

BYRON HISTORY EXPRESS

ANNUAL VOLUNTEER BANQUET & VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR

The Byron Museum of History hosted its annual Board of Commissioners and Volunteer Appreciation Banquet on April 15, 2009.

The 42 people in attendance were welcomed by staff, and President of the Board of Commissioners Randy Stukenburg. The volunteer of the year was Ms. Sandra Brubaker of Oregon, Illinois. Ms. Brubaker was chosen for her outstanding service to the museum and over 40 hours of service over the past year.

All volunteers were treated to a lovely meal catered by Three Sisters Cafe & Catering, as well as certificates and goodie bags containing chocolates and Byron Bucks. Potted tulips were given as door prizes.

"This event is an overall celebration of volunteerism," said Jessica McCanse, the museum's executive director. "Last year our volunteer hours more than doubled, totaling over 560 hours since last April. We are thrilled to see new faces as well as established volunteers as we get into some exciting new projects. We are blessed to have volunteer jobs here for people of all ages and experience levels."



*Carolyn Kauten, Jessica McCanse, Volunteer of the Year
Sandra Brubaker, Jim Brubaker, Kira Halvey*



BYRON 4TH GRADERS TOUR MUSEUM



*Peyton Keller, Adam Villa, Connor Hurd, Wyatt Gallister,
Malory Lameyer, Camryn Harper, Brenna Murphy and Grace Doyle*

This year's 4th Grade class at Mary Morgan Elementary were treated to a tour of the brand new Underground Railroad exhibit. In addition to a docent-led tour of the exhibit, students also worked on an activity: Deciphering the Underground Railroad Code. Students were given several code messages, which they had to decipher and translate using real Underground Railroad code words.

The highlight of the tours was climbing into a cedar box which represented the box used by Henry "Box" Brown, a Virginia slave who escaped to freedom by arranging to have himself mailed to Philadelphia in a dry goods container. Thank you to all the teachers, volunteers and interns who assisted with this year's tours!

The Byron Museum District

Board of Commissioners

Randy Stukenberg, *President*
 Angie Bauer, *Vice-President*
 Ron Beem, *Secretary*
 Kim Boyden, *Treasurer*
 Harry Adams, *Commissioner*

Staff

Jessica McCanse, *Executive Director*
 Carolin Kauten, *Registrar*
 Kira Halvey, *Education & Volunteer Coordinator*
 Kristi Gile, *Project Coordinator*
 Jim Brubaker, *Custodian*

Meetings are open to the public, and are held on the **4th Tuesday of each month at 7:00 PM** in the Museum's conference room.

Address changes and inquiries may be addressed to:

Byron Museum of History

PO Box 186
 110 N. Union Street
 Byron, IL 61010-0186
 Phone: 815.234.5031
 Email: info@byronmuseum.org



NATIONAL
 UNDERGROUND RAILROAD
 NETWORK TO FREEDOM

NEW UNDERGROUND RAILROAD EXHIBIT OPENS



We are pleased to announce the opening of a new, permanent exhibit. ***The Underground Railroad: From Shackles to Freedom*** is located in the Lucius Read home, and shines a spotlight on Byron's participation in the Underground Railroad. "Many people do not realize that the Underground Railroad came right through this community," said Jessica McCanse, the museum's

executive director. "In fact, there were three Underground Railroad safe houses right here in Byron, although the Lucius Read house is the only one that is still standing." The Lucius Read house, which is a part of the Byron Museum, is a recognized site on the National Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, an honor bestowed on only 12 sites in the state of Illinois.

From Shackles to Freedom traces the story of the Underground Railroad, from its development in the deep south to its active branches right here in northern Illinois. A new series of storyboards were written just for children, and the exhibit also features interactive elements such as an audiobox that plays a song about escaping to freedom, and a wooden box that people can climb into. "The wooden box was definitely the 'big hit' of the exhibit for

school tours," said Jessica McCanse. "Recently we hosted the Byron 4th grade class for tours of the exhibit and all the students made sure that they got a turn in the box."

Henry 'Box' Brown was a Virginia slave who achieved notoriety in the 1800's by arranging to have himself shipped in a crate to Pennsylvania in order to be free. He spent 27 dark, cold, wet hours inside the crate before the Pennsylvania abolitionists opened the crate in surprise.

We hope you come visit this new exhibit soon!



BAR NONE: 125 YEARS OF WOMEN LAWYERS IN ILLINOIS



Bar None: 125 Years of Women Lawyers in Illinois, an exhibit created by the Chicago Bar Association Alliance for Women and honoring the groundbreaking achievements of the first women lawyers in Illinois, is now open at the Byron Museum. **Bar None** will be featured in our gallery through June 26, 2009.

BAR NONE tells the stories of the women who first succeeded in gaining admission to the Illinois bar. It was a major struggle, and accomplishment, for these women. Here at the Byron Museum, we're all about local history. When we started talking about this exhibit with people, we realized that there are very few women practicing law in Ogle County today. In fact,

according to the 2008 Annual Report of the ARDC (Attorney Registration & Disciplinary Commission of the Supreme Court of Illinois), 66% of practicing attorneys in the State of Illinois were men. In Ogle County, the gender disparity is even greater. There are 48 attorneys registered to practice law in Ogle County; only 7 of these are women.

We asked several local women to participate in this exhibit by reflecting on their career and education, and how their gender has, or has not, played a part. Attorney Wendy S. Howarter, a partner with WilliamsMcCarthy in Oregon, discussed her mentors, obstacles encountered, and other topics in the exhibit. Also featured in the exhibit is Maria Berger, a solo practitioner serving clients in Rockford, Byron, and the surrounding region.

Bar None is open through **June 26, 2009**, so please stop in soon to see it!

SPOTLIGHT ON THE LUCIUS READ HOUSE & FAMILY

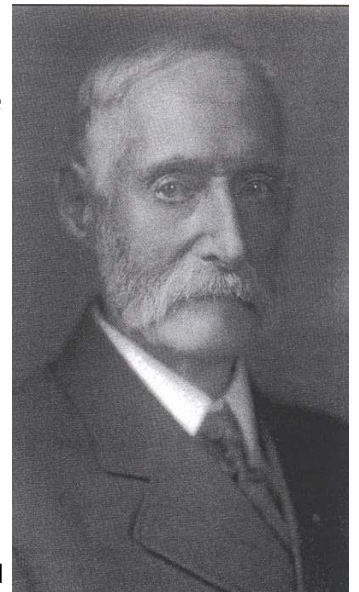
Recently, Byron Museum staff has been researching the Lucius Read & Tryphena Parsons families. We have uncovered some fascinating details about the lives of these people, and this month we are featuring Luke Parsons, who was a stepson of Lucius Read and lived here in the Read house during his youth.

Luke F. Parsons, son of Luke and Tryphena Parsons, was born in Massachusetts, but came to Byron with his parents and two brothers and sister. After his father died in 1844, his mother married Lucius Read and the Parsons family moved into the Read house. After working around the area, in 1856, Luke Parsons moved from Byron to Kansas.

He was in Lawrence in May of 1856 when the Sacking of Lawrence occurred where the Sheriff and his posse of 750 men took over the town for the Southern cause. They disarmed citizens, destroyed the printing presses in town, and burned down the Free-State Hotel, where Luke was a clerk. Shortly thereafter, Luke became involved with John Brown and his fight to eradicate Slavery. Both men fought at the battles of Black Jack, Sugar Creek and Ossawatimie. Parsons went to the Provincial Convention in Catham, Canada and was one of the signers of the Provisional Constitution, which was created for the new states that John Brown was planning on invading. Luke left for Harper's Ferry to help attack the Harper's Ferry Armory, along with

John Brown and other men, but once reaching Ohio, the group decided to postpone the invasion or a year.

Parsons stayed in Kinsman, Ohio to work as a carriage maker for a year and then in the spring of 1858 he returned to Byron for a short time. Instead of returning to help John Brown at Harper's Ferry, he returned to Kansas and at the inception of Saline County, Kansas, he became Sheriff. He took leave in 1861 to join the Union Army. He was appointed Inspector of the Third Brigade, Seventh Army Corps, Indian Home Guards, and Cherokee Nation and served on the frontier until the close of the war. In the Fall of 1865, he mustered out of the army and returned to his post of Sheriff of Saline County. On April 21, 1866 he married Katherine Houston. Together they had 3 children, Addie, Houston, and Stella. He died April 23, 1926 in Salina, Kansas, the last of John Brown's men.





110 N. Union Street
P. O. Box 186
Byron, Illinois 61010

CURRENT HOURS

Tuesday - Friday, 10am - 5pm
Saturdays 10am - 2pm

We are happy to accommodate your group outside regular hours! We have ample meeting space available and gladly offer it for scout groups, clubs, and other organizations.

Please call us to schedule your group's free tour today.

Tours are **FREE** and are self-guided or a docent can be arranged.

UPCOMING AT THE BYRON MUSEUM

22nd Annual ByronFest Quilt Show

July 10-12, 2009

This popular and FREE event is held during ByronFest, and last year's visitors were treated a viewing of **70** quilts and textiles! The quilts cover a range of styles and time periods, some dating back to the 1850s. In addition to traditional quilts, our show includes wearable art, wall hangings, and other quilted textiles. The Quilt Show opens for viewers on Friday, July 10th and closes on Sunday, July 13th.

The **entry date** for our Quilt Show is **Wednesday, July 8th from 2-7pm**, so please don't pass up this opportunity to show off your beautiful work!

This show is judged by a regional quilt expert, and cash prizes are awarded to the 1st place winner in each category. Categories include Quilts, Wall Hangings, 1st Quilt/Wall Hanging, Youth, and Quilted Clothing/Wearable Art. Entry in the show is \$5 per item, or free for Just for Show (entries not judged).

For more information about our Quilt Show, please call the Museum at 815.234.5031.



Realism or Not



Art Show Opening July 1

Realism or Not, will be featured in our gallery from July 1 through August 22. A group of women artists working in different media and highly individualized styles, each with a distinct point of view. Media used by the members include oil, acrylic, watercolor, glass, wood and mixed media. Art can be mainstream, sidestream or totally outside the realm of normal experience, but if it's well done, it's worthwhile. Although the artists cannot claim to be pushing hard against the boundaries of modern art, each is constantly pushing her vision and media to the farthest extent she can reach. For more information, please call the museum at 815.234.5031. Artists include: Christy Andres, Jean Apgar, Molly Dillon, K. Dyer, Linda Johnson, Sue Mount, Cam Roberts, Mary Rosandich and Peg Sowle.