

# The Tavern Log

A Publication of the Miamisburg Historical Society

June 2007

Volume XVI Issue 3

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The Tavern Log is published six times a year by the Miamisburg Historical Society for its members.

A list of deadlines and publication dates is available from the board president or on our website.

### Submit material to:

Editor, The Tavern Log  
Miamisburg Historical Society  
P.O. Box 774  
Miamisburg, OH 45343

or via e-mail to  
dewarrick@sbcglobal.net

The Tavern Log reserves the right to edit any material submitted.

### BOARD MEETINGS

Board meetings are held the third Thursday of each month at 6:00 pm at the Market Square Building.

### GEBHART TAVERN

Sundays, May thru Oct., 2:00-5:00 pm

### Website:

[http://miamisburg.org/miamisburg\\_historical\\_society.htm](http://miamisburg.org/miamisburg_historical_society.htm)

Webmaster: Jay Robinson

## Historic Home of Jacob Kercher to be Saved!

Who would have guessed that underneath the faded white aluminum siding covering the small, 2 story house at 14 South Ferry Street rested the log home of Jacob Kercher – one of the four “Founding Fathers” of what was to become the village (and city) of Miamisburg? Our Vice President, Les Wead, did – and he backed up his “guess” with some fine research which documented the fact that this was indeed the original Kercher home and what may well be the first house built in this community.

Records clearly indicate that Mr. Jacob Kercher and his wife, Anna Margaret (Gebhart), came to Ohio and the Miami Valley in 1808 and built a home adjacent to the Miami River in 1809-1810. In that home was born a daughter (Elizabeth) in 1810, who is recorded to be the first child born in the community. Ultimately, the Kerchers had 10 children (2 sons and 8 daughters) and moved on to larger quarters as the size of the family increased.

Mr. Kercher was an energetic and savvy business man who acquired a large tract of land in the vicinity of his home and went on to be a major force in laying out the original village. He is credited with donating the land for the “public square” on which now stands the Market Square Building, as well as the land on which was to be built St. Jacob Lutheran Church (was the name St. Jacob more than just a coincidence?). He also donated the land for the first cemetery (adjacent to the church) and was honored with having a school (Kercher School) and Kercher Street named after him. This same Jacob Kercher went on to build one of Miamisburg’s grandest homes known locally as the “Weber House” which served as the City Hall from the 1940s to the 1970s when it was demolished to be replaced by a city parking lot.

*Continued on Page 4*



## Memorial Day Weekend 2007

The Veterans Committee would like to thank everyone who helped to make our Memorial Day Weekend events the best ever. We dedicate our efforts to Richard Ennis, a charter member and our mentor, who passed away this year. Dick said at the first meeting, "This is what we need to do to get Memorial Day back to the Burg. Hey, a dance at the hall would be great!"...

*Continued on Page 8*



## From the President's Desk...

If you failed to attend any of the wonderful and varied activities put on by the Miamisburg Historical Society over the Memorial Day weekend, you missed out on some "real gems". Our Veteran's Committee ably led by **Randy Staley** and **Les Wead** did an outstanding job in pulling together the displays of uniforms and military memorabilia on the first floor of the Market Square Building. Much of this display will remain there through the 4<sup>th</sup> of July for those who were unable to see it during the initial run.

The "Victory Dance" at the Baum Opera House was co-sponsored with Post 165 of the American Legion and featured the fabulous Hauer Swing Band playing some of the great dance music from the 30s and 40s. A special "Thanks" goes to the **Baum Opera House Association** for making this lovely old structure available for this event.

Program Chairman, **Paul Schultz**, is to be commended for arranging for a special guest speaker from Wright Patterson who spoke about the formal ceremony provided by the Air Force at the burials of their departed members. This presentation was just one part of the excellent "Silver Taps" program which included a Color Guard from the American Legion and a bagpiper from right here in Miamisburg.

Another excellent event was the Memorial Day Parade co-sponsored by the Legion and the Historical Society. Unfortunately, the weather discouraged many of the spectators (and several of the units that had committed earlier to participating in the parade) from attending. Nevertheless, a record crowd attended the ceremonial service led by the American Legion in Library Park. (Perhaps the free hot dogs and ice cream was a factor?)

*Phil*

Phil Johnson,  
President

## MAKE A NOTE!

### Pot Luck Dinner Planned for June General Meeting *Program to feature the ACME Folding Boat story*

Our June 28 General Meeting at the Market Square Building will begin with a Pot Luck Dinner followed by a program on the ACME Folding Boat and its history, presented by Les Wead and Jim Bornhorst.

Dinner will begin at 6:00pm. Beverages and table service will be provided. Please bring one of your favorite dishes and enjoy the evening. No general meeting will held in July and August.

Please mark your calendars also for the end of summer Pot Luck Dinner to be held at the Market Square Building on September 27.

Paul Schultz,  
Program Chair



## Let's Go Back 100 Years...

The following article appeared in the *Miamisburg News* on **June 27, 1907**. How times have changed!

### Don't Blame the Girls

The hot weather brings its own particular brand of trouble to the telephone operators, and patrons of the telephone should not blame the young ladies at the exchange for failure to secure their party with promptness.

People now-a-days seek cool places on the porch and outside of the house, and frequently the telephone bell rings unnoticed and unanswered. The girl at the exchange can't help this.

Again some subscribers have a habit of not answering their bell promptly, thinking that when they got ready, to call up the operator, ascertain the party and answer the call. In the rush of business the operator is unable to remember who called up, and is unfairly blamed. In order to get good service and receive good service, calls should be promptly answered.

Then the thunderstorms put a good many telephones temporarily out of business. They are repaired as quickly as possible, but sometimes one storm will disarrange forty or fifty, which requires some time for attention.

The corps of young ladies are constantly busy, and patrons can rest assured of prompt service whenever possible.



## KUDO KORNER

Recognition of our volunteer force.  
We get things done because of you!

Great job done by **Jim Bornhorst** and **Quill Abney** on the construction of the framework behind our new signs on the east end of the Market Square Building.

Many thanks to **Barb Olekas** for her rendering of the Jacob Kercher Pioneer Home. Her artwork will be featured in upcoming fund raising efforts to save this historic structure. Fantastic job Barb!

Thanks to many hours of hard work by **Randy Staley** and his great **Veteran's Committee Members**, our Historical Society was again able to honor and celebrate the lives of our country's service men and women on this Memorial Weekend of 2007.

The Memorial Weekend military displays at the Market Square Building were expertly done through the efforts of **Les Wead** and **Rolla Broerman**. A top notch job was done of organizing and displaying the memorabilia that is so important in remembering our Vets.

The big job of spring cleaning the Gebhart Tavern was done this year by **Bobbie Sweny** and **Rolla Broerman**. They were ably assisted by Miamisburg Junior High students, **Mason Topiah**, **Chad Nace**, **Chase Thornhill**, **Matt Newkirk** and **Joe Moore**.

The colorful Memorial Day flyers were designed and printed by **Sue Montesano**. We always appreciate the great job Sue does in helping us spread the word about our Memorial Weekend events. Thank you also to **River Valley Credit Union** for donating their resources in the production of the flyers.

We appreciate the time and effort of our docents who worked at the Gebhart Tavern during the month of May. A big thank you to **Paul Schultz**, **Phil Johnson**, **Karen Sherrill**, and **Judy and Don Wuerstl**.

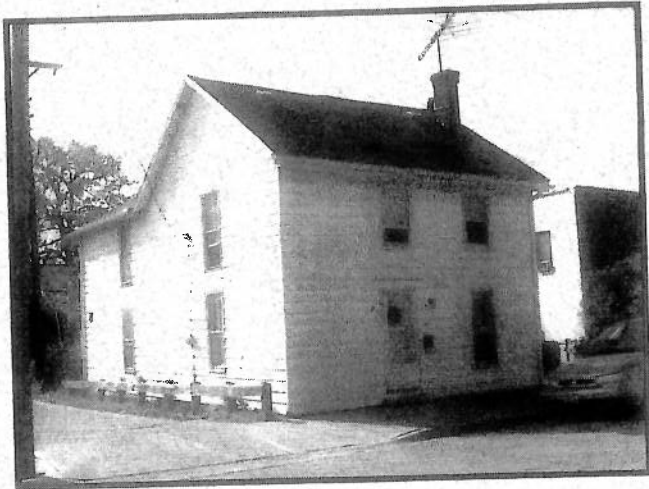
## We Send Our Sympathy

Condolences go out to Nita and Gary Petticrew on the passing of Nita's mother, Lucella Stone. We're thinking of you in your time of loss and extending our sympathy to your entire family.



## Historic Home of Jacob Kercher to be Saved!

(Continued from Page 1)



Your dollars can turn this ugly duckling...

*Rendering of Kercher Pioneer Home by Barb Olekas*



into this beautiful swan.

Enough about history! The **BIG NEWS** is that an energetic task force composed of representatives of the Historical Society as well as City of Miamisburg employees has been meeting regularly over the past few months in an effort to save this historic "log cabin" built by Jacob Kercher nearly 200 years ago. Efforts have been complicated by the fact that the structure is located in the region that is to become Miamisburg's new Riverfront Park. Had the Historical Society not stepped in, this historic structure would have met the same fate (demolition!) as other homes in that area in order to make room for the new park.

Thanks to the cooperation of the city, this task force has been given time to work out a recovery plan which includes separating a "newer" addition (circa 1860) from the original log structure and then moving the home to a new site adjacent to the Daniel Gebhart Tavern Museum at the corner of Old Main and Lock Streets. There it will be set on a new foundation after demolition of the city owned "Little White House". The Little White House is not an historic structure, but was formerly used by the Historical Society for educational purposes prior to the move of their headquarters to the Market Square Building in the center of town. In its new location, the Kercher pioneer home will be restored and will become an important part of the educational programs provided by the Historical Society to the children and adults in the community.

The Board has voted unanimously to launch a Capital Funds Drive and has chosen **John O'Gorman** to head up this effort. The Fund Raising Committee is currently working with the Board to establish a realistic target which will address all costs associated with the move and restoration of the historic structure as well as associated landscaping at the new site. We are pleased to report that an anonymous pledge of \$25,000 has already been made as a dollar-for-dollar match for all donations up to that limit.

In the coming weeks you will learn more about how this broad based fund drive will operate to give all individuals, businesses, foundations, etc., an opportunity to support this unique drive to maintain an important part of Miamisburg's history. Including the Kercher home in the immediate vicinity of the Daniel Gebhart Tavern will enhance the educational programs that are enjoyed by countless school children and adults in the community. Feel free to contact Phil Johnson, Les Wead or John O'Gorman for additional information.

## Bobbie Sweny Saves the Day

Due to an unexpected scheduling conflict, the program originally planned for our April General Meeting had to be changed. In its place Bobbie Sweny presented a wonderful slide presentation on Families, Homes and Businesses in old Miamisburg.

Bobbie provided an excellent and informative narrative to accompany the old photos. Her knowledge of the subject and her presentation style always serve to make a wonderfully entertaining program. Thank you Bobbie!

In addition to the program, we were treated to an artwork exhibition done by Cathy Sweny's 6th grade class in which their versions of tin ceiling tiles were displayed. Pictured below is a fine example designed and handcrafted by Emma Dickson.



We always look forward to the student's art display. Their participation in our Historical Society's program is greatly appreciated and enjoyed by all.

## Old Tradition Made New Again!



On May 28, 2007 an old tradition was made new again. Bicycle riders decorated their vehicles and rode in the Memorial Day Parade. School age riders that participated were judged on the best use of color and originality. Three 1st place prizes of \$25, three 2nd place prizes of \$15 and three 3rd place prizes of \$10 were awarded to the winners. The Miamisburg school with the most participants also received a \$150 award.

The individual winners were Jacyce Hill, Alexis Hill, Nathan Troike, Clay Geiser, Alex Troike, Gavin Moharter, Noah Belcher, Maria Boyd and Zach Boyd. Mound school won the prize for the most participants. All of the prize money was donated by the Miamisburg Historical Society. This old tradition has now become part of our annual Memorial Day festivities.

## We Extend Our Sympathy

Our Historical Society lost a member and good friend, Robert 'Bob' Newburg who passed away in late May.

All our thoughts and prayers go out to Minta Newburg and the entire family. Bob will be greatly missed by all who knew him.

## How high is your Miamisburg IQ?

### *The June Pop Quiz:*

Connect the original street names with the current names.



#### Original Street Name

Smith Street  
Sugar Street  
Vine Street  
Market Street

#### Current Street Name

Central Avenue  
Mound Avenue  
Fifth Street  
Maple Avenue

Answer on Page 6



## Notes From the Curator

By Joe Steffen

Another fun time for the Miamisburg Historical Society with the activities at the Spring Fling outing at Library Park and the Spring Fling Parade through the streets in Miamisburg. Each year the parade attendance grows as the local citizens make a special effort to join in and enjoy all the activities.

I took a step back to think about the parade and the support your Historical Society provides to help ensure the success of various events. Since 2001 your Historical Society has entered into the parade the 1909 Enterprise Buggy

built here in Miamisburg and donated to your Historical Society by the Hottle Family. The buggy has been involved in all of the various town parades including the Spring Fling Parades, the Christmas Parades, the Memorial Day Parades and even the Miami Township Anniversary Parade.

For each of the various parades in Miamisburg your Historical Society selects someone to ride in the old 1909 Enterprise buggy. The first person selected to ride in a Spring Fling Parade was Donna Hottle Van Buren whose family had donated the buggy to your Historical Society. We are very grateful for the donation from the Hottle family and want to continue to acknowledge their contribution.

Since 2001 a number of our fair citizens have been selected to ride in the Enterprise Buggy during parades here in Miamisburg. Bobbye Sweny, Phil Johnson, Laura Bornhorst and her nieces, my grandchildren, Joe and Caroline Atkinson, Carl Becker, John Crauder, Diane Warrick, Phyllis Abney, Joe Stanton, Jim Bornhorst, Les Wead and Marcia Dunahue is a partial list of those taking the special ride through town thus far.

I was asked to be the guest rider in the 1909 Enterprise Buggy for this year's Spring Fling Parade. It was also special for me to ride, as my mother was a member of the Kauffman family which was the original buggy manufacturing family here in Miamisburg. The parade was great and a real eye opener. I had no idea what a big event the Spring Fling Parade was all about. From the buggy I saw a good number of friends and the thousands that came to Miamisburg to enjoy the parade and Spring Fling activities.

What a great town we have. Thanks to all that have helped us care for the various items that make up the history of our fair city.

### Pop Quiz Answer

Connect the original street names with the current names.

#### Original Street Name

Smith Street

Sugar Street

Vine Street

Market Street

#### Current Street Name

Central Avenue

Mound Avenue

Fifth Street

Maple Avenue



## End of School Year for Educational Programs

By Bobbye Sweny

Our May schedule always fills up rapidly for us. This year we topped all previous records. We gave six classroom programs, three walking tours with Gebhart Tavern visits, one tour of the Market Square Building with the Veteran's exhibit and two walking tours downtown to visit buildings under reconstruction. This involved approximately 238 children from 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades and from the high school. In addition, we had five wonderful young men from Jeanne Toadvine's Jr. High class who helped us clean the Tavern, the smokehouse and the Little White House.

If you consider that we saw 113 of these children 4 times, the count goes up to about 577 – that's a lot of children. The letters we get from the Bear School children are always a joy – we look forward to them. And the messages from the teachers, *"Thanks from Kinder School to the Historical Society for all they do for the children of Miamisburg."* And *"Gratitude for an absolutely wonderful tour of Miamisburg. And thanks for showing and sharing with our students the rich history of our town!"* from Medlar View.

Special thanks to the wonderful docents who make this possible. Rolla Broerman, Judy Wuerstl and Diane McGloghlin joined Betty Morris, Jim Schnapp and me this year. If Rolla's daughter, Vi Hutchison from North Carolina, is in town, she always joins us with great enthusiasm. Then we have our stalwarts, Phil Johnson, Les Wead and Joe Steffen who open up the Tavern Museum for us ahead of time.

Phil and Les also gave tours of the Veteran's Exhibit while Rolla and I alternated a program on the Market Square Building, Memorial Day and the flag in the Miller Chamberlin Auditorium. Our special docent is our own Mayor, Dick Church, who greets the children on our walking tour with a challenge to follow their dreams. The children love meeting the Mayor.

We work with 14 teachers to schedule these programs. This year, one of our teachers asked to join the Society so we could supply her with the historic information she needs for a project to bring history to the third grade level. Her name is Lori Zastrow from Medlar View – we welcome her with open arms.

A special surprise for us this year was the H.V. Bear program. When the teachers asked for parent volunteers for the walking tour, expecting the usual six or seven, nineteen parents signed up. We had a wonderful time.

*Continued on Page 9*

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Fred Loy  
Mary Mahan  
Debbie Hodge

### Become a Member ... and help preserve Miamisburg

I would like membership in the  
category checked:

- ☐ Student \$5.00  
☐ Individual \$15.00  
☐ Family \$25.00  
☐ Sponsor \$50.00  
☐ Patron \$100.00  
☐ Life \$500.00 (per person)

Total enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to:  
Miamisburg Historical Society

- ☐ I am a new member  
☐ I am renewing

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*(please mail to:)*

Miamisburg Historical Society  
P.O. Box 774  
Miamisburg, OH 45343-0774

## Memorial Day Weekend 2007

(Continued from Page 1)

Thursday evening's "Silver Taps Ceremony" included American Legion Post 165 Color Guard, Piper, Tim Schaiper, honoring our veterans prior to the Civil War, invocation by Rev. Mike Hout and the National Anthem sung beautifully by Monique Kennon, a Fifth Grade Teacher at Bear School.

Our speaker was M/Sgt. Michael D. Koester, Supt. of WPAFB Honor Guard explaining their services provided to veteran's families throughout the region. Taps were played by M/Sgt. Koester and echoed by Post 165. Mayor Church closed the ceremony with a roll call of Miamisburg/Miami Township veterans who died in action from WW I through Vietnam.

A special thanks to Paul Schultz for arranging our speaker. If you missed Joe Stanton's cherry cheese cake, shame on you!

The grand opening of our Military Exhibits followed the ceremony only through the efforts of Lester Wade and Rolla Broerman. The highlight was a visit of 50 Third Grade students from Kinder School on Friday who toured the exhibit with the guidance of Phil Johnson and Les Wead. The exhibits will remain up through June if you would like to stop by on Wednesday or Saturday between 1:00 and 4:00 pm.

The Victory Dance at the Baum Opera House on Saturday Night was attended by our largest crowd yet. It was a great evening with the Hauer Swing Band filling that great old hall with the same sounds that were heard there in the 40's. The Victory Dance is able to be held each year only because of the many generous donations from Mayor Church's Wedding Fund, our friends at the Baum Opera House Board, Dance Chairman Joe Stanton and the decoration crew, Cathy Oberer, Sue Oberer, Rolla Broerman and Les Wead.

Oh yes, I almost forgot the tear down crew including numerous Historical Society members who stayed over to help clean up and get the house in order.

The American Legion Post 165 performed services at the cemeteries and the Linden Avenue bridge. They also led the parade and provided a beautiful service at the Library Park. We especially thank everyone who provided motorized vehicles at today's gas prices!



Parade Marshal Bud Colvin, WW II US Navy Veteran, was chauffeured by his daughter and granddaughter. Riding in the Historical Society buggy this year was Leigh Waltz, US Navy Seabee, who served in the Gulf War and Iraq.

Thanks to GFS Foods for the free hot dogs, the American Legion for the bottled water and Mayor Dick Church for the ice cream. Oh yes, how could I ever forget our Viking Marching Band? What a great show as usual. A special thanks also goes to Sue Montesano and River Valley Credit Union for our beautiful posters and handouts.

The downside of the Memorial Weekend events was the lack of attendance by our own members for the Silver Taps Program on Thursday evening. There is much work and effort that goes into providing programs for you during the year and we generally have 35 or less at our meetings. If you have any ideas or suggestions as to how we may improve our programs, please contact any board member.

**Will we do the Memorial Day Weekend in 2008?**

**Mark your calendar for May 22, 24, and 26!**

Randy Staley,  
Veteran's Committee Chair

### A special note for our sister organization, the Baum Opera House.

The Baum Organization is in need of cash donations to replace the curtains that were owned by the playhouse group which is no longer using the facility. There have also been some unexpected roof leaks and maintenance costs due to the freeze this spring. *If you can, please help!* A great job has been done in restoring this historical building which is certainly a valued treasure for our community.



## Upcoming Events

**June**    **Event:** Miamisburg Alumni Dinner & Dance  
**Date:** Saturday, June 16  
**Place:** Holiday Inn Dayton Mall

**Event:** Cruise the Burg #1  
**Date:** Saturday, June 23 4:00-9:00 pm  
**Place:** Downtown Miamisburg

**Event:** Historical Society General Meeting and Pot Luck Dinner  
**Date:** Thursday, June 28 6:00 pm  
**Place:** Mkt. Sq. Bldg., Miller-Chamberlin Auditorium

**July**    **Event:** Thunderburg  
**Date:** Saturday, July 21 3:00-11:00 pm  
**Place:** Downtown Miamisburg

**Event:** Tour d'Burg  
**Date:** Sunday, July 22 8:00 am - 5:00 pm  
**Place:** Downtown Miamisburg

**Event:** Cruise the Burg #2  
**Date:** Saturday, July 28 4:00-9:00 pm  
**Place:** Downtown Miamisburg

**NOTE:** There will be no Historical Society General Meeting in July

**Aug.**    **Event:** Cruise the Burg #3  
**Date:** Saturday, August 25 4:00-9:00 pm  
**Place:** Downtown Miamisburg

**Event:** Old Fashioned Top Throwing (Tentative)  
**Date:** Saturday, August 25  
**Place:** Downtown Miamisburg 5:00-8:00

**NOTE:** There will be no Historical Society General Meeting in August

**Sept.**    **Event:** Starving Artists  
**Date:** September 8-9 8:00 am - 5:00 pm / 12:00-5:00 pm  
**Place:** Library Park

**Event:** Historical Society Home Tour  
**Date:** Tentative - September 23

## Highlighting Our Historical Society



### Did you know...

Our Historical Society Research Room contains Miami Township and Miamisburg Census Records from 1830 through 1920.

Also available are the records from the following Miamisburg cemeteries:

Hillgrove Cemetery  
 Our Lady of Good Hope Cemetery  
 Gebhart Church Cemetery  
 Highland Cemetery  
 Stettler Church Cemetery

Stop in and take advantage of the many volumes of information that have been compiled for research purposes and just for general interest. You'll be amazed at the history of our town and its citizens that has been recorded and readily available to all.

## End of School Year for Educational Programs

*(Continued from Page 7)*

I would be remiss if I did not thank Cathy Sweny for the beautiful art show her students provided for the April general meeting. The replicas of tin ceiling tiles were outstanding. The sixth grade students have exhibited their historical art projects for us for about 14 years. They just keep getting better and better.

This summer we will be reviewing our programs with some of our teachers. Our object is to improve what we do and how we do it. There is always a need for more volunteers. We'd love to have you join us.

Bobbie Sweny, Chair  
 Children's Educational Programs



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## Hillgrove Cemetery A Change in Operations

On May 25, 2007 at 5:00 pm the Miamisburg Cemetery Association transferred operations and maintenance of the cemetery over to the Hillgrove Union Cemetery Board. Superintendent Wade Collins will remain in that position.

The telephone numbers for Hillgrove will remain the same. The office number is 866-2263 and Wades cell number is 937-609-9889.

New board officers are:

President..... Charles Lewis, Miami Township  
Vice President..... Darrin Preston, City of Miamisburg  
Secretary/Treas. ... Glenn Alexander, city resident

There should be no interruption of service.

## WANTED

Our Children's Educational Programs Committee is looking for the following clothing items (or similar) preferably from the late 1800's to early 1900's:

### School girl's clothing

- middy blouses
- skirts, dresses
- shoes (especially high button style)
- hair bows
- long underwear and stockings
- gym bloomers
- swimming suits

### School boy's clothing

- knickers
- jackets, shirts
- stockings, high-top shoes

### Teacher's clothing

- dresses (skirts - blouses)
- high button shoes

### Miscellaneous

- slates, lunch pails, eye glasses, pencil boxes

*Please call 859-5000*