



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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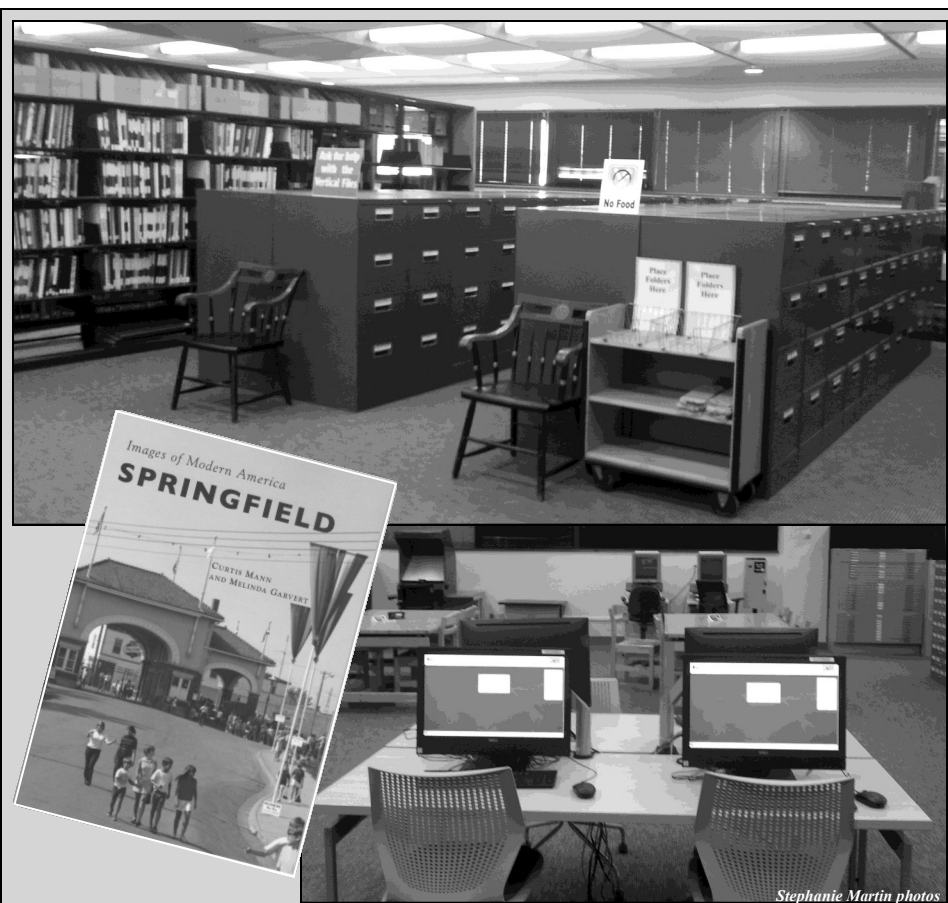
Book Talk and Sangamon Valley Room Tour To Offer New Vistas on Springfield's History

Society members and guests will get a two-for-one program, Tuesday, April 18, a "Talk and Tour" that will combine an inside look at the challenges of producing of a new book about Springfield's history with a tour of the newly refurbished City of Springfield Lincoln Library's Sangamon Valley Room

The "talk" portion, starting at 5:30 p.m. in Carnegie Room North, will feature authors Curtis Mann and Linda Garvert discussing their latest book, *Images of Modern America: Springfield*, just published by Arcadia. The talk and tour make for a perfect fit.

Mann oversees the City of Springfield Lincoln Library's Sangamon Valley Collection and serves as Springfield city historian. Garvert, a librarian who holds a masters degree in instructional media, worked alongside Mann and his predecessor, Ed Russo at the Sangamon Valley Collection for 29 years. She retired in 2014.

The tour that will follow is just a few days short of the 48th anniversary of the original opening of the Sangamon Valley Room, an event that then underscored the role the Society



Stephanie Martin photos

RESEARCH CENTER: With new computers and redesigned research facilities, the Sangamon Valley Room at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, will make it easier to do research on Sangamon County and its history. A tour will follow a talk on a new book about Springfield.

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Fun March, April's a Time to Visit Historic Sites

March was a busy month for the Society, highlighted by our very successful Trivia Night on March 18. I want to thank everyone who helped and participated in the event. It is greatly appreciated.

As we move on to April, you've probably noticed flowers popping out of the ground and the grass becoming greener. Spring is just around the corner, inspiring us to look toward spending more time outside. The warming temperatures encourage us to get out of the house and visit some of the area's interesting local historic sites. Springfield and Sangamon County have so many sites that there are probably some you haven't seen. It's an opportunity to introduce your grandkids to the rich history of our community.

While you're thinking about history, why not take a moment to renew your membership in the Society to help us continue to preserve and promote history for current and future generations.

Our membership drive runs through the end of May, so be sure to renew soon. By signing up now you won't miss a single issue of *Historico* nor will you miss learning about our interesting monthly programs and events, such as the upcoming look at the making of the new book, *Images of Modern America: Springfield*, by its authors, Curtis Mann and Linda Garvet on April 18. The presentation will be followed by a tour of the newly remodeled Sangamon Valley Collection.

To celebrate our history, you may want to take a look at some of the more significant historical happenings in Sangamon County in the month of April as compiled by Mike Kienzler. Most are described in more detail on the Society's on-line encyclopedia of county history, www.SangamonLink.org. They include:

❖ **April 14, 1846** - *The Donner Party* leaves Springfield. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=63>

❖ **April 29, 1871** - *Sharon Tyndale*, Illinois Secretary of State from 1865 to 1869, was shot to death the morning of April 29, 1871, in what became Springfield's most enduring murder mystery of the 19th century. Tyndale

was walking on Adams Street to the Chicago & Alton railroad station (today's Amtrak station) when someone apparently clubbed him to the ground and then shot him behind the right ear with a single-shot Derringer. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=6279>

❖ **April 4, 1911** - Two women were elected to the *Springfield School Board*, the first women to serve on a local governing body. Mrs. S.J. Hanes and Mrs. Hugh T. Morrison (newspapers at the time identified married women by their husbands' names), the only two women on the 18-person ballot, "were both elected by substantial majorities," the Illinois State Register reported on April 5, 1911. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=2666>

❖ **April 1915** - The *first weather report* ever transmitted by radio was a test sent from an experimental station based in Illiopolis sometime in April 1915. The transmitter, operating on call letters 9ZK, reached most of Illinois as a Morse code message that did not require wires, a transitional process known as "wireless telegraphy." Once received by another station, the information tended to be passed on further via print media. The Illiopolis station was operated by hobbyist Harry J.E. Knotts (1881-1917), owner of the Illiopolis' newspaper, *Center-State Record*. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=7582>

❖ **April 15, 1926** - Charles Lindbergh pilots the first airmail flight to Springfield. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=1789>

❖ **April 23, 2004** - Formosa Plastics plant near Illiopolis catches fire and explodes, killing five workers. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=7391>

❖ **April 19, 2005** - The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum complex fully opened in public ceremonies attended by President and Mrs. George W. Bush, U.S. Sens. Durbin and Barack Obama and many others. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=5270>



Historico, published 10 times a year (except July & December), is the official bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. *Winner, Certificate of Excellence, Illinois State Historical Society.*

You can download back issues of *Historico* in PDF format by going to our website, www.sangamohistory.org or sancohis.org. Send event announcements to historicoeditor@gmail.com.

Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor

Filing Deadline April 12 for Annual-Special Project Awards Competition

Need financial underpinning for a new history project? The Sangamon County Historical Society may be able to help, provided your application for a Special Projects Fund grant is received by the Wednesday, April 12 deadline.

Groups and individuals can receive grants of up to \$1,000. The projects must have long-term impact and be in keeping with the Society's mission to preserve and promote interest in the history of Sangamon County. Work must start after July 1, 2017 and be completed by June 30, 2018. The Society awards up to \$3,000 a year in the annual competition for funding

Applications are available on-line at 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. Award winners will be announced at the Society's annual dinner in June. For more information, call 217- 525-1961.

Special Projects grants have been used to repair the Oak Ridge Cemetery bell controller and repair a weathered, interpretive Bell Tower marker that explained that a marble slab inlaid on the Tower was the one upon which the remains of Abraham Lincoln were first placed in the cemetery's receiving tomb. A Special Projects grant also helped purchase equipment to establish a tree ring analysis laboratory at the Illinois State Museum, and for a National Public Radio series on WUIS-FM about Sangamon history. Previous grants also have underwritten permanent historic flora and fauna markers for a nature path at the Clayville Historic Site; and historic signage in the Village of Williamsville.

Society to Take Another Look At Sangamon Ordnance Plant

It's said that history repeats itself. That will be the case on Tuesday, May 16 when the Sangamon County Historical Society brings back "*The Sangamon Ordnance Plant: Its Impact and Legacy*," a powerful and comprehensive audio and visual look at a massive munitions operation that in the early 1940's rose on the farm fields of Illiopolis, drawing thousands of workers from Springfield and Decatur.

"We've had so many requests from people who missed its original presentation last September in Buffalo and another that followed a few weeks later in Illiopolis, that we wanted to bring it to Springfield," explained Mary Alice Davis, co-chair of the Society's program committee.

In both cases, the Powerpoint program, first at the Buffalo Public Li-

brary and then at a township hall in Illiopolis, drew standing room only crowds totaling over 200 people. Most were local to the Illiopolis-Buffalo area.

"Many of our own members in Springfield, unable to make the drive out to Buffalo or Illiopolis, heard about it later and wanted to see it. In fact, not a meeting has gone by since then that people have asked us to bring it here. It's appropriate since Springfield and its people--many of them our parents and grandparents--as well as the city itself, were integral to the plant's operation."

Continued on page 6)



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Mike Kienzler, *SangamonLink.org* Editor

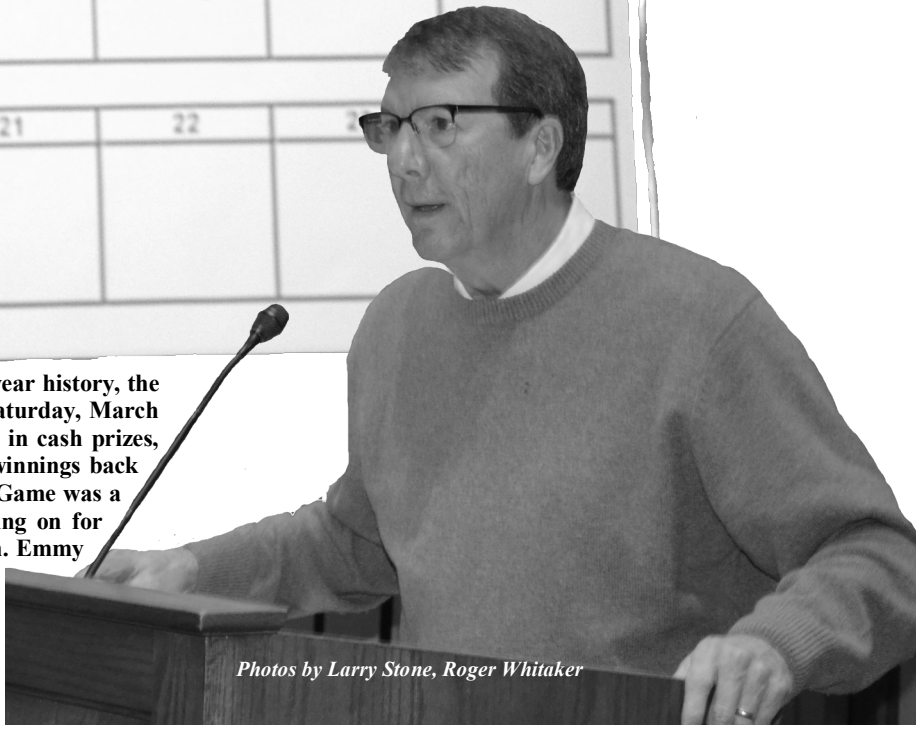
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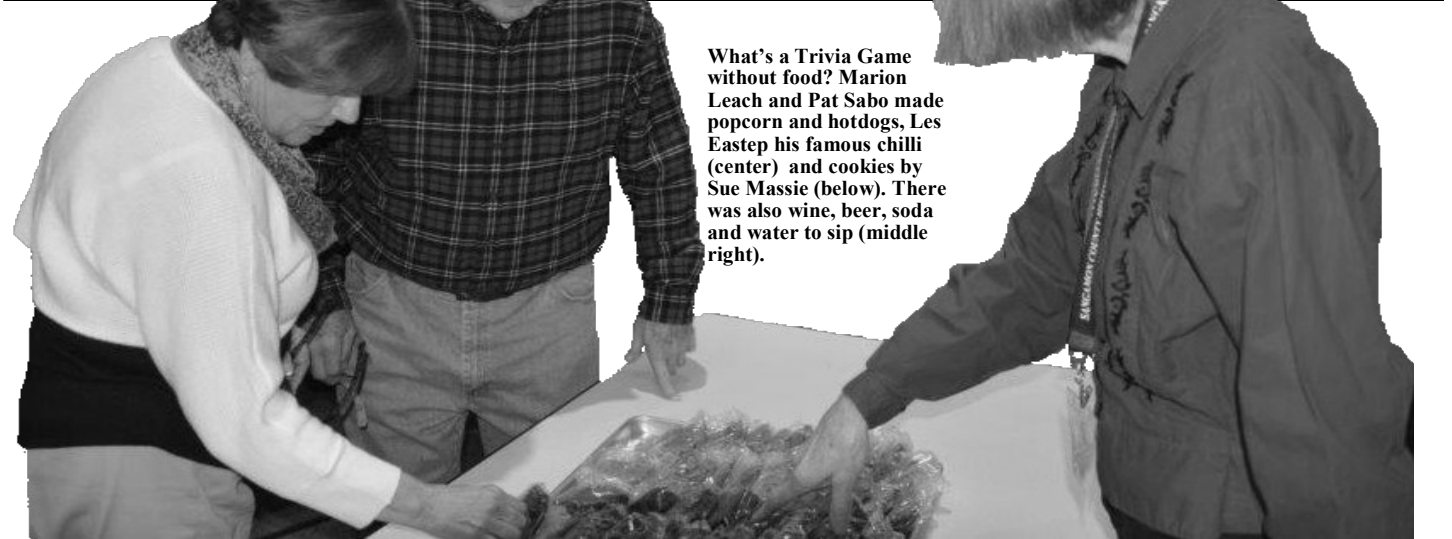
**5th
Annual
TRIVIA
NIGHT**

1	2	3	4	5	6
27	24	24	23	24	24
7	8	9	10	11	12
24	21	19	28	24	25
13	14	15	16	17	18
21	20	23	26	21	26
19	20	21	22	23	24
28	25				



With the largest turnout and sponsors in its five-year history, the Society's annual Trivia Night set a new record Saturday, March 18. Some 20 tables of players competed for \$375 in cash prizes, the first and second place tables donating their winnings back to the Society after the game ended. The Balloon Game was a cliff hanger, with just one table out of 20 holding on for several rounds before it too, had to pop its balloon. Emmy award-winning public television host Mark McDonald (right), once again emceed the event at Christ the King's Parish Hall, with Trivia guru Al Gietl handling the questions, and judging by Tony Leone, Kathy Rem, and Jerry Hopgood.

Photos by Larry Stone, Roger Whitaker



What's a Trivia Game without food? Marion Leach and Pat Sabo made popcorn and hotdogs, Les Eastep his famous chilli (center) and cookies by Sue Massie (below). There was also wine, beer, soda and water to sip (middle right).

Time to Pay Dues, Seek a Seat on Board

With the end of the Sangamon County Historical Society's fiscal year approaching on May 31, dues notices for the 2017-2018 season will be going out in coming days. All but Life Members must renew.

The period before the end of the fiscal year also marks the annual start of the process to fill board seats and officer positions. Elections will be held at the annual meeting to be held Tuesday, June 13 at the Clayville Historic Site in Pleasant Plains.

The Society board has voted to revamp some of the membership categories, removing or revising some, and adding a new business membership level. For 2017-

2018, members can renew at the regular membership level for \$30 which covers all members of the family including children 16 and up, provided they are living at the same address. New to the membership choices will be College/University student at \$20, which would allow individual college students not living at home to receive *Historico* and other membership benefits.

Annual memberships at the Pioneer (\$100), Settler (\$250) and Trailblazer (\$500) continue, as does Life Membership, a one-time fee of \$750. The Society's new Business level at \$200, is geared to attract corporate membership. The Society will continue to provide annual non-profit membership to history organizations and libraries at no cost. Dues can be paid on-line at sangamonhistory.org or by mail by filling out the



form with the dues notice and sending it to the Society at Box 8744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. All members are eligible to run for board seats. The Nominating Committee, headed by chair Mary Alice Davis, will be filling five three-year term seats, with two year-term ending in 2019 and one one-year term ending in 2018. It will also be making nominations for president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Anyone interested in serving on the board, should send a resume to the Nominating Committee by e-mail at schsoffice@gmail.org no later than Monday, April 10.

Mann, Garvert To Discuss New Book, Tour to Follow

(Continued from page 1)

played in its creation, design, and financial support.

At a dedication ceremony at its opening on April 22, 1977, Society officials noted that it climaxed "the dreaming stage of our Society's plan for a permanent collection of Central Illinois historical data," that would continue to grow "because of the awareness that the time of records of the present become almost immediately the history of the past."

Providing financial support for the Sangamon Valley Collection has been an ongoing Society project since its

opening.

Mann, Garvert and Ed Russo, who is also retired, have collaborated on nearly a dozen books together. All three are members of the Sangamon County Historical Society, Mann a past president, Garvert and Russo, Life Members.

For the newest book, Mann and Garvert assembled and described 1960s and 1970s photos, many in color and most taken by amateur photographers, that illustrate how Springfield changed in that era.

"Telling the rich and colorful history of a community like Springfield for a

20-year period in just 95 pages is a difficult task in itself, the authors noted in the book's introduction. "Our subtle theme is the changing environment, changes that were quite dramatic when compared with other eras." *Images of a Modern America: Springfield* is divided into chapters on tourism and historic preservation, education, entertainment, commerce, civic, and events.

The newly expanded Sangamon Valley Room on the third floor of the library, is, part of a major library renovation project made possible through a \$1.9 million gift to the library from the estate of Joe and Rose DeFrates.

Sangamon Ordnance Plant to Get A Second Look, May 16

(Continued from page 3)

The Sangamon Ordnance Plant: Its Impact and Legacy, gives historical context to the U.S. government's decision to build a nearly 32 mile-square city on prime farmland virtually overnight.

While the operation displaced hundreds of local farms and families and brought unwanted congestion to a once bucolic village, it had broader impact on Springfield. The city supplied much of the munitions

plant labor force—most of them women—and changed social and business patterns still with us today.

"The presentation, which includes television and audio clips, brings an almost forgotten chapter of our history,

front and center," notes Davis.

The free program, open to the public and will begin at 5:30 p.m. in the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North.

Calendar of History Events

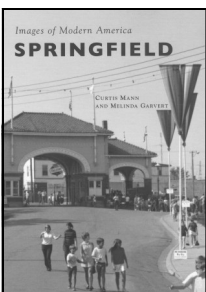
Now Through July 30: "The Story of New Philadelphia." The Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum exhibit showcases the first town in the United States platted and registered by an African American in 1836, former slave Free Frank



McWorter. The subject of extensive archeological research that began in 2004. The New Philadelphia site was added to the National Historic Register of Historic Places in 2005 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2009. Artifacts excavated from New Philadelphia, provided by the Illinois State Museum, are among the items in the new exhibit. The Museum is located at 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield. Museum hours are Noon to 4 p.m. Tuesday through Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays.

Wednesday, April 12: Deadline for SCHS Special Project Award Applications. See story, page 3.

Tuesday, April 18: Talk and Tour, 5:30 p.m. Authors Curtis Mann and Linda Garvert discuss their latest book, *Images of Modern America: Springfield*, just published by Arcadia. Following their presentation, attendees will be able to tour the newly expanded Sangamon Valley Room, a few days short of the 48th anniversary of its opening. Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield.



Tuesday, May 16: The Sangamon Ordnance Plant. Sangamon County Historical Society brings back "The Sangamon Ordnance Plant: It's Impact and Legacy," a powerful and comprehensive audio and visual look at a massive munitions operation that in the early 1940's rose on the farm fields of Illiopolis, drawing thousands of workers from Springfield and Decatur. 5:30 p.m. Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library.



Tuesday, June 13: SCHS Annual Meeting & Din-

ner, Clayville Historic Site, Pleasant Plains. Keynote speaker will be Carolyn Moore, president of the Society from 2007-2008. Moore will show and discuss her collection of historic plates.

Tuesday, September 19: Members-Only Tour, ACE Sign Company Sign Museum. The Society kicks off its fall meeting season with a members-only tour of this unique, privately run museum that charts Springfield's history through its signage heritage led by ACE president Dennis Bringuet. The tour will begin at 5:30 p.m. at 2540 South First Street, Springfield.



Sunday, October 1. "Echoes of Yesteryear, A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery," sponsored by the Sangamon County Historical Society. Noon to 4 p.m.



Tuesday, November 14: History's Mysteries: What Tree Rings Can Tell Us. Sangamon County Historical Society general meeting, 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library. Scientists Glenn Freimuth and Guy Sternberg will share findings on their Tree Ring research toward which the Society provided a \$1,000 Special Projects grant in 2015. By analyzing tree rings, they have been trying to resolve debate over the first structures in Sangamon County by accurately determining date and establish settlement chronology and settlement patterns.



Tuesday, February 20, 2018: Adding Historical Authenticity to the Big Screen. The Sangamon County Historical Society plays host to Karl Luthin, owner of KEL Equine Productions in Riverton, who will share both his expertise and the stories that go along with being internationally known for providing historically authentic horses, uniforms, crews, riders, drivers and stunt men to the movie industry. 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library.



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Sangamon County Historical Society MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form

Mall 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 June 1 to May 31. All memberships except Business/Corporate cover adults and children 16 and over living in the same household. Be sure to include their names.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____ Cell: _____ E-mail: _____



Status

___ New Member

___ Renewal

___ GIFT of Membership from:

Phone _____

2017-2018 Membership Levels

All the levels listed below cover adults and children 16 and over living in the same household. Please list their names in the space provided.

- Regular Membership - \$30
- College/University Student - \$20.
- Pioneer Level - \$100
- Settlers Level - \$250
- Trailblazer Level - \$500
- Lifetime Membership - \$700 (*one time fee*)

Business /Corporate Membership - \$200