

THE DELAWARE

Issue 4

November 2022



A publication of the
Delaware County
Historical Society

75 Years Young

Shout it from the rooftops! The Delaware County Historical Society is celebrating 75 years since the Society was issued its Articles of Incorporation on November 3, 1947.

Two of our dedicated volunteers, Ralph Au and Roger Koch (shown here) placed celebratory banners on the grounds of our facilities: Cryder Research Center, the old Jail and two on the grounds of the Meeker Homestead. Additionally, most members of our sister organizations, members of the Delaware County History Network, are also helping us recognize this



The dry ground at Cryder made driving the post for this banner particularly hard. Roger had to really work to set the stakes for this banner.

(Photos by M. Snyder)

special event by taking posters proclaiming our 75th Anniversary and displaying them in their facilities across the county.

Our Annual Meeting on November 17, 2022 will have a special program celebrating our anniversary. We look forward to



Roger and Ralph with an easier fix at the Old Jail.



Their smiles indicate this was the last banner to be hung.

our next milestone, our centennial celebration.

New Partnership, Expanded Vision

Beginning October 2022, the Delaware County Historical Society will be partnering with Barb Lyon & CO. on aligning priorities of the Historical Society such as educational programs, critical capital, and preservation needs with fundraising strategy. Barb has lived and worked in Delaware County for over 22 years and has nearly 27 years of non-profit management and operational experience. Together we are excited to elevate the work of the Historical Society and highlight our unique and diverse Delaware County history.



Barb Lyon

Early-Delaware Tour for Elementary Students

As the Covid pandemic started to wane this spring, the requests from schools for in-person programs started to flood our request lines. A popular program for 3rd grades to support the Ohio Social Studies Content Standards' local history requirement was the Early Delaware program, a 3-part morning starting with a walking tour that originates at OWU's Sulphur Springs where volunteers talk about the beginnings of the town of Delaware. From the river to the springs and streams and salt licks, early Delaware saw American Indi-



(Photos by K. Hildebrand)

ans, settlers from the East, explorers from the North, and travelers from the South. Moving on from the Sulphur Springs, students walk over the historic Olentangy River and on to the Nash House Museum for a tour and walk-through of a local 1878 Delaware family home donated by Pauline Nash. Looking at the artifacts from the home that dates from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s, students saw kitchen items, dining room accessories, music room and gramophone artifacts, art and woodwork from local artists, children's toys and clothing, and upstairs in the Gentleman's Study all the "latest" technology of the era.



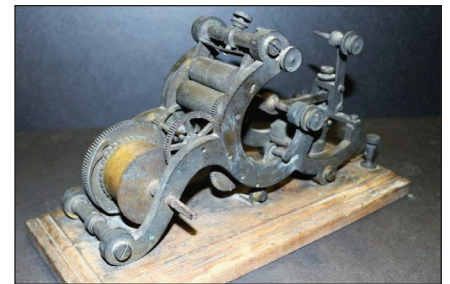
On the final leg of the tour, students enjoyed a Scavenger Hunt in the Cryder Research Library where they searched for items in the display cases. Early American Indian artifacts are on display, along with items from World War I, the Little Brown Jug, and our unique White House Easter Egg collection to name just a few of the numerous exhibits. Over 3500 children enjoyed these morning walks and other activities provided by the Curriculum Support Committee.

Submitted by Karen Hildebrand

A Generous Benefactor

A few weeks ago, the Adopt a Memory program received notice that a Mr. Raijer of Florida had adopted our Knox and Shain telegraph receiver.

Having had a prior experience, where an individual from California had misunderstood the intent of our program and believed he was purchasing our WWI Victory Medal, we wrote to Mr. Raijer. We explained the intent of the program is a way to make a donation to the Society with some fringe benefits. We asked if he wanted a refund. Although Mr. Raijer had thought he was purchasing the receiver, he was most generous and declined return of his money. He explained he collects telegraph receivers, and he has several in working condition. He provided several pictures of his collection, such as the one shown here.



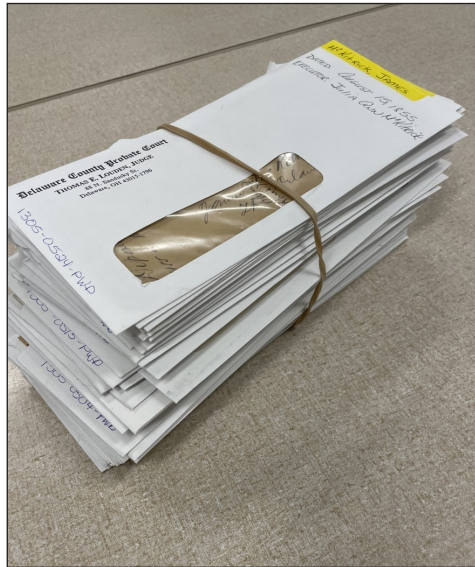
Embolden by Mr. Raijer generosity, we inquired if he would consider making a video for us of his working telegraph. Again, he generously responded and his informative video may be found at <https://youtu.be/xqzTZH6mpil>. Mr. Raijer is not originally from the U.S., and given his accent, he chose to use a mechanical voice for the narration. Thank you, Mr. Raijer, for your multifaceted generosity.

A Unique Donation

At the August meeting of the Board of Trustees, the Board voted to accept a donation of historical wills currently held by the probate court of Delaware County that are older than 100 years old and for which an estate had not been opened in the person's name. For additional background, please see the Delaware County Historical Society's website for a September 16, 2022 *Delaware Gazette* article by Probate Judge Hejmanowski about this matter <https://www.delawareohiohistory.org/history/century-and-a-half-of-bequests/>. At the October board meeting, Judge Hejmanowski presented the package of wills to Susan Logan, volunteer Director of the DCHS Cryder Research Library.

However before doing so, he read from the 1880 will of former Probate Judge Franklin B. Sprague and noted some practices of the

times. As an interesting addendum and prelude to this story, Judge Sprague's mother was Mary Meeker, daughter of Forrest Meeker, the original owner of our Stratford Road property, aka, Meeker Homestead Museum. In his will Judge Sprague bequests his estate to his



mother. If, after she has taken care of her needs, any income from the property remains then she is to give that to Judge Sprague's wife. His children were to each receive \$100. He notes his wife is free to remarry with his blessing but nothing from his estate will then be given to her, since it will be the "responsibility of her new husband to provide for her."

A quick review of historical records indicated that Judge Sprague's mother did die before him. He died before his wife but she did not remarry. Judge Hejmanowski also noted that the earliest will did name an agent to handle the estate on behalf of the individual's wife, a practice not noted in subsequent wills.

The Historical Society intends to make scanned copies of those wills available through our website.

What happened here?

If you have passed The Barn at Stratford recently, you may have noticed something missing - some of the roof. Work has begun to replace the roof and some of the timbers supporting the roof to assure that the Barn lasts another 175 years. Midstate Construction has undertaken the project and has promised little disruption to the venue. False roofs have been built underneath the roof that has been removed so that the venue is not exposed to the weather.

The work is done thanks to State Senator Andrew Brenner supporting our request for funds for the barn renovation. "We would have had a difficult time funding a renovation as large as this one without the generous support of Mr. Brenner and the Ohio State Senate," said Donna Meyer, Executive Director. This was part of the biennial State Capital Budget which provides appropriations to cultural fa-



cilities for building improvements. This is the third grant funding we have received from the state for the much needed restoration of the Barn at Stratford.

Because the timbers rotted from the top down, their condition was not fully recognized with visual inspections from below. Their condition was not realized until the roof had been removed.



Submitted by Karen Cowan



2690 Stratford Road
Delaware, OH 43015

Delaware County Historical Society
Executive Director: Donna Meyer
Sales & Event Manager: Melissa Stroupe
The Delaware
Editor: Margaret Duber Snyder, Volunteer
Graphic Design: Cynthia Croce Smith
Photographer: Brad Cowan, Volunteer



Brent Carson
(Photo by: Ohio Local History Alliance)

The Final Word

The first contact I had with the Delaware County Historical Society was in the spring of 1956. Our second-grade teacher took us on a field

trip, to visit the new Nash House Museum.

Always following a spark of history, it was not until the mid-1970's that I became closely associated with the Delaware County Historical Society (DCHS). I contacted George and Marilyn Cryder for assistance in providing slides on Delaware history and sharing with me their wealth of local historical knowledge. My hope was to entice students in my classes to learn about their hometown. The Cryders and I struck an agreement in 1975. They needed help giving

programs on local history to groups in the community. If I would assist the DCHS, they would provide me with all the pictures (slides) and stories I could use. The association with the DCHS continued through my teaching career and through these 17 years of retirement.

Joining the board of trustees and serving as board president, I witnessed the many changes and growth of our 75-year-old organization. The number of volunteers have not only increased steadily in recent years but also have displayed so many diverse talents. Skills in technology, communication, and research, have moved us to new levels of expertise. Key skilled members have created wonderful visual displays throughout the country. One of our strengths is reaching the youth of our county. Our educational programming for schools has won us statewide recognition. Last school year we took our educational programming to 2,600 Delaware

County youth during March, April, and May. The 20+ members of our education curriculum support committee of retired education have kept us in contact with schools throughout the county.

Indeed, all of our Committees in DCHS appear to be active, creative, and engaged in their work. Attending a regional conference of local historical societies 4 years ago, each group was asked to give a short report on our local activities. Speaking for our DCHS, I mentioned the number of committees we have. The comment was made that our historical society had more functioning committees than most of their groups had volunteers. The DCHS has been fortunate to have drawn so much support.

One of the studies I taught in school was the period of Golden Age in ancient Greece. I think as it relates to our own DCHS perhaps we have reached, in our 75-year history, our own golden age. Hopefully, we can keep it going for many years to come.