

APPENDIX B

Letters of Support



October 23, 2024

City of Crystal Lake
Historic Preservation Commission
c/o Elizabeth Maxwell
100 W. Woodstock Street
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

Dear Members of the Historic Preservation Commission,

The Crystal Lake Historical Society wishes to thank you for your ongoing efforts to preserve historic structures throughout our community. Through your educational trolley tours and landmark protection program, our community continues to appreciate and preserve its historic properties. The partnership of our organizations has benefited the quality of life for residents of Crystal Lake.

The Crystal Lake Academy Building (also known as Tarpley House) is a significant historic property which the Crystal Lake Historical Society feels must be saved! The builder was Andrew Jackson Simons, who brought his cobblestone trade from New York State to Crystal Lake. This rare method of construction is showcased on the foundation of the Crystal Lake Academy Building. Before retiring from the Crystal Lake Park District, I was deeply involved in restoration efforts at the Colonel Palmer House for more than twenty years and I understand the irreplaceable nature of the construction materials used by Simons. Like the Colonel Palmer House, which is the home of the Society, the walls of the Academy were constructed with red bricks believed to have been made of local clay at a factory north of town. The bricks and cobblestone foundation of the Crystal Lake Academy Building cannot be duplicated by modern masonry manufacturers.

BE PART OF OUR FUTURE - BY PRESERVING OUR PAST!

P.O. Box 1151 • Crystal Lake, IL 60039-1151 • Phone: (815) 455-1151
Website: www.cl-hs.org • Email: info@cl-hs.org

In addition to its rare building style, the Crystal Lake Academy Building is closely associated with many significant historic events and people. Its original purpose was to educate young people of our community. Graduates of the Academy went on to become doctors, lawyers, judges and even a governor! As a private residence, the building is closely associated with the Gates family. One of Crystal Lake's most famous citizens, William Day Gates, grew up in the house. Gates later started the American Terra Cotta and Ceramic Co. which manufactured architectural terra cotta and Teco pottery. Building examples with American Terra Cotta are found across the country including the Wrigley Building in Chicago and the Yerkes Observatory in Williams Bay, WI. Teco pottery is highly collectable, commanding an impressive price for even a small vase.

Maintaining and restoring an historic building requires a commitment of time and treasure. The current owner of the property, St. Mary's Episcopal Church is a small congregation that is unable to do this on their own. The Academy building must be saved and the community must step-up to assist. Cooperative partnerships for raising funds and finding a good use of the building could be developed, creating a win-win situation for the church and the community.

Future use for the Crystal Lake Academy Building can only happen if it is landmarked and preserved. Crystal Lake has precious few buildings that are 170+ years old and those that remain must be protected for future generations.

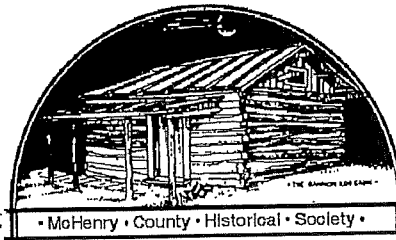
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Viger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "V".

Ann Viger, Vice President
Crystal Lake Historical Society

P: 815-923-2267

F: 815-923-2271



An Illinois, Not For Profit Corporation

6422 Main Street P.O. Box 434, Union, Illinois 60180

October 9, 2024

Historic Preservation Commission
c/o Elizabeth Maxwell
City of Crystal Lake
100 W. Woodstock St.
Crystal Lake, Illinois 60014.

Dear Ms. Maxwell and the Crystal Lake Preservation Commission,

As members of the McHenry County Historical Society's Historic Sites Committee we would like to support the land mark application for the historic Gates House on McHenry Avenue.

All effort must be made to save and keep this architecturally distinguished Greek Revival building. It has survived intact, for nearly 175 years and has seen many generations come and go. It has had guests, the likes of The Crystal Lake Academy, The Simon Gates family, (whose son founded American Tera Cotta), and today, St. Mary's Church.

This proud building has done its work steadfastly all these years. Now we, the community, must work to save it. It has been said about old buildings that they "*are not ours. They belong, partly to those who built them, and partly to the generations of mankind who are to follow us. . . . That which they labored for . . . we have no right to obliterate . . . what other men gave their strength and wealth, and life to accomplish, their right over it does not pass away . . .*" John Ruskin, 1849.

In 1941, as bombs rained down on London, Winston Churchill thought of the many historical buildings randomly being destroyed and the power these buildings had in shaping his people. He said; "*We shape our buildings; thereafter they shape us*". Mr. Churchill did not have a choice in the demolition of his country's structures.

We are lucky, we have a choice.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Rieghns,
As representative of the
McHenry County Historical Society's
Historic Sites Committee

[REDACTED]
Crystal Lake, IL.
October 9, 2024

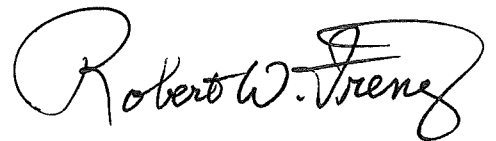
To The Commissioners of the Preservation Commission:

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the McHenry County Historical Society I am writing in support of the application co-sponsored by Jim Heisler and Diana Kenney to grant landmark status to the building currently known as Tarpley House. This ca. 1850 Greek Revival structure is without question one of the most historic buildings in McHenry County. Originally the home of the Crystal Lake Academy, it later became the residence of the Gates family, founders of the renowned American Terra Cotta Company.

As the author of *Historic County Schools of McHenry County, Illinois*, I can also testify to the significance of the Academy which pre-dated Illinois' first public education law of 1855. This may be one of the last remaining such structures in the state.

Tarpley House has stood as a silent witness to generations of change in Crystal Lake and the surrounding area. It was prominently pictured in the 1872 McHenry County Atlas when it was already 20 years old. While we almost always respect the rights of the property owner, we must not allow this historic structure to be lost to our city. It can continue to inspire, and remind us, of a different time and pace of life in our area's past. Tarpley House is deserving of landmark status.

Sincerely,



Robert W. Frenz
President, MCHS
[REDACTED]

Elizabeth Maxwell AICP

From: Sarah J Gates [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 30, 2024 7:50 PM
To: Elizabeth Maxwell AICP
Subject: Re Gates family home aka CL Academy Building/Tarpley House

Stop - Look - Think - Decide: This email originated from outside of the City. Do not click on links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Elizabeth Maxwell,

I believe you are the liaison between the Crystal Lake City Planning Dept and the local Historic Preservation Commission and historical societies. I am writing in regard to my paternal family home, now called the Tarpley House. As you know it was purchased in 1860 by Simon Sumner Gates (my great great grandfather) and amazingly enough, later owned by paternal grandmother's parents, Frederick B. and Lilian O. Mathis (1920).

I have recently retired from the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco where I've been employed for almost 40 years as an art conservator. In addition, I am a California native and consequently am familiar with environments that are unlucky to not have historic architecture. These facts, combined with my family's connection to Tecoma, make me very familiar with the importance of historic preservation for the cultural enrichment of our country and of the American people. I can think of no quicker way for a person to grasp the passing of time, and of different lifestyles, than to see remnants from past centuries. If one cannot travel to older cultures, then preserving out historic structures is the surest way of providing this education.

I'd like to add my voice to the others that have protested the proposed destruction of the house - it has so much to offer the community and indeed, visitors to the mid-west.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Gates

[REDACTED]
Pacifica, CA 94044
[REDACTED]

Dear Historic Preservation Commission and Crystal Lake City Council,

We, the undersigned residents of Crystal Lake, are writing to express our strong support for the preservation of the CL Academy Building / Tarpley House. This historic building, with its distinctive cobblestone and brick construction, along with its Greek Revival components and Federalist characteristics is a significant landmark in our community and a testament to the architectural heritage of Crystal Lake.

Andrew Jackson Simons, built this cobblestone house as well as the National Registered Colonial Palmer house, demonstrating his exceptional craftsmanship. These buildings stand as a symbol of our town's history and reflect the architectural trends of its time.

We understand that St. Mary's Episcopal Church may face challenges in maintaining this historic property. However, we believe that the preservation of such a significant landmark is a collective responsibility. We urge the city and the community to explore various options, such as fundraising campaigns, grants, or partnerships with historical preservation organizations, to secure the necessary resources for its restoration and upkeep.

By preserving the CL Academy Building / Tarpley House, we can not only honor our past but also enrich our community's future. This building has the potential to become a cultural hub, hosting educational programs, exhibitions, and community events.

We implore you to consider the historical and cultural value of the CL Academy Building / Tarpley House and take the necessary steps to ensure its preservation for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Becky and Jim Long

 Crystal Lake

