

# 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

Spring 2012

## Grand Marshall

*Mabel De Grush will lead our Homecoming parade this year. She likes living in Carbon Hill and we like having her here.*

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## Open House

*What a great day we had!*

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## Gallery

*Readers comment on loving photos so this issue you see recent photos from Spring Open House spread throughout the pages.*

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## Memories

*John Darin-- a first person account of working the mine in Carbon Hill at the time of the cyclone.*

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## A New Book Meeting

*Jim Ridings is working with Michele Micetich to prepare a book about Carbon Hill. If you want to be included, let us know!*

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## About our Society

*Your membership in the Society keeps the school museum thriving.*

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## Our 2012 Grand Marshal

Mabel DeGrush liked living in Carbon Hill right away. Her first memory here is of Homecoming (held later in summer in 1965) and of her new neighbor Helen Dryer -- her lifeline in those days. About a week before she & Barney moved into their new home on Holcomb Street, he was busy in the park. A builder as well as town clerk, he had lots to do at Homecoming time. She herself worked in the food stand mostly and then Bingo. She and Sara Grosvenor bought all kinds of great prizes at the local Hornsby's, Les G. was caller. It was always a fun time!



Mabel Mooney Runty DeGrush is from an old New Lenox family. Her Grandpa Oram left England and got off the train at New Lenox with fifty cents in his pocket. Dad Worth Mooney came from Decatur to be station master at the Wabash and Michigan Central. She remembers

her family as being a happy one, laughing a lot. Mabel graduated 8th out of 500 and took a job in Chicago, also studying at JJC. Her mom's death at age 47 ended her dream of becoming a teacher.

In 1948 Mabel married Dale Runty. Raising a young farm family Dale was in a fatal train accident. She and the five kids moved into town. Barney, whose wife Jen had just died, was the man who arrived to install new cabinets. The rest, as they say, is history ...

Mabel was the youngest lady on Holcomb Street when she arrived and today she's the oldest, still recalling fondly all her neighbors.

We're glad she came to stay!

# MEMORIES

**John B Darin (DaRin)**

recorded by his grandson in 1975

John Darin was born in northern Italy, "right up against the Austrian and the Switzerland mountains". He was five years old when his father was in America working and sent the money for the family to come over to America. They landed in New York in 1894 and had to stay in the station all night sleeping on the benches. The next morning "they stuck a green tag on them because they couldn't speak English" and led them out to the depot to catch a train for Lockport, Illinois. John's father was working on the I&M canal there. He worked on the canal about three more years before his job was done and then the family went down to Carbon Hill where his dad got a job in the coal mine.

"Carbon Hill at that time was quite a few people. I imagine there was about 2500 people."

When John turned 12, he started to work himself on a farm near there and he got \$10 a month. After a few years working on the farm, he went down in the mine to work. He was 14 years old when he entered the mine.

On the farm he had cultivated corn, cut hay, and worked in the garden hoeing and weeding; the coal mine was a little harder work.

" See, the coal mine, you have six yards on each side of your road, and you have to dig the coal out of each side. And you have to build your road at the same time. You

gotta take two or three feet of rock [out] so the car and the mule can come in and pull your car out with your coal.

So I worked there about eight years...

one day we had an awful storm there, a cyclone, and the storm hit the tippie and blew it all down to the ground. So they brought in new steel to rebuild it, but they never got around to it. I don't know what happened, they just thought it wasn't worthwhile to build it."

"Mining work was paid by the ton. I think it was \$1.35 a ton at that time [1912] . And if you could load four or five tons, you were doing pretty good. So when the tippie blew down, then we all had -- all the young fellows-- we had to leave town. Go and look for work some place else. The old people stayed there. Just the young fellows moved out. Of course, there were other mines around there. A lot of people went on to the towns of Cherry, Oglesby, South Wilmington, Morris, different towns where there were mines ... as mines worked out or closed up miners just moved on... I came to Joliet and started to work in the steel mills."

## THANKS TO ALL who came to our Spring Open House -----

What a lovely day we had with crowds and sunshine. The museum was filled with visitors. Tasty refreshments and great stories kept everyone around all afternoon. For those of you who missed the occasion I reprinted one first person account in this issue and lots of photos!

# HOME COMING WEEK

Join us June 20- June 24 for our 63rd Homecoming! We will be open at the museum Sunday 3:30 - 8 pm. We are honoring Mabel DeGrush, grand marshall at 4 pm on Sunday. The museum will also be open on Wednesday through Saturday 6-8 pm.

Also join us on Wednesday morning for a narrated bus tour of old Carbon Hill and Coal City. The bus leaves the library at 9:30 am. We'll be on the bus about an hour and then look at photos at the museum. Sign up at the Coal City library (634-4552) and board the bus there. This is the 4th annual tour with new stops and stories.

Meet old friends and make new friends in Carbon Hill June 20-24 !!!!



# New Carbon Hill Book in progress!

*we need your stories and photos!*

Jim Ridings and Michele Micetich are compiling the story of Carbon Hill and surrounding coal camp towns (Diamond, Suffern, Coal Branch Junction, Coal City, etc) into a book, similar in style to the Cardiff books Jim has written.

While the museum has many photos and stories, we sure don't have all of them, so we are hoping those with photos and information will contact us as soon as possible. Any items from any of area coal towns can be included in this book -- families, businesses, street scenes, schools, mines, documents, artifacts.

We need name and contact information for those interested in reserving a copy (or more) of this book. Numbers of interested people will determine how many books we have printed so it is important to contact Michele by phone or email if you would like to reserve or pre-order.

No money necessary for pre ordering' the book will cost approximately \$30 at time of pick up. Watch for future articles for the timeline of this publication!

To contact Michele phone 815-634-4213 or email [mmicetich@comcast.net](mailto:mmicetich@comcast.net)).

## Carbon Hill Historical Society Officers, 2012

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

## Public Relations

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Membership application & information at:

<http://www.ccpld.org/museum.htm>

**Carbon Hill Historical Society**  
**Louise Jensen**  
**630 Judson Street**  
**Carbon Hill, IL 60416-7018**





# 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. Annual membership dues are \$15.00. Thank you!*



Carbon Hill Historical Society & School Museum  
630 Judson Street  
Carbon Hill, Illinois 60416-7018