



# HISTORICO

*Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter*

308 East Adams Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701 217-522-2500 [www.sancohis.org](http://www.sancohis.org)

JUNE 2010

## *Tickets Going Fast!*

### **Agenda Loaded for Annual Dinner in Williamsville June 15: Tram Tour, Museum Look, Elections, Lincoln Talk, More!**

A ticket to this year's Sangamon County Historical Society annual dinner in Williamsville on Tuesday, June 15 will bring you more than a delicious sit-down supper.

In addition to getting some expert insight from nationally-known Lincoln historian Timothy Townsend into a Presidential election that changed history 150 years ago and voting for new directors and board members, you'll have a chance to win some sensational prizes including signed and framed limited edition mixed-media artworks, tickets to Sangamon Auditorium and New Salem's Theater in the Park, appraisals of antique books, autographed copies of some popular history books, antiques, Route 66 collectibles, tickets to Lincoln's ghost walk, and more!

The fun, in fact, begins even before the 6:30

p.m. dinner. Starting at 5 p.m., you can hop aboard a tram for free guided 15 minute tour of Williamsville's grand historic homes and sites and then wander through the community's famous Boxcar Museum filled with local history and Route 66 memorabilia.

The Williamsville Library, housed in the former Williamsville railroad station just next door, will have some special exhibits for you to see.

Across the street and down the block from the Williamsville Municipal Building/Community Center (where the dinner will be held), you can check out the nostalgic Route 66 gas station, complete with two digit per gallon price signs that should bring back a flood of memories and tears to the eye.

*(Continued on page 6)*



### **INSIDE:**

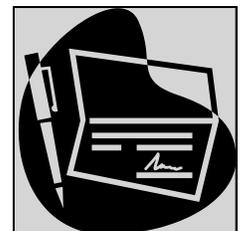
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**Time to Renew, Upgrade, or Give a Gift of Membership.**

Membership Form.....page 7



From the President's Podium

Wonderful Year, Fond Memories, Thanks for Support



The Society has almost concluded another year. We have only a very special bus tour of the Sugar Creek area scheduled for June 5 and the Annual Meeting in Williamsville on the 15th to close out a year of wonderful programs attended by more people than ever before!

Our congratulations go to Jack Alexander, Program Committee Chairman and his committee: Vicki Megginson, Pam VanAlstine and Roger Whitaker for a job well done!

Increasingly we have events brought to our attention, or think of scheduling events, with no time left to let you know about them in the next Historico. Now, as we prepare to put the Historico to bed until September, we realize if we had your e-mail addresses we could alert you to activities that may be of interest. (Maybe that's called catching up with the 21st century!) Please do include your e-mail address on your renewal.

If you have already renewed, or are a life member, please send an e-mail to Theresa at Robinson's so she can add your address to the membership list: ras1915@xanadoo.com. (The address letters and numbers stand for Robinson's Advertising Service, which ori-

ginated in 1915!). Then I have to ask you to please bear with us as we learn to handle such a large file of email addresses, but we do think they will help us keep the membership better informed.

Sadly Curtis Mann will be retiring from the Board at the end of this fiscal year. Curtis has been vital to the Society's existence for many years. He has been most generous with his time and the resources of the Sangamon Valley Collection in supporting all of our various requests, and his steady hand has kept us on track through thick and thin.

We will still be utilizing the SVC as a repository of all of our records, and I'm sure Curtis will be ever helpful when he has time, but he has taken on a host of additional responsibilities at the library, and his time will be very limited. Thanks, Curtis, for the multitude of things you have done over the years to help the Society!!

My term as President will be over as of the Annual Meeting, and I want to thank you all for your support and encouragement! It's been a fun two years!

Nancy

JUNE MEMBERSHIP and DONOR REPORT

The Sangamon County Historical Society thanks those who have joined or upgraded their membership level this month...and to those who have generously made donations in support of our goals.

DONATIONS

Cullom & Ann Davis
Paul Schanbacher
Matthew Vernau

MEMBERSHIPS

Life Members

Rosemary King
David & Virginia Scott
Roger & Vicky Whitaker

Individual Members

David Joens
Robert E. Schaaf
Dylan Shomidie
Francie Staggs

Family Members

Bruce & Joan Beeman
Charles & Elizabeth Budinger
C. E. & Joleen Welch
Michael & Patricia Carmody
Harry & Susie Estill



2009-2010 Officers
Sangamon County Historical Society

President.....Nancy L. Chapin
Vice-President.....David Scott
Secretary.....Curtis Mann
Treasurer.....Paul R. Mueller

Directors to 2010

R-Lou Barker • Elaine Birtch
Kim Efirid • Sue Wall • Martha Wolters

Directors to 2011

Jack Alexander • Connie Locher Bussard
John Huther • Don Springer • Jane Vetter

Directors to 2012

Tim Krell • Vicki Megginson
Donna Catlin • Roger Whitaker • James H. Beaumont

Honorary Director

William Hughes Diller Jr.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS: Finance: Tim Krell; Hospitality: Jane Vetter; Long Range Planning: David Scott; Membership: Connie Bussard; Nominating: Phyllis Eubanks; Program: Jack Alexander; Tours: Susan Hammond; Project Awards: Elaine Birtch; Publications: John Huther, Historico editor: Vicky Whitaker.

Membership in the Sangamon County Historical Society is open to both individuals and families. Dues are \$17.50 per year for individuals, \$25 for a family, \$50 for a sustaining member. For Individual Life Membership, there is a one-time payment of \$250 and for Family Life Member, a one-time payment of \$400. For a membership form and/or additional information, contact the Society at 522-2500 or write to us at 308 East Adams Street, Springfield, IL 62701.

## History Anew June 5

### Still Time to Hop Aboard the Bus For a Tour of Sugar Creek Area

At press time, there were still a few seats available for the Saturday, June 5 tour of the Cotton Hill District, Sangamon County's birthplace. The area—in and around Sugar Creek—was home to the first generation of settlers here.

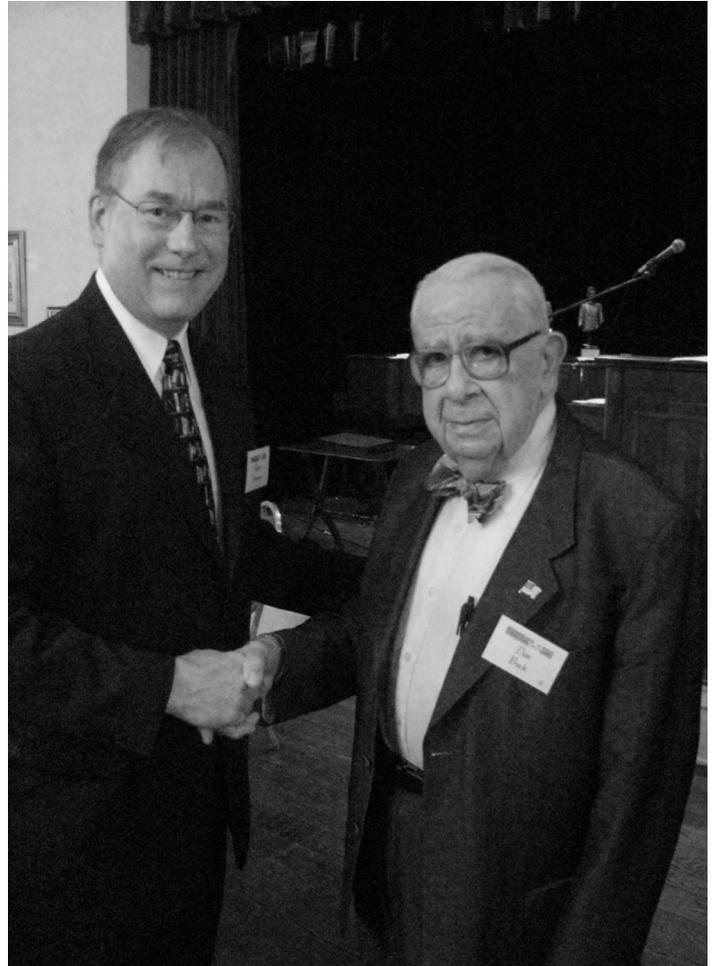
Traveling in a comfortable, air conditioned bus, participants in the tour—a joint project of the Society and the Elijah Iles House Foundation— will hear stories and descriptions of Sangamon's earliest settlement sites and view over five 19th century farm houses and early family cemeteries. At two of the cemeteries, actors will portray several of the early settlers buried there.

The tour, expected to take about two-and-a half hours, will leave from the Meijer's parking lot off Veterans Parkway (Route 4), Springfield, at 1 p.m. Sites and history along the route of Sugar Creek will be detailed by historian Dick Hart on the way down and back.

Tour takers also will receive a commemorative guide that will provide additional details about each site.

The tour is the first of several activities in preparation for Yale professor John Mack Faragher's visit to Springfield to help the Society celebrate its 50th anniversary next April. Faragher, author of "Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie" (Yale University Press) teaches the history of the American West and directs Yale's Howard R. Lamar Center for the Study of Frontiers and Borders.

Tickets for the bus tour, at \$40 for members of each organization, and \$50 for non-members, can be ordered from the Society. Call 522-2500 for reservations.



**HONORED:** The Illinois State Historical Society honored Daniel Buck (right) on May 19 when it named him "ISHS Volunteer of the Decade." Making the presentation—at the ISHS annual luncheon held at the Executive Mansion in Springfield—was ISHS president Mark Sorensen (left). Buck was an ISHS volunteer for several years and has been involved in several history-related organizations.

## *Missing From the Society's Membership List? Not Anymore*

Thought we forgot about you when you didn't see your name on the current membership list published in last month's *Historico*? We didn't. Computers may be great tools, but trying to automatically translate the information saved on two different formats can lead to strange results...which is why the names of about 14 members

were unintentionally dropped in the process. Our computer apologizes...and we do too. Here are the names of our "missing" members:

### LIFE

*Charles Jones Northrup*

### FAMILY

*Robert & Janice Irwin  
Michael & Jennifer Logan  
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Narmont*

*Bud & Mary Jo Potter  
James K & LuAnne Russell  
Judith A. Schmidt Family*

### INDIVIDUAL

*John Andrew Barker  
Patricia A. Lloyd  
Richard A. Lusardi  
Tara McAndrew  
Bob McIntyre  
Barbara Roseberry  
Betty Tabor Woods  
Ann Kramer*

*Alice E. Martin*

In addition, the "Jr." was omitted from the name of Individual Member *John E. Roberts Jr.* and the III was dropped from the name of family members *Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Patton III.*

### **HAVE YOU RENEWED?**

*To renew your membership for 2010-2011, see the form on page 7.*



**OFFICER, BOARD NOMINEES: (from left) Moore, VanAlstine, Eberle, Oxtoby, Bee, Tredwell, Beeman.**

## Vote on Officers, Directors Set for June 15 Annual Meeting

Members attending the Society's annual meeting on June 15 in Williamsville, will be voting on a new officers and directors for the coming year.

The Society's nominating committee, chaired by Phyllis Eubanks, has recommend a slate that would be headed by David Scott, the current vice-president, who would succeed president Nancy L. Chapin whose term ends this month. Other nominees are:

for vice-president Vicki Megginson; for secretary Pam VanAlstine, and for treasurer Paul R. Mueller. Megginson is currently serving the first of a three year term on the board of directors. VanAlstine has served on the Society's program committee this past year. Mueller is the incumbent treasurer.

Nominated for three-year terms on the board with terms expiring in 2013 are Linda Bee,

Bruce Beeman, Claire Eberle, Carolyn Oxtoby and Jane Tredwell.

They will succeed R-Lou Barker, Elaine Birtch, Kim Effrid, Sue Wall and Martha Wolters whose terms also expire this month.

Carolyn Moore was nominated to fill the two years remaining on Megginson's board position which expires in 2012.

### *Want to Know More About the New Candidates? Read On!*

#### **PAM VANALSTINE**

Prior to her retirement, Pam VanAlstine taught English, Speech and Theatre at Glenwood High School.

She has been a docent at the Dana-Thomas House for a number of years and helps plan special events for the site. She has also volunteered at Lincoln Tomb.

#### **CAROLYN MOORE**

A past Society president (2007-2008), Carolyn Moore and her husband reside in Rochester where they are very active in historic preservation.

#### **CLAIRE EBERLE**

Claire Eberle is deputy director of the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules (JCAR) for the Illinois General Assembly. She has

been with JCAR since 1987. Eberle served on the Senate president's staff from 1976 to 1978 and was a member of the legislative intern class of 1975.

Last year, she was inducted into the Samuel K. Gove Illinois Legislative Internship Hall of Fame.

#### **LINDA BEE**

Linda Bee is the Volunteer Coordinator of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum where she recruits, trains and schedules volunteers for the site. A 30-plus year state employee who began her career at the Old State Capitol, she has also served as volunteer coordinator at Lincoln Tomb and the Dana-Thomas House. This past

year, Bee was a member of the Society's Tour Committee.

#### **BRUCE BEEMAN**

Bruce Beeman is an attorney and partner at the law firm of Wolter, Beeman and Lynch.

He has been the catalyst in the restoration of the Bunn-Sanke House which he purchased in March 2008 from the Heritage Foundation of Springfield.

Beeman has experience restoring other historic buildings, including his law firm's previous office in an 1860s era home on 7<sup>th</sup> St. across from the Lincoln Home site.

#### **JANE TREADWELL**

Jane Treadwell is Univer-

sity Librarian and Dean of Library Instruction at UIS.

She came to UIS in the summer of 2002 after working 13 years at Emory University in Atlanta as Director of Collections and Technical Services.

She and her husband are avid gardeners and live on two acres near Lincoln Memorial Gardens.

#### **CAROLYN OXTOBY**

A past board member of the Society, Carolyn Oxtoby chairs the Heritage Foundation of Downtown Springfield.

She has pioneered the restoration and redevelopment of the downtown district as a preservationist, civic leader and an entrepreneur.



**AUTHOR SHARES STORIES:** Former St. Louis Post-Dispatch Illinois political columnist and author Taylor Pensoneau (at podium, left) filled the Lincoln Library's Carnegie Room to the max in Springfield on Tuesday, May 18 when he spoke to the Sangamon County Historical Society about "Governors and Gangsters." Pensoneau, a former Society president, shared stories and insight into the criminals and politicians he has written about in a series of popular books including former Governors Dan Walker and Richard Ogilvie, the notorious Shelton Gang and most recently, *Black Charlie Harris*. Later he autographed books for fans. (right). Pensoneau also autographed a copy of *Dapper and Deadly, The True Story of Black Charlie Harris*, that will be among the items that will be raffled off June 15 at the Society's Annual Dinner.

### *Society Publishes New Booklet Based On Springer Lecture on the Donners*

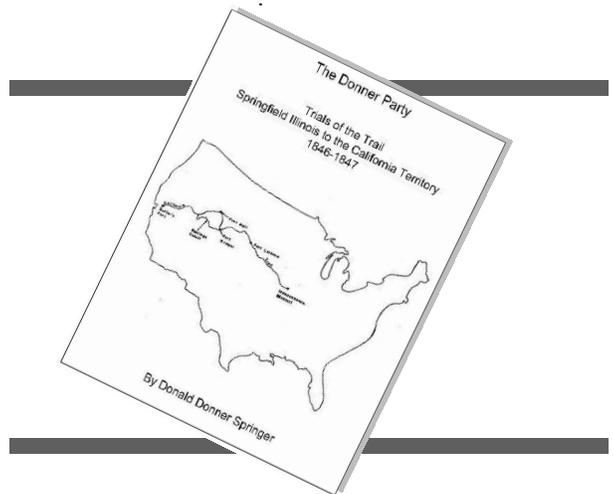
The Sangamon County Historical Society has issued its first new publication of the year, *The Donner Party: Trials of the Trail: Springfield Illinois to the California Territory 1846-1847* by SCHS board member Donald Donner Springer.

The illustrated booklet captures the remarks Springer made in April when he spoke to a Society-sponsored lecture at the University of Illinois Brookens Library that drew more than 200 people.

Springer is the great, great, great, great grandson of George Donner, who led the ill-fated wagon train over the final 1,000 mile leg of the historic journey in which nearly half the party



SPRINGER



perished after becoming trapped in a winter blizzard in the Sierra Mountains. Copies of the booklet will be available at the annual dinner on June 15 for \$3 for members, \$4 for non-members and other Society functions.

# Society Gearing Up for Annual Meeting June 15

(Continued from page 1)

At 6 p.m., the cash bar will open, giving you time to mix and mingle and get an advanced look at the many prizes that will be raffled off during the evening for benefit of the Society. Raffle tickets will be \$5.

Dinner tickets are \$20 per person for members, \$25 for non-members. Tickets must be ordered by June 11 to avoid a \$5 per person late fee. Fill out the order form on page 7 and mail it with your check to the Society, 308 East Adams Street, Springfield, IL 62701.

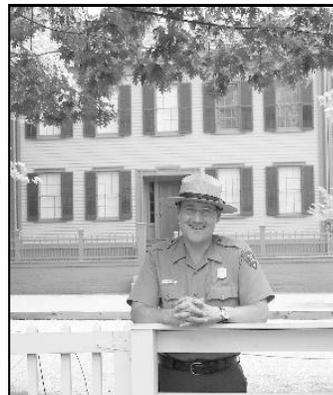
Townsend, historian at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site in Springfield, served as president of the Society from 1999 to 2000. He began his career with the National Park Service in 1991 as a Lincoln Home Park Ranger. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in from St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, and holds a master of arts degree in history from the University of Illinois at Springfield. Prior to his assignment at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Townsend worked on the curatorial staff at the Rock Island Arsenal Museum and

was an interpreter at the U.S. Grant Home, the Vachel Lindsay Home, and the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices. He also assisted with field archeology and research for the Springfield archeological firm of Fever River Research.

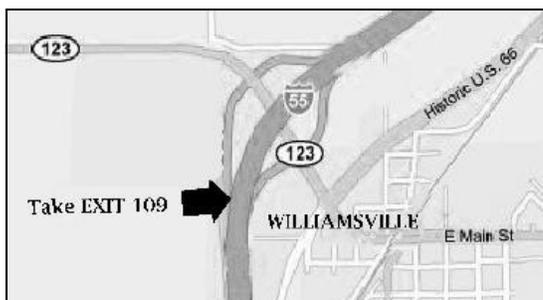
Williamsville, established in 1853, was originally known as Benton, but the name was changed in 1854 in honor of Colonel John Williams, a local landowner, after residents petitioning for a post office in the community learned there was another Benton in Illinois.

The downtown flanks both sides of the railroad and was a stopping point along historic Route 66.

Downtown Williamsville is located just east of I-55, about nine miles north of Springfield at exit 109 (Illinois 23).

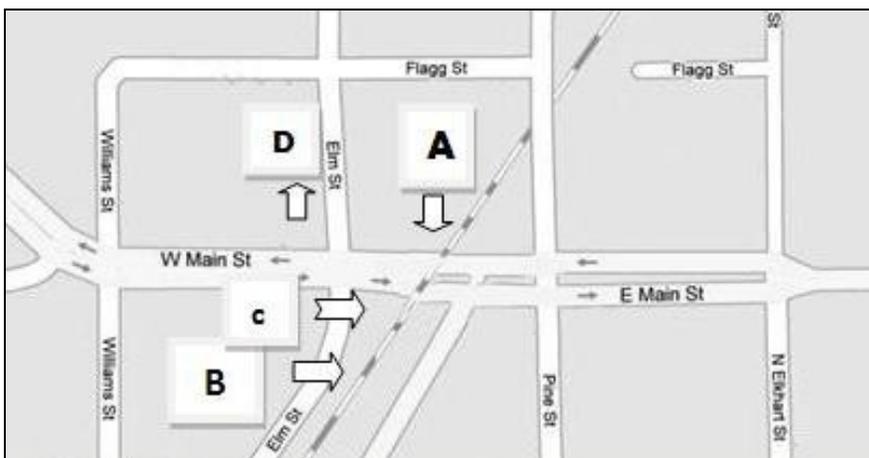


**LINCOLN HISTORIAN Timothy Townsend will be the featured speaker at the Society's Annual Dinner on June 15.**



## Williamsville Dinner Site Guide

- A: Williamsville Municipal Center (dinner site)
- B: Boxcar Museum
- C: Williamsville Library
- D: Route 66 Gas Station



## Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society Slates Program on Family's Heritage

The Illinois Mennonite Historical and Genealogical Society in Metamora will hold the fourth in a series of programs on Mennonite immigrants to Illinois on June 18-20 at the Illinois Mennonite Heritage Center.

The Center is located at 675 State

Route 116 in Metamora, north of Peoria.

The June program will focus on the Shrock family from 1550 to 2010 in a walk through a history filled with drama, excitement, heartache, love and faith. A choir of Schrock descendents will sing several songs of their European ancestors

from the *Ausband* and *Zion's Harp* led by hymnody scholar Dr. Mary Oyer, Professor Emerita of Music at Goshen College, Indiana.

To register for the events that span the weekend and for fee information call 309-367-2551.

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## Time to JOIN, RENEW, or UPGRADE Your Membership

To join, renew, or upgrade your membership level, fill out the form and mail it to the address on the reverse side of this form. If you'd like to give someone a gift of membership, provide the information in the appropriate section. A letter announcing your gift will be sent to the recipient.



Please check the appropriate box(es)  New Member  Renewal  Upgrade  Gift

Level of Membership:  Individual: \$17.50  Family \$25  Sustaining \$50  
 Individual Life \$250 (one time payment)  Family Life \$400 (one time payment)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

I am interested in becoming more involved in Society activities. Please contact me.

.....  
I'd like to send a gift of membership in the Sangamon County Historical Society to:

Level of Membership:  Individual: \$17.50  Family \$25  Sustaining \$50  
 Individual Life \$250 (one time payment)  Family Life \$400 (one time payment)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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## June 15th Annual Dinner Reservation Form



Dinner at the Williamsville  
Community Center,  
Williamsville, IL

Community tram tours start at 5 p.m.,  
6 p.m. cash bar with sit-down dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
at the Community Center

Members: \$20 Non Members: \$25

There will be a \$5 per ticket surcharge for reservations received after June 11. Seating is limited.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_.

Number of Reservations:

\_\_\_\_\_ Member \_\_\_\_\_ Non-Member (including non-member spouse/friends)

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Checks should be made payable to the Sangamon County Historical Society. Mail this form to the Sangamon County Historical Society, 308 East Adams Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701

***Sangamon County Historical Society***  
308 East Adams Street  
Springfield, Illinois 62701  
*Return Service Requested*

Non-profit Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Permit No. 777  
Springfield, Illinois

## ***Can You ID This Month's Mystery Photo?***



**FAMILIAR FACES?:** The description on the negative envelope says “Rabbit Row Community Picnic” and was taken on July 18, 1951. It’s another in the Society’s series of Photo ID shots to help the Sangamon Valley Collection at the Lincoln Library identify Mercury Studio photos they’re now digitizing. If you can name one or more of those in the photo, send the info along to [research@sancohis.org](mailto:research@sancohis.org). For more photos, go to [www.sancohis.org](http://www.sancohis.org).

## ***2010 Meeting Calendar***

### **Special Events**

**June 5**

**Sugar Creek/Cotton Hill  
Bus Tour**

**June 15**

**Annual Dinner Meeting  
Speaker: Tim Townsend**  
*Williamsville Community Center  
Municipal Building,  
Williamsville*

### **Program Meetings**

**September 21**

*Clayville*

**October 19**

*“Rabbit Row”*

**November 16**

*Lincoln-Herndon Law Office*