

Champaign County Historical Society and Museum  
Est. 1934

July/Aug 2023

# CHAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

## SUMMER FUN

Summer is always a fun time of the year. The kids are out of school, the weather welcomes us out of our houses, and the fair happens. This year there is a lot going on around the museum as well!

The construction project is moving forward and with it many changes to the interior of the museum. We are trying to bring in more interactive exhibits to help inspire a love of history in the next generation. In addition to our other changes, we will be updating the space to tell the Champaign County story more comprehensively and clearly.

While all of this is going on, we are still working to improve our database. Ensuring that people from all over the world can find information connected to our county. Our database is accessible on our website, [champaigncountyhistoricalmuseum.org](http://champaigncountyhistoricalmuseum.org).

If you're looking for something to do with your family this summer, come visit the Champaign County Historical Society & Museum!

We hope to see you soon!

Cheryl Ogden  
Museum Director

If you would like to receive communications from the Historical Society electronically please send us an email to [champaigncohistory@gmail.com](mailto:champaigncohistory@gmail.com). Let us know if you would like to receive your renewal notice, and/or the newsletter via email.

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*\*Banner Photo of John Quincy Adams Ward Birthplace, draped in red, white, and blue.*

# UPCOMING EVENTS

## 2nd ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Here's the scoop – celebrate National Ice Cream Day at the Champaign County Historical Museum's old fashioned ice cream social to be held July 16 from 2-5 pm on the lawn at 809 E. Lawn Ave. Don't miss this opportunity to relax under the trees and enjoy your favorite ice cream concoction. Woodruff's farm will be serving their delicious homemade ice cream and a variety of toppings will be offered along with your choice of cake or pie. In addition, Robert Pollock will serenade with music from one of his many music boxes/band organs. There is no charge to attend, just pay for what you order!

To ensure a successful event, help from the membership is needed. Volunteers are needed to set up and tear down of the tables and the pop-up tents. Also, volunteers to serve the "sweets" and direct parking. For the bakers in the group, we invite you to donate a cake! Let's get those mixing bowls out and stir up a "taste of heaven"!

We will order pies from Stephens Orchard and will accept donations of \$12.00/pie if you would like to sponsor a pie. Donations may be made on the CCHS website or by mailing to CCHS, 809 E. Lawn Ave., Urbana, OH 43078. Please indicate for the Ice Cream Social event. All donations are greatly appreciated!

Contact event chairman, Sandy Gonzalez (937-408-4195) with any questions and to volunteer – we need your help! This is a fundraiser for the CCHS, spread the word!

Celebrate National Ice Cream Day the old fashioned way – visiting friends under the shade trees while enjoying an ice-cold treat on a lazy summer day!

See you July 16!



## SAVE THE DATE FOR THE ANNUAL PICNIC!

Our annual "Picnic on the Lawn" is scheduled for August 27, 2023. We will be posting information on our website and sending out an email with ticket information soon. We hope to see you all there!

# EXPANSION PROJECT UPDATE

The Expansion Project Committee made further significant strides on various fronts in the past two months. Specifically, we entered into a Design-Build Agreement with Marker Construction, raised an additional \$30,000, and moved a step closer to acquiring the adjacent property.

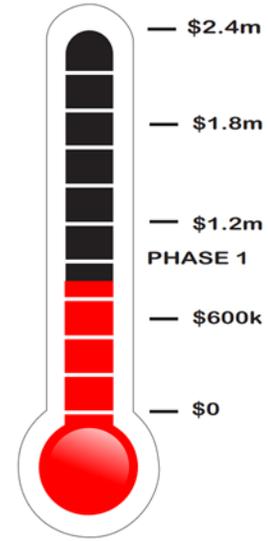
Under the Agreement with Marker Construction, they will, in Phase 1, design and build a meeting room addition, new front entrance, replace shuttered windows with glass, create a defined visitor reception area and perform site work. Assuming sufficient additional funds (\$100,000) are raised in the coming months, we will be able to break ground on Phase 1 this fall.

Regarding fund raising, we have now raised \$200,000 in grant matching funds, just shy of the required \$300,000 to realize the full \$600,000 in available grants.

Lastly, should we acquire the adjacent property, we will have additional and less costly construction options and more space for future expansion.

The Committee believes that completion of Phase 1 will not only immediately enhance the museum visitor experience but will also prompt the public, local industry and agriculture leaders, and the State of Ohio, to provide the additional funds necessary to realize the subsequent phases – new exhibit gallery, multi-purpose room and restrooms. - of the project.

Thank you for all your past and future support of this project!



*Pictured left, Dan Walter, and Ken Wright, from the Historical Society, receiving a \$5,000 check from officials of Farmer's and Merchant's Bank.*



*Pictured right, Ken Wright, and Dan Walter, from the Historical Society, receiving a \$5,000 check from officials of Park National Bank.*

# UPCOMING PROGRAMS

The programs for July and August have not yet been confirmed. We will post the information as soon as it is available. Please check our website, Facebook page, and the Urbana Daily Citizen for updates.

## DONATIONS WELCOME!

The Historical Society is embarking on many changes, but one constant is the need to fundraise for enhancing operations. Consider donating a good or service for gift baskets. It is our HOPE to have baskets available for raffle at the Champaign County Fair, August 4-11; Ohio Shrimp and Rib Festival, September 9 and 16; the Simon Kenton Chili Cookoff, September 23; and of course, our own OktoberFest, October 1!

Please consider this tax-deductible donation (EIN: 237247172 ) and consider it a wonderful way of getting YOUR business recognized!

Suggestions: Discount on a service you provide; Gift card for your business; an item you have not used, in the original packaging.

No used items.

Please contact me for a pickup or for any questions you have on how to support collecting, preserving, updating and SHARING our local history!

Cate Brinnon, Board Trustee

Call/Text: 937-869-4515  
Email: cbb3009@gmail.com



## DAVID LEANDER HILL by Candy Gilliam



*David Leander Hill*

Born in Urbana in 1868, David Leander Hill was raised by his grandparents for the first few years of his life. While living with them as a toddler, he earned the nickname "Bus". At that time, his youngest aunt attended a school for colored children on the south side of the city, and at the end of the week, each child was required to speak about something. So every Friday, a little boy in the class recited the only poem he knew, "Sing a song of sixpence, a pocket full of rye, four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie. When the pie was opened, the birds began to sing, wasn't that a dainty dish to set before a king?" But this young boy had an original way of saying this nursery rhyme. Instead of saying "when the pie was opened", he said, "when the pie bus open". Soon his fellow schoolmates were saying the same words, and young

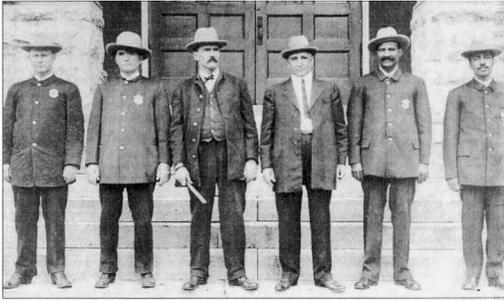
David's aunt would return home from school repeating this rhyme to the family. Young David would giggle each time during the part "pie bus open", and soon everyone began calling him Pie Bus just to see him laugh. By the age of 12 years, the nickname was shortened to just Bus, and everyone continued to call him this name for the rest of his life.

When a teen, Bus Hill ran off to join the Sells Brothers Circus as a drummer boy, becoming friends with Pawnee Bill of the Wild West Shows that traveled around the country during those years. This was short-lived, and he left there to briefly become the lead tenor with a reorganized troupe of Fisk Tennessee Jubilee Singers. This troupe traveled the country singing traditional spiritual Negro songs. At the age of 21 years, Bus decided to settle down, and he returned to Urbana to marry his sweetheart Keren Andrews. Together they raised a family of seven children. In 1896, Bus Hill had the unique opportunity to join the Urbana Police Division, as he was the first and only person of color to be hired by the police force. Bus was considered to be a good and courteous man, many thought he would make a great officer, and he looked forward to being given this chance! For the first several years, he held the position of night patrolman of the second ward. Mayor James Johnson took pride in his police department, laboring to keep the highest point of efficiency while paying his staff a salary of \$45.00 a month. By 1903, the police officers were paid \$50.00 each month, and Bus was doing a fine job at his new career, often being noted as the "fleetest footed officer on the force". But being fast did not stop him from injury. One evening in 1906, while trying to serve a warrant to arrest a man named John Henry Williams for disturbing the peace and terrorizing his family, Officer Hill was shot in the left leg after a foot chase. Fortunately, he recovered with

*Urbana Police Department, 1900  
L-R: William McGree, Bus Hill, Henry  
Clark, Jack Heatherman, John Calvert, John  
Woolenham. Picture from Urbana Daily  
Citizen, 06-17-1930.*



## DAVID LEANDER HILL by Candy Gilliam



*Urbana Police Department, 1912*

*L-R: William Gingery, Ned Comerford, William McGree, David Green, Bus Hill, William Scott*

no serious consequences. A couple of years later, Officer Hill was instrumental in the capture of a gang of thieves who had been robbing trains in the area. For weeks, the Springfield and Urbana police had been trying to locate the men responsible for these robberies. Eventually, a young man named William Pickard was caught robbing a caboose on the Big Four Railroad of clothing, tobacco and money. With his arrest, Officer Hill was able to obtain Pickard's confession to the previous robberies as well as collecting the names of the other men involved. In 1908, the current mayor, E.L. Bodey, agreed with the temperance movement and ordered that the county liquor laws would be strictly obeyed. This meant no alcohol sales after 10:00 p.m. and no Sunday sales. There were 23 saloons in Urbana and the entire police department was kept busy with the frequent calls of after-hour beer sales. In 1909, the Rose Law was passed in Ohio, giving each county the ability to vote on the ban of liquor sales and become a "dry" county. The vote passed in Champaign County, and Mayor Bodey enforced this new law of no liquor sales for three years. Suddenly the bootlegging operations were in full force, keeping all Urbana police officers busy with warnings and arrests of the disgruntled saloon keepers. The year 1912 brought in a new mayor with new rules, and this caused many disagreements between the politicians and the police department. Newly elected Mayor David Green felt that most of the policemen had been on the force for too many years, and he wanted to give other taxpaying men an opportunity at becoming officers. Because of this, Officer Bus Hill resigned his night watch position in compliance with the mayor's demand that older officers should quit or they would be discharged. For the next two years, Bus Hill operated his own grocery business on the corner of Hill and South Kenton Streets. But his heart still longed to be a police officer, and shortly after the death of Mayor Green, Bus Hill was hired back into the police force on an "as needed" basis for just \$25.00 a month. Eventually, he was hired into full time service in 1916 with a salary of \$60.00 a month.

Officer Bus Hill continued to show his honesty and integrity in this chosen profession. In the early 1920's, he refused to accept a \$100.00 bribe after arresting a man for bootlegging. Officer Hill found the man digging up a supply of whiskey from along the roadside and charged him with possessing and transporting intoxicating liquor. The man offered him money several times and promised to destroy the evidence, but Hill refused the offer. He stated he would never violate his

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*Urbana Police Department, 1932*

*L-R: Buck Scott, Bus Hill, James Ahern, Mayor Bruce Fulton, Howard Helfrich, Police Chief Jack Powers, James McGraw, John Bucher.*





oath of office nor would he obstruct the course of justice. Because of this behavior, Hill was labeled as being one of the most valuable assets for the city of Urbana. When two new positions in the Urbana safety department became available, Bus Hill was given the position of sergeant of police. This position came with a salary of \$1500.00 a year and 12 days of vacation. Bus Hill was honored!

One of the saddest days of Hill's career was his presence at the death of Sheriff Bosler, who was shot and killed in the line of duty during a shoot-out in 1926. Officer Bus Hill was shot in the finger during this fight, the bullet tearing off his fingernail. The injury was minor, and he was soon back to work helping with the numerous calls of domestic disputes,

*David & Keren Hill* assaults, burglaries, and dealing with drunks and gamblers. 1932 was a devastating time for the Hill family after their daughter Leona died from an asthma attack. Bus and Keren Hill took into their home her three young daughters to raise, and this large family became known as "the Hills on the Hill" because they lived at 227 Hill Street. They didn't have much money, but being together and staying together no matter what, was an important motto to him. Bus was an avid hunter, often spending days out hunting rabbit, opossum, and raccoons. He always shared his bounty, and often supplied the meat for his friends, special banquets and Christmas dinners. By 1938, after 40 years as a police officer, Bus Hill was ready to retire. He had served through the administration of 13 mayors and countless council members. He had gained a reputation as Urbana's most faithful officer, he was extremely efficient, and had a wide knowledge of the local citizens. Everyone knew Bus Hill and easily recognized his hearty laugh. He was honored with a retirement dinner, attended by city council members and county officials, in which he was presented with a handsome easy chair as a gift. Bus Hill stated, " My association with you has been very pleasant. It will linger on in memory. In retiring, I will not be with you in your work, but in spirit I will never leave you. In this administration, as in former ones, I have tried to do my duty as I saw fit. If I failed, it was an error of the head and not the heart."

*Gravesite, Oak Dale Cemetery*

At his retirement, Bus became the first Champaign County police officer to retire on a policemen's pension. Back in the year 1921, the first steps leading to the establishment of a policemen's pension fund was begun by the City of Urbana. A committee was appointed to look into this matter, and while it took a decade, it was finally approved in 1931. From this time forward, policemen would have an income provided in their elderly years by a monthly pension not to exceed two thirds of their salary. At his retirement, Officer Bus Hill was the longest serving officer and was able to draw a pension of \$80.00 a month (equivalent to \$1,700.00 today). He enjoyed his retirement for four years and died in 1942 of high blood pressure, at the age of 74 years. He was buried in Oak Dale Cemetery with honorary pallbearers being members of different police departments.



Mission Statement

The Champaign County Historical Society collects, preserves, and interprets relevant artifacts, documents, and other resources from Champaign County to educate current and future generations about our history.

# Welcome New Members

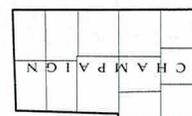
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CHAMPAIGN COUNTY  
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