



America's Credit Union MUSEUM

Winter 2005

Experiencing Credit Union History

A credit union CEO talks about his tour through America's Credit Union Museum

By: H. C. Klein, President/CEO, Arkansas Federal Credit Union



Peggy Powell, the Executive Director of America's Credit Union Museum, had given us directions to the museum by phone. When we arrived Peggy greeted us with her big smile as we walked into the former home of

Attorney Joseph Boivin's family. The first thing I noticed when entering the Museum was the large mural that covered the wall of the entrance way as you walked up the short flight of stairs to the first floor. The mural is a picture of this home when it was also used as the credit union's first office. I have the same picture in my office at Arkansas Federal and have had for the past 18 years. We walked up the stairs and Peggy took us for a tour of the entire building.

First Floor: The First Credit Union Office - First we went through the Rodney G. Brock Transition Room. I recognized the name as I have worked for Military (Air Force) Credit Unions my entire Credit Union career and I knew Rodney and admired him and his credit union for many years. Next we visited the Museum Video Galley and saw a 10 minute video about the history of Cooperatives and Credit Unions. In various scenes I saw many of my close friends in the Credit Union Movement over the past 36 years. It was a great film and I arranged with Peggy to purchase a copy for Arkansas Federal Credit Union to show new employees to indoctrinate them to our movement's history.

Peggy then took us to the Receiving Hall where credit union members would wait to do their transactions with President Boivin, and the Music Room where Attorney Boivin's daughter Gilberte practiced the piano and entertained those waiting to conduct business with her father. Following tours of the Parlor

and Children's Room, we found ourselves in Attorney Boivin's personal office.

This office is where Attorney Boivin, the credit union's first President, conducted business with members by taking deposits, making withdrawals and helping them with their lending needs. The original ledger book where member records were kept and the first minute book are kept in one of the office bookcases. The office, although small, also served his daily needs as an attorney which is where he made his livelihood.

I asked my wife to take a picture of me behind his desk. For a moment I felt what it must have been like over 96 years ago helping members of St. Marie's Parish with their personal financial needs, just pencil and paper – no computers or technology like we use and expect from our credit unions today – just a paper ledger book.

Second Floor: Credit union history cross the country – We walked up a flight of stairs to the second floor and the first thing we saw was The Richard D. Mahoney Transition Room. On the wall was the famous picture from the YMCA Campgrounds in Estes Park, Colorado where the founding of CUNA (Credit Union National Association) took place in 1934.

Next we visited The Stern Gallery. I remembered Joe Stern as being the author of the "Little Umbrella Man." What I didn't know was that he actually worked full time for the Boston Herald and drew many different "Little Umbrella Men" for over 40 years as assistance to the Credit Union Movement.

The Special Exhibit Room has a display of credit unions supporting the Military Movement during World War II. Having always worked in military credit unions this exhibit had a special meaning to me. We then went into The Reading Room which held various credit union publications. Of particular interest to me was Peggy Powell's goal to have the history of every Credit Union League in America put in writing and displayed in this

(continued on page 4)

America's Credit Union Museum

Defense Credit Union Council Exhibit Opens

On October 22, an exhibit honoring the Defense Credit Union Council's contributions to the credit union movement was dedicated in a special ceremony at America's Credit Union Museum.

Service Credit Union, the catalyst for the establishment of a permanent exhibit for the DCUC, donated \$30,000 to the Museum in honor of the DCUC. The exhibit celebrates the value that defense credit unions provide to U.S. military worldwide," stated Gordon Simmons, President/CEO of Service Credit Union and Treasurer of the DCUC Board.

Representatives from throughout the credit union industry, Armed Forces Financial Network, and DCUC attended the opening.



AFFN Board of Directors (left)

(L to R): Gordon Simmons, Chairman, David Weber, President/CEO, John Broda, Vice President, and Larry Borden, Executive Vice President. Also pictured is Josephine Davis, Air Force Banking Officer, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.



DCUC Exhibit

Gordon Simmons, Chairman, America's Credit Union Museum Board, Jean Yokum, Chairman, and Arty Arteaga, President/CEO, Defense Credit Union Council, admire one of the new Museum exhibits dedicated to the Defense CU Council.



DCUC Board of Directors (above)

(L to R): Ralph Storey, 1st Vice Chairman, Board Chairman, Vystar CU, FL.; Late James Bright, 2nd Vice Chairman, President/CEO, Scott CU, IL; Billie Blanchard, Secretary, President/CEO, Military & Civilian CU, AL; Jean Yokum, Chairman, President/CEO, Langley FCU, VA; and Gordon Simmons, Treasurer, President/CEO, Service CU, NH.

Your Museum in 2004

Preserving History and Growing in the Community

Growth and Success

As America's Credit Union Museum enters its third year of operation it has much to be proud of. The Museum is fast becoming an important presence to not only the credit union movement, but also the local community and the State of New Hampshire. The use of the Museum's conference space for credit union meetings and events has increased, new exhibits have been added, and committees to assist with the marketing of the Museum and the development of a financial literacy program established. Individuals involved in the credit union movement who have visited are impressed with the quality of their Museum and leave with a renewed sense of pride and commitment to what they are a part of.

A Special Thank You

To the individuals and organizations that have recognized the importance of preserving the history of credit unions through gifts to America's Credit Union Museum, we thank you. As a result of your generosity we have raised more than \$2.1 million toward our \$3 million campaign goal. Your interest, leadership, generosity, and support have been and will continue to be vital to our ongoing efforts in preserving credit union history.

Looking to the Future

In 2008, America's credit unions will celebrate their 100th anniversary. As we build toward that important event, we encourage you to pledge your support today to ensure that the story of the American credit union movement, its struggles, and its heroic leaders are preserved for future generations.

For more information on how you can support America's Credit Union Museum contact executive director Peggy Powell at www.acumuseum.org.



D. Hilton & Associates presented America's Credit Union Museum with a gift in the amount of \$15,000. Pictured (L to R) are: Gordon Simmons, Chairman, America's CU Museum Board, President/CEO Service Credit Union; Debbie and David Hilton, President/CEO's, D. Hilton & Associates; and Peggy Powell, Executive Director, America's CU Museum.



Sara Canepa-Bang, (center) President/CEO, Financial Service Centers Cooperative, presented Gordon Simmons and Peggy Powell with a \$5,000 gift.



America's CU Museum accepts a gift in the amount of \$25,000 from Liberty Enterprises. Pictured (L to R) are: Powell, Simmons, Stan Hollen, President/CEO, Liberty Enterprises; and Ron Rioux, ACUM Vice Chairman and President/CEO, St. Mary's Bank CU.



Ralph Story, Board Chairman, Vystar CU, presented Vystar's donation of \$15,000 to Gordon Simmons and Peggy Powell.

(continued from page 1)

Experiencing Credit Union History ...

room. We agreed to help her by providing a History of Credit Unions in Arkansas which we sent her earlier this year.

The largest room on the second floor is The Hall of States. This room includes exhibits from states across the country. I am proud to have contributed the "Credit Union Office" to America's Credit Union Museum because it is such a worthwhile cause to preserve our credit union heritage in this manner.

At the end of the Hall of States are life-size cut outs of Edward F. Filene and Roy Bergengren and a podium. On the podium are two buttons; one of a speech made by Filene and another by Bergengren. I pressed the first button and listened to Filene, the orator, preach about the good self-help credit unions could bring to an employer and their communities. Listening to him speak, I understood why he gave over \$1,000,000.00 of his personal fortune in the 1930's to help pass credit union legislation both at the state and Federal level and convince employers of the good that credit unions could provide to their employees.

Third Floor: The location of your next training session or banquet – The top level room has everything necessary for training large groups of people including tables, chairs and the latest in technology and audio visual aids. This room can also serve as a banquet hall for large dinner functions.

We'll be Back - Peggy, Muriel, Justin, and I took the elevator down to Peggy's office. The visit to America's Credit Union Museum was a trip we all enjoyed. I truly believe in what Peggy and her board are trying to do in preserving United States Credit Union History. What more perfect place than the building where it all started in 1908 – The first Credit Union in the United States in Manchester, New Hampshire.

I am so proud of our movement. It takes a great vision and a lot of effort to locate, acquire and preserve such a large piece of American history. Everyone involved with the organized Credit Union Movement in the United States needs to consider this Museum as their own. Please consider donating your time, talents and money to this great effort. Someone once said that "the future can be predicted by looking at our history." America's Credit Union Museum located in the birthplace of the Credit Union Movement in the United States is preserving our movement's history for the current and future generations of Credit Union leaders and members.

H. C. Klein, President/CEO, Arkansas Federal Credit Union



Honoring the Defense Credit Union Council

*"Serving Those Who Serve
Their Country"*

America's Credit Union Museum Officers

Gordon A. Simmons, Chairman

Paul Mayer, Treasurer

Lori Waser, Secretary

Peggy Powell, Executive Director

