



Fall/Winter 2024
Newsletter #31



It's hard to know where to start to say Thank You to these 2 loyal volunteers! Rich Goodbred is stepping down as President and Stan Meloy is retiring his position of Vice President as of January 2025. Rich took over the Presidency in 2013 but had been an active member before that. Stan has also served more than 10 yrs as VP and

had been an active member and officer previously. **We won't be having a presentation on Dec. 7th after our Board Mtg, but, instead, we would love to have you stop in from 9a-10a to enjoy a donut and coffee and thank them for their years of volunteerism.** Of course, we have NO PLANS to let them get away and are hopeful that they will still remain as weekend volunteers and continue to contribute their ideas to the Historical Society!

And, how fortunate we are to have others to "answer the call"! Karen Wold stepped up from her Secretary role to take on President, and Jack Anderson from Director to Vice President. In addition, we welcome Al Matison in as a new Director. **We are still looking for someone to join us and take over the Secretary's position,** so if you are interested in helping us out, we'd love to have you! It involves setting the agenda and typing meeting minutes as well as minimal correspondence. We have 9 Board Meetings/year and meet the first Saturday of the month April-December. The meetings typically last less than an hour and are followed by a presentation several times/year. Other members of the Board are: Kris Goodbred (Treasurer), Anna Svendsen (Curator), and Directors, Ann Newell and Kent Sellers.

Videos Now Available on our YouTube Channel!

For years we have had a library of videos ranging from the old reel-to-reel, VHS tapes, cassette tapes, CD/DVDs, to thumb drives. Terry Bronk, our wonderful videographer friend, is working to add them all to our YouTube channel. You can simply tune-in and watch interviews of older residents, home movies from parades, presentations from our meetings, and other media that has been donated over the years. When each one is completed Terry will post a link to it on our Facebook page. If you don't do Facebook, you can go to our web page www.earlvillehistory.org and click on the YouTube icon. There you will see a listing of all that are currently available. ENJOY!!

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

"Like" us on Facebook!



Board Meetings are on the 1st Sat. of the month (April through December) 8a.m. at the Museum

Membership Meetings at 9am as announced

Check Calendar

2025 Officers

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

\$\$ Your Donations at Work.... \$\$

We have been making some much-needed and long-overdue improvements to our buildings this Fall. The second floor of our main building has never had heat or air conditioning making it difficult to work up there or have guests visit displays in the cold or hot weather. Plus, the prolonged extreme temps are not good for the items in our displays. Malley Plumbing and Heating installed a secondary furnace/AC unit on the second floor to remedy that, and, at the same time, add value to the building. Our A-Team of volunteers will do some work to create some walls and display space around it.

The front wall of our Agricultural building (south of the main building) had rotted, and, after years of patching and painting, now has a new wall and entrance giving us a little extra space. The outside façade was changed keeping with the look of brick and adding 2 windows to let in more light. Bill's Creative Carpentry from Earlville is completing that work this week in time for us to host the Photos with Santa during Christmas Fest on Dec. 1st. Our own little elves (Jack Anderson and Dave Michelsen) have already installed new pegboard for new displays inside. None of this would have been possible without your memberships and donations. Our goal is to be responsible guardians of the money and provide you and our other guests with a great experience when they visit us!

BEFORE



AFTER



It's Membership Time!!

If you have an ANNUAL (renewable) membership to ECHS it will be due on January 1st. We sincerely hope that you choose to renew! Checks can be mailed to ECHS, PO Box 683, Earlville, IL 60518. This does not apply to LIFETIME memberships which are nonrenewable. ANNUAL memberships are \$15 per year. LIFETIME memberships are a one-time payment of \$150. We also have memberships available for businesses. Lifetime members and Lifetime business members are recognized with a plate on our Donor Board.

We currently have 231 total members—191 Lifetime Members and 40 Annual Members. We have 3 Lifetime Business Memberships.

Maybe you have a friend or family members who would appreciate receiving our newsletters? Why not purchase a membership for them at Christmas this year? Or, maybe you have a business that you'd like to have represented on our Donor Board? Please use the form attached to the back of this newsletter. Thanks to all of our members for their steadfast support of the Museum! We couldn't do it without you!!

Celebrating our Military Heroes



Prior to the month of November we gathered a bunch of volunteers at the Museum to help move our Military display to the first floor. We have many guests who cannot use the stairs and aren't comfortable taking the chairlift, so we wanted to make sure that everyone had an opportunity to see the exhibit. We have more than 20 uniforms that have been donated along with many other artifacts from the Civil War through today. Most all of the uniforms are displayed on mannequins and labeled with the soldier's name, branch of service, etc. Other parts of the display included Savings Bonds, Ration Books, hair donations, history of the local American Legion, the story of the War Hemp Mills, gas masks, Japanese rifles, a Civil War sword and more. Our thanks to Mike Roberson and Jack Anderson for lending their knowledge, and to the school for promoting the display. We were happy to host the HS and Jr High History Classes on Friday before Veteran's Day. On November 11 the Earlville Schools do an annual luncheon and program for all Veterans. It's a wonderful day to honor our service men and women and also a great opportunity to teach the younger generation about the military. Terry Bronk, videographer, took photos of the display, put them to music, and put them up on our YouTube channel. The display will remain up through the end of the year.

Old Street Light Donated

The street light in the photo to the right was recently donated to the Museum. Roy Weiman had it in his possession, probably left from the Kirby family who ran the Epie Florist Shop on the SE corner of Ottawa and Railroad (current location of the American Legion). It possibly hung from a pole at the corner of their business at the time when they were replacing the lights. We have photos of the downtown area showing this particular light during the 1940s and 1950s. Al Matison took it home, cleaned it up and had it rewired. It looks great and now shines brightly from a bracket that Al found. Thanks so much for this wonderful "find"!!

Just when you think you've seen about everything, we get another unusual (and very cool) thing to add to the Museum!

Might be time to go out to that old garage, attic, shed or basement and see what treasures YOU might have!!



Community Mural Committee

We are looking for a few good men (and women) who would be interested in joining a committee to pursue a mural painting in downtown Earlville. The wall for the mural is on the side of the building that is located at the east edge of the NuMark Credit Union parking lot. We'd love for the mural to be a reflection of the history of our city. The committee would be responsible for soliciting ideas from the community, meeting with potential artists, and ultimately determining what the mural would look like. Or, do you just have some ideas on what should be included on the mural? Either way, please contact us via email at: earlville.history@yahoo.com!

Wall paintings are not new to Earlville. A lot of companies used to advertise their products on the walls of buildings. Some of you might remember the Bull Durham tobacco or Gold Medal Flour painting that appeared on the south wall of the bowling alley before the addition was built. Sylvia's café, next to the Lyric had her advertising painted on the south side of that building as did Remick's Bakery & Restaurant on Railroad St. The Earlville Co-Op Elevator still has remnants of the round Gold Medal logo on their oldest metal building. The paintings, even though they were ads, were beautifully painted and added so much interest to the buildings. The newer murals "tell a story" about the city/town by highlighting significant buildings or events. Some have no story, and are just meant to provide color and interest. What a great way to help improve our city! Wont you join us???

Oh, If This Chair Could Talk!



Marv Masterson's family recently donated his barber chair to the Museum. Marv's Barber & Billiards was a thriving business in this community from 1952-1974. As with most barber and billiard halls back in the day, it was an unwritten rule that it was a place for men only. There was plenty of card-playing and lots of stories exchanged in and around this chair. Marv and his wife, Bernie, raised 7 children in Earlville. He retired from the barber business in 1974, moved to Seneca and eventually to Naples FL where he passed away in 2022 at the age of 98.

Marv's barber shop ended a long line of barbers in that same location. The building was torn down that same year to make room for the new Miller-Rowe Insurance building (currently First State Insurance). Those who came before him included: Chas Kuntz & Robt. Johnson (1948-1954), Ed & Geo Wolf (1939-1948), Wm Dolder (1921-1939), and I.A. Bock (1915-1921).

Thanks to the Masterson Family for this wonderful gift!



How Many Can You Name? (BEFORE you read this)

These children were part of a Style Show sponsored by the Presbyterian Junior Guild in 1951. More than 300 attended the event and more than 20 adults also participated.

Bottom Row: Jean Marshall, Craig Carter, Harriet Gould, Linda Gould, Cheryl Glover.

Top Row: Helen Klatt, Linda Cole, Sara Wold, Joyce Wold, Bonnie Harris, Janice Marshall



Wrestling Match!

Boxing and wrestling have always been popular sports but you can see that the match drew a BIG crowd on this day! Alexander Lumber Co is on the far right of the photo, and the railroad behind it. The location is at the intersection of Railroad and Ottawa St. The roof of the building would be Strong and Strong. We have other boxing photos that appear to be in a similar location. Based on the cars and the dress it must be in the 1920s or 30s.

Ghost Towns

The next time that you head south on Terra Cotta (E 1453rd Rd) and come to the stop sign at N 39th Rd, sit for a minute and imagine being in the middle of a busy little town. Gouldtown, as it was called, existed in this very spot prior to the Civil War. Nahum Gould was born in Massachusetts and became a minister before moving to Illinois in 1834. Many of his friends from seminary had moved to this area, including William Hickok, father of Wild Bill Hickok. During that time he organized Presbyterian Churches in Putnam and LaSalle Counties. In 1846 he moved to a town called Prairie Home which was subsequently renamed Gouldtown after him. At its busiest, the town contained a school, a Methodist and Presbyterian Church, a mill, two blacksmith shops and a cheese factory. Nahum Gould was antislavery and even ran an underground railroad within the community. Gould would only live here for 4 years before relocating to Somonauk. No one really knows the reason that Gouldtown and other “ghost towns” failed. Malaria and other illnesses wiped out many villages, and some were lost due to the railroad bypassing their location.

So, what’s left of Gouldtown? As you continue south through the intersection you will note 2 homes on the right (west) of the road. The older home is built on the foundation of one of the Gouldtown houses suspected of being Nahum Gould’s residence. As you proceed a little further, you’ll see a couple of trees on the left (east) with tall grass surrounding them. This is the Gouldtown Cemetery.



Gouldtown School



Rev. Nahum Gould

“Hidden Messages in Negro Spirituals on the Underground Railroad”

The Earlville Public Library will be hosting a very interesting program on **Feb. 4th, from 7-8p at the Lutheran Church.**

The speaker, Connie Martin, will show how codes were worked into quilts to let freedom seekers navigate escape route. She will bring a display of quilts to the presentation.

The Underground Railroad was very active in all of LaSalle County. For those who have not heard of that term before here’s a definition— The Underground Railroad was a network of people (not a real railroad) African American as well as white, offering shelter and aid to escaped slaves from the South. It operated from the late 18th century to the Civil War.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend!

Cemetery Walk—HUGE Success!!

It was a LOT of work, but we received so many positive comments on the Cemetery Walk on Sep. 21st that it was well-worth it! Approximately 100 people attended. The portrayers did a fabulous job acting out their honorees. We are grateful for their commitment to the part as well as to practices and the full day in the hot sunshine! Portrayers included— Mike Roberson, John Boltz, Jane and Bruce Bauer, Erin Wold, Ken Tillman, Jr., Al Fane and Warren Sanders.

Our committee worked hard, and our members came out of the woodwork to help on that day! They were there for set-up, helping guests on and off the bus during the long day, manning the Museum, cookie-baking, takedown/clean-up and “all other duties as assigned”! For those who could NOT attend, please go to our YouTube channel and watch the video!

...TO US!!!!



It’s hard to believe that the Museum turned 10 years old this year! Many of you remember when the Historical Society met in a small room in the basement of the Library. When the town

celebrated its 150th birthday in 2013 the Sesquicentennial Committee was looking for a place to have their headquarters. The old hardware store (our current location) was available to rent through the local bank. The Society was finally able to display some of the artifacts and photos that they had collected. As people came in to look around they kept bringing in more and more items. In 2014 the Earlville Community Historical Society voted to purchase the building and maintain it as the new community museum. And, as they say—The Rest is HISTORY! Since that time our membership has grown from 87 to 231. The museum has grown, too! It started out on just the first floor. Today both floors of the main building are full as well as the agricultural shed next door. And, all of this would not be possible without the physical (and monetary) donations that you have made.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- Dec. 1 EBA Christmas Fest
- Dec. 7 Board Mtg (8a) followed at 9a by donuts and coffee Thank You for Rich and Stan
- Dec. 15 Last day Museum is open before closing for the winter
- 2025**
- Feb. 4 Quilt Program sponsored by Library
- Feb. 15-17 LaSalle Co Museum Tours
- Apr. 5 Board Mtg (8a)
- May 3 Board Mtg (8) followed by Membership Mtg at 9a



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