



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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MAY, 2012

Important Part of State's Agricultural and Political History

For May Meeting, a Tour of Power Farms

Members of the Sangamon County Historical Society will be heading to the Cantrall area on Tuesday, May 15 for an visit to the historic Power Farms, an important part of the state's agricultural and political history. The gathering, which begins at 5:30 p.m., includes tours of the spacious house built by early settler George Power that has been a landmark for the region for nearly 200 years, as well as the outer buildings and property.

Although the meeting is free, pre-registration is urged since there will be at least two consecutive tours of the site. Refreshments will be served. To register on-line, go to www.sangamonhistory.org to sign up.

Power Farms, owned by Power descendent Harry Estill, and his wife, Suzy, has been in family hands for 191 years. Now encompassing 1,500 acres, it traces its history back to George Power (or "Squire" Power, as he was affectionately known to his farmer neighbors and to the early citizens of Springfield) who came to the area from Kentucky in 1821. Power eventually farmed and raised horses and cattle on some 2,500 acres, in 1855 building the brick home that is the centerpiece of the historic farmstead.

For almost 20 years Power was a justice of the peace in the little settlement of Cantrall and before him, according to tradition, Abraham Lincoln tried his first law case.

The little white frame courthouse in which this case was heard in 1836 still stands on the grounds of the Power home and will be one of the buildings meeting-goers will see.

The case and its significance are detailed in *Power Farms: The Story*

of George Power and the Illinois Farm He Developed that was written by Estill and published by the Society in 2011.

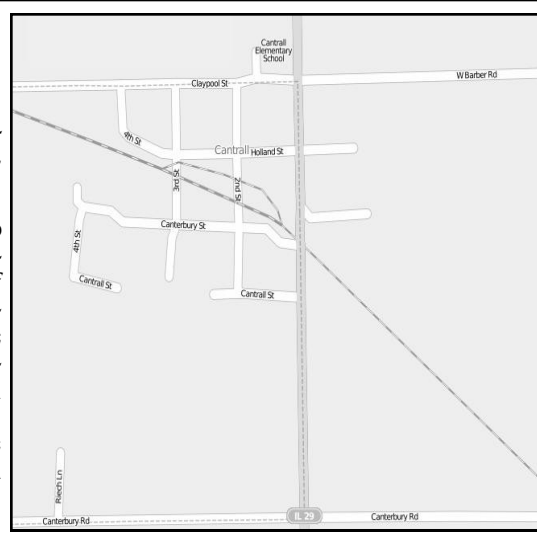


LANDMARK: The George Power House, built in 1855.

How to Get to Power Farms

Location: Power Farms is located on West Barber Road, 3/4 of a mile east of Cantrall.

Directions from Springfield: Go north on Route 29 past the Airport to Cantrall, a distance of about seven miles. Once in Cantrall, West Barber Road will be on your right. (Cantrall's Elementary/Intermediate School will be on the northwest corner). Power Farms is 3/4 of a mile east on West Barber Road and will be on your left.



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NANCY CHAPIN

New Website a Success! More Good Things to Come

The introduction of our new web site: www.sangamonhistory.org, has been wonderfully successful.

Many of you have tried it out, and several have registered for meetings and made payments online. We have even had several people join and pay their dues online. No one has reported any problem at all with using a credit card to pay, and we hope that when the annual meeting and membership renewal time come, many of you will utilize the site to make your reservations and pay.

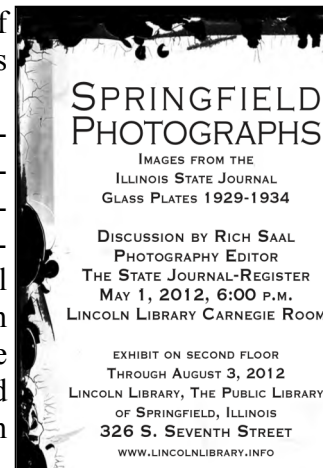
The use of the website for record keeping and payments will greatly simplify our management and bookkeeping work! Keep your eye on the site over the summer. There are more good things to come!

Please do note the date changes for a couple of special events. **State Journal-Register** photographer, Rich Saal has been working on a rather fascinating Masters' Project for his degree at UIS. He has rescued

and digitized glass plates of Springfield life in the 1930s that had been abandoned.

He asked for and received support from the Society for his planned photographic exhibit at the Lincoln Library in May. He will be introducing the exhibit on May 1, which was the same date we had re-scheduled Erica Holst's follow up on the Houghan scandal.

Erica most graciously offered to change the date of her follow up talk on Thomas Houghan's to June 5 so as not to conflict with Rich's opening. We're grateful for Erica's generosity and hope to see many of you at both programs!



Nancy

Board Redefines, Expands Membership Levels; Students, Special Giving Levels Are Added

Following unanimous approval by the general membership in March dealing with by-law changes, the Society board of directors in April passed changes to the by-laws that further define and expand membership options.

Effective immediately, general membership dues per household will be \$25 (with a limit to two persons per household). A new category, student membership, has been created. The \$15 per year fee will include an e-mailed version of *Historico*. Not for profit institutional

membership will be \$20 and will include a mailed copy of *Historico*. Life membership, (limited to two persons per household) will be \$700 in one payment.

In addition, the board created three new expanded annual membership levels that will bring with each, invitations to exclusive special events and other premium options. They are Pioneer (\$100), Settlers (\$250) and Trailblazer (\$500). Life Members who paid a one-time fee to join, can become part of any of the new groups with the appropriate donation.

MAY MEMERBSHIP REPORT

The Sangamon County Historical Society is pleased to add the following new regular members to its ranks:

- Barbara Frey
- David Grimm
- Todd Helm
- Lucille Holmes
- Karen C. Schwenk



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

Society Wish List: Equipment, Volunteers for Key Committee Posts

You might just be able to play Santa Claus a little—make that a lot— early this year by donating a piece of equipment to the Society.

“We really would like to have our own digital projector,” notes president Nancy Chapin, “especially for programs that are held other than at Springfield’s Lincoln Library (where such equipment is generally available). Committees would also be able to make use of a digital projector. If you have a spare or are thinking of trading up to a newer model, please keep us in mind.”

A digital projector isn’t all the Society needs at this point, she adds. “We would like to find an experienced office manager who could spend a couple of hours a week at the office to keep things organized., We also need three other volunteers to handle key jobs” she adds, including someone to shepherd and build upon the Friend and Sponsors section of *Historico*, a poster maker, and someone to head our bookselling committee.”

The Friends and Sponsors coordinator would be the point person contacting and following up with potential supporters whose camera-ready business cards or announcements run on page 7 of each edition of *Historico*. The Poster Marker would be responsible for creating posters to help publicize meetings. The Book Selling Committee oversees inventory of Society publications and handles sales at program meetings.

If you’re interested in playing Santa or otherwise filling a need for the Society, please contact the office through our website at www.sangamonhistory.org or by phone,” Chapin said.

Springer Family Seeks Descendants of War of 1812 Soldier for July 21 Ceremony at Berlin Cemetery

Are you or do you know a direct or relative descendant of Nathan M. Butler (1795-1842), a veteran of the Battle of New Orleans during the War of 1812?

Society member Don Springer and his brothers Bill and Phil would like to hear from you.

The Springers, who are among Butler’s descendants, are planning a special War of 1812 Memorial Nathan M. Butler Grave Dedication Ceremony on July 21 at the Berlin Cemetery in Berlin as part of a nationwide Bicentennial marking the War of 1812. The ceremony will begin at 11 a.m.

The 200th anniversary commemoration is being coordinated here by the Sangamon River Chapter, United States Daughters of 1812.

“According to John Carroll Power’s 1876 book, *History of Early Settlers in Sangamon County*, Nathan M. Butler, and his wife Mary (nee Harding) lived in Berlin and had seven children. We would like to be able to reach out to their descendants and make sure they are invited to this historic ceremony,” Springer said. Springer can be reached at 217-414-6178. His brother Bill can be contacted at 504-218-9173.

Here’s the list of Butler’s seven children according to Power in 1876:

WILLIAM A. BUTLER (born 7/23/1817), married Mrs. Jane Clark, (nee Trotter), lived on a farm four miles east of Springfield

STEPHEN H. BUTLER (born 1/12/1818) married Nancy J. (nee Coats). They had seven children: *Isaac Butler*, wife Emma J. (nee Clark) of Springfield; *Julia B.*, husband James W. Simpson. They lived in Pleasant Plains and had three children; *William E. Sallie E., Mary E.; Mary Butler Donner*, (husband Joseph Donner), they had one daughter: *Linnie B.; William Butler* (born 1856); *John Butler* (born 1859); *Ira Butler* (born 1861), and *Ida Butler* (born 1861).

JOSHUA C. BUTLER (born 11/26/1820) married Margaret J. (nee Ristine) and later Elizabeth (nee Stitt). They lived northeast of Berlin, and had four children: *Margaret J., Mary E., Robert L., and Charles B.* (born

(Continued on page 8)

Hot Off the Press

Society Booklet Provides A Taste of Chilli’s History

What’s cooking?

A new Society booklet that will should sate your taste for chilli history.

Springfield, IL: A Chilli History, penned by chilli connoisseur, and Sangamon County Historical Society member Les Eastep, will be rolling off the press this month. The

tome provides an in-depth look at some of the early chilli makers here like Ray DeFrates whose Ray’s Chilli at one point was named the best chilli in the country by Mimi Sheraton when she was food critic for *The New York Times*.

Chilli has a long history here. The area’s first chilli parlor, the Dew, opened in 1908 although chilli was prepared and packaged for sale in Springfield in the 1890s. Even the spelling of chilli, with two rather than one “l” is a regional twist. Eastep also provides the results of years of Chilli Cook-off competitions. You’ll be able to pick up a copy at the member price of \$5.

SPRINGFIELD ILLINOIS: A CHILLI HISTORY

Compiled by
Les Eastep
HAVE CHILES-WILL TRAVEL



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LOTS TO SEE: Society tour-goers visited the Clifton H. Moore Homestead/DeWitt County Museum (upper and lower left) in Clinton and other sites in nearby Atlanta on April 14 including the latter community's unusual octagonal limestone library and nearby clock tower. Below right, Bill Thomas, Atlanta's "one man chamber of commerce," demonstrates how the clock is hand-wound, a process done weekly by community volunteers.



Donna Catlin photos

Bus Trip a Rewarding Venture for this First Time Tour-Taker

By Cathy Mosley

The April 14th trip to the C. H. Moore Homestead began as a dreary, soggy day, and admittedly I didn't know what to expect since this was my first bus trip with the Sangamon Historical Society. However, I had nothing to worry as I was welcomed onto the bus, and (Society president and tour leader) Nancy Chapin quoted her grandmother as saying, "Rain before 7. Gone by 11."

Her grandmother was right.

Along the way Nancy explained that she had chosen Route 54 so we could get a better feel for how Illinois developed. She went onto explain that the route still showed how towns were laid out by the railroad in 12 mile increments for their workers. As we came into Clinton we began to see some examples of lovely old homes, but nothing

prepared us for the sight of the C. H. Moore Homestead; a stately green-painted Victorian mansion that rested comfortably, and grandly, on a manicured lawn.

We began our tour in the kitchen, with Larry Buss, the live-in manager, welcoming us. Buss's enthusiasm radiated off him as he gave some of the history of the house, and of its restoration; plus he offered a pleasant surprise - we could take pictures. He went onto explain that the house was originally built by a successful grain and lumber dealer John Bishop and his wife Minerva. The house was finished in 1867, but was sold in the early 1880's to Minerva's brother, Clifton Moore, after her death. Mr. Moore was already a prominent figure in Illinois, and DeWitt County, since he was prosperous lawyer, who claimed such ac-

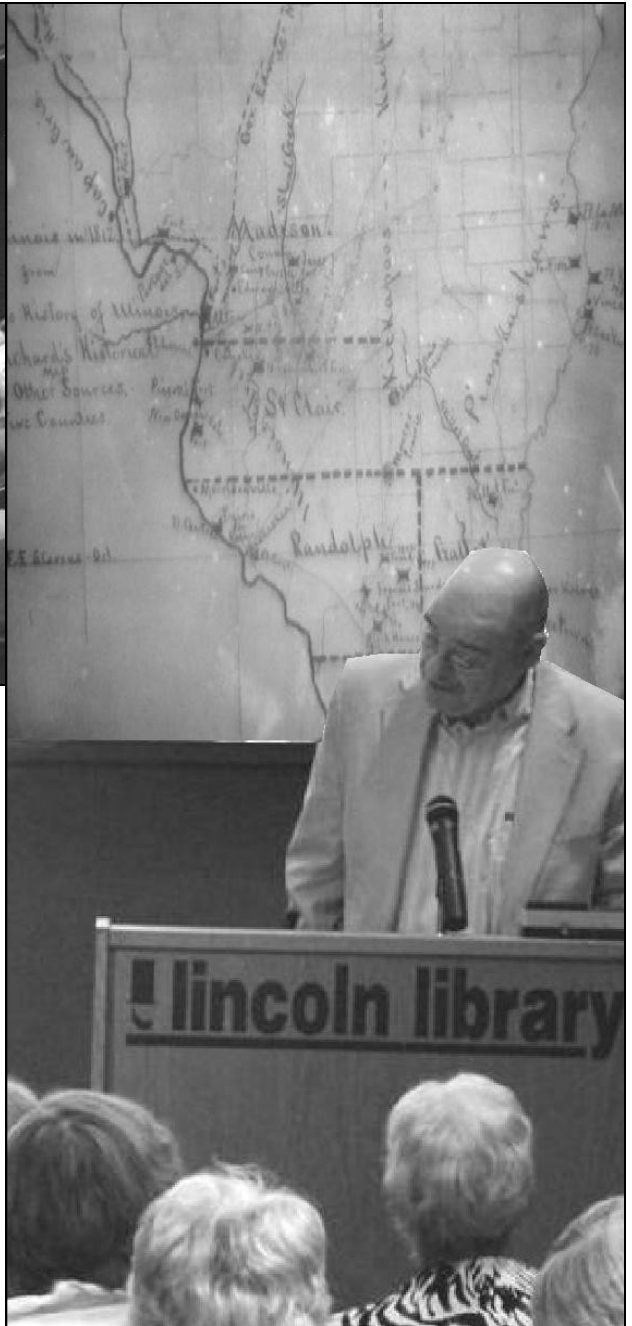
quaintances as Abraham Lincoln, and Judge Davis.

In the 1960's it came under the DeWitt County Historical Society, and it was through its and the town's efforts, that the mansion was restored, and became the home of its museum.

Buss had many interesting stories, but he also allowed us time to look around on our own. The house is a true treasure trove of beauty, with lovely examples of art, furniture, and clothing. In addition there was plenty to explore - the kitchen, two parlors, a music room, a child's bedroom, and two adult bedrooms.

However, for me, the true masterpiece was the library with its accented, built-in bookshelves and the fact that the top half of

(Continued on page 6)



INDEPENDENT researcher David Brady pulled no punches last month as he described in detail the politics and personal feuds between Native Americans and squatters who settled in Sangamo Country before and during the War of 1812. Speaking to a full house who gathered at the Carnegie Room of the City of Springfield’s Lincoln Library for the Society’s regular monthly meeting, Brady noted that the Native American’s story had been lost in time, falling victim to the exploits of settlers who erected cabins and fences on Indian lands, stole horses and took other aggressive acts that squeezed out native tribes like the Kickapoo and Potawatomi. Using old maps, Brady pointed trails long used by Native Americans and the patrolled lines of demarcation that separated Indians and settlers but which eventually led to the Indians losing their major hunting grounds and in many cases, their lives. Atrocities were committed on both sides before and after the war.

Donna Catlin photos

Despite Dreary Day, Society Bus Trip Brings a Sunny Experience

(Continued from page 5)

the library could only be accessed through Mr. Moore’s bedroom.

The basement of the mansion houses the DeWitt County Historical Society’s collections, including a prairie room where you can see what life was like living in a cabin. In the outbuildings, there are three farm museums: a telephone exhibit, a blacksmith shop, and a carriage barn.

We could have easily spent the day

there, but lunch at the Palm Grill in Atlanta was beckoning.

Once in Atlanta we picked up Bill Thomas, who is Atlanta’s “one man Chamber of Commerce.” There is little doubt that Thomas truly loves Atlanta, though a relative “newcomer” of 20 years. After retiring from teaching, he created Teleologic Learning Company, headquartered in Atlanta. He has also been influential in promoting Atlanta’s tourist trade,

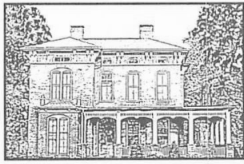
Lunch was at the Palm Grill, a re-

stored 1930’s diner that in its day was a well-known half-way stop for those traveling Route 66 from Chicago to St. Louis.

By the end of lunch we were already hoping for more trips, since we had to leave this fascinating town, (but not before we caught a glimpse of Route 66’s Paul Bunyon, who is settled in his new home).

(Cathy Mosely is a member of the Society)

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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:

"Preserving Family Items"

Taught by Jon Austin, former director, Museum of Funeral Customs, Saturday, May 12, 2012, 9:30 -11:30 a.m., Montgomery Hall, Room 1142, Lincoln Land Community College. Fee: \$18. Register for CEW 113-45 by calling 786-2292 or go online to www.llcc.edu/commed.

"Vicksburg in the Civil War-The Key." Overnight to Vicksburg, with day trip 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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Search On for Butler Descendants

(Continued from page 3)
They lived near Virginia, Illinois.

ELIZABETH E. BUTLER BARRETT (born 8/4/1823), husband William T. Barrett.

JOHN C. BUTLER (born 4/1825), married Frances (nee Brown).

RACHEL R. BUTLER PIRKINS (born 182?) husband Edward Riley Pirkins. *They had seven children: William E. who married Rose H. (nee Cooper) and had a child, Rose Belle; Nellie; Cordella E. (who married William H. Little); Emma L., Fannie M., Sallie B. and Julie.*

SAMUEL H. BUTLER who married Matilda Ann (nee Blair) in Texas, They had two children. *Their son, James E. married Molly E. (nee Oglesby) and moved to Missouri with three children. Daughter's name is unknown.*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, May 1

Springfield Photographs: Images from the Illinois State Journal Glass Plates. 6 p.m. Discussion by Rich Saal, Photography Editor, **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

Power Farms Tour, 5:30 p.m., three quarters of a mile east of Cantrall, Illinois. Free, but please register on line at www.sangamonhistory.org. if you plan to attend .

Tuesday, June 5

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.

Thursday, June 21

SCHS Annual Meeting, Pleasant Plains and Clayville, Illinois. Program hostess Sally Cadagin, Sangamon County Historical Society president, 2002. Details and reservation information will appear in the June issue of ***Historico***.

MAY 2012 MAY 2012 MAY 2012 MAY 2012 MAY 2012 MAY 2012