

From Under the Oak Tree

Special points of interest:

- Open Sundays 2—4:30 pm now to November 17
- Guided tours available, special group visits
- The Gift Shoppe at the Seven Oaks is open on Sundays with the Museum
- There is no charge to visit the Museum or any of the Museum Campus buildings
- The pedestrian bridge leading to the new Welcome Center was moved from the Wall St. bridge location in 2012.



Middle Point Railroad Watchtower

Old County Schools - Remembering the past - Wed., Feb.15, 1956 *Times Bulletin* newspaper, *Between Us* column by I. Van Wert

JUST BETWEEN US, some time ago Miss Ida Sprain of York Township worked out for us a list of the pupils she taught many years ago at the Moss School in her home township . . . “So many have said to me,” she writes, “that they got enjoyment out of reading their names with their old schoolmates” . . . So Miss Ida has set herself down to draw up another list and already, she says, quite a few of the folks on the list are watching for it . . . Up to today we didn’t have room, but now here goes . . .

THIS LIST is of the pupils of the Dutch School, located just west off federal highway 127 about four miles south of Van Wert . . . They are the pupils of 1906— just fifty years ago . . . Miss Ida says she “heard from 25 to 30 classes every day and did my own janitor work” while she was teaching at this school . . .

THE GIRLS on Miss Ida’s list are Mabelle DeLong, Bertha Flager, Mary Flager, Myrtle Flager, Beatrice Hoghe, Bernice Hoghe, Ida Hertel, Gladys Hertel, Velma Hertel, Edna Hertel, Pearl Hertel, Agatha Hertel, Cora Handwerk, Grace Handwerk, Helen McGee, Inis Rice, Nellie Rice, Grace Rice, Goldie Wise, Lillian Wise, Ilo Wise, Vearl Wise, Lucile Wise, Zelda Wise, Amy Wise, Naomi Wise and Ethel Wise . . .

THE BOYS ON the list are Harry Flager, Doyt Hertel, Gale Hertel, Glenn Hertel, Otis Hertel, Floyd Hertel, Guy Hoghe, Reide Hoghe, Fred Handwerk, Glenn Koehler, Orum McGee, Clyde Parker, Ray Parker, Vaughn Rice, Wilber Rice, Lester Wise, Orlo Koehler and Otho Wise . . .

Blast from the Past Quiz! Can you match the mascot names to the correct county schools? Van Wert County Schools pre-consolidation into or resulting as Lincolnview, Crestview, Parkway, and Van Wert that is . . .

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------|
| Middle Point | Eagles |
| Ridge | Dukes |
| York | Indians |
| Hoaglin-Jackson | Polar Bears |
| Union | Indians |
| Convoy | Warriors |
| Wren | Bearcats |
| Willshire | Rockets |
| Ohio City | Wildcats |
| Convoy Union | Bulldogs |
| Van Del | Tigers |

The correct match-up is on page 5.

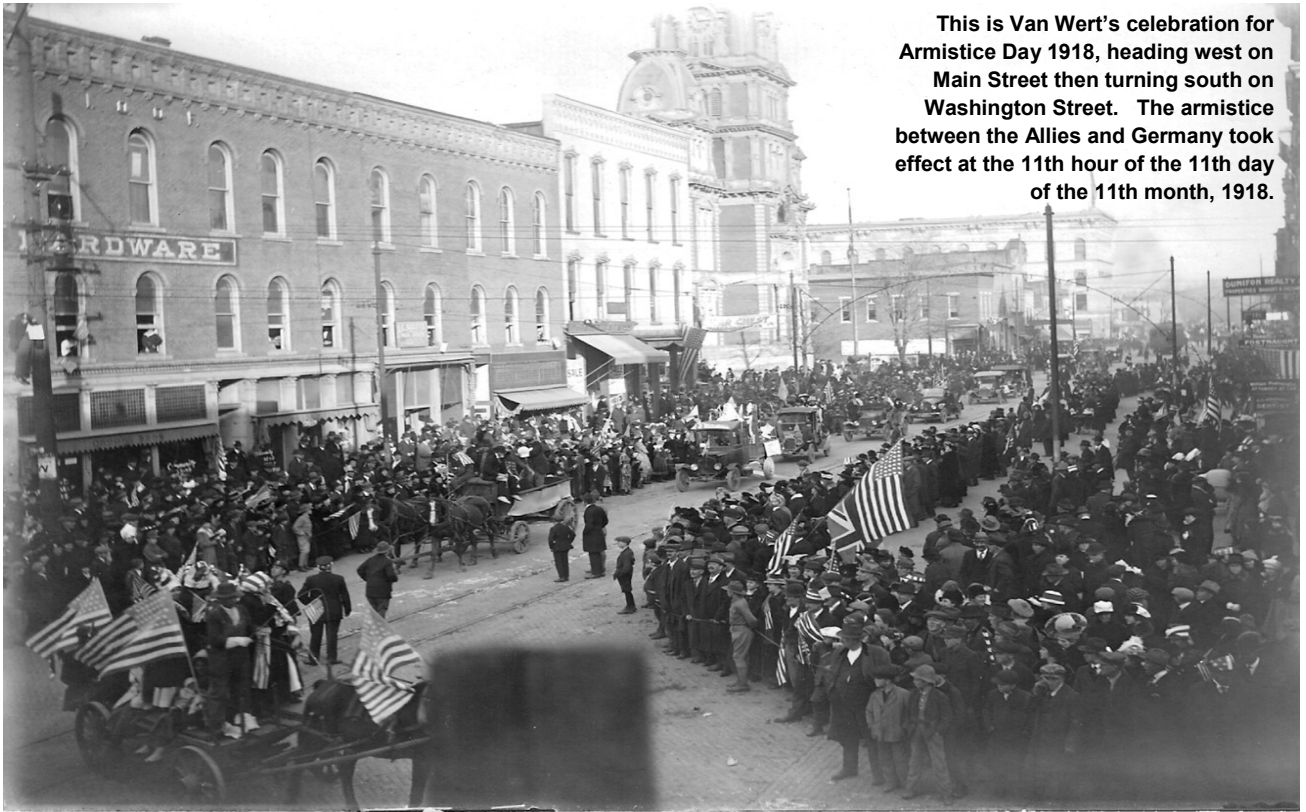
To find and to hold for posterity

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Inserts

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Program Schedule



This is Van Wert's celebration for Armistice Day 1918, heading west on Main Street then turning south on Washington Street. The armistice between the Allies and Germany took effect at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, 1918.

End of the Great War with Germany 1918, later known as WWI. Armistice Day became Veterans Day after WWII.

Locals support the Historical Society with generous donations

Mrs. Wanda Uncapher was very pleased to make a donation in memory of her brother, Bill Johns.

The Historical Society recently received a very generous donation of \$9,000 for general operations. The donor, Wanda Uncapher, of Van Wert, was very pleased to make the donation in memory of her brother, Bill Johns. Bill, who lived in North Carolina, was often seen back in Van Wert helping to care for their mother.

Former locals, Scott and Nikki Niswonger, who are frequently

back in town as loyal "locals", made a donation to the new Welcome Center & Research Library that opened in the Fall of 2012. Their donation was made for new technology in the Research Library. In recognition of their support, the Society trustees have named the Library the "Niswonger Research Library." Larry Mengerink of Vantage Career Center and his Building & Grounds classes, with assistance from Brenda Wurst,

renovated the building that is now the Welcome Center. Other financial supporters of the project were Iberdrola Renewables, Paulding Putnam Electrical Cooperative, and the Cooper Family Foundation.

The Society extends a big Van Wert style thank you to Mrs. Uncapher, the Niswongers, and the many other faithful supporters of our County Historical Society!

Quips from the Museum

Did you know your Historical Society has a new gift shop? They do! It is in the new Welcome Center. A great many work hours by many volunteers are behind this new gift shop so a fancy name had to be picked for it, and it is . . .

The Gift Shoppe at Seven Oaks! It is open on Sundays from 2—4:30 pm when the Museum Campus is open. So

what is the story behind the Seven Oaks? When the John Clark family built the home, circa 1896, that is now the Museum, there were seven oaks on the property. That is the truth!

Did you know the Society has a "Kodak Moment" photo spot? Kodak never knew about it, but many locals do!

It is the Gazebo! A beautiful place to take family photos!

Don't know where to take the prom photos mom? Head to the Gazebo! Another favorite local photo spot is the red caboose. Stop by the Museum Campus anytime and look for a photo spot!

The Gazebo is listed on the National Register of Historic Sites. Built in 1874 on the Courthouse grounds, it went to Fountain Park, then the County Fairgrounds and permanently to the Museum grounds.



What is in a name? More than George Washington could have imagined . . .

What if you lived in Van Wart County, not Van Wert? It could have happened. The name comes from Isaac Van Wart, a Minuteman in General Washington's Continental Army whose 15 minutes of fame came on September 23, 1780. Isaac and two fellow foot soldiers, John Paulding and David Williams, captured the British adjunct general, Major John Andre, near Tarrytown, N.Y. They found evidence on Major Andre of Benedict Arnold's treasonous plot to surrender, to the British, the strategic Hudson River fort at West Point. Andre was hanged as a spy but Arnold escaped to the loyalist lines.

General Washington wrote to the Continental Congress to encourage a reward for Van Wart, Paulding and Williams. They did by striking the first U.S. Medals ever awarded and giving each a \$200 a year pension until they were dead. The State of New York provided each with a farm.

All went well for the three heroes but Van Wart was mis-spelled as Van Wert. In the early 1800s the Ohio state legislature named three counties after these three men. Van Wart became Van Wert, both for the County and the City. Over the 200 years since the name was put on our Northwest Ohio county, there have been numerous battles between descendants of Van Wart and anyone who would listen to their appeals for the mis-spelling of the family name to be corrected.

George Washington had a "hand" in naming Van Wert County, in 1780!

In 1945 our local Brumback Library librarian, Mary T. Hardy, wrote to The Library of Congress over the course of three months. She was seeking a final answer to the name question. After an exchange of letters The Library of Congress wrote her on April 14, 1945. In this letter they referenced three letters written by George Washington to the President of Congress.

In the first letter of September 26, 1780, Washington did not know the names of the three men. The second letter of October 7, 1780, Washington provides the three names and uses "Isaac **Van Wart**." The third letter of November 20, 1780, Washington added this postscript: "P.S. I omitted acknowledging Your Excellency's favor of the 8th respecting **Van Wert**, Paulding and Williams." (Note: prior to 1945 there are sources that state the Oct. 7 letter includes the misspelling.)

The chief of the general reference and bibliography division at The Library of Congress wrote to Miss Hardy, "Possibly the name of your town was taken from this (third) letter written by George Washington." In answering a second question by Miss Hardy, he added, "None of our Dutch dictionaries list the name of Van Wart. Possibly this name is a shortened or Anglicized form of another name." Washington's spelling of Wart as Wert is assumed to have led to the name change by Congress when they honored Paulding, Van Wart and Williams.

It continued on as the name of the City of Van Wert and Van Wert County, Ohio; Van Wert, Decatur County, Iowa; Van Wert, Juniata County, Pennsylvania; Van Wert, Polk County, Georgia (now considered a south-end suburb of Rockmart, GA); and many streets in the Eastern U.S.A.

Why wasn't the name corrected back in 1780 or the early 1800s? Evidently there wasn't much interest in doing so. If a slip of the pen back in 1780 was good enough for George Washington and the Congress, we will have to remain Wart's namesakes living as Van Werts!



Now is the time to schedule a Museum Campus tour!

Nice weather will be here soon! Call and book a day for your family reunion, class reunion, social club, school class, scout group, church group, civic group or organizations, or a senior group and have a fun day at the Museum.

Call Museum Trustee Dean Williamson, 419.238.7737, or email at arldean@wcoil.com. Yes, that Dean, the local, green thumb gardener and top-rated Museum tour guide!



This sign, an outline of the State of Ohio, is located at the Museum Complex. It recognizes Isaac Van Wart, one of three who captured Major Andre, a British spy.

Marbles? Yes, they were on a roll in the past . . .

Wed., Aug. 21, 1940

Discovery of the sycamore stump in the middle of Woodland Avenue, where the grade is being cut down, uncovered a story of a lost marble 66 years ago. Harry Burt of West Main Street and Paul Sells of Woodland Avenue were talking about the stump when Burt told about a large marble he had lost one day in the vicinity of the sycamore tree. Mr. Sells said "I know who has that marble, it was found the other day." The boy who found the marble gave it to Burt, who, in relating the story said he had gone to the pasture to get the cows and was

shooting the marble towards the tree when it became lost.

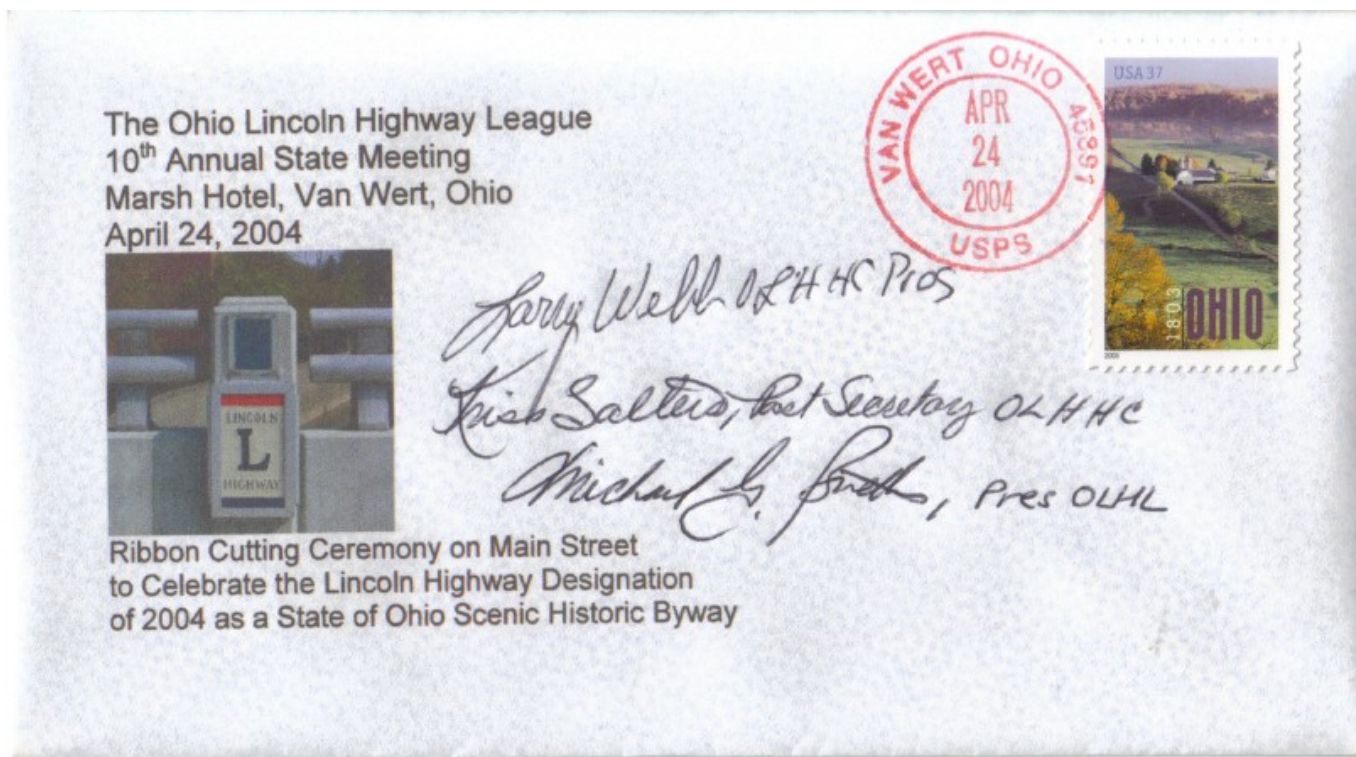
Fri., May 17, 1929

Marble Tournament

Ward Champions to Meet for Play to Decide Van Wert City Champion

The final play for the city championship of the Toledo News-Bee marble tournament in Van Wert, sponsored by the James Clark Shoe Company, will be held Saturday morning at 9:00 o'clock at Third Ward school building. The finals will be played between the following ward champions:

Clyde Presler, First Ward; Gene Williams, Second Ward; V. Lee, Third Ward; Truman Martin, Fourth Ward. The city champion will be given a medal by the Toledo News-Bee and a prize from the Elks Lodge, also a free trip to Toledo, where he will represent Van Wert in the Northwestern Ohio marble tournament. The winner of that tournament will be given a free trip to Ocean City New Jersey and play in the national marble tournament.



Lincoln Highway 100th Anniversary to be held in 2013. Van Wert's famous retired barber, Larry Webb, also a long-time volunteer for the Historical Society, will play an important role.

The Van Wert Convention & Visitors Bureau has organized a Lincoln Highway Centennial Committee for 2013. Main Street in Van Wert and old highway 30 in Van Wert County was part of the Lincoln Highway when it was formally recognized and construction was started on the east-west route across the United States. Van Wert has the opportunity to participate in several events as they pass through the County this summer. We are lucky to have a local fellow, Larry Webb, who has the Lincoln Highway as one of his hobbies. Larry has been active for many years in Lincoln Highway associations. The postal cover shown above is from 2004 when Larry hosted the Lincoln Highway League 10th Annual State Meeting in Van Wert at the Marsh Hotel. They held a ribbon cutting on the Main Street bridge over the Town Creek to celebrate the Lincoln Highway Designation as a State of Ohio Scenic Historic Byway.

That is our Main Street and old highway 30!

Become a member of the Van Wert County Historical Society

Your support is very important to the operations of the Historical Society. Choose from four levels of membership:

- Individual Membership** - \$20 annual donation
- Patron Membership** - \$50 annual donation
- Sponsor Membership** - \$100 annual donation
- Isaac Van Wart Membership** - \$200 annual donation

The Van Wert County Historical Society is a non-profit 501(c)(3) institution. All memberships are tax deductible. Your memorial donations, contributions and gifts may be tax deductible.

Memberships are annual, renewed at the beginning of the year. If you did not receive a notice to renew, please use the form to the right.

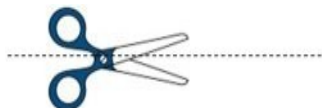
Historical Happenings, November 1996

At the Historical Society meeting on Sunday, September 15, 1996, we enjoyed a look at the liturgical art of Van Wert via a 36-minute video produced at the Wassenberg Art Center by Patti (Pancake) Keister. It was filmed by Gale Compton and edited by Linda McCann and Patti Keister. Did you know that there are 66 churches in Van Wert County? Well, we got a peek into 14 of them and learned about the architecture, stained glass windows, sculpture and paintings. The video tape is well done and very informative.

Wonder if this has been converted for computer viewing? Maybe the ladies are reading this . . .

**Answer for the Blast from the Past Quiz on page 1
School mascots matched to County Schools**

- Middle Point Polar Bears
- Ridge Tigers
- York Dukes
- Hoaglin-Jackson Bulldogs
- Union Wildcats
- Convoy Indians
- Wren Eagles
- Willshire Bearcats
- Ohio City Warriors
- Convoy Union Indians
- Van Del Rockets



The Van Wert County Historical Society Welcomes

____ New Member ____ Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

email _____

Annual Memberships

Individual Membership - \$20

Patron Membership - \$50

Sponsor Membership - \$100

Isaac Van Wart Membership - \$200

Make payments payable to:

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Van Wert OH 45891

Questions and inquiries:

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Thank You!

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If you would like to comment on, suggest content, or receive the newsletter, contact the newsletter editor via email at gbja@vwlocal.net or the Society via the contact information located on the last page of this newsletter.

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Visit us for organization information, photo gallery, trustee and officer listings at vanwert.com/museum

The Van Wert County Historical Society was organized in 1953, during Ohio's Sesquicentennial celebration. In 1955, William Fosnought, a local attorney and school teacher, donated to the Society a building which was built circa 1896 by the John Clark family. The building, now the County Museum, is located at the corner of N. Washington and Third Streets in Van Wert.

The Museum houses thousands of artifacts that have been donated by area residents. This original Museum property has been maintained as a Victorian home and features many displays.

The 1985 addition to the Museum Campus is a 50' x 50' building, called the Annex, with displays of other phases of early Van Wert life.

The Annex features a Historical Walking Tour of early Van Wert.

You can "Like" your Historical Society on facebook! Our facebook page has many photos displayed so they are available to everyone. Many of these photos have been stored for many years without being seen by visitors to the Musuem Campus. On facebook we are "Van Wert County Historical Society."

Well, I didn't know that . . .

. . . the old wrought iron fence in front of the Museum (Washington Street) was once located on a West Lincoln Highway property! A large brick home was built in 1884 by Sanford Kohn, a member of a prominent Van Wert County family. Kohn's occupation was a livestock dealer, especially buying and selling horses. He probably bought and sold more horses than any other man in the county. He had a son, George Kohn, born Oct., 8, 1860, who attended public schools here and was graduated from Ohio

Wesleyan University in 1882. He was admitted to practice law and at one time was editor and manager of the Van Wert Times newspaper. The old Kohn home was later owned by his daughter, Mrs. Lewis Ricketts, who sold the property to the Aeroquip Corporation. At the request of W.T. Hoeken in 1963, Aeroquip agreed to give this fence to the Historical Society. Jack Weaver and Howard Foltz undertook the job of erecting and restoring the fence. The section of wrought

iron fence from the corner to the driveway (Third Street) belonged to Roger Tossey who lived on Route 127 north. He and Ruth had set it out for the trash when Jack Weaver and Howard Foltz rescued it! The section of fence from the driveway to the caboose was once in front of the office of Dr. George K. Miller, Jr., in Delphos. It was donated by his son, Dr. Ken Miller in 1989.



What is this flag? If you knew it was Van Wert County's official flag pat yourself on the back! They are not many of them around! The flag's history will make a good story for the next - From Under the Oak Tree.