

# *The Ferry Landing*

*The Martins Ferry Area Historical Society, Inc.  
Spring 2008*

*Tom Thomas, President  
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## **A Message from the President . . . Tom Thomas**

Spring is coming and the museum is beginning to stir with activity. The remodeling work is almost finished, with work being done in the kitchen and the front reception room with a new coat of paint on all baseboards in the front rooms. Other important additions will be a hot water heater (finally) and even a fashionable doorknob. Some work will be done in the basement, and the summer kitchen will be painted by the ROTC cadets. The last item will be a new carpet in the living room. We received more good news when we learned that the Belmont County Tourism Council has once again offered us a grant to be used during 2008.

I have visited the fourth grade class at the Ayers Elementary School. I go in character as Ebenezer Martin and speak to the students about the history of Martins Ferry. In May, they will come to visit the museum and also Walnut Grove Cemetery. Also in May, I will be a guest in the eighth grade classes of Robert Dalton at the Martins Ferry Middle School. I teach a more complex lesson concerning the heritage and history of our community.

Discussions are being held concerning the operation of the Sedgwick House Museum this summer. We hope to be open on weekends from June through August. Two problems will affect this plan: Having people volunteer to help at the museum and having enough people that are willing to come and visit the museum. An announcement will be made in the TIMES LEADER concerning our final decision.

On Sunday, March 30, the Martins Ferry Hall of Honor had its induction ceremony at the new high school facility. Those honored for their service to or connection with Martins Ferry was: Betty Zane, Ebenezer Martin, school Superintendent Charles Shreve, Ferry Hospital founder Richard Wilson, literary giants William Dean Howells and James Wright, industrialist Harry Northwood, Mayor John Laslo, footballer Lou Groza, historian Annie Tanks, and architect Robert Forsythe.

In May, the MFAHS will place a display of the honorees in the display window of the Belmont County Tourism group at the Ohio Valley Mall.

## MONUMENT RECALLS MURDER, HIDDEN GOLD

### Slaying of Dr. Schuchardt in 1883, Subsequent Events Stirred Ohio Valley

*From: Wheeling News Register - 1949*



*A neighbor points out the inscription on the Schuchardt monument.*

MARTINS FERRY – A monument stands overlooking the river on Wilson Street in the north end of Martins Ferry. The monument, about 20 feet high and made of solid granite, is all that remains to tell a story of love and murder and hidden gold that kept citizens of the Ohio valley on edge for months.

The inscription on the stone says merely, “In Memory of Wilhelmine, Wife of Dr. G. Schuchardt, Born August 11, 1811, Died June 16, 1882.” But the story of three of the six people buried beneath the ton of stone, still lies in the dusty files of the old Wheeling newspapers.

The old Wheeling Intelligencer was a much different paper in 1883 than it is today. Back then it was a four-page daily, with the news, always a day late and sometimes older, sandwiched in between countless advertisements for cough syrup and liver medicines. There was no teletype, no transatlantic cable in 1883. But the frock-coated, button-shoed citizens of Wheeling were shocked on March 20, 1883, to read of the tragic death of Dr. G. Schuchardt.

They read, between a story of a new smallpox epidemic and an announcement of a sale of blooded horses in Bellaire, of how the old doctor had received an irate young visitor about supper time on the evening of March 19, of how he had taken the young man into the kitchen of his combined home and drug store on Main street, between Twenty-first street and the old paper mill alley, and of how workers in the store heard two pistol shots ring out and ran to the kitchen, to find the old doctor dying with a bullet in his temple and the young man in serious condition with a wound in his head.

#### **His Loved One Wronged**

The young man recovered, however, and was identified as Guenther Schnelle, nephew of the murdered man. Yes, he said, he had killed Dr. Schuchardt and tried to kill

himself. The dead man had done one he loved a terrible wrong, and he was not sorry for what he had done.

Young Guenther Schnelle was held in prison to await trial for his crime. Meanwhile Dr. Schuchardt was buried next to his wife, Wilhelmine, who had died the year before, in a plot of ground on his farm overlooking the river outside Martins Ferry. Hardly had the old doctor been buried until the case took another turn. On March 26, four days after the funeral, a man named Wendel Dickescheld, brother-in-law of the deceased, was apprehended with \$7,000 in silver coins which he had taken in 6 bags to a Wheeling bank for safekeeping. He said the old man had dug it up from great earthen jars buried in the cellar of his home and had given it to him two days before his death.

The whole district was set abuzz, of course. Was it true that old Dr. Schuchardt was a millionaire? That he had a hidden treasure? Was he murdered for his money? And most important, was there any more money in the cellar? Relatives, lawyers, police, all turned the cellar upside down, but no “great earthen jars” could be found.

Interest in the murder lagged after that, to be awakened suddenly on May 31 when police found Mrs. Mary Bach, grandmother of the murderer’s brother, dead in the same house. She was found hanging from the top of a door by a towel in the same room in which Dr. Schuchardt and Schnelle had staged the earlier tragedy. No connection between the two incidents could be uncovered.

On October 5, 1883, Guenther Schnelle was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of Dr. Schuchardt. The murderer’s brother had spent all his influence and resources to keep Guenther from hanging, and he had won.

### **Gold Discovered**

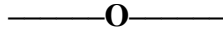
So ends the story of the Schuchardt tragedy and its accompanying entanglements. Well, almost. Years later, the Wheeling Stamping works was tearing down the old Schuchardt house to make room for their new plant. A laborer from Bellaire was digging in what had been the old cellar, preparing the ground for a foundation. His shovel struck something hard. Before he was through, the man had unearthed four great earthen jars filled, not with silver, but with gold. Dr. Schuchardt’s heirs contested the laborer’s right to the treasure, but the courts ruled against them.

Only the monument now remains to recall this story and these people. Dr. Schuchardt and his wife and the old grandmother, Mrs. Bach, are all buried beneath the stone on Wilson street that overlooks the river. Guenther Schnelle died in prison, and of Dickescheld, the man who first found the buried money, nothing further was ever heard.

The little cemetery plot is owned now by Hugh Myers, who lives across the street from the monument. He purchased the ground in March 1938; just 55 years after the murder took place, because he wanted a clear view of the river. This makes him one of the few private citizens in the country to own a cemetery, but where the Schuchardt history is concerned, unusual things are rather to be expected.

*Note:* 1997 – A neighbor who lives near the plot reported that the monument had been destroyed some years earlier.

**From: "THE DAILY TIMES" - ABOUT 1918**



**LOSES VALUABLE DOG**

"Bumbus," the valuable French bull dog owned by Charles O'Bearne, of South Fourth Street, has been missing for the past few days and the owner has been unable to locate him. Several times before he ran away from home but he always came back. However, this time he seems to have lost his way.



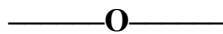
**WILL ORGANIZE SOON**

The South school baseball team, which won the championship last year, will again try for honors this year. Several members of last year's team are now in High school, but Prof. Bowen thinks that he can make a winning team out of the material which he has on hand. The boys will hold a meeting soon, at which time they will elect a captain and manager and then the organization of the team will take place. The boys are planning a track team this year.



**COAL WAGON ROUTE CHANGED**

The coal wagon from the Sheets mine at the head of Jefferson street will soon make use of the newly-paved street which goes from Euclid avenue back to Virginia street. Only a part of the road at Virginia street has to be repaired before the road can be used. By going this way the wagons will eliminate the Washington street hill.



**A FRIEND WE WILL MISS**

Kenny Dennis, a long-time member of the MFAHS Board of directors recently passed away. He was always ready and willing to lend a helping hand to any project that the society was working on. We will miss him a lot.

## **IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

**Annual dues for the year 2008 are due April 1st. The Martins Ferry Area Historical Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Martins Ferry local history. Membership dues help support the upkeep of the Sedgwick House Museum as well as this newsletter and other historical projects.**

**Please remember that this year dues are \$10.00 for individuals, and \$15.00 for families or groups.**