



TIMELINE 2015

Peoria Historical Society Newsletter | March-April | Volume 21, Issue 2

"to preserve, share and celebrate the stories of the Peoria area"



Spring Showcase April 26th

In celebration of Peoria's 180th anniversary, the Peoria Historical Society will host its 2nd annual Spring Showcase on Sunday, April 26 in the Peoria Civic Center Ballroom. Inspired by Walter Cronkite's popular television series, "You Are There" will feature WEEK-TV's Tom McIntyre and a host of local leaders and celebrities as they portray the city's founders. Travel back in time to meet some of Peoria's early social, administrative, and political leaders.

The doors open at 1:00 p.m. for the boutique, featuring an array of crafts and gifts from local shops and artisans. Entertainment starts at 3:00 p.m. Desserts

and beverages will be served; a cash bar will also be available.

Tickets are \$40 per person or \$400 for a table of ten. The program is expected to sell out, so reserve your tickets early. For more information, or to reserve your tickets, please contact the Peoria Historical Society office at (309) 674-1921.

Spring Showcase Treasures

Last year, one of the real attractions at the Spring Showcase Boutique was the PHS "Treasures" tables. Organized by Beth Johnson, the merchandise available at the "Treasures" contained a variety of items from quality costume jewelry to small

decorative keepsakes. Beth is again working on collecting merchandise for the "Treasures" tables for the 2015 Spring Showcase on Sunday, April 26th.

If you have some items just gathering dust in your closets, perhaps a beautiful tablecloth, a small crystal bowl, a pretty cup and saucer, something you brought back from a foreign excursion or if your jewelry box is overflowing, please consider making a donation to the "Treasures" tables. Donations will be accepted until April 21st. Beth will pick up your items and a tax receipt for your donation will be provided. For more information, please contact Beth at 264-6119.

"History, by apprising the people of the past, will enable them to judge of the future; it will avail them of the experience of other times and other nations; it will qualify them as judges of the actions and designs of men."

Thomas Jefferson, 1782.

From The President

I write this during the same week in January that President Lincoln delivered his “State of the Union” address to Congress, so it seems fitting to provide our members with a brief update on the state of our organization.

I’m very proud of the Peoria Historical Society’s accomplishments last year. We proved ourselves a vibrant and growing organization, one that is very much a part of the community. From our Spring Showcase, the exhibits at both Historic Home Museums, the Trolley Tours throughout summer and fall, the de Tonti Celebration in September, and the Holiday Home tours in December, the PHS has provided a variety of seasonal programs to “preserve, share and celebrate the stories of the Peoria area.”

And, yes, PHS is a growing organization. We welcomed 35 new members in 2014—a gain of 9 percent—and ended the year with 444 current dues paying members. I’d like to thank every one of you for your support. Your membership dollars and volunteer hours allow PHS to reach out to the community with educational programs focused on our mission.

Our Board of Trustees set a very aggressive budget for 2014 with a revenue target of \$211,500. I am pleased to report that our actual revenue was \$214,160. Outstanding. This represents a lot of hard work on the part of many individuals, especially our Executive Director, Mr. Walter Ruppman, and his staff. In 2010, our income was only \$132,600. Our income has grown over 60% during the past five years, due to the generous support of our members and donors.

Part of this remarkable growth has been guided by the strategic planning process the Board of Trustees initiated a year ago. The Board would like to recognize John and Sharon Amdall; their experience and common sense approach to organizational effectiveness has helped both the Board and staff develop a shared focus on priorities.

One last note, the Nominating Committee is preparing a slate of candidates for Officers and Trustees for presentation at the annual meeting on Thursday, May 7th. If you are interested in one of these leadership positions, please contact Past President Russ Crawford, Walter Ruppman, or myself.

Have an historic year everyone.

Mark L. Johnson

Peoria Historical Society

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Find us on Facebook

Special Collections Center

Bradley University Library
Bradley Avenue at Glenwood

Office Hours: 9 a.m.- 4:30p.m.
1 p.m.-4: 30p.m. Monday-Friday
Phone: 309.677.2822

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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.
\$20 minimum for tours



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PNC BANK



Killion's Corner:

by Bob Killion, Curator of Collections and Technology

A heavy winter approaches. All signs point to it. The squirrels are busy gathering their acorn harvest along the river bluff. Rushing quickly to his hoard, one squirrel does not notice one acorn fall free and roll under some dead fall.

Quickly buried by falling leaves and winter snows, the acorn slumbers. The next spring, a small Burr Oak seedling pushes upward toward the light, roots reaching down towards water. This particular tree will be about one season tall in 1492, when Columbus lands in the New World.

Situated on the bluff, the Great Oak has remained a stalwart sentinel, a silent witness to Peoria's colorful history. When Native Americans occupied the river banks, the tree's acorns were a prime food source for both humans and wildlife. The tree stood vigil in 1673 as Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet explored Peoria's shores.

The tree's branches stretched and grew as its brethren fell beneath the axes of de LaSalle and de Tonti during the building of Fort Creve

Coeur in 1680, and again in 1691 as Tonti and de LaForest built Fort St. Louis II.

Surveys from the 1750's referenced the tree during the height of the French fur trade. For the next six decades, the fortunes of war and politics shifted control of the area, but to the Great Oak little changed.

In October of 1812, the Great Oak's leaves trembled amidst the echoes of musketry as the militia destroyed Black Partridge's Village and that of LaVille de Maillet, believing the inhabitants supported the Native Americans. As the ashes settled on the Burr Oak's leaves, silence fell over the valley until 1813, when the Americans arrived to build Fort Clark. Occupied off and on by troops, trappers, and Native Americans, Fort Clark, too, fell to flames sometime in 1818.

The Tree weathered the turmoil. In 1818, Illinois became a state, and the first permanent American settlers arrived at the ruins of Fort Clark in April 1819. Progress was swift. In 1825, Fort Clark was renamed Peoria, and Peoria County was formed. In 1835, Peoria was incorporated as a town, and in 1845, a city.

In the 1850's, Dr. E.H. and Mrs. Maude Bradley purchased the land on which the oak stands. In the 1930's, the Bradley family purchased the adjacent house, razing the structure so the Oak's root system could flourish. In 1968, Mrs. Bradley left a final request: save the tree. On September 6, 1971, a park was established, and formally christened "Giant Oak Park" in 1974.

In 1976, the Oak was designated a bicentennial tree, and declared a tricentennial tree in 1991. "Frankie Acorn" shared its acorns, and schoolchildren have planted its seedlings on Arbor Day.

At present, the Great Burr Oak measures 55 inches at its base and the canopy spreads over 110 feet. Through the years, pesticides and storms have taken their toll, but the tree's caretakers continue to protect and heal: pruning, bracing, fertilizing, watering, and installing lightning rods to ensure the tree maintains its vigil over the city.

Stop by High Street and view a masterpiece of nature older than our country, a living testament to the tumultuous birth of Peoria.



Civil War Bookshelf

This April represents the 150th anniversary of the end of the American Civil War and the assassination of President Lincoln. Most Americans know that General Robert E. Lee surrendered the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia to the Union General U.S. Grant at Appomattox on April 9, 1865, but many do not understand that this event did not by itself bring the Civil War to an end. Several other Confederate armies still existed throughout the southern states, while remnants of the Confederate government were still aboard the trains they had used to escape from the Confederate capital of Richmond.

It was not until April 26, twelve days after Lincoln's assassination, that Confederate General Joe Johnston surrendered his Army of Tennessee near Durham, North Carolina, the last remaining significant Confederate military force. On May 10th, Confederate President Jefferson Davis was finally captured in Georgia.

Members of Co C, 84th IL Vol. Infantry, taken at Blue Spring, TN. The unit saw action in Murfreesboro, Chattanooga, Chickamauga, Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, the Atlanta Campaign, Franklin and Nashville. Sgt. Wesley Clark Herron, relative of Flanagan House Manager Linda Herron, is seated in the front, wearing the slouch hat.

Photo courtesy of Linda Herron.

The Union had offered a \$100,000 reward for his capture.

Pockets of resistance continued. The final battle of the Civil War took place at Palmito Ranch, Texas on May 12th, 1865. Surprisingly, it was a victory for the Confederate forces. It was not until May 26, 1865, that the Civil War officially ended. On this date, General Simon Bolivar Buckner entered into terms for surrender of the Army of the Trans-Mississippi, which are agreed to on June 2, 1865.

To read a bit of Civil War history from the perspective of a Peorian, we recommend *History of the 77th Illinois Volunteer Infantry – Sept. 2, 1862 – July 10, 1865* by Lieut. W. H. Bentley with an introduction by General D. P. Grier. Edward Hine originally published the volume in Peoria, Illinois in 1883. The 77th Illinois Regiment was composed almost exclusively of men from Peoria County.

In his introduction, General Grier states, “As the Commander of the Seventy-Seventh during the entire term of its service, I take great pride in its brilliant record. Our experience during the whole war was a severe one. We were constantly at the front. Our long and tedious marches were trying. Our battles were among the hardest fought during the war. But our brave men went through all without murmuring, and in the most trying positions in which they were placed, they never failed to acquire themselves honorably. In the estimation of their commanding generals, they stood second to none.”

The original edition of the book is a very rare volume. However, reprinted versions may be ordered through the on-line book site, www.abebooks.com for between \$30 and \$40.

Quiz answers: 1. d) The exact number from the 1860 census was 1,711,961, 2. c) 6,000, 3. e) The exact number was 34,834 fatalities, 4. e) the 77th Illinois, 5. b) Missouri



Flanagan House News

by Linda Herron, Flanagan House Chair

In commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War's end, Flanagan House will share Peoria stories of the war and the decades surrounding it.

In 1861, on the very day the war began, Peoria mayor William Willard led a recruitment rally for eager volunteers right down the hill from John Flanagan's home. Camp Lyon was created near the west gate of Glen Oak Park where 7500 Union soldiers eventually trained. A second camp—Camp Peoria—was formed in 1862 at Mary and Adams Streets. We can only wonder how the noise of drills and target practice were received up at Flanagan's Addition!

John Flanagan was a great admirer of Stephen Douglas and supported his candidacy. Douglas is believed to have been a frequent guest in the Flanagan home and we'll be presenting Douglas' views during our tours.

Large oil portraits of Peorians Capt. John Zeigler, Col. Robert Ingersoll, and Col. Charles H Deane (quartermaster at Camp Lyon) hang at Flanagan. We will delve into the wartime service and civilian histories of these men. Private collections and artifacts honoring area Federal soldiers will be featured in the parlor beginning in April.

On Feb 2, we were privileged to host acclaimed storyteller Sheila Arnold Jones. Ms. Jones presented a public workshop teaching great tips for becoming more effective docents. Sheila began her career doing living history at Colonial Williamsburg and performed in Peoria schools and organizations in celebration of Black History Month.

January and February were busy behind the scenes. John Haverhals has expertly repaired the walls in the master bedroom and we are now painting in preparation for reopening in March. Our cheerful, newly renovated vintage kitchen on the first floor is a must-see. Tom Krupa is updating exhibits in the basement and has created a brand new

leatherworking room. We have so much great vintage technology to share! Don't forget to follow the John C. Flanagan House Museum on Facebook!

Membership Swap April 11 & 12

The Peoria Historical Society, in partnership with the Peoria Zoo, Peoria Riverfront Museum, and Wildlife Prairie State Park, is pleased to announce a membership swap weekend April 11th and 12th. PHS members showing their current membership cards will qualify for complimentary admission to any of the partner organizations.

Haven't had the opportunity to stroll down PRM's historic Street? Eager to enjoy the animals after a long winter in hibernation? We encourage our members to take advantage of this rare opportunity to visit some of the area's other unique attractions. For free!

Haven't renewed your membership? Contact the PHS office to renew, and enjoy the advantages of membership today!



Ft. Clark Plaque Missing

Can you help the Peoria Chapter DAR solve a mystery? In 1908, the DAR dedicated a plaque at the Liberty Street Cilco station recognizing the original site of Ft. Clark. The plaque was removed when the station was demolished in the 1960s.

The plaque was reportedly turned over to the DAR and PHS, all of Flanagan House and PHS storage places have been scoured and the plaque cannot be found! We are hoping that someone in the community may have some knowledge about it, that we may return it to the Ft. Clark site and once again recognize this important piece of Peoria history.

If you have any information, please call the Peoria Chapter DAR Regent, Susan Bock, at 309-369-6459, or email her at susanbock@outlook.com.

Rennick Juried Art Show

The Peoria Historical Society is proud to announce the 51st annual Rennick Juried Art Show, to be held May 2-28 at the Main Branch of the Peoria Public Library.

Artists must submit a work depicting a Central Illinois theme, which may include landmarks, nature, water and landscapes, events, animals or people. The show is open to a variety of media, including: oil painting, watercolor, pastels, pen and ink, colored pencil, charcoal, mixed media, photography, pottery, porcelain, sculpture, glass, digital photography, fiber art and print-making.

The entry fee for the first piece of art is \$15.00 and \$10.00 for each additional piece. Best in Show will be awarded a \$300 prize and \$50.00 cash awards will be given to 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners. Ribbons will be awarded for Honorable Mentions. An artists' reception will be held on

Saturday, May 16, from 2:00-4:00 p.m. at the Main Branch of the Peoria Public Library.

For more information, please contact the Peoria Historical Society at 309-674-1921 or visit our website at www.peoriahistoricalsociety.org.

Annual Meeting May 7th

Please join the PHS at our annual meeting on Thursday, May 7th at 7:00 p.m. in the auditorium of the Peoria Riverfront Museum. In honor of the 150th anniversary of the Civil War's conclusion, former PHS President Bernie Drake will present "Peoria Generals in the Civil War."

Directly following the program, we will proceed with the business of the Annual Meeting. This will include presentation of annual awards and election of both Officers and new Trustees for the Board. Please plan to attend this very important meeting.

Admission and parking are free.



Moss Avenue Sale at P-M House

The basement of the Pettengill-Morron House is beginning to fill up with merchandise for the Moss Avenue sale in June. But more “stuff” is always welcome. The sale is an opportunity for Historical Society members to clean out their attics, basements, and closets while helping raise money for PHS.

We’ll accept good quality, clean, merchandise, with the exception of clothing and electronic items. Please feel free to drop off your merchandise at the Pettengill-Morron House any Tuesday morning between noon and 1pm between now and June 1st. A donation slip will be available so you may claim your donation as a deductible for income tax purposes.

Illinois Civil War Quiz

The topic at the Historical Society’s first quarter program on January 29th in the auditorium of the Peoria Riverfront Museum was a presentation by Dr. Philip Jones, Associate Professor of History at Bradley University. The title of his presentation was “The Surprising Civil War: How and Why Just About Everyone At the Time Got it Wrong.” Here’s a five question quiz to test your knowledge about the state of Illinois and Peoria at the time of the Civil War.

1. In 1860, when Abraham Lincoln was elected to be President, what was the approximate population of the state of Illinois? (Clue: the population of the state in 1850 was 851,470)
 - a) 956,000
 - b) 1,254,000
 - c) 1,475,000
 - d) 1,712,000
 - e) 1,906,000
2. In April 1861, when President Lincoln issued his first call for volunteers for the Union military, how many volunteers did Illinois Governor Richard Yates target

from the state

- a) 4,000
- b) 5,000
- c) 6,000
- d) 7,000
- e) 8,000

3. In total, approximately how many Illinois men in the military died as a result of their service during the Civil War? (Clue: a total of 259,092 men served in the Union forces during the Civil War)

- a) 15,000
- b) 20,000
- c) 25,000
- d) 30,000
- e) 35,000

4. What regiment of Illinois soldiers was comprised primarily of volunteers from Peoria County?

- a) 14th Illinois
- b) 33rd Illinois
- c) 34th Illinois
- d) 45th Illinois
- e) 77th Illinois

5. In what state did the majority of Illinois soldiers spend their time during the first two years of the war? (Clue: they spent most of their time marching chasing “bushwackers.”)

- a) Kentucky
- b) Missouri
- c) Tennessee
- d) Arkansas
- e) Virginia

Quiz answers on page 4.

The Newsletter of the
Peoria Historical Society

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Peoria, Illinois 61602

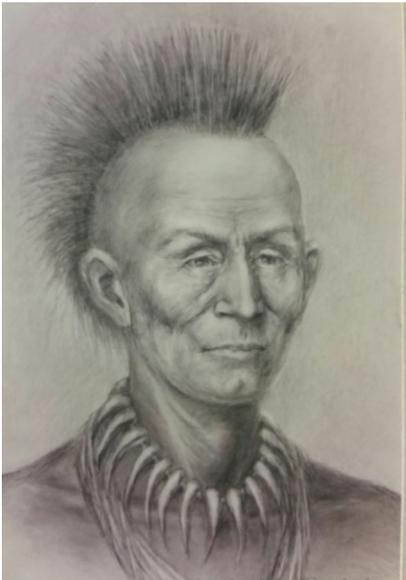
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Senachwine, 18th century Potawatomi chieftain, is one of the prominent historical figures featured during this year's Spring Showcase.

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