



# HISTORICO

*Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter*

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## Looking for History? For Some, It's Within Arm's Reach ...And Now Even Closer, Thanks to UIS Program

### *Devin Hunter to Detail History Harvest and More on April 16*

The Sangamon County Historical Society will get a behind-the-scenes look at *History Harvest*, a University of Illinois at Springfield project that's part of a nationwide effort to photograph and digitize history-related artifacts owned by the public that otherwise would be lost or forgotten.

The Tuesday, April 16 program, at 5:30 p.m. in Carnegie Room North at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, is free and open to the public.

When the UIS student-faculty team, led by history

professors Devin Hunter and Ken Owens, introduced the *History Harvest* to Springfield in 2016, it was a first for the Midwest and focused on political memorabilia. A second *History Harvest* was held here this past October and emphasized "Being Illinoisan" in seeking family photographs, letters, documents, objects and individual memories.

At the April meeting, Dr. Hunter will talk about some of the more unusual items previously stashed in attics, closets, and

dresser drawers as well as some of the stories shared by the public at the two events. He will also detail other history-related state and local initiatives forming at UIS.

Dr. Hunter, an assistant professor of history at UIS whose classes focus on 20<sup>th</sup>-

century U.S. history and public history, received his doctorate in history from Loyola University, Chicago.

His research centers on the ways that communities use history as a way to define and promote themselves.

*(Continued on page 6)*



**SPRINGFIELD FIND:** A rare "Johnsonette" uniform designed by Lady Bird Johnson and worn by a handful of young volunteers at the 1964 Democratic National Convention was among the Sangamon County finds by Devon Hunter (above) and his team at one of two *History Harvests* held here as part of a nationwide effort to digitally preserve historically-significant artifacts now in private hands.

### Trivia Night Sets New Record Underpinning Grants Program

The Society's 7th Annual Trivia Night set a new record on Saturday, March 23, both in fund-raising, attendance...and enthusiasm.

"We're definitely pleased" said event chair Mary Alice Davis who with her team of 27 volunteers, arranged every aspect of the annual event, from site selection to ticketing to food and drink.

"Everyone worked hard because we know how important it is to the individuals and organizations seeking Special Project Grants to get funded. And the Trivia Night proceeds is the sole source of that funding."

*(Continued on page 5)*

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**NEW GAME IN TOWN:** Roni Betts (left) sells the game tokens for Trivia's new Heads & Tails game,

**Pages 4 & 5**



## We're Winding Down But With 2020 Vision

Spring is here. Can summer and fall and winter be far behind? Not that we're rushing the seasons, but when it comes to planning meetings and events for an organization such as ourselves, we have to think ahead...way ahead.

That's why we're already deep into planning our 2019-2020 season of programs and events that we think you will enjoy attending as much as we enjoy putting them together.

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On page 5 of this issue of *Historico*, we've tried to give you at least a sense of the number of people it takes--and not all at once--to run a major event. If you're not on that list now, you could be among them next season, just by telling Mary Alice Davis or, for that matter, any other member of the board, that you'd like to lend a hand. We always welcome your help. You may find that being part of the process can make membership in the Society more meaningful, but it's up to you to take that first step.



Davis

Mary Alice, a past president of the Society, continues to carry a heavy load when it comes to dealing with all the details of our major events, but she is not alone. Another past president, Ruth Slottag, coordinated both the publicity and contacting round sponsors for Trivia Night, and treasurer Jerry Smith, as usual, did a yeoman's job handling the financial details. They get our special thanks!

The Society has a remarkable team of board members and volunteers, like those mentioned on page 5, who year-after-year give their all to these wonderful community events, programs, and more and will continue to do so for our next big project, the Oak Ridge

Cemetery Walk in October.

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The Society will hold its annual dinner at Clayville this June. You'll be reading more about it in the May issue. The Pleasant Plains Historical Society, which operates the site, has added a sensational wing and other upgrades to the building where we have held events in the past. If you haven't been to Clayville recently, you're in for a treat. Past president David Scott will be our keynoter. The dinner ends our 2018-2019 programming year, but starts us anew for fiscal year 2019-2020. (That's just a hint that if you haven't renewed your membership as yet, you'll soon be getting a reminder in the mail!)



Scott

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The May issue of *Historico* will also provide details on our annual elections conducted at the dinner. If you are interested in seeking a seat on the board, drop a note to the Society or send an e-mail to [schsoffice@gmail.com](mailto:schsoffice@gmail.com) and the Nominating Committee will contact you.

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The deadline for seeking a Special Projects Grant is Friday, April 26. The Grant committee, headed by Elaine Hoff, will be making its deliberations in May and the winners will be announced and introduced at the annual dinner. If you know of an individual or an organization in need of funds for a history project in Sangamon County, let them know about our program. They can get the details by going to [sangamonhistory.org](http://sangamonhistory.org).



Hoff

*Vicky Whitaker*



*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](http://www.sangamohistory.org) or [sancohis.org](http://sancohis.org). Send event announcements to [historicoeditor@gmail.com](mailto:historicoeditor@gmail.com).  
Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor, Photos by Kathy Dehen, Larry Stone

# Member-Only Tour to Explore Susan Dana's Role in Battle For Women's Right to Vote



Taking a cue from suffragist Susan Lawrence Dana, the Sangamon County Historical Society will step ahead of the curve on Tuesday, May 21, with an early salute to Dana's role in the women's right-to-vote movement which in 2020 will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the passage of the 19th amendment.

The site of the May meeting--this time an SCHS *members-only* tour and talk--will be at her historic Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home, today known as Dana-Thomas House, at Fourth and Lawrence in Springfield, starting at 5:30 p.m.

Pre-registration is a must, and will be available on line and by phone starting May 1. Seating is limited.

Dana, (1862-1946), was the daughter of Rheuna Lawrence, who began work in his teens as a bricklayer's helper, became a building contractor and later expanded into banking, livestock, railroads, and mining. He also served as mayor of Springfield and president of the Springfield School Board. Rheuna Lawrence died in 1901, leaving his entire fortune to his only child, Susan.

The thrice-married Susan was an unconventional woman for her time, supporting women's rights, equality for African Americans and an advocate of social services and the arts.

Dana gave Wright his first "open checkbook" commission, and the result, as described by the Springfield Historic Sites Commission, "reflects the mutual affec-

tion of the patron and the architect for organic architecture, the relatively flat landscape of the State of Illinois, and the Japanese aesthetic as expressed in Japanese prints."

Among Wright's Prairie Style houses, the Dana-Thomas House is considered to have the most complete, best-preserved interior in the U.S. The 35-room, 12,600 square foot home's construction cost about \$60,000 during a period – the work lasted from 1902 to 1904 – when a substantial eight-room brick house could have been built for \$4,000.

Dana lived in the house until the late 1920s, when she moved into a small cottage behind the home. She was hospitalized in 1942 and died four years later. The bulk of Wright's distinctive furniture remained with the house when Wright admirer Charles C. Thomas bought it in 1944 for use as headquarters of his medical book publishing company.

In 1981, the firm sold the home and furnishings to the state for \$1 million, well below what most experts think Thomas would have received if the building and contents had been sold piecemeal. The state then undertook a \$5 million renovation of the home.

For the tour, docents familiar with Dana's role in the suffrage movement will provide insight into specific areas of the building that she used in her efforts to assure Illinois women the vote.

## OFFICERS

President.....Vicky Whitaker  
 Vice-President.....Angela Weiss  
 Secretary.....Kathy Dehen  
 Treasurer.....Jerry Smith  
 Past-President.....Ruth Slottag

## DIRECTORS

### Term Ending 2019

Jennie Battles  
 Elaine Hoff  
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 Mary Schaefer  
 Larry Stone

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Peter Harbison  
 Sue Helm  
 Stephanie Martin  
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### Term Ending 2021

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## Committee Chairs

**Governmental/Community Affairs:** Ruth Slottag  
**Legal:** Bruce Beeman  
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**Publicity/Marketing:** Ruth Slottag, Susan Helm  
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**Publications:** Roger Whitaker  
**Programs/Special Events:** Mary Alice Davis, Vicky Whitaker  
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**Special Projects:** Elaine Hoff

## Staff

Mike Kienzler, [SangamonLink.org](http://SangamonLink.org) Editor

## APRIL 2019 MEMBERSHIP & DONOR REPORT



*The Society is pleased to welcome new members Tyler Curry, Susan Day, Eric Grauke, Douglas Mayol, Ron McDonald and Leslie Carlson and extend its thanks to Richard McLane and Lee Gaeding for their donations.*

Please make note of our official mailing address:

**SCHS**  
**Box 9744**  
**Springfield, Illinois,**  
**62791-9744**



*It's All In The Game!*



**A FIRST:** Dennis Thread made history March 23 as the first-ever winner of the Society's new Heads & Tails game-within-a game at its annual Trivia Night fundraiser. The game proceeds added to the funds raised for the Special Project Grants program and

*Larry Stonr photos*

## Funds Hit Mark for Special Projects Grants

# 7th Annual Trivia Night A Success at Every Level

*(Continued from page 1)*

Each year, the Society provides up to three \$1,000 grants to individuals or organizations seeking underwriting for all or part of small but significant history projects in Sangamon County that can be completed over the course of a year.

"In past years, these have included funding a WUIS-FM radio program that puts local history in context with our state and nation's past; providing monies to the Williamsville Public Library and Museum for a historical marker at Price-Prather House, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; and permanent signage for a historic nature path at the Clay-

ville Historic site," noted Elaine Hoff, chair of the Society's Special Grants Project committee. "We look forward to reviewing this year's applicants." The deadline for filing is Friday, April 26. The winners will be announced at the Society's annual dinner in June.

(Information about the 2019 competition can be found on the Society's website, [sangamonhistory.org](http://sangamonhistory.org) under Grant Funding).

Funds from this year's Trivia Night will help pay forward the 2020 Special Project Grants fund which the Society is continuing to build in anticipation of expanding the program in future years, noted Society president Vicky Whitaker.

This year's Trivia Night included the introduction of a new game-within-a-game, a visual coin-toss Heads & Tails that allowed individual Trivia players to compete with each other for a cash prize by purchasing game tokens before the roll of the coin.

"We were pleased that players picked up on the spirit of the game," said Davis, because it is a lot of fun. It will be back next year." As usual, many of the night's winners, both individually and as a table, donated their prize back to the Society to apply to the Special Grants Fund. "We are very appreciative of that," said Davis. "It all goes to support preserving and promoting the history of Sangamon County."

## *Meet the Team Working Behind the Scenes*

Putting a Trivia Night together isn't easy, even if you've done it seven years in a row.

"We really have a great team of dedicated people," observes Mary Alice Davis, who chairs both Trivia Night, a major fundraiser for the Society, and the Society's annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk in the fall, each involving a large number of Society members working behind the scenes to make the event run smoothly.

The Society's Trivia Night originated with a suggestion from Life Member Justin Blandford, superintendent of state historic sites in Springfield, who offered the Old State Capitol as the venue for what would become an annual event. Originally a "History Trivia Night" geared to members of history organizations around the county, it slowly evolved into

popularity, it outgrew its original home that was limited to 15 tables and

nearly doubled the maximum seating capacity.



This year's Trivia Night brought back faces well known to Trivia lovers and the community, all members of the Society, including trivia guru Al Gietl who wrote the questions and oversaw the electronic presentation; WSEC-TV *Illinois Stories* host Mark McDonald, who emceed the event; judges Kathy Rem, Tony Leone, and Ron McDonald; and nationally-known chilli chef Les Eastep who provided the chilli fixin's for those who didn't bring their own snacks or wanted a tasty pre-play supper.

Members of the committee working various aspects of the event also included Jennie Battles, Roni Betts, Kathy Dehen, Claire Eberle, Karen Gietl, Kathy Hoffmann, Marion Leach, Stephanie Martin, Kent Massie, Sue Massie, Mary Mucciante, Doug Polite, Rosalie Polite, Richard Sabo, Pat Sabo, Ernie Slottag, Ruth Slottag, Jerry Smith, Kay Smith, Larry Stone, Roger Whitaker and Vicky Whitaker.

a general questions event geared to a wider audience. And as it grew in

moved to the Parish Hall at Christ the King Church in Springfield, which



# UIS History Prof to Detail *History Harvest* Findings

(Continued from page 1)

As a public historian, Dr. Hunter has professional experience at the National Archives and Records Administration and the Pritzker Military Library and Museum in Chicago.

He is a member of the State of Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Committee, and is a board member for the Abraham Lincoln Association and the Illinois State Historical Society.

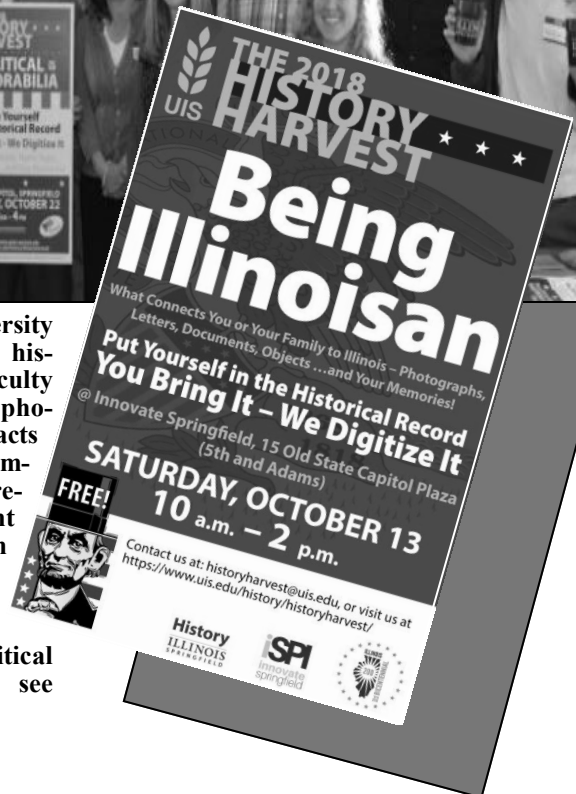
The *History Harvest* began as an undergraduate project at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2010 in which community members were invited to share their letters, photographs, objects, and stories and participate in conversations about these items. Students digitally captured each artifact and shared them in a web-based archive providing publicly available material for historical study, k-12 instruction, and life-long learning.

*History Harvest* has since spread to colleges and universities in 14 states and one international campus in Japan.

You can browse the extensive UIS *History Harvest* collection and some special exhibits by visiting the [uishist-harv1.uis.edu](http://uishist-harv1.uis.edu) website.



**ON THE TEAM:** University of Illinois at Springfield history students and faculty helped integrate family photos, letters and artifacts owned by community members into the historical record at the most recent *History Harvest* held in Springfield this past fall. An earlier *History Harvest* here netted an unusual collection of political memorabilia. You can see their finds on line.



## Society Membership Drive, Renewals Set to Begin

April may be showers and May those flowers, but both months are a reminder that the Sangamon County Historical Society's annual renewal drive starts this month and our fiscal year ends May 31.

Some members have already sent in their renewals and have been duly recorded for the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

Renewal reminders will be sent out shortly to those whose memberships will be lapsing and who prefer a mailed notice.

You can also renew on line at [sangamonhistory.org](http://sangamonhistory.org) or by using the form on page 8 that now reflects the 2019-2020 fiscal year.

The Society has six levels of membership ranging from the basic

Regular at \$30 which covers all adults

same address. College and university students living away from home can join at the individual student level of \$20 per year.

Other general membership levels are Pioneer (\$100 per year), Settlers (\$250 per year), Trailblazer, (\$500 per year) or Life Membership (a one-time fee of \$700).

Business/Corporate membership is also available at \$200 a year.

"In renewing your membership, you may also wish to consider stepping up a level," says Stephanie Martin, SCHS membership chair.

"Many members also find the renewal process offering an opportunity to make an annual donation, which the Society always appreciates," she adds.



# CALENDAR OF AREA HISTORY EVENTS

◆ **Thursday, April 4: Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Museum Re-Opens** for the season, 10 a.m. The Museum, at 629 South Seventh Street, Springfield, will be open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. until the end of October. On display will be artifacts, documents and photographs from the American Civil War era including items that document the history of the Grand Army of the Republic and the Woman's Relief Corps. Free but donations are welcome.

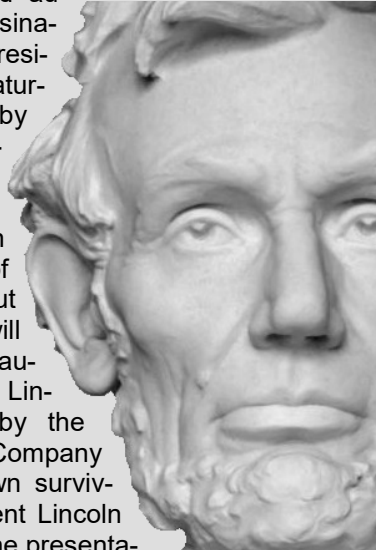
◆ **Tuesday, April 16: Harvesting History.** The Sangamon County Historical Society returns to its monthly meeting format with University of Illinois history prof Devin Hunter providing both a show-and-tell on this nationwide project that he and his students have brought to Springfield and what the future holds for the effort to create a digitized archive of history. 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library. Free and open to the public.

◆ **Friday, April 26: Deadline for Submitting Applications for the Society's annual Special Projects Grants** For information and an application, go to [sangamonhistory.org](http://sangamonhistory.org) and click on Grant Program. Completed forms should be submitted online to [grants@sancohis.org](mailto:grants@sancohis.org) or mailed by April 26 to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Special Projects Committee, P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744.

◆ **Friday, April 26: Illinois State Historical Society Annual Best of History Banquet and Annual Meeting**, 6 p.m., Roots Banquet Hall, 14305 State Highway Route 97, Petersburg, 6 p.m. Tickets \$45 for members, \$55 non-members. For information and reservations call 525-2781.

◆ **Friday April 26 to Sunday, April 28: "Til Death Do Us Part: Spring Murder Mystery."** Historic Edwards Place serves as the backdrop to this dinner theater murder mystery on a wedding theme. Starting time is 6:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday and 4:30 p.m. on Sunday. Guests are encouraged to dress accordingly for the wedding that goes awry when it's suspected that the bride, Gladys Worthington Jr., has been murdered. Six suspects have motives to kill the bride, but

**Saturday, April 24: The Assassination & Funeral of President Abraham Lincoln.** Reservations (by April 5) are required for this special program from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. at the Boardman-Smith Funeral Home in Springfield, created by Todd VanBeck, a nationally recognized authority on the assassination and funeral of President Lincoln and featuring a presentation by Timothy Good, Superintendent of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, author of three books about Lincoln. Attendees will be able to view an authentic replica of Lincoln's coffin built by the Batesville Casket Company using the only known surviving photo of President Lincoln lying in state. After the presentation, the favorite desserts of both President and Mrs. Lincoln will be served. The program, at 800 S. Grand Avenue West, Springfield, is free. To reserve a seat, call 544-7461.



Detective Drew Johnson, "DJ-50" will involve the help of the wedding guests to discover the culprit. The dinner-theatre event, open to those age 21 and over and directed by David Shaw, will be repeated on Friday, May 3 through Sunday, May 5, at the same hours. Tickets are \$45 per person. For information call 523-2631.

◆ **Saturday, May 4: Forgotten Illinois.** SCHS members and area historians Kathryn Harris and Tara McClellan McAndrew team up to present a second program on "Slaves, Indentured Servants and Free Black Leaders in our 'Free State, 1818-1860' " at the Springfield and Central Illinois African-American History Museum starting at 5:30 p.m. Harris will provide insight on *Mother Priscilla Baltimore and Brooklyn, Illinois* and McAndrew will provide *New Stories of Slaves and Indentured Servants in 'Free Illinois.'* " The program is free and open to the public but pre-registration is requested at 786-2432.

◆ **Tuesday, May 21: Ahead of the Curve: Susan Lawrence Dana, Suffragist.** The Sangamon County Historical Society provides a salute to Susan Lawrence Dana with a special program at 5:30 p.m. and related *members-only* tour at Dana Thomas House in Springfield. Pre-registration is a must and will be available on-line or by phone after May 1. Details in the May issue of *Historico*.

**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](http://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

\_\_\_ 2019-2020 GIFT of Membership from:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**2019-2020 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
- Pioneer Level - \$100
- Trailblazer Level - \$500
- College/University Student (individual) - \$20.
- Settlers Level - \$250
- Lifetime Membership - \$700 (one time fee)

I am adding a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Business /Corporate Membership - \$200