



Mercer County Historical Society Newsletter

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Editor: Mary Jane Sticklen

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Mercer County Historical Society & Essley-Noble Museum

1406 - SE 2nd Avenue
Aledo, IL 61231
Phone: 309/582-2280

Hours: 1:00 - 5:00 PM
Wed., Sat., & Sunday
April through the end of October.



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For Genealogy Queries write to:

MCHS Genealogy Dept.
PO Box 269
Aledo IL 61231-2504



Please address all correspondence to:
PO Box 269

"Mail is no longer delivered to the museum
building."

Memberships available for \$15/household

For membership or change of address contact:

Jim Runyon
756 State Hwy 94
Aledo, IL 61231
309-582-7762



Website:

http://www.geocities.com/mchs_61231

Welcome Veda!

The Essley-Noble Museum has found an able new curator in Veda Meriwether. She graduated from UT in East Moline, moved to Michigan, and has been a resident of rural Mercer County since 2002. Veda has experience in banking, computer consulting, and has office managerial experience at several car dealerships. She has one daughter, also living in Mercer Co., two sons, and four grandchildren. She has a variety of interests, including history, biking, quilting, sports, sailboat racing, and she has been a soccer coach. Veda has seemingly tireless energy and enthusiasm and loves meeting new people while learning more about Mercer County so stop in, introduce yourselves, and all will be richer for the experience.



Curator's Corner

By Veda Meriwether

I want to thank all of the new faces I have met through the MCHS for making me feel at home. It has been a new and exciting adventure for me, thus far. I have received great comments from the visitors to the museum. Let's get the word out about a wonderful wealth of history in Mercer County. There were many people that came to the museum as the Rhubarb Fest was going on. Thanks to Shirley Crawford for her past work as Curator and her support to help me in the future. I am looking forward to working with and for all in the future. I welcome your input and encouragement as I help to advance the mission of my position.



"Just Call Me Sherlock" says our newest MCHS board member Sandi Sharer. Sandi became interested in historical and genealogical research while putting on the computer family information from her mother, Charlotte, one of the Johnson twins from Mercer Co. Although residing in Moline, Sandi considers herself a "Mercer Co. Girl," with close family and nostalgic ties. She has been coming to Essley-Noble Museum for about 6 years to fill in the blank spaces of family history and, as she realized that things were difficult to find, she decided that she would start putting Mercer County information on the computer.

Sandi's first project was consolidating the **Obituary indexes** in alphabetical order, so that one could look up an individual's name and locate the obituary book that lists the microfilm number of where they could find the personal information and obituaries.

Her second project was putting the **Marriages of Mercer County** on the computer. She first listed all of the Mercer County marriages in order from 1835 to



1899. She then made a book of Grooms of Mercer County, listing the groom's name, his bride's name, the date and sometimes place of marriage and

the record number. Then Sandi did the same thing for the brides. She has yet to work on the marriages from 1900 thru 1916, having since become interested in Civil War soldiers.

Civil War Soldiers: Sandi has entered the Honor Roll Civil War soldiers on the computer, in alphabetical order. The museum has a book of the Honor Roll listed by cemetery, but by an alphabetical order listing, researchers find it easier to start their searches.

Sandi says, "When I learned the museum had two boxes of Civil War soldiers pictures that were not available to the general public, I brought my laptop and scanner to the museum and made copies of each of the Civil War soldier's picture so that we could put them in a photo album and make available to anyone who walks into the museum.

"Currently I am working on Mercer County Civil War soldiers, whether they live in M.C., served under M.C. companies, or are buried in Mercer County. I am looking to find the personal information of each soldier, his parents' names if available, his birth date, and place of birth, his death date, where he died and the cemetery he is buried in, then his children's information. I want his Civil War history, a photo as a soldier or an adult to put with the information, his obituary and any personal information I can find on that soldier.

"I would love to get Aledo residents interested in volunteering to help research these Civil War soldiers. Since I live in Moline my time at the museum is somewhat limited and if there were

interested people around Aledo to help research, we could complete our information that much faster. I would like to develop a program '**Adopt a Civil War Soldier**' where a relative comes in to research a family Civil War Soldier, or just picking a name from the book and trying to find out as much about him as possible. I am hoping that those Mercer County residents who have Civil War soldiers in their family will bring me that soldier's information.

"My ultimate goal in putting indexes and Mercer County Histories in the computer is so a researcher can come to the museum and more easily find information on their family member. The more information that is put on the computer, the better for the museum, and backing up that information makes it possible to protect the fountain of information already at the museum. Letting the general public know that researching will soon be much easier, will allow people of Mercer county and surrounding areas easier access to genealogy information.

"Those families in this area, who have personal family papers, pictures and information they do know what to do with, would be greatly appreciated by the museum so that personal family information is not lost. Growing up, when we had to clean out a relative's home, sorted papers and pictures, and if they did not recognize who was in the pictures they got pitched. It was a total loss and shame as once gone, those pictures and papers were lost forever."



H. E. Abercrombie
2nd Lieutenant Company H - 84th Ill. Vol.
Killed at Stone River - December 31st, 1862



Sandi is more than happy to help researchers at the museum and she can be found there most Wednesday afternoons and some weekends. Check out her user-friendly obituary and marriage indexes and the wonderful album of Civil War soldiers. Especially take up her invitation to be a History Detective and help with research, whether it be a Civil War soldier or another aspect of Mercer Co. history. Call the museum during operating hours, or drop a note to our P.O. box (See page 1, first column.) and let us know that you are willing to help.

Ruth Giffin Memorial Display

A new display at the museum has been dedicated in memory of longtime curator Ruth Giffin who passed away in May. The stand with swinging photo panels will be used to display old family pictures that often are tucked away in some storage box, unseen by family members for years at a time. This opportunity to show your precious photos and portraits of ancestors is an idea copied from a museum in Kansas where swinging panels on five stands have been filled by families displaying their heritage for friends and family members to view. We know that Ruth would have loved to show her family pictures in such a way to friends and relatives visiting the museum.



Each side of a 2'x 3' panel in the display stand will be rented to a family for use in displaying their photos at the museum at donation of \$50 per year. (Since the year is half over, this can apply for the rest of this summer plus the 2010 open season.) A family can bring their pictures to the museum and mount them as they would like to have them displayed on archival cardboard that will then be placed in a display panel. Labels identifying the people and/or places on display should be brought along with the pictures.

Formal family portraits are welcome, but displays can be much more interesting when they include informal shots such as people working, playing, or showing off their prized possession such as a new buggy or automobile. Old pictures of houses, farm buildings, family events, etc. help to tell the story of a family's history. Friends and cousins can then be brought or directed to the museum to see the picture of "great-grandfather Eli and his prize bull" or "great-aunt Sarah" as a demure teenager.

This is a great chance to show younger family members that ancestors were more than just names on tombstones - give them a chance to relate to that

grandfather who was responsible for their red hair, or the great-uncle who looked so much like them when he was a child. It is also an opportunity to show to relatives those ancestral pictures whose only copies are in your possession. To arrange for your own family display, call the museum during operating hours at 582-2280, or drop a note to P.O. Box 269 and someone will contact you.



Come to the Fair

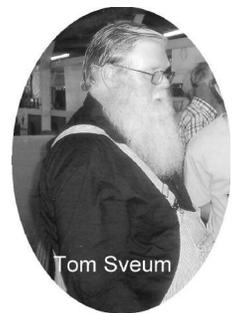
Tom Sveum, a wheelwright from Janesville, WI, is returning to demonstrate his craft at the MCHS booth in the Merchants Building during the Mercer County fair. Tom is most gracious to share his time and talents and is making new wooden wheels for the museum's railway freight wagon. He plans to be at the fair booth Wednesday, Thursday, Friday afternoons and evenings July 15-17 and will return during Antique Days.

The MCHS booth will be open July 14-18 so be sure to stop by to visit, see our displays, and enter our ever-popular "Name that Tool" contest.



Celebrate!

2009 marks the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Essley-Noble Museum. Join us for our special celebration on Antique Days September 12 when wheelwright Tom Sveum will return to heat the iron tire bands to fit them on the wooden freight wagon wheels he has been making. Stop by also to watch pioneer demonstrations and a mural being painted; visit the museum, machine shed, school house, and prairie garden; have some refreshments; and take home a wooden nickel.



5th Grade Tours

Except for one unfortunate rainy-day cancellation, the 5th grade tours in May were enjoyed by many. Thank you to Shirley Ball who coordinated the event and to the volunteers, teachers, and parents who helped make it a success, and for the students' enthusiasm, which makes it all worthwhile.

Coming Events

- July 14-18** **Mercer County Fair booth**
- Wheelwright Tom Sveum and other exhibits in an expanded MCHS booth.
- Sept. 12** **Antique Days.**
- Wheelwright demonstration, mural, pioneer demonstrations open house during expanded hours at the museum.
- Oct. 19** **Fall Open meeting**
- 7:00 p.m. at the museum. Program TBA
- Oct. 31** **Last Day**
- Museum will re-open April 3, 2010.

This newsletter sponsored by:

