



Public Invited To Attend Dedication Of New Illinois State Historic Marker For Dr. John Weir

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Madison County Historical Society (MCHS) invites the public to attend the dedication of a new Illinois State Historic Marker on Sunday, Dec. 5, 2021, at 2 p.m. at 715 N. Main Street in Edwardsville. The new ISHS marker will commemorate the home and work of Dr. John Weir (1809-1878). Sunday's dedication also serves as a kick-off for the Society's Centennial year. The first meeting of the Madison County Historical Society was held on Dec. 3, 1921, the 103rd anniversary of Illinois statehood.

Speakers at the dedication will include William Shannon IV, representing the Illinois State Historical Society and local historian Cindy Reinhardt, a member of the MCHS Board.

The Weir House

Built for Dr. John Weir in 1836, this Federal-style home remained in the Weir family for three generations. In 1963, Edna Weir sold it to the Madison County Historical Society which opened the house as a museum the following year. (The museum is currently closed for renovation.)

Dr. John Weir was born in South Carolina in 1809. After graduating from Harvard in 1835, he moved to Edwardsville where he served the community as a physician and surgeon for over 40 years. Although his practice was primarily in Edwardsville, he also assisted with the medical needs at the Confederate Prison in Alton during the Civil War. A respected scholar, his work was often published in medical journals. He was also a corresponding editor for the Southern Medical Record of Atlanta, Georgia.

Weir was active in the Methodist Church, teaching "Sabbath School" to children for many years. Putting his faith into practice, he was known for his generosity to the poor and, after the death of Elijah Lovejoy, became a vocal abolitionist. One newspaper article referred to him as the "red-hot abolitionist." He was the first Master of the Edwardsville Masonic Lodge and his home was the setting for many social events. His 1878 obituary read in part, "In his death the community has lost one of its most honored citizens."

The Weir House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.

To learn more, visit the following link on the MCHS website. The November 2020 MCHS News was dedicated to research on the Weir family. <https://madcohistory.org/mchs-news-volume-8-number-6/>

This ISHS marker is the fourth located between the 700 and 1200 blocks of North Main Street which was once the heart of Edwardsville's business district. The others commemorate the site where Edward Coles freed his slaves, Lincoln School and Pogue Store.