



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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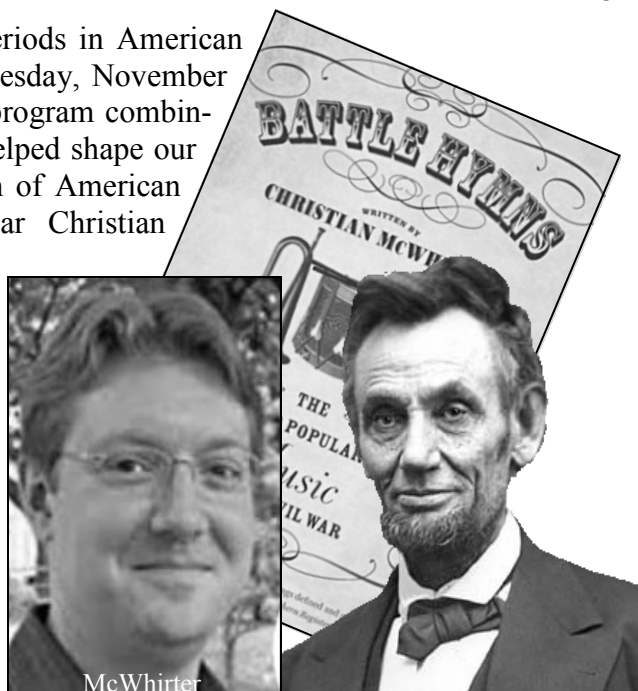
November 17 Meeting to Offer a Look ...and Listen to Lincoln Era Music History

Abraham Lincoln witnessed one of the most exciting periods in American musical history. You'll be able to recapture that era on Tuesday, November 17, when the Sangamon County Historical Society hosts a program combining both music and a well-researched look at the era that helped shape our nation's musical history. Telling the story of the evolution of American music during Lincoln's lifetime will be Lincoln scholar Christian McWhirter and the local folk band, Wild Columbine.

The program, free and open to the public, begins at 5:30 p.m. in Carnegie Room North at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street. Refreshments will be served.

"The music industry developed from nothing into a nationwide juggernaut during Lincoln's lifetime," says McWhirter. "Lincoln enjoyed this music and participated in its development, but he also actively influenced it as he became one of America's most prominent figures." McWhirter is the author of *Battle Hymns: The Power and Popularity of Music in the Civil War*.

(Continued on page 4)



Annual Members-Only Holiday Party Set for December 15

That first flake of snow may not have fallen yet, but even without it, there's no doubt the holiday season is about to get underway.

For members of the Sangamon County Historical Society that means just one thing: the

annual SCHS Holiday Party is just around the corner!

Tickets for the Tuesday, December 15 event, to be held for the second year in a row at the home of President Mary Alice Davis in Springfield, are \$25 per person. The festivities

will begin at 5:30 p.m., with catering by Carol Fraase.

"We had a great turn-out last year and we expect much of the same," noted Davis, whose home is decorated for the occasion, adding to the holiday spirit. Attendance is limited to

Society members.

Tickets must be purchased no later than December 7. You can reserve a spot immediately by registering and paying online through the Society website at sangamonhistory.org or filling out the form on page 10

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SCHS
Membership Roster
2015-2016



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2015 Oak Ridge
Cemetery Walk:
A Photo Album

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Thanks for Making the Walk A Success

As you probably know by now, our October Walk through Oak Ridge Cemetery was a tremendous success. The crowds were bigger than any previous walk and portend a great response to the event in the future....so great, in fact, that we have already scheduled another cemetery

walk at Oak Ridge for next October, Sunday, October 9 to be exact. We're already looking at ways to improve upon what we did this year. One thing is for certain. Our success now and in the future is bound up in an army of volunteers who did everything from portraying the historical figures featured this year to directing traffic, writing scripts, publicizing the event, setting up and operating concessions, even walking the site.

We're glad we worked so hard to bring this event back. Its history cannot and should not be ignored. To quote the late SCHS president Dr. Floyd Barringer from his book, *A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery*, "as you walk back to your car, we are sure that you will feel a little sad and reluctant at parting with the grand company of the souls you have met here. We hope that you will have been inspired by the notable heritage represented here and that you will return of Oak Ridge again another day."



BIG TURNOUT: Hundreds lined up to participate at the Society's Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk on October 11, the largest in the history of the event.

Donna Catlin photo

We are particularly appreciative of the eight "players," re-enactors who brought back to life such Oak Ridge figures as poet/artist Nicholas

Mary Alice



Historico, published 10 times a year, is the official monthly bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. *Winner, 2013 Certificate of Excellence, Illinois State Historical Society.* You can download back issues of *Historico* in PDF format by going to our website, sangamon-history.org or sancohis.org. Send event announcements to historicoeditor@gmail.com.
Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor, Donna Catlin, *Photographer*



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LAST PHOTO taken of the Sultana that sank in the Mississippi with more than 2,000 aboard on April 27, 1865 near Memphis Tennessee. Still America’s greatest maritime disaster, its history and the decisions leading up to its sailing were lost in the sweep of Lincoln’s assassination. Its story has been brought back to life by Tennessee attorney and author Jerry Potter, who detailed elements of the disaster for members and guests of the Sangamon County Historical Society at its October 15 meeting. Speaking to a full house in the City of Springfield’s Lincoln Library’s Carnegie Room North, Potter tied together a series of political decisions and personal influence by prominent figures including Lincoln and Grant that were compounded by greed and incompetence of those associated with the ship and troop transportation. The Sultana’s capacity was 376 passengers, but 2,266 soldiers were placed on board along with paying passengers, animals, and cargo. When it sank after a boiler exploded, only a fraction of those aboard survived. Most of its victims were Union soldiers on their way home and war prisoners. Potter (below, right), has spent 30 years studying the tragedy. A history major in college with a special interest in the Civil War, he turned to law as a career but found his interest piqued in the Sultana after seeing a painting of the incident (below) hanging in a local bank.



NOVEMBER 2015 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Society welcomes new members:

*Fred Floreth, LauRen Pashayan, Linda Schneider, Don Schneider,
 Tracy Petro. Pat Foster, Bruce Davidson, P.J. Stabb*

Please make note of our
 official mailing address:

SCHS
Box 9744
Springfield, Illinois,
62791-9744

Civil War Music Evolution to be Focus of Next Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Originally from Ontario, Canada, McWhirter earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Toronto and a master's and doctorate in United States History from the University of Alabama.

Since 2010, he has worked as an assistant editor for The Papers of Abraham Lincoln, first at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., and then at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. He also serves as editor of the *Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association*.

Aside from his book, McWhirter's writings on the Civil War, Lincoln, and popular culture have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Civil War Monitor*, and the *Blackwell's Companion* series, as well as his own blog, *Civil War Pop*.

Wild Columbine, composed of William Furry, Megan Turner, and Sally McDaniel-Smith, is a offshoot of Thistle n' Thyme, a popular group of local of musicians who focus on performing period music. Furry is executive director of the Illinois State Historical Society.



MUSIC MAKERS: Wild Columbine will be performing Civil War Music at the November 17 meeting, providing listeners with an example of the transition in music during the Lincoln era.

Linking Up

All About Kites...and Much More

Fresh from winning an Illinois State Historical Society award for the Society's continually expanding on-line history encyclopedia, *SangamonLink.org*, editor Mike Kienzler spend part of last month with his eyes on the sky. Well, sort of.

If you head to the site, you'll read his latest article about the J.C. Ayling Kite Co., which got its start in a backyard shed on North Seventh Street and manufactured millions of Jolly Boy kites in Springfield from 1911 until the 1940s.

"The key to the company's success was an innovation developed by founder John C. Ayling (1860-1921), a process for folding kites so they could be shipped at low cost and with little breakage," notes Kienzler, who points

out that several patents were issued to protect Ayling's idea.

He relates a 1931 **Illinois State Journal** article that described the company's beginnings:

In 1911, Ayling "began manufacturing, in a modest way, in a small shed at the rear of his home at 619 N. Seventh St. Up to that time the process of shipping kites was a difficult one. Though light, they made a bulky, fragile package that was difficult to handle. By making them so they could be folded, he found he could wrap them in compact parcels requiring far less space. That was his innovation.

The success of the company was due to his persistent sales efforts no less than to the original idea. After the first year, Mr. Ayling spent practically

all of his time on the road, establishing a clientele that has continued growing by leaps and bounds."

Ayling left the business in 1919 because of ill health, Kienzler notes, but kite sales continued to grow under the management of John Ayling's wife Margaret (1859-1943) and then their son, George Ayling Sr. (1891-1952), reaching one million kites by the time that 1931 story was published.

The company's trademark was the face of the grinning, gap-toothed Jolly Boy that adorned each kite. Kites consumed three carloads of lumber and one of paper annually, according to the **Journal** story.

In 1931, J.C. Ayling was selling
(Continued on page 9)

SangamonLink

History of Sangamon County, Illinois



SANGAMON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Roster

2015-2016



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SANGAMON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY *Membership Roster 2015 -2016*

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SANGAMON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY *Membership Roster 2015-2016*

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(Continued from page 6)

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(Continued from page 7)

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Thank-you for your support. Your membership dollars make it possible for the Sangamon County Historical Society to continue its mission to support and preserve local history.

With the holiday season coming up, why not give a gift of membership to a friend or family, a high school or college student, even a favorite teacher! Membership in the Sangamon County Historical Society is a gift that keeps giving 'round the year!



*A
Gift of
Membership*

Just fill out the form on the back of your *Historico* and check off the Gift of Membership. We'll take it from there!

Springfield's Kite Industry and More Now on SangamonLink.org

(Continued from page 4) kites wholesale in “the forty-eight states, most of the provinces of Canada, and 42 foreign countries. It has shipped kites to the central part of British East Africa and the capital of Iceland,” the Journal said. Kite styles included a three-stick hexagonal version, a two-stick bow kite and a “monoplane 3-tail kite with wings,” selling for anywhere between 5 cents and \$1.

still the first – the small paper folding kite that sells at corner drug stores for a dime.”

Kite manufacturing was a seasonal business, with the busy season lasting from September to February, and the Ayling plant moved often, with sites at Eighth Street and Princeton Avenue, in several buildings on Springfield's near north side, and at a couple of downtown locations. J.C. Ayling Kite Co. seems to have closed in

1940 or 1941 (city and telephone directories include listings for the company in 1940, but not 1941). The

reason is unknown — there apparently was no newspaper coverage of the closure — although it's likely that the United States' preparations for war could have put a crimp in the plant's needed supplies of wood and paper, Kienzler speculates.

A photo of the Jolly Boy kite can be viewed on the website along with some

additional details including information about modern-day collectors and kite enthusiasts.

Kites aren't the only topics new to the on-line history encyclopedia this month. You can also read about the 1955 measles vaccination program, take a look at where Springfield once had fire alarm boxes, and read more about the *Illinois State Informer*. You can also contribute to the site. Instructions are on line!

Holidays Ahead!

2015 Festival Tree Readied, Wreath for Old State Capitol

For the seventh year in a row, the Sangamon County Historical Society will be decorating a tree at the 26th Annual Festival of Trees. The event, that draws over 30,000 visitors, will be held at the Orr Building on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield, from Saturday, November 21 through Sunday, November 29.

In keeping with the theme, “Building Traditions,” this year's tree will feature an assortment of ornaments featuring historic sites, some gone, some present, that emphasize the need to preserve and maintain our architectural history. Previous trees have focused on school houses, barns, historic figures, a Victorian Christmas in Central Illinois, and gone-but-not forgotten historic sites razed and bulldozed to make way for newer buildings and facilities.

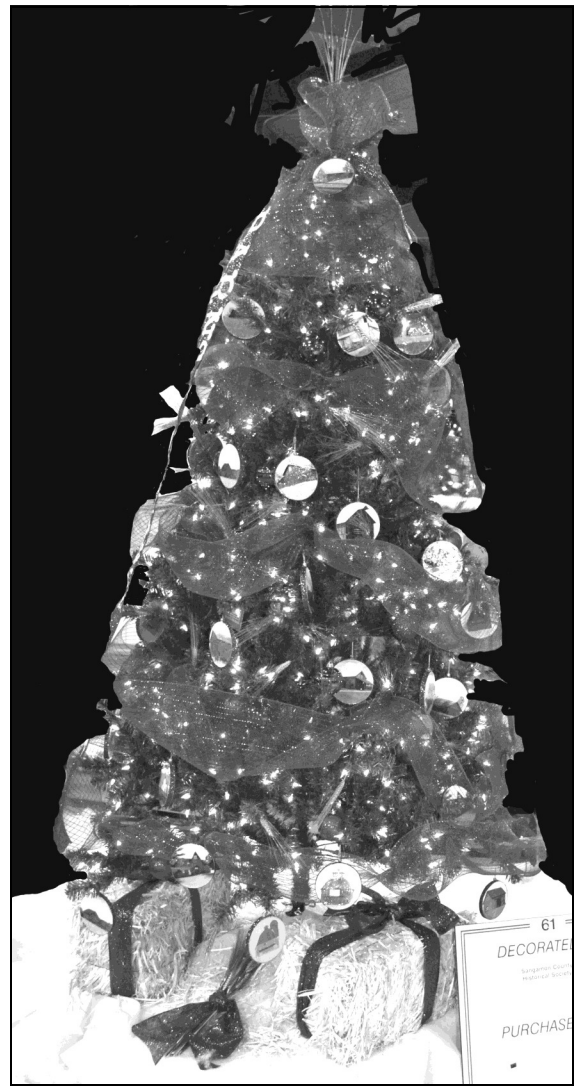
“Our tree always gets a lot of close looks,” says SCHS president Mary Alice Davis, “because we

always have a story to tell.” Davis suggested this year's theme.

Some 200 trees will be on display throughout the nine-day event. For ticket information and Festival hours, go to www.memorialmedial.com/memorial-medical-center-foundation/festival-of-trees.

The Society is also contributing a decorated wreath to the Old State Capitol which this year will have a display of wreaths for public viewing starting November 28. The display, that this year takes the place of the Christmas Tree holiday tour at the Executive Mansion, will be open during the downtown holiday walks and house tours, the schedule for which was not available as *Historico* went to press.

The Society wreath reflects the wide range of programs and activities it provides to members and the community throughout the year and was designed by board member Kathy Dehen.



SANGAMON COUNTY BARNS provided the theme for one of the Society's past Festival of Trees entries. The tree was surrounded by ribbon-tied bales of hay.



Calendar of Historical Events

Tuesday, November 17: "Lincoln and the Music of 19th Century America," 5:30 p.m. Christian McWhirter and the Wild Columbine trio combine for a retrospective on American music of the Lincoln era when the Sangamon County Historical Society gathers for its monthly meeting. Free and open to the public. Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 S. Seventh Street, Springfield.

Saturday, November 21-Sunday, November 29: 26th Annual Festival of Trees. (Hours vary). Orr Building, State Fairgrounds. Check out the Society's entry into the 2015 Festival of Trees. For admission information and hours, go to www.memorialmedical.com/memorial-medical-center-foundation/festival-of-trees.



Saturday, December 5: Clayville Christmas, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit the Children's Store at this popular historic site operated by the Pleasant Plains Historical Society, to see Santa as you listen to Pleasant Plains kindergarten and middle school students sing Christmas carols. There's face painting too! Clayville Historic Site, 125 County Highway 9C, Pleasant Plains.



For details, check the Clayville website, www.clayville.org

Sunday, December 6: "A Very Vintage Christmas" Historic Fashion Show and Tea, 2 p.m. The Historic Marbold Farmstead Association hosts this new event to be held in the Greenview Elementary All-Purpose Room, 1247 E. Palmer Street, Greenview. It will feature tiers of delicacies, tea, a style show, and a display of historic clothing from the mid-1800's to the early 1900's. Call 415-1239 217-415-1239 by December 1 to reserve a table. Tickets are \$15/person.



Tuesday, December 15: Sangamon County Historical Society Annual Members-Only Holiday Party, 5:30 p.m. at the home of President Mary Alice Davis. (See story, page 1). Tickets \$25 per person. Registration and payment must be received by December 7. Sign-up on line at www.sangamonhistory.org or fill out and mail in the form below along with your check.



Annual Members-Only Holiday Party Mail-In Reservation/Payment Form

Please use this form only if you wish to attend the Tuesday, December 15, Annual Sangamon County Historical Society Members-Only Holiday Party **but do not wish to register and pay on-line via our website, sangamonhistory.com.** The party starts at 5:30 p.m. the home of president Mary Alice Davis in Springfield. Catering will be by Carol Jean Fraase. Tickets are \$25 per person. **Checks should be made payable to SCHS and must be received by the Society at Box 9744, Springfield, 62791-9744 no later than December 7.** Please indicate if you need directions to the Davis residence. Street parking.

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

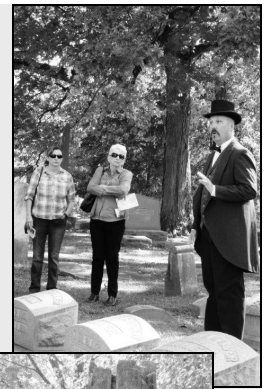
Names of Attendees: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____



PORTRAITS AND PLAYERS: Back row (from left), Bill Furry as Judge Samuel Treat, Bruce Davidson as Rolland W. Diller, Fred Floreth as Vachel Lindsay, and Pat Foster as Dr. Henry Wohlgermath. Front row (from left) Tracy Suttin-Petro as Nellie Grant Jones, Roni Betts as Rebecca Woods, Kathryn Harris as Phoebe Florville, and Linda Schneider as Mattie Rayburn.



Echoes of Yesteryear:

A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery

October 11, 2015



Photos by Donna Catlin

Sangamon County Historical Society
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Sangamon County Historical Society MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form

Mail this form with your check to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. You may also join or renew on line by going to sangamonhistory.org. Our membership year runs from July 1 to June 30.



Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____ E-mail: _____

Status

New Member

Renewal

Gift of Membership from:

Phone _____

Membership Levels

- 01 - Regular Membership - \$25
- 02 - Not-For-Profit Membership - \$20 (Must show proof of status).
- 03 - Student Membership - \$10. (Must show proof of status).
- 04 - Educator, \$15. (Must show proof of status).
- 05 - Pioneer Level Membership - \$100.
- 06 - Settlers Level Membership - \$250.
- 07 - Trailblazer Level Membership - \$500.
- 08 - Lifetime Membership - \$700