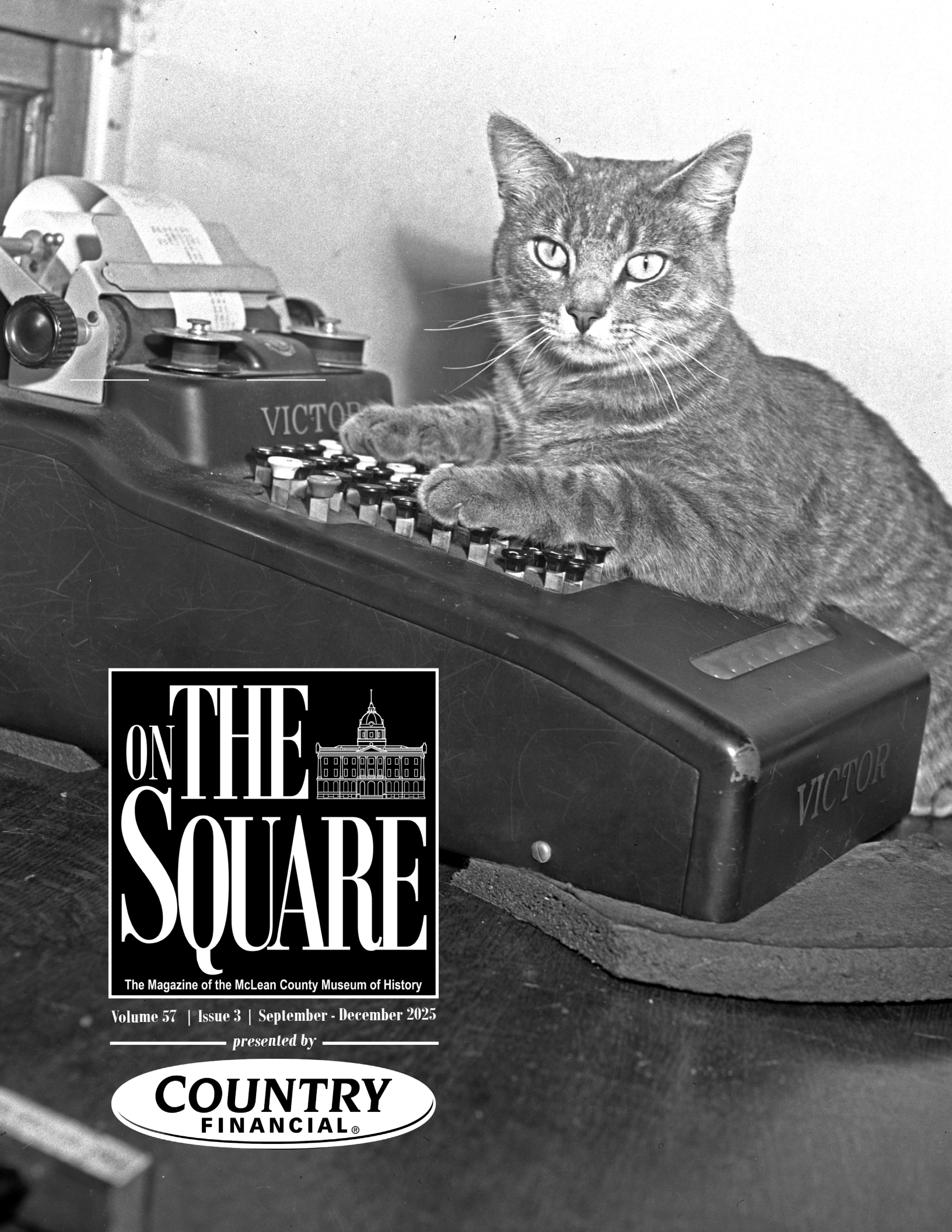




# ON THE SQUARE



The Magazine of the McLean County Museum of History

Volume 57 | Issue 3 | September - December 2025

presented by



# Cover Photo

This *Pantagraph* photo from July 22, 1947 features Tom the tabby cat hard at work. Phyllis Liston reported "Everyday for almost a week the big gray cat has faithfully appeared at 8:30 a.m. when the Normal city hall office staff opens... His previous whereabouts are unknown, but his remarkable personality has won him a daily diet of liver and hamburger from city employees and occasional visitors."

## Museum Staff

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

## Museum Board

|                       |                                       |                                                     |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| Craig Alexander       | Elizabeth Johnston                    | Robert Porter – <i>Secretary</i>                    |
| Keith Cornille        | John J. Killian                       | Karen Schmidt – <i>Treasurer</i>                    |
| Zach Dietmeier        | Mike Matejka                          | Ann Sullivan                                        |
| Bob Dobski            | R.C. McBride                          | Aondover Tarhule                                    |
| Tom Eder              | Pamela Muirhead                       | Carl Teichman                                       |
| Russel Francois       | Mike O'Grady                          | Paul B. Van Ness                                    |
| Duncan Funk           | Shelli Opsal                          | Carolyn P. Yockey – <i>Immediate Past President</i> |
| Vasudha P. Gadhiraaju | Michelle Pazar – <i>President</i>     | Sheahon Zenger                                      |
| Arlene Hosea          | José Manuel Pérez                     |                                                     |
|                       | Allison Petty – <i>Vice President</i> |                                                     |

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# From the Desk of Executive Director Emig

This season, we are leaning more than ever into programming that resonates on a personal level, creating space to inspire reflection and action.

In this issue of our tri-annual magazine, *On the Square*, you will read about our partnership with Nomad Theatre. We're working with them to host *Order in the Court*, a medley of ten-minute plays exploring the meaning of justice over time.

You will also read about *Mourning in McLean*, a new building-wide hallway display and programming series which utilizes artifacts from our collection to spark thought and conversation about one of life's only guarantees: death.

For something a bit lighter, you will see several baseball cards highlighting members of our team in this edition. These cards are just one playful way we're gearing up for our next temporary exhibit, *More Than a Game: A Community History of Baseball & Softball*.

And in case you missed it, you should know that our most recent temporary exhibit, *A Deadly Deception: The Asbestos Tragedy in McLean County*, received a competitive national award from the American Association of State and Local History. In his nominating letter, Dr. Edward Green, a sociologist in the Criminal Justice department at Roosevelt University, wrote:

"Exhibits like this bring history alive, educating students, locals, and visitors alike about the lived experiences of a location, yes, but also of corporate and environmental practices that a well-informed democracy must not repeat in the future."

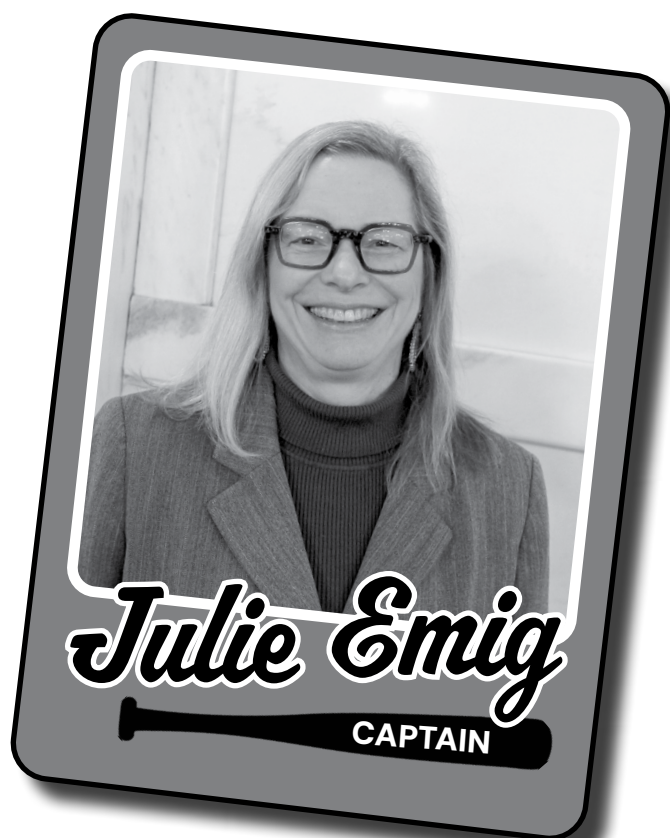
Dr. Green's words succinctly summarize exactly what we strive to do every day at the Museum — we strive to make sense of the past through nuanced and multifaceted exhibits, displays, and programs in partnership with the communities we serve.

Our staff is dedicated to living our mission everyday, and we know preserving the whole of history has never been more important.

We are an independent nonprofit organization that belongs to the people of McLean County. Despite our name, we are not owned or operated by local government.

**We rely on the support of our members, private funders, and our own revenue streams to do this work — preserving the past, creating space for people to learn, and bringing people together for meaningful experiences.**

Thank you for your support. We look forward to another season of learning and growing together!



# SPONSORS

*We are grateful for our Presenting Sponsors, whose support empowers us to continue preserving, educating, and collaborating in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County. Contact Norris Porter if you or your organization wants to partner with the Museum.*

**Ace World Wide Moving**  
Livingston Santas' Reindeer

**Anonymous**  
Speakers Bureau, Fieldtrips, Onsite Tours

**Avanti's**  
Volunteers

**Bridgestone**  
Futures in History Camp

**COUNTRY Financial**  
Free Tuesdays at the Museum  
*On The Square Magazine*

**Cumulus Radio Bloomington**  
Christmas Under the Dome

**Illinois Farm Bureau**  
Museum at the Farmer's Market

**Jeffrey Alans & the Wandell Family**  
Livingston Santas

**Lamar Advertising**  
Museum News E-Blast

**MCK CPAs & Advisors**  
Lunch & Learn Series

**Pontiac Granite Co.**  
Mourning in McLean

**The Pantagraph**  
Rotunda Installations

**WGLT**  
Live Stream Programs

*Special thanks to Bloomington Township and Normal Township for supporting our Senior Reminiscence Program!*

# NEW MEMBERS

*as of August 8, 2025*

Bonnie Bernardi  
Lynne and Barry Conder  
Joanne Curtis

Steve and Nancy Dauer  
William DeCardy

Neil and Lynn Finlen  
Pat and Dan Fitzgerald

Nayoka Griffis  
Mitchell Hisch and Joya Davis

John Hutchinson  
Michael and Jean Hutson

Suzie Hutton

Terry Koch

Barbara Nobles  
José Manuel Pérez

Shannon Perry  
Caitlin Smith

Caleb Sneed and Justin Vo  
Torri Thompson

Tonya Weber  
Janet Whitworth

Lois Zimmerman

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



# Notes from Norris

## Member Appreciation Month

November is Member Appreciation Month! Members will receive a 20% discount in our Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop AND at the shops at Miller Park Zoo as well as the Children's Discovery Museum. Plus, watch for news in October about how to enter to win an opportunity to tour the Dome!

## Lost Speech Mural

On May 29, 2025, over 200 people gathered to celebrate the dedication of a 45-foot-tall and 25-foot-wide mural depicting Lincoln's famous Lost Speech. The mural is on the east wall of Rosie's Pub, just across from where Lincoln gave the speech 169 years earlier on May 29, 1856. The dedication celebration began on the Museum Square with music from the 33rd Illinois Regimental Band and remarks from folks who worked on the project, including local Lincoln scholar Guy Fraker. The crowd then marched to the beat of a drum over to the mural for photos with Abe.

## Support the Magic — Invest in Excellence

Our end-of-year funding appeal will focus on the true "magic" of our work — what happens when our talented staff brings history to life for the broader public. We appreciate your trust and investment in keeping history alive for all to enjoy. Watch for a mailing in early December with more details and information about how you can support the "Museum Magic" with an end-of-year gift. This summer we outlined our vision for the future of programming at the McLean County Museum of History, inspired by the legacy of the Evergreen Cemetery Walk. This means more hands-on programming, performances in the Courtroom, interactive exhibits, historic art initiatives, and tours. We're grateful for the support we've received thus far and look forward to embarking on this new chapter with you all.

Please visit [mchistory.org/participate/saving-history](https://mchistory.org/participate/saving-history) to learn more.

## Nominate a History Maker

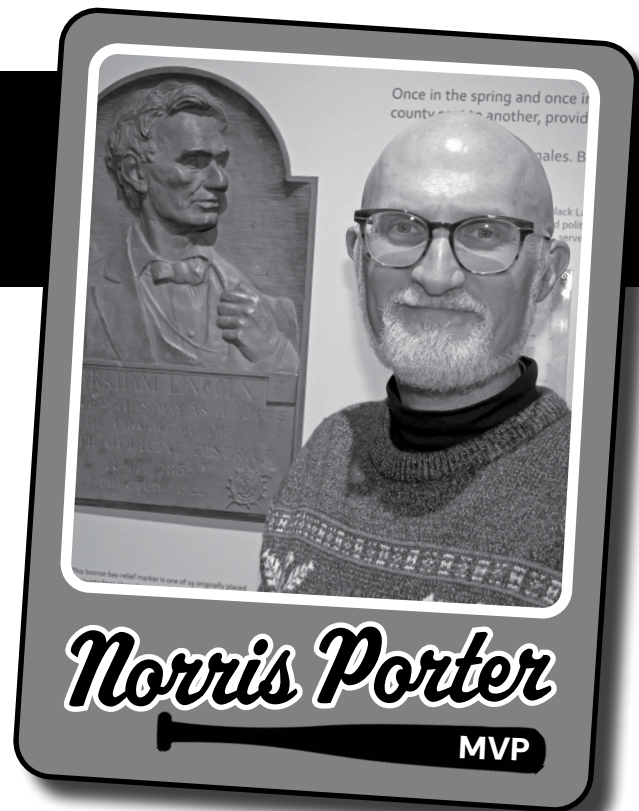
It's time to nominate individuals for consideration as a 2026 History Maker!

Please type [bit.ly/Nominate-History-Maker](https://bit.ly/Nominate-History-Maker) into your web browser for more information.

The deadline for submissions is October 3, 2025.

## What will your LEGACY be?

Planned giving is an ideal way to support the Museum and cement your legacy, creating a lasting impact. Please visit [mchistory.org/legacy](https://mchistory.org/legacy) or contact Norris at [development@mchistory.org](mailto:development@mchistory.org) for more information.



# Inspiring the Future with Knowledge of the Past

For those who may not know me, my name is Emily McCusker, and I am the Museum's Director of Youth and Family Education. My role sounds straightforward, and in many ways it is — but it also covers a wide range of responsibilities. I'm involved in nearly every K–12 program we offer. From leading our hands-on summer learning experiences for kids to hosting workshops for local scout groups and community organizations, I'm there. I also coordinate family and community events like our annual Día de Muertos celebration.

Since starting in July 2022, much of my focus has been on strengthening the Museum's relationships with local schools. This work isn't always visible, but it is vitally important to meet the Museum's mission. It's rewarding to see this work manifest, especially during fieldtrips. We welcome homeschool groups, daycare centers, and nearly every grade level from public and private schools, offering guided tours tailored to their needs.

Recognizing that not every class can visit us in person, we also provide resources for educators to use in their classrooms. This includes our recently re-developed loan kit program. Covering topics ranging from the history of the Kickapoo people to the homefront during the Vietnam War, each kit offers hands-on learning opportunities for students to explore. The kits include background information, inquiry-based activities and artifacts they can touch. Some are geared toward elementary students, while others are better suited for older grades, but all are meant to make history accessible and engaging.

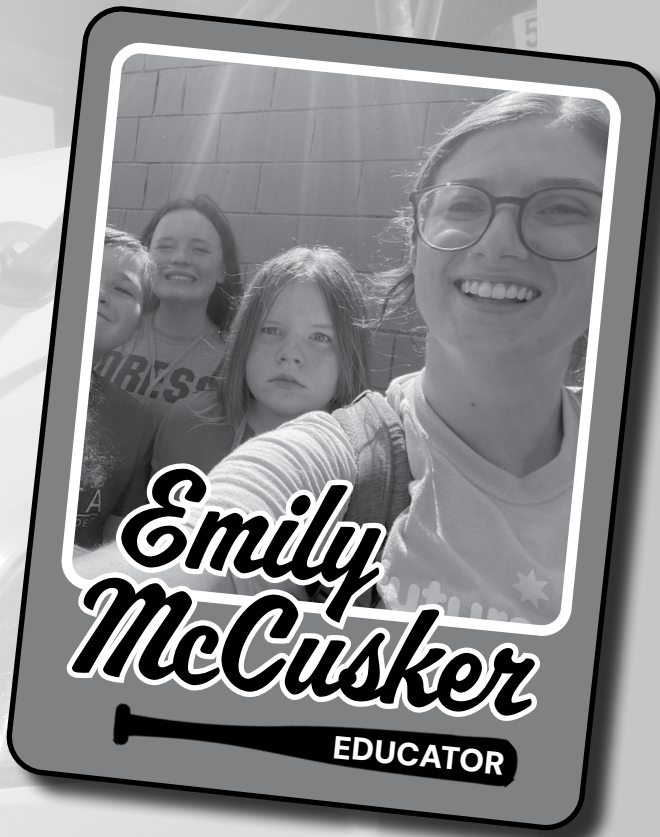
During my tenure, I've also worked to build and maintain a partnership with the Regional Office of Education #17, which has generously featured us on their podcast "ROE 17 Pod." I've also worked with the Bloomington Career Academy (previously the Bloomington Area Career Center), District 87, and Unit 5 administrative staff, as well as leaders of local multilingual education programs. Their insight and feedback are invaluable, helping us refine everything from one-time events to recurring programs. After all, no one knows their students better than the educators who work with them every day.

These relationships enrich my work, improving the experiences of the students we serve and deepening my understanding of our community's past and present. When a multilingual class uses our Spanish Language Audio Tour in the *Making a Home* exhibit gallery, or middle schoolers dive into primary source research in the Library, seeing their eyes light up fills me with joy. Watching young learners reinterpret history for themselves is the most rewarding part of my job, and I feel proud every time I see it happen.



## **Schools Served by the Museum in FY 25**

Bent Elementary School  
Bloomington Career Academy  
Bloomington High School  
Bloomington Junior High School  
Calvary Baptist Academy  
Calvary Kid Connections Pre School  
Caritas Home School  
Central Illinois Bridge Academy  
Cheer 24- Crossroads Area Home School Association  
Chiddix Junior High School  
Christian Life Academy  
Classical Conversations Mock Trial  
Cornerstone Christian Academy  
Countryside School  
Davis Home School  
Epiphany School  
Evans Jr. High School  
For a Better Tomorrow  
Fox Creek Elementary  
Graymont Grade School  
Harshbarger Home School  
Heartland Community College  
Heyworth Elementary School  
Herrarte Home School  
Home School Friends  
Inclusive Secular Home Schooling Community of Central Illinois  
Jessica Leman Home School  
Kindercare  
Kingsley Junior High School  
LeRoy Elementary School  
LeRoy Jr. & Sr. High School  
Lexington Jr. High School  
Little Jewels Learning Center  
Metcalf School  
Miller Home School  
Netzer Home School (Classical Conversations)  
Normal Community High School  
Normal Community West High School  
Oakland Elementary School  
Parkside Jr. High School  
Pontiac Twp. High School  
Prairieland Elementary School  
Offerman Home School  
Reeg Home School  
Secular Home Schoolers of BN  
Sharing Tree Preschool  
Shelley Leeman Home School  
Slagel & Haney Home School  
St. Mary's Elementary School  
St. Mary's School - Pontiac  
St. Paul's School  
Steidinger Home School (Classical Conversations)  
Tri-Valley Middle School  
Washington Elementary School





# Order *in the* Court!

Live theatre is back at the McLean County Museum of History!

We're thrilled to partner with Nomad Theatre and to host *Order in the Court*. This immersive theatrical event invites audiences into the heart of our historic Governor Fifer Courtroom for eight bite-sized plays.

From historic uprisings to dystopian futures, these plays explore justice, power, identity, and resistance with unique creativity, plenty of twists, heart, and humor. Directed by Lori Adams, *Order in the Court* is comprised of winning play submissions from playwrights across the country.

The winning 10-minute plays are:

- ◇ *Drag/Bar* by Domenick Scudera (Collegeville, PA)
- ◇ *End of Life* by Vincent Kovar (Bothell, WA)
- ◇ *Inquest* by Bruce Boeck (Normal, IL)
- ◇ *Normal Traffic* by Phil Drag (Maple Grove, MN)
- ◇ *Disorder in the Court* by MC Crosby (Brooklyn, NY)
- ◇ *Judge Sparks* by Matthew Green (Champaign, IL)
- ◇ *Zero Bond* by Lavinia Roberts (Conway, AR)
- ◇ *The Indigent Ladies of Towanda* by John D. Poling (Bloomington, IL)

Local playwright John D. Poling's play anchors the lineup with ties to real McLean County history. *The Indigent Ladies of Towanda* depicts the 1858 trial of women from Towanda, Illinois, who zealously destroyed all the liquor in the town's Buena Vista Saloon. Predating temperance movement icon Carrie Nation and her "hatchetations" by four decades, these women risked their reputation, safety, and even imprisonment to destroy the social ill they believed was infecting their community.

This play tells their story with humor and heart, and you won't want to miss it. There are five opportunities to experience this unique live theater event:

- ◇ Friday, September 19 at 7:30 p.m.
- ◇ Saturday, September 20 at 2:00 p.m.
- ◇ Thursday, September 25 at 7:30 p.m.
- ◇ Friday, September 26 at 7:30 p.m.
- ◇ Saturday, September 27 at 2:00 p.m.

Get your tickets [nomadtheatre.org](http://nomadtheatre.org) before they sell out!



Actors Ann Bastian White (left) and Opal Virtue (right) at dress rehearsal.

# Meet the Newest Member of Our Team

Katie grew up in Rockford, Illinois, and studied history at Northern Illinois University. There she earned her bachelor's degree, a museum studies certificate, and a master's in labor history.

Katie's rigorous academic background provided opportunities to teach, present, and curate. She worked in the university archives, the Illinois Regional Archives Depository, the Midway Village and Museum Center, the Tinker Swiss Cottage, and NIU's Regional History Center.

Her time as a Huskie culminated with a Ph.D. in U.S. Twentieth Century Labor History. The title of her dissertation is "The Food Pyramid: Mexicans, Agribusiness, Governments and Communities in the Midwest Migrant Stream."

She then went on to work at the other ISU (Indiana State University) in the university archives. While there, she also earned her Master's in Library and Information Sciences, with an emphasis on archives management.

Katie served as the Director of Special Collections and University Archivist for five years before accepting the position of Archivist at the McLean County Museum of History.

Katie says, "I'm happy to be back in Illinois and working where my interests in history, museums, and archives can all coalesce. I am especially happy to be back in Illinois, as both my husband and I have family in northern Illinois and southern Wisconsin. Though my eight-year-old son and almost six-year-old daughter will still complain that the trips to see family are long, they will be significantly shorter now. I look forward to meeting and getting to know everyone better, and I am so happy to be here."

Before retiring in May, the Museum's longtime Archivist, George Perkins, was able to work with Katie. The two had a handful of days together so Katie could get to know the Museum's vast collections and learn where George stored all the backups!

Katie is about two months into the job and has hit the ground running. She enjoys being able to serve a broader audience and looks forward to launching the Museum's new digital preservation policy. On the weekends, she enjoys exploring all Bloomington-Normal has to offer with her husband Joe and their two kids.

Next time you stop by, make sure to say hi!



# MOURNING IN McLEAN

DEATH IS ONE OF THE  
ONLY GUARANTEES IN LIFE.

*Mourning in McLean* is an exciting new display and associated programming series curated by Senior Director of Education, Candace Summers. On view from September 15 through November 21, 2025, *Mourning in McLean* will feature rarely seen objects and archival materials from the Museum's collections on all three floors of the historic courthouse building.

Items such as post-mortem photographs, hairwork jewelry, mourning wreaths, ribbons, altars, memorial cards, and monuments illustrate the many ways people honored and memorialized the deceased in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. From simple household rituals to elaborate ceremonies, intimate family gatherings to public displays, these acts of remembrance reveal how views on death and mourning have evolved across cultures and over time.

Mourning customs of the 19th century were steeped in tradition, having complex dress codes and social expectations, particularly for women. Several display cases will feature artifacts related to mourning attire, jewelry, and hairwork that will demonstrate how the rituals and traditions for mourning evolved. This period also marked the origins of the modern funeral home industry. It grew out of earlier practices of families and communities managing death care at home.

Previously, funerals were simple and often hasty affairs due to limited methods to preserve the body. Women were the primary individuals responsible for preparing the bodies. Burials often occurred on family land or church graveyards, and carpenters and cabinet makers made coffins. Over time, these duties merged into one industry, and those who provided these services called themselves "undertakers."

We will display objects from local undertakers, such as a cooling table and the Stubblefield Funeral Home hand fan, pictured on the right.





One section of the display will also explore the history of Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, Bloomington's oldest burial ground. Historic photographs of those hallowed grounds and other archival material will highlight the cemetery's development, including its origins as two separate cemeteries.

Another section will examine the craftsmanship of McLean County's most prominent monument makers, Higgins-Jung- Kleinau Co. Their work is found throughout Evergreen Cemetery and beyond. The Museum's collection includes tools used by these artisans and archival records documenting their business and the individuals that the monuments honor.

A series of programs will be held in conjunction with these curated displays, offering opportunities for our community to engage more deeply with the history of death and mourning.

*Mourning in McLean is made possible by our presenting sponsor, **Pontiac Granite Co.**, with major support from **East Lawn Funeral Home and Memorial Gardens**. Additional contributions provided by **Evergreen Memorial Cemetery** and **Kibler-Brady-Ruestman Memorial Home**.*



*Bloomington Cemetery Stereopticon Card, c. 1889-1900*

## EVENTS

Thursday, September 11, 12:10 p.m.  
Lunch & Learn with Carley Cotner, an end-of-life doula. She will discuss a doula's role in providing emotional, spiritual, and practical support during the dying process.

Friday, October 3, from 5 to 8 p.m.  
Enjoy an extended viewing of the displays during Downtown Bloomington First Friday festivities. Candace will be present that evening to answer any questions and looks forward to talking with visitors.

Saturday, October 4 at 11 a.m.  
Dine with the Dead is a picnic in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery. The program includes a one-hour guided tour led by Summers and a picnic lunch. Tickets are \$30 for the general public and \$28 for Museum Members.

Saturday, October 18 at 2 p.m.  
The Mourning in McLean presentation will highlight objects and archival materials on display, monument design and symbolism, notable funerals in McLean County, and the history of local cemeteries.

Friday, October 24, 7:30 p.m.  
The Next to Normal Story Slam: "Remember Me" will be an opportunity for community members to share stories about loved ones who have passed. Participants can also bring a photograph for the Museum's community ofrenda, which will be on display for Día de Muertos.

*Coffin plates, like this one donated by Georgia Downer, often adorned Victorian coffins with mottos or dates.*

# The Evolution of COUNTRY Financial®

By Carrie Skoberg, COUNTRY Financial®

COUNTRY Financial® is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year by reflecting on its roots and the broader history of the companies connected by Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB).

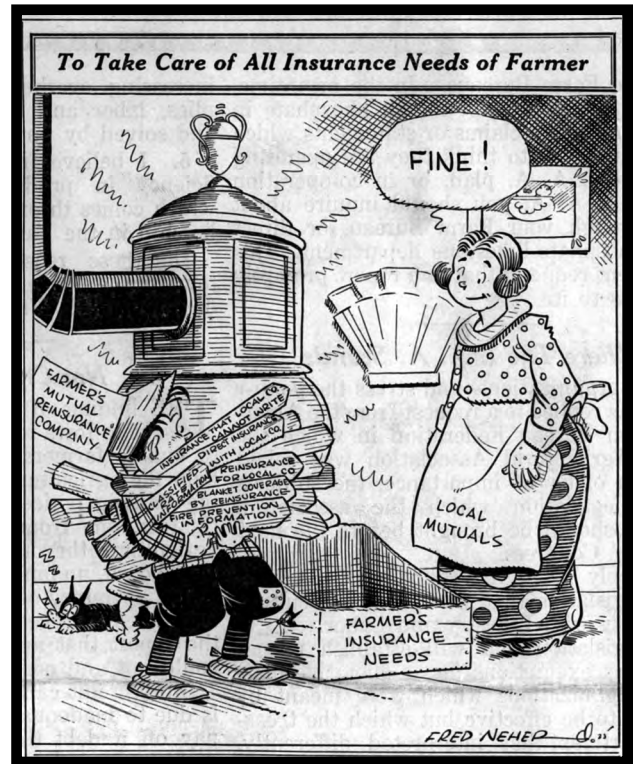
Each entity came to be with a common thread – to provide solutions for farmers.

## How it Started:

**The Illinois Agricultural Association®**

The Illinois Farm Bureau began in the early 1900s, born from farmers' struggles with isolation, economic instability, and the need for education in modern farming techniques.

Between 1909 and 1913, efforts to connect farmers throughout the state of Illinois with research and resources led to the formation of the Illinois Association of County Agriculturalists in 1913. This group evolved into the Illinois Agricultural Association (IAA®), with 13 charter counties.



By 1919, IAA® was restructured into a membership-based nonprofit, allowing it to expand its influence in legislation and agricultural education.

## Growth of Services to Farmers

In 1924, the Illinois Agricultural Auditing Association was created to assist farmers with financial management by offering reliable auditing services. Around the same time, the Illinois Agricultural Serum Association was formed to combat hog cholera through vaccination, successfully eradicating the disease by 1971. The association dissolved later that year.

## GROWMARK

In 1927, nine local agricultural cooperatives organized to form the Illinois Farm Supply Company to make fuel more affordable. This evolved into F.S. Services, Inc., and later GROWMARK in 1980 after merging with Illinois Grain Corporation. GROWMARK expanded its offerings to include tires, lubricants, seeds, and services like planting and marketing advice.

**COUNTRY Financial®**

The first insurance company in the COUNTRY Financial® group was born in 1925 from IAA's initiative to provide reliable, affordable insurance for farmers facing damage from hail, storms and fire. The Illinois Agricultural Mutual Insurance Company followed in 1926 to offer auto insurance. In 1929, Country Life was established to provide life insurance.

Over time, the group, known as Country Companies, evolved, adding other companies and additional insurance products and financial services, and expanding into new states through growth and strategic alliances. The group is now known as COUNTRY Financial.



### Prairie Farms Dairy

In the early 20th century, dairy was a secondary income source for many farmers. IAA promoted "cream pools" to ensure fair pricing, eventually leading to the formation of Illinois Producers Creameries.

By 1932, nine cooperatives had formed, including the Producer's Creamery of Carlinville. In the 1940s, they rebranded as Prairie Farms Creameries and began processing products like cottage cheese and milk in paper cartons. By the 1960s, the remaining cooperatives merged to form Prairie Farms Dairy, which by 1989 was among the 500 largest U.S. industrial operations. The photo to the left, from the Museum's *Pantagraph* Negatives Collection, features J.W. Finch and Norris Hulvey in 1949 at the Bloomington Prairie Farms Creamery.

### IAA Credit Union

Founded in 1951, the IAA Credit Union initially served IAA employees. It became a federal credit union in 1966 and expanded membership to include all IAA affiliates. By the 1980s, it also welcomed IAA members residing in Illinois as well as COUNTRY clients.

Join us in celebrating the 100th anniversary of COUNTRY Financial at the McLean County Museum of History this fall by visiting the pop-up exhibit on the first floor, enjoying free admission on Tuesdays, or attending one of our upcoming programs.

### 100 Years of COUNTRY Financial: Making a Home in the Twin Cities with Bill Kemp

Tuesday, September 16 at 6:30 p.m. in person and online via [youtube.com/mchistorymuseum](https://youtube.com/mchistorymuseum)

### Lunch & Learn: Celebrating 100 Years of COUNTRY Financial with Andy Bender

Thursday, October 9 at 12:10 p.m. in person and online via [youtube.com/mchistorymuseum](https://youtube.com/mchistorymuseum)



# NEW TO COLLECTIONS

## BOOKS

- ◇ *Fuge*, booklet from the handcrafted artbook by photographer Ken Kasian and donor, on Weston Cemetery Prairie Nature Preserve, 2022. *Donated by Kathleen Kirk.*
- ◇ *Way's Packet Directory, 1848-1994*, Ohio University Press, 1994; and *Elgin: An American History* by E.C. Alft, 1984. *Donated by Greg Koos.*
- ◇ *1950 Three I. League Record Book*, compiled and edited by Norman M. Paulson. *Donated by Aaron Henkelman.*
- ◇ *Mining the Middle: The Everyday Plundering of the Old East Side*, written and published by donor, 2025. *Donated by Marty Seigel.*
- ◇ *The Lives of Margaret Fuller* by John Matteson, 2012. *Donated by the Margaret Fuller Club.*
- ◇ Three novels by the donor, including two from the James McCloud Texas Ranger series, *Silar Station* (2003) and *Steele Creek* (2012). *Donated by Curtis Hawk.*
- ◇ Signed copy of *Living Downstream: An Ecologist's Personal Investigation of Cancer and the Environment* by Sandra Steingraber, 2010. *Donated by the Ecology Action Center.*
- ◇ *The Colonel and the Pacifist* by Klancy Clark De Nevers, 2004. *Donated by Kelby Cumpston and Torii Moré.*
- ◇ *Bloomington Circus Parade Coloring Book*, designed by Delia Kerr-Dennhardt for a Strong Towns Blono project. *Donated by Noah Tang.*
- ◇ *Lion Heart*, limited edition paperback, by Kiley and Matt Swearingen, Starnet Digital Pub., 2020. *Donated by Micaela Harris.*
- ◇ Trinity Lutheran School, yearbooks, 1960-62, and 1964. *Donated by Elaine Vincent.*
- ◇ Cookbooks, including *Treasured Recipes, Local 342 Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Union*, 1993. *Donated by John Baker.*
- ◇ *Centennial Barns of McLean County*, compilation by nonprofit group Barn Keepers, 2025. *Donated by Barn Keepers, via Jim Hanlin.*
- ◇ 2025 McLean County Fair & 4-H Show Book. *Donated by Ruth Stewart.*
- ◇ *To Basil with Love* by local author Julie Meulemans, 2022. *Donated by Terri Clemens.*
- ◇ *Little Things Count*, a collection of poems by Helen Beckenholdt Bidner, with a tribute by her son. *Donated by J. Gordon Bidner.*
- ◇ *Tales from Bloomingdale Farm, as told by our father John F. Regan Jr.*, compiled by Helen R.S.P. Campbell, 1981. *Donated by Lisa Childress.*



## PHOTOGRAPHS

- ◇ Photos relating to Elizabeth W. "Susie" Swearingen (1924-1997) and her downtown cafe. *Donated by her granddaughter, Marcey Buford.*
- ◇ Twelve stereographic slides featuring World War I scenes, with captions, manufactured by Keystone View Co. *Donated by Jana Kiefer.*
- ◇ Collection relating to activities of the local chapter of the Independent Telephone Pioneer Association. *Donated by Ruth Wilkerson, former secretary and treasurer.*
- ◇ Aerial of Rolland Bliss farmstead, Blue Mound Township, October 1966, with hand-painted "touch ups." *Donated by Sally Bliss Nolan.*
- ◇ Collection, including Fairview Elementary School, grade 2, 1971-72, and grade 3, 1972-73; Raymond "Monk" Marquardt and Bertha Besemann Marquardt, 50th wedding anniversary; widower Frederick Marquardt and his eight children, 1909-10; and more. *Donated by Tom and Nola Marquardt.*
- ◇ Collection relating to Eureka Co. and career of Delmar Small. *Donated by Terry Small, Delmar's widow.*
- ◇ Towanda Grain Co., picture postcard by C.U. Williams, postmarked 1909; and two photographs captioned "a friend of Mom's," with a woman in front of an automobile. *Donated by Dennis Vogel.*

*Continued on next page....*

# NEW TO COLLECTIONS

## PHOTOGRAPHS

- ◇ Collection of 43 photographs of the Kickapoo Creek Rock Festival, 1970, outside of Heyworth, taken by Bill Owens, a *Pantagraph* photographer, and the festival promoters. *Donated by Kelly Roberts, Bill Owens' daughter.*
- ◇ Bloomington High School class of 1923. *Donated by Sybil Stern Mervis.*
- ◇ Collection mostly related to donor's father, Ronald Cotner (1929–2009), and his career in the U.S. Navy, 1950s, in addition to other related family photos. *Donated by Elizabeth McGinn.*
- ◇ Winklepleck family and related photographs. *Donated by Jim White, Gridley Antiques.*
- ◇ Picture postcard, Irving School, Bloomington, 1911; Wabash Telephone Co., Bloomington, banquet, April 18, 1933; and others. *Donated by Judith Lampert.*
- ◇ Collection of Martin Wyckoff family photographs, and those of Martin and the donor. *Donated by Sharon Wolfe.*
- ◇ Set of digital photographs taken by previous owner of 1008 E. Monroe Dr., Bloomington, 2013. *Donated by Carl Roode.*
- ◇ Sets from various Normal Summer Theatre productions, 1981–87. *Donated by the Town of Normal via Director of Cultural Arts Beth Whisman.*
- ◇ Large collection related to local circus history, including those featuring Ward family members, and many more. *Donated by Steve Gossard.*
- ◇ Set showing the aftermath of the Great Bloomington Fire, June 19, 1900, with four by Bloomington photographer Bernard G. Read. *Donated by Logan Redman.*
- ◇ Two early views of Second Christian Church, Bloomington. *Donated by Reconcile Church, Bloomington.*
- ◇ Two stereopticon slides of what is today Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, taken by Bloomington photographer Giles Rounds, 1890–1905. *Donated by Amy Miller.*
- ◇ Additions to the Ewing Family Collection, mostly relating to N.P. Ewing and immediate family. *Donated by the Hon. Thomas Ewing.*
- ◇ University High School Class of 1918 reunions. *Donated by Duncan Funk.*

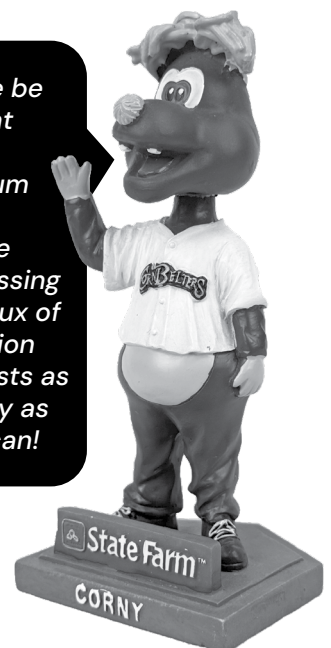
## OBJECTS

- ◇ 12 Christmas ornaments used by donor's family (c. 1950s). *Donated by Patricia Barth.*
- ◇ Dollhouse built by Frances Woodrum (c. 1990). *Donated by Michael Ohler.*
- ◇ Bell and apron from Susie's Café (c. 1980s). *Donated by Marcey Buford.*
- ◇ Hand crocheted COVID ear protectors (c. 2020). *Donated by Candace Summers.*
- ◇ Assistant Fire Chief cap and helmet belonging to donor (c. 1970s). *Donated by David Fox.*
- ◇ "Star Crossed Pollinators" sculpture (c. 2000). *Donated by Pam and Herb Eaton.*

## OBJECTS

- ◇ Bloomington Bison jersey (c. 2025). *Donated by Greg Zook.*
- ◇ Several objects including baseball items (c. 1960), Lancaster's reserved parking sign (c. 2010), La Bomba bobblehead (c. 2020), and more. *Donated by Kay Carius.*
- ◇ Items belonging to Ronald E. Cotner including a Chubby bear costume from Trinity Lutheran (c. 1930s), and Navy football goat mascot blanket (c. 1950s). *Donated by Elizabeth McGinn.*
- ◇ Baby thermometer (c. 1960s). *Donated by Shirley Craig.*
- ◇ Chadband's Jewelry and Fraternity clock (c. 1950s). *Donated by Julie Robinson.*
- ◇ Circus trunks and costumes, including a leotard worn by George Valentine (c. 1930s). *Donated by Steve Gossard.*
- ◇ Cornbelters opening day balls and bobbleheads (c. 2010). *Donated by Alan Sender.*

Please be patient with Museum staff, they're processing an influx of donation requests as quickly as they can!



# NEW TO COLLECTIONS

## ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

- ◇ Additions to the existing Larry Carius Collection and Carius Menu Collection, including menus, local matchbook covers and business cards, McLean County Health Department papers, and much more. *Donated by Kay Carius.*
- ◇ Papers related to the establishment of the CornBelts professional baseball team, 2007–2010, including press release, agenda, and remarks by donor during Corn Crib groundbreaking ceremony. *Donated by Alan Sender.*
- ◇ Winklepleck, Sohn, and Riseling family papers, mostly 1880s–1930s. *Donated by Jim White, Gridley Antiques.*
- ◇ The Movie Fan video store member card; collection of 2025 campaign mailers; and more. *Donated by Kelby Cumpston and Torii Moré.*
- ◇ AP print of David Davis Mansion by Frank R. Bush, 1984. *Donated by Patti Trudo.*
- ◇ Large collection of American Bicentennial items, including event programs, flyers, and much more, mostly 1976, gathered by the Robert and Catherine Knight family of Normal. *Donated by Catherine Knight and the Knight family.*
- ◇ O'Brien Mitsubishi of Normal, 2015 owner's manual; and other items. *Donated by Greg and Carol Koos.*
- ◇ Illini-Swallow Lines, Inc. bus ticket, Champaign to Bloomington, November 9, 1973, used by donor's sister, Nancy Larson Alexander. *Donated by Sue Groh.*
- ◇ Papers relating the former Gregor Gallery & Studio at 311 N. Main St. dating to the 2000s; and other items. *Donated by Marlene Gregor.*
- ◇ Two statement ledgers, Illinois Soldiers' Orphans' Home, 1890s. *Donated by Brooke Hassler.*
- ◇ Collection of videos by donor, including Prairie Air Show, 1989; Prairie Aviation Museum, Ozark Airlines, 1996; planting soybeans, 2022; and more. *Donated by Jim Ondeck.*
- ◇ Three art prints by Mary Ryburn, 1990s, including "The Miller House," number 351 of 1,000, signed by artist. *Donated by Cindy Ramsey.*
- ◇ International Association of Machinists Progressive Lodge #100 dues booklet, Otis Duane Iseminger, 1952–53; and other items. *Donated by Elaine Vincent.*
- ◇ Additions to the Martin Wyckoff (1950–2010) Collection in Archives, including original drawings; as well as Christmas newsletter from Danvers, "Gilfand Gazette," 1990s; and more. *Donated by Sharon Wolfe.*
- ◇ Copy of "Specifications for Labor and Materials for General Work, Residence for Miss Elizabeth Stein, 1008 E. Monroe Dr. in Bloomington," Lundeen and Hilfinger architects and engineers, 1952. *Donated by Carl Roode.*
- ◇ Bloomington High School Class of 1952 reunion booklets, 1962, 1972, 1982, and 1997. *Donated by Lillian Thoman.*
- ◇ Additions to the existing Normal Summer Theatre Collection, including posters and programs, as well as paper banners for the program's 50th anniversary, 2022. *Donated by the Town of Normal via Director of Cultural Arts Beth Whisman.*
- ◇ Papers relating to Carl's Ice Cream, including copy of purchase agreement, 1987. *Donated by Terry Garbe, son of past shop owners Carl and Betty Garbe.*
- ◇ Additions, mostly financial records, to the existing Adlai E. Stevenson Lecture Series Collection. *Donated by Adlai E. Stevenson Lecture Series Committee, via Rob Fazzini.*
- ◇ Issues of the McLean County Home Bureau *Bulletin* newsletter, 1919–1929; three almanacs with local advertising; and more. *Donated by the Hudson Area History Room, Hudson Area Public Library District.*
- ◇ Three-ring binder and album containing historical papers of Second Christian Church, Bloomington, including bulletins, programs, building contractor papers, typed church histories, and more. *Donated by Reconcile Church, Bloomington.*
- ◇ Watercolor of Women's March in Washington D.C. on January 21, 2017. *Painted and donated by Bonnie Bernardi.*
- ◇ Additions to the McLean County Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Collection. *Donated by John Krueger.*

*Continued on next page....*



# NEW TO COLLECTIONS

## ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

- ◇ "My Life at the Lucy Orme Morgan Home," seven-page typed manuscript by Georgia Longbrake Liehr (1918–1978) and supporting materials. *Donated by her daughter Elizabeth Fox.*
- ◇ Advertising piece for Booster Fans from Bloomington's Brumme Manufacturing Co., late 1940s–1950s. *Donated by Jeanne Gardner.*
- ◇ Wall calendar, 1996, featuring Dixie Truckers Home; as well as two "trucking" stories written by donor, "Truck Stop Kid," 1960, and "Good Times," 1998. *Donated by Dick Lower.*
- ◇ Local ice hockey items, including Twin City Stingers program, 1983–84, and Stingers schedule, same season, on posterboard. *Donated by Emil Ludy.*
- ◇ Ad and subscription form for "The Three I. League News," undated. *Donated by Aaron Henkelman.*
- ◇ Six Davis family farm journals from 1938 to 1958, including an Alice Davis Andrews account ledger, 1938–47, and two Mercer Davis cash journals, 1943–49 and 1949–56. *Donated by Susie Sears.*
- ◇ Collection of papers from the Walter G. Wright / GTE chapter of the Independent Telephone Pioneer Association. *Donated by Ruth Wilkerson.*
- ◇ Undated William Jennings Bryan portrait, printed with Lithographers' International Protective and Beneficial Association union label. *Donated by Morgan Kirkham.*
- ◇ Framed wall map, "Ground Surface Topography of McLean County," 1997. *Donated by Guy Fraker.*
- ◇ Four 2024 holiday season greeting cards; writings by donor in *The Labor Paper* and the Illinois Labor History Society's *Reporter*; and more. *Donated by Mike Matejka.*
- ◇ Collection of papers relating to Elizabeth W. "Susie" Swearingen (1924–1997) and her downtown cafe. *Donated by Susie's granddaughter Marcey Buford.*
- ◇ Second Annual Illinois Shakespeare Festival program, July 5 – August 4, 1979. *Donated by Kay Henrichs.*
- ◇ Collection of papers relating to Delmar Small (1935–2024) and his career at Eureka Co. *Donated by Delmar's widow, Terry Small.*
- ◇ Additions to the Stern Family Collection, including Harry Stern's 1910s Bloomington High School report cards, and an invitation for future U.S. Senator Paul M. Simon and Jeanne M. Hurley's wedding, April 21, 1960. *Donated by Sybil Stern Mervis.*
- ◇ Binder labeled "U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation, Hearing on Amtrak Nominees, 2022, Mr. Chris Koos;" and six letters, 2010 – 2017, from mayor of Asahikawa, Japan, to donor. *Donated by Normal Mayor Chris Koos.*
- ◇ Various items, including Trinity High School and ISU student identification cards; and more. *Donated by Dennis Fox.*
- ◇ "Student Survival Guide," 1992, published by *McLean County Community News and Business to Business Magazine*. *Donated by Ruth Cobb.*
- ◇ Additions to the Young Men's Club Collection, including meeting minutes, issues of the club's newsletter, "Cow Bell," and more. *Donated by the Young Men's Club.*
- ◇ DVD, "Freedom!" featuring the late Jack Waddell, 2017. *Donated by Kathleen Kirk.*
- ◇ Collection of papers relating to donor's father, Ronald Cotner (1929–2009), and Ronald's mother, Marguerite E. Benschneider, and more. *Donated by Elizabeth McGinn.*
- ◇ Collection of local newspapers, including *Bloomington Daily Bulletin*, March 1887. *Donated by Deborah Johnson, The Black Butterfly.*
- ◇ Additions to the Ewing Family Collection. *Donated by the Hon. Thomas Ewing.*
- ◇ Various circus related items. *Donated by Steve Gossard.*
- ◇ Collection of papers relating to the "Hank and Rita" film project. *Donated by Kathi Davis and Terri Ryburn.*
- ◇ Poster, "Funk Farms Celebrating 200 Years 1824–2024;" University High School Class of 1918 reunion materials; and more. *Donated by Duncan Funk.*
- ◇ Corn Belt Charity Horse Show items c. 1980s; 1958 BN indexed map; and more. *Donated by Jerry Nord.*

# Upcoming Events

## September

### **Courtroom Concert: Yea Big's Neuroplasticity**

Saturday, September 6 at 7:00 p.m. (Tickets are \$10 cash at the door)

### **Lunch & Learn: Understanding the Role of End-of-Life Doulas and Death Cafes**

Thursday, September 11 at 12:10 p.m.

### **100 Years of COUNTRY Financial: Making a Home in the Twin Cities with Bill Kemp**

Tuesday, September 16 at 2:00 p.m.

### ***Order in the Court* presented by Nomad Theatre Company**

Friday, September 19 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 20 at 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, September 25 at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, September 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, September 27 at 2:00 p.m.

## October

### **First Friday: First Fright!**

Friday, October 3 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

### **Dine with the Dead**

Saturday, October 4 at 11:00 a.m.

### **Architect A. Richard Williams: Revisiting an International Style Master with Bill Kemp**

Tuesday, October 7 at 7:00 p.m.

### **Lunch & Learn: Celebrating 100 Years of COUNTRY Financial with Andy Bender**

Thursday, October 9 at 12:10 p.m.

### ***FREE Admission in Honor of Indigenous Peoples' Day on Monday, October 13***

### **Mourning in McLean: The Story of Death, Grieving, and Funerary Customs with Candace Summers**

Saturday, October 18 at 2:00 p.m.

### **Courtroom Concert: Cole Pulice presented by pt.fwd**

Tuesday, October 21 at 6:30 p.m.

### **Next to Normal Story Slam: Remember Me**

Friday, October 24 at 7:30 p.m. at the McLean County Arts Center

## November

### **Día de Muertos Celebration**

Saturday, November 1 from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m.

### **History Reads Book Club**

Tuesday, November 4 at 7:00 p.m. at Bloomington Public Library

### **Knit In**

Saturday, November 8 from 10:00 a.m. to 1 p.m.

### ***FREE Admission in Honor of Veterans' Day on Tuesday, November 11***

### **Lunch & Learn: The Wizard of Oz in Illinois and Beyond with Mark W. Sorensen**

Thursday, November 13 at 12:10 p.m.

### ***Closed for Thanksgiving on Thursday, November 27***

## December

### **Christmas Under the Dome**

Friday, December 5 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 6 from 11:00 to 2:00 p.m.

### **Lunch & Learn with Guy Fraker: Abraham Lincoln & Ann Rutledge – Is the Story True?**

Thursday, December 11 at 12:10 p.m.

### ***Closed for the Holidays on December 24, 25, 31 and January 1***

# CLASSIFIEDS

## **Do you have a women's softball uniform?**

We're looking for a women's softball uniform to loan or accession for the upcoming exhibit *More Than a Game! A Community History of Baseball & Softball*. Please contact Maria Mears at [mmears@mchistory.org](mailto:mmears@mchistory.org) if so!

## **Do you enjoy sharing stories?**

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

## **Senior Reminiscence Volunteers**

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

## **Oral History Transcription Volunteers**

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

If you are interested in any of the above opportunities, or if there are other ways you would like to volunteer at the McLean County Museum of History, please contact Director of Volunteers Eric Hansen at [volunteers@mchistory.org](mailto:volunteers@mchistory.org) or 309-827-0428.

## Courtroom Concerts

We host a wide variety of concerts throughout the year, but this December we will have FREE live music EVERY Tuesday evening.

We're working to finalize the last few details now, but get ready to see the Illinois Symphony Orchestra Ensemble and Olympia Chamber Choir LIVE at the Museum. Check [mchistory.org/events](http://mchistory.org/events) for details.



**OPENING SPRING 2026**

We're still seeking sponsors for this exhibit. If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Norris Porter at [nporter@mchistory.org](mailto:nporter@mchistory.org)

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

Please visit [mchistory.org/events](http://mchistory.org/events) for more information on all of our upcoming events.





## McLean County MUSEUM of HISTORY

**200 N. Main St. Bloomington, IL 61701**

[mchistory.org](http://mchistory.org) | 309-827-0428

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## Mystery History Quiz

The previous mystery photo was an aerial view of old the Central School in Normal, built in 1914 and torn down in 1974. It occupied what is today a green space west of Illinois State University's Hewett-Manchester Residence Halls.

Those who correctly identified Central School included Laurie Burke, Thomas Cherry, Carol and Roger Elliott, Robert E. Handley, Karen Schiffbauer Moore, Dan Steadman, Dave Templeton, and Vicki Tilton. Laurie, Karen, and Vicki were Central School students. In the building's final years, it was used for ISU studio space, among other things. Dave Templeton, then an ISU student, remembers having an art studio in the basement.

Our latest mystery image(s) features a group of industrial buildings in Bloomington. We've obscured the company's name on this postcard. Do you know the name? How about the location? And what became of the company and these buildings?

If you think you've got the story straight, reach out to Librarian Bill Kemp at 309-827-0428 or [bkemp@mchistory.org](mailto:bkemp@mchistory.org). He always looks forward to hearing from Mystery History participants!

