

ON THE SQUARE



The Quarterly Magazine of the McLean County Museum of History

June-July-August 2022

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ON THE SQUARE

Quarterly Magazine

Edited by Susan Hartzold for the

McLean County Museum of History

and the



Visitors Center

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

Museum and Visitors Center Hours:

Visit mchistory.org for current hours and
Covid safety protocols

Admission:

FREE - Children and Students with ID
\$5 - Adults \$4 - Age 65+

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Cover image: Joe Billiti performs a high wire balancing act in the Gymnasium of Bloomington's YMCA in 1937.

Announcements

Now through August 6, the Museum will be participating in the Back 2 School Alliance School Supply Drive to help collect school supplies for local students in need for the 2022-23 school year. Visit bit.ly/Back2SchoolDrive22 to view the list of supplies needed!



Donate any supply from the list and be entered in a drawing to win a pair of tickets to the 2022 Evergreen Cemetery Walk.

Welcome New Members!

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Michael and Susan Andresen
Jamie Atchison
Carol Burroughs
Mercedes Davison
Charles Dempster
Heidi Enright
Francesca Erb
Mary Ettien
Patrick Ryan Gleason
Elizabeth Kaufman
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Michael Wallace
D. Lynn and Patricia Webber
Glen Wetzel
Julie M. Williams
Kay Wilson

Shirley Wilz

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, discounts in the gift shop, member pricing for event tickets, and our *Time Travelers* reciprocal membership that offers free and discounted admission to hundreds of sites across the U.S.

Balancing Acts



A circus balancing act features ordinary humans who stretch themselves, quite literally, to overcome extraordinary challenges. This year's *Sweet Corn Circus Festival* in Uptown Normal will once again center and celebrate the rich history of circus artistry in the Twin Cities. The event was inspired by the large number of aerial circus acts (30 +) that wintered and trained in the Twin cities. The first of these acts, The Flying LaVans, were the brothers Howard and Fred Green. Influenced by an aerial act they witnessed in 1875, the brothers set up rigging in their Father's Croxton Avenue barn and went on to become international stars. Soon other local's followed their lead. Many of them learned, practiced, and performed in Bloomington's YMCA gymnasium, at the time located at the corner of East and Washington Streets.

By the 1930s, the *Pantagraph* proclaimed that Bloomington had become "the capital of the aerial kingdom." And the circus tradition continues today with ISU's impressive Gamma Phi Circus, the oldest collegiate circus in the United States. See Adam Fox's article in this magazine for a personal account of our circus past, and present.

This summer season, we are all walking on a wire. The lasting pandemic continues to affect our lives; and while the Museum is delighted to welcome back treasured in-person events like our *History Makers Gala* this year, we continue to pivot, reposition, and reflect on how much our lives remain off-kilter. "Like many things in modern life, the image of balance that dominates our moral imagination has its origins in the Renaissance...by letting go of high-minded pursuits, we can free ourselves to discover the lower-key satisfactions of everyday experience" (*Humanities* magazine, 2021). A true balancing act requires letting go of distractions and tracking a steady course forward, one contemplative step at a time. The Museum is here to take those steps with you.

—Julie Emig, Executive Director

Latinos in Illinois and the USA: Music as a Cultural History

Chicago-based journalist Catalina Maria Johnson, PhD, suggests that music can be viewed and "read" as a tool that shares the cultural values, roots, and history of different peoples.



With a special emphasis on Mexican and Puerto Rican musicians in Illinois as representatives of Latino populations that have profoundly marked the state's culture and music, Johnson will present an illustrated presentation complete with musical samplings highlighting a broad overview of the last 75 years of music in the Latino U.S—including recent examples, such as the music created in response to the murder of 43 student-teachers in Ayotzinapa, Guerrero. This free public program, sponsored by a grant from Illinois Humanities, will take place on Saturday, August 6 at 1:00 p.m. in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom.

Johnson credits the tenacious insistence of a Mexican mom and a German/Swedish dad for the extraordinary gift of a bilingual and bicultural heritage. Thanks to them, she grew up between two cities: St. Louis, Missouri and San Luis Potosi, Mexico. Johnson's music journalism explores the extraordinary diversity of the global music scene with an emphasis on Latin and Latino music—from the most traditional roots music to cutting-edge electronic grooves. It is also very important to her to focus on the cultural riches that immigrants bring to the country of destiny, an invaluable and often unrecognized gift.

Johnson hosts and produces her own radio —*Latinos continued on page 8*

History Makers Gala Returns to ISU

On Wednesday, June 15 we will gather in-person, once again, to honor our new class of 2022 History Makers and recognize our 2021 class, who we celebrated last year in a virtual format due to the pandemic. Each year, the *History Makers Gala* recognizes long-standing residents whose outstanding, lifelong contributions of time and talents have helped make McLean County a better place to live. The Gala dinner will feature live entertainment that celebrates the honorees and their service to the community through a performance entitled “What a Wonderful Life!”

For those who have registered to attend, memory books will be available for you to share a remembrance or story with the honorees during the course of the event. If you will not be joining us in person, mail your written memory to the McLean County Museum of History Attn: Development at 200 N. Main St. in Bloomington, or send via email to development@mchistory.org. The deadline to register to attend the History Makers Gala is Friday, June 3. Go to bit.ly/hmtickets2022 to purchase tickets.

Meet our 2022 Honorees

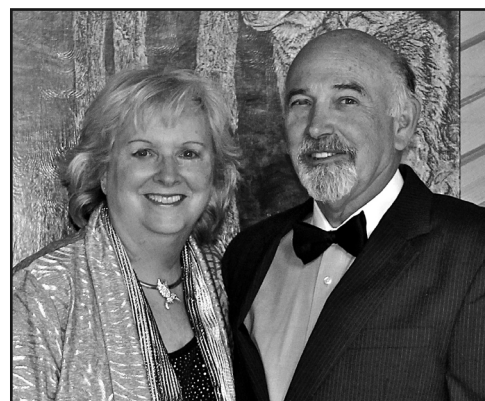
Deanna Frautschi and Alan Bedell both impact many lives with their generous souls, nurtured by their love of nature. Deanna has a legacy of involvement serving on over a dozen non-profit boards including United Way of McLean County, where she served as board chair, campaign chair and on various other committees. Alan's volunteer efforts began with youth baseball in Downs and blossomed with the Cornbelt chapter of National AMBUCS building wheelchair ramps throughout the community. He also helps provide Amtrykes—customized tricycles for those with special needs. Alan has served as national AMBUCS president.

Alan worked at State Farm after graduating from Illinois State University with a business administration degree and completing his military service. Deanna graduated from Bloomington High School and then received a communications degree from the University of Illinois. She spent 33 years at Country Financial, leaving as Executive Vice President for Human Resources and Communications. She most appreciates that Country gave her the responsibility for helping direct corporate resources to meet community needs.

Besides United Way, Deanna is deeply involved in the Multicultural Leadership Institute and serves on its advisory board. She has also served on the Illinois Prairie Community Foundation Board, the Parklands Foundation Board, and the Miller Park Zoological Society Board, where she was a past president.

The pair have chaired numerous fundraisers, including Zoo Doo, Red Cross Evening of Stars, and Carle Cancer Center events. They also use their own five-acre property to host small group tours and fundraisers in a relaxing educational environment.

Deanna and Alan sponsor scholarships for AMBUCS physical therapists, Illinois State University, the University of Illinois, Heartland Community College, and the Multicultural Leadership Institute. “We value our commitment to the community and the long-lasting effects,” Alan said. He added that they enjoy using their resources to benefit fellow community members.



History Makers Deanna Frautschi and Alan Bedell

“Tikkun Olam,” a phrase in Hebrew meaning to “repair the world,” sums up George and Myra Gordon's many community contributions, including education, recycling, and planting trees. Between the two, there are almost 60 years of environmental activism, generations of Illinois State University students taught, a reasonable voice in local politics heard, and local philanthropy elevated to a new level.

George earned his doctorate degree at Syracuse University. Travelling to Knoxville, Tennessee to research the Tennessee Valley Authority, he met University of Tennessee student Myra. An early job with the Girl Scouts brought Myra to St. Louis and eventually to Normal. George began teaching political science at Illinois State University in 1970 and the two married in 1972.



History Makers Myra and George Gordon

Looking for a volunteer opportunity in the early 1970s, Myra became involved in Operation Recycle. This eventually led to full-time employment in the 1980s as Operation Recycle expanded. Operation Recycle is today's Ecology Action Center (EAC), which both Myra and George have had long board tenures. Myra stepped away from Operation Recycle in the late 1980s,

—History Makers continued on page 13

Send in the Clowns: A Reflection on the Sweet Corn Circus Festival

By Adam Fox, Civic Arts Manager, Town of Normal

I never understood why there were so many clowns at Milner Library. Artwork throughout the building depicted a host of grease-painted faces smiling back at you. That's generally not what you expect in a university library. But since the Bone Student Center contained a Circus Room, it seemed a recurring theme on Illinois State University's campus that everyone just accepted without giving it much more thought. Eventually, a conveniently timed sesquicentennial provided an answer.



Gamma-Phi clowns at the 2021 Sweetcorn Circus Festival

When I began working for the Town of Normal, planning was nearing completion for its 150th birthday celebration. My role was to oversee the Normal Theater's portion of the 1-5-0 weekend, and I soon learned of the aerial performances that would be happening throughout Uptown and that Tino Wallenda was going to do a wire walk over the Circle. This time, I made sure to ask why. Warm smiles from the committee of Town staff and volunteers indicated that I had, perhaps, asked *the* question.

Over the course of that 1-5-0 weekend in 2015, the more I learned about this community's rich circus history, the more fascinated I became. Maureen Brunsdale and Mark Schmitt of Milner Library Special Collections wrote a book, *The Bloomington-Normal Circus Legacy: The Golden Age of Aerialists* (2013), an incredible resource for those who would love to know more. There are also numerous circus items to explore at the McLean County Museum of

History, whose mission includes sharing the diverse and compelling stories of our community's past. Nevertheless, I couldn't help wondering how I didn't know any of these fantastic pieces of local lore. One August afternoon, as I'm eating an ear of corn, an idea starts to take hold.

Everyone's favorite Sweet Corn Festival has undergone numerous iterations over four plus decades, successfully bringing together thousands of people to celebrate the agricultural roots of this Central Illinois community. Around the third year I was involved with the event, thematic inertia had begun to creep in, largely because of the rise of Make Music Normal as a multi-day celebration and other festivals that had taken on a similar footprint. We needed a hook, something that would make the event even more connected to the community's past and present. In 2019 the Sweet Corn Circus was born.

Aside from entertaining attendees with great circus acts including marquee performances from Illinois State University's Gamma Phi Circus, the oldest collegiate circus in the United States, the Sweet Corn Circus Festival has a focus on participation. Performers and coaches from Gamma Phi set up stations so that attendees have the chance to try their hand at juggling, walking a wire, spinning plates, or standing on stilts. The effect is quite magical, as participants of all ages realize that what these incredible performers do isn't impossible, but rather something that takes a lot of practice and hard work. Some may even go on to join Gamma Phi or take advantage of one of the numerous camps and training programs for younger performers. Likewise, and lucky for us, snacking on Midwest-grown sweet corn cooked perfectly by a vintage steam engine on the street remains a timeless act.

"Why circus?" is a question we've heard quite a bit since the Sweet Corn Circus came about, and the event is designed to answer just that. People may be showing up—as I once did—not knowing that a collegiate circus was even a thing, or that when someone refers to a "barn" in this town it might not have anything to do with livestock, or that Barnum & Bailey's most successful general manager once lived right here. But the smiles are unmistakable as people learn more about it, delighted to discover just how many stories their community has to tell.

The Sweet Corn Circus takes place at the end of every August and continues to grow; we'll save you a seat under the big top.



Costumes worn by the Flying Valentines, one of dozens of aerial acts that made their home in Bloomington-Normal, are featured in the Museum's permanent exhibit *Challenges, Choices, & Change: Working for a Living*.

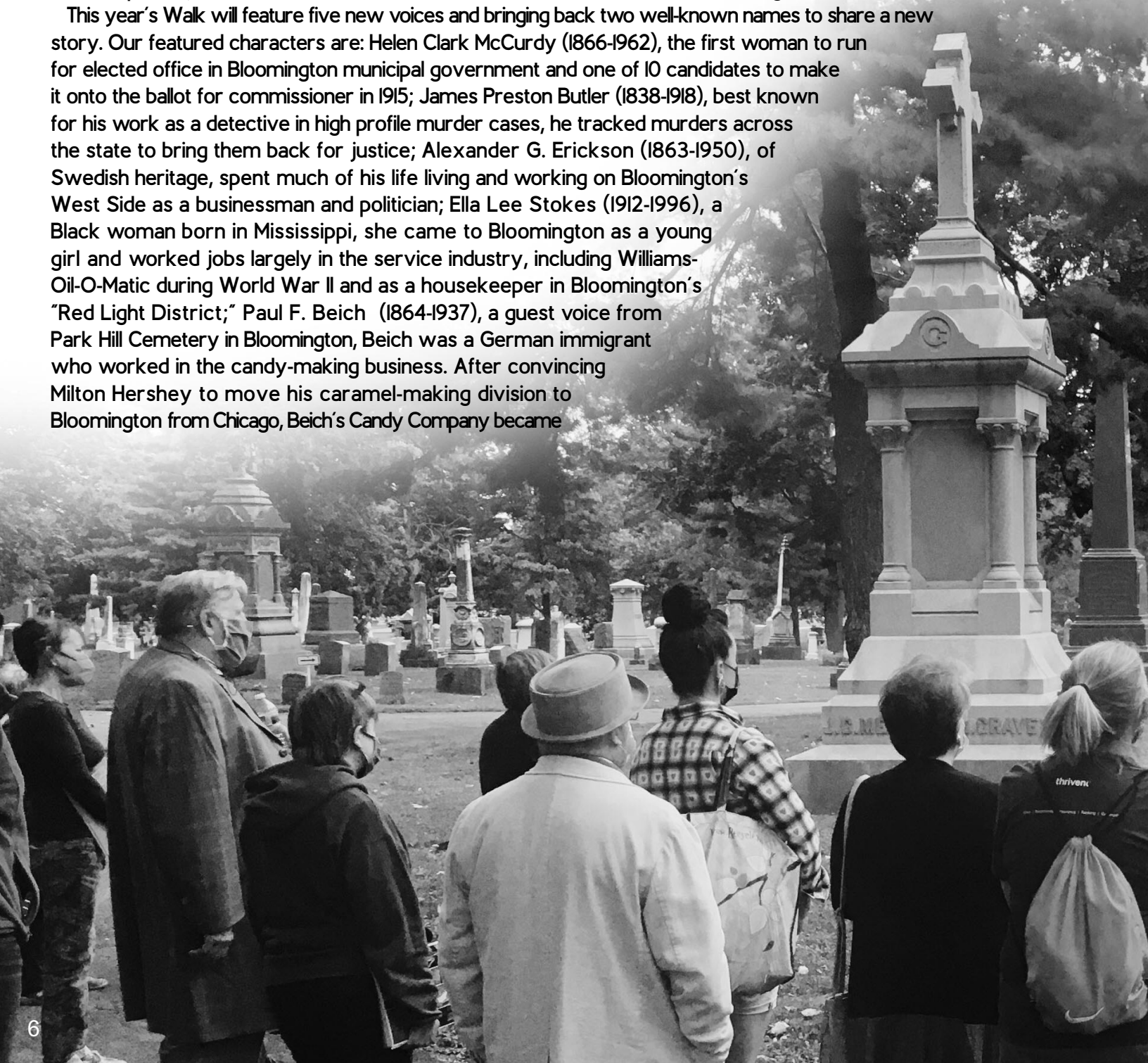


Cemetery Walk 2022

The *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* is back and better than ever for another monumental year (pun intended) on the beautiful, historic grounds of Evergreen Memorial Cemetery. The Museum is pleased to announce a continued commitment to providing a live in-person Walk in conjunction with a pre-recorded online offering thanks to our partner Broadleaf Video Management.

Due to the support of our Feature Sponsors: Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, Cumulus Radio Bloomington, and Pantagraph Media, the Museum can again ensure that over 2,000 students and chaperones, and additional older adults living in senior care facilities, are able to participate in this year's Walk free of charge (whether in-person or online)! Without support from our sponsors and community members, we would not be able to fulfill the primary mission of this event—to educate local students on the historic significance of cemeteries.

This year's Walk will feature five new voices and bringing back two well-known names to share a new story. Our featured characters are: Helen Clark McCurdy (1866-1962), the first woman to run for elected office in Bloomington municipal government and one of 10 candidates to make it onto the ballot for commissioner in 1915; James Preston Butler (1838-1918), best known for his work as a detective in high profile murder cases, he tracked murders across the state to bring them back for justice; Alexander G. Erickson (1863-1950), of Swedish heritage, spent much of his life living and working on Bloomington's West Side as a businessman and politician; Ella Lee Stokes (1912-1996), a Black woman born in Mississippi, she came to Bloomington as a young girl and worked jobs largely in the service industry, including Williams-Oil-O-Matic during World War II and as a housekeeper in Bloomington's "Red Light District;" Paul F. Beich (1864-1937), a guest voice from Park Hill Cemetery in Bloomington, Beich was a German immigrant who worked in the candy-making business. After convincing Milton Hershey to move his caramel-making division to Bloomington from Chicago, Beich's Candy Company became



known for its "Whiz Bar, the best nickel candy there iz-z!" And finally, Sarah (1814-1879) and David Davis (1815-1886) who spent much of their married life states apart while David worked away from home as a lawyer, judge, and statesman. The Davises maintained their loving relationship through letters, while Sarah managed the affairs of their estate and construction of their new home in Bloomington—which celebrates its 150th Anniversary this year!

The 2022 Evergreen Cemetery Walk will be held in-person on September 24-25 and October 1-2 with performances at 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. each day. Ticket sales will begin on Tuesday, August 30 and can be purchased by visiting the Museum's website mchistory.org, the Museum's Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center and Gift Shop or Evergreen Memorial Cemetery. Individual tickets to participate in the in-person event will be \$20 for the General Public, \$18 for Museum Members, and \$8 for Children or Students w/ ID.

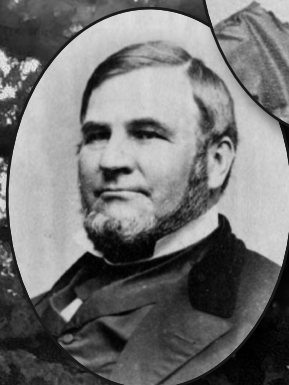
For the most up-to-date information about plans for the 2022 Evergreen Cemetery Walk and additional information about this year's characters, visit mchistory.org Questions? Contact the Education Department at education@mchistory.org



Paul F. Beich



Sarah Davis



David Davis



Ella Lee Stokes



Alexander G. Erickson



James Preston Butler



Helen Clark McCurdy



Juneteenth 2022

This year the true tradition of Bloomington-Normal's Juneteenth Celebration returns to the outdoors. On Saturday, June 18 the Twin Cities-area Juneteenth Celebration will take place at Miller Park in Bloomington from noon to 6 p.m. Activities, performances, and vendors will be onsite in the Pavillion and under tents throughout the park providing a true festival atmosphere for the entire family.



Many in the community do not realize that Juneteenth has been celebrated in Bloomington-Normal since 1993. The annual event held on the quad of Illinois Wesleyan University each summer was originally hosted by the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project and ran through 1999. During the early 2000s, the State Farm Affinity group known as the African American Forum carried forward the tradition, hosting the annual event at Forrest Park in Bloomington. Most recently, the Black History Project worked to revive the tradition in 2020—when the City of Bloomington proclaimed Juneteenth to be an official city holiday—and in 2021, when the City of Bloomington jointly hosted a virtual Juneteenth Celebration with the BN Black History Project.

Additionally, June is Black Music Month. In acknowledgement of Black Music Month, the Miller Park Pavilion will be converted into the “Black Music Sound Stage”—through which patrons will have an opportunity to experience a “Sight & Sound” music showcase that honors Black Music.

Stay up to date on Juneteenth event news and a final schedule by visiting the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project website at bnbhp.com

Before heading to Miller Park for the afternoon festivities, take full advantage of the Museum's partnership with Bloomington Public Library (BPL) during the morning Downtown Farmers' Market. BPL will be onsite inside the Museum with a Juneteenth Pop-Up Library and Story Time at 10:00 a.m.

Latinos continued from page 3— show, *Beat Latino*, which airs in Chicago on *Vocalo* (Chicago Public Media). She is also a regular contributor to NPR, Bandcamp, Downbeat and other outlets, and a member of the editorial board of *Revista Contratiempo*.

PLEASE NOTE: Capacity for this event is limited to 80 people. Face masks are recommended but not required to attend this program. For more information, contact the Education Department at education@mchistory.org or phone (309) 827-0428.

Illinois Humanities is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Illinois General Assembly [through the Illinois Arts Council Agency (IACA)], as well as by contributions from individuals, foundations, and corporations. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed by speakers, program participants, or audiences do not necessarily reflect those of the NEH, Illinois Humanities, IACA, our partnering organizations, or our funders.

Join the Heart of the Museum!

What better time to get involved in the place that brings you connection, community, and inspiration? Invest deeper in your roots and join us as stewards of McLean County's treasured history.

By taking your membership to new heights and stepping into VOLUNTEERISM you:

1. Dive deeper into McLean County's history while socially connecting with history lovers from around the community!
2. Receive comprehensive, onsite job training in library archives, historical research, history education, collections management, and more.
3. Work alongside accomplished museum professionals and community leaders from a variety of backgrounds.
4. Experience Behind the Scenes Tours and other professional development workshops to enhance your knowledge of our institutional history, collections management, and educational programming.
5. Gain access to a plethora of well-preserved primary source documentation, including the Pantagraph Negative Collection, microfilm, original plat maps, genealogical finding aids, and more.
6. Work alongside a team who strives to ensure diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Receive DEAL onsite training.

Our volunteers are treated as part of the staff. The Museum would not be able to open its doors to the public without their time and skills. To understand history is to understand the responsibility that we have to share it. Embrace this feeling in your heart today to powerfully impact the lives of others tomorrow! Thank you for considering turning your kind intentions into positive impact at the McLean County Museum of History. To learn more, please contact Rachael Masa, Director of Volunteers and Interns, at rmasa@mchistory.org



Board Volunteer Russel Francois visits with Jeff Woodard during the April 20 Volunteer reception.

Museum Dedicates Lincoln Funeral Train Marker

Commemorating the 157th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's Funeral Train passing through Bloomington, the McLean County Museum of History, the City of Bloomington, and generous donors and Museum members Dianne and John Hollister dedicated a new *Looking for Lincoln* historical marker and adjoining landscaped area near the site of the old Bloomington Train Depot of the Chicago & Alton Railroad. Dubbed "The Lincoln Special," the train transported the body of Abraham Lincoln from Washington, D.C. to Springfield, Illinois during a 13-day journey that began on April 21, 1865. The train passed through Bloomington early in the morning on May 3, 1865, and was greeted by thousands of local citizens while stopping briefly near the Bloomington Depot to take on wood and water. The dedication included live music, formal remarks from partners in the project, and a commemorative printed program and bookmark.

"Having lived in communities where not much attention is paid to history, and sometimes where people have a propensity to destroy history because of political disputes, the work that the Museum does communicates to future generations the importance of preserving our history," said Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe. "I think we should be thankful for that. As we unveil this marker here, it makes me think of how special Bloomington is, and it will always be."

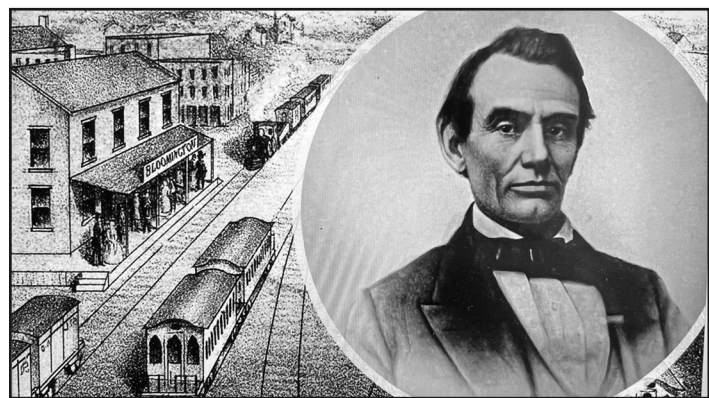
Museum Director of Development Norris Porter said the marker looks to tell the story of Lincoln through Bloomington's perspective. "I just hope that people in Bloomington and McLean County realize the impact and the connection between Bloomington and Lincoln," said Porter. "It seems today we've lost some of the luster and the yearning to understand and connect with Lincoln, and I hope this



Julie Emig, Dan Brady, Diane Hollister, Mboka Mwilambwe, Guy Franker, and John Hollister pose in front of the new Looking for Lincoln marker.

will motivate individuals to explore the history of Lincoln locally and be inspired as well."

This kind of inspiration and excitement for Lincoln are not lost on Diane Hollister, who helped lead the development of the marker project. "I hold him in reverence as how presidents should be: good, kind, wanting the best for everyone," said Hollister. "He is a moral compass. He was kind, and he listened to people, and I know he had the public good in mind. So, as I say, he is a legend in my mind."



Beyond the Lincoln legacy, Sarah Watson, Executive Director of Looking for Lincoln and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area said, "It's just important that we preserve and share our history, particularly to the next generations as they come along. In this case, Lincoln had quite an impact on Bloomington, and Bloomington had a significant impact on Lincoln and the way his career went. There are just so many significant Bloomington people in that story. It's something that the community should and does take great pride in."

Working with the Bloomington-Normal Convention and Visitors Bureau, the new marker will be added to the CVB Looking for Lincoln map, which will soon be made available in the Abraham Lincoln in McLean County exhibit at the McLean County Museum of History.

Unretirement

The pandemic led to many people retiring earlier than they had planned to, in part because so many businesses had to shrink their payrolls in response to the lockdowns. As the pandemic has eased, now the American economy has a labor shortage problem, resulting in employers raising wages to attract and retain the workers that they need.

That has contributed to a growing phenomenon, the “unretirement,” in which the recently retired decide to come back into the work force. According to a recent New York Times article:

- Participation in the labor force of those over age 65 has risen from 12.8% to 18.8% over the last 16 years.
- About 40% of workers over age 65 have been retired earlier.
- Some 25% of retirees decide to return to work in some fashion.

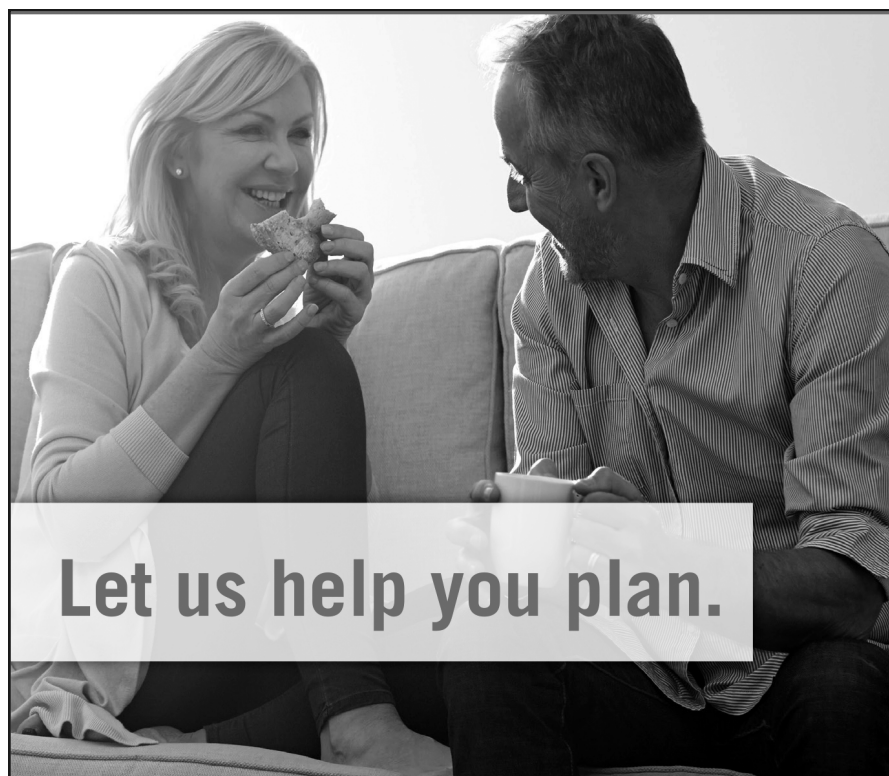
The article reports that financial considerations do not seem to be the primary driver behind returning to work. Instead, the unretired are looking for social engagement and a sense of purpose.

For example, Bonnie Rubin wrote an article for Forbes about her decision to go back to work (<https://www.forbes.com/sites/bonnie Rubin/2022/04/05/the-joy-of-a-little-retirement-job/>). The novelty of retirement for her became stale after a few years, and she found an opportunity with special appeal. Ms. Rubin took a part-time job in a flower shop that was 15 minutes from her home. In addition to the welcome interactions with co-workers and customers, she learned much more about flowers, a lifelong interest. Somewhat ironically in the internet age, she reports, the store owners particularly appreciated her old-fashioned writing and penmanship skills when it came to preparing the notes on the florist cards.

For employers, she points out, those returning to work from retirement may be a bargain, in addition to the skills and experience they bring to the job. They may not need health insurance, they probably aren’t looking for paid vacations, and climbing the career ladder is not on their agenda.

From the employee’s perspective, if Social Security benefits were started at age 62 (or any date earlier than the full retirement age) those benefits may be reduced if wages are too high. There is no benefit reduction after reaching full retirement age (66 for those born between 1943 and 1954, 66 and four months for those born in 1956 and turning 66 this year).

The information contained within this article is provided for informational purposes only and is current as of the date published. Please consult with your tax and legal advisors before implementing any strategies. This information is not intended to be and should not be treated as legal advice or tax advice. Readers should under no circumstances rely upon this information as a substitute for their own research or for obtaining specific legal or tax advice from their own counsel. April 2022 © 2022 M.A. Co. All rights reserved.



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New to Collections

Objects

- Rail level used by the G M & O railroad, c. 1935; donated by Terry Murch
- Sony M-435P microcassette recorder, c. 1999; donated by Greg & Carol Koos
- Nurses cape used by Nancy Lutes Stelzel, c. 1950; donated by Sharon Parker
- Cocktail napkin from the Grand Café, circa 1950; donated by Suan Guess Hanson
- Commemorative quilt made by the faculty of Bloomington Junior High School as a gift for Robert Knight when he retired as principal of the school in 1987; donated by Catherine Knight
- Bloomington optometrist Dr. S. P. Schrenzel, eye-glass case, c. 1963; Pencil case used by Don Marquardt while attending Franklin School, c.1948; donated by Sharon Wolfe
- Knitted suit (jacket and skirt) made by Lucille Beich, c. 1990; purchased
- Eaton Asphalt Co. advertising pencil sharpener in the shape of a toy truck, c.1958; donated by Leslie Frizzell
- Baby blanket used by the Joy and Warren Craig family, c. 1950; donated by Shirley Craig
- Collection of clothing worn by the children of Luella and Milan Sabick, c. 1954-1970; donated by Cindy Crow, and Rodney and Gary Sabik
- Safe deposit box used and removed by George

and Hazel Condon from Hudson Bank, shortly before it closed in 1937; donated by Ronal Grizzle

- Camera and glass plate negatives used by Chenoa Photographer and artist W.D. Nehr, c. 1902; donated by Bart Phillips
- Ida Alston Cavins opera glasses, c. 1900; donated by David Hiltabrand
- VHS tapes "Big Bird's Story Time" and "The Lion King" used by Julia Robinson; Fitbit Charge 3 watch used by James Robinson and his wife Shirley Craig; donated by Shirley Craig
- Tom Thumb toy cash register and play money, c. 1950; jump rope, c. 1980; swim goggles c. 1990; two pairs girl's dress gloves, c. 1978; donated by Eileen Wagner
- Small plastic cooler for drinks and sandwiches with Twin City Broadcasting station logos printed on it, c. 1982; donated by Michael Stanton

Archives

- More than twenty linear feet of Library Association / Withers Library / Bloomington Public Library historical records, including minutes, special event posters and flyers, correspondence, photographs, press announcements, news clippings, etc., pertaining to the history and operation of Bloomington's library, 1850s to present; donated by Bloomington

Public Library

- Cassette tape recording of President Gerald Ford at "Les Arends Day" in Melvin (made by donor who was working for The Daily Illini student newspaper at the time); and other items; donated by Arthur Drake
- Five binders containing Woman's Club of Bloomington-Normal minutes, attendance rolls, and other information, 1997-2004, 2009-2011, and 2015-17; as well as a folder with the history of club and list of past presidents; donated by the Woman's Club of Bloomington-Normal
- Foldout map titled "Map of McLean County Illinois," showing one room schools, published by McKnight & McKnight of Bloomington, undated; donated by Ruth Knecht
- Various and numerous items collected by Warren and Joy Craig, including First Baptist Church of Normal materials; diary kept by Joy Craig, 1976-2001; programs and news clippings of Bloomington High School theatrical productions, 1951-52; and much more; donated by Shirley Craig
- "Motor Way" magazine, partial (49 pages), including article of auto enthusiasts from Bloomington and elsewhere on tour of Chicago area, August 1905; advertising postcard, Hanes and Utterback, tailoring, Saybrook, mailed to F.C. Huckleburn, Saybrook, 1907; twelve receipts received from Parker Bros to pay notes to Gilbert and Gay, "given for purchase of Fell homestead," 1882; and many other items; donated by David Parker
- Materials relating to the May 3, 1851 receipt signed by Abraham Lincoln (original in the Museum's collection); instructions for curing meat on letterhead from Walnut Grove Home and Stock Farm; among other items; donated by David W. Wilson
- Additions to the Russ Paulson-Vrooman research collection, including draft copy of "The Vrooman Brothers: A Study in Reform Techniques" by Paulson, written for American history seminar at Harvard University, 1958; donated by Linnea Anderson
- Scrapbook, including three-page typed manuscript, "Things We Used to Do that We Do Not Do Today," written by Peter Ropp, March 1, 1955; donated by Ron Ropp
- Binder of McLean County Arts Council materials, including minutes, member lists, and articles of incorporation, c. early 1980s; donated by Marty Seigel
- Scrapbook containing Bloomington High School photos, programs, news clippings, and the like, compiled by Norma and Estelle Gronemeier, 1928-1930; and an Illinois State Normal University commencement week booklet, 1934; donated by Nancy Gronemeier Aldridge
- Items relating to Bloomington attorney William

Featured Artifact

Opera Glasses — donated by David Hiltabrand

This interesting pair of opera glasses originally belonged to Ida Augusta Alstrom (1880-1961). Born in Frankfort, Kentucky Ida was living in Baltimore when she met Dr. Lester Blake Cavins, whom she married in 1907. They settled in Stanford, Illinois that same year, when Lester took over his brother Stanley's practice there. In 1917 they moved to Bloomington where Lester established a new practice. That same year their only child Ida Miriam was born.



Ida's opera glasses have an applied brass monogram with her initials. Dating to about 1900 their design reflects the popular Art Nouveau style of the time. The glasses are incorporated into their leather covered case that when closed can be carried, like a purse, by its attached chain. The lenses, set in a gold-colored frame with decorative filigree bridge, fold down when the purse is closed.

Bracken and his son Dwight F. Bracken, who in his later years, served as a curator of the McLean County Historical Society (now Museum); donated by Douglas D. Fox

- Collection of local ink blotters, including Smith-Alsop Paint Co., Parker Bros., and other local businesses; Chicago & Alton Railroad booklets; donated by Leslie Frizzell

- Large collection of material, including handwritten and typed notes relating to United States Military Buttons of the Land Service, 1787-1902; "A Guide and Classificatory System" by Martin Wykoff; and an assortment of booklets, tickets, and ephemera from local theatrical productions, music shows, historical programs, and other events attended by Wykoff and donor, c. 1990s; and others items; donated by Sharon Wolf

- Large three-ring binder containing a 42-year history of citizen-based efforts to transfer ownership of Angler's Lake to the City of Bloomington, including correspondence, news clippings, and maps; donated by Margaret Hollowell

- Papers relating to the restoration of clock mechanisms in the Museum dome, a project led by Bill Miller and Don Gottselig, c. late 1990s; donated by Mary Ellen Gottselig

- Various items relating to the Chicago & Alton Railroad and its successor, the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio (GM&O) Railroad, including a C&A company rules booklet, 1920, GM&O paystubs, 1969-1972; and a handwritten period copy of a Gen. John A. Logan order to the 15th Army Corps, 1864; donated by Chet Sears

- Additions to the Matejka Collection, including articles written by donor for the Peoria-based "The Labor Paper," 2021-22; donated by Mike Matejka

- Collection of newsletters, Old North Normal Neighborhood Association, Summer 2004-Fall 2021; donated by Carol Weisheit and Gayle McCorkle (association co-presidents)

- Bloomington Rotary Club materials, 1977-78 and 1996-97, as well as rosters, attendance records, news clippings, and other items dating before 1977; donated Richard D. Johnson

- Bloomington Rotary Club papers, 2014-2019; donated by Jane Chamberlain

- Single issue of "Indy," Bloomington-Normal's free weekly paper, April 28, 2004; and a 1984 ACLU publication; donated by Robert Sutherland

Books / Periodicals / Publications

- The Finest of the Wheat No. 2: Hymns New and Old for Missionary and Revival Meetings and Sabbath-Schools (R.R. McCabe publisher, 1894); donated by Eric L. Jones

- "Echoes of Us," 1976-1977, compilation of Normal Community High School humanities class

short essays and poetry; donated by Catharine Knight

- Proposed Management Plan for Angler's Lake, prepared by the Bloomington Department of Parks and Recreation, 1988; donated by Margaret Hollowell

- The Ordinance of 1787 and Old Northwest Territory (Northwest Territory Celebration Commission, 1937), stamped, "From Wm. B. Brigham, County Supt. Of Schools, Bloomington, Ill;," donated by Denise Wilson

Photographs

- Twenty-two 8 x 10 photographs of BHS theatrical productions, including "Daddy Long Legs" and "Every Style a Star," 1951-52; donated by Shirley Craig

- Photographs by F.W. Leslie, Chicago, which were used in Motor Way magazine for article on auto enthusiasts from Bloomington and elsewhere on tour of the Chicago area, August 1905; donated by David Parker

- Koda Gems booklet of 10 photos of the Great Bloomington Fire, June 19, 1900; tintype of Julia Vrooman, undated; 18 color photos of the restoration of the McLean County Museum of History dome, taken by donor from his fourth floor office, at the then Commerce Bank building; and many

other photos; donated by David W. Wilson

- Four photographs of the German Day celebration in Bloomington, October 15-17, 1913, including one showing a float in front of the old Bloomington Coliseum; donated by Linda Lacy

- Collection of June 19, 1900 Great Bloomington Fire photographs, including 18 views of the destruction; and five showcasing early Bloomington Fire Department equipment and personnel, c. 1900; donated by Sharon Tepper

- Color slides of former courthouse clocks and inner workings, undated; and seven color prints of clocks and inner workings, July 21, 1999; donated by Mary Ellen Gottselig

**The Museum
collects personal, military,
household, business, art, and
native objects, created and used by
the people of McLean County.**

**What's gathering dust
in your attic?**

History Makers continued from page 4— completing a master's degree. An 11-year career at State Farm followed. When Illinois Prairie Community Foundation (IPCF) needed an interim executive director after Myra had retired from State Farm, she answered the call and found her dream job. Her interim status led to six years of service. The IPCF grew substantially under Myra's leadership.

George taught multiple classes at ISU, from basic introductory classes to his specialty in public administration and worked hard to ensure that his classes covered a full spectrum of political thought. He co-wrote a textbook on public administration that was published this year in its twelfth edition. George also served on the McLean County Board from 1996 until 2020.

Myra and George's latest ambitious environmental undertaking is helping the EAC effort to plant 10,000 trees a year for ten years.

We invite you again to join us on Wednesday, June 15 in the Brown Ballroom at Illinois State University to help us celebrate these present history makers!

Join us for **POP-UP STORY TIME**

w/ Bloomington Public Library

10:00 to 10:30 a.m. Tuesdays and Saturdays in June
in the Museum's classroom

(during library construction)

to register: bit.ly/3PuknUb

CALENDAR OF EVENTS*

Every Tuesday from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Old Time Music Group Live

“Oldtime” music hails from the Appalachia region of the U.S. from before the time of radio and phonograph. People would play these “fiddle tunes” at house parties and square dances. There are pockets of Oldtime players all over the U.S. and Canada, with inspiration for some of the songs coming all the way from Scotland and Ireland. The music is mostly unwritten and learned and played by ear. Bloomington’s very own Old Time Music Group is a laid back and diverse group of musicians that try to gather once a week. They welcome any instrument to come and play with them, but the group is primarily composed of fiddle, guitar, mandolin, and banjo. Not a musician? Just come to listen!

Every Saturday May through October 9:00 to 12:00 p.m.

Museum at the Market

The Museum opens at 8:30 a.m. to all visitors, with FREE admission until noon! Visit the Museum’s latest exhibits and shop at the surrounding Downtown Bloomington Farmers’ Market. Stop by the Museum’s plaza on Washington Street from 9:00 to noon to purchase all of your local history needs and favorite treats, and participate in a variety of free activities for all ages!

June 3-4

Cogs & Corsets: A Central Illinois Steampunk Happening

The Museum is once again pleased to be a partner in this signature Downtown event! For a complete schedule and more information about activities, go to cogsandcoresetsil.com

June 7, 14, 18, 21, 28 10:00 to 10:30 a.m.

Pop-Up Story Times with Bloomington Public Library

During the month of June, the Museum is excited to host Bloomington Public Library for a series of pop-up story times and children’s activities. To register for these BPL led programs, visit bloomingtonlibrary.org/events/month/2022/06 To find out more about the exciting expansion of our neighboring local library, go to bloomingtonlibrary.org/building-project

June 15 6:15 p.m.

History Makers Gala

Join the Museum as we celebrate four individuals who have dedicated their lives to making McLean County a better place to live. The 10th annual *History Makers Gala* will be held in-person in the Brown Ballroom at Illinois State University. See page 4 for more information. Tickets are available through June 3 at bit.ly/hmgala2022

June 18 12:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Juneteenth Celebration

This year the true tradition of Bloomington-Normal’s Juneteenth Celebration returns to the outdoors. Make your way to Miller Park in Bloomington to enjoy activities, performances, and vendors for the entire family. Stay up to date on Juneteenth event news and a final schedule by visiting the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project website at bnbhp.com and see page 8 for more information.

June 18 5:30 p.m.

WGLT Summer Concert Series

The WGLT Summer Concert presented by CEFCU will return to Downtown Bloomington for its 20th annual celebration! After a two-year COVID-imposed hiatus, WGLT is thrilled to come back “home” to the Museum Square. The 2022 show will feature, for the first time, an all-women lineup: Peoria-based Tambora, fronted by Cindy Youngren; New Orleans folk rock diva Lilli Lewis; and singer/songwriter Carsie Blanton. Questions? Contact WGLT Development Director Melissa Libert at mmboehn@ilstu.edu

June 24 7:00 p.m.

Viral Silence: Six Words featuring Eddie Breitweiser in Concert

Six Words is a concert-length composition by Edward Breitweiser inspired by local COVID-19 experiences in collaboration with McLean County nonprofits and youth organizations. This in-person and live-streamed public performance at the Museum will feature music and words by area residents who shared their personal stories with the project. The live-stream will begin at 7:00 p.m. on the Experimental Sound Studio’s YouTube Channel. This event is free, but reservations are requested: nonopera.ticketleap.com/vs/

June 25 thru August 6 5:00 p.m.

Saturdays on the Square

Presented by Pantagraph Media and the Castle Theatre in partnership with the City of Bloomington and the Museum, this outdoor summer series brings regional acts to perform free, family-friendly concerts on the Museum Square. This year’s current lineup is: June 25: Style in Stereo with Kyle Yap; July 9: Wedding Banned; July 16: Dan Hubbard with Leah Marlene; Aug. 6: Southern Accents, a tribute to Tom Petty.

**July 4
Museum Closed for July Fourth Holiday**

July 11-15 8:30 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Futures in History Camp (Registration FULL)

This out-of-this-world, 5-day camp experience includes facilitation by Museum staff and other experts, all materials needed for hands-on learning, meals and snacks, friendship, fun, and more! The camp is for students entering 4th, 5th, and 6th grades who are eager to explore the many futures a career in history can offer. From law, to archaeology, to architecture, to museum studies, and environmental science, there is a future for everyone at Futures in History Camp! For more information about partners and sponsors, visit mchistory.org/learn/futures-in-history-daycamp

July 19 6:30p.m.

Genealogy Treasures in Cemetery Records

The public is welcome to join this McLean County Genealogical Society Zoom program featuring Suz Bates, who will discuss overlooked research resources. To join the Zoom meeting go to bit.ly/3Ne2zdW

***All Zoom programs noted.**

August 2

7:00 p.m.

History Reads Book Club: *The Seasons on Henry's Farm: A Year of Food and Life on a Sustainable Farm* by Terra Brockman.

This hybrid discussion with the author will be held in the Museum's Governor Fifer Courtroom. Go to bit.ly/bplhistoryvirtual522 to register for the online discussion or bit.ly/bplhistoryinperson522 to participate in person. To request a copy of the book, contact Bloomington Public Library at reference@bloomingtonpubliclibrary.org or call (309) 590-6168.

August 6

1:00 p.m.

Latinos in Illinois and the USA: Music as a Cultural History

The Museum is thrilled to host Chicago-based journalist Catalina Maria Johnson, PhD, for a presentation exploring how Latin music is a source of history for the Latino community. For more information about this free program, see page 3.

August 27-28

Sweet Corn Circus

The Museum is once again thrilled to partner and participate in this annual two-day festival celebrating our agricultural history and McLean County's deep circus roots! See page 5 for more information about this Uptown Normal showstopper!

August 30

Tickets On Sale for Evergreen Cemetery Walk 2022

Tickets can be purchased at the Museum or Evergreen Memorial Cemetery. Tickets can also be purchased online by visiting mchistory.org. Tickets are \$20 for the General Public, \$18 for Museum members, and \$8 for children or students w/ID. See page 6 for more information..

September 5

Museum Closed for Labor Day Holiday

Congratulations Spring, 2022 Interns!

Please help us congratulate our three Museum interns for their hard work and dedication during this past Spring 2022 semester!



Sophie Randolph

Isabella Lethbridge is a Junior History Education major from Illinois State University. This semester, her internship focused on historical research and writing character biographies to serve as supplemental curriculum support for students attending the Evergreen Cemetery Walk. Isabella will also be continuing with the Museum as a volunteer for this summer's Futures in History Camp! Sophie Randolph is a Senior Graphic Design major from Illinois State University. Sophie joined the Museum as a graphic design intern under the supervision of Norris Porter and Candace Summers. She has produced new designs for the Museum's Free Family Pass, History Makers Gala, Trades & Labor Fest, and Evergreen Cemetery Walk promotional materials. Kylee Winkler is a

Senior History/Music double major from Illinois State University working as a Library/Archives Intern. After completing a comprehensive library/archives training with Bill Kemp, she was tasked with organizing and creating finding aids for a recently compiled music collection. Kylee also learned preservation techniques, like encapsulation, to care for additional archival items, like blueprints. Thank you again, Isabella, Sophie, and Kylee! Well done!



Kylee Winkler



McLean County
MUSEUM of HISTORY

200 N. Main St., Bloomington, IL 61701

309-827-0428 or mchistory.org

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Mystery History Quiz



We had only one winner for last issue's mystery photo—a January 1971 view of George “Hub” Parker at a 600-foot rail spur off the 900 block of East Grove Street in Bloomington. Today, this block is home to AB Hatchery & Garden Center, among other businesses. What's that? Yes, remember that Constitution Trail used to be the Illinois Central Railroad. And for a while, Parker Bros. Lumber & Fuel Co. (with offices and yards on the south side of East Grove) owned this spur so they could get coal delivered by railcar. The concrete elevators shown in the photo are long gone.

Congratulations to Dave Hiltabrand, the only history sleuth who knew the correct answer. Dave even identified “Hub” Parker, who passed away in 2000 at the age of 96.



We believe this issue's mystery photo will be much easier—or at least we hope. Do you know where this structure was located? It was somewhere in Bloomington-Normal. How's that for a hint! Do you know when it was built, and what made it special? If you know or think you know some of this story, contact Museum Librarian Bill Kemp at 309-827-0428 or bkemp@mchistory.org As always, good luck!