

# The Charlemagne

St. Charles History Museum

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WINTER 2016

## Meet our New Board President

Two years ago Kathy Brens, our most recent President, nominated me to the St. Charles History Museum Board of Directors. I was approaching retirement and given my long love of history, this opportunity was a natural fit. I thank Kathy for sponsoring me and I look forward to her continued guidance as a respected advisor.

I am pleased that all of our board members are being retained during 2016. Bob Matson will become an Emeritus Board Member and continue to frequently support the museum. Diana Brown, who leads our Education Committee, will act as our Vice President. Reflective of the board's desire to be more knowledgeable about St. Charles history, we will begin each board meeting with a history presentation from a member of the Museum staff. In addition, each board member will discuss how he or she engaged with the museum over the past month. Furthermore, I will spend every Thursday afternoon at the museum volunteering, conversing with Alison, interacting with staff, and staying abreast of the inter-workings of the St. Charles History Museum.

During our annual meeting, I mentioned the value of partnerships between our Executive Board and Alison Costanzo our Executive Director, her talented staff, museum members, local organizations, schools, and the general community. These mutually beneficial relationships are what make our museum an asset to St. Charles, Illinois. In that vein, we are strengthening our relationships with local arts organizations by loaning our exhibit hall for collaborative activities.

We are thrilled to announce that we will present our first on site lecture series and now have the ability to welcome forty guests. In order to continue growing and increase our presence within the community we will host multiple fundraisers and strategically target new audiences. Finally, our permanent exhibition will be enhanced by the addition of custom exhibition cases, new stories, and interactive technologies.

I am appreciative to be a part of this community and for this educational adventure. I am looking forward to a new and exciting year at the museum. Thank you for your continued support and contributions. Remember, history is being made every day.

Edward Klosowski - *Board President*

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## Executive Board

Ed Klosowski, *President*  
Diana Brown, *Vice President*  
Kathy Fleming, *Secretary*  
Rita Payleitner, *Treasurer*

## Board of Directors

Tom Anderson  
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Kathy Brens  
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Carol Glemza  
Clint Hull  
Bob Matson  
Joe Schelstreet  
Mike Shortall

## Staff

Alison Costanzo, *Exe. Director*  
Brigid Leavy, *Curator*  
Carissa Bolvin, *Museum Aide*  
Amanda Wolf, *Collections Intern*

## Museum Hours

Tuesday - Saturday  
10 am - 4 pm  
Sunday (June - Oct)  
12 pm - 3 pm

## About Us

Phone: 630.584.6967  
E-mail: [info@stcmuseum.org](mailto:info@stcmuseum.org)  
[stcmuseum.org](http://stcmuseum.org)

215 E Main St  
St. Charles, IL 60119

# A Word from the Director

*Hello Friends of the Museum,*

For over a year I have had the pleasure of serving as the St. Charles History Museum's Executive Director. Over this last year the Museum has gone through a number of changes. I am pleased to say that in 2015 the Museum increased its visitor count by 22%, made strides to be more engaged in the community, and rebranded the Museum.

In 2015 the Museum made significant changes and 2016 will be no different. The Museum will launch its new Saturday Speaker Series on February 27, 2016, at 11am. Our first speaker, Road Scholar Jeanne Shultz Angel, will present on the Underground Railroad in Illinois and how Illinois residents played prominent roles in the anti-slavery movement. Stay tuned for announcements on additional speakers presenting on variety of topics throughout the year.

As we move forward with the Strategic Plan and redevelop the permanent exhibit, the exhibit hall will receive new cases, artifacts and a thematic storyline. The new permanent exhibit will be implemented in phases and according to chronological sections. In conjunction with the new permanent exhibit, we will continue to rotate temporary exhibits, beginning with a 1940's themed exhibit that opens this spring. The exhibit will help kick off our first event of the year: 40's Night at the Arcada.

40's Night at the Arcada will not be our only new event in 2016. This summer we will be hosting two new events. Previously, the Museum hosted its Annual Pig Roast Fundraiser. This year, the Museum will replace that event with the Best of St. Charles Foodie Festival, a 21 and older event on Saturday June 18, 2016, 5pm-9pm. The event will feature small plates from local St. Charles restaurants, craft beer and wine, live music, a silent auction, raffle, and game of Mystery Wine & Dine. The next day, the Museum will host our first Family Fun Day on June 19, 2016, 11am-4pm complete with carnival games, food, and live museum.

All of these changes promise to make this an exciting year for the Museum. We want to thank you for your continued support, and hope to see you at our upcoming event, program, or exhibit.

Alison Costanzo, *Executive Director*

## Connect With Us



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## Where do I Come From?

*“Every man is a quotation from all his ancestors.”*

– Ralph Waldo Emerson

At one time or another, many Americans find themselves asking: “Where do I come from?”

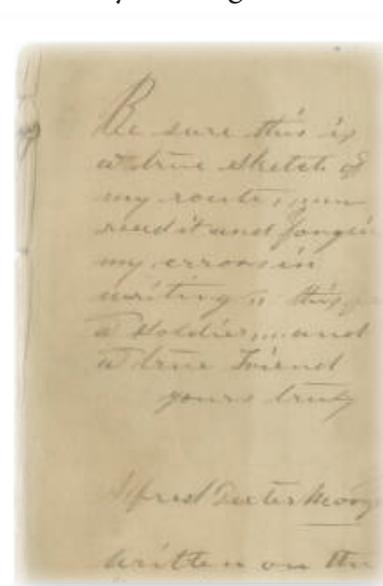
From validating family stories and involvement in historic events, to uncovering medical history and preserving legacies, genealogy is vital to understanding our identity. Recently I had the opportunity to collaborate with a man named Dave whose ancestors lived in St. Charles during 1850s. Dave approached me with fundamental questions about his family: “When did they arrive?” “What happened to them?” “What was their life like?”

Like many of our own ancestors, Dave’s family endured hardships that are difficult for us to imagine. The Potato Famine and a hostile socio-economic climate for Irish Catholics caused them to flee their homes in Tipperary, Ireland. In 1850, Dave’s ancestors settled in St. Charles. With this information in hand, I gained access to his great-great aunt and uncle’s marriage certificate; they married in 1855 at St. Patrick’s Parish in St. Charles. In order to track his great-great aunt and uncle’s children, I crossed referenced U.S. census records from 1850, 1860 and 1870, along with the museum’s city directories. One cousin from this family line, Alfred D. Morgan, remained in St. Charles.

This discovery revealed history special to Dave’s family and to St. Charles history. During the Civil War, Alfred served as a Sergeant in the 17th Illinois Cavalry. In preparation for this role, he would have completed training at Camp Kane under Brigadier General John Farnsworth. During his service, Alfred kept a diary detailing his hardships and exploits. Housed in the University of Tulsa Archives, Alfred’s diary reveals intense guerrilla warfare between Union and Confederate soldiers as the 17th traveled through Missouri. Over a two-year period, Alfred recorded various engagements with Confederate leader William “Bloody Bill” Anderson and his band of “scalpers,” notorious for this style of guerrilla warfare.

The discovery of resources like Alfred’s diary is a prime example of the powerful results exploring genealogy can uncover. Though it is but a small part of Dave’s ancestry, Alfred’s story shows how genealogy gives history a personal touch. It gives a deeper understanding of where our families came from and as well as a greater appreciation for our shared history. It is never too late to uncover your family history. You just have to ask yourself, “Where do I come from?”

–Carissa Bolvin  
*Museum Assistant*



Tuesday 15th [November, 1864] Arrived at Rolla [Missouri] and went into Camp. I got a letter from Sarah, the first since I left St Joe She has not forgotten me yet I see. here I will close my account of the Chase after William T. “Bloody Bill” Anderson, & Sterling Price. I trust if I never return home you, and all who see this will think kindly of the Author I thank you.

# Featured Article

## Fact or Fiction: The Keepers of the Fire



The Odawa (Ottawa), Ojibwe, and Potawatomi tribes were originally a single tribe, known as the Council of Three Fires. Considered the “youngest brother,” the Pottawatomi were called *Bodéwadmi* by their brothers, which means “keepers of the fire.”

In the 1400s, members of the Council of Three Fires, including the Potawatomi, migrated from Michigan’s Upper Peninsula to the mainland. They proceeded to occupy the majority of Michigan and expanded into Indiana. However, after decades of conflict with invading Iroquois over hunting ground in Michigan, the Potawatomi migrated again, this time to Wisconsin. En route, a number of bands established themselves throughout Northern Indiana and Northern Illinois. 1641 marked the first recorded contact between French traders and the Potawatomi in Wisconsin. There, they established trade relations with the French and frequently used the Fox River as a trade route.

Following the close of the American Revolution, the United States government began a wide spread strategic dispossession of Native American land. On August 24, 1816, the Odawa, Chippewa, and Potawatomi residing in Illinois ceded their land in Illinois east of the Fox River to the United States government. Villages like Shab-eh-nay’s Village and Paw Paw Grove were established on newly formed reservations for the Potawatomi. They were allowed to use the land outside of the villages for hunting purposes, including the western half of St. Charles.

In 1829, the Treaty of Prairie du Chien further dispossessed the Potawatomi of their land and consolidated their reservation to a significantly smaller plot of land in the northeast portion of their initial reservation.

From April to August of 1972, the College of DuPage conducted an archeological excavation at the Allen Site, located in the Wildrose Housing Development. Artifacts recovered from the excavation are consistent with intermittent use of the land for hunting. Findings include arrowheads, pottery sherds, evidence of fire, and two unrelated burial sites. Within the archeological record, there is no evidence indicating a permanent settlement within or in the immediate vicinity of St. Charles.

Brigid Leavy  
*Curator*

# Upcoming Events & Programs

## Saturday Speaker Series

Saturday February 27, 2016, 11am

### *The Anti-Slavery Movement in Black*

PRESENTED BY: ROAD SCHOLAR JEANNE SCHULTZ ANGEL

#### About the Program:

Illinois and Illinoisans played prominent roles in the anti-slavery movement preceding the Civil War, but were all opponents of slavery necessarily involved in the Underground Railroad? Understanding the wide variety of motivations that might lie behind any given individual's opposition to slavery – commitment to human rights, belief in racial equality, economic considerations, and religious convictions, among others – is important to understanding the escalation to war.



Angel explores the role that the Underground Railroad played in the lives of Freedom Seekers and explains how one particular story illustrates connections within the network across the state. She examines the criteria that historians use to separate fact from fiction and determine which purported Underground Railroad sites are verifiable. She demonstrates that the range of responses to slavery on the part of Illinoisans was more complex than the state's designation as the "Land of Lincoln" might suggest and that some of the underlying issues still manifest themselves in one form or another today.

Space is limited and RSVP is required by February 22, 2016. To RSVP please call 630.584.6967, visit our events section on our website at [stcmuseum.org](http://stcmuseum.org) or email [info@stcmuseum.org](mailto:info@stcmuseum.org). Fee: Members: \$5 Non Members \$10

Thursday March 31, 2016

7pm-10pm

Arcada Theatre

## *40s Night at the Arcada*

### *Grab your Dancing Shoes and Swing Into Spring!*

PRESENTING SPONSOR: THE ARCADA THEATRE

The St. Charles History Museum invites you to don your best 40s attire and enjoy a performance by The Flat Cats with heavy appetizers and dance lessons provided by Vargo's Dance Studio.

Museum Members will receive an exclusive behind the scenes tour of the historic Arcada Theatre.



BUY YOUR TICKETS NOW!

Tickets are \$40 for Members of the Museum and \$50 for non-Members. Buy them on our website under the events section or come visit us at the Museum where you can purchase one at the gift shop.

# Collections News

## From the Collection

In order for the St. Charles History Museum to continue producing quality temporary exhibitions and update the permanent exhibition we must gain a better understanding of the collection. Doing so will be a long process and that requires us to inventory and reorganize the collection, as well as establish a more comprehensive database. The museum began preparing for this project in July by cleaning out our storage facilities, developing a master plan, and purchasing new archival boxes, shelving units, and the newest version of our database.

During our initial cleaning efforts, we discovered a crystal chandelier tucked behind the probate record cabinets and inside of a cardboard box stuffed with packing peanuts. Due to the acidic nature of cardboard, the silver body of the chandelier was exceptionally tarnished and the crystals were coated with a thick layer of grime. Additionally, improper packing methods caused 70% of the crystals to detach.

We are indebted to our volunteer Allen Webb and Board Member Emeritus Bob Matson for dedicating two weeks of their time to cleaning and restoring the chandelier. You can see it on display in our current temporary exhibition "Baby, It's Cold Outside." While the museum is closed to the public during the month of January, we will dedicate ourselves to documenting the collection, populating the database, and hopefully discovering more treasures!

Amanda Wolf  
*Museum Assitant Intern*



St. Charles, IL 60174  
215 E. Main St.

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St. CHARLES

