

MAEYSTOWN VOLKSBLATT

Maeystown, Illinois

Maeystown Preservation Society

Maeystown Magic

John Rehling says that unlike most other antique shows, "at the Fruehlingsfest, people tend to arrive early, shop leisurely, and stay the entire day to soak up the Maeystown magic." Considering all the storms, heavy rainfall, and even a tornado this weekend, maybe there is something to that "Maeystown magic." The weather was exceptional and so was the crowd. Whether you came as a hardened collector or casual antique buff, there was something for everyone. Anything from a colossal string ball to a dentist's oak apothecary chest was available. Entering by the Mill you were greeted with a huge flowering display of annuals. By the end of the day the space was almost bare as were other garden vendors. Judging by the waiting lines, the food booths had the same success. Like the Oktoberfest, this show's reputation has become so well known that it too has a waiting list to get in. It was a perfect way to enjoy spring in Maeystown!

Anita Muertz

MPS Going Tech?

Maeystown Preservation Society will soon have a website! Buzz Asselmeier has graciously **donated** his talent and time to design and build a website most appropriate for our society. It includes our events, membership, Mill rental information, photos, map, and even current and past Volksblatt issues. It is user friendly, attractive and very informational. At this time we are waiting for our registered domain name: www.maeystownpreservationsociety.org. He plans to have it up by the next Volksblatt edition.

Anita Muertz

New Officers

At the January meeting officers for 2010 were elected. They are as follows:

President-----Dorothy Brandt
 Vice President-----Anita Muertz
 Secretary-----Nancy Uhl
 Treasurer-----Linda Green
 Curator-----Nancy Uhl
 Corresponding Secretary-----David Asselmeier
 Immediate Past President-----David Braswell

A familiar name is missing after some 30 years of service. That name is Joanne Goedel. Joanne has been the Secretary since the creation of the Society in 1980. Joanne feels she needs to pass the pen to someone else after all these years. Joanne will remain on the board. The new secretary is Nancy Uhl who has been our Museum Curator and active on the board for several years. We extend best wishes and congratulations to both Joanne and Nancy.

Joanne has written a very interesting article describing history of the society and the interesting events from its founding in 1980 to present.

Meeting Changes

There will be no monthly meeting of the Society in the months of June and July. Meetings will again resume on Tuesday, August 24 at 7:30 to begin preparation for the Oktoberfest.

Oktoberfests Remembered

Dreams became reality when Maeystown hosted its first Oktoberfest. That was way back when – 1981. The dreams were those of Gloria Maey Bundy and Julia Asselmeier Schulz, who often spoke of an autumn celebration to honor the way of life of local settlers. They envisioned black kettles over wood fires, spinning wheels, quilting, basket weaving, log-hewing, and down-to-earth country cooking, along with country music. It would be a pioneer celebration.

The Maeystown Preservation Society was born as a result of those dreams. In May 1980, the group was officially organized. By October 1981, the festival was "off and running." A local newspaper reported that the festival "would provide a look back into the history of the region in a setting that has changed very little since 1840. It will emphasize especially the contribution of the German immigrants to life on the Illinois frontier."

In the beginning there were fifteen crafters who paid no fees to the Society. All activity revolved around the rock mill, the former Julia Schulz house and the Ruiz property. Doug Clements was operating a furniture-making business out of the mill, and he contacted several fellow craftsmen to demonstrate their skills. One impressive craftsperson made shingles and another hewed logs.

A foot bridge was constructed connecting the mill side of the creek with the Ruiz property. The bridge was a popular feature of the festival, but because of safety precautions, it had to be dismantled the day following Oktoberfest. This practice was repeated yearly for a long, long time until the Ruiz property was no longer needed. The bridge building crew had completed this project so often that it was a "cut and dried" procedure. Bud Knoke brought his tractor, John

Goeddel and Fred Pieper brought hammers and nails, and a real piece of bridge-building art was produced. Usually, straw was put down to make the pathway smoother. Many local men offered a helping hand.

Once, during a heavy Saturday rainfall, the creek rose to frightening levels. With the bridge all ready for Sunday's foot traffic, it was feared the bridge would float down the creek. It would most certainly hit the Virgil Brandt bridge down stream and destroy it. Members frantically tied heavy ropes to the day-old bridge and hung on tightly until the flood danger passed.

When finally the bridge building was discontinued, many people expressed disappointment.

That first Oktoberfest attracted so many visitors that the planning committee was in disbelief. From early morning until late afternoon, a continuous line of cars crossed the rock bridge. People searched for parking spaces, and having finally found them, walked great distances to soak-up the creek-side atmosphere, purchase local crafts, and enjoy the ethnic foods. Wood fires scented the air and Mother Nature provided bearable weather. Apple butter sales were brisk, home-baked cookies and pies disappeared quickly. Turtle soup and ham and beans straight from the black kettles were a huge hit. A second trip to Waterloo for more bratwurst to be grilled was necessary early in the day.

At the end of the day, that first Oktoberfest there was one comment that everyone could agree on – "What a Day!" What a success!

Throughout the years plans followed the original fest, but with added numbers of everything – more crafts, more food, more music.

Fall flowers, from local dealers, were sold out early in the day. Antique dealers reported good sales.

Crowds at times were estimated to be 8,000 people. Of course, not all 8,000 would be at the fest at the same time. Early shoppers came to have first choice on crafts and foods. Crowds came and went, people searched for

parking spaces, children played in the creek. Contents of the black kettles disappeared early in the day.

For the committees involved, there has always been a great satisfaction when at the end of the day we can reflect and say, "What a success!" There have been no major mishaps, and never have we been forced to cancel.

Throughout the years, local newspapers have published glowing reports, providing much publicity for our Oktoberfests.

Jim Fox of Belleville wrote in 1986 that visiting Maeystown was a step back into time. Al Foster of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat glowingly described his visit to Maeystown.

A newsletter sent to members in December 1987 reported the good news that Oktoberfest '87 netted enough money to make the last payment on the mill. It had been purchased in 1983 from Doug Clements.

In 1988, a Waterloo newspaper reported that "the day of Oktoberfest was cloudy and cool – ideal weather for the annual fest. Traffic on Mill Street was about like the Poplar Street Bridge on Friday at 5:00 p.m."

By 1989, craftspeople had grown to 65. Crowds continued to grow and the demand for more portable restrooms and picnic tables was heard. And the yearly, temporary foot-bridge spanning the creek was still being constructed by the same work crew.

Crafts spaces in 1991 and 1992 grew to 81. The area was packed to capacity!

Over 9,000 people attended 1995's event.

In 2001, the unanimous decision was to no longer cross the creek to the Ruiz property. Instead, the area behind the Georgia Mae Jobb home (by then Braswell property) was used. The territory now covered land from the rock bridge south, past the Braswell property. Bridge builders sighed with relief, but many Oktoberfest-goers were disappointed to be able no longer to cross the creek.

One memorable occasion marks Oktoberfest '02. Early in the day, a

trucker was moving heavy equipment from Texas to somewhere in our area. Because automobiles were parked all along the main road, on both sides, the trucker could not make the turn into town. He could not move forward or backward. The bridge was jammed with huge yellow equipment. This all took place around 9:30 a.m. when traffic into town was heavy. To solve the problem, local men physically lifted cars and moved them far enough out of the way so the trucker could move on. The trucker's comment was – "We didn't know down in Texas that this was Oktoberfest day. We hadn't heard about it."

Apple butter has always been a major feature of Oktoberfest. From the beginning, when Julia and Emma Pape arranged to cook one kettle, quantities have multiplied. Today there are always six or seven kettles cooking at the same time. The general plan is to purchase 22 bushels of apples. Results vary, but we have produced 289 quarts of the bubbly specialty on one day.

As an added attraction for our 25th anniversary, David Braswell arranged for a 12-person harmonica and accordion band to entertain us. The group was from Solingen, Germany, and was also performing in Belleville. Our local musicians have included Rich Mueller of Columbia, Pearl Hirsch, Mardy Eisloeffel, and a Wayne Kohlmeier family band. Many times as the musicians strolled the grounds, visitors join in the try to remember long-past music lessons.

Although many of our dreamers are no long with us – Gloria, Julia, Meta Maeys, Evelyn Pfeiffer, Fred and Lillian Pieper, Emma Pape – the dream lives on. Family members have taken over and other locals have joined forces to carry on the tradition.

In October 2010 we will celebrate Oktoberfest XXX – that's 30 years! Who would ever have believed that the small gathering in 1981 would survive and grow into this? (I think Gloria and Julia might have foreseen this and would not be a bit surprised!)

Joanne Schulz Goeddel

Canning Jars

The Society thanks everyone for all the donations of jars for apple butter. This really helps us out by not having to purchase so many jars. They are expensive. We do, however, have a substantial supply of QUART jars on hand - enough to last a few years. We do, however, still need PINT jars and HALF PINT jars. If you have some, contact one of the officers or you can call the Mill Museum at 618-458-6464 and leave a message. We will contact you.

Coming Attractions

If you have been to the Mill/Museum at the recent Fruehlingsfest or some other time, you may have noticed we have been doing some much-needed painting and caulking of windows and doors, painting the fence and other general maintenance. The old WPA outhouse back by the creek also has a new coat of paint!

Also, in this issue you will notice that we have a society website available in August. More details will be available with the next issue of the Volksblatt.

We have also been chosen by the Illinois State Museum to participate with them along with nine other "rural" museums in Illinois to be part of a project that will involve the history of agriculture in Illinois and rural life in Illinois. This project will be sponsored by a grant from a national library association. If it is granted, we will receive equipment and training to interview, record and video local people involved with agriculture and rural life in Illinois, past history, and present. Some of our existing files and items would be photographed, digitized and made available through websites and links to other museums and schools. This is an awesome and exciting program, BUT it is subject to the award grant being made to the

Illinois State Museum. We should know the outcome by the end of October.

There are also several other projects in the planning stages that will make significant enhancements and improvements to the Mill/Museum.

These are exciting times for the Society. None of this would be possible without the wonderful donations and support of our members over the last 30 years. We sincerely thank you.

PLEASE WATCH FOR SOME OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE AUGUST VOLKSBLATT.

David Asselmeier

Recent Donations of Items

We have recently received the following items from individuals to be placed in our museum. Space limits us to specifically mention each item, but please be assured we have documented all that was donated to us.

- Mr. and Mrs. Robert Zeiting—Framed Original 1856 Plat of the Village of Maysville (Maeystown)
- Mr. Conrad Charles Stamm—Antique cooper's tools and antique wooden tool box
- Mary Hummert—Antique metal egg basket and antique wooden chicken coop, 1886 German Bible, numerous old 19th century clothing items for infants, men and women, antique glass corner display case, and fainting couch
- Mr. Al Bertram—Wedding dress of Beulah Pfeiffer's grandmother's wedding dress, along with a wedding photo of the dress, numerous old photos of the Pfeiffer family, old blacksmith items, old guns, and a geography book from Maeystown High School
- Jane Ralph—Adolph Wippermann's tailor's table

St. John Church

As you know, St. John Church of Maeystown is celebrating its 150th Anniversary. There are many events scheduled through November 2010. Please see below.

May 23	Guest Preacher Dr. Robert Baur
June 13	Confirmation Reunion Years 1953 -1968
July 11	Special music group "Sheltered Reality"
July 18	Guest Speakers Rev. Susanna DeBenedetto Rev. Paul Thompson
August 15	Confirmation Reunion Years 1969- 1993
August 29	Guest Preacher Rev. Bill Kapp
September 12	Anniversary Celebration Picnic
September 26	Combined Adult Choir Festival "A Festival of Praise"
October 17	Confirmation Reunion Years 1994-2009
November 14	Guest Preacher Rev. Ivan Horn
November 28	Final Events. Conference Minister Rev. Sheldon Culver Evening Live Nativity Christmas Program

Contact the church or a church member for times.

From the Files of Gloria Bundy

Going through Gloria's files you always find something interesting and it is usually something you knew, but never knew about the specifics.

Tondre Spring:

There is a spring coming out of the hills and limestone outcropping on the little farm which Bundys own which borders Stan Elliott's (now Coats) and David Asselmeier's land. At one time there was a family named Tondre living in a house near the spring and stream.

My father Ed Maey, spoke of Eugene Tondre living there. They walked to Posten School together and were good friends. John Powderly was their teacher. The Posten School Register #2 inscribes Eugene's name there when he was 12 years old. The school register has my father listed as "Eddie" Maey. The register is from school year 1896-1897 and Ed would have been 12 years old.

There is a huge oak tree growing by Tondre's Spring which our family has always guarded against cutting it down, the age of course, not known. We often walked up the creek to Tondre's Spring and found that at some time there were bricks laid to make the rock layers level. We think that this was not work done by the "Creator", but was done by some local men who were boot-leggers during depression days.
Gloria Bundy

Editor's Note:

The reason this file caught my attention is that our family (Krone) farm was adjacent to this land and I used to spend some weeks at my grandmother's house in the summers. This would have been in the late 1940 and early 1950's. I had never heard of Tondre's Spring. I was usually in the company of my older cousin Charles Pape, and being boys at that time we were in places where we should not have been. Charles took me to the spring which really came out of a cave and ran down to the creek. Charles pointed out the brick work there and both of us wondered why there were bricks way out there. That fact stuck with me over the years. Now some 60 plus years later I found out that the spring had a name, that there was a house there and maybe a reason for the bricks.
David Asselmeier

Old News

Following are excerpts of the Maeystown News in the Waterloo Times dated February 5, 1915.

- Jacob Gilbert, our street and alley commissioner visited St. Louis this past week.
- Adam Hertlein was the lucky winner of the quilt at Charles Meister's Sunday night.
- Ed Maey was in Waterloo Monday to attend the director's meeting of State Bank
- We are informed that the wedding bell will be ringing Feb. 11, 1915 in our village. How about it, Albert?
- Louis Zimmer still does a lot of all kinds of insurance business. The companies he represents are the best in the world.
- Louis Krone, the merchant, distributed a liberal supply of blotters to the pupils of Posten School. Thanks for this needed article.
- Now and not next summer that great interest is taken in good roads. Miles and miles of good roads are made and remade easily.
- Herman Pape and Henry Feldmeier were Waterloo and Belleville business callers last week. Henry bought a team of mules from Bauer Bros.
- August Diehl has received two new pianos which he has for sale. One of them is a player piano, it being the first in this part of the country.
- Max Krone, Arnold Hoffmann, Wm. Schneider, Christian Lehmann, and August and Arthur Hoffmann of the Maeystown Parochial School visited Posten School Tuesday. (Ed. Note-St. John Church School)
- Rev. Paul Schultz informs us

that the choirs of St. John Evangelical Church will give a concert in Maey's Hall in the near future. A splendid program is being prepared.

- The Maeystown Commercial Club held its regular monthly meeting Monday evening. The club has rented Pape's Hall for the year 1915 and meetings will be held there after this.
- The concert given by the Maeystown Brass Band on Sunday evening Jan. 23, 1915 in Maey's Hall was a success in all ways. August Diehl, director of the band, deserves much credit for the success of same. Everyone played his part splendidly.

*Taken from rootsweb, ancestry.com on Message Boards.

David Asselmeier

Calendar

May 28 & 29	Civic Association Homecoming 5:00 p.m. – close Parade – 6:00 – p.m. Saturday
June 5 & 6	40 th Annual Rendezvous at Fort de Chartres in Praire du Rocher
August 7	Trash & Treasures Village Yard Sale 8:00-12:00 noon
September 24	Apple Peeling 8:00-1:00 p.m.
September 25	Apple Stirring 6:00-3:00 p.m.
October 10	Oktoberfest 9:00-4:00 p.m.
December 5	Old-Fashioned German Christmas