

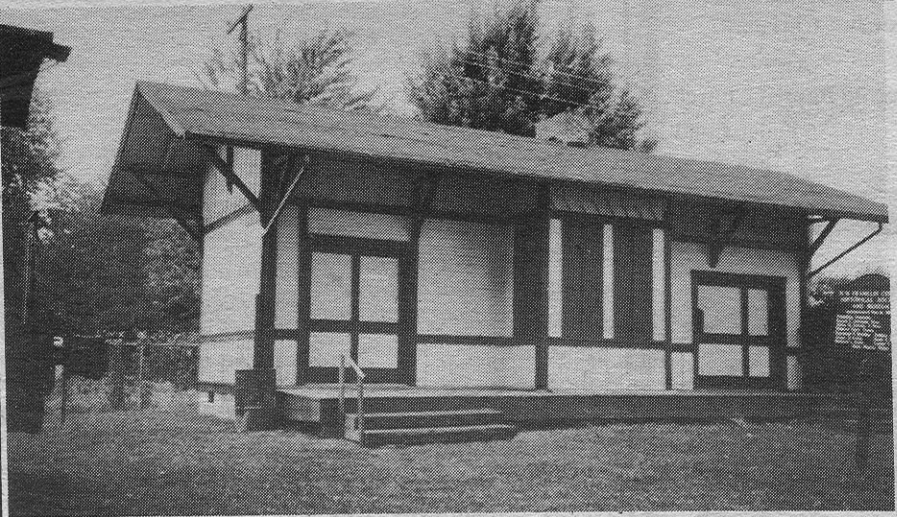
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# Hilliard Chamber of Commerce holds annual picnic at Northwest Franklin County Historical Society park

by Vicki Thornburg

The Hilliard Chamber of Commerce held their annual picnic at noon on Wednesday, September 10, at the Northwest Franklin County Historical Society. Their guest speaker was Mary Weaver Miller, known historian and secretary of the Historical Society for the last twenty years.

Following a short business meeting, Chamber members were treated to a guided tour of the historical village. Mrs. Miller visually sketched the history of each building and added a tinge of life spice to season the stories. She referred to the stolen bell being returned to the church as "the miracle story." The fictional legend of the railroad station devised by Mary Miller was the hit of the excursion. Approximately 1895 a news story proclaimed Hilliard the first stop for the railroad, but Hilliard had no station. The railroad had provided for a place for loading cattle, for obtaining water, and for other necessities, but they did not build a train station for people. The railroad eventually put three boxcars together, but records show this infuriated the people of



Railroad station with unique sliding doors.

Hilliard, so instead they chose to buy their tickets on board the train. In 1899, Hilliard got their train station, but there were no true "people doors." The sliding doors to the railroad station are unique and are only found in Hilliard. Mrs. Miller has conjectured that the railroad officials felt the Hilliard people would not use the station anyway, so the officials would not install "people doors." It is interesting to note from old records that the first item for business after Hilliard had become incorporated was a complaint that the railroad was holding up traffic.



Mary Miller showing unique doors of railroad station.