



The Kidron Community Historical Society Newsletter

30 years and counting

KIDRON — Secretary of State Ted W. Brown announced today that he has issued a charter to Kidron Community Historical Society to operate as a non-profit corporation in the State of Ohio.

The principal office of the corporation is to be located in Kidron, Wayne County, Ohio.

According to the Articles of Incorporation filed in the office of Secretary Brown, the corporation was formed "to do all within its power to discover and reflect all the available historical material connected with the history of the Sonnenberg and Kidron, Ohio community and carefully preserve the same; collect, preserve and diffuse such information as may be available in the field of genealogy connected with the Sonnenberg and Kidron community; to provide for the collection, preservation and display of historical relics, papers, books, records, museum materials, old church records, private papers, manuscripts, letters and other things of historical interest; ..."

Paul A. Neumannswander, Debra D. Nussbaum and Paul T. Badertscher are the incorporators of the corporation.

Paul A. Neumannswander, Box 14, Kidron, OH 49634 has been appointed to act as Secretary Agent of the society.

See Kidron Korner on page 3 to find out what has happened in the 30 years since this article appeared in the June 20, 1977, *Marketeer* published in Orrville.

103-year-old former resident visits Kidron

“Ralph who? Cornell? No, never heard of him.” Neither had we, until last summer. To get acquainted, a “meet Ralph” day was set up on October 14th at the Heritage Center.

Ralph, now 103 years old, showed up with a smile. Though he has not lived in the Jericho area for over ninety years, he loves to come back to visit. With him were his daughter, Lois McAllister, and granddaughter’s husband, Jay Bomze. They brought along a family Bible and some photos of Ralph in his younger days—in a new suit even—before his family moved to Massillon in 1915.

see *Cornell* page 2

Help! We need your sawdust!

A few months ago, the KCHS board embraced a unique and exciting idea for the 2008 display and launched the plans to make it happen. However, your help is needed to bring this project to realization.

The CommuniTree project is still in its planning stages, with the actual work ahead. But this is the time when we need to hear from you.

Do you or someone you know have the skills to work with wood? We have free materials for craftspeople who are willing to create items to be donated to KCHS. These items will form the 2008 annual display and then become the 2009 Members Banquet auction items.

Please call Wayne Liechty at 330-857-3681 or Prudy Steiner at 330-857-1927 by January 31 to be part of this exciting project!

New software for old artifacts

The KCHS recently purchased PastPerfect, a database that organizes historical society information from membership to mailings to accessions (a detailed catalog of historical items owned by a society). This software will be invaluable in gathering and preserving information for research, planning and preparing ownership documents. In October, Leora Gerber, Glenn Miller, Judie Nussbaum and Prudy Steiner attended a training workshop in the use of the museum software.



Volunteer Glenn Miller has created electronic data records for more than 100 items in the KCHS collection, having spent 3-4 hours per week for several weeks on this project.

Noteworthy dates!

Two major annual events in the life of KCHS are coming up in the next couple of months, so be sure to put them on your calendars now!

The Society’s annual meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27 at 7 p.m. All members and friends are welcome to attend this meeting which will open with a business session and conclude with a presentation by J. Augspurger titled “East Africa Revisited: Old and New Friends.”

Then on Tuesday, April 24, members are invited to gather at the Kidron Menno-nite Fellowship Hall for the annual Members Banquet. Invitations will be mailed later this spring giving more details on the meal, presentation and auction for the evening. After the banquet, members are invited to the grand opening of the 2007 annual display, “Celebrations and Memories: Frakturs and Illuminations.”

We look forward to hosting you for these events.



Director's Desk by Prudy Steiner



Before accepting the job as director of the Heritage Center in mid-August, I called former director Bruce Detweiler Breckbill to get his counsel. In our conversation, he said the most helpful qualifications for a director are 1) to enjoy people and 2) to possess organizational skills.

After four months as director, I understand why Bruce mentioned these two qualifications. While I enjoy having things organized, it is the people who provide a strong network for the Heritage Center who have made this job a special experience.

Let's start with the committed group of people who make up the Kidron Community Historical Society Board. They invest a lot of time and energy to make sure the Heritage Center runs smoothly and continues to grow, and they have shown me a tremendous amount of support.

Next are the docents, our volunteers. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting and working with them. Since it is a known fact that most of us take very little interest in our heritage until later in life, many of our volunteers have their own unique and interesting stories to tell—they want to keep their heritage alive. And in talking to them, I have discovered that I am related or connected with most of them in some way.

Of course I value all of our members. I am amazed at the number of people who are on our mailing list, and not only local people. Many no longer live in the Kidron area, but maintain connections to the original settling of this Sonnenberg area. We are thankful for each one. Each time I climb the stairs to the second floor of the Heritage Center, I am thrilled to see so many names listed on the "Heritage Club Members" plaque hanging on the wall. It is because of this support that the Heritage Center is known as one of the best in the area.

I look forward to working with and for all of you. When you are in Kidron, please stop in and see us.

Cornell continued

He remembers the day when the move was made with two hay-ladder wagons pulled by teams of horses.

But to back up a bit, Ralph was born in 1903 in a log house (no longer there) near the Jericho/Wenger Road intersection (the old Dan Bixler place). His father, Amiel, had come from the French-speaking part of Switzerland. His mother, Adelia (Henning), was from Ohio. The Cornells had a farm and also a small store behind their house. They raised, butchered and sold meat and "huckstered" other items purchased in bulk at McClain's Grocery. Ralph, the oldest of five children, recalls the trains running on the railroad near their property.

The first two years of Ralph's schooling were at Boone's School.

His teacher was Calvin Hofstetter. Then the family moved about a mile away, and Ralph went to Reed's School (located on a steep hill on the east side of Wenger Road where it intersects Western Road). One of the teachers there was Earl Tschantz. He tutored Ralph in spelling, which he liked, allowing him to win spelling bees.

Interestingly, Dave Gerber's father, Nathan, also born in 1903, attended Boone's, and was probably a pupil there at the same time as Ralph (1909-1911). (Dave himself was in the last class to attend Boone's School all eight years.)

There was attentive conversation between Ralph, his family, and the seven members of the Historical Society present that day. Afterward, Ralph took several members on a tour of the Jericho area, telling where his

Welcome New Annual, Lifetime and

Heritage Club Members

Historical Genealogy Dept. of the
Allen Co. Library—Fort Wayne,
Indiana

Rick and Annette Harnish—Flanagan,
Illinois

Dan A. and Ruth Miller—Dalton

It's time to renew your
2007 annual
membership if you
haven't already done so!

.....
• Have you visited the Kidron
• Database at www.omii.org
• lately?
• It's always being updated.
• Contact us with submissions
• and corrections.
.....

family had lived and where he went to school. That his mind, memory, sight and sense of humor are still intact was quite evident.

Ralph worked at Republic Steel, and later (post-WWII) developed a real estate and insurance business. He was married to Mabel Marie Keyser for 48 years, but now lives on his own. Ralph is a Rotarian, has a hobby farm, and is looking forward to renewing his driver's license next spring. Asked about the secret of longevity, he responded with a gentle smile, "Don't eat too much!"



Dave Gerber (left) and 103-year-old former Kidron resident Ralph Cornell shake hands in front of a Clayton Hofstetter painting of Boone's School, which both men attended.



30 Year Celebration of the Kidron Community Historical Society

After the Kidron Community Historical Society was officially chartered in 1977, many people spent the next few years searching for a building that could become a museum for their valuable historical records and artifacts.

Items that were donated were recorded first in a Sunday School classroom and later in the basement of the Fellowship Hall of the Kidron Mennonite Church. When the items became too numerous for the available storage space, it was evident that a change was needed. Could the holdings be moved to a larger, more permanent location?

The basement of the First National Bank in Kidron was ultimately chosen as the site for the premier exhibit of the Kidron Community Historical Society. The artifacts on display told the unique story of the Kidron Community. Fannie Amstutz, at that time the oldest resident in Kidron at age 98, cut the ribbon for the grand opening in 1985.

In 1992 John and Janet Sprunger offered to donate the land and the vacant Lehman Garage just west of the Kidron Square for the new museum.

The Board contacted the Ohio Historical Society who sent official representatives to Kidron to assist in properly setting up the museum. They also warned the Board that undertaking such a project meant lots of time, money, and persistence. But capable leaders such as Wayne Liechty, Delvin Nussbaum, and Paul Neuenschwander could not be daunted. The two-story building was completed for Kidron's 175th anniversary in 1994.

Credit goes to Paul and Anne Locher who purchased and dismantled a small log house on Lester Geiser's farm and donated it to be preserved in the first floor of the museum, Stanley A. Kaufman who was hired as technical consultant to train Ruth Moser and Celia Lehman to catalog and display items in the collection, Lloyd Vandersall who cataloged hundreds of books, the Kidron Community Council who contributed financial support from Kidron Machinery Sales, Roger Geiser who established the extensive genealogy database, Bruce Detweiler Breckbill who served as the first paid director of the Heritage Center, as well as many other people.

The exterior of the building was redesigned with a Swiss décor. The first floor displayed woodworking items, fraktur, linens, and clock- and organ-making tools for which the early Sonnenberg settlers were known. A door was rebuilt to accommodate the first fire truck built by Kidron Inc.

The second story is used for genealogical data entry and research; special annual displays which have included barns, churches, furniture, fine arts, fabrics, business displays; and storage of artifacts not currently on display.

So as we think back over the past 30 years of the Kidron Community Historical Society, it is evident that it was indeed the cooperative effort of many dedicated people who have made the Kidron-Sonnenberg Heritage Center an innovator in the development, collection, and displaying of historical community resources in Ohio.

Compiled by Celia Lehman

Thanks to our October, November and December Volunteers

Ada Amstutz	Glen Groh	Bernice Nussbaum
Dick Arter	Carolyn Haas	Delvin Nussbaum
George Breneman	Carol Haven	Heinz Peter
Clif Bushnell	Gail Johnson	Rosa Peter
Grace Bytheway	Gloria Kaufmann	Ella Rohrer
Esther Falb	Eldon King	Fritz Sprunger
George Falb	Eldon Kornhaus	Janet Sprunger
Nancy Ganyard	Eileen Lehman	Bud Steiner
Anna Gehman	Shirley Lehman	Jean Steiner
John Gehman	Vernon Lehman	Walter Steiner
Don Geiser	Wayne Liechty	Cindy Strubbe
Em Geiser	Don Miller	Sandi Suttle
Dave Gerber	Glenn Miller	Carol Yoder
Glenford Gerber	Bill Moser	
Leora Gerber	Richard Moser	
Ann Groh	Clarence Neuenschwander	

Want to help raise
money for KCHS?
Contact us if you
would be willing to
work at the food
stand at the Buckeye
Tool Expo, February
16-17!



Kidron Community Historical Society
P.O. Box 234
Kidron, Ohio 44636

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 Organization
 Postage Paid
 Kidron, Ohio
 44636
 Permit No. 5

January 2007



Board Members

President Wayne Liechty
 VicePresident Paul Neuenschwander
 Treasurer Richard Nussbaum
 Secretary Gloria Kaufmann
 Membership Chairperson Leora Gerber
 Board Members Fritz Sprunger, J. Augspurger
 Director Prudy Steiner
 Bit O'Vit Editor Kris Nussbaum

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!**

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.

Name _____
 Address _____

 Type of Membership _____
 General Donation _____

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

Calendar of Events

January 31, 2007
*Extended deadline for requesting wood for
 Communitree project*
February 16-17, 2007
Buckeye Tool Expo Fundraiser
February 27, 2007
Annual meeting, 7 p.m. at the Heritage Center
April 5, 2007
Heritage Center opens for 2007
April 24, 2007
*Annual Members Banquet and Auction
 Display Grand Opening*

**Kidron-Sonnenberg
 Heritage Center**

13153 Emerson Road • Kidron, Ohio
HOURS
 CLOSED JANUARY, FEBRUARY and MARCH
JUNE-SEPTEMBER
 Thursday, Friday and Saturday
 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
OCTOBER-DECEMBER, APRIL-MAY
 Thursday and Saturday
 11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Call 330-857-9111
 for group tours or special arrangements