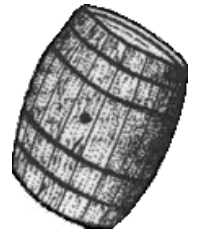


The Crackerbarrel



Elgin History Museum News July 2019

President's Report

Al Walters, President



Gone are the days when a museum could unlock the front door, turn on the lights and expect visitors to flood in to see exhibits. These days, the general public has many entertainment and educational options for spending what seems to be an ever-shrinking amount of free time.

The Elgin History Museum communicates with the public via press releases, social media, e-mails, direct mail, these Crackerbarrel publications and, importantly, word of mouth as each of us interact with our friends and family. Hardly a day goes by that I don't share some Museum tidbit with an acquaintance.

Marketing efforts drive visitors into the Museum to view exhibits, enjoy programs and conduct research, but there is another key way we touch the Elgin community. Knowing that some Elginites may never enter the Museum, a conscious effort is made to leave the building. That's right—community engagement outside of the Museum is central to the Museum's mission.

In just the last few weeks, Jerry Turnquist delivered a World War II lecture at the Gail Borden Public Library highlighting Elgin's ties to D-Day and led a walking tour of the Holy Hill (near east side) area. George Rowe delivered the keynote address during Elgin's Memorial Day commemoration at Bluff City Cemetery, also focusing on D-Day. Our Dairies to Prairies exhibit and movie visited West Chicago and Sandwich. Museum staff showed snippets of the D2P movie at McHenry County College, then discussed the evolution of the dairy industry and the importance of a safe and healthy farm-to-table milk supply chain. Even I pitched in with a presentation on the history of Walton Island at the Hawthorne Hill Nature Center. All of these activities were well attended and serve to keep the History Museum front of mind with Elgin's citizenry.

Community engagement does not stop with programming. Partnerships with other Elgin institutions are invaluable in accomplishing our networking goals. For 2019, we have partnered with Gail Borden Library to present lectures, U-46 to deliver field trips, and ECC to participate in Elgin's MLK Day celebration. The Museum supported Elgin's Cinco de Mayo festival and the Friends of the Lord's Park Zoo season opening with table displays and activities. Work on the Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House restoration continues as the Museum partners with the City of Elgin and the Near West Neighborhood Association to save one of Elgin's oldest structures.

Come visit the Museum or stop by the Museum table at area events. Better yet, please consider volunteering in support of a Museum activity. Helping hands are needed!



Museum Vice President George Rowe speaking at 2019 Elgin Memorial Day remembrance.

The Crackerbarrel

Published bimonthly by the Elgin Area Historical Society
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The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.
Next deadline August 20, 2019

 Visit our website Elginhistory.org

Opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the
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Saturday, September 14, 3:00 P.M.: Common Grave Memorial Dedication at Bluff City Cemetery

Dedication of a granite memorial marker, tree and bench in memory of Steve Stroud to be held at the Common Grave area.

Sunday September 22, 11:00 A.M. to 3 P.M.: Cemetery Walk, Bluff City Cemetery

Tickets available from elginhistory.org/events

Sunday October 13, 2:00 P.M.

Jane Addams, presented by Betsey Means

Saturday, November 2, 6:00 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. Museum Benefit and Silent Auction

Grand Victoria Casino

Carry Nation: The Original Barroom Smasher with Ellie Carlson. Tickets available from elginhistory.org

Saturday, December 7, 1:00 P.M.

Annual Holiday Tea at the Museum

Victorian Tea featuring Holiday Harmony Carolers.

2019 Program Schedule

Betsy Armistead, Program Chair

Events are held at the Museum unless otherwise noted. Check the website for the most up-to-date information and to purchase tickets. elginhistory.org/events

Saturday July 14, 10:00 A.M.

Classic Car Show at the Museum

Music and refreshments from 11:00 to 3:30.

Thursday July 18, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch Funerary Practices with Mike Murschel

A fascinating look at how customs and practices related to funerals have changed over time. Bring your lunch; drinks and dessert provided.

Saturday, August 10, 1:00 P.M.

Family Picnic at Trolley Museum \$10.00

See article on page 7 for details.

Thursday August 15, 12:00 Noon: Brown Bag Lunch: WWI Impact on Elgin with Jerry Turnquist

Bring your lunch; drinks and dessert provided.

Sunday Sept. 13: Art exhibit: A Fox River Testimony

Selected Works by artist Joel Sheesley, on display from Sept. 13 through November 15.

Thursday Sept. 19, 12:00 Noon:

Brown Bag Lunch: History of Women Educators in Elgin with Linda Rock

Bring your lunch; drinks and dessert provided.

Thank You Donors

- Laukes, Jim and Boisclair, Ann: Elgin Mental Health Center History
- Nissley, June
- Briska, Bill, Rock, Linda and Turnquist, Jerry: Speaker's Bureau

Steve Stroud Memorial

- Armistead, Dwight and Betsy
- Barnhart, Jerri and Ken
- Finn, James
- Putrenieks, Linda
- Richardson, Mary Ann
- Vossler, Jackie
- Underwood, Kathleen
- City of Elgin Heritage Commission

Nancy Kimball Cobblestone Project Donations:

- Bosely, David
- Elias Kent Kane Daughters of the American Revolution
- Garza, Laurel and Ivo

Board Fundraiser

- Armistead, Betsy and Dwight
- Bartholomew, Steve and Sara
- Bauer, James
- Bendick, Joe and Lois
- Briska, Bill and Cella, Fran
- Chevalier, Jim and Carol

- Dieringer, Roger
- Emmert, Judy
- Krueger, Marge
- Roxworthy, Dennis and Laurie
- Schroeder, Kathleen
- Siegenthaler, David

World's Fair Postcard Comes Home

by Jeff White

I recently acquired a great World's Columbian Exposition postcard with a significant Elgin connection.

The World's Columbian Exposition was held in 1893 in Chicago's Jackson Park, near where the University of Chicago is now located. The Fairgrounds were about 8 miles from the Chicago headquarters of the world's largest watch company: our own Elgin National Watch Company, whose offices at that time were at 76 Monroe St. in 1896.

A competitor from Massachusetts, American Waltham, had a huge exhibit at the Exposition in a pavilion inside the Manufacturing Building.

So, what presence did the Elgin Watch Company have at the Chicago Fair? Nothing! Why not? Perhaps the short Depression of 1892 put a damper on their plans for the Fair. Whatever the reason, the company finally decided to have the Elgin National Watch Company's Military Band represent the company by playing each day at the Exposition.

Few programs or photographs exist of these Chicago performances. This postcard is addressed to a Mrs. Astin of Winnipeg Manitoba Canada, and the message reads "Dear Grandmama, This is where Papa plays every afternoon. From your loving Bertha."

Who were Bertha and Mrs. Astin? The Museum's star researcher, David Siegenthaler, knew that Joseph Hecker was the Elgin Watch Factory Band leader. David's research revealed that Hecker's wife was a British woman whose maiden name was Astin, and he had two daughters, one named Bertha. This postcard is from Bertha to her Canadian grandmother, in reference to Bertha's father's performances at the World's Fair. We are happy to have this postcard back home in our Elgin collection.



World's Fair postcard, showing Elgin postmark

Museum News

Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director

Bluff City Cemetery Common Grave Memorial

Laura Stroud is leading the effort to create and place a granite memorial marker for the Common Grave at Bluff City Cemetery. There will also be a rest area at the Common Grave area with a tree and bench dedicated in memory of the late Steve Stroud. Please join in the Memorial Dedication on Saturday, September 14, 2019 at 3 pm at the Cemetery. And don't forget the annual Cemetery Walk, the following Sunday Sept. 22.

Author of New Book Visits Museum

On June 20, author Chris Register gave a Brown Bag Lunch talk about his book *Conversations with US* that features Project 231 and Ernie Broadnax. Chris rode his bicycle across the United States over the past few years, talking to regular people. He contacted the Elgin History Museum in 2017 and was connected with Ernie Broadnax. The *Conversations With US* project is based on the notion that there must be more to America than the typical refrain offered by politicians and cable news--that we are a nation divided. Is being at odds with one another really what defines us? Or is there another side to America: a common thread running along the Mississippi River and underneath our massive cities, over the Rocky Mountains and through the forests of giant redwoods, connecting suburban and main streets with gravel farm roads?

Welcome New Members!

Bernar Family
Conn, Diane

Garza, Laurel and Ivo
Kaczmarek, Dale



Author Chris Register and Ernie Broadnax, featured in Chris' new book about Americans

Participation in Lombard's Sheldon Peck Exhibit

The Elgin History Museum loaned two Sheldon Peck portraits to the Lombard Historical Society for a comprehensive exhibit. The Lombard Historical Society will present a unique exhibition of the works of noted folk art portrait painter Sheldon Peck. See more than a dozen original paintings by Peck from 1825-1848 displayed in the home Sheldon Peck built in 1839. This first-ever presentation includes paintings on loan from various collectors and museums from across the country and will be displayed together in the Peck Homestead. The exhibit will include several paintings never shown before in public. Exhibit is June 4 - August 31. <https://www.lombardhistory.org/peckexhibit>



Peck's Portrait of Nancy Gifford

Civil War Reenactment June 9-10

The Museum again had a table at the event, highlighting the role of the Kimball family in Elgin and in the Civil War. Our volunteers once again stepped up to help make this community event a success.



Ron Barclay and Kathy Walters at Elgin's Civil War Experience re-enactment

Car Show at the Museum July 14

It's almost time for this year's Classic Car Show to be held on the grounds of the Museum. This year's musical entertainment is from the Belvederes and Flat Creek Highway. The show is put on by the Chicago-Land Thunderbirds and the Model T Car Club.



SUNDAY, JULY 14 FROM 10AM - 3PM



ELGIN
HISTORY
MUSEUM

Classic
CAR SHOW

Elgin History Museum
360 Park Street, Elgin

Food Vendors • Live Music
FREE Admission to Museum

elginhistory.org (847)742-4248 museum@elginhistory.org

Noted Folk Artist
Sheldon Peck
Footsteps of His Life
Portrait Exhibition
June 4 - August 31, 2019
www.lombardhistory.org
www.info@lombardhistory.org

**SHELDON PECK
HOMESTEAD**

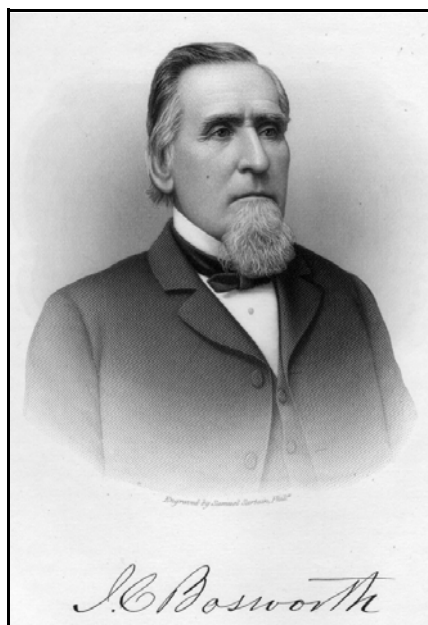
Sheldon Peck Homestead
355 E. Parkside Avenue
Lombard, IL 60148
630.629.1885

The Bosworth Family of Elgin: Part 1

by David Siegenthaler

The Bosworth family and descendants were prominent officers in the First National Bank of Elgin (now Chase Bank), Elgin's largest financial institution, for 110 years. Another line of the Bosworth family produced a two-term mayor who owned a successful lumber and coal firm for over 30 years. Several of Elgin's best-preserved vintage homes were built for Bosworth family members and one of Bluff City Cemetery's best examples of a sarcophagus is the Bosworth family monument.

Increase Child Bosworth was born April 2, 1812, near Saratoga Springs, New York. He was the youngest of six children born to Alfred (1773-1861) and Olive Child Bosworth (1775-1847). He was named after his maternal grandfather, Revolutionary War Captain Increase Child (1740-1810). Increase's siblings were: Mary Church (1799-1846; Mrs. Harry Weed); Benjamin Franklin (1801-43; wives: Almira Smith; later: Elizabeth Nixon); Oliver Cromwell (1803-35; wife: Electa Hall); Lucinda S. (1806-49; Mrs. Alfred Edwards); and Abigail Monroe (1809-83; Mrs. Benjamin Simonds). The parents, Alfred and Olive, followed their children west to Illinois in 1839 and settled in Dundee.



Increase Bosworth

In late 1836, after teaching for about two years in New York, Increase came west to Chicago, where he was employed for a little over a year in the store of "Edwards & Bosworth." Alfred Edwards was his brother-in-law and Benjamin F. Bosworth was his brother. During the course of his employment there,

Increase had occasion to visit Dundee and was impressed with its beauty and potential. With the aid of Mr. Edwards, who by this time had purchased his partner's interest in the store, Increase was able to open a general store in Dundee in early 1838. In 1839 Edwards joined him as a partner and the merchants soon commanded a large and lucrative trade. In 1852 Edwards left the partnership and was replaced by Franklin Smith Bosworth, Increase's nephew, who had been clerking in the store. This partnership lasted until 1867, when Increase moved to Elgin.

Increase lived in Dundee 29 years and quickly made his mark as one of the town's most trusted and respected leaders. In 1838 he was a member of Dundee's bridge-building committee. In 1840, after the government surveyed the land and put it on the market, Increase was chosen by the settlers to be their claim agent, bidding off their claims and deeding to them according to their claim lines. He understood the importance of railroads for the growth and development of the Fox River valley and was an early stockholder and promoter of all of the early railroads that would come to serve the Dundee-Elgin area. He purchased interest in a manufacturing mill in Dundee, and served as supervisor of Dundee Township.

Drawn to Elgin by the post-Civil War business boom that included the opening of the watch factory and the milk condensing plant, Increase saw promising business opportunities for his sons. In 1866 Increase and a partner commissioned a 3-story brick double store building on Fountain Square (8-10 S. Grove Ave.) in the heart of downtown Elgin. In 1867 Increase and his son Alfred, an 1865 graduate of the University of Chicago, partnered with George M. Peck in a successful dry goods and carpet store. In 1869 another son, William Eugene, joined the firm after he graduated from the University of Chicago.



The Bosworth Store on Fountain Square, 1870s

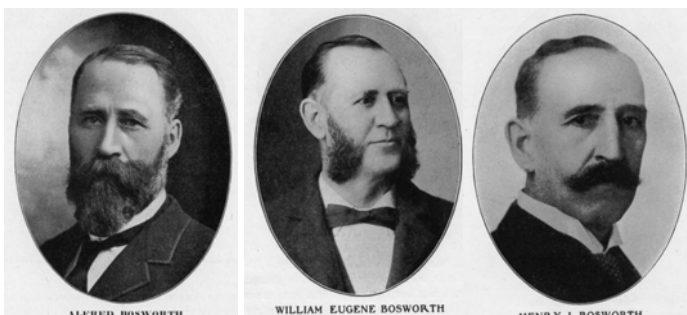
In 1875 Increase and his son Alfred left the dry goods business to become partners with Julius Angelo Carpenter in a private banking firm. Mr. Carpenter owned controlling interest in the prosperous Illinois Iron & Bolt Co. in Carpentersville, and his wife, Mary Edwards Carpenter, was Increase's niece. In 1876 the Bosworths and Carpenters purchased controlling interest in the First National Bank, the largest bank in Elgin, and its real estate loan affiliate, the Elgin City Banking Co.

Increase served as president of the First National Bank from 1876 until his death in 1888. Alfred served as cashier (active manager) from 1876 to 1905, subsequently serving as a director and, from 1917 until his death in 1930, president. Increase's youngest son, Henry, spent his entire 57-year business career (1876-1933) as a First National Bank employee, where he served as a director and second vice president. Increase's grandson, Neil Bosworth, served the bank as assistant cashier for over 25 years, and another grandson, Roland Bosworth, was a director for a number of years. As late as 1986, when William E. Redeker stepped down as director after 40 years with the bank, including 16 years as chief executive officer, a Bosworth was involved in directing the firm. Redeker was Increase's great-grandson.

After Increase moved here in 1867, he soon became one of Elgin's most prominent and influential leaders. See the accompanying 1873 photo of Fountain Square, which shows the prosperous I.C. Bosworth dry goods store. Immediately to its right is the First National Bank, which Increase became president of in 1876. Increase also served as vice-president of the Home National Bank (1872-circa 1874); he was president of the Elgin Packing Co.; he was one of the original directors of the township library and served as its president; he was a 2-term alderman (1874-76); he was a trustee of the Northern Illinois Hospital for the Insane; he was an Elgin Township supervisor (1872-73); he was treasurer of the Elgin Temperance Union; he was treasurer and trustee of the First Baptist Church; and he was an Elgin Academy trustee from 1868 until his death. He was also a trustee of the University of Chicago, where all three of his sons were graduates, and the Morgan Park Theological Seminary. Increase passed away at 75 on January 11, 1888.

Increase married Mary Ann Root on December 24, 1844. Mary Ann (1814-96) was the daughter of Dr. Anson Root, who came to Elgin in 1839. Increase and Mary Ann had four children: Alfred, William, Abbie and Henry. Alfred (1846-1930) married Eleanor Wheeler (1849-1944) in 1872 and the couple had six children: Edith (Mrs. W.A. Levering); Neil (wife: Ethel Lloyd); Roland (wife: Charlotte Weatherill); Louise (never married); Winifred (Mrs. Jerome Downes); and Dorothy (Mrs. John McDonald).

William Eugene (1848-1903) married Ida Louise Woodruff (1852-1944) in 1874 and they had five children: Cyrus (wife: Bertha Ramsey); Charles (died at age seven); Ralph (died at age 19); Ethel (Mrs. Ernest Redeker); and Walter (wives: Ruth Williams; later: Dess C.). William Eugene continued operating the dry goods store with George Peck after his father and brother left in 1875. In the early 1880s William became the sole owner and continued the firm until 1902, when he retired and sold out to Isaac Cohien. Neither Abbie (1851-1925) nor Henry (1854-1933) ever married.



Alfred, William, and Henry Bosworth

To be continued ...

Acknowledgments: Mike Alft's books and newspaper articles; Kane County histories; Elgin Today (1903); Internet sources; obituaries and other newspaper articles; etc.

David E. Postle, Architect

Michael Zimmer

Co-Chair, Historic Elgin House Tour



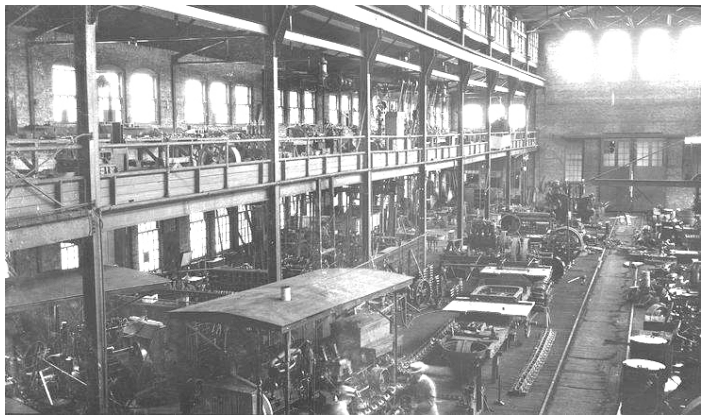
The Museum will be partnering with the Gifford Park Association to present this year's Historic Housewalk, which will feature four buildings designed by architect David E. Postle. Though the majority of Postle's career in Elgin is well documented along with his work on the Paddington Square apartments in Chicago, very little is written about his other Chicago work and his work in California. While he worked in Chicago, the Elgin city directory lists him as a resident, which meant a long commute in 1910.

Let me first mention another architect for context:

John Baptiste Fischer started out as Head Draughtsman for the branch office of the firm of Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge in Chicago. SRC was a Boston firm that saw the potential for Chicago work with the 1893 Columbian Exposition and opened a branch office here. During Fischer's time at that firm (1901-1909), SRC completed the Art Institute, McCormick

Mansion in Wheaton, Chicago Public Library (now Cultural Center), Glenbard West High School, Harper Library at U Chicago and other projects.

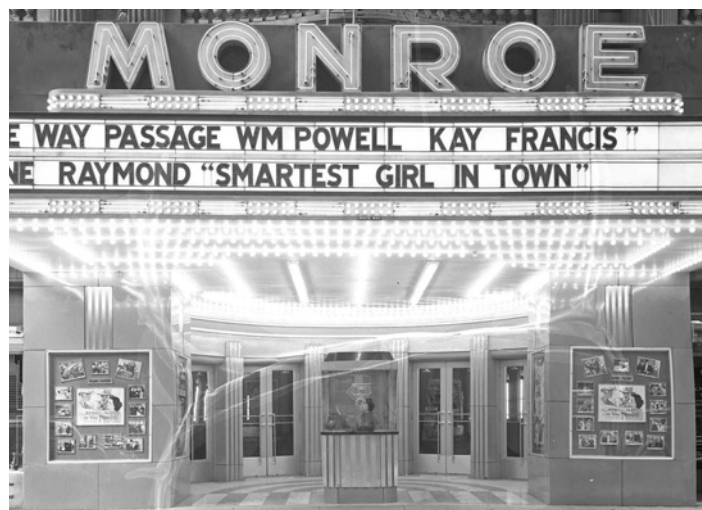
John Fischer left SRC in 1909 and became a partner with D. E. Postle Architects, with offices in the Marquette Building in downtown Chicago. The firm was renamed Postle & Fischer. Fischer was made a lead designer and head engineer. The firm completed some apartment flats around Chicago, primarily in the then booming Garfield park area and Oak Park, a dairy building on the South Side, a bank in Brainerd Minnesota, additions to Peoria's Holt Mfg. Facility (which became Caterpillar) among others. Postle spent his last ten years in Illinois working with John Fischer.



Interior of Holt Manufacturing

They also built the Sun Theater in Englewood, and converted a building in the Loop into the Monroe Theater (razed in the 1950s). From the March 8, 1919 issue of Chicago's *The Economist*:

Architects Postle & Fischer, 140 South Dearborn Street, have completed plans and are receiving bids on the general work for remodeling the former three-story Inter Ocean building, 69x190, Nos. 55 to 59 West Monroe street, into a thoroughly modern motion-picture theater for Harry C. Moir and Wm. S. Barbee. The entire rear portion will be wrecked, and the building reconstructed up from grade, with brick walls and reinforced concrete floor and roof. It will have a seating capacity of 1,000 persons, all on one floor. The design of the interior will be an adaptation of the Spanish Renaissance style. The lobby, foyer and spectatorium will be finished in tile, twenty feet high, surmounted by ornamental plaster cornice and ceiling. Special attention has been paid to the color scheme and light effect, which will be unique. An air washing ventilation system and a costly pipe organ will be installed. The improvements are estimated to cost \$115,000 to \$125,000.



Monroe Theatre, circa 1936

Postle moved to Los Angeles in 1921 and the remnants of his Chicago practice were transferred to John Fischer. Many of John Fischer's architectural plans and portfolio are now in the Art Institute's Archives, called The John Fischer Papers. The Art Institute states:

This collection documents a number of projects on which John Baptiste Fischer worked as designer and engineer. The firms Shepley, Rutan, and Coolidge and Postle and Fischer are well represented in this collection. Series I, Photographs, consists of four photo albums, a large portfolio, and four unidentified photos. These photos include floor plans, construction views, built views, and some recommendation letters.

Within those archives are documents/photos pertaining to the following Elgin buildings:

- YWCA
- Borden Condensed Milk Plant
- Garfield School
- St. Johns Lutheran Church

Family Picnic Aug. 10

On August 10 there will be a family fun day at the South Elgin Fox River Trolley Museum with a picnic for families and friends at Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve. Event starts at 1:00 P.M. with picnic lunch served at 1:30.

Enjoy a nostalgic trip back to an era when the electric trolley car was a vital part of American life. The trolley will take you to Jon J. Duerr Forest Preserve for an old-time picnic, complete with food, drinks and games for the kids.

ELGIN HISTORY MUSEUM
360 PARK STREET
ELGIN, IL 60120



Located at a crook in the Fox River, the Jon J. Duerr forest preserve offers a scenic setting, complete with wildlife, trails, picnic shelters rest rooms, and a little known 8-foot waterfall. It also features the historic burial site of unknown soldiers in General Winfield Scott's Army. Tickets are \$7.00 apiece (\$10.00 for non-members) and cover the trolley ride and lunch.

Reserve and prepay by August 2 by calling the Elgin History Museum at (847) 742-4248 or online at elgin-history.org/events. Donations to help the trolley museum thrive beyond the extensive vandalism that occurred last summer, where over \$110,000 of damage was done, will gladly be accepted on the day of the event. The Fox River Trolley Museum is located on Illinois Rte. 31, three blocks south of State Street in South Elgin.



Collections Corner

By Beth Nawara

In 1923, Community Chest began in Elgin. It is now the United Way of Elgin, which is closing their Elgin office and merging with United Way of Metro Chicago. The United Way of Elgin offered to donate several boxes of scrapbooks of newspaper clippings documenting their activities in Elgin. The Museum accepted three scrapbooks. The first begins in 1923 and ends in 1927. The second scrapbook covers 1932-1933 and provides a good representation of Elgin during the Depression. The third scrapbook has newspaper clippings from September 1942-August 1943 illustrating what was happening in Elgin during World War II.

