

## Gardens at Stephenson House by Carol Fruit

The gardeners have been working hard on Wednesdays—between rain storms—to get the gardens spruced up. Most areas have been planted with plants or seeds and now only need sunshine and nice showers to reach their summer potential.

Many plants in early gardens had some use other than decorative and many had more than one use. Five plants in the Teaching Garden had multiple uses that aren't readily apparent.

**FLAX** – Introduced by Thomas Jefferson from seeds brought back by the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Lovely blue flowers bloom in May and June and are nice for arrangements. The seeds that follow the flowers were used for oil and as a healthy grain. The stalks were used for weaving but are not popular because they are hard to work with.



Botanical print of flax.



**SAFFLOWER** – The deep orange color of the flowers are excellent for dyeing cloth red or yellow. The flowers also are nice for fresh

and dried arrangements and the seeds are used for oil.

**SESAME** – This tall (4'-5') plant has pretty white flower stalks in late summer. After the flowers fade, interesting pods form that are full of seeds. Easily recognizable as the sesame



seed used in baking, they also can be used for oil that is popular in Oriental cooking.

**AMARANTH** – This plant has been in cultivation for thousands of years. It



Amaranth in bloom.

was a sacred plant for the Aztecs. The Hopis used the seeds to dye ceremonial bread red. Every part of amaranth has some use. The red flowers, seeds and leaves may be used for dye. The seeds are more nutritious than most other grains and can be used whole or ground into flour for baking. The leaves have been called "summer spinach" because they are rich in calcium, iron, and vitamins A and C. They can be eaten when the young plants are about 8" tall. Amaranth will grow to about 5' with large red flowers in August. It is hard to miss but is at the back of the garden behind the sunflowers.

**SUNFLOWERS** –

The sunflowers are the showiest of all the plants. Most people know that the seeds are delicious roasted but you may not be aware that these sunflowers are called "Hopi Black Dye Sunflowers". The seeds can be used to make dye (which is actually purple).



# Piano Forte Repair Fund Continues to Grow



We have almost reached our goal! Stephenson House board members and volunteers hoped to raise \$1000 to use toward the restoration of the Piano Forte, currently on display in the parlor. Thanks to the generous donors listed below, a total of 60 keys have been purchased, totaling \$900.

The instrument was recently photo documented by the restorer and the work will soon begin. It is hoped that the piano forte will be playable by this winter. Several of our volunteers (who play piano) have expressed a desire test the finished product...for quality performance testing, of course. We appreciate their willingness to sacrifice their skills to the betterment of the overall cause.

Donors to date are:

Anonymous donor  
Steve Mudge  
Maxine Callies  
Virginia McDole  
Don & Diane Schrader  
Lucia Weber  
Ed and Candy Wentz  
Kathy Schmidt  
Elizabeth and Bill Bowling  
Dr. Robert Malench  
Brenda Knox and Matt Crowe

There are only 12 keys left to purchase. Brenda Knox's offer to provide a new linen shirt or shift with the purchase of a set number of keys still stands. Once the keys are sold the incentive of new clothes will also end. Brenda's offer is a very generous contribution, with the purchaser(s) receiving a garment entirely hand sewn and custom fitted.

Gentlemen: The purchase of five piano forte keys (\$15 each for a total of \$75) will buy a new, handkerchief-weight, 1820 linen shirt with mice teeth on the collar and optional neck ruffle.

Ladies: Purchase four keys (\$60) to obtain a new, hand-sewn, ladies' linen shift with short sleeves and a drawstring neck, either calf length or ankle length.

If you are interested in this incentive, call RoxAnn (618-692-1818) for more details.

To purchase a key or keys, send donations to:

*Piano Forte Repair Fund  
c/o. 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House  
P.O. Box 754  
Edwardsville, Illinois 62025*

Checks should be made payable to ***Friends of the Col. Benjamin Stephenson House.***



# News & Needful Things

## FOUND:

- green windbreaker, child's size medium
- green insulated jacket, adult size (may belong to one of the master gardeners)

## THANK YOU:

- Thank you, Walt and RoxAnn Raisner, for the donations of several men's shirts, a woman's apron, several yards of woven fabric, wool scrapes, and a ladies flat straw hat.
- Thank you, Rudy Wilson and Sid Denny, for giving your time and talents to Story Time and Archaeology Camp during June.

## WANTED:

- flour (all purpose or whole wheat)
- yeast
- bottled water
- medium-weight linen for ladies' mitts
- seamstresses to sew men's aprons and trousers and ladies' shifts for the wardrobe
- seamstresses to work on summer bed linens and draperies
- monetary donations to buy two period men's coats.
- cutting knives with wooden handles (no serrated edges)
- period silverware for the dining room
- old wool clothing with a 95% or greater wool content for use in a rug-hooking class
- child's and male dress forms (torsos)
- period forks and knives
- tin plates
- straw brooms (historical construction)

## NOTICE:

- Interpretive training booklets are available for volunteers to sign out and study the basic history of the house. The booklets contain the basic house tour and various information from the interpretive tour conducted at the house on a daily basis. Anyone interested in becoming a historical interpreter or in reviewing the tour information, may contact RoxAnn to check out a booklet.



## Volunteer Recognition

*The following is a list of the top ten volunteers of the month. This list is based on the number of hours each volunteer worked and recorded in the volunteer hours log book. We appreciate all the time our volunteers give each month, regardless of total hours worked. Thanks to each and every one of our volunteers!*

### June 2009

Bob Jurgena  
Kathy Schmidt  
Maxine Callies  
Diane Schrader  
Ron Goldsmith  
Rudy Wilson  
Karen Mateyka  
Walter Raisner  
Jill Allaria  
Martha McFarland



# July 2009



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4 
5	6 Pioneer Camp →	7	8	9	10	11
12 Sewing Circle Ben's Birthday Celebration	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24 Tour	25 Story Time
26 Sewing Circle	27	28	29	30	31	

## Calendar Activities

*July 4, The Fourth of July*, Stephenson House will be closed for the day to observe our country's birthday. Regular operating hours will resume July 5.

*July 6-10, 1820 Pioneer Camp*, Learn about life of an Illinois Territory pioneer during this hands-on historic camp. Campers will participate in various activities associated with daily chores, arts, crafts and school lessons common place during the daily life of

early Illinois residents. Open to children grades 3 -5. A morning session (9 a.m.-12 p.m.) is offered. Limited registration. To register, call 618-468-2222. \$75 per student. Funded in part by the Greater Edwardsville Area Community Foundation.

*July 12, Ben's Birthday Celebration*, 12-4 p.m. Bring the whole family and join the fun as the Friends of Stephenson House celebrate Ben's 240th birthday. Historical games, demonstrators, raffles, and FREE ice cream

with cake are planned. Lots of hands-on fun for the whole family!

*July 12, Sewing Circle*, 1-3 p.m.

*July 24, P.E.O. Tour*, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., 20+/- adults

*July 25, Story Time* "Stories of the Underground Railroad", 1-2 p.m., Gather under the old shade tree to listen to stories of the Underground Railroad told by Rudy Wilson. Children must be accompanied by an adult. For more information, call 618-692-1818. Free admission.



# House Activities



June



*On June 27, Rudy Wilson captured the imaginations of children and adults alike, who came to listen to stories of the hardships of slavery. A total of fifteen children and nine adults participated in the free activity.*

*The next Story Time is scheduled for July 25, 1-2 p.m.*



## "Stories of the Underground Railroad"

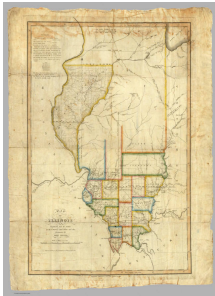


Dr. Sid Denny gave 11 students a feel for what it is like to be an archaeologist...Indiana Jones couldn't have made it more fun. Students spent five morning uncovering a 'mock' dig, recording their finds and learning about past cultures.



## "Archaeology Camp"

# Correcting Misinformation: Third Installment



Illinois Map, c. 1820

## **“Stephenson was “helping” the Indians by moving them to Missouri?”**

(R.Raisner) Stephenson was doing his job as a government representative. His purpose was to obtain the land occupied by the Indians on behalf of the U.S. government. The brutal truth is the government didn't care what happened to the Indians once they left Illinois, they wanted the land. Stephenson was not helping the Indians but performing the task set before him. If Stephenson was helping anyone it would have been the pioneers coming into the territory to purchase the land vacated by the Indians. The removal of the

Indians would have also benefited Ben. He was the Receiver of Public Monies at the Edwardsville Land Office and would have made money for himself as well as the government when land was sold. The more land sold, the more money earned.

(Sid Denny) Like most of his contemporaries, Stephenson had a strong dislike for Indians, even though he was the sub-agent for Indian affairs. During the War of 1812, Stephenson and Edwards led the militia that burned Kaskaskia Indian villages near Springfield. Ben's brother James was part of a disastrous campaign against the Indians that was led by Governor St. Clair of the Northwest Territory in 1791. James was a young officer and was lucky to survive since St. Clair's army was attacked by a number of allied tribes under Tecumseh. St. Clair lost nearly 850 militia and regular soldiers. Lucy's half brother was killed by Indians. Lucy's father was "Indian Van," a legendary Indian fighter. Further, her half sister was married to James Brady, a scout/ranger who was also an Indian fighter who twice was captured by Indians and twice escaped. Finally, when Stephenson was in Congress he wrote a joint letter to President James Madison with Rufus Easton (representative from Missouri) that detailed the Indian problems on the frontier. The last paragraph of the letter concludes with the thought that Indians should either be civilized or exterminated.

With regard to moving the Kaskaskia Indians to Missouri as part of the treaty of 1819 which Stephenson and Choteau negotiated: the treaty paid the Indians \$6000 in trade goods and provided that they be given land in Missouri. The Kaskaskia protested because the land was part of the area under the control of the Osage Indians and the Kaskaskia were afraid of the Osage. They therefore negotiated a clause in the treaty in which they were to receive protection from the U.S. Army when they moved.

I expect the idea that Stephenson was helping the Indians results from the fact that by the terms of the treaty he had to provide Army escort for the Kaskaskia when they moved. But given the history, I assume Stephenson did this out of duty only.

## **Why were the Indians “negotiating” if they didn’t understand land ownership?**

(R.Raisner) Indian views of land ownership were completely different than white pioneer views. The Indians did not believe anyone owned the land. What they were negotiating were their rights in regard to their removal from ancestral grounds. According to Michael W. Beatty, “They traded their ancestral patrimony for illusory wealth and transient security.” (*Compromising Their Rights*, Gateway magazine, Vol. 28, 2008, page 58)

(Sid Denny) Indians have always said that they did not believe in land ownership. They did not believe in written deeds, but they did believe in power. They believed that they were able to control land through power. They were almost always fighting each other over the control of land, killing members of other tribes who were found on lands that they considered part of their area. They might not have "owned" the land in the European sense but they clearly understood the idea of controlling land through the judicious use of power. Why did the Indians negotiate

if they did not own the land? They had lost their power to resist and therefore were left with the tool of negotiation. The U.S. government negotiated because they were in a position of power and the Northwest Ordinance required them to acquire legal title to all lands held by Indians through negotiation.

## **Was Stephenson educated?**

(R.Raisner) Not classically. It appears that Ben did not receive a formal education of any kind.

It is believed that Lucy was educated.

(Sid Denny) Lucy was supposed to be educated since her father left money for her education in his will. There is simply no data at all regarding Ben's education but his letters are not exactly models of grammar and exposition.

(Karen Mateyka) Lucy certainly was educated - her grammar, handwriting and ability to write a proper letter were very good. We know of two letters, one to Patty Canal and one to her son James. Both are well written.

Ben apparently was not formally educated. The letter written in 1815-Somerset, PA had poor spelling, handwriting and grammar.

## **How many slaves did he have?**

(R.Raisner) According to indenture records for Randolph and Madison Counties, the family registered a total of 11 indentured servants during the entire time they lived in Illinois. On average, there were eight servants here at any given time.

## **Were the slaves house servants or field hands? Were there enough to work the whole place?**

(R.Raisner) The servants probably worked as house and field workers. This was not a plantation that would have required lots of hands to keep it running, it was a farm. Stephenson owned 182 acres of land. Not all of the property was cultivated. The gardens would have been small but large enough to produce food for the family and servants.

It is true that the farm was self-sufficient; the Stephensons and their servants grew their own crops and raised livestock for food. The Stephenson family probably worked alongside their servants in many situations. The idea of Ben and Lucy lounging in the parlor drinking mint juleps while the slaves worked the day away is not a realistic depiction of life in Edwardsville at the time.

(Sid Denny) They grew most of their food...there is no evidence of any purchase of any vegetables--apples from Mrs. Robinson but nothing else. They never bought pork and they paid a Mr. Evans for slaughtering pigs and salting the meat. On the other hand, they frequently bought beef from the same Mr. Evans. With the exception of beef, they seem to have been fairly self sufficient.

## **Where did Stephenson house all the guests who passed through Edwardsville?**

(R.Raisner) Overnight visitors to the house would have bunked where space was available. There were three beds in the children's bedroom that could have provided additional sleeping space for guests. Depending on a guest's importance, it is possible that Ben and Lucy would have given up their bed chamber. There are also various historical references to visitors bunking in a barn (*this is a general historical reference to the period...not documented for the Stephenson house but it is a possibility*). There was also the Wiggins Hotel located on Main Street.

## **Where did the family get shoes?**

(RoxAnn Raisner) Shoes for the family and servants would have been purchased at one of the local general stores or from a cobbler. According

(Continued on page 7)



to the probate records, several pairs of shoes were purchased at Isaac Prickett's mercantile (*located at the abandoned Fort Russell site*). The following list details the purchases:



James Mitchell (Belleville store); all area.

June 13, 1822 – 1 pair of pumps for Dot (*one of the indentured servants*)  
 June 26 – ball or long boots  
 May 2, 1823 – 1 pair of shoes for Dot  
 June 12 – 1 pair of pumps and 1 pair of coarse shoes

(Sid Denny) In the early 1820s, there were newspaper ads for cobblers. It can be assumed that after that time, they could have purchased shoes made in town.

#### What goods were commercially available?

There was a wide range of commercially available merchandise. The following items were purchased from Isaac Prickett, R.J. Pogue and three men ran general stores in the

Sugar  
 Mending tub  
 coats  
 Locks  
 Nails  
 Mattock  
 Paper pins  
 Vinegar  
 Loaf sugar  
 Nutmegs  
 Buttons and cambric (a type of fabric)  
 Butt hinges and tenons  
 Tin cups  
 Buckets  
 Hard soap  
 Indigo  
 Paste board  
 Salt  
 Tin ware  
 Sulphur  
 Tin pans  
 Bottles of cordial  
 Brown cloth  
 Oven lid  
 Children's gloves  
 Small nobbs  
 Silk  
 Glass paper  
 Bunch tape  
 Frying pan  
 Checked shirt (*purchased for Hank, indenture servant*)  
 Bed cord  
 Collar beams  
 Rafters

Joists  
 Lintels  
 Bombazine (*mourning fabric*)  
 Black stockings  
 Shoes  
 Tumblers  
 Linen  
 Hooks and eyes  
 Thread  
 Worsted hose  
 Pepper  
 Flannel  
 Ribbon  
 Silk twist  
 Crepe fabric  
 Pens  
 Ink stands  
 Quills  
 Ink powders  
 Paper  
 Mackerell  
 Cream tartar  
 Turkey  
 Hand brush  
 Peppermints  
 Cloves  
 Bowls  
 Yellow bark (*medicine used to treat malaria*)  
 Wine  
 Yard of steam loom shirting  
 Butter  
 Lima bark  
 Thimble  
 Sprigs (*like push points – triangular pieces of tin for securing window panes to*

Some high quality goods like silk were included in these auctions/sales, but most high quality goods could be purchased only in St. Louis. The problem was that it was expensive to go to St. Louis. It cost a quarter to cross the Mississippi River on a ferry and \$1.00 if you took a horse. Stephenson had to go to St. Louis to deposit money from the land office (before the founding of the Bank of Edwardsville) so he could have done some shopping there. Finally, Stephenson owned his own store from 1816-1817 and brought goods in from Baltimore. Obviously the store went out of business because it went broke or he simply did not have enough time to run it.

#### What do we know about the Bank of Edwardsville and Stephenson?

There is an entire article written by Sid Denny regarding the Bank of Edwardsville and the U.S. banking system during the early 1800s.

(Ellen Nordhauser) The Bank of Edwardsville was one of three banks chartered by the Illinois Territory on January 9, 1818. The opening of a bank in Edwardsville would have been a very important development for the territory and the land office. Until the Bank of Edwardsville was established, Stephenson would have traveled to St. Louis to deposit land office monies in the Bank of Missouri. The new bank also increased the supply of money in the territory by printing its own notes. The Bank of Edwardsville also printed its own paper money, which it loaned to individuals. Soon after the Bank of Edwardsville was established the land boom turned into a bust. Other banks holding the Bank of Edwardsville's paper presented these paper notes to the bank and asked for gold or some form of hard currency, which was called specie. Of course, much of the paper currency was backed by nothing except hope that the boom would keep going. The Bank of Edwardsville, like many others, went belly up. Normally, the Bank of the U.S. kept inflationary, "wild" bankers in check by presenting their notes and asking for specie. But in 1818, the Bank of the U.S. was under poor management that allowed the inflationary printing of money by the branches to get way out of hand.

(Sid Denny) There were no banks in the Illinois Territory before 1816-1817. All banking was done in St. Louis, Kentucky, or Indiana. In Edwardsville it was obvious that St. Louis was the most convenient and people went there. The Illinois Territory chartered the first bank in Illinois in December 1816, in Shawneetown Ill. It was so successful that they chartered three other banks in January 1818. Of these three new banks only the Bank of Edwardsville actually opened. The other two—one at Cairo and one at Kaskaskia—never sold enough stock to open.

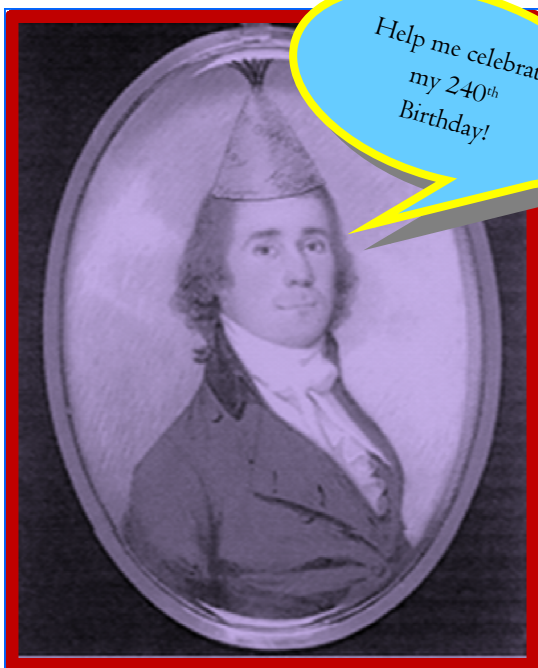
The charter of the Bank of Edwardsville required stock to sell at \$100 per share with 3,000 share available. In order to open it had to sell \$50,000 in stock subscriptions and have \$10,000 in gold or silver in hand. (The stock sold by subscription and a \$100 share could be bought for \$5.00 down in gold or silver with the remainder to be paid in paper money when called by the bank.) Most of the stock was purchased by two wealthy Kentuckians, General John Payne and his brother-in-law, Richard M. Johnson, who later became Vice-President under President Martin Van Buren. Local investors included Stephenson, Ninian Edwards, Abraham Prickett, Joseph Conway, Br. Joseph Bowers, Robert Pogue, Theophilis Smith and Robert Latham.

The bank opened in late 1818—it was obviously undercapitalized which became a problem later. It was, however, initially successful by the fact that Stephenson received permission from Congress to deposit the land office money in his bank instead of taking it to St. Louis. The bank went broke during the economic recession (depression) which began in late 1818 and lasted through the early 1820s. The value of almost everything fell by 50 percent—including land which had been over-specified. Additionally, the Bank of Edwardsville was attacked by the large banks in St. Louis that wanted the land office money which had once been deposited in St. Louis. The Bank of Edwardsville was an unwelcome addition which the Bank of Missouri tried to destroy.

In September of 1821 the bank closed. \$45,000 of land office money was lost—nevertheless, Stephenson was reappointed to a second term as Receiver of Public Money in early 1822.

(Sid Denny) Entrepreneurs purchased loads of goods in New Orleans or from New England and had public sales in Edwardsville. The sales went on for several weekends and were generally held near the courthouse. Most of these sales did not occur until after 1817 when the first paddle wheel steamboats made it up to St. Louis.

# Ben's 240th Birthday Celebration



Help me celebrate  
my 240<sup>th</sup>  
Birthday!

*Come Celebrate Ben's 240th Birthday*  
*July 12, 12-4 p.m.*

Admission: Adults \$6.00 Children \$3.00

Tour the House, out-buildings and gardens and  
enjoy **ICE CREAM AND CAKE**

*Special Demonstrations*

chair maker, weaver, spinning, leather working, quilting

Period Games on the Front Lawn • 50/50 Drawing

Raffle for candlelight tour of the House with a wine and hours d'oeuvre reception for 12

Antique Shop – Verbal Appraisals (limit 5/Small items or pictures please)

Sponsored by

The Friends of the Benjamin Stephenson House,  
Waters of America, The Bank of Edwardsville, Wal-Mart,  
Annie's Frozen Custard, and Mudge Law Firm

## *The Volunteer*

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