



telling the story of Plainfield, Illinois

Volume 20, Number 2

January 2026

President's Message

We Continually Strive to Do Better

The Plainfield Historical Society is guided by its adopted Mission and Vison statements (*see Page 4*). The 7 members of our Governing Board meet monthly, acting in good faith and with judiciousness (*Duty of Care*); acting in the best interests of the organization (*Duty of Loyalty*); and acting responsibly in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and our adopted bylaws (*Duty of Obedience*).

The Society's Governing Board welcomes comments, suggestions, and recommendations that may improve our organization. While not every piece of feedback can result in action, the Board members have a collective responsibility to consider your input and, when appropriate, act upon them. Following our Annual Meeting in July, the Society's Governing Board acknowledged and addressed many of your concerns.

The Society has undertaken projects to prioritize underrepresented groups in Plainfield—both past and present. To promote greater equity in the “telling of the Plainfield story” (*as identified in our newsletter masthead*) the Governing Board adopted an Indigenous Peoples Acknowledgement Statement and continues its efforts to preserve the Turner-Mottinger House at Quality Hill, where our community’s evolving role in assuring freedom for all citizens will be highlighted.

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 Pandemic, many members have suggested that the Society resume programming for its members and general public. Innovative programming that interests a variety of audiences and ages requires a commitment of funds, talent, and other resources. This issue of *The Messenger* announces a variety of programs and events throughout 2026. On behalf of the Governing Board, I invite and encourage you to support and attend as many as possible.

--Michael Lambert

Plentiful Programming Planned

Mark Your 2026 Calendars: Now thru December

An exciting year of programs is planned to satisfy many interests, abilities, and ages, beginning in January 2026. In the weeks preceding each event, online registration will be available at www.plainfieldhistoricalsociety.org/events/. Alternatively, mail-in registration is permitted if received at least 2 weeks prior to the event. Many of the events will be offered to members free of charge or at a reduced rate.

As details of each event are finalized updates and additional information will be announced through *The Messenger* as well as on Facebook (*Plainfield Historical Society*). Our website (www.plainfieldhistoricalsociety.org) provides up-to-date event details. There, you also may donate towards any of our projects, including the preservation of our historically significant properties.

Our winter discussion series, **Lite Lunch Learning**, is a noon hour program offered on the second Thursday during January, February, and March. Selected topics will be explored while participants are encouraged to share memories and ask questions. Participants may bring a “brown bag” lunch. Complimentary bottled water and delicious, hot soup (courtesy of Tischler’s Market) will be provided. Doors open at 11:50 am and the program will begin promptly at 12:10 pm. Each session will conclude by 12:45 pm so those attending during their work lunch hour can return to their workplace. Registration for each session is \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members. Additional parking is available behind the south building of the Plainfield Plaza. The three Lite Lunch Learning sessions are **January 8: “On The Move: Plainfield’s Relocated Buildings”** exploring the history of relocated buildings during the past 180 years; **February 12: “Roller Rink to**

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Board Members Visit Davenport Museum

Behind-the-Scenes Tour of Museum Operations

On September 13 and 14, Society Governing Board members Madison Basso and Michael Lambert traveled to Davenport, Iowa to visit the Putnam Museum and Science Center. The institution was established, in 1867, as the Davenport Academy of Natural Sciences.

Madison Basso served an internship at “The Putnam” several years ago. The “back of the house” tour was led, graciously, by Christina Kastell, Curator of History and Anthropology, and Christine Chandler, Curator of Natural Science.

Tour highlights and insights included a discussion of artifact storage challenges for an ever-evolving and expanding collection of artifacts; appropriate de-accessioning procedures for artifacts which do not support an organization’s mission and vision; contemporary options for public viewing of archived items (*see image below*); and artifact/document cataloging and storage considerations.



The tour was informative, enlightening, and encouraging as Plainfield Historical Society volunteers continue to organize, cull, repair, expand, and catalog our collection in our interim museum space as the Governing Board continues the planning process for the proposed 5,000 sf museum at the former 1940 Phillips Gas Station site. The similarities of issues between “The Putnam” and our museum was instructive and inspiring.



Are you following us on Facebook? We have more than 3,000 followers...

Indigenous Peoples Acknowledgment

Adopted by Governing Board in September

The Plainfield Historical Society acknowledges that we gather on the ancestral lands of the Council of Three Fires—the Potawatomi, Ojibwe, and Odawa Nations as well as many other tribes, including the Illinois, Miami, Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo, and Ho-Chunk.

During the early 1800s, opportunity-seeking European-American settlers entered northern Illinois, leading to years of both peaceful coexistence and aggressive conflict, culminating in the Black Hawk War of 1832.

The Treaty of Chicago of 1833 required both the removal of most Potawatomi people living in Illinois and the ceding of the lands where the Potawatomi had gathered, resided, traded, hunted, and harvested for generations and where other indigenous tribes had traveled and sought seasonal shelter.

The Plainfield Historical Society commits to building relationships with descendants of these tribal nations who continue to call this area home and pledges to sharing the history and contributions of native peoples with the Plainfield community.



These shelves and boxes hold the Society’s collection of more than 25,000 items...waiting to be catalogued and organized. Additionally, more than 275 l.f. of paper documents are being inventoried by our volunteers on Tuesday and Thursday work days. Additional volunteers will be needed in early February.

Plentiful Programming *(continued from Front Page)*

Rock-n-Roll: Electric Park Revival" discovering the history of Electric Park after the amusement resort closed in 1924. **March 8:** "Mid-Century Memories: Local Restaurants of the 1950s and 1960s" remembering the favorite restaurants where you might have dined or worked.

Join us at on **Thursday, April 9** at 7:00 pm, when **Illinois Lincoln Highway Association** representatives, Kay and Ed Kozack, will share Lincoln Highway history as well as identify the goals and explain initiatives of the Illinois Lincoln Highway Association. Limited seating available, advanced registration recommended. Members free; Non-Members \$5/person.

By popular demand, our **Spring Euchre Tournament** fundraiser will return on **Friday, February 20** with two sessions at Warehouse 109. Join your friends and neighbors for either the afternoon session (begins promptly at 2:00 pm with light refreshments, bottled water, and bar service) or the evening session (begins promptly at 7:00 pm with light snacks and bar service). The 50/50 raffle returns as well. Doors open 30 minutes prior to tournament start time. Members: \$25/person; Non-members \$30/person. Seating is limited, so advance registration will be required.

During National Preservation Month in **May 2026**, tours of the **Turner-Mottinger House at Quality Hill**—our Underground Railroad property—are planned. Learn more about the house, its owners, the Abolitionist Movement in Will County, and what this property embodies. Visitors can view recent renovation work and discover plans for future progress. The tour date and Members: free; Non-members \$10/person. Space is limited, so advanced registration will be required.

Plan to join us at one or all of our three distinct tours planned for **June 2026**.

The first event in **June 2026**—a Wednesday evening walking tour—will highlight **The Buildings of Herbert Cowell**, Plainfield's first resident architect. The tour will be led by local historian and retired architect Michael Lambert. Registration is limited to 20 adults, so advanced registration will be required. Members: \$10/person; Non-members \$20/person.

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Although permitting delays have unfortunately hindered progress at our **1940 Phillips Gas Station**, (see related article on Page 4 of this issue) our second **June** event will feature informative tours of the historic station, providing a glimpse of the on-going renovation work and future plans. Tours will be offered in conjunction with a Tuesday evening Cruise Night and the **nationwide centennial celebration of Historic Route 66**. Members: free; Non-members \$10/person. Advance registration not required for this event; however, space is limited for each 20-minute guided tour.

The third **June** event—a Sunday afternoon walking tour of the Plainfield Township Cemetery—will highlight some of the unique gravestones and the people and stories behind them. While not a CemeteryWalk presentation of years past, the informal tours are sure to enlighten and inform all attendees. Registration is limited to 40 adults and children over 12 years old. Members: \$10/person; Non-members \$20/person.

Two special events are planned for **September and October 2026**.

Our major **Fall Fundraiser, "Alcohol and Abstinence: A History of Booze in Plainfield"** will feature a silent auction, awesome food, an amusing look at Plainfield's relationship with alcohol between 1830 and 1950 and—of course—non-alcoholic offerings (for "the Drys") and libations (for "the Wets"). It promises to be a fun-filled, "adults only" evening of learning and calamity that you won't want to miss! Seating is limited and advance reservations will be required. Members: \$75/person; Non-members \$100/person.

Later in the year, our **Fall Euchre Tournament** fundraiser will return, again, with both afternoon and evening sessions, each with refreshments and a 50/50 raffle. Members: \$25/person; Non-members \$30/person. Seating is limited, so advance registration will be required.

Our 2026 programming concludes with **"Carols, Cookies, and Cocoa,"** a free, members and volunteers-only, "drop-in" appreciation Open House at our Museum Gallery on **Saturday, December 13, 2026**.

Watch for additional program details at our website (www.plainfieldhistoricalsociety.org), Facebook page, or in *The Messenger*. Plan—now—to join us as many times as possible throughout the year ahead!

Membership Renewals Now Online

Our Society relies on the generous support of our members. We appreciate the volunteer, labor, and financial support of each individual, business, and agency that sustains our Society's goals and projects.

Twelve-month memberships can be established or renewed easily and securely online through our website's membership portal:

www.plainfieldhistoricalsociety.org/join-support/membership.php

For those members who prefer to pay by paper check, membership dues along with each member's name, mailing address, phone number, and email may be mailed to:

Plainfield Historical Society

15204 S. Route 59

Plainfield, IL 60544

Alternatively, membership dues may be paid, in person, at our Museum Gallery & Research Room, 15412 S. Route 59, Unit 120 (Plainfield Plaza) during our posted hours. Annual Membership Dues (new or renewing) are:

Individual Under 18 years old: \$15.00

Individuals Over 18 years old: \$25.00

Businesses/Government with 1-25 employees: \$50.00

Businesses/Government with 26 or more employees: \$75.00

With the activation of our website and membership portal, members will receive an automated renewal notice each year, by email, as their anniversary date approaches.

Members are entitled to free admission to our Museum Gallery; 2 hours of assisted access to our research files at no charge; discounted rates for Society-sponsored programs and events; and general satisfaction that you have supported the mission and vision of your Society. **Unpaid prior years' dues and additional donations—above and beyond current membership dues—are always appreciated.**

Permit Issued for Station Renovations

In late November, the Village of Plainfield finally issued a building permit for our 1940 Phillips Gas Station property. Regrettably, winter weather set in before any substantial exterior work could proceed; that work will begin as weather allows. Additional site engineering and interior work—including selective demolition, masonry wall alterations, and concrete slab replacement—will continue thru the winter.

The unfortunate delays have precluded our participation in national centennial celebrations of Historic Route 66 in 2026.



Our Mission

The Plainfield Historical Society is dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and sharing artifacts that represent the unfolding story of the Plainfield, Illinois community through the conservation of its archival collections; implementation of educational programs; fostering of community partnerships; and stewardship of historic sites so that our collective heritage continues to be relevant to and embraced by present and future generations.

Our Vision

The Plainfield Historical Society seeks to engage the Plainfield, Illinois community and other interested persons in our pursuit to discover, document, collect, interpret, and honor our past with integrity and professionalism while inspiring and educating the broadest possible audience through engaging exhibits, dynamic storytelling, inspiring preservation efforts, and state-of-the-art facilities.

Our Core Values

Honesty, Integrity, Life-long Learning, and Stewardship.

Since September, membership in the Plainfield Historical Society has risen 10%. Our membership goal is to grow by 25% by June 30, 2026. Who have you encouraged to join us?

How to Reach Us

[Volunteer](#) [Donate](#) [Join](#)

Museum Gallery & Research Room:

15412 S. Route 59 — Unit 120, Plainfield, IL 60544

Tues-Wed-Thurs 9am-Noon; Sat 1pm-4pm

(Mid-February thru Mid-December)

Mailing Address:

15412 S. Route 59 — Unit 120, Plainfield, IL 60544

Phone: 815/436-4073

Email: plainfieldhistoricalsociety.il@gmail.com

Website: www.plainfieldhistoricalsociety.org

Facebook: Plainfield Historical Society