



Historical Society

Dwight Historical Society Newsletter

119 West Main Street
Volume 25 Number 1
Website: <https://dwiththistory.org>

P.O. Box 294

Dwight, Illinois 60420-1321
January 2025
Facebook: Dwight Illinois History

Happy New Year

Year in Review from President Mary Flott

It has been my privilege to serve as president of the Dwight Historical Society for many years. Mostly it's an easy role because of the amazing, multi-talented people who work with me to preserve Dwight's unique history. We always welcome new members and new ideas!

Last year was a busy one! Here are a few highlights:

- Receiving a \$4,000 grant from Illinois Humanities and \$850 from SOCU as part of their anniversary celebration.
- Continuing our Immigration Project, we focused on the Irish with displays and a program with local speakers, Baileys and pub cheese, and the music of the Irish band Turas.
- Touring Blue Island to see the homes designed by Robert Seyfarth, the architect who also renovated the Frank L. Smith/McWilliams home on W. Mazon.
- Hosting many visitors including a busload of Irish tourists, Dwight's third graders, the high school life skills class, a WTTW reporter researching the women's reformatory, the Wethlis, a couple who donated a vase inscribed with David McWilliam's name that they had found at a flea market in Pennsylvania twelve years ago, and about 20 members of the Costello family brought together after a couple family members had visited and done research with Kim at the museum.
- Providing programs, one by the Drechsels about the Keeley Institute for the Livingston County Retired Teachers and another by Lynn Neville about the History of the Library.
- Taking the miniature Gothic Church, made and gifted to the Historical Society many years ago by John McConnell, out of storage to decorate and display on the museum patio for Christmas.

We look forward to more projects, more visitors, and more members in 2025 as we begin researching our German immigrants, using our new website, and learning more about and sharing the history of Dwight.

Mary Flott

New Website

As we begin the new year, we are excited to report on the Historical Society's new website. In January 2024 with the invaluable assistance of Kevin Brown of Browntown Communications we applied for an Illinois Humanities grant to develop a new website. We received the grant of \$ 4,000 and hired Browntown Communications to work with us in building this website that includes a walking tour, a short video, historic references and photos. Check it out at: <https://dwithghistory.org>

Please join us at the Dwight Historical Museum on Thursday, February 27 at 7:00 p.m. as Kevin Brown presents the new website to the community.

Officers for 2025

Officers were elected at the October 2024 meeting:

President: Mary Flott

Vice-president: Janice Lauritzen

Secretary/Treasurer: Beverly Jensen

Historian: Linda Emling

Thank you to these members for their continued dedication to this organization.

In addition, Janice Lauritzen is Membership Chairman and Janet Neville is Newsletter Editor for 2025.

Meeting Dates for 2025

The Historical Society meets four times a year. The meeting dates in 2025 will be April 21, June 16, August 18, and October 20. A program follows the business meeting. If you have any suggestions for a program or would be interested in presenting on an aspect of Dwight history, please contact Mary Flott at 815-584-2107.

Docents Needed for Museum

We are always in need of docents to help keep the museum open to the public. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays from February through Thanksgiving. Upcoming dates are: February 8, 22; March 8, 22; and April 12, 26. Please consider volunteering as a docent by contacting Mary Flott at 815-584-2107.

New Exhibit for 2025

This summer we will complete our series on “Early Immigrants to Dwight” with an exhibit on the German immigrants. Our previous exhibits featured the Danish and Irish immigrants. Both exhibits were opened by a program featuring local members of the community with roots tracing back to earlier days in the village of Dwight.

If you are of German descent, we would love to include your story, pictures, or artifacts in our exhibit. You can contact Janice Lauritzen by email at janice.lauritzen@att.net or call/text at 815-531-7051.

Historical Wanderings... ..

A new feature of the newsletter will be a section titled: *Historical Wanderings*. The articles and stories included may be topics that we are exploring in the Historical Society or whatever peaks our interest or yours. So feel free to email me at jmneville@hotmail.com with a local topic to include. For this edition, I wandered through the Dwight Star & Herald from January 1925, one hundred years ago.

This article to the right caught my attention because the Historical Society has been in discussions with the Dwight Township about the future of the Dwight Gothic Church, which is the Presbyterian church referred to in the article.

Dwight Star & Herald January 16, 1925



“ A few weeks ago we reported the purchase of the old Presbyterian Church, one of Dwight’s most famous buildings of by-gone days, by the Christian Science Church of Dwight.

The building which had been standing unoccupied for some time, has been thoroughly cleaned and some carpentry work done, making it more habitable for the time being. When warm weather arrives more extensive improvements will be made on the building and it will be painted.

The first services to be held in the church since its purchase will occur the coming Sunday morning, Jan.18, when Christian Science services will be held at eleven o’clock, the subject being “Life. Sunday School at 9:45 a.m. The public is cordially invited to these services. All services of this organization will be held hereafter in this edifice.”

Hopefully "Old Man Winter" doesn't visit us this cruelly in 2025. I loved the lyrical language used.



Dwight Star & Herald

January 2, 1925

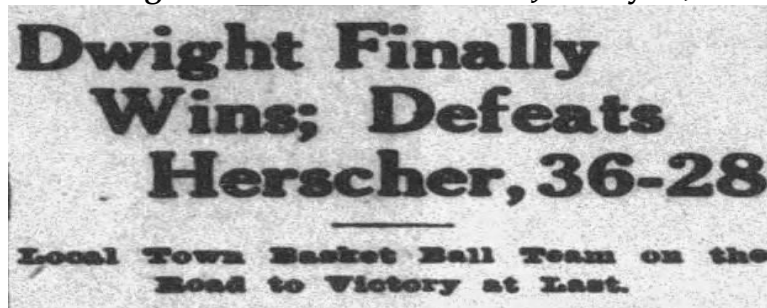


" Old Man Winter paid us another frigid call last Saturday Night as though in sympathy with the dying year so soon to pass into history, sent the mercury down to 25 degrees below zero, as a lasting remembrance of December 1924."

Watching my great-nephew play basketball and seeing familiar names sparked this inclusion

Dwight Star & Herald

January 23, 1925



"Dwight basketball fans had a real treat Wednesday night when they witnessed the fast game which was won by the Dwight Legionaires from the Herscher Independents at the high school gym. Final score, 36-28.

This is the first game won by the Legionaires, and chances are, all they needed was some good practice, such as they have been having by clashing with some of the fastest teams in central Illinois.

Following is the line-up:

| Dwight: | F.B. | F.T. | T.P. |
|----------------|------|------|------|
| Kern | 6 | 0 | 12 |
| Stelchen | 4 | 0 | 8 |
| Brown | 6 | 1 | 13 |
| Stelchen | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Anderson ... | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | | | 36 |
| Herscher: | F.B. | F.T. | T.P. |
| Wadleigh | 7 | 0 | 14 |
| O'Connor | 2 | 0 | 4 |
| Norgaard ... | 5 | 0 | 10 |
| Lane ... | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Inkster ... | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | | | 28 |