

Spring 2024
Newsletter #28

LOTS TO DO IN EARLVILLE!!

Thanks to our business and service organizations along with the local schools there will a number events to keep you entertained this spring/summer.

EBA CRUISE NIGHT!

Saturday, May 18th 5pm-8:30pm

To get things started this Spring, the Earlville Business Association is once again sponsoring Cruise Night. This classic car show is always a popular event with so many people walking up and down the middle of the downtown admiring the cars, sharing memories, and enjoying the “throwback” music that can be heard throughout. The parking spaces are usually all filled reminding us all of what it used to be like in the ‘50s and ‘60s in Earlville. The event is free to the public (\$5 for car registration), and they’ve got cool t-shirts and hats for sale, too.

EARLVILLE LIONS FEST 2024

Fri/Sat/Sun, June 7-9

The Lions Club has lots of music and other events planned for Lions Fest this year including the annual pork chop dinner on Saturday afternoon/night in Dodge Park. There will be a Little Mr. and Little Miss Earlville crowned on Saturday. Fun things to do for all ages.

EARLVILLE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEETING

Saturday, June 8th During Lions Fest

The Alumni Association is mixing things up this year, planning to incorporate their annual meeting during the same weekend as Lions Fest. It will be held in the EAST gymnasium starting with a social hour at 3pm. They will be honoring all classes ending in “4”, but ALL classes are invited to attend. Following the meeting, classes will be encouraged to go to the park and take part in the festivities. The Lions will have special seating for the honored classes.

EHS INAUGERAL HALL OF FAME INDUCTIONS

Saturday, June 8th During Lions Fest

At 6pm on Saturday the first presentation of EHS Hall of Fame Inductees will be announced and honored at a ceremony in the park. Those being inducted include: Roger Essman, Soccer Coach; Retired Lt. Col. Kevin Novak; Honorable Judge Don Norton; 1969-1970 undefeated football team; 1979-1980 girls volleyball team.

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

815-252-9380

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

“Like” us on Facebook!



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

2024 Officers

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

Directors:	Ann Newell Kent Sellers Jack Anderson
Building:	Dave Michelsen



Thanks to the Earlville Lions Club!!

The Earlville Lions Club recently donated more than \$41,000 back to our community as a result of some very successful fundraising events. We were one of the fortunate recipients receiving a check for \$2,000 from Maureen King a couple weeks ago. We certainly appreciate the gift, and we promise to put it to good use as we have a couple of big projects coming up in the next year.

A BIG thanks to the Lions Club for their generosity!!

PRECINCT CEMETERY WALK

Sunday, September 15th, 2024

1:00 p.m.

The Historical Society's major fundraiser this year will be to sponsor a Cemetery Walk through Earlville's Precinct Cemetery. If you've never been to an event like this before we'll try to explain what you'll experience. With the help of our committee we have chosen 8 people who will be featured during the walk. They are chosen based on their contributions to Earlville or, perhaps, just because they have an interesting life story. Tickets will be sold in advance. Ticketholders will gather at the Museum prior to boarding a bus which will transport you to the cemetery south of town. From there you will be escorted to each of the gravesites where a volunteer actor, dressed appropriately for the time, will tell you about their life. Each presentation will take approximately 7-8 minutes. There will be additional transportation to assist those who have difficulty walking. At the end of the walk you will be bussed back to the Museum. Depending on ticket sales, we will plan to do 2 separate tours.

The persons who will be featured in this year's Cemetery Walk are the following:

Keith Eldred Harris	(1919-1980)	Military hero, popular bus driver
Robert Harry O'Brien Giles	(1890-1955)	Vaudeville actor with an unusual talent
Lewis Carter	(1879-1971)	Farmer with many interesting jobs, including policeman
James Wales Rowe	(1903-1998)	Longtime insurance businessman
Albert C. Tillman	(1870-1942)	Earlville's first veterinarian
Loretta M. (Carter) Tillman	(1876-1965)	Albert's wife—notable artist
Alonzo J. Grover	(1828-1891)	Outspoken attorney and editor for human rights
Susan A. (Hoxie) Richardson	(1822-1901)	President of Illinois' first women's suffrage group

Mark you calendars now! More details (ticket prices, dates of sale, exact times, etc) will be coming as we get closer to the date this fall.

2024 Calendars—We still have a number of 2024 Calendars available for sale. The calendars are filled with vintage photos of people and places in Earlville. This will be the last year that we will be selling calendars. We also have 2023 calendars and a few of the earlier years available. \$10 each. Send request and money to Earlville Community Historical Society, PO Box 683, Earlville 60518.

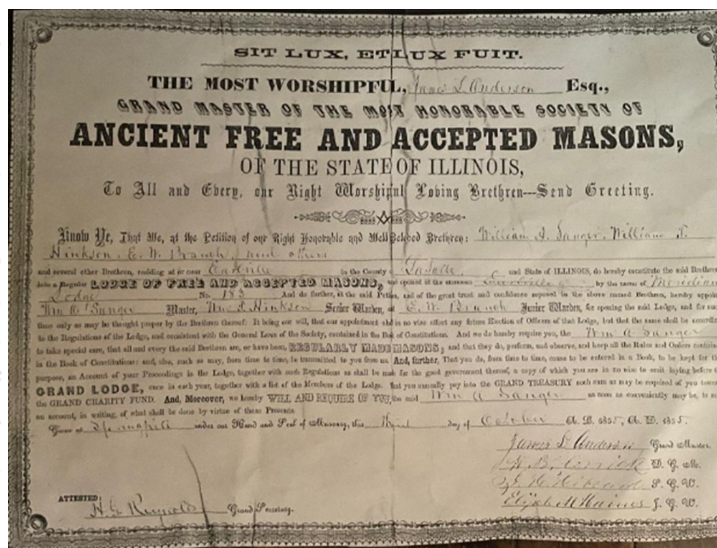
EARLVILLE MERIDIAN LODGE #183



During our research at the Museum we frequently run across obituaries that include references to a person's membership in the local Masonic Lodge. We've read that freemasonry is a charitable, benevolent, educational and religious society but had little knowledge into the organization itself. We were fortunate to have Chuck Miller and his son, Mark, along with Bill Mitchell from the Leland Masonic Lodge present a program on the history of the fraternal organization of "Freemasonry" (otherwise known as Masons) at our May meeting. The first Grand Lodge was formed in England in 1717. There are about 875,000 members in the U.S. We learned that freemasonry is based on the Bible story of King Solomon building the temple in Jerusalem. The Masons are not a religion and accept all Christian denominations into their membership. Many of their symbols and rites related to "carpentry" as you can see by their emblem above. Upon initiation a new member receives and "apron" symbolizing the "stone masons" as a gift. The apron is worn during masonic rites, and the member is to be buried with it upon his death. Every state has a Grand Master, and then each lodge has a Worshipful Master. Within the lodge is a hierarchy that includes a Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary, Treasurer, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon, Senior Steward, Junior Steward, Marshall, Tyler, and Chaplain. There is a specific and symbolic way that the meeting room is arranged based on directions (north, south, east and west). Many notable people were Masons, the first in the U.S. being George Washington. Other statesmen included Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Hancock, Paul Revere, John Adams, Lyndon Johnson, Gerald Ford and others. Many actors (Roy Rogers, John Wayne, Red Skelton) and athletes (Babe Ruth, Ty Cobb, Honus Wagner, Dizzy Trout) were members of the Masons. Today in Illinois, their membership supports a Childrens Home, the Illinois Masonic Home, the Shriners Hospital for Crippled Children as well as other programs.

Other organizations that grew out of the Masons include Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, Order of the Eastern Star, Job's Daughters and others. In order to be a member of any of these groups you must be a Mason or have a close relative that is a Mason. Although the Eastern Star is primarily made up of women there must be a Mason in the group, and other men are allowed to join as well.

The Earlville Meridian Lodge 183 began meeting in 1854 and was chartered in 1855 with the following officers—Master William H. Sanger, Sr. Warden William T. Hinkson, and Jr. Warden E.M. Branch. There's no documentation as to where the Masons met in those early days, however, when J.J. Pool built his drug store in 1868 (better known as the south side of the Kaleel building), the 3rd floor was designated as the new home for the Masons. According to descriptions of that construction, there were even inlays of the Masonic symbols within the flooring. The 2nd floor was to be their dining area. We are in the process of investigating to determine if those might still exist.



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In 1952 when they saw their membership grow they moved to a building on the north side of Railroad St. That building was demolished years ago. That location today would be First State Insurance. The Earlville Meridian Lodge #183 would celebrate its centennial year in 1955 with a large banquet at the Community Building. Past members as well as members from other lodges throughout the country attended this special event. The following photos were taken at that time.



Harry Lee; Dale Hartman; Walter Whitman; Harold Grey; Harlow Miller; James Heaton; George Gould; Ray Boozel
Bert Meade; Chris Svendsen; Clyde Aikens; Dr. E.H.Rayson; Gus Mendel; Mervin Svendsen



Stanley Pointer; Alfred Klatt; Milton Swanson; Walter Whitman; Everett Hatland; Harold Grey; Norman Larson
Ed Shreffler; Forest Carter; Sidney Winter; Martin Olsen; Melvin Mitchell



Walt Whitman, a longtime member, donated funds for the purchase of the Bader Estate property on Old U.S. 34 (now known as Union St.) for its new home in 1974. A Dedication Ceremony took place in November of that year with many of the organization's state dignitaries in attendance. The Lodge continued its meetings here until 1983 when the building was sold to Wess Whittaker. The building still exists and is still used by the salvage company. After that time, the Lodge met in several other locations until 1990 when they leased the 2nd floor of the American Legion. With decreasing membership, Earlville's

Meridian Lodge #183 disbanded and joined Leland's Masonic Lodge #558 in 2005, and nearly 20 years later, the Leland Lodge will be merging with the Sandwich organization later this year.

The Museum is fortunate to have an entire display case filled with articles related to the Earlville Masonic Lodge. Many of the items donated by S.A. Simison and Joseph P. Gatiss date back to the 1800's. Other more recent items include a couple of staves donated by Chuck Jenkins who was the last Worshipful Master of the Earlville Lodge before it joined with Leland in 2005. The family of Bob Strong donated his Shriner's hat, and we have a plate from the Eastern Star with the names of the members in 1974. Bill Mitchell also contributed many documents and photos to the collection including a listing of Earlville's Worshipful Masters over the years.



Recent Donations

We are fortunate to have items come in to the Museum each and every month and couldn't possibly list them all here. We like to highlight a few that piqued our interest, especially when they help to add to the research that we do on businesses, houses, families, etc. The first photo to the right was identified on the back as D.J. Nunemacher and his wife, Laura. We aren't sure who the young man is. Nunemachers owned a clothing business in Earlville from 1907-1951. It was located on the east side of Ottawa St. where many will remember as the location of our drug store. We also have a pair of children's shoes at the Museum that were purchased here.



The photo to the left had us all stumped. We recognized Donna (Harmon) Schrecengost on the left, and found out later that the woman in the middle was Mae Terrace. The background is obviously a grocery store. After referring to the dates in our business directory we asked our favorite historian, LaVerle Carter, if this guy could possibly be either House or Boyd from the Royal Blue Grocery store. She confirmed that it was L.A. Boyd. And why wouldn't she? She used to work for him! House & Boyd's Royal Blue Grocery purchased the Fischer Meat Market in 1920. In 1939 the partnership was dissolved and Boyd continued the business until 1952 when he sold to Gene Witalka. The location is on the south side of Railroad St. where many will remember Babcock Insurance or McConville Realty.



MURAL UPDATE

We are still moving ahead with our plans to investigate a wall mural on the building adjacent to the bank parking lot. But, we have put it on "pause" until the Cemetery Walk is over. If you are interested in being on a committee to offer your ideas and help get through all of the steps of the project, we'd sure love to have you. Send us an email at earlville.history@yahoo.com



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------------------|
| Sat. May 18 | EBA Cruise Night |
| Sat. Jun. 1 | NO MEMBERSHIP MTG |
| Jun. 7-9 | Lionsfest, Alumni, HOF induction |
| Sat. Jul. 6 | MEMBERSHIP MTG. - 9AM |
| Sat. Aug. 3 | NO MEMBERSHIP MTG |
| Sat. Sep. 7 | MEMBERSHIP MTG—9AM |
| Sun. Sep. 15 | PRECINCT CEMETERY WALK |

Rt. 34 Drive-In Theater Celebrates 70th Birthday!

DYAS 34
DRIVE-IN
Theatre
EARLVILLE
OPENS
FRIDAY, JUNE 11th
—OPENING ATTRACTION—
FRI. and SAT., JUNE 11 and 12

Pride of Blue Grass
starring LLOYD BRIDGES • IN COLOR

PLUS

Paris Playboys
GOWER HAYS
HENRY RAY

Also Walt Disney's "3 Little Pigs"

Sun. and Mon.
June 13-14
Also
Walt Disney
Cartoon
Festival

Jubilee Trail
TRUCOLOR
VERA RALSTON
FORREST TUCKER
JOAN LESLIE

Tue., Wed. and Thur., June 15-16-17
Back to Thrill You Again
JOHN WAYNE in "RED RIVER"

Admission - 50c
Children Under 12 Free If Accompanied By Parents
TRY OUR BIG SNACK BAR

Save THE COST OF A BABY SITTER BRING THE KIDDIES

In 1954, after operating the Lyric Theater downtown Earlville for 18 years, Chuck Dyas recognized the need to adjust to the country's new obsession with cars and decided to build a drive-in theater. He purchased 7 acres of land west of town from Sam Thompson and Bill Swayze and entered into a contract with the Ballantyne company, a major supplier of theater equipment. He used all local contractors for the construction. Opening night was Friday, June 11th, and they were still constructing the screen that day. It was reported that there were as many people out watching the screen go up as there were at the movie that night. The main feature was "Pride of Blue Grass", and the cost of admittance was \$.35 for adults. Kids were free. Most who grew up here have great memories (and lots of fun stories) of the drive-in. The back rows were always the coveted spots for hijinks, romance or sneaking in an alcoholic beverage. It's said that Chuck knew exactly how many kids accessed the drive-in inside the trunk of their car. Those who return to town for reunions or family gatherings will still take their kids or grandkids to share this unique experience.

In 1994 Dyas sold the drive-in to Ron Magnoni who continued a successful run for more than 30 years. The business survived the requirement to do an expensive upgrade from film to digital. In 2020 when the pandemic closed most businesses, the drive-in was able to stay open with some restrictions since it was outdoors. People were anxious to get out and, at the same time, be able to social distance. The drive-in continues to get first run movies, and it's not unusual to see automobiles lined up along Rt. 34 waiting to get in. Cars no longer have to use the heavy metal speakers. They can tune in to an FM radio station for a clearer sound.



Following Magnoni's unexpected death in 2023, his good friend and projectionist, Paul Bottomley and wife Shelley, took over the drive-in and opened as usual in April this year. Paul and Shelley were recently interviewed on WGN Radio's Steve & Johnnie's podcast in honor of the business' upcoming anniversary. In that interview Paul talks about the history of the business, his friendship with Magnoni and how they both were close to the Dyas family. Paul used to mow the drive-in for Chuck Dyas as a teenager. He says that he still uses some of the Ballantyne equipment and shares so much of the nostalgia of the business. They have made some updates including the ability to accept credit cards and adding more items to the concession stand menu. The old metal speakers are still available in the first 6 rows for those who want the whole throwback experience. Today's price of admission is \$10 for adults, \$8 for kids and seniors. Kids under 4 get in free. Like with Dyas and Magnoni before them, you can tell that the business is a labor of love for the Bottomleys.

**We Congratulate the 34 Drive-In on its 70 Anniversary
And wish the Bottomleys much success in the future!**

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