



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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VOLUME 55 NO. 8

OCTOBER 2019



PAST MEETS PRESENT at an SCHS cemetery walk press conference last month that drew advance media coverage for the October 6 event.

Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk Sunday, October 6

The Sangamon County Historical Society's annual *Echoes of Yesteryear* Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk will be held on Sunday, October 6 from Noon to 4 p.m.

Each year the Society's Oak Ridge cemetery walk focuses on seven people whose lives had an impact on Sangamon history, with period-garbed actors portraying each figure or that of someone with close personal ties.

For the 2019 walk, tour goers will learn more about the lives of six prominent historic community leaders that led their names to be forever connected with area

public schools: The six are James H. Matheny, Elijah Iles, Jesse Dubois, Jacob Bunn, William Butler, and Nicholas H. Ridgley.

The seventh stop will be at the grave site of one of the first two women elected to the Springfield school board, Mary Logan Morrison. Winning the post in 1911, she went on to serve as school board president.

Starting at Noon, tour takers will be bused from the starting point at the Oak Ridge Bell Tower to the first gravesite, then will walk to other sites (a distance

totaling about a half mile) before boarding a bus to return down the hill to the starting point.

The last tour starts at 3:15 p.m.

The tour is free but a free-will offering will be accepted. Free parking will be available. For a map of the site, see page 4.

Tour goers can enter the Oak Ridge Cemetery grounds from the south using Monument Avenue or from the west, using the entrance from J. David Jones Parkway (North Walnut Street). Signs will direct you to the Cemetery Walk parking area.

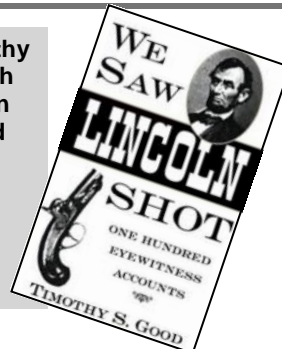
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HISTORIAN Timothy Good takes a fresh look at the Lincoln assassination and draws a different conclusion. Don't miss it!

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A Big Thank-You and an Eye on the Future

A lot of thought and effort goes into Society programs and events, often drawing support from a cross-section of the history community as we shape what we offer each year. The annual Echoes of Yesteryear Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk is no exception, and with the cooperation of Mother Nature, we hope you will be part of the growing numbers who will take advantage of a fall afternoon to take the tour and learn more about local history.

Working closely with the committee that plans the event for the past several years has been Mike Lelys, executive director of Oak Ridge, who retired this month. His service to both Oak Ridge and the success of our annual cemetery walk is immeasurable. We thank him for his efforts and support and wish him well in the future.

* * *

And speaking of the future, we're delighted to see that work is rapidly moving ahead on the Sangamon Experience, the new center for local history that is being developed at the University of Illinois in Springfield.

You may recall that it was alluded to last April by assistant professor of history Devin Hunter when he updated the Society on UIS participation in the nationwide "History Harvest," the latter a program to photograph and digitize history related objects owned by the public that might otherwise be lost or forgotten.

Made possible by a generous donation, the new Sangamon Experience will have at its heart a 5,300 square foot exhibition space now being readied in the UIS Public Affairs Center between the UIS bookstore and a new Center for Lincoln Studies.

The complex will include interpretive exhibit space, a student-centered laboratory for innovative

public history, and digital capabilities that reflect a commitment to using modern technology for local historical research.

Dr. Hunter has already reached out to local history organizations for help and support and I am happy to say that the Sangamon County Historical Society will be among those individuals and local history organizations doing their best to assist him in making the Sangamon Experience a success.

We look forward to touring the site which should be ready by year's end.

* * *

Just a reminder: our October 22 program will be a week later than usual, a reflection of both putting some space between our major events and programs, and the availability of a top-notch and provocative topic.

The session, as usual in Carnegie Room North at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, offers a different perspective on historical research and how newspaper stories from the past—commonly used for historic research—can differ dramatically from the personal correspondence of eye-witnesses whose written observations in journals and letters tell another story, in this case, the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln on April 14, 1865 at Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C.

Our speaker, Timothy Good, is well qualified to look at that moment in history.

Good—who may be more familiar to you as the Superintendent of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site here in Springfield—began his 28-year career with the National Park Service at the Ford's Theatre National Historic Site.

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 or sancohis.org. Send event announcements to historicoeditor@gmail.com.

Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor, Photos by Kathy Dehen, Larry Stone

October, November Programs to Give Unique Views of Illinois History, People

October and November will bring some thought-provoking programs to Society members, with speakers well-honed in their subject matter.

The Society, which usually holds its program meetings on the third Tuesday of each month, makes an exception in October in order to hear historian Timothy Good share what he learned by taking a close look at the personal accounts of those who were in Ford Theater the night Lincoln was shot that differ from later reports used by historians and others to relate the circumstances surrounding the shooting and its aftermath.

Good is no stranger to the Ford's Theater or Lincoln...and no stranger to Springfield, where in his position as superintendent of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site here, began his career 28 years ago with the National Park Service in Washington D.C. at the Ford's Theater National Historic Site. His book, *We Saw Lincoln Shot: One Hundred Eye Witness Accounts* will be the foundation of his October 22 presentation to the Society at 5:30 p.m. in Carnegie Room North. The program is free and open to the public.



Good has written three other books: *American Privateers in the War of 1812: The Vessels and Their Prizes as Recorded in Niles' Weekly Register*, *Lincoln for President: An Underdog's Path to the 1860 Republican Nomination* and *The Lincoln-Douglas Debates and the Making of a President*, reflecting his interests in naval history and American history.

Superintendent of the Lincoln Home

National Historic Site, Springfield since 2018, he holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Valparaiso University, a Master of Arts from the University of Durham, England, and earned a diploma from the United States Naval War College.

The Society resumes its regular meeting third Tuesday of the month schedule on November 19 with a post-Veterans Day program featuring Mark DePue.

DePue, head of the Oral History Program at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, will talk about the memories of Illinois veterans of World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War, Gulf War, and the War on Terror as captured in interviews for the program's "Veterans Remember" series. The presentation will begin at 5:30 p.m. in Carnegie Room North at the city of Springfield's Lincoln Library

A native of Decorah, Iowa, DePue holds a bachelor of science degree from West Point and Master of Arts and Doctor of Philosophy degrees from the University of Iowa. He was an Army officer for 25 years, He joined the faculty of Lincoln Land Community College from 2001 to 2005 as an adjunct professor and freelance writer. Depue served as a senior analyst at the Headquarters of the Army National Guard in Arlington, Virginia before being named Oral Historian for the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library in 2006.



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Please make note of our official mailing address:

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OCTOBER 2019 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Society is pleased to welcome new member Barb Wolfson.

Time to Take a Walk Back in History

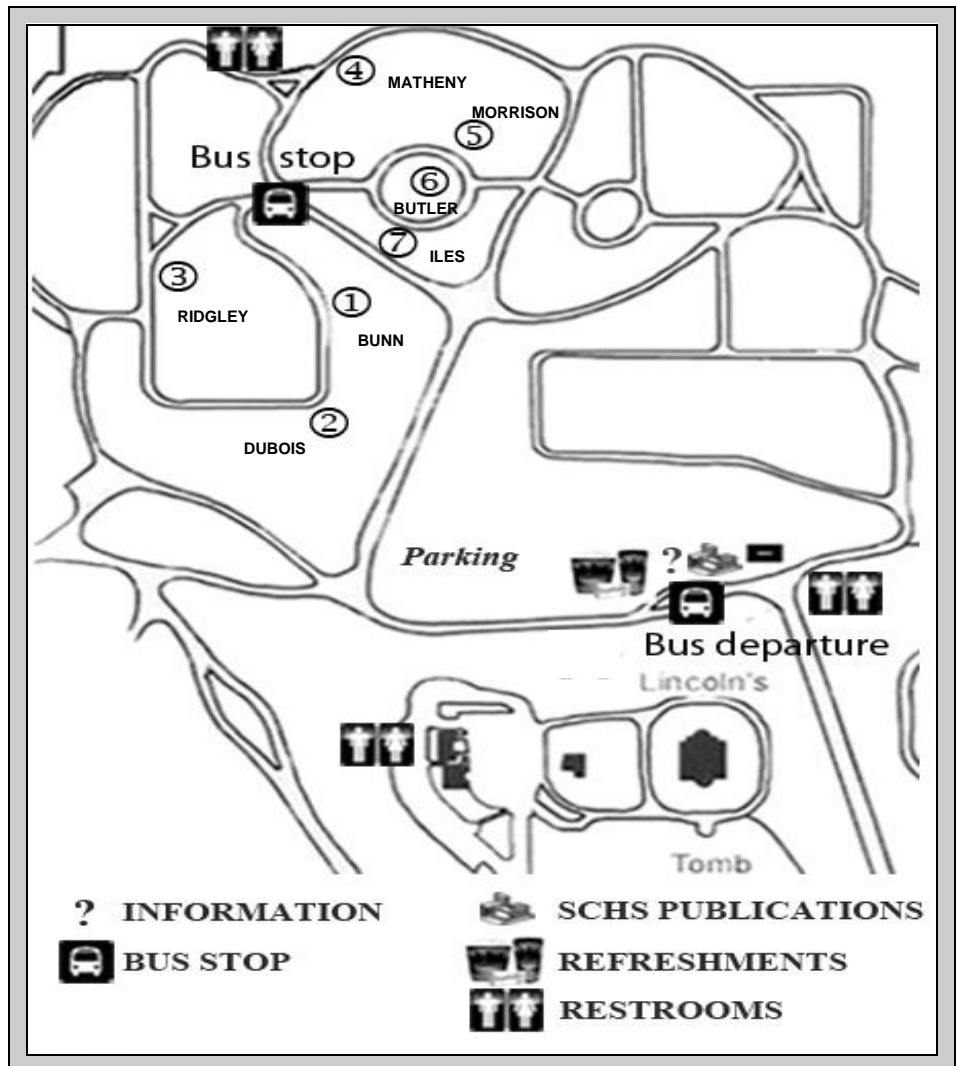


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The 365-acre Oak Ridge Cemetery, bordered on the west by North J. David Jones Parkway (North Walnut Street) and North First Street on the east in Springfield, is the largest municipal cemetery in Illinois. Nationally, it is second in visitors only to Arlington National Cemetery in Washington D.C.

At the walk, attendees will be able to purchase both publications from the Society and snacks and water from the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum. The walk, co-sponsored by the Society and Oak Ridge Cemetery, was held annually for 13 years beginning in 1996 and ending in 2008. It was brought back five years ago by popular demand.

“We were delighted to be able to bring this historically significant community event back,” noted Cemetery Walk chair Mary Alice Davis. “Over the years, there has been more than 10,000 local residents and visitors from across the country who have been on the Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk. For everyone and every year, it has been a learning experience.” Davis was president of the Society when the walk resumed.



Society Cited for Aid to Mark Founder's Grave

Representatives of the Sangamon County Historical Society were on hand for a ceremony on Sunday, September 8, honoring early settler James McCoy as part of Rochester's Sesquicentennial celebration.

The invitation to the event — and public acknowledgement of the Society's role in creating a new grave marker — were part of a two-hour program at historic Rochester Cemetery that included a graveside unveiling of the marker attended by his descendants, and in the nearby Ruth Primm Memorial Chapel, a Powerpoint presentation that looked at both the gravestones and history of the rural Roches-

ter Cemetery by archeologist and author. Dawn Cobb. The event was capped with a performance of early and Civil War music performed by the Lincoln Troubadours.

In 2018, the Rochester Sesquicentennial Committee was among the winners of the Society's Special Project Grants, receiving \$500 to mark the grave of McCoy, Rochester's first settler, who is buried in the pioneer section of the Rochester Township Cemetery. McCoy and his family, originally from Kentucky, settled north of the current village of Rochester in 1818, the year Illinois was granted statehood.

In her presentation, Cobb traced the development of Rochester Cemetery from a family burial ground to modern times, noting how both the grave markers and grave stones provide a guide to larger social and cultural changes in dealing with death. (Cobb, who spoke to the Sangamon County Historical Society in 2018, is co-author of *Cemeteries of Illinois: A Field Guide to Markers, Monuments, and Motifs*. She directs the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Cultural Resources Management Program).

Representing the Society at the ceremony were Elaine Hoff,

Special Project Grants committee chair, president Vicky Whitaker and board member Roger Whitaker, a past president. They were introduced by Sesquicentennial Committee co-chair Carolyn Moore (with Ruth Ann Theis), and is also a past president of the Society.

Rochester began its 150th birthday celebration last April, providing an array of special community activities each month including a quilt show, historic home tour, an antique tractor show and a Sesquicentennial Weekend Celebration in September and the burial of a time capsule.



MARKING HISTORY: Rochester Sesquicentennial co-chair Carolyn Moore (top left) welcomes guests to the start of ceremonies for placement of a new grave marker on the burial sites of the James McCoy family. McCoy, a hunter and trapper, moved from Kentucky to Illinois, settling in the north of the current village of Rochester in 1818. Descendants of McCoy (right) participated in the outdoor portion of the ceremony, laying flowers near the new marker (center). Following the outdoor event, attendees moved indoors into the nearby Ruth Primm Memorial Chapel where they heard archeologist Dawn Cobb (lower right) talk about the history of the rural cemetery and the historical and social trends associated with the symbols on gravestones and the materials from which they were made. As he has at other Rochester Sesquicentennial events, David Ramsey (below left) donned period style clothing McCoy would have worn. The rifle he carries belonged to McCoy.



SangamonLink.org Fans Continue to Grow: Society's Website Hits New Mark: Over 54,600 Views Last Month

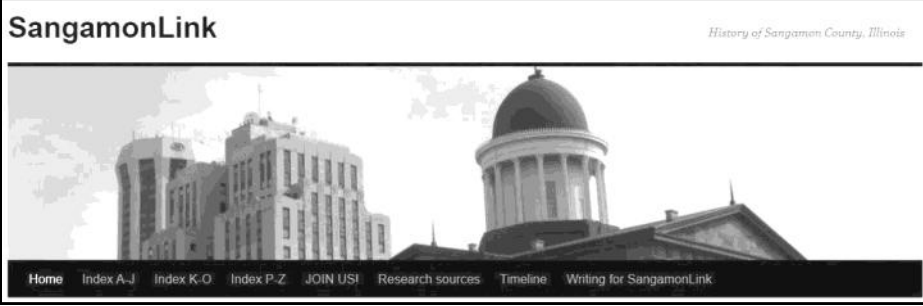
Talk about filling a need! The Sangamon County Historical Society's prize-winning on-line and searchable encyclopedia of Sangamon County history reached a new high in readership in early September, drawing 54,620 views in the month and visits by 26,355 individual visitors, a new record for the six-year-old site edited by long-time Society member Mike Kienzler, retired night city editor of the *State Journal Register*.

New software has allowed the Society to keep track of its viewership. The site now has 1,184 entries and has received 1,582 comments from readers since it went live in April, 2014.

Creation of the site was the outgrowth of an idea launched more than a decade ago to print a county encyclopedia to mark Sangamon's 200th anniversary, a common practice followed local, regional and city historical societies in an era before home computers and the internet became part of our daily lives and the fabric of contemporary research and communications

"There is no question that creating *SangamonLink.org* was the wise way to go. By taking a different approach, we recognized going on-line would not only give us the flexibility to constantly update and add material, but also make it easier for readers to search for specific information, something not possible with a printed volume. In retrospect, it was one of the most important services

we provide," observed Roger Whitaker, chair of the Society's Publications Committee and a member of the panel involved in determining the path the Society chose in taking the internet route. In 2015, *SangamonLink.org* was honored with a Superior Achievement Award from the Illinois State Historical Society in its annual Best of the Best Awards competition. In making their determination, the judges termed the site "a very important contribution to the history of Sangamon County." You can view the site by going to the Society's website at *sangmonhistory.org* or direct at *SangamonLink.org*.



Dana-Thomas House Foundation to Fete Susan Dana's 157th

Want to wish with Susan Lawrence Dana Happy Birthday?

You can do it with a check and help local school children see her famous home, by attending a celebration making her 157th birthday, Sunday October 12 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The event, sponsored by the Dana-Thomas House Foundation, will be held at historic Maldaner's Restaurant, 222 South Sixth Street in Springfield.

Tickets are \$125 per person and include a gourmet dinner, wine and beer, and music by the Virgil Rhodes Trio. There will also be a cash bar for cocktails.

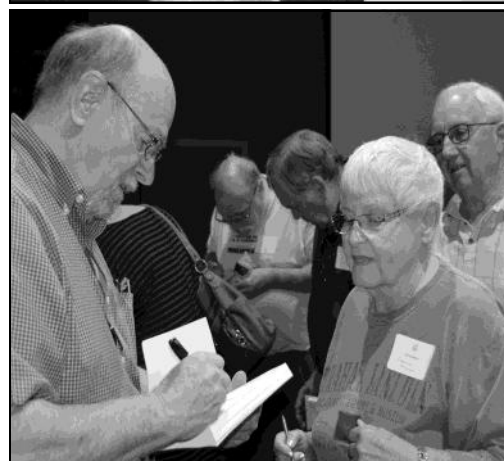
The evening's program will

include a cocktail hour along with a tour of the restaurant's pollinator rooftop garden.

Throughout the evening professional actor Linda Schneider will provide readings from Mrs. Dana's personal correspondence, which the Dana Thomas Foundation recently acquired from the Earl Bice Collection.

Proceeds from the event will fund transportation grants for participating area schools to visit the site.

To secure a seat, RSVP by October 7 to the Dana-Thomas House Foundation at 217-788-9452.



AUTHOR Ken Mitchell shares the untold story of Devereux Heights to a full house of members and guests September 17, kicking off the Society's meeting season at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library. His new book, *The Little Village That Could*, provides insight into Springfield history and its ties to coal mining. At left, Mitchell signs a copy of his book for member Francie Staggs.

CALENDAR OF AREA HISTORY EVENTS

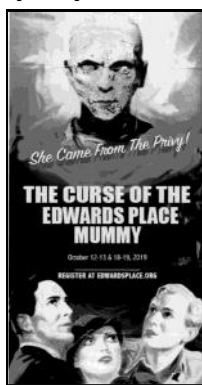
◆ **Tuesday, October 1: Springfield's Washington Street in the 1800s.** Historian and author Richard Hart, shares information about Washington Street in downtown Springfield and its growth as a site of commerce in the 1800s. 6:30 p.m. Books on the Square Springfield, 427 E. Washington Street. Free. For more information, see www.booksonthesquare.com. or call 217-965-5443.

◆ **Sunday, October 6: Echoes of Yesteryear Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk.** A walking tour featuring seven actors dressed in period costumes portraying namesakes of local schools. Participants will be bused to the area of the tour from the Oak Ridge Bell Tower. Noon to 4 p.m. (Last tour starts at 3:15 p.m.). Oak Ridge Cemetery. 1441 Monument Avenue, Springfield. Free parking and free admission (donations accepted). For more information go to www.sangamonhistory.org or call 217-525-1961.

◆ **Tuesday, October 8: Lunch and Learn: Footprints of Sangamon.** Historian and author Richard Hart will talk about "Strawbridge-Shepherd House: The First Footprint of Sangamon State University" followed by Dr. Judith Everson who will speak on "The Early Days of Sangamon State University." 11:30 a.m. Tickets are \$25 and includes lunch. UIS Student Union Ballroom, 2251 Richard Wright Drive, Springfield. For information call 217-206-6058.

◆ **Thursday, October 10: 8th AAHM Fundraising Gala.** The Springfield and Central Illinois African-American History Museum will honor the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Illinois, the Frontiers International Springfield Club, the Lincoln Home Historic Site and Union Baptist Church in this major fundraiser that this year will be honoring organizations that support and empower the Black community by paying it forward. A reception and silent auction starts at 6 p.m. followed by dinner and program at 7 p.m. at the Crown Plaza, 3000 South Dirksen Parkway. Tickets are \$60 adults, \$30 for children up to age 18. For information, see www.spiaahm.org or call 217-391-6323.

◆ **Saturday, October 12 and Sunday, October 13: "Curse of the Edwards Place Mummy" Fall Murder Mystery at Historic Edwards Place.** Edwards place steps into the Halloween season with a fundraiser centering around the mock filming of a horror movie, "Curse of the Edwards Place Mummy." Halloween costumed dinner guests are "extras" in a scene where the director is killed in grisly fashion! Guests will need to put their detective skills to the test to discover which of the six suspects is the murderer. Tickets for dinner, drinks, and the original show, at \$50 per person, go on sale to the public on Friday, September 13. The show, at Edwards Place, 700 North 4th Street, Springfield, will be repeated the following weekend, Friday, October 18 and Saturday, October 19. For ticket information, call 523-2631 or go to www.edwardsplace.org.



◆ **Sunday October 12: 157th Birthday Party Honoring Susan Dana,** sponsored by the Dana-Thomas House Foundation, Maldaner's Restaurant, 222 South Sixth Street in Springfield. Tickets at \$125 per person include a gourmet dinner, wine and beer, and music by the Virgil Rhodes Trio. Actor Linda Schneider will provide readings from Mrs. Dana's personal cor-

respondence which the Dana Thomas Foundation recently acquired from the Earl Bice Collection. Proceeds will fund transportation grants for area schools to visit the site. RSVP by October 7 to 217-788-9452.

◆ **Tuesday, October 22: Myth Busting Lincoln's Assassination.** Historian Timothy S. Good, author of "We Saw Lincoln Shot: One Hundred Eyewitness Accounts" shares his research and conclusions with the Sangamon County Historical Society on the mythology surrounding Lincoln's death. 5:30 p.m., Carnegie room North, City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, 326 S. Seventh Street, Springfield. Free and open to the public. (Note: The Society's programs are normally on the third Tuesday of each month. This is an exception. The regular schedule will resume in November).

◆ **Thursday, November 14: Helen's 200th Birthday Bash.** Historic Edwards place celebrates the 200th birthday of Helen Edwards, hostess, wife and mother. A re-enactor will be on hand to talk about birthdays in the 19th century. You'll hear excerpts of her many letters throughout the home, and have a piece of birthday cake. 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Free and open to the public. Edwards Place, 700 North 4th Street, Springfield. For more information, see www.edwardsplace.org.

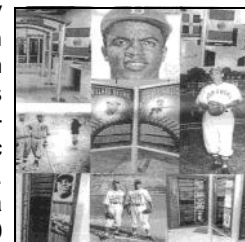
◆ **Tuesday, November 19: Veterans Remember.** Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Oral History Program director Mark DePue talks about the efforts to reach out and record the memories of Illinois military veterans. 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 S. Seventh Street, Springfield. Free and open to the public.

◆ **Saturday, November 23 - Sunday, December 1: SCHS at Memorial's Festival of Trees.** Stop by and check out the Sangamon County Historical Society's tree entry in this year's Festival of Trees in the Orr Building, Illinois State Fair Grounds, Springfield. For ticket information, see www.memorialmedical.com/memorial-medical-center-foundation/events/festival-of-trees.

◆ **Tuesday, December 10: SCHS Annual Holiday Party.** Details and ticket information in the November issue of *Historico*.

◆ **Saturday, March 21, 2020: Eighth Annual SCHS Trivia Night.** As in past years, proceeds will benefit the Society's Special Project Grant Fund. 6 p.m., Parish Hall, Christ the King Church, Springfield. Ticket and Round Sponsor information will be available early in 2020.

◆ **Saturday, April 11 to Tuesday, June 30, 2020: The Traveling Exhibit, Negro Leagues Baseball.** The Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum hosts this exhibit, a production of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum of Kansas City, Missouri, that honors and explores connections of African-American baseball history to Hispanic cultures, communities, and countries. Included will be player profiles and a timeline of baseball history AAHM, 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield,



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. 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