

# WASHINGTON HERITAGE HERALD

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**From the Editors Desk.** Recently, a Kroger representative asked the Washington Historical Society for 18 to 20 photographs depicting Washington as it was in that time frame. The photos were enlarged, mounted and placed as a permanent display in the local Kroger store. The store management indicated that there have been many favorable comments regarding the exhibit. The Kroger Company assumed all expenses for this project.

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*One of the richest sources of articles of general interest to readers of this newsletter are the weekly newspapers that have been published over the years which contain a great deal of information about Washington. The following article appeared in the May 15, 1919 issue of the Tazewell County Reporter. (It is quoted verbatim.)*

## **HENRY DENHART MAKES \$200,000 OFFER TO COLLEGE**

A correspondent from Carthage, Ill. sent out a misleading statement in regard to a big meeting held in Chicago on Tuesday to take action in regard to accepting a proposition made by ~~Henry Denhart~~ Henry Denhart of Washington to donate an additional \$200,000 to Carthage College if the Lutherans of three states would raise a like amount. The Carthage news writer had the nerve to claim Mr. Denhart lived in their old town. *The Peoria Star*, however, had the right dope on the affair and printed the following statement:

"Business men of Illinois, Wisconsin and Iowa, chiefly of the Lutheran faith, are meeting today in the Hotel Morrison, Chicago, to accept the challenge of Henry Denhart of Washington, Ill. who has offered to add \$200,000 to his benefactions to the Lutheran college at Carthage providing the Lutherans of these three states match the gift with a similar sum.

"Henry Denhart has become one of the richest of the down state bankers and no man begrudges him his success. He began life in Washington, Ill., began in honest poverty and has built an honest fortune. His mother was a widow who faced life's bitter problem single-handed. Her spirit and her virtues are reflected in her son. No schooling has this boy, except the common rudiments. His first job was in sweeping out dry goods stores in the mornings.

"He is a man of Lincoln's type except that his genius turned to business instead of politics. The full measure of his benefactions will never be written for this simple, quiet, kindly man of far-reaching wise benevolence used his money as a trust fund, expending it as he sees fit for the betterment of those about him and of the world at large. In Washington the stately stone church, a massive architectural masterpiece, he erected as a memorial to his mother. Twenty-eight churches in Chicago, it is said, were aided by him and to the Carthage college he has already given \$150,000. These are only a few of the gifts he has made and his private charities are many.

There will be a dinner at 6 o'clock this evening in Chicago and a meeting at 8 o'clock. Canvass for the \$200,000 in the three states will begin June 1 and it is expected to raise the sum by June 15."

*Henry Denhart was born in Germany in 1842, locating in Washington, Ill in 1853. He operated a dry goods business and then a lumberyard for several years. In 1867 he and Charles E. Anthony organized the Bank of Anthony and Denhart. In 1885 Mr. Anthony retired at which time Mr. Denhart assumed sole ownership of the bank. He also successfully bought and sold land in Illinois, Louisiana and Iowa. He died in 1933 and is buried, along with his wife, in Glendale Cemetery. They had no children.*

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*The same issue of the Reporter carried the following information about the graduation exercises of the class of 1919. "The graduation exercises were held at St. Mark's Lutheran Church. The valedictory address was given by Erma Stormer. Class officers were: Lyle Strubhar, President; Gladys Weeks, Vice-president; Harlan Danforth, Secretary-Treasurer. The class Motto - "IMPOSSIBLE IS UNAMERICAN."*

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**"BUY A COMMEMORATIVE BRICK FOR \$100.00 AND LEAVE A LEGACY. " (CALL 444-2113)**

## A FINANCIAL UPDATE

Near the end of 1994 the Washington Historical Society established a Fund Raising Committee whose sole purpose was to seek funds that would be used to renovate the Society's two buildings and pay off the mortgage on the property. Despite the ups and downs of the economy since that time, the Fund Raising Committee has received continued financial support from many businesses and individuals who believe in the goals of the Washington Historical Society. The Committee has raised over \$287,000 since December of 1994. Approximately \$159,000 has been given in the form of gifts, pledges and matching funds from individuals, families, and businesses. \$43,000 has been realized from the sale of bricks, and the Caterpillar Foundation has contributed \$53,000 in grants and matching funds. As a result, we have been able to pay off the mortgage on the property ahead of schedule. In addition, over \$157,000 has been spent in renovating the two buildings and making necessary repairs. The Committee is especially proud of the fact that only 2% of the monies received has been used for administrative and fund raising expenses. This was made possible primarily through the generosity of numerous individuals who gave freely of their time and talents in order for the Committee to succeed in reaching its goals. The list of things to do has dwindled considerably since 1994 but there are still projects to be completed. We are most grateful for past contributions and hope that individuals and families will continue to support endeavors of the Washington Historical Society in the future

The February 23 meeting of the Washington Historical Society was presented by Dr. Stacey Robertson, a Bradley faculty member and lecturer for the Illinois Humanities Council. Her topic, "Women Abolitionists From the Old Northwest," gave those in attendance a view of the movement that is rarely heard. Dr. Robertson supplemented the lecture with a series of projected photographs of women who were active in the abolitionist movement

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### CEMETERY WALK

Plans are underway to hold the Cemetery Walk, 2004, in the old cemetery section located at the south end of Market Street. Generally speaking, some of the oldest burial plots are in that section of Glendale Cemetery. Anyone who has relatives buried in this location and has pertinent information about them is encouraged to contact Jean Keely (444-2845).

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### VIDEO TAPES OF PROGRAMS

The Society video tapes the programs presented at the monthly meetings of the Society. The tapes are maintained in the library of the Zinser House and are available for viewing there via a TV set with a built-in VCR. Those wishing to purchase copies of tapes should call 444-2845. They are available for \$10.00 per tape.

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**UPCOMING PROGRAMS** – "Washington Authors and Artists" will be the subject of the March 22 program of the Historical Society. (7:00 p.m. at the Washington Presbyterian Church.) The annual banquet will be on April 26. when the Prairie Story Tellers will present "Historical Crooks and Characters of Central Illinois."