



Historico

The newsletter of the Sangamon County Historical Society
 308 E. Adams Street, Springfield, IL 62701
 www.sancohis.org 217.522.2500

December, '06/ January, 07

Officers

President

Taylor Pensoneau

Vice President

Carolyn Moore

Past President

Dr. Virgilio Pilapil

Secretary

Sally Cadagin

Treasurer

Nancy Chapin

Directors

Directors to 2007

R-Lou Barker

John Huther

Janice Petterchak

Mary Jo Potter

Gary Vitale

Directors to 2008

Carol Andrews

David Brady

Phyllis Brissenden

Robert Davis

Carolyn Oxtoby

Directors to 2009

Jack Billington

Dan Buck

Al Eck, Jr.

Susan Hammond

Steve Leonard

Honorary Director

William Hughes Diller, Jr.

Committee Chairmen

Book Sales

Sue Wall

Constitution & Bylaws

Curtis Mann

Finance

John Huther

Historico Editor

Nancy Chapin

Membership

Carolyn Moore

Nominations

Dr. Virgilio R. Pilapil

Programs

Taylor Pensoneau

Project Awards

Dr. Virgilio R. Pilapil

Publications

John Huther

Publicity

Janice Petterchak

Web-

master

Special event for members only:

History for the Holidays

Governor Yates house

1190 Williams Blvd.

Springfield

December 20, 6:00—8:00 PM

Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres

Reservations and a **\$5.00 donation** needed

Governor Richard Yates, Jr. served as governor of Illinois from 1901 – 1905, and then served in Congress for seven consecutive terms.

The house was built in 1905 by Col. James Culver, and his Culver Marble & Stone Company which had a reputation "of being the best stone mill in the Middle West, being equipped with a 30-ton electric traveling crane, a 10-ton locomotive crane, saws, planners, and lathes, and including in separate buildings complete blacksmith, carpenter, paint and steam-fitting shops, stores, etc. The Culver Company did general contracting in all classes of construction and many big jobs in Springfield and all through this territory bear its name."

The governor's house has been painstakingly restored by Jon and Pinky Noll to its original magnificence, and we are grateful to them for hosting this special evening.

Reservations deadline December 12th, see form p.6

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>History for the Holidays</i>	1
<i>What Ever Happened to James Colin Brewster, Springfield's Bay Marmon</i>	2
<i>President's Report</i> ; Report on October program	3
Oak Ridge Digitization; December happenings; ORC Writing Project; etc.	4
Quincy Christmas Candlelight Tour	5
Spring schedule; <i>History for the Holidays</i> reservation form	6

Tuesday, January 16, 7:00 PM

Program

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North

What Ever Happened to James Colin Brewster, Springfield's Boy Mormon Prophet?

Gary Vitale

James Colin Brewster was very well known as a young, charismatic Mormon prophet in Springfield in the nineteenth century. However, after leaving Springfield for California in 1850, folks in Sangamon County heard little more about him. Now, questions about Brewster's life after his Springfield period will be answered by Gary Vitale, a longtime faculty member at Springfield College in Illinois.

Brewster, who was born in New York in 1826, lived in Springfield for eleven years before his departure. During that time, he published two books of biblical revelations as well as a newspaper. After the assassination of Mormon leader Joseph Smith in 1844, Brewster and his followers labored vigorously, but with minimal success, to preserve Mormon unity in Illinois. Abandoning this effort in 1850, he led a wagon train of his followers, called "Brewsterites," to California. However, his Mormon movement in that state failed—and he disappeared. Vitale will reveal what happened to Brewster.

Vitale, who grew up near Cleveland, Ohio, was a theater major at Northwestern University, where he graduated in 1960 with a bachelor of science in speech. In 1974, he received a master of arts in literature from the University of Illinois at Springfield. At SCI, his teaching chores cover speech, Shakespeare and the humanities. He is a member of the Sangamon County Historical Society's Board of Directors, as well as a member of the advisory board to the Illinois State Historical Society.

Report on November Program

A large crowd, some seventy persons, was on hand for Anthony Rubano's comprehensive update on the rehabilitation of Springfield's Union Station, another significant step toward enhancement of the history of the city's downtown.

Rubano, a project designer at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency who is heavily involved in the renovation of the station and neighboring Union Square Park, was well received as he mixed in humor with much detail in documenting the nearly \$12 million rehab of the station—first opened for business in 1898 after being constructed for \$75,000. Members of the audience seemed most fascinated with the part of the project providing for the restoration of the station's tall clock tower, once a familiar part of Springfield's skyline.

Work on the project has progressed to the point that the station is set to be opened to the public this coming February. It will serve as a visitors' center within the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum complex. Rubano said the station also will be available for weddings, receptions and other events.

The appearance of the original exterior of the station, which Rubano said reflected Romanesque revival architecture, is being restored in line with the plans or drawings drafted by the structure's architect, Francis T. Bacon, a Romanesque style adherent. The reconstructed ornamentation on the building again will bring to mind, Rubano noted, the influence at the time of the station's building of famed architect Louis Sullivan—whose works included the landmark Wainwright Building in St. Louis.

Continued next page

The President's Corner -

NACOGDOCHES, Texas—A warm sun was casting a golden glow over this eastern Texas city as I lazily strolled through its old but well preserved downtown on a day not long ago in late October.

While my wife Liz, as is her custom, was rummaging through antique shops, I finished off a roll of film on shots of the facades of buildings that evoked memories of earlier times. I do this everywhere we go because it's true, as some friends say, that I love to recapture the past. It was not hard to do in Nacogdoches since this pleasant community of 30,000 goes out of its way at every juncture to stress pride in its history. And there is plenty of that because Nacogdoches boasts, and I have no reason to doubt it, that it is the oldest town in Texas.

An understanding and appreciation of the city's long history can be gained quickly at the sparkling visitors' center in the middle of the ancient downtown. Indeed, the spirit of the community seems to revolve around the center, which focuses on the diversity of the city—settled in 1779 on the site of a Spanish mission founded in 1716. Besides the Stars and Stripes, Nacogdoches has been under eight other flags, including those of France, Spain and Mexico as well as the Lone Star and Confederate ones. The visitors' center represents a cram course on the town's legacy—even down to its claim to having had Texas' first oil well (a very big deal), first newspaper, first two-story building, first wine cellar and, heaven to Betsy, first ceiling fan (located in a drugstore where the fan blades were turned by a mule-drawn treadmill outside).

We saw this concentration on the past again and again as we traversed towns, big and small, during a nearly two-week jaunt through central and eastern Texas. The state's Capitol in Austin, a distinctive structure featuring sunset red Texas granite completed in 1888, was no exception. However, I must say that the Illinois Statehouse, with its historic paintings and statuary, does not take a backseat to its Texas counterpart in recognition of the past.

Repeatedly seeing the evidence of another state's placement of high priority on its heritage served, in the end, to bolster one's pride in the ongoing efforts at the state and many local levels in Illinois to not push the past off the radar screen. Driving and observing in Texas was a refreshing reminder to this writer of the cultural enhancement advanced in Illinois by those in our historical society and by other grass roots groups of similar mind. Too, of course, there is ongoing appreciation of the roles of our state's Historic Preservation Agency and the Illinois State Historical Society. Like Texas, Illinois has a darn good number of folks who realize that knowledge of the past is a necessary prelude to a much broader perspective in the future.

Taylor Pensoneau

November program report cont.

Restoration of the clock tower, said Rubano, has been a major challenge in the project. He stressed the importance of ensuring that the lines of the new tower (built of steel with an exterior of bricks) be identical to the lines of the original tower. When the flagpole at the top of the tower is figured in, Rubano pointed out, the tower will rise to 150 feet in the air. Near the top of the tower, each of the four sides will house the face of a clock more than eight feet tall.

YEARS TO REMEMBER

- 1800**—Barely 2,000 living in Illinois (Russo, PP)
- 1819**—Gershom Jayne first doctor to settle in the county (Campbell, SS)
- 1821**—James Adams first attorney in Springfield (Campbell, SS)
- 1821**—July, Elijah Iles opened first store in Springfield. He also laid out first streets—Jefferson, Washington, Adams, and Monroe. (Russo, PP)
- 1821**—First school opened in Springfield (SJR 76)

Sources: Bruce A. Campbell, *The Sangamon Saga: 200 Years: An Illustrated Bicentennial History of Sangamon County*, 1976; Edward J. Russo, *Prairie of Promise: Springfield and Sangamon County*, 1983; *Springfield Journal Register*, 1976.

Oak Ridge Cemetery Digitization Project

More Oak Ridge Cemetery burial records should be available online next year now that Sangamon Valley Collection (SVC) at Lincoln Library has received a \$20,000 grant to digitize the third and fourth volumes of Oak Ridge Cemetery's interment records. These volumes include approximately 14,850 interments dating from January 1894 through July 1918. Information provided in these records include name of the deceased, date of death; age at death; cause of death; grave location and name of undertaker. Previous grants have been used to digitize the first and second volumes, which range from 1858 to 1894. They are available for searching at the Illinois Digital Archives website (www.idaillinois.org). Funding for this grant was awarded by the Illinois State Library (ISL), a Division of the Office of Secretary of State, using funds provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), under the federal Library Services of Technology Act (LSTA).

Curtis Mann

We Welcome

Rick Beard,
director of ALPLM and
new member of SCHS

Life Member
Jeanne Lanphier

Presents for the Holidays

A wonderful gift for those 'hard to find for' on your list are notecards and SCHS books, and they will be available at the Holiday Party for your gifting needs, so plan to buy them then. (They are also available at Robinson's any time.)

Vachel Lindsay Home

Christmas Celebration December 9th

Noon to 4:00 pm

- Reading of Lindsay's Christmas/New Year's themed poetry by students from Debra Huffman's Honors English Class at Lanphier High School

- Storyteller Roberta Coderno will tell tales of Christmasses Past for children of all ages.



Old State Capitol

Lincoln-Herndon law offices will be open for the downtown candlelight tours on December 6,7,13,20.

1st Night 1850s Ball will be from 7:00-10:00 PM.

Last Call for the Oak Ridge Cemetery Writing Project

Time is running out for submission of essays for the Oak Ridge Cemetery Writing project. We really would like to have more of you who have family buried there tell us about:

- Your family history
- Your first ancestor in Illinois/Sangamon County
- A favorite ancestor
- An ancestor with a special/unique/unusual accomplishment
- An interesting or life-changing family experience
- A family event in Illinois/Sangamon County

or anything else relating to a family member buried there.

The Project Awards committee has received several essays approaching the subject in different ways, and there certainly is no one approach that is seems to work better than any other, so just write about your family any way it seems right to you.

We understand that some of you are still working on your essay and others of you have thought about it but not quite managed to get pen to paper. If you just need a little extra time, please let Project Awards Chairman, Gil Pilapil know. (787-0284)



"Preservation is for everybody."



Christmas Candlelight Tour 2006

Quincy Preserves Christmas Candlelight Tour will be held on Sunday, December 10, 2006, from 4:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. The tour will feature the interiors of five homes and the Quincy Museum. Tour-goers will have the opportunity to enjoy both the architecture of the homes as well as their holiday finery.

Guided by luminaries, tour-goers are encouraged to walk from home to home, enjoying the neighborhoods where the houses are located. Homes on the tour represent many architectural styles: Colonial Revival, Neoclassical, Craftsman, Richardsonian Romanesque, and Dutch Colonial. Quincy Preserves volunteers will be located throughout each home to answer questions.

The Quincy Museum will be decorated with the theme *Let Heaven and Nature Sing*. Refreshments will be available in the kitchen of the museum.

Tickets are available in advance for \$8.00 in advance and for \$10.00 on the night of the tour at any of the houses. Please contact tour chair Chris Kirn for additional information regarding tickets and locations.

Submitted by Jayne Fentem, Publicity Committee. Phone: 217-228-2724 or 217-223-1309, ext. 217

Sangamon County Historical Society
308 E. Adams Street
Springfield, IL 62701



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

2007 Program Schedule

(All programs start at 7:00 PM; all are at Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North, except for the March program, currently scheduled at Brother James Court)

	January 16	
<i>What Ever Happened to James Colin Brewster, Springfield's Boy Mormon Prophet?</i>		Gary Vitale
	February 20	
<i>A Soldier's Story</i>		Robert Davis
	March 20	
<i>Brother James Court—A Proud Role</i>		Franciscan Brothers
	April 17	
<i>New Berlin—Pretzel Town on the Prairie</i>		Village leaders
	May 15	
<i>The Statehouse Pressroom—A Place Like No Other</i>		Taylor Pensoneau

Note to History for the Holidays attendees: To minimize steps, pull into driveway ramp to unload passengers. The park road leading past the duck pond is one way to the South. Do not park on the East side facing North.

I am currently a Sangamon County Historical Society Member _____ ; wish to upgrade membership_____

I am joining SCHS herewith_____ Reservation deadline: December 12th!

Please reserve _____place(s) for *History for the Holidays*, December 20th \$5.00 per member donation

Enclosed:\$_____

Name(s) of Attendee(s): _____

Phone number: _____