



Anna District
Historical Society
Anna • Kettlersville • McCartyville

Skipping Village Gazette

Neighbors in Action: Post World War II “A Labor of Love”

Two hundred fifty hours. That was the approximate amount of time spent by Rev. F. J. Mittermaier and his wife, Magdalena, translating the over 500 letters that came to the Anna area from the German people through the “Neighbors in Action” program following World War II.

Begun by Shelby County resident Louis F. Warbington shortly after the end of the war in Europe in 1945, the program, which gained international recognition, was responsible for sending over 8000 packages of food and clothing to the German people from residents of Shelby County. The production of food in Germany

*Welcome to our newest ADHS members...
Mike and Sheryl Bales, John and Denise Koverman, Jennifer and Tony Hall, Ellen J. Freytag, Christine Koehler Sellers, James and Carol Hulsmeyer, Leroy and Rosalia Larger, and Gerald Maurer, Ray Bornhorst, Steve and Alison Berning, David and Linda Hoying, Marvin and Judith Schmiesing*

Welcome and thanks for your generous support of the Anna District Historical Society! (Please let us know if we have inadvertently missed your name, and we will add it to our next newsletter list.)



PAINSTAKINGLY MADE BY HAND, woodburned and stained are these beautiful doll house furnishings that came from Germany to Rev. and Mrs. Mittermaier from a German workman. He made the two-room furnishings to be a message to them that he appreciated the gifts of food, clothing, and above all, the letters he and his family had received from the Anna home of the Mittermaiers. The furnishings are a work of art about 12 inches high and were done in period style of 350 years ago. They doll furniture is currently on display at the Packer Historical Center.

had been disrupted by the effects of the war, including the destruction of farmland, livestock, and machinery. Food shortages were widespread. Shelby countians were encouraged to write letters to accompany the packages. Soon return letters began pouring into Sidney and Shelby County post offices from grateful families in Germany.

The Mittermaiers started their “friendly service” in translating the German letters for members of St. Jacob Lutheran church in Anna where Rev. Mittermaier served as pastor of the church. As first generation Americans born to German immigrants, both Mittermaiers were fluent in speaking and writing the German language. Both felt strongly that they were only “doing their part” to promote good will and international understanding between former enemies.

All of the German letters showed, in the words of the

Mittermaiers "such a fine spirit of appreciation."
Many of the letters echoed the sentiment that
"Germany must never forget what you in America are
doing."

Rev. Mittermaier said that quite a few Germans wrote
that they never were in any way affiliated with the
Nazis; that they were persecuted and constantly spied
on because of their opposition. Wrote one man, "You
will never know how many youths in our city were
shot because they refused to fight for Hitler."

A great proportion of the letters came from people
who became refugees at the end of the war. They lost
farms and homes and all of their possessions as they
fled for their lives before the advancing Russian army.

The Mittermaiers later said that they had learned so much
through translating hundreds of the German written
letters, and they continued corresponding with many of
the families long after the war was over.



Rev. F. J. and Mrs. Magdalena Mittermaier



HELP US PRESERVE OUR HISTORY

Please consider becoming a member of the Anna District Historical Society.

Name of member _____

Name of spouse _____

Children under 18 _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Single Membership - \$20 yearly _____

Family Membership - \$25 yearly _____

Lifetime Membership - \$500 _____

Mail to: ANNA DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P.O. Box 133, Anna, OH 45302

The ADHS is a 501(c)3 charitable organization, and your donation may be tax deductible.

Military Memorabilia Now on Display at the Packer Center

As of this past Memorial Day weekend, a new display is in place at the Packer Historical Center featuring uniforms and other artifacts from the American Civil War through the present era. Please stop by during our regular open hours of Sundays from 1-4pm or Thursday evenings from 6-8pm to see this interesting and informative display. Private tours are also available. Simply leave a voice mail message by calling 937-646-0011, and a member will get back with you to make arrangements.



Hometown Heroes Project to Continue

The opening of the military display coincided with the dedication of the Hometown Heroes banners installed on Main Street in Anna. This project, which was organized by Joey Bruns of McCartyville to earn his Eagle Scout designation, has now been taken over by the ADHS to honor additional veterans from our school district. Please contact Carol Carity (937.394.3581) or Susie Bertsch (937.394.3072) for more information.

Additional Giving Opportunity to Support the ADHS

The Anna District Historical Society is initiating a new way to participate in the funding of the society and its projects. Three levels of monthly contributions are available:

- ⇒ DR. MILLIETTE LEVEL - \$50 monthly or \$600 yearly (includes ADHS membership)
- ⇒ ANNA CAREY THIRKIELD LEVEL - \$25 monthly or \$300 yearly (includes ADHS membership)
- ⇒ LOIS LENSKI LEVEL - \$10 monthly or \$120 yearly

This donation can be deducted monthly from your bank account automatically if preferred. Members of these three groups will be recognized periodically in the Skipping Village Gazette to recognize your generosity.

Upgrades Continue at the Packer Historical Center

NEW WINDOWS - This project has been completed, and we now have new energy efficient windows on all three floors of the center.

SECURITY AND FIRE ALARM SYSTEM - Both systems have been installed and will go live very soon.

NEW STORM DOORS - Two beautiful solid oak storm doors have arrived and will be installed later this summer on both of the east doors of the center.

FOUNDATION REPAIR - The materials for repair are on site, and replacement of the rear foundation is set to begin very soon. This project also includes a new double door basement entrance on the west side of the house, a new door at the northeast corner of the house, and filling in the cistern in the back yard. This project is being funded by a grant received through the Ohio Facilities Construction Commission.

FRONT DOOR SIDELIGHT REFURBISHMENT - We have secured the services of a local artisan to re-lead this beautiful old window.

Anna District Historical Society

112 West Main Street

P.O. Box 133

Anna, OH 45302

POSTAL CUSTOMER

ANNA, OH 45302

**Out of
Anna's Past...**



Anna's United States Post Office in the early days of the village. This building later became the home of the Anna Library on the right side of the building, as well as the residence of Eddie and Rosa Phillips in the remainder of the house who performed in many vaudeville shows. Rosa Phillips served as the town's librarian and piano teacher for many years.

Anna District Historical Society

112 W. Main Street, P.O. Box 133

Anna, OH 45302

Website: www.adhs-oh.org

Phone: 937-646-0011

Carol Carity, *President*

Kathleen Eshleman, *Vice President*

Susan Bertsch, *Treasurer*

Carol Wentz, *Secretary*



Anna St. Jacob Lutheran Church during construction in 1907, just eight years after the Lenski family arrived in Anna. Rev. R. C. H. Lenski, father of the famous author Lois Lenski, helped design and proudly oversaw the building of this church. The building is still in use today as the home of the St. Jacob Lutheran congregation.

HOW CAN I HELP?

- BECOME AN ADHS MEMBER - Membership dues help us pay our operating cost and support the society's work.
- ASSIST WITH BUILDING MAINTENANCE, ETC. - Contact Randy Wentz if interested. rwentz915@gmail.com
- BECOME A MILLIETTE, THIRKIELD, OR LENSKI LEVELED DONOR.

**Hours for the Packer Historical Center
Sundays 1-4pm and Thursdays 6-8pm**