



The Crackerbarrel

VOLUME 53 NUMBER 6
NOVEMBER 2016

Vice President's Report

Terry Gabel, Vice President



STEPS: A Process for Evaluation and Future Direction

Over a year ago, Elizabeth Marston, Director of the Elgin History Museum, recommended we strongly consider participating in the American Association for State and Local History organization's self-evaluation STEPS (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations) process. By participating, the Elgin Historical Society would be able to compare its performance and operations to nationally-recognized standards. Although this process would involve considerable staff and volunteer time, the potential benefits of participating in this evaluative process were significant, including:

1. Making the staff, Board members, committee members and other volunteers aware of nationally accepted standards
2. Increasing credibility with our members, volunteers, donors and the general community
3. Improving policies and other practices
4. Creating a clear direction for continued improvement and long term sustainability
5. Making better focused and meaningful long term budgetary planning decisions
6. Preparing for participation in other standards/accreditation programs sponsored by professional organizations.

The most important aspect of STEPS is that it is an organic, participatory process that is integrated into all aspects of the Society's structure and operations.

Under the guidance of president Bill Briska and Director Marston, five committees were formed to assess how the Elgin Area Historical Society was performing in the areas of: Mission, Vision and Governance, Audience, Interpretation, Collections and Management.

This critical evaluative process is nearly complete and the Museum is proud to report we are functioning at the second highest "Silver level," with a clear view of what needs to be done to achieve Gold status.

The STEPS process helped us complete the following:

- Revised our mission statement
- Developed a vision statement;
- Revised our Constitution and By-Laws;
- Provided more clarity and transparency to our financial process through documentation and Board communication;
- Developed policies regarding ethics and conflicts of interest;
- Vastly improved our collection accession/deaccession processes
- Reviewed and updated numerous other procedures.

STEPS has been an intense and immersive process affecting every aspect of the Society's operations. We are extremely fortunate to have Board members and committee volunteers who "stepped" up to this challenge by selflessly contributing significant time and effort to STEPS. These individuals agreed to attend afternoon and evening meetings, even during the busy Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays.

While the Elgin Area Historical Society's success is a tribute to those who preceded us, it is also dependent upon our current members, volunteers, generous donors and community supporters who believe and advocate for the importance, relevance and validity of our mission. Their invaluable support has now been corroborated by nationally recognized, objective measures.

We thank all who participated in the STEPS process.

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The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.

Next deadline December 20, 2016

 **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 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 5, 6:00 P.M.

Annual Benefit and Silent Auction

Elgin Country Club, 2575 Weld Rd., Elgin, IL

Leslie Goddard portrays first lady Jackie Kennedy in 1964, as the former First Lady is besieged by sightseers around her home in Georgetown. As she deliberates what to do next, she shares her life story and her years in the White House, her struggle to maintain her privacy from the media, her restoration work, and her efforts to showcase the arts. In a climactic revelation, she recounts her husband's death and comes to a heartfelt decision about how to begin a new life for herself and her children. Hearty appetizers and desserts, plus a full silent auction and raffle. Members \$40.00, Non-Members \$50.00.

December 3, 1:00 P.M.

Holiday Tea featuring music by North Side Brass with David Nelson on piano

See article on page 5 for details.

Thank You Donors!

2016 Board Fundraiser Donors

The annual fund drive raised nearly \$10,000. The Museum is very grateful for this generous community support. Thanks to each and every one of you who contributed funds to help the Museum grow.

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Abbott, Carol | Lee, Maureen & Tom |
| Anderson, James | Lytle, Miriam |
| Anderson, James & Sara Ellen | Maki, Daniel and Karen |
| Barbezat, Mary Ellen & Mitch | Marco, Rebecca |
| Barnhart, Jerri and Ken | Marston, John & Elizabeth |
| Bartholomew, Steven | McClure, Sandra & Dennis |
| Bell, Charles & Marianne | McIntyre, Susan |
| Bost | |
| Bendick, Joseph & Lois | Miller, Dan |
| Blanchard, Laurence | Moylan, Susan |
| Brandes, James & Rhonda | Muchow, Linda & Stephen |
| Briska, Bill | Nelson, David J. & Dolores |
| Brown, Betty | Neville, Aubrey |
| Burkart, Janet | Nobs, Martin & Brigitte |
| Campbell, Rachel | Peradovic, Mark |
| Chevalier, Carol | Pielin, Don |
| Childs, Helen | Rauschenberger, Tom |
| Corsi, Alisa | Roberti, Mary |
| Crinigan, Linda | Rock, Linda |
| Cuming, Andrew & Britta | Roller, Jerry & Carolyn |
| Dieringer, Roger | Rowe, George & Marge |
| Dixon, James and Cecilia | Roxworthy, Dennis |
| Dunning, Charles and Patricia | Schmoltdt, William |
| Dyer, Maurice | Schroeder, Kathleen |
| Eder, Linda | Shales, John & Marlene |
| Felicetti, Richard and Sharon | Siegenthaler, David |
| Flaks, Carl and Mary Ellen | Silfies, Dawn |
| Gabel, Terry & Sue Brigham | Smith, H. Jane |
| Gerberding, Phyllis | Sorton, Judy & Alex |
| Grosser, Patricia | Strohmaier, Gayle |
| Hallock, Alma | Turnquist, Jerry & Kathleen |
| Holland, Glen & Susan | Utt, Norma |
| Jocius, Patricia | Weseman, Margaret & Ed |
| Jones, Richard | Ziegler, Phyllis |
| Kostlevy, William | Zingales, James |

Dairies to Prairies Project

- Gail Borden Library Foundation
- Heinmiller, Wayne, Network for Good
- Neville, Aubrey

Nancy Kimball Cobblestone Project

- Alft, E.C.
- Anderson, Laura
- Flaks, Carl and Mary Ellen
- Gifford Park Association
- Kozal, Richard
- McClure, Sandra and Dennis
- Quality Painting & Carpentry
- Shales, John and Marlene
- Zingales, James

Other Donations

- Krueger, Margaret
- Missele, Carl and Chris
- Nelson, David J. and Dolores: for Holiday Tea North Side Brass

Welcome New Members

Jerri Barnhart, Membership Chairperson

- Janette Burger
- Sherry Drake
- Kevin Gaffney
- Ann Taylor
- Ruben Villanueva

Smith Hoag, Builder and Architect

by David Siegenthaler

No other Elgin builder or architect of the late 1800s and early 1900s built or designed as many homes and buildings as Smith Hoag. Some of the most impressive and high-end Elgin-area homes and buildings still standing were designed by Hoag.

Hoag was born May 17, 1838 in Batavia, New York, to Quaker parents, David and Jane Dutcher Hoag. He began his building career in the mid-1850s and in 1862 married Mary Rebecca Cole. The couple came west to Chicago about 1863 and moved on to Geneva in 1864, where he built some of that city's finest homes.

Smith Hoag began his Elgin building career in the late 1860s and moved his family to Elgin about 1871. Two of his first big Elgin building projects, in 1870-71, were the DuBois Opera House (16-22 S. Grove; burned down 1886) and the First Baptist Church (270 E. Chicago; still standing but altered). The Opera House architect is unknown and the First Baptist architect was Asa Barrows. Hoag quickly evolved from a carpenter to a general contractor to an architect over the course of his career. By the time he moved to Elgin he

was already listed as an architect in the 1870-71 city directory. However, before about 1880 it is unknown which buildings he designed himself.

Other Hoag-built buildings from the 1870s included three big downtown Elgin commercial buildings: the Martin building (157-59 E. Chicago; 1874; razed 1967); the Hubbard building (150 E. Chicago; 1874; razed 1909); and the Morris Town building (1-13 S. Grove; 1879; razed 1960). One of the earliest Elgin homes built by Hoag, in the late 1860s, was the 3-story brick Charles Moseley home at 320 Watch St. (razed 1968). He also built, about 1871, the Gothic Revival-style Oliver Chisholm home still standing at 402 N. Spring St. In the 1870s he also redesigned the S.S. Mann home (117 Tennyson Court; still standing) and built several "cottages" at the mental hospital.

By 1878, according to his biographical sketch in the city directory, he employed 40 to 50 men during the building season, including carpenters, masons, painters, etc. It also noted that "he has erected over 200 different buildings, many of which are of his own design, he being a practical architect as well as builder."

In 1880, Hoag's reputation as the top architect and builder in the area was enhanced when he was chosen by the wealthy Wayne draft horse breeder Mark Dunham to design and build the Dunham Castle. Located about six miles southeast of Elgin, this French Chateau-style castle was completed in 1883. By the end of the 1920s, tractors had largely replaced draft horses and the Dunham business closed. The Dunham estate was sold and subdivided. The castle was converted into apartments in 1953 and a buyer in 1986 restored it to a single-family home. In 2013 it was sold to a businessman who plans to renovate it for use as a special events venue. In 1979 the castle was added to the National Register of Historic Places.



Dunham Castle

In 1887 Hoag designed a pair of Queen Anne homes that have been lovingly restored. Last year the Edward Barclay home at 359 Park St. won a city award for restoration. This year it won the Chicagoland Painted Ladies grand prize and was the star of the annual historic house tour, thanks to owners Tom and Maureen Lee, who bought the home in 2009. In 1993 Steve and Laura Stroud bought the Philip Freiler home at 653 Douglas Ave. and restored it to one of the jewels of Elgin. Researching and restoring this home led to Steve's interest in documenting and preserving as many Elgin homes as possible. Since 2005 he has published three volumes in a series entitled "There Used To Be," has researched about 35 homes for historic house plaques, has amassed a huge database of home building information, and is currently building a website on Elgin bungalows.



The magnificent Philip Freiler home at 653 Douglas Ave., restored by Steve and Laura Stroud



Edward Barclay home at 359 Park St, Chicagoland Painted Ladies grand prize winner for 2016 (Photo courtesy of current owner Tom Lee)

Three prominent Victorian-style downtown commercial buildings still standing were designed by Hoag. In 1886-87 he designed the 3-story red brick Tyrrell Building (built for Dr. Pierce Tyrrell) at 209-11 E. Chicago St. In 1889 he designed the 3-story brick McBride Building (built for brothers David and Thomas McBride, Jr.) at 53-63 Douglas Ave. And in 1892 he designed the 2-story brick Ranstead Building (built for Judge John Ranstead) at 43 DuPage Court.

Two more beautifully restored Hoag-designed Queen Annes are the 1891 William and Abby Wing mansion at 972 W. Highland Ave., owned by Maureen McWaid and Steve Thoren, and the 1894-95 Alfred Bosworth home at 705 W. Highland Ave., owned by Evelyn and Roy Chapman.



Alfred Bosworth Home, 705 W. Highland



Wing Mansion, 972 W. Highland

Three turn-of-the-century Elgin fire stations were designed by Hoag and all are still standing, though none are still active stations. In 1896 Hoag designed mirror-image stations at 36 S. DuBois Ave. (closed 1968; converted to a residence) and 820 Dundee Ave. (closed 1982; converted to retail and office space). In 1903-04, he designed the station at 533 St. Charles St.

The style of this beautifully ornate building is most often described as Neo-Classical or Beaux-Art. This station closed in 1991, the same year it was added to the National Register. It was then restored and converted into the "Fire Barn No. 5 Museum," which opened in 1995.



Fire Barn No. 5 in its heyday

Hoag also designed impressive public buildings outside the Elgin area, including the Woodstock Opera House in 1889. Now a fully-restored community center owned by the City of Woodstock, the Opera House remains an important performance venue for McHenry County. He also designed courthouses for several counties, according to his obituary.

The Hoag family home in Elgin from about 1871-84 was on the north side of South St., east of Union St. In about 1884 Hoag built the home at 36 S. Union St. and the family lived there a few years before moving to 52 S. State St. in about 1889. By about 1898 the family had moved back to 36 S. Union St., a Victorian home that still stands.

Smith Hoag's widowed father David came west with him about 1863. David was a carpenter and worked and lived with his son until David's death in 1885. David also had three daughters: Mary Elizabeth Hoag Van Buren Sanford, Susan A. Hoag Way and Sarah Almeda Hoag Townsend. Mary and Susan are buried in the Hoag family plot in Bluff City Cemetery.

Hoag and his wife Mary (1839-1930) had six children: George M. (c1865-70s; died between 1870 and 1880 censuses); Carrie Aurelia Hoag Young (c1868-1945);

Emma M. Hoag Parker (c1871-94; died of appendicitis six months after her wedding); Mattie L. Hoag Baker (c1874-1930+; still alive in 1930); Alice (1876-90); and Mary Frances Hoag Robinson (1878-1930+; still alive in 1930).

Smith Hoag's final work, about 1912, was the redesign of the First National Bank building at 6-8 S. Grove Ave. He passed away at age 78 on August 18, 1916 and was buried in Bluff City Cemetery. One hundred years later, many of his most stunning works not only survive but have been elegantly restored by their proud owners to their original grandeur.

Acknowledgements: Mike Alft's books and newspaper articles; city directories; federal censuses; obituaries; newspaper building reports; Internet sources; photos by Judy Van Dusen; photo of Stroud home from a 2008 Victorian calendar by Jim R. Johnson; photo of Lee home by Tom Lee; etc.

Holiday Tea on December 3!

Northside Brass will perform at 1:00 P.M. at the Museum. This is an amazing group of musicians that perform at events all over Chicagoland. The Northside Brass was founded in 2011 by Ryan Hobbs, who plays trumpet. The brass-only group has since expanded to include strings and jazz. Northside Brass offers educational concerts to under-served schools and communities, because they believe music education enhances the lives of students and improves communities. David J. Nelson will assist on piano, Sarah Arrillo on trumpet, Keri Godon on french horn, Jonathan Houghtling on trombone and Josh Biere on tuba.

Don't miss this FREE event at the Museum on Saturday, December 3. Old Main will be decorated for the holidays and the refreshment committee goes overboard on holiday treats.

Northside Brass will also be performing with David on Sunday, Dec 4 at the Gail Borden Public Library.



North Side Brass, pictured with Program Director David Nelson, performed at our 2015 Summer Soiree

Grant for Gylleck

Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) awarded the Elgin History Museum \$24,000 to digitize 3,500 images in the Elmer Gylleck photo collection. This is the Museum's most frequently used collection and most at risk. The collection documents Elgin's architectural heritage with images of buildings and streetscapes taken between 1847 and 1960s. This photo collection consists mainly of prints, approximately half of which have been mounted on matte board, often with notations pasted or written in ink on the back. These prints are frequently handled and are at risk of damage and degradation.

The digital files will be available to the public through the Illinois Digital Archives (IDA) and on the Museum's website. This two-year project benefits the Museum by meeting a Strategic Plan goal of improving the community's access to images in our collections. Digitization improves collections management and stewardship, and will simplify digital access to the images for the Museum's use in exhibits, publications, and interpretive materials.

The Gail Borden Public Library is partnering with the Museum to facilitate access to digital portals. The project is supported by City of Elgin Heritage Commission, Judson University, Elgin Community College, and at least four neighborhood organizations, including NENA, GPA, Near West Neighbors, and DNA.



Gylleck Collection image of Elgin National Watch Co.

Progress at the Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House

A successful Near West Neighbors open house and fish fry was held on Crystal St on Oct. 1. Many people stopped by despite the rain to enjoy the barbershop quartet performances and the delicious fried catfish. Also on display was the inside the Nancy Kimball house; many visitors viewed the construction of the historic structure. Now that the internal subdivisions have been removed and the interior is gutted, the structure, including split pine lath, is readily visible. Thank you to the neighborhood association for helping to introduce our project to the residents and other visitors.



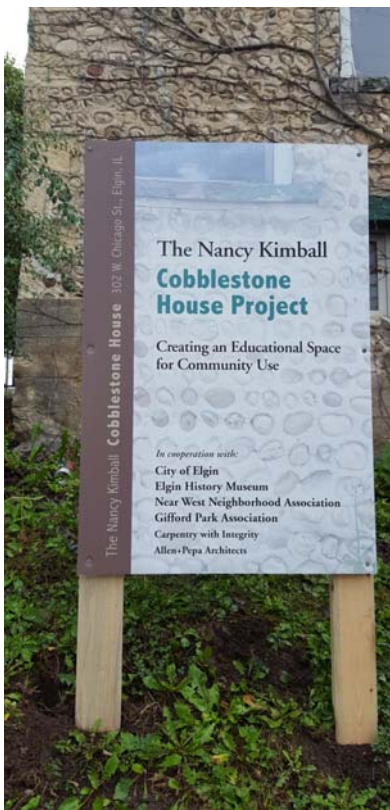
Barbershop Quartet at Near West Neighbors Fish Fry



.Volunteers helped move cobblestones closer to the house

The house is now enclosed for winter, ready for rebuilding of the rear cobblestone wall to commence in spring. Signage is in place to provide information about the project, installed by Board member Dennis Roxworthy and volunteers Chris Shreve and Dave O'Donnell.

On Oct. 30, volunteers started moving the pile of cobblestones from the disassembled north wall nearer the house and began the sorting process. This will make things easier in the spring when rebuilding of the north wall begins.



Volunteering is Fun!

Rebecca Marco, Editor

Here are some recent events which benefitted from Society members who volunteered. We thank all of our volunteers who give their time and effort so generously to Museum events as well as other events in the community.



Historical Society volunteers at Nightmare on Chicago Street, Oct. 22.



Museum Director Elizabeth Marston accepting Midwest History Association Alice B. Smith Prize for Project 2-3-1, a project that required many hours of volunteer time.

Shop Museum Store for Holiday Gifts

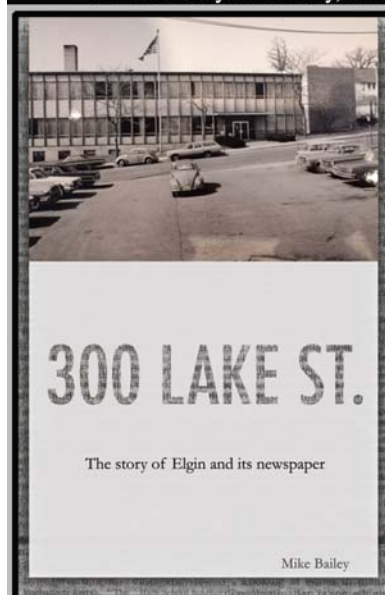


The Holidays are just around the corner and the Museum Store may have just what you need. The store has a large selection of books to choose from. Two new books are the *Elgin Garden Club 100 Years and Growing* history book and Mike Bailey's new book *300 Lake Street*. The Elgin Eagle brewery beer glasses make a great gift for beer enthusiasts. The store just received a new supply of the Elgin 1835 ceramic crocks, pitchers and coffee mugs. Members receive a 15% discount on all items.

300 Lake Street

The story of Elgin and its newspaper

A new book by Mike Bailey, author of *Goodbye Elgin High*



Join us at one of the following publication parties:

- Nov. 9, at the Gail Borden Public Library, Meadows Community Room, 6:30-8:30 p.m.
- Nov. 12, at State Street Market, 701 N. State St., 10 a.m. - noon.
- Nov. 17, at the Elgin Public House, 219 E. Chicago St., 6-8 p.m.

Books will be available for purchase at these events. They will also be available after Nov. 12 at the State Street Market and the Elgin History Museum, 360 Park St.

To purchase online, go to: ghostwritermedia.com/300lakest



Collections Corner

Elgin National Watch Factory Band Bass Drum

The Museum Board recently approved funds for conservation of the big bass drum that was once used by the Elgin National Watch Factory band. The drum head has come loose from both sides of the drum and the whole instrument is out of alignment. Craig Deller is a drum conservator from Madison, Wisconsin who will be able to make the drum worthy of exhibit again. Look for it in the Watch Factory exhibit room in 2017.



Richard Stolt Elgin Watch Collection



Beth Recher and sister Sally Nolen donate the Richard Stolt Elgin Watch Collection

The Stolt Family recently offered the Museum a collection of 30 Elgin railroad watches ranging from the 1870s to 1890s. Richard Stolt collected them in memory of his father, Fred Stolt, an Elgin National Watch Company watchmaker for 40 years. The Museum is thrilled to add this curated watch collection to the collections.