

Minutes for RCHS April 27, 2017 meeting

General Interest

Posted by: Linda Cottrell Liss

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The regular monthly meeting of the Roane County Historical Society, Inc. was held on Thursday, April 27, 2017 at the Roane County Library. President Rick Greathouse called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. with sixteen members and guests present. An opening prayer was led by Jack Nida and the Pledge to the American Flag was recited by all. In absence of the Recording Secretary, the minutes of the March 23, 2017 meeting were read by Linda Liss and approved as read. Treasurer, Carol Board Westfall, reported no receipts/disbursements since last meeting: Balance: \$12,419.95. Linda Cottrell Liss, Correspondence Secretary, reported:

1. Society member, Lisa Carper Stott who lives in OH, had picked up the many books, and genealogy papers of the late Society member, Jan Parker of Millersburg, OH. She went through the car load of materials and took pertinent and historical items as a donation to the Summit County Library, Akron OH, with whom the RCHS has an exchange relationship.
2. Email correspondence from Sherri Unger, Spencer, WV: Sherri is in possession of a box of photo slides from the estate of the late Virgil Daughtery. Would the RCHS like them? Will respond, YES, as one of the society's members has scanner that can convert slides to photos. As Membership Secretary, Linda reported the current membership is steady at 204.

President Greathouse, welcomed and Linda introduced our Guest Speaker, Mr. Philip Smith, Director of Planning and Development for the City of Spencer.

Mr. Smith is busily finding and implementing ways to promote and celebrate the history and heritage of Spencer, Roane County. He is looking for new and exciting ideas to promote Annual Heritage Days coming up, tentatively June 3-4, 2017. He announced that the Civil War Heritage Park on hill behind Wal-Mart promotes the Civil War heritage of Spencer with a marked walking trail; the park also marks a walking trail for viewing the area once occupied by the historical Spencer State Hospital. The Park is open to the public. No digging or metal detectors allowed. Philip is working with Woodworks and Signs of Spencer and the Boy Scouts Troop 437 to create and install historic kiosks in strategic areas to commemorate the history of the former Spencer State Hospital and its 96 year history in this community. He displayed two sample kiosk ideas for the hospital: One for the hospital's farm and one for the history of the hospital itself.

Along the line of remembering the historic Spencer State Hospital, he is working on ideas for a SSH Memorial Park to be located in a prominent area of the former SSH property. The Park may include decorative columns from the original hospital building, decorative plantings, park benches and perhaps a memorial walkway with bricks in remembrance of hospital patients buried in its two cemeteries.

Additional Business:

Annual Genealogy Fair is scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 23, 2017, 9 am - 3 pm at the Heritage Park Community Building in Spencer. The September meeting of the RCHS has been rescheduled for Thursday, Sept. 14th to accommodate final planning for the Genealogy Fair.

Newsletter Editor, Linda Liss, reported that the Spring 2017 "Journal" newsletter had been mailed. New items needed for the Summer 2017 Journal.

Linda Cottrell Liss announced that the Essay Scholarship Committee met and selected the 7th annual scholarship winner as Mr. Chase Webb, upcoming 2017 graduate of Roane County High School. The \$1,000 scholarship presented annually by the Roane County Historical Society will be awarded at the school's May 16th Awards Ceremony. Mr. Webb will be program guest for the May 25th meeting of the Society.

Bonita Schreckengost reported that the sign commemorating the Spencer State Hospital cemeteries is still in the hands of the Sewah Studios, in Marietta, OH. They do not have a copy of the original photo that was on the reverse side of the sign. A sharp digital photo is needed to complete the project.

Bonita also reported that she had checked with appropriate authorities regarding our raffling off a long-rifle at our upcoming Sept. Genealogy Fair. Is a permit needed to hold such a raffle? It was noted that other area organizations have had such projects with no trouble. She has proceeded in designing a ticket for the project, noting that tickets will be sold for a \$20 donation. Drawing to be held at the September Gen. Fair.

Linda Cottrell Liss reported on the progress of identifying the location of and protection of the Spencer State Hospital's two cemeteries. It has been learned through a 1981 deed that 17.05 acres of land was sold to the Roane County Board of Education and within that acreage were the hospital's burying grounds. The deed details that a chain-link fence was to be erected around the cemetery portion of land before any school construction was begun. The fence was never constructed, but the school was built on portion of the cemetery, desecrating a number of graves. Each addition to the school has encroached further into the cemetery property. A letter has been written to Mr. Jeff Mace, current Roane County Board President, and copies sent to six other prominent entities, relating her concern and the concern of the Spencer State Hospital Face Book group. It is Linda's hope, with support of the Roane County Historical Society and the 423-member Face Book group, that enough concern can be generated to encourage the Board of Education to erect a chain-link fence around what is left of the cemeteries.

Rick announced that a Committee on Nominations needs to be formed to nominate officers for the 2017-18 fiscal year.

Meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. with refreshments being served.