

WASHINGTON HERITAGE HERALD

A publication of the Washington Historical Society, Washington, Illinois
Volume 8 - #4 - April 2004. Ralph and Wilma Lee Woolard, Editors

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From the Editors' Desk. Membership dues to the Washington Historical Society for the 2004-2005 fiscal year are now payable. (The cost of membership in some categories has been slightly increased.) For some recipients of this issue, it is the first time in several months that you have received the newsletter. Forever hopeful, we are sending this issue to approximately six hundred addresses believing that we may encourage those whose membership has lapsed to rejoin the Society. The fee structure is as follows:

General - Single - \$20.00; Family - \$25.00

Contributing - Single - \$25.00; Family - \$35.00

Golden - \$100.00 (per person or family); Life-Time - \$300.00

Student - (grade, high school or college) - \$5.00; Commercial - \$50.00

Dues may be paid at the upcoming banquet/meeting or may be sent to The Washington Historical Society, P.O. Box 54, Washington, IL 61571

The next issue of the Heritage Herald is scheduled to be published in August and will list the dates of programs, etc. for the 2004-2005 year.

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The annual banquet will be held on **April 26** at the First United Methodist Church, 1420 N. Main Street, at the intersection of Main Street and Bypass U.S. 24. Dinner will be served at 6:00 p.m. and will be followed by a program entitled "Historical Crooks and Characters of Central Illinois." The program will be presented by the Story Tellers of Peoria.

Tickets for the event are \$8.00 and may be purchased at the Zinser House, Homespun (on the Square), and Studio 901 (formerly Colonial Beauty Salon). Tickets must be purchased by April 23. Do plan to attend and bring a friend or two!

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Planned Giving. Do you know you can provide monetary support for the Washington Historical Society in your estate plan? Such gifts to the Society are tax deductible and are applied to the Washington Historical Society Endowment Fund. These gifts help support the Mission of the Society and foster historical research, preservation, and exhibits. In addition, such contributions help insure the continued presence of the Historical Society in the community. The Board of Directors would welcome an opportunity to work with you and your legal representative to determine an estate plan that would work best for you, your family and the Washington Historical Society.

===== A GLIMPSE INTO THE PAST

Why or when man first ate the seeds of grasses, learned to grind them into flour, mix the flour with water and bake it into bread is not known, but flour is a staple in the diet of most people today. Grinding grain was important to the development of early settlements. William Holland, Sr., built the first grist mill in Washington in 1827. It was operated by horsepower and produced a flour that resembled bran. People traveled fifty miles to utilize this mill and sometimes had to wait two weeks for their grindings.

Some of the first finely ground flour produced in Washington was made by Lawson Holland, Esq., in 1826 or 1827. The flour was produced by breaking wheat or corn with a pestle in a mortar, then sifting it through a hand-sieve. The mortar was created by hollowing out one end of a log. The other end was firmly placed in the ground. The pestle was a heavy piece of round timber, the lower end of which was shaped to fit the hollow in the mortar, the upper end being fastened to a spring pole which aided in raising the weight of the pestle. Near the lower end of this pestle were

four cross-pins, or handles, that were used by the operators. This pestle seems to have been developed on the principle of a perpendicular battering ram, an idea perhaps borrowed from the ancients. The hand-sieve was not the ordinary wire-sieve of today, but one that was peculiar to those early days. It was made by drawing a fawn-skin across a wooden hoop, like a drum-head, and perforating the skin with a hot iron rod the size desired. Through these holes in the skin the finer particles of broken grain escaped during the shaking process. What remained in the sieve was returned to the mortar and repounded. It was then sifted again until all the flour was separated from the bran. By this tedious process Lawson produced flour.

This type of mill was the only kind that existed in this part of the country until 1836 or 1837 when William Kern built a flour mill in the area. It proved to be a financial failure, however. The next flour mill was built by A. H. Danforth & Company in 1845, in the first brick building erected in Washington.

Source: "History of Tazewell County," Chas. C. Champman & Co., 1879.

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March Program. If you were not in attendance at the March meeting of the Society you missed a "cracking good" program. Featured were the creative talents of Washington artists Laurel Paul, Jo Ann Bell, Betty Manguson and writer/artists, Joan Summer. Poet David Wright, a graduate of the Washington schools, rounded out the program. They had an appreciative audience.

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Museum Day in Illinois. The sixth Annual Museum Day was celebrated in the Illinois State Capitol rotunda on Thursday, March 25. Representatives of the Washington Historical Society attended the event. Also attending were Erin Vallosio and Angie Cooper, District #52 middle school students. Erin and Angie presented a power-point program that featured some of Washington's homes of the past. Many people stopped and expressed their interest in this exhibit, and were especially impressed by the power-point project the students had developed. Legislators Keith Sommer and Dan Rutherford took time to visit the exhibit, also.

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"Spotlight on the past." The Washington Courier newspaper is featuring a column entitled, "Spotlight on the Past," every two weeks. The Washington Historical Society is responsible for the column and Jean Keely will be writing the articles. Information related to the history of Washington will be featured as well as information about forthcoming events, activities, and exhibits sponsored by the Society. Anyone having verifiable information concerning "early" Washington may contact Jean Keely (444-2467).

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