



# Historico

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

May, 2006

May 10, Wednesday, 5:00 pm

Board Meeting

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room South

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### Special Functions

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### Webmaster

Karen Everingham

### Booksales

Sue Wall

### Historico Editor

Nancy Chapin

May 16, Tuesday, 7:00

Program

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North

## *Matthew S. Marsh's 1836 Map of Sangamon County*

Thomas F. Schwartz

Interesting insights into an informative but intriguing 1836 map of Sangamon County by businessman Matthew S. Marsh will be provided by Thomas F. Schwartz, the Illinois state historian and interim director of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

The map—a very early and highly detailed example of Sangamon County documentation—shows the original boundaries of the county before its division following the relocation of the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield. The map came out of a manuscript collection of Charles James Fox Clarke, a friend and business partner of Marsh. The first purchase of property in Illinois by the two men, who had visions of attaining fame and fortune, was witnessed by Abraham Lincoln—whom Marsh and Clarke had met in New Salem.

Schwartz, an authority on Lincoln and his era, was named state historian in 1993 by Governor Jim Edgar. Thirty-eight years old at the time, Schwartz was the youngest person to hold the post. Earlier, he was curator of the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection at the Illinois State Historical Library. In conjunction with the Henry Huntington Library in California, Schwartz was in charge of the nationally acclaimed exhibition, *The Last Best Hope of Earth: Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America*, which attracted large crowds in Chicago and Los Angeles. He is now an advisor to both the state and federal Lincoln bicentennial commissions. Schwartz, who grew up in Downers Grove and holds a doctorate in history and international relations from the University of Illinois, has been a consultant for many historical documentaries.

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### *Around Town*

May 5 5:30– 7:00 PM (Free)  
14th Annual Mayor's Awards for  
Historic Preservation  
Hoogland Center for the Arts

May 8 Old State Capitol  
"Old Capitol Days" (see next page)

May 13 2:00 PM Vachel Lindsay home  
Poets in the Parlor  
Proceeded by new house sign unveiling

### *Book Review report*

Following a lovely meal at La Sorella Restaurant on April 6, 2006, Sally Schaefer presented a program on "Early Settlers in Rochester". After giving a concise history of settlement in Rochester which can be traced to 1820, she turned to a study of the musical world in this prairie village. With Sally's background in music, she gave us a wonderful glimpse into the tunes and lyrics from this era. She explained how a Revolutionary War melody such as, "The Girl I Left Behind", was carried from one generation to another and the words were changed to fit the time frame. During this pioneer period there was usually a single musical score, but a multiple of sheets of lyrics. Much of the folk music was passed along by an oral tradition.

Sally, who has been a public school music teacher for over 35 years, explained that there is no set curriculum in Illinois, so each individual instructor can teach whatever they deem musically important; whether it be rock or classical. However, she emphasized that her theory was that whatever you taught had to be genuine. She felt that her students responded to the folk songs that we had been exposed to as children a generation earlier.

We were treated to her playing instru-

ments from the 1820-1860's era, such as the recorder or drum. The banjo and harmonica are uniquely American instruments and were especially popular in small villages, such as Rochester. We were invited to join in a songfest led by Sally as she played the autoharp and we enjoyed singing several nostalgic tunes. She explained the relationship between poetry and music and how closely intertwined they are. Often, a song was just accredited to the person who wrote the lyrics, rather than the one who wrote the musical score. She closed the informative program by reciting Walt Whitman's poem, "I Hear America Singing" which made us swell with pride to be an American in Central Illinois.

Thanks to Carolyn Moore for this report

### *Donner Party Anniversary*

About 50 people turned out to help commemorate the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginnings of the Reed and Donner family's trek to California at the Iles House on March 17<sup>th</sup>. The Iles House welcomed them with music throughout the house with a trio playing in a front room. Many were seeing the house for the first time, and after a period of time for touring the house, and refreshments provided by the Society for all, Iles

House Foundation president, Dave Barringer, welcomed the group and introduced Don Springer, a Donner descendent, who had recently donated a Donner family spinning wheel to the house, and who then spoke about aspects of the trip. He began by reminding his audience that this was a period when 'going west' was considered America's 'Manifest Destiny'. Further, he pointed out that the Donner family was familiar with wagon train travel as they had not only come to the Midwest from North Carolina, but traveled to Texas and back by wagon train in prior years.

While the first part of their journey was uneventful, the fateful decision to follow the 'Hastings Cutoff' proved to be disastrous. The 'shortcut' turned out to be a treacherous and nearly impassable route which had never been tried by wagons. The route exhausted the party and put them days behind their schedule to get across the Sierra Nevada Mountains before winter. Springer told of the many hardships that the party endured before they even started on that leg of the trip. Then an early snow on October 28, culminating in 22 feet in the pass, completely stopped progress. The group, already exhausted, was holed up for months in impossible conditions with food enough for just a few weeks. While rescue groups eventually reached them; bringing in some supplies and taking out those who could travel, more than half never made it through.

Springer's thesis was that rather than being vilified for the cannibalism that reportedly occurred, they should be applauded for their effort and determination in the face of insurmountable odds.

Springer also pointed out that 1846 was the same year that Brigham Young led his band of Mormons west, though the Mormons rested in Iowa over the winter and began their trip through the mountains rested in the spring of '47. They therefore further benefited by the knowledge gained by the hardships of the Donner Party.

### *John Chapin Memorials*

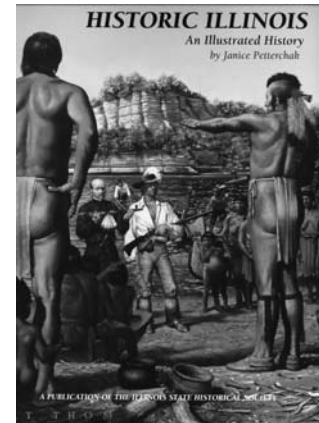
The following additional memorial gifts have been gratefully received:

John B. Dixon  
Simon & Joyce Friedman  
Donald & Patricia Graham  
Alice E. Martin  
Dr. & Mrs. Virgilio R. Pilapil

## Report n April Program

A large group attended the April meeting to learn about the 'Rebirth of Downtown Springfield'. Victoria Clemons, Executive Director of Downtown Springfield, Inc., began the program by explaining that the purpose of DSI was to restore the historical heritage of the downtown area with economic vitality. She pointed out that they were working with the City on various projects such as Springfield Green and the like. She named several special events that DSI sponsors to bring families to the downtown area: the new Capitol City Celebration to begin July 4; Blues 'n Bluegrass and the Holiday Walks on Wednesday evenings before Christmas. And she told about the not-for-profit Heritage Foundation, created to support the architectural and cultural heritage of the community through education, historical restoration, beautification and lessening the burden on governmental bodies. The group is currently acquiring properties south of the Lincoln Home toward that end.

Carolyn Oxtoby then took over and explained that her interest in the downtown area began with acquiring the Lincoln/Herndon law offices with Edith and Jim Myers and restoring them. She then pointed out that she was a descendent of George Pasfield, who had accumulated ownership of many buildings downtown and that when the trust he created ended, and she inherited a share of them, "retail was following the rooftops" west, and she was therefore faced with owning empty buildings. At that point she realized "major history right there in front of us". Since that time she has sought to revitalize the downtown area, and encourage others to do so, by restoring a building every three or four years, creating both retail and living space. She is pleased to find that current apartment interest comes not only from legislators and lobbyists, but medical students and a broader range of community people.



*Historic Illinois:*

*An Illustrated History*

Several members took advantage of the opportunity to purchase this book by Janice Peterchak at a reduced, member's price during April. For those still wishing to purchase a copy, they are available from ISHS (217.525.2781) for \$49.95 (plus \$4.00 shipping and handling) or at Prairie Archives.

## REUNION—A Musical Epic in Miniature




If you missed the opportunity to see this play at the Union Theatre of the ALPM this past month, you will have another opportunity to see it when Theatre in the Park at New Salem produces the play June 23—July 2. For reservations, call: 217.632.5440.

"The musical is an attempt to tell the story of the Civil War through the eyes of those who took up the Union cause—an intersection of theatre and history, weaving together songs, visual images and dialogue."

## OLD CAPITOL DAYS

### May 5-7, 2006

**Civil War Encampment  
on the grounds of the historic  
Old Capitol State Historic Site  
Springfield, IL.**



**Re-enactors invited for living history demonstrations from the civil war period.**

**Portajobs, firepit, firewood, and straw provided.**

**No pets, fireworks or alcohol.**

**Artillery, mounted soldiers, and officers by invitation only.**

**Bring your musical talents and stories for the Friday night campfire.**

**Saturday evening dance and dinner provided by organizers.**

**Register by April 4, 2006  
217.632.5440, Springfield  
Illinois 62762  
or by mail (217) 525-7960**

**Old Capitol State Historic Site  
101 State Capitol Plaza  
Springfield, IL 62704  
217-525-7960**



*10th Annual Cemetery Walk  
October 8, 2006*

Plans are underway for this year's Cemetery Walk. Carolyn Moore will be the chairman, with Elaine Birtch chairing the research and portrayals. Curtis Mann, Elaine, John Daly, Myra Epping, Dick Hart and Nancy Chapin are each researching one person and writing a script for the actors. Phil Funkenbusch will again be the director.

As this year's walk will be part of Oak Ridge Cemetery's 150th Anniversary celebration, the persons to be portrayed were chosen with that in mind and many will reflect the origins and development of those first years of the cemetery's development.

- Maggie Weaver - this German-born lady came to Springfield following the Civil War when she was 70-years-old. She lived in the village of Ridgely, near the noisy, smoky iron mills that once employed hundreds of men. She well remembers the many German organizations that once existed in the city.
- Marie Helmle - mother of Oak Ridge's first burial, Eliza Helmle. She and her husband Charles Albert had 11 children in all, though Eliza was their first and apparently unforgotten sorrow. The family was busy and successful in business, banking, politics, and the Board of Education.
- John Freeman - Springfield fireman and former fire chief, killed while working as a fireman during the World's Fair in Chicago and whose body was returned to Springfield for an elaborate, hero's funeral.
- Mary, Eliza Jo and Rachel Parker, orphaned sisters from Arkansas who were sent to Springfield by Rev. Springer to the Home for the Friendless.
- Jamison Jenkins, a freeman from North Carolina, was a teamster by occupation but also a conductor on the Underground Railroad. His house was located a block south of Abraham Lincoln who asked Jenkins to haul his luggage to the train station as Lincoln was leaving for Washington, D.C.
- Mayor James Conkling, a prominent politician and lawyer in Springfield, he gave an eloquent address at the dedication of Oak Ridge Cemetery. He along with Lincoln helped to organize the Republican Party.

Invitations have gone out to SCHS authors and to various historical organizations in the community asking them to participate in the Historama, and Marian Leach has again offered to run a concession stand with wonderful treats like fresh popped corn and cidar.

If you would be willing to volunteer this year, please contact Carolyn Moore 498.8159 or email her: [carmor@insightbb.com](mailto:carmor@insightbb.com) and make her day! If you don't want to volunteer this year, you had better take your phone off the hook and turn off your computer because she has 'the list'. In any case, save the date and plan to attend!

*Oak Ridge 150th Anniversary Picnic*

Plans are underway for a picnic on July 16th to celebrate the anniversary. In the 19th century the cemetery was a popular place for families to go for a picnic on Sundays. In fact, there were so many people wishing to go spend time on the lovely cemetery grounds that tickets were issued to Lot owners guaranteeing them entrance, and others could obtain 'day passes' until the grounds were full.

There will be a variety of music homemade root beer and lemonade; kettle corn; ice cream; baguettes and cheese (to go with the wine you bring) - and more.

You can bring your own picnic, or order a boxed fried chicken picnic to pick up on site.

It is hoped that families will use the opportunity and come together to create oral histories, or do rubbings, or just enjoy the beautiful scenery.

Save the date—July 16—and watch for more details!

*Cemetery Walk DVD*

Don Springer and Dean Williams have produced a DVD of the complete 2005 Cemetery Walk . This is something we have been wanting for a long time and we are pleased to finally have one available.

We have purchased several for resale at meetings and other events. The member price is \$15.00 and the non-member price is \$20.00

*Research Donation*

Gill B. Coates

With thanks to Curtis Mann for doing research for Mr. Coates.

**The President's Corner**

Our present interest is now focused on the Society Directory that we had planned to produce on this 45th anniversary year. Many may not be aware but the annual history of the Society has been written up only to 1984-85, the year when the last Directory was issued. That makes 21 years of unwritten histories. Not being able to come up with volunteer writers, the Executive Committee pushed it up front and committed five people to divvy it up. Each writer was to limit the histories to some 200 words for each year so as to have a handy Directory rather than a thick book. Thus, the histories will basically carry the essence and highlights of the different years.

At the last Board meeting, life member Polly Myers, brought to our attention two Sangamon County cemeteries that have been neglected and in ruins and with the responsibility for their care undefined and their future uncertain. Mrs. Myers had taken the lead to do something about them and their preservation and she is certainly on the right track with what she has done. The Board is supportive of her goals although limited by the prescribed aims of the Society. This is where concerned citizens of the local communities involved may rally themselves together to work toward preserving their local heritage.

The April 17 commemoration by Iles House and SCHS of the 160th Anniversary of the Donner Party's departure from Springfield was a well-attended gathering. Don Springer, a Donner descendant, gave an excellent presentation on the subject. It is interesting to realize that the present Donner descendants in Springfield essentially descended from William Donner, the only son of Captain George Donner, the elected Captain of the Donner Party, who stayed to take care of the family farm. Our thanks to Board members R-Lou Barker, Phyllis Brissenden, Sally Cadagin and Marie Jo Potter for taking care of the foods and drinks and to Iles House' Dick Hart, David Barringer, Melinda Garvert and others for the program.

The April program on "The Rebirth of Downtown Springfield" by Carolyn Oxtoby and Victoria Clemmons was most enlightening in understanding what is being done to improve the city and preserve historic Springfield. The Book Review idea of Elena Pilapil had

<p><i>The following is taken from a book presented to Lot owners by the Oak Ridge Board of Managers in 1879</i></p>	<p><i>Rules Concerning Interments.</i></p>
<p>APPLICATION for lots or graves, must be made either to the City Clerk, or to the Sexton.</p>	
<p>2. <b>The Sexton will reside</b>, with his family, within the cemetery, and will see that suitable persons are in attendance at every interment.</p>	
<p>3. Whenever an interment is to be made, timely notice thereof must be given at the office of the City Clerk, or to the Sexton of the cemetery, and a permit obtained therefor, specifying the name of the person, the size of the burial case, and, when to be made in private lots, the location of the grave, and time of interment.</p>	
<p>4. The person applying for a permit must give the following particulars:</p>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name of deceased.</li> <li>2. Place of nativity.</li> <li>3. Late residence.</li> <li>4. Age.</li> <li>5. Date of decease.</li> <li>6. Date of interment..</li> <li>7. Disease, if known.</li> <li>8. Name of parents, or kindred, if known.</li> <li>9. In whose lot to be interred.</li> <li>10. Name of undertaker.</li> <li>11. Size of burial case.</li> </ol>	
<p>5. All interments will be subject to the following charges, which must be paid to the City Clerk, or Sex-ton, on obtaining the permit:</p>	
<p>For opening and closing a grave, under four feet in length.        -        - -        - -        - \$3.00</p>	
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its second and last topic on the "Early Settlers of Rochester, IL" by music teacher Sally Schaefer who also incorporated a presentation on the "Music Enjoyed in America, 1820-1865" thinking that the people of Rochester would have enjoyed the same music at that time. Intended for a small group discussion, the Book Review idea came up to expectations.

A comment in the March Historico about Salisbury Christian Church's first minister, John Lemmon, merited a note from a member, Jacqueline D. Wright, who wrote that Lemmon, who was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic Post 30, died on May 11, 1922 and was buried in Oak Ridge Abbey #13 Column. She also wrote about the burial sites for three of the 12 members of the first nominating committee of the Society noted in the April 26, 1961 newspaper photo published in that issue that reported on the formation of the SCHS: Edward Geary Pree, buried at Oak Ridge Abbey; Carroll Hall, donor of the Society's Carrol Hall Fund, buried at Oak Ridge New Mausoleum; and Mrs. Mary F. Minniear, buried at Camp Butler. The last living member of that committee, John Chapin, joined the celestial group barely two months ago when he died March 1. He was buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery. Our condolence to the Chapin Family on his passing. - VRP.



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 Permit No. 777  
 Springfield, Illinois

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

*Spring Calendar*

May 13:	Tour of 'Prairie Home' and Funk's Grove	
May 16:	<i>Matthew S. Marsh's 1836 Map of Sangamon County,</i>	Thomas F. Schwartz
June 20	Annual Meeting, Sangamo Club	Janice Petterchak

Four, to five feet in length, - - -	3.50
Five feet long, and upwards, --, - -	4.00
Five feet long, and upwards, when in casket, -	4.50

***BRICK GRAVES.***

Persons desiring to have graves walled inside with brick, laid in cement, will be furnished at the following prices:

From two, to three feet in length, inside,-	\$ 5.00
From three, to four feet, inside,- - -	6. 50
From four, to five feet, inside, - - .	7. 50
From five, to six feet, inside, -- -.	9. 50
From six, to seven feet, inside,- - -	11.00

*There may have been slight increases in prices!*

*Publications Committee Report*

A new history of Sangamon County was the focus of the Society's Publication Committee this year. In September 2005, the Committee, working on a suggestion made by member David Brady, began initial discussions on writing and publishing a new county history in time for the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the county in 2021. In subsequent meetings, committee members agreed to start preparations for a single volume history.

The first step in this process has been to gather citations of book and periodical titles on subjects related to Sangamon County history. These citations will form an annotated bibliography to be used by researchers and writers participating in the production of the history. This new bibliography will complement an older one completed by James Krohe in the 1970s. The next step of the committee, once the bibliography is completed, will be to formalize an outline of the chapters to be written for the history. This should be completed by the end of summer.

Curtis Mann, Ch.

*Bus trip to Funk's 'Prairie Home', gem museum, nature center, chapel*

*May 13th*

At press time there are still a few seats left on the bus if you would like to go but haven't yet made your reservation. This should be a fascinating tour at a delightful time of year for a relaxed lunch outside, amidst all the spring flowers. The tour will leave from the Stratton Bldg. parking lot at 9:00 AM.

Call 522.2500 to make a reservation and a box lunch choice. The cost is \$35.00 for members, and \$40.00 for non-members.