

Volunteer's Handbook

Welcome !

...to the Byron Museum of History's Volunteer Program. We sincerely appreciate your efforts and hope that your time spent with us will be a rewarding experience. This Handbook is an introduction to the policies and procedures of the Byron Museum of History's Volunteer Program and should serve as a useful guide to ensure that you have a positive and successful volunteer service.

Our Mission Statement:

The mission of the Byron Museum of History is to create an awareness of and appreciation for the historical, cultural and commercial development of the Byron area through a commitment to preservation, resource management and display of historical artifacts for public benefit.

Our Objectives:

- To develop an awareness of our past, and acquaint the members of the Museum with local culture patterns and the evolution of the local cultural heritage;
 - To stimulate historical curiosity, guiding others to learn how to seek further knowledge of our past;
 - To encourage an appreciation of our past and to assist in developing the capacity for historical perception and judgment;
 - To act as an organization to take permanent care of significant historical artifacts for the public good; and
 - To serve as a resource for the community's schools, providing them programs that serve other objectives of the Museum and its citizenry.
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Byron Museum of History

Museum Fact Sheet

Byron Museum of History

110 N. Union Street
P.O. Box 186
Byron, Illinois 61061

Phone: 815.234.5031
Fax: 815.234.4447
Website: www.byronmuseum.org

Hours of Operation

February-December Wednesday –Saturday: 10:00am – 3:00pm (*Closed Sunday, Monday, Tuesday*)
Open by appointment in January

Directions

The Museum is located at the stoplight intersection of Blackhawk (Rte. 2) and Union Street (Hwy.72) .
Entrance is in the newer addition on Union Street behind Read House.

Admission

Admission is **FREE**. Donations are welcomed.

Gift Shop

The Museum gift shop features historical souvenirs, books, Byron mementos, toys, and candy.

Museum Staff

Executive Director.....Marian Michaelis
Community Relations...Noah Hansen
Educator.....Dan Wykes
Custodian.....Bert Fry

Board of Commissioners

President.....Randy Stukenberg
Vice President....*Vacant*
Secretary.....Jim Eisfeller
Treasurer.....Jim Hess
Commissioner....*Vacant*

How It All Started **The Read House**

The Lucius Read House and Byron Museum of History are part of the **Byron Museum District in Byron, Illinois**. Since its organization in the early 1990s, the Museum has strived to preserve Byron's rich local and area history. This includes the Read and Parsons families, the Underground Railroad, Albert Spalding, the Rock River, railroads, outhouse archaeology and much more. The Read House that currently stands on the Museum site was constructed in the early 1840s.

Lucius and Emily Read first came to the prairie settlement of Bloomingville (*one of two early names of Byron*) from Vermont in 1836 at the invitation of Emily's brother Pardon Kimball who had arrived in 1835. Originally, the Reads built a log home like their neighbors near the site of the current house. They soon determined they wanted a more permanent structure. Kimball constructed their "Byron brick" home around 1843. The Read House is now one of the oldest structures in present day Byron.

From their arrival, the Read's home was a focal point of activity in the young community. The Congregational Church held meetings there. The house served as an inn, tavern and even as printing house. For a time it was a post office, school and store. Research indicates the Read family was active in the Abolitionist movement, providing safe haven for runaway slaves being smuggled north through the Underground Railroad. A number of routes ran northward through Illinois, and many Ogle County residents were active in the Movement.

Lucius Read became a successful business man, community leader and church leader. He was involved in the process of claim purchases by other settlers, the sale of land to newcomers, census taking, and numerous other community activities.

The two surviving children of Lucius and Emily (*who died in 1847*) were raised in the Read House. Helen married Archibald Andrew of Rockford. Emily, the younger, wed John F. Spalding of Byron, a cousin of the famous baseball legend Albert Spalding. Both daughters later became teachers in the area. Lydia Read Artz, the only surviving child of Lucius and second wife Tryphena Parsons, was present when the last load of slaves passed through town in 1862. She later married prominent physician and druggist Dr. William Artz, and established herself as publisher of the local newspaper, *The Byron Express*.

In time, the Read House was sold to the Kennedy family, remaining a residence until 1945 when it became a restaurant and tavern. In 1988, a group of local business leaders, aware of its historical significance, purchased the building and began efforts to restore it. In 1990 a Museum District was formed to care for and operate the house as a focal point for local history. By purchasing other nearby buildings and making additions, the **Byron Museum of History** expanded and now conducts programs, offers many displays on local history, and has developed a local research center for use by members of the community.

SAMPLING OF CURRENT EXHIBITS

Gallery & Read House

- **Albert Goodwill Spalding**
Albert Goodwill Spalding, professional baseball player and famous sporting goods manufacturing founder, was born right here in Byron, Illinois in 1850. This exhibit features 1850s baseball uniforms, Spalding artifacts and baseball lore. Included in this area are the Bittner Bakery girls' who made baseball history during World War II when many of the men were away.
- **The Lucius Read House & the Read/Parsons Families**
This exhibit contains historic photographs and stories about the original residents of this 19th century brick structure.
- **From Shackles to Freedom**
The original owners of the Read House were abolitionists, and in Spring of 2002 the house was officially recognized by the NPS as a site in the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom program. Learn about Byron and its citizens' participation.
- **Byron Schools**
This exhibit features a photo display, artifacts and books which tell the story of early schools in Byron and exemplifies the importance of education to residents then and now.
- (Changing exhibits i.e. Suffragettes)

Exhibition Hall

- **Working Model Train**
Train can be activated by visitors to wind around through detailed model of 1910 Byron. Lights can also be activated to identify certain buildings. Audio speaker will provide accompanying info if desired.
- **1910 Model of Byron**
See what Byron looked like in the early 1900s. Learn about the devastating fire of 1877 which destroyed a good portion of downtown. An audio program provides visitors with the story of the importance of railroads in Byron's history and growth.
- **Military Memorabilia**
Photos, dressed mannequins and many items reflecting the Civil War. Also records and displays relating to both World Wars, Korea, Vietnam and other conflicts.
- **Pit Toilet Archaeological Digs**
Ever wonder what might be discovered in an old "outhouse pit"? This exhibit features artifacts uncovered during several outhouse pit digs including broken chamber pots, dishes, toys, medicine bottles and some other surprises.
- **Agriculture Exhibit**

Volunteer Opportunities & Tasks

Administrative Office Assistant

Organized individuals are often needed to assist with general office work. You might answer phones, help with mailings and perform a variety of other simple office tasks.

Cataloguing & Accessioning

Learn about history while researching and maintaining the Museum's collections. We use ***Past Perfect***, a database designed especially for museums, to process the entire receiving, describing, and entering (accessioning) of new items into our collection. You do not need to be proficient with computers; only able to type.

Docent

If you like teaching and interacting with the public, this is a job for you! We will provide the information you need, help train you to lead tours and to assist with special events.

Exhibit Design and Installation

Individuals are often needed to assist with the break-down of current exhibits and the installation of new ones. This is a great way to see how museums operate behind the scenes.

Research

If you enjoy history and exploring books and archives, you can fit right in! Extra hands and minds are valuable in researching future exhibits and discovering more information on items already in our collection. Examples are our photograph collection, Byron physical history, Byron business history, Byron military history, the Read family and more -- possibly creating and transferring oral histories.

Scanning Photographs and Documents

Do you love photos? We have *hundreds* of photos and documents relating to Byron history that must be scanned into electronic format. It's easy. We'll show you.

Skilled Work

Do you like to sew? Handy at woodworking? Considered a good "handyman"? You might assist from time to time when repairs or storage measures are needed.

Special Events

If you would like to volunteer, but are short on time, you might offer a few hours with seasonal and special events. Some ongoing activities are ***Student Group Tours***, the annual summer ***Quilt Show*** during ByronFest and the ***Festival of Trees*** at Christmas.

Byron Museum of History

Volunteer Program Policies and Procedures

Purpose Statement

The Volunteer Program at the Byron Museum of History offers each volunteer the opportunity to contribute to the mission of the Museum. We recognize that volunteers provide the Museum with a valuable resource of talent. We appreciate this contribution and aspire to offer every volunteer a gratifying and rewarding experience. The following policies and procedures were established in order to ensure success and promote the best environment for both volunteers and staff.

Volunteer Recruitment

The Byron Museum of History recruits volunteers without regard to race, gender, religion, national origin, age or disability. Volunteers must be sixteen years of age or older. All prospective volunteers must complete a volunteer profile which ensures that the Museum will best utilize the abilities and experience of each volunteer. The Byron Museum of History reserves the right to refuse prospective volunteers who are deemed inappropriate for the volunteer program.

Volunteer Commitment

All volunteers must sign a Volunteer Commitment form. By signing the form, the volunteer agrees that he or she is committed to upholding the policies and procedures outlined in the Volunteer Handbook and wishes to contribute his or her efforts as a museum volunteer.

Volunteer Placement

Volunteers are placed within the Museum according to their expertise, interests and needs of the Museum. Job descriptions that summarize the duties of the volunteer position will be available upon request.

Maintenance of Records

The Byron Museum of History will keep as record of all relevant volunteer personal information on file which is held confidentially by the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers may review their files upon request. Volunteers are responsible for updating personal information, such as change of address or contact number with the Volunteer Coordinator.

Record of Service Hours

Volunteers are responsible for signing in the Volunteer Logbook on arrival for assignment and signing out upon completion. Volunteers are encouraged to keep track of their service hours in the time sheet provided in the Volunteer Handbook. Hours are calculated on an annual basis and available upon request.

Absences

All volunteers are expected to fulfill their volunteer duties once committed to an assignment. In the event of an unexpected absence or tardiness, the volunteer is expected to speak with the museum staff in advance of the time that the volunteer was scheduled to start his or her assignment.

Policies & Procedures Cont.

Concerns and Grievances

Although the Museum endeavors to create an equally beneficial and enjoyable relationship between the volunteer and the Museum, disagreements may arise. Such concerns and grievances should be brought to the attention of the Executive Director.

Resignation

If a volunteer chooses to resign from the Byron Museum of History's Volunteer Program, the museum would appreciate it if the volunteer gives notice that they wish to cease service. He or she should submit an oral or written resignation to the Volunteer Coordinator.

Dismissal

The museum reserves the right to dismiss the volunteer if he or she fails to meet his or her commitment to abide by the volunteer program's policies and procedures as stated in the Volunteer Handbook.

Security and Safety

It is the responsibility of both museum staff and volunteers to assure the safety of the Museum, its collection, and its visitors. Any accidents or injuries that occur during a volunteer assignment are to be reported immediately to museum staff. The security of personal items is the responsibility of each volunteer. The Museum is not responsible for any lost or damaged personal items.

Electronic Media

Many volunteers will have access to computers and the internet while working at the Byron Museum of History and it is the responsibility of both museum staff and volunteers to protect the reputation of the Museum. The museum's board will be developing and voting on an Electronic Media Policy, until this is made available, please use good judgment and common sense.

Confidentiality

It is the Byron Museum of History's policy that any direct or indirect use or dissemination of confidential information relating to the museum or its visitors, staff, or other volunteers to outside third parties or co-workers except as provided by law or museum district's policies and procedures is absolutely forbidden both during your volunteer engagement and after volunteer engagement has terminated.

Non-Harassment Policy

The Byron Museum of History has a policy of "zero tolerance" for workplace harassment. It is the aim of the Museum to provide a setting free of any form of harassment regarding race, sex, religion, national origin, age or disability.

Violence Prevention Policy

The Byron Museum of History has a policy of "Zero tolerance" for workplace violence. Any volunteer who threatens or engages in any violence in the workplace will be terminated immediately.

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The Byron Museum of History has a strict policy against the use of drugs and alcohol on museum property. Termination of volunteer service may result if illegal use of drugs or alcohol is suspected.

Byron Museum of History

Volunteer Agreement Form

The Volunteer agrees:

- to arrange with the Museum an estimated amount of time offering to volunteer.
- to specify if volunteering regularly , or only for Special Events.
- to provide accurate and relevant personal and contact information.
- to become familiar with the policies and procedures set forth by the Museum.
- to attend simple training sessions as provided by the Museum.
- to submit to a background check if I am to work with children.
- to be prompt and reliable for each volunteer task or shift.
- to inform the *Volunteer Coordinator* if unable to report for work.
- to inform the *Volunteer Coordinator* in writing of resignation or leave of absence.
- to return the ***Volunteer Handbook*** upon resignation.
- **To enjoy yourself!** And to let us know how we might improve our volunteer programs.

The Museum agrees:

- to provide professional orientation and training.
- to furnish a supportive climate for volunteer performance and growth.
- to assist volunteers in evaluating their tasks and tours, and making necessary changes.
- to keep volunteers informed of all activities and opportunities throughout the year.
- to provide documentation of participation if volunteer requires.
- **To recognize and appreciate the invaluable help of our volunteers!**

(Please read and complete below.)

I hereby acknowledge that I have received and reviewed the Volunteer Handbook from the Byron Museum of History. I am committed to upholding the policies and procedures outlined in the Volunteer Handbook, and wish to contribute my efforts as a Museum Volunteer.

PRINT Volunteer Name: _____

Volunteer Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Museum Director Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Executive Director, Volunteer Coordinator



Volunteer Application

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

DOB _____ Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Emergency Contact (name & phone): _____

I am committed to volunteering a minimum of _____ hours over the next _____ months for the Byron Museum District starting on _____ and I give my consent to a background check.

Signature Date

Museum Hours: Wednesday-Saturday 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM February-December

Your Availability: _____

Please circle your ideal situation: **One-Time Basis** or **Sort-Term** or **Regular Basis** or **Long-Term**.

Volunteer Opportunities (check all that apply):

_____ Special Events: Quilt Show, Festival of Trees, programs or fundraisers.

_____ Facilities: Cleaning, grounds, carpentry, exhibit installation, moving days.

_____ Administration: clerical, marketing, mailings, board support.

_____ Collections: Archival, exhibits, research, data entry, photo/document scanning.

_____ Education: Docent for public tours, programming, presentation, outreach.

_____ Internship: with or without credit.

Previous Experience: List job and volunteer experiences that are pertinent to the position for which you are applying: _____

Applicants will be asked to read the museum district's volunteer handbook.

General Comments Please include additional comments on the flip side.