

History at a Glance

Volume 2, Issue 4 Fall 2007

Happy 175th Birthday, Minster: 1832-2007

The Village's Early History

by Laura Paulus

Minster's earliest history is filled with tales of hardship and deprivation, as the pioneers strived to make a living from the soil. In 1832 the new community of Stallostown was founded by a group of German immigrants led by F.J. Stallo. The town's name was later changed to Minster ("important church" in German), named for the city of Munster in Germany in remembrance of their strong spiritual and historical ties with the Bishopric there.

The early economic pattern of Minster residents was based on the characteristics learned in the villages of their native land, characteristics of thrift, determination, hard work and pride in their community that continue to this day. Most of the earliest settlers came from the province of Oldenburg, Germany; some came from Hannover (*an early spelling*) Province and other northwest German areas.

The settlers brought with them the values of faith in God, belief in the importance of education, a strong work ethic and accomplishment of goals by community efforts; these values were nourished from the beginnings of the town.

Faith in God and the Catholic religion brought these early pioneers together to worship. The first Mass in Minster was in a private home in the fall of 1832. A Christmas Day Mass in 1833 marked the formal establishment of Catholicism in this area of Ohio. Stallostown Mission became St. Augustine Parish in 1836 and is considered the 'mother church' of the area. A log church was built in 1835 in the North Park by community efforts; in 1848, a brick church with one spire was built. The twin spires atop the church were constructed by Johann Anton Goehr in 1874-1876. (In 1900-1901 the entrance was changed to the tower end on Hanover Street.)

Education was highly valued by the early citizens. The large public school built in 1895, de-

stroyed and rebuilt in 1905-1906, was for many years the elementary school; now it is the parish Religious Education Center. In 1867, St. Theresa's School for Girls was constructed north of the church. It was demolished in 1931 and a new high school built on the site (now used as the elementary school). Educational values continue to be one of the most important aspects of life in Minster, with record numbers of graduates attending college.

From the values of the earliest settlers to the present day, Minster has become a unique community still connected to its Germanic heritage of the Catholic faith and excellent schools, with an outstanding work ethic and achievement by community efforts as its foundation.



St. Augustine Church,
Minster (1960s)

Also in this issue:

October 4 *ghostly* presentation in St. Marys, page 4

November 1 trustee elections in Moulton, page 2

Coverlet Weaver Philip Nagel, insert

Trustee Elections to be held on November 1

The Auglaize County Historical Society will hold elections for trustees at its November meeting. A brief recap of the year's activities will also be presented.

The meeting will be held on Thursday, November 1, 7 p.m., at Trinity Lutheran Church, Moulton. Dessert and a speaker will be provided as well.

Please join us for an interesting program, good fellowship, and some yummy desserts.

*The Auglaize County Historical Society
thanks outgoing trustees*

Jim McCullough, Shinbone,
and

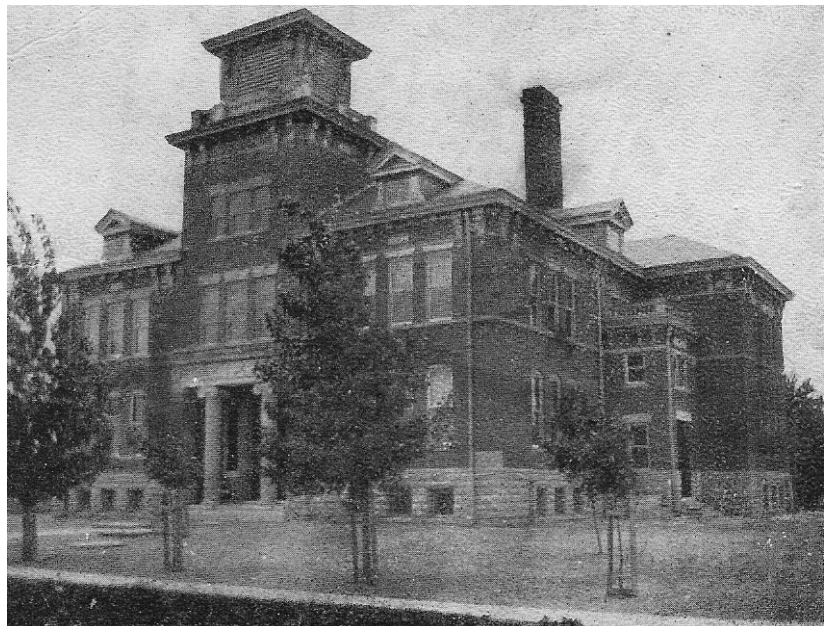
Irene Kepler, Wapakoneta,

*for their years of service
to the organization*

RIGHT: Wells Fargo & Co. Express at the north-west corner of Fourth and Main Streets. Proprietor Frank Fischer is shown with his daughter. This is the site of the Wooden Shoe Inn. Photo courtesy of Albert Fischer



BELOW:
Minster Public School, 1910.



DID YOU KNOW?

The newly-enacted federal pension reform bill includes an IRA rollover provision that provides an exclusion from gross income for certain distributions up to \$100,000 from a traditional or Roth IRA. This provision is effective through 2007 and only applies to donors age 70 1/2 and over. It provides a significant incentive for charitable giving this year!

A study by the Corporation for National Community Service has found a significant connection between volunteering and good health. Volunteers have greater longevity, lower rates of depression, and lower incidence of heart disease. Happily, the Auglaize County Historical Society has a volunteer position just right for you! Give us a call at 738-9328, to find out how you can improve your health and your historical society—all at once!

A Minster Timeline: *The First Century*

September 1, 1832

A stock company was formed in Cincinnati by a group of 97 Germans who combined their funds in order to purchase a section of land in Mercer County (now Auglaize).

September 28, 1832

F. J. Stallo, leader of the group, arrived with six men at the land office at Piqua and purchased one section (640 acres) for \$1.25 an acre.

November-December 1832

The land was divided into 144 shares.

April 14, 1833

Those 144 shares were subdivided into sections of 10 lots each, which were then chosen by random drawing to establish ownership.

June 11, 1833

The plat of Stallstown was recorded in Mercer County. (NOTE: The original plat map was found in a trash barrel in downtown Minster in the 1920s by Minster historian C.H. Dickman III. It is now displayed at the Minster Historical Society Museum.)

July 26, 1833

F. J. Stallo died, a victim of cholera.

1836

The name of the town was changed from Stallstown to Minster to reflect death of F.J. Stallo and honor the city of Munster, Germany, as well as the church.

March 5, 1839

Minster was incorporated as a village.

1845

The construction of Loramie Reservoir and the Miami & Erie Canal was completed (The first packet boat had reached Minster in 1843, causing great rejoicing in the town.) The canal allowed goods produced in and around Minster to be shipped from the village to places throughout the country, ensuring the highest prices for farmers and manufacturers.

In the same year more immigrants arrived by boat, mostly from the Province of Westphalia, Germany.

November 7, 1846

Village Council granted John H. Steinemann and Francis Sprehe the right to construct a mill race from the Loramie Reservoir to the canal and to use any street necessary as long as a bridge was built wherever the race crossed the street. The purpose was to operate a grist (grain) mill, a great advantage for local farmers.

1849

The town was devastated by a cholera epidemic, with more than 250 lives lost.

1855

John H. Steinemann erected a chapel in the cemetery in honor to God for his wife's recovery from illness.

(NOTE: The Chapel has been recently renovated by the Minster Historical Society and is open to the public.)

1857

Pork packing became the leading industry; grain and lumber were also shipped to market. Passenger packets made the trip to Cincinnati in several days. The whole area from Cincinnati to Toledo prospered.

1877

The coming of the railroad improved trade, accessing a wider area of the country and prompting the long decline of the canal as a transportation method.

1901

The new century brought industrial growth to the village, as it did everywhere that railroads flourished; Minster continued to expand its business community.

1913

The March 1913 flood suspended transportation for several days, but Minster suffered no loss of life and little destruction of property.

1917

World War I brought many changes to the village as young men left home to fight in the war.

1920

Some German street names in Minster were changed to American presidents' names; others remained, such as Hanover and Frankfort.

1932

Minster celebrated its centennial year with a *Souvenir Book of History*, begun by C.H. Dickman III and completed after his death by Velma Schmieder, local historian.



Fourth Street, Minster

Auglaize County Historical Society

223 South Main Street
St. Marys, Ohio 45885 *or*

206 West Main Street
Wapakoneta, Ohio 45895

Phone: 419/394-7069 *or*
419/738-9328

auglaizecountyhistory@bright.net

The Auglaize County Historical Society was founded in 1963. Its mission is the “discovery, preservation, and dissemination of knowledge about the history of Auglaize County and the State of Ohio.”

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

AUGLAIZECOUNTYHISTORY.ORG

*There's never been a better time
to be part of the Auglaize
County Historical Society!*

Musical Lecture to Begin October

The Auglaize County Historical Society will host a musical presentation entitled “Ghost Ballads, Apparitions, and Other Paranormal Phenomena” on Thursday, October 4, 7 p.m., at the St. Marys Community Public Library, 140 S. Chestnut Street, St. Marys. It is free and open to the public.

Presenter Hank Arbaugh has spent more than forty years as a performer, scholar, and educator of traditional music. With an MA in English/Folk Studies from OSU, he has years of intensive personal research, and has spent long hours in the field. He has taught at the high school and college level, published and

recorded music, appeared at national festivals, and is president of two music organizations.

“Ghost Ballads” is funded, in part, by the Ohio Humanities Council. The Humanities Council encourages all Ohioans to explore the human story, to use history, philosophy, and the other humanities as the means to arrive at new insights.



ALL SITES OPEN NOVEMBER 4

All of the Historical Society's properties will be open on Sunday, November 4, from 1 to 4 p.m.

Please visit us at
The Mooney Museum
223 South Main Street, St. Marys,
**featuring a book signing by
author Eldon Montague**

Wapakoneta Museum
206 West Main Street

Gary Log House
The Fairgrounds

and Olive Branch Church
SR 219, east of New Knoxville

for free tours & refreshments