

Scott County Historic Preservation Society, Inc.



March 2017

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Thank You!

Hello, everyone! Thanks to everyone who attended the wonderful tour given by our friends at the Henry Kahl Home. Over sixty of you turned out. Thank you for your support because you make SCHPS possible.

But don't forget about the next tour! This month, we'll be going to the spectacular Joseph Bettendorf Mansion.

Joseph Bettendorf



Joseph Bettendorf was the brother of William Bettendorf, a prodigious inventor. Together, they founded the Bettendorf Company in Davenport.

With Joseph handling the financial end of things, the two brothers would make a fortune off of William's inventions.

Foremost amongst these was the Bettendorf Truck, a solid railroad car frame that had no bolts to shake loose as a train car travelled across bumpy rails, making it much safer.

After a fire devastated their company in Davenport, the brothers moved their business to the nearby town of Gilbert. After a short time, the town officially changed its name to Bettendorf.

The Mansion



As Joseph grew wealthy, he decided that he needed a home to showcase his success. His home was not only going to be an abode for his family, but also an opulent showcase for visiting railroad magnates.

He commissioned famed local architect Arthur Ehrling, the same man who designed the Henry Kahl Home, for the task. But all the while Ehrling worked, Joseph kept a close eye and a tight leash on the construction.

Joseph took employees from his plant, now located on the riverfront that the mansion overlooked, to build the brick façade of the mansion exterior.

Hand-painted ceilings with intricate designs were made in Chicago, and then shipped to Bettendorf by railroad. European craftsmen carved the elaborate woodwork on site, and Italianate marble was laid in strategic areas.

Several extra touches were added to the mansion as well, including electrical outlets along the baseboards and steel I-beams for extra structural support.

When the mansion was finished, it boasted 28 rooms and three stories. In addition to a beautiful parlor, music room, and dining room, the home also had a ballroom on the third floor and a bowling alley in the basement.

All of this sat on a 24 acre property at the top of the bluff. Although the gardens and the bathhouse are gone now, the carriage house still remains.



Annual Farnam Dinner

As in the past, the Scott County Historic Preservation Society will have one or two tables available at the 14th Annual Farnam Dinner on Thursday, March 16, at St. Ambrose University's Rogalski Center.

Admission will be \$40 per person. Checks can be made payable to, "SCHPS - 1820 Grant Street, PM Box 5017, Bettendorf, Iowa 52722-5017." If you are interested in attending, please contact Rex Grove at 563-355-8727.

This year, the featured speakers will be Tom Shieber, Senior Curator at the National Baseball Hall of Fame and Museum in Cooperstown, New York, and also Tim Rask, a member of the Society for American Baseball Research and author of "Baseball at John O'Donnell Stadium."

Ongoing Projects for the SCHPS

SCHPS is assisting member and active preservationist Kory Darnall with an on-going project at City Cemetery in Davenport. Mr. Darnall and SCHPS Historical Researcher Coky Powers have identified and placed official markers on the graves of nearly 60 veterans interred on the grounds, including one veteran of the War of 1812.

Recently, the Department of Veterans Affairs provided brand new headstones for grave sites of 18 veterans in City Cemetery without markers.

March Happenings

Local historian Karen Anderson will be giving three tours of the area detailing different areas of local history.

The Rock Island Historical Society will be hosting a lecture called "Monarch Butterfly Conservation Efforts, History and Needs," by Master Gardener Rhonda Brady. It will be on March 2nd, with reservations due by February 27th. Call Monica Holeman at (563) 650-4349 for reservations.

The Old West Convention for the National Congress of Old West Shootists will be held at the Radisson Quad City Plaza in Davenport on March 24-26. Several seminars will be held in addition to an Old West Show and Auction, an Indoor Western Action Shoot at Davenport Guns and Shooting Club, and a banquet on Saturday night. For more information, visit www.sweetwaterregulators.com/2017_NCOWS_Convention.html.

We will meet at Rivermont Collegiate (The Joseph Bettendorf Mansion) at the front entrance on March 9, at 6:30 pm. The address is 1821 Sunset Drive, Bettendorf, IA 52722. Get ready for a great tour, and we'll see you there!