

MAEYSTOWN VOLKSBLATT

Maeystown, Illinois

Maeystown Preservation Society

www.maeystownpreservationsociety.org

Annual Fruehlingsfest Antique and Garden Show

The annual Fruehlingsfest was held on Sunday, May 1. Just as the press release states "The Fruehlingsfest Antique and Garden Show is held rain or shine." This year we had both, but luckily the shine came before the rain. There was plenty of time to find that antique item, anywhere from the vintage carnival clown knock-downs to an old hog feeder used as a drink cooler. If you were looking for that special plant like an heirloom tomato, a huge flowering annual flower basket or miniature mouse ear hostas you were in luck. The varieties of food provided so many choices...potato pancakes, turkey drumsticks, German potato salad, brats, homemade strawberry shortcake and many more. Though the weather was not exceptional, the people were. The Fruehlingsfest is always a "very entertaining day in a beautiful setting."

I still believe there might be something to that "Maeystown Magic."

Anita Muertz

Annual Maeystown Spring Art Show

The Annual Spring Art show was held on March 19-20, 2011, and was sponsored by Historic Maeystown.

The works of two local artists were featured at the ballroom of the Corner George Inn and also at the Society's Mill and Museum. The featured artists were Barbara A. Schreiber and Faith E. Mueller, both of Waterloo. One of the artists, Faith Mueller, featured quick drawn portraits on site for a nominal fee.

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 23 at 7:30 at the mill to begin preparation for the Oktoberfest.

Stage Backdrop Discovered

During the cleanup and preparation at St. John Church for the 150th anniversary one of the areas that was cleaned was the storage area under the stage in the Fellowship Hall. Back under the stage David Henerfauth discovered something that appeared to be a large rolled up curtain. The item was removed and unrolled. It was discovered that it was an advertising backdrop that was used as the background on the stage.

The backdrop is in excellent shape. It is estimated to be from about 1923. It provides a wonderful history of Maeystown businesses at the time. Some Waterloo businesses are also on it. In addition to church functions, the fellowship hall was used for dances, showing of movies and other events.

We cannot reproduce the backdrop in this paper, but if you will go to our website at maeystownpreservation.society.org and click on pictures you can view the backdrop.

David Asselmeier

New Life Member

Dennis Dvorachek of Belleville, Illinois, has recently become a Life Member of the Society. Welcome Dennis.

Blacksmith Shops in Maeystown

From the Files of Gloria Bundy

At one time blacksmith shops were an important part of life. Most items made of metal came from the blacksmith shops that made everything from nails to tools, horseshoes, wagon wheels (wood with iron bands on the rims) utensils and anything made of metal. Horseshoeing was also a function of the blacksmith. It is interesting to note that as the horse and wagon became obsolete, the natural migration of the blacksmith shop seemed to migrate toward auto repair as part of their function.

This migration can be noted in one of the advertisements shown on the stage backdrop (see other article) where there is a 1923 advertisement from John Meister advertising Auto Repair, Horseshoeing and General Blacksmithing.

The first blacksmith shop in Maeystown was started by John Peter Bickelhaupt. In 1861, Bickelhaupt built a stone house near the corner of Main and Mill which is now owned by David Braswell and used as a Bed and Breakfast. Bickelhaupt had a blacksmith shop at the rear of the house. He later built a shop across Main Street which was next door to the tavern on the corner. The large two story shop was torn down to make a parking lot for Hoeffft's Village Inn. The date it was torn down is not known.

Bickelhaupt operated in Maeystown for about 10 years and then moved on to Monroe City. He sold the shop to his nephew apprentice George Hoffmann. George Hoffmann moved into Bickelhaupt's stone home. This George Hoffmann was one of the four George Hoffmanns who lived on Mill Street and created great confusion for

the Post Office. Each of the Hoffmanns became known by a “nickname” to separate them. To further identify himself this George Hoffmann attached a “Junior” to his name, even though his father’s name was Johann Phillip.

Jacob Hess operated a blacksmith shop in Maeystown in partnership with Ira Beatte. Location of the shop and dates is not known. It was probably the Bickelhaupt shop.

A 1903 “Maeystown News Column” from the Waterloo paper noted that a St. Louis man, Hermann Pradler, was looking at the blacksmith shop vacated by Jacob Hess. Pradler apparently stayed until the beginning of World War I and then went back to St. Louis

The next blacksmith shop was run by Ben Heitner who ran a shop from 1927 until 1942, location unknown, but again probably the Bickelhaupt Shop. Heitner was known for his ability to make oak wood bobsleds that ran on forged iron rails. The rails made his sleds really go fast down the Maeystown hills. John Meister also made bobsleds. In our museum storage we do have a steering wheel shaft and the iron frame from a bobsled. They were recovered several years ago from behind Hoefft’s Village Inn. We do not know if it was made by Heitner or Meister.

The last blacksmith shop was run by Louis Schilling. The Schillings lived in a house by the creek just adjacent to the bridge. A blacksmith shop was built with lumber from a local sawmill by Louis Schilling and he operated it as a blacksmith shop. Louis Schilling was a Registered Horseshoer for the State of Illinois. Our archives from Gloria have the original card issued to Schilling in 1925. (A copy is shown at the bottom of this article.)

The shop sat idle after Schilling retired. Shortly after World War II a Navy buddy of Guy Bundy (Gloria’s husband), Delferd Jefferies moved to Maeystown with his wife and son to re-open the shop that Guy had told him about. The family didn’t stay long and moved back to Hale, Missouri.

The building sat vacant for several years and was torn down in about 2000.

David Asselmeier



Mill Renovations

It has been over 16 years since the Society has done any major repairs and renovations on the mill and museum property. We are pleased to announce that over the past several months we have and or making some much needed repairs, maintenance and renovations to the property. When you own a property that is over 150 years old there is always something to be done to maintain the property, not to mention improving it. Also, we have to be careful that what we do is in keeping with the historical significance of the property and maintaining its period look.

This is just a brief list of things that have been done:

- Fence has been painted.
- A new life-sized cut-out of Jacob Maeys greets you at the inside front entrance and gives a short history of Maeys and Maeystown.
- All windows have had glass repaired, glazed and painted, inside and out.
- All of the interior plaster walls on the museum level have been patched and repainted, along with the wood.
- An additional counter top has been added in the lower level to add more workspace and jar storage for apple butter preparation.

- Fascia boards outside along the roof lines (front and back) have been replaced and painted.
- Holes and cracks in the eaves, soffits and exposed rafters have been sealed.
- Eaves and exposed rafters have been primed and painted.
- Spouting and downspouts have been repaired and reworked to stop water leakage.
- Several drainage and leakage problems have been resolved.
- Chimney has been repaired and tuck-pointed.
- Tin roof has been patched, cleaned and repainted.
- Bathrooms have been repainted and new traditional fixtures have replaced old ones.
- On the upper third floor the ceiling has been painted and other repairs made as we prepare to expand the museum to this floor.
- The front of the mill will have a new look. We have had problems with uneven levels and surfaces at the front. We are in the process of extending the sidewalk, building a new low stone wall to enable us to level the ground and lay a level flagstone surface to the left side of the door. This area will also have a natural stone bench and a new sign showing the historical significance of Maeystown and the museum along with some traditional green landscaping.

All of this has or will be done in a proper manner to maintain the historical integrity of the property. These items have been long in coming and were things that needed to be done. None of this would have been possible without the support and contributions of our valued members and supporters. We thank you.

Give us a couple of weeks and stop by on a Saturday or Sunday to look it over. The upper level (third floor) museum expansion is next on our list.

David Asselmeier

Visitation was at Quernheim Funeral Home and interment was at St. John Cemetery, Maestown.

David Asselmeier

Death

Florence Hesterberg

Florence Hesterberg (nee Hoffmann), passed away on February 23, 2011. She was born on September 3, 1928 daughter of the late Henry A. and Alma P. Hoffmann (nee Krone).

Florence was born near Maestown and lived there all of her life. In addition to many other memberships, volunteering and other activities, Florence was a member of the Maestown Preservation Society.

Florence knew all there was to know about Maestown and its people, customs and history. She was an invaluable source of information for me and for other members of the society. If we had a question, we knew we could always ask Florence. She usually knew the answer. She also provided a valuable service with her various articles and stories that were printed in the Volksblatt. Her last article "The Star on the Hill" appeared in our February 11, 2011 issue. She had a true flair for writing and recording history.

Florence was also the source of many of the old pictures of Maestown that were enlarged and are displayed in the mill museum. The Society and I will truly miss her.

In addition to her husband of 61 years, Wilbert (Whip) Hesterberg she is survived by her children Shirley (Allen) Stafford, David (Lauren) Hesterberg, Kathleen (Miguel) Engbring, Dean (Charlotte) Hesterberg and Lynn (Randy) Hicks and 17 grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by a granddaughter Jamie Lynn Hesterberg and brother Louis Hoffmann, brothers-in-law and sisters-in-law.

Calendar

May 27 & 28	Civic Association Homecoming 5:00p.m.-Close
August 6	Trash and Treasures Village Yard Sale
October 9	Oktoberfest 9:00-4:00 p.m.
December 4	Old-Fashioned German Christmas 11:00-5:00 p.m.