



ALTON AREA LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION
BOX 232, ALTON, ILLINOIS 62002
WWW.ALTONLANDMARKS.ORG

June 2022

Lectures: There are two summer lectures yet at the National Building Arts Center in Sauget, Il. July 5th is “When Bad Things Happen to Good Buildings”, and July 12th is “Mesker Brothers: Storefronts of America”. For free tickets contact <http://web.nationalbuildingarts.org>.

DANGER- The Koenig House (829 East Fourth St.) is in need of immediate repairs. What has happened to 522 William could soon happen to the Koenig House. The Alton Museum, which owns it, should attend to it before it crumbles and falls. It is used to store Museum items. The Museum is facing fines for code ordinance violations. The Wilhelm House (314 Oak) behind the Koenig, also owned by the Museum, has been condemned by the city. The Museum board has a responsibility to maintain their buildings. Send the Museum an email about the Koenig House at altonmuseum@gmail.com.

New: Ward one has a new alderperson, Elizabeth Allen (618-567-1451).

Tour: Type in address below to see the 1974 AALA tour of lower State Street.

<https://archive.org/details/lower-state-street-tour-alton>

House History: If you have an abstract of title for your home, make a copy of it and give it to the Hayner Library's Genealogy and Local History Library. They will file it in the House History Repository. Sometimes there is important history in them.

522 William: This small brick duplex was for sale, until the south wall blew out. Now it may be the next building lost to neglect in Christian Hill.

Riverfront: Mayor David Goins has appointed a commission to give advice to the city about the Mississippi River front. The Riverfront Development Commission consists of Tourism Bureau President Cory Jobe, former alderman Brian Campbell, Altonworks founder John Simmons, Alton Fire Chief Jesse Jamison, Vice President of Argosy Casino Mike Thomas, Sierra Club Co-Coordinator Christine Favilla and Alton resident Leo Portal.

The AALA did not get a position on the seven member commission. The reason we have Landmarks Blvd., an amphitheater and a marina is because the commitment of the AALA. The AALA waged a 13 year battle (from 1973 to 1987) in the Illinois courts to keep a highway from cutting through Riverfront Park. The case went all the way to the Illinois Supreme Court and the AALA won. The crux of the issue is that this common land platted by Rufus Easton is in the public trust and must be used for "park and parklike purposes". We hope the commission fulfills the commitment of the AALA.

Donations: Donations or dues can be mailed to the AALA, Box 232, Alton, IL 62002 or made through our website. Individual dues are \$15.00 a year. Family membership is \$25.00 a year. Contributions are tax deductible. Help us be a strong voice in preserving historic Alton. Thank you for your support. And remember to contribute to the other local organizations that enrich your life.

House Tour 2021: The 49th AALA House Tour is available to the public for free. “Then & Now” is a free download from our website. Paper versions of the tour are at the

downtown Visitors Center at Piassa and West Broadway. The tour features historic pictures of buildings still standing in Alton. The tour is a drive-by only tour. Except for the buildings which are ordinarily open to the public, you can not go into the buildings. Please consider a donation to the AALA for this free tour. Remember last year's drive-by tour is still available on our website for free, also. That tour is of Sears and other manufacturer's kit houses in Alton.

Windows: The AALA has long advocated for owners of historic homes to maintain their original wood windows. One resource for wood window sash replacement is St. Louis Sash Corporation. For more information go to stlsash.com.

Lucas Row: The stretch of buildings at the corner of East Broadway and Henry Streets has a new name. Lucas Row, 601-613 East Broadway, is named after their architect, Lucas Pfeiffenberger. Pfeiffenberger (1834-1918) not only designed many Alton buildings, homes and churches, but was also mayor and chief of Alton's volunteer fire department.

Downtown: Good news! The nomination for the Broadway corridor to become a National Register of Historic Places historic district (actually an addition to the Middletown Historic District) has been approved by the Department of the Interior. The nomination was approved by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency on October 29, 2021. Karen Bode Baxter who wrote the nomination deserves much of the credit. The nomination is available to the public. Even

if you think you know all the history of Alton, it is fascinating reading. The greatest advantage for downtown building owners is that they will be eligible for historic tax credits for renovations they do to their buildings. This could mean a big boost for our downtown area.

Pay Pal: We now have PayPal on our website. If you wish to pay your dues or make a donation to the AALA, you can do it with a credit card through Pay Pal rather than mailing a check. Click on “Donations” or “membership” on www.altonlandmarks.org and follow the instructions. Thank you.

Sidewalks: Consider adopting a brick sidewalk to clean off. Our brick streets and sidewalks give Alton its character. Too many of our brick sidewalks are covered with grass. If they are cleaned off, people will use them and they will remain clean. Any bushes and shrubs should be cleared off sidewalks for safety. Lots of people are walking for exercise and fun. They deserve clean sidewalks.

William Street: The first two blocks of William Street have been repaired and rebricked. Now that leaves the remaining three blocks to be fixed. New gas lines are being installed on William Street now. After that perhaps the rest of William Street can be completed.

WINDOWS: Nothing changes the character of historic homes like replacement windows. Please consider repairing your original windows before you forever change the visual appeal of

your historic home.

REVITALIZED: Local attorney John Simmons and his wife Jayne have announced their plans to invest \$75 million to the revitalization to downtown Alton. Mr. Simmons has been acquiring buildings in Alton. His plan divides the downtown into three districts: the Grand Entertainment District, the Broadway Makers District and the Jacoby Arts District. This could be an exciting rebirth for our area.

Accepted: The Abbott Machine Company building, formerly the Alton Gas & Electric Power House on the Great River Road, has been accepted to be on the National Register of Historic Places. The building, at 700 West Broadway, was built in 1913. Other than the Union Brewery at 1421 Pearl Street, this is Alton's first industrial building to be on the Register. The AALA is trying to offer a tour of the building in the near future.

Gift: The Tinner's Anvil at 211 Langdon is selling pieces of terra cotta for the AALA. They are perfect for backyard gardens. The AALA gets a commission for each piece sold.

Did you know?: A towboat with the maximum length of barges (five) is longer than the Titanic. 1000 feet plus vs. 889 feet.

Hayner Library: The AALA has bought three file cabinets for the growing Alton House History Repository. Stored at the Genealogy and Local History Library at 401 State Street, the Repository began with 300 house histories written for past AALA Historic House Tours. Now the total is over 3000 histories. Every year as new histories are written for the House Tour and as the library staff add more information to existing histories, storage has become a

problem. Hopefully, these cabinets will ease that problem.

Haskell House: Here's a new development which may help save the Haskell House in Haskell Park. The city owned house needs a use to be saved. Britta Haggard and Sue Utgaard have proposed using the house as a children's museum. Britt and Sue have been meeting with local groups, neighbors, and city officials to build support. If these two ladies can get this project going, this could be a win-win situation for the city of Alton, the Haskell House and our area's children.

The other important news about the Haskell House is the discovery of its architect. While sorting through blueprints in its attic, it was found that the house was designed by renowned German born American architect Theodore C. Link. Link was the architect of the Hayner Library at 401 State, the First Presbyterian Church at West Fourth and Alby Streets and the St. Louis Union Station.