

Rock Island County Historical Society



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Rock Island County Historical Society

RICHS Newsletter

822 - 11th Avenue
Moline, IL 61265-1221
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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

September 2026

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Reminders/ Updates

Dues are \$35 per calendar year. Please pay after October 1st.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the "Birdies" campaign. Checks will be distributed October 9th. RICHs raised \$4,358.

Riverside Cemetery Walk—Sept. 27, 1-3 PM

The December Open House will be Dec. 7th. Cookies needed.

The Fall Membership meeting will be October 16th. More information to follow.

There will be a "members only" night in December. Watch for updates.

Happenings

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

Director of Operations Hired

Corey Fetes was hired at the June board meeting to be the Director of Operations. He will be responsible for the day to day operation of the facility. Additionally, Corey is working to bring RICHs into the 21st century of technology and communication. We welcome him to his new position.

Friends of RICHs

Pre-pay at RICHs \$15, 3rd Tuesday 11:30
September Program—Creepy, Twisted Tales of the QCA

October Program - Bricks and Brickyards
November Program—Figge Centennial

September 21st Open House

RICHs will be open Sunday, September 21st for tours and an indoor sale of excess collectables: books, postcards, and treasures from the past. Hours will be noon to 4 PM.

Board Resignations

George Bathje has resigned from the board because he and his wife are moving to the Chicago area to be closer to family. George served for seven years bringing a wealth of technical and organizational expertise.

Corey Fetes has resigned from the board in order to become the Director of Operations of RICHs. He brings years of experience at Deere & Co. along with an MA in History and an MBA. We look forward to improvements in our use of technology and service to patrons.

Financial Report

The figures given below are from the financial reports shared with the board of directors at their monthly meetings.

	April 2025	May 2025	June 2025	Year to July
Income	\$1400	3115	52632	61862
Expenses	\$20774	5226	5884	52327
Net	\$(16374)	(4913)	(3352)	9535

The checkbook balance is \$122,099.72 with additional CD's at 4%.

Large expenses in April included insurance (\$13,168), a new printer, copier, scanner (\$5,031) and maintenance of the A/P house heating and cooling system (\$1,202). The large bill in May was fire and liability insurance on the property (\$13,168). In June, PerMar was paid \$1,545 for six months security.

RICHES is still the fiscal agent for the Civil War Monument fund of approximately \$3,300 invested in a certificate of deposit at Vibrant Credit Union.

Friends has a small amount (less than \$1,000) at Black Hawk Bank and Trust.

The distribution for Birdies for Charity will be October 9th. Thank you to the 44 donors for sharing \$4,300 plus "the bump." Those funds were designated for the restroom renovation, but the scope of that project was downsized to replacing toilets and faucets, and removing wallpaper and painting. Needless to say, other projects remain. There is a large bill with Northwest Mechanical that will require using money from the cd;s or investments. Otherwise, the finances are in a positive position. Thank you to our membership and friends for their support.

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
Bill Graham
Dale Hachtel

DIRECTORS – Term expiring 2026

Brad Dye
Ed Simpson
Karin Martin
Leonard Lopez

DIRECTORS—Term expiring 2026

Mark Slater
Bob Conklin
Heather Carlson

Appointed Positions

Director of Operations	Corey Fettes
Membership	Eileen Wicker
Memorials & Gifts	Joyce McCormick
Newsletter Editor	Merredith Peterson

Board Resignations

Two resignations were accepted during the June board meeting: George Bathje who is moving from the area and Corey Fettes who is changing roles from board member to Director of Operations at RICHES.

George Bathje has served on the board for nearly seven years and is moving to the Chicago area to be closer to his family. George brought a background in project coordination and mechanical expertise from his years at Commonwealth Edison. He and his spouse Ava raised some of their family in Port Byron watching the river pass by as well as Tug Fest. They travel extensively having friends and family around the globe and a daughter in Melbourne, Australia as well as a son in the Rockford/Chicago area. George also is an excellent historical researcher. He plans to learn about a new county. Thanks, George

Corey Fettes has been a volunteer at RICHES for a year. He has served on the board for much of that time. As a board member and volunteer, Corey has made improvements in many areas: scanning the index cards for the book collection, installing security cameras, reworking the webpage, and using our software (PastPerfect) to its full capacity. We look forward to many more improvements.

Corey has a master's degree in history and an MBA. He is retired from Deere & Co. where he worked as a senior product manager. He lives in Moline with his spouse Jenny and young son Grayson. He is responsible for the day to day operations at RICHES and reports to the president. The board and the volunteers look forward to working with him and bringing RICHES into the 21st century.

Acquisitions

Thank you to the patrons and friends listed for their additions to the collections at RICHS. Listed are the donations from February through May. Thank you for helping to enhance the story of Rock Island County.

Alexander	Nancy	Longview Park RI photo, Strombeck-Becker photo, Survey
Alexander	Nancy	Photos and postcards of Queen Esther Circle of Kings
Anderson	Linda	Children's toys - bowling pins
Anderson	Richard	Various photos - Augustana
Butterworth Center		Photos - various
Finkes	John	Lake Davenport Sailing Club info, Spanish American War
Galley	Kathy	Alleman Reunion Booklets (1971, 1981, 1986 - 2, 1976, 1991), St Mary's Church Directory 2001 and Parish Directory 1994
Henning	Zen	History of Free Masonry—books and papers
Hipple	Jane	Cheese slicer
Irish	Barbara	Moline Tool Co., Moline - papers, brochures, and photos
Michel	Joe	Civil War Grand Army of the Republic Veteran's Medal
Michel	Kathy	2 wood doll cradles, late 1800s green scrapbook
Michel	Joe	11 inch cast iron skillet with lid, HO train car and track
Moline Preservation		Huntoon House drawing and framed picture, Moline's
Oleson	Don	Moline city map 1877, Books, Moline 1877 bridge framed
Reed	Mark	RI Alumni Directory 1932-1996, UTHS Alumni Directory 2001, Moline Sr. HS Reunion 1957, Moline Sr. Yearbook multiple years
Simpson	Rick and Cass	John Deere yearbook for 1930 (Moline)
Slater	Mark	John Deere by Neil M Clark (book)
Thoms	Mike	1905 Atlas of Rock Island County, war maps, postcards,
West	Perrine	Black Oxen, cup and saucer from Japan

Don't Cook Tonight ...

By Heather Carlson

Ask just about anyone who grew up in Rock Island County in the 1950's and 1960's if they remember Chicken Delight and the most common response will be a smile accompanied by them singing "Don't Cook Tonight Call Chicken Delight." It was a special night for sure when the delivery person handed over fried chicken, French fries, corn sticks, and a packet of cranberry sauce dinners on paper plates with another paper plate stapled on top to keep the food warm and in place. There may not be as many people, though, who remember that Chicken Delight was a product of Rock Island.

Al Tunick was born in Montreal, Quebec on February 28, 1915, and later moved to New York with his family where they became naturalized citizens. In 1934 they moved to Chicago then to Rock Island in 1936 where he remained. Over the course of his professional life, he was president of the Franchise Group, owner of Karmelkorn Shoppes, Inc. and a Soup "R Sandwich franchise. Mr. Tunick began working for AD Harris Scrap Metal in 1947 and later organized his own firm, Rock Island Industrial Movers.

In 1950 he bought Deacon Products Co which sold deep friers. He and some of his friends began experimenting with different types of deep-fried food when they landed on deep frying chicken that had been seasoned with spicy breading. Until that point, chicken was normally pan-fried and took quite a while to cook. This method was unique and much faster. By 1952 he was marketing this product through small

take-out and delivery locations under the name Chicken Delight.

The Korean War was close to ending and women were working outside the home leaving them with less time to cook dinner. The catchy jingle,

played frequently on the radio, took hold and dinners became much easier. Chicken Delight grew to over 1,000 locations in the United States, and a group of Canadian businessmen bought the rights for Canada, opening the first location in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

While Chicken Delight was growing in popularity in Moline and Rock Island, a story appeared in the July 15, 1952, edition of the Rock Island Argus. Edgar C. Cook, Jr. reported on the opening of Rock Island County's "newest private farm airport, appropriately christened International Cow Pasture No. 2." International Cow Pasture

No. 1, located in Virginia, was owned and operated by Arthur Godfrey of radio and television fame. After five years of construction Duane and Warren Mueller, along with help from Richard McQuadry and several of their friends, completed construction of a hangar which housed their only aircraft. The airstrip was described as



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(Continued from page 4)
bumpy and rolling, but safe for travel.

While helping on his father's farm one summer day, Warren Mueller got "extremely hungry." Realizing it was a long hike back to the house for a quick snack, he'd given up on the idea of taking a break when a plane flew overhead making him wish it was possible to drop food



from airplanes. He then thought of the catering service operating in Rock Island that delivered chicken dinners and an idea struck him. He had a plane and a runway, why couldn't they deliver chicken dinners to farm families by air. Chutes n' Chicken took flight. Their wives made parachutes out of tablecloth material, Chicken Delight prepared and delivered the chicken to the Moline Airport, the Mueller's flew to Moline, packaged the dinners and attached them to the parachutes. Friends and family benefitted from the experimental deliveries and soon after they were in a not very profitable but fun business.

The Mueller's studied detailed plat maps showing where their deliveries each Sunday were going, and before take-off they placed the boxed dinners in plastic bags, tied them to the parachute lines then dropped the dinners at the delivery location. And the rules were simple, "1. Eat the chicken. (But, of course). 2. Put para

chute in plastic bag. 3. Secure bag with Mueller's name tag (which was included in the dinner). 4. Drop bag in mailbox. 5. Enclose remittance in provided envelope. 6. Drop envelop in mailbox." They also included a note with each dinner asking the recipient to let their friends know if they enjoyed the dinner, and if not, please let them know what they could do to improve.

There were no suggestions. No dinners missed their targets, although one of the Mueller's said he saw a farmer climbing a maple tree to retrieve his delivery. Remarkably, all but one parachute was returned. It ended up in the home of a Detroit, Michigan woman who was visiting friends near Edginton and wanted to keep it as proof to her Michigan friends that her chicken dinner did, in fact, fall from the sky. It is possible, however, that she did mail it back. In a letter to the Mueller's complimenting the experience, she offered to do so. The Mueller's plan was only to have some fun and provide a delivery service to local farmers, but they did make a \$.26 profit one year, calling it a success.

All good things must come to an end, though.



As other fast-food franchises like McDonald's and KFC expanded their operations, Chicken Delight sales declined, and the company was sold to Consolidated Foods (now Sara Lee) in 1965. The memories and the jingle are pleasant memories, though.

Sources: RICHS files—Edginton Township-Edginton— Businesses Chute'n Chicken; articles and pictures from The Reynolds Press

Friends of Rock Island County Historical Society Luncheons

September 2026 - June 2026

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. Rock Island, IL.

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

<p>September 16th, 2025 Jeff Adamson</p> <p>Creepy, Twisted Tales of the QCA</p> <p>MENU: Swedish Meatballs w/Egg Noodles, Salad, Rolls and Butter, and Dessert</p>	<p>October 21st 2025 Jeff Adams</p> <p>Bricks and Brickyards</p> <p>MENU: Roast Pork, Cheesy Hashbrowns, Green Beans, Dessert</p>
<p>November 18th, 2025 Kelsey Vandercoy</p> <p>Figge Art Museum Centennial</p> <p>MENU: Roast Turkey & Dressing, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Vegetable, Salad, Rolls, Dessert</p>	<p>December 16th 2025 Michael Flaherty</p> <p>Maps & Their Value</p> <p>MENU: Glazed Ham, Au Gratin Potatoes, Vegetable, Salad, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>
<p>January 20th, 2026 Brett Hitchcock</p> <p>History of Circa 21</p> <p>MENU: Spaghetti & Meatballs, Salad, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>	<p>February 17th, 2026 Steve Slininger</p> <p>Center for Belgian Culture</p> <p>MENU: Ranch Chicken w/Potato Salad, Vegetable, Salad, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>
<p>March 17th, 2026 Ferrel Anderson</p> <p>Recent Finds Shed New Light on Hopewell Archeology</p> <p>MENU: Meat Lasagna and Salad,</p>	<p>April 21st, 2026 Christina Kastell</p> <p>The Davenport Tablets Conspiracy</p> <p>MENU: Baked Ham w/Scalloped Potatoes Vegetable, Salad, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>
<p>May 19th 2026 TBA</p> <p>MENU: Meatloaf w/Potatoes, Vegetable, Rolls & Butter, Dessert</p>	<p>June 16th, 2026 Larry Russell</p> <p>The Meredosia Bottoms</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.

Job Description: Director of Operations

Job Summary

The Rock Island County Historical Society (RICHES) is seeking a dedicated and experienced Director of Operations to oversee the organization's daily management, financial operations, event coordination, and collection management. The Director of Operations will work closely with the Board of Directors, volunteers, and the community to ensure the Society's mission is upheld while fostering growth and sustainability. This role will take on key operational responsibilities currently managed by the President, allowing the President to focus on strategic planning and broader organizational initiatives.

Key Responsibilities

1. Organizational Leadership & Management

- Be on-site Wednesday through Saturday to manage daily operations.
- Supervise and provide direction to staff and volunteers.
- Implement and update the organization's strategic plan.
- Act as a liaison between the Board, staff, and volunteers, ensuring alignment with organizational goals.
- Oversee day-to-day operations, allowing the President to focus on strategic initiatives.

2. Financial Oversight & Revenue Generation

- Assist in budget development, financial planning, and reporting to the Board.
- Oversee payroll, expense management, and financial records.
- Identify and develop new revenue sources to enhance financial sustainability.
- Lead and participate in fundraising initiatives.

3. Event & Program Coordination

- Oversee and coordinate key events hosted by RICHES.
- Develop and implement programs to increase membership, revenue, and community engagement.

4. Collection & Museum Management

- Supervise collection management and artifact preservation.
- Ensure compliance with museum best practices and utilize the PastPerfect database.
- Oversee museum tours, school group visits, and special events.

5. Communications & Community Engagement

- Maintain regular communication with Board members, staff, volunteers, and donors.
- Contribute to newsletters and provide regular updates on activities and accomplishments.
- Assist in organizing and participating in key meetings, including Board meetings.

Qualifications & Skills

- Bachelor's degree in museum studies, history, nonprofit management, business administration, or a related field (preferred).
- Experience in nonprofit administration, museum operations, or a related field.
- Strong leadership and management skills, with experience overseeing staff or volunteers.
- Financial acumen, including budgeting, revenue generation, and expense management.
- Experience in event planning, fundraising, and grant writing.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.
- Proficiency in museum database management (e.g., PastPerfect) is a plus.

Scam—Just When You Thought It Was Safe

Have you noticed a blossoming of tip jars and donation jars, or "go fund me" pages? Everyone is watching expenses a little more closely. One little piece came to light at RICHES in June.

A detective from the Arsenal called to say our donation jar at the Arsenal Museum had been robbed. That was quite a surprise since no one was aware of such a thing. It seems that the box labeled donations for Rock Island County Historical Society was placed in the museum at some point in time, and someone had been regularly collecting whatever money was in it until someone else did a "grab and run" after breaking the lock on the box. Of course, RICHES would not have placed such a box anywhere let alone a federal installation.. Consequently, one robber was robbed by another.

Moral of the story: Check your information before you donate.

Technology

Artificial Intelligence is in the news everyday. It has positive and negative potential, all of which come with challenges. RICHES has had an excellent experience using AI with the process for scanning the card files for the book collection.

Several years ago the Moline Regional Community Foundation awarded RICHES a grant for a card scanner and the software to scan the cards related to the book collection to make the list available on-line and more easily searched in house.

After three years of processing in a traditional manner, we were only in the "K's". After some trial runs, our Director of Operations found an inexpensive and quick solution using AI and the remaining cards were processed in less than a month.

The catalogue of books will be available online when the new webpage goes active.

The Bench

RICHES AUCTION FUND RAISER

Custom wood bench made from an antique headboard and footboard.

Suitable for indoors, porch or covered patio
Available for viewing at RICHES.

Call or stop in

Bid sheet available

Auction ends

September 1, 2026



(detail)

**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**

<input type="checkbox"/> President's Circle	\$500.00 & up
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$100.00 - \$499.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing	\$50.00 - \$99.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family/Business	\$35.00

Modjeski, the Owl

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