

Randolph Times...

"Uniting the Past with the Future"

Visit our website: www.rths.org

Quarterly Newsletter of Randolph Township Historical Society, Inc., 114 Valleyview Drive, Englewood, OH 45322
Dedicated to Preserving the History of Clayton, Englewood, Union, and the Surrounding Areas.

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We list our valued sponsors on our website.



Office Phone: 937-832-8538
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www.rths.org

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Angie Hoschouer

2020 was supposed to be the year of vision, to reset and embrace the third decade of the 21st century. Now we find ourselves in the middle of a global pandemic and learning new phrases such as “social distancing” and “self-quarantining.” Of course, our mothers always told us to wash our hands, and even that has taken on a new meaning. So, in an abundance of caution, have canceled the April meeting and program and will further assess the situation as we learn more about the spread of this deadly virus. I was very much looking forward to hearing about Union resident Jack Egan and his defense of many of the gangsters and ruffians that passed through town. I will do my best to reschedule this program before the end of the year.

The officers and directors of the historical society wish you all good health. Please practice good hand washing, wink and smile when you meet someone (no handshakes!), and keep your distance from others. We do suggest that you check in on your elderly neighbors and make sure all are well and have what they need. We will all get through this crisis safe and sound.

Take care, everyone, and be well.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

All functions are at the History Center unless otherwise noted.

Meetings on 2nd Wednesdays

April 8, CANCELED DUE TO COVID/19

May 13, 7 p.m./business meeting/miniprogram: Mark Risley, “The Legend of Roswell”

June 10, 7 p.m./business meeting/miniprogram: Dianne Herman, “Let Women Vote: The Long Quest for Suffrage”

Special Events

Garage/Used Book Sale: May 28 & 29, 8 a.m.–4 p.m., and May 30, 8 a.m.–2 p.m.

Please visit our Facebook page for updates on meetings, visitors' hours, programs, and events.

QUARTERLY SUMMARY

January 2020: The No-Bake bake sale brought in \$350.00, and the book/ornament sale brought in \$459.00. The Society ended the year with 178 memberships. Even though the History Center had no public hours, we had 12 visitors. The daughter and son-in-law of Hal Sherman, who painted the National Road Scene that hangs in the Center's foyer, are the owners of the farm previously owned by Sue and Glynn. They suggested the RTHS help with a showing of Sherman's paintings of historical buildings, combined with an ice-cream social for the community. The daughter also said she would like to offer her father's collection of history books for sale with the proceeds going to the RTHS. Any more discussion was postponed until after the next board meeting. The firefighting knick-knacks donated to the RTHS for use or sale are on display in the foyer with prices on them. The new bathroom heaters have been installed. Realtor Ray Gibson had owned the sign from Albert Drug Store, and his son said the sign could go to the RTHS when located. Glynn suggested also trying to get a Ray Gibson Realty sign. Elmer "Buddy" Bergman, who just retired as Englewood Fire Chief, spoke on the history of firefighting in the area and his experiences.

February 2020: The History Center had six visitors, thanks largely to Doug Allen, who opened the Center while he was doing some work there. A representative of the Northmont Class of 1965 had contacted Doris about scheduling a tour during their reunion this fall. It has been recommended that the bathrooms be kept closed during the winter with the heaters on low and open during the summer. Angie questioned whether the fire code had any requirement. Speakers have been lined up through June. (*See p. 7.*) A discussion of updating the Web site and replacing printers was deferred to the board of directors, meeting on Feb. 16. Members viewed a documentary from PBS made for Ohio's bicentennial.

March 2020: The existence of the History Center seems to be more widely known, as there were three visitors during the month, despite the lack of public hours. The Web site is being updated, and the RTHS purchased a printer/copier/scanner and a new laptop, taking advantage of Office Depot's Going Out of Business sale at the Salem Avenue outlet. The laptop has been loaded with a new Microsoft Office package. The Past-Perfect software has also been updated. Angie purchased a much-appreciated heater for the kitchen area of the basement. May 28 through May 30 has been set for the garage sale, and a notice inviting donations has been put on Facebook. The contact with the antique cars is agreeable to doing a car show in September. Angie will ask the people at Palette of Threads across Main Street from the Center about sponsoring a display of wedding dresses and loaning some dress forms to display them. Robin Perkins and Susan Wharton are discussing an ice-cream social at Wharton's house on Sweet Potato Ridge and are consulting with Union officials about any permits. Mary Geiger had obtained a portion of the 1850 census covering Randolph Township from the Riverside Historical Society, and she presented it to the RTHS. Tim Hrastar presented a miniprogram on Huey Long, the Louisiana politician during the 1930s. He outlined both the social benefits Long brought to Louisiana and the dictatorial methods he used.



AREA NEWS AND NOTES

In Memoriam

Don Bowman and Beth Hess both died recently. Bowman had been a member since 2016 and Hess a member since 2013. All of our members are valuable, and these two will be sorely missed. Their families have the condolences of all the members of the RTHS.

"The genomic data show that this bacterial strain [*of the Black Death*], or variant, is the ancestor of all modern plagues we have today worldwide. Every outbreak across the globe today stems from a descendant of the medieval plague."

Hendrik Poinar McMaster University, Canada.

(Part of a team who mapped the genome of the 14th-century Black Death, he was quoted in Science News, October 12, 2011.)

THE FAMILY TREE

by Kay Dawson



Illness and Fear

In the late 1960s, Leighton Mann was doing some carpentry work at our house. When he mentioned taking his wife to dinner, my mother reminded him she had said the repair could wait on his convenience. Leighton, usually mild mannered, said fiercely, “Your repairs never wait. We haven’t forgotten who brought us groceries when our boy had polio and everyone else was afraid to come near us.”

The current fears about coronavirus remind us that once such scares were even greater and were more frequent.

Clifford Humphrey remembered he was forbidden to swim at a friend’s pond one summer when there were three cases of polio on that road (one of which was the Mann boy). In Brookville, the city sprayed the streets with DDT, thinking polio might be transmitted by insects.

Visiting my parents shortly after my brother Bruce was born, Miriam (“Bid”) Vermilya stood well back until she was sure my parents knew she had recently had tuberculosis and weren’t afraid to have her around the baby. (My mother pointed out Bid at least had a negative TB test, while my mother had never been tested.) In Saranac Lake, New York, site of a major TB hospital, some people rolled up the car windows when driving through the town.

People avoided crowds, and swimming pools, movie theaters, and parks were often closed when polio had been diagnosed. My parents found my brother Bill looking at the paper at age five and asked what was in the news. He “read,” “No more polio! Billy can go to the store.” My parents had been taking turns shopping so they could keep Bill and Tom at home. (Bruce and I weren’t born yet.)

They heard on the evening news that the FDA approved the Salk polio vaccine for the public, and the next morning my mother repeatedly dialed the doctor’s office until it opened to get us high on the list for the vaccine.

My mother was especially afraid of childhood diseases after my older brother Tom nearly died of post-measles encephalitis. When he got measles the second time (he got all those diseases twice) my mother called the doctor’s office. The receptionist told her the doctor would make a house call after he finished his hospital rounds. Instead, he showed up in a half hour, telling her, “I thought I wouldn’t make you wait. After his last experience, I figured you’d be terrified.”

Needless to say, we four kids got every vaccination available.

Even when there wasn’t panic, patients were often isolated. Bid Vermilya was in Stillwater Sanatorium for six months and could only wave to her children through the window. The foundations of Dayton’s smallpox hospital are still visible on the bluff above Carillon Park.

Virginia Wolf told the RTHS in an oral history how she and the two children caught scarlet fever when her husband was away. The house was quarantined, and the only person allowed in was a neighbor who had already had the disease. A diagnosis of scarlet fever, possibly erroneous, kept Dorothy Lurz’s family quarantined for 30 days, while her father camped in the yard so he could go to work.

Perhaps the most dramatic account of an attempt to control a pandemic is the story of Eyam, England. When the plague broke out there in 1666 the villagers agreed among themselves to quarantine the entire village for 14 months. The death toll in Eyam was high, but surrounding villages escaped the plague.

Modern medicine has eliminated much of the risk, but not the fear.

Membership Report by Wilma Schroeder

Many thanks to all of the members who have so promptly renewed your 2020 memberships. We have 155 memberships for the current year. If the address label does not say either LIFE or 12/2020, you need to renew soon.

Memberships Processed December 11, 2019–March 11, 2020

Corporate: City of Union (r)

Family: Ivan & Beverly Clark (r), Jack & Betty Horstman (r), Dane & Priscilla Mutter (r), Luis & Pat Riancho (r), Charles & Phyllis Sheets (r), Jim, Carolyn, & Carla Van Dyne (r).

Individual: Allen County Public Library (r), Barbara Benson (r), Cleve Collar (r), Kathleen Dawson (r), Susan Evans (n), Larry Drusen (r), Thomas Eastridge (r), Marian Ekberg (r), Shirley Frick (r), Barbara Eller (r), Bill Gothard (r), Sarah Grentz (r), Judy Hodges (r), Carol Hoke (r), Dennis Mann (r), Pat Mulso (r), Gloria Mumma (r), Ron Papp (r), John Ruell III (r), Patricia Saylor (r), Jerry Sherman (r), Susanne Wertz (r), Jennifer Woods (r).

Lifetime: Doug Allen (rup).

Sustaining: Catherine Springer (r).

Thank you for your continued support!

ACQUISTIONS

From Larry Crowell: Old tools from Methard Sawmill in Englewood.

From Englewood Glass: A display case with three glass sides, glass shelves, and lighting.

From Catherine Springer: Pictures of the Medley family, who lived at 241 Talmadge Rd., Clayton, in 1945. (Mary Medley, the mother, transferred ownership of the property to her daughters in 2000. Her daughter Dorothy sold the house to Samuel Haupt in 2011. Haupt sold it to Bradley Schaurer in 2016, and Catherine Springer bought it in the fall of 2017.)

Thank You

The display case mentioned above and pictured here is just the latest in the generosity shown to the Randolph Township Historical Society by businesses, cities, and individuals.

Before we purchased the History Center, Clayton allowed us to store records and artifacts in two rooms at the Janice Ward Center, and all three communities have been very generous with financial contributions and service.

It took the RTHS a year or two to discover who was plowing our parking lot when it snowed. Randy Hartman of Vital Signs had been doing it, and when discovered, refused to take money for it. (The RTHS provides him with a letter of thanks each year acknowledging his in-kind donation if he wants to use it for tax purposes.)

Over the years, we have received many items for the History Center. The Northmont Board of Education donated large photos of each graduating class of Randolph High School. The RTHS accepted them although we had no idea how to store or display them. A few weeks later, a member was helping clean out a former architect's office, saw the drawers used to hold blueprints, and was told he could have them if he would remove them himself. The pictures fit into them perfectly.

The display cabinet donated by Englewood Glass is just the latest in furnishings for the History Center. It will be put to good use, use displaying items and freeing up much needed space in the lower level of the Center.

It's heartwarming to know we have so many people in the community who appreciate its history and are willing to help preserve it.

New Office Equipment

In our attempt to purchase and furnish the History Center and keep the RTHS solvent, we have not only depended on the generosity of members but on bargains and grants. Sue Cummings was especially good at finding these. It was through her efforts that we got computers and printers/copiers for the office.

They got us started and were much appreciated at the time. They eventually became obsolete or, not having been new when the RTHS got them, reached the point of no return. Thanks to Ivan Clark's expertise Angie Hoschouer's willingness to shop, and a Going Out of Business sale at Office Depot's Salem Avenue location, the office now boasts a new Canon copier/scanner/printer which will enable us to print in color, copy or scan documents and pictures for display or for researchers, and scan photos the public is willing to share with us but not ready to part with. We also have a new laptop, running Windows 10, and the PastPerfect software had been updated to allow us to insert photos of artifacts.



The cabinet is empty, with glass on all sides, and the items appearing to be inside it are simply reflected in the glass front.

RECENT HAPPENINGS AT THE RTHS HISTORY CENTER

Miniprograms

The January meeting featured a very interesting talk by Elmer “Buddy” Bergman, who recently retired as fire chief of Englewood. An Englewood native, he came from a family of firefighters and married into a family of firefighters. At one time, he estimated more than 50 of his relatives were connected with the fire service. Starting as a junior fireman in 1967, he became a volunteer and was one of the first full-time firemen hired in 1977.



Fire Chief "Buddy" Bergman celebrates his retirement by summarizing the changes he saw during his career on local fire departments.

He told the audience about early firefighting and that the first property tax for fire protection in Randolph Township was in 1939. He remembered in the late 1960s as a junior fireman he accompanied firemen as they went door-to-door asking for donations to buy an ambulance. Until then, funeral directors Jim Churchill and Dale Sarver used their hearses as ambulances.

“In the early years,” he said, “we’d have a fatal fire at least once a year,” but in his 22 years in the city of Englewood, there was only one fatal fire.

Many in the audience did not realize that the local fire departments didn’t conduct regular fire inspections until after the 1977 Beverly Hills Super Club Fire, in Southgate, Kentucky, when a couple of hundred people died because the exits were blocked.

After the merger between Clayton and the township in 1997, Englewood, Union, and Clayton wanted their own fire departments, and at that point, he said, the departments started having manned stations. As a result, “Our response time since ‘97 has been under five minutes for fire and ambulance calls, where it used to be twice that.”

There was no speaker at the February meeting. Instead, members viewed a documentary about the history of Ohio, produced for the Ohio Bicentennial in 2003.

At the March meeting, Tim Hrastar of the Osher Lifelong Learning Center at the University of Dayton talked about Huey Long of Louisiana in the 1930s.

Long was an old-style machine politician. No one held any appointive office if he didn’t approve of their, or their relative’s, political views, and all appointees were expected to donate to his campaign fund. He used strong-arm tactics to get his programs through, even acquiring a new capital building by drilling a hole in the roof of the old one. While Senator, he continued to dictate to his gubernatorial successor.

But, Hrastar pointed out, he also supplied schoolchildren with free schoolbooks, built a bridge across the Mississippi River, started a medical school, provided literacy programs that taught 100,000 adults to read, and built paved roads in a state that was last in the number of passable roads. And he spread his programs to include African Americans, avoiding the racial conflict other politicians of the era used to gain white support.

Hrastar described how Long found Franklin Roosevelt too conservative and developed a “Share the Wealth” platform. He was mentioned as a presidential candidate in 1936. Long, he said, has been considered instrumental in causing FDR to formulate the programs of the “Second New Deal,” which included Social Security and other social programs, rather than the economic programs of the early part of his term.

Roosevelt considered Huey Long and Douglas MacArthur the two most dangerous men in America.



Tim Hrastar, who offers courses at the UD's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, talks about Governor Huey Long of Louisiana.

INVITATIONS

The Current Crisis

Most of us go about our daily lives and only realize we saw history when it shows up in our kids' history books. Even when we realize it—during World War II, for instance—we are often too busy coping to give it much thought.

Even Samuel Pepys, whose diary of 17th-century London described the Plague, the Great Fire, and the restoration of Charles II, was only recording daily events (and was just as interested in recording his amorous adventures).

But with so much canceled or closed, with authorities urging us to stay home as much as possible, this would be a good time to record our reactions to and experiences during the Covid-19 crisis. There have been pandemics before and, I hope, pandemics that were worse. But few people have had as much information about the crisis as we have. Many in rural areas were not even aware that the terrible illness decimating their families and small towns also existed in other areas.

In fact, the 1918 influenza was called the Spanish flu because of this lack of public information. It apparently broke out at an Army base in Kansas and traveled overseas with the soldiers. But the countries fighting World War I didn't want to harm morale at home by frightening newspaper readers and didn't want to tip off their enemies that large numbers of soldiers were incapacitated, so newspaper censorship kept it from being covered. Spain, being neutral, had no such censorship, so the first indication of the flu's severity came from Spain.

Why don't some of you write down your actions or keep a diary? It doesn't have to be a great literary work like Pepys'; the variable spellings and casual grammar of Civil War diaries don't make their accounts of seeing Lincoln after Antietam any less engrossing. If you don't have access to a computer, send us a tape or write it by hand or have a relative help you. Or use an old object like the one recently added to our school exhibit—a typewriter! [*See below.*] You can send it to the History Center or bring it in on that much brighter day when we can again hold meetings and get within six feet of each other.

Come in and See Us Sometime

By Kay Dawson

Various members have been busy over the winter refreshing our exhibits. Some things have been exchanged for other items, and some things have been added.

One item added to our school exhibit is something that often puzzles youngsters and leaves many of us muttering, "Is THAT in a museum?"

Many of us will remember learning to type at Northmont on the old Smith-Corona typewriters with the blank keys. (This one is portable; my class learned on big gray monsters.) It was possibly the most useful thing some of us learned; with apologies to Mrs. Miller, I've made much more use of my typing skills than I ever did from any algebra she tried to so hard to teach me!

Still, it's a shock to find part of your past is now a museum artifact.

The Smithsonian's National Museum of American History lets visitors try putting a harness on a



model of a mule, lift the heavy "sad" irons that women used to use, and see blocks of sod that homesteaders used to build sod shanties on the prairie.

As I stood looking at a pedal-operated sewing machine, the docent encouraged me.

"Try it. This room isn't just for children."

When I told her, "I don't need to. I learned to sew on one just like it," she laughed and replied, "About half of our visitors are eager to try things in here. The other half stare and say, 'Oh, my God,' don't tell me that is old enough to be in a museum! I remember that!"

Currently the possibility of public hours in April are in doubt. But after the corona virus is conquered, come by the History Center to revisit your youth.

Membership Information

Yes! I want to become a Member of the Randolph Township Historical Society.

Date _____
Name(s) _____
Address _____
City/State/Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

New _____ Renewal _____ Gift _____

Membership Level (Check One)

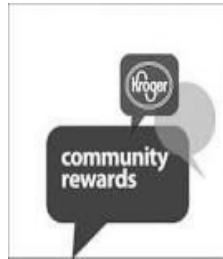
- _____ Individual @\$15.00/year
- _____ Family @ \$25.00/year
- _____ Sustaining @ \$35.00/year
- _____ Sponsoring @\$75.00/year
- _____ Individual Lifetime @ \$250.00 (one-time)
- _____ Corporate @ \$150/year

Extra Cash Donation: \$ _____

Enclosed is my check for _____
Total _____

Please send completed form with check to:
Randolph Township Historical Society
RTHS History Center
114 Valleyview Drive
Englewood, OH 45322-1324
Donations are tax-deductible.

COMMUNITY REWARDS PROGRAM



We keep putting information about the Kroger Community Rewards program in our newsletter because it is an easy way to support the Society. If you link your KrogerPlus card to the Randolph Township Historical Society, you can earn money for

the RTHS when you shop at Kroger's in any state. Each receipt will show the donation, and only your name and the amount will be reported to RTHS.

The Society's organization number was recently changed, and we are uncertain whether or not we need to re-register our KrogerPlus cards. We will let you know as soon as we can find out. (Kroger has slightly more urgent problems to deal with.) If you do, or if you are new, you can enroll by calling Kroger Customer Service at 1-800-576-4377 when they are less busy. Give them your Kroger Plus card's 12-digit barcode number your phone number, and our organization number: DC576. You can also go online at www.krogercommunityrewards.com. Last year the Society earned about \$250.00 through this program.

UPCOMING MINIPROGRAMS

(Programs scheduled for the upcoming quarter may be changed due to the corona virus. Please check the Facebook page or call the History Center and leave a message. We will return you call as soon as possible.)

The RTHS hopes to reschedule the talk by David Greer that had to be canceled in April. Greer was to talk about the career of Jack Egan, a Dayton attorney who lived in Union and practiced law from 1899 to 1936, at the April meeting. Greer will also sign his book, *God is Merciful: The Colorful Career of John Egan*, if the talk can be rescheduled.

In May, we hope, Mark W. Risley will speak about "The Legend of Roswell." There have been stories for years that an alien spacecraft craft landed near Roswell, N. M. in 1947 and the aliens' bodies are preserved at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base. Many are just as vehement that it was only a weather balloon or a U.S. military project. Risley will cast some light on the issue. He is a retired airline flight operations coordinator and past president of the Oakwood Historical Society. He also served on the steering committee for the centennial commemoration of the Great Flood of 1913.

In June, Dianne Herman will provide an overview of the history of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which 100 years ago gave women the right to vote. This was the culmination of a struggle that took more than 70 years, although a few states granted women the vote earlier. Herman is the coordinator of the Speakers Bureau for the League of Women Voters in the Greater Dayton Area and a retired instructor at Sinclair Community College. She has a bachelor's degree in political science and history and a master's degree in political science.

All these programs are free, open to the public, and followed by refreshment. The talks follow the business meeting which starts at 7 p.m.

The RTHS tries to have a miniprogram after each meeting, held on the second Wednesday of every month. Check the Facebook page for details.



RANDOLPH TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY

INCORPORATED

114 Valleyview Drive - Englewood, Ohio 45322

"Uniting the Past with the Future"

Clayton - 1816 Englewood - 1841 Union - 1816

SOME DATES TO REMEMBER REMAINING IN 2020

All events are held at the RTHS History Center, 114 Valleyview Dr., Englewood, Ohio, unless otherwise noted.

Monthly Meetings:

2nd Wednesdays

April 8, CANCELLED DUE TO COVID/19 VIRUS

May 13, 7:00 p.m.

(note time change)

June 10, 7:00 p.m.

July 8, 7:00 p.m.

Aug. 12, 7:00 p.m.

Sept. 9, 7:00 p.m.

Oct. 14, 7:00 p.m.

Nov. 11, 1:00 p.m.

(note time change)

Dec. 9, 1:00 p.m.

Work Sessions:

Wed. and Sat. afternoons
1–4 p.m.

Visitors' Hours at the History Center

2–4 p.m.

Apr 5 & 19 (May be cancelled due to health risk)

May 3 & 17

June 7 & 14

July 12 & 19

Aug. 2 & 16

Sept. 13 & 27

Oct. 4 & 18

Open other times by appointment

Call (937) 832-8538 and leave message

Special Events:

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June 10, 7 p.m.: Dianne Herman, "Let Women Vote: The Long Quest for Suffrage"