



MCHS News

January 2014

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 2 No. 1

715 N Main Street
Edwardsville, IL
62025

Hours:
Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm
Group Tours Available

Free Admission

Museum Phone:
618-656-7562

Library Phone:
618-656-7569

Web Address:
madcohistory.org

E-mail:
info@madcohistory.org

About Us:

The MCHS museum complex, consisting of a modern archival library, the 1836 Weir House Museum and the Helms Collection Center, is owned by the non-profit Madison County Historical Society and operated jointly with Madison County.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

MADISON COUNTY ARCHIVAL LIBRARY

WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

As you enter the Madison County Archival Library, you will receive a greeting followed by "How can I help you today?" or a similar question from one of four library staff members who have a well-deserved reputation for exceptional service to our patrons.

But if you haven't visited the library you may wonder. "What's in it for me?" This month we'd like to highlight some of the reasons to visit this special trove of information on Madison County. Whether you have a special project or a keen curiosity, there is something for everyone at the Madison County Archival Library.

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Archival Research Assistant LaVerne Bloemker helps Walter Engelke learn about the history of his family farm. Using plat maps, owners were identified as early as the 1860s.

(Photo: Reinhardt)

JANUARY - MARCH 2014 CALENDAR

Continuing through Mid-February

Exhibit:

"Tools of the Trade:

Surveyors and Topographers"

MCHS Museum

March 1 Exhibit:

The Kane Family of Architects

MCHS Museum

Also coming in 2014:

Program: Kane Family Architects

Exhibit: Creatures of Cahokia

Exhibit: Wedding Gowns

Program: Route 66 in Illinois

MCHS members receive personal invitations to new events and programs.

2014 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

It's January of a new year, which means that 2014 MCHS membership subscriptions are due now. Reminders will be sent in February, but if you haven't done so already, please renew today to save us a stamp.

Don't forget to renew gift memberships too, and thank you for supporting the work of the Madison County Historical Society. Your membership helps us to "open doors to Madison County history."

FALL EVENTS POPULAR

In November and December MCHS sent out invitations to "Dine in History" and to join us as we ushered in the holiday season with a Christmas Open House. Thanks to everyone who helped make these events a success. Thanks also to Madison County florists who contributed to the Friends of the Museum Silent Auction.

We hope to see you again next year for these wonderful annual events.

MCHS BOARD

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Archival Research Mgr.
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Archival Research Asst.
Carol Frisse
Archival Research Asst.
Karen Stoeber
Archival Research Asst.
Jenn Walta
Curator

VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the museum or the archival library. Please call if interested.

MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through an MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our website, at the MCHS Museum or at the Archival Library.

PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

WEB SITE

madcohistory.org

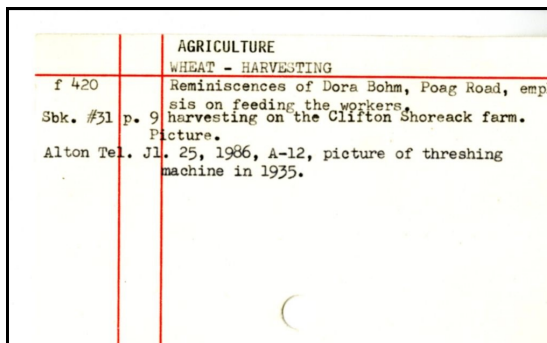
ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

By Mary Westerhold, Archival Research Manager

Not Your Average Card Catalog

At the Archival Library, we still use a card catalog. Yes, we are in the process of creating digital finding aids that will replace the card catalog and have completed the process for our books and some of our over 6,000 photos. But the real treasure in our card catalog is the indexing done by previous staff and volunteers.

The library holdings include over 35 scrapbooks, 1,000 f-sheets (see note below on f-sheets), several special commemorative editions of newspapers, and numerous atlases and histories that have all been indexed and included in the card catalog. For example, the two cards under the heading of "Agriculture - Wheat Harvesting" list



Sample indexing card from MCHS Card Catalog

specific pages in four different scrapbooks and commemorative editions of the *Alton Telegraph* and the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* along with three f-sheets.

While the card catalog is not an every name index of the holdings, it IS an in-

dex of the primary name or subject in most of the articles in the above mentioned sources. Without these references created by the dedicated staff and volunteers that were here before me, the holdings in our library would be much more difficult and time con-

suming to search.

Note: An f-sheet is a large sheet with newspaper clippings and even full size newspaper pages glued to the sheet and then laminated. The name comes from the paper size, which was called a "Folio" sheet. Hence the term "F-sheet"!

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

By Jenn Walta, Curator

Exciting things have been happening at the museum this fall. Visitors continue to praise the display, "Tools of the Trade: Surveyors and Topographers," with its large number of various surveyors' instruments. The display inspired a local resident to donate a transit, two stadia rods, blue-print tube, and tripod to the museum's permanent collection.

For the past few months, SIUE anthropology student Ryan Anderson has worked as an intern at the museum. Ryan's internship revolved around the creation of a new exhibit for the Artifact Room on the second floor of the Weir House. Prior to

installing the new work, he cataloged, photographed, and stored all of the artifacts in the



Surveying instrument donated by Beverly Kane

previous exhibit with the help of a volunteer. The new exhibit, "Creatures of Cahokia," is designed to engage the interests of third through fifth graders that typically come through the museum on school field trips. All but one of the items featured in the exhibit is from the MCHS collection.

The exhibit, which focuses on the importance of animals to the Mississippian people of Madison County,

will be completed in early 2014. Check the Madison County Historical Society's Facebook page for more information about the opening of the exhibit.

RECENT MCHS NEWS



Maxine Hogue (1927-2013)

Long-time MCHS Museum employee Maxine Hogue, 86, passed away on November 22 at the Eden Village Care Center, Glen Carbon. Maxine started working for the Museum in 1981

and retired in 2005. Although those are her official dates, she also served as a volunteer for several years after her retirement. She worked in numerous capacities during her employment, but in later years she was the museum's curator. She was especially good with textiles, possessing the skill to repair delicate fabrics in the collection as needed.

Known as "Grandma Max" to her family, Maxine was a descendant of early Madison County families and possessed a wealth of knowledge about Madison County. Her service to MCHS was greatly appreciated and the society extends sincere condolences to her family and many friends.

New and Renewing Memberships (November - Mid-December)

Collinsville

Joan Shaffer

Godfrey

Gracie Koeller

Dorsey

Allen & Marge Schmidt

Highland

John & Maxine Johnson
Arnold Meyer

Edwardsville

Gary & Patricia Coffey
Gary & Benna Denué
Joseph Helms
Mary Ruth Kettenbach
Dan Marshall
George & Phyllis Metcalf
SJ & Emily Morrison
Sondra Naegler
Bob & Sandi Schwartz
Fredna Scroggins
Luther & Charleen Statler
Ed & Candy Wentz

Marine

Sharon Daiber

Worden

Robert Gusewelle

Pinehurst, NC

Susan Foster

Coopersburg, PA

Thomas Kelahan

Thank you for supporting MCHS!

MCHS NEW LOOK CELEBRATES FIRST YEAR

The January issue of MCHS News marks the one-year anniversary of the launch of our new image. A year ago, John Celuch, owner of Inlandesign, donated the services of his firm to create a new logo using an image of the Weir House door knocker, but replacing "WEIR" with "MCHS." They then provided a template for a newly-designed newsletter, stationery, membership cards, etc. as well as graphics for our Dining in History event. The logo became the inspiration behind the society's new mission statement: "Opening Doors to Madison County History."

John Celuch has a strong record in support of historic preservation. He was the first curator of SIUE's Sullivan Collection, and his fascination with Sullivan architecture is one of his many interests. He helped establish the Edwardsville Historic Preservation Commission as well as the Goshen Preservation Alliance and served on the MCHS



**Madison County
Historical Society**
Opening Doors to Madison County History

Board in the 1990s. His preservation instincts also include buildings for his business which was first located in a restored storefront on Purcell Street in Edwardsville. When that block was vacated to build the

Madison County Administration Building, he bought and restored another cast iron Edwardsville building in the 200 block of Main Street where the offices of Inlandesign are located on the second floor above Plowsharing Crafts and 222 Artisan Bakery.

Inlandesign, a multi-disciplined creative services firm, was founded by John Celuch in 1976. Adam Celuch, John's son and also a talented designer, joined the firm in 2005 as Art Director.

MCHS is very grateful for their talent, advice and continuing support.

Did you know?

Established in 1812 before Illinois became a state, Madison County is one of the oldest counties in Illinois. The original borders included all of the present-day Illinois counties north of the southern border of present-day Madison County. The current borders of Madison County were established in 1821.

MCHS Archival Library Staff

The reason the staff at the MCHS Library is so exceptional is they all have a love of history and a sense of curiosity that draws them into the stories they help you research.

Mary Westerhold, originally a library volunteer, was employed as an Assistant Librarian in 2000 and was promoted to Research Manager in 2007. She has a BS in Actuarial Science from the University of Illinois and worked in the insurance industry for almost 20 years before coming to MCHS. While still in high school, she developed a love for genealogy and now regularly gives presentations on the topic. She served as president of the Madison County Genealogical Society and was recently appointed to the Executive Board of the Illinois State Genealogical Society. In 2013 she authored a pictorial history, *Images of America: Madison County*. Cemeteries are her area of special interest.

LaVerne Bloemker has been an Archival Library Research Assistant for four years, but like Mary was a volunteer before being hired. She is a past member of the MCHS Board of Directors and after many years of personal research, became an active member of the Madison County Genealogical Society in 2003. She is particularly interested in the history of Hamel, her hometown.

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MCHS ARCHIVAL LIBRARY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

GENEALOGY

The MCHS library is the ideal place to start a search for family history in Madison County. Recently three sisters visited the library to research their Spilman and Barnsback family history. The women had flown into St. Louis from around the country, hiring a driver to bring them to the library in Edwardsville. During an afternoon at the library they were delighted when staff helped them locate not only information about their family, but also photographs which were scanned and copied for them. One of those photographs, pictured at right, shows their relatives in Edwardsville with the Vice-President of the United States.

It's not unusual for groups to meet at the library for family research. A call before the visit will alert the staff so they can have some materials pulled in advance.

Sometimes patrons learn of long-held family secrets from sources at the library, like the woman Carol Frisse was helping one Sunday afternoon who discovered one of her ancestors had been hung as a horse thief. Obviously, occasionally a skeleton slinks out of the closet, but it all adds to the interest of a family story.

Patron Alan Schmidt came to the library to find the grave of his aunt. He said, "That Mary Westerhold is something like a cemetery geek!" He meant that as a compliment of the highest order and was very pleased with the assistance he was given in locating Schmidt and Heerin family plots.

There are many compiled family, church or business histories at the MCHS Archival Library, plus maps and books on Madison County and Illinois history. MCHS also has thousands of photographs of Madison County people and places with regular additions made to the growing collections at MCHS.



U. S. Vice-President Thomas R. Marshall (Dem) came to visit Edwardsville on August 27, 1914. He is pictured seated on the left next to his host, Charles Boeschstein. Standing (left to right) are Mrs. Elizabeth Barnsback Spilman, Mrs. Bertha Boeschstein, Charles H. Spilman, Mrs. Mary West Hadley and Mrs. Lois Marshall. (MCHS)

For example, the library recently received several packages of materials about the Giese and Take families from an anonymous donor. The boxes included Madison County genealogy records dating to 1813, several generations of family photographs, school records, a diary and more. These materials, now available to local researchers, demonstrate why one visit to MCHS is never enough. If you haven't searched your family at MCHS lately, it may be time for another visit.



The Edward and Christine Giese Family; Back row (left to right): Frieda, Wilmer, Hanna and Ruth Rosa Giese; Front row (left to right): Festo, Edward Giese (1866-1948) and Christine Schruppf Giese (1873-1935) (MCHS)

BUILDING HISTORY RESEARCH

Have a ghost in your house? According to Mary Westerhold, although people often come in to research their homes, sometimes you can tell they are looking for more than just history. They are reluctant to come right out and inquire about a ghost, but they'll ask, "How can I find out who has died in my house?" After spending a little time with our staff, they will then often admit they are trying to identify a ghost. It's nothing new for our library staff, and they are happy to help with the research, whether it is looking for a ghost or just finding out who built a house.

One of the great things about the staff is that they get involved with research topics, often continuing to look for information after the patron has gone because they are now curious about where someone came from or the original owner of a house or business. When that happens, they follow up with the patron to provide additional information.

BROWSING

Some visitors aren't working on a specific project, but want to learn more about local history. They are welcome to stop in to read one of the county histories, browse vintage newspapers or review some of the family histories on our shelves.

One popular item for browsers is the scrapbook collection. It is uncertain when they were started but there are about three dozen scrapbooks of newspaper clippings dating back to the 1870s.

As an example, they include a collection of news clippings written by Rachel Louise Travous, Public Director of the Madison County Republican Women's Committee in 1920. (See box at right)

R. Louise Travous was a fascinating woman who also wrote a bi-weekly newspaper, *The Kickapoo*, from Nov 1927-Dec 1928. *The Kickapoo*, part news, part local society gossip, can also be read at the library.

Whether you are interested in voting rights for women, coal mining, Madison County's infamous politics, or evidence of changing customs, the library staff can point you to items on almost any aspect of Madison County or Illinois history that might spark your interest,

OTHER RESEARCH

Individuals and students come to the library to research specific topics. Carol Frisse remembers a young woman who came in every Sunday for a month researching the sheriffs of Madison County. After so many weeks, Carol said the patron became like family and she was missed when the project was completed.

Local offices often request copies of photographs for their businesses. For example, MCHS photos can be seen on the walls of the new First Clover Leaf Bank in Glen Carbon or on a calendar created a few years ago by the Bank of Edwardsville celebrating its 140th anniversary.

Newspaper reporters often call or visit seeking information or images for a story. Last month a woman stopped by looking for data to determine the impact of the 1927 Farm Bill on local farmers. Another patron was researching local brick yards. The variety of topics is what keeps our staff interested and engaged.

ADVICE

There are times when the MCHS library doesn't have the information a patron is looking for, but the staff is still able to help patrons by suggesting other locations or free on-line sites where they might find the needed information.

Many students come to the library to do research for class assignments. MCHS library staff help these young historians learn to narrow the scope of their topic and document their research.

June 2, 1920

A typically feminine little woman gave me such an excellent idea the other day that I want you to have it. Some one had said, "Women can't take care of their homes and take an interest in politics too." My friend's answer was this question, "Do men's businesses go to pieces because they stop to vote?"

That was one of the best points that I have heard made for suffrage...the happiest marriage is that one in which the husband and the wife are companions; and how can there be companionship if there are no common interests? Wives, read up a little on the big things of the day, and get something to talk about besides naughty children and unreasonable laundresses; then see if your husband's lodge has as great a claim on his time as it used to have.

Carol Frisse, Research Assistant, started volunteering for MCHS in the mid-1980s. She has provided assistance in many areas over the years, including curating museum exhibits. Since 1997 she has worked in the Archival Library on Sunday afternoons as part of the MCHS Staff. She is also a long-time volunteer at the SIUE University Museums and is President of the Goshen Preservation Alliance. Like others on the staff, she is an experienced genealogist.

Karen Stoeber, Research Assistant, is the newest member of the MCHS Library Staff. She holds both Bachelor and Master degrees in History from SIUE and worked for eight years as a seasonal park ranger for the National Parks Service. She conducted historic tours and programs at the Museum of Westward Expansion in St. Louis and the Harry S. Truman Home in Independence, MO, among other sites. She brings a broad background in history that is helpful in placing family incidents in the context of history. Karen has a special interest in American Indian and women's history.



MCHS is fortunate to also have an excellent Museum Staff who will be profiled in a later issue, and many dedicated volunteers.

HAZARDS OF THE JOB

Success Stories

For the recent production of the film *Boxcar to Boardroom* that tells Mannie Jackson's story, Tim Hurtin and Alison Wood contacted the Archival Library several times for photos of Jackson, local events and places in Edwardsville and Madison County that were relevant to the story. The photos were used in the DVD, with MCHS receiving credit for its assistance. A complimentary copy of the DVD is in the holdings of the Archival Library.

♦♦♦

In 2001, Don and his wife Sue arrived at the Archival Library from Texas seeking information on an "orphanage" that was located in or near Edwardsville. Don remembered that he and his brother were placed in this home by a family member. However, since Don was only nine years old at the time and the event happened over 50 years before, he was a bit sketchy on the details. Nothing in the Archival Library's records indicated that there was ever an orphanage in the Edwardsville area. Marion Sperling, who was the Archival Research Manager at the time, contacted a friend who was a long time resident of Edwardsville hoping that she might be

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By Mary Westerhold

One of the hazards of working at the Madison County Archival Library is that we (the staff) frequently become slightly obsessed with research topics. I am particularly susceptible to cemeteries and looking for "the rest of the story" for the residents of the cemetery. Take for example the Virgin Cemetery, one of my recent research projects.

Cemeteries, as you can imagine, are important to family historians. The ISGS web site lists 271 cemeteries in Madison County. Many of these are small family cemeteries in rural locations that have been overgrown and forgotten. The Virgin cemetery is one of these forgotten cemeteries. In Volume 11 of the Madison County Genealogical Society's Cemetery books, Virgin cemetery is listed as being located in St. Jacob Township on property owned by Jefferson Virgin in 1860. Of the six graves, five are children, all aged four or younger, listed as children of "J & A Virgin." The sixth grave is for a Civil War soldier, Henry F. Van Hooser. I was intrigued enough by the listings to begin searching for family information.

Searching our card file, I found a reference to a biography of Jefferson Virgin which lists Anna Lindley Van Hooser as his second wife. It also stated that they had nine children, four of whom were still

living in 1894. I then checked the 1850 Federal Census because one of the children, John Whitfield Virgin was born in 1850. The 1850 census listed John W., age 9/12, with his parents Anna & Jefferson Virgin. Next I went to the 1860 Federal Mortality Census because three of the children on the cemetery listing, Perry, Nancy and Madison Virgin, died in February 1859. The 1860 Mortality Census listed the three Virgin children, all of whom died from "Putrid Sore Throat," which in today's terms is Scarlet Fever.

The 1850 Census also provided another answer. Listed with the family of Jefferson and Anna Virgin are William and Henry Van Hooser, Anna's sons by her first marriage to John Van Hooser. William and Henry both served in Company G, 117th Illinois Infantry Volunteers. William survived the war, but Henry died at Ft. Pickering, TN, in 1863.

I could find no information on the final burial, Sarah M. Virgin, who died on 1 Jan 1853, age 1 year and 5 days. However, the research left me feeling sympathy for Anna Lindley Van Hooser Virgin who stated on the 1900 Census that she had borne 11 children, five of whom were still living. It also made me grateful for modern medicine which has greatly decreased the mortality rate in general, but especially among small children.

REGIONAL HISTORIES

By Mary Westerhold

Authors of local history books are frequent visitors to the Archival Library. Many of the local pictorial history books feature photos from our collection. In addition, we have received requests to fact check books on local and state history. These research relationships benefit not only the authors, but also the library. These authors generously donate not only their book when it is published, but also scans of photos from their book to enhance our collection and fill in gaps.

The MCHS photo at right was used in Cheryl Eichar Jett's *Images of America: Alton* published by Arcadia in 2009. Jett is the author of several regional histories and often uses MCHS images. Her books are available at a discount for members in the MCHS gift shop.



From the book "Alton" by Cheryl Jett: "The Nazareth home was built at 2120 Central Avenue in 1918 as a home for the poor and elderly who had nowhere else to go; the contractor was Henry Wardein. The sisters of St. Francis of the Martyr St. George, an order...founded in Thurne, a small village in Germany, purchased the Nazareth Home in 1925. The sisters moved to Alton, renaming the institution St. Anthony's Infirmary.

EARLY POSTMASTERS OF HAMEL

Continued from page 6

By LaVerne Bloemker

Several months ago Scott Delicate, editor of *The Stalker* (Madison County Genealogical Society's quarterly publication), asked if I was up for a research challenge. He was looking for someone to write an article on the early postmasters of Hamel. I assured him I was interested, but got side-tracked with other projects.

Recently, however, an email was forwarded to me from Ted Engelmann of Denver, Colorado, asking about his ancestor, Gampiers Adolph Engelmann of Hamel. Ted said family records indicated Gampiers was a wagon maker who also served as the first postmaster of Hamel. That was enough for me to get busy with research so I could answer two requests at the same time.

I started my search at the Archival Library by looking at our extensive card catalog, the Brinks 1882 *History of Madison County, Illinois*, and various other library resources. In addition I did research at home using Ancestry.com, State of Illinois databases for marriages and deaths, etc. One of my finds was a handwritten record of U.S. Appointments of Postmasters from 1832 – 1971 for all the towns in Madison County on Ancestry.com. Hamel was indeed listed but the first Postmaster was George H. Engelmann in 1871, not Gampiers A. Engelmann (later known as Adolph G. Engelmann).

In my correspondence with Ted, he said he is donating family records and memorabilia to various libraries and historical societies. He has already provided family history on Gampiers Engelmann to MCHS and will either send or hand deliver the original documents appointing Gampiers and later his widow Charlotte Engelmann as Postmaster and Postmistress of Hamel, Illinois in 1886 and 1888 respectively. The information on early Postmasters of Hamel will be available at the Archival Library.

As any experienced researcher knows, often when one fact is revealed, more questions become apparent. In this case, we wonder how, or if, George Engelmann is related to Gampiers Engelmann. Also, the record of U.S. Appointments of Postmasters included names of Madison County communities that were unfamiliar to library staff. Among them was Barcoville, which started another research project to discover where it was located (near present day Granite City) and what happened to the town.

Results of these research projects by library staff are compiled and saved in files at the library so the information is available for future researchers. The report of Madison County Postmasters will also be printed and available at the Library as an additional resource.

able to help. Not only did her friend remember such a place, she even had a photo that was taken when she visited the home with a group from her church to bring Easter baskets to the children. The photo was produced and much to Don's surprise, he and his brother were in the photo! Don had no memory of the Easter baskets or the visit by the church group, but he did remember the names of some of the other children in the photo. We were even able to locate the house, now a private residence, so Don and Sue could see the home.

♦♦♦

In 2004, the library received a phone call from the curator of the Fairfield Historical Society in Fairfield, Connecticut. While researching Abraham Jennings Gould, the curator found a letter from Curtis Blakeman to Abraham Jennings Gould, which described early life in Madison County, and she was wondering if we would be interested in a copy of the letter. She also requested any biographical information we might have on Curtis Blakeman. Since Curtis Blakeman was one of several sea captains who founded the village of Marine, we did have information which we were happy to provide.

HEZEKIAH KELLY

By Mary Westerhold

In late March of 2011, Mike came into the archival library looking for an obituary for Hezekiah Kelly (Kelley), who supposedly died in June 1, 1822. For that time period, we have microfilm copies of the local newspaper, the *Edwardsville Spectator*. Mike was actually searching for the obituary for someone who had seen the information on an ad for an online newspaper database. The ad had shown part of the obituary for Hezekiah Kelly, the name of the newspaper (Edwardsville Spectator) and the date June 1, 1822. Mike searched the microfilm but could not find the obituary even though his search included a few months prior and after the date mentioned. He left discouraged and somewhat confused by the fact that the obituary did not exist.

Intrigued, I started searching the microfilm beginning in January 1822. Obituaries in

the early newspapers are not the same as they are today. Typically, if they exist at all, they are a mere few lines, similar to "Mary Smith died Sunday at the home of her daughter and was buried in the local burying ground." Since the *Spectator* is a weekly publication and only a few pages in length, the search went fairly quickly. Finally, the February 8, 1825 edition carried this information:

"DIED--In this town, on Sunday morning last, Mr. HEZEKIAH KELLY, aged 57 years, formerly of Norwich, Connecticut. His remains were yesterday respectfully interred by his Masonic brethren, with the usual rites and formalities of the order."

Mike was thrilled when we notified him of the obituary. However, as often happens, the newspaper gave us another mystery. In the October 12, 1824 edition of the *Spectator*

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Madison County Historical Society

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Edwardsville, IL 62025

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HEZEKIAH KELLY (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

Success Stories

Students of all ages visit the MCHS Archival Library. In 2009 a British doctoral candidate was researching the slavery question in Illinois. He was specifically the attempt to call an Illinois State Constitutional Convention in 1823-24 in order to legalize slavery in Illinois. He knew that Madison County, split between factions both for and against slavery, was at the center of this controversy.

During that time, every edition of the local newspaper, the *Edwardsville Spectator*, printed articles that reported both sides of the argument, often shown side-by-side on the front page. The student was especially interested in our material relating to Edward Coles and others who worked with Coles to successfully oppose slavery in the State of Illinois.

was an article about preparations for a possible visit of General Lafayette. The newspaper listed the names of those on the committee to "receive and welcome the illustrious La Fayette" and among those names was Hezekiah Kelly. The interesting part was that some names, including Hezekiah's, were followed by an asterisk noting that they were surviving soldiers of the Revolutionary War. So now our search became the verification of Hezekiah as a Revolutionary War soldier.

We searched all of the material in the archival library and contacted local chapters of both the DAR and SAR, but nothing could be found that named him as a Revolutionary War soldier. A reporter for the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* did an article on our search and a few months later we heard from a researcher in New Jersey, Jack, who was a descendent of Hezekiah. He had found the

article online and was excited because he had never seen the obituary or known the date of death or age at death. This was important because Hezekiah's father had 2 wives and there was some discussion in the family as to which one was Hezekiah's mother. However, he also had never heard of any Revolutionary War service.

Over a year passed with no new information. In August 2012, Jack contacted me again with the news that the obituary had helped him identify Hezekiah's mother. This information allowed him entry into a Mayflower Lineage Society because Hezekiah's mother was a descendent of the Billington family of the Mayflower.

As yet, we still have not determined if Hezekiah Kelly did serve in the Revolutionary War, but who knows what tomorrow's mail may hold?

MARY'S RESEARCH TIP

This month's tip may seem like a no-brainer, but it is one that can easily be forgotten as researchers delve into official items like censuses, marriage licenses, land records, probate files, etc.

As local communities and churches celebrate anniversaries, a commemorative book or booklet is often produced. These often include biographies of early members of the communities and photos that have been resurrected from family attics and community archives. In addition, the

general history can often explain reasons for an ancestor's sudden relocation or even perhaps the unexplained deaths of several family members. Was there a natural disaster such as a flood, fire, or tornado or did the community suffer from an epidemic such as the cholera epidemic in 1849-50?

A careful reading of these local histories can often provide answers and perhaps even give additional clues that might further your research.