



# HISTORICO

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

## Annual Meeting June 12

A captivating lake view and a sumptuous meal are just a couple things members will enjoy at the Annual Meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, June 12 at Island Bay Yacht Club.

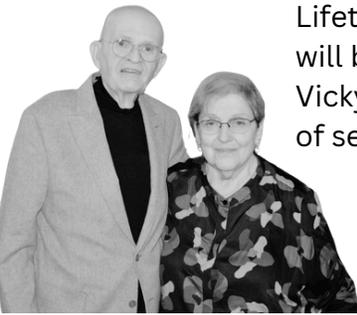
Additionally, the winners of the annual Special Project Grant awards will be announced and 2024-2025 Officers and Board of Directors will be voted on.

### **Reservations must be made by June 9**

Reservations and payments can be made online at [www.sangamonhistory.org](http://www.sangamonhistory.org) Cost is **\$32 per person.**

If you prefer to mail your payment, please email your reservation to [schoffice@gmail.com](mailto:schoffice@gmail.com) and mail payment promptly to P.O. Box 9744, Springfield, IL 62791-9744.

Lifetime achievement awards will be presented to Roger and Vicky Whitaker for their years of service and dedication to the Society. Mike Kienzler will also be recognized for his ten years of service to Sangamon Link.



## Sangamon Link celebrates 10th Anniversary

Want to know when Springfield got its first snow plow? Or find a reference to a relative? Maybe read about crimes and gambling dens in the early 1900s?

It was in 2009 when the SCHS president, the late Nancy Chapin, proposed a type of encyclopedia of history. Lists were made of topics; an online format was decided, but it wasn't until 2014 that the Society launched the site. That was on June 18, 2014 in the Old State Capitol.

Or learn more about the 1918 Spanish flu and the 1940s polio epidemic? You can find out about the last hanging in the county, the first person who died in the county, an 1899 woman golfer, and a black artist who had a studio in 1870 plus much more on Sangamon Link, part of the Sangamon County Historical Society website.

Mike Kienzler retired from the State Journal Register in 2013 and offered to write some articles. Ten years later he is still doing that. To date there are 1,474 articles on the site. And, it is a popular site with 15,000+ hits a month.

You can find out about Lincoln's dog, but not about Lincoln. Mike Kienzler who researches, writes, edits, and posts entries says, "I did write a piece about Lincoln's dog but there is so much already written about Lincoln, our site focuses on other great history of Sangamon County. Interestingly, though, the dog article is still popular.



*Mike Kienzler being interviewed at Old State Capitol press conference announcing SangamonLink June 2014.*

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Has your contact information changed? Please let us know any changes.

# From the President's Desk



CINDA KLICKNA

Our June annual meeting will be full with announcements of the grant winners, celebration of the 10th anniversary of SangamonLink, and awards to outstanding individuals in our Society. We hope you will attend to give special tribute to Roger and Vicky Whitaker who each will be presented with a lifetime achievement award for their commitment and service to the Society for many years. Both have served

as President at different times.

Vicky wrote, designed, and edited Historico for over fifteen years. Roger has run the website and the technology needs. Their service has been so important to the work that goes on behind the scenes to make our Society successful. My hat's off to such a wonderful couple!

SangamonLink (see page 1) is an amazing site that offers an interesting and often unique look at history in Sangamon County. Thanks to Mike Kienzler for his work in writing about fun, intriguing, and extraordinary people and events. At the annual meeting we will also celebrate the

anniversary of the site and honor Mike for the work he continues to provide. The site gets thousands of visitors each month.

Sadly, SangamonLink articles will no longer be included in the State Journal Register so please continue to visit our website.

As we wrap up another membership year, I thank the Board members for their commitment to this organization, for their constant attention to putting together programs and events, and for their deep knowledge of the history of our Society as well as of the Sangamon County.

*Cinda*

## Reminder

Thanks to the many who have already

submitted their membership renewal. The mailed letters were a bit delayed but we need your continued support. Your membership dues make it possible for us to offer free monthly programs and the popular cemetery walk as well as the Historico newsletter.

**Don't Forget!**

## SJ-R Cuts

Just as we are celebrating the 10th anniversary of SangamonLink, the Society has recently been told that the twice-a-month Sangamon Link articles will no longer be published in the State Journal Register. Our editor, Mike Kienzler, was asked to send articles to the editors in Rockford, Illinois, and recently was told the column will be ending. We are sad to get this news as many in the Springfield and surrounding area enjoyed reading about interesting Sangamon County history.

## Centennial Business Awards

The Illinois State Historical Society is accepting nominations from Illinois corporations that have conducted business in the Prairie State for 100 years or more. Visit [www.historyillinois.org](http://www.historyillinois.org) for application. Deadline is July 31, 2024.

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](http://www.sangamonhistory.org) or [www.sangamohis.org](http://www.sangamohis.org).

Send event announcements to: [schshistorico@gmail.com](mailto:schshistorico@gmail.com)



# 2024-2025 Slate of Officers

## Meet the Candidates



**For President:** Cinda Ackerman Klickna holds a B.A. in English Education from the University of Illinois, Urbana, and a Master's in Literature from the University of Illinois, Springfield. She taught English in the Springfield School district for many years and held several positions with the Illinois Education Association and the National Education Association. Klickna retired in 2017 after serving six years as President of the Illinois Education Association, and she served as a trustee of the Illinois Teachers Retirement System from

2003-2019. She is a freelance writer for the Illinois Times, President of the Dana Thomas House Foundation Board, and also serves on the Board of the Illinois Educators Credit Union and the UIS Alumni Board.



**For Vice President:** Linda Schneider has been involved as an actor with our annual Cemetery Walk at Oak Ridge since the 1990's and now serves on the Planning Committee as the actor liaison. In the early 1990's she served on the Old State Capitol Foundation Board and served a term as President. Linda has been involved with local community theater for many years and has been delighted to combine her interest in local community history with her love of theater. Linda is a retired Office Administrator with the University of Illinois Springfield.



**For Treasurer:** Jerry Smith, a Springfield native, has served several terms as treasurer. He earned an Associates degree from Springfield College, later pursuing studies in business administration at SIU. As a veteran hotel executive, he traveled almost 35 years around the US opening and managing various hotels in the South and Midwest. He returned home in 2006 and managed the conversion of the Springfield Renaissance Hotel to the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel for three years.



**For Secretary:** Sarah Adams is Curator of Collections and Interpretation for the Springfield Art Association. She holds a B.A. in Religious Studies from Western Illinois University and an M.A. in Museum Studies from University of Kansas. Adams has worked in the museum field since 2012 with a focus on history and anthropology collections.

2023-2024 Officers  
 President - Cinda Klickna  
 Past President - Susan Helm  
 Vice Presidents - Mary Alice Davis, Stephanie Martin, and Ruth Slottag  
 Treasurer - Jerry Smith  
 Secretary - Sarah Adams

Directors  
*Term ending June 2024*  
 Mary Alice Davis  
 Kathy Hoffman  
 Kathy Dehen

Directors  
*Term ending 2025*  
 Lee-Ann Burgener  
 Elaine Hoff  
 Larry Stone

Directors  
*Term ending 2026*  
 Mary Mucciante  
 Scott Pillsbury  
 Linda Schneider  
 Ruth Slottag

**SCHS Mailing Address:  
 PO Box 9744  
 Springfield, IL 62791-9744**

# UNDERGROUND RAILROAD CONDUCTORS

With the trio Wild Columbine playing music from the 1800s, the program kicked off on May 21 with over seventy in attendance. Continuing the Society's program from a year ago which commemorated an Underground Railroad conductor buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery, this year focused on six conductors – two white and four black men who risked their lives in helping free runaway slaves.



Susan Helm shared information about several conductors, many who had a connection to Abraham Lincoln.

Luther N. Ransom, a white man, ran a boarding house near the Globe Tavern where Abraham and Mary Lincoln lived when they first married. The boarding house doubled as an underground railroad station until 1844. An October 18, 1841 handbill offered a \$200 reward for Henrietta Jones and her children ages 6, 4, and 2 who were “seen at Ransom’s board house on yesterday morning.” Ransom also helped his father select an attorney to represent them when charged with assisting a fugitive slave in Jacksonville. The attorney was Lincoln.

Erastus Wright was a white man who lived at Jefferson and Walnut Streets, a stop on the Underground Railroad. He was a teacher and abolitionist, a Sangamon County school commissioner and a member of the “abolitionist” church, Second Presbyterian, now called Westminster. Wright served as one of Abraham Lincoln’s pallbearers.



Four Black men also were conductors and had ties to Lincoln.

Jameson Jenkins lived just south of the Lincolns on Eighth Street. He was a wagon operator and was linked to helping sixty runaway slaves escape through Springfield to Bloomington in 1850. Jenkins drove President-elect Lincoln on his last carriage ride in Springfield to the Great Western railroad depot when he left for Washington, DC in 1861.

Reverend Henry Brown was born in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1823 and moved often, arriving in Springfield around 1847. His home on the northeast



*Robert Davis portraying William Donnegan*

corner of 10th and Madison was where he helped runaway slaves move north. Brown served Lincoln as a laborer. For Lincoln’s funeral procession, Brown led Lincoln’s horse.

Aaron Dyer was born a slave in Richmond, Virginia, in 1818, given his freedom in 1841 and came to Springfield in 1846. He was a blacksmith and drayman and at night took runaway slaves to their next destination. He and his wife moved to Lincoln, Illinois, in 1877 to be close to their daughter. Although Dyer had no ties with Lincoln, his grandson William (“Billie”) was friends with renowned writer William Maxwell who wrote a story about Billie. Dyer is buried in Lincoln and his gravestone is inscribed: “Aaron was a Springfield Conductor on the Underground Railroad.” This is one of the only gravestones found with an open acknowledgement of being involved as a conductor.

Robert Davis portrayed William Donnegan who left a memoir that was discovered in the Sangamon Valley Collection. Donnegan was a cobbler, his shop was on north Jefferson between Eighth and Ninth Streets. At the age of 80 he was lynched during the 1908 race riot. Davis shared the story, written in Donnegan’s own words, about helping a sixteen-year-old girl escape out of Springfield in 1858. Hiding her in his shop’s “garret” and buying a “pair of white gloves and a white false

face,” he took her on a circuitous route through town, trying to evade the girl’s master and other men hunting her. The story involved a shooting of a dog, hiding the girl in a tree, and eventually dressing her as a boy and sending her with a group of men heading out to plow. The girl escaped on her journey to Canada.

John C. Ackerman, the Tazewell County Clerk, has been instrumental in tracking down and placing markers on graves of Underground Railroad conductors and serves on the state-wide task force that is doing research to uncover the stories of many of the conductors. He shared the work of the task force and the hope that a map of known sites can be



*John C. Ackerman  
Tazewell County Clerk*

Cheever, Lincoln’s bodyguard is buried, and Illinois State University.

developed. Ackerman told the audience that Illinois should be boasting of being the state that had the first integrated school in Otterville. He named sites connected to the Underground Railroad – Knox College, known as a stop on the Underground Railroad route, the University of Illinois where Dr. Daniel

Markers will be placed on the graves of the men buried in Oak Ridge: Donnegan, Wright, Jenkins, and Brown. A marker was presented to Bill Donneth from the Logan County Historical Society to be placed on Dyer’s grave, and another marker will be shipped to Kansas where Luther Ransom is buried.

◆ ————— ◆  
**Mark your calendar for the fall programs**

- September 17 - Hutchinson Cemetery
- October 15 - Moving Pillsbury Forward
- November 19 - The Conkling Family

***Echos of Yesteryear Cemetery Walk  
September 29 at Oak Ridge Cemetery***

# Meet the Candidates - continued



**For Director:** Mary Alice Davis Davis has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Denison University, Granville, Ohio. She was a teacher for four years, co-owned a children's clothing store for 10 years, and co-owned a chain of fast food stores for 35 years. She is past

president of the Society (2014-2016), its Secretary (2012-2013), and co-chaired the Program Committee (2012-2019). Davis has chaired the Society's annual Cemetery Walk since 2015 to the present. She is a Westminster Presbyterian elder, past chairman and trustee of the Illinois State Museum Society Board, past vice-president of the Old State Capitol Foundation and served as a docent and past vice-president of the Land of Lincoln Girl Scouts Council.



**For Director:** Stephanie Martin Martin, Manager of the Sangamon Valley Collection at the City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, earned her bachelor's degree in American Studies from Knox College in Galesburg, a master's in Historical Administration from Eastern

Illinois University and a master's in Library and Information Science from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She is a past president of the Springfield Jaycees, and past president of the SCHS (2020-2022).



**For Director:** Kathy Hoffman, a retired mathematics teacher, spent the majority of her career at Springfield High School, retiring in 2001 as department chair. She holds degrees in mathematics from Nebraska Wesleyan University and Sangamon State University. She served on the Board (2011- 2014) and

was appointed to fill a vacancy in 2017. She has served on several community boards including Lincoln Memorial Garden, The Hoogland Center for the Arts, and Goodwill Industries. Hoffmann is also a past chair of the Docent Program at the First Presbyterian Church. She is a World Affairs Council of Central Illinois board member and serves as secretary.



**For Director:** Brian Barstead, a lifelong resident of Sangamon County, holds a Bachelor's degree in Biology and Medical Technology from Illinois State University and an MBA from University of Illinois Springfield. He has worked as a private wealth advisor, certified financial planner, chartered financial consultant and chartered life

underwriter. Barstead was a musician in the Springfield Municipal band for 40 years and past volunteer at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. He has been involved with the Rotary Club of Springfield since 1990 and currently serves as Assistant Rotary Foundation Coordinator for Zone 31 and serves on the Council on Legislation and Resolutions.

# Calendar

## A Heads Up Guide to Area History Events



Send announcements, information, photos and illustrations to [schshistorico@gmail.com](mailto:schshistorico@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](http://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 Officers and Board candidates, and hear about the 2024 Grant award winners while taking in the beautiful lake-side view from the patio. Cost: \$32 for buffet dinner; cash bar.

July 1 & 2: Independence Day Celebration at Lincoln's New Salem. 10am to 4pm. Suggested donation.

July 13: Vietnam Encampment at Illinois State Military Museum. 10am to 4pm. Free (donations appreciated)

July 27: Maid Rite 100th Birthday Party. 11am to 2pm. Free to attend. Food and drinks available for purchase.

August 24: Hoopskirt & Haber-Dash 5k Run at Springfield Art Association. 8am. \$30/person



### Saturday, June 15 - Summer Frolic at Lincoln's New Salem. 10am to 4pm.

Celebrate frontier heritage with period clothed interpreters demonstrating throughout the historic village.



### Saturday, June 15 - WWII Encampment at the Illinois State Military Museum. 10am to 4pm. Free (donations accepted)

The Illinois State Military Museum will be hosting a World War II Encampment at the museum. The Living History detachment will be there to answer questions about what the troops experienced and the equipment that they used.

### Illinois State Historical Society Day Trips



July 25 - Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago to see the new exhibit "Inventing the World of James Bond".

Sept. 10 - St. Louis destinations that enlighten us on the life of Ulysses S. Grant at different points in his life.

For information on ISHS Day Trips, visit [www.historyillinois.org](http://www.historyillinois.org) or call 217-525-2781.

*The next Historico will be mailed in  
September*

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 \$ \_\_\_\_\_