

CORNERSTONE

Lemont Historical Society's Newsletter

"Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same."

--Ronald Reagan

"We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

--Thomas Jefferson

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 4, 8am

July Hike with Richard Lee & Doris Peterman

Upcoming Quarrymen Games

July 14 - 11 am at Cantigny Park

July 20 - Normal, IL

July 27 - 1 pm at Home (Mt Assisi)

August 11 - 1 pm at Home (Mt Assisi)

August 17 - West Allis, WI

August 25 - 1 pm at Somonauk, IL

July thru August

Lemont: Then and Now 2 Exhibit
at *The Lemont Center for the Arts*

September 15, 2pm-4pm

Our Town: Lemont
at *the Lemont Public Library*



Thank you
Athens Marble Club
for your support!

VILLAGE OF LEMONT LEMONT TOWNSHIP
LEMONT PARK DISTRICT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

July 2019

Dear Members,

Happy summer to all of you! It was worth waiting for, even though it took some time to get here. On the 4th of July, we will be celebrating the signing of the Declaration of Independence. On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the final wording of the Declaration, thus affirming the independence of the United States from Great Britain. For over two hundred years, United States' citizens have celebrated our independence by marching in parades, flying our American flag, decorating with red, white and blue and celebrating at picnics with our family, friends and community. Throughout all of our celebrations, we should remember our gift of freedom and thank God we are blessed with this liberty.

Along with thanking God for our liberty, we have some other folks to thank. We have had another busy month around the Old Stone Church. We really would like to thank the Lemont Garden Club for all that they do for us every year. However, this year, they really went over the top. Back in June, 8 members of the garden club very generously gave us 3 hours of their time assisting Terry Blanz and Barb Bannon with the garden clean up - that adds up to 24 hours of volunteer labor. We would like to thank them for their time, their hard work and their overwhelming generosity to make our garden special. We would also like to thank Ralph Pakula and his Public Works team for their ongoing assistance to our grounds along with Boy Scouts who assist as well. We want to let everyone know, also, what a great job Fred Bluder & Sons Tree Service did repairing our flagpole after the Memorial Day storm.

At the end of June, I was happy to be part of the Tedens Family reunion, along with Susan Donahue, Doris Peterman and Richard Lee, which took place the weekend of June 21st. Susan Donahue summarized it nicely in her article. Also, on June 22, the Quarrymen had their first home games of the season. It was a beautiful, relaxing afternoon and the Quarrymen did well. It is too bad we cannot get more kranks out there to cheer them on. Hip Hip Huzzah!!

On July 5th the "Lemont – Then and Now 2" art exhibit opens at the Lemont Center for the Arts. Richard Lee put a lot of work into compiling this exhibit and did a great job of showcasing Lemont's history. There will be a reception on Saturday, August 10, from 2 until 4 at the Center on State Street next to Aldi.

Heritage Fest is Saturday, July 13, from 4 to 11. The Historical Society will again be running the gambling in the true nature of Smokey Row (bingo) and taking historical photos. Also, this year we are proud to have the Historical Society Hound Dogs performing at Heritage Fest. We look forward to their performance. However, we did find out that they will be changing the name of their band to False Harmony shortly after their performance at Heritage Fest.

Beginning on August 23, we will be participating in the Canal Corridor Association's Passport Program celebrating 35 years of the I & M Canal being America's "First" National Heritage Area. The program will run until August 23, 2020. Hopefully, this will bring many visitors to our museum and Village.

We hope to see you and your family at some of these fun events. All the very best for a great 4th of July and safe and restful summer!

Sincerely,
Sue



GENEALOGY CORNER

Genealogy: Family History Reunion

By Barb Bannon

The terms Genealogy & Family History Tree are often used interchangeably when speaking about researching ancestors. The idea of a tree goes beyond just tracking great-great-grandpa. One definition of Genealogy from Merriam-Webster is “an account of the origin and historical development of something,” “the study of ancestral lines,” or “pedigree.”

Our lives have become so hectic that we need to intentionally make an effort to slow down and visit our past. Years ago people made a point to get together with family. They didn't just make a phone call, send a text or stop by for a few minutes; an extended visit or gathering was planned to make it a special event. Today many families are scattered miles apart and need that gathering process more than ever.

Hold a family reunion to uncover more family history in one place than hours and hours of research would ever discover. The preparation is challenging, but the outcome is very rewarding. Plan activities that are enjoyable and get everyone involved. Family photos and special remembrances get the memories flowing and provide everyone plenty of “new” old stories to enhance the family history. Take advantage of currently available inexpensive portable scanners and jump drives to share photos.

A reunion trivia game is entertaining and informative; compile a variety of questions from serious to silly. How many living generations are in the family? Who is the oldest living member? What couple had the most children? What was Aunt Dolly's cats name? What was Uncle Bub's real given name?

Get both young and old involved sharing stories about the type of toys children have played with over the years. A fashion show or contest is a good way to bring family history to life, prompting everyone to go through their trunks or storage boxes of old clothing. Encourage members to demonstrate skills ancestors may have had such as whittling, ice cream making, quilting or preparing an old family recipe.

Display your family tree even if it has empty branches, you may be surprised who will be able to fill in the gaps. Make a chart large enough to include names, pictures and other information. This is also an opportunity to get those old photos identified, they have a way of arousing great reactions and stories from older family members. Record everything you can, don't miss this chance to have faces and voices to go with that genealogy for your descendants.

Most of all don't forget to enjoy the presence of family, they are a link to our past and the bridge to our future!

Families are like fudge, mostly sweet with lots of nuts!



Connecting Branches

If you would like to contact other genealogists, please let us know by leaving a message at the Museum 630-257-2972 or by e-mail to lemonthistorical@gmail.com

MORE FROM OUR WRITERS

July Hike Through the Heritage Quarries

Guided by Richard Lee and Doris Peterman

The latest hike fell on Independence Day morning. The hikers walked from the Gazebo on Main Street to explore the Heritage Quarries. Stay tuned for information on our next hike!



LEMONT, IL
QUARRY WALK
July 4, 2019
8 AM
 Guided by
 Richard Lee and Doris Peterman

Heritage Quarries Trail Hike around old Lemont Quarries
Historical Interpretation and Natural History

- * Meet at Gazebo along the I&M Canal
 (east of downtown Lemont off Main Street)
- * Cost is \$8 per adult, \$5 for children (cash only)
- * The hike is approximately 3 miles and 1.5 hours long


WEATHER PERMITTING
 For more information, call (630) 257-2972

SOCIETY NEWS *by Susan Donahue*

Tag Days & BINGO!

TAG DAYS

We have had successful Tag Days this year thanks to our faithful volunteers & generous donors!!

BINGO!

We again are happy to announce that the Society will be sponsoring "BINGO" at Heritage Fest on Saturday, July 13th. We are keeping the tradition alive.

There is the excitement of all those bouncing balls and the anticipation of winning what could be a decent jackpot.

I can't say positively that Lucy and Ethel will call any of the games, but I can guarantee there will be very professional callers who will not call B27 or O17. Bingo balls might try to escape as this has happened in the past, but we are wise to them and move quickly to scoop them up and put them back where they belong.

You will be under a tent with benches to sit on. We will have live music playing in the background and the Engineer of the passing train will blow his whistle loudly adding to the feel of a street fair.

You can bring your lucky charms and sit them on the table. We are very close to the food court so you can grab a hot dog or a kielbasa and I did hear that the taverns will be open so you should be able to get a cold brew if you are so inclined.

It is a slice of what the Old Granddaddy Keepataw held for many of us – good old fashioned fun. If you have ever wondered why we are compared many times to "Mayberry" this is part of it.

We know that hardline Bingo Players have their favorite seats – not too close to the caller and yet not too far away so they can hear the number. Some give steely glances like a death ray to those who are laughing and joking and still somehow manage to win.

It is like a mini drama. We never have had any fights and we would like to keep that legacy intact.

We look forward to seeing you there and hope that you enjoy the time with us playing what we have been told is one of the highlights of the Fest. I personally would love to see those who consider us a must and thank them. See you there!!



Terry Blanz could not wait to tell his BF "Honest Abe" about the Tag Day donations and as you can tell they both favor "Top Hats!"

EVOLUTION OF LEMONT'S FESTIVALS *by Barb Bannon*



Do your memories of our festivals start with the beginning of Heritage Fest? Were you here for Keepataw Days? Or maybe you remember the "Basket Picnic". No matter your age, you can most likely tell a story or two about having fun and watching fireworks in Lemont.

Once known as a "Basket Picnic" given by Lemont American Legion Post 243 in Thompson's Grove, residents were treated to a celebration of Independence Day. The next year Legionairs realized the residents were looking for more and expanded from one to two days filled with games, refreshments and plenty of mirth and excitement at Green Grove on Blue Hill, near McCarthy Rd.

In 1921 the Lemont Post provided a real old fashioned Fourth of July with baseball games, dancing, bicycle races, games and even auto races. The majority of the events were held at Riverside Park near downtown. Autos dubbed Red Devil, Blue Comet, Yellow Hornet and Blue Cyclone competed for a \$75 purse split between winning driver and owner. To conclude Independence Day, Toddle Grove Inn, just south of 127th Street, hosted music and dancing in the moonlight. Everyone enjoyed themselves, although with prohibition, the choice of beverage was somewhat restricted.

Plans in years to follow were expanded to include a morning parade headed by the Legion Band followed by the Fire Department, the Legion bus, Lemont citizens in their autos and an elaborately decorated "one-hoss shay". Among the attractions were a tug of war between the Fire Department and the Legion boys, and a boxing match between the "California Feather" and "The Battling Dummy" that ended in a desperately fought four round draw. The two event filled days concluded with an impressive fireworks display.

In 1950 thousands gathered for the Legionair's four day July fest, held at the West end of Main St near Legion Park, this was not the only festival that year. On October 8th a celebration was arranged to mark the dedication of Lemont's new ornamental lighting system. Plans were completed by the Chamber of Commerce directors and entertainment committee. Called "Keepataw Day", in keeping with the name of the Indian settlement, it provided free entertainment, games, concessions and various types of amusements; it was planned as a one day community event with all residents of Lemont participating.

The Chamber asked all men of the community to take part in a Best Beard contest. At least 125 residents participated as bearded Lemont "pioneers" and a prize of \$25 was awarded for the most luxurious growth of whiskers; the un-bearded local men were subject to arrest by "deputies", thrown into a "jail" constructed in the center of town and "fined" \$2. There were performances of traditional Indian dances and also entries were submitted for the choosing of a Chief and Squaw to ride in the parade, all of which would now be considered disrespectful. At the parades end everyone looked to the sky. Dropped from a plane were more than one hundred weighted ping pong balls worth \$1 each in merchandise from Lemont stores.



LEMONT'S FESTIVALS (cont.) *by Barb Bannon*



Keepataw Day September 14, 1952
Can you identify anyone in the photo?

The Chamber appealed to merchants and residents of the community to decorate places of business and homes and for all residents to wear old fashioned attire, blue jeans, calicoes, cowboy hats or other costumes in the spirit of the festival for visitors.

By 1952 "Keepataw Days" had moved closer to the Labor Day holiday, expanded to a two day fest and kept growing, eventually turning into a four day event. Carnival rides, vendors, food booths and musical performers stretched along the midway on Main Street. The celebration had many locations, at times closing Stephen, Main and Canal Streets, even using the Metra parking lot and in the last years the Lemont Plaza.

In 1988 Lemont's population was about 6,000 with Keepataw Days drawing 30,000 people over the four days. The Chamber of Commerce and The Jaycees, both past organizers of the festival, were donating event proceeds back into the village. So when the owners of Lemont Plaza balked at being the host again, citing expansion on their property, the village officials pressured them and they agreed at the last minute to be the location for the next two years.

Keeping with the High School turning 100 years old in 1990, "Children Are Our Future, The Second Century" was the Keepataw Parade theme. There were 100 entries including 15-20 floats, antique cars and horse drawn wagons. The carnival featured 12 rides, live bands, food vendors, craft show, games, clowns and children's activities.

Since 1991 Heritage Fest has kept Lemont traditions alive in our Historic Downtown, returning to a one day celebration of our town's history and heritage with local food vendors and family fun. This years 29th annual fest is sure to match or surpass those of previous years with live music on the main stage, wonderful food, and entertainment for the entire family.

As with life everything comes full circle, so to for Lemont festivals. Through the years since that "Basket Picnic" the celebrations have seen many changes in the selection of games, carnival rides, entertainment, even the location of the fest and parade have varied from downtown to uptown and back. Current and former residents have looked to these festivals to reunite with old friends and enjoy their historic town of Lemont.

STEPPING BACK IN TIME *by Susan Donahue*

I thought it might be interesting to see more highlights of our early beginnings, as we celebrate our 50th Year. Some I was not aware of and the info filled some gaps for me.

Excerpt from Minutes:

July 7th, 1970: "Mr. Ludwig reported that he had attended the meeting of the Lemont Round Table, at which time he presented a resume of the proceedings concerning the formation of the Lemont Area Historical Society. He reported that interest was shown at this time, and he is hopeful that this interest will spread through the Village."

"Discussion was held pertaining to the planned participation in the Lemont Keepataw Days. It was decided that, since it would be very difficult to staff a booth for the three day period, the idea will be abandoned. Instead, it was suggested by Mr. Urick that the church building be open during the time and an exhibit be prepared for public viewing. It was announced that the Historical Society will be represented in the Keepataw Days Parade though the exhibition of two cars, to be driven by Messrs. Johnson and Mathy.

August 4, 1970:"Rev. Leo mentioned briefly that the Bethany Church will be having a sunrise service on Sunday, Aug 9th and requested the use of the Methodist Church basement for the serving of breakfast, in as much as the Historical Society has been granted use of the building. Rev. Leo thought it right that we be advised of this use. This was, of course, granted unanimously."

Rev. Leo mentioned also that he had contacted the company who moved the organ from the old church to the new building, and ascertained that the missing pipes were located, and be delivered to the church soon. Mr. & Mrs. Mathy volunteered to have these installed in place by Sept 1, when the building will be opened to the public.

August 5, 1970: Letter written by Madeline Hamelen reporting on a meeting between the Lemont Untied Methodist Church and representatives of the Lemont Area Historical Society: A recommendation as to the sale and holding of the mortgage will have to be presented to the congregation to be voted on. It is perfectly alright to begin paying the heat and electric bills.

September 1, 1970: Five glass show cases have been purchased from Wolter's store at a total cost of \$150. In addition, 800 ft of shelving is yet to be received. It was moved and seconded that this money be reimbursed to Mrs. Johnson. Motion carried.

Museum Committee reported that articles are being received and installed in the museum, and that everything is coming into condition for the open house.

October 6, 1970:"Museum Committee – Elaine Mathy. 900 people signed the register for the Keepataw Days Open House; it is estimated that more than that attended, but did not sign the book.

Tedens Family Reunion *by Susan Donahue*



Clare and Rita Tedens on their front porch

I know many of us find it hard to believe that the Lemont Area Historical Society has been preserving our rich history for 50 Years! In the beginning we were a fledging organization held together by people who believed there was something about our town's beginnings, struggles, and triumphs that was important enough to save and to pass along to future generations. This small, but determined group, came together rolled up their sleeves and said, "We can make this happen!"

One of the Lemont Area Historical Society's missions is helping people to find connections to families here in Lemont. We had one person come in a few years ago, who had just found out he belonged to a very prominent family in Lemont called the Tedens.

He had always known he was adopted by a very loving family. He didn't need to know any more than that and he was satisfied. When his son married and was having children, questions arose. "Who are your birth parents?" "What about any family illness lurking just out of sight from them?" "Could you please take a DNA test?"

The dad decided to ease his son's mind and take the test. It was like opening a dusty book you had always meant to read and finally had the time. The Tedens family living here in Lemont and Texas have graciously opened themselves up to him and his family. He can now understand the circumstances of why his mom made the choices she did, and he has come to terms with this.

Ironically one of the homes his great grandfather built is one he did not need to be introduced to. Without knowing it, he and his wife, a dear friend of the present owner, have visited it on many occasions. Now it is personal and he could with pride say, "This home was envisioned and built by MY Family."

This past weekend the Tedens family united here in Lemont. Our Society President, Susan Roy, and her husband are the proud owners of one of the three homes on one block that was built by the Tedens! Fostering our history, Sue kindly extended herself as did her neighbors to let the Tedens family come and visit. Doris Peterman and I watched them all looking curiously, many for the first time, at homes that played a role in their past. They walked in their ancestors shoes as they climbed the steps, stood on the porch, and entered their historical past. Sue, as always the hostess, presented wine, cheese, and kolaczki. The family also visited the Tedens Bldg on Stephen Street thanks to the present owner, Mr. Stanton.

The next day, members of the family, as patrons and extended family, attended St. Patrick Church and enjoyed lunch at Gelsosomo's. The family shared pictures and stories as they got to know one another. Gary and Sue Roy, Richard Lee, and I were pleased to witness the miraculous union of this family. Richard told of his meeting Mr. Walt Tedens for the first time - a first-class gentleman welcoming Richard to the Lemont United Methodist Church. A lasting impression, I was thrilled to meet the man whose life has closure and a whole new support group.

The cobwebs have been swept away and new memories are bringing in the sunlight. I know all of us were happy to have been a part of this adventure.



Claire Tedens

UPCOMING EVENT

“Our Town-Lemont” Presented by the Lemont Area Historical Society

Sunday, September 15, 2019 - 2-4pm
Lemont Public Library (in the Event Center)
50 E. Wend St.
Lemont, IL

Registration with the Lemont Public Library is required.
Register online at www.lemontlibrary.org or call 630-257-6541 Ext. 2



Join several presenters from the Lemont Area Historical Society for a journey into the history of “Our Town-Lemont”. In this 2 hour program, utilizing archival photos, you will learn the history of the places, structures, and institutions we encounter, deal with, or pass by in our everyday life here in the village. Includes the history of Lemont's waterways, quarries, railroads, religious institutions, schools, and businesses. Lemont history books will be available for sale.

Refreshments and raffle.
All attendees will receive a coupon for free admission to the Lemont Historical Museum.

