



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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APRIL, 2012

Researcher to Share New Findings on Sangamo Country's Role in War of 1812

Independent researcher David Brady is not one to pull punches, especially when it comes to history. In 2009, when he last addressed the Sangamon County Historical Society, Brady peeled away the myths surrounding some of Springfield's most prominent citizens and their role in the Panic of 1819, noting at the time that "Our county histories are based on ego inflating personal biases that are problematic. They hide the truth."

You can expect more of the same when Brady takes a hard look at the "War of 1812 in Sangamo Country" on Tuesday, April 17, exploring the politics and personal feuds between early settlers and Native Americans that may have downplayed the historical realities about the area's response to the conflagration.

His talk begins at 5:30 p.m. in the Carnegie Room, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street. The free program is open to the public.

The United States declared war on the British Empire in 1812 for several reasons, chief among them trade restrictions reflecting Britain's ongoing war with France, impressment of

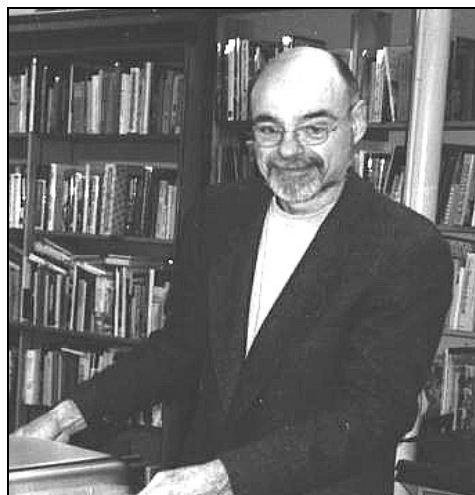
American merchant sailors into the Royal Navy and British support of American Indian tribes against American expansion.

The war was fought in three theaters. At sea, warships and privateers of both sides attacked each other's merchant ships. The British blockaded the Atlantic coast of the U.S. and mounted large-scale raids in the later stages of the war. American successes at sea were characterized by single ship duels against British frigates, and combat against British provincial vessels on the Great Lakes. Both land and naval battles were fought on the frontier, which ran along the Great Lakes and Saint Lawrence River. The South and the Gulf coast saw major land battles in which the American forces destroyed Britain's Indian allies and repulsed the main British invasion force at New Orleans.

From 1811 through 1815, the Illinois Territory was on the border of the conflict. Sangamo Country served as a militarized zone for the defense of the Illinois Territory and was home to hundreds of Illinoisans known as Rangers who patrolled the temporary boundary line between the Native

Americans to the North and the Illinoisans to the south.

"In getting men and supplies to



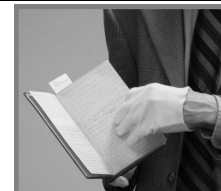
LOOKING BACK: David Brady will provide insight into the War of 1812 here.

point of need, the trail known as the Edwards Trace played a roll topographically important to Illinois defenses," says Brady. "It is during this period of war that much of the first mapping of Illinois and naming of these places familiar to us came about. The war and the Edwards have left their legacy on this land."

INSIDE

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LUNCHTIME LEARNING: Presidential Library and Museum Curator James Cornelius donned gloves to give the Society's new lunch hour series-goers a look at some famous documents. The series wraps up Friday, April 6. For details. See story, page 6.





NANCY
CHAPIN

New Society Website Key to Our Continued Growth

Thank you all for your support of our revised Constitution that was passed by the membership at the program meeting in March. Now the committee will be working on some revisions of the by-laws to bring them up to date.

This month we are introducing our new website and hope it will not only provide both members and guests with lots of information about the society but will also provide a place for non-members to join and/or donate and for members to renew their memberships, correct their address information and both make reservations and pay for special events – AND make donations! Members will also be able to e-mail other members and to take part in various discussion forums.

Sam Wheeler has spent a great deal of time setting the site up and is still fine-tuning it, but we think it is time to introduce it to you, the membership, and ask you to help us fine tune it further. Most of this process is a matter of us learning how to utilize the tools the site provides to us in the best way possible for our membership.

The site offers several levels of security: the public can view general information about the society, see its event schedule, view and order from our list of publications, and get research information; but they will not even have a

'members' button viewable on their screen. Once a member signs in a 'members' button will appear on their home page through which a member can view and change as necessary all of the information in his own profile, add a profile picture, e-mail other members and take part in the members' forums. Members will not have access to other members' information other than the ability to e-mail them.

We realize that at this point in history we have only about two-thirds of the members' e-mail addresses. We believe that some of you have simply not supplied them as you had no need to in the past and that others do not have e-mail addresses. For those without email access to the site, you are STILL welcome to send in renewals and reservations by a check in the mail. (Please identify the purpose of the check on its face.) As time goes on, more of you will be able to access the site through your e-mail address and renew and reserve there.

We believe the system is going to simplify maintaining up-to-date membership rolls and to help us maintain good income records, since the forms provided as downloading the income to our bank account are very detailed.

Nancy

Tasting Wild Apricot: How to Access and Use Our New Website

As Executive Coordinator for the Sangamon County Historical Society, I am always looking for innovative ways to both attract new members and to serve our current members more effectively. A few months ago, I became aware of an online membership software package called **Wild Apricot**, a program designed specifically for small non-profit groups.

In addition to a number of features that make managing the society much easier, the software allowed us to build a new website, which I invite you visit at www.sangamonhistory.org.

There is certainly plenty to see on the new website: you can read past issues of *Historico*, view and register for upcoming events, browse pictures from past events, order publications, renew your membership, donate to the society, and read blog posts. However, I want to call your attention to the special features on the website that are only available to society members.

As current SCHS members, you have the ability to "login" to the site in the upper right-hand corner of the homepage. If we have your current email

address on file, follow these steps to login:

1. In the upper right-hand corner, click "Forgot Password."

2. Type in your e-mail address that SCHS has on file, as well as the security code on the screen

3. Then check your e-mail account and open the message from the Sangamon County Historical Society. Click the link within the message that asks you to choose a new password.

4. A new window will open, which will allow you to set your password.

Now, anytime you access the website, you can "login" in the upper right hand corner using your email and password. By doing so, you now have access to a "Members" tab at the bottom of the navigation bar along the left hand side of the screen.

The "Members" tab allows you to view and search the **SCHS Member Directory**. If you wish to send an SCHS member an email message, simply search for the member in the directory and click on their name.

If the member has an e-mail address on

file, you will see a button labeled "Send message." Click on it and send the member a message. In addition, the Members tab also includes the SCHS Discussion Board, where members can start discussion topics and respond to previous discussion threads. This feature allows members to interact with one another and brainstorm ideas to help the society.

Of course, if you have any trouble accessing any of the unique membership features on the site or if you need to establish or update your email address, just send me an email at swheeler.schs@gmail.com and I will be happy to help you.

The new website has the ability to not only attract new members, but it also has the potential to make current members feel more connected than ever to one another as we all have a role to play in helping the Sangamon County Historical Society fulfill its worthwhile mission of preserving and promoting the history of central Illinois.

Samuel P. Wheeler,
Executive Coordinator
Sangamon County Historical Society

Homestead, Museum and More **Seats Still Available for April 14** **Bus Trip to See Clinton, Atlanta**



RESTORED
 Atlanta, Illinois
 will be a bus
 tour luncheon
 stopping point
 on April 14.

Some seats are still available for a Society-sponsored bus trip to the C.H. Moore Homestead/DeWitt County Museum in Clinton, Illinois with lunch in Atlanta on Saturday, April 14. A coach bus will depart from the Meijer's parking lot at 9 a.m. and re-turn at 3 p.m.

Clifton Moore was a lawyer and land speculator who became a friend of Lincoln's and is felt to have been a factor in Lincoln securing the nomination for President. Moore purchased the homestead, added a library to it and left the house and hundreds of acres of land to his heirs in trust, which preserved the homestead.

The house was purchased by the DeWitt County Museum and restored. In addition there is a carriage barn with sleighs and buggies, a farm museum with vintage tractors and a threshing machine, a telephone exhibit.

From Clinton, tour takers will go across country 20 miles to Atlanta, Illinois, a community that has taken advantage of the Route 66 tourism incentives to restore its downtown to complement its 100 plus-year-old octagonal, limestone library and Illinois' only working wooden grain elevator museum" Tour goes have the option of having a modestly priced lunch (under \$12) lunch at the Palms, a 1930s restored restaurant.

Send checks to the Society at 123 S. Seventh Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701. Tickets are \$45 for members, \$55 for non-members.

New Membership Categories Ahead

Membership Okays Constitution Revision to Allow By-Law Changes

At its March general meeting, members of the Society unanimously endorsed revisions to the Society constitution that will allow by-law changes leading to the creation of new annual membership/giving levels. The new categories are designed to enhance the organization's ability to underwrite expanded administrative operations and support for special history projects. A new annual student membership category may be added.

Special membership benefits will be made available to each category, the details of which will be announced later this spring. Life Members who paid a one-time fee to join, can become part of any of the new groups with the appropriate donation.

Register Now For Meeting at Power Farms

We're doing a bit of logistical planning for the Society's next general meeting that will be held on Tuesday, May 15 at the historic Power Farms east of Cantrall. The meeting will start at 5:30 p.m. We want to include you in the headcount. Please let us know by registering via www.sangamonhistory.org (see page 2 for instructions on using the new website) or by calling the Society office at 525-1961 by Monday, May 7.

We'll be telling you more about the history of the Power Farms--which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places--in the May issue of *Historico*, but if you'd like to get a heads up on this important part of Illinois' agricultural and political history, you may want to purchase a copy of *Power Farms: The Story of George Power and the Illinois Farm He Developed* published by the Society in 2011. Priced at \$5, it can be picked up at the Society office.



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Historico, published 10 times a year, is the official monthly bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society.

You can download back issues of *Historico* in PDF format by going to our website, www.sangamonhistory.org.

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

Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor



THE BIG TOP ON THE PRAIRIE

The circus came to town, at least for an evening, March 20 when historian and writer Tara McClellan McAndrew took a close look at the state's circus history, one that put Illinois right in the center ring. Her lively presentation, to nearly 100 people who came to the presentation in the Carnegie Room of the City of Springfield's Lincoln Public Library, included descendents of some of the country's best know circus performers.

"Illinois is known for many things—corn, Chicago, Abraham Lincoln, and *political* circuses, but not many people realize we were once center ring for real circuses," McAndrew told the crowd. "According to circus historian Fred Pfening III, editor of *Bandwagon*, the magazine of the Circus Historical Society, Illinois played a major role in America's circus history," she said.

As part of her research, McAndrew discovered that Illinois State University

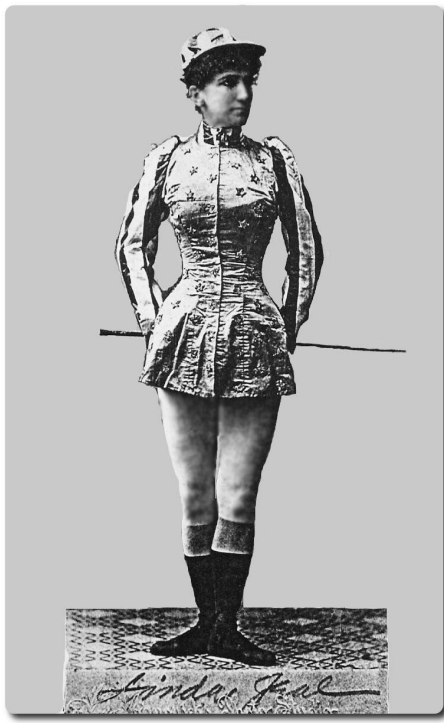
had an expansive circus collection that includes photos, films, documents, videos, oral histories of performers, books and some artifacts. "Years back I heard that Petersburg had an extensive circus history, but until I found ISU's collection, I didn't know that Bloomington did too, or the rest of the state."

The circus heyday for Illinois ran from the 1890s to 1930s, when "scores of performers wintered here." But circuses were performing in the state as early as the mid-1830s," she said. In 1871, Quincy became the winter quarters for the W.W. Cole's New York and New Orleans Circus and Menagerie, one of the biggest circuses in the country. It wintered there for five years, she noted. Peoria was also a hotspot for circuses starting in the 1870s, including a Young Buffalo Wild West Show that featured Annie Oakley and a man roping a rhino.

What made Illinois so appealing? Ex-

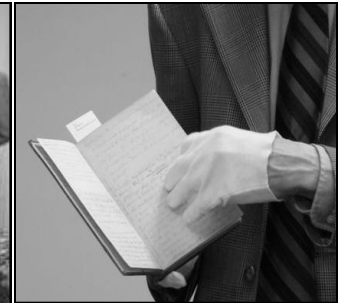
perts that McAndrew interviewed said in the state's rural areas, hay was cheaper and more plentiful than in urban areas and where the cost of living was lower. The state's extensive railroad system was also a draw as was its proximity to two big circus management towns, Baraboo, Wisconsin and Peru, Indiana. Chicago was a draw because of the many circus equipment manufacturers like tent and wagon makers, were headquartered there. Chicago's large population was also a draw.

Armed with a power point show that ranged from Ringling Brothers posters to photos of some of the powerhouse circus performers of their day, McAndrew shared many of the anecdotes she came across in her research including the fact that from 1870 to the 1930s, Bloomington had a world-wide reputation as the place to go if you wanted to be a trapeze artist in the United States.



CIRCUS TIME: (Above, left) speaker Tara McLellan McAndrew meets with Jan Costello (center) of Petersburg, and her family who are related to circus performer Kitty Kelly, (above, with who for her act, had doves landing on her arms as she walked a globe and a teeter-totter). Her husband Dan and brother Pat, both clowns, developed their own circus that performed in the state. Costello is one of Kitty and Dan's grandchildren. At left, McAndrew and Society board member Donna Catlin whose "Grandma Dallie" was the star and famous bareback rider for the Ringling Brothers Circus. Dallie's Jeal's adopted mother, Linda Jeal, (left) was known as the "Queen of the Flaming Zone" because she raced on horseback through a hoop of fire. In the 1890s, she and Dallie moved to Havana where they operated a practice barn. Catlin remembers going to circuses with "Grandma Dallie" and her other circus relatives as a child. She said she was struck by how "everyone seemed to be related to everyone and how busy the circus people were working backstage." Below, left, the program drew a full house to the Carnegie Room.





INSIDER LOOK: Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library Curator James Cornelius (at podium, right) with Society president Nancy Chapin, donned gloves to handle a book from William Herndon's library (above right). At right, author Roberta Volkmann with her new book on Susan Dana Thomas, the subject of her March 30 presentation. The series concludes on Friday, April 6 when Presidential Library Services director Kathryn Harris discusses *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

Lunch Hour Lecture Series a Hit as Audience Hears More on Lincoln's World, Life of Susan Lawrence Dana; *Uncle Tom's Cabin* Focus Next

The Sangamon County Historical Society launched its new Lunch Hour Lecture Series on March 23 with a talk by Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and Library Curator James Cornelius on "Recent Revelations in the Lincoln World, Big and Little", followed on March 30 with a presentation by author Roberta Volkmann about her book, *"Susan Lawrence: The Enigma of the Wright House."*

The Noon series, at the Society's office at 123 South Seventh Street, includes lunch. Tickets for the remaining presentation, April 6, by Kathryn Harris, director of Library Services at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library, are \$20. Harris will provide insight into some of the issues surrounding "Uncle Tom's Cabin," an anti-slavery novel by Harriet Beecher Stowe published in 1862.

Members can bring one ticketed guest. For information, call the Society office at 525-1961.

"Following sandwiches with both fruit and spinach salads, rounded off with a lemon pound cake, James Cornelius, Curator of the Lincoln collection at the Presidential Museum and

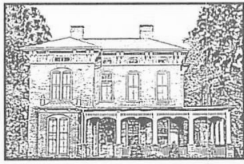
Library, proved he was the perfect person to inaugurate our new luncheon series. He promised and came through with 'revelations,'" noted Society president Nancy Chapin. "First he passed around a photograph that he had just picked up in the mail on the way over. He explained that it was fairly typical of many items that were received each year as being a special Lincoln artifact. The photograph was obviously not of Lincoln, despite the affidavit with it."

Next he shared a copy of a portrait of Willie Lincoln that had turned up fairly recently, Chapin said. "He is still in the process of trying to discover where and when the portrait was painted as the bucolic background intrigues him. Then he donned his curator's gloves and displayed a book from William Herndon's library and showed the detailed notes that Herndon had made on every spare space he could find. He pointed out that the meticulous Herndon was responsible for most of the research in cases Lincoln litigated during the time of their partnership. The Herndon book, and this one was on religion and science, was part

of a recent study of the reading habits gleaned from the libraries of the Lincolns and of Herndon." Cornelius wrapped up his presentation by explaining that he was looking into what factors might have led to the creation of the fake portrait of Mary Lincoln recently discovered at the Governor's mansion." It was fascinating to learn of the twists and turns his research turns up and the more intimate luncheon setting made a good backdrop for such a presentation," Chapin added.

Volkmann's new book focuses on one of Frank Lloyd Wright's early clients, Susan Lawrence Dana, whose 35-room mansion, now a popular Springfield tourist attraction, is considered one of the finest examples of the Prairie School of Architecture in the world. Volkmann, who said she has been closely associated with the Dana Thomas House for decades, told the gathering that her research gave her new insights into the character of Lawrence. Copies of her book are available through Amazon.com in both paperback and Kindle or can be purchased directly from the author by contacting her at cvolk@aol.com.

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**My Name is Duncan
And I Love History**



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The Community Learning program at Lincoln Land Community College is beginning a non-credit curriculum related to interpretation about people, animals, nature, and cultural artifacts. Upcoming programs include:

Discovery Daytrip: Taylor Studios in Rantoul, one of the busiest exhibit fabricators in the world. March 16, 2012.

Springtime and Gangsters, overnight tour of Southern Illinois, hosted by Liz and Taylor Pensoneau, April 19-20, 2012.

Interpretation and Your Summer Visitors. April 25, 2012.

Vicksburg in the Civil War-The Key. Overnight to Vicksburg, with daytrip to Natchez, May 3-6, 2012



Other offerings, including those leading to certification follow, in association with the National Association for Interpretation (NAI).
For information, call 217-786-2430 or 217-786-2432.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday April 6

Lunch and Lecture Series

“Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” Speaker, Kathryn Harris, Director, Library Services, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
Noon to 1 p.m., Society offices, 123 South Seventh Street, Springfield. Fee. (See page 6)

Saturday, April 14

Bus Tour to C.H. Moore Homestead/DeWitt County Museum and Atlanta, Illinois. Bus departs 9 a.m. from Meijer’s
Parking Lot and returns by 3 p.m. Some seats still available. See page 2.

Tuesday, April 17

“The Sangamon Country and the War of 1812.” Speaker: David Brady. 5:30 p.m. Carnegie Room, City of Springfield Lin-
coln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield.

Tuesday, May 1

Thomas Houghan’s Secret Past: An Early Springfield Scandal. 5:30 p.m. at Edwards Place, 700 North Fourth Street,
Springfield. Edwards Place curator Erika Holst talks about the prominent physician and original owner of Edwards Place— from
1833 to 1843 known as Houghan House — and the secret that erupted around him in the 1860s.

Springfield Photographs: Images from the Illinois State Journal Glass Plates. Discussion by Rich Saal, Photography Edi-
tor, **The State Journal Register**, Carnegie Room, City of Springfield Lincoln Library, 326 South Seventh Street, Springfield. The
images will be on display on the Library’s second floor through Thursday, August 3.

Tuesday, May 15

Trip to Power Farms, owned by Harry and Suzy Estill, 6 p.m., three quarters of a mile east of Cantrall, Illinois. Please register on
line if you plan to attend. (See page 3).

Thursday, June 21

SCHS Annual Meeting, Pleasant Plains, Illinois. Guest speaker, Sally Cadagin, Sangamon County Historical Society
president, 2002.

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