



TIMELINE 2016

Peoria Historical Society Newsletter | May - June | Volume 22, Issue 3

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

Coming Sept. 8 2016 De Tonti Award to Honor Rep. Leitch

Henri de Tonti Award Event to be held Thursday, September 8, 2016

The Peoria Historical Society is proud to announce that State Representative David Leitch is the 2016 recipient of the Henri de Tonti Award. This Award was established in 2012 to recognize individuals or organizations within the Tri-County area that have exhibited outstanding leadership qualities.

David Leitch has been a visionary and analytical guardian for the people of his district and Illinois. His leadership as an advocate for the health community has benefited the Peoria School of Medicine, Heartland Clinic and the mentally ill. David's diligent efforts have helped change the face of Peoria: Illinois Central College, Pere Marquette/Marriott, Keystone, Civic Center, Peoria Riverfront Museum, G.A.R. Hall and others.

Leitch has served as Illinois State Representative from the 73rd District since 1989. His areas of service in the State House include Deputy Republican Leader from 2011 to present in addition to Assistant Republican Leader, Assistant Majority leader and



David Leitch tours P/M House

Medicaid spokesman. In his 27 years in office, he has been an active member of nearly 20 local boards and more than seven committees and boards in the state legislature. David has received over 50 "Legislator of the Year" awards or its equivalent by numerous organizations, "Guardian of Small Business" by the National Federation of Independent Businesses seven times and "Activator" by the Illinois Farm Bureau 17 times!

David Leitch graduated from East Peoria Community High School and earned his B.A. in History/Political Science from Kalamazoo College. From 1970 to 1974, he was a reporter for the Peoria Journal Star and later served 6 years as the President of the Peoria Downtown Development

Council. From 1980 to 2008, Leitch was Vice-President of Area Development for National City Bank.

Previous recipients of the Henri de Tonti Award have been: 2012 - Caterpillar; 2013 - Illinois State Senator Dave Koehler; 2014 - former U.S. Secretary of Transportation and former member of U.S. House of Representatives Ray LaHood; and 2015 - Junior League of Peoria, Inc.

The Thursday, September 8th, 2016 Tribute to State Representative Leitch begins with a cash bar reception at 5:30 P.M. in the Cotillion Room at the historic Peoria Marriott Pere Marquette and dinner seating at 6:00 P.M. in the Marquette Ballroom. The Henri de Tonti Celebration is a major fundraiser for the Peoria Historical Society.

This is the 5th year to present the Henri de Tonti Award which was established by the Society to honor the French explorer and fur trader who is credited with founding the first French fur trading outpost along the shores of Lake Pimiteoui. That event, in the fall of 1691, is generally accepted as the founding of Peoria.

For more information about tickets and sponsorship opportunities, call 674-1921 or Carol Hornickle at 453-6050.

"History is not a burden on the memory but an illumination of the soul." — Lord Acton

From the President

As my term as president comes to an end and I reflect on the last year, I wanted to take this opportunity to thank everyone for their dedication to the Society, and to recognize the many accomplishments we have achieved. Personally, I am most proud of the strides we have made with Strategic Objective #5, *Share the PHS Mission, build membership and promote collaborative partnerships*, particularly in the area of collaboration. In the last year alone, we have worked closely with many organizations to develop joint programs and exhibits, including the Peoria Riverfront Museum, Peoria Public Library, Peoria Area World Affairs Council, Peoria Zoo, Wildlife Prairie Park, The Peoria PlayHouse Children's Museum, Junior League of Peoria, Peoria Women's Club, CityLink, Peoria Downtown Advisory Commission, ArtsPartners of Central Illinois, Peoria Area Visitors and Convention Bureau, Central Illinois Landmarks Foundation, Wheels O' Time Museum, Peoria Park District, Moss-Bradley Neighborhood Association, OLLI, Bradley University Special Collections, Illinois Central College, and many local schools, retirement communities and area historical societies where our volunteers give presentations. I believe we have strengthened the Society by building stronger relationships with these organizations, and we have spread our mission to the larger community – to *preserve, share and celebrate the stories of the Peoria area* – through these collaborative efforts.

The long-term viability of any organization depends upon the dedication and vision of its board, staff, membership and volunteers, and their willingness to adapt to – even embrace – the many challenges and opportunities before them. I can honestly say that the Peoria Historical Society has what it takes to go the distance, and we've seen the integration of new technology as we digitize the collection, the adoption of new programs and – most importantly – a commitment to building partnerships throughout the greater Peoria area with a shared interest in preserving our history for future generations. It is with the deepest appreciation and respect for those who support the mission of the Peoria Historical Society that I say thank you! It has truly been an honor and a privilege to serve you.

Sincerely,

Deborah Dougherty,

President

STAFF

Walter C. Ruppman

Executive Director

Bob Killion

Curator of Collections,

Technology

Judy Earls

Administrative Assistant

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Peoria Historical Society

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Peoria, IL 61602

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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. - 4:30 p.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.

\$20 minimum for tours

Distribution of Timeline courtesy of:



PNC Bank

History Quiz

by Mark L. Johnson

The Timeline history quizzes this year are based on a recent book by local author, Ken Zurski, titled, "Peoria Stories - Tales from the Illinois Heartland." The book contains nine stories about famous individuals who have visited the city over the years. It is available at Barnes and Noble and the Peoria Riverfront Museum as well as through Amazon.com. In this edition of the Timeline, the history quiz is based on Chapter Six, "A Plotter's Tale" which tells the story of the surveyor William Hamilton's experiences in Peoria. Most Peoria history buffs know that in 1826 William Hamilton conducted the original survey of the quarter section of land which the state legislature had put aside for the county seat of Peoria County. Hamilton was paid a total of \$58.75 to complete the survey of a total of 147 acres. The quiz is focused on another of William Hamilton's activities in Peoria, when he served as the defense attorney in the first trial conducted in Peoria County, the murder of a Frenchman named Peter Laundri.

1. When the County of Peoria was established on March 8, 1825, it also became one of five regional circuit courts in the state. The first court held in Peoria was the following fall, November 14, 1825. John York Sawyer acted as the first judge. A month earlier, on October 14, outside a saloon, a white man was found dead from a stab wound. What was the name of the Indian who was charged with the murder?
 - a) Gomo
 - b) Senachwine
 - c) Nomaque
 - d) Nauntay
 - e) Nee Nee Wah
2. When the murder trial began, the County of Peoria did not yet have a court house, so the trial was held in the home of the following citizen along the river?
 - a) John Hamlin
 - b) Thomas Forsythe
 - c) William Eads
 - d) Samuel Fulton
 - e) John Agee
3. Hamilton's efforts at defending the accused were unsuccessful. After the Indian was quickly found guilty and sentenced to be "hanged by the neck until he is dead" in his Peoria trial, Hamilton appealed the case to the Supreme Court of Illinois. The Supreme Court of Illinois _____?_____.
 - a) Granted a stay of execution.
 - b) Changed the sentence from a hanging to death by a firing squad.
 - c) Refused to hear the case.
 - d) Granted a retrial.
 - e) Appointed a new Circuit Court judge.
4. Hamilton then appealed the second indictment of the Indian to the Illinois Supreme Court, arguing that the charges should be dropped on the grounds that the Indian was not bound by the laws of the state of Illinois. During the appeal, _____?_____.
 - a) Since there was no jail, townsfolk were paid to keep the Indian under guard.
 - b) One Peoria resident, a man named Allen held the Indian at his house.
 - c) Indians attempted unsuccessfully to rescue the accused.
 - d) The accused Indian escaped and fled Peoria.
 - e) Hamilton prevailed and the case was finally stricken.
5. Hamilton left Peoria in 1827 and moved north to Galena where prosperous lead-ore mines were opening. During his life in Galena, what happened to Hamilton?
 - a) He was married and had a large family.
 - b) He was commissioned as a colonel in the militia during the Black Hawk War.
 - c) An area near Galena where Hamilton mined is now known as "Hamilton's Pits."
 - d) He became the Justice of the Peace for the Galena territory.
 - e) His mother came to live with his family after her husband was killed in a duel with Aaron Burr.

(Answers on page 7)

Help Wanted:

Willing persons needed to assist with yard sale to benefit PHS! Please apply in person at the Pettengill-Morrison House at 1212 West Moss! No experience needed. Thursday, June 9: tent and table set up. Friday, June 10: unpack boxes and arrange items on tables. Thursday and Friday: 2:00 until done. Saturday, June 11: work at the sale between 7:30 and 4:30. Volunteers especially needed late afternoon on the 11th. Rewards: Fun and laughs and a good feeling of having helped PHS.

Call Beth Johnson at 264-6119 to apply or to have your questions answered!

Springtime in the River City

- Mark L. Johnson

A few weeks ago, while browsing at an estate sale, my wife came across a framed copy of a poem titled "Peoria". The poem seemed especially appropriate for inclusion in this edition of the Timeline as it offers a glimpse of Peoria in the springtime. The last name of the author of the poem, Edna Dean Proctor, is certainly well known to most Peorians, but just who was this poet. Fortunately, the Proctor family genealogy is well documented on the Internet at www.houseofproctor.org.

Captain John Proctor was born in Massachusetts in 1788. Edna Dean Proctor was his daughter, born in September 1829. The first volume of her collected poems was published in 1866. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow showed his appreciation of her talents by including many of her poems in his book "Poems of Places." She was also friends with John Greenleaf Whittier. In 1890, when she was 61 years old, Riverside Press published a volume of her poetry titled simply, "Poems." Three poems in the book had connections with the state of Illinois where several of her half-brothers resided in Peoria, including John Cleveland Proctor.

John Cleveland Proctor arrived in Peoria at the age of 21. His brothers, Israel F. Proctor, and Ezekiel A. Proctor also resided in Peoria. In 1850, the Proctor Lumber Company opened for business on Water Street. In 1863, John C. Proctor was one of the founders of the First National Bank, and he began a 31-year tenure as president of the bank in 1875. In 1883, John played a key role in establishing Cottage Hospital, which became known as

Proctor Hospital. In 1906, he built the Proctor Endowment Home on Spring Street and he died at the Home in 1907 at the age of 85.

The poem "Peoria", by Edna Dean Proctor, certainly must be a reflection on her experiences while visiting the city during the springtime.



Edna Dean Proctor

Peoria

*O the music of thy name, Peoria!
When with May thy meadows flame,
When the wild crab woos the bees
To its bowers, and Judas trees
Tint thy budding woods with red;
When from all thy groves and leas,
As if grief and care were dead
And life and joy forever wed,
Blue birds, thrushes, orioles,
In rapturous song pour forth their
souls,
Then I know 'twas first in May
Thy Indian lovers came this way,
Pausing on thy bluffs to mark
Mead and lake and forest dark,
And, tranced with bloom and song
of bird,
Coined thee this melodious word -
Like a far-off bugle note
Fall the syllables and float - Peoria!*

PRM Prohibition Events: Roll Out the Barrel Bus Tours & Speakeasy Saturday

In conjunction with the Peoria Riverfront Museum's *American Spirits: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* exhibit, come join our very own tour guides Bernie Drake and John Leyland as we roll out the barrel on the whiskey days of Peoria. We'll visit the famous Peoria distillery row, find the old Peoria breweries, and see the whiskey barons' homes. The May bus tour is coupled with a stop and tour of the Peoria Brewing Company. Also, come join Hugh Higgins, whiskey aficionado and owner of Hearth restaurant, for a tutorial on whiskey and tasting as part of the Speakeasy Saturday series. Details and tickets are available through the PRM website. www.peoriariverfrontmuseum.org.

Roll Out the Barrel Bus Tour & Tasting | Featuring Peoria Brewing Company Tour
Sat. May 7 | 1:30-4 pm

Speakeasy Saturdays: Whiskies of the World: Tutorial & Tasting
Sat, May 14 | 2-4 pm

Meet Robert Killion, PHS Curator

People often ask what I do. My reply to them is "I'm the curator for the Peoria Historical Society" "Oh that sounds interesting" is the most common response I get. I must say it is interesting. Since I started here at PHS in 2007 it has been a non-stop learning experience as I never know what is going to be offered for donation next or what research question someone is going to need help with. Some people will want to know how I got here and what I do every day. Well getting here has certainly not been a straight path.

I started my BS in History at Illinois State University after getting back from my initial training for the Army Reserves. I also joined ROTC. I chose history because I loved it and as I planned on being an active duty Army officer I figured might as well do what I loved and relevant at the same time. Life has a way of changing the best laid plans and when an auto accident changed my Army plans I ended up working at Mitsubishi. During the 10 years I was there I spent 5 years as an Associate and 5 years as a Supervisor in Process control. During the entire time I continued to go to school and by the time I was laid off in 1999 I decided to get my MS in History from ISU. My late wife Holly was finishing up her BS in Nursing after having worked as a RN since 1993 so when the Navy Recruiter came to the Nursing school we decided why not? While she was stationed at Camp Lejeune, NC I taught history classes at Coastal Carolina Community College and started taking classes for my MA in

Museum Studies. When she was stationed in Rota, Spain for the next 3 years I worked as a librarian and network administrator in the base library while continuing my Museum Studies program. In 2006 we returned home to Central Illinois. I had a couple of classes left to take for my MA and in one I had to interview the heads of local organizations. One of the organizations I chose was PHS. I interviewed the Executive Director, at that time Amy Kelly. A short time later I saw an ad in the paper saying they were looking for a Site Manager but by the time of the interview the Collections Manager position was also open...and as they say the rest is history. I have been working at PHS ever since.

I have two primary responsibilities. First and foremost is the development, care and documentation, of the extensive and varied collection owned by PHS. Secondly, it is helping the many people from all over the United States, and even the world with their research questions on Local History. Included in my day to day job are so many varied tasks. I work with volunteers and interns on many projects. One of the most important projects is the documentation of new objects that are donated to PHS as well as the continued task of putting all the old records and images into our collections database. This digital documentation gives us physical and intellectual control of the collection as well as preserving it for perpetuity. It also allows us to share our collection not only with visitors to Flanagan House, Pettengill Morron house, the Wheels O' Time Museum, and the Peoria Riverfront Museum but also with researchers from all over the world through our website. The more records entered into the

collections database the more accessible and therefore more utilized our collection becomes. This wealth of information has led to inquiries from England, Finland, Sweden, New Zealand, France, Canada, and Argentina. Of course the research questions and request for images also come locally and from all over the United States. Information from our collections, to name just a few examples, helps people with their hobbies, in writing both fiction and nonfiction works for personal, educational, and for profit use, and in genealogy. The most used portion of our collection is our image collection. Images are used for display at local businesses, in homes, given as gifts, and used to illustrate books and histories, personal and public. Some of the most satisfying moments are when we do a new upload of data to the website and I immediately receive an email or phone call from someone very excited to find the information or images of their family or particular interest online.

Since we are a small staff I never know what I might need to do to help out on day to day tasks and for special events. One of the things that have grown out of this is giving presentations. I have given presentations locally as well as nationally on a variety of topics.

Initially this was primarily on the development of our online presence and sharing of the collection but these presentations have grown to include historic photography, caring for your personal collections, uniforms, and most recently Civil War presentations while in uniform.

I never know what will walk in the door or come in the mail, nor do I

(continued on next page)

(Robert Killion cont.)

know what interesting new question I will be helping someone with. I like to say I rarely get accomplished what I set out to do on any particular day but I am always busy, it is always interesting, and it is always worthwhile.

Dressing Downton Trip Report



Participants of the joint venture bus trip to Chicago's Driehaus museum

PHS Annual Meeting & Social

Please join us

Pettengill-Morrison House

Thursday, May 12 at 6:00 p.m.

- **2015 Financial Report**
- **Election of officers and new trustees**
- **Volunteer of the Year Award**
- **Guardian Award**
- **Historic Preservation Award**
- **Centenarian Awards**

Over the years, the Peoria Women's Club (PWC) and the Peoria Historical Society (PHS) have provided opportunities for members and local citizens to share in educational, historical, cultural, social and civic programs. The Peoria Women's Club, organized on January 20, 1886, takes pride in keeping history alive and in serving the Peoria area for 130 years. PHS, incorporated in 1934, works to preserve the unique history of the Central Illinois River Valley for both the education and enjoyment of current and future generations. Both groups understand the importance of building and nurturing relationships with other not-for-profits.

In March, Peoria Women's Club and Peoria Historical Society members and guests visited Chicago to view the current Driehaus Museum exhibit, "Dressing Downton Abbey". Everyone enjoyed a

lovely spring day visiting the Museum, experiencing the "hustle and bustle" of the Magnificent Mile and appreciating time spent with friends and family.



English tea at Driehaus

Flanagan House

Spring has sprung and exciting changes in our exhibits of Peoria history are underway at the Flanagan House Museum! Society curator, Bob Killion, is moving many collection items from downtown office storage into fresh exhibits in several rooms at Flanagan. Extensive artifacts' displays of Peoria's distilling and brewing history, local military history and much more are coming soon.

We will also be offering historical costume rental from several eras (items are from a private collection and are not part of the Society collection). Vintage wedding garb is also now available and reasonably priced. Interior and exterior photography sessions for amateur and professional photographers are also available. Our beautiful backyard summer gardens are a delightful location for parties and receptions. We're not simply the oldest home in Peoria; we are continually reinventing ourselves to serve our community in many new and exciting ways.

In order to keep our home in good repair, we are currently looking for a volunteer plumber to do a couple of minor repairs and a volunteer painter for high, exterior repairs. For inquiries please contact the Peoria Historical Society office Tuesday - Friday at 674-1921.



Sweet 16 Birthday celebration at Flanagan House

German Rhythms

Don't miss the third Quarterly membership meeting aboard the Spirit of Peoria. This year we will celebrate *German Rhythms on the River* with good friends, German food and music. Reserve your tickets early.

DATE:

Thursday, August 11, 2016
Boarding Time: 5 p.m.
Departure Time: 6:30 p.m.
Return to Dock: 8:30 p.m.
Event concludes: 9 p.m.

COST:

\$ 35 includes dinner, Illinois River cruise and live music with cash bar available

LOCATION:

Spirit of Peoria
100 Water Street
Tickets available at the Peoria Historical Society
611 SW Washington St
Peoria IL 61602
309-674-1921
www.peoriahistoricalsociety.org

Quiz Answers

- #1 - c
- #2 - e
- #3 - d
- #4 - all five answers are correct
- #5 - b

You can help! Moss Ave Sale



Fibber McGee and Molly
and their famous Closet

Have an area at your house that looks like Fibber McGee's closet? Here's a solution for you. Take those items over to the Pettengill-Morrison House to be sold at the upcoming PHS Yard Sale, to be held on Saturday, June 11. We accept any items except clothing or items with cords! The items do not need to be vintage, just in good, clean condition! You can drop these items off at Pettengill-Morrison on any Thursday between 10 and 2. A volunteer will open the basement door for you once you arrive. A tax receipt will be available for all donations.

If you need help getting items to the house or have any questions, please call Beth Johnson at 264-6119!

John Haverhals: Stepping Down



John Haverhals has served on the PHS Board of Trustees for two terms and will be stepping down in May. John was recognized as Volunteer of the Year in 2013 and, during his tenure on the board, has filled an extremely important role as the chair of the Historic Homes Committee.

Mary Hamm, a long-time volunteer and docent of the Pettengill-Morrison House, shared the following regarding John. On one occasion he cleared the brick path at the PM House that leads to the former site of the carriage house. That was quite a feat, since it hadn't been cleared for years and was thick with vines and poison ivy. John and Mary, working together, walked both the grounds and the house to make a list of needed repairs. John has personally worked on many projects over the years, including the much-needed scraping, patching, and painting at the P/M House as well as other thankless tasks like hauling countless loads of trash from the basement and the attic.

John coordinated the repair of the chimneys, resulting in no further leaks in the basement. He supervised and participated in the installation of new roofs for both the garage and the front porch. He was right up there on the roof with the PCCEO student workers during the repair work!



John removes old tile adhesive at Flanagan

In December, after a terrible storm, he picked up nearly 100 branches in the driveway and yard. He negotiated the bid for the repair of the upper gutters and roof. We could go on, but you get the idea that John is a dedicated and tireless volunteer and can be thanked for many restoration projects he completed at both homes.

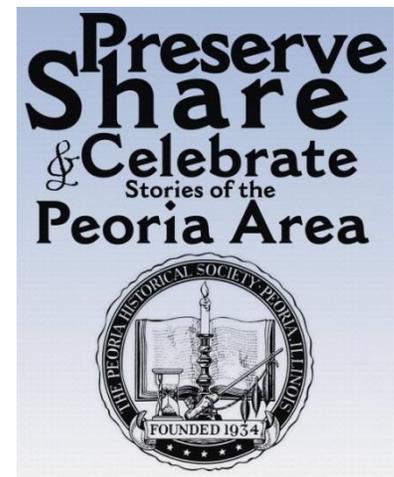
Linda Herron, Flanagan House Chair considers John and his wife friends and echoes Mary's compliments of John. Linda stated, when speaking of John, "not only did the houses benefit, but he inspired others to step up and make a difference as well. His plumbing, wiring and fine carpentry skills are second to none." She went on to say "he is also very

knowledgeable about both house's histories and that of the area and often leads tours at Flanagan House."

Mary and the many other volunteers serving with John have remarked what an honor it has been to work with him and to have been witness to his expertise, commitment, high moral character and most of all, his kindness. A mere "thank you" doesn't seem adequate! The Peoria Historical Society is deeply grateful for his service on the board, the Finance Committee and as the Historic Homes Committee Chair and we hope to see him often.



John & wife Bernice work in the garden at Flanagan House



Meet New P-M Chair Alicia Butler



As the new Pettengill-Morrison House Chair, I am pleased to have the opportunity to work with the Peoria Historical Society Board of Trustees, staff, and the many outstanding volunteers in promoting and maintaining the Pettengill-Morrison House. I am a lifelong Peoria resident, graduating from Peoria High School and Bradley University. I am very involved in the community serving on a number of boards, including the Peoria High School Alumni Board, Peoria Area Community Events (PACE), and the Moss-Bradley Residential Association. I am privileged to be the Alumni Advisor of my sorority at Bradley University - Gamma Phi Beta - and am a former Peoria Public Schools District #150 School Board Member and still work to promote the District and the students. I am an avid sports fan; Peoria High School basketball and football and Bradley Basketball, as well as the Chicago Cubs, Bears, and the Golden State Warriors (go Shaun Livingston!).

I am very proud of my grandparents who started a business here in 1927 and it is still a successful business today. I am blessed with the best Mother in the world and have 3

rescue dogs and a rescue cat. I have worked in all aspects of marketing (public, corporate and medical) and co-host a morning radio show. I appreciate the opportunity to work collaboratively to highlight our history and showcase the PM house.

PHS Artifacts & Wheels O' Time Museum

See PHS Artifacts and many other items at the Wheels O' Time Museum.

May 1st is first day of the 2016 Season for the Wheels O' Time Museum. The Museum is located at the corner of North Knoxville and Woodside Drive, across from Lake of the Woods. The Museum includes four buildings that are housing a collection that is varied, historical and a bit whimsical. The collection includes Peoria Historical Society artifacts such as the 100+ year old Rock Island Steam Engine and a Duryea Gem Automobile. You can tour three rail cars, observe the restoration progress of a 1931 Ahrens-Fox Fire Engine -- which was owned by the city of Peoria -- and visit the Early Ford V-8 Club Display, which features period Ford automobiles, including a 1930's Model A. You can even sit in the rumble seat. Hours are from noon to 5:00 PM, Wednesday through Sunday and Monday Holidays. Can't wait to see you there—it will be fun for the whole family.

Annual Rennick Juried Art Show

You are invited to participate in this 52nd annual historical show sponsored by the Peoria Historical Society in collaboration with the Peoria Public Library.

This show is named after Percival Rennick who was the first president of the Peoria Historical Society and is one of the oldest juried art shows in Central Illinois. The show was established in 1964 by Camilla Kenyon. Rennick was raised in Stark County, he spent most of his adult life in Peoria, working in education and learning about law (from a private tutor). Rennick also studied history and land development.

Over the years, under the leadership of Marjorie Schwebel, the show has continued to grow as a venue for artists to share their vision of Central Illinois images.

Artists may submit oil, watercolor, pen & ink, pastels, colored pencils, charcoal, mixed media, acrylic, photography, pottery, fiber art, print making, porcelain, or sculpture. Your piece must depict a scene that is within a 100 mile radius of the tri-county area. All artwork must be an original completed in the last two years and ready for hanging or on display in the enclosed cases at the library.

Where: Peoria Public Library

When: May 4 to May 31

How: For entry and award details contact the PHS office at (309) 674-1921 or go to our Web site at peoriahistoricalsociety.org

The Women Presidents of PHS

As Deborah Dougherty completes her term as PHS president, it's worth noting that she's the third woman who has served in that office.

Back in 1940, Miss Naomi Lagron, already a respected businesswoman and former high school and college teacher with a strong interest in Peoria history, took office as the first woman president of PHS. Lagron-Miller, the company she and business partner Miss Ida Miller founded in 1922 and incorporated in 1925 remains in business today, still selling religious goods. A 1902 Peoria High School yearbook shows her as a French teacher, pictured in alphabetical order just one away from Miss Jean Morron, at that time a history teacher there. Peoria Public Library files include Miss Lagron's spirited defense of her father Arthur's views on the location of the original Fort Creve Coeur. Born in France, her father researched the early reports written in French of the fort. Miss Lagron was also an early member of the Peoria Equal Suffrage Association, on the committee that drew up its constitution in 1912. In 1916 she was teaching French, Spanish and Italian at Peoria Musical College which, in 1920, became Bradley's Conservatory of Music.



Peoria High School faculty, 1902. Note Miss LaGron and Miss Morron.

In 2008, Marilyn Voss Leyland became the second woman to head PHS, serving a two-year term. She joined the board as a representative from Caterpillar Inc. Following retirement, she began writing a monthly column on Art and History for the local magazine Arts Alive!. Her grandfather John Voss was one of the early members of PHS back in 1934. His library provided valuable materials for her research, writings and talks on Peoria history. Her parents Eugene J. and Evelyn Strassburger Voss both served as active volunteers, particularly at the Pettengill-Morron House and presented various historical programs. She continues as an active volunteer.

Deborah Dougherty is a professor of history and political science at Illinois Central College where she's taught for nearly 20 years. There she has fostered an interest in local history among her students, including some who've served internships at PHS. She now lives in an historic home in Peoria's West Moss historic neighborhood, serves on the board of the Moss-Bradley Residential Association and the Peoria Riverfront Museum, and was recently appointed to the Peoria Historic Preservation Commission.

**The Newsletter of the
Peoria Historical Society**

611 SW Washington
Peoria, Illinois 61601

Phone: 309-674-1921
Fax: 309-674-1882
Website: <http://www.peoriahistoricalsociety.org>
And on Facebook

Non-profit Organization

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Permit # 745

Peoria, IL 61601



Edna Dean Proctor, (1829-1923)
Miss Proctor was eminent among
American poets. See inside to learn
how she connected with Peoria.

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