

ON THE SQUARE



The Magazine of the McLean County Museum of History



Volume 57 | Issue 1 | January - March 2025

presented by



Cover Photo

Rita Ayers browses Annette Saylor's paintings displayed for the Art Fair at Withers Library in 1956, with her pooch, Pepe Lamoko, and matching purse in tow. The Museum digitized this photo for the *Public Life in McLean County* collection, available through the Illinois Digital Archives. Explore more than 166,000 images, such as this one, by visiting bit.ly/MCMHIDA. To learn more about the Museum's ongoing efforts to save y(our) history and make it more accessible for all, please visit mchistory.org

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New Members

as of December 20, 2024

Marci Abrecht
Aileen Blomgren
David Blunk
Carole Cronin
William Flaherty
Ken Greene
Shanna Hargitt
Ronnie and Liz Jones
Gary and Claudia Kaufman
Merlin and Diane Mather
Brenda A. Miller
Susan Prendergast
Allen Quade

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.

Karen Schmidt
Ann Sullivan
Aondover Tarhule
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Carolyn Perry Yockey – *President*
Sheahon Zenger

From the Desk of Executive Director Emig

As I write this letter for the Winter Issue of On the Square, the sounds of the Illinois State University Civic Chorale fill the McLean County Museum of History's Courtroom. In the darkness of winter, what better comfort than a song echoing off stone and marble? The beautiful vocals spilling into the rotunda are a poignant reminder of the power of artistic expression and the enduring connection between art and the humanities.

Our "Working for a Living" exhibit gallery showcases the lives and labor of local artists and entertainers like fiction writer Bob Tucker, comic Sid Smith, and singer Marie Litta, highlighting the intersection of art and everyday life. However, our relationship with the arts extends beyond individual stories. We view artworks as valuable historical documents, offering unique perspectives on the past.

In 2025, we will continue to explore the relationship between history and art. A \$72,350 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services will support the preservation and accessibility of our art collection, while providing valuable learning opportunities for college students. The beloved Livingston Santa will soon make way for "Sculpture on the Square," featuring a renovated "Star-Crossed Lovers" by local artist Herb Eaton, funded by an Illinois Arts Council Catalyst Grant.

A new mural by Troy Freeman will commemorate Lincoln's "Lost Speech" on the façade of Rosie's Pub, right across the street from where Lincoln gave his 1856 oration in Major's Hall. And the newly formed Digital Preservation Team will ensure that valuable historical photographs, like "Art Fair at the Withers Library Lawn" from 1956 (seen on the cover of this issue and below) are preserved for future generations.

We are Your Museum – Your History!



Julie M. Emig
Julie M. Emig, Ed.D.

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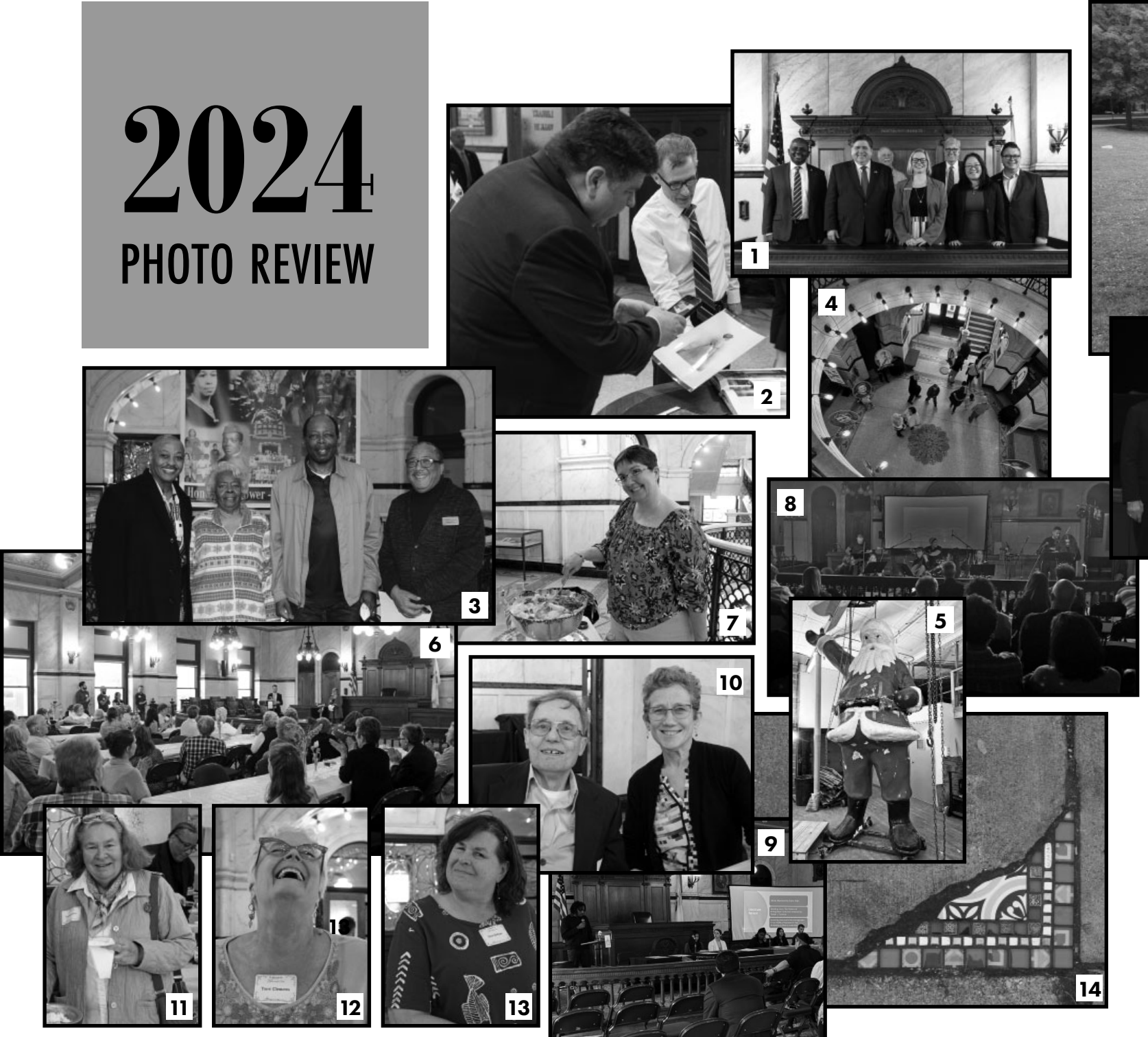
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2024

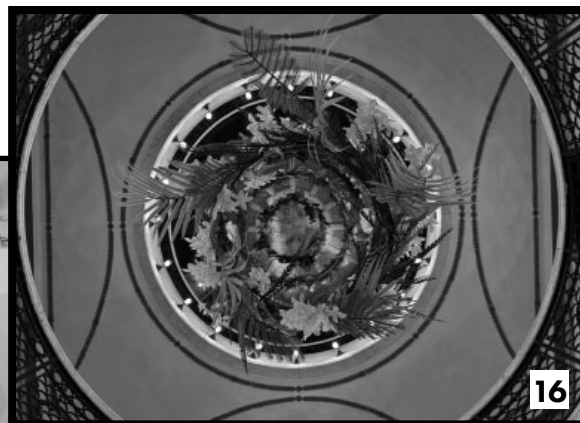
PHOTO REVIEW



1. Left to right: Bloomington Mayor Mboka Mwilambwe, Governor JB Pritzker, Board Member Mike Matejka, Julie Emig, Normal Mayor Chris Koos, Representative Sharon Chung, Deputy Director of Illinois Tourism Daniel Thomas. February 27.
2. Bill Kemp shows Governor JB Pritzker the original photographic print of Gertrude Lewis which the governor's wife, MJ Pritzker, featured in her book *A House That Made History: The Illinois Governors Mansion, Legacy of an Architectural Treasure*. Upon seeing the photo, the governor exclaimed, "Oh I have to send this to my wife!"
3. Left to right: Pastor John Brown, Stephanie Moore, Bruce Thornton, and Jeff Woodard. February 10, 2024.
4. Participants mingle in the Rotunda between discussion sessions during the *50 Years of Women's Rights: an Interactive and Intergenerational Exploration*, hosted in collaboration with the McLean County League of Women Voters on March 23.
5. Santa arrives at the artist's studio to begin restoration. March 25, 2024.
6. Volunteer Appreciation Reception. April 17, 2024.
7. Candace stirs the punch! Volunteer Appreciation Reception. April 17, 2024.
8. pt.fwd presents Josh Henderson's "One More Night," a free concert bringing together world class musicians on April 23.
9. Dr. Toro-Morn's ISU Sociology Capstone students present their Latino Oral History findings. April 27, 2024.
10. John Sicks (left) and Susan Hartzold (right). 11. Kathryn Kerr. 12. Terri Clemens. 13. Sara Kellum. April 17, 2024.



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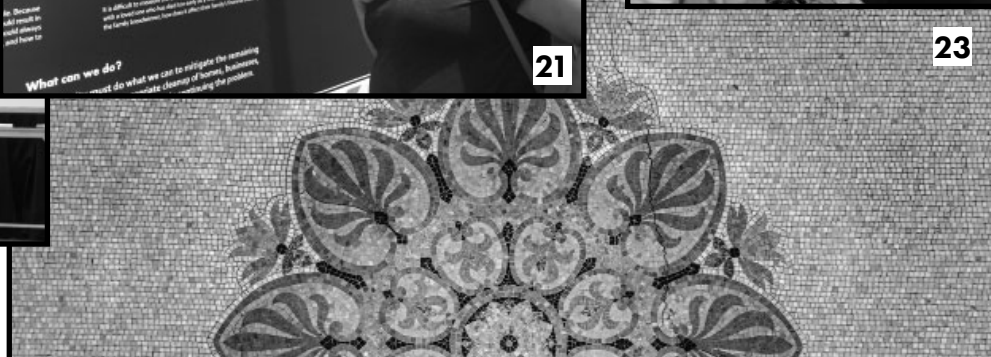
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14. Bloomington became the first Ememem installation in the U.S. in February. The anonymous, globetrotting street artist from France "flacked" the east side of the Museum Square in the cover of darkness.
15. Futures in History Day Camp campers, volunteers, and staff. June 28, 2024.
16. Rotunda Installation in honor of Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, curated by Morgan Bueza, Susan Hartzold, and Micaela Harris. May 2024.
17. History Makers left to right: Bob Dobski, Julie Dobski, Bob Hathway, Barb Hathway, Jan Lancaster, and John Penn.
18. History Makers Gala. June 18, 2024.
19. Restoration of the first Livingston Santa is complete! Left to right: Andrew Jumonville, Russel Francois, Julie Emig, Jeffery Wandell, and Norris Porter. July 24, 2024.
20. The masterminds behind *A Deadly Deception: The Asbestos Tragedy in McLean County*, Susan Hartzold (left), Mike Matejka (middle), and Jim Walker (right). September 7, 2024.
21. Board Member Shelli Opsal previews the newest temporary exhibit. August 31, 2024.
22. Cheryl Willis shows her mother, Elaine Tipsord, her father's (Willard Tipsord) story in the new exhibit.
23. Photo of the Rotunda's mosaic, taken by photographer and Museum volunteer extraordinaire, Kevin Eatinger, in October.

2024

PHOTO REVIEW



If there ever was a project that had a life of its own, it was the Evergreen Cemetery Walk. Over the last 30 years, this event brought history to life, sharing the stories of 211 people from McLean County's past with more than 90,000 attendees. Despite its enduring legacy, the event became unsustainable, and we made the incredibly difficult decision to make the 30th Evergreen Cemetery Walk the last. That announcement was met with many emotions, but the community showed up to celebrate.

3,470 people attended the in-person tours of the Walk's Grande Finale, and of that 1,575 students and chaperones attended free of charge thanks to our event sponsors: Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, Illinois Prairie Community Foundation, Cumulus Media, Pantagraph Media, and Normal Township, with additional support from CEFCU, Illinois Farm Bureau, MCK CPAs & Advisors, WGLT, Deanna Frautschi & Alan Bedell, Bloomington-Normal Convention & Visitors Bureau, the McLean County Chamber of Commerce, A.B. Hatchery, and the generosity of Museum members.

We are so grateful for your support and look forward to sharing fresh and exciting programs this year!

1. Cem Walk Cast & Crew pose for a silly photo. October 9, 2024.
2. Jana Kiefer gets ready to take her tour group out during the 2024 Evergreen Cemetery Walk. October 13, 2024.
3. Amy Miller, one of only two volunteers who participated in all 30 Cemetery Walks, gets ready to lead her last tour.
4. Left to Right: Eric Hansen, Emily McCusker, and Grace Irvin wave as they run the show behind the scenes.
5. Susie Thetard and Jane Thomley, the masterminds behind the Cem Walk costumes, pose for a photo at the Wrap Party.
6. Joann Hart (left) and Ruth Stewart (right) get ready to take tickets at the gate.
7. Judy Brown (left), former artistic director of the Walk, and Ann Bastian White (right) previous Cem Walk actress, smile before starting their tour. October 12, 2024.



8. A woman adds photos of her loved ones to the community ofrenda at our Día de Muertos celebration. November 1, 2024.
9. Yolanda Alonso (right) poses for a photo with her daughter Margo. November, 1, 2024.
10. The Padilla-Islas poses for a photo with the Ofrenda, designed by their matriarch, Miriam, and assembled as a family.
11. Illinois Art Station leads art-making activities during Christmas Under the Dome. December 7, 2024.
12. Attendees pose for a photo during our Día de Muertos celebration. November 1, 2024.
13. From left to right, board members Arlene Hosea, President Carolyn Yockey, and Karen Schmidt. December 6, 2024.
14. Board Member Mike Matejka shows a child how to operate the model train display at Christmas Under the Dome.
15. Santa (Jeff Courtright) and his helper (Colleen Reynolds) pose for a photo. December 7, 2024.
16. Community Choir, Cantus Novus, performs for the crowd at Christmas Under the Dome. December 7, 2024.
17. Sounds of Illinois Chorus performs in the Rotunda, among the decorations. December 7, 2024.

Development Updates

On Saturday, November 30, 2024, the Iconic Livingston Santa returned to Downtown Bloomington, taking his place for the holidays on a new display pedestal built through the cooperation of many partners who donated their time and materials.

Partners in the restoration of both Santas include: P.J. Hoerr, LiUNA Local 362, Stark Excavating, Row Construction, Mid-West Construction Rentals, Operating Engineers Local 649, Masons Local 18, Ace World Wide Moving, City of Bloomington, County of McLean, Town of Normal, Crawford-Murphy & Tilly, Jeffrey Alans, Russel Francois, Mike Matejka, Jeffrey Wandell, Tim Roecker, R. Gingerich Crane, Carpenters Local 237, Mathis-Kelly Construction, Mohr & Kerr Engineering & Land Surveying P.C., and the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts.

Over 150 people braved the cold to attend the dedication ceremony that featured the announcement of Jeffrey Alans & the Wandell Family as the new Presented By Sponsor for the Livingston Santas through 2028.

Our current fundraising total for the Saving Santa initiative is just over \$82,000 towards the \$85,000 project cost.

If you haven't already contributed to the project and are moved to do so in the New Year, please contact Norris Porter at development@mchistory.org or visit bit.ly/Saving-Santa.

We extend a big thank you to artist Andrew Jumonville, all of our partners, members, and donors who made this project possible!

We are also grateful to roll into the New Year with a new slate of Presenting Sponsors whose support empowers us to continue preserving, educating, and collaborating in sharing the diverse stories of the people of McLean County. This year's Presenting Sponsors and what they are sponsoring are listed on the next page.

What will your LEGACY be? Planned giving is an ideal way to support the Museum and cement your legacy, creating a lasting impact. For more information please visit mchistory.org/legacy or contact Norris Porter.



Santa Dedication Ceremony, November 30, 2024.

SPONSORS

COUNTRY Financial

Free Tuesdays at the Museum
On The Square Magazine

MCK CPAs & Advisors

Lunch & Learn Series

Bridgestone

Futures in History Camp

Illinois Farm Bureau

Museum at the Farmer's Market

WGLT

Live Stream Programs

Jeffrey Alans & the Wandell Family

Livingston Santas

Ace World Wide Moving

Livingston Santa's Reindeer

GRANTS

Grants play a critical role in funding Museum operations. They enable staff to create new opportunities and further ongoing initiatives for the preservation and sharing of history in new ways with the community. Current grants and projects include:

\$550,000

Congressionally Directed Grant through the National Historical Publications and Records Commission

Allows us to digitize and add metadata to over 150,000 additional photo negatives from the Pantagraph Collection from 1957 to 1963. The total project cost is \$734,077 and will be completed in 2027. We give a special thanks to Senator Dick Durbin for championing this project.

\$72,350

Museums for America grant through the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS)

Enables us to improve the storage of the Museum's art collection. The total cost of the project is \$145,937 and will be completed by 2026.

\$4,000

Action Grant through Illinois Humanities

Empowered us to create a Spanish Language Audio Tour for our *Making A Home* exhibit gallery. The total project cost was \$46,000. The tour is now available on our mobile tour platform Tourient.

\$11,514

Catalyst Grant through the Illinois Arts Council

Provides funding to refurbish and install Herb Eaton's Corn on Curb, establishing the "Sculpture on the Square" initiative. The total project cost is \$41,514 and will be completed in 2025.

\$1,500

CEFCU Grant

Contributes to the "Lincoln's Lost Speech" mural project, set to conclude in 2025 or 2026 pending total project funding.

\$8,000

Monetary Grant through Normal Township

Recalibrates the Senior Reminiscence Program, training volunteers to transform the future delivery of the program.



A Quarter Century Ago Bloomington Put Corn on the Curb

Mayor Judy Markowitz launched the Corn on the Curb initiative at the turn of the century to showcase Bloomington's vibrant artistic community and celebrate the city's Sesquicentennial.

Inspired by Chicago's "Cows on Parade" in 1999, Corn on the Curb utilized one of the area's most iconic exports and lots of puns to create a sense of communal pride. Steve Ross of Lexington designed a six-foot ear of corn model, and local artists submitted concept proposals. The selected artists then decorated their ears of corn for display.

The community gathered to celebrate on July 2, 2000, with 17 ears of corn around the Courthouse (now Museum) Square. Afterward, residents requested the corn be displayed again the following year, prompting the mayor to order a dozen more sculptures. An auction on September 22, 2001, marked the end of the successful project, dispersing the sculptures around town, and in some cases, across the country. Few remain on public display locally, but soon, Eaton's Corn on the Curb will return to where it all started, in the heart of historic downtown Bloomington.



Herb Eaton in the studio with "Star Cross Pollinators" (2000)



Harold and Marlene Gregor pose with "Corrnmén Miranda" (2000)



Celebrating 100 Years:

A Lookback on the History of COUNTRY Financial® and the Illinois Farm Bureau®

By Andy Bender

Senior Vice President and Deputy General Counsel at COUNTRY Financial



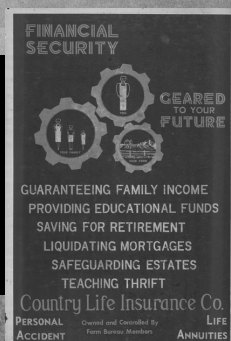
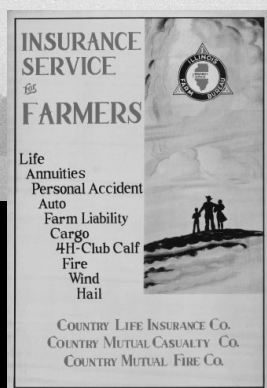
In 1925, the Illinois Farm Bureau ("Farm Bureau") planted a seed that grew into what is today known as COUNTRY Financial. Born out of the need to assist small companies in their desire to spread risk, Farmers Mutual Reinsurance Company was chartered on Nov. 17, 1925. Over the next two decades, the company began offering insurance products directly to consumers and was renamed Country Mutual Fire Company in 1946.

The near-immediate success of the reinsurance company encouraged demand for additional insurance services, specifically auto insurance. At the time, farmers were under-insured and faced with paying the same rates as urban drivers who drove cars more often and in more congested areas. The solution came via Illinois Agricultural Mutual Insurance Company, chartered on October 14, 1926. This company was also renamed in 1946, becoming Country Mutual Casualty Company. In 1957, Country Mutual Fire Company and Country Mutual Casualty Company merged to become the company we know today as Country Mutual Insurance Company.

Despite the progress in property and casualty insurance, farmers still had unique needs to protect their families. COUNTRY Life Insurance Company (CLIC) was started in 1928, offering ordinary life insurance to Farm Bureau members. In 1970, CLIC hit the incredible milestone of becoming the first \$2 billion company to provide life insurance in one state.

These companies operated in Illinois until the early 1960s when they began to expand to other states. While maintaining the values that made them successful, the companies found broader geographic and demographic success through acquisition and organic growth.

Today, the companies that makeup COUNTRY Financial provide a broad range of insurance products and financial services in 19 states, helping clients protect what they have and provide planning throughout their lives. Even as the group continues to grow and add new products and services for clients, the companies remain focused on providing insurance and financial solutions for farmers and maintaining a strong relationship with the Farm Bureau. Today, COUNTRY is the leading farm insurer in Illinois and has expanded its farm insurance products to 10 states. To learn more or find a representative near you, visit countryfinancial.com.



A Partnership Rooted in History

Illinois State University (ISU) and the Museum have enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship that has grown and flourished over the years, partnering in various ways. From faculty serving on the Museum's Board of Directors to students participating in internships and volunteering, the partnership has been a cornerstone for educational enrichment and community engagement. Museum staff also regularly provide educational programming to ISU classes, and faculty members have guest-curated exhibits, further deepening the bond between the two institutions.

Several efforts stand out amongst all the rest, including the annual History and Social Sciences Teacher Symposium, jointly sponsored by the ISU Department of History, Museum, and Regional Office of Education 17 since 2007.

Each year, the history symposium serves hundreds of practicing pre-K through grade 12 history and social science teachers throughout Illinois and a contingent of upper-level ISU history education majors. This inclusive event aims to connect experienced educators with aspiring teachers, fostering mentorship and dialogue across generations. A central focus of the Symposium is to promote the integration of local history resources into classrooms, making history more tangible and relevant for teachers and their students.

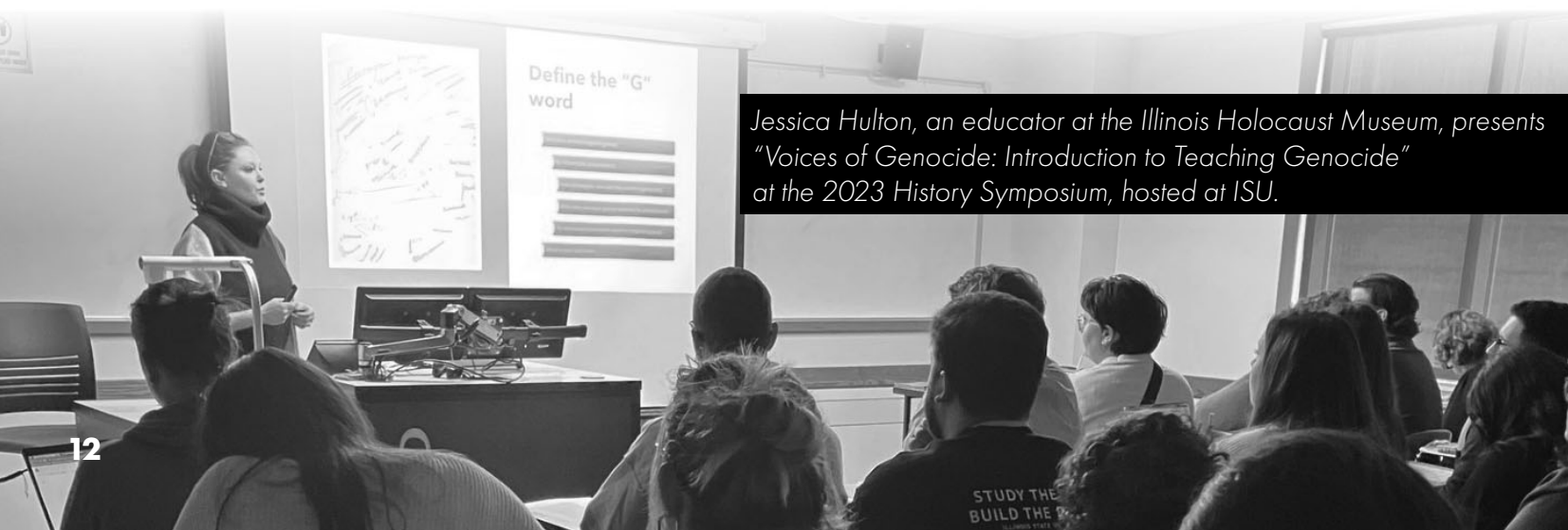
Over the last 17 years, the Symposium—just as its organizers—has changed and adapted to current educational practices, standards, as well as the needs of students and educators.

Initially, Symposium sessions occurred in various locations near the Museum in downtown Bloomington. By 2010, the Museum became the primary host. However, in 2015, the event moved to ISU's campus, gaining access to larger spaces, allowing for record attendance and an expanded program. That year, the Symposium featured 35 unique sessions, drawing over 200 educators, students, and presenters. Today, the Symposium attracts around 300 participants annually, serving as a dynamic platform for professional development and educational innovation.

"The Symposium provided me with invaluable insight and resources to my upcoming career" said Grace Bartlett, a 2021 graduate of ISU's History-Education program, a former Museum intern, and current teacher at Bloomington High School. It has become a day that Bartlett looks forward to each year "as a way to grow and network with both experienced and developing professionals in education."

LeRoy teacher Bradley Marcy (Veteran, presenter, and ISU alumnus) says the Symposium has become a yearly tradition for central Illinois teachers. He notes it "fills a glaring gap in professional development and even professional community building that plagues Midwestern educators."

The 2025 symposium, scheduled for Friday, February 21, at ISU, will focus on "Bridging Divides: Preventing Polarization in History and Social Science Education." Registration is free, and all Illinois pre-k through high school teachers and pre-service teachers are welcome to register at tinyurl.com/HistorySymposium25.



Jessica Hulton, an educator at the Illinois Holocaust Museum, presents "Voices of Genocide: Introduction to Teaching Genocide" at the 2023 History Symposium, hosted at ISU.

The Museum & Illinois State University

The partnership between the Museum and ISU extends far beyond the annual Symposium. Museum staff collaborate with faculty across various disciplines each semester to enhance classroom learning. In 2024 alone, museum representatives delivered presentations in courses on history, anthropology, and criminal justice, offering students firsthand exposure to local historical resources.

The Museum has also collaborated on programming with departments such as Women's and Gender Studies, Latino Studies, Graphic Design, and Anthropology, underscoring its commitment to interdisciplinary learning. Additionally, Senior Director of Education Candace Summers serves on ISU Center for Civic Engagement's Community Consulting Board, allowing the Museum to have a voice in how the university interacts with the community.

A particularly innovative project emerged in 2024 through a collaboration with history professor Dr. Taylor Soja. Dr. Soja's Senior Seminar, focused on family history, partnered with the Museum during the past semester to research diverse individuals in McLean County history.

The Museum believes strongly in our mission of telling the diverse stories of McLean County. Unfortunately, due to historically discriminatory practices in documenting the past, it is significantly more difficult to uncover the histories of women, minority populations, immigrants, people with low incomes, working-class people, as well as disabled individuals. Dr. Soja's class used museum resources, including our archives and newspapers, to research individuals who may otherwise have continued to sit in a pile of "maybe someday" projects.

Conducting research takes a significant amount of time, and thanks to the efforts of Dr. Soja's class and Candace Summers' guidance, there are now ten individuals with new biographies that will be part of the Museum's vast collection of resources. This collaboration not only enriched the students' academic experience by giving them hands-on practice in public history but also provided valuable content for the Museum's programming—a true win-win for all involved.

Students also engage with the Museum through various internships each semester. The Museum is fortunate to have a stream of eager, emerging professionals from ISU. Since May 2022, the Museum has worked with 23 ISU student interns who have collectively completed over 3,400 hours of work and counting!

Of those 23 interns, four have returned for multiple semesters, a testament to the meaningful projects and mentorship provided by staff. Interns come from departments across the university, including History, Art History, Anthropology, Graphic Design, Photography, Education, Political Science, and Criminal Justice.

The Museum is thankful to have such excellent and supportive partners who see the value in including local history in their curriculum and encourage students and educators to explore the history right outside their window. We look forward to continuing this partnership with ISU, in all of its facets, for many more years to come.

2024 Intern Stats

16 Interns

12 from Illinois State University

1 from Illinois Wesleyan University

1 from Heartland Community College

1 from Arizona State University

1 from Monmouth College

7 History Majors

4 Anthropology Majors

2 Political Science Majors

2 Graphic Design Majors

1 Art History Major

6 returned for multiple semesters

**2,700+ hours
of hands-on learning**

Museum Looking for Lady Hearts Softball Items

Have you heard the Museum is hard at work putting together an exhibit on local baseball and softball history in time for Opening Day 2026? Yes, we're very excited to tell many amazing stories—from the first baseball clubs in the decade before the Civil War to today's Bloomington-Normal Girls' Softball Association.

To supplement the ongoing research and oral histories, the Museum is looking for objects to help us tell these stories. From the 1980s to 2019, the Lady Hearts were the premier women's fastpitch softball team in the Twin Cities. Do you have a Lady Hearts uniform? Ballcap? Glove? Other items? If so, please contact Museum Curator of Exhibits, Susan Hartzold at skhartzold@mchistory.org or 309-827-0428.



Help us welcome Lisa Novak!

Our previous Visitors Center Manager, Jamie Arthur, moved to Kentucky to be closer to family in November. We miss her, but wish her well and are excited to welcome Lisa to the team. Lisa brings a myriad of experience and a passion for President Lincoln that gives Norris a run for his money.



Museum Staff (and Santa) 2024

New to Collections

BOOKS

- *A Guide to Depression Era Art in Illinois Post Offices* (2005) by Mary Emma Thompson. *Donated by Tom J. and Margaret Ann Hayden.*
- *Atlas of American Geology*, compiled and arranged by A.K. Lobeck (1932). *Donated by Daniel W. Hinds.*
- Danvers Community High School "Dragon" yearbooks from 1960, 1962, and 1965-1970. *Donated by Doug Taylor.*
- *It Is Well* (Silver Cat Press, 2022), novel written by donor. *Donated by Leta Behrmann.*
- McLean County Fair and 4-H Show Book, 2024. *Donated by Ruth Stewart.*
- *Recipes to Remember*, BroMenn Service Auxiliary (2003), and *Best Recipes of Illinois Inns and Restaurants* (1988). *Donated by Donna Hartweg.*
- Bellflower Township High School yearbooks, 1944, 1952, 1953, 1968, 1970, 1981, and 1983. *Donated by the Bellflower Historical Society.*
- *A Condensed Botany* (1872) by Joseph A. Sewall of Illinois State Normal University. *Donated by Marygrace Surma and the Michael Surma Estate.*
- *Horner of Illinois* (Northwestern University Press, 1969) by Thomas B. Littlewood. *Donated by Greg Koos.*
- *The Many Branches of the Hoover Family Tree* (2021) by Carla Farrell and Cheryle Davis. *Donated by Chuck Hoover.*
- Normal Community High School "Reverie" yearbooks from 1946 and 1947. *Donated by Pam Wheat.*
- *The Saxtown Murders* (1974) signed by the author Dr. Wilson Balz. *Donated by Steve Gossard.*

OBJECTS

- Ken Holder Lithograph, c. 1976. *Donated by Matt Erickson.*
- Collection of items belonging to Luellen Laurenti, c. 1977-1997. *Donated by James Chrisman.*
- MP3 play, iPod Shuffle and iPod Nano belonging to Jim Robinson, c. 2000-2019. *Donated by Shirley Craig.*
- Cane presented to William Blake Leach, c. 1928. *Donated by Elizabeth Leach-O'Donnel.*
- Cemetery walk tablecloth, c. 2000-2024. *Donated by Candace Summers.*
- Pride bracelet, c. 2024. *Donated by Wesley United Methodist Church*
- Collection of items from the Young Men's Club, c. 1916-2024. *Donated by The Young Men's Club.*

Do you have an item to donate? Inquiries regarding physical object donations should be directed to Curator of Collections Jackie Cain. Inquiries regarding the donation of photographs, books, and other archival materials should be directed to Librarian Bill Kemp. Please note, objects donated into the Museum's collection undergo a review process to ensure it's a responsible acquisition and you will be asked to fill out a form. For more information, please visit mchistory.org or call us at 309-827-0428!

PHOTOGRAPHS

- Postcards from Eric Bloomquist's collection (including views of the Museum Square in the early 1900s). *Donated by Randy and Rhoby Hamblin.*
- Set of photos relating to the Village of McLean centennial marker (1955); and two photos of the old McLean County Jail after its closure. *Donated Nancy Saul.*
- Photos relating to Luellen Laurenti's political activities. *Donated by James Crisman.*
- Catharine (Watke) Knight's photo album of her time at ISNU (1943-47); large collection of late 19th and early 20th century photos held by May English, many relating to the Denman and English families; and more. *Donated by Catharine Knight and Sara Knight in memorial of Robert N. Knight, David C. Knight, and May English.*
- Photos of brothers Jake and Glen Thomas of Stanford, mostly relating to their World War I service. *Donated by Brenda A. Miller.*
- View of standpipe, unidentified (not Fell Park in Normal). *Donated by Jim and Lila Hetzler.*
- Normal Central Junior High School, class of 1947, and other photos. *Donated by Janni Martin.*
- Three late 19th century photos of the children of Israel Huber Light and Emma Catherine Mutch Light. *Donated by Jim Carper.*
- Large collection of photos relating to the John Watkin Evans family and his business. *Donated by his great-grandson Tom Evans.*
- Panoramic of large group outside the Miller Park Pavilion at the turn of the last century. *Donated by Richard Devine.*

Continued on next page...

- Portrait of Bloomington attorney W.B. Leach (donor's grandfather), and print of Leach family home, 707 E. Walnut St. in Bloomington. *Donated by Elizabeth "Becky" Leach O'Donnell.*
- Photos collected by the Washington School PTO/PTA, 1940s to 2000s. *Donated by Bloomington Public Schools District 87.*
- Picture postcards showing the exterior and interior of a substantial but unknown roller rink building. *Donated by Carolyn "Susie" Scott.*

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

- Antique Study Group I papers, including member booklets, minutes, and photographs, 1997-2023. *Donated by Linda Cully.*
- Various items, including papers relating to a newer Spanish revival house, 28 Chatsford Ct., Bloomington; Village of McLean "siltennial" (125th anniversary) papers; issues of *The McLean Lens* newspaper, 1980-1981; and more. *Donated by Nancy Saul.*
- Luellen Laurenti papers, including items relating to the National Organization of Women and other activities. *Donated by James Crisman.*
- Collection of local campaign mailers and other items, including eleven bean soup recipe from Common Ground Grocery, June 2024. *Donated by Torii Moré.*
- First day cover of "These Immortal Chaplains" postage stamp, postmarked May 28, 1948. *Donated by Norris Porter.*
- Notes from interviews with Ethel Sinclair by donor, 1979. *Donated by Dr. Gary Heath.*
- Collection of John Firefly poetry, including "Ray Charles," signed and dated August 10, 2004, and others. *Donated by Kathryn Kerr.*
- Items related to Margaret (Peg) and John Kirk, including poetry, Joe Dowell recordings, and Normal Community High School speech team scrapbook (1973-1982). *Donated by Kathleen Kirk.*
- Collection of Knight family papers, including music programs relating to David Knight. *Donated by Catharine Knight and Sara Knight in memorial of Robert N. Knight, David C. Knight, and May English.*
- Various recent local ephemera, including a ticket to the High Kings concert at the Bloomington Center for Performing Arts with the envelope signed by the band. *Donated by Micaela Harris.*
- Papers relating to D. Frank McCorkle, including letters of indenture between Julia Scott Vrooman and McCorkle, 1925 to 1943. *Donated by Leta Behrmann.*
- McLean County Association for Home and Community Education booklet, 106th annual meeting, 2024. *Donated by Ruth Stewart.*
- Additions to the Robert S. Hall Collection (Hall was a German POW during World War II), including German identification document with photo and fingerprint, correspondence to Hall's family in Normal regarding his capture, hand-drawn map, and more. *Donated by his daughters Holly Schultz, Luanne Negley, and Nancy DeLorge.*
- Collection of vital records and other papers relating to the John Watkin Evans family and his construction business. *Donated by his great-grandson Tom Evans.*
- Items relating to the Federal Land Bank Association of Bloomington, including State of Illinois proclamation, March 3, 1967. *Donated by Charles Knudson.*
- Uncle Vait's Pizza Menu, Lexington, 2024. *Donated by Adem Jaoski.*
- Normal Elementary Schools certificate of promotion for Velma Irene Martin, June 5, 1947, and other items. *Donated by Janni Martin.*
- George Washington print once framed and hung at New Kentucky School in Mount Hope Township, presented to teacher Helen Witham and her students in 1935. *Donated by Ann Radich.*
- Pantagraph Printing & Stationery Co. typeface books, company newsletters, business papers, books printed by the company, and more. *Donated by Pantagraph Printing & Stationery Co.*
- Poster for Cudahy's Branded Beef, salvaged from renovation of 1311 W. Olive St., Bloomington, from Erickson's grocery store into Dreams Are Possible. *Donated by Director Mary Campbell.*
- Various items, including postcards, programs, Village of Gridley history clippings, and more, collected by donor's mother, Arlene Ruth Punke. *Donated by Teresa Casselman.*
- Two compact discs featuring the donor—"Go Tell It on the Mountain," 2007, and "Travis Wesley Meets Ron Jones—The More I See You," undated. *Donated by Ronnie Jones.*
- Additions to the existing Family and Consumer Sciences Professionals of McLean County Collection: scrapbooks covering the years 2015-2022 and 2022-2024. *Donated by the Family and Consumer Sciences Professionals of McLean County.*
- McLean County Republican Central Committee folded mailer, May 1978. *Donated by Kevin Callis.*
- Additions to the Jack Waddell Collection: Broadway playbills featuring former students and colleagues. *Donated by Jack Waddell.*

Continued on next page...

Featured Artifact

Local artist, Matt Erickson, donated this 1976 Ken Holder lithograph entitled "Jack H. Painting Holder" last fall. Holder (1936-2018) originally hailed from Texas but moved to Bloomington-Normal in 1969 to join the faculty at Illinois State University, where he taught for 29 years. He retired as Professor Emeritus in 1998 and continued making art, primarily in Downtown Bloomington, alongside artists like Harold Boyd and Harold Gregor.

Holder mainly worked in acrylics and watercolors but explored various mediums throughout his career. This limited-run lithograph highlights Holder's painterly mark-making and oft-meta perspective of the mundane, placing the painting within the painting, creating intrigue.



NEW TO COLLECTIONS CONTINUED

- Green Gables restaurant menu, 2024 (after reopening); Evergreen Cemetery Walk materials, including programs with autographs; and more. *Donated by Amy Miller.*
- Recipe booklet, "Orbit a Go-Go with Modern Gas," prepared by the Home Service Dept., Northern Illinois Gas and used by a gas company representative for a Bloomington Junior High School home economics class, 1965-1967. *Donated by Sue Harrison.*
- Tax bills and receipts paid by John G. Miller, Bloomington, in 1865 and 1869. *Donated by his great-granddaughter, Virginia Sims Hurd.*
- Twelve issues of "Echo," St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing's newsletter, 1957-1959 (donor's grandmother Dorothy Cleary Collins Shoemaker attended the school). *Donated by Alicia Whitworth.*
- Scrapbooks pertaining to Washington School; PTO minutes, newsletters, and more, 1940s to 2000s. *Donated by Bloomington Public Schools District 87.*
- Large collection of plans and drawings related to Young Architects with work relating to the Illinois House, Government Center, the "fire station salon" at McGregor St. in Bloomington, area residences, and more. *Donated by Jon Young.*
- Various recent items including an "Envisioning Justice" packet from Bloomington Public Library event in October, and the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 99 125th Anniversary Commemorative booklet. *Donated by Mike Matejka.*
- Various items, including Chenoa Locker Plant receipt for processing from 1968; Gridley's Heinhold Hog Market Inc. receipt from 1963; and more. *Donated by Cindy See.*
- Notepad of recipes compiled by local confectioner Henry Jaeger, who ran a candy shop in downtown Bloomington from the 1930s to the 1950s. *Donated by Bruce Crane.*
- Kathryn Beich Candies stationery and letterhead, blank. *Donated by Lawrence E. Weller.*
- Items relating to neighborhood New Year's Day college football "pool," including two poster board-size lists of games and picks, 1998 and 2005, and a one-page writeup—"The Vale Street Gang"—on the history of the neighborhood group. *Donated by Martha Everman.*
- Several items relating to Bloomington attorney W.B. Leach and his son, Bloomington banker Shelton B Leach. *Donated by Elizabeth "Becky" Leach O'Donnell.*
- July/August 2012 issue of The Saturday Evening Post magazine, featuring a fanciful depiction of Uptown Normal on cover, and an article on mass transit referencing the town. *Donated by Mayor Chris Koos and the Town of Normal.*
- Patrinmar Bridge Club papers, 1949 to 2023, including member booklets, minutes, treasurer reports, and more (group's name is an amalgamation of three Catholic churches in Bloomington—St. Patrick's, Holy Trinity, and St. Mary's). *Donated by Laura Cain for the Patrinmar Bridge Club.*

Upcoming Events

January

Lunch & Learn: Why Care About Air with Dr. Alicia Wodika and BNCARE

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

Free Admission for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

Monday, January 20

Museum & Visitors Center CLOSED for Staff Development Day

Wednesday, January 29 AND Thursday, January 30

February

History Reads Book Club at Bloomington Public Library

Thursday, February 4 at 7:00 p.m.

First Friday: Tour de Chocolat

Friday, February 7 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

Lunch & Learn: Doing Oral Histories with the Bloomington-Normal Black History Project

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

Knit In at the Museum

Saturday, February 15 from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

FREE Admission for Presidents' Day

Monday, February 17

March

Full Circle! Bloomington to Berlin and Back with Jack Waddell

Saturday, March 1 at 2:00 p.m.

Dirty Laundry Film Showing and Panel Discussion at Normal Theater

Tuesday, March 4 at 7:00 p.m.

pt.fwd presents Fujiiiiiiiiiiiiita

Tuesday, March 11 at 7:00 p.m.

Lunch & Learn: Artists, Advocates, Acrobats, and More! McLean County Women in History

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

Lucy's Girls: Lucy Orme Morgan and the Girl's Industrial Home

Thursday, March 27 at 6:00 p.m. at Bloomington Public Library

April

Lunch & Learn: Organizing Policy Change for a Just & Regenerative Food System with Jeff Hake

Thursday, April 10 at 12:10 p.m.

Holi Moli in Uptown Normal

Saturday, April 12 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Slow Art Day

Saturday, April 12

Volunteer Appreciation Reception

Thursday, April 24 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

The Silent Killer: Dangers of Asbestos in the Workplace Panel Discussion

Tuesday, April 29 at 6:30 p.m.

Volunteer Opportunities

Senior Reminiscence Program

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

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.

Day Camp Counselor

Help us facilitate the Futures in History Summer Day Camp this year! Volunteer Responsibilities include:

- Assisting with activities
- Leading discussions with campers
- Supervising campers to ensure their safety
- Answer questions from campers about our topics

Volunteer Counselors are required to attend multiple trainings and have a strict time requirement. They must also be willing and able to work with children for full days and pass a background check.

This year's camps are tentatively scheduled for June 23 - 27, July 7 - 9, and July 14 - 16.

Tour De Chocolat

We are looking for volunteers to serve as greeters, candy distributors, and activity assistants for the Downtown Bloomington First Friday festivities on February 7 from 5-8 p.m.

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 or 309-827-0428.

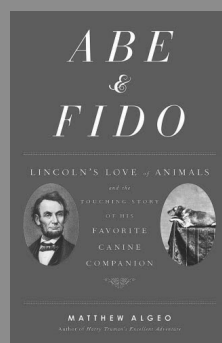
Save the date and join us on the evening of
Wednesday, June 18, 2025

for the 13th

HISTORY Makers GALA

We will announce this year's honorees in early April and tickets will go on sale at that time too. Stay tuned, the event will have a fresh look this year as exciting changes are being made.

History Reads Book Club is hosted quarterly in partnership with BPL and focuses on books about Illinois History. This quarter's book is *Abe and Fido: Lincoln's Love*



of Animals and the Touching Story of His Favorite Canine Companion by Matthew Algeo. We will meet to discuss on February 4 at 7 p.m. Contact the BPL Help Desk at 309-590-6168 to reserve a copy.

On the Square is a tri-annual magazine for members of the McLean County Museum of History. New editions of the magazine are mailed the first week of the following months:

January, May, and September.

Questions? Concerns? Feedback?

Please contact Micaela Harris, Director of Communications, at mharris@mchistory.org or 309-827-0428 ext. 114.

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



McLean County MUSEUM of HISTORY

200 N. Main St. Bloomington, IL 61701

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

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

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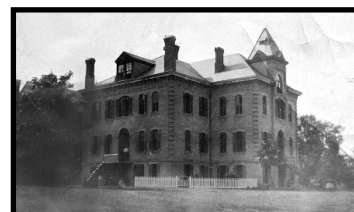
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Mystery History Quiz

The previous historical head scratcher featured a residential building at the McLean County Poor Farm. Located about five miles south of downtown Bloomington, the Poor Farm housed some of society's more unfortunate souls—those generally unable to care for themselves. It opened in the early 1860s and remained in operation into the 1950s. The site is now privately owned. This building is no longer standing, but the superintendent's house and water tower are still visible from U.S. Route 51.



We received a wide range of well-reasoned but incorrect guesses, including old Bloomington High, Mennonite School of Nursing, long-gone Edwards School in Bloomington, and the old County Jail. Whew! Those who knew the correct answer included Thomas Cherry, Carol and Roger Elliott, and Mary Haskell.

Okay sleuths, here's another mystery building to ponder. Do you have a clue as to its location and purpose? Or are you clueless? Ha! Anyway, if you have—or hope to have—an answer, contact Bill Kemp in the Museum's Library & Archives at 309-827-0428 or bkemp@mchistory.org. As always, good luck!

