

# Delaware County Historian

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## Final Stage in Meeker Acquisition Underway

By Roger Koch

The acquisition of the 1812 Col. Forrest Meeker Homestead by the Delaware County Historical Society has successfully cleared all of the planning and zoning approvals of the City of Delaware. The City Council gave a unanimous vote of approval to the final development plan for the project, which includes a split of the nine-acre original parcel of land that is currently occupied by Garth's Auctions. Tom and Carolyn Porter, owners of the property, and operators of Garth's for over thirty years, will donate the seven-acre hill overlooking US 23 south of Delaware, with all of its historic buildings, to the DCHS for use as our museum and offices. The early federal-era brick house and stone-end barn, long used as an antiques auction facility, will make a superb pioneer-era museum and educational facility for the Society to protect and share with future generations of Ohioans. The homestead, already listed on the National Register of

Historic Places, will now be permanently protected by zoning and deed restrictions.

The remaining two-acre lot on the corner of US 23 and Stratford Road will be developed into a convenience store and gas station with the appearance of a small grouping of stone and wood-sided nineteenth-century farm outbuildings. The only existing structure to be removed will be a 1970s metal pole building. The overall project, described by local planning officials as a win-win example of new development being sensitively designed to enhance the city's southern gateway, will be extensively landscaped. The end result should be a more compatible appearance to the entrance to Stratford Village area and improved traffic flow at the intersection.

Garth's Auctions and Appraisers, now owned and operated by Jeff and Amelia Jeffers, has grown to the point where new, larger quarters are required, and will be relocating to a new facility east of Delaware sometime in 2011.

### Meeker Homestead

(Photo by Matt Kear)

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## We Remember Marilyn Cryder

The Delaware County Historical Society lost a good friend and a longtime dedicated volunteer when Marilyn Cryder passed away on September 14, 2010. Marilyn was considered “a legend” by many when it came to matters of Delaware County history. Her decades of involvement with the DCHS included not only being “the spokesperson for local history,” but also serving as curator and recording secretary. Marilyn and her husband, George, formed a team dedicated to the preservation of local history and to educating the public about our area’s rich historical heritage.

Marilyn was also a charter member of the Delaware County Genealogical Society. She served on the Delaware City Historic

Preservation Committee, the City Records Commission, and the Design Commission of Main Street Delaware. In addition, Marilyn served on the committee that helped to produce Ray Buckingham’s book, with vignettes on local history, entitled “Delaware County: Then and Now.”

Both DCHS President Brent Carson and First Vice-President Jack Hilborn spoke at a memorial service for Marilyn held several days following her passing. In his remarks, Hilborn said, “When I think about Marilyn, I see her always-present easy and pleasant smile. She was always warm and

cordial with folks, but she would hold her ground, so to speak, particularly when it came to questions on history. She knew her stuff.”

We have lost a true friend and valued colleague. At the same time, we celebrate her many contributions and commitment to the work of the DCHS over many decades. Her impact and “imprint” on our organization was very positive and vital for many years.



**George and Marilyn Cryder**

### DELAWARE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

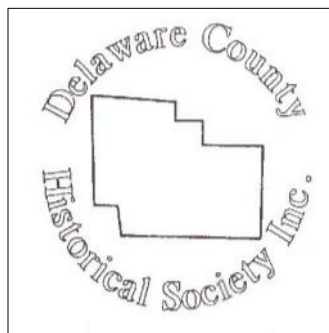
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1st Vice-President	Jack Hilborn
2nd Vice-President	Roger Koch
Recording Secretary	Janell Kuck
Corresponding Secretary	Sue Heston
Treasurer	Jan Fleischmann

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Newsletter Editor: Matt Kear

Contributions of original historical research concerning Delaware County, Ohio, are welcome.

Send your contributions to the attention of the Newsletter Editor at any of the above addresses.

## Gangster John Dillinger and Delaware's Fortress

By Brent Carson

The early 1930s were marked by the Depression, Prohibition, boot-legging, and bank robbers. Names like Bonnie and Clyde, "Pretty Boy" Floyd, and "Baby Face" Nelson became household names.

Most remembered was bank robber John Dillinger and his gang. In 1933, the gang escaped from jail twice, raided police stations to obtain weapons, and robbed banks. "Dillinger Wanted" posters were hanging in post offices throughout Ohio and Indiana.

Brandishing machine guns, the gang had robbed the Greencastle, Indiana, bank on October 23, 1933. Fearful that Dillinger might come to Delaware, the First National Bank at 26 North Sandusky Street went to extraordinary means to protect itself from the Dillinger gangsters. The *Delaware Gazette*, in a front-page article on November 6, 1933, described how the bank had been turned into a virtual fortress. All the windows were covered in bullet-proof screen. Each bank teller would be in bullet-proof glass cages. The five-ply glass would be more than an inch thick, tested to withstand both pistol and sub-machine gun fire. Microphones would be used to communicate with customers. The top of the cages were lined with sharp steel spikes. Above the spikes were rows of wire charged with 1,500 volts of electricity. All doors were electrically controlled. Money and bank books were placed on revolving steel bullet-proof trays which tellers would turn with a crank. Employees were issued gas masks. The alarm system was not only placed on the front of the building, but also was tied to both the police station and the sheriff's office. It was perhaps the most secured bank of its time.

Dillinger and three of his gang were captured in January of 1934. The three members were moved to Lima, Ohio, to be placed on trial for murder. John Dillinger was placed in a jail in Indiana, but escaped before his trial. His three gang members were convicted, and in March were to be transferred to the Ohio Penitentiary. Fearing that Dillinger would attempt to free them between Lima and Columbus, the three were placed in a military convoy following a route through Kenton and Marysville. Each was placed in a separate car. The convoy included 75 police, National Guard, and machine gun trucks. Highway Patrol cars closed the highway and secured a path five miles in front. Crowds lined the roads to watch the convoy pass.

Upon arriving at the Penitentiary, there was still the fear of a prison break. Ohio's governor feared for his own life and was assigned added protection.

Meanwhile, here in Delaware, spring had arrived and the Willis High School Class of 1934 had been looking forward to its senior trip. Being in the midst of the Great Depression, the trip would only be to Columbus for the opportunity of touring the Ohio Penitentiary. With Dillinger on the loose, the senior trip was cancelled.

In the end, Dillinger was killed leaving a theater—some remember "The Lady in Red." In the fall of 1934, the three fellow gang members attempted a breakout from the Ohio Penitentiary, but it failed.

One died in the attempt, one was later executed, and the third served a long prison term.

The era of Dillinger and the gangsters had ended. Delaware's First National Bank was not robbed and its "fortress" was defortified.

The John Dillinger wanted poster in the post office was removed. That valuable poster is today part of the archives of the Delaware County Historical Society.

**Speaking of Bank Robbers,** Delaware lore tells of a connection of outlaw Jesse James to the city of Delaware. It has been told, but never verified, that he had relatives living here, and that he snuck quietly in and out of town to visit them. If you have knowledge of this connection, please contact us at the Historical Society.



John Dillinger Wanted Poster

(from Wikipedia)



Left: Hayes items were on display at the reception.

Below: Jack Hilborn leads the Lemonade Toast

## Hayes Birthday Celebration

The DCHS sponsored a birthday reception in honor of President Rutherford B. Hayes on October 4 in the Wesleyan Room of the Old Bag of Nails Restaurant.

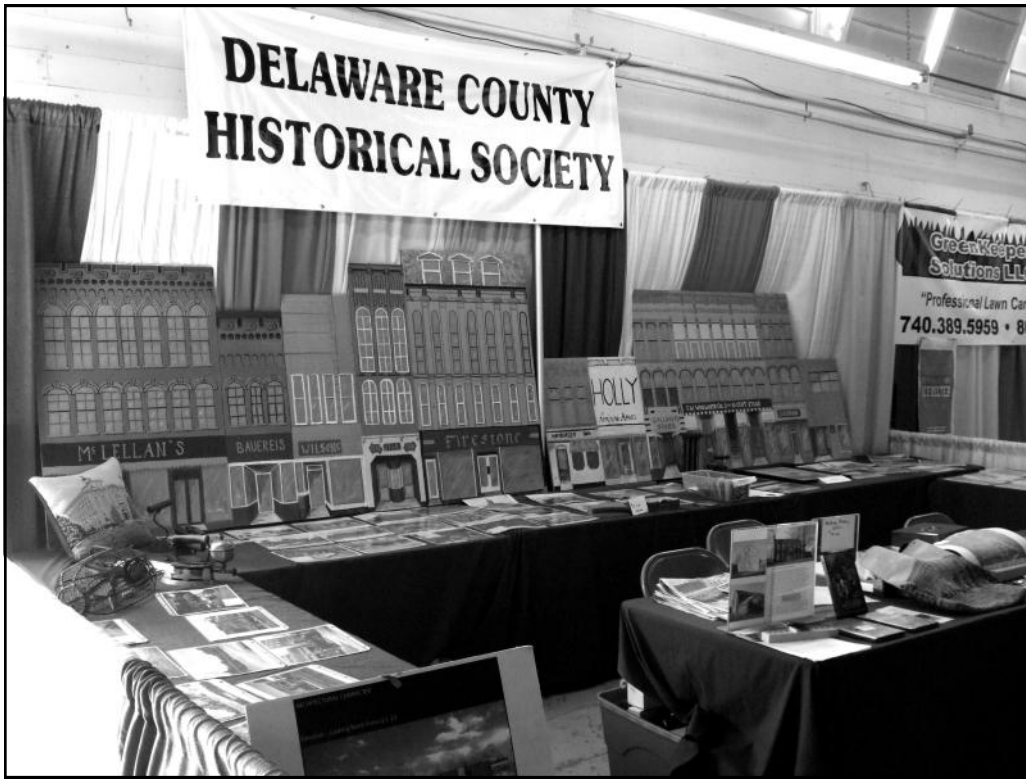
Rutherford B. Hayes was born in Delaware on October 4, 1822. This year is the 188th anniversary of his birth.

The program featured Brent Carson describing President Hayes's life-long ties to Delaware. Historic items relating to President Hayes were on display, including items on loan from the Hayes Presidential Center in Fremont, Ohio, and Hayes High School. Jack Hilborn led a "Lemonade Toast" to the president, which certainly would have pleased Mrs. Hayes, who was popularly known as Lemonade Lucy.



Above: Hayes High School seniors (left to right) Tim Andrews, Zainab Kandeh, Carly Mungovan, and Graham Bowling were guests of honor at the reception.

## DCHS at the Fair



The Society once again had a booth in the Coliseum at the Fairgrounds.

### Patrick Hardin: First Student Member

By Brent Carson

The Delaware County Historical Society has created a new level of membership, the Student Membership, open to students at a cost of \$5.00 for the year. Patrick Hardin learned of the new student membership level while visiting the Historical Society booth at the Delaware County Fair. He asked if he could join, thus making him the first official student member. Patrick is a sophomore at Hayes High School and a lover of history, particularly local history. His other interests include theater and music. He is a member of the Thespians, plays the violin, and was in last year's high school production of *Guys and Dolls*. He is also a member of Saint Peter Episcopal Church.

Patrick said that he is proud to be the first student member. "I consider it an honor to be the first," he said. Patrick added that he wants to be more than just a member, he wants to be a volunteer.

Mary Thomas of Bellepoint was the winner of the Courthouse tote bag raffle at this year's Delaware County Fair booth.



Above: DCHS President Brent Carson, left, presents Sandy Wicker with a Hayes Christmas ornament, her prize for winning the trivia contest at the reception.

## Report of Members and Donors

### New Life Members

Central Ohio Podiatry Drs. Buchan  
Sandra Cryder  
Devore-Snyder Funeral Homes  
Mark & Carrie Hickman  
Chris Hon  
Steve & Joy Kaser  
Roger Koch  
Carolyn Porter  
Bob & Nancy Rietz  
James Steven Shaw  
Sally Wildman

### Sponsors - Members who gave

#### \$100 or more

Jim & Sue Aufdenhaar  
Richard & Patricia Belch  
Jeff & Barb Benton  
Gary E. Brokaw  
Delaware County Bank & Trust Co.  
Bob & Holly Gerspacher  
Lucy Ruth  
Bill & Marty Stroud  
Ezra F. Vogel

### New Members

Helen & Bernon Almond  
Jim & Janice Ambler  
Mark & Margaret Arnold  
Christopher Belt  
Toby Boyce  
Stanley Brechtel  
Richard & Paula Cochran  
Patrick Coffey  
Randy DeVault  
Cheryl L. Downing  
Tom Edwards  
Lee Edward Elverson  
Sammi Porter Flynn  
Lynn Foreman  
Rosalie Frazier  
Carolyn Gibby  
Patrick M. Hardin  
Susan Hardin  
Julie Heston  
Jim Johnston  
Anne Myles Lamb  
Ross Long  
John Miller

Margaret Mills  
Jerry Myers  
Cynthia Rush  
Joe & Marsha Schaub  
Anna Slesinki  
Jim & Pam Smith  
John & Teresa Thomas  
Cindy & Joe Vail  
Chadwick & Erica VanSickle  
Jane Warburton  
Phil & Jane Webb

### In-Kind Donors

Price Farms Organics, Ltd.  
ELK Productions

### Donors – Porter Memorial Fund

H. Thomas Allyn  
Alice Camp  
Norman & Pat Hayes  
Tom King  
Betty G. Williams

## Annual Meeting to Feature “Memories of Our Meeker Homestead”

The Delaware County Historical Society’s annual meeting will be held in the historic Meeker Barn, the home of Garth’s Auctions, Inc., 2690 Stratford Road, Delaware, Ohio, on Thursday, November 18, 2010, at 7 p.m. The annual election of officers and trustees will occur at the meeting. The slate of officers and trustees will be announced at the meeting, and may be made available on the society’s website in advance.

Following the elections, there will be a dramatic production titled “Memories of Our Meeker Homestead.” Kyle Rayburn, a local actor and performer, will lead the drama and play the role of Benjamin Meeker as he recalls the days of early settlement in Stratford. Kyle is a Delaware native and a graduate of Hayes High School. He has performed as an actor and musician in Central Ohio for several years.

This is an evening you will not want to miss. The Board hopes to see each of you there!

## Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration Planning Underway

By Brent Carson

The year 2011 begins the four-year sesquicentennial commemoration of the Civil War. A committee has been meeting since last May to make plans for the recognition of Delaware County’s involvement in the war.

Steve Curmode of Hyatts has taken on the task of assisting the group in compiling a Delaware County Civil War website. Steve is a graduate of Olentangy High School and a longtime employee of the McGraw Hill Publishing Company. He loves history, particularly Civil War history, and he is a new member of the Historical Society.

Other members of the committee are Ray Myers, James Titus, Bill Rietz, Rick Helwig, John O’Brien, and Brent Carson.

If you would like to join the planning committee, check the DCHS website for the time of the next meeting.

## Historic Nash House To Be Featured on Holiday Tour; Story of Nash House Retold

By Maggie Webb

The Nash House will be one of the homes featured on the Northwest Neighborhood Association's 2010 historic holiday tour. The tour is Saturday, December 4 from 4-8 pm. This would be an excellent opportunity for members of the Delaware County Historical Society and their friends to see the Nash House at its finest.

The Nash House Museum, located at 157 E. William Street (lot # 635, old lot #18) was built for Thomas and Mina Slattery. Thomas worked as a clerk for the railroad and Mina was a seamstress. The young couple moved into their new seven-room brick Italianate home in 1878 with their two-year-old daughter, Minnie Angeline. The following year their son, William Henry, was born and two years later they had another son, John Thomas. The house must have been a lively place with a young family with three children under the age of five! In 1882, Mina gave birth to her fourth child, a daughter, Sarah Mariah. Sadly, two weeks later Mina died. Baby Sarah lived for seventeen days. The funerals took place in the parlor of the house. Heartbroken, Thomas Slattery sold the house for \$2,800. The next year his two-year-old son, John Thomas, died. Thomas Slattery died one year later of consumption, leaving his two young children, Minnie and Willie, parentless. The children grew up with their grandparents, John and Mary Slattery, in Lewis Center. Willie eventually moved to Kansas, and Minnie married Robert Parker. Many people in Delaware remember Dr. George Parker, a well-loved Delaware physician who died in 1996. He was one of ten children of Minnie and Robert Parker.

In 1885 William Henry Nash acquired the house at 157 E. William for \$2,400. Henry Nash worked for the railroad, as so many people in Delaware did. Henry and Emiline Nash had five children: Frank, Charles, Linnie, Eugene and Dora, ages

11 to 22. The Nash House must have been a very busy household! Frank, the eldest child, also worked for the railroad. He was killed at Springfield, Ohio, when a huge icicle fell from a water tank, stabbing him in the chest. He died instantly. His funeral was also held in the parlor of the Nash House. He left a wife and a seven-month-old daughter. After the deaths of Henry and Emiline, the house passed to Eugene Nash and his wife, Lois. Eugene was a grocer and a well-known active Delaware citizen. Lois was a well-known seamstress. They had one child, a daughter, Pauline, who was recognized for her weaving and quilting skills. Her grade school water colors are displayed throughout the house. Pauline was active with the Red Cross. After the death of her parents, Pauline donated her family home and many family artifacts to the Delaware County Historical Society. Although Pauline had never married or had children, she loved children and hoped her family home could be used for educational purposes. The Nash family had lived in the house for nearly 70 years.

The Nash House remains much the same as it was when the young Slattery family first lived there in 1878. There have been the obvious electrical, heating, and plumbing upgrades over the years, but the "bones" of the house remain original. The front porch was added after 1916 and a bathroom addition and a kitchen remodel were completed in the 1930s. The house does show signs of normal wear and tear.

If you look closely, you can see the scars in the doorways made by Linnie Nash's wheelchair (Linnie was left an invalid after a severe bout with scarlet fever). The Nash House is furnished with period pieces and accessories donated to the Historical Society by Delaware County families. These furnishings and the reproduction wallpaper make the house a showcase of the Victorian period.



The Nash House

(Photo by Matt Kear)

## Many Changes Are Taking Place at DCHS Library

By **Sandy Wicker, Librarian**

"It's not your Father's library anymore" could be our new motto. We have a new look and a new focus. Please come in and see for yourself; we'll be glad to show you around. Many thanks to volunteer Benny Shoults and his company, ELK Productions, for the new office furniture and display walls. We also now have WI-FI, so bring your laptops!

The removal of the court records from the back room has given us much needed storage space for our artifacts. We are busy labeling the shelves and have begun cataloging items into the PastPerfect software. The Common Pleas records have been moved to the Willis building and can be accessed through the Records Center on Channing Street. The Probate records are now lo-

cated in the Delaware County District Library on E. Winter St. and will be managed by the Delaware County Genealogical Society.

We have two new major projects: 1. Collecting and digitizing photographs for a history of Delaware County book to be published by Arcadia Publishing; 2. Providing photographs to decorate the new Juvenile Court Facility in the Rutherford B. Hayes County Services Building on North Sandusky Street.

Spencer Chambers, a Boy Scout from the LDS troop in Powell, did his Eagle Project with us by bringing helpers in to sort and label photographs.

We continue to do research for patrons on various topics and to conduct tours of the Nash House, especially for schools. We recently had a group of Red Hat ladies from Johnstown. We have out-

reach programs that include conducting "trunk shows" (Maggie Webb and I did one for the Olen-tangy Schools Pioneer Days) and providing speakers for schools, churches, and other organizations. On the 4th Wednesdays of the month, we have been doing a short talk and discussion about aspects of Delaware County history. Bring a lunch and join us for our "Brown Bag" sessions at noon. One of our topics was "Gold Fever" about the Gold Rush of 1849 and some of the people from Delaware who went to California.

As a Librarian, it is very gratifying to watch patrons find the information they need, whether is it for a book they are writing, for a movie for Ohio Wesleyan University, or just to satisfy their curiosity about the history of Delaware County. The search continues!

## Library Changes

By **Louis Foster**

As many people know, the DCHS library has been under the most extensive changes in our recent history, and perhaps the biggest changes ever. Of course, these changes have not been easy, and not just because of the labor involved. They are not complete and some may take longer than we first thought.

In the end, everyone will benefit. Historical matters and displays are the main focus of the DCHS and this will continue. Genealogical research will continue under the guidance of the genealogical society, now located at the Delaware County District Library. Most of the old property records and court cases will be available in the Willis Building, which is just north of town. The more current records will be housed at the Hayes Building on Union Street.

We are currently exploring the possibility of digitizing data, records, and photographs currently in our archives, including the Mendenhall title abstracts. These records may be available in several different formats. These advances will certainly help future generations of historians and genealogists.

## President's Report: Many New Volunteers Stepping Up

By **Brent Carson, President**

Another successful year at the Delaware County Fair brought to my attention how fortunate we have been in bringing new, active volunteers to our Historical Society in recent months. Of the twenty-five people who worked at the fair booth, eleven were first-time volunteers. The fair booth, as the old saying goes, is "the tip of the iceberg." Whether it be assisting during open museum/library hours or participating in planning projects and committees, new volunteers are coming forward. Among the areas where first-time volunteers are participating include the picture digitization project: three new volunteers; school tour docents: two new volunteers; Arcadia book publication project: two new volunteers; Civil War Sesquicentennial Commemoration committee: five new volunteers; Delaware Business Memorabilia committee: seven new volunteers. In addition, there are six new volunteers assisting with cataloging, museum exhibits, and planning for our acquisition of the Meeker Homestead.

This year's fair also brought us seventeen new memberships as compared to five new fair memberships in 2009. We look forward to a bright future and a growing membership.



## *News and Notes from the Nash House*

### **The Search Is On for Memorabilia of Old Delaware Businesses**

By Brent Carson

A group of interested Historical Society members and former Delaware-area business people are in search of Delaware County business memorabilia. The archives of the Historical Society have a limited number of items connected to the businesses of this county. For the purpose of preservation and display, this group actively wishes to collect this memorabilia before it is lost.

In particular, we are in search of items with business names or logos. We are most looking for items such as pencils, yardsticks, calendars, boxes, and menus.

Another area of our search includes photographs of the people who owned or worked in businesses, and particularly pictures of long-time employees. Think of the clerks in grocery stores, clothing stores, and drug stores; restaurant waiters and waitresses; gas station attendants; and workers at amusement places like bowling alleys, skating rinks, and theaters. We would like their pictures even if the pictures weren't taken at the place of business.

Members of our memorabilia collectors group to date are Joan Smart, Henry Banks, Bob Gray, Bill Sheehy, Maggie Webb, Ed Wolf, Lloyd Bowen, Reg and June Moncur, Brent Carson, and Jim Newell. Charing the group is Ric Ray.

If you have any memorabilia or suggestions as to whom we might contact, give any of us a call or contact the Historical Society.

### **Help Preserve Our Historical Legacy**

Bequests have played an important role in the preservation of Delaware County history. Planning now may make your gift more meaningful and reduce taxes on your estate. Please consider the Delaware County Historical Society when making your estate plans.

### **Garden Committee To Form; Green Thumbs Needed**

By Roger Koch, Buildings and Grounds Committee

The Delaware County Historical Society needs to organize a Garden Committee that will occasionally tend our flower gardens at the Nash House. The Growing Friends Garden Club did such a wonderful job of looking after our beds and plantings for many years, but they finally had to give up the responsibility. They left us with well thought-out perennial plantings, so we basically just need to maintain the beds seasonally and do periodic weeding, trimming, and mulching. The lawn is cut by a landscape contractor on a regular basis. We can get the assistance of additional labor for the fall leaf cleanup, so there shouldn't be any back-straining hard work. If you enjoy light work in the garden, let me, or any one of our officers or board members, know of your interest, and we will organize a committee that can communicate with each other and schedule its own work sessions.

There will be an initial work session at the Nash House on Saturday, October 30, at 10:00 am, to assess the needs and do some fall pruning, trimming and weeding. Come and join us.

### **Any Spare PCs To Donate?**

As we pick up the pace on our PastPerfect cataloging project and scanning of photographs and other documents, we are finding we could use a couple more PCs for the many volunteers who are eager to help. We are looking for computers running Windows XP or newer. If they have Microsoft Office 2007 (Word and Excel) or newer, that would be great as well. If you would like to donate or contribute funds to purchase computers and software, contact Sandy or Jan at [info@delawareohiohistory.org](mailto:info@delawareohiohistory.org).

### **Looking for Newsletters and Minutes from Our Early Years**

The Delaware County Historical Society began in 1947. Maybe some of you have a stash of old newsletters, meeting minutes, or other archives that will help complete the history of our society. We have many early and recent papers, but especially need to fill in the 1950s and the 1960s. If you would like to donate or lend us your copies for scanning, please mark them attention "Jan/History of DCHS." If you have questions, send them to [info@delawareohiohistory.org](mailto:info@delawareohiohistory.org).

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