

# HALLMARKS

Newsletter of The Marion County Historical Society

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## POTLUCK TO PRECEDE ANNUAL MEETING

In a departure from past practice, a potluck dinner will precede The Marion County Historical Society's annual business meeting on Thursday, December 5, in the Heritage Hall Auditorium. Members are asked to bring table service and a covered dish or dessert to share. Meat and beverage will be provided. The meal begins at 6:00 PM, and will be followed by Christmas carol singing led by Carol Robinson.

An abbreviated business meeting will begin at 7:30PM. MCHS President Don Alspach and Director Jane Rupp will report on MCHS activities in 2002. Officers and trustees will be elected. Oral committee reports will not be presented. Instead, all committee chairs must submit their written reports to the MCHS office by Monday, December 2, so that they can be distributed in booklet form at the annual meeting.

The Nominating Committee has submitted the following slate of officers and trustees for 2003:

President: Don Alspach

Vice President: Carol Robinson

Recording Secretary: Virginia Howard

Treasurer: Phil Fox

Corresponding Secretary: Trella Romine

Trustees (term expires December 31, 2005): Mike Perry, Helen Kaufman, Al Tozer, Gary Craft, and Bill Schertzer

Trustee of Heritage Preservation Endowment Fund (term expires December 31, 2005): Trella Romine



## THANK YOU

To our new and renewing Pride members

### *BENEFACTOR*

William Kay Davis Foundation

### *PATRON*

Donald & Deborah Alspach  
Baldauf Construction Co., Inc.  
The Marion Bank  
Scharer Insurance, Inc.

### *ADVOCATE*

Louis & Berniece Conkle  
Phil & Phyllis Fox  
Paul Habluetzel  
Kingston Residence of Marion  
Josephine Macpherson  
Tuscarora, Inc.

## MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS DUE

A membership renewal for was included in last month's issue of Hallmarks. To date, 106 members have paid next year's dues, which are due January 1, 2003.

Your support is needed to maintain the high quality exhibitions and programs presented by MCHS. Please take a moment to check your mailing label. The top line shows your membership level and "paid through" date. If you have not already done so, please send your 2003 dues payment to the MCHS office. As you renew, consider upgrading your membership to a higher level.

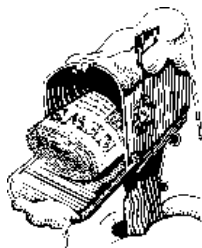
An MCHS membership is a unique gift for the history buffs that you know. To purchase a gift membership, just send the name and address of the recipient, along with your name and address and payment to MCHS. MCHS will send the new member an attractive gift card which includes the membership level and donor's name.

If you have questions regarding your membership status, contact the MCHS office.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

Don Alspach

We have had a successful and interesting year thanks to the efforts of our members, Board of Trustees, committee members, and our dedicated and talented Director, Jane Rupp. Some accomplishments I would like to mention are:



- A Blast from the Past, an educational program for Marion County youth, a success through the efforts of Jan Augenstein and the Education Committee.
- The Cabin Fever Cruise In at the Marion County Fairgrounds was a success through the efforts of Keith Kohler.
- Thanks to Norm Fogt and Richard Carey for the placement of the Harrison War Road marker in Waldo. Also, thanks to the many sponsors for their financial contributions.
- The restoration of the log cabin at the fairgrounds is now fully funded and work will begin soon.
- Thanks to Willis Thomas, Kensel Clutter, and Elaine Merchant for the interesting and informative presentations at our quarterly meetings.

One goal I wanted to attain this year was to increase our membership to broaden our base of interested persons and to encourage the continued growth of MCHS and Heritage Hall. We began such a program in August with a hard working committee of Don Ryan, Bill Schertzer, Norm Fogt, Richard Straub, Richard Carey, Virginia Howard, Jane Rupp, and myself. Our first step was Corporate Pride memberships. This phase is well under way and has already received some response. Phase two will be to contact individuals and families we think would be interested in our mission here at Heritage Hall and who would invest in a Pride membership in MCHS.

Finally, I would laud the visionaries who purchased Heritage Hall in 1989, renovated it, and gave us what we have today. Four of that group are active on our Board of Trustees at present, continuing the tradition. Those members are Trella Romine, Norm Fogt, Helen Kaufman, and Eula Rhoads. Thanks to them, our Board of Trustees, Director Jane Rupp, and all members who have worked to make a successful year.

### In Memoriam

We extend our sympathy to the family and friends of Don Simmons, who recently passed away.

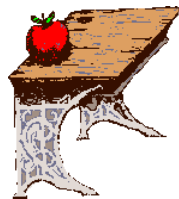
## VISIT OUR UPDATED WEB SITE!

Thanks to many hours of work by MCHS member David K. Miller, the Society's web site has a fresh new look – and a new location. When you point your browser to [www.historymarion.org](http://www.historymarion.org), you will find all the information that was available on the Society's original site, plus additional facts about MCHS sites, A Blast from the Past, and The Marion County Hall of Fame. Current press releases can also be found there, along with links to related Marion and Ohio sites.

More improvements to the site are planned, so you'll want to check back often. There's even an online version of *Hallmarks*!

## CAN YOU HELP?

MCHS members often research topics in local history for the benefit of the Society. At present, Willis Thomas is conducting research in order to create "An Index and Location of the Schools in Marion County," from the frontier era to the present. He is asking for assistance in identifying the following historic school districts: Big Island Township Subdistricts 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10; Green Camp Township Subdistricts 1, 3, 4, 5, and 6; Marion Township Subdistricts 5, 9, and 11; Prospect Township Subdistricts 1, 3, 5, and 6 (any with higher numbers?); Richland Township Subdistricts 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, and 8; Salt Rock Township Subdistricts with numbers higher than 3; Scott Township Subdistricts 6 and 7 (or higher); and Waldo Township Subdistricts 1 and 2 (or higher than 3).



If you can help, contact Mr. Thomas directly at 740/389-2962.

## CLUTTER, ROMINE, THOMAS RECOGNIZED BY OAHSM

by Trella Romine

The Marion County Historical Society received an Award of Achievement for publishing the *Map of the Sandusky Plains* at the annual meeting of the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums (OAHSM) held in Columbus on November 2. Kensel Clutter, Trella Romine, and Willis Thomas accepted the award at the noon luncheon where other historical societies and individuals from around the state were also recognized for exceptional contributions to local history.

In presenting the award, Patricia Smith, Awards Chairman for OAHSM, noted the uniqueness of the project, and the depth of the research that was necessary to create it. A copy of the map was contributed to the Silent Auction that was held at the annual meeting to benefit OAHSM.

## NOAH LEE'S EXCELLENT ADVENTURES

Noah Lee was born in Scott Township, Marion County, in 1833, the son of John C. and Louisa (Spurgeon) Lee. His biography could be the basis for a western movie! According to the 1883 *History of Marion County*:

*[Lee] lived with his parents, acquiring a common school education, spending four months in the fall of 1853 at a Quaker school in Delaware County. He supplemented this by teaching a three months' term in Indiana.*

*In the fall of 1855, he drove a team to Story County, Iowa, for Amon Hipsher. He continued in that State two and a half years. April 10, 1858, there being no railroads west of the Mississippi, he and William Osborn walked from Iowa to Allen County, Kan[sas], a distance of 450 miles; there he took up a Government claim, pre-empted the same, and assisted to lay out the town of Iola, the present county seat of Allen County. In the autumn of 1860, he returned to Ohio.*

[Lee was likely one of about sixty members of a company organized in January, 1859, to create a new town, located about 75 miles south of Topeka. The little town - Iola - began to grow, and was doing well until the effects of the 1860 drought depressed business and discouraged many citizens. It is interesting to note that, during this time, much of Kansas was embroiled in the turmoil between pro- and anti-slavery settlers. It appears, however, that this conflict did not greatly affect Allen County residents.]

*March 28, 1864, he set out for Montana Territory, and obtaining the company of W[illiam] H. Lee [his brother] and Jerome Sult at Valparaiso, Ind[iana], they went to Cedar County, Iowa, where they purchased four yoke of oxen (one yoke were cows), provisions, etc., etc. June 1 they started, reaching Virginia City [Montana Territory] after two and one-half months of tedious riding; mined here, washing gold, until late in the fall.*

[Noah Lee was part of the gold rush to Virginia City, a town which did not exist until after gold was discovered there on May 26, 1863. Don't confuse this Virginia City (Montana Territory), with the more famous Virginia City, Nevada. The Montana town - now a ghost town and historical site - is located about forty five miles northwest of Yellowstone National Park.]

*Then with eleven comrades he [Noah] built a flatboat and embarked upon the Yellowstone, homeward bound.*

[The 1883 *Marion County History* states that Noah's brother, William, remained in Montana, and was living on a ranch near Yellowstone National park in 1883.]

*The river was very low, making their journey very slow and wearisome. They were frequently obliged to step out into the floating slush and lift their craft from some hidden rock.*

*After thus running several days, the ice completely dammed the river, compelling them to abandon the boat. Taking such articles as they could carry, they walked to the mouth of that river in a few days, completely exhausted from the want of food. Seven of the company wintered at Fort Union [in what is now North Dakota], up the Missouri, but the remaining four, of which our subject was one, were determined to reach the States. Accordingly, an old skiff was secured, in which they traveled two days and nights, the ice finally compelling them to take to land again.*

*Reaching Fort Berhold [North Dakota], under the guidance of an Indian, they set out once more for the settlements. After wading many days through the snow, they went into camp near the Painted Woods country [North Dakota]. Just as they were well settled for the night, twenty-one Sioux Indian warriors surrounded them. All their loose clothing, provisions and the like were seized, and they were permitted to take their departure, but that same evening they came upon another band of Indians, who were friendly and sheltered them for the night. Three Indians being furnished by the latter to guide and protect them, they finally reached Fort Rice [South Dakota], half frozen. They then passed down the river to Sioux City [Iowa], where the party separated.*

Lee returned to Marion County. In 1867, he married Lizzie Reed. They were the parents of two children. He operated a mill in Caledonia and was a leading citizen of the town, serving on the school board and town council, and as Sunday School superintendent at the Universalist Church.

