

Collection Plan

Approved 1/18/07

The Early American Museum - A Brief History of the Collection

In 1966, William Redhed, son of one of the county's first European settlers, offered his extensive collection of late 18th and early 19th century artifacts to the Champaign County Forest Preserve District for the purpose of a museum. The Early American Museum opened its doors in 1968 with Redhed's 2573 pieces: His collection is strong in agricultural implements, tools of textile production, culinary and homemaking devices and includes a premiere, comprehensive collection of lighting devices (about 300 pieces). The story after Redhed has been one of passive collecting, accepting and sometimes rejecting the pieces offered to the museum as they are offered. In the early years enthusiasm over the new museum encouraged other county residents to donate collections: a fine collection of furniture from Mary Davis Barnhart, a glorious rustic-design iron gate from the Weinard family, even plows and tools from the University of Illinois were given. In addition, the museum has acquired significant larger collections of personal artifacts with a collection of 213 hair combs from Mrs. C.M. Bechtol, and 118 pipes from J. C. Dallenbach, as well as small intimate donations like the mechanical doll won in an essay contest at Lewis and Company (a local department store).

In 1992, the museum accepted the donation of the Chesebro blacksmith shop (last operated in 1920) in its entirety. The shop and its contents, numbering over 2731 pieces serve to give a complete picture of this profession in Eastern Illinois. A comprehensive collection of dolls and toys belonging to the blacksmith's daughters serve to illuminate the life of a child in the early twentieth century. This is aided by the glass plate and acetate negatives (367) donated by the Blaford family, which illustrate the lives of children in the first 30 years of the twentieth century, as well as many aspects of rural life. Because of our strength as the institutional sponsor of the Illinois Quilt Research Project, the textile collection of the museum is substantial with 42 quilts, 14 coverlets and over 1600 items of clothing including 600 pieces recovered from the dispersal of the University of Illinois' Textile Collection in 1998. The museum acts as steward of a large collection of archival materials related to Champaign County's African American History, the Doris K. Hoskins Collection. Other noteworthy local collections include a wide-ranging group of 19th century woodworking tools, a small but complete set of native arrow points, 71 shoes from the Sholem family, 287 telephones and related items from the Capel family, a young girls' diary from 1911, a farmer's set of daybooks from 1899 to 1917, a comprehensive group of post and greeting cards, and military uniforms.

Introduction:

Given the depth and breadth of our current collection, and in keeping with the mission to collect, preserve and interpret the history of East Central Illinois, specifically Champaign County, the Early American Museum has devised this collecting plan to guide its future. The story of Champaign County will be told not only from its uniqueness, but also as the story intersects with, reacts to and relates with regional, state and national history.

The following is a partial list of the types of external forces, which have affected local history and which we will typically address as they relate to the Interpretive themes:

- Native American displacement and removal as a result of European colonization;
- Establishing communities as a result of the opening up of the Northwest Territory;
- Personal losses and gains given the effects of the Civil War,
- Slavery and abolition as it effected County residents
- Agricultural growth and accumulation of personal wealth as a result of the many innovations of the Industrial Revolution;
- Nineteenth century waves of immigration as a result of wars, famines and disease in Europe;
- The communications boom with the rest of the nation brought about by the invention/use of the railroad, telegraph, telephone, radio and Internet; economic hardships brought about by the depressions of the late 19th century,
- World War I, and the Stock Market Crash of 1929;
- Social movements including those which occurred during Reconstruction, the Women's Suffrage Movement;
- The Temperance Movement; the Labor Movement; and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s;
- Technological advances of the twentieth century most notably the automobile,
- Electrification and eventually computerization;
- The experiences of both soldiers and those at home during World War II,
- The Korean War,
- The Vietnam War and later conflicts;
- The prosperity of the 1950s and the 1990s;
- The cultural upheaval of the 1960s.

Interpretive Themes:

The Early American Museum has chosen five interpretive themes to guide and discipline it's collecting. Collections should support one or more of the following themes:

Immigration and Migration, Agriculture and the Environment, Transportation and Communication, Home Economy to World Economy, and Living in Community.

Each of these themes is to be considered within the context of East Central Illinois, specifically Champaign County and with the consideration that the prairie environments, with its wetlands, tall prairie grass and rich soil have determined much of the human behavior in this area.

A key to the text:

Bold= one of the five themes

Bold + Italic= a subheading of the five themes

Sans Serif=a chronological subheading

Boxed and Italic=a reflection on the collection

Immigration and Migration.

Who has lived in East Central Illinois and why? Did they stay or leave, and why? This theme will discuss Native Americans and their removal, early settlers and their descendants, waves of immigration from other continents as well as migration from other parts of North America, and the reasons for population shifts, loss and gain without and within the county.

Early History

The earliest inhabitants were pre-historic Native Americans who made their homes along the waterways, the Sangamon, Embarrass, the Okaw, the Salt Fork. They left little material culture, mostly projectile points and axeheads, behind them as they traveled through the area, hunting and fishing.

Currently the Early American Museum has a representative set of projectile points from the prehistoric era. Any further study of the Native Americans can be done by loans from institutions, for example the Illinois Transportation Archaeology Recovery Program, who is better suited to explore and keep pieces from the area.

Later people from the Illiniwek, the Kickapoo, the Potawatomi and to a lesser extent the Piankeshaw, Wea, Miami, Fox and Sauk lived on the Grand Prairie over time. They had contact with Europeans, traded and obtained glass and metal items from jewelry to tools and weapons and eventually were removed from the area by the same Europeans. The latter day Native Americans used a combination of small scale agricultural practices mixed with traditional hunting and gathering.

Much of their material culture was ephemeral, but certain trade items and stone implements have remained. Currently the Early American Museum holds only a few pieces from this era as well, in part because of the ephemeral nature of the objects.

19th century

European explorers, primarily French, were acquainted with the Grand Prairie region by the end of the seventeenth century. It wasn't until the early 19th century that European settlers made their way up from the south to the Illinois territory, along the Old National Road and traveled up the river beds to the vast stretches of prairie, broken only by a few groves of trees, into what would become Champaign County. These first settlers were generally of a southern background, coming from Kentucky, Tennessee, and the southern regions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. For most subsistence farming was a way of life. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, a second influx of settlers with more means at their disposal arrived: many hailed from the Eastern United States. The material culture of the early settlers was mixed. Several precious objects from the East or from Europe--silver, clocks, a few items of fine furniture were brought from their earlier life. These were mixed with home-fashioned tools and products, sometimes crude. Goods could be ordered, or brought from elsewhere requiring a great deal of travel.

The Redhed collection provides many representative examples of the types of objects, which would have been common during this period.

In the two decades before the Civil War, East Central Illinois began to change dramatically. Scandinavian and German immigrants were imported to the Broadlands area by Michael Sullivant to work his immense farm. The Illinois Central Railroad recruited Irish immigrants, having left home in large part because of the potato famine. The northeast and southwest corners of the County, specifically Penfield and Ivesdale, fostered small enclaves of Irish rail workers.

Material culture specific to these people might include those pieces typically associated with ethnicity: food production, handwork, and items associated with different religious practices. Specifically ethnic artifacts are not currently present in the collection, but may be something we look at in the future. We do have pieces in the Redhed collection which again may be used to illustrate the daily life of these people.

The conclusion of the Civil War in 1865, followed closely upon by the institution of the Illinois Industrial University in 1867 (later to become the University of Illinois) changed the immigration and migration patterns of the county forever. Resettlement of foreign nationals and also of soldiers from other states to Champaign County was common. In addition, the aftermath of the Civil War brought the first wave of African American migration to the area.

One of the more notable groups of late 19th century immigration was that of a particular group of German immigrants from Ostfriesland. As Miller has said, “Their skilled knowledge about drainage enabled these late settlers to transform a wasteland swamp into some of the most productive land in the world.”¹

Material culture might include drainage tile, agricultural items and household goods specific to the East Frisians and related to their settlement of the Northeastern part of the county.

Late 19th century immigration to Champaign County also included a few Jewish families and the beginnings of Italian and Greek immigration. Many of these late 19th century immigrants were actually migrants from other areas of the United States.

The shoes from the Sholem family business would represent an early Jewish merchant in Champaign County. Italian and Greek immigrants are not currently represented. Immigrant populations from all eras might be adequately studied and represented through loan of various materials, e.g. the loan of the Flesor Candy Store material.

¹ Willis Baker and Patricia Miller, *A Commemorative History of Champaign County Illinois: 1833-1983*. (Urbana: Illinois Heritage Association, 1984), 50.

20th century

In the early 20th century the University of Illinois began to grow and farms began to shrink making the population of Champaign County more urban and cosmopolitan. In 1917 with the opening of Chanute Air Field a significant number of servicemen would begin to enter the county—again from elsewhere in the United States. In the 1920s there were significant Ku Klux Klan rallies which drove some African Americans from town. Over the course of the 20th century, during that period which is known as the Great Migration, the African American presence in Champaign County grew to its current 11% of the population. This population would have a profound effect on housing and planning decisions later in the century in the wake of the Civil Rights movement.

Material culture specific to these groups and events is not currently represented in our collection. Collection of Chanute Air Field pieces should be limited as the museum there has proprietary interest. The Doris K. Hoskins Archive provides a great deal of two-dimensional material for research and study of African American life in Champaign County.

Assisted by the GI bill, hundreds of servicemen came to Champaign County after World War II. The Korean War slowed this influx, but the pattern of transitoriness for the Champaign County population was continued.

The museum has collected oral histories from this generation of immigrants to Champaign County as well as uniforms from their years of service. Of interest to the museum might be artifacts which show the sudden influx of veterans, the housing boom that accommodated them, or changes in University life as a result of their arrival (and/or departure).

Current

In the latter part of the 20th century the immigration policies of the United States and the international nature of the University populace has brought new groups of immigrants to Champaign County. Groups from China, Korea, Japan, Vietnam and several other smaller groups account for 6.5% of the county population now being counted by the U.S. Census as Asian. Another 2.9 to 5 percent of the population is Latino/a with a recent influx of Mexican immigrants in the 1990s. Future collecting would include material culture from these groups.

Agriculture and the Environment

How has the natural environment set the stage for agriculture/agribusiness within the county? What was agriculture like before mechanization, industrialization? In what ways has mechanized agriculture changed the county and transformed the population focus and living patterns? This theme will investigate land use by Native Americans, early agricultural practices by the European settlers, how mechanization came about and what practices are being used today?

Early History

Native Americans, as stated above used this area for hunting and fishing and did very little agricultural work here, but the early European settlers to the county found that they were able to farm small plots near the river beds in order to survive.

19th century

Most of the earliest settlers found the long trek to Danville a difficult one and so built their own grinding mills especially in Urbana, Sadorus and the St. Joseph area. Because it was difficult to break the sod of the tallgrass prairie, several people became prominent cattle farmers.

Artifacts which reflect cattle farming, and pre-industrial revolution grain farming are available in the Redhed collection. Artifacts which relate to specific cattle farmers might also be welcome.

The coming of the railroad to Champaign County in the 1850s brought the latest inventions, and the distribution of John Deere's self-scouring plow as well as the ability to drain land with ceramic tiles. Champaign County became one of the most fertile and heavily farmed counties in Illinois. The manufacture of drainage tiles was local and lucrative.

Our collection includes several examples of local drainage tiles.

The Illinois Central Railroad was provided with land on either side of its tracks which it promptly sold in parcels to hundreds of families who began to farm, and had easy access to markets for livestock (particularly Chicago). It also provided access to all manner of improved, mass-produced farm implements which could be ordered and delivered by the railroad. The rise in the use of steam-powered engines would mechanize threshing and other farm implements.

The Redhed collection provides several examples of harvesting and planting devices, but larger agricultural implements prove difficult to store. The museum holds a notable, early swing arm reaper, corn cutters and planters, and early plows which offer a unique opportunity to interpret the agricultural life in Champaign County before the steam engine.

20th century

By the beginning of the 20th century, gasoline powered engines would begin to take over the work previously done by steam, horse or human powered machines. The complete conversion to gasoline-powered machinery did not take place until the 1950s because the Great Depression and World War II made it impossible for farmers to purchase same.

If the story of farming, agriculture and agribusiness can be told with advertising or small pieces of machinery this might be more advisable than collecting further larger pieces of farm machinery, especially with the success of the Illinois and Indiana Antique Tractor and Gas Engine Club and the inception of their Historic Farm museum. Borrowing from I and I might be investigated in the future.

Current

By the end of the 20th century small family farms became consolidated into larger corporate farms and farming machinery has become highly sophisticated. At the same time certain environmentally conscious practices are being put into place in some areas.

Documentation of this change could be made through advertising media, corporate sponsored items and the like.

Transportation and Communication

How have people communicated with one another, and traveled within and outside of the county through the history of its development? Foot, buggy, rail, automobile, interurban, mass transit and air travel as well as mail, telegraph, telephone and Internet communication will be considered.

Transportation

19th century

Native Americans traveled through this area on foot, as did the early settlers who had a few horses or oxen, but usually arrived in small boats, or by traversing up the river valleys. Horse/Oxen drawn travel, buggies and wagons were used in the 1820s to 1840s. As a result of the laying of the Illinois Central Railroad tracks, population grew, and spread into previously uninhabited areas. Not only did the railroad grow, but wagons were needed to carry goods from the trains. As a result the wagon business boomed. The IC was soon to be followed by the Big Four, the I B and W, and the Great Western. All sorts of mass produced items became available to people as a result of the railroad's proximity, including the wagons themselves.

The museum has many of these mass produced items in the Redhed collection, as well as a wagon and wagon parts and a complete blacksmith shop inventory. In addition, the museum's collection has many trunks and crates which illustrate the manner in which items moved on the rail. An area of collection to consider would be a limited number of railroad memorabilia. This should be limited, as many fine railroad museums, including one in Monticello, already exist. Borrowing from the Monticello museum and/or private collectors for special exhibit purposes remains a possibility.

20th century

A peculiar aspect of transportation in Champaign County was the Interurban. During the 1850s, Urbana developed a horse-drawn street railway, which in the 1890s was electrified by William B. McKinley. An electric railroad/trolley system eventually connected Danville, Urbana, and Champaign—branch lines were then developed to hook

up surrounding towns. As the automobile became the primary mode of transportation, the Interurban waned in importance becoming defunct in the 1950s

The museum currently does not hold any items which document the Interurban or Mass Transit in the area. This is a rich area for borrowing items from particular collectors.

The county shares with the rest of the country the need for road improvements as well as the vast number of other cultural changes brought about by the increasing popularity and affordability of the automobile throughout the 20th century.

While the museum holds a few automobile tools and parts, it has historically chosen not to specialize in automobiles, because of their size. When needed private collectors have been called upon to provide needed examples of parts, or –for programs– example automobiles. Items which represent cultural changes wrought by cars, e.g. businesses which failed, such as the interurban transit line itself, because of improved local roads as well as the Interstate system might be something to pursue as specific to Champaign County.

Communication

In the past century and a half changes in communication have also affected the culture at large. Prior to the U.S. Postal Service, of course, messages were carried by hand or through a personal courier. The first Post Office was founded in the county in the year Champaign was separated from Vermilion County, 1833. From that time to the present, letters, bills, notes, postcards, cards and invitations have been a popular mode of communication here-as elsewhere.

The museum holds several letters in its collections, as they relate to three-dimensional objects but does not actively collect letters, but rather refers them to the Champaign County Archives in the Urbana Free Library. The museum does have a small post-card collection, which serves a double purpose: documenting the area and its sites and preserving a unique type of communication. The museum might be interested in collecting copies of letters to accompany unusual or compelling objects.

Telegraph lines came with the Illinois Central Railroad and were known to have been part of the equipment of the first West Urbana (Champaign) train station in 1856. The museum has two telegraph keys which have been part of an interactive educational exhibit, and no telegraph messages (printed) in the collection.

Telegraphy was actively used until the 1960s. This may be an area of interest for the museum.

Telephone lines were first strung in Champaign County beginning in the late 19th century. Switching stations were often located in farmhouses and small towns. Switchboards were used until the mid-20th century.

The Capel family of Champaign County was responsible for providing rural telephone service. The museum holds a representative sample of telephone equipment from the 1910s to the 1970s thanks to the Capel family.

The University of Illinois has played a pivotal role in the development of the type of computerized communication which we now use from the development of the first Illiac computer to NCSA Mosaic (the first web browser); this area still attracts companies and individuals involved in computer-driven communication.

The University has its own archival system, so paper documentation would not be necessary to collect—however a small number of representative artifacts might be considered in the future.

The Home Economy to the World Economy

How have men, women and children worked in the county from the earliest times to the present? Work in the home as well as outside of the home will be considered with attention to occupations, businesses, industries, trades, labor unions and utilities.

Early

For the Native Americans and early settlers, the economy in which they lived was strictly a home economy with very few outside connections: they worked to produce what was necessary to survive.

Redhed pieces provide many (possibly too many) examples of home economy from hand held corn shellers to a very complete array of clothmaking tools which may be considered a more than adequate representation of county history up to 1850.

19th century

From the Civil War until the First World War, the economy of Champaign County was based for the most part on the interconnection of towns on railroad lines with supplying markets in larger cities. Rural households with family farms by far outnumbered the people localized in the two larger towns of Champaign and Urbana (as well as in the smaller towns). These households met many of their own economic needs in the same subsistence manner as before the Civil War, however over the course of the second half of the 19th century demand for mass-produced goods among these farmers led to sales of cash crops and livestock. Grain elevators began to be built in the 1870s creating centers of activity in small towns. Services were provided almost exclusively locally for all manner of needs: construction, blacksmithing, coopering, wagon making. Often African American residents were engaged in service occupations such as barbers, launderers and day laborers. Banks, grain brokers, and merchants were local as well.

A representative sample of businesses and services might be generated so that a few artifacts from each type can be obtained.

20th century

Some manufacturing took place in the latter part of the 19th century, e.g. the Urbana Woolen Factory, Patton Brick and Tile Factory. Much more manufacturing came to Champaign, Urbana and Rantoul during the course of the 20th century: local firms founded in the boom days of the 1920s included the now defunct Illinois Glove Factory and the Universal Bleacher Company as well as Collegiate Cap and Gown (no longer locally owned). Again in times of prosperity manufacturers like Humko (Kraft) and Solo Cup moved into Champaign County providing a larger and more global economic base. Recent efforts by the University of Illinois have brought many high-tech firms, particularly computer based firms to Champaign County.

Again, representative artifacts from a wide variety of businesses might be sought.

The movement of the Home Economy to the World Economy over the past two centuries brought many changes in the lives of workers: men, women and children. The work of women and children is not often documented or considered in the context of work and yet it has been vitally important in the development of the area. Topics of interest may include late 19th century women's work keeping the home, e.g. making quilts or canning food, accounting for the business of a family, providing additional income through the making of butter or taking in sewing. Also sought as a topic of interest is the work of children, whether in play or in the work, e.g. milking the cows, delivering newspapers. Today more women working outside the home and fewer children working because of labor restrictions, something which must also be considered.

These are all vital aspects of a household and world economy and should not be overlooked in collecting.

Living in Community

How have men, women and children managed to shape their communal lives in the county through entertainment, sports, arts, celebrations, government, politics, social service organizations, education, free exercise of religion, or the ideological tenets they may hold. How have the lives of individuals within the county been formed by national, state and local events, e.g. war, disease, racial, ethnic and gender issues and inequities and what has been the community response to those same events.

Individuals within the Community

Individual people are the basic unit of any community. Connecting those people to their accomplishments and associations through artifacts, e.g. the Busey family and Busey bank or Erma Bridgewater and Bridgewater Park, is important to consider in the acquisition of an artifact.

Family Life

The smaller unit of organization for the community has been, (in the early days of the county) extended families, and more recently nuclear families. Families not only work together but also live together and play together. Entertainments that families engage in include games and toys.

In the Chesebro collection we have many early 20th century examples. A cross section of games and toys from other eras should also be considered as collection pieces.

Families generally worship together (this would be covered in the religion section of the narrative); they work and eat together (covered by the Home Economy section); they provide for the education and entertainment of their children (schools/arts and culture).

Recognition of their pursuits as a family will sometimes be evident only through collecting family pieces—a several generation wedding dress, for example.

Education

The first one-room schools in Champaign County were built in the 1850s and in 1958 the last one room school was closed, Mounts School in Condit Township. At one time there were over 200 one-room schools in the county and the museum has a long tradition of offering school programs to students to celebrate this tradition.

It is an area of collecting/interpretation which we should be certain is complete.

By the end of the 19th century Champaign and Urbana were finding it necessary to consolidate their one-room schools into larger schools. Large high schools were built by both towns in the 1910s. At the same time, Catholic churches were founding parish schools. Rural consolidation of high schools didn't occur until after the Second World War and later in the 20th century some, but not all elementary schools consolidated.

In 1968, desegregation initiatives were undertaken in Champaign schools, however they have been recently found wanting and a reorganized school-of-choice program was instituted.

Probably the single most defining feature of Champaign County's educational establishment is the University of Illinois, founded in 1867. It dominates much of the life of the county. Parkland College, founded in the 1960s is another important feature of educational life.

Medical/health

Ague, milk sickness, cholera, tuberculosis, scarlet fever, polio—just a few of the dread diseases which Champaign County has suffered with. In the days before the railroad there were no doctors and B.F. Harris is known to have driven to Ohio to get homeopathic medicines to treat himself, his family and his neighbors. The railroad brought individual physicians who set up office in large and small towns alike. In 1895 the Burnham City Hospital was founded, Carle Hospital was opened in 1929 and Christie opened a Clinic in

Champaign in 1929. The latter two organizations still remain in business and have become regional medical treatment centers and major employers in the County.

The museum currently has two surgical kits from the Civil War era, and a few other home medical implements. This is a specialized area of collection. Perhaps this could be addressed by borrowing artifacts for particular exhibits.

Religion

Native Americans in the County had their own sense of the spiritual particular to the peoples about whom we might like to speak. Kennekuk, a leader of the Vermilion Kickapoo, preached a blend of native religion and Christianity to his people. Early settlers to the county tended to be Protestant, primarily Methodist and Baptist. Irish immigrants brought in by the railroad forced the construction of Catholic churches and by the early 20th century a full spectrum of Christian denominations was evident here. The late 19th century saw a small group of Jewish immigrants to the County, and with the University this group has continually expanded. Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims are among the peoples who have established themselves as a cultural and social presence in Champaign County during the second half of the 20th century. While the religious beliefs of an individual/group often has a profound effect on his/their behavior it is often one of the “invisible diversities” which is overlooked in museums.

The museum owns the Galesville Methodist communion set and a handful of family Bibles and hymnbooks. Judicious choices of religious artifacts could be made to tell a more complete story.

Celebrating Community Life

Before the Civil War quilting bees and barn raisings, gatherings of the few settlers who lived in distant parts of the county occurred with some regularity and provided entertainment for County residents. In the latter part of the 19th century an Old Settlers Reunion group was formed which provided many communal events and celebrations.

The Old Settlers Reunions proved important in writing the first histories of the County and pieces from the Redhed collection illustrate many of the types of artifacts which are mentioned in those histories.

Parades, like the Corn Parade in Mahomet which marked some event, or celebrated local products, work, or ingenuity were common forms of entertainment from the Civil War until the mid 20th century; and still exist, with less frequency, today.

Remnants of parade, county and township fairs might also be sought as documentation representing the best hopes, pride and priorities of county residents. We currently do not have any of these pieces in our collection.

Anniversaries, like the centennials of small towns held in the 1970s (Ogden, Philo, Fisher), were cause for celebrations and homecomings. Representative of the

conscious decision to celebrate history, these often generated artifacts. Another instance when our community is self consciously historic is at groundbreaking and dedication ceremonies.

Often three-dimensional pieces are produced in commemoration.

Wars and military

Champaign County was settled by four veterans of the Revolutionary War, provided soldiers to 17 regiments in the Civil War as well as numerous men to the Spanish American War, the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, and recent conflicts in Europe and the Middle East. G.A.R groups were active in Champaign County as have been AmVets, the American Legion and the V.F.W. Women's auxiliaries have been active in many of these groups as well.

The museum has World War I and II uniforms, but only small parts of uniforms from other wars and conflicts. Military museums (War Museum in Danville) avidly collect such items, but a comprehensive set of uniforms and military paraphernalia should be sought for Champaign County residents.

Wars had a profound effect on the men, women and children left behind. Items which represent the hardships of those at home should also be retained, and possibly expanded.

Currently the museum holds a few ration books from World War II era.

Government/Law

In 1833, Vermilion County was parceled in two; the western half became Champaign County. Locating commissioners appointed by the governor determined that the County seat should be in Big Grove (now Urbana) as it was centrally located. Only one attempt to move the county seat occurred by West Urbana (now Champaign), but failed. The township form of government was adopted in 1860 with 15 original townships. This was later revised to 28 townships. Individual towns were incorporated over the course of the 19th century; several have now disappeared.

The Museum has the charge of the Hensley Township Hall which it uses as an educational facility; copies of town hall records augment this use. Systems are in place to archive many governmental records, but representative artifacts from some county, township, town and city governmental offices might be an appropriate addition to the collection.

Political buttons and other campaign items are of interest in collecting the history of the area, but because of the widespread documentation of political figures in the press and the archiving of public records it is probably not the mission of the museum to duplicate these sources of information.

Police and fire protection districts began to be formed in the mid-nineteenth century and are not consolidated in any way. The museum currently has no police or fire uniforms or equipment.

Sports and Recreation

As part of our discussion of educational institutions, the subject of sports will inevitably arise. Two of the architectural landmarks of the University of Illinois are the Memorial Stadium and the Assembly Hall, both sports facilities. Sports teams affiliated with high schools are important to the community life of many smaller towns.

Schools normally keep their own trophies and equipment, but a small representative sampling of such artifacts could assist interpretation.

Notable non-school team sports include participation by many County residents in baseball leagues. Baseball was extremely popular in the late 19th and early 20th century: the Eastern Illinois Baseball League was followed avidly in towns such as Ivesdale, Seymour, Sadorus, Mahomet and Fisher. It lasted for over 60 years. Some Champaign residents played for the Negro Leagues as well. Today all sorts of recreational baseball and softball leagues (as well as soccer, basketball and other sports) for adults and children create and maintain community within the larger towns as well as in the smaller towns.

Again artifacts from a small sampling of these groups, i. e. uniforms, equipment, trophies, scorecards, announcements, could represent this form of social life well. The museum does hold a couple of baseballs from the late 19th century.

Olympic athletes from Champaign County have been numerous and are honored by the Champaign Park District at Parkland College. The Avery Brundage collection of Olympic artifacts is housed at the Spurlock Museum and Avery Brundage's papers are housed at the University Library.

A few artifacts representative of the major Olympic personalities from Champaign County might be considered, but the mission to save this aspect of history is already been covered by other institutions.

Recreational opportunities for the populous of Champaign County have been informal and formal. The flat terrain and cold winters have made cross-country skiing and skating a popular winter occupation for a long time.

The museum does have skates and skis in the collection. However, snowboarding, canoeing, kayaking, bike riding for fun, hiking, etc. are relatively new recreational pursuits which came as a result of increased leisure time in the second half of the twentieth century. These too should be investigated.

The Forest Preserve District itself is a testament to this wise use of leisure time.

Artifacts which document the history of the Forest Preserve might be prudent to retain.

Social Groups & Service Organizations

Many social groups and service organizations are church based or interest based and those have been discussed elsewhere. Fraternal organizations like the Masons, the International Order of Odd Fellows, and the International Order of Hibernians may have religious or cultural requirements but not be affiliated directly with another group. This type of organization became popular at the end of the last century and was very popular throughout most of the 20th century.

We do have some Odd Fellows material in the Chesebro collection and a Masonic lamp in the Redhed collection.

Other service organizations existed for one social purpose which now has changed. The Red Cross, for example was formed in response to a need during World War I but survives today with a disaster relief mission. The League of Women Voters was formed to help inform women who had just attained suffrage to make a wise choice and now serves as a watchdog group over local government as well.

While these groups' paper artifacts and photographs are being collected by the Urbana Archives, the three-dimensional pieces might be collected by the Early American Museum.

Some social groups, like the Rotary Club or the Professional Business Men's Organization are children of the mid-20th century and existed to further the business opportunities of individuals and of the community but had social benefits as well.

The great diversity of social organizations should be considered in collecting.

Arts

An essential element of living in community remains how Champaign County residents celebrated that through the arts.

While personal expression in the visual arts through the traditional media of sculpture, painting and drawing are better represented at the Krannert Art Museum, folk arts—such as quilting and woodworking—are appropriate for the collection of the Early American Museum. Visual arts also encompass architecture—but the interpretation of this can be done exclusively through the use of photographs and other archival materials which it is not our mission to keep.

Musical arts were practiced in churches, homes and collectively in public places. After the civil war, homes were often fitted with pianos--or more commonly—pump organs which provided musical entertainment. Large and small towns within the community formed bands to perform at public occasions, e.g. Ivesdale, Royal, St. Joseph, in the late

19th century. Towns similarly had glee clubs and choirs who performed regularly. This tradition carried on well into the 20th century, with some groups still extant.

The John Philip Sousa library in the Harding Band Building on the campus of the University of Illinois houses a related collection, so the Early American Museum may not want to collect in the area of brass bands, unless local.

More popular today and throughout much of the latter part of the 20th century has been the formation of small independent groups who play/sing in commercial establishments performing popular music. Still, church-based and school-based bands, orchestras and choirs perform regularly.

The museum currently has a good sampling of sheet music from the turn of the century as well as a pump organ, an autoharp and two pianos. We do not currently have other instruments in our collection. It might be advisable to discuss the need for two pianos and the way to keep the piano we do keep in good order.

As far as the written word is concerned, literary societies and reading groups were formed in the County in the late nineteenth century and some persist today.

Evidence of these societies could be preserved with some small ephemera, however this could also be accomplished with photographs/photocopies.

Entertainment

Champaign County's public entertainment venues began in the mid 19th century with halls and opera houses such as the Busey Hall, Barrett Hall (which later became known as the Champaign Opera House) and the Neal Opera House in Rantoul. These were used for all manner of public activities including lectures, plays, musical performances, and dances. For example Barrett Hall hosted Susan B. Anthony in 1882. Eventually similar types of theatres were built for the enjoyment of motion pictures and vaudeville shows. It wasn't until the end of the 20th century that the in-town, single-run theatre was replaced completely by multiplex theatres in suburban areas. At the beginning of the 21st century a revival movement for those downtown theatres is underway. Meanwhile theatrical performances have been offered throughout the county by school, church and civic groups in all sorts of venues. The University's theatre department has offered theatrical performance for general enjoyment for many years. With the opening Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in 1969 their outreach has been expanded greatly.

Media

Champaign County has been the home to many newspapers in the course of its history. The current newspaper which serves the entire county and surrounding area, the News-Gazette has gone through many ownerships and changes, but has been continuously published since 1852.

While a few representative titles may be advisable, particularly from the surrounding town papers, the History, Philosophy and Newspaper Library at the University of Illinois has many titles available, with more available online every day. It seems imprudent to keep any newspapers which do not relate directly to a three dimensional object.

Social Issues

In Champaign County, as in Illinois and throughout the nation, social inequities and injustices (e.g. poverty, oppression, racial and ethnic bias, slavery, alcohol and drug abuse, religious tensions, gender discrimination) and the problems which arise from the perception of, or activism about, said problems inevitably have arisen as a result of “living in community.” The earliest such problems arose as the Native Americans were driven from the area to reservations west of the Mississippi. In fact, a well-documented forced march made its way through the southern part of Champaign County in 1838.

This is an area of interpretation which could be discussed without artifacts.

Runaway slaves and questions of slave ownership were common in this part of Illinois, and freed slaves did settle in Champaign County in the mid 19th century. Ethnic groups from the Irish to the Germans in the 19th century and more recently from the Latino/a to the Middle Eastern resident have suffered from life difficulties based on prejudice. Not the least of these groups was the African Americans who came after the Civil War and later in the period of the Great Migration (ca 1910-1930). African Americans make up the largest minority in the county now, and have suffered through racial inequities in schooling, housing, and employment.

*The museum has built a relationship (through its publication of *Through the Years*, exhibits and other projects) with the African American community and care should be taken to continue to interpret this history.*

From the temperance movement of the 19th century to today’s rehabilitation/detoxification clinics and support groups, substance abuse has been an issue which has shaped the lives of people in Champaign County.

Particularly during the era of Prohibition, but also during the social upheavals during the 1960s, material culture betrays this influence and is of interest to the collection.

In the early 19th century, women were among the first schoolteachers in Champaign County; women found expanding opportunities at the beginning of the 20th century as well, with the relative freedom of the University. As a result of the University’s influence, the suffrage movement was well supported here. Certainly inequities in employment and education applied to women as well.

Again as a result of the proximity of the University, the unemployment rate in Champaign County has been historically lower than that of surrounding counties; however in periods of national economic hardship, such as the Great Depression, Champaign County’s fortunes followed the national trend.

Religious intolerance is known in Champaign County as well. Anti-Semitism and Anti-Catholicism were broadly accepted in the late 19th century and rallies by the KKK were held near Mahomet and in Urbana intimidating Jews, Catholics and African American residents alike.

Most evidence of this type of inequity or injustice may come through the print media and through photographs rather than in a collection of artifacts. Because these are life-forming issues, a few well-selected artifacts may speak loudly about a topic, e.g. the homemade wooden leg which the Museum recently accepted. Its crude construction at once speaks volumes about the poverty and ingenuity of the African American farmer who used it.