



Historico

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

April, 2008

Wednesday, April 9, 5:00 PM

Board Meeting

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room South

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Tuesday, April 15, 7:00 PM

Program

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North

A History of the Springfield Municipal Opera from 1950 to the Present

Tom Shrewsbury

Mr. Shrewsbury's early career centered around the performing arts. He was involved in professional theatre where he knew and worked closely with such personalities as Vincent Price, Bob Fosse, and Carol Burnett. His professional background focused on administration and marketing. He served as the United States Director of Rehabilitation International in New York City and served as a liaison to Mrs. Richard Nixon for the employment of the handicapped.

Mr. Shrewsbury will explore the original concept of the Springfield Muni Opera prior to and including its original opening in 1950. He will discuss the Muni's success and failure, and what led to its final demise. This includes the three groups who used the site prior to its ultimate destruction. Mr. Shrewsbury will outline how the Muni was reorganized in 1964. Largely due to his efforts, the Muni is now one of only a few similar community theatres of its size in the United States that is entirely self supporting and debt free, having drawn 1,000,000 patrons since 1964.

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Around Town -

April 5, Saturday, Vachel Lindsay Home
2:30 until 4:30 p.m.

"Topping It Off--170 Years of Women's Hats in America" program and afternoon tea. Reservations required. Small Fee. Call for info. 524-0901 Display of Period Hats from private collection.

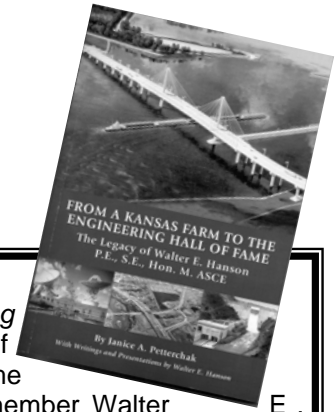
April 12, Saturday, Vachel Lindsay Home
2:30 P.M.

"Poets in the Parlor" Professor Ethan Lewis. light refreshments follow.

April 26, Saturday Governor's Mansion
12:00 Noon Illinois State Historical Society Annual Awards Luncheon. For more information call 525-2781.

We Welcome New Member

Ann Kramer



"*From a Kansas Farm to the Engineering Hall of Fame*" is a new biography of Springfield civil engineer and long-time Sangamon County Historical Society member Walter E. Hanson. Society past president Janice Petterchak authored the book.

A naval officer in World War II, Hanson in 1947 attained a master's degree in civil engineering from the University of Illinois. He and two partners founded W.E. Hanson & Associates in Springfield in 1954. Over the years, he and other engineers in the firm designed dozens of buildings, bridges and dams across the United States and a number of foreign countries. One of their major projects was the Clark Bridge across the Mississippi River at Alton. Still headquartered in Springfield, the now-named Hanson Professional Services has grown to 450 employees with offices nationwide.

The book is available for \$25 by contacting Betty Lou Hicks of Hanson Professional Services, 414-7919. Proceeds are being donated to the Sangamon County Historical Society, Sangamon County Community Foundation, and Brookens Library at the University of Illinois at Springfield.



Mr. Walter Hanson hosted employees and guests at a reception held at Hanson Engineering offices in Springfield on March 18. The book, "*From a Kansas Farm to the Engineering Hall of Fame*", written by Janice Petterchak was featured at the gathering. Complimentary books were presented to the Illinois State Library, Lincoln Library and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Mr. Hanson took pleasure in presenting checks to the Sangamon County Historical Society, the Sangamon County Community Foundation, and Brookens Library. He told of his association with each of these groups and spoke very fondly of his long-time ties with the SCHS. Mr. Hanson was grateful to Taylor Pensoneau, immediate past president of the society, in providing the literary link to Janice Petterchak as a respected biographer. John Huther, who recently served on the Board of Directors of SCHS was also cited as an individual who shared a great interest with Walter in Sangamon County history.

SCHS is most grateful for Mr. Hanson's generosity.

Carolyn Moore, President

Interested in Genealogy?

The Illinois State Genealogical Society is sponsoring tours of the Illinois State Archives and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library on April 18 and 19th. If you are interested in learning more about what resources are available and where, you may want to sign up for these one or more of these tours. The cost is \$12.00 per non-member and \$10.00 per member per tour. For information and registration:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~ilgs/>

Report on March program -

Dr. Richard Taylor, of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, began the meeting by recounting how a chance connection with the widow of the Lawrence family lawyer enabled him to obtain a great many of the Lawrence personal papers soon after the house was purchased by the State in 1981. Those records and papers went a long way towards 'fleshing out' the flamboyant, but tragic life of Susan Lawrence. Married in the 1880s, she had lost two children and was widowed by 1900. Her beloved father died the following year, and she found herself the head of not only the family but a vast fortune.

Dr. Taylor pointed out that instead of turning to local architects such as the Helmles, who were long-time family friends, she turned to the young, experimental Frank Lloyd Wright to construct a mansion surrounding her family home. While it is not known why Lawrence chose Wright, his concepts of naturalism may have meshed with a growing spiritualism that Lawrence was exhibiting at the time.

By the time her mother died in 1905, Lawrence was holding not only great social gatherings but also séances in the house. IHPA has her letters to the 'spirit world' demonstrating her growing interest in the esoteric and metaphysical, and her calculations based on her belief in numerology.

She married Jorgen Dahl, 24 years her junior, and he died soon thereafter. She then married an old family friend, which turned into a disaster and divorce.

By the early '20s she had turned the house into 'The Lawrence Center of Constructive Thinking' and moved next door to a smaller house. Meetings were held for various causes at the big house, from spiritualism to suffrage. She backed various causes, among them a Women's Rights Amendment, only to have it opposed by other women's groups who feared the loss of traditional paternalism.

Dr. Taylor ended by noting Lawrence's long search for identity and meaning of life seemed to do nothing but create more confusion for her. By 1942 she was out of money and declared incompetent because of irrational behavior. She spent her last years living at St. John's Hospital.

History Fair Awards!

SCHS has provided \$400.00 for prizes for the Illinois Historical Preservation Agency's Western Regional History Fair on April 5th. This regional competition is open to both Junior High and High School students. Winners will be selected to go to the state-wide competition on May 8. The public is invited to observe the Regional projects from 1:00 – 2:00 pm on April 5th at the State Journal-Register offices.



The Society is pleased to support the area students research projects on state and local history. Judges for the History Fair include the following members of the Historical Society: Nancy Chapin, Deanna Funk, Marty Paludan, Cathy Caughlin and Elaine Birtch.

Elaine Birtch, Project Award Chairman

*Donaion gratefully received
In Memory of*

Winifred Barringer

From
Perry Hall



*Fulton County Historical Society,
Inc. Rochester, IN*

April 26-27—18th Annual Redbud
Trail Rendezvous

Rendezvous on river bank por-
trays frontier history with tepees
and historic tents and camps,
foods cooked over wood fires,
music & dance on Chippeway
Village state, muzzle loading
shoots, traditional crafts, blanket
trading. For more information:
[http://www.htctech.net/~fchs/
redbud2.htm](http://www.htctech.net/~fchs/redbud2.htm) or call: 574-223-
4436.

The Old State Capitol hosted a birthday party for itself to commemorate its 40th Anniversary in fine style on Tuesday, March 25. About 150 people attended the gala event which was a tribute to all of the engineers, architects and trades people who made it possible before much was known about how to even approach such a project.

Mark McDonald, host of "Illinois Stories" for WSEC, was MC and showed clips from his "Illinois Story" on the Old State Capitol renovation. The evening concluded with Don Ferry, Wally Henderson and Augie Wisnosky receiving, not keys to the city, but keys to the building (that actually work) from Mayor Davlin in appreciation of their efforts 40 years ago.



Curtis Mann's report on—

Fort Taylor

PART III

The official military census of Sangamon County of able bodied men between the ages of 18 and 45 was taken in 1862 and 1863. Harvey Taylor, 38, was enumerated among these men. Taylor's occupation was listed as operating a bawdy house. A man named Robert Taylor was listed directly below Harvey indicating he was living in the same ward. Robert, 28, was also listed as a bawdy house operator. No records have been discovered yet to prove these two men were brothers but the same last name and occupation is a strong indication of some familial relationship. Robert Taylor could have been operating the second house owned by the Harvey and Lucinda.

On February 10, 1863 Harvey and Lucinda Taylor deeded the houses and lot to a woman named Emmaline Gladden for \$5,000. Gladden deeded the property back to the Taylors a week later for only \$500. Harvey also purchased a half lot along Madison Street a few months later.

Emmaline Gladden is one of the shadowy residents of Springfield who have very little recorded about their lives. She appears as the head of a household in the 1860 census. Miss Gladden is a 31-year-old New York native operating a boarding house. Though she is not known to have been a brothel

owner, one should remember that Harvey Taylor was also listed as a boarding house operator in the 1860 census. Gladden owned \$2,500 worth of real estate and \$1,400 worth of personal property. She was married on April 21, 1864 to a Robert B. Taylor in Springfield. This would have made her Harvey's sister-in-law if Robert was Harvey's brother.

Early in February the Springfield police began a series of raids in an effort to crack down on brothels. Police aided by a guard of the Invalid Corps raided the brothels of Ida Johnson and Harvey Taylor. Ida or Ada Johnson was the former inmate at Harvey Taylor's house who was robbed by a fellow prostitute five years earlier. She apparently prospered and became a madame herself. Eight prostitutes at Johnson's and eleven at Taylor's were arrested. The newspaper article noted no men were found in either house and speculated that some advanced warning had been given to warn the men of the coming raid. Each of the arrested prostitutes was fined \$50 and costs. When brought before the justice of the peace "some of them appeared to be ashamed of their condition, while others gloried in their depravity."

After three years of service many Illinois regiments returned to Camp Butler in 1864 to be mustered out. While most of the veterans soon left for their homes, others remained in Springfield to celebrate their return to private

life. Their revelry included much drinking which soon turned to lawlessness. The citizens of Springfield reported being assaulted and accosted by drunken soldiers day and night.

Conditions turned violent on February 4 when a group of drunken soldiers went on a rampage and destroyed several businesses including the Taylor's brothel.

"The establishment presided over by the evil genius known as Harvey Taylor was completely gutted: tables, chairs, sofas, mirrors and all the furniture were completely ruined. A desirable result but accomplished in an unlawful and much to be condemned manners. Several liquor establishments were also destroyed by the rioters."

Madame Ida Johnson started the new year off with a bang by shooting a young soldier on New Year's Eve at a ball. Johnson was not charged for the shooting indicating the young soldier was making some kind of advance upon her. The soldier died at his room in the St. Charles Hotel two days later. The paper noted "the noise and excitement had an unfavorable effect upon the deceased."

Police officials routinely raided the Taylor establishment during the waning months of the Civil War. Lucinda Taylor was fined on four separate occasions during the early months of the year for keeping a brothel. At least nine inmates of the establishment were also arrest and fined on each occasion.

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



Non-profit Organization
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2008 Program Schedule

May 20

7:00 PM *History of the Sangamon County Fair*

TBA

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room, North

Fort Taylor Continued from p. 5

Harvey and Lucinda became the owners of an 100-acre farm west of Springfield which they purchased for \$10,000 from John and Mary Prince in November. The farm was located on the north side of West Washington Street where the Fallingbrook subdivision is located today. The farm, which was purchased in Lucinda's name, was paid for with \$5,000 down and a mortgage for the remaining \$5,000.

4th installment next month -

Check out the website!

Fresh, new look to the website (www.sancohis.org). Our new webmaster is on the job!

Lincoln's "Cache"

The Central Illinois Geocaching Assn. And the Menard County Trails and Greenways are cosponsoring a *Lincoln's "Cache"* on April 12 starting from New Salem. They will be searching for 30-40 caches at historic locations. If you have a handheld GPS and would like to take part, call 632-4000 for information.

This could be a great activity for Sangamon County too, and if anyone is interested, try to go to New Salem on April 12th to see how it runs and then please let us know of your interest, schs@sancohis.org, or 522-2500.

Vachel Lindsay Home

Volunteer Orientation

April 26, Saturday 9:30 - 2:00
at Vachel Lindsay Home
Light lunch served.
Call to register: 524-0901

Thanks to Dave -

Our thanks to Dave Brady for being our 'bookseller' at the ISHS Symposium At Millikin College on March 14. He made lots of sales and drew attention by having our new, color banner on display.