



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744, Phone: 217-525-1961, e-mail: schsoffice@gmail.com web: www.sangamonhistory.org, SangamonLink.org

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November 21 Meeting

Research Duo to Look at Trees' Roots In History

Trees have more than branches, bark, sap, roots and leaves.

To an internationally prominent team of researchers-anthropologist Glen Freimuth of Rochester and arborist Guy Sternberg of Petersburg--trees can tell a lot about the people who passed under their natural umbrella and the communities that grew around them.

The duo, who will speak at the Society's Tuesday, November 21 meeting will detail their research stemming from samples taken from two trees at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site run by the National Park Service in Springfield, and two at the Illinois Executive Mansion that provide clues

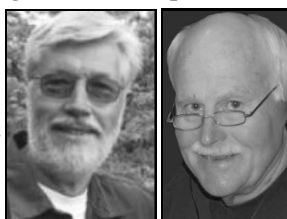
to what was on the home site when Lincoln lived there and when the trees at the mansion were planted.

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

The findings are part of a wider project, partially funded by a \$1,000 Sangamon County Historical Society Special Projects grant to accurately date the construction of the area's fast

disappearing log structures. The researchers will also update their progress on the overall project.

Dr. Freimuth, who did his undergraduate work at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, holds a doctorate in anthropology from the University of Illinois. An adjunct research associate at the Illinois State Museum's Research and Collections Center in Springfield, he is a retired Professor Emeritus and author of numerous articles and papers. His archaeological research has taken him across the Midwest, including excavations at the Lincoln Log Cabin and Moore



Sternberg Freimuth

(Continued on page 4)

Society's Annual Holiday Party Set for December 12

Judging from what seemed like an eternal summer, the approach of cooler, even cold weather means just one thing to Sangamon County Historical Society members: our annual Holiday Party is coming up fast.

This year's seasonal social kickoff will be held on Tuesday, December 12 starting at 5:30 p.m. at the home of Roger and Vicky Whitaker. Party-goers will

be able to choose from a selection of hors d'oeuvres and desserts, accompanied by wine, soda or water.

Tickets are \$30 for members, \$35 for non-member guests of members. Reservations can be made on-line or by using the form on page 11, but in either case, a payment must be received by the Society no later than Friday, December 1. Directions to the Whitaker residence will be e-mailed or mailed to ticket purchasers. "Over the years, the holiday party has been held in many venues, including the Old State Capitol, historic

inns, and private homes. The feedback in recent years has been a preference for the comfort and warmth of the latter, so we thought we would return to that for 2017," noted past president and event co-chair Mary Alice Davis, who twice hosted the event at her home. "We are fortunate to be able to do that again this year in what has become a tradition for the Society."

Reservation Deadline December 1

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WALK TALK: William Furry, dressed as Lincoln's law partner William Henry Herndon, chats with Mary Disseler, portraying Elizabeth Todd Edwards prior to the start of the Society's 14th Annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk.

Kathy Dehen photo

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Dedicated Volunteers Make Event Very Successful

Autumn has been a busy season for the Society. We were happy to partner with the Springfield Art Association for a program about the fascinating life of Cecilia Beaux, famed artist who painted a portrait of John Whitfield Bunn, a prominent Springfield businessman.

We are very happy to see so many members attend the "Echoes of Yesteryear: A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery" on October 1. More than 600 people enjoyed our event this year, which featured eight historic figures all of whom had a close connection to President Lincoln. Mary Alice Davis, chairman of the Cemetery Walk Committee did a wonderful job leading the effort again this year. It was a pleasure to work with such a great committee which also consisted of Jennie Battles, Pete Harbison, Susan Helm, Mike Lelys, Curtis Mann, Mike Kienzler, Linda Schneider, Ernie Slottag, Jerry Smith and Larry Stone.

I especially want to thank the actors and actresses: Dennis Rendleman as John Todd Stuart, Mary Disseler as Elizabeth Todd Edwards, Bob and Pat Davis as Jamison and Elizabeth Jenkins, Tracy Petro as Virginia Dresser (daughter of Rev. Charles Dresser), Linda Schneider as Sally Logan Lamon (daughter of Stephen Trigg Loman), William Furry as William Herndon, and Don Schneider as Governon William Bissell. They all did a tremendous job in portraying their historical individuals and helping keep our community's history alive.

We send a very special thank you to our sponsors: Butler Funeral Homes, Staab Funeral Home, Arnold Monument, Oak Ridge Cemetery Board of Managers and Foundation who helped make the event possible. Thank you also is sent to the African American History Museum and Lincoln Monument Association for providing refreshments.

In addition, we are extremely grateful for the two dozen other volunteers, the Oak Ridge Cemetery staff, Mayor Langfelder, and the City of Springfield staff who helped with promoting the event.

November 11 is Veteran's Day, so be sure to thank the veterans for their service to our country.



To learn about some of Sangamon County's significant historic happenings listed below, go to www.SangamonLink.org and read the articles written by Mike Kienzler.

Nov. 8, 1892: Annie Rheem Hannon was elected Sangamon County school superintendent, becoming the first woman to hold elective office in the county. Her victory took place even though women weren't yet allowed to vote in Illinois. As a result, Hannon was unable to cast a ballot for herself. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=9529>

Nov. 13, 1922: Two 17-year-old gunmen shoot to death motorman William Heter in one of a string of street car robberies. The robbers got \$12.30, a street car token -- and long prison sentences. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=9638>

Nov. 15, 1916: Regular fire drills are given credit for saving the lives of Ridgely School students when a blaze broke out in the middle of the school day. Sparks from the school's coal furnace blew out of a chimney, setting fire to wooden roofing shingles. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=9306>

Nov. 21, 1924: An estimated 4,000 people attend the first Illinois State Corn Husking Contest, held on a farm near New Berlin. A Nokomis man won the competition by husking 31.6 bushels in an hour and 20 minutes, but the handwriting was on the wall. A mechanical husker operating simultaneously husked three times as much corn as the human competitors. <http://sangamoncountyhistory.org/wp/?p=9136>

Ruth Slottag



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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

Society Putting Accent on History For 2017 Festival of Trees Display

As it has for the past several years, the Sangamon County Historical Society will put an emphasis on history for its entry in the 2017 Festival of Trees.

The Society has traditionally decorated a seven-foot-tree for the Festival, the largest family-oriented winter holiday event in Central Illinois, drawing close to 40,000 visitors. Proceeds from the Festival, sponsored by the Memorial Medical Foundation, benefits regional health care.

Some 200 Christmas trees and wreaths will be on display during the nine day event at the Orr Building on the State Fairgrounds, from Saturday, November 18 through Sunday November 26 including the Society entry that this year captures both the colors (ice blue, brown and white) and the spirit of the theme “Skates, Sleds and Snow.”



The Society’s tree will put an accent on old-fashioned skaters like those who in the late 19th century and early 20th displayed their skating skills and winter finery on area lakes and ponds including Reservoir Park (now the site of Lanphier High School). The tree will be capped with an old-fashioned skater dressed as she might have looked in a long flowing skirt, fitted jacket, gloves and a matching large feathered hat.

A team of Society members will be decorating the tree on “Super Set-Up Weekend,” a two-day event that brings crews from organizations across the county

to the site to work on their trees on Saturday, November 4 and Sunday, November 5, prior to judging Sunday evening. Every ornament and pieces of garland must be glued or wired to the tree. The trees are distributed to the Festival’s mainly corporate sponsors who display them in institutional and professional offices or donate them to community organizations to mark the holiday season.

In past years, the Society’s trees have been displayed at the Governor’s Mansion, historic Pasfield House, and other popular sites.

“Designers are not required to follow the Festival theme or colors,” noted chair Vicky Whitaker, “although we try to do so where possible. Our past trees have carried the portraits in ornaments of historic sites, prominent citizens of the past, historic churches, barns, and schools among other themes. This year both the color scheme and overall theme were on target for us to provide a turn-of-century look at a popular winter outdoor activity.”

The Festival is open to the public for nine days, with a shortened tenth day, a by invitation pre-opening event—Elder Care Day—that accommodates the assisted walking and wheel-chair needs of residents in area nursing homes and extended care facilities. The start of the Festival is celebrated at a \$100 per ticket, black-tie fundraising gala on November 11, a week before the official opening.

The Society tree can be viewed during regular Festival hours. The Festival opens at 10 a.m. each day, but closing hours vary. For information about hours, entertainment, and special features, visit the Festival website, www.memorialmedical.com/memorial-medical-center-foundation/events/festival-of-trees.

Admission is \$5 for adults, \$3 for children ages three through 12. Children two and under are admitted free. On Senior Day, Tuesday, November 21, admission for adults 65 and older is \$3.



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Please make note of our official mailing address:

SCHS
Box 9744
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NOVEMBER 2017 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Society welcomes the following new members: David Barringer, Andrew Call, Lee Gaeding, Karen Lawless, Kathy Lindley, Kenneth Lindley, Marilyn Montney, Wayne Montney, Wanda Riseman, Dennis Rendleman.

Bunn Portrait Comes Home And With It, a Tale to Tell

John Whitfield Bunn's portrait is back home...where it belongs.

That was the message and the fascinating story behind the return of a painting of Bunn that was shared with Society members October 17 at a joint meeting with the Springfield Art Association at Historic Edwards Place. The painting, by famed artist Cecilia Beaux, will be on permanent loan to the Association.

It almost didn't happen, said Robert Bunn, who, on behalf of his family, from 2006 onwards, sought return of the paint-

ing from a successive series of financial institutions that claimed ownership of it as part of the acquisition of physical property of what formerly was Marine Bank of Springfield, now J.P. Morgan Chase Bank.

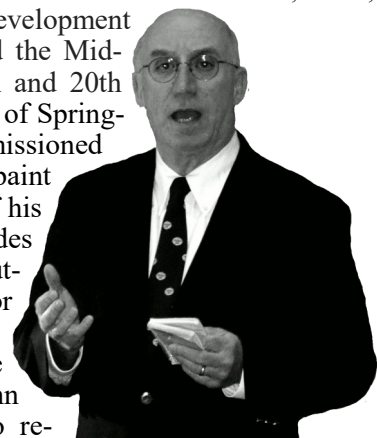
Originally chartered in 1851, Marine was the oldest banking institution in Illinois and included among its customers, Abraham Lincoln. The Bunn family, including John W. Bunn, played a prominent role in its operations through the early 1990s even after it merged with Banc One in 1992.

J.W. Bunn, who served as president from 1903 to 1920, played a significant role in the commercial, civic, political, and industrial development and growth of Illinois and the Midwest during both the 19th and 20th centuries. In 1913, a group of Springfield businessmen commissioned the renowned Beaux to paint Bunn's portrait in honor of his 80th birthday. For decades after, it hung on a wall outside the bank's third floor board room.

Fearful it would be mothballed, Robert Bunn made frequent requests to return the painting to the family, even hiring prominent Boston-based Beaux scholar Tara Lee Tappert—who discussed Beaux's life and work at the meeting—to appraise the work in an attempt to buy it back. By then, Beaux's work had become valuable to art collectors and museums. All offers were rejected.

It was only in 2016 that Bunn uncovered documents, including correspondence from Beaux, a bank newsletter, and a receipt from an insurance company, that showed that the painting had been commissioned from Bunn's friends as a personal birthday gift. It was all the proof that was needed. A letter from the Bunn family lawyer and the documents ended the quest. Six weeks later, JP Morgan Chase agreed to return the Beaux work.

Restored, the portrait sits in the frame selected by the artist. In J.W. Bunn's hand is a book about his old friend, Lincoln, a connection, Dr. Tapper said, was one of the reasons the famed artist Beaux agreed to do the painting. She saw it as an opportunity to learn more about Lincoln.



Robert Bunn, who sought and won return of the Beaux portrait.

BEAUX expert Tara Lee Tappert and the J.W. Bunn portrait.

Tree Researchers to Share Findings Rooted in Local History

(Continued from page 1)

Home historic sites. He is a member of the Society for American Archeology, the Illinois Archaeological Survey and the Illinois Association for the Advancement of Archeology and is a cer-

tified Professional Field Archaeologist. Sternberg, who has been studying and cultivating trees since 1952, is an award-winning landscape architect, arborist, tree consultant, writer, lecturer and photographer who has propa-

gated and grown hundreds of species of trees and maintains his own research arboretum, Starhill Forest, in Petersburg, assembling one of the largest PCN oak genus living reference collections for North America.



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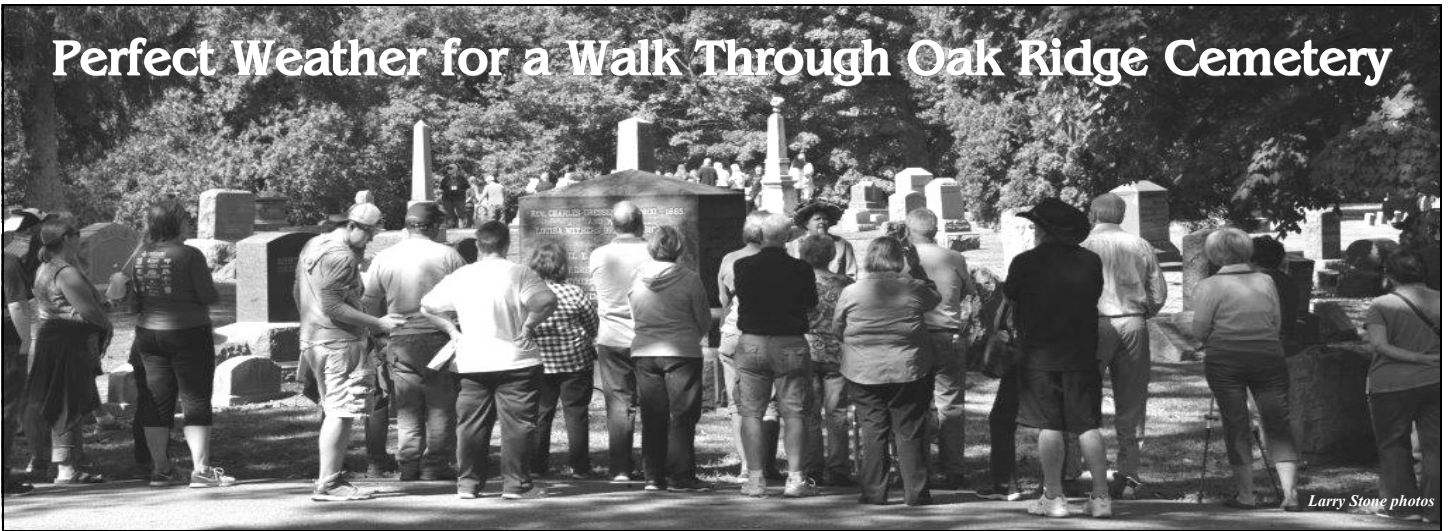
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Lincoln Home National Historic Site
Lincoln Monument Association
Macon County History Museum
Oak Ridge Cemetery Board of Managers
Oak Ridge Cemetery Foundation
Pleasant Plains Historical Society
Rochester Historical Preservation Society
SIU School of Medicine Museum
Springfield & Central Illinois African- American History Museum
Springfield Art Association/Historic Edwards Place
State Fair Foundation

Give A Gift of Membership



With the holiday season fast approaching, why not consider giving a GIFT OF MEMBERSHIP in the Sangamon County Historical Society for 2018-2019? Just fill out the form on the back page and mail it with your check to the Society at Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. If you wish, we'll send a letter of acknowledgement of your gift on your behalf directly to your recipient in mid-December. Be sure to check off the GIFT of Membership box on the left and *include your name and phone number.*

Perfect Weather for a Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery



Larry Stone photos

With Mother Nature providing perfect weather, some 600 history buffs including those above, visited historic Oak Ridge Cemetery on Sunday, October 1, for the Sangamon County Historical Society's "Echoes of Yesteryear: A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery" in Springfield. The annual event, in its 14th year, provided stops at seven gravesites of friends, relatives, and associates of Abraham Lincoln. Re-enactors like Linda Schneider (below) who portrayed Sally Logan Lamon, the daughter of Lin-

coln's second law partner, provided insight to the people closest to Lincoln during his years in Springfield.

Other re-enactors (bottom, back row, from left, Robert and Patricia Davis, Dennis Rendleman, William Furry; second row, from left, Schneider, Tracy Petro, and Mary Disseler, and (front) Don Schneider, offered verbal portraits of each Lincoln-linked subject of this year's tour, donning costumes of the period that de-

(Continued on page 10)



Mother Nature Provides Perfect Weather for Cemetery Walk

(Continued from page 9)

lighted their traveling audiences.

Buses brought visitors to and from the parking area at the base of the Lincoln Tomb to the top of the hill for the start of the hour and a half walking tour.

Additional Attractions

As they waited for buses to arrive, participants were able to get a close up look at a replica of Lincoln's Funeral hearse built for the Staab family for use in the 2015 Lincoln Funeral Commemoration. They were also able to purchase drinks and snacks from the Springfield and Central Illinois African-American Museum, momentos and materials from the Lincoln Monument Association and an assortment of books and publications from the Sangamon County Historical Society.

The free tour ran from Noon to 4 p.m. on a day when temperate weather for perfect walking weather.

"We were both thrilled by the wonderful turnout and the hard work that so many people put into the event that made it a success," said Mary Alice Davis, event chair.

"We are especially appreciative of the hard work and dedication of Oak Ridge Cemetery executive director Mike Lelys and his staff, the Staab family, Arnold Monument, and the Butler Funeral for their support and to the more than 50 volunteers from the Society, organizations, and the community who helped plan and insure the success of the event."

Scripts and More

Each of the re-enactors were scripted, and in period dress, but also provided a special touch of their own that brought to life the people who were important to Lin-

coln, Davis said.

Rendleman portrayed John Todd Stuart (1807-1885), a cousin of Mary Todd Lincoln. Stuart was Lincoln's mentor and first law partner.

Mary Disseler captured the character of Elizabeth Todd Edwards (1813-1889), a sister of Mary Todd Lincoln and the wife of Benjamin Edwards, youngest son of Governor Ninian Edwards. The couple were leaders of Springfield Society. Their home, Edwards Place, is now a historic site operated by the Springfield Art Association.

whose father, Reverend Charles Dresser (1800-1865) who married the couple. Dresser was Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church. The couple were wed on November 4, 1842 at the home of Mary Todd's sister Elizabeth, in Springfield.

Like Schneider, who spoke about Stephen Trigg Logan (1800-1880), through the voice of his daughter Sally, William Furry portrayed another of Lincoln's law partners, William Henry Herndon (1825-1891), who staffed the law office while Lincoln (like Logan) rode the circuit, campaigned and was eventually elected President.



CLOSE UP LOOK: Participants in the 14th Annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk were also able to get a close look at a replica of the hearse that carried President Abraham Lincoln to his final resting place at Oak Ridge Cemetery in 1865. The original was destroyed by fire in 1887 but was recreated for the Staab family for use in the 2015 Lincoln Funeral Re-Enactment in Springfield.

Larry Stone photo

Re-enactors Robert and Patricia Davis teamed to play Jameson Jenkins (1808-1873) and his wife Elizabeth (1807-1880) who were African-American neighbors of the Lincolns. A successful businessman and teamster, Jameson Jenkins drove President-elect Lincoln to the Great Western Depot in Springfield to begin his train trip to Washington, D.C.

Tracy Petro detailed the marriage of Abraham Lincoln to Mary Todd as recalled through the eyes of Virginia Dresser

Don Schneider captured the life and times of Governor William Harrison Bissell (1811-1860), the tenth governor of Illinois (elected in 1856) who served in Congress for three terms and in the Illinois House of Representatives for one term.

A date has already been set for next year's walk, Davis noted. "This year, we moved the walk from the second Sunday in the month to the first, and it worked out well. In fact, everyone seemed to like the earlier time frame so much that we decided to capture that first weekend between September and October. Next year, the walk will bridge the transition and is slated for Sunday, September 30."

Event photographers Kathy Dehen, Ernie Slottag and Larry Stone snapped away as they toured the site. Their end result was an album of photos, too many of which could fit into one issue of *Historico*.

If you'd like to get an armchair view of what they saw, as well as other photos of Society events, check out the Society's Facebook page or visit our website at www.sangamonhistory.org.



Annual SCHS Holiday Party



Mail In Reservation Form

Please use this mail-in form only if you wish to attend the Tuesday, December 12, Annual Sangamon County Historical Society Holiday Party but do not wish to register via our website, sangamonhistory.com and pay on-line.

The party starts at 5:30 p.m. at the home of Roger and Vicky Whitaker. Tickets are \$30 per person for members, \$35 for non-member guests of members. Checks should be made payable to SCHS and be received by December 1. You will be contacted by mail, phone or e-mail with directions to the Whitaker residence.

Names of Attendees: (Please Print):

Amount of Your Check: _____ Phone _____

Please send driving directions by Regular Mail

e-mail at _____

Mail this form to SCHS at Box 9744, Springfield, 62791-9744. All payments must be received by December 1.

Calendar of History Events

Tuesday, November 21: History's Mysteries: The Secret of Historic Trees Can Tell Us. Sangamon County Historical Society general meeting, 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library. Scientists Glen Freimuth and Guy Sternberg detail their tree ring research for which the Society provided a \$1,000 Special Projects Grant. (see story, page 1).

Tuesday, December 12: SCHS Annual Holiday Party.5:30 p.m. at the home of Roger and Vicky Whitaker. Tickets are \$30 per person. Members can bring a non-member guest, for which tickets are \$35. All reservations and fees must be received by December 1. Register and pay on-line at sangamonhistory.org or use the form by mail, above. (For details, see page 1).

Tuesday, January 16, 2018: Sangamon County's Italian Heritage. The Society kicks off the State's Bicentennial Program Year with a presentation by Chicago-based educator and historian Bill Cellini Jr. who has researched and written about the area's Italian immigration and heritage, some of which is the basis for a section on early Italian immigrants to which he contributed to the Society's

searchable encyclopedia of county history, sangamonlink.org. 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library. Free and open to the public.

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, 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.

Saturday, March 10: Trivia Night. The Society stages its Sixth Annual Trivia Night, returning to the Parish Hall at Christ the King Church in Springfield for another round of questions, fellowship and fun, the proceeds of which will benefit Society programs and projects. Mark McDonald returns as emcee, with trivia master Al Geitl handling the proceedings. Watch **Historico** for further details.

Sangamon County Historical Society
P.O. Box 9744,
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. Our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31. All memberships — except Business/Corporate and college/university students — cover adults and children 16 and over at the same address. Be sure to include their names.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____ Phone: _____

Cell: _____ E-mail: _____



Status

___ New Member

___ Renewal

___ 2018-2019 GIFT of Membership from:

Phone _____

2017-2018 Membership Levels

Except for business and college/university student membership, all levels listed below cover adults and children 16 and over living at the same address. ***Please list their names in the space below.***

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

Business /Corporate Membership - \$200