



Historico

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

November 2006

Wednesday, November 8, 5:00 PM

Board Meeting

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room South

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Project Awards

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Publications

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Tuesday, November 21, 7:00 PM

Program

Revitalizing Union Station and Union Square Park

Anthony Rubano

Interesting insight into another major project promising to boost further the vitality of downtown Springfield—the revival of Union Station and Union Square Park—will be provided by Anthony Rubano, a project designer at the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

When reopened early next year, the rehabilitated Union Station will serve as a visitors' center within the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum complex. Complemented by the Union Square Park renovation, the revamping of the station will return it to full-fledged status as a Springfield landmark. Helping to ensure this recognition is the restoration of the station's clock tower, once a familiar part of the city's skyline. The exterior of the station is being returned to the original plans drafted by architect Francis T. Bacon, a practitioner of the popular Romanesque style, between 1896 and 1898—the year the station opened for business.

Anthony Rubano, a project designer at IHPA since 1999, has worked extensively with the Illinois Main Street Program within the agency. In that role, he has provided architectural services to almost sixty historic Main Street communities. A part-time faculty member at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, he also has taught American architecture history at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It was from the University of Illinois that he earned a master of architecture degree with an emphasis on architectural history and preservation in 1995.

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A beautiful Day for 'A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery'

Thank you to the many people who helped make the SCHS Cemetery Walk on October 8, 2006 a great success. It takes a multitude of volunteers to sponsor this event, and each person's contribution is sincerely appreciated. A special tip of the hat to Elaine Birtch who served as Portrayals Chairman, Nancy Chapin who chaired the Historama area, and LuAnn Johnson, Director of Oak Ridge Cemetery who each coordinated a specific aspect of the event.

The portrayals at the six sites were well received and it was a good mix of actors who brought to life the various people from Springfield's history. We are grateful to the individuals who research, write, and act to tell these stories. We were truly blessed with picture-perfect weather. The media gave us some excellent coverage.

We are looking forward to the 11th annual Cemetery Walk on October 7, 2007, so mark your calendar now to reserve time to be involved in this activity. We are exploring some new possibilities for next year's event.

Carolyn Moore, Chairman



Maggie Weber



Marie Helmle



James C. Conkling



Margaret Freeman



The Parker Sisters



Jamieson Jenkins



Historical Organization displays



Prairieland Dulcimers

Our grateful thanks to Nicky Stratton who took these and a multitude of other pictures of this year's walk. Her CD of the pictures may be viewed at the SVC.



SCHS authors

The President's Corner

Two of the most devastating coal mining disasters in Illinois and national history are covered with great insight in a new book, *Death Underground*, recently published by the Southern Illinois University Press. I highly recommend the book, even though the two tragedies did not occur in our part of Illinois.

The book delves into the explosions that killed 111 men at the Centralia Coal Company's No. 5 mine in 1947 and 119 men at the New Orient No. 2 mine by West Frankfort in 1951. Although both mines were in southern Illinois, the disasters reverberated with many persons in Sangamon County, where the legacy of coal mining remains strong in Springfield, Riverton and other places. In addition, the book brings the Statehouse in Springfield into play by linking state regulatory negligence to at least the Centralia disaster.

Death Underground is coauthored by Robert E. Hartley and David Kenney, both of whom I've known for many years. Hartley is a former Illinois journalist and author of other books dealing with Illinois public figures. Kenney is a retired political science professor at SIU as well as an author. As the former president of the Illinois Coal Association, I was asked to join Hartley and Kenney in a panel discussion at Carbondale on the unveiling of their book. The audience included persons who were descended from victims of the two disasters.

The book, long overdue, is a significant contribution to the historical literature of downstate Illinois. It is fair and balanced in exploring the background leading up to, and seemingly apparent reasons for, the disasters that put Illinois on the nation's front pages in 1947 and 1951. The book brings cohesion, clarity and perspective to the circumstances and resultant realities surrounding the disasters, thereby providing in hindsight a path to an understanding of much of what was involved. Out of it comes a message—a stark reminder—to Illinois mine operators, miners and public officials that the diligent efforts in mine safety that have prevented a reoccurrence of Centralia or West Frankfort in our state cannot be relaxed or compromised.

Taylor Pensoneau

Report on October Program -

A full house turned out to learn from David Brady just how a volcano eruption in Indonesia could have had much of an effect on Illinois history. Dave has a penchant for discovering facts that negate our comfortable myths (recall what his findings did to Robert Pulliam's fine reputation as the first settler in the county!), and he's done it again. Most of us have been led to believe over the years that the Sangamon country was settled because it was considered so valuable as the land of 'milk and honey'; in fact many reports state that is what 'Sangamo' means. However, Dave painted a very different picture as to why the area was settled, and had

the background information to back it up.

He first detailed the incredible effects of the 1815 Tambora volcano eruption, the "largest eruption in historic time", and went on to explain that the sulfur gases it emitted into the stratosphere blocked the heat from the sun, causing climatic changes in both Europe and the United States. In the summer of 1816 in Europe it was cold and damp, rotting the crops, and in New England there were freezes every month, killing all plantings and causing that year to be dubbed 'the year without a summer'. That, in turn, caused crop failures, famine, sickness and fi-

nally, mass emigration.

Other than being much drier than normal, the Midwest was less affected by these climatic abnormalities and the flow of settlers into Southern Illinois to purchase land at \$80 for 160 acres was massive. The high prices for produce to supply the devastated areas caused the development of river and canal transportation systems, but as the climate returned to normal in New England over the next few years, the bottom dropped out of both the produce and land markets causing both bankruptcies and bank failures. Displaced settlers then fled to the Sangamon Country where the land had not yet been surveyed and where they could squat on the land freely.

Steam Power Comes to Sangamon County
by Curtis Mann

Many of the Society's members will know that I have a strong interest in the early mills of Sangamon County. I have written several articles about their history and even published a small booklet about early watermills. However, I have never touched upon the early steam powered mills of the county. I am fascinated about these mills because they made such an early appearance in the county. At least four steam powered mills were in operation by 1833. I have researched them individually and will provide brief histories of each in a series of articles.



Part 1
Heredith's/ Millville

One of the most ambitious steam mill operations was started in western Sangamon County in 1833. Mr. Andrew Heredith, a merchant miller and pork packer, came to Sangamon County in early 1833 to find a fresh start after having failed in business in Cincinnati. He is reported to have suffered misfortunes including the burning of a slaughterhouse. Heredith, backed by capital obtained by friends, purchased 640 acres of land from the federal government about three miles west of Loami, Illinois and another 300 some acres from private sales in March 1833. A steam saw mill was in operation on this land by June 15 when an article appeared in the Sangamo Journal noting the mill was in operation. The article

also stated that Heredith was constructing an extensive flouring mill which had four sets of millstones to grind wheat into flour. The mill was up in running by August as local merchants were purchasing wheat to be delivered there.

Heredith himself hired teamsters to haul flour from the mill to Meredosia on the Illinois River.

On June 19, 1834, Heredith sold his milling operation and land to a fellow Cincinnati merchant name Nicholas Goshorn for a little over \$20,000 which would equate to over \$380,000 in today's money, a nice chunk of change for that time.. No reason is known for the quick turnover in ownership. Goshorn might have been one of the reported friends who provided Heredith with the initial capital and received the mills as a return of his investment. Goshorn borrowed \$5,000 from a Cincinnati bank to help finance the transaction.

The mills became a social center for the area. It served as a site for public meetings and a polling place. The 1881 history of Sangamon County noted that "quite a village grew around the mill which was given the name of Millville." No official plat exists for this village which might have built haphazardly around the mill.

The mill became very successful with farmers coming from a reported distance of up to one hundred miles with their wheat and other grain to be ground. The Panic of 1837 caused Goshorn to fail and a bank in Cincinnati became the

owner of the property after the Sangamon County Sheriff was ordered to sell it to pay off his debt. Goshorn made an effort in 1838 to sell his mills, land and lots in the village of Millville but found no buyers. He recovered from the panic and remained a successful merchant in Cincinnati.

As for Andrew Heredith, misfortune continued to follow him. After selling the mill, he became involved in buying fat hogs and driving to the market in St. Louis. A couple of drives in the fall of 1836 earned him some money. Buoyed by this success, Heredith used all of his money and borrowed more to purchase a large drove of hogs numbering between 1,000 and 1,500. He was driving this herd south through an open prairie south of Scottville in Macoupin County when a cold wave overtook it. The men had to abandon the herd to seek shelter at the nearest house. Left to their own devices, the hogs piled on each other. They either smothered on the inside or froze on the outside. About 500 hogs were killed outright and the rest were unfit for sale. The entire enterprise was a total loss. Heredith was attempting to overcome this financial disaster but died before he could find prosperity again.

The milling operation at Millville was apparently dismantled and moved away. The village dwindled and nothing is left there today.

*Congratulations!
2006 Studs Terkel Awardees!*

The Illinois Humanities Council, in conjunction with Illinois mayors, has announced 75 recipients of the 2006 *Studs Terkel Humanities Service Award* state-

wide. This award recognizes individuals who have made a lasting contribution to the cultural life of their communities. We commend Mayor Davlin for nominating Springfield recipients **Tom Schwartz**, Interim Director of the ALPLM and State Historian "who has used

his knowledge with students, community groups, and the public in a way that makes Lincoln and his era alive and relevant to today's world" and **Karl Scroggin**, host of WUIS' *Classics with Karl Scroggin*, "having logged nearly 200,000 hours on the air and in the community helping to keep classical music and culture alive and well in Springfield".

A U D I T I O N S
MON. & TUES., NOV. 13-14
6-9pm *for the Play*

THE LAST OF MRS. LINCOLN

By James Prideaux
Directed by Phil Funkenbusch

A drama about the last seventeen years of the life
of Mary Todd Lincoln

Cast of 14 actors – Rehearsals begin March, 2007

Performances in the Union Theatre at the ALPLM
May 4-6 & 11-13

*Auditions held on the first floor of the
Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
313 S. Sixth Street (near Café Brio)*

See Phil Funkenbusch or Ed MacMurdo for details.
Phil (785-6085) Ed (558-8928)

Play auditions

Phil Funkenbusch has appealed to SCHS for actors/actresses interested in trying out for this drama of Mary Todd Lincoln's last 17 years following the assas-

sination of her husband. The play won three 1973 Tony Awards and recently has been acclaimed by *The New Yorker* magazine critic recently as "the best evocation of Mary Todd Lincoln's time and her place in it."

We Welcome New Members!

Life Membership
Sally Cadagin

Sustaining Membership
Polly Poskin

Members
Karen Carmody
Anna Marie Diefenback
Joe Victor

Oak Ridge Cemetery History Writing Project

We need your story on a family member buried at Oak Ridge! You can simply report family history; tell about what some family did when they came to Sangamon County; tell of a favorite ancestor; report on a special family anecdote on someone buried there; or come up with your own approach to writing about an ancestor. The deadline is November 30, 2006, so you still have time to submit your story.

See the September Historico for details, or contact Dr. Gil Pilapil, 494-2386 or Gilpini@yahoo.com for more information.



SCHS Members will be invited to a special event in December:

History for the Holidays

Governor Yates house
1190 Williams Blvd.
Springfield
December 20, 6:00—8:00 PM

Refreshments and hors d'oeuvres

Governor Richard Yates, Jr. served as governor of Illinois from 1901 –1905, and then served in Congress for seven consecutive terms. He had this magnificent house on Williams Blvd. built in 1905 by James Culver of the Culver Marble & Stone Co.

The governor's house has been painstakingly restored by Jon and Pinky Noll to its original magnificence, and we are grateful to them for hosting this special evening.

*Note: We will be accepting reservations in December from members **only**. If you are an individual member and 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.*

More information in the December Historico



2007 Cemetery Walk

The date has tentatively been set for October 5 next year, and if you would be interested in helping with next year's Cemetery Walk, now is the time to let Sally Cadagin, Chairman of Volunteers, know. You can reach her at cadamyst@sbcglobal.net or 546-5840. We always need more researchers and script-writers, but car parkers, portrayal assistants, SCHS table assistants and a host of other tasks. We try to schedule volunteers on the day of the 'walk' so they will have time to see everything in addition to their volunteer assignment, so you won't miss anything by helping.

Iles House blog

Board member, Will Howarth, has set up a blog site for the Iles House and posted the stories and pictures from events there.

Anyone can access the blog at iles-house.blogspot.com and even add your own comments.