Timeline of Rockford’s History

1818 Illinois becomes a state

1834 Germanicus Kent, Lewis Lemon and Thatcher Blake arrive as the first settlers on the west side of Rock River.

1835 Daniel Shaw Haight arrived on the east side of Rock River, and constructed a cabin.

1837 The state of Illinois officially recognizes the name city’s name to be “Rockford.”

1834 The first train, pulled by the engine Pioneer, arrives in Rockford

1842 Lewis Lemon receives his manumission (freedom) papers from Kent. Lemon lived the rest of his life in Rockford until his death in 1877

1842 A national economic depression hits Rockford and puts 27 businesses in Rockford out of business in one day!

1870 John Nelson and William Worth Burson make a sock on an automatic machine for the first time. The red heel sock would eventually turn into the Sock Monkey toys we have today.

1893 A national economic depression hits Rockford and puts 27 businesses in Rockford out of business in one day!

1893 Charles Box is elected the first African-American Mayor of Rockford.

1923 Prof. James Henry Breasted helped Howard Carter in deciphering the hieroglyphics in the newly discovered tomb of King Tut.

1923 The Peaches were one of four original teams in the All American Professional Baseball League, and one of the best: winning 4 championships. The team played from 1943-1954.

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1989 Charles Box is elected the first African-American Mayor of Rockford.

1989 Rockford officially becomes the second largest city in Illinois.