

Historical Society celebrates 50th year of Highland House Museum



Martha and Howard Smith

From 1929-75, Howard the Magician and his pretty assistant, Elvonne, delighted audiences both here and around the country. On stage, Elvonne was sawed in two, levitated and hypnotized. She also led trained dogs through their performances and did folded paper illusions.

In real life, she was Martha, wife of Howard.

Howard grew up near Lynchburg and was interested in magic from the age of 9, perfecting many illusions that delighted audiences near and far.

The pair played local schools and other groups but also traveled extensively throughout many states. Their audiences ranged from children to overall-clad folks at dusty crossroads to black-tie affairs.

They worked with entertainers Harry Blackstone, Edgar Bergen and Howard Thurston.

Most of their scrapbooks, photos and posters

have gone to a magician's museum in Colon, Mich.

Note: Text compiled from "Magic Memories" by Kay Burns in "The Highland County Magazine Spring 1984," published by Leland Pennington. Highland County magician Steve Faris has mounted a display in the Highland House from his vast collection of magician memorabilia. The conference room walls are covered with colorful posters, and the display case is full of interesting items. This picture came from his material on the Smiths. On Oct. 24 at 7 p.m., Faris will be doing a program at the Highland House Museum in Hillsboro.