



BLOCK HOUSE 1816

## ROCK ISLAND ARSENAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### March 2015 Newsletter

Hello Members:

We continue to look for an editor for our newsletter. If you are interested, please contact any of the board members.

Our April 2<sup>nd</sup> program will be presented by Mr. Lawrence Bay, a longtime history buff who has been interested in the Civil War and Abraham Lincoln since childhood. A frequent speaker on the subject, he will focus on the assassination of Abraham Lincoln and the hunt for John Wilkes Booth. He will cover the actual assassination; talk about the conspiracy which included the attempted assassination of William Seward and cover the speculation of who all might have been involved; and the hunt for John Wilkes Booth including speculation that Booth actually died January 13, 1903 (partially based the 1907 book "The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth" by Finis L. Bates).

The program will follow dinner served at 6:00 p.m. at the Arsenal Island Golf Course Clubhouse, 1838 Gillespie Street, Rock Island Arsenal. The menu will be a tossed salad with roasted vegetables and an herb vinaigrette, grilled ham steak with maple glaze, mashed potatoes, medley of vegetables and peach upside-down cake with lemon custard all prepared by the Golf Club kitchen and all for \$14.00, including tax and tip. Please have your check or cash ready to give to **Dick Hochstetler** or **Linda Miller** when you arrive.

Reservations are due by noon on Monday, March 30, 2015. You may call **Monica Holeman** (563) 650-4349, or **Linda Miller** (563) 355-6165 or you may email Linda at: [chiicaliinda@aol.com](mailto:chiicaliinda@aol.com). Dinner cancellations must be made by the reservation deadline or you will be liable for costs incurred and billed accordingly.

Our meetings are open to both members and non-members. Those who wish to skip dinner and attend just the program portion of the meeting, starting at 7:00 p.m., may do so free of charge.

Drivers and passengers entering the Arsenal must have a valid picture I.D. Let the guard know you are attending a function at the Arsenal Island Clubhouse. Remember, those coming across the Government Bridge from Iowa need to proceed to the Rock Island Gate as the Davenport Gate will be closed for inbound traffic.

Our website, <http://www.arsenalhistoricalsociety.org>, is up and running. Be sure to share the link with your family and friends.

## **New Rock Island Arsenal Publication**

The newest release in Arcadia Publishing's "Images of America" series is ***Rock Island Arsenal***, by George Eaton, US Army Sustainment Command (ASC) Historian. The book is available online ([arcadiapublishing.com](http://arcadiapublishing.com) or [amazon.com](http://amazon.com)) or at the Rock Island Arsenal Museum gift shop. This soft cover book has 200 black and white images and commentary associated with Rock Island Arsenal's history. The majority of the images are from the photograph collection of the Rock Island Arsenal Museum.

## **Annual Farnam Dinner**

### **The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Farnam Dinner will celebrate:**

The 1896 Government Bridge and its Designer, Master Engineer Ralph Modjeski

**Date:** Friday evening, March 27, 2015

**Place:** Jumer's Hotel and Casino, Rock Island, Illinois

The 2015 Farnam Dinner will celebrate the life and work of "America's greatest bridge builder," Ralph Modjeski, who designed the 1896 Government Bridge between Rock Island and Davenport as his first bridge project. Modjeski went on to design and construct dozens of bridges in North America including the Ambassador Bridge in Detroit, the Ben Franklin Bridge in Philadelphia, the San Francisco Bay Bridge, and several bridges on the Mississippi River. Modjeski capped his career by contributing to the design of the first span of the Iowa-Illinois Memorial Bridge (now part of the I-74 Bridge), which first connected Moline with Bettendorf in 1935.

The evening's program will feature the following distinguished presenters: First, Basia and Leonard Myszynski will present film clips from a new documentary they are producing on the life and work of Modjeski. Their full-length documentary Bridging Urban America: The Story of Master Engineer Ralph Modjeski, is scheduled to be released in the spring of 2015.

Second, Jeffrey W. Newman, engineer and Senior Associate of the bridge-building firm Modjeski and Masters will discuss the design and operation of some of Modjeski's bridges. He will focus mainly on the Government Bridge, its design and construction, its operation for over 100 years, and its future. Newman is an expert on bridges with swing spans and was the lead engineer for all of the recent upgrades performed on the Government Bridge.

**Schedule:** 5:00 p.m. Viewing Displays, Cash Bar, Raffle Ticket Sales;  
6:20 Dinner; 7:30 Program

**Cost:** \$40 per person or \$375 for a table of 10

**Registration for Dinners:** Online registration available at <http://riveraction.org/>



## **Vietnam War Exhibit Opening**

*You are cordially invited to a special opening for the Rock Island Arsenal Museum's Vietnam War exhibit and a temporary display of reproductions of Army Art of the Vietnam War.*

On Sunday, March 29, 2015, the Rock Island Arsenal Museum will be open from noon to 4:00 pm. The US Army Garrison-Rock Island Arsenal is a commemorative partner for the Vietnam War 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration. This will be one of the garrison's commemoration events and activities for 2015.

Vietnam Veterans of America, Quad Cities Chapter 299, will conduct their Vietnam Veterans Memorialization Ceremony at Memorial Park on Rock Island Arsenal from 1:00 to 2:00 pm.

## **Thanks to our Rock Island Arsenal Historical Society Volunteers February 2015**

Judith Belfer – Board business  
Arlis Enburg – Board business and meeting minutes  
Dick Hochstetler – Board financial business  
Monica Holeman - Historical Society dinner reservations  
Anne Jochum - Board business and publicity; newsletter  
Jim Jochum – Board business; newsletter  
Jolene Keeney - Board business; Representative for Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau's museum week  
Linda Miller – Historical Society dinner reservations; Board business  
Pat Morthland - Board business;  
Martha Wahe – Board business

## **Thanks to our Rock Island Arsenal Museum Volunteers February 2015**

Sebastian Bladel – Photographic archives project  
Anne Jochum – Photographic archives project; Vietnam War Commemoration project  
Jim Jochum – Information Requests; Monitoring of website  
Bruce Kindig – Photographic archives project  
Ed Reiter – Photographic archives project

### **Rock Island Arsenal Museum February 2015**

During the month of February, museum staff members continued to work on three primary projects. Conduit for a mass notification system was installed in storage areas and the museum exhibit hall, and a second group of contractors began pulling wires through the conduit and installing the notification equipment. A museum staff member must escort the contractors at all times. Museum staff members are also working on a Vietnam War exhibit to be included in the timeline section of the exhibit hall and on a Rock Island Arsenal exhibit for the Putnam Museum.

During the week of February 2, 2015, Kris Leinicke participated in a US Army Center of Military History (CMH) team at Fort McNair, DC, to review the draft of a new Department of the Army Pamphlet to accompany Army Regulation AR 870-20 *Army Museums, Historical Artifacts and Art*.

On Wednesday, February 11, 2015, the air handling unit in east range storage was repaired.

On Wednesday, February 11, 2015, Kris Leinicke was filmed for two episodes of Channel 4's ongoing series, *Rock Island Arsenal: Inside the Gates*. A story about Milton Howard aired on February 19, 2015, and a story about the Rock Island Arsenal Museum aired on February 26, 2015.

On Tuesday, February 24, 2015, museum staff members (Jodie Creen Wesemann, Bill Johnson, Kris Leinicke) met with representatives from Public Works to discuss new lighting options for the museum exhibit hall.

On Friday, February 27, 2015, museum staff members (William Johnson, Kris Leinicke) met with the Putnam Museum's Curators and Exhibit Designer and US Army Sustainment Command (ASC) Historian, George Eaton, to review the artifacts selected for the Rock Island Arsenal exhibit at the Putnam Museum.