



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744, Phone: 217-525-1961, e-mail: schsoffice@gmail.com web: www.sangamonhistory.org, SangamonLink.org

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About John Albert Jones

Born in 1806 into a politically prominent Washington D.C. family, John Albert Jones' father, Edward, was appointed Chief Clerk of the Treasury Department by Alexander Hamilton and served the administrations from George Washington to Andrew Jackson.

John Albert Jones moved to Pekin, in Tazewell County, Illinois in 1835, where he edited the *Pekin Gazette* (afterwards called the *Tazewell Telegraph*), a Whig paper and the pioneer journal in that county. In 1837 he was appointed the Tazewell County Circuit Clerk, a position he held until 1857, entertaining Circuit Judge David Davis and then attorney Abraham Lincoln when they held court at the Tazewell County Courthouse in Tremont, Illinois.

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First Look

Society to Launch Underground Railroad Conductors Historical Marker Program at Oak Ridge on May 16

Members and guests of the Sangamon County Historical Society will be heading outdoors on Tuesday, May 16 for a new Society-sponsored historical marker program at Oak Ridge Cemetery: *Heroes and Heroines: Honoring the Legacy of Underground Civil War Era Railroad Conductors*.

The event, starting at 5:30 p.m., will combine historical re-enactment, period music, and unveiling of the first of what is anticipated to be the installation of special plaques on Oak Ridge grave sites identified by historians as Civil War Era "Freedom Train" conductors, part of a vast secretive network of volunteers who helped fugitive slaves escape to the North.

The first plaque at Oak Ridge will honor John Albert Jones, who in 1837 became Tazewell County's fourth Circuit Clerk. At the time of his death at age 82 in 1888, Jones resided in Springfield and was buried at Oak Ridge. At the event, he will be portrayed by popular SCHS Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk re-enactor Pat Foster, whose costume will reflect clothing of the period.

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PORTRAYING John Albert Jones at the ceremony will be popular SCHS Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk re-enactor Pat Foster. To his left, the actual marker.

Dues Due, Dinner at Your Fingertips...And a Very Rare Honor

The clock keeps ticking and then *zing!*

If you've forgotten to pop that check in the mail for your annual SCHS dues, you've still got a few days before the Society's fiscal year ends on May 31,

The same is true if you haven't jotted down the date for the Society's annual dinner coming up on June 13, But that too has a deadline and this year we guarantee you will not want to

miss it, especially because you'll be witness to a rare honor bestowed on someone you likely know. **Hint: See page 3.**

And then there's that *zing!* If you were planning to apply for one of the Society's annual Special Project Grants, it's definitely too late. The deadline was April 20. Now it's nail-biting time for the applicants in a year filled with tough competition.

"We received nine entries this year,

which makes for a lively discussion for the Special Project Grants committee meets to recommend which will get the nod," says Pete Harbison, this year's chair.

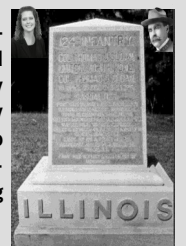
"We work with a limited budget and have rules in place that govern the types of projects we can fund. That always prompts a broad range of internal discussion to take place between the committee members and that often

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COUPLING expertise and photos assembled by historian Lee-Ann Burgener for the Society's April 18 monthly program meeting, members and guests learned about the life, local works and national monuments by Colonel James Culver, one of Springfield's most prolific 19th century builders. Burgener's presentation reflected years she's spent digging into the history of the illustrious Culver family and its ties to American history including a memorial to the 124th Illinois Infantry at Vicksburg National Military Park.





From the President's Desk



Susan
Helm

What I've Learned In My First Year as President of SCHS:

Here are a few things I've learned about this organization since becoming President last June.

- ✓ The Sangamon County Historical Society is fiscally responsible – good stewards of their money, i.e. **your** money. That's saying a lot. Besides being guided by our very able Treasurer Jerry Smith, we have many members on our board who provide a great deal of institutional knowledge, including when we weren't always guided by a budget. I appreciate that each dollar that is spent is scrutinized in the best of ways. It's wonderful to know we've got money but not necessarily spend it, unless necessary or appropriate.
 - ✓ In good weather or bad weather, many members will show up to our programs and field trips. This occurred both at our outdoor September meeting when it was 95 degrees and most recently when we had a member's only tour of Tony Libri's properties at the former Ursuline Academy and there was no heat in many of the buildings we went through.
 - ✓ Our organization supports all like-minded ones in the community. We promote other history focused organization's events and even fundraisers.
 - ✓ Through our websites and President's lines, we attempt to provide history related advice and support whenever possible. A huge partner in this effort in the Sangamon Valley collection
- staff at Lincoln Library with Curtis Mann and Stephanie Martin. Many of our board members like Cinda Klickna and Vicky Whitaker as well as *SangamonLink* editor Mike Kienzler depend on access to their collection and occasional advice.
- ✓ Lincoln Library with Summer Griffith at the helm is a wonderful resource for us, hosting our board meetings and most programs and, as previously mentioned, offering the services of the Sangamon Valley collection. We wouldn't be nearly as successful without the resources of the library.
 - ✓ Our board members are extremely dedicated and despite health issues, they "keep on trucking".
 - ✓ Our board members can agree to disagree and even have lively discussion whether it's about a grant application or a budget item and I respect and encourage that.
 - ✓ We will continue to keep a paper version of "*Historico*" which is refreshing since so many newsletters have gone digital.
 - ✓ Our community is very interested in history and we have many good stories to share.
 - ✓ Last, but not least, we value your membership and encourage you to renew it in May.

Thank you for your continued support of the Sangamon County Historical Society.



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Winner, Certificate of Excellence, Illinois State Historical Society.

You can download back issues of *Historico* in PDF format by going to our website, www.sangamohistory.org or sancohis.org. Catch us on **Facebook** and **Twitter**. Send event announcements to historicoeditor@gmail.com.

Vicky Whitaker, *Historico* Editor.

Cinda Klickna, Mike Kienzler, *contributors*

At Annual Dinner June 13:

Society To Honor Curtis Mann For Lifetime Achievement



When members and guests gather at the Island Bay Yacht Club for the Sangamon County Historical Society's Annual Dinner on Tuesday, June 13, they will be part of a history making event that goes beyond the traditional components of the organization's annual meeting.

For only the second time in its 62-year history, the Society will be presenting its coveted "Lifetime Achievement Award" to a historian and public servant whose work and efforts have advanced and helped spread the region's knowledge and understanding of local history.

The recipient will be Curtis Mann, who in July will be retiring as head of the City of Springfield Library's Sangamon Valley Collection after 30 years on the job. A past president of the Sangamon County Historical Society, he also serves as the City's Historian.

Friends and family will be joining Mann at the dinner, providing personal and professional reflections on his role in making the Sangamon Valley Collection a major resource for historical research.

The first recipient of the Society's Lifetime Achievement Award was educator and historian Dr. G. Cullom Davis in 2018, who was recognized for his efforts in creating an oral history program at Sangamon State University that had helped preserve the county's rich history and inspired others to take the same path.

Like Mann, Dr. Davis, who died in 2022 at age 87, was a past president of SCHS.

Mann, who holds a Master of Science degree in Information and Library Science from the University of Illinois-Champaign and a Bachelor of Arts de-

gree from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale where he majored in history, first joined the Library in 1993.

Over the decades, he has left his mark on the history community, not only as a skilled and thoughtful librarian, but also as an author, researcher, archivist, and public speaker,

Mann's research interests include the English colony founded by George Flower and Morris Birkbeck in Edwards County, Illinois, and the early

agricultural history and settlement of central Illinois.

Mann has authored or co-authored a dozen books about local history

in the Springfield area and has held key roles or advisory posts in history related organizations or agencies, among them the Illinois Foundation for Frontier Studies, the Elijah Iles House Foundation and the Illinois State Historic Sites Advisory Council.

Reservations for the June 13 dinner can be made on-line at the Society's website, sangamonhistory.org or by filling out the form on page 7 and mailing it to the Society with your check. Payment must be received no later than Tuesday, June 6. Tickets are \$30 per person.



Curtis Mann

2022-2023 OFFICERS

- President.....Susan Helm
- Vice-President.....Cinda Klickna
- Secretary.....Sarah Adams
- Treasurer.....Jerry Smith
- Past-President....Stephanie Martin

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Term Ending June 2023

- Vincent Chappelle
- Peter Harbison
- Mary Mucciante
- Ruth Slottag
- Scott Pillsbury

DIRECTORS

Term Ending June 2024

- Mary Alice Davis
- Kathy Hoffmann
- Kathy Dehen

DIRECTORS

Term Ending June 2025

- Elaine Hoff
- Larry Stone
- Angela Weiss
- Vicky Whitaker

Please make note of our official mailing address:

SCHS
Box 9744
Springfield, Illinois,
62791-9744

New Program Extends Effort to Recognize Underground Conductors

(Continued from page 1)

The new SCHS program builds upon one initiated two years ago by the Tazewell County Genealogical and Historical Society in conjunction with the the Peoria Branch of the NAACP and Tazewell County Clerk, John C. Ackerman who put together six public recognition events marking the gravesites of 25 known Tazewell County Conductors of the Underground Railroad. Peoria and Woodford Counties have continued this effort in their areas.

Dangerous Effort

Beginning sometime in the late 1840s and continuing throughout the Civil War, an estimated 800 enslaved individuals passed through Tazewell County on a pathway to freedom in Canada, thanks to the efforts of local conductors.

Illinois, while a Free State with laws that did not allow slavery within the state, strong laws against harboring runaway slaves or assisting in any way existed. The minimum fine for harboring slaves was \$1,000 and a minimum six months in jail. Additionally, hired bounty hunters worked within the state to capture and either return or, in most cases, resell individuals into slavery in St Louis.

No Plaque

Jones' role was acknowledged at ceremony at the mansion he built in Tremont, Illinois, today the only remaining structure in the county that was part of the Underground Railroad. But a cemetery plaque had no where to be placed in Tazewell County since Jones was buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Sangamon County.

Last fall, Ackerman approached the Sangamon County Historical Society seeking its assistance in placing a marker at the Jones grave that October in conjunction with the

185th anniversary of Jones having been appointed the Tazewell Clerk. But in addition to SCHS already in the throes of preparing for its annual Cemetery Walk, a review of where Jones is buried—in an older, remote part of the sprawling Oak Ridge site—made it clear that its distance, narrow access road for vehicles and lack of parking (coupled with October's traditionally unpredictable weather) would not work. Instead, SCHS suggested May coupled with an offer to expand the Underground Conductor Gravesite Marking Program to Oak Ridge in much the same way as the program expanded into Tazewell's nearby neighbors.

Ceremony At Bell Tower, With An Indoor Option

Representatives from Tazewell County are expected to attend the May 16 ceremony that will be held adjacent to the Oak Ridge Bell Tower with parking nearby.

Outdoor seating will be limited, but attendees are encouraged to bring a folding chair. In the event of rain, the program will be held indoors at the nearby Springfield and Central Illinois African-American History Museum at 1440 Monument Avenue which has an adjacent parking area.

In case of rain, the May 16 ceremony will move indoors to the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum.



“We’re so pleased our counterparts in Tazewell County reached out to us, noted SCHS president Susan Helm. “It is an excellent way to honor these historic brave individuals from our area. We look forward to seeing them finally recognized.”

Jones Ties Reached Back to Lawyer Lincoln's Circuit Court Riding Days

(Continued from page 1)

Abraham Lincoln stayed at Jones' Tremont home on his numerous visits for court. The house was occasionally used as a stop on the Underground Railroad (another location outside Tremont was more frequently used). The floor hatch to the hidden basement is located in the bedroom in which Abraham Lincoln would use during his stays.

In 1861, Lincoln appointed Jones Superintendent of Commercial Statistics in Washington D.C. Jones resigned in 1866 and the following year was appointed by Judge Davis as Clerk of the Circuit Court of the United States for the Southern District of Illinois, prompting his relocation from Tazewell County to Springfield where he purchased a home at 1015 South Fifth Street.

In failing health, Jones resigned that position in June of 1887 and died in July of 1888 .



UNDERGROUND RAILROAD STOP: The brick Jones House at 412 East South Street in Tremont, Illinois, built in 1845, is thought to have hid slaves traveling the Underground Railroad. Abraham Lincoln, a close friend of Jones, was a frequent visitor while a lawyer riding the Eighth Circuit Court. A Lincoln campaign rally was held there in 1860.

A Lesson in Fun and Funding Limits

Special Projects Grants Began With History Trivia Night at Old State Capitol

(Continued from page 1)

leads to altering the ground rules down the line if needed. The nature of the types of grants we've funded in the past has changed over the years and we continue to learn and recommend things as simple as wording on the application to more complicated issues.

"Nearly two decades ago, there was no Special Grant program, much less a budget to underwrite it," recalls Mary Alice Davis, a Society past-president and long-time board member.

"I remember the discussion about those funding requests in the early days. The Society would be approached with requests throughout the year, some of them small like one from a Boy Scout seeking funds for materials and plants to restore a small but historic gravesite on Chatham Road that had not been attended to for years. He wanted to clean it up and add some plants as his Eagle Scout project. I think he got \$75. But then there were some pretty pricey requests too, really well-over the Society's ability to handle financially.

"As I recall, the turning point came out of a casual discussion in which someone thought the Society should create and purchase custom brass plaques, donating one to each public school in Springfield so students could read about their school's history. The concept as well

as the cost of such a venture in addition to ignoring schools in other districts in Sangamon County was the wake-up call. A Special Projects Grant committee was formed and brought some rules and regulations to the process, which continues to be reshaped to

this day."

It was under Davis' presidency that the Society began holding an annual fundraiser whose proceeds were directly tied to the Special Project Grants awards. It started as a small *History Trivia Night* at the Old State Capitol, an event that encouraged local history groups to form tables and compete against each other, both in playing local history trivia and eventually coming up with clever tabletop displays on a historic theme.

The event became so popular—even drawing players from as far away as St. Louis—that it out-grew the Old State Capitol.

History was eventually dropped from its Trivia Night title, the Society adjusting to audiences with broader interests caught up in what had become a fairly popular and more competitive game night here and elsewhere, with teams of players drawn to Trivia Nights with substantial cash prizes.

"Covid, of course, provided the final blow to the Trivia Night phenomena, but by then the Society, like other local organizations, were well into researching ways to provide financial support for historical projects, an effort the Society continues to pursue to underwrite both the Grant Program and to underwrite our own local history projects such as our annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk," Davis noted.



TIGHT SQUEEZE: Local history was the name of the game when the Society held its first History Trivia Nights at the Old State Capitol to underwrite its then new Special Project Grants program. Pitting teams representing local history organizations against each other, the first fundraisers packed a small room on the lower level. Eventually it occupied part of the building's first floor as well.

The Calendar

A Heads Up Guide to Area History Events



Send announcements, information, photos and illustrations to historicoeditor@gmail.com. You can still see a list and links to all the Zoom programs the Society offered during the Pandemic on-site meeting shut-down, by going to the SCHS website, sangamonhistory.org.

Tuesday, May 16: *Heroes and Heroines: Honoring the Legacy of Underground Civil War Era Railroad Conductors*, 5:30 p.m. Oak Ridge Cemetery. The Society launches the first in a series of special dedication presentations honoring Civil War Era Underground Rail Road Conductors buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery. The outdoor event will combine historical re-enactment, period music, and unveiling of a gravesite plaque that will go on each grave as historians work to identify those at Oak Ridge who were heroic "Freedom Train" conductors. The program, based on and with the assistance of the Tazewell County Genealogical and Historical Society program for which it created the plaques, will be held adjacent to the Oak Ridge Bell Tower with parking nearby. Seating is limited, but attendees are encouraged to bring a folding chair. In the event of rain, the ceremony will be held indoors at the nearby Springfield and Central Illinois African-American History Museum at 1440 Monument Avenue which has an adjacent parking area.

Tuesday, June 13: SCHS Annual Dinner, 5:30 p.m., Island Bay Yacht Club, 76 Yacht Club Drive, Springfield. Tickets are \$30 per person, For dinner details, a mail-in reservation form or instructions to order tickets on-line, see page 7.

Saturday, August 26: Hoopskirt and Haber-Dash 5K Fun Run. The Springfield Art Association's Historic Edwards Place museum will benefit from this creative event, announced now so you can spend the next few months gearing up for it! There's a \$30 entry fee but for this 5K fun run, you can dress like you just stepped out of a haberdashery in hat and tie, or that you just made your debut in the biggest hoopskirt you can find! The course is flat in Abraham Lincoln's Springfield, Illinois and will take you through the Enos Park neighborhood, north through Lincoln Park, and back down again. Fun costuming is encouraged, with a prize for the best dressed of the bunch. After the run, you can stick round for historical activities. Dogs will be welcome at the race (but not inside the museum)! A race shirt and museum



entry is included in the registration price. Medals will be awarded to winners. Activities after the race include the 10th Illinois Volunteer Cavalry Band and historical cricket in the yard (They'll have an expert on hand to teach you how to play!).

Sunday, October 1: SCHS Annual Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk. And if you think August seems far away, think October. The Sangamon County Historical Society is already working on its next Oak Ridge Walk. There's a lot of planning that goes into this event that draws thousands of history buffs each year. It may seem months away, but time moves quickly, so mark your calendar for this annual event.



2023 SCHS Annual Dinner information and Reservation Form

GENERAL INFORMATION

DATE: Tuesday, June 13, 2023

WHERE: Island Bay Yacht Club 76 Yacht Club Drive, Springfield.

TIME: 5:30 p.m. Social Hour; 6:30 p.m. Buffet Dinner, Back Patio overlooking Lake Springfield.

TICKETS: \$30 per person. (Ticket order information below. Payment must be received by June 3).



BUFFET DINNER MENU

Mixed Greens with Candied Pecans, Slice Strawberries, mandarin orange with Poppseed dressing.
Seasoned Grilled Breasts of Chicken.

Mediterranean-Style Farfalle Pasta with Olive Oil, Garlic, Sundried Tomatoes, Artichokes, Fresh Basil, Parmesan Cheese.
Sauteed Zucchini, Yellow Squash, Red Peppers, Onion Rolls and Butter

Lemonade, Ice tea and Water

DESSERT TABLE: Strawberry Shortcake with Angel Food Cake,
Macerated Strawberries and whipped cream, Chocolate Texas Sheet Cake.

◆
CASH BAR

SCHS ANNUAL DINNER MAIL-IN RESERVATION FORM or PAY ON LINE AT www.sangamonhistory.org.

PAYMENT MUST BE RECEIVED BY JUNE 3. Make checks payable to SCHS. mail to SCHS, Box 9744, Springfield, Illinois, 62791-9744.

1. Total Number of Tickets: _____

2. Your Full Name and of those covered in this ticket order: (Please print) ▼

3. Your address: ▼

4. Phone: ▼

5. E-mail: ▼

Sangamon County Historical Society
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Sangamon County Historical Society 2023-2024 MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form

Mail this form with your check to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. Our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31. All memberships cover adults and children 16 and over at living at the same address. Be sure to list their names. *PLEASE PRINT.*

Your Full Name _____ Spouse/Significant Other First Name _____

Spouse's maiden name where applicable _____ Your e-mail _____

Your address _____ City, State , Zip _____ Phone _____

Full Names of other family members included in your membership:

Choose Your Level of Membership: Regular (\$30) Pioneer (\$100) Settler (\$250) Trailblazer (\$500)
 Lifetime (\$700 one-time fee) College/University Student (individual) (\$20)

This is a GIFT (Name of recipient, mailing and e-mail address):

I am adding a donation to the Society in addition to my membership in the amount of \$ _____

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