



# HISTORICO

*Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter*

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744, Phone: 217-525-1961, e-mail: schsoffice@gmail.com web: [www.sangamonhistory.org](http://www.sangamonhistory.org), [SangamonLink.org](http://SangamonLink.org)

VOLUME 54 NO. 7

SEPTEMBER 2018

## Cemetery Symbols Expert to Share Her Savvy As Society Readies Its Annual Oak Ridge Walk

The Sangamon County Historical Society kicks off its fall season with a triple play, all tied to the 200th anniversary of the State of Illinois.

Archaeologist Dawn Cobb taps into the gravestone monuments and motifs you'll be seeing on the Society's annual Oak Ridge Cemetery walk in October with a visual presentation on Tuesday, September 18 in Carnegie Room North at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library starting at 5:30 p.m. The meeting is free and open to the public.

Cobb, director of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources' Cultural Resource Management Program since 2016, is co-author of *Cemeteries of Illinois: A Field Guide to Markers, Monuments and Motifs*.

She and her co-author Hal Hassen, who directed the Cultural Resource Management Program from 1990 to 2015, assembled nearly 300 photos for the book that has become a handy guide for amateur genealogists, historians, and cemetery buffs seeking to decipher and understand the historical trends associated with the symbols on gravestones and markers.

"We thought this would be an ideal way to broaden our historical understanding of what we will be seeing at the Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk in October," noted Mary Alice Davis, SCHS program co-chair and coordinator of the Oak Ridge event to be held on Sun-

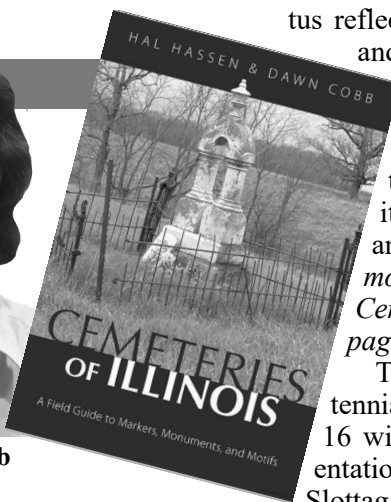
day, October 14. tennial Event focusing on individuals with a tie to the development of Springfield and Sangamon County."

More than 10,000 area residents and visitors have participated in the Society's annual Oak Ridge Walk since its inception in 1996. After a hiatus reflecting cemetery internal policy and administrative changes, the popular historical walk was revived in 2015 by Davis when she became president of the Society. She has served as its chair since then, overseeing an 11-member committee. (For more about the work of the Cemetery Walk Committee, see page 6).

The Society picks up the Bicentennial thread on Tuesday, October 16 with a special Powerpoint presentation by Society member Ernie Slottag on the *History of Transportation in Springfield: From Horse and Buggy to High Speed Rail*. The presentation is part of the Springfield Illinois Bicentennial Coordinating Committee Town Hall series. (See page 3 for details).

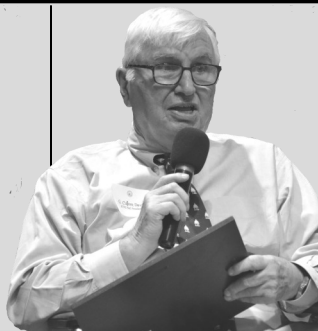


**Dawn Cobb**



### INSIDE:

- From the President's Desk.....2
- Horse & Buggy to High Speed Rail.....3
- Cemetery Walk: Behind the Scenes.....6
- Summer Museum Tour a Hit.....7



HISTORIAN and educator G. Cullom Davis (left) was presented with the Society's first Lifetime Achievement Award at the organization's annual meeting in June. More about the honor, Society election results and Special Project grants on pages 4 & 5.



## For Society, a Busy Summer and an Even Busier Fall

Normally, July and August usually provide a respite from the Society's monthly program schedule but it doesn't mean we won't take advantage of a special opportunity or aren't busy at work. You'll be seeing the fruits of the latter labor beginning this month with the start of a head-spinning fall line-up of programs and activities.

But first, let me thank Erika Holst, assistant curator of Decorative Arts at the Illinois State Museum, for offering, hosting and leading an exclusive members-only tour of the new *Bicentennial and Beyond: Illinois Legacy Collection* exhibit in July. It was a terrific opportunity to see part of the Museum's vast collection and hear the back-story behind each item in the display in its historical context. I know it whetted our appetite for another look and fortunately, the exhibit will be up through February. Don't miss it.

### Advancing Oral History

We were delighted to honor educator and oral history advocate G. Cullom Davis at our annual dinner in June. It also marked the start of what we see as a long-term effort to re-establish a Sangamon County oral history program under the wing of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum's Oral History program. To that end, I have tapped our newly elected vice-president, Angie Weiss, to head its development and ask each of you to consider participating in what will be a "Community Archivist" project with long-term significance.

This fall, working with ALPLM Oral History director and Society member Mark DePue, we will be developing and distributing material to all our members that will help them determine whether they have the time, skills and interest in being trained to do the research, interviews, transcription or editing involved in being part of the oral history project in advance of training that will begin in early 2019. This is a long-

term project for the Society in much the same way as our extremely successful *SangamonLink.org* on-line and searchable encyclopedia of Sangamon County history edited by Mike Kienzler. Both are the types of projects that in the age of new media, truly fulfill our mission to preserve and promote county history. We hope you will consider being part of this newest effort.

### Gateway to Busy Season

September's program is a natural gateway to the Society's annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk on Sunday, October 14, an effort whose planning involves a group of hard working volunteers. You can read more about them on page 6. October will put our focus on the history of transportation here, compiled by member Ernie Slottag into a fascinating Powerpoint presentation that's both a regular Society monthly program and part of the Illinois Bicentennial's Town Hall program. Don't miss it!

We'll be announcing our November program next month (it's in the works) and some of the line-up for the rest of the year and into 2019. The Society is also playing an active role in the planning of the annual Festival of Trees, an official State Bicentennial Event that will celebrate the Lincoln to Victorian era period in Illinois history. One of our past-presidents and former State Librarian, Kathryn Harris, is honorary chair of this year's event and several Society members are also deeply involved in advisory roles to Memorial's Festival committee.

As it has for several years, the Society will also decorate a tree for the regional charity event that draws nearly 40,000 visitors to the Orr Building on the State Fair grounds from November 17 through November 25.

*Vicky Whitaker*



**Historico**, published 10 times a year (except July & December), is the official bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. *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](http://www.sangamohistory.org) or [sancohis.org](http://sancohis.org). Send event announcements to [historicoeditor@gmail.com](mailto:historicoeditor@gmail.com).  
Vicky Whitaker, **Historico** Editor, Photos by Kathy Dehen, Larry Stone

***Society's Contribution to Bicentennial Lineup***

**How We Got From There to Here:  
October to Focus on Transportation**

No story about the growth of Central Illinois from a frontier backwater to a modern center of government, commerce and industry can be told without looking at one of the prime forces that spawned its development: transportation.

Society member Ernie Slottag has made that his challenge for the past several months, researching and developing a pictorial look at how new inventions and transportation services transformed Sangamon County and Central Illinois over the last 200 years.

Slottag's Powerpoint presentation, on Tuesday, October 16, begins at 5:30 p.m. in Carnegie Room North at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library and is free and open to the public. The program, part of the Society's regularly scheduled monthly offerings, is also



part of the Springfield Bicentennial Town Hall lecture series that began in February and concludes in November.

"Transportation has always been a major player in the course of how Sangamon County and Springfield developed," says Slottag, a long-time Springfield resident who, prior to his retirement, served as the city's public information chief through several administrations. "But it has been fascinating looking back at both records, maps and old photos that really bring home

the dramatic changes modes of transportation have had on the community."

Among his finds as he searched through local records and materials in the Sangamon Valley Room at the city of Springfield's Lincoln Library, were records of a patent granted to no other than Springfield's most famous citizen, Abraham Lincoln, who invented a bellows system to lift flat bottom boats over shoals and river obstructions. At the time, flat bottom boats

were used transport farm products.

Slottag's talk will look at the impact rail service had here, early motor cars and the post WWII boom in highway and aviation transportation that helped spawn the growth of suburbia here and across America.

"We will continue to see changes, of that I have no doubt," says Slottag. "But if we want to know where we're going, it's important to know how we got from there to here."



**OFFICERS**

President.....Vicky Whitaker  
Vice-President.....Angela Weiss  
Secretary.....Kathy Dehen  
Treasurer.....Jerry Smith  
Past-President.....Ruth Slottag

**DIRECTORS**

**Term Ending 2019**

Jennie Battles  
Elaine Hoff  
Mary Mucciante  
Mary Schaefer  
Larry Stone

**Term Ending 2020**

Peter Harbison  
Sue Helm  
Stephanie Martin  
Eugene Walker  
Roger Whitaker

**Term Ending 2021**

Mary Alice Davis  
Kathy Hoffmann  
Sue Massie  
Doug Polite

**Committee Chairs**

**Governmental/Community Affairs:** Ruth Slottag  
**Legal:** Bruce Beeman  
**Finance:** Doug Polite, Larry Stone  
**Membership:** Stephanie Martin, Peter Harbison  
**Nominating:** Mary Alice Davis  
**Hospitality:** Marion Leach  
**Publicity/Marketing:** Ruth Slottag, Susan Helm  
**Oral History Project:** Angela Weiss  
**Publications:** Roger Whitaker  
**Programs/Special Events:** Mary Alice Davis, Vicky Whitaker  
**Social Media Chair:** Mary Schaefer  
**Special Projects:** Elaine Hoff

**Staff**

Mike Kienzler, [SangamonLink.org](http://SangamonLink.org) Editor

**SEPTEMBER 2018 MEMBERSHIP & DONOR REPORT**

*The Society is pleased to welcome new members:* Andy Wasilewski, Roy Wehrle, Vonnie Hinesley, Roselyn Wollis, Joanne Willard, James Theis, Ruth Ann Theis, and Ann Kramer.

*We expresses appreciation to the following for donations to the Society:* Kathryn Harris, Perry Hall, Linda Garvert, Claudia Pecori, Sandra Pecori, Tri-City Public Library District, and Janine Toman.

Please make note of our official mailing address:

**SCHS**  
**Box 9744**  
**Springfield, Illinois,**  
**62791-9744**

# Honoring A Lifetime Saving Local History



**FRIENDS, FAMILY AND WELL-WISHERS** gather around G. Cullom Davis at the Sangamon County Historical Society's annual dinner which he received its first Lifetime Achievement Award.

Emotions ran high as nearly 100 members of the Sangamon County Historical Society gathered on June 19 to pay tribute to G. Cullom Davis, whose pioneering efforts in the area of collecting oral history, spawned universal praise as well as careers and programs reaching far beyond Central Illinois. The event was held at historic Westminster Presbyterian Church in Springfield.

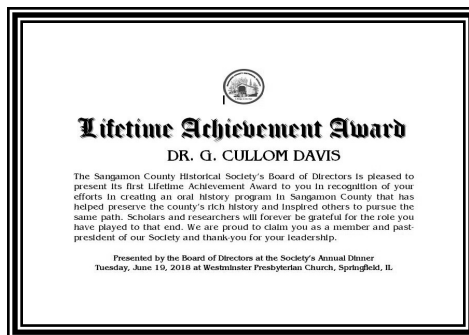
Dr. Davis, who served as president of the Society from 1991-1992, received its first Lifetime Achievement Award and a commitment by the Society to develop a volunteer corps of community archivists to continue his work.

Starting in 2019, the Society will be working with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library to provide formal training to SCHS members interested in becoming interviewers, transcribers or oral history editors, the initial step in developing a full-scale county-wide effort. To that end, in one of her first acts as president, Vicky Whitaker has named vice-president Angie Weiss to coordi-

nate the Society's new Oral History program in conjunction with ALPLM.

Dr. Davis created an oral history program at Sangamon State University (now the University of Illinois at Springfield) in the 1970s. Now retired, his early efforts continue to provide an invaluable tool for researchers and others, enabling them to listen to first-hand accounts and recollections of people who served or participated in activities, events, or decisions that helped shape Sangamon County. The recorded interviews made by the students he trained and the accompanying transcripts are available on-line through the Brookens Library at UIS. The scope of the ALPLM oral history program is much broader than Sangamon County.

Mark DePue, director of the ALPLM Oral History program was among a trio of speakers who talked about the importance of oral history and Dr. Davis's contribution to it as part of the presentation. Illinois State Historical Society executive director William Furry and Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission executive director John Lupton shared the podium to praise Davis's effort. In addition to a plaque, Dr. and Mrs. Cullom were awarded Life Membership in the Society.



**SPEAKERS Furry, Lupton, and DePue** shared the podium.

**PRESIDENTIAL GREETINGS;** Former SCHS presidents Kathryn Harris (left) and Taylor Pensoneau (center) were among more than a dozen past presidents of the Society attending this year's annual dinner that saluted one of their own. Honoree G. Cullom Davis was president from 1991 to 1992. The annual dinner also marked the fifty-seventh year since the Society was founded in 1961. In her remarks at the dinner as she ended her term as president, Ruth Slottag noted that the Society now has nearly 700 members and is continuing to grow.



## Society Elects Officers, Board; Awards Grants

By a unanimous vote, members of the Sangamon County Historical Society elected new officers and directors at the organization's annual dinner meeting held June 19 at historic Westminister Presbyterian Church in Springfield.

Officers who will serve one year-terms on the executive committee through June 2019 are Vicky Whitaker, president, Angie Weiss, vice-president, Kathy Dehen, secretary, Jerry Smith, treasurer, and Ruth Slottag, past-president.

Whitaker previously served as vice-president.

Weiss was a director of the Society. Dehen and Smith were re-elected to their previous positions.

Elected to fill three-year vacancies on the board ending in 2021 were: Sue Massie, Doug Polite, Mary Alice Davis, and Kathy Hoffman. Roger Whitaker was elected to serve a two-year term and Larry Stone, a one-year term.

Stone joins four other board members whose terms end in 2019: Jennie Battles, Elaine Hoff, Mary Mucciante, and Mary Schaefer.

Whitaker becomes the fifth member of part of the board

whose terms end in 2020. They are Peter Harbison, Sue Helm, Stephanie Martin, and Eugene Walker.

The annual meeting also saw the announcement and presentation of winners of this year's Special Project Grants that award up to \$1,000 for individual or group history projects.

Special Project Awards went to Sarah Jones (\$1,000) to digitize and thus preserve blueprints of the Sacred Heart Chapel (1895) and the Ursula Hall Music Conservatory (1895) designed by William Conway, Springfield's first architect; the

Rochester Historic Preservation Society (\$500) for signage at the Rochester Historic Park; Oak Hill Cemetery,

Clear Lake (\$500) for a Donner Party memorial plaque and landscaping; and the Rochester Sesquicentennial Committee (\$500) for a plaque marking the grave of Rochester's first settler, James McCoy who is buried in the 1800s pioneer section of the Rochester Township Cemetery.

The awards were announced by Elaine Hoff, chair of the Society's Special Project Grants Committee.

**ON BOARD FOR 2018-2019:** Nearly a full complement of Society officers and board attended the annual meeting. Back row (from left): board members Sue Massie, Sue Helm, Eugene Walker, Roger Whitaker, Kathy Hoffmann, Stephanie Martin, Peter Harbinger, Mary Mucciante, Doug Polite, Jennie Battles, and Mary Schaeffer. Front row, (from left): board member Elaine Hoff, past-president Ruth Slottag, president Vicky Whitaker, vice-president Angie Weiss, treasurer Jerry Smith, secretary Kathy Dehen, and board member Mary Alice Davis. Board member Larry Stone was out-of-state.



## Taking a Walk No Simple Task: Just Ask The Committee

Going for a walk has a different meaning to Mary Alice Davis, chair of the Society's annual *Echoes of Yesterday* Walk through Oak Ridge Cemetery for the fourth year in a row.

"It's always a challenge" she says of the complex operation that looks oh-so-easy-to-put-together...but is just the opposite.

"It takes time and a lot of planning," says Davis, who heads a committee of more than a dozen other Sangamon County Historical Society volunteers who spend months fine-tuning the event. Each brings to the committee specific skills, knowledge, and experience in handling anything from writing scripts to parking cars.

"I've worn out a pair of walking shoes in the process," she says of the free, public event on October 14 that this year will have stops at burial sites of seven historically important Sangamon County residents that reflect the state's 200th Bicentennial. The tour has been designated an official Illinois State Bicentennial event, which means it is being promoted across Illinois and beyond.

Oak Ridge is the second most visited national cemetery in the Nation, surpassed only by Arlington in Washington D.C.

### Choosing Sites a Challenge

"You can't just pick and choose where the stops will be by looking at a map," Davis explains. "Oak Ridge covers some 365 acres of flat ground, wooded areas, and rolling hills, and we have to take into consideration walking distance and timing. While we provide transportation to the start of the tour, there is a some walking in between, so we think carefully about both the route and distance visitors will have to travel to see everything from start to finish."

The Walk will run from Noon to 4 p.m., with the last tour starting at 3:15

p.m. As it did last year, the reproduction of Lincoln's funeral hearse will be on display at the site, courtesy of P.J. Stabb Funeral Home. (The original was destroyed by fire in 1887 and faithfully reproduced by Stabb for the Lincoln Funeral Reenactment in May 2015 on the 150th anniversary of the President's funeral).

### Workshop View

"Some committee members recently had a chance to stop at the Stabb workshop to watch a team of skilled craftsman refresh some of the fittings on the horse-drawn hearse that the

State Historical Society and the Illinois Colored History Society; Catharine Bergen Jones (1817-1915) who cast her first vote (in support of liquor prohibition) in 1914 at age 97, the first time women in Illinois were allowed to cast ballots in municipal elections; John Kelly (1783-1823), the first settler of Springfield; Carrie (Caroline Lathrop) Post (1824-1914) for whom the King's Daughters Home in Springfield was named; Catharine Frazee Lindsay (1848-1922), mother of poet Vachel Lindsay; and Moses Broadwell (1764-1827), founder of Clayville.



**ON SITE: Committee members must go on-site at Oak Ridge Cemetery to plan annual Cemetery Tour route. The October 14 tour is an official State Bicentennial**

Stabbs so generously put on display at the Walk and other significant sites," Davis added.

### Seven Stops Set

This year, there will be seven stops along the Cemetery Walk route, each at the grave of a prominent figure in State history who will be portrayed by a re-enactor in period garb. For this special Bicentennial event, the committee selected the burial sites of Lincoln's first law partner, John Todd Stuart (1807-1895); civic leader Martha Hicklin (1838-1922), board member and treasurer of the Lincoln Colored Home and a member of the Illinois

In addition to Davis, the Committee is composed of Mike Lelys, executive director of Oak Ridge; Curtis Mann, sites; Mike Kienzler, scripts; Jennie Battles, volunteers; Ruth Slottag publicity; Susan Helm and Elaine Hoff, buses; Linda Schneider, re-enactor recruitment; Ernie Slottag, communications; Terry Castleman, florist; Jerry Smith, logistics; and Larry Stone and Peter Harbinson, parking and logistics.

"It is a wonderful team," says Davis, "but it doesn't stop there. In addition to the planning group, as the event draws closer, we also seek volunteers from the Society who can help on the day of the event in a variety of ways. At least one volunteer is assigned to each site to assist the re-enactors and for crowd control."

And, she notes, "We also need volunteers to assist at table sites at the start of the walk and to do other tasks as needed."

You can volunteer by e-mail at [schsoffice@gmail.com](mailto:schsoffice@gmail.com) or by calling the Society at 525-1961.



**CLOSE UP LOOK:** In a private, guided evening tour for Sangamon County Historical Society members on July 10, Illinois State Museum Assistant Curator of Decorative Arts detailed her choices for the Museum's new wide-ranging *Bicentennial and Beyond: Illinois Legacy Collection* exhibit. Some 60 SCHS members signed up for the event that included viewing rarely seen art works, furnishings, flags, clothing, and memorabilia from the institution's collection of more than 13 million items.



## On the Calendar

### PROGRAMS

**Tuesday, September 18: "Markers, Monuments & Motifs."** Archaeologist and author Dawn Cobb provides a prep guide to the Society's annual Oak Ridge Cemetery walk coming up October 14 in this Sangamon County Historical Society fall meeting season kick-off presentation, 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street. Free. by an expert on Illinois cemeteries. Free.

**Tuesday, September 25: *The Displaced Persons Act of 1948: Local, National & International Context.*** Loyola University professor Robert Vitas, local author Sandy Baksys, University of Illinois-Springfield assistant professor Devin Hunter, and UIS associate professor Heather Bailey look at the impact of the DPA as it marks its 70th anniversary, 6:30 p.m., UIS Brookens Auditorium. Free. For information: [uis.edu/speakersseries/events/](http://uis.edu/speakersseries/events/).

**Tuesday, October 16: *The History of Transportation in Sangamon County.*** The Sangamon County Historical Society's contribution to the Springfield Bicentennial Town Hall series provides a fresh look at how changes in transportation have shaped how we live today. Ernie Slottag narrates this Powerpoint presentation loaded with rarely seen photos of how we got from there to here. 5:30 p.m., Carnegie Room North, City of Springfield's Lincoln Library. Free.



### SPECIAL EVENTS

**Saturday, October 6: *History Happy Hour: Rum.*** Historic Edwards Place hosts this fund-raiser tasting session featuring premium rums from Central/South America and the Caribbean, made by expert distillers to be sipped and enjoyed. The ticket price includes tasting and desserts. 7 p.m., at Edwards Place, 700 North Fourth Street, Springfield operated by the Springfield Art Association. Tickets \$35 per person, \$30 for SAA members. For information, see [collections@springfieldart.org](mailto:collections@springfieldart.org) or call 217-523-2631.

**Sunday, October 14: *Sangamon County Historical Society Annual "Echoes of Yesteryear" Walking Tour of Oak Ridge Cemetery,*** Noon to 4 p.m. (last tour begins at 3:15 p.m.). Free but a free-will offering will be accepted.

**October Friday, October 19 & Saturday, October 20: *Edwards Place Murder Mystery.*** Get ready for another who-dun-it at Edwards Place in this murder mystery that combines dinner and entertainment in the historic home operated by the Springfield Art Association. Tickets, at \$45 per person, go on sale to the public September 17, earlier and \$40 per person if you're an SAA member., For information, go to [collections@springfieldart.org](mailto:collections@springfieldart.org) or call 217-523-2631. (Repeated Friday, October 26 & Saturday, October 27).

### EXHIBITS

**Now Through February 3, 2019: *Bicentennial and Beyond: Illinois Legacy Collection.*** Take a journey through 200 years of Illinois history at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield. The exhibit features rare and rarely seen artifacts from the museum's collection of more than 13 million items. For hours, fees and information see [illinoisstatemuseum.org](http://illinoisstatemuseum.org).



**Now Through February, 2019: *1908 Race Riot.*** Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield. For hours and information, call 391-6323.

**Ongoing: *Early African American Pioneers of Central Illinois.*** Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield. The exhibit explores and illuminates African American families who moved to Central Illinois in the 1800s and who still have descendants in Springfield. No charge but donations are welcome. For hours and information, call 391-6323.

**Sangamon County Historical Society**

P.O. Box 9744,  
Springfield, IL 62791-9744  
Return Service Requested

Non-profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 777  
Springfield, Illinois

**Sangamon County Historical Society MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form**

Mail this form with your check to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. You may also join or renew on line by going to [sangamonhistory.org](http://sangamonhistory.org). Our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31. All memberships — except Business/Corporate and college/university students — cover adults and children 16 and over at the same address. Be sure to include their names.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_



**Status**

\_\_\_ New Member

\_\_\_ Renewal

\_\_\_ 2018-2019 GIFT of Membership from:

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**2018-2019 Membership Levels**

Except for business and college/university student membership, all levels listed below cover adults and children 16 and over *living at the same address*. **Please list their names in the space below.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- Regular Membership - \$30
- Pioneer Level - \$100
- Trailblazer Level - \$500
- College/University Student (individual) -\$20.
- Settlers Level - \$250
- Lifetime Membership - \$700 (one time fee)

I am adding a donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

Business / Corporate Membership - \$200