



SEPTEMBER 2024

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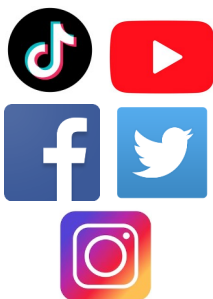
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A Newsletter for the volunteers & friends of the Stephenson House



THE VOLUNTEER

A Beautiful New Garden Fence



The carpenters working on the new garden fence.

by Donna Bardon, Master Gardener

Thanks to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America Local 664 of the Mid-America Carpenters Regional Council, Stephenson House has a sturdy new garden fence. Eleven carpenters and apprentices volunteered their time and talent to remove the rickety, 21-year-old fence and build a new one on August 17.

The garden fence was built to specifications outlined in 1999 by restoration architect Jack Luer Associates of St. Louis, based on the 1822 probate records of Benjamin Stephenson. The handcrafted fence is 32 feet by 40 feet and encloses eight raised planting beds. The fence is built with one-by-four-inch pickets cut at a single 45-degree angle and spaced two inches apart.

A six-foot gate will be added soon. The gate will feature hardware crafted by Bob Woodard, a talented local blacksmith, who made the hinges, handle, and latches in 2004 for the Stephenson House.



Carpenters from The Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Local 664 who worked on the new fence.

by Jim Tillerson, Journeyman Carpenter
Local 664

A couple members of Carpenters' Local 664 were approached by Rick Stamer, a retired Union Iron Worker concerning the replacement of the garden fence, knowing that most trade unions give back to their communities in many ways. The carpenter union requires all apprentices to complete a given amount of community service hours in order to advance through their apprenticeship in the hope they can realize the irreplaceable skills they have learned and instill the value of giving back. The team of five apprentices and several journeyman carpenters gathered at 7:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 17 to implement a plan that had been previously devised. A little more than eight hours later the new fence was in place, each piece cut and placed on

(Continued on page 6)

Get Those Final Bids In! Auction Closes September 19

Do you love antiques? Looking for a missing piece for your milk glass collection? Always on the hunt for arrowheads? Well, 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House's online antique auction is a good place to start your search. The Sid Denny Memorial Antique Auction is open for bidding and closes on September 19 at 6 pm.

A wide range of collectibles are being offered to the highest bidders. For over 16 years this auction was held in the parking lot of the historic site but Covid-19 forced us to move it online. Formally known as the Antiques & Collectibles Auction, its name was changed this year in memory of founding board member, volunteer, and event chair, Dr. Sid Denny who passed away in 2023. This is one of two annual fundraisers benefiting the continued restoration and educational programming at the museum.

A total of 366 lots are open for bids at Legacy Realty and Auction, (<https://legacysells4u.hibid.com/catalog/543270/stephenson-house-online-benefit-auction>). Winning bidders

from outside the area can have their items conveniently shipped to them but will need to pay shipping costs. Local winners can pick up their items on Saturday, September 21 from 9 a.m. -1 p.m. at GEM Storage located at 447 S. Buchanan Street (off Linden St. behind Market Basket).



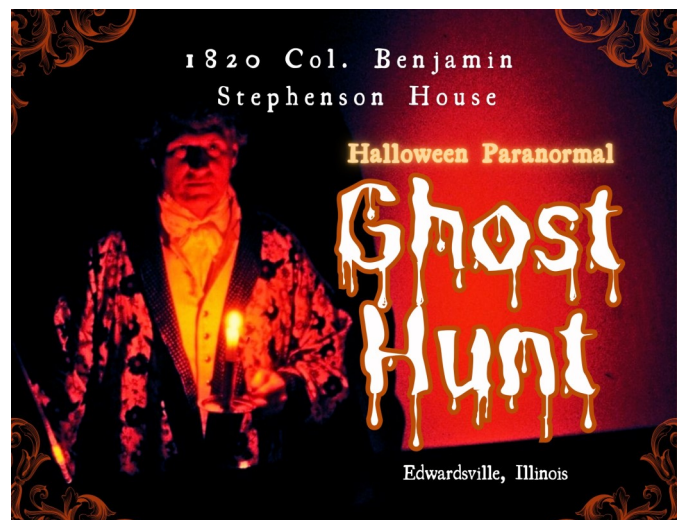
An 1899 wicker baby buggy is just one of the antique being auctioned this month.

Join Us October 31 for a Ghost Hunt!

Hunt for what goes bump in the night this Halloween at Stephenson House! On this day, it is believed the boundary between the physical world and the spiritual realm becomes permeable, leading to increased paranormal activity and spirit contact. The Midwest Paranormal Investigators Consortium will be hosting a paranormal ghost hunt from 6 pm -12 am. The house has a long history of hauntings. Investigators will have access to both floors of the 1820 section of the house, the detached kitchen and upper quarters, and the servants' cabin.

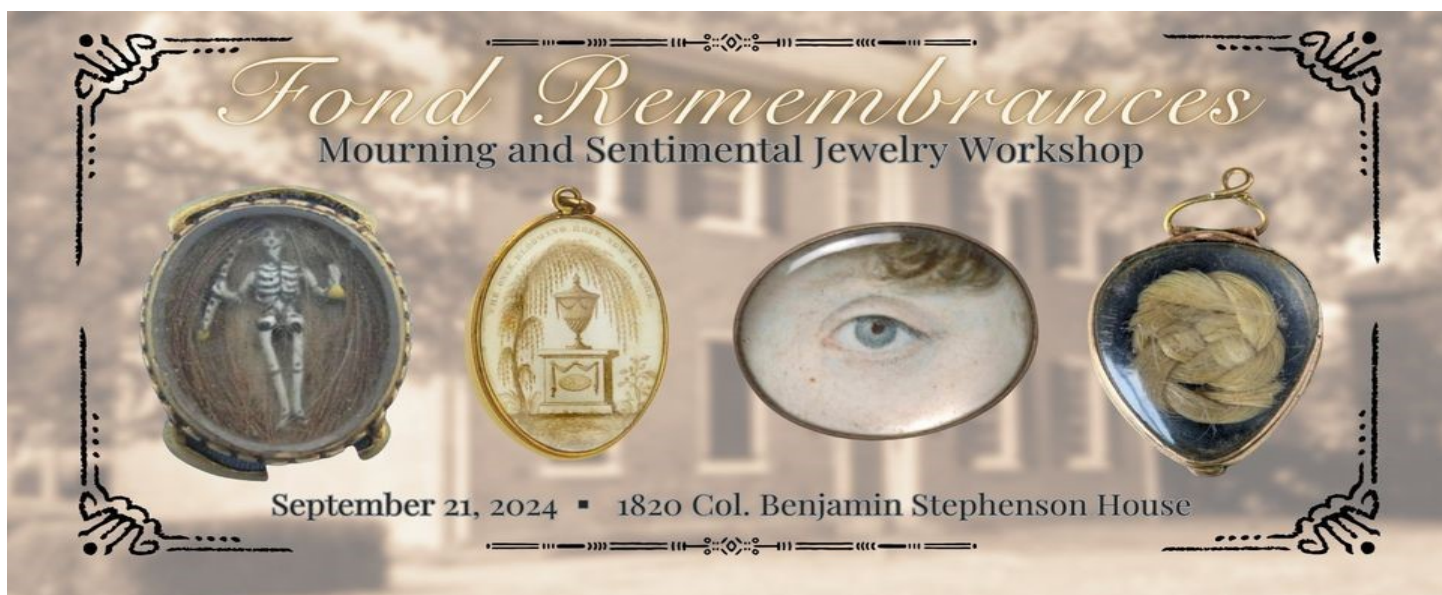
Reservations are required. Guests should arrive by 5:45 p.m. Tickets are \$48 per person and nonrefundable. Any paranormal investigative skill level is welcome. The Midwest Paranormal Investigators Consortium will provide the equipment but you're welcome to bring your own.

Hunts are limited to 10 people (13+ years & up).



Anyone under 16 years old must be accompanied by an adult.

Tickets available at www.stephensonhouse.org



Fond Remembrances: Mourning & Sentimental Jewelry Workshop

Join us on September 21 from 9:30 am—4 pm for "*Fond Remembrances: Mourning and Sentimental Jewelry Workshop*." Mourning jewelry has been around since the 17th century. Wigmakers of the period found an alternative use for their skills by making sentimental jewelry pieces using the hair of loved ones. Some of the first pieces were rings with brooches, pendants, and earrings following close behind. Each piece was overflowing with spiritual symbolism surrounding grief and loss. Depictions of skeletons, funeral urns, cupids, doves, weeping willows, and mourners are common motifs that often incorporate pieces of a loved one's hair; braided, woven, or artfully arranged. Hair doesn't decay after death and was a perfect way to keep a piece of a loved one with the wearer as a remembrance.

The 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House is excited at the opportunity to offer this unique hands-on history workshop. In this class, we will explore the purpose of mourning jewelry, iconography, motifs, and designs used during this period and learn some of the techniques involved in creating these pieces. Participants will create pieces of jewelry using various techniques and materials as well as explore contemporary expressions of 'memento mori'. Limited to 8 adults (16+ years old), \$55 per person (includes all supplies).

Optional Items to bring:

- Any of your personal jewelry, beading, or other crafting tools for small crafts (Cricut/silhouette tools work well)
- Nonstick crafting mat
- Your or a loved one's lock of hair (if you want to include it). *This is not the intricate hairwork of the Victorian period. The Federal period hairwork was a simple locket, simple braid or scattered pieces of hair.

What you will take home:

- One completed double-sided mourning pendant with brooch attachment
- Optional: other pieces to make for yourself or the Gift shop to sell to visitors.
- Additional double-sided pendants for purchase.

To register visit www.stephensonhouse.org.



Three examples of what will be made during the workshop.

Season of Mourning: A Special Exhibit



The parlor is set to recreate what Col. Stephenson's funeral may have looked like on October 12, 1822.

During the month of October, Stephenson House commemorates a pivotal event in the life of the Stephenson family—the death of Col. Benjamin Stephenson on October 10, 1822.

During this period, special exhibits in each area of the house represent the final days in Stephenson's life and the period immediately following his death.

Both nursing and funerary practices of that time varied greatly from what we would recognize.

Civilian hospitals as such did not exist. We believe, based on store records of medicine purchases in the days just before Stephenson's death, that he was treated at home for an ultimately fatal case of malaria. The main bedchamber of the house is therefore set as a sick room, where the family would have cared for Stephenson in his final days.

Immediately following his passing, Stephenson's body would have been prepared for respectful display and burial. Modern embalming had not been invented, and no funeral businesses are known to have existed in the Edwardsville area. In the common practice of the time, family and servants would instead have prepared the body; a coffin constructed by a local craftsman; and the deceased laid-out for visitation in the home itself.

The parlor of Stephenson House has been staged to show this ritual.

Deep mourning followed the death of a family member, involving both the appearance and the public behavior of the family. Items in the main bedchamber, the children's bedroom, and the servants' quarters show the household's participation in this elaborate rite, parts of which could last more than a year.

Finally, as part of the harsh economic reality of Stephenson's death, assessors intruded on the family home and conducted an exhaustive inventory of possessions, preparing for a public auction only weeks after Stephenson's passing. The dining room is staged to show this process, which occurred November 25, 1822.

Join us during October to see this special exhibit, and commemorate the life and passing of Col. Benjamin Stephenson. The museum is open for guided tours of the exhibit Thursday thru Saturday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. and Sunday, 12-3 p.m. It's highly recommended that reservations are made in advance due to the museum being short-staffed. Admission fees are \$10 Adults, \$5 children, and Free for children under 6 years old. This exhibit is not recommended for small children.



Col. Stephenson (Walt Raisner), Lucy Stephenson (Sarah Frerichs) and Dr. John Todd (Eric Wallace) during a sickroom scene for our YouTube video detailing medical practices in the early 19th century.



Living History Days Returns

by Cindy Reinhardt

The 2024 Living History Days Festival will be held in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon, Illinois, on October 4-6. The Madison County Historical Society (MCHS) created the festival five years ago to provide opportunities for residents of all ages to connect with history.

The schedule of events includes something for everyone. From vintage ball games to reenactments from the Civil War and the War of 1812; concerts, book fairs, crafts, demonstrations, and more will be waiting for visitors in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon in early October.

The historic Wildey Theatre at 252 N. Main Street will feature concerts on Friday and Saturday nights. The Col. Benjamin Stephenson House at 409 S. Buchanan St. will have special activities on all three days.

On Saturday, Historic Leclaire Field on Troy Road and the surrounding area will have vintage “base ball” games, a Civil War cavalry encampment, and tours of the Leclaire National Historic District. Next door, the Edwardsville Children’s

Museum and Nickel Plate Station will have free museum admission and vintage children’s games. Food will be available at the Leclaire Field concession stand.

A few blocks north of Leclaire, the Edwardsville Book Fair at City Park will feature music, local authors, and thousands of new and used books. Nearby, the St. Andrew’s Quilt Guild will showcase an array of beautiful quilts. At Woodlawn Cemetery, the Alumni Players! have a community partnership event that presents “Voices of Our Past,” a program celebrating the lives of past residents of Edwardsville who were buried in the 1871 cemetery. In Glen Carbon, Yanda Log Cabin Day, invites visitors to tour the historic cabin and browse artisan booths on the grounds.

Sunday’s primary location is Edwardsville’s City Park where visitors will attend the MCHS Chautauqua that features speakers Mary Todd Lincoln, Edward Coles, and Ninian Edwards. Between speakers there will be music from an a Capella chorus, a jazz combo, gospel choir, and the St. Louis Osuwa Taiko drums. In addition, visitors can peruse a War of 1812 military encampment,

(Continued on page 9)

Upcoming Events, Tours & Activities

- **September 7, Volunteer Training & Hands-on Learning: Making Candles,** 11 am
- **September 14, Guided Paranormal Ghost Hunt (*SOLD OUT*),** 6 pm-12 am
- **September 19, Sid Denny Memorial Antique Auction.** The online auction will end at 6 pm. Item pickup will be September 21 from 8 am-1 pm at GEM Storage on 447 S. Buchanan Street behind Market Basket
- **September 21, Fond Remembrances: Mourning & Sentimental Jewelry Workshop,** 9:30 am-4 pm. Limited to 8 adults (16+ years old), \$55 per person.
- **October 12, Guided Paranormal Ghost Hunt (*SOLD OUT*),** 6 pm-12 am
- **October 3-31, Mourning Col. Stephenson**
- **October 27, A Gothic Evening with Edgar Allan Poe,** 5:30 pm & 7:30 pm. Tickets available on our website.
- **October 31, Guided Paranormal Ghost Hunt,** \$48 per person (Reservations Required), 6 pm-12 am
- **November 9, Guided Paranormal Ghost Hunt (*SOLD OUT*),** 6 pm-12 am
- **November 30, Christmas Candlelight Tours,** 5-8 pm

(Garden Fence, Continued from page 1)

site, and all debris cleaned up. Tom Lewis, a now retired, 60-year member of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, who lives nearby, walked over and provided some hands-on assistance as well as business agents Matt Chase and Ramey Baker. Journeymen, Logan Sims, Bart Smith, and Jim Tillerson led the team of apprentices, Matt Yates, Jimmy Parks, Blake Harkey, Zach Ledbetter and Kyle Bruhn. Even though the day was hot, and the work was grueling, the task was completed and the team stood back with pride knowing that the skills and time they had donated provided a quality job for a non-profit entity that will be there for years to come.

I personally feel very blessed with the skills that I have learned over the years and the wages and benefits that it has afforded me, thanks to the Carpenters Union. I feel an obligation to give back not only to the community but to try to mentor and pass on some of that knowledge to another generation to maintain the stability of the

trade. There was a time when it was hard to get into the trades as there were more candidates than openings. Today is the opposite, many of the baby boomers have retired and there are less applicants than what the job market requires.





Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|---|----|--|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 Volunteer Training: Making Candles |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 Guided Paranormal Ghost Hunt 6pm |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 Sid Denny Memorial Antique Auction | 20 | 21 Mourning Jewelry Workshop 9:30 am |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 |
| 29 | 30 | | | | | |

Desserts of the Early 19th Century: Cracknels

by Jeanne Spencer

Cracknels

Take half a pound of fine flour, half a pound of sugar, two ounces of butter, two eggs, and a few caraway seeds; (you must beat and sift the sugar) then put it to your flour and work it to paste; roll them as thin as you can, and cut them out with queen cake tins, lie them on papers and bake them in a slow oven. They are proper to eat with chocolate.

— MOXON, ELIZABETH. "ENGLISH HOUSEWIFERY." PG.114.



21st Century Recipe, courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foodways

Ingredients

- 1 ½ c flour
- 1 c sugar
- 4 Tbsp. butter
- 1 large egg
- 1 Tbsp. caraway seeds

Instructions

Note: It is important that this dough be worked with your hands. Do not try to mix it with a spoon, mixer or food processor.

Pre-heat oven to 325 degrees and line cookie sheet(s) with parchment paper.

Combine flour, sugar and caraway seeds in a bowl until well mixed.

Cut in butter. Beat egg slightly and add to flour, sugar and butter mixture.

Work the dough with your hands until the mixture holds together. If you find that the heat of your hands is not bringing the mixture together, you can beat one more egg and add a little bit at a time and work until dough holds together. This mixture will be stiff, so it is important not to add any more moisture than necessary.

Taking a small portion of dough at a time, roll out to 1/8" thick on a lightly floured surface. Cut out dough with a 2 ¼ inch biscuit cutter and place on parchment lined cookie sheet ½-1" apart. Dough does not spread during baking.

Bake 8-10 minutes or until lightly browned around the edges. Cookies will be soft to the touch.

Allow to cool slightly on the cookie sheet before removing to wire racks to cool completely. As the cookies cool they will become hard and crisp.





& Hands-on Learning

You are invited to a volunteer enrichment opportunity at the Stephenson House. A different topic will be featured each month to help expand your knowledge of the past and help you learn a new demonstration or skill. ALL volunteers are invited to attend. We hope to see you soon!

Mark Your Calendars

September 7, Making Beeswax Candles, 11 am.

Learn how to properly make hand-dipped and molded tallow and beeswax candles in the 1820 kitchen. This activity is easy to do as a demonstration during tours. Historical interpreters should dress in period working garb. Volunteers who do not interpret should dress for comfort and practicality as it can potentially damage to clothing. Please RSVP with RoxAnn by September 6. If the weather is exceedingly hot, we will postpone to a later date.



(Living History Days, Continued from page 5)

watch indigenous craft demonstrations, shop at the MCHS book sale, or grab a bite to eat from a food vendor.

Also in Edwardsville, on Living History Days weekend is the SIUE Homecoming Kickoff and Family Weekend in the Stratton Quad on Friday evening and the Homecoming Soccer game Saturday at Korte Stadium.

For a full schedule of times and events, visit the Madison County Historical Society's website at: <https://madcohistory.org/> or call 618-656-1294.

News & Needs

Thank you...

...United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Local 664 for donating their time and skills to building a new garden fence.

Needs...

- Bookshelves with adjustable shelving.
- Do you need service hours? We can help! There are a variety of jobs and projects we'd love to have help with.
- Please return Volunteer Training binders if you have one.
- Aprons and day caps for the interpretive wardrobe
- volunteers to help with house tours, gift shop, garden & grounds, grant writing & research, special event, as well as seamstresses to sew clothing for the volunteer wardrobe



Want to support Stephenson House
when you shop online?

PayPal Giving Fund

Set us as your favorite charity, then click to
donate \$1 each time you check out with
@PayPal. It's easy:
paypal.com/us/fundraiser/charity/1651866

**IT'S AN EASY WAY TO LEND YOUR
SUPPORT!**



August Happenings at the House



Top Left & Center: Carpenters from Local 664 work on rebuilding the garden fence. **Top Right:** New Ghost Tour t-shirts are now available in the museum shop. **Right:** Site Director, RoxAnn Raisner during volunteer training. **Left:** The flower garden at the back of the house in full summer bloom.

