

## Ogle County Historical Society

### 2016 RECAP

Last year the Ogle County Historical Society was open 51 Thursdays, 22 Sundays, and 5 Saturdays. One of our Saturday openings, June 18, was in conjunction with the dedication of the John Phelps sculpture in the new park behind the Coliseum, just one block east of us. We hosted the following groups during the year: the Chicago chapter of the Victorian Society in America, Lighthouse Methodist Church Seniors, OES 4<sup>th</sup> graders, DLR 7<sup>th</sup> graders, and Stephenson County HCE. The Ogle County Genealogical Society met here 10 times. Our total number of visitors was nearly the same as 2015, about 700.

Our planned merger talks with the Genealogical Society were delayed, but hopefully will begin this year. The research only hours, generally staffed by one of their members, are becoming better known and used.

Membership numbers have remained stable, and many more people are visiting our [Facebook page](#). Due to Kathy Stauffer's move out of state, Michal Gigous has taken over the Facebook page, and Kris Gilbert now maintains our website.

As in previous years, school activities and summer jobs cut down the number of hours available for our Junior Docents to assist us, and for most of the year we had only 3 students in the program. The addition of two new Junior Docents in November gave us a little boost. Even with our low numbers, and their supervisor's health problems during part of the year, the Junior Docents were able to give us about 100 hours of their time.

We received donations of documents and artifacts from 35 individuals and organizations last year. These included over a dozen books, nearly 80 photos, Schiller Piano Co. sales literature from the 1920's, and even a piece of Project Play, a community built wooden playground behind Jefferson School in Oregon which had to be removed for safety reasons after 27 years of hard use.

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For the first time ever, the Historical Society had a college intern. Oregon High School graduate Kasia Majewski, who is majoring in History and interested in museum work, contacted us in early November and we, along with her college, were able to set up a short term internship over her 4 ½ week winter break. She helped with a number of projects and also learned a lot about what goes on at a small, all-volunteer organization.

The hundreds of school record books we received in 2015 from the merger of the Lee-Ogle Regional Office of Education with Whiteside County are now all labeled, shelved, and cross-referenced with other school materials we've received over the years. They are now available for on-site research. Please visit and see the changes we've made in the past year. Better yet, join us and become a volunteer. It's habit-forming.

## OOPS!

The answers to the historical quiz in our July issue were inadvertently left out of the October issue, so here they are:

1. David Buick (f.)
2. John and Horace Dodge (a.)
3. Enzo Ferrari (h.)
4. Louis Chevrolet (i.)
5. Edward D. Etnyre (j.)
6. Henry J. Kaiser (d.)
7. Walter P. Chrysler (e.)
8. Gottlieb Daimler
9. Ransom E. Olds
10. Antoine Cadillac

The underlined middle initials are the Bonus Point answers.

How did you do?

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## RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The autumn of 2016 turned out to be a fairly good few months for donations of artifacts. After receiving one of our physically largest items over the summer, a **7' by 12' bookcase from the Oregon Public Library, we started the fall with small items**, two political campaign buttons saved by local author Esther Buskohl of Leaf River. One is a Roosevelt/Wallace button from the 1940 Presidential campaign, obviously made to be distributed in the upper Midwest since it has an ear of corn pictured on it; the other is for William Stratton, who was elected Governor of Illinois in 1952 and re-elected in 1956.

We received a copy of the new book The Art of Oregon by OCHS member Beth Simeone and Bob & Colleen Logsdon, while Gayle Richardson of Batavia sent us a ledger book containing records of children admitted to the Peek Home for Children in Woosung Township. This home was established by the Methodist Church in 1916 and closed in 1973.

Tricia Kise of Oregon brought in information on the Howard Johnston Plaza apartment building on S. Third Street. There were newspaper articles on its **construction in the early 1980's, from groundbreaking to open house, along with photos** taken during construction and a subsequent remodeling. During Candlelight Walk, Bill Ulferts of rural Oregon donated two books of poetry by Edith Andrew **Burchell, local author and music teacher. Mrs. Burchell gave them to Bill's mother** in 1966, and they are temporarily part of our display at Nash Recreation Center.

We received a digital accession consisting of 2 photos of Doty School in Buffalo Township and a copy of the sale deed from 1958 when the county sold the property after the school closed. Robert Webb of the Primitive Baptist Library in Carthage IL sent them in return for information on the school building, where a Primitive, or Old Order, Baptist congregation had met for many years. He later mailed us photocopies of a history of the congregation, along with obituaries and genealogical information on many of the members.

David Gaffin of Tennessee sent a copy of Gaffin Family Statistical and Biographical Sketches, written by his great-aunt, Catherine Gaffin Lyon, after we provided him with information on the three cemeteries in Mt. Morris Township where members of the Gaffin family are buried.

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Our last donation of the year was from member John Barnhart, who brought three 3-ring binders of information he had put together for the historical walking tours he conducts through the Oregon Park District. We now have a “Walking Tours” section on our shelves of notebooks, including 3 new ones on Blackhawk and the Blackhawk War, the lime kiln, and the Banditti.

We have already received one artifact this year. Kristen McCusker of Algonquin, who had previously sent us a digital copy of a photo of the boys of Beacon School in 1939, including her grandfather, Bruce Dummer, brought in a program from Ogle County’s 1939 rural schools eighth grade graduation. Let’s hope that this is the start of a full year of artifact, document, and monetary donations, new members, and MORE VOLUNTEERS!

## **ANNUAL INVASION OF THE SEVENTH GRADERS**

On October 20, we once again welcomed the 7<sup>th</sup> graders from David L. Rahn Junior High School in Mt. Morris. This was part of their tour of downtown Oregon which also included the Courthouse, Judicial Center, and Oregon Public Library. We hosted groups of 12-14 students every 45 minutes from 9am to 2pm. As usual, the stereoscope and the military headgear were popular with the students, and this year we also had one of the Tic-Tac-Toe blocks from Project Play, where many of them had spent a lot of time during their grade school years. Thanks go out to the teachers and parents who accompanied them, and to our docents: Joanne Pennock, Dotti Bowers, George Bouska, Janet McMillan, Judy McNett, Bonnie Hendrickson, and Bill Bailey. We also had another tour group booked the same day, and they were capably handled by Susan Davis.

**PHOTOS OF 7<sup>TH</sup> GRADERS ON NEXT 2 PAGES**





## OGLE COUNTY IN THE CIVIL WAR

by Bill Bailey

### #26—Matthew Van Buskirk, Polo

Matthew Van Buskirk was born on New Year's Day of 1835 in Beekmantown, Clinton County NY. He had a younger brother, Albert, who also served in the Civil War and was killed at the battle of Drury's Bluff VA in 1864. Matthew came to Illinois in 1856 and lived in LaSalle for a year before moving to Ogle County, settling in Polo.

When the 92<sup>nd</sup> Illinois Volunteer Infantry was organized in the late summer of 1862, Matthew enlisted and was made Captain of Company E, one of the two companies recruited from western Ogle County. Several previous columns have covered the 92<sup>nd</sup> and some of the individual soldiers in it, and Capt. Van Buskirk was an active participant in all of the regiment's activities, from their training at Camp Fuller in Rockford to the end of the war.

On September 8, 1863, he led a patrol up Lookout Mountain, west of Chattanooga TN, and ascertained that the Confederates were abandoning the town. The next day the 92<sup>nd</sup> was in the forefront of the troops occupying the town, and their flag was the first U. S. flag raised over Chattanooga since secession.

In the spring of 1864, some of Captain Van Buskirk's men were involved in the incident at Nickajack Gap, written up a few columns ago, and several of them were captured. In a letter to the father of William Guyer, one of his men who were captured, Capt. Van Buskirk took the opportunity to cut loose on the Northerners who didn't support the war: "..... some of our men were murdered after they had surrendered.....You can say to all the Copperheads of your vicinity that they were accessory to the murder of some of their own citizens.....every soldier scorns all such vile reptiles.....They do deeds which would blacken or brand into infamy the most savage and brutal nation of the world."

Shortly after this Matthew was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel following the resignation of Lt. Col. Sheets and Major Bohn. Since Col. Atkins of the 92<sup>nd</sup> was commanding a brigade, Lt. Col. Van Buskirk commanded the regiment for the rest of the war.

Immediately after mustering out in June of 1865, Matthew moved to Hardin County IA, where he opened a store, at first dealing in footwear and crockery, then expanding to general merchandise. He died nine days after his 66<sup>th</sup> birthday and was buried in Iowa Falls, survived by his wife and 6 of their 8 children.

The Ogle County Historical Society  
PO Box 183  
Oregon, Il. 61061

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Application for Membership

\_\_\_\_\_ \$35 per household per year

\_\_\_\$5 per year for hard copy of Gazette

Renewals due in November for following year

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Street Address\_\_\_\_\_

City\_\_\_\_\_ State\_\_\_\_\_ Zip\_\_\_\_\_

Phone\_\_\_\_\_

Email\_\_\_\_\_

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