



Historico

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

March, 2008

Wednesday, March 12, 5:00 PM

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room South

Board Meeting

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Program

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Nominating

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Project Awards

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Nancy Chapin

Webmaster

Fred Slocombe

Tuesday, March 18, 7:00 PM

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North

Program

Susan Lawrence Dana's Search for Spiritual Truth

Dr. Richard S. Taylor

"Susan Lawrence Dana's Search for Spiritual Truth," will explore Susan's interest in occult, esoteric, and non-mainstream religious movements and the role that those movements played in the early history of what is now the Dana-Thomas House State Historic Site. Dr. Taylor's recent and on-going research on Susan Lawrence Dana has added greatly to our understanding of this complex woman, the time in which she lived, and the remarkable house she built.

Dr. Taylor has produced a number of scholarly articles, including two on Susan Lawrence Dana. He has taught part time and was an adjunct professor for several years at Sangamon State University (now University of Illinois at Springfield). After earning his history Ph.D. in 1977, Dr. Taylor located to Springfield to work for the State of Illinois. Currently Dr. Taylor is in charge of a small team that plans interpretive programs, develops exhibits, does research, and curates antiques for the more than 50 historic sites managed by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

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We Welcome New Members

Donna Catlin
Patricia Furry
Charles Hoots
Jody Kienzler
Jeff Lightfoot
Betty Schoenborn
Dorene Smith
John Taylor
Karen Thompson

Around Town -

March 15, Saturday
1:00 PM Museum of Funeral Customs
7th Annual Poetry Reading
Readers call 544-3480 by Feb 29
2:30 PM Vachel Lindsay Home
Poets in the Parlor
March 25, Tuesday 5:15 PM
Old State Capitol
Old Capitol Community Tribute
40th Anniversary of the Old Capitol Re-dedication
Call DSI at 544-1723 for tickets
Reception, Program, Refreshments.

Report on February Program -

Kay Smith, the Illinois Bicentennial Coordinator, gave us an overview of events which are planned for the next year to honor Abraham Lincoln. Not only will the emphasis be on honoring the life of Lincoln in a meaningful way, but also to provide a festive time for people to celebrate this occasion. Kay said, "On February 12, 2009 all eyes in the world will focus on Springfield, Illinois and we want to be prepared to explain why we are called the 'Land of Lincoln.'"

She also touched on some Federal projects, such as the re-design of the penny, the re-dedication of the Lincoln Memorial (May 2009), a teach-in featuring a one hour web cast and a Bicentennial book with one page allotted for each state of the Union.

In addressing plans within the State of Illinois, Kay could only spotlight a few because of the multitude of projects. Newspapers throughout the state are currently recording a "Lincoln Log" or daily entry about happenings in the life of Lincoln. To keep abreast of the latest information, check www.lincoln200.net.

Cindy Davis, Chair of the Springfield Bicentennial Commission and her assistant, Julie Dirksen helped us to focus on our own city, which Lincoln called home. This commission is a non-funded entity which serves as a conduit for coordinating events throughout the area. Cindy explained about the "wall dogs" (artists who do not charge for the murals they paint on the sides of buildings) who will be coming to do their renditions of Lincoln's life. Not only does Springfield plan to center on events on February 12, 2009 but also to have another round of learning activities and celebrations on the 4th of July. The local website for Bicentennial info is: www.visit-springfieldillinois.com. Several pamphlets were shared with the audience which gave an excellent chronology of Lincoln's life.

During the discussion period, there was some talk about possible dramatic presentations, a film festival, or other fine arts programs that could be a meaningful tribute to the life of A. Lincoln.

Thanks to Carolyn Moore for this report

New Webmaster

Karen Everingham, who set up our web site in 2002 and ably maintained it ever since has decided to retire. She has been wonderful about quickly putting up the Historico and other special announcements and working to make the site more appealing. We are most grateful for her help over the years!

We are pleased to announce that Fred Slocombe has agreed to become our new Webmaster. Fred maintains several sites for local organizations and we are delighted he has agreed to help us too.

Our condolences to the families and friends of

Winifred L. Barringer
Oliver J. Keller
C. Christopher Patton

long time members of the Society

Symposium Schedule

We have included a copy of the schedule for the 2008 Illinois History Symposium to be held at Millikin University in Decatur on March 13-15. Entitled "Lincoln's Legacies", there are several interesting sessions and speakers to entice your attendance.

SCHS members may register at the ISHS membership price, but there will be a \$5.00 charge for all registrations received after March 3.

Curtis Mann's report on -

Fort Taylor

Part II

Harvey Taylor did not go to St. Louis but instead traveled first to Pana, Illinois and then onto to Shelbyville. He was captured on May 8 about six miles outside of Shelbyville by the Shelby County sheriff. Springfield police officer Garret Elkin traveled to Shelbyville and brought Taylor home on the Great Western Railroad. Lucinda Taylor met the train at Long Point station, now known as the village of Niantic, west of Decatur. Lucinda managed to smuggle a revolver onto the train and place it into the hands of her handcuffed husband. Elkin discovered the weapon and attempted to take it from Taylor. With the assistance of fellow passengers, Elkin was finally able to wrest the revolver from Taylor. The rest of the trip to Springfield was uneventful. Taylor was released after posting bail of \$1,000.

The case of Harvey Taylor began the following day. He was charged with shooting with intent to kill. A large number of witnesses were examined. He was jailed after his bond was raised to \$2,000. The outcome of this trial is unknown but it appears that Harvey was sentenced to some jail time.

While Harvey Taylor was doing jail time, Lucinda resumed their chosen profession. The papers remain silent on her operation until the end of the year. Lucinda was charged in early December with keeping a house of ill-fame. Her trial was noted

to have been "witnessed by a large number of spectators, most of who appeared to relish the evidence exceedingly." Lucinda was found guilty and fined \$50. The Taylors had plenty of competition in Springfield during 1859. At least three other brothel operators were fined for keeping houses of ill-fame in Springfield.

Despite their numerous run-ins with the law, the Taylors prospered in the brothel business. Lucinda purchased a house owned by James W. Weiss on February 8, 1860. This house was located on the west side of North Fourth Street midway between Madison and Carpenter streets. Weiss, a carpenter by trade, bought the lot from Isaac Diller in 1856 and most likely built the house. The Taylors moved their operation into the new location and were living there when the 1860 city directory was printed.

Two weeks after purchasing the house, Harvey and Lucinda were tried and found guilty of assaulting a woman who might have been one of their girls. Harvey was fined ten dollars and costs, and Lucinda was given a fine of three dollars. Harvey was again fined ten dollars later in October after he became involved in a quarrel with a man name Davis who worked as a runner for the St. Nicholas Hotel. Davis and Taylor traded several blows before Harvey beat his opponent severely with a cane.

The 1860 census of population provides some insight into the origins of Harvey and

Lucinda. He is listed as being 38-years-old and she is 35-years-old. They were both born in the state of Ohio. A two-year-old male named Alfonzo is apparently a child of theirs. He was born in Illinois. Harvey's occupation is noted as that of a boarding house owner. The census enumerator indicated that Harvey did not own any property even though his wife had purchased the house early in the year. Four women ranging in ages from 16 to 28 are living in the household as well. One, Jenny Jackson, is listed as a dress maker. Rosa Smith has no occupation given and the last two, Martha Davis and Kate Holliday, are listed as domestics.

Prosperity continued for the Taylors into the next year. They bought the north half of lot eight from James Weiss on February 4, 1861 for \$1,000. This included a house on this portion of the lot. The Taylors were now the owners of two adjacent houses.

The cruel realities of the lives led by prostitutes are attested to in a newspaper article that appeared on July 25 in the *Illinois State Journal*. A dead body of an infant, apparently the child of a prostitute, was found dead in the cistern of a brothel located just north of the Taylor house or "model establishment" as referred by the paper. The infant was most likely an abortion or stillborn. Pregnancy was one of the many unwanted results of being a prostitute.

Vice including gambling, drinking and prostitution also proved profitable to other residents of

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2008 Program Schedule

All programs start at 7:00 PM
 Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room, North

<i>Susan Lawrence Dana</i>	March 18	Richard Taylor
<i>History of the Springfield Muni</i>	April 15	Tom Shrewsbury
<i>History of the Sangamon County Fair</i>	May 20	TBA

Fort Taylor Continued from p 3

Springfield. The number of brothels increased so much in the second ward of the city that residents petitioned the city government to suppress them. Seven known brothels were operating in this ward which encompassed the northwest part of Springfield. Even within this ward, the stretch along North Fourth Street where Taylor's house was located was considered the sinkhole of the city, being infested with "bawdy houses."

to be continued next month-

Congratulations!

to Carl and Roberta Volkmann on their newly released book: *Springfield's Sculptures; Monuments, and Plaques.*



Map Drawer for SVC

Income from the Society's Carroll Hall Fund has recently been used to purchase a much needed map drawer for the Sangamon Valley Collection at Lincoln Library.

March 18, 4:00 -6:00 PM

Hanson Professional Services will be hosting a book signing of "From a Kansas Farm to the Engineering Hall of Fame", a biography of Walter E. Hansen written by Janice Pettechak.

March 29, 9:30—2:00 PM

Vachel Lindsay Home
 Volunteer training
 Call 524-0901 to register or for more information.