



HISTORICO

Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter
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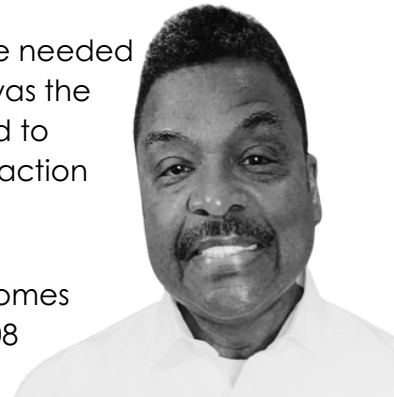
April 16th Program On Site at the First Black Firehouse in Springfield

On April 16th, the SCCHS will hold our monthly meeting at a special location, the Black Firehouse No. Five, located at 1310 E. Adams. Ken Page will share the history of the site, the work that has been done to restore the building and acquire old logbooks and pictures, and lead us on a tour. The Central 3 Community First Project Inc, led by Ken Page, is heading up the restoration and was the recipient of the 2023 Society award to purchase display cases for artifacts. Visiting the site will be an opportunity to see all that has occurred over the past year.



Monthly Program:
April 16, 2024 at 5:30 pm
Black Firehouse
1310 E. Adams St.

The firehouse was built in 1902-1903 to provide needed fire service to the area east of 10th Street. It was the only firehouse where black men were allowed to serve. The heroic firefighters were called into action during the 1908 race riot.



A plaque in front of the building, which the Sangamon County Historical Society helped fund, reads, "It was the first firehouse to answer the alarm to extinguish the homes and business of black citizens that were torched by angry white mobs during the 1908 Race Riot."

The building is now owned by the Central Lodge #3 Prince Hall Masons. It was established in 1867 by Prince Hall, an abolitionist who came from England as a free man.

Grant Deadline April 20th

Time is closing in on the due date for grant proposals. Grants for up to \$1,000 for projects that preserve and promote interest in the history of Sangamon County are awarded each year. A committee reviews the proposals and determines awards based upon the money available. Award winners are notified by mail and are invited to share their project at the Society's annual meeting in June.

Visit the Society's website sangamonhistory.org to access the application, the rules for entry, and a list of past grant awardees.

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Are you interested in serving on the board of directors? Email schoffice@gmail.com

TIME TO RENEW



Renew Your Membership by May 31st

From the President's Desk

With Gratitude

It is hard to believe we are just two months away from our annual meeting (June 12). We hope to see you there. This year has seen great attendance at our meetings. We thank you, our dedicated members. Thanks to Marion Leach who provides tasty treats for the programs held at the Lincoln Library.



CINDA KLICKNA

I want to personally thank our long-time member, editor of *Historico*, and member of the board, Vicky Whitaker. If you want to learn the history of the Society or details about the history of Sangamon County, Vicky is your go-to person. I have learned so much from her. Having conversations about history and digging into details with her is always a session that goes too quickly. She offers ideas and insights for programs and articles.

Cinda

THANK YOU

For close to 15 years Vicky Whitaker has been the writer and editor of *Historico*. She has decided it is time to step aside.



Vicky has spent hours upon hours researching topics, writing, laying out, and editing the issues of our newsletter. Vicky joined the board in 2010 as Publicity Chair and *Historico* editor. She served as Vice President of the Society in 2016 - 2017 and as president in 2018-2020. She and her husband, Roger developed the presentation about the Illiopolis Ordinance Plant, which they have given numerous times to a number of organizations.

Thank you, Vicky, for your unwavering dedication to the Society.

In Memory

David W. Scott
1936-2024



David W. Scott passed away on March 16th. He was dedicated to preserving Illinois heritage and improving the community.

He is a Past President of the Sangamon County Historical Society, and also a Past President of the Illinois State Historical Society where he earned its Lifetime Achievement Award. He was actively involved with the North Washington Park Association, the Historic Preservation Association of Springfield, and was appointed to the Mayor's Springfield Historic Sites Commission. In 2018 he edited a book for ISHS commemorating the bicentennial of Illinois statehood.

Membership Renewal

Membership renewals will be sent soon! Please renew your membership by May 31st. Renewal form is on page 8

Donations can be made to the Illinois State Historical Society and First United Methodist Church in Springfield.



Historico, published 9 times a year (except July, August and December), 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.sangamonhistory.org or www.sangcohis.org.

Send event announcements to: historicoeditor@gmail.com

Underground Railroad in Sangamon County



The Sangamon County Historical Society is proud to once again host a program on the activities of the Underground Railroad in Sangamon County on Tuesday, May 21st at 5:30 pm at the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum. The stories of six brave men will be shared. There will also be remarks by some members of the Underground Railroad Task Force of Illinois. Following the program, there will be short grave side services and placing of a commemorative marker on each of the four conductors buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery.



2023-2024 Officers

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Past President - Susan Helm

Vice Presidents - Mary Alice Davis, Stephanie Martin, and Ruth Slottag

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Term ending June 2024

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The Central Illinois African American History Museum is located at 1440 Monument Avenue just south of the Monument Avenue entrance to Oak Ridge Cemetery.

In the spring of 2023, the Illinois General Assembly created the Illinois Underground Railroad Task Force. The group was charged with connecting existing local projects and new projects to create a cohesive statewide history of the Underground Railroad in Illinois. Last May, the Society offered a program on John Albert Jones, a white underground railroad conductor from Tazewell County who is buried at Oak Ridge. The Tazewell County Recorder of Deeds, John C. Ackerman, initiated work in his county to place markers on all graves of underground railroad conductors that could be located. When he discovered the story of Jones, he contacted our Society which led to the May 2023 meeting. The Society determined that others who are buried at Oak Ridge should be remembered. The May program will tell the stories of several Black conductors who knew Lincoln.

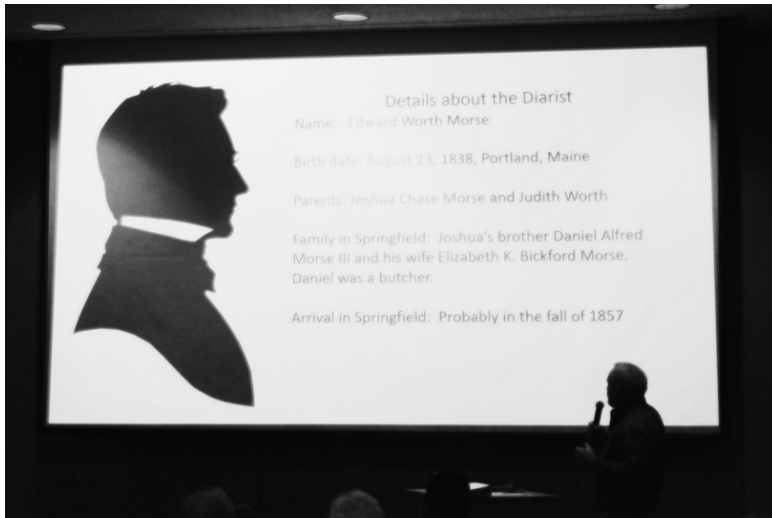
History day – April 24 – Volunteers needed

See amazing history projects and help out at the annual state-wide History Day by checking in participants, setting up items, or serving as a judge. Illinois History Day, an event where students from across Illinois create history projects such as exhibits, websites, documentaries, performances, and research papers on topics of their choice, will be held in Springfield on April 24, 2024. This state-wide program encourages students in grades 6-12 to delve into the history and culture of Illinois through researching primary and secondary source materials.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of National History Day, the 2024 theme will be Turning Points in History

Dear Diary.....

One man's documentation of the weather and more



Curtis Mann, former historian and head of the Sangamon Valley Collection who recently retired, always tells compelling stories about people and events in Sangamon County. That was true on March 19th with his presentation about Edward Morse. When exploring items in the Sangamon Valley Collection, Mann discovered a diary – all written in pencil - that Morse wrote in the 1850s.

Mann started more research to discover that Morse had been a businessman in Springfield. He kept details about his work as a store clerk and often recorded the weather in Springfield. The diary covers the year 1856. “Later,” Mann shared, “Morse became a traveling salesman throughout southern Illinois selling medicine.”

The first part of Mr. Morse’s diary was written when he lived in Springfield and worked for Wheelock Paine & Co. bookstore and bindery located on the East side of the square. Messrs Wheeler and Webster left, and were replaced by Mr. Borean and Mr. J.R. Bacon. The store was destroyed by fire on Saturday, February 13th after McCabe’s store burned; eleven buildings were affected. Luckily they had a \$5,000 insurance policy and just three days later relocated to a new building, which also housed City Hall.

Mr. Morse attended First Baptist Church located on the Southwest corner of 7th and Adams, and was baptized there on January 31, 1856, along with 23 others. He spent a lot of time at the Church, sometimes attending three times a day, and met with people who were newly baptized. In his spare time, he would go on walks, take tea with friends and family, including Mrs. Sherman and Mrs. Gordon, who were sisters of his Aunt, Mary Bickford Morse. One of these occasions involved “Going to the hill to take tea”, which was Vinegar Hill, Edwards Mathers addition. He also liked to educate himself, and even attended writing school on March 25th.

He did not discuss politics; the only reference was the Democratic National Convention being held at the Capital and there being “people everywhere”, including Senator Douglas.



Meeting photos by Ernie Slottag

Changing Careers

On May 24th, Mr. Morse agreed to work for Freeman and Ware as a traveling salesman. Mr. Freeman (who built the St. Nicholas Hotel) was a medicine drug patent doctor who sold liniments, balsams, sweating drops, tonics and more in Alton. Mr. Freeman later moved to Carbondale and was a banker.

Traveling with Freeman, Mr. Morse set out on a horsedrawn wagon. Challenges were common - the wagon broke down, horses ran away, yet they forged ahead. He sent the medicine to Decatur to be transported on the Central Railroad. He signed up 50 agents along the way, mostly farmers.



July 17th Mr. Morse was struck with bilious fever, which is common with malaria, and was sick with nausea, vomiting, etc. for 23 days. Once he was better, he took the railroad to Decatur, then went to Springfield where he worked at the St. Nicholas Hotel, visited the state fair and Matteson Mansion. The diary mentions the Governor Matteson house on October 8th.

After spending a month in Springfield, Mr. Morse went on the road again and returned on Christmas Eve.

Freeman and Ware was dissolved in January of 1859, but Mr. Morse spent the rest of his life in patent medicine, and founded Morse & Co. He died on the road, in Mt. Vernon, of a heart attack in 1916 at the age of 78. There is no record that he ever married. He is buried in Mt. Vernon, where he moved to around 1880.

Curtis Mann has served as a past president of the Sangamon County Historical Society and in June was awarded the Society's Lifetime Achievement Award.

Mr. Edwards' Neighbord

The Benjamin S. Edwards family owned the historic house Edwards Place in Enos Park neighborhood from 1843-1913. Benjamin and his wife Helen raised their three daughters within the walls of Edwards Place, and they lived to see Enos Park grow and change along with their family. Often, Edwards Place is known because of a small connection to Abraham Lincoln – Benjamin's brother Ninian married Mary Todd's sister Elizabeth, and Benjamin and Abraham met in the courtroom as lawyers over 400 times. Edwards Place is now also home to several pieces of furniture from Ninian's home, namely the courting couch on which Abe and Mary sat and a piano assuredly heard by Abe and possibly played at his wedding.

Much has been researched about the Edwards family's connection to the Lincolns and other notable names of the time. One area that has been lesser known is the Edwards' interaction with their neighbors. Research into the matter shows that the Edwards family lived in a vibrant neighborhood, filled with neighbors running their own businesses and contributing to Enos Park neighborhood and Springfield. The jumping off point for this research was the 1860 city directory for Springfield, a time that pinpointed much change in the neighborhood.

Until around 1860, Edwards Place and the surrounding area were on the edge of the community, more rural in scope. Railroads constituted many of the businesses in the neighborhood at that time. Helen Edwards wrote of the C. & A. Railroad that was constructed in 1852 in the neighborhood, "...cut through part of our property, destroying a beautiful maple grove." There was also a flour and grist mill, a woolen mill, iron works, foundry and machine works, and Reisch Brewery. Not long after 1860, there was the coal industry, the Illinois Watch Factory, a trolley line, and the Springfield Iron Company. That's not even including the small businesses and professions in which the Edwards' neighbors worked.

Enos Park went through multiple divisions from 1833, the year Edwards Place was built, to 1965, most of which occurred in the 19th century. The area all around Edwards Place was divided into smaller lots, but Edwards Place remained an exception to the norm of land being platted into smaller lots, being one of the areas that kept a large area of land. From the time period observed for this research, the years surrounding 1860, development was active close to the land that the Edwards' owned. The area that was the focus of research was specifically this area.

The Edwards' were surrounded by a varied community. They were represented by many different professions – a total of 27 different lines of work in one small area. And the nature of these professions shows the growth of Springfield. Surrounding the Edwards' were five carpenters, four laborers, and even two (eventual) mayors. It isn't surprising that at least three of their neighbors were working for the railroad, which had been in the area since the 1830s. It also isn't surprising that the women who were listed in the 1860 directory were all keeping house as their job. There was a mix of the type of work done in this area of Enos Park in 1860. Some "white collar", some blue. There were bricklayers and a well digger living next to a reverend and a photographer. Business owners alike were in the neighborhood, making a living by selling to the Edwards' and other of their neighbors and peers. Many of these people moved after 1860, sometimes to other areas of town, and sometimes out of town all together. It is not surprising that there was a skewed representation of gender in Enos Park; women were not typically listed unless they were considered head of household, and they were not typically considered head of household. The few found in Enos Park were living on their own or with children, and were, in some cases, widows.

Nearly HALF of the Edwards' neighbors were born outside the United States. This isn't unusual for Enos Park neighborhood, which saw many immigrant communities. Many immigrant groups were coming to Springfield around this time period, including Scandinavians and Portuguese people, who weren't seen as close to the Edwards'. The majority of Portuguese immigrants settled along Miller and Carpenter between 9th and 10th streets, which was a bit to the east of Edwards Place. Illinois was a good place for immigrants to move – they had opportunities here in farming, cheap land, and good jobs. And with the platting of Enos Park, land was easier to come into in a growing city. And this isn't including the immigrants who lived within Edwards Place during this time period, as domestic help to the Edwards family. Most of them were Irish immigrants, with some German, and some native born.

People were moving to Springfield, and in Enos Park, from many locations in the United States, as well, and often for the same reasons as immigrants. Kentucky is one common location where people moved from – it was bordering Illinois, and the move made sense for many families – including the Edwards family, if you'll recall. People were coming from not just the south, but also the northeast and other midwestern states. All of these people saw something of opportunity in Illinois.

The Edwards lived in a diverse neighborhood, crossing social and ethnic barriers. They had a cohesive community of varied professions and backgrounds. The Edwards family saw many changes in their neighborhood over the time that they lived in Edwards Place, from 1843-1909. When they moved into their home, they had very few neighbors. But by 1860, they had many neighbors, and by the 20th century, homes surrounded Edwards Place, truly enmeshing it into the city of Springfield. It went from a more rural location to a bustling neighborhood in Enos Park. Helen dictated to her daughter Mollie later in life, "Springfield had grown rapidly, and we had very near neighbors."

This community can shed light on Edwards Place and the Edwards family by showing their place in Springfield. The Edwards family was a grand one, Benjamin having descended from a governor, and they were often concerned with their status and showing that status. This was seen in the renovation and expansion of Edwards Place and their role in entertaining the social and political elite of Springfield. However, the people they interacted with every day weren't necessarily from their own social class. They lived and worked beside people who rented from them, who purchased land from them, and who lived on small plots of land belonging to other developers. Their interactions with their neighbors would have broadened the Edwards' world, whereas in a more insular neighborhood, that may not have been the case. The Edwards' were also in a position to elevate the status and wealth of their neighbors. Through supporting their neighbors in various ways, those same people would have opportunities to advance in their own dealings through more business, and assistance otherwise.

Calendar

A Heads Up Guide to Area History Events



Send announcements, information, photos and illustrations to historicoeditor@gmail.com. You can still see a list and links to all the Zoom programs the Society offered during the Pandemic on-site meeting shut-down, by going to the SCHS website, sangamonhistory.org.

Save The Date

Wednesday, June 12 - Annual Meeting

Mark your calendars for June 12th for our annual meeting at Island Bay Yacht Club. Enjoy a delicious dinner, vote on the Society Board candidates, and hear about the 2024 Grant award winners while taking in the beautiful lake-side view from the patio. Cost: \$30 for buffet dinner; cash bar.

Tuesday, May 21 - Honoring the Legacy of Civil War Underground Railroad Conductors

The May program, starting at 5:30 pm, will be held at the Central Illinois African American History Museum (1440 Monument Avenue) near the entrance to Oak Ridge Cemetery. Hear about six conductors, including both white and Black conductors, who are buried at the cemetery and find out more about the state-wide effort honoring the legacy of brave Underground Railroad conductors.

Saturday, June 8 - Dana-Thomas House Foundation Summer Party and Frank Lloyd Wright Birthday

Enjoy a summer evening in the beautiful Dana-Thomas House courtyard for food, jazz, and special visitor Frank Lloyd Wright, portrayed by Pat



Foster. June 8 would have been Frank Lloyd Wright's 157th birthday.

Wednesday, April 12 - Lunch & Learn Series by UIS Alumni Sage Society and the Illinois State Historical Society

Clayville at 200: Clayville was founded as a stagecoach stop between Springfield and Beardstown in 1824. The Inn is the oldest standing brick building in Sangamon County and second oldest in the state. Hear about the stories and history of Clayville in its historic bicentennial existence.



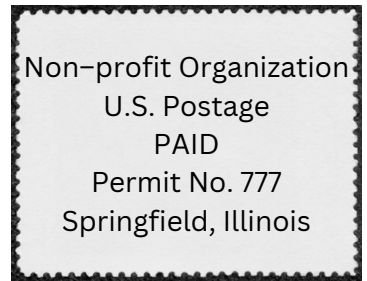
Tuesday, May 21 - Lunch & Learn Series by UIS Alumni Sage Society and the Illinois State Historical Society

Life and Times of A.E. Staley: A.E. Staley was a farm boy from North Carolina who moved to Decatur and built a soybean manufacturing empire. He was the original owner of the football team that became the Chicago Bears. Award-winning writer and film producer Julie Staley will discuss the life and times of A.E. Staley and his influence on life in the prairie.



A.E. Staley (Photo courtesy of Staley Museum, Decatur, IL)

Sangamon County Historical Society
P.O. Box 9744,
Springfield, IL 62791-9744
Return Service Requested



Sangamon County Historical Society 2024-2025 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 \$ _____