

Rock Island County Historical Society



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Volume 51 Issue 1

Rock Island County Historical Society

RICHs Newsletter

822 - 11th Avenue
Moline, IL 61265-1221
Phone (309)764-8590
Website: www.richs.cc
E-mail: richs@richs.cc

HOURS FOR RESEARCH LIBRARY

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday & Saturday

TOURS OF HOUSE MUSEUM & CARRIAGE HOUSE

by appointment—call (309)764-8590

March 2025

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Reminders/ Updates

Dues are \$35 per calendar year.

RICHs will be closed April 16—19th.
Augie students at the library April 24th

Dinner reservations and payment due 5/9.

Echoes from Riverside is available for \$25.

Check us out on Facebook

RICHs has an eclectic membership with a broad range of interests. If you would like share some items, please call (309)764-8590 to make arrangements.

Happenings

If you are short on time, please read this summary.

Friends of RICHs

Pre-pay at RICHs \$15, 3rd Tuesday 11:30
Program for April is Dave Heller on the
River Bandits—
May Program - Kate Holt, Moline's First
Librarian by Christina Conklin
June Program—Camp Annawan (a CCC
camp) by Steve Kastorff

Birdies for Charity pledges and donations will be due June 27th if you want RICHs to deliver them. Otherwise, they may be mailed to the JDC office to arrive by July 4th. The tournament will be June 30—July 6.

Spring Membership Dinner

May 15th, Hauberg Center, 5:30 Social
Time, 6 PM Dinner, Program—Dianne Moore on
Wharton Fieldhouse. Reservations due **May 9th**.

Center for Belgian Culture

RICHs welcomes the CBC to their new space in the library. The CBC held an open house Saturday, March 8 from 1—3 to share their new arrangement with their membership. The move proved to be very timely because of the fire on 7th Street Moline. Most of their artifacts escaped damage because they were at RICHs. The CBC also has a storage area in the basement of the A/P House.

Waffle breakfasts will continue at the Friends Circle on the 1st Saturday of the month.

Financial Report

Read carefully and do not panic. The figures given below are from the financial reports shared with the board of directors at their monthly meetings.

	Nov. 1, 2024 - March 22, 2025	Jan. 1 - Mar. 22, 2025	Feb. 21, 2025	Feb. 21 - Mar. 21, 2025
Income	89,090.07	57,044.37	56,025	883.39
Expenses	21,613.08	10,893.57	1,523.96	4,629.19
Net	67,476.34	46,150.44	54,591.04	-3,745.80

The figures above are an attempt to explain that most of the membership dues are paid in November and December plus there are a number of end of year donations from estates and IRA-type accounts. The important number to note is the **\$46,180.44** which is the final figure if RICHES plans to stay within the amount given in the fiscal year.

The checkbook balance is \$158,037.26 with additional CD's at 4%.

Birdies for Charity So why participate in Birdies? Yes, we are in a favorable position and probably will be for several years. The money earned through Birdies helps make repairs to the physical plant without using the endowment fund. Many of the donors of former years have died and have given their last gift. We need to be thoughtful in our expenses and continue to honor the work that has been done in the past. We have a wonderful resource for our present community and researchers in the future. We should make every effort to preserve it. Please donate through the Birdies program.

Rock Island County Historical Society

OFFICERS

President	Merredith Peterson (2025)
V. President	Bruce Noah (2026)
Secretary	Linda Anderson (2025)
Treasurer	Kathy Michel (2026)

DIRECTORS—Term expiring 2027

Sandy White
Corey Fetes
Bill Graham
Dale Hachtel

DIRECTORS – Term expiring 2025

Brad Dye
Ed Simpson
Karin Martin
Leonard Lopez

DIRECTORS—Term expiring 2026

Mark Slater
George Bathje
Bob Conklin
Heather Carlson

Appointed Positions

Membership	Eileen Wicker
Memorials & Gifts	Joyce McCormick
Newsletter Editor	Merredith Peterson

Friends

The January and February lunches were not held due the extremely cold weather. The leadership regrets any inconvenience the cancellations caused. Jerry at Riverfront Grille did not charge any fee for the cancellations. The paid reservations were rolled over to the March meeting.

We thank **Bill Howard** for his many years of greeting people and serving as the treasurer of “Friends.” Bill was one of the faces of the group. He will tell you that Charlie Pierce recruited him for RICHES. Bill is always quick with a joke or a story from the Navy, Hiking Club or life growing up in Michigan. He is not disappearing from the group. He will be dining and enjoying the meal without any responsibilities.

Thanks, Bill for more than twenty years of dedication to Friends. That means he spent more than 200 lunches as the group moved from the Deere-Wiman Carriage House to the Congregational Church in Moline to Christ Episcopal Church in Moline, to the current site at Riverfront Grille in Rock Island. It's been quite a “hike.”

The Centennial Bridge Toll Scandal

By Heather Carlson

The five arches on the Rock Island Centennial Bridge are a familiar sight to all residents of the Quad Cities. Construction of the bridge began in 1938 and was completed in 1940. Designed by Ash-Howar-Needles & Tanmen and built by the American Bridge Company, McCarthy Improvement Company, and Priester Construction Company, it is 3,850 feet long and stands 170 feet above the Mississippi. Originally the bridge was going to be named the Galbraith Bridge in honor of Rock Island's mayor at the time of the bridge opening, Robert Galbraith. Mayor Galbraith, however, favored naming it the Centennial Bridge in honor of Rock Island's centennial. In 2017 the Centennial Bridge was officially renamed in honor of Master Sgt. Stanley Talbot and is now the Master Sgt. Stanley Talbot Memorial Bridge.

The bridge was originally a toll bridge with motorists paying \$.10 and pedestrians \$.05. Over time tolls increased to \$.50 per automobile and ran as high as \$2.00 for semis. On May 2, 2003, the bridge was declared toll free and a ceremony commemorated the event. However, not all the tolls collected for a period of as many as twenty years ended up with the Rock Island Bridge Commission.

In 1960 ten toll takers and three supervisors were indicted on federal charges of conspiracy to defraud the US Government. Neither the bridge superintendent nor the bridge commissioner was involved in the scheme.



Those indicted were suspended and replaced by police officers.

The bridge was equipped with an electronic counter system which was defective. Toll takers discovered the defect and took advantage of it by disconnecting the system, which allowed those involved in the scheme to falsify the amount of money collected and keep the difference. In April of 1960 a relatively new bridge toll taker, on the advice of his attorney, told State's Attorney Bernard J. Moran he had been "invited" to participate in the scheme of falsifying the amount of tolls collected. He was told to go along with the plan and the State's Attorney's Office launched an investigation. A month later the FBI began their own investigation.

The system of taking toll money involved three levels. The first involved toll collectors disconnecting the electronic counting system during peak traffic hours for no more than an hour and pocketing the tolls collected. The simplest and longest in use recorded trucks or buses crossing the bridge at a lower class and keeping the difference. A variation of this level of the scheme had the toll taker recording a two or three axle truck as a two- axle car and keeping the difference. The electronic counter only counted axles, so detection was difficult. Another level of the scheme involved prepaid passes used by motorists who crossed the bridge frequently. This aspect of the scheme had the toll collector taking money from a

(Continued on page 5)

Acquisitions

Thank you to everyone who helps make the story of Rock Island County more complete.

Beck Dorothy	Black Hawk College yearbooks 1945-1951, Abstracts for Rock Island Watch Hill property
Bredt Tim	Photos: Class of "37", J I Case 20 year club, J I Case Rock Island Works Fire Vol 1948. Moline Book of Public Buildings 1915, Moline Class of 1937 yearbook
Condit Jeff	From Friendship Manor. Quilt, baskets, history books and display stand
Dailey Julie	Rock Island Bar Auxiliary photos and meeting notes
Ege Frank and Karen	Stereographic viewer and slides, WW II ration books, thumbsucking prevention guard, baby shoes 1914, button hook
Eis Loryann	"A Supplement to the Hauberg Indian Museum booklet
Gillespie Darwin	Civil War books
Graves Victoria	Navigation charts 1968, vintage Christmas cards and calling cards, Bill Hewitt Family History book, John Deere books
Hermes Bruce and Linda	Confirmation dress dated about 1921 or 1922. Given to Marian Hermes, daughter of Frank Allen's chauffeur.
Johnson Bonnie & Vicky Ruklic	1920s books, photos & postcards. Baby items and clothing
Kinkaid David	WHBF TV 25th Anniversary Invitation, Schwab Advertising System (name plates, cards, plaques), WQUA Radio media kit, pictures (Ronals Reagan, Terry Brandstad, etc)
Kinkaid David	Various buttons and badges (QC Downs, QC Open, Black Hawk Braves, etc)
Lambert Doug	Photo of Deere and Company downtown Moline
Michel Joe and Kathy	Dear Joe by John O'Donnell (book)
Peeters Dennis and Sue	Denny Jacobs coasters, RI Arsenal Apprentice Program book
Polios Nancy	Moline High School items: Class of 1959 reunion booklets, Hall of Honor program 2020, Literary booklets (1957, 1958, 1959), Class of 1957 60th reunion booklets
Ramsay Judy	Books: Abraham Lincoln, William Shakespeare, Civil War Treasury, Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi
Reed Mark	RI Alumni Directory 1932-1996, UTHS Alumni Directory 2001, Moline Sr. HS Reunion 1957, Moline Sr. Yearbook multiple years
Roseman Elizabeth	Railroad file. MHS English Dept info. Swedish American Genealogist info. Walking tours and Channel Cat tours by Curt Roseman
Roseman Elizabeth	Wharton Field House and Browning Field materials. Files on dams and canals (Hennepin), American Dream book, Moline schools (Garfield, John Deere, Moline High School), Covenant Church, Roseman family photos, Methodist Church
Roseman Elizabeth	Moline High School memory book. File on Moline schools. Paper dolls. Wedding scrapbook. Mildred Frisk letters, RI Union 1901. Local business ads/promo materials.
Sebben David	Photos of Rock Island Sand and Gravel Company, RI County Courthouse cornerstone, MWA workers, 1835 Courthouse Rock Island Sand and Gravel items including Insurance Survey, Appraisal, Photo album, matchbooks
Seeburger Toni	3 RI/Dav Ferry Tokens, WW II tax tokens, Grant's coin
Simpson Rick	Buffet furniture piece
Slater Mark	John Deere by Clark
Stickrod Ronna	1918 and 1919 Moline High School yearbooks
Vogel Gregory	Pressed Steel Works items (2 boxes)
Wassenhove Vicki	Various books and articles (Leslie C Swanson book, and supporting materials)
Whitmore JoAnn	Black dress 1920s and 2 hats (1 felt and 1 straw)

(Continued from page 3)

motorist without a pass, applying that amount to a frequently used pass, and keeping the total.

State's attorney Moran placed a call to the FBI asking for assistance with the investigation, and a large number of agents was brought in equipped with cameras, radios and other surveillance equipment. They photographed toll collecting using cameras placed in the rear of special trucks, and positioned one agent, disguised as a vagrant, on the bridge pretending to look at the river. He had a radio hidden in his clothes and gave a running account of the activities from that vantage point.

Determining guilt or innocence was a difficult process due to the number of collectors involved in the scheme. In order to prevent further misappropriation of funds, the bridge authority suspended all collectors without pay until those who were guilty were found.

Innocent collectors received all back pay. During the grand jury hearings, FBI agents testified using the films taken during their investigation. Indictments were brought against

New Projects Webpage

Corey Fetes, Eileen Wicker, and Kathy Michel are working with Augustana College to develop a new webpage for RICHS. The goal is to make the resources at RICHS available remotely including (for now) information about the books. If you would like to help, Wednesdays and Fridays are the days to learn how to scan the information on the books.

Digitizing Maps

A big thank you goes to Mike Flaherty who is currently digitizing the map collection. Orin Rockhold scanned the county plat books this winter. He also with some help from Tony Girrard has had the county map from 1868 scanned and broken into individual pictures of the townships. Now, the project has gone a step further with more maps including the railroads and the maps the gas stations used to give away. There is no cost.

Digitizing The Daily Union and The Weekly Union

The Union was printed during the Civil War and into the 1920's. RICHS has the paper copies and the 45 rolls of microfilm. One estimate for saving these papers is \$175

12 of the suspended toll takers, many of whom began working in the 1940's to the early 1950's. The indictments charged that their scheme intended to make false reports aimed at obstructing the Congressional purpose to make the bridge free for public use.

Ultimately the 12 suspended toll takers were indicted in Springfield, Illinois on August 14, 1959 and arraigned on September 4, 1959 in Rock Island Federal Court. One of the suspended collectors pled guilty and refused a lawyer. He was referred to a federal probation officer. Ten others filed motions to dismiss the charges, and the 12th person's case was delayed pending a change of attorney. While the exact amount of money taken during the time of the scheme was unknown, the bridge commission conferred with federal officials and the state's attorney's office to recover what money they could from a bonding firm that was notified of the loss of funds.



per roll. The board of directors has set aside \$4,000 to use this year to make new scans and have a searchable format. It is estimated that it will take three years to finish.

Blueprints

RICHS has had a collection of blueprints in the basement of the house. Organizing them was an Eagle Scout project in recent years. Recording them on a spreadsheet was a summer project recently. Now, since Dennis Kelly donated horizontal file cabinets and the blueprints from Kelly and Associates, a new summer project has emerged: evaluating and sorting the original collection. George Bathje and Karin Martin have developed a rubric for evaluating them. If you have some time on Thursdays, come join them.

New Printers

There are two new printers in the library, a Brother All-in-One for the public and a RICOH CL2510. They replaced two that were old and non-functioning.

Friends of Rock Island County Historical Society Luncheons

September 2024 – June 2025

Reservations due by **NOON** the Friday before the luncheon date. **Cost of lunch is \$15.00.**

Please pre-pay either by mail or in person.

Location: - River Front Grille at 4619 34th St. R.I. IL.

Lunch begins promptly at 11:30 and programs at 12:15.

<p>September 17th, 2024 Merredith Peterson Forgotten Heroes of R I County</p> <p>MENU: Swedish Meatballs w/Egg Noodles, Salad, Rolls and Butter, and Dessert</p>	<p>* October 15th 2024 * Gena Schantz Before Rock Island, There Was Farnhamsburg</p> <p>MENU: Roast Pork, Cheesy Hashbrowns, Green Beans, Dessert</p>
<p>November 19th, 2024 Jeff Adamson Twisted Tales of the QCA</p> <p>MENU: Roast Turkey & Dressing, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Vegetable, Salad, Rolls, Dessert</p>	<p>December 17th 2024 Paul Cioe Regional & Seasonal Music</p> <p>MENU: Glazed Ham, Au Gratin Potatoes, Vegetable, Salad, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>
<p>January 21st, 2025 Diann Moore Wharton Fieldhouse</p> <p>MENU: Spaghetti & Meatballs, Salad, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>	<p>February 18th, 2025 Jeff Adams Bricks and Brickyards</p> <p>MENU: Ranch Chicken w/Potato Salad, Vegetable, Salad, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>
<p>March 18th, 2025 Bill Graham TRAINS</p> <p>MENU : Meat Lasagna and Salad, Rolls & Butter Dessert</p>	<p>April 15th., 2025 David Heller River Bandits</p> <p>MENU: Baked Ham w/Scalloped Potatoes Vegetable, Salad, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>
<p>May 20th 2025 Christina Conklin Moline's 1st Librarian– Kate Holt</p> <p>MENU: Meatloaf w/Potatoes, Vegetable, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>	<p>June 17th, 2025 Steve Kastorff Camp Annawan</p> <p>MENU: Fried Chicken, Potato Salad, Baked Beans, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>

If Moline or Rock Island schools are closed or a virtual learning day is declared due to weather, our luncheons will also be cancelled.
Your money will be refunded.

Roll Call

Every year the names of the membership are shared in the December newsletter. This year it is in the first newsletter of 2025. Every effort has been made to have the list complete. Please call if you find yourself “missing in action.” We have had several people in charge of this responsibility in recent months, but there is every reason to believe it is now under control. Thank you for your patience.

President Circle \$500+

Linda Anderson
William M. Coopman
Sue B. Hauberg
Faye Hauberg Page
John & Merredith Peterson
LaVonne Wait
Patron \$10 –499
Rosalie & Ronald Barman
Judy Belan
Julia Brennan
Marilyn Bush
Don Cardon
Bill & Mary Christison
Susan Collins
Bob & Christina Conklin
Kent Crippen
Jean Dasso
Loryann Eis
William Ellis
Mary Gardner-Karcher
Lauri Gartner
Dale & Joanne Hachtel
M Joyce Hanna
Virgil Kain
Larry Lamont
John R. & Bonnie L. Lartz
Bill Lindquist
Karin Martin
John & Joyce A. McCormick
Joe & Kathy Michel
Larry Miller
Norm & Janet Moline
Bruce Noah
Diane Oestreich
Sandy & Richard Perry
Barb Sandberg
Robert E. Scott

Robert G. Scott
Mark & Cindy Slater
Ron and Rebecca Smolenski
Craig & Deb Veber
John & Marcia Wetzel
Bob & Dorothy White
Sandra Woest

Contributing \$50– 99
Barbara B. Anderson
John Beardsley
Cliff & Heather Carlson
George and Kay Christison
Gilman Clark
Jennifer Duburg
Victoria Graves
William Hannan
William Howard

Sandra Madsen
Ted & Jacque Maxeiner
Gary Miller
Ronald L. Miller
Fred Mueller
Billy Potter
Kathleen Qualls
Barbara B. Sandberg
Cliff and Marge Scharer
Ed & Barb Simpson
Stafford Family
Thomas Stoffel
Eric & Barbara Trimble
Kelly Wendt
Bud & Dorothy Workman
Sandra White

Family \$35

Betty Baff
George Bathje
James Bizarri
Lois Black
Bobbie Jo Boeh
Tim Bredt
Judith Callen
Elizabeth A. Casillas
Dick & Margaret Castle
Betty E. Clark
Peter & Teresa Cone
Karen Davidson
Debra Donaldson
Joan & Bob Eastlund
Frank & Karen Ege
Paul & Marion Erickson
Corey Fettes
Harry D. & Kathy Galley
William H Gilbert
William James Gilbert
Bill Graham
Darrel & Betty Hagberg
Bill & Ruth Anne Hartman
Kenneth Hedberg
Sharon Heinze
George and Zen Henning
Sharon Hoaglund
Jill Hoff
Peggy Huffstutler
William & Elois Hughes
W. Gerald & Colleen Huiskamp
Robert Humphrey
Bobbie Jo Irish
Dennis & Lois Kelly
Robert A. Kent

Continued on page 8

Family/Business Members continued

Christopher C. Kirk	Patricia Morthland	Abby & Bill Shaw
Donna Knudtson	Joan Mueller	Larry & Pamela Shelton
Kevin & Jane Koski	Arlyn Neumann	Roxanne Stevenson
Beth Lagomarcino	Ann & Alan Noyce	Marlys J. Unruh
Bonnie Lawhorn	Brice Oakley	Rita D. Van Raes
Nancy Licko	Nancy Olson	John & Nora VanSpey broeck
Jerry, Elaine, Susan Lundeen	John Bealer Owens	
Victoria Graves	Sue & Dennis Peeters	Linda Walker
Ronald Lloyd	Dick & Kathy Potter	Vance Waugh
Leonard Lopez	Coky Powers	Stuart Waxenberg
Sharon Mack	Jo Ann Pryor	James Westpfahl
Bonnie M. Martin	Allen County Public Library	Linda Jane Wheelan
Tom Martin	Judith Ramsay	Dale & Jill Whiteside
Judith McDowell	Mark & Sue Reed	Eileen Wicker
Sandra McNerney	Elizabeth Roseman	Jeffrey B Winter
Angelo D. Mendoza	Joshua Rounds	Phyllis Witherspoon
Randall L. Michels	Peg & Kevin Rounds	Kathy Wolters
Melissa Middleswart	Wayne A. Scherer	Barbara Zuwala
Judy Minteer	Matthew J. Sharer	
Diann Moore		

2024 Birdies Report

Thank you to the 2024 Birdies participants. RICHS received \$4,500 including the bonus from other tournament partners. The money was used to make repairs and update the Atkinson-Peek House. Repairs to the carriage house are ongoing and consist of window glazing, ceiling patching, and exterior stucco patching.

Although they are not listed here, there were members/patrons who made contributions after the Birdies deadline. That money was added to the general fund to provide archival supplies and services to the public.

Bogeys (\$100 & More)

Linda Anderson
Karin Martin
Kathy Michel
John Donald
O'Shea
John Peterson
Deb Veber

Eagles (\$50 - \$99)

Virgil Kain
Mary Karcher
Tom & Judy Peterson
Marge & Cliff Scharer

Birdies (\$20 - \$49)

Judy Belan
Pam Bell
Marilyn Bush
Mable Carlson
Deb Donaldson
Nancy Johnson
Joyce McCormick

Mark & Cindy Slater

Rita Van Raes
Shirley Ricketts

Steve & Christine Van Lancker
Sandra White
Jill Whiteside
Sandra Woest

**Please use this form for renewal and
new memberships.**

**We invite you and your friends
to join the**

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
(A NOT-FOR-PROFIT CORPORATION)**

**Send this membership form
with your check.**

Date: _____

Please send your dues to:

**ROCK ISLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
ATTN: Membership Chm.
822 11th Avenue
Moline, IL 61265-1221**

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Phone: _____ **e-mail:** _____

_____ **Dues**

() President's Circle.....	\$500.00 & up
() Patron.....	\$100.00 - \$499.00
() Contributing.....	\$50.00 - \$99.00
() Family/Business.....	\$35.00

Modjeski, the Owl



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