

The Crackerbarrel



Elgin History Museum News January 2017

President's Report

Bill Briska, President



The recently concluded year, 2016, was a very successful one for the Museum, in the steady march of progress affecting all key areas of operations. The Museum "family" has made this happen.

The dues-paying membership (about 300 households) create the foundation to build success. It is the 70+ volunteers who contribute time, talent and expertise to assemble the building blocks. The five part-time employees (whose combined hours amount to less than 2 full time staff) are the cement that holds it all together. Then there are the more than 200 individual donors, whose generosity supplemented many other sources of income, give the Museum the extra boost needed to excel.

The annual report contained within this issue will tell you a little more about the activities of 2016. As you read it, look between the lines and behind the numbers for the reason behind the Museum's success. It lies in attracting talented people and giving them resources to get the job done.

For a relatively small organization, mostly led by volunteers, our success lies in taking a steady and deliberate path forward. There is a very good chance you are one of the building blocks of our success. Collectively we honor and thank you.

Welcome New Members

- Jim Laukes
- Darrell Walters

Thank You Donors!

Dairies to Prairies

Armstrong, Tom
Barnhart, Jerri and Ken
Elgin Breakfast Rotary Club
Hinkston, David
McClure, Sandra and Dennis

Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House

ABODE	McDowell, Jessica
Allerton, Lorraine	Missele, Carl and Chris
Anderson, Brian	Nelson, David J. and Dolores
Armstrong, Tom	Rauschenberger, Carol
Burmeister, Deborah in memory of Jacquie Trevino	Renner, Richard
Gesserick	
Fukala, Jennifer	Walters, Alan and Kathleen
Marston, John and Elizabeth	

General Donations

Bost, Marianne	Lytle, Miriam
Dixon, James and Cecilia	Marco, Rebecca
Dusenberry, Jason	Mathews, Karen
Dyer, Maurice	McClendon, Julia
Epping, Hugh	McIntyre, Susan
Flaks, Carl and Mary Ellen	Nawara, Beth and David
Flaks, Carl in memory of Marv Elbert	Nore, Gilbert and Mary
Gieske, Patrick and Carol	Olson, Clifford and Rebecca
Gregory, Martin and Mary	Pawlowski, Jason
Grimm, Richard	Pielin, Don
Grosser, Patricia	Pool, David H.
Harris, Ricky	Roberti, Mary
Knoll, Naomi	Rowe, George
Kramp, Douglas	Siegenthaler, David
Larson, Paul R.	Stroud, Steven and Laura
Lee, Maureen and Tom	Youngren, Peggy and Steve
Lewis, Cheri	

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Published bimonthly by the Elgin Area Historical Society
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Secretary: Laura Stroud
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The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.
Next deadline February 20, 2017



Visit our website Elginhistory.org

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

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April 23, 12:00 Noon to 3:00 P.M.

Annual History Fair

History comes alive for the whole family! Explore Elgin history in a hands on and interactive way! Weather permitting, activities are planned in the Museum and outside. Free Admission.

April 30, 2:00 P.M.

Radio Players: The Shadow and Our Miss Brooks

Experience the magic of old time radio with sound effects and original music! Radio Players West presents programs based on original radio scripts from the 1930s to 1950s. The actors will present an episode of the classic drama *The Shadow* and the comedy of *Our Miss Brooks*. Light refreshments. Non-members \$3.

May 12, 7:00 to 10:00 P.M.

Candlelight Tour of the Museum

Learn interesting facts about Elgin history on this 45 minute candlelight tour. Light refreshments and food.

May 18, 12:00 Noon.

Brown Bag Lunch: Sears Art Gallery

David Nelson and Ann Chipman guide a tour of the incredible Sears Art Gallery on the campus of Elgin Academy. Refreshments. Non members \$3.

June 4, 2:00 P.M.

Elgin Road Races with Ed Wiseman.

Non members \$3. Refreshments available.

July 16, 10:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. Antique Car Show

Lively music, good food available for purchase. Prizes will be awarded for cars. The Museum will open at 11 A.M. and tours will be available. Free admission.

August 11, 7:00 to 10:00 P.M.: Summer Soiree

September 24, 11:00 to 3:00 P.M.

30th Annual Cemetery Walk at Bluff City Cemetery

October 8, 2:00 P.M.

Mamie Eisenhower

November 4m 6:00 to 10:00 P.M.

Annual Benefit and Silent Auction

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

Terry Lynch portrays
Alexander Hamilton.

December 2, 1:00 P.M.

Annual Holiday Tea at the Museum



Linda Rock in character at Cemetery Walk

2017 Program Schedule

David Nelson, Program Chair

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

elginhistory.org/events.html

February 18, 11:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M.

Volunteer Brunch (invitation only)

March 5, 12:00 Noon: Russian Tea

Before the Elgin Symphony Orchestra concert, sit down at the Elgin History Museum and enjoy a leisurely tea a la Russe with fresh baked pastries. The Museum exhibits will be open for this special event and souvenirs from Russian trips will be on display. Advance registration required. Fee: \$20.

Tickets: <http://elginhistory.org/event/russian-tea/>
or call 847.742.4248 or email museum@elginhistory.org to register.

March 19, 2:00 P.M.

Juliette Kinzie by Betsey Means

Betsey Means portrays educated pioneer woman Juliette Magill Kinzie, a writer and historian, who married John Kinzie in 1830, lived in Wisconsin at Fort Winnebago and moved to Chicago in 1834. In 1844 she wrote the *Narrative of the Massacre at Chicago*, an account of the Fort Dearborn massacre she compiled from firsthand accounts of the Kinzie family.

Gilbert Turnbull, Builder and Architect

by David Siegenthaler

Though Gilbert Marshall Turnbull may be best known for his brick flats, he also designed, with his partners, many other important Elgin buildings. These include Elgin's City Hall, four churches, a school, a hospital, a fire station, several store buildings, as well as some of the prettiest Queen Annes in town.

Gilbert was born April 23, 1856 in Iowa City, Iowa to Joseph and Rebecca Turnbull. His parents came west from Ohio to Illinois in 1848 and moved to Iowa about 1854. Joseph (1828-88), a carpenter by trade, became a Civil War captain and served as city marshal of Iowa City in 1869-70. In the early 1880s he moved to Elgin to join his sons, Gilbert and Benjamin, and lived here for four years.

Gilbert attended Iowa State University and became a carpenter and contractor. He moved to Elgin in 1880, which coincided with the beginning of one of the biggest building booms in Elgin's history. The city's population more than doubled during the 1880s, thanks to flourishing industries like the watch factory, condensing factory and the David C. Cook Publishing Co.

For much of his career, Gilbert worked with partners. In the early-to-mid-1880s, his building partner was his younger brother Benjamin. In summer 1888 Benjamin got married and moved away. It was about this time that Gilbert began to design as well as build. From 1892-94 he partnered with a young architect named David E. Postle (1863-1939), who went on to become very successful on his own in Elgin, Chicago and Los Angeles. From 1895-1912 he partnered with William C. Jones (1868-1930), another young architect who went on to make a name for himself by designing hundreds of churches, among other buildings, in the Midwest.

Gilbert's signature construction in Elgin are his brick flats (apartments) and double residences, at least 13 of which still stand. All are located on the east side and were built between the mid-1880s and 1893. His Elgin brick flats, according to historian Mike Alft, were "a local counterpart of Chicago greystones and New York brownstones." They are 3-storied, with the lower floor partly below ground level, and the steps of the wooden porch leading to the second floor entrances. They have flat roofs, prominent rectangular or triangular bays and overhanging metal cornices. Good examples are his own double residence at 71-73 Park Row, built in 1888, and the 3-flat at 150-54 S. Gifford St., built in 1890 for his father-in-law, John Kinney. In 1891 he designed a pair of single-family homes with many of the same style elements at 11 N. Liberty St. and 321-23 DuPage St.



Turnbull's residence, 71-73 Park Row



Kinney 3-flat at 150-54 S. Gifford St., 1890

Gilbert's most costly and impressive Elgin building was the City Hall built in 1892-93 at 200-04 E. Chicago St. This Victorian-Gothic red brick 5-story building with an ornamental 7-story clock tower served as Elgin's City Hall from 1893-1968 and was razed in 1969. The upper floors were never used and, after being structurally weakened by the 1920 tornado, were removed in 1933-34 and replaced with a flat roof and a lowered clock tower.

Four churches in Elgin were designed by Gilbert and his partners. Three are still standing:

- German Evangelical Church, 19 Center St. (1892-93; was Faith United Methodist Church 1968-98 and has been Iglesia Carismática Puerta De Sion since 1999)
- Cedar Hill Mission Church, 400 N. Crystal St. (1895; now a parsonage for the First Missionary Baptist Church, which moved here in 1966.)
- Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, 357 Division St. (1906-07)
- Epworth Methodist Church, 811 St. Charles St. (1895-96; sold to the Hungarian Reformed Church in 1911; razed 1969)



Elgin City Hall, formerly at 200-204 E. Chicago, razed in 1969. A parking garage now stands here.

In 1892 Turnbull's firm designed the original Sherman Hospital building at 938 Center St. (razed 1964). This was the first building in Elgin (other than the state mental hospital) built specifically as a hospital.

In 1899 he designed the Abby C. Wing School at 260 Center St. (closed 1977; converted to apartments in 1981). In 1891 he designed the brick fire station at 216 W. Chicago St. (closed 1977; razed 1978). This was the first fire station on Elgin's west side.

Some Turnbull-designed Elgin commercial buildings still standing:

- A.M. McArthur Building, 74 S. Grove Ave. (1893)
- Henrietta Building, 51 S. Spring St. (1908; built for Swan's Dept. Store; occupied by Sears 1938-80, ECC's downtown campus 1983-2010; now part of the ArtSpace complex)
- Peter Burritt Memorial Building, 21-29 S. Grove Ave. (1914)

Rebecca McBride Burritt Gilbert commissioned the last two buildings to honor her first husband Peter Burritt and his first wife Henrietta.

Gilbert Turnbull also designed some very attractive Queen Anne-style homes in Elgin, most notably the Izzo-Pelton home at 214 S. State St. Built in 1889 for \$20,000, a huge sum in those days, this is one of only two homes in Elgin on the National Register of His-

toric Places. (The other is James T. Gifford's "Stone Cottage" on Prairie St.) In 1998, the Izzo-Pelton home was designated a local landmark, a status which affords it the same protection from ill-advised exterior alterations as if it were located in a historic district. Built for Dr. Ora Pelton and sold to Arthur and Sue Izzo in 1963 by Helen Pelton Ladd, this 127-year-old home has had, remarkably, only two family owners. Sue Izzo, who has lived in this home since the mid-1950s, passed away in December 2016 at age 104.



Izzo-Pelton House, 214 S. State St.

Other striking Turnbull-designed Queen Annes include:

- George Richardson home, 600 E. Chicago St. (1892; co-designer David Postle married the Richardsons' only daughter in 1893)
- Abel Gifford home, 254 Villa St. (1889; Abel was the youngest brother of Elgin founder James T. Gifford)



Abel Gifford home, 254 Villa St.

- August Scheele home, 802 Douglas Ave. (1894-95)
Mr. Scheele was an Elgin grocer for over 50 years.



August Scheele Home, 802 Douglas Ave.

On October 22, 1888 Gilbert married Edith Kinney (1862-1929). The couple had no children of their own but in 1900 adopted an infant girl and named her Gilberta. Gilberta married Earl Vilven of Batavia in 1923 and died in 1988 at age 88. Gilbert was active in Elgin Masonic Lodge 117, where he was elected worshipful master (the highest lodge officer) each year from 1887 through 1892. He lived at 472 Dundee Ave. until he moved into his new double residence at 71-73 Park Row at the time of his marriage in 1888.

In his later years most of Gilbert's projects were outside of Elgin, when he concentrated on church, school and factory buildings. He and his partner William C. Jones designed numerous churches in the upper Midwest. He moved his office from Elgin to Chicago in 1907 and worked on contract for the Borden Condensed Milk Co. and the Bowman Dairy Co. of Chicago. His last major Elgin structure, completed in 1914, was the Peter Burritt Building.

Gilbert Turnbull passed away at age 62 from a heart attack on February 19, 1919 and was buried in Bluff City Cemetery. His flat-roofed brick residences on Elgin's east side are a constant reminder of this prolific and versatile architect.

Acknowledgments: Mike Alft's books and newspaper articles; city directories; federal censuses; obituaries; newspaper building reports; Jerry Turnquist; Chan Swan's photo editing skills; photos by Judy Van Dusen.

2016 Annual Report

Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director

Significant 2016 Accomplishments

The Museum's documentary and traveling exhibit, *Project 2-3-1: A Story of Elgin's African American Heritage*, won five awards: one national award from the American Association of State and Local History (AASLH); two regional awards from the Midwest Museum Association and the Midwest History Association, and two local awards from the City of Elgin Heritage Commission and the Image Commission.

Filming started on the *Dairies to Prairies* documentary and traveling exhibit project on the change of land use in Elgin. Oral histories, tours of the prairies and natural spaces, and interviews with county board members and forest preserve staff have been recorded. Several grants have been received and the project is up and running for 2017.

Membership

Jerri Barnhart, Membership Chair

The Society had 272 members, with 29 new households joining in 2016. Groupon memberships, while up in 2015, are generally non-renewing. 84 volunteers donated 7,421 hours in 2016!

Program and Event Highlights

David Nelson, Program Chair

The Museum's programs for 2016 were all well-presented, educational, interesting in their own way, and well-received by the Museum's audiences. A total of 1,877 people viewed the 2016 programs.

In April, Betsy Means presented a very dramatic portrayal of labor leader Mother Jones. The Museum Candlelight Tour last May 13 was very well attended and was a huge success. We plan on presenting another Candlelight Tour in 2017. Linda Rock's presentation of Elgin Artist Jane Peterson was extremely interesting, as was Carl Flaks' program on the History of Presidential Campaigns.

The Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House program given by project architect Eric Pepa and others showed the interior and exterior of the house before renovation began, and then the plans for renovation and use.

Historian Jerry Turnquist presented The Miss Elgin Pageant of 1925, a fun program that coincidentally featured a picture of my Aunt Elsie Nelson!

The Amazing Adventure of Bertha Benz and the German Automobile by Anette Isacacs was impressive and well-received.

2016 was the 160th birthday of Old Main, which opened in 1857 as the Elgin Academy. The Museum hosted a big birthday party with a beautiful cake, wine and entertainment with music of the day.

The 7th annual Museum Benefit held at Elgin Country Club featured Jacqueline Kennedy portrayed by a favorite Museum presenter, Leslie Goddard. The Benefit raised \$13,000.



Leslie Goddard as Jackie Kennedy

The last program of the year was the annual Holiday Tea, featuring delicious food and a Christmas musical performance by the Northside Brass and yours truly at the piano. The Program Committee and I continue working hard to bring the best programs to Elgin in 2017.



Rebecca Larson serves guests at the Holiday Tea

Education and Outreach

Sara Russell, Museum Educator in 2016, provided programming for 39 groups with 828 participants, mostly school children, but also some adult groups.

The Museum was the registration point for the 35th anniversary Elgin Historic House Tour in September, with 1,500 people stopping in to pick up tour tickets and view the exhibits. The Museum also partnered with the Elgin Public Museum and the Gail Borden Public Library for Lords Park Zoo programming, as well as children's reading programs at each institution.

The Museum's Speaker's Bureau consisting of Jerry Turnquist, Linda Rock, Steve Stroud, Don Pielin, Carl Flaks, Bill Briska, Steve Thoren, Marge Rowe, and Terry Gabel gave 26 programs to 1,027 people in 2016, including Parks Foundation programs in April and October. Outreach programming and partnering including festivals, Library programs, and Cobblestone House events reached out to 2,628 people. There were 22 rentals of the Museum meeting room, including the Gifford Park Association, the League of Women Voters, the Elgin Garden Club, and the Historic House Tour Committee.

Collections

In 2016, the Collections Committee accepted hundreds of items from 66 donors into the Museum's permanent, education, or exhibit collections. The Museum contracted with Beth Nawara to provide part time assistance in collections management. The Museum also received an Institute of Museums and Library Services grant totaling \$24,770 to digitize photographs in the Elmer Gylleck Photograph Collection.

Noteworthy items accepted into the collection in 2016 include:

- Elgin National Watch Company archival and objects collections from Jeff White, Don Bradley, Ellsie Baehr, and Estate of Theodore E. Bowman
- Elgin National watches from Melvin Young, Beth Recher and Sally Nolen



Richard Stolt Elgin Watch Collection

- Archival materials related to Elgin schools from Karen Muesser, Jerri Barnhart, Dana Olson, Rita Anderson, Chuck Block, Dundee Township Historical Society, Steve Vacherlon, Richard & Sharon Felicetti, Denise Blank, and Edward Whitcomb

- Watercolors by Elgin artist Marie Templin from Kirby Nelson
- Relief molds of “Lincoln” by T.A. Rovelstad from Jeff White
- Painting of Old Main by Barbara Broeske from Barbara Broeske
- Morse drug store sign from Jerry Turnquist
- Dairy-related archival objects from Carol Plagge, Ricky Harris and Jerry Turnquist
- 2 DVDs and 2 reels of film of Elgin in the early 1950s titled *Our Town Elgin* from Paul Bauman

Volunteers Rick and Kathleen Grimm organized the yearbooks in the archives and the research library. The following sections of the objects room were organized: athletics, business and industry, dairy, education, Elgin National Watch Company, Elgin memorabilia, medical, military, music, and sewing. A team of archival volunteers worked for months to finalize the archives index to add to the Museum's website.

Exhibits

A new Museum exhibit, *Elgin American Compacts: Designing for American, 1926-1951* opened in June. This exhibit presents several of Elgin American's most distinctive compact styles and the stories behind their diverse designers. New lighting was installed on the first floor landing in the Museum to highlight artwork and information on Elgin artist Trygve Rovelstad.

Finance Report

George Rowe, Treasurer

Thanks to great support from the Museum's active and growing list of supporters, finances continue in a strongly positive direction. With \$173,000 budgeted this year for projects, staff and operations, funds were raised through grants, membership fees, donations, and programs to finish with a positive balance. Actual income for 2016 was about \$228,000 with expenditures just below that figure. The increased expense was due, in large part, to the Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House Preservation Project.

The 2016 Cemetery Walk netted \$6,400, and the annual benefit raised another \$13,000. The Museum's excellent programs enrich the community and help financially. Board Member Jim Anderson again conducted an in-house audit in 2016. The importance of this cannot be overstated. To have a CPA on staff to review transactions and systems is of great benefit to the Museum. Thank you Jim Anderson!

• Nancy Kimball Cobblestone Project

The Nancy Kimball House Project is a major undertaking for the Museum; it requires partnership with the City, strong financial planning from the Board of Directors, and enthusiastic support from the membership. The \$46,110 grant from Kane County Riverboat fund helped complete the first phase, and member support allowed additional work to be completed this year.

Real construction on the Cobblestone House Preservation Project began. Demolition of the unstable north wall was completed, a new concrete foundation wall and footings were poured, and a new north wall was framed and enclosed. The Museum was even able to have John Crowe, master mason, start laying reclaimed stone to recreate the north wall.

• IL Give Campaign

The IL Give campaign again provided a huge income boost at the end of the year. The Elgin History Museum is part of the Grand Victoria Foundation (GVF) Grant Works agencies, which qualifies the Museum to receive matching funds for the IL Give campaign up to the first \$5,000 from GVF. The Museum increased the number of IL Give donors from 14 in 2015 to 47 in 2016, and 100% of the 2015 donors also contributed in 2016, earning an additional \$2,000 incentive bonus for the Museum.

• Endowment

The Museum's endowment exceeded \$500,000 for the first time in 2016. The endowment has been built from memorials to the Museum and has not been drawn on since its inception in 2000. The estates of Joyce Pellicore and Phyllis Krueger added \$11,000. The fund is now nearing the point where interest dividends may be used if needed. The main purpose of the endowment is to support financial stability.

Overall, the Museum again operated with a balanced budget, no debt, and adequate insurance and reserve funds. Donors continue to be generous and supportive of Museum projects. The keys to the Museum's success are a well-trained and enthusiastic staff, active and passionate volunteers, donors, Board members who endorse the Museum's varied projects, and a well planned and executed financial plan.

• Museum Store

The Museum Store Committee, including Sandi McClure, Mira Wojciechowska, and Tricia Grosser, added some new items to the inventory in 2016, changed store displays, and shipped online orders. The Store and Museum admission fees earned nearly \$10,000 in income for the year.





Museum Communications

In 2016, six issues of the Elgin History Museum Crackerbarrel newsletter were compiled by a number of writers, including Museum Researcher David Siegenthaler. Text and images were designed, edited and published by board member Rebecca Marco.

Media Information: The *Courier* published an article or press release for the Museum 37 times in 2016, the *Daily Herald* 39 times. Six other publications featured the Museum another 11 times.

The Elgin History Museum website highlighted 20 programs on the events calendar, and provided convenient links for buying tickets for the Lake Geneva boat trip, the Cemetery Walk, and the Annual Benefit. A Dairies to Prairies page, promoting the Museum's new project, now provides videos, the full project brochure, and links to a Facebook page. The Project 2-3-1 web page was improved with added features and updated with news about recent awards. A research links page was created to help online guests find more content related to Elgin architecture, people or pictures. Video content was improved with an update to the Art Deco in Elgin page. Event sponsors were featured on the website with their logos prominently displayed on the Cemetery Walk page.

The Museum's social media presence continues to be strong with an increase of 289 new Facebook fans in 2016 and 159 new Twitter followers. The content that generated the most buzz on Facebook were videos and vintage Elgin photographs.

Facebook Live, a relatively new platform for us, was used with great success to promote the Holiday Tea. 3,049 people this year viewed Elgin History Museum video content. A very popular 2016 post, an article about Hillside Cemetery, was seen by 571 people.



David Nelson accompanies North Side Brass at the Holiday Tea