

2008 FARNAM DINNER COMMITTEE

Alexandra Benedict, Port Byron, writer and local historian; **Neil Dahlstrom**, Moline, archivist and author; **Jill Doak**, Rock Island, City of Rock Island; **Gayle Rein**, Geneseo, retired teacher; **Elizabeth Roseman**, Moline, independent scholar; **Curtis C. Roseman**, Moline, retired university professor (2008 committee chair); **Eunice Schlichting**, Davenport, Putnam Museum and IMAX Theatre; **Marlene Scott**, Rock Island, retired, Rock Island Arsenal; **Dan McNeil**, Moline, River Action; **Dick Stahl**, Davenport, former Quad City Poet Laureate; **Helen Stahl**, Davenport, retired teacher; **Kathleen Seusy**, Moline, Rock Island County Historical Society; **Joe Taylor**, Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau; **Roald Tweet**, Rock Island, retired college professor; **Gregory Voge**, Rock Island, Chippianock Cemetery Heritage Foundation; **Kathy Wine**, Davenport, River Action; **John Wetzel**, Moline, retired economic development officer; **Marcia Wetzel**, Moline, Col. Davenport Historical Foundation.



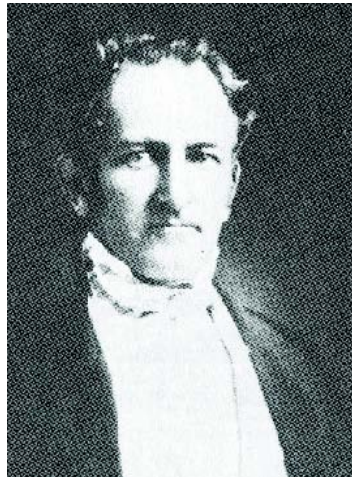
Many Farnam Dinners incorporate educational components for children. Here a fourth grader constructs a truss bridge from balsa wood. The students' bridges were used as decorative centerpieces.

PUT THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR:
FEBRUARY 20, 2009

Sixth Annual Quad Cities Henry Farnam Dinner

Radisson Quad City Plaza Hotel,
Downtown Davenport
111 E. 2nd Street

*Celebrating the
75th Anniversary of
Locks and Dam #15*



For further information or to
receive a formal invitation, contact
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2008 FARNAM DINNER: CELEBRATING STEAMBOATING ON THE UPPER MISSISSIPPI

Captain Clarke "Doc" Hawley was the featured speaker at the fifth annual Quad Cities Henry Farnam Dinner. Over the last 46 years, Hawley has served as captain or master on five of the great American steamboats: the *Avalon* (now the *Belle of Louisville*), the *Natchez*, the *Mississippi Queen*, the *American Queen*, and "lady of the rivers," the *Delta Queen*. He began a career on the rivers at age sixteen as a calliope player and popcorn popper on the *Avalon*, and at age 24 was certified as the youngest steamboat master on American rivers. Captain Hawley drew on his wealth of river experience in a lively presentation at the Farnam Dinner. In his words: "I will teach you something and I will make you laugh."

The event included displays that featured the history of steamboating on the Upper Mississippi River. Michael Blaser, a Quad City artist who is widely renowned for his steamboat paintings, introduced Captain Hawley.

Captain Hawley has guided steamboats on the Mississippi, Ohio, and other rivers through nineteen states, and along the way earned pilot's licenses for 1,370 river miles. To become licensed, pilots are required to draw from memory every detail of the meandering rivers including all features that pertain to navigation, such as sand bars, islands, navigational lights, bridges, and dams.

Hawley co-authored the 1994 book: *The Excursion Boat Story: Moonlite at 8:30*, and has taught at Tulane University. He now lives in New Orleans' French Quarter, and still plays the calliope.

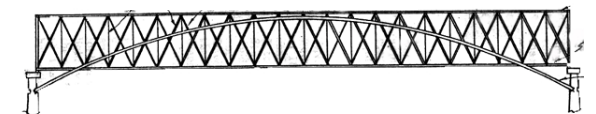
ABOUT THE ANNUAL HENRY FARNAM DINNER

The dinner is organized by the Quad Cities Henry Farnam Committee, an independent group of volunteers and representatives of local organizations. River Action is a regular supporter of the event and organizations and individuals have contributed substantially to its support.

Held in February each year, the dinner celebrates significant historical events, people, and places in the Quad Cities area of Illinois and Iowa, especially as they relate to broader regional and national events, with a special emphasis on the Mississippi River.

Each dinner embraces a specific theme, typically tied to anniversaries of significant local events. In addition to displays and an after-dinner program, the dinner incorporates educational and legacy projects intended to enhance the public awareness and appreciation of the rich heritage of events, people, and places in the Quad Cities region.

The dinner is named in honor of Henry Farnam, the principal builder of the Chicago & Rock Island Railroad, the first to reach the Mississippi from the East (1854), and the contractor for the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi between Rock Island, Illinois and Davenport, Iowa (1856).



One Span of the First Bridge

PREVIOUS FARNAM DINNERS

2007: Under the general theme, “From Commercial Waterways to Recreational Pathways,” the 2007 Farnam Dinner celebrated the 100th anniversaries of the Moline Lock and the Hennepin Canal. The program, and associated displays, highlighted the history of these projects, along with past, present, and future recreational uses of these and other waterways in the Quad Cities area and the Upper Mississippi River Valley.

Table centerpieces were model boats in a variety of styles, which were constructed by fourth grade students at Sherrard Elementary School under the direction of Samantha Heilig of the U. S. Corps of Engineers.

The featured speaker at the dinner was Dr. Michael Conzen, Professor of Geography at the University of Chicago. Dr. Conzen is an internationally renowned expert on nineteenth century historical geography, with a special focus on the evolution of nineteenth century canals and waterways. Conzen played a key role in the development of the Illinois and Michigan Canal National Heritage Corridor.

The 2007 Dinner was organized by the Farnam Committee and held at the Mark of The Quad Cities in Moline, Illinois, with 245 in attendance. Sponsors included River Action, the City of Rock Island, Moline Preservation Society, Chippianock Cemetery Heritage Foundation, the *Dispatch/Rock Island Argus/Leader*, and the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau.

2006: The third annual Farnam Dinner celebrated the 150th anniversary of the completion of the first railroad bridge across the Mississippi at Rock Island, and the 100th anniversary of Silvis, Illinois, a railroad town. Numerous displays included bridge art and models made by local school children at Jordan Catholic School and Rock Island Primary Academy in Rock Island, and the Kaleidoscope Project at Augustana College. The program included poetry by Dick Stahl, a review of historical bridge images by Curtis Roseman, a preview of the September 2006 RiverWay celebration by program host Norman Moline, railroad music, and toasts to historical figures.

The highlight of the evening was a presentation by Dennis E. Suttles, a Lincoln scholar from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Suttles is an expert on the 1857 court case, *Hurd et al. v. the Rock Island Railroad*, in which Abraham Lincoln defended the railroad against steamboat interests who had challenged the right of the railroad to bridge the Mississippi.

The 2006 dinner was organized by the Farnam Committee and held at the RiverCenter in Davenport, Iowa, with 304 attending. Sponsors included River Action, the City of Rock Island, Chippianock Cemetery Heritage Foundation, the *Dispatch/Rock Island Argus/Leader*, *QC Magazine*, and the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau. As a legacy project, a pictorial history of the first bridge and its three successors, was created:

<http://www.riveraction.org/nuke73/modules.php?name=News&file=categories&op=newindex&catid=6>

2005: The second annual dinner celebrated significant anniversaries of several Quad City institutions, including Chippianock Cemetery (150 years), the *Quad City Times* (150 years), the Rock Island Arsenal Museum (100 years), and the Rock Island County Historical Society (100 years). It featured a variety of activities, including displays, toasts to historical figures and organizations, historical vignettes written by Charles Oestreich, and a series of “my favorite Chippianock stories” delivered by local media representatives. The capstone of the evening was a presentation on the 19th century urban cemetery movement by Dr. Dennis Montagna who directs the National Park Service’s Monument Research and Preservation Program.

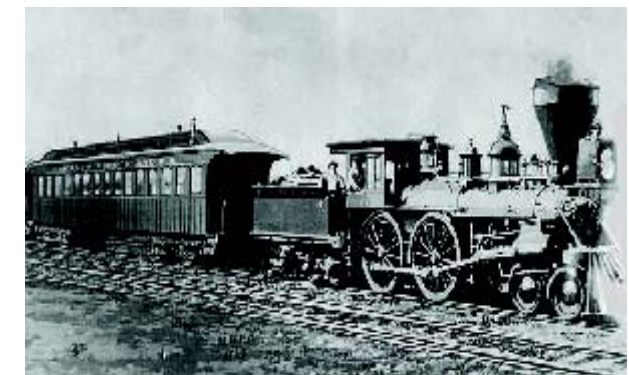
The 2005 dinner was organized by the Chippianock Cemetery Heritage Foundation, with the assistance of the Farnam Committee. The Foundation was also a sponsor, along with Avolux Media, American Bank & Trust Company, Four Points by Sheraton Hotel, Dennis Fretty, Dot’s Pots, and Coleman Florists. It was held at the Black Hawk Lodge in Rock Island, Illinois, with 225 in attendance.

An anniversary book, *150 Years of Epitaphs at Chippianock Cemetery*, was published in 2006 by the Foundation and the Rock Island Preservation Commission. This 284-page paperback features biographies, scripts, photographs and monuments pertaining to the 114 people featured in the popular “Epitaphs Brought to Life” tour series. Sections of the book enlighten readers about the rural cemetery movement, Chippianock’s role in that movement, and interpret the symbolic art and landscape significance of the cemetery. It is in the collections of area libraries, with a limited number still available for purchase at the cemetery office.

2004: The first dinner celebrated the 150th anniversaries of the completion of the railroad to the Mississippi River in February 1854 and the June 1854 Grand Excursion, which brought to the Quad Cities hundreds of eastern dignitaries to commemorate the railroad’s completion. The event featured displays, presentations on the Rock Island Railroad by Roald Tweet and on the 1854 Grand Excursion by Elizabeth Roseman, poetry by Dick and Helen Stahl, a selection from the musical “Grand Excursion” by the River Song Players, music by Henry Farnam IV, introduction of the third and fourth-generation Henry Farnam Family, a “Riverfront 2004 Showcase” video, and toasts to key historical figures.

The 2004 dinner was organized by the Quad Cities Grand Excursion Committee and held at the Four Points By Sheraton Hotel in Rock Island, with over 400 in attendance. Its sponsors included River Action and the Quad Cities Grand Excursion Host Committee.

For an overview of the building of Rock Island Railroad and the Grand Excursion of 1854, see this Web site: <http://www.augustana.edu/academics/geography/department/GrandExcursion2/>



An Original Rock Island Rocket