

# FULTON COUNTY PIONEER



8848 State Highway 108 , P.O. Box 104, Wauseon , Ohio 43567

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## UPCOMING HISTOR-TEAS

### May 15, Tea for Two **For the Love of Mothers**

Based on our popular Valentine's event, this "carry out" tea is designed for private sharing. Your scones and desserts will be accompanied by your favorite choice of tea.

*Prepaid reservations due May 12*

**\$28 Non-Members**

**\$23 Members**

### June 12, In-Person Tea **Honoring Historic Women of Winameg**

This program will be held on the porch at the History Manor. Hear the untold stories of the pioneer women of Winameg, the county's oldest settlement.

*Reservation due June 9*

## OUR SPRING GALA IS BACK!

The April 24th Gala this year will be a virtual affair. We will bring this event to you on-line and you will pick up your meal at the museum between 4-5 P.M.

**\$25.00 for members**

**\$30.00 for non members**

*Prepaid Reservations due April 17*

We won't be selling 1942 War Bonds, but there will be special raffles and drawings in the lobby, which will be transformed into a WWII canteen that afternoon.

The virtual 1940s program will begin at 6 P.M. on-line. You will receive the information on how to join the on-line gala in an email when we receive your reservation.

Pretend at home that you are in our 1940's event—complete with music and other entertainment!



## **T**HIRD THURSDAYS

We are experimenting this Summer by staying open late one day a month for families that



work during the day. On the third Thursday of June, July and August, we will highlight baby boom era playtime. Watch our webpage and Facebook as we get closer to June 17th.

## The Museum of Fulton County, OH Annual Gala



The Museum Gala April 24, 2021

**Saturday, April 24, 2021**

*Honoring Fulton County's  
Veterans of WWII*

## “It’s Child’s Play”

Can you imagine the life of three little girls whose father owned a playhouse furniture factory? They probably didn’t realize how envious other little girls might have been.

That was the life of the Fraker sisters who grew up in Wauseon in the 1950’s.

Kenneth and Theola Fraker both had many brothers and sisters and had to leave school after the 8th grade to help support their families. They married in 1930 and started a family in Wauseon. After farming and delivering ice for the Silo Company, Kenneth got a job with the Toledo Machine and Tool

Company. But, in his spare time, he did what he really loved—creating things from wood in his garage. He started with children’s picnic tables, benches, and small toy chests. Workshop space soon became a problem so he rented a barn on West Leggett Street. In 1946, he purchased farm ground on Walnut Street just west of Shoop Avenue and built a factory. The second floor became the family home.

Kenneth then designed a machine to shape vinyl covered wooden toilet seats as, “The Fraker Seat Company.” This labor intense process entailed pouring softened



*Susan Ledyard (Sullivan) modeled for the company’s advertisements.*

pearlized vinyl over a mold. The solution was quite toxic and difficult to work with so the decision was made to only



manufacture wood items. After WWII, dried wood was not available for purchase, so Kenneth built a large barn and purchased a kiln. Poplar wood from Georgia and Alabama was shipped by rail to Wauseon and the wood was dried, planed, sanded, and shaped at the factory.

Both Kenneth and Theola designed their products: toy boxes, table and chairs, rocking horses (above), desks, cradles, doll wardrobes, and kitchen cupboards. Theola did all of the office work. Their products were sold at Macy’s and Hudson’s in Detroit and Macy’s and FAO Swartz in New York City.

Sadly, Kenneth suffered two severe heart attacks at the ages of 48 and 52 and was no longer able to run the factory. The business was closed and the building was sold in 1961.



*A float entered in the Wauseon Homecoming Parade probably in the 1950’s*

*The children are from the Fraker’s Neighborhood.*

Dear Members and Friends of the Museum,

We are almost back to “normal!” We are planning for a great summer. Our last “un-gala” will be here soon and we have one more virtual tea in May. But after that, our events will be in-person. Wear those masks as long as they are needed. The end is too close to make a misstep now.

We anticipate more tourist traffic this year. Annual events at the fair grounds will again bring us visitors and hopefully members like you will bring guests to enjoy the Winameg and toy exhibits. The third Thursday in June, July and August will be special this year (see page one).

Late in the summer we will be having our “Murder at the Museum” event that we cancelled last year, and last year’s “Great Fulton County Road Rally” will be repeated. The depot will be open for some Sundays again as well.

We want to thank you again for all of your patience and support over this past year. It’s been long and trying 2020 but as we say in our business, “that’s history.” Looking forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

*John Swearingen Jr.*  
John Swearingen Jr.

**THE REST OF THE STORY!**

**EDITORIAL REVISIONS**

If you thought the Pike School story was cut short without a proper ending you were correct. The following paragraph completes the story:

*“However, time marches on and a consolidation occurred. In 1987, Pike Twp. School became part of the Delta School System along with York Twp. The old school building in Winameg remains but is uninhabited at this time.”*

The following names were inadvertently omitted from our February Donor List:

**Patty Fraker  
Susan and Jacob Holland  
Marv and Kathy Leatherman  
James Moor**

**Special Exhibit Premier**

**IT’S CHILD’S PLAY**

Return to Post WWII Fulton County and explore the toys that provided endless hours of enjoyment.

The toys in this exhibit are from the collection of Beverly Miller who had a houseful of toys from her childhood and graciously donated them to the museum before she passed. If you grew up in the 1950s you will enjoy reminiscing over which ones you had and which ones your friends had and how you played together.

The exhibit premier for members and their guests only is on:

**FRIDAY, May 7, 2021**

**From 4-7 P.M.**



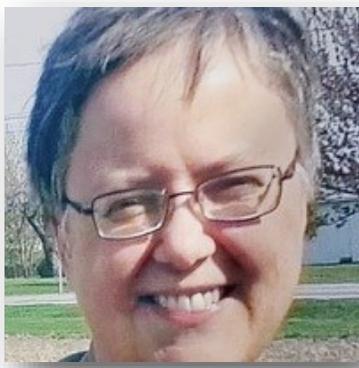
Some of the many children’s toys available at the museum shop.

## RECENT ACCESSIONS

### TOYS! TOYS! TOYS!

The workroom at the museum is full of toys. They are many, varied and too numerous to count. Thanks to the generosity of Beverly Miller, they are here for you and all the generations to come to enjoy.

The following story was printed in the [Farmland News](#) in 2019.



Beverly graduated from Pettisville High School and Eastern Mennonite University. After graduation in 1975, she taught math at Western Mennonite High School in Salem, Oregon. It was her dream job,

but it lasted only three months. Due to her lifelong diagnosis of Bi-polar Disorder, severe symptoms brought her back to Wauseon where she worked in the family business until her death in 2020.

In 2004, she purchased the Victorian home on Shoop Avenue and began to fill it with treasures she had been collecting from family, friends and auctions. She named each room and furnished it accordingly. The sewing room furnished with a grandmother's sewing machine, pattern books and other notions.

There was a baby's room with a high chair and life-size doll in the chair, a crib, with blankets and throws and all the toys any child would need. There was a "Ladies breakfast room", a "sitting room", a "guest room", a "Florida room" and a world and books room filled with books of travel and adventure.

Each room was decorated accordingly with just the right amount of antiques and collectables to make it look authentic.



Her 'Dawdi Haus was a shed in the back yard. This was named after the typical small house that Amish families build for grandparents to live close by. This building is where Bev kept most of her 1950s collection of toys.

All things "tires" were special to the Miller family so there were many cars and trucks in the toy collection. The Flag Stix Game in the picture above is quite rare. It contains a page of flag pictures from around the world and you use the wooden pieces to create the desired flag.

Beverly was an ambassador for mental health. She shared her story openly as a way to help others. She began speaking publicly and in 2012 participated in the NIMH study of bipolar disorder. She never passed up a chance to speak about the need for treatment and acceptance of mental illness. We thank Beverly for donating her collection of toys (*seen here*) so



that generations to come can learn how the children of Fulton County played in the 1950's.