



# Historico

The newsletter of the Sangamon County Historical Society  
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 www.sancohis.org 217.522.2500

**November, 2005**

**November 9, Wednesday, 5:00 pm**

**Board Meeting**

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room South

- Officers**  
**President**  
 Dr. Virgilio Pilapil  
**Vice President**  
 Taylor Pensoneau  
**Past President**  
 Kathryn Harris  
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 R-Lou Barker  
 John Huther  
 Janice Petterchak  
 Mary Jo Potter  
 Gary Vitale  
**Directors to 2008**  
 Carol Andrews  
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 Robert Davis  
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**Committee Chairmen**  
**Membership**  
 Carolyn Moore  
**Program**  
 Taylor Pensoneau  
**Publications**  
 Curtis Mann  
**Finance**  
 John Huther  
**Project Awards**  
 Gary Vitale  
**Nominating**  
 R-Lou Barker  
**Constitution & By-laws**  
 Curtis Mann  
**Publicity**  
 Janice Petterchak  
**Special Functions**  
 Elena Pilapil  
**Tours**  
 Kim Efird  
**Webmaster**  
 Karen Everingham  
**Booksales**  
 Sue Wall  
**Historico Editor**  
 Nancy Chapin

**November 15, Tuesday, 7:00 PM**

**Program**

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North

## *Utopian Socialism in Sangamon County*

Kelley A. Boston

Kelley Boston will discuss the brief existence of the Sangamon Association, an example of nineteenth century utopian socialism in which reform-minded individuals established communities in rural areas where association members could live and work together in a communal society. The association's undertaking, located near present-day Loami, was clearly representative of the reforming spirit of the antebellum era.

Using census, deed and court records, Boston provides insight into the daily lives and experiences of the members of the association—later called the Integral Phalanx. She shows what types of persons in the county delved into utopian socialism. She notes the reasons for their participation. She also explains why the only central Illinois experiment with utopian socialism failed so quickly. These are matters overlooked for years that now can be explained through Boston's research.

Boston, a native of Farmersville, is a research associate with The Papers of Abraham Lincoln under the research division of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Boston, who has won awards for her research into socialism in Sangamon County, has a bachelor of arts degree in history from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master of arts in history from the University of Illinois at Springfield.

Among her previous positions, she was an assistant at the Illinois State Military Museum. Her professional career also includes attendance at the Institute for the Editing of Historical Documents at the University of Wisconsin in 2004. Boston was inducted into the Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society in 2003.

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### *Book Review*

November 10, 5:30 PM  
LaSorella Restaurant  
3325 Robbins Road

#### The Bondwoman's Narrative

By Hannah Crafts & Henry Louis Gates, Jr.  
Reviewed by Barbara Burris

Dinner and program \$15.00.  
(Non-members \$16.00)  
See reservation form on p. 5.

### *Volunteers needed:*

The ISHS sponsored, Illinois History Symposium, December 1-3, which is free and open to all, (though they would appreciate a donation) is to be held at several locations, while centered at the Lincoln Home Visitor's Center.

ISHS has asked for volunteers to host sessions to be held at Lincoln Library's Carnegie Room on both Thursday and Friday. Volunteers are needed to ensure the availability of water and other session needs. Hours would be from 9:00 AM to about 1:00 PM, and 1:00—4:00 PM each day—and volunteers would get to attend the session. If you would be willing to help, please call Curtis Mann, 753-2900, Ext. 234.

To obtain a schedule of the sessions, go to: [www.illinoishistory.org](http://www.illinoishistory.org), click on "Illinois History Symposium" and then on 'schedule'.

### *Around town*

Saturday, December 3 - 11:00-3:00 PM  
Old State Capitol  
Statehood Celebration

### *Our Appreciation to -*

R-Lou Barker for the contribution to the effort to restore historical artifacts damaged by hurricane Katrina in memory of Morton Barker, whose great-grandparents met and were married in New Orleans.

SCHS members are invited to a special event:

## *History for the Holidays*

Iles House  
December 13 6:00—8:00 PM

Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres

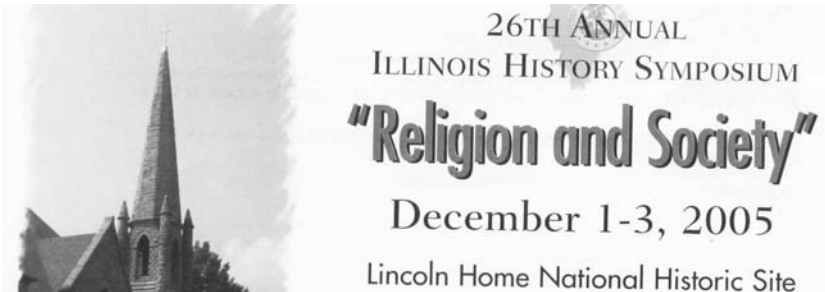
Presentation of restored 1876 Map  
By Curtis Mann

Membership drive *Grand Prize!*

December Surprise (courtesy of our President)

Reservations and a \$5.00 donation required

This special event is for members only. If you are an individual member and you wish to bring a member of your household, we would be delighted to update your membership to a 'Family' status for just \$7.50; and if you wish to bring someone who is not a member of your household, we would be even more delighted to receive a \$17.50 membership in their name (and give you credit towards the Membership prize)!



26TH ANNUAL  
ILLINOIS HISTORY SYMPOSIUM  
**"Religion and Society"**  
December 1-3, 2005  
Lincoln Home National Historic Site

### *Reports on October activities*

#### *On October 7th -*

The NPS Colloquium reception sponsored by SCHS on that Friday night was a great success! It was a lovely evening, perfect for walking from house to house: the Dubois house in the Lincoln home area which has been rehabilitated on the exterior and modernized on the interior to provide for modern uses; the newly opened Iles House and the restored Vachel Lindsay home all welcomed the many visitors of the evening.

The tour followed a lovely reception masterminded by Phyllis Brissenden with the aid of Mary Jo Potter and Elena and Gil Pilapil; and an interesting talk about Springfield in 1860 by Curtis Mann to set the stage.

This seemed a wonderful way to preface the Colloquium on Saturday, and the Cemetery Walk on Sunday, which featured some more of Lincoln's fellow citizens.

## *The President's Corner*

October has been a busy month for the Society for a variety of reasons: participation in the opening of the Iles House, hosting of the pre-conference event of the Lincoln Colloquium, and even an invitation from the Menard County Historical Society to attend the installation of a marker for the farmhouse in Athens in Menard County where Charles Lindbergh slept after an emergency landing at a nearby Sangamon County farm field (see story this issue). And most recently, the Ninth Annual Cemetery Walk at Oak Ridge Cemetery involving many people and taking much preparation. All these require time and member participation to prepare and to work during the actual events. My thanks to all who helped selflessly to accomplish these jobs.

It should be noted that this year's Cemetery Walk is the first event in the celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the founding of Oak Ridge Cemetery, President Lincoln's chosen final resting place. It will end with next year's Cemetery Walk, with five other functions to take place in between. Top this with Dr. Richard Moy's presentation about the legacy of SIU School of Medicine on US medical education, along with other Board decisions made, and one can see how filled the Society's hands had been. However, there is always light at the end of the proverbial tunnel. We can now look forward to perhaps a more relaxed November activity and a tantalizing "December Surprise" for everyone. Again, don't miss coming to these monthly programs.

VRP.

## *And the Cemetery Walk on October 9th*

As the Trolley stopped in the historic section of Oak Ridge Cemetery, Executive Director, LuAnn Johnson greeted guests with a wonderfully rich narrative. Then, on this picture perfect day, with a profusion of yellow mums to guide their way, guests discovered history that came alive...

Dressed in mourning clothes, Mary Welles (Linda Schneider) movingly recounted her fight back from the loss of her husband and five children. Judge Samuel Treat (Don Schneider), Chief Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court, held his elegant walking cane while engaging in tales about his encounters with Abraham Lincoln ...and as though from a mystical land, music filled the air as Rev. Francis Springer (Bill Furry) sang his way to life and bestowed upon the throngs a story of countless contributions to the religious and educational thread of Springfield. Diminutive Jane Allen (Lisa Sabo), a minister's daughter and wife of a successful merchant, painted an enlightening picture of

her life as Springfield's first female teacher; and enchanting Virginia Dresser (Kate McCreight) revealed her role as Reverend Charles Dresser's youngest daughter. At the last portrayal, guests found Orson Stafford (Paul Sullivan), a swash buckled sailor and businessman drolly expounding about Abraham Lincoln who argued both for and against him in numerous legal cases.

After the last portrayal, guests strolled down the tree covered hill toward the lilting sound of the Prairie Dulcimer Strings and an impressive array of authors and refreshments at the Historama.

Throughout the year, the Sangamon County Historical Society's vision is to inspire and sustain area history. Owing to the amazing effort of Oak Ridge Cemetery employees, this year's Chair, Carol Andrews and the society's many devoted volunteers....The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Echoes of Yesterday was indeed a day of history that inspired.

## *And Dean Moy's Report on the history of the SIU Medical School on October 15th -*

Dean Moy began his talk about the development of SIU Medical School by reviewing medicine through the ages, beginning with Hypocrites and going right through the checkered path of health care to the modern era. He pointed out that by the mid-twentieth century research had become the core of medical education and the criterion used to measure the profession. With a dream to create a 'teaching' institution, Dean Moy recounted his successful efforts to build the SIU Medical School into just such a place.

The school's stated goal was to prepare primary care physicians with broad knowledge that went beyond purely scientific expertise. Those goals and the ones of adequately reflecting minority percentages in its student body as well as supplying rural areas with skilled doctors have been met in the years that SIU Medical School has been in existence.

Dean Moy told of the school's innovation in developing a Department of Medical Humanities wherein literature and philosophy could be made a part of medical training and give a framework to questions of death and dying, jurisprudence and the like. Probably his proudest achievement was attracting Howard Barrows to the school to develop his problem-based learning theory. Problem-based learning is a tool that enhances the teaching based orientation of the school. It involves learning through enhancing clinical skills be problem solving, often with simulated patients, rather than learning causes and solutions strictly from books and experiments. The school is now known across the country for its leadership in the field of clinical skill training. Dr. Moy concluded by saying that SIU Medical School has been the most successful such institution created since 1970.

*Lindbergh's Emergency Landing:  
A Tale of Two Counties*

In the early days of flight, pioneering Charles Lindbergh transported mail in his plane between St. Louis and Chicago. On September 30, 1926, he encountered trouble en-route with his mail and made emergency landing at a clover field in Sangamon County about three miles south of Athens in Menard County. It was about 5 P.M. when John E. Dirks, almost 17, and his older brother, Herman, 21, saw the event. A neighbor, Merritt Fitschen, 7, also did. The two brothers came to the aid of Lindbergh. Lindbergh's first words were, "Would anyone here be kind enough to help me take my mail to Springfield?" Herman, now deceased, driving in a Model-T Ford, took Lindbergh to Springfield and then returned back to the farm where Lindbergh stayed overnight at the Dirks farmhouse in Athens, now owned by Bruce and Marjorie Kugler. Lindbergh left the following morning after repairing his airplane. Lindbergh later became famous for making the first solo nonstop flight across the Atlantic in a small monoplane from Roosevelt Field near New York City on May 20, 1927, arriving in Paris the next day and winning a \$25,000 prize as a result.

Athens resident, Charles E. Nance, felt that Lindbergh's unexpected landing is an important part of local history and wanted it memorialized with a marker at the Dirks house where he slept. With Ron Krause, president of the Menard County Historical Society (MCHS) taking the lead and with help from the Menard County Highway Department, the sign recognizing the historical significance of the farmhouse on Fitschen Road was installed at the roadside by the farmhouse on October 7, 2005 at 4 P.M. At the installation were MCHS members, Athens Mayor Debbie Richardson and Menard County Commissioner Louis Leinberger, as did the two who saw Lindbergh's emergency landing, John Dirks, now 95, and Merritt Fitschen, now 86, both still healthy and with full faculties. The Sangamon County Historical Society (SCHS) was represented at the event by its president. Nance and Krause now hope that a similar marker for the Lindbergh landing site would be considered by the SCHS. The chance emergency landing by a prominent personality may seem insignificant to some, but it can be an important one for a small town looking for recognition and wanting to preserve its history.

By Virgilio R. Pilapil, M.D.

*SESQUICENTENNIAL FARM AWARD TO SOCIETY MEMBER*



One hundred seventy years ago, in 1835, Mrs. Mary Dillahunt of Kent County, MD purchased 80 acres of rich farm land in Cooper Township, Sangamon County, from the State of Illinois. Today the farm, located 3 miles south of Mechanicsburg and west of Nazarene Acres, has increased in acreage and its present 182 acres are operated by Jim Sample.

Mrs. Dillahunt's only daughter Mary Ann married Joseph Crawl, and they added more acres to the farm; their daughter Miranda married Isaac T. Darnall, and they also purchased additional land. Isaac died young, leaving

Miranda with five small children and a farm to run, and she then married Mr. Taylor.

Three of Miranda's sons - Charles, Benjamin Franklin, and Hilary - grew to adulthood, and an 1882 map shows the farm divided between the widowed mother and the three sons. Hilary's land was later sold to Nazarene Acres. Descendants of Charles Darnall and his son Roscoe include Connie Darnall of Illiopolis, and Tom, J.D., Perry and Chris Waters (sons of Mary Lee Darnall and Jim Waters), who grew up in Rochester.

Miranda's share was passed down to son B. F. Darnall and then to his son LaRue Hampton Darnall, father of Doris Darnall (Mrs. Robert) Hamel of Pleasant Plains, IL and Walnut Creek, CA. Doris has three children - Joel Hamel of MN; Brandon Hamel and Genene Welch of CA.

On July 26, 2005, in ceremonies held near the farm, SCHS member Doris Hamel was presented the Illinois Sesquicentennial Farm Award by Rep. Bill Mitchell. Also in attendance were IL Department of Agriculture staff members; Jim Birge of the Sangamon County Farm Bureau; members of the Hamel, Darnall and Waters families, and officers of the Rochester State Bank. Mrs. Hamel received several certificates of award, as well as a Dept. of Agriculture sign that now marks the farm.

Representatives of radio station WUIS (U of I-S public radio), whose transmitter and antenna have been located on the farm since its inception 30 years ago were present, as well as several dozen invited guests, all of whom were treated to lunch at Turasky's Steakhouse at Dawson by Mrs. Hamel following the ceremonies.

Thanks to Dorothy Ross for this report and our apologies to Doris Hamel for being so slow in getting it printed up!

## The Need for Seed

By Curtis Mann

While the residents of Springfield viewed the arrival of the steamboat Talisman on March 24, 1832 as the dawning of a new age of river transportation and prosperity, the area farmers were more interested in the amounts of seed corn lying in the boat's hold. The previous year was a difficult growing season for farmers because of the residual effects from the winter of 1830-1831 commonly remembered as the winter of the deep snow. As one farmer reminisced "the climate was so chilled that the effect was felt during the whole season of 1831. There was a frost every month in the year and the corn could not ripen. It was so worthless that seed corn could not be gathered to plant during the following season." Farmers of the middle and northern counties of the state, affected by the climate change, sought seed corn further downstate and from other states.

The *Sangamo Journal* of February 16, 1832 alluded to the prospect of an abundant supply of seed corn coming to Springfield in the spring. Many farmers waited for the arrival of the

Talisman to purchase the seed corn. Others traveled down to St. Clair County and other places south of St. Louis which apparently had surplus corn crops to sell for seed. Denton Offutt, who Abraham Lincoln worked for as a clerk, advertised he would have 3,000 to 4,000 bushels of seed corn available by the end of March at New Salem.

Farmers bought the Talisman's seed corn supply so quickly that many orders went unfilled. Captain Vincent A. Bogue offered to bring another load of seed corn up if 10,000 bushels would be subscribed in a just a week's time. It is not known whether the subscription was made or not. Low water levels forced the Talisman back down the Sangamon River to St. Louis where it burned.

Transportation costs and scarcity drove the price of seed corn to an average of \$2.00 to \$3.00 per bushel. Those prices equate to about \$35 a bushel at 2005 prices. Farmers who purchased loads of corn and transported them home themselves reported paying an average of \$1.00 per bushel.

### We Welcome New Members!

Julie Cellini  
Thelma Davenport  
Stephen D. McKenrick  
Dr. Richard H. Moy  
Ernie and Ruth Poani  
Judith Ullrich  
Betty Washko

### !!Membership Drive!!

Don't forget to ask your friends and neighbors if they would be interested in joining SCHS! We have a wonderful set of programs lined up this year.

We are hoping to add at least 50 new members this fall and will have a wonderful 'prize' for the person who brings in the most new members, or renewals.

Invite friends to join and come to the *History for the Holidays* on December 13th! It will be a fun and informative evening, but have them join soon and make their reservations before we reach our limit!

I am currently a Sangamon County Historical Society Member \_\_\_\_\_ ; wish to upgrade membership \_\_\_\_\_

I am joining SCHS herewith \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ place(s) for the *Book Review*, November 10th: Members \$15.00 Non-members \$16.00

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ place(s) for *History for the Holidays*, December 13th \$5.00 per member donation

Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: SCHS, 308 E. Adams, Springfield, IL 62701

