

## Thanks to our Excellent Presenters!

We've been fortunate to have several folks offer to present information on their families, businesses or just fun experiences growing up in Earlville.

In May, Wilma Stillwell and Larry Simpson shared photos, some history, and memories about working at "**Marathon Electric.**" (sorry, no photo).

In June, Dale Harris, presented interesting facts and stories about his dad, "**Keith Harris' WWII Military Career.**"



In July, the Feld brothers, Jim and Bill, took us down memory lane (and the streets of Earlville) with "**Bill & Jim's Excellent Paper Route**" from the 1960s.

In August, Greg Kaleel joined us to present the "**History of the Kaleel Clothing Business**" beginning with his grandpa, Nemer, and his peddling business through the current businesses of future generations.



Our next presentation will be at the November meeting where Randy Simpson and A.J. Wold will discuss the **History of the Earlville Fire Department.** Mark your calendar for **Saturday, November 5th, 9am**, at the Museum. Public is always welcome!

Thanks to all who have shared their time, talents and information with us! *Do you have an interesting story to tell or information to share?*

## MUSEUM

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

## HOURS

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

Anytime by appointment

Call:

815-246-9778

815-985-3763

[www.earlvillehistory.org](http://www.earlvillehistory.org)  
[earlville.history@yahoo.com](mailto:earlville.history@yahoo.com)

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

## 2022 Officers

Pres	Rich Goodbred
VP	Stan Meloy
Sec	Karen Wold
Treas	Kris Goodbred
Curator	Anna Svendsen

Directors:

Larry Maly  
Sandi Engel  
Kent Sellers

## George W. Frey Produce Company

The George W. Fry produce and poultry business was a long-standing Earlville business. It was located south of the railroad tracks on the NE corner of Railroad and Third streets. A good part of the block building still stands facing Railroad St. but was converted into a residence a number of years ago. Frey and a partner by the name of Moses, purchased the business in 1898 from W.G.Thompson. The partnership dissolved leaving Frey



the sole owner. The building was only 2 stories initially, and by 1907, the business demanded more space. Instead of adding on, the entire building was raised up 8 feet, and cement blocks were added underneath to create another floor. A large feeding station was erected across the street to the west (NW corner) in 1910. We're not certain of the date of closure, but we know that they were still in business in the 1940s. Some of our older citizens have told stories about shooting pigeons and other small fowl

as kids and taking them to Frey's to earn some money. Others say that they were brought in as extra help to round up the poultry to get them ready to ship. The photo below shows a group of the workers covered with feathers. In 1935, the Earlville Leader reported that Allen Frey (son of George) had been returning from Chicago with a load of sugar when he was stopped and forced to return to Chicago. When he reached Chicago the burglars stole the sugar and then let him go. Evidently, sugar, butter, eggs and poultry were being hijacked pretty frequently. According to the article, "The opinion of the Chicago officials is that since many of the racketeers have been driven out of the beer and whiskey racket, they are turning to these other lines of livelihood." Since Frey's did not carry burglary insurance the company was on the hook for around \$500 in loss. In 1956, Strong & Strong bought both of the Frey properties. The feeding station was removed from the property and a large grain storage warehouse was erected by Strong. The Earlville CoOp elevator now owns that property on the NW corner, and the John Ridge family resides in the original building on the NE corner.



This photo of Pickers and Feeders from 1914 includes the following names:

1. Unidentified
2. Ed L?
3. ? Grimm
4. ? Dunner
5. Roxy Furbush
6. George Whitfer
7. Bill Freebe
8. Clyde Carter
9. Orin Minard
10. Mason Tratner
11. George Pratt
12. Dale Thompson
13. Ed Wilson
14. ? Tomlinson

## Floating Chicken Pickers Try to Engineer Strike

There was a little interruption of work at the **Frey poultry** house last Saturday, right in the busiest season. About twenty men have been engaged in picking chickens, as is customary at this time of the year. Friday night they held a meeting at Beale's and the out-of-town fellows, or floaters, who come here during the season and then fade away, engineered a strike for higher wages. They have been getting 7 cents apiece for picking, which is more than is paid at any other plant, it is said. Many of the hens are shipped alive to the Chicago market. The pickers demanded 8 cents for picking, or an agreement that all the birds should be picked here. The hens are smaller and easier picked than the roosters and larger birds, have fewer pinfeathers and more can be picked in a day.

This proposition was put up to the local men who are employed at the plant, but they declined to be a party to the walk-out. Finding that coaxing or bulldozing would not influence the home boys, the out-siders decided to strike anyway. Saturday morning the local force showed up for work as usual, while the outsiders presented their demands for more pay. In order to avoid any trouble, the entire force was laid off for the day and notice given that those who desired work at the old rates should be on hand at 7 o'clock Monday morning.

During the day the floaters, seeing that their strike had failed before it began, got out of town quietly.



George W. Frey Co.—Sending poultry to market

Feeding Station opened in 1910  
NW corner of Railroad and Third Sts.



### Inquiring Minds Want to Know....

1. Do you have an hour or two a month to volunteer during our open hours at the museum?
2. Have you (or someone in your family) completed a family tree or genealogy search on one or more of your family members? We get many email requests and out of town visitors who stop by looking for information on a family member who has Earlville ties. We would love to make a copy of yours to have available.
3. Do you possess computer skills? Are you interested in doing online research?
4. Are you interested in joining us as a Director on our Board? We have Directors that rotate off of the Board nearly every year and would love to have you join us!

Contact Anna (815-985-3763) or Kris (815-252-9380)

### WE ARE GRATEFUL.....

To the Families of [Paul R. Hughes](#) and [Janis Novak](#) for directing Memorials to the Earlville Community Historical Society.

To Roger Cantlin for his generous donation in memory of his wife, [Kay \(Conklin\) Cantlin](#).

We share in your loss and extend our most sincere condolences to your families.



## A Little Centennial Trivia....



The year 2023, will mark the 160th birthday of our fair city. Although Earlville was settled some 20+ years before that time, 1863 is the year that the town became incorporated. The city celebrated the biggest party ever in 1963 when Earlville turned 100. For those who were around at that time, you probably have some vivid memories of that Centennial celebration. So, let's test your memory! For those of you who were not yet conceived in 1963, you might be amazed at the magnitude of this event. Check out the answers!

1. How many days did the festivities last?
2. How many people were estimated to have attended the parade?
3. Who was the mayor at the time of the Centennial?
4. What were the names of the men's and women's groups?
5. Who developed the official seal of the event?
6. What was the name of the pageant that was presented as part of the celebration?
7. How many cast members were in the pageant?
8. How many units took part in the parade?
9. Name the President of the event incorporation and the General Chairman of the event.
10. Who was the Centennial Queen? (extra points if you can name the other 8 who were on the court)

*(answers appear on Page 6)*

### ECCHS Joins New Group

ECCHS has joined a newly formed group of Historical Societies in LaSalle County. The group meets routinely to share ideas and resources. It also affords our group the opportunity to visit other museums in the county. Karen Wold officially represents our organization. Thanks, Karen!

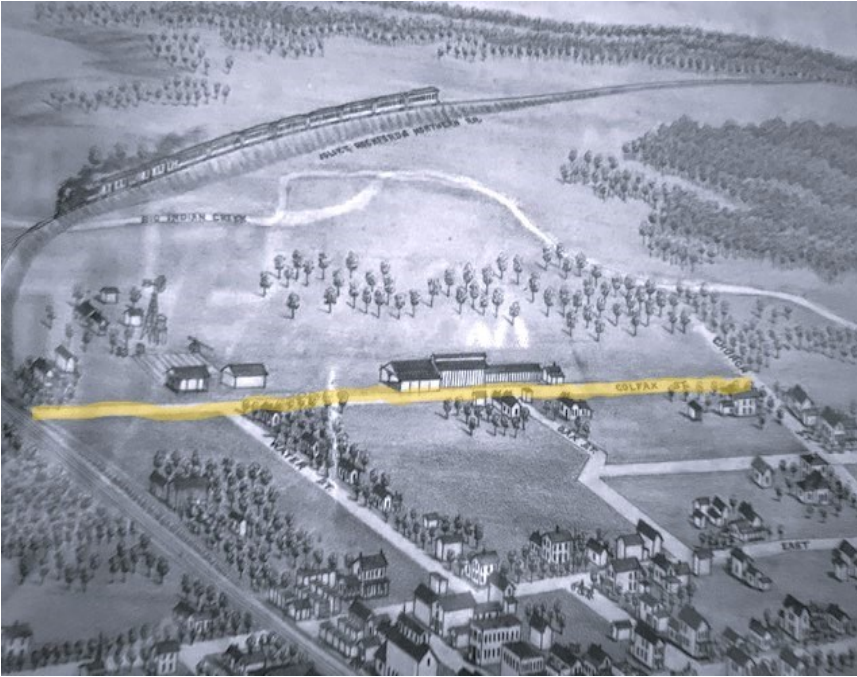


### Best of Luck, Keegan!

Keegan Bottom, our High School volunteer, is off to Eastern Illinois University to pursue a major in history! Keegan started volunteering with us 3 years ago. After he graduated in May of this year we thought we wouldn't see him anymore, but the day after graduation he stopped in and said that he still had some time this summer if we needed him. Over the years he has helped us with creating a spreadsheet with all of the Earlville veterans that we have information on, and, this summer has been instrumental in helping with research. Before he left us, Keegan walked us through the process of setting up our own YouTube channel so that we can continue to make video presentations available to those who can't join us at the museum. We know that you will do great things, Keegan! Thanks for all your help!

## Colfax Street—Now You See It, Now You Don't!

Have you ever heard of “Colfax” Street? In 1876 Colfax Street is seen on maps of Earlville and was located just east of Grant Street extending from Water Street to Church Street. In other words, it ran north and south along the west side of the golf course parking lot.



By 1906, the street stops appearing on most city maps. Despite fading into obscurity, Colfax Street seems to have technically remained a proper street in town for some time. In 1941 there was a small blurb in the Earlville Leader asking residents whether they had ever heard of such a street as it had recently been discovered on a city plat. It would appear that the street (even though there WAS no street) was finally laid to rest in 1990 when the city officials finally “vacated” the street, meaning that the public officially no longer had the right to use or access the area.

We always like to look into the naming of streets and so dug long and hard to find a settler or important businessman by that name. After finding no “Colfax” in Earlville,

we came to the conclusion that both Grant and Colfax streets were most likely named after Ulysses S. Grant and Schuyler Colfax who were the President and Vice President at the time. When you look at the 1882 map above, imagine that the large building in the center of the photo is the golf course clubhouse :)

## What Ever Happened to the Old Hemp Mill?

The Earlville Industrial War Hemp Mill was built by the U.S. Government in 1944 to produce hemp for rope, cord and twine during WWII. When the war was over it was no longer necessary, and, in 1946, was sold to Union Asbestos & Rubber, a company that made industrial insulations, packing and asbestos tiles. They employed nearly 80 workers which was quite welcome in the post-war era. The asbestos plant closed in 1954 and was eventually purchased by George Gavora who brought his corn-manufacturing business here producing items such as popcorn, caramel corn, and cheese covered puffed corn. In 1968, Gavora sold the building to Jewel Foliage, a business providing horticultural products. Roman Development purchased the property in 1972 and, in 1975 sold it to the Aluminum Foundry Corporation. One week after the transaction, the Quonset-hut style hemp building burned down.



**Standing:** Lefty Grennan, Shirley Smith, Leroy Hunter, Diane and Ray Neely, Stella Rasmussen, Harold Buckwalter, ?Innis, Charles Mitchell, Clint Madden, Mitch Kaleel

**Seated:** Rita Edwards, ?, Dorothy Duffy, Clara Mitchell, Lena Smith

## Tammany Baseball Club

Even before the Earlville Rangers started playing baseball in the 1890s, there was organized baseball in Earlville. The following article was published in April of 1969:

*“The young men of Earlville assembled in Breese’s Hall on Friday evening, April 23rd, for the purpose of organizing a base ball club. There was quite a number of persons present, and all seemed to feel interested in the cause. The Club was well organized, and adopted the name of “The Tammany Base Ball Club of Earlville.”*

*J.F. Brower was elected President; S.E. Snow; Vice President; G.S. Signor; Treasurer; Financial recording and corresponding Secretary, S.E. Snow; F.P Breese and J.H Burlingame, Directors; Arthur M Smith, Scorer.*

*If weather permits, the club will play every Friday afternoon on their grounds in Earlville. Knowing the quality of the ‘timber’ of which the first nine is gotten up of, we will venture to say that in short time we will be ready to play any club in the county.”*

The term “Tammany” came from a political society which began in New York City and was known to “control the democratic party” in that state and city. Many of the people who settled in the Earlville area came from that area of the country.

The prognosticator in the article above must have known what he was talking about as it related to the “quality of the timber.” Most of the their final scores were included 30 or 40 runs!

## Welcome Los Dos Amigos!

ECHS welcomes the newest business to Earlville’s downtown—**Los Dos Amigos**—a Mexican restaurant located at **124 W Railroad St.** We wish you much success! If you haven’t given them a try, stop on in and offer them your support!



### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sat. Sep. 3rd	ECHS Mtg. 9 a.m.
Sat. Oct. 1st	ECHS Mtg. 9 a.m.
Thu. Oct. 6th	LaSalle Co Genealogy Guild program. Speaker Charlotte McGrath
Sat. Nov. 5th	ECHS Mtg. 9 a.m. <i>Earlville Fire Dept</i>
Sat. Dec. 3rd	ECHS Mtg. 9 a.m.
Sun. Dec. 4th	EBA Christmas Fest



1963 Centennial Queen Judy Hughes and her Court  
Nancy Mitchell; Betty Todd; Mary Ann Atherton; Ellen Novak; Judy Hughes  
June Novak; Gertrude Wiley; Ruth McConville; and Juanita Marshall

### Answers to Centennial Trivia:

1. 6 days
2. 35,000
3. Frank Morrill
4. Sisters of the Swish and Brothers of the Brush
5. Richard Dilbeck
6. “Like Big Indian, Ever Onward”
7. 300
8. 150
9. President—Joseph Hubert (Marathon);  
General Chairman—Bob Strong
10. Judy Hughes, Queen. Queen’s Court included:  
Nancy Mitchell, Betty Todd, Mary Ann Atherton,  
Ellen Novak, June Novak, Gert Wiley, Ruthie  
McConville, Ellen Novak, and Juanita Marshall.

# 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***

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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