

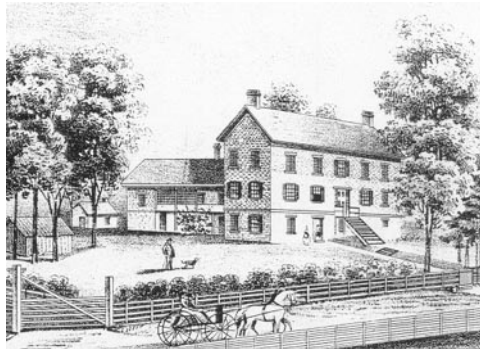
THE BRICK BOARD BUGLE

Herriman Mansion website: <http://freepages.history.rootsweb.com/~herrimanmansion/index.html>

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**Newspapers of Fayette
County Online** website link
[The Herriman Mansion
Restoration Project](#)



The Herriman Mansion

Fifth Regular Issue - This is the fifth regular issue of the periodic newsletter to inform the public, supporters and friends of the Herriman Mansion project about its progress. Significant actions to record the history and encourage the preservation and restoration of the Herriman Mansion, commonly referred to as “The Brick”, will continue to be published here.

Availability of The Brick - As reported on August 18, 2002, the property owner, Mr. Eldon Lenth informed me on August 6th that he had decided not to make the land available to restore the Herriman Mansion in its current location. His offer to donate the building for restoration or any other historical use if it were removed from his property continues to be reviewed for feasibility and support.

Current Course of Action - As I reported in the August 18th newsletter, it is my conviction that this property deserves to be preserved and restored. Efforts continue to develop a complete history of Maj. David B. Herriman and his family, the mansion that he built, and the significant role he played in the development of Wadena and Illyria Township. While my personal feeling is still that the moving of the mansion to

a new location is neither practical nor historically accurate, there has been a continuing effort to determine the feasibility and cost of relocating the mansion somewhere in the immediate Wadena vicinity. There seems to be a consensus that since so much of the history relates to the land Maj. Herriman selected as the location for his large, extravagant home, relocating it from its current location would not be the preferred action. The building and structure mover in Wadena, Aylsworth Brothers House Movers, was contacted to determine the feasibility and cost of moving a structure that large and in the state of ruin that it is currently in. Doug Aylsworth provided me his expert opinion on these questions. While he felt it might be technically feasible to move the mansion, it is something that his company does not have the capability to do and it would be very expensive. A rough ball-park estimate of cost would be near \$100,000. That cost plus the cost of land to place the mansion on and the extra stabilization that would be required to prepare it for moving would elevate the cost even more. I do intend to seek and inquire of a building mover that has the experience and capability to move such a large structure to get further information. In addition to the integrity of the structure as it

<< Segment of drawing from the 1875 Andreas Atlas showing the Herriman Mansion as it appeared in the 1870s.

Community Sites:

Elgin: ([Iowa Related Links](#) - [Misc. Links](#))

Clermont: ([Links :: Of Local Interest](#))

Fayette Co. Genealogy:
<http://www.rootsweb.com/~iafayett/>

now stands, there are also issues about the limestone first floor/basement and the feasibility of moving the mansion over the existing roads utilities, bridges, etc. We need to explore various other alternatives and only if 1) none of these prove to be available and 2) an acceptable relocation alternative is identified would I reconsider the option of moving the building.

Thanks To Supporters - Ed Gage, the Wadena area focal point, and Allen Knox continue to be key local supporters of the project.

Herriman Descendants - The website has had a few visitors who left comments in the Guest Book. One was Jamie Kaisershot, who found the website when doing genealogy research. Her comments were as follows: “I am a great-great-grand-daughter of Major Herriman. My grandmother used to tell stories about the Major and his mansion--for example, evidently his second wife helped to design the house (she insisted on the wooden grating on the porch so that her pet birds wouldn't escape!) “I'm delighted that someone is interested in restoring this wonderful old building. Best of luck to you!”

I did send Jamie an update and some genealogy information and she sent an email which included

the following comments: "Thanks for the update on the Mansion--yes, I had read that the current owners of the building were not willing to make it available for renovation. It seems to me that it would be in everyone's best interest for the renovation to take place (if it were eventually a museum or bed and breakfast, the owner could make some money, I would think!) But it seems that there is little that we can do about this particular situation.

"Thanks, too, for the picture of Charles Herriman's gravesite. Charles' wife was Mary Dorland. I have been able to trace her ancestry back to the 15th century in Holland over the Internet. Isn't genealogy a fascinating hobby? "Best of luck with this very challenging project!"

Former Residents Of The Brick - Grace Durnan, her son Mike Durnan, Earl Wilbur, Pat Smith, Ralph Fest, Lois Erickson, and Lorrain (Mrs. Earle Little) Foster, Ruth (Hidinger) Brooks, and members of the Davis and Probert families all provided much significant information about the property as it was during the period that they or their family members had lived in The Brick. Anyone having knowledge about the history of the mansion or the families that have lived there are requested to provide me this information and the related stories. Each bit of information contributes to the development of the history of the families and the property.

Support Needed For Ongoing Tasks - The various ongoing efforts to help move the project along include these tasks:

The charter for the Illyria-Wadena Community Betterment Association was being revised to allow tax-deductible donations to be made (this effort may be on hold).

Information is being collected to prepare a National Register

application to be considered by the Iowa State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).

These and many additional tasks need to be done. Most can be broken into small packages so the volunteers performing them need not feel overwhelmed. If you are interested in this project and would like to help out, contact Everett or Ed to let us know what you would be most interested in doing.

Local Publicity - Continued publicity on the activities of the local committee and individuals supporting the project is needed. Contacts with The Oelwein Daily Register and the Fayette County Union had indicated the editors were interested in working with us on news stories about The Brick for publication in The Register and the Union. The Fayette County Union did publish a story on August 21, 2002, about the restoration effort. Mike Van Sickle wrote an excellent story about this effort. The content of the article is available on the Herriman Mansion Restoration Project website (see the URL at the top of the first page of this newsletter).

The historical importance of the Herriman Mansion and the status of the progress being made on the project needs to be frequently displayed before the people of Northeast Iowa. This is especially significant for the local community and people with ties to Wadena or having an interest in preserving history and landmarks..

Herriman Mansion website - The website established on RootsWeb continues to be added to and expanded. Please provide inputs by signing the guest book on the website [see item on first page - **Herriman Descendants**] or sending me an email or letter with your feedback. This will help with the refinement of this website.

Links To Other Websites - The links to our RootsWeb

Herriman Mansion Restoration Project website, the Fayette County RootsWeb site, and the two community websites shown on page 1 of this newsletter provide the public information about The Brick that can be found on the www. They have links to two on-line photo album websites and other related websites.

Additional Planned Near-Term Efforts - Investigation of actions needed to apply for REAP/HRDP¹ grants is pending but somewhat premature given the uncertainty about the property ever becoming available.

Investigation of completing the application for the National Register of Historic Places is still pending.

The need to do **stabilization of the property** to prevent or minimize further deterioration is of major concern for the future of this project since without it the building is likely to collapse.

I would like your comments and suggestions, or offers of help or support on this effort or any of the other near-term tasks.

Contributions/Donations - No new donations have been received. As stated in August, we may have a "Catch 22" situation with the conflict of solicitation of donations tied to the property being available for preservation and the possibility of needing funds in hand for acquisition costs to make the property available. We need to break this impasse

Next Issue of the Bugle - Future issues of this newsletter will be published when sufficient new information is available. Send inputs to the editor by US mail or email, i.e., any suggestions on content or material to be included.

¹ REAP (Resource Enhancement and Protection Act), the source for the REAP/Historical Resource Development Program (REAP/ HRDP) funding.