



Effingham County Cultural Center and Museum Newsletter

Effingham, Illinois

Volume 3, Issue 1

January-February-March 2016



Two hundred area World War II veterans were honored on this Christmas tree in December. Inspired by ECCMA board member **Jane Loy Ries**, the heart-shaped ornaments were constructed by Unit 40 second graders as part of a Veterans Day activity geared to inspire patriotism and student appreciation for military service. The reverse side of each red or white ornaments bears the name of the student responsible for making it.

ECCCMA Mission Statement

The purpose of the Museum is to establish, maintain, and operate a museum for the general public, and to collect, research, care for and interpret materials and artifacts of cultural and historical interest to the residents of, and visitors to, Effingham County, Illinois. Our vision is that the 1872 Effingham County Courthouse remains as an architectural gem that instills a sense of community pride and provides a venue to educate and showcase the history, art, and transportation of Effingham County. The Museum is a 501(c) 3 organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Hours

Usual hours March-December: Tuesday & Saturday: 10 AM - 2 PM
Other hours by special arrangement
Closed to the general public January-February, except for special programming
or by appointment

Accessibility

The museum is wheelchair accessible from the east side entrance just off the parking lot. Toilet facilities that are wheelchair accessible can be found in the west exhibit room.

Collection Building

The scope of the Museum's collection is directed by its Mission Statement. Donations are accepted of objects that relate directly to the Museum's mission of collecting materials and artifacts of cultural and/or historical interest.

Board and Officers

President	Delaine Donaldson	
Vice President	Jane Ries	
Secretary	LoElla Baker	
Treasurer	Allen Westendorf	
Members at Large	Jerry Katz	
	Rueben Boyajian MD	Henry Poterucha MD
	John Keenan	Linda Ruholl

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Visit us on Facebook @: Effingham County Courthouse Effingham Ill
Newsletter Editor: Linda Ruholl

The Museum as Upcoming Event Venue

The second floor of the Museum is being renovated and prepared as a venue for small group events. The floor space will be shared with exhibits, which necessitates a limit on the number of guests. The renovated room's beautiful architectural details lend themselves to minimalist decor.



West windows



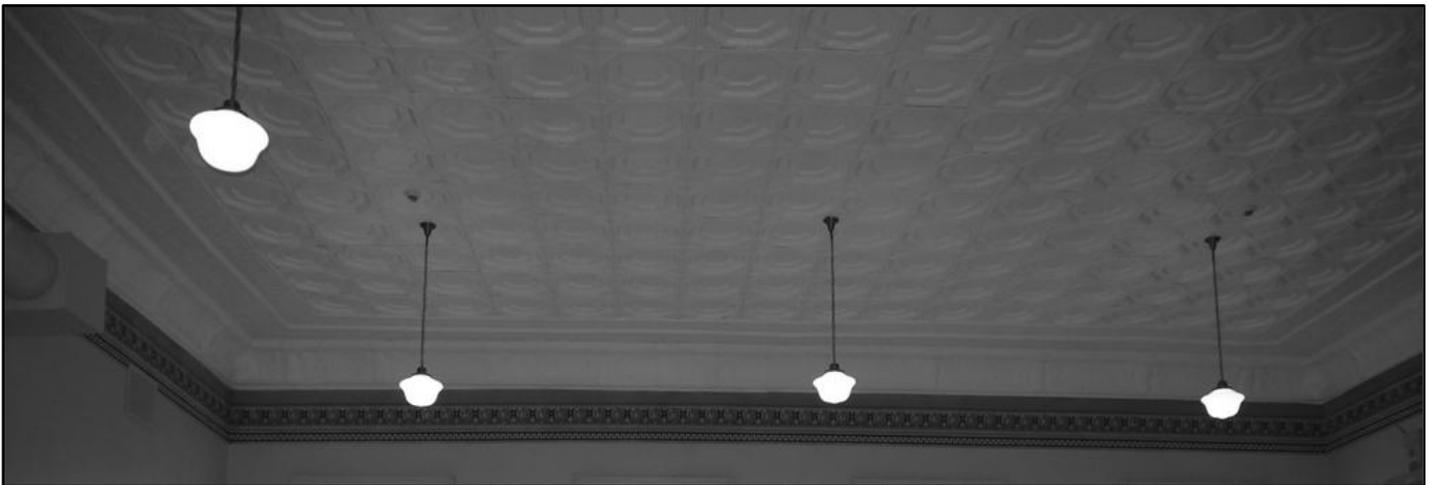
Reconstructed rails and spindles



Northwest corner



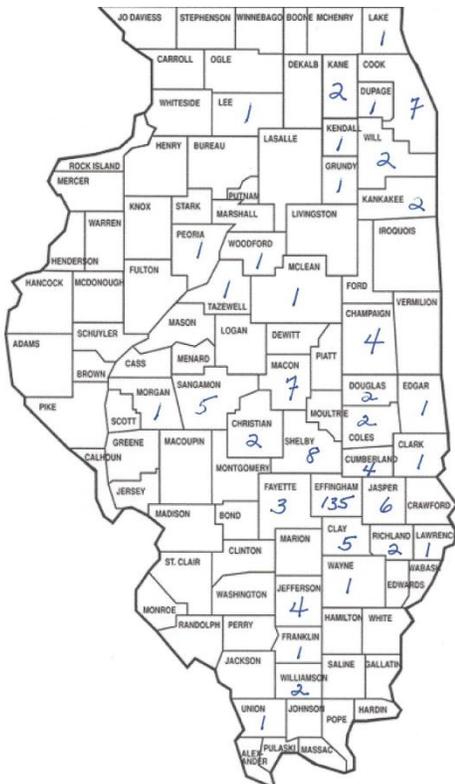
West wall



Newly restored metal tile ceiling, school house lights and period-correct wallpaper frieze

The Museum's Face on FACEBOOK

All museums evaluate their programs and activities. Recently, ECCCMA member **Jane Ries** reached out to the Museum's Facebook followers in hopes of quantifying the impact of the organization's FB page. On November 1, 2015, all Facebook followers were asked to indicate their location. The results were eye opening. Between 3:01 PM and 11:50 PM, the page yielded 343 "likes" with an attached location. Many were Illinois residents, but two came from overseas, one from the West Indies and one from Germany. The map below demonstrates that the 27% of the non-Illinois Facebook followers have an interest in Effingham County and its history, and they live in 26 different states. The first figure is a snapshot of the number of followers on a particular day, with Missouri, Indiana, Florida and Texas most heavily represented during the nine hours of data collection. The second figure shows the hits from within Illinois, by county.



FACEBOOK Messages

- *"Effingham is still my hometown at heart."
Jamie H, Carterville, IL
- *"Live in Ohio but I was born and raised in the area and have family members locally."
Amy N, Ohio
- *"Born in Effingham...the Museum is important and doing great work. Cultural history and heritage is worth more than the line item on the budget reflects."
Stacia M, Bloomington, IL
- *"Keep up the good work, Jane!"
Dana M, West Frankfort, IL
- *"Originally from Altamont, but now live in Moore, Oklahoma."
Kristin C
- *"Love all the work you have done and the info you share."
Kimberlee Z, Beecher City, IL
- *"We will always be interested in events in and around Effingham."
Rose H, Gadsden, Alabama

First wedding in the Museum ~ October 10, 2015

ECCCMA members **Shannon Ruholl** and **Corey Dasenbrock** were united in marriage on the partially-renovated second floor of the museum at 1:00 PM on October 10th.



The podium just before the ceremony



The wedding party during recitation of the vows

The Ruholl family is greatly indebted to the Museum Volunteers who worked so hard to prepare.



Bride at east window



Couple on north steps



Flower girl north sidewalk

Effingham County Genealogical and Historical Society

ECCMA's sister organization is inhabiting a new space on the first floor of the recently opened Effingham Public Library



Genealogist Eleanor Poe Bounds points out shelf labels



Microfilmed newspapers and census records



**Obituaries and other clipping collections on the top 2 shelves
DAR records bottom shelf**



2 electronic microfilm readers, with "Print or Save" options

The Effingham County Genealogical and Historical Society has a plethora of resources for the genealogy buff, family historian, or local history enthusiast. It makes no difference if you are an experienced researcher or just starting to find your way - the ECGHS collections will have something to get you started, or knock down that "Brick Wall" you've been fighting, or simply enrich your existing database.

Come see what they have to offer. The new area is comfortable and well lit, as well as glassed in so you can work in "peace and quiet", but not feel isolated. A water fountain and handicap accessible bathroom are just steps away. Two electronic microfilm readers and a copier are available at low cost. The Effingham County Courthouse Museum is right across the street from the Effingham Public Library, so the traveling genealogist-family historian can conveniently visit both without having to move a vehicle.

Consulting genealogists are available in the room without an appointment on Wednesdays and Saturdays 10 AM to 12 noon, provided the library is open. The EPL doors open at 9AM Monday through Saturday. The library closes at 8PM Monday through Thursday, 6 PM on Friday, and 5PM on Saturday. The EPL telephone number is 217/342-2464.

Recent Events

Historic Lecture Number 1: November 12, 2015



Rebecca Merten, Administrator of the local Public Health Department, and **Linda Ruholl**, Nurse Historian for the ECCCM, initiated the 2015-16 series of lectures with *Early History of the Effingham County Health Department*.

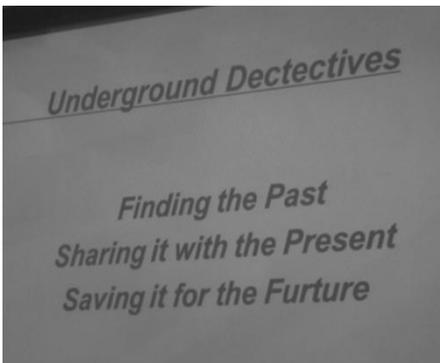
The Mission of the health department is the same now as it was in the 1940s, that is, population-based health promotion and the prevention of illness and injury. Our local department was formed after a successful referendum in 1947. Linda shared information about the first Board of Health and staff members. Rebecca followed up with an accounting of early core immunization, sanitation, and maternal child-health activities, and compared that work with the kind of services offered by the health department today.



The presentation concluded with a discussion of the in-home delivery services developed by the first Health Officer, Dr. Fred Tonney, in collaboration with Miss Marjorie Schafie, the county's first Supervising Nurse. Over a period of five years after the 1949 St. Anthony Hospital fire, the Effingham County Health Department nurses worked with area doctors to assist 928 mothers to deliver 937 babies in their own homes. During that period, there were **no** maternal deaths in those homes.

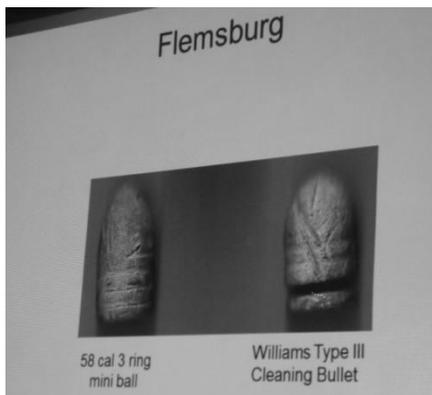
Rebecca Merten is shown in the upper photograph holding a Life Safety Award she received in Woodridge, Illinois on October 8, 2015. The Illinois Fire Safety Alliance honored her educational work to prevent blast and burn injuries from fireworks among the people in Effingham County. Her actions were not popular with some in the county, but were well aligned with the ethical duty of a professional nurse, as well as the "injury prevention" mission of our public health department.

Historic Lecture Number 2: December 10, 2015



Dave Loy and **Brad Garbe** shared their expertise with metal detectors in the second presentation of the lecture series on 12.10.15. In the guise of **Underground Detectives**, they showed how they came to locate a wide variety of treasures over the years. Bullets, bells, buttons, coins....all are old and often made of metal. Old maps and Google maps are both helpful in finding likely sites to search, but the best finds are based on individual invitations from knowledgeable locals. A high quality metal detector is essential; the one Loy and Garbe use cost them around \$1,400, but other models on the market range from \$40 to \$6,000.

The two men are life-long friends and have detected at many locations, including Flemsburg, several old stage coach stops near Effingham and Montrose, the site of the old Strife school, former fair grounds in Watson and Mason, and a number of church sites dating back to the 1850s.



Simply finding treasures is fun, but the context around the finds is history. Loy and Garbe have educated themselves about coinage - when and where their finds were minted, for example. Additional terminology is associated with coins. A "pocket spill" is a cache of coins located near each other at the same depth, and likely the result of haste on the part of a male seeking for correct change.

Loy and Garbe predict future hunters will find fewer treasures due to the changing nature of coinage. For example, US pennies made before 1982 were 95% copper. Starting in 1983, that was changed to zinc with a thin coat of copper. Acidic soil destroys these newer coins quickly.

Effingham Equity Presentation

We are delighted to announce that the Effingham Equity donated \$5,000 to the ECCCMA on December 14, 2015. The Equity's Robin Brown made the presentation.



L to R: **Jane Ries**, Vice President, Board members **Dr. Henry Poterucha** and **Linda Ruholl**, Secretary **LoElla Baker**, Board member **Allen Westendorf**, Equity representative Robin Brown, Board member **Jerry Katz**, and President **Delaine Donaldson**.

Hospital Fire Exhibit Request



Linda Ruholl is developing an exhibit for the second floor to honor the 76 victims of the 1949 hospital fire. The vast majority (88%) of the dead were women and children. Little public information is available about many of these people. However, there may be family members who loved them and remember. **Photographs are a powerful means of communication.** If your loved one died in the fire, please consider sharing a photograph as a way to preserve her (or his) memory. Contact Linda by leaving a message at the Museum.

Linda has gathered in excess of 550 individual documents illuminating the lives of the fire victims, and is organizing them in two large binders. These binders will be part of the exhibit. Included are newspaper clippings, obituaries, census, marriage, and death records, military service records, gravestone photographs, and a limited number of legal notices and individual victim photographs. Unfortunately, only 17 of the 76 victims (22%) are represented by photos at this point. Your loaned photo would be scanned and returned unharmed.

Upcoming 2016 Historic Lecture Series Offerings

Arranged and coordinated by ECCCMA volunteer LoElla Baker

All sessions start at **7:00 PM in the Second Floor Courtroom**
Doors open at **6:00 PM**

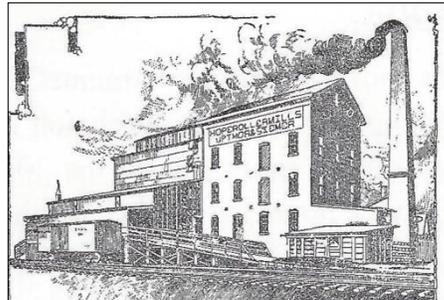
January 14, 2016: History of McCoy School



Jill Moomaw will share her research and recollections about McCoy School.

February 11, 2016: History of Siemer Milling Company

Rick Siemer will speak of the history of his family's Teutopolis business, which got its start as the Hope Roller Mills in 1882.



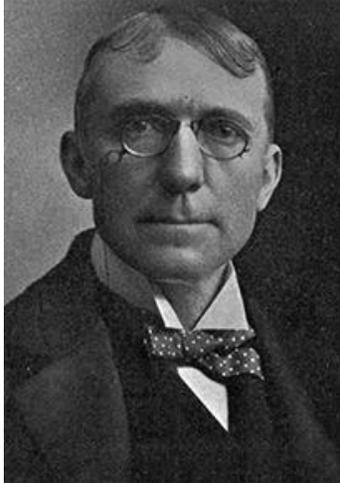
March 10, 2016: History of Centenary United Methodist Church

Glen Bower will explain how this historic church was founded and how it evolved over the years.



Just Published!

ECCCMA Member **Jerry Eident** is happy to announce the recent publication of his latest book, *On Prairie Winds: The Letters of JN Matthews and JW Riley*. This volume contains the letters written and exchanged by **Dr. James Newton Matthews** and **James Whitcomb Riley** over one hundred years ago. Matthews was a well-known Mason physician with a gift for verse, while Riley was the famous 19th century Hoosier Poet.



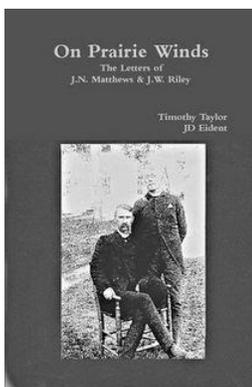
JW Riley



JN Matthews

Eident's co-author, Timothy Taylor, died unexpectedly in August of 2012. Jerry Eident became aware of Taylor's scholarly work earlier in 2011, and that was the beginning of a series of communications that enhanced Taylor's understanding of the Matthews' Effingham County connection to Riley, as well as the context of Matthews' life and his home town of Mason. Unlike some academics trying to write about and interpret literary history from a distance, Timothy Taylor took the time to travel to Effingham County from Mt. Prospect, and made the effort to visit the Effingham County Genealogical and Historical Society, as well as the former Matthews' sites in Mason, with Jerry Eident at his side.

After Taylor's death, Jerry Eident did not allow the book to die with its first author. Jerry completed and formatted the volume with the permission of Mr. Taylor's wife, JoEllyn Taylor, after she gave access to her husband's files in late 2014. Were it not for Jerry Eident's effort, it is extremely unlikely that this detailed primary evidence of local history would have been published.



Title: *On Prairie Winds: The Letters of J.N. Matthews & J. W. Riley*

Authors: Timothy Taylor (posthumous) & J. D. Eident

Self-published; © 2015; 642 pages; hard-bound

Cost: \$30.00

ISBN: 978 132 960 3158



March, 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Museum reopens to public 10-2	2	3	4	5 Museum open 10-2
6	7	8 Open 10-2 Membership Meeting 6PM Board meeting 7PM	9	10 Historic Lecture 7PM Doors open 6PM	11	12 Open 10-2
13	14	15 Open 10-2	16	17	18	19 Open 10-2
20	21	22 Open 10-2	23	24	25	26 Open 10-2 HOLY SATURDAY
27 EASTER	28	29 Open 10-2	30	31		



Second Annual Lincoln Celebration

Mark your calendar NOW!



Thursday, April 14, 2016

7:00 PM



**at the Old Courthouse Museum in the
Second Floor Courtroom,
and in collaboration with**

