



The State Journal-Register • Springfield, IL • The Oldest Newspaper In Illinois

[Back](#)
[Home](#)

Share:
 [ShareThis](#)
[Print](#)
[Comment](#)

Daughters of Union Veterans expanding headquarters, museum

By **PETE SHERMAN**

THE STATE JOURNAL-REGISTER

Posted Feb 23, 2009 @ 11:29 PM

Last update Feb 24, 2009 @ 06:16 AM

The Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War is expanding its national office and museum in Springfield.

The organization, whose members are all direct female descendants of Union Civil War veterans, recently bought an updated, 2,800 square-foot "American foursquare" home next to the Daughters' museum and office at Walnut and Governor streets.

The 1898 home will be converted into research, library and special exhibit space, as well as quarters for organization trustees visiting Springfield. A children's room is also planned.

The timing is right, said Ozzie Thompson, chairwoman of the group's board of trustees.

"We've been outgrowing our current space," Thompson said from her winter home in Texas.

"We were thinking of buying property and then building. But I'm afraid by the time we'd get everything built, everyone would be dead.

"When the (previous owners of the home) were selling, we said we would like to have the first chance. They agreed. It is our baby now."

"In the last 10 years, more and more people have been coming to the museum," she said. "They really enjoy it. But they always say, 'My, you're really crowded.' And we are."

Marianne Fanale, the administrator of the museum and headquarters, said the museum will be rearranged somewhat, since the books that will be transferred next door will leave more room open for other artifacts.

The basement is full of items the Daughters have never been able to show, she said. And more often arrive on the doorstep.

"We just received eight boxes, just sent from Massachusetts, from a member entering a nursing home," Fanale said. "They include handwritten (Civil War) records of every Massachusetts soldier and dresses."

Other artifacts in the museum include rifles, pistols, swords, drums, uniforms, bullets, diaries, medical instruments and hundreds of Civil-War era archives and genealogical texts.

Thompson said the new building also will allow the organization to host programs and speakers. Computers and microfilm readers will be available for researchers.

"Of course, all of this will be free," she said.

The Daughters of Union Veterans will be 125 years old in 2010. The group plans to dedicate its new facility in August of that year, when members will hold their national meeting in Springfield. It also plans to hold an open house at the new facility this April.

Pete Sherman can be reached at 788-1539.

A brief history

The Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War was founded in 1885. The DUV moved from Washington to Springfield in 1951, purchasing a home on South Second Street. In 1969, the organization built and moved into its current facility at 503 S. Walnut St.

Membership eligibility is by "lineal descent only." There are about 4,000 members.

Learn more about the Daughters of Union Veterans at its Web site, www.duvcw.org.

Copyright © 2009 GateHouse Media, Inc. Some Rights Reserved.

Original content available for non-commercial use under a Creative Commons license, except where noted.