

*Museum continued*

....an 1892 photo of the Bucktail Regiment Civil War Veterans is disintegrating and the images will soon be made unrecognizable. Just one example of this need.

The Museum has the potential of being a key tourist attraction for Cameron County with two-thirds of it's visitors being from out of town. People travel hundreds of miles to visit museums and the Little Museum needs to be promoted out of the area to draw these people in. The Curator of the Pennsylvania Lumber Museum said that we had the most comprehensive local museum she had ever seen. Nothing to sneeze at coming from someone in her position! You and the Society have done an awesome job of collecting and displaying the collection...now we need to let people know about it! People visiting the Lumber Museum would enjoy seeing our collection. People visiting two area Tom Mix events would enjoy seeing our collection. Doll collectors would enjoy seeing our collection. WWII enthusiasts would enjoy seeing our collection. Civil War enthusiasts would enjoy seeing our collection....but they need to know it is there! Road signs, advertisements, a website, newspaper and magazine articles and you folks talking it up would make a difference. We can be a leader in bringing much needed tourist dollars into the County!

There are literally thousands of dollars available to us through grants. What a nice little boost to our local economy \$25-50K would bring. We only need to seek them out and apply for them. Grants are available to catalogue the collection, to re-do the landscaping, to conserve what needs to be conserved, to do presentations and more. Those grants can be a win-win opportunity for us and the County.

Last and most important, we need to "resell" the Museum to the residents of Cameron County. It is really pathetic that only 60 of our 5900 residents visited the museum this season. However, there IS an interest in Cameron County history and genealogy. The Cameron County Genealogy Project, a Rootsweb internet site with 450 pages of Cameron County historical information has had 41,000 hits since January, 2000 - more than 10,000 hits a year! (It was directly responsible for about 60 of the visitors this year.). There is an interest! The Museum needs to be promoted locally. An article about the collection needs to be in both newspapers every week and reminders that we are open on the radio. Opening day should be a huge local event with programs through out the season. Families having reunions should be invited to see what information we are preserving on their families. School-age children should be introduced to their heritage with programs and visits to the museum- they are our future members. Museum exhibits should compliment local, state and national happenings - like a prominent display of Mason family holdings during the Mason

Reunion and a display of all we have on the Korean War during the 50th Anniversary of the War. There needs to be a display of artifacts in the Library display case when ever possible, prompting people to come and see the rest.. The museum (and the Society) should be presented to every organization who will have us. Churches should be invited to hold Heritage Days at the museum with picnics in the park. WE NEED TO MAKE IT SO THEY WANT TO COME TO SEE WHAT WE HAVE!

Sound like work? It sure does and we cannot do it with only 100 members...we need 500 members for the 2004 season. It is easy...each one of you need only find 5 people who will part with \$5 and join in the excitement that 2004 will be. We will have our 500 and be well on our way to 1000. Why not? We will make it the best \$5 they spend in 2004 and you proud to be a part of that excitement!

ONE THOUSAND visitors should be our goal for 2004!. Each of you only need to put ten family members and friends in your car and drive them down! They will thank you for the experience and you will be happy to know that you helped make it happen.

Now some of these ideas are bold and have not been tried and some of them will be real work. There are several places to be about it. You can be in the "it can't be done" place. That is fine. We need people to be there, because it will only motivate those of us in the "it can be done" place to work harder to get it done. Just please do not make it too hard for those who are trying to make it happen. Many of the "it can't be done" group will change their minds once things start to happen. There is also the "no one will do anything" place. That is also fine. All volunteer organizations like ours have a large percentage of people who join and do not participate. Not a problem...we need their money and eventually, given the opportunity, many of those people will show up if there is a lot going on. So, don't let that stop you from participating. There is also the "wait and see" group. That group is also fine. Just don't wait too long and miss out on the fun! So as you can see everyone has a place in the scheme of things.

If you know you are in the "it can be done" group and want to be a part of this exiting opportunity, please let John Kautz, Sandra Hornung or Mike Wennin know. Come be part of the team! Do you know someone who would be good at some part of this effort - invite them to join.

Also, these ideas are the ideas of one person brainstorming - Mike Wennin. Your ideas are equally important. Please make sure you share yours with John or Mike in the near future so they can be considered and included. Help make 2004 the year that put Cameron County and the Cameron County Historical Society back on the map!

# The of the Voice!

Cameron County Historical Society

Volume One No.1

PREMIER ISSUE

Fall 2003

## The Little Museum - Our Greatest Asset!

A treasure-trove of Cameron County History is housed in our historic 1930 Sears, Roebuck Simplex Sectional School House. The Museum was the result of the dreams, hard work, donations and contributions of hundreds of people. When it first opened in the early 1970's, people flocked to see it. Attendance was almost overwhelming. In order to accommodate the people who were traveling in from out of town to see it, a request that local people not attend on Sundays was printed in the paper. Photos on the paper show cars lined along the highway in front of the museum. Donations of artifacts were reported every week in the paper along with the names of the members who manned the museum, cleaned and repaired artifacts, and helped in other ways. *The Little Museum News* was a regular and popular installment in the local paper.

Like with all things, over the years interest waned. Folks figured if they saw it once they saw it all. Many of the movers and shakers moved or passed away, leaving a handful of volunteers to continue the work that once took the whole community to maintain. Even the thirtieth anniversary of the opening of the museum passed with out fan fair! Hats off to those few who have maintained the Museum and made sure it stayed open the past few years! From talking with some of those folks, at times it's been a lonely, seemingly thankless job. Only 171 people visited the Museum this summer - two-thirds of them from out of town! Less than 60 local people thought it worth while to visit.

Well it is time to turn that around! The Museum houses a superb multi-million dollar collection that really needs to be treated as such! It is a huge asset to the County that is not being utilized. There is much that needs to be addressed.

The Society cannot fulfill it's objective of assisting in research work since there is no ready access to the 35,000 plus items that are housed there. The collection needs to be cataloged on a computer to aid researchers and genealogists and to track the inventory. We had two requests for a catalogue of our holdings pertaining to the lumber industry and to the agricultural history of the area which we were not able to readily fulfill. We have tons of both, but no way to know what or where it is- a missed opportunity for recognition from PA State Lumber Museum and Penn State University. Recognition from such organizations can lead to grant moneys!

There are items in the collection that desperately need to be conserved. One of our most rare and valuable photographs...  
*See Back Page*

## Introducing *The Voice!*

In an effort to bring some renewed excitement to the Society, I have asked John if I could produce a periodical newsletter.

I see the purpose of the newsletter to be multifaceted. An organ of communication to the membership; a journal of Cameron County History and Genealogy; a tool to maintain and grow the membership; and eventually a publication available to the public.

I see *The Voice* being produced by a group of people committed to building the Society; to sharing our collective history; and to sharing their excitement in the contribution the Society can be to their family and friends. If you are one of these people, please contact me!

We will soliciting articles, interviews and photos from members and the community. Everyone will be welcome to participate.

I hope that you will look forward to receiving each issue and that you will be proud that it represents the Cameron County Historical Society!

-Mike Wennin

# Who is this guy?

## or Notes from the Editor!

You are probably wondering by now who is this guy with all of these wild ideas and what is he up to?

My name is Mike Wennin. I am the son of Ernie and Leah Wennin. I grew up in Emporium living here until we moved in 1971. I would have graduated with the Class of '72. I moved back last December after living in New York, Texas, California and most recently Atlanta, Georgia. I can trace my roots to Peter Jordan who arrived in 1811; to William E. and Alvira Gore who arrived in the 1860's; to Anton and Maria Wenin who arrived in 1904 and Jack and Vada Freeman who came to Emporium in 1940. My family has been here for a while!

I became interested in History sitting in Mr. Narby's History class some 30 years ago and have pursued it on some level ever since. I became interested in Genealogy about 5 years ago and have all 4 of my Parent's lines traced to Europe. Four years ago this month, I took on being the County Co-ordinator for the Cameron County Genealogy Project, (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~pacamero>) an online Rootsweb sponsored website that now contains over 450 pages of Cameron County historical data, and receives over 10,000 "hits" per year.

While living in Georgia, I was involved with the Etowah Valley Historical Society, the Cassville Heritage Association, the Euharlee Historical Museum and was Commander of the Stiles-Akin Camp #670 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Since returning to Emporium, Don Hefright, members of the Cameron County Genealogy Email-list and I have formed the Cameron County Genealogy Club that meets monthly at the library and presently has over 60 members. We hope to merge the Club with the Historical Society sometime in the near future. I have published monthly newsletters for the Genesee Valley Nash Car Club of America and the Stiles-Akin SCV Camp; an intermittent family newsletter and wrote, designed and published technical manuals as one of my jobs. I also maintain two websites.

This summer, I have been at the Museum about 90% of the days it was open and, since we had over 40 visitors the last two weekends of the regular season, I have opened the museum Saturdays and Sundays from 1-4 PM during the month of October. I will be hosting a Senior Day at the museum on the 20th with members of the Senior Center traveling down by bus and am working with a local church to have a Family Day this Fall at the Museum. I have been in close contact with John, keeping him up to date with what is going on.

I say all this not to brag, but to let you know that I bring experience, commitment and excitement to the Historical Society. I am looking forward to working with you to bring the Society to it's full potential and to help make the Museum a hot spot in Cameron County.

This issue of the newsletter has been about me and my ideas only because of lack of input. I need your ideas, your family stories, your photos, articles, and input. Please contact me if you want to play!

# The Voice!

of the  
Cameron County Historical Society

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Mike Wennin and others yet to  
step forward - 814-486-6355

Ira Collin's Royally Rugged  
Cameron County are available  
at the Library for \$10! Get  
them in time for Christmas!

History is the account of things said and done, in the past. In this sense, each of us has a history, an account of where we come from and how we got to be who we are. Communities, likewise, each have a history. So, too, do nations, families, and human organizations of every sort.

History serves us in many ways. It can inspire us with stories of exemplary lives or caution us with tales of human folly and wickedness. History can inform and educate us by providing the context and perspective that allow us to make thoughtful decisions about the future. And history has the power to delight and enrich us, enlarging and intensifying the experience of being alive.

### Why Is History Valuable in American Society?

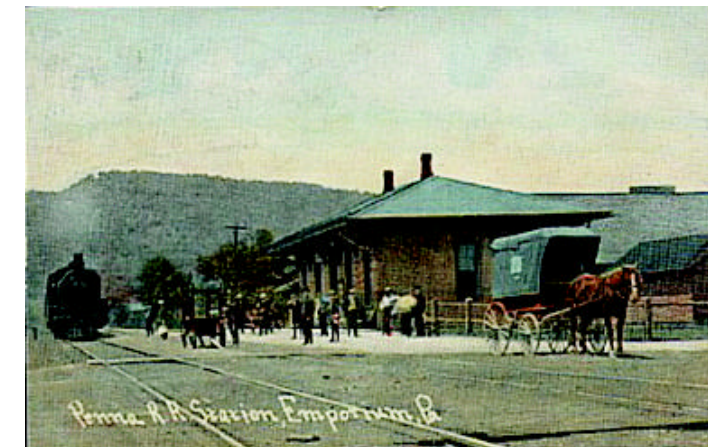
#### It Aids in Community Building

People who share a history even different sides of the same story can discover the understanding, insight, and respect needed to build a common future. History provides the foundation for talking about the things that matter in our communities today.

# The Gift of History

### It Provides Context and Inspiration

Sometimes historical perspective on where we have been lets us see more clearly our progress towards where we would like to be. History cautions us, but it also gives us hope.



When people understand the difference made by the actions of those who have gone before, they see that their actions can make a difference. They believe that they, too, can make history.

### It Helps Us Explore and Discover Who We Are

History gives each generation a means to discover the people and the events that speak most clearly to the problems of their own time and helps each prepare for and build the future.

When people get involved with the past they begin to see

themselves as connected to others family, community, nation, or a group defined by ethnicity, religion, work, or play. The result is a sense of belonging, direction, and meaning.

### It Allows Us to Exercise Our Imaginations

Through history we imagine being in a different time and place. Sometimes the result is simply funimagining a fascinating character, a great ball game, or how we might have reacted in the middle of a great event.

Sometimes we discover empathy and respect for those very unlike ourselves. A revised point of view makes it easier to escape from our intellectual and emotional boxes, to find new ideas, new solutions, and a liberating sense of new possibilities.

Sometimes the convergence of ideas,

understanding, and events from the past promotes artistic, scientific, and social creativity, innovation, and problem solving.

### It Enables Us to Extend and Sharpen Memory

Memory often fails. Even eyewitnesses don't get it right every time. The evidence does not add up. And each of us brings our own distinctive life experiences and habits of mind to forging our accounts of the past. So we speak past each other, fall prey to biased accounts, become combative with those whose views of the past disturb or repel us.

But there is a discipline to history that can lift us out of these dead-end approaches to the past. This discipline asks that we immerse ourselves in the full scope of evidence from the past. It asks that we critically and empathetically weigh others' accounts of what happened and what they mean. The value of this aspect of history is that it gives us a way to move beyond our narrow, divergent views of the past to more fruitful dialogues about which tomorrows are possible and worthwhile.

*Next Issue: What History  
Organizations Bring us.*