



TIMELINE 2017

Peoria Historical Society Newsletter | January-February | Volume 23, Issue 1

“to preserve, share and celebrate the stories of the Peoria area”

Peoria Historical Society Names Zach Oyler Interim Executive Director

The Peoria Historical Society has named Zach Oyler interim Executive Director after the announcement of the departure of Walter Ruppman as Executive Director at the end of 2016.



Zachary M Oyler

As interim Executive Director, Oyler’s responsibilities will include overseeing the administration, programs, events and strategic direction of the Society until a permanent executive director is selected. Oyler has been a member of the Society’s Board of Trustees since May, 2016 and is a Realtor/Broker for Keller Williams Premier Realty.

“We are very happy that Zach agreed to take on this role after Walter’s departure,” said Jim Carballido, President of the Peoria

Historical Society. “With his leadership skills and dedication to historical preservation, he will help us maintain our strategic focus on preserving, sharing and celebrating this city’s great history while we search for a permanent Executive Director.”

For more information on the Peoria Historical Society, visit peoriahistoricalsociety.org or find us on Facebook at facebook.com/PeoriaHistoricalSociety.

5th Annual Holiday Home Tour – Splendor of Christmas Past

The PHS Holiday Season started off with an elegant cocktail party at the home of Lindsey and Kathy Ma on December 2nd. This event was a new and welcome addition to the Holiday Home Tour weekend as approximately 100 people attended this party. All attendees were treated to wonderful appetizers and desserts donated by A Matter of Taste, Two25, 2Chez, Golden Corral and Trefzger’s Bakery. Champagne was donated by Paparazzi’s, wine and other beverages donated by the Ma’s and Hugh Higgins of Hearth conducted a much enjoyed bourbon/whiskey tasting. In addition everyone was given a tour of Kathy & Lindsey’s magnificent historical home and a ticket to the Holiday Home Tour. All monies raised from this event will benefit the Home Maintenance Fund for the Pettengill-Morrison House and Flanagan House. Thanks to all who attended this great party and to all

who donated to make this so successful. Our plans are to make this an annual fundraiser and you won’t want to miss this event next year! Kathy and Lindsey, a special thank you as this would not have been possible without you!



Lindsey and Kathy Ma home

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“You have to know the past to understand the present.” — Carl Sagan

From the President

Now that we are at year end, I wanted to reflect upon what an outstanding year we had at the Peoria Historical Society. We had many of our wonderful volunteers continue their passion of supporting our museum homes like opening them the first Sunday of each month. At the Flanagan house, it was our first summer of air conditioning thanks to funding from the Daughters of the American Revolution and our members. We also had a very successful 4th of July celebration that included an amazing view of fireworks in the Flanagan backyard. In May, we installed six new engaged trustees to our Board of Trustees. In August, we paddled down Lake Peoria on our fourth annual "Rhythms on the River" with a German flare. Our fifth annual sold out Henri deTonti Celebration this fall was our most successful event as we honored State Representative David Leitch. Our dedicated staff of Walter, Bob, and Judy continued to expand our extensive collection while maintaining a steady hand on daily operations. A focused committee to expand our membership base was also a highlight of the year. We ended the year on a positive note with a lovely Holiday Home Tour which featured five beautiful homes.

Although we had a wonderful year, we've got some somber news as we enter the New Year. Walter Ruppman is leaving the Peoria Historical Society effective December 31. Walter has faithfully served as our Executive Director the past seven years. He was instrumental on leading the PHS through the collaboration that formed the Peoria Riverfront Museum and put us on the path of making us a stronger, more successful organization. We thank Walter for all his many contributions to PHS and wish him and his wife Joan well. As the PHS Board considers a replacement, we have hired current Board Trustee Zach Oyler as our interim Executive Director. He will work on a part time basis in the office and actively represent us within the community. Please thank Walter for his dedicated service to the PHS and welcome Zach in his new role.

Jim Carballido

PHS President 2016-17

"So much of our future lies in preserving our past." - Peter Westbrook

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Technology
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Peoria Historical Society

611 SW Washington Street
Peoria, IL 61602

Office Hours: 9 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. Tuesday—Friday

Phone: 309.674.1921 Fax: 309.674.1882

adminphs@peoriahistoricalsociety.org

www.PeoriaHistoricalSociety.org

Find us on Facebook

Special Collections Center

Bradley University Library
Bradley Avenue at Glenwood

Office Hours: 9 a.m.- 4:30p.m

Monday-Friday

Phone: 309.677.2822

John C. Flanagan House Museum

942 NE Glen Oak Avenue
Peoria, IL 61603
Phone: 309.674.1921

Pettengill-Morrison House Museum

1212 W. Moss Avenue
Peoria, IL 61606
Phone: 309.674.1921

Tours by appointment.

Cost: Adults \$10, Children 12 and under \$3.00
\$20 minimum for tours

Distribution of Timeline courtesy of:



PNC Bank

Peoria....in the Beginning

Peoria is one of the oldest European settlements in Illinois. The lands that eventually would become Peoria were first settled in 1680 when French explorers René-Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle and Henri de Tonti constructed Fort Crevecoeur. This fort would later burn to the ground, and in 1813 Fort Clark, Illinois was built. When the County of Peoria was organized in 1825, Fort Clark was officially named Peoria.

Peoria was named after the Peoria tribe, a member of the Illinois Confederation. The original meaning of the word is uncertain.^[6]

Peoria was incorporated as a village on March 11, 1835. The city did not have a mayor, though they had a village president, Rudolphus Rouse, who served from 1835 to 1836. The first Chief of Police, John B Lishk, was appointed in 1837. The city was incorporated on April 21, 1845. This was the end of a village president and the start of the mayoral system, with the first mayor being William Hale.



Henri de Tonti

Pettengill-Morrison House Gets Window Upgrade

Jake Schick, owner of SCHICKBUILD, and a new Trustee, has volunteered at P-M in the past. He brought volunteer electricians and plumbers for a work day to help us with repairs. Jake and his crew are currently rebuilding the attic windows and painting the attic dormers at P-M. All of the labor and materials are donated. Jake's company restores and maintains many of the historic homes on Moss Ave. He has a true passion for preserving history.



PHS, P-M and Flanagan appreciate Jake's generosity and expertise.



Flanagan House Sports Military Theme



Flanagan's holiday theme was "Home for Christmas". James Ware and Sophia Newton portrayed his grandfather returning home to his family from WWII on Christmas Eve 1945. The children were portrayed by their siblings Phillip Ware and Esther Newton. James Ware's Army dress uniform was worn by Marilyn Leyland's father during WWII.



Exquisite Miniatures at Flanagan House

Visitors at the Flanagan House for the Holiday Home Tour last December were in for a special treat. Bob Page was generous enough to bring many of his miniature replicas of Peoria buildings to the Flanagan House.

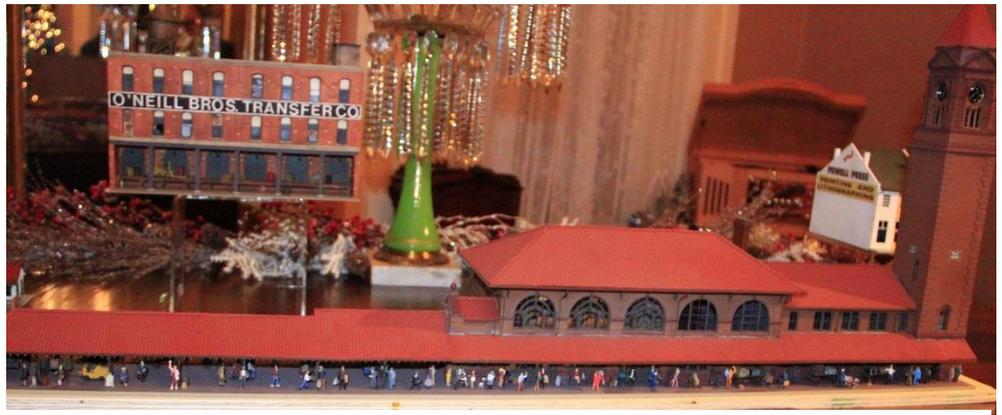


Bob Page with miniature Rock Island Station

Bob is a native Peorian, local historian and model builder. He has been crafting miniature replicas of buildings from the Peoria area for over 40 years. Bob is also a lifelong model railroader. His grandfather worked on the railroad and rode non-stop between Galesburg and Beardstown sparking Bob's interest.



Bob uses old photographs and drawings to determine the original dimensions of bygone buildings. Attention is paid to window size and number and in one project he actually counted the bricks in a drawing to help determine building size.



Foreground: Rock Island Railroad Depot with miniature people, Water St. Background: O'Neill Bros. Transfer Co.



The Jefferson Hotel, Rialto Theatre (originally the Hippodrome Theatre) and Crawford's Shoe Store located in the 200 block of South Jefferson Avenue along with a few other businesses.



Clover Club (formerly The Sportsman's Club), 416 Fulton Street, jazz joint with gambling room. This address housed a bar/tavern as far back as the 1890's.

The Peoria Historical Society would like to express our sincere thanks to Bob for sharing his wonderful talents and the fruits of those talents.

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The annual tour on December 3rd and 4th surely did not disappoint and once again was a huge success! Thanks to our home owners for welcoming over 500 people through their beautiful historic homes. And thanks to the over 100 volunteers who donated their time and talents. In addition, our house managers for the Pettengill-Morrison House and Flanagan House outdid themselves with their inviting and educational themes. Thanks to Mary Hamm, Deb Maxwell and Linda Herron for leading their teams! All five of the homes were unique in architecture, décor and splendor.

The 1886 Victorian home of Bill & Valerie Ackerman was decorated in a wintery theme with florals designed by the Methodist Service League. Bill and Valerie greeted everyone on the third floor as they showcased the third floor luxurious bath, recently finished to look completely appropriate to the home.

Guests at the PM House were greeted by a handsome butler who guided you into the home to experience a traditional French Christmas. One of the maids explained the French menu complete with a *Bûche de Noël* cake for dessert. The table was set with china, crystal and sterling silver from Ms. Morrison's collection and from there Ms. Jean Morrison, aka Opal Ferry, greeted everyone in the library. All of the rooms were exquisitely decorated with many of Ms. Morrison's traveling pieces on display.

The third home on Moss Avenue was the home of Dr. James Adams and decorated by Kathy Ma. This 1922 Georgian-style red brick home featured antique posters, a floor to ceiling magnificent Christmas tree, a spectacular staircase and much,

much more.

Once again we were fortunate to have a home open in the Randolph Roanoke Historic District. Vikki Hibberd welcomed guests into her recently renovated post-prairie style home built in 1914 and designed by the Hewitt and Emerson architectural firm. This home featured many built-in features, including a leaded glass cabinet in the living room and leaded glass entry doors. Even with Vikki's renovation, many of the original features remain in the home, including a whole house vacuum system. Santa was also there to greet children young and old.

Flanagan House Museum took us back to a time which will never be forgotten – the 40's! WWII soldiers were in full dress on the front lawn and inside we had the opportunity to meet a young WWII soldier and his bride to be. Marilyn Leyland shared her father's WWII collection of greeting cards and a beautiful picture of her newlywed parents leaving on the train in 1944. Bob Page exhibited his scale models of Peoria landmark buildings, many gone but surely not forgotten. Other unbelievable military artifacts were displayed on the second floor. This was an exhibit folks will not forget!

Each home boasted a raffle basket valued at anywhere from \$100-\$300. Winning names have been drawn and they are: Gail McGinnis, John Sahn, Trisha Heitzman, Cindy Godsil and B. Welch. We thank those who donated these baskets and everyone who purchased tickets.

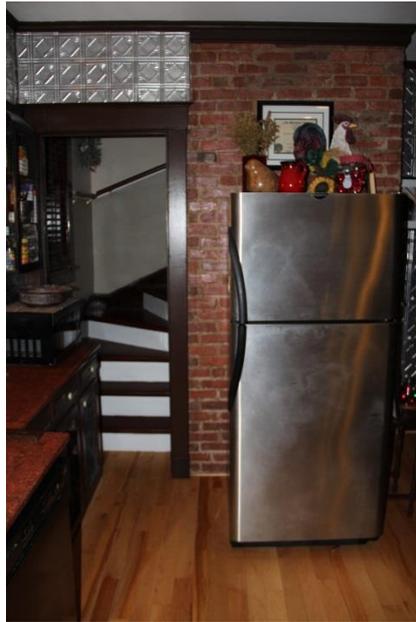
If you joined us for this magical Holiday Home Tour, the Peoria Historical Society thanks you for your interest and support. If you

were not able to join us this year, mark your calendar for 2017! It's always the first weekend in December. We are always looking for volunteers for this event as well as many others. If you'd like to volunteer please contact the PHS office at 309-674-1921.

Home Tour pictures follow:

Flanagan House





Vikki Hibberd Home



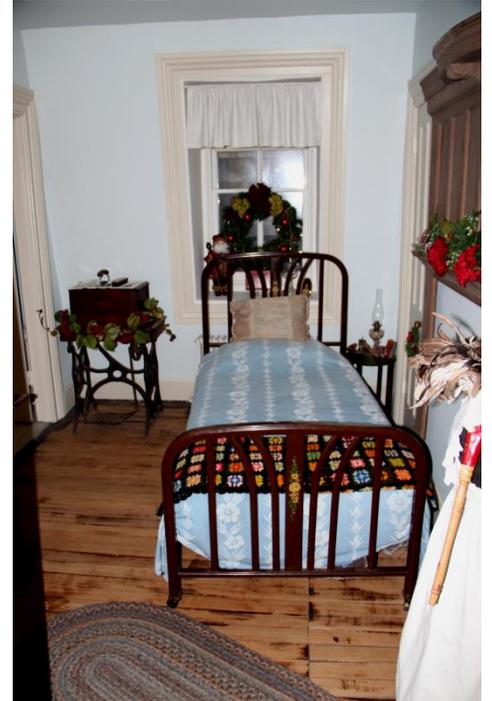
Bill & Valeri Ackerman Home



Dr. James Adams Home



Pettengill-Morrison House



In addition to thanking all of our sponsors, the Peoria Historical Society would also like to thank the many volunteers that brought the Holiday Home Tour to fruition.

Ackerman, Bill
 Ackerman, Valerie
 Adams, Cindy
 Adams, James
 Adcock, Suzie
 Anzaldua, Trisha
 Armbruster, Mary Ann
 Armstrong, Patty
 Baldwin, Dana
 Barth, Linda
 Bateman, Gwen
 Bishop, Molly
 Crusen
 Bledsoe, Richard
 Brereton, Edie
 Brewster, Sheila
 Buralli, Brian
 Carballido, Jim
 Carney, Donna
 Close, Kathy
 Cothren, Jackie
 Coulter,
 Christopher
 Cox, Brian
 Dace, Vicki
 Dieckow, Flo
 Dougherty, Deb
 Dougherty, Tom
 Draper, Jeri
 Dries, Eleanor
 Dusenberry, Liz
 Duvall, Lauren
 Earleson, Judy
 Edwards, Ken
 Ferrie, Joe
 Ferrie, Opal
 Formes, Malia
 Fox, Anne
 Frank, Judy
 Frels, Karen
 Frels, Pierce
 Furness, Lynn
 Gerontes, Greg
 Gerontes, Karen
 Gerontes,
 Katherine
 Gruber, Sarah
 Hamm, Mary
 Hamm, Kirby
 Hartle, Tina
 Haverhals,
 Bernice
 Haverhals, John

Herron, Linda
 Hibberd, George
 Hibberd, Julie
 Hibberd, Vikki
 Hill, Clayton
 Hornickle, Nick
 Horrie, Cindy
 Jensen, Beth
 Johnson, Colleen

Johnson, Leann
 Johnson, Marcia
 Johnson, Beth
 Johnson, Mark
 Johnston, Kathy
 Kellogg, Pat
 Killion, Robert
 Krupa, Tom
 Krukowski, Jenna
 Lavin, Alexa
 Leyland, John
 Leyland, Marilyn
 Lewis, Paula
 Lorenz, Karin
 Lienweber, Rob
 Ma, Kathy
 Ma, Lindsey
 Maxwell, Deb
 McDowell, Gayle
 McElwe, Julie
 Monroe, Sally
 Neidy, Jon
 Newton, Esther
 Newton, Sophia
 O'Brien, Tim
 O'Brien, Donna
 Oyler, Heather
 Oyler, Zach
 Page, Bob
 Papenhouse, Susie
 Parks, John
 Perkins, Kelly
 Peterson, Stacy
 Pogue, Connie
 Robins, Robin
 Robinson, Brittney
 Robinson, Heather
 Rosa, John
 Ruppman, Walter
 Schick, Jake
 Seelig, Carol
 Smith, Donna
 Stephens, Jorja
 Thomas, Jeff
 Tomczyk, Connie
 Ware, James
 Ware, Larry
 Ware, Phillip
 Withers, Rachel
 Winchell, Chance
 WW II Reenactors



Thank you!



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Cocktail Party • Lindsey & Kathy Ma

**Papparazzi • Hearth • 2Chez • Two25
 A Matter of Taste • Golden Corral • Trefzger's**

Raffle

**Jim's Bistro • Childer's • Donnelly's Irish Pub • Thyme
 Weaver Ridge • Good Earth Landscaping**

AMT • Mark Ferrill

**Johnson's Florals • Hagerty Brothers
 Maui Jim**

Steel House Restoration Project

Mark L. Johnson

The Peoria Historical Society has partnered with the Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation and the Wheels O'Time Museum in a unique project to honor one of Peoria's most innovative and charitable businessmen, Robert G. LeTourneau. Co-ordinated by volunteers from these three groups, the project is focused on rescuing and rehabilitating one of LeTourneau's "Carefree Steel" homes from the former LeTourneau plant and moving it to a permanent site at the Wheels O'Time museum. At the museum the "Carefree Steel" home will serve as an exhibit of how a family lived in Peoria during the 1930's.



"The Carefree Home" from a marketing brochure of the Steel Buildings Division of R.G. LeTourneau Inc.

Robert G. LeTourneau moved his manufacturing operations from California to Peoria in 1935 to be closer to Caterpillar Tractor Company. Letourneau's innovative attachments, such as bulldozer blades and rubber tired scrapers, made Caterpillar tractors a primary piece of equipment in the earthmoving industry. Letourneau sales in 1937 totaled \$5.7 million.

LeTourneau was granted in excess of 300 patents for his inventions. Shortly after moving to Peoria, he recognized a shortage of affordable



LeTourneau plant in north Peoria in 1948, image courtesy of H.W. Holling

housing available to his employees and designed and built several hundreds of the small "Carefree Steel" homes at the factory. The homes were constructed in three different sizes and floor plans with the largest two bedroom design being only 856 square feet. Twenty-three of these homes were erected just south of the LeTourneau factory along Grant Street, which was referred to as LeTourneau Court. LeTourneau employees lived in all the homes at LeTourneau Court.

Today, more than twenty of these homes still exist in the Peoria area, with a significant cluster located near the Water Tower in Peoria Heights. None of the homes however were originally located in Peoria as the structures did not conform to the building codes of the city.

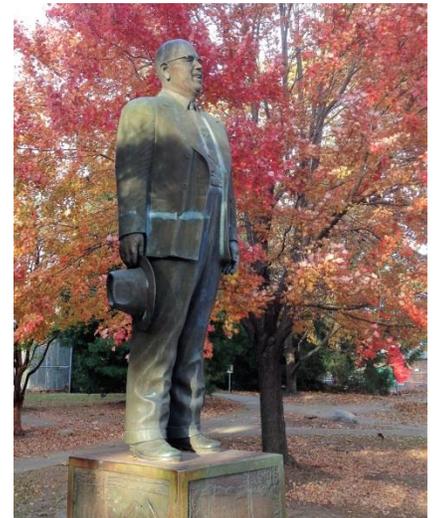
LeTourneau sold his Peoria factory to the Westinghouse Air Brake Company in 1953 and moved his manufacturing operations to Texas. The Peoria factory site is now owned and operated by Komatsu. Several years ago, Komatsu initiated a factory renovation program and demolished the old red brick LeTourneau manufacturing building which stood along Adams Street. Attached to this building was a LeTourneau "Carefree Steel" home which had been used as a manufacturing office since the 1930's. Komatsu has offered that



"The Carefree Home" made available from Komatsu.

"Carefree Steel" home to the Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation.

Together with the Wheels O'Time Museum and the Historical Society, volunteers from the three organizations have developed a plan to rescue and rehabilitate the structure. The plan is to move the building to the Wheels O'Time Museum site in the spring or summer of 2017. The Historical Society will provide assistance in developing the home into an exhibit showcasing how a family lived in the Peoria area during the 1930's.



Statue of R. G. LeTourneau at Glen Oak Park in Peoria

R.G. LeTourneau died in June 1969 in Longview, Texas. In 1988, former employees of the LeTourneau factory in Peoria raised \$25,000 to fund a statue of the man who was described as "a mover of mountains."

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The statue was given to the Peoria Park District and still stands in Glen Oak Park just to the south of the tennis courts. LeTourneau was known as a very religious and philanthropic businessman. It has been estimated that he donated up to 90% of the profits from his business endeavors to charitable organizations. Throughout his life he was referred to as “God’s Businessman,” and often would quote a verse from the New Testament book of Matthew, “But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”

The “Carefree Steel” home project is targeting to have the home in place at the Wheels O’Time Museum, fully renovated with the interior displays functional by the fall of 2017. For further information on this project, please contact PHS President Jim Carballido or PHS Past President Mark Johnson by calling the PHS office at 674-1921.

P-M House Gets Christmas Gift

Paul Grethey, owner of Johnson’s Floral and Greenhouses, has graciously donated 2 fresh wreaths to Pettengill-Morrison House for the Christmas season. Their outstanding work can be seen at many homes that they decorate on Moss Ave. during the Christmas season. The family-owned business has been located at 313 N. Morton Ave., Morton, IL for 49 years.

PHS and P-M are grateful for Paul’s generosity.

House Repair and Maintenance Update

It is a constant mission to keep the Pettengill-Morrison and Flanagan houses in complete repair. These are large and very old buildings and they require constant work to keep them suitable for tours and special occasion rentals. The PHS Preservation Committee has done an excellent job of seeing that this work is identified, scheduled and when necessary, working with the Finance Committee to see that financing is secured.

A Large part of the work that is required is completed by volunteers who share their time and talents to see that these historical sites are maintained. We are publishing a listing of repairs that need to be addressed. If you can spare some time we would appreciate hearing from you. If you have a talent that could be applied to any of these tasks we would appreciate hearing from you. If you would like to be considered as a future resource we would appreciate hearing from you.

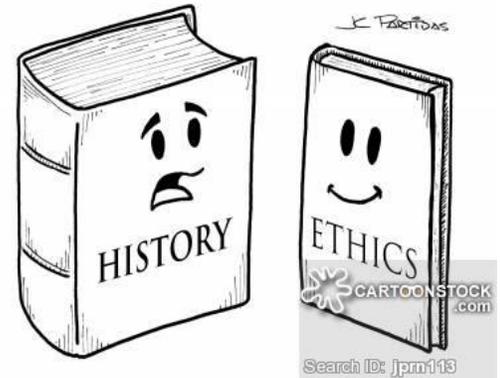
To become a volunteer for the work listed below please contact the PHS office at (309) 674-1921 or adminphs@peoriahistoricalsociety.org.

Pettengill Morrison House
• Tuck pointing and brick replace
• Window glazing
• Painting – Interior and exterior
• Power washing
• Yard light install
Flanagan House
• Brick up exhaust fan opening
• Install bath sink legs
• Gravel for drive
• Basement lighting upgrade
• Correct plumbing to upstairs sink
Skills needed: plumbing, HVAC, electrical, glazing, masonry, painting

New Members Welcome:

PHS would like to extend a warm greeting to those who have become new members since our last printing. It is a pleasure to have you as a part of our community.

Bob Page
 Jeff Thomas
 Lee Fosburgh
 Pierce Frels
 Amber Lowery
 Roberta Koscielski



“PLEASE, TELL ME YOUR SECRET. EVERYDAY I’M FATTER WHILE YOU’RE THINNER AND THINNER.”

DON'T THROW AWAY HISTORY
 HONORED DUTY TO HELP TRY CITY AND FELLOWMAN

**PRESERVE
 SHARE
 CELEBRATE**

Contact General Curator Robert Killion, anything related to the History of Peoria and the Tri-County Area, much needed.

**HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS
 & OBJECTS, PICTURES,
 DIGITAL-USE PICTURES**

RKILLION@PEORIAHISTORICALSOCIETY.ORG
309-674-1921
 Peoria Historical Society
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 Peoria, Illinois 61602

Membership Matters!

Pass along your passion for history and consider becoming a Peoria Historical Society **Membership Sponsor**. Someone you know has the same interest in “preserving, sharing and celebrating the stories of the Peoria area”. Your gift of membership not only helps further the PHS mission, but encourages others to do the same. Please use the form below or go online to peoriahistoricalsociety.org for a printable membership form and add a note that you’re sponsoring the new member when you submit the form. And thanks for your continued support.

Membership Matters!

Become a PHS Membership Sponsor!



Yes, I would like to sponsor a one year membership to the Peoria Historical Society.

New Member Information

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

Sponsor Information

Credit Card # (Visa or Mastercard) _____

Expiration _____ Security Code _____ Membership level \$35 ___ \$60 ___ \$100 ___

Your name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

If paying by check, make payable to the Peoria Historical Society

Please mail this completed form to the
Peoria Historical Society
611 SW Washington St., Peoria, IL 61602

Thank you! The new Member will receive a special “Welcome-to-PHS note in your name.

**The Newsletter of the
Peoria Historical Society**

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R.G. LeTourneau Steel Homes
in Peoria?

Read inside to learn more about these
steel houses that were built in Peoria

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