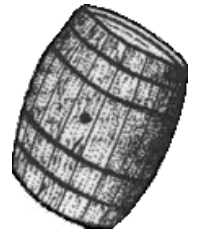


The Crackerbarrel



Elgin History Museum News November 2021

President's Report

Al Walters, President



I generally devote this column to highlighting upcoming activities at the Museum such as the November 13th Gala. This month I wish to discuss the 34th Annual Bluff City Cemetery Walk.

The 2021 Walk was one of the best-attended walks, and this was no accident: our co-chairs Rudy and Lillian Galfi spent hours upon hours planning, organizing, researching, writing, recruiting and managing every aspect of the event.

The past few years, there was interest in changing the format. The Bluff City Cemetery Walk has three objectives: bringing Elgin's history alive, making the cemetery a less foreboding place, and of course raising funds for the Museum.

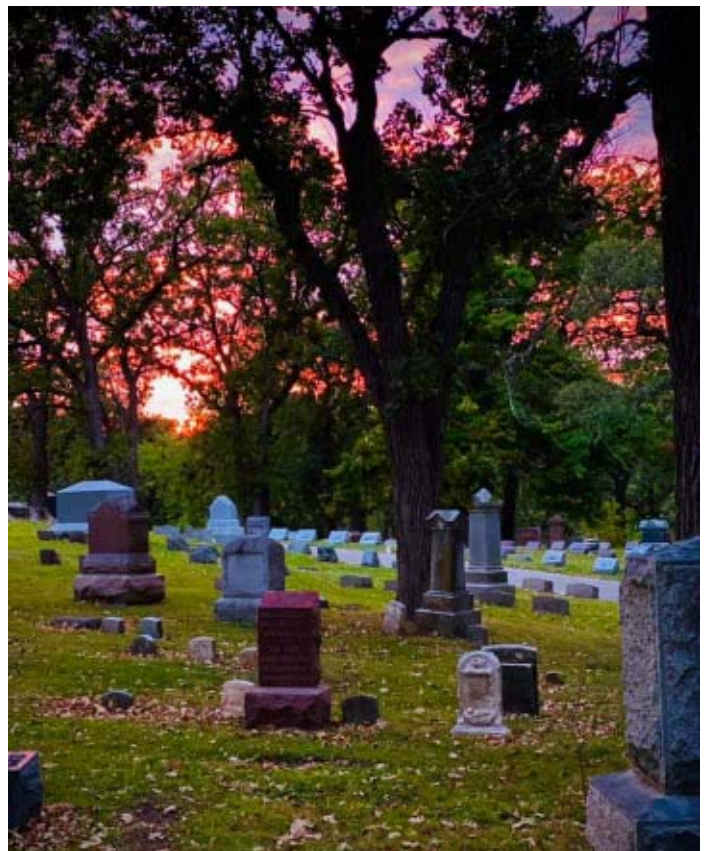
To achieve these goals, the main concern was to accommodate more attendees while keeping the tour group size manageable, and how to enhance the customer experience. Change can be hard—I often joke that as historians we like to mentally live in the past, so change comes extra hard for us.

At Rudy and Lil's behest, we committed to exploring a new plan. Could we spread the event over two days instead of one? Would folks be interested in a Saturday evening tour? Could we manage a shotgun start? Could people adapt to four defined starting times, two on Saturday and two on Sunday? Would volunteers commit a full weekend to the event? How would we communicate these changes to the public? Would people view a video version? Would those who didn't hear about the format change in advance be disappointed? Would the City and Cemetery support a two-day event?

These concerns were all addressed through extensive planning. With Rudy and Lil calmly leading the way we devised solutions. By September, I knew if the train came off the tracks it wouldn't be for lack of planning and effort. Still, this was something new.

With the help of great weather, solid planning, dedicated volunteers and crossed fingers, the 34th Cemetery Walk exceeded all expectations. We selected six fascinating characters and a vignette. Our actors told their stories with compassion, professionalism and a touch of humor. We welcomed 600 guests over the two days and ushered them via small groups through their walks in 90 minutes. We accomplished all three goals.

At our wrap-up meeting, Rudy and Lil thanked the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to realize their vision of an expanded event. The changes were successful because we built on the successes of the prior 33 years. I wish to thank all of the dedicated leaders and volunteers who made the 2021 Cemetery Walk a resounding success.



Sunset at Bluff City Cemetery. This was the first year an evening walk was offered to the public.

The Crackerbarrel

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The Crackerbarrel welcomes reader contributions.
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 Visit our website Elginhistory.org

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

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Dec. 18, 12:00-3:00 P.M.: Family Play Day at the Museum (Bilingual event)

Make a LeeWards-style ornament for the holidays. Games and activities, plus tours through the exhibits. Donations accepted. Play is supervised by English/Spanish-speaking personnel. El juego es supervisado por personal de habla inglesa / española.

In Memoriam: Harry Blizzard

Elizabeth Marston, Museum Director

Board Member Emeritus Harry Blizzard passed away last week at the age of 94. His many years of service to the Museum, his leadership in the Elgin community, and his friendly and positive personality kept the Museum on track and growing. He was one of the longest-serving board members, one of the most significant fundraiser and donor for the Museum, a Civil War buff, an Elgin Road Race fan, and a docent, educator, and role model.



Harry and Phyllis Blizzard

Harry Blizzard was born in 1927 in Iowa. Harry served in the military as a young man at the end of World War II, from September 1945 to December 1946, at Fort Snelling in Minnesota and Fort Riley in Kansas. Harry was very proud that his great-grandfather fought in the Civil War with General McPherson, the only Union general killed in the Civil War. Harry prized his great-grandfather's Medal of Honor and Civil War memorabilia.

He attended Iowa State University and earned a degree in Civil Engineering. In 1956 he was hired by the Illinois State Tollway management during the construction from Rockford to Chicago. Harry and his wife Phyllis moved to Elgin because "Elgin was in the middle of the tollway system and looked like a nice place to live."

2021 Program Schedule

Betsy Armistead, Program Chair

Check the website for current information. elginhistory.org/events

Please register for in-person tours on elginhistory.org

Nov. 13, 7:00 P.M. Virtual Annual Benefit and Gala

See article on page 3 for details on silent auction and registering for the Zoom presentation.

Nov. 20, 12:00-3:00 P.M.: Family Play Day at the Museum (Bilingual event)

Make a LeeWards-style ornament for the holidays. Games and activities, plus tours through the exhibits. Donation accepted. Kids are welcome to learn and have some fun exploring the Museum's interactive exhibits. Learn about the founding of Elgin, the Watch Factory, Elgin Road Races, and products Made in Elgin! Play is supervised by English/Spanish-speaking personnel. El juego es supervisado por personal de habla inglesa / española.

Dec. 4, 1:00 P.M.: Annual Holiday Tea and Program

Linda Rock presents An Elgin Christmas.

Elgin historian Linda Rock highlights how Elgin prepared for the Christmas and New Year's holidays during the 20th century. Traditions include Santa, parades, shopping, decorations and more. This is an in-person and Zoom online event.

The tollway assignment took two years, then Harry moved on to help rebuild O'Hare Field. The couple had four children and remained in Elgin for 65 years. He started his own civil engineering firm in 1961 called Harry Blizzard & Associates which he directed until 1990. Harry also owned the Hoot, Toot & Whistle miniature train amusement area on Route 20 for a short time in the 1960s along with an RV sales park.

He was an elected Trustee at Elgin Community College (ECC) from 1966-1978. In 1981, ECC ended the funding of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra. Harry became a transformational board member for the symphony, changing it from an all amateur group to an all professional award-winning organization. He served as symphony board president for five years, but remained on the symphony board for the rest of his life.

Harry joined the Elgin Area Historical Society Board in 1993. He served as Vice-President from 1995-1999 and led a corporate fundraising effort that raised thousands of dollars to create new exhibits. As a donor, the greatest impact came from a generous donation Harry and Phyllis made to increase the Museum's endowment.

Harry received the Elgin Cosmopolitan Club Distinguished Service Award in 1999. In 2000, ECC renamed their Stage One Theater to honor Harry and Phyllis Blizzard as the Blizzard Theater. This was a result of the Blizzard's significant pledge to the school, which became an endowment for the arts at ECC, specifically dedicated to keeping technology up-to-date.

"I gained so much more than I've ever given. There is a lot of satisfaction in helping others." —Harry Blizzard

Elgin History Museum Gala 2021

Kathy Walters

Our 2021 annual gala is almost ready. Because of Covid we are once again having a virtual auction. It will begin at 8:00 A.M. on Wednesday November 10th and bidding will end at 7:15 P.M. on the evening of Saturday, November 13th. To view the items, visit <https://elginhistory.org/event/7pm-annual-gala/>

This year we have new offerings of five different personalized Elgin Experiences for you to bid on. They include a tour of the Wing Mansion and a ride in a Model A Ford, a tour of an amazing collection of toys and bicycles along with some full-size vintage cars, assistance in finding out the secrets of your old house with an Elgin architectural historian, a walking tour of an historic Elgin neighborhood highlighting architectural details, and with stories of the area, and a focus on Elgin history from a woman's point of view.



This annual fundraiser will feature carefully curated gift baskets, vacation packages to Panama City Beach, FL and Door County, WI. and a golf package for Bowes Creek.

Any donation of \$100.00 or more will receive a FREE Elgin Watch porcelain ornament, different from last year's offering. Check the museum website for details. So, plan to join us on-line the evening of Saturday, November 13th for a Zoom presentation of the auction items. **Please note that you must register for the event at www.elginhistory.org.** The evening will also be streamed to Facebook Live.

We will take one last look at the auction items starting at 7:00 P.M. The bidding will end at 7:15 P.M. There will then be a presentation of several Museum Moments which are very short videos explaining little-known items in the Museum's collection. This will give us time to determine the auction winners. The winners will be announced at 7:30 P.M.

Charles Harley Wayne, Elgin Mayor and Trial Attorney

Linda Farroh Eder

The death of Charles Harley Wayne at age 54 on December 29, 1909, shook the trial law establishment of the Chicago area. Upon returning from Chicago on legal business, Charles stepped off the train in Elgin and hurried toward his office at Botsford, Wayne and Botsford, which was located in the YMCA block just across Chicago St. and east of the bridge from the train depot. As he approached his office building he slipped on the ice, fell and slammed his head on the sidewalk. His wife Mary, who was waiting at his office for him to arrive, was notified of the accident and arrived at his side shortly before he died.

Following his death, five days of stories and tributes filled the Elgin papers. The *Elgin Daily News* of December 30, 1909, ended a story, "... Lawyers throughout northern Illinois laud him as one of the

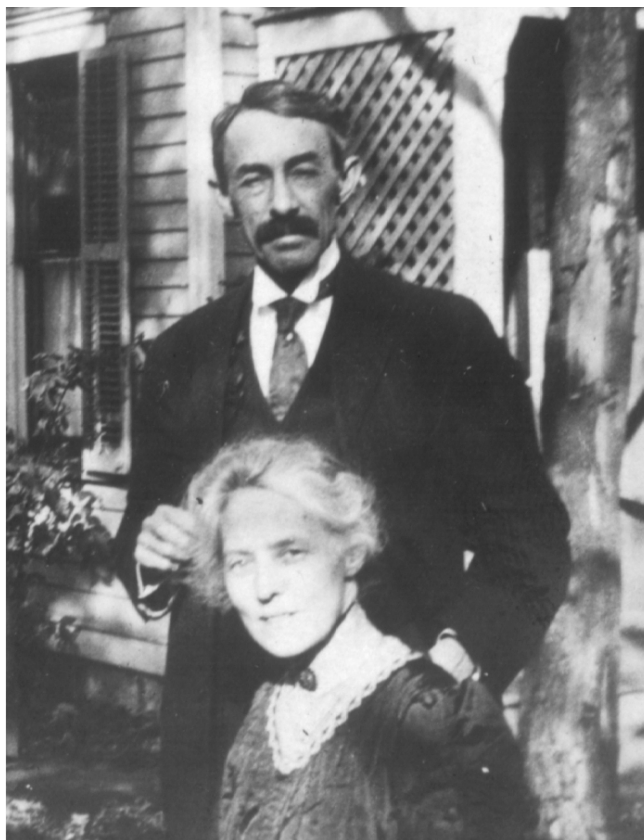
most able trial attorneys in the district. His reputation extends throughout Kane, McHenry, DuPage, Lake, Boone and Winnebago counties, and he was a familiar figure in the courts of Chicago." On January 3, 1910, in an extraordinary gesture, "... the Elgin city court and the Kane County circuit court adjourned after transacting necessary business, out of respect to the memory of the deceased, and the fact of adjournment was ordered spread upon the records of both courts by the judges presiding"

Charles Harley Wayne was born the second child of Harley and Ellen (Deitz) Wayne on December 27, 1855, in Union, McHenry County, Illinois. At the age of 20, Harley had traveled from his home in Maryland, Otsego County, New York, to the newly-opened farmland of McHenry County. By the time he married Ellen Deitz, the seventh child of William and Martha (Maguire) Deitz, on April 30, 1848, Harley had become an influential citizen of the area. Their first child, Ida Estelle, was born September 15, 1851, but she tragically died August 22, 1854.

When Harley wrote Ellen during the first year of the Civil War, he always inquired about Charlie and frequently gave advice and messages to be passed to him. Harley Wayne, Captain, Company D, 15th Illinois Infantry, was killed at Pittsburg Landing, Tennessee, April 6, 1862, during the early hours of the Battle of Shiloh.

Ellen and her son continued to live in Union where Charles attended school. He later enrolled at the University of Chicago, where he was President of his graduating class in 1880. Upon graduation, Charles returned to McHenry County and studied law with A.B. Coon of Marengo. Charles was admitted to the bar in December 1882 and moved to Elgin, Illinois, where he and his mother Ellen bought a new house at 433 Division St. for \$3,000 on April 20, 1883.

In Elgin, Charles formed a law practice with Attorney John A. Russell. In a tribute to Charles upon his death, Attorney Russell said, "... The business relations thus established brought about a very warm friendship which has always continued. He was a lawyer of marked ability and was gentlemanly, courteous and considerate in the courtroom as well as while transacting the ordinary business of the lawyer ..." After five years, Charles entered a law practice which became Botsford, Wayne and Botsford.



Charles Harley Wayne and his wife Mary

As his star was rising in the legal world, Charles met Mary Smith, the daughter of Leonidas and Sarah Jane (Stewart) Smith. Mary and her sister Sarah had followed their brother J. Stewart Smith to Elgin when he took the pastorate at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer in 1885. Mary Smith was born on September 22, 1861, in Nashville, Tennessee, as one of five children.

C.E. Botsford and Stella M. Eaton witnessed the marriage of Charles and Mary by J. Stewart Smith at the Episcopal Church of the Redeemer on January 17, 1888. Since Charles and Mary did not want to disappoint friends and well-wishers, they sent no invitations but invited everyone to the wedding via a newspaper notice. When the doors to the church were opened, a throng of people filled every seat within five minutes, leaving several hundred people outside the church. After the ceremony an informal reception took place at the residence of Rev. J. Stewart Smith. The happy couple left on the 9:30 P.M. train to the east.

The *Elgin Courier* followed the honeymoon trip of this favored young couple. When they returned to Elgin, they lived at 433 Division St. with Charles' mother Ellen. Numerous articles appeared in the local papers about parties and social events that the couple held or attended. Both were active in Episcopal Church of the Redeemer activities.



433 Division St.

Charles was a member in numerous clubs, participated in community affairs, spoke at many community functions, and was active in the Republican Party. He and his mother Ellen participated yearly in the Memorial day observances featuring the Marengo Harley Wayne post of the GAR.

In 1895, Charles ran for Mayor of Elgin and presented his platform in the newspaper:

- 1st - I am not connected with nor do I represent any local corporation whatever.
- 2nd - That neither I, nor my business partner, are now or ever have been the owners of stock in any railroad corporation and if any person can show to the contrary I will make him a present of same.
- 3rd - I am not the candidate of any ring or class of citizens.
- 4th - I have not made, nor will I make any promise to any person to appoint him to any position whatever.
- 5th - If elected my aim will be to do my duty conscientiously in the interest of the whole people, giving to all individuals and all corporations their exact rights, but not a hair's breadth more.

Charles won the election over Anson W. Root, 2,142 to 1,369 votes, on April 16, 1895. Two years later, Charles decided not to run for a second term. In his term as mayor, Charles secured the publishing and release of an annual report which had been delayed for three years. He also secured many changes in the rules whereby the minority have a say in the proceedings of the board.

About 1900, Charles and Mary traveled west where they visited Charles' cousins in California. On that trip they met Esther Bishop, the daughter of McKendree Bishop and the granddaughter of Ellen (Deitz) Wayne's sister, Mary Ann Bishop. Charles and Mary asked if she would like to visit and live with them in

Elgin. Esther borrowed money from her father and made the trip to Elgin, where she joined the Charles Wayne household.



Esther Bishop Britton

On December 19, 1900, Ellen (Deitz) Wayne died after a three-week illness and was buried with her beloved husband Harley in the Marengo Cemetery. Charles gave Esther a diamond ring for the loving care she gave his mother Ellen before her death. Almost 40 years later, Esther, then Mrs. Claude Britton, gave the same loving care to Charles' wife Mary before Mary's death on January 24, 1940.

During his time in Elgin, Charles became a noted trial lawyer. "Gifted with a keenness of perception that is seldom equaled and being an adept in the reading of human nature, he combined the shrewdness of an analytical mind with gift of oratory that was entrancing."

After one term in the Wheaton court, a newspaper praised Charles: "An Envious Record—Never has there been a term of court in Wheaton where there were more hotly contested cases than the one which closed last week. And it is an almost unheard of thing for any lawyer or firm of lawyers to be engaged in nearly every case on one side or the other and to be on the winning side of all. But such is the record made by C.H. Wayne

of Elgin. Charley has a host of friends in DuPage County and his stock is way, way above par and we know of but one objection to him - he does not vote here."

Acknowledgments: Researched and written by Linda Farroh Eder, a granddaughter of Esther Bishop Britton. Condensed and edited for publication, this document draws information from family Bibles, diaries, scrapbooks, newspapers and miscellaneous other sources.

Who Was Bone John?

Peter Hennessey, Museum Member

The following notice appeared in an Elgin newspaper in 1898: "Bone John' has been called by police for cruelty to animals by driving a decrepit old horse..."

"Bone John" once drove a wagon in Elgin collecting animal carcasses. A weary horse pulled the wagon, looking as though it belonged in the wagon instead of hitched to it. In the days before automobiles, when horses and other livestock were common within city limits, people like Bone John performed a valuable service hauling away the bodies of animals that had died, a gruesome and smelly but necessary task.

"Bone John" was my mother's grandfather. He was born Johann Heinrich Schultz on January 1, 1850 in Hanstedt, Hanover, Germany. He immigrated to America about 1871. He learned English and became a naturalized citizen in 1886. He married Sophia Sass in December 1874 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Elgin. She was a German immigrant too, but unlike John, she spoke no English. They had three children: Frank, Charles, and Ida. The 1875 History of Elgin City and Business Directory listed John as "a dealer in bones and rags residing on the west side of Dundee Road, north of Lovell Street." He also manufactured fertilizer, glue, and grease.

As Elgin grew, farmland was replaced by businesses and homes, so John moved to some farmland on Bode Road. The 1910 census shows he rented the land, and that he had a hired hand named George Haberly who was also a German immigrant.

I enjoy history because we can gain understanding by comparing past events and situations with the present day. If Mike Rowe (star of TV's "Dirty Jobs" series) had worked with Bone John rendering animal parts into useful products, how would he compare John's smelly work with the many "Dirty Jobs" he participated in over the years?

My older brother, Michael, proofread the previous paragraphs for me. When he finished reading, he asked me why I hadn't included the story about why Hugo

Lose Jr. always provided special, personalized service to our parents whenever they went to his gas station on the corner of Chicago Street and Bode Road.

Hugo was almost always the one who serviced our car, and he was always friendly and really quite chatty. But that was all I remembered, so I asked my brother the significance. It seems that Hugo provided such top-notch service to my family because he was very grateful that our mother's grandfather Bone John had helped his father (Hugo Sr.) come to America.

I contacted Glen Lose, son of Hugo Lose Jr., for more information. He explained that in the early 1900s the Elgin National Watch Company sent agents to Germany to recruit workers, including Glen's grandfather Hugo Sr., hired because he had graduated from a watchmaker's college in Germany. He lived on Bone John's farm for a time.

Bone John also helped four others come to America. John Henry Schultz was also listed as a passenger on the Kaiserin Augusta with Fred Berlin and Henry and Dora Fehlhaber, further evidence that he did indeed assist others on their journey to America.

So what are we supposed to make of this immigrant farmer's life, performing a job that may have been scorned by others? John Schultz's obituary was published in the *Elgin Daily Courier* on December 21, 1916. It reads in part: "His characteristic charity to needy people made him many friends." Such a simple tribute—he helped change peoples' lives.



Photo: Courtesy of Bartlett History Museum. The Kronprinzessin Cecille arrived in New York on March 26, 1913. Passenger John Henry Schultz is to the right of the boy holding the life preserver.

Thanks to Glenn Lose for sharing his grandfather's story, and to Pam Rohleder of the Bartlett History Museum, and independent researcher John Weiss for providing specific details to bolster our family's story about "Bone John."

EAHS Election Results

Laura Stroud, Secretary

The results of the yearly EAHS election for 2021-2022 were announced at the Annual Membership Meeting on Oct. 10, 2021. The voting was conducted by email and paper ballots. There were 63 votes by email and 16 votes by paper ballots, with a total of 79 members voting. The following candidates were elected:

Officers (Two Year Term)

- Christen Sundquist, Secretary
- Ricky Harris, Corresponding Secretary
- Bill Briska, Treasurer

Directors (Three Year Term)

- Dennis Roxworthy
- Laura Stroud
- Tina Viglucci

Board of Directors' recommendation to merge the Elgin Area Historical Society Constitution and Bylaws was also voted on and approved.

The Terrible Truesdell Bridge at Chicago Street

Gavin Carlson, Museum Intern

Elgin's First Bridges

"Urbs Fluminis," or city by the river, has been the slogan on Elgin's official seal since 1859, and of course a city by the river is a city that requires bridges. Elgin's first bridge was a crude wooden span built at today's Chicago Street in 1837-1838. The bridge had to stretch over a river that was much wider than it is today. The first bridge was washed out in the flood of 1849 and was rebuilt. By 1866 it was in poor condition and Elgin voters approved a bond issue to replace it. The contract was given to Lucius E. Truesdell of Warren, MA, for his patented iron bridge, said to combine a pleasing design with a strong structure.

The Truesdell Bridge is Built

The Truesdell bridge was completed on Halloween day of 1866 at a total cost of \$13,200 (approximately \$226,000 in today's dollars), with \$2,000 being paid up front, and the rest being paid upon the bridge's completion. Its roadway was 18 feet wide, topped with seasoned oak and featuring pedestrian walkways and wrought iron railings on either side. Truesdell delivered a bridge he promised was both beautiful and strong.

Truesdell Troubles in Elgin and Elsewhere

While no one questioned the bridge's beauty, its strength and structural design would soon be challenged. Just over two years later, in December 1868, more than 90 head of cattle with a combined weight of 50-60 tons was driven across the bridge, causing it to collapse. Thinking it was a fluke, the bridge was rebuilt in the Truesdell style; an ultimately fatal decision.

Just a few months later on the Fourth of July 1869, a festive crowd gathered to watch a tub race on the Fox River. This crowd proved to be too much weight for the bridge to handle and the east abutment gave way, throwing 150 spectators into the water. Luckily the river was barely 4 feet deep at that point, and there was only one fatality. The bridge was rebuilt once again in the Truesdell style.



The rebuilt Truesdell bridge, 1871. Note the beauty of its lattice iron work. The large building at the end of the bridge on the right is the Lynch Building at 100-110 West Chicago Street. It housed Friedrich's Furniture, which burned in 1958, with over \$150,000 in damage.

The Chicago Street bridge in Elgin was not the only bridge built in the Truesdell style; a Truesdell bridge was also built over the Rock River in Dixon, IL, this bridge also had problems. It collapsed on May 4, 1873, only 4 years after it was built, resulting in 46 fatalities. The news of this horrible accident made the rounds and some local farmers decided that fording the river would be safer than using the Elgin Truesdell bridge. They weren't the only ones who refused to use the bridge – when the circus arrived in Elgin the lead elephant put one foot on the bridge before backing off and refusing to move. The herd of elephants had to be led down the river bank and driven through the water to the other side.

The End of the Truesdell Bridge

In 1881 a flood caused by melting snow from one of Elgin's worst winters broke the dam upriver and again washed out the Truesdell bridge at Chicago Street.

ELGIN HISTORY MUSEUM
360 PARK STREET
ELGIN, IL 60120



This in turn led to the Elgin Ferry Boat Disaster, in which eight people lost their lives after the town's makeshift ferry capsized while crossing the river.

Later that same year, the bridge would be rebuilt to finally shake off its bad history. The new bridge was built by the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway for only \$1,200 (less than a tenth of the cost of the Truesdell bridge). The railway drove piles deep into the riverbed and constructed an ordinary wooden bridge. The new bridge was deemed “homely but nice” by the weekly *Elgin Advocate*, and it didn't collapse!



The Truesdell Bridge after the flood of 1881

Keeping Score?

That's six bridges over the Fox River at Chicago Street between 1837 and 1881, including three collapsed Truesdell models between 1866 and 1881. That's a new bridge nearly every 7 years!

Lucius E. Truesdell was born May 10, 1818 in Monson, Massachusetts. He was a physician and inventor who, according to the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, proposed an iron bridge that “might be built of short light pieces, easy of transportation to the almost inaccessible localities where bridges might be needed.” His design proved to be less than stable, and after the two collapses of the Elgin bridge, he decided to pursue other avenues of work.

Welcome New Members

- Michael Maginity
- Jamie Rivas
- Amy Wisinski and Robb Walker