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Lemont Area Historical Society
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WINTER 2020

CORNERSTONE

Lemont Historical Society's Newsletter



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**Thank you
Athens Marble Club
for your support!**

VILLAGE OF LEMONT
LEMONT TOWNSHIP
LEMONT PARK DISTRICT

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

November 2020

I think that many of us, when first confronted by the virus, felt that this was going to last a short time and then be gone. Needless to say this has not happened. The museum is now open to the general public using masks and social distancing. We now have a doorbell camera so you will need to ring the doorbell for me to let you in. In the wake of the world as we now know it, we felt this was advisable and we are sure you would agree.

The Board and I would also like to publicly extend our deepest sympathy to the Joyce Affelt family on their loss. Her class of LHS 1955 donated postcards depicting Lemont and we do have a wonderful collection in our archives. She also donated many of her prints to us before she left Lemont with permission to copy and sell them. When in town, Joyce would stop by the museum to touch base and I will miss these visits.

You know our fundraisers have had to be curtailed. No *Hocus Pocus* movie in house, but creative minds came up with a "Hocus Pocus Basket Raffle" that went well and then the World Series Benefit. We are very lucky to have the support of all of you.

We did participate in the Lemont Park District Halloween event which 600 children attended and the "Trick or Treat" day sponsored by the Downtown Businesses. Fun to see the clever costumes like a computer, a girl in a picture frame, and, of course princesses.

The Nominating Committee came up with some very good people to run for the Board of Directors. As there were no challenges - 5 nominations and 5 open candidate seats - the Board approved having the confirmation via Zoom and not in person in order to limit contact during the pandemic. It was a first. At the November 17th General Membership Meeting, the following candidates were elected: Patricia Knight, Tricia O'Neill, Jason Smith and William Unhock. Due to a family illness Dianne Butkovich withdrew and John Quinn was elected to serve in her place. All of the candidates bring talents and enthusiasm to our Board and we do appreciate their willingness to contribute their time and positive energy to our LAHS.

I would personally like to also thank those who have contributed much to our success these past years with their ideas and follow through and although not on the Board after January 1st will hopefully still be active in our organization like Andrea Earnest, Pat Camalliere, Richard Homerding, John Quinn, and Richard Lee.

Please note that the donations coming in to the LAHS are very much appreciated. It is both heartwarming and humbling to read the messages of encouragement that are included. Thank you.

On behalf of the LAHS Board of Directors and myself, we wish all of you a *Happy Thanksgiving, a Merry Christmas, & a Healthy, Happy, & Prosperous New Year!!!!*

I think many of the Christmas decorations will come out to help make it festive in keeping with this joyful season of hope and love.

Sincerely,
Susan D.



Joyce Affelt, Village of Faith Prays for Peace

GENEALOGY CORNER

Staying Connected

By Barb Bannon

More than a decade ago I wrote an article, "The Written Word", about handwritten letters from some of my relatives. I consider myself very fortunate to have letters, some of which were sent by family members overseas during the very emotional times of WWII.

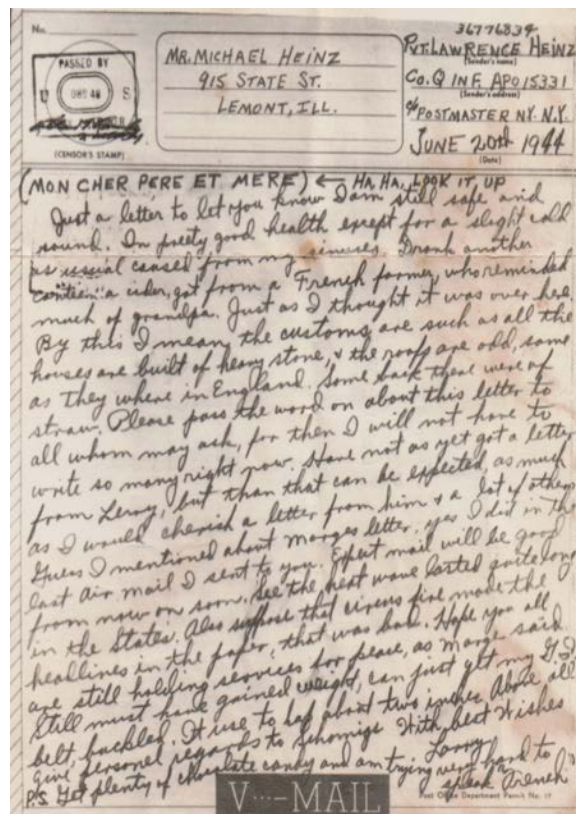
Genealogy research leads to a host of vital records, but if you are very lucky you will find photos of relatives that you have never met or a card or letter written in a relatives' own hand. We are once again in a time of socially distanced communication with relatives and friends, when photos and correspondence can impart a feeling of "being there". You may notice very distinct differences in handwriting in a card congratulating one on the birth of a new addition to the family, compared to a note of sympathy after a loved ones passing. Feelings are often conveyed through ones handwriting but hardly through keyboard strokes.

When I read these family letters I felt the ever-present tension. They contain unusually long paragraphs about the littlest happening in their lives, and very little if anything about problems.

On the other end of the spectrum, I enjoyed the beautiful or outlandishly funny cards for holidays or other special occasions.

Hand written letters are a cherished item that everyone, not just a genealogist, appreciates and would more likely save, unlike the quickly deleted e-mail. Letter writing is a challenge and a dying art form. Passing on this practice to children, even if it's just short greetings in a card, is a great way to develop their writing skills. Relate to them what it was like before e-mail and instant messaging made communication so immediate and disposable, or they soon will know nothing but that type of correspondence. Have them put a letter or postcard in the mail and experience the excitement and anticipation felt waiting to receive a response.

With the speed we are currently living our lives, voice mails, text messages, e-mails, digital pictures may be what we will have available to save for future generations. A descendant may enjoy a voice mail from the day that Aunt Fran got crazy and sang the goofy "Miss Mary Mack" song that no one could remember at the party the night before; or the short cell phone video of Uncle Phil doing the latest dance from "Tik Tok" when he thought no one was watching.





Maintenance Battalion – Third Armored Division

your memories on one of the many cloud sites now available. Spread the wealth by sending copies to relatives. It may make it easier for them to continue the family history where you leave off.

Even if no one is interested in genealogy, everyone will still enjoy those special memories.

Imagine future historians finding carefully saved video clips, emails and text messages from during our holidays or other special occasions. Save the digital items and scan the paper treasures in the best format to a high grade medium, to prevent it from being lost forever.

Whether it will be a hand written letter, a note in a card or an email, don't toss or delete it before envisioning the smile on the face of a future genealogist in your family. Compile a CD, DVD or Zip Drive of special moments remembered in photos, video clips, letters, cards, and e-mails, whatever you have. Or store



Connecting Branches



The Genealogy Committee has been made aware of the following family names being researched:

Naomi Stonehouse researching

Lawrence & Mary (Pettewski) Szulczesky (Schultz) family
and Albert & Antoinette (Hobbit or Kabat) Pettewski

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

Taming the Illinois Wilderness

By Pat Camalliere

If you've walked through County Forest Preserve trails you have some idea of what Northern Illinois looked like before Illinois became a state in 1818. The land was wilderness: woods and grasslands. Native American trails were intended for foot traffic. Travel was on rivers and streams or following migratory herds after farming season was over. Although the Indian population could easily have grown produce for trade, for the most part they grew only what was needed for their own use. One reason for this is that there was no way to move harvested crops. Even rivers and streams were not an option, as much of the year waterways were not navigable; they were flooded in the spring, too shallow to float all except light canoes in summer and fall, and frozen in winter. Native Americans knew this well, and didn't even try.

People from the East Coast and immigrants from Europe and elsewhere knew the land here was plentiful, and desired to purchase such land to farm and build villages and cities, and of course we all know that eventually this was done. But have you even wondered exactly how the wilderness was turned into today's civilization? There was much more involved than cutting down trees and building a house and barn.

A farmer could not grow crops to sell until there was a way to transport the crops to a population who wanted to buy them. No means of transport existed.

Roads had to be built, and canals had to be dug.

Arrangements had to be made with Native Americans, who did not understand the concept of individual ownership of land.

And the land had to be measured into tracts that could be purchased.

The first step was to survey the land. When I was studying this time period to write my novel, *The Mystery at Black Partridge Woods*, I found surveying fascinating.

ILLINOIS' SURVEYORS

From Wilderness to Real Estate: Before land could be purchased it had to be converted from uncharted wilderness into tracts of land to be marketed and sold. This was done by creating townships that, depending on who was doing the survey, were either 36 square miles or 25 square miles. Once the township was created, it could be subdivided into any size and configuration an individual wanted.

The [Continental Congress](#) had passed the [Land Ordinance of 1785](#) and then the [Northwest Ordinance](#) in 1787 to control the survey, sale, and settling of the new lands. Rules were set down governing how the USA would continue forward. The precedent was set that the country could expand westward from the original 13 states, and that states north of the Ohio River would be admitted to the Union as slave-free states. Included in this ordinance were provisions to *survey* the Northwest Territory.



Northwest Territory, 1878 Photo by touringohio.com

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 not only defined rules for dividing and selling the land, but laws for how the land would be governed, including courts, law enforcement, sheriffs, militias, penalties and punishments. This document was drawn on heavily when drafting the Constitution of the United States in 1789.

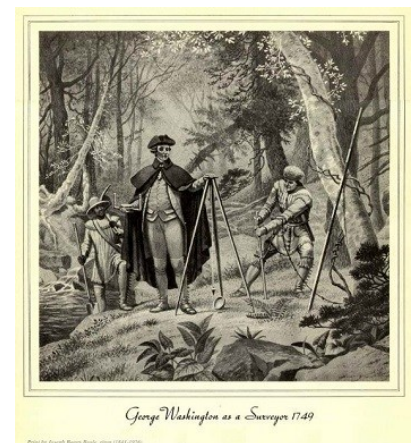
Surveying was a Dangerous Job: The surveying and subdividing of Illinois land was done during the years 1805 to 1855, but mostly between 1815 and 1835. By that time, various treaties had been negotiated with native populations, but the treaties allowed Indians to live on the land until it was sold. Indians knew that surveyors were here to measure the land for sale, and they would have to leave once that was done. You can imagine why the men were not welcome. Surveyors were also vulnerable because there were so few of them in comparison to significant Indian populations that largely did not leave Northern Illinois until 1835.

Surveyors were Land Marketers: When the land opened up to survey by Congress in 1790, there was a rush of surveyors into the land northwest of the Ohio River. Premium prices would be paid by speculators for the best land. To insure these speculators got title to the best lands, they offered their surveyors generous contracts that more often than not awarded a portion of the surveyed land. In some instances even as much as one half for really good land was awarded the surveyor. In other cases the surveyors were paid in cash. It was up to the surveyors to give not only accurate but sometimes glowing descriptions of the land. In most cases, those purchasing large tracts of land, especially speculators, had never seen and may never see the land they were buying. Therefore, it was left to the surveyor to describe the property so it would get top dollar. Fees paid to early surveyors may seem extravagant but life on the frontier required a special person with a special skills: grit, determination and fearless personality. Surveying often took place during the winter months when the threat of attack by an Indian hunting party was greatly reduced as they were more likely to stay in their winter quarters.

Survey Excursion Teams: Each survey team began with a team leader, or colonel. The leader was responsible for the entire excursion including selecting all the men that would take part. He was an experienced surveyor, familiar with the frontier. Under him would usually be three assistant surveyors, each surveyor accompanied by six men, each with a specific job. In the field where Indians could be encountered at any time, great care was taken to insure the safety of the team. In the lead position walking about two or three hundred yards in front of the surveyor was the hunter. His job was to scout for game and be on the lookout for any signs of danger in the form of Indians. Next was the surveyor, two chainmen, a marker, and a pack-horse man that carried the baggage. This group kept close and were armed to fend off any attack. About two-hundred yards behind came the last member of the team, the spy. He kept on the back trail and made sure the surveyor party ahead was not followed. Each man in the team carried his own rifle, blanket and any other personal items required for survival in the wilderness. The packhorse carried cooking utensils and provisions that couldn't be obtained from the wilderness.

Settling in for the Night: Each night the teams would come together, build a single fire, prepare and eat a meal. The men would tell stories and sing songs to pass away the evening. Then, about three-hundred yards from the fire, they brushed away the snow and made their bed for the night, each man keeping his rifle and personal gear at his side. When daylight arrived, two men would circle the smoldering campfires to make sure no Indians had set up an ambush during the night.

- The country's first county surveyor was George Washington.
- Abraham Lincoln's career as a surveyor began in 1833 when John Calhoun, Sangamon County Surveyor (Illinois), offered Lincoln a job as his assistant. Lincoln's career as a surveyor lasted only a few years. His projects included government surveys, road surveys, town lots, and private surveys. His instruments now on display at *Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site*.



SOCIETY NEWS *by Susan Donahue*

We would first like to wish Jim Ludwig and his mom Priscilla a return to good health. We wish Jim a speedy recovery in his release from the hospital, and we send Priscilla all our best as she recovers in the Lemont Rehab Center.

We have rented the museum out to different groups during our history and when a request came in from the "Red Hats" known as the "Canal Girls" we were more than happy to oblige. Quite a few of them are volunteers for the LAHS. Their scheduled November meeting, which was to be held at the Lemont Public Library, had a conflict so they thought of us. They did kindly make a donation to us, which we appreciated.

You probably were aware that we hosted a guest from another country at the Lemont Township Alba facility "Scarecrow Event" sponsored by the Lemont Junior Women's Club. The three mischievous cohorts of Darlene, Tim & Terry decided on Mary Poppins and gave her an umbrella, which unfortunately got trashed by our enthusiastic wind. She was provided a new umbrella for her new journey back to England. We congratulate the Lemont Garden Club, who won 1st Prize. We are not giving up and are planning a surprise for next year – one we have not come up with yet, but knowing the three co-conspirators I am sure it will knock it right out of the park this time!



We will not be having our "Annual Christmas Choral Concert" which thanks to the generous donation of time and talent by our local church choirs over the years was a way to kickoff this joyful time and there was such a positive energy. as we began the Christmas season. Will Santa be able to make it this year by appointment? We have a message now into the Head Elf "Sleepy" since so many are asking about his appearance this year. He is the children's favorite and they can't wait to see this kind man center stage to share their wishes with him.

I must say too that all of you have contributed so much time and talent to help us with the "Christmas Cookie Sale"



throughout the years, and we pause in gratitude, but in this time frame and with fewer bakers it was not realistic to have it. I know our "Cookie Queen" Barb Bannon is both happy and pleased with all of you. who through the years unselfishly donated the cute, small holiday cookies for sale. Everyone would wait to see Norma Johnson's cute, Christmas trees and the beautiful variety of Gloria Abboud and the late Rose Yates. We also had volunteers who helped us repackage these goodies like Barb Bannon, Barb Buschman, Gloria Abboud, Pat Browne, Doris Peterman, Norma Johnson, the late Bernice Johnson and Rose Yates. Broken cookies never lasted long. The museum was bathed in the warmth of friends sharing a laugh and enjoying each others company. Good memories to press into our hearts and keep forever.

We also did decorate one of the cute, small Christmas trees in downtown Lemont for the season. It was mostly Gail August and myself who did the decorating. We have had the pleasure of first finding the tree, not always as easy as it sounds, and then decorating it in nice weather, thunderstorms, freezing temps and every so often snow. My theory is more is better, while Gail is more conservative in decorating. We would compromise and the finished product made us proud to have the LAHS name on it. It is always a fun time.

STEPPING BACK IN TIME *by Susan Donahue*

Now here is a brief exchange between the Lemont Area Historical Society and the Lemont Park District dated July 16, 1970 to Norbert Lesnieski, President of the Lemont Park District from our own LAHS President Tom Ludwig at that time.

In also looking at this correspondence I was struck by the fact that we often think of ourselves as being involved in our museum and our artifacts, including our library exclusively and in fact here is an example of how we decided as a group to extend ourselves.



Dear Mr. Lesnieski,

At the July 7 meeting of the Lemont Area Historical Society a report was given concerning the June meeting of the Lemont Opportunity Council, particularly that portion of the meeting concerning itself with the discussion pertaining to the spring which is located at the east end of Main Street, and the condition of the property surrounding the spring. It was noted, with interest, that a suggestion was made at this meeting, that the Lemont Park District become involved in this situation.

Following this report, it was truly moved and seconded that a letter is directed to the Lemont Park District which will serve to urge that the property be acquired by the Park District, if at all possible and that under your jurisdiction this property be cleaned up, that the immediate area surrounding the spring be put into clean and attractive order, and maintained in this manner for the enjoyment of all citizens in the Lemont area.

The members of this society are diligently working to perpetuate the aura surrounding the village and its history, and feel that this particular area should most certainly be on portion of the village and its environs which should be preserved.

Tom Ludwig, President Lemont Area Historical Society

Answer from Lemont Park District:

Dear Tom,

I have been asked by the Lemont Township Park District to answer your query concerning the district acquiring the spring property located on East Main St.

To the best of our knowledge, this land is owned by the Van Dale Realty Co. and it is the intent of the Lemont Park District to inquire of the firm as to whether title to this land could be obtained.

The Lemont Park District Board will most certainly give this matter continuing consultation and also join the Historical Society with the thought that this property should be preserved and maintained in a manner that will prove to be an asset to our community.

Sincerely, Russ Sandberg, Sec. Lemont Park District

Calling All Members!

You can renew your membership or buy a new membership online!

Join By Mail

- Complete the membership application below
- Make out a check for the appropriate dues
- Mail both to the Historical Society's address on the form

*You will receive your membership card
in a few weeks*

Join Online!

www.lemonthistory.org/membership.html

*You will receive your membership card
in a few weeks*

Join In Person

HOURS OF OPERATION

Tuesday and Friday
10 AM to 2 PM
Saturday
10 AM to 1 PM
Sunday
1 to 4 PM

Membership Benefits

- Voting privileges at General Membership Meeting
- Cornerstone Newsletter
- Free admission to regular museum exhibit area
- Free use of Society Library
- One Guest pass for free admission to regular museum exhibit area
- Discount on Archival Photos and other image media
- 10% Discount on items in Gift Shop, including selected books

Additional Benefits for Corporate Members

- One extra Guest pass for free admission to regular museum exhibit area (Total 2 passes)
- Your business card included in one issue of the Cornerstone Newsletter
- Membership Certificate suitable for framing

Additional Benefit for Life Members

- Name will be engraved on nameplate and displayed on plaque in museum.

Opportunities For LAHS Members

Our historical society has many kinds of activities that members can get involved in if they wish. New members who get involved will enable us to do more and do it more efficiently. Here are some possible opportunities:

Archiving Photos And Newspaper Articles | Tour Guides – At The Museum, Around Lemont, And New Trails
New Exhibits | New Archival Collections To Copy And Sell | Fund Raising Events | Newsletter Articles
Museum Care And Improvements | Tour Advertising | Special Programs And Reenactments
New Pages For The Website | Maintaining The Gardens



LEMONT AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Located at the *Old Stone Church*
306 Lemont Street
Lemont, IL 60439

Lemont Area Historical Society Membership Form

Date: _____

Welcome to the Lemont Area Historical Society Family!

- Please check your Membership/Benefactor category and fill out the form.
- Make your check payable to: Lemont Area Historical Society.
 - Additional donations are tax deductible and are very much appreciated.
- Mail (or drop off) to 306 Lemont Street, Lemont, IL 60439 or stop by the Museum. If you have any questions, please call: (630) 257-2972.
 - Hours of Operation
 - Tuesday and Friday: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - Saturday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 - Sunday: 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Please enter my membership in the Lemont Area Historical Society.
Enclosed are my dues in the appropriate amount as indicated below.

- | | | | |
|--|-----------|--|---------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Athens Marble Club | \$1000.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family Member | \$30.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends of Keepataw | \$500.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Member | \$20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quarry Club | \$250.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen Member | \$15.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member | \$200.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Member | \$10.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Corporate Member | \$50.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional Donation | \$ |

Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

What would you like to get involved in? Tap into your talents!

- ☐ Exhibits ☐ Genealogy ☐ Volunteering ☐ Programs ☐ Oral History ☐ Wedding Committee
☐ Home Registry ☐ Sunday Museum Guide ☐ Group Tour Guide ☐ Light Maintenance

Memorial Plaque: The Lemont Area Historical Society also has a Memorial Plaque where names of loved ones are engraved. \$10 (minimum) donation.

In Memory of: _____
(name to appear on plaque)

Donation Amount: _____