



RIPS NEWS

Advocates for Historic Architecture

www.RockIslandPreservation.org

Membership Meetings

- August 18, 2015 **Monday** 7:00 PM **Home of Lucy Hotchkiss, 2306 11th Ave A, Moline IL**
This will be a regular business meeting.
- September 15, 2015 **Tuesday** 7:00 PM **Wakeland Fire Equipment, 1716 39th St, Rock Island, IL**
RIPS member Terry Anderson has arranged a trip back in time with Tom Wakeland who will share his pictures and memorabilia of early firefighting in Rock Island. After the program we will move to the home of Linda Anderson, 1718 21st St, Rock Island for the rest of our meeting.
- October 20 2015 **Tuesday** 7:00 PM **Location to be announced**
Executive Director, Matthew Toland of The Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies will be our featured speaker. Learn about the history and offerings of this internationally renowned educational center right in our own back yard. *See related article below*

Remember to keep the third Tuesday of each month marked on your calendar for monthly RIPS meetings and activities

YOUR STORY

Why I Love Old Buildings

Recent newsletters have featured the thoughts and insights of some RIPS members, with the theme "Why I love Old Buildings".

Do you have a story to tell about your affection for old homes? Please share!

Bring your essay to our next meeting or submit it at "Contact Us" at www.RockIslandPreservation.org

THE CAMPBELL CENTER

The Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies

is located just north of us in Mount Carroll, Illinois. It was started in the mid-1980's with a mission of offering a comprehensive curriculum focused on museum collection care and historic preservation processes. It is located on a beautiful campus that traces its history to a secondary school named Mount Carroll Seminary.

In the late 1970's the campus was for sale to the highest bidder and a group of citizens joined together to purchase the property and find a new purpose for it. Led by a local furniture conservator, a new organization offering classes in historic preservation was born. Today the center welcomes students from around the world while also serving as a resource for local communities.



Please join us to meet Executive Director, Matthew Toland and learn more about this gem of a resource right in our own back yard.

Visit www.campbellcenter.org for courses and more information.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONFERENCE

Carbondale was host to this year's joint Illinois Historic Preservation and Main Street Conference in June. This is the first time that the two conferences were held together and it was a great opportunity to learn more about the Main Street program and ways we can work together to preserve our historic downtown and encourage heritage tourism. The theme of the conference was embodied in a keynote address by Ed McMahon entitled "Where Am I? The Power of Uniqueness". Subsequent workshops addressed areas including: property tax assessment freeze; incentives for historic commercial buildings and use of TIFs; legal issues for preservation advocates; and marketing strategies for adaptive reuse. The conference ended with a luncheon address by Cory Jobe, Director of Illinois Office of Tourism titled "Tourism's Impact on Illinois' Economy". It was a rousing call to each of us to return to our communities and focus on identifying the history, structures and features that make our city a unique place to visit, but even more important, a unique and wonderful place to live.

RIPS members Linda Anderson and Jaan Sturgis attended the conference and share their notes. Linda focuses on "The Main Street Approach"; Jaan summarizes the historic tax credit available in Rock Island.

THE MAIN STREET APPROACH

By Linda Anderson

The Power of Uniqueness

Driving down a commercial strip in most mid-sized cities it would be hard to tell if you were in Oklahoma or Illinois. You see all the same big box stores and restaurants. Reflective of the Main Street approach, it is the uniqueness of your community that will attract residents and visitors. Focus on your history, identify your assets and build a community around these features. As baby boomers retire and more people can work from anywhere, the choice of where to live is based on a feeling of community. Find your community's identity and be proud of it. Many cities have too much commercial space (often unoccupied). Allowing commercial development all over the place is bad for your downtown and also your city. And though businesses often say they are looking for project ready sites, large open spaces are perceived as blight – not a plan. Punctuating the idea of uniqueness, the presentation ended with a series of pictures of those big box stores and restaurants housed in historic structures or in new buildings designed to reflect the character of the community. Yes, it can be done!

Assessing the Heritage Tourism Potential of your Downtown

You want your downtown to be a draw for tourists. It needs to serve as the heart of the city for its residents. Step one is to list the downtown on the National Register of Historic Places. Then make sites, programs and events in the downtown come alive. Start with the research – not just dates and names, but stories. Package the information in a variety of ways such as guided tours, brochures, cell phone tours, interpretive signage. Then repackage it based on a theme, Rock Island Lines, John Looney, ethnic neighborhoods, secret places, the beginning of the NFL. Don't forget the amenities: directional signage, kiosks, and maps. And parking...locals want door front parking. Visitors are expecting to walk and discover. Direct them to the parking ramp. And then make sure you have a kiosk of visitor information close at hand. Co-market. Take a downtown walking tour and stop for lunch. Tour a neighborhood and then stop at a brew pub. These ideas are fun for residents and tourists alike.

Think Like A Realtor

Realtors are required to work for their client and present all options. That could mean that an empty lot is worth more than a building. But let's focus on ways we can make that historic building or home the most attractive option. How about a broker tour? Batavia is doing just that. It is a 3 hour bus tour (3 – 6PM) with the theme *Batavia is open for business*. Information on incentives and resources is presented between stops. The tour ends at a restaurant with food and beverages. Attendees are given a flash drive with information on the city, the buildings, the incentives and printable applications. A similar tour would be possible for homes possibly ending with small plates and wine in a historic neighborhood. Another idea, work with the newspaper to include information on historic homes and neighborhoods in the real estate section.

Creative Placemaking

Daniel Grove, principal with Lakota Group (the group currently working on Rock Island's preservation plan) talked about the importance of authenticity as you work to build spaces that have meaning to the people who live in your community. Walgreens may offer predictability, but brew pubs offer an experience. Build on your history and develop identities for your neighborhoods. Adopt a "Build a Better Block" strategy. You have a lifeless commercial block with several empty store fronts. You would like to attract a bike shop. Host a bike workshop in a vacant storefront on a Saturday where volunteers help kids work on bikes and after several hours of sweat equity, the kids earn a rehabbed bike. Bring in trees from a local nursery, picnic tables from the park and a food vendor. The block comes to life and other property owners can see the vision. This is the first step to building a better block. When it comes to neighborhoods, try a one-day pop-up park. Put up a small tent, host a scavenger hunt, invite residents for ice cream and talk about the history or character of the neighborhood.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONFERENCE

HISTORIC TAX CREDITS

By Jaan Sturgis

In Illinois one of the few financial benefits to owning an historic home is known as the historic tax credit, which is administered by the State Historic Preservation Agency. This property tax credit can be used for owner-occupied houses that are either Landmarked or on the National Register, either individually or in a district. Only certain cities in Illinois allow this credit, and Rock Island is the only one locally.

The credit works relatively simply; however, it is generally applied to larger projects. The property tax assessed value is frozen for eight years and then stepped up equally over the next four years to its full value. In order to meet the threshold for this credit, you must spend more than 25% of the full market value on a rehab over a 24 month period. Construction costs (even to later additions) and depreciable soft costs (including architectural and engineering fees, survey and legal expenses) count. Things that don't count are acquisitions, furnishings, new additions, landscape, and site improvements.

There is one more important factor in using this credit. You must apply the Secretary of Interior's guidelines for historic preservation. You must determine what is significant including prominent facades (exterior), spaces (interior), and features (exterior and interior) and retain these; however you do not have to do a restoration.

For additional information on the historic tax credit contact Anthony Rubano at 217.782.7149 or anthony.rubano@illinois.gov and www.illinois-history.gov

Learn More!

Conference documents are available for download at www.IllinoisHPC.org

DOUGLAS PARK FIREHOUSE

The only recognizable historic features of historic Douglas Park today are the little corner 'gate houses' on 10th Street and 18th Avenue and the former Fire Station No. 5 on 9th Avenue and 18th Street. It opened in 1915, shortly after the city purchased the formerly private park. It was designed by local architect George Stauduhar in the Prairie style. The exterior is wire cut brick with a stone foundation and a red-tiled hipped roof. Although the roof material has changed, the copper gutters remain. As fire equipment became much larger, the original arched opening, framed by ornamental brickwork, was too small. For the past decades, the building has been used for storage by the parks department.



Fire Station #5.
Photo: www.RIGov.org

GEOTOURISM PROJECT

National Geographic has set its schedule for informational meetings about Geotourism in the Quad City area. You can attend any of them (see the complete list and info in the QCTimes at http://qctimes.com/news/local/next-round-of-national-geographic-meetings-scheduled-for-august/article_91233780-2dcf-5f28-8c75-e13faab5bf2d.html) but the most convenient is probably downtown at the Establishment Theater, 220 19th Street, at 1:30 pm on Tuesday, August 11. The meetings only last 90 minutes and will inform local residents and businesses about the National Geographic Mississippi River Geotourism Project. Special emphasis will be given on participation in the project and adding content to the Geotourism website. Residents are invited to nominate local businesses, landmarks, attractions, activities, events and local foods by November 1, 2015, at <http://mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com/>

The completed website is to be launched in August 2016. If you're involved in a LOCAL business or activity that might be attractive to tourists, be sure to attend. If you know of such businesses or attractions, please tell someone involved with them to come. This will result in targeted free advertising.

CELEBRATE LONGFELLOW

Longfellow School was in danger of being closed a few years ago, but neighborhood activists managed to save it. During that time, it was named one of the most endangered buildings in the State of Illinois by Landmarks Illinois, the only statewide non-profit advocacy organization here.

Now it is being celebrated as one of 20 buildings that have been saved in the past 20 years. Please read about it here. <http://2020.landmarksil.org/2007/longfellow-elementary-school/>

Take the time to say why this building matters to you, at the bottom of the page. It shows people are reading it!

DOUGLAS PARK

Douglas Park is one of Rock Island's historic parks, dating from the era when parks were being created throughout the city. With its flat open fields, Douglas Park became the home of many athletic events and teams over the years. The following article was written by Simon Herrera, a local historian who specializes in the Rock Island Independents.

The Secret Past of Douglas Park By Simon Herrera

Most Quad-Citians don't know about the secret past of Douglas Park in Rock Island. Some know that it was home to the World Series of Fast Pitch Softball in the 1950's and 1960's. Others may know that it was home to the Island City Stars of the Three-Eye Baseball League and that in the early 1900's it hosted events such as the circus, boxing matches and the Rock Island youth field days. What most don't know is that from 1920-1925 it was home to the NFL's Rock Island Independents.

During the 1920's the Independents hosted several famous teams including the Chicago Bears, the Green Bay Packers and the Chicago Cardinals. George Halas, Jim Thorpe, Curly Lambeau and eight other Pro Football Hall of Famers played games in Douglas Park. To understand how a small town of just 35,000 could be home to an original NFL team - take a look at the history of the park, the team and the city.

The land Douglas Park stands on was opened to the public in 1905 by a committee of citizens. The original name, Island City Park, was chosen by a contest in the Rock Island Argus newspaper. In 1913 the city of Rock Island paid \$20,000 for the land and it became a city park. In 1917 it was renamed Douglas Park after U.S. Senator Stephen Douglas.

The Independents got their start in the early 1900's. Owner Walter Flannigan's philosophy of equally splitting the profits allowed the team to attract some of the top players in the country. By 1920 the team was so good that it reached national fame.

The Rock Island Line Railroad made the area accessible. In the early 1900's with the aid of the Rock Island Arsenal and the farming industry the area became a center for manufacturing. The ease of transportation and the seating capacity of the new park allowed Flannigan to easily persuade teams to travel to Rock Island.

In the end, what allowed this secret past was a combination of team leadership, community support, a growing economy and beautiful Douglas Park.

For more information on Douglas Park and the Independents visit - www.rockislandindependents.com

Celebrate Douglas Park and the Rock Island Independents

Head on down to Douglas Park
Sunday, Aug. 23, at 2 pm
for a FREE event.

Supporters of local history and 1920's era football are organizing a football game that will honor the professional football history of Douglas Park. Everyone is invited to Douglas Park to watch as the Rock Island Independents take on the Moline Universal Tractors. The game will feature 1920s rules and strategy as well as a "melon" football, and even replica jerseys. Bring a blanket or chair for seating.

*Know someone who would like to
play in the game? Contact
simon.a.herrera@outlook.com*



Above, 1919 USA Champions
Photo: Matt Clark,
www.RockIslandIndependents.com

Below, c1940 aerial view of Douglas
Park Photo: RetroQC on Facebook

