



FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

NEWSLETTER

December 2012

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Holiday Social - December 11th

The Friends of LeClaire Annual Holiday Social will be held at the home of William & Elizabeth Krause at 1203 Emerson Ave. on Tuesday, Dec 11, at 7:00 p.m. The appetizer/dessert potluck for members only will be a real holiday treat.

Christmas is a special time in the Krause household where guests will find more than two dozen decorated trees throughout their beautifully restored home. This dose of holiday cheer is sure to please all but the worst Scrooge...and fortunately we have none of those in Friends of LeClaire!

Members who wish to attend should bring a dish to pass. Please RSVP to wkrause86@gmail.com or call 618-540-5950.

LeClaire Parkfest

Teamwork does make a difference as was seen at the 21st annual LeClaire Parkfest. Dozens of volunteers, from Friends of LeClaire, the EHS Student Council, SIUE's Alpha Phi Omega and many other organizations made the day a wonderful success...plus we had phenomenal weather!

Edwardsville Parks & Recreation did a wonderful job preparing the park grounds for visitors, moving picnic tables and completing work on the rose garden in time for the festival. New Parks Department employee, Eric Hanson, was at the park all day providing invaluable assistance. The Edwardsville Police Department helped with traffic and were there for emergencies.

The only snag in the day's activities came when the pony vendor called to say their truck broke down so they couldn't make it. We know there were a number of disappointed children and for that we apologize.

Make it a LeClaire Christmas!

- Memberships: Friends of LeClaire Gift Membership \$15
- Shirts: Long & short sleeved T-shirts, sweatshirts & hoodies \$12-\$25
- Books: LeClaire's history or LeClaire pictorial history \$15-\$22.50
- Misc: LeClaire Magnets: (Perfect stocking stuffer at the right price!) 50¢
- LeClaire Shopping Bags: (Why wrap when you can use one of these?) \$4.00

For questions or to place an order, call 618-656-1294 or send an e-mail to friends@historic-leclaire.org



House History Contest

Congratulations to Tim and Valene Carter, winners of the Leclaire House History Contest! A history of their Madison Avenue home will appear in the March FOL Newsletter.

This is an on-going contest for members of Friends of Leclaire. To enter, simply send an e-mail to friends@historic-leclaire.org, or if you don't use computers, send a note to Friends of Leclaire, P. O. Box 644, Edwardsville, IL, 62025. Include your name, address and phone number with a note or subject line saying "House History Contest." A winner will be drawn at random in advance of each newsletter, and an article written about the history of the home.

Homeowners will be given research results, including a list of previous owners, and when possible, early photographs of the house.

Many Friends of Leclaire members are former residents or history buffs with an interest in Leclaire. As Friends of Leclaire members, you can also enter the contest and request a Leclaire house history for your parents or grandparent's home. Or perhaps there is a Leclaire house that particularly interests you. Just include the address on your entry. Good luck!

Nelson's Historic Osage-Orange Trees to Receive Care

Leclaire residents and historians need not be alarmed when they see workers with chainsaws among the historic row of Osage-orange trees that separate Lewis and Clark Community College's Nelson Campus from Leclaire Field. Arborists will be working to preserve the trees planted by N. O. Nelson in the 1890s to separate the Leclaire factories from the campus and residential portions of Leclaire.



For the past several years dead limbs in the tree canopy has been a cause for concern. LCCC President Dale Chapman was interested in preserving the longevity of the trees as well as addressing safety issues.

LCCC consulted with William Spradley, a certified arborist and degreed forester dedicated to preserving trees, to assess the condition of the Osage-oranges. Spradley found that most of the trees are in good condition, but recommended pruning dead branches and thinning parts of the canopy to remove weight and stress on

the trees. Trees on the northwest side of the entrance drive to the Nelson campus need the most pruning.

One tree on the southeast side of the drive will have to be removed because it poses a potential danger. The tree is smaller in diameter than most of the others and not directly in the row, so Spradley thinks it was probably a seedling that was not part of the original stand of trees. Much of its canopy is dead and the tree leans over, outside of the line of the other trees, so that if it fell, it would fall on cars in the parking lot, or more seriously, on the drivers or passengers of those cars.

Fortunately the tree that has to be taken down is in a dense part of the row so its loss will be less noticeable. LCCC plans to save the wood from the tree so it can be fashioned into bowls or other small articles that can be displayed at the Nelson campus.

Work on the trees will be done while the trees are dormant for winter.

In the 1800s, Osage-orange trees were regularly planted in rows to form fencing around pastures or in some of the plain states, they were grown as wind breaks. It was also planted as a crop for fence posts as the wood is disease resistant and is immune to termites. Indians, including the Osage tribe for whom it was named, valued the wood for making bows. An old wives' tale said that the large green fruit of the Osage-orange, commonly called a "hedge apple," could be placed under the bed or in basement windows to keep out bugs in the fall. Recent scientific evidence indicates there is some truth to the tale.

About Friends of Leclaire

Friends of Leclaire (FOL) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting and enhancing the history and heritage of the Leclaire National Historic District. The organization promotes Leclaire's heritage through advocacy, education, and community involvement.

FOL conducts business meetings at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month except in December when the regular meeting is replaced with a holiday social and January when it's just too cold!

All members are welcome to attend meetings which are held in room 201 of Building N4 at the Historic N. O. Nelson Campus of Lewis & Clark Community College in Edwardsville.

Coming Soon

Dec 11	7 p.m. Holiday Party
Jan 8	No FOL Meeting
Feb 12	FOL Meeting
Mar 12	FOL Meeting

Friends of Leclaire

P. O. Box 644

Edwardsville, IL 62025

friends@historic-leclaire.org

618-656-1294

Articles from the Past

December 30, 1904

A Christmas party took place at LeClaire hall Monday night. The little folks had theirs on Friday night, but Monday night the older pupils, the students at the Industrial College, had a tree and distribution of presents. The latter were unique.

Everyone was remembered, but it was stipulated that the presents must in cost be between a nickel and a dime. N. O. Nelson received a loaf of bread, W. H. Tanner, the superintendent, was handed a pair of fake spectacles and the rest of the gifts were in a similar vein.

June 23, 1908

Thirty young folks enjoyed a dancing party given at LeClaire Assembly Hall on Saturday evening by Miss Bessie Burton. It was in honor of her guest, Miss Gertrude Michelet, who is here for a couple weeks. The idea of a dancing party in June is a bit daring with the temperature what it is, but the guests found LeClaire cool, and nobody missed any of the dances carded and all clamored for extras and voted the hop splendid. The chaperones were Mr. & Mrs. C. H. Burton, Mrs. W. E. Wheeler, Mrs. F. T. Weir & Mrs. W. R. Prickett.

September 10, 1908

Any boy who is seen whittling on the streets of Edwardsville for the next day or two will be under suspicion. If his face is stained with jelly, he will probably be locked up.

Jelly, bread and pocket knives formed the booty of the robbers who entered five homes in LeClaire, a manufacturing suburb of Edwardsville, Wednesday.

At each place the pantry was the scene of chief loss. Glasses of currant and crab apple jelly were taken with bread and a half dozen pocket knives.

Exploring the 1940 U. S. Census by Ashley Mattingly

Who walked the halls of your home in the past? What were the names of the families who laid their children to rest and celebrated holidays within your walls? These are undoubtedly questions that many current residents of LeClaire have had as most of us live in historic homes. One resource that can help you trace the residential history of your home is the United States Federal Census.

The National Archives and Records Administration holds the records of the United States Federal Census. A national census has been recorded every ten years since 1790, providing a snapshot per decade of our nation's population. As of April 2nd of this year, the 1940 census was made available to the public and is accessible for free through a variety of sources.

By 1940, LeClaire had been annexed by Edwardsville; therefore, the census taken for LeClaire was included under the Edwardsville Township. When the census was recorded, towns were divided into wards, or enumeration districts. One enumeration district was assigned to an enumerator, or census taker. Enumeration district numbers are represented by a county number and a district number separated by a dash. LeClaire primarily fell under ward five of Edwardsville, which was enumeration district 60-44.

Online resources listed with this article provide free information and original pages from census documents.

The National Archives' website is useful if the only information known about your home is the location. You can enter state, county, city and street and enumeration district information to refine your search. Additional information about census records

can be found on this site, including code information to help decipher information recorded by enumerators. The FamilySearch website can be searched by resident name and/or by location.

Once you locate the census page that reveals the history of your house and its former inhabitants, you will notice that seemingly minute notations can expose interesting inter-relationships and details of daily life from the past. You will learn residents' names, ages, race, occupations, education levels, where they were born, and marital status. Household data also discloses whether the house was rented or owned and the value of the home. Two people per census page were asked supplemental questions including where their parents were born and veteran status. Interestingly, these questions were asked of everyone for censuses taken prior to 1940. Other supplemental questions include whether or not individuals were assigned a social security number, what their "usual occupations" were, and (for women) if they had been married before and number of children born.

Additionally, since the country was still suffering from the Great Depression in 1940, a section of the 1940 census was dedicated to questions surrounding employment with a focus on "emergency work," or employment through the Civilian Conservation Corps, Works Progress Administration, or National Youth Administration.

One of the families who lived in LeClaire in 1940 was the Somerlad family of 925 Troy Road. (*See census page specific to Somerlads on page 4*) This record reveals that Bertha Somerlad was the head of the household and she was the family member who relayed information to the enumerator, as indicated by the

