



Highland Historical Society

Highlights

Highland, Illinois

January, 2014

**NEXT QUARTERLY
MEMBERSHIP
MEETING WILL BE
7:00PM,
WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 8, 2014**

**AT FAITH
COUNTRYSIDE
ATRIUM APARTMENTS
1331 26TH Street**

This is our "Show and Tell" meeting, so bring your area items or Swiss items to share.

**NOTE THE DUES INVOICE
INCLUDED IN THIS
MAILING OR ATTACHED
TO YOUR EMAIL**

Most members will receive a Membership Renewal Form with this newsletter. These dues statements are for the calendar year 2014, and are due upon receipt.

If you do not have changes in address or other information, just put in your name and leave the rest blank. We do not need or record a spouse name if you only pay for an individual membership.

Some members are lifetime members or have paid for more than one year at a time. If we send you an invoice and you think it is a mistake, please contact us and we will clarify our records.

We now offer delivery of the newsletter by email. About a third of members have now signed up. This not only a savings for the Society in printing and mailing costs, but means you can print your own copy in color and send articles to family and friends who are not members. If they are happy with what they read, we may get new members. Let us know if you want email delivery by checking the renewal form or by contacting me directly at: 4j@charter.net.

Make checks payable to "Highland Historical Society" and send them to:
**Highland Historical Society
P.O. Box 51
Highland, Illinois 62249**
(not to the newsletter address)

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Newsletter Editor
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Highland, Illinois 62249
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As you know, the membership meetings are quarterly and board meetings are monthly. Anyone who wishes to can make a presentation or simply attend a board meeting. In December the board decided to make its regular meeting a working supper at Farmers. Here is a picture of some good looking folks, working for you.



First US Stamps issued 1847

GETTING MAIL IN HIGHLAND, ILLINOIS

The sale of land lots for houses began in September 1837. Mail was, at first, sent to Clifton's Store, on the Sugar Creek in Clinton County. Later it was

picked up once a week in Troy by Anthony (Anton) Suppiger on horseback, for which he was paid a little more than \$1 per roundtrip.

The first three stores in town were not by Swiss immigrants but American settlers. The second store in Highland was opened in early 1839 on Main St. at Walnut by David Thorpe and it became the most popular of the three stores existing here in the early years for the hundred residents. Thorpe got himself appointed the first Postmaster General of Highland in 1839.

A letter to a US location then was \$.25, to Switzerland \$.50 (about \$10 and \$20 in today's money). Two citizens subscribed to German newspapers, one from Philadelphia, one from St. Louis and shared the papers with the whole town. For decades letters from Switzerland were also shared with the town.

This leads us to a strange development in Highland history. According to the **Centennial History of Highland, Illinois 1837-1937** by A.P. Spencer, Thorpe received a letter in 1840 from the Post Office Department in Washington advising him that the name Highland had already been assigned to a town in Northern Illinois, so we could not use it.

“Investigation showed that this town was located at the present site of Highland Park, Illinois” (p.44) He states that our Post Office became “Helvetia” but that **a few years later** Highland

Park was incorporated under that name, freeing us to go back to “Highland, Illinois.”

The problem with this history is the dates do not work. The present site of Highland Park is a combination of two villages, one St. John's founded in 1847, and one called Port Clinton, founded in 1850. It first became Highland Park when incorporated, but that was in 1869, too long to be called “a few years later.” Clearly the competing “Highland” had to be elsewhere and may have simply ceased to exist. While in later years there was a great deal of confusion in deliveries as to whether the writer meant Highland or Highland Park, the use of zip codes starting in 1963, made that less of a problem. Based on dates of founding and incorporation it does not appear Highland Park was the Highland Washington was referring to in their letter of 1840.

In 1843 the National Road was completed between Pocahontas and Troy, going through Highland. This led to a stage coach route and the quicker, safer delivery of mail. It was no longer necessary to go to Troy for mail and items that took four days to come from St. Louis, now took a day or two.

In 1855 the B & O Railway began traveling through Trenton, so our mail went there by train, then by government coach to Highland. In 1867 we got our own train and mail came directly here.

Over the years the Post Office was located in various stores

(including the Kinne Store twice for father and son Postmasters), hotels, the Opera House (Lory Theater) and the Switzerland House (where the Masonic Lodge is now). A long-serving Postmaster (1869-1882) was the apparently busy Dr. Gallus Rutz, postmaster, medical doctor and editor of the **Highland Union**.



The present Post Office building on Main Street was built in 1932. Deliveries in town were by walking only and took place twice a day. Out of town, deliveries were initially by Model T or horse and carriage. The envelope above is the commemorative cover issue for the opening day, November 1, 1932. Below, the Post Office with handicap ramp as it is today.



Annual Membership 2014
Highland Historical Society

First Name _____ Last _____ Spouse (if Family) _____

Street _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

WANT NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL?
YES

- Individual \$10 per year
- Family \$20 per year
- Sustaining \$50 per year Business Associate . . . \$50 per year
- Sponsoring \$100 per year
- Life Member \$1,000

Please make checks payable to: Highland Historical Society and send to:
Highland Historical Society, P.O. Box 51, Highland, Illinois 62249
Membership year runs from January 1 through December 31