



HISTORICO

November 2024

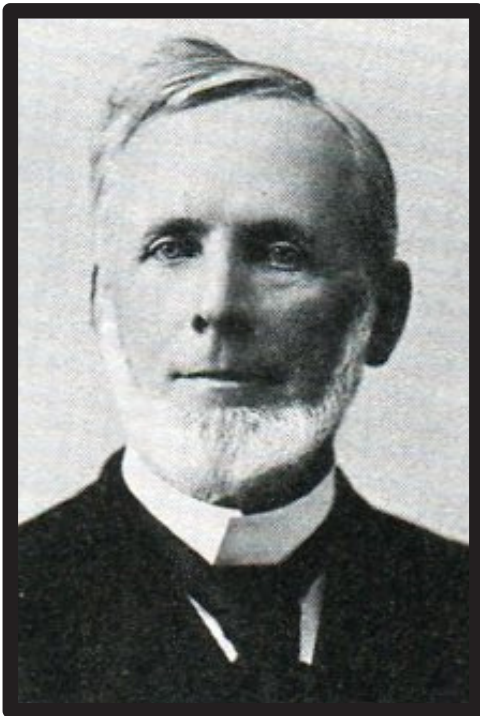
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Sangamon County Historical Society Newsletter

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www.sangamonhistory.org | www.sangamonlink.org

November Program - Springfield from 1860-1880s as heard through the voices of the Conkling Family



**Tuesday, November 19
5:30 pm at Springfield Art
Association**

Allicent Smith, a frequent presenter for the Society, will share information on James Cook Conkling and his wife, Mercy, and son, Clinton. Smith has done extensive research which includes letters written by the family to each other. These letters, written during the Civil War, provide an intimate look into the Conkling family dynamics, including how the Civil War was impacting life in Springfield, as well as Springfield's economic conditions, life at Camp Butler, plans for the Home of the Friendless, societal news and the parents well-intended strategies to keep their son on a respected and moral path. Post Civil War correspondence connects the Conkling family with the planning of the final resting place of President Lincoln and the forming of the Lincoln Guard of Honor.

Allicent Huffaer Smith was born and raised near New Berlin where she continues to live with her husband, Don. She retired as a teacher from District 186 in 2012. Allicent was a member of the Dana-Thomas House Foundation for six years and continues to serve on its Education Committee. For the past eleven years she has been a docent at the Dana-Thomas House and was honored with the volunteer of the year award from the Department of Natural Resources in 2023 for her work. She serves as a trustee on the West Sangamon Public Library Board, is an active volunteer for the New Berlin 'Blessings' Food Pantries and serves the village's St. John's Lutheran Church Council.

Highlights

November Program

November 19

at

**Springfield Art
Association**

****NEW LOCATION****

for Fall programs

Website Updates

Coming Soon!!

Holiday Party

December 10

at

The Inn at 835

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Mark your calendar for the Holiday
Party on December 10!



From the President's Desk



CINDA KLICKNA

Our September and October programs have drawn many to the Becker Library (thanks to Tony Libri) and then the Art Association (thanks to Betsy Dollar and SCHS board secretary Sarah Adams.) November's program will be another great presentation from Allicent Smith, the third program she has prepared for the Society.

We look forward to seeing you at our November program and our December holiday reception.

We had a great turnout for the annual Cemetery Walk. I'd like to thank the committee for their hard work on this event: Mary Alice Davis, Susan Helm, Ruth Slottag, Jerry Smith, Larry Stone, Linda Schneider, Scott Pillsbury, Ernie Slottag and Mike Kienzler. They put in countless hours to plan the event, including touring the cemetery, writing scripts, finding actors and volunteers, and many other behind the scenes tasks to make this event run smoothly. Thank you!!!

Cinda

Thank you to our Cemetery Walk Sponsors

Butler & Bisch Funeral Homes

Arnold Monument Company

Staab Funeral Home

Oak Ridge Cemetery

Thank you also to our actors and volunteers. It was another great event with rave reviews!!

In Memory



Leslie "Les" Eastep passed away on October 15, 2024. He worked at IDOT for 31 years, was a member of the Temple B'rith Sholom, and was a chilli enthusiast, winning several chilli competitions. Les was active in the community with SPARC, Habitat for Humanity, Children's Miracle Network, AARP, LLCC Board of Directors, and was a past board member of the SCHS.

SCHS Board of Directors

2024-2025 Officers

President - Cinda Klickna

Vice President - Linda Schneider

Past President - Susan Helm

Treasurer - Jerry Smith

Secretary - Sarah Adams

Directors

Term ending 2025

Lee-Ann Burgener

Elaine Hoff

Larry Stone

Directors

Term ending 2026

Mary Mucciante

Scott Pillsbury

Ruth Slottag

Directors

Term ending 2027

Brian Barstead

Mary Alice Davis

Kathy Hoffman

Stephanie Martin

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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: schshistorico@gmail.com

Moving Pillsbury Forward

Our October program was another packed house, this time held at the Springfield Art Association. Chris Richmond told the history of Pillsbury Mill and the work that has been going on since the group, Moving Pillsbury Forward, took possession of the 18-acre site in 2022. Richmond shared moving stories of employees who have provided insight into the workings of the plant and have donated artifacts.

It was in April 1929 that the Pillsbury Company, headquartered in Minneapolis, expanded operations. With wheat as a stable crop in the Springfield area and train tracks close by, the Springfield site was chosen. The mill produced flour, and even the batter for Kentucky Fried Chicken.

Over the years buildings were added, the mill set production records, and the number of employees increased from 300 in 1930, to 858 in 1937 and by 1955 there were 1500 employees. The mill operated until 1991 when it was sold to Cargill; with mechanization the work force had been reduced to 450; the mill shut down in 2001 and sat abandoned until 2008 when it was sold for scrap. Another scrap metal company used demolition that exposed asbestos which required a \$3M cleanup in 2018.



Left: Chris Richmond

Below: It was a full house for the October program

Bottom Left: Pillsbury artifacts

Pictures by
Ernie Slottag



From Tuesdays at Dock #107, open days when people could stop by the site, Richmond and his group met many former Pillsbury employees. Phil Aiello, a grain handler, helped Richmond learn about the Tripper machine, still standing in a silo. Dave Kelly, a millwright, could point to the exact spot where his locker once stood and then revealed his dad's locker was next to his. Others came forward with a 1946 seniority list of the union workers, pictures of the Pillsbury bowling team, a huge rolodex with hundreds of cards listing companies that supplied parts, a 1930s blueprint of one of the buildings which will be key for engineers to determine the best way to take down the structure.

What's next? Photos are being taken to document the site; oral histories have been recorded, the names of all employees have been added to a wall at the site, a site survey and historical records survey have been completed, the group is now a 501c3 not-for-profit, and \$9M has been committed to cleaning up and cleaning the property for redevelopment. The project completion is anticipated within 24 months.

Cemetery Walk 2024

On a beautiful fall day, 450 people came out to Oak Ridge Cemetery for the Sangamon County Historical Society's annual cemetery walk. Attendees boarded a bus and were taken to the first gravesite, walked to the next few stops and then reboarded the bus back to the parking area.



Seven Springfield citizens who are buried in the cemetery were portrayed by actors in period costume. The people and their portrayers were:



John J. Bird (Robert Davis) was a black civil rights activist who became the first U of I trustee.



Susan Moore (by Erica Smith) was a blind woman who lived the longest at the Home for the Friendless.



Emma Bressmer (Mary Dissler) ran Bressmer's Department store with her sister and sister-in-law.



Far Left: Mary Alice Davis, committee Chair

Left: Marian Leach providing delicious treats.

All photos by Scott Pillsbury

Cemetery Walk 2024

Pauline Deutsch Redlich (Sherry Flynn) was the daughter of Bernhard Deutsch, the first rabbi in Springfield.



Reed "Kid" Waddell (Pat Foster) became a notorious swindler and wheeler-dealer.



Alfred Piquenard (Andy Van de Voort) left his mark on Springfield as the architect of the State Capitol.



Ellen Huntington Henkle (Linda Schneider) was known as Springfield's best singer.





PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE ANNUAL

HOLIDAY PARTY

DECEMBER 10 5:30 PM

THE INN AT 835 PARLOR
835 S. 2ND ST. SPRINGFIELD, IL

HORS D'OEUVRES & DRINKS

MINGLE WITH MEMBERS AND
EXPERIENCE AN ARISTOCRACY
CHRISTMAS "BELL"

\$35 PER PERSON

REGISTER **BY NOVEMBER 29:** ONLINE
WWW.SANGAMONHISTORY.ORG
OR CALL 217-525-1961 OR EMAIL
SCHSOFFICE@GMAIL.COM



Statehood Day Commemoration

Tuesday, December 3, 2024
Inn at 835

10-11:45 am: "Antislavery Efforts in Early Illinois: The English Prairie Settlement at Albion" by Caroline Kiesel and "An Election of Consequence: Illinois' Slavery Campaign, 1823-1824" by Bernard Sieracki

Lunch Buffet, \$25/ISHS Member; \$30/Non-member, Guest speaker Senator Doris Turner, "Designs for the New Illinois State Flag". **Register for luncheon by November 21**

1-2:45 pm: "Native Americans in Illinois in 1818: Treaties and Treachery in the Path to Statehood" by Michael Wiant, and "Recovering the Past: Illinois Tribes and the Road to Remembrance and Commemoration" by Logan Pappenfort

3-5pm: Statehood Day Cotillion, demonstration and dance led by Jeanette Watt

5:30 -8pm: History Happy Hour Reception at Anvil & Forge Brewing and Distilling Company

Calendar

A Heads Up Guide to Area History Events

Save the Date!



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



November 2, 10am & November 3, 12pm: Great War Encampment at IL State Military Museum

Come see a Battle Re-enactment, Fashion Show,

Weapons Talk, and our Living History Detachment and learn about all things World War One.

Free; donations welcome.

November 7, 6pm: Oak Lecture: The Lincolns' Neighborhood at Edwards Place

Join Tim Townsend of Lincoln Home National Historic site as he discusses the Lincoln neighborhood. Jim will provide insight into the lives of six individuals and the impact they made on their community.



November 11, 9am-5pm: Abe Appreciation: Veteran's Day
Members of the US Armed Forces, both active duty and Veterans, and their spouses attending with them receive free museum admission.



November 12, 11am: IL State Historical Society Lunch & Learn at Illini Country Club

Pastel Artistry & Springfield Art Association

Artist Tracey Maras presents "Serenity and Connectedness",

conveying subtle vibrancy that capture moments and sensations that instill a sense of peace. Cost \$40. Register at www.uis.edu/advancement/events/lunch-learn-series

December

Dec. 7: Holiday Open House at Edwards Place from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Free to attend.

Dec. 7: Christmas at the Front at Illinois State Military Museum from 1pm to 5pm. Free to attend.

Dec. 7: Christmas Market at Brinkerhoff Mansion from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. \$5 per adult; \$1 per child.

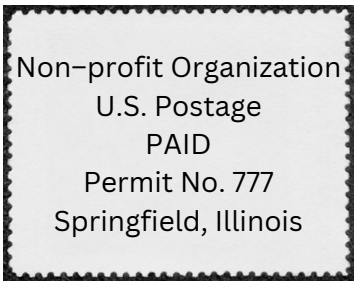
Dec. 13 & 14: Holiday Candlelight Open House at Elijah Iles House from 4:30 pm to 7:30 pm. Donation suggested.

Dec. 14: Wreaths Across America at Camp Butler.

Dec. 14: Cozy Winter Holiday Tea at Edwards Place at 1:00 pm. Cost - \$40/member; \$45/non-member.

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 \$_____