



On The Square

The Quarterly Newsletter

McLean County
MUSEUM of HISTORY

Volume 48, Number 1

March - April - May 2016

New Exhibit, *Abraham Lincoln in McLean County*, to Tell Story of Lincoln's Local Connections

The McLean County Museum of History's Lincoln-related collections of artifacts and archives, in combination with a variety of hands-on and digital interactives, have been brought together to create an engaging visitor experience that explores Lincoln's life in Bloomington. Opening on Saturday, May 21, this exciting new exhibit examines Lincoln's work as an attorney in McLean County and on the Illinois Eighth Judicial Circuit. It defines his pivotal role in the anti-slavery movement and the formation of the new Illinois Republican Party in Bloomington. It makes clear the circumstances of his nomination for president in 1860. And, through revealing reminiscences from the residents of McLean County, it explores the lasting connections Lincoln made with the people of this community.

The exhibit will be located in the brand new State Farm Gallery on the Museum's first floor. It is the second in a series of five galleries funded through the ongoing *Extending Excellence* capital

campaign that is raising \$3 million to build new permanent exhibits, upgrade digital technologies throughout the Museum, expand the Education Department, and improve landscaping on the Museum Square.

The exhibit was co-curated by Museum Curator Susan Hartzold and Museum Librarian Bill Kemp, who is also the writer of the popular *Pantagraph* feature 'Page from Our Past'. Kemp noted, "Although this exhibit pays necessary attention to Lincoln's wide and deep legal connections to McLean County, we felt that story had been told well many times before. For this exhibit we wanted to emphasize Lincoln's role as the leader and moral voice, beginning in the mid-1850s, of the movement to oppose the expansion of slavery. Bloomington was a main stage for Lincoln's rise in this political movement. As such, the exhibit will place Lincoln in the context of slavery and racism as practiced and experienced in America from the nation's founding to the Civil War."

Lincoln first came to McLean County as an attorney on the Illinois Eighth Judicial Circuit

Visitors to the exhibit will be invited to explore the Circuit experience through a touch screen featuring maps illustrating how the Circuit changed over time, how the population of Illinois affected the size of the Circuit, and anecdotes about traveling the Circuit. A map will show the route Lincoln travelled in and out of McLean County and various places he stopped along the way.

Lincoln tried over 90 cases in McLean County, representing everyone from regular folk to powerful corporations. Several of these cases are examined in the exhibit, including one involving the early use of the insanity defense, and the landmark tax case that saved the Illinois Central Railroad from potential bankruptcy. While working on these cases, Lincoln borrowed desk space to catch up on correspondence and casework, frequently using David Davis' law office. The exhibit will feature the desk used by Davis in his Bloomington office.

(continued on page 9)

Celebrating the Service of Greg Koos!

An opportunity to thank Greg for his many years of devoted work and to wish him well will be Thursday, March 31, with a reception starting at 4:00 p.m. in the historic Governor Fifer Courtroom and a special program expected to begin around 5:30 p.m. Please watch your mail and the Museum's website for more information.

With thanks to our newsletter sponsor:

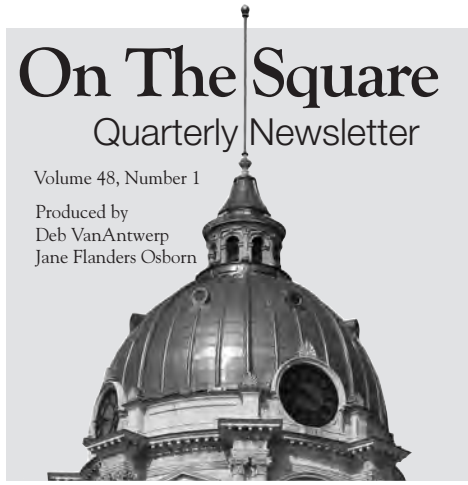


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Quarterly Newsletter

Volume 48, Number 1

Produced by
Deb VanAntwerp
Jane Flanders Osborn



McLean County Museum of History
and *Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66*
Visitors Center



200 N. Main St., Bloomington, IL 61701
Phone (309) 827-0428 Fax (309) 827-0100
www.mchistory.org

Located on the corner of Main (Rt. 66)
and Washington Streets, the Visitors Center
and Museum entrance is located on
Washington Street on the south side of the square

HOURS

9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday, Wednesday, Thursday,
Friday, Saturday
9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Tuesday (Free)

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Spring 2016 History Reads Book Club

Join us for *History Reads Book Club*, a joint program offered by the McLean County Museum of History and the Bloomington Public Library. Here are the 2016 book club selections:



May 3:

The Fire That Will Not Die (1979)
by Michele McBride
McBride's book provides a personal account of the 1958 fire at Our Lady of the Angels School in Chicago that claimed the lives of more than 90 people.



The program begins at 7:00 p.m. in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom. Free parking is available at the Lincoln Parking Deck, located one block south of the Museum on Front Street.

Books will be available for checkout at Bloomington Public Library or may be requested via inter-library loan through your local public library. Also available are the following books for upcoming programs.

August 2: *Lincoln's Ladder to the Presidency: The Eighth Judicial Circuit* (2012)
by Guy C. Fraker

November 1: *The Bootlegger: A Story of Small-Town America* (1999)
by John E. Hallwas

For more information contact the Museum's Education Department at education@mchistory.org or 309-827-0428; or contact Karen Moen at Bloomington Public Library at reference@bloomingtonlibrary.org.

Become a 'Blanketeer' at the *Under the Dome* Knit In



Join us for another session of the *Under the Dome Knit In* on Saturday, May 20 from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. in the Museum's Governor Fifer

Courtroom. We welcome all knitters and crocheters to create charity items or work on their own projects.

This quarter's feature charity is Project Linus, which is based right here in Bloomington. Project Linus' "blanketeers" provide blankets and afghans to seriously ill or traumatized children. For more information about Project Linus and blanket requirements, please visit www.projectlinus.org.

The *Under the Dome Knit In* is free and open to everyone. Light refreshments are served. Bring your own project or the materials to begin a new one, grab a friend, and come "knit for a bit!"

Free parking will be available on the street and at the Lincoln Parking Deck, one block south of the Museum on Front Street. Questions? Contact the Education Department at 309-827-0428 or education@mchistory.org.

Museum to Host *Herndon on Lincoln: Letters* with Dr. Douglas Wilson

The Museum is pleased to welcome Dr. Douglas Wilson, author and co-director of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College, who will present a program about the written work of William Henry Herndon, one-time law partner and friend of Abraham Lincoln, on Saturday, March 12 at 1:00 p.m. This program will be held in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom and is free and open to the public.



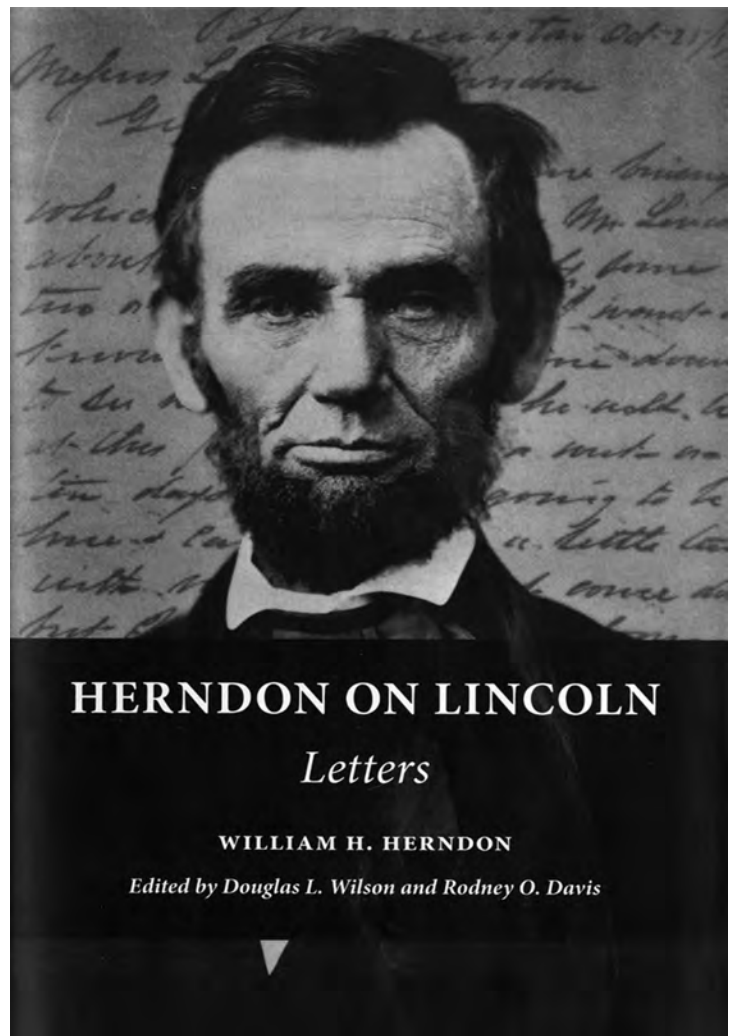
Dr. Wilson's program explores the editorial work that the Lincoln Studies Center has been engaged in for the last several years. The most recent example of this work can be found in the latest book Wilson co-edited with Dr. Rodney Davis, *Herndon on Lincoln: Letters* (2015).

Herndon probably knew Lincoln better than anyone else. In 1889 Herndon co-authored a biography of Lincoln, *Herndon's Lincoln: The True Story of a Great Life*, which has been called the most influential of all Lincoln biographies. It was to be a faithful portrait of his friend and former law partner based on his own observations and the hundreds of letters and interviews he compiled from friends and associates of Lincoln. For a variety of reasons, however, much of what he had to say about Lincoln was not included. In *Herndon on Lincoln: Letters*, Wilson and Davis present a collection of Herndon's letters on Lincoln, identified and annotated, that supplemented the large compilation of reminiscences of Lincoln that Herndon gathered from friends and associates. Many of Herndon's letters are published in their book for the first time and may add significantly to our understanding of both Lincoln and the man who was his law partner for nearly 20 years. Wilson will speak to what can be learned from Herndon's letters that is not found in the famous biography.

Wilson is the George A. Lawrence Distinguished Service Professor Emeritus and, with Dr. Rodney Davis, co-director of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. He previously taught English and American literature at Knox. His collaboration with Dr. Davis, which began as a teaching partnership, has produced several works including *Herndon's Informants* (1998), annotated transcriptions for the website of the Library of Congress's Abraham Lincoln Papers (1999-2002), and new editions of *Herndon's Lincoln* (2006), and *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates* (2008).

Copies of *Herndon On Lincoln: Letters* will be available for purchase for \$35.00 plus tax. A book signing will immediately follow the program.

For more information about this program, please contact the Education Department at education@mchistory.org or by phone at 309-827-0428. Free parking will be available on the street or at the Lincoln Parking Deck located one block south of the Museum on Front Street.



Making A Home Grand Opening



Visitors to the Museum's grand opening celebration of the *Challenges, Choices, and Change: Making a Home* exhibit partake in internationally-themed refreshments prior to the morning's program. Treats included cookies and beverages representing the major ethnic and cultural groups that call McLean County their home.



Exhibit consultant Dr. Gina Hunter, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Illinois State University, presents her research process and the numerous stories of McLean County settlers featured in the Museum's newest exhibit.



The ribbon has been cut. Eager visitors take in the sights and sounds of the new *Making a Home* exhibit for the first time.



Museum Curator and exhibit designer Susan Hartzold speaks to the media about the grand opening of the first of five new permanent exhibit spaces to open at the Museum. The opening of *Challenges, Choices, and Change: Making a Home* will be followed shortly by the opening of a second permanent exhibit, *Abraham Lincoln in McLean County*, on May 21, 2016.



President's Day

It wouldn't be Presidents' Day in Illinois without a little A. Lincoln. Thus, this year's Presidents' Day celebration started off with the unveiling of a plaque that will soon accompany the brass bar embedded in the pavement outside the entrance to the Museum that marks the threshold of the Lincoln Era Courthouse that once stood on this site.

The exact placement of the Lincoln Era Courthouse was discovered during the archaeological excavation undertaken during the construction of the Visitors Center in 2014.



Three former History Careers Day Camp attendees, Sami Fries-Romack, Soren Gjesfeld, and Jackson Steele assisted Executive Director Greg Koos with the ceremony.



As you may have heard, the theme for Presidents' Day 2016 was [Vice] Presidents' Day! Here, visitors "Golf their Way to the White House" while learning about notable VPs who were lucky enough to later be called POTUS.

Education Department Trains Others on Senior Programming

Nearly 1.8 million people in Illinois are aged sixty-five or older. Twelve percent of those seniors live with Alzheimer's disease or another form of dementia. As these numbers grow, museums, libraries, and other cultural organizations can play a significant role in improving the quality of life for seniors.

In Central Illinois, senior care facilities and community groups have found a trusted partner in the McLean County Museum of History. For more than ten years, the Museum's Senior Reminiscence Program has provided museum educators to assisted living communities, senior centers, and adult day service facilities. The program offers a mentally-engaging, social experience that allows ample opportunity for participation, no matter a senior's cognitive ability. Using authentic objects, photographs, and inquiry-based facilitation, educators encourage seniors to recall, share, understand, and connect with

history, their memories, and each other. Seniors benefit by sharing their memories and also by learning new information about local history.



Using this program as a model, members of the Museum's Education Department will host *Shared Memories: Creating Senior Programming for Your Community*, a workshop in which they will discuss the benefits and challenges of creating senior programming for a community. Professionals from cultural and senior care organizations in Illinois

will learn about our methods on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This free workshop, in partnership with the Illinois Heritage Association, will be hosted at the Museum.

The workshop has been filled, but a wait list is available. Visit www.mchistory.org/learn/programs/senior.php for further information and contact the Education Department by March 15, 2016 to be added to the wait list.

Please direct any inquiries to education@mchistory.org or 309-827-0428.



This program is made possible in part by a grant from Illinois Humanities, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Illinois General Assembly.

Director of Education Candace Summers to Present *To Be a Writer, One Has To Be a Reader: The Life and Work of Clara Louise Kessler*

Join Candace Summers, the Museum's director of education, for a new program that celebrates the life and career of Clara Louise Kessler, author, teacher, and beloved head children's librarian. The program will be held in the Community Room of the Bloomington Public Library on Thursday, April 14 at 7:00 p.m. This free program is open to the public.

Our community was re-introduced to Kessler and her work at the 2015 *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. She began her career working with children as a kindergarten teacher first; then, in 1919, she embarked on a 33-year long position as the head children's librarian at Withers Public Library. Her mission was not only to present the very best children's literature and encourage its enjoyment, but to create an environment which would stimulate children's imaginations, encourage children to freely express themselves, and help children grow into adults who would help build a better Bloomington.

Kessler published many short stories and poems locally and nationally throughout her lifetime. After reading Kessler's poetry, actress Jane Cowl stated that Kessler "knows and loves children and is vitally interested in them." Summers' program will be illustrated with images of Kessler and examples of her work.



Guests of Honor—Miss Anna Croskey, principal of Abraham Lincoln School, was talking with two library staff members when this picture was snapped. The tea was given in honor of Miss Louise Kessler (center) and Miss Elizabeth Abraham (at the right) to observe their 20th anniversary on staff.

Save the Date: June 16

5th Annual *History Makers* Gala

The McLean County Museum of History invites you to join us for the 5th annual *History Makers* Gala to be held on Thursday, June 16 in the Brown Ballroom of the Illinois State University Bone Student Center. Each year the Museum's *History Makers* Gala honors individuals who have devoted much of their lives to helping improve McLean County and the lives of those who have made a home here. This year's honorees have made significant impacts in the fields of agriculture, athletics, civil liberties, and spiritual health in our community. The names

of the 2016 honorees will be revealed during a news conference planned for late March in our historic Governor Fifer Courtroom. Public ticket sales will begin soon after. Museum members should look for their formal invitation in the mail in April with a special member price for tickets. Proceeds from the *History Makers* Gala support the Museum's free educational programs that annually serve approximately 7,000 students and 1,200 senior citizens. Watch this newsletter and www.mchistory.org for more information about the Gala this spring!



Peg Kirk was honored in 2015 for her work as a teachers' advocate, an educator, an actress, and community volunteer. Alan Chapman, retired Unit 5 Superintendent, presented her with the *History Makers* plaque.



Presented in conjunction with the Museum's annual meeting, the *History Makers* Gala will feature dinner and live dramatizations to celebrate the honorees.

History Careers Day Camp Registration Opens April 18

Calling all future historians! Registration for the 2016 season of History Careers Day Camp at the McLean County Museum of History is approaching. Registration for three separate sessions of camp will open Monday, April 18. Space is available for the first 20 students to apply for each week of camp. Preference will be given to those students

who have not attended camp before. The dates for the three sessions are June 20-24; July 11-15; and July 25-29. Camp registration is available to all area children entering fourth through sixth grade. Online registration will be available through the Museum's website at mchistory.org/learn/programs/daycamp.php. Printable registration forms will be available through the Museum's website, as well as through Unit 5 and District 87 online backpacks. Registration will close Friday, May 27.

This summer, campers will have the chance to explore five different careers related to the field of history: law, archaeology, architecture, museum studies, and environmental science. Over the course of the five-day camp, students will visit the David Davis Mansion and Sugar Grove Nature Center, and will, of course, become



Campers investigate a compass plant while on a prairie hike at Sugar Grove Nature Center.



Camper Jadah Olshak discovers what interesting objects are currently in storage at the Museum.

well acquainted with the Museum and Downtown Bloomington's own Museum Square. For more information, please contact the Education Department by email at education@mchistory.org or by phone at 309-827-0428. We can't wait to hear from all of you young history buffs in April!

Volunteers Speak, Part 1: *10+ Years with the Museum*

We are fortunate to have a dedicated group of volunteers who serve our patrons and provide quality service in every department of the Museum. Many of them have been with us for a long time; in fact, nearly 40 current volunteers at the Museum have been with us for a decade or more! That's quite an accomplishment for any not-for-profit, and we're honored to have earned their loyalty.

We wondered: *what enticed these volunteers to join us, and what makes them stay?* So, we asked.

Why did you begin volunteering at the McLean County Museum of History?

The MCMH invites you to be involved and join them in preserving the experiences of our communities. I was a member of the Bloomington/Normal Junior Women's Club when we assisted on a textile project, and as a tour guide for the first Evergreen Cemetery Walk.

► *Amy M.*

I have library training and an interest in history, so the Museum of History was a natural place to volunteer.

► *Gretchen M.*

The Historical Society was extremely helpful when I was in graduate school and working on my master's thesis. I was allowed to handle the newspapers from the 1850s and the staff at the McBarnes building were extremely helpful. The volunteering is payback and certainly fits within my frame of interests.

► *Patricia L.*

As a former history teacher, history is my passion. So volunteering at the Museum was a natural.

► *Mary Kay Z.*

I love history, and I feel it's important to know about our past.

► *Flora F.*

What keeps you coming back?

I keep coming back due to the satisfaction I receive each time I do a job there. Very important to that satisfaction are the great people who work at the Museum and make it such a pleasure to be part of the organization. Volunteers are never made to feel as "just a volunteer," but rather as key players and important to the success of whatever is going on.

► *Mary Kay Z.*

I come back because I enjoy the people I work with. Also, because this was something new to me, it has been (and continues to be) an important growth experience.

► *Carole K.*

The Museum appreciates their volunteer's time and talents. The Museum's success is the achievement of recognizing and utilizing those qualities and I feel privileged to assist such a talented, friendly and professional staff.

► *Amy M.*

[Librarian Bill Kemp] provides interesting tasks and is considerate of volunteers and their irregular schedules.

► *Gretchen M.*

I come back because I still enjoy it as much as when I started, particularly the tour guide aspect. Enjoy all the people I interact with and volunteering allows me to keep doing what I enjoy.

► *Doug W.*

I love to feel appreciated by the staff.

► *Flora F.*

What's your favorite volunteer activity? Why?

I love the Evergreen Cemetery Walk. Although it can be nerve-wracking during that first week in October, it is fun with friends. And I always learn a lot.

► *Mike D.*

Being involved with the Cemetery Walk and preparing display cases. I enjoy discovering and sharing the "gems" of the collection and their stories.

► *Amy M.*

I love interacting with people, sharing information about the Museum, etc.

► *Flora F.*

Probably my favorite would be leading groups...whether school groups in

educational activities or groups at the cemetery walk. The reason would be the immediate feedback that comes from participants.

► *Mary Kay Z.*

How does volunteering at the Museum affect your life?

Volunteering at the Museum enriches my life. I learn new things, discover new challenges, and work with good people.

► *Mary Kay Z.*

I especially appreciate how much I've learned about local history.

► *Gretchen M.*

History was not my favorite subject in school! (In fact, I failed a history course in college!) Thus, it's just a bit odd that I've ended up here. Working at the Museum has certainly stretched me and caused me to understand not only the importance of historical events, but also how our culture has evolved over the years.

► *Carole K.*

This is wonderful feedback from some wonderful people! We received so many great responses from our survey that we'll be sharing more in the next newsletter.

Given the topic of this article, it seemed appropriate to note that **Judith Myers**, a Museum volunteer for 17 years, retired from service in December. Judith has helped with the library, *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*, and even eBay sales, and has been a weekly presence and a valued member of the Museum volunteer staff. We miss you, Judith!

Meet Our Interns

Maggie Krause



Maggie Krause is a junior at Illinois Wesleyan University. She is studying history and English, and is considering a career in public history.

This semester, Maggie is working with Curator of Collections and Exhibits Susan Hartzold. Maggie is aiding Susan and Registrar Emma Meyer with the preparation of objects for the Museum's new permanent exhibits. She is completing conditions reports for items coming off display and insuring that objects returned to the collection are stored properly. Maggie is eager to learn the policies and practices of an accredited museum, excited to see many of the artifacts the Museum has acquired since it was founded in 1892, and enjoying the stories of the people that accompany them.

Rachael Laing

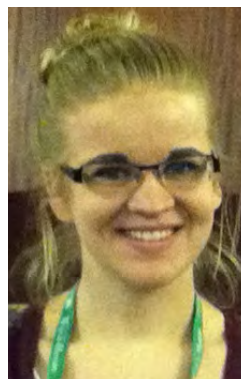


Rachael Laing comes from Buffalo Grove, Illinois, and recently graduated from Monmouth College with two bachelor's degrees, one in history and one in classics. Current-

ly a history graduate student at Illinois State University, she is interning in the Library/Archives.

Her work is focused on organizing a collection on Lawrence Irvin, a friend of Adlai E. Stevenson II who was involved in state politics, the Illinois Soldiers' and Sailors' Children's School, and the Bloomington Housing Authority. As a person familiar with neither the Bloomington-Normal area nor political history, she is enthusiastic to learn more about both, as well as how museums preserve paper documents.

Lisa Elleson



Lisa Elleson, a native of nearby Streator, is a senior at Illinois Wesleyan University and is majoring in English literature with a minor in business administration.

Upon graduation she hopes to get a job as an editor for a publishing company or magazine.

Lisa is serving as an intern for the Education Department this spring doing additional research and writing biographies for some of the characters who have been featured in past years of the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*, expanding them for use by researchers. Lisa has always had an appreciation for small communities and their history, and is thrilled to have the opportunity to learn more about the Bloomington-Normal community and work closely with some of the staff here.

Highlights of the January 29 Teacher Symposium



Mark McBride, history teacher at Tri-Valley High School, and several of his students presented a session on the creation and implementation of the Tri-Valley Civil War Living History Reenactment group.

This is the ninth consecutive year that the Museum has partnered with the Illinois State University Department of History and the Regional Office of Education #17 to present this event. The symposium attracted 140 attendees.

New Exhibit, Abraham Lincoln in McLean County, to Tell Story of Lincoln's Local Connections

— continued

Visitors will be invited to select and copy a letter written by Lincoln with a simulated quill or nib pen dipped in “ink.”

During more than 20 years on the Eighth Circuit, Lincoln came to trust and depend on several leading citizens of McLean County. These like-minded men included David Davis, Leonard Swett, Jesse Fell, and Asahel Gridley — all members of the Whig Party who, like Lincoln, opposed the expansion of slavery. When the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 threatened to extend slavery into northern territories, Lincoln and his Bloomington friends argued against it. An audio/visual presentation will discuss the United States economic dependence on slavery and the formation of the Republican Party, as well as how Lincoln's opposition to slavery's expansion thrust him into the national spotlight and eventually led him to the White House.

Lincoln's Lost Speech

On May 29, 1856, delegates from across Illinois gathered at Bloomington's Major's Hall to oppose the expansion of slavery. In an emotionally charged keynote address, Lincoln pledged to oppose the expansion of slavery and the rise of “Slave Power” — even threatening to use force if Southern “disunionists” made good on their threats to secede. On the heels of this speech, the new Illinois Republican Party, with Lincoln as its leader, was formed. Because no complete transcript of this speech exists today, it is known as Lincoln's “Lost Speech.” Yet we know much of what Lincoln said that night. Using a touch screen interactive, visitors will be invited to assume

the role of the historian and attempt to “find” the Lost Speech by choosing the correct contemporary sources historians used to piece together Lincoln's speech.

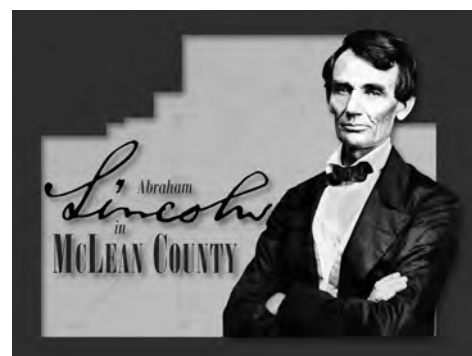
Two years later, in 1858, Lincoln faced Stephen Douglas in an epic U.S. Senate race highlighted by seven debates. The expansion of slavery was at the forefront of these debates. While Bloomington was not a formal Lincoln-Douglas debate site, both candidates spoke on Bloomington's courthouse square during the campaign.

Despite his loss to Douglas in 1858, the debates brought national exposure to Lincoln. Jesse Fell, who believed Lincoln could be president, suggested his friend write an autobiographical sketch so newspaper editors back east could share his life story with voters. Visitors to the exhibit will be invited to view a handwritten or typed version of Lincoln's brief autobiography on a touch screen. Tapping highlighted words and phrases will reveal additional context and interpretation of this unique autobiography.

In mid-May 1860, Republicans gathered in Chicago to nominate their presidential candidate. Lincoln, with a team led by Judge David Davis, captured the 1860 Republican nomination for president and then won the general election largely over the issue of slavery's expansion.

During his presidency, Lincoln kept in contact with many McLean County friends — through appointments, letters, and White House visits. The residents of McLean County kept up with their beloved president through the local newspaper, *The Pantagraph*. When the news of his assassination reached Bloomington, they responded with both sorrow and anger. On Sunday, April 16, 1865, 5,000-plus local residents gathered on the courthouse square to mourn Lincoln. “Men wept in the streets and women and children sobbed as though they had lost a father or brother, or member of the family,” declared the *Pantagraph* on April 18, 1865.

After Lincoln's death people began collecting bits and pieces — relics, if you will, associated with the martyred



president. Genuine or not, these items speak to Lincoln's hold on the American imagination, then and now. Visitors are presented with six artifacts reported to be associated with Abraham Lincoln. Using the data offered by the artifact donors, visitors are asked whether they believe the artifacts are genuine. A pull out for each artifact reveals what the exhibit curators believe to be true about each artifact.

After his assassination, those who knew or had met Lincoln began sharing their stories of him. Many of these recollections and reminiscences offer insight into both the private and public Lincoln. Visitors are invited to sit down and view an audio-visual presentation that offers insight into Lincoln's personality through illustrated memories of McLean County residents. In addition, Lincoln scholar Michael Burlingame answers the question, “Why are we still studying and writing about Lincoln?”

Visitors will also be invited to download the Museum's smartphone app, *McLean County History in Maps*, that will take them to a narrated tour of Lincoln sites in Bloomington-Normal.

Grand Opening

set for May 21, 2016

A public program will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, May 21, with a presentation by exhibit curator Bill Kemp, followed by a ribbon-cutting ceremony and the official opening of the exhibit. Light refreshments will be served.

The public is invited to attend this free program and media are welcome to contact Director of Marketing and Community Outreach Jeff Woodard to set up preview tours and interviews the week before the grand opening.

Discover local history on your smart phone!

The Museum is happy to announce that for the first time ever, McLean County history is now accessible in a mobile app!

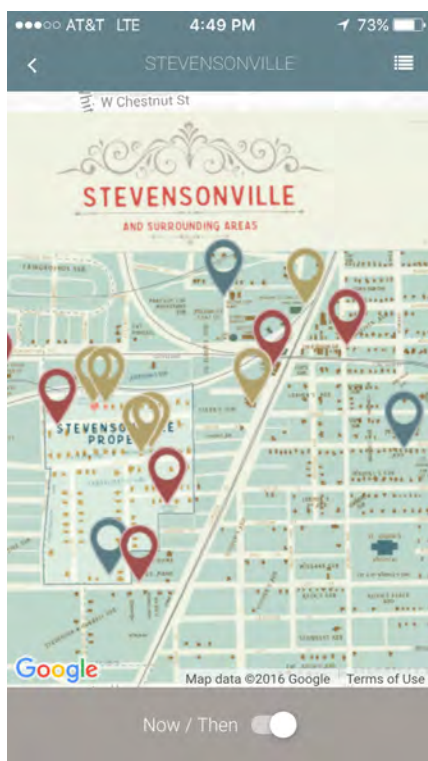
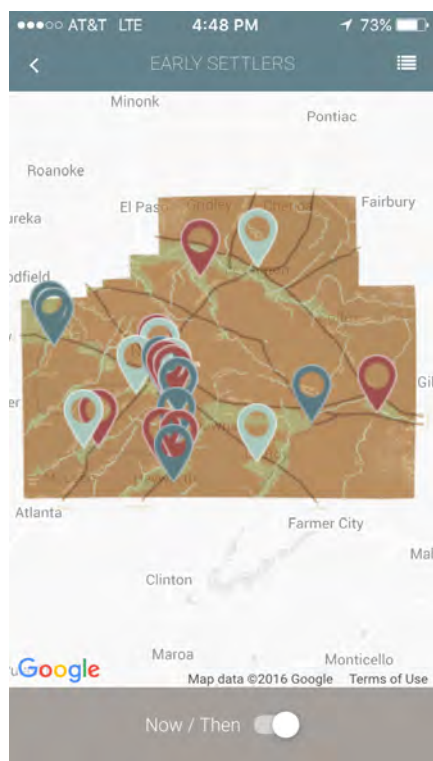
Learn where 24 of the earliest settlers lived throughout the county and some of the hardships they endured. Discover what Elizabeth Randolph had to do when her son suffered from a deep cut on his abdomen and a physician was nowhere near, or what the Dawson family ate from season to season when they arrived in

McLean County in 1822. Visit former sites of churches, grocery stores, factories, and coal mines in and around Stevensonville — a historic neighborhood on the west side of Bloomington. You can enjoy this app from anywhere, whether you are inside our new *Making a Home* exhibit, on the road touring these sites, or in the comfort of your home.

These two maps are part of the Museum's new permanent exhibit, *Making a*

Home. Additional maps and information will be added to this app as the Museum opens each of its four other new permanent exhibits. In conjunction with our exhibit opening in May, *Abraham Lincoln in McLean County*, the app will feature a narrated tour of Lincoln-related sites in Bloomington-Normal.

Search the Apple and Android app stores for "McLean County History in Maps" to download the app today!



This app was made possible by donors to the McLean County Museum of History's Extending Excellence Capital Campaign. We would like to recognize the generous support of the McLean County Genealogical Society.

McLean County Genealogical Society Celebrates 50 Years

The McLean County Genealogical Society, which shares space and resources with the Museum, celebrated its 50th anniversary with an open house on January 26 in the Governor Fifer Courtroom of the McLean County Museum of History.

There were 75 in attendance with five communities from outside McLean represented. The group received proclamations from the McLean County Historical Society, the Town of Normal, the City of Bloomington, McLean County, and the State of Illinois.



Pictured are past presidents. Back row, left to right: Mary Scott, George Perkins, Ardys Serpette. Front row: Judith Myers, Neil Sallee, Sara Cushing.

Permanent tax relief

For many years, Congress has had to address “tax extenders” each year, sometimes every two years. The “extenders” were a grab bag of tax breaks that were considered “too generous” to taxpayers to be made permanent, but too important in the short term to be allowed to expire. Whenever it came time to renew the “extenders”, the tax-writing committees would have to find other tax “loopholes” to close to raise the revenue to “pay for” another extension of the “extenders.”

That all changed in December 2015.

As part of the final budget deal, Congress enacted the Protecting Americans from Tax Hikes Act of 2015 (the PATH Act). Many of the temporary provisions were made permanent, and this was done without offsetting tax hikes.

For individual taxpayers, perhaps the most important extender is the “Charitable IRA Rollover.” Beginning in 2006, taxpayers who are age 70 ½ or older (in other words, those who must take required minimum distributions from their IRAs) have been permitted to direct transfers of up to \$100,000 per year from their IRAs to a qualified charity. Such distributions satisfy the distribution requirement, but they are not included in the taxpayer’s income, so they do not increase the taxpayer’s adjusted gross income. That’s even better than the usual charitable deduction.

This tax provision was temporary, and it repeatedly expired. Congress never failed to renew this provision, sometimes retroactively, but sometimes that renewal came very late in the year, giving taxpayers very little time to take advantage of it. Now it is permanent.

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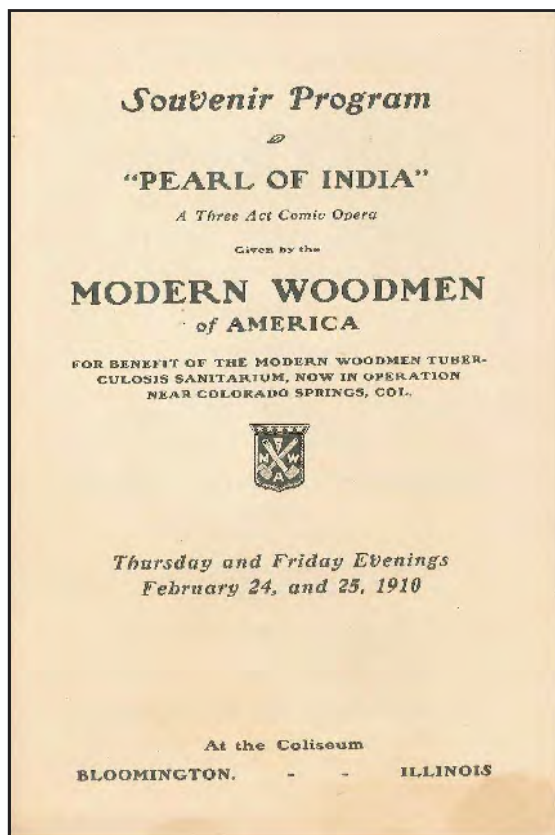
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Donations to Collections

Library/Archives Spotlight

Modern Woodman Program, February 24-25, 1910



The Museum receives donations from all kinds of folks and from all sorts of circumstances. For instance, last fall Bernadine Kull of Hudson donated items recovered from the attic of 507 E. Jackson Street in Bloomington. This material is related to the McKee and Kopp families, both lines of which are unrelated to Bernadine.

Included were scrapbooks, a business ledger, and this Modern Woodman program from 1910. Note that the tuberculosis fundraiser was held at the old Bloomington Coliseum, which was opened in 1898 and torn down in 1961. The Woodmen are a fraternal benefit society with headquarters in Rock Island, Illinois.

Recent Donors to Library/Archives:

Mac Arnold
Patricia Barth
Doug Bozarth
Dennis Fox
Elsa Gongwer
Steve and Kathy Gossard
Peg Kirk
Lois Welsh Klein
Catharine Knight
Elaine Knight
Jim Komnick
Bernadine Kull
John Learned
Barbara Linville
Laurie Livingston
McLean County Title
Margot Mendoza
Becky Roots
Ruth Stewart
Marilyn Townley
Ruth Trower
Sherry Tuffin
Eileen Wagner
Barbara Williamson

A Moment in History

MAY 1, 1988



This comes from The *Pantagraph* Print Collection. The photograph is dated May 1, 1988, and is labeled, "Acting Dir. McLean Co Historical Society." At the time Greg was serving as the interim executive director after the retirement of Barbara Dunbar. The "interim" tag was removed shortly afterward. Greg "Mr. Gopher" (ask him about the nickname) Koos began working for the Historical Society (now Museum) way back in 1977. That was the year of the *Roots* television miniseries, *Star Wars*, disco, the deaths of Elvis and Bing Crosby, the New York City blackout, and President Jimmy Carter's blanket pardon of Vietnam draft dodgers. After painting exhibit platforms, his first Society/Museum job, Greg moved to Archives, where he was paid \$1 an hour (or about \$4 an hour today, adjusted for inflation). His first official job title with the Society was archivist and then archivist/site manager. To give one an idea as to the length of Greg's tenure, this photograph was taken 11 years after he started working for the Society. And then consider that this photo is 28 years old, or older than some Museum employees. So... 11 years before the photo and 28 after add up to around 39 years with the Museum. What a run! Congratulations Greg on a dynamic and memorable career and the rich legacy you leave behind. You've changed the community in deep-rooted ways for the better.

Collections Spotlight Featured Artifact

American Legion Parade Uniform

donated by Reta Holderby

The Museum recently received a pair of gray, denim coveralls as part of a donation that included American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and military uniform items. All of the objects belonged to Sergeant Sidney Webb and were donated by his granddaughter-in-law, Reta Holderby. The coveralls were worn by Sergeant Webb during American Legion Parades in Bloomington and throughout the state while riding on their 40 & 8 car. The 40 & 8 is an invitation-only membership for leaders of the American Legion. The box car of the French Railways was chosen as the symbol, which was stenciled with a "40/8", denoting its capacity to hold either forty men or eight horses. What makes these coveralls especially interesting is that our archives include a clipping from a 1954 *Chicago Sun-Times* with a photograph from one of these parades.

Sidney Webb was born in Leicester, England in 1899. Sergeant Webb fought in WWI and received a number of awards for his service including a Silver Star and a Purple Heart, which are represented on a donated medal ribbon. After the war, he worked for Keiser-Van Leer Hardware as a machinist and lived on East Jefferson Street in Bloomington.

Webb married Jessie Walker of Peoria in 1920. The couple had one daughter, Ms. Thelma Holderby. Webb was very active in the American Legion; he was a member of the Military Order of the Cooties and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Sidney Webb passed away on June 28, 1969 and is buried in Park Hill Cemetery in Bloomington.



McLean County Legionnaires ride through Leopolis on their 40 and 8 car.

Recent Donors to Collections:

Michael Eyer	Elaine Knight
Dennis Fox	Pat Rush Kohoutek
David Hall	Jim Messer
Reta Holderby	Amy Miller
Lois Welsh Klein	

McLean County Museum of History Welcomes Our New Members!

David Berry
Judith Hinshaw Curtin
John Ficca
John Ford
David Hiltabrand
Carroll Kinnaman
Kevin D. Kuebler
Michael J. Miller
Maggi Pratt
Sally Pyne
Joan Straka
Mrs. David A. Toland

Museum membership is an act of philanthropy that supports local history, preservation, and education for the entire community. Each membership also offers direct benefits to you and your family with free admission to the Museum and Library/Archives, 10% off in the gift shop, member price for event tickets, and our Time Travelers reciprocal membership that offers free and discounted admission to hundreds of sites across the U.S.
Join today at www.mchistory.org!



Calendar of Events

Ongoing programs
and upcoming events

Saturdays beginning May 7 through October 29

Farmer's Market

The Museum opens at 8:30 a.m. to all visitors! Tour the Museum's latest exhibits and shop at Farmer's Market.

March 10 at 12:10 p.m.

Lunch and Learn:

The Economic Impact of Art & Culture in Bloomington-Normal

Professor Diego Mendez-Carbajo will be speaking at this program, which will be held in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom. It is free, open to the public, and sponsored by Illinois Wesleyan University, the McLean County Museum of History, and the Collaborative Solutions Institute.

March 12 at 1:00 p.m.

Herndon on Lincoln: Letters

The Museum is pleased to welcome Dr. Douglas Wilson, author and co-director of the Lincoln Studies Center at Knox College, who will present a program about the written work of William Herndon, a one-time law partner and friend of Abraham Lincoln. This program will be held in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom and is free and open to the public. For more information please see page 3.

March 15 at 6:30 p.m.

McLean County Genealogical Society Public Meeting

This meeting will feature Dr. John Reda, Assistant Professor of Colonial Illinois History at Illinois State University, who will present a program about his experience as an expert consultant for the popular television series "Who Do You Think You Are." Reda worked on the episode featuring singer Melissa Etheridge. He will share behind-the-scenes photos taken on the day of the

shoot. The meeting will be held in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom. For more information about this and other programs, please contact MCGS at mcdgs.events@gmail.com.

March 22 10:00 a.m.

Shared Memories: Creating Senior Programming for Your Community

Using the Museum's Senior Reminiscence program as a model, Education Department staff will present a workshop in which they discuss benefits and challenges of creating senior programming for a community and they will give participants the tools to create their own program. See page 5 for more information.

March 31 at 4:00 p.m.

Celebrating the service of Greg Koos

Please join Museum board and staff for an open house reception to thank Greg for his many years of devoted work and to wish him well on his pending retirement. Watch your mail for more information coming soon!

April 6 through April 26

Tri Valley History Fair on Display

Since 1998, projects by seventh grade students attending Tri-Valley Middle School have been displayed throughout the halls of the Museum every spring. The student-created projects featuring McLean County and Illinois history-related topics; many of these projects will go on to compete at the state level. Stop by to see what these hard-working students, led by their teacher Mr. Robin Roberts, have accomplished. You won't want to miss this!

April 7 at 12:10 p.m.

Lunch and Learn:

Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll: Kickapoo Creek Rock Festival in Court

Robert Bradley will be speaking at this program, which will be held in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom. It is free, open to the public, and sponsored by Illinois Wesleyan University, the McLean County Museum of History, and the Collaborative Solutions Institute.

April 12 at 4:00 p.m.

Open House for New Executive Director Beth Whisman

Please join Museum board and staff for an open house reception to welcome Beth Whisman to her new position as executive director of the Museum.

April 14 at 7:00 p.m.

To Be a Writer, One Has To Be a Reader: The Life and Work of Clara Louise Kessler

Join Director of Education Candace Summers for an evening exploring the life, work, and impact of Louise Kessler, head children's librarian at Withers Public Library. The program will be held in the Community Room at Bloomington Public Library and is free and open to the public. See page 5 for more information.

April 18

Registration begins:

History Careers Day Camp 2016

To download an application, please visit our website at www.mchistory.org/learn/programs/daycamp.php. For more information, see page 6 of this newsletter.

April 19 at 6:30 p.m.

McLean County Genealogical Society Public Meeting

The Irish Heritage Society and the McLean County Genealogical Society will co-sponsor "The Irish in Evergreen Cemetery Bloomington." Margaret Bratcher and Denise DeFries will present the program.

April 30 at 11:00 a.m.

El Día de Los Niños/El Día de los Libros (Children's Day/Book Day)

The Museum will join a variety of community organizations in celebrating the 9th annual Children's Day/Book Day presented by Bloomington Public Library. Attendees will be able to enjoy music, crafts, face painting, dancing, mascots, community groups, food, and fun throughout the Library. At the Museum's table, there will be a bilingual coloring book that will help children to learn several words in Spanish. There will also be representatives from community organizations with information about available services and opportunities.

This bilingual program is FREE and open to the public. For more information, please visit www.bloomingtonlibrary.org.

May 3 at 7:00 p.m.

History Reads Book Club

Join the Museum and Bloomington Public Library for the second installment of the *History Reads Book Club* for 2016. The discussion will be held in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom. See page 2 for more information about this meeting.

May 12 at 12:10 p.m.

Lunch and Learn:

Future of U.S. Manned Space Flight

Bob Aaron will be speaking at this program, which will be held in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom. It is free, open to the public, and sponsored by Illinois Wesleyan University, the McLean County Museum of History, and the Collaborative Solutions Institute.

May 14

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Under the Dome Knit In

Grab a friend, some needles or hooks, and your yarn and come on down to the Museum to "knit for a bit!" Light refreshments will be provided. This program is free and open to the public. See page 2 for more information.

May 21 at 1:30 p.m.

Grand Opening:

Abraham Lincoln in McLean County

The public is invited to a grand opening program to unveil the Museum's second permanent exhibit. The celebration will begin with a presentation by exhibit curator Bill Kemp, immediately followed by a ribbon cutting and official opening ceremony. Light refreshments featuring baked goods from Lincoln's lifetime will be served. See page 1 for more information.

May 30

Museum Closed

for Memorial Day

EXHIBITS



Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66
Visitors Center

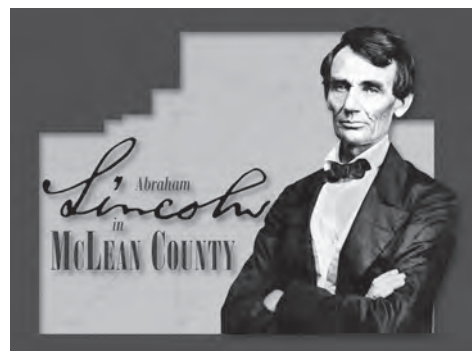
Located on the ground floor of the Museum, the Visitors Center includes an exhibit featuring many local Route 66 landmarks past and present. It allows visitors to compare and contrast travel, dining, and lodging in Abraham Lincoln's time with that of the Route 66 heyday. The Visitors Center is free and open to the public during regular Museum hours.



Now Open

Making a Home

From the arrival of native people to the immigration of Asian Indians and Latinos in the late 20th century, this exhibit explores the experiences of individuals and families who came from all over the world to make McLean County their home. Their stories reveal the many challenges this diverse group of people faced after their arrival — stories of determination and hard choices, of maintaining traditions and inventing new ones, stories of how their lives unfolded and changed — stories of making a home.



Opening May 21

Abraham Lincoln
in McLean County

This exciting new exhibit will examine Lincoln's work as an attorney in McLean County and on the Illinois Eighth Judicial Circuit. It will define his pivotal role in the anti-slavery movement and the formation of the new Republican Party in Illinois. It will make clear the circumstances of his nomination for president in 1860. And, through revealing reminiscences from the residents of McLean County, it will explore the lasting connections Lincoln made with the people of this community.

McLean County Museum of History Staff

Greg Koos
Executive Director

Susan Hartzold
Curator of Collections and Exhibits

Bill Kemp
Librarian

Candace Summers
Director of Education

Torii Moré
Curator of Digital Humanities

Jeff Woodard
Director of Marketing and Community Affairs

Beth Whisman
Director of Development

Deb VanAntwerp
Director of Volunteers and Interns

Barb Adkins
Visitors Center Manager

Emma Meyer
Registrar

Hannah Johnson
Education Program Coordinator

George Perkins
Archivist

Harlan Fuller
Bookkeeper

Betty Turchirollo
Volunteer Assistant

Lauren Lacy
Development Assistant

Anthony Bowman
Education Outreach Coordinator

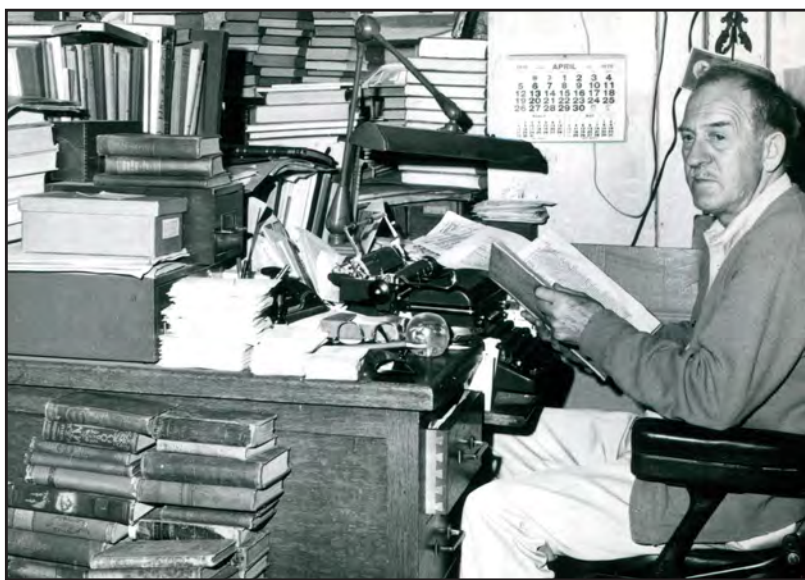


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MYSTERY HISTORY



For this installment of "Mystery History," do you know who this is, what type of business he was in, and where said business was located? If you know the answer to all three questions (who, what, and where) contact Librarian Bill Kemp by email at library@mchistory.org, or by phone at 309-827-0428. And if you have any stories about this person and his business, we'd love to hear them!

Yet again the Museum's popular "Mystery History" feature stumped many of our most ardent history sleuths. Last issue's undated photograph showed Peggy Eppa and Helen Thoms sitting on a peculiar-looking cement bench with an oak-and-acorn motif. The bench was located on the east side of the McLean County Courthouse Square (now Museum Square).

This bench was formally unveiled to the public on May 21, 1935 by the Illinois Department of the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War. The occasion was an immense gathering (or "encampment") and parade in downtown Bloomington of surviving Union veterans and their families. The bench was dedicated "in memory of our fathers, the Grand Army of the Republic."

The only one to come close to the correct answer was Carman Gresham, who identified the bench as once located on the Square. The bench was last seen in Carlock where it had been moved at one time, but just when it was moved from the courthouse square is unknown. A photograph of this bench shows up in the January 21, 1963, *Pantagraph*, so we know it was still around at that time.