

Historical Happenings

Newsletter of Kewanee Historical Society

Summer 2011

ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

It's that time again—for our annual newsletter and an appeal for financial assistance. This year, as last year, we are going to forego the bake sale but still ask you, one of the 350 on our membership list, to make a donation to help with the expenses of maintaining your museum.

Wal-Mart, which had for several years matched our bake sale donations up to \$1,000, has discontinued the matching grant program and simply gives out “community grants.” Thus, the decision made last year not to have a Bake Sale.

Last year's “First Annual Fundraiser Without a Bake Sale” was a great success thanks to the generosity of many of the lifetime members of the Kewanee Historical Society. We received just under \$5,000 thanks to contributions from 56 members. That was about \$2,000 more than in previous years.

Included was an **extraordinary donation of \$1,000 from David Good**, a 1961 graduate of Kewanee High School who recently retired as a professor of history at the University of Minnesota.

Also, special thanks to the **Henry County Independent Insurance Agents** for another \$500 donation. There were other donors of relatively large sums, but not knowing where to “draw the line,” we will continue to not list all of you who continue your financial support of the museum.

This is our only special fundraising event each year, so please support it if you can. If you can donate, send your check to Kewanee Historical Society, 211 N. Chestnut St., Kewanee, IL 61443.

We are **still “hurting” for volunteers.** If you can help for just a couple hours a week or even a month, let us know. If you know of someone you can recommend, refer that person to us.

If you or anyone you know wants to help, please call President Larry Lock at 853-4572 or contact any of the board members whose names are listed in this newsletter.

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

We continue to be **open on Thursday and Saturday afternoons from 1:30 to 4:00.** Pat and Larry Lock cover Thursday afternoons and they and other board members alternate on Saturdays. Merry Ann Malcolm continues to help on Thursdays with organizing our collections of documents and improving displays.

As usual we will be open for **extended hours during Hog Days**—10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Sunday and Monday of Labor Day weekend. This is easily the time for the greatest attendance at the museum—in 2010 we had the typical 200 visitors.

Maintaining and improving our building is an ongoing process. Fortunately we incurred no major problems in 2010. We did cover part of an interior wall with paneling because of crumbling plaster. Also, some minor roof patching was needed last year and some small patches were made to the exterior south wall this spring.

Thanks to four local concerns that continue to make in-kind contributions to the society: **B&B Printing, Ed's Heating and Plumbing, Jerry Lippens' ABC Signs and Network Business Systems of Geneseo (internet provider).**

The four display cases that **Bob and Peggy Bailleu** donated last summer have been filled with displays on the Butterwicks and their hardware store that now houses the museum, the Lyman and Lay Department Store, brewing and saloon history in Kewanee and area agriculture. The cases were transported to the museum and assembled through the volunteer efforts of **Mark Tudder and Allen German.**

Larry Lock with the use of a projector borrowed from the Henry County Genealogical Society has done several power-point programs during the past year. He has presented programs on Kewanee Streetcars, Walworth and Its Predecessors, Kewanee Parks, Kewanee Scenes in Late 1800s, and Kewanee in 1859. Programs were presented for Kewanee Courtyard Village and Estates residents, Kewanee Woman's Club, Kiwanis Club and ladies groups of the First Baptist Church, St. Mary's Catholic Church and First United Methodist Church. **A program is scheduled for the Henry County Genealogical Society on the history of Kewanee parks, both private and public.** It will be on Monday, July 25 at 1:30 in the Kewanee Public Library meeting room. **Any group wanting a program is welcome to contact Larry at 853-4572.**

Groups are always welcome to schedule a visit to the museum. This past year we had visits from several Girl Scout and Boy Scout groups, Central School summer classes and ABCD after-school program.

Requests for research are welcome. We get them in person, by phone, by mail and more often these days by email. People anywhere in the world can find us by "googling" Kewanee or Kewanee history. Our website, which is provided by **Rob Bailleu**, is **kewaneehistory.com.**

Last year we loaned some items from our extensive **cornhusking exhibit** to Pioneer Village at Long Grove, Iowa for a special Labor Day open house that focused on the production of corn.

Finally, we still have about 30 copies of "**Streetcars in Kewanee and Galva,**" from the 350 that were printed in 2009. Written by the late Fred Rozum and published by us, the 100-page book with about 50 illustrations, is available for \$16 including tax, plus \$3 if it is sent by mail.

New Old Stuff

We have received artifact and document donations from nearly 40 different individuals since our last newsletter in June of 2010. The museum is full, but we can always make room for more. Unable to mention all, here are some of the past year's donations.

A special donation was a large collection of **Kewanee Boiler** memorabilia from the family of the late Brule Carleson, a Boiler executive from the 1950s to early 1970s. Included are sales catalogs dating back to the 1890s, interesting pictures, a Masonic ceremonial sword that belonged to E.E. Baker, founder and longtime president of Kewanee Boiler, and more. **(See our website for a copy of the recent Star Courier article about the 2011 museum opening that includes information about Kewanee Boiler history and our Boiler display.)**

Kewanee Machinery and Conveyor items were donated by Mary Glidden-Williams, daughter of Robert Glidden, longtime president of the company. Included are a specialized safe and corn hanger, both made by Machinery and Conveyor, and sales catalogs and pictures of the farm machinery that they manufactured. (See photos in the newsletter.)

Two scrapbooks filled with Star Courier news articles on **Korean War soldiers** from Kewanee and the area were donated by Norman Johnson, who found them at an auction and felt they belonged in the museum. We later learned that they were compiled by the late Warren "Beanie" Olson.

Another military item is the **Henry County Honor Roll** donated by Bobby Johnson. It contains pictures and info on most, if not all, Henry Countians who served during World War I.

We have Kewanee city directories dating back to 1876 but did not have any really old telephone books. Dave Clarke changed that with the donation of **1916 and 1926 phone books.**

Several people did donate Kewanee and Wethersfield high school **yearbooks** and others have given Kewanee **city directories**. We can always use more, including phone books, especially since a donation might include one that we do not have.

Each year we receive **old photographs** and we can never have too many. Those from the past year include photos of **Ryan's Round Barn** under construction (donated by Gary and Chris Erickson), the **1898 Kewanee High School football team** that is especially interesting since the first KHS yearbook with student photos was in 1904 (donated by Terry and Noreen Conley), **Company K of the Illinois National Guard in 1913** (donated by Mary Jane Skoglund), and others.

If you have interesting old photos that you do not want to part with, they can be scanned and emailed to us. Also, we have a laptop computer and portable scanner and can come to you to scan pictures.

Captions for pictures

Besides Kewanee's "big boy" industries Kewanee Boiler and Walworth, there were several "little brothers" during the 1900s, including **Kewanee Machinery and Conveyor**, whose president, Robert Glidden, is pictured above with a company employee in front of the 5-by-10-foot display board illustrating the 37 millimeter high explosive shells that they manufactured during World War II. Although farm machinery was their main product, Machinery and Conveyor like other Kewanee industries concentrated on the war effort. **The actual display board is part of the museum's Machinery and Conveyor exhibit.**



Although **Kewanee Machinery and Conveyor** became well-known in the Midwest for its farm machinery, the company produced small safes such as the one shown above in a 1927 company advertisement that featured Mary Hitchcock, a cashier at Kewanee's Rialto Theatre, demonstrating its use. A **safe** like the one above was **donated to the museum last year by Mary Glidden-Williams**, daughter of longtime company president Robert Glidden.

