

Highland County Historical Society celebrates 50th anniversary, Part V

**By Pamela Nickell
H.C. Historical Society**

Our tour of the Highland House continues. The imposing building is clearly marked "Highland House" and sits at the intersection of East Main and South East streets in Hillsboro.



The historically accurate repainting of its name was done a few years ago in memory of Lester Wallis, longtime member, volunteer and photographer.



Once inside the door, the spacious vista is calling you to explore. Our current quick tour is like looking at Norman Rockwell paintings. One immediately sees what the painting is all about but on closer inspection, such as this series will get into, tells far more detailed stories.

With our brochure in hand, today we visit the Military/Medical Room. As you approach the room you will first probably shudder a bit to see an antique dentist chair and drill. Surrounding it is an old dental cabinet and other dental tools. Then moving your eyes to the right, you might sense being watched.

Several life-size mannequins stand at attention wearing the uniforms of local heroes. It is in their honor we carry on as best we know how. This display is a moving experience of remembering and learning.

The Schoolroom is too small to enter, but all items are easily viewed from

the doorway. It represents a one room school and includes an 1860 McGuffey reading chart, teacher and student desks, a child-made diorama, books and portraits of Presidents Washington and Lincoln. What are the marbles made of? No iPads, though, and very little color make a sharp contrast to what students experience today.

Curriculum was very basic, yet children who were able to attend school were well-educated to become good citizens in whatever role they chose.

The Schoolroom and the Military/Medical rooms are off the upper rear hallway. This area houses the "Hall of Fame" with local inductees from the fields of entertainment, education, art, agriculture, authors and philanthropists. While this honor has not been bestowed on anyone in several years, a current committee has been activated to update and add to the honorees.

Storage closets on the second floor are not open for tour but surely can be seen upon request. They were in huge disarray before this past summer when graduate students from Miami University, Dana Cress and Andrew Hall, donated their summer to the Society.

They sorted, categorized, cataloged, boxed and shelved reams of documents and artifacts. Having their dedication and expertise was a huge blessing and we hope to continue the collaboration with Miami University forged by Board of Trustee member Mike Shanahan.

Also in the same hall the Library is available by appointment for research and information on individuals, families, businesses and properties.

Genealogical records, though, are available from our sister organization, Southern Ohio Genealogical Society, who welcome your contact.