



Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter
P.O. Box 9744 Springfield, IL 62791-9744 | 217-525-1961 | schsoffice@gmail.com
www.sancohis.org | www.sangamoncountyhistory.org

April Program at Lincoln Library Growing Up on Route 66

Tuesday, April 21
5:30 pm at Lincoln Library -
Carnegie Room

One of the nation’s most celebrated roads, historic US Route 66, is celebrating its centennial this year. Visionary for its time, the Mother Road is one of the original highways within the National Highway System. It was intended to connect rural main streets and urban communities so that small towns could have access to a national thoroughfare. Illinois is part of the start and the first state to have paved the road across the entire state, running through Missouri and all the way to Santa Monica, California.

It seems totally appropriate that one of our organization’s programs should include an in-person accounting by our own Mary Alice Davis, past President and chairman of the Oak Ridge Cemetery Walk, to present “growing up on Route 66”.

Davis’s parents William “Bill” and Helen Posegate built the A Lincoln Tourist Court in 1945 as gas rationing ended. They also opened a lumber company, believing people would soon be travelling and building again. He named his motel after the 16th president, using his typical signature of “A Lincoln”. He also used the President’s profile on the sign and the stationery.

Mary Alice and her brother Robert grew up at the motel, which never closed except for an hour on Christmas Day to have Christmas dinner.

Come to this program to learn more about what it was like to grow up in the motel on historic Route 66. Learn about how Ace Sign Company made the first sign out of wood planks. When the name was changed to A Lincoln Motel, Ace made their first neon sign, and it ended up being featured in a Rose Bowl parade and the Route 66 experience at the fairgrounds. Davis will share some old photos and other memorabilia with the audience and answer any questions.



Highlights

April Program
April 21 at
Lincoln Library
Carnegie Room

March Program
Recap

SangamonLink
Stories

IN THIS ISSUE

March Program Recap.....3
America 250 in Springfield.....4
SangamonLink Stories.....5



If you have had a recent move, please remember to log into the website to update your address in the system, so you can stay up to date on Historico!

From the President's Desk



LINDA SCHNEIDER

We are so pleased with the turnout for the March monthly program on Sangamo Town by Curtis Mann. Although we usually have delicious treats provided for us by Marion Leach, due to another commitment she was unable to attend this month's program. Never fear, she will be attending the April program and we are already talking about treats in conjunction with our program by Mary Alice Davis about her memories of Route 66 and the A Lincoln Lodge which was owned by her family. We hope you will be able to join us.

The Program/Special Events Committee is working on topics and presenters for 2026-2027. If you have a topic to suggest and/or a presenter, please contact me at schsoffice@gmail.com or 217-525-1961. Plans are also underway for our Annual Meeting/Grants Recognition on Tuesday, June 16 at the Pasfield House. Further details will be included in the next edition of Historico.

Also, grants applications are due on April 20, 2026. If you know of a local organization that could use funding help with a historical project related to Sangamon County, please encourage them to apply. Applications are available on our website - www.sancohis.org - and can be submitted either to our mailing address, PO Box 9744, Springfield IL 62791-9744 or via email, schsoffice@gmail.com.

Thanks to all of our monthly program presenters for 2025-2026 - Paul Golladay, Mike Kienzler, Rich Saal, Karen Conn, Curtis Mann, Mary Alice Davis, Susan Helm and Cinda Klickna. We so much appreciate your willingness to share your knowledge of Sangamon County history with us.

Linda



2025-2026 Officers

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Past President - Cinda Klickna

Treasurer - Sam Sgro

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Term ending 2026

Ruth Slottag

Term ending 2027

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Historico, published 9 times a year is the official bulletin for members of the Sangamon County Historical Society. Springfield, Illinois.

Winner, Certificate of Excellence, Illinois State Historical Society

You can download back issues of Historico in PDF format by going to our website: www.sancohis.org.

Send event announcements to: schshistorico@gmail.com

March Program: "The Rise and Fall of Sangamo Town"



by Cinda Klickna

Curtis Mann always draws a crowd when he gives a presentation. That was the case March 17 for the Sangamon County Historical Society's program; extra chairs had to be set up.

Mann presented *Built on the River: the Rise and Decline of Sangamo Town*. Sangamo Town no longer exists; in fact, nothing can be seen on what is now farmland. But, it once stood northwest of Springfield on the Sangamon River near Salisbury.

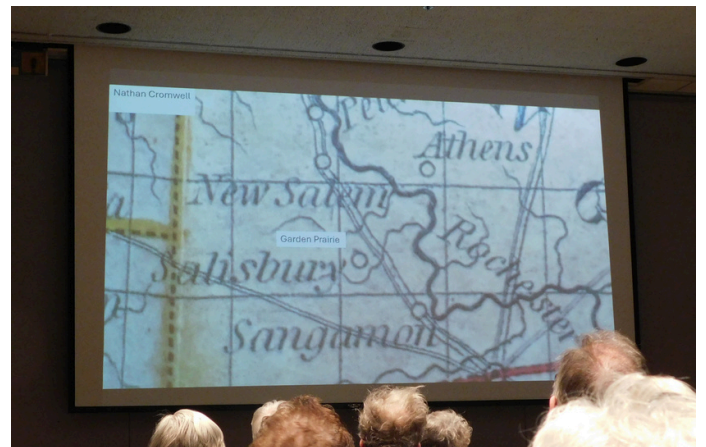


Moses Broadwell came to the area in the early 1820s; he had fought in the Revolutionary War and made his way west. He was "ambitious," according to Mann, and bought 328 acres for his new town. Broadwell started the Sangamo Milling Company and in 1822 the Sangamo Exporting Company which shipped pork to St. Louis and the south.

Mann shared information about some of the first people in Sangamo Town. Ebenezer Brigham opened a store in 1823 and became the first postmaster. Later, he left on a keelboat called Good Luck, which didn't have much luck on its journey. Addison Philleo was the first doctor in Sangamo Town; the story is that he had to leave his home in New York when he was accused of grave snatching.



Jack Carmen opened a tavern; Jacob Roll opened a store in 1829 and served as Postmaster; Anson G. Henry was a doctor who later moved to Springfield and was friends with Abraham Lincoln.



As other towns were founded and grew, such as Athens and Salisbury, Sangamo Town, which Mann estimates had only around 30 people, died out by the mid-1830s. By 1845, the land had converted back to agriculture. Today, we just have stories of the people.

All photographs by Ernie Slottag

America 250 Events in Illinois in 2026!

America 250 will be commemorated across the United States in 2026. There are several events under our very noses throughout the year. Visit Springfield's website contains information for national, state, and local events happening during this important year.

Visit Springfield's intro into the America 250 page says it best: "On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress approved the final draft of the Declaration of Independence, ushering in a new nation. 2026 marks the 250th anniversary of that momentous occasion. Organizations around the state of Illinois will be celebrating 250 years of the United States with initiatives that focus on three themes: We the People, Power of Place, and Doing History. Institutions around Springfield, Illinois, will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration through programs, exhibits, and other exciting projects."

Check out these sites to find events that suit your schedule:

Visit Springfield - <https://www.visitspringfieldillinois.com/America.aspx>

Illinois America 250 - <https://www.il250.org>

America 250 - <https://america250.org>



PLUS! There is a special digital passport for Illinois 250 that contains nearly 60 locations around the state of Illinois for you to visit and check off your list. Find that passport here: <https://www.il250.org/passport>.



Sangamon County Historical Society 2025-2026 MEMBERSHIP/MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL Form

Mail this form with your check to the Sangamon County Historical Society, P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744. Our membership year runs from June 1 to May 31. All memberships cover adults and children 16 and over living at the same address. Be sure to list their full names. Please Print.

Your Full Name _____

Spouse/Significant Other First Name _____

Spouse's maiden name where applicable _____

Your e-mail _____

Your address _____

City, State , Zip _____ Phone _____

Choose Your Level of Membership: Regular (\$30) Pioneer (\$100) Settler (\$250)

Trailblazer (\$500) Lifetime (\$700 one-time fee) College/University Student (individual) (\$20)

This is a GIFT (Name of recipient, mailing and e-mail address):

I am adding a donation to the Society in addition to my membership in the amount of \$ _____

SangamonLink Stories - IL Route 66 Hall of Fame Members, Sangamon County

U.S. Route 66, “the Mother Road,” probably the most famous highway in the country, ran from Chicago through Sangamon County to Santa Monica, Cal. from 1926 until its official decommissioning in 1985.

The Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame was established at the Dixie Truckers Home in McLean County, in 1990. The Hall of Fame, operated by the Route 66 Association of Illinois, moved to larger quarters in Pontiac in 2003, where it is part of the Pontiac Museum Complex. Here are a selection of Sangamon County’s members of the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame (you can find the whole list at www.sangamoncountyhistory.org).



1991: Ed Waldmire family and the Cozy Dog Drive-in, Springfield. Edwin Waldmire Jr. invented the name “Cozy Dog” and perhaps perfected the recipe – if not the concept – for a batter-covered hot dog on a stick. Cozy Dog Drive-in became an iconic stop for people traveling Route 66 after 1949. You can still visit Cozy Dog on South 6th Street in Springfield.

1993: Bill Shea and Shea’s Finest Truck Covers, Springfield. Bill Shea (1921-2013) operated Texaco and Marathon gas stations along Peoria Road in the 1940s and ’50s. The business eventually became a homegrown Route 66 museum and tourist attraction. After Shea’s death in 2013, Ron Metzger of Springfield bought much of the memorabilia Shea had amassed and moved it to his Route 66 Motorheads Bar and Grill.

1997: Ralph (1907-85) and Frank Hay (1902-83), Hay Brothers Garage, Divernon. The Hay brothers operated their service station a block west of Route 66 in Divernon from 1932 until 1977. Howard Hay recalls his father giving away used tires to people who couldn’t afford them and sharing food with travelers who didn’t have the money to buy dinner. The former Hay Brothers Garage building, constructed as a Ford dealership in 1917, is now Herman’s Garage and Body Shop.



2005: Tom Teague, Springfield (Ambassador’s Award). Tom Teague (1943-2004) founded and served as the first president of the Route 66 Association of Illinois; established and was the first editor of The 66 News of Illinois; and conceived the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame. Teague also wrote a book of stories about people he met along the highway, Searching for 66 (1996).

Teague was the first recipient of the Route 66 Association of Illinois’ Ambassador’s Award, which was then named after him. According to the association, the Ambassador’s Award “is reserved for the truly exceptional individual who has provided outstanding benefits to the Route 66 Association of Illinois for an extended period of years.”

(continued on page 6)

2026 Programs April - May

April 21

Mary Alice Davis
*Growing up
on Route 66*



May 19

Cinda Klickna
*April 15, 1909: The Day
the Petticoats
Swarmed the Capitol*

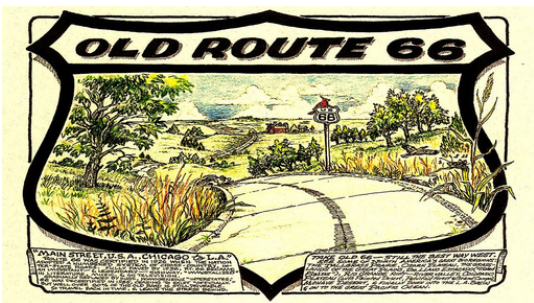


All programs take place at the Lincoln Library, the Public Library of Springfield, in Carnegie Room North, unless otherwise noted.

SangamonLink Stories (continued from page 5)



2007: Curve Inn, Springfield. The Curve Inn calls itself “Springfield’s original roadhouse.” The building opened in 1932 as a grocery/café, Copp’s Corner, operated by Emilio Copp. Guido Mancini bought the business in 1945 and changed the name to the Curve Inn. Curve Inn, under later owners Neil McGillivray, then Ray and Ami Merchant, and Don Thompson, developed a reputation as a popular music venue and gathering place. It suffered a serious fire in February 2026.



2010: Bob Waldmire, Rochester (Tom Teague Ambassador’s Award). Bob Waldmire (1945-2009), the son of Ed Waldmire, grew up in Rochester and Springfield. But his State Journal-Register obituary listed his home – accurately – as “Route 66.” Waldmire traveled Route 66 from end to end, probably dozens of times between the early 1960s and his death, often driving his 1972 Volkswagen van. Waldmire’s 1972 Volkswagen van is on display inside the Illinois Route 66 Hall of Fame and Museum.

For most of those years, he made his living by creating artwork revolving around the highway. Before his death from cancer, Waldmire left instructions about the disposal of his ashes. Half were buried next to his parents near Rochester, and the rest were distributed along Route 66.

2013: Wilbur Fawns Sr. family, service stations and cafe in Williamsville and Sherman. Wilbur Fawns Sr. (1908-1990) was 29 in 1938, when he became a mechanic at Charles Sutton’s Garage in Williamsville. Fawns took over the garage in 1943, enlisting the help of sons Bill (age 14), Wilbur Jr. (12) and George (10) as mechanics and pump jockeys. In 1954, he bought a Standard Oil station, also on Route 66. That station was known for its distinctive illuminated sign. Wilbur Jr. and George Fawns stayed in the gas station business at various locations in Williamsville, Springfield, and Sherman, where George bought another Standard Station. George’s son Pat eventually succeeded his father as station operator in Sherman. Wilbur Sr.’s wife, Ruth (1912-90), operated the family’s Route 66 Café just east of the Williamsville Standard station from 1960 to 1984.

SangamonLink was created to put the rich history of Sangamon County – home of Abraham Lincoln and the capital of Illinois – at people’s fingertips. This online research hub is edited by Mike Kienzler.

Calendar

A Heads Up Guide to Area History Events

Save the Date!



Send announcements, information, photos and illustrations to schshistorico@gmail.com.



April 11: Annual Lincoln Tomb Ceremony at Lincoln Tomb in Oak Ridge Cemetery at 10AM. Free to attend.
<https://suvcw.org/lincoln-tomb-ceremony>
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War



April 18: Civil War Event, 10AM-4PM. Free to attend, donations appreciated.
217-761-3910
Illinois State Military Museum

April 15-17: The Illinois State Museum Society plans an overnight motorcoach tour to explore Illinois artists' and architects' works in southeast Wisconsin.
www.illinoisstatemuseum.org
IL State Museum Society



April 22: Earth Day Drive Trip to Funks Grove - Prairie Home, Museum, Maple Syrup and Bluebells!
www.
historyillinois.org.
Illinois State Historical Society

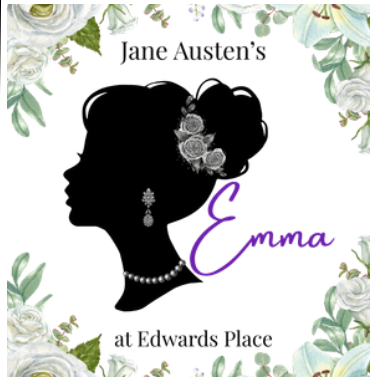


ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Dana-Thomas House Foundation

April 17: Dana-Thomas House Foundation Annual Dinner - "Growing Up in a Frank Lloyd Wright House."
Registration required.
(217)788-9452
Dana-Thomas House Foundation



April 24-26: Jane Austen's Emma in the parlors of Historic Edwards Place. Friday-Saturday - 7PM; Sunday - 2PM.
Tickets are \$15
www.edwardsplace.org
217-523-2631
Edwards Place

Sangamon County Historical Society
P.O. Box 9744,
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PROGRAMS

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
5:30 PM AT LINCOLN LIBRARY

April 21
Mary Alice Davis

May 19
Cinda Klickna

June 16
Annual Meeting/Grant Recognition
at Pasfield House

Want to get involved?



Consider joining a committee. It's a great way to give back while preserving and promoting Sangamon County history.

Committees:

Programs/Special Events
Membership
Grants
Cemetery Walk
Finance