

Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter



Volume 10 Issue 2 April 2022

ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM MAY 24TH

May 24, 2022—6 p.m. with dinner at 6:30 at Turtles Tap. The buffet will feature chicken and beef with sides and dessert. The cost of the dinner is \$25.



We are finally able to have an Annual Meeting and Program this year! We look forward to you joining us at Turtles Tap. Please contact the Museum to reserve a seat.

Mr. Nick Koba, author of *Strip Mining History of the Grundy, Will and Kankakee Counties*, will be the program presenter. Additional information will be sent out as it becomes available. As noted in our last newsletter, Mr. Koba's book is available for purchase from our gift shop. *See the bottom of page 2 of this newsletter for more information on purchasing a copy of his book.*

There will be a business meeting immediately following the dinner. During the meeting we will have the election of board members. Terms expire for Donna Sroczynski, Lisa Barkley and Karen Zelko. All of them have agreed to serve another term. Nominations for board members can be made from the floor.

510 W. Illinois Ave. • Morris, IL 60450 • 815-942-4880

Web site: www.grundycountyhs.org

E-mail: grundyhistory@att.net

Facebook: Museum of the Grundy County Historical Society-Illinois

Museum Hours: Thursday, Friday, Saturday
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Group Tours by Appointment—Call for Appointment

The Grundy County Historical Society Newsletter is published four times a year. It is distributed to members of record free of charge via e-mail and USPS. Subscriptions start at \$10 for students annually.

Board of Directors

Marion Gore
President

Donna Sroczynski
Vice President

Sue Cunnea
Treasurer

Lisa Barkley
Secretary

Dave Finch
JoEllyn Johnson
Theresa Lamb
Duane Wolfe
Karen Zelko

APRIL 26TH PROGRAM—HATS

April 26, 2022—7 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Museum.

Our next program will explore the many hats in our collection. We will be displaying and talking about our Hat Collection. We have 85 hats including for men, women, and children. Learn a little about the history of hats and the different styles through the years. You will have a chance to test your knowledge of styles and when they were in "vogue."

Reservations are not required for this program. It is open to the public. There is no admission charge.

Refreshments will be provided.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Work is progressing on our Genealogy room. I want to thank Kevin Connor, a Morris retired drywall taper, who donated his time completing that step in the process. Also, thank you to Mark Riley, of Riley Painting who volunteered his time and sealed and painted the walls. The next step is getting flooring installed. Then we will be ready to set up for people to come in to do genealogy research on Ancestry.

DONATIONS:

In closing the Downtown Development Office, Julie Applegate gave us the baseball uniforms of the "Morris Reds" who played a Civil War era "gentlemen's game" of

baseball from 2009 to 2011 at Dollinger Farm. The roster included Tim "Bagger" Applegate, Andrew "The Rooster" Bordner, RJ "Junior" Bordner, Rob "Glad to Play" Bordner, Alan "AJ" Ferrari, Jim "No Sir" Jennings, Mary Dick "The Butcher" Kopczick. Mike "Is There" Meyer, Eric "Doc" Ortinau and Paul "Volunteer" Hatcher.

Morris Herald gave us photos of the former *Morris Herald* Staff.

Cal Hammond donated the printing plates he used for making stationery for some Morris businesses, including the Court House, Paper Mill and First National Bank.

After the building on Washington Street, that burned last year, was torn down, Tom Turner was able to dig up a few more Morris made bricks. He also dug some clay from the site and made a couple of cups from it that are now on display.

Norma Arnsdorf donated items from Morris High School class of 1957 and their reunions.

From an auction, we received a plate that was from Margaret McKinley's Coal City Dry Goods store. The rim of the plate is a calendar for 1909. It is on display in the case with other Grundy County plates.

The newest donation was from the Estate of Art Johnson which includes 1920's Morris High School yearbooks and some of his personal and military items.

If you have Grundy County related items you would like to donate, please stop in and let us see them.

We also appreciate monetary donations through the Amazon Smile, Ace Hardware, and Hilton Honor Points Programs. If you need information on these, please call the Museum.

In conjunction with our speaker for our Annual Meeting, Mr. Koba's book is available in the book section of our gift shop. *Strip Mining History of the Grundy, Will and Kankakee Counties : The Story of the Northern Illinois Coal Corporation 1927 to 1974*. Cost of the book is \$20. In addition, it can be sent out upon receipt of the cost of the book and shipping (\$23.82 total). Be sure to include your shipping information with your check.

NEW WEBSITE

Check out our newly revamped website. The URL to get you there is <http://www.grundycountyhs.org>. The new website gives us much needed additional flexibility to update

the site on a regular basis and also the ability to showcase developments at the Museum.

NEW MEMBER

The following person has joined the Historical Society. We thank him for his membership.

James "Jim" Black

CHICAGO TO APPOMATTOX

The Grundy and Surrounding Counties Men who fought the Civil War to its End

On March 22nd, Grundy County native Jason Baker told the story of men from Grundy, LaSalle and Will Counties who joined a Civil War regiment in Chicago, and served for almost four years before witnessing Robert E. Lee surrender to Ulysses S. Grant to end the war. We had over 50 people attend this very informative session.



Jason Baker, our March speaker.

The 39th Illinois Infantry was formed in October 1861. The units were numbered based on when they applied. An interesting side note, our museum has a replica flag of the 36th Illinois Infantry in our possession. That unit was formed in Aurora in September 1861 and went to Missouri. The flag was sewn by the Women's Auxiliary of the Darveneau Post of Grand Army of the Republic to be used by survivors of the Civil War marching in parades. The flag was donated to us by Eugene Gore who had received it from his grandfather William Kerns who served in that regiment.

WHO AM I?

Our January 2022 Mystery Person was ***Raymond Kindelspire***. Can you guess, from the following description, who is this issue's mystery person? Look for the answer in our July 2022 issue. Or, even better, please stop in and inquire about me.

I was born in Vienna Township in 1868. I left the farm in 1895 to be a member of the J. H. Pattison Lumber firm. In 1897 I helped organize the Morris Grain Co., acting as secretary. I was the first president of the Building & Loan and was

a director of the Farmers & Merchants National Bank. I was active in the formation of the Rotary Club and was its first president. I married Alice Pattison in 1893. *Who am I?*

GOOSE LAKE PRAIRIE PARTNERS CABIN FEST



Cragg cabin built from blue prints made by Mr. Hough before the original was moved.



Youth Corp working on front wall of the cabin in 1985.

members of the Youth Conservation Corp.

RADIO



WCSJ Radio (103.1 FM) features the Historical Society and Museum in its "People are Talking" segment, airing the first Monday of the month at about 9:10 a.m. Be sure to tune in!

FACEBOOK



Mary Collins is the Facebook Administrator and posts articles on Facebook regarding the museum displays and activities. Dorothy Cunnea is still posting obits and continues the "100 years ago" feature. Facebook friends: 1,785.

A LANDMARK HEDGE



The ancient landmark still stands, but it's in the way. It's the Osage hedge on Airport Road. Before barb wire was invented, farmers needed somehow to fence in their

livestock. There were local sawmills but that lumber was needed for buildings, not fence rails. Hence the Osage Orange hedge.

This thorny semi-tree species is hog tight all right, and it also makes a good wind break to prevent soil erosion from that north wind. But it has to be constantly clipped to make a dense enough growth to confine both hogs and cattle, and that's a hard and unpleasant job. That hearty hedge also saps moisture out of the neighboring field.

Unfortunately, the hedge along the east end of Airport Road now stands underneath an electric line. If left unclipped, Osage Orange can grow to a height of 25 feet. Commonwealth Edison does not like that. If left unchecked, those branches rubbing up against the power line shorts out the line and it starts to burn. Pacific Gas & Electric knows all about this. A tree contacting a PG&E distribution line west of the Cresta Dam in the California foothills caused the California Dixie Fire which burned 963,309 acres. The Airport Road hedge is also an aggravation for the Road Commissioner because it shades the road and he has to waste his cinders.

When Art Harder built his country home near the corner of Conklin Road and Airport Road, he named the place "Hedgewood." Now it's time to widen that corner. It takes a bull dozer.



AN ADDITIONAL WAY TO DONATE TO THE MUSEUM

Do You Have an IRA? Do you have to take an RMD—Required Minimum Distribution? If so, that money, up to \$100,000, is not taxable if donated to a nonprofit organization such as the Grundy County Historical Society and Museum. The donation must be made by the financial institution directly to the recipient. If you have questions, contact your financial representative.

MORRIS GETS A BASEBALL TEAM

First Nine

Captain & Catcher

Sam Hull

Pitcher

Stillman Massey

Shortstop

James Galloway

First Base

George Green

Second Base

Sidney Higby

Third Base

John Wallace

Right Field

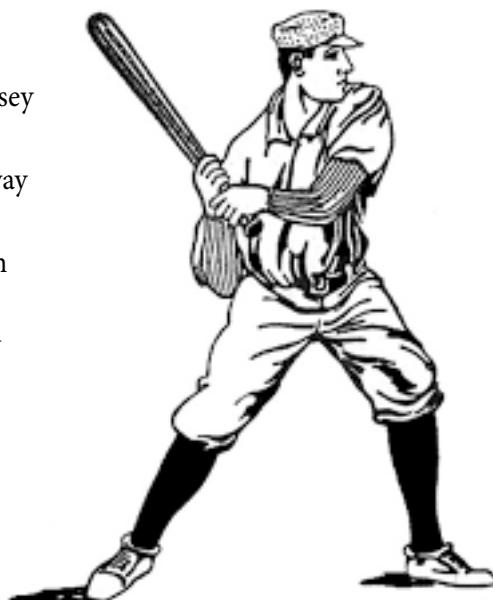
Henry Miles

Center Field

Duane Field

Left Field

Tracy B. Harris



Second Nine

Captain & Catcher

Hez Cleveland

Pitcher

Ed Sanford

Shortstop

George Colten

First Base

George A. Day

Second Base

Henry Parmalee

Third Base

Harry Miller

Right Field

Eli Johnson

Center Field

E. Rockwell

Left Field

Henry Reading

By 1867 baseball had become a national institution. Almost every city had at least a dozen baseball clubs, and every town or hamlet had one or more—BUT NOT MORRIS! For crying out loud! In the year 1867 the Gebhard Brewery was built, both the Congregational Church and the new Immaculate Conception Church were finished, Chapin Park was planted, the Shabbona steam fire engine was purchased—but no baseball team!

The publisher of the *Morris Herald and Advertiser* put out the hue and cry, and one month later on a Monday night, July 18th, the Illinois Club was organized with 30 members. J. W. Lawrence was elected president; George Day, vice president; John Wallace, Secretary; and Charles Turner, treasurer. H. L Miller, I. W. Pankhurst, and Stillman Massey were the directors. The first thing to do was raise the money to buy the ball, bat, bases, and whatever. The players would come later but it wouldn't take long.

On another Monday evening at the end of August, Sam Hull was named Captain of the First Nine and Hex Cleveland was named Captain of the Second Nine. See the above graphic for the roster of the First and Second Nines.

The uniform: blue caps, white and black plaid flannel shirts, white and blue belts, blue pantaloons, canvas shoes.

The first game was played on a Tuesday afternoon on the grounds east of Ed Sanford's house (on Vine Street). The score was 57 to 67. We don't know who the opposing team was or which team won. *The Herald and Advertiser* didn't have a sports page yet, never been done before, but the second baseball game played in Morris was covered on the third page.

And a spirited game it was! It was played on a Friday afternoon on the home turf on Vine Street between the second nine of Ottawa's Shabbona Club and the First Nine of the Morris Illinois Club. The Ottawa team had been at this longer, and those boys were better at running the bases. But the Morris boys were way better batters. The umpire, Mr. Rising of Ottawa, erred in three technicalities against the Morris nine, but it wasn't intentional. He was a gentleman and wanted to do justice. The Morris team lost to Ottawa 63 to 75. Nevertheless, the Morris entertained their opponents at the Ross House after the game.

By the fall of 1867 Morris had four baseball clubs. According to the publisher of the *Morris Herald and Advertiser* the goal was to keep this fine athletic sport clear of all abuses so that it would command the confidence of all classes in the community.