

February 2015

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The 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House



The Volunteer

Friends, Foes and Acquaintances:

The Social Network of Benjamin Stephenson

By Sid Denny

Daniel Pope Cook enjoyed a meteoric rise in Illinois politics and died far too early. In his brief lifetime and his even briefer time in Illinois he compiled a record of accomplishment which is almost unparalleled in Illinois history. As a young newspaper editor and publisher in Kaskaskia he was an unabashed admirer of Benjamin Stephenson. Later in life he was a powerful political ally of both Stephenson and Ninian Edwards. Later, he served as the Stephenson family lawyer and became the son-in-law of Ninian Edwards. He is more commonly remembered for his term as member of the Committee on Public Lands and later as an influential member of the Ways and Means Committee of the United State House of Representatives. As a member of the Ways and Means Committee he used his influence to secure a grant of government lands to aid in the construction of the Illinois and Michigan Canal.

Given his significance in Illinois history it is strange that so little has been written about Daniel Cook. One author suggests, "Though widely acclaimed in his day for his astute leadership, Cook has



Daniel Pope Cook
1795-1827

been something of a forgotten man in the annals of his state's history, possibly because the overshadowing figure of Abraham Lincoln soon was to appear upon the scene (1999: Secretary to the Cook County Board of Commissioners, Cook County, Illinois)." Whatever the reason for the lack of historical research on the life of Daniel Pope Cook it is clear that surprisingly little is known of his life. Most articles written about Daniel Cook correctly state that he was born in Scott County, Kentucky in 1794. Additionally, most sources suggest that he was a member of a poor and politically insignificant offshoot of the powerful Pope family of Kentucky. Much of his early success is attributed to his rela-

tionship to his relative Nathaniel Pope. Nathaniel Pope is sometimes referenced as the uncle of Nathaniel Pope but no evidence for such a relationship is ever cited. In fact, none of the sources indicate that the names of his mother and father are even known. In reality, Cooks' relationship to the Pope family is hard to tie down and is far more distant than most authors seem to suggest. In the 1810 census of Scott County Kentucky there are five Cook families listed. These include the families of Coleman Cook, Isaac Cook, Robert Cook and two John Cooks. The census information for Colman, Issac, and Robert Cook indicates that each was more than 45 years old at the time of the census. One of the John Cooks was also older than 45 at the time of the census. The second John Cook was between 26-44 years old at the time of the census. Given the ages of the men and the fact that Daniel Pope Cook was born in 1794, the youngest John Cook was the most likely to have been Daniel Pope Cooks father. Consequently, genealogical searches for John Cook proved that the youngest of the John Cook was indeed the father of Daniel Pope Cook.

Welcome Heather Kosydor, Administrative Intern



My family moved to Edwardsville from Granite City in 1988. I graduated from Edwardsville High School in 2003, and then I attended SIUE and received my Bachelor's

Degree in Art History with minors in Studio Art and History.

I am currently enrolled in the Museum Studies certification program, which has

brought me to the 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House. I chose this museum for my internship because it is a huge part of the history of my hometown. The house has engaging learning programs and volunteer opportunities for the community, with outreach all over Madison County.

I have learned so much in my short amount of time interning at the museum, with Director RoxAnn Raisner as my guide. Learning how to run PastPerfect more effectively and inputting information and working on current and future museum events has given me further experience necessary in pursuing my dream of one day working as a registrar in a larger institution.

Upcoming Dates

- The house will be closed during the week in January and February.
- February 7, Winter Dinner & Auction
- February 14, 9a.m., Volunteer Training: Dressing 1820
- February 21, Playing the Past (Girl Scout Badge Program)
- March 12-14, MOMCC Conference
- March 21, Playing the Past (Girl Scout Badge Program)
- March 26, Classical Conversations Home school tour, 10 a.m.-12p.m.
- April 11, Trivia through the Decades
- April 15, SIUE Life Long Learning, adult tour, 1:15-3:15 p.m.
- April 22, Trunk Delivery Columbus School, 9:15-9:25 a.m.
- May 1, Trinity Lutheran School Tour, 12:30-2:30 p.m.
- May 2, Junior Gardener (Girl Scout Badge Program)
- May 6, Columbus School Tour, 9:30-11:30 a.m.
- May 6, Columbus School Tour, 12:30-2:30 p.m.

Making Butter in the 1820 Kitchen



One of the most popular activities in the kitchen at Stephenson House is butter churning. There is something about making butter in an old-fashion wooden churn that pulls everyone into the kitchen (or maybe it's the lure of good smelling treats wafting through the air). Most of our volunteers have helped with this activity and enjoyed the products

of their labor. I guarantee fresh churned butter and buttermilk taste 100% better than any store bought brand. It will not have all the preservatives either.

Butter making is defiantly a hands-on activity where everyone can help. We often let visitors get their bicep workout in for the day by lending a hand in the churning process.

Stephenson House purchased its wooden churn from Beaver Buckets several years ago (www.beaverbuckets.com) and it's been in regular use ever since. There are other types of churns available on the market if you want to buy one or you can simply use an old canning jar.



What we use at Stephenson House.....

- Wooden churn
- Heaving Whipping cream (1-2 quarts, depending on how much butter we want to make)
- several pitchers of water for washing the butter (or someone to run back and forth to the well)
- butter paddle
- long-handled wooden spoon
- cheesecloth (precut squares that will line the bowl and hang over the top edge. The contents of the churn will be poured into the bowl later. Do this before starting to churn.)

- two large bowls (one to line with cheesecloth and one to wash the butter)
- bucket

We purchase heavy whipping cream from a local grocery store to make our butter. It is practically impossible to get anything other than heavy whipping cream to make butter unless you live on a farm with milk cows. Leave the cream sitting on the counter at room temperature overnight so it clabbers. We usually sit it out about 4 p.m. if we plan to use it by late morning the next day.

Once it's clabbered pour it into the churn. Now the workout begins. Take the plunger (the one attached to the churn, not the one in the restroom!) and start churning the cream in a steady up and down motion. Try to keep a rhythm as you churn. The process of churning the cream takes anywhere from 10 minutes to three hours. We have found that the weather plays a big part in the success of our butter.



When the cream begins to turn to butter there is a distinct change in how the plunger feels and sounds. The cream begins to separate from the fat, making the plunger harder to push/pull up and down. The opening where the plunger is inserted into the lid will begin to have chunks of butter form around it (see above photo). Remove the plunger and lid to check the contents of the churn at this point. There should be buttermilk and butter in the churn if it's ready. The texture of the butter should feel firm like butter at room temperature. If it's too soft then continue churning until it changes. Be Warned....if you over churn the mixture, the butter and buttermilk will turn back to cream.



Now the contents of the churn need to be poured into a large bowl covered with three to four squares of cheesecloth (layered on top of each other and large enough to line the bowl and hang over the sides). It's a good idea to prepare the bowl with the cheesecloth before you churn so it's ready when the butter is done.



Scrap out any leftover bits of butter from the churn into the cheesecloth lined bowl. Extra hands and a really LONG spoon are essential at this point.

(Continued on page 4)



Everything is in the bowl and ready to be separated.



(Continued from page 3)

Now, grab all of the sides of the cheesecloth and squeeze out the buttermilk. In the above photo the buttermilk is pouring out of the cheesecloth into the bowl and the butter is wrapped up in the cheesecloth. Continue to squeeze until there is very little liquid dripping from the butter. Remove the cheesecloth from the

butter then place the butter in a large bowl for washing. The buttermilk can be used for baking or frozen for later use.

At this point the butter needs to be washed to remove all the residual buttermilk or it will spoil very quickly. You'll need lots of water for this step.

Use a butter paddle to turn the butter over and over in the water. The water will turn cloudy quickly. Keep pouring it off into a waste bucket then add fresh water until the water no longer clouds. This will take a while but you'll want to be sure it's clean or it will sour.

The butter is now ready to use, as well as, the buttermilk. We usually have a large amount of butter at the end of the day. It is a great addition to the table and tastes so much better than anything you can buy in the store. Enjoy!



From the Director

Although the house is closed during the week in February there is still a lot of activity at the house. We've been getting ready for the Winter Dinner & Auction, February 7 and the upcoming Trivia Night, April 11. Area schools have starting booking spring tours and plans are underway for the summer camps.

There is a volunteer training session schedule for February 14 at 9 a.m. The topic of this session is Dressing 1820. I will be going over the proper way to wear your period clothing. If you plan to

attend, please let me know.

I am looking for volunteers to work on weekends. Check the shutterfly page for calendar updates and to see date/times where help is needed most.

The House has a new intern this semester. Heather grew up in Edwardsville and is a welcome addition. Stop by and introduce yourself some weekend.

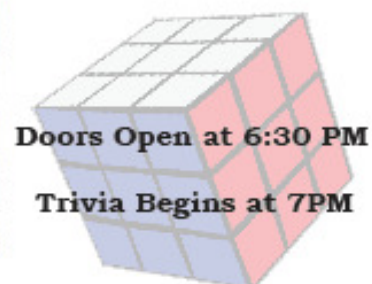
Get your table reserved for the Trivia Night in April. The committee is planning another awesome night. This is a fun event so start putting your team

together. You're not going to want to miss it.

Have a Happy Valentines Day!



THE FRIENDS OF COL. BENJAMIN STEPHENSON HOUSE PRESENT



CHALLENGE YOUR INNER TRIVIA GEEK AS OUR CATEGORIES TRAVEL THROUGH THE DECADES



- Cash Prizes for 1st and 2nd Top Scoring
- Prize for Best Costume
- Prize for Best Dressed Table
- 50/50 Raffle
- Audience Participation Games

**\$120/8 PERSON TABLE
OR
\$15 PER PERSON**

**Guests may bring food for their table. Snacks and water provided.
Cash Bar- No Outside Beverages, Please**

Event Venue

Edwardsville American Legion Post 199
58 South Route 157, Edwardsville, IL

**FOR MORE INFORMATION
OR TO RESERVE YOUR
TABLE CALL
618-692-1818**



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News & Needs



Thank you....

- everyone who helped, donated and/or supported the Winter Dinner & Auction fundraiser.

Needs....

- paper towels, Kleenex, 13-gallon trash bags
- volunteers to help with school tours, house tours, gift shop, garden & grounds, grant writing &

research, special events.

- cleaning supplies such as Windex, toilet bowl cleaner, Swiffer dusters, hand soap, disinfecting wipes, bleach, paper towels, toilet paper, brasso
- seamstresses to sew clothing for the volunteer wardrobe
- bolt of 100% cotton batiste

News....

- The house will be closed during the week in January and February. Regular hours resume March 5, 2015