

SWIFT NIGHT OUT

Our group gathered at the Tower the evening of August 9, 2025 to take part in the annual counting of migrating Swifts roosting in various sites. For the first time there were still young swifts in the Tower nest this late in the year. Local adult swifts entered and left after short visits, which we thought to be adults feeding the young still in the Tower.

As we watched in the approaching darkness, we saw a flock of about 50 swifts flying southwest overhead, we assumed flying to a roosting site familiar to them. Later, a second large group of swifts flew overhead in the same direction. And again, slightly later, the third group flew over going in the same direction. We did wonder if the group circled and returned but the flocks were spaced apart by some minutes.

Our president, Ron Kaiser, has swifts nesting the the chimney of their home. He observed 11 entering the chimney on one night during Swift Night Out.

Thanks to:

Scott Chase for connecting the solar panel to the monitor in the spring and taking the system down in the fall.

Joyce Schoulte for painting the door frame and the registration box.

Roger Schoulte for routine checks of the site, removal of the tree and care of other items needing attention.

Corbin Schoulte who took the cap off the chimney in the spring and replaced it in the fall.

National Cemetery Association and the caretakers of the lawns.

The visitors who came and shared their responses in the guest book.

Those who donate to the upkeep of the Tower.

The swamp white oak planted in honor of Harold Krambeer failed to leaf out and had to be removed. We hope to replace it.

FRIENDS OF THE SHERMAN SWIFT TOWER

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Farmersburg, Iowa 52047

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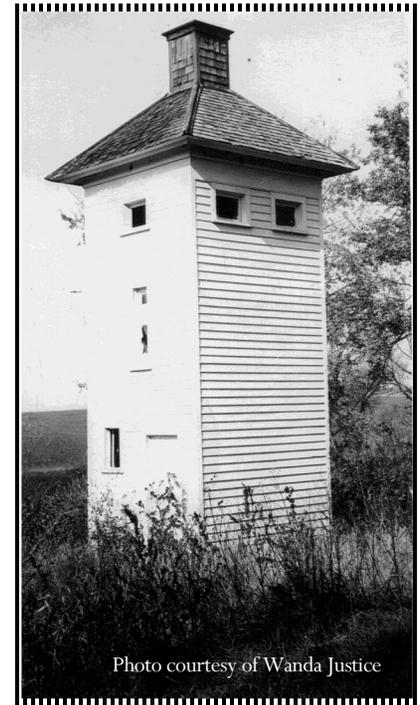


Photo courtesy of Wanda Justice

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2026 Newsletter

2025 Swifts at the Tower

This was a different nesting pattern than in previous years. On June 25, 2014, there were five live babies in the nest in the Tower; by June 8, 2017, there was the first egg in the nest. 2025 would be a different year.

June ? Five swifts flying overhead. No nest building started.

June 8 Seven sticks on the wall

June 22 Small nest no eggs

June 29 Nest empty – one egg on the floor of the chimney

July 9 Five swifts flying overhead, multiple eggs in nest

July 12 Six eggs in nest; 80 degrees inside tower

July 20 Six eggs in nest

July ? Swift observed on nest grooming

August 12 3-4 young still on nest not clinging to wall

August 26 3 young swifts remain in tower clinging to the left of the nest. They flew out while being observed.

We were concerned about the young swifts having enough time to develop the stamina to survive their long journey to South America

TOWER VISITORS

They came from Iowa, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Texas, Minnesota, Florida and Coast Rica. Fifty-one individuals and four families were kind enough to leave a message in our guest book. We appreciate your notes and comments, it's encouraging to know there are many others who love birds. Althea Sherman would be delighted to know that her love of swifts is shared by many visitors and that some visitors first learn about chimney swifts at the site. Listen for the "Ode to the Sherman Family" by a local poet; it's on the recording. You are welcome to visit the Tower replica at the National Cemetery site anytime, the informational sign and audio recording are available at all times.



Note the glue from old nests

NOTES FROM ALTHEA...

Althea Sherman papers, 1902-1936. MS49. Special Collections, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines.



Special Archives
State Historical
Society Of Iowa

Notes From Althea Usually this article comes from Althea's observations at National, Iowa. But in 1913, she began a trip to study birds in other parts of the world. The descriptions that follow were from her "Birds by the Wayside, in Europe, Asia, and Africa" published in the *Wilson Bulletin* Vol 27 : Iss 1 Article 2. The article about India is 29 pages long and I encourage you to read the original and her other articles about this trip. It is found online. Quotes from Althea are in italics.

Althea left New York on the Cunard S. S. Laconia on December 2, 1913, and spent a month on the ocean traveling to Bombay, India. The trip was arranged by Thomas Cook and Son Company and followed the popular route of visitors. A representative of Thomas Cook met the group at each new location and took them to their hotel.

To identify birds she did not know, she found local books, local human sources and museums which helped her identify over 50 species of native birds. For those she couldn't identify, she made detailed notes and sketches of the bird which she took home for more research. She gave them "temporary names, and my Jerusalem Chickadee, Constantinople Crow and Interlaken Betty serve as Pleasant recollections" in later identification.

She identified the Indian Roller on her first trip to search for birds, "When perched it is a beautiful sight, but on the wing it is a dream of loveliness as its greenish blue colors, mingled with various other shades of blue, gleam in the sunlight."

She wrote the following about the Indian papers; "It was a matter of great surprise to me that during six weeks of reading India's newspapers never except once did I find them containing any thing but sneers, lies and misrepresentation, when making mention of America or things American: and I later found a similar spirit animating the British press."

(continued on the left)

(Althea's notes continued)

However, she didn't record any incident of disrespect or animosity during her visit.

Her rail journey to Calcutta "occupied forty-four hours." But she quickly found two unfamiliar bird species, the Indian Brown Shrike and the Indian Koel. She found the Common Indian Swift near her hotel, which reminded her of our Chimney Swifts.

She went on to identify almost fifty species although she expressed concern about the possibility of stepping on a cobra or other poisonous snake as she left the hotel early in the morning for her bird study.

She describes outings into the country where she arranged rides on rickshaws which she disliked and sometimes cancelled, Tongo horses, an elephant and in ekkas, one horse carriages.

She ends the article with her observations of vultures, a common species. She witnessed a vulture eating what appeared to be the bodies of humans, and when her guide affirmed that this was accurate and not unusual, she wrote a defense of the birds, comparing many harmful acts chosen deliberately by humans while the birds' choice was limited by the need to survive. Althea's journey was cut short in England when WWI caused concern and citizens returned home. She returned to New York on August 26, 1914.

The S.S. Conard Laconia was torpedoed and sank February 25, 1917.