

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:**

If Walls Could Talk	2
Artifacts Found	3
Resource Corner	3
Upcoming Events	4

# The History Keeper

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## Inaugural Meeting of Historic Landowners

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission hosted its inaugural Neighbors Night event on August 26, 2016 at the Boone County Historical Museum. Commissioners David and Lisa Kummerow gave a presentation on renovating historic properties. Van Dykes and Hafele Catalogs which list thousands of fixtures and architectural pieces that are appropriate for historic renovations were made available for attendees to review. The Horton Brass Catalog which was not available is also a great resource tool. See page 3 for other resources to utilize during renovation projects and research of structures and residents.



**The Swift House, 127 West  
Locust Street**

The night was a success thanks in part to the residents that were in attendance. They showed a true interest and dedication in preserving the heritage and history of Belvidere. Belvidere and the Commission is lucky to have residents that have such an appreciation for the City's past, present and future.

Due to this level of encouragement, the Commission intends to host a neighbors night event bi-monthly with presentations provided that would be beneficial to residents. The event is also intended to allow residents to meet each other and share stories and questions.



*Vintage post card of the State Street Bridge  
found on eBay*



*1938 Press Photo showing National Sewing  
Machine workers on strike*

# If Walls Could Talk



704 North State St.  
Belvidere, IL 61008

*This house is currently on the market. Any interested parties may contact the Belvidere Board of Realtors for inquiries.*  
215 N. State St.  
Belvidere, IL  
815-544-2719

Belvidere Daily Republican  
Friday, September 14, 1990  
If Walls Could Talk  
By Kathy Sterbenc

Address: 704 N State St  
Style: Colonial Revival  
Year Built: 1898

When Keith and Laurie Sofolo moved into the house at 704 N State St. three weeks ago, they had a feeling some prominent residents had lived there.

They were right—the place was home to a newspaper publisher, a postmaster, a teacher, and a senator's aide. This parade of professions belonged to one man— Frank T. Moran, who built the house in 1898.

## FRANK THOMAS MORAN

Frank Moran was born in Shirland, Illinois, on May 12, 1872, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth (Daily) Moran. After graduating from Rockford Academy, he taught in Winnebago County. While teaching, he became a correspondent for the Rockford newspaper (called the Morning Star, Morning Republican, and Rockford Daily Republican in biographical articles on Moran).

The Rockford paper finally hired Moran as a full-time reporter in the late 1880s, and he rose to the position of city editor within six years. In December 1892, Moran became editor of the Boone County Dispatch, which he co-published with T. Cole Anderson. Moran and Anderson sold their interest in the Dispatch a short time later to A. H. Keeler, and the paper's name became the Daily Northwestern.

In November 1894, after a brief return to the Rockford paper, Moran bought half-interest in the weekly Boone County Republican and co-published it with Charles Beverly.

As he prepared to print the first issue of the Boone County Republican as a daily — giving Belvidere two dailies— he and Beverly bought out the Daily Northwestern. Thus, the Belvidere Daily Republican was born.

Journalism wasn't Moran's only interest, although he once said he couldn't be dragged away from the job "even with a Gatling gun." He served as Belvidere's postmaster from 1901-1914, presiding when the new post office at State and Meadow streets was dedicated in 1910.

Moran was an aide to the U.S. Congressman Charles E. Fuller, who made him secretary of the U.S. House Committee of Invalid Pensions from 1919-1926.

He married Edna Galey on April 3, 1894, and they had two daughters, Bernita and Verona. An expert angler, he spent a lot of time fishing on Wisconsin's Lake Delavan and Long Lake.

He died, crippled by arthritis, on August 24, 1949. Edna Moran stayed in the house until her death in 1967.

# If Walls Could Talk Continued

THE HOUSE - Colonial Revival

The asymmetrical, two-story house still has its original oak floors on the first floor and pine floors upstairs. A fireplace with tile trim remains in the entry hall, flanked by sliding “pocket” doors leading to a dining room and parlor.

Oak pillars and other woodwork grace the entry hall. A six-paneled swinging door leads from the dining room to a pantry, its walls still lined with original cabinetry. A servant’s staircase leads from the pantry to the second floor.

Upstairs, a wide hallway divides four bedrooms. A transom window was placed over each bedroom door. The rooms on the Menominee Street side of the house are seven-sided, while the rooms on the other side have six sides.

The house features many window shapes, including a keyhole window in the south gable and a row of ribbon windows in the front gable. Pilasters flank the southern bay’s double windows on the second floor. Dentils and brackets ornament the house.

A one-story porch supported by classical columns wraps around the front and south side. Floral swags and festoons fill the porch gable over the front door.

## Artifacts Found During Renovations

Residents that attended the August 26, 2016 Neighbors Night brought in and/or discussed items that were found on their properties. A corset, large newspaper image and a letter from a local company was found in a kitchen ceiling and stories of dishware being found during a privy dig were shared.

Privy Digs are growing in popularity. Per Wikipedia, Privy digging is the process of locating and investigating the contents of defunct outhouse vaults. The purpose of privy digging is the salvage of antique bottles and everyday household artifacts from the past. Privy digging is a form of historical digging and is often conducted on private residential properties. Privies are also called pits, holes, and chambers.

Most privies are located behind the building or buildings which they served. In major urban areas, such as older cities on the US east coast, they are commonly found in the rear section of the residential lot and their size will vary considerably from place to place.

Some privy diggers also research excavation sites where old houses and other buildings, such as factories, saloons, and hotels once were. The use of heavy machinery can lead to indications of stone or brick structures and other subterranean anomalies being unearthed. This in turn can lead to discoveries of privies, cisterns, root cellars, and trash pits. Permission to salvage on these sites can lead to remarkable discoveries with relatively little physical effort but this is the exception to the rule.

*If you are interested in having a privy dig on your property please contact Anna Pivoras at the Boone County Historical Museum at 815-544-8391.*

## Resource Corner!

**The Boone County Historical Museum** at 314 South State Street has a vast collection of pictures, articles, artifacts and records.

**The Ida Public Library** at 320 North State Street can provide researchers with books, newspapers and some records.

There are many **catalogs** that one can purchase that lists historical fixtures for renovations and other items.



**Boone County Historical Museum. 314 South State**

## **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.

<http://www.ci.belvidere.il.us/departments/community-development/historic-preservation>

# Upcoming Events

## **Hometown Christmas in Downtown Belvidere**

December 2, 2016 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!

## **Next Neighbors Night**

The next neighbors night will be October 28, 2016. There will be a presenter providing the history of Belvidere.

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.



## **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.