

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.

Newsletter

Spring 2014

Grand Marshall 2014

Thora Jensen Lohmar is this year's honored Grand Marshall for our annual Homecoming. See her Sunday, June 22 in the parade and at the museum.

Page 1

Schools of the Past

Bus tour of Country Schools June 18 and WGGG meeting July 12. If interested, call 815-634-4213



The Howard Family

What a surprise! Pam Reilly, 2014 Illinois Teacher of the Year, has a very local connection to our Howard family of Felix Township.

Page 2



Looking for Helpers

Carbon Hill Historical Society will form new committees this fall. If you are interested in any aspect of our work, please give us a call.

Page 3

About our Society

Spring Open House



was great!

Page 4

2014 Grand Marshall

Thora Jensen Lohmar and new husband Richard had just moved into Carbon Hill in 1964, settling in to their rental house when brother John Jensen recruited them to help with the Homecoming. Now her volunteer role is marking 50 years. We'll recognize her years of contribution officially through the title of Grand Marshall for this year's Homecoming parade on June 22.

Born in 1932 to Migo Jensen and Marjorie Nelson Jensen, Thora and family moved from Chicago's south side to Gardner during the Great Depression. There she first learned the close community in small towns and country schools.



Minus one summer stint of factory work (her Mom's wise plot to keep her in high school until graduation) Thora says that small town living has been a joy.

First grade chum Mary McHugh, sister-in-law Louise Jensen, son

Tom and his family, "daughters" Cindy, Debbie & Carol, grandkids and greatgrandkids, neighbors and friends, plus dog Penny help keep Thora active since Richard's death in 2009. She's always "on the go" except for last winter's snow days.

Homecoming days of drying beer money in a pillowcase, or serving pork chop dinners, and baking for the food stand, may now be past, but Thora is grateful Carbon Hill is still a safe and comfortable place to live and she looks forward to another Homecoming outside her door.

Join us at the museum on Sunday, June 22, at 4 pm to honor Thora with old and new photos, stories, and refreshments.

THE HOWARD FAMILY IS STILL AROUND....

The "world wide web" makes visible so many very personal and fascinating connections. This spring I received this exciting email request to visit the Carbon Hill School Museum.

"Hello. I am writing because I would like to come and visit your museum one day soon. I am Pam Reilly, Illinois Teacher of the Year 2014 and my Great Grandmother Howard taught at your school house. I have been using her picture of she and her students in front of the school house in my speeches. I wanted to give more credit to where it was located and the time frame in which she taught there. I would absolutely love to come for a visit and research how many students she had, etc. as well as just see it for myself... "

And so Pam came to see the school where Mary Howard had once been a teacher in the early 1900's, until she married. Mary had been a student in the Carbon Hill school and, as was the custom for some of the bright girls, she took the county test and became a teacher to young students in Carbon Hill. Mary's record book and class photos are at the school today; Pam read through them, noting others of the Howard family who had attended the school across generations. Pam's visit was moving, especially as she sat at the same teacher's desk her great grandmother had used. She took so many photos and asked questions about the community, the township, and the Howard family, many of whom were unknown to her. She was provided with a family genealogy kept at our school.

Unlike Mary Howard, who could not continue to teach after her marriage, according to the rules of the day, Pam Reilly was able to do just the opposite.

Married with three boys, Pam stayed home to raise her boys for seven years and then went on to become a teacher.

A graduate of Aurora College and National Louis University, a continuous and eager learner, Pam now has spent thirteen years teaching kindergarten, first and second grades. Her strong collegial recognition as a collaborator, leader and advocate for children and education is evidence that she loves her work and excels at it.

Mary Howard Marek would find her great granddaughter's modern journey worthy of a gold star and a big hug as well as part of a family tradition. Many of the family became teachers: One, namely Elsie Haldorson Skubic, also taught in the Carbon Hill School in the early 1950's.

Pam returned to the Carbon Hill School Museum with her class of 17 second graders who were excited to see an old school room, sit in the desks, read schoolbooks, explore slates, pens, lunch boxes, and other tools of school long ago. Pam read them a book which has special meaning for her and for them. And then a surprise! Alice Wills, former student at Carbon Hill School, and a niece to Mary Howard, came to join the class and meet Pam. It was a tender moment that reached across time and made everyone in the room smile.

The pioneering Patrick Howard family in Felix Township, Grundy County, Illinois, shows up in the earliest plat maps long before there was a Carbon Hill School. Their large family has continued through generations with many current familiar names among Howard descendants living in the area: Marek, Haldorson, Baudino, Austin, Wills, and Skubic are just a few.

Mary "Mae" Howard Marek....



Currently Pam Reilly teaches second grade at Woodbury Elementary in Sandwich. In her role as Illinois Teacher of the Year, she is available to read to classrooms, visit schools across the state, present at workshops. To have her visit your school, library, or group, contact Sandwich School District directly. Hearing her speak with enthusiasm and passion is worth the booking.



The Work of the Society Grows

Meetings, Books, Tours, Visits, Programs.

In September 2014 the Carbon Hill Historical Society will begin to hold monthly meetings on the first Monday morning of the month beginning at 11 am and ending at noon, when we open the museum for our routine Monday hours, noon to 4 pm.

Each month we will review current projects, update membership lists, schedule operational chores and work on programs and displays. Your presence at any of these short meetings helps to fulfill our mission. We are eager for more volunteers to help "cut, copy, paste, file, sort, scan, dust, etc." All are welcome and needed.

Bus tours, programs and presentations, available upon request. Schedule your group visit and tour of the museum today! 815-634-4213 for more information.

FOR SALE: T V Testa's Books on Mazon Fossil Animals and Mazon Fossil Plants; Goose Lake Twp History, Carbon Hill History, Postcards, Carbon Hill School paperweights, books on Cardiff, Ladd, Grundy County, Will County, and other historical places and events.

Michele presented the program on the Cherry Mine Disaster for Highwood Historical Society's Annual Dinner May 13, 2014. Many coal mining Italian families left our area for Highwood years ago!



Carbon Hill Historical Society Officers, 2013-14

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

Director: Ed Nowman

Director: John Vacca

Public Relations

Michele Micetich ---- mmicetich@comcast.net

Michele --- 815-634-4213

Membership information at:

Carbon Hill Historical Society
Louise Jensen
630 Judson Street

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!



Carbon Hill Historical Society & School Museum
630 Judson Street
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