



## PRESERVATION MATTERS

PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION  
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*This circa 1850s photo shows the Harshbarger family in front of their modern brick home. This is the oldest extant brick house in Piatt County and is being restored by Jeff and Grace Harshbarger.*

### Homestead Preservation Under Way in Atwood

If you take the country roads south to Amish country, as you come close to Atwood, you will drive by the oldest standing brick structure in Piatt County. And standing it is, thanks to the loving work of Jeff and Grace Harshbarger over the past four years.

The second of four Harshbarger homes, this dwelling was built by Jeff Harshbarger's great, great, great granduncle, Daniel Harshbarger in the 1840s after homesteading forty acres of farm ground with his brother Samuel. They lived in the still-standing log cabin not far from the house. (The log cabin received a 2001 PACA Heritage Award for its preservation/rehabilitation.) The house was built with brick

made on the property and numbered by the 100s, mostly likely to insure payment to the brick-makers.

Generations of Harshbargers lived in this house up until the 1970s, adding plumbing and electricity as rural development stretched into the Atwood area. Over time, the house was abandoned and the land turned into pasture for cattle. In 1999, Jeff purchased the twelve acres the house stood on, finding it dilapidated and roofless. Two weeks later Jeff visited his new land and found the house wrapped in yellow tape like a forgotten Christmas present. Somehow the house had caught fire and burned to a crisp.

Never one to admit defeat, Jeff, and his nephew Jesse Miller, climbed into the remains and hoisted the debris out one shovel load at a time. Jeff admits now

that the fire actually saved him time as most of the debris would have had to have been carted off anyway—as it was, he could do it in ashes.

The summer of 2000, Jeff, whose middle name is Mason, became a mason—he began re-laying the brick piled on the ground and tuck pointing the remaining walls to strengthen the structure. Since then, he and Grace have spent most weekends patiently rebuilding the “Old House” as they call it.

“At first people would drive by and mostly shake their heads and move on. Occasionally, someone would get out of their car and remark on what a neat project this was,” Jeff says. “Now, less are shaking their heads and more are coming back to see what progress we’ve made.”

Last spring, after grinding out old mortar made of cement and horse hairs and tuck pointing the brick, Jeff poured a new concrete foundation and began construction of the internal frame upon which a roof would stand. By late fall, the Old House had a new roof and a new lease on life.

"Every winter, every snow and rain, I would cringe knowing the Old House was losing some of itself. This past winter when it stormed I knew the walls were safe from the elements," Jeff comments.

Driving by you'll notice this brick dwelling with its plastic-lined windows and boarded up front door. By this time next year, however, the "Old House" should have a different look. Jeff and Grace are adding additions to its west and north sides so they can live in it in modern comfort.

So if you're planning a drive through the country sometime this summer, be certain to stop three miles north of Atwood and witness the recreation of local history and homage to a family's heritage.

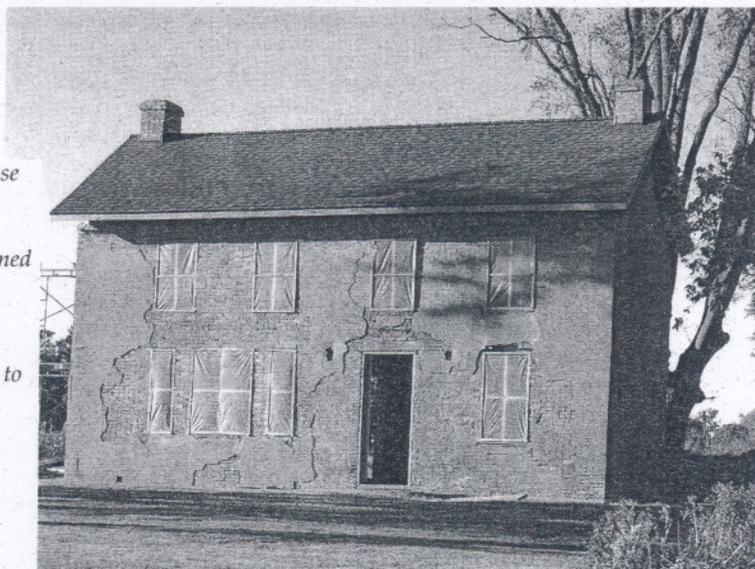
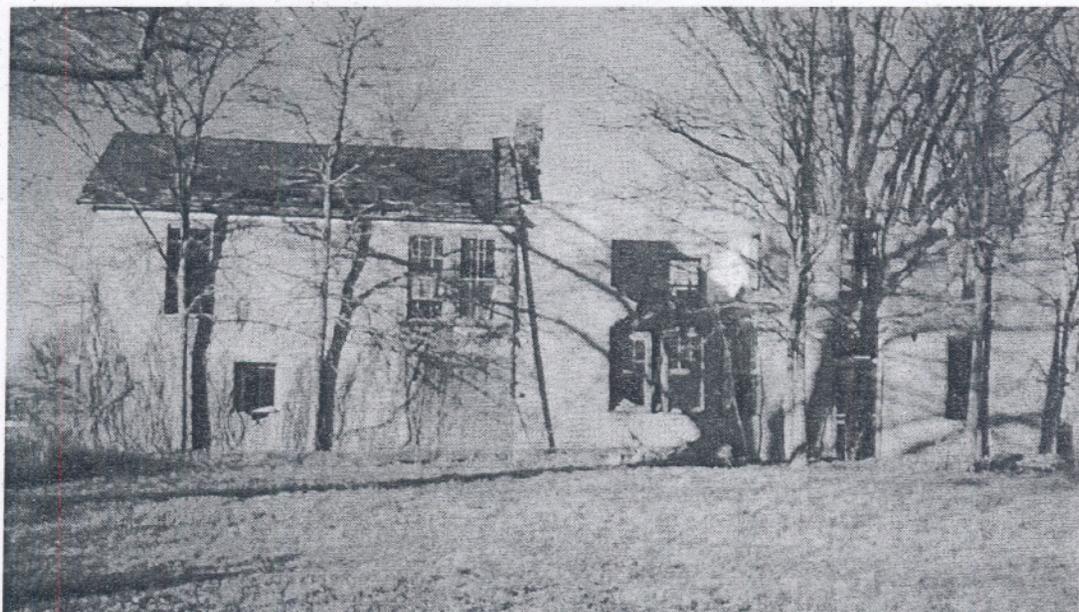
*This article was written by PACA member, Grace Giorgio Harshbarger. The Harshbargers can be contacted at: [info@atwoodretreat-center.com](mailto:info@atwoodretreat-center.com). PACA welcomes articles about preservation efforts - local, state, or national - for publication in our newsletter. Please send your submissions to [pacaexdir@insightbb.com](mailto:pacaexdir@insightbb.com).*

*Upper Photo: Circa 1970s. The family moved from the house in the late 1960s.*

*Center Photo: Post-fire, 2000. The house mysteriously burned two weeks after purchase by Jeff Harshbarger.*

*Bottom Photo: Fall, 2004. The gaps in the walls were rebricked, the walls repointed, and a new structural system to support the new roof and interior was constructed.*

*All photos are by Jeff Harshbarger.*



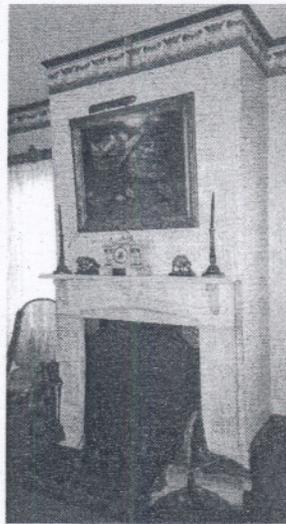
## Funk Prairie Home & Gem and Mineral Museum

If you are looking for a day trip to one of the best kept secrets in Central Illinois, I would suggest that you visit this incredible house and museum. The Funk Prairie Home is located in McLean County just south of Bloomington near the Shirley Road Exit 154 on I55. You should call ahead for reservations (309-827-6792). The house is open Tuesday thru Saturday from 9 to 4 and is closed in January and February.

Early this spring six of us went on a Saturday afternoon tour. We were greeted by Bill Case, who lives on the property and is by far one of most knowledgeable and enthusiastic guides I have ever had the pleasure of spending an afternoon with. The history of the house and the Funks could fill an entire newsletter and Bill loves to tell stories of the Funk family.

Issac Funk came to McLean County from Ohio in 1824. The family farm grew to encompass 25,000 acres and the principal products were corn, cattle, and hogs. Their son, Lafayette Funk, began construction of the two-story house in 1863 and completed it in 1865, largely using Funk's Grove timber. The house has thirteen rooms that were completely restored by the Funk Family Trust in 1984. All of the original furnishings were returned to the house.

Issac's eldest son, E.D. Funk, founded the Funk Seed Company in 1901. Lafayette Funk II, while traveling the world as an executive of the seed company, became a gem stone and mineral collector. A museum was constructed behind the main house in 1973 to display part of his collec-



Interior of the Funk Prairie Home: marble parlor fireplace, marble corner bathroom sink, and Bill Case demonstrating a victrola. Photos by Cahill.

tion and also the history of the Funk Seed Company.

The contents of the house are truly amazing. There are several pieces of furniture that came from Philadelphia that are identical to those made for Ulysses S. Grant. The house was one of the first to have indoor plumbing and electricity. DeLoss Funk, who majored in electrical engineering at the University of Illinois, built a generator house and wired the residence, surrounding grounds, and an outdoor tennis court. The gem and mineral collection is indeed world class. There are specimens here that rival those of the Smithsonian and other top museums that I have visited around the world.

If you go, plan to spend at least four hours. You will be glad you made the trip.

*Rich Cahill. PACA Board member*

## PACA Officers Elected

At the May Board meeting, new officers were elected: President, Catherine Barbercheck; Vice-President, Robert Nemeth; Secretary, Anthony Thomas; Treasurer, Richard Cahill. The Board also welcome three new directors: Anthony Thomas, Elisabeth Jenicek, and Carol Knepp.

## National Preservation Conference

This year's national preservation conference, sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will be held in Portland, Oregon from September 27 to October 2. The conference theme is: Sustain America -- Vision, Economics, and Preservation. Educators, advocates, and professionals will share their knowledge in various educational tracks and fun tours are available. Contact PACA for information.

## P.A.C.A. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

- Adult \$15
- Student \$10
- Senior Citizen \$10
- Family \$20
- Corporate \$75

Additional Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO PACA

### TYPE

- New \_\_\_\_\_
- Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

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Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

## 2005 Heritage Grants

At the May PACA Board meeting, the Heritage Grant applications received this year were discussed. A total of ten high-quality grant proposals were received that totaled \$23,200. The following six projects were funded at a cost of \$8,100.

*Historic East Urbana Neighborhood Association (HEUNA) was given \$500 towards the purchase of a plaque for Victory Park on East Main Street. The plaque will honor the history of the park as a site of victory gardens during World War II.*

*Michele Olsen of the Center for the Study of Art and Architecture (CSAA) was given a grant of \$2,200 to continue her Architeacher program at Bottenfield Elementary School. The success of her previous grants to encourage students from Yankee Ridge School to appreciate local historic structures was noted.*

*University YMCA was given \$2,000 towards hiring BLDD architects and Eta Engineering to conduct a complete conditions survey of their building and evaluate how to make the building more "green."*

*Illinois Disciples Foundation received \$800 for much needed roof repairs.*

*Octave Chanute Aerospace Museum was given \$750 towards the purchase of a fire proof filing cabinet to insure the safe storage of archival materials.*

*ERES received \$1,950 to reconfigure and enhance a series of articles written on local preservation and land use issues. A well designed booklet should help the group receive funding and be an educational resource.*

The annual Heritage Grant Program helps fund local non-profit preservation projects with proceeds from the salvage warehouse.

**Preservation Matters: newsletter of the Preservation and Conservation Association**  
P.O. Box 2575, Station A, Champaign, IL 61825

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**Preservation Bridges the Past  
into the Future**



*Learning to run plaster cornices at the 2005 Kids' Building Fair, sponsored by PACA and the Orpheum Children's Science Museum. PACA member Art Zangerl was the teacher.*

## Salvage Donations

Claudin/Depke Welding  
Norman & Carolyn Baxley  
First United Methodist Church, Havana  
Robert Smith, Pastor

Roger Carlson  
Mike & Betsy Lindeman  
Franzen Construction  
UI Department of Geology  
UI School of Music  
Enterprise Building (Youngerman Trust)

## Salvage VIP's

Rich Cahill  
Bob Swisher  
Betty Swisher  
Mike Richards  
Mark Bush  
Dan Leasure  
Darrel Foste  
Mike Miller  
Brian Duffield  
Neil Lasater  
Maria Velazquez

*Remember to check your mailing label for your membership renewal date. The date shown indicates when you **last renewed**; membership runs for one year from that date.*



## New & Renewing Memberships (Received since the last newsletter)

### Charter Members (1981-1983)

Mr. & Mrs. R. A. Avner  
Susan Appel

### Over Ten Year Members

Bruce Creamer  
Anthony Bamert Family  
Joe Donahue  
Rick Orr & Scott Larimer  
Sharon Slade  
Michael Markstahler  
Michael & Bonnie Irwin

### Five to Ten Year Members

Mindy Moncel  
Elisabeth Jenicek & Michael Clewley  
Bill McNeill  
Marilyn Morris  
Harold & Margaret Balback  
Ruth Wyman

### One to Four Year Members

Alice & Ed Vernon  
Kathy Frye  
Lisa & Richard Smith, Sharon Cemashko  
Gary Peters  
Benny & Lori Dow  
Jan Kalmar, Maya & Adrienne Bauer

### New Members

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A. Mark Neuman  
Wells and Wells Construction Co., Inc.  
(Corporate)  
Betsy Araya & Mike Lindeman  
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