

Highland County Historical Society celebrates 50th anniversary, Part X

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

The Highland House is a house of history and preservation, but to me, it has become more of a house of mystery. Each subject I light upon to write about in this series brings more questions and wonderments. How I would like to have known the Detwiler sisters as Helen Ford did.



The recent memorial she wrote of the sisters for the HCHS provides an otherwise unavailable knowledge of them and their way of life here in Hillsboro, but it also brings to mind so many questions. One can look at a painting and appreciate it, but if you know even a little bit about the artist your appreciation and interest grow.

Helen's article can be found in the Fall 2014 HCHS Newsletter. It is a fascinating example of how three personalities intermingled and supported each other and a description of the times in which they lived.

We know all three sisters, Irene, Margaret and Frances painted as did their very talented mother Emma and that Irene probably was the most prolific next to her mother. Their subjects included portraits, landscapes and florals; the latter on both canvas and china.

The Highland County Historical Society is fortunate to have several pieces of their art with at least one painting by each of the four women and including both canvas and china.

The most recent acquisition is a landscape by Emma Detwiler donated by Sandy Pence in memory of Sandy Harsha, a long time Detwiler enthusiast and Historical Society supporter. We wonder how many more there are to discover; especially after a recent contact from a lady in Martha's Vineyard letting us know that she has two. Wouldn't it be nice to bring home those two?

A June 2014 exhibit at the museum, put together by Avery Applegate, brought in

Detwiler work loaned from Greg VanZant, Jean Wallis, Beth Biggs, Margaret Van Frank, Betty Wilkin, Helen Ford, Susie Sharp, Anne Rhude, Debbie Harsha, Susan and Steve Thompson, Leland and Ellen Pennington, Mary Jo Copeland, Barbara Hodge, Tara Beery, Nina Pence and the Hillsboro First United Methodist Church.

Avery was interviewed about this show by Lisl Bonneau, producer/Supreme Court of Ohio program manager of Ohio Government Television. You can find this on our website www.hchistorical.weebly.com. On this tape, you find out more about the Detwilers and see some of this beautiful art.

The portrait pictured here is very appropriately located in the Children's Room on the second floor of Highland House. It is of Frank Armstrong Collins (1874-1959) painted when he was about 4 years old by Emma Detwiler.

Who was Frank? Did he stay in Hillsboro? What was his profession? Was he a descendant of Caspar? There are no doubt those of you who know; I have yet to find out.