



Look Into the Past  
To Discover the Future

May 2026  
Volume 19  
Issue 2

## The Historian -- Keeping the Public Informed

### Volunteers Needed

Workshop every Monday from  
1:00 – 3:00 p.m. at the building,  
309 South Fifth Street

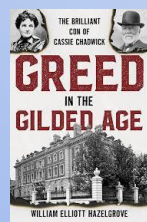
Join us!

**Always things to do on  
Mondays between 1 and 3. If  
you can help out, we'll  
appreciate it.**

- Help with exhibits
- Preserve newspaper articles
- Preserve collections and photographs
- Help with housekeeping
- Help with fundraising
- Help with keeping the grounds neat and weed free
- Proofreading the obituary information, family history and marriage information

We're looking for yearbooks from 1943 to 1949 to fill in our collection's gaps? If you have one to donate, we'd appreciate it!

**Sunday, May 17, 2026 at 2:00 p.m.**



William Hazelgrove returns to present his program

***Greed in the Gilded Age,  
The Brilliant Con of Cassie Chadwick***

*This program is sponsored by the  
Kirkland Public Library.*

Author William Hazelgrove will return with another fascinating tale. *Greed in the Gilded Age, The Brilliant Con of Cassie Chadwick* is a Gatsby-esque tale of mystery, money, sex, and scandal. 'Millionaire' had just entered the American lexicon and Cassie Chadwick was front page news, becoming a media sensation before mass media. Combining the sexuality and helplessness her gender implied, Chadwick conned at least 2 million dollars, equivalent to about 60 million today, simply by claiming to be the illegitimate daughter and heir of steel titan, Andrew Carnegie. Playing to their greed, she was able to convince highly educated financiers to loan hundreds of thousands of dollars, on nothing more than a rumor and her word.



*Kirkland Public Library has supported the Kirkland Historical Society by providing many of the guest speakers at our monthly meetings. Now it's our turn to support the Friends of the Library. On Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> from 5-8 pm a community event will be held in Franklin Park. Denny Rehn's famous pulled pork sandwiches will be part of a meal offered for the \$14 ticket price. Children's meals (Lunchables) will also be available @\$5 each. Red Horse will provide live music and the Citizen of the Year and Business of the Year will be announced. Sips and Sprinkles will have their ice cream creations available for purchase.*

*Purchase your tickets at the May 17<sup>th</sup> presentation  
(cash and checks only)*

Kirkland Historical Society, 309 South Fifth Street, Kirkland, IL 60146  
kirklandhistoricalsociety.com  
Also visit us on Facebook at Kirkland Historical Society

# KHS Archival Notebooks – available for research

1776-Bicentennial  
1908 Decoration Day, Fire  
1996 Flood  
4<sup>th</sup> of July Parades (3)

Accidents, Tragedies, Crime  
Aerial Agriculture Barn Quilts, Barn Tours, 100 Yr. 150  
Yr. Farms  
Agriculture  
Bands & Entertainment  
Bank, Resource  
Bank, State Bank (2)  
Bridges  
Business, A-Z  
Business, Photos  
Church, Congregational  
Church, Congregational History  
Church, Lutheran  
Church, Lutheran Church Directories  
Church, Methodist (2)  
Church, Methodist Directories  
Church, Methodist Programs  
Church, Methodist Turkey Dinner  
Churches, Other  
Citizens, Personal Items, Columns  
DeKalb Co. Community Foundation  
DeKalb County History Center  
Fire Department (2)  
Franklin Township Property Owner Documents by  
Section  
Franklin Twp.  
Hemp Mill 1,2,3  
Hicks Mill Additions  
Indians  
KHS Cemetery Walks  
KHS Remembers

Kirkland Historical Society  
Kirkland's Oldest Building Program by Connie Worden  
Kirkland Property Owner Documents, Deeds, Abstracts,  
Misc  
Kirkland Kingston Belgium Breeders Assn  
Lumber Yard  
Medical Center  
Memories  
Military  
Newspapers  
Office Fixtures Mfg. Co.  
Oral History  
Organizations A-C, D-L, M-Z  
Parks, Memorials, Forest Preserve  
Police  
Post Office  
Public Library  
Rivers  
Roads  
RR  
RR Magazines  
Senior Housing  
Sheep Yards  
Subdivisions  
Unknown People Photos  
Village History  
Village Maps  
Village Records  
Village House Photos – 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>  
Village House Photos – Benham & Lawrence  
Village House Photos – Main St.  
Village House Photos – North-South  
Village House Photos – Other

An amazing collection of articles in these notebooks  
that are available for you to look at and do any  
research on a topic you are interested in.



**Save the Date -- July 25, 2026**  
**Annual Fundraiser to be held at  
the Kirkland Historical Society  
Building**

Support Kirkland Historical  
Society  
through  
GIVE DeKalb  
County



Donors can give online from  
Midnight to midnight on May 7, 2026 at  
[GiveDeKalbCounty.org](http://GiveDeKalbCounty.org)

Between April 23 and May 7, those who prefer  
to donate by check can print a donation form  
from the website and give by mail.

Give DeKalb County is coordinated by the  
DeKalb County Nonprofit Partnership, a  
program of the DeKalb County Community  
Foundation. The previous nine giving days  
raised over \$6.8 million through 38,651  
donations combined.

A Bonus Pool of funds is being raised and  
each donation made during Give DeKalb  
County is boosted by a percentage of these  
funds. The Bonus Pool is made possible by  
the generous support of community partners.

Every Sunday morning a postcard is published on our  
Facebook page. These postcards bring back  
memories to many who grew up in Kirkland.

Comments are made and replied to and many are  
interesting and enlightening. We do not put any  
information we have with the picture, however, most  
do not have any information on them.

If you have pictures, postcards, or memorabilia that  
relates to Kirkland, consider donating it to the  
Kirkland Historical Society.

Also, be sure and visit our website at  
[www.KirklandHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.KirklandHistoricalSociety.com) where you  
will find an amazing amount of information. Also  
on this website are all the back issues of our  
newsletters.

Contact us at [kirklandhs309@gmail.com](mailto:kirklandhs309@gmail.com) with  
any questions.

## Happy Birthday America

250 years ago on July 4, 1776, the Second Continental  
Congress after extensive discussion and amendments  
signed the Declaration of Independence drafted by  
Thomas Jefferson.

It included 27 grievances against King George III and  
England's rule over the colonies. The essence of the  
document and the bedrock principle of our democracy  
is that "We hold these truths to be self-evident that all  
men are created equal."

After the Revolutionary War, individual colonies each  
with strong opposing opinions about slavery,  
federalism, and other issues, the Constitution was  
adopted by all the states and shortly thereafter the Bill  
of Rights was adopted.

History includes a war, the Civil War, in which families  
fought on opposite sides; times of depression and  
unemployment; and times of prosperity -- a time to  
rejoice. We are still striving to "form a more perfect  
union".

Perhaps of equal importance are times of routine life  
which may have been monotonous at the time, but of  
interest to later generations.

When did your family come to America and why? Why  
did they settle in Northern Illinois?

Did your great-great uncle send home a letter from the  
trenches in Belgium in WWI?

Did your great granddad go across France in a tank with  
General Patton in WWII?

Did your grandmother journal or tell you about preparing  
dinner -- some call it lunch -- for a dozen hungry  
threshers?

Family stories are repeatedly told around the dinner  
table and should be preserved.

Perhaps this is the time you should write down these  
stories to be preserved for future generations.

*Share them with us.*



## Kirkland Aids America's Food Chain

**Wenzel's turkey farm** was the longest continuous producing turkey farm in northern Illinois. In 1898 Louis Wenzel bought the farm south of Kirkland (where William Wittwer built a house last year).

In spring 1899 Louis started a family sized flock of turkeys. In 1936 his son Earl Wenzel started his tenure with 100 bronze turkeys and expanded by 10-20 turkeys a year until it grew to 12-14,000 turkeys a year under Frank and Betty Wenzel's ownership (1956-1963).

At least three people worked on the turkey farm year-round with 20 extra hired during marketing season. During the war, what wasn't sold to locals or Hampshire and Elgin meat markets and groceries was sold to the government to feed the armed forces. Turkeys became an extinct operation in Kirkland in 1963.

**George Ault and Gerson Banks' turkey farm** thrived from the 1930s until 1942. It started on 6<sup>th</sup> Street and moved to the Ault farm on Ault Road east of town. Poults would arrive one day old and be raised until dressed for market. They'd take 1000s of orders for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Each year's open house would include a non-competitive sulky race, Eddie Bowles' trick pony, the American Legion Drum & Bugle Corp, a horse show and, of course, a tour of the turkey operation.



