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The Campbell County Historical & Genealogical Society in Alexandria is home to hundreds of local artifacts and records. The research room contains filing cabinets full of yearbooks, photos, records and more. PHOTOS BY PHIL DIDION/THE ENQUIRIR

‘SO MANY STORIES HERE’

*Northern Kentucky history museum
preserves regional roots*

Julia Fair | Cincinnati Enquirer | USA TODAY NETWORK

ALEXANDRIA, Ky. — Steve Battistone was curious.

In 2004, he bought a house in Fort Thomas that was built in 1924. He wanted to know more about the previous owners and the history neighbors had created on the street. So, he turned to the Campbell County Historical and Genealogical Society for help.

They helped him unearth public records, like old deeds and newspapers, so he could piece together local history. He was delighted to learn his street, Von Zuben Court, was built by and named after a tailor who worked at the military fort the Northern Kentucky city is named after.

Now, Battistone is the president of the historical center so he can help others relive local history.

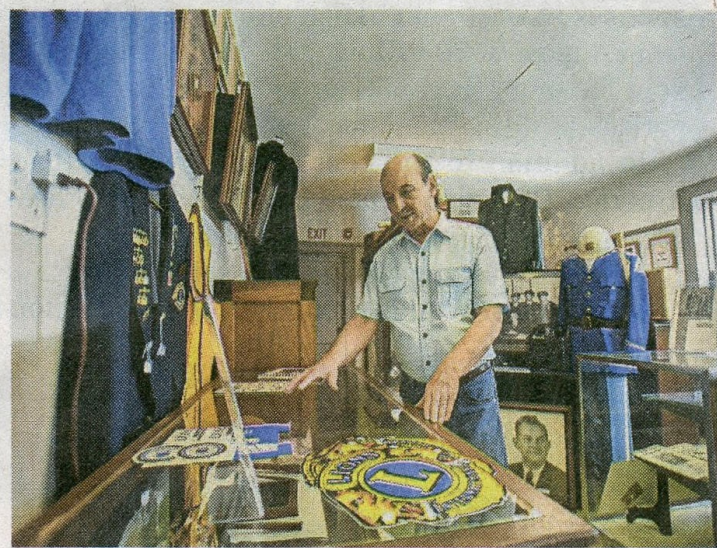
“There are so many stories up here,” Battistone said.

The discoveries happen on the top floor in the old courthouse in Alexandria, a white building with four large pillars that sits on a manicured lawn with lush trees. Volunteers founded the historical and genealogical society in 1990 when they gathered to preserve local artifacts. Here, people can find evidence from the 1890s, thousands of maps and photos, family files and more.

Steve Roth, 70, of Highland Heights, has used the center’s resources to find out more about his family that immigrated from western Germany to Cincinnati in 1845.

“You have this serendipity effect when you’re researching,” he said. One time, when he helped another woman look at her family’s deeds, he found that family neighbored one of his ancestors as well.

Roth and his brother have been researching the



The Campbell County Historical & Genealogical Society’s president, Steve Battistone, walks around the museum, sharing details about the various rooms and the relics they hold.

history of Highland Heights. He’s intrigued by the things they find, like documentation about a hospital that used to be there and a businessman’s failed attempt to sell small plots of land called ‘baby farms.’

If you can’t find it here, Battistone said they can direct people where to look for public records, like deeds from the Campbell County Property Valuation Administrator office.

“It’s a variety of inquiries we get, and we get them from all over the globe,” Battistone said.

The best mystery cases Battistone has solved are about family memories.

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The Campbell County Historical & Genealogical Society in Alexandria is home to hundreds of local artifacts and records. The medical room contains old surgical equipment, medicines and personal items of local doctors of old.

PHOTOS BY PHIL DIDION/THE ENQUIRIR



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Museum

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“The one I had recently was just so touching,” he said.

A woman from Florida called searching for information about a Catholic nun from St. Joseph’s Orphanage that used to be in Cold Spring. The woman was raised by the sister until the woman was about six years old. Then the woman’s mother remarried and returned to the orphanage to pick up her kids, Battistone said.

The woman, now in her 80s, wanted to know what happened to the nun.

Battistone sent the woman the nun’s obituary and a prayer card that was given out at the funeral.

Another time, Battistone got a call from a woman searching for her lost wedding photos.

When she got married in the ‘50s or ‘60s — Battistone estimated it was one of those decades — she and her husband could only afford to have the pictures taken.

“The pictures were made, but they never saw them,” Battistone said.

Someone donated those negatives to the museum and Battistone retrieved 22 photos from her day as a bride.

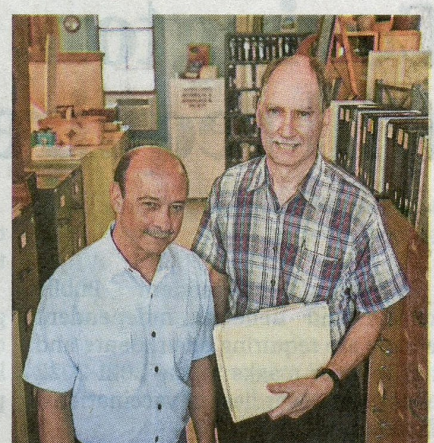
“We have more stuff than there is space,” Battistone said as he walked around the museum.

People have wanted to donate large items he doesn’t have space for. Right now, for example, people are holding onto a fire truck until the center has a new, larger home.

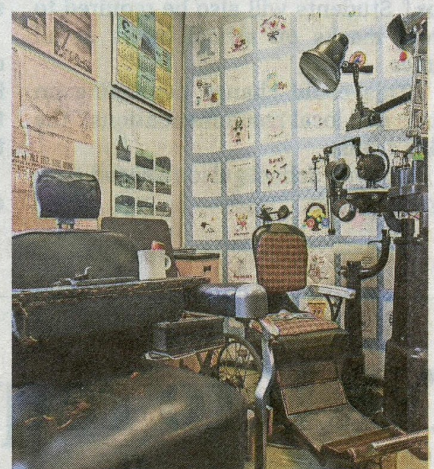
Battistone said there’s a space in Silver Grove they hope to move into. He smiled and said he’s looking forward to sharing more details when the plans are final.

Julia Fair is the Northern Kentucky government reporter through the Report For America program. The Enquirer needs local donors to help fund her grant-funded position. If you want to support Julia’s work, email her editor Carl Weiser at cweiser@cincinnati.com to find out how you can help fund her work.

Do you know something she should know? Send her a note at jfair@enquirer.com and follow her on Twitter at [@JFair_Reports](https://twitter.com/JFair_Reports).



The Campbell County Historical & Genealogical Society’s president, Steve Battistone (left) and local researcher, Steve Roth (right) stand together in the society’s research room on July 15.



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