



2023 ANNUAL MEETING

The annual Dining-in-History event at the Olde Wicks Factory in Highland on November 5 was a wonderful event. Attendees enjoyed touring the historic facility as well as a performance on the nearly century-old Wicks Theatre Pipe Organ in the Grand Hall.

Thank you to all who attended! We hope to see you again next year at another historic venue in Madison County history.



THE COMMUNITY AT FRUIT STATION

BY CINDY REINHARDT

There is an often-repeated Bible verse that says, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away" (Job 1:21). A century ago, the same might have been said about railroads. In a time before automobile transportation, the railroad often brought prosperity to an area, creating small communities all along the line that lasted until the trains stopped running. One of many such places in Madison County was the community of Fruit, Illinois, also known as Fruit Station.

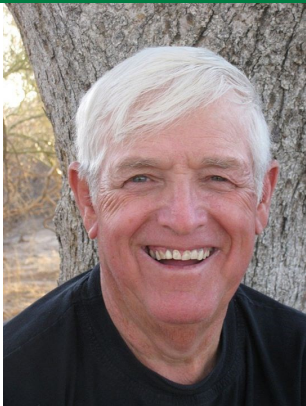
Fruit is located on Fruit Road, 2.5 miles east of Route 157 between Edwardsville and Hamel, Illinois. It straddles the boundary between Pin Oak and Hamel Townships. The community once consisted of several homes, a two-story train depot with loading platform, a grain elevator, blacksmith shop, a tavern, and a combination general store, post office and hotel. All of these bordered Fruit Road near the railroad tracks. Today, none of the business buildings remain, although a few foundations along the bike trail are evidence that there is a story to be told.

The area around Fruit was simply rural farmland before the Toledo, Cincinnati, and St. Louis Railroad, a narrow-gauge line, came through in 1883. By that time, John Gray Fruit was long established on his farm

Cont. on page 4



2024 SPEAKER SERIES KICKS OFF FEBRUARY 11



Larry Kinsella

On Sunday, February 11 at 2 p. m. the Madison County Historical Society will welcome Larry Kinsella as the first presenter in the 2024 MCHS Speaker Series. The event will be held at the Main Street Community Center at 1003 N. Main Street in Edwardsville, Illinois. Speaker Series events are free and open to the public.

Kinsella will discuss last summer's "Chip-a-Canoe" project, where volunteers spent 451 hours turning a felled tree into a canoe

using only hand-made stone tools. Although others have made canoes in recent years, those were done using fire. In analyzing the few existing dugout canoes from the prehistoric past, Kinsella theorized that they did not use fire to con-

struct these early canoes. Instead, he believes they used only stone tools, from taking down the tree to shaping the canoe, and this experimental archaeological project set out to prove that premise.

The project not only proved the validity of the experiment, it was also painstakingly documented at every step of the way by journalist/videographer Steve Rensberry. Kinsella is presently working with archaeologist Steve Boles, Senior Research Archaeologist at the Illinois State Archaeological Survey, to write a presentation based on the documentation and observations accumulated through the Chip-a-Canoe Project. The presentation will be offered at the 2024 Annual Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology.

Kinsella, who has a strong interest in experimental archaeology, said he talked about this project for 35 years. He said, "It's inevitable that someone finally calls your bluff. That's what happened a few years ago at the Rabbit Stick Rendezvous in Rexburg, Idaho. Myron

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Hours
Mon-Tues, by appointment
Wed - Fri, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.
Sunday 1- 4 p.m.

**Madison County History Museum
and Library**
801 N. Main Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Contact us:
Library: 618-656-7569
Society: 618-656-1294
Email: info@madcohistory.org

RECENT NEWS

WEIR HOUSE DECORATED FOR HOLIDAYS



The League of Women Voters held its December meeting in the Weir House and made sure the old house was suitably decked out for the holiday season. It was great seeing it so lively!

If you have an organization that would like to meet in the museum, there are select dates available. Please call 618-656-7569 to inquire.

THE WINDOWS ARE DONE!

The last of the restored windows was installed at the Weir House since the last newsletter. What a job! The Weir House has 31 windows. Almost all were removed and restored except some of the dormer windows which were not original to the house. Thank you to everyone who sponsored restoration of a museum window.

Thank you

The history article in this issue would not have been possible without the assistance of past and current residents of Fruit Station and their descendants. In particular, the memories, photographs, and documents shared by dozens of people on Facebook were very helpful. In addition, interviews and/or correspondence with Sandy Klenke Gibbons, Rodney Klenke, Mark and Robin Paproth, Kelly Paproth, Steve and Mary, Haarmann, Pattie Ann Sommerfeldt, Jo Sanders, Carol Pletcher Treat, Carol Fruit, Susan Fruit Henderson, Bill Anderson, Randy Long, and Carlene Strassen Keilback were invaluable.

CURRENT PROJECTS

Current projects for MCHS include:

Working with a professional design firm to create new museum exhibits.

Creating a new sign for the front of the building.

Applying for two major grants.

Exploring a redesign of the website and social media presence.

Planning programming for 2024. Expect another event with Thomas Jefferson, who may bring his friend John Adams, Living History Days festival and so much more!

LIBRARY VOLUNTEERS CELEBRATED

Library staff and volunteers celebrated the end of a very productive year as well as the holiday season with refreshments and small gifts of appreciation.

With the Probate Project, there is a never ending need for volunteers for prep work. MCHS is very grateful for all our volunteers.

2024 MCHS MEMBERSHIP

IT'S TIME TO RENEW!

Thank you to all who have already sent in your membership renewal for 2024. For all non-profit memberships, each reminder sent out costs the organization additional funds, so these early renewals are greatly appreciated. All memberships in MCHS run on the calendar year, January 1-December 31. Membership dollars, in combination with fundraising, donations, and grants, pay for publications, programming, salaries, operational expenses, and more. MCHS can't thank you enough!

NEW FLAG FOR 2024

Thanks to a generous grant from the Raise the Flag Fund of the Edwardsville Community Foundation, there will be a new American flag flying at the museum in 2024.



Donna Bardon
Craig Becker
Betty Byrd
Lynn Engelman
Dixie Engelman
Mike Featherstun
Susan Featherstun
Gary Forshaw
Laura Fowler
Laurie Frey
Carol Frisse
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Connie Royston
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Sue Wolf

Volunteers make everything possible! Thanks to those above as well to members of the MCHS Board who are also dedicated volunteers.

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PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor
cindy.reinhardt@madcohistory.org

VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the Museum or the 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 a MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our web-site, or at the Library.

THE Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

RECENT NEWS

KINSELLA ... (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

Cretney told me I'd better start the project while I still could." His dream project was completed in the summer of 2023.

Kinsella, an amateur archaeologist, has volunteered at Cahokia Mounds for 50 years and has been involved in archaeology for more than 65 years. He began to flintknapping in 1980 and has authored many articles and papers on experimental archaeology. In addition to his work on flintknapping, he has also written and published articles on atlatls and banner stones in numerous archaeology publications.

In 2010, he was awarded the prestigious Don Crabtree Award by the Society of American Archaeology. A carpenter by trade, he combines those skills with his experience in experimental archaeology to provide programming for libraries, schools, universities, and now, for the Madison County Historical Society.



Workers test the canoe made entirely with stone tools. (Kinsella)

PEERING INTO THE PAST...PARANORMALLY

MCHS will host a follow-up paranormal investigation of the Weir House (the museum building) on January 20 through the Midwest Paranormal Investigators Consortium (MPIC).

This previously announced event will be held from 7 p.m. - midnight and is limited to 20 participants (15 years and older). Tickets are \$40 per person, with reservations taken on a first-come, first-served basis.

To make reservations, contact Lynn Engelman at 703-994-0806 or email lae2017@gmail.com with your name and contact information. Visit the Society's Facebook page or website for further information.

2024 NEWSLETTER SPONSORS Thank You!



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406 Hillsboro Avenue, Edwardsville, Illinois
ESTABLISHED 1841

DONATION IN MEMORY OF

LOIS CLAIRE TEASDALE POOLE

The Madison County Historical Society is grateful for a recent \$5,000 donation in memory of Lois Claire Teasdale Poole (1927-2022). Although Lois never lived in Madison County, she was an MCHS member,

Lois was born in California, but her genealogical history had deep roots in Madison County where she had many cousins, aunts, uncles, and other relatives. Through marriage, she was even connected to the Hoxsey family, which included Mary Hoxsey Weir who once lived in the MCHS museum building. Another interesting aspect of Lois's story is that her uncle, Henry Loewen, was a portrait photographer in Edwardsville. His name can be found on many century-old photographs of Madison County families. Lois's maternal line included many familiar Madison County families including Handlon, Bardelmeier, and Take.

We extend condolences to her family at their loss and sincere appreciation for their generous donation.

OOOPS!

Several readers noticed the ending text was inadvertently cut off during layout of page 7 in the last edition of the MCHS News. The missing word was "knew."

FEATURED NEWSLETTER SPONSOR THE BANK OF MADISON COUNTY Thank You!

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THE COMMUNITY AT FRUIT STATION (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

on the north side of Fruit Road in Hamel Township, as was James B. McKee on his farm on the south side of Fruit Road in Pin Oak Township. The train ran through both of their farms.

THE MCKEE LAND

James Barber McKee was born on a farm south of Edwardsville in 1831. By 1850, he had established his own farm in Section Three of Pin Oak Township. His home, located approximately a mile south of the intersection of Fruit and Staunton Roads, was said to have been built before the Civil War. Unfortunately, the historic house was destroyed by fire this past summer. When the railroad arrived, the station was located on the south side of Fruit Road on McKee land. The railroad called it McKee Station. Shortly after, McKee began selling his property.

Of particular historic interest in the history of Fruit is a triangle of land consisting of 7.25 acres which was bordered by Fruit Road on the north, Staunton Road on the west with the railroad (now a bike trail) which completed the triangle. In the sketch at right, it is labeled as parcel #33 (the present-day tax ID number).

McKee sold most of his farm to Fritz Reineke in 1884. Reineke divided the triangular parcel north of the tracks into two parcels. He sold the parcel closest to Fruit Road and bordering the railroad to attorney E. J. Jeffries in 1889. Jeffries and his partners established a grain elevator there. In 1901, Reineke sold the remaining 3.25 acres in the triangle to George & Lena Tegmeier for \$543.75.

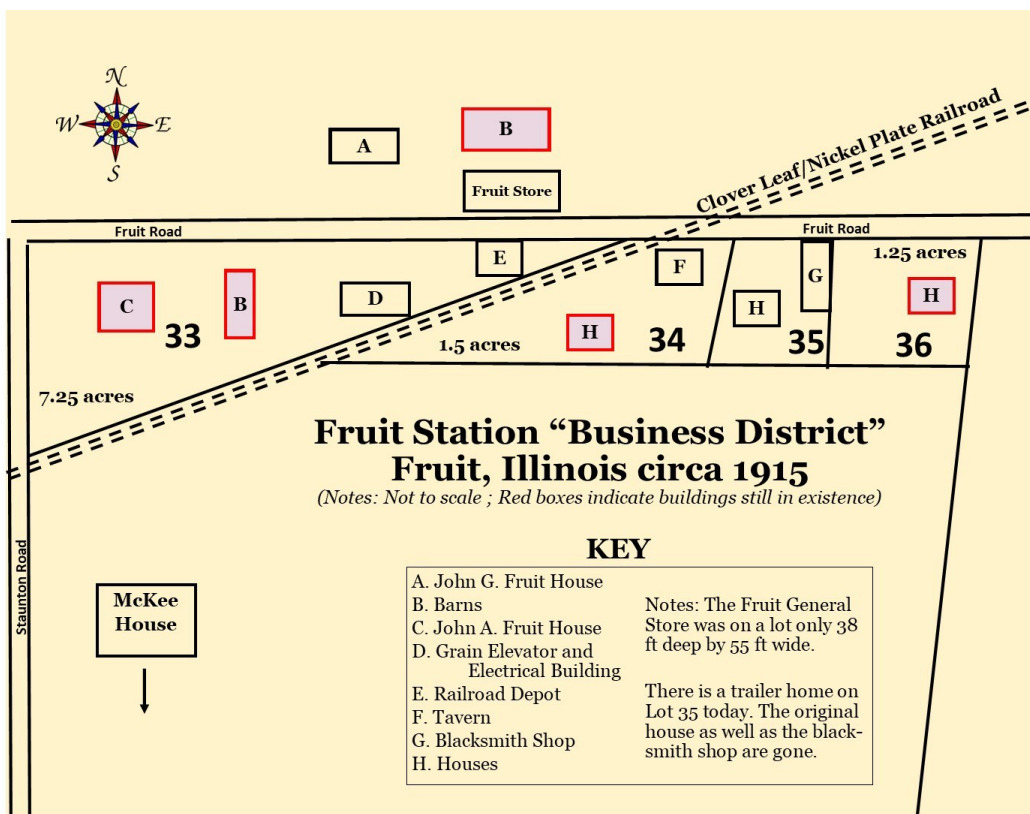
Three years later, in 1904, the Tegmeiers sold that same parcel to John A. Fruit for \$2,600. An oral history story passed down to Rodney Klenke said there was a house on the property which was moved after John Fruit purchased it in 1904. The price difference reflected here, \$543.75 vs. \$2,600 in four years' time, supports that story. The house was supposed to have been moved to a lot nearby, but the location is unknown.

THE FRUIT FAMILY

Long before the railroad came along, there was the Fruit (Fruitt) family. They first travelled north from Kentucky in 1811 to explore Illinois. At that time, they determined that the Native American situation was too unsettled, so they returned home. They must have been impressed with what they saw because in 1817, Edmund Fruit (1786-1861) and



In this undated photograph of Fruit, Illinois the general store before it was expanded is shown on the left and the dark building on the right is the train station. Beyond the station is the saloon building and even farther back, partially hidden by the horse and wagon is the blacksmith shop. Just beyond the wagon in the center of the street is the railroad crossing. Notice that Fruit Road was still dirt, or mud when it rained. (Kelly Paproth)



This sketch of Fruit Station identifies the businesses in Fruit, Illinois circa 1915. The numbers 33-36 are tax ID numbers, with "33" identifying "the triangle" which is often referenced in the story. Note that the north side of Fruit Road is in Hamel Township; the south side in Pin Oak Township. (by Cindy Reinhardt)

his wife Mary (Gray) Fruit returned to Illinois. This time they purchased 160 acres in what would become section 19 of Pin Oak Township. The price was \$2 per acre. That property, where they raised their family, is near the Dunlap Lake subdivision today. In the 1830s, Edmund purchased another 150 acres, in three parcels, paying \$1.25 per acre.

LIFE ON THE PRAIRIE CHANGED WITH THE RAILROAD

Their son, John Gray Fruit (1816-1891), also purchased land directly from the United States. On Nov. 3, 1836, he purchased 80 acres of land for \$1.25 per acre which was on the southern border of what would become Hamel

Township (townships weren't established until 1875). That farm included property which would eventually become Fruit Station, but it was a desolate place back then, covered with prairie grass and no nearby neighbors.

Eventually, John was joined by two brothers, Jefferson and Washington Fruit, who purchased adjoining farms in Hamel Township.

In 1841, John married Judith Frances Wilson (1825-1920). Like her husband, Judith was born in Kentucky and moved to Edwardsville with her parents when she was very young. She lived to be 95 years old and for many years was Edwardsville's

oldest resident. As a member of the Madison County Old Settler's Union, she was interviewed on numerous occasions. From these interviews there is a description of life on the prairie in the early years of her marriage.

The *Edwardsville Republican* in December 1917 reported the following:

"Mrs. Fruit blushed when asked when she had married and replied, "That's the only thing in my life that I am ashamed to tell; I was less than 16, but I've always been glad I did it."

"She was married to John Gray Fruit, Feb. 18, 1841. They went to a farm east of town and lived in a log cabin in the midst of the great prairie. The nearest neighbor lived a mile and a half away. Although wolves could be heard howling less than a quarter of a mile away, many nights when her husband was far afield, she was not afraid. She loved life in the wilds of Illinois although the only recreation at the end of a long hard day was her knitting, and she had plenty of that to do as she made all the stockings worn by her family for a number of years."

The reporter commented on Judith's positive attitude, even during the worst of times. She attributed her advanced age to having an optimistic disposition. Here he describes the tragedies of 1891.

"Mr. and Mrs. (John G.) Fruit's life had been especially happy, and they were looking forward to

their 50th wedding anniversary when the former was taken ill. Only a few months remained before the event, and his illness was the first of a series of misfortunes that transformed the brightest period of their lives into a period of sorrow. Within seven months four members of the family died. The first death was that of a son, Capt. Thomas E. Fruit, February 24, 1891. Two days later, a brother of Mr. Fruit, Jefferson Fruit, died. Mr. Fruit's death occurred April 24, and that of another son, George, the following September. Mrs. Fruit, in the face of these calamities, did not become embittered, but regarded her sorrows philosophically."

THE RAILROAD

Planning of the route for the Toledo, Cincinnati & St. Louis Railroad, known as "the narrow gauge," began in 1881. The track was completed and a regular schedule established by May 1883. Note that a permanent Edwardsville station on that line was completed the same year and is still in existence today (the Nickel Plate Station).

When the first stop north of Edwardsville was established in 1883 it was called McKee Station. Three years later, in 1886, the line was purchased by the Toledo, St. Louis, and Kansas City Railroad, known as the "Clover Leaf." That same year, the U. S. Postal Service added three offices, all at local railroad stations: Stallings, Peters, and McKee Stations.

Three years earlier, in February 1883, John A. Fruit, the youngest son of John G. and Judith Fruit, was hired as station agent for the railroad. In 1886, he was also appointed as the first postmaster at McKee Station. At that time, post office locations were often named for the postmaster which is why McKee Station changed its name to Fruit Station.

In 1889, the Clover Leaf widened the base of its road from a narrow gauge to a standard gauge railroad, about a six-inch difference in the space between the rails. The Clover Leaf was sold in December 1922, to the New York, Chicago, and St. Louis Railroad, aka, the "Nickel Plate."

The last local passenger service on the Nickel Plate was in 1959 and the last freight train came through in the late 1990s, but they had long before discontinued a stop at Fruit. In 2001, the former rail line officially opened as the Nickel Plate Trail, part of the Madison County Transit Trail System.

FRUIT, ILLINOIS

By the time Fruit was established as a station and post office, John G. Fruit was 70 years old, so his youngest son, John Albert Fruit, was the entrepreneur who established multiple businesses at Fruit. The first of these businesses was a general store established in 1885 on the north side of Fruit Road next to the Fruit homestead. After his father's death in 1891, John A. and a brother-in-law, Harry Belk, opened their new store the following year. In 1905, John built a new grain elevator. The sketch of Fruit provided here shows the locations of these businesses.

It is believed that John A. Fruit continued to live in the homestead (pictured at left) with his mother and several siblings near the Fruit General Store for some time. John bought out the interest of his brother-in-law when the Belks moved out of the area in 1893.

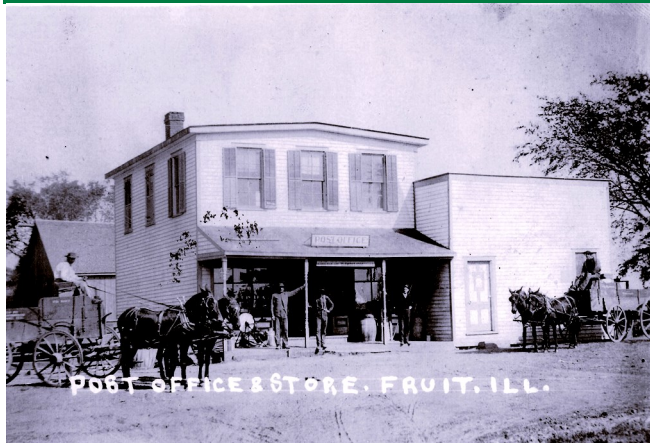


Judith Fruit in 1913 at a meeting of the Old Settler's Union (MCHS)



The home built for John G. and Judith Fruit circa 1849. When the house was torn down in 1976, it was said to be 127 years old at the time. (Rodney Klenke)

THE FRUIT FAMILY AND THEIR BUSINESSES (CONT. FROM PAGE 5)



Two undated views of the Fruit General Store showing it before and after an expansion. Although it looks large in the photographs, the original building was probably not much larger than a four-square house. The store was on a lot only 38 feet deep by 55 feet wide.

(At left, Courtesy Steve Haarmann; At right, MCHS)



The Fruit family farm, with the exception of the lot with the store, was sold in 1893 as part of the estate settlement. In 1918, John and Anna Buhrle purchased the former Fruit farm and their descendants, the Klenke family, still own and operate the farm today after more than a century.

In 1901, 40-year-old John Albert Fruit married Lilly Dzengolewski of Alhambra, a schoolteacher 13 years his junior. After his marriage, he and his wife occupied the old homestead built by his parents. His mother Judith moved in to Edwardsville where she lived on North Buchanan Street, not far from where she lived as a child, for the last 19 years of her life.

Lilly, of course, left her job as a teacher (female teachers could not be married), and they soon started a family which grew to include eight children, seven who survived to adulthood. All the children were given college educations, but as youngsters the boys were expected to help at the store.

In 1904, John purchased the western part of the previously described triangle and, probably within a year, built a modern nine-room, two-story Victorian home for his growing family. He had previously purchased the other section of the triangle, across the road from his store, where the station and soon a new grain elevator would be located.

The Fruit family was well-respected in business as well as personable in their dealings with friends and neighbors.

In a recent letter from Bill Anderson, he shared excerpts from a 1970 interview with his grandparents regarding the Fruit family and Fruit Station. His grandparents, William A

Klueter (1893-1986) and Flora C. L. Henke (1894-1992) were born on farms near Fruit Station and grew up there.

He wrote that, "They had a deep respect for the Fruit family. They were good people and fair dealers, and their business was a community center of sorts."

The General Store was indeed a community center, but there is very little documentation remaining to tell of the diverse activities of the enterprise. There was no need to advertise, since their customer base was all local. In fact, if they did advertise, locals had to go to the store to get their newspapers or mail.

However, there are memories or oral histories which help weave together clues of an earlier time. Susie Bloom said her parents, Melvin and Olga Grotefendt, spent their honeymoon night in the hotel above the store. Melvin grew up on the family farm just down the road. Steve Haarmann has no personal memories of it ever being open, but he remembers that the adults in his childhood referred to the big old building on Fruit Road as "the hotel." Darlene Klingel said that she rented an apartment in the building in the 1950s. These stories, and others like them, are the only way to know that it was once a hotel and apartment building as well as a general store.

According to those who remember, the general store sold food staples, clothing, shoes, feed and seed, plows, tools, housewares and more, but it also served as a community meeting place where neighbors met and passed on the most recent news. The post office with a set of post office boxes was in the store at a time when people some-



From left, 1901 wedding portrait of John A. and Lilly Fruit; The home built by John & Lilly circa 1905; The children of John and Lilly Fruit, from left, are Ruth (1913), Roy (1909), Maurice (1908), Clyde (1906), Mildred (1905), Warren (1904), and Irene (1902). (Carol Pletcher

GENERAL STORE WAS HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

times had savings accounts with the post office. John A. could coordinate the business of the station and grain elevator from the store. According to a Fruit family memoir by Jane Wisco in the 1960s, John was always on the platform when she and her mother passed by on their way to visit her grandparents in Edwardsville.

"Just before we came to Edwardsville we stopped at Fruit Station where we always looked out the train window to see if we could spy Cousin John and talk with him a little. We never failed to see him standing there on the platform wearing his train cap, no coat, but a vest and shirt sleeves held up by a rubber band worn for that purpose in those days by businessmen to keep their shirt sleeves clean. He was a small man with a very pleasant expression and always seemed to enjoy seeing us. We would lean out the train window talking until the train moved slowly on, both of us waving until he was out of sight. We could always see the old homestead in the background, while the little store building stood near the station on the right (side of the road) with a hitching post in front where horses were tied."

The Fruit family believed in education and supported the local Union Grove School where John served on the School Board for 20 years. They were also religious, attending the nearby Cumberland Presbyterian Church. They were active members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and often hosted gatherings or picnics at their home. They could not have been pleased when in 1906 Henry Wiesemeyer purchased land just east of the railroad depot and built a tavern.

The Wiesemeyer saloon hosted platform dances, fish fries, and other entertainments across the street from the Fruit General Store. It was a short-lived enterprise though, since it was forced to close in 1920 with Prohibition. There is no indication that it re-opened after Prohibition ended.

The Fruit businesses also provided income opportunities for the area. Again, from Bill Anderson,

"My grandfather's father, Herman Henry Klueter (1862-1939) immigrated from Germany in 1883, came to Madison County and worked for Mr. Fruit until he saved enough to buy a horse. Then he borrowed farming equipment from friends and family and began farming nearby.

"My grandfather recalled the routine of hauling milk daily to Fruit Station, where a train they call the "plug train" arrived every morning at 11 and picked up milk to take to Edwardsville. The plug train stopped again at Fruit Station at 6 p.m." (Note: A plug train was a train offering local service on a long-haul freight line.)



Undated photograph showing the intersection of Fruit Road and the Clover Leaf Railroad. The house at left still remains, but the "Saloon" in front (that's Fruit Road running in front of the saloon) has been gone for many years. On the west side of the track is the railroad station (the dark building) and the grain elevator. (Haarmann and Paproth)

"People in the area routinely took the plug train from Fruit Station to and from Edwardsville for various reasons. In my grandmother's case, it was for music lessons on St Louis Street among other things. She remembered the train fare as 25 cents; grandpa thought it was a dime."

In later years, John hired a man to drive a milk truck which would go from farm to farm gathering milk to be sent out on the daily west-bound train to Edwardsville. Area farms were able to provide eggs and produce for the store's shelves, and many locals

worked at the store/hotel filling multiple positions.

In the 1880s, John Fruit advertised for a blacksmith at Fruit. It's not known if he was successful then, but, in 1904, William and Tillie Geers purchased two lots on Fruit Road east of the railroad tracks on the south side of the road. William was a blacksmith and wagonmaker who immediately set up shop in Fruit. In 1916, Geers sold the property to John Fruit when they moved to Marine, Illinois. The Fruits sold out to another blacksmith, Fred Kuhn, when they retired in 1943. In 1960, Fred sold his blacksmith business (not the property) to Henry "Hank" Haarmann who moved the shop down the road to his farm east of Fruit in 1964. Hank's son, Steve, still does blacksmithing part-time, mostly fabrication and repairs. Neither he nor his father were ever farriers who worked with horses.



Hank Haarmann's Blacksmith shop after storm damage in 1964. (Haarmann)

While still living at Fruit, John A. became involved in numerous businesses. On December 31, 1934, after 49 years, the post office at Fruit closed. With the advent of Rural Free Delivery, it was no longer needed. Only a dozen patrons had boxes at Fruit by the time it closed and the primary advantage was the newspaper could be read a day earlier.

John A. Fruit, who had been a postmaster, station agent, store and grain elevator manager as well as a farmer, evidently wanted to do more. He purchased the grain elevators at Stallings and Peters Stations, was a founder of the Edwardsville Creamery and A & B Feed Company in Edwardsville and became a director at the Edwardsville National Bank and Trust Company. He sold his home and businesses in Fruit in 1943 to Clifford Castor and wife. John and his wife, Lillie, retired to a

Cont. on page 8

SAVE THE DATES!

The schedule for the 2024 Speakers Series has been set. As always, these programs are always scheduled on Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. at the Main Street Community Center at 1003 N. Main Street in Edwardsville, Illinois. They are free and open to the public.

FEBRUARY 11

Chip-a-Canoe; Presenter Larry Kinsella (See article on page one.)

APRIL 14

Abraham Lincoln and Gustav Koerner: At the Crossroads of History; Presenters Jack Le Chien and Molly McKenzie

JUNE 9

Loving Lincoln, Stories about Women who Influenced Abraham Lincoln; Presenter Stacy Lynn

AUGUST 11

Famous But Forgotten: Residents who were famous in their time, but are now forgotten; Presenter Cindy Reinhardt

CALENDAR

Saturday, January 20

Exploring the Weir House...Paranormally
Ticketed event - Details on page 3

Wednesday, January 31

Annual Appeal Kick-Off Reception
(Ticketed event)

Sunday, February 11*

2 p.m.

Chip-a-Canoe

Building a Dugout Canoe using Only Stone Tools
An Experimental Archaeology Project

Presenter: Larry Kinsella

*Location: Main Street Community Center
1003 N. Main Street - Edwardsville

THE COMMUNITY OF FRUIT, ILLINOIS (CONT. FROM PAGE 7)

home on N. Buchanan St. in Edwardsville near other Fruit family relatives.

Castor bought the house and store building and lived at Fruit until his death in 1959. The former store building was left empty for many years. It was destroyed by fire in 1972. The fire was so fierce it scorched the side of a nearby barn where the Buhrls had a difficult time saving the panicked cattle inside. After the fire, the Buhrls bought the property where the store was located.

The beautiful John A. and Lilly Fruit home, after the Castor family, became home to the Sommerfeldt family for decades. Then, it sat empty for ten years, but is now being restored. The barn on the property, which likely predates the house, also remains.

There is part of the train station's foundation remaining. The elevator was taken down many years ago and the ma-



The John & Lilly Fruit homestead in 2023.

(Reinhardt)

terials were used to build a barn for Louis Klenke on Maple Road. The foundation is still there as well as an electrical building which stood next to the elevator. In the early days, what became known as the electrical building had a large gasoline engine to provide power.

The saloon building is gone, but the house on the property which dates to some-time before 1906, is still there.

The former blacksmith shop is also gone, but the house (Lot 36), possibly built for William and Tillie Geers, has been occupied by the same family for more than 60 years.

Fruit is today a cluster of homes where everyone knows their neighbors. It is perhaps not so quiet as the prairie described by Judith Fruit, but it is a lovely, tranquil place which contains many fond memories for the families who knew it well.