



Historico

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

March, 2007

March 1, Wednesday, 5:00 pm

Board Meeting

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room South

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March 20, Tuesday, 7:00 pm

Program

Brother James Court Chapel, 2500 St. James Road, Springfield

Brother James Court – A Proud Role

Brother Anthony Joseph

The historic role of Brother James Court and its predecessor, St. James Trade School, in serving developmentally disabled men, orphans and many others will be related by Brother Anthony Joseph, the Mission Effectiveness Director at Brother James, in a presentation in the facility's contemporary chapel.

Since 1928, the facility known first as St. James Trade School and then Brother James Court, a ministry of the Franciscan Brothers of the Holy Cross, has occupied a site in a largely rural setting in the far northeastern corner of Springfield. The Franciscan Brothers, an order with roots in Germany, established St. James on 275 acres bought for a dollar from the Hospital Sisters of St. Francis, the operator of St. John's Hospital. Early on, the Franciscans operated a farm and dairy on the land. As time passed, a monastery and buildings for teaching trades and academics were constructed—almost exclusively by the Franciscans and their students.

To reach Brother James Court, follow Sangamon Avenue East/Camp Butler Road (east of Interstate 55) to a split in the road just before a railroad crossing. Veer left on LaVerna Road and proceed to St. James Road. There, turn left and then almost immediately turn right into a drive leading to the parking lot for St. James Monastery. After parking there, walk to the neighboring Brother James Court and the chapel.

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Around Town in March

March 10

2:30 pm Vachel Lindsay Home
Poets in the Parlor

March 24

1:00 pm
6th Annual Poetry Reading
Museum of Funeral Customs

Report on February program

In a Civil War uniform and showing a single-shot musket, Robert J. Davis held the attention of a large audience in the assembly and display area of the Iles House, as he assumed the character of Andrew Lewis, a slave who escaped from his master in Missouri to become a member of the Illinois 29th Infantry of the U.S. Colored Troops (USCT). Lewis' family in Kentucky was broken apart as slave buyers took away his mother, his sisters, and finally him to different states. But, before he left, his grandmother whispered to him that she had had a vision that one of the family would one day be free, and she was sure Lewis was that one.

By secretly rowing across the Mississippi with other runaways, Lewis came to Quincy, Illinois, where he learned about the conflicts and the compromises over slavery that led to the Civil War. With many of his fellows, Lewis joined the Union army, mustered in at Camp Butler, and

in May 1864, he was a member of the Army of the Potomac in Washington, D.C.

As Lewis, Davis made sure we understood that the Union defeat in the Battle of the Crater, during the siege of Petersburg, Virginia, July 30, 1864, was due to Gen. George Meade's insistence that inadequately trained white troops lead the assault rather than the fully trained colored troops who were originally supposed to. Near the end of the war, Lewis' regiment was busy chasing Gen. Lee towards Appomattox Court House. In the extensive question and answer session, where Davis could be himself— not Lewis, he revealed that Lewis was killed in the Appomattox campaign. He is buried in Virginia, not Illinois.

Davis brought large display maps with him as well as photographs of black Union soldiers and various books on black soldiers and sailors in the Civil War. The prediction of Lewis' grandmother came true for him with Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. As Davis explained after his program, "Despite all the quibbling about whether the Proclamation really freed any slaves, the only thing the black slave heard in it was one word, 'freedom,' and he made it a real emancipation by using his feet and walking away from slavery."

*Many thanks to the
Iles House crew!*

Many thanks to Dave Baringer, Dick Hart and the volunteers at Iles House for their help in preparing for the February program!! Not only did they set up chairs and get the house ready, but there was a bit of snow the week before, which meant that they had walks to clear and a whole parking lot to make ready— no small feat! With great effort and some ingenuity as to how to make parking and walking safe, they managed!



Volunteer Opportunity

The Elijah Iles House is currently recruiting volunteers for the new spring tourist season.

We are looking for people interested in Springfield and Sangamon County History who would conduct tours of the Elijah Iles House. The Iles House has a unique history that is fun to share with visitors. Training is provided. Please contact Linda Denk at 546-9537

The President's Corner

As many Sangamon Countians move along in years, they are fond of recalling that at some point in the past—maybe very long ago—they witnessed a certain historic event or, perhaps, saw or briefly met a famous person. Thus, so it may be with some of those in the throng that recently crowded into the middle of Springfield to witness Senator Barack Obama's announcement from a podium on the grounds of the Old State Capitol that he is running for president.

Irrespective of whether one is a Democrat, Republican, libertarian, independent or something else, an individual who braved the February cold to catch Obama's big moment will be able to say that he or she was there at the start, so to speak, in the event that Obama's quest is successful. It is the kind of thing that can give one, well, a sort of bragging right later on to a grandchild or younger friend. It allows a person to claim to be a small part of history.

Delving into this area brings much to mind. I cannot count the number of southern Illinoisans who in years gone by seemingly felt that the signature occasion in their life was getting to witness the public hanging in 1928 in Benton of legendary gangster Charles Birger, an event that still remains the last hanging of a convicted criminal in Illinois. Truly, it has been hard to believe that just about everybody in the lower part of the state back then appeared to have watched Birger's hanging. Likewise, darn few of the southern Illinoisans I've known who were living in 1925 did not claim to have personally observed and luckily survived the devastating tornado that ravaged the region on March 18 of that year, leaving death and incredible destruction in its wake. People want to identify with something special in history, regardless of whether it is good or ugly. For many of us, it's just part of human nature.

In many instances, the memory of just seeing a celebrity, or of maybe chatting with one, instills a sense of pride to be resurrected again and again. Take my own Grandmother Pensoneau. A highlight of her life, judging by the frequency of its mention, had to be the time she said she saw John Philip Sousa, the famed bandmaster and composer, direct a musical program at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. I never had the nerve to determine for myself if Sousa actually did appear at the fair. I just accepted the veracity of it if Grandma said it.

I myself am in the league of those I'm writing about here. In trying to make an impression on certain acquaintances, I have resorted at times to a recitation of some of the well-known individuals that I met and chatted with as a young general assignment reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* in the early 1960s. In all honesty, this was no big deal because I was the night reporter for the newspaper—the only one at the time. So, when famous persons came to St. Louis for one reason or another, and they were available only in the evening for a brief interview, myself and a staff photographer were the only ones working. Consequently, by default I reckon, I can look back on having spent a few minutes with the likes of (not in order of importance) Lucille Ball, Jane Russell, Walt Disney, Martin Luther King Jr., Harry Truman and others. Yes, that's right, Harry Truman. He was about a decade removed from the White House when he took a train to St. Louis to attend a convention and I was fortunate to get a few minutes alone with him at St. Louis' Union Station.

Okay, so I am guilty of name-dropping. By the same token, I also guess that I fall into the ranks of those who witnessed Birger's hanging or saw the great southern Illinois tornado in 1925. Although maybe only in a small way for most, each person can be a historian. One's recollections may fail to impress many listeners down the line. But, hey, there are always the grand kids.

We Welcome New Members

Mary Crane
Carol Lohman

Shirley McConaughay
Patricia Wilkes

Victor Young

The City Mills

Curtis Mann

The City Mills, one of the earliest steam flour mills in Springfield, was erected in 1839-1840 by James L. Lamb and Asa Eastman. This mill was located on South Seventh Street just north of where the Iles House stands today. It was located here because the Town Branch stream was nearby and provided a water source. Early histories note this mill was first located in the village of Auburn but later moved to Springfield by Eastman. The mill was sold to Addison Hickox and Thomas V. Wilson in 1852. They operated in for a year before selling to Springfield watchmaker Thomas Alsop. The mill was destroyed in a fire on May 23, 1854 and was considered a complete loss. Alsop formed a partnership with Horace Hickox, the brother of Addison. This partnership eventually lost the mill to creditors and it was sold to Addison Hickox in 1859. Hickox operated the mill through the Civil War and then sold it to his son Eaton R. The mill's end came on September 5, 1867 when the boiler exploded and destroyed the mill. The explosion was reported to have such force as to entirely fill the air in the vicinity with timbers, boards, shingles, and fragments of the boiler. Five people were in the mill but none were killed. The mill was not rebuilt.

John T. Trutter

John T. Trutter, the 1st President of the Sangamon County Historical Society, died on February 2, 2007 in Northfield, IL. John was a veteran of WW II, a retired vice president of AT&T and chancellor of the Lincoln Academy for 16 years, in addition to having served on and led numerous organizations and civic endeavors in the Chicago area.

Despite having moved to the Chicago area years ago, John's interest in Sangamon County history never wavered. He frequently sent clippings, comments and mementos to the Society, in fact last month's *Historico* carried a picture of the 1961 anniversary banquet featuring the "Long Nine" that John had just recently sent. He will be missed.

John was interred in the Tanner mausoleum at Oak Ridge Cemetery.

*In memory of
John T. Trutter*

The Edward English Woods Family



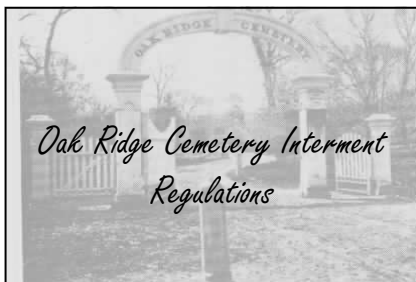
Bus tour to Allerton Park

Friday, May 11

The 1500-acre woodland, garden, meadow, and prairie landscape that surrounds Allerton House was once the private estate of Robert Henry Allerton. In 1946, Allerton gave his beautiful Illinois estate to the University of Illinois for use as "an educational and research center, as a forest and wild-life and plant-life reserve, as an example of landscape architecture, and as a public park."

The core of the estate features an English-inspired manor house to be toured with lunch served in the dining room. Outside there is a reflecting pond, an approximately 10-acre meadow, and a series of formal sculpture gardens through which we will be given a guided tour. There will be a tour of the quaint and historic town of Monticello.

The cost of the trip, lunch included, is \$50.00 for members; \$60.00 for non-members. You are welcome to reserve your place on the bus by sending a check to SCHS, 308 E. Adams, 62701 or to wait for the sign up form in the April *Historico*.



Oak Ridge Cemetery Interment Regulations

Are you one of the fortunate ones whose ancestors are buried in Oak Ridge Cemetery? Are you hoping to be able to use some of the remaining interment rights for yourself and your family? The time to begin preplanning those arrangements is now.

Often someone will come in our office clutching an old deed telling us of how they want to use the remaining interment rights. As we catch our breath we are hoping that there has not been a loss in that family or there is not an imminent death. The process can sometimes be quite lengthy. People often mistakenly think that if they have an old deed that they in fact control any remaining interment rights. Having this piece of paper does not insure that this is the case.

Other families will come into the office feeling assured that they have the right to determine the use of unused interment rights because a loved one has left all of their personal property to them. Ownership of unused interment rights passes by specific bequest in a will. If there is no will or specific bequest, interment rights can pass by standard affidavit that is completed at the time of purchase or at a later date by the interment right owner(s.) If there is no specific bequest or a valid affidavit then unused interment rights pass to the heirs of the deceased interment right owner(s) in perpetuity. (765 ILCS 835/16 and 760 ILCS 90/1)

If the original interment right owner did not preplan and did not assign interment rights then current ownership follows Illinois cemetery law. For example if Great-grand Father purchased twenty-four interment rights and did not use all of them prior to his death, then at the time of his passing the remaining interment rights are equally owned by his legitimate, illegitimate and legally adopted children. In this example if there were sixteen unused interment rights and if he had four children each child does not own four of the remaining spaces. Each child owns $\frac{1}{4}$ of each of the sixteen remaining spaces. As each one from that generation passes, their interest in the interment rights passes to their legitimate, illegitimate and legally adopted children. This passing of ownership continues from generation to generation.

In the case of Oak Ridge Cemetery where many of these old family lots were purchased in the 1800s we are now four or five generations removed from the original interment right owner. This can sometimes mean that dozens of signatures are needed to use the remaining interment rights. If those signatures are being collected at the time of a death this only adds to the stress and grief being experienced by the family.

Families who are interested in using interment rights purchased by ancestors should begin acquiring signatures now as they preplan their final arrangements. Old historic cemeteries like Oak Ridge Cemetery are interested in preserving family heritage and will explain the process in detail. They will help you draw a family

tree and guide you where to look for information. It is then up to the family to acquire the needed signatures.

If many family members no longer live in the area it is sometimes best to obtain the needed signatures to have all the remaining interment rights placed in the name of a local heir who can easily oversee any upcoming interment. But this decision is entirely up to the family. Each family situation is different.

If ownership is going to be relinquished to one person, one couple, or a few people, then a new deed can be issued to the new owner's name(s.) Most cemeteries charge a deed fee to change the cemetery records and record the new deed. If ownership stays within the immediate family then an additional contribution does not have to be made to the endowment care fund. But under Illinois law if ownership transfers to a non-immediate family member then a contribution must be made to the endowment care fund for each interment right transferred.

Obtaining signatures and securing new deeds should be done well in advance of the time of need if at all possible. Determine your family's wants and needs and begin the process now to establish ownership or assignment of the family interment spaces you hope to use.

LuAnn Johnson
Executive Director
Oak Ridge Cemetery

Editor's note: Read the above carefully as Illinois Cemetery statutes apply to all cemeteries in Illinois, whether or not they currently follow the law strictly. At some point in the future it may become very difficult to locate all the heirs to obtain permission for burial in any Illinois cemetery.

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



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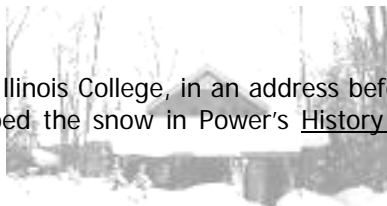
2007 Program Schedule

All programs start at 7:00 PM

<i>Brother James Court—A Proud Role</i>	March 20	Franciscan Brothers
Brother James Court		
<i>New Berlin—Pretzel Town on the Prairie</i>	April 17	Village leaders
Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room, North		
<i>The Statehouse Pressroom—A Place Like No Other</i>	May 15	Taylor Pensoneau
Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room, North		

The Deep Snow

Rev. J.M. Sturtevant, President of Illinois College, in an address before the Old Settler's Society of Morgan county, at Jacksonville described the snow in Power's History of the Early Settlers of Sangamon County Illinois as:



"In the interval between Christmas, 1830, and January, 1831, Snow fell all over central Illinois to a depth of fully three feet on a level. Then came a rain, with weather so cold that it froze as it fell, forming a crust of ice over this three feet of snow, nearly, if not quite, strong enough to bear a man, and finally, over this crust of ice, there was a few inches of very light snow. The clouds passed away, and the wind came down upon us from the north-west with extraordinary ferocity. For weeks, certainly not less than two weeks, the mercury in the thermometer tube was not, on any one morning, higher than twelve degrees below zero. This snow fall produced constant sleighing for nine weeks."

Editor's note: Since February 13th's blizzard, people have asked about how the famous 'deep snow' compared. Powers noted that he used Rev. Sturtevant's description because he had been brought up in New England and knew about snow.