilson (1861-1863) is located in the area next to the woman's suffrage marker. Lizzie was the daughter of Samuel Talbert Stilson and Sara Lukens Stilson, early settlers of Earlville. No one is sure when it was moved to Dodge Park or if it was there when Dodge purchased the property.



3. A golf tournament entitled the "Dodge Memorial Cup" was sponsored by the Earlville Country Club in 1936 and held for several years in recognition of his generous contribution.

Dodge Park has been home to family reunions, church services, band concerts, community celebrations, Memorial Day services, basketball games, paper drives, tennis matches, and bake sales to mention a few. On your next visit to the park, take a minute to stop by the boulder and tip your hat to Mr. Dodge and his generous contribution to our city.

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 per person - annually)

Business/Institution (\$25.00 annually)

Family (\$20.00 annually)

Individual Lifetime (\$100 per person - 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.**

Send this form and your dues to the following address:

Earlville Community Historical Society

Attn: Membership

136 S Ottawa St.

PO Box 683

Earlville IL 60518