



ALTON AREA LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION
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WWW.ALTONLANDMARKS.ORG

Sept. 2021

House Tour: On October 1st the 49th AALA House Tour will be available to the public for free. “Then & Now” will be a free download from our website. Paper versions of the tour will be at the downtown Visitors Center at Piasa 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.

Downtown: A draft nomination for the downtown area authored by Karen Bode Baxter is now available to the public. Even if you think you know all the history of Alton, it is fascinating reading. Next it has to be approved by the state preservation office. Then it goes to Washington for approval. 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.

Volunteers: One point that Karen made clear in her

presentations was her gratitude for all the hard work that the 30 volunteers did on this nomination. The AALA and Main Street asked for volunteers and they appeared. Karen was impressed by the number and expertise of our volunteers. Evidently other cities have not responded as well as Alton did. Karen did a special call out for Ann Davidson for her research in the City Directories.

Welcome: The American Women's League Chapter House has a new owner. One of nine buildings in Alton listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places, it was converted into a living space years ago. The new owner is from St. Louis and has been looking to Alton to move for some time.

Barth Park: Drive by the river side of Barth Park and see the beautiful flowers at the park entrance. Thanks to the park neighbor who tends to the flowers and plantings there. Thanks to all the park neighbors who help keep our parks beautiful.

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" on www.altonlandmarks.org and follow the instructions. Thank you.

Donations: Donations 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 your life.

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.

Free: We have released our 2020 AALA Kit House Tour free to the public. This is our 48th annual house tour. It is on our website, www.altonlandmarks.org. A paper version of the tour guide is available at the downtown Visitor's Center's outside box. We have Pay Pal on our website now if you wish to make a donation to the AALA.

William Street: The first two blocks of William Street have been repaired and rebricked. Now that leaves the remaining three blocks to be fixed. Utility workers say that new gas

lines are planned for that area next year. Then perhaps the rest of William Street will 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.

KOENIG HOUSE- The Koenig House (829 East Fourth St.) is in need of immediate repairs. We hope the Alton Museum, which owns it, can attend to it before it gets any worse. The Museum is facing fines for code ordinance violations. The Wilhelm House (314 Oak), also owned by the Museum, has been condemned by the city. The Museum board has a responsibility to maintain their buildings.

Facebook: The AALA has a Facebook site now. Check it out and give us suggestions. <https://www.facebook.com/Alton-Area-Landmarks-Association-307793659892024/>

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 for the last year and a half 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 was begun 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.