



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

308 East Adams Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701 217-522-2500 www.sancohis.org

FEBRUARY 2010

On Track For February 16

When Rail Service Meant Real Service: A Look at the Interurban in Springfield

Most people don't remember when you could step out your front gate, wave down a commuter train on its way from Danville or Decatur and hop aboard to do a day's shopping in downtown Springfield...or take an overnighter to St. Louis.

Those were the days of the Illinois Traction System, a 550-mile electric interurban rail line that from 1895 through the mid 1950s, provided daily passenger service to thousands living and working in central, northern, and eastern Illinois. By the time it ceased operations in 1981, it had become a completely diesel powered freight-only service.

Railroad historian Dale Jenkins will talk about the origin, operation, and demise of this once bustling commuter and freight line, when he speaks and provides visuals for the Sangamon County Historical Society's next meeting on Tuesday, Feb-

ruary 16. The program will begin at 7 p.m. at the Lincoln Public Library, 326 Seventh Street, Springfield. Admission is free and is open to the public.

Jenkins, a Springfield native who now lives in Decatur, is founder and now president of the Illinois Traction Society, a group that is preserving the history of the Illinois Terminal Railroad and its predecessor lines including the Illinois Traction System that provided electric passenger and freight service to this area as well as steam-operated freight service. In his talk, he'll discuss its history and the role it played in Springfield.

Jenkins grew up about a block from the Illinois Traction System's Springfield terminal off Clear Lake Avenue and like



RAIL MAN Dale Jenkins.

(Continued on page 6)

INSIDE:

- From the President's Podium...2
- Three Named to Board3
- Member of the Month.....4
- Mystery Solved.....7
- Spring Meeting Schedule.....8

DEDICATION
February 9 at 10
a.m. for the
Lincoln
Funeral Train
Monument.



Details on page 3

NEXT MONTH

Topic: How Illinois Became A State.

Speaker: David Scott
Date: March 16 Time: 7 p.m.

**Location: Lincoln Public Library,
326 Seventh Street, Springfield**





Middle School Awards In Keeping With Society's Goals

We were pleased to present "awards" to the two middle school teachers who attended our meeting at the Chatham Library on January 19. Both awards reflected well the goals of the Society.

The Lincoln Magnet School history program has been active in local history projects at the Old State Capitol and the Illinois History Fair for several years. Their request to purchase more materials on local history to aid the students in their research was so appealing to the Board that they offered to donate Society publications to the school if they wanted them. Teacher Jodi Mitts is currently reviewing the Society's book list.

The Pleasant Plains Middle School request for funds was to print up some of the materials now in the archives at UIS on the Clayville project for students to utilize in their study of various aspects of the village. Clayville offers the opportunity for students to study local history, from many angles, and the Board was delighted to aid with that endeavor.

The Board is also planning to work with UIS to see if it is possible to furnish additional materials from the archives to the middle school students. We look forward to

working with additional middle schools in the future.

The 50th Anniversary of the Society will be marked in 2011 and we are pleased to announce that John Mack Faragher, author of *Sugar Creek*, Yale University Press, 1986, has agreed to come to speak at a commemoration of the event. *Sugar Creek* describes the settlement of southern Sangamon County from near Virden north along the creek to what is now Lake Springfield. Faragher's analysis of the social aspects of frontier life set a new standard for historical research.

Faragher's trip is the result of a combined invitation of the Society and UIS. The University is in the preliminary stages of planning a course on frontier studies around the visit, and we will be looking into similar programming to prepare for and/or enhance his visit. Jack Alexander initiated the contact and Vicki Megginson followed up and helped get everyone on the same page. Thanks to you both!

We welcome our three new Board members: Jim Beaumont, Donna Catlin and Don Springer!

Nancy

FEBRUARY REPORT

New Members

The Sangamon County Historical Society is pleased to add the following people to its membership ranks this month:

Robert and Janice Irwin
George R. Kennedy

Membership in the Sangamon County Historical Society is open to both individuals and families. Dues are \$17.50 per year for individuals, \$25 for a family, \$50 for a sustaining member. For Individual Life Membership, there is a one-time payment of \$250 and for Family Life Member, a one-time payment of \$400. For a membership form and/or additional information, contact the Society at 522-2500 or write to us at 308 East Adams Street, Springfield, IL 62701.



2009-2010 Officers Sangamon County Historical Society

President.....Nancy L. Chapin
Vice-President.....David Scott
Secretary.....Curtis Mann
Treasurer.....Paul R. Mueller

Directors to 2010

R-Lou Barker ♦ Elaine Birtch
Kim Efird ♦ Sue Wall ♦ Martha Wolters

Directors to 2011

Jack Alexander ♦ Connie Locher Bussard
John Huther ♦ Don Springer ♦ Jane Vetter

Directors to 2012

Tim Krell ♦ Vicki Megginson
Donna Catlin ♦ Roger Whitaker ♦ James H. Beaumont

Honorary Director

William Hughes Diller Jr.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS: *Finance:* Tim Krell; *Hospitality:* Jane Vetter; *Long Range Planning:* David Scott; *Membership:* Connie Bussard; *Nominating:* Phyllis Eubanks; *Program:* Jack Alexander; *Tours:* Susan Hammond; *Project Awards:* Elaine Birtch; *Publications:* John Huther, *Historico* editor: Vicky Whitaker.



PROJECTS ranging from buying books about Illinois and Sangamon County history for students at the Lincoln Magnet School to support their research for the Illinois History Fair to acquiring National Endowment for the Humanities reports on 19th Century Farming that will aid Pleasant Plains Elementary School sixth graders working on projects associated with the Pleasant Plains Historical Society's restoration of the Clayville and Broadwell Inn were awarded \$250 grants from the Society to support their efforts. Checks were presented to teachers from each school at a special ceremony January 19 at the Chatham Public Library, held prior to the Society's monthly program meeting. Society treasurer Paul Mueller (left) and Project Committee chair Elaine Birtch (right) share the moment with (from second left), Scott Morey, treasurer of the Pleasant Plains Historical Society, Pleasant Plains Sixth Grade Teacher Debbie Green, and Lincoln Magnet School teacher Jodi Mitts.

Three New Directors Named to Fill Posts on Society Board

Three area residents have been appointed directors of the Sangamon County Historical Society to fill vacancies on the board. They are James H. Beaumont and Don Springer, both of Springfield, and Donna Catlin of Sherman.

Beaumont, who retired as vice-president of the Illinois State Chamber of Commerce in 2002, has long ties to this area. Born and raised in Decatur, his father, James, was

born and raised in Springfield in a house on Eighth Street, south of the Lincoln Home.

A graduate of Colgate University in Hamilton, New York, Beaumont earned a master's degree in journalism from Columbia University in New York City, and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Following graduation

from Columbia, Beaumont worked as a reporter for the daily *Des Moines Register*, Iowa's largest newspaper, the first of what would be three separate vocations.

When a family friend's job offer provided an opportunity for him to move back to Decatur, he took it, even though it meant switching careers and going back to school--to Northwestern--to receive training as a stockbroker. Beaumont began his



Springer, Beaumont, Catlin

third career in 1972, this time as an Illinois State Chamber of Commerce exec, moving to Springfield with his wife, Mary, and children. Family members of the Society, today the Beaumonts have two married
(Continued on page 7)

City to Unveil Lincoln Funeral Train Monument Advanced by Katie Spindell

Sangamon County Historical Society members are invited to attend the official unveiling of the Lincoln Funeral Train Memorial Monument on Tuesday, February 9 on the west side of the Amtrak Station, Third Street and Washington.

The site marks the spot where the funeral train arrived in Springfield on May 3, 1865, ending a 14-day, 1,700 mile journey from Washington, D.C.

The ceremony will begin at 10 a.m., a change from the originally scheduled 11 a.m. start.

The three foot wide by five foot high black polished granite monument, was designed by Society member Katie Spindell, who led the effort to have some type of historic marker placed at the station that would show where the train made its final stop.

(Continued on page 5)



The Funeral Train Monument

Oak Ridge A Life's Inspiration for Society's Paul Mueller

As a boy, Paul Mueller wandered up and down the narrow paths and tree-lined roads of Oak Ridge Cemetery—steps away from his parent's home—frequently stopping to take a close look at the carvings on the old tombstones. For him, it was a first-hand lesson in history, one that has shaped not only his broader interests, but also his career.

"I always had a love for Oak Ridge and have been drawn to it throughout my life," says Mueller, who found himself even more focused on its history several years ago, after reading Floyd S. Barringer's book, *A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery* that was published by the Society in 1967. The book, he says, "really changed my life."

It inspired him to take one of the Society's Cemetery Walks in which "actors" and "actresses" dressed in costumes of the period, provide commentary and dialogue to what might otherwise be an ordinary tour. "To see hundreds of people attend the walks to learn more about the Cemetery and its inhabitants gave me great pleasure. I know that many of those people have come back to the Cemetery to learn more and enjoy the treasures that Oak Ridge holds, all because of the Society's outreach."

The book and the tours led Mueller to become a Society member, eventually taking a leading role in two of the walks before joining the board and in 2009, becoming its treasurer. The Society was unable to hold a Cemetery Walk this past year, but Mueller is confident its mission to tie the people of Sangamon County to its past, will find a new outlet.

Barringer's also book inspired Mueller to push for a memorial for the over 200 women and children displaced by the Civil War, who are buried at Oak Ridge. They were among orphans and indigent war widows brought by boat or train to Springfield and helped by the Home for the

Friendless, a charity that provided temporary quarters for the women and put the children put up for adoption. The Home for the Friendless, built in 1865 on the corner of South Grand and Eighth Street, ceased operations in 1904 and was razed in 1935. The organization that created the home eventually evolved into the Family



Service Center, today Springfield's oldest charity.

"It saddened me to think that the over 200 individuals buried in the area reserved for the Home for the Friendless did not have any individual memorialization. After reading about this in Dr. Barringer's book I found myself drawn back to the area again and again and I knew that something had to be done." Mueller brought the issue to the Cemetery's board of managers who were receptive to creating a proper memorial.

"Over the next two years, we formulated a plan to build a garden memorial

wall to the individuals. Muller enlisted historians and history buffs including William Furry, Tony Leone, William Crook, LuAnn Johnson, Polly Poskin, Nancy Chapin and others "to bring the project to completion." Work included doing research to identify the individuals buried in the area, creation of a brochure to explain what the project was about, and a fundraiser that allowed the community to underwrite it.

"I am still drawn back to the Home for the Friendless Memorial, but now I have peace, knowing these 200 individuals will not be forgotten. The project gave me a deeper understanding of our nation's history, but most of all I gained a lot of knowledge and understanding about our local history and how the community supported the Home throughout its history. That same spirit was evident as we asked for support to build the memorial wall." Born in Springfield, Mueller is a graduate of Ursuline Academy and received an associate's degree from Springfield College in Illinois before receiving a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of Illinois in Springfield. One of three children of Paul and Judy Mueller, he still has ties to Oak Ridge where he is employed as a cemetery assistant, helping families with pre-need and at-need arrangements.

As might be expected, when he's not out with his steady date Lisa Kounse, Mueller spends much of his leisure time reading or browsing through book stores, favoring tomes about local history by a wide range of authors and historians. He also creates stained glass works in his home studio. Some of his work is on sale at Mastodon State Park outside St. Louis, Missouri, to help support its Education Outreach Program.

Active in St. Joseph Catholic Church, Springfield, he serves as its coordinator for ushers and greeters and is on its Liturgy Committee. For the past eight years, he has also taught first grade religion classes to Catholic children attending public schools.

For Some Mystery Photos, A Mystery No Longer

When Janet Wilson saw a photo of her father, Fred Beck, playing with the Charlie Roger's band, she could hardly contain herself. "That's my dad," she said excitedly, her eyes lighting up as she asked for a copy of the shot, one of several Mercury Studio Collection photos on Society's Festival of Trees entry in November.

Wilson, chair of the Festival's volunteer committee, thought she could identify some of the other musicians in the shot too and followed it up a few days

later, when she provided the Society with additional names plus the probable location of the performance: the Elks Club.

Like others who have come forward to provide information in the Society's "Mystery Photo Contest," her name has been entered in the 2009-2010 competition that end with a drawing for a grand prize. The winner will be announced in May.

The photos are part of hundreds needing IDs in the Mercury Studio Collection

housed at the Lincoln Public Library's Sangamon Valley Collection. New photos are posted each week on the Society's website, www.sanchohist.org and monthly in *Historico*. If you can identify any of the photos (there's an on-line archive of the ones that have been posted so far), send the information to research@sanchohis.org.

Below are some that have been identified in full or partially. See the newest photo on the back page.



A. Jan Wilson believes this photo was taken at the Elks Club. That's Mort Oberman on bass, Ben Drake on piano, and sax players Fred Beck (her dad), third from right, Frank Metzger, (second from right) and Frankie Romano (right).

B. Connie Sebok made some IDs for this Girl Scout ceremony photo taken at the West Grand School: Susan Schoenrock (second row, second from left), Norma Jean Goddard (third row, left), Pamela Goddard (fifth from right, second row), with principal Amy Smith standing behind her, and to her right, Evelyn Schoenrock.

C. R-Lou Barker and Kathy Stelling helped solve this photo mystery. Both identified the man at right as Scott McDonald, with the sales department of Barker-Lubin Company. Stelling believes the man in the plaid shirt is Maurice Dullenty, a draftsman with Barker-Lubin.

D. After seeing the photo, Tim Krell contacted Doug Nevitt, one of his former co-workers at Firehouse No. 10, who is in the photo. Krell says it's a photo of the Rookie Class of 1967. In the back row (from left), is Cliff Garst, Training Chief Bernard "Bunny" Phillips, Larry Yokem, and Bill Earl. In the front row, from left, are Nevitt, Russ Steil, and Mike Flynn.

WATCH FOR MORE MYSTERY PHOTO IDS NEXT MONTH!

Lincoln Funeral Train Memorial to be Unveiled February 9. You're Invited to Attend!

(Continued from page 3)

Spindell, a member of the board of the city's International Visitors Commission, has for the past several years provided tourists and dignitaries with information about Springfield. She frequently found herself being asked about the location of the funeral train arrival site at what is now the Amtrak station.

"Over the years, thousands--and I do mean thousands--of tourists asked me where the funeral train arrived and were disappointed to discover it wasn't designated with some type of monument or marker," said Spindell.

The Lincoln Funeral Train attracted eight to 10 million mourners along its route from Washington D.C. through Maryland, Pennsylvania, New

York, Ohio, Indiana, and into Illinois. Markers and memorials along the route can be found in every state.

The Springfield monument includes an etched illustration of the Chicago & Alton railroad Engine 58 that pulled the funeral car from Union Station in Chicago to Springfield. Engine 58 was draped with flags intertwined with crepe and bunting and other symbols of

mourning. Illinois artist Elizabeth Mattingly Thacker hand etched the drawing onto the monument's granite base.

Spindell, who spent months researching the funeral train's route, had sought a memorial that she said would be "elegant, simple, dramatic, and somber." The monument was installed at the site in December, awaiting for its unveiling on February 9.

Rail Historian to Eye Springfield's Role In Once Popular Commuter Rail Service

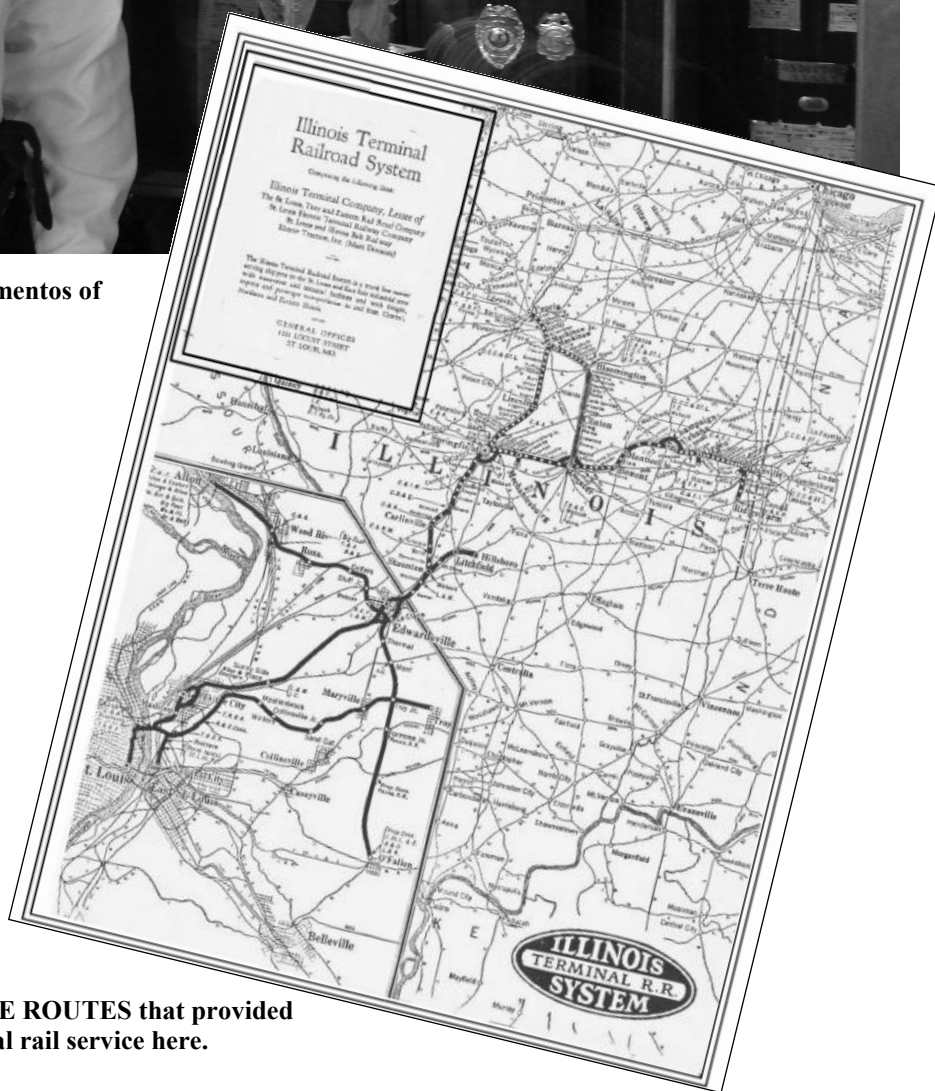


INTERURBAN GURU Dan Jenkins with momentos of his railroad years.

(Continued from page 1)

many youngsters, was drawn to the tracks to watch the trains go by. After graduating from high school, he went to work for the Illinois Terminal Railroad, his career with it and its successor, Norfolk Southern, spanning 40 years, 37 of them with the line's police department.

He and his wife Judy are volunteers at the Monticello Railway Museum which features displays of rail cars and other equipment as well as steam-powered train rides on weekends and holidays from May through October. Though he normally serves as a conductor, Jenkins and his wife both hold steam locomotive engineer licenses.



THE ROUTES that provided local rail service here.

Three Take Seats On Society Board of Directors

(Continued from page 3)

sons and five grandchildren.

In 1994, he was named outstanding chamber executive of the year by the Illinois Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives. The award recognized long-term professional career achievements of the candidate including experience, training and education, and service to IACCE and other professional organizations.

A self-admitted history buff, he is particularly interested in the Civil War Era, his desire to learn more piqued by a course he took at UIS taught by the late Phillip S. Paludan, a leading authority on the life and presidency of Abraham Lincoln. "I was fortunate to take Dr. Paludan's course on the Civil War Era as a senior learner at UIS the last time he taught it, and I'm still reading books to follow up on topics raised in that

class."

Beaumont will serve as a director until 2012, filling what remains of a three year term vacated by Bill Minder.

Springer, a descendant of the famed Donner family of Springfield, whose ill-fated journey west 164 years ago, has become an integral part of the history of America's western migration, has been a Life Member of the Society since 1966 and has previously served on the board.

Abraham Lincoln lived across the street from Springer's great-great grandfather, the Reverend Francis Springer, who founded both Trinity Lutheran and Grace Lutheran churches in Springfield and was the city's first superintendent of schools.

Springer will be discussing the Donner Family's *Trials of the Pioneer Trail*,

1846 as guest speaker at the Society's April 20 program-meeting.

Springer is currently a director of the Center for American Archeology and is a member of Sons of the American Revolution. He is also a member of the American Business Club, the Springfield Film Commission, and the University of Illinois Foundation. He and his wife Karen have two children, a daughter, Paula, and a son, Douglas.

A financial advisor with Edward Jones, Springfield, he has been in the field for 36 years and is a founder and charter president of the Illinois Securities Industry Association.

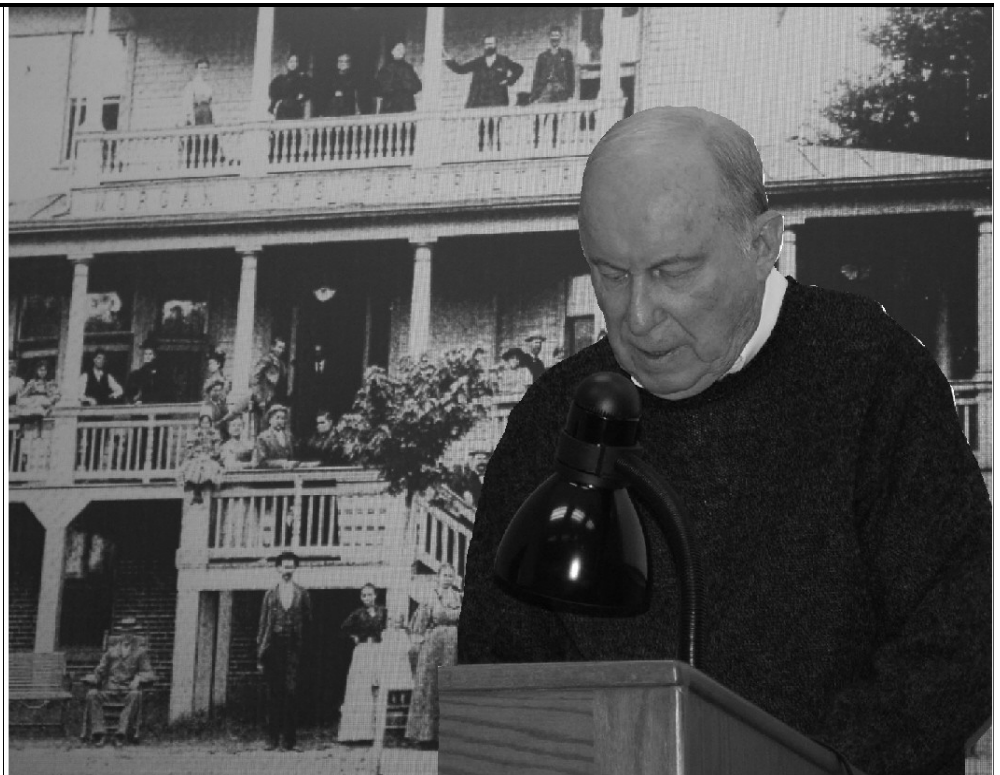
His hobbies include travel, hunting, and bridge.

Springer will serve as a director until 2011, filling what remains of a two year term previously held by Jack Nevins.

A native of Springfield, Catlin was raised in Sherman, attending local schools there and in Williamsville before marrying in 1961 and moving to Normal, Illinois. Before moving back to Sherman 20 years ago, she and her husband Carl, a career Navy man, traveled extensively around the world and lived in several states. But her love of local and Sangamon County history never left, says Catlin. When she returned home, Catlin began what she describes as "my quest to find what history I could for the growing village of Sherman," a time-consuming project. Acknowledging her work, the community's village board and mayor have designated Catlin the honorary "Sherman Historian."

Catlin will serve until 2012, completing the three year term previously filled by Sarah Thomas.

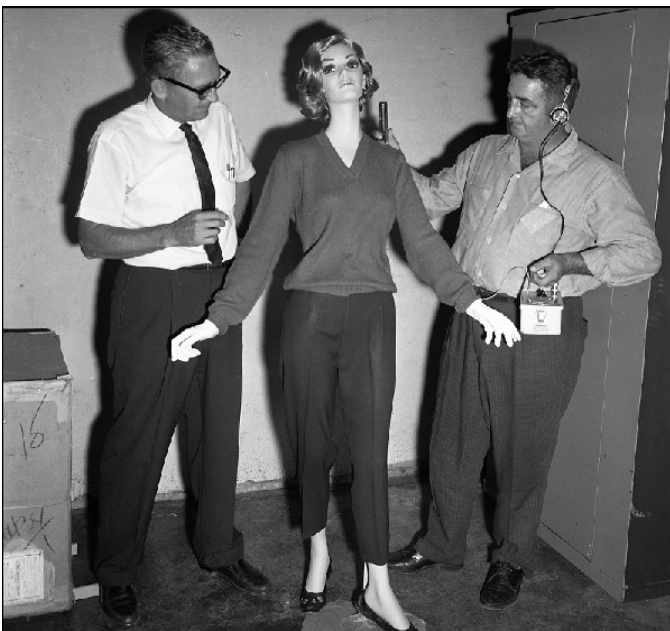
WATER WHIZ: Retired groundwater geologist Phillip C. Reed shared both geological and historical knowledge with the Society last month when he detailed how the state's springs and licks helped shape its social, political, and economic development including its most prominent historical figure, Abraham Lincoln who is said to have tasted the mineral water at Rock Springs. The session, held at the Chatham Public Library, included a power-point show with this photo of the Washington Mineral Springs Hotel in Okawville, Illinois, circa 1896, one of several resorts built to draw those who sought health benefits from mineral springs. In the early 1900s, visitors also sipped mineral water from a flowing well at Washington Park in Springfield. A prolific author, Reed's most recent work is "*Spring Place Names and Historic Data on Springs, Licks, and Selected Water Wells in Illinois*" published in 2009.



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Can You ID This Month's Mystery Photo?



**MEN AND MANNE-
QUIN:** Can you identify the men in this Mercury Collection photo? The photo was snapped on October 7, 1965 and is believed to be part of a Civil Defense exercise. Send your info to research@sancohis.org. You could win a prize! (See page 5).

2010 Meeting Calendar

Monthly Programs

(Third Tuesday)

February 16

Remembering the Interurban

Speaker: Dale Jenkins

March 16

How Illinois Became A State

Speaker: David Scott

April 20

Springfield's Donner Family: Trials of the Pioneer Trail, 1846

Speaker: Don Springer

May 18

Governors and Gangsters

Speaker: Taylor Pensoneau

June 17

2010 Board Meetings

February 10 March 10

April 14 May 12