

Highland County Historical Society celebrates 50th anniversary, Part XLIII

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

November! The official month of Thanksgiving! Could we feel any more thankful than we have each and every day of this 50th year of the Highland County Historical Society?

This week, the museum is filled with folks representing a dozen or so local organizations decorating the 14-plus HH Christmas trees. Artists and crafters are setting up their beautiful creations in the special holiday museum shop. A parade committee is planning the HCHS participation in Hillsboro's annual Holiday Parade.



Yet, all the time, the business of the HCHS goes on, including the onerous but educational task of entering HH possessions in a computerized cataloging system. John Glaze and Vicki Knauff are faithful to this task and on the rare times others of us volunteer, they try to teach us. That slows them down, but they are patient.

On one such time, as I was "helping" John started to move a case with a doll in it and the very, very old glass case simply fell apart. (I didn't touch it, John!) Thank goodness, no glass broke, so John tied it together and put it in a box, which I brought home to try to find a furniture maker who would reglue it.

It was obviously handmade in the first place but very delicate with three thin glass sides and top. I was obligated in Springfield the next day, so my search for someone to repair it was going to have to wait a couple of days. However, when I got home from Springfield, my very own live-in fixer, Bob, had completely repaired the case, making it a very short time that this exquisite doll was unprotected in the museum.

Now that I know Elizabeth better our records do not give us her name but since Elizabeth is my very favorite Victorian name I will claim the privilege of calling her that, at least to myself.) I would like for you to know her better, too. She is glorious.

She is a Limoges French fashion doll of about 1890. She has a porcelain head with a lovely, full-cheeked, open-mouth expression. Her hair is natural in a classic style of the period. Undergarments include pantaloons and slip.

Most obvious is her crimson velvet and ivory lace gown with bustle and long train adorned with black beads down both sides of the velvet and along the bottom of the pointed front jacket design. She wears "gold" earrings and a "diamond" ring on her right hand. Her shoes are leather of a deep, rich red color. Her crowning glory is a wreath of flowers.

"Elizabeth" was given to the Highland House by Willa Bare Stanforth, a Highland County

native, listed in the HCHS Hall of Fame as an artist, a political activist, a preservationist and an author.

She wrote "Each Blade of Grass" and "New Market Memories." The latter helped support the preservation of the New Market Community House. Her paintings are in private homes, the Ohio University Inn and the HH. As a charter member of the HCHS, one of her many contributions was assisting in the refurbishing of the log cabin behind the HH. Ms. Stanforth was born in 1915, 50 years before the founding of HCHS. She lived until 2009 and passed away at age 93, active in her pursuits still and leaving us with a vastly enriched heritage.

Come in and enjoy the museum at any (all?) events, and/or come in at quiet times to fully immerse yourself in the history it preserves.