



PURCELL STREET AND THE COURTHOUSE SQUARE: LOST TO TIME

By Cindy Reinhardt

Those who are new to the area (or young) may be asking, "Where is Purcell Street?" or, "What courthouse square?" Purcell Street was on the north side of the courthouse in Edwardsville. Today, the once thriving business block is covered by the Madison County Administration Building. The loss of Purcell Street also dismantled the courthouse square, removing its north side connection.

Edwardsville has been the county seat for Madison County government since the county was established by proclamation in 1812. That designation comes with many advantages, most notably keeping the downtown area relevant and thriving, but Edwardsville has also lost numerous historic buildings due to necessary county expansion. Until 1990, Purcell Street was a block-long collection of business houses built primarily between 1890-1914. They were destroyed to make room for the Madison County Administration Building.

THE BEGINNING...

The lots on Purcell Street are part of the Original Town of Edwardsville, but so far as is known, a name wasn't assigned to the street until the new 1857 courthouse was built next to them.

Cont. page 4



Purcell Street prior to 1914 when the Bank of Edwardsville replaced the corner businesses with its new five-story business complex (see page 7). In this picture, the bank is located in the second building from the corner between the corner dry goods store and a drug store built for John S. Trares. At the far end of Purcell Street was the Madison Store. (MCHS)

BUILDINGS OF A BYGONE ERA OPENS DECEMBER 4

Another "From the Vault" exhibit will open on Wednesday, December 4, with a selection of sketches, photographs, and artifacts from historic buildings of Madison County.

The county has many beautiful historic structures representing many architectural styles. This exhibit looks at buildings from all over the county both rural and urban. Some of the subjects, like the buildings on

BUILDINGS OF A BYGONE ERA

December 4, 2024 through
February 28, 2025



Purcell Street, are unfortunately gone due to expansion, renovation or fire. The exhibit gives viewers the opportunity to appreciate them once more.

Please note the museum will be closed from November 15-December 3 so that current exhibits can be disassembled and the new exhibit installed. The new exhibit will be in place through February 28, 2025.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

HISTORY MUSEUM

Nov. 15 - Dec 3
Dec 24-25
Jan 1

ARCHIVAL LIBRARY

Nov. 28-Dec. 1
Dec 24-25
Jan 1

*Have a wonderful
holiday season!*

Library Hours
Mon. - Fri., 9 a. m. - 4 p. m.
Sunday 1 p. m. - 4 p. m.
Call for Museum Hours

**Madison County History Museum
and Library**
801 N. Main Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Contact us:
Library: 618-656-7569
Society: 618-656-1294
Email: info@madcohistory.org

2024 ANNUAL MEETING

ANNUAL MEETING HELD NOVEMBER 3

More than 100 guests attended the MCHS Annual Meeting and Dining in History event at the Crystal Garden Event Center. The venue was incredible, especially with the view of colorful fall leaves through the glass walls of the room. Guests were entertained through the Social Hour by the music of MCHS Board member Wilbert Glasper on saxophone and Oliver Johnson on keyboard.

After the meal, a brief meeting led by President Fred Faust was held for the purpose of approving board candidates for the coming three-year term. Those approved were Leslie Bednar, Robert Clouse, Tallin Curran, Bob Daiber, and Carol Manning. All are returning members of the Board who have contributed greatly to the success of the Society.

Following the meeting, a program on Route 66 was presented by author and historian Cheryl Eichar Jett with contributions by Cindy Reinhardt and Teri Ryburn.

ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

The 2024 Annual Report was presented at the Annual Meeting. Copies are available at the Madison County Archival Library at 801 N. Main Street in Edwardsville. The list of accomplishment during the past year is a long one, and the lists of donors and volunteers is extremely gratifying. The Society is very grateful.

2025 MCHS GOALS

- Complete designs for permanent museum exhibits and begin fabrication and installation
- Expand and strengthen MCHS Archival Library collections
- Complete final renovations of the Weir House
- Hire a Museum Director
- Install solar panels on Library to reduce Museum energy costs
- Redesign MCHS website to improve maintenance functions
- Double MCHS membership to 800
- Expand MCHS educational outreach activities to underserved communities
- Continue to expand MCHS programs for teachers and students

Pictured below, from left, 1. Fred Faust leading the annual meeting. 2. Guests explore the eclectic choices at the silent auction. 3. A view of the crowd in the beautiful Crystal Garden room (Scott Oliva)

2024 ANNUAL MEETING (PHOTOS BY SCOTT OLIVA)



MCHS BOARD

Fred Faust, Pres.
Robert Clouse, V-Pres.
Arnold Meyer, Treas.
Candace Ladd, Sec.
Norma Asadorian
Leslie Bednar
Donna Caban Bisset
Tallin Curran
Bob Daiber
Wilbert Glasper
Stephen Hansen
Carol Manning
Stephen Mudge
Jeff Pauk
Cindy Reinhardt
Jeff Skoblow

STAFF

Robert Clouse
Operations Director
Mary Z. Rose
Archives Librarian
Jenn VanBibber
Museum Curator

Sunday Staff

Robert Clouse
Stephen Mudge
Cindy Reinhardt
Carol Manning
Jeff Pauk

PUBLICATIONS

MCHS NEWS

Cindy Reinhardt, Editor
cindy.reinhardt@madcohistory.org

VOLUNTEERS

There are abundant and varied opportunities for volunteers at either the Museum or the 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 a MCHS membership. Memberships run on the calendar year, Jan 1-Dec 31. Applications are available on the MCHS website, or at the Library.

The Madison County Historical Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

BUILDING NEWS

Recent work on the Weir House and grounds includes continued painting and finishing work on the second floor.

Outside, a short staircase was added to the north side of the ramp platform so visitors have the option of stairs or the ramp and the basement door (exterior) has been replaced with an insulated steel door.

In case you've noticed, our flag is missing because the ropes broke. A company with a lift has been contacted to safely replace the ropes. We hope to have it repaired soon.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS COMING SOON!

Watch your mail box for membership renewal information. A membership application card will be sent for you to return, or you can renew your membership online. Donna Bisset, our new Membership Chair, is looking forward to seeing all those renewals! Please make her Christmas a merry one!

VOLUNTEERS AT WORK

Regular library volunteers are excited to have finished the massive probate project far ahead of schedule. The last of the documents they prepared are still being scanned, but the entire project should be completed before the end of the year. If you are looking for probate records in Madison County, these are already available on FamilySearch.org.

They are now working on two indexing projects. There are collections of obituaries which are being copied, indexed and filed. In a second project, scrapbooks of articles about military service collected by the late Harold Meisenheimer of Alton are being indexed.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

In addition to library volunteers and the important work they are doing (see above), volunteers are also needed to serve as museum docents now that the museum is open.

MCHS could also use writers, communications assistance, graphic design, carpenters, painters, ushers (for Speaker Series), and more. Please call 618-656-7569 if you are able to volunteer weekly, monthly, or even yearly. No amount of time is too small and all volunteers are greatly appreciated.

NEWSLETTER SPONSORS

Thank You!

In Memory of Veteran

PHYLLIS THRASHER BURG MANUS



IN 1943, AT THE AGE OF 22, PHYLLIS JOINED THE U.S. NAVAL RESERVES. SHE ATTENDED RADIO TRAINING SCHOOLS BEFORE BEING SENT TO PORT BLAKELY, BAINBRIDGE ISLAND, WASHINGTON, WHERE SHE WORKED AS A JAPANESE CODEBREAKER. IT WAS A

SECRET SHE TOOK TO HER GRAVE, WITH FAMILY LEARNING ABOUT HER INCREDIBLE SERVICE LATER. SHE WAS GIVEN AN HONORABLE DISCHARGE ON MAY 14, 1945.

FROM HER DAUGHTER, SUSAN MANUS LUCCO

DINING IN HISTORY SPONSORS

Thank You!

KENDRICK AND DONNA BISSET



www.edwardsville.minutemanpress.com

**DESIGN
PRINTING
MAILINGS
APPAREL
SIGNAGE**

618.659.8600

edwmmp@minutemanpress.com

**BANK of
MADISON COUNTY**

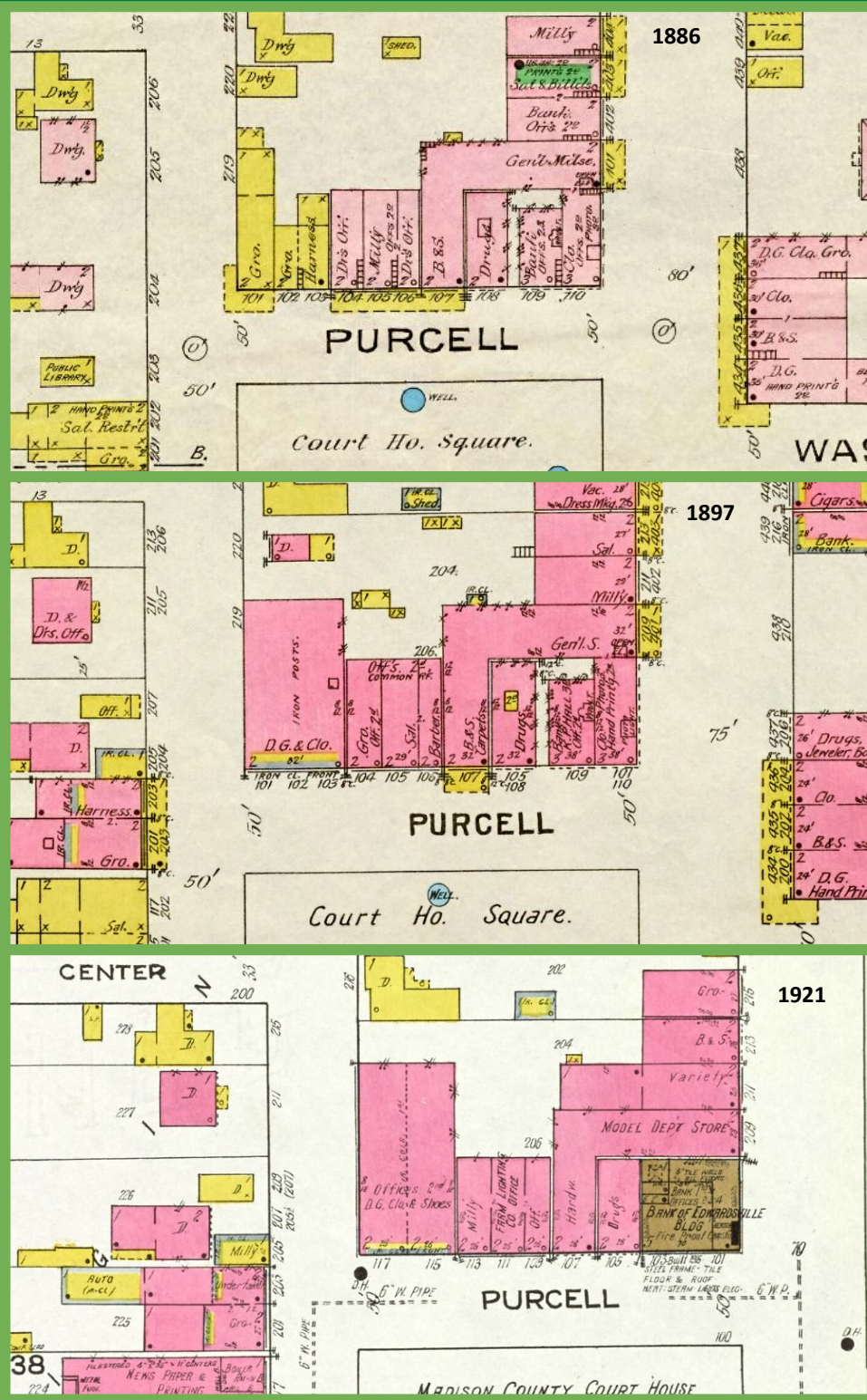
A Division of Bank of Illinois
Smaller Bank • Bigger Service • Stronger Community

 bankofmadisoncounty.com

 618-656-2882

 Member FDIC and Our Community

PURCELL STREET: CHANGES 1886-1931 (CONT. FROM PAGE 1)



Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are wonderful tools for discovering how buildings and neighborhoods changed over the years. They were made for fire insurance purposes so they gave dimensions and showed what materials were used. Pink was for brick, yellow for lumber, brown for fireproof, and grey for iron. Although the Archival Library has several in its collections, they are also available online through the University of Illinois Library. These include Alton, Troy, Highland, and other Madison County communities.

Notice in the top map (1886) the western most Purcell Street building is a frame structure but by the second map (1897) it is brick with an iron front. Between 1897 and the last map (1921) the major change is completion of the bank building on the eastern corner (colored brown for fireproof).

A map at the Archival Library (1930) shows an expansion of the bank building, a five-story addition that took up the entire footprint of the Model Dept. Store on Main Street.

At that time, Maj. Thomas F. Purcell, an Irish immigrant, was the land agent in Edwardsville. He was a civil engineer by trade but spent decades as a printer and well-respected journalist in numerous midwestern states. He was not a long-time resident of Edwardsville, but he was very well-liked. Purcell Street was likely named for him when he died that same year.



Purcell Street businesses can be seen on the far right behind the 1857 Court House and annex. (MCHS)

Before 1857, the business district in Edwardsville was 12 blocks north of the current courthouse in the 1200 block of North Main Street. It took a few years for the streets around the new courthouse to be populated with business buildings. William Prickett (1836-1922) described the early years of Purcell Street in a 1914 interview for the *Edwardsville Intelligencer*. He told how in 1857, the lots on Purcell Street were empty and the other blocks surrounding the courthouse had mostly small houses which would eventually be replaced with business blocks.

As can be seen by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps at left, the street gradually changed with the oldest buildings being replaced by newer buildings, just as they often do today. This continued until 1989 when all of the businesses on Purcell and a couple on Main Street were razed to make way for the Madison County Administration building.

Most of the buildings were purchased much earlier and were already being used by the county. Due to its desperate need for space, the county also had annexes on Hillsboro (several), Randle, and St. Louis Streets.

The largest purchase was the five-story Bank of Edwardsville building in 1979 after the bank built a new facility on St. Louis Street. It soon filled with county offices.

PURCELL STREET BUSINESSES

115-117 PURCELL STREET

The first building on Purcell Street was the Academy Building, a two-story frame building which was moved to the corner of Purcell and Second Streets from a prior location on the west side of Second Street. Another two-story frame building was erected next door. The first-floor rooms opened as grocery and general merchandise stores while the second floors, perhaps predictably, were law offices.

Thirty years later, in 1890, these two frame buildings would be moved to another location (the second move for the old Academy Building) and replaced by a new two-story brick which would be known as the Prickett Building. By that time other buildings had filled the rest of the block-long street.



If you look closely, you can see women sitting in the windows of the Madison Store. It was a fundraiser for the St. Andrew's Guild. The store owner paid them each \$1 to sit in the windows for an hour. Circa 1895. (MCHS)

The first tenant for the new building was the Madison Mercantile Store, later shortened to the Madison Store. The Madison Store was the oldest store in Edwardsville when it was sold in 1948 to Orville Bonham, who continued the business until it closed in 1973. Even then, Bonham's daughter and her husband continued in half of the building with Johnson's Draperies.

The Madison Store was a dry goods store carrying clothing for the whole family including shoes, fabric, draperies, etc. Many area residents when asked remember getting their Boy Scout and Girl Scout clothing and manuals at the store. As well as gym class uniforms, and which are always described as "awful." Women remember going to the fabric section with their mothers. One woman said when she went to the Madison Store with her mother, she felt "fancy."

Jack Foerkolb, a life-long resident of Edwardsville, remembers getting a blue suit there for his First Communion.

The store had a mezzanine with offices and storage across the back of the store and very high ceilings in the front of the store. There were apartments and offices on the second floor accessed by a very long set of steep stairs because of the mezzanine.

111-113 PURCELL STREET



In the early days both the Edwardsville Library and the Post Office were on Purcell Street. The above photograph, taken prior to 1905, features the first rural mail carriers: H. C. Miller, J. H. Wohlbrink, and P. W. Sommerlad. (MCHS)

This double storefront building was usually operated as two separate businesses. As shown above, one of the early tenants was the post office. In those days, the post office was often in the corner of someone's store. Edwardsville's first post office was built in 1914. Also shown in the picture is another tenant, Green Tree Brew at 111 Purcell Street.

It's hard to tell from the photograph, but from other sources, we know the storefront on the left (113 Purcell St.) was likely the millinery shop of Bernadean D. Judd. Mrs. Judd, the former Bernadean "Dena" Kramer, was 25 years old when she married Charles Judd in 1898. She was widowed the following year. For the first year she lived with her in-laws, but within a few years was making her way as a milliner and dressmaker with her own business on Purcell Street. She resided in one of Edwardsville's hotels the rest of her life, a not uncommon situation for singles at that time. Her business was very successful, and she later moved to 107 Purcell Street, a larger store. She died suddenly, at her store, at the young age of 62.



The most remembered tenant at this address though was the George Musso Restaurant and Tavern which opened in 1948. George and his wife, Pauline, started with the bar and liquor store in the right storefront, officially operated by Pauline, since as Madison County Sheriff, George was not permitted to sell alcohol. Within a few months, they opened the restaurant and combined the two so bar patrons could get food and vice versa.

It was considered a high end restaurant-lounge for Edwardsville with fabric tablecloths and sports décor, reflecting George's 12-year career as a professional foot-

PURCELL STREET BUSINESSES

ball player for the Chicago Bears. The sports angle also brought in some celebrities looking to rub elbows with George.

Pauline Musso did the books and kept things running while George worked for the county. Eventually, she took a job teaching in Collinsville and a manager was hired the last two years it was open.

When the restaurant closed after only 12 years, George told a reporter it was because they no longer had Route 66 traffic coming through town.

The next tenant was another professional athlete. Don Ohl Office Supplies opened in the double store front. Ohl, an EHS graduate, played for the Detroit Pistons, and hired a manager to take care of the business when he was away.

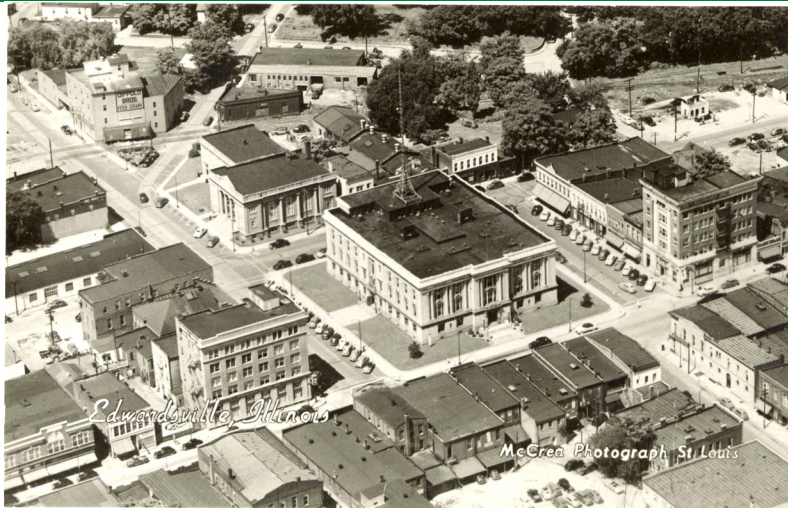
There were a half dozen apartments on the second floor of the building that were known as the Musso Apartments. Musso retained ownership of the building until it was sold to the county.

109 PURCELL STREET

At some point in the 1960s, 109 became part of the Musso Building and the number 111 disappeared. Prior to that 109 was always an address listing offices, primarily law offices, but also real estate and insurance agencies.

107 PURCELL STREET

107 was a storefront the was very deep so that it could connect with the storefront at 209 N. Main Street. (see page 7) It was originally the G. B. Crane Store, then the Edwardsville Dry Goods Store.



A postcard with an aerial view of Edwardsville before 1990 when the courthouse square was still intact. Purcell Street is on the right with the bank on the corner. (MCHS)

105 PURCELL STREET

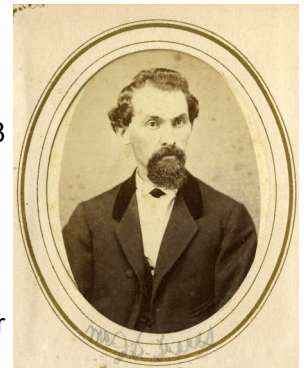
The cast iron storefront at this address was designed and built for pharmacist John Sebastian Trares by local architect Charles Spillman in 1882.

Trares came to Edwardsville from Ohio and was a savvy business investor. He took his earnings from his pharmacy and invested them in real estate, mostly rental units which brought in additional income so he could build even more. In his obituary, the newspaper said Trares was, "credited with the building of more business

houses and dwellings than any other during former days of Edwardsville."

Although his pharmacy building no longer stands, many of these other buildings remain. Most prominent is a business block including 222-228 N. Main Street and one of his personal homes at 304 N. Main St., now the Weber and Rodney Funeral Home.

Trares was only at this location for ten years before selling to another pharmacist, Dent Burroughs, followed by a series of other pharmacists until purchased by Norman Winter in 1945, also a pharmacist. Winter owned the building until he retired in 1962, after which the building had a long list of businesses occupy it: a men's clothing store, William Straube's CPA office, Enloe's Shoe Room, the Book Shelf, E. Ambrose-Books, and Inlandesign, a design firm.



John Sebastian Trares (MCHS)

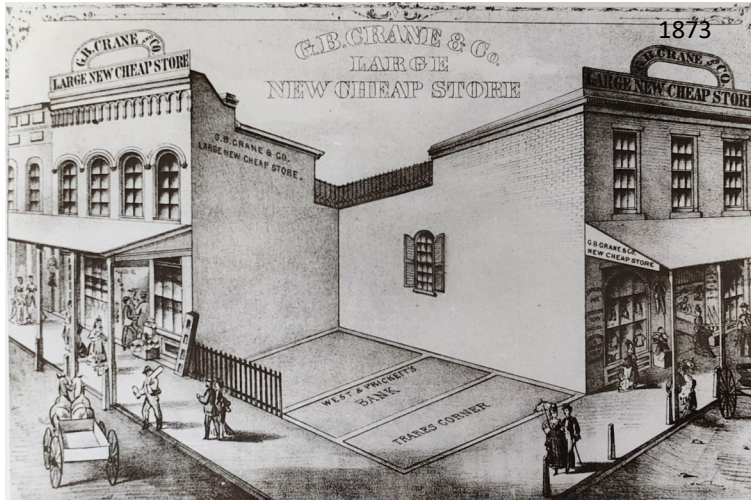


105 Purcell Street, circa 1900. Notice "books" prominently displayed on the store window. Drug stores almost always sold books at that time. (MCHS)



Above: Purcell Street buildings in 1985 shortly before they were cleared to create space for the new Madison County Administration Building. (John Celuch)

CORNER OF N. MAIN & PURCELL STREETS: A PICTORIAL TIMELINE



Although the corner space on Main Street belonged to John S. Trares, he leased it to others and established his pharmacy at 105 Purcell Street.

George B. Crane was a businessman who came to Edwardsville near the end of the Civil War. He married Isobel French whose father, a successful merchant, partnered with him to build his new store. Crane invested well, paid his father-in-law back for his portion, and by the time he retired, had amassed a small fortune. He built a beautiful home at 730 St. Louis Street in 1893 which still stands today.

The new 1914 Bank of Edwardsville building was a “skyscraper” by standards of the time, only to be exceeded by a new six-floor National Bank building a few years later. The two banks flanked the courthouse on Main Street for many years.

The upper floors of the Bank of Edwardsville were filled with professional offices: doctors, dentists, attorneys, contractors, real estate, and insurance firms. To reach those higher floors, there was an Otis elevator, the kind with the open cage, requiring an elevator operator. Many children in Edwardsville loved riding the elevator, and even today, more than 50 years later, have fond memories, as if it were a carnival ride.



Above Top: This drawing of G. B. Crane’s “Large New Cheap Store” was in the 1873 Atlas of Madison County. Crane believed in heavy marketing and had at least one large advertisement in every issue of the newspaper.

Middle: Crane’s store was succeeded by the Edwardsville Dry Goods Company in 1891 which expanded to fill the corner storefronts, as well as the former Crane store.

Bottom: The dry goods firm sold a lot on Purcell Street to West and Prickett Bank (later renamed the Bank of Edwardsville) circa 1896. The bank built the white building which can be seen at left in the photograph above. In 1914, the Bank tore down numerous buildings on both Main and Purcell Streets to erect the five-store commercial building seen at right.



Above: This Bank of Edwardsville building was designed by architects Clymer and Drischler of St. Louis and estimated to cost \$100,000. It was completed in 1914 amidst a great deal of construction in the immediate area. The new courthouse, across the street, was also under construction. The courthouse wasn’t completed until 1915. (MCHS)



801 N. Main Street
Edwardsville, IL 62025

Address Service Requested

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



BUILDINGS OF A BYGONE ERA

December 4, 2024 through
February 28, 2025



at the Madison County History Museum
715 North Main Street
Edwardsville

Another
From the Vault
exhibit



Visit the past with a
selection of drawings,
photographs, and artifacts
from Madison County
structures, many of which
have been destroyed.



2025 SPEAKER SERIES *In Lincoln's Time...*

February 9

Dr. Stephen Hansen

**A Superhero From Another Age:
The Legend & Mythology of Abraham Lincoln**

April 13

Christian McWhirter

Music of the Civil War

June 22

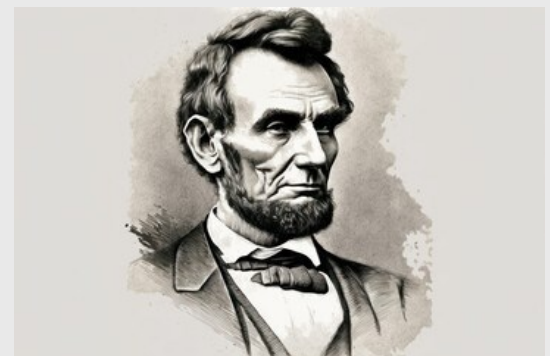
Kathryn Harris

as Harriet Tubman

August 10

Stacy Lynn

The Women in Lincoln's Life



All Speaker Events at 2 p.m.
on a Sunday afternoon
Main Street Community Center
1003 N. Main Street, Edwardsville, IL

REMEMBER MCHS THIS CHRISTMAS

Looking for a Christmas gift for the person who enjoys learning about local history? Consider a gift of membership in the Madison County Historical Society or a donation in their name.

The Society also has many books on local history available to members at a 20% discount in the gift shop, in the Archival Library at 801 N. Main Street in Edwardsville.