



The Kidron Community Historical Society Newsletter



A few of the 37 quilts on display at the Heritage Center.

Splendid Scraps

The 2006 Heritage Center annual display, “The Piece-ful Quilter: Scraps to Splendor,” highlights the work of Kidron area fabric artists.

More than three dozen unique handmade quilts were selected to be a part of the display. Some quilts were created in response to special events or as gifts for people, such as the “Kidron Auction Quilt” and the “Salem Mennonite Scripture Quilt.” Other quilts were simply a part of everyday life. Several of the quilts on display were purchased at garage sales by friends, relatives and neighbors of the quilters.

The display pays tribute to the artistry of Kidron’s sewers, past and present. Be sure to view these beautiful works of art this summer.

KCHS Welcomes New Board Member/Treasurer

More than ten years ago, Clayton Steiner agreed to serve on the board of trustees for the Kidron Community Historical Society. For more than nine of those years, he has served as treasurer of the organization. Now, KCHS bids him farewell as life takes him in a new direction.

Clayton and his wife, Ruth, depart July 5 to fill a Voluntary Service assignment in Washington, D.C., where they will be the hosts of the International Guest House, a place for overseas visitors.

Clayton retired recently after 20 years at A.R.E. where his most recent position was that of corporate pur-

chaser. Ruth retired this summer after completing her 30th year of teaching.

Clayton brought a great gift for detail to his position and says he appreciated the “felt ownership and the financial support of the community.”

Richard Nussbaum will be assuming Clayton’s place on the board and the position of treasurer.

Rich is a lifelong resident of Kidron and will retire from Schantz Organ Company in November after 43 years. He is a member of the Wayne MEDA (Mennonite Economic Development Associates) Investment Club and has served as that club’s treasurer since 2002. He and his wife, Judie, have been

active in KCHS.

Thank you, Rich, for stepping up to fill this important position, and blessings on you, Clayton, as you move on to new adventures.



Clayton Steiner (L) met with Richard Nussbaum to review accounting methods as Steiner passed on the torch to Nussbaum.

From the Editor's Desk *by Kris Nussbaum*

When I was a little girl, one of my best friends was my great-grandmother, Prudence Burger. She was 82 when I was born and she had arthritis and didn't see very well. When I was a few years old, a woman named Sara came to live with Grandma to take care of her and her house.

I think Sara's presence gave Grandma the courage to invite me into her life in a way I've never forgotten. Once a week, I spent a couple of hours at Grandma's house, playing with her toys, running up the back stairs and down the front stairs, and pretending that her big front porch was my pirate ship. I must have exhausted her, but she always had a hug, some oatmeal raisin cookies and a glass of milk for me.

When I got a little older, she gave me music lessons. She and I played flutophones with color-coded buttons, cranking out classics like "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." She taught me to have fun and enjoy making music.

One of Grandma's great treasures was her doll, Bobby. He had a fragile head and a cloth body. He also had some problems. Someone had mishandled Bobby and ripped about a quarter of his head away from his body and the stuffing was jutting out. He had been fixed with tape, but the stuffing didn't seem to fit, so he had an enormous lump on his neck. It was a great privilege to be allowed to hold poor, fragile Bobby and rock him to sleep when I was at Grandma's; some days when I was too rambunctious, it was a privilege I could not earn.

Grandma Burger died in 1980 at the age of 92. I have never stopped missing her and wondering what wisdom I might have learned had I been older, had she lived longer.

Bobby lives in my bedroom now, wearing the red corduroy overalls, black and white houndstooth shirt and tiny baby shoes he has worn as long as I can remember. And somewhere in my collection of childhood treasures are several pieces of cardboard containing flutophone music. Are they worth any money? Probably not. But to me, they're priceless. They remind me of the precious gift my great-grandmother gave me: her time.



Welcome New Annual and Lifetime Members

Lois Amstutz-Hesston, Kansas
Richard King-Wooster, Ohio
Jim Steiner-Cincinnati, Ohio

It's not too late to renew your annual membership if you haven't done so for 2006!

Thanks to our April, May and June Volunteers

Anna Sommer	Vernon Lehman
Amstutz	Joan Martin
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Members Banquet Spotlights Kidron's Quilting Heritage

The tenth annual KCHS banquet opened with the thought that "being here is a gift from God." The 210 KCHS members and friends who gathered on April 25 were reminded of this by Gordon Amstutz, who led the devotional.

Following dinner, Board President Wayne Liechty recognized the contributions of 49 volunteers, two of whom were new this year. Of special note was Anna Sommer Amstutz, who faithfully continues to volunteer at 99 years old.

Dr. Virginia L. Gunn, Professor of Home Economics and Family Ecology at The University of Akron, presented the program "The Piece-ful Quilter: Scraps to Splendor." Gunn, a renowned textiles expert, highlighted national trends in quilting and how quilters from the Kidron area adapted and responded

to those ideas. She noted that the Kidron community was known for "taking an American tradition and making it reflect values" such as family, friendship and faith.

The program was followed by an auction of donated items conducted by Joseph Mast who returned as the auctioneer. Members had the opportunity to bid on eleven items, including a vintage Kidron Electric thermometer, a 1959 Kidron Cheese Factory teapot, a framed 1930s photo of the Kidron Auction, E.P. Gerber salad tongs and a pottery piece by award-winning artist Jim Spires.

At the conclusion of the evening, Liechty thanked Steve Steiner and his crew of helpers for running the kitchen and serving the meal, Allyson Leisy and Annie Nielson for putting the

display together, auction donors for their generosity, and Leora Gerber for her tireless efforts on behalf of KCHS.

The Heritage Center was open for members to see the new display.

Thank you to our banquet sponsors. A complete list of sponsors can be found on page 4.



Dr. Gunn (R) used vintage quilts to discuss trends in sewing while her husband (L) and Allyson Leisy act as her assistants.

Kidron Korner

What are the niches that made the Kidron Community special?

Was it the people who lived here? Its location? What they found here? Was it cultural? Perhaps it was providence?

Kidron was labeled “An Energetic Swiss Community.” It began with four families arriving from Switzerland in 1819. Our forebears, escaping severe religious persecution, found respite in America. Soon, more and more immigrants arrived until there was a large Swiss settlement around the newly formed town and within the five-mile area surrounding it.

These people had a similar background and they knew that in order to survive, they had to depend on each other. Deeply religious, they were trustworthy and eager to serve one another and God.

It was commonplace to know everybody, and this interdependence brought people together in useful activities. Farmers helped each other thresh grain; women got together to make apple butter.

Strong family ties were important. Living on farms gave fathers opportunities to spend time with their children. Divorce, crime and unemployment were unthinkable here where everyone trusted everyone else, where doors remained unlocked.

When selecting their farm sites, farmers checked what kind of trees grew in this area. They looked for beech, oak, maple and hickory trees. These thrive only in good soil. They also checked the water supply. Today’s statistics show that this area has the best agricultural resources found anywhere in the world.¹ This includes soil type, rainfall and growing season.

Kidron was close to bigger cities for needed supplies. When the railroad ran through town, it facilitated shipping out extra grain and/or importing coal.

People driving through the area marvelled at the beauty of clean, well-kept lawns, the colorful flowers, all of which were Swiss traditions. One could walk through meadows, watch the sun set, and hear the birds in the nearby wooded areas. Soon, small family-owned businesses mushroomed. Some of these continue today, passed down from generation to generation.

Civil leadership was not necessary. When a need arose, a group of men formed a coalition to take care of it. Children learned responsibility and dependability early. Everyone was their neighbor’s keeper; they did what needed to be done. Their lifestyle was about more than gaining earthly possessions or keeping up with the world. The church was the center of activity. Everyone went to Sunday services and any other activity the church sponsored. This gave the community a sense of God’s presence.

In the early years, the emphasized work ethics didn’t allow for higher education. Later, teachers who believed in strict discipline were hired. Parents often kept children home to work.

The cost of living was comparatively low compared with many other places. Doing with what you had was the norm. An unspoken rule was “waste not, want not.”

People in the area grew their own food. They ate wholesome food cooked with traditional Swiss recipes. Meat, potatoes, vegetables and fruit were the standard diet and on special occasions one found “nothings”, saurkraut, swiss cheese, fruit shturn or rosettes.

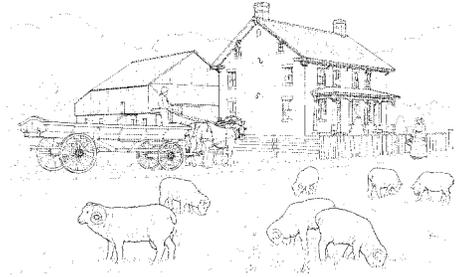
The people led a separated life by keeping pretty much to their own community. They generally did not associate with outsiders or delve into politics. They were sometimes referred to as being isolated with little diversity. True, the community was very conventional. People were inclined to do the same things the same way. After all, if what they did before had worked on the farm, business or social scene, why change? If it was good enough up to now, there was no need to change.

This may have squelched creativity or what might have been God-given talents. For example, women did not become ordained ministers; that was a man’s responsibility. In many respects these people lived a carefree life, running barefoot on the farm, participating in corn huskings, farm sales, quiltings or making schnitz and homemade ice cream. Young people went to literaries where they mixed socially with activities such as book reports, debates, or games.

People did not believe they were here by chance. Earth was not the Christian’s forever home. Swiss Mennonites believed life on earth was a preparation for life after death which would be eternal. They believed in a God who had led their lives. It was He who guided them physically, spiritually, mentally and socially. This higher goal gave them incentive to live the best exemplary life based on the Bible that they possibly could. They put into practice what they believed and that makes all the difference in the world.

Many changes have come in the Kidron Community since these early days. How much of the traditional practices are still maintained and which are worth keeping will need to be determined by the reader.

By Celia Lehman



¹For more information, visit <http://www.ohioaginfol.com/info3.htm>

Kidron Community Historical Society
P.O. Box 234
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July 2006



Board Members

President Wayne Liechty
 VicePresident Paul Neuenschwander
 Treasurer Richard Nussbaum
 Secretary Gloria Kaufmann
 Membership Chairperson Leora Gerber
 Board Members Fritz Sprunger, J. Augspurger

Membership Fees

Individual Annual Member \$ 1 5
 Husband and Wife Annual Member \$ 2 5
 Organization Annual Member \$ 3 5
 Individual Life Member \$ 2 5 0
 Heritage Club Member \$1000 or more

**Annual memberships are due every January.
 Thank You!**

Name _____
 Address _____

 Type of Membership _____
 General Donation _____

The Kidron Community Historical Society of Kidron, Ohio, founded in 1977, operates under the nonprofit charter granted by the State of Ohio. Your tax deductible gifts will help secure the future of the Historical Society and give you a part in preserving the heritage of this unique community. A reminder will be sent when annual memberships become due each January.

Send your check to: Kidron Community Historical Society • Box 234 • Kidron, OH 44636 • Phone 330-857-9111

Thank you to our Members Banquet Sponsors!

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**Kidron-Sonnenberg
 Heritage Center**

13153 Emerson Road • Kidron, Ohio

HOURS

JUNE-SEPTEMBER

Thursday, Friday & Saturday

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

OCTOBER-DECEMBER, APRIL-MAY

Thursday & Saturday

11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

CLOSED JANUARY, FEBRUARY & MARCH

Call 330-857-9111

for group tours or special arrangements

••••• Visit the Kidron Database at www.omii.org •••••