One hundred years ago, women in the United States were finally given the right to vote! From Seneca Falls through WWI, from Illinois (the first state to ratify the amendment in June of 1919) to Tennessee (the last state to ratify the amendment in August of 1920), suffragists never lost sight of the goal, and after a seven decade struggle, American women were finally granted the right to vote on August 26, 1920.

To mark, honor and celebrate this important anniversary, a collaborative committee consisting of members from the Peoria Historical Society, the Peoria Riverfront Museum, the Peoria Public Library and the League of Women Voters of the Greater Peoria Area is working hard to create events, programs and activities that honor these courageous women and underscore the importance of this historic event. Most of the celebration will take place in June, and while some of the events are still in the sketch phase, most of the major events are set in ink. The keynote event will be a PRM hosted lecture, book signing and cocktail party with Elaine Weiss, author of The Woman’s Hour: The Great Fight to Win the Vote. Please note the “working” calendar below and check the Peoria Historical Society website and Facebook page for more information closer to June.

Winning the Right to Vote Celebration: 100th Anniversary of the Nineteenth Amendment Working Calendar

June 6 - 1:00-3:00 pm
Opening Reception for PHS Curated Exhibit in Peoria Public Library Downtown Gallery
(exhibit will be open 6/6 though 6/31)

June 9 - 2:00 pm
PHS Hosted Suffragist Tea
at Pettengill-Morron Historic House Museum

June 9 - 5:30–7:30 pm
Elaine Weiss Lecture, Book Signing & Cocktail Party
at Peoria Riverfront Museum

June 10 - 8:00 am
Breakfast Talk with Elaine Weiss
at Peoria Public Library North Branch

June 10 - 6:30 pm
Suffragette March from Peoria Riverfront Museum to Municipal Band Concert by Kelleher’s

June 10 - 7:00 pm
Municipal Band Concert featuring music of era
Outside of Kelleher’s

Fridays & Saturdays in June
PHS Notable Women Tours

Spring/Summer
Sash Making Workshops for Teens
PRM Curated Case
Book Club Discussions
Film Series & Lecture Series
From the President

Our first thoughts go out to all those directly and indirectly affected by Covid-19. In times like this, we are all in this together. Fortunately, this is a sentiment that has always described the Peoria Historical Society community. Our hard-working Board of Trustees, our tireless volunteers and our dedicated staff function as a family, and I am happy to report that “our family” has had a good year since we met at our annual membership meeting last May. Since that point, PHS has had great success and lots of fun!

Since last May, we have sponsored several successful fund-raisers including a well-attended deTonti event, a Trivia Night and a record year for the Holiday Home Tours. The Rennick “History thru Art” Show celebrated its 55th year and moved to its new location at the Peoria Riverfront Museum. Our History Tours resulted in great attendance and even sold out in October. And, we continue to enjoy substantial membership growth.

Additionally, our collection was seen in a variety of venues over the past year. Our curator, Maureen Naughtin, displayed art from the PHS collection at the Peoria Public Library Main Branch Gallery in May. The show was titled “Historic Art Inspired by Local History.” PHS owned artifacts remain on display at the Peoria Riverfront Museum, the Wheels o’ Time Museum and, as can be seen in this issue, at other locations as well.

All of our successes are due to the commitment of our generous members, volunteers, staff and Board of Trustees. Thank you all for your commitment and dedication! We will keep our members and patrons updated on schedules and events.

Kathy Ma, President

Art Show Makes History!

by John Parks

Celebrating talented local artists and Peoria area history, the Peoria Historical Society is proud to announce the 56th Annual Rennick “History Thru Art” Show.

This year’s show has many exciting features, including the “History Thru Art” theme that recognizes Central Illinois’ rich history. Cash awards totaling over $1,000 will be rewarded at an opening reception that honors artists, patrons, and show sponsors Sharon and John Amdall. For the second year, the artwork will be showcased at the Peoria Riverfront Museum throughout the month of May.

The ‘History Thru Art’ Show will be open and free to the public, May 7th through May 31st in the Peoria Riverfront Museum Auditorium during regular business hours. A special opening reception and awards ceremony will be held Thursday, May 7th.

For artist criteria and additional show information, please visit peoriahistoricalsociety.org, or call the Peoria Historical Society office at 309-674-1921

A Belated “Thank You” and Gift Basket Winners

by John Rosa

In the Winter edition of the Timeline, we had intended to thank all of the people who made the Holiday Home Tour the great success that it was. However, I overlooked one group and would like to send out my sincere apologies for that.

To the following volunteers who worked at the Scottish Rite Cathedral that weekend, thank you so very much.

Tim Ryon, Shelly Lehman, H. Wayne Wilson, Bill Shaner, Mike Nuske, Connie Tomczyk, Beth Johnson, Suzie Adcock, Mark Johnson, Ken Edwards and those Masons who volunteered their time to guide us through the building.

And, now that all the Holiday Home Tour gift baskets have been claimed, I am pleased to announce the names of those winners: Julie Deignan, Ira Mae Elbert, Jackie Rea, John Rosa, Mary Sierra and Susan Welty.

Thank You Sid!

by John Rosa

The Peoria Historical Society would like to thank Sid Ruckriegel, Peoria City Council member and PHS member, for his generous donation to the PHS Endowment Fund. His donation was in memory of Vickie Garner, mother of PHS vice president Zach Oyler.

Through this donation and through others like it, the Peoria Historical Society can continue to meet its mission to “preserve, share and celebrate the stories of the Peoria area”.

Spring 2020 Peoria Historical Society Newsletter
Sharing Stories: Educational Outreach

The Peoria Historical Society currently has several educational outreach presentations and welcomes the opportunity to share Peoria history with the Peoria community. Below is a list of topics and presenters. To schedule a presentation with a PHS staff member or volunteer, please call the office at (309) 674-1921 Tuesday through Friday 9:00 – 4:30.

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<tr>
<td>Pettengill-Morron Historic House Museum (30 min)</td>
<td>Corey Curtis, P-M docent</td>
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<tr>
<td>John C. Flanagan Historic House Museum (30 min)</td>
<td>Alexis Lavin, Flanagan House Manager</td>
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<td>Springdale Cemetery (60 mins)</td>
<td>Beth Johnson, PHS Board Member</td>
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<td>Peoria: Whiskey Capital of the World (60 mins)</td>
<td>Bernie Drake, PHS Volunteer</td>
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<td>Notable Women of Peoria (60 mins)</td>
<td>Beth Johnson &amp; Marilyn Leyland, PHS Volunteer</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Civil War, Abe Lincoln &amp; Peoria (60 mins)</td>
<td>Corey Curtis</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joseph Petradi: Italian Sculptor (60 mins)</td>
<td>Maureen Naughtin, PHS Curator</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Spanish-American War and its ties to Peoria (30 min)</td>
<td>Maureen Naughtin</td>
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<td>Counting People: History of the Census (45 mins)</td>
<td>Maureen Naughtin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Illinois Women in Action: 100th Anniversary of Winning the Right to Vote (60 mins)</td>
<td>Maureen Naughtin</td>
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Sharing Stories: Collaborating with Our Partners

The Peoria Historical Society relishes the opportunity to collaborate with area partners to tell the stories of our area. This year PHS-owned artifacts will grace the exhibits of two partners – the Doug Oberhelman Caterpillar Visitors Center and the Museums of the Diocese of Peoria. Under the guidance of CAT archivist Lee Fosburgh, PHS will help the Caterpillar Visitors Center tell the story of the CAT sponsored 497th Engineer Heavy Shop Company stationed in Burma during WW II, and under the direction of archivist Sister Lea Stenfancova, PHS will assist the Diocesan Museum shape a story about the history of health care in Peoria.

The 497th Engineer Heavy Shop Company sponsored by Caterpillar was stationed in Burma from October 1942 to late 1944. Comprised of 194 men – all Caterpillar employees –, the company was in charge of repairing machinery used to construct the Ledo Road – a stretch of road needed to circumvent a portion of the main Burma Road which had been captured by the Japanese. The addition of the Ledo Road allowed American and Chinese forces and supplies to move unthreatened along the road. The entire mission was lauded for having accomplished “the greatest engineering achievement since the building of the Panama Canal,” according to a statement made in a 1944 CAT publication, News and Views. And the 497th – the men from Peoria – could take credit for the tremendous help.

To learn more about the story of these courageous men, visit the Caterpillar Visitors Center. (Make special note of the scrapbook.)

The Museums of the Diocese of Peoria will open this spring a special exhibit about the history of healthcare in the Peoria Diocese. While much of the exhibit will focus of the role of Catholic healthcare, other significant players in the field will also be on display, notably the medical bags of Dr. George Zeller. Dr. Zeller is best known for forever changing how mentally ill patients are treated. Dr. Zeller believed in educating the public about mental illness, and he advocated for the compassionate, humane treatment of all patients. Key to Dr. Zeller’s care of the mentally ill was the use of therapeutic practices. He insisted that “imprisonsments” and restraints were not the answer. Instead, under his tutelage, all medical personnel were trained in the use of therapeutic medicine. Dr. Zeller oversaw the construction of what was in 1902 known as the Illinois Asylum for the Incurably Insane. Upon Zeller’s insistence, the hospital’s name was quickly changed to the Peoria State Hospital as he firmly believed no one was incurable. Truly a change-maker, Dr. Zeller’s compassion permanently altered mental health treatment and understanding.

To learn more about the history of healthcare in the Peoria area, visit the Museums for the Diocese of Peoria.
Peoria’s Notable Clocks, where are they now?
by Pat Dowd

Mechanical clocks have been a part of society since the 1200s. Churches were the first to have mechanical clocks, which let parishioners know when to come to worship. As industrialization occurred, they were also important in letting people know when to come to work, so their activities could be coordinated.

Peoria, being an active city for industry and business almost since its founding, was and is pervaded by clocks. Lowly alarm clocks were important in getting people to work on time. They often had specially made dials advertising their purchase place. Time clocks were also important in making sure accurate records were kept so employees could be appropriately paid. A recording clock made by the International Time Recording Company, Endicott, New York (ca. 1910) was recently donated to the Peoria Historical Society by Victoria Holland Hurst and is currently on display at the Wheels O’ Time Museum. The manufacturer of this clock eventually merged with other time clock companies to form the International Business Machine Company, now more commonly known as IBM. Once the lower part of the clock was opened, the original card listing the buyer was found. It was sold to the Boss Manufacturing Company. Peoria was one of the places Boss had a manufacturing plant for gloves. Some businesses also had elaborate interior clocks, such as the clock in the lobby of the second location (210 S.W. Adams Street) of the First National Bank. What happened to that clock?

The most well-known clock in Peoria is the one from the County Courthouse, which was installed in 1878. After the courthouse was torn down, it was restored and displayed at Vachon Brake Service, the Wheels O’ Time Museum, and now the Peoria Riverfront Museum. Its most recent restoration and move to Peoria Riverfront Museum was described by John Parks in the September 2015 Timeline publication. A testimonial to that clock was published in the 1879 Seth Thomas Clock Company catalog “The clock furnished our Court House, we are pleased to say, gives universal satisfaction. It has been running for about 3 months, and during this time has deviated but ten seconds from standard time. For good material, honest work and courteous treatment, we take pleasure in recommending the Seth Thomas Clock Company.” (letter dated October 28, 1878). Two other large outdoor clocks were also present in Peoria for a time - the one in the Rock Island Railroad Depot tower (tower demolished in 1939) and the one on top of the Commerce Building located at Washington and Harrison (demolished in 1967). What happened to those clocks?

In writing this article we hope to uncover information about the four-sided street clock that used to be in front of Goldstein’s Jewelry Store (211 S.W. Adams Street) starting in the 1920s. The Tower and Street Clock Chapter of the National Association of Watch and Clock Collectors is trying to determine the fate of the Peoria and other four-sided street clocks that used to be in many cities of the U.S. Please contact Chuck Roeser at clockdoc6672@gmail.com if you have any information. Thanks for your help!

Jean Morron’s Bookcase – Full of Treasures
by Stephanie Ashton

Going through Jean Morron’s collection of books has given me insight into who this fascinating woman was. Miss Morron’s bookcase alone contains material on just about every topic. When she wasn’t learning a new language or reading novels about far-off places (many of which she likely visited herself) in English or French, she was learning about science, religion, history, and cooking.

One of my favorite finds is Gathered Crumbs: Peoria Cook Book, a collection of recipes compiled in 1888 in Peoria by Mrs. Jennie C. McClure. Inside is a treasure trove of nineteenth-century dishes submitted by some familiar names: Mrs. J. H. Morron’s cream of celery soup, Mrs. H. Detweiller’s noodle soup, Mrs. Lydia Bradley’s “two ways of cooking tomatoes,” Mrs. Lucie B. Tyng’s Indian bannock, and S. Trefzger & Son’s zwieback, to name a few. These recipes are followed by household remedies for everything from ink stains to mosquitoes in the house, as well as a section of “bills of fare” such as the menu for Mrs. J. B. Greenhut’s fish dinner. The recipes alone are a wonderful glimpse into late-19th-century daily life, but to know as a fact that these dishes were served right here in Peoria is, for me, an amazing discovery.

Upscale Porch Sale
by Mary Hamm

Mark your calendars for June 13. We will be once again participating in the Moss Ave. Sale with the Upscale Porch Sale. You don’t want to miss shopping for the “finer items” such as antiques, linens, jewelry, fine china, housewares and many unique finds. We will also be offering tours of the Pettengill-Morron House. Bring your friends and we’ll see you there!
Rediscovering Peoria's Quiet Architectural Avant-Garde
by Beth Johnson & Ed Barry

There has been considerable fanfare during the last several years about the late 20th Century Peoria Architect Richard Doyle. Because of the spark that has been ignited by passionate developer and entrepreneur Kim Blickenstaff, the Community is being re-introduced to several of Mister Doyle’s local architectural jewels, including several mercantile structures along North Prospect Road, and the delightfully Modernist former Peoria Heights Public Library. Architect Doyle had several Peoria contemporaries cut from the same fine cloth: quiet yet passionate about their architectural craft; possessing immense creative talent; and powerfully committed to the Peoria Community they called home. One such contemporary was Architect Cletis Roy Foley.

Cletis was the quintessential 20th Century Modernist architect. Ready to throw off the “shackles” of classical architectural dogma and detailing, in favor of a sleek, clean, and altogether new paradigm that was bold and powerful in its simplicity. More importantly, Cletis not only believed in the beauty engendered by such an all-new approach, he also believed in its transformative power, to make society a better place within which to live, work, and prosper. And while hindsight may now tell us that Modernism at its purist had its shortcomings (witness Brasilia, Pruitt-Igoe, and others), that passion at the time ran deep and wide. And was profoundly heartfelt among architects the world over, including Cletis Foley. A diverse sampling of Cletis’s Modernist architectural legacy in Peoria (some of which are with us intact; others that have been inelegantly modified; and some that are lost forever) includes:

4444 North Knoxville. The first high-rise condominium residence in Central Illinois, and a superb example of the symmetry and purity of the International Style, located just south of David Connor’s equally-superb Modernist residence, also influenced by Cletis.

Demanes Interiors. A beautifully Miesian commercial building, purpose-built as the home of Lou Demanes’ interior design firm. This gem is now somewhat lost in the cacophony of surrounding retail development.

CILCO Headquarters. Peoria’s only high-rise metal curtainwall structure of the Modernist era, with delightfully robin’s-egg blue finish panels. Only the ground floor detailing has been lost by an inelegant update in more recent years.

Downtown YMCA. Very much in the spirit of LeCorbusier’s Villa Radieuse or Oscar Niemeyer’s Brasilia, this tall and thin building ‘slab’ with a low and shapely counterpoint, perfectly captures the spirit of its time.

Central Park Pool. One of Cletis’ later public buildings, a joint effort of the School District and the Park District, this facility included expansive translucent sliding doors that created a spectacular indoor-outdoor connection for all swimmers.

Varsity Theater. One of Cletis’ earliest designs, while working with Fletcher Lankton and John Ziegele, this excellent example of urban Moderne design (as opposed to Modernist design) has been lost to a suburban-inspired strip shopping center.

These are just a sampling of the many buildings that Cletis helped create in our community, in a career that spanned well over fifty years. He began that career as an Associate with J. Fletcher Lankton and John N. Ziegele Architects. Later, he was a partner in Greggs, Briggs, & Foley Architects, and then Foley, Hackler, Thompson, & Lee. In 1965, he broke away from these larger practices, to get “back in the trenches” by forming Apace (Associated Professional Architects and Consulting Engineers), with fellow Modernist Architect Gordon L. Tinsman and Engineer S. Alan Baird. He formally retired from Apace in the late 1980s.

A true renaissance spirit, Cletis was passionate about his family and his community, in addition to his chosen career field of architecture. He was a devoted husband to Margaret and father to four children: Don, Mark, Gay and Pat. At Westminster Presbyterian Church (where he designed their beautifully-modern parish hall), he taught Sunday School for twenty-eight years and served as an elder for three years. In the Peoria Community, he spent twenty years on the City’s Planning Commission; served twelve years as an elected Trustee for the Peoria Park Board; and also served on the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission. Cletis was also involved with youth as a Boy Scout leader and in the Peoria court counseling program for youthful offenders. In his spare time, Cletis and Margaret together hosted countless foreign exchange students, reeled in taking their grandchildren for some serious white-water rafting, and delivered meals for the Meals on Wheels program.

Cletis Roy Foley left us some six years ago, after a long and meaningful one hundred years in America’s Heartland that he felt such passionate fealty towards. As an architect, a citizen advocate, and a quietly-impactful homo sapiens, he left a powerful and positive imprint on that Heartland. Much of what Cletis was, as an architect and as a man, can be understood in the following quotation from an article he wrote in the early days of his career.

It is my firm conviction that the modern movement is winning out because it has a better product to offer. The point should be made, however, that this movement is not a style as compared with other traditional styles, but is a conviction of men, particularly our younger men, who see through the superficiality of past mistakes. Homes should not be modern in a stylistic sense, but modern as truly good architecture has always been – that is, suited to the times and people using it.

An Architect’s Guide to Lasting Design by Cletis R. Foley
The Review • The Society of Residential Appraisers • February 1952
Prominent People from Peoria’s Past
by Michele Lehman

If you’ve attended a concert at Westminster Presbyterian Church or a theatre arts lecture at Bradley University, chances are you are familiar with the name Gretchen Iben. This prominent Peorian left legacies supporting the arts when she died in 1986.

Iben was born Gretchen Ruth Hulsebus in 1900 in Peoria to Bernhard and Talea Hulsebus. She graduated from Bradley University with additional studies at the University of Illinois and in New York and California. She taught English and directed plays at Manual High School. She later taught speech and drama at Bradley. She married building contractor Richard Iben of Peoria in 1942. The couple lived at 902 W. Moss Avenue for 35 years. They had no children.

Here is some of the arts-related work Iben was involved in:

Co-founded Corn Stock Theatre, was its first president and directed its first show, “Gigi.”

Bequeathed funds to Westminster Presbyterian Church, where church leaders established the Gretchen R. Iben Arts Series. The program remains strong with 10 concerts sponsored by the series last year, according to church organist and choirmaster Thomas Clark-Jones. She also directed pageants at the church, where she was a member.

Established the Richard and Gretchen Iben Memorial Lectureship at Bradley University after the death of her husband in 1982. The series supports residencies for guest directors, designers, writers and actors who work with students and faculty, providing close mentorship and practical connection to the professional world, according to Department of Theatre Arts Chair Scott Kanoff.

Served on the board of Peoria Players Theatre, where she directed 23 plays over 30 years, beginning in 1931.

Directed plays for Junior League, Peoria Consistory and YWCA, which honored her with its Outstanding Woman Award in 1975.

Bradley University’s President Report noted after her death, “Her productions established a tradition of excellence as a result of her literary taste, her play selection and her ability to inspire and draw the best from her cast and crew.”

Iben is buried at Peoria’s historic Springdale Cemetery next to her husband and near his relatives. Her own paternal grandparents, parents and brother also are buried at Springdale.

Peoria Historical Society Receives a Gift
by Michele Lehman

Peoria Historical Society thanks WTVP for its donation of an original oil painting by Peoria artist Hedley William Waycott (1865-1938).

Formerly, the painting was given to WTVP by a viewer to be sold at the television station’s annual fundraising auction. The station’s management determined the painting would be given to the Historical Society to be preserved and for the enjoyment of the public, according to WTVP CEO and President Lesley Matuszak. The painting will become part of the Historical Society’s permanent collection and will be displayed during the Society’s art shows, said the Society’s Curator Maureen Naughtin.

The 31-inch-by-40-inch work depicts a scene along the Illinois River near Henry. Waycott’s paintings are prized for their beauty and their representations of the bluffs and streams of the Illinois River Valley. His other subjects include landscapes and florals in an impressionist style.

Waycott, who emigrated to the United States from England, helped establish the Peoria Art League in 1894. He taught art, designed and crafted picture frames, and owned an art and art supplies store. He was well-known in art circles and in Peoria-area society in the first 40 years of the 20th century. His works are in private collections throughout the United States and abroad. The former Lakeview Museum of Arts and Sciences in Peoria exhibited 60 of his pieces in 2006.
Welcome New Members!

PHS would like to extend a warm greeting to those who have become new members since our last publication.

Deborah Triebel  
Susan Platt  
Thomas Garske  
Kim Reynolds  
Robin and Jessica Hearn  
James Kosner  
Mary Sierra  
Robert and Ira Mae Elbert  
Martin Crabtree  
Maryellen Strode  
Marylee and Richard Bales  
Mac and Connie Pogue  
Daryl Hoover and Kay Ingels  
Angela and Joseph Milton  
Sean and Kim Ames  
Derek and Sarah Schryer  
Susan and Scott Welty  
Peggy and Bob Davison

Meet Stephanie Ashton

*by Mary Hamm*

Stephanie Ashton is the new volunteer/intern at Pettengill-Morron House. She accompanied her mother to the office to donate some items and to “see what she could learn.” There she met curator, Maureen Naughtin. At a second chance meeting, Maureen asked if she would be interested in an internship and Stephanie “jumped at the chance.” She is working on the Morron book collection. She is sharing that experience in her own article.

Stephanie graduated from Richwoods High School in 2008 and the University of Illinois in 2012 with a B.S. in Media and Cinema Studies. She spent 8 months in Orlando at Disney EPCOT participating in the Disney College Program, 2012-2013.

Her interests include history, English, literature, art and music. She plays the flute and piccolo. She is especially interested in Peoria history, genealogy and the 19th century.

When Stephanie isn’t “marveling at this beautiful house and all of the things in it,” she daydreams about doing something with Peoria and its history full-time. She has been researching her family history and discovered that her great-great-great grandparents were married here. They have been in Peoria since at least 1849. Someday she hopes to write a book.

We were lucky to have Stephanie portray a maid in the Servant’s Quarters during the Holiday Home Tour while her mother, Jean, entertained guests by playing our antique piano in the Parlor.

We are thrilled to have Stephanie with us every Thursday and appreciate her dedication!

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Pass along your passion for history and consider becoming a Peoria Historical Society Membership Sponsor. Someone you know has the same interest in “preserving, sharing, and celebrating the stories of the Peoria area”. Your gift of membership not only helps further the PHS mission, but encourages others to do the same. Please use the form below or go online to peoriahistoricalsociety.org for a printable membership form and add a note that you’re sponsoring the new member when you submit the form.

*Thanks for your continued support.*

**Become a PHS Membership Sponsor!**

Yes, I would like to sponsor a one year membership to the Peoria Historical Society.

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Credit Card # (Visa or Mastercard) ____________________________

Expiration_______ Security Code_________

Membership Level:  
- Student: $25___  
- Individual: $35___  
- Family: $60___  
- Patron: $100___  
- Lifetime: $1,000___  
- Corporate: unlimited, starting at $250_____

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Please mail this completed form to the Peoria Historical Society  
611 SW Washington St.  
Peoria, IL 61602

Thank you! The new member will receive a special “Welcome to PHS” note in your name.