



HERSCHER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

THIRD QUARTER
NEWSLETTER – 2023

"from past generations to future generations"

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Spring seemed to pass quickly and now we have welcomed Summer with the much-appreciated rain. Having been raised in a wheat and cattle farming community, I do recall a certain Spring when the entire town was in distress if we did not get some rain, and soon. As in years past, it seemed to arrive just in time. As the rain poured down, I remember seeing the neighbors standing out on their porches hollering and cheering that it may be a "good crop after all!" When crops are lost, an entire community suffers, yet we share that burden, and it seems to lighten our load. As I think of years past, I am reminded that the same principle exists in all things - community. There is a certain excitement that happens when a historic item is donated to the museum, or a story unfolds of an earlier family from years before. Such was the case with our summer program of "Take Me out the Ballgame Again." The Herscher Main Street Museum presented an impressive display of sporting events (school, church, and community teams) through the years going back a century, and then a museum committee arranged for folks to continue reminiscing at the Herscher Sports Club. Many thanks to all volunteers who made this event such a success which served as a reminder that we all have a story to tell and how rewarding when we can do this together.

Mary Kirstein
HAHS President

MISSION STATEMENT

Herscher Area Historical Society's purpose is to capture and preserve history and artifacts related to Herscher and the surrounding area from past generations to future generations.

TAKE ME "BACK" TO THE BALLGAME

by Kelly Knobloch

The special event hosted by HAHS, "Take Me Back to the Ballgame," was held on Sunday, June 25th. Fifty members and guests attended the event, touring the Main Street Museum and enjoying snacks and drinks at the Herscher Athletic Club.

Those attending were able to view our special Sporting display at the museum. The display features memorabilia from a multitude of Herscher area sports teams, but with baseball in full swing in June the event focused on reuniting baseball fanatics.

After touring the museum, guests enjoyed hot dogs, popcorn, and peanuts at the Herscher Athletic Club while visiting with friends. Attending were past players like Mike Watt who was a pitcher for the Tobey Truckers, current HHS baseball Coach Regez, and multi-generation players like the Bauer family.

The HAHS had door prizes for those attending. Congratulations to our winners: White Sox tickets - Cindy Witheft, Joliet Slammers tickets - Ron Shank, Cubs pillowcase - Preston Bauer, and White Sox pillowcase - Matt Duval.



*Mike Watt, Dale Pfeiffer,
and Tom Uribe*



Betty and Joe Roza



CHRISTMAS SALE AT THE ANDERSON HOUSE

**November 11
9:00 am – 3:00 pm**

Come find your perfect Christmas decoration!
We also need volunteers to help with this event. We begin setting up in October.
If you would like to help, please email us.

KANKAKEE AVENUE CIRCA 1907

by Bob Voss

Kankakee Avenue back in the day was a busy place as the picture shows. These are the businesses we think that were there at the time. Starting at the SE corner of Main & Kankakee

- Sprincher's Tavern
- Fred Kamman's Wines/Liquors
- Unknown Building
- Residence
- Residence/Restaurant
- Vollmar's Hardware (partially shown)
- Lee Brothers Hardware (not shown but was at the SW corner of Kankakee and Maple)
- Karcher Hotel and Restaurant (not shown but was at the SE corner of Kankakee and Maple)



This article was taken from the booklet "Downtown Herscher – Then and Now" available at the Museum.

JACKIE EBERLE

An interview with Jackie Eberle was in last quarter's newsletter. We have since received additional photos that we would like to share. These are pictures of Jackie with her children and grandchildren.



PURCHASE A PAVER STONE TO HONOR A LOVED ONE

by Judy Witheft

Paver stones are available at Herscher Area Historical Plaza and/or Cardiff Plaza (located 9 miles west of Herscher). If you would like to have a paver stone added to our plaza, please complete the form on the next page designating which location. Your granite paver stone can memorialize a departed loved one, celebrate an event, a person, a business, a sports team, or yourself as a donor, or contain a beloved quotation. It can observe just about anything you wish.



I/we would be interested in helping the Herscher Area Historical Society on this project by purchasing:

GRANITE PAVERS: I would like ___4” x 8” pavers at \$100.00 each = \$_____ *(13 letters & spaces per line with 3 lines available)*

I would like _____8” x 12” pavers at \$200.00 each = \$_____ *(13 letters & spaces per line with 6 lines available)*

Information to be etched on the granite pavers as follows – please print clearly:
13 letters and spaces per line - 3 lines for small paver or 6 lines for large paver

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone and Email Address _____

Signature _____

Please return this form along with your check made out to Herscher Area Historical Society to the address below.

The Herscher Area Historical Society is a tax exempt (501c3) organization.
 Any donations made to HAHS are tax deductible. We thank you for your support and donation to the Herscher Area Historical Society Memorial Garden.



Herscher Area Historical Society
 P.O. Box 403 • Herscher, IL 60941 1-815- 426-2627
herscherareahistory@gmail.com Website: herscherhistory.org

GRAIN CRADLE PURCHASED

by Jane Schwark

A grain cradle is a scythe attachment that looks like a large claw. As the mower mows a stroke, the grain stacks up in the cradle. At the end of the stroke the mower can neatly lay the grain down in the windrow with all the seed heads facing the same direction.

Before the invention of the cradle, grain was harvested with a sickle. The harvester held handfuls of grain stalks as they cut and collected stalks of grain in neat bundles that were tied off or stacked in the field to dry. The invention of the scythe, roughly a sickle with a long handle, allowed people to mow and harvest without having to bend over. However, grain harvesting with a scythe was inefficient, as cut material fell in windrows in a haphazard way, which led to loss of grain. The invention of the grain cradle allowed mowers to harvest grain efficiently and more quickly.

In time, mowers were replaced by horse-drawn machines, and later by fuel powered machines, but today the scythe and cradle are an important tool for farmers and gardeners working on a scale for which heavy machinery is undesirable.

The museum was able to purchase the grain cradle shown in the photo on the right at the Sauerwein sale. The grain cradle is in excellent condition. It will be a nice addition for teaching about farming in the future at the museum.



Jane Schwark with newly purchased grain cradle

WE APPRECIATE OUR VOLUNTEERS



Norm Krueger

VOLUNTEER CRAFTSMEN

by Mary Kirstein

Pictured at left, local volunteer Norm Krueger has been helping the museum out by repairing our recently acquired Grandfather clock donated by Rodney Schwark. These two talented gentlemen and master craftsmen, one who loves working with wood and the other who works on all things mechanical from restoring old cars to delicate watches, are real treasures to HAHS.

“CHAMPION” VOLUNTEER

Pictured at right, Aidan Knobloch stands with his Hereford steer. He received the Grand Champion title at the Illinois Hereford Preview and Reserve Grand Champion at the Section 10 FFA Fair. Aidan volunteered his time to help the historical society spruce up Cardiff Plaza. We love seeing our local youth get involved with volunteering!



Aidan Knobloch



ELMA TOBEY

Story contributions from:

Sally Schneider, Thelma Webber, Janet Boyer, Carol Webber, and members of Elma's family

Elma Alice Meredith Tobey was born November 5, 1918, the sixth child of John Franklin and Nellie Alice (Earley) Meredith's eleven children. Her siblings include her only sister Ellen (born in 1908), Frank (born in 1911), Earnest "Ernie" (born in 1913), Louis (Bill) (born in 1915), Delbert (Dale) (born in 1916), Donald (born in 1921), Carl (born in 1924), Lester (Mike) (born in 1925), Omer (born in 1929), and Russell (born in 1931).

Elma's mother had a difficult life, but she never complained. She made all kinds of soups, baked breads, and prepared all the food for her large family. During the Depression Years, she had a ration card for items for her family.

Elma attended country schools in the Clifton area and Herscher Grade School, but never attended high school. She remembered childhood games of "anti-I-over," red rover tag, and hide-and-seek with plenty of family members to join in.

When Elma was old enough to work away from home, she made socks at the Bear Brand Hosiery Company in Kankakee. In 1937, Elma married Ward Tobey, the son of Jesse and Lyle (Fetterly) Tobey from Herscher. The couple lived on the corner of Myrtle and Elm Street in Herscher. Jesse had a trucking company, and Ward became a driver for his father and later became the owner of the company.

Ward and Elma had three sons, Donald (born in 1938), Leonard (born in 1942), and Leslie (born in 1949). Donald married Patricia Long of Herscher. Donnie Tobey developed kidney problems and was given a kidney transplant, but unfortunately died in 1961 at 23 years old. Their son is Russell (Rusty) Tobey who is married to Lynn (Boma) Tobey. Their children are Kristin and Brandon Bauer, Kelly Tobey, and Erik and Kelsey Tobey. Rusty and Lynn have six grandchildren. Rusty and Erik are part of Tobey Construction and Cartage, Inc.

Leonard married Jackie Lynch from Kankakee. They stayed in the Herscher area with Leonard heading up Tobey Construction and Cartage, Inc. Their two children are Jana and Dale. Jana, who is married to Steve Langridge, lives in Flower Mound, Texas near Dallas. The couple has a son Jake and a daughter Jessica. Dale and wife Amy live in Limestone and have two sons, Drew and Dilan. Dale also works for Tobey's.

Leslie was born in 1949 and tragically was killed in an auto accident on Route 17 West in 1967 as he drove to Kankakee Community College for class after graduating from Herscher High School.

During the years that Ward and Elma lived on Myrtle Street, some of their neighbors and friends were Richard and Fran Cotter (father and mother of Dick Cotter, Kathy O'Connor, and Patty Korn), Lee and Ursula Arthur (father and mother of Carol Webber and Bob Arthur), and Jim and Elma Webber (father and mother of Ed, Martin, Jim, and Bob Webber, Maxine Sorensen, Lois Dionne, Kathy Jepsen, and Butch Webber). Since Ward, Jim, and Lee worked together in the trucking business, the families would sometimes take excursions to Brookfield Zoo or Cobb Park for picnics. The two Elmas and Ursula remained friends for years even after their lives changed.

Elma liked to have her family together for the holidays, especially Christmas, and would bake many kinds of cookies and pastries for them. When events and meals occurred at the Herscher United Methodist Church, she diligently helped wherever she was needed. One of her hobbies was painting china cups, and she sometimes donated them to church fundraising events. Elma and Ward moved to a new home on North Park Road in Herscher, and one of their neighbors was Garnette Vercellono who also enjoyed painting china cups. Elma and Garnette enjoyed their hobby together as good friends.



After Ward died in 1971 at age 55, Elma lived on Park Road for many years alone, driving her car, visiting friends, and attending church. Later, she moved to Butterfield Court in Kankakee where she had an apartment with meals prepared, cleaning and laundry services, and people to talk with. She enjoyed visiting with Herscher friends and talking with them on the telephone.



Elma’s words to live by are these: “No matter how bad you think you have it, someone else is worse off than you. We should count our blessings every day.” She commented that she misses the good old days, and she believes people don’t visit with their neighbors like they used to. She was glad when she no longer had to take care of a home and do all the housework.

Besides Elma’s immediate family and relatives living in the Herscher are, her brothers, Carl and wife Charlotte Meredith and Lester (Mike) and Eylene Meredith, lived in Herscher (and currently two of Mike and Eylene’s children, Sally Schneider and Bruce Meredith, live in Herscher), plus other nieces and nephews also lived in Herscher. Elma died in 2017. Both she and Ward are buried in Memorial Gardens Cemetery east of Kankakee.

MUSEUM HOURS

MAIN STREET MUSEUM

190 S. Main, Herscher

Open Fridays 9-11 AM and the First
Sunday of Each Month 1-3 PM

ANDERSON HOUSE

161 W. Myrtle, Herscher

Open the First Sunday of Each
Month 1-3 PM

LABOR DAY WEEKEND HOURS:

Museums OPEN 1-3 PM Sunday, September 3

Museums CLOSED Monday, September 4 (unless special request)

Museum Board Meetings take place at the Anderson House on the Fourth Monday of each month at 6:00pm in the spring and summer and at 4:00pm in the fall and winter. Exceptions will be posted at 190 S. Main and on our website at herscherhistory.org. All members are welcome to attend.

Call the Museum at 815-426-2627 to visit the museums at a time convenient for you.

Contact Us:

Herscher Area Historical Society

P.O. Box 403

Herscher, IL 60941

1-815-426-2627

Email: herscherareahistory@gmail.com

Follow our Facebook Page: Herscher Area Historical Society

Join our Facebook Group: Herscher Area Historical Society/Kankakee County West

Website: herscherhistory.org

REMEMBER HERSCHER AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

Your legacy is important to us and our community. Please remember the Herscher Area Historical Society in your final wishes and estate planning. Your gift will ensure that the work of capturing and preserving the history of Herscher and County West continues for future generations. If you have questions, please contact the museum at 815-426-2627 and we will direct you to our legal advisor.

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