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ALTON AREA LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION

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ESTABLISHED MCMLXXX

ALTONLANDMARKS.ORG

*54th
Annual*

HISTORIC HOUSE TOUR

THIS IS YOUR TICKET  CARRY IT WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2026 | NOON-5PM

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Alton Area Landmarks Association was founded in 1970 during an effort to save the old GM&O Railroad Station from demolition. Support was widespread, but the building was razed for the William L. Beatty Federal Building and United States Courthouse on Belle Street. In order to promote the architectural heritage of the greater Alton area, the Historic House Tour was started in 1971.

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*Please read prior to
beginning our
historic home tour.*

TOUR GUIDELINES

The following guidelines have been established to ensure safety both to the properties on the tour and to our visitors.

- No food or drink.
- No smoking in the structures or on any premises on the tour.
- Please, no taking pictures inside homes.
- Remember to walk on runners or keep to pathed areas.
- Please do not open closets, drawers or doors that are closed. These houses are not for sale. Please respect the owner's privacy.



IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTICE

It is the very nature of a historic home tour to involve inherent hazards due to the age, design and layout of the sites involved. There may be conditions that will prevent a participant with physical limitations from safely taking the tour. The sites are privately owned and maintained and owners do not receive compensation for having their site on the tour.

Participants may encounter steep stairs, stairs without railings, uneven floors/walkways/porches, slick walking surfaces, low head clearances, drop-offs, to name but just a few of the possible situations. Neither AALA, nor the homeowners, shall be held responsible for injuries or accidents. By participating in this home tour, it is assumed that you understand and accept these conditions.

Each site is examined for obvious situations and hazards that may be present prior to the tour day. Hosts and hostesses are placed in the home on the day of the tour to help safely guide participants and warn them of any possible hazards, as well as narrate pertinent historical facts. Sometimes rooms or areas may be cordoned off or closed entirely due to safety concerns. However, due care and caution is required of all participants. Children must be closely supervised and controlled at all times.

If you are involved with an injury or accident at one of the sites during this tour, it is your responsibility to immediately report this to the owner or host/ hostess or both.

If you have purchased this ticket and now feel that you are unwilling or unable to accept these conditions, please return it, prior to use, to any of our ticket selling locations for a full refund of the purchase price.

Thank you for coming and please safely enjoy the tour!

TOUR SITES

*You may begin at any site
and proceed in any order.*

- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| 1. GEORGE & ANNE E.
HOPKINS HOUSE
<i>626 E 15th Street</i> | 3. THOMAS P. DOOLING
HOUSE
<i>1315 Washington Avenue</i> | 6. CATHOLIC CHILDREN'S HOME
<i>1400 State Street</i> | 9. JOSEPH & RACHEL
GRATIAN HOUSE
<i>603 Easton Street</i> |
| 2. SAMUEL H. WYSS
DRUGSTORE & FLAT
BUILDING
<i>629 Ridge Street</i> | 4. MAIN STREET UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH
<i>1400 Main Street</i> | 7. WIND DRIFT
CONDOMINIUM
<i>120 Windward Place</i> | 10. BRUCH-GUERTLER
HOUSE
<i>101 Blair Avenue</i> |
| | 5. MCPIKE MANSION
<i>2018 Alby Street</i> | 8. OLMSTEAD-MOOK
HOUSE
<i>1252 State Street</i> | |



Not part of the
official tour.

OTHER HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

WALL OF FIRST ILLINOIS
STATE PRISON
*William Street, between Broadway
and Wall Street*

CONFEDERATE CEMETERY
635 Rozier Street

ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY
MONUMENT
5th and Monument Street

ROBERT WADLOW STATUE
2810 College Avenue

LYMAN TRUMBULL HOUSE
1105 Henry Street





GEORGE & ANNE E. HOPKINS HOUSE

*Middletown
Historic District*

Address

626 EAST FIFTEENTH STREET

Built

1905

Owners

KITTY & MIKE
HARTMANN

HISTORY

This handsome house was built for George E. Hopkins in 1905. Mr. Hopkins was born in Alton in 1862, the son of George K. and Mary B. Hopkins. He married Anne Eaton of Springfield, Missouri in 1887. Mrs. Hopkins was born in Maine, and she moved in prominent social circles. The couple had a son, Kendall E. Hopkins.

Mr. Hopkins was educated in Alton and lived here most of his life. He worked in the wholesale drug business conducted by his father and remained with that firm after their move to St. Louis. Mr. Hopkins was one of the oldest commuters going daily to St. Louis on the Chicago & Alton and Big Four trains. He was a member of the Alton Country Club and a local champion golfer. In 1917, the family moved to St. Louis. Mr. Hopkins died at age 58 in 1920. Mrs. Hopkins died in 1952 at the age of 87. They are buried in Oakwood Cemetery.

The house has been home for a number of families over time. For more than 30 years the home was owned by Henry V. Boehl, pronounced “Bale”—the neighbors called him “Cotton.” In the early 1980s, Neil A. and Emily Schultz owned the home. In July 1982, they wrote the names of their three sons, Joey, Ben, and Andy, in the wet cement on the back porch. Current owner, Kitty Hartmann, carefully preserved the part of the concrete with their names when the rear of the house was resurfaced.

Kitty and Mike Hartmann acquired the house in 2021. Kitty especially enjoys restoring old homes and appreciates the beauty of the Middletown Historic District. This house is her third renovation in Alton.

Kitty pays close attention to detail to make the house look as close to the original as possible. One of the biggest jobs so far has been installing 5-inch copper gutters and 4-inch round down spouts reflective of the original appearance. Exterior paint, as well as repairs to the front porch and back deck, have also been significant efforts. At some point, siding was applied over the original wood clapboards. All old cracked concrete sidewalks have been replaced for safety. The limestone steps in the front are original. The stone wall in the front is a later addition. A new fence surrounds the garden planted with more perennial plants. Hail damage this spring has resulted in a new roof.

Inside, the wood floors on the main floor are original. Five-panel doors, trim and hardware are intact throughout the house. New paint was completed throughout. The kitchen has a new tin ceiling and open shelving to display the owners’ collection of dishes. The fireplace has been redone to resemble tile work that would have been typical of the original period. At an earlier date, a back staircase was converted into a powder room and the landing became a closet. The 2nd floor full bath was a total renovation now featuring a cast iron claw foot tub. All toilets, faucets and light fixtures have been replaced. William Morris wallpaper adorns some walls, including Strawberry Thief in the dining room. Whimsical Hygge & West “daydream” wallpaper is in the upstairs bathroom. Note the beautiful antiques handed down from the owners’ grandparents as well as quilts and baskets collected by Kitty over the years.

ARCHITECTURE

This two-story wood frame house has four bedrooms and 1 ½ baths in more than 1,600 square feet. The roof has front gables. A full-width porch and bay windows admit light and ventilation. The single car garage is entered through an alley at the back. The home is located on a red brick street in the Middletown Historic District.

2



SAMUEL H. WYSS DRUGSTORE & FLAT BUILDING

Middletown

Address

629 RIDGE STREET

Built

1902

Owner

KYLE HULKER

HISTORY

Alton architect Lucas Pfeifferberger designed this drugstore and flat (apartment) building for Samuel H. Wyss in 1902. It was Mr. Wyss's second Alton drugstore designed by the architect. Contractors Wuellner & Hellrung submitted the best bid for \$3,440.30 as shown in Lucas Pfeifferberger's Personal Notebook.

Samuel H. Wyss was born in Alton in 1860. He was the son of a Swiss immigrant. Mr. Wyss was a druggist who earned a pharmacy degree from the National College of Pharmacy in Chicago in 1887. He married Dorothy Emert in 1893 and they had five children and many grandchildren. The family belonged to St. Mary's Church and helped the new parish school and convent grow.

Also in 1902, Mr. Wyss became the first president of Alton Banking & Trust Co. He was an investor who acquired a lot of farmland in the rich American Bottom area. Mr. Wyss belonged to the Knights of Columbus, Elks and Western Catholic Union. He died in 1936 and was buried in St. Anthony's Cemetery.

In 1905, the building was occupied by grocer J.T. Weirich. The upstairs apartment housed a glassblower and his family. Later on J.P. Dunn owned a grocery for a number of years. From 1919–1945, Daniel Hoeber and family had a grocery store and later a Schlitz beer distributorship in the property.

Many fondly remember the store as Mook's Art Supplies run by artists Ed and Doris Mook from 1963–1990. Previously, they had replaced auto glass. Mr. Mook painted watercolors of the riverfront. Mrs. Mook made tole paintings, baskets, and framed art for clients. Mr. Mook started painting more and more, he needed to frame his work and thus the art business was born.

The current owner is Kyle Hulker of Bluebird Tattoo. He has retained the old cast iron storefront and red brick sidewalk. The original tin ceiling is in fine condition and painted gold. Mr. Hulker designed the new mural on the 7th Street wall. It features an Alton postage stamp with the Pink Panther rolling it back. Joe Albanese painted it. A deck is planned for the top of the garage in the rear of the building. Upstairs, he remodeled the two-bedroom apartment rental with huge pocket doors, 13-foot ceilings plus updated kitchen and bath.

ARCHITECTURE

The two story brick structure has two bands of decorative brick running along the parapet wall. Chimneys rise from the walls. The foundation and steps are of massive limestone slabs. Segmental arches crown the second floor windows. The original cast iron storefront remains. Large windows admit ample light and allow for tempting product displays. Inside the shop decor is light blue and white with black accents. The building is located in the Hunterstown neighborhood.

3



THOMAS P. DOOLING HOUSE

Upper Alton

Parking on Benbow

Address

1315 WASHINGTON AVENUE

Built

CA. 1890

Owner

JEFFREY DALE

HISTORY

Orson Hewitt was the first known owner of this house built around 1890, occupying it until about 1902. Mr. Hewitt was a merchant. The property was known as the Orson Hewitt place for many years when it was the only house on the 10-lot block surrounded by Washington, Benbow, Main and Bloomfield. With 3,400 square feet, the dwelling was considered a mansion in its day.

Traveling salesman Thomas A. Rice owned the property for several years. In 1909, Thomas P. Dooling bought the dwelling from Mr. Rice. Mr. Dooling was a renowned local educator and principal, superintendent of Madison County schools, justice of the peace and later manager of the Alton Coal Company. He married Rilla Harris of Fosterburg. They had children Thomas, Paul, Edna and Clyde. Paul served in World War I. Mr. Dooling died in 1930. Then Mrs. Dooling made the house into apartments. One night in 1938, a window crashing to the ground awoke Mrs. Dooling during a house fire that damaged the north section of the home. The fire department arrived in time to rescue two women tenants and extinguish the blaze. In 1942, Mrs. Dooling died at home.

In 1990, the home was listed as vacant in the Alton City Directories available at Hayner Genealogy & Local History Library in downtown Alton. In 1991, the home was on the city condemned structure list. The intrepid Dale family purchased it in that year and performed a complete "gut" rehab over the past 35 years. The first task was removing trash that covered the floors throughout the house, in some rooms waist-high. The owners disposed of more than 300 lawn and garden bags of debris. The walls were covered with multiple layers of wallpaper over crumbling plaster that could not be saved. After rewiring and new plumbing, the lath was replaced and covered with drywall. There are 3–4 bedrooms and 2 ½ baths. Five original fireplaces and three chimneys remain. Modern amenities include central air, central vacuum, intercoms, a second-floor laundry, office, off-street parking and a pool.

ARCHITECTURE

The house is in the Italianate style popular in the United States from 1840–1885. The 3,400 square foot home is a two-story wood frame building. Oriented toward light and warmth from southern sunshine, it has a front gable with wings. The foundation is limestone. The roof has a low slope originally covered with slate. Wide overhanging eaves are supported by double decorative brackets on the frieze. Tall narrow double windows have bracketed crowns above. The trim is original around modern replacement windows. The front door on the south porch is original with a brass doorbell stamped, *Patented 1863*. Stately mature trees shade this venerable historic home in Upper Alton.

4



MAIN STREET UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Upper Alton

*The building is fully
handicapped accessible.*



*Learn more about the church's
many offerings here:
www.altonmainstreetumc.org*

Address

1400 MAIN STREET

Built

1973

Owner

MAIN STREET UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH

HISTORY

In 1817, Methodism came to the Alton area when a group of six Methodists formed the first Methodist fellowship in Upper Alton. In 1923, two Methodist churches sold their buildings: the Washington Avenue Methodist Church at 711 Washington to the Jewish community for a synagogue, and the Wesley Chapel at 2014 Main Street to the Ku Klux Klan. Then they purchased the present site on Main Street and Benbow Avenue and they consolidated into one congregation.

By 1962, a frame tabernacle, church and new brick parsonage had been built. In 1972, the church started to build the present sanctuary. The first service was held in 1973. The educational building, library and lobby were added by 2000.

Crosses mark the holiness of the site and the religion as Christian. The steeple on the roof is surmounted by a cross. On the north face of the sanctuary, a large silver-toned cross rests upon a section of stone. Next to the entry door is the United Methodist insignia, a black cross with red flames that are a reminder of Pentecost when the power of the Holy Spirit unified witnesses who saw "tongues, as of fire."

On the east side, a parabolic arch marks the entry to the sanctuary. Above it is a quatrefoil, the four-lobed frame often thought to signify the four apostles who wrote the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The frame surrounds the Chi Rho, a symbol of Christ made with the first two letters of Christ's name written in Greek.

Over its 209-year history, many leaders have led thousands of members of the church. One of those members, Robert Wadlow, has a building named in his memory. The current pastor is Nicholas Gleason.

ARCHITECTURE

MSUMC is a striking example of Midcentury Modern architecture as shown by the A-frame design over multi-toned brick walls. The A-frame elevates the religious experience as it points heavenward. One benefit of the steeply sloped roof is its ability to shed water rapidly, important where the average precipitation is nearly 40 inches per year. On the south side a mansard roof protects those approaching the church through the covered entryway. The rest of the complex has a flat roof. Its modern style of architecture is marked by honesty in materials. Wood, stone and brick are exposed, not concealed by plaster. The choice of building materials reflect those used locally, helping to unify the complex with the neighborhood.

Inside the sanctuary, the ceiling of dark wood seems to soar towards the heavens, evoking a feeling of awe. A large cross hangs above the altar. The sanctuary has a pipe organ as well as grand piano. Colorful art glass fills three triangular gable dormers in the roof. A band of windows runs along the lower walls, displaying messages about the faith as they cast an otherworldly light. A handout about the windows will be available at the tour.

In 2024, the church planted a community orchard along Washington Street. The orchard contains six heritage apple trees chosen for the site by Patrick Gibson of Heritage Farm and Fruit Trees in Godfrey. The orchard is designed to provide fresh fruit to the community from mid-summer through frost, roughly July–November. It's location along the sidewalk on Washington Street makes it easy for pedestrians to stop and pick a snack. The church will have lunch and refreshments (baked goods and beverages) available for a suggested donation. Also, JoDell Langdon from Colombiana Country Store in Grafton will sell her fresh baked goods and Amish-made jams.

5



MCPIKE MANSION

*National Register
of Historic Places*

*Information:
mcpikemansion.com
618-830-2179*

Illustration by Ruth Means

Address

2018 ALBY STREET

Built

1868

Owners

SHARYN &
GEORGE LUEDKE

On the National and State Registers of Historic Places, Mount Lookout Park was the proud name for this beautiful mansion Henry Guest McPike constructed on his 15-acre estate. The 16-room house was designed by prominent Alton architect Lucas Pfeifferberger. At the height of his fortunes and political prominence, McPike chose a Second Empire Italianate Style with a French mansard roof. Magnificently, the structure's symmetrical arched dormers look out on his elaborately planted estate above Piasa Valley.

Undertaken when Pfeifferberger was 35 years old, it is one of the earliest houses he is known to have planned as well as one of the most graceful. The three-story brick structure holds 7,000 sq. ft. The mansard roof and dormer windows were borrowed from the redesign of Paris, France during the Second Empire reign of Napoleon III. The style became popular in the American Northeast and Midwest from 1860–1880, especially after 1870. Italianate characteristics include overhanging eaves supported by brackets and tall arched windows. Scrollwork makes the brackets extra fancy.

Fronted by the original iron fence, one can only imagine how beautiful the garden was, as Mr. McPike was a charter member of the Horticultural Society of Illinois. He developed and patented the McPike Grape sold throughout the United States. He was also a member of the committee to bring the Lincoln Douglas Debates to Alton in 1858 and sat on the platform with Mr. Lincoln as the Republican Representative, a highlight in his life. As recorder of deeds in Madison County, his position enabled him to make his living in real estate. He was prominent in community matters. As mayor of Alton for two terms (1887–91), he was able to promote many improvements to the city, such as sidewalks.

The restoration is ongoing. The Alton Historic Commission awarded the Luedkes with a certificate for work on the sunroom and 55 windows. Eric Lavelle is the masterly skilled carpenter that allows this restoration to continue.

Since buying the mansion, the Luedkes have undertaken major renovation. The building was stabilized, a new roof applied, and the entire building tuck pointed. The front porch, sunroom and 55 windows have been restored and many unseen endeavors accomplished. The repair of the eaves and box gutters is completed. This year's accomplishments include finishing replacing 200 floor joists. Weather damage necessitated a new roof. A ramp to the first floor in the rear makes the mansion accessible to more visitors. The next adventure will be installation of second story floorboards.

The first floor with gift shop can now be visited as well as the vaulted wine cellar in the basement. Grounds can be visited 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily.

Currently, the McPike Mansion can be reserved for weddings, birthdays and special events. Tours of the grounds and wine cellar can be arranged. Restoration can be followed on the McPike Facebook page. A schedule and reservations for tours may be made on the website www.mcpikemansion.com.



CATHOLIC
CHILDREN'S
HOME



Address

1400 STATE STREET

Built

1923

Owner

DIOCESE OF
SPRINGFIELD
IN ILLINOIS

HISTORY

Probably no building in Alton has been home to as many souls as the Catholic Children's Home (CCH). In its 147th year of service, CCH's mission is to aid, protect and care for the needs, education and welfare of children and families without regard to poverty, riches, race, religion or national origin.

CCH began when a group of Sisters, now called Adorers of the Blood of Christ, started the Pio Nono Orphan Asylum in 1879 in Piopolis, IL. In 1884, they were invited to help Alton's growing population of children in need. At first, they used the former James H. Lea home on Prospect Street, but by the early 1900s, it became apparent that a larger building was needed.

After the 1918 influenza epidemic, Bishop James Ryan of the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul wrote to his priests, "The influenza has crowded the orphanage as to render imperative no further delay in the new building." Bishop Ryan led the people of the Diocese to raise over \$355,000 in 1919, and in March, land at 1400 State Street was purchased from the estate of John Hayner.

The present building was built to house 500 youth. Every precaution was taken to ensure their safety. Built of fireproof brick, each floor had balconies with staircases for easy egress. Fire-resistant marble staircases, tile floors, terrazzo and plaster are used throughout. A separate structure was built to house two boilers to ensure heat was always available.

CCH's goal has always been to prepare children for a life of usefulness and responsibility. Boys learned how to repair shoes and to bake in 175-loaf-capacity ovens. In the sewing rooms, girls learned to make their own clothes. Talented scholars received advanced education.

Under the direction of Michael Montez, a Memory Room has been established where former residents can come to learn about their family history. The room contains numerous artifacts and historical references. It will be available during the tour.

ARCHITECTURE

This huge, five-story structure has 177 rooms, equivalent in square footage to three football fields. Masons built the ground floor with limestone during the first building season, and it remains waterproof to this day. They built the walls from yellow brick with matching mortar, a color that gives a feeling of warmth and hope. The flat roof is topped with a crenellated parapet wall, and stone drip bands and copper downspouts direct water away from the building.

The entrance portico is clad in Bedford limestone from southern Indiana, one of the finest building stones in the world because of its uniform appearance, beautiful color, and structural stability. Bedford stone has been used in tens of thousands of buildings in the United States including the Lincoln Memorial and Empire State Building.

Low walls made of large blocks on either side of the granite steps help support the weight of the portico with two balconies above it. Inscribed on a panel are Christ's words, "Suffer little children to come unto me." Crockets resembling stems of Brussel sprouts crown the arches and help shed rain away from the structure.

Hundreds of original wood windows with stone sills remain. They admit abundant light and ventilation. Some have segmental brick arches with keystones.

Priceless maple, ginkgo, oak, pine and tulip trees soar above the front grounds, providing shade and privacy.



WIND DRIFT CONDOMINIUM

Christian Hill

Address

120 WINDWARD PLACE

Built

1988

Owner

CONYA COWAN

HISTORY

Location, location, location! Because this residence is less than 50 years old, it is not yet considered "historic." But the owner has graciously opened it for the AALA tour to showcase two things: 1) it perches atop the limestone bluffs with a spectacular view of the Mississippi River, the reason Alton exists, from the patio and deck, and 2) it has several distinctive architectural modifications inside. We hope you enjoy them! The home is part of the Wind Drift Condominiums in development since 1988.

Current owner, Conya Cowan, acquired the property in 2021. Ms. Cowan describes her decorating style as Western Forward Boho, and she likes to collect dishes. Her favorite things about the condo are the massive stone fireplace and the expansive view. The loft houses the library.

Ms. Cowan has been a hairdresser for 47 years and owns Fringe Salon Studio in Alton.

ARCHITECTURE

There are three bedrooms and two baths in 2,220 square feet on three levels. Special features include a vaulted ceiling, loft, open floor plan, hardwood floors, wood-burning fireplace, walk-in closets, walk-out basement and two parking spaces. It is located adjacent to the end of Jefferson Street.

8



OLMSTEAD-MOOK HOUSE

Christian Hill

Address

1252 STATE STREET

Built

CA. 1910

Owner

MICHELLE CAMPBELL
& PAUL GOEWERT

HISTORY

This home appears in the 1910–11 Alton City Directory for the first time with John W. Olmstead in residence. The architect and builder are unknown at this time.

Mr. Olmstead started out as a news agent for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in town. He and his wife, Sue Lowe, had two children. He soon became a real estate developer who specialized in building small homes for people of small incomes to help them become homeowners. He built at least 250 homes. Mr. Olmstead developed most of the old Percisval tract on State Street and West 9th Street as well as many other parts of Alton. Mr. Olmstead was from Springfield, Missouri. He lived in Alton about 44 years and was described as “a man’s man” and a storyteller with a delightful sense of humor. The family moved from the house about 1919.

The house was rented out as two units for most of the 1920s. In 1928, the next owner was Emil G. Mook, a son of Phillip Mook, who had emigrated from Germany in the 1800s. Mr. Emil Mook was trained as a painter, a pupil of painter Paul Harney, and student at the St. Louis School of Fine Arts. For 29 years, Mr. Mook was a printer in business with his older brothers, Charles and Fred. Their printing shop was located at 317 Belle Street. The business ran for 52 years.

Mr. Mook and his wife, Lottie Snively, raised their two children, Ed and Virginia, in the home. Virginia was at the top of her class in the arts at the University of Chicago. Mr. Mook died at age 68 in 1946.

Then Ed and his wife, Doris, raised their three children in the house. They ran an auto glass replacement business for 30 years. Later, they also owned Mook’s Art Supplies at 629 Ridge Street (also on the 2026 Historic Home Tour). Ed painted watercolors of the riverfront. Doris made tole paintings and wove baskets. As Ed created more and more, he needed to frame his work, and thus their art business was born. Many remember buying their arts supplies at the store. Ed died in 2010 at age 90, and Doris died in 2023 at the age of 99. The family sold the house after 96 years of ownership.

The current owners are Michelle Campbell and Paul Goewert. They acquired the property in spring 2026. They have refinished floors and are busy refreshing the home. They have enjoyed restoring a number of other old homes in Alton.

ARCHITECTURE

Inside, there are four bedrooms and three baths. This home has a steeply sloped side gable roof with cross gambrels on the east and west sides as seen in the Dutch Colonial style. A small gable rises over a bay window on the south side. The gables have diamond shingles while the main floor has clapboard siding. Note the three diamond-shaped windows. Much of the original hardwood flooring, trim, six-panel doors and hardware remain. The house rests on a foundation of limestone built into the hillside overlooking a pond. Graceful pines provide shade and screening.



JOSEPH & RACHEL
GRATIAN HOUSE

Middletown
Historic District

Address

603 EASTON STREET

Built

1858

Owner

MEREDITH &
JESSE GERNIGIN

HISTORY

The Joseph Gratian House sheltered three generations of pipe organ builders and musicians. Mr. Gratian was an English immigrant. The house was built in 1858. His pipe organs graced many churches throughout the region. He was a composer and collected pipe organ music. He and wife, English immigrant Rachel, had three children. Sadly, Joseph died from falling plaster in a tornado in East St. Louis in 1897 and is buried in Alton City Cemetery.

Son John W. learned the family business and later improved the house. He married Katherine Warren and had three children. Their son, William E., carried on the family tradition until the sale of the company in 1932. He married Blanche Jones and they had a son. William E. opened Central Sales Co. on East Broadway selling auto supplies for many years. In 1934, a fire started by a spark from the flue destroyed most of the roof. Grandfather Joseph's organ music collection was lost. The family owned the home until the early 1940s.

Beginning in 1960, Edwin and Jane Sasek owned the house for six decades. The couple met while in college in Iowa and had six boys and one girl. Mr. Sasek was a World War II veteran. He was in the insurance business for many years and owned Ed Sasek and Associates. He was an avid outdoorsman and watercolor painter. The couple loved gardening, camping, canoeing and travel. They belonged to St. Mary's Catholic Church where Ed served at the 6:30 a.m. Mass into his 80s. Mr. Sasek retired at age 87. Mrs. Sasek died in 2016 at age 92. Mr. Sasek died three years later at age 94. They are buried in St. Joseph's Cemetery.

In 2020, Meredith and Jesse Gernigin bought the house from the Sasek family. They live there with their six-year-old son, Atlas. Inside, the original staircase and woodwork are intact. They redid the attic into a hidden guestroom.

The home is full of color. The Gernigins painted the outside of the house a bright gold reflecting Meredith's favorite bird, the goldfinch, and planted sunflowers in the garden for them. Meredith painted the graceful sidewalk with pomegranate and snake designs on a light blue ground. Meredith is an artist and her home studio will be open to visit during the tour.

ARCHITECTURE

The home has more than 2,500 feet of living space on two floors. It is of wood frame construction and retains its original clapboard siding. The roof is a cross gable design with several projecting bays. Two chimneys remain. The original windows were four-over-four panes. The asymmetrical full width porch wraps around on the south side. The home was raised twice on its limestone foundation due to changing grades from road construction. There are 4 bedrooms and 1 ½ baths. The home sits on red-bricked Easton Street with the old brick walk on the south side. It is one of the oldest homes in the Middletown Historic District.

10



BRUCH- GUERTLER HOUSE

*Illinois Register
of Historic Places*

*National Register
of Historic Places*

*A hands-on historic window restoration
workshop will take place here on October
10. See page 35 for information.*

Address

101 BLAIR AVENUE

Built

1854

Owner

JAMES &
YVETTE PARIS

HISTORY

Don't let its modest size fool you. The Bruch-Guertler House has long been recognized for its unusual importance. A 2005 Alton Telegraph article reported that the chairman of the Preservation Council in Springfield described the property as "second only to Lincoln's home in terms of historical importance in Illinois."

Why is this small stone Alton home so significant?

The house was designed and built by Ignatz Bruch, a master stonemason born in Baden, Germany, in 1822. Bruch immigrated to the United States in 1846 and settled in Alton by 1850. He acquired property here beginning in 1852, and the cottage was constructed around 1853–1854, probably using limestone quarried from the bluff behind it.

During his brief career in Alton, Bruch established a successful masonry business, producing curbstones, culverts, sills, monuments, and other stonework. In 1855, Ignatz and his brother Valentin received the stone contract for Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church on State Street. Bruch died in 1860 at only 38 years old.

ARCHITECTURE

The one-and-a-half-story cottage combines a traditional Federal house form with remarkably unusual Gothic Revival stonework. Its defining features are the carefully shaped pointed stone arches surrounding the windows and entrance—Gothic forms rarely found in residential architecture west of the Allegheny Mountains at the time.

The 1974 National Register nomination called the house "the unaltered work of a master-mason-builder" and, architecturally and artistically, "a unique work." Bruch's craftsmanship is also evident in the massive dressed-stone railings at the entrance, intricately carved with intertwined oak leaves and acorns.

Beneath the front portion of the house is an impressive stone-vaulted cellar. The house was heated with Franklin stoves rather than fireplaces. An attached summer kitchen, separate from the main structure, once stood at the rear of the house, and included its own basement and cistern supplied by rainwater collected from the roof. The summer kitchen no longer survives.

Equally remarkable is the house's survival. When nominated to the National Register in 1974, no plumbing or concealed electrical wiring had ever been installed. Preservationists emphasized the relationship between the house, limestone bluff and surrounding landscape, describing the property as offering a rare sense of being placed "within another age."

The Bruch-Guertler House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 30, 1974, and on the Illinois Register of Historic Places in 1984.

PRESERVATION TODAY

Yvette and James Paris purchased the house in early 2026, continuing preservation efforts begun by its former owner, who stabilized the masonry and addressed damaging water intrusion. Since May, the couple has partnered with local father-and-daughter carpenters Eric and Claire LaVelle on the next phase of restoration.

For the Paris family, preserving the Bruch-Guertler House is both a labor of love and an act of stewardship—continuing the work of those who came before them so that Bruch's remarkable craftsmanship and this important piece of Alton history have a solid future.

3 THREA

TO ALTON'S HISTORIC DISTRICTS

*By Terry Sharp,
President, Alton
Area Landmarks
Association*

Alton has the distinction of having three registered national historic districts, Christian Hill, Middletown and Upper Alton. These add character to our city and remind residents and visitors alike about our rich and diverse history. But these historic districts are under attack by three recent trends that erode their integrity and threaten the very character of Alton—the replacement of original wood windows with plastic or metal windows, the use of plastic siding, and the demolition of historic homes to make way for modern structures. Historic structures can be a challenge. They can be expensive to maintain, if regular maintenance has been deferred. But as stewards of these historic districts, we must maintain them appropriately. If we do not, Alton's character and history will be irrevocably lost.

WIS

THE FIRST THREAT is modern replacement windows. Alton's historic homes were built with wood-framed windows. Why keep them? Windows are the EYES of a building. And like human eyes, windows convey the age and personality of a place. Historic windows provide visual depth to the architecture. The National Trust for Historic Preservation gives a multitude of reasons why repair and maintenance of windows is the best choice, economically and practically. Most importantly, taking away original windows, and insensitive replacement effectively ruins the historic integrity, not only of your home or building, but this also permanently alters and makes a community or historic district NOT recognizable as historic. This in effect also damages the worth of the home/building and lowers the worth of the property and the neighborhood. We urge old house owners to

attend one of the available workshops on how to maintain their windows.

THE SECOND THREAT is from artificial siding. Alton's historic homes were built with bricks or wood siding. Why use wood siding and not plastic? Plastic looks like plastic. We all recognize that, as a material, plastic is not only cheap/inexpensive, but it looks low-quality and inappropriate on a historic house. While the argument for plastic is that it requires "no maintenance," what they are not telling you is that these products indeed cannot BE maintained. Vinyl and aluminum can only be replaced. The marketing will not tell you that the common replacement windows will start to break down and need to be replaced in as little as two years. Vinyl siding will fade, will be damaged by wear or by weather and it cannot be painted or repaired, only replaced. Also, in the event of fire of course these materials are incredibly toxic as they are burning or melting.

THE THIRD THREAT to our historic districts is existential, the complete replacement of historic homes with modern ones. This threat can literally destroy the whole idea of a historic district. A good example is Kirkwood, Missouri. The North Taylor Historic District contains less than 200 homes, yet ten historic houses have been demolished so that developers could acquire the lots to build new houses. An 1850s house is soon to be the eleventh. The Historic District is now over 5% new houses, and more demolitions may be on the way if Kirkwood cannot strengthen its preservation ordinance. Historic districts are very desirable neighborhoods to live in. But when is a historic district (certified by the Department of the Interior), not a historic district? When 10% of the contributing historic homes are demolished? Or 20%? Or 30%? Don't be fooled into thinking a new house designed to look like a 1890s house is a good substitute. These historic districts are not New Town or Disneyland. No new house is a replacement for an authentic historic house. The truth is that people are buying genuine historic homes ostensibly to live in but then claiming the old structures cannot be feasibly renovated and must be torn down and replaced with something new.

This threat has come to Alton. A development company has bought an 1860s house in Middletown and has recently applied for a demolition permit from the Historical

Commission. They want to build a counterfeit historic-looking house on the lot. The Alton historic preservation ordinance is a little stronger than the Kirkwood ordinance, so with community push-back, the development company has withdrawn their request for now. However even if the developer's demolition permit request was denied by the Historical Commission, they could appeal to the city council. If the city council denied the demo permit, the developer could take the issue to court. The threat is surely not over.

Once a historic structure is gone, it's gone forever. These three threats are already invading Alton and could eventually destroy our historic districts completely, thereby destroying Alton's reputation as a historic city and all the cultural and financial benefits that brings. We hope that by alerting you to these threats and the benefits of alternative solutions, you can help us slow the invasion and maintain Alton's rich and original architectural heritage.

*Windows are the
EYES of a building.
And like human eyes,
windows convey the
age and personality
of a place.*





LOOKING OLD IS *BEAUTIFUL*

*By Eric Shultis,
Secretary, Alton
Area Landmarks
Association*

Seems crazy to have to say this, but a historic district should look *OLD*. We should see buildings that carry their history not only in the actual construction and materials, but also in the surfaces and patina that physically represent the passing of time and events. However, if all continues on our current course, the homes and buildings in historic districts will have vinyl siding, aluminum or vinyl replacement windows and doors. We will not recognize the age, experience, style, colors and surface we recognize as old and historic. The only indicator left that a building or home might be old may be crooked walls and a distinctively not-modern overall shape. I fear that our Alton Area Landmarks Historic tour might end as QR codes on signs near sights having an antique photo of how the place appeared when it looked historic.

*Side-by-side, the
difference in depth,
material, and patina
between the historic
wood window on the
left and the vinyl
replacement window
on the right is stark.*

that we can date, the old growth lumber used for old buildings is by nature less prone to rot. Repaired, the windows can have another 100 years of minimal but doable maintenance. When we repair and restore the old windows and doors, the character of the place is intact. This is referred to as Historic Integrity, and in this way we can tell that the building is old, we can actually know the time period, we can sense the accumulation of time, history, memory, and when we touch the windows and doors as we do, we are contacting the same surfaces, door knobs, shutters, that people touched 100, 150, 200 years ago. We feel that—*literally*.

Plastic looks like plastic. We all recognize that as a material, plastic is not only cheap and inexpensive, but it looks cheap, low-quality, and inappropriate. While the argument for plastic is no maintenance, what they are not telling you is that these products indeed cannot be maintained. The marketing will not tell you that the common replacement windows will start to break down and need to be replaced in as little as two years. Vinyl siding will fade, will be damaged by wear or weather, and it cannot be painted or repaired, only replaced. In the event of fire, the fumes are incredibly toxic as they burn and melt.

The most common selling point from window manufacturers is improved energy efficiency. The same level of efficiency can be achieved with historic windows through proper maintenance, weatherstripping and the addition of storm windows.

Like anything of quality, the initial investment has a higher cost than what you have in newer cheaper construction. However, the investment you make will be much more lasting, and that quality is reflected in the overall value of your property. Old homes and buildings can be modified for basic modern conveniences, but they are not going to be a new home and nor should they be. The charm factor is rarely mentioned these days, but we all can see it. Living and working in historic buildings is inspiring. Historic buildings embody history, they educate us. We are grounded by the sense of the past continuing in the present amongst us; we are affected by the quality and beauty of historic places, and the sense of community that these embody moving forward. We like to say historic Alton, but we must preserve and protect historic Alton. Alton Area Landmarks

Association (AALA) began in the aftermath of Urban Renewal—a time when we lost huge numbers of important and historic buildings to be replaced by modern boxes of glass. There was the intentional displacement and intended destruction of whole communities especially targeting African Americans, renewal being a euphemism. The 1970s historic preservation movement that AALA was part of in Alton was impactful. Landmarks and other passionate preservationists saved many homes and businesses from destruction. That time was a pivotal moment, and where we are now is not unlike then.

Instead of the obvious destruction with wrecking balls and bulldozers of the 70s, we now have a slow and quiet destruction done in incremental disappearances, doors gone, windows gone, siding gone—all replaced by plastic. So here we are again at a defining moment, a pivotal moment. While the drama may be less, the damage is incredibly sad, because there will be a haunted house under all the fake. Like a corpse under wraps, a haunting that will not draw interest, and damage done that is irreversible.

*We like to
say "historic
Alton," but
we must
preserve
and protect
historic
Alton.*

Home improvement is marketed to make everything look new, clean, perfect. This is contradictory to everything that is beautiful about old buildings. It has been, and remains, that the wear and obvious age, the discolored brick, the weathered paint, the imperfections are what attract us to old homes and buildings. It is the evidence of the passing of time, the physical history. In fact, even places in decay, obviously old and historic, attract with their own particular beauty and activate our curiosity—there is a romance for the overgrown and even neglected, a unique beauty. Of course, neglected too long and a place is lost.

Windows are like the eyes of a building, and like human eyes, windows convey the personality of a place. The nature of glass is that over time the glass (much like our skin) sags and becomes wavy. Old windows have distinct proportions

LOCAL HISTORICAL RESOURCE ORGANIZATIONS



Alton has a long and rich history as a Mississippi River town. The range of historical happenings which have shaped Alton is as varied as the names who made Alton famous: Robert Wadlow, Benjamin Godfrey, Abraham Lincoln, Elijah Lovejoy, James Earl Ray, and Miles Davis.

To support, educate and enlighten, Alton has a family of historical organizations. These organizations each have a different function and expertise. For those in the Alton area who seek historical information, this is a brief overview of these organizations.

ALTON AREA LANDMARKS ASSOCIATION (AALA)

Box 232, Alton, IL 62002

www.altonlandmarks.org

The AALA, founded in 1970, is dedicated to educate, promote and save the architectural heritage of the Alton area. AALA sponsors the Fall Historic House Tour and the Winter Lecture Series. The AALA also spearheaded the successful "Save City Hall" campaign.

ALTON HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Alton City Hall

www.cityofaltonil.gov/historical-commission

101 East Third Street

Alton, IL 62002

The Alton Historical Commission was created by city ordinance in 1997 for the purpose of identifying, preserving, protecting and enhancing buildings and structures having an historical and architectural value to Alton. The Commission is composed of seven members appointed by the mayor, at least four shall reside in Alton's three historic districts, Christian Hill, Middletown or Upper Alton. The principal purpose of the Commission is to review all applications for alteration, demolition, or new construction within these districts. The Commission meets the first and third Tuesday of each month in the city council chambers. The meetings are open to the public.

ALTON MAIN STREET

200 West 3rd Street

618-463-1016

www.downtownalton.com

Suite 512

Alton, IL 62002

Alton Main Street's mission is to engage our community in the continued renewal of our historic downtown district and Mississippi River heritage by cultivating an attractive center of economic and social activity.

The National Main Street Center was established as a program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980 to address the myriad issues facing historic downtowns. Working with a

nationwide network, Main Street has helped over 2,000 communities across the country bring economic vitality back downtown, while celebrating their historic character, and bringing communities together.

Since 1994, Alton Main Street has led volunteer efforts to transform Alton's Downtown district into a thriving commercial and residential center. Educating citizens about the benefits of historic preservation through public engagement is central to Alton Main Street's purpose. The organization fosters an appreciation of our community's history by coordinating social, economic and beautification activities.

ELIJAH P. LOVEJOY MEMORIAL

P.O. Box 214

Alton, IL 62002

Elijah Lovejoy was an abolitionist newspaper publisher who was killed by a pro-slavery mob on November 7, 1837, in downtown Alton. Founded in 1952, this non-profit organization's purpose is "for the perpetuation of memory of Elijah P. Lovejoy and the presentation of scholarships to deserving students."

MADISON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

715 North Main Street

618-656-7562

www.madcohistory.org

Edwardsville, IL 62025

The Madison County Historical Society was organized in 1916. In 1923, a room in the county courthouse was made available for use as a museum. In 1962, the Weir House, the second oldest brick house in Edwardsville, was purchased and restored as a county museum. A new library building has recently been completed next to the museum. The library has many historical sources, such as maps, plats, cemetery indexes, census records, marriage records and city directories.

RIVERBEND RENEWAL

Alton, IL 62002

www.riverbend-renewal.org

Riverbend Renewal is a registered nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and restoring Alton's historic homes. We believe that maintaining the character of our historic city strengthens neighborhoods and fosters a sense of place—because empty lots don't make great neighbors.

- **Craftspeople & Contractor Network:** We are creating a directory of skilled tradespeople experienced with historic homes, giving homeowners and property owners resources to hire professionals who can help restore and rehabilitate their properties.
- **Preservation Advocacy:** We identify at-risk historic properties and work to promote preservation over demolition.
- **Hands-On Workshops & Education:** We offer workshops in historic trades and restoration techniques, putting skills directly into the hands of participants. We also share the stories and history of the buildings and neighborhoods that make Alton unique through lectures and educational events.

THE HAYNER PUBLIC LIBRARY DISTRICT

401 State Street
Alton, IL 62002

618-462-0677

www.haynerpubliclibrary.org

For researchers, the Hayner Library has two resources of interest:

1. The Illinois Room, located in the Genealogy & Local History Library, has voluminous information about Alton, Madison County, and the surrounding area. Included in its collection are Alton City Directories, which list businesses, home addresses, occupants, occupations, children, etc.
2. For those doing research about their family histories, the library has genealogists on staff. They can be reached at Genealogy Services at 618-462-4677, Ext. 2865.

ALTON HOUSE HISTORY REPOSITORY

The Hayner Public Library and the Alton Area Landmarks Association (AALA) have combined resources to create the Alton House History Repository. The Repository is a collection of house, church, and building histories catalogued and stored in the Illinois Room at the Genealogy & Local History Library at 401 State Street, Alton.

The Repository's initial collection was created by the donation of 300 histories written for the AALA's Fall Historic House Tours. Every year, the histories of eight to ten Alton homes and buildings will be added to the Repository. The Hayner Public Library and the AALA hope that citizens of Alton will contribute photos, abstracts of titles, personal reminiscences, and other mementos to the recently created folders of addresses or create new folders to include every address in Alton.

An individual file on a house might include house photographs, a copy of the abstract of title, copies of deeds, architect or designer background, house plans or drawings, a list of owners, and stories about the building or owners. A copy of an abstract would be an important historical document to start with, because they are no longer created upon change of ownership. Churches usually have written histories of their buildings, and these could be collected as well.

Homeowners will want to start their own files in the repository. Some homeowners have done extensive research on the history of their house. The Repository, in addition to the materials added by Hayner's research staff would ensure its preservation and safekeeping.

The AALA and the Hayner Public Library believe this Repository will be of value to historians, genealogists, architects, preservationists, and homeowners. The AALA would like to thank the Hayner Public Library for its help in making this project possible.

Today the Repository contains 4,000 house histories.



HISTORIC TRADES RESOURCE LIST

What makes the historic trades different? Building technologies change, and the skills required to build structures have changed with them. Many techniques used in restoration differ greatly from those in new construction.

This list is compiled by Riverbend Renewal. riverbend-renewal.org

Chris Hardin

Brick Masonry & Tuckpointing
618-515-0088
hardinchris27@gmail.com

Painting by Jeannette

JEANNETTE PHILLIPS
*Painting, Specializing in Paint Prep,
Window Restoration & Glazing*
618-977-2638
Alton, IL
jeannettenphillips@gmail.com

Old House Restoration

KURT ACKERMAN
*Window & Door Restoration,
Custom Trim Millwork,
Tuckpointing, Flooring & Consulting
Services*
618-567-4132
Edwardsville, IL

St. Louis Sash

BILL HAYS
Wood Doors & Windows
314-631-5729
St. Louis, MO
Mosashes@sbcglobal.net
stlsash.com

Burkart's Woodworks

Millwork
314-771-7727
St. Louis, MO
sales@burkartswoodworks.com
burkartswoodworks.com

Plastering by Eric Aulbach

ERIC AULBACH
Plaster & Ornamental Plaster
314-752-7837
St. Louis, MO
Susan.aulbachplastering@gmail.com
stlplastering.com

True North Restoration

MARIE
Window & Door Restoration
314-349-5280
St. Louis, MO
marie@truenorthpreservation.com
truenorthpreservation.com

Miller and Maack General Contractors

*General Contractor with Experience
in Historic Structure Restoration*
618-344-2506
Collinsville, IL
officemanager@millermaack.com
millermaack.com

Dark Horse Contracting

ERIC STAUFFER
*Interior & Exterior Painting,
Carpentry, Power Washing,
Window Glazing, Gutter Cleaning
& Repair*
618-802-3041
Alton, IL
Darkhorsecontracting15@gmail.com

Saint Louis Restoration

BRETT WISSEL
*Millwork Repairs / Replacement,
Stripping and Finishing, Door
Refinishing, Custom Woodworking,
3D Scanning, Furniture Repairs &
Upholstery*
314-772-2167
St. Louis, MO
info@stlrestore.com
stlrestore.com

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

*What does it mean
to be listed?*

There are two categories or rankings of homes, sites or historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

1. National Historic Landmark. There is only one home in Alton listed as a National Historic Landmark. It is the Lyman Trumbull House at 1105 Henry Street.
2. The National Register of Historic Places lists individually other historic districts, sites and buildings. In Alton these include:

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Christian Hill

Middletown

Upper Alton

ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

Alton Military Prison

*William and East Third
Streets*

BUILDINGS

American Woman's League

Charter House

509 Beacon Street

Bruch-Guertler House

101 Blair Street

Haskell Playhouse

1211 Henry Street

McPike House

2018 Alby Street

Post House

1516 State Street

Senator Lyman

Trumbull House

1105 Henry Street

Yakel House and Union

Brewery

1421-1431 Pearl Street

Hotel Stratford

229 Market Street

Salem Baptist Church

8217 Wood Station Road

CEMETERIES

Alton National Cemetery

600 Pearl Street

PROPOSED

North Alton Confederate
Cemetery

635 Rozier Street

DEMOLISHED

Col. Rutherford-
Schaperkotter House

1006 Pearl Street

Elm Ridge

College Avenue



MAKE A DAY OF IT IN ALTON

RETAIL

Mississippi Mud Pottery	Olive Oil Marketplace	By Design
1904 General Store	Funky Planet Toys & Gifts	Goodwill Store and Donation Center
The Grapevine of Alton (<i>children's clothing</i>)	Duke Bakery	Alton Music Exchange
Second Reading Bookstore	Terra Cotta	Picture This and More
New Frontier Furniture	5 A's Thrift Shop	Jacoby Fine Violins

ANTIQUES & VINTAGE

Country Meadows Antiques	Alton Exchange	Coco & Oak
Tinner's Anvil	Strangelovely	Honeybee Vintage
Wilson's Antiques	Persnickety by Jen Farley	

BARS

Fast Eddie's Bon Air	Catdaddy's Tavern	Danny's Lounge
The Firehouse	Morrison's Irish Pub	Johnson's Corner
Bossanova	Bubby & Sissy's	Norb's Tavern
Mac's Downtown	The Conservatory	Johnson's Corner

RESTAURANTS

My Just Desserts	Decaro's	Joe K's Restaurant
Comfort Cuisine	China King	DJ's Bar & Grill
Brown Bag Bistro	Carver's BBQ	Santino's Steak & Pasta
Flock Food Truck Park & Bar	Chapala Grill & Tequila Bar	Castelli's Restaurant at 255
Gentelin's On Broadway	Heaterz	Hong Kong House
Bluff City Grill	Taqueria Maya	Gumbo 2 Geaux
Don & Penny's Restaurant	Chinese Buffet	China Wok
Tony's Steakhouse and Bar	O/B Slices	Tab's Cafe
Old Bakery Beer Company	We're Outside Barbecue	Good News Brewing Company & Wood Fired Pizza
LuciAnna's Bistro & Patisserie	Johnson's Corner Restaurant	
	Riviera Maya Restaurant	

COFFEE SHOPS & JUICES

Post Commons	c.J.'s Juicery
Maeva's Coffee	Germania Brew Haus

ACTIVITIES

JANUARY–MARCH

- Alton Area Landmarks Association (AALA) Winter Lecture Series (Third Saturday at 10 am at Hayner Genealogy & Local History Library)
- Eagle Watching

APRIL

- Dine-in or Take Out from Alton Restaurants
- Self-Guided Driving Tours of Historic Districts: Christian Hill, Middletown and Upper Alton

MAY

- Alton Farmers' & Artisans' Market (Mother's Day weekend–October 17, 2026)
- Alton Splash Pad (open in summer)
- Memorial Day Parade
- Pup Crawl

JUNE

- Community Band Concerts: Thursday & Saturday evenings
- Robert Wadlow Concert Series: Thursday & Saturday evenings
- All Wheels Drive-In Car Show
- Night Market: Thursdays

JULY

- July 4th Fireworks Display
- Community Band Concerts
- Robert Wadlow Concert Series: Thursday & Saturday evenings
- Night Market: Thursdays

AUGUST

- Jazz Wine Fest
- Rock the Hops
- Food Truck Festival

SEPTEMBER

- Earthtones Festival – 3rd Saturday in September
- Alton Pride Festival

OCTOBER

- Vintage Voices Walking Tours at Alton Cemetery (October 3, 4, 10, 11, 2026)
- Historic Home Tour with Alton Landmarks: October 3, noon-5 pm
- Halloween Parade

NOVEMBER

- Community Tree Lighting: Downtown
- Rock Springs Park Christmas Wonderland Opening

DECEMBER

- Holiday Shopping

YEAR-ROUND

- Alton Odyssey Tours
- Alton National Cemetery
- Alton Little Theater
- Alton Dog Park
- Alton Marina
- Antiques & Vintage Shopping
- Argosy Casino Alton
- Alton Amphitheater
- Dining
- Downtown Alton Public Art
- Jacoby Arts Center
- Lovejoy Monument
- National Great Rivers Museum
- Nightlife
- North Alton Confederate Cemetery
- Piasa Park
- Robert Wadlow Statue
- Wellness & Spirituality



UPCOMING EVENTS

VINTAGE VOICES WALKING TOURS

*October 3, 4, 10, 11
12–2:15pm*

*Alton City Cemetery
1205 E 5th Street, Alton, IL
62002*

*\$15 Adults, \$10 students (6-18)
[www.facebook.com/
VintageVoicesTours](http://www.facebook.com/VintageVoicesTours)*

Living history tours with actors, in period costumes, telling the story of people who have shaped Alton's history.

WINDOW RESTORATION WORKSHOP

*October 10
12–5pm*

*Bruch-Guertler House
101 Blair Avenue, Alton*

*\$95, Students \$45
www.riverbend-renewal.org*

Join Riverbend Renewal for a hands-on workshop focused on the art of historic window restoration. Old windows are an irreplaceable part of a home's character, but too often they're overlooked or replaced. In this session, you'll learn practical techniques for repairing, restoring, and preserving wood windows the right way—skills that save money, maintain historic integrity, and keep craftsmanship alive.

Whether you're a homeowner, DIY enthusiast, or simply curious about preservation, this workshop will give you the tools and confidence to bring new life to old windows.

Spots are limited to 15 participants—reserve your place today!

HISTORIC BUILDING TOUR LECTURE

*Saturday, October 17, 10:00
a.m.*

*Genealogy & Local History
Library
401 State Street, Alton*

Free & open to the public

For fifty-four years, the Alton Area Landmarks Association has invited the public to view some of the most historically and architecturally important homes and buildings in Alton at their annual Historic Building Tour. This year, Hayner Library is hosting the AALA as they present highlights from the 2026 building tour from the comfort of the Genealogy & Local History Library. Learn about the interesting and varied histories of the homes and buildings featured on the tour.

Seating is limited. Please register at 1-800-613-3163.

PROPERTIES IN NEED OF TLC

*John Sutter House,
427 East Fourth Street*

*Koenig House
829 East Fourth Street*

*Wilhelm House
314 Oak Street*

*Alton Mental Health Center
roofing
4500 College Avenue*

*Sparks Mill Company
Building
210 William Street*

*Coppinger-Booth House
1243 West Ninth Street*

SPECIAL THANKS



House Tour Committee

Jonathan Bland
Ann Davidson
CO-CHAIRS
Eric Shultis
Joyce Boswell
Greg Stranquist

Coordination

Terry Sharp
PHOTOGRAPHY
Dr. John Lindsay
RESEARCH / VOLUNTEERS
Eric Shultis
SIGNAGE
Jean King
PROOFREADING
Jacob Goble
GRAPHIC DESIGN

Ann Davidson
HOUSE HISTORIES
Alice Barnard
Gwen O'Brien
HOMEOWNER INVITATIONS
Marilyn Morrissey
GIRL FRIDAY
Joyce Boswell
Erica Swagler
HOSPITALITY

Homeowners

Thanks to the homeowners and members of the community who so generously have opened their homes for the historic tour.

Volunteers

Many thanks to Pam DeCourcy at the Hayner Genealogy & Local History Library. To all the volunteer hosts and hostesses who give their time so generously each year. To the ticket sellers, organizers and all the others who have responded to the call.

A Legacy of Historic Preservation Advocacy

Thanks to Doug Bader for his many years of service to the preservation of Alton history.



HISTORIC WINDOW WORKSHOP

**SATURDAY
OCTOBER 10TH**

NOON - 5PM

REGISTRATION FEE: \$95
STUDENTS: \$45

PRESENTED BY:
RIVERBEND RENEWAL &
ERIC LAVALLE

LOCATION:
BRUCH-GUERTLER HOUSE
ALTON, ILLINOIS

register now



