

Chautauqua Historical Society

Preservation is progress, may we be worthy stewards...

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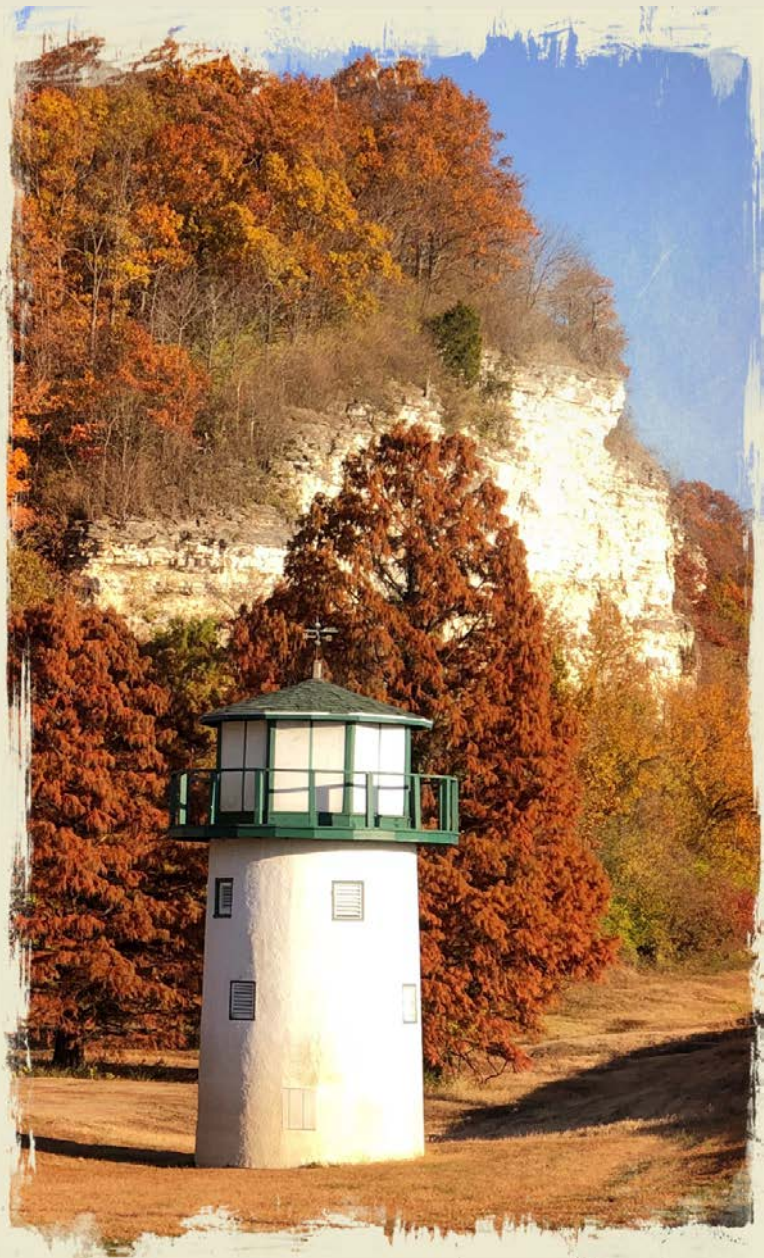
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CHAUTAUQUA



HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

I left the office of President of CHS on October 1st. I have enjoyed the past five years but it is time to move on. I would be remiss to not thank everyone who has worked with me to make the Historical Society better for Chautauqua.

I want to thank the CHS Board of Directors for their work in keeping our society on track to keep improving. I am always amazed to see all of the volunteers, both CHS members and non-members, as they identify historical artifacts and work to make sure that our community has its past saved for future Chautauquans. I want to also thank all of our members and donors for supporting our efforts.

I am sure that you will give your welcome and support to the new CHS President, Cale Fischer, and help him to keep CHS growing and improving.

My best to all,

Jack Weyforth

President, Chautauqua Historical Society

The Chautauqua Historical Society

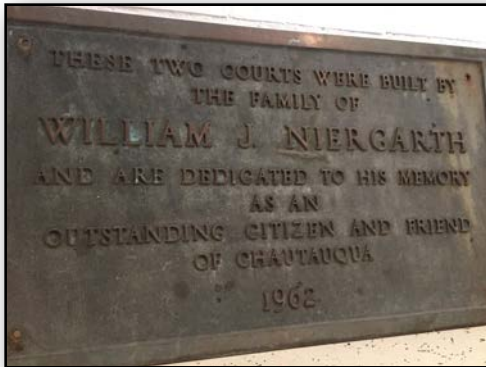
The mission and purpose of the Chautauqua Historical Society is the preservation and enhancement of the historic traditions and culture of New Piasa Chautauqua, Chautauqua, Illinois; the encouragement of historical research on the Chautauqua community and nearby historic districts; the publication of historical brochures, pamphlets, and other written material on New Piasa Chautauqua, remaining permanent assemblies and chautauquas in other parts of the United States and the national Chautauqua movement; and the establishment of an educational program to inform the Chautauqua community and the general public of the historical and educational value of New Piasa Chautauqua.

Melissa McCanna, editor, writer

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Chautauqua Place Names: Who Are They?

In the spring newsletter, five signs were featured. Those are not the only named signs around the grounds! The discovery, research, restoration and recognition will be an ongoing project.



Niergarth shuffleboard courts: In the 1962 Chautauqua summer program book, the dedication of two new professional shuffleboard courts was described. Then president of the board, Walter Griesedieck, said “I should like to call your attention to the two new shuffleboard courts. These were built through the kindness and generosity of the wife and daughter of the late Mr. William J. Niergarth of Webster Groves as a memorial to him and his love for Chautauqua.” It was later mentioned that he introduced the game of shuffleboard to the community. On Sunday, August 5th, 1962, there was a memorial service and dedication of the courts. The bronze plaque (left) was removed and stored during the construction of the Donnelly pavilion. The

historical society plans to reinstall the plaque. William Niergarth, an active Chautauquan and president of the board from 1944-45, died in January of 1962. The family owned the Polster cottage “Oakhurst” from 1929 to 1938. The existing lease history does not indicate what cottage they owned after 1938.



Update on the Schwaninger Field sign: Originally profiled in the spring newsletter, the “field” sign was noted as missing after the fall flooding in 2016. This author just found it in September of 2017, sitting atop the stone gates to Flint Park!

The sign was turned over to the groundsman, Kyle Berry and Will Mortland, for rehanging. Taking their stewardship of Chautauqua seriously, they didn’t just rehang the sign as found, instead, they carefully took each sign, cleaned and repainted and then reattached them on the fence backstop.

Thank you!



Chautauqua Historical Society 2017 Activities



The Young Musicians Concert: Music has been an important part of Chautauqua since its inception. Each year, the historical society brings an accomplished classically-trained musician to entertain our residents in the beautiful Kupferle Chapel. This year brought an accomplished young man from Grafton, Emmanuel Bishop, to delight us with his violin music. He was joined by a string quartet. Emmanuel has played his violin in concerts around the world. Following the performance, a reception was held in town hall, allowing the talented musician to mingle with his new Chautauqua fans, friends and family.

Fourth of July Flag Ceremony: This important ceremony was very well attended again this year. It marks the beginning of the holiday celebration in the valley. July 4th celebrates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776 by the second Continental Congress. A more modern day Congress established this day as a holiday in 1870 and reaffirmed it in 1938 with a holiday for federal employees.



Chautauqua coloring pages: This season saw a creative new project that successfully involved all ages! Rose Tomlinson designed and drew a blank coloring page for each week of the season. Every page featured an image related to Chautauqua. One was available each week at the Archival Research Center (ARC). This brought a lot of interest in what the new page would be, from the lighthouse to our own ginkgo trees. People could pick up a new page in the ARC every week, and color it there or take it home.

Coloring page evening: This was a wonderful extension of the coloring page project by Rose. Some 30 adults joined together in the Town Hall to color a page and join in conversation and 20 children joined together in the Yellow Balloon to color. This was a very well-attended new event for the historical society.

Activities at the Archival Research Center (ARC): The ARC was open three days each week during the summer season, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 - 12:00. The director, Rhea Winters, the intern and new and existing volunteers kept the center open and running smoothly. The cottage boxes and the coloring pages brought many members of the community into the archival center this year, making it a busy place! See page 8 for more information on ARC news and activities.

Jersey Joe's: Every Wednesday throughout the season, Bert Hampton made coffee available and often provided donuts or cookies. Available on the porch of the Kentucky Home, it has become a great place to meet old friends, make new friends and catch up on all the Chautauqua news.

Flag Ceremonies: Since 2004, military service flags have flown during the season to honor Chautauqua's deceased veterans. Seven flags were flown this season, each raised during a noon flag ceremony on Sundays, after chapel. The flag detail, led by Chuck Bryant, is made up of representatives from the nineteen Chautauqua men and women who served in the military. The Historical Society sponsors each flag ceremony and serves as the custodian of the flags, which have been given to the community on a long-term loan basis by veteran's families.

The 15th Annual Platform Lecture: This year's program brought us an engaging speaker from our local environs, Janet Riehl. You may have seen the name, Riehl Lane off of route 3 in Godfrey, which leads to her family home place. You may have heard of Frank Riehl, noted poet from the late 1800s, early 1900s. Perhaps you remember Riehl station, a railroad stop off the bluff line. Maybe you are also aware of the family's important national role in orchards and horticulture. Janet Riehl brought her family's and our area's history to life through fiddle music and song, pictures, poetry and stories. A reception followed the presentation.

The CHS newsletter: The historical society publishes a newsletter twice a year, designed to highlight our activities, historical research related to aspects of our community and nearby historic districts, and remaining permanent chautauquas in the United States. The newsletter is sent to all Chautauquans, providing a valuable connection to the discovery of our history.



Regular historical updates in the Channels weekly newsletter: This was the second summer that regular articles were placed in the weekly channels newsletter. Each article highlighted information from the rich resources of the Historical Society archives. Written by Rose Tomlinson, the articles received a positive reaction from the community and brought stories of our history closer to Chautauqua families every week.

Tomlinson/Hurd intern: Kathryn Bozon returned this season as the Tomlinson/Hurd Chautauqua Historical Society Intern. This year, the NPCH-CICA funded a portion of her stipend for scanning and organizing the cottage leases. Her other work included scanning documents for the historical society. We hope to continue this internship on a yearly basis.

The CHS Summer Lawn Party: This was a wonderful event for CHS members hosted by our membership chair, Ellen Mullarkey. It was designed as a party in the early 20th century might have been, featuring cakes, lemonade and cookies, cool white clothing and spirited games of badminton and croquet. Members agreed that this should become a yearly event. See pages 6 and 7 for photographs.

**Be a part of and help shape these wonderful activities, join the
Chautauqua Historical Society!**



Chautauqua Historical Society *Summer Lawn Games Party*



This season, a charming party was given by the historical society for its members. Conceived and brought to life by membership chair, Ellen Mullarkey, the party was an instant success. Members were asked to dress in cool white clothing, as the first Chautauquans did. And dress they did, in dapper and delightful summer regalia.

Three games were played that day, croquet, badminton and shuffleboard. All three games were mentioned in early program books as part of regularly scheduled activities. The 1910 program book highlights summertime activities such as lawn tennis, croquet and roque games. In the 1914 program book it was noted that croquet was free!

There were two particularly spirited games that afternoon - croquet and badminton. Delicious cookies, cakes, ice tea and lemonade were much appreciated. The party, held in the first week of the season, was very popular and there were many requests to make this a yearly event.



The Archival Research Center (ARC)

The 2017 season opened two weeks early, requiring our volunteers to be available to clean and prepare the room, and to assist residents with research. Our volunteers stepped up to the task! This summer, the collections we organized, stored in archival books and scanned, included: summer program books, Children's Day Pageant Programs, and Chautauqua theatre memorabilia. Work on the cottage boxes continued, with materials added to nearly every box.



We are still searching for program books missing from our collection: 1904, 1920-1924, 1927, 1930 and 1945, and Children's Day Pageant programs from 1969 - 1981. We will copy these and return the original to you.

We want to thank Rhea Winters for her years as the director of the ARC. Her work guiding volunteers and seeing to the work of the center was so valuable. We are fortunate that she will volunteer at the ARC, offering her knowledge and experience.

The Chautauqua Historical Society is grateful that Mary Ann Weyforth has stepped forward to be the new director of the ARC. She will share with us the knowledge and insight gained both from her work as an ARC volunteer and her extensive teaching background.

We are already preparing for the 2018 season and welcome your assistance as a volunteer!

Chautauqua Historical Society Membership

The Chautauqua Historical Society is the custodian and caretaker of an impressive and growing collection of photos, letters, monographs, and other documents gathered from our fellow Chautauquans and others. The Society works for the conservation and preservation of these precious fragments of our beloved Chautauqua's heritage. As in past seasons, the Society will continue to support the expansion of operations in the Archival Research Center in the Kentucky Home. It will continue to host Jersey Joe, our Wednesday morning cybercafé. You can look forward to the Society-sponsored Young Musician's Concert, and the Platform Lecture, an annual presentation of a unique and fascinating look into history as viewed from the perspective of our wonderful riverside village. The Society newsletter continues to provide new and informative views into our past, as we identify and document stories, events, and memorable moments of our history. This year CHS members will be invited to attend the CHS Summer Lawn Party.

Membership Categories

CHS Patron, \$25 – Benefits include subscription to the Society newsletter, priority reservations for special events and tours sponsored by CHS and/or partner organizations. Membership is tax deductible.

Piasa Bluffs Assembly, \$75 – Benefits include all the above, plus: membership in the national Chautauqua Network administered by the Chautauqua Institution in New York, newsletter credit for support of special printing issues (PBA members are the principal support for the color printing of the newsletter); advance invitations to PBA programs; and not to be forgotten, free coffee and pastry at the Jersey Joe's Wednesday Cybercafé. Membership is tax deductible.

NPC Lineage \$100 – Benefits include all of the above. In addition, your family will be invited to a Cottage Box "building" event where we will work with you on filling your cottage box with personal history. Membership is tax deductible.

The Chautauqua Historical Society membership is on a calendar year basis of January - December. Send your payment to:

Ellen Mullarkey
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