

NO SMALL CHANGE

THE GRANT PROGRAMS OF LANDMARKS ILLINOIS

PREPARED BY
PLACEECONOMICS
FOR LANDMARKS ILLINOIS
JUNE 2017





SOUTH SIDE
COMMUNITY ART CENTER

THE SOUTH SIDE
COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER
IN CHICAGO

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PRAIRIE MILLS WINDMILL
IN GOLDEN



INTRODUCTION

For nearly half a century, Landmarks Illinois has been a fierce champion for important places all over the state. It does this through advocacy, technical assistance, education, and policy initiatives. Since 1984, nearly 200 sites have also received financial support through Landmarks Illinois' grant programs. The purpose of these grants is:

to provide monetary assistance to significant structures or sites in Illinois that are under threat of demolition, in imminent deterioration, in need of stabilization, in need of structural or re-use evaluation, or need to be evaluated for landmark eligibility.

This study was commissioned to better understand the scope, the geographical reach, and the effectiveness these grant programs: the Endangered Building Grant program, the Preservation Heritage Fund (PHF), and the Barbara C. and Thomas E. Donnelley II Preservation Fund Grant. Beginning in 1984, small grants were awarded through the Endangered Building Grants program, which was funded through the general operations budget. The fund rarely exceeded \$5,000 annually, although it did grow after 2002. In 2004, the Executive Committee approved a resolution establishing the Preservation Heritage Fund. Fifteen percent of easement contributions received the previous year were dedicated to the Preservation Heritage Fund annually. The Barbara C. and Thomas E. Donnelley II Preservation Fund Grants began more recently in 2013. Through these programs, slightly more than \$825,000 has been awarded to 192 projects.

In evaluating the grant programs, four significant patterns emerged:

1. The grants were generally small
2. The grants were usually one of the early awards received for the project
3. The grants added credibility to the organizations receiving them
4. The grants effectively leveraged the recipients' ability to raise additional money

SMALL

Baseball legend Charles Comisky once said, "It is the small things in life which count; it is the inconsequential leak which empties the biggest reservoir." That description fits the grant programs of Landmarks Illinois in a couple of ways. First, as will be seen in the stories that follow, it was often the "small thing" in the form of a Landmarks Illinois grant that ultimately saved an important historic resource. Second, it is quite often an "inconsequential leak" that dooms a heritage structure. Most of the grants Landmarks Illinois has awarded over the past 33 years have been used to address that "inconsequential leak" literally, by repairing windows or a roof or stabilizing a building. Half of the grants given by Landmarks Illinois were less than \$2,000. But as the title of this report suggests, this relatively "small change" in monetary terms resulted in a giant change in the stewardship and survivability of the historic site or structure.

EARLY

There is an old principle in political fundraising that says a \$10 donation made a year before the election is more valuable than \$1,000 donation made the day before the election. It is this commitment of money early in the process that makes the Landmarks Illinois grants so critical. Sometimes those early funds are used for emergency repairs. Sometimes they are used to make needed evaluations, for landmark status eligibility, or for reuse feasibility. Sometimes they are used to remove the threat of immediate demolition. But in nearly every instance, this early intervention provided the indispensable first step in a strategy to assure the survival of the heritage asset.

CREDIBILITY

Big institutions with paid staff, capital budgets, and fundraising consultants probably don't need a grant from Landmarks Illinois to establish their credibility. But the recipients of these grants rarely fit that profile. Usually, they are nonprofit organizations with a small but strongly committed group of citizens concerned about their local landmark. While a few grant recipients – like the South Side Community Art Center in Chicago – have been around for decades, others are newer organizations in small towns that have not yet established track records of success. What was heard time after time in interviews with grant recipients, particularly in smaller communities, was that the grant from Landmarks Illinois gave the organization credibility – to other funding sources, to local government, and to their fellow citizens. And sometimes even more importantly, being awarded a grant from Landmarks Illinois gave organizations the confidence that, "We can do this!" This served as recognition that both the landmark they were trying to save was worthy of preservation, and also that their small organization had the ability to make that happen.

LEVERAGE

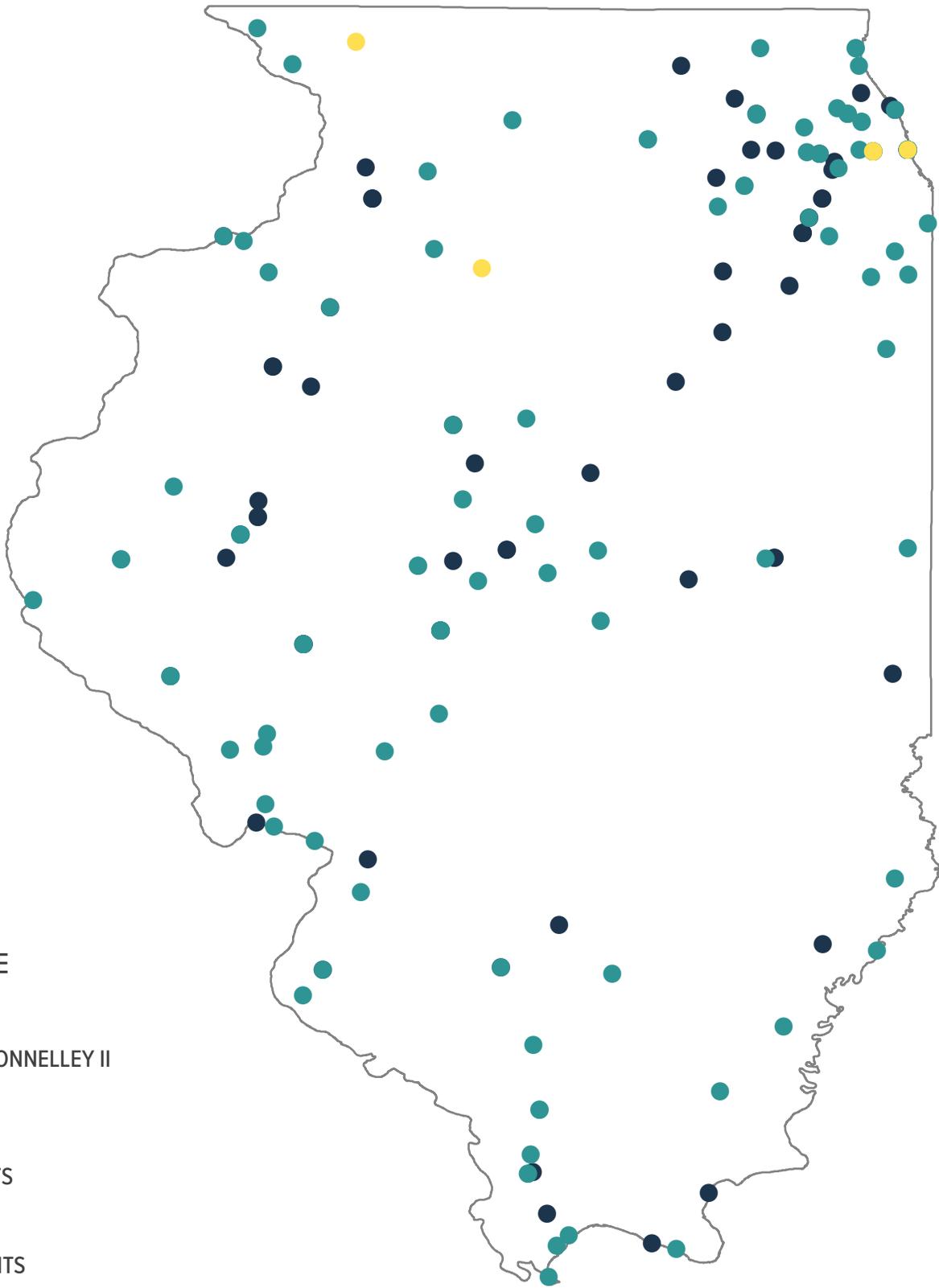
In most cases, the grant from Landmarks Illinois only covered a fraction of the total investment that the project required. In more than half of the cases, Landmarks Illinois' share represented less than a quarter of the total funds needed. But the grant provided the leverage needed to raise additional funding. While data was not available on total costs for every project funded, based on an evaluation of more than half of the grants, it is estimated that the \$825,000 from Landmarks Illinois was matched by more than \$14,000,000 from other sources. That means more than \$16 from other sources for every \$1 from Landmarks Illinois.

COMMUNITY

It was noted above that four patterns were consistently seen in most of the grants: small, early, credibility, and leverage. But there was also a fifth that may be the most important of all. While the grants themselves were awarded for a site or structure, from the communities' point of view, it really wasn't the brick and mortar (or windows and roof) that were the purpose of the grant. Their real purpose was supporting the local community – its meaning, its memory, its values, and its distinctiveness. The grants usually went into the physical fabric of the building, but the building was not the end; it was only the means to preserve, to recall, and sometimes to heal the fabric of the community.

DISTRIBUTION OF GRANTS STATEWIDE

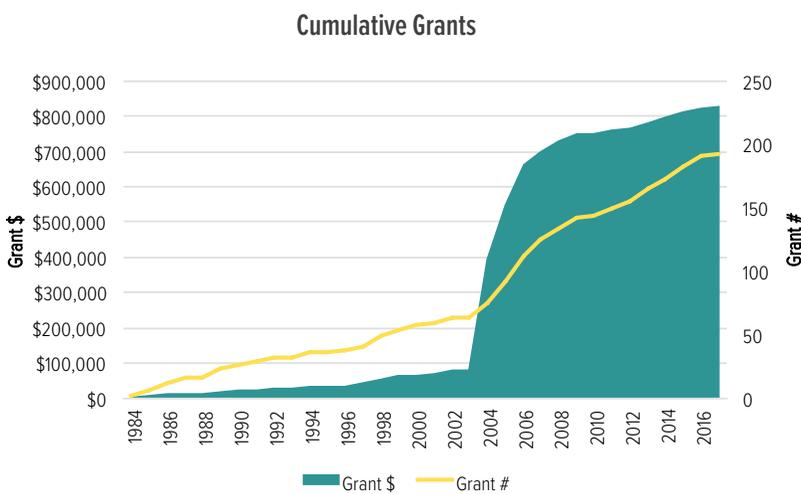
- BARBARA C. AND THOMAS E. DONNELLEY II PRESERVATION FUND GRANT
- ENDANGERED BUILDING GRANTS
- PRESERVATION HERITAGE GRANTS



THE STATISTICS

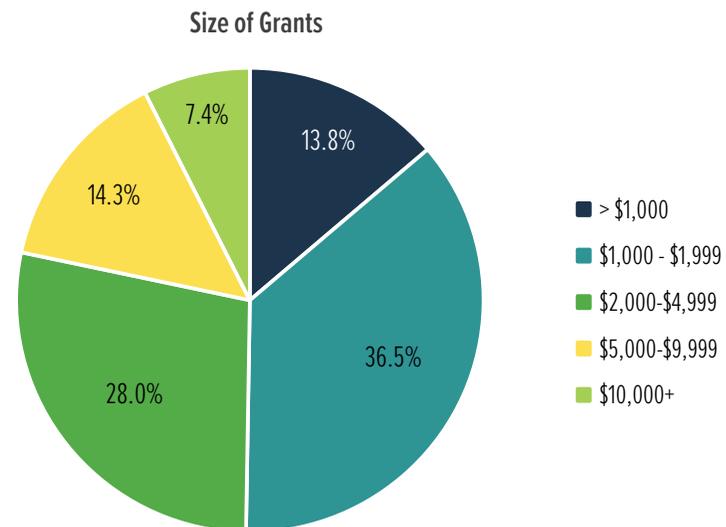
To understand the reach and the impact of the Landmarks Illinois grant programs, this study looked at data from 192 grants made between 1984 and 2017. Available information for each grant varied, but in all cases it included the amount of the grant, the year the grant was awarded, and the recipient. In most cases, the purpose of the grant was also listed. In just over half of the cases, the total cost of the project was included. The data that follows is based on information from those grant records.

Landmarks Illinois has provided \$825,629 in grant funding through the Endangered Building Grant program, the Preservation Heritage Fund, and the Barbara C. and Thomas E. Donnelley II Preservation Fund Grants. A total of 192 individual grants have been awarded. There have been a handful of instances where a grant was awarded but for whatever reasons, the recipient chose to not accept the money. Those awards are not included in the data below.¹ Over the last decade, there have been an average of eight grants each year, representing a total of just over \$16,000 per year for an average of



\$2,000 per grant.

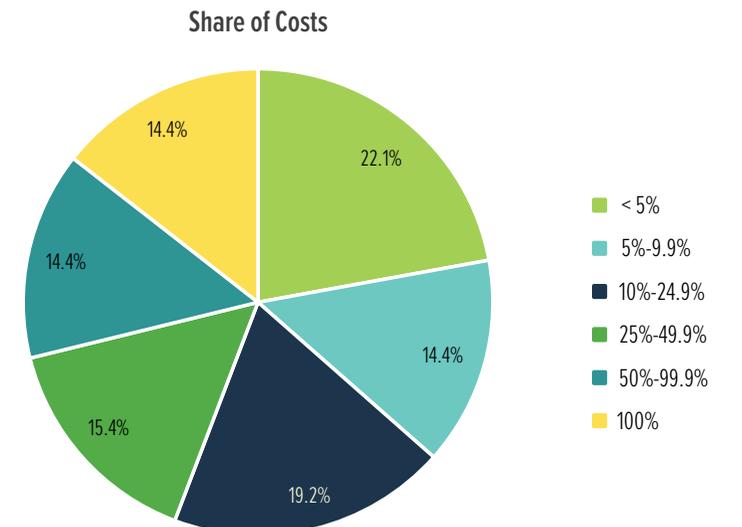
As was noted earlier, most of the grants are relatively small. More than 14% of the grants



were less than \$1,000 and nearly 36% were between \$1,000 and \$1,999. Only 7.5% of the grants were in amounts of \$10,000 or more.

The total cost of the project for which funding was sought was not available for every grant. However, that information was provided for more than 100 of the grants. Based on that data, we were able to determine the share of the Landmarks Illinois grant in relation to the entire project cost. In just over 14% of the awards, the Landmarks Illinois grant covered 100% of the project. It should be noted, however, that these were nearly

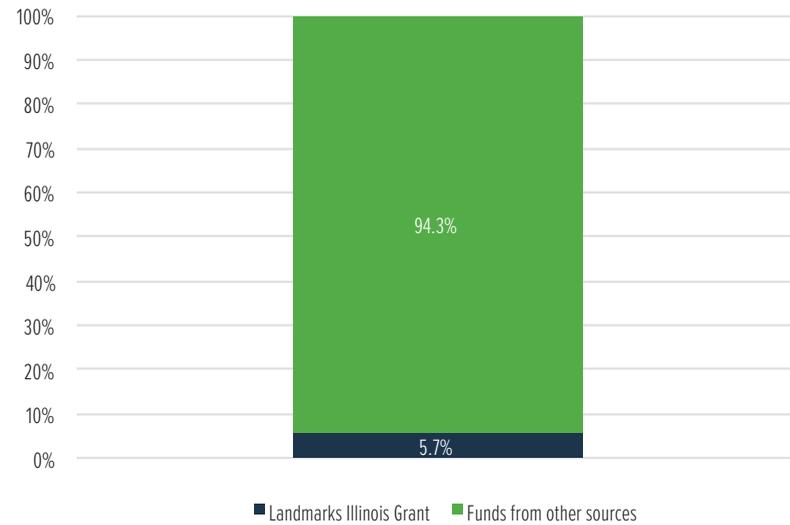
always small projects totaling approximately \$1,000 or less. More often, the Landmarks Illinois share was less than 5% of the entire project costs (22.1% of grants), or between 5% and 9.9% (14.4% of grants).



¹ In four specific years of grant making, Landmarks Illinois was able to marshal more significant financial capital to allocate larger grants. Grants made in 2005 expended the remaining dollars in its Landmarks Preservation Fund to close out that program. Between 2006 and 2008, charitable giving to Landmarks Illinois increased markedly through the growth of its preservation easement program. The Great Recession, beginning in 2009, forced a reallocation of Landmarks Illinois resources to core mission functions, specifically its advocacy program. Year-over-year budget increases of 20-25% have been invested in the Preservation Heritage Fund since 2012 as Landmarks Illinois donations grow as part of the economic recovery.

It is important to understand the impact of these grants. Although they were generally small grants, recipients received the grants early in the project and were able to use the funds as leverage to attract additional money.

Landmarks Illinois Share of Total Project Costs

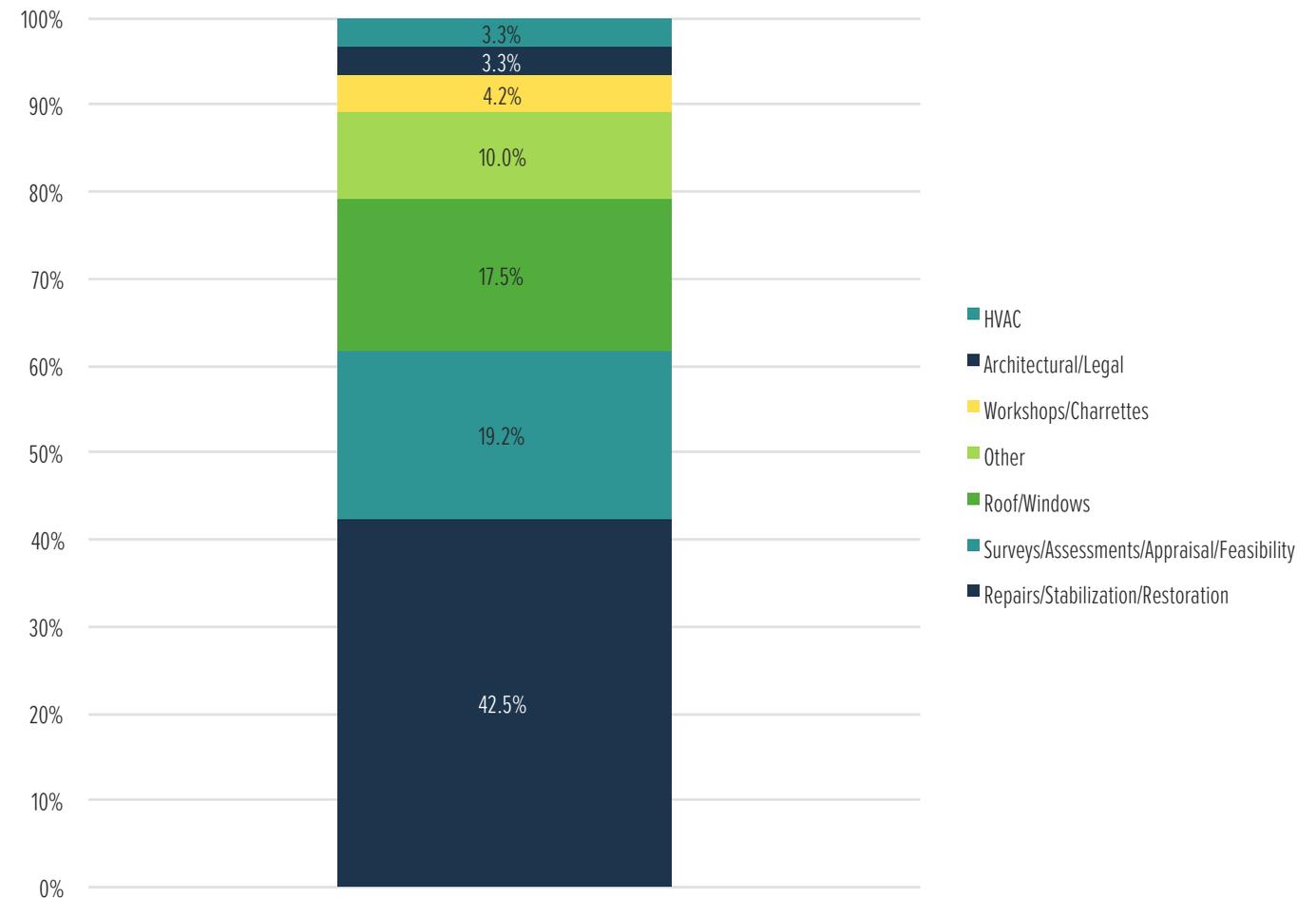


On a composite basis, 5.7% of total project costs came from Landmarks Illinois grants and 94.3% came from other sources. This leveraging of limited dollars is an important measure of the programs' effectiveness.

The stated purpose of the Landmarks Illinois grants is “to address threats to the historic resource from demolition or imminent deterioration, to assist properties in need of stabilization, and to fund analyses as to the structural condition of the building or its eligibility for landmark designation.” Nearly two-thirds of the grants went to: stabilization, restoration and repairs (42.5%); work on roofs or windows (17.5%); or heating/ventilating/air conditioning systems (3.3%). More than one in five grants went to support: surveys, assessments, appraisals or feasibility studies (19.2%); or to legal or architectural services (3.3%). The remainder went to support workshops or charrettes (4.2%) or to a variety of other uses (10%).

The full impact of the money distributed cannot be measured merely through size of grants or the use of the money. To show how much further funds were able to stretch and grow due to the remarkable people who put in the time and hard work, this report focuses on eleven communities that have benefitted from the Preservation Heritage Fund. All of the eleven cities featured received funding in 2004 or later.

How Grants were Used

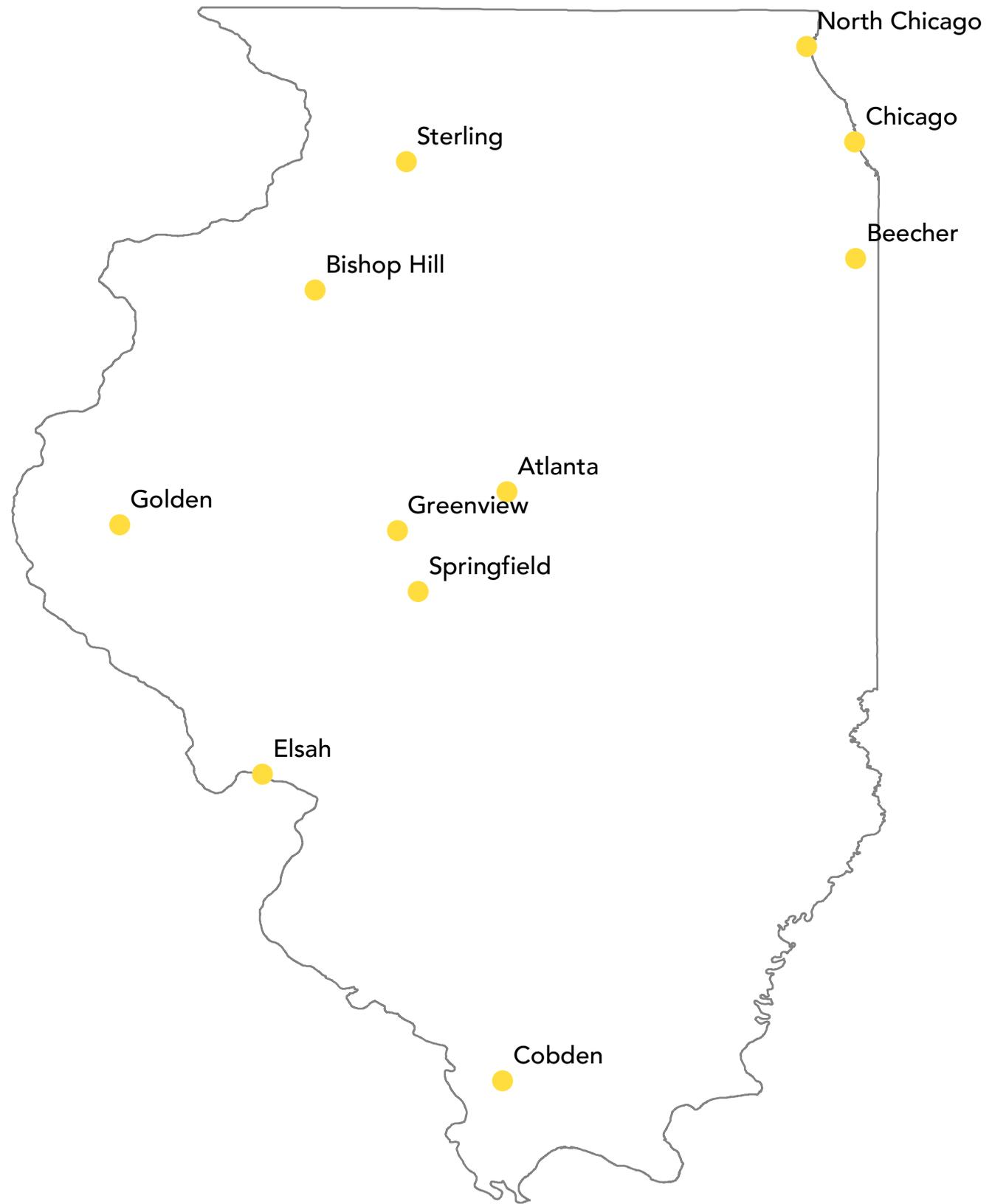




THE STORIES

The places described in this report represent the past, present, and future of the communities in which they stand. These places served—and in some cases, still serve—as safe harbors from persecution, meeting places for the community, and massive repositories that convey local histories in both their physicality and in their function. In many cases, the Preservation Heritage Fund (PHF) grants were the first grants received to help stabilize and revive these places. This early support added legitimacy to the project and encouraged those who believed in these buildings to give up their evenings and weekends, and to trust their instincts about these special places. Conversely, the response, fortitude, and resourcefulness of these grant recipients only made Landmarks Illinois more determined to continue distributing funds to communities working so hard to save their beloved places.

We have attempted to do some justice to these greater stories of place by talking with dozens of remarkable people from eleven communities who received these grant funds. We wanted to get a sense of what drove them and how the PHF grants, while often only a small percentage of the total project scope, had impacts far beyond their dollar figure because of the recipients who leveraged the funds. Whether the building is valued because President Lincoln slept there, because it served as a space for religious freedom, or because people in the surrounding area needed a safe place to congregate and grow, these communities identified places of importance that they wanted to protect and celebrate. Landmarks Illinois has responded time and time again to these requests over the years and the great people of these communities have more than responded – they have thrived.



MAP OF TOWNS
AND CITIES
PROFILED FOR
THIS REPORT



ATLANTA – DOWNEY BUILDING

GRANT RECEIVED: 2006
GRANT AMOUNT: \$10,000

In 2011, Rutgers’ Center for Urban Policy Research conducted a Route 66 Economic Impact Study with the National Park Service Route 66 Corridor Preservation Program and the World Monuments Fund. The study found that even small towns along this route are attracting thousands of visitors a year, and that for the most part, these visitors are drawn by the historic character of the route—the vintage restaurants and motels, historic sites, road art, National Parks, and more—that run along the great expanse of the so called “Mother Road.” On average, these visitors spend \$1,500-2,000 per travel party. When you ask Bill Thomas about his efforts in Atlanta, Illinois, a town located on Route 66 with a population of 1,649 people, the very first thing he’ll say is: “I did all of this for economic development purposes.”

There was nobody better to help turn around the local economy of Atlanta than Bill. He currently serves as the Economic Development Director in Logan County, and has been involved in Route 66 initiatives in Atlanta and across Illinois for over 15 years. He is also Chair of the Route 66: Road Ahead Partnership, and was the Chairman of the Route 66: Road Ahead Initiative Steering Committee when it was created to set up the Partnership.

When Bill took up the cause to restore the Downey Building in 2005, the structure—which is really two separate north and south buildings—was in danger of falling down. According to Bill, the primary motives for wanting to bring it back to life were threefold:

- To leverage the power of Route 66 to enhance Atlanta’s economic base by restoring the building’s historic diner and making it fully operational;
- To make more space for educational and historical programming; and
- To move the Atlanta Museum out of the basement of the Atlanta Public Library and into the Downey Building, where artifacts could be properly stored and both permanent and rotating exhibits could be better curated.

THE DOWNEY BUILDING WITH MUSEUM AND CAFE ON THE GROUND FLOOR, AND LIBRARY, EVENT SPACE, AND OFFICES ABOVE

“I DID THIS FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PURPOSES. WE HAD NO TOURISTS IN TOWN IN 2008. SINCE THE CAFÉ OPENED IN 2009, SALES TAX REVENUE HAS GONE UP 43%. NOW TOURISTS HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT.”

— Bill Thomas, Economic Development Director, Logan County



BILL THOMAS AND RACHEL NEISLER
IN THE PALMS GRILL CAFE

Bill immediately got to work garnering support for this vision. The first thing he did was write a nomination to list the Downey Building on the National Register of Historic Places. He then promptly applied for the Landmarks Illinois Preservation Heritage Fund grant.

The ambitious project to restore the Downey Building, create a museum in the space, and bring its 1930s café back to life was going to cost a half a million dollars. Landmarks Illinois awarded a \$10,000 grant for the Downey Building, and Bill promptly leveraged that \$10,000 in subsequent applications for funding. He explained, “We ended up getting three National Park Service grants, about \$55,000, but we got the first one because we already had support from Landmarks Illinois...That first grant paved the way for the others.”

The Illinois Bureau of Tourism also funded around \$100,000 of the project, and the Atlanta High School Alumni Association came up with an impressive sum to put toward the project as well. This creative alumni connection came about when Bill learned that the Greyhound bus used to pick up flowers from nearby Lincoln, Illinois—there wasn’t a florist in Atlanta—and dropped them off at the bus stop in front of the café. There, high school students would pick up their corsages and boutonnieres for various dances. While the local high school had closed in the 1970s, Bill knew that many former students stayed close to home and that such a connection could conjure fond memories and engender support from alums. The outreach certainly paid off: alumni donated \$147,000 to the project.

PINS MARK THE
ORIGINS OF THE
PROJECT’S MANY
VISITORS



THE LIBRARY

The basement of the Atlanta Public Library, just up the street from the Downey Building, held many of the town’s historical documents and functioned as the local museum. The annex for the overflow of materials was in the south side of the Downey Building, which is still owned by the library. Because of this, Bill went to the library and asked if he could work on this project, leveraging the Route 66 angle. The library embraced this idea, but had what Bill called “a limited vision” in which the café would only be staged and not actually functioning. So, Bill decided he needed to get on the library’s board to make things happen. And he did just that. He convinced the rest of the board to let him run with his vision with the understanding that the burden was on him to make it work. And it did.

Today, the second floor of the Downey Building boasts an extensive collection of ever-growing archival materials like historical photographs, public records, newspaper archives, yearbooks, and memorabilia. According to Rachel Neisler, co-director of the library and museum since 2013, “Back when the museum was in the basement of the library...well, there were a few hundred visitors on a good year. Last year, we had about 2,500 visitors in this space.”

THE CAFÉ

In 2009, as promised, the Palms Grill Café reopened after a four-decade-long hiatus. That year, four bus tours came into town. By 2016, 51 bus tours came to visit thanks to the café and Route 66. Beyond being meticulously restored, the café is heavily programmed with talks about relevant local history. Themes like pre-electronic entertainment and the Civil War bring in locals who have had family in the area for generations. “We work with the town and what we think will be interesting to residents. We do push the envelope a bit, but that’s what libraries are supposed to do...get people thinking about new things and expanding minds,” said Rachel, who also happens to be Bill’s daughter. Pushing the envelope seems to be in their DNA.

Today, Atlanta is clearly continuing to pick up steam. There are arts camps in the summer for grade school students, including a music camp led by New York resident and Tony Award-nominated actor, singer, and dancer, Robert Lupone, Patti Lupone’s brother. A giant Paul Bunyan statue—one of only 150 that were positioned along Route 66—now stands across the street from the Downey Building thanks to Bill, and people come from all over to see it. There was initially local push back regarding the statue moving into town as well, but once again, enough people were convinced that change could help bring some energy to the area and Bill’s tenacity won out. “We’re the only town in Logan County that has increased its population in recent years,” said Bill. “I just wouldn’t give up, and they knew I wouldn’t give up.”

For more on the Route 66 Economic Impact Study: <https://www.wmf.org/sites/default/files/article/pdfs/Route%2066%20Economic%20Impact%20Study%E2%80%9494Synthesis.pdf>

For more about the Downey Building: https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/route66/downey_building_atlanta.html

For more on the Palms Grill Cafe: <http://www.thepalmsgrillcafe.com/>

The Public Library and Museum website: <http://www.atlantapld.org/>

“NOBODY WOULD HELP ME SAVE THIS PLACE LOCALLY, SO I HAD TO GO BIGGER. LANDMARKS ILLINOIS WAS MY SUPPORT. THE STRENGTH OF LANDMARKS ILLINOIS BROUGHT THE HELP OF BERGLUND CONSTRUCTION, KNICKERBOCKER ROOFING, AND THE UNIONS.”

– Sandra Thielman, Founder, Beecher Mausoleum Guardian Angel Association

BEECHER – BEECHER MAUSOLEUM

GRANT RECEIVED: 2013
GRANT AMOUNT: \$1,500

Sandra Thielman can tell you the stories of every individual occupying her favorite building—which is to say she can tell you which of the 171 souls permanently resting in the crypts of the Beecher Mausoleum died of tuberculosis, miraculously survived the Civil War, or served as a bodyguard to President Lincoln. The mausoleum, built in the early 20th century by Cecil E. Bryan, sits on one acre of land at the end of a long gravel road. It's a relatively small building, but a handsome one, constructed of Bedford limestone and a stunning white marble interior. Sandra's mother was laid to rest here in the late 1960s, but her family moved away shortly afterward. Sandra built her life elsewhere and didn't return to the mausoleum for decades. Then in 1996, she received a call from her father and everything changed.

There were rumors that the mausoleum had been vandalized, and Sandra lived much closer to the building than her father. He asked her to drive out and assess the state of things because her grandmother was now seriously ill and they wanted to start planning for next steps. When Sandra arrived, 30 years after her last visit, the heavy, century-old doors of the mausoleum were wide open. Inside, there was extensive graffiti, broken windows, bullet holes from target practice, large burn marks on the marble floor from bonfires, drug paraphernalia, broken headstones – all signs that the building had been broken into and used as a place to party for years. Sandra was furious.

Although the mausoleum sits adjacent to a cemetery and a church, they aren't affiliated with the mausoleum. Illinois law states that a board must manage the mausoleum, but money to maintain the building and grounds ran out in the 1960s and the board dissolved. By the 1980s, a single descendant continued to maintain the building, but doing the work alone was just too much to handle. According to Sandra, "One day, [that last descendant] kissed her grandfather goodbye, opened the doors here, left them open, and just walked away."

Sandra started researching all of the families who had relatives listed on the headstones—the founding families of the town—and started the Beecher Mausoleum Guardian Angel Association as a charity. She eventually assembled a board and created a 501c3 as a means to raise funds. "It was when I was really at the end of my rope, when I really didn't know what else to do...that's when Landmarks Illinois helped. We were listed on [Landmarks Illinois]' '10 Most Endangered' list—they got involved and continued to encourage me, to come with me to meetings and other things."

In addition to also winning a \$1,500 Preservation Heritage Fund grant, Sandra met contractors through Landmarks Illinois who agreed to donate a two full weeks of labor that included a foreman and tuck pointers. The unions also pitched in. "We estimated that they gave us \$200,000 worth of work when all was said and done," said Sandra.

While these were huge victories, Sandra also wanted others to have access to the piles and piles of research she had acquired. She went back to college to learn to how to make a website and created a landing platform for everything she had compiled—information about the history of the Beecher mausoleum, the architect of the building, information on other Illinois mausoleums, newspaper articles, burial locations, photographs, and fundraising efforts. Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this site is its online genealogy section, where it states, "If you are researching your family's genealogy, we would be happy to check our files and see if we have anything you're looking for. Just send Sandra an email."

There is also a "Beecher Mausoleum Family Tree" on Ancestry.com that connects over 12,000 people. Today, people come from all over to dig deeper into their own family histories, often visiting family they didn't previously know existed. "I've helped people go back to their Civil War history and found one relative through baptismal records in Germany!" Sandra said.

In 2015, the board rededicated the mausoleum on its 101st birthday and along with local residents, who were now on board with Sandra's efforts, several families came from out of state for the celebration. Restoration efforts continue today, including replication of some of the destroyed stained glass, and there is an ever-growing interest in local family histories. Sandra firmly believes the mausoleum can fund its own maintenance by selling the remaining spaces available in the mausoleum—about 40 to 50 are still vacant—and by holding events and possibly outdoor burials in the surrounding one-acre lot. She hopes the community also sees this potential, because, as she puts it, she can't do this work forever. Sandra does have a backup plan, however: "I want to take all of the research—the stacks of plans and papers and all of it—and make a coffin for it and put it in one of the crypts. That way, when this place does come down one day, the history will be preserved for everyone. People will know who and what was here."

To see Sandra's historical and genealogical research and to learn more about Beecher and other mausoleums, visit <http://beechermausoleum.org/>



EXTERIOR
OF BEECHER
MAUSOLEUM IN
2017

BISHOP HILL – DAIRY BUILDING

GRANT RECEIVED: 2014
GRANT AMOUNT: \$2,000

In the middle of the 19th century, a population boom in Sweden increased economic pressures on a society that was fundamentally agricultural. With less available land for farming and increased restrictions on religious freedoms, Swedes were leaving in droves and coming to the U.S. and other countries. About one-quarter of the entire population of Sweden left their homeland. Many of these young pioneers came over in groups, establishing colonies and a migration tradition between certain parts of Sweden and receiving areas in the United States.

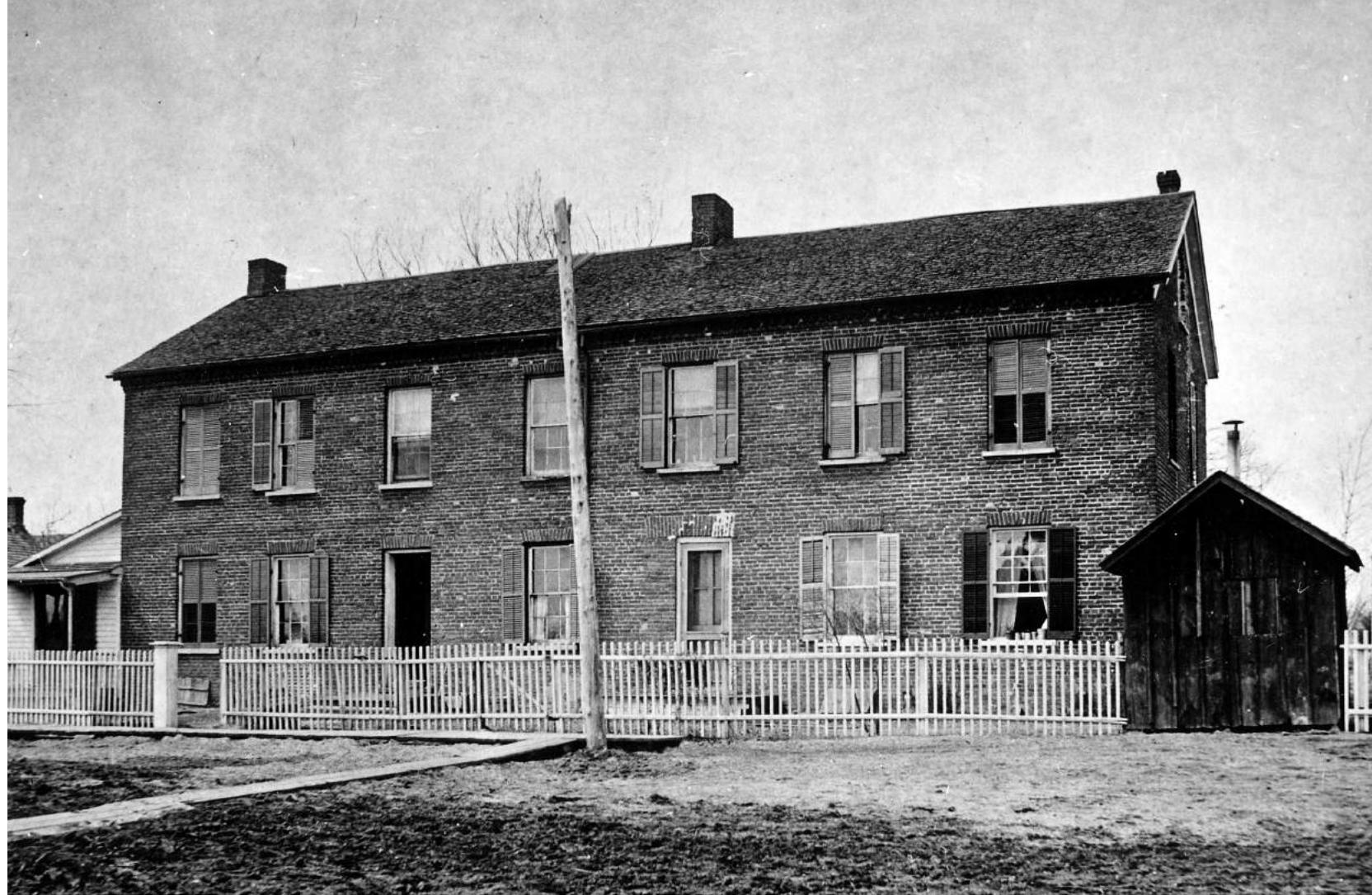
The Bishop Hill Colony was established at the onset of this Swedish exodus in 1846. This brave group of settlers—which first came to New York, then Chicago, then, legend has it, walked all the way to Western Illinois—helped turn their region into one of the most prosperous areas of the state by the 1850s. The Bishop Hill settlers constructed all of their own buildings with brick made on-site by the women and children of the colony.

Today, incredibly, 18 of these pre-Civil War buildings from the original colony are still in use. With only 135 people residing in Bishop Hill, it's hard to imagine how these buildings are still standing, much less being maintained and activated. Then, when one follows the trail of funding and advocacy, it becomes clear that Todd DeDecker, a former high school social studies teacher with a Master's degree in Museum Studies, is the modern-day pioneer of the Bishop Hill Colony.

Todd, who grew up just five miles from the colony, explained:

“Many of us are descendants [of the original settlers] and live in these buildings, use them, and want our grandkids to see them and know the history... This place has a historical, economical, and emotional impact for family members. Everyone here wants these buildings preserved and many of us depend on the tourism.”

In the four years since he was hired as the Bishop Hill Heritage Association Administrator, Todd has raised an astonishing \$900,000 to restore the original colony buildings. This feat was achieved through a variety of state grants, Save America's Treasures grants, and private grants. The \$2,000 Preservation Heritage Fund grant from Landmarks Illinois was used to help restore the Dairy Building, which has been an essential piece of the puzzle for both programming and tourism in Bishop Hill. “The Landmarks Illinois grant was one of the first grants we received for the Dairy Building,” said Todd. “We used the award from this grant in other grant applications to bolster our case for additional funds by showing that we had support from that organization. I am sure it helped with the later grants that we received for the building.”



ABOVE: HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH OF DAIRY BUILDING (CREDIT: BISHOP HILL HERITAGE ASSOCIATION)
BELOW: THE DAIRY BUILDING IN 2017



Before the Landmarks Illinois grant, the Dairy Building—where milk, cream, and butter was made for the settlers—was in such poor condition that the basement was filled with sand to keep it from collapsing. For many years it had only been used for storage, but Todd and others recognized the potential of the building: “We never had a venue for programming or concerts before, and these things would not have been possible without the Dairy Building.”

At this point, \$125,000 has been spent on the stabilizing and restoring the Dairy Building, replacing the badly deteriorated flooring with old barn wood, replacing weak plaster (but “keeping the strong stuff”), and using the space as an venue for educational programming. Workshops, concerts, community and heritage-themed events, board meetings, birthday parties, and other events now also take place in the building. A portion of the second floor was converted to an apartment and another portion is rented to a photography studio, both generating income for building maintenance.

TODD DEDECKER STANDS
INSIDE THE DAIRY
BUILDING'S FIRST FLOOR
EVENT AND MEETING SPACE



“WE STILL HAVE DESCENDANTS FROM THE DAIRY BUILDING HERE—SOME COLONISTS USED TO LIVE THERE, AND PEOPLE KNOW THEIR GRANDPARENTS LIVED THERE, TOO. NOW THERE ARE REUNIONS IN THAT BUILDING, AND THIS BRINGS MORE PEOPLE AND DESCENDANTS TO BISHOP HILL. ONE IMPACT OF THE [LANDMARKS ILLINOIS] AWARD IS THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THE DAIRY BUILDING SINCE IT’S BEEN RESTORED. BEFORE, IT WAS JUST A STORAGE BUILDING, NOT USED OR SEEN BY THE PUBLIC FOR YEARS.”

— Todd DeDecker, Bishop Hill Heritage Association Administrator

Today, tourism is on the rise in Bishop Hill. There are unique shops at the colony, and visitors come from as far as Minnesota for Dairy Building events. About 90,000 people a year come through and, according to Todd, the average tourist spends \$125 per day if they come to the county. While school field trips are down due to state budget cuts and much of the original grant funding sources are no longer available, current plans and future goals are still underway. The colony carpenter’s shop was recently acquired by the Bishop Hill Heritage Association, and the lot next to the Dairy Building will soon contain a fire pit and seating for outdoor events like family reunions and weddings. Todd, as determined as ever, is hard at work raising another \$250,000 for future restoration projects.

To learn more about the history of the Bishop Hill Colony and the Bishop Hill Heritage Association’s latest fundraising efforts, visit <https://bishophillheritage.org/>

TODD DEDECKER STANDS WITH GLENDA WALLACE (LEFT), WHO RUNS THE THE BISHOP HILL COLONY STORE (BELOW)



CHICAGO – SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY ART CENTER

GRANT RECEIVED: 2014

GRANT AMOUNT: \$2,500

The South Side Community Art Center (SSCAC) opened its doors on December 15, 1940—a time when the work of African American artists was only allowed to be publicly displayed in places like churches and YMCAs. The SSCAC came to be with the support of Franklin Roosevelt and his Works Progress Administration’s Federal Art Project, as well as through an extraordinary effort from within the community to buy the building on South Michigan Avenue. It was the first African American art museum in the United States.

Raising enough funds to buy a 19th century mansion at the end of the Great Depression was no small undertaking. Numerous committees were formed to collect donations from local businesses and to put on elaborate events like the first “Artists and Models Ball” and the “Mile of Dimes.” Legendary figures like Margaret Burroughs, who later founded the DuSable Museum of African American History and Culture, stood on street corners collecting change in tin cans until the 1890s brownstone mansion was paid for in full. And the effort was well worth it. By March 1941, over 13,000 people had attended events and exhibitions and taken art lessons at the Center. All of the classes were free. By May 7, 1941, the SSCAC became known across the country when Eleanor Roosevelt dedicated the facility at a ceremony that was broadcast on national radio.

The SSCAC had an extraordinary beginning, and continued to be extraordinary thanks to its leadership and local support. Arcilla Stahl, emeritus board member and former interim director at the SSCAC explained: “The Center was likely able to continue after the government funding dried up because we were already community-focused, we already had all that support. This place is a beacon. It was the place to come to. Even those who lived in other parts of the city, they came here to learn.”

IT'S A TRADITION TO TAKE PICTURES OF GROUPS ON THE FRONT STEPS AT THE SSCAC. CURRENT AND FORMER DIRECTORS MASEQUA MYERS AND ARCILLA STAHL, RESPECTIVELY





“WE ALL UNDERSTAND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN RESTORATION TAKES PLACE. WITH THAT RENEWING COMES A FEELING THAT ‘I CAN BE RECONNECTED.’ WITH A LIFT AND EXPANSION IT SHOWS THE BUILDING IS ALIVE, THE BUILDING IS NOT DYING.”

—Masequa Myers, Executive Director of the South Side Community Art Center

Alumni include Charles White, Bernard Goss, George Neal, Eldzier Cortor, Gordon Parks, Archibald Motley, Margaret Burroughs, Charles Seebree, and Gwendolyn Brooks. According to Arcilla, this was also a place for African American entertainers to come to when they were in town. “Nat King Cole came here, too. When entertainers came into the city, they came here, spent time here, played music together. Imagine how that must have sounded.”

The building was awarded Chicago Landmark status in 1994 for its remarkable local significance. But, even then, the SSCAC was like a parent taking care of all of its children but neglecting its own needs. It needed significant repairs. As Arcilla put it: “This building was old when we bought it [in 1940]! We always knew the work was needed but didn’t have access to funds in earlier years to do it.”

During her tenure as interim director, Arcilla applied for a grant from Landmarks Illinois in 2014 and was awarded \$2,500. The required matching funds were then met and exceeded by the Alphawood Foundation. That money allowed the SSCAC to hire a consultant to assess the building’s needed repairs and to come up with a formal plan for action. Once the Center had the support of these two organizations and a plan, they were able to begin their capital fundraising campaign and approach organizations like the National Endowment for the Arts.

Also in 2014, Masequa Meyers took over as the Center’s executive director, and immediately understood the need to repair and update the building and took up the charge: “It comes down to timing and vision—our president at the time [the grant was written] had that. At some point in time, you have to take the building condition seriously and not just piece together small repairs.” Masequa has always been involved in the arts as multidisciplinary artist with projects as diverse as filmmaking, media consulting, and producing the Teen Talk Radio Theater program. It isn’t difficult to understand why she feels so strongly about the health and future of the SSCAC and its home when you know what it has done for her personally: “I have a unique relationship with this space because I took art classes here as a teenager. It was an organization that I found reaffirming as an African American artist and was a turning point for me. It made me want to inspire future generations. We need to reaffirm young people in the arts—it has such a huge impact. The foundation of being able to express yourself and feel confident and have self worth—it’s immeasurable.”

There are big plans in the years ahead for the Center. Masequa and the SSCAC are committed to making sure the needs of the community are met by expanding the scope of the Center and reaching out to new partners. Now armed with an actual assessment of the building and its needs, the Board of Directors recently held a charrette to determine priorities. The Center is now also working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation and hoping to become a National Treasure to gain more access to resources and tourism.

While the SSCAC has always provided classes for all, it has historically used their gallery space for fine art exhibitions. They recently made an exception to address issues important to the community and had a show featuring the work of young people using art to deal with violence in Chicago Public Schools and their communities. Physical updates to the Center are also needed as technology and various art mediums change. The brownstone’s electrical wiring needs to be upgraded to accommodate this new technology; art and artifacts need improved storage options; and the building needs to be made ADA accessible and more environmentally friendly.

Masequa explained: “This [work] is important, and seen not just as an expansion of the building and space, but as an expansion of the community. The organization has been flexible to the community’s needs from the beginning and now the building needs to adapt.”

For information on current events and exhibitions, visit www.sscartcenter.org/

For more about the history of the Artists and Models Ball: <https://lucian.uchicago.edu/blogs/artofacommunityspeaks/2013/02/14/the-historic-artists-and-models-ball-at-the-sscac/>

To The SOUTH SIDE COMMUNITY ART CENTER

With Affectionate Gratitude

*When I was young so timidly I brought
wobbly lyrics to the Center midst.
There I was mashed and minded --
purged, pounded; valued but divided;
revised and shuffled
into some semblance of near-quality.
What was muddled was left to myself to mend,
to reassemble, stumble out to sun.*

*So the Center salvaged, harried, hounded
our thousands of gift-boys, gift-girls into
their own Perfection through the Howling-time.*

*And now the Sons come - and the Daughters come.
The Rope of art, of comfort-carrying,
thus passes through the hands of our generations.
And thus we shall survive.*

Gwendolyn Brooks

“COBDEN WAS REALLY STRUGGLING LIKE A LOT OF PLACES. WE WERE—WITHOUT BRAGGING—THE IMPETUS FOR OTHERS TO COME HERE.”

– Judy Travelstead, Treasurer, Union County Historical and Genealogy Society and Museum



COBDEN – DUBOIS BUILDING

GRANT RECEIVED: 2005
GRANT AMOUNT: \$5,000

When you enter the Union County General Store, your eyes dart from one table to the next, taking in everything from home décor items to piles of woven baskets to holiday items, collectables, local pottery, and even ancient pottery fragments and arrowheads from Tennessee. Everything is for sale at this resale shop, and everything is reasonably priced so that residents, regardless of their income level, can afford to both decorate their homes and possibly even own a piece of history.

All items for sale are donated and the store is run by volunteers. Because of this, every dollar made there helps to fund the attached Union County Museum. As Judy Travelstead, Treasurer of the Union County Historical and Genealogy Society and Museum, put it: “It’s all about the community—history, affordability, a gathering place for people. Our volunteers come here as a way to get out of the house and get in touch with the community, so it’s a win for us both!”

The store and museum are housed together in downtown Cobden’s historic DuBois Building, which boasts an impressive Mesker Brothers Iron Works façade. The building was once the headquarters for H.A. DuBois, who would no doubt appreciate the baskets for sale in the Union County General Store given that DuBois himself owned a nearby basket factory. But it took a tremendous amount of time, energy, and skill from some very determined people to get the DuBois Building and its educational and community-focused programming to where it is today.

In 1986, the Historical Society acquired the DuBois building. An upholstery shop rented space in the building until the late 1990s, and then the building was only used occasionally for art exhibits and bazaars over the years. The Historical Society began working to repair the building in the early 2000s, but when the Cobden Museum closed in 2005 and donated all of the artifacts to the Historical Society, it was time to kick things to a new level. Restoration and fundraising efforts started in earnest at this point—there was a tremendous amount of work to be done.

DUBOIS BUILDING (OPPOSITE PAGE)



EXHIBITIONS IN THE MUSEUM (TOP AND MIDDLE) AND THE INTERIOR OF THE RESALE SHOP



ICE
FEET
TOES

PYRAMO BRAND
GROW YOUR OWN TOMATOES TO BE
THE BEST

FLAMM
GROW YOUR OWN TOMATOES TO BE
THE BEST

BLUE STAR
GROW YOUR OWN TOMATOES TO BE
THE BEST

ELBERTA
GROW YOUR OWN TOMATOES TO BE
THE BEST

INVISIBLE
PATCHING
C.W. DRAPER

Parts of the floor had collapsed in the back of the building, the entire building needed a new roof, the interior was clad in wood paneling and had a dropped ceiling, and multiple windows were broken. Judy's husband, alongside some local Amish friends, were able to do much of the work on the building. The original interior ceiling was uncovered and found intact, and the walls were scraped down to their original color and repainted accordingly. The roof was replaced and a back wall was reconstructed. Still, it was cold in there. Installing a heating system required not only a new furnace, but the installation of all of the HVAC infrastructure. Judy explained, "The building was in terrible shape. We spent all we had on the rehab, but we had no furnace and had to rely on space heaters. This wasn't great for business!"

Right around the time that the Cobden Museum offered its collection to the Historical Society, Judy heard about the Landmarks Illinois grant. She immediately called Landmarks and spoke with Suzanne Germann, Director of Grants and Easements at Landmarks Illinois, who encouraged her to apply, especially because they were hoping to get more Preservation Heritage Fund grants to the southernmost part of the state. The Historical Society won a \$5,000 grant through Landmarks Illinois that paid for half of the HVAC project, and the required matching grant funds paid for the other half. "We couldn't open to the public with just the space heaters. [The Landmarks Illinois grant] was a lifesaver at that point. It would have taken us another year to raise these funds otherwise."

In the summer of 2006, the Union County Museum (formerly the Cobden Museum) opened in the DuBois Building. Patrick Brumleve is the current president of Union County Historical and Genealogy Society and Museum, and his family founded the original museum in its previous location in 1961. The Union County Museum has both permanent and rotating exhibits, lectures, cultural programming, books, and countless local, beautifully curated historic artifacts. The Historical Society has also published numerous books on history—even receiving the distinguished Delta Award—and was one of only six sites in Illinois selected for the Smithsonian Institute's "Hometown Teams" traveling exhibit in 2014.

The exhibits, programming, and General Store in the DuBois Building have had a major impact on Cobden. New businesses have come to town thanks to the museum, including the Ant Hill Gallery, which was opened by a retired Southern Illinois University professor who visited the Union County Museum and fell in love with the area. With the help of Historical Society members, this professor opened his gallery in a nearby building that now represents 65 different artists. Yellow Moon restaurant also moved to Cobden thanks to the success of the Union County Museum and a local winery.

Beyond the arts and cuisine, the community is also expanding culturally. Thanks to a special payment agreement made with the Historical Society, the Latina woman who runs the grocery store next door to the museum was able to purchase her store's building. She even painted her store the same historic colors as the museum and resale shop. A Historical Society board member helped the grocery store owner improve her English for over a year to prepare her for citizenship exams. "She has been such a great neighbor, and helped us put up signs in Spanish in the resale store to welcome others who live here," Judy explained. "Before that, Hispanic immigrants never came into the shop, it was as if they didn't feel welcome. So we're so happy to expand and welcome that newer part of the community."

The Union County Historical and Genealogy Society continues to turn its once-struggling community into a destination. They have been so successful that their artifacts and ambition outgrew the space, and they recently purchased a Mid-Century medical building down the street to help expand initiatives. The museum and shop will stay in the DuBois Building, but the new building will offer a place for genealogical research and additional programming.

"We were able to earn the trust of the community over the years with the museum and shop, so they trusted us enough to donate to this campaign," said Judy. "It took us two years to buy the old medical building, but that's now one less vacant building here and a sign that things keep improving in town. Many towns shrink with economic downturns, but we now have more stores and artists are moving here. Here, we welcome people from everywhere."

For more information on the Union County Historical and Genealogical Society and current exhibits at the museum, visit www.unioncountymuseum.com/

“WHEN OUTSIDE PEOPLE SAY
‘YOU ARE WORTHY OF THIS!’ IT
HELPS. THE NAME LANDMARKS
ILLINOIS HELPS.”

– Jane Pfeifer, Historic Elmhurst
Foundation



Farley's Music Hall

37
Hill Town
Historic Elmhurst
Foundation

JANE PFEIFER STANDS
IN FRONT OF FARLEY'S
MUSIC HALL

ELSAH – FARLEY’S MUSIC HALL

GRANT RECEIVED: 2007

GRANT AMOUNT: \$2,000

In 1993, the “Great Flood” devastated communities along the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and their tributaries. It was one of the costliest floods to ever occur in the U.S.—about \$15 billion in property damage—and it caused significant damage to many of the buildings in the village of Elsau. One building hit particularly hard was Farley’s Music Hall, where water climbed all the way up to the first floor’s top window sash.

The owner of the music hall couldn’t afford to fix up the building after the damage it sustained, so the Historic Elsau Foundation went out on a limb and purchased Farley’s in 1994, shortly after the flood. Jane Pfeifer, a former archivist at the local Principia College who has been on the board of the Foundation since the 1970s, pushed to acquire the building when some believed restoration would be too great a task and expense. It was indeed a great task, but when one visits Elsau, it’s clear why Farley’s had to be saved and why returning it to its original purpose meant so much locally.

U.S. Senator James Semple founded Elsau in 1853, and offered free lots to anyone who built houses with the stone from his quarry. Farley’s was built in 1885 by Dr. Farley, the Republican boss of the village, who constructed the building across the creek from his house. The building quickly became a center of village activity and known as the “Music Hall” or “Farley’s Dance Hall.” But it was more than just a place to cut loose. The Elsau Historical Society website describes Farley’s as being “a destination for wandering Indian medicine shows, literary club meetings, church socials, school plays, and all sorts of dances.” Despite an impressive number of events held at Farley’s and other venues in Elsau, it remained a relatively quiet village until the Great River Road (Illinois Route 100) was built in 1964, bringing a new level of traffic, passersby, and interest. In 1973, the unique and remarkably untouched village of Elsau was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The Foundation applied for Landmarks Illinois’ Preservation Heritage Fund grant in 2007 when drainage issues and rot became a big problem for the hall. They were awarded \$2,000—the first grant they had received for the building—and that award was used to attract more attention and funding. Jane explained, “The enthusiasm we garnered when we won the Landmarks Illinois grant made us think we could do large projects like the roof, which was in worse shape than we’d thought. When other people—people outside of Elsau—say ‘you are worthy of receiving these grants,’...well, it meant a lot to us.”

The \$2,000, plus additional funding from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State of Illinois, went to copper gutters, a new roof, replacing rotted wood from the windows, and replacing the band board around the building. Another bonus from this restoration was the discovery of historic stenciling done with milk paint on the first floor walls. After carefully removing the top layer of years-old yellow paint, the stenciled designs were preserved and once again adorn the walls.

Today, Farley’s once again fills with live music and holds “contra dances,” which are a kind of folk dance made up of long lines of couples. Other events, including weddings and funeral services, are also held at the hall, and the Foundation would like to bring in more funding for maintenance through event rentals in the future. Connie Davis, who runs the Green Tree Inn Bed and Breakfast down the street, volunteers to do the scheduling work for Farley’s in exchange for being able to use the space a couple of times each year for free. One thing Jane could not stress enough is that “there’s a lot of maintenance, but we feel that Farley’s is a ‘friend-maker!’ It’s here for the community.”

To learn more about Elsau and Farley’s Music Hall, visit <http://historicselsah.org/>

THE INTERIOR OF
FARLEY’S MUSIC HOUSE
(TOP). JANE PFEIFER
SHOWS OFF HISTORIC
PAINT DECORATIONS
UNCOVERED DURING
THE RESTORATION
PROCESS (BOTTOM)



“WHEN THE TAIL POLE BROKE, WELL, THE WINDMILL WOULDN’T WORK WITHOUT IT. A NEW ONE COST \$12,000 TOTAL, EVEN WITH A [GOLDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY] BOARD MEMBER DOING A LOT OF THE WORK DIGGING THE TRENCHES, USING HIS OWN EQUIPMENT, ETC. THE \$5,000 FROM LANDMARKS ILLINOIS WAS SO IMPORTANT.”

–Kay Lord, President, Golden Historical Society



GOLDEN - PRAIRIE MILLS WINDMILL

GRANT RECEIVED: 2004 AND 2007

GRANT AMOUNT: \$5,000 AND \$2,500

When asked how the upkeep of the massive Prairie Mills Windmill is funded, Marge Shank, treasurer of the Golden Historical Society, said, “Well, if we’ve spent \$800,000 on all of this work, we’ve spent \$800,000 in our own labor, too.” She wasn’t complaining, she’s just part of a group of remarkably passionate and resourceful volunteers. Marge then went on to mention that she and Lois Reason, another longtime Golden Historical Society board member, personally laid the carpet in the massive community hall behind the windmill, which used to be a bowling alley. They did this work recently, which is to say that Marge was in her 80s.

Thanks to the tenacity of the Golden Mills Historical Society members, the Prairie Mills Windmill had indeed brought in almost \$800,000 in grant funding and donations by 2016, as Marge estimated, The mill was constructed 144 years earlier by Hinrich Reemts Emminga, who was trained as a millwright in Germany. Mr. Emminga immigrated to the Golden, Illinois area in 1852 and built his first windmill—the Custom Windmill—a mile and a half from Golden (demolished in the 1930s). Emminga returned to Germany to build another windmill in Felde in 1866, then came back to the U.S. to construct his third and final windmill, the Prairie Mills Windmill, in 1872.

In its early days, Prairie Mill’s stone-ground flour products were exported around the world. It continued to operate as a wind-powered mill until 1924, when a storm tore off two of its four sails. After that storm, the windmill was modified to operate using a gasoline engine, but by 1930, all operations had ceased. Subsequently, the windmill had several owners who used it as a tavern, a supper club, and even a residence. It was shuttered and left vacant in the early 1980s when it quickly deteriorate.

In 1986, when the town of Benson, Illinois, wanted to buy the windmill, the citizens of Golden quickly mobilized to purchase the mill, thus establishing the Golden Historical Society. The mill, still in poor condition, was jacked up on railroad ties for yet another decade until major restoration work began in the mid- to late-1990s. Unfortunately, in the early 2000s, a major setback occurred when the windmill’s tail pole broke. The tail pole is a long 40,000-pound beam that helps turn the top of the mill, and its breaking rendered the mill completely inoperable. Unsurprisingly, this did not shake the steely resolve of the Golden Historical Society.

The Landmarks Illinois Preservation Heritage Fund grant program had just been established when the Golden Historical Society applied for more funding for the windmill. Without a new tail pole for the mill, not only would the windmill be unable to grind and produce grain for student programs and visitors, but the top of the windmill would continue to sustain more damage. Landmarks Illinois awarded the Society a \$5,000 Preservation Heritage Grant that was matched by an incredible amount of itemized, donated labor and a grant from the Society of the Preservation of Old Mills. The fact that most of the labor was done by volunteers is especially remarkable considering that replacing the tail pole involved “working 90 feet off the ground and in an awkward position,” according to Kay Lord, current and past president of the Golden Historical Society.

Since the windmill has been restored, Kay and other volunteers have been giving tours of the mill—about 50 each year—mostly to 3rd and 4th graders. Locals come for tours because they are related to the early settlers, and even German tourists have made the trip to see the mill. In fact, people came from every direction to visit. According to Lois, “Quincy, Illinois, used to have a skydiving facility and skydivers would sometimes spot the windmill from above and then land here for a closer look. We’d happily offer to give them a tour, then just drive them back to Quincy!”

While the Golden Historical Society has been remarkably resourceful, the insurance, maintenance, and utility bills for the windmill, museum, and community hall add up to about \$25,000 each year. The fundraising is continual. In 2007, Landmarks Illinois awarded a second grant of \$2,500 to help with the museum and community hall, which is located just behind the windmill. Funds were used to clad the exteriors of these buildings, which generate revenue crucial to the continued maintenance of the windmill. Every spring, the Golden Historical Society puts on a dinner theater event called the Follies Play, a comedy acted out mostly by locals, which helps raise funds to keep the windmill going. The event is held in the community hall, which is also rented out and used for various community events.

Additionally, incarcerated individuals from a nearby prison come once a week to work on the mill. Kay explained, “They’re a great help with the landscaping, painting, drywall...they’ve even reupholstered chairs for us, and done tile and drywall work. Some have these skills and others learn a lot. They can get out into the fresh air and we feed them much better than the prison does...those sandwiches they give them are terrible. One man was really interested in working with an electrician when he worked with us. He wouldn’t even take breaks. Sure enough, when he got out, he became a union electrician.”

There is unanimous concern that younger people aren't more involved with the windmill, and that is a primary goal going forward. According to Marge, "A lot of older people lived here when we started this. They supported it and put money into it, but many have passed away. We were in our 60s when we started this, but that was 20 years ago." Still, there are no signs of Golden Historical Society slowing down. The sails and shutters now need to be repaired and they're hoping to begin that work this summer. In the past, Lois and her husband spread airplane cloth out onto the lawn and figured out how to repair them with tools and a hair dryer. The extensive landscaping around the lawn was, unsurprisingly, plotted out and designed by five of the women on the board. To all of this, Marge simply shrugged and said, "The Germans are very efficient!"

For more information about the windmill: <http://www.oldmills.scificincinnati.com/> and <http://www.goldenwindmill.org>

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT:
MARGE SHANK, TREASURER, GOLDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
LOIS REASON, BOARD MEMBER, GOLDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
KAY LORD, PRESIDENT, GOLDEN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

GREENVIEW – MARBOLD FARMSTEAD

GRANT RECEIVED: 2012 AND 2015
GRANT AMOUNT: \$1,500 AND \$2,000

When the Marbold Farmstead was included in Landmarks Illinois' "10 Most Endangered" list in 2012, it had been vacant for the better part of 40 years. The Historic Marbold Farmstead Association had officially formed in 2011, but those who began the nonprofit had already been working to save the farmstead for years. The listing was followed up by a \$1,500 Preservation Heritage Fund grant from Landmarks Illinois, and the combination of these two forms of recognition were a huge victory for the group.





THE MARBOLD FARMSTEAD IN ITS HEYDAY (TOP), AT ITS MOST DETERIORATED (MIDDLE), AND NOW ON ITS WAY TO BEING FULLY RESTORED (BOTTOM, 2017). THANKS TO THE HISTORIC MARBOLD FARMSTEAD ASSOCIATION FOR THE TOP AND MIDDLE PHOTOS

Like any building that has sat empty for decades, the main farmhouse needed a tremendous amount of work. \$1,500 might seem like a drop in the bucket for most projects this size, but Charlotte Wohler, the President of the Association, explained the true impact: “We were on the Most Endangered list, and then we received our first grant. We already knew this place was special, but still, it validated us to be recognized and supported by Landmarks Illinois. It really validated all of our efforts.”

That first \$1,500 grant and its matching funds—which came from membership dues, fundraising, and a local agricultural (seed) company—went to repairing the soffits and gutters of the 1850s Federal-style farmhouse. Their Landmarks Illinois grant application stated: “Years of missing gutters, eave trim and soffits have allowed wildlife into the house. There are also places of entry for animals around the exterior of the house that need to be sealed off.” To add emphasis, all of this was underlined in the application. The house was in real danger if it wasn’t secured, and quickly.

In 2015, Charlotte applied for a second Preservation Heritage Fund grant to rebuild and repaint the walls of the farmstead’s smokehouse. The farm had been completely self sufficient in its earlier years, so these outer buildings are significant to its history. Tradespeople from nearby Petersburg and Canton, Illinois, were kept busy with the work. The Association also raised \$57,000 and paid off their purchase loan, so they now own the property outright.

While the Association and its allies have made remarkable progress, it has been achieved through a lot of hard work and creative thinking. Everything is seen as a potential resource, even the old, discarded farm equipment neighbors left to rust on the farmstead’s land over the years. This was recycled and earned another \$3,000 for the property. The Association also engaged the local community college to work with a fundraising group there, interviewing community members and gauging their interest in the farmstead. A National Register of Historic Places nomination is currently in the works to further legitimize the importance of the farm. All of this input will help with grant-writing efforts. And, of course, there are parties. Numerous fundraising events happen on the land—which was historically used for celebrations—including the impressively popular “Antique Show and Farm Fest” each June, which fills the farm with live music, historical tours, food, drinks, and a variety of activities.

Of course in its early decades, this was more than just an ideal party spot for locals. The 10-acre, 1850s farmstead was originally farmed by German immigrant John H. Marbold, who cultivated wheat, corn, sheep, cattle, and hogs. He also sponsored relatives and young German and Swedish immigrants who worked on his land to pay for their passage over. These young people were given their first job, housing, English lessons, citizenship assistance, and loans to buy farms of their own. The Marbold family was generous to the town of Greenview, and even created the local cemetery when none existed. This generosity and history is not lost on people like Charlotte, who became involved because she has lived in Greenview for all but six years of her life.

Restoration projects are clearly in the works all over the farmstead, and future goals abound. There is a real desire to continue growing connections to other communities and schools—including one within viewing distance of the farm—and plans to make this a living history site that shows what farming and living practices were like for the Marbolds and others in the town’s early days. The main house will also be filled with activities. An optimistic and enthusiastic Charlotte explained, “We probably have about one million [dollars] more to raise for restoration. We’re hoping agro corporations will see the value and donate. We’re an agricultural community...and we have ten acres to program!”

For more about the Historic Marbold Farmstead and upcoming events on the farm:
<http://www.historic-marbold-farmstead.org/>

“I BELIEVE IN THE VISION OF SAVING THIS OLD FARMSTEAD. I LOVE MY COMMUNITY AND THE HISTORY IT HOLDS. THE FARMSTEAD’S HISTORY AND GREENVIEW’S HISTORY ARE LOCKED TOGETHER AND IT’S WONDERFUL TO COMBINE THE TWO AND SHARE IT WITH THE CURRENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS.”

– Charlotte Wohler, President, Historic Marbold Farmstead Association





NORTH CHICAGO – EMMANUEL FAITH BIBLE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

GRANT RECEIVED: 2005
GRANT AMOUNT: \$7,500

Trudy Griffins came to North Chicago in the 1970s for military training at the Great Lakes Naval Academy. She was originally from Indiana and had no plans to stay after her training, but she fell in love while at the Academy and got married. She also found that there was simply too much work to be done in her community to leave it.

After finishing at the Academy, Trudy and her husband became pastors and eventually started their own church in neighboring Waukegan. They moved the church to a second location at the Waukegan Municipal Airport for only a short while when then heard there was a Catholic church building for sale near the naval academy in North Chicago. “When I first saw this church, we weren’t really pastors yet. We had just been married in 1977. Someone told us about this building coming up for sale in 1991—it was stripped of its stained glass and furniture so we were able to get it for a low price. At that time, everyone here was still Catholic, so it took a while for the [Emmanuel Faith Bible Christian] church to grow.”

Trudy started a food pantry at the church in the mid-1990s. While the area had already been struggling for some time, the number of people coming to the pantry grew dramatically around the year 2000 due to the economic downturn. The church needed more heated space to accommodate people and resources, and the heating system they had inherited with the church building was a relic from the 1950s. In 2006, Trudy applied for the Landmarks Illinois Preservation Heritage Grant and received \$7,500 to replace the furnace. “We really needed that furnace. We needed it for all the community.”

While at the Naval Academy, Trudy was a storekeeper, stocking shelves, distributing uniforms, keeping inventory and ordering supplies for the commissary. And it shows. She runs an amazingly tight ship. On average, about 400 people come each week to pick up food from the pantry, and the church basement is packed from the time it opens. The crowd is diverse and all are welcome, regardless of their backgrounds or religious beliefs. When the pantry is open, people are seated in chairs, patiently holding numbers while volunteers help distribute the tremendous amount of fresh, healthy food piled on tables. There are about 10 volunteers from the church, and they have partnered with the Lake County Courts so people can do their community service hours at the pantry.

A weekly soup kitchen is also run out of the church. Food for the pantry and soup kitchen comes in from the Northern Illinois Food Bank, several local stores, and the Naval Academy—the very place that prepared Trudy for this work. “We get good food and we get it on a continuous basis. The community needs it: at the end of the night, those shelves are always empty.”

The church itself currently has no paid staff, but while the demographics of North Chicago continue to shift, the Emmanuel Faith Bible Christian Church remains a full gospel church with 50 to 60 members. “The congregation started to shrink as people got older, but now it’s growing again and we need to make room for the young people,” Trudy explained. In fact, the pantry has gotten so large that it has outgrown the building and there are plans to build a new rectory and food pantry so that the church can have space for classes and new members. “A lot of the congregation works in the food pantry. They love that work. But we also need space here for a younger population now. They need to come up and support us and continue the work.”

EMMANUEL FAITH
BIBLE CHRISTIAN
CHURCH



“WE LOVE DOING THIS, WE WERE MEANT TO DO THIS. OUR WORK ISN’T JUST WITHIN THESE WALLS, IT’S OUT IN THE COMMUNITY. OTHER CHURCHES HELP US, AND OTHER CHURCHES LEARN FROM US. THEY’VE NOW ESTABLISHED PANTRIES LIKE WE HAVE.”

— Trudy Griffins, Pastor, Emmanuel Faith Bible Christian Church

“THE MONEY WAS WONDERFUL, BUT IT WAS THE PRESTIGE [OF LANDMARKS ILLINOIS] THAT LEAD TO WHY THIS GRANT WAS IMPORTANT—IT WAS A CATALYST AND HELPED US SELL THE STORY TO OTHER PEOPLE. HAVING THE SUPPORT OF LANDMARKS ILLINOIS WAS WORTH 100,000 TIMES THE GRANT AMOUNT FOR THAT REASON.”

— Dick Hart, Founding and Current Board Member, Elijah Iles House Foundation

DICK HART STANDS IN FRONT OF THE STRAWBRIDGE-SHEPHERD HOUSE

SPRINGFIELD – STRAWBRIDGE-SHEPHERD HOUSE

GRANT RECEIVED: 2007 AND 2011

GRANT AMOUNT: \$5,000 AND \$1,000

In 2014, the Illinois State Historical Society didn't protest when moving its offices from a second floor location in downtown Springfield—an office space that was essentially invisible to the public—to the first floor of a 10-room, 3,000-square-foot house with a central staircase, original woodwork, and three fireplaces framed with walnut mantles. The house sits at the edge of the University of Illinois at Springfield campus on several acres that include a restored prairie and a huge outdoor space for events. Thousands of students pass the building daily. This idyllic, wood-frame farmhouse is known as the Strawbridge-Shepherd House and is one of the oldest extant wood-framed farmhouses in central Illinois. And it was almost demolished in the mid-2000s.

Throughout its long history, only two families had occupied the house. Because of its location, it was acquired in 1970 by Sangamon State University, now called the University of Illinois Springfield. Thomas Strawbridge Jr. originally bought the land for farming, and built the house in the mid 1840s. After Strawbridge died, Charles M. Shepherd purchased the property in 1883, and the Strawbridge family remained until the university acquired the land. The house was used for university offices and classes for around a decade, and the university installed carpeting and wall paneling, along with other more modern modifications to the space. In 1982, the building was left empty in its prominent location—it's located between two campuses on a well-traveled road—leaving an endless stream of students wondering about the story of this prominent, deteriorating farmhouse. In 2006, the university ran an advertisement in a newspaper about selling off parts of the house before demolition, and this was the step that mobilized local preservationists.

The Elijah Iles House Foundation (EIHF) leapt to action after the ad was printed, asking to meet with university officials. The university was not receptive at first. Dick Hart, a current and founding board member of the EIHF and an attorney by trade, pushed especially hard to save the house. He explained, "We were already responsible for the Iles House, so taking on the responsibility of the [Strawbridge-Shepherd] house was out of our original scope. But it just seemed too important." Dick and others eventually did get a meeting with the university, knowing there was already a budget in place to tear the house down. So they offered an alternative—if the university gave the demolition funds to the EIHF, they would use it as seed money to save the house instead of destroy it. When university officials asked Dick what he thought they could do for the place at this point, he said, "Well, here is a listing for your class on historic preservation, so that's a good place to start figuring it out."

Incredibly, the \$10,000 budgeted by the university to tear down the house was instead given to the EIHF, with some reluctance and the understanding that the EIHF were the ones responsible for making this project work. Once the house was safe from demolition and left to the care of Dick and others, there was a heroic effort by volunteers and temporary labor to clean out years of debris and get the old farmhouse ready for a public viewing. "By the time we had the reception, we already had a lot of our own money in this house—we believed in this project to our core and we were determined to see this through no matter how many people showed up. Still, it was fantastic that so many did!" Over 1,000 people came to the reception, making it clear that there was huge local interest in the house, and helping the university get fully on board with the plan.

Unsurprisingly, the university's \$10,000 and board member contributions were spent quickly on stabilizing and clearing out the building, so fundraising was crucial. Dick applied for the Preservation Heritage Fund grant in 2007 and won \$5,000 to continue restoring the house, and then Sue Massie, then treasurer of the EIHS, won another \$1,000 from Landmarks Illinois in 2011. According to Dick, "The money from Landmarks Illinois was nice—really nice—but it was more about the reputation of Landmarks Illinois. We could now put a sign out in front of the house saying that we had funding from them. It was a catalyst, absolutely. Having that support helped with other funding because of who they are." The university also embraced the project fully now, and began holding events for alumni and retired faculty at the house.

In 2014, both the Illinois State Historical Society and the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum moved in. The museum, which was located on the second floor, quickly outgrew the space and has recently expanded into a new building. Last fall, the EIHF held another successful fundraiser on the grounds that included a huge tent, a fire pit, storytellers, music, local food, and a horse drawn carriage. Even descendants of the Shepherd family came to visit. Students from the university wrote a nomination to place the old farmhouse on the National Register of Historic Places, and it was successfully listed in 2015.

Dick hopes that eventually Illinois State Historical Society will be able to rent out the second floor of the house—not a surprising hope coming from a staunch preservationist. In the meantime, the house seems to be holding its own and has become an important part of the university that almost demolished it a decade earlier. The restored prairie in back of the house may soon become an arboretum of native trees to be studied by university students, and according to Dick, "The Chancellor of the university loves it and loves to throw parties there."

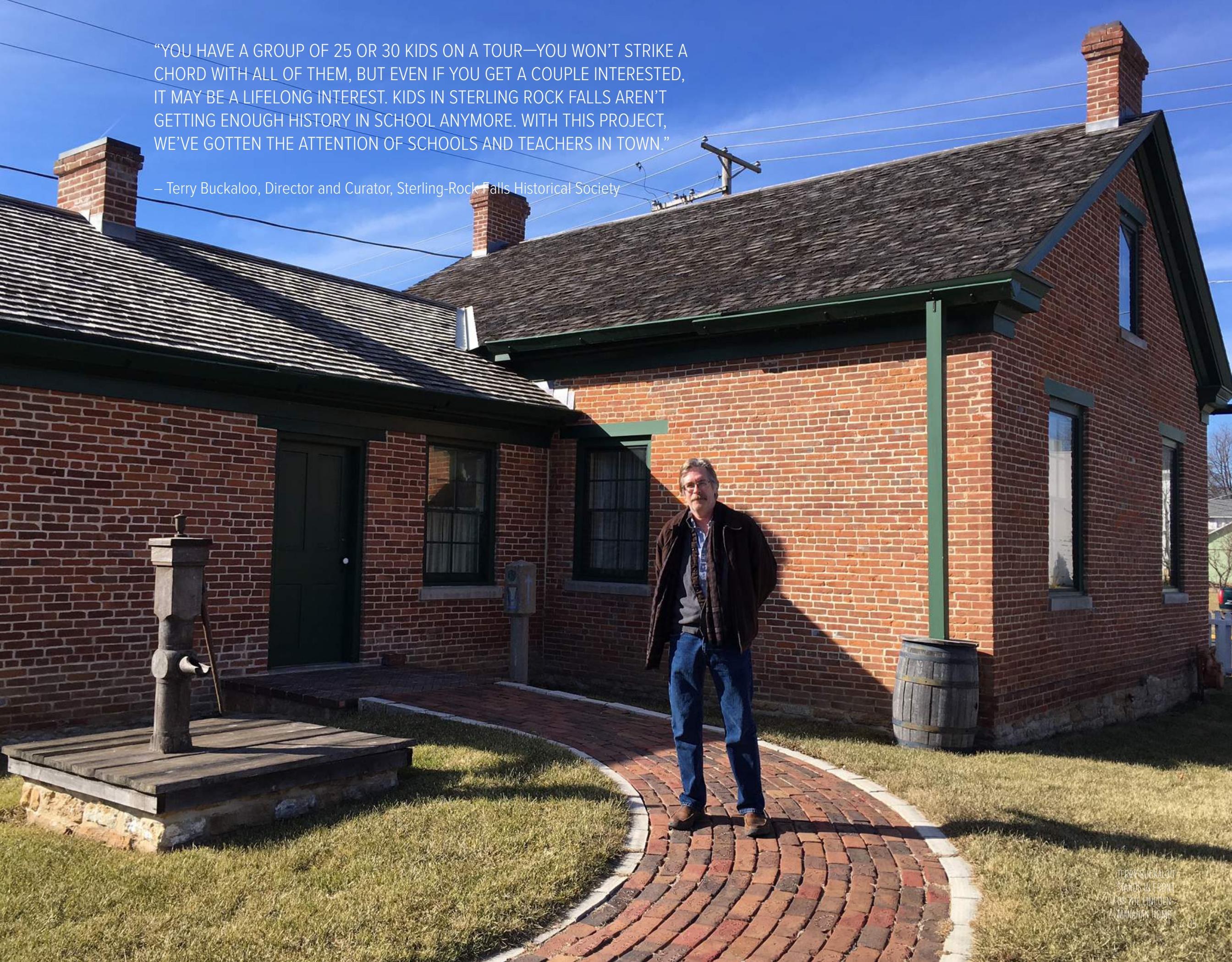
For more information on the Strawbridge-Shepherd House, visit:
<http://www.sj-r.com/article/20140305/NEWS/140309592>
<http://npaper-wehaa.com/illinoistimes/2017/04/06/#?article=2899772>



REHABILITATION AND RESTORATION WORK ON THE STRAWBRIDGE-SHEPHERD HOUSE HAS TRANSFORMED THE BUILDING INTO A MUSEUM AND EVENT SPACE (PHOTO CREDIT ELLJAH ILES HOUSE FOUNDATION)

“YOU HAVE A GROUP OF 25 OR 30 KIDS ON A TOUR—YOU WON’T STRIKE A CHORD WITH ALL OF THEM, BUT EVEN IF YOU GET A COUPLE INTERESTED, IT MAY BE A LIFELONG INTEREST. KIDS IN STERLING ROCK FALLS AREN’T GETTING ENOUGH HISTORY IN SCHOOL ANYMORE. WITH THIS PROJECT, WE’VE GOTTEN THE ATTENTION OF SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS IN TOWN.”

— Terry Buckaloo, Director and Curator, Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society



TERRY BUCKALOO STANDS IN FRONT OF THE LINCOLN MANAHAN HOME

STERLING – LINCOLN-MANAHAN HOME

GRANT RECEIVED: 2009

GRANT AMOUNT: \$2,000

Terry Buckaloo was splitting his time between the Sterling Rock Falls Historical Society Museum and his corn and soybean farm when one of the oldest structures in Sterling was suddenly threatened in 2007. The Lincoln-Manahan Home was put on the market after falling into bankruptcy and was in danger of being demolished due to its location in a commercial district. As Terry put it, “We figured, if the Historical Society wasn’t going to save it, who was?” They took a risk and made a commitment to purchase the property in March of 2007, though there was real concern that they’d be forced to sell the property again if they didn’t secure enough funding to restore it.

The Lincoln-Manahan Home, built in 1846, is not only one of the oldest in town, but is likely the oldest structure still intact. It is also the home in which Sheriff William Manahan hosted a 47-year-old lawyer named Abraham Lincoln during an 1856 visit to Sterling. Legend has it that Lincoln—in town to speak at a rally for the Republican Party’s first presidential candidate, John C. Fremont—slept on the Sheriff’s sofa with two chairs placed at its end to accommodate his long legs.

Over the years, the home was passed through many hands and used as both a residential and commercial rental property, which put a lot of wear and tear on the building. While the home had tremendous historical significance, there was a daunting amount of restoration work that needed to be done, including the acquisition and proper repointing of about 10,000 historically accurate bricks.

But this didn’t shake Terry and the rest of the Historical Society. By 2009, they had made major fundraising strides, though some critical repairs were still remained. Terry explained, “Landmarks Illinois came along at the right time because even with the other fundraising and donated brick we were able to acquire, we still needed another 2,000 bricks to complete repairs on the east side of the house.” The Preservation Heritage Fund Grant secured the remaining brick and allowed for the completion of the eastern wall repairs and restoration.

Once restoration was complete, the home was dedicated on July 18, 2011, as the Lincoln-Manahan Home Museum. It’s open to the public, and Terry no longer has time to farm because he splits his daytime hours running tours and staffing both the Historical Society Museum and the Lincoln-Manahan Home Museum. The attention given to the restoration

has grown membership and interest in the museum, and the Foundation is expanding their scope to include more educational programming, which has been a primary driver for Terry. “This was really about education. We wanted to get the kids interested in history. Every kid knows about Lincoln, so it’s a great way to get them more interested.” Since opening in 2011, over 2,500 students have toured the Home, and the Historical Society has started a junior historian program for kids in grades 3-6 in the summer.

The Foundation has spent over \$400,000 as part of the restoration of this house, including purchasing three lots adjacent to the property. One of these lots is the future location of the Lincoln Learning Center, a building currently under construction that will be used for special programs and activities. None of this would have happened without a strong vision, relentless fundraising, and extensive community outreach from the Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society. An unanticipated side effect of the ambitious restoration of the home was that the outreach attracted more active members (including a Lincoln impersonator), retired teachers who now volunteer as docents, and even the contractor who was hired to brickwork and carpentry. “He wanted to be more involved with the mission...he now fixes things for us for free!”

For more information on the Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society, visit www.srfhs.com



IN THE LINCOLN MANAHAN HOME,
A REPLICA OF THE COUCH ON
WHICH LINCOLN SLEPT DURING
HIS VISIT



CONCLUSIONS

The 11 projects featured in this report may not seem to have much in common – different structures, different needs, different places, different people. At first glance, one might assume that their only thread is the grant support they each received from Landmarks Illinois. But on closer examination, these projects are more alike than different. In telling the stories of their projects, few of the people interviewed discussed the physical components that these grant funds repaired and restored. Instead, they talked about and were proud of the role that their local landmark now plays in their community. Here is what we heard over the hundreds of miles covered and dozens of people interviewed during our research on the impacts of these grant funds:

- Most commonly noted was that the spaces in the historic buildings are being used for community functions, often providing the type of space not previously available. This opportunity to host events frequently created a connection to surrounding towns and rural areas.
- Nearly all interviewees mentioned the cultural and educational programming that now takes place, telling the story of the building, certainly, but also the community, and the people who built it.
- Those “people” stories often included a legacy that still exists – descendants of original settlers still visiting or otherwise supporting the community.
- Even more moving was how often the towns in general, and their landmark building in particular, served an important role as both a safe harbor for oppressed groups, but also a venue for freedom of expression. In many instances the buildings are still playing that role today.
- Finally, a consistent theme among towns was the important role that Landmarks Illinois played in saving their treasured buildings, frequently as the first source of outside money.

The great Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith once said, “The preservation movement has one great curiosity. There is never any retrospective controversy or regret. Preservationists are the only people in the world who are invariably confirmed in their wisdom after the fact.” This study has shown that Galbraith was right. The grant programs of Landmarks Illinois, and the recipients of those grants whose efforts have saved their local landmarks, are invariably confirmed in their wisdom after the fact.

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Lisa Campbell, Board Member, Beecher Cemetery and Mausoleum

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Chicago:

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North Chicago:

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Springfield:

Richard Hart, Founding and Current Board Member, Elijah Iles House Foundation

Sterling:

Terence Buckaloo, Director and Curator, Sterling-Rock Falls Historical Society

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THE PLACEECONOMICS TEAM

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BEECHER
MAUSOLEUM IN
BEECHER



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