

CARTHAGE HISTORIC PRESERVATION, Inc.



CHP Newsletter Issue No. 1

1st Quarter 2016

A NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the inaugural Carthage Historic Preservation (CHP) quarterly newsletter! As part of CHP's ongoing commitment to educate about and advocate for historic preservation in Carthage, this newsletter will enhance CHP's communication efforts with its members. Please read about some Phelps House history, upcoming

events, membership benefits, our "wish list", and CHP's latest project: The Sweet House. You're always welcome to volunteer for our many fun events we have during the year.

Thank you for your membership.
We appreciate YOU!

~Ron Petersen, Jr.

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WHY HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

"How will we know it's us without our past?"

~John Steinbeck, *Grapes of Wrath*

In its preface to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Congress declared that the preservation of historic properties "**is in the public interest so that its vital legacy of cultural, educational, aesthetic, inspirational, economic, and energy benefits will be maintained and enriched for future generations of Americans.**"

Carthage enjoys a rich history which is reflected in the many structures found throughout the city. The Jasper County Courthouse, buildings on the Square, Boots Motel and the Phelps House, to name just a few, all have a story to tell about the Carthaginians

who came before us, and the events that helped to shape the city of Carthage.

Carthage Historic Preservation was formed in 1978. Since its founding, CHP has established three historic districts with over 600 structures listed on the National Register, rehabilitated two Victorian properties off the Carthage Square, and purchased and restored the historic Phelps House.

Today, CHP remains committed to educating citizens about the cultural and economic benefits of historic preservation in our fair city. Join us in our quest to save what makes Carthage so special...because without our past, how will we know it's us?



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

May - Historic Preservation Month
May 3 - Give Ozarks Day fundraiser
Oct. 1 - 2nd Annual Lobster Boil
Dec. 3 - Christmas Homes Tour and Tea

Are you an **Amazon** shopper? You can support CHP by shopping at Amazon's charity website **smile.amazon.com** and selecting Carthage Historic Preservation as your charity. Amazon will donate .5% of your purchases to CHP.

An excerpt from Benjamin Sweet's journal, Tuesday, September 10, 1867:

"Pleasant. Started quite early in the morning. After we had got about ten miles, we met a woman – who had been to call her mother who was a hundred years old and had started to walk to her son's at a distance of 15 miles – who asked us to let an old woman that was ahead of us ride a little way. When we got in sight of the old lady, she was so tired that she could scarcely (sic) move. I lifted her into the wagon and carried her to her grand-daughters, about 14 or 15 miles from where we found her. We took dinner there–Coon Creek–and arrived in Carthage at four o'clock P.M."



THE SWEET HOUSE

CHP is excited about its newest project, the Sweet House, which is believed to be the OLDEST house still standing in Carthage. The house was built by **BENJAMIN G. SWEET** (1838-1909), a Civil War veteran, carpenter, store owner and entrepreneur.

The land on which the house sits was part of an 1854 United States land grant to William Chenault. In 1868, **William Phelps** bought all of the property from 13th Street south to the north side of what is now the Phelps House property. The property abstract shows that in 1868 Phelps sold a parcel of land

on East 13th Street to Sweet who then built a house. Sweet sold the property to Edmund Webb in 1870 for \$1200, a sizeable profit above the \$375 in loans obtained by Sweet.

Over the years, Sweet worked in construction, as a grocer, owned a newsstand, and even tried his hand at owning a restaurant on the west side of the Square. According to family, he owned general stores in Kansas and Arkansas, and had a mining interest in Oklahoma.

Look for more information on the Sweet House in the coming months.

BENJAMIN G. SWEET:

- married Inez Hall Sweet in 1866. He moved to Carthage with Inez and daughter, Minnie Elzora in 1867. A son, Clayton Clark, was born the following March.
- was a Civil War Veteran; a Union Soldier who served with the 74th Volunteer Illinois Infantry throughout the war despite suffering from chronic rheumatism.
- worked with brothers-in-law E.B. and E.H. Hall who were carpenters and builders in Carthage. According to a Carthage Press interview with Sweet's son, Clayton, "his father erected many of the early day residences in Carthage."
- kept journals, four of which were preserved and gifted to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Sweet's granddaughter, Marcella E. Sweet Roper. These journals describe his wartime experiences, travel to Carthage, and business challenges in 1872.



Carthage Banner 5/26/1870

PHELPS HOUSE HISTORY

The land for the Phelps House was obtained in 1868 and the home was designed by Colonel William Phelps and completed in 1895 of grey Carthage marble, which was locally mined. The house has many unique features, such as original hand painted wallpaper, combination gas/electric chandeliers, a functioning dumbwaiter and a heated cloak closet.

Rich wood paneling, ten unique fireplaces of varying marble and tile, and beautiful stained glass windows are featured throughout the house.

The Ladies' Parlor showcases the original furniture purchased by the Phelps at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair. Many of the additional furnishings and renovation of the structure have been provided by generous contributors and friends of the Phelps House. Member dues and donations together with proceeds from tour fees and rentals are used by Carthage Historic Preservation to preserve and maintain the historic home.



Public Tours of Phelps House:

Wednesdays,
April-November
10:00am to 4:00pm

Cost: \$5.00

Free to Members and their guests

(Large group tours by appointment.)

In 2011, the roof of Phelps House was replaced with original style clay tiles which were *produced by the same company who made the original tiles*. The tiles come with a 75-year warranty! Other recent projects include repairing vents and moisture guards, installing period-appropriate guttering, and restoring and repairing plaster ceilings.

CARTHAGE MEMORIES

In a journal entry from Monday, May 27th, 1872, Benjamin Sweet shares that "It has been raining nearly every day for the last ten days and today at eleven o'clock, the Spring River began raising very fast...at 3 o'clock it had raised about fifteen feet covering the bottom...to Myer's Woolen Factory: the water carrying wood, rail fences and nearly every thing that stood in its course. A stream of persons from town have been going to and from the Woolen Mill to witness the water in Spring River higher than it was ever known to be before."

The weekly newspaper, *Carthage Banner*, reported that the river grew to be a mile wide and 30 feet deep. Nearly all of Carthage's population was out on the hills and bluffs to look at the grand sight, many arriving by carriage, and everyone expressing astonishment at how "the gentle, murmuring, lovely Spring River had in two hours time turned into a roaring, mighty river...." The loss of livestock and crops, fencing, wood, and other property was estimated to be over \$200,000.

Those words echo the experience of present-day Carthaginians who, on December 27, 2015, saw heavy rains and flooding of Spring River. That night the river crested at 20.24 feet. Our ancestors would no doubt have been expressing astonishment once again!

Did you know...

The Phelps House is available to rent. In 2015, the Phelps House hosted many events including:



9 weddings
7 showers
17 parties
3 teas
3 reunions
3 school tours
8 workshops
7 bus tour luncheons
catered by CHP



Host your next event
at the beautiful
Phelps House!

For more info go to:
www.phelpshouse.org
or contact

Events Coordinator
Judy Hill
417-358-9688



BECOME A MEMBER OF CHP!

Carthage Historic Preservation is a non-profit, community-based membership organization which receives no government funding. Member dues and contributions are critical to our mission of preserving the rich history of Carthage. By becoming a member of CHP, your tax-deductible donation helps support and encourage historic preservation throughout Carthage.

Individual	\$30
Family	\$50
Associate	\$100
Contributing	\$150

For more membership information and to pay via *PayPal*, go to:

www.phelpshouse.org/involvement/membership.html

Your support is greatly appreciated!

Member Benefits

- ♦ Free Tours of Phelps House for members and guests
- ♦ Discount on Phelps House Ornament (see below)
- ♦ Annual Members Event

Volunteers are always needed. Some of the ways you can help:

- **Phelps House**
Assist with set-up and food prep for bus tour luncheons
- **Sweet House**
Yard work | Handyman/carpentry services
- **Lobster Boil**
Set-up | Food Prep | Server | Ticket Sales
- **Christmas Homes Tour and Tea**
Setup | Food Prep | Server | Volunteer in Homes
- **Share your memories/memorabilia with CHP**



For more information, please email historiccarthage@gmail.com or call 417-358-1776.

Phelps House Ornament
\$14.00 (+ tax)
Member Price \$12.00 (+ tax)

**For
Sale**



- * Large trays to bus tables (available at restaurant supply stores)
- * Plain white paper towels
- * Angel Soft Toilet Paper
- * Orange Glo Wood Cleaner
- * Large Coolers

Donations are greatly appreciated!

Your purchase helps support historic preservation.
Email historiccarthage@gmail.com to order yours today.

Carthage Historic Preservation
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