



**Chester Shade Historical Association**  
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 Chester, OH 45720  
 Web: [www.chestercourthouse.com](http://www.chestercourthouse.com)  
 Email: [chestercourthouse@windstream.net](mailto:chestercourthouse@windstream.net)  
 Phone: 1-740-985-9822  
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**Chester Shade Historical Association  
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**Academy and Courthouse Hours**

Monday, Wednesday, Thursday  
 And Saturday  
 10:00 - 4:00  
 Or  
 By Appointment  
 Call Kaye Fick at 740-985-4115  
 Or  
 Mary Powell at 740-992-2622

E-mail  
[chestercourthouse@windstream.net](mailto:chestercourthouse@windstream.net)

Website  
[www.chestercourthouse.com](http://www.chestercourthouse.com)

Courthouse  
 740-985-9822

**From the Bench**

Hello Members,

Springtime and April means time for the annual CSHA Benefit Dinner (details elsewhere in this newsletter). I encourage all members and former members, as well as your friends and neighbors that you invite to come along, to come out and enjoy a wonderful meal, fellowship and entertainment. See you there! Please entice others to be a part of CSHA and join up at the dinner, or maybe renew your own membership!

On the evening of March 12<sup>th</sup>, the CSHA hosted a “getting to know you” informal soup and sandwich meal at the Academy for our like associates in historical preservation in the county and surrounding area. At the conclusion of the meal, all 26 attendees were given the opportunity to introduce themselves, identify with what organization they represented, and offer any comments about their association with that group.

The Meigs County Historical Society and Museum had six members present; Gary Coleman and Jordan Pickens updated us on their group’s work in cataloging all of their collections, as well as the temporary move they had to make into the Nolan Annex while maintenance and repair work was being done in the main museum building. They also highlighted their plans for the year in rotating themed exhibits in the Annex, the current one being Fraternal Orders.

The Buffington Island Battlefield Preservation Foundation and Portland Community Center was represented by six members; Gary Holter reviewed that relatively young group’s continuing efforts to get better established and its presence known to the public, as well as seeking out items to add to their museum collection. Constance White updated the progress on the plans for the third Morgan’s Raid Reenactment slated to take place across the county September 15-18, 2016 and will involve participation and input from all of our Meigs County historical groups, as well as other civic organizations of the county, as it coincides with the Sternwheel Festival weekend in Pomeroy.

Two members from the Athens County Historical Society and Museum were in attendance. Tom O’Grady, Executive Director, talked about that group’s recent acquisition of the First Christian Church building on West State Street in Athens, their move into that building, and plans for necessary repairs and renovation while maintaining the building’s current and original architectural features. Most interesting was the transformational plans in renaming the society to the “Southeast Ohio History Center”, with visions of working very closely with all historical preservation groups within this quadrant of the state, in promoting each other, sharing ideas and even sharing (loaning) exhibit items among our groups. (cont. pg. 2)

(continued from page 1)

Tim Ihle, representing the Meigs County Commissioners, gave an inspiring talk, first commending then thanking everyone for all they do in preserving the history of our area. He explained the reasoning behind the support the commissioners allocate to each of the historical groups in the county. He encouraged each organization to define projects they would like to see happen in their areas and to not hesitate in applying to or discuss with the Commissioners, funding possibilities. He said the Commissioners are many times the first to know what grants and other funds are available from state, federal, and other philanthropic avenues and they can work with us to get some of that funding.

The CSHA had 11 members present, and thoroughly enjoyed hosting our guests. Thank you ladies for the wonderful food you prepared and served! The whole purpose of the evening was to encourage our historical preservation community to be determined to work together in a positive manner, promoting to the public and researchers each other's ability to provide or showcase historical and genealogical information, publications, documents, artifacts, and even park-like lands. We must work more diligently to get ourselves known, to get our name "out there", so that more and more people can enjoy our local heritage!

All of our associations have websites and/or Facebook pages, so to all of you who are not too electronically challenged, you can keep informed of our activities, calendar, and what we have to offer; or "Google" us!

Dan Will  
CSHA Vice President

### Meigs Heritage Festival

We are going to have a Classic Car Show

On July 16, 2016 at the Eastern High School sponsored by the Chester Shade Historical Association. Please consider polishing your classic car and coming to the nice paved lot. Plans are incomplete at this time but there will be over 40 awards.

The Ohio State Harmonica Championship

Will be held inside at 3:30 pm.

There will be a Coin Show

And more.



### The School Children's Quilt

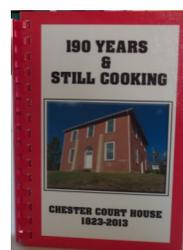
By Pat Holter

During the 2002-2003 school years, fifth and sixth graders from Chester School had a *cultural arts* project they were to do. They and their teachers decided they would create a quilt that illustrated early life in Chester.

Shown near the top of the quilt is the Rainbow Bridge, built in 1928, that today is the gateway into Chester from State Route 7 on SR 248. Several businesses are named in some of the blocks as are several churches and the Chester School. Also shown, high on the hill overlooking Chester, are the historic Chester Court House and the Chester Academy with cattle and horses grazing about the hillside.

On the back of the scenic picture is an oak tree, the leaves bearing the names of the students who worked on the quilt.

Needless to say, the young people were very proud of their quilt and are happy that it is on permanent display in the Chester Court House Museum where visitors can admire their work and learn about early Chester.



New Chester Cookbooks  
For Sale  
\$20.00  
Call 1-740-985-9822

By Charlene Hoeflich

The Meigs County Jail an Impressive Structure

The Meigs County Jail, built more than a century ago and still in use today, was described in a newspaper story of that time as a “classic architectural achievement.”

It remains today one of Meigs County’s most impressive structures.

The jail, located on Second Street in Pomeroy on a lot adjacent to the Meigs County Courthouse, was constructed following a fire on Feb. 4, 1894 which destroyed the original building used to house prisoners.

History tells us that the first inclination of county officials after the fire was to put up a “cheap affair,” but then after further consideration it was decided “to erect a modern brick structure incorporating the VanDorn system in both design and security features.”

VanDorn constructions were known for building strengths in jails they built which prevented prisoner breakouts. Features included not only solid steel frames around the openings to the jail, but security doors to the cells and in the corridors along with exterior strengths in wall construction.

In the original construction there were 16 cells with eight on each floor. Each cell measured seven feet by six feet 11 inches. A central prisoner’s corridor on each floor measured six feet 10 inches by 27 feet, eight inches.

Security features included cell doors which were two feet by six inches wide, constructed of solid steel jail plate and hung on frames of angle iron. The VanDorn individual lever clocking system was operated from the end of the cage in the jailer’s corridor. Every measure was taken to make the jail “escape proof.”

It was reported that the total cost of purchasing the land and building the jail was about \$24,000.

The breakdown of expenses were listed as follows:

Purchase of the Trussell lot on which the jail was built, \$1,700;

Payment to the architects for the plans and for supervising the work, about \$300;

D. Findling of Pomeroy for doing the plastering - \$589

The Sanitary Plumbing and Heating Co. of Gallipolis - \$1,905.12

The VanDorn Iron Company for iron and steel work - \$4,888.06

Pfaar and Genheimer of Pomeroy for carpenter work - \$3,143.60

George Bauer of Pomeroy - \$1,818.75 for excavation, \$1461.62 for foundation, and \$4,800 for brick work, for a total of \$10,706.77



The Meigs County Jail has a rich history. One of the classic architectural achievements in the county, this century-old building was constructed to exacting specifications. Many of the most sophisticated escape-proof building methods were used. The jail continues to house some of the county’s inmates.

## Meigs County Clean-up Days

### 14th Leading Creek Stream Sweep—

Saturday April 23, 9 am till noon at Meigs SWCD Conservation Area between Rutland and Harrisonville.

**4th Countywide Cleanup Day—Saturday May 21, 9 am to 2 pm.**

If you have old electronics or other junk you would like to get rid of take it to the Meigs County Fairgrounds. Old tires will be taken for free.

**Annual Ohio River Sweep—Saturday June 18, 9 am to noon at Racine and Pomeroy.**

Contact the Meigs SWCD at 740-992-4283 for details.

## CHESTER HILL GOLF CLUB

By Cleo Weber Smith

Yes, Chester did once have a golf course. The course was built on sixty eight acres about one mile east of Chester on State Route 248. It was built beginning in 1946 and was owned and operated by Thomas and Jessie Weber, my dad and mom.

Dad learned to play golf with his son-in-law Raymond Wilson on golf courses in Jackson and Gallipolis Ohio. There was a short par four course at Rutland but golfers from Pomeroy really wanted a nine hole, par 36, course to play on.

The Chester Hill course was planned by Ohio State University. The ground was rolling and hilly much to the liking of golf players. There were lots and lots of ground being moved to build up the nine greens and nine tees. Bent grass was sown and a full underground watering system was installed. Electric lines were installed underneath Tupper's Plains Chester waterlines. This allowed a cold water drinking fountain to be located at the 4<sup>th</sup> tee next to the woods. The players really enjoyed that when they reached the tee.

Other needs for operating a thriving golf club was tearing down an old barn to be replaced by a building used to house mowers and tractors. That was followed by construction of a club house. This provided restrooms, showers, a kitchen and dining room. Jessie, my mother, was known for her hot dog sauce, biggest cheese burgers, chicken salad, pie, ice cream, milk shakes, and homemade pickles. A pop machine was also provided.

For many years July 4<sup>th</sup> was annually the time for the greatest number of golfers to play the course. One particular July 4<sup>th</sup> saw 179 men register to play. Playoffs were held on Labor Day weekend. After the playoffs were finished, the Weber's provided a large dinner. They again held another large dinner at the end of October. Both dinners were free.

My husband, Lawrence, along with my sisters Ruth, Opha and Offett all helped with the mowing and cooking along with Jessie. Some of the men who helped mow the greens and Tee's were, Dale and Earl Showalter, John and Larry Hill, Gary Wolfe, Tom and Tim Gump, Bill Hannum. George Wolfe and Jim Ridenour were local golfers.

Bob Woods' yard was across the road from the 7<sup>th</sup> green and was sometimes the recipient of balls that missed the green.

The water sprinklers had to be placed on the greens early in the evening and removed early on dewy mornings before play began. I remember pulling crab grass in the fall.

My father loved to play golf and I played. All seven grand children played and five still are. Alice, Bob and Kate are good golfers. The Chester Golf Course closed in 1974.

**Those were Great Years.**

However, another sport has found a use for the old course. Nora Eason, owner of the property, has donated some of the land for soft ball and base ball fields. Thus, other sports, using a ball, have found a home for Chester area youth and adults alike.

The Chester Township Trustees moved their facilities to part of the golf course grounds in 2016. They are located on the old Number One green.

More about growing up in Chester, by Cleo, will appear in the next newsletter. Something about a cannon?

If readers have some good stories about Chester, Meigs County or the region, send them to us to share.

### **New Web Page Coming!!!!**

Chester Shade Historical Association  
Would like to announce our New Web Page.

To find it type:

[www.chestercourthouseandacademy.com](http://www.chestercourthouseandacademy.com)

In your browser and you will open the home page.

We are happy to announce that Kristin Fick is helping us with this project. She is a student at Bowling Green State University majoring in Visual Communications Technology and she is Kaye Fick's granddaughter.

If anyone would like to make any suggestions as to things that we can do to make it better, please contact the Chester Courthouse at P.O. Box 5, Chester, OH 45720 or call:740-985-9822.

## **Chester Courthouse/Museum Memorabilia**

**By Linda Blosser**

### **Paul Robert Karr**

In 1942, when he was a young man, Paul Karr's family moved from Forest Run to a farm on New Hope Road near Chester.

By October 1943 Paul was in Boot Camp at Paris Island, South Carolina as a United States Marine.

In January 1944 he was sent to camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for Military Intelligence Training.

After training he went by ship to the island of Guam, with the 3rd Marine division in the Western Pacific Campaign, World War II.

By March of 1944, he was sent to another island, Iwo-Jima.

He remained there as the United States captured the island from Japan in 1945, and was on the island, not at the site, when the American flag was raised.

Paul came home in 1946 to the family farm, where family members still live today.

He died February 28, 2013

We are proud to display several items from Paul's service, including a uniform and wool coat.

This information was provided by his son Roger Karr.

We are always happy to accept donations of items relating to Meigs County History.

## **Pictures**

### **Ohio History Tax Check-Off**

**Donate to Ohio History on your Ohio tax return and help support history projects in local communities that invest in Ohio's economy.**

The funds generated through the Ohio History "tax check-off" are made available through a competitive matching grants program, the History Fund. The History Fund supports the preservation and sharing of Ohio's heritage by supporting local projects, programs, and events related to Ohio's history.

#### **Small donations make a BIG difference**

For just \$8, you can help repair a roof, preserve rare color film footage, or stage a historical reenactment.

#### **Help promote the History Fund tax check-off**

To be a part of the Ohio History Tax Check-Off campaign and to access free promotional materials, go to: [ohiohistory.org/makehistorycampaign](http://ohiohistory.org/makehistorycampaign).

## **MEMBERSHIP DUES**

FOR THE

*Chester Shade Historical Association*

**Help us today so that we can continue our**

**Education and Youth Programs!!**

**Adult Membership \$10/year**

**Student Membership \$1/year**

**Thank you for your continued support!!**

**Please send your payment to:**

**Chester Shade Historical Association**

**P.O. Box 5**

**Chester, Ohio 45720**

# Genealogy Corner

Spring 2016

Kaye Fick Director

The Genealogy Department would like to announce the addition of two new volunteers:

Molly Arms, the daughter of John Fisher of Pomeroy. Molly has served in the Military Services and has worked at the Meigs Historical Museum. She also volunteers at the Pomeroy Library. She will be us helping with different projects as needed, coming once a week on Wednesdays.

Betsy Jones from Racine has taught school at Eastern High School and is now working as a substitute teacher. When she is not subbing she will be here on Monday afternoons. She is married to Brett Jones that worked for ODOT.

If any one reading this newsletter would like to donate some time to volunteering at the Courthouse and Academy we are always looking for extra hands.

**Here is a list of materials that we collect: We can make copies of many materials and can bind them into books. You can keep the original.**

Family Histories

Old family pictures (identified)

Old obits and death notices

Old birth, marriage, and divorce information

Old yearbooks and school pictures (identified if possible)

Lists of class graduates

Old church records, pictures, and histories

Old school house pictures, histories, and locations

War records for veterans of all wars

Research materials for Meigs County and surrounding areas (Original only please)



## Wanted: Volunteers

One of our greatest needs at the library is volunteers. We need many people to volunteer in order to sustain the *Chester Shade Historical Association* and to keep the Courthouse and Academy maintained and open for future generations. If you have a few hours or a couple of days a month that you can spare, please consider becoming a volunteer. **We will train you.**

The following is a list of some of the jobs that volunteers can do:

- ◆ Cut birth, death, divorce, marriage, anniversary, reunion, biography, etc. items from old newspapers.
- ◆ Paste the cutout items on sheets, by category
- ◆ Index articles onto a form
- ◆ Help with children's programs (tea parties, genealogy, school class tours)
- ◆ Help prepare and serve meals a few times during the year
- ◆ Donate baked goods or other foods for meals occasionally
- ◆ Help decorate the Courthouse and Academy for various functions.
- ◆ Help with the newsletter.
- ◆ Clean and maintain the buildings and grounds
- ◆ Make copies
- ◆ Make labels
- ◆ Punch and bind books
- ◆ Laminate materials
- ◆ Stamp and put security stickers on new acquisitions.
- ◆ Retype obits and other items that are hard to read
- ◆ Help set up displays in the museum
- ◆ Do genealogy look-ups
- ◆ Research histories of Meigs County Schools and Churches
- ◆ Type indexes into a software program (if you can type, we can teach you the program)
- ◆ Greet visitors
- ◆ Conduct interviews and record oral histories. (We are losing our older people and their vast amount of information very quickly.)
- ◆ Transcribe oral histories
- ◆ Catalog reference materials
- ◆ Catalog donations

If you are interested in history, education, research, or meeting visitors who come from across the country, we can use you! Please call CSHA at 740-985-9822 or Kaye Fick at 740-985-4115.

## The Chester Court House and Chester Academy

By Pat Holter

The Chester Court House was built in 1823 as the site of Meigs County government because the Village of Chester was the most centrally located community in the county. The Chester Academy was built in 1840 as a site of higher learning as a teachers college. It was also used as a high school for many years. Student and teachers usually boarded in local homes.

Around 1845 the powers that be, politicians, decided to move the county court system to a more populated area, namely Pomeroy; even if they did not have a permanent building to meet in until the 1850's. Thus, the Court House ceased to be the seat of county government. However, the land and the buildings remain as county property to this day.

For the next eighty years or so while the Academy served as a high school the Court House was used from time to time as an overflow class room for high school students.

From time to time the Court House would sit empty being used only occasionally. After the Civil War the Grand Army of the Republic met there due to the central location in the county. Members not only met there but many were buried in the Chester Cemetery. The Jaycee's and the Chester Grange have also met in the Court House.

In 1926 the Return Jonathon Meigs Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution took on the project of rejuvenating the now vine covered former Meigs County Court House. Many architectural students who visited the building over the years felt it was structurally sound and worth saving due to its unique construction. A former DAR regent left a legacy to cover repairs. The county commissioners hired a work force and the building was saved for posterity.

A primary phase of this project was to build two concrete piers on the front exterior wall to stabilize the "bulge".

Effort was made to make these stabilizing pillars look like they were part of the original construction. The next time you are at the Court House, look at the front wall from the side and you will see the bulge.

Then in 1995 the DAR Chapter again took on the project of again preserving the building so it could again be used. Mary Powell was appointed chair person for the project and she and Regent Patricia Holter took on the task of drumming up public interest in the project. The Ewing Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution also became involved and Dale Colburn became their representative. The SAR, a multi county organization, now considers the Court House to be their home base, although they do meet in other member counties as well. Delmar Baum, a retired contractor, Bob Thompson a building contractor, and George Genheimer, a retired carpenter, were part of the group who met with construction engineer Randy Breech who developed plans and secured state permits, all contributing without compensation. The Chester Shade Historical Association, CSHA, was formed at this time as a non-profit organization.

Jeff Thornton, who was running for county commissioner, was instrumental in applying for a grant which was received in 1996 in the amount of \$46,000. The funds were administered by the county commissioners and the CSHA guided the work to be done. Other dollars were raised through local fund raising events and in kind work credit provided by volunteers.

The Court House, the Academy and the Chester Commons are now part of the Meigs County Park System with the CSHA as caretakers. The county commissioners help financially with up keep of the facilities for which we are grateful.

More on the Academy, its use and renovation in the next CSHA newsletter.

# Chester Shade Historical Association

## 2016 Annual Buffet

This year's Annual Buffet will be held at the Meigs High School Cafetorium starting at 6:30 pm on Friday April 15, 2015. Tickets will go on sale after April 1. The tickets will be \$15.00 per person and can be bought at Chester Academy, Baum's Lumber, Summerfield's Restaurant and Farmer's Bank in Pomeroy.

All proceeds go towards supporting our organization by helping to pay the utilities and keeping our doors open for visitors.

Our menu for this dinner will consist of Pork Loin, Chicken Breast Casserole, Baked Macaroni and Cheese, Mashed Potatoes, Green Beans and Corn, Pickled Beets, Slaw, Applesauce, and rolls. Drinks will be iced tea, coffee, and lemonade. There will be a variety of homemade deserts.

This year we will have Michael Gerlach speaking after dinner about The Underground Railroad.

### ***The Underground Railroad***

By Michael Gerlach

*The Underground Railroad is one of those topics in history that we don't understand more than we do understand. We spend too much time looking for tunnels and secret rooms that seldom existed in houses that weren't even built when the Underground Railroad ended. The Ohio Valley was a cauldron of strategy, politics, intrigue and violence when it came to the issue of slavery. Long before the Civil War, a small dedicated group of abolitionists waged a war against slavery on both sides of the river. What happened in Meigs County was dramatic, dangerous, exciting and very important.*

We really would like to invite everyone to come out, have a good time and a good meal.

Please feel free to contact us at 740-985-9822 for more information.

2016 CSHA Membership

\$10.00 Individual Adult, \$20.00 Parents & Immediate Student Children, \$1.00 Students,  
\$100 Lifetime Membership

Please make your check payable to: Chester Shade Historical Association  
P.O. Box 5  
Chester, OH 45720

**PLEASE PRINT**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

(If email has changed, we are asking you to verify your email address)

Student Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Persons: Family \_\_\_\_\_, Individual \_\_\_\_\_, Student \_\_\_\_\_, Amt. Pd. \_\_\_\_\_

Years Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Date Paid \_\_\_\_\_ Donation \_\_\_\_\_ Amt. Pd. \_\_\_\_\_

(Please mark one of the following and a member of the CSHA will contact you)

I would like to volunteer at the Courthouse/Academy

I have a family history or other items to donate to CSHA

I have stories to tell

Thank you, we appreciate your support!!!!!!!!!!

**Yes, I would like to volunteer!**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

I can volunteer: One day a week \_\_\_\_\_

One day a month \_\_\_\_\_

Occasionally \_\_\_\_\_

As needed \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred day: Monday \_\_\_\_\_ Wednesday \_\_\_\_\_ Thursday \_\_\_\_\_ Saturday \_\_\_\_\_

We are open 6 hours a day from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Special Skills\*: Filing \_\_\_\_\_ Typing \_\_\_\_\_ Word Processing \_\_\_\_\_ MS Excel \_\_\_\_\_

\*For most jobs you don't need any special skills, just a willingness to learn. We will train you. For Volunteer Info contact: Kaye Fick, 38092 Green Up Lane, Long Bottom, OH 45743 or email: [kayefick@windstream.net](mailto:kayefick@windstream.net).



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Chester Shade Historical Association  
% Jim Stewart  
P. O. Box 5  
Chester, OH 45720

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## *Your Dues Count*

*The money that you pay for dues goes to promote our organization. It helps us pay our utility bills and upkeep expenses, making it possible to keep the buildings open to the public. Please check out our membership page and sign up today.*