

ON THE SQUARE



The Magazine of the McLean County Museum of History

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Welcome New Members!

as of December 10, 2023

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Museum membership is an act of philanthropy that supports local history, preservation, and education for the entire community. Membership also offers direct benefits to you and your family with free admission to the Museum, Library & Archives, plus discounts in the Visitors Center & Gift Shop, special member pricing for events, this magazine, and a Time Travelers reciprocal membership that grants you free and discounted admission to hundreds of sites across the country.

Cover Image: Bustling Downtown Bloomington 1924

100 Block of West Washington Street viewed from the northeast corner of Main and Washington, featuring an electric streetcar, a horse and wagon, and several early automobiles. This photograph has been preserved and digitized by the Museum and is available on the Illinois Digital Archives. To explore more of the almost 200,000 images we've uploaded for public use thus far, please visit bit.ly/MCMHIDA.

Looking to the Future Through the Lens of the Past

I've been thinking about the meaning of preservation — both material and cultural — even more than usual. One of my favorite objects in the re-envisioned and recently re-opened Merwin Gallery is a memorial hair wreath and photo of the Buchwalter family circa 1880. The satin-backed wreath is composed of the hair of various family members. The hair has been wrapped around the wire in intricate loops and embellished with jet beads. Its artistry is meticulously preserved, a stunning example of an object fabricated to memorialize the family.



Victorian Hair Wreath c. 1880

What is it about the stuff we collect? In some ways, all objects are ephemeral. Time can slowly deteriorate (almost) any material. Still, we decide what we hold on to and what we let go.

“As the embodiment of our collective memories, cultures, and values, cultural heritage in many ways strengthens and binds diverse societies together. It helps support a sense of belonging, mutual understanding, and trust,” says conservator Alison Heritage. Indeed, from a futures perspective, preserving cultural heritage’s potential to be (re)created, (re)used, and (re)interpreted afresh is vital so that “it can inspire and sustain future generations in new ways” (Getty Conservation Institute, 2023).

This is why we preserve material items and are so grateful for the abundance of support we've received for our Saving History campaign. Y(our) investment in the sustainability and care of physical objects is so important. It enables us to preserve a diversity of culture that critically informs who we might become in the future — it's at the heart of what we do at the McLean County Museum of History.

As we stride into the new year, we look forward to amplifying and extending our preservation of materials and cultural history in many ways. In 2024, we will:

- Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Cemetery Walk
- Launch a Spanish Language Tour for the Making a Home Gallery funded by the Illinois Humanities Council
- Open an exhibit about McLean County's asbestos tragedy and the subsequent movement for workers' rights
- Carry on with the digitization of our Pantagraph Negatives Project
- Continue to add items from our object collection to our Online Collections Database

Additionally, we hope to receive good news about several grant proposals, and we will continue to deepen and extend our partnerships within the community.

As you can see, lots of exciting work, all aimed at better serving you, is happening. Which brings me to my final note on this evolving format of *On the Square*. We are moving to a triannual publication that will include popular columns from past editions (preservation!) while incorporating more articles and images that focus on a behind-the-scenes look at how we preserve, educate, and collaborate to share the diverse stories of our community.


Julie Emig, Ed.D.





WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2024

Brandy: Anticipating all of the unexpected goodness that comes with being at the Museum!

Micaela: March's collaboration with the League of Women Voters, Día de Muertos, and more Rotunda Installations

George: Advancing the Pantagraph Negatives Digitization Project

Torii: Seeing the native plants on the Museum Square grow and fill in!

Julie: Continuing to leverage partnerships in the community

Jamie: Strengthening our relationships with our current vendors, and building relationships with new local vendors

Candace: Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the Evergreen Cemetery Walk

Jeff: Creating new partnerships and building communities

Maria: Building up our relationships with our local higher education institutions

Emily: Launching the Spanish Language Tour

Jackie: Hoping for positive news on grants

Morgan: Designing the May Rotunda Installation for Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Susan: Opening the asbestos exhibit, a project a decade in the making

Eric: Continuing to connect with our existing volunteers and recruiting new ones

Bill: Echoes all of that, especially more money for the Pantagraph Negatives Digitization Project!

Kathi: Welcoming more visitors from around the world to our Museum and Visitors Center

Norris: Documenting additional legacy gifts through the Jesse Fell Legacy Society

Exhibiting History

By Susan Hartzold

Susan Hartzold has been the Curator of Exhibits at the Museum for 31 years and has created over 50 exhibits during her tenure.

Have you ever wondered where the Museum gets ideas for new exhibits? Or how we bring those ideas to life? As Curator of Exhibits, I steward exhibit development and collaborate with community experts and academics to do just that.

At the McLean County Museum of History, exhibit development typically takes two to three years, and at any given time, two or three exhibits are in various stages of development. The process is much more complex than many would think and involves much planning and collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

Exhibit ideas can come from anyone, anywhere. In the past 30 years, staff, museum members, visitors, and experts on the topics from within our community have generated exhibit ideas. No matter who presents them, we consider any ideas relevant to our community and mission.

Seriously considered exhibit concepts are discussed in depth by the Museum's Exhibit Advisory Committee, a group of staff, board, and community members who review ideas based on the criteria required of all our exhibits.

The most important criterion we consider is whether or not the idea relates to McLean County's history and our mission of preserving, educating, and

collaborating in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County. Only ideas that reflect the spirit of our mission move forward to the next stage of exhibit development.

We always seek to uncover previously unexplored history. This can be difficult as objects, photographs, and archival materials from marginalized groups are often limited. Although challenging, we never eliminate ideas based on limited resources. Some concepts are great opportunities to conduct groundbreaking research and seek out new items for our collection and stories to tell.

Oral history projects have been and continue to be vital to the Museum's award-winning exhibits. This type of research is invaluable because it provides us with various first-hand perspectives and enables us to gather stories from diverse residents. Additionally, those interviewed often have objects they are willing to donate to the Museum or share as an exhibit loan.

The committee also takes into account collaborative opportunities. What community organizations and individuals can partner with us? Partners can aid in researching, collecting, and securing financial support for an exhibit, enhancing the quality and impact of our exhibitions.

Susan's office is complete with a full workshop set up to build mounts and other exhibit elements in house!



Once an exhibit topic is approved, a guest or co-curator is identified and contracted. They have topic expertise and lead the exhibit research and writing. I assist with both activities and guide the co-curator through exhibit development.

Concurrently, we conduct a front-end survey, asking 30-50 individuals about their exhibit expectations. This helps us to understand our audience better so we can create an exhibit that not only features what people are excited about but also includes the most important information they seek.

The co-curator and I then identify an Exhibit Development Committee — a team of five to seven community members with knowledge of the topic. They work as advisors and provide feedback. At the first meeting, we will discuss the front-end evaluation, outline the exhibit's goals, and identify potential oral history interviewees.

Oral history interviews begin as soon as possible, typically with the assistance of college interns. We also get started on the research and writing of exhibit text. As the exhibit themes develop, I work with our Archives and Collections Departments to identify objects, images, and graphics for possible use. This phase alone can take over a year to complete.

We then compile exhibit text into a large packet that we refer to as the exhibit script. Once that approaches completion and we finalize the display graphics, images, and objects, we share the script with the entire Museum staff.

All staff have the opportunity to read and give feedback on the script and can offer ideas for hands-on and digital interactives that our Curator of Digital Humanities, Torii Moré, can incorporate into the exhibit. Torii and I then meet with the Education Department to plan interactive elements that enhance the learning objectives of the exhibit. We also send the completed script to an editor to double-check that the text is error-free and makes sense to readers.

Meanwhile, I get started with my juggling act of compiling colors, fonts, and design elements. Working out where and how to install as many as 30 pages of text, dozens of images, graphics, and archival items, along with objects and interactives, and making it look visually appealing — and simultaneously accessible. It is quite a challenge.

Fortunately, the Museum has a modular exhibit panel system that allows me to move our gallery walls into unlimited configurations. Having created exhibits for over 30 years, I've become an expert estimator, knowing how many linear feet of exhibit panels will be needed. I can rearrange them to accommodate all the different exhibit themes and materials.

During this phase, the Collections Department is busy pulling and preparing the artifacts for display. Collections will write condition reports to document any issues with the objects and to help better monitor them once they are on display.

Once all the text, images, graphics, and object drafts are complete, I create scaled-down proofs of the exhibit. We then use these proofs during evaluation sessions that involve small groups of individuals external to the project. The groups view the proofs and participate in a moderated discussion about content, language, and design.

Following the feedback phase, we make any needed changes to the finalized panel designs and conduct even more editorial reviews. We send the artwork to the printer after completing this rigorous final review.

At this point, with the help of volunteers, we set up the panel system. The upcoming asbestos exhibit will use 30 4' x 8' panels. Seven have art mounted on both sides. Next, specially constructed mounts are created for each object. This critical step ensures that each object will not be damaged.

When the artwork arrives, each section is carefully secured to the exhibit panels; followed by the interactives and artifacts. *Continued on next page...*

Overhead and specialized lighting is adjusted, and a final cleaning of the space happens in preparation for the exhibit opening.

Then it's the big day. The exhibit doors are open to the public, and visitors can enjoy and learn something new about our history! Each exhibit is the culmination of the long, hard work and expertise of the many individuals who helped bring it to fruition. After all that's gone into it, closing the door on this chapter of work is hard, but I quickly move on—our next exhibits are already in progress!

Susan uses custom cut plexiglass and a bonding chemical to create a mount for a clock going on display in the Merwin Gallery.



Shedding Light on Local Women's Lives

By Candace Summers

Senior Director of Education Candace Summers conducts extensive research for the Museum's many programs.

Throughout history, women have been marginalized and forced into a secondary social status, taking the backseat to men. This often makes historical research of their vital stories challenging — even in their hometowns.

Materials on male residents are plentiful and seemingly endless, especially if you are

researching the local ties of a prominent man like Abraham Lincoln. If you're researching someone like Belle Blue Claxton, a woman of color, your resources are much more limited.

Women are often not identified by their given name in written historical records. Instead, they are identified as their husband's wife or their father's daughter. Some laws and traditions limited what women could do in society. Types of employment, ability to own property, voting rights, and more were often determined by gender.

Further, women's accomplishments and inventions have often been credited to men. For example, Charles Darrow didn't invent the modern game of Monopoly; Elizabeth Magie did. Who got the credit? Charles.

Researching women of color or women in lower economic brackets is even more difficult. There is often even less material available when compared to white women or more affluent women.

It is vital that we, as historians, ensure women take their rightful place in history by telling their stories as part of the larger story of us and our community. *Continued on next page...*

It has become somewhat easier to tell women's stories in recent years - thanks largely to digitized historical documents, photographs, and other records. One source that has revolutionized our work here at the Museum is the digitization of *The Pantagraph* and its inclusion on Newspapers.com in 2014. Tangibly, this has allowed us to increase the diversity of the stories presented through our programs and events, perhaps most notably the Evergreen Cemetery Walk.

Before 2014, we used *The Pantagraph* index in the Museum's Library and Archives when researching stories to feature on the Cemetery Walk. This is only a partial index through the 1940s. From there, we would look through microfilmed images of *The Pantagraph* at either Bloomington Public Library or Illinois State University's Milner Library. The process was lengthy and not always fruitful.

If not for the digitization of *The Pantagraph* and other local history resources, women like Clara Louise Kessler (beloved longtime children's librarian at Withers Public Library), Louise Calimese (matron of the Booker T. Washington Home for children of color), Eva Jones (first Black person elected to Bloomington City Council and the District 87 Board of Education), or Emily Howard (a late 19th/early 20th century artist) might have remained in relative obscurity or simply a footnote in our community's history.

In recent years, increased access to other digitized local newspapers like the *Daily and Weekly Leader*, *Illinois State University's Vidette*, and *Illinois Wesleyan University's Argus* newspapers allowed us to research local women more.

It made possible research on women like Frances Kessler, who profoundly impacted local music appreciation education. Frances Kessler was featured in last year's Cemetery Walk, and Clara Louise Kessler was featured on an episode of the WGLT podcast McHistory.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst to make many more resources readily available. Our own Museum ramped up digitization projects



Louise (left) and Frances (right) Kessler c. 1956

during the pandemic. This allowed us to make more of our materials available to the community while we were all sheltering in place, concurrently expanding our digital preservation efforts.

Some of those projects include digitizing the 1855-1920 Bloomington-Normal City Directories and local history books such as *Bloomington C&A Shops: Our Lives Remembered*. The digitization of the *Pantagraph* Negatives Collection has also helped us identify previously unavailable images of women we feature in exhibits, on the Cemetery Walk, and in our Pieces From the Past Sunday column in *The Pantagraph*.

Even with all these resources now available at our fingertips, there are still stories we cannot fully tell. The experiences of indigenous women who lived in McLean County remain mostly unknown. Their experiences were either not written down, or the anecdotal accounts come from those who colonized this land. However, as new resources are discovered or digitized, we strive to do our best to include the voices of all who have called McLean County home.



Eva Jones (middle) on the Human Relations Panel c. 1970

Growing Intergenerational Relationships, Bridging Divides

By Jeff Woodard

Jeff joined the staff 18 years ago, after many years as a volunteer, and has since increased community outreach efforts twofold.

Last year, the Museum served over 4,000 students. When students walk through our doors or participate in our programming, it is an opportunity to engage with younger community members and offer them the space to be seen and heard.

A project thesis by Gloria Yates at the University of Washington states, "Children and retired adults are two of the most vulnerable populations that exist in society." Yates also shared that these two populations are often served separately within museums. But in recent years, there has been a rise in intergenerational programs created to connect these two vital sections of society across the country and in our Museum.

We see this play out at the Museum as several community organizations share our space, including the Bloomington-Normal NAACP Youth Council. The group, which conducted its second-anniversary celebration in the courtroom in 2023, hopes to inspire new leaders by giving a voice to local youth.

Intergenerational learning is paramount to the mission of the Youth Council. The student-led group produced a mini-documentary and screened it for an audience at the Museum. The documentary featured long-time educators Dr. Charles and

“ The beautiful former courthouse, now our home for thirty years, has continued to evolve into a community commons space that is the center of county social, commemorative, and entertainment activities.”

- Tom Eder, Past President



Members of the NAACP Youth Council pose with Bloomington & Normal's mayors c. 2023

Jeanne Morris, who shared a history of working for equality and educational access in McLean County.

The Youth Council also presented "30 Minutes with the Mayors" in the Museum Courtroom. The students alternated asking Mayor Koos of Normal and Mayor Mwilambwe of Bloomington questions. The program exposed the students to civics via a refreshing mix of lighthearted and serious exchanges between the mayors and the students regarding their interests and concerns for our community.

It is an honor and a privilege to provide these young leaders with the space to forge intergenerational connections that otherwise may not have occurred. As we persevere with our outreach efforts, we hope to continue to be a welcoming space - one of significance for everyone as we strive to include the stories and diverse perspectives of the people of McLean County.

Join us in continuing to bridge the generational divide on March 23 at 2 p.m. for an intergenerational dialogue and human library hosted in partnership with the McLean County League of Women Voters to explore the last fifty years of women's rights.

Objects

- ISU University Union coffee mug, 1980; and a Bloomington Junior High School Knights pennant. *Donated by Catherine Knight.*
- “Early Learning Fun” pre-school readiness kit, 1976; SRA Reading Accelerator tool; four golden phonograph records. *Donated by Shirley Ann Craig.*
- Williams Oil-O-Matic wall clock. *Donated by Michela Liable.*
- McLean County Deputy winter and summer uniform; Police Officer’s Handbook of Law, 1974; both belonging to Lieutenant Floyd L. Schroader. *Donated by Teresa Davis.*
- Jaycees vest, 1969. *Donated by Nancy Deffenbaugh.*
- NCAA Baseball Championship ring, 1969. *Donated by Dennis Fox.*
- Woman’s wedding coat, 1915. *Donated by Jan Schlickman and Judi Butterick.*
- Cobbler forms used by William John Always, 1900. *Donated by Sherri McElroy.*
- Compound light microscope used by Dr. Russell Oyer, 1940. *Donated by Lisa Swartz.*
- McLean Sesquicentennial T-shirt, 1980; Benedict’s Midway Standard patch. *Donated by Nancy Saul.*
- Bloomington Street Light Bayonets, 1930. *Donated by Linda Roberts Messer.*
- Plaster bust created by Ricky Roderick, 1960. *Donated by the Roderick Family.*
- Bloomington steam plant gauge. *Donated by Robin Roberts, Dixie Casey from Jack Robert’s estate.*
- G.I. Joe Air Adventurer action figure, 1971. *Donated by Norris Porter.*

Books

- The Alton System, Examination Questions and Answers for Promotion to Firemen ..., 1940. *Donated by Steve Gossard.*
- 2023 McLean County Fair & 4-H Show Book; a textbook from Lexington Jr. High, Making Sure of Arithmetic, with bookplate reading “Larry Stewart 1954-55.” *Donated by Ruth Stewart.*
- Chatsworth, Illinois—Sesquicentennial (2017). *Donated by Jane Randall.*

- Saybrook Community High School yearbooks, 1948-1951. *Donated by Cassandra Short Paulson and siblings.*
- Collection of Illinois Soldiers’ Orphans’ Home biennial reports, 1880s to 1910s. *Donated by the Baby Fold.*
- School and Home Cooking, 1920 textbook, signed by Carolyn Sutter and Bonnie M. Sutter, Heyworth High School; and other titles. *Donated by Dorothy Clifford.*
- Colton’s Common School Geography, Illinois Edition, 1879 (Illinois section by Edwin C. Hewett, president of Illinois State Normal University at the time); and Monteith’s Comprehensive Geography, Illinois Edition, no date. *Donated by Kathy Templeman.*
- Collection of local cookbooks, including those for the Heyworth Siltenial, 1856-1981; and Cheney’s Grove Township Sesquicentennial, 1825-1975. *Donated by John Baker for John Baker Sr. and Madaline Baker.*
- Saybrook Christian Church Cookbook, 1992; Home for the Holidays: A Victorian Christmas Cookbook printed for the David Davis Mansion, 2004; Stacy’s Dance Factory, Cooking to the Beat, 1998. *Donated by Karen Schmidt and John Elterich.*
- Illinois State University telephone directory, 1988-89. *Donated by Ruth Wilkerson.*
- Several books associated with circuit preacher Hiram Stoddard (1812-1907) including Vox Dei: The Doctrine of the Spirit ..., 1889. *Donated by Steve Campbell.*
- Reprint of Early Emigration to California, 1849-1850, by Major Wellman Packard, published in 1971; Larison family tree compiled by donor. *Donated by Steve Rambach.*
- 1935 Index (Illinois State Normal University yearbook). *Donated by Susan Decker.*
- Stern Family History: Beginning with Moshe Dov and Sarah Tich Stern..., 2023, compiled by the donor and others. *Donated by Sybil Stern Mervis.*
- Summer 2004 issue of “First & Fastest” devoted to the Bloomington, Pontiac & Joliet Electric Railway Company. *Donated by Don Munson.*

- ISU University Union coffee mug, 1980; and a Bloomington Junior High School Knights pennant. *Donated by Catherine Knight.*
- “Early Learning Fun” pre-school readiness kit, c. 1976; SRA Reading Accelerator tool; four golden phonograph records. *Donated by Shirley Ann Craig.*

Photographs

- Collection of negatives from Don Riegger, including the Illinois Wesleyan University Gymnasium, the Castle Theatre, Bloomington, and other local scenes. *Donated by Steve Gossard.*
- Collection of photo albums and individual photographs collected by Clifford and Irma Vail. *Donated by Glenn Haney.*
- Grover Cleveland Cabinet cards; Adlai E. Stevenson I, 1892 Democratic Party ticket; two picture postcards of Gridley, IL residences, published by Taylor Drug Store in Gridley. *Donated by David Parker.*
- Collection of negatives, circa 1940-1945, featuring John, “Tot”, and Fred Baldini, among others, as well as scenes from Bloomington. *Donated by Mary Baldini Olson.*
- About 30 black-and-white photographs of John “Jack” Waddell and stage contemporaries. *Donated by John (Jack) Waddell.*
- Set showing the Chicago & Alton Railroad Shops after the 1914 expansion, including views of the roundhouse, locomotive back shop, and other buildings—exteriors and interiors. *Donated by Elaine Vincent and family.*
- Picture postcard, postmarked 1914, Wellmerling grocery store, exterior, downtown Bloomington, featuring owner Louis Wellmerling. *Donated by Jim Raymond.*
- Kistner Family family photographs, the Jersey Avenue residence, and kennel business. *Donated by Paul S. Anderson.*
- Signed portrait of Adlai E. Stevenson II, 1958. *Donated by Dennis Feicke.*
- Cabinet cards of Henry Lee Jackson and George L. Jackson. *Donated by Deb Spencer.*
- Normal Community High School, Class of 1967 25th reunion photo, June 20, 1992. *Donated by Nancy D. Anderson.*



FEATURED ARTIFACT: BLIND CONTOURS

This object is a plaster cast of a bust sculpted by Ricky Roderick, a blind student who attended Thomas Metcalf School in the mid-1960s. He recounted the artistic process to Metcalf Art Supervisor W.D. Hartley. Arts and Activities, a periodical for art educators, published the story in January 1964. Roderick's art teacher noticed his remarkable ability to guess the exact measurements of materials while feeling them. This spurred the portrait sculpture project. Roderick felt the size of his head, neck, and the distance between his facial features. He then transposed what he felt to his clay work. After weeks of sculpting, Roderick completed his sculpture, and his teacher told him he would make a mold and cast the head in plaster so that Roderick could keep it. Roderick received the plaster cast a few weeks later and was ecstatic that he could take his artwork home. The Roderick family donated the bust to the Museum in July 2023.

Archival Materials

- Two issues of "Woman's Review" 1999 featuring "Old Stuff" by Terri Clemens. *Donated by Terri Clemens.*
- Ruth Farmer Condon Autograph Book from Trinity Lutheran School dating to 1934. *Donated by Elizabeth Smith.*
- The Prairie Farmer WLS AM Radio "Happy-Go-Lucky" 1945 "Almanak". *Donated by Lori and David Kennedy*
- Print of Hessler's portrait of A. Lincoln, 1860; The Golden Stamp Book of Abraham Lincoln, 1954; and other items that belonged to Nelson Smith. *Donated by Dixie Lewis.*
- Black Lives Matter Bloomington-Normal Book Club List of books read 2016 to the present. *Donated by Marie Susanne Langille.*
- Scrapbook pages compiled by Rachel Hodge Fuller (1904-1987) relating to student life at Illinois Wesleyan University and other topics; Daily Diaries 1905-1910 belonging to William H. Fuller; and other items. *Donated by Gretchen Fuller Huff.*
- Measurements and supporting material relating to one of the largest bur oak trees in Illinois, located in southwest Bloomington. *Donated by Dan Holder.*
- Miller Janitor Supply 1988 calendar; 2000 Festival of Trees materials; Annual Pow Wow Program from the Grand Village of the Kickapoo 2002; a Pantagraph supplement "A Look at McLean County 1982"; and more. *Donated by Ruth Cobb.*
- 1970s Normal Parks and Recreation materials, and 1970-1971 Unit 5 Concert Programs. *Donated by Catharine Knight for Mary Knightwright.*
- Collection of papers relating to donor's career and work with the Machinists Union at Eureka Co., 1965-1999. *Donated by Diane Scheel.*
- 7 Page Manuscript by Ruth Wyman entitled "Richard and Mary Browne's Life in McLean County during World War II," 1986. *Donated by Jane Randall.*
- Senior Scrapbook Saybrook Community High School, 1935-36, compiled by Ralph Jacobs. *Donated by Jan Schlickman.*
- Margaret Munce Campbell items, including a scrapbook of French vocabulary; a 1924 journal; and other items. *Donated by Allene Gregory.*
- Additions to John (Jack) Waddell Archive Collection including a 2002 New York City performance poster; a program from the 2023 Gala Celebrating Unsung Heroes in the Theatre (donor was an honoree); and other items. *Donated by John (Jack) Waddell.*
- Corporate records for Bloomington's Packard Duck Pin Bowling Alley, Inc., 1947-1953; Specs for 1920s Country Club building addition by Associates of A.L. Pillsbury; and a Fred Dolan interview on his World War II experiences, 2002. *Donated by Mike Dolan.*
- Four issues of local manufacturer Thor Corp.'s newsletter "Thorcast," 1950s; McLean County Business Men's Guide; and other items. *Donated by Sherry and Steve Shipley.*
- 1935 Daily Pantagraph Golden Gloves Boxing Tournament Finals flyer (featuring Ray Wheat); Daily Pantagraph Radio Guide, November 1, 1952; and other items. *Donated by Dennis Fox.*
- Collection of materials relating to donor's time as a reporter for the Lincoln Courier Newspaper, including items relating to the Village of McLean, Ben Funk School, Route 66, and other McLean County topics. *Donated by Nancy Saul.*
- Various items, including 2002 Bloomington-Normal Bridge Newsletter; Official McLean County Sheriff's Department Coloring Book, 1970s; "The Climate Crisis Is Here," flyer for event held at Wayman AME Church, 2019. *Donated by Torii Moré.*



This 1914 postcard donated by Jim Raymond features Raymond's grandfather, grocer Louis Wellmerling (left). During the Great Depression, Wellmerling served one term as Bloomington mayor.

Continued on next page...

- Information on the "Wine Me Up" Book Club, 2010 to present; and list of books read. *Donated by Paula Leifel.*
- Twelve "Bull of the Woods" Comic Strips by J.R. Williams, undated; Employee Manuals for the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio and Illinois Central Gulf railroads held by Wesley W. Erickson (1910-1987). *Donated by Sandra Hinthorn.*
- Collection relating to Lois Zimmerman Getz (1929-2020), including Carlock Grade School report cards, 1935-1941; Correspondence; and Family Genealogical Research. *Donated by Sharon Albonico.*
- Collection of correspondence to donor from relatives in Ireland; various local publications, including Old House Society annual tour booklets, 2008, 2003-14, and 2016. *Donated by Michael and Cheryl Whelan.*
- News section from January 1, 2000 Pantagraph (Y2K!). *Donated by Ruth Wilkerson.*
- Collection of letters relating to William Kerrick Bracken (1866-1938) and family archive collection. *Donated by Steve Campbell.*
- Bloomington & Normal Railway & Light Co. 100-ride coupon book, early 1900s. *Donated by DeWayne and Vickie Willhoite.*
- General Land Office warrants, Winton Carlock, 1835 and 1851; a May 1937 Woolen Mill Store promotional booklet featuring poetry by Frank L. Irvin; and other items. *Donated by Barb and Ike Schlosser.*
- Mennonite Hospital, Bloomington, annual reports, 1948-1954; and other items. *Donated by Denise Wilson.*
- Correspondence relating to the Jersey Hill Kennel business, Pedigree charts and show certificates; Papers from Lyle Kistner's employment at The Pantagraph; and other items. *Donated by Paul S. Anderson.*
- Collection of papers relating to Carl and Julia Vrooman and Adela Marion Curtis, the School of Silence, and related topics. *Donated by Elizabeth Howlett.*
- Materials relating to Towanda and Towanda public schools 1930-40s collected and saved by Winnifred Michael Nice (1919-2020). *Donated by Richard Nice.*
- Charles P. Goelzer's Bloomington Fans Association member card 1927, and other items. *Donated by Deb Spencer.*
- World War II service papers of Carleton Munday, including the typed manuscript, "Flight of the Peoria Belle," compiled by Normal R. Pickstone; and other items. *Donated by Carla Books.*
- "Welcome to Bloomington" Booklet published by the Commercial Club; Promotional Card for 1915 silent film "Trey O' Hearts" featuring Bloomington native, Cleo Madison. *Donated by David Parker.*
- Bloomington optician E.K. Crothers stationery; two-page timeline, "U.S. 66 By-Pass and Construction Notes," compiled by M.L. Powell; and other items. *Donated by Don Munson.*
- Normal Community High School Class of 1967 25th reunion booklet. *Donated by Nancy D. Anderson.*
- Collection of member booklets from local organizations, 1920s to the 1960s, including the McLean County Home Bureau, McLean County Homemakers Extension, Randolph Ladies Aid Society, Bloomingdale Community Club. *Donated by David Mills.*

Archival Materials, Photographs, Books, Objects, and other pieces of McLean County's past accessioned in to the Museum's collection from September to December 1, 2023 are represented above. If you are interested in donating an object, please visit our website at mchistory.org for more information.

Featured Recipe: Confetti Corn Cake with Creamy Cheese Sauce

CONFETTI CORNCAKE WITH CREAMY CHEESE SAUCE

Joan Widmer

2 pkgs. mixed vegetables (frozen) Salt and pepper (to taste)
 2 T. butter 1 pkg. corn muffin mix
 Cook vegetables as directed on package. Drain. Add butter and seasonings. Place into buttered baking dish. Make corn bread as directed on package; spoon over vegetables. Bake at 425° for 25 minutes or until brown. Let stand 3 minutes and invert on serving plate. This can be a one-dish meal by frying 1 pound loose hamburger—placing it on top of vegetables in baking dish before covering with the cornbread mix.

Continued Next Page.

CONFETTI CORNCAKE WITH CREAMY CHEESE SAUCE (Continued).

CREAMY CHEESE SAUCE:

2 T. butter Dash of pepper
 2 T. flour 1 1/2 c. milk
 1/2 tsp. dry mustard 1 1/2 c. Velveeta cheese (diced)
 1/2 tsp. salt

Melt butter in small saucepan. Remove from heat and blend in flour and seasonings. Slowly stir in milk and cook until mixture thickens. Add cheese and continue cooking until it melts. Serve over wedges of corncake.

Did you know the Museum's Library & Archives has one of the largest public cookbook collections in the state of Illinois? There are a lot of tasty treats and snacks in the stacks! This featured recipe comes from the 1974 publication "Our Favorite Recipes from Gridley's Kitchens" compiled by the Gridley Community Service Club. Joan Widmer (1928-2023) was born in Normal but spent most of her life in Gridley where she served on the Public Library Board and was an active member of the community for many years. If you give Joan's recipe a try, let us know how it goes! Email us at ots@mchistory.org.

Creating a Digital Connection to the Collection

The McLean County Historical Society accepted its first object into the Museum's permanent collection in the 1890s. Since then, the Museum has used the object collection as a tool for sharing McLean County's stories and collective memories.

At the turn of the 21st century, the Museum began to make a concerted effort to digitally track the information related to all 18,500 plus objects in the collection. As the database grew, the Museum began to develop ways to make it more accessible to the general public, and thus, began creating an online database in 2021.

It quickly became clear that the online project was a massive undertaking that would not happen overnight. Since then, Museum staff have worked tirelessly for the past few years to create a digital portal into the Museum's permanent collection. Although this database is still a work in progress, we are proud to announce that over 800 records have been digitized and made available online to anyone, anywhere, at any time. This unique database allows online visitors to access photos, descriptions, historical context, and biographical information about each object and the people who interacted with it.

Though we've only uploaded a fraction of our collection thus far, this work continues daily and is very time-consuming. Each object uploaded to the Online Database must first be located and moved carefully for photographing, and staff must document its condition in great detail. Depending on the object's existing information, often thorough research is then conducted into its origin - who interacted with it, where it came from, how it was used, what it is made out of, how it ended up here in the McLean County Museum of History, and so on.

This is not only a time-intensive process but also an expensive one. The photography equipment, associated labor costs, and the expense of storing the metadata attached to each object quickly adds up.

It conservatively takes about three hours of staff time and around \$100 to upload one object.

The funds raised through our Saving History Campaign empower the Museum to continue this vital digital preservation work. We are grateful to those who have donated thus far and hope to continue to receive public and private funding to save y(our) history.

Until more of our collection is available online, you can request in-person viewings of permanent collection objects via email at collections@mchistory.org.

To explore the Museum's Online Collections Database, scan the QR code, stop by the kiosk in the Merwin Gallery, or head to mchistory.pastperfectonline.com.



Do's and don'ts for IRA beneficiaries

Inheriting an IRA, as welcome as it may be, comes with complications. If you are a surviving spouse, there are special favorable choices for you, and this article is not for you. Nonspouse beneficiaries need to know a number of rules.

Do not contribute to your inherited IRA. This is not allowed, because the requirements for personal and inherited IRAs are different.

Do not try to convert your inherited IRA to a Roth IRA. This is not allowed.

Do change IRA custodians if you are not happy. However, moving the IRA to a new custodian must be done by direct transfer. Do not try to take a distribution and roll it over in 60 days, as this approach is not available for nonspouse beneficiaries of inherited IRAs.

Do take distributions from the inherited IRA, regardless of your age. If it is a traditional IRA, there will be income taxes to pay, but no penalty taxes, even if you are under age 59½. If it is a Roth IRA, there will be no taxes or penalties.

Do not leave the money in the inherited IRA for more than ten years. With a few limited exceptions, the money in an inherited IRA must be disgorged in ten years. In some cases, there may be annual Required Minimum Distributions before the ten years are up.

Do name a successor beneficiary. Failure to name a beneficiary can add time and cost to estate settlement.

Do consider a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). If you are age 70 ½ or older, you may direct a transfer of up to \$100,000 from your inherited IRA to a qualified charity. The amount of the transfer will not be included in your taxable income (which means you don't get a corresponding tax deduction if you itemize).

If you don't already have a professional tax advisor, inheriting a substantial IRA is a good time to consider getting one.

The information contained within this article is provided for informational purposes only and is current as of the date published. Please consult with your tax and legal advisors before implementing any strategies. This information is not intended to be and should not be treated as legal advice or tax advice. Readers should under no circumstances rely upon this information as a substitute for their own research or for obtaining specific legal or tax advice from their own counsel. September 2023 © 2023 M.A. Co. All rights reserved.

Plan **wisely**
to retire
confidently.

Meet with a Wealth Advisor to start your plan.



NOT
FDIC INSURED

May lose value
No bank guarantee



WEALTH MANAGEMENT

Upcoming Events

For more information on all of our upcoming events, scan the QR code or visit mchistory.org/events



crafting HISTORY

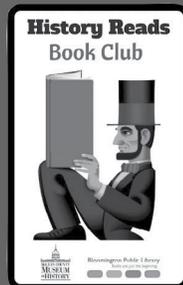
February 20 & April 16

Hands on adult learning on the third Tuesday of the every other month at 6 p.m.

Tuesday, February 5 at 7 p.m.

This quarter's read is *Mary Jane's Ghost*

Meetings held at Bloomington Public Library quarterly. Register at bloomingtonlibrary.org



Lunch & Learn

second Thursday of the month
from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m.
online and in person

1-11: *Electric Transit History* with Bill Kemp

2-8: *Game Design* with Ben Rosset & Jamie Mathy

3-14: TBA

4-11: *Creating a Sensory Garden* with Brittnay Haag

Tour de Chocolat

Friday, February 2, from 5-8 p.m.

BNBHP Panel Discussion with Children of the Booker T. Washington Home

Saturday, February 10 at 1 p.m.

We All Play Together: History of African American Music in Bloomington-Normal

Saturday, February 17 at 1 p.m.

Knit In at Normal Public Library

Saturday, February 17, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Growing Up Gen X with Erika Holst

Saturday, February 24 at 2 p.m.

50 Years of Women's Rights: an Interactive & Intergenerational Exploration with the League of Women Voters

Saturday, March 23 from 2-4 p.m.

Volunteer Reception

Wednesday, April 17 at 5 p.m.

Sweet Greeks: First Generation Immigrant Confectioners in the Heartland with Ann Flesor Beck

Saturday, April 20 at 2 p.m.

John Henderson's "One More Night" presented by pt.fwd

Tuesday, April 23 at 7 p.m.

HISTORY Makers GALA

SAVE the date for the 2024 History Makers Gala – Tuesday, June 18, 2024

Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and festivities begin at 6:15 p.m. at the Brown Ballroom in the Illinois State University Bone Student Center. Tickets go on sale beginning April 1, 2024.

The 2024 class of History Makers will be revealed at a Museum press conference on Wednesday, March 27th at 11:00 a.m. in the Courtroom and live via the Museum's YouTube channel.

For the most up to date information, please visit mchistory.org.



McLean County
MUSEUM of HISTORY

200 N. Main St. Bloomington, IL 61701

mchistory.org | 309-827-0428 | @mchistorymuseum

Open Monday-Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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MYSTERY HISTORY

The old Unitarian Church of Bloomington was the last issue's Mystery History photo. It was located downtown at the corner of East and Jefferson streets (the site of PNC Bank today). Its successor—what's now the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal opened on Emerson Street in 1960.

Spot-on history sleuths who identified the long-gone church included Ruth Cobb, Jeffrey Deaver, Carol and Roger Elliott, Gary Faulk, Gary Fillingham, Robert E. Handley, JoAnna Mink, and Nancy Osterman. As always, if we left anyone off the list, our apologies.

For this Mystery History go-around, can you identify the residence behind this gentleman? Need a clue? It was located in Normal. Hey, we just used the past tense in the previous sentence, so that's another clue! If you know the name of the building—and better yet, a little bit of its history—reach out to Museum Librarian Bill Kemp at 309-827-0428 or bkemp@mchistory.org. And remember, when it comes to history ... think local!

