

Switzerland County Historical Society
June 29, 2009

Honor the 4th of July by stopping by to see “Switzerland County Unfurled,” now on display at the Switzerland County Historical Museum. A fascinating collection of flags, banners and pennants have been brought out of storage just in time to celebrate our nation’s birthday and express our county’s long history of honoring the red, white and blue.

From handmade one-of-a-kind expressions of patriotism to manufactured American flags with varying numbers of stars, the flags displayed range from pristine condition to being faded and tattered. Some have a known provenance, while others have partial stories that lead to mysteries the museum staff is trying to solve. We hope citizens within our community may be able to provide the answers to some of our questions.

For example, a World War I commemorative banner measuring 13.5 feet by 9.75 feet has a field of white surrounded by a wide red border. Three-hundred-eighty-nine blue stars represent the service men and women who served from Switzerland County. When a soldier died a gold star was sewn over the blue star. The twenty-seven heroic dead honored with gold stars are:

Bernard Breeck	Sergeant William Hudson	William L. Stepleton
Herbert Barker	Forrest Hughes	Howard Stoops
Clifford Brindley	William Littrell	Oscar Scudder
Dan Brindley	Frank Mitchell	Charles W. Stewart
Bertram Buchanan	Herbert Neal	Elbert Wolf
Eddie Burman	Thomas W. Pike	W. Hampton Williamson
Sergeant Edward Cole	Porter Patton	Anthony Yates
Corporal Edwin Danner	Uley Ricketts	
Corporal George W. Day	Glenn Sample	
Charlie Griswold	Carroll Saberton	

The banner appears to be unfinished, as an area of white has room for more stars. When the armistice was signed on November 11th, 1918, Switzerland County servicemen numbered 445 and six women from the county had seen service as Red Cross nurses.

Who created this impressive banner? How and where was it to be displayed?

Some of the other treasures in the exhibit include American flags that flew aboard the Delta Queen, a hand-painted banner made in 1858 from the Palmetto Sunday School of Mexico Bottom near Patriot, and 45, 46 and 48 star flags.

New at the “Life on the Ohio” River History Museum is a pennant display donated by Joe Roberts, collected while he was lock master at the Markland Dam.

Admission to the Switzerland County Historical Museum and the “Life on the Ohio” River History Museum will be free July 4th and 5th.

Martha Bladen