

The History Keeper is meant to keep residents and land-owners of historic properties within the City of Belvidere informed about the assistance available to them and to keep them informed about the latest happenings.

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# The History Keeper

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

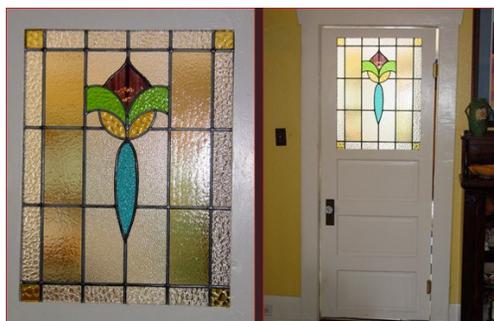
JANUARY 2016

## Second Meeting of Historic Landowners

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission hosted the second Networking Night on October 28, 2016. Mayor Mike Chamberlin spoke briefly at the meeting highlighting economic investment downtown, a need to encourage more art city-wide, and the importance of Historic Landowners in Belvidere that preserve and improve so many valuable assets in town.

Following the Mayor was guest speaker Gary Blatchford, who owns and operates Blatchford's Glass Studio in Belvidere. His business focuses on making and repairing stain glass in Boone County. The Glass Studio is one of very few window and glass makers left in the area and is a fantastic local resource for the historic preservation community. Additionally, Mr. Blatchford is the proud owner of a historic home himself, the inaugural Mayor of Belvidere's home on North State Street.

If you have any questions for Mr. Blatchford regarding his home or Glass Studio, you may contact him by phone at 815-544-2345.



### Selecting A New Name

The Historic Landowners group would like to formalize a new name moving forward. At the most recent meeting several names were introduced, but four were selected to be voted upon.

The choices are:

- Friends of Preservation
- Belvidere Preservation Group
- Boone County Preservation Connection
- Preservation Network

*We would like your feedback!*

Please, email or mail your vote back to the City of Belvidere before the next Networking Night meeting on February 3, 2016 in order to be considered. Include your name and which group name you prefer from the listed options above.

Email:

[gdelrose@ci.belvidere.il.us](mailto:gdelrose@ci.belvidere.il.us)

Phone:

815-547-7177

Mail:

Department of Community Development  
401 Whitney Blvd. Suite 300  
Belvidere, IL 61008

# The Lampert House



Belvidere's first historic landmark known as "The Wildflower House," stood empty for 16 years until a couple with historical hearts with a knack for restoration breathed new life into it.

The house at 410 E Lincoln Ave. has many claims to fame. The first frame home built in Belvidere, it's often called the Muriel Lampert house in reference to the family who owned it from 1891 to 1972.

The Lamperts' love of flowers is annually displayed in a yardful of wildflowers, and current owners Gary and Sherry Knott-Simon plan to add to the still-established carpet of color.

## Still the Same

The exterior of the house has seen practically no change since its construction. The first wing- a two-story, Greek Revival structure- was built in 1837, when the front door afforded a clear view of the Kishwaukee River and maybe an Indian or two.

Greek Revival features on the front-gabled house include the entry porch, supported by prominent, square columns with inset panels; and the low-pitch roof with "cornice return," or cornices that turn inward at the ends and make a major unfinished triangle called a "pediment." Many homes feature cornices that complete the triangles.

The thick, multi-layers of the cornices are called the "entablature." This feature mimics the Parthenon, the major inspiration of Greek Revival style.

A small, triangular window, or "fanlight," in the pediment was intended to light the attic. The Simons removed the original upstairs ceilings, and the fanlight now accents their bedroom. They added roof supports taken from an antique Boone County barn.

Two small windows were built upstairs at eye level and eventually were removed. The Simons rebuilt the windows in their original spots.

The basement under the two-story wing displays a 12-by-12, hand-hewn beam that still has bark on it.

The second wing, a Carpenter Gothic structure, was built in the 1850s. It apparently served as a dining room, with seven doors leading into the room. Five doors remain.

The house had no kitchen, electricity, plumbing or central heating when the Simons moved in. They turned the dining room into an old-fashioned kitchen with a window seat, the original wainscoting (wood paneling on the lower part of the walls), and open cabinetry.

The Carpenter Gothic porch includes "colonettes," or wooden, arched latticework columns. These columns exist in their original form, down to the pendants hanging in the center of each arch. Both porches have their original doors.

In the 1890s, the Lamperts added about 8 feet along the southwest end of the house. This includes a small alcove in front with a bay window. A partitioned summer kitchen, with a well and pump close by, stands about 6 feet from the back door.

## Many VIPs

The Lampert lot was owned by many big-name Belvidere residents through the years. The property's first owners were settlers Daniel Caswell and Daniel and Aaron Whitney. Seth Whitman- the town's postmaster/pastor/professor- owned the house and property from 1838 until 1844, when it changed hands to James Loop and then Col. Joel Walker.

Philip and Clara Lampert bought the house shortly after their marriage, and their only child, Muriel, was born there in 1892. A lawyer, Philip died in 1899. Clara carried on his abstract business while working as a court recorder for the Boone County Circuit Court. Muriel became deputy clerk of the circuit court in 1912.

**If Walls Could Talk**  
**By: Kathy Sterbenc**  
**BDR News Editor**  
 (Originally appeared  
 in February 2, 1990  
 issue of BDR)

**Address:**  
 410 E. Lincoln Ave.  
 Belvidere, IL 61008  
**Style:**  
 Greek Revival and  
 Carpenter Gothic  
**Year Built:**  
 1837

## The Lampert House Continued...

Clara and Muriel were avid naturalists, and they found birds and flowers particularly fascinating. Their own drawings of flowers and butterflies have been delicately stenciled on the walls of the home by Sherry Knott-Simon, who found the drawings in the Lampert's guest book.

Clara died in 1962 and Muriel in 1972. Muriel left the house to local historians Bessie and Emmett Sullivan. The house sat empty until Bessie's death in 1986, when two men from Garden Prairie bought it. They sold the house, still in disrepair, to the Simons in August 1988.

Since then, the Simons have done an incredible job of repairing badly sagging floors, crumbling foundation and walls, and rotting wood. They had trouble even insuring the house at first, Sherry said.

As the first sprouts of wildflowers emerge in the front yard, the Wildflower House has regained its status not only as a historical showplace, but a beloved home.

## Resource Corner!

### Milling Companies

It was recently discussed, during the last meeting, that a resident had an issue in locating and hiring the proper milling company after their home sustained water damage to its hardwood floors. Due to the fact that many of the historic homes in Belvidere have hardwood flooring, this topic seemed particularly relevant to share with both the meeting attendees and the newsletter subscribers. During the meeting the topic was further discussed and other residents offered advice on which companies in the region they relied on for their hardwood milling needs. Those companies are:

#### The Hardwood Connection

The Hardwood Connection has served the woodworking community since 1979. Their complete mill shop can provide you with edge jointing, ripping, glued-up panels, laminated blocks, thickness planning, surface sanding, re-sawing, and custom moldings.

- Website: [www.thehardwoodconnection.com](http://www.thehardwoodconnection.com); Address: 1810 W. State St. Sycamore, IL 60178
- Phone: 815-895-8733; Email: [contact@thehardwoodconnection.com](mailto:contact@thehardwoodconnection.com)

#### Owl Hardwood

Since 1981 OWL Hardwood Lumber has been offering the Chicagoland area the finest hardwood lumber around. With over 50 different species of domestic and imported lumber, you're sure to find exactly what you need for your next woodworking project.

- Website: [www.owlhardwood.com/home](http://www.owlhardwood.com/home); Address: 926 S Graceland Ave. Des Plaines, IL 60016
- Phone: 847-824-5025; Email: [info@owlhardwood.com](mailto:info@owlhardwood.com)

#### K and V Hardwood Moldings

Established in 1994, this Rockford based hardwood molding company provides millwork services to the entire Rock River Valley Region.

- Address: 912 8th St. Rockford, IL; Phone: 815-968-5004

## How To Best Connect

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission will continue to create and distribute The History Keeper newsletter in 2017, but the mailing list has now reached over 200 households. In order to most effectively and efficiently reach you, we need to know the best way to get into contact with you. That is why we would like to offer you the option of receiving a digital version of this document in the future.

If you'd like to subscribe to The History Keeper newsletter via email, please contact Gina DelRose at [gdelrose@ci.belvidere.il.us](mailto:gdelrose@ci.belvidere.il.us).

If you'd like to keep receiving the newsletter via regular mail, no additional action is required.

## **Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission**

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E-mail: [gdelrose@ci.belvidere.il.us](mailto:gdelrose@ci.belvidere.il.us)

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission (the Commission) has been a part of the community for decades. The Commission is comprised of seven members who live in Boone County, work for or own property within the City of Belvidere as well as a staff liaison. The Commission's goal is to promote the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or historical interest or value for the health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people of the City. Since its inception, the Commission has landmarked 26 local properties, five national registry properties, the 2004 West Hurlbut Local Historic District, the 2012 North State Street National Historic District and the 2012 South State Street National Historic District.

### **For More Information Visit:**

[www.ci.belvidere.il.us/departments/community-development/historic-preservation](http://www.ci.belvidere.il.us/departments/community-development/historic-preservation)

## **Upcoming Events**

### **Next Networking Night**

February 3, 2016 at 7:00 PM is the next Networking Night Meeting. It will feature special guest speaker Darius Bryjka, who works for the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. He will be detailing the Historic Tax Credits that are available to historic landowners in Belvidere.

### **Landmark Property Maintenance Program**

All properties that are locally or nationally registered historical landmarks or part of a historic district in the City of Belvidere qualify for a matching maintenance grant of up to \$1,000. The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission has created a local incentive that will pay up to 50% of project costs or up to \$1,000 per project, but the project must first be approved by the commission. For more details on the grant contact Gina DelRose at 815-547-7177.

### **Now Accepting 2017 Award Nominations**

Since 2012 the Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission has hosted an awards ceremony for those residential and commercial property owners that have made appropriate improvements to their historical properties. Efforts such as repairing windows, repainting instead of installing vinyl siding, fixing a front porch, bringing the inside of a residence back to life while still respecting the historical features have been highlighted in the past. If you know someone that is deserving of an award please call Gina at 815-547-7177.

### **Future Networking Meetings**

Are there any presentations that you would like to see? Salvagers? Re-furbishers? Construction Companies? Realtors? Paranormal Activities? Please contact Gina at 815-547-7177 and let her know! We will try our best to schedule one.



*Indian Hill Manor, Rockford, Illinois*