



# HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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## My Home. My History. Stories of Personal Collections

Personal stories of Sangamon County's rich history will feature presentations by several society members about a favorite historical object from their personal collections at the Society's February 16 meeting.

"My Home. My History" will provide an opportunity for people to share their personal history which is not always seen in museums and books. Through this program the stories often shared between friends and family are able to have a wider audience, and attendees will have the chance to learn about history from a personal viewpoint," said Genevieve Kaplan, program committee member.

The February program meeting will be held Tuesday, February 16 at 5:30

p.m. at the Carenige Room North, City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh St., Springfield.



Some of the items presented will include china pieces in the autumn leaves pattern, which was one of the largest premium items in U.S. history. Mary Alice Davis will

talk about these items that were distributed in the 1930s by Jewel Tea Company.

Heather Wilkens, also a member of the program committee, will moderate the program and will showcase a book, "Looking for Lincoln in Illinois: Lincoln Springfield," created by the Lincoln Heritage Coalition and



written by Bryon Andraesen. This carefully researched book includes fifty stories about Abraham Lincoln and is richly illustrated.

Genevieve Kaplan will discuss her grandfather's decades long career in the Secret Service. While living in Springfield, Robert Weed took a job with the Secret Service in Chicago. Then in the 1950s, he transferred to

Washington, DC, where he served under several Presidents from Dwight Eisenhower through Ronald Reagan.

Roger Whitaker will share information about his collection of telegraph keys. The collection focuses on the JH Bunnell company, founded after the Civil War, by Jesse Bunnell,

*(Continued on Page 3)*

## Expanded History Trivia Night Moves to New Location

Calling all history buffs and trivia players for the fourth annual History Trivia Night.

This year's Trivia Night is expanding its capacity which is necessitating moving to a new site, Christ the King Parish Hall, 1930 Barberry Drive, Springfield on Saturday, March 19.

"In previous years, players have had to be turned away at the door due to lack of space," said Mary Alice Davis, SCHS president. "In the larger space this year, we will have plenty of room for all who want to attend."



Food and drinks will be available for purchase. The renowned chili maker, Les Estep, will be on hand with his delicious chili. Cookies are also available. Drinks include beer, wine, soda and water. (Unlike most other

Trivia Nights, players are not allowed to bring their own snacks.)

Put your team together and challenge your friends at this fun-filled evening. The three top teams will earn cash prizes of \$200 - First place; \$100 - Second place; or \$50 - Third place.

Interested players can register at [www.sangamonhistory.org](http://www.sangamonhistory.org). You can reserve a table of ten for \$100. Individuals or couples can register for \$10 per person. Players can either pay online or mail a check to the Society at

*(Continued on Page 2)*

## From the President's Desk

.....Mary Alice Davis



The New Year started with a terrific program from the “impressive” General Grant portrayed by Larry Werline. Many thanks to Vicky Whitaker, Sangamon County Historical Society board member who has been Program Chairman for the past three and one half years and has done a marvelous job of coordinating a variety of presentations and trips.

Sangamon County residents can be proud of the legacy our ancestors left us. As a society, we take pride in showcasing this rich history.

Over the past several months, society members have toured several area museums: Illinois State Military Museum, SIU Pearson Medical Museum, Air Combat Museum at the Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport, Chatham Railroad Museum, and we were the last visitors to the National Museum of Surveying before it's unfortunate closing.

Our programs also have traveled to the Illinois State Supreme Court Building, Edwards Place, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and back stage at the Springfield Muni.

Members have enjoyed talks by several authors: Taylor Pensoneau who discussed his biographies of important Illinois politicians, particularly Governor Walker, Ken Mitchell, who discussed his book, “North End

Pride,” and Tennessee attorney Jerry Potter, who spoke about his book, “The Sultana Tragedy” and its Springfield connection.

We also heard from World War II and Korean War veterans, enjoyed music from the Lincoln Era and learned about 1800's fashion, spooky Sangamon County, Illinois State Fair history, how the weather has changed the area, Lincoln Era society and courtship, Thomas Jefferson and the Shape of Illinois, from telegraph to telephone as well as the preparation efforts of re-enactors. Mike Lelys, Oak Ridge Cemetery Director gave a talk about the cemetery just before the SCHS October Cemetery Walk.

Hopefully this review of SCHS's many programs will encourage members to make a special effort to set aside the third Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. and attend our programs. Most of the SCHS programs are at the City of Springfield Lincoln Library in the Carnegie Room North and are open to the public.

When the SCHS programs travel to other sites, space may be limited, so these programs are for members only.

Remember, there is a special seat for you at the next meeting on Feb. 16, so please come and bring a friend!

*Mary Alice*

## Funding Available for Sangamon County Historic Projects

If your organization is seeking funds to a local history project, the Sangamon County Historical Society is taking applications for funding new historic projects within the county that carry out its mission, to preserve and promote interest in the history of Sangamon County.

Groups and individuals are invited to apply for grants of up to \$1,000 for projects that are of interest and value to citizens of the county.

Over the past three years, the Society has given Special Projects grants to the Oak Ridge Cemetery to repair the bell controller; assist with the purchase of necessary equipment to establish a tree ring analysis laboratory, and for a National Public Radio series on WUIS-FM about Sangamon history.

Applications are available on-line at [www.sangamonhistory.org](http://www.sangamonhistory.org). Completed forms can be submitted online or mailed to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Special Projects Committee, P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. The deadline is April 22, 2015. Award winners will be announced at the Society's annual dinner in June.

For more information, call 217-525-1961.

## Trivia Night *(Continued from page 1)*

Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9444.

Round sponsors also are being sought for \$100. It's a great way to advertise your business.

The doors open at 6 p.m. and the

game begins at 7 p.m. Trivia master Al Gietl will develop the questions.

The event is co-sponsored by the Sangamon County Historical Society and Pleasant Plains Historical Society.

Proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit both the SCHS programs and the continuing development of the Pleasant Plains Historical Site.



*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, [sangamonhistory.org](http://sangamonhistory.org) or [sancohis.org](http://sancohis.org). Send event announcements to [historicoeditor@gmail.com](mailto:historicoeditor@gmail.com).

Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor, Donna Catlin, *Photographer*

## Grant Recalls Memories of Lincoln



General Ulysses S. Grant (impersonated by Larry Werline) poses with President Mary Alice Davis prior to his talk to the SCHS January meeting.

General Ulysses S. Grant, (portrayed by Larry Werline) dressed in full uniform, provided a lively first-person testimonial about his service under President Abraham Lincoln. He discussed his appointment to lead the Union and the battles in the Civil War.

He also talked about his meetings with Lincoln and their combined strategies to defeat the Confederate rebellion. He refuted the claims about his heavy drinking on the battlefield.

## My History

(Continued from page 1)

one of President Lincoln's telegraphers. The examples of Bunnell telegraph apparatus date back to the late 1800s and early 1900s including one modern re-issue of a miniature working telegraph key made as a novelty for a 1905 dinner honoring Andrew Carnegie. The dinner was attended by such notables as Edison and Firestone, all of whom had a telegrapher background.

Whitaker's other pieces in the collection are representative of equipment used here in Springfield during the heyday of the telegraph.

The above mentioned are only a few of the personal histories that will be shared at the meeting. There will be more interesting historical surprises in store for those who attend.

If you have a personal historic item you would like to share with the audience at this meeting, e-mail Genevieve Kaplan at [kaplan.genevieve@gmail.com](mailto:kaplan.genevieve@gmail.com) or call her at 703-868-8886. Let her know of your interest and your topic as soon as possible. Speaking opportunities are on a first come, first served basis.



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Mike Kienzler, SangamonLink.org Editor

## Calendar of Historical Events



### Saturday, February 6: As Lincoln Heard It: An Evening of Antebellum

**Music**, 6 p.m., Historic Edwards Place, 700 N. Fourth St. Springfield. Unveiling and performance on the restored Ninian Edwards grand piano. Tickets \$50 per person. Proceeds to benefit restoration of the historic home's second floor. For tickets and more, go to [www.edwardsplace.org](http://www.edwardsplace.org) or call 217-523-2631.

**Friday, February 12: Lincoln's Birthday Museum**, 9 a.m. - 5p.m. Dedication of the newly redesigned Gateway at 9 a.m. Followed by various activities, crafts, music and a balloon drop in which guests can win

prizes. (Visit [TenYearsLincoln.com](http://TenYearsLincoln.com)) Free, Museum admission required.

**Tuesday, February 16:** "My Home. My History: Telling the Stories of Our Personal Objects," Sangamon County Historical Society's program meeting: 5:30 p.m. Society members share their stories. (See story on page 1.) City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 S. Seventh St., Springfield. Free and open to the public.

**Saturday, March 19: Historic Trivia Night.** Christ the King Parish Hall, 1930 Barberry Dr., Springfield. \$10 per person, tables of 10. Register at [www.sangamonhistory.org](http://www.sangamonhistory.org). (See story on page 1.)



**Sangamon County Historical Society**

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Springfield, IL 62791-9744  
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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](http://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