



Madison County Historical Society

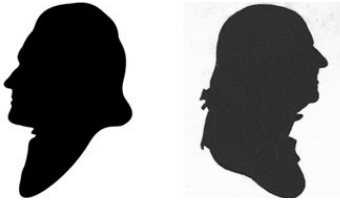
# MCHS News

May 2024

<https://madcohistory.org>

Vol. 12 No. 3

## ENCOUNTERS WITH PRESIDENTS ADAMS & JEFFERSON



On May 15 and 16, MCHS invites you to attend two events surrounding the appearance of Presidents Adams and Jefferson in Edwardsville. On Thursday, May 16, reenactors Michael Lepage and Kurt Smith will portray founding fathers and often political enemies in a lively debate from the Wildey Theatre stage. The performance is hosted by MCHS and Friends of the Wildey and made free to the public thanks to a grant from the Fink Family Trust.

On the night prior to the debate, MCHS is hosting a ticketed reception for the actors at the museum building (\$75 per person). MCHS members should have received invitations prior to this newsletter. The reception will provide an opportunity to visit with these men who make a living portraying these lions of American history. The challenge and fascination for those observing them is that they often have no script, but have to react "on the fly" when in character and interacting with the public.

The reception is on Wednesday, May 15, 4:30-7:30 p.m. at the Weir House and the debate is at the Wildey Theatre at 7 p.m. on May 16. For further information, call 618-656-1294.

## THE EAGLE PACKET COMPANY



*The Spread Eagle, one of many steamboats owned by the Eagle Packet Company which operated primarily on the Mississippi River. (Mudge)*

by Cindy Reinhardt

The Alton wharf was once a bustling place with numerous packet companies carrying both freight and passengers to places near and far. The most prominent of these was the Eagle Packet Company which plied the waters of the Mississippi River and its tributaries for nearly 85 years.

The company was established at Warsaw, Illinois, by two very different families, the Hills and the Leyhes, who both came to Alton when the Eagle Packet Company relocated there in the early 1870s.

The Leyhe brothers, William and Henry, were German immigrants, sons of Heinrich and Anna Leyhe who emigrated to America in 1846. Henry, born in 1838, and William, born in 1840, were six and four years old when the family of six made the journey.

*Cont. on page 4*

## THE SIGN HAS ARRIVED! THE SIGN HAS ARRIVED!

Thanks to the generous donations of two MCHS families, and the work of a half dozen Board members, the Society's much needed fresh new face on Main Street is now here!

MCHS member Cay Ursprung donated \$1,000 in memory of her parents, Carl and Shirley Ursprung. The same amount was donated by Mike and Cindy Reinhardt. Robert Daiber led a



group of volunteers who did the work of installing the sign, saving the Society a significant amount of money. Bob was assisted by Fred Faust, Candace Ladd, Bob Clouse, and Steve Mudge, all members of the hard-working MCHS Board.

The Society is delighted with the fresh new look and hope you enjoy it, too, as you drive by.

### Hours

Wed - Fri, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.  
Sunday 1 - 4 p.m.

Madison County History Museum  
and Library  
801 N. Main Street  
Edwardsville, IL 62025

### Contact us:

Library: 618-656-7569  
Society: 618-656-1294  
Email: [info@madcohistory.org](mailto:info@madcohistory.org)

## RECENT NEWS

### MCHS WELCOMES SHOVONDA MITCHOM TO BOARD

Board member Stephen Hansen, recognizing the importance of financial planning to the success of MCHS, recently nominated Shavonda Mitchom for a position on the MCHS Board. The nomination was approved at the MCHS March board meeting.

Mitchom recently returned to Southern Illinois University Edwardsville (SIUE) to serve as the Assistant Vice Chancellor for Administration. In this role, she is responsible for long-range capital planning and budgeting, the campus master plan, and university park activities. For the past three years, Mitchom has served as Chief Financial and Administrative Officer for Hoyleton Youth and Family Services, a child welfare and social services agency. During this time, Hoyleton embarked on its first major construction project to rebuild residential facilities. Mitchom led financing activities related to this construction project, working closely with multiple financial partners, including the State of Illinois DCFS capital grant program and UCC investment fund.

Prior to Hoyleton, Mitchom served nearly eight years as the director of business affairs for the SIUE College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). She worked closely with CAS deans,



*Shavonda Mitchom*

### FIRST MCHS ANNUAL APPEAL

With a minimum bare-bones budget of nearly \$150,000 annually, MCHS sent out their first annual appeal in March. Many of you responded and the Society is very grateful.

Although MCHS, of course, accepts donations at any time, it is generally looking at the May 15 reception as a culmination of this first effort.

Until then, please, keep the donations coming! Each one is greatly appreciated, not only for the dollars it brings, but also for the "pat on the back" that it gives all of us that volunteer for the Society. It is validation that you like what is happening at MCHS, i.e. the programming, preservation, events, publications and more. Each one is, in a way, a "thank you." It means a lot and is a boost to all our volunteers.

faculty, and staff to manage budget and administrative activities for the College. Mitchom has extensive financial management skills, having previously served in treasury and finance roles at Purdue University and Washington University in St. Louis, and at the Federal Reserve in St. Louis and Chicago.

Mitchom is a native of Carbondale, Illinois and has a bachelor's degree in economics and math from Illinois State University and MBA in finance from Southern Illinois University Carbondale. She resides in Fairview Heights with two daughters, Niara who is in middle school and Kai, who recently started her post-college career in Chicago.

MCHS is grateful for her willingness to serve and look forward to working with her. Welcome, Shavonda!

### VOLUNTEERS!

There's a saying that the reason volunteers are not paid is not because they are worthless, but because they are "priceless!"

**Donna Bardon**  
**Craig Becker**  
**Kendrick Bisset**  
**Betty Byrd**  
**Lynn Engelman**  
**Dixie Engelman**  
**Mike Featherstun**  
**Susan Featherstun**  
**Gary Forshaw**  
**Laura Fowler**  
**Laurie Frey**  
**Carol Frisse**  
**Carter Grisby**  
**Bill Iseminger**  
**Marcus Keen**  
**Kyle Kennedy**  
**Daymon Kirk**  
**Cherie Kuhn**  
**Marty Lane**  
**Shirley Malench**  
**Clara Moore**  
**Bill Nettles**  
**Maya Noonan**  
**Robert Mudge**  
**Jon Parkin**  
**Steve Rensberry**  
**Mike Reinhardt**  
**Ramona Rodriguez**  
**Connie Royston**  
**Ellen Thorson**  
**Gregory Thorson**  
**Shannon Wesselmann**  
**Sue Wolf**

Volunteers assist with the Probate Project, take care of the MCHS grounds, host festival booths, and much more!!

#### MCHS BOARD

Fred Faust, Pres.  
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Stephen Mudge  
Cindy Reinhardt  
Carol Manning

#### PUBLICATIONS

##### MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually  
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor  
cindy.reinhardt@madcohistory.org

#### VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the Museum or the Library. If interested, please call 618-656-7569.

#### MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through a MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our website, or at the Library.

THE Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

## RECENT NEWS

### 2024 MCHS SPEAKER SERIES



MADISON COUNTY  
**Historical Society**



Sunday, June 9 at 2 p.m.

#### LOVING LINCOLN

STORIES ABOUT WOMEN AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN

*Presenter: Stacy Lynn*

Free Event - Open to the Public

Main Street Community Center, 1003 N. Main Street, Edwardsville, Illinois

### HISTORIAN RESEARCHED

#### THE WOMEN IN LINCOLN'S LIFE

At the third Speaker Series of the year, Stacy Lynn's program will explore the influence of women in the life of Abraham Lincoln. The women include his female legal clients, his political constituency of women, and a few of the women who shaped his legacy. These stories are the subject of Lynn's recently completed manuscript that will be published by SIU Press in January 2025.

The book is part biography, part memoir, and also includes personal stories about Lynn's relationship with Lincoln through her experience as an editor of Lincoln's papers for 20 years. Lynn's previous books include *The Jury in Lincoln's America* (2012) and *Mary Lincoln: Southern Girl, Northern Woman* (2015).

In her presentation, she will share several stories from the new book, provide a short reading and lead a discussion afterwards. She has written dozens of articles and appeared in numerous documentaries related to her specialties. She has historical expertise on Lincoln, 19th century America, Illinois history, women's history, the Progressive Era, legal history, and the history of race.

Lynn has a Ph.D. in American History from the University of Illinois (2007). From 1996-2016 she was Associate Editor and Assistant Director of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois. Currently, she serves as Associate Editor of the Jane Addams Papers.

### MCHS USED BOOK SALES

Thanks to everyone who donated books and volunteered to sell books at the first MCHS Winter Book Sales, especially Mike Reinhardt, and Kendrick and Donna Bisset. By the time this newsletter is received, those sales will be over, but MCHS will continue to collect used books that are in good condition and of good quality to sell at at events in the Fall.

### FAMILY SEARCH

A reminder that the Madison County Archival Library is a FamilySearch library. Stop by to see what you can add to your family tree!



### SUMMER-FALL VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

As the summer festival seasons gears up the Society is in need of volunteers. For example, May 31-June 9, MCHS has five events! They include:

- May 31; MCHS will host a bus tour from Missouri
- June 2; Chicken Dinner Fundraiser at the Edwardsville Moose Lodge (servers and homemade desserts needed)
- June 5; Opening Night Reception for new MRF Exhibit (servers and hosts needed)
- June 8; MCHS in the History Tent at the Edwardsville Route 66 Festival (volunteers needed for two-hour shifts 10 a.m.-8 p.m.)
- June 9; June Speaker Series program (volunteers needed to set up chairs).

If you are interested (or know someone who might be interested) in any of the above opportunities, or would like to serve as a museum docent this summer, please call 618-656-1294. If interested in the ongoing probate project, call 618-656-7569 or stop by the Archival Library at 801 N. Main Street in Edwardsville.

### MRF EXHIBIT COMING TO MUSEUM

Those of you with fond memories of the Mississippi River Festival may want to attend an opening night reception for a new exhibit that includes memorabilia belonging to Lyle Ward, the festival director for many years.

Ward will be at the reception where everyone is encouraged to linger as they reminisce about what were, indeed, "the good ole' days," for many attendees of the festival.

Plans for the reception are being completed at this writing, but the reception will begin at 4:30 and there will be a suggested donation at the door.

**Mississippi  
River  
Festival**



## NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

*Thank You!*

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**ATTORNEY, CIVIL RIGHTS ADVOCATE**

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## EARLY YEARS OF THE EAGLE PACKET COMPANY (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)

St. Louis was their initial destination, but due to a cholera outbreak, they continued north to keep their family safe. The Leyhes eventually settled in the town of Warsaw, Illinois, a river town approximately 30 miles north of Quincy.

Heinrich operated a lumber mill, and as they became old enough, his sons worked with him. Henry was especially adept with engineering abilities which would prove useful when they established the Eagle Packet Company.

Perhaps influenced by the early ship crossing, or simply exposure to every aspect of life on the river, the brothers chose careers on steamboats and eventually both became steamboat engineers, then pilots, captains, and masters of their own boats.

In 1860, they were approached by riverman J. H. "Ham" Brandom of Alexandria, Missouri, with a proposition that they build their first steamboat. Brandom had a small steamboat called the *Eagle* that sank in the mouth of the Des Moines River, not far from Warsaw. As was the custom in those days, boats were constantly being built and rebuilt, often using salvage from boats that sank. Brandom offered the machinery, boiler, and whatever else could be used in exchange for half interest in the new boat.

The Leyhe brothers used wood from their family's sawmill to either build the boat themselves or, according to one source, hire boatbuilder O. J. Waird of Warsaw, to build it for them. Soon after the *Young Eagle* was finished, Brandom sold his share to Granderson Winfrey (G. W.) Hill, an experienced river pilot from nearby Alexandria, Missouri. The Leyhe brothers and G. W. Hill became the active partners of the Eagle Packet Company for decades, although there were other financial partners, including G. W.'s brother, Robert E. (R. E.) Hill. This was the beginning of the Eagle Packet Company, although it was not incorporated until 1873.

The Hill brothers, born in Virginia, came west to Alexandria, Missouri, via Kentucky with their parents, John and Polly (Winfrey) Hill, in the 1830s. The family probably settled in Missouri vs. Illinois because they brought slaves with them from the South. R. E., born in 1816, and G. W., born in 1824, both were experienced riverboat pilots and/or captains, navigating the Mississippi, Des Moines, Illinois, and Missouri Rivers from the early 1840s.

The Hills were self-made men. Their father was in debt when he died in 1839, so they had to make their own way financially. They worked the river, invested in land holdings that grew to significant value and operated a pork processing plant and mercantile store in Alexandria. By the 1860 Federal census, Robert's personal and real estate was valued at \$70,000 and G. W.'s property at \$28,000.

The equivalent in today's dollars gives them both millionaire status.

By contrast, the Leyhe brothers were much younger. In 1860, they were in their early 20s and both living in their father's household. They had no personal valuation of wealth but had acquired the skills which, combined with the financial acumen of the Hill brothers, would dictate the future success of the Eagle Packet Company. The two families knew each other and invested in each other's ventures even before they became partners on the river.

Although listed as a steamboat captain and farmer in the 1860 census, R. E. was not an active partner in the Eagle Packet Company. However, in 1863, with G. W. and the Leyhe brothers, he commissioned a stern-wheeler built in Warsaw which he named the *R. E. Hill*. A year later, the *R. E. Hill* was hauling cotton when it

was captured as a Confederate steamer at Beulah Landing, Mississippi. It is unknown what happened to the boat after being captured by Union forces.

Another major investor in the early years of the Eagle Packet Company was a Warsaw resident, John A. Williams, who would serve as company president for roughly two decades. Williams, born in 1816, was a pioneer riverman, starting with flatboats early in his career before becoming a steamboat captain in the 1850s. He died in 1917 after reaching the age of 100.

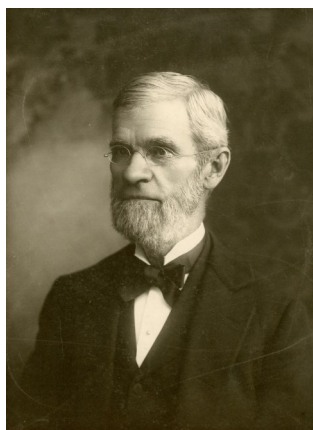
The first riverboat built by the Eagle Packet Company, the *Young Eagle*, successfully worked a route between Warsaw and Keokuk, Iowa, and after only a few years, the company added a larger boat, the *Grey Eagle*, also built in Warsaw. This sidewheeler was a daily packet between Quincy and Canton, Missouri, but was not as successful as they hoped. Under a new strategy, in 1874, the company moved headquarters to Alton, Illinois, where they built a warehouse on the wharf. The boat was successfully moved to the more lucrative Grafton to St. Louis route.

R. E. Hill and John Williams eventually sold their shares so that the three remaining major partners were William and Henry Leyhe and G. W. Hill. In Alton, all three established homes and started families. Interestingly, after only a short time in Alton, G. W.'s family moved to Hannibal, and he and his family visited between the communities for many years. In 1887, the Hill family joined G. W. in Alton permanently. A letter addressed to his brother indicated the reason the family lived in two different towns for so many years was a desire for the Hill children to attend segregated schools.

In the early days of the company, after the season, when ice formed on the river, Henry Leyhe and G. W. Hill would go to Alexandria to work at the Hill pork packing plant.



*Brothers Commodore Henry (1838-1914) and Captain William (1840-1930) Leyhe as pictured in a 1912 book, "Alton Illinois Illustrated."*



*Granderson Winfrey Hill (Mudge)*

# THE EAGLE PACKET COMPANY

In the 1870s, as the company grew to include multiple packet boats, the off-season was used for repairs and maintenance. Henry Leyhe oversaw this aspect of the business. They were continually rebuilding the wooden-hulled steamboats to be faster, more-efficient, safer, and larger. A man which worked the river for years, said that a working river boat was rarely used more than five years on the river before being renovated, scrapped for salvage, or sunk. That seemed to be the case for the Eagle Packet Company who had numerous boats using the name "Eagle," including the *Spread Eagle*, the *Bald Eagle*, and the *Grey Eagle*. Boat names were often reused on a new boat when an older one was decommissioned. Although the company went on to build the *Alton*, the *Peoria* and the *Cape Girardeau*, they never had a boat with a name beginning with "M." Henry Leyhe considered that bad luck since "M" is the thirteenth letter of the alphabet.

The first Eagle Packet Company boats were built under supervision of the Leyhe brothers in Warsaw. However, in 1872, the company commissioned its first larger boat with boatbuilders in Madison, Indiana, where most of their future boats were built. Henry Leyhe continued to supervise every detail of new construction, but the work was no longer done locally.

The company expanded rapidly, acquiring competing lines with boats that didn't have the "Eagle" name. They regularly ran packets out of Cape Girardeau as well as, to the north, on the Missouri, Illinois, Peoria, and Des Moines Rivers. William and Henry served as captains and pilots, and G. W. Hill, also a licensed pilot, was the agent, selling tickets and booking freight passage. In the earliest years freight was the primary cargo, including wheat, apples, corn, fuel, and other commodities. The Leyhe brothers said that the company may not have had such success if not for the skills of G. W. Hill. He was often referred to as jovial or affable in the newspapers, a personality that was effective in negotiating contracts and agreements in the packet trade.

The company added towboats, barges, and excursion boats to their line. Another investment came when William Leyhe and the Eagle Packet Company purchased Ward & Brady's Boat Store in 1895. It was renamed the "Eagle Boat Company." (See page 7 for more on the store.) They employed crews on each boat, plus warehouse workers, and crews of up to 75 men at a time to rehab boats at what became its winter quarters on the Tennessee River at Paducah.

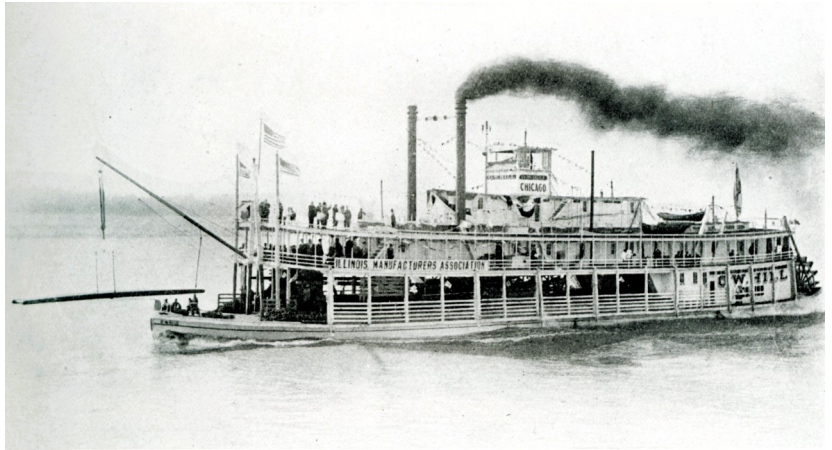
The owners all had family members who worked for the company. G. W. Hill's son-in-law, Samuel Gregory, was a captain and his nephew James Jenkins, worked as a clerk. But the Leyhes had much closer connections. William Leyhe had two sons who entered the business, William Henry Leyhe and Henry William Leyhe. After they entered the business, the original Capt. Henry was referred to as Commodore Henry and William Jr. was called Capt. "Buck" Leyhe to distinguish them from each other in a family



*Alton homes of G. W. Hill (far left) and Henry Leyhe. Both no longer exist. The Hill residence was located at 320 Easton St., and was originally built for Silas Farber, a mayor of Alton. The Hill family purchased it in 1887. (Mudge) The Leyhe home was located at 219 E. Third St. and was built for the family in 1894. (Hayner Genealogy and Local History Library)*

which had a penchant for reusing names. Com. Henry Leyhe's son, Harry, was one of the youngest men to serve as an officer on a riverboat.

In 1903, at a meeting of the company board, what newspapers called "the Hill faction" was elected and put in control, much to the dismay of the Leyhe family. After a few weeks, G.W. Hill and other shareholders agreed to sell out to Commodore Henry Leyhe, ending the dispute. G. W. Hill, along with his son-in-law Samuel Gregory, continued to



THE STEAMER G. W. HILL.

Regular St. Louis and Calhoun County Packet Steamer, Making All Landings from St. Louis on the Mississippi above Alton to Rip Rap Landing, Leaving St. Louis Twice a Week.

*When the new G. W. Hill steamer was put into service, G. W. Hill piloted the boat from Alton to Quincy, a last stint as a pilot after many years in the financial end of the industry. He maintained his masters and pilot license up to the end. (from Alton Illinois Illustrate, 1912)*

manage and own other packet companies. The last company he was involved in built a new ship in 1909 and named it the *G. W. Hill*. The *G. W. Hill* steamboat continued to operate on the Mississippi River for years after Granderson Hill's death in 1911.

When Granderson Hill died, he was called the oldest working riverman on the Mississippi River since he remained active in the business until just months before his death at the age of 91.

Com. Henry Leyhe died in 1914 before the company's awful winter of 1918. The company took most of their boats to Paducah in the winter because the Tennessee River never froze, but in the winter of 1918, it did. Ice from the Ohio River pushed into the Tennessee and four major boats in the Eagle Packet fleet, the *Spread Eagle*, the *Grey Eagle*, the *Alton*, and the *Peoria* were crushed in what was called an ice gorge. Only the *Alton* was insured. The following season, the company, with only two boats which survived the disaster, used insurance money to purchase the *William Garig* from a New Orleans firm. The *Garig* was renamed the *Golden Eagle* which became the company's most celebrated and longest lasting vessel.

# THE EAGLE PACKET COMPANY - THE LATER YEARS

## RIVER STORIES

In his obituary, the story is told that G. W. Hill was a deck hand on the boat that started the great fire of 1849 in St. Louis. The boat caught fire, and when the mooring ropes burned, it drifted downstream, setting fire to 22 additional steamboats, plus other boats. Those fires caused fires on the wharf which spread to the city where 430 buildings were destroyed. Afterwards, new building codes required new construction to be of stone or brick.



The flood of 1903 put the railroad lines out of business for a time, making the river boats the only transportation from Alton to St. Louis. Hundreds thronged the wharf in Alton to catch a steamer to the city or load manufactured goods which had no other way out.



A poem written by one of the deckhands on an Eagle Packet Steamer:

**Once you ride between two  
stacks you're doomed;  
You will steamboat 'till  
you're tombed.**



An article about Henry Leyhe said that, "neither fog, nor flood, nor cyclone could drive him off the river, and all have tried." He was onboard one of the Eagle Packet steamboats during the Cyclone of 1896.



Fred Henry Leyhe, son of Capt. William "Buck" Leyhe, wasn't a riverboat pilot, but was interested in the river. He had the *Robert E. Lee* riverboat built as a restaurant on the St. Louis riverfront.



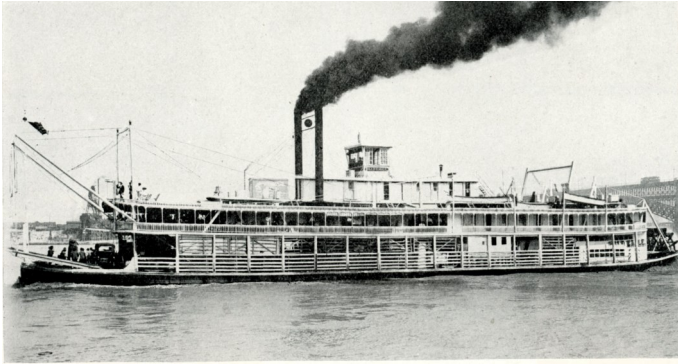
In 1924, the company had its last new boat built in Jefferson, Indiana, the steel-hulled *Cape Girardeau*. It was the third boat using that name. That same year, Capt. Harry Leyhe died before the new boat, whose work he had supervised, was launched. The

company stock was now only in the hands of founder William Leyhe and his sons. In 1930, William, the last of the founding members of the Eagle Packet Company, died at his home on State Street in Alton at the age of 91. William was president of the company for many years, turning that position over to his son Henry just two years before his death.

By this time, the company was already making changes brought on by America's new dependence on railroads, trucks, and automobiles for transportation of both people and freight. William had used the riverboats to commute from his Alton home to the company offices for years, but that was not the usual commute for most. The company began focusing on river excursions and charters which were gaining in popularity. In 1932, the *Golden Eagle* made the last commercial freight run for the Eagle Packet Company.

At the beginning of 1935, the company's four remaining boats were reduced to just one. The *Piasa*, an older boat which survived the 1918 disaster because it was at another location, was dismantled and salvaged. The *Bald Eagle* was sold to another company and shortly after sank in the Missouri River. The *Cape Girardeau* was sold to Greene Line Steamers in Cincinnati, Ohio. The *Golden Eagle* was renovated and improved for the tourist trade.

In addition to the usual tourist trade, the *Golden Eagle* was engaged in boat races which captured the imagination of the nation. In 1941, it struck a submerged dike near Chester, Illinois and sank. Passengers were



STEAMER BALD EAGLE, OF THE EAGLE PACKET COMPANY'S LINE.  
The Steamers of this Line Cover Both Passenger and Freight Service Between Alton and St. Louis and to Points in the North, and Cape Girardeau and All Intermediate Points South.

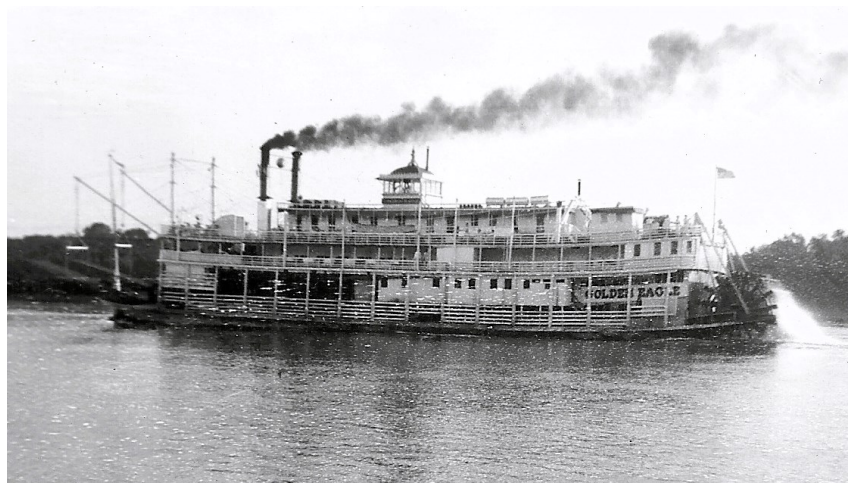
*The Bald Eagle as pictured in the book, Alton Illinois Illustrated, 1912.*

able to off-load by walking a plank to safety. Hope for the boat was lost until the waters receded and they realized the damage wasn't as great as originally feared. In 1946, the Leyhes sold the Eagle Packet Company and their interest in the boat and it was repaired and renovated. During the 1946

season it went as far south as New Orleans and participated in a steamboat race at Memphis against a boat called the *Gordon C. Greene* which had previously been the Eagle Packet Company's *Cape Girardeau*.

In 1947 the *Golden Eagle* was sold to the St. Louis Shipbuilding and Steel Company. It was renovated, painted a bright sparking white and set off on its first run of the season, which unfortunately became its last. On May 16, 1947, the *Golden Eagle* ran aground at Grand Tower, broke apart, and sank. All passengers were able to leave the boat safely, including Capt. "Buck" Leyhe, who was onboard as a passenger.

Capt. Henry Leyhe died in 1948 at the age of 75, and his younger brother, William "Buck" Leyhe in 1956 at the age of 83. These longtime steamboat pilots and masters were interviewed often over the years and were so well-known that their deaths were reported in newspapers across the country. They were the last of the old steamboat rivermen of the Eagle Packet Company who brought steamboats from the age of walnut-hulled boats to steel.



*The Golden Eagle is shown here on the Illinois River in 1937. The Golden Eagle plied this route in early years before being moved to St. Louis. (Nancy Hess)*

## MCHS CELEBRATES EXTRAORDINARY TEACHERS



The 2024 MCHS Teaching Fellows: (left to right) Cara Lane, Logan Ridenour, Suze Gibson, and Rachel Harris. (MCHS)

### TEACHERS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Madison County Historical Society (MCHS) is pleased to announce the creation of a new award recognizing teaching excellence. The first Teaching Fellow recipients are Cara Lane, Edwardsville High School, Logan Ridenour and Suze Gibson, both of Roxana High School, and Rachel Harris, Edwardsville Liberty Middle School.

MCHS Teaching Fellows are exceptional educators who have created history or social studies curriculums using the resources of the MCHS Museum and Library. The materials created can be shared with other teachers and are designed to address Illinois Instructional Mandates.

Last fall, these teachers worked with MCHS Education Coordinator Bob Daiber, Library Research Manager Mary Rose, and Curator Jenn VanBibber to develop lesson plans which incorporated documents and artifacts from the museum and library to explore Civics, Black History, the Holocaust, and Women's History.

Rachel Harris said, "I was excited to be able to focus my lesson from the Madison County Historical Society on the importance of using oral tradition when studying Black history." Harris, who teaches at Edwardsville's Liberty Middle School, used family histories from Charlotte E. Johnson's research. Johnson's work includes the Network to Freedom National Park Service application, maps, church records, newspaper articles, and background readings which Harris used to teach her students about the Underground Railroad.

Suze Gibson at Roxana High School developed a three-day Holocaust lesson plan. "I built my lesson plan around an excerpt from Leonard Stocker's "Singers Are Made, Not Born: A Memoir" from the archives of the Madison County Historical Society," Gibson said. The memoir helped the students understand the choices faced by groups targeted for persecution during the Holocaust. "It made the history of the Holocaust more personal and

relevant for them," she explained.

Cara Lane, an Edwardsville High School English teacher, focused her lesson plan on the World War I diaries, letters, and documents of Bertha Love. A native of Hamel, Illinois, Love served as a nurse at Rouen, France, during the war. Lane said, "My research homed in on some specific diary entries and my lessons recommended ways to also incorporate other history lessons, literature, and art to round out the student experience. These kinds of lessons are crucial for demonstrating how to use primary sources as well as to study local history and potentially get students interested in accessing local archives for themselves."

Lane was especially appreciative that MCHS has made so many of these materials available online. This makes them accessible to teachers everywhere who are looking for primary sources on the role of women during wartime at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Logan Ridenour, Roxana High School, developed his lesson plan on Civics. "I am honored to be selected as a MCHS Teaching Fellow," Mr. Ridenour said. "I am looking forward to using my lesson plan in class and plan on sharing it with other teachers."

Teaching Fellows are helping MCHS in its mission to reach out to the community. "The work of these outstanding teachers helps ensure that Madison County history will be preserved and taught to a new generation," said MCHS Education Coordinator Bob Daiber. "Their work helps make us all aware of the relevance of our shared history."

## THE EAGLE BOAT COMPANY



In 1895, the Eagle Packet Company purchased Ward and Brady's Boat Store, an old company founded in 1837 which catered to the needs of rivermen. They renamed it the "Eagle Boat Store" and continued to provide everything from furnishings to giant mooring ropes. The store was originally located at 412 N. Levee Street in St. Louis, but later moved to 408 Commerce Street.

The boat store was managed by various shareholders, but after 1930 the majority of shares belonged to William "Buck" Leyhe who inherited his father's shares. When Buck retired as a pilot, he became a fixture in the store where reporters often stopped by to listen to tales of the river in "the old days." When Buck died, the store was sold. The new store moved out of the old building and began delivery service on the water.

What's left of the business is now Eagle Marine Industries. The building shown here became a bar/restaurant called the "Old St. Louis Levee House" until it was destroyed by fire in 1972. (Mudge)

## CHICKEN DINNER FUNDRAISER BRING YOUR APPETITE!

The Edwardsville Moose Lodge is hosting a Sunday Chicken Dinner on June 2, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m., where a portion of every meal will be donated to the Madison County Historical Society. Desserts, provided by MCHS, will be sold separately.

The meal includes fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, green beans, bread, salad, and beverage. No one goes away hungry with this menu! Take-out options are also available.



To purchase tickets in advance, stop by the Archival Library at 801 N. Main Street in Edwardsville, or send payment by mail with a check payable to MCHS at 801 N. Main Street, Edwardsville, IL 62025. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$6 for children aged 12 and under.

Need more information? Call 618-656-1294, visit the MCHS website ([www.madcohistory.org](http://www.madcohistory.org)), or check the MCHS Facebook page (Madison County Historical Society).

## MAY-JUNE CALENDAR

**Wednesday, May 15 (4:30-7:30 p.m.)**  
**Reception - Ticketed event**  
MCHS Museum (See details page 1)

**Thursday, May 16 (7 p.m.)**  
**Free event**

**Adams – Jefferson Debate**  
Wilkey Theatre, Edwardsville

**Sunday, June 2 (11 a.m. - 3 p.m.)**  
**Chicken Dinner Fundraiser**  
Edwardsville Moose Lodge

**Wednesday, June 5 (Beginning at 4:30 p.m.)**  
**MRF Exhibit Opening Reception**  
MCHS Museum - Donation suggested

**Sunday, June 9 (2 p.m.)**  
**Free Speaker Series**  
**Loving Lincoln: Stories about Women & Lincoln**  
Presenter: Stacy Lynn  
Main Street Community Center, Edwardsville

## REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR SUMMER HISTORY CAMP! SIGN UP FOR FUN ON THE FRONTIER JULY 15-18

Details about this year's Summer History Camp can be found online at the MCHS website and Facebook page, or at this link for registration: <https://roe41.org/page/student-events>. For questions about registration, call 618-296-4535.

This camp is jointly sponsored by MCHS and the Madison County Regional Office of Education #41. The cost for four days of field trips and fun is \$150 per person.

