

# Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Kewanee Historical Society

Summer 2010



## ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

FIRST ANNUAL FUNDRAISER WITHOUT A BAKE SALE - It's that time again—for our annual newsletter and an appeal for financial assistance. However, this year for the first time 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.

The main reason for having the bake sale in recent years was that the donation from Wal-Mart was tied to our bake sale. In each of the past few years we have made about \$150 on the sale of baked goods and about \$1,500 from your monetary donations in lieu of baked goods. Wal-Mart matched our efforts up to \$1000. However, we learned last year from a local Wal-Mart representative that their donation, which is called a Community Grant, is no longer connected to any fundraising effort conducted at the store, such as a bake sale or tag day. Thus, the decision not to have the Bake Sale.

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

Part of the reason for not having a bake sale bears on another plea for help. We are “hurting” for volunteers. If you can help for just a couple hours a week or even a month, let us know. 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.

### *Officers of the Kewanee Historical Society ~*

Larry Lock, Pres.

Steve Moon, Vice Pres.

Joan Herrick, Sec.

William McKee, Treas.

### *Directors of the Kewanee Historical Society ~*

Jeff Arch, Lee Ann Bailleu, Clint Block, Marci Carlson, Greg Davis, Mark Hepner, Pat Lock, Alma McLennan, Dave Van Nieuwenhuysse

## 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—between 150 and 200 in recent years.

Maintaining and improving our building is an ongoing process. A major improvement last summer was the installation of a **security system**. Besides guarding against break-ins, it should bring a quick response from the fire department in case of fire.

Needed repair to the south wall where stucco had cracked badly some 40-50 feet high was done by Jensen Construction. About half of the repair job was **donated by Bruce Whitmer**, master plasterer who learned his trade from his father, who also worked on the museum years ago. The entire south wall was then painted. Also the basement door on the north side was repaired.

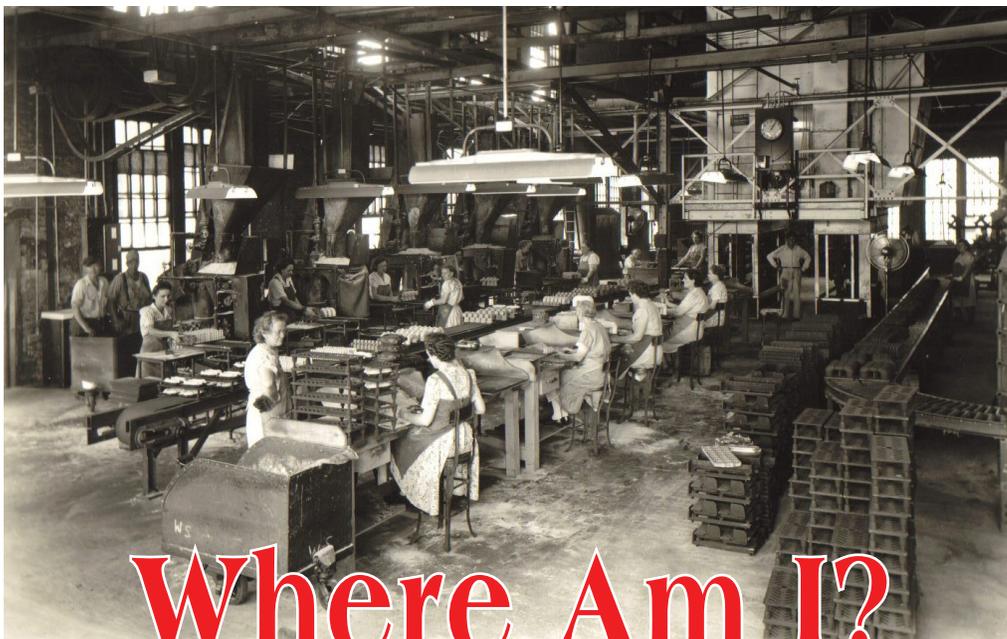
Thanks to five local concerns that continue to make in-kind contributions to the society: B&B Printing, Ed's Heating and Plumbing, Doug Irwin Accounting, Jerry Lippens Sign-painting and Network Business Systems of Geneseo (internet provider).

**Bob & Peggy Bailleu** at B&B also recently donated four display cases that will be put to good use.

Larry Lock with the use of a projector borrowed from the Henry County Genealogical Society has done numerous power-point programs during the past year. He has prepared programs on Kewanee Streetcars, Walworth and Its Predecessors, Kewanee Parks, Kewanee Scenes in Late 1800s, and Kewanee in 1859. The latter was done for the Royal Arch Masons on the celebration of their 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. Programs were also done for Kewanee Courtyard Village residents, Central School summer school, the Genealogical Society, and ladies groups of the First Baptist Church, St.

Mary's Catholic Church and First United Methodist Church. **Any group wanting a program is welcome to contact Larry.**

In April of this year the museum hosted the Henry County Genealogical Society's monthly meeting at which Tom Willer of Chicago gave a program on “How My Ancestor Saved President Lincoln's Life.” The tongue-in-cheek title is based on what we call the “Lincoln Lantern,” which is on display in our museum. The lantern was loaned to Lincoln by Saxon postmaster Charles Robson when Lincoln was returning to Kewanee on an October



# Where Am I?

evening in 1858 after speaking in Toulon. After being returned to Robson, the lantern was passed down through generations until it was donated to our museum several years ago. About 40 attended the program.

**Groups are always welcome to schedule a visit to the museum.** This past year groups ranging from 3rd graders at Visitation to Red Hat Ladies from Orion have visited. There were also Brownies and Cub Scouts, Central School classes, a Model A car group and senior citizens from Galesburg.

**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**.

We need to give special thanks to the **Independent Insurance Agents of Henry County** and, of course, **Wal-Mart** for continuing to make major monetary contributions. Also, to **Charles Gray** for his monetary gift and for his continuous search of the internet for references to Kewanee and people with a Kewanee connection and his “finds” at area auctions. A recent gift from Charles is a panorama photograph of the **1930-31 student body of Wethersfield High School** assembled in front of the old high school.

Check out chilit.org on the internet to find a truly interesting article on James H. Andrews, mayor of Kewanee from 1919 to 1935, written by his grandson James H. Andrews for presentation to the Chicago Literary Club. Grandson Jim, a Chicago attorney, Kewanee High 1950's graduate and historical society member, did some of his research at our museum. When on the literary club's website, go to Archives on the lower left side. Click on Index of Papers Online to find the biography entitled “God Tempers the Wind to the Shorn Lamb.”

Also on the internet you can find “When Farmers Were Heroes: The National Cornhusking Contests,” a 27-minute documentary that was partly filmed and researched at our museum. The DVD costs only \$10 and can be found at [heritagedocumentaries.org](http://heritagedocumentaries.org). It is outstanding and includes commentary on the late William Rose of Kewanee and by 95-year-old Hank Endress of Wyoming, Illinois, both champion cornhuskers of the 1930's.



## STREETCAR BOOK STILL AVAILABLE

“Streetcars in Kewanee and Galva” by Fred Rozum, which was published by the Kewanee Historical Society in August of 2008, is still available. The first printing of 250 sold out in six months and 100 more

were printed last spring.

The 100-page book with 50 illustrations that covers the history of streetcars in Kewanee and Galva from 1903 to 1935 can be purchased in Kewanee at the museum, B&B Printing on Main Street and the reference room at the library for \$16, including sales tax. They can be ordered by mail for that price plus \$3 for shipping (total of \$19). Send check to Kewanee Historical Society, 211 N. Chestnut St., Kewanee, IL 61443.

## Where Am I? Answer:

You are in one of the core rooms of the Walworth, circa 1940. Two copies of this photo, were donated independent of each other about one week apart. They came from Ronelle Spiegel and Jeanne DeConnick. In both cases their husbands' aunts are in the picture (Wilma Fuerst and Mary Kubinsky Lawlor).

## New Old Stuff

We have received artifact and document donations from 40 different individuals in 2009 and already from 10 persons in 2010. The museum is full, but we can always make room for more. We only have space here to mention a few.

A large collection of slides depicting the work of **architect Philip Welch**, a Kewanee native, was donated by the executor of his estate, Kathy Barrett of Santa Fe, N.M. Welch, who died there several years ago, designed the medical offices on South Chestnut and some Kewanee residences.

A Boy Scout uniform worn by **William McKeever** around 1920 when he was a scout leader was donated by Charles McMahon. They were neighbors on Beach Street until the death of McKeever, a longtime streetcar employee.

**Larry Verdick**, society member and Kewanee collector, loaned negatives of numerous photos of the **1932 National Cornhusking Championship** on the Peterson Farm between Kewanee and Galva. Larry purchased the negatives at a local auction. The photos were taken by attorney Russell Neville, well known for his amateur photography.

Several people have donated Kewanee and Wethersfield high school **yearbooks** and others have given Kewanee **city directories**. We can always use more, 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 workers or buildings at four Kewanee industries, Nobiling grocery and clothing stores, West Side Bakery, Siona School of Beauty 1930s students, 1920s Northeast Park swimming pool, fans at Terminal Park baseball game about 1910, Walworth golf outing group, the Herrick brothers (early Kewanee boxers), Washington School classes, and World War II soldiers.

**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.**

## Kewanee Historical Society

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**Open Thurs. & Sat.**

**May 1 - Oct. 1 • 1:30pm - 4:00pm**

or by Appointment call:

309-853-4572 • 309-853-8605

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