



Miller County Historical Society

2 0 0 5 H W Y . 5 2 , T U S C U M B I A , M O 6 5 0 8 2

**INSIDE THIS
ISSUE:**

Oral History	2
Elmer's Fiddle	2
President's Message	2
Williams Tombstones	3
Inside Story	4
Donors	4

Museum hours are Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m. to 4 p.m.

CAR SHOW AND CHILI SUPPER SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 15

WHERE HAS THE SUMMER GONE? Preparations are under way for our final social event of the year—the car show and chili supper. This is always a popular event and signals the close of our museum season for 2011.

Jack Brumley is in charge of the car show and **Connie Prather** will be directing the kitchen crew. Food service will begin at 11 a.m. and tickets are still just \$5. The menu includes chili, dessert and beverages, plus the music of Joe Jeffries' group.

Elva Steen donated yet another of her lovely quilts and sales of raffle tickets have been going on throughout the summer. Tickets will still be available the day of the event—\$1 each or 6 for \$5—with a drawing at the close of the day.

We look forward to sharing a lovely fall day with all of you. Come see us!



Lewis Wall's new old toy

IMPROMPTU EVENT WELL RECEIVED

We added a new temporary display this summer featuring "The Glory Brigade, a movie filmed in the Tuscumbia area in the 1950's. Many local people still recall this event. Artifacts used in the display, as well as a copy of the film itself, were donated earlier this year by **Mike Wineman**. Because of the interest shown in this display, it was decided to host a

free Sunday matinee showing of the movie. Thanks in part to advance publicity by Vernon Publishing Company, this impromptu event was very well attended—it was standing room only! We have decided to expand our permanent military display next season to incorporate the Korean War and Miller County people who served their country during this conflict.

FAMILY ORAL HISTORY ... FACT OR FICTION?

When artifacts are donated to the museum, we try to get a little history and background on the item in order to make our displays more interesting and informative. Often the stories offered have their roots in family history, handed down by word of mouth through several generations

For example, when we were first doing museum renovations, **Patsy Wickham** came in with an item that had been in her family since before she could recall. It was a smooth, brown ball, slightly smaller than a baseball; it was as light weight, as Styrofoam. Patsy said it was a cow hairball—something we had never heard of. To verify this story, we took the item to the Veterinary Museum in Jefferson City where they confirmed that it was as represented. Called a “bezoar”, it was once thought to have medicinal properties and would neutralize poisons (which it didn’t).

Another item that has been at the museum for several years was a “mastodon tooth”. A very

old, yellowed paper from 1934 detailed how dinosaur bones and several teeth were discovered east of Olean in 1917. According to the article, two teeth were originally given to the Missouri State Museum in the Capitol and this one was donated to us by the family in 2004.

Dwight Weaver, one of our charter members and a recognized authority on caves, was the first to question our identification of this artifact. It was his opinion this was in fact a stalactite, the drip formations that hang from the ceiling of caves. We were still uncertain until we were visited by **Jerry D. Vineyard**, retired Assistant State Geologist, who immediately identified the item as a stalactite.

While the account of the discovery may be correct, our artifact, sadly, was not part of that finding. It is often difficult to let go of the colorful stories handed down through families, but in the interest of accuracy, we have corrected our display to reflect this new information.

IT’S MUSIC TO OUR EARS

When the museum closes for the season, we will take the opportunity to freshen our displays by adding new items and creating new displays. Thanks to the continuing generosity of **Joe Pryor**, we will be incorporating **Elmer Flaughter’s** old fiddle, complete with rattlesnake rattles, into our music display.

Legend has it that fiddles were once considered to be instruments of the Devil and rattlesnake rattles were put inside the body of the fiddle to

ward off evil. Another version of the story says that fiddle players put rice inside their fiddles to absorb moisture, much like we do in our salt shakers. Since mice liked to chew in to eat the rice, rattlesnake rattles were added to keep the mice away.

We like both stories and are excited about adding this new acquisition to our existing display.



**Elmer Flaughter's
Fiddle**

P R E S I D E N T ' S M E S S A G E

The Pig and Pickle Fest held Saturday September 17 at the Riverside Park in Tuscumbia was quite a treat for all who attended. Even though it was a rainy day, hundreds came to the event. It had been well advertised due to the efforts of Larry Flaucher, Tuscumbia High School Alumni Association president who distributed fliers and signs around the county. The event was sponsored by the Tuscumbia Alumni Association with proceeds going to the Association, the Special Olympics, and the village of Tuscumbia.

Tuscumbia community volunteers provided all the labor for set up of tents, chairs and preparing meals in the park pavilion. The meal featured pulled pork with all the sides and desserts and, of course, the delicious deep-fried dill pickles.

Four community fire departments held a cook off featuring their version of smoked pork loin. The Brumley community fire department won the first place award, but the Tuscumbia fire depart-

ment raised the most money for their team's pork loin sold at auction.

Our museum was represented in one of the shelters where we displayed our quilt for this year's quilt raffle. The quilt was made by my wife Judy's mother, Elva Steen.

Dan Peek and his wife Joe Pryor, our President and Good-Will Ambassador Joy participated in the event bringing copies of Dan's book "Live! The Ozark Opry." Lois Mace Webb, sister to Lee Mace, came all the way from Stilwell, Kansas to enjoy the festivities.

A car show contest was sponsored by the event and large trophies were awarded. The kids had a greased pig race but it was difficult to determine who won.

Master of Ceremonies for the event was Frank Schlesinger who also provided musical entertainment. Additional musical entertainment was provided by "Wasted Time" from Eldon. Some in the audience could not resist the urge to get out on the dance floor.



Joe Pryor, our President and Good-Will Ambassador

J o h n a n d M a h a l a W i l l i a m s W e r e E a r l y M i l l e r C o u n t y S e t t l e r s

John Williams and Mahala (Barton) Williams came to Miller County from Kentucky in 1859, settling on a farm west of Iberia. Shortly after arriving, Mahala died in childbirth. She and her infant daughter were the first burials in the Williams Cemetery. John was buried there in 1879. Over time their tombstones have become weathered and broken, and a family descendant, **Sherril Steen**, recently replaced them. When the old tombstones were offered to our museum for storage and preservation, we were delighted!

The museum also has on display a barn loom that the family brought with them from Kentucky as well as the restored slave cabin that stood on their farm.

Two of John and Mahala Williams' great-granddaughters were instrumental in organizing the Miller County Historical Society and several of their descendants are actively involved in the museum today.



STEWARDSHIP

During the past quarter, we received significant monetary contributions from the following individuals:

Waldo and Alice Steen

Joe and Judy Pryor

Robert and Alice Tyler

John and Megan Pryor

Marilyn Bosso

Ruby Webb

Stanley Huhman

Lois Webb

Harold and Gail Strange

Dr. Paul and Marge Howard

William and Geraldene Harvey

We rely heavily on donations to meet our monthly expenses and continue our work. Your generosity and support are greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Annual memberships are renewable in January of each calendar year. You can show your support for our organization and museum by filling out the application below and sending it, along with your payment, to the address shown..

Miller County Historical Society
Membership Registration

Please fill in the form and mark your membership choice below

Name: _____

Address _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

_____ Individual membership—\$10
 _____ Family membership—\$15
 _____ Individual lifetime membership—\$50
 _____ Institutional Sustaining Members—\$15 per organization

P.O. Box 57, Tuscumbia, MO 65082
 Ph: (573) 369-3500 email: millercountymuseum@att.net

Internet provided by:



www.socket.net
1-800-SOCKET-3

Visit our web site:
<http://millercountymuseum.org>

*Thank you for your
Continued support*