



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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Kicking Off 2016

History With A Twist: Grant Remembers Lincoln

Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses G. Grant shared a unique time in American history, but what did they really think of each other? The answer to that question may come on Tuesday, January 19, when well-known reenactor and history buff Larry Werline dons his Grant uniform for a Sangamon County Historical Society presentation on "Grant Remembers Lincoln."

Werline, a Chatham resident who bears an uncanny resemblance to Grant, has been impersonating him since 1997, the outgrowth of his avid enthusiasm for history, particularly the American Civil War. Active for many years in a Civil War round table and for a decade a Civil

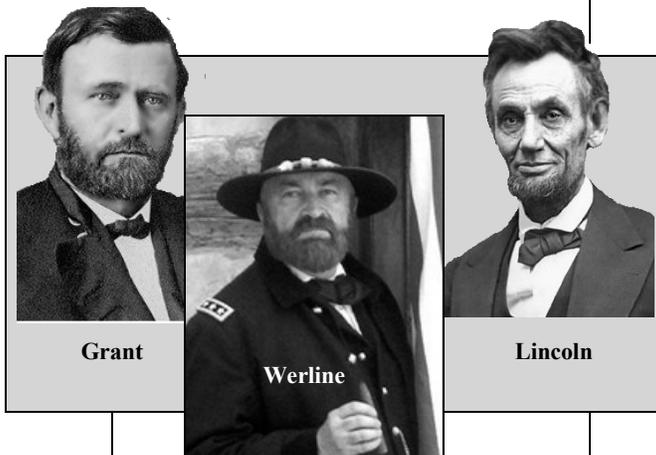
War reenactor with the largest Union Artillery Battery in the Midwest (where he rose to the rank of Captain), Werline eventually began focusing on playing Grant, his exact height and

Grant reenactor and presenter.

His first person presentation, at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, begins at 5:30 p.m. and is free and open to the public in addition to Society members.

"This will not be a scholarly presentation, but rather a first person account of their relationship and events they shared told mainly by stories," explains Werline, who is expected to discuss the similarities and differences between Lincoln and Grant, their interchanges early in the Civil War and their partnership to win it, Lincoln's last days, and his time at Grant's headquarters at City Point, Virginia in 1865. He will also discuss the Grant presidency.

(Continued on page 6)



similar features making him an ideal

March 19 History Trivia Night Moving to New, Larger Site

Get ready for some fun and games, mixed in with a little bit of history!

That's what's in store for members and their guests and die-hard trivia players when the Society hosts its

fourth annual History Trivia Night on Saturday, March 19. It will be at a new location this year: Christ the King Parish Hall, 1930 Barberry Drive, Springfield. This year, proceeds from

the event will benefit Sangamon County Historical Society programs and the continuing development of the Pleasant Plains Historical Society's Clayville Historical Site.

"While we appreciate the three years we've held the sell-out event at the Old State Capitol for benefit of the Lincoln Troubadours, it was apparent to all of us in-
(Continued on page 6)

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HOLIDAY FLAIR: What makes a good party great? Delicious food, as SCHS Holiday Party goers found out. For a look at this year's event see pages 4-5.





2016: A Time to Look Ahead, Look Back

As we step into the new year, what better opportunity is there to look ahead toward our future and back at the past 12 months. Let's start with the latter. The Society has had a wonderful 2015, one of continuing extraordinary growth, honors, and accomplishments. Our monthly programs have consistently drawn large crowds, attracting new members to our rolls. Our special events and our special project grant programs have also had a positive impact on both the history community and the general public. It's the kind of effort that underscores the depth of commitment our board and members have toward keeping local history meaningful to all.

Our two largest public events, the sold-out History Trivia Night last March and this past October's super successful Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk involved the efforts of an army of volunteers and for that we are quite grateful. As we head into 2016 with these and other events still on the drawing board, we are certain of their success because of your enthusiasm for what we do.

We were especially honored this past year to be recognized by the Illinois State Historical Society for our *SangamonLink.org* on-line and searchable county-history website, a project that took nearly a decade to create and one that will continue to build an easily accessible body of knowledge about our county's history in the future. It is a natural fit for our mission.

Another element of being a county-wide organization, is to promote and where we can,

provide financial help to local history groups which is why you can read about a variety of history events happening around Sangamon County through on-line flash announcements via e-mail or in *Historico*. The Society, in fact, has had a long commitment to supporting such activities and in at least one major way, of underscoring how important local history is through the creation and

continued monetary support we give to the Sangamon Valley Collection at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library.

For 2016, we have lots of exciting new programs and events that you will be hearing about in coming weeks and months. When it comes time to renew your membership this spring, you may want to think about donating a little extra with your dues to help us continue our work.



THE SOCIETY'S *Wreath of Events*, on display at the Old State Capitol this past December, provided visitors with a broad look at our many activities. The Society also created a "*Sangamon County Historic Sites History Tree*" for the 26th annual Festival of Trees in late November. Afterwards, it went to the law offices Brown, Hay & Stephens, LLP, which selected the tree at a pre-Festival Gala sponsor lottery.

Donna Catlin photo

Mary Alice



Historico, published 10 times a year (except July and December), is the official 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*

Opening Reception January 8

New Art Association Exhibit to Look at Springfield's Architectural Legacy

Springfield's shifting architectural scene, captured in photos from the Sangamon Valley Collection at the city's Lincoln Library, will be on display, free, from Friday, January 8 through Wednesday, January 27 at the Springfield Art Association's M.G. Nelson Family Gallery of Art at Edwards Place.

"*Shifting Sands: Springfield's Architectural Legacy*," features more than 40 photos of Springfield's historic buildings from the 19th and 20th centuries and explores the evolution of Springfield's built environment over nearly two centuries.

"As the city has grown and evolved, some of these historic structures have been lost, some have been restored and repurposed, and some have fates that hang in the

balance. In *Shifting Sands*, the stories behind several of these buildings will be brought back to life," says the Association's Erika Holst who co-curated the exhibit with Curtis Mann, manager of the Sangamon Valley Collection. Both Holst and Mann are members of the Sangamon County Historical Society, Mann, a past president.

An opening reception for the exhibit will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. on January 8, with a gallery talk starting at 6 p.m. in the gallery, part of the Springfield Art Association's Edwards Place Historical Home complex located at 700 North Fourth Street in Springfield. The exhibition is sponsored by the Ace Sign Company of Springfield.



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Linking to the Link

With Entries From Manufacturing to Murder, Society's "webpedia" Continues to Grow

From manufacturing to mayhem, readers of the Sangamon County Historical Society's on-line and searchable county history encyclopedia, www.SangamonLink.org will find plenty to whet their appetite this month among the newest additions to the award-winning site.

Editor Mike Kienzler has added nearly a half-dozen new posts (and most likely a few more as you read this), a broad collection of unusual events and data ranging from a who's who in manufacturing in Springfield in the early 50s (and by implication, a measure of the loss of their clout in today's economy); how famed pilot Jimmy Doolittle almost plowed his plane into the State Capitol dome; and a sensational 1920s murder trial.

Those who measure the changes in the area's economy may be especially drawn to the list of manufacturing companies here in

1953, the largest among them Allis-Chalmers, who then employed 4,500 workers, Sangamo Electric, with 3,000 employees, and Pillsbury, with 1,500. Back then, manufacturing was a big business, the "made in Springfield" designation attached to prod-

ucts distributed worldwide, ranging from bobby pins to bulldozers.

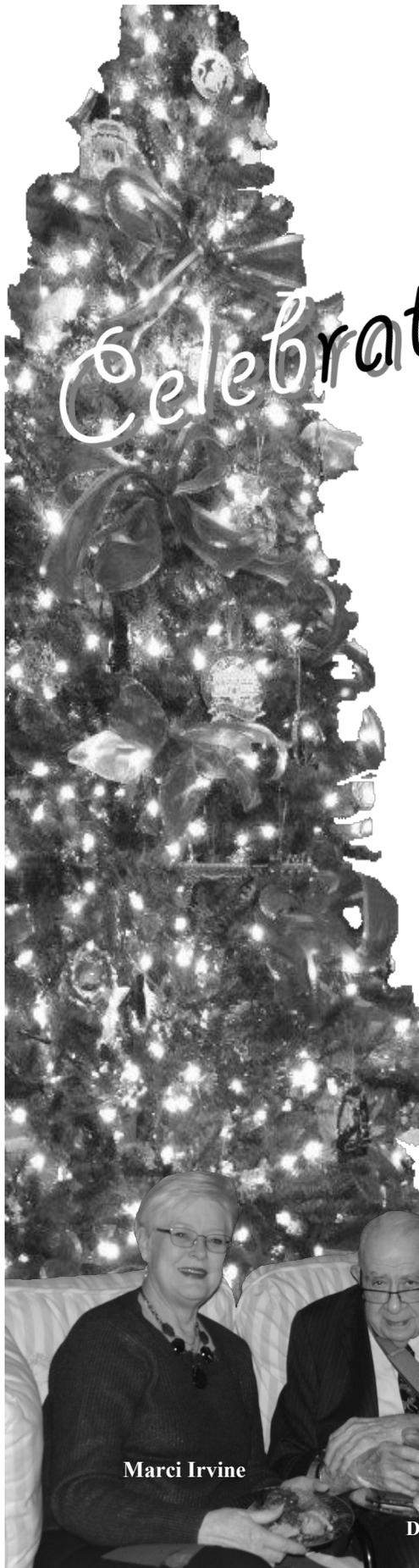
The new additions also include details about the last public hanging in Sangamon County and the trial of "Hunkie John" Buskiewich, the defendant in a sensational 1926 murder trial, but the story behind the Doolittle near-miss has a modern-day spin on how and why the Statehouse dome is always illuminated. Check it out!



JANUARY 2016 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*The Society welcomes new Life Members
 Roy and Casey Mayfield*

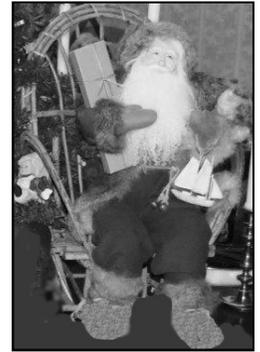
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Celebrating the Season!

Society Members Gather to Kick Off Holidays

SCHS president Mary Alice Davis (left) hosted this year's annual holiday party held on December 15 at her Springfield home. Nearly 60 attended the members-only event that included a buffet dinner and dessert prepared by Carol Jean Fraase. The evening was filled with conversation and awe at the beautiful Christmas decorations and trees that sparkled throughout the evening. Santa popped up in numerous places, including the buffet table that featured one of many favorites in Davis's collection!



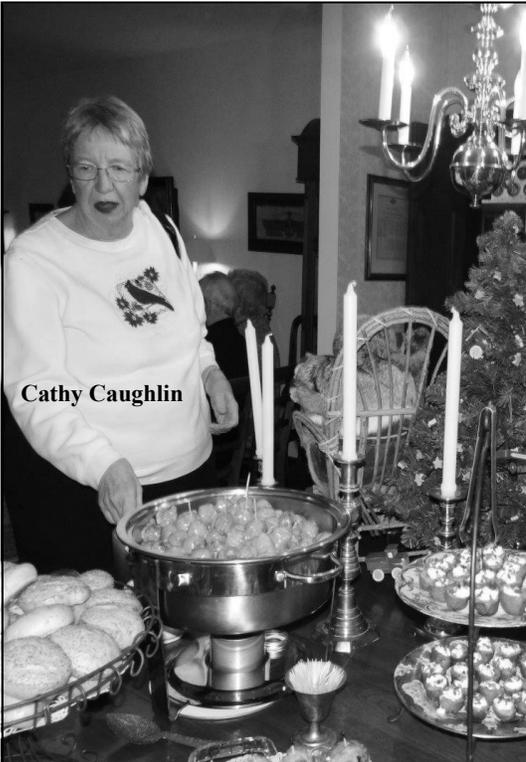
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Set for March 19

Trivia Night Moving to Grow, Will Aid SCHS Projects, Clayville

(Continued from page 1)

involved in planning and coordination that the facilities at the OSC were not large enough to grow the event," noted SCHS president Mary Alice Davis.

"We had 160 players last year and had to turn away tables because there simply was not enough room to add more in the building's Foundation Hall," she pointed out.

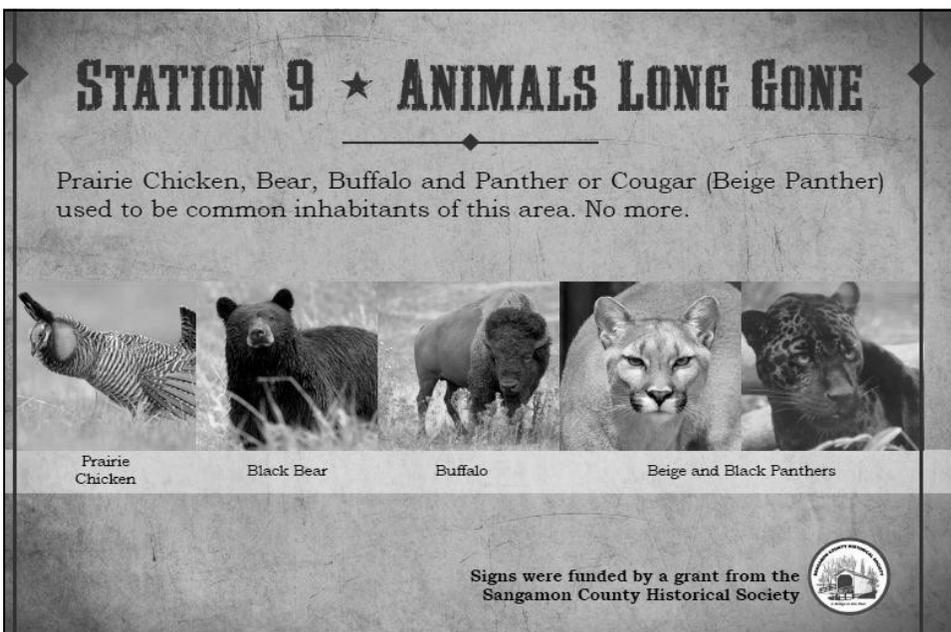
The first year the event was held at Old State Capitol, tables were spread across several main and upper floor rooms that for a trivia night, was a logistical nightmare. The Old State Capitol's garage-level Foundation Hall helped consolidate play into one area, but it was apparent that its size limited the number of persons who wanted to eat, play, and enjoy the evening.

"We're pleased this year to have proceeds go to both our programs and the continuing efforts of the Pleasant Plains Historical Society in making the Clayville historic site a valuable contribution to our community," said Davis, in noting that "Clayville has always been an active partner in our trivia night event, so it is with special delight to know that they will also directly benefit from its success."

Details and ticket reservation and round sponsor information will be available on-line on the Society's website, www.sancohis.org, starting in February will appear as well in the February edition of *Historico* and on social networking sites. Trivia master Al Gietl will once again develop the trivia questions for the evening.



LONG-TIME PARTNERS: Members of the Pleasant Plains Historical Society, responsible for reviving the Clayville historic site, have long worked with the Sangamon County Historical Society in making Trivia Night a success, providing labor and chairs as well as players. Last year, the Society provided a grant to Clayville to post signage along one of its nature trails. This year, Clayville will be a direct beneficiary of some of the proceeds from the 2016 Trivia Night to be held Saturday, March 19 at a new, larger location. *See story, starting page 1.*



Lincoln-Grant Ties to be Focus of January 19 Meeting

(Continued from page 1)

Werline does well over 100 presentations each year at reenactments, museums, libraries, schools, historical

societies, round tables, and similar ventures. He is a featured presenter for the Springfield "History Comes Alive" program at the Illinois Old State Capitol and

has participated in numerous films including *Gettysburg*, *Gods and Generals*, and *Antietam*.

In addition to SCHS, he is also a member of the U.S.

Grant Association, the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Macoupin County Civil War Round Table. Werline is an alumnus of Purdue University.

Evening of Antebellum Music on February 6 To Recreate Abraham Lincoln's "Play List"

Abraham Lincoln didn't have iTunes or an iPod to listen to music, but he did like to hear his favorite songs as played on an 1835 square grand piano at the home of Ninian and Elizabeth Edwards.

Music played on the piano entertained Lincoln on his many visits to the Edwards's house, first as a young suitor to Elizabeth's sister Mary Todd, and then as relative by marriage socializing with his in-laws.

You can recreate those moments too, on Saturday, February 6, from 6 p.m. to 7 p.m., when the restored 181-year old grand piano is unveiled...and played at *"As Lincoln Heard It: An Evening of Antebellum Music,"* a special fundraiser to continue the restoration work at historic Edwards Place.

"Mr. and Mrs. Edwards" will host "Mr. Lincoln" and ticketed guests for an evening of Lincoln's favorite songs, as well as music from Mrs. Edwards's 1850 song books. A wine and dessert reception will follow.

Tickets are \$50 and may be purchased by visiting www.edwardsplace.org or calling the Springfield Art Association at 217-523-2631. Proceeds will be used towards the restoration of



the second floor of Edwards Place, a historic home at 700 North Fourth Street in Springfield that is part of the Springfield Art Association complex.

Built in 1833 and remodeled in 1857, the historic house museum tells the story of social and domestic life in Abraham Lincoln's Springfield. Restored in 2015 to its antebellum glory, this Italianate mansion was one a center for social activity in Springfield. Prominent citizens and politicians such as Lincoln, Stephen A. Douglas, David Davis, and numerous governors, judges, lawyers, and politicians were entertained at lavish dinner parties and the grounds played host to many summer picnics and political rallies.

Edwards Place was the home of attorney Benjamin Edwards, youngest son of Governor Ninian Edwards and brother-in-law of Mary Lincoln's sister Elizabeth. Although the Lincolns did not court or marry there, Edwards Place is home to the "courting couch" on which Lincoln and Mary Todd sat during the early days of their romance, originally the property of Ninian Edwards. Edwards Place has been owned and operated by the Springfield Art Association since 1913.



Calendar of Historical Events

Friday, January 8 - Wednesday, January 27: *Shifting Sands: Springfield's Architectural Legacy.* Photo exhibit displaying more than 40 photos of Springfield's historic buildings from the 19th and 20th centuries. Opening reception, 5:30 p.m. on January 8. Free. M.G. Nelson Family Gal-



lery of Art, Springfield Art Association Edwards Place complex, 700 North Fourth Street, Springfield. For viewing hours and/or information, call 217-523-2631.

Tuesday, January 19: "Grant Remembers Lincoln," Sangamon County Historical Society program meeting: 5:30 p.m. Grant reenactor Larry Werline shares stories that provide insight into the relationship between Lincoln and Grant. (See story, page 1). City of Spring-

field Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield. Free and open to the public.

Saturday, February 6: As Lincoln Heard It: An Evening of Antebellum Music, 6 p.m. Historic Edwards Place, 700 North Fourth Street, Springfield. Unveiling and performance on the restored 1835 Ninian Edwards grand piano. Tickets \$50 per person. Proceeds to benefit restoration of the historic home's second

floor. For tickets and/or for more information, go to www.edwardsplace.org or call 217-523-2631.

Saturday, March 19: History Trivia Night. (See story, page 1).



Look for details in the February edition of *Historico*.

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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.



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Status

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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