

The Crackerbarrel

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President's Report



President George Rowe

Happy New Year everyone! Hope you enjoy the Annual Report for 2013, another great year! Thanks for the efforts of our many volunteers and our dedicated staff! I look forward to another wonderful year in 2014, we accomplished big things in 2013 and I know that with the help of our many dedicated members, we will continue to do so in the coming year.

2013 Annual Report

Financial

Bill Briska, Treasurer

The year 2013 was another sound one, financially, for the Society and Museum. We remain debt-free, properly insured and have an appropriate emergency reserve fund. We continue the positive momentum established during the last 15 years by slowly and steadily expanding our services and programs.

Operating income in 2013 (i.e., income not destined for the endowment fund) was \$161,747. Expenditures were \$146,559. A substantial portion of positive difference came from a grant that reimbursed us in early 2013 for costs related to exhibit construction in 2012. We also enjoyed better than expected income in other areas. All this success was the result of hard work, great volunteers and generous supporters, and a bit of good luck. The excess income over expenditures leaves us in good position for 2014 to upgrade our computer system and focus on other strategic needs related to fulfilling our mission.

Donations to our endowment fund grew by \$3,715 in 2013. Combined with an increase in the value of our endowment investments, the fund now stands at \$420,290. We continue to follow a conservative but growth-oriented approach to these investments. The fund is primarily composed of bequests and memorial gifts. These are added to the principal of the endowment, thus creating a lasting legacy from these precious gifts. Eventually, only the income from the endowment will be used for operating expenses. Building an adequately sized endowment is one way of providing for the Museum's long-term financial viability.

Our successful business model helped us weather, and actually grow, during the Great Recession. It is based on developing several diverse sources of revenue. These include dues, donations and admission fees, of course. They also include sponsorship opportunities for events and TV productions, publishing, store sales, research and photo reproduction fees, grants for specific projects and donations of in-kind services. A major, non-monetary, part of our success is the large number of volunteer hours donated to the Museum's operations. The volunteer help is equal to that of about six full time employees. We have four part-time professional staff whose combined hours are the equivalent of 1.3 full time employees.

The following is a brief summary of income and expenses:

<i>Income</i>	<i>Expenses</i>
8% Membership Dues	9% Exhibit Construction
28% Grants	46% Programs, insurance, supplies, equipment, collection management, printing, postage, etc.
27% Cash Donations	45% Salaries, taxes and contracted services
37% Earned income (sales, admissions, fees for services, sponsorships, etc.)	

The Crackerbarrel

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360 Park Street, Elgin, IL 60120
Phone 847-742-4248
e-mail: elginhistory@foxvalley.net



President: George Rowe
Vice President: Terry Gabel
Secretary: Laura Stroud
Corr. Secretary: Ricky Harris
Treasurer: William Briska



Editor: Rebecca Marco

The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.
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 Visit our website www.elginhistory.org

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Significant Accomplishments

- Elgin Windmill Installed in Foundry Park
- Courier News Morgue Files Donated to the Museum
- Added 100 New Elgin Watches to the Watch Factory Exhibit Re-Installation
- Art Deco Seminar Exhibit Opening
- 1913 Motorcycle Race Trophy and Program
- Moseley Paintings Elgin Arts Grant and Exhibit
- 2014 Elgin Memories Calendar

Membership

Jerri Barnhart, Membership Chair

At the end of 2013, Society membership included 267 households (approximately 820 members), which brought in \$13,231.

10,384 Volunteer hours were logged by 97 volunteers in 2013!

Programs and Events

David Nelson, Program Chair

In 2013, 2,069 people attended 27 programs and events, a substantial increase in programs over 2012. Highlights include:

- Another antiques appraisal program with Mark Moran at the Gail Borden Public Library.
- Bungalow and home research programs.
- Two Illinois Humanities Council sponsored programs on the Illinois Miner's Revolt with Rose-

mary Fuerer and The History of Thanksgiving with Penelope Bingham.

- Brown Bag Lunch Lectures on Native American Art, Elgin Mental Health Center, Elgin in the 1930s, and Collecting the American Flyer Railroad.
- Several events including the 1913 Elgin Motorcycle Race Program, the 2nd Annual Thunderbird Car Show, a fundraiser at Villa Verone, the 26th Annual Cemetery Walk, the Museum's Annual Benefit with a program on Civil War Steamboatin', and an Elgin Museums Bike Route.
- A special program on the history of Bluff City Cemetery was held by Steve Stroud in the holding vault at the cemetery and Rochelle Pennington gave a nostalgic look at Christmas in December.
- The Society's daily radio segment on WRMN Radio continued in 2013 with volunteers Jerry Turnquist, Rich Renner, Larry Drafall and David Siegenthaler.

Education and Outreach

Sara Russell, Museum Educator

Tours and programming for children and adult groups in 2013 brought in \$5,000 with 74 programs and 1,742 participants. Lucy Elliott, the Museum's longtime friend and educator, left in August to pursue other activities and Sara Russell, educator at the Elgin Public Museum, picked up the educator's position at the Elgin History Museum in addition to her job at the Public Museum.

The Elgin History Fair at the end of April consisted of a public event and then three days of school programs, with the help of a large team of volunteers including 25 Elgin High School students. The event brought in \$1,000 and 400 students in just three days.

The Museum participated in the Green Expo with the City of Elgin to highlight our windmill project, the vintage motorcycle event in downtown Elgin, the Harvest Garden Market, the Church Walk held in May, and the Historic Elgin Housewalk. We also partnered with Gail Borden Public Library to support the Big Read Project, participated in the Friends of Lords Park Zoo events, Armchair Generals Civil War Roundtable, and Nightmare on Chicago Street.

The Museum presented programs to the Golden K, the Kiwanis, the Rotary, Cornerstone Church, Sun City in Huntley and at Edgewater, Holy Trinity Church, the Fideliters Ball, and AAUW through eight dedicated volunteer presenters.

The Museum building hosted 21 rentals with 544 visitors for members' events and meetings, one wedding, and several non-profit events, including meeting space for the Gifford Park Association and event space for Elgin Academy.

Collections and Exhibits

Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director

The Collections Committee was again busy determining donated items to be accepted into the Museum's permanent, education, or exhibit collections. Hundreds of items came in from 84 donors.

Hannah Walters was hired in 2013 to provide part-time assistance in collections management and building operations.

Highlights include:

- **The 1912 Illinois Cup trophy from the Elgin Road Races and a collection of items on Charles Merz, an early racer.**
- **An Elgin Lawrence Radio from Bruce Anderson.**
- **The Sun-Times Media Group donated the Courier News Morgue files, containing clippings, photos and negatives on a variety of local, regional, and national subjects. A number of donors contributed funds to help accept this very large collection, which needed off-site storage space and professional assistance from Beth Nawara.**
- **The Elgin National Watch Company exhibit space was completely redone with new cases, new walls, and over 100 on-loan watches from collectors Jeff White, Lance Lagoni, and Chuck Bell. The watch factory story was retold in chronological order with help from Bill Briska, George Rowe, Dennis Roxworthy, Doug Tomsha, Lucy Elliott, Maurice Dyer and Hannah Walters.**
- **The Museum also installed a Hospitals Exhibit on the development of Elgin Mental Health Center, Sherman Hospital, and St. Joseph Hospital.**
- **An off-site exhibit on Elgin artists was installed in November in the Gail Borden Library. The exhibit includes the work of Thomas Moseley and other well-known Elgin artists.**

Publications

The 2014 Elgin Memories Calendar came out in September with images from the Museum's collections.

Crackerbarrel and Websites

- **The Museum published six *Crackerbarrel* newsletters, edited by Rebecca Marco. Digital color copies were emailed to many members. Black and white printed copies were mailed to the remaining members.**

- **David Siegenthaler and Rich Renner consistently contributed researched journal articles to help make the *Crackerbarrel* a scholarly effort.**
- **The Museum's Facebook Fan Site currently has 689 friends.**
- **Hayden Pierce conducted an analysis of the Museum's website in 2013 and that data is being analyzed for future Society website changes in 2014.**

Program Schedule for 2014

David Nelson, Program Chair

Check the website for the latest details.

<http://www.elginhistory.org/events.html>

Preserving Elgin Bungalows

January 20, 2014, 7 P.M., Gail Borden Public Library

Historian Steve Stroud and architect Eric Pepa will discuss bungalow styles and provide examples of the more than 2,000 bungalows built between 1910 and 1946 in Elgin.

Elgin Alive Program on African-American History

January 21, 2014, 7 P.M., Gail Borden Public Library

The Museum is heavily involved in researching Elgin's African-American history for a documentary, a traveling exhibit, and to assist the City in interpretive signage information in parks and other areas.

Votes for Women: The 72-Year Struggle for Suffrage, presented by Leslie Goddard

**March 16, 2013, 2 P.M., Elgin History Museum
Free Admission for Members, \$3 Guests**

This illustrated slide lecture explores the struggle from 1848—when the first scandalous call was issued at Seneca Falls—to 1920, when women finally gained suffrage. If voting feels more like an obligation than a privilege, remember that it took 72 years for women to win the right to vote. Learn the stories of the courageous women, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Alice Paul, who fought to win women the right to vote. You will never find voting inconvenient again!

Regretting Mr. Wright: Mamah Tells Her Own Story presented by Elizabeth Carlson

**Sunday, April 13, 2013, 2 P.M., Elgin History Museum
Free Admission for Members, \$3 Guests**

Mamah Borthwick Cheney and Frank Lloyd Wright fell in love. They were both married to other people and had eight children to care for between them. Flaunting all social mores of their time and abandoning their obligations, they ran off together. They spent time in Europe and then later settled in Wisconsin where Mr. Wright built Taliesin for Mamah.

While Mr. Wright could depend on society to forgive a man's indiscretions; especially if it also viewed him as genius, Mamah was expected to behave in a carefully prescribed manner. When she did not, she was outcast. She lived what was left of her short life as the female head of household at Taliesin where she died, tragically, in 1914. Mamah returns to our world in this presentation to tell her own story.

Elgin History Fair

**April 27, 2013, 12-3 P.M., Elgin History Museum
Free Admission for All Ages!**

Family and friends are invited to enjoy an afternoon in Elgin of long ago. Parent/Child activities include making better butter, grinding field corn, building a cobblestone house, washing monkey socks! This year will include special information and activities on the Civil War in conjunction with the Gail Borden Library Lincoln exhibit. Rain or shine.

History of Tupperware!

Thursday, May 15, 2013, 12 Noon

Elgin History Museum

Free Admission for Members, \$3 Guests

International Museum Day and Brown Bag Lunch Lecture

Collector Linda Rock discusses the development of Tupperware with examples from her fascinating collection.

June 19, 12 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch TBD

July 17, 12 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch with Jerry Turnquist

August 21, 12 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch: History of St. Joseph Hospital

September 28: Cemetery Walk, Bluff City Cemetery

October 12, 2 P.M.: Abolition/African American History

**November 8, 6 P.M.: Annual Benefit/Silent Auction/General Meeting, Elgin History Museum
"Mr & Mrs Lincoln"**

\$35 Members/\$45 Non-Members, advance tickets required.

December 6, 1-3 P.M.: Holiday Tea, featuring Elgin Opera singers

Correction

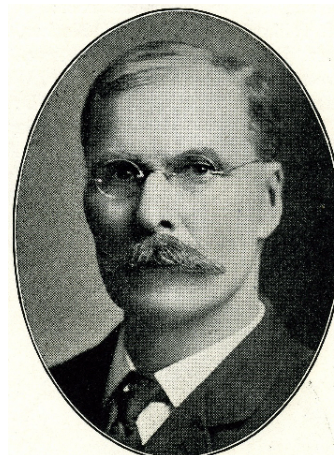
In the November edition of Crackerbarrel, Elgin Medi-Transport was incorrectly identified as Medi-vac Ambulance. We regret the error.

Elgin Sweeper Company's 100th Anniversary

by David Siegenthaler

The Elgin street sweeper was the world's first commercially-successful motorized street sweeper. The first Elgin sweeper was sold in 1914 after two years of trial and development. The buyer was the City of Boise, Idaho. Three other cities also bought Elgin sweepers in 1914. In 1915, 15 were sold; 23 in 1916 and 42 in 1917. Even though the sweeper was formally offered to the City of Elgin at a "very special price" in October 1913, Elgin didn't buy its first Elgin sweeper until 1920.

By 1919, 100 U.S. cities, the U.S. government and three foreign countries had bought Elgin sweepers. That year a newspaper report noted: "Apparently the Elgin sweeper is going to give the Elgin watch a battle for the right to keep Elgin famous."



J. M. MURPHY

The man who invented the Elgin sweeper was John M. Murphy, born in Chicago on March 15, 1846. His family soon moved to Lake County and Murphy grew up on his dad's farm, eventually becoming a successful farmer himself. In 1870 he married Maria Agnes Coon and they had two sons: John W. and Lewis. In 1883 the family moved to Elgin, where Murphy became a partner in a windmill

manufacturing firm with William D. Nichols. By 1887, however, the firm was in the hands of a receiver and Nichols turned over his patents and factory to the newly-organized Elgin Wind Power & Pump Company. In 1897 Murphy partnered with Fred Steere in a firm that made and sold carriages and wagons. In 1902 Murphy and Steere opened Elgin's first automobile dealership, offering the Rambler for sale. In 1904 they were granted the city's first Ford agency.

In April 1902 Murphy was elected alderman and appointed to the "Streets, Alleys and Bridges Committee." On September 16, 1902, Alderman Murphy initiated a resolution that was adopted by a 13-0 vote. It read: "...the Superintendent of Streets...is hereby instructed by the City Council of Elgin to keep all paved streets clean from this date, and that the Mayor of Elgin be respectfully requested to see that this order is carried out at all times."

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, the reform-minded Progressive movement swept the country, inspiring citizens with ideals such as public improvements and modernization. Arwin Price, a champion of public improvements, was elected mayor of Elgin six times between 1889 and 1919. The paving and cleaning of streets were Progressive ideals that, combined with the emerging mania for motorized transport, provided fertile ground for inspiring Murphy's invention and making it successful.

This was a time when horses far outnumbered cars. Their waste, along with other debris, accumulated on paved streets and resulted in unsanitary, unsightly and dangerous conditions. Elgin's existing horse-drawn sweeper raised clouds of dust and the anger of merchants. If the street was dampened prior to sweeping to hold down the dust, the brushes were not stiff enough to handle the mud.

John Murphy was not only a car dealer and an alderman but also an avid motorist. He had a professional, political and personal interest in seeing that the streets were kept clean. In 1903 Murphy acquired a bright red car in which he sped around town at speeds estimated up to 30 mph. Nicknamed the "Red Devil," the car was terrorizing residents, horses, trains and streetcars. A newspaper report lamented that the city had no ordinance regarding speed. In 1904, when Elgin passed its first ordinance regulating automobiles, speeds were limited to six mph downtown and 12 mph elsewhere in the city.

The American Tower & Tank Company was established in Elgin in 1903 to make structural steel for windmills, water tanks, railroads and bridges. In September 1911 Murphy met with that firm's partners, James Todd and Charles Whiting. He had with him plans and drawings for a motorized street sweeper and enthusiastically presented his vision to them. The Tower & Tank Company was not operating at full capacity and agreed to provide factory space as well as an associate, Daniel Todd, to oversee development of the proposed sweeper.

In July 1912 a prototype sweeper was given its first test on the streets of Elgin. Grove and Highland avenues were thoroughly cleaned in two hours. No serious faults were found and only minor defects were reported. By the fall of 1913, after further refinements and testing, the sweeper's performance was good enough that it satisfied Murphy, and the Todds and Whiting were willing to risk their firm's reputation on it. Mail solicitations were ventured that fall and a responsive inquiry from the City of Boise resulted in the first sale. Other sales followed, slowly but steadily.

Murphy lived in Elgin from about 1883-1919. During most of those years (about 1886-1914) he lived at 327 DuPage Street, a Second Empire-style home with a

mansard roof that is still standing. At some point prior to 1920 Murphy signed over his patents to the American Tower & Tank Company and moved to the state of Washington. The 1920 census shows Murphy and his wife living with their son, Lewis, in Seattle. In November 1927 in Seattle, a tragic automobile-train crash took the lives of his wife and son. Murphy was critically injured with a fractured skull but recovered. He died on June 14, 1933 in Seattle at age 87.



The Murphy Home, 327 DuPage Street

By 1922, when the Elgin sweeper was in use in more than 175 U.S. cities, the owners felt that it had achieved sufficient distribution and the potential market was sufficiently promising to devote all of their resources to manufacturing the sweeper. That year the American Tower & Tank Company's name was changed to the Elgin Street Sweeper Company. In 1928, the firm was reorganized and incorporated as the Elgin Sweeper Company.

The Elgin Sweeper Company was located at the foot of Oak Street, across the river from the watch factory, until 1966, when it moved to its current site at 1300 West Bartlett Road at the far southeast edge of Elgin. The former factory was partially burned down in 1986 and the remainder was razed in 2000 to accommodate the expansion of the National Street Metra station.

The original brochure for the Elgin motor sweeper declared: "The history of all experiments and practice seems to demonstrate the fact that a good stiff broom accompanied by the proper pick-up arrangement, and scientific means for dampening the sweepings in advance of the broom, affords the ultimate method for removing refuse from paved streets in a practical manner and at a minimum of cost." A hundred years later, those principles still apply for mechanical broom sweepers.

More recently, air-based sweepers (vacuum and regenerative air) have been developed that are more efficient in removing fine sediment and consequently reducing pollutant run-off from streets into storm sewers. The Elgin Whirlwind, introduced in 1971, was the first vacuum street sweeper produced in the U.S. Some cities use a broom sweeper for the heavier debris and follow it with a vacuum sweeper for the finer debris. Vacuum sweepers are also useful for cleaning catch basins and other areas that broom sweepers are not suited for.

The original 3-wheeled sweeper was nimble enough to maneuver around automobiles, wagons, carriages and horses. The same design is still in use today, with steering via the single (now it is actually a close-together pair) rear wheel. By 1960 the most popular Elgin sweeper was called the "Elgin Street King." In 1964 the "Elgin Pelican" was introduced and has been the firm's flagship product ever since. The Pelican, a 3-wheeled mechanical broom sweeper, has been America's most popular urban street sweeper for the past 50 years. The name was inspired by the popular limerick: "A wonderful bird is the pelican/His bill will hold more than his belican/He can take in his beak/Enough food for a week/But I'm damned if I see how the helican!"



Original Elgin Motor Sweeper

Though the Pelican's top speed is about 20 mph, its recommended cleaning speed is 3 to 5 mph. In 1979 the firm introduced the Roadrunner, a 4-wheeled sweeper mounted on a truck chassis that can travel at highway speeds between jobs. Elgin Sweeper's clients include municipalities, contractors, airports, industry and racetracks. Most of its sweepers are custom-built for specific customers, one or two at a time. Specialty sweepers are engineered for unique needs. Some cities use their street sweepers as moving billboards for their sports teams or for causes like breast cancer awareness. This trend began in 1991 when the City of Chicago, a customer since 1917, ordered five sweepers, each painted Chicago Bulls red, decorated with the team logo and assigned the number of a starting player.



The Elgin Street King

The firm's broom sweepers are all named after birds, while the air-based models all have the word "wind" in their names. In 1982 the Elgin Sweeper Company was acquired by the Federal Signal Corporation, based in Oak Brook. A contentious 89-day strike in 1986 by union employees over wages resulted in the hiring of a new non-union workforce. In 2002 the firm built its 30,000th sweeper and was recognized as the single largest producer of street sweepers in the world, with customers worldwide.

The City of Elgin currently has five Elgin sweepers in its fleet - three Pelicans, one Eagle and one Megawind. The Pelicans are the slow, 3-wheeled broom-type workhorses, the Eagle is a 4-wheeled broom-type sweeper capable of highway speeds, and the Megawind is a 4-wheeled combination broom/vacuum-type sweeper used mainly to clean catch basins.



Modern Elgin Pelican

Former Mayor Ed Schock, speaking to Elgin Sweeper Company employees in 2007, said: "I can't tell you how much pride everyone in the city feels whenever they go to another community and see an Elgin sweeper. You're one of the best advertisements Elgin has."

Acknowledgements: Mike Alft's newspaper columns; "The Sweep of Time," by William A. Richmann (1962); Tom Migatz, City of Elgin Public Works Supervisor; Rich Renner's newspaper references; various other sources.

2013 Museum Benefit Recap

David Nelson, Program Director

The Elgin Area Historical Society and Museum was shimmering in a golden glow of candlelight inside and out for the Society's 4th annual benefit on November 9. Over 100 people attended the successful silent auction, which included for the first time "Mystery Wine Bags," with various gift certificates for concerts, restaurants, and specialty stores. The audience mingled throughout the first and second floors enjoying the exhibits, silent auction, conversation and delicious hors d'oeuvres. The evening ended with a brilliant and educational program, "Steamboatin' in the Union Victory," presented by Brian "Fox" Ellis. Mr. Ellis brought stories of the siege of Vicksburg, the capture of Nat-chez, and the horrors of Shiloh to life in a first person monologue. The audience responded with prolonged applause. Mr. Ellis graciously presented encores with two more "Steamboatin'" stories.

This benefit brought in a record \$11,633 for the Museum, and was made possible by the Program and Silent Auction Committees, many generous sponsors, and the Museum Board. A big thank you to all the benefit workers and Ricky Harris for her leadership in bringing the silent auction to a successful close. Much applause to our Museum Director Liz Marston, for her work and leadership. And as always, a heartfelt thank you to our Museum members and friends who support us by taking part in the annual benefit.

2013 Holiday Tea Recap

Rebecca Marco, Editor

At the Holiday Tea in December, the full-house crowd was regaled by traditional Christmas songs presented by violinist Betty Volkening, soprano Susan Dennis, and our own David Nelson on Roland electric piano. The Museum was beautifully decorated for the season and all were entertained by Rochelle Pennington's presentation on An Old-Fashioned Christmas. It brought back happy memories for everyone in the audience.

A Win for the Museum

Rebecca Marco, Editor

Thanks to a winning auction bid and the willingness of some of our members to step up and contribute when needed, the Museum's collection of Elgin Road Race artifacts was recently enhanced tremendously. The Museum now owns the 1912 "Illinois Cup" a trophy presented by Ford to Road Race winner Charles Merz, as well as some other road racing items, all from a California collection recently auctioned off by the collector's heirs.

It all started when Jeff White noticed that a brochure for a Maryland auction mentioned an Illinois race, so he looked more closely and saw that the trophy pictured in the flier said Elgin on it. Jeff contacted Maurice Dyer and they decided this collection would be good for the Museum to own. Jeff and Maury quickly contacted other Society members and members of the Elgin Model T Club who are interested in the Road Races and cars in general, and incredibly were able to accumulate pledges totaling over \$13,000 from 12 individuals in less than 24 hours. Jeff handled the auction bidding via phone, and placed the winning bid.

The Illinois Cup is now on display at the Museum, along with Merz's racing helmet and other Elgin-related items from the collection. The items unrelated to Elgin will most likely be sold to other museums.

The Elgin road races, which ran from 1910 to 1920 (and 1933), were once one of the country's major races. Over the years, eight different trophies were awarded, but only four are known to still exist: Elgin Historical Society now has the Illinois Trophy; the Western Reserve Historical Museum in Cleveland has a large solid silver one; the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum has one, and the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, Michigan has the fourth.

Charles Merz was a native of Indiana who also competed in four Indianapolis 500 races, including the very first one in 1911. He was active in automobile racing from the time he was 17 years old.

We encourage you to come to the Museum and enjoy this important addition to our collection. Many thanks to Jim Anderson, Ken Barnhart, Harry Blizzard, Maurice Dyer, Fox Valley Model T Club, Terry Gabel, Ted Heise, Phred Hollister, Aubrey Neville, Dennis Roxworthy, Rich Renner, Paul Sommer, and Jeff White for making this happen.



Charles Merz Road Racing Collection, Including the Illinois Cup from the 1912 Elgin Road Races