



HISTORICO

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

October Program - Pillsbury Stories

In the Summer and Fall of 2023, Moving Pillsbury Forward conducted an oral history project to capture many of the important stories associated with the site from community residents. Several of the interviews involved workers at the site. And, in some cases, family members of workers. These first-person accounts have added a rich layer to the historical context of our ongoing effort to document the site. The recordings will be archived within the Sangamon Valley Collection at Lincoln Library. This presentation will reveal much of what has been learned.



Pillsbury Mills and the C&M rail yard in 1952 (Sangamon Valley Collection)



Chris Richmond, retired Fire Marshall, will be our presenter for the program. In 2019 he formed a community centered working group to study the potential for

redevelopment of the long-shuttered flour milling and manufacturing site. Chris is now President of Moving Pillsbury Forward, the not-for-profit that is focused on the environmental cleanup and redevelopment of the 18-acre former Pillsbury Mills site in Springfield.

*Tuesday, October 15
5:30 pm at Springfield
Art Association*

Highlights

October Program
October 15
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

Even with a last-minute venue change, we had a huge crowd at our September program. Thanks to all who came out for a wonderful history lesson about Hutchinson Cemetery. I've been at several events and have been approached by many saying they like our new Historico design. Thank you!

The Historical Society is working to make major

improvements to our website and email contact system.

From the generous donation from the estate of Alvera Knox, we are able to use some of the money to help fund the new system. Be watching for updates of the progress.

Since the Springfield Journal-Register decided not to publish the Sangamon Link articles, we are happy to announce that the Illinois Times will be publishing articles periodically. Included in this issue is the article, written by Sangamon Link editor, Mike Kienzler, which will be in the Illinois Times.

Cinda

Website and Software Updates

We are thrilled to announce a new website will be coming soon! The update is needed due to outdated technology. We have also decided to implement a member management database software program that will make it easier to track membership records, will allow online event registrations utilizing secure

payment processing, online renewals, and messaging. In the event that we need to get an urgent message to our members, such as a change in location or cancellation due to weather, we can easily do this with the software.

Please make sure we have your correct email address.

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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

Program on Hutchinson Cemetery Draws a Crowd

Around 80 people attended the September 17 program, *Quite a City of the Dead – the Rise and Fall of Hutchinson’s Cemetery*, given by Illinois State Museum Curator of History, Erika Holst. The cemetery once stood where Springfield High School is today. John Hutchinson bought five acres of land in 1841, and in that year the first burial occurred at the site. The cemetery was outside the city limits and offered a peaceful, beautiful setting.

Hutchinson came to Springfield in 1840; he was a cabinet maker, adding coffin construction in 1842. His coffins were lined in velvet with silver handles. Within a short period of time his cemetery became the main cemetery even though the Old City Cemetery stood just east of Hutchinson’s.



Above: Erika Holst, Curator of History at the Illinois State Museum, presents at the September program



Holst shared the views of death and dying in the 1800s, a much more intimate time for a family. Hospitals didn’t exist; doctors might make occasional house calls, and family watched at the bedside when a loved one was dying. It was up to the family to prepare the body, and funerals were held in the home within one to two days after a death since there was no embalming.

Hutchinson offered a coach and driver to transport the coffin to the cemetery. In 1850 the Lincolns laid to rest their three-year-old son Eddie. His monument was carved out of marble.

Holst presented staggering figures of mortality rates: 52% of those buried at Hutchinson Cemetery died before the age of five, 65% of those buried died before the age of 20, and 84% of those buried died before the age of 40. Illinois had one of the highest infant mortality rates.

Oak Ridge Cemetery was chartered in 1856 with the first burial in 1858. By 1861, Hutchinson Cemetery was in poor condition and people complained about the lack of upkeep. By 1866 Hutchinson had left Springfield. Conditions continued to decline and in 1874 the city of Springfield ruled that no

Continued on page 5

Springfield's Original Homeless Shelters

When a jobless migrant – a “hobo” or “tramp” – wandered into Springfield during the Great Depression, he might have been in for a surprise: a well-stocked shelter offering meals, a bed, work opportunities and even recreation.

Springfield's transient-aid program was part of the Federal Transient Service, set up in 1933 to help communities deal with the hordes of people traveling the country to find work. The program lasted only about two years, until the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt developed a more extensive welfare system. In the meantime, though, the transient system helped hundreds of people a day in Springfield alone.

Springfield opened its first three shelters in January 1934. They weren't enough. Five hundred transients overflowed the available beds, and within a month, officials had to seek more beds in downtown rooming houses and residential hotels.

The original three shelters were at 131½ N. Sixth St.; 11th and Adams streets (the former Brown Hotel); and Ninth and Adams streets (in an old Illinois Terminal Railroad freight house).

An Illinois State Journal reporter visited one of the shelters shortly after it opened. *Each shelter station contains a number of army cots on which the unfortunates seek nightly repose. There are showers for bathing, kitchens for preparing food, and dining rooms in which it is served. Eventually there will be recreation rooms where the men can read, relax, or indulge in recreational games and pastimes.*

Those who are able are expected to work 18 hours a week in return for their succor.

By May 1935, Springfield had at least five shelters: the original three, plus additional ones at 10th and Adams streets and Eighth and Washington streets.

That may not have been a complete count: the 1934 Springfield city directory also lists a “Transient Home for Women” at 704 E. Monroe St. However, Springfield transient bureau director James Maxwell told the Journal at one point the number of women registered as transients here was “so small as to be negligible.”

Maxwell, a former YMCA official from Detroit, headed a staff of 11 employees. Local social service agencies, including the YMCA, YWCA and Travelers Aid Society, also provided support. But much of the work was done by shelter residents themselves. For instance, the Journal's January 1934 story reported 42 transients operated the shelters' combined laundry, which was in Shelter No. 2, the former hotel.

At shelter No. 3 (Ninth and Adams) is a bakery, (where) experienced bakers, gleaned from the transients seeking aid, prepare 400 loaves of bread daily for the local consumption. At shelter No. 2 is a barber shop, where three experienced barbers keep all the shelter “guests” in trim. Those physically unable to wield a razor are given free shaves.

Residents did finish work, like painting, when the shelter buildings were remodeled, and transients with woodworking skills built 150 chairs, which were distributed among the three shelters. Other skilled, if jobless, migrants sewed their compatriots' clothes and mended their shoes.

During the summer of 1934, shelter residents raised their own vegetables on a 60-acre truck farm near 18th Street and Ridgely Avenue. Some migrants cut firewood, which was given away to Springfield's own impoverished residents. The laborers earned 50 cents to \$3 a week, plus their room and board.

The Ninth and Adams shelter even boasted a small hospital and dispensary staffed on a part-time basis by local physicians, the Journal story said.

Continued on page 6

Program on Hutchinson Cemetery - continued

more burials could take place at Hutchinson Cemetery. Oak Ridge offered free land equal to the plot at Hutchinson for any family who wished to move their loved one's grave; many families paid to have the grave moved.

Contrary to what many believe that Springfield systematically moved graves over a period of time from Hutchinson to Oak Ridge, Holst shared that removal of graves occurred over many years. Of the 979 burials at Hutchinson, only 717 were actually removed.

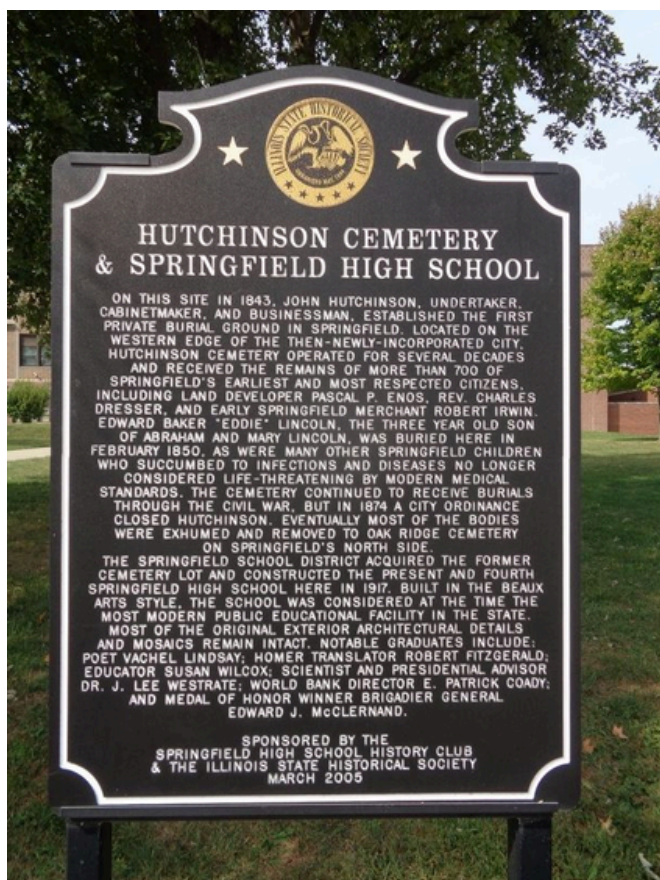
Much of the Hutchinson area became Forest Park but without funding and little upkeep, it too became overgrown and an eyesore. In 1916 Springfield High School was built on the Hutchinson Cemetery site. In 1963 when adding an elevator shaft, workers found a grave in the basement. Some say the grave belonged to a little girl named Rachel and that she still haunts the building.



Above: It was a full house for the September program!



Above: Questions continued for Erika Holst



Above: Attendees enjoying the delicious treats provided by Marian Leach

Homeless Shelters - Continued

Among the present patients (in January 1934) are three youths who hail from West Virginia. They told Maxwell that they were kicked out of their home by a stepfather, and the only resource they had was to "hit the trail." At present they are in quarantine, being afflicted with a contagious disease.

The Springfield shelters worked with a satellite camp, Camp Schrader, which opened on the Sangamon River near Kilbourne in summer 1934. The camp was named after Fred Schrader (1891-1963), who headed the Associated Welfare Agencies of Springfield at the time; he also was president of the Chicago & Illinois Midland Railroad. The 200 campers lived in tents surrounding a mess hall, administration building and washroom/laundry.

Maxwell "has arranged a routine for the campers which should prove invigorating and helpful to the men, most of whom have been unable to find employment for a long period," the Journal said.

They will arise early and after breakfast will work for six hours, interrupted only by luncheon. The afternoon, so long as weather permits, will be devoted to swimming in the river, where a beach has been laid out, and to sports of various kinds, such as baseball, volleyball and horseshoes.

In the winter ... the mess hall will be used for a study hall and as a library, with space also for gymnastics and boxing.

Any time a camper desires to leave he will be allowed to go and his place will be taken by an inmate of one of the city's shelters who wants to enroll at the camp and is physically able to do the work.

Transients who stayed in Springfield didn't miss out on recreation. The transient bureau had a recreation center in the 100 block of North Eighth Street, and shelter residents competed in YMCA-sponsored sporting events. The transients' swim team, led by a multisport athlete named Ray Hartenberger – nothing else is known of him – romped over teams from six other organizations in the Y's 1934 Community Club competition. A group of transient entertainers (dancers, singers, a contortionist and a "Hill Billy Band" among them) put on a well-attended vaudeville show at Lincoln School in February 1934. In turn, the Illinois State Register said, 70 children living in the transient shelters were treated to a Christmas party, including Santa, that December. In full operation, the Springfield shelters typically housed 800-900 migrants every night, plus the 200 men at Camp Schrader.

Considering how many homeless men went through the shelters during the two years they operated, they seem to have been relatively trouble-free – less than 1 percent of registered residents had criminal records, Maxwell said. Newspaper stories report a few fights, some thefts, and a couple dozen arrests, often for crimes allegedly committed elsewhere.

In what apparently was the most serious incident, shelter intake manager Kenneth Corley was stabbed by a drunken transient, William Murphy. Corley recovered, and Murphy was sentenced to seven months at the Vandalia state farm. Overall, Mayor John "Buddy" Kapp told a luncheon club in 1934, "the Springfield transient bureau is regarded with more friendliness by local people than is true in other cities."

The Transient Bureau operated in about 300 cities nationwide, including Cairo, East St. Louis, Moline, Rockford, Danville and Chicago in Illinois. Camp Schrader was among several hundred similar work camps.

The Federal Transient Service shut down in early 1936, to be replaced by the new Works Progress Administration.

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.

October 10, 11am: IL State Historical Society Lunch & Learn at Illini Country Club

The Marvelous Land of Oz! presented by Mark Sorensen will review the 125th anniversary of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz.



October 19, 10am-4pm: Civil War Encampment at IL State Military Museum

Learn about the Civil War and the soldiers who fought it - what they

wore, what camp life was like, and the equipment they used.

October 10, 12pm: Tales from the Vault: Black in the Army Again at ALPLM

Explore African-American military service in the US through artifacts, images and manuscripts.



October 26, 10am-4pm: Fall Festival at Lincoln's New Salem

Period clothed interpreters will demonstrate daily



tasks throughout the historic village such as candle dipping, soap making, basket making, spinning wool, gardening, natural dyeing, and broom making. Visitors can step down into the cellar at the tavern to see how fruits and vegetables were preserved during the winter.

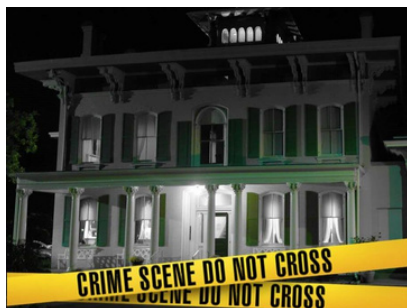


October 13, 1-4pm: Oak Ridge Cemetery Tree Tour

Learn more about the trees at Oak Ridge Cemetery, some which can be traced back to Lincoln's time and before.

October 18-19, 6:30pm; October 20, 4:30 pm: Unsolved at Edwards Soiree Mystery Dinner Theater

Help solve a murder while enjoying a



catered meal from Emerald's Eats. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Visit www.edwardsplace.org/upcoming-events for more details or to purchase tickets.

Lincoln Tomb Porch Talks

Programs include Restoration of the Lincoln Tomb; Where's Robert; Lincoln Across Borders; Dear Rascals; and Lincoln & Grant. Visit www.dnrhistoric.illinois.gov/experience/promotions/lincoln-tomb-porch-talks.html for full details.

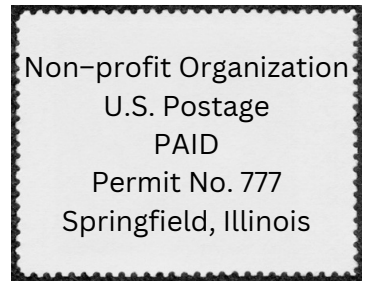
October 28, 10am: Planes, Trains, Etc.-Mobiles:

The Illinois State Museum Society continues its program series with a free visit to the local facilities of Impact Life, an organization that has strong volunteer transportation crew that plays an important role. RSVP by 10/21 to 217-524-4222.

Walk, Hike, Bike and History

Experiences include 1908 Race Riot Walking Tour; Underground Railroad Walk; 5-Mile Bike Tour; Friends of Lincoln Hike; 20th Century Black Leaders Hike; Black History Walk; and A Stroll with Old Bob. Visit www.dnrhistoric.illinois.gov/experience/promotions/walk-hike-bike-and-history.html for full details.

Sangamon County Historical Society
P.O. Box 9744,
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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 \$_____