

On the Banks of Yesteryear - Preserving History

Written by Delphos Canal Museum

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One hundred years ago, John Wahmhoff, owner of the Pioneer Drug Store in Delphos, began collecting historical artifacts from people. A look at some of these first items gives us insight into what the people at that time thought was worthy of keeping to show future generations. Fortunately, Wahmhoff archived everything by the year it was received and the museum still has many of the relics donated in 1913.



Lives of the early settlers were remembered by items such as a wolf trap donated by Matt Fornefeld. The last wolf in Ohio was supposedly killed in 1842 but there are stories of people seeing them later than this. A baby oxen yoke was donated by J. Phillips. The animals had to be trained to pull heavy loads from an early age. Before the threshing machine and later the combine, grains had to be cut by hand and then “flailed” to beat the seeds out of the oats and wheat. J.W. Clapper donated a flail so that future generations could see what one looked like and how it was used.

And on the domestic side there is a flax reel that was already over 200 years old when donated by Miss Mary Kuntz in 1913. This was also called a yarn skein winder because by turning the wheel and winding the flax or yarn over and around the wooden dowels, skeins were formed.

A very heavy, long-handled waffle iron to use in a fireplace was donated by H.C. Raabe, and B.

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Lindemann offered a sausage stuffer which looks a little like a giant cake-decorating tool.

The Civil War, fought 50 years earlier, was well represented with a canister ball donated by C.L. Gander and a cannon ball donated by Thomas Rice. D. Bliss made sure future generations would know that Legrand Bliss served in the Civil War by donating Legrand's discharge paper.

Transportation was a very important part of early Delphos history. A coffee mill used on a canal boat was donated by F.L. Klein and a link and pin train coupler, when seen, explains why so many brakemen lost fingers and limbs or their lives before a safety law was passed in 1893. The link and pin as well as a narrow gauge railroad spike were donated by J. Nicholson.

These are just a few of the items donated in 1913. What do you have that would reflect the history of Delphos to someone 100 years from now?