



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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May Program Spotlight

Locally Created Flag Resides at Smithsonian

By Mike Keinzler

A homemade flag Lanphier High School students carried to the Statehouse in 1970 as a symbol of the environmental movement found a permanent home in the Smithsonian Institution. But a mystery remains: who sewed the flag?

Smithsonian Magazine revived the story of the Lanphier flag in April as part of the publication's commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Earth Day.

The flag got its start in the classroom of LHS science teacher Ray Bruzan, who, as Smithsonian reported, turned Room 308 into the school's "Environmental Action Center" during the 1969-70 school year.

On the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970, dozens of Lanphier students



Lanphier High School students carried a locally created environmental flag in 1970. Photo by Pam Bruzan.

marched behind the flag to the State house, picking up litter as they went to highlight the need for environmental reform. At the Capitol, they turned in

petitions to Lt. Gov. Paul Simon (acting governor for the day) calling for action on environmental problems.

The flag, 61 by 36.5 inches, carries green stripes, a symbol of a clean earth; white stripes, symbolizing clean air; and the Greek letter theta, suggesting death. The design was based on one created by Ron Cobb, cartoonist for the Los Angeles Free Press.

Bruzan kept the flag in his classroom for the next two decades. As the 25th anniversary of that first Earth Day approached, however, he learned that the Smithsonian was looking for artifacts from the 1970 observance. Bruzan contacted the museum.

"I told them we did Earth Day in a big way here," he told State Journal-
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Flu Epidemic of 1918-20

By Mike Keinzler

This year's Covid-19 shutdown in Sangamon County has lasted longer than the one authorities imposed for the influenza epidemic of 1918. But medical progress over the last century means this year's death toll has been far lower ... at least so far.

In 1918, health officials closed churches, schools and theaters, barred street gatherings and set up a special hospital at the Illinois State Fairgrounds, but the so-called "Spanish flu" epidemic nonetheless killed more than 500 county residents.

Second and third waves of flu appeared in the area in 1919 and 1920. Although those waves were weaker, dozens more people died.

As the first epidemic hit, the Illinois State Register announced the closings on its October 16, 1918, front page.

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**Time to
Renew Your
Membership**



Hello Friends,

We hope you are all well and safe in this unusual time of the coronavirus pandemic. Unfortunately this disease requires us to quarantine and practice social distancing, causing many things to be done differently than usual.

Much to our displeasure, the Society has had to halt our monthly programs and activities. Both our monthly programs and annual meeting have been postponed until next fall.

In order to fulfill our mission of providing historical information about various topics about our community's rich and interesting history, this edition of *Historico* contains three articles that bring insight to a few of those issues. We believe you will enjoy reading them.

We thank our guest writers, Mike

Keinzler, SangamonLink editor, and Mary Schaefer, Society board member, for their articles about an earlier epidemic, victory gardens, and a locally created Earth Day flag that was included in a display at the Smithsonian Institution.

More than 100 years have passed since the last large pandemic that required citizens to protect themselves from a very contagious infection by staying at home.

It has been sixty years or more since victory gardens were commonplace in our community to help increase the food supply during difficult times. We are proud to remember their important places in history.

A couple of major items of Society news is that the deadline for our Special Projects Grant application has been extended due to delays caused by

the coronavirus. (See article on page 5 for complete details.)

As most of you know, the Society's membership year is from June 1-May 31, so it is time to renew your membership for the new year if you have not already done so. Renewing your membership will enable you to continue receiving *Historico* and other Society information. (See page 7 to learn membership levels and opportunity to give a gift subscription to a friend or relative.)

Since our meetings were put on hiatus in February, we have missed seeing you. Please know that we are thinking of you. In the mean time, stay in touch. Email or call us with suggestions for future articles or programs. We look forward to seeing you again soon.

Stephanie J. Martin

Flag

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Register reporter Mike Matulis in 1994. Museum officials were receptive. Lanphier's flag became part of the Smithsonian's 25th anniversary exhibit about Earth Day and remains in the Smithsonian's permanent collection.

Bruzan had only one regret: The mother of one of his 1969-70 students had sewed the flag, but 200-some students had passed through his classroom 24 years earlier; by 1994, Bruzan no longer remembered who the seamstress was.

"I remember I was so thrilled to get the flag that I wrote a thank-you note

to the parent, but I forget who it was," Bruzan told Matulis. "I'd be thrilled to



Earth Day Flag is shown in bottom center of Smithsonian display.

find out because I'd like to send that name into the Smithsonian to be

incorporated with the flag in their display of it."

The woman never has been identified.

Bruzan and his wife Pam traveled to Washington, D.C., in 1995 to view the anniversary exhibit, including the Lanphier flag. Pam Bruzan, who was a reporter for the Illinois State Register in 1970, took several snapshots of the students' march that also were used in the Smithsonian display.

One of those photos was used in Smithsonian Magazine's online article about the 50th anniversary in 2020.

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Ruth Slottag, *Historico* Substitute Editor

Planting Victory Gardens in Times of War

By Mary Schaefer



Governor Dwight Green is shown visiting the victory garden of Mr. and Mrs. Louie Barni, 1912 East Jackson Street, Springfield. L to R above are: Professor Lee A. Sommers, extension specialist in vegetable crops at the University of Illinois; Governor Green, Mr. and Mrs. Barni and Mrs. T. J. Knudson, representing the Garden Club of Illinois. Photo credit Illinois State Journal.

During both world wars, American civilians were called upon to help the war effort by planting their own “victory gardens” or “war gardens” in order to grow their own fruits and vegetables.

The United States National War Garden Commission was created in 1917 as an information resource for Americans to help meet the domestic need for food. Europe was suffering from a food shortage. The commission provided pamphlets to citizens on how to plant, harvest and store their own vegetables and fruits so more food could be sent to the troops and the allies. Propaganda posters and ads were created to entice Americans to “Sow the Seeds of Victory” and turn “Gardens into Munition Plants.” Families were urged to dry or can surplus fruits and vegetables for use in the winter. To aid in this effort, community canneries were established nationwide.

Through this nationwide campaign, gardens could be found in backyards, empty lots, rooftops and public areas, just about anywhere there was free space available. Schools even took part – planting gardens on their property. Citing the National War Garden Commission, the Illinois State Journal reported on October 6, 1918, that there were 5,288,000 war gardens in 1918. “As a result of the garden campaign and conservation work, 1,450,000,000 quart jars of canned vegetables and fruit have been saved,” the article reported.

Excerpts from the *Illinois State Journal* Garden Hints column, “Grow a Row of Sugar Beets” published in the February 10, 1918:

The authorities in Washington are striving in every possible way to make American War Gardens a big success. They feel that the Kaiser must be fought in the back yards and kitchens of the country, that each man, woman and child in

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Mike Kienzler, SangamonLink.org Editor



Illinois State Fairgrounds Woman's building (also known as the Administration Building) was converted to an emergency hospital in October 1918. (Photo courtesy of Tom Fitch).

“The lid went on Springfield with a bang yesterday when the health authorities closed all the schools and all the theatres and gave notice that they would remain closed until further orders. ...

“(Students) who were getting ready to hail the order with glad acclaim had their hopes sadly dashed when the teachers explained the full meaning of the order. Not only were they to go home, but they were to stay there under penalty of being arrested if found outside their own door yards.

“The moving picture houses received their orders to close at noon and immediately closed their ticket windows. ... The order applies to all places of amusement and places of assemblage, including lodge rooms, where people gather in numbers, and so stringent is to be the enforcement of it that people are not to be permitted to congregate in the streets.”

With both local hospitals full of influenza patients, officials quickly prepared a 100-bed emergency hospital in the Woman's Building at the Illinois State Fairgrounds and put out urgent calls for volunteer physicians nurses and cooks. Cases continued to mount; 125 new victims were reported October 24, the Illinois State Journal said.

One health inspector visited a home yesterday in which ten members of the family were suffering from influenza, and he discovered a total of thirty-two cases in ten homes which he visited.

Theaters reopened November. 8 and schools November 11. The fairgrounds flu hospital closed November 14. But the crisis continued, and in December, officials had to open a new, 32-bed emergency hospital in what was known as the Littler Home at Rutledge and Miller streets. Authorities finally closed the second hospital in mid-January, when the number of patients had dwindled to eight.

In a January 1 newspaper report, Springfield health superintendent Dr. A.E. Campbell said the flu's toll would have been higher if not for other steps taken by city and county officials.

“On account of the epidemic, we instituted ‘sick calls’ at all factories, shops and large stores in the city, thus isolating the sick from the other workers; placarded every business house in the city; placed a police officer at the door of every moving picture theatre. These simple, but seemingly drastic measures had the effect of isolating the sick from the well and prevented the closing of

business houses which always proves disastrous financially.”

Another flu scare took place in January and February of 1920. The number of reported cases – 121 in Springfield as of Feb. 10 – fell far short of the earlier eruptions, but Campbell still felt the need to order that all funerals be held privately.

“All crowding at theaters, moving picture shows and other places of amusement is strictly prohibited,” his order added.

In March, state statistics showed that, during the 1920 recurrence, Springfield had had the highest flu death rate in Illinois. However, city physicians told the Illinois State Register the data was “practically worthless,” because they had reported only the most severe flu cases to authorities. (The number of deaths wasn't reported in the article.)

Military influenza deaths

Local death reports don't tell the whole story. At least 32 of the 133 county residents who died in World War I military service are identified in the Honor Book of Sangamon County, 1917-1919, as victims of influenza. The actual number is certainly higher, since the Honor Book didn't specify the illnesses that killed many other service members.

One notable flu death was that of



Rollman

Sgt. James Rollman (1892-1918) of Springfield, who was an orderly with Sangamon County-based Unit W of the U.S. Medical Corps. Nurses from the

unit told the Illinois State Journal Rollman was a hero.

“(He) contracted influenza from which pneumonia developed, from the

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Epidemic

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boys who were taken ill in the ships on the trip over, in the worst of the epidemic.

“If there ever was a hero,’ Miss (Sarah) Wray said last night, talking of Sgt. Rollman, ‘Jimmy was one.

“He would get down to the lowest decks in the transports, and carry the sick and dead boys up. He contracted the flu from one of them, and was taken sick one night when I was in charge. I noticed how ill he was and told him to go to bed. He did, and he never got up again.”

Unit W

The only woman listed in the Honor Book as a WWI fatality from



Casstevens

Sangamon County was a Unit W nurse, Geneva Casstevens. She grew up in Beecher City, but transferred her nursing registration to

Springfield before joining the unit. She

died of flu on Oct. 14, 1918, in Liverpool, England.

Unit W, which included 12 area physicians, 50 orderlies and 21 nurses, was formed and commanded by Major (later Lt. Col.) D.M. Ottis, a surgeon associated with St. John's Hospital. Ottis formed the unit in the fall of 1917 and raised \$10,000 for equipment and expenses.

The unit was abruptly called up in January 1918 and sailed for Europe on May 1, 1918. It was deployed to a military hospital at Knotty Ash, near Liverpool.

The unit reported one other death — that of Capt. Francis Fletcher (1879-1918), a physician who practiced in Auburn and Chatham, from a perforated ulcer.

“No other losses were suffered by the unit, although many of them were severely ill with influenza and from the strain of the work which fell upon them during the raging epidemic of this malady,” the Journal reported in May 1919.

Grant Application Deadline Extended

The deadline for filing applications for the Society's Special Projects Grants has been extended to July 31.

Due to the coronavirus, some organizations experienced unavoidable delays so we are allowing them more time to develop and submit their plans for history projects.

These grants provide funding for historic special projects within the county that carry out our mission, which is to preserve and promote interest in the history of Sangamon County.

Applications can be downloaded from the Society's website www.sangamonhistory.org. Click on “Grants” to find the application form.

Completed forms can be submitted online or mailed to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Special Projects Committee, P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744.

The new deadline is July 31. Award winners will be announced this fall.

Flag

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Bruzan retired from the Springfield School District following the 2000-01 school year. Among other honors during his 42-year school career, Bruzan was named the district's Educator of the Year in 1990, Illinois' Environmental Teacher of the Year in 1975, and an Outstanding Teacher by the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in 1988-89.

Interviewed for The State Journal-Register last month, Bruzan told reporter Steven Spearie he asked Smithsonian magazine to send a copy of its April issue to 11-year-old environmental activist Greta Thunberg of Sweden.

“It's an indication of what young people can do, and we need more of it,” Bruzan said.

Bruzan's recent publications

In retirement, Ray and Pam Bruzan have focused on the history of Rochester, Illinois, their home. Among their publications have been *Cotton, Violins and Shots in the Night* (2015), two updates of the 1918 *Orange Judd Farmer Pictorial Community Album of Rochester Township and Village*, and a series of Rochester-related children's books, including *The Ghost Train of Lost Bridge Trail* and *The Ghost Trolley of Rockychester*.

Historical society members may know the Bruzans from their presentation February 24 of their most recent children's book, *The Violinist of Rockychester*, published in 2019.

It tells the real story of eminent violinist Louis Persinger, who was born in Rochester and may have had his first music lessons there. Persinger had a brief performing career of his own, but he is best remembered today as an outstanding violin teacher at the Juilliard School in New York City. Among his pupils were Yehudi Menuhin, Ruggiero Ricci and Isaac Stern.

Gardens

(Continued from page 3)

America must do his bit as well as the soldiers in France. Garden clubs are being formed all over the country.

Woman's clubs, civic organizations, commercial associations and schools are being pressed into service in the great endeavor to produce more food. The amateur gardeners of the country are urged to grow more food than ever before. People who

gardens provided about 40 percent of the U.S. vegetable supply. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt even planted a victory garden on the lawn of the White House.

According to the USDA, increasing the production and consumption of fresh vegetables and fruits through home, school and community gardens

also in attendance to preview the garden.

“I don’t know how to express how inspired I am by what you are doing,” Green told the Barnis. “It is really worthwhile and on your own, and it is in the spirit of victory. It shows the kind of determination that will carry us to great victory and a bigger and better America.”



Posters created by the National War Gardens Commission to promote Victory Gardens.

have never used a spade before are asked to get out and get busy. It is no use to talk about conserving food if there isn't food to conserve.

As World War I neared the end, citizens continued to maintain their “war gardens” as the new term “victory gardens” took root.

Shortly after the United States entered World War II, another nationwide campaign for victory gardens emerged.

As certain foods were rationed during the war, more Americans turned to growing their own fruits and vegetables as a mainstay source of food to feed their families. The United States Department of Agriculture reported that 20 million victory gardens were planted in 1943, producing 10 billion pounds of food. In 1944,

made the U.S. a stronger, healthier nation. The agency encouraged storage and preservation from the gardens, so surplus produce could be used by families and also for school lunches, welfare agencies and for local emergency food needs.

Illinois Governor Dwight Green proclaimed the second week of June in 1942 “Victory Garden Week.”

In an article published on June 4, 1942, in advance of Victory Garden Week, Illinois State Journal reporter Beulah Gordon wrote about a visit Governor Green made to the garden of Mr. and Mrs. Louie Barni, 1912 East Jackson Street in Springfield. The Barnis’ plot had been selected by the local victory garden committee as Springfield’s typical victory garden. Representatives from the Governor’s Committee on Victory Gardens were

The Barni’s’ 2,400-square-foot garden contained a variety of vegetables including peppers, onions, celery, peas, head lettuce, leaf lettuce, Romaine lettuce, endive, sweet basil, eggplant, chard, garlic, mymus or Mel Moes (which, translated from German, means, “greens that come in May”), leeks, tomatoes, potatoes, rhubarb, cabbage, cauliflower, carrots and beets. There were also flowers in bloom including lilies, zinnias and roses.

About 1,500 victory gardens were on record in Springfield, with many hundreds more that had not been officially reported, Journal said.

The victory garden campaign was lauded as a way to help boost morale and to decrease food shortages while showing patriotic support for the war efforts.

Time to Renew your Membership

Renew Now by Mail or Online for 2020-2021



JUST A REMINDER: The Society's membership year runs from **June 1 to May 31.**

You can renew for 2020-2021 by mail using this form...or renew online at
sangamonhistory.org.

You also can use this form to give a gift of membership...or join the Society for the first time!

All memberships—except business/corporate and college/university students—include adults and children 16 and over living at the same address.

2020-2021 SCHS MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Please Print)

I'm **RENEWING**

I'm a **NEW MEMBER**

This is a **GIFT** for _____
(Name of Recipient, Mailing Address (Street, City, Zip))

SELECT THE MEMBERSHIP LEVEL

- Regular Membership - \$30 Pioneer - \$100 Settler - \$250 Trailblazer - \$500
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Address: _____

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I am adding a donation of \$ _____.

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