

The Crackerbarrel



Elgin History Museum News March 2017

President's Report

Bill Briska, President



Tax season is upon us. For me, this necessary chore has a beneficial side effect. After going over the family budget for the past year, I am in a good position to review long range goals, including estate planning. We all will leave some type of inheritance to our family, friends and community. Good planning can make the difference

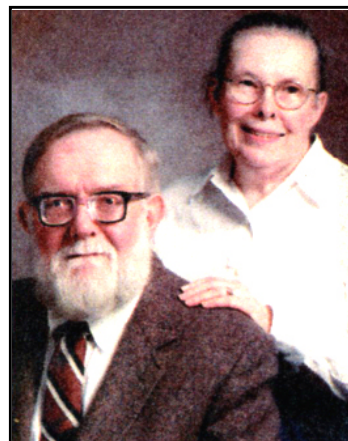
between a significant legacy or distress and chaos for those who survive us.

Beyond the obvious considerations extended to family and friends, estate planning is an opportunity to leave a lasting mark on your community. Gifts to organizations that will carry on your values are an effective way to do this. The Elgin Area Historical Society is indebted to those who have been thoughtful enough to include it in their estate planning. Over the years these generous gifts helped the Society cover the costs to rehabilitate and equip Old Main to become the Elgin History Museum. In December of 2000, the Board of Directors established an Endowment Fund. At the time, a decision was made that all future bequests and memorials would go into the Endowment. Furthermore, that principal would not be drawn upon and that only the earnings may be used. Thus, all bequests and memorials gifts can continue, in perpetuity, to benefit the Historical Society's mission. These gifts would, in effect, be a lasting legacy to the Elgin community.

As you plan what your legacy will be, please consider a gift to the Historical Society. It will be a gift that will keep on giving for years to come. It will be a gift that serves generations to follow. The Historical Society and Elgin History Museum have a unique role to play in our community. You can continue to be part of it.

For information about planned giving contact Museum Director, Elizabeth Marston, for an informative brochure. I would also be happy to discuss with you any aspect of the Museum long range plans and how you your legacy can fit into them.

Fond Farewell



Christian and Barbara Schock

Christian Schock, past President of the Elgin Area Historical Society from 1991-1994, passed away last month. As a charter member of the Society, Christian was active for many years before he and his wife, Barbara, moved to Galesburg in 1996. Christian served as Vice President of the Society and created nearly 2,500 daily broadcasts of the WRMN *Elgin: 100 Years Ago* radio program. He developed

Society membership, raised funds for the Old Main renovation, and wrote research papers on Elgin history. Other Society members who have passed away in the last few months include Marv Elbert, a dedicated teacher and coach in School District U-46; John Lawrence, a well-liked career Elgin police officer; and Jim Kimmey, husband of Betty Volkening.

Please let the Museum know if there are other Society members who have passed away recently.

The Crackerbarrel

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The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.
Next deadline April 20, 2017



Visit our website Elginhistory.org

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Society's Board of Directors.

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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 of the Museum and meet characters from the past. Wine and cheese refreshments after your peculiar nighttime visit. Tickets \$10 per person online at www.elginhistory.org

May 18, 12:00 Noon.

Brown Bag Lunch: Historic U.S. Route 20

Since 2012, the Historic US Route 20 Association has been actively working with local towns and communities in a grass roots effort to designate 20 as a Historic Highway. This presentation will tell the history of why the road became Route 20, starting as a Native American path, all the way to the railroads and westward expansion. Hear the stories of the people along the highway who call 20 home. Bring your lunch. Drinks and dessert provided. Free admission.

May 18, 6:00 P.M.

Elgin Downtown Historic District Walking Tour

See downtown Elgin and its unique buildings and history in this walking tour led by historian Jerry Turnquist. Recently added to the National Register of Historic Places, this new historic district (Elgin's sixth) boasts buildings ranging from the 1870s to more recent times, all with interesting stories to tell. Meet at city parking lot, southwest corner of S. Grove Avenue and Prairie St. Wear comfortable shoes. Free admission.

May 20, 10:00 A.M.

Hillside Cemetery Tour

Tour Hillside Cemetery, the small hidden cemetery used by the Elgin State Hospital for 50 years. Meet Elgin Mental Health Center historian Bill Briska in the east parking lot of Highlands golf course/Grumpy Goat restaurant, 875 Sports Way. Free admission.

May 21, 12:00 Noon to 4:00 P.M.

Near West Neighborhood Civil War Walk

Start at the Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House, 302 W. Chicago Street, to join a walking tour of Civil War sites on Elgin's near west side. \$5 suggested donation.

May 25, 7 P.M.: Lords Park Zoo History

Bear, bison, elk, and even a lion are part of Lord's Park history. Friends of the Lords Park Zoo will share information about the Zoo's beginnings, how it has changed, and stories of the antics of animals and humans.

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

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.

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.

June 4, 2:00 P.M.

Elgin Road Races with Ed Wiseman.

Ed Wesemann was at the 1933 Race! He will give us his memories of that day and show some of his collection of souvenirs. Light refreshments. Non-members: \$3/Members: Free

June 15, 2:00 P.M.

Brown Bag Lunch: Sears Art Gallery Tour

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

July 7, 12:00 Noon

Brown Bag Lunch: General Grant With Jim Zingales

Elgin re-enactor Jim Zingales will perform as Civil War General Grant. Bring your lunch as you learn about Grant's service to the country. Drinks and dessert provided. Non-members: \$3 / Members: Free

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

Get ready to step back in time! Come visit the Elgin History Museum for our annual Classic Car Show. This annual event had over 300 attendees in 2015 and some very cool classic cars. Cars styles and years vary but if you love classic cars this is a must attend event. The Museum will be open for tours. Food and drink offered for sale. 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 4, 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

Welcome New Members

Michelle Banks

Grant Born

Sharon Crockett

Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce

Naomi Knoll

Peter Koch

Wayne and Jeanette Russell

Katherine Sohn

Betsey Sohn

Brian Walker

Jim Stinson

Thank You Donors!

Dairies to Prairies

- Marilyn Damisch
- Triumph Bank
- Marge Krueger in memory of Christian Schock
- Cultural Arts Commission grant

Nancy Kimball Cobblestone House

- Allie Hallock
- Elizabeth Haney and Dave Kitz
- Dan Miller
- George and Marge Rowe
- Dennis Roxworthy
- Signal Hill Chapter of Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR)

General Donations

- Wayne Heinmiller
- Benjamin Moore Paint matching grant
- Sally King for the Hillside Cemetery signage
- Ron Lange
- Susan McIntyre
- Wayne and Jeanette Russell in honor of daughter Sara Russell, the Museum Educator

David E. Postle, Architect

by David Siegenthaler

David Elmer Postle (1863-1939) was an Elgin architect from 1892-1921. He left his mark on Elgin with many impressive buildings, such as the Lords Park Pavilion, the Elgin Public Museum, the old Elgin High School, the David C. Cook Publishing Co., three churches, and many high-end residences.

David was born February 18, 1863 on a farm near Columbus, Ohio, to Franklin and Catherine Postle. His ancestors, who came to America about the time of the American Revolution, were of Welsh and English stock. He was one of 11 children, two dying very young. He was trained as a teacher and taught school for two years before moving to Chicago in 1884, where he took a position in an architect's office in order to learn the business.

David worked with several architectural partners in his career. In 1892 he entered into a partnership with Elgin architect Gilbert Turnbull and during their two years together they designed many fine Elgin buildings and homes. Also about 1892 he partnered with Chicago architect John B. Fischer, a partnership that lasted 29 years. From about 1905-10 David partnered with a

young Chicago architect named Harry H. Mahler (1876-1975) and together they designed an Elgin church, a museum and several residences, mostly on upper Douglas Ave. Later in his career, after he moved to California, his partners were his two sons, George and David, Jr.

Oliver Postle, David's older brother, was also a Chicago architect and the brothers often worked together until the late 1890s, when Oliver read about the fortunes being made in the lead and zinc mines of Missouri. Unable to persuade David to come along, Oliver moved his family to Missouri and quickly fell into financial difficulties. A business partner skipped town and Oliver, broken in spirit, financially depleted, and worn out physically, became ill with typhoid and died in November 1899. Oliver's daughter (David's niece), Katherine Joy Postle Blackstone, grew up to become a well-known artist.

One of David's first Elgin designs, in 1892 (along with partner Gilbert Turnbull), was the George Richardson home at 600 E. Chicago St. Richardson came to Elgin in 1889 to become superintendent of the David C. Cook Publishing Co., one of Elgin's biggest industries. While designing the home, Postle met the Richardsons' only child, 23-year-old Georgia (1868-1957). He and Georgia were married Oct. 24, 1893 in the home of her parents, a home the newlyweds would continue to occupy until 1903 when they built their own home, a Prairie-style double residence at 50-54 N. Liberty St., at the north end of the same block.



George Richardson Home, 600 E. Chicago St.

In 1892, David designed, with Gilbert Turnbull, the German Evangelical Church at 19 Center St. (Iglesia Carismatica Puerta De Sion since 1999). In 1910 he designed, with Harry Mahler, the St. John's Lutheran

Church at 115 N. Spring St. In 1912 he designed the Epworth Methodist Church at 551 Arlington Ave. (Calvary Baptist Church since 1980).

In 1897 David and his brother Oliver were commissioned to design a pavilion in Lords Park to replace one that had just burned down. This new pavilion opened in 1898 in a picturesque setting overlooking the lagoon. In 1990 its use was suspended when structural cracks were discovered. Because it had become a community landmark, the City Council decided upon a complete restoration. By 1993, when it was re-dedicated, over \$1 million had been put into the building - considerably more than the original cost of \$5,000. In 1991 the pavilion was honored as Elgin's first officially-designated "Local Historic Landmark."



Lords Park Pavilion

In 1905 David also designed, with Harry Mahler, the other landmark building in Lords Park—the Elgin Public Museum. Originally called the Lord Memorial Museum, this Neoclassical style building was largely funded by George P. and Mary Lord, and was built to house the extensive natural history collection of George Lord. The original design was to have north, east and west wings meet in a central hall. George died in 1906, soon after construction began, and by 1907 only the central hall and west wing were completed. Interest in the project declined after George's death and the building remained in an asymmetrical state of construction until 2000, when the east wing was finished to complete its symmetry. The Elgin Public Museum is the oldest building in Illinois built expressly as a museum that is still serving that purpose.



Elgin Public Museum in 2006

The Everett Apartments at the southeast corner of DuPage St. and Park Row were designed in 1899 by David for his father-in-law George Richardson. This 2-story brick Neocolonial style building originally held eight units, four-to-six rooms each. It was one of the first Elgin multi-family residences to be called an apartment building rather than a flat. Designing "The Everett" may have been a good preliminary exercise for David's next big apartment complex in 1902: "The Pattington" in Chicago.



The Everett Apartments: DuPage St. & Park Row

The Neoclassical style Pattington Apartments in the Uptown neighborhood of Chicago consists of two 4-story stone-and-brick U-shaped structures built around courtyards. It has 72 luxury units, each containing six to nine rooms, and is Chicago's largest apartment complex built before the 1920s. Considered Chicago's best vintage courtyard building, the Pattington was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1980 and won the 1995 Dreihaus Preservation Award. The complex has been a condominium since 1977.

In 1901 David again collaborated with his father-in-law, this time in George Richardson's capacity as superintendent of the David C. Cook Publishing Co., the giant publisher of Sunday School literature. D.C.

Cook was operating out of a congested conglomeration of buildings at the northeast corner of Chicago St. and the Fox River, a site ill-equipped for the needs of an expanding, high-volume, progressive-minded firm. A spacious new site was chosen at 850 N. Grove Ave. and here a thoughtfully-designed factory complex was built. The frontage building consists of a stately 2-story Greek Revival administration building, flanked by two single-story wings that, after the 1910 addition, extended nearly 400 feet along N. Grove Ave. The main factory buildings are in the rear of the frontage building. Innovative, state-of-the-art features designed to increase the efficiency, productivity and comfort of the employees included skylights, a fresh air ventilation system, adaptable 1-story construction, a lunchroom and a recreation hall. David also designed the 1910 addition to the factory, along with partner Harry Mahler.



David C. Cook complex, 850 N. North Grove

The old Elgin High School at 360 DuPage St. was designed by David in 1904 and built in two stages, in 1905-06 and 1910-11 (in 1938 there were two additions). This was Elgin's only public high school until 1962 when Larkin High School opened. A new Elgin High School was opened in 1972 on the eastern edge of town and since then the old Elgin High has housed administrative offices for the school district.

The last Elgin construction designed by David (along with his Chicago partner John Fischer) was a \$500,000 4- and 5-story addition to the Elgin National Watch Co. in 1921. In May 1921 David moved his family to Los Angeles, California and continued his successful career there, joined by his two sons, George Richardson Postle (1896-1984) and David Elmer Postle, Jr. (1901-62). The two boys, the Postles' only children, both graduated from Elgin High School and the University of Illinois school of architecture.

In a 1923 interview David had only good things to say about Elgin, the city in which he established his career, met and courted his wife and raised his two boys. His move to California was "just responding to the call of the West, and anxious to give my sons touch with its advantages." While in Elgin David was very active in the First Methodist Church, where he was superintendent of its Sunday School and a member of the Church board. He also served as a member of the Board of Education (1916-19) and was a member of the Monitor Masonic lodge. His wife Georgia was very active in

the local prohibition movement. In 1914 she was the leader of the “drys,” when they successfully voted to outlaw saloons in Elgin Township.

David Postle passed away in Pasadena, California at age 76 on March 12, 1939 and was buried there. He will be remembered not only in Elgin, but also in Chicago and the Los Angeles area, for the many landmark buildings he and his partners designed.

Acknowledgments: Mike Alft's books and newspaper articles; various newspaper sources, including obituaries and building reports; federal censuses; Internet sources; photos by Judy Van Dusen and others.

The Elgin Ferry Disaster of 1881

by Dawn Silfies, DMD

In January 1882, Elgin made the top ten list of “Great Disasters of the Year 1881,” coming in 4th place with the entry: Sinking of ferry boat, Elgin, Ill 10 lives lost. To understand what caused this disaster one must go back to the winter of 1880. It was one of the worst winters seen in the Elgin area according to pioneers living in the area since 1835. Snow, snow, and more snow, with freezing cold continuing into April, when there was a sudden warm-up with spring rains. Newspapers of the time reported on the flooding across the Midwest.

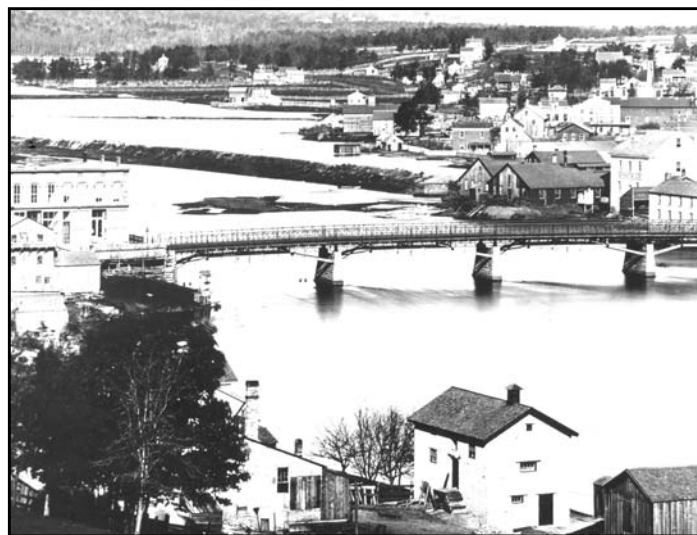
The waters of the Fox River started rising on Saturday April 16, with the breaking up of the ice and the melting of snow occurring on Sunday. The disasters started upriver, and like falling dominoes, continued traveling down the river with the rising waters. Large floating cakes of ice began picking up debris along the way. Bridges at first acted as barriers to the debris, but as the material built up, the pressure on these structures caused some to give way, bursting forth the free flow of unfettered water, ice cakes, and debris which then traveled downstream, causing more harm.

The Village of Dundee's bridge failed first; the iron span on Monday April 18, and the wooden part on Tuesday afternoon. Now the flow of the river was unimpeded and Elgin felt its awesome power starting on Tuesday morning. The *Elgin Advocate* reported “huge cakes of ice borne down the stream with remarkable rapidity passing over the dam, banging against the piers of the Chicago Street Bridge, wearing them away. Slowly at first, but as the torrent increased, they succumbed to the inevitable.”

The final insult was Smith Hoag's barn from the west side carried downriver by the floodwaters and crushing against the bridge with a terrible grinding noise, splin-

tering of wood, and bending ironwork as the two structures met. The flow of the water helped the bridge crush the barn like an eggshell, and soon the wooden mess was past the bridge, and quickly traveling down the river. The bridge, severely damaged, finally fell at 4 o'clock Tuesday afternoon. There was a terrible crash as the western span of the bridge came down first, and went floating down the river intact.

The crowd, watching from the shore, grew alarmed for the safety of the watch factory bridge at National St., and many hurried to see if it would go down too. The watch factory bridge gave a fearful shaking when it was struck by the Chicago St. bridge span, and for a while the span was entangled around the supporting pier, but this bridge did not go down. Further downriver, the supports to the trestle of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St Paul Rail Road had about 80 feet of track pulled down. The Chicago and Northwestern Bridge was also badly damaged.



Old Chicago St. Bridge, looking north, 1871

When the Chicago St. bridge went down, west-siders were cut off from the gas main. Kerosene lamps were brought out, and the gas company supplied a number of tin lamps. Buildings near the river were flooded on the lower floors. South of Chicago Street to the Watch Factory, every basement had water in it. Private residences on Grove Avenue from the Court House were standing in water, with the water flowing across the street and to the intersection of Dexter Street where flooding forced the sidewalk out of its bed and into the street.

Businesses dependent on the river for power either had to shut down or arrange for steam power. The west side did not have as much damage as the east side, although several barns and outhouses on the bank of the river were carried away.

The city council informally authorized the establishment of a ferry and according to the *Elgin Advocate*, “it will be ready for business Saturday or Monday. Elgin was fortunate with the destruction of so much property no lives were lost.”

The ferry was not a big boat; in fact it was a mere scow 11 feet by 16 feet. It was propelled by a rope strung across the Fox River. The City Council paid \$150.00 for the ferry, which was put into service on Tuesday April 26 1881. Its first trip from the east side of the river to the west went without a hitch, although people did express concern about stability and how it rode low in the water, only about six inches above the waterline. The second trip, begun the next morning, was the ferry's last.

At around 7:30 am April 27, adults and children started gathering on the west bank near the remains of the Chicago Street Bridge waiting to board the ferry. From a child's point of view it must have been an exciting adventure to travel to school on a boat. The newspapers of the time estimated that 30 people were on the ferry. The number of people accounted for later was 26, about half of them children. Citizens came out to watch the new ferry make its way across the river, so there were many eyewitness accounts of the tragedy.

After the passengers climbed aboard, the ferry pushed off with boatmen Thomas Murphy and Patrick Sullivan pulling on the rope to propel the boat through the water. This they did slowly, so as to not upset the delicate balance of their human cargo. All went well until they were two thirds of the way across the river, when the ferry encountered a faster moving current of water. The river, which was only inches from the top edge of the boat, now lapped over the edge, wetting some of the passengers. Startled, they reacted by backing up to get away from the water, pushing other passengers against the far railing, and quickly unbalancing the boat. T

he railing gave way, spilling passengers into the freezing cold muddy water, and causing the ferry to fill with water. The boat then capsized, quickly sinking below the surface. The passengers struggled for life in the freezing swift-flowing current. Their horrified screams could be heard blocks away. People watching from the shore rushed to help, using wooden boards and rowboats to save those they could.

William Long, a carpenter, found a plank in the water, grabbed it, and swam ashore with it, bringing one of the little girls with him.

Thomas Murphy clung to the tow rope for as long as he could. Dangling in the water, he finally let go. A strong swimmer, he tried to help some of the passengers, but soon was overcome by so many grabbing at him that they pulled him underwater. Thomas Murphy died that morning, along with seven others.

While some of the bodies were found right away, three would be found days later near the watch factory bridge. Frances Creighton's father walked the banks of the river night and day, not resting until her body was recovered.

Those saved were: WH Paton, Dr. Van Koerhing, Robert Egan, Patrick Sullivan, John Collins, George Kirkpatrick, William Long, Peter Johnson, Louis Olsen, A Harris, LD Eastman, Emma Berringer, Bertie Rahn, JA Simmons, J L Lockwood, Andrew Dawson, Austin Rice, Fred Ainley, Alfred Hillstrum, and a farmer, name unknown.

The coroner's inquest found that the victims "came to their death by drowning while crossing the Fox River on a boat built by the order of the mayor and aldermen for the purpose of ferrying passengers across the river between East and West Elgin; that said boat was wholly unfit for the purpose for which it was intended and was managed in a careless and reckless manner by the boatmen in charge; that Mayor Bosworth as the executive officer of the city, and alderman Jencks, chairman of the committee on streets, having the boat specially (sic) in charge, were guilty of negligence in not knowing positively that the boat was safe and placed in the hands of careful and competent men before allowing passengers to be taken upon it."

Those known to have drowned:

- Thomas Murphy age 34, one of the ferrymen
- Guy S. Carlisle age 15, eldest son of Supervisor James Carlisle
- Leo Taylor age 15, son of James Taylor from the firm Campbell & Taylor
- Elmer Foster age 15, son of George Foster carpenter
- John Corben age 37, recently moved here from Lake Co. Leaves a wife and two children.
- Frances Creighton age 13, daughter of John Creighton yardmaster Chicago, Milwaukee & St Paul
- Emery Huntley IV age 23, from Algonquin
- William Colville age unknown

Acknowledgments: Mike Alft's book "Elgin: An American History" pp 93-95; newspapers Elgin Advocate, Chicago Tribune, Ottawa Free Trader, and the Rock Island Argus; city council meeting minutes; death record information from Gail Borden Library website www.gailborden.info.

History's Mysteries

Thornton Thompson....

Museum volunteers Rick and Kathleen Grimm have been helping to organize the Museum's collections for the past two years. Rick found a little metal tackle box on a shelf that held a collection of 120 Civil War letters. Rick determined that the letters all related to Thornton Thompson of Butlerville, Ohio. A little research showed that Thornton Thompson survived the war and led a long life of business and service in Warren County. The Collections Committee recom-



mended that the Civil War letter collection be transferred to the Warren County Historical Society in Lebanon, Ohio. We made contact with the Museum in Ohio and they were happy to accept the collection. Rick and Kathleen delivered the letter collection to Warren County in October!

In the meantime, Ken Gough transcribed all 120 letters, which you can see on his blog:

<http://catherinethompsoncivilwarletters.blogspot.com/>

The letters are a fascinating look into the 1860s life of a soldier and his wife trying to get through the conflict and maintain the business back home. But how did the Elgin History Museum come to have this letter collection? Ken put the pieces together as he researched each of Thornton's children. The oldest son, George Thornton, moved to Elgin and lived here for 40 years. George was an Elgin Justice of the Peace for a time and helped start the Old Settler's Association, forerunner of the Elgin Area Historical Society. The letter collection was donated by him to the Old Settler's Association and transferred to the Museum. Way to go, Ken!

...and George Washington

As recently reported in the *Elgin Courier-News*, last year a Colorado man, John Thelen, bought a Native American picture at a Goodwill store, wanting to reuse its frame. Inside, he found an old print of George Washington behind the artwork.

The notes on the back said it was put up at Washington School in Elgin IL on January 26, 1899. Mr. Thelen located Washington Elementary school, one of the oldest schools in district U46, on the internet. He then mailed the portrait, the Native American artwork and a letter about his discovery to school principal Lori Brandes. He wrote, "...I only hope that someone would be interested in the original picture with its inscription, as it may have some historic value to the school...or not!"

The name of the person who presented the portrait to the school, Laura Bunker, was also written on the back. Ms Brandes believes Laura Bunker gave the picture to the school at the time of her eighth grade graduation. No one knows when or why the portrait ended up in Colorado. Judy Van Dusen, one of our researchers, said Bunker is an old Elgin surname, Laura Bunker passed away in California in the 1950s, and Judy's research suggests one of Laura's granddaughters may have lived in Colorado.

"My theory is the picture was taken down from the school, given back to the family, it ended up with the granddaughter in Colorado, they didn't want it anymore, and it wound up in a resale shop," she said. Judy is trying to contact other Bunker family members who may still be in the Chicago area. The portrait now hangs on the wall at Washington Elementary once again.