



Historical Society

Dwight Historical Society Newsletter

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P.O. Box 294

Dwight, Illinois 60420-1321
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Facebook: Dwight Historical Society

New Exhibits at the Museum

This summer Historical Society members rearranged the museum and created several



new exhibits. One display focuses on the medical field, featuring physicians, nurses, and pharmacists. The gray uniform pictured belonged to Ruth Wallace, a Gray Lady at the Dwight VA Hospital. The exhibit also includes medical

instruments, Dr. Joss's doctor's bag, medicine bottles and salves, and other items.

Mrs. Georgianna Cooke is shown with her nephew, Lee Nelson. In 1922, Mrs. Cooke organized a group of women under the American Red Cross. They helped fold and make bandages, assisted patients with writing letters, and performed other duties.



Seymour Drugs is also featured. George Seymour opened Seymour's Drugs on Mazon Avenue in 1866, making it the fourth-oldest business in Dwight. After George's death, his son Roy operated the store from 1905 to 1953. In the section, "Historical Wanderings", there is biography of George Seymour.

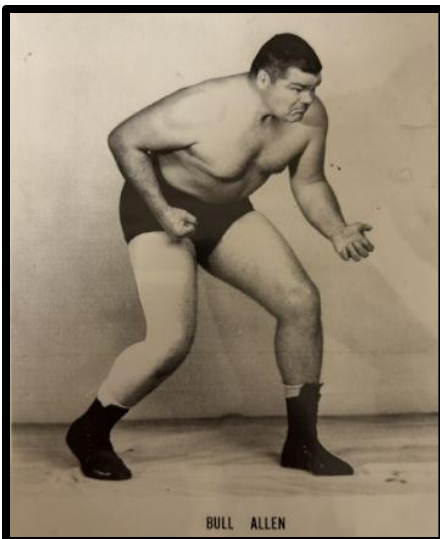
"Bull Allen" Display

Another new display in the Sports Exhibit features the pro-wrestler, Allen Bovel, professionally known as "Bull Allen". His grandsons, Rick and Jim, graciously donated memorabilia from his wrestling career. Allen was born in Pennsylvania in 1915, boxed in his youth, and as a teen drove a "Whippet" car. He later moved to Illinois where he resided in Dwight with his wife, Harriet, and two children, Gayle and Richard and worked as a welder and iron worker. A newspaper article reporting on an upcoming match stated that more than 1,000 people were expected to attend the match. *"Main Event will be a two out of three falls, one hour tag team match. Bull Allen, who tips the scales at 250 pounds, and "Moose" Drocke, a 245 pounder, take on Rocky "Mr. Navy" Spenser, a crafty 200 pounder and Mike "Croatian Strong Boy" Sipich.* The article goes on to report: *"Allen, a native of Dwight, Illinois is one of the most powerful men in the ring. He can hold a 250 pound weight over his head for 10 minutes."*

On a personal note, Allen Bovel and his family

were my childhood neighbors before I

moved at age five. His daughter, Gayle, would babysit for us on occasion and she would watch her dad's wrestling matches on television. His wife, Harriet, was a lovely lady, who would invite my sister, Cyndi, and me over to her house to make cookies. I remember Allen sitting in the den when we went over but we didn't interact with him. For years after we moved, she would make us each a huge cookie at Christmas and bring them to our house.



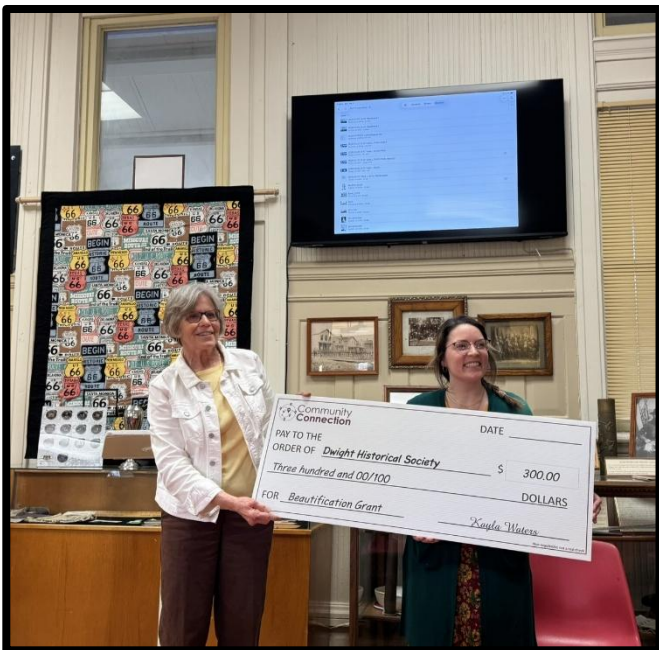
Historical Society Selling Commemorative Route 66 Items



Please support the Historical Society by purchasing a raffle ticket or two for this beautiful Route 66 quilt, highlighting historical local businesses along Route 66 and designed by DHS member, Joy Ahearn. Raffle tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased at the museum or by contacting Janet Neville (815-545-5622) or Mary Flott (815-584-2107). The drawing will be held on September 20th of the Dwight Harvest Day weekend.

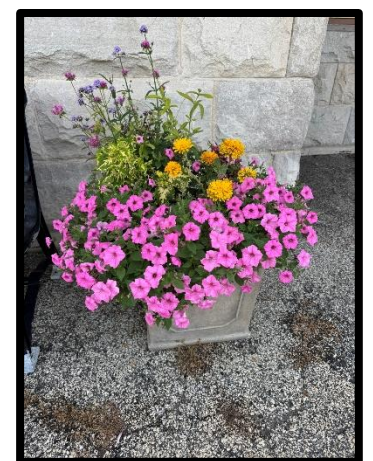
Route 66 Anniversary Pottery
A commemorative pottery dish was commissioned by the

Historical Society for the 100th anniversary of Route 66. The dish is available in several colors, costs \$15, and can be purchased at the museum or by contacting Janet Neville (815-545-5622) or Mary Flott (815-584-2107).



Thank you to
Community
Connections for
awarding the Historical
Society a Beautification
Grant for \$300 .

We used the money to
purchase flower pots
for outside of the museum. Thank you to
Linda Emling for filling them with beautiful
plants and flowers.



Scenes from Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Weekend May 2-3



A Big THANK YOU to:

Carson Woods for letting us use the beautiful Garden Room for our program.

Janice Lauritzen and Kim Drechsel who co-chaired the Route 66 exhibit in the museum, Joy Ahearn for designing the quilt, Mary Flott for her leadership, Mary Boma for the baseball newspaper, and all the other members who helped in so many ways.

To our program panel: Phil Becker, Jim Livingston, Don McNamara, Mike Metkze and Harlan Olson for their entertaining stories.



Vintage Baseball Game: Blue Island Brewmasters vs. Lemont Quarryman

Historical Wanderings....

This biography of George Seymour, written in autobiographical style, appeared in the booklet, *A Walk Through Dwight History*, written in 2021 by The Dwight Historical Society.

George A. Seymour 1842-1900

I am George Seymour. I was born in 1842 in Cleveland, Ohio, and moved to Dixon as a boy. At the age of 19, I enlisted in the 13th Illinois Volunteer Infantry during the first call for troops after the fall of Fort Sumter. After three years of service, I re-enlisted and served an additional year.

In 1866 I married Mary Dryan of Gap Grove, Illinois, a place just outside of Dixon. Shortly after our marriage, we moved to Dwight where we were blessed with four children.

I went into the drug business in 1866 opening a store on Mazon Avenue where I became a compiler of medicine. It was in this building that Dr. Leslie Keeley made his headquarters and undoubtedly concocted his famous chloride of gold remedy for the treatment of alcoholism. His institute made Keeley famous and put Dwight on the map.

In 1869, the Seymour building was destroyed by fire, and I reopened the business on South Franklin Street. Seymour's Drug Store moved again in 1899 to 130 East Main Street, the site of the remodeled section of the former Bank of Dwight. Tragedy struck a year later. I was hit by two freight cars attached to the front of an engine while crossing the tracks near the C & A Depot. I died almost immediately. Poor Mary, my wife, and mother of my children, and like me, a registered pharmacist, never got over the shock of my death, and she passed away two years later.

But let me tell you about my boys. I worked to see that they were well-educated and prepared for life in this world, and they certainly made me proud.

Our oldest, Eugene, farmed land in North Dakota before moving to Griggsville. His brother, Roy, was born in 1875. After graduating from Dwight High School, he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Illinois and a Bachelor of Law degree from Harvard. He took over the drug store business in 1905 and ran the firm until his death in 1953. When Roy died, the Seymour Drug Store I started in 1866, was the fourth oldest business in Dwight. Roy and Edna are buried near Mary and me in Oaklawn Cemetery.

Ernest, two years younger than Roy, worked in the drug store in his youth and even drove a medicine wagon in the territory around Dwight. Ernest graduated as valedictorian of his Dwight High School class of 1896. The year of the accident, he was in his first year at Rush Medical College. He left school for a year and then transferred to the University of Illinois in 1904. After medical school, he returned to Dwight and then moved to Blackstone in 1906. He married Viva Heller in 1913. In 1924, he moved to Streator where he practiced medicine until his retirement in 1956. Dr. Ernest Seymour died in 1970 at the age of 92 and is buried in Riverview Cemetery on Streator.

Historical Society Meeting Dates

The remaining meeting dates in 2026 are **August 17, and October 19**. A program follows the business meeting. If you have any suggestions for a program or would be interested in presenting on an aspect of Dwight history, please contact Mary Flott at 815-584-2107.

Docents Needed for Museum

We are always in need of docents to help keep the museum open to the public. The museum is open from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays. **Upcoming dates are: July 11, 25, August 8, 22, September 12, 26, October 10, 24.** Please consider volunteering as a docent by contacting Mary Flott at 815-584-2107.

*****Membership*****

It's not too late to renew your membership. You can go on our website, dwiththistory.org or mail it to: Dwight Historical Society; P.O. Box 294; Dwight, Illinois 60420.

Individual memberships are \$15 and a Family membership is \$20.