

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

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Fall Fundraiser

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission will be hosting a fall fundraiser on October 17, 2020. Unlike fundraisers in the past, this one will be family friendly and take place outside with minimal contact between participants and volunteers. The focus of the fundraiser is to highlight historic properties, businesses and local lore while raising money for the Historic Property Maintenance Program.

What fun adventure is the Commission planning, you ask? Well it will be a city-wide scavenger hunt! Tickets will be \$20 for those over 16 and \$10 for those 15 and under. Lunch will be provided. Each car will make up a separate team, regardless of the number of occupants. Prizes will be awarded to the first three teams that successfully complete the scavenger hunt. Ticket sales and details will be announced on the Commission's Facebook page and in the Boone County Shopper.



Bowley



If Walls Could Talk
By: Kathy Sterbenc,
Belvidere Daily Re-
publican (Originally
appeared in Dec. 7,
1990 issue of BDR)

Address:
615 North State
Street.
Belvidere, IL 61008
Style: Colonial
Revival
Year Built: 1890s

A lover of music and nature, Bill Bowley was as dependable as a clock. For more than 50 years, he served as Boone County clerk and lived in the same Colonial Revival house at 615 N. State.

William Bowley Jr. was born May 13, 1862, in Belvidere, the son of Annie (Martin) and William Bowley Sr. His mother was a native of Cornwall, England. His father was a mill proprietor, with articles in the Belvidere Daily Republican saying he worked at the Big Thunder and Baltic Mills. He also was a founder of Belvidere's First Methodist Church.

Bowley was barely a teen-ager when his father was killed in an accident at the Baltic Mill. With a mother, two sisters, and a brother to help support, Bowley left grade school and entered the work force.

In 1889 he married Ida Miller. He opened a dry goods store at 517-519 S. State St. in the early 1890s, and was financially wiped out when fire destroyed his store in 1893. But then he campaigned for the office of Boone County clerk in 1894 and won, starting a 52-year career of public service.

Bowley issued thousands of marriage licenses during his tenure. Belvidere was a popular stop for newly-weds-to-be before state law required a waiting period for marriage licenses. Bowley would issue licenses at any time of the day or night and then keep the records locked away from reporters, according to his obituary in the Belvidere Daily Republican.

Bill and Ida adopted two daughters, Bessie and Gussie, and a son, Eldon. Ida died in July 1909.

Bowley was called "the father of Belvidere Park" after he helped clean up the park area, formerly known as Gooseberry Island, and formed the park board in 1919. Bowley also scouted northern Boone County for 1,700 young elm trees which were planted in Belvidere Park.

Bowley was responsible for the zigzag sewer system in Belvidere Park, forcing city workers to lay the pipes without removing a single tree.

An accomplished cornet player, he was a leading member of the popular Belvidere Brass Band and the Belvidere Silver Cornet Band. He played cornet during Maj. Gen. Stephen Hurlbut's funeral procession.

Bowley died Aug. 14, 1946, at home. He served 51 years, eight months and seven days in office, which officials said was the longest period anyone in the U.S. had served as county clerk.

Bowley's daughter, Bessie, who lived with her father, taught kindergarten in Belvidere for 35 years. She retired in 1940. Bessie stayed in the house until 1956, when Anno Karl Von Heimburg moved in. Bessie sold the house to Von Heimburg in 1960, but only with the approval of her neighbors, the Funderburgs, Von Heimburg said.

Von Heimburg, who still owns the house, was born in Cecil City, Wis., to Anno Erich Karl and Emma (Naber) Von Heimburg. His father owned the first dairy in northern Wisconsin, known as Marinette Dairy and later as Twin Cities Dairy.

Von Heimburg's father came to the U.S. at age 17 after failing a Latin class. Faced with the choice of taking the class again or joining the German army, Anno Erich picked option No. 3: leave the country.

The Von Heimburgs were barons before that political system was abandoned, and three German castles have been inked with their family.

Von Heimburg moved to Belvidere in 1952 and worked as superintendent of Our Own Dairy in Poplar Grove. He later worked as hydraulic assembler for John S. Barnes in Rockford, retiring after 29 years.

The Colonial Revival-style house was built in the shape of a Queen Anne home, said Kirk Gustafson, chairman of the Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission. Belt trim separates the first and second stories, and wooden shingles adorn the gable.

The corner windows are topped with brackets, and a round-headed window dominates the front gable. The full-facade, one-story front porch is supported with wooden columns on stone bases.

The original patterned wainscoting adorns the dining room walls, and leaded-glass windows remain throughout the house. A marble and wood, mirrored fireplace still stands in the living room. On the mantle Von Heimburg keeps the clock that Bowley himself placed there in the 1890s after the house was built.

2020 Historic Preservation Awards

The difficult decision was made to cancel the 2020 Historic Preservation Awards. This would have been the 9th year for the awards and we were excited to honor those property owners that have gone the extra mile in improving their properties. We plan on awarding the selected 2020 winners at the 2021 Awards Program.

In the meantime, if you have noticed a property that has improved their yard, porch, windows, painting, etc., please be neighborly and give them the recognition they deserve. We can all appreciate receiving good will in these chaotic times.



Although there will not be an official Awards Program, we do want to thank the Funderburg family and K-B Farms for graciously donating the residence at 605 North State Street to the Boone County Museum of History. We are excited about the endless possibilities that this donation provides to the Museum and the community.

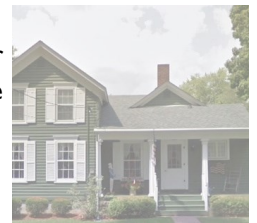
THANK YOU!

2020 Historic Property Maintenance Program

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission awards two property maintenance grants for exterior renovations. 405 West Hurlbut Avenue was awarded funds to assist in repainting the exterior of the home and 127 West Locust Street was awarded funds to assist in repairing windows and trim.



The Historic Property Maintenance Program is funded by various fundraisers hosted by the Commission and Images of America book sales. Any property that is locally or nationally landmarked or located within a registered historic district is eligible to apply for the annual grant funds to assist in exterior renovations.



Downtown Façade Improvement Grant

The Downtown Façade Improvement Grant is funded by the City of Belvidere's video gaming revenue. Due to Covid-19, this funding source was impacted when video gaming machines were shut down for two months. This caused a delay in determining available grant funds. Four applications have been received but a final decision has yet to be made regarding allotments.

Resource Corner!

Facebook can be a great place to learn about history! Here are some pages that we think are worth checking out:

<https://www.facebook.com/IllinoisHistoricCommissions>; <https://www.facebook.com/landmarksill>; https://www.facebook.com/Illinois-State-Historical-Society-112877422100328/?ref=page_internal

How To Best Connect

The Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission will continue to create and distribute The History Keeper newsletter in 2021 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 and 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 29 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**

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

ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Courthouse Square Phase III Survey

The Lakota Group has completed surveying the Courthouse Square Phase III area and will be producing a draft document by the end of September. Once this document is completed it will be posted on the City of Belvidere's website.

The survey will include architectural as well as historical information about each property.

To view the work completed so far please visit: <https://www.ruskinarc.com/lakota-group/belvidere/map>

Historic US Route 20 Association

The Historic US Route 20 Association released a map of Route 20 that lists several Belvidere locations and businesses to visit while traveling. A limited number of maps are available to the public at the Community Development Department. 401 Whitney Boulevard.

New Belvidere Historic Preservation Commission Member!

Anna Pivoras' term has ended on the Commission. Anna is the Executive Director of the Boone County Museum of History and brought a wealth of knowledge and enthusiasm to the Commission.

Although she is irreplaceable, we are excited to welcome Sonya Dobberfuhr to the Commission! Sonya retired from the Maywood Fire Department as Captain. She also has experience with the Maywood Historic Preservation Commission, Frank Lloyd Wright Trust, Chicago Historical Society and Chicago Architectural.

