

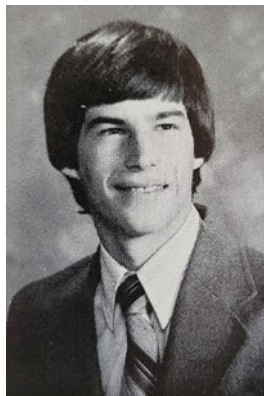


# Hinckley Historical Society News

2026, volume 1

## What America Means to Me

*In preparation for the country's bicentennial in 1976, HBR faculty member John Mason asked his eighth-grade class in Hinckley "what America means to me." A few excerpts from those essays follow. As we approach our 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, today's middle school students will be asked the same question. We plan to share their opinions in future newsletters and programs.*

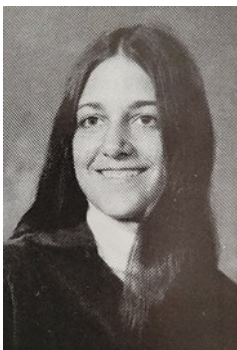
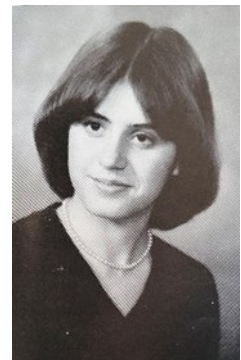


"What America means to me is freedom; more freedom than any other country. Our communications system is not restricted too much. All news, except the most highly secret, is told. America is a place with many different nationalities of people and traditions. They all blend together and form new nationalities."

**Scott Bastian**

"When I was a child, I figured all people lived like I did. When I grew older, I learned about different countries and types of government. I became aware of how small the 'free world' really is. I realized how fortunate I was to live in a wonderful country like America. One of the things I admire most about America is its way of helping others. The way it feeds starving nations and helps underdeveloped countries. Some people think we are 'suckers' for doing that and we should just think about ourselves. In my opinion if we stop helping others, we would be giving up something that makes us Americans."

**Janet Roderick**

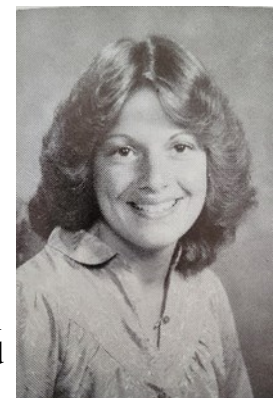


"America to me means freedom of speech, the press, and religion. We have a voice in our government and receive a good education. America means love and peace. Our government tries to trade with other countries. The land was beautiful when the settlers first came and I hope it stays that way and not get over-populated or polluted."

**Kelly Niles**

"The United States of America is the best country in the world. No country is without faults or could be called 'perfect', but life is far better than anywhere else. The United States is truly a land of opportunity for all. Here it is possible to move up or down the ladder of success by your own hard work. No one is forced to stay in a certain economic level. Women too are important and are not looked upon as second class citizens as they are in many lands. The U.S. is a great land with great people. We should all be proud we are Americans."

**Melissa Nash**



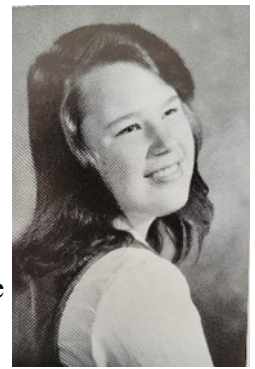
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(America, continued from page 1)

“America means a land where you are free to live the way God wants us to. America is a land of progress where we keep trying to make things better. When you need help, most of the people care for you. America means good living with time to relax. America means a home in this country with love for their fellow man.”

**Norita Manser**

All of the 36 student essays are available in *Hinckley Review* newspaper issues from 1975 and 1976. The newspapers can be found on the website [Hinckleyhistorical.advantage-preservation.com](http://Hinckleyhistorical.advantage-preservation.com). The essays were printed in 1975: December 4 page 8, December 11 page 15, December 18 page 8, and December 25 page 4. Also issues from 1976: January 1 page 4, January 8 page 4, and January 15 page 4.



**What we are celebrating in 2026**

Americans and people around the world will celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It will be read in Hinckley on July 4 on the Community Building balcony.

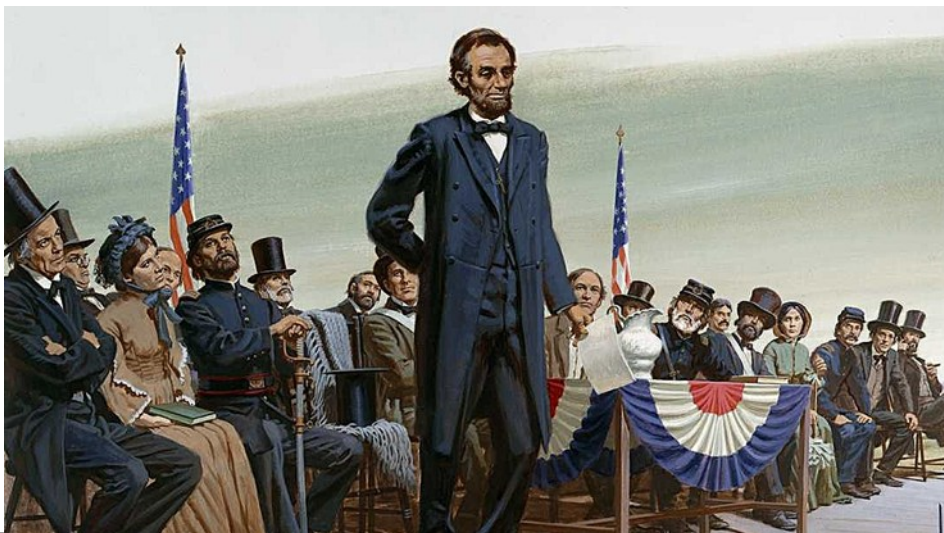
President Abraham Lincoln on the eve of the American Civil War, said this revolutionary document introduces “an abstract truth, applicable to all people in all times.” He stated that the Declaration’s assertion of the “self-evident” truth that all are “endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights” gives the nation a goal to seek and an ideal to realize. Among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.



Lincoln went on to say the Civil War was a test whether the nation conceived and dedicated to that proposition could long endure. Today we are still being tested whether the nation will survive. The

legislative gridlock, policy divisions, and ignoring our constitutional rights raise serious threats.

Lincoln’s call is still relevant. “It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task before us...that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom--and the government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.”



Board Members:

President - Bob Pritchard

Vice Pres. – Cathy Bartels

Secretary – Jennifer Klambauer

Treasurer – Barry Morsch

Other members –Shawn McCrea, Rebecca Nickels, Stephanie Shelton, Ardith Trumpy, and Jay Yaggie

Newsletter published by Bob and Mary Pritchard

## The Harlem Globetrotters Have Started Their Centennial Tour

Hinckley residents may think the world-famous Harlem Globetrotters' Centennial Tour is premature since their first road game was in Hinckley in 1927. HHS has been doing research into that game for a new museum exhibit and has a recorded interview and newspaper stories from two of the original Hinckley players.



The all-Black ball team played not only their first road game in Hinckley but also four more games here within three years. Eventually their style of play changed to fast action, amazing ball handling, and entertaining antics on their anniversary return games here in 1949, 1966, 1967, 1987, 2001, and 2016.

**Share Your Pictures.** If you have pictures from any of these Globetrotter visits that we can use in the new exhibit, please share them with HHS. Karen Levandowski shared this picture of Becky Lauer receiving a proposal. The Historical Society is planning a Globetrotter program later this year and invites you to share your memories from the games played here.

### Time to Renew Your Membership

If you haven't already renewed your membership, or want to join HHS, do it today. Annual membership is just \$15 for individuals, \$25 for families, and \$30 for businesses. You can mail payment to the Historical Society at 141 E Lincoln in Hinckley, IL 60520 or pay by credit card at [www.givebutter.com/nrqYPd](http://www.givebutter.com/nrqYPd).



Membership in the HHS helps support museum exhibits, programs, band concerts and newsletters. HHS is pleased to be one of the attractions bringing visitors and activities to Hinckley. As we look ahead to the coming year, we are entering an extraordinary moment of remembrance and celebration. The United States will mark the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its independence, Hinckley prepares for its 150<sup>th</sup> year since incorporation as a village, and we commemorate the centennial of the first Harlem Globetrotter road game in Hinckley. Watch for details about our programs and events.

These milestone anniversaries come only once. Your membership and financial support help ensure Hinckley's history is preserved, honored, and shared with generations to come. Thank you for your support.

# Welcome to Our Nest

The Hinckley-Big Rock area had a shortage of early childcare options for families before 2025. However, when three of the area's in-home providers announced their retirement last spring, two local educators decided the situation had turned into a crisis. They knew many young parents needed all-day childcare so they could work and children needed the developmental skills so they were ready to learn in school.

**Starting a childcare is not easy.** State licensure of childcare programs normally takes a year to meet all the physical requirements, inspections, and approvals. Hinckley's new Bird's Nest Early Learning and Care Center opened its doors in just 4 months because of broad community support.

The new learning and care center is run by Tamara Reddington (shown on the right) and Michelle Hansen. Tamara had been teaching in the HBR preschool program for 4 years and had over 20 years of early childhood education and experience. Michelle was a paraprofessional in the HBR preschool program and had good organizational skills and involvement with parents.



Part of the reason the program could open so quickly was finding the ideal space states Tamara. "We knew the United Methodist Church had a long history of supporting education, but we were surprised they had built their new church in 2000 with a special area for a preschool." The area was underutilized and the congregation was eager to see it help solve a community need.

United Methodist Church pastor Derek Rogers said "I've always believed the church building is a tool to impact people's lives. It is more than a place where we gather on Sunday mornings for worship; it is a space meant to serve our community every day of the week." Partnering with Bird's Nest is a concrete expression of that belief he added. "It reflects our calling to extend hospitality, meet real needs, and strengthen the community."

The learning and care center is divided into two rooms: one suited for 2-3-year-olds and the other for children ages 3-5. There is direct access to an outside grass area with playground and access to an adjoining large indoor space for activities, snacks, and lunch.

To solve the state's requirement that students receive a hot lunch, Tamara and Michelle found a local restaurant that was willing to cater on a daily basis. The restaurant prepares the menus according to state nutritional guidelines and delivers the meals to Bird's Nest.

## Nurturing Mind, Body, and Spirit

The Bird's Nest curriculum is focused on play-based learning at a pace suitable for each child. Tamara said "Students explore projects in literacy, math, science, art, and music." Michelle adds the focus is on routines rather than rigid schedules. "Children are given time and space to engage deeply, discover joy in learning, and grow with confidence." According to center staff, activities are designed to help develop dexterity, strength, hand-eye coordination, and patience. Children learn to share and work cooperatively.



One of the parents said her daughter has already learned so much, both academically and emotionally. "She is making great friends and genuinely looks forward to going each day."

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(Nest, continued from page 4)

One example of this flexibility was when the children saw a house that was being built next door to the playground. The children got to observe the work, talk with the workmen, and imitate the building process during play time using construction toys.

Another parent added Bird's Nest is a stimulating environment with skilled, compassionate staff. Children learn to interact with peers and adults as they develop self-regulation, build language and early math skills, and gain confidence.

Bird's Nest is intentionally keeping the student/teacher ratio below state guidelines. "We want the teachers to be able to give each child the attention they need," says Michelle. Tamara is working with the older students, another teacher, Amie Weinert, focuses on the younger ones and Michelle assists each group as needed.

Tamara and Michelle are intent on providing a variety of attendance options to suit the parents' schedules. Besides full-day childcare, they offer flexible times in just the morning or afternoon and on selected days of the week.

**As they think about the future,** they are considering offering summer preschool program options that include full-day care, theme camps and enrichment opportunities. "Our spread sheet to keep track of all the all the participants' schedules at different times and days of the week is complex," says Michelle. "That is just part of our philosophy to serve the community's needs."



## Your Donations are Vital

The Hinckley Historical Society is able to operate only with the support of donors and members. It receives no tax support or government grants to pursue its mission and maintain its museum building. The following people and organizations over the past year\* have joined in the HHS efforts to preserve the memories and history of the Hinckley area, bring its rich history to life for future generations, and serve as an attraction to the community. Thank you for the support!

### Under \$100

Ben & Val Bingle  
Amie Carey  
Emily Freriks  
Mary Haug  
Sheila Howard  
Dan Kenney  
Donna Kimpan  
Chryl Kirkus  
Jennifer Klambauer  
Carol Kohler  
Leigh Kossman  
Shawn McCrea  
John McFarland  
Barry Morsch  
Ann & Larry Peppers  
Allison Pickert  
Alyssa Pickett  
Loreen Popp  
Don & Patti Pritchard  
Cheryl & Tim Salter  
Brian & Gennie Siwicki

Kristine Smets  
April Viland  
Darrell & Vilma Viland  
Vic Viland  
Betty Wielert Memorial  
Shirley Wilhelmsen  
Don Willrett

### \$100 to \$500

Jack & Jina Beane  
Ed & Sue Carter  
Diane Christian  
Anna Marie Coveny  
Donahoe Family  
Mark Herrmann  
Gary Leifheit  
Carolyn Leifheit  
Dave & Sharon Maroo  
Vince McGirr  
Dorothy & Allan Bastian Memorial  
Dorothy Myers  
Marilyn Nehring

Linda Ott  
Joanne Pearson  
Janice Reingardt  
Peggy & Paul Smoltich  
Ken & Kathy Spears  
Strypes Plus More  
Ardith Trumpy  
Sarah White  
Jan Wielert & Jenean Arnold  
Larry & Karen Yaggie

### \$1,000 & More

Resource Bank  
Catherine & Frank Bartels  
Jane Bastian  
Pat Bastian  
Ron Klein  
Hinckley Lions  
Bob & Mary Pritchard

\*Donations from November  
2024 thru October 2025

# Jane Bastian to Become Centenarian

Born during the “roaring 20s” nearly a century ago, Jane Bastian soon experienced the great global depression that followed. It would make an indelible impression on her early life and limit her opportunities. Her father farmed on the north edge of DeKalb but to make ends meet for the family that included Jane and her three sisters, he took on additional jobs to supplement the income from the farm.

Jane learned to be self-sufficient and how to make her own clothes. She joined the Kishwaukee 4-H Club at the age of 10 and improved her sewing skills. The “church” dress she made was so impressive at the county level, she was encouraged at the age of 12 to enter it at the state fair where it won a blue ribbon. 4-H would continue to play a role in her later life. Jane would say “The basic learning that a girl gets in 4-H will stay with her and help her accomplish her plans for future years.” Jane went on to be selected one of the top 4-Hers in the State of Illinois in 1945 and later helped guide many young girls as a 4-H Club leader in the Hinckley area.



Math is a subject that a lot of students avoid but Jane loved it. When she graduated from DeKalb High School in 1944, Jane enrolled at the Northern Illinois State Teachers College in DeKalb. However, after only a few semesters of study, she couldn't afford to continue her education. She took a job in the Purchasing Department at Ideal Industries in Sycamore.

Meanwhile Jane continued to be active in 4-H Club work and was involved in the DeKalb County Rural Youth organization. This group provided social activities for young adults and brought them together from all over the county. It was at one of these events that Jane met Wilbur Bastian from Hinckley, and they fell in love. Jane and Wilbur were married in 1947 at her parent's home.



## Moves to Hinckley

The couple started their family while living in one of the Bastian Brothers' farm homes on Bastian Road. Wilbur was active in the farm's dairy operation but also attended an electrician training program in Chicago. He wanted to become an electrician and start his own company. Over the years Jane learned that business and helped her husband with the financial books. She became the delivery service to get electrical parts for Wilbur from supply

companies. Jane was also in charge of gathering and selling eggs from the farm chicken flock.

Jane loved learning and joined the Cooperative Extension Service Home Bureau organization to as she said, “Learn valuable information about such subjects as diet, budgeting, raising children, and gardening.” She believes “The home is the center of our lives and not the circumference.” Jane felt she was a homemaker and not a housewife. She served in leadership of the county Home Bureau organization for several years.

Wilbur and Jane bought land for their dream home along Route 30 west of Hinckley in 1960. It would be where Robert, Pat, Elaine, Carol and Linda would grow up. Linda and her husband Darrin would eventually buy and live in the home after Jane and Wilbur moved to a retirement center in 2012.



While raising their family, Jane was active in the St. Paul's United Church of Christ in Hinckley. She taught Sunday School and was a leader in the Women's Guild that among other things served church dinners, decorated the church, and made lap robes.

Jane served as an election judge for the county and in 1985 was elected Clerk of Squaw Grove Township where she served until 1993. She says "It was a great way to serve the community and learn about taxation and local government.

Over the years Jane and Wilbur found time to travel to all 50 states and spent a month touring what she called "all the hot spots in Europe," including the performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play in Germany. Jane tried to encourage her mother to visit relatives in England but was never successful. So after their mother's death in 1986, the four daughters made the trip in remembrance of their mother. They toured the country by train, stayed in bed and breakfast hostels, and did a lot of walking.



*Jane and Wilbur at their 50th anniversary*



Seen with Jane are her five children (shown in the first row), some of her 12 grandchildren, 16 great grandchildren and spouses at her last birthday party. Jane will become a centenarian on September 26, 2026.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

### **Family Photographs are Treasures Worth Sharing**

You may have taken time at family gatherings over the holidays to enjoy family pictures. They are valuable records of life in our time and fun memories. The museum invites you to share copies of family pictures for our collection. Digital pictures are now more common than printed photographs, but both are appropriate for our collection. We can make copies of print photographs so you can keep the originals.

Contact Bob (815-761-4058) or email the Historical Society if you have pictures to share.

### **FUN QUESTION**

Do you know who these kids are today?





141 East Lincoln Ave., Hinckley, IL 60520  
 HinckleyHistoricalSociety@gmail.com  
 Facebook: Hinckley Historical Society Group  
 Website: Hinckleyhistoricalsociety.com  
 Phone: 815-761-4058

- \* Museum is open only by appointment this winter
- \* Renew membership in the Historical Society
- \* Share your pictures from Globetrotter visits
- \*What does America Mean to you?
- \* Who is the next Centenarian?
- \* Hinckley has a new Bird's Nest.



## Preparing for a Celebration



Our country will be commemorating the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence this year. It's an excellent time for our museum to join with others to listen to people, look at how this document has been implemented in our space, and share our hopes for the future. The Declaration will be read on the balcony of the Hinckley Community Building on July 4.



We will feature the answers of HBR eighth graders in 1976 to the question "what America means to me?" We will ask today's youth and adults "what truths are self-evident today?" We plan to update our History of Hinckley document for the last 50 years.



Plan to join in the activities. A six-part documentary television series created by producer Ken Burns will get you in the spirit. It explores the country's founding struggle and eight-year war for independence and is available on PBS Passport. The DVD set is available from the Prairie Catalog system and the accompanying book is available at the Hinckley Public Library.

