



MCHS News

September 2020

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 8 No. 5

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
(Closed to patrons due to COVID)

Phone:
618-656-7569

Web Address:
madcohistory.org

E-mail:
info@madcohistory.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.

MADISON COUNTY POLITICAL TRIVIA

by Stephanie Malench and Cindy Reinhardt

Madison County politics, or any political discussion these days, often falls under the category of items not to be discussed at the dinner table in the interest of keeping the peace. But it is doubtful that readers will find anything here to argue about, because with only two exceptions, no present-day politicians are named.

Granite City Manufactures Soda for 1964 Presidential Election

Barry Goldwater's presidential campaign was the first to come up with an official party beverage. It was manufactured and distributed in 40 states. One of the manufacturers was in Granite City.

Shortly before the election, Granite City Alderman Donald Partney began manufacturing Johnson Juice (distributed by Ladybird Distributing). He called it an antidote to Gold Water.

Distribution for Johnson Juice didn't spread too far from Granite City, since it came out late. In any case, *The Chicago Tribune* reported that although Johnson won the election, Gold Water won the soda war. The paper speculated that this could be because Gold Water, a ginger ale flavored soda, was a better mixer with alcohol than the lemon flavored Johnson Juice.

If you own a Johnson Juice can, you are better off than if you saved a Gold Water can, since fewer were made.

Both Gold Water and Johnson Juice were made at the R. C. Cola Company plant.

Killed Trying to Save His City

Granite City Mayor John Edwards was killed trying to save the town from the Flood of 1903. When he lit a match to restart an engine at a pumping station, the engine exploded.

Bombed By the Mob?

In December 1947, the home of State's Attorney Charles W. Burton at 419 E. Vandalia Street, Edwardsville, was bombed. Although never proved, police at the time suspected it was done in retaliation for Burton's crackdown on gambling.



Gold Water photo courtesy of foundastory.com



Johnson Juice photo courtesy of Morean Auctions Breweriana.com

Between eight and ten sticks of dynamite were placed under concrete stairs leading to the driveway. Newspaper accounts provided a long list of damages to the home, then noted that the Burtons slept through the blast and didn't learn about it until morning.

Infamous Madison County Native

Granite City native and State Auditor Orville Hodge was sentenced to 12 years at Menard State Prison in Chester for embezzling \$6.15 million in state money, while Illinois Auditor of Public Accounts from 1952-1956. Among other things, he used the money to purchase two private jets, 30 cars including a Cadillac, Rolls Royce, and Lincoln, and multiple properties in Illinois and Florida.

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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

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

The Archival Library, which has been closed to researchers since April, hopes to reopen on September 16 with COVID-19 guidelines to protect patrons and staff.

Masks will be required and the number of patrons which can be at the library at any given time will be limited to allow for social distancing.

Due to this restriction, library staff highly recommend that patrons call and make a reservation before coming. In addition to reserving a time-slot for research, this allows staff to pull needed books and materials to assist with whatever topic the patron is researching.

Although the library is currently closed to the public, staff continue to serve patrons by responding to email and telephone requests for information. When not assisting patrons, they continue researching accessions, cataloging and screening collections to make them more accessible.

Library staff have been working on two major projects. First is a plan to upload pictures of Madison County schools to the Illinois Digital Archives website. When that

project is completed, it will be announced here.

In the second project, an index of the library's nearly 4,000 books is now available on the Society's website. The search engine can pull up books by town, author, etc. making it easy to see if the publication you are looking for is at the library. For example, a search for the N. O. Nelson Company found the following:

2 results found. Records searched: 3832

	Nonco Catalog No. 40 - Waterv 010 N N.O. Nelson Manufacturing Record Type: Library
	N.O. Nelson Co. - 010 N N.O. Nelson Co. Record Type: Library

The library's database of books can be found at <https://madcohistory.org/archival-library/archival-library-resources/>

MUSEUM SPOTLIGHT

We are often asked when the museum will open. The fact is, although the building is closed, the museum has never closed. Only the building is closed, the materials are available in many ways.

Museum staff have worked diligently to create new and innovative exhibits at other locations, as well as online. When some staff members were required to work from home due to COVID-19, their time was well-spent creating a greater presence online.

Museum Superintendent Jon Parkin recently arranged to have a pop-up exhibit from the National Archives, "Rightfully Hers" installed at the Madison County Administration Building. The exhibit was created in celebration of the passage of the

19th Amendment for universal women's suffrage. Area residents that visit the building to register to vote or for early voting can explore aspects of women's suffrage that may not have considered in the past. The exhibit will be in place until November 6. Additional material is available at the exhibit's website at <https://museum.archives.gov/rightfully-hers> for those who want to learn more or who are unable to visit the exhibit in person.

This exhibit is a wonderful compliment to a recent online exhibit by museum staff, "Women's Suffrage Movement in Madison County," at <https://madcohistory.org/online-exhibits/womens-suffrage-movement-in-madison-county/>.



RIGHTFULLY HERS AMERICAN WOMEN AND THE VOTE

LIBRARY INTERN BEGINS WORK

David Thompson, a master's degree student in history at SIUE has begun work at the Archival Library. His studies focus on history in public memory. The internship was funded through a grant from the SIUE Emeriti Faculty Association. An article on the work he is doing at the Museum/Library will be included in the November newsletter.

THANK YOU TO STEPHANIE MALENCH

Nearly a year ago, Stephanie Malench agreed to write an article for the MCHS News on political trivia. Since that time, she has been promoted from reporter to editor of the *Troy Times Tribune*. Given her new schedule, the article became a joint project with editor Cindy Reinhardt. Members of the Malench family have been long-time members of MCHS. Their continued support, as well as the fine work contributed to this edition of the MCHS News, are greatly appreciated.

WATCH YOUR MAIL BOX



Since there can be no Dining in History event celebrating a historic place in Madison County this year, arrangements have to be made to hold the MCHS Annual Meeting which is part of that event. To that end, the Society will mail the annual report to members with two cards which we hope you will return as soon as possible. One will be a card to vote on acceptance (or not) of new and/or renewing members of the Board of Directors, and the other

will be a membership renewal card. Although memberships won't be due for another month, and another reminder will be sent in November, some members might find it convenient to take care of both at the same time, especially those who pay by check.

NEWSLETTERS ARRIVE LATE

Unfortunately, delivery of the July newsletter took approximately 10 days longer than usual. If you receive this newsletter before September 13th, please remember to preregister for the MCHS online program on the dirty politics of the 1860 election. The link is on page eight and a program description was in July month's newsletter.

MUSEUM BUILDING PROGRESS

The MCHS Annual Report, which will be mailed to members next month, will have details of what has been done so far to the museum building (the Weir House), but we have included some of the major progress here.

MCHS had approximately \$800,000 available to begin renovations of the Weir House and has expended nearly \$700,000 on renovations and repairs to date.



This photo shows the new porch and progress with the windows. The window on the left, above the porch, has been restored and the window on the right has been removed for restoration.

Work is nearly completed on exterior paint removal and brick repair, as well as the roof, which has had problems delaying completion. Work on windows/doors is progressing, as can be seen above. Reconstruction of the back porch and a new ADA compliant ramp have recently been completed. In addition, a new HVAC system was installed and the electrical service upgraded.

Behind the scenes, a team has been working with a designer to layout eight new primary galleries and two smaller hall galleries which will illustrate the history of Madison County.

Unfortunately, major fundraising activities to complete the work on the building have been delayed due to COVID-19. Watch for details in the November newsletter.

BRINGING HISTORY TO YOU

Despite the closure of the museum building, MCHS has worked with staff at the museum and library to bring history to you in a variety of ways: exhibits at the courthouse, this newsletter, the first online program, more content on the MCHS website, and a social media presence.

2020 NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

July-August ♦ Thank you for supporting MCHS!

\$100 Patron

William & Judith Eaton

\$50 Family

Dan & Pat Jacobi
Al & Kim Pauli

\$35 Individual

Lois Cremin
Kristy Frey

2020 DONORS FOR MUSEUM RENOVATION

July-August ♦ Thank you for your generosity!

Mike & Marian Smithson

WOMEN IN MADISON COUNTY POLITICS

Women and Politics in Illinois

In 1919, Illinois was the seventh state (first east of the Mississippi) to ratify the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote in state and federal elections. However, it was not the first time women were able to vote in Illinois. In 1891, local women were given the right to vote in school board elections and in 1913 they were allowed to weigh-in for other local offices, with the exception of city police magistrate and county treasurer. They also could not vote for state offices. Prior to 1920, there were two ballots on election day, the "little ballot" for women and the regular ballot (for men).

Eulalia Hotz First Female County Official

Eulalia Hotz became the first female to hold an elected office in Madison County when she was elected County Clerk in 1942.

For Hotz, called "Uke" by her friends, it was a family affair. Her father, Joseph, was County Clerk in 1924 and, in 1926, hired Eulalia to work for him part time. Her father was clerk until his death in 1933. At that time, both Eulalia and her brother, Norbert, were both working in the office with their father. Norbert was appointing acting Clerk, and then elected to office, but decided not to run again in 1942.

Eulalia ran for office and won, as she did many times until 1974 when she decided to retire. She always ran a "cheap" campaign, very little money, but lots of friends, and was known for her 1925 Model-T Ford painted champaign pink, her campaign color.

Hotz never took holding office for granted. Before every election she cleaned out her desk and took all her personal belongings home in case she didn't win. She never lost.

She served for 32 years and later became the first woman to be elected president of the Illinois Association of County Officials in 1969.

Hotz was near retirement before the next woman, Dallas M. Burke, was elected to office in Madison County. Dallas Burke was elected to the office of Coroner in 1972.

It was Hotz who initiated the practice of setting up special "branch" registration centers in grocery stores and other locations, a practice that was later adopted throughout the state.

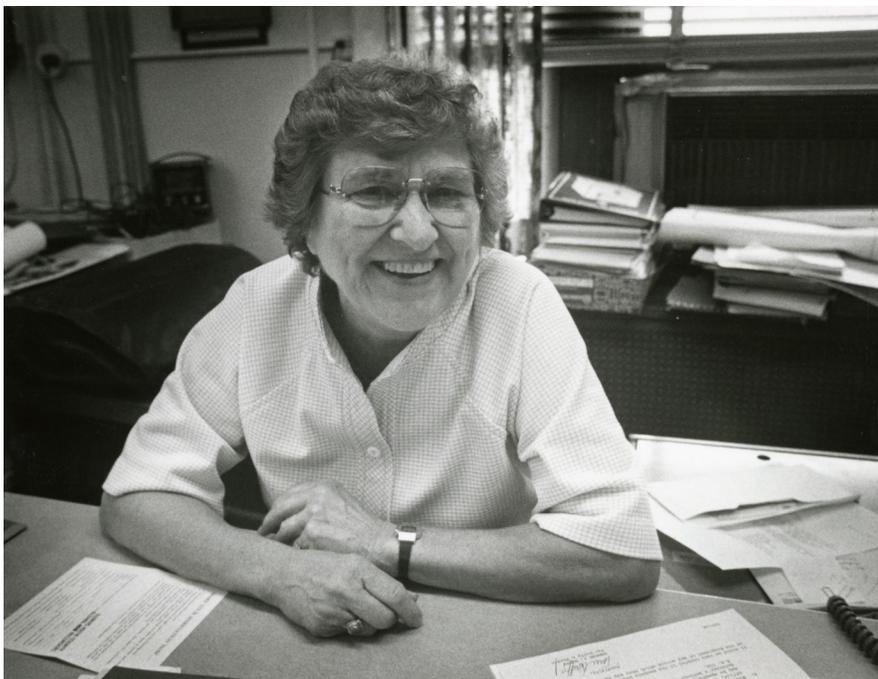
And then Came Evelyn Bowles

When Hotz retired in 1974, she nominated her protegee, Evelyn Bowles, as her replacement. Bowles was at that time a 22-year veteran of the Clerk's office.

The Democratic Party wanted someone else, so Bowles became the first Democrat to not pay the "lug" (10% of salary to the party in exchange for their endorsement). She was elected four times, retired, then ran for state senator. She was hugely popular and often ran unopposed because it was common knowledge that Bowles couldn't be beat. She never lost an election.



Above, from left, employees of the Madison County Clerk's Office, Feb, 1933: County Clerk Joseph Hotz, Deputy Clerk Norbert Hotz, Ralph Hogan, Eulalia Hotz and Clara Smith (MCHS). Below: Madison County Clerk Evelyn Bowles. (Edwardsville Intelligencer)



A National Conservative Voice

Although not an elected county politician, Phyllis Schlafly, of Alton, was an influential voice in local, state and national politics. Schlafly, a conservative activist, is credited with preventing the Illinois legislature from ratifying the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972. That same year she helped found the Eagle Forum, a pro-family conservative group with offices in Alton and Washington, D.C. Illinois was the only Northern state which did not ratify the Equal Rights Amendment at that time. (The state ratified the ERA in 2018.)

The press called Schlafly "hysterical" in the 1970s when she predicted that gays would one day push for the right to marry.

PAUL SIMON AND BOW TIES

Paul Simon began his climb to political fame in 1948 when he became the youngest editor-publisher of a newspaper in the United States (age 19). His newspaper, *The Troy Tribune*, became known for its investigations and activism against gambling, prostitution, and government corruption. After convincing Governor Adlai Stevenson to investigate the gambling and corruption in Madison and St. Clair Counties, Simon then served as a “star witness” before the Kefauver Commission in 1951.

Simon served as a Democratic Lieutenant Governor under Republican Governor Sam Shapiro from 1969-1973. The only other time a lieutenant governor served with a governor of a different party was when Archibald A. Glenn served as Democratic Lieutenant Governor under Republican Governor John Lourie Beveridge, who became governor after Richard Oglesby resigned ten days into office to be U.S. Senator from 1873-1879. The 1970 Illinois Constitution ensured this would never happen again by requiring both leaders be from the same party.



Paul Simon

Throughout his tenure in the Illinois State Senate (1963-1969), the United States House of Representatives (1975-1985), and the United States Senate (1985-1997), Simon never held a leadership position above subcommittee chairperson.

Despite continuing to write numerous articles and books, Simon refused to give up his typewriter for a computer.

Simon’s Famous Bow Tie

Early in his career, one of the Chicago newspapers referred to Simon as “the candidate with the bow tie.” Over the years, it came to be more than a symbol for Simon. Public relations experts told him to get rid of the bow tie and his horn-rimmed glasses and to change his views to match what the polls were saying people wanted to hear, but he refused.

He said the bow tie became his declaration of independence that announced to the country that, “I’m my own person. You have to take me for who I am.”



(MCHS)

SIMON INSPIRES ANOTHER BOW TIE



Mark Von Nida, Madison County’s current Circuit Clerk, has been wearing a bow tie in homage to Paul Simon ever since he was first appointed to public office in 1997. At an auction in Troy a few years ago, he was able to purchase one of Simon’s bow ties. He gave it to his son who is carrying on the tradition with a political career in Nevada.

Von Nida provided another piece of Madison County trivia. The office of the Madison County Circuit Clerk has never had an elected clerk that did NOT die in office. Von Nida retires in November and hopes to be the first to break that gruesome record.

Before becoming Circuit Clerk, Von Nida was County Clerk for four terms. During that time he applied for and was given a patent for an invention that guarantees secrecy at the voting booth. Working with the county’s election vendors, he made his invention available nationwide with royalties paid to Madison County.

Since Von Nida is chair of the county’s Democratic Party, it’s likely the bow tie will not be retired any time soon.

Mark Von Nida (Von Nida)

LINCOLN IN EDWARDSVILLE AND HIGHLAND - 1858

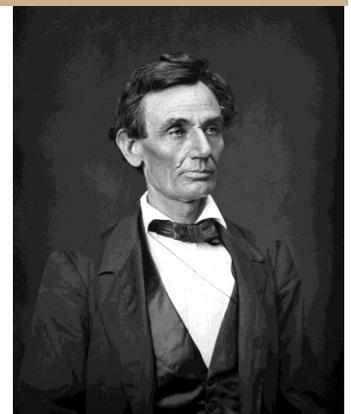
On Sep. 11, 1858, Abraham Lincoln followed Stephen Douglas into Edwardsville to campaign, a usual political strategy at the time. Douglas drew a large crowd, but Lincoln, a guest of his friends, brothers Joseph and Matthew Gillespie, was not received as well. He spoke before a relatively small crowd following a reception at the Matthew Gillespie home at 606 N. Main Street.

Mary Orsina Smith, a relative of the Gillespie family, was 12 years old when Lincoln visited the home. She and others present often told the story of Lincoln bumping his head on the doorway to the dining room.

Although the house is still there today on Main Street, it underwent a major renovation in the 1890s so no longer resembles the home visited by Lincoln.

After leaving Edwardsville, Lincoln travelled with Joseph Gillespie to Highland where he was greeted by large crowds of enthusiastic supporters. Edwardsvillians came to appreciate Lincoln at a later date.

(Note: The Lincoln Douglas Debate and the Shields duel were covered in an earlier edition of the MCHS News that can be found online at <https://madcohistory.org/mchs-news-volume-6-number-3/>)



Abraham Lincoln

GOVERNORS & OTHER EARLY MADISON COUNTY POLITICIANS

Edward Coles, the second governor of Illinois (1822-1826), was born in Virginia in 1786. Although raised on a plantation, Coles did not support slavery. When he moved to Illinois in 1819, his slaves were freed. A personal friend of President James Madison, he was appointed Registrar of the Federal Land Office in Edwardsville, a position he held until he was elected governor in 1822.

In 1824, Coles and his supporters defeated a pro-slavery coalition which was calling for a new Illinois Constitutional Convention. Although often remembered for his anti-slavery work which dominated his term, Coles was also a racist who regarded Blacks as "inferior citizens," and tried to keep them out of the state. In 1833, Coles left Illinois for Pennsylvania where he died in 1868.

Ninian Edwards came to Illinois from Kentucky in 1809 due to a convenient "swap." At the time he was Chief Judge of the High Court of Appeal in Kentucky, and another man, Chief Justice John Boyle, of Kentucky, was appointed Territorial Governor of Illinois. Both men preferred the other's appointments and President Madison, a friend to both, agreed to the exchange. The new position came with 1,000 acres of land at Kaskaskia, the seat of government for the Illinois territory and Illinois' first state capitol.

Edwards was the first Territorial Governor (1809-1818), one of the first Illinois senators (1818-1824) and the third governor of the State of Illinois (1826-1830).

It is believed that the Edwards family lived in Edwardsville during his years as state senator. In 1814, the town of Edwardsville was platted by Thomas Kirkpatrick who named it for Edwards, his friend and political mentor.

During his term, he worked to remove Native Americans from Illinois, while also promoting immigration to the state which resulted in a significant increase in the population of Illinois. A slave-owner in his native Kentucky, Edwards established a policy of indentured servitude in Illinois in order to retain his slaves. After his political career, Edwards moved to Belleville where he died after contracting cholera when treating victims of the 1833 cholera epidemic.

John Reynolds, who spent part of his boyhood near Edwardsville, served in all three branches of Illinois government. After serving in the War of 1812, he was appointed/elected as associate judge on the Illinois Supreme Court, as representative in the Illinois House of Representatives and as the fourth governor of the State of Illinois. He was a proponent of slavery who narrowly won the 1830 governor's race. (*Note: The first four governors of Illinois were all slave-owners.*)

Thomas Ford has a true rags to riches story. He knew poverty as a child, but applied himself to his studies and became an attorney. He came to Edwardsville early in his career where he practiced law until he was appointed State's Attorney in 1829. After service in the Black Hawk War (1832), he built a private law practice in Peoria, Illinois. Like Reynolds, he was appointed to the Illinois Supreme Court, and went on to election as the seventh governor of Illinois (1842-1846).

Both Reynolds and Ford left written records. Reynolds wrote an autobiography, *My Own Times*, and Ford, *A History of Illinois, from its Commencement as a State in 1818 to 1847*.

The 23rd governor of Illinois (1905-1913), **Charles Deneen**, was born in Edwardsville in 1863. When still a boy, his family moved to Lebanon where his father was a Latin professor at McKendree College. He was a straight-laced Methodist who abstained from alcohol and invited evangelist Billy Sunday to hold prayer sessions at the Governor's Mansion.

He was a frequent visitor to Edwardsville, where he visited his aunt, Sarah Deneen Metcalf, whose husband was an important Illinois politician in his own right.

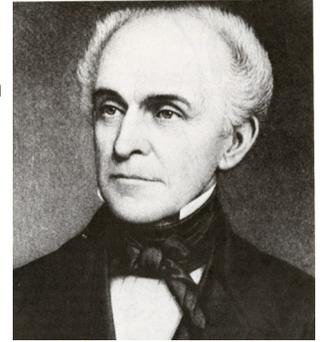
Another Illinois governor with ties to Madison County was **John Henry Stelle** who attended Western Military Academy in Alton. As Lt. Governor, he came to the governor's office upon the death of Governor Henry Homer. Stelle served only three months, but it was probably all Illinois could afford. He was known for extravagant spending and holding parties.

An important politician from Madison County who did not serve as governor was **Jesse Burgess Thomas**. Thomas was the first Circuit Court Judge in the Illinois Territory from 1809 to 1818. When Illinois became a state in 1818, he, with Ninian Edwards, became one of the first U.S. Senators from the state, serving from Dec. 3, 1818, until March 3, 1829. Edwardsville was one of the places Thomas called "home" during that period.

At the end of the Civil War, U.S. Senator **Lyman Trumbull** of Alton was responsible for the act that created the Freedman's Bureau, enacted on March 3, 1865. After President Lincoln signed the bill into law, this federal agency oversaw the transition of the enslaved from slavery to freedom.

Trumbull was elected to the House of Representative in 1854, but never served in that position, because in 1855 the state legislature appointed him to the U.S. Senate.

Photos of the five early Illinois governors with ties to Madison County: Edward Coles, Ninian Edwards, John Reynolds, Thomas Ford, and Charles Deneen.
(MCHS)



CAMPAIGNING BY AIRPLANE



Dick Mudge Jr., circa 1940
(Steve Mudge)

One of the more unusual campaigns in Madison County took place in 1956, when Dick Mudge Jr. ran for the office of State's Attorney. His campaign focused on the fight to eradicate illegal gambling in the county, not an insignificant issue.

In the late 1940s, gambling was so bad that the sheriff confiscated more gambling tables and machines than he had room to store. As a temporary solution, the halls of the courthouse were lined with gambling equipment.

Mudge, a veteran pilot of WW II who spent a year in a POW camp, was a no-nonsense kind of guy. With a goal of closing down Club Prevue, on the border of Madison and St. Clair County, he had 10,000 fliers printed.

With the help of his brother, John, he flew over the neighborhood surrounding the club and blanketed them with copies of the leaflet shown at right. (Courtesy of Bill Mudge) It was unusual, but effective. Mudge served as State's Attorney from 1956-1964.

Mudge came from a family of attorneys, judges and politicians who have walked the halls of the Madison County Court House since well before the current building was dedicated in 1915.

To: THE CLUB PREVUE,

Alias The Mounds Club, Alias The Corona Club, or whatever else the racketeers are calling it now:

THE HANDWRITING IS ON THE WALL.

YOUR REIGN OF LAWLESSNESS IS SOON TO BE ENDED.

The good citizens of Madison County are disgusted with you, your political friends, and gambling joints operating in open defiance of our State Laws.

I promise the Club Prevue and the voters of Madison County that if I am nominated and elected State's Attorney, the Club Prevue and all other disreputable and illegal places will be closed.

Dick Mudge, Jr.

MORE POLITICAL TRIVIA

Senator Never Elected

Ralph Tyler Smith of Alton (born in Granite City) was appointed to the U. S. Senate by Governor Richard Ogilvie. He filled the seat vacated when Everett Dirksen died of lung cancer in 1969. Smith was a U. S. Senator from Sep. 17, 1969 until Nov. 16, 1970, when he lost to Adlai Stevenson in the special election.

First and Longest-Serving

Although long associated with Chicago, Jesse White, was born in Alton in 1934. He is the first African-American to hold the elected position of Illinois Secretary of State, from 1999-present. He is also the state's longest serving Secretary of State.

Dirty Politics

In 1961, First Baptist Church the Rev. Barney L. Moore was duped into speaking at the pulpit against Edwardsville mayoral candidate Raymond Rogers. A parishioner anonymously called Moore saying that Rogers would be buying liquor for a party at a local tavern. The pastor later apologized publicly for the false accusation.

Who Won?

In the days before television and radio, residents obtained early election results by visiting the local newspaper office where regular reports were posted on the windows. It was common to find large crowds in the streets outside the newspaper offices on election night.

Corralling Cats

In 1937, the Edwardsville City Council voted to control the hunting habits of cats by requiring that they be licensed and wear bells. The idea was to protect song birds, but the bells also allowed mice and rats to be forewarned. The ordinance was soon revoked.

Edwardsville's Dead Candidate

During the 1965 mayoral race in Edwardsville, one of the candidates, William Straube, died before the election. Supporters then continued to run his campaign, encouraging voters to elect the deceased candidate, which would force another election in six months.

The story was picked up by the Associated Press and published in newspapers across the country.

Straube, who served multiple terms as Edwardsville's mayor, garnered 900 votes and came in second.

During an earlier term as mayor, Straube is credited with successfully working with the local NAACP to encourage businesses to welcome patrons of all races.

National Prominence

As an elected politician, Charles Boeschstein served only one term, as Mayor of Edwardsville, but the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* called him the most influential Democrat in Illinois.

Boeschstein said he could accomplish more behind the scenes than he could in office. For the first half of the twentieth century, he was a major player at the Democratic National Convention.



Madison County Historical Society

Opening Doors to Madison County History

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Edwardsville, IL 62025

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FALL MCHS CALENDAR

WEBINAR SEPTEMBER 13—2 P.M.
Fake News, Lying Politicians, and Dirty Tricks:
Madison County on the Eve of the
Presidential Election, 1860 (or 2020?)
Presenter: Stephen Hansen

https://siue.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_9F8aR3xVSa-A7bsZnJzGpw

ANNOUNCEMENT!
ALL 2020 MCHS
IN-PERSON EVENTS
PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED
HAVE BEEN CANCELLED
DUE TO COVID-19.

EDITOR'S TIP

Writing Your Family's Story

Many people will build a family tree, but fail to act on their intent to record family stories they either witnessed or have been told at every family reunion for decades. Like many of us, they say there is never enough time, or they don't know how to start.

My advice, and what I have done, is to record your family history in small, manageable bites. Write stories that are only a paragraph long, if that's all you have time for, as well as stories that take a few pages, if that is needed. Collect them in a computer file or in a notebook until you have enough to eventually make a publication that can be shared with family and, if you're willing, shared with the Madison County Archival Library.

Recording your story this way, allows you to choose a topic to focus on instead of looking at the big picture. Look

at your own life, your education, teachers, schools, work experience or the houses where you lived. Or narrow it down to an event that was meaningful to you. If you can, ask your siblings for input, since they often remember different details. Don't worry if their version isn't the same as yours, just record that you remember "Version A" while your sibling remembers "Version B."

Take the same mini-view when talking to older family members. It's easier to take notes or record stories if you don't ask for their life history all at once.

Another tip, let them know what you are going to ask about in advance. It helps them if they have a chance to mull things over a bit and perhaps pull pictures to serve as a reminder. A bonus with this method...you will have many enjoyable visits (or phone calls during COVID-19) with your older relatives and friends of the family.

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.