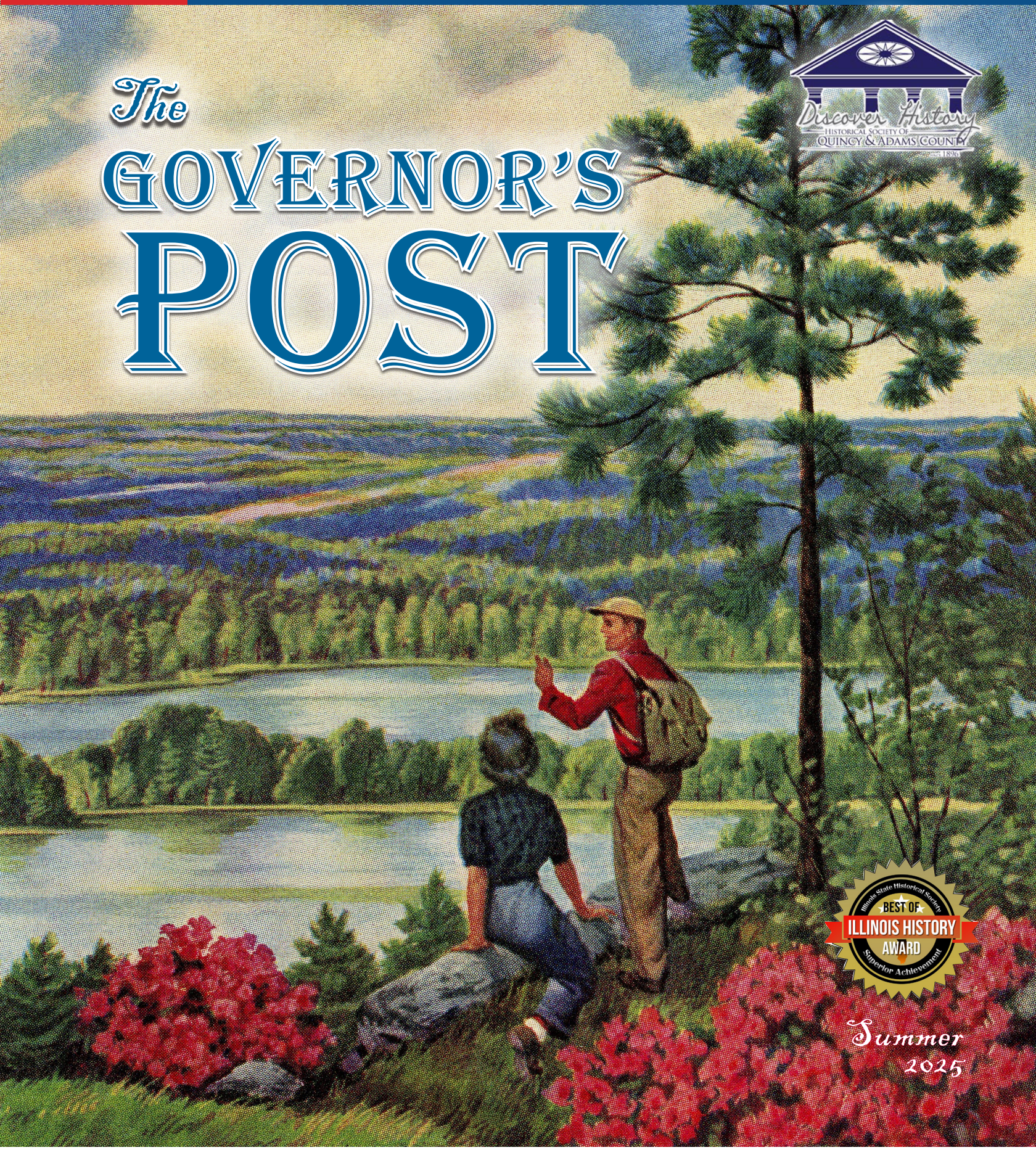


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# HISTORICAL SOCIETY

of Quincy and Adams County, Illinois, Est. 1896

## *The* GOVERNOR'S POST



Summer  
2025

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*Thanks to the support of HSQAC members like Clare Goerlich, Mary Ann Freeman, and Iris Nelson, the Society keeps moving closer to its goal of supplying the community with an ADA compliant addition for the History Museum at 332 Maine.*

## MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE

**Thank you for being a valued member of the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County, Illinois! Your support over the past year has made a tremendous difference and helped us celebrate the following milestones:**

- Receiving three 2025 “Best of History” awards from the Illinois State Historical Society.
  - Starting the expansion, elevator installation, and ground-level entrance at the History Museum.
  - Expanding our educational outreach to every school in Adams County.
  - Producing a series of videos for use in school curricula.
  - Constructing a new Meeting/Conference Room at the Visitor Center at the John Wood Mansion.
- As a member, you have played a vital role in making these accomplishments possible. We hope you have enjoyed the advantages of your membership and that you will continue to enjoy the following benefits as you renew your membership for 2025-26: Receiving our award-winning quarterly magazine *The Governor's Post* via U.S. mail; full access to our historic sites, including the Governor John Wood Mansion, the Visitor Center, and the History Museum on the Square;

a 10% discount on merchandise in our gift shop; and a discount at select Quincy restaurants. We will also continue to offer great programming throughout the year, including the Bicentennial Speaker Series, the Civil War Symposium, the extremely popular Woodland Cemetery Tours, and the Christmas Candlelight Tours. Additionally, you will have access to the Lounge at the Visitor Center, featuring a history lending library and complimentary coffee bar. Membership truly has its privileges.

Please note that your membership is set to expire on May 31, 2025, unless you joined on January 1, 2025, or later. We sincerely hope you will renew and continue to be part of another outstanding year with us.

### Renewing your membership is simple:

- Scan the QR code here or in your “Invitation to Membership” and follow the prompts. OR
- Complete and mail the “Invitation to Membership” form you will soon receive in the mail with your payment to 425 S. 12th Street, Quincy, Illinois 62301. OR
- Prefer to renew by phone? Call us at 217-222-1835.



# SOCIETY WINS THREE BEST OF ILLINOIS HISTORY AWARDS

The Governor's Post quarterly publication produced by HSQAC has been awarded the top prize in its category at the Illinois State Historical Society's (ISHS) 2025 Best of Illinois History Awards at a ceremony held in Springfield recently.

The Post was recognized for Superior Achievement for Non-Book Materials – Ongoing Periodicals. The winning piece was described as follows: "This periodical is surely the envy of historical societies and museums throughout the state as it establishes a high standard not only in production quality, but with varied and interesting content. Combining the society's news and program promotions with interesting and enlightening articles provides fresh insights into the history of Quincy and Adams County."

The Governor's Post is one of the benefits of HSQAC membership and is distributed to its members each quarter. The Post writing staff includes HSQAC Executive Director Rob Mellon; HSQAC Office Manager Susi DeClue; HSQAC Museum & Collection Manager Nancy Benz; and volunteer contributor Beth Young. Stories from the Society's column *Once Upon a Time* coordinated by Arlis Dittmer are also featured in each issue. Jenna Benz of Arts Quincy designs the piece, and Royal Printing of Quincy has printed the periodical for several years.

Two other entries from HSQAC also received high honors – Civil War Symposium V and the book, *Tales of John Wood and His Adams County*. Civil War Symposium V, recognized by several national publications and sponsored by HSQAC and Tri-States Civil War Round Table, received the Certificate of Excellence in Public Programming – Educational Program. The

event has long been recognized for offering an interesting mix of local and national presenters in various formats. Symposium Coordinators are Beth Young and Dr. Timothy Jacobs. The adjudication committee commented: "This comprehensive and informative program about Civil War military leadership, the Lincoln assassination and other topics used a variety of presentation styles, including music, to provide a strong program targeting an audience with varied interests."

*Tales of John Wood* received the Certificate of Excellence in Publications – Other. This book features selected articles pertaining to the Governor John Wood era in Adams County and was coordinated by HSQAC member Reg Ankrom. It was lauded for its entertainment value and communal approach to research with the following comments.

"This is an entertaining and informative collection of short essays by twenty-one authors about the history of Adams County from 1730 to 1896. The activity of writing these stories beginning in 2011 brought community members together to research local history, and the publication of dozens of these essays meant that the wider community could share in this knowledge."



Center, from left, former HSQAC Board member Jerry Holzgrafe and current HSQAC Board member Cecil Weathers, accept the Illinois State Historical Society's top award for the HSQAC quarterly *The Governor's Post* from Will Shannon, Incoming ISHS President, and Anne Mosley, ISHS Board member, at a ceremony held in Springfield on April 26.



Center, from left, former HSQAC Board members Rich Keppner and Beth Young accept the award for Civil War Symposium V from Will Shannon, Incoming ISHS President, and Anne Mosley, ISHS Board member, at a ceremony held in Springfield on April 26.



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# GOLFING AT QUINCY'S SOUTH PARK

## INDIAN TRAIL MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE



By: Rob Mellon

Few sports carry the rich tapestry of history associated with golf—a game that has evolved from its modest beginnings in Scotland in the 15th century to a beloved pastime across the world. Interestingly, in 1445, an edict in Scotland banned golf because it interfered with archery practice. Even with those initial restrictions, though, golf endured, gaining popularity until 1754 when the Royal and Ancient Golf Club at St. Andrews established modern rules, giving birth to the game we know today.

A stream of Scottish immigrants called the Scots-Irish came to the American colonies in the 1700s with most settling in the colonial lands of Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the Carolinas. These immigrants most likely brought the tradition of golf to the Americas. By the late 1730s, the first organized games were being played on Harleston Green near Pitt and Bull Streets in Charleston, South Carolina. The sport's popularity soared—so much so that in 1743, Charleston merchant David Deas ordered 432 golf balls and 96 clubs from Scotland. The South Carolina Golf Club formed in 1786, making it the first golf club in the United States.

By the end of the 19th century the

game of golf had spread domestically. The Amateur Golf Association of the United States was founded in New York City in December 1894. The five founding clubs were the Country Club at Brookline, Massachusetts; the Newport Country Club of Newport, Rhode Island; Shinnecock

the rich. That changed when the New York City Park Commission opened the first public golf course at Van Courtland Park in the Bronx. Unfortunately, common rules and appropriate etiquette were not routinely followed, which made for some harrowing days on the links.



*The Old Course at St. Andrews, located in Fife, Scotland, was established in 1552 and is widely regarded as the oldest golf course in the world.*

Hills Golf Club on Long Island; St. Andrews Golf Club in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York; and the Chicago Golf Club in Wheaton, Illinois. The Chicago Golf Club was the first to create an 18-hole course in 1892.

Similar to the introduction of automobiles in American society, golf was initially thought to be a pastime for only

At the turn of the century, golf courses were more like chaotic battlegrounds than serene escapes. Hackers frequently sent balls hurtling toward unsuspecting players on fairways and greens, turning every round into a high-stakes game of dodge the golf ball. Wild shouts and frantic warnings echoed across the course as golfers scrambled for cover from rogue projectiles. To add to the mayhem, pedestrians often wandered onto the fairways, sparking heated arguments—and sometimes full-blown altercations—between park-goers and golfers. The bedlam was so disruptive that it became

clear something had to change. Rules were established which were designed to bring order to the madness and restore a level of relaxation and joy to the game.

Reverend Samuel Dana of Quincy, pastor of the Congregational Church, discovered his love for the game while traveling east. Inspired by his newfound passion, he returned to the Gem City in 1896, armed

with golf clubs and balls and ready to introduce the sport to his hometown.

The first games of golf in Quincy were played on a humble cow pasture in Lawndale, an area that stretched between Maine Street and Grove Avenue, and South 20th and South 23rd Streets. This spot included what we now know as East and West Avenue, Division Street, and Prairie Avenue. Players improvised by laying out holes and sinking tin cans into the ground as makeshift cups—marking the beginning of golf in Quincy.

As the sport gained popularity, it became clear that better playing conditions were needed. This enthusiasm led to the creation of the Quincy Country Club in 1898. One of the club's first major undertakings was designing a proper golf course, setting the stage for a thriving golf community in the city.

Shortly after the Quincy Country Club unveiled its golf course, the Spring Lake Golf Course followed suit—both catering to private memberships. But as the roaring 1920s brought a surge in golf's popularity, Quincy's civic leaders saw an opportunity to make the sport accessible to everyone. Fueled by this vision, the Chamber of Commerce, in conjunction with the city's Boulevard and Park Association, worked to bring a public golf course to life.

The driving force behind this ambitious project was a dedicated committee of Chamber members: Thomas Burrows, Charles Lee Weems, J. Russell Winters, Victor Winters, and Donald Best. After careful deliberation, they selected South Park as the ideal location for Quincy's very first municipal golf course—a landmark moment that opened the fairways to players from all walks of life.

On April 8, 1922, Boy Scouts meticulously mapped out a seven-hole course at South Park using "official measurements." The course was carved out of cherry orchards and rugged terrain south of Curtis Creek. Scotty Irwin, a local golf pro and hardware store manager, designed tee locations and hole placements that challenged players while embracing the natural contours of the land. Irwin served as the first superintendent of the public course in South Park and worked as manager of the Golf Department at Tenk Hardware Store in Quincy, which carried a



*Mayor P.J. O'Brien officially inaugurated the golf course at South Park on Memorial Day, May 30, 1922. The mayor is pictured taking the ceremonial first shot on the course.*

variety of clubs, balls, and bags.

The course was nestled in the scenic southwest corner of the South Park grounds, and the links were accessed by a lane on 8th Street. Players began their journey at the first tee, strategically placed near the roadway, with the first hole plunging steeply toward the creek bottom. Though the first green was a short distance away—just over a hundred yards—it posed a thrilling challenge as it was guarded by a dense grove of trees that tested even the most skilled golfer.

From there, the second tee offered a dramatic change in elevation, starting at the creek bottom and climbing uphill to a second hole perched majestically on the heights, a few hundred yards away. The layout continued with play weaving back and forth across the terrain, leading to the 7th green near the original starting point. Later that summer, two additional holes—the 8th and 9th—were added to complete this interesting and picturesque course.

The South Park golf links were far from ideal, but they certainly did have their own unique charm. Among the many challenges were fairways overrun with wild, untamed grass, dotted with unexpected holes and gullies that turned every shot into an adventure. In regard to the greens, players could forget lush carpets of grass—the South Park greens were made of sand. In the early days of municipal golf, sand greens were often the norm. After lofting a shot onto one of

these sandy surfaces, players would use the back side of a rake and smooth out a path to the hole. To keep the sand firm and manageable, oil was mixed in, creating a quirky but practical solution that gave these courses their rugged personality.

On a sunny Memorial Day, May 30th, 1922, South Park came alive with excitement as Mayor P.J. O'Brien officially inaugurated Quincy's new golf course. The ceremony took place at the first tee, near a small shelter house, where a lively crowd had gathered. As the mayor stepped up to take the ceremonial first swing, playful heckles rippled through the spectators. Many doubted he would even make contact with the ball, but O'Brien, a passionate baseball fan, was not one to back down. With a grin, he quipped that if the golf ball were a baseball, he would know exactly what to do with it. Then, with casual confidence, he wound up for his backswing, followed through with exactness, and sent the ball soaring—landing impressively close to the sand green. The crowd erupted in cheers and laughter, their doubts replaced by admiration.

The South Park course officially debuted with an exciting first round played on the unique 7-hole layout. Charles Lee Weems stole the spotlight, delivering the best performance of the day with a score of 30, finishing 9-over par. Close behind, Chester Wilcox secured second place with a score of 35 (+14), while Thomas Burrows

claimed third at +15. Victor Winters rounded out the foursome, finishing at +17.

As the members of the inaugural group wrapped up their rounds, the course buzzed with energy as other players eagerly took to the greens, celebrating the grand opening of South Park's newest golfing gem. The day marked not just a competitive start but the beginning of many memorable moments for golfers at this short, but challenging course.

This quirky little golf course nestled in the heart of the city's southside, was where golfers armed with just three trusty clubs—a driver, a mashie-niblick (the vintage cousin of today's 7-iron), and a putter—braved what could only be described as golfing adventure. Welcome to the Indian Trail Municipal Golf Course, a place that was as beloved as it was infamous!

This was not your typical pristine course with manicured links. The course had a reputation for being, let us say, "character-building." With three of the shortest consecutive holes in the area, it was compact but packed with challenges. Remarkably, the 7th tee was on the far side of the creek. To even get there, golfers had to roll up their pant legs, kick off their shoes and socks, and wade barefoot across a shallow creek.

The course's oddities did not end there. In 1929, *The Quincy Herald-Whig* captured the spirit of this oddball venue when a local golfer joked that its nine tees were so bizarrely shaped that "Einstein alone could describe them." From dish-shaped tees to hilly contours and devilishly tricky sand greens, this course turned every round into a test of skill, patience, and creativity.

The Boulevard and Park Association worked to breathe new life into the South Park course each year. Their efforts to improve the fairways helped improve the playing experience, offering golfers flatter, more enjoyable conditions—though some of the course's notorious challenges still tested even the most seasoned players. In the early 1920s, a round of golf cost just 5 cents, a bargain that doubled to 10 cents by the end of the decade. To inspire the next generation of golfers, young enthusiasts aged 14 to 18 were welcomed to play for free, making South Park a hub for budding talent and community spirit.

In 1932, a bold redesign transformed the course into a fresh challenge for golfers, stretching across 2,034 yards of hilly and uneven terrain. The new layout brought excitement to players, starting with the first tee strategically placed at the southwest corner of the course—formerly the old number 9 tee. Meanwhile, the second tee took over the spot of the old number 5 tee, setting the stage for a dynamic reorganization of several holes. The number 9 tee was on the extreme west side, and it was common for right handed golfers to slice their ball into a cornfield.

The revamped par-32 course offered a variety of hole lengths to test players:

- Hole #1 - A solid 311 yards to open the round.
- Hole #2 - A slightly longer 319 yards to the pin.
- Hole #3 - A tricky 266-yard challenge.
- Hole #4 - A short but deceptive 149-yard shot.
- Hole #5 - A compact 130 yards that demanded precision.



*In the early days, golf courses were more like chaotic battlegrounds than serene escapes. Pedestrians often wandered onto the fairways, sparking heated arguments—and sometimes full-blown altercations.*

- Hole #6 - A mid-range 183 yards with subtle challenges.
- Hole #7 - A 234-yard stretch that required accuracy.
- Hole #8 - A scenic but challenging 224 yards.
- Hole #9 - A finishing hole of 218 yards.

The redesign proved to be a hit, and history was made just two years later in 1934, when Walter Sturhahn set the course record with an impressive score of 27—five strokes under par.

Indian Trail Municipal Golf Course developed a history of hosting prestigious city and state golf tournaments. Notably, in 1938, it served as the venue for the Illinois State Amateur Championship. The course also featured special exhibition matches, including a memorable showdown between Larry Moller of Quincy and Warren Dawson of Chicago. Moller, a two-time Illinois State Amateur Golf Champion (1934 and 1937), faced off against Dawson, who claimed the state title in both 1931 and 1932. In an exciting match that drew a large local crowd, Moller edged out Dawson.

By the late 1930s, the Indian Trail Golf Course at South Park began to lose its charm and popularity. As the years rolled into the 1940s, the course remained open, clinging to old traditions such as its annual Easter egg hunt—a nostalgic event that brought families together—but the fairways grew quieter as fewer golfers came to play.

In 1947 there was talk of closing Indian Trail and opening a modern 18-hole course that would redefine public recreation on the east side of town. Discussions about the new course's name sparked lively debates. The contenders were narrowed down to two: "Westview" and "Green Ridge." After much deliberation, "Westview" emerged victorious—a name symbolizing fresh perspectives and forward momentum.

On a crisp Saturday morning, April 30, 1949, the Westview Golf Course opened its gates to eager golfers and curious spectators alike. The air buzzed with excitement as players teed off on pristine

greens, marking the dawn of a new chapter in the town's golfing legacy. The Indian Trail Municipal Course had been outpaced by the much larger and more modern venue.

The South Park Golf Course was more than just a place to play—it was a slice of history that opened its gates in May 1949 for its final season. In 1949, the course still offered local youth an affordable place to enjoy the game at just 15 cents per round. For nearly three decades, this humble, little course served as a gathering spot for budding golfers, amateur hackers, and a few city champions. Unfortunately, when the Indian Trail Golf Course closed for the 1949 season, it never reopened.

Plans were set in motion to transform the former golf course into a vibrant youth recreation and music camp, but those plans were never fully developed. Some nostalgic golfers who once teed off on the Gem City's southside might still reminisce fondly about

wading through the creek, swinging their mashie-niblicks, and navigating the unusual sand greens attempting to sink their puts.

Westview Golf Course surpassed Indian Trail as a superior municipal course in every

way, but there is an undeniable charm in looking back at the simpler days of golf—a time when each round was an adventure and every swing carried the echoes of camaraderie, playful banter, and a little old school Calftown tradition.

## WHAT IS A MASHIE NIBLICK?

Did you know that golf once had clubs with names as peculiar as “mashie niblick”? This historic gem was not just a tongue twister—it was an extremely useful and versatile club. Perfect for tackling tricky shots like bunker escapes, delicate chips, and precise approaches to the green, the mashie niblick was a vintage golfer's trusty sidekick. Imagine wielding this handy, hickory club on the short but sneaky Indian Trail Municipal Golf Course in Quincy's South Park.

For comparison, the mashie niblick is like the great-grandparent of today's 7-iron. But don't be fooled—its design and loft varied depending on the manufacturer and era, making every mashie niblick unique. It is a little slice of golf history that reminds us how far the sport has come. Who wouldn't want to wade Curtis Creek and take a few whacks at a golf ball with a mashie-niblick?



Quincy links champion pictured with golfing legend Byron Nelson at an exhibition at the Quincy Country Club in 1948. Pictured from left to right: Dr. Leroy Wolfe, Hal Stone, Jim Frisnia, Byron Nelson, and Larry Moller. Nelson and Frisnia held off Stone and Moller. Nelson thrilled the crowd with a 65, five under par performance.

# CAMP POINT FOURTH OF JULY AND CHAUTAUQUA EVENT



By: Janet O'Leary

Bailey Park in Camp Point will be the setting for a joint celebration July 3-4, 2025. For many years, Camp Point has held traditional Fourth of July activities including a parade, music, Baby Contest, and Little Mr. and Little Miss competition. A vibrant fireworks display has concluded the evening. Those events and others will take place again this year, but in honor of the Adams County Bicentennial, a Chautauqua-style event will also take place on July 4.

The Chautauqua Assembly was held in Camp Point from 1907 until the early 1930s, and was one of many traveling tent shows popular throughout Canada and the United States during that time period. Chautauqua programs included speakers, humorists, musicians, and clergy and usually took place over several days. Camp Point was the site of one of the largest and most well-organized Chautauquas in the area.

The week-long Chautauqua was held in Camp Point's Bailey Park. Some people

rented tents and camped at the site for the entire week. A dining hall served meals three times a day. The price for a single all-day ticket was thirty-five cents, and tickets for the entire week cost \$1.50. Some of the most notable speakers through the years included William Jennings Bryan, an orator and politician, and Billy Sunday, a professional baseball player and evangelist. In addition to the speakers, popular singers and orchestras often performed. Between the morning and evening presentations there was always a ball game. Competition among teams from the area towns was always very intense. Billy Sunday was the catcher for Camp Point when he preached there in 1909 and 1921, and he was credited with helping the home team win in those years.

The 2025 Chautauqua program will host several well-known speakers and musicians. Dr. Tim Jacobs of Quincy, who spent his early life in Camp Point, will be the Master of Ceremonies for the day. He will also portray William Jennings Bryan who was the featured speaker at Camp Point's 1909 and

1921 Chautauqua programs.

Dr. Curt Fields, Jr. will portray General Ulysses S. Grant. Dr. Fields is a native of Tennessee and has had a long career in education and law enforcement. He is also a lifelong student of the Civil War and bears a striking resemblance to U.S. Grant. Dr. Fields travels extensively and portrays both General Grant and President Grant in first person, while dressed in elaborate and accurate costumes. His topic will be "General Grant's Travels through Illinois at the Beginning of the Civil War."

Timothy Good of Springfield will also be present. He is an author and former National Park Service employee who recently retired as the Superintendent of the Lincoln Home in Springfield. He is a noted Abraham Lincoln historian who has written several books about the former president. He will discuss his popular book about Lincoln's Assassination on July 4.

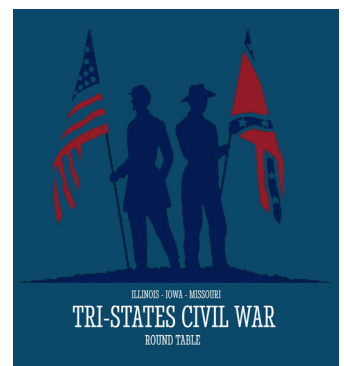
Two musical groups will represent the style of music that was common in

## TRI-STATES CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE LOOKING FOR NEW MEMBERS

Interested in the Civil War? Quincy is the home of the Tri-States Civil War Round Table. The group meets on the third Tuesday, August through May, in Room D022 at John Wood Community College at 7:00 pm. Each meeting features a specific topic, and programs are given by local experts as well as visiting scholars. Recent programs have dealt with Quincy's Woodruff cannon, the life of Illinois General/Governor John Palmer, and William Walker's antebellum warfare in Nicaragua.

Dr. Timothy Jacobs is Commander of the organization. Other officers include Rodney Farr, Treasurer, and Roger Leach, Secretary. Fred Anastas is Technical Advisor, and Beth Young is Trivia Specialist.

New members are welcome and are asked to pay dues of \$20 per year. If interested, please attend a meeting or call the Historical Society at 217-222-1835.





Large crowds enjoyed the Chautauqua activities.



William Jennings Bryan (center) also spoke at the Chautauqua in 1921.

Chautauqua programs. Mike Anderson of Jacksonville is a musician, singer, storyteller, writer, author, workshop leader, and educator. One of the most versatile folk entertainers in the Midwest, he will present a program with the mountain dulcimer.

The Pike Pipers consists of four women from Pike County who have formed a recorder ensemble. They play a variety of music and travel throughout the area to entertain but also to educate others about the versatile recorder. Their group uses several types of recorders to offer a unique and pleasant sound.

In 1855, four men combined their properties to develop the town of Camp Point, and several local speakers will represent those founders on July 4: Thomas Bailey was a renowned businessman who donated much of the land now called

Bailey Park; Benjamin Booth was the first blacksmith in the Camp Point area; William Farlow was a farmer and livestock dealer; and Peter B. Garrett built the first house in Camp Point – and it is still a family home.

There will also be historic displays and items of interest at Bailey Park. Dean Huber will share pictures of former Camp Point homes and businesses. Many of those buildings were designed and built by his ancestor, Lambert Huber. Steve Louderback will demonstrate a broom making machine that was originally used by his grandfather.

Everyone is invited to attend this special celebration in Camp Point's Bailey Park on July 3-4.



William Jennings Bryan speaking to the Camp Point Chautauqua in 1909.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF QUINCY AND ADAMS COUNTY

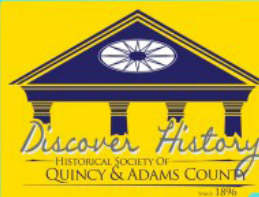


# ANNUAL MEETING

*History Museum on the Square*

STAINED GLASS GALLEY  
332 MAINE STREET QUINCY, IL 62301

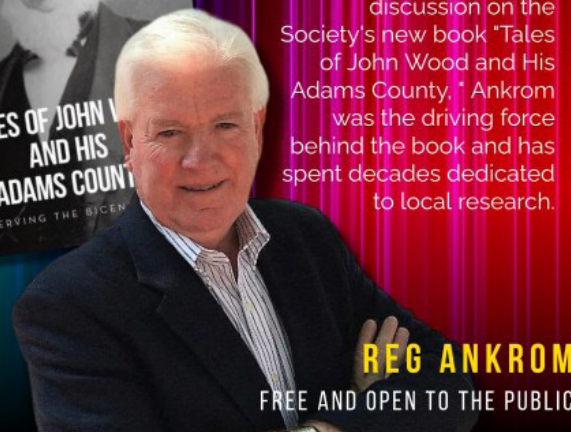
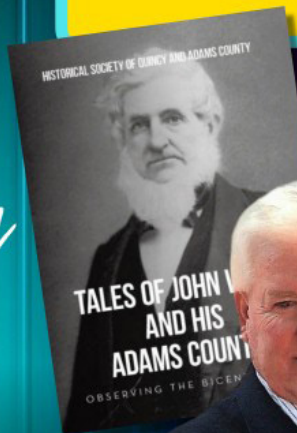
MUSEUM CONSTRUCTION UPDATE AND TOUR AT 1:30 PM



**SUNDAY  
JUNE 22**

**ANNUAL MEETING 1PM  
BUILDING TOUR 1:30PM**

**PROGRAM 2PM**



Reg Ankrom will present a program on early Adams County history, including a discussion on the Society's new book "Tales of John Wood and His Adams County." Ankrom was the driving force behind the book and has spent decades dedicated to local research.

**REG ANKROM**

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

# FROM THE COLLECTION

## Quincy Excelsior Stove Manufacturing Company

At first glance, this miniature furnace might seem like just a quirky toy or decorative piece. However, it played a crucial role in the history of sales and heating technology. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, salesmen used these detailed scale models to showcase full-sized furnaces. Since real furnaces were too large, heavy, and expensive to transport, these miniature versions served as effective sales tools.

As coal- and wood-burning heating systems gained popularity in American homes and businesses, furnace companies faced a challenge: how could they convince customers to invest in a product they couldn't see in operation? Their innovative solution was to create fully functional miniature models—crafted from cast iron and scaled to about a quarter of the size of the real units. These models featured operable dampers, ash pans, vents, and doors, with many capable of burning a small fire to demonstrate airflow and efficiency. Equipped with engaging marketing language and a working product, salesmen could vividly illustrate the benefits of their full-sized furnaces.

This practice was part of a broader trend. Stove manufacturers had long produced scaled-down kitchen stoves for sales demonstrations and displays at fairs and stores. Like these stove models, furnace miniatures often featured ornate cast iron designs, providing a tactile and impressive way for customers to see the craftsmanship and branding details up close.

Our example, made by Quincy's Excelsior Stove Manufacturing Company, exemplifies this tradition but is distinguished by its focus on both residential and commercial heating. Likely, it traveled with a salesman across sales territories, combining technical explanation with theatrical fire demonstrations to captivate potential buyers. Rarely do these pieces survive, as many were worn out, repurposed, or discarded with technological advances. Ours remains a remarkable artifact, offering a tangible glimpse into local industrial history and the art of salesmanship in a bygone era.

The Excelsior Stove and Manufacturing Co. was founded in



*Working scale model of a furnace from Quincy's Excelsior Stove Manufacturing Company, likely used as a salesman's sample.*

Quincy in 1865 by John Christopher Fisher Jr., Samuel Wood, and Joseph Easterly. The Fisher family had immigrated from Hanover, Germany, around 1855. By 1880, the company was producing ornate nickel-plated coal and wood ranges that served both as cooking appliances and sources of home heat. Advertisements featured trade cards that promoted both the company and its elegant products.

Founder John Fisher Jr., likely a molder by trade, initially worked at the Phoenix Foundry. His son, John J., born in Quincy in 1867, became company president by 1919. Multiple family members contributed to the firm's growth, helping to distribute its products around the world. One of Excelsior's catalogs proudly displayed its "Highest Award Gold Medal" designation. The company's stoves, such as the award-winning Hotel National Double Oven Steel Range, were engineered for durability and flexibility, able to burn coal or wood. This high-end model sold for \$240, with optional accessories adding \$14.25 to \$29.00.

By 1908, Excelsior claimed to be the largest stove plant in the West, headquartered at 510–618 S. Front St. in Quincy, with branches in Oklahoma City and St. Paul, Minnesota.



*Several horse-drawn wagons pause in front of Excelsior Stove and Manufacturing Company, 510 South Front St., Quincy, with a shipment of stoves destined for Korea.*

# HSQAC, U OF I EXTENSION OFFER JDUB CLASS THIS SUMMER

As many of our readers and members know, the HSQAC frequently combines forces with other organizations to present quality programming that each involved group could not do alone. Such is the case for a program to be held this June, from the 9th through the 12th. In conjunction with the University of Illinois Extension Service and John Wood Community College, the Historical Society is offering a program involving the Underground Railroad, Nature, and Harriett Tubman. The activity – Hidden Trails: Nature’s Role in the Underground Railroad - will be offered as a class in JWCC’s JDUB Academy and is designed for upper elementary aged children, grades 4 – 6. The course will be limited to 15 students, each of whom needs to be registered as a participant in the JDUB Academy.

The class will meet at JWCC each of the five mornings involved, and participants will be transported to various other sites for coursework. On day one, class members will visit the Historical Society’s History Museum on the Square, the Underground Railroad Museum (The Eells House), the Lincoln Douglas Debate Museum, and the Loredo Taft Debate Sculpture in Washington Park. Day two finds the group heading to Bob

Bangert Park to study geography and map reading, wetland dip netting, and basic naturalist skills. On to the Historical Society’s Visitors Center on Wednesday, day three, where students will hear a brief lecture about Harriett Tubman and will be introduced to historical research skills. The youngsters will actually handle and transcribe diary material from the mid-nineteenth century and examine nature artifacts from that period. It’s back outdoors on day four, with the group traveling along the JWCC Trails on campus. Sun and star navigation, moss growth, camouflage, and tree dating are among the skills which will be taught. On day five the group travels to the New Philadelphia National Park site near Barry, Illinois, where the students will hear about Free Frank and participate in some Prairie activities. Transportation will be provided.

The goal of this class is to teach basic information about the Underground Railroad and connect this history to nature and life skills that were used by many of the slaves who escaped to freedom. Course instructors include Amy Lefringhouse of the University of Illinois Extension and HSQAC staff and volunteers Rob Mellon, Beth Young, Iris Nelson, Dr. Patrick Hotel, and Lynn Snyder.



The poster features a large, detailed sculpture of Abraham Lincoln's head and hand holding a scroll. The background is dark with faint silhouettes of people. At the top left is the "200 ADAMS COUNTY, ILLINOIS BICENTENNIAL • EST. 1825" logo. To its right, it says "SPONSORED BY JWCC AND THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF QUINCY & ADAMS COUNTY". On the right side, there is a list of adjectives: "DESPOt ★ LEADER ★ TYRANT ★ EMANCIPATOR ★ BUTCHER ★ SAVIOR". Below this is a stylized eagle logo and the text "was Lincoln a Dictator?". The word "Dictator?" is in large white letters, and "Debate" is in large gold letters below it. Underneath "Debate" is the Latin phrase "sic semper tyrannis". At the bottom, there is a banner that says "WHEELER VS BELKO" with stars on either side. Below the banner are two men, Wheeler and Belko, in suits. At the bottom left are logos for Discover History and John Wood Community College.

**Wednesday, July 9, 2025 - 6:30 pm**  
**Mary Ellen Orr Auditorium**  
**John Wood Community College**  
**1301 S. 48th Street, Quincy, Illinois**



*The Governor's Post will begin running a new series of stories about HSQAC members and their travels.*

## DEMPSEYS TRAVEL EAST THIS TIME

*By: Terrell Dempsey*

Vicki and I have long centered our vacations around history. She is highly skilled in planning our excursions and books us into particularly interesting Airbnbs whenever there is an opportunity. For years we focused our attention on foreign travels, exploring most of the major sites of western civilization as well as the Maya, Aztec, Inca and lesser-known North and South American cultures. But a few years ago, we realized that there was much of the U.S. we had not explored. There were museums of interest to us from our work in slave history, underground railroad activity, and historic preservation.

Then there is family history. I am interested in visiting places where our ancestors lived, loved, and fought. Vicki's family almost all first set foot on American soil in St. Louis in the 19th Century. Other than Redbud, Illinois and Herman, Missouri. Her German Lutheran ancestors have passed their lives within sight of today's Arch. But my ancestors arrived in the 1600s on the east coast. A few years ago, we explored the Hudson River Valley where part of my mother's family arrived in 1642 and established what is now the town of Kingston, New York after serving a seven-year term indentured to the Dutch West Indies Company. So, this year we decided to make a road trip east to lay to rest some Confederate ghosts in the Dempsey family, go to important museums and historic sites we had not visited, and honor some local Black troops on their Civil War journey.



*Vicki and Terrell Dempsey*

We stopped the first night in Cincinnati where we toured the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center. The Freedom Center was rather disappointing because it said nothing about the work of Dr. Eells and the underground railroad developed by the Illinois State Anti-Slavery Society under his guidance. Exhibits merely spoke of Ohio abolitionists and the familiar Harriett Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and William Lloyd Garrison. There was



*Terrell and Vicki Dempsey took a road trip east, which included Washington's Headquarters in Cumberland, Maryland - built between 1754-58 for Washington's use during his service in the French and Indian War.*

nothing about how the radicals at the Mission Institute started the URR in Illinois, nor how they provoked Missouri so badly that Missouri politicians stacked the state supreme court and changed the law regarding slaves taken to live in free territory. This change brought about the Dred Scott Case that ultimately resulted in the Civil War.

After touring the Harriet Beecher Stowe house on the old campus of Lane Seminary, we went on to Pennsylvania. We toured Frank Lloyd Wright's Falling Water and Kentuck Knob. Nearby was Ft. Necessity where George Washington started the French and Indian War. A day trip to Pittsburgh and a ride up the incline to the top of Mt. Washington allowed us to see the fork where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rives join to form the Ohio.

Winding through the beautiful hills of Pennsylvania and Maryland took us to the Antietam Battlefield. We spent three nights in an 1840s log house in Sharpsburg. Surgeons cared for wounded and dying Confederate and Union soldiers in the house as they did in all the structures for miles around. A week-and-a-half after the battle the little 9-year-old girl who lived in the house died, probably from the incredible pollution in the area following the battle. Thousands of men and animals were buried in shallow graves throughout the area. The Union Army stayed for six weeks with latrines spread across the area. Each of the thousands of horses produced about twenty-five pounds of manure a day. Surgeons piled amputated arms and legs outside buildings and tents. They drained infections and dumped the fluid on the ground. The ground water – everyone drank from shallow wells – was terrible. The entire region stank.

On the battlefield I visited the Sunken Lane where my Great-great-grandfather Dempsey fought with the 19th Mississippi. The next day we strolled around Harper's Ferry. The engine house were



*The 29th U.S. Colored Infantry Regiment, formed in Quincy in 1864, played a significant role in the Battle of the Crater.*



*Dempsey and General Grant, living historian Curt Fields, who has visited Quincy several times as both President and General Grant.*

John Brown was captured was a place of quiet reflection on how the final act of the abolitionist movement presaged the coming of the bloody civil war. It was also in the beautiful little town that another ancestor, Presley Horton of the 13th Mississippi had served under Stonewall Jackson when the southerners seized the town and bagged 12,000 prisoners.

We rendezvoused with our older daughter in Washington, D.C. and enjoyed touring the National Portrait Gallery, the National Museum of African American History and Culture, and the National Museum of the American Indian. We stayed in an apartment in a 19th Century row house. It was nice to be in a city for three nights so we could enjoy fine dining. We took advantage of the opportunity to eat Laotian and Cuban food. Next, we headed south.

We stopped in Richmond for a quick tour of the Confederate White House, then headed to Petersburg for an emotional visit. My five-times Great-grandfather Dempsey was called up by the Petersburg Militia during the American Revolution. He marched off with Gen. Horatio Gates and was captured by the British after the Battle of Camden in 1780. After he was exchanged, he fought with Francis Marion in the Carolinas.

Petersburg was also where Grant had Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia bottled up in 1864 and 1865 in a vast network of muddy trenches and bombproofs. We visited a poignant place -- the remnant of the Crater where the soldiers of the 29th U.S. Colored Infantry were decimated in a vain attempt to breach the southern lines after Union troops tunneled under Confederate lines and exploded 8,000 pounds of gunpowder. The first one hundred soldiers of the 29th USCI, the only Black regiment that Governors Yates and Oglesby allowed to be organized in Illinois, were enrolled in Quincy.



*The Engine House at Harper's Ferry site where John Brown was captured.*

The men of the 29th suffered greatly. General Burnside made no effort to follow up on the stunning blast. Grant fired Burnside for his negligence. The soldiers who went into the Crater were soon surrounded. Confederates butchered Black soldiers rather than allow them to surrender. According to the film at the National Park office, Union soldiers who were surrounded with the 29th joined in the killing. It was a shameful moment in our history. I was happy that neither John C. Dempsey, nor Presley Horton were anywhere near the Crater – though I'm sure they would not have behaved any differently. It was a sobering day. Thinking of the poor men who had endured slavery in Missouri who came to such a vicious, merciless death gave me pause.

At sundown we visited Ft. Whitworth where John C. Dempsey was one of the fifty men who survived out of three hundred assigned the ugly job of holding off the Union Army while Lee and the rest of the Army fled Petersburg. I thought of my father's combat experiences and survivor's guilt he experienced. I wonder how John's experiences echoed down the generations of my family.

The next day we went to Appomattox where the celebration of the 160th Anniversary of the surrender was taking place. We were delighted to learn Curt Fields was there as General Grant. He stayed with us on two of his visits to Quincy. He told us he is looking forward to returning in 2026.

Vicki and I were happy to learn that the 29th USCI was present at Appomattox when the surrender occurred. It must have taken a lot of self-control to not seek revenge on the vanquished rebels for the outrages of the Crater, but the Black troops harmed no one. Like everyone else, they were glad the killing and dying were over.

On our return trip home we stopped at Lexington, Virginia. We toured Stonewall Jackson's House, the Chapel of Washington and Lee University with Robert E. Lee's tomb, stood at the grave of Lee's horse, Traveler, then ended the trip at the Virginia Military Institute. I do not hold either Jackson or Lee in high regard. Jackson was an efficient dealer in death. Robert E. Lee must have known the war was lost after Gettysburg. The Emancipation Proclamation had laid to rest any hope of European recognition for the Confederacy and the numbers said it all. The Union Army grew and grew. Two Hundred Thousand Black troops were enlisted in the last eighteen months of the war. There were few southern replacements.

We drove through the mountains of West Virginia and Kentucky on the way home. We chatted about things we had seen and the beauty of the country. The best part of every trip is coming back to home and friends in Quincy and Adams County. We are unmatched for beauty and history. But in a month or two, Vicki will ask, "Where do you want to go next?"



*The Forest Home Hotel at Siloam Springs in 1913. The transport carried guests from the Wabash Depot in Clayton, Illinois, to the famed Forest Hotel in the secluded community of Siloam, located in a little valley in Buckhorn Township.*

# THE FOREST HOTEL: A SILOAM TREAT

*By: Linda Riggs Mayfield*

In the late 19th and early 20th century, one highly specialized hotel in Adams County attracted hundreds of visitors each year, not only from neighboring counties, but from other states and even Europe.

Its annual opening for the May-to-October season was a newsworthy event. The famed destination was the Forest Hotel in the secluded community of Siloam, located in a little valley in Buckhorn Township, about 30 miles east of Quincy. (Some handwritten notes spell “Forest” with two Rs, but official documents have only one. One early article called it the “Forest Home Hotel,” but that name appeared nowhere else.) The hotel and the community that grew up around it were focused on one attraction: the many mineral springs in the valley.

Mineral springs were valuable. The painkiller aspirin was not patented until 1899, and the patent for it was held in Germany until after World War I. Until then, Americans who had aches and pains

turned to natural remedies, and the waters from mineral springs were highly prized and advertised for their curative effects. Mineral springs supported hotels and resorts in many states.

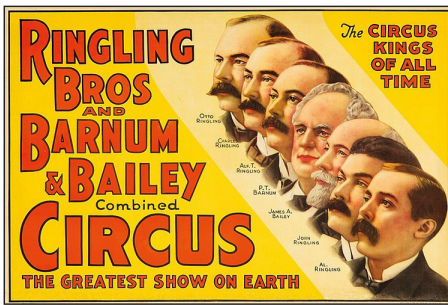
George “Mohawk” Myers first acquired the tract with the springs on it when the government released the area as bounty land in 1852, then it was sold several times. Rev. Reuben K. McCoy, a Presbyterian pastor from Clayton, is credited with discovering and naming the springs sometime after the Civil War: Siloam was the name of the pool to which Jesus sent the blind man he healed in John 9:7. In 1881, Quincy Burgesser, a Clayton businessman, owned the land. Burgesser had the spring waters analyzed and found them to have “more strength than the water from the famous Eureka Springs,” due to the high magnesia, iron, and sulfur content.

Seizing the business opportunity, Burgesser began building a resort hotel on his land in 1882 and organized the Siloam Springs Company in 1883 to support and

operate it. So many reservations were made before it was even completed that the plan was enlarged, and the resort opened with a 40-room hotel, a two-story bath house, and spring houses. The beautiful L-shaped hotel had balconies, a ballroom, and full kitchen facilities. There were tennis courts and croquet grounds. The three-day grand opening in May, 1887 attracted guests from as far as Colorado.

The little village of Siloam grew around the hotel — homes, school, post office, liveries, stores, a 200-foot swimming pool. Local guests arrived by road and those from farther away came by transportation provided from the Wabash railroad station at Clayton. An 1895 advertisement in *The Siloam Herald*, stated: “All persons desiring to come to Siloam from Baylis on the Wabash route will find first class livery rigs at cheap rates at Haines and Co’s livery stable.” Business thrived.

The original owner of the springs, George Myers, lived to be 102, and his longevity was credited to drinking the spring water. In the



The guest books from the Forest Hotel for 1886-95 and 1909-14 are archived at the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County and include signatures of world-famous guests. C. E. Ringling, renowned circus owner, registered Oct. 23, 1887. P. T. Barnum stayed there July 24, 1888.

1890s, J. B. House, a Siloam entrepreneur, sold the water and shipped it by rail all over the country at \$3/barrel, or \$2 more if he had to provide the barrel. Hotel guests could arrange to have the Siloam waters at home.

The Mount Sterling *Democrat Message* reported on June 18, 1909, that the new hotel manager, C. S. Johnson, had refurbished the hotel prior to the season opening, adding “new toilet rooms by (sic) both ladies and gentlemen,” 37 new rugs, 205 yards of new carpet, and 60 yards of linoleum, as well as new wallpaper and paint, 16 rocking chairs, and a piano in the parlor. He also added running water from a system run by a gasoline engine. Outside, he installed 930 feet of concrete sidewalks and 700 feet of boardwalks, a 1,000-foot lake with an island and a beach, and dressing rooms.

The guest books from the Forest Hotel for 1886-95 and 1909-14 are archived at the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County and include signatures of world-famous guests. C. E. Ringling, renowned circus owner, registered Oct. 23, 1887. P. T. Barnum stayed there July 24, 1888. (The column in which the innkeeper checked whether the guest had arrived by auto or horse was left blank.) E. I. DuPont registered July 27, 1888, listing his home as Paris, France.

The number of guests fluctuated greatly over the following years, but Adams, Pike, and Brown County citizens supported the hotel. Baseball teams stayed there. Ladies from Quincy hired drivers to take them and their children to Siloam for day trips and overnight outings. Young people from Beverly, where their strict Methodist parents had prohibited dancing, came to the ballroom at the Forest Hotel on



*Siloam Springs State Park, Clayton, Illinois, today.*



*Fishermen congregating on the 68-acre Crab Apple Lake at Siloam Springs.*

Saturday nights. In 1894, the Quincy Glee Club sang there; in 1888, the Fishhook Band performed.

The hotel was closed from 1912 to 1915, then Johnson resumed managing it, and July 15, 1924, he purchased it from the Siloam Springs Company. But the era of springs resorts was ending, and there was no way to revive the business. A decade later, J. S. Harwood bought the hotel at a tax sale and renovated it again, but he was only able to keep it open two seasons, then he sold it to the newly formed Siloam Recreation Club. The club intended to restore it and develop the area for recreation, and local citizens raised money to match the state’s contribution toward that goal. The hotel was remodeled in 1937, and the roads were graveled. But by 1940, the Club had negotiated to turn the entire Siloam valley into a state recreation area. The state opted not to restore or maintain the structures.

The last buildings were sold at auction by the state on Nov. 20, 1943, and dismantled for lumber. Cecil Noftz of Golden bought the hotel for \$1,200. A news article that reported the day’s events speculated that there was enough wood in the hotel to build five modest houses. Today only the hewn stone foundation of the hotel remains, and most of the remnants of the town have been gone for almost 70 years.

The beautiful, steep-sided valley that used to be the location of the Forest Hotel and the town of Siloam is now part of the Siloam Springs State Park. Visitors who know where to look can find the sidewalks and foundation stones of the grandest building of them all, and on the west side of the road that forms a one-mile loop through the valley, there is a modest historical marker that simply states that the spot was the location of the Forest Hotel.



# Visitors Center



The needs of the community have generated renewed interest in using the Society's spaces for professional meetings and family gatherings. Two rooms in the Society's Visitors Center at 425 South 12th have been recently upgraded and can now be used by the public -- the Lounge, remodeled in 2021, and the meeting- room- turned- conference room which was updated this past March. This campus is also the home of the elegant, Greek Revival style Governor John Wood Mansion. The Mansion grounds and Mansion proper may also be rented by the public and are particularly appropriate for special occasions and intimate gatherings.

The Visitors Center Lounge is the perfect place for meetings and gatherings of around 25 people. Amenities include a coffee bar which can double as a catering prep area; a conference table which seats 8; and a cozy fireplace area outfitted with comfortable sofa and chairs. An antique fireplace mantel salvaged from the home of William Berry has been installed on the north wall of the room and enhanced with an electric insert. Other features include reclaimed barn wood on the floors, a marble tile fireplace hearth, and black granite countertops on the coffee bar.

A mural spanning the south wall of the room depicts Governor John Wood in battle, and custom bookcases made of walnut house a lending library where patrons can select history-themed books to read and then return. Another popular feature is the wooden ceiling fan with blades that mimic a windmill. The numerous vintage elements in the room not only catch the eye but are also a constant reminder of the importance of history.

The newest renovated area in the Visitors Center is the conference room or what was previously known simply as the "meeting room." While serviceable, it did not have professional quality furniture or the connectivity for Wi-Fi or online virtual meetings so important to today's organizations. Also, the tiny kitchenette and dorm-size fridge were no longer very useful for the type of events the Society now hosts.

Following the renovation, the room is drop dead gorgeous. Sporting a color scheme of varying shades of gray, the space is now highlighted by custom work, such as elegant raised wall panels and chair rails; a fireplace with vintage mantel and faux stained glass window; new floor covering; new window blinds; and a conference table surrounded by cushioned chairs. Connectivity outlets are housed in the table, and a large flat screen television has been mounted on the wall. The kitchen area boasts a full-sized refrigerator with beverage and ice dispenser; a microwave; new cabinetry; and an island with storage and seating for four. Stunning quartz countertops and fireplace hearth tie the room together, while a brown sofa adds contrast and visual interest.

No Society funds were used for the renovation of either room; the projects were paid for by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous.



The Governor John Wood Mansion features many original John Wood family and period furnishings. This historically significant home was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1970, and in celebration of the 2018 Illinois Bicentennial, the John Wood Mansion was selected as one of the Illinois 200 Great Places by the American Institute of Architects-Illinois. The 14-room home is a wonderful place for dinners and receptions and is also available for tours. The beautifully manicured Mansion grounds, replete with a variety of native trees and period appropriate plants and flowers, are well suited for weddings and receptions, community events and picnics for up to 200 guests.

The Society has a new policy for Visitors Center room rentals for non-profit organizations: Non-profits may use the lounge or the conference room free of charge during the day when the Society is open (Monday-Friday, between 9 am and 4 pm); however, the activity must be scheduled with the HSQAC Office in advance. The rooms may also be used when the building is closed, but a minimal fee or donation will be necessary, because the Society must compensate the staff who open and close the facility.

The standard cost of using the Mansion or the grounds is \$200 for 3 hours. Other fees apply for additional hours of usage. A deposit and Facility Use License agreement are also required.



*Governor  
John Wood Mansion*



The “Honeymoon Express” located on the grounds just north of the Quincy Country Club Golf Course near 26th and State Streets in 1919. The crew offered five- and-ten minute rides for \$10.

## THE “HONEYMOON EXPRESS” ARRIVED IN QUINCY IN 1919 TO THE DELIGHT OF THOUSANDS

By: Rob Mellon

The barnstorming period of the 1920s was an era of thrilling aerial entertainment where stunt pilots, often using surplus World War I planes, performed daring aerobatic feats and offered airplane rides in rural areas, introducing aviation to many Americans devoid of any formal regulations.

On a pleasant September morning in 1919, Lieutenant Samuel “Sammy” Pickard, a daring World War I pilot with a penchant for adventure, soared through the skies in his trusty biplane, the “Honeymoon Express.” The small aircraft, its wings glinting in the sunlight, carried not just the weight of its pilot but also the promise of thrilling joy rides for eager onlookers below. Pickard’s destination that day was Quincy, where he hoped to captivate paying customers with the sheer exhilaration of flight—a novelty that still felt like magic in the early 20th century.

The journey was not without its challenges. After an unsuccessful attempt to land in Hannibal early that morning—perhaps due to tricky winds or an unyielding terrain—Pickard was forced to divert his course. Undeterred, he charted a path to

Monroe City before finally setting his sights on Quincy. By the time he arrived in the afternoon, the buzz of his engine had drawn curious spectators to the landing site just north of the Quincy Country Club Golf Course near 26th and State Streets.

As the bright red “Honeymoon Express” descended gracefully onto the grassy expanse, a crowd gathered, their faces filled with wonder. For many, this was their first glimpse of an airplane up close—a marvel of human ingenuity that had only recently proven its mettle in the Great War. Pickard’s arrival was not just a spectacle; it was a moment that bridged the past and future, offering a taste of the boundless possibilities that lay ahead in aviation.

Lieutenant Pickard’s flying career during the First World War was extraordinary. After enlisting in the Army Air Service, he trained with the Royal Flying Corps in Toronto. From being a University of Kansas student just a few years before he became a decorated aviator, he proudly wore a chevron earned during his two years of service in the skies over the Argonne area in France. With nerves of steel and unmatched skill, he

brought down three enemy planes in fierce aerial combat. Yet, his bravery came at a cost. Twice, the planes he piloted were struck down in fiery engagements.

One harrowing moment stands out: soaring at over 2,000 feet, his aircraft was hit by enemy fire just 11 days before the Armistice ended the war. With smoke billowing and controls failing, Pickard made a bold crash landing that left him seriously injured. For seven months, he lay in a French hospital, battling to recover from his wounds. After the war, he returned to his hometown of Kansas City, where he channeled his passion for aviation into a new chapter as part of the Lafayette Airplane Company.

In the early 20th century, filled with a barnstorming spirit Pickard offered thrilling five- and ten-minute flights for just \$10 (equivalent to nearly \$200 today). The scene near the Quincy Country Club was electric, with crowds gathering to witness this marvel of aviation. A few dozen adventurous souls seized the opportunity to take to the skies, experiencing the exhilaration of flight for the first time.

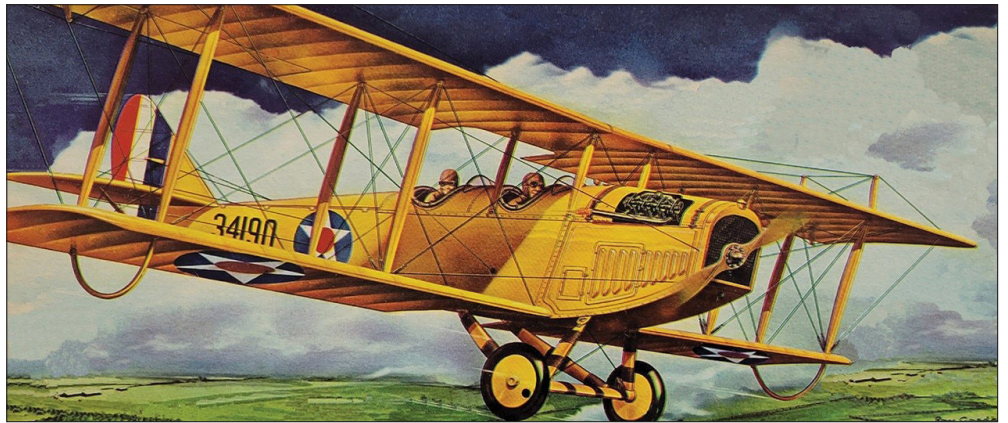
The pilot and crew were so inundated with eager passengers that they worked tirelessly, skipping dinner to keep up with demand. Men, women, boys, and girls alike lined up for their turn, their faces alight with anticipation. The joyrides continued into the early evening until an unexpected flat tire brought the day's flights to a halt.

Undeterred, Pickard resumed operations the next morning, offering a few more flights before the "Honeymoon Express" soared off to its next destination—Palmyra, Missouri. Plans were already set for its triumphant return the following weekend, leaving behind a community buzzing with stories of their airborne adventures.

The "Honeymoon Express" earned its whimsical name in celebration of Samuel Pickard and Francke Palmer's daring decision to tie the knot in mid-air after a whirlwind five-day romance. It was a marriage ceremony unlike any other. However, this airborne wedding was not without its challenges. First, they needed a minister bold enough to perform the ceremony at 3,000 feet. As if that were not tricky enough, there was one unusual requirement: the preacher had to weigh under 200 pounds due to the plane's weight restrictions. The only willing minister tipped the scales at 207 pounds, leaving everyone wondering if love could overcome gravity itself.

In true romantic fashion, the group decided to go for it anyway. With hearts racing and wings trembling, the ceremony took place high above the earth. The plane initially struggled to take off—perhaps weighed down by both the preacher and the sheer excitement of the moment, but it eventually soared into the cloud-filled sky. Just days after exchanging vows, the newlyweds took to the skies over Quincy in a Curtiss JN-4 biplane, proving that love truly knows no bounds—or altitude.

The Curtiss JN-4, commonly known as the "Jenny," was a two-seat biplane designed as a training aircraft during World War I. Introduced in 1916, it featured a 90-horsepower Curtiss engine, dual controls for instructor and student, and a wooden airframe covered with fabric. The Jenny became the primary trainer for the U.S. Army Air Service, with an estimated 95% of American pilots during the war trained on this aircraft.



*The Curtiss JN-4, commonly known as the "Jenny," was a two-seat biplane designed as a training aircraft during World War I.*

After the war, surplus Jennys were widely used in civilian aviation, particularly during the barnstorming era of the 1920s, making it one of the most iconic airplanes in early American aviation history. Variants like the JN-4 (Canadian), or "Canuck," were produced for the Royal Flying Corps and featured design modifications such as lighter airframes and different control systems. The "Honeymoon Express" was a JN-4 Canuck.

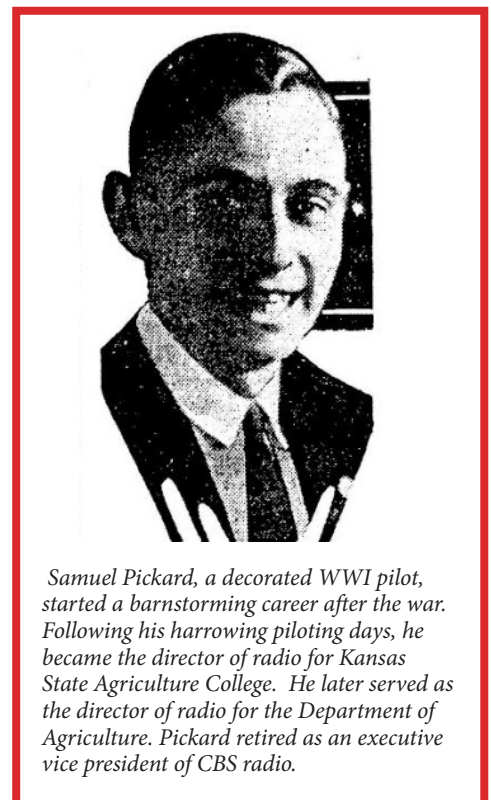
The excitement in Quincy reached its peak on Saturday, September 6, 1919, as the plane returned from a thrilling three-day adventure in Palmyra. Though no flights took off that Saturday, the air buzzed with anticipation for Sunday's joy rides. By the time the sun rose, over 5,000 eager spectators had gathered at the field just north of the Country Club, their eyes fixed on the skies. The short flights offered a taste of freedom and exhilaration—until an unexpected accident brought the Quincy flights to a sudden end.

Just as the crew prepared for another thrilling day of spectator rides, W.A. Thorpe, the dedicated mechanic for the "Honeymoon Express," stepped forward to ready the plane for its next flight. He reached for the propeller to kickstart the engine, but in an instant, disaster struck. As Thorpe reached to pull down on the propeller, the engine roared to life unexpectedly. The powerful blades struck him in both his arm and leg, sending him tumbling to the ground injured badly.

Gasps rippled through the crowd as spectators watched in dismay. Fortunately, fate intervened in the form of Dr. F.T. Brenner, a local physician who happened to

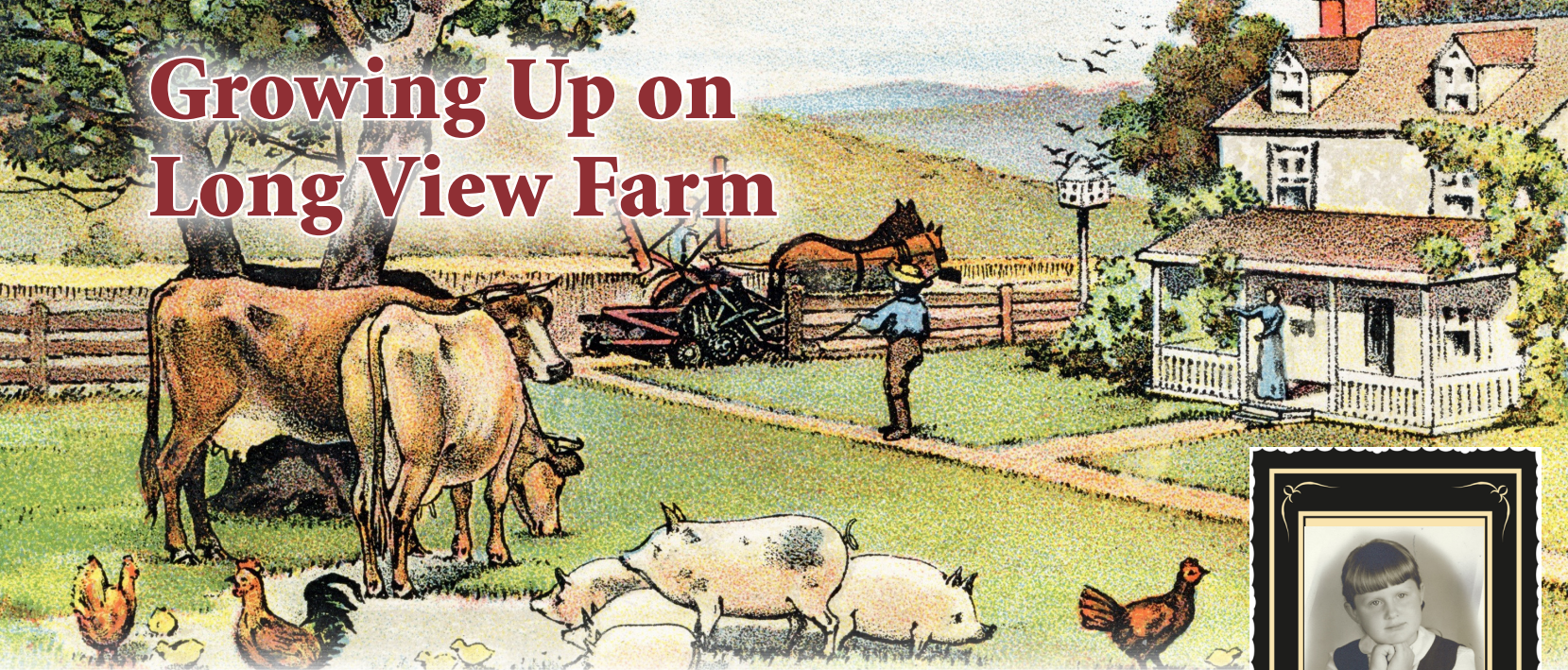
be on-site. Without hesitation, Dr. Brenner rushed to Thorpe's side and provided immediate care. The injured man was taken to the Newcomb Hotel where he spent the rest of his time in Quincy recovering from the incident.

Though shaken by the episode, the resilient crew of the "Honeymoon Express" pressed on. A few days later, with heavy hearts but unwavering determination, they departed Quincy—leaving behind a story that would long be remembered by those who witnessed it.



*Samuel Pickard, a decorated WWI pilot, started a barnstorming career after the war. Following his harrowing piloting days, he became the director of radio for Kansas State Agriculture College. He later served as the director of radio for the Department of Agriculture. Pickard retired as an executive vice president of CBS radio.*

# Growing Up on Long View Farm



By: Signe Oakley



As a child I had the pleasure of growing up on Long View Farm. I cherish so many of those memories from the past. In autumn when apples were picked and the air was crisp and cool, great aunts and great uncles, and my grandparents (Lewis and Catherine Baker) joined Mother and me at the farm to make apple butter in the big, black, iron kettle in the back yard by the dinner bell. My father who was at work, had already split wood and had it ready for the men to build and keep a fire going. Everyone cut apples, the women prepared the spices and the jars for apple butter while the men kept up the fire and constantly stirred the apples. Everyone brought food to share at noon, cold fried chicken, Grandma's potato salad and angel food cake, green beans, various other salads and Aunt Daisy's home-made rolls and pies. At the end of the day with the apple butter jarred, and everything cleaned up, the jars were left on a long table for everyone to pick up the next day.

When I was in school, another of my favorite autumn activities was picking corn. I would get off the bus, rush to change to my farm clothes, and hurry to the corn field where my grandfather and his hired man were picking corn. The mules, Jerry and Larry were pulling the old green wagon. "Thump, thump, thump," as the corn hit the wagon. I was the only child in the family, and it made me feel very grown up to help unless I forgot my gloves. If my grandfather noticed my hands were sore or starting to bleed, he would make me stop picking corn immediately. He didn't want my teacher to think my family made me work so hard.

As the days grew colder, it was time for butchering hogs. Runts or crippled pigs were always separated from the others when weaned and fattened separately for our use. Grandpa said they might not survive the truck ride to market anyway so we might as well eat them. I always took care of those pigs and sometimes became attached. It wasn't always easy to swallow a chop from one of them. Depending on how many pigs we had, we might have more than one butchering day. My father, who worked for the health department, was very particular about sanitation and handling them properly. We did not butcher cattle because he said they were too big to

handle and we had no way to refrigerate them adequately before freezing. We made sausage, cut up and packaged pork for the freezer, and divided it between my grandparents and us plus giving a little to other family and friends. Some people processed their own hams, but we never did. One of my favorite foods was the liver which we never froze. We had a feast of liver and onions. When I close my eyes, I can still remember the kitchen, the smells, and the taste.

From as early as I can remember Grandpa B. (Lewis Baker) took me on walks in the woods, at first carrying me until I was big enough to walk. He told me the names of all the plants, trees, animals, and birds. He identified what birds and animals made the sounds we heard. Grandpa showed me where he kept all the animal feed and how much he fed. As I grew older, I wandered the woods without my grandfather. Instead, Connie, my favorite barn cat, and one or more of her kittens were my companions. Occasionally Connie would quickly disappear into the tall grass. You would hear a guttural sound and some squeaks, and Connie would return with a mouse in her mouth. I always praised her, and if she considered leaving it at my feet, I told her to eat her snack. Of course, when she had kittens with her, the kittens followed their momma into the grass, and they got the treat.

Grandpa B operated a feed mill and sawmill



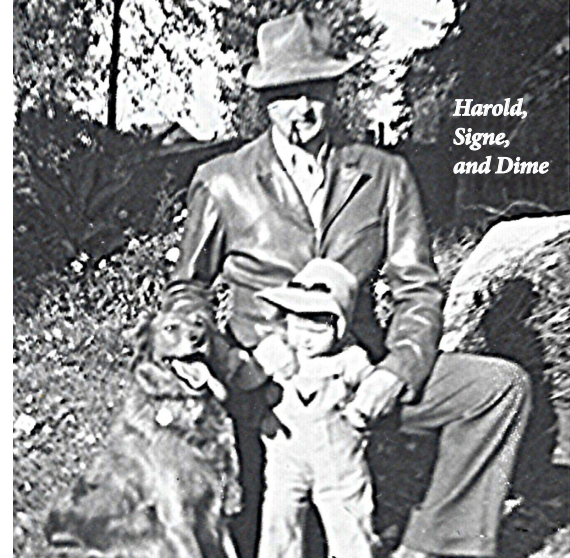
*Signe's father, Harold Jacobson, tends the Corriedale sheep Signe raised as a 4-H project.*

on Long View Farm. I spent many hours watching Grandpa fill sacks of ground grain as tall as I was. After tying the sacks, he picked one up in each hand and lifted the sacks up into the farmer's wagon or pick-up truck. Many a farmer brought his farm dog along. How much fun it was to play with the dogs while the grain was ground! Perched on an out-of-the-way log, I often watched when my grandfather and Uncle George ran the sawmill. It was operated by a belt attached to a steam engine. One day, when I was not in attendance, there was an accident. The hired man got too close to the belt from the steam engine and the belt grabbed him, spun him around and stripped him of all his clothes. He was left standing in only his socks and shoes. Fortunately, his body remained intact, and he was not hurt. After that, Grandpa B decided that perhaps it was best if I didn't watch the men sawing logs. Since the limestone quarry was located on another farm, I never really got to see it in operation except for brief periods of time.

My most vivid memories involve the Christmas holidays. Mother worked part time at the Payson Post Office. Each month she would stash some money in an empty Calumet Baking Powder can she kept in the cupboard. During the year when there were sales on flour, sugar, and other ingredients, she would purchase supplies for holiday baking. We had our own eggs, black walnuts, and pecan trees. As long as Grandma B's pasteurizer worked, she gave us butter. After my great Aunt Flora, Grandpa's sister, had strokes, we took care of her. She was able to help pick out some nuts, but she was better at telling stories about her growing up years, which made the nut cracking and picking out nut meat go much faster. Immediately after Thanksgiving we started preparing cookies, candy, fruitcake etc. for Christmas. My parents always had a big open house after Christmas Eve church service and a house full for Christmas Day dinner. We recycled coffee cans and other containers for the Christmas goodies. My dad painted our old coffee cans as well as the ones we got from family and friends. Then Mother and I decorated them. My father, who had his own fruitcake recipe and several candy recipes, took an active part in the holiday food preparations. His fruitcake was special. He always made it early in December and put it in an unheated room to "season." Aunt Flora loved his fruitcake and always persuaded us to cut some early so she could partake. According to Aunt Flora, fruitcake and plum pudding were the best foods at Christmas. She was, I think, an early member of the Payson WCTU (Women's Christian Temperance Union.) Therefore, we never told her the fruitcake was heavily fortified with apricot brandy. I

always prayed for snow when it was time to make Christmas deliveries. We had a horse called Lady who could pull the one-horse open sleigh that resided in a corner of the barn. With snow on the ground, it was great to make deliveries in style just as my ancestors had done. We packed the sleigh with Christmas goodies, bundled up, and climbed in. I nestled between my parents for extra warmth. Mother had her delivery list in hand. Living in a small town she knew everyone's situation and who really needed a little extra cheer at this time of year. The first delivery we made was to the family whose husband/father was missing from WWII. We continued stopping at the homes of elderly and people who lived alone and didn't have much family. At each stop, I was sent to the door. "Merry Christmas" and "May God Bless you in the new year."

As I grew older, I took on other responsibilities. I worked in the gardens, canned and froze vegetables, helped care for Aunt Flora and all the animals. With the help of my parents, I bought Corriedale sheep and raised them as a 4-H project, saving money for college. At twelve, I purchased cake decorating tools I saw demonstrated at the state fair. By thirteen I was selling decorated cakes to add to my college fund. My first wedding cake was made when I was fifteen. I feared my father would have a heart attack carrying the cake up a long flight of stairs to the reception hall. In the summer before my freshman year, my grandfather had strokes and was unable to keep working. His hired man quit. Someone needed to take care of all the livestock. My father really didn't have time to do chores before he went to work in Quincy, so I decided I wanted to take on the task. I also decided I wanted to take agriculture at Payson Seymour High School because I thought I needed more knowledge. No girl had ever taken agriculture at the school. My acceptance to the course required a special meeting with the school board members, principal, and ag teacher. All went well. Some boys didn't live on a farm or were unable to come up with a special construction project for one reason or another. The teacher chose two of the guys who applied to help me build a large sheep feeder with me providing all



Harold,  
Signe,  
and Dime

materials. The three of us came up with a design which the teacher accepted. Then we went to work. The guys were better at some tasks, and I was better at others. The project was a good example of cooperative learning. We worked very well together, developing good communication skills and receiving an A on the project. The feeder was used for many years. While I didn't take ag all four years, I did care for the sheep, cattle, and hogs during my entire high school career. Additionally, the process helped me in later years as I taught group meal projects in culinary arts at the Quincy Area Vocational Technical Center. I learned many things in that ag class including castration of pigs at a local farm. My grandfather was not certain that skill was necessary, but all the boys in the class plus farmers and those involved treated me with upmost respect. I found value in all that I learned in the class.

My mother, the pigs, chickens, and sheep are all gone now. The barn cats are mostly feral, but they still catch mice and show up at the house daily for the food provided to them. We don't farm the land ourselves, but our farming partner and we still raise beef cattle. We are, however, increasing raspberry bushes and fruit trees as well as adding more asparagus plants. We grow sweet corn for our family and a few friends. When there is more time, vegetable and flower gardening may increase. My children, grandchildren, and I still enjoy the house and farm. Long View Farm will always be home to me, and hopefully the "home place" to generations after me.

## Bicentennial Book Coming Soon.

To celebrate our county's 200th anniversary in 2025, the Adams County Bicentennial Committee, led by chairman Chuck Scholz, is proud to announce a new comprehensive historical book of the county, its people, and its communities, highlighted by hundreds of photographs representing all eras and aspects of local Adams County history. This story of Long View Farm and the stories of many other Adams County farms will be included in the book - *Adams County Illinois: The First 200 Years* - which is scheduled to be published by Acclaim Press in early fall 2025.



Quincy's Free and Public Library, now the Historical Society's History Museum on the Square, opened its doors in June 1889, right next to the Powers & Finlay building.



The Powers & Finlay building (center) was razed in 1965, and excavation for the Museum's new addition has just uncovered much of the demolition debris which was used to fill in the foundation.

## UNEARTHING HISTORY: SURPRISES BENEATH THE MUSEUM BUILDING PROJECT

By: Rob Mellon

The History Museum building project has turned into an unexpected journey through time. As construction crews began excavation, they stumbled upon fascinating remnants of a bygone era—layers of brick, limestone foundations, and even a limestone wall on the southern edge of the site. These discoveries have added both intrigue and complexity to the project, and, combined with the need to relocate a gas line and delays in steel delivery, have pushed the target date for completion back by about a month to October 1, 2025.

But what's the story behind these unearthed materials? Research reveals that this site was once home to a grand three-story building constructed in 1858 by Matthew Bell Finlay

and William Powers. The two entrepreneurs opened a merchant tailoring business at 326 Maine Street in Quincy, leaving this legacy that's literally being uncovered today.

Matthew Finlay, an Irish immigrant from County Cavan, arrived in Quincy in 1839. After working in a bakery and dry goods store, he partnered with William Powers to launch their tailoring business. Powers, originally from Temple, New Hampshire, had moved to Quincy in 1838 after learning bricklaying in Boston. Together, they built their impressive brick structure at 326 Maine Street.

Interestingly, Powers also supplied bricks for many downtown projects, meaning the

bricks being unearthed during excavation likely came from his company—a fascinating connection between past and present.

After Finlay bought out Powers and ran the business until his death in 1882, the building became home to *The Quincy Daily Journal* in 1883. The newspaper operated there until 1920 when it merged with *The Quincy Whig*. Over the decades, the building housed various businesses, including architect John Benya's office in the early 1960s.

Meanwhile, just next door at 332 Maine Street, the cornerstone for the Free and Public Library was laid on May 31, 1888. The library opened its doors in June 1889 and remained neighbors with the Powers & Finlay building for many years. In 1963, however, the library purchased the three-story brick structure and razed it two years later in 1965. Apparently debris from the demolition was used to fill in the foundation and is being unearthed today as Waterkotte builds the new addition.

The excavation has not only highlighted challenges but also uncovered a tangible link to Quincy's history. From its origins as a bustling tailoring business to its role as home to local newspapers and other enterprises, this site tells a story of innovation and community growth. While construction continues on the Museum building project (pictured, right), these discoveries remind us that every layer of earth holds pieces of our shared heritage – waiting to be uncovered.

Stay tuned as we watch history come full circle with this exciting project!



Pictured here are the initial excavations which accommodate the footprint of the new building addition at the history Museum. Existing former stone foundation walls are evident from previous buildings at this site and will stay in place. The new compacted, crushed stone base will provide the pad for the new footings and foundation walls that will allow for the new elevator shaft construction as well as the new egress stairway construction.



Architect's rendering of the new addition.

# MAKE HISTORY WITH US



Join the many donors who are making a major impact at the History Museum on the Square



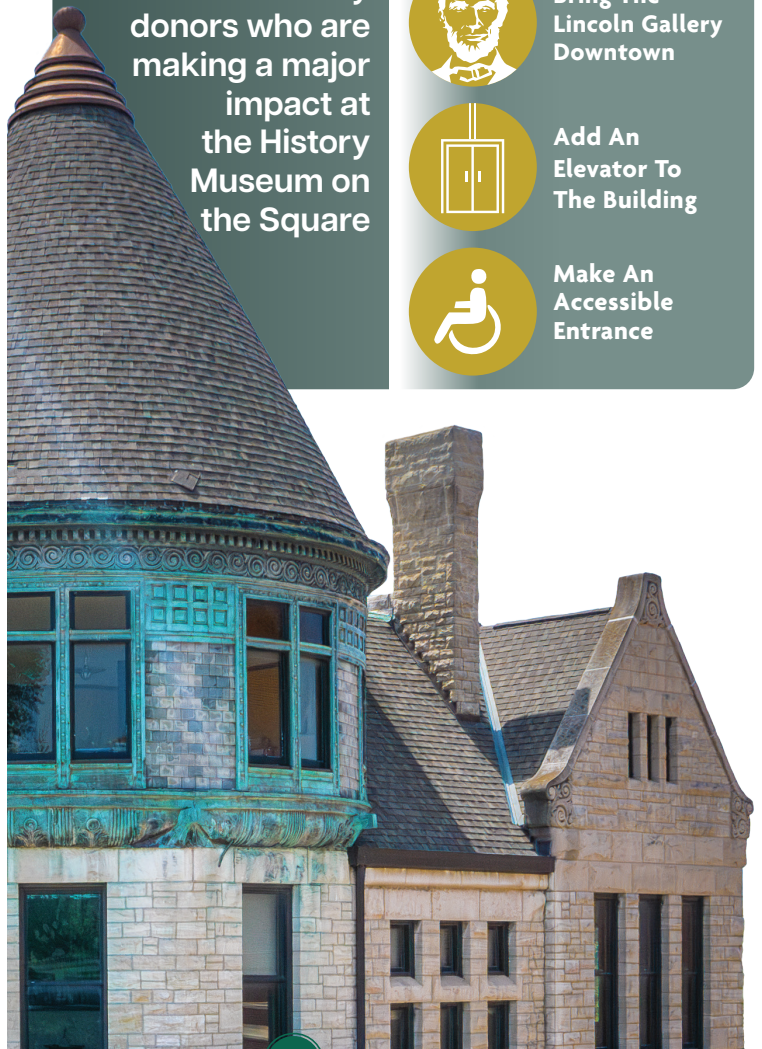
Bring The Lincoln Gallery Downtown



Add An Elevator To The Building



Make An Accessible Entrance



\$2M

## Your Donation Matters

Your gift brings history to life in downtown Quincy. The Museum is our region's gateway to the past – serving thousands of Adams County students, drawing visitors downtown, and preserving our community's remarkable stories.

Help us build an extraordinary Lincoln Gallery in a museum that's truly open to everyone.



Scan To Donate



# VINTAGE RECIPES FEATURED AT OPEN HOUSE

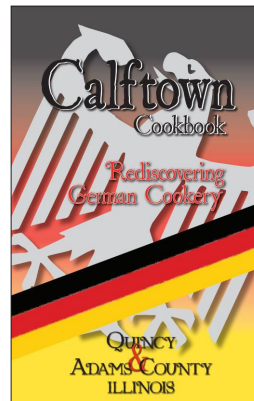
A public Open House was held in March to reveal the newly renovated conference room in the Visitors Center at 425 South 12th in Quincy. Attendees viewed the stunning décor and were treated to a variety of delicious dishes prepared by HSQC staff and members from age-old recipes, some featured in *The Governor's Post* and some from the Society's *Caltown Cookbook*.



Bird's Nest Pudding

Dishes included Lisensuppe (German Lentil Soup), George Washington's Whiskey Cake, Civil War Macaroni and Cheese, Burnt Sugar Cake, Lafayette's Gingerbread, and Weiner Schnitzel. Rob Mellon, Nancy Benz, Dan Doane, Arlis Dittmer, and Susi DeClue prepared the recipes for the 40 some attendees.

HSQC member Jil Johnson also tried one of the vintage recipes featured in *The Governor's Post* in her own kitchen. Her version of Bird's Nest Pudding, a baked apple/pudding dish flavored with maple syrup, nutmeg, and brown sugar, was apparently a hit on the home front, since her husband, Bob, urged her to take this picture and send it to us!



Recipes are a monthly feature of *The Post*, the Society's quarterly magazine. The *Caltown Cookbook* is available for \$10 in the Society's gift shop, Quincy's History Shop, in the History Museum on the Square at 332 Maine. Printed cards featuring several of the vintage recipes are still available in the Society's office. Drop by if you would like to pick up a few.

HARBIN

BICENTENNIAL SPEAKER SERIES

200

ADAMS COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
BICENTENNIAL • EST. 1825

# MORMONS IN ILLINOIS

SEPT 10 | 6:30 PM

MARY ELLEN ORR AUDITORIUM

JOHN WOOD COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
1301 S. 48TH STREET, QUINCY, ILLINOIS



# CORN DODGERS

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 tablespoon warm bacon drippings or butter
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 tablespoons bacon drippings for frying

## DIRECTIONS



1. Combine cornmeal, salt, and sugar in a mixing bowl.
2. Make a well in the center and pour in the bacon drippings or butter and the boiling water.
3. Stir contents until combined and set aside for 20 minutes to cool.
4. Heat a skillet and add extra bacon drippings.
5. Spoon mixture into skillet in 2-tablespoon dollops and cook over medium-low heat for 8-10 minutes, until the bottoms are golden. Then flip and cook for another 5 minutes. they should be crisp on the outside but chewy on the inside.



Recipe from the Illinois History Lincoln Collection of the University of Illinois

# VOLUNTEERS ALWAYS NEEDED

As is the case in many non-profit organizations, volunteers are the lifeblood of the Historical Society, and many offerings would not be possible without their involvement. At the Society, volunteers may work just a few hours a week in a particular area or maintain a more robust schedule and tackle an event or activity. For instance, in the Education Program alone, up to eight volunteers are needed to schedule school visits, instruct classes, give tours, monitor students, or demonstrate skills several days each week during both the fall and spring sessions. The gardens at both campuses are tended by volunteers who weed, trim, dig, and plant during the growing season. The Mansion has several garden plots – Mirror Garden, Herb Garden and Prairie Grass Garden- as well as a number of species of trees and other plants. As you can imagine, help is always needed in maintaining and enhancing this beautiful campus.

The History Museum's gardens also need refreshing and planting each year and many volunteers have used their imagination and ingenuity in creating those plots. Other volunteers share their acting talents, appearing as living historical figures in some of the organization's most popular events such as the Woodland Cemetery Tours and the Christmas Candlelight Tours of the Governor John Wood Mansion. You never know when your neighbor will pop up at the Mansion as John Wood or at Woodland as a Quincy icon! Our volunteers also serve as greeters at the History Museum on the Square and assist in the Research Library and with the Collection at the Visitors Center.

A crew of volunteers provides Mansion tours which are increasing in popularity among tourists and area residents. The majority of the current tour schedule is handled by five rotating tour guides who show the house and surroundings on weekdays during operating hours. This system is working extremely well, but the increase in tourists has led the Board of Directors to re-visit the issue of Saturday tour guides who could handle the weekend



*John and Candy Scott are volunteers in the Prairie Grass Garden at the Governor John Wood Mansion. They recently donated a beautiful garden bench which has been installed in the southeast corner of the Mansion grounds.*

visits beginning this summer. These new guides would receive basic training which includes information about the various structures on the campus as well as a script which provides details about the Mansion and grounds. HSQAC staff would handle the opening, closing, and alarm procedures for the buildings, making the guides' jobs much easier. A Saturday schedule would be organized in the HSQAC office.

*Please give us a call at 217-222-1835 if you are interested in volunteering in a certain area or in becoming a "Saturday Tour Guide." We would love to hear from you!*

PRESENTED BY THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF QUINCY AND ADAMS COUNTY

2025

# WOODLAND CEMETERY GHOST TOURS

EVERY SATURDAY IN OCTOBER AND HALLOWEEN NIGHT

OCTOBER 4th, 11th, 18th, 25th, and 31st

THREE GREAT TOURS

- SPIRITS OF THE MISSISSIPPI TOUR
- FOUNDERS AND PIONEERS TOUR
- PFANSCHMIDT MURDERS MAUSOLEUM TOUR

**WOODLAND CEMETERY**  
1020 South 5th Street, Quincy, Illinois

FOR MORE INFO: [WWW.HSQAC.ORG](http://WWW.HSQAC.ORG) or (217) 222-1835

Discover History  
Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County  
1847-1898

A Halloween-themed poster for Woodland Cemetery Ghost Tours. The background is dark blue with silhouettes of trees, tombstones, and a crow. There are red splatters and bats. The text is in various colors and fonts, including a large, stylized 'GHOST TOURS' in white with a red outline. The logo for the Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County is in the bottom right corner.

# Society's Bicentennial Event to Honor John Quincy Adams in July

The Historical Society of Quincy and Adams County will salute the founding of Adams County with a John Quincy Adams 2025 Celebration on Saturday, July 19, in the Armory, 416 Jersey, as part of Adams County's Bicentennial festivities.



Jeffrey Denman



Brian "Fox" Ellis



Steve Belko



C. James Taylor



Mark Cheatham

The event will focus on the father and son of the Adams political family and includes a portrayal of founding father John Adams by popular re-enactor Brian "Fox" Ellis and presentations by three nationally recognized historian-educators – Steve Belko, C. James Taylor, and Mark Cheatham.

Belko, instructor of history and political science at John Wood Community College, will discuss the birth of Adams County and delve into the reasons the city and county were named after John Quincy Adams. Belko was previously executive director of Missouri Humanities and has published extensively on Andrew Jackson, an Adams nemesis.

Denman is author of *John Quincy Adams, Reluctant Abolitionist*. The book provides a distinctive view of the second Adams' life and is informed by his relationship with slavery – which, it has been established, he openly despised.



This will be "Fox" Ellis' first presentation as John Adams, the

second president. He will offer the unique view of the son, John Quincy Adams, through the father's eyes. A master storyteller and author of sixteen books, "Fox" Ellis has worked with museums across the country and has been a featured performer at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield.

C. James Taylor will discuss John Quincy Adams' *Diary*, a detailed look at our 6th president's life from 1779-1848. Taylor was editor in chief of the *Adams Papers Project* at the Massachusetts Historical Society and holds Distinguished Professor Emeritus status at the University of South Carolina.

Cheatham will discuss Adams' relationship with Andrew Jackson. Currently a professor at Cumberland University, Cheatham is the project director of Cumberland's Papers of Martin Van Buren Project. He has written widely about John Quincy Adams.

Lunch will be provided for attendees, and a panel discussion is also scheduled. Books will be available at the event, and a book signing will be held after the presentations. No admission will be charged, but reservations are required through the Historical Society at 217-222-1835 or [hsqac.org](http://hsqac.org).

BICENTENNIAL SPEAKER SERIES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13, 2025

6:30 PM

**JWCC MARY ELLEN ORR AUDITORIUM**  
1301 S. 48TH STREET, QUINCY, ILLINOIS

# GEORGE ILES

## AND THE TUSKEGEE AIRMEN

PRESENTATION BY ROB MELLON

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF QUINCY AND ADAMS COUNTY



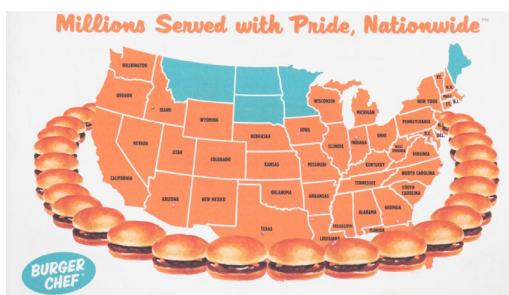
The grand opening of the Quincy Burger Chef on Friday, May 10, 1968, was a community celebration. The event drew an enthusiastic crowd, including prominent members of the local media eager to capture the excitement.

## “THERE IS MORE TO LIKE AT BURGER CHEF”

By: Rob Mellon

The fast food industry began in the early 20th century, evolving from the need for quick, inexpensive meals catering to busy urban lifestyles. The post-World War II economic boom further accelerated the growth of fast food. The rise of car culture and suburban expansion led to innovations like drive-ins and drive-throughs. By the 1950s, chains like McDonald’s, Burger King, Taco Bell, and Kentucky Fried Chicken joined the market, solidifying fast food as a dominant force in American dining culture.

Burger Chef, an often-overlooked fast-food chain, played a pivotal role in shaping the industry when it launched in 1954. Founders Frank and Donald Thomas, alongside Robert Wildman, introduced groundbreaking flame-broiling technology—a conveyor-based open broil system that enabled rapid burger production.



This innovation not only set a new standard for efficiency but also influenced how fast food was prepared across the industry. Within just two years of opening their first location, Burger Chef expanded rapidly to 40 outlets, showcasing its early success and appeal.

By the mid-1960s, Burger Chef had become a fast-food sensation, boasting nearly 500 locations across the country. Its meteoric rise caught the attention of General Foods Corporation, which acquired the brand in 1968 to harness its remarkable growth and success. What set Burger Chef apart was its strategic focus on smaller rural communities—often becoming the sole fast-food option in these towns. This bold expansion into underserved areas fueled its rapid growth and solidified its place as a beloved name in American fast food history.

In the cold January of 1967, Quincy’s Ferd Niemann, Jr., a man with a knack for

spotting opportunities, was on the hunt for his next big endeavor. A Korean War veteran who had returned home in 1953, Niemann had already dipped his toes into the restaurant business and gained invaluable retail and wholesale experience through his family’s enterprise, Niemann Bros. Wholesale Grocers.

The fast food industry was booming, creating a revolution fueled by America’s love for convenience. Niemann saw this as the perfect venture. After carefully weighing his options among various fast-food chains, he zeroed in on Burger Chef, a brand that was making waves from its Indianapolis headquarters. With its innovative approach to fast food and a rapidly expanding footprint, Burger Chef held the promise of both growth and excellence—the perfect combination for Niemann’s vision.

By the time the Burger Chef franchise opened its doors in Quincy, the chain





*The female staff at the Quincy Burger Chef in the late 1960s.*



*The male staff at the Quincy Burger Chef in the late 1960s.*

had already grown to an impressive 700 restaurants nationwide. It was not the vintage burger joint; it was part of a movement that reshaped how America dined on the go.

Chef Systems, Incorporated was formed in July 1967. The company created a land development company called A Village Land Corporation and selected the northwest corner of 18th and Broadway as the location for the Quincy Burger Chef. Construction started soon after, and by the spring of 1968, the new building was complete.

The building's vibrant décor was a striking combination of bright orange and white, with expansive glass windows that offered a clear view of the bustling street. Inside, the walls were adorned with rich walnut paneling, creating a warm and inviting atmosphere. The space was brightly illuminated by eye-catching hexagon-shaped light fixtures which add a modern touch to the design. At the heart of the kitchen was Burger Chef's signature open flame broiler, the secret behind its distinctive and mouthwatering flavors that set it apart from competitors. Designed as a family-friendly destination, the restaurant could comfortably accommodate up to 100 patrons. Located in the center of a spacious parking lot with room for 65 cars, it was conveniently accessible for visitors arriving by vehicle—a perfect spot for families to enjoy delicious meals together.

The leadership team at Chef Systems, Incorporated was composed of dynamic individuals, each bringing unique expertise to the table. Heading the company was Ferd Niemann, Jr., serving as president, alongside Paul Dennis as vice-president. Dan Bickhaus, with a background in the insurance industry at Miller, Castle, and Freiburg, took on the role of treasurer. Rounding out the team were Richard Niemann and Leonard Straub as directors. In an exciting move, Bickhaus was entrusted with managing Burger Chef of Quincy—a decision that leveraged his professional experience and promised fresh energy for the venture.

The grand opening of the Quincy Burger

Chef on Friday, May 10, 1968, was a community celebration. The event drew an enthusiastic crowd, including prominent members of the local media eager to capture the excitement. Speeches were given by representatives from the Chamber of Commerce, the Midtown Merchants Association, Burger Chef's corporate team, and the proud owners of Quincy's newest dining hotspot.

Burger Chef quickly became a favorite location in the Gem City and the neighboring areas. With its warm, family-friendly atmosphere and an untiring commitment to delivering top-notch, lightning-fast service, the restaurant drew crowds in droves. For many families across the tri-state area, a trip to Quincy simply was not complete without stopping by Burger Chef with the kids.

In the spring of 1969, the Burger Chef in Quincy marked its first anniversary with a spectacular celebration. The festivities included a lively dinner party and an exciting sweepstakes that had the community buzzing. The grand prizes were a sleek, brand-new 1969 Ford Mustang and a Philco color television.

The lucky winner of the Mustang was Betty Lesperance from Belleville, Illinois. But the generosity did not stop there—Burger Chef also treated the coaches, players, cheerleaders, and court members from both Quincy Senior High School and Christian Brothers/Notre Dame to free meals during their homecoming celebrations. It was a nice way to honor their successful first year, while giving back to the community that supported the restaurant.

Burger Chef's menu may have been modest in size, but it packed a punch with some iconic offerings that left a lasting impression. The "Super Shef" stood out as a hearty quarter-pound burger topped with catsup, lettuce, tomato, pickle, onion rings, and cream dressing, all nestled in a toasted bun. Meanwhile, the "Big Shef" introduced in 1964, was a trailblazer—predating McDonald's Big Mac by three years. This



double-decker delight featured two quarter-pound beef patties, American and cheddar cheese, shredded lettuce, a center bun, and the signature "Big Shef" sauce.

Beyond burgers, Burger Chef also expanded its menu with innovative items like a fish fillet sandwich and the "Country BBQ" sandwich. The latter was made with processed pork products and bore a striking resemblance to the McRib. These creative offerings showcased Burger Chef's knack for innovation and delivering new types of fast food.

Burger Chef was also the first chain to offer combo meals which included a burger, fries, and a drink. One of the combos offered in Quincy in 1969 was the Triple Threat which was a sizzling open flame broiled burger, crispy French fries, and a thick shake for only 55-cents. Burger Chef was also the first to provide a fixings bar called "The Works." They were also the first chain to offer free drink refills.

The company was a pioneer in catering to children by introducing menu items specifically designed for younger customers. One of its notable innovations was the "Funburger," which included a Burger Chef hamburger, a puzzle, and a toy. In 1973, the company launched the "Funmeal," a complete kid's meal featuring the Funburger, fries, a drink, and a cookie. The meal was packaged with engaging designs showcasing their

mascot, Burger Chef, alongside his trusty sidekick Jeff—a dynamic duo reminiscent of Batman and Robin, but with a more lighthearted appeal. To further enhance its marketing efforts toward children, Burger Chef introduced an imaginative cast of characters such as Count Fanburger, Burgerilla, Cackleburger the Witch, Wolf Burger, and others, creating a playful and memorable brand experience.

When Star Wars premiered in 1977, Burger Chef entered into a strategic marketing partnership with George Lucas to offer exclusive Star Wars memorabilia, including commemorative glasses, posters, and toys, aimed at attracting families and younger patrons. This innovative approach captured significant attention within the fast-food industry. By 1979, McDonald's responded by launching the Happy Meal, which closely mirrored Burger Chef's family-focused marketing strategy.

Burger Chef subsequently filed a lawsuit against McDonald's for copyright infringement, initiating a prolonged and costly legal battle between the two companies. The combination of increased competition, an inability to adapt to evolving market dynamics, and the financial strain of the court case placed immense pressure on Burger Chef's operations. Ultimately, Burger Chef lost the legal dispute, and within a few years, the company began exploring options to sell its business.

The Quincy Burger Chef, renowned for nearly a decade of strong sales performance, experienced a decline in revenue during the latter part of the 1970s. As a result, Chef Systems, Inc. made the decision to close the Quincy location at 18th and Broadway on February 28, 1978. Following the closure, the property was acquired by Jeff McClean, the founder of Gem City Pizzeria, which had been successfully operating

since 1972. McClean undertook a comprehensive refurbishment of the Burger Chef building, with plans to launch a new dining establishment at the site.

On November 20, 1978, tragedy struck the Speedway Burger Chef in Indianapolis, Indiana. Four teenagers working at the restaurant were kidnapped and brutally murdered miles away from the scene. Initially, Burger Chef management dismissed the incident as a simple robbery, suggesting that the employees had stolen money and abandoned the restaurant. This misinformation led police down the wrong path during the critical early hours of the investigation.

As the horrifying truth emerged, public outrage grew—not just over the murders themselves but also over the restaurant's mishandling of the situation. The company faced intense criticism.

Already struggling with declining sales, an outdated menu, and fierce competition in the fast-food industry, this scandal proved to be a devastating blow. Just four years later, in 1982, Burger Chef corporate decided to sell—a somber end to a once-promising franchise.

The case, now known as the Burger Chef Murders, remains one of Indiana's most infamous unsolved crimes, leaving behind haunting questions and a legacy of cautionary lessons.

By 1982, General Foods sold Burger Chef to Imasco Limited, the parent company of Hardee's, for \$44 million.

Imasco, a Canadian corporation headquartered in Montreal, oversaw the transition, as many Burger Chef locations were either converted into Hardee's restaurants or closed permanently. Approximately 100 Burger Chef locations remained operational, primarily in the Midwest. Over time, the brand faded from prominence due to increasing competition. The final Burger Chef franchise closed its doors in Cookeville, Tennessee, in 1996. Despite this, Hardee's has occasionally brought back the iconic "Big Shef" burger for limited-time promotions, keeping a small piece of Burger Chef's legacy alive.

Burger Chef may have closed its doors, but its legacy continues to be seen in the fast-food industry. Known for its groundbreaking innovations and ambitious expansion strategies, this once-beloved chain helped shape the modern fast-food culture we know today. From its iconic flame-broiled burgers to its vibrant orange-and-white décor, Burger Chef captured the hearts of millions and became a national sensation during its heyday. Though its time was fleeting, its influence remains unforgettable, sparking nostalgia among people of the Quincy-area who still cherish the memories of dining at this vintage establishment.



All Burger Chefs had a similar color scheme of red-orange and bright blue in order to attract customers.



**BIG SHEF**  
SANDWICH

**BIG SHEF**  
HAMBURGERS  
SHAKES

**BIG SHEF**  
Two all-beef patties broiled over open flames, teamed with golden melted cheese and garden fresh lettuce, topped with a special sauce and served on a toasted triple decker bun.

burger chef  
We always treat you right.  
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**BIG SHEF**  
SAUCE

**Ingredients:**

- Dill relish (not sweet relish)
- Dehydrated onions
- Salad dressing, like Miracle Whip
- Louisiana hot sauce

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**Directions:**

- Mix dill relish and dehydrated onions - let sit for 2 to 3 hours. Add relish/onion mixture to the salad dressing. Add a small amount of hot sauce. Mix ingredients together.

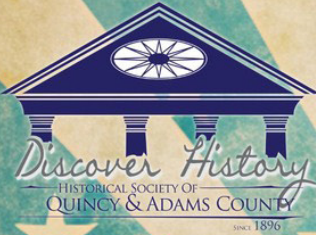
*In order to make more room for content in The Governor's Post, we will only publish our Membership List in two issues each year.*

**AUGUST  
9TH**

**7:30 PM**

 **QUINCY  
COMMUNITY  
THEATRE**


Tickets On-Sale  
Soon at the  
Quincy  
Community  
Theater



 **FEATURING  
12TH STREET BRASS**

 **ONE NIGHT ONLY AT THE QUINCY  
COMMUNITY THEATER**

# **VICTORY BELLES**

 The Victory Belles are a delightful vocal trio performing the music of the 1940s. This music brought hope and joy to our GIs and those on the Home Front alike—and the Victory Belles keep that tradition alive in rich, three-part harmony. Their repertoire includes all the treasured gems of the WWII era plus patriotic classics including a musical salute to each branch of the US armed forces.

 *Sponsored by the Historical Society and the Quincy Community Theater*





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*Quincy Fire Department engine house located on the west side of 5th Street, between Hampshire and Vermont. It operated with two fire wagons, "Triton" and "Rough and Willing," and a team of 15 firefighters.*



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