

Historical Happenings

Newsletter of the Kewanee Historical Society

Summer 2008



ANNUAL BAKE SALE FUNDRAISER SET FOR SATURDAY, JUNE 21

It's that time again—for our annual newsletter, bake sale and appeal for financial assistance. It is in this newsletter that we announce the date of our **bake sale** and ask for your financial help. So here goes:

The Kewanee Historical Society will hold its annual **Bake Sale** at Wal-Mart on Saturday morning, **June 21**, from 8 to 11. This is the **main fundraiser for the society each year** and provides a considerable portion of the operating funds for the year.

We ask you to donate baked items and bring them to Wal-Mart by 8 a.m. A table will be set up outside the north front entrance. If you cannot bring them out, call 853-4572 or 853-8605, to make arrangements to have your baked goods picked up.

If you don't feel like baking, we will gladly accept money donations. Again, feel free to drop money donations off at the Bake Sale table. Or you can mail them to the society at 211 N. Chestnut St., Kewanee, IL 61443. Please make sure that your check (please do not mail cash) is made out to "Kewanee Historical Society."

Since the society once again qualifies for the matching grant from Wal-Mart's foundation, it is important to get a money donation to us prior to the June 21 Bake Sale. Needless to say, the more we raise from the Bake Sale and its related donations, the more money we will receive from Wal-Mart. The past several years Wal-Mart has been very generous by matching up to \$1,000. (Last year's Bake Sale netted \$3,000--\$2,000 from our generous members and \$1,000 from Wal-Mart.)

Once again, this is our only major fundraising event, so please support it with your generosity. Also, a reminder that our monthly meeting for June will be at 12:30 on June 21, the bake sale day. We usually meet at 8:30, but not this June. As usual all members are welcome to attend the monthly board of directors meetings.

Officers of the Kewanee Historical Society ~

Larry Lock, Pres. Steve Moon, Vice Pres.
Joan Herrick, Sec. Kathy Miller, Treas.

Directors of the Kewanee Historical Society ~

Lee Ann Bailleu, Clint Block, Marci Carlson, Bea Clark,
Greg Davis, Mark Hepner, Pat Lock, William McKee, Alma
McLennan, Bob Miller, Dave Van Niuwenhuyse

WHAT'S HAPPENING...

Some items of interest since the spring of 2007:

◆ During the past year **three new board members** have joined us. They are Bea Clark, Marci Carlson and Clint Block. Current responsibilities of board members include attending our monthly meetings, taking a turn at volunteering on Saturday afternoons so that the museum can be open to the public and helping out at various times if available. If you are interested in getting involved to this extent, contact a board member.

◆ Besides **Saturday afternoons** from 1:30 to 4:00 from May 1 to Sept. 30, the museum is also open on **Thursday afternoons** from 1:30 to 4:00, staffed by Larry and Pat Lock. Board members Bea Clark and Greg Davis have also been volunteering time on Thursdays to work on projects. Anyone interested in volunteering some time on Thursday afternoons or any other time, please contact us. There is always something to be done; we can use all the help that we can get.

◆ During this spring several board members have been working on **building maintenance** projects, including minor stucco patching on the south exterior wall and removing crumbling plaster and peeling paint in several interior locations. Doing the work have been Bob Miller, Steve Moon, Greg Davis and Larry Lock. The south exterior wall also needed some major patching that was done by a professional contractor. We will hire someone to paint the south wall during the summer. Of course, we will not paint over the mural of historical landmarks done by Dave Washburn in 1995. It is fading but hopefully will be good for many more years. The roof is inspected each year and minor repairs were needed this spring.

◆ Our **website** has been redone after much of it was out of commission for some time. The site continues to be provided by **B&B Printing** and is now administered by **Steve Morrison**, society member who does a great deal of computer work for various organizations. We very much appreciate the work that Steve has done. Check out the website: kewaneehistory.com. The website continues to lead to email requests for information about Kewanee families, businesses, organizations, etc.

◆ Besides B&B Printing, Kewanee businesses that continued in-kind support included **Kewanee.com**, which provides email service, and **Ed's Heating** (Jeff Arch), which worked on our furnace last fall without charge.

◆ Society President Larry Lock wrote **four articles** last summer for the Star Courier to promote interest in the museum. The articles were about the family-donated letters and diary of Civil War General John Howe of Kewanee, late 19th century artist Junius Sloan whose paintings included landscape scenes in Kewanee, Billy Sunday's 1906 month-long religious revival in Kewanee, and Western Tube Company in the early 1900's (the forerunner of Walworth Mfg. Co.). Steve recently put them on our website if you missed them and are interested. (kewaneehistory.com)

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◆ During the past year Larry has given **talks on local history** topics to Kiwanis Club, Kewanee Woman's Club, Kewanee Church Fellowship, St. Mary Altar Society and the Church of Peace. If interested in a talk for your organization, don't hesitate to contact us.

◆ During the month of April we provided the Kewanee Public Library with **displays pertaining to World War I**. April's "Read It Now" book at the library was Hemingway's "A Farewell to Arms," which is set in France during World War I. Since this is the 90th anniversary of the conclusion of World War I, we will make Kewanee's role in the "war to make the world safe for democracy" a featured display in the museum. **Visit soon to learn about Kewanee and World War I.**

◆ As usual **Hog Days** at Labor Day weekend was busy for the museum. We were open **Saturday, Sunday and Monday from 10 to 5** for about 200 visitors, which is the norm for the past few years. **We will be open those same hours for 2008 Hog Days. Also, to repeat, we are open Thursdays and Saturdays from 1:30 to 4:00 from May 1 to Sept. 30.**

This photo is one of many items that will be part of the World War I displays featured in the museum this year. The funeral service took place at St. Anthony's Lithuanian Catholic Church at 8th and Tremont Streets. The service was probably for Michael Mikenas, a Kewaneean of Lithuanian descent, who was one of the 20 Kewanee area armed service members who gave their lives during World War I.



New Old Stuff

During the past 12 months we have recorded donations of Kewanee memorabilia from no less than 45 people. We appreciate everybody who remembers the Robert and Marcella Richards Museum and wish we could mention all, but space will limit us to telling about just some of the contributions in this newsletter.

◆ Longtime society member, donor and supporter **Laila Henry** died in 2007 and remembered the Kewanee Historical Society in her will. Her considerable bequest, along with past bequests and continued donations from current members, will help assure continued operation of the museum.

◆ Two regular visitors to the museum (and members), **Michael Kirley** of Los Angeles and **Charles Gray** of Kewanee, continued their generous support of the museum. Both gave sizeable monetary donations and artifacts. Michael provided information about coal-mining in Kewanee Township and a copy of the 1911-12 city directory. Charles discovered and shared interesting old pictures as he continued his long-time interest in Kewanee history.

◆ Our most recent donation is the "**mini museum**" displayed for many years at **Andris Waunee Farm Restaurant**, a Kewanee area landmark for many years. The collection of all kinds of Kewanee memorabilia was acquired over the years by Carol Andris. Now that the restaurant has closed following the

death of Carol's husband, Glen Andris; she wants the collection to be available for people to appreciate. Along with the many artifacts, Carol is also donating two large display cases

◆ **Col. Duane Lempke** continued his tribute to Kewanee area military personnel with a photo collage honoring those who served in the **Korean War**, especially the six Kewanee men killed in that conflict. The retired Army officer presented one of the Korean War plaques to the museum when he was in Kewanee last fall for the 50-year reunion of his Kewanee High School class. Duane previously executed collages honoring the 11 Kewaneeans killed in the Vietnam War and the 89 who gave their lives in World War II. All three collages are on display at the museum, as well as City Hall, the American Legion and the VFW.

◆ Several interesting scrapbooks were received during the past year. Two contain pictures and other items pertaining to **Kewanee Boiler**. One was donated by Shirley (Funk) Zwolinski of Homestead, FL, whose father Kenneth worked at the Boiler; another by Donna Hulse of Galva, whose husband (Thomas) and father-in-law (Lloyd), worked at KB. The other scrapbook features **Kewanee Manufacturing** and was donated by Mary Morrell of Kewanee. She also gave an impressive and historically significant **ledger book** detailing the first few years of the company's existence starting in 1916.

◆ Nelson Lay of Kewanee donated many items from his late mother's (**Dorothy Mayhew Lay**) historical collection, including Boss Manufacturing items, interesting photos of 1930's Kewanee and 1837 and 1841 "day books" (financial records) of Nelson Lay, one of Kewanee's founders in 1854 and the great-great grandfather of today's Nelson.

◆ Janis Battersby Craig donated numerous Craig family and Saxon area items, including **Wethersfield Township Assessor's ledger books** from the 1890's. Janis and her sister, Ilene Battersby Baker, also donated pictures and artifacts from their father's (Fred Battersby) service in World War I.

◆ Personal papers and memorabilia from the law office of **James Andrews**, mayor of Kewanee from 1919 to 1935, were donated by Charles "Chip" Eastman.

◆ Another contribution pertaining to a government official is the handgun carried by Henry County **Sheriff Byron Pierce** when he was killed in the line of duty in 1946. It was donated by retired Illinois State Trooper Jacki Booker, whose family was given the firearm by Sheriff Pierce's widow. Pierce worked at Kewanee Boiler before becoming a police officer.

◆ Finally, a visitor last fall from the Chicago area, Roy Sye, who is researching a book about semi-pro football in northern Illinois in the early 1900's, gave us two large boxes (several hundred dollars worth) of office supplies. One of the teams to be featured in Roy's book is the **Kewanee Regulars**, one of the top Illinois teams during the decade preceding World War I. We learned as much or more about the Regulars and other Kewanee teams as he did from us.

Kewanee Historical Society

211 North Chestnut Street
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309-854-9701

Open Thurs. & Sat.
May 1 - Oct. 1
1:30pm - 4:00pm

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or by Appointment call:
309-853-4572 • 309-853-8605