

December 2019

Trivia Q: What did Fred and Betty Turner gift their friends on Christmas every year?

Trivia A: [Woodblock-printed Christmas cards](#). Every Christmas from 1946-1974, friends of Fred and Betty Turner received an original woodblock printed card. Beginning in January, soon after one Christmas for the next, the couple would choose a historical Illinois building or structure, take a photograph, then design, carve and print the image by hand. Their theme was "Illinois History through Woodblock Prints." Most cards included inserts with detailed information about the historical significance of the depicted site. **To learn more about the Turner's and their holiday tradition, visit our new exhibit "Illinois History in a Christmas Card" opening December 1, 2019.**

November 2019

Trivia Q: Which iconic building in Urbana sported this festive window artwork painted by the Urbana High School Art Club in 1949?

Trivia A: [Knowlton-Bennett Building](#), 135 West Main Street, Urbana.

October 2019

Trivia Q: Where did [Heath English Toffee](#) find the inspiration for their product?

Trivia A: From [Vriner's Confectionary's 'Trail Toffee.'](#) In 1928, a sample of Vriner's 'Trail Toffee' managed to make its way to Heath Brothers Confectionary in Robinson, Illinois. They loved Vriner's version so much they were inspired to develop their own formula for Heath English Toffee which still exists today.

September 2019

Trivia Q: Which Champaign County school hosted an open air school in the 1920s?

Trivia A: Open Window School opened March 22, 1920 in a room on the third floor of Central School at the corner of Randolph and Hill in Champaign. Under the supervision of the Champaign County Anti-Tuberculosis League the school opened with 18-third through fifth grade students. While in school the children were provided with woolen suits and blankets along with boots and gloves since during the winter months the school was kept at 55 degrees.

The open air school movement was based on the concept that fresh air, good ventilation and exposure to the outside contributed to good health. Originating in Europe, the model was quickly adopted by the United States as a way to provide care and education for children who were anemic, malnourished, or who had been exposed to tuberculosis. The first open air school in the United States was located in Providence, Rhode Island (1908). Read more about [open air schools in the Midwest](#).

August 2019

Trivia Q: What year did the City of Urbana legalize and regulate professional wrestling?

Trivia A: 1926. On March 1, 1926, a proposal was put forth to the Urbana City Council and Mayor concerning boxing, sparring, and professional wrestling in the city. Major cities like New York already established licensing systems to regulate combat sports, but other parts of the country still deemed them dangerous and immoral, and they remained unregulated. The Urbana proposal was presented as a local petition signed by hundreds of Urbana citizens. The proposal aligned with similar proposals made in Normal, Rockford, and Chicago to permit combat sports. Local news outlets felt that if Chicago passed the proposal, Urbana would as well. On April 20th, the ballot measure was presented as a simple yes/no measure to the people and barely passed with 1,952 votes for and 1,864 against.

Want to know more about professional wrestling? See our [2 part blog series!](#)

July 2019

Trivia Q: Where was The Urbana Free Library located before it moved to its current location on Race Street?

Trivia A: The [Urbana City Building](#), 107-109 S. Market St. (now Broadway Ave), held the library from 1894 to 1918 when it moved to its permanent home at the corner of Race and Green Streets.

In 1894, the library moved to the first floor of the Urbana City Building. Library attendance increased greatly following the move, something attributed to the location of the library on the first, rather than the second floor. It initially occupied a single room, but an addition was added to the west side of the building to make more space for the growing collection and number of patrons. Library growth steadily continued into the 20th century and the two rooms failed to meet the needs of the community. In addition to space limitations, the police bullpen was below the library and patrons were interrupted by loud citizens sobering up in the holding cell. This combination of issues led to a proposal for a new library building by the Urbana Commercial Club in 1908.

June 2019

Trivia Q: Where did R.E.O. Speedwagon take the photo found on the back cover of their "T.W.O." album?

Trivia A: The counter at [Vriner's Confectionery](#).

May 2019

Trivia Q: Where was Lorado Taft's "Lincoln the Lawyer" statue, currently in Carle Park, originally located?

Trivia A: In front of the Urbana-Lincoln Hotel.

On July 3, 1927, Franklin H. Boggs, George M. Bennett, Joseph C. Blair, and Lorado Z. Taft met on the steps of the recently completed Urbana-Lincoln Hotel to give a dedication ceremony honoring the newest addition to the hotel, a bronze statue of the 16th president of the United States, Abraham Lincoln, titled "Lincoln the Lawyer". The statue was designed and sculpted by Taft, a nationally known sculptor and University of Illinois graduate. For more information on who supplied the funding and modeled for the sculpture see "[Lincoln the Lawyer, a statue by Lorado Taft.](#)"

April 2019

Trivia Q: What year were the schools in Champaign County consolidated into eight super districts?

Trivia A: 1946. After World War II, the move from threshing to combine harvesting led to a significant reduction in the number of people engaged in the agricultural trade. With less farm labor needed, rural populations began to decline as former farm laborers sought work in urban areas. As the population decreased, it also became difficult to find teachers willing to work in isolated areas. The most common solution to these issues was to consolidate schools into larger districts.

In 1946, professor of rural sociology David Lindstrom proposed the idea of eight super districts for Champaign County. The super districts would save on the costs of duplicate equipment and personnel, and would make way for the development of services for students with special educational needs. In 1946, the county closed 45 schools as it began to consolidate districts.

A great resource is Barbara Roberts' [Materials on one-room schools in Champaign County](#).

March 2019

Trivia Q: When was the first day of weather observation for the Urbana weather station?

Trivia A: "On August 17, 1888, an observer whose name is now unknown read the brand-new weather instruments and logged the first entry for the record book of the Urbana campus weather station." The State of Illinois Water Survey published a [History of the Urbana Weather Station](#) covering the years 1888-1963. The detailed history lists the equipment first used at the station and tables of average temperature, maximum and minimum temperature, precipitation, and snowfall by months for the period 1889-1962.