



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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REC

MAKING OUR HISTORY

Artists Render Lincoln's Legacies

00:01:00

January 17 Panel to Weigh Impact of New Approach to Eyeing History

How should we look at history? Maybe in ways other than you think.

Sangamon County Historical Society members and guests will get an in-depth look at the changes happening here and on a broader scale as historians, artists, and cutting-edge technological experts team to discuss the whys and new ways history can be collected, interpreted, and preserved for future generations.

The free Tuesday, January 17 program, starting at 5:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Room, City of Springfield Public Library, will provide an update and reflection on "*Making Our History, Artists Render Lincoln's Legacies*" a year-long virtual residency project whose results were on display along with 20 short videos from late August to mid September at the University of Illinois Springfield, the Springfield Art Association and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

The paintings, sculptures, prints, photography, virtual reality, conceptual and video art are earmarked for the UIS permanent collection.

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SOCIETY SALUTES Dennis Brinquet at a unique Holiday Party gathering at Ace Sign Company. Photos and more on pages 4-5.

(Continued on Page 6)



From the President's Desk



Susan Helm

2022 Brought Return to In-Person Meetings; More Ahead in 2023

As the New Year unfolds, it's exciting to see the emergence of in-person meetings and programs again.

We will continue to monitor our community's health care concerns and make decisions on in-person vs. virtual month to month. We've got an exciting line up of programs for the first half of 2023, including at least one field trip to one of our grant recipients of 2022.

Recently I was invited to attend a dedication ceremony at the Old State Capitol for an historical

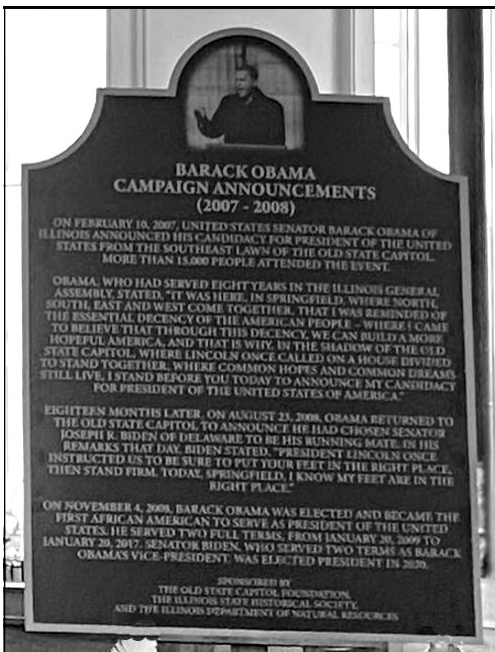
What wasn't lost on me was how many times President Abraham Lincoln's name was mentioned which leads me to the first SCHS program of the year combining art and history.

With the help of SCHS board secretary and social media chair Sarah Adams (also Curator of collections & Interpretation at the Springfield Art Association), we will be hosting an event on Tuesday, January 17 at Lincoln library led by Graham Peck, PhD, Wepner Distinguished Professor of Lincoln Studies from the University of Illinois Springfield.

"Making history: Artists Render Lincoln's Legacies" is an innovative physical and digital art exhibit featuring various artists' interpretations of how they see our most revered President. We hope to include some area artists and their work.

At this writing, we will have completed three programs this fiscal year and four if you count the one for President we've received at the holiday party with Dennis Bringuet. Finally, we've once again had a successful Cemetery Walk and holiday party. We encourage other like-minded organizations to submit any program offerings to our able *Historico* editor Vicky Whitaker (vwhitaker@gmail.com) for inclusion in our newsletter calendar.

I continue to be humbled by the people I've encountered and their dedication to preserving history. Thank you to all the readers for their continued support of our organization. We look forward to our series of spring programs and reviewing and awarding community grants.



Representatives chamber.

Many well-known state dignitaries were present and once again the beautiful marker was created by Ace Sign Company.



Historico, published 9 times a year (except July, August & December), is the official bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. Springfield, Illinois.

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 sanchohis.org. Catch us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Send event announcements to historicoeditor@gmail.com.

Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor.

Cinda Klickna, Mike Kienzler, contributors

Members Step Up to Support Fall Fundraising Campaign

If you happened to slip a donation in the mail to the Sangamon County Historical Society last month, you weren't alone. Amid the flurry of holiday gift giving, the Society's letter to members and friends drew a great response, notes SCHS president Susan Helm, who tracked the gifts designed to help so many of the organization's programs and outreach.

"Asking for donations in December when virtually every non-profit is doing the same thing was a little unusual for us, but as we looked ahead, it did make sense, the Pandemic over the past two years, we've had to halt one of our key events, trivia night, that helped fund our Special Project Grant program. As we move into 2023 and beyond, we will



be looking at new ways to replace or enhance such events and also develop broader activities and long-term giving programs that will strengthen the bond between our members and their largesse in supporting our community-oriented efforts."

The Society operates on a June 1 to May 31 fiscal year that runs counter to the calendar year of most other organizations. "It's a throwback to its June 1961 founding," notes Helm, "and can be confusing when it comes to renewing memberships or making donations. That's why we also encourage donations in the spring as part of our annual membership renewal period, but any time is time for giving and we appreciate all who responded to our recent request."

Meeting Cancelled for Bad Weather? Here's How to Find Out

Remember those nice warm days of summer or the crunch of falling leaves under your feet this past fall? And snow? And ice? And, oh my, it's January and Mother Nature can be cruel, especially if the temperature dips and the flakes start falling in amounts high enough to give you second thoughts about going to that SCHS meeting.

We know. We've been there before and are prepared to cancel a meeting or a special event in hazardous weather conditions.

If that happens, an announcement to that effect will be posted by **3 p.m.** of the day of the meeting/event several different ways. Notices initially will be posted on our main website, sangamonhistory.org and on our phone message system, **217-525-1961** by **3 p.m.** on the day of the meeting or event. This should give you ample time to slip off the coat, boots and watch the flakes fly from the comfort of your living room chair.

Where possible, we will also post any cancellation notices on **media websites** and request that they be **broadcast** through local radio and television outlets.



2022-2023 OFFICERS

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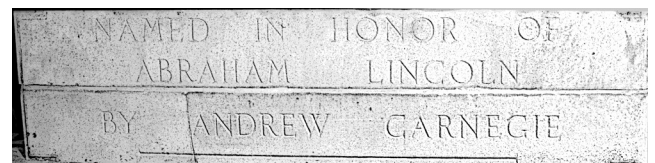
HOLIDAY PARTY AT ACE SIGN MUSEUM PROVIDES

Heavy rain didn't dampen the turnout or enthusiasm of SCHS Holiday Party goers who gathered at the Ace Sign Company Museum in Springfield on December 14 for the organization's annual event, this year with a big surprise: the first public showing of a massive display of architectural artifacts from the library that served the city from 1904 to the early 1970s when it was razed to make way for the current Seventh Street building.

The huge pieces, assembled along the south wall of the Museum, provided a close-up look at the intricate lentil and

carved plaques (below) that were at one point lost in time, dumped years before from a city warehouse and abandoned on a back lot at the Illinois State Fairgrounds for decades until they were discovered in 2010 by a state clean-up crew.

The 1904 library building was funded by famed industrialist Andrew Carnegie who underwrote the construction of thousands of libraries across the United States, most of which carry his name. But not in Springfield. Carnegie, a great admirer of Lincoln, forbade his name to be used. One





FIRST LOOK AT LIBRARY'S ONCE-LOST ARTIFACTS

of the two recovered massive plaques that stood at the Seventh Street entrance of the old building, alludes to his desire. The other expressed gratitude to Carnegie for his gift.

The Society got involved in the preservation effort in 1974, a few weeks before the old library that opened in 1904 was about to be torn down. Lacking \$2,000 to prevent the demolition of some of the 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. That never happened, the largest pieces eventually discarded.

Dennis Brinquet, (above, right) now the retired president of Ace Sign Company who stepped in at a critical moment to make sure the artifacts wouldn't be lost for good, filled in

some of the details that brought the pieces to the Museum, a growing conglomeration of Springfield history in neon and metal that tells the story of the city's growth and change. Brinquet took holiday party goes on a trip through local history, heads swiveling as he talked his way through the room with its massive signs and artifacts of a city that once was and continues to change,

Society president Susan Helm thanked Brinquet for his long efforts to preserve local history, presenting him with a rare honor, Lifetime Membership in the Society to acknowledge his continuing efforts to give the community continuity through the Museum.

In addition to the numerous signage that for many brought back memories, Brinquet also offered party goers a tour of the manufacturing side where the company produces signs for customers world-wide.

SCHS Panel to Weigh In on a New Twist on Looking at History

(Continued from page 1)

The innovative collaborative art and history project stemmed from conversations between UIS Visual Arts Director Brytton Bjorngaard and Graham A. Peck, the UIS History Department Wepner Distinguished Professor of Lincoln Studies who wound up co-directing the year-long collaborative virtual residency project that drew on a cross-section of approaches by 20 Illinois professional artists, documentary makers and scholars.

To Dr. Peck, who will be among the panelists for the January presentation, there are many Lincolns that inhabit our culture, among them, he says, "the frontier Lincoln, the logician, the family man, the

politician, the military chief, the emancipator, the icon, the American God, the pop culture artifact, the Land of Lincoln, and Lincoln's still resounding political legacy."

Dr. Peck will be joined on the panel by some of the artists as well as Josh Hester, principal and executive producer of Springfield-based The Story Teller Studios and his team that documented the artists at work sites or in locations that included New Salem, a museum in Urbana-Champaign and the



SHARING HISTORY: UIS history Professor Dr. Graham A. Peck (right) and The Story Teller Studios principal and executive producer Josh Hester, (above) will be among the panelists on Tuesday, January 17 when the Society takes a closer look at how a University of Illinois Springfield project is providing historians with a new approach to looking and interpreting history. Below, the artists from across Illinois who participated in the unique year-long virtual residency project.

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

WILLIAM BLAKE Chicago	JULIE COWAN Evanston	KEENAN DAILY Champaign	DAVID HINDS Springfield	DANNY HOUK Belleville	LARSEN HUSBHEY Chicago	JORDAN FEIN Springfield	LORI FULLER Urbana	ADAM BROOKS, MATTHEW WILSON Chicago
LINDSAY JOHNSON Chicago	KELLY K. JONES Chicago	JUDITH JOSEPH Chicago	JUDITH MAYER Chicago	ALEXANDER MARTIN Peoria	MARK NELSON Chicago			
NATHAN PECK Chicago	DON POLLACK Evanston	KRISTA SHELTON Springfield	COREY SMITH Chicago	BILLIE THEIDE Champaign				

Calendar on 7:

A Heads Up Guide to Area History Events



What with all the havoc Mother Nature can level, January is never the best time to re-introduce a monthly history calendar. but we're hearty folk here at the Sangamon county Historical Society, ready to switch back to our Pre-Pandemic approach to making *Historico's* monthly *Calendar On 7* a place to help promote not only our own, but other local history organization programs and events. Send announcements, information, photos and illustrations to historicoeditor@gmail.com. You can still see a list and links to all the Zoom programs the Society offered during the on-site meeting shut-down, by going to our website, sangamonhistory.org.

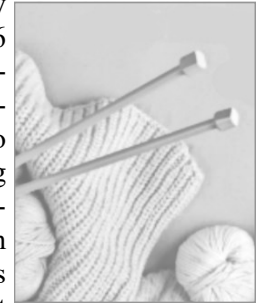
Tuesday, January 17: *A New Look at "Making Our History: Artists Render Lincoln's Legacies."* 5: 30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street. Free. For this Sangamon County Historical Society monthly program, panelists will take a look at a University of Illinois project that combined art and technology to interpret the impact of Abraham Lincoln. (See story, page 1). Free.

Friday, January 20: *Deadline to Register to Participate in a New Illinois 4-H History Initiative Website.* The Illinois 4-H Alumni Association is seeking photos of special memories, mementos and awards won by 4-H members over several decades starting in the 1970s. They'd like to know more about



how the organization impacted individual lives growing up in the 4-H program. For more information go to <https://go.illinois.edu/4hbythedeCADES>.

Friday, February 7 *A Stitch in Time: Knitting and Crocheting in the 1800s.* 6 p.m., City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street. Join a Lincoln Home park ranger in this Library sponsored presentation, who will discuss how crafts like knitting and crocheting played a role in important moments and ideas in American history during the 1800s including the abolitionist movement and the Civil War. DeFrates Room, Third Floor, Free.



February 11: Take Your Sweetie to Susan Lawrence Dana's 1912 Valentine's Dinner

Susan Lawrence Dana had two great loves, her first husband Edwin Dana, and her second husband Constantine Joergen-Dahl.

On February 11, The Dana Thomas House Foundation will be hosting a Valentine dinner, fashioned after one Susan threw in 1912. The event will be held at Arlington's in Springfield (recreating a party at the Dana-Thomas House would be too prohibitive). The event includes dinner, drinks, music, and actors portraying Susan and Susan's second husband Joergen-Dahl. Guests will be shown pictures of the royal blue Valentine book that Susan created for her first husband Edwin in 1889. It was called *An Effect in Blue*. A poem and drawings are all done in royal blue. The actual book (right) is housed at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library.

Susan lost her husband in 1900 when he was killed in a mining accident in Colorado. Then twelve years later, in 1912, Susan hosted a Valentine musical in honor of Governor Charles Deneen and his wife, Bina, with 150 guests in attendance.

The *Illinois State Journal* and the *Illinois State Register* reported on the event. The Register wrote, "never has the interior of the artistic home been prettier than it was last night in its Valentine garb." In the gallery, several tall vases, filled with bleeding hearts and hyacinths, had been placed around the room. The balcony was decorated with palms and ferns; the walls were "covered with a delicate tracery of green." The dining room was decorated with cupids, hearts, and arrows, the living room a sea of pale pink. Cakes and candies, shaped into hearts, were served in large, scarlet, heart-shaped boxes.

The program for the evening was a musical where Susan introduced a singer, Constantine Joergen-Dahl from the Columbia School of Music in Chicago. Chances are the guests had no clue that he and Susan were planning to elope the next month since the official announcement a few months later was reported as a surprise. Susan was 49 years old although she listed 36 on the marriage certificate; Joergen-Dahl was 26.

Tickets are \$125 per person. For reservations and information, go to *Events* on the Dana Thomas House website: dana-thomas.org. - Cinda Klickna .

(Klickna, vice-president of SCHS and a frequent contributor to Historico, is the current president of the Dana Thomas House Foundation).



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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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