



HISTORICALLY SPEAKING

DIGITAL EDITION

September 2014

The Newsletter of the Pioneer & Historical Society of Muskingum County

MUSEUMS OF THE PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MUSKINGUM COUNTY

The Stone Academy Historic Site & Museum

115 Jefferson Street

Zanesville, Ohio

Hours: Wednesday-Sunday 1:00-4:00

May through September 28

Dr. Increase Mathews House Museum

304 Woodlawn Avenue

Closed until Spring

Open to groups at other times by appointment.

The Historical Society office is
located at the Stone Academy

740 454-9500

www.Muskingumhistory.org

Follow us on Facebook



MUSEUM SEASON COMES TO AN END

The Dr. Increase Mathews House Museum closed for the season on August 31 and the Stone Academy Historic Site and Museum will close September 26. We like to make the museums available to the public so as many people as possible can learn about Muskingum County's history from our

exhibits but past experience has shown us that museum visits are rare occurrences during the fall and winter. The cost of keeping the heat up and the lights on is not justified by the few people who come through in the off season. Another difficulty is finding docents who are willing to give of their time to escort visitors through the museums and place the artifacts in their proper context. That is why we are especially grateful for the volunteer docents who worked through the summer: **JAMIE SNODGRASS, FLOYD FELUMLEE, LLOYD BARNES, TINA WICKLINE, BOB JENKINS** and **JIM McDONALD**. Their knowledge of the Society collection and their willingness to sit through long, lonely afternoons waiting for the next guest is greatly appreciated.

Groups can still schedule museum tours by calling the office at 740-454-9500. We will also be open December 6 and 7 for the Christmas Open House. The Director will be working in the office, although his schedule may be somewhat erratic. You can reach him by telephone at the office or through the Contact Us tab on our website, MuskingumHistory.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The annual Christmas Open House will be December 6 and 7 from 1:00 to 5:00 with both museums being open. We are working with other Historic District businesses and will have more details later.

The P&HS is one of several groups combining for a bicentennial celebration of the Y Bridge on November 16 at the Welcome Center across from the McIntire Library. Join us at 1:30 to salute Zanesville's most iconic landmark.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2014

Hello Members of the Pioneer and Historical Society of Muskingum County:

Your Society has been busy. Right now we are planning our annual Holiday Open House for the first weekend in December. This requires considerable time and planning on the part of the Program Committee and total support of the Board of Trustees. We are looking for musical entertainment for that weekend and we would like to increase participation in the event by including more private homes and business in this year's open house.

The city of Zanesville is planning a special birthday party to celebrate the Bicentennial of the Y-Bridge and we will be part of that celebration in November. The Civil War Round Table will be starting up again shortly and meets at the Stone Academy which is an excellent use of our meeting facility. The Friends of the Pioneer and Historical Society started their season of meetings on September 15.

The portrait of Dr. Increase Mathews is in the process of being restored in Cincinnati and should be ready in time for our Holiday Open House. This is something the Board of Trustees has wanted to do for some time. We are putting a new roof on the garage section of the Stone Academy. We don't know when this was last done but it has not been done since the building passed into our hands so we know it has been more than thirty years and leaks have indicated it has to be done. The Board of Trustees has decided to do what they can to preserve the brick wall on the Jefferson Street side of the Stone Academy for as long as possible. This involves removing the hedge which is pushing the brick wall forward. It has been suggested that we remove the uppermost course of bricks which were added at some later date from the rest of the wall and we will do that as well. We hope that will reduce pressure on the brick wall and allow it to remain in place. The wall is leaning towards Jefferson Street. Removal of the hedge and first course of bricks should also allow a much better view of the front of the building from the street level. Repairs will require some tuck pointing and concrete repair to the wall itself. We hope to have that all completed before winter sets in and puts more pressure

on that wall. Another winter like the last one might have resulted in a collapsed wall into Jefferson Street.

As always, it is with the support of you our members that these repairs can be accomplished. We continue to thank you for your support and special gifts.

Bob Jenkins, PRESIDENT PIONEER & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GRANT PROVIDES FUNDS FOR NEW HVAC EQUIPMENT

Maintaining stable temperature and humidity are important parts of artifact conservation and are also ways to make museum visits more enjoyable. The Stone Academy has three furnaces and air conditioning units and the Mathews House has one aging hot water heating system and three air conditioners. Routine maintenance and periodic replacement with this many systems gets expensive.

We are grateful that the Zanesville city administration values the work we do in preserving our community's history. On September 11, 2014, workers from A-1 Heating and Air Conditioning installed new HVAC equipment at the Stone Academy. Funding was provided by a Community Development Block Grant through the City of Zanesville. The \$12,000 grant replaced the attic furnace and two air conditioning units.



Workers from A-1 Heating in the hot confines of the Stone Academy attic. To see this picture, and more, in color, read the newsletter on our website.

A quirky, dusty, and endangered institution

Jim Geyer, Museum Director

Did you know that there are more small historic house museums, like the Dr. Increase Mathews House, in this country than McDonald's restaurants? (More than 15,000 according to the National Trust for Historic Preservation.)

Yet house museums are at the center of an intense argument within the museum world. According to an article published recently (8-9-2014) in the *Boston Globe* "that argument has reached a surprisingly fever pitch." In her report, Ruth Graham reviews articles from scholarly journals and professional publications and cites museum conferences, panel discussions, and speeches with titles like "Are There Too Many House Museums?", "America Doesn't Need Another House Museum", "After the House Museum", "House Museums: A 20th Century Paradigm", and a book referred to by its critics as "The Final Solution for House Museums".

The article proclaims that "house museums can seem like the sleepest corner of the museum world: They tend to be small spaces with small budgets, elderly volunteers, and even older furnishings. But recently they have become the center of a live, even contentious debate. Although some well-known house museums are thriving, many smaller and more obscure places are struggling. Their plight is so drastic that some preservationists are now making an argument that sounds downright blasphemous to defenders of these charming repositories of local history: There are simply too many house museums, and many of them would be better off closing."

Make no mistake, the Dr. Increase Mathews House is NOT about to close any time soon. But its long-term viability is by no means guaranteed and should not be taken for granted.

When Zanesville's oldest building, the home of its first physician and one of its founding fathers, was bequeathed to the Historical Society the community came together to create its very own historic house museum. During its early years of operation in the 1970s, in the midst of America's bicentennial celebration, communities across the country were experiencing a renewed interest in history, including local history. Key community leaders from America's "greatest generation" got involved, needed funding was secured, and hundreds and hundreds of people came. Over the years attendance declined. This summer the museum has so far attracted only a trickle of visitors.

Interior upgrades and renovations in 2007 and extensive exterior restoration in 2011-12 addressed serious issues with the building. From an historic preservation standpoint the museum is in good physical shape. The challenge: how does the museum regain the relevancy it enjoyed in the 1970s? How do we attract hundreds and hundreds of new people to the museum? How do we regain the level of community involvement and support experienced when the museum was "new"? If the Mathews House continues to operate following the traditional house museum model – guided tours, antiques on display, look-but-don't-touch mentality, etc. - the result will likely be continued decline and increased instability.

Creating a new, more effective museum model will not be easy. Operating a house museum in Zanesville in 2014 and beyond has some obvious problems, including competition from other museums. Short trips to Newark, Lancaster, and Columbus provide visitors with modern, state-of-the-art, high tech, hands-on, relevant museum experiences. It's especially difficult when our local newspaper promotes the competition (Columbus Museum of Art, COSI, etc.) as it did prior to the Labor Day weekend with no mention of our museums. A variety of cultural, entertainment, and recreational activities offer local residents many options when choosing leisure-time activities. Social media and the internet offer a more immediate source of information. Figuring out how to attract more people to our venues, including repeat visitors, is essential to regaining the stature and importance enjoyed in the 1970s.

(continued on page 4)

(Director's Report continued from page 3)

The *Boston Globe* article suggests the solution is **creative programming**. The key is the realization that most people just don't have much interest in history. History museums need to tap into what does interest them. A good example of this concept occurred on June 22nd when over 300 people visited the Mathews House, most for the first time. They came to see the gardens as part of the Beaux Art Club Garden Tour. But many also toured the museum and learned a little local history in the process.

Have a creative idea that might attract more people to our museums? Want to get involved in developing new programming for 2015? Interested in becoming a program sponsor? I'd love to talk with you.



RECOLLECTIONS OF SCHOOL LIFE IN ADAMSVILLE

NATIONAL MILITARY HOME, June 6, 1882

Editor *Telephone*:—I will give you another of my reminiscences. Time, 1847. The teacher, John Mills, was a doctor, a justice of the peace, and in fact, a little of almost everything. He also taught in the old brick school house. He was not very severe on the scholars. It was his custom after he had heard the scholars recite their lessons, to read a paper and fall asleep in his chair. Then the fun began. We would chew paper into balls, throw them at the girls, and they would throw them back at us. The ceiling was covered with them. There was a niche behind the door where the water bucket sat, and at the left of the door there was a small board hung on a nail. On one side of the board was the word "In", and on the other side the word "out." When one of the scholars went out he had to turn the board so that "In" was hidden from the school, and out was visible. Then when he came in again the order was reversed. We got tricky.

When Dr. Mills went to sleep, we would go out and play, giving the board a whirl clear around, so that the board would show we were "in." There was a considerable space in the grave-yard where no one was buried then. There we had many a game of ball during school hours. Once the Doctor waked up out of sleep, and looking out at the window, said: "How does it happen that there are so many boys out playing ball?" He went to the door and called them in. When they came he inquired of them the cause of so many being out during school hours. Of course every one told him that the board was turned "In", and we had liberty to go out at such times. "Well," he said, "I will watch you." But the boys were generally too sharp for him, else his propensity for sleep was too great. One time, however, I got caught nicely. I supposed him to be asleep, and in going out I gave the board a whirl clear round as usual. But he was only feigning to be asleep and saw how the thing had been done. He then fixed the board so that it wouldn't whirl clear around anymore.

One time during the summer, Dr. Decker came riding past, and seeing Mills asleep in his chair, rode up close to the open window, and gave him a cut on the back of the neck with his riding whip. Mills started from his sleep, and jumped out of the window to see who it was; but Dr. Decker had ridden quickly away, and by the time Mills was on the ground, Decker was out of sight. Mills then had nothing to do but go back into the school house again. The scholars plagued him a great deal about it, but he took it all good naturedly.

Dr. Mills used sometimes, to make us sit in between the girls for punishment. Once he made me sit between two of them. I pretended to be very bashful and to feel very bad over it. But when the master's back was turned, I had lots of fun. It was an enjoyment rather than a punishment.

John Mills was a very good natured man, and I can't complain much of him as a teacher. His greatest fault was going to sleep in school. My next teacher was Mr. Baker.

DICK

(copied from *The Telephone*, "A Monthly Educational Journal Edited and managed by E. Spencer, Adamsville, O." Vol. 1, No. 10, June 1882)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

or

MAINTAINING YOUR PROPERTY?

Historic Preservation, the rehabilitation and conservation of buildings deemed to be of cultural significance, began in America when the Mt. Vernon Ladies Association formed to save George Washington's home in 1858. During the Great Depression the Historic American Building Survey recorded significant buildings through photographs and measured drawings. Some of the structures have since been lost but a record of them remains. Historic preservation became more mainstream and grassroots following the destruction of New York City's Penn Station in 1963 and the national bicentennial in 1976.

Historic preservation and the concomitant establishment of museums are now found in communities across the country. Some of the late 20th century preservation and museum projects, such as saving the buildings on Ellis Island, were of national relevance, but many, such as the museumification of the Dr. Increase Mathews House, preserved buildings that had only local importance. The preservation of the Stone Academy falls into another category. The building is "the sole remaining public structure in Ohio from the early 1800s" (*Ohio Geology*, 2008, No. 2) and with its connections to the Abolition movement it has state and national significance although we have yet to get that message out to the wider world.

Jim Geyer makes reference to this proliferation of preserved structures of only local importance and the associated question of just how many of these buildings preserved as museums we need in his article in this newsletter.

While recognizing particular buildings as worthy of preservation may be a relatively new phenomenon, the desire to keep one's own neighborhood in good condition has been with us for all time. When we look at the condition of some neighborhoods now we might wish we could have lived in a time when people kept up their property and there were no dilapidated buildings but besides 20th century creations such as Williamsburg and Disneyland, has such a place ever existed? The following letter from the November 6, 1882, edi-

tion of the *Zanesville Courier* makes us wonder.

Wake Up, Ninth Ward, Wake Up!! How It Strikes an Old Resident.

First you were called Springfield; second they named you Putnam; then after the Temperance reformation they called you *Saint's Rest*, but finally you became the Ninth ward of Zanesville. Under your last name you did well for a time; but now that the *Saints are resting and sinners are working*, you begin to look shabby and unsightly. You do not now-a-days keep the Sabbath as formerly. The butcher shops are opened for business on Sunday; so are the cigar stores *open all Sunday*. The Drug Store that used to have its *Sunday hours* is now kept open pretty much all day Sunday.

Your fences are not repaired and kept painted as formerly. Numerous old houses belonging to the former generations are yet standing, rotting down. Old building material lies piled up, resting like the saints to these *many years*, eating itself up with interest and taxes. Your school houses, churches, and two church parsonages are not painted. Your Female Seminary tries to hide itself back of *its cheap old* fence and worn out sidewalks. Nobody is looking within your bounds for homes. Your real estate is depreciating, your young men are drinking, smoking, lounging; your Sunday Schools are only half filled. Do wake up!

Yours sincerely,

RESIDENT

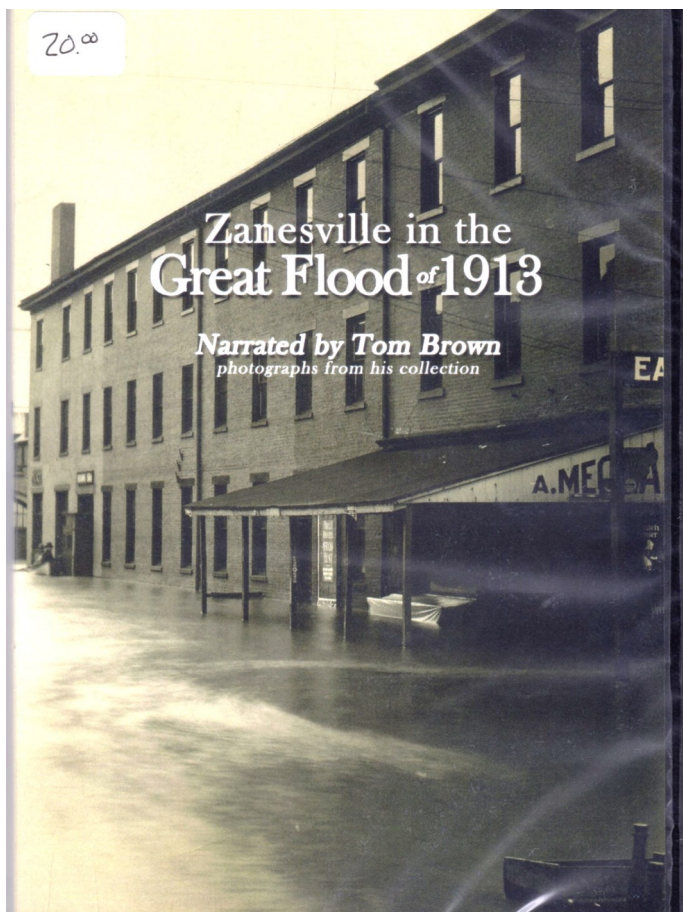


The Dr. Increase Mathews House before it was preserved by William Adams in 1937. Without his work, this would likely be a vacant lot today.

Pioneer & Historical Society
Of Muskingum County
115 Jefferson St
Zanesville OH 43701

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUEST-

Non-Profit Organization
U S POSTAGE
PAID
Zanesville OH 43701
PERMIT NO 528



It's not too soon to be thinking of Christmas gifts for friends who enjoy learning about Muskingum County history. May we suggest Tom Brown's history of the 1913 flood on DVD. Tom tells the story of the greatest natural disaster to ever afflict the Muskingum Valley using photos from his extensive personal collection. This high quality DVD was recorded in the studios of Maysville High School. With a running time of 1 hour 16 minutes even the most dedicated flood aficionado should learn something new. The cost is \$20 plus tax with a discount for P&HS members. If you are not able to purchase a copy before the Stone Academy closes for the season, visit us during the Christmas Open House or contact us at 740-454-9500 for information on mail order sales.

Added page exclusive to the digital edition. Some photos have previously been posted to our Facebook page. Follow us on Facebook under Pioneer and Historical Society of Musk-



Getting the new furnace through the small opening to the Stone Academy attic was no easy matter. For more information see page 2.



Interesting juxtaposition of new heating technology with 200 year old roof rafters and sheeting.



Mosaic Tile in the entryway to the former Bloomer Candy Co building on N 3rd St. which is expected to be demolished for make room for a parking lot.



Drawing of downtown Zanesville by Tony Dunlavey from the cover of a 1923 Chamber of Commerce booklet