

Colonel Benjamin
Stephenson House
Mourning Tour Hours

Thursday—Saturday
10 am to 3 pm

Sunday
12 pm to 3 pm

All tours are guided by a historically
dressed docent. Gift shop remains
open until 4 pm

Admission Fees:
Adults \$6.00
Children (6-12 yrs) \$3.00
Free for children under 5 years old



Mourning Customs Exhibit

Our early American ancestors
viewed death differently, in some
ways, than we in the twenty-first
century. It was a time to grieve
the passing of a loved one, yet
hold on to memories in the only
way they knew how in an age
before photography and film
captured the essence of a
person's nature.

Mourning jewelry and tokens of
remembrance from times past
are now considered works of art
and highly collectible. See
depictions of these rare
mementoes in a special exhibit
recreating their significance and
the lost lives they represent.

Mourning
Col. Stephenson
A Special Exhibit

October 2016

*"The prairies spread
with palls of brown, with
rustling notes of
sadness."*

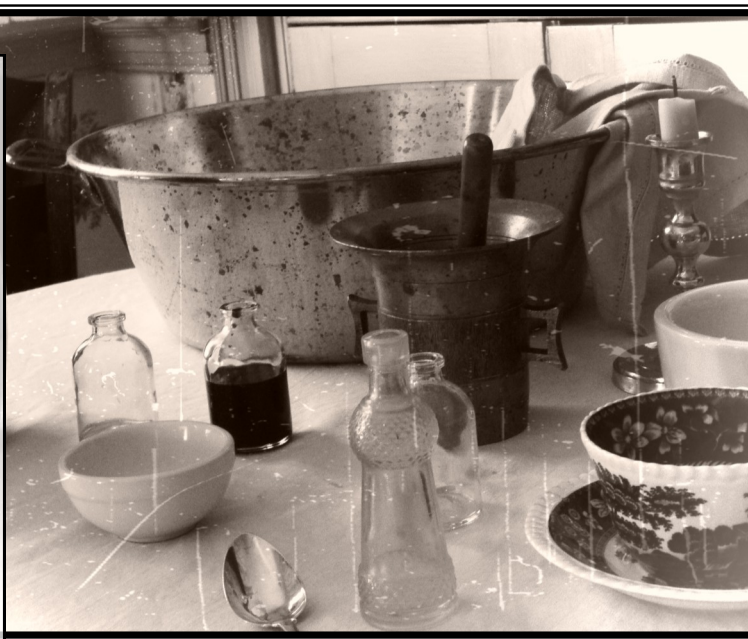
Thus begins a poem written
in 1822 on the tragic death
of Col. Benjamin
Stephenson, early Illinois
statesman and militia leader.

During the month of October, visitors to Edwardsville's oldest historic home have the opportunity to experience a bit of the macabre while learning about mourning customs of Early America.

"I see their sable garbs of woe.

I hear their notes of sorrow."

Clothing defined every aspect of life during the 19th century, even in death. The bereaved observed strict rules of conduct in their wardrobe choices. On display are various styles of appropriate mourning garb appropriate to each family member and friends of the deceased.



Moments in Time

Each room of the Stephenson's federal style home portrays a different aspect of the days leading up to and following the Colonel's untimely death. Learn about Early American medical practices and how families cared for the sick and dying in an era before modern medicine. Uncover the mysteries surrounding the Colonel's death and the aftermath for his young widow and orphaned children.

- How did a family survive in the aftermath of the Colonel's death?
- Did the Widow Stephenson ever remarry?
- How long did a widow wear black?



These and other intriguing questions are addressed during the exhibit by knowledgeable docents in period attire.

The Funeral Parlor

Two hundred years ago, funerals took place in the home. All through the month of October, visitors can experience the Stephenson House parlor in its traditional macabre décor as the original family must have welcomed the fellow bereaved. Become a guest at the 1820 visitation for the Colonel and step back in time. Observe funeral customs of the day and learn how they influenced modern funeral practices.

Not for the faint of heart, the exhibit evokes a sense of the time and the somber nature of our forefathers' understanding of death as an unavoidable part of life.

