

MAEYSTOWN VOLKSBLATT

Maeystown, Illinois

Maeystown Preservation Society

25th Anniversary Dinner

By now you should have received your invitation to the Society's 25th Anniversary Celebration on September 10. Reservations are due by September 1. Plans are underway to make this a special day. Hope to see you there.

Mini Silent Auction

As a fundraiser for the museum, the Society will have a Mini Silent Auction at the 25th Anniversary Celebration on September 10. We will have baskets and other items of interest available for bidding throughout the evening. Anyone who would like to donate a basket or other item for the silent auction is asked to call Marcia at 458-6660 or 935-2100, ext. 403, or Anita at 458-7463. Thank you in advance for any baskets or items that you would like to donate!

2005 Oktoberfest

It is hard to believe, but the Oktoberfest is fast approaching. This year Oktoberfest is October 9.

For those of you interested in the apple peeling and apple butter cooking, the dates have been set. Apple peeling will be Friday, September 23. Apple butter cooking will be Saturday, September 24.

Raffle Tickets

Enclosed with this mailing is a set of 10 raffle tickets for each member to sell or purchase. Please return the stubs

and your check in the envelope provided. Be sure to return the stubs and money by October 5 or bring them to the Country Store on the day of the Oktoberfest. Additional tickets will be available at the Old Rock Mill and at the Oktoberfest on October 9.

Brief History of the Society

Since it is our 25th Anniversary, it is imperative that we review some of the history of the Maeystown Preservation Society.

The concept to found the organization and eventually have an Oktoberfest was largely the idea of Julia (Asselmeier) Schultz, Meta Maeys, and Gloria (Maeys) Bundy. It was founded in May of 1980.

The reasons to found the organization are listed below and these became part of the organization's objectives in their charter for incorporation and still remain today.

1. To preserve the integrity and character of Maeystown.
2. Encourage preservation of existing structures.
3. Encourage preservation of local customs, traditions and values.
4. Promote community awareness of Maeystown's heritage.
5. Develop an oral history of Maeystown
6. Solicit support in historical endeavors.
7. Develop local history files.

The first officers of the society were Doug Clements, President, Deborah Walker, Treasurer, Joanne Goeddel, Secretary, and Lillian Pieper, Membership Chairman.

The Society was incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in 1980 with the legal assistance of attorney, Jay Huetsch. The Society continued as a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Illinois until 1994, at which time it applied to the Internal Revenue Service for federal tax exempt status. On January 6, 1995, the corporation was formally given tax exempt status under Section 501, (c), (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Over the years, there are several milestones that have made the society what it is today. It has been the foresight and guidance of many individuals to be able to reach those milestones.

They are:

1. Founding of the Society in 1980.
2. Creating an Oktoberfest in 1981.
3. Purchasing the Mill in 1983.
4. Achieving tax-exempt status in 1995.
5. Obtaining a State matching grant to restore the Mill and create a visitor's center and museum in 1995.
6. Creation of a Museum in 2004.

The Oktoberfest was created out of the Society and the first Oktoberfest was held on October 18, 1981. It was held at the Mill, the Goeddel property and the Ruiz property along the creek and by the bridge. Recollections of the first Oktoberfest follow in another article.

The Mill was purchased from Doug Clements in 1983 for \$16,000.00. This was a monumental step for the Society. Renovations and improvements were made over the years, but there were no funds to do the job as completely as the Society wanted.

In 1995, the Society was able to obtain a matching grant from the State of Illinois in the amount of \$19,757.49. This meant that the Society had to match this amount and that was done through funds on hand accumulated from the Oktoberfests and also through a solicitation of donations from our members. These projects were completed by mid 1996, making the Mill what it is today.

The last milestone was achieved in 2004 with the actual formation of a museum of Maeystown history and artifacts on the main floor of the Mill. Work is currently being done to expand the museum to the top floor of the Mill.

We congratulate all those who have made all of this possible within these 25 years and we are looking forward to the next 25. Hope to see you at the 25th Anniversary Celebration!

Past Presidents of the Society

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| May 1980 | Doug Clements |
| October 1981 | Helen Klein |
| November 1983 | Dennis Thomas |
| 1986 – 1987 | Jane Schmidt |
| 1988 - 1990 | Ron Upchurch |
| 1991 - 1993 | Dennis Knobloch |
| 1993 – 2001 | David Braswell |
| 2002 – 2004 | Claire Beck |
| 2004 | Dorothy Brandt |

Thanks to Joanne Goeddel, our Secretary, for providing information from our minutes and her personal recollections regarding the history of the Society and the first Oktoberfest.

First Oktoberfest

Since it is the 25th Anniversary of the Society, it is only right that we also talk about the first Oktoberfest, which has held on October 18, 1981. This year's Oktoberfest will be Society's 24th Oktoberfest.

We have researched information of this first event and have a treasure trove of information taken from a very well documented 1981 yearbook which was prepared by David Henerfauth, one of the original participants. David keeps good accounts of each year and the happenings of international news, national news, local news and family happenings. Most of the items we are relating came from that book and the rest from our minutes.

The first Oktoberfest was held on the Mill grounds (prior to our ownership), the Goedell property and the Ruiz property. Records show there were 31 crafters and 10 food stands. Crowd estimates were from hundreds to the low thousands.

David Henerfauth states from the August 1981 period, "The Preservation Society is knee deep in plans for the first Oktoberfest. How will it turn out? Will anybody come? We are lining up craft people who will make t-shirts, Gloria is writing a booklet, Julia and Emma want to cook apple butter, etc. If all goes well at the planning meetings there is sure to be somebody from the back of the room who will ask, 'What will we do if it rains?'"

This question proved to be prophetic. Another paragraph from David's booklet dated October 17, 1981 says: "It's October 17, the day before the Oktoberfest. So long anticipated, and it's raining! Members of the Society met at Julia's rock house with rain coats, boots, umbrellas and many ideas on how to prepare for the big day in the rain. Knowing that, 'The show must go on', we cooked apple butter close to Julia's shed and those who stirred found shelter in the shed. The ham and beans, cooked in an open kettle, was also prepared in the rain.

Doug Clements delayed making the turtle soup until 3:00 a.m. It was also made outdoors in an open kettle. So, we pulled it altogether in the cold, mud and wet conditions and came back early Sunday morning to find what the day had in store for us."

"Also on Saturday, as the rain continued, we watched the water in the creek creep higher and higher up the sides of the banks, finally lapping under the stringers of the foot bridge. Some of the men ran to get ropes to tie the bridge to some near-by trees so it wouldn't be dislodged and carried downstream. Doug (Clements) and his boys at the wood-working mill house had already made one bridge earlier for the Oktoberfest which did dislodge and go down stream with a similar flash flood. He and the boys made the bridges by hand using no electrical tools or mechanical devices in construction. He wanted a bridge built as they were built by early settlers, so to lose a second one would have been heart-breaking. But, it was saved and added so much to the tone of the festival and the spirit of the day. Below is a picture of the bridge when the flood was at its peak." (We are unable to reproduce the picture, but ask David to see it.)

"Dave and Barb made and sold t-shirts and buttons with Maeystown on them. Gloria sold quilt chances and her book and booklet. Marie helped with the pie stand. Mark and Willis cooked bratwurst and Kris and Cathy made little "ghosts" out of marshmallows and sold them at grandma's stand. More than 30 crafts people came to sell authentic items. There was no stand allowed that sold items of today's fancies or trinket type merchandise."

It was cold and wet and we shivered in the late afternoon. Those who lived nearby got their winter coats and "zipfel" caps. The sun goes down early in hilly Maeystown in the fall. The crowd, estimated at 3,000, was all gone by 5:00 p. m. After contacting the crafts people later on to engage them for 1982, all but one consented to come

back. He was the man who had the glass bee-hive and said that the bees he brought to the festival got cold and those in the hive at home wouldn't let them back in. So, he had a job to get all his bees to the same temperature again to restore order in the hive. Members of the Society felt the day was very successful in spite of the weather."

A clipping in David's book from an unnamed local paper says: "October 18: In spite of cold, damp and windy weather, as well as grounds muddied from the previous night's cloudburst, hundreds of enthusiastic people turned out for Maeystown's first Oktoberfest and Craft Fair held along Maeystown Creek at the stone bridge."

The booklet also contains a copy of the ad for the first festival.

Food was home-made coffee cake and bread, fruit custard pies, ham and beans, bratwurst and kraut, ice cream, soda, coffee, cider, sugar/molasses cookies, funnel cakes.

Attendees could also observe artists - apple butter and molasses cooking, herb displays, black smith, calligraphy, woodwork and carving, cooper, metal worker, tin smith, potters, and stained glass workers. There was also quilting, crocheting, hand work, leather work, needle point, wheat weaving, chair caning, log hewing and shingle making.

Thank you David for writing down these observations and memories.

Commemorative Cancellation Stamp Announced by Maeystown Post Office

We are pleased to announce that we have been notified by the Maeystown Post Office that they have been able to obtain a commemorative cancellation stamp in honor of the Society's 25th anniversary. We understand this will be available on September 10. We thank Jean Happel, Postmaster, for this special consideration.

Mill Hours

The mill is open for you to visit the museum and visitor center from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Saturdays and 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m. on Sundays. Brian Mormann and Heather Weber are the student attendants and will be happy to meet and greet you.

Village News

Camille Ann Hesterberg, daughter of Dr. Dean and Charlotte Hesterberg and granddaughter of Wip and Florence Hesterberg, traveled to Hungary in in August as an exchange student for her senior year in high school. She will be there until August of 2006. She was chosen through the Rotary Club of one of the local cities of North Carolina. She and her family live in Cary, North Carolina. Her sister, Karina Rose, who graduated this year, has also left home for Eastern North Carolina University. That leaves only 12 year old Nik in the Hesterberg household with his parents.

Calendar

| | |
|--------------|---|
| September 10 | 25 th Anniversary Celebration |
| September 24 | Apple Butter Cooking |
| October 9 | Oktoberfest 9:00-5:00 p.m. |
| December 4 | Old-Fashioned Christmas 11:00-5:00 p.m. |