

# The Crackerbarrel



## Elgin History Museum News March 2020

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### President's Report: New Board Members

*Al Walters, President*



It is said in life nothing is more constant than change, so it should surprise no one that the new year brings changes to the Society's Board of Directors. Due to the 2019 passing of Steve Stroud and David Nelson, along with a board member's resignation, three new board members were recently

vetted and formally appointed.

Mr. Rudy Galfi joined the board last fall. He is a retired technology manager. He and his wife Lillian are the co-chairs of the Cemetery Walk. Both also serve on the Program Committee. Look for Rudy and Lil to make some exciting enhancements to the 2020 Cemetery Walk.

Ms. Anne LoCascio is a long-time Museum volunteer. She holds a Master's degree in Fine Art and has worked in the graphic design field for over 25 years. Anne is employed full-time as a Creative Director in the restaurant magazine publishing world.

Ms. Krisilee Murphy has worked for the Elgin Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau since 2009, serving as its Executive Director since July 2018.

Our new board members participated in a board orientation session in late January. Rudy, Anne and Krisilee bring a wealth of creative energy and organizational talent to the Board.

As usual, January's board meeting was dominated by financial topics. We reviewed 2019 financials and locked down the 2020 budget. I am happy to report that the Elgin History Museum is financially sound and poised to expand our services and community reach in 2020. This is only possible though the generous and ongoing support of our members. Thank you!

The Museum's ethics policy is reviewed annually by all board members, and all signed to indicate their commitment to comply with the policy at the February meeting. Our board, staff and volunteers are ready to make 2020 the best year ever at the Elgin History Museum. Please join us!

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### Welcome New Members

Elsbeth Alvarado  
George Bero  
Patricia Elvin  
Erik Malmquist  
Monica Montoya  
Krisilee Murphy

Eric and Erika Schambach  
John Schwartz  
Robert L Spoerlein  
Roger Stephens  
Mary Ellen Thielemann  
Scott Toppel and Greg Hagen

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### Thank You Donors

#### David Nelson Memorials

- Bill Briska and Fran Cella
- Betty Brown
- Ann Chipman
- Cynthia Core
- Richard Jones
- Eileen and Lambert Lucietto
- Rich Renner and Jackie Vossler
- Dennis and Laurie Roxworthy
- Mark and Liz Sharf
- Laura Stroud
- Jami and Kerry Sund
- Al and Kathy Walters

#### General Donations

- John and Ana Devine
- Mary Roberti

## The Crackerbarrel

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**President:** Al Walters  
**Vice President:** George Rowe  
**Secretary:** Laura Stroud  
**Corr. Secretary:** Ricky Harris  
**Treasurer:** William Briska



Editor: Rebecca Marco

The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.  
Next deadline April 20, 2020

 Visit our website [Elginhistory.org](http://Elginhistory.org)

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**Friday June 19, depart from Museum at 8:00 A.M.:  
Member Field Trip and Train Ride, East Troy  
Railroad Museum, East Troy, WI**

Save the date! See article on page 5 for details.

**Thursday July 16, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch  
Once Every Four Years: Carl Flaks presents Political  
Memorabilia**

**Saturday July 18, 10:00 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.: Classic  
Car Show at the Museum (Rain Date July 19)**

**Thursday August 20, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag  
Lunch: Elgin Stories and Songs presented by  
Sharry Blazier**

**Sunday August 23, 2:00 P.M.: The Secret  
Presidency of Edith Wilson**

Presented by William Hazelgrove

**Thursday September 10, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag  
Lunch, Elgin Railroad History presented by Andy  
Thompson**

**Sunday September 27: Bluff City Cemetery Walk**

**October 4: "Silent City Speaks" theatre presentation  
of Cemetery Walk characters. Details TBD**

**Sunday October 11, 2:00 p.m.: Annual Meeting  
"French Fiddle Tunes and Tall Tales" presented by  
Dennis Stroughmatt**

**Saturday November 7, 5:30 p.m.:  
Annual Benefit Gala, at Holiday Inn and Suites in  
Elgin. Oktoberfest theme with music from German  
band The Musikmeisters**

**Saturday December 5, 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. Annual  
Holiday Tea**

## 2020 Program Schedule

*Betsy Armistead, Program Chair*

Events are held at the Museum unless otherwise noted.  
Check the website for the most up-to-date informa-  
tion and to purchase tickets. [elginhistory.org/events](http://elginhistory.org/events)

**Thursday March 19, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag  
Lunch presented by John C. Thiel**

See article on page 3 for details. The riveting  
account of the murder, *Death of a Colporteur: The Story  
of the Murder at Bloody Gulch Road*, was written by his  
great nephew, John C. Thiel, and tells the story of the  
sensational murder. Copies of the book are available in  
the Museum store.

**Sunday March 22, 2:00 P.M.: Centennial of 1920  
Palm Sunday Tornado with Jerry Turnquist**

See article on page 3 for details.

**Thursday April 16, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch  
Hats Off to Elgin  
Presented by Linda Rock and Beth Hudson**

Vintage men's and women's hats tell the story of hat  
styles through the decades. Tidbits of Elgin history  
interspersed throughout the program add an interest-  
ing local flavor.

**Saturday April 25, 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.:  
Open Elgin architectural tour  
including Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House**

**Thursday May 21, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch  
Nancy Kimball Cobblestone Treasures**

## Spanish Outreach

Board member Tina Viglucci, also the Hispanic Out-  
reach Director at Gail Borden Public Library, and  
President Al Walters came up with the idea of offering  
Museum tours in Spanish. Tina recruited three other  
volunteers who speak Spanish: Armando Trejo, Betty  
Martinez, and Maggie Sifuentes.

They all attended a docent training meeting in October  
2019. Free Museum tours in Spanish are now given on  
the third Saturday of each month at 11:00 A.M. and  
1:00 P.M. Since the tours began in November, more  
than a dozen people in small family groups have partic-  
ipated, viewing the Museum and talking with the  
docents to learn more about Elgin.

On February 16, the Abraham Lincoln program was presented in English at 2:00 P.M. Kevin Wood, the Abe Lincoln presenter, is bilingual and presented his entertaining and informative program again in Spanish at 4:00 P.M. to 15 Spanish speakers of all ages.

The Museum plans to incorporate Spanish in other parts of the Museum to help make history available to all Elgin residents.



Kevin Wood presenting his program on Lincoln in Illinois, in English, to a very full house.

## Project 2-3-1 Exhibit Educates District 300

*Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director*

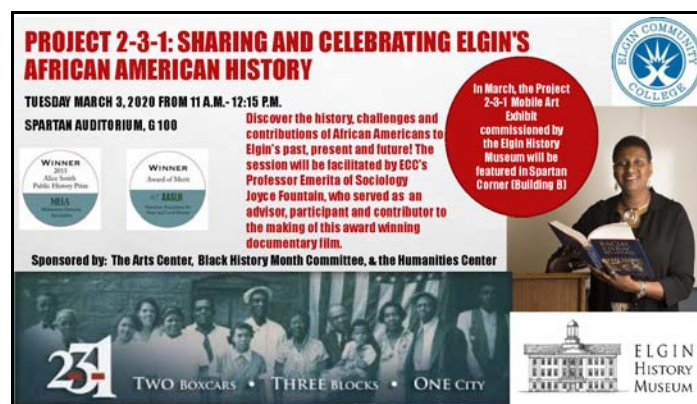
*Two Boxcars, Three Blocks, One City: A Story of Elgin's African American Heritage* is a documentary film and traveling exhibit that the Elgin History Museum premiered in 2015. Five years later the film and exhibit are still being shown to start discussions about the history of race relations and how that relates to today's social justice issues. The Gail Borden Public Library showed the film in February for Black History Month, and the

research that went into the making of the documentary was featured during Black History Family Festival at the Library.

The Glen Ellyn Historical Society also organized a showing and discussion of the film.

School District 300 reserved the exhibit in February for middle school students. Museum volunteers have been transporting, setting up and taking down the exhibit all month for Carpentersville Middle School, Westfield Community School, and Dundee Middle School.

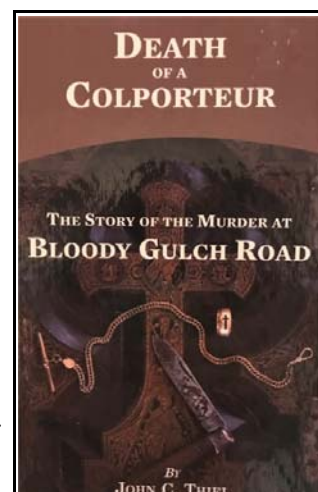
In March, the exhibit will be at Elgin Community College, where Joyce Fountain will moderate a discussion session hosted by the college on March 3.



## Special Programs of Interest

*Betsy Armistead, Program Chair*

On March 19 at noon, there will be a brown bag lunch with a talk about the Murder in Bloody Gulch, a sensational case at the turn of the century, and the subject of a book by John Thiel. On September 18, 1885, the body of 17-year old Frank Charles Thiel, a Bible salesman who hailed from Elgin, was found in a hastily dug grave beneath a culvert on a country road south of Dixon, Illinois, brutally murdered. Mr. Thiel will discuss the book he wrote about his relative's murder and copies of the book will be available for sale.





## Palm Sunday Tornado Program

On Sunday March 22 at 2:00 P.M., Jerry Turnquist will present information in remembrance of the Palm Sunday Tornado of 1920. This natural disaster destroyed much of Grove Avenue in downtown Elgin and killed seven people. Check out the calendar for dates and times.



*Wreckage of the 1920 tornado*



*Rebecca Marco and Linda Rock at the luncheon*



*Judy Van Dusen and Sandi McClure*

## Volunteer Lunch 2020

*Rebecca Marco, Editor*

There was a large turnout for the Volunteer Luncheon although it was snowing heavily at the time. Volunteers were treated to Italian beef and chopped salad from Portillo's, along with the famous chocolate cake and other desserts. Amateur nature photographer Ira Marcus discussed how he captured some of the beautiful bird photographs on display at the Museum, and Linda Rock discussed her efforts in curating the exhibit commemorating the 100th anniversary of the American Association of University Women (AAUW).



*President Al Walters, his wife Kathy, and volunteer Dennis McClure at the Volunteer Luncheon*

## Crackerbarrel Index Now Available Online

*Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director*

Past President Rachel Campbell has indexed all of the Museum's Crackerbarrel newsletters since the Elgin Area Historical Society started in 1961! The index is alphabetical by name and subject. To view the index, visit our website at [elginhistory.org](https://elginhistory.org) and click on <https://elginhistory.org/research/crackerbarrel-index/> under the **Research** tab. The Index will download as a PDF file. Use the Index to locate all Crackerbarrel issues that include information in the listed subject of interest.

Back issues since 2008 are available on request as PDFs and Museum staff can assist interested individuals with obtaining copies of older issues.

The Crackerbarrel has published lots of good local history research over time. Be sure to check it out! Thanks to Rachel for completing this big project!



# Spectacular Train Trip for Members

*Carl Flaks, Program Committee*

Aaaaaaall aboard for a delicious lunch on a vintage electric train and a delightful day in the Wisconsin countryside!

On Friday June 19 2020 at 8:00 A.M., Museum members will travel by motor coach from Elgin to East Troy, WI. We will visit the East Troy Railroad Museum and board the East Troy Trolley dining cars for a traditional dining car lunch service and trolley ride.

The vintage train glides through the picturesque southeast Kettle Moraine area of Wisconsin to Phantom Lake, where passengers can take a short stroll before re-boarding, and savoring dessert.

Trip includes visits to East Troy Museum, the Elegant Farmer, and a four-story cobblestone hotel.

Meet at the Elgin History Museum to catch the bus for this wonderful trip. Price per person is approximately \$85.00. Minimum of 30 people are needed for the trip. This event is for members and their guests only. Contact the Museum to purchase tickets or buy online at [elginhistory.org](http://elginhistory.org)



*Restored trolley car at East Troy Railroad Museum*



*The dining car, East Troy Railroad Museum*

## The Hubbard Families of Elgin: Part 2

*by David Siegenthaler*

In 1866-67, William G. Hubbard's second Elgin home, a large Italianate, was built at 378 Division St. In November 1873 this home was sold to Emeline Borden, second wife of Gail Borden. Intending to move here, Gail Borden became critically ill in Texas and died there on January 11, 1874. Emeline Borden and her son Alfred Church moved into the home and Emeline lived there until her death in 1890. Alfred built the home next door at 364 Division St. in 1886-87. The Hubbard/Borden home at 378 Division St. still stands but was extensively remodeled in 1919 and converted into a Christian Science church with a Greek Revival style. It has been home to several different congregations since then.





*Hubbard-Borden Home, 378 Division St.*

In 1873, before he sold his home to the Bordens, William built his third Elgin home, an Italian-style villa, at 140 N. Gifford St. William and his wife Charlotte remained in this home until their deaths in the 1880s, and then their son Will and his wife Callie lived there until 1915. In 1920 the home was sold to Matilda Lange, whose husband Henry converted the home into several apartments. The home remained a multi-unit apartment house until 2001, when it was deconverted to a single-family home again. William died of pneumonia December 15, 1883, at age 79. His wife Charlotte died March 10, 1885, at age 68. They are buried in Bluff City Cemetery.



*William Hubbard's home, 140 N. Gifford St.*

Henry Wright Hubbard, son of William G. and Charlotte, was born May 17, 1844, in Elgin. Like his father, he was active in the abolitionist cause and the First Congregational Church, to whom he bequeathed \$5,000. Henry was educated at Elgin Academy and the University of Michigan law school. He served in the Civil War, then returned to Elgin, where he practiced law and helped organize the YMCA. He also practiced law at Denver, Colorado, and taught mathematics for a few years at Fisk University, a school for newly-freed slaves in Nashville, Tennessee.

In about 1879 Henry began a 34-year career as treasurer of the American Missionary Association in New York City. He died of heart failure on May 21, 1913, in a bank vault in New York City and is buried in Bluff City Cemetery. He was a wealthy man and bequeathed the bulk of his estate to the American Missionary Association for work among African-Americans of the South.

According to Elgin historian Mike Alft, Henry was the first person born in Elgin to be listed in the prestigious "Who's Who in America." He was a bachelor who considered Elgin as his ultimate home and was a frequent visitor to friends and relatives here.

William ("Will") Hubbard, the last-born child of William G. and Charlotte, was born June 27, 1849, in Elgin. He was educated at Elgin Academy, Beloit College and the University of Illinois, where he was a member of the first graduating class in 1872. At age 20 he became a telegrapher for the Union Pacific railroad and worked at Greeley, Colorado. On July 10, 1872, Will married Callie Edwards of Champaign, Illinois. Callie was born November 14, 1852, in Felicity, Ohio, and her family moved to Champaign when she was a child.

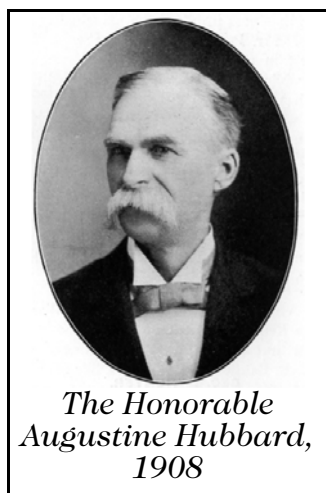
Will and Callie's first three children died young. Winifred (1875-76) and William (1877; 3 days old) died in Champaign. Charlotte (1879-83) died in Elgin. Their other two children were Ethel (1886-1977; Mrs. Roy Webster) and Marguerite (1891-1981; Mrs. Lyman Weld). Will and Callie moved to Elgin about 1879 and lived at 128 N. Gifford St. When Will's mother died in 1885, they acquired her home next door at 140 N. Gifford St., and lived there until 1915, when they moved to their new home at 722 Cedar Ave. About 1923, the couple moved to Winnetka to live with their daughter and son-in-law, Marguerite and Lyman Weld. Callie died there June 29, 1925, at age 72, and Will died May 22, 1930, at age 80. They are buried in Bluff City Cemetery.

Fascinated by telegraphy and telephony since his teen years, Will experimented with many different systems, inventing early versions of the telephone, both electrical and mechanical. Eventually, Alexander Graham Bell's invention won out. Telephone exchange franchises operating under Bell's patents were being granted throughout the country. Will obtained the Chicago Telephone Co. franchise for Elgin in 1881



and supervised installation of the equipment on the second floor of his father's building. He solicited subscriptions and managed the exchange for seven years. In 1888 he left to devote his energy to the development of independent telephone interests. That year Will and three partners incorporated the Elgin Telephone and Electric Supply Co. By the turn of the century, however, Will had changed careers and become an insurance agent.

Will's private collection of antique telephone and telegraph instruments was shown throughout the country. He was the only independent exhibitor of "electric telephones" at the World's Fairs in Chicago (1893) and St. Louis (1904), and his exhibit depicting the evolution of the telephone was purchased by Purdue University. At the time of his death he was collecting a display of antique telephone and telegraph instruments for Chicago's Rosenwald Industrial Museum, now the Museum of Science and Industry.



*The Honorable  
Augustine Hubbard,  
1908*

Augustine ("Gus") Hamilton Hubbard, no relation to the William G. Hubbard family of Elgin, was born March 17, 1843, in Salem, Michigan, to Harvey and Emily Hamilton Hubbard. In 1855 he moved with his family to Minnesota, where he graduated from the state normal school at Winona and worked as a store clerk in Lake City. In 1861 he went to St. Paul to enlist in the Union Army but was persuaded by General Sib-

ley to be his special messenger, carrying messages between the military posts of the Northwest during a period of Indian uprisings. For three years he was engaged in this service, almost day and night in the saddle, facing every kind of danger.

In 1864 Gus came to Chicago, where he graduated from Eastman's Business College. He then became a dairy farmer in McHenry County for three years, where he married Martha Lorette Hatch on October 25, 1870. Martha was born April 14, 1850, in McHenry County. In March 1871 the couple moved to Elgin where Gus partnered with R.W. Padelford in the insurance business. In 1876 he partnered with Erastus Gilbert in an insurance firm that also dealt in real estate and loaned money. In 1877 he was elected justice of the peace, an office which he held for the next 26 years.

Gus and Martha had two children: Frederick A. (circa 1872-1956) and Lewis Roy ("Roy," circa 1876-1935). Frederick married Beryl Burns in 1895 and they had a daughter Dorothy. He became an insurance executive and in 1914-15 built a new home at 950 W. Highland Ave. In September 1915, as they were preparing to move to New York City for Frederick's job promotion,

Beryl died. Frederick became president of multiple insurance companies and lived in New York and Florida, where he died in Fort Myers. His widow, Luella, died in 1989. Roy married Clara Mackey in 1897 and both died in Chicago—Roy in 1935 and Clara in 1948. Gus' wife Martha died February 11, 1897 and he married Clara Pettis June 1, 1898.

In 1903 Gus was elected mayor of Elgin and served a 2-year term. He defeated Arwin Price, who had been mayor for the three preceding terms (1897-1903). Gus' administration was highlighted by a large increase in the miles of paved streets, a requirement for concrete sidewalks, and a revision of the building ordinance, focusing on fire safety, following the horrific Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago.

Gus lived at 145 Hill Ave., a home he owned and occupied from 1883 until his death in 1926. In 1890, when George E. Linkfield's Addition was platted in northwest Elgin, it included Hubbard Ave., a street named for him. In 1926, when Green Acres Subdivision was platted, Hubbard Ave. was extended north to Wing St. Gus died June 3, 1926, and is buried in Bluff City Cemetery. His widow Clara died October 26, 1935.



*Gus Hubbard's home, 145 Hill St.*

*Acknowledgments: Mike Alft's books and newspaper articles; Kane County histories; "Elgin Today" (1903); obituaries and other newspaper articles; Internet sources; city directories; federal censuses; Kane County Recorder of Deeds research by Laurel Garza; house photos by Judy Van Dusen; etc.*



## Collections Corner

*Beth Nawara, Curator of Collections*

Using funds from a grant received from ISHRAB, Museum staff and volunteers scanned and uploaded all issues in the Museum's collection of the "Cases and Faces" newsletter published by the Elgin American company to <http://www.idaillinois.org> and to the Museum website [elginhistory.org](http://elginhistory.org). This project interested Museum staff in other Elgin company newsletters. Some of the names of newsletters are very creative. Sherman Hospital published the "Sherman Rx." Chicago Rawhide published the "Rawhide Roundup." The Museum is asking for donations of "Rawhide Roundups" published in the 1940s. Beginning in December 1941, D.C. Cook published "What's Cooking" and donations of issues printed after 1944 are requested for the Museum's collection.

Mrs. Green's Fried Chicken, formerly located near Dundee Ave. and Summit St., was known for their great parade floats. The Museum would love to see any pictures of the floats or the restaurant that you would like to donate. The Museum will also accept digital scans of photos members may have and wish to share.



*Corporate newsletters from Elgin companies*