

Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum, Inc.

1013 North Long Drive

Syracuse, IN 46567

574-457-3599

www.syracusemuseum.org

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Curator's Corner

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Curator's Corner
- Board of Directors
- Collection Curiosities
- Donations and Loans
- Membership
- Upcoming Programs and Events
- An Unusual Sort of Tour . . .

Hello again from the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum! We've had a lot of excitement at the Museum this summer season—we've been visited by over 1500 people in the past three months! Hopefully you've had the chance to enjoy the Museum yourselves!

In July, the Museum welcomed its first visiting exhibit—Historic Fishing Lures by Garry Ringer. It was a crowd dazzler! The display case held baits of local origin, including Creek Chub, and YPSI.

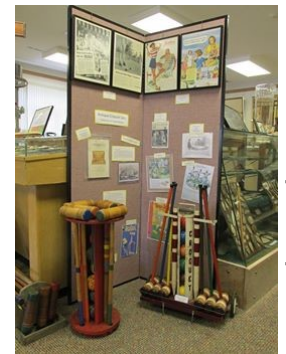


Historic Fishing Lures

We were happy to share the story of our past year with those of you who attended our 1st Annual Board Meeting in June! The event was covered by Jack Elam in the most recent quarterly publication of the Kosciusko County Historical Society—*The Thaddeus*, Autumn 2014.

We are pleased to announce the receipt of a \$10,000 donation to be used for the sole purpose of Museum expansion in the future. We look forward to developing a long range plan to address future

August brought a display of antique croquet sets by David Sheets. Tabletop, parlor, and outdoor sets from the late 1800s through the 1960s continue to be showcased through the middle of September.



Antique Croquet Sets

I'm hopeful that we might also soon have a visiting exhibition of vintage buttons! Stay tuned. In October I'll be displaying an on-loan collection of V-Mail comics drawn by a Syracuse native—find out more in "Collection Curiosities" on page 2. I also aim to have a new interactive war letter display up and running—I am currently seeking any war correspondence from this area to photocopy for use in the display. Contact me for details!

Board of Directors

needs of the Museum as it works to fulfill its mission of historical preservation and education for the Syracuse community.

We also express our thanks to long-time board member and supporter Ann Vanderford Garceau. Ann co-authored a book entitled Syracuse and Lake

Wawasee earlier this summer. She has generously donated all profits from the sale of the book back to the Museum to fund its operation and preservation projects. We feel this a double blessing—the book itself is a fine work of pictorial history that has greatly increased our understanding of local history!

Collection Curiosities

Veteran's Day will be upon us before another Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum Newsletter graces your doorstep, so I thought I'd fill you in on several interesting items on display in our military collection. Enjoy!

1. 1945 World War II V-Mail Correspondence Comics from U.S. Naval Lieutenant Don Fassler to his wife "Ruru" in Syracuse (On Loan by D. Castell).

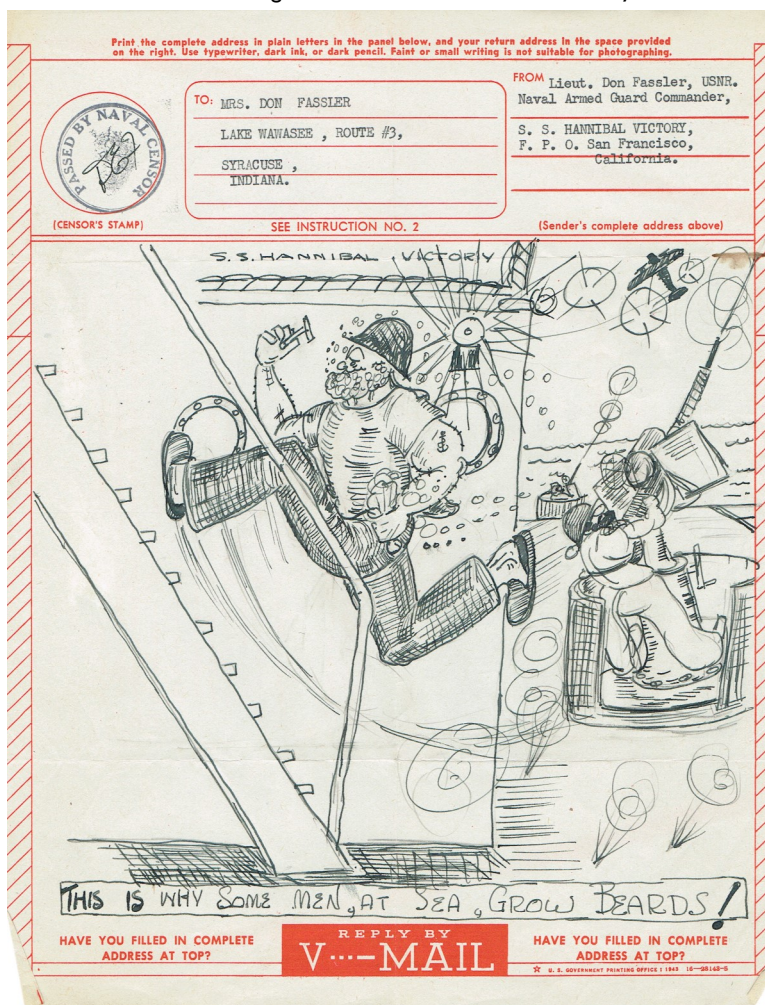
Lieut. Fassler, stationed aboard the S.S. Hannibal Victory, was an excellent artist; his comics capture what life in the Navy was like during World War II. V-Mail, short for "Victory Mail", was a hybrid mail service used during WWII. When sent, V-mail letters were opened and censored, copied onto microfilm for transportation overseas, and then printed back to paper at one-fourth of the original size for delivery to the addressee. This allowed for letters to be reduced to only 3% of their original weight and volume—a great space saver on military transports. The decision to microfilm V-Mail ultimately rested with the military authorities who opened and censored the mail and was based on the distance to be traveled, the mail volume, and available space. The eight V-Mail comics by Lieut. Fassler were never microfilmed—they were sent from San Francisco to Syracuse in original form due to one such military decision.

Over one billion letters were delivered during the time that V-Mail service operated in the United States (June 1942—November 1945). This collection will be on display through the end of November at the Museum—don't miss the opportunity to see this unique temporary display!

2. Civil War Certificate of Exemption, October 20, 1864 (SWHM Permanent Collection).

This document, issued by the Indiana's Tenth District Board of Enrollment, granted a military service exemption to Perry Sulser, age 34, of Turkey Creek Township, Kosciusko County, by reason of having furnished an acceptable substitute. At the start of the Civil War, there was no shortage of willing and able-bodied servicemen for Union military duty. By 1862, however, patriotic fervor was wearing thin. Enlistment bounties were paid to men who volunteered to serve; this accounted, over time, for 92% of all enlisted men. Still, the Enrollment Act, conscribing all males

between the ages of 20 and 45, was passed in March of 1863 to provide fresh manpower for the Union Army. The Act spelled out two means by which men could avoid the draft: substitution (providing a substitute person for service) or commutation (paying \$300 to the military). The length of time granted by a substitution or commutation draft exemption varied across the duration of the war; in the case of Perry Sulser, substitution bought him one year of freedom from military service. This was plenty of time, as the Civil War officially ended in May of 1865! Stop in and see this historic document, now 150 years old.



1945 Fassler V-Mail Comic

Donations and Loans

As always, we are thankful for the all donations and loans from the Syracuse community that help improve the Museum’s displays and research files!

Recent Donations: mink/fox stoles, night caps, late 1800s purse, underskirt and pantaloons (J. Stoelting); Oakwood First Century 1893-1993 book, binder of Oakwood newspaper clippings and documents (N. Harter); SHS 1940 diploma, commencement activities brochure, newspaper articles, yearbook (J. Metcalf Clark); B&O Railroad paperwork salvaged from old station, (J. Meade); Chinese dish (D. Murphy); 1929 school certificate for perfect attendance, Africa School (J. Kohr); “Reminiscing” K. Harkless set, framed sesquicentennial “We Are Proud of Our Community Spirit” ad , Turkey Creek As-

essor’s Book 1895, genealogy tree of H. Ward, real estate abstract detailing Crosson and Ward’s ownership and debts (J. Elam); Kale Island Beacon can opener (R. &D. Fetters); South Shore postcard, Japanese Money (D. Castell); Happy Fisherman map of Lakes Wawasee and Syracuse – (L. Reinholt); Harry Nicolai & parade truck photos (L. Nicolai via G. Ringler); SHS Yellow Jackets license plate commemorating 1958-9 Basketball County Championship (M. Disher); Wawasee Bowl matchbook (D. Sheets); various picture frame holders for displays (G. Ringler); medicine bottles/tins from Thornburgs (A. Garceau); Weatherhead brochure and circus performer picture (C. Fry).

Loans: V-Mail comics (D. Castell); Christmas Card printing machine (J. Rowland); Map of Kosciusko County circa 1900 (M. Brower).

History is the witness that testifies to the passing of time; it illuminates reality, vitalizes memory, provides guidance in daily life and brings us tidings of antiquity
- Cicero

Membership

We are thrilled to report that we’ve already exceeded our membership goal of \$900 for the 2014 year. In fact, we’ve taken in \$1450 in membership monies so far! Thank you for your generous support! We welcome new annual member **Jerry Wright** to the annual membership ranks. We thank **Phil Lehman, Charles and Sara Kroh, Barbara Naab, William**

Hurst, and Rick and Cathy Lemberg for their recent annual renewals. We also thank **Bette and Bud Slabaugh, John Sells, and William Cast** for upgrading to lifetime memberships this year! Renewal forms for 2015 will go out in the December newsletter. We plan to try and expand our membership base in 2015 by kicking off a community-wide membership cam-

paign, something that has not been done since the beginning years of the Museum’s existence. If you have a neighbor, friend, or family member whom you think would benefit from a Museum membership, please let them know about our annual and lifetime membership rates. Free brochures are available at the Museum for membership promotion—stop in and pick some up if you’d like to take an active role in helping the Museum grow!



Jones’ Hotel

Upcoming Programs and Events

Mark your calendars!

Programs Sponsored by SWHM:

- Hotels of Syracuse presentation, Saturday, September 20th, 11 am
- Billy Yank, Common Soldier for the Union, Saturday, November 15th, 12:30 pm

Both programs will be @ SCCs Celebration Hall

Events Around the Community:

- Railroading on the Wabash Fourth District presentation and book signing by Victor Baird, Thursday, August 28th, 6 pm @ the Syracuse Public Library
- Genealogy Workshop, Tuesday, September 16th, 10 am—12 noon @ the Old Jail Museum in Warsaw



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September 2014 Newsletter

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I noticed something interesting this summer as I was giving a tour to several young families at once. There are SO MANY THINGS TO

CRANK in our Museum! The cranks were a source of great joy to the children in this bunch, and I quickly realized that a tour focused solely on crank-endowed objects could give visitors quite a comprehensive view of what the Museum has to offer. Don't believe me? Consider some of the following items on display with indispensable cranks and the information visitors can learn from them:

1. Washing Machine Circa 1880. Doing laundry used to be an all-day affair that included hauling

An Unusual Sort of Tour

water, agitating, cranking clothes through the wringer, and hanging them out to dry.

2. 1917 Harmonograph. Turn the crank to wind up the spring, make the turntable go round, and listen to old classics such as the 1944 version of 'One Meatball' by the Andrews Sisters, a song which had, in its roots, been used to raise money for the Union army during the Civil War.
3. 1908 Mier Car. Applying muscle power to the crank mounted at the car's front was the only way to get the car engine started in the old days!

4. Spink Switchboard Circa 1920s. A switchboard operator would turn the crank to apply ringing voltage to the

called line.

5. Bingo Machine. Turn the crank of the cage clockwise to capture and call one ball in a game.
6. Postage Stamp Machine Circa Mid 1900s. The crank on this machine, used at the old Oakwood Hotel, delivered a stamp when proper payment (4¢) was inserted.
7. 1930s Cities Services Koolmotor Gas Pump. The crank opposite the gas pump would reset the fuel gauge to zero when rotated, a necessity between customers.