

Carbon Hill School Museum

Welcome to the old Carbon Hill School, now a public museum, owned and operated by the Carbon Hill Historical Society, a registered not-for-profit Illinois organization, dedicated to collecting, preserving, and displaying our local history.

A Quarterly Newsletter

Fall 2011

Genealogy

One of the happy chores of museum work is like forensics. Like many of the TV shows, we are always looking for one more clue. Here's a recent episode.

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Car Show WOW!

The car show welcomed "old" cousins!



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Speaking of Public Rallies

The current New York and other sit ins and protests are nothing new. Sometimes you just have to make your point!

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Society Calendar

November 14:
CHHS annual meeting
2 PM at the museum

December 18:
Holiday Open House
Sunday at the museum
1 -5 PM

Icons of the Past

Memories are held in the icons left behind. Whether a photo, a pop bottle, a diary, quilt, or cane, a person and a time is recalled.

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Membership Dues

2012 membership in the Society keep the school museum thriving.

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Genealogy

One interesting aspect of our museum's work is reconnecting with the earliest residents of the village. Weekly a person or family from another state will send an email requesting any information on their ancestor(s) who lived in Carbon Hill. So we get out the old ledgers, school group photos, and any newspaper accounts. Many times a trip to the courthouse for legal documents and phone calls to old timers are necessary.

In August Jim Dutkiewicz came from California to learn more about four great grandparents who lived in early 1900's Carbon Hill. One



pair, Giuseppe (Joe) Sandretto and Costanza Bonatto had two sons, John and Lawrence, born in Carbon Hill. The other pair, Pietro Perelli and Maria Bonatto, had four children: Madeline, James, Peter and Hector. They lived on 7th St in 1910 and are pictured here. We

found these children listed in our school register. Madeline is Jim's grandma.

The other Bonatto sisters married into the Bianca, Vironda, Fenilli, and Ginardi families, all living in the area of Carbon Hill in the early 1900's. Of course, the men were all coal miners. An uncle, Frank Bonino, was also a miner in the area.

The Perelli's moved west to Mark, IL, most likely after our 1912 cyclone. Katherine Perelli married Peter Giacherio, an early founder and mayor of Mark.

It's a pretty drive to Mark, south of Spring Valley, to see many familiar names & a Coal Miners Cafe.

CRUISIN' IN THE PARK

Years ago car shows in the park provided fun times, so the idea was revisited this year with great success by Mayor Ed Pacchetti: thanks to John Vacca, Bob Novy, Doug Letterly and others-- a great day was had by all. Over 100 cars and several cool motorcycles gathered on a perfect afternoon to fill the park. What a trip down memory lane!

So nice to hear the winners of one category, the Herbsts, have Carbon Hill ties: Diana Herbst is the granddaughter of Art and Vic Vecellio. She and her cousin Donna Gordon are featured in the photo on the cover page. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, here are a few from the show----



The 1890's Strikes

Recent protestors in New York call to mind Carbon Hill in 1894 during one miners strike, and another in 1897 when the mining company actually moved in several houses near the #2 mine and built a tall fence around them to protect strikebreakers they hoped to hire. The Chinese agent refused to bring his 800 men here for fear of their lives. It was a wild and dangerous era, based on reports.

Chicago Daily Tribune, June 4, 1894.

Joliet, Ill. June 4 [Special] --- A culvert across a swamp near Carbon Hill, on the Joliet and Eastern railroad, in Grundy County, was burned by striking miners Sunday morning. Trains were delayed and a wreck train was sent down to build a new culvert. The burning of the culvert was intended, it is believed, as a reminder of what was to come if the rail road did not stop... sending coal from Virginia mines across the railways here and if coal operators did not stop hauling any more coal during the strike.

NOTE: The EJE RR ran a coal branch line -- GARDNER COAL CITY & NORTHERN RY-- in January, 1889 (now its the high line along the east side of Carbon Hill) The EJE had stops north of the Illinois River down to South Wilmington with depots and towers for fueling: Here are the stops:

Mile 0 stop **Walker**
 Mile 1 Plainfield
 Mile 5 Caton Farm
 Mile 12 **Minooka -- connects here with Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway**
 Mile 18 Divine
 Mile 21 Dell Abbey
 Mile 24 Chickering (in 1895 this is listed as Carbon Hill) the scene of the burnt culvert
 Mile 25 **Coal City ---connects here with Santa Fe Railway**
 Mile 27 Centerville
 Mile 30 **Mazonia ---connects here with the Chicago and Alton Railway**
 Mile 31 **Coster --connects here with the Kankakee and Seneca Railway.**

Chicago Daily Tribune, August 8, 1894.

Mob Makes a Raid, Strikers on the Warpath at Carbon Hill, Ill.

Coal City, Ill. Aug 7 -- [Special]-- Carbon Hill, a mining village, the seat of the Star

Coal company's operations, situated one mile and half from here, was at the mercy of an Italian mob of several hundred dissatisfied miners today. On three occasions the Sheriff's deputies were summoned to No. 2 shaft and the miners at work were each time hurriedly hoisted to the top to stay the tide of onward marching Italians.

The armed deputies and miners took positions in the tower, but on each occasion the howling mob desisted approaching within gunshot. Later in the day the strikers held a noisy meeting in the principal street of the village and voted to wreak destruction to life and property early tomorrow should the miners persist in going to work. The peaceable miners tonight voted to go down provided protection is given them. This will be done and a battle will certainly take place. Sheriff Daniels is on the ground and additional large number of deputies were sworn in here this evening. Deputies today succeeded in dispersing gangs of intimidators at the Carbon Hill shaft. There will be fully 100 armed men, many of whom are ex-soldiers, who will be prepared to meet the enemy in the morning.

The mines at Braceville, Carbon Hill and Diamond were in chaos. The company hoisted coal under heavy guard. At many points in the late 1890's working miners had to get through drunken mobs of the "anarchist aliens" (Bohemian, Polish and Italian miners who did not speak English and either misunderstood or felt left out of the process of negotiations). In 1897 Carbon Hill's Star coal company tried to import 800 Chinese from Wyoming but Governor Tanner stopped that, knowing it would bring violence.

Finally, in Nov, 1897, Streator Illinois held a convention of the mine operators of northern Illinois and included Braceville, Carbon Hill, and Diamond. Two follow up mass meetings were planned to ensure everyone understood and was included. One mass meeting was held at Carbon Hill, which had by then been dubbed "Hong Kong" -- for obvious reasons.

Icons of the Past



Carbon Hill Historical Society Officers, 2011

Michele Micetich --- President
Linda Bradley --- Vice President
Louise Jensen --- Secretary-Treasurer

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Membership application & information at:

www.ccpld.org/museum.htm

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Come Visit Us at the Museum!

The Carbon Hill Historical Society is dedicated to the collection, preservation and display of local history. The Society is a registered not-for-profit organization and is the sole owner of the Carbon Hill School Museum. The museum is open Mondays, noon to four p.m. --- or by appointment. We are located at 875 Second Street in Carbon Hill. Dues for membership in the Society is \$15.00 annually. Thank you!



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630 Judson Street
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