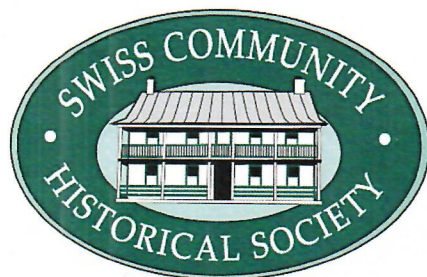


Christmas 2016



newsletter



of Bluffton & Pandora
PO Box 5
Bluffton, Ohio 45817

Treasuring the Schumacher Farmstead

Our Heritage

By Wendy Chappell-Dick

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MEMBERSHIPS

Annual Household - \$30

Annual Sustaining - \$100

Life - \$1,000

Please check date on mailing label showing current standing. Mail dues checks and donations to Marvin Diller at above address.

NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Wendy & Andy Chappell-Dick

In 1999 the Swiss Community Historical Society decided to do something they had never done before or since. They hired a "Fall Events Coordinator," a part time staff person to open the house for visitors every weekend from September to December. That person was me. I was in my early twenties, and eager to learn more about my heritage and to share that interest with others. Ann Hilty and Keith Sommer trained some volunteers to be docents, including Beth Raeburn, Lesa Lewis, Ross Lehman, Linda Suter, Amy Lehman Mikesell, and Bobbie Chappell.

Each Saturday we had a theme: Local History; Ground Cherry Jam with outdoor oven-baked bread; Making Music From the 1800s; Making Apple Butter; Woodworking; Historical Uses of Herbs; and Making Christmas Decorations out of natural materials with Beverly Amstutz.

Unlike the crowded, bustling fall festival, these Saturday afternoons were calm and slow. Usually we had a small but very interested crowd, and they often stayed for a long time. These were days before the house was climate controlled, and it got quite cold. In the late afternoon we lit candles. I have happy memories of the open houses that year. I remember wondering why people (including me) loved spending time out at the Swiss House so much. It felt good to be away from electronic noises, sights and screens. It felt quiet and peaceful out there. One could really get a sense for a simpler time. Some of my favorite memories of the Schumacher House are the simple times. A small family picnic with the cousins. Stopping in the yard to eat an apple on a canoe trip down the Riley. Watching the sun set.

One of my hopes for the Heritage Center is that it will mean the property is used more often, and by more people. The Heritage Center can provide a comfortable gathering place for families and groups, and I hope it leads them to experience the farmstead in a deeply personal way. Through special events and displays we can examine our historical traditions more closely, and explore them for ourselves. Our Schumacher farmstead is a treasure that should be enjoyed more than once or twice a year.

As a child, I remember listening to my Grossmama Betty (Bixel) Heiks talk what she called "fake Swiss" with her friends at Fall Festival while I munched apple butter on fresh bread. This fall I will be making a donation to the Heritage Center fund in her honor, anticipating the day my future granddaughter will enjoy the Schumacher farmstead with me.

activities and happenings

by Joanne Niswander

Our faithful docents, the guides who voluntarily take time to give tours of the Homestead when requested, were especially busy during September this year.

The month started off with a Saturday afternoon docent training session that showcased the work that Alice Lora and Kaye Phillips have done over the past several years in photographing, marking, and putting into inventory our collection of historic items (items on display as well as those in storage). Although the work continues, as there are still many items not yet photographed, the information that has been gathered is a valuable resource for our docents as they interpret the Homestead's history to visitors.

We were honored, on September 16, to host a tour of the Homestead for 25 Allen County Museum docents. As most of the visiting docents had never been to the Homestead before, we were pleased to be able to show off what we have to offer. They were a very interested, very receptive group.

Next on our list was the ever-growing crowd, well over a thousand, attending Fall Festival on September 24. Although our Docents were not able to give special tours to any one group, we were all on hand in costume to answer questions, demonstrate various crafts, and help to make our visitors feel welcome.

Then, to cap off our September list, we hosted 87 first graders from Bluffton Elementary School on the 27th. The four classrooms of



children visited all of our buildings, learning from our docents how children from an earlier age lived, slept and played. This particular tour with the Bluffton first grade children has been a tradition for many years.

As you may or may not be aware, our docents are willing to give private tours (for a donation to the Society) throughout the spring, summer and fall to individuals and small groups as they are requested. Please call Joanne Niswander at 358-0186 to schedule a tour.

Although winter will soon be upon us, our docents expect to be on hand to greet you when you visit the Homestead's Christmas Open House on December 10. We look forward to seeing you then!

"Enjoyed the tour this morning very much--had no previous knowledge of this very interesting historical aspect of the area. Thank you so very much."

- Linda J Sparrow Boger, Allen County Museum



acquisition

Who is Friedrich Boediker? And where is Pentleton, OH?

A beautiful blue and white coverlet was recently donated to the Society by Seth and Carol Bixel of Bluffton, Ohio. Inscribed with the weaver's name, Friedrich Boediker, and the year 1861, the coverlet is 69" by 75" in size and in excellent condition. It was originally in two parts because of the size of the loom and is connected by hand stitching down the center. The Boediker coverlet is reversible, with the inscription woven in backwards and forwards, to allow the writing to be seen on both sides and used on both sides. Coverlets were to be placed on the very top of the bedding, as a bedspread would be today. This one was purchased from the Kris Frick Sorgenfrei DeBolt Estate and had also once belonged to Ted Diller of Bluffton, Ohio.

Pentleton is the former name of Pandora, Ohio.

- Kaye Phillips



Divinity Fudge

Carol Diller, from *Memories of Mother's Cooking*

My earliest memories of my mother's divinity candy and New Year's serenaders coming to our house are somehow interrelated. I was too young to go serenading or to stay awake until they came, so they are just a memory, but our family all got a taste of the divinity before we went to bed.

2 c sugar

½ c light corn syrup

½ c water

2 egg whites (room temperature)

1 t. vanilla

1 c broken hickory or walnut pieces

Mix sugar, syrup and water in a sauce pan. Stir over heat until sugar is melted; continue to cook without stirring until it reaches hard boil stage (260 degrees). While syrup is cooking, beat eggs whites in a large bowl until they just hold their shape. Remove syrup from stove and pour over beaten eggs whites in a thin stream, beating continuously until it holds its shape. Add vanilla and fold in the nuts. Spread into a buttered pan and cut in 1-inch pieces. To make sea foam candy, substitute brown sugar for white sugar.

Note: Don't make this on a rainy day.

thank you

A generous anonymous donor presented the Swiss Historical Society with a new applique quilt purchased in eastern Ohio to raffle off at our Fall Festival last September. The quilt, 94"x111", fit a queen or double bed, with the pattern "Heart of Roses." The winner was Janet Klinker of Columbus Grove, Ohio, and the raffle raised \$355 toward the renovation of the Risser Sleigh.



Have you found the Society on Facebook yet? After posting this archival image of rural mail delivery dated February 9, 1907 in Richland Township, an interesting discussion ensued about the parents of the young boy collecting the mail. Charles Steingraver (Steingrover) is the mail carrier. Weldon Luginbuhl is the child collecting the mail. From the Herman Kindle Collection in the SCHS Archives.

Christmas Open House

"Christmas at the Homestead" will be on Saturday, December 10, from 1:00-6:00 PM at the Schumacher Homestead. The public is invited to tour the decorated 1843 house while snacking on homemade treats and listening to songs of the season. Guests can watch food being prepared in the fireplace, hand dip a candle, design and make a fraktur, play a game of checkers, shop in the gift shop and chat with staff about the history of the house and typical life in the 1840's. Guests arriving at dusk will be able to see the house lit by candles much as it would have been in 1843.

The event is free to the public, but donations will be gratefully accepted.

- 1:00 Fiddles
- 2:00 New Year's Carols and stories
- 3:00 Dulcimers
- 4:00 "The Friendly Beasts of Christmas"
- 5:00 Christmas Story and German Hymns



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