



the

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A Hundred Years Later: The Parties Continue

In 1902, wealthy Springfield socialite and women's activist Susan Lawrence Dana chose an architect from Oak Park, instead of local architects, to design a new home incorporating her parents' Italianate mansion at Fourth and Lawrence Avenue. For 35 year-old Frank Lloyd Wright, designing the Dana House was his largest commission to date. This project was not typical of his usual projects in that Wright had to restructure an already existing 30 year-old house, the Italianate mansion, rather than starting from nothing. As construction progressed, however, very little from the Italianate structure remained at project completion. In honor of Susan's father, Rheuna Drake Lawrence, Frank Lloyd Wright retained a Victorian sitting room with a marble fireplace as one of the few remnants of the former home. Susan's father was a one-time mayor of Springfield and an influential and prosperous businessman during the 19th century. He initially became successful by winning several building contracts, eventually becoming involved in railroads, coal mining, banks, farming, and real estate. Rheuna died in February 1901, leaving behind his wife Mary and daughter Susan. Her husband Edwin Dana had died in a mining accident the year before. Some of the typical Prairie style features found at the Dana-Thomas House include a raised main level, open floor plan, and centralized fireplace. External Prairie style features include low horizontal roofs and wide overhanging eaves.

In 1904, Susan and her mother Mary dedicated the newly-built house with a series of Christmas parties. The first party Susan and her mother hosted in December 1904 was for all the families of the laborers, artisans, and designers who had worked on the new House. Unfortunately, Susan's mother did not live long enough to enjoy her new home; she died in March of 1905 while on vacation in Georgia. For more information about Mary Lawrence and

her philanthropy, see the March 5, 2003 issue of the *Cook-Witter Report*. The plans used to build the Dana-Thomas House incorporated Susan's love for extensive entertaining in that she had three balconies built in various locations designated for musicians to play during parties and social gatherings. The January 3rd, 1956 *Illinois State Register* describes her as a "leader in social circles here and welcome in national and international society. Her parties were brilliant...her hospitality limitless."

Susan opened a country store that first December in the basement of her new home. The country store also served to generate money for charity. The store sold jams, canned goods, brooms and canned pickles. Live chickens and hay further helped create the atmosphere of a country store. On December 20th and 21st, guests paid 25 cents to attend a charity bazaar held for King's Daughter's Home for Aged Women. This fundraiser also included the country store in the basement. A series of parties were held starting on December 26th for the women at the King's



Photo courtesy of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

Daughter's Home, one for residents of the St. Joseph's Old Folks Home, and the Home for the Friendless. Additionally, parties were held for children from two local orphanages.

Susan's philanthropic work was well known, as was her reputation for entertaining governors, state politicians, and members of Springfield society. She also loved to host parties for neighborhood children. A scholarly paper titled "Frank Lloyd Wright and Susan Lawrence Dana" explains that "Susan Dana used her father's fortune to live as she pleased, and she soon became a local legend. Acquaintances remembered . . . the elegant parties that she threw for Springfield's social elite in her Wright-designed home, which she called "Lawrence House."

Susan Lawrence Dana moved just west across the railroad tracks to a smaller, more manageable home around 1928. The courts declared her incompetent in 1942, and she was admitted to St. John's Hospital where she died in 1946 of a stroke. Her property and personal belongings were put up for auction in 1943. The five-day auction was described by chief auctioneer Luke Gaule as "one of the most fabulous held anywhere. . . . A citywide war blackout halted proceedings one night and the audience was kept occupied by auctioneers' chatter and group singing." According to a 1956 *Illinois State Register* article, "in 1901 her wealth was estimated at three million dollars. Settlement of her estate 42 years later. . . left something less than \$100,000." The House was sold in 1944 to Mr. and Mrs. Charles C. Thomas, who used the home as offices for their publishing firm for the next 37 years.

Throughout the past month, centennial Christmas events took place in the 35-room mansion in an attempt to recreate Susan Lawrence Dana's first Christmas in her home. Dana-Thomas House State Historical Site staff and volunteers maintained a country store during this past month. A hundred years later, the recreated country store contained such items as baskets, sachets, pottery, candy, and lotions. Two roosters in cages also were on hand to replicate the ambience of 100 years ago. A country store was also opened in the downstairs billiards and coat rooms in 1994 to commemorate the 90th anniversary. Live music played every weekend afternoon this past December at the Dana-Thomas House. A series of holiday receptions were offered for members, guests, and volunteers. The events were sponsored by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency (IHPA) and the Dana-Thomas House Foundation. The Foundation was created by executive order of Governor James R. Thompson in October 1983. It is a not-for-profit organization working to promote awareness of Frank Lloyd Wright and Susan Lawrence Dana through

educational programs. An equally important mission for the Foundation is the desire to work with the IHPA to preserve and protect the historic site.

The 12,000 square foot Dana-Thomas House has been owned by the State of Illinois since 1981. The three-year Dana-Thomas House restoration took place between 1987 and 1990 at a cost of \$5 million. The restored house is the best preserved example of Frank Lloyd Wright's early Prairie Style houses. It contains more than 100 pieces of original furniture and more than 450 art glass windows, doors, light fixtures designed by Wright. The Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site is open for tours on Wednesday through Sunday from 9 am to 4 pm. The Museum's Visitor Center and the Sumac Bookshop, operated by the Dana-Thomas House Foundation, are located in the original carriage house.

Sources:

Allen, James, Patterson, John, and Taylor, Richard. "Frank Lloyd Wright and Springfield's Lawrence School". HISTORIC ILLINOIS. Vol. 4, No. 6, pp.2-3, 12-13, April 1982.

Allen, Wayne and Mary Meyer. "Chapter Two of Four Part Series about Susan Lawrence. Illinois State Register newspaper, January 3, 1956.

Allen, Wayne and Mary Meyer. "Chapter Four of Four Part Series about Susan Lawrence. Illinois State Register newspaper, January 6, 1956.

A House for Susan Lawrence Dana: A Prairie House Cookbook. Introductory Comments. Editor: Jone VanWinkle, 2004.

"Frank Lloyd Wright and Susan Lawrence Dana" from The Town and the Prairie Conference. Sangamon State University, Springfield, Illinois, April 1985.

Sources courtesy of the Sangamon Valley Collection at the Lincoln Library and the Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site.



Congratulations to **Attorney General Lisa Madigan** and her husband Pat Byrnes on the birth of their daughter. Seven-pound, three-ounce Rebecca Grace Byrnes was born on Saturday, January 15th at about 8 p.m. Rebecca Grace is the couple's first child.

Veto Session Lives Up To Its Name

Legislators focused their work on vetoes during the fall session rather than delving into new, substantive issues. The fall veto session began November 8th for a six-day run ending November 18. Many controversial subjects that might have been considered during the brief November session were not, including the capital budget for construction projects that was postponed from the spring session; security upgrades around the Capitol building after the September shooting of security guard William Wozniak; a bailout of Chicago's Transit Authority; and gambling expansion. Revisiting the issue of medical malpractice legislation that had been discussed earlier in the summer was also a possibility. However, none of these complex issues received any resolution this fall. A bill approving stem cell research in Illinois was only two votes short from passage in the Senate. **House Bill 3589** would have allowed stem cell research but prohibited human cloning.

Legislators concluded the 93rd General Assembly on January 10th and 11th. In the final two days of the 93rd, a couple of important bills have passed both chambers and now proceed to Governor Blagojevich for his signature. Landmark legislation in the form of **Senate Bill 3186** amending the Illinois Human Rights Act made it through the Senate with a 30-27 vote. The measure received approval in the House the next day. The bill prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation in areas such as employment and housing. **Senate Bill 3362**, a supplemental spending bill contains about \$5 million earmarked for security upgrades in the Capitol complex; \$3 million in museum and park district grants to communities having off-track betting parlors; and close to \$2 million for school districts that have undergone consolidation. The 94th General Assembly was sworn in on Wednesday, January 12 at noon. Following is a sampling of some of the vetoes dealt with this fall.

Total Veto Overridden

The General Assembly was able to override the total veto of one house bill and 5 senate bills. The General Assembly overrode the Governor's veto of Senate Bill 2460 by the required margin, so the bill becomes law. The Native American Gaming Act is established under **Public Act 93-1051** (Burzynski/Pritchard). PA 93-1051 requires the Governor to submit a request for authority to enter into a compact with a Native American tribe to the General Assembly before allowing the Native American tribe to

conduct gambling in Illinois.

Under **Public Act 93-1048**, homeowners are granted legal protection if they use a banned handgun to shoot an intruder in their own homes. With this legislation, a homeowner could break a city's ban on handguns during an act of self defense or defense of another person. Senate Bill 2165 had received a total veto from the Governor, but the veto was overridden by both chambers. The legislation pitted those who thought it undercut local governments' rights to pass local ordinances against those who think we should be able to defend ourselves in our homes.

Amendatory Veto Overridden

Only one piece of legislation, House Bill 826, had an amendatory veto overridden by the required 3/5 majority. **Public Act 93-1053** amends the Illinois Municipal Code to allow municipalities carrying out a business district development plan to impose a retailers' occupation tax, a service occupation tax, and a hotel operators' occupation tax. The Governor recommended in his veto message removing a provision authorizing corporate authorities in a municipality from imposing the above three types of taxes, and only imposed if it had been approved by a referendum.

Override Attempt Fails

House Bill 4651 (Joseph Lyons) received a total veto by the Governor. The bill would have provided minimum distances to be maintained between mobile homes. The legislation provided that when a mobile home is removed from a site for repairs or is replaced by another mobile home, the standards in place when the site was originally constructed would apply. The vote to override the Governor's veto failed in the Senate with a 28-28-0 vote on November 16.

Amendatory Vetoes – Changes Accepted

In three instances, the legislature accepted the changes suggested by the Governor. The three senate bills had received amendatory vetoes; they now become law with the Governor's changes. One of these, **Public Act 93-1060** (Crotty) allows someone to receive a temporary license as a speech language pathologist assistant without meeting all regular licensure criteria if he/she has completed a program or holds a certificate in another state. Issuing a temporary license can occur if he or she obtains documentation certi-

fying that the applicant’s professional experience with students with disabilities in a school setting will be supervised by a licensed speech-language pathologist. The Governor recommended requiring the abovementioned supervised experience in speech-language pathology specifically refer to experience required under federal law or court order. The General Assembly accepted the amendatory veto and the legislation became effective 12/23/04.

Public Act 93-1062 (Crotty) requires the Department of Human Services (DHS) to develop a plan to revise the rates for the various types of child care provided to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients. The Governor recommended moving the date of completion to January 1, 2005. The legislature agreed with his recommendation.

Bills Dead

Two house bills that were amendatorily vetoed were allowed to die. One of them, **House Bill 2220** (Lang), would have increased Medicaid rates for nursing homes effective July 1, 2004. In his veto message, the Governor recommended moving the effective date of the payment rate increase to January 1, 2005 instead.

Total Vetoes Dead

Six senate and nine house bills receiving total vetoes were allowed to die this fall. Passage of **Senate Bill 2374** (John Bradley) would have raised the truck speed limit from 55 to 65 miles per hour on rural highways. It passed both chambers during the spring legislative session, and had passed the year before as well. Governor Blagojevich vetoed it both times, citing safety concerns.

House Bill 956 (Currie) also received a total veto from the Governor. This bill would have imposed a 60-day limit on the filing of lawsuits in response when a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request is denied. As originally drafted, the measure contained a 30-day limit. Currently there is no limit in place. This bill was also allowed to die.



Reminder: The Governor's State of the State Address has been moved back one day to February 3rd.

Reminder: The General Assembly's web site has moved to www.ilga.gov.

Number of Bills With Governor’s Vetoes, 2000-2004

<u>Governor’s Action</u>	<u>2004</u>	<u>2003</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2000</u>
Veto	22	54	13	28	3
Amend. Veto	6	45	13	18	6
Item Veto	0	3	1	0	0
Item Reduction	0	6	0	0	0
Item Veto & Reduction	0	7	0	0	0

Data is from the Index Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, Legislative Information System, and Creative Resources.

Second Year Bill Numbers to Date

	<u>House Bills</u>	<u>Senate Bills</u>	<u>Total</u>
Passed Both Chambers	35	179	414
Public Acts	221	165	386
Total Veto	11	11	22
Amendatory Veto	3	3	6

Data is from Creative Resources

