



Northern District of Illinois Court Historical Association Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2016

From the President

It is an exciting time for the Northern District of Illinois Court Historical Association. We recently visited the National Archives at Chicago for a lesson on our Court’s history, and we are working in partnership with the staff of the National Archives & Records Administration (NARA) to preserve even more of it. We have received an extensive collection of notes and audio recordings from the family of long-time court reporter Raymond Comeau, and our Vice-President/Archivist and Seventh Circuit Librarian Gretchen Van Dam has launched a display of historical picture postcards previously donated by Susan and William Schroeder.

In June 2016, we were privileged to see a collection of records and other pieces of history during our visit to the National Archives of Chicago. (See page two for more about our visit.) All federal court records are preserved for a period of time in the Federal Record Center, located on the same campus as the National Archives. After that time, a select segment of those records are identified by Administrative Office of the U.S. Courts and NARA for indefinite preservation at the National Archives. In 2013, for example, it was determined that materials from all criminal cases that went to trial from 1970 onward would be preserved, and that certain types of criminal cases that did not go to trial (*e.g.*, cases related to treason or national security, among others) would also be preserved. Other non-trial criminal cases are scheduled for destruction between 15 to 75 years after their closure. We are working with NARA archivists to supplement this preservation schedule by asking judges and other long-time personnel to identify historically significant criminal cases that did not go to trial and do not fall within the case codes that have been identified for preservation. Thank you to those judges who have responded to Board of Directors Chair Judge Rebecca Pallmeyer’s requests for such information, and if you haven’t responded already, please take the time to do so. Your efforts to identify noteworthy cases will help ensure the preservation of our Court’s rich history.

History comes from all places and serves as lessons as we move forward. We are honored that the family of Raymond Comeau has donated numerous pieces of Mr. Comeau’s extensive personal collection spanning his 45 years of court-reporting service in the Northern District of Illinois. His work includes copious handwritten notes and audio recordings of court proceedings, including materials from the Jimmy Hoffa and the Chicago Seven trials. Look for more information about this collection in a future newsletter and on display in our Courthouse, where our judges, staff, litigators, and litigants continue to make history every day.

- Margot Klein

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

National Archives Tour and Reception	2-3
Postcards from the Past	4-5
From the Archives - Cornerstone-Laying Ceremony Invitation	6



YLD Architectural Tour and Happy Hour
Thursday, August 25, 2016
4:30-6:30pm

Join the Younger Lawyers’ Division of the Federal Bar Association for a walking tour of federal and state legal buildings in the Loop! This 60 minute tour will be guided by local mediator and Chicago Architecture Foundation docent, Jill Tanz. Sights will include buildings and areas of historical and architectural significance. A Happy Hour at The Berghoff immediately follows the walking tour. While the tour is sponsored by the YLD, all lawyers are invited to attend. Space is limited.

Meet at the Chicago Architectural Foundation—224 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60604

FBA Members \$15 Non-Members \$20

Court Historical Association Visits the National Archives at Chicago

Article and photos by:
Association President
Margot Klein



In June 2016, we partnered with the Seventh Circuit Bar Association, the Young Lawyers Division of the Chicago Chapter of the Federal Bar Association and the National Archives at Chicago for a phenomenal guided visit of the National Archives. The maximum capacity crowd saw first-hand the meticulous work of NARA archivists in preserving historic federal records within our region, including those of our own Court. NARA staff brought our Court's history to life by leading the group through displayed material ranging from a handful of charred filings that had survived the Chicago Fire, to filings and evidence in a great variety of landmark cases, and photographs of the Seventh Circuit Judicial Conference in the 1940s and 1950s.

Included within the display were handwritten materials by then-attorney Abraham Lincoln, the signed jury verdict in Al Capone's criminal trial, a handwritten motion from Bobby Seale, and several weapons admitted as exhibits during the Chicago Seven trial. In addition, we saw

pleadings by *A Raisin in the Sun* author Lorraine Hansberry in one of the Hansberry family's many challenges to housing discrimination, and pleadings and evidence from Karen Ulane's early 1980s challenge to workplace transgender discrimination. Transcripts from removal proceedings under the Chinese Exclusion Act of the late 19th century were also shown. Other items on display related to the 1912 sinking of the Rouse Simmons (*i.e.*, "the Christmas Tree Ship"), Enrico Fermi's 1942 lab notebook marking the first sustained nuclear chain reaction, electoral college materials marking Abraham Lincoln's presidential victory in Illinois, and judges' written remarks upon the deaths of President Lincoln and his rival Stephen Douglas.

Although the material displayed for our visit was diverse, significant and impressive, it represents a sliver of the history preserved there. Over 120,000 cubic feet of historic records are preserved at the National Archives at Chicago. Thank you to NARA archivists Douglas Bicknese and Glenn Longacre, NARA archives technicians Jeremy Farmer and Sarah Rogers, and other NARA staff for their work in putting together and leading us through such a treasure trove of history. We look forward to future visits.

See page 3 to view more photographs from the visit.



Northern District of Illinois

Historical Association

www.ilndhistory.uscourts.gov

Officers:

Margot Klein, President

Gretchen Van Dam, Vice-President,
Archivist

Meaghan Clayton, Secretary-Treasurer

Directors:

Judge Rebecca R. Pallmeyer, Chair

Judge William T. Hart

Judge Jacqueline P. Cox

Judge Jeffrey Cole

William J. Kresse

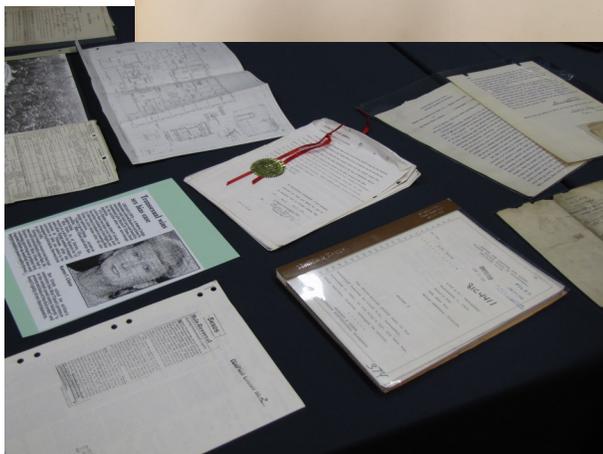
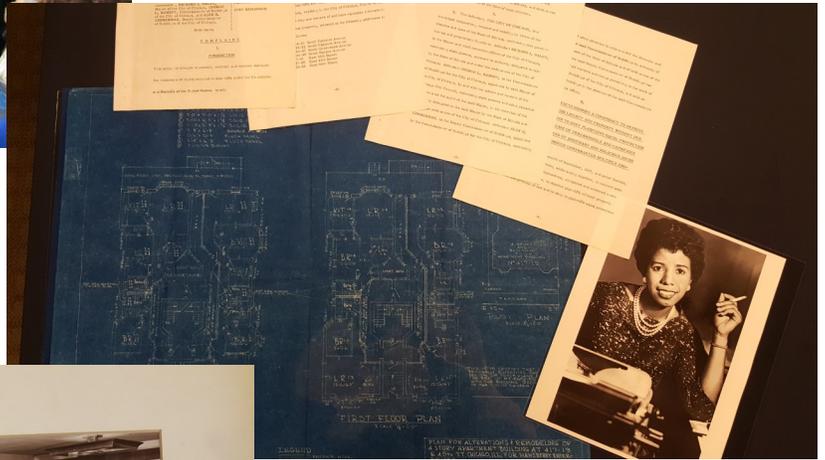
Joel R. Skinner

The N.D. Illinois Court Historical Association is incorporated in the State of Illinois exclusively for education and charitable purposes within the meaning of 501(c)(3) of the IRC. Contributions are used for maintaining archives and educational programming about the history of the court. Contributions may be sent to the Secretary-Treasurer, Room 1637, 219 S. Dearborn, Chicago, IL 60604.

Court Historical Association Visits the National Archives at Chicago



Archivist Douglas Bicknese describes and presents archived court materials to tour participants



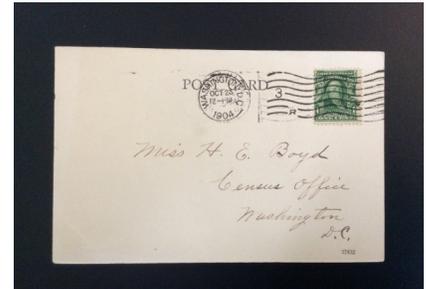
Postcards from the Past

The American picture postcard debuted around the turn of the 20th century, creating an enthusiasm for sending and collecting postcards around the country. One popular image to send of a city one visited was that of a famous or unique building. In the early 1900's one of Chicago's most impressive buildings, and the subject of scores of postcard images, was the Henry Ives Cobb-designed U.S. Post Office and Federal Building. The Historical Association is fortunate to have a large collection of postcards of the Cobb Courthouse dating back to the early 1900's - almost from the very date of the completion of the building. The majority of the postcards were donated by Susan and William Schroeder in 1998. Susan Schroeder served the federal judiciary for many years, first as U.S. District Judge Bernard Decker's judicial secretary and also as the Attorney Admissions Coordinator for the Northern District of Illinois. Susan also donated her collection of memorabilia of the Cobb Courthouse, including spoons and china.

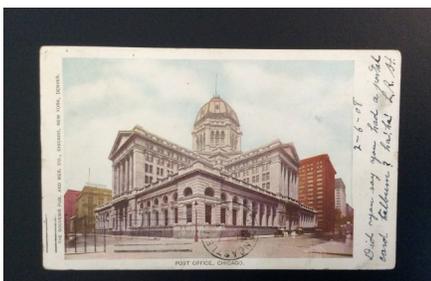
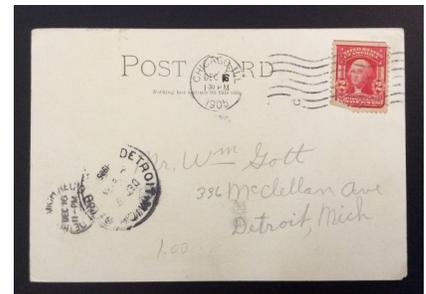
The N.D. Illinois Court Historical Association's collection of courthouse postcards is on display at the Library of the U.S. Courts on the 16th floor of the Dirksen Courthouse.



Among the very earliest postcards in the collection is a black and white illustration postcard, postmarked October 1904, from the very first days of the building's opening. It was sent with no message to Miss H.E. Boyd at the Census Office in Washington, D.C.



Another of the earliest in the collection is postmarked December 16, 1905, which is the same year the building was fully open to tenants, and notes that it is an illustration of the "New Post Office, Chicago." The postcard was sent with no message to Mr. Wm. Gott, 336 McClellan Ave, Detroit, Mich., and was sent with a .02 stamp!



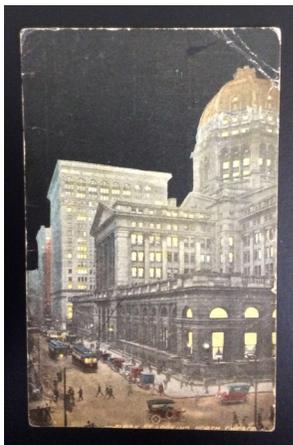
A card from 1908 was sent to Miss Flora M. Harris in Greencastle, Indiana and asks, "Did you say you had a postal card album? ha! ha!" from L.R.H.



Postcards from the Past continued



This card from 1908 sent to Dayton, Ohio notes that the correspondent was “Here to-day on ‘Business.’” Let’s hope it was postal and not court business!



One of the more unusual cards is postmarked 1916 and features a night image of the courthouse and the seldom-seen Clark Street side of the building (the Dearborn side was the more often used visage).



The postcards were produced by a number of different companies. Many of the earliest are from the Curt Teich & Co. Printers in Chicago. The Teich printing company is famous for producing the brightly colored “Greetings From” postcard booklets. The company operated from 1898 to 1978; the family donated the company’s archives to the Lake County Discovery Museum and many can be viewed online at <http://www.lcfdp.org/museum/research/teich>



From the Archives

The Henry Ives Cobb-designed courthouse building, which also served as a post office and government building, was completed in 1905. Its construction began in 1899 and was not without controversy.

This invitation was for the cornerstone-laying ceremonies held on October 9, 1899. Attendees included: architect Henry Ives Cobb; the Postmaster General; the Attorney General; Chicago Mayor Carter Harrison, Jr.; U.S. District Judge Christian Kohlsaat of the Northern District of Illinois; Canadian Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier; Ignacio Mariscal, Vice-President of the Republic of Mexico; Manuel de Aspiroz, Mexican Ambassador to the United States; various senators and congressmen; and tens of thousands of public spectators. President William McKinley also attended the ceremonies but had previously warned that he would not attend if related labor disputes were not resolved first.



The Historical Association owns one of the original invitations (image displayed) sent for the cornerstone-laying ceremony on October 9, 1899.

In his remarks during the ceremony, Judge Kohlsaat said,

“Today there needs no massive temple to recall to us our allegiance to the federal government. This edifice will not speak to us of a foreign control, but will be our own. We draw no distinction between our city, our country, our state, and our nation. They are all one to us. They belong to no one more than to each of us. This is the visible physical presence of the general government in our midst; but it is our own.”

"LAYING OF THE CORNER-STONE." *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922): 3. Oct 10 1899.