



Champaign County Historical Society and Museum
Est. 1934

May/June 2023

CHAMPAIGN CHRONICLES

PROJECT UPDATE

The Expansion Project Committee is pleased to report on the considerable progress made in the last two months. Specifically, we received positive feedback from city, county and State of Ohio officials regarding their potential project contributions and assistance; we directed Marker Construction to develop a Phase 1 Construction Design using current available funds to start work prior to the grants' deadline of June 2024; we obtained multi-year financial pledges from two additional banks; we engaged professional marketing personnel to enable us to more broadly and effectively inform the public of our project.

Details of the Phase 1 design, within budget constraints, include:

Relocating the current front entrance workspace, replacing with exhibits

Enlarging the library/research area

Create a defined visitor reception area

Adding vestibule to front entrance.

Replacing shuttered windows with glass.

Expanding and enhancing the parking lot to accommodate more visitors and to comply with local ordinances.

The Committee appreciates that our ongoing efforts are generating the enthusiasm and financial support necessary to move forward with the next phases which will include a new Exhibit Gallery and a Multi-Purpose room to host programs and events. Thank you for your continued support!

Inside this issue

Capital Campaign	1
Board of Trustees	2
Upcoming Events	2
Upcoming Programs..	3
Civil War Veterans ...	4
UU Yearbooks	5
Volunteers Needed	5
New Members.....	8

**Banner picture is of the Urbana High School marching band in the Memorial Day Parade 1941.*

2023 BOARD OF TRUSTEES



At the Annual Membership meeting in January, several new board members were elected to fill two year terms. The board of trustees for 2023 is pictured to the left. Left to right the trustees are; Charles Emory, Dorothy Case—secretary, Victoria Wildman, Cate Brinnon, Sandy Gonzalez—Vice-President, Lois Monroe, Margaret Piatt, Ken Wright—Treasurer, Candy Gilliam—President, Vince Gonzalez, Cheryl Ogden—Director, Dick Virts—Curator, Terry Koster.

UPCOMING EVENTS

46th ANNUAL BAND RALLY



The Champaign County Historical Society is hosting a Band Organ Rally on our museum grounds on May 20 & 21, 2023. In conjunction with the Mid-America Chapter of the Musical Box Society International (MBSI) will be hosting their 46th Annual Rally.

A Band Organ Rally is like a Car Show, where folks from across the Midwest and Southern Canada will bring their antique mechanical music machines for display and demonstrate the music of the 1890's - today.

A Band Organ is a large mechanical music machine that was built to provide music for fair rides, carousels, and

skating rinks. Our members have seen and heard the Pollock family Band Organ at our Oktoberfest every year since 1985. Now we will have the opportunity to see and hear many other versions of American and European Band Organs.

The event will be free of charge. The hours of operation are 10am to 5pm on Saturday and Sunday. The Champaign County Historical Society is inviting food trucks to participate.

The Mid-America Chapter of MBSI looks forward to presenting you with “The Happiest Music on Earth” in May.

2nd ANNUAL ICE CREAM SOCIAL

Our second annual Ice Cream Social is scheduled to take place on July 16, 2023 on the museum grounds. Keep an eye on your email box or on our website for more information!

The car show rally scheduled for June 17th has been canceled. We will be attending the Black Heritage Festival on that date and we hope to see you all there!



UPCOMING PROGRAMS

CHILDREN'S HOME

On May 14, 2023, at 2 p.m., Hayla will present a program on the history of the Champaign County children's home. The program will be held at the Champaign County Historical Society, the location of the former children's home. Admission is free and the public is welcome to attend.

Hayla Parker, a Champaign County Historical Society member and former trustee, was born in Urbana and has lived her entire life here.

After graduation from Urbana High School in 1959, she attended Urbana Junior College, receiving an Associate's Degree in 1961. Returning to Urbana College in 1968, she completed her Bachelor's Degree in English Education in 1970. Later, she received two master's degrees from Wright State University, one in Education and one in English.

Hayla began teaching English at Urbana High School in 1970 and retired in 2000. From 1976 to 2000, she taught British Literature and composition to seniors, was head of the English department, senior class advisor, and National Honor Society advisor.

After retirement from the high school, she taught an addition eighteen years at Urbana University as an English adjunct, retiring again in 2018. While teaching at UU, she also taught at Clark State from 2006 to 2016, also as an English adjunct.

She remains involved in the Champaign County Historical Society, is an active member of the First Presbyterian Church, where she is currently a Deacon, and volunteers at PAWS cat shelter. She has one son, two granddaughters, and two great-grandchildren and is kept busy visiting them in Clearwater, Florida, and Fort Wayne, Indiana.

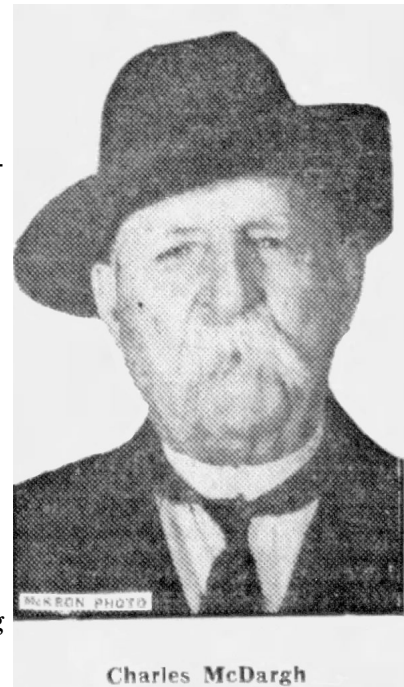


MCGARGH & PENCE, CIVIL WAR VETERANS

by Candy Gilliam

At the end of the Civil War, most soldiers returned to their families, farms, and businesses to continue with their lives as normal as possible. Little did two local men know they would become part of Champaign County history.

Charles Ira McDargh was born in Urbana, and at the age of 16, he enlisted for the war along with his father and brothers. Charles was described as full of "grit and pluck", with a spirit of good nature, and he was excited to be a part of Company G, 3rd Ohio Cavalry. On the soles of his shoes, he wrote the number 18 - so when questioned about his age, he would tell the officers in charge he was "over 18". He fought in 22 war engagements, including the Battle of Stones River and the Battle of Chickamauga. At the close of the war, Charles McDargh returned to Urbana and worked for the Urbana Post Office delivering mail by horseback to Sidney and Troy. Then he became a lineman with Western Union and helped to install the first telephone lines in Urbana. In the mid-1870's, he became the engineer at the Urbana Waterworks pumping plant. He knew all the machinery and helped to build the engine house. Part of the position at the Water Works was keeping an accurate record of the weather. For over 30 years he reported on the local weather conditions. Charles McDargh had a few side jobs besides working for the water plant. Every winter for over 10 years, he cut cedar trees along the area swamps and sold them on Monument Square as Christmas trees. He also trimmed trees for the city of



Charles McDargh

*Urbana Daily Citizen,
June 16, 1939*

RESIDENCE OF CIVIL WAR VETERAN
AT URBANA IS MINIATURE MUSEUM

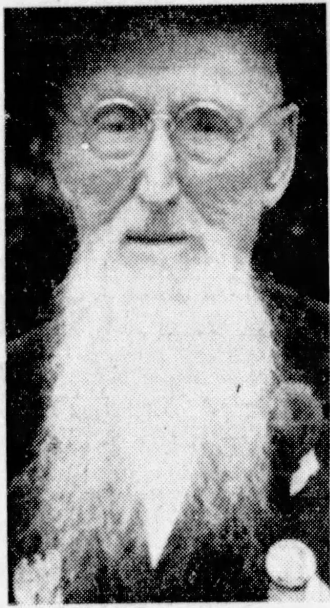


CHARLES I. MCDARGH AMID HIS RELICS

Urbana. He trimmed most trees along the city streets as well as the willows lining Oak Dale Cemetery. During the 1880's, he began a personal collection of historical items, war and Indian relics, and odd curiosities found in the county. His yard was full of old war items and soon his home became a mecca for collectors. The many war items he often showcased were war badges, flags, canteens, cannons, swords, pistols, ammunition, and old money. He claimed to have been one of the men who helped remove the remains of Simon Kenton from his original grave and re-inter him in Oak Dale Cemetery. Charles collected many items belonging to Kenton, including his letters, rifles and lamps. (Eventually, all of McDargh's artifacts and historical relics were sold at a private auction, to buyers coming from several states). In 1911, the Urbana Water Works pump engine was dismantled and a new one installed. Soon a few Urbana City

Council members and the Mayor felt that Mr. McDargh was unfit to be in charge of the new machinery. They wanted a new engineer for the updated equipment. Other council members felt that McDargh's knowledge of the plant and his many years of service qualified him to keep his position. In the end, he kept his position as the night engineer, but in 1914, he decided to leave the Water Works after 37 years of employment.

Just before Memorial Day in 1924, Charles McDargh and two other veterans erected a 25 foot iron flag pole in the Grand Army Lot at Oak Dale Cemetery. This was the first time a flag was flown over the resting place of the soldiers buried there. Charles never missed attending the Memorial Day parades through the streets of Urbana, which he was always the guest of honor with the privilege of firing the salute. Being an active member of the W.A. Brand Post 98, GAR, he often traveled as a delegate, and drove himself to Iowa for the 1926 GAR encampment there. In 1927, at the age of 83 years, he took a two week trip to visit the battlefields near Chattanooga, Shilo, and Stones River. He was honored to be appointed as Ohio delegate to the National Encampments, and for the next 10 years he traveled to Maine, Michigan, Wisconsin, Colorado and all over Ohio attending these celebrations. Charles McDargh loved his recollections of gallant soldiers, past battles and war victories.



Eli Pence, 1940

Eli Pence was born in St. Paris, OH, and at the age of 20 years answered President Lincoln's call for volunteers in 1862. He enlisted with a group of seven boys, all from Johnson Township, who mustered in at Camp Chase in Columbus, OH, and became part of Company H, 45th Ohio Volunteer Infantry. He soon left for service on a train to Fort Thomas, KY, and fought in many battles in Kentucky, Tennessee and Georgia. Times were tough and food was in short supply. While never admitting to stealing food from area farmers, he did admit to often foraging for something to eat. One day while out searching, Eli and three friends found a pig. What a feast of roasted pork shoulder & cooked ham they all had! Eli Pence was promoted to Corporal in 1864, then soon fought in the Battle of Rensselaers (Georgia) where he was

UU Yearbooks for Sale

We still have a selection of UU yearbooks available for \$5 each and the proceeds from this sale go toward care of our collections.

You can message us through our Facebook page, Champaign County Historical Museum – Urbana, OH. Or email us at champaigncohistory@gmail.com, to check availability.

Volunteers Needed!

The Events Committee, chaired by Sandy Gonzalez, is looking for volunteers to help with upcoming events. If you are interested in being involved please contact Sandy Gonzalez at 937-408-4195 or at sgonzalez2045@gmail.com

MCGARGH & PENCE, CIVIL WAR VETERANS

by Candy Gilliam

wounded. During this battle, he was ordered to charge the enemy with fixed bayonets. While chasing them, he ran down a hill, crossed a stream and went into an open area where he was suddenly met with withering fire from the Confederates who were hiding just yards away. Many fellow soldiers were killed, and Corporal Pence was knocked down from a gunshot in his right shoulder. He was lucky to run over a nearby hill to the hospital tent. Two surgeons probed unsuccessfully for the bullet. Since infection would soon be setting in, the surgeons agreed that his arm needed to be amputated. Eli determined this would not happen to him, and when the doctors were looking away, he ran to a nearby tent where friends hid him. They tended and dressed his wound, and Eli's arm was saved. However, the bullet was never recovered. Not being able to return to the ranks, he was assigned to quartermaster duty near Nashville, TN. Later he was sent to Columbus, OH, to guard prisoners who were arrested for bounty jumping. Corporal Pence mustered out of service in 1865, and returned to his farm in St. Paris. He married in 1866 and raised a family of 6 children.

Starting about 1873, a reunion of the 45th O.V.I. veterans took place, which turned into an annual event. Here the men enjoyed dinners, gave speeches and shared their memories. Eli Pence never missed this yearly meeting and, in fact, always looked forward to it! By the 1920's, the veterans attending the reunions started to rapidly decline as members passed away. In 1927, only eight men from the 45th O.V.I. were still living, and Eli Pence was made



*Champaign Democrat, Oct. 8,
1929*

President of the organization. He held this position for the rest of his life. The Douglas Inn in Urbana hosted the 60th reunion in 1933. Eli Pence was 91 years old, and he decided this was to be the last reunion held because of low attendance. With other veteran units attending, they celebrated with drums, fifers, and buglers playing taps. There was much singing during dinner, and a fabulous desert of angel food cake, topped with 60 candles, was served with red, white, and blue ice cream. Eli stood and made a tribute to the memory of each soldier and veteran who had passed, and told memories with those still living. While reunions were no longer held after this year, it didn't stop Eli from continuing to make visits with his lifelong friends. At the ripe age of 92 years, he was still

driving his own car and often would drive himself to Sandusky, OH, to visit comrades living at the Ohio Soldiers and Sailors Home.

In July of 1938, a great reunion for Union and Confederate soldiers was held in Gettysburg, PA. Congress awarded money towards the transport, housing and food for any Civil War veteran who wanted to go. Both Eli Pence and Charles McDargh traveled together by train to attend this great event. Here they met their enemies on friendly terms, with peaceful hugs, and shared their many memories of years past.

Just a year later in 1939, Charles McDargh developed an infection from a cut on his left toe. Blood poisoning and gangrene spread to his entire leg and he died in his sleep at the age of 95 years.. At his death, he was the last Civil War veteran living in the city of Urbana. Eli Pence died two years later in 1941, just 3 days after his 99th birthday. At the time of his death, he was the very last Champaign County Civil War veteran. While these two men were lucky to survive the Civil War, many men and woman throughout the following years have not. This Memorial Day, let's honor the memory of all who have sacrificed their lives for our Country and freedom.



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

Kevin Smith/APG Maintenance, LLC

Grant Davis

Jim Hearlihy

809 East Lawn Ave.
Urbana, Ohio 43078
Phone: 937-653-6721
www.champaigncountyhistoricalmuseum.org
Email: champhistmus@cccn.net



CHAMPAIGN COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM

ADDRESS SERVICES REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
Urbana, OH 43078
Permit No. 67