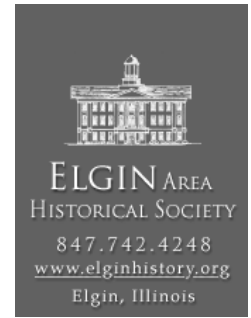




The Crackerbarrel

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 5
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President's Report

Bill Briska, President



September is Elgin history's "walking season" with Historic Elgin House Tour (often referred to as "the house walk") and the Cemetery Walk. The House Tour, organized by the Gifford Park Association, with help from many Historical Society members, is now in its 34th year. This is also the 29th year for our own Cemetery

Walk. The House Tour is September 12th from 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. The Cemetery Walk follows on September 27th from 11 A.M. to 3 P.M. Please keep an eye out for more detailed information about these wonderful events.

Looking beyond the enjoyable experience of learning about architecture, or strolling beautiful Bluff City Cemetery, these two events give us a close-up glimpse into the lives of others. These were the people who make up our collective past and helped define our community's character. Embedded in their stories are the near universal struggles, aspirations and successes of all mankind. They help place our own lives in context because, at a fundamental level, we see that people have much more in common than the sometimes superficial distinctions that set us apart.

The Museum is pleased to offer you another valuable first-hand perspective on life. The September 17th edition of our Brown Bag Lunch series features Judge Manuel Barbosa. His recently published autobiography, *The Littlest Wetback*, is a glimpse into a culture that surrounds us but may not be familiar to many non-hispanic Elginites. I am referring to the life of recent immigrants who, like many of our grandparents, arrived in American without the economic and educational advantages of those already here. However, the great story of the American experience is

one of upward mobility through succeeding generations. Just as interesting to me was reading the judge's story of growing up. His life was filled with the same insecurities, challenges and milestones we all experience. History both informs and reflects our lives.

Distinguished Visitors

by Richard Renner

For many years the Illinois Watch Case Co. was Elgin's second largest employer. On July 18th two descendants of the company's founding family visited Elgin and the History Museum to see their roots. Cindy Salans Rosenheim of San Francisco and Jim Markham of New York visited with their spouses and Chicago architectural historian Patrick Steffes. Cindy and Jim are great-grandchildren of Sol and Beckie Eppenstein and grandchildren of their son James Eppenstein, Elgin High Class of 1915 and later a successful Chicago architect and designer. In addition to touring some former family homes and the site of the watch case factory at Dundee and Slade Avenues, they enjoyed a special exhibit on the family business provided by Jeff White.



Cindy Rosenheim and Jim Markham, Eppenstein descendants, in front of the Illinois Watch Case Co. exhibit

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The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.

Next deadline October 20, 2015

 Visit our website www.elginhistory.org

Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Society's Board of Directors.

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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>

Sept. 27, 11 A.M.–3 P.M.

Cemetery Walk at Bluff City Cemetery
(see article in this issue)

November 7, 6:00–10:00 P.M.

**Annual Benefit/Silent Auction/General Meeting
Elgin Country Club**

Terry Lynch will portray famed Chicago planner and architect Daniel Burnham, the main force behind the 1893 Columbian Exposition and the lakefront plan for the City of Chicago. \$40 Members/\$50 Non-Members, advance tickets required. 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. holiday treats, punch, and tea will be served.

Thank You Donors

The following are Board Fundraiser donations. We are still accepting donations until the end of the year. Hope you can help along with these other generous donors!

- Alft, Mike and Fran
- Anderson, James and Sara Ellen
- Barnhart, Jerri and Ken
- Bartholomew, Steven
- Bauer, James
- Bendick, Joseph & Lois
- Blanchard, Laurence
- Briska, Bill and Fran Cella
- Brown, Betty
- Brown, William H. and Sally
- Burkart, Janet and Gordon
- Burke, Christopher
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- Childs, Helen
- Clossman, Richard
- Clute, Mary Alice
- Cook, Bruce
- Crinigan, Linda
- Cuming, Andrew and Britta
- Dieringer, Roger
- Dyer, Maurice
- Elbert, Marvin and Donna
- Epping, Hugh
- Flaks, Carl and Mary Ellen
- Gabel, Terry and Sue Brigham
- Gerberding, Phyllis
- Grimm, Richard
- Hagemann, Geraldine
- Hallock, Alma
- Handrock, Carole
- Haskins, Michael and Trudi
- Hempstead, Jean
- Hoeft, Elizabeth
- Holcomb, Roger
- Jocius, Patricia
- Jones, Richard
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- Nelson, David J. and Dolores
- Neville, Aubrey
- Nore, Gilbert and Mary

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- Paypal
- Pellicore, Joyce
- Plagge, Carol
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- Reid, Jeffrey and Elaine
- Rock, Linda
- Roller, Jerry & Carolyn
- Rowe, George and Marge
- Roxworthy, Dennis
- Scarbrough, Edith
- Schroeder, Kathleen
- Shales, John and Marlene
- Siegenthaler, David Customer
- Smith, H. Jane
- Smith, R. Lorece
- Stroud, Steve and Laura
- Swan, Chandler
- Turnquist, Jerry and Kathleen
- Utt, Norma
- Vossler, Jackie
- Wesemann, Edward and Margaret
- Wojciechowska, Mirosława
- Ziegler, Phyllis

Project 2-3-1 Donors

- Blackwell, Stephen
- Hurley, Vicki
- Segel, Patricia and David

Nancy Kimball House Project

- Allen & Pepa Architects

General Donations

- Lord, Jeffrey
- Rowe, George and Marge in honor of Mike Alf's 90th Birthday
- Roxworthy, Dennis and Laurie for the Annual Car Show
- Thiel, Martha
- Zeigler, Brian

Prairies to Dairies Project Donors

Prairies to Dairies is the title of our next research project/ documentary.

- Damisch, Marilyn
- Damisch, Scott
- Triumph Bank

Welcome New Members

- Paul and Amelia Andreson
- Mary Camacho
- Bruce and Mary Cook
- Ruth Cukla
- J. Michael Griffiths
- Susan and Glen Holland
- Delores Howard
- Pam and Jeff Leas
- Ellen McNett
- Michael Murschel
- Brett Roxworthy
- Chad Roxworthy
- Jennifer Whalen

29th Annual Cemetery Walk Coming Soon!

Steve and Laura Stroud, Board Members

This year's cemetery walk is Sunday September 27, at Bluff City Cemetery from 11 to 3 P.M. We invite everyone to come out and enjoy the day walking in a beautiful parklike setting and listening to six Elgin citizens, portrayed by volunteer actors, tell their life stories. You will hear from Annetta Jens whose family made and sold Jens Popcorn in Elgin; James T. Gifford, founder of Elgin; David and Emily Scofield (David ran a tree nursery and Emily was the daughter of Cyrus and Sarah Larkin); Emeline Church Borden, wife of Gail Borden; and Bernhard Hagelow, who invented tar paper roofing and owned a saloon in Elgin.

There will also be five vignettes sharing stories and pictures of the superintendent's original home in Bluff City Cemetery; and the holding vault will be opened and the history behind it explained. Civil War-era music will be played at the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) section of the cemetery, and we will feature two old headstones that were moved from Channing Cemetery. There will be more music by the singing ladies.



Bluff City Cemetery—Superintendent's Home



Bluff City Cemetery—Holding Vault

Many of you who came to the cemetery walk in previous years will recognize some of the performers, who have been with us for many years. We would like to acknowledge their continuing support. They are Mike Alft, 15 years; Linda Rock, 17 years; Mike Delehoy, 15 years; August Conte, 23 years; and Bonnie Conte, 17 years. We are fortunate to have such a great group of volunteer actors to support this event year after year.

We are also happy to announce two new actors this year: Andrew Cuming and Beth Hudson. Andrew has been a guide and will now demonstrate his acting abil-

ities. Beth's first acting role was last year, when she portrayed Caroline Chamberlain. We welcome them and look forward to their performances.

Our awesome hard-working costumed guides will again escort you on the route. They love guiding our guests and even though their feet must get tired after a long day of walking and talking, they work hard to make the cemetery walk a success. We are very appreciative of their dedication.

So let's see....we have the actors, the guides, the speakers at the vignettes, greeters, ticket takers, crowd and traffic control help, items for sale at the book table and oh yes, refreshments and popcorn will be available.

We have it all, so there's no reason not to come out on Sunday, September 27th to enjoy the walk and learn about Elgin's fascinating citizens. All you need is a pair of comfortable shoes and a family member or friend to share the walk.

Tickets are \$10 in advance and for Elgin History Museum Members, \$12 at the gate, free for children 12 and under. Group rates are available. You can purchase tickets at the Museum, in person or online, and at both Ace Hardware stores in town. For more information call 847-742-4248, go to www.elginhistory.org or visit us on Facebook. See you at the walk!

The Harveys of Elgin

by David Siegenthaler

The Harvey family was prominent in the early histories of Elgin and of Kane County. A Harvey may have had the first blacksmith shop in the county. A Harvey was Elgin's first lawyer. A Harvey family was, along with Nancy Currier Kimball, the first occupants of what may be the oldest surviving home in Elgin. A Harvey was captain of the first military company raised in Kane County. A Harvey was elected an alderman on Elgin's first city council and was re-elected six times. A Harvey's father-in-law was a prominent judge for whom Plato Township was named. A Harvey was a Civil War lieutenant. A Harvey was the first female head librarian at the Gail Borden Public Library. And a street in northwest Elgin is named for the family.

Joel and Polly Bennett Harvey, both of English descent, immigrated to Kane County with their family from the Syracuse, New York, area in September 1835, only months after James T. Gifford founded the city of Elgin. The family settled along Ferson Creek, where Joel claimed 300 acres near the northwest corner of St. Charles Township. Their eldest child George, then only 18, came to Chicago via the Great Lakes to accompany their household goods. The rest of the family came overland by ox team and wagon.

Joel was a blacksmith by trade and, in addition to farming, opened what may have been the first blacksmith shop in the county. Joel died in 1840 at age 47, but not before serving his new county as treasurer and justice of the peace. His wife Polly died in 1872 at age 73 and both are buried in Elgin. Joel and Polly had six children, all of whom lived in Elgin at some point: George Phelps (1816-1900); Edward Eliakim (1818-48); Emily Grace (born 1825; Mrs. Paul R. Wright); Henry Garner (1828-74); Sarah E. (born 1831; Mrs. Woodbury M. Taylor); and Joel Demetrius (1836-1911).

Edward Eliakim Harvey came to Elgin in 1840 at age 21 and became Elgin's first lawyer, having previously read law in the office of Joseph Churchill of Batavia. In those days the only requirements to be admitted to the bar was to provide an affidavit that a certain amount of time had been spent "studying" in a law office, and to pass an oral examination of three or four simple questions. In July 1841 Edward married Ruth Ann Kimball, daughter of Joseph and Nancy Currier Kimball. The couple had two children: Isabelle ("Belle") and Florence, the latter dying at 19 months. Isabelle (1842-1907) married Sherwood Raymond in 1862. In 1845 Edward became Elgin's third postmaster. In 1846 Edward and his family moved into the newly-built cobblestone home at 302 West Chicago Street, along with his mother-in-law, Nancy Currier Kimball. In the spring of 1847 the Illinois Governor issued a call for volunteers for service in the war with Mexico. Edward answered the call, was commissioned captain and, along with three lieutenants, raised the first military company in Kane County's history. Edward became ill and died in Mexico in March 1848.

About 1844, the first school building in Elgin was built by private subscription and stood near where the First Methodist Church now stands. The teacher there for its first two or three years was Emily Harvey. In 1846 Emily married Paul R. Wright, a lawyer and former teacher, who read law with Emily's brother, Edward, prior to their marriage. Paul would later be elected an alderman on Elgin's first two city councils.

Joel and Polly's youngest child, Joel Demetrius, was raised in Elgin and was admitted to the bar in Kane County in 1857. He practiced law in Geneva, Aurora and Chicago and also dealt in real estate. In 1876 he was appointed Collector of Internal Revenue for the First District of Illinois by President Grant, a position he continued to hold through the administrations of the three succeeding presidents. In 1858 he married Julia Plato, daughter of Judge William B. Plato, for whom Plato Township was named.

George Phelps Harvey, Joel and Polly's first-born child, claimed his own farm of 320 acres in 1837 or '38 near the southwest corner of Plato Township. In November 1839 he married Mary Love Burr (1816-95), daughter of Atwell and Betsy Wheeler Burr. The Burr

family was also from upstate New York and had settled along Ferson Creek next to the Harveys in 1836. George farmed his land until 1848 when he moved his family to Elgin. In 1850-51 George built a large grain and produce warehouse along Douglas Avenue next to the railroad tracks and became a produce merchant. In the early 1860s his warehouse burned down and he later partnered with George Renwick in the manufacture of threshing machines. By the late 1860s George owned the Elgin Marble Works, which he sold to Arwin Price in the early 1870s. From the mid-1870s to about 1897, when he retired, he sold insurance.

George was a very active public servant, beginning in 1853, when he was elected county treasurer. The following year he was elected an alderman on Elgin's first city council, an office to which he was re-elected six times. He also served as city and township assessor, internal revenue collector, county board supervisor and Elgin Academy director. George joined the Kane lodge of the Odd Fellows in 1851, and was one of the original trustees of the Universalist Church in Elgin when it organized in 1857.



208 Kimball St. Today

Some time around 1850 George built what appears on early maps to be a large home at the northwest corner of Highland Avenue and Harvey Street (named for the family). In 1864 he bought property along Chapel Street, north of Chicago Street, and built a home at 15 North Chapel. In 1886 he bought an existing home at 208 Kimball Street, where he lived the rest of his life. This Italianate-style home, probably built in the 1870s, has been altered somewhat, but still stands, well-preserved.

George and Mary Harvey had ten children, four of whom died in infancy. The surviving children were Charles Marens (1841-74; Civil War lieutenant); Welford Wellington (born 1844); Cecil Clara (1845-1903); Mary Elizabeth (1849-1910); Estelle Emily (born 1857; Mrs. William Freck); and Illione (1858-1945). Illione graduated from Elgin High School in 1877, worked as a cashier in Bosworth's dry goods store and later became a stenographer. Illione moved to Chicago where she married Orrin Barrett, the owner of a large stationery store, in 1905. Later the couple moved to Seattle, Washington, where she died at age 86.

Cecil Harvey started teaching in Elgin public schools in 1866, eventually being in charge of the primary department at the "Old Brick School." In 1882, Louis Yarwood, the first head librarian at Elgin's public library, was dismissed and the position was offered to Cecil. She accepted and was head librarian for the next 21 years, until passing away from breast cancer in 1903. During her tenure the library was moved into an extensively-renovated home at 50 North Spring Street in 1894. This home was donated by Gail Borden's stepsons, Alfred and Samuel Church, with the stipulation that it be named after their stepfather, Gail Borden. The library moved out of this building in 1968 but the building still stands, having been converted into a series of restaurants since the mid-1980s.

Acknowledgements: Mike Alft's books and newspaper articles; Hazel Belle Perry's newspaper articles; Autobiographies of Fox Valley Pioneers (1981); city directories; Kane County histories; Kane County Recorder of Deeds; Kane County Clerk; etc.



Cecil Harvey, Librarian

Car Show Report

Rebecca Marco, Editor

Our car show on July 19 at the Museum was quite a success and very well-attended. This year, the automobiles were very dramatically arranged on the lawn in addition to the street and parking lot. It was an eye-catching display and a wide variety of cars were represented, everything from true classic antiques, restored with meticulous effort to maintain authenticity, to a highly customized "rat rod" pickup featuring a rusty old two-man saw blade mounted over the windshield and many other unusual and creative details. There were cars from all eras up to the early 1990s.

Many thanks to Dennis Roxworthy and Chicagoland Thunderbird Club, Mustang Restorations and the Fox Valley Model T Car Club. The music from Mandy Z & Rural Route 1 set the right tone for the event. The cars attracted many new visitors who also got a chance to enjoy the Museum. Here are some highlights.



Pontiac Bonneville



Rat Rod!



1971 Buick Catalina convertible, a Survivor, owned by Mike Ford of Hanover Park



More 70s awesomeness



A true classic. Bill Witte and Treasurer George Rowe



British Invasion

North Side Brass plays Donor Appreciation Event

Rebecca Marco, Editor

This year's Donor Appreciation event was held at the Museum. Light refreshments were served and we were entertained by a string quartet provided by North Side Brass. The players and their musical selections were first-rate. Everyone enjoyed the background music and their formal performance of jazz standards. The group was made up of two violins, a viola and a cello. The musicians were very talented and we all enjoyed the performance immensely.

We wish to thank David Nelson for finding these marvelous performers and for all of his hard work finding and booking the performers who make all of the Museum's events so fun and memorable.



North Side Brass members and Program Director David Nelson at the Donor Appreciation event

Collections Corner

by Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director

We recently received some railroad-related donations from Dee Stambazze. The items came from her grandfather, William Olhaber, who worked for the Chicago Milwaukee St. Paul Railroad at the high Elgin station on Crystal Street. William died in a 1907 railroad accident at the station, leaving behind a young family. Ms. Stambazze donated his Elgin Railroad watch and two railroad lanterns with the CN & SP R logo that Mr. Olhaber had used on the job. In the 1883 wedding photo, William is wearing his Elgin watch. Thanks to Mr. Olhaber's descendants for the generous donation.

ELGIN HISTORY MUSEUM
360 PARK STREET
ELGIN, IL 60120



Elgin Railroad Watch



Minnie Meyerhoff and William J. Olhaber, wed Sept. 1893