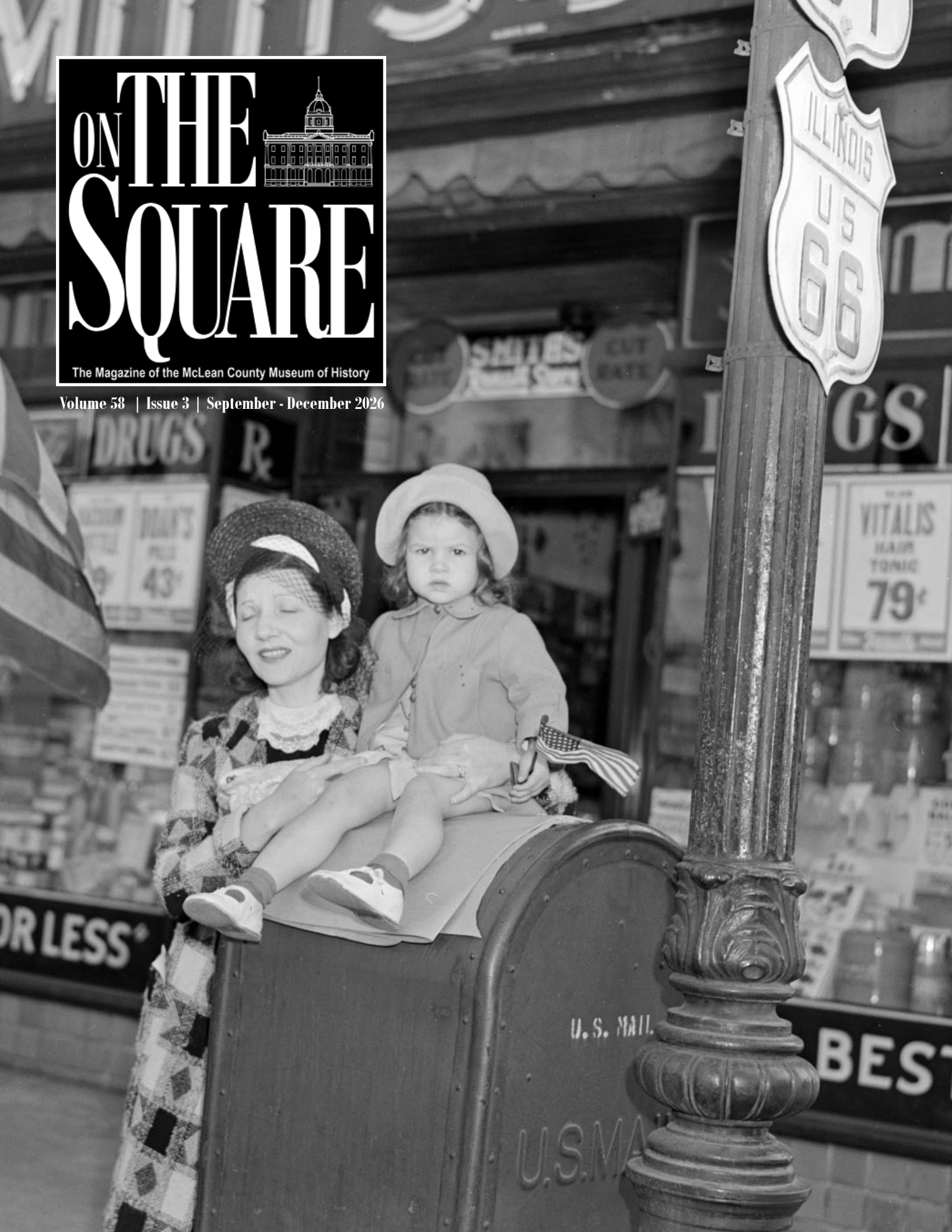


ON THE SQUARE



The Magazine of the McLean County Museum of History

Volume 58 | Issue 3 | September - December 2026



Cover Photo

An unidentified woman stands next to a child sitting on a mailbox during the 1940 Memorial Day Parade. They are standing near Smith's Drug Store at 101 N. Main St. in Downtown Bloomington. The drug store was located inside the Miller Davis building from 1932-1969.

The iconic Route 66 shield sits casually in the corner of the image. It reminds us that the Mother Road wasn't always an iconic symbol of Americana. Rather, its humble origins were that of a mundane federal infrastructure project.

This photo from the Museum's Pantagraph Negatives Collection and thousands more like it are available to anyone, anywhere, at anytime via the Illinois Digital Archives at bit.ly/McIDA.

Museum Staff

Bailey Babbitt	<i>Collections Technician</i>
Jackie Cain	<i>Curator of Collections</i>
Kathi Davis	<i>Visitor Experience Assistant</i>
Julie Emig	<i>Executive Director</i>
Rochelle Gridley	<i>Assistant Archivist</i>
Eric Hansen	<i>Director of Volunteers</i>
Micaela Harris	<i>Director of Communications</i>
Bill Kemp	<i>Librarian</i>
Jana Kiefer	<i>Assistant Archivist</i>
Brandy Maloney	<i>Development Assistant</i>
Emily McCusker	<i>Director of Youth & Family Education</i>
Maria Mears	<i>Curator of Historical Interpretation</i>
Torii Moré	<i>Curator of Digital Humanities</i>
Lisa Novak	<i>Director of Visitor Experience</i>
Norris Porter	<i>Assistant Executive Director & Development Director</i>
Candace Summers	<i>Senior Director of Education</i>
Katie Sutrina-Haney	<i>Archivist</i>

Museum Board

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Tom Eder	Pamela Muirhead	Ann Sullivan
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Elizabeth Johnston	Allison Petty – 1 st Vice President	Sheahon Zenger
John J. Killian	Robert Porter – Secretary	

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From the Desk of Executive Director Emig



The other day, I took a phone call. My office phone rings a lot, though not nearly as often as Librarian Bill Kemp's.

John Rettick, who serves on the Board of Commissioners for the Central Illinois Regional Airport, called to ask if the Museum could help restore the brick base of the Charles Lindbergh historic marker on Stringtown Road. The marker commemorates the spot where Lindbergh bailed out of his mail plane during a particularly rough flight in 1926, just a few years before his record-breaking journey across the Atlantic. Because we are always interested in preserving connections between local history and national events, we will soon make a field trip to Stringtown Road to see what we can do.

It's a seemingly small request, but it illustrates something important: preserving our collective memory requires intention. It requires people who notice what is worth remembering — and who are willing to do something about it.

The McLean County Museum of History receives requests like this every day. In just a few short months, several local organizations have asked for help bringing their history to life. We were excited to work with the Paul A. Funk Foundation to dedicate an Illinois State Historical Society Marker commemorating Research Acres, where groundbreaking crop research occurred for more than 134 consecutive years. And when we provided a special tour for Illinois Prairie Community Foundation staff, we were happy to share Director Erik Rankin's high school yearbook photo!

Yes, I love the big moments. The opening of *A More Perfect Union* at the McLean County Arts Center as part of America 250 or the Route 66 Light Show on the Museum façade in collaboration with Visit BN. These moments are spectacular. They are bold and visible.

But the big moments are possible because of the daily, steadfast work of Museum staff and volunteers, supported by the generosity of our members. Our mission — to preserve, educate, and collaborate to share the diverse stories of our community — is in the phone calls we answer, the artifacts we care for, the stories we research, the partnerships we build, and the seemingly small moments that connect the past to the present.

I recently watched a young girl visit *More Than a Game! A Community History of Baseball & Softball*, presented by Beer Nuts Brand Snacks & The Shirk Family, with her grandparents. She discovered that by pressing a button, she could hear the chants of the BNGSA Angels at a 2025 game. Delighted, she grabbed her grandparents and pulled them over to listen.

A sound from today, connected to sounds from decades ago. A young girl, connected to generations of girls and women who played the game. A local story, connected to a larger story about equity and change.

That is what museums do. We preserve the things that help us remember. We connect those things to the stories that shaped us. And we create opportunities for people today to see themselves in the history that came before them. Sometimes that work looks spectacular. More often, it looks like a phone call, a field trip, a compact, a photograph, or a little girl pressing a button. These are the little things that make the long days and "other duties as assigned" worth it. We are Your Museum — Your History!

NEW MEMBERS

as of August 23, 2026

Rachele Ackerman
Robert & JoEllen Bahnsen
Janean Baird
Brian & Carrie Bangert
Emily & Leonard Bell
Gina Bianchi
Dan & Lynnette Bixby
Joseph Blaney
Bloomington Public Library
Rachel Brandt
Karla Chandler-Huffman
Belinda Click
Yvonne Clogston
Sherry Cluver
Patrick & Susan Cortesi
Catharine Crockett
Thomas Crumpler
Lois "Bo" Cryder
Chris Denney
Herman & Sarah Dick
Sean Fagan
Mehl Feldkamp

Melinda Fischer
Bob & Linda Fisher
Rebecca Foley
Joe Gibson
Elaine Goldfarb
Carolyn Hansen
Eric Hansen
John & Rita Hensley
Debra Honegger
Robert Hoy
Michelle Hrubesky
Charles & Sue Hurliman
Lou Ann Jacobs
Chad Kahl
Kathy & Kent King-Nobles
Christie Lau
Deborah & Walter Lindberg
Rob & Rebecca Mentzer
Mary & Phil Mitchell
Jim Bob Morris
Juliana Nelson
Renee Nestler
Normal Public Library

John & Lisa Novak
Meghan O'Neal Rogozinski &
Jon Rogozinski
Carol Brill Parish
Randy & Nancy Phillips
Debora L Rhodes
James & Faith Russell
Dora Scheer
Felicitas Sebastian & James
Moeller
Steve & Linda Spencer
Deborah Stokes
Cassy Taylor
Eric & Cassidy Teague
Tina Thomas
Mollie Ward & the Ward
Shaw Family
Todd Willoughby
Katie Wills
Clete & Jeanie Winkelmann
Jeff Woodard
Chuck & Gwen Yurieci



Presenting Sponsor: BEER NUTS Brand Snacks & the Shirk Family.

Major Support Sponsors include: Rochelle & Neil Gridley, Anonymous in honor of Louis E. Davis Post No. 56's 1964 State Champion Baseball Team, Anonymous in honor of the Dolan & Behr Families, and Ed & Sally Rust.

Additional Contributions from: Pantagraph Media, Bob & Julie Dobski – Rob Dob's Restaurant & Bar, Bob & Charmelle Watkins, Anonymous in honor of Joe & Nadine Yurieci, and WGLT.

Special Donations were made honoring: the Normal CornBelters, Larry Carius, Norman & Annette Eder, the Illinois State Redbirds 1969 National Champions, Family Bonds Created Through The Joy of Baseball, Bob Williams, Jacob Schmidt, Steve King, ForeverLawn Heartland, and Casper Brewing Company.

Notes from Norris



November is Member Appreciation Month

November is Member Appreciation Month! Members will receive a 20% discount in our *Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop* AND at the shops at Miller Park Zoo and the Children's Discovery Museum. Plus, watch for news in late October about member exclusive behind-the-scenes tours on Saturdays November 7, 14, and 21.

Invest in Strengthening Our Digital Backbone

Today, sharing history requires more than exhibit galleries and archival collections. Museums must also invest in the digital infrastructure to preserve collections, protect important records, and make history accessible online. **Within the next six months, the Museum must raise \$20,000 to replace its principal operating server — the core technology that supports our daily operations, digital collections, and communications.**

Without this critical infrastructure, we cannot effectively preserve, manage, or share our collections with our community. Watch for a mailing in late October as we kick off our end-of-year appeal. Your support will help strengthen the Museum's digital backbone and ensure our shared history remains accessible for generations to come.

History Makers

On Thursday, June 18, we hosted the 2026 History Makers Gala after a one-day postponement due to severe weather. While 430 guests were originally registered, 340 attended to celebrate our 2026 History Makers: Melinda Fischer, John McIntyre, Feli Sebastian, and Camille & Art Taylor. Thank you to everyone who supported the Gala! The Museum netted \$29,248.35 to support our educational programming and general operating expenses.

Believe it or not, it's now time to nominate individuals for consideration as a 2027 History Maker. Nomination details are available online at bit.ly/Nominate-History-Maker.

The deadline for submissions is October 31, 2026.

Legacy

A planned gift is a meaningful way to support the Museum while creating a lasting impact for future generations. Your generosity helps preserve our community's history and ensures it can be shared for years to come. Please visit mchistory.org/legacy or contact Norris to learn more.

More Than a Game!

We opened our exhibit in July and have been overwhelmed by its positive reception. Thank you to our donors, sponsors, members, volunteers, and staff who helped bring it to life! Our sponsors are listed to the left on page four. The exhibit will remain open through 2032. Contact Norris Porter if you or your organization are interested in partnering with the Museum to amplify our community's robust history.

Upcoming Events

September

The Underground Railroad in McLean County with Bill Kemp
Thursday, September 3, at 6:30 p.m. at Bloomington Public Library

Closed for Labor Day on Monday, September 7

Walking Tour: Lincoln in Downtown Bloomington – SOLD OUT
Saturday, September 12, at 1:30 p.m. **Tickets Required**

A View from the Top: Inside the Museum Dome Tour – SOLD OUT
Tuesday, September 15, at 5:30 p.m. **Tickets Required**

Premiere of the *Post Amerikan: The Newspaper That Wouldn't Die*
Friday, September 18, at 7 p.m. at the Normal Theater **Tickets Required**

Democracy Dialogues: "All Men Are Created Equal"
Tuesday, September 22, 6:30 p.m. at Heartland Community College

Lincoln's Lost Speech Found: Origin of the Illinois Republican Party
Monday, September 28, 6 to 8 p.m. at Heartland Community College
\$35 per person, registration required.

Closed for Staff Development Day on Thursday, September 30

October

Mid Century Modernist Home Tour of Bloomington-Normal
Saturday, October 3, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. **Tickets Required**

Closed for Staff Development Day on Monday, October 5

Mourning in McLean with Candace Summers
Thursday, October 8, 7 p.m. at Bloomington Public Library

Lunch, Learn & Listen: Cemetery Customs & Traditions of Days Gone By, Dining with the Dead at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery
Friday, October 9 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. \$39 Registration Fee.

Institute Day Programming for Kids – Native Nature
Friday, October 9 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Free Admission in Honor of Indigenous Peoples' Day
Monday, October 12

Closed for Staff Development Day on Wednesday, October 14

Lucy Pettengill: Underground Railroad Operator with Laura Keys
Thursday, October 15, 6:30 p.m. at Bloomington Public Library

National Immigrants Day Program
Wednesday, October 28, *more details coming soon!*

Downtown Bloomington Trick or Treat
Friday, October 30, from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Día de Muertos Celebration
Saturday, October 31, from 3 to 7 p.m.

Upcoming Events

November

History Reads Book Club – *Onward to Chicago: Freedom Seekers and the Underground Railroad*

Wednesday, November 4, 7 p.m. at Bloomington Public Library

Please note this session is on a Wednesday instead of a Tuesday due to the election.

Institute Day Programming for Kids – Native Nature

Friday, November 6 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Knit In at the Museum

Saturday, November 7, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Joseph Rodney: Freedom Seeker on the Illinois Central Railroad with Darrel Dexter

Saturday, November 14, 2 p.m. at Bloomington Public Library

Democracy Dialogues: “Consent of the Governed”

Thursday, November 19, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the YWCA

Closed for Thanksgiving on Thursday, November 26

NOVEMBER IS MEMBER APPRECIATION MONTH! *Details on Page 5.*

December

Concert in the Courtroom – TBA

Tuesday, December 1, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Holidays Under the Dome

Friday, December 4, from 5 to 8 p.m.

Saturday, December 5, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Concert in the Courtroom – Illinois Symphony Orchestra’s Around the Town String Quartet

Tuesday, December 8, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Concert in the Courtroom – TBA

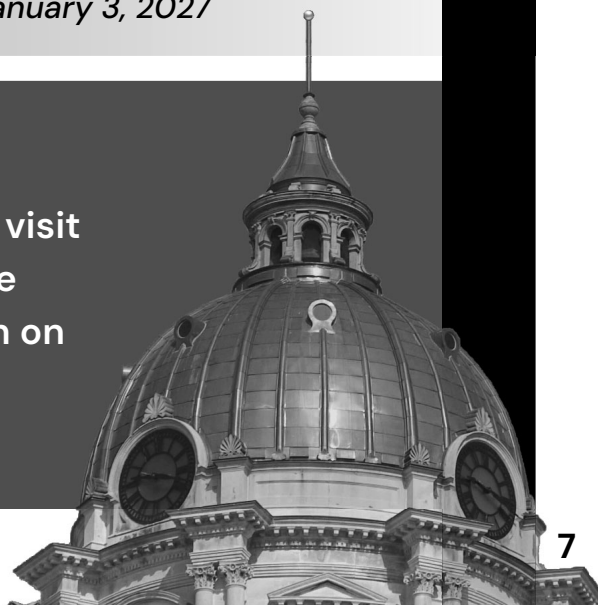
Tuesday, December 15, from 5:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Museum Closed for the Holidays

Thursday, December 24, 2026 through Sunday, January 3, 2027



Please scan the QR code or visit mchistory.org/events for the most up to date information on all of our upcoming events!



No School? Come learn at the Museum!

Last year, we received feedback from community partners that the parents in our community were seeking programs for school nonattendance days.

In response, we offered *Day Off, Art On*, a day-long art history program. Participants worked with local artists and Museum staff to learn how to view, appreciate, and understand art.

We also provided a session of uninterrupted art-making, during which students were encouraged to create anything they could imagine.

One student sent us this message after the day ended:

"I just wanted to say thank you for arranging this program. I had a lot of fun and learned so much. I didn't realize how much there was to know about McLean County or this museum. I especially enjoyed working with different art mediums and getting to go behind the scenes at the museum. I would absolutely love to participate in a similar program again in the future."

This semester, we're continuing our Institute Day programming with Native Nature, an exploration of Illinois' wildlife, its history, and its relationship to our community. In this partnership with the Ecology Action Center, students will learn about the history of the prairie, invasive species, the importance of pollinators, and how we can care for the natural world around us. These lessons will come to life with hands-on activities like air-dry clay pottery, custom card games, seed planting, and more.

This program will be held once on October 9 and once on November 6. Please make sure your student has the day off before registering them. District 87 students should register for the October date. Unit 5 students should register for the November date.

Native Nature is available for students in grades 5–8. The cost to participate in Native Nature is \$50 per student, or \$45 for Museum Members and households with multiple children registered.

If the cost of this program would prohibit your student from participating, please reach out to Emily McCusker at emccusker@mchistory.org to discuss your options. Snacks will be provided, but students should bring their own lunches.

Please visit mchistory.org/institute-day-programming to learn more.

TOP IMAGE: Director of Youth & Family Education, Emily McCusker, talks to students during "Day Off, Art On" in January.

BOTTOM IMAGE: Art made by students during the first session in January.



Traveling Exhibit Stopping in Bloomington to Share Illinois' Underground Railroad History

One of the core principles of the Museum's mission is educating our community about the many facets of our history, including topics that have long been overlooked. One such topic receiving renewed attention is the Underground Railroad in Illinois and those who helped enslaved people escape to freedom.

Exploring this chapter of our nation's history feels especially timely as we commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States.

In partnership with Bloomington Public Library and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area (Looking for Lincoln), we're bringing the traveling exhibit *Journey to Freedom: Illinois' Underground Railroad* to Bloomington Public Library this fall.

The exhibit will be on display September 3 through November 30, 2026, in Community Room 1 during regular library hours.

Created by Looking for Lincoln, a Springfield nonprofit dedicated to preserving and sharing Abraham Lincoln's Illinois story, *Journey to Freedom* is one of two Underground Railroad exhibits the organization has loaned to more than a dozen Illinois communities since 2025.

The exhibit tells the stories of freedom seekers and the multiracial network of conductors who helped them pursue freedom and dignity, often at great personal risk.

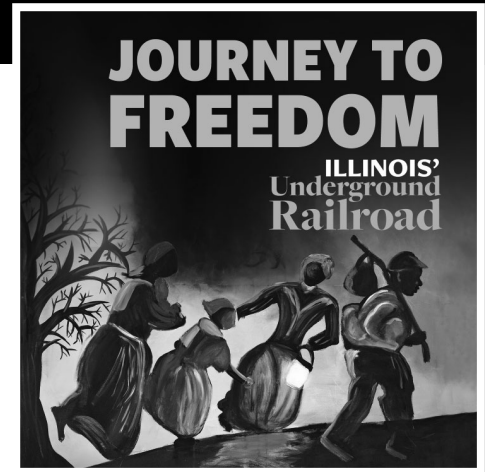
Visitors will explore communities that served as stops on the Underground Railroad, from Cairo and Springfield to Quincy and Chicago, as well as Brooklyn/Freedom Village, Miller Grove, Rocky Fork, Galesburg, Jacksonville, New Philadelphia, and Mount Hope in McLean County.

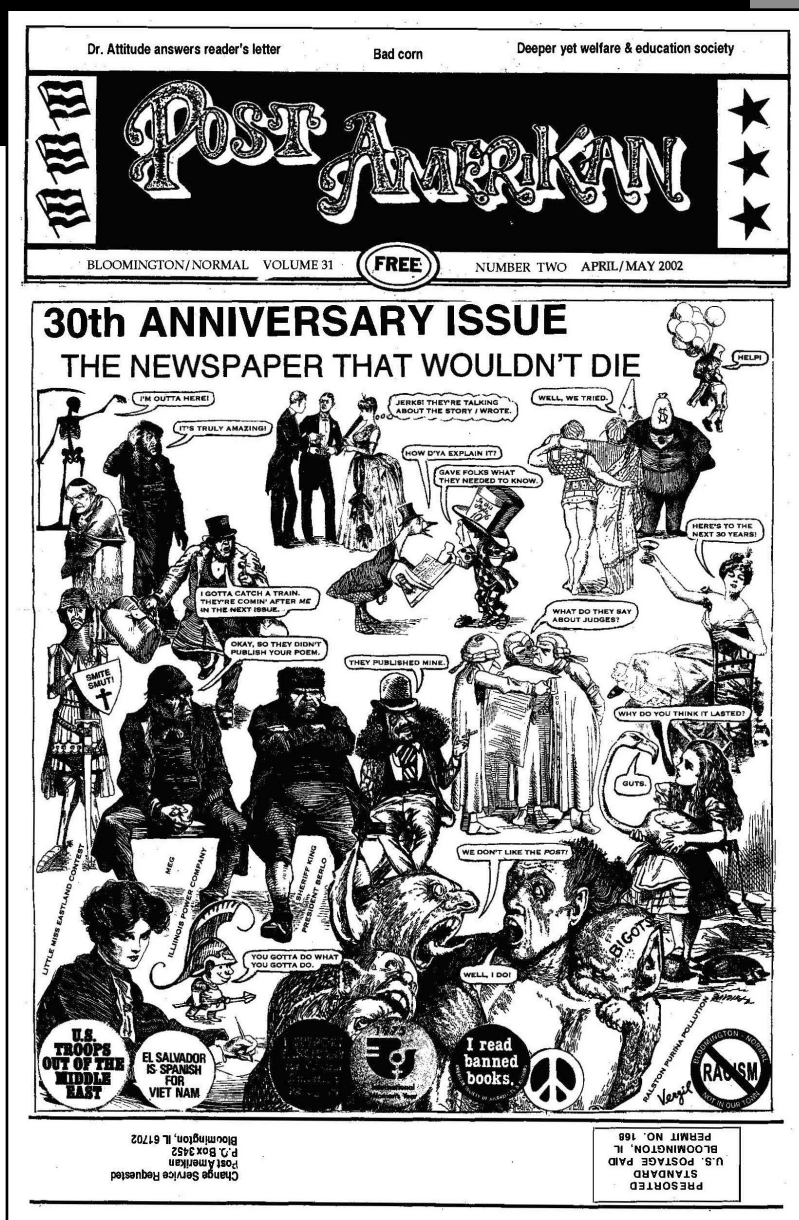
First-person interpretive videos, historical information, and custom illustrations bring these stories and the people behind them to life. The Museum is grateful to Bloomington Public Library for hosting the exhibit and helping make it accessible to our community and surrounding area.

A series of free companion programs will be held at the Library during the exhibit. All programs are open to the public and will be livestreamed on the Library's YouTube page.

- ◆ The Underground Railroad in McLean County: Separating Fact from Fiction, with Bill Kemp
Thursday, September 3 at 6:30 p.m.
- ◆ Lucy Pettengill, Underground Railroad Operator, with Laura Keys
Thursday, October 15 at 6:30 p.m.
- ◆ Joseph Rodney: Freedom Seeker on the Illinois Central Railroad, with Darrel Dexter
Saturday, November 14 at 2 p.m.

Please visit mchistory.org or contact/events, email education@mchistory.org, or call us at 309-827-0428 for more information.





As I read the issues of the Post Amerikan spanning 32 years of our country's history, from Baby Boomers to Gen Z, I was touched by the idealism, audacity and hope the community that gathered around the Post Amerikan exemplified.

I admired that community's tenacity, their ethos, their energy, their intelligence, their humor, and their desire to make a positive difference. I wanted to examine this community's dynamism as a catalyst for synergistic change in the evolution of this small Midwest town in the corn belt — and as a microcosm of what was happening nationwide. BloNo was, and is, an example to all.

Who would've thought?

— Gary Fritz



"To our early revolutionaries, the press was the chief guardian of the principles of the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson said that 'the security of all is a free press...The agitation it produces must be submitted to. It is necessary to keep the waters pure.' The Post Amerikan follows in this great American tradition, bringing to light abuses by those who would use their power for their own personal convenience or gain."

— The Post Amerikan, Vol. 3, No. 9

New Documentary Highlights the *Post Amerikan*'s Legacy and the Museum's Role in Preserving the Country's Longest Running Underground Newspaper

The *Post Amerikan* is the oldest continuously running alternative newspaper in the United States — and it was based right here in Bloomington–Normal.

Born from the social unrest of the 1970s, the all-volunteer paper covered national and local issues with a clear point of view, challenging mainstream media and embracing controversy.

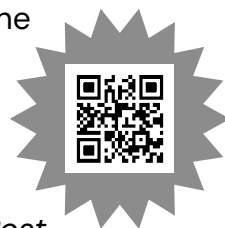
It opposed the Vietnam War and advocated for Black, women's, and gay liberation. Locally, the *Post Amerikan* exposed abuses of power, including the abhorrent conditions of the McLean County Jail. From 1972 until its final issue in 2004, the paper told stories other outlets would not.

On Friday, September 18, 2026 at 7 p.m., the public can experience the *Post Amerikan* like never before, on the big screen at the Normal Theater.

Gary Fritz, a retired genetics professor turned documentarian, spent the last five years producing a feature-length film chronicling the story of the *Post Amerikan*.

Colleagues at EIU who previously worked on the newspaper introduced Fritz to *The Post Amerikan* and many of its contributors. In 2020, Fritz proposed and facilitated an agreement whereby the Booth Library at Eastern Illinois University would digitize, free of charge, the complete set of *Post Amerikan* issues held by the McLean County Museum of History.

Every issue of *The Post Amerikan* is now available online. Scan the QR code or visit mchistory.org/research/post-amerikan to begin reading!



This collection allowed Fritz to research and complete his second documentary, *The Post Amerikan: The Newspaper that Wouldn't Die*. The self-funded film is 110 minutes long. The September 18 showing is an exclusive opportunity to view the documentary. Fritz is considering entering it into the Mendocino Film Festival next year and will likely make it available to stream online after that.

The evening of September 18 will also feature a panel discussion after the showing, including a Q&A with people who worked on the paper: Laurie Dahlberg, Mark Silverstein, Susan O'Neal, Chuck Willer, and Scott DeWitt.



The screening of this film in Bloomington–Normal was made possible with contributions by the following sponsors: ACLU Illinois, Ecology Action Center, McLean County Museum of History, PFLAG, Prairie Pride Coalition, and several Illinois State University departments, organizations, and programs including the Department of History, Milner Library, Queer Coalition, School of Communication, Center for Civic Engagement, Department of Government and Politics, and the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program.

Tickets are \$8 for adults and free for students. Get yours at the Normal Theater box office or by visiting mchistory.org/events.



Original art from the *Post Amerikan* in 1975!



MID CENTURY MODERNIST ARCHITECTURAL HOME TOUR

Saturday, October 3, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The 2026 Mid Century Modernist Architectural Home Tour is an independent, community-organized event encouraging education and preservation of mid-century modern architecture. Proceeds from the tour benefit the McLean County Arts Center, McLean County Museum of History & Bloomington-Normal Youth Symphony!

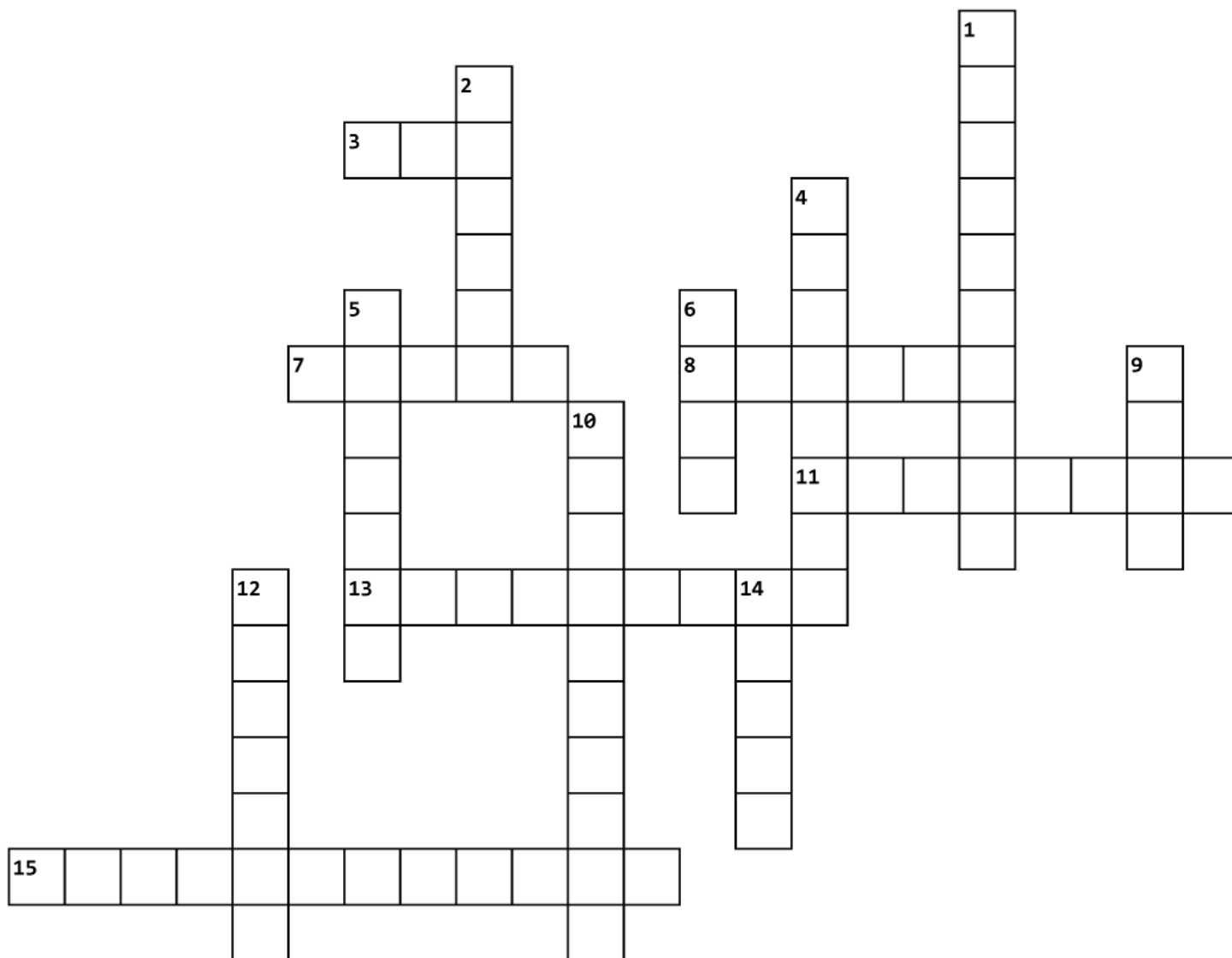
This one-day event invites participants to witness the artistry of MCM architecture in BN through a self-guided, interpretive tour of ten exteriors and grounds and an introductory panel presentation. Plus, the McLean County Arts Center (MCAC) is hosting an accompanying exhibit of MCM decorative arts in the Armstrong Gallery.

The panel presentation will begin at 10 a.m. and includes a 15-minute performance by members of the Bloomington-Normal Youth Symphony. Panelists include the Museum's Librarian Bill Kemp, Museum board member and architect Russel Francois, Doug Johnson (MCAC Executive Director & Artist), Seth Wheeler (Preservation Advocate & Salvage Practitioner), and Mercy Davidson (Director of Planning & Zoning for the Town of Normal). Pip Ong will moderate the 75-minute presentation at the MCAC.

Tickets are \$30 per person. Each ticket includes admission to the panel discussion, musical performance, and exhibit at the MCAC, plus a self guided exterior tour of 10 mid-century modern homes, and limited edition artist-designed tour materials highlighting each home's unique architectural features and historical provenance.

Get your tickets online at bit.ly/MidCentHome26 or in person at the Museum's Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop.

Visit mchistory.org/events or email mcm.bn2026@gmail.com for more information.



Across

3. The Post Amerikan has been referred to as "the newspaper that wouldn't ___"
 7. The Museum offers several guided _____ every year
 8. McLean County's northernmost city on Route 66
 11. Member Appreciation Month
 13. Eastern Illinois University _____ the Post Amerikan (Hint: see page 11)
 15. The country's oldest continuously operating underground newspaper

Down

1. A term used to reference Harold Gregor's vibrant paintings. (Hint: see page 17)
 2. The Museum is raising money for a new one (Hint: see page 5)
 4. Consent of the _____ (Hint: topic for the last Democracy Dialogues session on 11-19-26)
 5. Avenue running north-south through Bloomington-Normal + a McLean County village on Rt. 66
 6. Acronym for the Museum
 9. The Stevenson-_____ Library is the official name of the Museum's Library & Archives
 10. We're celebrating the Route 66 _____ this year
 12. The Museum is open every _____ until 8 p.m. with free admission (Hint: see back cover)
 14. "All men are created _____" (Hint: topic for the Democracy Dialogues session on 9-22-26)

Answers listed to the left on page 12!

NEW TO COLLECTIONS

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

- ◇ Compilation of Madge Cary Turnipseed research relating to Saybrook and the Cheney's Grove area, and a collection of papers relating to same. *Donated by Melanie Turnipseed Kenney.*
- ◇ Artist's sketchbook, Native Americans and other subjects, mostly pencils, by Frank Edward Johnson (1935–1987). *Donated by Sarah E. Robinson.*
- ◇ Card with slogan, "The Bitterness of Poor Quality Remains Long after the Sweetness of Cheap Price Is Forgotten;" and other items. *Donated by Sybil Stern Mervis.*
- ◇ Letter, Owen J. Reeves, Dean of the Bloomington Law School, Illinois Wesleyan University, to Sigmund Livingston, 1895, regarding academic prize. *Donated by Laurie Livingston.*
- ◇ Large collection of papers from Walter (1891–1950) and Georgia Alma Whitfield Meers (1887–1971), including scrapbooks, condolence telegrams, and more. *Donated by Carol Parish and her two late sisters, Lynda Comerford and Rosemary Brill.*
- ◇ Papers relating to Harold and Anna Mary Nelson, and their son Roger Russell Nelson (1947–2026), including records relating to Elegant Legacy Stables. *Donated by Patrick and Leslie Yocum in memory of Roger Nelson.*
- ◇ Additions to previous donation of church papers, including a Walther League record book, 1959–62; Ladies Aid Society records; large collection of Sunday bulletins; and more. *Donated by Zion Lutheran Church of Danvers.*
- ◇ Five maps, including Conoco Travel Bureau, Century of Progress Exposition, 1934; Governor Small's Record on Hard Roads, 1922; and more. *Donated by Wendell Sutton.*
- ◇ Letter, Adlai E. Stevenson II to "My Fellow Democrats," April 18, 1954, on Passavant Memorial Hospital (Chicago) stationery, facsimile. *Donated by John Biaggi.*
- ◇ Advertisement, circa 1970, Paul F. Beich Co., "The Kid Pleasers" and "Your Halloween Money-Makers," featuring donor's mother Barabra Felmley Funk, and two Beich sisters, Eleen and Julie Beich. *Donated by Duncan Funk.*
- ◇ Poster, "Pubs of BloNo," 2012; Heyworth High School alumni roster, 1878–1973; and more. *Donated by Terri Ryburn.*
- ◇ LP record, "A Moment of Yet," Normal Community High School Experimental Ensemble, Black Flag Bonsai Club label, 2026. *Donated by Candace Summers.*
- ◇ Addition to existing Ronald E. Cotner Collection — U.S. Naval Submarine School course notebook, Korean War-era. *Donated by Elizabeth McGinn.*
- ◇ Collection of Lucy J. Koehler "That Old House" columns from the weekly *McLean County Community News*, 1988–1991; three household expense ledgers kept by Louis and Marquerite Koehler, 1946–1959. *Donated by Candace J. Koehler and the estate of James F. Koehler.*
- ◇ Abstract of title for lot in Briarwood Subdivision, Bloomington–Normal. *Donated by Willa Cooper Kingdon and Sharon Cooper Carr.*
- ◇ Additional papers relating to the Kerfoot and DeVore families, including Lester W. Kerfoot's (1916–1993) United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners members cards, dues books, and more. *Donated by Kevin Lowery.*
- ◇ BroMenn Service Auxiliary papers, including meeting minutes, programs, and much more, circa 1925 to 2012. *Donated by Carle BroMenn Service Auxiliary.*
- ◇ Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Railroad, "The Alton Route" promotional booklet, circa 1948; Majestic Theatre, Bloomington, March 13, 1941, ticket for police pension fundraiser; and more. *Donated by Steve Gossard.*
- ◇ Garfield School (one-room school in Dry Grove Township) papers; Normal Community High School Class of 1959 reunion materials; and more. *Donated by Phylis VerSteegh.*
- ◇ Three Illinois State Normal University theater programs, 1946–47, all featuring the donor's father, Warren Craig; and more. *Donated by Shirley Craig.*
- ◇ Large collection of papers relating to Downs history, including material on schools and Methodist Church; and more. *Donated by Mary Jantze.*
- ◇ Papers, including correspondence, cards, school records, and more, relating to the Arrowsmith and Weedman families. *Donated by Roney Scott.*
- ◇ Journal, 2004–2022, of Elizabeth Diane "Liz" Jones (1945–2022) of the Twin Cities, including supporting material. *Donated by Lisa Novak.*
- ◇ Arthur J. Bill pocket diary, 1877. *Donated by Linda Bill Reavill.*

NEW TO COLLECTIONS

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

- ◇ Pickett School, Normal Township, Patrons Club records, 1919–1989, including minute books, scrapbook, and more materials collected by donor's mother, Bonnie Mohr. *Donated by Ray Mohr.*
- ◇ Collection of papers, mostly financial, relating to John Harvey Elliott (1816–1898); and more. *Donated by Jim White, A. Gridley Antiques.*
- ◇ Christmas card from the Darwin Rust family, 1951. *Donated by Jerry Gilbert.*
- ◇ VHS tape, "The Heart of the Corn Belt," Funk Trust Farm, no date; schedule and handout for Black Lives Matter retreat, August 26, 2017; and more. *Donated by Torii Moré.*
- ◇ Collection of papers relating to Walt Bittner (1917–2015), former Bloomington council member and mayor, including "Historical Sketch of City Hall Building at Monroe & East Street." *Donated by his daughter Pam Bittner Merrill.*
- ◇ Papers, including campaign materials, related to donor's political and civic activities, 1960s–1970s. *Donated by Margaret Chasson, the first woman to win elected office in Bloomington.*
- ◇ Music CDs, Chuck Senrick, "Live After Dark," 2007; and Chaepter, "Dragon of Shame," 2026. *Donated by former intern Aidan Coyne.*
- ◇ Five letters, various dates and correspondents, 1856 to 1916. *Donated by Sarah M. Lindenbaum.*
- ◇ Written remarks by donor on behalf of local ACLU chapter, from five public events, 2025–26. *Donated by Carol Koos.*

- ◇ Collection of papers relating to Harber Bros Co., Bloomington, and attorneys Oglevee and Franklin, mostly 1910s–1920s. *Donated by Kristin Wilkinson.*
- ◇ Items related to 1972 "Student Historian of the Year" award through the Illinois State Historical Society. *Donated by Ann Chasson.*
- ◇ Packet from the Bloomington–Normal Newcomer's Club, with letter from Maureen Zinser, early 1940s. *Donated by Dave Blunk.*
- ◇ Souvenir program, "The Original Passion Play," Bloomington, 1950s, signed by cast in which donor played an ascending angel. *Donated by Laurine Wellman.*

OBJECTS

- ◇ Hand-woven wool trapper's blanket, c. 1880s; two children's band uniforms, c. 1930s; Wool shirt, c. 1880–1900; Women's ice skates, c. 1860s–1880s; and Barber's chair by Emil J. Paidar Co., c. 1930s. *Donated by the Danvers Historical Society.*
- ◇ American Locomotive Builder's Plate, c. 1945. *Donated by Steve Gossard.*
- ◇ Sunnyfield Farm seed bag, and watercolor and gouache card by Harold Gregor, c. 2000s. *Donated by Marlene Gregor.*

Featured Artifact

Harold Gregor (1929–2018) was a painter, printmaker, and Professor Emeritus at Illinois State University. He is known for his bright, colorful "flatscapes" and is the first resident of McLean County to have their work hang in the White House. He was well loved by former President Barack Obama and his family.

Harold and his wife, Marlene, picked up this seed bag at a flea market in Towanda. According to Marlene, it inspired his iconic "flatscape" series, some of which can be seen at the Central Illinois Regional Airport and OSF St. Joseph's Hospital.



NEW TO COLLECTIONS

PHOTOGRAPHS

- ◇ Collection of photographs mostly relating to Saybrook schools. *Donated by Melanie Turnipseed Kenney.*
- ◇ Earl M. Brickey's farewell party at Lucca Grill, February 18, 1949; Park Methodist Church, Bloomington, Crusaders class, 1955; and more. *Donated by Terry Aldridge.*
- ◇ Portrait of Bloomington attorney and historian, Ezra Morton Prince (1831-1908). *Donated by Isabella Pedone.*
- ◇ Collection of photographs relating to Walter and Georgia Alma Whitfield Meers pertaining to family life and farm management. *Donated by Carol Parish and her two late sisters, Lynda Comerford and Rosemary Brill.*
- ◇ Photographs relating to Harold and Anna Mary Nelson, and their son Roger Russell Nelson. *Donated by Patrick and Leslie Yocum in honor of Roger Nelson.*
- ◇ Collection detailing projects by Tri-Valley High School students at the Grand Village of the Kickapoo Park, outside of LeRoy, 1997-98; project to paint patriotic mural on Tom and Shelley Bruning's barn east of Tri-Valley Middle School in the weeks after 9/11; and more. *Donated by retired Tri-Valley social sciences teacher, Mark McBride.*
- ◇ Photographs relating to the BroMenn Service Auxiliary, various dates, mostly latter half of the 20th century. *Donated by Carle BroMenn Service Auxiliary.*
- ◇ Collection of photos detailing Ronald O. Lee's time in the Air Force, 1950s. *Donated by his great niece, Kimberly Beier Cline.*
- ◇ Photos relating to Garfield School, Dry Grove Township; Normal Community High School Class of 1959 reunions; and more. *Donated by Phylis VerSteegh.*
- ◇ Collection of photos mostly related to the Village of Downs and its history. *Donated by Mary Jantze.*
- ◇ Swedish Methodist Episcopal Church, Bloomington, 1912 confirmation class. *Donated by Dave Joens.*
- ◇ Photos from the Arrowsmith and Weedman families, various dates. *Donated by Roney Scott.*
- ◇ Two picture postcards — Dan's Modern Motel, Normal; Mennonite Hospital, Bloomington. *Donated by Jerry Gilbert.*
- ◇ Photographs from 1969 Bloomington City Council campaign; and other subjects. *Donated by Margaret Chasson.*
- ◇ Set of photos from 1972 "Student Historian of the Year" program sponsored by the Illinois State Historical Society. *Donated by Ann Chasson.*
- ◇ Wide-ranging collection of photos related to the Kerfoot and DeVore families. *Donated by Kevin Lowery.*
- ◇ Two photo collages showcasing Bloomington-Normal commercial printers and print shops, including Gummerman, Lang-Fuller, and others. *Donated by Carol and Chuck Long.*
- ◇ Jolly Fellows (young men's social club), tenth annual banquet, Bloomington, 1942. *Donated by Paul B. Van Ness.*

BOOKS

- ◇ *1926 Reminiscences*, Saybrook High School yearbook. *Donated by Melanie Turnipseed Kenney.*
- ◇ *American Years* (Doubleday, Doran & Co., 1938), by Harold Sinclair. *Donated by Karen Kleinhand DeSilva, in memory of Scott Sinclair, wife Karen Gregory, and son Jack.*
- ◇ *The Barbaric Heart: Faith, Money, and the Crisis of Nature*, 2009, written and signed by Curtis White. *Donated by Kathryn Kerr.*
- ◇ *The Legacy*, 1990, signed by the three main authors. *Donated by Terri Ryburn.*
- ◇ *20 Minutes from Home* written and signed by former Pantagraph photographer Robert Ringham; and *En Plein Air* by Ciel Baptiste, 2025. *Donated by Torii Moré.*
- ◇ *Atlas of Great Lakes Indian History* (University of Oklahoma, 1987), edited by Helen Hornbeck Tanner. *Donated by Greg Koos.*
- ◇ *Our Lile-Lyle-Echoes* compiled by Rith Ann Lyle Barekman, 1982. *Donated by Cindy Shoultz.*
- ◇ *We Bike the Route 66*, a 329-page account of a 2024 bicycle journey by German tourists Andrea and Uwe Jankowsky. *Donated by Deb and Gary Neumayer who hosted the Jankowskys at their Twin City home.*
- ◇ *St. Louis Lucifer: How I Danced with the Devil in the Midwest Moonlight*, by Victoria L. Szulc. *Donated by Joan M. Travis.*

DEMOCRACY

DIALOGUES

There are two more opportunities to participate:
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 & THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Join us to explore the historic legacy of the Declaration of Independence, and to engage in dialogue with our neighbors about *what we the people* want the next 250 years to look like.

Tuesday, September 22 at 6:30 p.m.

"All Men Are Created Equal" with Dr. Meghan Leonard
Community Commons Building at Heartland Community College

Thursday, November 19 at 6:30 p.m.

"Consent of the Governed" with Dr. Robert Bradley
YWCA McLean County

Scan the QR code or
visit mchistory.org/250 to learn more.



Día de Muertos Celebration

Presented by First Site Property Management, Hacienda Leon, and Tony's Tacos

● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● **Saturday, October 31, from 3 to 7 p.m.** ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●

Musical Performances by Marcos Mendez and Beatriz Montes

Food Trucks ● Free Activities for All Ages ● Interactive Ofrenda

Holidays Under the Dome

Friday, December 4
5 to 8 p.m.

&

Saturday, December 5
11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Our annual holiday open house, traditionally on the first Friday and Saturday in December, corresponds with Hanukkah this year.

We're excited to partner with Moses Montefiore Temple and highlight Jewish traditions during this free two-day event for folks of all ages!

FREE Tuesday Night Performances in December

Join us on December 1, 8, and 15 for Concerts in the Courtroom beginning at 5 p.m.

The Illinois Symphony Orchestra's Around the Town String Quintet will play on the 8th.

Keep an eye out for future announcements regarding the rest of the lineup!

Please contact ehansen@mchistory.org for more information.

Volunteer Opportunities

Do you enjoy sharing stories?

Would you like to be a volunteer tour guide? We're looking to expand our tour offerings and anticipate needing extra help to do so. We're still in the early planning stages but if this peaks your interest, please let us know!

Senior Reminiscence Volunteers

We will train interested volunteers to visit senior living centers with objects and photos from our education collection to help spur conversation and memories. This program helps combat isolation, foster a greater sense of community, and take the Museum to those who can't access it in person.

Oral History Transcription Volunteers

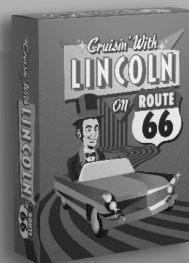
One of the major ways that the Museum collects and preserves local history is through the use of Oral History interviews. Museum staff interview people for various reasons to capture their story. After the interview, software generates a transcript of the conversation. However, the transcripts need to be reviewed and edited by a real person to ensure accuracy. Volunteers in this category must have strong writing skills.

Box Making

Help us preserve history by building custom boxes for archival materials. We'll provide the materials and the training!

If you are interested in any of the above opportunities, or if there are other ways you would like to volunteer, please contact Director of Volunteers Eric Hansen at volunteers@mchistory.org or 309-827-0428.

Add our special edition *Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66* card game to your shopping list. And don't forget that members get an extra discount in November!

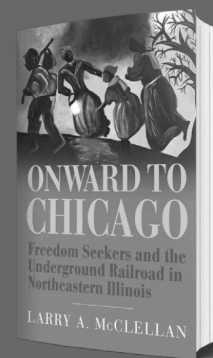


Only available in our Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop

History Reads BOOK CLUB

Up Next:

Join us to discuss it on November 4!



On the Square is a tri-annual magazine for members of the McLean County Museum of History. New editions of the magazine are mailed the first week of the following months: January, May, and September. Questions? Concerns? Feedback? Please contact Micaela Harris, Director of Communications, at mharris@mchistory.org or 309-827-0428 ext. 114.

Please visit mchistory.org/events for more information on all of our upcoming events.



McLean County
MUSEUM of HISTORY

200 N. Main St. Bloomington, IL 61701

mchistory.org | 309-827-0428

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Mystery History Quiz

Our previous “Mystery History” offering was a solid stumper, that’s for sure. Only two history sleuths correctly identified the building shown as the old St. Mary’s Catholic School at the corner of Taylor and Mason streets in Bloomington.

Congratulations to Thomas Cherry and Pat Pence, two long-time Museum friends who know their local history with the best of them! The school, shown on the right, was built in the early 1900s and torn down in 1955. It was replaced with the current structure.



Okay, we hope this go-around is a little less tough.

Tell us where this fountain was located, and provide a little bit of its history to be named a winner in our next edition of *On the Square*.

Give the librarian a ring at 309-827-0428 or email at bkemp@mchistory.org.

Thanks for your love of local history!