



MCHS News

Nov 2017

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 5 No. 6

715 N Main Street
Edwardsville, IL
62025

Archival Library Hours:

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

Museum :

The museum is currently closed for renovation

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, a museum in the 1836 Weir House and the Helms Collection Center, is owned by the nonprofit Madison County Historical Society and operated jointly with Madison County.

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

GLEN CARBON - THE EARLY YEARS

This year marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the Village of Glen Carbon. To commemorate the occasion, the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum created a timeline of Glen Carbon history which they have shared with MCHS for this issue of the MCHS News. They say a picture is worth a thousand words, and this selection by curator Linda Sinco certainly tells the story, representing some of the common and not-so-common facts about Glen Carbon's early history.

800 – 1450 During this time, Native Americans of the Mississippian Culture lived in the area, followed by other Native American groups who later encountered early European settlers.



This stone tool is part of a collection of fossils and Native American tools donated to the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum by the Durham family.

1801 -1812 The area surrounding what would become Glen Carbon was called the Goshen Settlement. As word of this "land of milk and honey" spread, the population grew.

1832 Henry Stallings owned a road house at Six Mile Prairie, near present day Granite City on the National Road. It was located six miles east of the Mississippi River. This stage coach stop had a reputation for good cheer from New York to St. Louis.

1849 A four-month-long cholera epidemic killed 4,700 residents of St. Louis and then spread to the east side of the river. It was so bad that there were hardly enough healthy people to bury the dead.

1863 William Yanda established a blacksmith shop near the family's log cabin on Main Street. Yanda, his wife and 10 children lived in the two-room cabin that, over the years, was covered by many additions and remodels. The building was slated for demolition when the long-hidden cabin was discovered. A group of concerned citi-



The Catholic prayer book shown above belonged to Lizzie Yanda Burgdorff, born 1873. She was a member of St. Boniface Catholic Church, making the long journey to Edwardsville on Sundays by horse and buggy.

zens, who recognized the historic value of the cabin, saved and restored the cabin to its earlier appearance.

1883 The Clover Leaf Railroad offers service through Peter's Station.

1891 Madison Coal Company began. Mines 1, 2, and 4 were in Glen Carbon. Mine No. 3 was in Edwardsville. To become a coal miner a man had to work for two years with a certified miner. At the end of the two year apprenticeship he would

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REMINDER

The Historical Museum Remains Closed for Renovations



The Archival Library is open regular hours.

ABOUT US

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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 web site, at the MCHS Museum or at the Archival Library.

PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

By Mary Westerhold

ALTON NAVAL MILITIA OF ILLINOIS

Can you help us? This photo shows the cover of a booklet that we recently “found” in our files. It had been filed in our Civil War vertical file, but it is not associated with that war. The booklet was printed in 1898 and is regarding the “Third Division, Second Battalion, N.M.I., Alton, Ill.”.

Here is what is stated in the preface regarding the booklet:

“In presenting the people of Alton this little souvenir volume, the members of the Third Division, Second Battalion, Naval Militia of Illinois, are not actuated by the desire to see their pictures in print. While proud of our organization, of the work we have done and are doing, and modestly conscious of our good looks, collectively, we have in this enterprise a more substantial object in view than the gratification of our personal vanity. In short, the booklet is issued for the money it is expected to realize for the division treasury.”

As mentioned in the above preface, the booklet contains the photos of the members of this unit,

with some members identified on later pages. The roster of the unit is included along with a “Biography of the 3d Division.” And, there is a photo of the “Signal Corps showing silver pitcher won at Camp Stedman in 1897.” The silver pitcher is in the museum’s collection.

We are seeking additional information on this unit of the Naval Militia of Illinois. Please contact Mary Westerhold at the Archival Library, (618) 656-7569, or via email at mtwesterhold@co.madison.il.us. We plan to digitize the booklet and share the digital version along with any additional information with the Hayner Genealogy & Local History Library.



MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

By Jenn Van Bibber

Before the museum closed for renovations, visitors may have noticed a silver-plated water pitcher in the corner of one of the exhibit rooms. It was a trophy won by the Signal Corps of the Alton Naval Militia in 1897.

During the Civil War, some men were pulled from regular duty and assigned to a signal corp. These small signal parties worked with multiple military departments to provide communications and intelligence, but most disbanded after the war. The Signal Corps spent the remainder of the 19th century making weather observations and providing communications at various Army posts. In 1880, Illinois and New York became the first states to have permanent signal units in the National Guard.

During World War I, Lieutenant J.B. Maxfield of the Alton Division of the Illinois Naval Militia tried to garner support for the Alton division of the Signal Corp from the local community. According to a June 1916 article in the *Alton Evening Telegraph*, the men serving in the unit had primarily been activated for flood relief, but in the

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The silver-plated pitcher at right was donated to MCHS by Charles G. Smith in 1956.

RECENT NEWS

HELP RESTORE THE WEIR HOUSE!

The Madison County Historical Society (MCHS) is appealing to area residents for assistance in restoring the windows of the 1836 Weir House which serves as the county museum. Donors are asked to consider adopting one or more windows of the Weir House in honor of their Madison County family. The average cost is \$2,400 each for a completely restored window and a protective storm window appropriate for the historic building. The 1836 home has 31 windows. Honored families will be listed on a plaque in the museum when it reopens following restoration.

MCHS began a systematic analysis of the museum building several years ago. With the help of an architectural firm specializing in historic structures, the Society began to make plans to restore the Weir House and improve the museum exhibition space. Part of the renovation occurred last year when the roof was replaced, and the dormers and chimneys were rebuilt. This was made possible thanks to the generosity of the Kriege Family.

A high-efficiency heating and air conditioning system is currently being installed. Plans for new electrical wiring,

plaster repair, interior painting, new lighting, removal of exterior paint, tuckpointing, and resealing the structure will allow Madison County residents to enjoy the use of this architectural jewel for generations to come. These are just some of the aspects of the restoration project that will cost an estimated \$2 million to complete. Once this work is finished, new museum exhibits designed to tell the story of Madison County will be installed.



The Madison County Historical Museum in the Historic Weir House circa 1965. (MCHS)

Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the 1836 Weir House has been the home of the Madison County Historical Museum since 1964. It is owned by the Madison County Historical Society, a 501 (c) (3) organization founded in 1921. For further information, call 618-656-7569 or visit the MCHS website at madcohistory.org. Donations may be given online or sent to MCHS, 801 N. Main Street, Edwardsville, Illinois, 62025.

We hope you will consider making a special gift to help restore the windows or contribute to

the additional work that needs to be done to preserve the historic Weir House for generations of Madison County families to come. A donation card is included in this newsletter for your convenience.

NEW MUSEUM EXHIBITS

Although the museum is closed for renovations, Curator Jenn Van Bibber and her Assistant Curator, Mary Rose, have found creative ways to make exhibits of MCHS artifacts available to museum patrons. The Centennial of the Wood River Refinery is highlighted in a new exhibit at the Madison County Administration Building. A fascinating new online exhibit called "Vintage Jewelry and People Who Wore It" has been added to the MCHS website

The online exhibit has great photographs of jewelry from the MCHS collection as well as information on the people who once owned the jewelry. A second exhibit with stories of Madison County residents visiting the 1904 World's Fair will be available soon. Click on the "Online Exhibits" tab at madcohistory.org and take a "walk" through the new exhibit.

RENEWAL MEMBERSHIPS ONLINE

A new option is available for new and renewing MCHS members. For the convenience of our members, the Society has made it possible to join or renew memberships in the Society online. Of course the Society still accepts memberships by mail or at the Archival Library but the online option makes it easier to pay by credit card.

Membership in the Madison County Historical Society runs on the calendar year. A membership renewal form will be sent out the first week of December, but members can now opt to renew online instead of sending in the renewal form with a check.

Gift certificates are also available for MCHS memberships. With memberships beginning Jan 1, it's the perfect holiday gift.

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

September-October 2017 ♦ Thank you for supporting MCHS!

\$100 James Madison
Gary & Benna Denué

\$50 Family
Maryann Cochran
Bruce & Nancy Hoffman
Carol B. Dappert &
Mary C. McMahan
Bonnie Norman
Jeffrey & Sue Weber

\$35 Individual
Dorothy Anderson
Debbie Bennington
Janet C. Clark
Bernard Hellman
Mary Lou Maley
Keith Veizer

EARLY GLEN CARBON HISTORY (CONT FROM PAGE 1)

apply for his mining papers. After proving his experience in the handling of explosives and general knowledge, he was certified to work in the mines.



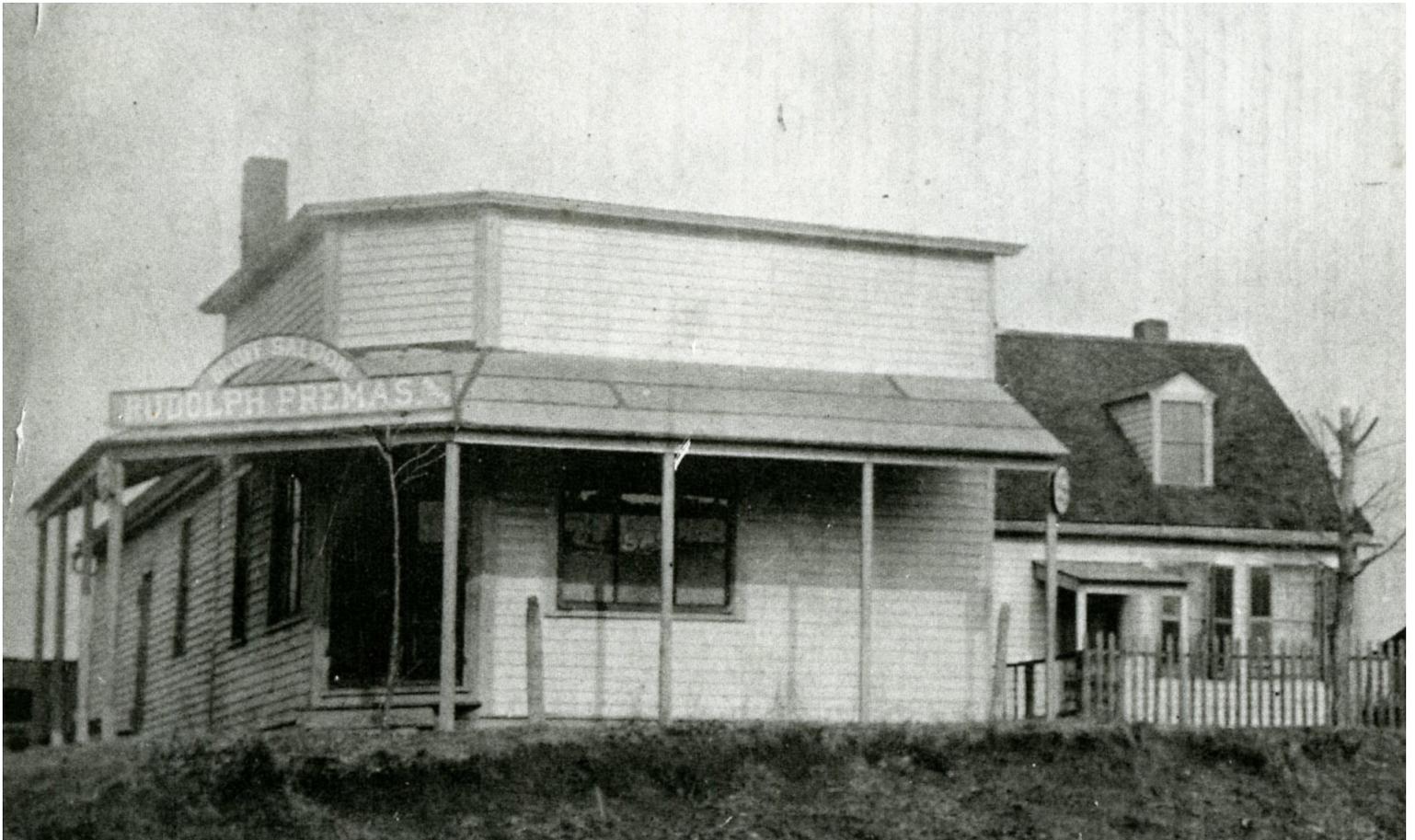
Postcard showing Glen Carbon miners circa 1910 (MCHS)

1891 William Primas began operating the Bluff Saloon. Later it was run by other family members, including Rudolph "Premas" as shown in the photo below. In 1927, a garage and gas pumps were added. Upon Aurie Primas' retirement, the business closed in 1958.

1891 Frederick C. Bonsack establishes the St. Louis Pressed Brick Company in Glen Carbon. Despite a major fire in 1895, the company continued to manufacture bricks until 1906 when another catastrophic fire destroyed the works. The St. Louis Brick and the Madison Coal Mine companies both built housing for workers in Glen Carbon.



Workers at the St. Louis Pressed Brick Company in Glen Carbon circa 1910.



The Bluff Saloon and home of the Primas family in Glen Carbon .

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS

1892 Glen Carbon incorporated as a village. George Bonsack served as the first village president. Bonsack was the office manager at St. Louis Pressed Brick Company.

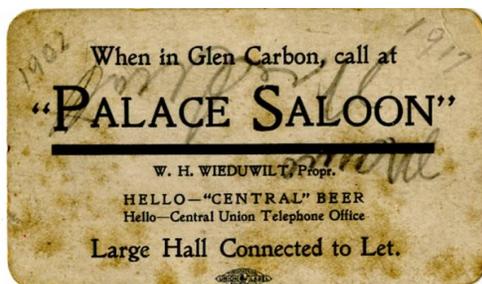
1893 First RR ticket bought for Glen Carbon to St. Louis. A passenger could take the train into Saint Louis for the day and come back late in the evening. This enabled a lot of folks from the area to attend the 1904 World's Fair.



Western Brewery Depot in Glen Carbon in 1904.

1894 Dominick Pizzini opened a division of the Western Brewing Company on Main Street. He later built a saloon next door and closed the brewery, converting it into a hotel.

1896 The Palace Saloon building was located on the north side of Main Street near the corner of Main and Rosin Streets. The Palace Saloon was operated by H. Lister and



Above: Wieduwilt's Palace Saloon. At left, A business card from the saloon indicates that the telephone company also had an office at the same location.

Sons as early as 1896 and was sold to William Wieduwilt. Mr. Wieduwilt conducted business there until approximately 1920. The building also housed at various times, an ice cream parlor, barbershop and Justice of the Peace, Louis Weiler. The first telephone switchboard was located there and was operated by the Wieduwilt family.

1896 Dr. Adam H. Olive arrives in Glen Carbon and places a down payment of \$200 on "House #42." His home and office on Main Street are shown below (MCHS).



1900 The population of Glen Carbon from the U. S. Federal Census is 1,348.

1903 Johnny "Buster" Lucas, was born in Glen Carbon February 10. He went on to play outfielder for the Boston Red Sox in '31 and '32. At his passing in 1970, he was buried in the Buck Road Cemetery.

1909 Zephaniah Montgomery donated an acre of land for a new school to be built about two miles east of Route 159 on Glen Crossing Road. This school was named Acme School, a name chosen by the children who attended. In 1919, a second room was added, and the school functioned until the 1950s. Acme School Pocket Park, located on Glen Crossing Road, honors Acme school.



Students pose with their teachers in front of Acme School which was located near the settlement at Mont Station.

EARLY GLEN CARBON HISTORY

1910 A combination village hall and firehouse was built at a cost of \$6,000 on the corner of School and Summit Streets. The location was selected because the bell could be heard throughout the village, and the firemen and their equipment could get down the hill easily.



The 1910 Glen Carbon Village Hall and Fire Station shortly after it was completed. A citation on the back of the photo reads, "Chris Snyder Fire Chief, unknown, Evan's Twins, John Krumeich, Joe Sprendio (child), unknown"

1910 Oil street lights in Glen Carbon were replaced with electric lights.

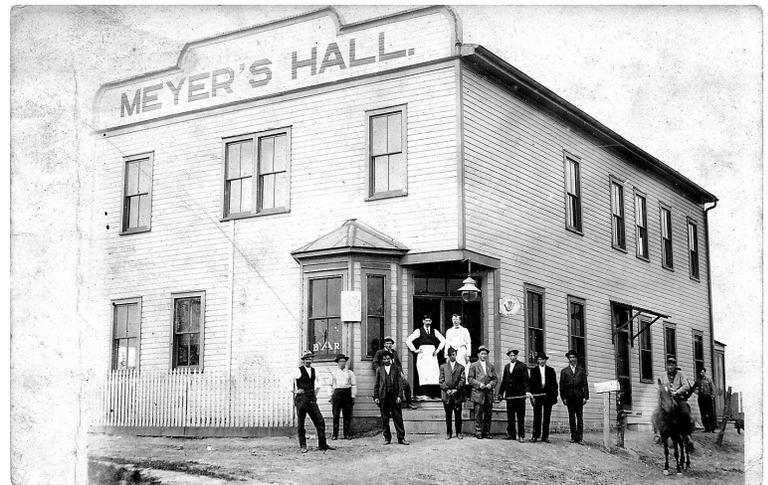
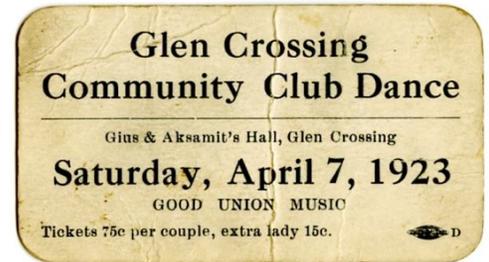
1914 A new two-story brick school building, designed by architect J. W. Kennedy and built by Henry W. Eberhardt, opened on School Street. It cost \$7,500. The previous year Glen Carbon voters approved construction of the new



Above is a recent photo of the 1914 school building which is now home to the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum

school with a vote of 53-3. When a new school was built, the old building continued to serve the community as a police department (with jail), a library, and other uses until it was converted into the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum. In 2014, the century-old building was added to the National Register of Historic Places.

1917 The area surrounding Glen Crossing was annexed to the Village of Glen Carbon. Glen Crossing had a number of businesses and a popular baseball field. Shown at right is a ticket to a dance at Meyer's Hall (shown below). Built by Joseph Meyer, the hall was later purchased by Frank Gius and William Aksamit. The hall was a center for community activity among the many Eastern European immigrants that settled in Glen Carbon. During World War II they held benefit dances at the hall where the proceeds were given to a soldier on leave so he could afford to enjoy his time at home before returning to the war.



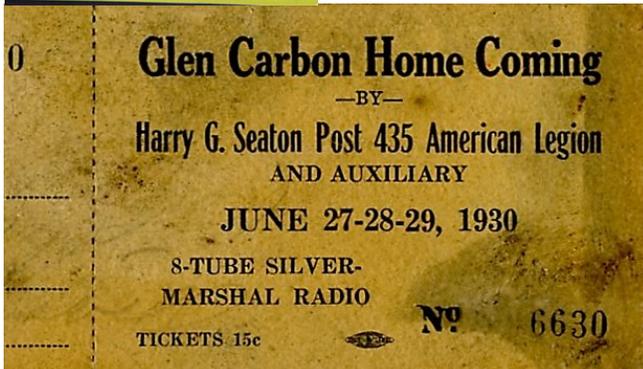
The mine safety teams in Glen Carbon drilled for emergencies and had an excellent record. The 1930 team, shown above, won many awards in competition with other mine safety teams.

CELEBRATING 125 YEARS

1922 Donk Brothers build a 70' x 200' reservoir at Mine #4 by placing a dam across a creek on the Eva Yates farm. The lake is now part of Glen Carbon's Lakewood subdivision. A picture of the Donk Reservoir under construction is shown below. (MCHS)



1930 Community pride is in full view at the annual Glen Carbon Homecoming, Glenfest, and numerous other celebrations. On June 27-29, 1930, the first Homecoming was sponsored by Harry G. Seaton, Post 435 American Legion and Auxiliary. The 15 cent tickets advertise "8-TUBE SILVER – MARSHALL RADIO." Perhaps the radio programs were available for folks to listen to, as they enjoyed Homecoming. Homecoming posters and a ticket for the first homecoming are shown below.



1933 A campaign was launched to raise a fund of \$1,200 to provide transportation for 41 students wishing to attend high school. Three school buses were purchased by the citizens of Glen Carbon. The first bus "Purple Swan" was purchased in 1934. A second one in 1938 and the third one, the "Blue Goose" was a brand new 1939 bus purchased from Butler Chevrolet in Edwardsville. Members of the bus committee were Hermenia Shashek, Myrtle Titter, Mary Hardy, Elizabeth Harris, Fannie Rasplica, and Mayor Frank Yanda. Prior to this time students either road the train to school or found other transportation since there was no high school in Glen Carbon, and the school district did not provide transportation.



Shown above is the 1939 school bus known as the "Blue Goose."

1934 A Glen Carbon baseball team won the Southwestern Illinois Intercity Championship. Baseball was a recreational sport for both men and boys in those days, and Sunday afternoon games could attract hundreds of fans.



Southwestern Illinois Intercity League Champions of 1934. Known players are Ray Kubicek second from left in back row; Coach Bill Henry in dark jacket and John Shashack third from right, center row. Contact MCHS if you can identify other players. (MCHS)



Madison County Historical Society

Opening Doors to Madison County History

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Edwardsville, IL 62025

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PITCHER

(Continued from page 2)



case of war, the men could be incorporated into the United States Navy. The article reported that the group had 54 men and three officers.

Originally, this incredibly ornate water pitcher (see close up above) was suspended on a frame along with a silver-plated cup.

Visitors to the Madison County Historical Society's website can view a photograph and description of the pitcher in online exhibits.

RECENT NEWS

Thank You

The Madison County Historical Society is grateful to Museum Coordinator Linda Sinco and the Board of the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum for allowing MCHS to use part of their timeline of Glen Carbon History Exhibit for this edition of the newsletter in celebration of the 125th anniversary of the Village of Glen Carbon.

Images for the Glen Carbon timeline article in this issue of MCHS News are

courtesy of the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum (GCHM) at 124 School Street, Glen Carbon, Illinois, unless otherwise noted.

The physical exhibit at GCHM covers a longer length of time than could be included here and includes many additional photographs and artifacts related to village history. The Glen Carbon Heritage Museum is open Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. from September through April with extended hours in summer.

MARY'S RESEARCH TIP

TRUSTING ONLINE SCANS

Information from online databases - both commercial and government - may need verification. For example, in an online search in one of the major commercial genealogy databases, I found an uncle listed in a high school yearbook from a school in Kansas. I looked at the photo, and it did look like my uncle. However, there were a few discrepancies with this result that did not fit my family information.

The school was a private school in Kansas, and my uncle lived in Illinois. I knew the family did not have the funds to send any of their children to an out-of-state private school. Also, the years were not

quite right for him to be in high school. I decided to scroll through all of the pages of the yearbook to see if I could resolve the issues. What I discovered was that two high school yearbooks - one from Illinois and one from Kansas - from two different decades had been combined into one file and indexed under the name of the school in Kansas. Now that I was working with the correct dates and the correct location, I determined that the photo was of my cousin who was named after his father (my uncle) and strongly resembled him. I learned my lesson about assuming all online scans were correct.