



Early 19th Century Mourning Customs

By Erin Litteken

Funeral:

At this point, in many larger cities, people were beginning to specialize in laying out the dead. It is unlikely that Edwardsville had such people at this point, so it is pretty safe to assume that Benjamin's laying out would have been handled by family and servants.

Ben would probably have been laid out in



Laying out the dead at Mt. Vernon.

the parlor in a shroud while Thomas Armstrong was making the \$10 ridge top coffin Lucy ordered. Coffins were often made by cabinetmakers or carpenters in areas where there were no formal undertakers. Lucy paid a bill on October 11 for \$3 for "Brick and Walling grave". This was very uncommon in this area and in this time. There was also cash paid to James Walls for "Pailing in Stephenson's grave". "Pailing" refer to pickets that were placed around the burial site and tombstone. Although his gravesite was apparently quite elaborate, we no longer know where it was originally located in Lusk Cemetery.

Typically, family and friends were notified of a death by an invitation to the funeral. Mourners would gather at the home of the deceased, sometimes sharing food and drink before the service (usually, though, this would happen after the funeral).

The funeral service then was nothing similar to the services of today. A prayer was offered at the home. Then the mourners processed on foot to the grave site. If the site was near, the casket was carried while others

carried the pall. A minister, or other respected man, would then speak. The mourners would then recess to the home of the deceases.

Flowers were a rarity at funerals compared to what we are familiar with now. Any flowers present would have been from the nearby garden, so in October, the selection was probably slim.

In many instances, gifts were given out to the mourners. Typical gifts were black gloves (sometimes made of chamois or lamb), scarves, or hatbands. In very wealthy families, jewelry, such as mourning rings, were given to close family members. There are no records available of such items being purchased by Lucy, so we do not know if she practiced this ritual.

Mourning Clothes:

The length of time one wore mourning clothes directly correlated to how close they were to the deceased.

According to *The Workwoman's Guide*, mourning times are as follows, with some allowances made for individuals in different circumstances:



For a husband or wife, one to two years
For a parent, six months to a year
For children, if above ten years old, from six months to a year; below that age from



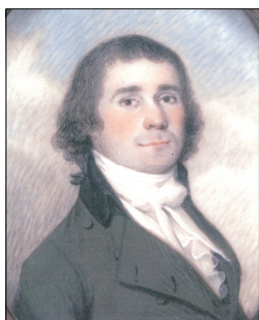
Col. Stephenson's coffin on display in the parlor during the 2007 Mourning exhibit. Photo by Jill Cook.

Special Issue: Mourning Col. Stephenson

The Volunteer

RoxAnn Raiser, Director

A Newsletter for the Volunteers of the 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House



DIED-In this town, on Thursday last, Col. Benjamin Stephenson, Receiver of Public Moneys for the Edwardsville Land District, in the 54th year of his age.

However unavailing the tear of regret, which is shed for a deceased friend-not withstanding the efforts of philosophy, or the just, but ineffectual dictates of sober reason-it will flow. Vain to the bereaved widow and fatherless child are all the admonitions of careful friends-who fear and mourn rather for the living than the dead.

But when one who has filled the various stations of life with such pre-eminent faithfulness, as the subject of this notice, is called hence, the grief extends far beyond the precincts of the weeping relatives. All seem anxious to mingle their sorrow with the known pangs of the bereaved widow and children. Such emotions cause the present feeble attempt to sketch some of the events which have marked the life of Col. Benjamin Stephenson.

He was born on the 8th of July, 1769, in the then colony of Pennsylvania-whence he emigrated, in the nineteenth year of his age, to Virginia, where he commenced his public life, and acquired the lasting esteem and approbation of all who knew him. In 1809, he removed with his family to Illinois, since which time he has filled various public offices, with such distinguished credit-so much to the satisfaction of all with, or for, whom he acted, that his eulogy is written in the hearts of more person, perhaps, than will read this article.

During the late war he commanded a battalion under the then Governor Edwards, and a regiment under Brigadier General Howard, and in one or the other of which stations he was actively employed during nearly the whole period of danger to our exposed frontiers and on all occasions distinguished himself so much by his vigilance, energy and intrepidity, as to secure the approbation of those under whom he acted, as well as the respect and esteem of those whom he commanded.

After the termination of his military duties, he was elected by the people of the territory to represent them in Congress. Without having become famous as a public speaker, he is acknowledged to have effected, by his prudent watchfulness, and through the esteem entertained for him, by his fellow members, as much at least as any other delegate could have done. From this high and honorable station Col S. retired in 1816, having received the appointment of Receiver of Public Moneys in this land district. In this station he continued to retain the confidence, friendship, and esteem, of all who knew him. As a member of the convention which formed the constitution of this state, his conduct was equally satisfactory to his constituents.

Although the writer of these lines has known and honored the ceased as a public officer, he has to stat that it was in the friendly and domestic circles that the virtues of his heart shone with peculiar luster. If the patriot mourn his death as a public loss-if friends shed the tear of sorrow over his grave-what, oh! what are the agonies of a beloved and affectionate wife-now wife, alas! no more, and of children, cherished by the kindest sympathies of paternal love?

He alone who is the widow's God, and a Father of the fatherless, can heal the wound which His hand, in his own providence, has made To Him may they look in humble confidence, and in Him may they find present and eternal consolation. [Communicated.]

ON THE DEATH OF COL. STEPHENSON.

The prairies spread with palls of brown,
Their summer's verdant gladness;
And autumn's leaves are fluttering down,
With rustling notes of sadness.

How fled from heaven the cheerful blue,
That decks a sky unclouded;
The aire puts on a dusky hue;
The earth in gloom is shrouded!

Yea, nature seems to mourn with all
Who linger, broken-hearted;
Who firmly for his country-stood,
And to her hail ascended.

I saw him in the summer's ray,
With manly frame unbending;
But ah! behold yon corse of clay,
A funeral train attending.

I see their sable garbs of woe—
I hear their notes of sorrow;
Which bid the day in darkness flow,
And wean from hope the morrow.

Oh! When he breathed his last farewell,
How wild his orphans' shrieking!
How did her grief, more stifled, tell
Her widow'd heart was breaking!

Insane is woe! by fits, despair
Against the blow is raving;
Or resignation, bending there,
For aid divine is craving.

And may that aid, Almighty God!
Be shed on these, benighted;
And light them from this earthly sod
To where no joys are blighted.

*Published in the Edwardsville Spectator on October
12, 1822*

Mourning Dresses

This article was printed in the *Edwardsville Spectator* dated December 12, 1820. The pictures did not appear with the original text but have been added here as visual aids.



FROM THE NEW HAMPSHIRE PATRIOT.

MOURNING DRESSES.

“When grief is feign’d how ill such forms appear.
And oh! How useless, when the grief’s sincere.”



Funeral procession of George III.

The influence, the power and the authority which custom exercises over the human mind are great and extensive; the tax which it levies upon the labor and property of man, if prudently used, would supply his wants and furnish the conveniences of life. How great a portion of our time, our labor and our money do we expend, not for useful purposes, but merely to conform to custom. The real wants of man are few and easily gratified; but those which custom, fashion, and habit have created are many and hard to be supplied. Custom and fashion cost us more than all the taxes we pay to support the government of our country. We complain of those which government demand, but submit without a murmur to those more grievous which our won folly imposes.—And hence, as lord Bacon justly observes, “since custom is the principal magistrate of man’s life, let men by all means endeavor to obtain *good customs*.”

There is no law which custom has more arbitrarily imposed, none whose mandates are more generally obeyed, and none by which some families suffer more severely, than that respecting *mourning apparel*.—When a person dies customs demands that all the relatives, particularly those who are nearly *illegible* to the deceased, should be clad in *black*, and wear that dress for a considerable time. The length of time is different in different sections of the country, but the practice pervade every part of the nation. This expense, is, indeed, borne by the wealthy without subjecting them to inconven-

ience; but it presses hard, not only upon the poor, but upon many families who have such a portion of property, as with economy and industry would render them comfortable.—To such families their mourning apparel is considerable; for they think it must be better than that of the



The Mourners, 1815 by Thomas Rowlandson

class below them. I have known many who were poor, made much poorer by this practice, and their sufferings greatly increased. I have witnessed several instances of large families who lived well so long as their parent existed, but when he died the children were not only deprived of his support, but the pittance of property he left them was materially impaired by the unnecessary purchase of such mourning. In populous towns this practice is carried to extravagant height—they wear for the first period a full mourning dress, for the second a half mourning dress.—The evils resulting from it are serious, not only to the family, but sometimes to the creditors of the deceased, who are deprived of their just dues.—Reason and reflection condemn the custom as unnecessary and useless. It is not pretended that it can better the condition of the dead, and certainly does not improve that of the living. No other cause can be assigned for its support, than that the tyrant custom, the lord of fools and the plague of wisemen, demands it.

There is no reason, in the nature and fitness of things, why those who have lost a parent or other relative, should lay aside their former useful apparel merely to wear those of another colour and form. There is no reason why the color of their clothes should be black any more than that they should be blue. Different nation have adopted different colors as signals of their grief and those have varied at different periods. In the United States and Europe the ordinary *illegible* is white; in Turkey, blue or violet, in Egypt, green in Ethiopia, brown *illegible*.....reasons for the particular color their mourning; white is supposed to denote purity: yellow that death is the end of human hopes; in regard that leaves when they fall and flowers when they fade *illegible* yellow; brown denotes the earth whither the dead return; black the privation of life; blue expresses the happiness which it is hoped the deceased does enjoy; and purple or violet, sorrow on the one side, and hope on the other, as being a mixture of black and blue.”



Through mourning dresses have generally prevailed, there have been individuals, as well as religious sects, who have wholly *illegible*. Of these, the Quakers, from their number, their uniform practice, and their moral character, form the greatest example.—The death of their nearest relations, makes no visible change in their apparel; though in them the ties of kindred are as strong, and their loss as sensibly felt, as in people who wear the full habiliment of mourning.

The Life of Death by Ann B. Wass, Ph.D

The following articles are part of an education text written by Ann B. Wass for Riversdale House Museum entitled, **The Life of Death: Mourning and Funeral customs in Early Nineteenth Century America.** The text was used in a mourning exhibit conducted at the historic site in October and November of 1997. The entire text is available for Stephenson House docents, and includes: *The Deathbed, Epitaphs, Mourning Dress, Mourning Pictures and African-American Funerals.* Dr. Wass has granted permission to Stephenson House to reprint her work for our docents. Credits need to be given to her and Riversdale House Museum, The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, 4811 Riverdale Road, Riverdale Park MD 20737



The Funeral

The body of the deceased was washed, dressed in a shroud, and laid in a wooden coffin, which by the nineteenth century might be made by a local cabinetmaker. Invitations to the funeral were sent out, and the mourners would gather at the house of the deceased. In town, the church bell would be rung (for a fee) to mark the passing. Prayers were offered before the procession to the grave began. This was often on foot, especially if the distance was not far. (9) the coffin was usually carried by strong young bearers, with more prominent people supporting the cloth cover, or pall. (10) The pall was black, except in the case of children, when it was white. (A pall for a young girl in an 1818 novel was made of white velvet.) (11) A church might own a very elaborate pall to lend out to members. Sometimes a child's coffin was borne by other children as an instructive reminder of mortality. In 1814, Mr. and Mrs. Bascom saw "the funeral procession [of Captain Smith], in which were the disconsolate widow & 5 children, their aged parents, bowed down with grief—and many brothers and sisters to mourn the loss of their beloved friend and brother." (12)

Harriet Beecher Stowe was four years old when her mother died in 1815 and remembered,

...the mourning dresses, the tears of the older children, the walking to the burial-ground, and somebody's speaking at the grave, and the audible sobbing of the family and then all was closed, and we little ones, to whom it was so confused, asked the question where she was gone, and would she never come back?...

They told us at one time that she had been laid in the ground, at another that she had gone to heaven; whereupon Henry, putting the two things together, resolved to dig through the ground and go to heaven to find her. (13)

Mary Livermore remembered the death of her sister in the early nineteenth century.

The funeral services were as desolate and devoid of comfort as they could be. It was esteemed the proper thing to make them so, in those days. Black, black, everywhere,—no flowers,—not uplifting music,—not helpful words of faith, hope, or blessedness. The tendency of the service was towards instruction, and warning to the young. They were liable to be overtaken by sudden death, and, if unprepared for it, how sad their doom! (14)

After the funeral, mourners returned to the house for food and drink. It was the custom in some localities to eat before the procession. An observer described the traditional funeral meal on Long Island,

...it as likewise the custom at funeral...for relative of the deceased, at the house from which the funeral was to proceed, to prepare a large quantity of cold provisions, such as roast turkeys, boiled hams, roast beef, etc...Also rum, brandy and gin, with pipes, tobacco and cigars, were handed round...It was not an unusual thing to see the farmers congregate...smoking their long pipes and drinking, hearing and telling the news, and laughing and talking together for two or three hours before the funeral would move. This long stay at the house previous to the proceeding to the place of interment, together with the great plenty of spirituous liquors distributed about, sometimes occasioned scenes of much noise. (15)

- (9) Jane Nylander, *Our Own Snug Fireside* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 39-40.
- (10) Robert W. Havenstein and William M. Lamers, *The History of American Funeral Directing*, rev. ed. (Milwaukee: Bulfin Printer, 1962), p. 206.
- (11) Phillis Cunnington and Catherine Lucas, *Costume for Births, Marriages, and Deaths* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1972), p. 270.
- (12) Nylander, *Snug Fireside*, p. 40.
- (13) OSV Education Department, reprint from *The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*, ed. Barbara W. Cross.
- (14) OSV Education Department, reprint from Mary Livermore, *The Story of My Life* (Hartford, 1987).

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From Amateur To Professional, Undertaking in America

Funeral directing in America evolved from the various trades that provided services for the families of the deceased. Upholsterers, for example, provided textile items such as shrouds and palls and branched out to provide other services, such as furniture upholstery. (This was especially true in England, where the growing middle class imitated aristocratic funerals that were rigidly supervised by the Court of Heralds.) Blanch White, “upholsterer and undertaker, from London,” set up shop in New York in 1768 and advertised, “Funeral furnished with all things necessary and proper attendance as in England.” (23)

The preparation of the body for burial—bathing, dressing in a shroud, and laying in the coffin—was transferred from family and friends to professional. While midwives often assumed these duties, by the early nineteenth century large cities had specialists in laying out the dead. The 1810 Philadelphia city directory listed 14 people under the heading of “layers out of the dead.” (These people were also listed, however, as nurses.) (24)

Cabinet-makers, who were also called upon to make coffins, also might have become general undertakers. Cabinet-maker Michael Jenkins of Baltimore, began his business in 1799. He was also appointed coroner of the city, which must have made it convenient for him to engage in undertaking, as well. The cost of a mahogany coffin supplied August 10, 1799, was 7£, 10s. (His son, Henry, carried on the business, which continues to the present, as Henry W. Jenkins & Sons Co.) (25)

Andrew Gardner of Vincennes, Indiana, similarly established a store and carpenter shop in 1816. Cherry coffins were \$2.00 to \$10.00, with varnishing extra. Gardner also constructed a hearse in 1819. (26)

Francis Gasch’s Sons began as cabinet-makers in the 1850s. Ledger entries indicate that they added a variety of funeral services to coffin-making and other cabinet work. Entries for the year 1864 include, “A coffin case and attending to the funeral of a child;” “a walnut coffin & case,” and “for a hearse and mourning goods.” (27)

Those who rented out conveyances also branched out into the undertaking business. John Dobbin, a livery stable keeper in Baltimore in 1847, advertised, “Funeral served at the shortest notice, with utmost order,” (28) while Gardner T. Schwartz of Providence advertised in 1856,

Livery Stable Keeper, Undertaker
Tomb Proprietor and Dealer in ready-made
coffins, of all kinds & at all
prices, near the corner of
Pine and Dorrance—St. (29)

The majority of nineteenth-century American burials were in churchyards, and the sexton, or church caretaker, performed a variety of funeral services. To the traditional “tolling of the bell” and “digging of the grave” were added laying out, directing the procession, and providing merchandise and paraphernalia. (30)

Such developments as the establishment of secular cemeteries and the widespread use of chemical embalming would come later in the century.



Items Supplied For An English funeral In 1824.

- A strong coffin with white padded satin lining and pillow
- A mattress, sheet and a padded satin-lined lid
- A very strong outside oak case, covered with superfine black cloth, best silvered nails, and rich ornaments also silvered
- A rich plume of black ostrich feathers, and a man to carry ditto
- Silk scarves, hatbands and gloves for attendants
- Gifts of ditto for mourners
- Feather-pages and wands
- Mutes on horseback
- Silk dressing of poles
- Best black velvet pall and saddlecloths for horses
- More ostrich feathers
- Cloaks
- Pages in truncheons and staves, hatbands and gloves
- Crape, attendants
- Rooms on the road
- Coachmen
- Feathermen
- Turnpike fees (31)

Not that, in England, those who could afford it borrowed many of the trappings from heraldic funerals, which had once been strictly reserved for the nobility.

(23) Habenstein and Lamers, *Funeral Directing*, p.226

(24) *Ibid.*, p. 237

(25) *Ibid.*, pp. 227-228; C.R. Francis, “Funeral Directors Since 1799, *Embalmers’ Monthly*, July 1935, p. 18 [Unfortunately, most of this article is missing from the bound volume in the Library of Congress.]

(26) C.R. Francis, “Five Generations Built This 119 Year Old Business,” *Embalmers’ Monthly*, May 1935, pp. 22-25.

(27) Ledger, collection of Francis Gasch’s Sons.

(28) Habenstein & Lamers, *Funeral Directing*, plate 27.

(29) *Ibid.*, p. 235.

(30) *Ibid.*, pp. 239-40.

(31) Original in Bertram S. Puckle, *Funeral Customs, Their Origin and Development*; 1926 transcription in Richardson, “Why Was Death So Big in Victorian Britain?” in *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement*.

(Continued from page 1)

three to six months, for an infant, six weeks and upwards.

For brothers and sisters, six to eight months

For aunts and uncles, three to six months

For cousins, or uncles and aunts, related by marriage, from six weeks to three months

For more distant relations or friends, from three weeks upwards

Other sources note that a husband did not have to adhere as strictly to the mourning rules, and could marry again at any time. It would have been extremely scandalous for a woman to even come out of mourning clothes early, let alone marry another man before the mourning time was over.



Two clothing ensembles used during the 2007 mourning exhibit: a gentleman's coat with mourning sash and a muslin dress for a young girl with black trim. Photos by Jill Cook.

Servants, if financially feasible, were given mourning clothes. In less wealthy households, the servants often wore armbands. Servants would also receive any gifts being bestowed upon mourners.



Early 19th century fashion plate showing a mother and child dressed in full mourning clothes.

Mourning was separated into stages. The first stage of mourning required deep black textiles without shine or gloss. This stems from superstitions concerning reflected images of the dead. The Narcissus myth from ancient Greece was based on the fear of looking at one's reflection in the water. If you did, they believed the water spirits could drag your soul away. This superstition led to the customs of covering mirrors and portraits of the dead and using dull fabrics and jewelry. By looking at such objects and seeing your reflection, you could be the next to die. These beliefs became even more popular during the Victorian era (1837-1901).

During the later stages of mourning, clothes could be somewhat shinier. Eventually, lighter colors, such as gray or purple were socially acceptable. Some sources note that the wearing of black stems from people trying to blend in and not be noticed by Death. By being unobtrusive, they will avoid being the next to die.

Women bore the full brunt of mourning, normally wearing all black clothing and accessories, accompanied by heavy black veils or bonnets. Clothing was to be simple and unadorned. The stages listed in *The Workwoman's Guide* call for:



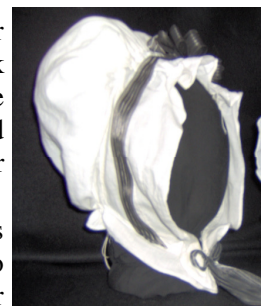
Full mourning garb typical for a grieving widow. Photo by Jill Cook.

“The deepest mourning clothing to be bombazine trimmed with crepe; and entirely crepe, or silk and crepe bonnet. The next mourning level is black silk trimmed with crepe; silk and crepe bonnet. A third or slighter mourning, is a plain silk dress, with either black or white silk, or even a straw bonnet. Half-mourning is grey or lavender silk in a morning, and the same or white with black ornaments in the evening; bonnet either white or lavender silk, or straw.”

They also provide directions on how to make or adorn appropriate mourning clothing. A certain kind of ribbon called a “love-hood” or “love” was a transparent silk and was often used as a ribbon for trim or decorating caps specifically for mourning. It was referred to as a “love-ribbon”.

Men dressed in all black also, but as in many of the mourning rituals, this rule was not strictly adhered to, especially military men (a black armband would suffice). The cloth often used for men were dense black woolens, especially the variety known as “cloth”, which was shrunk or fulled after weaving, then napped and shorn to give a felt like texture. Buttons and other shiny surfaces had to be removed or covered.

Children in mourning could wear solid black or white with black trim. Younger people or people mourning for younger people could incorporate more white into their garb.



A day cap featuring a 'love' or mourning ribbon.

In England, “court mourning” was practiced. Common people would go into short periods of mourning for court members. In 1818, the following was an order for Court Mourning issued by “the Lord Chamberlain’s office for her late Majesty, the Queen, of Blessed Memory”.

“The ladies to wear black bombazines, plain muslins or long lawn linen, crape hoods, shamoy (sic chamois) shoes and gloves, and crape fans. Undress: Dark Norwich crape. The gentlemen to wear black cloth, without buttons on the sleeves and pockets, plain muslin or long lawn cravats

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and weepers, shamoy (sic chamois) shoes and gloves, crape hat bands and black swords and buckles. Undress: Dark grey frocks”

Jewelry:

Jewelry was used to remind people not only of their loved ones, but that death was imminent. “Momento mori”, meaning “Remember you must die” or “Remember death”, was the phrase used to describe most of this type of jewelry. All jewelry for deep mourning also followed the no shine rule..

In the late 1700s and early 1800s, symbols of death switched from the morbid representations of skulls, skeletons, and coffins, to images that were more sorrowful and romantic. Objects like weeping willows (symbolizing sorrow), broken urns or columns (symbolizing a life cut short), flaming hearts or torches (symbolizing passion, ardor), women draped over a headstone weeping, and anchors (symbolizing hope) became used more prominently on tombstones and miniatures alike.

Miniature paintings were very popular in the early 19th century and were often set in brooches, pendants, rings, slides, bracelets clasps, and earrings. As they were all hand-painted, and typically personalized with initials, names, or a particular sentimental phrase, no two were identical. Hair from the deceased was also commonly used to adorn these miniatures.



motifs, and was often woven into bracelets, fob chains, and earrings. (The latter became more popular during the Victorian era). Hair could also be chopped up, macerated, or dissolved and used to paint miniature scenes of love and loss.

People also made pictures detailing their mourning. It was very fashionable to use silk thread on a silk background to express your grief through needlework. These pieces were not necessarily done immediately after the death, but often later as a memorial to the deceased.



Two examples of embroidered mourning portraits.

The House:

Draping the house in crepe became very popular during the Victorian era. Prior to that, records are very scarce on how the house was adorned. This is probably because house adornment was not often practiced before the mourning customs of the Victorian era became popular. There are a few obscure references to a black ribbon being hung on the door to announce the death to the public, but no solid references have been found.



Hair was often used in other types of jewelry as well. Because it survives time and decay, it was often used as a sign that love outlasts death. It becomes a personal shrine to the dead. Earlier in time, the hairpiece jewelry was hidden from view, but in the 1700s it became popular to display the hair jewelry. It could be curled, plaited, and woven into decorative



The home of George Washington in mourning. Note the black ribbons on the closed shutters and over the door.

Vignettes Planned during the Mourning Exhibit

The following vignettes are planned for October. Each room depicts a different day from October 10 to November 20, 1822; the five weeks following Ben's death. A brief description of each room's vignette is given with suggestions for topics to discuss with visitors.



to engage the visitor and prepare them for the exhibit.

Kitchen and Servants' Quarters: This area will be little changed. Public observance of mourning customs was generally a luxury of

the wealthy. Mourning would have been observed by the servants at Stephenson House but probably not to the same extent as the family. It is very probable that the servants wore mourning clothes in honor of the Colonel but armbands and 'love' ribbons on day caps is all that we will be displaying on interpreters working in this area. Topics to discuss: dyeing black of existing clothes to make due after a death, the work must continue regardless of grief, and candle production for use during the laying out of the dead.

Parlor: Colonel Stephenson's coffin will be displayed in this room

(Continued on page 10)

Orientation Room: A clothing display will be set up in this room. Before tours begin, docents are encouraged to discuss the various garments and explain the differences between male and female, child and adult, family and servant. Photos of mourning clothes and needlework portraits also will be displayed throughout the room.

There will be some black armbands available for male visitors to pin to their sleeve. This is not required but it may be a small way

Gardens at Stephenson House by Carol Fruit, Master Gardener



The Heritage Garden has been exuberant this summer. As the garden evolves we try to repeat and add new plants that are particularly showy or interesting but we may have gotten a little carried away. Many of the plants were so tall the scarecrow disappeared for awhile.

The okra grew to about 8 feet. It took two people to harvest

the pods, one to hold the stems down while the other one cut. It did have beautiful flowers and attracted attention but we will probably limit the planting to 1 or 2 instead of 6.



October brings total change to the look of the Heritage Garden as we

clean up tired and perhaps frosted vegetation and let the beds rest for the winter.

A newly cultivated area you may have noticed is at the corner where you turn into the parking lot. The area under the red bud tree has been planted with some Missouri native ground covers. It was a weedy spot that is the first area visitors see on entering the Stephenson House property. It should fill in eventually and should remain green through the winter. The ground covers should be fairly carefree. These plant varieties could have been in the woodlands around the Stephenson House in the early 19th century.



OCTOBER 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Mourning Col. Stephenson October 1-31				1	2	3
4	5	6	7 Book Club	8 School Tour School Tour	9	10
11 50/50 Auction	12	13	14 SIUE Tour	15	16	17 Art East
18 Art East	19	20	21	22	23	24 Militia Muster
25 Militia Muster	26	27	28	29	30	31

October 1-31, **Mourning Col. Stephenson**, Join the Stephenson Family and Edwardsville as it mourns one of its founding fathers. Experience the customs grieving families practiced and say goodbye to Colonel Benjamin Stephenson as he lies in state in the parlor of his home. Watch as lawyers begin cataloging the Stephenson's personal items for the probate records, and as Lucy prepares to auction off her belongings.

October 7, **Book Club**, 7-9 p.m. The book selection for this month is *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves, and the Creation of America* by Henry Wiencek

October 8, **Lincoln School tour**, 9:30-11 a.m., 50+/- 7th grade

October 8, **Lincoln School tour**, 12-1:30 p.m., 50+/- 7th grade

October 11, **50/50 Auction**, 9a.m.-2 p.m. Check your attics and basements for antiques, memorabilia and collectibles, and

then bring them to the seventh annual 50/50 auction. Proceeds are split 50/50 with the house or you may choose to donate the entire sale. The auction features a large assortment of quality items. *House tours will not be available during this event but the museum gift shop will be open.* The House Is Closed.

October 14, **SIUE Tour**, 1:15-3:15 p.m., 30+/- students

October 17 & 18, **Art East**, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Guest artist and photographer Maxine Callies will display her photos at Stephenson House.

October 24 & 25, **Militia Muster**, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Saturday and 12-3 p.m. Sunday. Citizen soldiers gather at Stephenson House to take up arms in defense of their homes. Visitors will view a militia encampment, soldiers' daily routines, and preparations for the expedition led by Col. Stephenson during the War of 1812.





with the shutters and blinds closed. Candles placed throughout the room will be the only source of light. Sprigs of rosemary and lavender help to dispel the scent of the corpse (since the body was on display for up to three days

while the family made funeral arrangements). All reflective surfaces are also covered. Copies of the obituary and poem published in the Spectator will be located on the piano forte; a copy of each may be given to visitors. Topics to discuss: lack of embalming, custom of covering reflective surfaces, custom of sitting up with the dead until the body was removed for burial.

The parlor depicts the date of October 13, 1822. We suspect this is the day the Colonel may have been buried. The coffin is closed in preparation for transport to the grave site.

Dining Room: As visitors enter this room, it shows the process of inventorying the house. Within five weeks of Ben's death, everything in the house was inventoried and sold at public auction to pay toward the large debt left after his passing. The



date depicted for this room is November 19, 1822. Topics of discussion: the auction, the debt, life for Lucy after his death, the usefulness of the inventory in the restoration process.

Master Bedroom: The sick room moments after Ben's death. Date depicted in this room is October 10, 1822. Topics of discussion: the cause of Ben's death, the receipts for yellow bark, preparing the body for burial.



Children's Bedroom: The family observe full mourning. All toys have been put away and the house is made as corpse-like as possible. This state of mourning lasts up to a year. Topics of discussion: various levels of mourning, different colors for different ages, the loss of a father.

The Volunteer

The 1820 Col. Benjamin
Stephenson House
P.O. Box 754
409 S. Buchanan
Edwardsville, IL 62025



Phone: 618-692-1818

Fax: 618-692-6418

E-mail:

stephensonhouse@sbcglobal.net

www.stephensonhouse.org