

The Crackerbarrel



Elgin History Museum News September 2023

President's Report

Ann LoCascio, President



As usual, we've got a lot going on at the Museum!

August 26 saw the opening of Joel Amore's solo art exhibit "Hastings." Joel is a gifted local artist who got his start creating graffiti/street art at a young age. This led him to painting Victorian homes and high-rise apartments. From there he began to study realism and sign painting, combining everything into an all in one art form.

He enjoys participating in community events, painting big walls, and helping businesses bring their artistic side to life. A portion of his work is in the Museum archives, preserved from the board-up art created during the summer of 2020 in Downtown Elgin.

September 23 and 24, the popular Bluff City Cemetery Walk returns with seven of Elgin's past residents telling their stories beside their gravesites. This year it includes a store owner, a miner, an educator, a windmill manufacturer, a musician, a tavern owner and a daughter who's parents' early death led to important public safety measures.

The Walk will again use the format of two days and timed entry tickets. Be sure to get your tickets before the day of the event! Come out and enjoy the beautiful Bluff City Cemetery and the notable stories of its residents.

Looking ahead long-term, the planning committee for an exhibit on Elgin's Hispanic heritage has been meeting for several months. Much like our programs Project 3-2-1 and Dairies to Prairies, this comprehensive project will be several years in the making and we expect to have an exhibit, documentary and events to document and celebrate this important demographic in Elgin's history. We are in the project's infancy, so all are invited to participate. More announcements will be coming soon.

Welcome New Members

Dave Bosely
Gail Borden Public Library
Dave and Patty Gathman
Sharon Lavalie

Steve Rauschenberger
Mike Vallone
Cheryl Wilkins
Evan Wise

Welcome new Life Members **Mary and Tom Kemerling!**

The new Life Member Donor Board at the Museum commemorates Life Members past and present.

To become a Life Member, visit
<https://elginhistory.org/product/life-membership/>

Many Thanks to the 2023 Cemetery Walk Sponsors!

- Ziegler's Ace Hardware
- Justin Budd, Edward Jones Financial Advisor
- Citizens for Castro
- Countryside Funeral Homes & Crematory
- Downtown Neighborhood Association
- City of Elgin
- Elgin Heritage Commission
- Dan and Karen Fox
- Friends for Anna Moeller
- Terry and Sue Brigham Gabel
- Rudolph and Lillian Galfi
- Ralph Helm
- Independent Order of Odd Fellows
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- Jill and George Moore
- Dennis and Laurie Roxworthy
- Nancy and Art Schueneman
- St. Charles Memorial Works, Inc.
- Symonds-Madison Funeral Home

The Crackerbarrel

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The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.
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Visit our website Elginhistory.org

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September 14, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch Woodruff & Edwards Foundry

Tom Barilich discusses the impact of Woodruff & Edwards on Elgin, plus provide information on foundries in general. Founded in 1879, Woodruff & Edwards made metal cast products for over 100 years. Bring your lunch; dessert and beverage provided. Please register for in person or Zoom.

September 23 & 24: Bluff City Cemetery Walk Saturday, September 23 tours at 2:00 P.M. & 5:30 P.M. Sunday, September 24 tours at 11:00 A.M. & 1:30 P.M.

See article on page 2 for details. Enjoy the beauty of Bluff City Cemetery while learning about past Elgin families and residents. Tickets must be purchased in advance.

September 29, 6:00 p.m. Wine, Cheese, & Chocolate Tasting FUN-raiser at the Elgin History Museum

Learn about the difference in wines with certified wine educator Don Clemens. He will talk you through tasting 8 small glasses of wine. There will be a table of refreshments to go with the wine during the evening. Raffle prizes with your ticket. \$40 members/\$45 guests

October 15, 2:00 p.m - 3:30 pm: Annual Meeting + Cyndee Schaffer: The Journey of Mollie's War

20-minute Annual Meeting: election of officers and reports on the financial health of the Museum and the year's events.

Cyndee Schaffer, co-author of the award-winning book *Mollie's War*, will detail her mother's experiences in World War II from basic training in 1943 to her return home in November 1945.

November 18 & 19: Photos with Santa Fundraiser Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House 302 West Chicago Street

The house will be decorated for Christmas. Bring the whole family: babies, grandparents and pets! Just \$30 for a scheduled time to take a photo with Santa and his elf. There are refreshments and crafts to make, too!

December 9, 1:00 p.m. - 3:00 pm: Holiday Tea It's a Wonderful Life with Leslie Goddard

Upcoming Events

Al Walters, Program Chair

Check the website for current information. Events take place at the Elgin History Museum unless otherwise noted. elginhistory.org/events

Joel Amore's "Hastings" art exhibit is on display in the meeting room until December 31, 2023



Artist Joel Amore at the opening of his exhibit at the Museum

September 9 & 10, Historic Elgin House Tour 9:00 a.m.- 4:00 P.M.both days.

The Gifford Park Association presents a tour of homes in the historic Northeast Neighborhood on Elgin's east side. Please see historicelginhousetour.com for details and to purchase tickets. Tickets also available CASH ONLY at the Museum.

Historical Tales Unveiled at 36th Annual Bluff City Cemetery Walk

Rudy and Lillian Galfi, Cemetery Walk Co-Chairs

History comes to life once again as the Bluff City Cemetery Walk returns on Sept. 23 and 24 for its 36th year, offering a captivating journey through the lives and stories of remarkable individuals who have left an indelible mark on the community. Held on the picturesque grounds of the Bluff City Cemetery, this year's event promises to be a captivating blend of heritage, education, and entertainment.

This year's tickets are timed entry, allowing attendees to choose the tour time that suits them best. Saturday's performances will begin at 3:00 p.m. and 5:30 P.M., while Sunday's presentations will begin at 11:00 A.M. and 1:30 P.M. To ensure a seamless experience for all attendees, tickets will not be sold at the gate. For \$20.00, these tickets are an incredible value for the wealth of history and entertainment on offer.

Adding a modern touch to this cherished tradition, a virtual version of the Bluff City Cemetery Walk will be made available starting October 1st. This innovation enables history enthusiasts and curious minds from around the world to view the event.

The heart of the event lies in the characters brought to life through engaging performances, embodying individuals who have significantly shaped Elgin's history. Among the luminaries featured in this year's line-up are:



William D. Ackemann: An astute businessman and a member of the Ackemann Bros. Department Store family, who left an indelible mark on local commerce.



Joseph Hecker: A musical maestro renowned for founding the Elgin National Watch Factory Band and establishing the Elgin College of Music, enriching the cultural fabric of the city.



Ruth Anderson: A dedicated educator whose lifelong commitment to teaching affected generations, particularly during her two-decade tenure at Wing School.



Geister Family (narrated by Mary Geister): From leading a windmill manufacturing firm to owning a lumber company, the Geister family's journey is a testament to entrepreneurial spirit.



Gould Family (narrated by Dorothy "Dot" Gould): Overcoming tragedy, Dorothy Gould emerged as a community leader after losing her parents in the tragic Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago.



Chisholm Family (narrated by Emma Chisholm): A glimpse into the life of Elgin's affluent 19th-century elite, the Chisholm family derived their prosperity from mining interests in the West.



Abraham Leatherman: Founder of Leatherman's Tavern, a vital rest stop along Route 20 that served as a haven for travelers and a social hub.

For those with mobility concerns, Knapheide Truck Equipment Center in McHenry, IL has generously provided a tram, accommodating up to 15 passengers, to help ensure that everyone can enjoy the experience. This year's route includes some steep grades.

The Bluff City Cemetery Walk is a celebration of history that transcends weather, remaining an enriching experience come rain or shine. Attendees are encouraged to check the weather forecast and come prepared to delve into the captivating tales that have woven the fabric of Elgin's heritage. For more information on the event or the tram option, please contact the Museum at 847-742-4248.

The Walk stands as a testament to Elgin Illinois' vibrant history and the individuals who have played pivotal roles in shaping the region. With its engaging performances and immersive storytelling, this year's event promises to captivate audiences and leave them with a deeper appreciation for the past.

In Memoriam

Barry K Danielson of Elgin passed away on Friday, August 25, 2023 at the age of 88. Barry graduated from Elgin High School and practiced law in the Elgin area for many years. In his retirement, Barry became an active member of the Elgin Area Historical Society, joining the Board of Directors in 2008. He served on the Finance Committee, working to guide the Museum into the future, and at the Museum greeting and guiding Museum visitors. Barry knew a tremendous amount of Elgin's history and also enjoyed vintage cars as a member of the Fox Valley Chapter of the Model T Ford Club.



Barry and his beautifully restored car

Several other members, supporters, and friends of the Museum have passed away since September 2020. We miss them all! If you know of any other Historical Society members who passed away recently, please notify the Museum.

In Memoriam

- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| George Bero | Jerry Roller |
| Karen Beyer | Edith Scarbrough |
| Floyd Brown | Ed Wesemann |
| Helen Childs | Ed Whitcomb |
| Cindy Drafall | |

New Topics Added to Speakers Bureau

Rebecca Miller, Museum Educator

The Museum's Speakers Bureau continues to wow audiences with interesting and informative presentations. Topics related to the Elgin National Watch Company and nostalgic Elgin memories remain popular. Every program ends with great questions and personal stories. Our speakers have added several new topics recently and we look forward to sharing them with new audiences.

Among her new programs, speaker Linda Rock offers "Compliments Of: Elgin Advertising Give-Aways from Years Ago." Businesses have long used promotional items to advertise and create loyalty among customers. Using items from her personal collection, Linda displays many types of Elgin advertising products from the late 19th century through the 1960s. Audiences are sure to recall fond memories when Linda displays a windshield scraper from Barnhart's Service Station, a needle threader from LeeWard's or a thimble from Muetterties Sunlight Bakery.

Lifelong Elginite Alan Walters has developed a program "Remembering Walton Island." Beginning with a history of the Fox River shoreline that surrounds the area, Alan takes listeners through Walton Island's journey from a muddy shallows to one of Elgin's most picturesque parks located symbolically in the middle of Elgin. East and west siders will appreciate Alan's storytelling and the bridge that Walton Island offers our community, literally and figuratively.

If you have a favorite period of Elgin history or wonder how life in Elgin looked during a certain national event or notable decade, historian Jerry Turnquist has programs on the 1920s, 1930s, the 1950s, the war years and Prohibition. These offer a study of how Elgin's past fits into the big picture of world history.



A Speaker's Bureau presentation at Gail Borden Public Library

Historian Bill Briska and Museum Educator Rebecca Miller offer "The Elgin National Watch Company – Employee Life." Have you ever wondered what was it like to work at the Elgin National Watch Company? Factory life was very regimented and manufacturing watches was an exacting job, yet employees enjoyed

social clubs, steady employment and a certain prestige gained by working at the Big Shop. Audiences learn about life inside the factory, its departments, rules and employee perks and challenges.

The Museum's Speakers Bureau presentations can be booked for private events, either on or offsite. The newly completed Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House also offers a charming venue for small programs. We have been pleased to offer presentations to the Elgin Garden Club, PEO DY, The Classic Car Collectors of Chicago and several local church groups. Visit www.Elginhistory.org to learn more about booking a presentation for your group.

Thank You Donors!

Your generous donations ensure the financial health of the Museum. Much of the budget comes from fundraising and memberships. Thank you!

2023 Board Fundraiser Donations Since July 7

Biesterfeld, Gary	Lagoni, Lance
Blohm, Carol	Lee, Maureen and Tom
Bost, Marianne	Marco, Rebecca
Brandes, James and Rhonda	Martin, Nancy
Budd, Justin	Muchow, Linda and Stephen
Burkart, Janet	Muntz, David and Jean
Campbell, Rachel	Nawara, Beth and David
Caughlin, John and Peg	Nish, Don
Conley, Ronald and Mary	O'Connor, Kevin
Corbett, Rita	Rauschenberger, Carol
Costello, Laura	Rauschenberger, Steve
Couture, Betsy	Rowe, George and Marge
Duffy, John and Ann	Smith, Jane
Dunning, Charles and Patricia	Smith, R. Lorece
Emmert, Judy	Sorton, Judy and Alex
Flaks, Mary Ellen	Sundquist, Christen and Matt Martin
Grosser, Patricia and Jeff	Swan, Valerie
Hallock, Alma	Textor, Jane
Harkin, Patricia	Turnquist, Jerry
Harris, Ricky	Van Dusen, Judy
Hoelt, Libby	Walsh, Larry
Keselica, Barb	Wilson, E. C.

The Ackemann Family

Ackemann Bros. department store, commonly known as Ackemann's, was Elgin's largest department store. It opened in 1895 and remained in the Ackemann family until 1985. The new owners converted it into a home furnishings store in 1986 and retained the Ackemann name. Ackemann's closed for good in 1993 after 98 years in business. Prior to his family's department

store, William Ackemann owned an Elgin dry goods store from 1881-94. Altogether, there was an Ackemann's store in Elgin continuously from 1881-1993, a total of 112 years. Branch stores operated in Woodstock (1975-85) and Crystal Lake (1981-92).

The Ackemann family consisted of William D. Ackemann, founder of the Elgin department store; his four brothers, Henry F., August W., Conrad F. and Frederick H.; his two sisters, Minnie Bauer and Lena Bultmann; and their parents, Henry and Wilhelmina. Between 1872 and 1892 all had permanently emigrated to Elgin from the little village of Winzlar, about 20 miles west of Hanover, in northern Germany.

In 1866, the kingdom of Hanover was forcibly annexed by Prussia during Bismarck's drive toward unification. Many Hanoverians, fearing the militarism and possible conscription of their new rulers, sought refuge in America. For those eager to leave Winzlar, the chief guide was William Grote, who came to America at age 16 in 1866, the same year that Prussia took over Hanover. Grote found employment as a farm hand in the rural area east of Elgin. The following year he was joined by his parents and together they bought a farm in Hanover Township just east of Elgin. In 1871 Grote moved to Elgin and opened a general store with J.F. Ettner, a fellow Hanoverian.

William Dietrich Ackemann (1855-1917) grew up on a farm, but wanted to be a merchant. There was little opportunity for that in his home country. In 1871, at age 16, William emigrated to New York City, where he obtained a job in a grocery store on Long Island owned by a family friend. His wages were board and lodging and an opportunity to learn. For nearly a year he learned the grocery business as well as the English language.

In 1872 William came west to Elgin. Mr. Grote, the young man from the same German hometown, offered William a temporary position in his general store. Through the influence of Mr. Grote, William obtained a position with Bosworth Brothers and Peck, selling dry goods. He worked there six years, followed by two years for M.W. DuBois, another dry goods merchant. In 1881, William entered into a partnership with Fred Sauer, opening a dry goods store in the new Jennings Hotel building, at the northwest corner of Douglas and Highland avenues. In 1883 he withdrew from that partnership and bought out the dry goods portion of the Grote and Ettner store, which, since 1881, was also located in the Jennings Hotel building. In 1885 he took in W.C. Weld as a partner and consolidated Weld's store with his own. Mr. Weld withdrew a year later.

William D. Ackemann married Bertha Sexhauer (1860-83), an Elgin native, in May 1882 in Chicago. In March 1883, daughter Bertha (1883-1953) was born. Only two weeks later, mother Bertha died of puerperal fever. William never remarried. His sister Minnie emigrated to Elgin in 1883 to help raise Bertha, who married Paul Zumkeller (1877-1956) in 1906. When his father-in-law, William, died in 1917, Mr. Zumkeller was elected president of Ackemann's. Later, Bertha and their son, Paul R. Zumkeller, would also serve as president. William

had a Queen Anne-style home built in 1885 at 128 N. Porter St. and lived there the rest of his life. This home still stands but has been significantly altered.

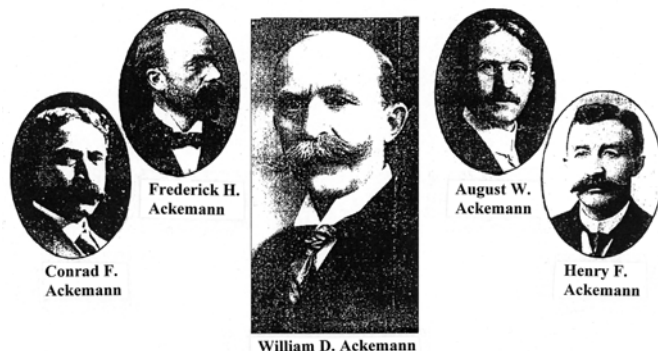
In 1875, the next Ackemann brother to emigrate from Germany to Elgin was August William ("Gus") Ackemann (1859-1924). Coming directly to Elgin, Gus joined brother William as a clerk in the Bosworth Brothers and Peck store. In the early 1880s, he left Elgin for employment in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Chicago but returned in the mid-1880s to work at brother William's dry goods store.

August married Minnie Buhmeyer (1865-1957) of Elgin in 1886 and they had four children: Dr. Harry; Luella; Elfrieda; and Dr. William H. By 1900, August and his family had moved into the circa 1860 Greek Revival-style home at 52 Crighton Ave. This home remained in their family until the 1980s.

In 1880, Conrad Frederick Ackemann (1864-1938) was the next brother to emigrate here, finding employment in a clothing store and a crockery store before working in brother William's dry goods store from 1882-88. In 1888, Conrad formed a partnership with Edwin Clothier and conducted a furniture store and undertaking parlor. In 1892, brother Henry bought out Mr. Clothier and in 1893 brother Frederick purchased a third interest in the firm.

Conrad married Amelia ("Millie") Mutzelburg (1866-1926), an Elgin native, in 1887. The couple had no children. Conrad had a Queen Anne-style home built in 1901 at 582 Park St., but by 1921 had moved into the Colonial Revival home at 16 Rugby Place, where he lived the rest of his life. Both of his former homes have been meticulously restored. Conrad, who served as Ackemann's president from 1928 until his death in 1938, was active in his church, as well as several civic and fraternal organizations.

The Firm of Ackemann Brothers



In 1887, the fourth Ackemann brother, Frederick Heinrich Ackemann (1869-1934), emigrated to Elgin. He briefly clerked in brother William's dry goods store, but within months accepted a position in William Grote's real estate and brokerage firm, becoming Mr. Grote's private secretary and accountant. In 1893, Frederick purchased an interest in his brothers' furniture and undertaking firm. When the Seybold Reed-Pipe Organ Co. moved to Elgin from Chicago in 1903, Frederick became its treasurer and general manager. Though he was involved in other businesses, Frederick remained a partner in Ackemann's and served as vice president for the last few years of his life.

Frederick married Christie Deuchler (1869-1925) of Dundee Township in 1895 in Chicago. The couple had five children: Stella, Walter, Helen, George and Carl. In 1892, when Frederick moved into his new Eastlake-style home at 116 N. Porter St., the entire Ackemann family was living in the same Porter St./Hill Ave. neighborhood. In 1902 Frederick bought the former August Scheele Queen Anne-style home at 802 Douglas Ave. and lived there the rest of his life.

In 1892, Henry Frederick Ackemann (1853-1921), the eldest sibling, emigrated to Elgin and became brother Conrad's partner in the furniture and undertaking business. In the early 1880s, Henry had married Minna Schlie (1859-1926) in Germany and the couple had two children, both born in Germany. Their eldest child, Henry C. (1885-1956), served 30 years as general manager of Ackemann's and was president for the last five years of his life. Their younger child, Minna, was persuaded by another German immigrant, Ernest H.C. Ackemann, to drop the "c" from her last name and become his wife. Their three children included Theodore ("Ted"), Ackemann's credit manager for 42 years, and Ernest W., who became chief judge of the 16th Circuit Court in Kane County.

In addition to his own family, Henry F. Ackemann brought his parents, Henry Sr. (1827-1904) and Wilhelmina (nee Walbaum; 1835-1911) to Elgin in 1892. Henry Sr. was a farmer and hotel owner in Germany. The couple had eight children – the seven who emigrated to Elgin and Sophie, who died in infancy. The parents had visited their children in Elgin in 1885 and in 1888, but in 1892 they were here to stay, living with their son, Henry F., upon arrival. They had a new home built at 252 Hill Ave., but in 1896 had moved into another new home at 110 Hill Ave. In 1916, his son, Henry C., was married and took over that home; his parents moved to 731 N. Spring St.

In 1894-95, the five brothers consolidated their businesses and built the original Ackemann Brothers department store, which opened in April 1895. It was a 2-story and basement brick building, 44'x132', at 168-70 E. Highland Ave., extending to Division St. on the north side. The building still exists but has been renovated and altered so often, it is unrecognizable.

Ackemann's department store was successful from the start. Rapid growth required a third story to be added to the original building in 1898. In 1908-09 a big addition to the west more than doubled its floor space. In 1912 the two-story building adjacent to the east was bought and in 1916 a third floor was added to this building. In 1957-58 a major addition on the northwest side added about 33% more floor space.



Ackemann's, 1914 (l.) and 1956 (r.)

A furniture and floor coverings warehouse opened at 170 Dexter Ave. in 1965, and in 1967 Ackemann's bought the former Gail Borden Public Library building at 50 N. Spring St. The store had grown to become nearly a block long and a block wide.

The early 1980s were a disheartening time for Elgin's downtown. Two of its three major retailers, Sears and Spiess, moved to Spring Hill Mall in West Dundee in 1980 and 1984, respectively. Ackemann's also felt the pressure, and changed its marketing strategy. By 1984, emphasis had been shifted to men's, women's and children's clothing, with other departments reorganized or eliminated. In 1985 Ackemann's President Paul R. Zumkeller, grandson of founder William D. Ackemann, announced the sale of the store.

The new owners, Dennis Leopold and Steve Rauschenberger, focused on furniture and other home furnishings. In 1993, Ackemann's, Elgin's last major downtown retailer, closed for good, citing changes in customer demographics. In 1999, after yet another round of renovations, R.R. Donnelley & Sons moved into the building.

In addition to the five Ackemann brothers, two Ackemann sisters also emigrated to Elgin. Minnie Ackemann Bauer (1857-1925) came to Elgin in 1883 to live with brother William and care for his young daughter Bertha after his wife died. In 1886 Minnie married Ludwig Herman Bauer (1854-1902), a German immigrant who worked at the watch factory and later owned his own jewelry store. They had no children.

Lena Ackemann Bultmann (1862-1933) married William F. Bultmann (1862-1938) in 1887 in Germany and that same year they emigrated to Elgin. Mr. Bultmann was head of the music department at the Ackemann's store and later became superintendent of the Seybold Reed-Pipe Organ Co. The couple had no children. All of the Ackemann family members are buried in Bluff City Cemetery, and the family is featured in this year's cemetery walk.

Acknowledgments: Mike Alft's publications; Kane County histories; obituaries and other newspaper articles; Ancestry.com; Courier-News photographs; monument photo by Judy Van Dusen; etc.

Artist Charles L. Peterson

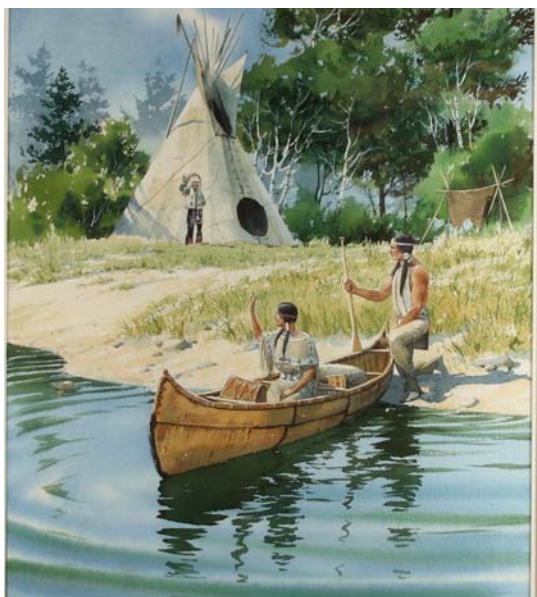
By Rachel Campbell, Past President

When the Peterson and Wiberg families immigrated to the U.S. in the late 19th century and early 20th, they undoubtedly had no idea that a grandson born in 1927 would gain wide acclaim as an artist. Grandfather Peterson arrived from Sweden as a teenager and was soon known for his skills as a tinsmith and plumber. Grandfather Wiberg, also from Sweden, arrived in the U.S. looking for a fresh start. The family farm had been lost and he was looking for an opportunity to establish the family here. When he left Sweden in 1900, he left behind a wife and three children. To establish himself in the U.S., he worked as a lumberjack and barnmaster. It was 1902 before he could send for his family.

Clarence, known as Pete, the artist's father, was the third son of the tinsmith/plumber. Karin, his mother, was the oldest child of the Wiberg family. Before her marriage, she worked as a dressmaker and clerk. They married in the early 1920s and by 1927 had three sons in Elgin: Dick, Bob and Charles, who became the artist. As a young man, Pete apprenticed with his father in the plumbing business. When he had an opportunity to work at the watch factory, he knew the higher wages and benefits would provide security for his growing family. He was hired as a machinist.

In 1927, the year Charles was born, the family ordered a Sears Kit house that was built at 16 North Alfred. When the Great Depression hit in 1929, Pete lost his job at the Watch Factory, but was fortunate to find a job pumping gas at the Elgin Oil Company, a position he held for the next 10 years.

Charles was nicknamed "Chick" in his early years and answered to that name for the rest of his life. Chick was a typical Elgin boy: he did well in school, delivered newspapers, and joined the Boy Scouts, attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. In 1947 he attended the International Boy Scout Jamboree in Paris with "Par" Parlasca and 12 other boys. It was his task to teach Indian dancing to the other members of the group.



In high school Chick participated in wrestling, drama and music. His senior year he was band president and president of the Student Council. He finished all the requirements for graduation at mid-year.

Chick began drawing as a small child—mostly cowboys, Indians, sketches of pioneer life, and ships and sailing. It wasn't until after he finished high school that he took an art class. His mother mentioned to Claudia Abell, the high school art teacher, that Chick had never taken an art class because he didn't want to do the silly projects required of students. Miss Abell invited him to come to class and draw whatever he wanted.

When he entered the Navy a few months later, he continued drawing sailors and ships. He served in the South Pacific a short time before the Japanese surrendered. He later quipped, "As soon as the Japanese heard I was coming, they surrendered."

Fifteen months after the war ended, Chick was home, and took a job at a local newspaper drawing comic strip illustrations for a local religious publishing house. This led to night classes at the American Academy of Art in Chicago and a position at the Leo Burnett Advertising Agency, and, later, a job in the advertising department at Hart Shaffner and Marx. But Chick was not satisfied: the art director made all the choices and Chick was not allowed to be creative.

During this time he met an old friend, Ray Barnhart, who had just finished graduate school and was on his way to start a faculty position at Marietta College in Ohio. Barnhart encouraged Chick to join him and continue his education there. Chick accepted this suggestion and enrolled at Marietta. With the courses he had completed at the American Academy he was able to finish his degree in two years. He graduated Cum Laude and with membership in Phi Beta Kappa. From Marietta he went on to Ohio State where he earned a MFA in painting.

His first teaching position was at Concord College in West Virginia. The head of the art department there suggested that he explore etching and lithography. Chick enrolled in summer school classes at the University of Wisconsin. That summer, he met his wife-to-be, Susan Gilkson. Chick soon moved on to head the art department at Marietta College, where he stayed as a professor until 1973 when the family moved to Ephraim, Wisconsin, in Door County.

Chick had loved this area since he and a friend, Del Neil, had camped there shortly after the war. When he met Sue, he learned that her family had a summer place in Ephraim near the Anderson Dock. It was here that the family established their home and Chick began his life as a full-time painter. His love of sailing and his talent for painting marine subjects meshed nicely. It became his home for the remainder of his long and productive life.

Chick once remarked, "I find the excitement of the sea and ships in action particularly exciting." While teaching at Marietta, he and his family spent their summers in Door County where Chick could paint and enjoy his favorite recreation, sailing. His love of sailing and his interest in history led him to historic ships. Most of the ships he painted were Great Lake ships. To make sure his paintings were correct in every detail he did research at the Manitowoc Maritime Museum.

In the 1990s, according to an article in the Pewaukee Press, he participated in most of the International Maritime Art Exhibitions at the Maritime Gallery at Mystic Seaport. There he won two Hoyne Awards and a museum purchase award. He was listed among the top 10 national painters of signed limited editions. Peterson was also listed as one of the notable maritime painters of the 20th century by Russell Jinishian in his book *Bound For Blue Waters*.

Memories Collection

In his book *Of Time and Place*, Peterson talks about what he called "the ghost images." An example is the painting "The Daily News" that reflects Elgin's past. The painting is a home about the time Peterson was a boy. Superimposed on the painting, faint but discern-

ELGIN HISTORY MUSEUM
360 PARK STREET
ELGIN, IL 60120



ible, is a drawing of a lad on his bicycle delivering newspapers. In the bicycle basket, the name of the paper — the *Courier News* — is visible. In other paintings in the Memories Collection, he included members of his family, neighbors and objects from a bygone era.



In the 1990s, Peterson entered into an agreement with the White Door Publishing Company to produce limited edition prints of his work. The ghost images became The Memories Collection. Within two years he was listed in *U.S. Art Magazine* as one of the ten best selling artists in the art print industry. In 1995 he was inducted into the magazine's Hall of Fame.



Chick Peterson painted nearly until the end of his life. He died in June, 2022.

Kind Words for Elgin

Ryan Quade, Museum Visitor



When I got an internship for the summer, I found an Airbnb that met what I was looking for, and it just happened to be here in Elgin. Just a suburb, like any other, I thought. Well, after spending a summer living in Elgin, all I can say is: how lucky can you get! This is a gem of a town. The beautiful historical homes and churches, world-class History

Museum, Fox River, and cultural diversity make this a very, very special place. Thank you to everyone who supports this incredible community, especially those who support the Elgin Historical Society!