

*Osceola Mills Community Historical Foundation*  
*Annual Bulletin*                      *July, 2015*

David Wulderk, President

Patti Rice, Secretary

Floyd Hauth, Vice President

Cathy Hollis, Treasurer

The Osceola Mills Community Historical Foundation has completed a busy and successful year since our last bulletin was distributed! Many, many heartfelt thanks are extended to you the membership, the generous benefactors and the volunteers who make this Foundation the success that it has been for over a quarter century!

**Welcome!!!!!!**

The OMCHF meets at the Brisbin House at 7:30 on the first Wednesday of the month; excluding January and February. You are warmly welcome to attend our meetings and involve yourself with our events and activities. The OMCHF is an active and community oriented organization. There is an incredible amount of local history in the Osceola Mills and Moshannon Valley area! It is a history with strong ties to state, national and even some international events and trends of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is also a history that should make us proud to study and preserve it as best we can! Join us and work with us!!!

**Hours and Dues**

The OMCHF is located in the historic Brisbin House at 601 Lingle Street in Osceola Mills PA. The Osceola Mills Community Library shares space with the Foundation. The Foundation's museum is open on Wednesdays from 2:00 until 4:00 during later May and early June. The museum is also open on Sundays from 2:00 until 4:00 from Memorial Day until the end of October. Tours can also be arranged by calling 339-7778 or 339-6188. Membership dues are \$5.00 yearly for an individual, \$15.00 for a family, \$25.00 for an organization, \$35.00 for an organization and \$100.00 for a life membership.

## Building Maintenance And Upgrades

Again this year, the OMCHF is on a solid financial footing. The heat pumps have been installed which have resulted in a substantial savings of heating oil costs. This project was made possible by the generous funding bequeathed by the late **Mrs. Stella Wawrynovic** in 2014. Increased electrical costs are being carefully monitored as that utility is paid by the **Osceola Mills Community Library** whose volunteer officers rent space from the OMCHF. Remember to please support this fine library! It offers a variety of services for young and old and anyone between. It is well stocked and well used. That, in itself is a tribute to those volunteers who have made it a community showpiece. Please note that whatever benefits the library also benefits the OMCHF.

The bay window on the side of the Brisbin House building, facing the Post Office, is now being repaired and secured in order to prevent further detachment from the building. The contractor is finished and has done a fine job reinforcing the structure and improving the appearance of the building, both inside and outside. The window repair will result in more heating oil savings. Roofing repair of missing shingles and minor patching is planned for this summer. The third floor window has also been repaired.

The OMCHF is planning to replace the worn carpeting in the Library and meeting rooms. It has served its purpose for over twenty five years and is getting harder to clean with each passing year. The Foundation is also planning to replace the same stairway carpeting leading to the second floor museum and install stair treads.

The Brisbin House, like anyone's home; whether older or newer; needs to be maintained and upgraded from time to time. Funding from this carpet project will come, in part, from the OMCHF's share of the annual **Sara Jane Mattern Award** and also from Mrs. Wawrynovic's gift.

The OMCHF also continues to collect rent from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for space leased for the office of **Representative Tommy Sankey**.

## Acquisitions

The Clearfield County Historical Society donated a glass display case to the OMCHF as well as large two sided carpeted display board. The board has been placed on the third floor to display artwork and lighter materials. The glass display case has been placed in the basement. Thanks to Floyd Hauth for using his truck to transport the cases and to Rich Myers for helping to carry the display board to the third floor!!!

The OMCHF recently acquired three old and rare bottles from businesses once located in Osceola Mills. All three have raised embossed lettering. One is a *Meyer Dairy* quart milk bottle and the two others are seven ounce soda bottles from *J.R. Sommerville* and the *Osceola Cola* bottling works. Thanks to \_\_\_\_\_ for donating the bottles.

## Osceola Logo Clothing!!!

Tee shirts, sweat shirts and caps are for sale by the OMCHF!! Various sizes and colors are available with *Osceola* or *Cowtail University* designs. Please contact Shirley Hollenbach at 339-7942 for information or for orders.

## DVD Slideshow Still For Sale

The OMCHF continues to sale books and **David Caslow's** DVD slideshow at the museum. The DVD contains scores of historical photos of the town and depicts a "then and now" theme. It makes a great gift and sells for only \$12.00.

## Events!!!!

The **OMCHF Annual Dinner** was held in December at the Elks Country Club in Philipsburg. The guest speaker was **Jerry Fritz** who spoke so well of the Osceola area's history in accompaniment with his new book of Osceola history. The book, which is sold as a DVD, is a second volume of his late father's work, *Osceola Mills...From the Beginning*. Both Jasper and Jerry Fritz have been historical treasures to Osceola Mills and deserve our credit and thanks. The DVD is available for sale at the museum for \$10.00. Copies of Jasper **Fritz's** original book remain available for sale. Both the book and DVD make fine gifts!

The **Rabies Clinic** was held on May 30 and again was successfully sponsored by the OMCHF.

The annual **Osceola Flower Show** will be held at the Fire Hall on Saturday, July 25

The OMCHF was open for visitors during the **Annual Car Show** on Saturday, June 28. Thanks to all who volunteered and toured the museum!!

**Osceola Spirit Day** is scheduled for Saturday, September 12. The OMCHF will again take part with its soup sale and the museum will be open for visitors. Every drop of soup was sold last year.....and the year before!!

**Christmas Caroling** by some of the OMCHF members and others is set for this December. All who like to sing are welcome to join!

**July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade**..... This year's theme for the OMCHF parade float was women's suffrage. One hundred years ago, in 1915, the PA legislature put the question of women's voting as a ballot amendment to the 21 years of age and male only voters of the time. Women's groups organized themselves well in Clearfield County and had the support of a good deal of men who were committed to this progressive reform. Three Clearfield newspapers of the time and the *Philipsburg Daily Journal* wholeheartedly supported the measure.

To publicize the cause, the Pennsylvania Suffrage League sponsored a truck with a replica of the original Liberty Bell mounted on the bed. The bell and truck traveled the rutted dirt roads from town to town in Clearfield County in order to drum up support for a "yes" vote on the amendment. This "**Women's Liberty Bell**" had plenty of newspaper coverage. The truck stopped in Osceola in early August and was greeted by a rally of about 2000 people. The only known (to date) photos of the bell in Clearfield County were taken in Osceola Mills and can be viewed at the OMCHF's museum.

Unfortunately, the measure failed statewide by about 150,000 votes. BUT.....it did carry Clearfield County by a two to one margin and won throughout central, northeastern and western PA. Eastern PA, including Centre County, voted the measure down. Women would not get the right to vote in PA until the 1920 constitutional amendment was ratified by thirty four states to become the law of the land.

The OMCHF used **Dave Caslow's** truck for the float. It was decorated with patriotic bunting and had an old firehouse bell, borrowed from the Clearfield County Historical Society, mounted on back to represent the 1915 bell. Thanks to Dave for the use of his truck and to Osceola's finest suffragettes, **Joan Myers** and **Janet Hauth** who dressed in period costume and wore "Votes For Women" sashes; just as they would have in 1915!

## **A Descendant of Chief Osceola In Osceola Mills Today....Carol Mekis !!!!!**

The story of Chief Osceola, of the Creek Nation in Florida, has been well documented since his death in 1838. Osceola's father was English and his mother Native American. Much of his life was spent in conflict with the US government's forced relocation policies. One could easily argue that the tragic fate of the southeastern and most other first nation peoples amounted to a terrible genocide; whether intentional or not. Osceola, himself, maintained his self respect and dignity in the face of an awful persecution of the time. He was described as "most extraordinary man.....a cunning and restless spirit."

Jerry Fritz has written well of Chief Osceola's life and his short fourteen page booklet is available at the OMCHF museum. He describes him as a *Warrior and Patriot* in his booklet title. Osceola fought a losing battle against the US government's constant encroachment on to traditional Indian lands and the relocating of native peoples into holding camps until their departure for lands further west; often in present day Oklahoma. Fritz noted the government's "failure to communicate and negotiate in good faith." That tragedy was often repeated in regard to Native Americans. Osceola was taken prisoner; most likely because soldiers and official saw his leadership qualities and heard of his passion for justice. He spent his final days in lockup at Fort Moultrie in Charleston, South Carolina.

Chief Osceola had, perhaps, four wives; two of them Seminole women. He left behind many grandchildren and an expansive family tree of descendents that grew considerably over the decades and centuries.

One of Chief Osceola's descendents was a woman named America Raulerson. She, like most of Osceola's families remained in Florida. America died in 1938; several years before her great granddaughter, Carol Moss was born in Jacksonville. After moving to Atlanta with her family; Carol met and later married George Mekis of Spike Island and in one of life's ironic twists; moved to and settled in Osceola Mills! Carol is a direct descendent of Chief Osceola on her mother's side.

Carol has documented written lineage tracing her family back to Chief Osceola and it is a somewhat complicated but fascinating read. The same can be said for many family genealogies. Thanks so much, Carol, for sharing this great family story and this great American story!

