



MCHS News

July 2019

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 7 No. 4

Historical Museum
715 N Main Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Hours:
The museum is currently closed for renovation.

Archival Library
801 N Main Street

Hours:
Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm

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.

THE VILLAGE OF CARPENTER

A century ago, the Village of Carpenter was the largest community in Hamel Township. The flourishing village on two railroad lines was a central location for shipping in the township. However, when the railroads expanded to other communities and transportation to nearby towns became more convenient, Carpenter businesses closed and the population declined. Today, there is little left but the people. Many are descendants of those earlier families who are close-knit for good reason. Nearly all of the early families of Carpenter are related by blood or marriage and can be placed on the same family tree.

Bill Tucker, retired editor of the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*, takes a look at two Carpenters, the past and present.

REMEMBERING CARPENTER

by Bill Tucker

The trains still roll through Carpenter, just like they did when Eileen (nee Neuhaus) Mateyka, 93, lived there through the Depression years.

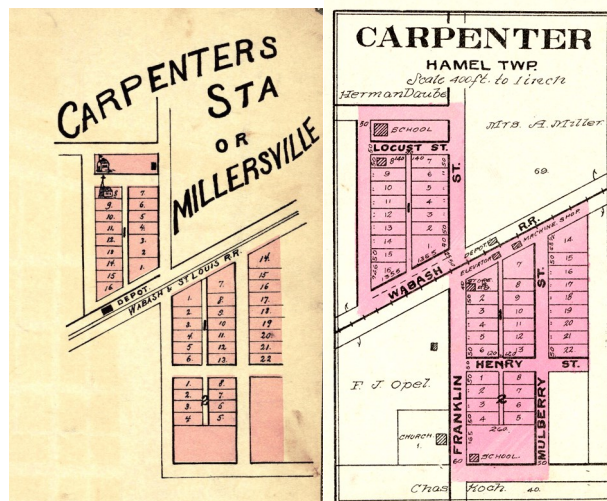
Located on Illinois 140 north of Edwardsville and west of Hamel, the railroads, nearby farms and the presence of Zion Lutheran Church remain as much a part of daily life in Carpenter now as they did in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Trains no longer stop in the village, though, as the Norfolk Southern and Union Pacific freights roll on through.

Motorists, most of them anyway, don't stop in Carpenter either since to many folks the village is simply that double set of overpasses on Illinois 140.



Gustav and Regina Neuhaus, Eileen Mateyka's parents, on their wedding day, April 30, 1922. After the Neuhaus store closed, Gus found work with the county and was clerk of Hamel Township for 19 years. (Eileen Mateyka)



Plats of Carpenter, Illinois, in 1892 (left) and in 1906 (right) taken from Madison County atlases. (MCHS)

Mateyka remembers growing up in Carpenter, where the population was "maybe 100, might have been a few hundred."

It was never big, but during the 1920s it had all the essentials.

"Carpenter had an elevator. My dad had the post office for several years. There was a depot, the Wabash ran through there. There was a gas station, a tavern," Mateyka said.

Her dad, Gus, as he was known, ran the grocery store, which also included the post office.

"He had everything: groceries and dry goods," Mateyka said.

The post office connection put Gus' daughter in a position to meet the majority of residents in and around Carpenter.

"By having the post office, people came in," Mateyka remembered.

With the store and post office, the Neuhaus family had some extra space so they took in boarders.

Mayteka remembers a station agent rooming with the family as well as a couple of school teachers.

But the Depression took its toll on business. "He (Eileen's father) lost it during the Depression. He had too many giveaways that he was trying to

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ABOUT US

MCHS BOARD

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VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the museum or the archival library. If interested, please call 618-656-7569.

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, or at the Archival Library.

PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

By Mary Westerhold

MAPS AND PLATS

There are many maps and plat books in the collection at the Madison County Archival Library. The maps range from an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper depicting one township or part of a town to large maps that require special housing in our large map case drawers and even larger maps that hang on the wall. The 1861 Holmes & Arnold map of Madison County hangs on the wall and includes street maps of Alton, Bethalto, Collinsville, Edwardsville, Highland, Marine, and Troy.

Early Illinois maps include population figures or detailed railroad routes. The 1837 Illinois Map is a companion to the 1837 Gazetteer, both of them compiled by John Mason Peck. It would seem that Peck was an advocate of frontier (Illinois), as he also authored "Annals of the West" and "Forty Years of Pioneer Life." also in the collection either as originals or reprints.

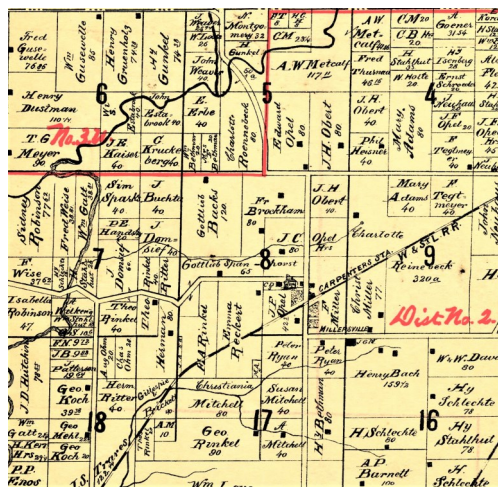
The plat books also vary in size and content, with the 1873 Atlas and Plat book containing biographies of residents, along with sketches of various buildings, houses, and

farms, while the 1892 version has all of the rural school districts outlined in red and a small school house icon showing the approximate location of the school building. By the 1920s, these had evolved into books that only showed detailed plat maps of each township. However, in the 2013 version of

the Land Atlas and Plat Book, the most recent photography from the National Agricultural Imagery Program was included alongside the traditional township map.

Frequently, city leaders published a map along with a booklet in order to promote the advantages of the growing community. We have two notable ones in our collection, "Edwardsville the City Beautiful" (1932) and "Granite City, Ill." (circa 1904). Both of the booklets include photos of the best features of the communities and detailed maps.

Maps and plat books help track the changes in an area including new roads, school district consolidation, railroads, new communities, growth of existing communities, and even locations of businesses. Whatever the research project, chances are there is a map which will show the way.



This plat from the 1892 Madison County Atlas shows the NW quarter of Hamel Township (MCHS)

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

By Jenn VanBibber

The staff at the museum cannot seem to find enough hours in the week to accomplish everything we would like. If we aren't busy researching and prepping for a new exhibit (a summer recreation display is currently viewable at the Courthouse and Administration Building), then we are working with the historical society's permanent collection.

Recently, a donor gave a set of dentist's tools from the mid-twentieth century. The black leather doctor's bag held over 70 dental instruments and paraphernalia, some of which were quite chilling to behold. A lot of hours have gone into this collection, carefully marking and cataloging each individual piece and creating a new permanent home within our storage area.

The Madison County Historical Society is fortunate to have space to house a majority of the collections which they hold in trust for the public. The staff works to uphold the best practices set by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) and the American Alliance of Museums (AAM). If you visit the Archival Library and wonder why the museum staff have disappeared, it is because we are diligently working behind the scenes to preserve the county's rich history and heritage for future generations.

We are still looking for hard working volunteers for ongoing projects at the museum. Please contact Museum Superintendent Jon Parkin at 618-656-7569 or jlparkin@co.madison.il.us with your interest.

MCHS SPEAKER SERIES SUNDAY, AUGUST 11 - 2 P.M. THE WOOD RIVER MASSACRE

The topic for the August Speaker Series event will be the Wood River Massacre presented by Museum Superintendent Jon Parkin.

Numerous versions of this story have been told over the years but all seem to agree that on July 10, 1814, a woman and six children were killed by Native Americans near the Wood River in Madison County, Illinois.

Superintendent Parkin will provide a fresh look at the tragedy which occurred during the last part of the War of 1812.

MCHS Speaker Series programs are held at Immanuel United Methodist Church at 800 N. Main Street in Edwardsville. The Fellowship Hall is located on the lower level with entry on the south side of the building.

MEET THE MCHS BOARD

MCHS is fortunate to have highly qualified candidates on the Board of Directors. Board profiles began with the January issue of this newsletter and continue below with Steve Mudge.

Stephen Mudge – Edwardsville

Stephen Mudge comes from a long line of prominent Madison County attorneys and judges who have practiced here for over 100 years. He has been an attorney for nearly 40 years with Reed, Armstrong, Mudge & Morrissey, P.C. His primary specialty is trial practice, and he also serves as a mediator and arbitrator on personal injury cases on a regular basis.

His great, great grandfather, Solomon Hinckley Mudge, moved to Madison County in 1836 and the family homestead is still in the family. Steve spends a considerable portion of his off time maintaining and improving the property, where a home built in approximately 1845 still stands. Steve is a life-long history buff and enjoys outdoor work, home restoration, including barn restoration. Steve resides in Edwardsville, Illinois, and has two sons, John and Taylor.

CLERICAL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Do you have office skills? Can you work with Excel, spreadsheets and mail-merge? As the Society moves forward into the Capital Campaign, we are gaining members and contacts and could use help in managing these lists.

This is work which could be done from home. If you are able to help, please let us know. We would greatly appreciate it! Call 618-656-1294 for more information or to volunteer.

MCHS TRIVIA NIGHT SATURDAY, AUGUST 10 - 7 P.M. AMERICAN LEGION HALL 109 S. MAIN ST. - GLEN CARBON

Invite your friends to join you for a night of challenging fun at the Society's first Trivia Night. Don't worry, to keep things fair, there will not be a Madison County history category! All categories are general interest questions anyone might know. Details:

CASH PRIZES:

1ST Place - \$360 and 2ND Place - \$240
Teams of up to 8 max./table - \$20/person
Mulligans available at the door! 3/\$5, or max. of 12/\$20
Beer/Soda provided - No outside alcohol - BYO snacks
Silent Auction - Dessert Dash Auction - Live Auction
50/50 Raffle - Dead or Alive Game - Booze Basket Raffle

Want to help make this event a huge success? Bring a team, sponsor a table, donate goods or services to the silent auction, shop at the silent auction, participate in a raffle, sponsor a round or make a donation (always welcome) Call the MCHS Trivia Night Committee at 618-451-2611. We appreciate anything you can do to help raise funds which benefit the Madison County Historical Society, and the Madison County Historical Museum and Archival Library.

Mulligans will be available at the door and are not sold in advance. Teams of eight can register by mail: (MCHS, P. O. Box 422, Edwardsville, IL 62025) or on-line at <https://www.madcohistory.org/trivianight/>.

MUSEUM FUNDRAISING

Work continues on the quiet phase of fundraising for the renovation of the Madison County Historical Museum. For information, visit the Society's website at <https://www.madcohistory.org/capital-campaign/> or call 618-656-1294.

2019 NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Apr. 15 – June ♦ Thank you for supporting MCHS!

\$250 Benefactor
Edna Grench
Robert & Mary Madoux

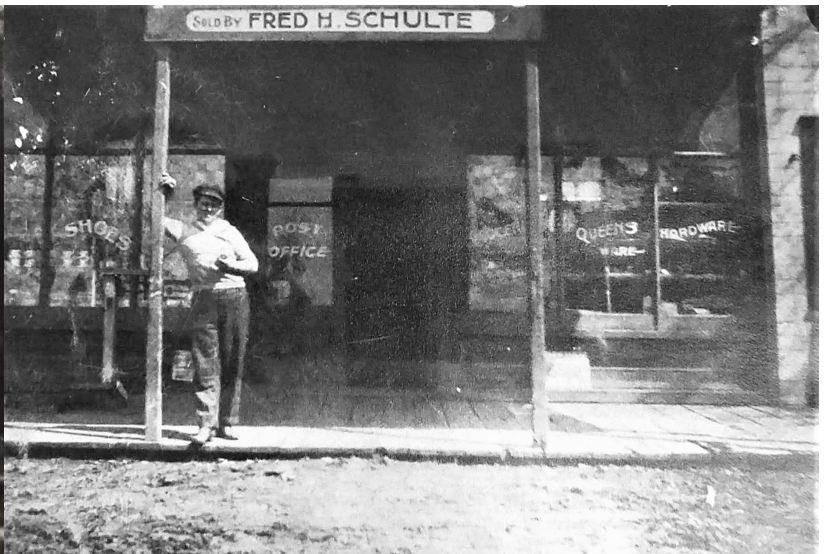
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Mary Nevinger

Ellen Nore
Sharon Petty
Jacob Surrat
Lori Uhe
J. Keith Veizer

REMEMBERING CARPENTER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)



Located on the east side of Quercus Grove Road, south of the Wabash Railroad tracks, was this store, established in 1885 by Fred C. Backs (left). When he retired, it was taken over by his son-in-law, Fred H. Schulte, shown in front of the store circa 1915. In the early 1920s the store was purchased by Gustav Neuhaus, Eileen Mateyka's father. The Schulte and Neuhaus families were also related. Until the store closed in 1932-33, the proprietor of the store also served as postmaster for the village. (Photos courtesy of Terry Fagan and John Schulte)

help and ended up in about the same position they were," Mateyka said in reference to a practice that was common during those lean years the nation suffered through.

Farming was a way of life for many Americans. According to a *New York Times* article, 30.2 percent of the nation's population lived on farms in 1920. By 1987, that figure had dropped to just 2 percent.

They were small farms, designed to feed the families that owned them and provide income through surplus produce.

Mateyka remembers Carpenter back then.

"It was mostly farmers. There were a lot of surrounding farms," she said. "My dad took fresh eggs to Alton.

But in the 1920s, very few people ventured outside their home towns with any kind of frequency. If you lived in Carpenter, you stayed in Carpenter.

Mateyka remembers many of the pastimes.

"There was one building, called a saloon, and they had a hall up above. That was entertainment. They had dances and school programs. That and the church, that was entertainment," she said.

"In the summer, it was mostly church picnics and a parade on the Fourth of July," she continued.

"At the church picnics, I had a couple of uncles. They'd give me a quarter or 50 cents and that was your money for the night and that was a big deal." Family made those picnics special.



Intimate views of the store at Carpenter show Fred Schulte (right) in the photo at left with supplies for the store. Above is a rare interior view of the store in the 1920s when owned by the Neuhaus family. (John Schulte, left photo; Eileen Mateyka, photo above)

REMEMBERING CARPENTER



John Schulte's mother framed a collection of old photographs for him including this one of a "threshing ring" near Carpenter. The label identifies Fred Schulte as "the man with the white cup." Unfortunately, John did not study the picture in detail until after his mother's death. Upon close examination, almost everyone is holding a white cup! (John Schulte)

And any flat surface that could accommodate four bases and something resembling an outfield was put to use.

"Baseball in the summer - that was a big pastime," Mateyka said. Autumn had the men out working in the fields and while they lacked modern farm equipment to ease their chores, they were well-taken care of.

"The men would do the harvesting, and the women would cook lunch and dinner," Mateyka remembered.

But eventually, it would turn cold and life in Carpenter moved indoors.

"In winter, it was card playing, (and) the women quilted at the church," Mateyka said.

Winters were harsh, so families stayed indoors and en-

joyed each other's company, often gathering at one home or another to socialize.

"Also in the winter, people would get together in their homes. The men would play cards and the women would visit," Mateyka said.

She also remembered one other circumstance unique to early 20th century America.

"There was one lady in the community that was a midwife. She helped deliver babies," Mateyka said. "There were five in my family and she helped with all five of us.



Most in the community knew her as "Grandma Stahlhut." She was the community midwife, believed to be Marie Stahlhut. (Eileen Mateyka)

...

There are conflicting stories on how Carpenter got its name, both involving the Wabash Railroad Company.

The village was platted in 1877 by John Frederick Opel, who owned a farm in the area, according to a 1962 article in the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*.

The article goes on to state that before the village was platted, the name Millersville had been used as it was located on land from the old Fred Mueller (Miller) farm.

The article goes on to state, "Sometime later a man passing through town was killed on the Wabash railroad tracks near there. His name was Frank G. Carpenter and due to this incident, it was decided to name the town Carpenter."

Millersville thus became a part of Carpenter.

However, an 1984 *Intelligencer* article says, "the Wabash Railroad Company built a spur at the present site, and, 'by order of the company,' it was called Carpenter."



The elevator and offices of the Hamel Co-op at Carpenter, Illinois. (undated). Hamel Co-op purchased the elevator in 1950 from the Backs family. Operations in Carpenter were closed in 2003 and the buildings torn down in 2005. The Hamel Co-op in Hamel will celebrate its 100th anniversary in 2020. (Hamel Co-op)

REMEMBERING CARPENTER (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)



The Wabash Depot in Carpenter. The Wabash Railroad was established at Carpenter in 1877. (Terry Fagan)

That article goes on to say that the Wabash had built another spur known as "Nobody's Switch" a half mile to the north, but railroad officials found that location unsuitable.

Both articles agree that Opel platted the village, which was officially established on May 9, 1877.

The Wabash had hoped to see Carpenter grow, which it did. According to the 1984 *Intelligencer* article, H. Breed and B. Clark established a grain office, which moved 20,000 bushels of corn in its first year.

Frank Clark then attached a building to the grain office, which became the general store.

The Wabash made Clark its station agent, and in 1878 a United State Post Office was established, at which time he added the title postmaster.

In late 1877, according to the above article, Peter Balmer, a local farmer, opened a hotel.

That structure, however, was replaced by a larger one in 1882, which was built by Charles Sprunger and J.H. Bange.

Another large grain elevator, this one built by D.S. Shellabarger and Co. of Decatur, was built in 1881.

By then, the Wabash had made Carpenter a station site, as it had constructed a water tank and pond to support its steam engines as they passed through the village.

The *Intelligencer* article goes on to state that, "In 1882, though not giving exact population figures, the *History of Madison County* by Brink describes the town as 'bustling with activity that comes with growth.' Carpenter had a physician, a general store and post office, two grain offices, a hotel, a blacksmith, a wagon shop, a harness and saddle shop and a shoemaker."

That article also mentions German immigrant Fred Backs, who moved to the village in 1885 and became Carpenter's leading businessman, as he owned a general store and two grain elevators.

Many Backs family descendants can still be found in and around Carpenter.

...

Before Carpenter was ever platted, a school took root in the area. According to the 1962 *Intelligencer* article, Carpenter School was an outgrowth of Hazel School, which was organized in 1860 by directors William Mitchell, James Apley and Wesley Davis.

A 22 x 20 building was erected for \$373, which included "all benches, desks and painting," according to the article. Later that year, George S. Pomeroy was hired as a teacher for six months for \$196.

The 1962 article included a 1907 photo of students at Carpenter School. The boys were primarily wearing white cotton shirts, dark jackets and caps. The girls were dressed in pinafores and heavy stockings.

The names listed with the photo were: Lillie Sparks, Fred Vieth, Fred Ohel (Opel), Will Bettmann, Ann Schaberg, Kathy Sparks, Mable White, Alma Moritz, Edwin Rinkel, Herman Richards, Alfred Miller, Charles Rinkel, Edward Schaberg, Dolly White, Reka Brakhane, Eva Massey, Harry Sparks and Arlie Massey.



The public school at Carpenter on Legion Drive has been converted into a home. (MCHS)

...

Zion Lutheran Church still stands atop a hill, just off Illinois 140 on Quercus Grove Road.

A 1951 *Edwardsville Intelligencer* article states that the Zion Lutheran congregation was organized on March 2, 1902, by nine Lutherans who had held membership in St. Paul's Lutheran congregation, New Gehlenbeck.

Those charter members were F.C. Backs, Gottlieb Backs, L. Stahlhut, Ferdinand Stahlhut, Fred Stahlhut, Henry Behme, C. Bien and J.H. Zimmerman.

That article states, "The plot of ground on which the church, parsonage and school originally were erected was bought in 1902 for \$800. In 1904, the congregation decided to erect a church for the sum of \$2,000 after having held services in a church of a different denomination. The cornerstone was laid Oct. 2, 1904, and on Dec. 18 in that same year the house of worship was dedicated."

REMEMBERING CARPENTER

"A year earlier, on Oct. 21, 1903, a Christian day school was organized with 12 pupils. A small house east of the church property served for a while as a schoolhouse. On Aug. 26, 1906, the congregation dedicated its own new school building."

The 1951 *Intelligencer* article focuses on the church's rededication ceremony as the building underwent an extensive remodeling.

The pastoral message of the evening service was delivered by Rev. Elmer Zimmermann of Concordia Theological Seminary in St. Louis. He was the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. J.H. Zimmerman, who were charter members of the congregation.

During the remodeling, the 1951 article states, a greater part of the old building was torn down, making way for a new basement, which included space for a kitchen and meeting room.

• • •

Directional signs on Illinois 140 and the lettering on the water tower still bear witness to Carpenter's existence.

But the post office is closed and residents now have Edwardsville mailing addresses and zip codes.

Youngsters in Carpenter attend Edwardsville District 7 schools, both the public and parochial schools having closed years ago.

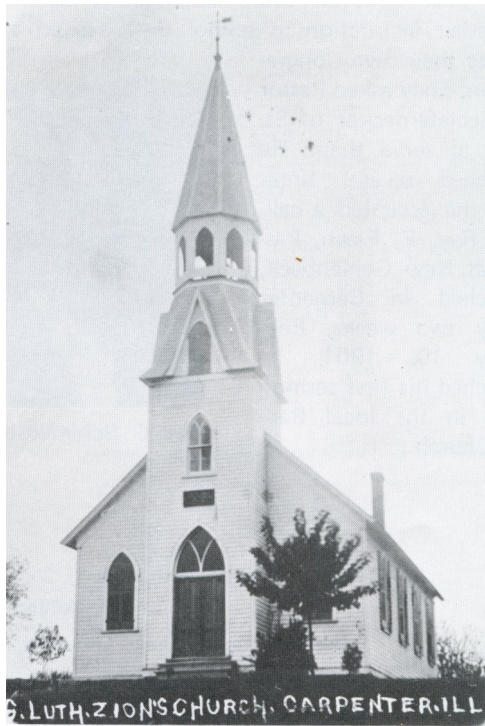
And the red, white and blue flag of the Wabash Railroad, which helped put the village on the map in the first place, hasn't been seen for about half a century.

Still, life goes on in Carpenter as it has since its beginnings.

"Carpenter is basically today what it was 50 years ago," said long-time area resident Dave Coley, who lives off of Jerusalem Road.



The Edelweiss Tavern dates back more than a century. For most of its life it was known as the Town Club and Grocery. It was started in the 1880-1890s by the Koch family (pronounced "cook") and remained in the family until it was sold to the Louis Franke family in 1948. The Frankes lived in and operated the Town Club until 1963. When the Neuhaus Store closed, Clarence Koch was appointed postmaster at the Town Club. (Bill Tucker)



Zion Lutheran Church in Carpenter is shown here circa 1910 (left) and in 1977 (above). The church was a major gathering place for many in the community. Behind the church was the Lutheran school and across Highway 140 is the Lutheran cemetery. Today Zion Lutheran Church shares a pastor with the Lutheran church at Worden. (Eileen Mateyka)

Carpenter Electric and Pump Repair Inc., owned by Jeff Tosh, is the village's most active business, but the Edelweiss Inn still operates, albeit on somewhat irregular hours, Coley said.

The Edelweiss, which serves cold beer when open, was formerly known as the Town Club, Coley said.

"A few people go up there in the evening," Coley said.

It doesn't take much imagination to picture a baseball field across the road from the Edelweiss Inn in what is now an empty lot.

Coley remembers the games from the '40s and what they meant to the village.

"They had a ball field across from the tavern," Coley said. "They had a pretty good team back then in what was called the 3M League. They played Hamel, Staunton, Bethalto. As kids, we would go up there and ride our bikes around the bases after the games."

Zion Lutheran Church still stands on the hill, but Coley said membership has declined and many of its members and would-be members travel to Worden for Sunday services.

Coley said what is now the Edelweiss Inn, at one time included a small grocery store.

"They had a meat counter. You could get ice cream, a loaf of bread," he said.

And there was a gas station on Route 140 that was operated by Elizabeth Backs.

It was a gathering spot, Coley said, "where you get a beer and play cards."

Cards, baseball and the railroad tie Carpenter's history together. Those things and more make the village more than just the double overpasses on Route 140.

Thanks to Cindy Reinhardt, Laverne Bloemker and Kelly Tosh for their help with this article.



Madison County Historical Society

Opening Doors to Madison County History

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Edwardsville, IL 62025

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MCHS CALENDAR

SATURDAY, AUGUST 10 - 7 P.M.

MCHS TRIVIA NIGHT

American Legion Hall

190 S. Main Street, Glen Carbon, Illinois

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11 - 2 P.M.

THE WOOD RIVER MASSACRE

Presenter: Superintendent Jon Parkin

Immanuel United Methodist Church

800 N. Main Street, Edwardsville

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21

3 P.M. - 7 P.M.

**LIVING HISTORY: A CHATAUQUA
WITH MARK TWAIN AND FRIENDS**

Edwardsville City Park

Corner of E. Vandalia and Buchanan

Edwardsville, Illinois

SUNDAY OCTOBER 13 - 2 P.M.

THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Presenter: Eric Robinson

Immanuel United Methodist Church

800 N. Main Street, Edwardsville

MARY'S RESEARCH TIP

Review Your Research

by Mary Westerhold

Often when working on family history, you hit a "brick wall" and can't seem to get any further. One method I use is to focus on an individual and review the research using timelines, maps, and even a brief history of that person.

When you start to gather information on a specific person, gaps become apparent and ideas for new resources (or resources you have used for other individuals) come to mind. If you are still stuck on an individual, try researching a sibling, a cousin, or another relative. You might find the answer you are seeking or maybe just another clue that will lead to another clue and another clue....

\$15 SUMMER MEMBERSHIP SPECIAL

Do you know someone who might enjoy a membership in the Madison County Historical Society? Since membership runs on the calendar year, January 1 - December 31, the society is offering a \$15 summer membership which expires in December. Individual memberships are normally \$35.

The special is for new members only and is not available on-line. Those interested can join or purchase a gift membership in person at the Madison County Archival Library at 801 N. Main Street in Edwardsville or mail to MCHS, P. O. Box 422, Edwardsville, IL, 62025. MCHS representatives will be at numerous events around the county where the special will also be available. For information call 618-656-1294.