



Historico

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

April, 2007

April 11, Wednesday, 5:00 pm

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room South

Board Meeting

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April 17, Tuesday, 7:00 pm

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North

Program

New Berlin—Pretzel Town on the Prairie

A firsthand look at New Berlin—its past, present and future—will be presented by a team of residents of the village in western Sangamon County.

Many folks in this part of the state primarily think of New Berlin as the home of the Sangamon County Fair. However, much more has gone into the makeup of the rural hamlet, centered in an agricultural area founded mainly by German and Irish settlers and still featuring farmhouses and barns amid fields of corn and wheat.

Interesting insights into New Berlin will be provided by Ruby Simpson and William Pfeffer. In addition, a collection of New Berlin artifacts and memorabilia will be exhibited by Jim Davenport. Ruby Simpson, a resident of the village since 1946, compiled a book on the history of New Berlin published in conjunction with the village's centennial in 1965. Pfeffer, a onetime treasurer of the village who served as its mayor from 2001 to 2005, is senior vice president of the Warren-Boynton State Bank at New Berlin. Pfeffer also played a leading role in the creation of the West Sangamon Public Library District in the late 1990s. Davenport is a lifelong resident of New Berlin and retired telephone company employee. The coordinator of the program is Allen Smith, a retired law school dean living in New Berlin and a member of the Sangamon County Historical Society.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>New Berlin—Pretzel Town on the Prairie</i>	1
<i>Around Town, New Member, Report on March program</i>	2
Bus trip to Allerton Park, May 11th	3
<i>President's Corner, Wanted—Manuscripts to Publish</i>	5
Spring Schedule	6

Around Town in April
National Poetry Month
 Vachel Lindsay Home will have an exhibit of Vachel Lindsay's art from originals in the collection of ALPL.

April 5 WILL –TV *Prairie Fires*
 Three prairie poets featured

April 14 2:30 PM *Poets in the Parlor*
 Featuring Bonnie Bollman, Hillsboro

April 18 11:00 Old State Capitol
 Holocaust Observance

We welcome new member -

Galyn Bowman

Elijah's birthday party



The Iles House opened on Elijah Iles' birthday, March 28 for the season. The opening was quite an affair with the Mayor dedicating the new elevator; Iles School choir and instrumentalists and a round robin discussion on 'Where Springfield stands with its Historic Preservation efforts'.

The grand opening will continue on Saturday, March 31 at 12:30 PM with a dedication of the brick patio and recognition of brick donors followed by a round table discussion of 'What's New in Springfield History'; the panel to include Curtis Mann, Linda Garvert, Floyd Mansberger, David Brady and Bob Davis.

The House is owned by the Elijah Iles House Foundation, a not for profit corporation, and is the home of the Barringer Collection of Early Sangamon County Antiques and the Museum of Springfield History exhibiting the Illinois Watch Collection of Farrell Gay. The House is open to the public without charge on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10:00 to 4:00 PM. Special tours may be made by arrangement. Now that the elevator and patio are in place, handicapped visitors are welcome to park behind the house and enter down the ramp to the patio and elevator.

Report on March program

Upon arrival those attending the program at Brother James Court were warmly welcomed by guides and a visual potpourri of artifacts and memorabilia in the St. Joseph the Worker chapel, built primarily by students of the trade school during the 1950s. There were pictures and artifacts from the time the Brothers ran a farm and orphanage; examples of work done by students of St. James's Trade School; and more recent pictures of the residents of St. James Court. In addition there were pictures and artifacts representing the Franciscan order and its German heritage.

Brother Joseph Anthony then explained the origins of the order which began in



Chapel window detail

Germany in 1862. In 1924 the first Brothers came to Louisiana to run an orphanage and then on to Springfield in 1928 where they purchased a farm from the Franciscan sisters. While running the farm and dairy,

they first performed services at St. John's Sanatorium, but soon established an orphanage on the property. From that endeavor they developed the St. James Trade School which provided vocational training until 1972.

lished St. James Court where they care for up 100 developmentally disabled men. The men live in the residence court on the property and attend either the Springfield Developmental Center during the day or go to jobs in the community. In addition the Brothers support an independent, halfway house for men able to live more independently.

Brother Anthony Joseph went on to explain that modern care and medicine have enabled the developmentally disabled men to live longer lives than previously which is presenting new challenges in how to handle various forms of dementia and other aging problems. The current residents range in age from 23 - 70.

Following the program refreshments were served, courtesy of St. James Court. The Society is grateful the generous hospitality provided.

In 1974 they estab-

May 11 Bus trip to Monticello, IL and Allerton Park



Plans have been finalized for the bus trip to Monticello and Robert Allerton Park on Friday, May 11th. The bus will leave from the **Iles House parking lot** on 7th Street (Southeast corner of 7th and Cook Streets) at **8:30 AM**.

[Please plan to be at the parking lot by 8:15 AM and note the parking lot location, as it is a new location.]

We will be given a guided tour of the historical sections of Monticello by a member of the Monticello Chamber of Commerce before continuing on to Allerton Park.

At Allerton House we will view a video and then la buffet lunch in the elegant dining room (lunch fees included). Following luncheon we will be given a

guided tour of the vast Allerton Park gardens.

"The section of the park north of the winding Sangamon River includes Allerton's 40-room stately home, *The Farms* (1900), a 1/4-mile-long (0.4 km) formal garden, and a 1 1/4-mile-long (2 km) sculpture walk extending westward from the end of the formal garden. The sculpture walk concludes with *The Sun Singer*, an Art Moderne bronze sculpted by Carl Milles in 1929, one of more than 100 sculptures on the grounds."

The gardens are lovely in the spring, and we are planning on a beautiful day, but if the weather looks inclement, you might want to include an umbrella, and regardless of weather, walking shoes are in order.



May 11th Bus tour to Monticello, IL and Allerton Park

Member \$50.00 ____

Non-member \$60.00 ____

Name _____ Phone number _____

Cell number _____

(We ask for your phone numbers in case we need to contact you the morning of departure.)

Mail to: SCHS, 308 E. Adams, Springfield, IL 62702

The President's Corner -

Ruby Simpson, Allen Smith, William Pfeffer and Jim Davenport. In my opinion, they are a quartet of ground breakers.

These four individuals make up the team of New Berlin residents that is presenting the Society's monthly program in April. They will be calling attention to their village by stressing its history and projecting its future. In so doing, they will be focusing the Society spotlight, for one evening at least, on a community in our county other than Springfield. This is breaking new ground, as I see it, and well could be a harbinger of some programs to follow.

No question, Rochester has shown a keen sense of its history, and the highly respected local preservation organization there might choose to fill the bill for one of the Society's monthly programs in the near future. Likewise, the same could be true for Pawnee and, say, Riverton. Sangamon County does entail, after all, more than just Springfield.

The program on New Berlin is occurring in the same time frame in which a few in the village are tossing around the idea of setting up a local history group to encapsulate the community's largely agrarian past. One does not have to live in New Berlin very long to discover that veteran residents hold their village in high esteem.

One relative newcomer ascertaining the pride of New Berliners in their world is Al Smith, who has quarterbacked the staging of the April program. Smith is a former law school dean who in retirement moved to New Berlin from Hendersonville, North Carolina, in 2005, and immediately applied his considerable energy to the gaining of an understanding of his new home. On the other hand, former New Berlin mayor and civic leader Bill Pfeffer, who will be one of two speakers at the April program, is a lifelong resident of the village. Ruby Simpson, the other speaker, has lived there most of her life. Prominent in the American Legion auxiliary, she has become a bastion of the community through various bookkeeping and civic roles. She easily could be regarded as the village's unofficial historian.

If Ruby is the historian, Jim Davenport might be the village archivist, or the closest thing to it. A New Berliner from day one, he never has ceased collecting records and mementos tied to the village's earlier years. Jim will have items from his collection at the April program, and will be on hand to answer questions on about any subject pertaining to New Berlin.

Taylor Pensoneau

WANTED: Manuscripts to Publish

At its November 8, 2006 meeting the SCHS Board approved the following policy statement about publications: "SCHS publications should be about people, places, events, and information relative to Sangamon County's broad history—documented, interesting, and authored primarily by SCHS members. SCHS publications should provide a benefit to its members as well as income for the Publication Fund, expenditures from which are the initial responsibility of the Publication Committee."

The Board also approved the purchase of a block of ten International Standard Book Numbers and bar codes that are used by libraries for cataloging and by stores for registering sales. The Publication Committee expects to use the numbers on book-length publications. A number is assigned to each book and a new edition of the book requires a new number.

Booklets that SCHS has published about selected Society programs in the past will continue but will not have numbers and bar codes assigned to them.

The Publication Committee is prepared to consider manuscripts that members believe will meet SCHS policy criteria and wish to submit for SCHS publication. Manuscripts should be typed on 8 1/2 x 11 paper for submission but ideally should be prepared on a computer so that eventually the text may be transmitted for printing in digital format.

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



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2007 Spring Schedule

<i>New Berlin—Pretzel Town on the Prairie</i>	April 17 7:00 PM	Village leaders
	Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room, North	
Bus trip to Monticello and Allerton Park	May 11, 8:30 AM	
<i>The Statehouse Pressroom—A Place Like No Other</i>	May 15 7:00 PM	Taylor Pensoneau
	Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room, North	
Annual Meeting, Dinner and Program	June 19 6:00 PM	Sangamon Club

Continued from page 5

When an author wishes to have a manuscript considered, she or he will be asked to sign an Agreement with the Publication Committee that formally recognizes the submission. The Committee will have the manuscript read by one or more persons and advise the author in writing if it is acceptable for editing and printing, or if it is not acceptable.

The Agreement stipulates that the author will be informed of editing and other changes the Committee may wish to make before printing and that the author at any time may withdraw the publication from consideration. It further stipulates that if the manuscript is not accepted, the Publication Committee will inform the author of its reasons.

The Agreement also stipulates that the author will retain copyright and will receive two copies of the printed manuscript and SCHS will make the book available for purchase through its customary channels.

The Publication Committee hopes the Agreement and related procedures will provide an orderly process for communicating with authors.

By John Huther for the Publication Committee