



MCHS BUILDING HISTORY

621 St. Louis Street - Edwardsville, IL

By Cindy Reinhardt, 2026

The Crossman House

The stately two-story brick house at 621 St. Louis St. was built circa 1928 for Samuel and Laura Crossman. It was the second Edwardsville house built for the Crossmans. The first one, completed in time for their 1916 wedding, was located at 213 S. Buchanan St. It was also a two-story brick house, but smaller than their new St. Louis Street house.

Samuel Vaughton Crossman and Laura Shaw Crossman were married on Nov. 8, 1916, in a beautiful home wedding at her parent's home in Leclaire. Their marriage was the joining of two prominent Edwardsville families.

Samuel was named for his grandfather who was only six years old when he immigrated to New York from London, England, in 1834. Two years later, he was apprenticed to a Cincinnati printer, and when he completed his indenture, he moved to Alton where he found work in the printing trade. He worked for and was a partner in numerous Madison County newspapers, the last being the *Edwardsville Republican* which his sons, Thomas and William Crossman, took over after his death. The *Republican* was a competing newspaper to the *Edwardsville Intelligencer* which in its early days supported the Democratic party. In those days, newspaper businesses were general printers that published books, leaflets, invitations, calling cards, and more, in addition to a weekly or bi-weekly broadside. The Crossmans published the *Edwardsville Republican* from 1869 until 1917 when it was sold.

The Samuel Crossman who built this St. Louis Street house was born in Edwardsville in 1884 to William and Julia (Bickelhaupt) Crossman. Despite his family's history as printers and newspaper editors, none of William Crossman's three children became printers. Samuel was invited to enter the banking business even before completing high school. It was a good choice since, beginning at the Edwardsville National Bank, he rapidly climbed the ranks to cashier. When his bank merged with the Bank of Edwardsville, he was carried over as cashier and in later years served on the bank's board of directors.

Samuel's bride, Laura Shaw, was born in St. Louis in 1889. She was one of six children born to William and Elizabeth Shaw. William, like Samuel's grandfather, was also a native of England, coming to America as a young boy. He found work with the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company in St. Louis, Missouri. After Nelson founded Leclaire in 1890, Shaw commuted by train to Leclaire for three years before moving his family to Leclaire in 1893. They lived at 409 Jefferson Road and were good friends with the Nelsons who lived across the street. Laura's mother regularly went on rides



The Samuel and Laura Elizabeth (Shaw) Crossman Hoome at 621 St. Louis Street as it appears today. (Reinhardt)

with Mrs. Nelson, often with one or more of her children in tow. William Shaw was manager of the Nelson Machine Shop and became a member of the N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Company's board of directors. At the 1904 World's Fair, William demonstrated Nelson products at the company's booth, so Laura's family visited the fair often.

In 1927, eleven years after their 1916 marriage, Samuel and Laura purchased a lot on St. Louis Street that had originally been part of the Edward West property, on the north end of West Street. By 1927, the West house was owned by Adolphus Wolf who, like Samuel, was also connected with the Bank of Edwardsville. The lot purchased was on the east side of the West/Wolf property. It had 50 feet of frontage on St. Louis Street and ran approximately 130 feet deep, from St. Louis Street on the south to Randle Street on the north.

The exact date the house was completed is estimated as 1928. The lot was purchased in May 1927 and newspaper articles indicate that by September 1928, the Crossman family was occupying the house. Although the exact construction date is unknown, there is no doubt it was on a busy thoroughfare. Route 66 was commissioned in 1926, before they purchased the lot, and a gas station was on the corner across the street. Just a block down West Street was the new Edwardsville High School that opened in 1924 (now Lincoln Middle School). Fortunately, the Crossman lot was deep enough to build well back from the street.

The new house had four bedrooms, and they needed them all. Samuel's mother died in 1928, and after the new house

was built, his father William came to live with them. Samuel and Laura had two children, William, named for Samuel's father, and Laura Elizabeth (called Elizabeth), named for her mother and grandmother. The children were aged 11 and 6, respectively, when they moved to the new house.

It was a very social household. Laura was a founding member of the Monday Club, a Red Cross volunteer, and a participant in many of the women's activities at St. John's Methodist church. Samuel served as trustee and secretary of the church board for decades.

In May 1936, Samuel's father, William, passed away. Less than a year later, Samuel died. He was only 52 years old. By this time their son William was attending Illinois Wesleyan, and Elizabeth was nearing the end of her high school years. Following high school, she also attended and graduated from Illinois Wesleyan in Bloomington.

William went on to attend Washington University Law School, but his studies were interrupted by service in WWII. In October 1940, he married Katheryn Tuxhorn of Edwardsville. Following the war, he was hired by Owens-Illinois Corporation in Peoria, Illinois, where he had a 40-year career.

Elizabeth also married an Edwardsville native, Charles Richard "Dick" Nash, who was a successful architect in Glenview, Illinois. Dick's uncle, Frank Nash, was mayor of Edwardsville from 1921-1929.

Laura Crossman was a widow for many years, but her children and grandchildren visited often. She lived in her beautiful St. Louis Street house for more than 50 years. There have been seven owners since it was sold by Laura's estate in 1981, and it remains one of the strikingly handsome residences of the St. Louis Street Historic District.

