



FRIENDS OF LECLAIRE

NEWSLETTER

March 2021

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WELCOME TO HISTORIC LECLAIRE!



William and Elizabeth Krause

(Reinhardt)

By now everyone has seen the new “Welcome to Historic Leclaire” sign at the entrance to Leclaire on Franklin Avenue near Plum Street. What they may not know is that this beautiful sign was a gift from William and Elizabeth Krause with installation paid for by Friends of Leclaire. The sign was designed by Sherrie Hickman of Creative Options Design and produced by Dave Thomas. Friends of Leclaire is grateful for this generous gift that welcomes everyone to our special neighborhood.

LECLAIRE PARK SPRING CLEAN-UP

The Friends of Leclaire will hold their annual Spring Clean-Up at Leclaire Park on March 27 beginning at 9 a.m. The Parks Department has done a great job this spring, adding mulch, trimming trees, and more. The FOL group will clean-up flower beds, remove trash from along the edges of the lake, etc. Volunteers are asked to bring gardening tools and wear garden gloves. For additional information call 618-656-1294.

LECLAIRE PARK PLAYGROUND

Two new spring riders have been installed at Leclaire Park, a turtle donated by Friends of Leclaire and an airplane donated by an anonymous donor. In case you’re wondering, FOL was expecting a duck (pictured in the October newsletter) but received a turtle instead! FOL typically spends funds on park improvements and educational materials on the history of Leclaire.

Enno Tidball (nearly three-years-old) loves riding on both new pieces of playground equipment at Leclaire Park. (Caroline Tidball)



POSTPONED OR CANCELLED (or, life COVID-Style)

A number of programs and/or regular Friends of Leclaire activities have been either postponed or cancelled this spring including the following:

2021 Mayoral Forum

Friends of Leclaire encourages civic engagement so normally holds forums when there is an election for either mayor or Ward 5 aldermanic elections. This year there is a race for mayor, but, since it is still not safe to gather in large groups, the election forum for 2021 has been cancelled. FOL encourages everyone to research the candidates and issues on the ballot and then exercise their right to vote. Election day is Tuesday, April 6, but early voting has already begun. You can find a sample ballot at:

<https://apps.co.madison.il.us/CountyClerk/Elections/VoterRegistration/>

FOL Annual Meeting

Like last year, the FOL Annual Meeting (normally held in April) will be postponed to a month when the organization can meet outdoors. Tentative coming meeting dates are a regular meeting on Tuesday, April 13 at 6 p.m. at Leclaire Park (time is earlier than usual since it is outdoors) and the FOL Annual Meeting on Tuesday, May 11 at 6 p.m. at Leclaire Park.

FOL has a Board of seven people consisting of president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and 3 trustees. If you are willing to hold office or want to nominate someone for office, call nominating chair, Andi Smith at 618-691-9495.



MORE RECENT NEWS

PROGRESS AT THE NICKEL PLATE

Despite COVID and the weather, work has been progressing rapidly on renovations at the Nickel Plate Station. Windows have been restored, siding installed (National Register approved), new doors hung, floors refinished and much of the indoor painting has been completed. In addition, new wiring and lighting have been installed as well as an ADA compliant walkway. The bathroom is also nearly finished. Weather permitting, work should be done by late spring and the building will open whenever furnishing is complete and the area is deemed safe given COVID precautions. The city has paid for much of the renovation, but there are still interior items that need private funding. These include display cabinets and other furniture plus the construction of a shelf where model trains will circle the room above the doorways.

To donate, visit <http://www.nickelplatestation.org/>. To contribute by check: please make checks payable to "Edwardsville Community Foundation" (with 'Nickel Plate Station' in the memo line) and mail to: Edwardsville Community Foundation P.O. Box 102, Edwardsville, IL 62025. If you have questions about the project, contact SJ Morrison at 618-558-3062.



A contractor works on interior painting in the Nickel Plate Station. (Reinhardt)

NEW COMPOSTING COLLECTIVE

If you are interested in composting, a new organization, the Good Dirt Composting Collective, makes it possible for you to compost without having a collection bin at your home. The organization's focus is to provide education and resources so that everyone can compost.

The first of what will be numerous composting centers has been established at St. John's Methodist Church, 7372 Marine Road. Residents are invited to drop off food scraps for composting. If you are interested in more information, send an email to marypgruse@gmail.com or visit the "Good Dirt Composting Collective" Facebook page where there are many tips on composting...in other words, how to painlessly turn food scraps into good dirt!

FOL MEMBERSHIPS

Friends of Leclaire is grateful to all the new and renewing members who have sent in their membership dues through newsletter reminders. This saved FOL the cost of making a large mailing to accomplish the same task. The savings on postage and materials will be used to help beautify the public spaces in Leclaire and for the publication of educational materials about Leclaire, like this newsletter. Thank you!

VALUE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Leclaire is a National Historic District that also has Local Landmark Status which means there are restriction to what residents can do to the exterior of their homes. If you are planning home improvements this spring or summer, the city's historic preservation guidelines can be found at:

<https://www.cityofedwardsville.com/313/Historic-Preservation-Commission>.

Since this designation, the neighborhood has been greatly improved. Like most historic districts throughout the country, when the last recession hit, Leclaire properties did not lose value. Collectively, using the city's historic preservation guidelines, Leclaire property owners are not only creating a more attractive neighborhood, but also protecting and improving property values, and preserving the history and character of this unique district.

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. Membership is just \$20 annually. To join, send dues to Friends of Leclaire, P. O. Box 644, Edwardsville, IL 62025. For information, call 618-656-1294.

FOL normally conducts business meetings at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month except in December and January, but the schedule is currently "as announced" due to COVID. (See article on page one.)

All members are welcome to attend meetings which are normally held in Room 201 of Building N4 at the Historic N. O. Nelson Campus of Lewis & Clark Community College in Edwardsville. Alternative locations will be announced during COVID.

The quarterly Friends of Leclaire Newsletter is written and edited by Cindy Reinhardt. Contact her at cynreinhardt@yahoo.com with questions or feedback.

THE BUETTEMEIER HOUSE - 1215 EMERSON AVENUE

The charming home at 1215 Emerson Avenue was built in 1912-1913 for Gottlieb and Emma Buettemeier who were retired farmers from Hamel. At that time, this section of LeClaire was only recently platted. Streets had been established, but this was the first house on either Lindenwood (formerly Monroe) or Emerson Avenues. Except for the Kennedy house on the corner of Franklin and Emerson, there was little construction in this area until the mid-1920s. When built, the house was given a house number of 115, but it was changed to 1215 in the early 1920s.

Gottlieb Buettemeier was born in Westphalia (Germany) on Nov. 10, 1839. He immigrated to America in 1861 and in 1866 married Wilhelmine Stockman, a young woman he may have known from the old country since they were from the same region. The couple worked hard, saving for a farm, then expanding it over the years. However, their financial success was marred by tragedy. Wilhelmine died in 1876, just ten years after their marriage, leaving Gottlieb with five small children. Two years later, he married another German immigrant, Emma Sieb, and had seven additional children.

In October 1912 Gottlieb and Emma purchased the lot on Emerson for \$500. By this time Gottlieb was 73 years old, and Emma a few years younger. They had acquired a number of farms, some at the time remained in the family, but others were sold. For example, two parcels were sold in 1916 for a combined \$10,000, a significant amount.

The Buettemeiers lived alone at their new house for only a short time. Sometime before 1920, their daughter, Emma Buettemeier Wolf and her children, Florence and Erwin, came to live with them. (Note: It was common for girls like Emma to be named for their mothers as well as sons named for their fathers.) Emma's husband, Charles E. Wolf, was listed as a patient at the state hospital in Jacksonville in 1920. In 1954, he died at that same hospital.

On Emerson, besides Gottlieb and Emma Buettemeier, the 1920 U.S. census included their daughter Emma Wolf, who was working as a seamstress at Elder Manufacturing Company, and their grandchildren, Florence, 17, working as a telephone operator for the N. O. Nelson Company, and Erwin, 16, employed at U. S. Radiator Company.

The newspapers of the time had many articles telling of family gatherings and celebrations for their large extended family including some of Gottlieb's siblings who had also immigrated to America. In the spring of 1924, Florence decided to move to California. She quit her job at N. O. Nelson Manufacturing Co. and left for Anaheim where she had cousins residing.

She stayed with them for five months before returning to Illinois. It's unknown why she returned, but she was home in September when, surrounded by family and in the midst of conversation, Gottlieb died suddenly while sitting in his rocking chair. There was a private funeral held at the house, as was the custom at that time, followed by a public funeral at the Lutheran Church in Hamel where he was buried.

In May 1926, the house on Emerson was sold to Gottlieb's great nephew. Henry Brunnworth was Gottlieb's sister Sophie's grandson. The Brunnworth family first bought

the house on contract for deed, then bought it outright in 1931 after Emma Buettemeier's death.

When the Brunnworths moved into the house, the Wolf family, with Grandma Emma Buettemeier, moved to property at RFD 4 Edwardsville off Franklin Avenue where Erwin established Wolf's Hatchery and Farm. Later, Florence had her portion of the property subdivided into Fair Oaks Subdivision which included part of Circle Drive. Wolf's Hatchery later was moved to 110 E. Vandalia Street where many reading this article

may remember it. (The old hatchery building later became Dale's Barber Shop.)

As for Florence's dreams of California, after her brother Erwin married in the late 1940s, she and her mother moved to San Diego County, California. When Erwin's wife died in 1969, he left Edwardsville to join his mother and sister in California. Emma died in 1972, and her children, Edwin in 1974 and Florence in 1995.

The Brunnworth family was very different from their relatives, the Buettemeiers. To begin, both Henry and his wife, Frieda Suhre

Brunnworth, came to the house as newlyweds, rather than retirees. They also were not immigrants, or even the children of immigrants, although it is likely that they grew up speaking German at the Lutheran Church in Hamel. (Many Lutheran congregations kept the German



The Brunnworth family circa 1943. From left, Evelyn, Frieda, Henry, Norma; front, Rolland. (Steve Kreuzberg)

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This photo of 1215 Emerson Avenue was taken in 1995 as part of a historic building survey conducted by the Edwardsville Historic Preservation Commission.

1215 EMERSON AVENUE (CONT. FROM PAGE 3)

language until WW I.) Both grew up on Madison County farms, Henry in Alhambra and Frieda in Hamel. Instead of the family tradition of farming, Henry became an accountant who worked for U.S. Radiator Company for 37 years.

Henry and Frieda had three children, Norma, Evelyn and Rolland. The oldest, Norma, married Fred Kreutzberg in 1948. Her family moved to Arizona in the 1960s. The middle child, Evelyn, made headlines in 1944 when the *Intelligencer* announced that she was the first child in Edwardsville suspected of having polio. She recovered and went on to marry a military man, Harold Glenn. The youngest, Rolland, also had a military career so no direct descendants of the Henry Brunnworth family remain in Edwardsville today. However there are dozens of cousins remaining in Madison County, including FOL member Jean Hughes who lives just down the street on Emerson Avenue.

Henry Brunnworth died in 1958 of a sudden heart attack. Frieda remained at home on Emerson until she remarried in 1963. Her second

husband, Daniel Glenn, was her daughter Evelyn's father-in-law. After their marriage they sold the house to the Harold and Esther Hartley family who would live at 1215 Emerson Avenue for nearly thirty years.



These photos show the Brunnworth sisters Evelyn (1931-1990) and Norma (1929-2019) in front of their home at 1215 Emerson Avenue circa 1934. Pictures were provided by Norma's son, Steve Kreutzberg.

Nude Swimmers at Leclaire Resulted in Officers' Visit

A dozen men and women, some of them said to be entirely destitute of clothes, took a dip in Leclaire Lake last night shortly before midnight and then created so much excitement that deputy sheriffs were called. Residents living along the lake said other disturbances have occurred during the past several days.

Last night when the officers arrived the swimmers had left the water and were chased several miles south of Edwardsville. Arrangements were being made today to arrest the persons if they return for another swimming party.

LECLAIRE ON FACEBOOK

Friends of Leclaire has a Facebook page called Historic Leclaire that offers historical information, but also neighborhood information like the status of power outages, an informal lost and found, etc. that affect residents. At Christmas, in lieu of a Holiday Social, many posted photographs of their Christmas decorations. It was fun seeing the interior of many Leclaire homes!

There have been numerous requests for other kinds of posts of late, so just to reiterate, the page does not post commercial, political, religious or service information, i.e. people advertising services. The only exception is when we have Leclaire Parkfest sponsors. If you want to keep up with neighborhood news and learn more about Historic Leclaire, go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/130752360309088>.

At left is a recent post. The article is copied from the June 25, 1930, *Edwardsville Intelligencer*.



Flashback: Leclaire Lake after the 2006 ice storm by Edwardsville photographer Dave Rudloff.