

The Ferry Landing

*The Martins Ferry Area Historical Society, Inc.
Spring 2009*

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

As we leave the winter months behind and enter spring, we have become busy here at the Sedgwick House Museum. Last week fourth grade students from the Martins Ferry School District visited the museum. We talked about the history of the city and the heritage that is represented by the items in the museum. The students always are amazed at the lifestyle that we portray in the museum...what life was like a hundred years ago. When they returned to the classroom, Rosie Thomas, their writing teacher, had them write a paper about their visit and what they enjoyed. The reports are extremely interesting to read.

Youth from the First Christian Church here in Martins Ferry, under the leadership of Justin Hill, have agreed to scrape and paint the summer kitchen that is located between the museum and Keller's Funeral Home. We really appreciate their help and their desire to provide volunteer work within the community. Also, men from F & H Construction have been hired to replace two outside doors at the museum. Our thanks to the Belmont County Tourism Council for providing the funds that allow us to do this work.

We have great news to share with you! We were finally able to find someone to serve as a guide at the museum this summer. He is BOB WEBER, who resides on Broadway Street in Martins Ferry. We are able to pay him with money provided by the Martins Ferry Rotary Club. The Sedgwick House Museum will open on the weekend of May 22, 23, and 24. That is graduation weekend. The Sedgwick will then be open every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday through the end of August. Operating times each day are from noon until 4:00 p.m.

The Martins Ferry Area Historical Society is announcing officers for 2009-2010. President: Tom Thomas; Vice President: Barb Shrodes; Treasurer: Joyce Roy; Secretary: Rosie Thomas; Board of Directors: Dorothy Roy, Barry Schunn, Jennifer Schunn, and John Applegarth.

MARTINS FERRY GETS “LIT UP”

From the files at the Sedgwick House Museum

Operation of Martins Ferry’s municipally-owned electric plant began in 1895. In February 1896, the light plant had 83 customers who were billed a total of \$141.75 for the month. A 10 percent discount was allowed for paying on time. A number of subscribers quit taking the service in summer when evenings got longer.

The first plant was operated by a board of trustees, elected by the voters. The earliest available minutes record a meeting of the board on May 5, 1897. L. L. Scheehle, who operated a grocery at Hanover and Second Streets, was elected chairman of the board at this meeting. The other two members were William Joy and C. S. Moore.

One week later, the board met and named S. T. Kerr light plant superintendent, and A. B. Gordon and Harry Geer engineers, each at a salary of \$60 a month. Joseph Ahl was hired as fireman and trimmer (Trimmer of the old carbon lights) at \$1.50 a day. Joseph Swain was hired as a light trimmer at \$45 a month. At the same meeting, Trustees Joy and Moore and the light plant superintendent were instructed to confer with council about a levy for the light plant for the year.

The minutes show that on May 18, the trustees authorized the application for a loan from the Commercial Bank in Martins Ferry for the extension of the incandescent lines and enough money from time to time to pay running expenses “until tax money comes in September.”

At the July 6 meeting, C. A. Smith was awarded the contract for painting the light plant stacks for \$150 and the board of education was granted permission to use city poles to link three schools by phone. Free current was granted to the fire stations, then called “hose houses”, providing all inside wiring was done.

On August 28, 1897, the light plant coal contract was let to August Henschel for \$1.97 per 100 bushel (four tons) and \$3.73 per 100 bushel for mixed coal.

The city continued to operate the light plant until June 1970, when the plant and electrical system were sold to the Ohio Power Company for \$4,825,000. The building was demolished several years later.

Some early customers included: George B. Barr, Commercial Bank, George W. Heil, W. Hoyle, Ralston & Co., Rev. J. W. Robins, Dr. W. B. Shuttleworth, G. W. Tweedy, George Webber, T. Yingling, and Marshall Cropper.

BANKS OF THE PAST WERE SIMPLER

By Annie C. Tanks

The "Times Leader", September 10, 1987


Banking was much simpler when small banks were in small towns and the cashiers, formally attired in suits and ties to indicate their importance to the community, knew their patrons, their signatures, habits and associates personally

It has been said that checks can be written on anything. That may not be true in the computer age, but 80 or 100 years ago, people used whatever was handy and the banks honored the result.

Businessmen were likely to find in their pockets a checkbook from another bank. No problem; cross out the bank name, substitute that of the desired institution, and write an acceptable document. A stack of old cancelled checks drawn on a Martins Ferry bank includes checks from the Quarter Savings, Germania Half Dollar, Dollar Savings, German National Exchange, People's, and Bank of the Ohio Valley, all of Wheeling; First National of Bridgeport, First National of Dillonvale, Mount Pleasant National, and Commercial of Martins Ferry. Most remembered to cross out the inappropriate place name and substitute "Martins Ferry" (sometimes written as one word). Others wrote the bank name and town together.

They wasted little ink on alterations. "Quarter" was crossed out and "Peoples" substituted, or "Savings" was inserted between "People's" and "Bank". Several simply changed the location.

Statement of the condition of THE GERMAN SAVINGS BANK at the close of business December 30th, 1908.	
Have Paid \$1750.00 in Dividends.	RESOURCES
	Real Estate \$ 6100 00
	Cash on Hands 22066.88
	Cash in Banks 42514 83
	Loans 219002.67
	Bonds 12342 29
	Fixtures 2000.00
	Total \$294916 67
	LIABILITIES
	Capital Stock 25000 00
Deposits 257323.69	
Undivided Profits 2592.98	
Surplus 10000.00	
Total 294916.67	
W. C. BERGUNDTHAL, Cashier	



A 1300 NOT GUILTY

Statement of the German Savings Bank, later the Citizens Bank, issued December 30, 1908

MFHS CLASS OF “59”
Some gleanings from the 1959 MFHS yearbook

140 graduates

Class Motto: “We build the ladder by which we climb”

Class Officers: President, Jerry Meldrum; Vice President, Linda Curry;
Secretary-Treasurer, Glenn Ayers; Social Chairman, Lois Tennyson

Homecoming Queen: Linda Heil

Band: 10 seniors

Football: 9 seniors; 4 wins – 5 losses (Martins Ferry 15 – Bellaire 0)

Basketball: 10 wins – 11 losses

Mr. Martins Ferry High School: Ron Binns

Miss Martins Ferry High School: Peggy Blackford

Mr. Friendly: Frank Suriano

Miss Friendly: Michelene Hutter

Mr. Esquire: Bryan Evanszyk

Miss Fashion: Linda Heil

Mr. Wit: Tom Somerville

Miss Wit: Linda Paxton

Mr. Citizen: Jerry Meldrum

Miss Citizen: Linda Curry

Mr. Athlete: Keith Sommer

Miss Energy: Judy McCue

RESEARCHERS PLEASE TAKE NOTE

The “staff” members at the Sedgwick House Museum are willing to assist anyone who is doing research. However, please remember that we are all volunteers, and it is not always possible to be at the museum on short notice. If you are planning a visit to the museum for the purpose of research, please call in advance to set up an appointment. That way, we can search our files thoroughly and have information ready for your visit. Call Tom at 740-633-5559 or Barb at 740-633-3430.

