Footprints

Preserving our Past for the Future

Two of the old churches of Delhi...Shiloh United Methodist Church, at left, at Anderson Ferry and Foley roads. Built in 1819, it is likely the oldest standing church structure in Hamilton County.
Above is the old St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church on Neeb Road, founded by reformed Lutherans who left German religious persecution in 1849.
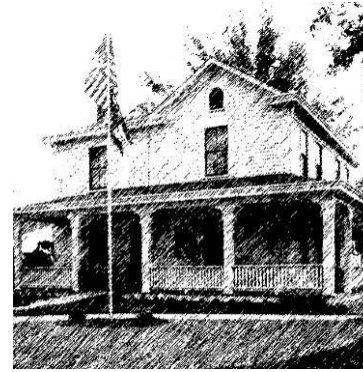
DELHI HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Footprints

Museum needs volunteers to stay open
Can you spare 20 hours a year?

Upcoming Dates

- **June 4 - Spring Grove Cemetery and Sign Museum Tour.**

- **June 10 - Old Time Religion, 7 p.m. Delhi Park Lodge.**

- **Sept. 9 - Tour of the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum, 7 p.m.**

- **September 17 - Green Township Historical Assoc., Bricca Murders Case, Nathaniel Greene Lodge, 6394 Wesselman Rd**

The Delhi Historical Society Farmhouse Museum is open March-October from 12-3 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday & Sunday.

It all comes down to this - an empty chair.

The Delhi Historical Society's Farmhouse Museum has just undergone a restoration project that not only took care of many critical maintenance issues, but also produced a beautiful facility that is the gem of Delhi. But it might soon be sitting idle except for Sundays and special events.

Little by little our strong core of volunteers has aged, died or moved away. This year we are down to four responsible people who can open the Museum and perform the simple tasks necessary to keep it open.

We are seeking five to 10 more people to volunteer for three hours **one Tuesday or Thursday a month from March through October (that's 21 hours total)** on a regular basis. The critical day right now is Tuesday.

There are many tasks to be done while you are here - AND YOU GET TO CHOOSE WHAT YOUR TASKS ARE:

- watering flowers
- Dusting
- stuffing envelopes and labeling the newsletters
- Copying and scanning our photo collection
- Greeting visitors and researchers
- Indexing church and census records (simple computer data entry)
- helping the archivist catalog and store donated items.

Couples are especially welcome! Please email delhi.history@fuse.net or call 513-451-4313 today to learn how you can help keep the Farmhouse Museum Open

June 10 program features Delhi churches

Why are there two Jewish Cemeteries in what was once Delhi? Who are the people buried in the little Baptist cemetery behind the Administration Building? What Delhi Church has likely the oldest church building in Hamilton County?

Join us, Monday, June 10, at 7 p.m. as Peg Schmidt, archivist for the Delhi Historical Society, presents a slide show of the old churches and cemeteries of Delhi and the surrounding area. The program is at the Delhi Park Lodge 5125 Foley Road.

As always, bring a snack to share with the group.

Upcoming....September 9
Tour of Police Museum

Join us Monday, September 9, at 7 p.m. at the Greater Cincinnati Police Museum at West Eighth and Freeman Ave., Take a step back in time and explore the lives of the men and women who have served our tri-state communities; the development of uniforms, weapons, vehicles, animal partners, equipment, and vehicles; how law enforcement has changed over the years; and how the region influenced policing within 200 miles in every direction.

From the Archives
Exodus from Lorraine - the villagers of Waldhause move to Delhi

Martini, Backscheider, Conrad, Kaiser, Strassel, Megel. These are common Delhi names with one thing in common – they all originated in a small French town called Waldhause on the border of Germany.

Waldhause and its sister city Walschbronn date back more than 2500 years. In Roman times Walschbronn was known for its baths of bituminous and sulphurous waters. The source of the fountain of white sulphur water was what was then called Bergwach mountain. Emperor Frederic, II, restored the baths and Count George de Bitche, a duke of Lorraine, attempted to build a castle there. The castle, started around 1490, was called Walschburg His son, Count Reinhard, gave it to his cousin in 1524, the Count Palatine of Zweibrücken Georges-Ochstein, who did nothing to prevent its ruin.

Writings dates from 1594 indicate that the towers and walls of the castle still remained. It seems that it was never completed, and that the stones were taken and used in the edification of the wall of the Church, and at the construction of some nearby houses. The church was built before 1578, the date on which a fire partially destroyed, and rebuilt with the materials from the old castle. That church was demolished and rebuilt in 1785.

Germany or France?

After the breakup of Caesar's Rome, the area came under the control of the Franks (France), but by 950 the it was conquered by Holy Roman (German) Emperor Otto II. Things were relatively stable until the mid 1600s when the territory was fought over during the 30-Years War, the Nine Years War, the War of Spanish Succession, and War of Polish Succession. So between 1600 and 1766, it went back and forth among Poland, Austria, Germany and France. Finally in 1766, it became part of the French province of Lorraine. But it still remained contested territory. Then in 1815, with the defeat of Napoleon, France ceded the land to Austria, which gave it to Prussia, although over

Houses along the street in Waldhaus

the next 50 years, France annexed most of it back. In 1870, it went back to Germany after the Franco-Prussian War. It remained part of Germany until that country's defeat in WW I when it went back to France. Germany took it back in 1940, but it was liberated by American troops in 1944 and returned to France.

It is not any wonder then that the language of the region around Waldhause is called

Church in Waldhause built in 1785

Lorraine Franconian, a mostly German dialect. The records we have at the Historical Society date from the late 1500s, when the town of Waldhause was established or settled by the Holy Roman Emperor who forced immigration from Italy, France and German states in order to build a glass factory. Thus we have the very Italian Martini family settling there.

Why did the families leave and come to Delhi? Who were the first to immigrate? We really don't know. We do

Philip and Magdalena Klem Martini settled in Delhi after leaving Waldhause.

know that Waldhause is a Catholic town, and when Prussia took control in the 1815, the Calvinist/Lutheran Emperor William III began to force the new Evangelical (Reformed Lutheran) religion on the people. So religious persecution along with being in a war-torn area, probably encouraged an exodus to the U.S. The first family shows up in St. Stephen (Our Lady of Victory) records in 1837. Family tradition says that Peter

Strassel came to Delhi in 1832 with his wife and seven children. His farm was located between Rapid Run Road and Bender Road and overlooked what is now Bender Road.

Strassel later sponsored the immigration of Jean Pierre Martini and his two sons, Philip and John, who arrived in the 1850s.

Members of the Backscheider family show up in Delhi shortly after Strassel, settling above Sedamsville and on Mayhew Road. Brothers Balthazar, Nicholas, John, Jacob, and their cousin Peter, arrived around 1840. Peter Backscheider's wife, Anna Maria Strassel, was Peter Strassel's sister. The extended family of John Backscheider's wife, Maria Megel, followed.

Soon there was a very strong connection between Delhi and Waldhause. In 2005, former member Jack Wellman traveled to Waldhause, where he met then town mayor Gene Martini and his wife.

He was presented with two volumes containing the birth, marriage and death records of the town from the late 1500s to 2000. Jack donated the records to the Delhi Historical Society. Anyone wishing to do research on families from Lorraine are encouraged to visit the historical society, where they will likely find the information they need.

Jack and Katie Wellman with Eugene Martini, then mayor of Waldhause, Lorraine, France.

Our Lady of Victory Cemetery contains the burials of many Waldhause immigrants

John Backscheider Garage on Mayhew Avenue.

Closed June 4
The Delhi Historical Society Farmhouse Museum will be closed Tuesday, June 4, as volunteers take part in the tour of Spring Grove Cemetery and the Sign Museum..

Membership Form

Name:_____

Address:_____

City:_____ State___ zip_____

Phone:_____ e-mail:_____

Make checks payable to: Delhi Historical Society, 468 Anderson Ferry Road, Cincinnati, OH 45238

Membership Levels
Senior Citizen or Student ($10) _____
Regular Annual ($20) ____
Regular Family ($35) ____
Sustaining Individual/Family ($50) ____
Patron Individual/Family ($100) ____
Business ($100) _____
Benefactor ($500) _____
Founder ($1,000) _____