



MACOUPIN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

From your president,

The "Let Us Hear Your Song!" Songwriter Workshop Series is happening in the Ruyle Building as I write this letter. This is a brand-new event for Macoupin County Historical Society and is well attended. The participants range in age from school children to persons almost my age. We have three musicians working with the group this evening, and it's sounding pretty darn good. This three-part event is another effort to bring MCHS to the attention of more people, to serve the community, and to make MCHS more relevant to the residents of Macoupin County.

Another new event, "The Old Time Arts and Crafts Conference," is scheduled for October 11 and 12. This is an effort to return to our roots and will be quite different from the spring and fall festivals. We will be seeking artists, crafters, and tradesmen who can **demonstrate** and/or **teach** their crafts on site at MCHS. Demonstrators may sell the product they make on site and will not be charged for booth space. There will be no selling of manufactured items or reselling of items. These are two of the new projects that are planned for 2025. Other new ideas are mentioned elsewhere in the newsletter.

There was a meeting on April 7 that was open to the public and discussion focused on how to make MCHS successful in the future. Financial sustainability is our number one goal. MCHS is financially sound now, but our festivals no longer bring in the income we once enjoyed.

Our campus, with all of its buildings, is very expensive to maintain, and inflation has caused all our costs to skyrocket. The Board is now hiring work done that volunteers used to do. That's because we have fewer volunteers who are physically able and available to come work at MCHS. We can't continue to draw down our reserves; therefore, we must increase our income.

Our second priority is to increase the number of members and other volunteers. We need to work harder at being the **county-wide** organization we were intended to be. I would like to point out how much we appreciate our teen volunteers. We simply could not have gotten through the Fall Festival without them. Our special thanks to the Northwestern FFA members and the volunteers from clubs at Carlinville High School. Please come back!

Our third priority is doing better community outreach in Macoupin and surrounding counties so that the public is better informed of our activities and programs. We will be reconstructing our website in the near future. We plan to do more on Facebook, and we intend to be set up to take debit and credit cards at the Spring Festival in the Red Barn and the gift shop. We will have another meeting in the near future to discuss the future of MCHS and the public will again be invited. Please feel free to come get involved.

We recently welcomed new board members Brandy England, Patty Ambrose, and Dave McKee. Outgoing board members Deb Wiles, Paul Mihalek and Audy Schmedeke were thanked for their service and continue to volunteer their time and talents. Current officers are Dan Hauter, president, Greg Brown, vice president, Libby Klocke, secretary, and Carol Link, treasurer. The members of the board and other important contacts are listed in the newsletter with our contact information (page 7). Please feel free to reach out to us. (continued on page 2)



**Don't Forget
the Quilt Display in
John C Anderson
Museum**

*Spring
Festival
May 24, 25*

(From the president, page 1)

There are four organizations operating on our campus: MCHS, the Macoupin Agricultural Antique Association, the Macoupin County Blacksmith Shop and Brooms on Breckenridge. Our blacksmith shop is open the fourth Saturday of each month, as well as each Wednesday. The blacksmith shop now operates the sawmill. New members and volunteers are always welcome anywhere on grounds. Which activities interest you?

Activities planned for 2025 include the Spring Festival, May 24 & 25, the Fall Festival, September 20 & 21, The Old Time Arts and Crafts Conference, October 11 & 12, The Hammer In (Blacksmith Shop open house), November 1 and the Christmas Show, December 5, 6, & 7. More events may be added to our calendar as we explore new ideas to make MCHS more responsive to the public.

Please remember our First Monday of the Month informational meeting series. The next meeting is May 5 at 7 pm, and our presenter, Jeff Dunn, will be talking about neon signs and their history associated with businesses along Route 66. These informational meetings are free, open to the public, and cover a variety of topics. Future meeting dates are July 7, August 11, October 6 (annual wiener roast) and November 3.

I hope to see everyone at our **Spring Festival** on May 24 and 25.

Dan Hauter, President



**Blacksmith Shop Is Open
Wednesdays 10:00-2:30
Every 4th Saturday**

Joining the Board

Hi everyone! My name is Patty Ambrose, and I'm one of the new board members elected at the March 17th annual meeting. I'm a life-long resident of Carlinville. I'm excited to be a part of the Historical Society, bringing my many years of experience in marketing, event planning, and publicity to the Society. I hope to add a new perspective.

I have extensive outreach experience, including roles as director of the Carlinville Christmas Market, Illinois Route 66 National Scenic Byway and Constituent Affairs at the Governor's Office, as well as marketing and communications with the IL Dept. of Transportation.

Through these positions, I've gained a lot of knowledge building relationships and connecting with people. I enjoy the work and the bringing of new ideas to improve or enhance programs. Having just joined the Historical Society, I see I've got a lot to learn. When the Society was founded, there were over 300 members that first year. Most were local and excited to contribute to the daunting task ahead. The recent membership has suffered losses, from natural attrition or relocation of those early members, and I want to work with the board and current members to return our membership numbers back to what they were originally.

In addition, I'll be coordinating vendors for the Society's Spring and Fall festivals. One of my first priorities is making the website an interactive, online place to do business. The board has agreed, and we'll be redeveloping the website to make it interactive and functional. It is our intention to increase both membership and sponsorship opportunities, as well as to give the Society an opportunity for e-commerce and an easily navigated site for genealogy research.

There's a lot of work to keeping the Society going, so building membership and volunteers is also a top priority. I hope you, as current members of the Society, will join with us to bring forth the necessary changes required to grow. I'm looking forward to meeting you all in the coming months, and I encourage you to share your love of our county's history with others who may want to join us.

See you at the Spring Festival!

Patty

Guided Tour J C Anderson Home

Sunday, June 1,
Promptly at 1:00 pm
Adults \$5

Join the Tour!



Themes Announced

Take a stroll through the John C Anderson home this May 24, 25 at Spring Festival to see the fine presentation of quilts tied to Macoupin County. See the 1857 Double Irish



Chain quilt made by twenty-year-old Sarah Rowland. Examine well used and loved quilts left by the family of John C Anderson when the society bought the home in 1973. Another very old quilt to examine is *Dove in Window*, made by Luary Cherry of the Palmyra area soon after the Civil War.

At Fall Festival, September 20, 21, we plan to display coverlets, most of them woven by hand. We have

at least one coverlet woven by hand, from thread spun by hand, from sheep raised by the weaver's family.

Local Man's Corn Contest to Continue

Will B Otwell began his Farmer Boys Corn Contest over 100 years ago. His Farmer Boys Clubs evolved into the now international 4-H Clubs for boys and girls. Current 4-H members are welcome to enter, but you don't have to be a 4-H Club member to enter this contest.

Come to the Spring Festival and look for the booth with Otwell's corn contest seeds and information. Bring your finished entry to Fall Festival, Sept 20 or 21 and claim your cash prize if your entry wins! Judging and awarding of the \$100 prize will take place Sunday, September 21.

Brooms on Break

Janice Person, left, is making a hawk tail broom.

Deb Lebo, right, is making a long-handled cob web or Harry Potter broom as she called it. On break for the summer, classes will start again in the fall.



Olde Arts to Demonstrate

The Macoupin County Historical Society has decided to go back to its roots with an Old Tyme Arts Conference on October 11th-12th from 9 am till 4 pm each day. This conference is a classroom and demonstration day for the arts and occupations that are being lost to the computer age we live in. Each building of the Historical Society will be transformed into a classroom of some sort to pass on these disappearing crafts. The public will be given a chance to sign up for these classes and wander the grounds to watch the demonstrators work their crafts.

We currently have demonstrators teaching chair caning, broom making, printing press and sawmill operating, broomcorn harvesting and broomcorn dying, tatting, canning, food foraging, blacksmithing, wood turning, sewing, and many more. If you have knowledge of a craft you can add to this event, please reach out to Rodney Eichen or Greg Brown. (see page 7).

We definitely need organizers for this event. Before October 11, 12, organizers will assign the classes and demonstrations to suitable classroom buildings on the grounds at specific times so that schedule conflicts may be avoided. On October 11 and 12, registrars will need to guide participants as they select and pay for their chosen activities. Traffic guides will help direct people to the various sites for their classes and demonstrations. Monitors will need to observe the class and demonstration sites between events. In the Red Barn, servers will assist those preparing to feed the participants, volunteers and demonstrators.

Demonstrator, teacher, organizer, registrar, guide, monitor or food server, which will you be? Or perhaps you will attend a few demonstrations and take a turn at being a guide? What will *you* do to help us pass the past into the future?

In memory of W.B. Otwell and his
Farmer Boys of the Early 1900s



Enter the Fall Festival
Great Corn Roundup!

Plant these 10 kernels of corn and get growing!
Enter your largest ear of corn at the Fall Festival.
Largest ear wins a cash prize of \$100.
(Must be 18 or under to enter.)



Be sure to stop into Carlville's
John C. Anderson House
to see a display about
W.B. Otwell and the Farmer Boys Club.



MCHS Gift Shop Changes

Anderson house gift shop is making numerous changes.

The large display cases have been removed, and numerous bookcases are being added to make more room for shoppers to see and select items for sale. The gift shop boasts a variety of handmade items made by creative people throughout the county. If you are willing to donate homemade items to the gift shop, please call or see the gift shop coordinator, Cheryl Gardner (217-825-9249).

This Spring Festival, May 24-25, the gift shop will have on display and for sale many items embroidered by the late Barb McCormick. Barb was a very dear friend and supporter of the Anderson House Gift Shop. Many loyal shoppers already have Barb's well-known Flour Sak kitchen towels on display in their own homes. We lost our dear friend in December, 2024; however, with many thanks to Barb's family, we now have the opportunity to display and also to sell select pieces of her past work. Barb received so many blue ribbons at local county fairs and the IL State Fair for her beautiful work, it is hard to select a favorite item.

Please visit the gift shop early during our Spring Festival.

Remembering Forgottonia

Singer, songwriter, award-winning Chris Vallillo will perform at the Ruyle Building at MCHS July 7, 2025. Chris will be telling stories, singing songs and enlightening the audience with his program "Forgottonia." Chris has many programs about rural life in the Midwest, but this one will focus on the people and places in an area in Illinois known as "Forgottonia" because it was bypassed so many times by government programs and opportunities.

His guitar playing has been described as "flowing like warm honey," and he has a keen eye and sense of history. He picks like Mississippi John Hurt and Doc Watson and weaves stories about the history and lifestyles in his songs.

We are so proud to offer Chris Vallillo, an Illinois Roads Scholar at the Macoupin County Historical Society, July 7, 7:00 pm, 2025. This event is made possible by a grant to



Carlinville Winning Communities from the Illinois Humanities.

Critter Art Added

Last fall, the MCHS board approved a project brought forward by Rodney Eichen to beautify the area near the food pavilion. He drew a landscape design and began planting the landscape. Mary Tinder, who served on the same committee, wrote and received a grant from the Carlinville Rotary Club for art to compliment the plantings. Two colorful pieces were painted and hung



on the Big Red Barn. Andrea Duncan painted the rooster, and Mary Tinder painted the goat. Both artists donated their fees to the Anderson Mansion roof replacement project.

If you'd like to present a concept for a cow or horse painting, or perhaps some other farm critter, contact Rodney or Mary (see page 7). The materials will be supplied for free, and we will showcase your talents!



We thank the Carlinville Rotary Club and the Macoupin Art Collective for their support of this project!

General Grant Interviewed

By Dave Ambrose

Members and guests of the Macoupin County Historical Society were treated to an appearance by Larry Werline, who portrays Ulysses S. Grant, and Judy Wagenblast, portraying Emily Briggs, a 19th century Washington journalist, during the Society's annual meeting, Monday night at the Carlinville Elks.

Dressed in the uniform of a Union general and brandishing an unlit cigar, Werline told his interviewer that Grant was born in a two-room cabin in Point Pleasant on the Ohio River. A year after Grant's birth, the family moved to Georgetown, Ohio, where his father continued his tannery business.

"We had relatives on both sides of the river," Werline recalled as Grant. "My parents were strict abolitionists. We had relatives on the other side, so I got both perspectives growing up." (continued on page 6)

Lost & Found, etc.

Volunteers Needed to help in the food barn before, during or after Spring Festival. Contact Dave McKee (page 7)

Time to Reserve your booth for Spring Festival. Contact Patty Ambrose (page 7), vendor coordinator, or download a contract from our Web page.

Free: All the squirrels you can catch on the MCHS property. Not returnable.

Reminders: The decorating theme for Spring Festival 2025 will be *vintage quilts*. Visit the Anderson Museum to see your great-great grandmother's quilt!

Wanted: Volunteers to be a monitor in a room of the museum during Spring Festival. 2 hour shifts. Contact Janell Ramey with a text or voicemail (page 7).



MCHS would like to borrow a small quilting frame for use at our Olde Arts Conference, October 11,12.

Contact Rodney Eichen (page 7)

Is the Attic Closed?

Well, yes, for now, the third floor is closed. The leaky roof has been replaced. The bees, squirrels, birds and bats have flown the coop, so, why is the third floor still closed?

Well, have you ever been in any attic after a totally new roof has been installed? Actually, it's the tear-off of the old roof that causes the debris to accumulate inside the attic.

And then there is the collection of calling cards left by the critters.

But the good news is that the noise of the roof project has sent the critters packing. And the better news is that a crew has been found to clean the attic, which just happens to be a huge attic, as many square feet as the first *or* second floor of the building.

The third floor is not going to be done before Spring Festival, but we are hopeful for Fall Festival, September 20, 21.

Our volunteers are simply too few and too, "ahem," old to take on this monumental cleaning task, hence the need to hire a crew. So, if you haven't spent all that income tax return yet, we would sure welcome your donations.

Join us on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/MacoupinCountyHistoricalSociety

Master Gardeners

The Master Gardeners of Macoupin County have been busy digging up and dividing perennials from their personal gardens, in preparation for their annual plant sale. This year's sale will be Saturday, May 24, from 8:00 am-3:00 pm. The sale takes place during the Macoupin County Historical Society Spring Festival, located at [920 W. Breckenridge, Carlinville, Illinois](#). Our plant sale tables can be found next to the Windmill and Red Barn.

Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer questions and help you select the best plants for your garden conditions. Feel free to bring photos of your yard, and plenty of questions! You will find a variety of perennials, including thornless blackberries, 'Gro-Low' Sumac, hydrangeas, native plants, Hostas, daylily varieties, phlox, daisies, aster, yarrow, Henry Eiler's sweet coneflower, allium, ground sedum, iris, and even some houseplants. Most plants are priced at \$10 or less. Please come shop and find some new additions for your own yard.

The funds raised help support projects like adding raised beds at county nursing homes, replenishing plants and mulch annually at the Macoupin County Courthouse, the native garden and the Victorian garden at the Historical Society, as well as providing potting soil for 10 planting containers at the county fairgrounds.



The Macoupin County Master Gardeners have been busy sprucing up the native garden and mulching at the Macoupin County Historical Society. Far Right, our new President, Ellen Lorentz, Charlie and Jeanette Baker and Carol Meyer shown in this photo.

Songwriters Meet



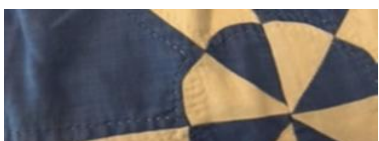
Songwriters and “wanna be songwriters” came from Macoupin County and beyond to the Macoupin County Historical Society Ruyle building April 16 for the first of three “Let us Hear Your Song” activities. The events were led by critically acclaimed songwriter, teaching artist and musician, Mr. Nick Davio.

The writers’ series was the second “Community Conversations 2025” program offered by Carlinville Winning Communities, a local non-profit. The programs are offered through grant funding from the Illinois Humanities organization, said Chad Strubbe, President of the organization and Manager of the local Ace Hardware store.

Guest artist, musician and recording artist Derrick Streibig and Davio presented one of their original works to inspire the beginners. Attendees worked in small groups sharing songs they’ve started to write or wanted feedback and assistance writing. One unexpected delight from the first evening was the new Carlinville Earth Day Song, composed on the spot by a small group of attendees.

The next Songwriters evenings were April 30 and May 7 at the Macoupin County Historical Society. The activities were free to the community.

Don't forget to check the Treasures Market at Spring Festival!



Museum Contacts:

Museum Office 217-854-2850

Genealogy 217-854-2850

Wednesdays 10:00—12:00

e-mail Mchs.museum@yahoo.com

Web page Mchssociety.org

Facebook www.facebook.com/MacoupinCountyHistoricalSociety

General Grant

(continued from page 4)

Upon Grant’s return from the Mexican War, he married Julia Dent in 1848. Grant’s wife’s family owned 20 slaves, and his father-in-law gifted the couple four them as a wedding gift, technically making Grant a slave owner.

“I used them on our farm, but I worked side-by-side with them, and I paid them,” Werline as Grant insisted, pointing out that slaves were never paid for their work. “When you hear people say I was a slave owner, that’s only partly true.”

Werline confirmed Grant and Lincoln did not cross paths until the war. While both men were in Springfield prior the firing on Fort Sumter, they were not in the city at the same time. By the time Grant arrived in the spring of 1861, Lincoln was already the sitting President in Washington.

Speaking as Grant, Werline minimized rumors that he was a “fall down drunk.” His reputation as an alcoholic began, he said, while he was stationed in California away from his young wife.

“They wouldn’t increase our pay even though the cost of living was three times higher,” he said. “Some of the officers decided to supplement our income by making alcohol.” Grant was discharged when he showed up for duty after having “drank a little too much of our profit.” Though Grant was a sometimes heavy drinker, Werline said the General’s reputation as a drunk was fueled by his enemies who wanted to hurt his reputation.

When rumors about his drinking reached Lincoln, the President sent a contingent of journalist “spies” to see if Grant was drinking to excess and determine whether or not he was running the army. They reported back that Grant was sober and completely in charge of his soldiers.



Macoupin County Historical Society Officers – 2025

Title	Name	Phone	Cell Phone	E-mail
President	Dan Hauter	217-854-9725	217-710-8056	dhauter45@gmail.com
Vice-President	Greg Brown		618-567-1512	gregb@fgmarchitects.com
Secretary	Libby Klocke	217-965-4563	217-965-4563	libby62690@gmail.com
Treasurer	Carol Link		217-825-5279	

Board Members

Name	Phone	Cell Phone	E-mail
Patty Ambrose		217-494-6087	Ptty-ambrose@yahoo.com
Roger Anderson		217-710-8867	Andersoncattle35@yahoo.com
Greg Brown		618-567-1512	gregb@fgmarchitects.com
Rodney Eichen		217-370-3692	
Brandy England		217-851-3402	Bmengland007@gmail.com
Libby Klocke		217-965-4563	libby62690@gmail.com
Dave McKee		217-710-0613	Mckeedavid1949@gmail.com
Mary Tinder		217-825-9699	mtinder@gmail.com

Committee Chairmen/Contact persons

Committee	Chairman/contact	Phone	Cell Phone	email
Brooms	Rodney Eichen		217-825-4282	
Curator	Janell Ramey		217-710-5989	janelleramey@yahoo.com
Food	Dave McKee		217-710-0613	Mckeedavid1949@gmail.com
Genealogy	Libby Knoche	217-965-4563	205-527-9636	libby62690@gmail.com
Gift Shop	Cheryl Gardner		217-825-9249	529gcgardner@gmail.com
Grounds	Jim Foster		217-851-5486	
House Maintenance	Paul Mihalek		217-556-2179	paul_mihalek@yahoo.com
Membership	Libby Knoche		205-527-9636	libby62690@gmail.com
Newsletter	Janell Ramey		217-710-5989	janelleramey@yahoo.com
Room Sitters	Janell Ramey		217-710-5989	janelleramey@yahoo.com
Sawmill	Paul Mihalek		217-556-2179	paul_mihalek@yahoo.com
Treasures Market	Mary Schmedeke		217-825-8887	mkschmedeke@gmail.com
Vendors	Patty Ambrose		217-494-6087	Ptty-ambrose@yahoo.com
Xmas Decorating	Kendra Mize	618-402-6620		

Spring Festival
May 24, 25
2025

Fall Festival
Sept. 20, 21

Museum Office and
Genealogy
217-854-2850



Spring Festival
Decorating Theme in
the Museum Is
Quilts

Macoupin County Historical Society
P. O. Box 432
Carlinville, IL 62626

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT #293

Return Service Requested



Macoupin County Historical Society

Membership Type \$25 Household ☐ \$300 Life ☐ Renew ☐ New ☐

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ - _____ e-mail _____

Amount Pd \$ _____ By ☐ Cash ☐ Check # _____ Date _____

Bring or mail to MCHS, PO Box 432, Carlinville IL 62626

Indicate areas where you would be interested in helping at the Society

- | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Food Service | <input type="checkbox"/> Accounting | <input type="checkbox"/> Christmas Show |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House Tours | <input type="checkbox"/> Housekeeping | <input type="checkbox"/> Building Maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogy | <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds Maintenance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> House Decorating | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity | <input type="checkbox"/> Recruiting/Membership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrate old time -methods. List _____ | | |

What are the best times for you to help _____

What is your area of historical interest? _____

Vendors!

Spring Festival—May 24, 25

Contracts on website:

Mchsociety.org

Call Patty Ambrose (217-494-6087)