



Historical Preservation Committee

Kaden Nelms – Chairman

McKenzie Building – Second Floor Conference Room

Tuesday, October 14, 2025 – 3:00 p.m.

- I. Roll Call
- II. Approve the September 19, 2025 meeting minutes
- III. Public Comment
- IV. New Business
 - 1. Review/Recommend Medal of Honor Monument
 - 2. Review/Recommend Historic Tourism Boards
 - 3. Discussion: Bicentennial Monument
 - 4. Discussion: Bicentennial Celebration
 - 5. Discussion: America 250
- V. Unfinished Business
- VI. Recess

Members: Chairman Kaden Nelms, Russ Crawford, Linc Hobson, John Ackerman

Minutes pending committee approval

Historical Preservation Committee Meeting

Chairman Kaden Nelms

Second Floor Conference Room – McKenzie Building

Friday, September 19, 2025 – 3:00 p.m.



Committee Members Present:

Chairman Kaden Nelms, Russ Crawford, Circuit
Clerk Linc Hobson, County Clerk John
Ackerman

MOTION

**MOTION BY MEMBER HOBSON, SECOND BY MEMBER
ACKERMAN** to approve the August 19, 2025 meeting minutes

On voice vote, **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

DISCUSSION:

Display of an 1860 Abraham Lincoln Campaign Banner

County Clerk John Ackerman stated that the Peoria Historical Society owns this piece, and they reached out to him to see if we would be interested in applying to display it at our courthouse. He stated that we have applied, but we have not received a response. The Committee members discussed possible locations for the banner.

DISCUSSION:

Medal of Honor Monument

County Clerk John Ackerman stated that this item was voted on and approved two years ago. He stated that the original monument that was proposed was a black, six-foot obelisk that would match the stone on the Veterans' Memorial. He stated that the only difference would be that there would be a blue medal of honor ribbon at the top.

The Committee agreed that Clerk Ackerman would get updated pricing and have this as an action item for the next meeting.

DISCUSSION:

Courthouse Grounds Displays

County Clerk John Ackerman discussed an area where a tree was just taken down. He stated there is a hole that has electrical to it, and that is where he talked about putting a Vietnam Soldier's Memorial.

The Committee agreed that Clerk Ackerman would get pricing and have this as an action item for the next meeting.

County Clerk John Ackerman stated that a location for the archway from the Arcade Building needs to be decided upon.

County Clerk John Ackerman stated that he thinks the six story boards could be done this year.

The Committee agreed that Clerk Ackerman would get pricing and have this as an action item for the next meeting.

Member Crawford questioned whether Chairman Grimm had stated what displays he would want on the Courthouse grounds.

Chairman Nelms stated that Chairman Grimm would like all decisions made in this committee then they can be brought to executive committee for further approval. He stated after executive committee, it would be taken to the full board.

DISCUSSION: Bicentennial

County Clerk John Ackerman stated that we are 20 months away from the bicentennial. He provided handouts from a few other counties which showed what types of celebrations they planned.

Clerk Ackerman stated that we would need a graphic design company to create a logo.

The committee members agreed that the next meeting should be scheduled in mid-October. County Clerk John Ackerman stated that he would work on preparing his action items for the next meeting.

Chairman Nelms recessed the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

(transcribed by S. Gullette)

Tazewell County Medal of Honor Monument

Tazewell County has 3 Medal of Honor Recipients; Dr. Thomas C. Murphy, William Reed, and John Ayers. This is quite remarkable when you consider only 3525 individuals throughout American History have received our nation's highest military honor.

The Medal of Honor is presented by the President of the United States in the name of the United States Congress to members of the military that have distinguished themselves through acts of conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty.

Yet these heroic veterans are not currently memorialized here in Tazewell County.

We are proposing to fix this and provide a lasting memorial on the grounds of the Tazewell County Courthouse for future generations.

This petition would place the question of construction of this new monument to the citizens of Tazewell County on the March 2024 Primary Ballot. If the "Ballot Question" receives a simple majority of the votes cast, then the Tazewell County Board would be required by Illinois State Statute to fund construction of the new monument within 1 year.



We are proposing a simplistic eight foot tall Black Granite Obelisk, which would in appearance blend with the current Tazewell County Veteran's Memorial on the Tazewell County Courthouse Grounds. Inscribed on three of the sides would be the biography of each of the Tazewell County Medal of Honor Recipients and their photos. The fourth side would have a description of the Medal of Honor and description of the Battle of Vicksburg, which all three Medal of Honor Recipients participated in and for which they have received the Medal of Honor recognition. The only color on the new monument would be at the top of each side the Medal of Honor Emblem would be placed in blue with clustered white stars.

Cost of this new monument has been estimated at \$80,000. The Tazewell County Board has over \$20 million available through the Federal ARPA Funding and the same in General Fund Reserves, which our small portion of this funding can be utilized. As such, no additional taxpayer revenue would be required for this project honoring our heroic Military Veterans.

We are asking for your support to get this question on the 2024 March Primary Ballot by signing the attached petition. Any Tazewell County Registered Voter can sign the petition.

Tazewell County Clerk & Recorder of Deeds John C. Ackerman
Tazewell County Veteran's Assistance Director Steve Saal



Tazewell County

Medal Of Honor Recipients



John C. Ackerman
Tazewell County Clerk

Dr. Thomas C. Murphy – A resident of Green Valley, Illinois, Dr. Thomas C. Murphy was born on February 1st, 1844, in Ireland. He was described on his Military Discharge papers as being seventeen when he enlisted in the Union Army in Pekin, Illinois, a farmer by trade, 5' 6.5" tall, with fair complexion, grey eyes, and red hair.

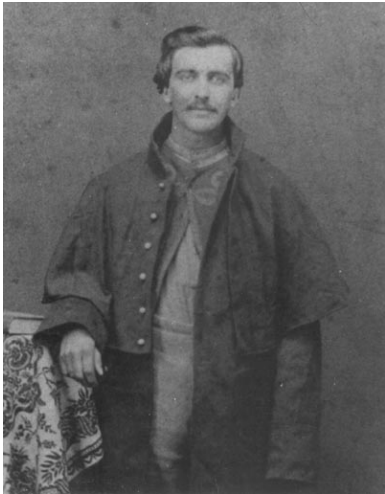
He enlisted in the Union Army on August 15th, 1861, as a member of Company I of the 31st Illinois Infantry Volunteers, with the rank of Private, in Pekin, Illinois. He was promoted to Corporal in March of 1862. As a member of 31st Illinois Infantry, he participated in the Battle of Belmont, Battle of Fort Donelson, Battle of Champion Hill, Battle of Big Black River, Siege of Vicksburg, Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, Battle of Atlanta, and Battle of Jonesboro under first the leadership of Colonel John A. Logan, then Colonel Lindorf Osborn, and finally Colonel Edwin S. McCook.

On May 22nd, 1863, during a second major attempt to directly assault the fortifications of Vicksburg, before eventually successfully laying siege to Vicksburg, Thomas C. Murphy and the 31st Illinois Infantry was in the heart of the battle. As described on his Medal of Honor Certificate "he crossed the line of heavy fire of Union and Confederate forces, carrying a message to stop the firing of one Union regiment on another." As a sign of respect for the actions of the 31st Illinois Infantry throughout the Siege of Vicksburg, the unit was given the honor of being the first to march into the captured city following the formal surrender.

Following his discharge for expiration of service on the 19th of September in 1864, he returned to Tazewell County. In 1868, Thomas Murphy graduated from Rush Medical College in Chicago. He returned home to Tazewell County and married Virginia Maria Placket in Green Valley, Illinois, on the 2nd of February in 1871. They would have six children, four of which survived to adulthood. They lived for a short time in Kansas, then returned to Illinois, living in Manito and Hopedale. Following the death of his wife, Dr. Thomas Murphy spent his last years living with his daughter in Biloxi, Mississippi. He died on December 31st, 1920, and was laid to rest in Green Valley Cemetery in Green Valley, Illinois. For his "conspicuous gallantry in action at Vicksburg," Thomas C. Murphy received the Medal of Honor on the 23rd of June, 1916. Dr. Thomas C. Murphy is the only Medal of Honor recipient buried in Tazewell County.

William Reed – Born in Laurelton, Pennsylvania, in 1839, William Reed traveled to Pekin and was a teacher when the Civil War begun. On June 25th, 1861, he enlisted in the Union Army. As Illinois' soldier quota was already filled, he traveled to St. Louis with others wanting to join the Union Army to join the newly formed 8th Missouri Volunteers with the rank of Private. He was described as 5' 5" tall, with dark hair and blue eyes with light complexion. The 8th Missouri Volunteers would see action during the Battle of Fort Donelson, Battle of Shiloh, Siege of Corinth, Fort Hindman, Yazoo Pass Expedition, Battle of Port Gibson, Battle of Raymond, Battle of Jackson, Battle of Champion Hill, Siege of Vicksburg, Battle of Chattanooga, Battle of Missionary Ridge, the Atlanta Campaign, Sherman's March to the Sea, the Carolinas Campaign, and the Battle of Bentonville.

During the Siege of Vicksburg, on May 22nd, 1863, General Ulysses S. Grant ordered an assault on the Confederate Fortifications. The plan called for a storming party to build a bridge across a moat and plant



scaling ladders against the enemy embankment in advance of the main attack. The volunteers knew the odds were against survival and the mission was called a “forlorn hope.” Only single men were accepted as volunteers and even then, twice as many men as needed came forward and were turned away. Amongst the volunteers that day was William Reed. The assault began in the early morning following a naval bombardment. The Union soldiers came under enemy fire immediately and were pinned down in the ditch they were to cross. Despite repeated attacks by the main Union body, the men of the Forlorn Hope were unable to retreat until nightfall. Of the 150 men in the storming party, nearly half were killed. “For gallantry in the charge of the volunteer storming party on 22 May 1863” William Reed received the Medal of Honor on December 12th, 1895.

Following the Civil War, William Reed returned to Pennsylvania and entered the merchandise business. He went on to own many highly successful businesses, served on the Town Council, and to be recognized as the founder of the Huntingdon Orphan’s Home. He died on Memorial Day, May 30th, 1918, at his home in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, recognized by the community as one of, if not the most, prominent business and public citizens. He is buried at Riverview Cemetery in Huntingdon.

John Ayers – Born in Washlinaw, Michigan, on October 30th, 1837. He had traveled to Pekin, Illinois, and was a carpenter when he enlisted in the Union Army on June 25th, 1861. He was described as 5’ 7” tall,



with a light complexion, light eyes, and dark hair. As Illinois’ soldier quota was already filled, he traveled to St. Louis with others wanting to join the Union Army to join the newly formed 8th Missouri Volunteers with the rank of Private. The 8th Missouri Volunteers would see action during the Battle of Fort Donelson, Battle of Shiloh, Siege of Corinth, Fort Hindman, Yazoo Pass Expedition, Battle of Port Gibson, Battle of Raymond, Battle of Jackson, Battle of Champion Hill, Siege of Vicksburg, Battle of Chattanooga, Battle of Missionary Ridge, the Atlanta Campaign, Sherman’s March to the Sea, the Carolinas Campaign, and the Battle of Bentonville.

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After the war, he returned to his family in Michigan, settling in Antrim County, before settling in St Joseph County. He became a blacksmith, later training as an allopathic doctor sometime around 1880. He died on July 30th, 1913, in Three Rivers, Michigan, and is buried in Riverside Cemetery in Three Rivers.

Abel

Monument Company



Pekin (309) 346-4186
1917 N. 8th St.
Pekin, IL 61555

Canton (309) 647-0105
162 E. Chestnut St.
Canton, IL 61520

Toll Free in Illinois 1-800-342-2235

Quotes are good for 60 days

October 1, 2025

Quote for City of Pekin

Memorial: \$50,560.00
Laser portraits: \$1200.00
Lasered text: \$18,000.00
Lasered colored medals: \$1200.00
Drill Holes: \$250.00
Footing and pad \$1400.00
Crane: \$2000.00
Tarriff: \$3097.00 (tariff could change depending on order date)
Total: \$77,707.00

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to quote this memorial.

Thank you,

Steve Matthey
Abel Monument Company

HISTORIC TOURISM SIGNAGE FOR TAZEWELL COUNTY COURTHOUSE



Purchase 2 Triangular Kiosk for the West Side of the Tazewell County Courthouse Lawn. This would give us 6 story boards to share Historic Information:

- 1) Abraham Lincoln at the Tazewell County Courthouse
- 2) Tazewell County Government History
- 3) Tazewell County Veterans Memorial
- 4) Third Tazewell County Courthouse
- 5) Current Fourth Tazewell County Courthouse
- 6) Historic Tazewell County Activities (Famous Attorneys, Tazewell House Monument, Arcade Building Arch)

These units are 36" x 48". Cost in 2024 was \$488 for frames and \$2,000 for completed story board panels, for a total project purchase cost of \$4,976.