



Local Author Publishes New Book About Glen Carbon

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IMAGES
of America

GLEN CARBON

Joyce A. Williams

GLEN CARBON - The village of Glen Carbon is tucked into river bluffs in southwestern Illinois. European immigrants working at a brickyard and coal mines incorporated the village in 1892 and elected some of their peers to organize protection and services.

It was a thriving village with a population of 1,200 in 1900 that fell to just 300 residents when the coal mines closed during the Great Depression. Families stayed together by buying company houses for \$50 per room, and neighborhood and government programs helped them survive. As the economy improved, Glen Carbon's leaders annexed affluent and well-planned subdivisions. Glen Carbon families, including the Yanda, Primas, Wieduwilt, Pizzini, Harris, and dozens of others persevered so that Glen Carbon could become the community it is today.

Saving historic buildings and venues – along with planning newer subdivisions and shopping centers – helped create a peaceful village that unites the past and present. While developing parks and bike trails, they protected and preserved Old Town, the heart of the village which is linked with other subdivisions by tree-lined bike and hiking trails. This helped lead CNN Money to name Glen Carbon as one of the country's "Best Places to Live" in 2007.

Now, readers throughout the area can explore the story of this southwestern Illinois village in more depth with the new book, *Glen Carbon*, written by local author Joyce A. Williams. The book is part of Arcadia Publishing's Images of America series. This new pictorial book consists primarily of photographs from the collections of the Glen Carbon Heritage Museum, but Williams also includes contemporary photographs to contrast the old with the new. Many of the modern-day photographs were taken by Williams' grandson, Eli Burns-Irvin.

Joyce Williams was born and raised in Glen Carbon and has been a student of history her entire life. Williams comes from a family of southern Illinois coal miners who arrived in Glen Carbon in 1911. At that time, work was plentiful in the coal mines that attracted men of numerous ethnic groups from across the country. Another early industry that employed hundreds of men was the St. Louis Pressed Brick Company. It too, was gone by the 1930s.



Williams and her family have been active in efforts to preserve the history of Glen Carbon and Madison County for many years. She is a member of the Glen Carbon Historical Commission and is a past president of the Madison County Historical Society. She was a co-author of the *Centennial History of Glen Carbon* in 1992 and before her retirement was a staff archeologist at Southern Illinois University. Her husband, Bob, and her father, LeRoy Harris, led efforts to restore the Yanda Log Cabin in Glen Carbon.

Glen Carbon is available at local stores including Books-a-Million and Walgreens. Signed copies are available at the Madison County Archival Library in Edwardsville where MCHS members can purchase copies at a discount. A schedule of in-person book signings will be released at a later date.

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