



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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Behind Historic Preservation

The Inside Story: Making Dana Thomas House Whole

Mike Jackson, one of architecture's most prominent historic preservationists, will take a look back at the efforts to restore and preserve Dana Thomas House, when he kicks off the 2024 Sangamon County Historical Society program season on Tuesday, January 16.

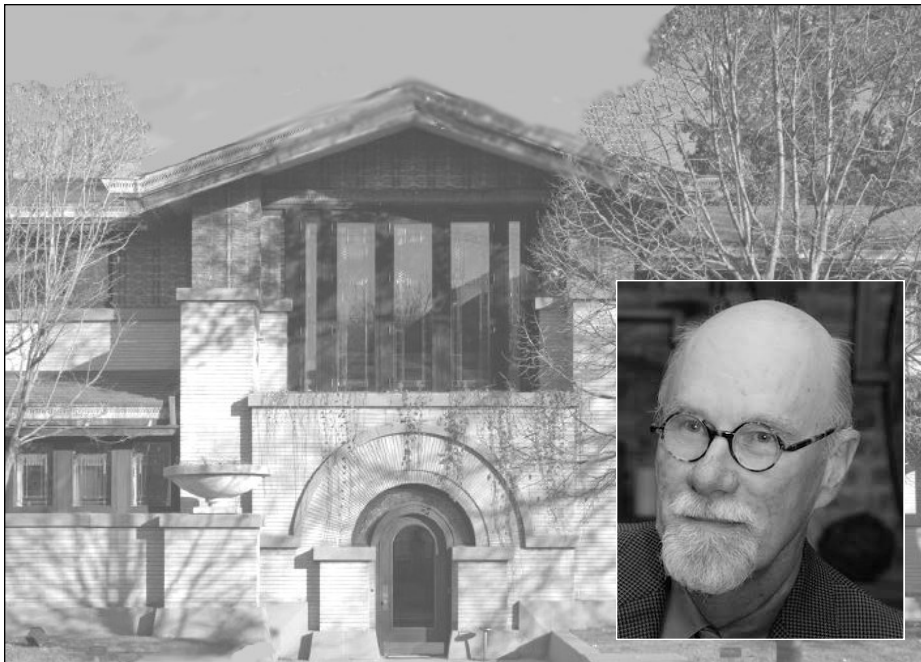
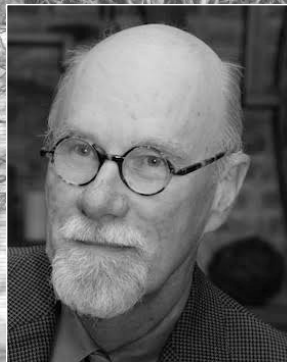
The free presentation, co-sponsored with the Dana-Thomas House Foundation, starts at 5:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Room at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield,

Springfield-based Jackson, a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, served as the Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer in Illinois from 2009 to 2013, and from 1983 to 2013 oversaw and was actively involved in reviewing thousands of Illinois historic properties undergoing renovation including serving as project manager for restoration of the famed

Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Dana-Thomas State Historic Site in Springfield, a six-year effort to bring it back to its 1910 architectural splendor.

With an international reputation for his knowledge and work, Jackson is an active member of the Association for Preservation Technology, co-chairing its Codes and Standards

Technical Committee and directing its Building Technology Heritage Library, a free online archive of pre-1964 architectural trade manuals, building codes and related material.



PRESERVATIONIST Mike Jackson (inset, right) who oversaw the restoration of Dana-Thomas House in Springfield, leads off the Society's 2024 Program Speaker Series on Tuesday, January 16.

Prominent in *Upstairs Downtown*, the national movement for downtown revitalization through an economics and design training, he currently serves as board chairman of the National Building Art

Center in St. Louis

Jackson holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a Masters in Historic Preservation from Columbia University in New York.

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From the President's Desk



CINDA KLICKNA

Sangamon History? Look to Us for More in 2024!

Happy New Year!

2023 ended with our annual holiday party, this year held at the historic Edwards Place.

Interpreters in period costume greeted guests as they toured the house. The Old State Capitol Chorale sang festive holiday music, and 2024 is set to be a year of great programs as Sangamon County has so much amazing and interesting history.

Mark the third Tuesday of each month for programs that will cover the restoration of the Dana-Thomas House (January 16), neighbors of the Edwards back in the 1800s (February 20), a traveling medicine salesman from the 1850s (March 19), a trip to the Black Firehouse (April 16), and a look into the lives of black Underground Railroad conductors (May 21).

* * *

My many thanks to the SCHS Board for support, hard work, and interest in promoting our Society.

In June *SangamonLink* reaches its tenth anniversary so plan on hearing more about that,

and visit the site which receives as many as 14,000 hits each month You can reach it at (www.Sangamoncountyhistory.org).



And visit the Sangamon County Historical Society website (www.sangcohis.org) to read more about the history of the Society, announcements of upcoming grant applications, etc.

Cinda



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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. Catch us on Facebook and Twitter. Send event announcements to historicoedi-

February Focus: Edwards Place

***An Upscale Early Neighborhood
To Get a New, Up-Close Look***

Edwards Place, the mid-1800s Enos Park Italianate mansion between North Fourth and North Fifth Street in Springfield, has served both as a historic site and home to the Springfield Art Association since 1913.

The building is one of the last structural remnants of an upscale residential neighborhood that had once been the prime address of some of Springfield's most prominent families, businessmen, lawyers, politicians and more.

Constructed in 1833, it underwent several additions and renovations in its history in response to changes in fashion, occupancy and use. It remains the oldest house in Springfield on its original foundation.

The house sits on what was an 80 acre tract of federal land acquired by William Kelly—an early Springfield settler—who in 1823 paid \$1.25 an acre.

In June 1832, Kelly sold his acres to Thomas Houghan who constructed a brick story-and-a-half Greek revival dwelling, its footprint still discernable underneath the many subsequent additions to the house.

In June of 1843, Houghan sold his house and surrounding 15 acres to Benjamin S. Edwards for \$4,000. By the mid-1850s, the Edwards family was looking to upgrade their house to bring the exterior up to the latest style as well as refurbish the interior.

Benjamin Edwards was now in his late 30s, a highly successful attorney and an influential man in town. He wanted a home that reflected his social and professional status.

Plans for the remodel were drawn up by the architectural firm Boyington and Wheelock of Chicago, signifying the family's desire for high-style architecture. The Italianate villa they envisioned had a three-story tower in front and a large, circular staircase in the center of the house.

Edwards was the youngest son of Governor Ninian Edwards and brother-in-law of Mary Lincoln's sister Elizabeth. Their home became the site of lavish dinner parties, summer picnics and political rallies in the Lincoln era.

Unlike most of its nearby large residential counterparts that eventually met the wrecker's ball, the mansion--built in 1833, remodeled in 1857 and restored in 2015--continues to provide visitors with insight into the social and domestic life in Abraham Lincoln's Springfield, Illinois.

Edwards Place curator Sarah Adams will provide a new dimension on its history on Tuesday, February 20 when she shares with Sangamon County Historical Society members and guests her research on the family's neighbors and household help in a program that will offer additional depth and shape to life in one of the oldest neighborhoods in Springfield.

"Some of their stories are somewhat known, and some are barely recorded in history. All of these stories give a good idea of what the neighborhood looked and felt like in the mid-19th century in Springfield," says Adams, who holds a master's degree in Museum Studies from the University of Kansas and has worked in the museum field for more than a decade, focusing on history and anthropology collections.

Adams, secretary of the SCHS board, has a broad range of research interests including 19th century history, religious culture (she holds a bachelor of arts degree in Religious Studies from Western Illinois University) and historic foodways, examining how everyday habits influence and are influenced by the society in which we live. The presentation, free and open to the public, starts at 5:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Room, City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield.



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Please make note of our official mailing address:

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 Box 9744
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SCHS Holiday Party 2023



Food, fun and friendship turned out to be just the right mix when the Society held its annual Holiday Party on December 13 at Historic Edwards Place in Springfield. Surrounded by winning art works in the modern Gallery that bridges the historic home with the Springfield Art Association's offices and workshops, partygoers spent the evening dining on savory hors d'oeuvres and delicious desserts. Donned in period costumes, members of the Old Capitol Chorus provided holiday entertainment.

Words of welcome to the Edwards Place complex came from Sarah Adams, Curator of Collections and Interpretation (above, left). Adams, SCHS secretary, chaired the committee that planned this year's event that was rated a hit by all who attended. Committee members included Kathy Dehen and Lee-Ann Burgener. Past president Susan Helm created the lighted table centerpieces adding to the holiday spirit.

Photos by Ernie Slottag, Kathy Dehen

Diary Opens A Door to Illinois History ...And a Look at the Weather, Too!

It's not every day you can step back in time... down to the day...and the minute.

But that's what historian Curtis Mann will be doing on Tuesday, March 19 and you're invited to come along!

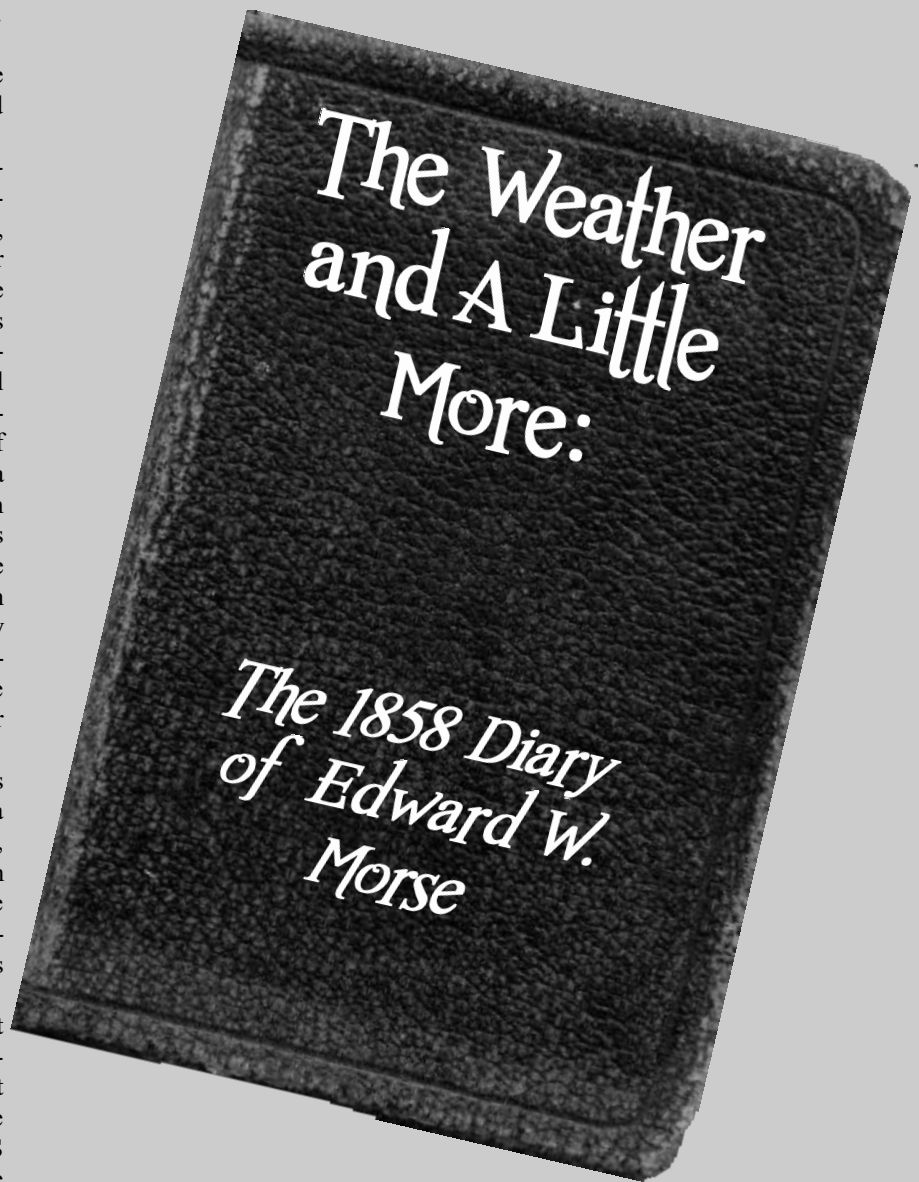
Mann, the recently retired head of the Sangamon Valley Collection at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, will be back in a familiar place, the Carnegie Room on the Library's first floor, for a Sangamon County Historical Society program discussing the life (and diary) of Edward W. Morse, a Springfield businessman who kept a diary of his daily activities while living in Springfield in 1856...and the daily weather. The free program begins at 5:30 p.m. and is open to the public as well as Society members and their guests.



Mann

“Morse's diary provides fascinating details about Springfield and his employment as a store clerk,” says Mann. “Later in the year, Morse begins a career as a traveling salesman and recounts his extensive trip selling medicine in southern Illinois,” providing an unusual first-hand man-in-the-street account of what life was like at a key time in history.

Mann, the city historian and author, has spent decades researching a variety of subjects relating to local, regional and state history. A past president of the Society, in June he became only the second person in the history of SCHS to be presented with the organization's Lifetime



There's Still Time to Donate to the Special Project Grants Fund!

It may be January, but it's never too late to make a donation to the Society's Special Projects Grant fund. Since 2013, the Society has funded grants to various not-for-profit groups and individuals needing assistance with dozens of diverse local history-related projects that because of their size or scope are usually ignored by larger funding organizations. In the past our Special Project Grants program has helped pay for reinstallation of the historic Leland 1860's Farm House summer kitchen, paid for repairs to damaged ceilings and walls in the 1908 former Ursuline Academy music conservatory, even historic signage in Clayville,

Rochester, Springfield and Williamsville to underscore the important role history plays in those communities. Covid halted our annual Trivia Night whose proceeds were specifically earmarked to fund the grant program. We hope to develop a new event that will provide continuous annual support for the Special Project Grants program. Until then, we ask for your financial help in underwriting this valuable program by making a specific donation for 2023 by February 1.

Checks in any amount can be made payable to SCHS Grants and mailed to SCHS at Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744.

Calendar

A Heads Up Guide to Area History 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 Pandemic on-site meeting shut-down, by going to the SCHS website, sangamonhistory.org.

Tuesday, January 16: The Story Behind Restoring Dana Thomas House. Springfield-based architect Mike Jackson who served as project manager for restoration of the iconic Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Dana Thomas House in Springfield, talks about the six-year historic preservation process and its challenges when he speaks to Sangamon County Historical Society members and guests in this program open to the public in the Carnegie Room, City of Springfield Library, 326 South Second Street, Springfield. **Time:** 5:30 p.m. Free and open to the public.

Tuesday, February 20: Meet the Neighbors and by that we mean the well-heeled neighbors and house staff of the Benjamin Edwards family that in the mid-1850s bought and revamped a home on what is now 700 Edwards Place to become a show-place and destination for Springfield's elite. Today it's a restored historic house owned and operated by the Springfield Art Association. Its curator, Sarah Adams, takes a closer-look at some of the neighbors and staff who added to the area's aura when she speaks to members of the Sangamon County Historical Society and their guests gathered at the Carnegie Room, City of Springfield Library, 326 South Second Street, Springfield. Free and open to the public. **Time:** 5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 19: The Weather and a Little More: The 1858 Diary of Edward W. Morse. Back in the days when jotting something down required paper, pencil or pen in hand, you could almost guarantee it might become a somewhat permanent record as opposed to today when that message-tapped on a PC or cell phone, can vanish in a keystroke. The old-fashioned approach gets a whole new dimension at the hands of historian Curtis Mann when he talks about the contents of an 1858 diary penned by a Springfielder who religiously recorded not only the daily weather but so much more. Don't

miss this slice of life report on what Mann learned when he speaks to Sangamon County Historical Society members and guests in a program in the Carnegie Room, City of Springfield Library, 326 South Second Street, Springfield. It's free and open to the public. **Time:** 5:30 p.m.



Friday, March 29 Victorian Game Night at Edwards Place This new fun event and Historic Edwards Place fundraiser will feature six stations of Victorian era card and dice games for people to learn and play. Some will be familiar to the modern person, like draw poker and a version of blackjack, and some may be entirely new, like Hazard and Whist. Prizes will be given to the top players! Tickets, at \$65 per person, include heavy hors d'oeuvres, beer, wine, and a signature cocktail, and the program. **Time:** 6:30 p.m.-10 p.m. Edwards Place is located at 700 North Fourth Street. For information, call 1-217-523-2631.

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Sangamon County Historical Society 2023-2024 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 living at the same address. Be sure to list their full 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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