



TIMELINE 2014

Peoria Historical Society Newsletter | May-June | Volume 20, Issue 3

Celebrating Our 80th Year



PHS Celebrates 80 Years

The Peoria Historical Society celebrated eight decades of history with two distinguished events in the month of April.

On April 8, Executive Director Walter Ruppman and members of the Executive Committee accepted an official Proclamation from Mayor Jim Ardis and the Peoria City Council in recognition of the Society's dedication to the preservation of Peoria history.

On April 12, PHS presented "Peoria Hosts: Famous Guests in the River City," a spectacular performance of costumed interpreters, musicians, dancers and singers. A gift boutique showcased an array of goods from local artists and shops. If you were unable to make the event, we encourage you to view the dynamic performances on YouTube.

Theodore Roosevelt (PHS President Mark Johnson) accepts the Mayoral Proclamation recognizing PHS's 80th anniversary. Also pictured (l to r) City Council members Ryan Spain and Eric Turner, and PHS Executive Director Walter C. Ruppman.

PHS Creates Endowment Society

In 1986, a PHS Endowment Fund was created under the direction of then-president, Bob Middleton with the goal of ensuring the longevity of the organization. This year, PHS is proud to introduce the Charles Ballance Bequest Society, named for former mayor and prominent early Peorian, Charles Ballance. A benefactor may join the Bequest Society in the following ways:

- Name the Charles Ballance Bequest Society in their will.
- Give stock or other investment vehicles to the Charles Ballance Bequest Society.
- Give a current gift of \$2,500 to the Bequest Society.

Members of the Bequest Society will be honored at an annual reception. Additional gifting opportunities are available. For more information on how you can leave a lasting legacy to the Peoria Historical Society, please contact the PHS office at 309-674-1921

For more information on Charles Ballance, please see the article on page 4.

Support PHS on Facebook

Social media is becoming an increasingly important tool for non-profit organizations. Sites like Facebook allow PHS to reach out to our members and the community, allowing us to share historical photos, event invitations, and organizational updates with a larger audience. We invite you to not only "Like" PHS on Facebook, but also comment and share posts on your own wall. Please help us "share" the news of our exciting events!

From The President

Greetings! It appears the wicked winter of 2014 may be at long last departed, with much welcome spring sunshine finally at hand. Our sincerest thanks to Tom Dougherty for clearing the snow from P-M House this winter. I sincerely hope many of you attended our 80th Anniversary Luncheon Celebration at the Peoria Civic Center on Saturday, April 12th. The Office of the Mayor of Peoria formally recognized the Society's anniversary with a Proclamation presented at the April 8th City Council meeting.

With spring in the air, there's a lot of activity at our two historic homes. Flanagan House hosted "The Life and Times of the Shelton Brothers" in March and April. One of the most memorable cold cases in Peoria is Bernie Shelton's murder outside his Parkway Tavern on Farmington Road on July 26, 1948. Pettengill-Morrison House is hosting an exhibit on "The Fine Art of Hospitality" featuring artifacts from Miss Morrison's personal collection.

There are many volunteer opportunities at both historic homes. Please call Executive Director Walter Ruppman at (309) 674-1921. Walter can put you in touch with our house managers, Kathy Dallinger and Linda Herron. Both Kathy and Linda do an outstanding job directing volunteers, and their tireless dedication to these historic properties is a great asset to the Society.

The summer trolley tours kick-off in June, with 88 tours scheduled. In addition to offering community outreach and education, the trolley tours generate approximately \$10,000 in revenue each year. While there are some veteran tour guides, we are in need of additional guides. Written scripts and practice sessions with an experienced tour guide are available.

Please mark your calendars for the Society's annual meeting on Wednesday, May 7th at 7 p.m. in the lower level auditorium of the Peoria Riverfront Museum. Mrs. Vicki Howell will make a presentation on the settlement of early Peoria. Mrs. Howell is the great-great granddaughter of Josiah Fulton, one of the original seven American settlers who arrived at the site of Fort Clark in 1819 and initiated the development of modern Peoria.

Special congratulations are due to our Executive Director, Mr. Walter Ruppman. He has been nominated for a one year term on the Advisory Board of the Illinois State Historical Society. I know the ISHS will benefit from Walter's knowledge and leadership as he serves his term.

Mark L. Johnson

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.- 12 p.m.
1 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
Phone: 309.677.2822

STAFF

Walter Ruppman
Executive Director

Bob Killion
Curator of Collections, Technology

Open-Contact PHS
Administrative Assistant

OFFICERS

Mark Johnson
President

Deborah Dougherty
Vice President

Jim Carballido
Treasurer

Jennifer C. Martin
Secretary/Timeline Editor

Russ Crawford
Past President

TRUSTEES

Dean Cantu

Kathy Dallinger

Mary DuBois

Chuck Frey

Brent Goken

John Haverhals

Laura Havran

Nick Hayward

Linda Herron

Kevin Kizer

Marianne Moll

Jon Neidy

Susan Bock (DAR)

Stacy Peterson

Gerd Prewitt

Greg Rastatter

Sid Paul Ruckriegel

Richard Schwebel

Steven Streight

Jeff Thomas

W. Eric Turner

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

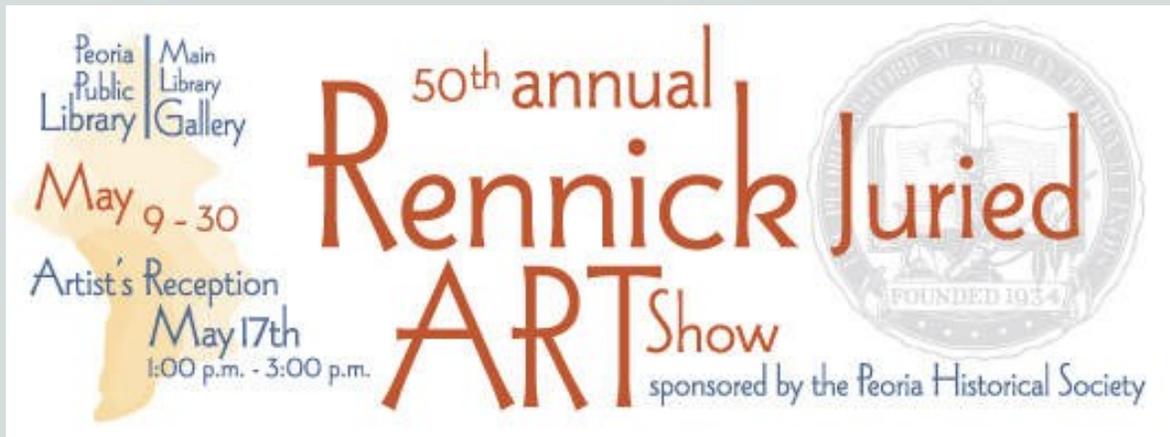
Tours by appointment.

Cost: Adults \$7, Children 12 and under \$3.
\$20 minimum for tours



Distribution of Timeline courtesy of:

PNC BANK



50th Annual Rennick Juried Art Show

The 50th annual Rennick Juried Art Show will be held May 9-30 at the Main Branch of the Peoria Public Library.

Artwork will be accepted on May 5 from 10:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The entry fee is \$15.00 for the first piece and \$10.00 for each additional. 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 May 17, from 1:00-3:00 p.m. at the Main Branch of the Peoria Public Library.

For more information, or to obtain an entry form, please contact the Peoria Historical Society at 309-674-1921 or Marjorie Schwebel at 309-672-2363, or visit our website at www.peoriahistoricalsociety.org.

Benefit for GAR Hall on May 3

Join the Brazilionaires and the Smokers Blues Band Saturday, May 3 at 7:00 p.m. for "A Night of Blues and Samba," a benefit at the Grand Army of the Republic Hall, 416 Hamilton Blvd., Peoria.

Designed by Hewett & Emerson, this Classical Revival hall was built in 1909 as a memorial to Civil War veterans and dedicated to Captain Joseph B. Greenhut. Maintained solely through the hard work of dedicated volunteers, the GAR Hall requires ongoing preservation to maintain its historic beauty.

Tickets are \$7 in advance and \$10 at the door. All proceeds will go directly to the maintenance and preservation of this historic landmark. For more information, or to purchase tickets, please visit <http://thebrazilionaires.com/concert-tickets>.

Moss Avenue Sale, June 7th

The treasures are starting to fill the basement of the Pettengill-Morrison House in preparation for the Moss Avenue Sale on Saturday, June 7th. Donated merchandise may be dropped off at the house on the following dates:

Sunday, May 4, 1pm to 4pm

Friday, May 16, 1pm to 4pm

Sunday, June 1, 1pm to 4pm

Any household items (with the exception of clothing or electrical items) will be accepted and tax deductible donation forms are available. Volunteers to assist with the sale are needed both on Friday afternoon, June 6th as well as during the day of the sale, especially from 3pm to 5pm for teardown of the sale. For further information, please contact the PHS office at (309) 674-1921



Who Was Charles Ballance?

Charles Ballance was a prominent early Peorian—a renaissance man, as he has been called—with numerous accomplishments: teacher, lawyer, surveyor, real estate investor, Civil War colonel, politician, poet, and historian.

Charles (1800-1872) was born in Silver Springs, Kentucky to Willis and Joyce Ballance. His parents joined the Shakers and moved to Pleasant Hill when Charles was 6; he remained until his expulsion for challenging church orthodoxy. At 29, Charles left to forge a new life. He studied law, was admitted to the bar, and taught school before leaving the state in 1831.

Charles traveled throughout Indiana and Illinois. He found “poor fare” at Rushville, but said Peoria was “the richest country on earth ...it so far exceeded any place I had ever seen...I at once resolved to spend my days here but at present there is but little doing toward making a town on account of the unsettled state of the titles to the land which however it is hoped will soon be settled.”

Home of Charles Ballance at 904 South Adams

He opened a school which “was so badly patronized for want of children that it soon closed.” Soon after, Charles was elected county surveyor and expanded the City of Peoria with new additions. He purchased a home at Water and Liberty streets – the site of old Fort Clark – for four hundred dollars. Prospects improved, and he purchased a ferry for \$125.00 in 1834, running the ferry until a captain could be located. Title disputes occupied much of his time as an attorney, and reached a critical juncture in 1835.

At issue was a “garden & three houses” – also claimed by Isaac Underhill and Lewis Bigelow -- who had a preemption right. Underhill threatened to destroy Ballance’s fence and hired George Dupree, a “low-life bully” to do it. “Dupree undertook it three or four weeks ago...and I struck him lick with the hoe which proved sufficient to stop him.” Another man was hired to finish the job and, judging by his possession of a gun, possibly do greater harm. Both Ballance and Underhill were indicted for assault with intent to

commit murder, although neither was convicted, and the controversy continued.

The following spring, Ballance married Julia M. Schnebly (b. 1816), with whom he would have ten children. Julia moved into the Water St. house: “in the spring the water came up to our back steps and it was not unusual at such times to attach a fishing rod to the back door to catch a fish for the next meal.”

Ballance was elected Justice of the Peace and made an unsuccessful bid for the state senate. He was elected First Ward Alderman (1852) and Mayor of Peoria (1855). Ballance was instrumental in bringing Lincoln to Peoria for the Stephen Douglas debate. A staunch supporter of the Union cause, he formed the 77th Regiment, Illinois Infantry, and was elected Colonel.

Eventually, land disputes were settled with a sizable payment to Robert Forsyth, ending twenty years of litigation over the French claims. In 1870, shortly before he died, Charles Ballance wrote the History of Peoria Illinois, one of the many great legacies of his life.



PHS Acquires “Old 886” Engine

With the acquisition of the Peoria Regional Museum Society on January 1, 2014, the passenger locomotive commonly referred to as “Old 886” became the property of the Peoria Historical Society. This iconic machine commemorates the end of an era as the last steam locomotive to operate in Peoria. Since 1985, “Old 886” has been on prominent display at the Wheels O’ Time Museum.

The original Rock Island locomotive number 886 experienced a mishap in 1952 just north of Peoria at Detweiller Park when the engine broke a union link and blew a cylinder head causing the fractured head to fly across the Route 29 highway and onto the park grounds. The engine was not repaired, and the Rock Island Railroad sold the damaged locomotive, and it was sent to the Keystone Steel and Wire Company in Bartonville to be scrapped.

A similar steam locomotive numbered 887 had also been assigned to the Chicago Division suburban passenger operation of the Rock Island Railroad. By mid-1953, the use of the steam powered locomotives had been discontinued, and locomotive 887 was

“officially” set aside at a rail yard in Blue Island, Illinois on August 31, 1954.

Later that year, the Peoria Junior Chamber of Commerce, with the assistance of Louis B. Neumiller, a director of the Rock Island Lines, and the President of Caterpillar Tractor Company, approached the railroad about obtaining steam locomotive 886 because of its historical significance to Peoria. Since the 886 locomotive had been scrapped, the rail company proposed donating and renumbering locomotive 887. The restored and renumbered locomotive arrived in Peoria on June 29, 1956 and was originally displayed at a site in lower Glen Oak Park.

Within six years the condition of “Old 886” had deteriorated substantially. It was moved from the Glen Oak Park site to the Rock Island engine house in Peoria for a renovation. After the restoration was completed, on July 17, 1963, title to the locomotive was formally transferred to the Peoria Park District and the locomotive was moved to a new display site near the Detweiller Golf Course.

The Park District partially refurbished the locomotive in the spring of 1976, but by 1984, it became apparent that “Old 886” was in need of another restora-

tion. The Peoria Regional Museum Society agreed to accept responsibility for the repair and restoration and the title transferred to PRMS. With this title transfer, the plan called for “Old 886” to be moved to the Wheels O’ Time Museum on April 23, 1985. It was jacked-up onto wood cribbing and then onto house-moving dollies with hand operated hydraulic jacks for the seven mile journey through Detweiller Park to the Museum, 1710 W. Woodside, Dunlap. The total cost of the move was \$17,500.

For twenty-eight years, the Peoria Regional Museum Society has faithfully maintained the “Old 886” steam locomotive and an attached coal tender at the Wheels O’ Time Museum through extensive volunteer efforts. Also on display is a Milwaukee Road combination rail car. This unique rail car, which has undergone significant restoration, is also now the property of the Peoria Historical Society.

The Historical Society has accepted both the opportunity and responsibility to work with the Wheels O’ Time Museum to ensure that these wonderful historical railroad artifacts are preserved and available to the public. Wheels O’ Time is open May 1 through October 31.



Mary Poppins Tea at P-M House

Join the Peoria Historical Society at Pettengill-Morrison House for a supercalifragilisticexpialidocious tea party June 29 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Guests will be treated to a delightful assortment of tea-time treasures as we celebrate both the 80th anniversary of P.L. Travers' classic children's book and 50th anniversary of the Disney film, Mary Poppins. There will be children's activities including movie-inspired dress-up, sidewalk chalk drawings, and even a visit from the rosy-cheeked nanny herself. Tickets are \$20/pair and \$10 for each additional guest.

Repairs Completed at P-M House

The number one maintenance objective identified at Pettengill-Morrison House was repairs to the four chimneys. Each chimney had evidence of serious deterioration of the bricks and mortar, especially at the corners of the structures. Fortunately, funds

were available in the PM House Restricted Account to pay for this repair. Historic Homes Committee Chairperson John Haverhals recommended a stone mason who specializes in repairs to historic properties and the work was completed during the month of March, shortly after the last snowfalls of the winter. All of the mortar was removed from the chimneys as well as damaged bricks. A new mortar cap was also installed on all four of the chimneys.

Flanagan Project Update

The primary maintenance objective at the Flanagan House is the installation of an air conditioning system, estimated to cost \$18,000. Unfortunately the balance of the Restricted Account for the Flanagan House is less than \$5,000, so we are asking for donations for this project during 2014. We are extremely grateful to the anonymous benefactor who generously donated the initial \$1,000 for this project. The Grant Committee is investigating possible grant sources, but many of these grants include a matching level of commitment, so private donations are critical. Please consider this project

when planning gifts to non-profit organizations this year.

Annual Meeting May 7th

Please join the Peoria Historical Society Wednesday, May 7 from 7:00-8:30 p.m. for our next Quarterly Lecture in the auditorium of the Peoria Riverfront Museum. Our guest speaker is Vicki Howell, the great-great granddaughter of Josiah Fulton, one of the seven Americans who arrived at the site of Fort Clark along the shores of Lake Pimiteoui in April, 1819. The event is free and open to the public. Free parking is available in the parking garage located under the Museum Plaza, which is accessible from Water Street.

Our annual meeting will occur after the lecture and we will vote on our officers and Board of Trustees. We will also present our Volunteer of the Year, Guardian, and Centenarian awards.

2014 Trolley Tour Schedule

Our 1 1/2 hour tours depart from either Kelleher's Irish Pub or Harp & Thistle. Tickets are \$15.00 per person. Passengers pay the CityLink driver \$1.00 upon entering the trolley or bus. Seniors 65 or older ride the trolley free with proof of age and a regular ticket purchase. Space is limited and reservations are recommended. Advanced payment is required for groups of 10 or more. Call the PHS office at 309-674-1921, Kelleher's at 673-6000, or Harp & Thistle at 688-5668 to book your tour!

Roll Out the Barrel Tour-From 1850 to Prohibition, the volume of whiskey distilled, aged, bottled and shipped made Peoria the whiskey capital. The distilleries, several large breweries, and extensive stockyards here also created the second largest grain market in the country. Travel through the earliest sections of Downtown and Peoria's Warehouse District to discover facts about distilling in Peoria.

Naughty to Nice Tour-Follow Peoria's history from the naughty—the 20's, the gambling, the gangsters—to the nice—Peoria's now FOUR All-America City awards. This trolley tour traces triumphs through time from the 1920's to the present; stories of the city's gangster era, including the site of Peoria's most notorious crime scene — The Bernie Shelton murder. Also, discover why Peoria has been honored four times with the prestigious "All-America City" award.

River City Tour-The Native Americans, the French, the whiskey and earthmoving capital of the world, the grand mansions and Grandview Drive - The River City Tour has it all. Beginning in Peoria Heights, the tour proceeds down Grandview Drive, through the Averyville area to downtown Peoria, then on to High Street and Moss Avenue, before circling back down to Glen Oak Avenue on the return to the Heights. Admire stately homes and enjoy the renowned grand view of the Illinois River.

Grandview Drive & Springdale Cemetery Tour-View the elegant homes of past and present prosperous merchants, landowners, and professionals. See the Illinois River from the best vantage point in Peoria. Then tour Springdale Cemetery, the oldest chartered cemetery in the state of Illinois. Hervey Lightner designed this 270-acre tree-studded cemetery with miles of twisting roads in 1855. You will appreciate the serene park-like setting and hear about Peoria's founding fathers and mothers. A must see!

Abraham Lincoln & the Civil War Tour-Follow Lincoln in Peoria and learn about Camp Peoria and Camp Lyon. This tour tells the story of Lincoln's visits to Peoria, the Civil War troops, and the camps where they trained. See the markers where the camps once stood. Visit Springdale Cemetery and see the final resting place of many of the Civil War veterans. The tour will pass the GAR Hall, built in 1909, and hear the story of Joseph Greenhut, a Whiskey Baron who provided much of the Hall's funding.

Haunted Peoria Tour-Explore the dark site of Peoria as we venture where strange sightings and events have been reported. Discover the stories behind the ghostly appearances that have startled and puzzled Peorians through the years. Learn about the Lady in White, the Legend of Nee-Nee-Wah, the Curse of Old Lady Gray, and more. What will you see in Haunted Peoria?

2014 Peoria History Tour Schedule					
Tour Information	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct
Thursday 10:30am Harp & Thistle	River City	Grandview Drive & Springdale Cemetery	River City	Grandview Drive & Springdale Cemetery	River City
Friday 10:30am Harp & Thistle	Grandview Drive & Springdale Cemetery	River City	Grandview Drive & Springdale Cemetery	River City	Grandview Drive & Springdale Cemetery
Saturday 10:30am Kelleher's Irish Pub	Abraham Lincoln & The Civil War	Naughty to Nice	Naughty to Nice	Abraham Lincoln & The Civil War	Haunted Peoria
Saturday 1:00pm Kelleher's Irish Pub	Naughty to Nice	Roll Out the Barrel	Roll Out the Barrel	Haunted Peoria	Haunted Peoria

The Newsletter of the
Peoria Historical Society

611 SW Washington
Peoria, Illinois 61602

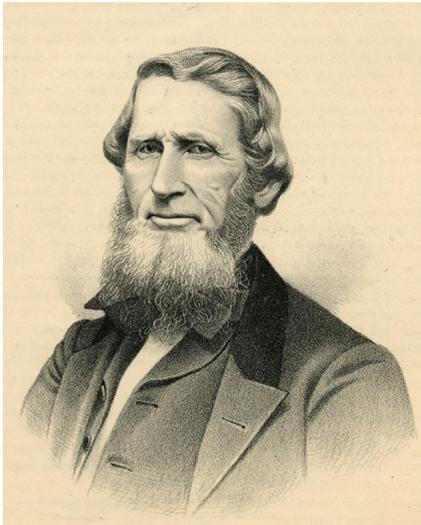
Phone: 309-674-1921
Fax: 309-674-1882
Website: <http://www.peoriahistoricalsociety.org>
And on Facebook

Non-profit Organization

U.S. Postage Paid

Permit # 745

Peoria, IL 61602



The Peoria Historical Society is proud to introduce the Charles Ballance Bequest Society in honor of the prominent early Peorian. Find his story on page 4.

T
I
M
E
L
I
N
E

