

Putnam Past Times

Vol. XLI

Putnam County Historical Society

August 2015

No. 3

2015 Agricultural Museum Open House Sunday August 16

The 16th Annual Agricultural Museum Open House will be held on Sunday August 16 between 11:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. at the Agricultural Museum, 501 Old Hwy 26 in Hennepin. Local collectors will be displaying antique tractors and vehicles as usual. The permanent displays are agricultural equipment and tools, wildlife, coal mining and military memorabilia, early 1900s general store, post office, one room school and farm kitchen.

At 1:00 p.m. Richard Morthland will present **He Gave the World the Steel Plow: The John Deere Story**, a Road Scholar Program sponsored by the Illinois Humanities Council.



History of Technology Division, NMAH

John Deere's agricultural innovations, especially the self-scouring steel plow, monumentally impacted farming methods during the formative years of the United States, making expansion into the vast prairies and plains of middle-America possible.

The magnitude of Deere's contributions to technology and history is matched only by that of his personal character, which encompassed remarkable talents and virtues, profound flaws, and many internal contradictions.

Richard Morthland — farmer, teacher, and seasoned public speaker — portrays Deere, inviting audiences to ponder not only the history lessons to be learned from his career but also the human lessons to be learned from his life.

Pork chop sandwiches or hot dogs will be available for purchase, either as lunches including slaw, beans, chips, cookie, and drink or as sandwiches only.

Everyone is invited and admission is free. The Agricultural Museum is handicapped accessible. Pulsifer House (our historic house museum built in 1844) will also be open for tours. Pulsifer House is not handicapped accessible.

New Board Members

Sheila Haage and Gary Boggio were elected at the Annual Meeting in April to replace Luke Holly and Brad Popurella on the Society Board. The other Board Members for the year are Sidney Whitaker (President), Karen Bailey (Vice-President), Teresa Clausen (Secretary), Will Duke (Treasurer), Dick Ashdown, Sue Bruch, Sue Campbell, Darlene Cofoid, Kevin Kunkel, and Lonna Nauman. Sharon Clausen continues to serve as Curator.

Putnam County Historical Society

P.O. Box 74 – Hennepin, IL 61327-0074

putnamcountyhistoricalsociety.org 1-815-925-7560 pchs61326@yahoo.com

Society Participates in Hennepin 4th of July

The Putnam County Historical Society presented two performances of *Soldier, Come Home*, readings of Civil War letters of the Pringle family of Pennsylvania at 1:30 pm and 2:30 pm in the Courtroom on July 4.

Thanks to Teresa Clausen and Sandra Woest for organizing the event.

Photo: David Mallery, Matt Gimbal, Sidney Whitaker, Carly Neubaum, and Nathan Ward.



In Memoriam

We mourn the loss of the following Putnam County Historical Society members and friends. Over the years they have supported the Society's goals and programs. All will be sadly missed.

Jeanne Alleman (Life)

Juanita Bogner

Ken Fiedler

Mary Gorham

Billie Jessen (Life)

Lloyd Larson

Charles Lundgren

Betty Marshall

William A. B. Peterson

Elmer Schrowang

James H. Whitaker (Life)

Memorials & Tributes

The following Memorials honor the lives of members and friends of the Society:

Jeanne Alleman – Lois Boyle, Luke Holly, Sidney Whitaker.

Ken Fiedler – Eleanor Bruch, Gary & Cyndy Bruch, Henry & Ida Bruch, Ken & Barb Bruch, Ron & Sue Bruch, Helen Marie Engelbrecht.

Irene Gensini – Ralph & Kathy Gensini.

Billie Jessen – John & Lyla Stiet.

Richard Minter – Helen Marie Engelbrecht.

James H. Whitaker – Sue Campbell, Sharon Clausen, Helen Marie Engelbrecht, Sidney Whitaker.

Year-end Fund Drive

The Putnam County Historical Society thanks these additional donors to the year-end Fund Drive. We depend on the generosity of our members and friends during fund drives to cover the annual cost of maintaining Pulsifer House and the Agricultural Museum and carrying on our mission of keeping the history of Putnam County alive through education, restoration and genealogy.

Heartland Bank

Margaret Hundertmark

Mark & Mary Walmsley

Recent Donations

The Putnam County Historical Society thanks the following donors for gifts and loans to the Society in recent months:

Merry Bassi – large square table cover.

Boers Family – Farm advertising materials (Burl George, Campbell, DeKalb, G&J, Griffith, Pfister, Pioneer) and plat books.

Gary Boggio – 10 metal numbers from the stable stalls at the Cecil Hotel, Hennepin advertising (C & W Eddy and J.H. Seaton), Moews Seed Co. sign and detassler pin #274, and Jack Zenor for Sheriff button.

Pam Bouxsein – 2 pictures of horses and farm machinery.

David Campbell – framed 1898 Magnolia Mutual Insurance Co. calendar and framed 1916 fire insurance policy to John Swaney (on loan).

Sharon Clausen – 6 parasols.

Will & Carol Duke – farm scale, forge blower, plow, harness, hexagonal field tile, 2 green glass insulators, tools, custom made Perdew boat, spool holder, spools, silver cruets with cranberry glass inserts, silver casserole and vase, sewing basket, 2 school desks, 5 wooden folding chairs, 2 glass kerosene stove fuel dispensers, and other household items.

Marie Etter – 1942 pink baby blanket, 1947 pink child's jacket, 1954 doll buggy, and Ray's Store advertising thermometer.

Marjorie Haws – framed 1899 Magnolia Mutual Insurance Co. calendar.

Harold Heider – Wilson family photos and history, Friends Meeting House photos, school hand bell, coffee grinder.

Beverly Lapuh – Montreal Beverages wooden bottle case, wooden lawn chair, typewriter table, old dictionary.

Fred Lippincott – copy of pictures of Asahel & Emily Hannum (Caledonia pioneers).

Charles Lundgren – Magnolia Bank items (share list, cancelled checks, receipts), Magnolia school report card, Connecticut Insurance Co. fire policy.

Lonna Nauman – Magnolia Methodist Church photo and dedication program 1915.

Emma O'Connor – assorted obituaries.

Putnam Christian Church – Sunday School table and 5 child chairs.

Lynn Shimkus – Lostant High School alumni book 1906 – 1993.

Kathy Spratt – 1941 Lone Tree School reunion register, Thomas Kennedy letter and article, autograph book, and rose spice beads.

Sidney Whitaker – veterinary items from Chauncey Maulfair practice including daybook.

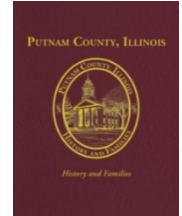
Geri Winkler – 3 dresses hand made by her mother (1925 rose crepe dress, apricot flapper dress, 1929 imported French satin wedding dress).

Historical Society Website & Facebook Page

The Putnam County Historical Society has changed its website and also now has a Facebook page. The new Web address is: <http://putnamcountyhistoricalsociety.org>. To find us on Facebook enter Putnam County Historical Society in the Find Friends search box.

Putnam County History & Families

Copies of the new Putnam County history book are still available from the Putnam County Historical Society.



Orders at \$55.00 for pick-up or \$61.50 for mail delivery can be submitted by mail to:
Putnam County Historical Society, P.O. Box 74, Hennepin, IL 61327.

Questions should be sent by email to: shwhitaker@starband.net or phone to: 815-303-5104.

Undercliff Hotel Resort at Senachwine Lake

Before the flow of the Chicago River was reversed in the early 20th century to discharge Chicago's sewage into the Illinois River rather than Lake Michigan, the Illinois River was second only to the Columbia River as a freshwater fishery in the United States. At that time Senachwine Lake flowed into the Illinois River and was an important part of that fishery. The water was clean and clear and the west bank had a shallow sandy shoreline that attracted swimmers as well as fishermen. The area was also an important center for market hunting, which had been supplying the Chicago market ever since the railroad came to Putnam in 1855.

In the 1860s George Sparling owned over a mile of shoreline on the lake separated by the property of John Locke about two miles east of Putnam, where there was a road down to the sandy beach. Senachwine Lake was



mentioned as early as 1875 in the Henry newspaper as a resort. Sparling bought the Locke land in 1876 and was leasing the beach to Charles Grubbs in 1880 for the 'Senachwine Lake Pleasure and Fishing Resort'. Grubbs had sailboats, skiffs and fishing tackle to rent, sold refreshments to campers and picnickers, and maintained a dance floor, swings, and croquet sets. In 1882 Robert Challoner of Lacon asked Sparling to build a hotel and lease it to him to manage. Sparling built a three story hotel and Challoner opened the Undercliff Hotel on December 21, 1882. The Hotel had a large parlor and dining hall on the main floor that could be combined for dancing. There were 22 rooms on the second and third floors. The kitchen and staff rooms were in an ell to the rear. Robert Elliston, the decoy carver, lived at and operated out of the hotel from 1882 to 1886.

Frank Leavitt and Robert Thompson replaced Challoner in 1883. They were in turn replaced by Graves and Sammis in 1885. George Sparling himself took over in 1887 and hosted the Illinois Grange picnic in August. A two story annex was added to the hotel in 1889.

Soon after the turn of the century the Illinois River level rose because of the outflow from Chicago and flooding began to be a problem. In 1902 the main floor flooded to a depth of 4 feet and in 1904 the foundation was raised to avoid further damage during floods.

The Hotel was still thriving when it burned in 1914, but it was not rebuilt. The resort remained popular because there were still 20 to 30 cabins and the Lakeside Pavilion dance hall run by Charles Wood. Wood leased the



Lake Senachwine, Putnam, Ill.

Pavilion to Dewey Wright, who had been an orchestra leader, around 1920. Wright had entertainment Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights until the Pavilion burned in 1928. Wright built a second dance hall in the 1930s and operated it until it burned in the 1950s. By then pollution and siltation from



the Illinois River had damaged the fishing and rising water levels had lessened the attraction of the beach for swimming, so the resort slowly declined, except for the private cottages in the area.



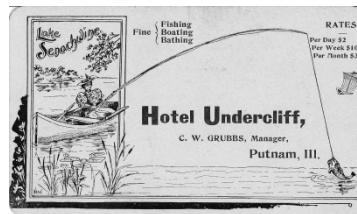
No. 16. Undercliff, Moon-light on the Lake.

The

Putnam County Conservation District took over the resort grounds in the 1980s and now maintains a picnic area.

Advertising Card

Undercliff Hotel Beach

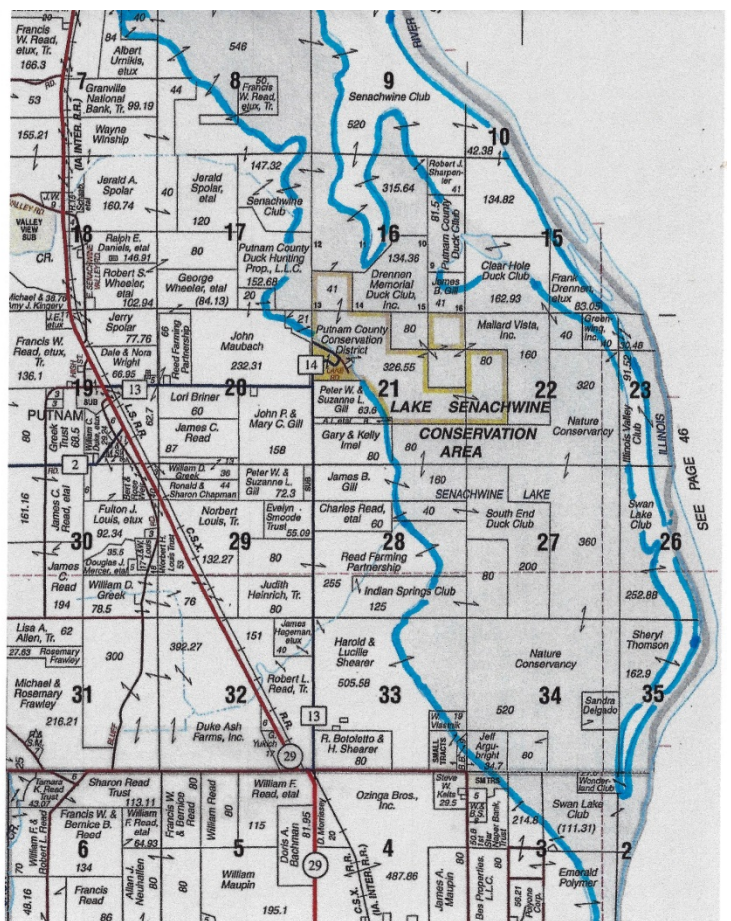
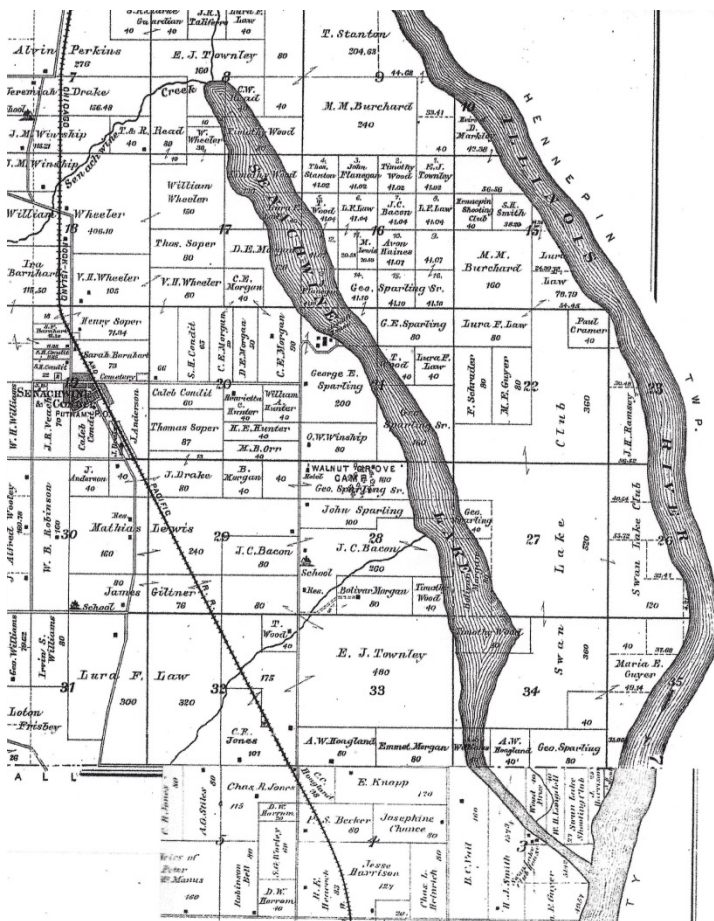


Prospectus Cover 1905



Senachwine Lake 1890

Senachwine Lake 2012



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