

Auglaize County
Historical Society

Auglaize County Historical Society

2006 Newsletter

FOR JANUARY - FEBRUARY - MARCH

Visit Our Web Site www.auglaizecountyhistory.org

Editor, George Nearingder



The Daniel Mooney Museum
223 S. Main Street
St. Marys, Ohio

Greetings from the President,

Highlights of the 2006 upcoming events

On April 1st the **Wapakoneta Local History Museum** will be one of the stops for the Upper Floor Tour planned by the **Downtown Wapakoneta Partnership** organization. Watch the newspapers for a listing of the downtown buildings that will have the upper floors open for viewing or contact **Pam Doepker at Mike's Appliances**. This will be a wonderful opportunity



The Gary Log House
Auglaize County Fairgrounds
Wapakoneta, Ohio

On Sunday, April 2nd, both the **Mooney Museum** and the **Wapakoneta Museum** will be opening for the 2006 season. Both Museum sites will be open from 1 to 4 the first and third Sundays of the upcoming months except when holidays fall on those weekends. Watch the **ACHS Newsletters** and our local papers for adjustments. Remember you can call and make appointments for tours when you have reunions, out of town guests, or club and organizational meetings when you would like to view the museums. We just need advanced notice to line up guides.



The Wapakoneta
Local History Museum
206 W. Main Street
Wapakoneta, Ohio

April 6th will be our first membership meeting of the year. It will be held at **The Famous Old Time Music Co.**, near **St. Johns, Ohio**, in the old **United Local School Building**, beginning at 7 p.m. **Kitty and Vernon McIntyre** will be explaining and demonstrating the history of string instruments. If you have an old string instrument that you would like to know about, bring it along and they will talk with you about it and give a verbal appraisal. It should be an interesting and entertaining event.



Shineborn Church
State Route 219 - East N. Knoxville

Last year we opened the **Gary Log House** during the **Buckeye Farm Antique Show** during **Memorial Day** Weekend at their request and we will be open again for the 2006 show coming up May 26th, 27th, and 28th. Members willing to host the cabin a few hours contact me at **419-738-6975**. Numerous visitors were through last year and the Show staff has lined up some exhibits to highlight the cabin again this year. **The Buckeye Farmers** work hard putting on this quality event and I hope you'll all gather your family together and take advantage of this living history event.

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Those of you who have computers, check out our web site at: www.auglaizecountyhistory.org Our programs, calendar of events, etc continue to be updated on the web site as well as exhibits within the museums. Check it out!!!!

Our exhibit at the **Gary Log House** during fair week this year will be about the **Breweries, Bars, and Restaurants** around the county. If you have pictures and memorabilia that we could copy or use please contact one of the trustees so we can make notes, copies etc. and be ready with our exhibits.

The **Board** has moved the **ACHS** to the next level by taking the step to advertise for some administrative help. We sought help on this decision from the **Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums** and the **Ohio Historical Society**. We found that forty years is a long time for an organization to continue as we have with properties to maintain, exhibits to build and programming to research, with only volunteers. We advertised for a part time position, approximately 20 hrs. a week and for someone who had a good working knowledge of **Auglaize County History**, grant writing expertise, fund raising abilities, and possible background in membership drives etc. We received eleven applications and a committee has been interviewing. We hope we will be able to make an announcement in the near future as to who will be working with us to make the **Auglaize County Historical Society** an even greater organization.

As I write this today I've just come from saying goodbye to a dear friend and fellow worker in the **Auglaize County Historical Society, Katy Gilbert**. You know through the forty years of this organization we've been blessed with people who have been real crown Jewels in the **ACHS. Katy Gilbert** was one of those crown jewels. **Katy's** love for people and history showed in her work as she recorded it through her newspaper articles, her **Veterans book** and her dedication to the historical societies of **Auglaize County**. Thanks Katy, you will be sorely missed.

Looking forward to seeing you at the upcoming events and wishing you a beautiful spring.

Karen Dietz, President

Officers of the Auglaize County Historical Society

President: Karen Dietz, Vice President: George Neargarder, Treasurer: Jim Heinrich, Secretary: Julie McCullough Trustees: Ruth Eshleman, Betty Bubb, Todd Spieles, Dale Altstaetter, Irene Kepler, Jim McCullough, Barb Harrod.

J O I N N O W	I would like to become a member of the Auglaize County Historical Society. Enclosed is \$ ___ for membership in the category indicated.
	___ FAMILY \$25 ___ ADULT \$15 STUDENT \$5 ___ \$12 SENIOR ___ SENIOR FAMILY \$20 ___ SINGLE LIFE \$250.
	NAME _____ TEL. _____
	ADDRESS _____
	CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____
	Make checks payable to: Auglaize County Historical Society and send it to our Membership Chairperson, Anna Mae Saum, 131 Bayshore Dr., St Marys, Ohio 45885. Memberships are tax deductible to the extent allowed by the law. For additional information, please call 419-394-5243 OR 419- 738-6975.

Come to Auglaize County Historical Society Meeting Thursday, April 6, 2006



Kitty And Vernon McIntyre from the Old Time Music Company will be explaining and demonstrating the history of string instrument.

If you have an old string instrument that you would like to know about, bring it along and they will talk with you about it and give a verbal appraisal. It should be an interesting and entertaining event.

The History of The Famous Old Time Music Company

The Famous Old Time Music Company was established in 1972 by Harry Sparks and Mack Smith, two college boys who had been caught up in the surge of interest in bluegrass and folk music brought on by the catchy sounds of the theme music from the TV show 'The Beverly Hillbillies' and the two hit movies 'Deliverance' and 'Bonnie and Clyde'. Initially the store was housed in a long, narrow building which had been a Graeter's Ice Cream Shop. In fact, some of the display cases still in use at the store today were originally from the Ice Cream Shop. The store had a limited selection of merchandise and a small repair facility, but a booming interest in jamming and playing bluegrass music.

Ownership of the store transferred to bluegrass bassist Rich Hart in the late 1970s. Famous Old Time Music ended this era of its development with dealership privileges from Martin Guitar Company, Gibson Company, Gold Star Banjo Company, and assorted string, book, and accessory suppliers. There was also a very active local Cincinnati following who traded at the store and came regularly to enjoy jam sessions and socializing with picking pals.

In 1984, Rich decided to change careers and advertised Famous Old Time Music Company for sale. Cincinnati's own bluegrass legend, Vernon McIntyre, saw this as the fulfillment of a longtime dream. Having been active as a consultant during the start up phase of the store and having traded and jammed at the store throughout its history, Vernon was intimately familiar with the merchandise, musicians, and fans of the music. His reputation as a professional musician and teacher prepared him well for the role of leader of this enterprise.

Vernon, his wife to be, Kitty, and her brother Andy Schaeffer became partners in the store in 1984. The Famous Old Time Music Company has now grown into two stores, one in a 5000 square foot facility in Cincinnati, Ohio purchased in 1991 and the second in purchased in 2001, a 20,000 square foot former St. John's Union Local School building, located at 20322 State Route 33, east of Wapakoneta, Ohio. All through the years and the growth of the business, Famous Old Time Music Company has remained a Mecca for the bluegrass enthusiast with an amazing selection of vintage & new instruments, friendly jam sessions, and down home atmosphere.

Dawn Arnold keeps the Cincinnati store running smoothly; Andrea Williams oversees the St. John's store; Vernon and Kitty split their time between the two locations.

Wapakoneta Store Hours Sunday, Monday, Tuesday by appointment only

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday noon to 6 pm Saturday 10am-4pm



Katy Gilbert Died.

Kathryn Ann "**Katy**" Gilbert, 67, 431 Arlington Sreet in St. Marys, died Monday, February 27, 2006 at **St. Rita's Medical Center** in Lima

She was born March 12, 1938, near Minster, a daughter of **Richardt and Medella (Egbert) Berning** and they preceded her in death.

She is survived by two daughters, **Lori Lynn (Marcus) Petitjean**, Russia, OH, **Pamela (Chris) Marx**, Brookville, OH. Three Sons, **Eric**, Ft. Loramie, **Dane**, Dayton, and **Dereck**, St. Marys. A sister **Sandra (Jim) Berning**, New Bremen, and **many friends and acquaintances**.

She was preceded in death by a daughter, **Alice "Suzy" Zimmer**, and an infant sister **Sharon Berning**. She was a member of **Holy Rosary Church** and Member and Trustee of the **Auglaize County Historical Society** and also a member of **New Bremen , Minster, and New Knoxville Historical Societies**.

A **Mass of Christian Burial** was on March 4 at **Holy Rosary Church** with **Rev. Leo Hoying** officiating. Buried was in the **German Protestant Cemetery** in New Bremen

Part of Katy's Remembered news story from the Evening Leader 3-2-2006

Kathryn Ann "Katy" Gilbert, was a lover of history and of life. She was born in **Minster**, went to school in **Kettlersville** and graduated from **New Bremen High School**. She then attended college in Dayton taking business and real estate classes at **Miami-Jacobs Business College** and **Wright State University**,

She married and had six children, **Lori Lynn, Eric, Pamela, Dane, Derek and Suzy**, For a while, **Lori Petitjean** recalled, her mother sold real estate. She was good at that because she always enjoyed people. **Gilbert** returned to St. Marys in 1948 with **Erick, Derek, Dane and Pam**, her four youngest children.

There, she reconnected with her roots. "She loved the communities around here," said her son, **Derek**, who had offered a home to his mother for the past few years.

Although a talented writer with an interest in history, **Gilbert** had rarely written on the topic until she returned to **Auglaize County** and found work as a job consultant at **Goodwill Industries**.

George Nearing was president of the **Auglaize Co. Historical Society**. He heard that **Katy** was interested in history and enlisted her to volunteer to write in their newsletter.

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She jumped at the chance and soon became the editor," he said. Soon, **Gilbert's** knowledge and writing talent attracted the attention of local editors. She wrote for **The Evening Leader, The Community Post and The Daily Standard.**

"She always gave 110 percent," **Tom Wehrhahn**, managing editor of **The Evening Leader**, said. "She started full-time at The Leader shortly before I did, so we learned a lot together. Few people were as kind or as generous as she was. If anyone had a heart of gold, it was **Katy.**"

Neargarder said that **Gilbert** "She enjoyed writing and interviewing people. She soon was writing about the one-room schools in **Auglaize County** and presenting programs to clubs throughout the county," .

On Dec. 7, 2003, **Gilbert** published a compilation of **Auglaize County World War II Veterans'** stories, "**Memoirs of World War II.**" "She was proud of those World War II veterans stories," **Derek Gilbert** said. **Myron Fledderjohann**, vice president of the **New Knoxville Historical Society**, of which **Katy** was a member, worked with **Gilbert** when she was researching the book.

"She was very sincere and gave of herself," he remembered. "She was a person who had a sincere interest in history and wanted to share the information that she secured with the public. And, of course, the (history of local) veterans was one of her favorite topics."

Gilbert's children, although they recognize their mother's great interest in history and **Auglaize County**, saw a different side of her. Her daughter, **Lori Petitjean**, spent a lot of time with **Gilbert** after she was diagnosed with endometrial cancer on Oct. 6, 2005.

But no matter of her other interests, family was her foundation. "She thought the world of us kids," **Derek** recalled. Added **Petitjean**, "She loved her sister very much, too - **Sandy Brining.** They were very close. They laughed a lot and talked about the past." .

After surgery, radiation and chemotherapy, **Gilbert** had thought she had beaten cancer. She came into **The Evening Leader** office in January, proclaiming that the doctor had cleared her and mentioning that she couldn't wait to drive her beloved **LeSabre.** Then, on Jan. 25, she was diagnosed with brain lesions. **Gilbert's** children said that, when **Gilbert** became ill and was transported by St. Marys emergency squad to the hospital, she was more concerned with her children than with herself.

"She was like, get some sleep, go to work. She had a lot of fun on the helicopter ride," to Lima Hospital **Derek Gilbert** remarked. He and **Petitjean** said they want to thank the St. Marys emergency squad, **Gilbert's** doctor, the Joint Township District Memorial Hospital staff and, especially, emergency room nurse **Marilyn Neerderman** for the care they took with **Gilbert.** Her children said that, through it all, **Gilbert** was philosophical.

"She doesn't dwell on the worst side of life," **Petitjean** said. "She would say, 'I have no control over this. It's in **God's** hands.' She never complained about anything while she was sick," she added. "I hope if I ever have to go through something like that, I'm as good as her".

Memories Of Port Koneta Wapakoneta, Ohio

By Richard "Dick" Schwer



Port Koneta Airfield Opened September 8, 1946

It was estimated by the **Wapakoneta Daily News** that 10,000 persons visited **Port Koneta** airfield on Sunday, September 8, 1946, for the dedication of the new airport. Spectators were entertained by the **U.S. Airforce** show with thrilling aerobatic performance. On exhibit were many planes and a helicopter which made it a most successful and gratifying event.

It all started during the spring and summer of 1946. A group of local people built an airport north of **Wapakoneta** on what was known as "the **Brewery Road**" now known as the **Wapakoneta-Cridersville** road. Today in 2006, the original hanger building is located at **17666 Wapak-Cridersville Road** and owned by the **Schaub Excavating Company**. It is a long wooden building that extends to the east from near the road. This was the only building that was there in 1946. The building on the south side of the hanger and the little home just north on the hanger both were added in the 1950's when the airport was reopened for a few short years by **Burdette Metzger**, a local **Wapakoneta** man.

The original air field only lasted about eighteen months and was closed due to the lack of support by the people. The original thought behind the opening of the airport was that many of the returning **World War II pilots** would want and need a place to continue flying, which turned out to be far from the truth. Many of them encountered many close escapes from death, and wanted no further flying times.

A brief description of the airport, the people, planes, etc.

The original two airplanes were known as **Aeronca Champions** with a seat in front and a seat in behind it. It was built around **Middletown, Ohio**, and cost \$2200. a piece. One was destroyed in a crash, and the other, color was restored and placed in the **Neil Armstrong Air and Space Museum in Wapakoneta**.

At the airport, one single gasoline pump was located in a semi-circle at the east end of the hanger, the price of **aviation fuel was 45 cents per gallon**, which was about double the price of regular auto gas.

There was a **windsock** on the roof of the west end of the hangar. The **propellers** on the planes were wooden, made by the **Hartzell Company in Piqua, Ohio**. In order to start the engine, it was required for another person to "**spin the prop**", as there were no starters or batteries in the planes. The **ignition systems** consisted of **dual magnetos**, a safety feature, in case one failed, the plane could continue to a safe place on the one remaining **magneto**.

The engines were **65 horsepower Continental engines**. The planes were covered with fabric, had mechanical wheel brakes, and no lights or radios.

Memories of Port Koneta
by Richard Schwer



Learning to fly at Port Koneta

In order to **learn to fly solo**, trainees, in addition to learning to **take off**, fly safely, and **land safely**, had to also learn to **recover from stalls and tailspins, mock forced landing etc.** In those airplanes, if you had enough altitude they would recover by themselves. This was a throw-back to pre war flight when either you knew how to recover from these or crash. This training is no longer required.

The price of flying back then was \$6.00 solo and \$9.00 dual (with instructor, **Aubrey Knudegaard**). **Aubrey** was a very handsome, blue-eyed **Swede**, a very able pilot. He had flown the very dangerous **“Hump” in China** for four years during the war.

Interesting Facts About The Airport

The main runway was about 1900 feet long, and ran from the southwest corner of the field to the northeast. This was the most used runway , but there was also a short runway that was only 1100 feet from fence to fence, extending from the south side of the field to the north side. This was only used when there was a strong north wind. I recall using this once when there was a stronge northly wind. I took off to the north and cleared the fence on the north side by not too large of a margin, then coming in over the corn field on the south side, clearing the corn and fence by about five feet, then dropping the plane for the landing.

The Pilots That Learned To Fly At The Airport.

A few of thje people that learned to fly at Port Koneta at that time who are still living are; **Kenny Weber, Ned Keiber, Junior Kleman, Neil Armstrong, Glen Snider and myself.** These are about all that are still living, any others are unknown to us.

There was a minor opening day during the earlier summer months, and after taking a ride that day, I was the third person to sign up for flying lessons. When my turn came up next, I had to wait several hours because **Bill Petty, Sr.** came in for a landing, and his tail wheel caught a wire from the high wires that were along the west side of the roadway, and the wire broke off. He landed safety. I had to wait until the power company repaired the line so that the gasoline pump would work so I could refuel the plane. To prevent an accident the Power lines were lowered .



L.to R. Ken Weber, Dick Schwer, Ned Keiber.

***We Thank You Richard “Dick” Schwer for sharing
your memories on Port Koneta 60 years ago.***

This story of Port Koneta in Wapakoneta from information from a history written by Richard Schwer and news items from the Wapakoneta Daily News. It was modified for the newsletter by George Neargarder, Editor