



# MCHS News

November 2021

Opening Doors to Madison County History

Vol. 9 No. 6

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

The museum is currently closed for renovation.

**Archival Library**  
801 N Main Street

**Hours:**  
Wed-Fri 9 am - 4 pm  
Sunday 1 pm - 4 pm  
(Reservations recommended)

**Library Phone:**  
618-656-7569

**MCHS Connections:**

**Website:**  
madcohistry.org  
**E-mail:**  
info@madcohistry.org  
**Phone:**  
618-656-1294

## 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 REMARKABLE MR. DILLIARD

BY CINDY REINHARDT

Irving Dilliard and his family had a decades-long connection to the Madison County Historical Society with representatives on the Board of Directors from 1937-1963. Although the Society recognizes this as an admirable achievement, there is far more to the remarkable story of this Collinsville, Illinois, native.

Irving Lee Dilliard's life journey reads like a compilation experiences from several men. He was a journalist, editor, author, teacher, and historian. He fought against so-

cial injustice, served his community in multiple capacities, and had a wartime experience very different from most who served in WW II. Although he had personal acquaintance with many famous personalities of his day, he remained a very down-to-earth and approachable family man.

### BEGINNINGS

Irving was born Nov 27, 1904, in Collinsville to James and Mary (nee Look) Dilliard. By the time Irving was born, his father, the



*continued page 4*

## MCHS: CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

*This "celebration" column will be featured in the MCHS News during the coming year to commemorate the Centennial of the Society. In addition, many topics in the MCHS News will link back to the roots of the Madison County Historical Society and the people who established the organization. To begin...*

On Dec 3, 1921, the Madison County Historical Society held its first annual meeting in the probate court room of the Madison County Courthouse. The purpose of the new organization was to "preserve books, papers, military records and anything else in the county of historical interest."

Officers elected for the new organization were Prof. William D. Armstrong, Alton, president; Gaius Paddock, Fort Russell, vice-president; Probate Judge George W. Crossman, secretary; Miss Laura Gonterman, treasurer.

Trustees included Mrs. Charles (Annie) Burton, Edwardsville; Wilbur T. Norton, Alton and William L. Waters, Godfrey. Associate members of the board of directors were Mrs.

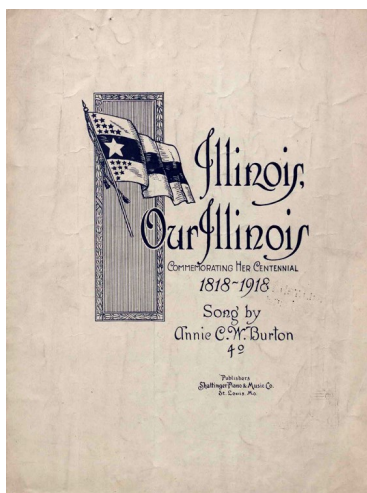
Mark Henson, Collinsville and Norman G. Flagg, Fort Russell.

Since the annual meeting was held on the 103<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Illinois statehood, Flagg, an Illinois legislator whose family came to Madison County in 1818, related "interesting historical events of the state." Burton recited the lyrics to "Illinois, Our Illinois," a song she wrote in 1918 to commemorate the centennial of Illinois and pay homage to Illinois soldiers in World War I.

The meeting closed with an invitation for all county residents to join the Society at a cost of \$1 per year in annual dues.

Nearly a century later, in 2016, descendants of Madison County's Flagg and Paddock families donated a large collection of

documents, photographs, and artifacts to the Madison County Historical Society. Norman G. Flagg's grandparents, the family's earliest settlers in Madison County were Gershom Flagg (1792-1857) and his wife, Jane Paddock Flagg (1787-1863). Both families were originally from Vermont.



## ABOUT US

### MCHS BOARD

Fred Faust, Pres  
Lynn Engelman, V-Pres  
Arnold Meyer, Treas  
Tallin Curran, Sec  
Leslie Bednar  
Robert Clouse  
Arno Ellis  
Stephen Hansen  
Candace Ladd  
Lacy McDonald  
Stephen Mudge  
Jeff Pauk  
Cindy Reinhardt

### STAFF

Mary Z. Rose  
Archival Library Research  
Manager

Carol Frisse  
Archival Research Asst.

Jenn VanBibber  
Curator

### 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  
618-656-1294

## MUSEUM & ARCHIVAL LIBRARY SPOTLIGHT

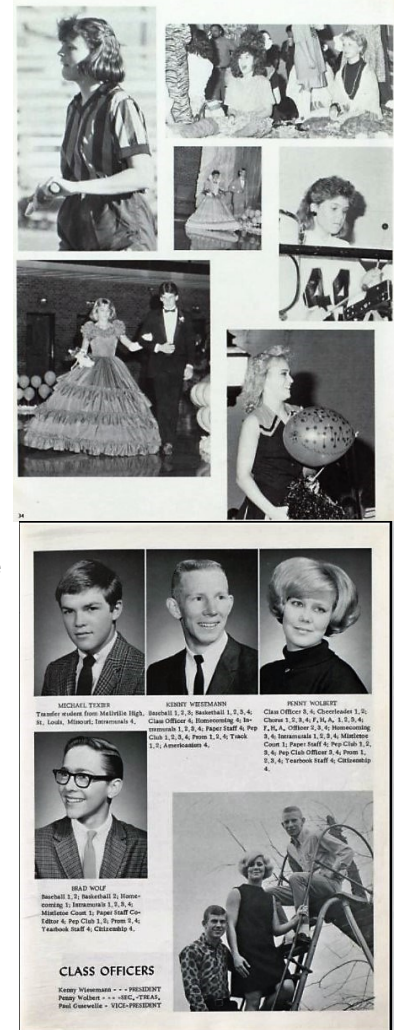
Staff have provided services for more than 20 research requests in September and October. Topics included family history questions, local African American history, house histories, Madison Countians in WWII, local haunted houses, and more. Staff also provided a training sessions for Madison County Historical Society board members on the archival library resources and providing research services.

Additional Madison County yearbooks can now be found online at the Internet Archive. Sample pages from Edwardsville and Worden High Schools are at right. View these pages and more here: <https://archive.org/details/@mchmal>. For a complete list of all the yearbooks in the MCHS collection go to: <https://madcohistory.org/archival-library/archival-library-resources/school-yearbooks/>. If the yearbook is also available online, there is a link to free, available yearbooks that were scanned by MCHS and other organizations.

Yearbooks provide memories of another time, but they are more than "just" pictures of students. There are also photographs of staff and many have advertisements picturing local businesses.

The library took a temporary pause in receiving and processing donations in September to focus on preparing for the management transition. However, a few donations sneaked in from board members, volunteers, or via mail. We haven't processed them yet, but of note are two separate donations mediated by MCHS board member Cindy Reinhardt of documents and photographs related to the Dippold family of Edwardsville.

The staff is closing in on completing the preparatory work to make the volunteer-created index of Madison County guardianship files available on the MCHS website. More on this when the project is completed.



## TRANSITION NEWS

By now, MCHS members should have received the MCHS Annual Report telling about the transition from a Madison County government operated library/museum to a Society operated institution on December 1.

While disappointed that the partnership with the County has ended, the Society has developed realistic plans for addressing the financial and management challenges it now faces. The most obvious is that the size of the staff will, of necessity, need to be reduced. The Society will retain two part-time employees, Mary Z. Rose as Archival Library Research Manager and Jenn Vanbibber as Curator. Both have already agreed to employment by the Society beginning December 1. Volunteers are already being trained but more will be needed.

As we say farewell to members of the staff who will be leaving, we are grateful for their service. Having a full professional staff has been a privilege. Museum Superintendent Jon Parkin transitioned to a new position with the

county on November 1. Carol Frisse will hopefully remain in her position until November 30 when the county's contract expires.

Robert Clouse, a member of the Board and a retired museum director, has agreed to oversee operations.

Stephen Hansen has been joined by grant writer John Harvey to work on finding additional grant funding. It is hoped that the Society can also find sponsors for the newsletter or local events.

Additional volunteers will be needed to process newly acquired artifacts and documents into the collections. Anyone with clerical or typing skills is encouraged to volunteer at the Archival Library.

Despite all the challenges, the Society believes, with the help of the Madison County community, we will be able to keep the library open its usual hours and continue on work towards a newly renovated museum. We are very grateful for your support.



## RECENT NEWS

### VILLAGE OF LECLAIRE

The Online Speaker Series program for October was "Leclaire: Model Village to Modern Village." This program is a new film about the former



Village of Leclaire, now a neighborhood of Edwardsville. It is produced by Bob Gill's Hometown Productions for MCHS and in-

cludes many photographs from the MCHS collections. Gill, who has been the videographer for this series since the pandemic interrupted in-person meetings, is in this case, also the presenter.

This is the second film Gill has produced Leclaire, a model village founded in 1890 N. O. Nelson, a St. Louis businessman and philanthropist. Nelson's purpose was to improve the lives of his workers.

Gill's first film on Leclaire was to celebrate Leclaire's Centennial in 1990. At that time he interviewed historian Carl Lossau and many older residents of the neighborhood who had lived there for many years, some even with personal memories of Nelson. Going back to the original videotaped interviews and adding many images uncovered since 1990, Gill has made it possible for educators and others to easily access the story of Leclaire. Leclaire was named to the National Register of Historic Places in 1979.

### MCHS RETURNS TO OUTDOOR EVENTS & FESTIVALS

MCHS Board members and volunteers have been able to participate in a number of outdoor activities this summer and fall. The Society had a display at the Route 66 Festival in June, hosted Living History Days: A Chautauqua with Teddy Roosevelt and Friends in September and attended Leclaire Parkfest in October.

The Society has participated in the Leclaire event for decades. The family of Leclaire founder, N. O. Nelson, donated several boxes of materials to MCHS many years ago, including photographs, documents and artifacts.

The Society is able to showcase copies of many of those items at Leclaire Parkfest.

### ANNUAL MEETING

Information about the Annual Meeting on November 16 was in the annual report. To attend the Zoom meeting, either return your ballot with an email address or contact us if it is too late to mail in your ballot. With luck, this will be the last annual meeting held via Zoom.

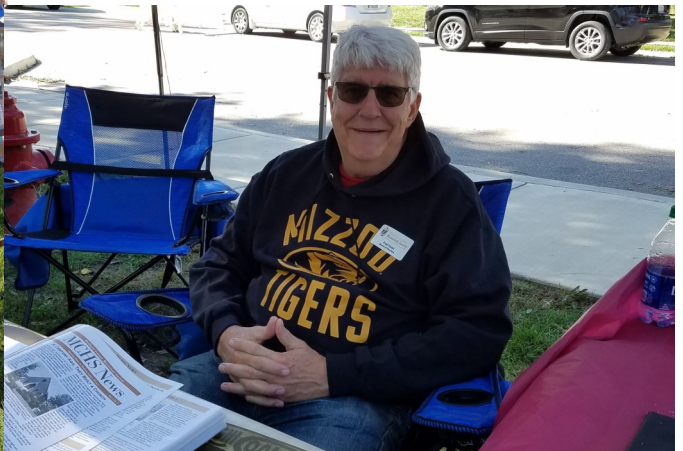
### HOLIDAY GREETINGS!

The Society wishes everyone a joyous holiday season and looks forward to (perhaps?) being able to see you all in-person next year.



Join the conversation and learn more at the MCHS Facebook Page: Madison County Historical Society

At left: Bob Gill in character as N. O. Nelson at Leclaire Parkfest; Below is MCHS President Fred Faust working the MCHS Booth at the festival. (Reinhardt)



## 2022 NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

September - October ♦ Thank you for supporting MCHS!

#### Patron \$500

Mike and Cindy Reinhardt

#### Sustaining \$250

Gary & Benna Denué  
Stephen & Julia Hansen  
Eileen Waters  
David & Kay Werner

#### Friend/Corporate \$100

Kurt & Gretchen Ackerman  
Arnold Meyer  
Patrick Shelton

#### Family/Non-Profit \$50

Bob Daiber  
Mary Sue Schusky  
Harry & Carol Windland

#### Individual \$35

Carolyn Catalano  
Jeanne Dietz  
Gary Harmon  
Nancy Hess  
Jim Kelih  
Madelyn Knight  
Gracie Koeller  
Elizabeth Lengyel

Robert Lindley

Everett Loy  
Melissa McCanna  
Richard Raymond  
Glenna Spitze

## ADDITIONAL DONORS

September - October ♦ Thank you for your generosity!

Jeanne Dietz

Stephen and Julia Hansen

Mike and Cindy Reinhardt

Mike Ritchie

MCHS Memberships run on the calendar year. - Gift Certificates available.

To join or renew MCHS membership, go to <https://madcohistory.org/membership/> For additional information, call 618-656-1294.

## THE REMARKABLE MR. DILLIARD (CONT FROM PAGE 1)

The photo below is from a page in the 1927 University of Illinois yearbook, labeled "Campus Leaders." It seems Dilliard's capacity for leadership came at a young age.

During his university days, he was a member of Ma-Wan-Da, a senior honor society, numerous fraternities, editor of *Illinois Magazine*, and writer



Irving Dilliard

and editor for the college newspaper, *The Daily Alumni*. During college he was also on the Board of Directors for the YMCA.

∞

Later in life, a colleague said of Dilliard, "He (Dilliard) was an environmentalist at a time when pollution was ignored. He was a social activist when caring too much about anything was suspect.

founder of Collinsville's first bank, had gone to work at the National Stockyards in East St. Louis. His mother, Mary Beedle (Look) Dilliard, was a well-read, educated woman who graduated from Monticello College in 1893.

Dilliard took an interest in writing at a young age, contributing articles to the *Collinsville Herald*. In 1923, when a senior in high school, he became a correspondent for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

Also in the early 1920s, he began writing letters to successful authors that he admired seeking advice on how to establish a literary career. Dilliard received letters and postcards from 120 diverse writers, each offering their view of how to go about creating a career based on writing.

### ADVICE TO A YOUNG WRITER (samples):

George Bernard Shaw, "Write 5,000 words a day for five years."

P.G. Wodehouse, "I think newspaper work is the best foundation possible for writing fiction."

Robert Frost, "I don't believe I know how I got my start. I suppose I just kept writing what I wanted to write and occasionally trying to publish it; but I was twenty years at it before I published much of it."

Edgar Lee Masters, "Read everything that interests you. Then follow up the books that those interests suggest. Live fully, and thus come to a comprehension of the human mind and of its life. Keep your health meanwhile. Write! Write! Write! Keep a notebook to preserve thoughts that come to you."

The latter, Edgar Lee Masters, seems to be one he took to heart. He read voraciously, kept notes on people, places and things that interested him, and read newspapers with scissors in hand to clip articles of interest to him and his acquaintances. Many letters sent to him begin with the writer thanking him for forwarding an article about something of interest to them. This personal correspondence is preserved in the archives at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.

### EDUCATION

Dilliard attended the University of Illinois where he graduated in 1927. In 1924, he was initiated into Alpha Kappa Lambda and remained active in the organization for many years, including a term as the fraternity's eighth national president in 1936. In 1960, he



Irving's parents, James Irving Dilliard ((1852-1935) and Mary Beedle Look Dilliard (1867-1935) were married in 1899.



(Schusky)

was awarded the organization's Alumni Distinguished Service Award. He took graduate classes at Harvard following graduation from the University of Illinois. He then returned to Collinsville and began his career at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

In 1938, he was one of the first nine Nieman Fellows to study at Harvard

University for a year. Nieman Fellowships, still available today, present a unique opportunity for working journalists to further their education.

### JOURNALISM CAREER

After graduating Phi Beta Kappa in 1927, he found work as a cub reporter at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, where he had been a contributor while still in high school. It was the year of the 1927 St. Louis tornado. The newspaper was short-staffed due to the disaster and glad to have him. Just three years later, he was promoted to the editorial staff (1930-1948) and later to a position as editor of the editorial page (1949-1957). He continued writing editorials (1957-1960) for the *Post-Dispatch* until he retired in 1960 to begin a second career as lecturer and author.

On the editorial page, Dilliard was a strong voice in support of the Bill of Rights and a defender against social injustices. His expertise in matters regarding the U. S. Supreme Court was legendary and largely self-taught. His personal library contained one of the finest collections of books on the Court in the country. Justice William O. Douglas said, "He was the finest writer to ever cover the Court."

He wrote books about the Supreme Court, biographies of the justices (past and present) lectured at law schools and gained a personal relationship with several who held positions on the Court.

Numerous articles over the years have suggested that Dilliard's views on injustice were forged early. At the age of 14, he was among the crowd watching as the body of Robert Prager was taken down after a mob lynched him in the mistaken belief that he was a German spy in World War I.

His editorials could be crusades against corruption or calls to make needed social changes, and they were both local and national in scope. His editorials in support of preserving the Eugene Field House and the Campbell House are just two examples where he rallied in support of historic preservation and made a difference. He also supported authors by reading new books and publishing



## CHAMPION OF THE COURTS

hundred of book reviews either in the *Post-Dispatch* or in the *Illinois Journal*.

He often took what were considered controversial stands, for example, writing against the work of Senator Joseph McCarthy and the "Red Scare."

He wrote more than 40 editorials against the deportation of a Ellen Knauf, German war bride who was arbitrarily denied admission to the United States. She languished on Ellis Island for four years and was about to be deported when the influence of Dilliard and the *Post-Dispatch* pushed her case to the Supreme Court where the verdict was ruled in her favor.

She later wrote a thank you letter to Dilliard, thanking him for taking up her case. She said that it "is what I dreamed America was about. I can only thank you from the bottom of my heart." Dilliard had never met the woman, but after learning her story, fought for what was right.

In what writer Robert Tabscott called "beyond insight into clairvoyance," Dilliard published a series of editorials in 1954 called "A War to Stay Out Of." His vision of the Indochina conflict predicting the consequences of U. S. involvement fell on deaf ears.

In November 1978, John Lofton said about Dilliard that he was "not just a champion of worthy causes in remote places. He was in effect the conscience of the paper, urging that it observe and champion standards of integrity and fairness on its own ground and toward its own readers. When lesser editors might have hesitated to take stands that might upset their publisher, Irving Dilliard dared to take the risk and put the *Post-Dispatch* in the front line of defense of freedom of the press and other rights."

Historian Bernard DeVoto, when assessing the state of journalism in 1953 for a *Harpers* magazine article, said, "What makes a national newspaper is the editorial page. No other in the country is good enough to be compared with (the *Post-Dispatch*)."

"One reads the page, knowing that the people who write it have an extraordinary

knowledge of American life which makes the *Post-Dispatch* the finest practitioner of liberal journalism we have ever seen."

During his varied career, what contributed to his outstanding body of work was not just his curiosity about what was happening around him, but his response, which was often to study, research and then write about the issue with great integrity. "Fake news" had no place in Dilliard's world, even if a story didn't always slant the way his employer would have liked. Truth was truth.

### WRITE! WRITE! WRITE!

In the words of Edgar Lee Masters, Dilliard did just that. In 1937, he authored a booklet, "*Building the Constitution*," published by the *Post-Dispatch*, that was used in Missouri schools for decades. That was followed by a half dozen books, many focused on the Constitution and the Supreme Court. He contributed articles to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, *The Dictionary of American Biography* (100 articles), *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, *Collier's Encyclopedia*, *Journal of Negro History* and many other books. And he regularly contributed articles to *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's*, *The Nation*, *Yale Law Review*, and the *Journal of Illinois History*, to name only a few.

He was a regular contributor to the *Christian Science Monitor* (1928-1936) and to the *Chicago American* (1962-1965), work that was often reprinted in newspapers around the country.

Edgar Lee Masters also advised him to "keep a notebook with you at all times to take notes." Although not a notebook, Dilliard always had paper with him to make notes on story ideas, concepts, contact information and more. A friend, Donna Bardon, remembers that after receiving a letter, he cut open the envelope and laid it flat. The flattened envelope was cut into strips that fit in his pocket and were used to made notes for himself and others on the recycled envelopes. He once told her he was "socially liberal, but financially conservative."



## Eccentric, but Beloved

Dilliard was by all accounts a man who could and did talk to anyone, regardless of their status in life. He had an almost child-like curiosity and would walk up to something or someone with a "Let's see what's happening over there" attitude.

He corresponded with some of the most important people in the country, yet was happy to answer a letter from a high school student as well, perhaps remembering all the writers who responded to his questions in the 1920s.

Dilliard was famous for his quirks. He didn't wear socks. He always shook both of your hands at the same time, right-to-right and left-to-left. He said shaking both hands offered double the value at no additional cost. Once introductions were made, he was likely to check out your shoes, and if they had laces, he would then teach you how to lace and tie your shoes in what he considered a better way.

Karl Monroe, former editor of the *Collinsville Herald*, once reported coming across Dilliard in Ireland. He was sitting on a bench, showing a Soviet diplomat his method of tying shoes so they would be more comfortable. Dilliard admitted it was a great ice-breaker.

Columnist Pat Gauen, of the *Post-Dispatch*, wrote about Dilliard in 1995. "Eccentric? Sure. But it is as genuine a gift as you will ever receive, from maybe the smartest – and kindest – person you ever met."

## MILITARY SERVICE & THOUGHTS OF POLITICS

In addition to writing for print venues, he also wrote and presented many lectures at universities and law schools across the country and in Europe. In 1966, he lectured and conducted seminars in India, Hong Kong, and Japan. Six universities awarded him honorary degrees.

He also wrote many programs that he presented at meetings of local organizations including the Madison County Historical Society. Favorite local subjects included Elijah Lovejoy, a martyr for freedom of the press, and the Lewis and Clark expedition that occurred exactly a century before his birth in 1904. As can be expected from Dilliard, he spoke on a wide variety of topics.

### POLITICAL OFFICE?

In 1962, Illinois Senator Paul Douglas publicly proposed that Irving Dilliard be the next candidate for the U. S. Senate. The news was so widely reported the Dilliard found himself in the rather awkward position of publicly stepping down from a candidacy he had never agreed to fill in the first place.



### SECOND AND THIRD CAREERS

In 1963, after working as a lecturer for the Salzburg Seminar in Austria and as a Regent's Lecturer at the University of California, he accepted a teaching position at Princeton University. He became the inaugural Ferris Professor before retiring a second time in 1974.

Following his second retirement (or third if you include military service), he took on yet another career as the first director of the Illinois Department of Aging (1974-1975).

### MILITARY SERVICE

Dilliard's military service from 1943-1946, took him all over Europe where he was often witness to some key historic moments both before and after the war. He entered the U. S. Army in 1943, at the age of 39, older than the average soldier. Through friends in the military, he offered to serve, if needed, as a public relations specialist and his offer was gratefully accepted. He entered service with the rank of

captain. After training in the U.S., he left for Europe on Dec. 31, 1943 on the Queen Mary with 16,000 troops. He landed in Scotland nine days later and was given additional training before being assigned to the Psychological Warfare Division, Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Forces (SHAEF) under Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower.

He was present at the liberation of Paris where he worked until being sent to Bavaria, as commanding officer of the Information Control Division, Office of Military Government. His primary charge was to license non-Nazi newspapers and re-establish a free press. He was also responsible for removing Nazi content from all forms of entertainment including radio, books and theater. In 1945, he sponsored the first Jewish composed opera produced in Germany since 1938. He also supervised the physical work needed to restore printing presses, many of them destroyed in bombings.

In late 1945, he was assigned to cover the Nuremberg Trials for *Stars and Stripes* (European edition). He also sent articles home to the *Post-Dispatch* on his experience covering the trials and witnessing the execution of 28 men convicted of Nazi war crimes. His last few months of service were spent in Africa and the Middle East.

For his work during the war, Lt. Col. Dilliard was not just recognized by his own country, but also by England and France. He was a recipient of the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, Order of the British Empire (military), Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, and Medaille Argent de la Reconnaissance Francaise.

### PUBLIC SERVICE

Dilliard served on the Board of Trustees of many organizations including the Illinois State Historical Society, the Illinois Library Association and the Collinsville Memorial Library where he was a trustee for 52 years and president for 36 of those years. He had a great love for libraries. He was in the inaugural class of trustees when the Illinois Arts Council was established.

He was the first person from Collinsville to win a statewide election when he was elected to the Board of Trustees for the University of Illinois in 1960. He served from 1961-1967.

Dilliard was appointed to state positions by seven different Illinois governors from Horner to Walker. To list all of the organizations he was affiliated with and community groups he helped would take a full page or more.

He was dedicated to history and was active in the local chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, as well as the William Clark Society.

Dilliard's father-in-law, Charles H. Dorris, became a trustee for the Madison County Historical Society in 1937 and served until 1953 when he became the Society's first emeritus director. His seat was taken by his son-in-law. Dilliard served on the MCHS Board for ten years, until 1963. During much of his tenure at MCHS, Dilliard was also serving on the Illinois State Historical Society Board. He was responsible for some of the first state historical markers in Madison County. He chaired the Committee for a Madison County Historical Museum when the museum moved from the courthouse to its new home at the Weir House.



## FAMILY

### DILLIARD FAMILY IN MADISON COUNTY

Dilliard was often asked why he didn't move to Missouri. An article in the *Post-Dispatch* in January 1990 said his response was that crossing the Mississippi River twice a day, helped him develop "a national point of view." But it could also have been because Collinsville had been his home for generations and remained his home until his death in 2002. His house, until 1960, was the home his grandparents purchased in 1885.

He was born in 1904, the year of the St. Louis World's Fair. Although his father, James, was originally from Macoupin County, his mother, the former Mary Beedle Look, had Collinsville roots dating back to when Unionville (an earlier name for Collinsville) was founded. Mary's grandfather, Horace Look, helped plat the town and was a postmaster for 30 years.

Horace Look's wife, Irving's great grandmother, was Emma Corbitt Darrow. Her father was a minister who worked with John Mason Peck at Rock Springs near O'Fallon. Her brother, Joseph, was both a minister and a physician. He founded and built three Episcopal missions, in Edwardsville, Collinsville and Marine, Illinois. Joseph also founded a school called the Seminary that was located on Seminary Street in Collinsville. Joseph died in 1855 after caring for the ill during a cholera epidemic.

Irving's maternal grandparents, Oliver and Kate Look, owned and lived in the historic D. D. Collins House from 1861-1885. It is where his mother, Mary, was born and spent her girlhood. In 1998, Irving purchased the house and gifted it to the City of Collinsville. It is now a house museum.

After selling the D. D. Collins House, Oliver and his wife purchased another historic Collinsville house, the home of Dr. Henry Wing at the corner of South Aurora and East Church Streets. Built in 1852, it was considered the finest house in Collinsville in its day. From 1885-1964 the house was owned by three generations of Irving's family. When his parents died in 1935, Dilliard and his wife, the former Dorothy Dorris continued family ownership. Married in 1931, their family by then had grown to include the first of two daughters. Doris Lee and Mary Sue. It was a large house and, ac-



Oliver Childs Look and his wife Catherine Jane "Kate" Beedle Look, were Irving Dilliard's maternal grandparents. (Schusky)

cording to census records, by 1935 the Dilliards were sharing it with Dorothy's parents, Charles and Susie Dorris, a situation that worked out well for everyone since Dilliard was often away for the next decade with the Harvard Nieman Fellowship in 1938-39 and again from 1943-1946 for military service.

During his life and career, Dilliard met and became friends with many influential people of the day, writers, historians, politicians, and yes, Supreme Court justices. The Wing House had a front row seat to history as many of these men (mostly men) found their way to the Wing House. There was a guestbook at the house that included the names of Carl Sandburg, Paul Angle, Arthur Schlesinger, Adlai Stevenson, Paul Douglas, Paul Simon, Learned Hand, William O. Douglas and many others whose names, although not readily recognized today, were well known in their time. Paul Simon never failed to "visit my Republican friend" before leaving the house, a reference to Dilliard's father-in-law who had his own suite of rooms in the house.

Madison County bought the Wing House and it's one acre lot from the Dilliards in about 1960, and the house was torn down in 1964 to make room for a 76-unit, seven-story apartment complex for low-income senior citizens under the auspices of the Madison County Housing Authority. The Dilliards moved to Crestwood Drive in Collinsville (of course) to a home known to family and friends as the house on Paw Paw Hill.



The Look family & friends at the Wing House, 505 E. Church Street, Collinsville, circa 1890. (Schusky)

## EXTRAS

In 1949, the Dilliard family vacationed on the East Coast. Dilliard reached out to a friend who invited the family over for a picnic. Eleanor Roosevelt made hotdogs for the Dilliard girls on the grill in her backyard at Val-Kill Cottage.

During WW I, while still in high school, Dilliard had a job as a messenger boy at the Collinsville telegraph office. He was the one delivering official notices of the death of Collinsville residents in military service to their families.

Dorris School in Collinsville is named for Dilliard's father-in-law, Charles H. Dorris, who was a much beloved superintendent of Collinsville schools from 1900-1937. Following his retirement, a fountain featuring the Greek god Pan was installed in front of the Collinsville Memorial Library.

Dilliard saved everything. Notes, books, volumes of correspondence, and more. In the 1990s he began looking for homes for the materials. His journalism/*Post-Dispatch* records were donated to UMSL. His materials on the Constitution and the Supreme Court were donated to the Law School at SIU Carbondale. His military records were donated to the U. S. Army Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and his personal letters and correspondence, that included some of all the above, were donated to the Louisa H. Bowen Archives and Special Collections of Lovejoy Library at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.



# Madison County Historical Society

*Opening Doors to Madison County History*

**P. O. Box 422  
Edwardsville, IL 62025**

**Address Service Requested**

PRSR STD  
Non-Profit  
Organization  
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62025

## RECENT & COMING EVENTS

**Sunday, November 14—2 p.m.**

**Annual Membership Meeting - Zoom meeting by Invitation**

**Call 618-656-1294 for link to meeting**

**Program: Leclaire: From Model Village to Modern Village**

**Presenter: Bob Gill**

**Find it at: [madcohistory.com](http://madcohistory.com)**

## CAN YOU HELP?

Do you like libraries? Do you have clerical or typing skills? The Society could use your help with accessioning new photographs, books and documents into the computer as well as indexing materials in the card file. Flexible schedules available.

See the Annual Report for a list of volunteer opportunities, and, if you can help, call 618-656-1294.

## GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE

Need a Christmas or holiday gift idea for that person that has EVERYTHING? Contact the Madison County Historical Society about a gift membership in the organization. If you order online, be sure to comment that it is a gift and who the gift is for so we can send the certificate to you. We don't want to spoil any surprises.

## SUGGESTIONS WELCOME

The Society tries to provide a variety of programs, publications, and exhibits that cover the entire county and that, we hope, have broad appeal. If you have suggestions for any of the above, we'd like to hear them!

Send an email to [info@madcohistory.org](mailto:info@madcohistory.org) or call 618-656-1294 with your suggestions. We are also interested in hearing about YOUR Madison County family.

Madison County Historical Society

**ONLINE  
SPEAKER  
2021 SERIES**

*Bob Gill*

Leclaire:  
From Model Village to Modern Village

**OCTOBER  
2021**