

# The Volunteer

The 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House

## Christmas Candlelight Tour



November  
2015

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Experience an 1820s holiday party during the Christmas Candlelight Tours at the Stephenson House on November 27 and 28 from 6-9 p.m. Take a self-guided tour, sing period carols in the parlor, learn a dance in the dining room, listen to a story or two, and then enjoy a hot cup of wassail in the kitchen during this annual event.

The rooms at the historic house are adorned with simple holiday trimmings that were known to be used during the early 19th century. "We keep it simple but that doesn't mean it's not beautiful," commented site director RoxAnn Raisner, "all of our decorations are historically correct and documented for the period. You'll not see the stereotypical Colonial Christmas though." Candles and fireplaces will be a glow during the event, adding to the cozy atmosphere.

All tours during the event are self-guided but historically dressed docents are on hand to provide information as well as answer questions. "We want visitors to feel like they are actually at the Stephenson's home for a party in the 1820s. Hopefully they feel so completely immersed in the experience they become a part of the celebration." Raisner stated. "Our site is not a typical museum experience so we've planned activities our guests can partake in; an experience for the senses." Visitors are encouraged to take up a partner and learn a simple country dance; sing a carol to



Both photos taken during the Candlelight Tour from 2010. These photos and many more are located on the Stephenson House's Shutterfly page.



the accompaniment of an 1820 pianoforte; listen to a story of holidays past; enjoy a sweet in the kitchen; or relax next to a blazing fire.

The admission fee is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children (6-12 years), and children age 5 and under are admitted free. Hours of the event are 6:00-9:00 p.m. The 1820 Colo-

nel Benjamin Stephenson is located at 409 South Buchanan Street. Please call the Stephenson House (618) 692-1818 if you have questions or need further information. The house will not be open for tours during the day of the event or on Sunday, November 29.

## 50/50 Antique Auction

By Julie Mangoff

A big thank you to everyone who helped out with set up, tear down, or donating items for the 50/50 Antique Auction in the beginning of October. We had a lot of unique items up for sale and several items resulted in bidding wars. The auction itself lasted about six hours. All the food and baked goods were delicious. At the end of

the day, these items went up for auction. Several of the auction house staff even bid on the desserts to enjoy after work.

My grandmother told me how much she loved the oatmeal and cranberry cookies with orange zest (she is asking me for the recipe and I do not know who baked

them. If you did or know who did, please email me the recipe at [jamangoff@gmail.com](mailto:jamangoff@gmail.com) or leave a copy at the house for me to pick up. My grandmother and I thank you in advance).

Hopefully next year's auction will be as successful as this one!

## Ball Gowns for the Candlelight Tour

This is a reminder for the ladies preparing ball gowns and fancy dresses. If you want to wear them for the Christmas Candlelight Tours you have less than a month to complete the dresses.

If need help or inspiration for your gowns (or want to preview the ball

gowns) stop by the Stephenson House during Sewing Circle.

Good luck, happy sewing, and we will be seeing all you during the Candlelight Tour!

Image from Google.



## SIUE's Digital Library

By Julie Mangoff

The internet can be a wonderful place. This past week Kathy Schmidt asked if I could do some research on Edwardsville History. When I did a Google search on the topic, the usual websites came up: local historical societies, city government, Wikipedia pages, local business pages, and Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's (SIUE) digital library. Curious, I clicked on the link for the library and discovered that the university has digitized several historical documents. These files have been uploaded to the internet and are free for everyone, not just students, to use. One of the collections, uploaded this past June, contains several encyclopedias and atlases from the late 1800s specializing in the history of different Illinois counties.

When I opened the collection, I found two books detailing the history of Madison County, Illinois: *History of Madison County, Illinois: illustrated, with biographical sketches of many prominent men and pioneers* (1882) and *Illustrated encyclopedia and atlas map of Madison County, Ill.: carefully compiled from personal examinations and surveys* (1873).

After downloading both files (they are in PDF format, like this newsletter you are reading), I was pleasantly surprised to find that the books were scanned in color and in high definition. Each page is yellowed with age and it felt like I was reading the physical copy of the book.

But the neatest part of this discovery is that both encyclopedias mention Col. Benjamin Stephenson in several different places. The books say he worked as the Receiver of Public Monies, negotiated the treaty with the Kickapoo, and that he owned the second mercantile store in the city of Edwardsville.

In addition to the information on Stephenson, the books also describe Palemmon Winchester's murder trial and the scandalous reasons behind it (he allegedly killed Daniel Smith for implying that Lucy Stephenson was having an affair with Ninian Edwards).

Overall, the information about the Stephenson family in these books is nothing new. Still, it is neat to hear people

over 50 years later talk about the family and their accomplishments.

The last item of note is in the atlas portion of encyclopedias has beautiful sketches of Edwardsville from the 1870s. There are pictures of buildings from around town with horse and buggies driving by and a map of Edwardsville (as well as other local towns). Some of the landmarks depicted in them are still recognizable today.

If you are interested in looking at the encyclopedias or seeing what other treasures SIUE has made available online, you can find the homepage for the collection at:

[http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/sie\\_brink](http://collections.carli.illinois.edu/cdm/landingpage/collection/sie_brink)

If you do decide to get the files (which I highly recommend), you may need to get Adobe Reader to open the files. The link is

<https://get.adobe.com/reader/>

Both are free and safe to download.

## October Photos



Above: The Parlor in mourning with coffin resting on two chairs. Photo by RoxAnn Raisner.



Right: Photos taken from set-up for the 50/50 Antique Auction. Above: Volunteers help move trailer beds into place for the auction on October 3. Photo by RoxAnn Raisner. Right: Close-up on several antiques. Photo by Julie Mangoff. Below: View of items set up for auction after set-up with volunteers helping arrange items. Photo by Julie Mangoff.



# November 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Carlinville Pri- mary School 9:45 — 11:45 A. M.	5	6	7 Playing the Past 9:00 A. M. — 12:00 P. M.
8 Sewing Circle 1:00 P. M.	9	10	11	12	13 Educational Talent Search 9:30 — 11:30 A. M.	14
15	16	17	18 Carlinville Pri- mary School 9:45 — 11:45 A. M.	19	20	21 Playing the Past 9:00 A. M. — 12:00 P. M.
22 Sewing Circle 1:00 P. M.	23	24 Board Meeting 7:00 P. M.	25	26 Happy Thanksgiving! All Day	27	28 Christmas Candlelight Tours 6:00 — 9:00 P. M.
29	30					

## Upcoming Dates

- November 4: Carlinville Primary School,  
9:45 — 11:45 A. M.
- November 7: Playing the Past,  
9:00 A. M. — 12:00 P. M.
- November 8: Sewing Circle,  
1:00 P. M.
- November 13: Educational Talent Search,  
9:30 — 11:30 A. M.
- November 18: Carlinville Primary School,  
9:45 — 11:45 A. M.
- November 21: Playing the Past,  
9:00 A. M. — 12:00 P. M.
- November 22: Sewing Circle,  
1:00 P. M.
- November 24: Board Meeting,  
7:00 P. M.
- November 26: Thanksgiving!
- November 27-28: Christmas Candlelight Tours,  
6:00 — 9:00 P. M.

## Thank You!

- everyone who helped decorate the house for mourning
- everyone who donated items or helped set up for the 50/50 Antique Auction... it was a great success
- to all the volunteers who filled out surveys for the Museum Assessment Project Grant

## *The Stephenson House on Facebook*

The Stephenson House is nearing 500 likes on Facebook. The more likes we have the more people will see us online. Our goal is to exceed 500 likes by the end of the year, so if you have not done so, please like us!

If you have not seen our Facebook page, next time you are on, Facebook just search for 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House and you should be able to find us.

## *Experience Edwardsville App*

In October, the Experience Edwardsville App launched smart phones. The app contains information about upcoming events, local history, places to eat, hotels, and much more about Edwardsville. The app is de-

signed to promote the city, as well as generate interest in local businesses and attractions. Experience Edwardsville is free to download from the app store to your smartphone.



## *The Volunteer*

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If you have any articles or stories you would like to be added to next month's edition of *The Volunteer*, please contact the editor at: [jamangoff@gmail.com](mailto:jamangoff@gmail.com).

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[www.stephensonhouse.shutterfly.com](http://www.stephensonhouse.shutterfly.com)

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## *News & Needs*

### *Needs...*

- volunteers to help with school and Christmas Candlelight tours
- unprocessed honey
- volunteers to help with house tours, gift shop, garden & grounds, grant writing & research, as well as special events
- cleaning supplies such as Windex, toilet bowl cleaner, hand soap, disinfecting wipes, bleach, and toilet paper
- seamstresses to sew clothing for the volunteer wardrobe
- bolt of 100% cotton batiste