



Summer 2025
Newsletter #33

After months of discussion, meetings with the muralist, and getting all of the proper permissions, contracts, and other necessary details, the long-awaited Mural is about to commence! The location of the Mural is 139 W Railroad St. (Aughenbaugh Chiropractic), and the wall to be painted is just to the east of the NuMark Credit Union parking lot.

The Mural process started with an idea brought forth by member Larry Maly about 3 years ago. We studied up on what we needed to do to move forward, and, at times, weren't sure we could take on such a huge project. Part of our mission is to give back to the community so we finally decided to "just do it!", and here we are today.

We started by forming a committee and determined an overall theme of the project, combing through suggestions from the public, the board, and the committee. Finally, we needed to determine the total cost and fundraising needs. The Mural Committee (Karen Wold, Anna Svendsen, Kris Goodbred, Jane Bauer, Matt Johnson) chose 5 elements to the design that reflect the history and origins of the town as well as highlighting its uniqueness. Each element is still present today:

CB&Q Railroad –Early settlers originally set up the town near Sutphen's Run on South Ottawa Street, but when the railroad arrived in 1854, they moved closer to the tracks to gain better transportation and shipping opportunities. This is represented by a drawing of one of the first depots in Earlville which was located between the tracks and east of the current depot building.

Agriculture - Farming was the sole means of support and survival in the late 1800s and early 1900s. While farming has changed significantly over the years, it continues to be a main contributor to our local economy. This element is represented with a drawing of the very first Grange (Co-Op) Elevator.

Wallace Hotel -Built in 1874, the "Wallace Block", located on the SW corner of Ottawa and Railroad Streets, survived two major fires. It housed a hotel and several ground-floor storefronts on its east and north sides including the first bank. The building remains an attractive feature of downtown today. A drawing of the Wallace House corner is part of the design.

Earlville County Club -Founded by local investors in 1930 during the Great Depression, this club was created to provide recreational opportunities for the community during a difficult time. Today, after more than 90 years, the course remains active all season long, attracting golfers of all ages locally and from distant communities. A drawing of a golfer represents the Country Club.

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MUSEUM

136 S. Ottawa St.
P.O. Box 683
Earlville, IL 60518

HOURS

Saturday 10am-2pm
Sunday 12pm-2pm

Anytime by appointment
Call:

815-615-1192
815-252-9380
815-826-0630

www.earlvillehistory.org
earlville.history@yahoo.com

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Board Meetings are on the 1st Sat. of the month (April through December) 9a.m. at the Museum

Presentations as announced

Check Calendar

2025 Officers

Pres	Karen Wold
VP	Jack Anderson
Sec	Julie Krzyzek
Treas	Kris Goodbred
Curator	Anna Svendsen
Directors:	Ann Newell
	Kent Sellers
	Al Matison
Building:	Dave Michelsen

Mural Project (Continued from Page 1)

Drive-In Theater—Probably one of the most unique features of Earlville is the Rt. 34 Drive-In Theater. Opened in 1954 by Chuck Dyas, this drive-in was inspired by the 1950s car culture. Now in its 70th year, it continues to draw movie-goers from all over northern Illinois and beyond. The design includes a drawing of the theater screen with classic cars.

The Mural will encompass the entire wall of the building. The Muralist, Euljio Ortega, has estimated that it will take 4-6 weeks to complete pending weather conditions. The parking area on the east side of the NuMark parking lot will be closed during this time. It will be fun to watch it unfold in front of our eyes! The cost of the project will be close to \$30,000 which includes the artist, his supplies, rental of lift equipment and other incidentals. We are certain that it will be worth the money and the efforts to further beautify the community and pass along a little history at the same time.

If you (or your business) are interested in donating to help offset the cost to the Historical Society, you can mail a check to: Earlville Community Historical Society Mural Project, PO Box. 683, Earlville IL 60518. We will be recognizing those contributions in future newsletters.

CORRECTION/ADDITION

We LOVE it when our readers correct or add to the information that we post or include in our newsletters!! In our article on the Century House we omitted one of the owners by the name of John & Sharon Stomatopoulos. They purchased it in 1982 and renamed the restaurant “JJ’s Place”. They only had it a short time before there was a suspicious fire. Songers got the property back and later sold to Tucker.

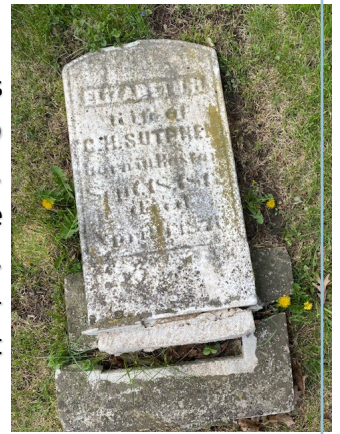


The photo to the left was recently brought to us by the family of Clarence Gast taken during or after WWII. These are Earlville Legion members standing for a ceremony or parade along the sidewalk on Ottawa street next to Dodge Park. The sign post you see in the background behind and under the US flag corresponds to another picture we had (below) of the Community Honor Roll listing those who served or were serving at the time. And, it’s difficult to see unless enlarged, but there is a Coca-Cola mural ad on the corner building (old B&L).



Repair of Cemetery Stones

With the proceeds from our Cemetery Walk last Fall we are having Elizabeth Sutphen's cemetery stone repaired. Elizabeth and her husband, Charles, were the first settlers to lay claim on the acreage that eventually became Earlville. Charles was buried in Joliet. Her stone was broken off of its base and in need of cleaning. Here's a photo of it before it was repaired. Mendota Monument is still working on it at the time of this newsletter. We are hoping to be able to repair others in the future. The LaSalle County Genealogical Guild is offering some grant money for these types of projects so we have filled out an application to be considered for some of their funding.



Ah, the Boys of Summer!

Based on their ages we're guessing this fun photo was taken ~1937. Just a bunch of boys playing softball in front of the school. Front Row: James, McConville, Oscar Locke
Middle Row: Ted Zimmerman, Leo McConville, Ray McNerny, Bob Leonard, Don Norton
Back Row: P.R. Hughes, Jack Norton, Jim Malley, Ray McConville
And, off to the side, cheerleader, Mitch



Samples from the Glass Slides

While we haven't been able to identify a lot of the *people* in those glass slides that were recently developed and uploaded to our YouTube Channel, we've certainly found some great photos of houses in town. This home (302 Stilson St.) sits on the SW corner of Stilson and Cherry Sts. John Hamill (Chuck Howey's uncle) built the home in 1910. The 3 story home was known for its 3rd story "ballroom" which was the site of dances in the 1940's. It's such an interesting house inside with multiple fireplaces and beautiful oak woodwork. This photo shows a big wrap around porch which was changed and minimized over the years. Its been in the process of renovation for a long time



If you're able, head to our YouTube channel and check out the glass slides, interviews, and other presentations.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCb1OyYaBPLmXmH3taJLRg>

Charles “Chick” McGary



The Museum was recently the recipient of the old “basketball scorer’s table” donated by the High School. It immediately brought to memory the years of seeing “Chick” McGary as a fixture behind the bench at basketball games. He began his work as official timer in 1925 for Coach L.B. Mann. In 1974, he was elected to the Illinois Basketball Association’s Hall of Fame, and a year later was recognized by the Little 10 Basketball Conference for 50 years of dedication and service to high school athletics. In 1982 he was invited to serve as an assistant timer during the Class AA state basketball tournament. During an interview in 1965 he recounted the days before the automatic clock system they used stop watches. He said, “Part of a timer’s

job was to check that last shot, and I’ll tell you it was quite a chore to try to eye the watch in your hand and the basketball. Sometimes we used a gun to end the quarters, but usually we had a gong something similar to what they used at prize fights. I had to give a yank on the cord to make it clang.” Early on, before there was a gymnasium, games were played in Robinson Hall (above the stores on the north side of Railroad St.). There were few cars back then, and they often had to find any conveyance to get to the out-of-town games. Things were easier as time passed, and he always felt that the changes made the game more interesting. Chick rarely missed a game. He estimated that he had worked more than 2000 games during his career.

Chick was born in 1901, the son of James and Nora McGary. He grew up with his four brothers (Earl “Pete”, Edison, John, and Thomas) on the family farm south of town. Their home was beautiful and stood out because of its unusual pink/salmon color. It was located just south of Rt. 34 at the end of Ottawa St. The McGary family experienced much sadness when Thomas died at age 9, and their father, James, died a few years later in 1926 leaving the farmwork to the sons. That same year Chick and his brother, Edison, were placing a cab cover on one of the tractors when it swung loose, hit the throttle and started the motor. Both young men were trapped under the machine. Edison was killed and Chick suffered a broken leg.

Most everyone who knew him remembers that he was always dressed in a suit and tie. Even when he was farming and needed to go to town for a part, he would change into his clothes before leaving the house. His wit and sense of humor endeared him to everyone he met – young and old. His interests went far beyond basketball. He was a fan of ALL sports, both boys and girls, and attended their games regularly. Chick was also known for his extensive knowledge of boxing. He was a member of the Rangers baseball team when he was younger but sustained injuries that shortened his career.

Above all, Chick LOVED to play cards. And he was serious about it. He could be seen playing cards in many spots around town and was part of a long-standing poker club called the “GMC” which stood for “Get McGary Club”. Members of that group included Ralph Schmitz, Joe Gedwell, Earl Frame, Jim Rowe, Doc Nichols, T.M. Anderson, Wib Blakeslee, Len Streed and possibly others.

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Chick died unexpectedly in 1987 at the age of 85. The entire school and community mourned his loss. Several months before his death he set up a basketball award for an EHS student to be named each year at the athletic banquet. The honor was for an athlete who had worked hard physically and encouraged the team with a positive attitude. His family also used memorial money to create an award in his name to be given to a senior student excelling citizenship, academics and athletics. He continued to give back even after his death. The photo to the right is the old scorer's table recently donated to the Museum from the high school.



Earlville Country Club

We came across this photo (right) recently from the Earlville Leader announcing the 1937 completion of the new log cabin clubhouse at the Earlville Country Club. In 1928 forty or more men from the community initiated the effort to build a recreation area that included a 3 or 4 hole golf course, an ice skating pond, tennis courts and swimming pool. It was to be called the Indian Creek Recreation Park. They initially leased 27 acres of land to lay out the course. While the "recreation



park" idea did not completely develop, a beautiful 9 hole golf course did. Enough people purchased their \$15 memberships to complete 6 holes of the course. In 1929 an additional 12 acres of land was purchased from Lester Hoadley with money raised by the sale of stock at \$100 a share. During the Depression it was the generous donation of Ralph Dodge that kept the course open. In 1937 the Women's Auxiliary was formed with the purpose of raising money for a clubhouse and future expenses. Three years later the little "caddy

house" was built in the log cabin style to match the clubhouse. Green fees were paid there and a few refreshments and balls/tees were sold. Later that year, restrooms were added. We believe that the photo to the left was taken at the dedication of the new clubhouse.



In the 1960s a kitchen was added and the porch was extended. In 1975 a new Pro Shop was built and the old building was converted into new bathrooms. Many more improvements have been made over the years.

A NEW ERA IN EHS SPORTS—SOCCER PROGRAM BEGINS IN 1980!

EHS Soccer is 45 years old this year! In 1974, the Little 10 Conference decided to take on the soccer as their Fall sport. Earlville chose to hold on to their football program at the time continuing play in the Little 8 Conference. It became increasingly more difficult to find like-sized schools, and with the rising cost of travel, equipment, and insurance, and decreasing participation in the sport, Earlville discontinued their football program after decades of fielding teams. The last football game was played in the Fall of 1979. The Fall of 1980 marked the beginning of soccer as EHS fully committed all of their sports to the Little 10 Conference including volleyball, basketball, track and baseball. Coach Mark Longo sponsored an Open House for the parents and community to teach the basic rules and strategy to the new game. The new sport caught on quickly, and the teams have enjoyed much success in the following years. The “first” teams are pictured below:



BOYS 1980-81 SOCCER TEAM:

Kneeling: Denny Trump, Allan Wold, Kipp Hardin, Tom Todd, Dale Wilson, Mike Engle, Don Durbin

Standing: John Terrance (Mgr), Randy Torman, Brian Johnson, Steve Maly, Kris Leonard, Mark Anderson, Paul Ostrem, Roger Torman, Jim Vezain, Coach Mark Longo

GIRLS 1980-81 SOCCER TEAM:

First Row: Kris Svendsen, Jodi Sondgeroth, Linda Powell, Lisa Flickenger, Jody Jones, Amy Zimmerman

Second Row: Jeanine Eddings, Tiff Landers, Cindy Skaggs, Kathy Thorson, Sandy Cox, Sonya Kaleel, Rhonda Beale

Third Row: Mgr. Joette Stegman, Dawn Eddings, Peg Norton, Tiff Stillwell, Jane Carter, Jane Norton, Nan Ostrem, Carol Finkle, Deb Zimmerman, Alison Svendsen, Marti Cronin, Coach Martha Hill



Did you know.....?

...that the huge stone slab that sits in front of the Museum was once the step into the old Earlville Post Office that was located on Railroad Street (west side of current laundromat)? It was preserved for posterity at the farm home of Roger and Marian Jones and used as a conversation piece in their yard west of town before being donated to the Historical Society years ago. The Post Office was in that location from 1902 until the “new” one was built in 1970 on the NW corner of Winthrop and Main Sts.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sep. 6	ECHS Board Mtg 9am
Oct. 4	ECHS Board Mtg 9am
Nov. 1	ECHS Board Mtg. 9am

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 Nov/Dec for following year)

☐ Individual (\$15.00 *per person* - annually)

☐ Business/Institution (\$50.00 annually)

☐ Family (\$30.00 annually)

☐ Individual Lifetime (\$150 *per person* - one-time payment; no annual dues)

☐ Business/Institution Lifetime (\$300 – one-time payment; no annual dues)

Member Information

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Address* _____

**To avoid postage costs we would like to send newsletters to your email account.*

Do you have a Facebook Account? Yes/No

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

Earlville Community Historical Society

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

Eff. 11/11/2016