

February 2015

DUES: Dues for 2015 can be paid now. Please remember to support us with a check. Dues can be mailed to the AALA, Box 232, Alton, IL 62002. 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 our lives.

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING: Our next meeting will be Monday February 23rd at 7:30 pm at the Hart House, 524 Belle Street, Alton.

Altonian and Madison County Recorder, Amy M. Meyer, will speak regarding what exactly a recorder does and why her office is an important source for historical research. Ms. Meyer will speak to the history of land recording in the United States, and in Madison County specifically. She will explain why the Recorder's Office remains an integral part of our governmental process and a necessary function of buying and selling land.

An avid historian, Ms. Meyer will discuss the *History Begins Here* campaign which explains the importance of deeds, plats, military discharge records, and other documents, which recorded almost 200 years ago in the normal course of the Madison County Recorder's Office, now exhibit the history of the region. She will highlight some of the important and interesting recent documents uncovered in the course of an audit of records within the office, including an 1818 plat of Alton,

commissioned by Rufus Easton, and an 1875 plat for a subdivision in Troy commissioned by General Sherman. Everyone is invited.

Thanks to Lacy McDonald for giving us an overview of the resources at the Hayner Public Library's Genealogy and Local History Library last month.

Thanks to Richard Trudell for coming to our November meeting and educating us about his custom millwork business. Call him at 462-7211 for more information.

NEW TRAIN STATION: More detailed plans for the Alton Regional Multi-Modal Transportation Center will be presented to the public. The last plans were shown a year ago and refinements have been made. The meeting will be March 4th, at 6:30 pm in the Alton City Council Chambers, on the first floor of City Hall, 101 East Third Street.

HOUSE HISTORY REPOSITORY: Some years ago the the Hayner Library and the AALA combined resources and created the Alton House History Repository. The AALA donated 300 house histories written for our Fall Historic House Tours to start it. Every year we have added another five to ten histories from the House Tours. The library staff is continuously adding more histories and updating the ones already there. The Repository now features over 2800 addresses. If your

house is not represented in the Repository, we encourage you to work with the AALA or the library to create a history for your home. The AALA thanks the Hayner Library for their hard work on this project.

TEA FOR TWO: The Alton Stained Glass Works (412 East Broadway) is now serving tea. They feature 20 different loose teas. What is more civilized than a hot tea on a cold winter afternoon? Stop in Wednesday through Saturdays 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For more information, go to www.altonartglass.com.

Passing: Author and historian Judy Hoffman died Dec. 24, 2014. Mrs. Hoffman wrote "God's Potion: Godfrey, Illinois 1817-1865" about the history of Godfrey and Alton.

REGISTER: Alton has another building added to the National Register of Historic Places. The Salem Baptist Church at 8217 Wood Station Road was built in 1913, but the church was founded in 1819. Thanks to Mrs. Charlotte E. Johnson.

WISE-OLIN- The Wise-Olin House at 1128 State Street is finally for sale. We understand it is an online auction with the opening bid at \$106,000. The sign in front of house is for Real Home, 888-876-3372, Hubzu.com.

ART: Next time you are near 415 Ridge Street, check out the dynamic new face of the building. It is a celebration of our natural heritage and abundance.

PARK: For more than twenty years the waterfall at Rock Spring Park has not flowed. Last year the Rock Spring 2020 Committee, a group including the city, private businesses, and volunteers, turned a switch and the water flowed again. Thanks to this committee for starting an overhaul on one of Alton's well-loved parks.

WISE-OLIN: The Wise Olin House (built between 1859 and 1865) at 1128 State Street has been vacant for four years since the last owner left it. The best thing that could happen is that someone would buy and renovate it. The house is 6,045 square feet and is on a 115 foot by 220 foot lot. The city and the AALA have been working together to try to save this historic Christian Hill property.

PLAYHOUSE: Work has begun on restoring the Playhouse. The playhouse has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1974.

If you haven't sent your contribution in yet, it is not too late. You can contribute through the website, www.haskellplayhouse.org. Or you can mail a check payable to Lucy Haskell Playhouse Fund % Alton City Treasurer, 101 East Third Street, Alton, IL 62002.

MILES DAVIS: Fund raising for Miles Davis Memorial Project has reached more than \$21,000. This is two-thirds of the way to the goal of commissioning sculptor Preston Jackson to begin working on a life size Miles Davis sculpture. There is no statues of Davis in the U.S. There are two in Europe. Money can be donated to this project through the Alton Museum of Art and History.

FOR SALE: The very historic Moses Atwood House at 1750 Liberty, circa 1854

BUILDINGS:

There is talk of new development along Piasa Street. The renovation of the Synder Building may be helping that area.

The 1906 Old Post Office building is for sale, \$350,000 negotiable. The stone and masonry building is at Alby and East Third Streets. Contact Robin Voss at altonoldpostoffice@comcast.net for more information.

LOVEJOY: Two new signs about the life of Elijah P. Lovejoy are to be erected in Alton. One sign will be near the Civil War Prison on William Street. It will about Lovejoy's murder by a mob at a riverside warehouse downtown. The other sign will be in Upper Alton and will be about Lovejoy's history as a pastor of the College Avenue Presbyterian Church and the Rock House as a station on the Underground

Railroad. Alton has long needed some informational signs about this important figure. These signs will help tell the story of Lovejoy to our out of town guests.

FOR SALE: There are many historic houses for sale in Alton.

Please remind people you know who are house-hunting to drive around Alton. Contact the AALA for suggestions.