



Historico

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

April, 2009

SCHS Members and Friends To Meet at Chatham Public Library April 14 at 7 PM

SCHS's monthly program will be held at the Chatham Public Library at 7 pm on April 14. Come join us to learn about the history of the Chatham Library and to take a tour of the new facilities!

In early April the Chatham Public Library will hold a grand re-opening and dedication following completion of their new addition. The expanded library facility more than doubles the space of the

original library and includes many new specialized areas, the most exciting of which is a local history/genealogy room which will also serve as a local museum.

SCHS will be donating booklets from the Society's collection and completing the library's set of *Historicos*. To help the local history room get off to a good start, contributions from the Presidential Library, the Sangamon Valley Collection of Lincoln Library, and materials pertinent to the Chatham or the south county area donated by Society members will be presented. The library also houses a coffee shop run by volunteers, and we plan to support that endeavor rather than take our own refreshments. Come hungry!

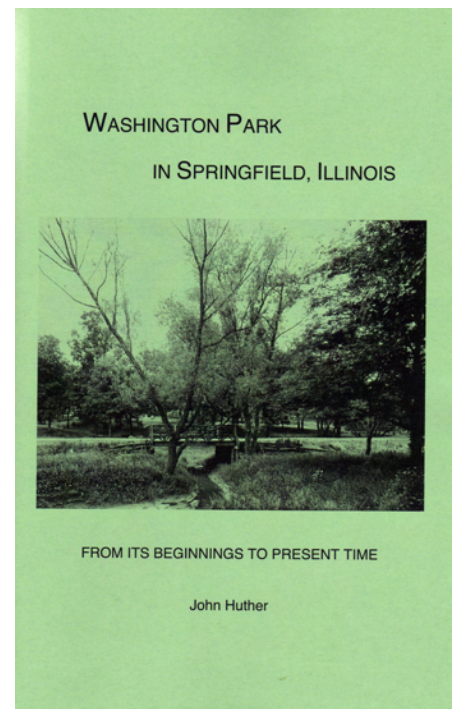
To get there:

Via Route 4 to Chatham: Follow Route 4 to the stoplight at Walnut Street (UC Bank, Family Video, BP station); turn left on Walnut and drive to the 1st light at Park St. (Casey's on north corner). Drive south on Park to the 1st stop sign at Spruce Street; turn right on Spruce, and the Library will be on your left. Call 483-2713 for directions if necessary.

Via I 55 to Chatham exit (Walnut St.): Follow Walnut Street to the 3rd stoplight at Park St. (Casey's on north corner). Drive south on Park to the 1st stop sign at Spruce Street; turn right on Spruce, and the Library will be on your left. Call 483-2713 for directions if necessary.

The entrance to the meeting rooms is on the south side of the building. NC

Society Announces Release of New Publication



The Sangamon County Historical Society is pleased to announce the publication of a new booklet by John Huther. This history of Washington Park details its origin as a 17 acre private park and its development as a 150 acre public park designed by O. C. Simonds. Information in the book is based on Park District minutes and early annual reports plus materials from the Sangamon Valley Collection. There are three maps and 26 photos in the 52 page booklet.

Copies may be obtained at the Society office at 308 East Adams Street, (telephone 522-2500) at a cost of \$5.00 for SCCHS members or \$6.00 for nonmembers. Add \$1.50 For mailing. JH

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Note from Nancy

We lost a long-time member and friend this month. John Daly died on March 7th. John was a past Board member and a regular researcher and scriptwriter for the cemetery walk each year. As the retired Director of Archives, he was particularly adept at finding a family letter or memoir that added a very personal touch to scripts he prepared. Furthermore, he followed up his script presentations prepared to answer any questions with lots more information and details about the character or the times. John will be missed.

Hope you've been able to attend at least a couple of the really interesting programs we've had so far this year. Beginning in January Gary Vitale explained just why many of Nellie Grant's belongings have ended up in Griggsville, Illinois. That was followed by Bob and Pat Davis' fascinating re-enactment of Jamieson and Elizabeth Jenkins and the tour of the Willard Ice Building and its art. All of this could then be "washed down" with a presentation about the breweries of Springfield by Curtis Mann. I think you will agree that is quite a variety!

As mentioned on page one, this is the month we are to meet at the newly enlarged and remodeled Chatham Public Library. I do hope that some of you with Chatham or southern Sangamon County roots will bring something to the meeting to contribute to their new local history room. We will be presenting copies of the *Historico* to them for those years prior to their existence, and Curtis Mann and Kathryn Harris are looking into finding materials from their libraries to share. Then our last regular meeting of the spring will be held at the Illinois State Museum Research facility on 10½ Street where Dr. Robert Warren will explain the oral history agriculture project on which he has been working.

On another front, we have been working on putting out some informational brochures on some of the towns and villages around the county. We hope to have about five completed before too long. The other ongoing project is a county history that will hopefully be completed for the county bi-centennial. We have been attempting to develop a cohesive statement of purpose of such an endeavor, and that has proved more difficult than first imagined, but we think we are getting there.

Look forward to seeing you at the Chatham Library April 14! *Nancy*

Tours Planned to Connect Lincoln and Local Churches

The Liturgical Arts Festival of Springfield is sponsoring two tours entitled "Springfield Churches: The Lincoln Connection" on Sunday, April 26. Beginning at 1:30 and 2:30 pm, the trolley tours will start at Westminster Presbyterian Church. The cost is \$15 per person. Reservation deadline is April 3. For more information, click www.LAFSpringfield or contact Westminster Presbyterian Church.

While no church building from Lincoln's time survives, connections to that era can be found in numerous Springfield churches. Participants of the tours will trace those connections by visiting the early sites of several Springfield churches and viewing historic photographs and artifacts.

Lincoln's Death to be Commemorated

Two different ceremonies will commemorate the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's death. A Ceremony of Tribute followed by the presentation of memorial wreaths on behalf of fraternal, hereditary, and veterans organizations will be held on April 15 at 11 am at Lincoln's Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery. A commemorative luncheon at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel will follow. Reservations are required for the luncheon. For more information, click funeralmuseum@ifda.org or call 544-3480.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Military Order of the Loyal Legion in the United States have scheduled their annual commemoration on April 18. Events include a ceremony at the tomb at 10 am and a luncheon at noon at the Inn at 835. For more information, email arlsuvcw@aol.com or call 219/464-1332.

Board Meeting
April 14, 2009, 5 PM
Lincoln Library Carnegie
Room South

OFFICERS

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Nancy L. Chapin
Vice President
David Scott
Secretary
Curtis Mann
Treasurer
John Huther

Directors to 2009

R-Lou Barker
Dan Buck
Susan Hammond
Tim Krell
Sarah H. Thomas

Directors to 2010

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Martha Wolters

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Paul Mueller
Jack Navins
Jane Vetter

Honorary Director

William Hughes
Diller, Jr.

HISTORICO CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Chapin
John Huther
Curtis Mann
Carl Volkmann
Roberta Volkmann

WEBMASTER

Terry Cameron



Carolyn Oxtoby and *Vanitas VI* by Audrey Uskenko



Wally Henderson and George Atkinson and *Myth IV* by Jin Soo Kim



Ed Brooks and *Alpha Centurian* by Terrence Karpowicz

SCHS Members Enjoy Rare Tour of Willard Ice Building

On March 7, 25 members of SCHS viewed the architecture and art works in the Willard Ice Building, headquarters of the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDR), through the eyes of two individuals who have personal connections to the building. Earl “Wally” Henderson, retired architect who designed the building, explained his vision for the project, and George Atkinson, artist and Assistant Coordinator of the Capital Development Board’s Art-In-Architecture (AIA) program, gave an informative description of all the art pieces. Special thanks goes to Mike Klemens, Manager of Policy and Communication for IDR, who facilitated the two plus hour tour and Carl Volkmann who served as Society host.

After reviewing some of the history that led to the site selection, Henderson explained that the building which covers two city blocks can be envisioned as a horizontal skyscraper. It was designed to incorporate as much natural light as possible and to eliminate private office space through the use of glass. Completed in 1984, the edifice can accommodate 2300 to 3000 people. Although there have been several modifications to the original design, the tropical garden with its 30 foot palm and waterfall remain the centerpiece of the atrium.

Atkinson described the AIA program which specifies that ½ of 1% of the amount appropriated for the construction of state-funded buildings be allocated for original art to be placed in that building. He explained the art selection process for each project. All artists in the program are professional and Illinois residents. The Ice Building has 8 sculptures and twenty-one two-dimensional works inside and outside of the building with an even split between abstract and realistic pieces. In addition to describing each work and its artist, Atkinson shared his own artistic journey as he created *Illinois Skyscape No. 22*, one of the paintings in the collection.

Elija Iles House Inaugurates New Season

The Elijah Iles House opened for the new season with a celebration of Elijah Iles’ 213th birthday on March 28. The home will welcome visitors each Wednesday and Saturday from 10 to 4 through December. To commemorate Lincoln Springfield Funeral Days, the Iles House will be draped in black April 11 through May 9.

Frontier Women’s Issues to be Featured at April “Patchwork of People” Lunch

The April session of *Central Illinois: Patchwork of People*, the popular lunch and learn series sponsored by the UIS SAGE Society and the Illinois State Historical Society, will examine women’s issues in the frontier life of Central Illinois. The program will be held April 21 in rooms C/D in the PAC at UIS. The buffet luncheon begins at 11:30 am, and the presentations will be from 12 noon to 1:30 pm.

The topic is “How They Lived at Home.” Dr. Stacy Pratt McDermott, assistant editor of the Papers of Abraham Lincoln will present “Domestic Law, Matrimony, and Divorce in Sangamon County: 1837-1861” Director of Women’s Studies at Bradley University in Peoria Dr. Stacey Robertson will speak on “Myths and Realities in the Lives of Frontier Women.”

The cost of the lunch and presentations is \$20, but the presentations are free and open to the public. Pre-registration is requested. To register or to obtain more information, visit www.uiaa.org/uis or call 206-7395.

Springfield's Breweries Featured In March Program



SCHS Secretary and City Historian Curtis Mann presented the March program at Lincoln Library's Carnegie Room. Using a PowerPoint presentation, Mann provided a short history of ten Springfield breweries in alphabetical order from Ackerman to Weiss. James Busher started the first brewery in Springfield in about 1840. Unlike most of the other beer barons who were of German ancestry, Busher and his brother John emigrated from England. Busher's brewery business lasted approximately twenty years despite two fires and considerable competition from rivals.

Mann spent considerable time describing the colorful history of the Kun Brewery. After arriving in Springfield in 1854, Andrew Kun leased the Reisch Brewery while it was closed due to a short prohibition in the city. Kun managed to avoid legal trouble by skillfully retaining the services of shrewd lawyers. When the prohibition was repealed, the Reisch Brewery returned to normal operations. Kun then used his profits to build his own brewery in 1856. Using the profits from his business, he built a famous mansion at the corner of Carpenter and Walnut Streets. The brewery closed in 1877, but historical memories were brought back in 1993 when work crews who were widening Walnut Street discovered underground the large storage cellars used by the Kun Brewery.

The Reisch Brewery was the best known and longest lasting brewery in the history of Springfield. Started in 1849 by Franz Sales Reisch from Germany, the brewery lasted more than 100 years and became a true regional operation in Illinois.

Working alone at first, Reisch built a three-story building, dug a well for water, and built storage facilities. Later, two sons joined the operation, and the business expanded several times. After national prohibition was repealed in 1933, the Reisch Brewing Company borrowed money and resumed operations. Facing challenging competition from larger national beer companies, the company ceased operations in 1966. The SIU Medical School was built on the site where the old brewery buildings and the family mansion stood.

Mann's presentation was well received by an audience of more than sixty. His remarks will in time be presented in booklet form and will be published by the Historical Society. Dr. Virgilio Pilapil introduced the speaker, and R-Lou Barker served as hostess. CV

DONATIONS

Patricia Rudolph

MEMBERSHIPS

NEW MEMBERS:

Kathy and Mike Nenaber
Patricia Sabo Family



Riverton

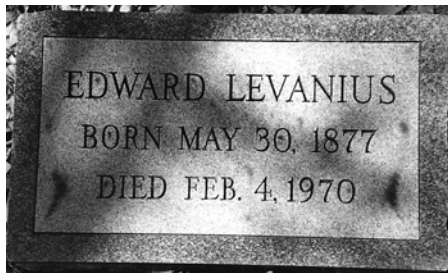
Even though the village of Riverton owes the origin of its name to its location near the Sangamon River, the community actually had its start as a town platted on a proposed railroad called the Northern Cross Railroad. Springfield merchant and developer John Taylor had the future site of Riverton platted on December 11, 1837, and originally named it Jamestown. The railroad did not come for a number of years, and the town site passed through the hands of a couple of gentlemen before being purchased by Parley Howlett in 1862. Howlett, who operated a distillery and coal mine, renamed the town after himself in 1864. Having borrowed a large amount of money from the Bunn Bank in Springfield, Mr. Howlett lost all of his holdings after failing to keep up his financial obligations. Jacob Bunn assumed ownership of the town for a few years before going bankrupt himself.

The village of Howlett changed its name to Riverton in 1873. In 1880 the distillery and coal mine employed the majority of the men in the village along with a paper mill and Spaulding's nursery. It is interesting to note that the majority of the miners at that time were either native to the United States or born in England and Ireland. By 1900 the village's population was 1,127, one of the larger villages in Sangamon County at that time. A number of the miners were immigrants from the countries of Italy, Russia (Lithuania) and Austria. Three different mines operated in the community, the last closing about 1933. CM

From Humble Beginnings: Lincoln's Illinois 1830-1861

To celebrate the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, the Illinois State Museum is presenting an interdisciplinary exhibition which explores the Illinois that Lincoln knew through objects and stories of the people who lived here. "Lincoln's Illinois" traces the dynamic changes in Illinois' agriculture, industry, and transportation that, by 1860, helped transform Illinois from a frontier region to a powerful state. The exhibition runs to January 10, 2010. You won't want to miss it!

Edward Levanius, Springfield Tombstone Artist



The old adage “Dead Men Tell No Tales” is certainly not relevant when it is applied to cemetery symbolism. The language of symbolism has always been associated with grave markers and often gives us a clearer understanding of the personality and life achievements of the person buried in the grave site. Tombstones not only enlighten us about names, dates of birth, and dates of death but also tell us about a person’s occupation, religion, personality, social status, and beliefs about life after death. One of the masters of the cemetery art craft was the iconic Edward Levanius who worked in Springfield for more than sixty-five years.

Edward Levanius was born on May 30, 1877, in Landskrona, Sweden, and immigrated to the United States at the age of sixteen. Before he moved to Springfield Levanius lived in Petersburg for several years. While serving as the owner of the Twentieth Century Monument Company, he created dozens of symbolic monuments for grave sites in Oak Ridge Cemetery and Calvary Cemetery. He did most of the engraving by hand until the invention of the pneumatic carving tool. Levanius also assisted other artists and sculptors when he helped erect the two sculptures in front of the Illinois Supreme Court building and the Lincoln statue in front of the Illinois State Capitol. He was a seventy-year member and elder of Westminster Presbyterian Church. He died on February 4, 1970, and is buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery. Ironically, the tombstone of Edward Levanius is unremarkable compared to his elaborate creations.

For a complete summary of cemetery symbolism, read *Stories In Stone: A Field Guide To Cemetery Symbolism And Iconography*, by Douglas Keister.



One of Levanius’ most creative works in Oak Ridge Cemetery is the grave marker of Patrick Dowling (1856-1896). The gravestone is topped by an elaborate chair with the caption, “Thou Shalt Be Missed Because Thy Seat Will Be Empty.” The vines symbolize the relationship between God and man, the ferns represent humility, frankness, and sincerity, the harp signifies heavenly aspirations, and the doves imply purity.



Phoebe Florville (1804-1897) was the first wife of William Florville, Abraham Lincoln’s barber and friend. Her Levanius monument is a treestone with broken limbs that symbolize a life cut short. Treestones provide a great opportunity for imagery since nature is full of symbolism.



Thomas Strawbridge (1798-1880) was a saddler by trade and served as one of the first skilled craftsmen in Sangamon County. The sheaf of wheat on his gravestone denotes someone who has lived for a long time, and the fallen roses and the urn are symbols of death. The monument includes a chair with Thomas hat and a chair with his sister Mary’s cloak. The hitching post symbolizes his work with horses. CV

Mormon History Association Conference Planned in May

The Mormon History Association will meet in Springfield May 21 to 24 for a conference on the theme “Mormonism and the Land of Lincoln: Intersections, Crosscurrents, and Dispersions.” Featured presenters will include Bryon Andreasen, Research Historian of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Lincoln/Mormon scholar; Richard Carwardine, Rhodes Professor of American History, St. Catherine’s College, Oxford; and Walter Nugent, Emeritus Professor of History, University of Notre Dame.

More details and registration information is available at www.mhahome.org/index.php or 801/521-6565.

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



Non-profit Organization
 U.S. Postage
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 Springfield, Illinois

www.sancohis.org



April

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

4	“Poets in the Parlor”-Springfield poet John Knoepfle will present selections from his new book <i>Walking in Snow</i>	2 pm Vachel Lindsay Home, 603 S. 5 th St., information: 217-524-0901.
8	“The Archaeology of Early Springfield” – Presented by Floyd Mansberger, Fever River Reserve	7 to 8:30 pm Illinois State Museum
14	SCHS monthly program: Chatham Public Library (see page 1)	7 pm Chatham Public Library
15	Commemoration of Lincoln’s death (see page 2)	11 am Lincoln’s Tomb, Oak Ridge Cemetery; information: funeralmuseum@ifda.org or call 544-3480
18	Commemoration of Lincoln’s death (see page 2)	10 am Lincoln’s Tomb, Oak Ridge Cemetery; information: email arlsuvcw@aol.com or call 219/464-1332.
21	<i>Central Illinois: Patchwork of People</i> - “How They Lived at Home” (see page 3)	11:30 am to 1:30 pm Public Affairs Center, University of Illinois Springfield; information: www.uiaa.org/uis or call 206-7395.
26	“Springfield Churches: The Lincoln Connection” tours presented by the Liturgical Arts Festival of Springfield (see page 2)	1:30 and 2:30 pm Westminster Presbyterian Church; information: www.LAFSpringfield.org