

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.

**INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:**

- The Witbeck Home 2**
- Resource Corner 3**
- The Progressive Dinner 3**
- How To Best Connect 3**
- Upcoming Events 4**

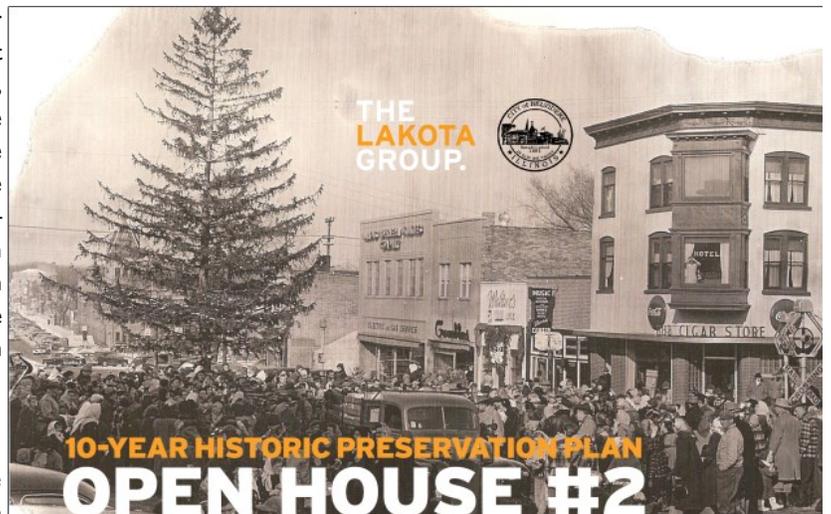
The History Keeper

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

OCTOBER 2017

10 Year Plan Open House and Friends of Preservation Meeting

On Thursday, October 26th from 6pm-8pm, at 419 East Pleasant Street, Belvidere, Illinois, the Lakota Group will be hosting an open house regarding the City's 10-Year Plan. The open house will be held in conjunction with the Friends of Preservation meeting.



The City of Belvidere has contracted with the Lakota Group to initiate a community planning process to prepare a 10-Year Historic Preservation Plan. This Plan seeks to create a set of community-supported preservation planning policies and recommendations that build on prior preservation programs and initiatives. The Plan also seeks to address preservation issues that are of critical importance to the citizens of Belvidere. The 10-Year Historic Preservation Plan will also focus on key implementation strategies that identify important implementation partners and key short and long-term actions. The City has engaged the Lakota Group, a preservation planning firm based in Chicago, Illinois to help create the Plan.

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Kris Bryan with Wood-It-Be-Nice will be presenting on preserving and restoring wood features in your home as well as being available to answer your questions.. Kris has over 20 years experience in his field and is a dedicated member of the Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission.

Everyone is welcomed to attend the open house and meeting. Light Refreshments will be available so please RSVP to Gina DelRose at 815-547-7177 or gdelrose@ci.belvidere.il.us.

For more information on the 10 Year Plan, please visit the Lakota Group's website: <http://www.thelakotagroup.com/projects/belvidere-historic-preservation/>

The Witbeck Home



If Walls Could Talk
By: Kathy Sterbenc
BDR News Editor
 (Originally appeared
 in April 13, 1990 issue
 of BDR)

Address:
217 W. Hurlbut Ave.
Belvidere, IL 61008
Style:
Gothic Revival
Year Built:
1864

“Only four families have lived in the 126 year old house at 217 W. Hurlbut Ave., and all are descendants of the house’s builder, Isaac Witbeck. Isaac T. Witbeck was born in 1810 in Green County, N.Y. In 1854, he moved to Chicago and became a member of H. Witbeck & Company, a firm which manufactured carriages, wagons, plows, and other farm implements.

Witbeck came to Boone County in 1858 with his wife, Miranda Onderdonk, and they farmed in Flora Township for five years. He was a Flora Township supervisor and a founder and director of First National Bank. He also helped start Second National Bank. He moved to Belvidere in 1864 and built the house. After his death, Miranda sold the house to their son, John L. Witbeck.

John married Marietta Olney, a descendant of Thomas Olney of Hertfordshire, England. Thomas joined Roger Williams in establishing the colony of Providence, R.I., after their expulsion from Massachusetts colony for religious reasons. Thomas was a founder of First Baptist Church of Providence.

John Witbeck was the proprietor of Flora Meadows Stock Farm, located on the land he inherited from his father. John had more than 60 draft and trotting horses on the farm. He also kept a race horse in the barn behind Hurlbut house.

John worked in the lumber business with Tripp & Co. He eventually became vice president of First National Bank and director of both First and Second National Banks. John and Marietta sold the house in 1924 to their son, Olney Witbeck. Olney left the family farm to work in a pickle factory and then at National Sewing Machine Company.

He entered the furniture business in 1906, and later obtained his mortuary license. He bought the J.R. Balliet house at 203 Logan Ave. in 1937 and established the Witbeck-Wheeler Funeral Home. Olney and his wife, Jennie Bennet Witbeck, sold the house in 1929 to their daughter, Marie Louise, and her husband, Dr. Ross Edgar Hunt.

Mrs. Hunt helped organize the Community Concert Association, and served as its membership and drive chairwoman for some 40 years. She was instrumental in bringing such performers as the Boston Pops and Nelson Eddy to Belvidere. In 1979, she received the Belvidere Area Chamber of Commerce’s Doctor of Civic Betterment Award.

The Gothic Revival Style, popular in the U.S. from 1835-1860, was used for churches, civic buildings, and wooden and stone houses. Sharply pointed gables, lancet windows and wooden verge boards were used to give a medieval appearance. The Witbeck House has been sided, making it difficult to tell what the original wall surface was. But Gothic window ornamentation was left uncovered.

Perfectly preserved wooden verge boards decorate all of the gables. Coupled, round-headed windows with arched, drip moulding dominate the larger front gable. A sawn pilaster stands between those windows, and flat-sawn, floral ornamentation springs from the pilaster’s top. A double-hung window with six-over-six small panes (“lights”) fills the smaller front gable. Triangular “false shaping” is visible over many of the house’s windows. The shaping gives the illusion of Gothic pointed arches.

The Witbeck Home Continued...

The house used to have a wrap-around porch which extended from the front door around the east corner. It has original French doors in the front parlors. None of the partitions in the house have ever moved, Mrs. Hunt said. The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission recently designed the house as the city's second historic landmark, along with the Wildflower House, 410 E. Lincoln Ave.

The Progressive Dinner fundraiser was a huge success!

On September 9, 2017, the Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission hosted a Progressive Dinner Fundraiser to help raise money for their Landmark Property Maintenance Program. The dinner was very successful and enough money was raised to fund two separate grants for the 2018 grant cycle. We would like to thank the homeowners, sponsors, caterers and entertainment that helped make the night memorable for so many people.

Appetizer: The Alexander House (519 South Main Street), catered by Sheri Casey and sponsored by Debbie Carlson, Berkshire Hathaway Home Services.

Dinner: The Swift House (127 West Locust Street), catered by David and Lisa Kummerow, entertainment by Lee Gardner and sponsored by Attorney Nathan J. Noble and David and Lisa Kummerow.

Dessert: The Dunton House (401 East Lincoln Avenue), catered by Sheri Casey and sponsored by Ollmann Ernest Martin Architects and Dean's.

Please check the Upcoming Events section of the newsletter for more fundraisers and information about the grant program.



Resource Corner!

The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency is now known as the Illinois Historic Preservation Division of the Department of Natural Resources.

Information regarding property tax assessment freezes, historic preservation tax credits and other financial incentives can be found on their website. In addition to financial incentives, the Division also assists with architectural services, cemetery preservation, archaeology and preservation resources.

For more information please visit their website at: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnrhistoric/Pages/default.aspx>

How To Best Connect

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission will continue to create and distribute The History Keeper newsletter in 2018, 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.

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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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

Or find us on Facebook: **Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission**

Upcoming Events

Next Friends of Preservation Night

October 26, 2017 at 6:00 PM is the next Friends of Preservation Meeting. It will feature a woodworking preservation by Kris Bryan at Wooden It Be Nice, 419 East Pleasant Street. Kris has over 20 years of experience in the restoring business. He has restored cabinets, staircases, doors, trim, windows, etc.

The Lakota Group will also be hosting an open house for the City's 10 Year Historic Preservation Plan.

Upcoming Fundraisers

The Commission is planning two fundraisers. There will be a prohibition themed murder mystery at the Boone County Museum of History in January 2018 and a stained glass window tour highlighting the community's churches in the Spring of 2018.

Stay tuned for more details!

Hometown Christmas in Downtown Belvidere

December 1, 2017 kicks off this year's Hometown Christmas festivities! Please stop by the Boone County Historical Museum to say hi to the Belvidere Historical Preservation Commission members and ask questions or share stories. We love to hear them!

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 2018 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.

