



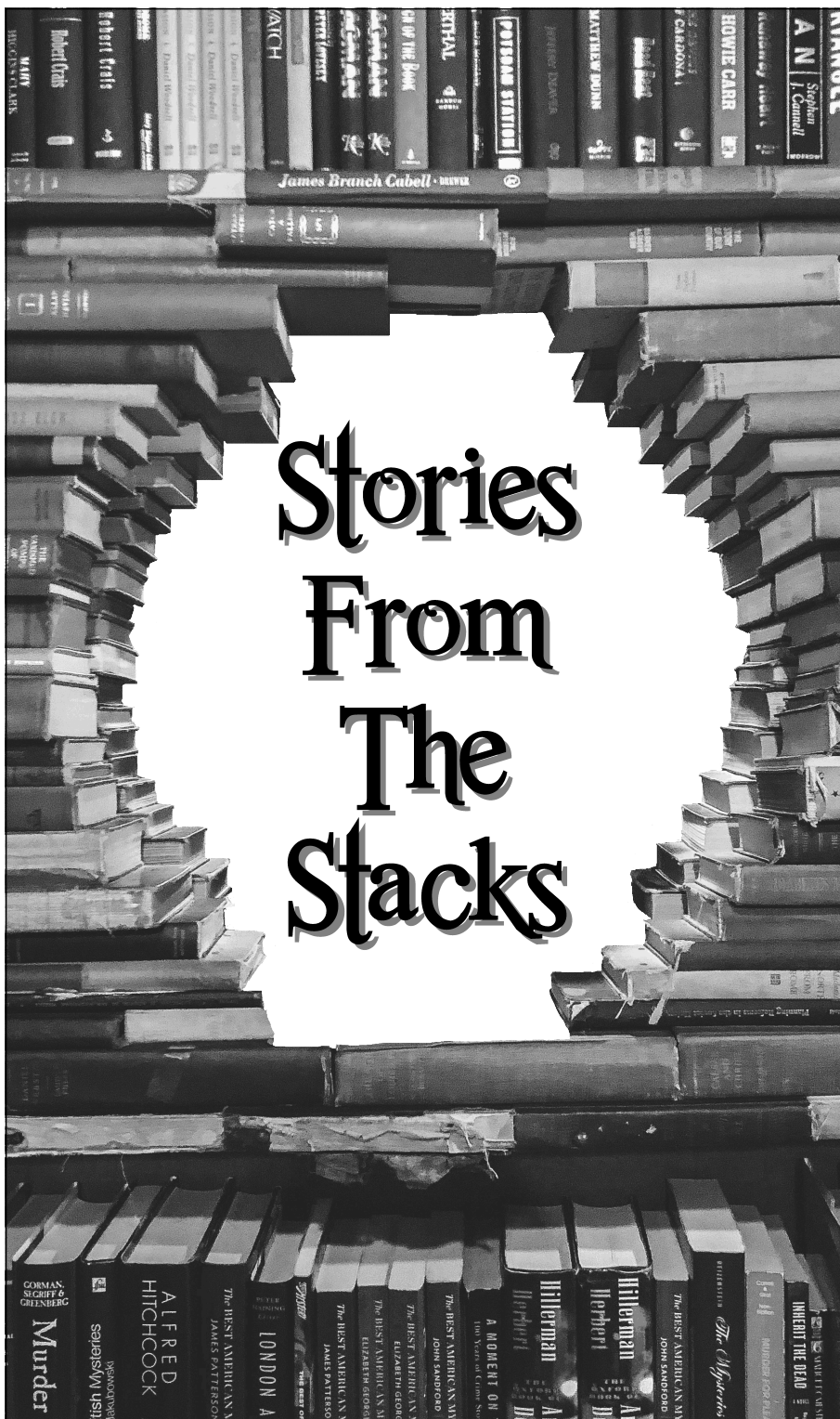
# HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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## Stories From The Stacks

November 15:

## Inside the SVC: Local History's Treasure Chest

What's buried in the Sangamon Valley Room's stacks at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library?

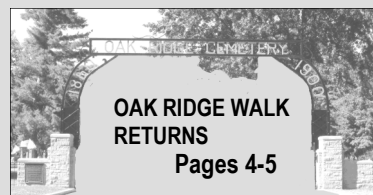
More than you can imagine.

- Could there be a map showing the location of Springfield diamond mines?
- A really, *really* old will of a New Jersey farmer?
- A bust of Abraham Lincoln rescued from the exterior of the original city library building before it was razed to make way for the present structure?

There's a tale to be told about each and much more that will be shared on Tuesday, November 15, when the Society returns to its regular monthly on-site meeting schedule at the city library, 326 South Seventh Street, Spring-

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### INSIDE LOOK:



HOLIDAY PARTY AHEAD.....Page 3





**Reserve a Seat for Wednesday, December 14**

# Ace Sign Museum to be Site Of Annual SCHS Holiday Party

**Attendees Will Be First to See Architectural Works Saved From Razed City Library**

Society members and their guests will be celebrating the holiday season on Wednesday, December 14 with a party and more at the Ace Sign Company Museum in Springfield, a unique setting that will bring with it the first public viewing of important historical architectural artifacts from the city's long-ago demolished 1904 library building funded by industrialist Andrew Carnegie.

It was the Sangamon County Historical Society that in 1974 saved the items from being destroyed by a wrecker's ball within a few weeks of clearing the site for construction the present library.

And it was Dennis Brinquet, now the retired president of Ace Sign, who stepped in at a critical moment to make sure the artifacts wouldn't be lost for good.

Brinquet will speak about his role in the preservation effort and about the museum's other holdings at the holiday gathering that runs from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the company's headquarters building at 2540 South First Street.

Reservations and pre-payment are required,

"We are really looking forward to both getting back to holding our annual holiday event and in this case, hearing more about both the Museum and Dennis Brinquet's amazing effort to fulfill saving part of the city's history and its connection to our earlier effort in the same vein," noted SCHS president Susan Helm.

The Society got involved in the preservation effort in 1974, a few weeks before the old library— opened in 1904 and built with funds provided by famed industrialist Andrew Carnegie — was about to be torn down.

Lacking \$2,000 to prevent the demolition of some of its exterior sculptured pieces and plaques, the Library turned to the Society for help. The Society, in turn, quickly raised \$3,000, more than enough to cover the cost of carefully removing the works.

The saved items were to be stored by the city and eventually incorporated into a display in the new library. Instead, at some point they were dumped onto an Illinois State Fairgrounds back lot where they were discovered in 2010 by a State Agriculture Department clean-up crew.


The discovery led history buff and modern-day Sign Galahad Brinquet to seek and successfully get permission from the city to recover the artifacts from the site.

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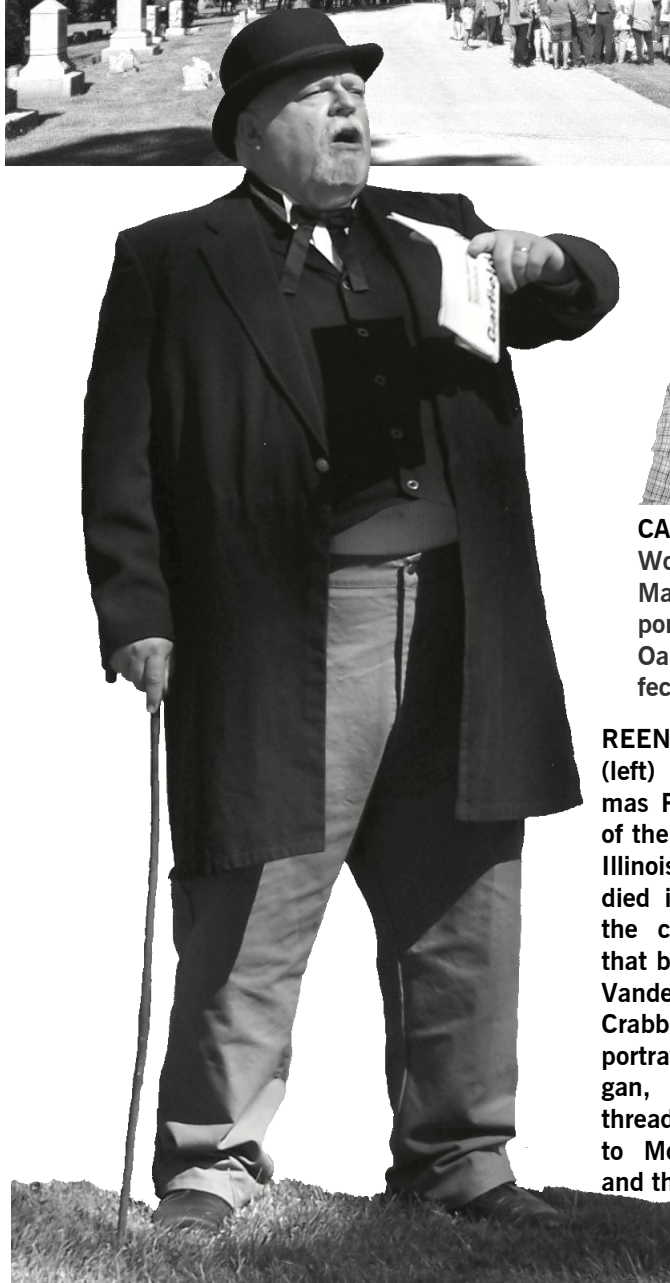
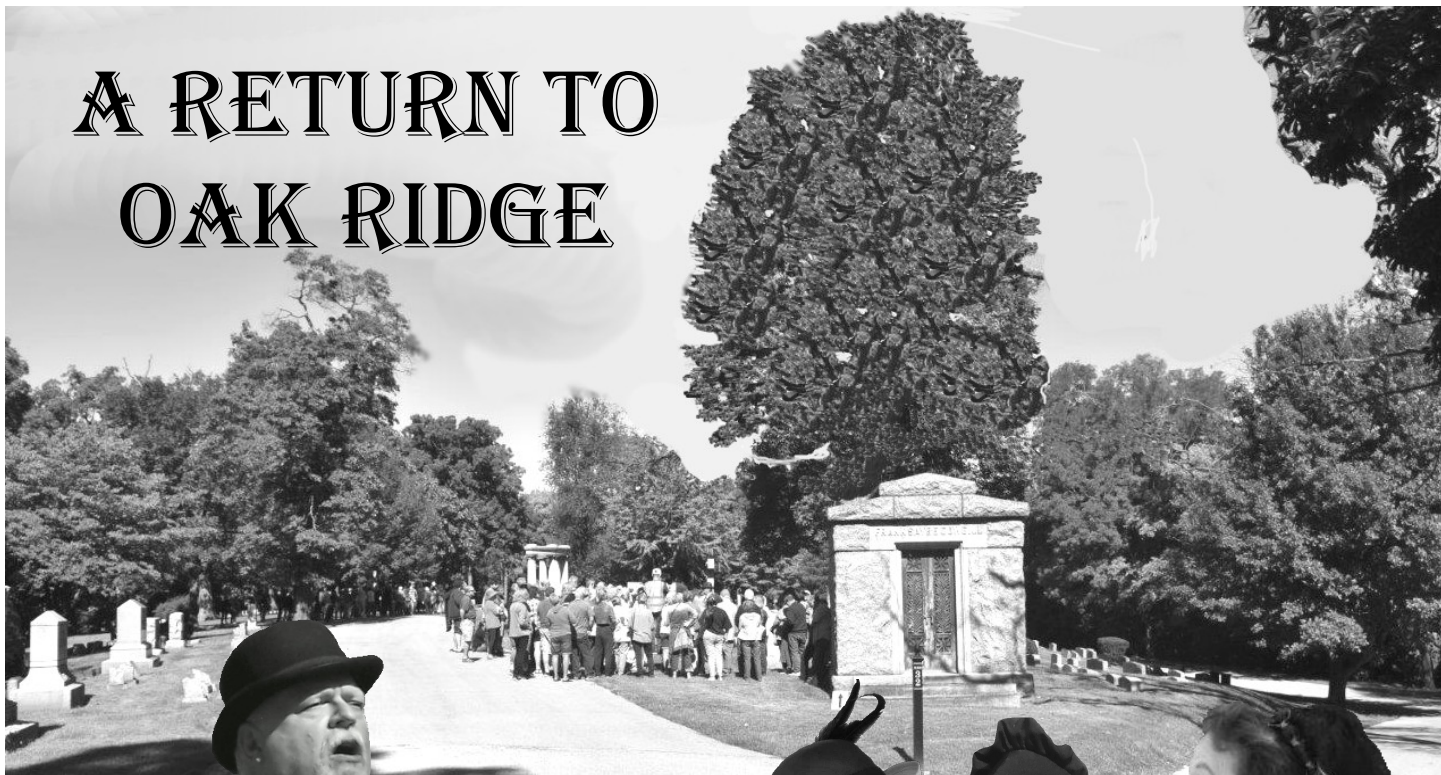
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 **A catered buffet supper with substantial hors d'oeuvres and desserts is included in the \$20 per person event fee for members who also may bring up to two non-member guests at \$25 per person. Drinks will be available at a cash bar. Reservations must be received and paid for no later than Tuesday, December 6. No walk-ins. For reservation information, see Page 7.**

Please make note of our official mailing address:  
**SCHS**  
**Box 9744**  
**Springfield, Illinois,**  
**62791-9744**

# A RETURN TO OAK RIDGE



**CAPTURING HISTORY;** Erica Smith (left) as Harriett Knudson, Carol Woodrum ((center) as Salome Paddock, and Mary Disseler (right) as Margaret Carpenter were among a group of costumed reenactors who portrayed historic figures at family grave-site stops along this year's Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk. Mother Nature cooperated, providing perfect weather for the return of the annual Society event.

**REENACTOR** Dave VanDeVoort (left) embraced the spirit of Thomas Rees, the long-time publisher of the *Illinois State Register* and an Illinois State Senator. Rees, who died in 1933, left funds to build the carillon in Washington Park that bears his name. At right, Deb VanDeVoort, as Harriet Palmer Crabbe, listens as Patricia Davis portraying Gertrude Wright Morgan, talks about the common thread that linked Crabbe's father to Morgan's career in education and the Civil Rights Movement.





**ON DISPLAY:** Oak Ridge Cemetery Tour visitors got an extra look at history, the replica of Lincoln's funeral hearse transported to the site for the event by the P.J. Staab Family Funeral Home. The gilded coach was created for the Lincoln Funeral Reenactment in May 2015 on the 150th anniversary of the President's funeral. (The original was destroyed by fire in 1887). Once in place (center and right), Staab staffers installed its eight plumes of feathers.



**TRANSIT TO THE PAST:** Oak Ridge Cemetery tour takers were bused to this year's tour site and back, moving in groups from one nearby gravesite to another, at right, gathering to listen to reenactor Andy VanDeVoot portraying Springfield drug-gist Richard Dobbs. Below, reenactor Dennis Rendleman awaits visitors to the unusual bench monument erected in memory of William A Northcott, who served as Illinois Lieutenant Governor and U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Illinois. He later became Head Consul of Modern Woodmen of America, a fraternal life insurance company that erected his monument in 1917.

**HISTORICO** Oak Ridge photos by Larry Stone, Kathy Dehen, Ernie Slottag and Ronni Betts.



# Look at Library's Unique Local History Collection Underscores SCHS Link

(Continued from Page 1)

field. The meeting starts at 5:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Room and is free and open to the public.

The lively look at this unique history resource will draw on the experiences of both library professionals, researchers and writers who regularly make the Sangamon Valley Collection their first stop in seeking information on the area's historical roots.

Librarians Curtis Mann, manager of the Sangamon Valley Collection and City Historian and Stephanie Martin--both past SCHS presidents--will share some of the off-beat information requests they've fielded over the years.

On the user end, writers Cinda Klickna and Mike Kienzler will take the floor, Klickna, the Society vice-president, author and journalist, will provide a brief look at the role the Society played in creation of the Sangamon Valley Collection. Kienzler, editor of the Society's on-line encyclopedia of county history, *SangamonLink.org*, and a retired *State Journal-Register* editor, will detail the breadth and scope of his research among the SVC stacks. Library Director Summer Griffith will offer insights on the future of the SVC.

If time permits, the audience will have a chance to pose questions to the panelists.

## Long Relationship With Library

The Society and the Sangamon Valley Room with its vast collection of local history, have been intertwined for more than five decades. In fact, it was 53 years ago this month--in 1969-- that members of the Society's board of directors decided to accept a challenge from the city's Lincoln Library board to help plan the construction of a new city library, one with space devoted to Sangamon County history. It took nearly a decade before the wrecking ball demolished the old city library building on the corner of Seventh Street and Capitol Avenue. The new library opened in 1977.

Springfield's first library was created just after the end of the Civil War. Between 1867 and 1904, it was housed in

five different locations, its final move in 1894, to the top floor city hall on Seventh and Monroe. a few years before famed steel magnate and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1901 agreed to finance a new city library building for which construction began in 1902.

## Don't Call It Carnegie

Between 1883 and 1929, Carnegie underwrote construction of 1,689 libraries throughout the United States -- 2,509 world-wide -- first in his hometown in Scotland and then in his corporate home, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. His largess continued in response to requests from local communities. One such appeal--from Reverend Edwin S. Walker, a retired Springfield Baptist minister--resulted in a \$75,000 library construction grant from Carnegie.



RAZED but not forgotten: the City of Springfield library in 1904.

When told in 1901 that local officials intended to name the building the Lincoln-Carnegie Memorial Library, Carnegie said no, noting that he "*would consider it a desecration to have any other name linked with that of Lincoln.*"

The city bought the property on which the Carnegie-financed library would rise (and today's library now sits) for \$20,000. Weather, shortages of stone and labor disputes delayed the work, but the library was finally dedicated on June 7, 1904. It would be razed and replaced 70 years later.

## Society Saves Artifacts

With construction plans for the new library firmed by 1974, the Society learned the Sangamon Valley Room would be located on the south side of the third floor of the new building,

overlooking the Lincoln Home area. But it wasn't long before the relationship between the Library and the Society to provide both advice and financial support would be put to the test.

In late summer of 1974--a few weeks before the old building was to be razed--the Society learned that the Library needed money to save some of the historic architectural features before the wrecking ball started to swing in early September.

Among the items sought to be saved was an ornate entry way that framed the main door on Seventh Street, a bust of Lincoln looking down on the Seventh Street entrance and two plaques on the corners of the building's exterior that bore the inscriptions "*This records the gratitude of the City of Springfield to Andrew Carnegie*" and "*Named in Honor of Abraham Lincoln by Andrew Carnegie.*"

Also on the save list were a "unique copper catch basin and parts of the main staircase" to be "preserved for future generations of Lincoln Library patrons."

The Society needed to raise \$2,000 by September 9 to save the artifacts. It did and in fact, brought in \$3,000. Monies exceeding the goal were to be used to defray costs of reinstalling the saved items in the new library.

But that would not be the fate of most of the "rescued" pieces, eventually dumped on a back lot in the northeast corner of the Illinois State Fairgrounds and exposed to the elements. They were uncovered in 2010 by Department of Agriculture workers cleaning up the site. Notable among them was the carved stone lintel that once stood atop the library entrance...and the engraved plaque expressing the city's gratitude to Carnegie for his gift.

## First Look for Society Members

On learning about the historic nature of the find, Ace Sign Company owner Dennis Brinquet sought and received permission from the city to remove and store the pieces for eventual display at the company's museum. The pieces will be unveiled December 14 at the Society's annual holiday party.



# SCHS HOLIDAY PARTY INFORMATION, REGISTRATION

Since the 2022 SCHS Holiday Party on Wednesday, December 14 at the Ace Sign Company Museum is a catered event, all reservations must be paid for in advance at a cost of \$20 per person for members, \$25 for non-member guests of members. Here's what you need to know:

- ❄ Members can bring up to *two non-member guests*.
- ❄ You can pay by mail or on-line.
- ❄ Your reservation and payment and must be received by Tuesday, December 6.
- ❄ Checks should be made payable to SCHS and sent to *SCHS, Box 9744, Springfield, 62791-9744*.
- ❄ No last-minute walk-ins, no refunds.
- ❄ Name tags will be at the check-in table.

For electronic payment, go to *sancohis.org* and follow the *party reservation* link for payment and guest listing instructions.



## 2022 HOLIDAY PARTY MAIL-IN RESERVATION FORM: (PLEASE PRINT)

Your FULL NAME: .....

Phone Number:..... e-mail.....

Other SCHS members covered by your payment: (Full Name, PLEASE PRINT):

.....

.....

Full Names of non-member guests: (*Limit 2*) : (PLEASE PRINT)

.....

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**Sangamon County Historical Society 2022-2023 MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form**

Mail this form with your check to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. Our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31. All memberships cover adults and children 16 and over at living at the same address. Be sure to list their names. *PLEASE PRINT.*

Your Full Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse/Significant Other First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's maiden name where applicable \_\_\_\_\_ Your e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Your address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State , Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Full Names of other family members included in your membership:

*Choose Your Level of Membership:*  Regular (\$30)  Pioneer (\$100)  Settler (\$250)  Trailblazer (\$500)  
 Lifetime (\$700 one-time fee)  College/University Student (individual) (\$20)

This is a GIFT (Name of recipient, mailing and e-mail address):

I am adding a donation to the Society in addition to my membership in the amount of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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