



# MCHS News

November 2020

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 8 No. 6

**Historical Museum**  
715 N Main Street  
Edwardsville, IL 62025

**Hours:**  
The museum is currently closed for renovation.

**Archival Library**  
801 N Main Street  
**Telephone Hours:**  
Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm  
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm  
(Reservations recommended)

**Phone:**  
618-656-7569

**Web Address:**  
madcohstory.org

**E-mail:**  
info@madcohstory.org

## About Us:

The MCHS museum complex, consisting of a modern archival library, a museum in the 1836 Weir House and the Helms Collection Center, is owned by the nonprofit Madison County Historical Society and operated jointly with Madison County.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization.

## THE WEIR HOUSE FAMILY: MADISON COUNTY PIONEERS

by Cindy Reinhardt

The Weir House, built in 1836, has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1983. Located at 715 N. Main St. in Edwardsville, the house has had only two owners in 184 years, the Weir family (three generations), and the Madison County Historical Society who purchased the home for a museum in 1963. This issue of the MCHS News will look at the fascinating family who built and owned the house for more than a century.

### The House

This two-and-a-half story Federal-style home was built the year after Dr. John H. Weir came to Edwardsville. According to Weir family lore, the house was financed by John's first wife, Hepzibah, and built using plans and carpenters from the East Coast. It was built on a corner lot facing N. Main Street with Eighth Street on the north. More than a century ago, Edwardsville renamed their streets and Eighth Street became F Street. The street was vacated in 2005 and is now a brick plaza between the museum and library buildings.

The house was intended to be part of a row of houses. For that reason, it was designed with no windows on the south side. When the rowhouse concept didn't materialize, a single window was added to provide additional light in the room.

There were originally many outbuildings on the property that stretched from Main Street to Second Street. These included a stable for the doctor's horses, a necessity at the homeplace of a doctor who often made house calls.

Another outbuilding was a detached brick kitchen. Later a one-story kitchen was attached on the back of the house. In 1929, the one-story addition was replaced with a larger two-story addition that made it possible to subdivide the house into at least two apartments. Another major change to the house is circa 1930, the house was painted white. Although attractive, this would later prove to be a major error.

### Dr. Weir – the early years

John Weir's early history is not well documented except in family stories written many years after his death. He was born Oct. 5, 1809 in South Carolina. His roots were said to be

Scotch-Irish, with both sides being Covenanters. Covenanters in America were often affiliated with the Presbyterian church and held a position of anti-slavery. The Weir family moved to Tennessee in 1825 where John began working with Rev. Samuel A. Worcester. (Although more research is needed, it is likely this is the same Rev. Worcester who ministered to the Cherokee and helped found the first Native American newspaper.)

Worcester encouraged John to further his education. In 1829, as related in the 1912 *Centennial History of Madison County*, John walked to Andover, Massachusetts. It took him 30 days to complete the journey. At Andover he entered

Phillips Academy, an elite school already well established by 1829 as a school for young men (only). Today, it has grades 9-12 and university prep and is the alma mater of two U.S. presidents and numerous other dignitaries.

John was not from a wealthy family so he had to juggle a schedule of teaching, classes and other jobs to work his way through Phillips, and then Harvard Medical School. His studies included a tutelage under Dr. Kendall Davis of Reading, Massachusetts. It was in Reading that



Patriarch of the Weir family, John H Weir (1809-1878) (MCHS)

continued page 4

## ABOUT US

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### VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the Museum or the Archival Library. If interested, please call 618-656-7569.

### MEMBERSHIPS

Several membership levels are available to those interested in supporting the work of preserving Madison County history through an MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on our website, or at the Archival Library.

### PUBLICATIONS

#### MCHS NEWS

6 issues annually  
Cindy Reinhardt, Editor

## MUSEUM & ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

### LIBRARY OPEN TO PUBLIC

Madison County Archival Library reopened in September with COVID-19 precautions in place to protect both staff and patrons. Masks are required for all visitors to the library, and the number of researchers is limited so reservations are strongly suggested, but not required. Walk-ins are still welcome, but will be subject to the availability of space.

Reservations are also helpful because it gives staff time to pull needed materials in advance, making it possible for researchers to complete their work in less time. Call 618-656-7569 to make a reservation.

Hours at the library are the same as before COVID, Wednesday-Friday, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. and Sunday 1-4 p.m. Please call if you plan to visit near a holiday, as this may affect hours.

### MICRO-MUSEUM CREATED

A small museum has recently been established in the conference room of the Archival Library. Curator Jenn VanBibber has installed an exhibit called *Déjà Vu: 2019-2020*. It compares recent events with a century ago. The symmetry between now

and then is startling: COVID-19 *versus* the Spanish Influenza, and an abbreviated baseball season.

The micro-museum contains five display cases recently removed from the Madison County Courthouse, when social distance guidelines were implemented for the safety of people accessing court services.

David Thompson, a graduate student at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, has been assembling materials about the Flagg family, who were among the earliest-settlers of Madison County. His research will culminate in an exhibit which will be open to the public after Thanksgiving.

### NEW ONLINE EXHIBIT

Assistant Curator Mary Z. Rose has just posted another of her wonderful on-line exhibits. *Advertising: The Art of Persuasion* is the 13th online exhibit available on the Society's website. Using materials from the collections highlighting businesses that once operated in Madison County, she has created a primer on the evolution of advertising in America. This exhibit can be accessed at: <https://madcohistory.org/online-exhibits/advertising-the-art-of-persuasion/>



## RECENT NEWS

The votes are in! The slate of new and returning board members was unanimously approved, and the Society is grateful for those who also included comments and suggestions. Thank you to all who returned MCHS ballots in a timely manner. This is the first time the annual report was distributed via the U.S. Mail instead of at the annual meeting.

Two projects involving Society volunteers, museum staff and SIUE interns are in progress at the present time.

The first is a project using the centennial towers and refurbishing them for use as displays that will be placed in locations around the county. Each tower has four panels rep-

resenting different townships in Madison County. QR codes are being added to the towers so viewers can obtain additional information about Madison County history by scanning it with their smart phones.

The second project is the creation of an app which will provide a driving tour of Madison County. The first topic currently under discussion is a tour of Route 66, since the "Mother Road" includes so many Madison County communities.

A recent expansion of the website, moving to a new and larger platform, had a few hiccups, but those have been resolved. Updates and new materials will be added soon.

# THE WEIR HOUSE: LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The Weir family's homeplace has been the home of the Madison County Historical Museum since 1964. Prior to that the museum occupied a room of the courthouse, but as the county's population grew, the museum space was needed for court business. Although the museum building is currently closed for renovations, the museum staff continue to make exhibits available at off-site locations, as well as online, so the museum is never really closed. The Madison County Archival Library, a part of the Museum Department, remains open.

New plans for the museum building began several years ago with an architectural survey which identified what restoration work was required. That's where the white paint mentioned in the article on page one reared its ugly head. Bricks used in buildings of this age are "soft" bricks which, when painted, will eventually cause moisture problems to the interior. Most of the paint has now been removed from the building, stopping short of removing all the paint so the brick is not damaged. Over \$800,000 has been spent on the building in recent years, but additional funds will be needed to complete the work, including design of the interior and exterior exhibits.

The Madison County Historical Museum and Archival Museum are operated in partnership with Madison County government. The County provides operating expenses and leases the museum and collections for a nominal fee. The Madison County Historical Society (MCHS) owns all the artifacts and four buildings on the museum campus (two normally open to the public). When major improvements are needed, MCHS works to locate grant funding and/or to raise money to pay the expenses. These expenses have totaled nearly \$1.5 million over the past couple of decades and include construction of the Archival Library building, a major engineered repair to the front wall of the Weir House, as well as recent work.

Within a few weeks, MCHS members will receive materials for the MCHS Capital Campaign to fund the completion of the museum building and exhibits. The campaign has been delayed due to COVID, but for work to continue during this time, additional money will be needed. As soon as possible, regular fundraising will be resumed, but until then, we hope you will consider making a donation so construction can continue.



**WATCH YOUR MAILBOX FOR THE CAPITAL CAMPAIGN!**

## 2020 NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

(2021 Membership Year)

September-October ♦ Thank you for supporting MCHS!

### **\$250+ Benefactor**

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## 2020 DONORS FOR MUSEUM RENOVATION

September-October ♦ Thank you for your generosity!

Helen Lee Beneze  
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Beverly Stutz



## THE EARLY YEARS (CONT FROM PAGE 1)

Dr. Weir met his first wife, Hepzibah (sometimes spelled Hepzibath) Damon Temple, a young widow.

Hepzibah Damon was born Feb. 21, 1810, at Reading. She was from a wealthy, well-established family that arrived in America in 1633 from Reading, England. In 1831, she married George Temple, who in 1834 was given a marker at the local cemetery that says he died "at sea." Whether he was a passenger on a ship which went down or simply died of disease while at sea is not known. At the age of 23, Hepzibah was a widow.

It is not known how the marriage of John and Hepzibah came about, nor why they chose Edwardsville as their future home. After finishing his coursework in 1835, John Weir came to Illinois where he set up his medical practice as a physician and surgeon.

Since it would be a year before they married, it is likely that John and Hepzibah travelled separately, although family lore has them coming west in a covered wagon. The family story also says they bought a large quantity of new furniture. At the time their story was written, the family was not aware that Hepzibah was a widow who would have owned a household full of furnishings. In any case, a wagonload of furniture was sent West to furnish the new home in what would have then been considered the "Far West." Hepzibah and John were married by a Presbyterian minister in St. Louis on Oct. 29, 1836.

They had a new house, and John had a thriving practice so all that was needed to complete their family was children. Their first child, Mary Elizabeth Weir, was born at home on Feb. 9, 1838. For reasons known only to time, Hepzibah died six months later, on Sept. 10, 1838.

### A NEW CHAPTER

More than a year after Hepzibah's death, on Dec. 17, 1839, John married Mary Hoxsey, the daughter of William and Mary (Gray) Hoxsey (sometimes spelled Hoxie). Her family consisted of some of Madison County's earliest settlers. Her father came to Madison County from Kentucky in 1817 and purchased land in Alhambra Township. The following year, after William made improvements to the land, he brought his family north to Madison County. William, was born in Rhode Island, a New Englander, and his wife, Mary, was a Virginian. They were married Virginia, in 1793, but moved to Kentucky early in their marriage.

The 1882 *History of Madison County* tells the story of their settlement here, describing the original log cabin, then a larger log house that was beautifully crafted. Mary Hoxsey Weir remembered it fondly from her youth. Mary was born in 1810, so was only eight-years-old when she came to Madison County. In her obituary, it tells of how the family had to live at nearby Fort Russell for a short time for protection against Native Americans.

Some of her older siblings were already adults when the family moved to Illinois. At least two of her older brothers went back to Kentucky to marry, then returned to establish farms of their own in Alhambra Township. Mary had 10 siblings who survived to adulthood and many of their descendants still live in the area. Several of the girls married prominent men. In addition to Mary's marriage to Dr. Weir, her sister Jane married surveyor Beniah Robinson, and another sister married a Blackburn of Blackburn College.

William and Mary Hoxsey brought a 17-year-old Black girl named Temp with them from Kentucky. Temp is on the list of registered slaves in Madison County. Under her listing it reads:

"Temp, a negro girl of 17 years, bound herself to Will. Hoxsey for sixty years from Dec. 1, 1817."

In the 1830 census of Madison County, she is listed as a slave. According to the 1882 *History of Madison County* where the Hoxsey story is told by "Mrs. Dr. Weir," the family was served by "Old Aunt Tempe" until about 1840 when she went to live in the Black settlement at Pin Oak Township.

There is no way to know for certain, but perhaps it was the influence of John Weir that caused the Hoxsey family to release Temp well before her indenture was over.

The family story of Dr. Weir says that he was politically a Whig, and after the murder of Elijah Lovejoy in 1837 he became an abolitionist. Coming from a family of Covenanters, it is likely he was always anti-slavery, but became more vocal after the Lovejoy incident. In any case, Temp was released shortly after the marriage of John and Mary Weir in 1839.

Dr. Weir had a good relationship with the Black population of Madison County and was often invited to speak at their gatherings both before and after the Civil War. The Edwardsville Intelligencer described him as a "red hot abolitionist." He was a good speaker, appreciated for his sense of humor, who spoke on many occasions for various organizations he supported,

*At right is the earliest known picture of the Weir House. It shows a neighborhood girl, Bernadine Bach, with the back of the house in the background. It was taken before the 1929 addition was added and before the house was painted. The small one-story kitchen addition can be seen in this photo. (MCHS)*



## THE EARLY YEARS

including the County Temperance Society, the Whig Party, and the Madison County Medical Society.

He had a flourishing medical practice and a scientific mind that studied illnesses of his time and wrote about possible treatments for medical journals. His medical advice was also published in local newspapers. In addition to his regular practice, during the Civil War he was sometimes called to the Confederate prison in Alton. After the war, he was authorized to give physicals to Civil War veterans to determine if they were eligible for disability pensions. He was also the appointed physician for the Madison County Poor Farm and in addition to treating patients, sometimes made appeals to families to adopt orphans from that facility.

Dr. Weir made numerous property investments, including a farm, which together with his medical practice provided a significant income. The local newspaper in some years printed a list of residents with the highest taxable income and Dr. Weir was one of the wealthiest citizens in Edwardsville. It's interesting to note that if one did not pay his medical bill, the doctor charged 10% interest on the bill until it was paid.

Dt. Weir had a strong interest in education. In 1844-45, he organized the Female Academy of Edwardsville. His daughter Mary would have been about eight at the time. Classes were taught by Jane M. Allen in a room of the Weir house. The school was only in existence for a year, until another school became available for his daughters.

### TERMS OF TUITION - EDWARDSVILLE FEMALE SCHOOL

For all the English branches, per quarter.....\$3.00  
 Latin or French, added to the above.....\$5.00  
 Lessons on piano-forte, with use of instrument.....\$10.00  
 To those who find their own instrument.....\$8.00  
 Painting and Embroidery, per course.....\$2.00  
 Board must be obtained in private families, at from one to two dollars per week, convenient to the school room.

*Above is a portion of a notice placed in the Alton Telegraph and Democratic Review by Dr. Weir on May 24, 1845. A later article described the location of the school as in the Weir residence.*

John Weir died Aug. 3, 1878, after a six-month illness due to a heart condition. His obituary said, "The people of Edwardsville, and the county generally, will regret his death. He was the oldest practitioner of this county and had, previous to his illness, a large and lucrative practice...Dr. Weir was generous to the poor, and did as much, or more, to advance the science of medicine, as any physician in the county." He was 69 years old and had been a Madison County physician for 43 years.

Mary Weir survived her husband by nine years. She died Jan. 14, 1887 at the family residence. By the time of her death, she was survived only by her son, Edward, and her step-daughter, Mary Weir Anderson, who lived in Colorado.

## THE SECOND GENERATION - HEARTACHE & ACHIEVEMENT

John and Mary had six children, however, only two survived to adulthood. In addition, John's daughter from his first marriage lived to adulthood, so there were three children of that generation raised in the Weir household. One of those, Sarah Frances, married and had children, but died young, before either of her parents. Despite having a doctor of good repute in the household, there was no stopping death. The Weir children are listed in the family table on page four.

John's daughter from his first marriage, Mary Elizabeth Weir, was born in 1838. In 1858, she married Joseph G. Robinson, a prominent citizen whose family came to Edwardsville in 1836. He was appointed postmaster in 1861, but left that position before completing his term to join the ranks of the Union Army. During the war, serving with the Illinois 9th Infantry, Joseph "was shot through the body at Fort Donelson, wounded in the hand at Shiloh and struck by a fragment of shell at Corinth," according to an Intelligencer article. He returned a hero with the rank of Captain.

After the war, he served as Madison County Sheriff, then invested in and became superintendent of the Edwardsville Railroad. Employment with the railroad took the family to St. Louis, where he died in 1890 from complications of his wound at Corinth. He is buried at Woodlawn Cemetery in Edwardsville. His widow moved with her son Charles to Colorado where she was a popular society matron. She was known for her interest in writing



*Above left is a newspaper photo of Mary Weir Robinson, 72, taken in 1910 to accompany an article about her musical compositions. At right is her husband, Capt. Joseph Robinson. (Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library)*

music that became more than a hobby as it was published and performed "around the globe." She was also active in the Woman's League movement, a leader in Colorado who attended the 1910 Women's League's Convention in Webster Groves. About 1920, she moved with Charles to California where she died in 1925.

*Continued on page 6*



## THE SECOND GENERATION (CONT FROM PAGE 5)

John and Mary's daughter, Sarah Frances Weir, born in 1843, married Charles Hoiles of Edwardsville in 1868. They were the parents of two children, Jane Frances lone and Charles Wesley Hoiles. The family lived in Greenville, but their youngest, Charles, was born at the house in Edwardsville in 1873. The following year, in 1874, Sarah died at her home in Greenville. Her body was returned to Edwardsville and the well-attended funeral was held from her parent's home.

When Dr. Weir died, his will left his estate to his widow and three children. But, by then, his daughter Sarah was no longer living and his daughter Mary by then lived out of state, so ownership of the house after the estate was settled, was with his widow, Mary, and son, Edward. When Mary died, she left her portion to Edward, the only surviving child of John and Mary Weir.

Edward Henderson Weir, born in 1847, became a physician and surgeon like his father. At the age of 17, he enlisted in the Union Army at the very end of the Civil War.

When he joined his father's practice, they established offices in rooms at the St. James Hotel. Before then, Dr. John Weir took patients at the house where they would enter through the side door on F Street (sometimes referred to as 8<sup>th</sup> Street). Stone stairs leading to the patient entrance still remain at the house today.

In 1875, Edward was married to Ann Frances Terry in Trinidad, Colorado. According to their daughter, Josephine, the couple eloped because the bride's parents did not approve. As it turns out, Ann Frances, known as

Fannie, might have been better off if she had listened to her parents. By various accounts, Edward was a dashing young man, and she was a beautiful woman always impeccably dressed. Unfortunately, despite his father's involvement in the temperance movement, Edward became addicted to alcohol.

After the wedding, the new Dr. and Mrs. Weir took up residence with his parents in Edwardsville where Edward continued his medical practice. The couple had six children, all girls except the oldest, Terry Soaprus Weir, who died when he was only two months old. The girls were Marie (1877), Leona (1878), Marjorie (1884), Edna (1887) and Josephine (1890).

By 1883, Edward had already abandoned his medical practice. The Alton paper reported that he had returned from "an extended prospecting trip to the northwest." On Feb. 8, 1894, the Alton Telegraph again reported on the family, "Mrs. Fannie T. Weir, of Edwardsville, caused some surprise in that city last week by instituting divorce proceedings against her husband, Dr. E. H. Weir. She charges him with habitual drunkenness and failure to support her. The family holds a place in the best society of Edwardsville."

After the divorce Fannie and the girls remained in the house while Edward left, going first to California, and then to New York City where he died of pneumonia in 1904. He left his estate, such as was left, to his daughters. His obituary said that "Dr. Weir led a life peculiar to himself, the result of overindulgence by his too fond parents, Dr. John H. Weir and Mary Hoxsey Weir, two of this city's foremost people of earlier times. His friendship was strong and his hates equally so. He was liberal to a fault but not always for the best ends."

After the divorce, Fannie needed an income, so she rented rooms, usually to single school teachers. She and her daughters, always beautifully dressed, worked from home as seamstresses making both fancy dresses and wedding dresses. They also gave music lessons from the house. They were able to maintain their social status in the community, despite the stigma of divorce. It should be noted that after Edward's death, Fannie referred to herself as a widow in census records and other documents. This was a common practice for divorced women of the time, even if their former husbands were still alive. Also, due to her social status, her sewing business was never advertised.



Ann Frances "Fannie" Terry Weir, wife of Dr. Edward H. Weir and mother of five daughters. (MCHS)

## THE WEIR WOMEN

The five Weir daughters kept the house alive with laughter, music and celebrations as they entertained often, and many held their weddings from the house. There were regular bridge parties, Sunday teas and other musical gatherings of friends and family. The Weir sisters were all talented musicians who were often called on to give vocal performances or to accompany others. When Marie married in 1898, the Greenville Advocate said she was known "not only by her beauty and accomplishments, but by her charming ease of

manners." All the sisters were described in similar language in newspaper articles over the years.

Leone was the first to leave the homeplace. She was valedictorian of her class at Edwardsville High School where she chose "The Progress of Women" as the subject of her speech. *The Intelligencer* reported that, "With perfect command of language and expression, she followed her theme in a manner that held the audience spellbound. One of the striking points she made was that mankind would never attain the perfect whole, until man

*Continued on page 7*

## THE WEIR WOMEN (CONT FROM PAGE 6)

rose to woman's moral standard, and woman rose to man's mental standard."

That fall, in a beautiful ceremony in the Weir House, Leone married Henry C. Armstrong of St. Louis. He was an Edwardsville native whose father had also been a doctor. Henry had a successful career as an investment broker in the tobacco business. The Armstrongs had three children. Henry died in 1945 on a visit to Edwardsville. Shortly before her death in 1961, Leone returned to 715 N. Main St. where she lived with her sister, Edna.



*These passport photos of Charles and Marie (Weir) Van Weise were taken circa 1920. (ancestry.com)*

Born in 1877, Marie was the oldest of the Weir sisters. In 1898, she married Charles Walter Van Weise of Greenville. Their wedding was also held at the family house on Main Street. Marie and her husband eventually moved to Rockford, Illinois, where they owned a department store. The couple had no children, and at Charles' death in 1946, it was announced that a million dollar trust had been established to benefit 17 local charities. Income from the trust was provided to his wife and two of his sisters-in-law until their deaths (It is assumed these were the unmarried sisters, Josephine and Edna). The Charles and Marie Van Weise Charitable Trust continues to support specific northern Illinois charities today. After Charles' death, Marie's sister, Josephine, came to live with her. The Charles Van Weise Department Store continued to expand for decades beyond Charles and Marie's deaths and was well-known throughout Northern Illinois.

In 1905, Marjorie became the third sister to be married in the Weir House when she exchanged vows with William Otto Hughes, an Edwardsville grocer. The Hughes family lived at the Weir House in the early years of their marriage which was probably a good situation for all involved. On Feb 1, 1913, the youngest of three Hughes children, Charles Allen Hughes, was born. He was the last Weir descendant born at the Weir House. Between 1915-1920, the Hughes family moved to the Detroit area where William found work in the auto industry.

Josephine Weir was the last of the sisters to marry. She married Douglas Hadley in 1911, but it is unknown if this wedding was also from the Weir family home. Douglas Hadley was active in the reserves and served in both World War I and World War II. He was a son of W. F. L. Hadley and grew up in what is now School District #7's Hadley House

on St. Louis Street. Douglas and Josephine divorced in 1925. Under terms of the divorce, Douglas took custody of their son, John, who had special needs and lived the latter years of his life at Beverly Farm. Josephine was given custody of their daughter, Mary West Hadley. After her divorce, Josephine sometimes lived at the homeplace in Edwardsville, but other times with her sister, Marie, in Rockford. After the death of her brother-in-law in 1946, Josephine and her daughter, Mary, made a permanent home with her sister in Rockford.

Edna Weir was the only sister who did not marry. She shared the Weir House with her mother, sisters and their families or various tenants over the years as they moved in and out. At some point in time, the house was divided into at least two apartments. An advantage of tenants, besides income, was that it allowed the women to travel without leaving an empty house. The women took lengthy trips to visit family or to meet the other sisters for Florida vacations. In 1921, Marie took her mother along for a six-month tour of Europe. They also hosted visitors at the Weir House. For Edna, the only impediment to travel was her job.

In the 1920s, she took a secretarial job at Edwardsville Junior High School, and by 1940, was the librarian at Edwardsville High School. There is no indication in city directories that she worked outside the home after that time. Her mother by then was in her late 80s and perhaps needed assistance. Also, after 1946, Edna had an income of \$200 per month from her brother-in-law's trust that was equal to the median income at the time. She was able to continue traveling and was active in numerous charitable organizations, as well as her church.

Ann Frances Terry Weir (Fannie) died in 1944, at which time the other sisters decided to sign the house over to Edna for a nominal amount since Edna had cared for their mother.

An important aspect of Edna's life, not yet mentioned, is that she was an active member of the Madison County Historical Society. In the early 1960s Edna moved to a nursing home in the Rockford area near her youngest sister, Josephine. She agreed in 1963 to sell her former home to the Historical Society. After her death in 1966, her estate provided \$1,000 to MCHS for further restoration of the house.

The Weir sisters and their mother, bonded by love and determined to find their way under what would have been difficult circumstances, remained close-knit all their lives. They visited each other often for what were sometimes months-long stays and found ways to get together as a group numerous times over the years. The sisters all died between 1960-1970. However, their descendants have occasionally stopped by to visit and share stories of their fascinating family and the historic Weir homeplace.



*The Weir House, 715 N. Main St., Edwardsville, circa 1963. (MCHS)*



# Madison County Historical Society

*Opening Doors to Madison County History*

801 N. Main Street  
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Address Service Requested

PRSRT STD  
Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
Paid  
Permit #9  
Edwardsville, IL  
62025

## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN



MCHS members will soon receive Capital Campaign materials asking for their help to complete the new Madison County Historical Museum. The project involves a complete restoration of the exterior of the historic building according to National Register Standards and a renovation of the interior to create new exhibit spaces which use the artifacts and documents in the MCHS collections to tell the story of Madison County. We hope you will consider making a contribution. Thank you.



## EDITOR'S TIP: FINDING HISTORIC IMAGES

"A picture is worth a thousand words." It's true. When researching someone from the past, finding a photograph of that person, their business or their home adds significantly to the story.

In this newsletter, I found Weir family photographs at the Madison County Archival Library, in newspapers, at ancestry.com (passport photos) and at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

Here are my favorite places to look for photographs:

- Family members; other branches of your family tree may have photos your branch didn't inherit
- Local archival/genealogical libraries and museums
- Yearbooks, school directories and church directories
- Newspaper articles; especially those that celebrate weddings and anniversaries
- Google images
- Genealogy websites: Any place people post family trees may have images attached or sources, like passports, which include photographs. Family Search Memories has thousands of images.
- Illinois Digital Archives is a state site with all kinds of documents and photographs from the State of Illinois.
- Archive.org. is a free on-line library of books, newspapers, movies, music and more, including photographs.

To join or renew MCHS membership, go to <https://madcohistory.org/membership/> or send a check to MCHS, P. O. Box 422, Edwardsville, IL 62025.; For additional information, call 618-656-1294.