



The Crackerbarrel

VOLUME 52 NUMBER 6
NOVEMBER 2015



President's Report

Bill Briska, President



It is time to celebrate! The Museum has had a productive year and received generous press coverage and wide-spread public support for its efforts. The Museum's annual benefit on November 7 is the perfect place to have a good time. You helped make it happen so come to the party! This year's event will be held at the Elgin

Country Club, one the area's most distinguished venues. The historic country club is well known for its beauty, hospitality and fine food and drink. I am told that the silent auction is loaded with great items to bid on ranging from history related gifts, to collectibles, fine wines, a weekend get-away at Lake Geneva, plus a few surprises.

The entertainment portion of the evening will feature Daniel Burnham, the famed city planner who proclaimed, "Make no little plans. They have no magic to stir men's blood." Mr. Burnham will be portrayed by the distinguished re-enactor Terry Lynch. Did you know that Burnham's firm was involved in drafting Elgin's first city plan back in 1917? Or, that many of the ideas put forth then have shaped the way the city looks today? Check our website for more information and to buy online tickets at *Elginhistory.org*, or call the museum at 847-742-4248, to reserve a place at this classy celebration and benefit.



Speaking of benefits, how would you like to double the impact that your generosity has on our community? The end of the year always results in cash donations to not-for-profits but this year is special thanks to the Grand Victoria Foundation. They will match

any donations made to the Museum, up to a total of \$5,000. **The gift must be made electronically**

through the Museum website, on December 1, to qualify for the match. Please use the "donate" button on our web page, *Elginhistory.org*, and your credit card to double the impact of your gift. Any gifts from this golden opportunity will support the Museum's capacity to serve Elgin.

In Memoriam: Joyce Pellicore 1948-2015

Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director

The Museum recently lost a longtime friend, volunteer, and past board member. Joyce Pellicore passed away suddenly at her home on October 25. Joyce was a life member of the Society; a Society board member from 1998-2005; an active volunteer docent, teacher, and trainer; a member of the Education Team; and the author of the Docent Interpretive Guide. She was the Holiday Tea co-chair with Mary Ellen Flaks from 2008-2013, decorating, baking, and coordinating the event. Joyce personally trained many of the current docents and led the annual docent training meetings. The Museum is really at a loss without her bright, bubbly personality and giving spirit. She will be missed.



Donations can be made in her name to the Museum or to her family c/o Jim Pellicore, 5237 N. Mulligan, Chicago, IL 60630.

The Crackerbarrel

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Editor: Rebecca Marco

The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.

Next deadline December 20, 2015

 **Visit our website Elginhistory.org**

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

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Program Schedule for 2015/2016

David Nelson, Program Chair

Events are held at the Museum unless otherwise noted. Check the website for the latest details.

elginhistory.org/events.html

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.

March 20, 2016, 2:00 P.M.
The Hayloft Gang: Story of the National Barn Dance,
Stephen Perry

April 10, 2:00 P.M.
Mother Jones featuring Betsey Means

April 24, 3:00 P.M.
History Fair

May 19, 12:00 noon
Brown Bag Lunch: Nancy Kimball Cobblestone
House

May 23, 7:00 P.M.
Free Masonry and the Elgin Masonic Lodge History

June 16, 12:00 noon
Brown Bag Lunch: The Cold War in Berlin with
Steve Stroud

July 21, 12:00 Noon
Brown Bag Lunch: Elgin Artist Jane Peterson as por-
trayed by Linda Rock

Sunday, July 17, 10:00 A.M. TO 3:00 P.M.
2016 Car Show at the Museum

August 18, 12:00 Noon
Brown Bag Lunch: Jerry Turnquist

September 15, 12:00 Noon
Brown Bag Lunch: History of Presidential Cam-
paigns with Carl Flaks

September 25, 11:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.
Bluff City Cemetery Walk

October 9, 2:00 P.M.
Amazing Adventures of Bertha Benz and the History
of the German Auto featuring Anette Isaccs

November 5 6:00 P.M.
Annual Benefit/Silent Auction/General Meeting
Featuring Jacqueline Kennedy as portrayed by
Leslie Goddard

December 10, 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M.
Holiday Tea featuring music by North Side Brass
with David Nelson on piano

Thank You Donors

Board Fundraiser Donations

- Laura Anderson
- Mary Ellen and Mich Barbezat
- John Boline
- David Covey
- Rachel Campbell
- Charles and Patricia Dunning
- Linda Eder
- Tricia and Jeff Grosser
- Carol Hecht
- Dan and Karen Maki
- Marco Technical Documentation, Inc.
- Evelyn Johnson
- Bill and Janet Jones
- John Lawrence
- Northern Trust Bank
- Don Pielin

Other Donations

- Orlando Davidson

Entwined History

by Paul Larson

Editor's Note: the following letter mysteriously found its way to us via board member Paul Larson, the archivist and historian for the Northern Trust Bank in Chicago. We hope it encourages you to attend the Benefit.

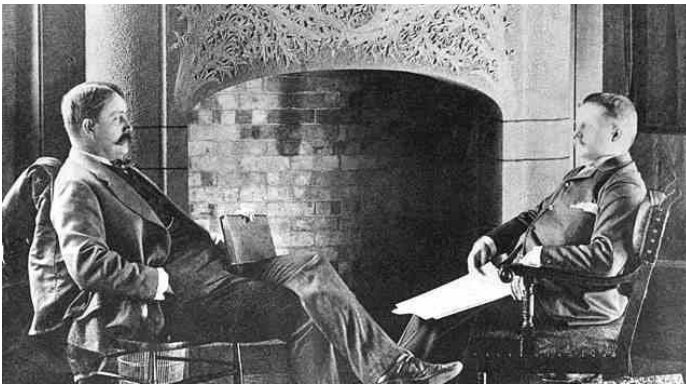
**THE NORTHERN TRUST
COMPANY BANK**
S. E. COR. LA SALLE AND ADAMS STS.
CHICAGO

October 21, 1913

Dear Ms. Marston,

I remember Daniel Burnham well. He was quite a gentleman, an extremely talented architect and an excellent public speaker. I'm quite certain you will enjoy listening to him at your upcoming Benefit.

When The Northern Trust Company opened for business on August 12, 1889 it was on the second floor of the Rookery building. The room was number 17 as I recall. It was a beautiful building and scarcely three years old at the time. Burnham and his partner John Wellborn Root occupied the 11th floor, the top floor. The office had a marvelous library which I believe exists intact to this day. I have enclosed a photograph recently taken in the library which I hope you will enjoy.



Burnham & Root at the Rookery

I'm hopeful that you may at some time, if you have not already, have the pleasure of meeting Mr. E. H. Bennett, a talented young associate of Mr. Burnham. I understand he was extremely helpful throughout the preparation of "The Plan of Chicago" completed in 1909 for the Commercial Club of Chicago.

I understand The Elgin Commercial Club later approached and engaged Mr. Bennett to prepare a similar plan for your fair city. It was, I believe, published in 1917 by a local firm by the name of David C.

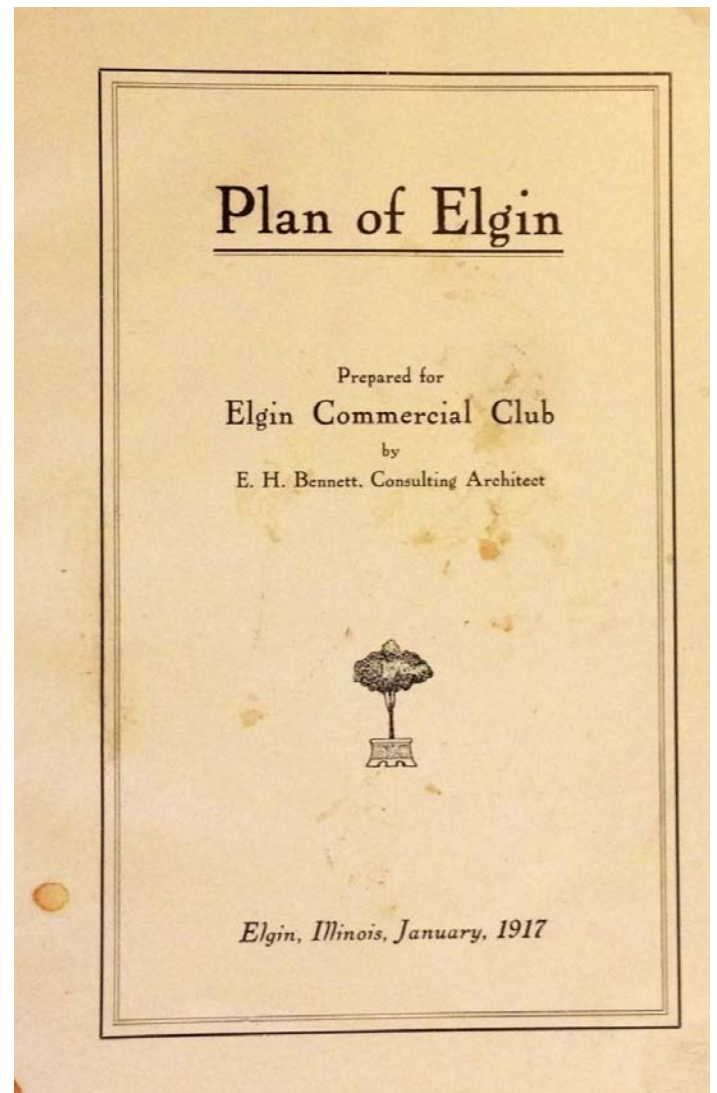
Cook. I am most certain that a young colleague of mine, one Mr. Larson, has in his possession a first edition.

Clarence Darrow was another early occupant of the Rookery Building. You may recall that he was quite instrumental in the Haymarket Square trials. We would see each other from time to time in the elevators and I always enjoyed these chance meetings.

I'm so pleased to hear that your upcoming gathering is being held at The Elgin Country Club. It is a fine club organized in 1901 with a beautiful golf course. Incidentally, The Northern Trust held the first men's golf outing on Columbus Day in the year 1912. I believe Larson has a program and a pair of gold golf balls from the outing which he has personally shown me. He may share them with you as well.

Best regards,
Byron Laflin Smith

cc: Paul Larson



Welcome New Members

- Maria Arvizu
- John Boline
- Kathleen Boyce
- Cecilia & James Dixon
- Mari Frenier
- Richard S. Hamilton
- Kris and Jim Heykoop
- Steven & Kendra Kroiss
- Christine Myers
- Rebecca Larsen-Nocchi
- Jim Lupie & Steve Starobrat
- Katherine Romano and Helen Price
- Anthony Schumacher
- Dana and Gary Vierck
- Carolyn Williams

Car Show: Correction

Rebecca Marco, Editor

The blue convertible identified as a 1971 Buick Catalina in the September edition of Crackerbarrel is actually a 1974 Buick LeSabre. The editor regrets the error.

William Gabriel, Master Mechanical Draftsman

by David Siegenthaler

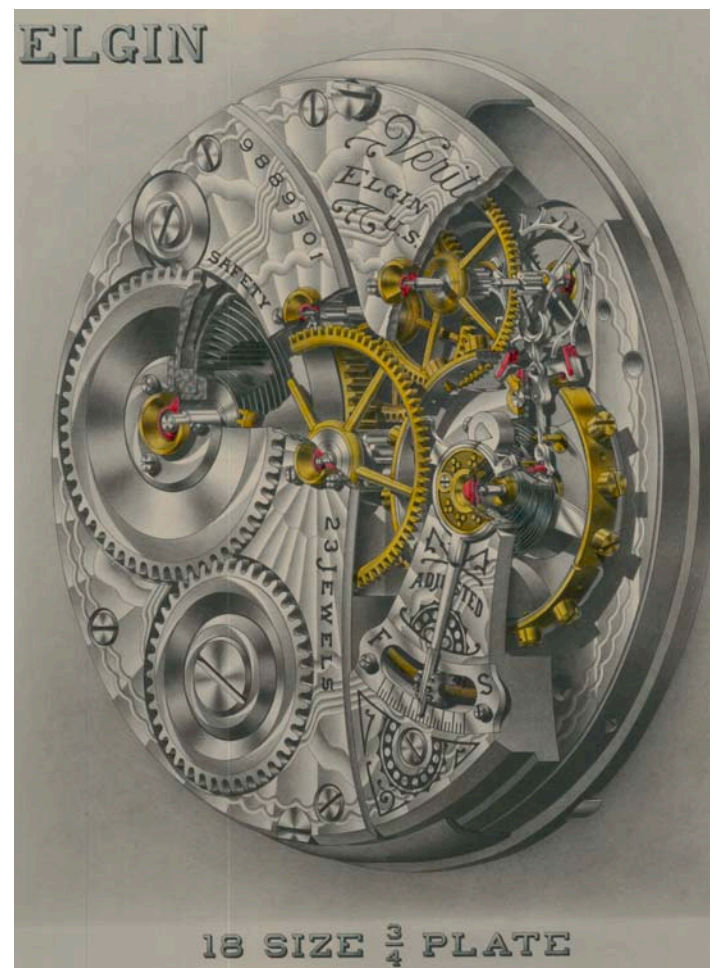
The Elgin National Watch Company was once the largest watch factory in the world, due in large part to the highly-skilled draftsmen who designed their watchmaking machinery. William A. Gabriel was the factory's chief designer and draftsman from 1888–1933. Gabriel not only designed state-of-the-art mechanical watches but also the automatic machinery to produce those watches, which have been described as “ten times as complicated and intricate as the watches themselves.” He did this in an era many decades before computer-aided design and drafting software. Gabriel's automatic machinery reduced labor costs, as one automatic could replace 50 or more workers. Reduced labor costs meant lower prices for watches, which meant increased sales, which meant hiring more employees. So, even though Gabriel's automatics eliminated many jobs, the net effect was to increase the number of employees.

The Elgin National Watch Company's first master draftsman, Charles Moseley, was also its first superintendent (1864-72). Moseley designed both the watches and the machinery to make them, including the automatic lathes which were indispensable in the evolu-

tion of watchmaking machinery. In 1872 draftsman Frank Leman was assigned to work with Moseley and designed several ingenious semi-automatic machines. When Leman retired, William Gabriel took his place and in 1888 became the head of the designing and drafting department.

Gabriel and his associates in the designing and machine departments produced many technological marvels. One machine, for example, was designed to drill, countersink and tap the lower plate of a watch. It was composed of 15,000 parts, of which over 500 were gears. The machine accomplished 104 operations, completing a plate every 15 seconds. It revolved the plate to 21 separate stations and was enclosed in glass and run in an oil spray. Another machine produced screws so tiny that a magnifying glass was needed to recognize them as screws.

The accompanying large-scale cut-away drawing of an 18 size three-fourths plate Elgin watch was completed by Gabriel in 1903 and represented more than two years' work, entirely at home in his spare time. The magnitude of the work involved in producing this drawing, which he did solely for its educational value, was so impressive that the company's *Watch Word* magazine devoted a full page to it in 1931.



William Gabriel's amazing watch drawing

According to a 1926 *Watch Word* article, "Every watch movement that has come out since Mr. Gabriel's appointment as head of the Drafting department has been designed by him, as have the greater share of the watchmaking machines made since he took his present position, not to speak of many tools and alterations to improve machines." Gabriel retired in 1933, the year he turned 75. This was during the depths of the Great Depression, a time of great retrenchment for the watch factory.

Recently, Brian Truxell donated many original technical drawings of watch movements, parts and machinery, executed by Gabriel, Leman and others, to the Museum in memory of his grandfather Jerry Campagna. Some date back to the mid-1860s, the very earliest years of the factory. There are even a couple of drawings by W.W. Abell, the prominent Elgin architect. Abell was hired as a draftsman by the watch factory in 1873 and worked there for 18 years. These drawings were salvaged from the Drafting office on the fifth floor of the watch factory's front building before it was razed in 1966.

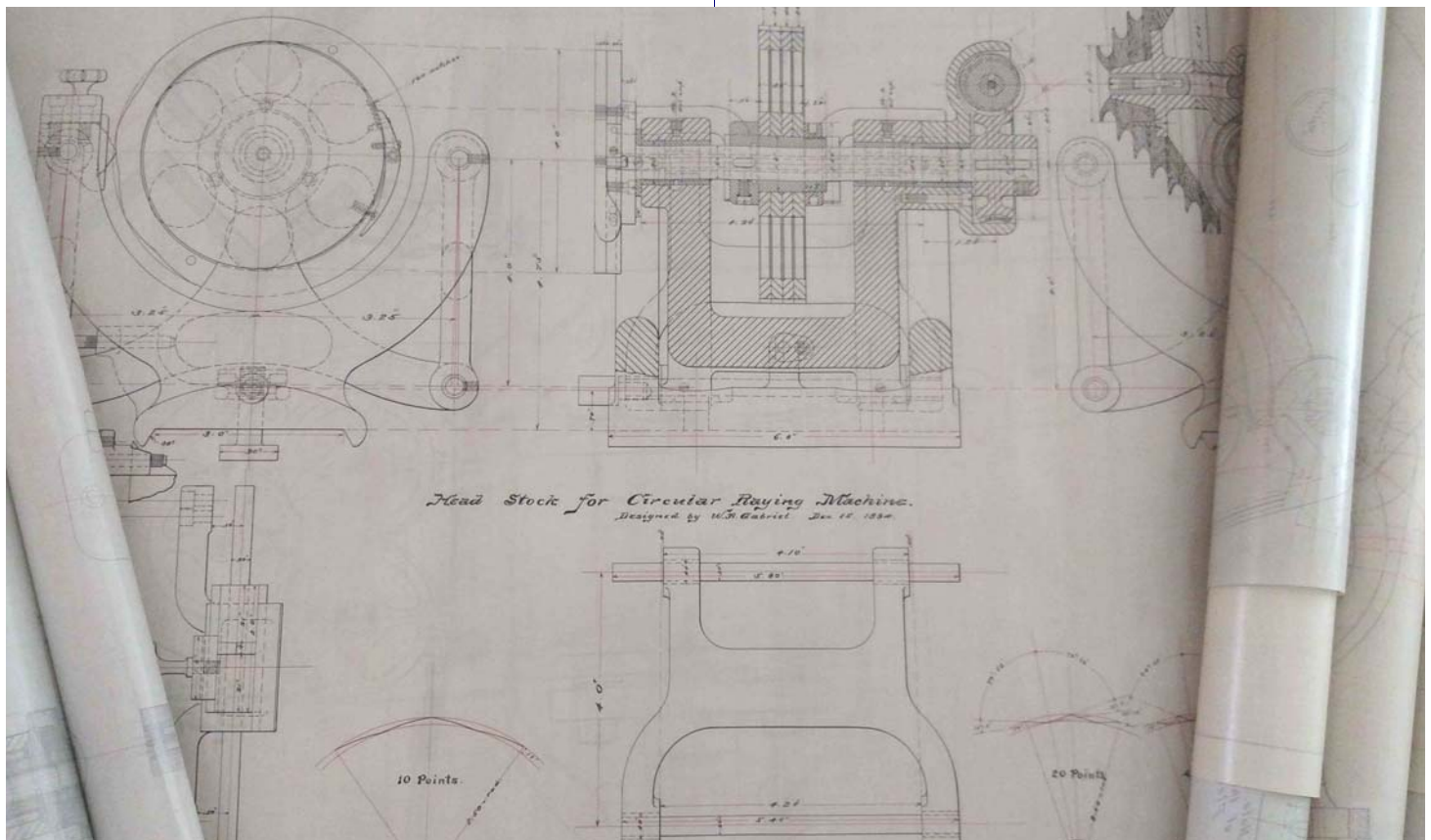
Curiously, there are no drawings by Charles Moseley, the factory's first master draftsman. It is likely that Moseley took his drawings with him when he left in 1876. Moseley and the Watch Company's board of directors frequently butted heads since 1870, when Moseley, aggrieved at what he saw as an invasion of his authority as superintendent by the general manager, completely absented himself from his duties for

nearly two years. The Company, perhaps fearing he would take his skills to a rival watch factory, continued to pay him. In 1872, when the Company reorganized its staff, Moseley was given a position especially created for him: "designing and consulting engineer." Moseley may have felt this was a demotion and shifted some of his energy to a new enterprise that he began in 1873 with his brother Horace. The directors felt Moseley was underachieving and finally, in 1876, abolished his position—a not-so-subtle way of firing him.

In 1981 the Society received a donation from the widow of Gabriel's grandson of a kit of Gabriel's drawing instruments. This kit is on display in the Museum's watch factory room.

In an era of computers, micro-electronics and digitization, these intricate mechanical devices may seem like little more than curious relics of a distant past. In their time, however, they were technological masterpieces that rivaled anything today in terms of innovation and sophistication.

William Atkinson Gabriel was born in Seymour, Connecticut on June 25, 1858 to Peter and Martha Atkinson Gabriel. His father was born in Prussia and his mother in England. At age 11 his family moved to Bridgeport, Connecticut. There, at age 16, he began employment with the Wheeler & Wilson Sewing Machine Company, where his father was a foreman. He remained there about three years, studying mechanical drawing with a tutor in his spare time.



Gabriel then served a three-year apprenticeship with the Bridgeport Brass Company, where he learned the tool-making and machine-building trade. Having a clear talent in that line, many of his evenings were devoted to making drawings of work in hand at the shop, as an aid to its execution. His proficiency attracted the attention of management, who often called upon him for pen-and-ink sketches for engravers' use. He also came to the notice of W.F. Durfee, a Bridgeport mechanical engineer who needed an assistant draftsman and hired Gabriel. Durfee took a fatherly interest in Gabriel's career and encouraged and directed him in his studies for two years.

Gabriel then worked six months as a draftsman for the Birmingham Foundry and Machine Company of Birmingham, Connecticut. After that he was a designer and toolmaker for the Smith & Egge Manufacturing Company of Bridgeport for about a year. While there, the master mechanic of the Illinois Watch Company in Springfield came east seeking skilled machinists. Gabriel accepted the offer to work in the Springfield company's machine shop and for the next three and a half years designed tools and machinery while gaining experience in the watch industry.

In January 1887 Gabriel applied for a position at the Elgin National Watch Company. He was hired in February 1887 as a machinist with the understanding that he soon was to be in the designing end of the business. When Frank Leman retired, Gabriel replaced him and in August 1888 became head of the design and drafting department, a position he would hold for the next 45 years.



WILLIAM A. GABRIEL

In October 1883 Gabriel married Emma Louise Selbie (circa 1865-1939). He and Emma had three daughters: Bessie (born 1884; Mrs. William E. Cannon); Gertrude

Estelle (born 1886; Mrs. Thomas Polk; later, Mrs. Amos L. Cottrell); and Elsie Walling (1887-1924; Mrs. Guy W. Blackburn).

The Gabriels lived at 419 DuPage Street from about 1894 to 1904, when they purchased the Victorian home at 570 East Chicago Street. This home was built in 1891 and was immediately east of two homes, 558 and 564 East Chicago Street, which were built for and occupied by a pair of longtime watch factory foremen, E.G. Gooding and Hiram S. Thomas.

William and Emma Gabriel lived in this home the rest of their lives. By 1935 daughter Bessie was widowed and returned to Elgin with her adult son Richard to live with her parents. Emma died unexpectedly in 1939 while visiting her daughter Gertrude in California. Grandson Richard married and moved out in 1940. Daughter Bessie continued to live with William until he passed away in 1947 after a long illness. William was cremated at Acacia Memorial Park in Chicago.

Acknowledgements: Mike Alft's books and newspaper articles; Elgin Time: A History of the Elgin National Watch Company, 1864-1968 (by Mike Alft and Bill Briska, 2003); Historical Notes on the Foundation and Development of the Elgin National Watch Company (unpublished; by George Hunter, 1906); various articles in the Watch Word magazine; federal censuses; city directories; etc.



William Gabriel's home at 570 E. Chicago St.

Museum Store News: Madman Muntz Christmas!

Welcome to the Elgin History Museum Store news. In each edition of the Crackerbarrel, we will try to feature items that may be new to the Museum Store or pertain to exhibits featured in the Museum.

This month, we feature items that go along with our new exhibit, *Madman Muntz: A Popular Culture Icon*. His advertising and marketing genius made him an American Maverick, the name of a documentary about Earl "Madman" Muntz. Stop by to see our shirts, jackets, hats and books that were developed for the documentary. Each item is only \$5! You can also bundle the items together for a cheaper price...just like Madman Muntz would do! Be sure to read the accompanying article in the Crackerbarrel about this exhibit.



Some Muntz items featured in the Museum Store: Shirts, hats, windbreakers, and more!

Clearance!

To get ready for the holidays and make room for new items, the Museum Store is having a clearance sale November through December. This is a great chance to get the lowest prices on overstocked books and stocking stuffers!

New Exhibit: Madman Muntz: A Popular Culture Icon

Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director

Earl Muntz grew up in Elgin in the 1920s and '30s, eventually taking his car dealership and marketing ideas to California before World War II. He developed and owned many businesses, including Muntz TV, the Muntz Jet car, and 4-Track Stereo systems. An interesting and dynamic character, Earl Muntz was one of the first to develop an excitable marketing alter ego, called Madman Muntz. The shocking, loud TV commercials showed Madman Muntz, a businessman so crazy he was giving cars and TVs away at rock bottom prices.

Jim Castoro, owner of Custom Aluminum Products in South Elgin, was a Muntz Jet car collector. He amassed a nice Muntz reference collection with ads, catalogs, and other information about Muntz, plus a few Muntz TVs and 4-Track Stereos for the car. Jim donated to the Museum his reference collection, plus a traveling exhibit his company produced to highlight Earl Muntz and the documentary produced in 2006. The exhibit is currently in the meeting room and includes a 4-minute movie trailer of the documentary. A public reception on October 8 to thank the Castoro Family and Custom Aluminum Products staff included a short presentation on Muntz and the collector's connection. Many thanks to Doug Tomsha, Bill Briska, George Rowe, and Carol Huntoon for working to complete the exhibit in its new museum home.

Unfortunately the documentary was never released and is not available for sale.



Madman Muntz in his heyday



Steve Dillett (L), President, Custom Aluminum Products, and Jim Castoro with Bill Briska (R) at Muntz reception



Elgin 100 Years Ago: November 2, 1915

Our radio program kicks off the morning on WRMN 1410 AM at 6 A.M. Listen online at <http://www.wrnm1410.com>. Click the link, then click "Listen Live!" when WRMN's website is displayed. Or, listen on your smartphone using the free WRMN 1410 app, available by typing "WRMN 1410" in your phone's app search area. Below is the feature for November 2, 2015.

Elgin's news reported that the annual cost of running the State Hospital, was increasing. Costs had gone up nearly 20% as a result of new buildings, more patients and attendants, and increased salaries. Nearly 2100 patients were at the hospital, up from around 1800 the year earlier. But per capita costs had declined nearly 20% over the past five years. It now cost 42 cents a day to maintain a patient, and the meals cost four cents each.

Ten Elgin girls proved their fitness by walking to Aurora. They took pictures all along the route just to prove they did it. They started on a Sunday morning at 7:30, lunched at Batavia and reached Aurora with plenty of time to catch a 5 o'clock train home.

Finally, one Elgin newspaper was remarking on the amazing, deliberate violations of the law by Elgin men illegally selling liquor. Elgin had voted to be dry, and the paper demanded that it be dry. Those men selling alcohol in violation of the law were not only as bad as hold-up men or thieves - they were anarchists encouraging disrespect for the law and a government collapse. The paper suggested that stiffer punishments might be the solution.

