



# The Informer

The Dundee Township Historical Society Newsletter

October 2021

## 2021 HISTORIC SITES PROGRAM

The 2021 Historic Sites Program & Plaque Presentation, "Around the Corner Plaquing", will be held on Sunday, November 7<sup>th</sup> at 2pm.

After the hiatus of 2020, we will be awarding plaques to four homes in West Dundee. Three of them are in the block bordered by Second and Third Streets and Oregon Avenue and Liberty Street.

At 219 South Third Street stands the William Oatman house, a handsome three-story red brick structure.



In the 200-block of South Second Street are two sizable frame homes. And in the 300-block of South Second is a large brick four-square which boasts porches on both the main and second floors.

All four houses date between 1904 and 1918 and are carefully maintained to perpetuate their original appearance.

All area residents are invited to attend this recognition program to learn about some of the earlier residents of Dundee Township, popular structure styles of the past, and ways to keep or restore their homes to the original architectural design.

The program will be held at the Historical Society Museum. There will be no admission charge, donations are graciously accepted.

For more information, call the museum at 847-428-6996.

## MEMBERSHIP DUES BILLING IN DECEMBER

Please note that we have changed our dues structure in that all Annual Memberships will now run from January through December regardless of when you last paid your dues.

This change will allow for more efficient book keeping on our part. We will be sending out renewal notices for membership dues in December.

As a member you continue to show your pride and commitment to retain and share our local history for our residents and visitors.

If you have questions, regarding this change please call the museum at 847-428-6996. Leave a message with your name, phone number, and that you are inquiring about your membership status. You may email your inquiry to [dths@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dths@sbcglobal.net) if you prefer.



## 52<sup>ND</sup> ILLINOIS INFANTRY – THE DUNDEE BOYS

52nd Illinois Infantry Volunteers answered President Lincoln's call to arms after the firing upon Fort Sumter in April of 1861.

The 52nd, which came to be known by the locals as "The Dundee Regiment", was made up of men from Dundee, Algonquin, Elgin, Nunda and the surrounding area throughout much of mid Illinois.

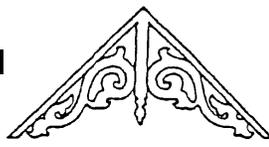
Some of the volunteers were just boys. They left home and family and gathered in Geneva, a great adventure ahead of them. Thinking the war could not last long, little could they imagine the horrors the next 4 years held for them. The 52nd travelled through the southern states, the newly formed Confederacy. They took part in the Battle of Shiloh, at Corinth, Pulaski, Kennesaw Mountain and other locations unfamiliar to them.



**Private Edgar Bowen** enlisted Sept 11, 1861 with others from our area and was mustered in October 25, 1861 in Geneva. He re-enlisted December 25, 1863. He was discharged July 6, 1865 having reached his "expiration of term of service" following the end of the war. After his service in the Civil War, he and his wife Lucia (Perry) moved away from our area.

In June of 2021, Bob Bowen of Michigan graciously donated the picture of his ancestor along with his discharge from the Civil War. Bob and his family feel these items belong with the history of Dundee Township.

Thank you to the Bowen Family for their thoughtfulness and commitment.



## Remembering Gene Lamp

We mourn the loss of long time member and board member, Gene Lamp who passed away August 1, 2021.

Gene served the Historical Society as treasurer for more than 20 years. During his time as a board member he participated in every event the museum presented. He was seen in the cemetery as he portrayed numerous "Spirits of Dundee" including David Deweese, Martin Barrows, David Hill, Dr. James Bumstead and more. He boarded a bus on "The Magical History Tour" as Jesse Oatman, Dr. Edmund Cleveland, Eaton Walker, Dr. Luke Hale, Homer Hoxie and others. His most memorable characterization was that of Abraham Lincoln. Gene, who stood 6 foot 4, grew a beard, colored his hair and donned a "stovepipe" hat to share 'The Wit and Wisdom of Abraham Lincoln'.

Gene's wife, Mary, passed away December 20, 2019. Mary was one of our "Library Ladies". Any project given to Mary was always done promptly. She was an integral part of the success of the Housewalk, Cemetery Walk, Collector's Day and the publishing of the society's history book. She was thoughtful, outspoken and Jeopardy smart. Together Gene and Mary were dedicated, generous and faithful supporters of the Historical Society as well as other local organizations, always willing to help where help was needed and fun to work with on projects. To say they will be missed is an understatement.

### The many faces of Gene Lamp



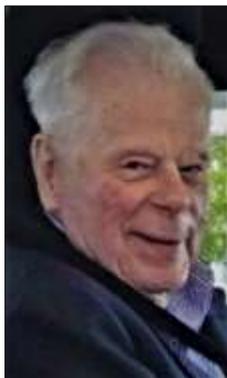
As Frederick Dickenson



As Dr. Luke Hale



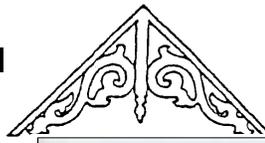
As Abraham Lincoln



Gene Lamp



Gene and Mary sharing their needle point and bobbin lace making talents.



## R.L.B. OPERA HOUSE

Established 1893



The Grand Opening of the R.L.B. Opera House was November 3, 1893. It was located on the south side of Main Street where the pool hall is today.

R.L.B. was imprinted on the front of the building. It stands for Reese, Lemke and Bauman, the 3 men who built and operated the opera house. It was lighted by gas and electricity.

The opera house was a Vaudeville theatre for family entertainment, slightly different from Burlesque, which was more "Bawdy" and geared more for the adult male population. Sally Rand, the fan dancer, was a major attraction in the realm of Burlesque.

The audience seats came from "Memorial Hall" in Carpentersville, which was built by Mary Edwards Carpenter Lord in honor of her late husband, Julius Angelo Carpenter. Seats were equipped with a ring underneath so a gentleman would have a safe place for his hat. In the Victorian Era it was considered impolite for a man to wear a hat indoors.

Posters advertised one of the many acts that performed here. There were jugglers, dancers, comedians, singers and more. Many performers who played the opera houses across the country were Al Jolson, Burns and Allen, The Marx Brothers, Jack Bennie, etc. We have no documentation that any of these big names in show biz ever performed here but must have played the Vaudeville theaters of Chicago.

When movies became the popular entertainment some opera houses took on a whole new life and began showing movies on a screen. The Dundee Opera House became a movie theatre as well as a place to hold children's performances and class plays. Through the years it was a shoe factory, the library, telephone offices, various doctors and dentists, a tailor, roller skating rink, Plinke and Rakow Furniture and Undertaking, Reese Dry Goods Store, and finally The Ben Franklin.

It burned in the 70s and was replaced with the building that stands there now. It is remembered by most locals as the Ben Franklin Five & Dime. Anything you needed you could find at "The Ben" which was owned by Cal Grafelman. The park at Fifth and Main streets, formerly "Tower Park", was renamed in his honor.



## **OPERA HOUSE EXHIBIT**

Currently in our museum's north room.

The small exhibit next to the "stage" represents a dressing room and shows what things may have been like back stage.

If you haven't been to the opera this year (or to our museum) you should stop by on a Wednesday or a Sunday from 2-4p

## **THE RETURN OF OUR DICKENS OF A CHRISTMAS SALE**

The Dundee Township Historical Society will hold its Christmas sale during the Dickens in Dundee Celebration.

As in the past, the sale will be held at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church located at 410 W. Main St. in West Dundee on Saturday, December 4th, 9am to 2pm.

New, gently used, and vintage Christmas items sold at reasonable prices. This is your chance to purchase that unique gift. Don't miss it!

## **THANK YOU**

Thank to those who purchased items at our Super Spectacular Garage Sale. It was a great success.

Thank you to all those who donate area related items to our museum collection. These donations help us to add to the history of Dundee Township, remembering past residents who helped develop our area to become the place we know and enjoy today.

Thank you to the many patrons of Amazon Smile that listed the Dundee Township Historical Society to benefit a percentage of their purchases. Your continued support when making purchases is most appreciated.

Thank you to the many persons who volunteer their time and talents to our society without regard for recognition.



## IMPORTANT DATES

<b>October</b>	No programs
<b>November</b>	7 Historic Sites Program & Plaque Presentation 2pm
<b>December</b>	4 Dickens of a Christmas Sale 9am-2pm

### Dundee Township Historical Society

**Kristie Benedik**

President

**Open Position**

President Elect

**Colette McDonough**

Secretary

**Sue Roeser**

Treasurer

**Marge Edwards**

Past President

**Greg Ryant, Connie Kaschub, Jim Prow,  
Jack Wendt, Dave Culligan,  
Vicki Wilbrandt, Anne DeLurgio**  
Board of Directors

Committees:

<b>Newsletter</b>	Marge Edwards Kristie Benedik
<b>Historic Sites</b>	Jack Wendt
<b>Library</b>	Luanne Lewandowski Marge Edwards
<b>Museum</b>	Jack & Nancy Wendt
<b>Membership</b>	Connie Kaschub
<b>Docents</b>	Jack Wendt
<b>Land &amp; Buildings</b>	Jack Wendt
<b>Website</b>	Kristie Benedik
<b>Programs</b>	Marge Edwards

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