



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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FEBRUARY 2011

February 15 Meeting at Iles House

Rare Insider Look at Statehouse Art

Mark Sorensen, president of the Illinois State Historical Society and a former Illinois State Archives assistant director, will share his knowledge about Statehouse art when he speaks to the Society at its Tuesday, February 15 program meeting.

The 7 p.m. meeting will be held at the Iles House, 628 South Seventh Street. Springfield. Seating is limited.

Sorensen is expected to provide details of new findings on "The Goddess of Justice,"

(Continued on page 6)



STATEHOUSE ART EXPERT Mark Sorensen (left), president of the Illinois State Historical Society, will provide an insider's look at the Capitol art collection and share new findings about "The Goddess of Justice," (above) a ceiling mural painted in 1875 for what was then the State Supreme Court Chambers. The restored, ornately decorated room is now used for Senate meetings.

From the President's Podium

Some Board Business and Some History



DAVID W. SCOTT

Changes in membership categories

The Board at its January 12 meeting voted to make some changes in the membership categories and to increase dues. Neither had been changed for some time.

Three actions were approved: The first is to eliminate the distinction between Individual and Family memberships. Secondly, while the Sustaining membership is retained, there are changes in the definition of such members. The third change is to create two new membership categories: the Corporate and the Not-for-Profit, e.g., libraries and schools. Corporate members will have visibility with our members

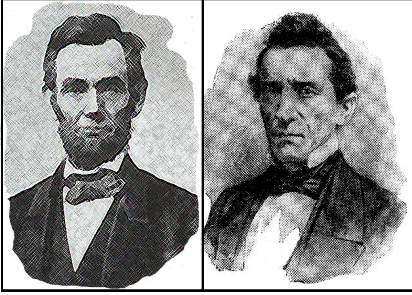
such as having their logo in our newsletter and/or website. It is hoped that such businesses will become partners with the Society in expanding program offerings. See pages 4 and 5 for the current and proposed constitutional wording.

Members need to amend constitution

To implement the changes in the membership categories, our Society's Constitution needs to be amended and that can only be done with the approval of members. The first step in that process occurred at the program meeting on January 18 when a statement of the proposed amendment was

(Continued on page 4)

Also In This Issue:



NEWLY DISCOVERED personal papers of William Butler (photo, right) may give better insight into his personal and professional relationship with his former roommate, Abraham Lincoln. Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library curator James Cornelius will provide more details of this find at the Society's March 15 meeting. See story, page 7.



WHEN Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States gather here in April to mark the death of Lincoln, they'll hear from a historian focusing on Lincoln's Views on God and Religion. See page 3.

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New Union Theatre Production Offers Insight On African-American Oral History Tradition

When *"Flight"* lands on the stage of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum's Union Theater in Springfield next month, it will give audiences a chance to celebrate the African-American oral tradition as it passed from generation to generation.

And that's what playwright Charlayne Woodard had in mind when she wrote the multi-character drama about a young mother living on a Georgia plantation in 1858. Suddenly sold, she leaves behind her husband and their five year-old son. Through a magical evening of storytelling, music, and dance, the enslaved community comes together, not only to comfort the father and son, but to heal and strengthen themselves.

Writing in the *Los Angeles Times* about her experiences growing up, Woodard recalled that her grandfather was "the best storyteller in the family," often teaching his 22 grandchildren lessons through stories.

"Growing up with storytelling came in handy when the Center Theatre Group commissioned me to write my first multi-character play, *"Flight."* Until then I'd only written solo work for myself. I decided to adapt folk tales, from Africa and the American South, for the stage. I read hundreds of other folk tales. I chose my favorites, wrote my adaptations and there it was -- folklore project completed!"

But for Woodward, an accomplished stage, screen and television actress as well as a playwright, her real journey had just begun, she said.

"I read narratives of the enslaved

Africans brought to America -- oral histories of life in bondage from the mouths of the very people who experienced it. Only then did I begin to understand the evolution of storytelling in our culture.

"I learned that as soon as the Africans arrived, their languages and religions were outlawed. They were not allowed to read or write under penalty of death. In this new land, there was a great need for folk tales. Those living in bondage had no sewing circles, no Bible study and no debutante gatherings to help them endure their everyday trials and tribulations. Consequently, storytelling was the HBO, the "Masterpiece Theatre," of the day. The special effects were the storyteller's gift of gab, movement and music. Because of the prohibitions, the storyteller cleverly disguised culture and history within the stories."

"Flight" will be performed at the Union Theater on Thursday, March 17 through Saturday, March 19, 7:30 p.m. and on Thursday, March 24 to Saturday, March 26 at 7:30 p.m. with a performance on Sunday, March 27 at 4 p.m. Tickets are \$12 general admission, \$10 for museum members. For more information, see www.alplm.org.



Historico, published 10 times a year, is the monthly bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. Back issues are available on-line in PDF format at our website, www.sancohis.org. Updates, late-breaking news, features, and more are regularly posted on our website.

Event updates also can be found on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com). Log in and search for *Sangamon County Historical Society*.

Annual Membership dues are:
 Individuals: \$17.50 , Family:\$25, Sustaining: \$50
 Individual Life Membership, one-time payment of \$250
 Family Life Member, one-time payment of \$400.

For a membership form and/or additional information, contact the Society at 525-1961 or write to us at P.O. Box 1834, Springfield, IL 62705 or schsoffice@gmail.com.

Like to Write? Edit? We Want You!

The Sangamon County Historical Society is seeking volunteers to either write or edit articles on our 'wiki' for the county history website that is to be completed for the county's bi-centennial. You can get a head start on learning the punctuation wiki entries need by googling "wiki tutorials" and watching a couple of the basic ones. We will be holding tutorial sessions weekly. Call 525-1961 or e-mail schsoffice@gmail.com if you have questions or are interested in taking part in a tutorial session or exciting project.

55th Lincoln Tomb Anniversary April 16

Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War and the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States will hold their 55th annual Lincoln Tomb Ceremony-- the Abraham Lincoln Death Day Observance commemorating the 146th anniversary of President Lincoln's death-- on April 16. Representatives from around the country will converge on the Lincoln Tomb site at Oakridge Cemetery at 10 a.m. for a wreath presentation ceremony, followed at Noon by a luncheon at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel, official headquarters for the event. Civil War historian Robert J. Miller will speak on "Lincoln and God, Religion and the 16th President." Father Miller has taught Church History in the Deacon & Lay Ministry Formation programs of the Chicago Archdiocese. From 2003-2006, he held official positions in the Civil War Round Table of Chicago culminating in helping lead two battlefield tours, and becoming the group's president in 2005-06. From January – June 2006, he took a sabbatical at Notre Dame University, taking courses in spirituality and, fulfilling a long-held dream, completed his sixth book, entitled "Both Prayed to the Same God: Religion and Faith in the American Civil War." For more information and tickets, call 636-274-4567 or contact Robert Pretrovic at rpetro7776@aol.com.



Miller

Lincoln Scholar to Speak at ALA Dinner February 12

The Abraham Lincoln Association holds its annual banquet February 12 at the Crown Plaza Hotel., Springfield at 6 p.m. Guest speaker will be Dr. Allen C. Guelzo, the Henry R. Luce III Professor of the Civil War Era at Gettysburg College, where he serves as Director of the Civil War Era Studies Program. He began work in 1996 on an 'intellectual biography' of Lincoln, *Abraham Lincoln: Redeemer President* (1999), which won the Lincoln Prize for 2000 and the 2000 Book Prize of the Abraham Lincoln Institute. He followed this with *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (2004), which became the first two-time winner of the Lincoln Prize (for 2005) and the Book Prize of the Lincoln Institute. Tickets are \$85 per person. For information call 866-865-8500.



Guelzo

Grierson Society Winter Ball February 19

The Jacksonville-based Grierson Society holds its annual Winter Ball starting at 5 p.m. on February 19 at Hamilton's in Jacksonville. In addition to a full dinner, the event will include music by the Vintage Brass Band and a performance by the Central Illinois Civil War Dance Society. Proceeds will benefit the General Benjamin H. Grierson monument at East Cemetery and General Grierson Days, one of the largest re-enactments in the Midwest, with cavalry, infantry, artillery, dismounted cavalry and medical units from both the Union and the Confederacy. Major Gen. Benjamin H. Grierson was one of the most successful cavalry leaders of the Civil War. Tickets are \$30 per person. For information and tickets, call 217-472-4099.



EXECUTIVE BOARD

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William Hughes Diller Jr.

BOARD MEETINGS

2nd Wednesday, Lincoln Library, 5 p.m.

February 9, March 9, April 13, May 11, June 8

FEBRUARY 2011 MEMBERSHIP REPORT

The Sangamon County Historical Society is pleased to add the following members:

LIFE: Thomas F. Schwartz
INDIVIDUAL: Mary Lynn Kelly

DONATIONS:

Charles and Nancy Chapin in memory of Jean Vitale

Vote Set for February 15 Would Change

(Continued from page 1)

was presented to the members in attendance. The next step is the publication of the current Membership Article and the proposed new one in this issue of the *Historico* so all members have the chance to be aware of what is being proposed. Below and on page 5 is the current and proposed constitutional wording.

At the February 15 program meeting, the members in attendance will vote whether to adopt the changes to the constitution. The required quorum is 20 members and adoption requires a 2/3rd approval.

Board ups dues

Dues are not covered in our Constitution and are thus not subject to member approval. A Board action merged the Individual member and the Family member creating a Household member category at \$25 annually, the same as the Family member dues.

Creating a Household category has the effect of raising regular Individual membership dues from \$17.50 to \$25. The cost to the Society is the same whether a person joined as a Family or Individual member and such a distinction does not necessarily

relate to the number of people in a household who read the *Historico* or attend events. An increase for those who have paid Individual membership dues of \$17.50 is eased by a Board decision that for such persons if they make their renewal payment early in the renewal process for the next year or two, their dues will be held to \$20.

The Board set the Not-for Profits dues at \$20 for the newsletter and renewal notices only. Corporate dues are now set at \$250 or more.

All these changes should increase revenue allowing possible program expansion and new projects identified through the strategic planning process.

The board also decided that Life memberships should be increased substantially: Life memberships to \$700 from the current \$250 for Individual and \$500 for Family memberships; and sustaining from \$50 to \$100. The expected increase in revenues from sustaining members will help to support the increase costs of having our own office.

Membership In historical perspective

Membership now stands at 342: 86 are Life (both

Proposed Changes in the Sangamon County Historical Society Constitution

ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

Current

Membership shall be in four classes:

1. **Individual active members** – Any person interested in the purposes of the society shall be eligible.
2. **Family** – persons of a single household
3. **Sustaining members** – A person, and/or husband and wife, corporation or firm who makes a gift which is in addition to active membership fee or fees.
4. **Life membership** – Life membership fee paid in one payment.

Membership Categories, Restructure Dues

individual and family), 24 sustaining, 109 Family memberships and 123 Individual memberships. Overall there has been little change in recent years.

Certainly the extent of interest in the history of our county is substantially greater than the one-fifth of one percent (.2%) of the households in the county that are members of the Society. Retaining members and finding new ones is a never-ending task for not-for-profits; significantly increasing membership is no easy task.

There have been period in our 50 years history when membership has been higher; sometimes substantially higher. For example, in 1969 the late fall issue of *Historico* reported 560 membership, of which 12 were Life memberships. Membership categories and the dues associated with each category at that time were: Individual \$4; Junior (under 21), \$1; Sustaining, \$50 and Life \$100.

In the first year of existence, the Society gained 315 members, as reported by Membership Chair Dorothy Cushman in the October 1962 newsletter. At the end of 1962 the Society set a goal of 600 members for the next year. President Edward Preen was suppor-

tive of this goal, charging the Membership Committee "...to find interested prospective members in all walks of life.... History is of interest to everyone". However, the late 1963 issues of the newsletter do not given any membership figures so we do not know how successful this early ambitious effort was. What we do know is the 1960s was a time of newness and enthusiasm.

In upcoming issues of the *Historico* I am planning to write further about the history of our Society. I will identify some programs and projects from an earlier day that might be of interest now.

Board approved fund-raising plan

Also approved by the Board at its January meeting was a fund-raising plan that would support special projects as identified during our strategic planning process. Created as part of the recognition of our 50 anniversary, the recently created fund-raising committee is evaluating its options. You will learn about the opportunities to give in subsequent issues of the *Historico* and in a special mailing.

David

Submitted by the Board of the Society to the Members present at the Program Meeting, February 15, 2011.

Proposed

Memberships shall be in five classes:

1. **Household Member** – a person or persons interested in the purposes of the society shall be eligible *
2. **Sustaining Household Member** – a person or persons who make a donation in an amount determined by the board in addition to the household membership dues. **
3. **Life Household Membership** – Life membership fee paid in one payment***
4. **Not-for-profit Organization** ****
5. **Corporations** ****

*combines current individual and family membership
***no change

**makes changes in definition of sustaining membership
**** new category

IT TOOK 20 YEARS to build Illinois' sixth Capitol for which ground was broken in 1868. Built at a cost of \$4.5 million (about \$1.5 million over budget) its French style mansard roofs on the north and south wings are said to reflect the influence of Frenchman Alfred Piquenard who with George Gamsey, are credited by historians for creating most of the plans for the building designed by the Chicago-based architectural firm of Cochrane and Gamsey. Piquenard also left his mark on the building's interior, especially Room 212, an ornate meeting room that once housed the Illinois Supreme Court. Mark Sorensen is expected to provide some new details about the room when he speaks to the Society on February 15. Sorensen, president of the Illinois State Historical Society, is a former Illinois State Archives assistant director with broad knowledge of Statehouse art.



Sorensen to Give Rare Insider Look at Statehouse Art

(Continued from page 1)

the centerpiece ceiling mural in Room 212 of the Statehouse that once housed the Illinois Supreme Court. Painted in 1875 by Italian artist Attilio Moretti, it shows the goddess of justice trampling on coins in representing that justice cannot be bought.

The ornate room, located on the building's south side and now used as a Senate Committee Room, was modeled after the Doge's palace in Venice.

Designer's Plaster Molds

The room's ceiling makes extensive use molded plaster, also known as *carton-pierre*. The work was done by day laborers putting plaster into molds designed by Alfred Piquenard, the French-born architect who designed the capitol building with George Garnsey, associates of the Chicago architectural firm, Coch-

rane and Garnsey.

The room went through many changes before its most recent restoration, Sorensen says. Chandeliers from Austria were donated in 1969.

"Win Fritsch of Springfield did painting and woodwork in October 1976 and came back in January 1993 when pieces of the ceiling started falling down," he noted.

Decorations Restored

But the major transformation came in 2001 when New York City-based EverGreene Architectural Arts, was retained to restore the room's historic decorative scheme with dozens of colors and finishes, including metallic paints and powders, stenciling, glazing, gilding, *faux bois*, and *faux marbre*.

Its unique *carton-pierre* ornament was conserved in the ceiling,

and two scagliola columns and bases were restored. It also documented, stabilized and conserved "The Goddess of Justice" and a smaller second mural, *Eagle*.

Multi Hats For Sorensen

During his 27 years of working in Springfield, Sorensen witnessed and researched the many changes that continually took place inside the Capitol and on its grounds, including the "indoor rainstorm" that hit the building last July. He recently led a tour of the building for Leadership Springfield members as part of State Government Day.

In addition to his position with the State Historical Society, he is the Official Macon County Historian. A former member of the Decatur Historic Architectural Sites Commission, he now serves on the Board of the Governor Richard Oglesby Mansion.



TIES? James Cornelius, (center) Curator of the Lincoln Collection at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum will be discussing the ties between William Butler (left) and Abraham Lincoln when he speaks to the Society on March 15.

March Meeting Mystery

Unraveling William Butler’s Little Known Ties to Abraham Lincoln

Who was William Butler and how was his life intertwined with Lincoln?

That’s the question James M. Cornelius will answer when he speaks to the Society at its Tuesday, March 15 at the Lincoln Library in Springfield. The meeting, open to the public, begins at 7 p.m.

Cornelius—who in May 2007 became Curator of the Lincoln Collection at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum—has written a few books and dozens of articles and book reviews about architecture, baseball, literature, and most of all, American and British history.

In his talk, “*New Light on William Butler, Sangamon County Circuit Clerk and One-Time Lincoln Roommate*,” Cornelius will tell what’s been discovered from a new cache of Butler’s personal papers that recently surface, much of it

early but some of it war-date.

“During the war of 1812, Butler served as a messenger, delivering communications from the governor of Kentucky to General William Henry Harrison in the field,” says Cornelius. “He worked as a deputy clerk of the circuit court of Adair County, later as a clerk on a steamboat, then purchased a farm and settled in Sangamon County in 1828. In 1832 he married Elizabeth Rickard, and the couple had three children. In 1836 Stephen T. Logan, judge of the First Judicial Circuit, appointed him as clerk of the Sangamon County Circuit Court, a position he held until for five years.”

Butler was an active Whig, says Cornelius, and later joined the Republican party. He was appointed State Treasurer in 1859 to fill someone else’s term, then elected in 1860. “His contacts with Lincoln during the Civil War were both personal and official; he owned southern cotton by 1864, and needed

permission from Lincoln to sell it.”

A native of Minneapolis, Cornelius received degrees from Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. For ten years he worked as an editor in New York City, at Doubleday, Random House, and *Collier’s Encyclopedia*, then for eight years at the University of Illinois Library’s Illinois Historical and Lincoln Collections.

At the ALPLM he hears from scores of people every month who seek information about specific pieces of Lincolniana – most of it mundane, some of it wonderful; buys or accepts donations of manuscripts, books, and relics for the collection; helps to organize and write the museum exhibits; speaks to private and public gatherings; arranges to lend artifacts to other museums; and publishes short reviews and essays on Lincoln and his times. He and his wife Anne have two teenage daughters.

There’s Still Time to be a Part of a History-Making Event

The clock is ticking, but there’s still plenty of time to join in a world record-making attempt to help kick-off the national Civil War Sesquicentennial. All you need to is participate in a simultaneous reading of Abraham Lincoln’s Farewell Address at 11 a.m. on February 11 at the Lincoln Depot, 10th and Monroe Streets that sponsors are hoping will help set a new Guinness World Record.

The 150th anniversary observance of the Civil War will begin on February 11, exactly 150 years after Abraham Lincoln left Springfield, Illinois on his Inaugural journey as President-elect to Washington, D.C.

Lincoln made an impromptu speech that day from the Great Western Depot before departing Springfield for the last time. The event is sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and Gatehouse Media, Inc., which owns the State Journal-Register and the Great Western Depot site. For more information, go to: <http://extras.sj-r.com/r/depot> or call 788-1356.

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End Notes

Office Volunteers Welcome!

If you'd like to help out, or just man the Society's new office at 123 S. 7th Street any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday morning from 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., the Society would like to hear from you. Occasionally Marion Leach, our office manager, needs to be somewhere else and we need someone in the office. Lots of history to review while you are there!!! Contact us at 525-1961 or schsoffice@gmail.com.



Photo Contest Now on Facebook

Check out our Facebook page! We have a new Mercury Studio photo contest there. Prize to the best identifier!

Forwarding Your Mail? Please Let Us Know!

If you are going on a trip and having your mail forwarded to you, please call the Society's office at 525-1961. Mailed issues of *Historico* cannot be forwarded and are returned to the office with a full postage charge.



2011 Calendar

PROGRAM MEETINGS

Tuesday, February 15

"Statehouse Art: Lost and Found

Mark Sorensen, Iles House

Tuesday, March 15

"Lincoln's Friend: William Butler"

James Cornelius

Tuesday, April 26

SCHS 50th Anniversary Reception, 5:30 p.m.

John Mack Faragher, 7 p.m., UIS

Tuesday, May 17

History and Tour, Lincoln Memorial Garden

Jim Mathais, Executive Director

Tuesday, June 21

Annual Meeting

All program meetings are held at the City of Springfield's
Lincoln Public Library, 326 S. Seventh Street, Springfield
unless otherwise noted.