President’s Report

Bill Briska, President

Valentine’s Day was an appropriate occasion for the Museum staff to host the annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. Where would the Museum be without its large volunteer work force?

Volunteer support made the Museum possible and continues to make it relevant, vibrant and growing in its mission of education and stewardship. The Museum relies on the volunteer labor of more than 98 individuals who donate time, talent and energy to support operations throughout the year. For example, the combined hours of our four paid staff members amount only to the equivalent of 1.4 full-time employees. While the combined hours of our volunteers amount to about 5 full-time equivalent employees. In addition, we are grateful for the many more hours that paid staff donate as volunteers when they are no longer “on-the-clock.”

How does one measure the volunteers’ contributions? The answer is that volunteer support is almost immeasurable. True, hours can be tallied, and completed projects can be pointed to, but how do you total the value of donated talent, creativity, initiative and innovation? You cannot. You can only see it, and feel it, as you walk through the Museum, or attend an event, or make use of the archives, or seek out the expertise of staff and volunteers.

Finally, for the volunteer, how do they measure their personal experience? For a few thoughts on that I refer you to an article by one our newest volunteers, Sandi McClure. Sandi and her husband, Dennis, moved to Elgin in 2013 from California. Sandi has a long history of volunteering at museums and historic sites. Sandi and Dennis discovered the Museum by attending the History Fair in 2014. Dennis, an experienced woodworker, has helped the Museum with several repairs.

At the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon, I was reminded that personal value comes from the fellowship of working with others.

Volunteer Lunch

Rebecca Marco, Editor

On February 14th the We Love You Luncheon was held at the Museum to honor the many volunteers who keep the Museum and the Society going. Volunteers were treated to a delicious meal and got to see the unveiling of the Museum’s new flat-screen TV, which replaces some outdated equipment formerly used for presentations in the meeting room. The TV stand is custom-made by Dave O’Donnell, Dennis Roxworthy, Bill Briska, George Rowe, Ron Barclay, and Doug Tomsha, and can be moved out of the way when not in use.

Thank you again to all who offer their volunteer services to the Museum. We could not do it without you!
Program Schedule for 2015
David Nelson, Program Chair

Events are held at the Museum unless otherwise noted. Check the website for the latest details.
http://www.elginhistory.org/events.html

March 16, 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.: “Elgin High School Sports in the 1950s” old Elgin High School auditorium
To register, call Gail Borden Library at 847-742-2411. Program will feature reminiscence and discussion from Elgin High School athletes of the 1950s, including Dick Becker, Chuck Brandt, Paul Hudgens, Gary Kane, and Roger Lenart. Audience participation will be encouraged by moderator Mike Bailey. If you have 1950’s Elgin High memorabilia to share, please email Ron Lange at elginron@hotmail.com.

March 22, 2:00 P.M.: Women of Elgin’s Past
Elgin historian Jerry Turnquist will discuss women of Elgin who were vital in establishing Elgin’s two hospitals and the YWCA, worked for social and civil betterment, and who were career trailblazers.

April 12, 2:00 P.M.: The Berlin Airlift
Annette Isaacs, professor and native of Germany, will look at the events of the Berlin Airlift which delivered supplies to hungry Berliners June 1948–spring 1949.

April 26, 3:00 P.M.: New documentary, Project 2-3-1 Elgin’s African-American History
Blizzard Theatre, Elgin Community College
Our newest documentary will premiere free of charge. The public is invited. Commentary and discussion will take place after the film for those interested.

May 3, 12:00 noon to 3:00 P.M.: Elgin History Fair. Free admission

May 6, 7:00 P.M. at Gail Borden Public Library: Barry Baumann speaks about “The Conservation of Paintings: Historical and Technical Discoveries.”

May 11, 7:00 P.M. at Gail Borden Public Library
Steve Stroud will give a talk about bungalows.

May 13, 7:00 P.M.: “What Were They Thinking: Aberrations in Architecture” with Rebecca Hunter

May 14, 6:00 P.M. A Walk in the Park
with Steve Stroud. Meet at Channing School parking lot

May 17, 2:00 P.M.
The Ups and Downs of Dining a la Downton
$25.00, includes High Tea

May 20, 7:00 P.M., Gail Borden Library
History of Elgin Mental Health Center with Bill Briska

May 21, 12:00 noon: Brown Bag Lunch
Elgin Women’s Club with Linda Rock

May 21, 7:00 P.M., Gail Borden Public Library:
“The Ranch Comes of Age: Mid-Century Modern Architecture in Elgin” with Rebecca Hunter

May 23, 9:00 A.M.
Tour of Elgin Mental Health Center Cemetery with Bill Briska: meet at Hickory Stick restaurant, east parking lot, Elgin Sports Complex.

May 25, 11:00 A.M. Bluff City Cemetery
Memorial Day ceremonies

May 26, 5:00 P.M. and 7:00 P.M.: Elgin Planetarium, corner of Watch and Raymond Streets: public Presentation of the Planetarium by Peggy Hernandez of school district U-46

May 28, 7:00 P.M. at Gail Borden Public Library
History of the Elgin National Watch Company with Jerry Turnquist

May 31, 3:00 P.M. at Gail Borden Public Library
Fireside chat about Elgin’s past with historians Mike Alft and Jerry Turnquist

June 18, 12:00 noon: Brown Bag Lunch
The Underground Railroad with Marge Edwards

July 19 10:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.
Antique and Vintage Car Show at the Museum

August 20, 12:00 noon: Brown Bag Lunch
Toy Soldiers with Don Pielin

Sept. 27, 11 A.M.–3 P.M.
Cemetery Walk at Bluff City Cemetery

Oct 11, 2:00 P.M.
Spirit of Motown with Jesse Sandoval

November 7, 6:00–10:00 P.M.
Annual Benefit/Silent Auction/General Meeting
$40 Members/$50 Non-Members, advance tickets required. The Benefit will feature Terry Lynch as famed Chicago planner and architect Daniel Burnham, the main force behind the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the lakefront plan for the City of Chicago. Appetizer refreshments, silent auction and cash bar.

**December 5, 1:00-3:00 P.M.: Holiday Tea**
Marshall Fields History featuring Leslie Goddard
**FREE Admission**

Learn about Christmas at Marshall Fields and the store’s history. Enjoy Old Main dressed up for Christmas. Delicious holiday treats, punch, and tea will be served.

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### Welcome New Members

- Rudy Galfi
- Cameron Keyser
- Deb Leveille
- Timothy Mandel and Madeline Lindgren
- Ron Mendez

### General Donations: Thank You!

- Jim Anderson
- Terry Gabel and Sue Brigham
- Carol Kuhn
- Ron Lange
- Paul Larson matching grant with Northern Trust Bank
- Susan McIntyre
- Joyce Pellicore in memory of past Society Board member Marilyn Magowan
- David Siegenthaler
- Jerry Turnquist

### Fond Farewell

Several members and friends of the Museum passed away in 2014. If you know of other members not listed who have passed away, please let the Museum know.

- Dick Breslich
- Marion Danner
- Marilyn Magowan
- Melba Schickler

### Donors to Project 2-3-1: The Story of Elgin’s African American Heritage Documentary and Exhibit

- Mary and Al Bullock
- Elgin Township Democrats

### What’s a Docent?

*Sandi McClure*

Have you ever wondered who those folks are that hang out in the Gift Shop? These amazing people are docents for the Elgin History Museum. They donate their time and skills for the love of the museum.

Each docent is trained to greet visitors. Docents learn the gift shop and the items for sale, and how to ring up sales and entry tickets. They share their love of the Museum by giving tours or talking about the exhibits. Docents are the Museum’s spokespersons to the community, networking with friends and family to encourage visitors.

The History Museum is always looking for docents. Are you a new retiree or have been retired for a while and are looking for a great volunteer experience? This is your opportunity to learn about Elgin’s past, present and future, plus make new friends.

The History Museum is also a great opportunity for students. You can learn about history, participate in programs, and improve your résumé for college entrance applications.

If you are interested in becoming a docent, stop by the Museum and talk to the docent on duty, the staff and Elizabeth Marston, the Director. We would love to see you!

### 2014 Annual Report

*Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director*

In 2014, the Elgin Area Historical Society continued to increase services and make programming more widely accessible. Within the Museum, new computers, faster internet service, a more versatile website, and enhanced collection management were added along with additional storage. EAHS continues to operate on a sound financial basis, and through steady growth of its endowment fund seeks to build long term financial resiliency.
Significant 2014 Projects:

- **Project 2-3-1: The Story of Elgin’s African-American Heritage** is a two-year effort that will culminate with the April 26, 2015 premiere of a feature length documentary film and traveling exhibit on the history of the local African-American community. Project 2-3-1 has generated new research resulting in a large volume of oral histories, photographs, documents and other findings. The Museum reached out to the African-American community to create partnerships with people and organizations. Fundraising for this $90,000 project began in 2013, with $73,125 raised, or pledged, in 2014.

- Interpretative signage in three local parks. In cooperation with the Summit-Park Neighborhood Association, the Museum was involved in researching and designing six interpretative signs for Newsome Park. The park is the site of Elgin’s first African-American church. Fabrication of the signs is complete and they will be installed in the spring of 2015. Additionally, in cooperation with the Gifford Park Association, the Museum researched and designed an interpretative sign for Barclay Park installed in 2014. Finally, in 2014 the Museum installed two large interpretative signs in Foundry Park as part of the 2013 restoration and re-installation of a historic windmill.

- Creating a bungalow-themed historic district. Beginning in 2013, and continuing through 2014, the Museum worked towards creating a city-wide Bungalow-themed Historic District. Using a small grant from the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, and in partnership with Landmarks Illinois and Neighborhood Housing Services of the Fox Valley, the Museum contracted with the architectural firm of Allen & Pepa to develop descriptions of bungalow-style buildings appropriate for inclusion in a thematic historic district. An informational brochure was created on bungalow-style houses. To rally public support the Museum hosted two well attended public events in January and May 2014. In addition, a small exhibit dedicated to bungalow-style homes was created and installed at the Museum.

Finance Report

*Bill Briska, Treasurer*

EAHS’s financial position remains sound and continues nearly two decades of gradual, steady growth. The Historical Society and Museum continued to be debt-free and properly insured, maintain funds for specific projects, and have an emergency reserve. Operating income in 2014 was of $152,008. Expenditures were $151,215. There were also commitments for an additional $44,750 of income to fund Project 2-3-1. This money, while committed in 2014, will arrive in early 2015.

The endowment fund, which is separate from the operational funds, was valued at $461,670 at the end of 2014. EAHS continues to have a conservative, but growth oriented investment strategy, which holds mutual funds invested primarily in American companies. The Board of Directors sees the endowment fund as essential to building long term financial resiliency. The EAHS endowment began in the year 2000 with a single $16,345 gift.

Membership

*Jerri Barnhart, Membership Chair*

At the end of 2014, Society membership included 253 households (approximately 844 members). The Museum used Groupon sales to gain an additional 21 new membership households. 10,231 volunteer hours were logged by 98 volunteers in 2014!

Programs and Events

*David Nelson, Program Chair*

In 2014, 1,525 people attended 21 programs and Events. Highlights include:


- Several events including the 3rd Annual Thunderbird and All Ford Car Show, the 27th Annual Cemetery Walk, the Museum’s Annual Benefit with a program on President and Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, and a Bungalow Rally program.

- A special program on the history of Channing Cemetery was held by Steve Stroud and the Bravissimo Vocal Ensemble sang some beautiful Christmas music in December.

- The Society’s daily radio segment on WRMN Radio continued in 2014 with volunteers Jerry Turnquist, Rich Renner, Larry Drafall and David Siegenthaler.

Education and Outreach

In 2014, Sara Russell, Museum Educator conducted 35 programs for 1,250 participants. The Museum participated in the Harvest Garden Market, and the Historic Elgin House Tour. We also partnered with Gail Borden Public Library in several programs and exhibits, 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, Sun City in Huntley, Bartlett Library through four dedicated volunteer presenters. The Museum building hosted 18 rentals with 544 visitors for members’ events and meetings, and several non-profit events, including meeting space for the Gifford Park Association.

Collections and Exhibits
The Collections Committee accepted into the Museum’s permanent, education, or exhibit collections. Hundreds of items came in from 87 donors. The Museum contracted with Beth Nawara in 2014 to provide part time assistance in collections management. Highlights to the collection include:

- Gregg Ziegler Daytona Race trophies from 1960 and 1961
- Family Collections including amazing letters, clothing, photos, and objects from the Barclays, Giffords, Masons, Pratts, and the Wilcox/Urie/Goddard Family
- Cash register from Blum’s Ice Cream parlor
- Elgin National Watch Company Advertising Display collection
- Early Illinois license plate collection
- Sherman Hospital time capsules
- Elgin Stove
- Salvador Dali designed Bird-in-Hand Elgin American compact
- Elgin German Veterans flag

Exhibits
Lost Elgin, an art project sponsored by Gifford Park Association, was installed in the meeting room in November 2014. It features images of demolished Elgin buildings created on a series of porch pickets.

Publications
The 2014 Elgin Memories Calendar came out in November with images from the Museum’s collections on World War II in Elgin. Sales were very good.

Crackerbarrel and Websites:
- The Museum published six Crackerbarrel newsletters, edited by Rebecca Marco.
- David Siegenthaler consistently contributed researched journal articles to help make the Cracker barrel a scholarly effort.
- The Museum’s Facebook Fan Site currently has over 1,000 friends.
- Website is being transferred from DreamWeaver to Wordpress, to allow for more collaboration in updating content, and is being redesigned.

The Lovells of Elgin – Part 2
by David Siegenthaler

Edward Lovell, in addition to his thriving law practice, was on the committee creating the Elgin Board of Education (1873); was a public library director (1872-77); a school board member (1876-79); an Elgin Academy trustee (1876-1902); a city attorney (1879-80); a state legislator (1879-81); a Kane County judge (1882-90); and a school board president (1897-98). In 1877 a citizens’ petition headed by the incumbent mayor requested Edward to be a candidate for mayor. Edward consented but declined to actively solicit votes. Running unopposed he was elected to a one-year term. At the time of his death in 1902 he was the local attorney for the Milwaukee Road railroad as well as president of the Elgin National Bank and the Elgin Historical and Scientific Society.

Edward met his future wife, Carrie Gertrude Watres (born November 28, 1855) at his tenth reunion in Ann Arbor in 1880. Carrie, from a prominent Scranton, Pennsylvania, family, was 13 years Edward’s junior and was in Michigan studying to be a doctor. She earned her homeopathy degree in 1883 and returned to Scranton to practice medicine. Edward and Carrie married in Scranton in June 1885 and soon came to Elgin to live. Carrie got a license to practice medicine in Illinois but in those days married women did not follow a career and she confined her efforts to raising a family.

Edward and Carrie’s first child, Gertrude, was born in 1886. She was followed by Lucy in 1889 and Margaret in 1892. Their fourth child, Vincent, was born in March 1895 but died the following February of congestion of the lungs. Carrie, still grieving over young Vincent’s death, died only eight days later of typhoid pneumonia.

Following Carrie’s death, Edward faced the responsibilities of raising his three young daughters by himself. A relative came to keep house and sister-in-law Eliza and some elderly aunts also helped out. The two older girls attended the Academy and the youngest,
In January 1902 Edward passed away at age 59 of intestinal obstruction. In his will he specified that Colonel L.A. Watres, his brother-in-law of Scranton, Pennsylvania, should be trustee of his three daughters and soon they were taken to Scranton to live with their aunt and uncle.

The Lovells lived at 420 Fulton Street until 1880, when they moved into the big mansion at 600 Villa Street. In September 1879 Vincent Lovell bought the home for $4,865 at a foreclosure auction. The home was built by Hezekiah Gifford, possibly in the late 1860s, for about $18,000, a huge sum in those days. It was known as “Gifford’s Folly” because it was generally felt a folly to build so large a home for so small a family. Hezekiah lived there with his wife Mary Jane and son Samuel Judson. Samuel Judson moved out shortly after his marriage in November 1872 and Mary Jane died in January 1874. In October 1874, at age 64, Hezekiah married Cornelia Morgan. Hezekiah sold the home in May 1876 to a Chicago couple and died the following March. This was the same Hezekiah Gifford who, in April 1835, built the very first home in Elgin—a humble log cabin.

In the early 1880s Lucy, Vincent, Eliza and Edward were all living together at 600 Villa Street. In 1885 Edward’s wife Carrie moved in and the couple planned to start a family. This may have been the impetus for Vincent and Eliza, a childless couple, to build their own home in 1886, a block to the north at 600 Margaret Place. By 1890 Lucy had moved in with Vincent and Eliza, whose home was quieter than Edward and Carrie’s, which by then included two young daughters.

In 1887 Vincent, like his brother ten years earlier, was persuaded to run for mayor and was elected. Two incidents during his term as mayor revealed him to be a man of principle and integrity. In early 1888 Sherman Hospital was planning to open at the corner of Channing and North streets. However, neighbors protested, fearing it would become a nuisance and lower property values. The City Council agreed and passed a resolution forbidding it. Mayor Lovell then vetoed the resolution, thereby saving the hospital, a much-needed institution. A short time later Mayor Lovell clashed again with the City Council over their refusal to approve his appointments for city marshal, unacceptable to some liquor licensees, and superintendent of streets, a key figure in the patronage system. On June 4, 1888, Vincent resigned in protest, the only Elgin mayor to resign his office. Like his brother, Vincent also served as a director of the public library.

By 1890 Vincent’s health was again failing and he went to Wisconsin, Michigan and, finally, Pennsylvania in an effort to regain his health. In December 1892 Vincent died of apoplexy in Scranton at age 47.

In 1887 Elgin Academy made plans to broaden its curriculum to include a manual training program, which the public high school did not yet offer. Lucy Lovell funded construction of a 3-story brick building named Lovell Hall, which housed a foundry, blacksmith shop, machine shop and wood shop. Lucy and her husband were longtime advocates of practical education, and though the Academy’s original 1839 charter expressly authorized the trustees to “connect manual labor with literary instruction,” the financial means to do so were lacking until Lucy’s generous gift. Lovell Hall was converted to dormitories in 1921 and razed in 1962. Lucy passed away in June 1894 at age 87.

Following the deaths of her husband in 1892 and her mother-in-law in 1894, Eliza was alone in her home at 600 Margaret Place. In about 1894 Eliza adopted Ida Schelker, a young neighbor whose father tragically killed himself with a shotgun in a freak accident. In 1901 Eliza’s nephew, T. Lovel Hadwen, married Ida. In about 1896 Eliza adopted a pair of 3-year-old twins, Harry and Fred Degener. Their mother died only days after giving birth and they were taken in by Miss Mary Peabody. In 1896, when the Elgin Children’s Home Association was established, Eliza offered the use of her home as its first site. Soon, Mary Peabody (as matron), the Degener twins and other homeless children were sharing her home. About a year later the Children’s Home was moved to larger quarters.

Sometime around the turn of the century, Eliza sent the twins overseas, where they were educated in European schools. By about 1917 both Degener twins had returned to live in Elgin. After her adopted daughter’s marriage in 1901, her brother-in-law’s death in 1902 and the removal of her nieces to Pennsylvania, Eliza must have felt quite alone.

In 1903 Eliza decided to return to her native England and stopped in Pennsylvania to visit her nieces. While there it was decided that the three Lovell girls—Ger-
trude, Lucy and Margaret—should go with her. Edward believed in the value of travel and wanted his girls to have such experiences. They spent a few months in England and in October 1903 the girls entered a French school in Paris. Eliza rented an apartment there and kept house for her nieces from 1903-05, just as Lucy had kept house in Ann Arbor for her sons in the 1860s. In the summer of 1904 they visited Eliza’s adopted daughter’s relatives in Switzerland. In 1905 the girls returned to Pennsylvania but Eliza stayed in Paris and the following year built a chalet in Switzerland.

The three Lovell girls all graduated from Vassar College in New York, their mother’s alma mater. Gertrude married Cole Price in 1915 and died in 1975. Lucy never married, became a longtime teacher and died in 1982. Margaret never married, worked in the personnel departments at various colleges and died in 1981. Eliza returned to this country in 1925 and settled in Pennsylvania, where she died in 1928 at age 84. The bodies of Eliza, Lucy and Margaret were all returned to Elgin for burial. The last Lovell descendant living in the Elgin area was Virginia Jewett (1908-2001), great-great-niece of Lucy Lovell.

The former Lovell mansion at 600 Villa Street was sold after Edward’s death in 1902 and became a succession of sanitoriums, retirement centers and rehabilitation centers - most notably, Resthaven Sanitarium (1909-72) and Lovellton Academy (1980-1999). The building was razed in 2006 and replaced with a Walgreen’s drug store.

The last remaining connection to the Lovell family in Elgin is the home at 600 Margaret Place, built in 1886 for Vincent and Eliza. This home has twice served as a refuge for some of Elgin’s most vulnerable residents. In 1896 Eliza graciously offered it for use as Elgin’s first home for homeless children. From 1975-87 it served as the first home for the Community Crisis Center, a sanctuary for battered women and their children. In 2001 this home was designated a local historic landmark by the City Council.

Following its service as the Community Crisis Center in 1987, Albert Cox and his wife Reggie Stephens bought the home and lovingly restored it to its original grandeur. When restoring the front parlor, the couple found the original shade of paint, a peacock blue, behind the mantle of the fireplace. But instead of using that color they decided to mix in a little more green, toward turquoise. That’s when the room suddenly turned cold. “We repainted the walls and the room turned warm again,” Reggie said. She believes the spirit of Lucy Lovell, who died in the home, lives in the attic. “The Dobermans will go there and bark furiously,” she said. Perhaps a Lovell presence remains in Elgin still.

Acknowledgements: Mike Alft’s books and newspaper articles; Viola Swanson’s unpublished Lovell family research (1988); House-ghosts, Chicago Tribune, October 30, 1992; city and county histories; obituaries; city directories; etc.

Collections Corner
Rebecca Marco, Editor

EAHS member and Elgin collector Jeff White recently purchased a bound book of old Elgin Daily News newspapers from 1876. I have included some excerpts here. Thanks for sharing with us, Jeff!

From Wednesday, June 21, 1876:

The lack of explanation associating the lynchings with the Presidential campaign is disconcerting. During the 1876 campaign, Southern Democrats used violent intimidation tactics throughout the South to suppress the black (Republican) vote.

On June 17, a riot occurred at Mt. Pleasant Plantation in Louisiana, near Baton Rouge. The riot involved over 200 white vigilantes and most of the plantation’s blacks. The vigilantes lynched five blacks and left them hanging from trees as a warning to other Republicans in the area. *

The Presidential campaign has opened by the hanging of five negroes by Southern white regulators at Mt. Pleasant, Louisiana, the other day.

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On June 17, a riot occurred at Mt. Pleasant Plantation in Louisiana, near Baton Rouge. The riot involved over 200 white vigilantes and most of the plantation’s blacks. The vigilantes lynched five blacks and left them hanging from trees as a warning to other Republicans in the area. *

It is also interesting that the “g” in “campaign” was printed upside-down.

Here is an excerpt from Thursday evening, Jun 22, 1876:

M. Mallery & Co., yesterday shipped a carload of cheese vats, milk cans, etc., to Danville, Iowa.

Moses Thompson was elected Secretary of the Old Settlers Society, in place of Otis B. Jenne, at the reunion yesterday. Jenne was put on as one of the committee.

The speech of Col. John S. Wilcox at the Old Settlers reunion yesterday, in response to the toast “To the Old Settlers,” was one of the finest ever heard. The Colonel is always at home on such occasions.

Died—At Dundee, yesterday, Geo. B. Edwards, aged 21 years 11 months. Funeral from his mother’s residence on Saturday at 10 a.m.

A large number of ladies and gentlemen are “meeting at the fountain” of the artesian well at the Condensing Factory this afternoon.

Another entry from the same day describes when the long-anticipated Artesian well at the milk condensing factory struck water.

Other articles in the book include several on the grim news from the Battle of the Little Big Horn, Custer’s Last Stand.