

Sharing the Secret

October 2008

Arcanum Wayne Trail Historical Society, Inc. 123 W. George St.

website - www.arcanumhistoricalsociety.org

Volume 4 Issue 4
Arcanum, Ohio 45304

President's Report by Richard Troutwine

In my last report I mentioned the Historical Society would be acquiring a large wooden display of the Darke County Fair from the Garst Museum. This wonderful folk art piece constructed by Sylvan Mehaffie has arrived, with a little restoration work it will be up and running. Also, an old wooden school desk was received from Tom Staley. These items are greatly appreciated.

Restoration of the main building continues. In order to bring the building up to safety code and make it handicap accessible, the front southeast door in the conference room and rear north door must be replaced with doors that have a 32 inch opening each with panic bars. The doorway between the main conference room and the north room must be widened to accommodate wheelchairs. Further, a cement wheelchair ramp and entry pad will replace the current north entry way. Grant money has been applied for to cover the expense of these projects which will be approximately \$6000.

Our Yard Sale and Fair Gate were huge successes. All of the books, *Arcanum Chronicles*, have been sold. Thanks to all who helped with these activities.. Mark your calendar for the Christmas Bazaar that will take place here Saturday, November 29th.

All copies of the book *Arcanum Chronicles* have been sold. We owe a debt of gratitude to Anita Short and Bill Gunder for the publishing rights. AWTHS has profited over \$1000 from book sales.

The checking/savings balance is \$8,448.91, the long term debt remains \$7,376.18.

We are happy to welcome new members. A special thanks to Harry and Hana Hanes for their lifetime membership.

I have served three years as president. Following our by-laws it is time for a new president. Please let a board member know if you can take over this responsibility, you will get a lot of help and support from board members. Elections of officers and board of directors will take place at our annual meeting January 10th.

November 13 Membership Meeting 7:00 p.m.

Bear's Mill...not the same old grind

AWTHS presents Becky (Kauffman) Dynes, Arcanum resident and Outreach Manager for *The Friends of Bear's Mill*. Members and guest are welcome to hear Becky give a narrative of the history of the mill and also show a short video produced by PBS for the TV Show "Our Ohio".

Built in 1849 by Gabriel Baer, the mill is one of the few operating water powered mills in Ohio today. The site of the present mill, as well as water rights, was granted to Major George Adams by Presidential Deed from President James Monroe in 1824. Since 1979 Bear's Mill has been privately owned by Terry and Julie Clark. Operations are governed by the non-profit organization "The Friends of Bear's Mill".

Becky and her husband Ryan graduated from Arcanum High School. Becky earned a bachelor's degree in Community Education from University of Toledo and a master's degree in Family and Consumer Sciences Education from Ohio State.

Join us for an enjoyable evening to learn more about the history of our historic area.

Officers and Directors

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|----------|
| President | Richard Troutwine | 692-5128 |
| Vice President | Fred Troutwine | 692-8939 |
| Treasurer | Jerry Kramer | 692-5764 |
| Rec. Secretary | Pat Jones | 662-9114 |
| Corres. Secretary | Annette Stewart | 692-6462 |
| Directors | Dave Flora | 692-8412 |
| | Keith Furlong | 548-6556 |
| | Wendell Miller | 692-8425 |
| | Jeff Puterbaugh | 692-5304 |

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

This notice is to inform all members of the annual membership meeting

Arcanum Wayne Trail Historical Society, Inc. Annual Membership Meeting

January 10, 2008

7:00 p.m.

Election of Officers and Board of Directors

Stephens Lumber Company, Inc.

The sawmill & lumber yard located at 204 W. Washington Street for many years first began by George Ivester about 1860 on land he purchased in 1854 from Arcanum's founder, William Gunder.

The lumber yard and sawmill were located in essentially the same physical location since 1860. The office was moved at various times and carried a North Walnut Street and a Washington Street address. The sawmill address had been given as North Street, North Walnut Street and North Sycamore Street.

There have been only a few owners since the beginning, George Ivester, Francis Fourman, Fourman Brothers (Roy & Berman), J. M Johnson, with the Stephens family in ownership the longest, more than 75 years.

Brothers Columbus Isaiah "C. I." and George H. Stephens became proprietors in 1925, naming their new business Arcanum Hardwood Lumber Company. George sold his share to C. I. and moved to Texas during the depression. He returned to Arcanum and worked at the sawmill as an employee. Many remember George as mayor of Arcanum from 1940-1945.

Following his service in the navy Wm. J. "Jack" Stephens joined his Dad, C.I. In 1947 the business became known as Stephens Lumber & Sawmill.

The name changed again in 1965 to Stephens Lumber Company, Inc. By that time Thomas J. Stephens had joined his father and older brother in the business.

C.I. was timber buyer and also timber cutter in early years. Jack and Tom became skilled timber cutters while working with C. I. After C. I. passed, Jack was timber buyer and logger. Tom had already assumed responsibility for maintenance of the mill equipment, including update of machinery, and continued as head sawyer. All of their timber came from Ohio and Indiana. Lumber was sold wholesale as well as retail.

The saws were silenced and the doors closed for the last time in 2002.

When settlers arrived in this area they found a dense forest. Each community had a sawmill, some like Arcanum had more than one. Some farmers had their own blades. Once the railroads came through Arcanum, lumber not needed locally was shipped elsewhere.

The Stephens lumber family was part of two distinct events which were important in the history of the United States, and which are part of the history of Arcanum.

Tom remembers his father telling about a contract with the US government for planks 4"x5"x30' straight grain white oak used in construction of PT boats during WWII.

The event most local people know about was supplying lumber to refurbish the USS Constitution in celebration of our nation's bicentennial in 1976. Stephens Lumber Company had the honor of sawing Ohio white oak into beams and planks for the ship. The contractor for the refurbishing job considered Stephens Lumber Company the best sawmill east of the Mississippi River. The Natural Resources Director at the time said "White oak grows straight and tall in the rich deep soil of central and western Ohio. The logs, which range from 30 to 36 inches in diameter to 35 to 45 feet long, come from trees 150 to 200 years old". The sawmill was buzzing to have the lumber delivered to the Boston Navy Yard by January 1974 where the work took place.

Tom tells how their timber went coast to coast and across the ocean: railroad ties were cut for Disney World, boards for paddle wheels for Delta Queen and other riverboats, 12x12x20 oak timbers for bumpers at Soo Locks, Michigan, timbers went to Egypt to be used to move a large temple to make way for the Aswan Dam, timbers to Mystic Seaport, Conn for restoration of Whaler Charles C. Morgan and other large racing schooners, barges for dredges on Ohio River, giant beam for windmill, lumber for frame homes and misc. furniture companies.

Locally we used every inch of a tree, continued Tom, bark for mulch, sawdust for bedding of animals and first cut slabs for firewood.

The property is now owned by Phil & Karen (Stephens) Garbig and Gary & Carol Breckenridge. The site is used as a storage facility.

(Information for this article was given by Tom and Liz Stephens, as well as from the books "Arcanum, Ohio Business History (1852 thru 1968)" and Arcanum...A secret place 1999.)

Kepner Building circa 1866

The structure on the southwest corner of West George and South High Sts. is undergoing a facelift. Known as the Kepner Building, the building is presently owned by Tom and Denise Wetzel. A former Arcanum student, Tom lives in Pleasant View Tennessee. Denise is from Nebraska.

In 2001 Tom and Denise purchased the property in anticipation of relocating and operating a business in the building. They have repaired the roof and are now preserving the exterior. Over 10,000 bricks have been replaced and 90% of the tuck pointing has been completed. Among other repairs, sections of the gutters has been rebuilt. The building looks nice with a fresh coat of light grey paint trimmed in maroon and dark grey. You may notice whimsical designs painted here and there to spark curiosity.

Tom tells that there are still scores written on the walls where boys played basketball on the second floors. Also written on the walls are signs "No Cursing" and "No Spitting". Baking pans left behind remind Tom of the cream bread once a popular item in town.

Dating back to 1866, the structure is older than our historical society building. Consisting of two buildings it encompasses 102 through 110 West George Street. The east building is believed to have been erected first, the west building erected in 1873 for business man and community leader H. A Kepner. The third section added was along S. High St. around 1913 with the entrance on High St.

Beginning in 1940, Rogers Hardware opened for business from 102 and 106 and then after Ritz Theater closed, 108 W. George St. was also used as a show room. Walter F. Rogers was owner and proprietor for longer than any other owner. He lived with his family in a 6-room apartment on the 3rd floor for several years.

Presently U.S.A. Martial Arts is using the first floor.

The east section of the second building, 108 W. George St., is remembered as the theatre. First Dreamland and later the Ritz. The most recent business at this address was Arcanum Optical.

Local residents think of cream bread when remembering John Toops' Arcanum Bakery, located in the west section of the second building, 110 W. George St.. "Toopsy", as he was affectionately called, sold the bakery in 1987 after 33 years of "sweet" business.

Both locations, 108 and 110, are vacant at this time.

In 1873 Kepner Opera House was on the second and third floor of 102 W. George St. Following the erection of the City-Township Building and new Opera House activities held in the Kepner building were now being held in the new Opera House. The upper floors of 102 were then used by various organizations. Over the years the rooms were also used as a skating rink, dance hall, and basketball court, among other uses . For 10 years Arcanum School held 7th grade classes there.

The upper floors at 108 and 110 were also used for businesses and organizations. Family names of those tenants in both buildings can still be found in our local phone directory; Allen ,Albright, Ballard, Boyd, Beck, Blackburn, Brandenburg, Brumbaugh, Carter, Cline, Coons, Dull, Eubank, Furlong, Gilbert, Hall, Hardy, Harsh, Hawley, Hoffman, Hughes, Jobes, Johnson, Koogler, Long, Martin, Reichard, Sarver, Scofield, Shank, Sharp, Smith, Shepherd, Shultz, Shuler, Simpson, Swartzel, Thomas, Toops, Troxel, Weider, Wills, and Wolf.

An interesting fact from the early years before the organization of local banking institutions, Mr. Kepner (along with John Smith) served as custodian of much of the money for both town and surrounding area residents. The money was kept in a safe in his hardware store. This location was later the site of the First National Bank, beginning 1893 thru 1914. H. A. Kepner was Arcanum's first mayor.

Read more about our community in *Arcanum, Ohio Business History, (1852 thru 1968)* written by Anita Short, from which much of this information was taken.

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Those who liked Toop's cream bread were able to buy it again this summer at the Farmers Market. Kolb's Specialty Bakery was a first time vendor in Arcanum, selling cream bread made from Toop's original recipe and using his local flour. He said his bread is unique because it is made from whole grain flour.

John and Pat Kolb's family joined Fred Feitshans and Michael Grims families, together providing fresh produce, fruit, flowers, and all kinds of baked goods.

Farmers Market was held on the grounds of the Veterans' Memorial Park which is property of the historical

Committee ReportsAcquisitions Dick Troutwine 692-5128

| | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 0878 Two (2) Ruth Lyons Calendars | donated by | The late Edith Patterson |
| 0879 Bird Bath Basin | Jane Long | |
| 0880 Bird Bath Base | Lonnie Norris | |
| 0881 Gower's Plumbing and Heating Ash Tray | Cary Wogoman | |
| 0882 Arcanum High School Football Ticket - vs. Troy 35 Cents | Charles Didier | |
| 0883 Darke County Fair Display by Sylvan Mehaffie | Garst Museum Penny Perry Exc. Dr. | |
| 0884 Larger Hook Rug (green/beige) | Carol Bryson | |
| 0885 School Desk | Tom Staley | |
| 0886 RJ Warner Ins. Ash Tray (copper) | purchased from Lew Williams Printing | |
| 0887 1924 Arcanum "The Echo" Yearbook | purchased from Lew Williams Printing | |
| 0888 1925 Arcanum "The Arcana" Yearbook | purchased from Lew Williams Printing | |
| 0889 1926 Arcanum "The Arcana" Yearbook | purchased from Lew Williams Printing | |

Memberships Carolyn Furlong 548-6556

As of August 26 AWTHS has 160 members. Thanks to all who have renewed their membership since our last newsletter.

A special thanks to members Harry and Hana Hanes who have become lifetime members.

Singles and Family

Carolyn & Richard Davison Norman Dohner Tim & Peggy Sanders Gary & Denise Swabb

2009 Membership fees are due January 1st. Renewal form is on page 5 of this newsletter.

Membership dues are essential to preservation activities and to support property needs.

Publications Barbara Deis 678-7832

The first printing (100 copies) of "Arcanum Chronicles" was completely sold out by August. Printing cost of the books was \$925.00 There were some related expenses such as mailing materials, order forms and display items. A total of six books were given to those individuals who were involved with writing, proof reading and contributing to the book in some way and also to the Arcanum Public Library. The profit was \$1026.55.

This book, written by Anita Short and Bill Gunder, is being reordered. "Arcanum Chronicles - Volume 2" also written by Anita and Bill is ready for print. It includes histories of the Arcanum Fire Department and Arcanum Public Library.

Previously released books, *Arcanum, Ohio Business History (1852 thru 1968)* by Anita Short and *The Secret Town* by Bill Gunder will be reprinted by AWTHS with permission of Anita and Bill.

Our community is very fortunate to have such knowledgeable historians. Much thanks is to be given to both Anita and Bill for their dedication in collecting, documenting and preserving our history through the printed word. Books they have written have fulfilled the AWTHS mission: *To collect, preserve, and foster an appreciation for our past and promote an interest and knowledge of past historical events for citizens of all ages, which may act as a foundation for future generations and instill a sense of pride in local history.*

Much information for our newsletters is gleaned from these books. Anita and Bill's books are also used by Arcanum's 3rd grade teachers in social studies which include the study of local history.

These books will be available at the Christmas bazaar and also by contacting Bill Gunder, 692-8000 or Barb Deis, 678-7832. The books will make great Christmas gifts.

Historians Anita Short 692-8715 Bill Gunder 692-8000

Over 600 photos of Arcanum and its people have been preserved on DVDs by Bill Gunder. AWTHS would love to borrow photos from your family albums to scan to a CD rom so they may be preserved and shared with the community. The photos will be returned to the owners promptly. DVDs will be shown at AWTHS activities. Bill has been working on this project since 1992 when he began working on his book "The Secret Town". His late wife Carolyn bought a large box of photos from the Chancellor brothers collection at Red Gilbert's estate sale. Anita Short contributed what she has collected during her years of research. Jeff Puterbaugh also added to the mix. Many photos Bill has scanned have been donated to the historical society during the past 4 years. You are encouraged to contact Bill, he'll answer your questions about the project.

Adopt-A-Highway

Jim Deis and his granddaughters picked up litter along St. Rt. 49 in July. The next cleanup will be in November.

Committee Reports continuesWays and Means

Jenny Quigney 692-5994 / 459-8090

Since our last newsletter we have had two very successful fundraisers. The first one was the World's Longest Yard Sale. This was held the first weekend of August and thanks to all of you who donated items, it was a huge success. In the three days we profited \$1134.80. This was almost twice what we made in 2007.

The second activity was working the north fair gate, Gate #3, during the Great Darke County Fair. We received \$900.00 for this effort. Due to the efforts of our membership with their donations of items and their donations of their time we had a very successful month.

On June 21 we operated the food stand for the Lion's Club Cruise-In. The weather didn't cooperate, the attendance was down. Thanks to AWTHS helpers who purchased the extra buns, hot dogs and sausages our profit was \$152.76. Thanks to all who helped on that damp and cool evening.

We continue to receive income from aluminum recycling, hall rentals and card parties.

Our Holiday Bazaar is coming up on November 29th and once again we will be asking for your help. We could use any holiday items that you feel you can donate. Also, we will have a bake sale at that time. We are still in the planning stages for the bazaar and will have more information as time goes on. Please contact me at 937-459-8090 if you have any suggestions or donations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each of you who helped with our most recent fundraisers. Your efforts for these and every fundraiser is greatly appreciated.

Local Oral History - New Committee

Preservation of oral history is very important and a relatively easy way to record stories told first hand. This can be done as a round table discussion, town hall format, or a one on one discussion. Our older residents are passing on and their stories and memories are being lost. Contact Dick Troutwine 692-5128 with your ideas and suggestions. We need to get this project going. If you can help with this project please mark the membership form below.

Host and Hostess Are Need During AWTHS Open Hours

By the first of next year dirty work from hammers, saws, sledge hammer, etc should be finished. Our Historical Society will be ready for visitors during set hours. Volunteers will be needed during open hours to welcome guest and to sell items from our "gift shop". The second floor will not be open for the general public. Mark the membership form below if you are interested in helping.

Membership FormPayment Due by January 1, 2009

Name _____

Address _____

City, State & zip code _____

Phone _____ Email _____

New Member _____

Renewal _____

| | | |
|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Annual Membership Fees | \$15.00 Single | \$25.00 Family |
| \$50.00 Sponsorship | \$150.00 Corporate | \$1000.00 Lifetime |
| <i>Your tax deductible additional contributions are also greatly appreciated</i> | | |

We need your participation in order to exist and for continuous growth. Please check the area in which you can help.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Acquisitions | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Programs | <input type="checkbox"/> Ways & Means | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating | <input type="checkbox"/> Flower Garden Care |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yard Care | <input type="checkbox"/> Oral History Preservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Adopt-A-Highway |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AWTHS Open Hours Host /hostess | <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Set Up Hall for Rentals/Meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Design | <input type="checkbox"/> Publications |

| Arcanum Wayne Trail Historical Society, Inc. | | |
|--|--|------------------------|
| October 7, 2008 | Board Meeting | 7:00 p.m. |
| October 3 & 17, 2008 | Euchre Party | 1:00-1:30 p.m. |
| November 4, 2008 | Board Meeting | 7:00 p.m. |
| November 7, 2008 | Euchre Party | 1:00-1:30 p.m. |
| November 13, 2008 | Membership Meeting Speaker: History of Bear's Mill | 7:00 p.m. |
| November 21, 2008 | Euchre Party | 1:00-3:30 p.m. |
| November 29, 2008 | Christmas Bazaar | 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. |
| December 2, 2008 | Board Meeting | 7:00 p.m. |
| December 5 & 19, 2008 | Euchre Party | 1:00-3:30 p.m. |
| <u>2009</u> | | |
| January 6, 2009 | Board Meeting | 7:00 p.m. |
| January 8, 2009 | Annual Membership Meeting | 7:00 p.m. |
| | Election of Officers and Directors | |

On Going Projects

Euchre Parties - First and Third Friday of each month September through May

Hall Rental - Carolyn Furlong 548-6556 Aluminum Can Recycling - Wendell Miller 692-8425

For Sale - Historic Arcanum Note Cards & Christmas Cards and book " Arcanum Chronicles" 678-7832 & 692-8000

Donation of Appreciated Stock(s) - Richard Troutwine, 692-5128 or Todd Durham, 2nd National Bank, 548-2206

WORKING TOGETHER TO PRESERVE YOUR MEMORIES OF OUR COMMUNITY

Arcanum Wayne Trail Historical Society, Inc.
123 W. George Street
P.O. Box 4
Arcanum OH 45304