



Historico

The newsletter of the Sangamon County Historical Society
 308 E. Adams Street, Springfield, IL 62701
 www.sancohis.org 217.522.2500

May, 2008

Wednesday, May 14, 5:00 PM

Board Meeting

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room South

Officers

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Constitution & By-laws

Curtis Mann

Finance

Allen Smith

Membership

Dan Buck

Program

Steve Leonard

Nominating

Susan Hammond

Project Awards

Elaine Birtch

Bookseller

Kim Efird

Historico Editor

Nancy Chapin

Webmaster

Fred Slocombe

Tuesday, May 20, 7:00 PM

Program

Lincoln Library, Carnegie Room North

A Brief History of the Sangamon County Fair

Mrs. Elizabeth McDevitt

Mrs. McDevitt will provide a historical overview of the Sangamon County Fair from its inception in 1950 to the present. She is uniquely qualified to present the history of the fair having served as its office secretary for the past twenty eight years. Her husband Robert served as fair director for over thirty-five years.

The New Berlin Community Club developed the idea of having a fair in the town park in 1949. In 1950 the Sangamon County Junior Fair Association was formed. From 1950 through 1953 the fair was held on the grounds of the New Berlin High School. Due to a generous donation of land from the Pfeiffer Family, the 1954 fair was held for the first time at its present location. Fifty-four year later, the fair encompasses thirty acres with nine buildings a grandstand and stage. Today, the fair remains true to its original concept as a showcase for agriculture and an entertainment venue for the entire family.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>A Brief History of the Sangamon County Fair</i>	1
<i>Around Town; History Fair; Constitution amendments; Lincoln's Cache</i>	2
<i>Insert of Best paper ' at the IHPA Regional History Fair</i>	
continued	
<i>Fort Taylor, Part IV</i>	3
<i>Report on April Program; Thanks to Dan Buck</i>	4

Around town -

May 10 2:30 Vachel Lindsay Home
Poets in the Parlor" featuring
Prof. Jim Ottery.Refreshments

May25 1:00 Oak Ridge Cemetery,
Block 4 (Old part of cemetery)
**Home For the Friendless
Memorial Wall dedication**
reception to follow in Oak
Ridge offices.

May 31 Vachel Lindsay Home
Volunteer Orientation (9:30-
2:00) and light luncheon.
Register 524-0901.

IHPA Regional History Fair

Elaine Birtch, Project Awards committee chairman rounded up wonderful support for this year's History Fair: Elaine, Cathy Caughlin, Nancy Chapin, Dee Funk and Marty Paludan to help with the judging and SCHS to provide monetary awards to the prize winners who were:

Outstanding paper: Cara Dunn from Lincoln Magnet School for her paper on "170 Years: Old State Capitol Restoration" (included in Historico as an insert this month);

Outstanding exhibit: Megan Bishop & Rachel Skelton of New Holland School for their exhibit on "Steak 'n Shake";

Outstanding Performance: Timmy Wiggers, Maddie Funderburg, Matt Havey & Neal Parker from Lincoln Magnet School for "Love and Death:Abraham Lincoln & Ann Rutledge";

Outstanding Media: Katie Whelan, Wendy Whelan, Hilda Tieman and Harledd Flesches, Payson Seymour HS for "Jenny Hodges, AKA Albert Cashier"

Lincoln Cache experience at New Salem -

Despite terrible weather nearly 100 people turned out to look for historical 'caches' in Menard County at the 'Lincoln Cache' on April 12, and about 50% of them were visitors from over 50 miles away. It would be a wonderful way to introduce more people to the history of Sangamon County if there are enough of you who would be willing to help and/or take part. Please let us know if you are interested.

Iles House volunteers wanted -

Iles House is still seeking volunteers to help show visitors around. There will be an informational meeting at the house at 10:00 on May 3. Call 698-8856 if you are interested.

Proposed Constitutional Amendment

The Board has approved and hereby gives notice to the membership that the following amendments are to be voted on at the May 20 Program meeting.

Present wording:

Article VI, Section 4. The president, vice president and directors shall not be nominated for the same office until one year after the end of their terms.

Article VI, Section 6. If a director is absent from four regular consecutive directors' meetings, in any fiscal year, without giving the president prior notice, the president shall declare his/her position vacant and notify him/her accordingly. The board of directors shall fill his/her unexpired term of office by their election.

Proposed wording:

Article VI, Section 4. Directors shall not be nominated for the same office until one year after the end of their terms.

Article VI, Section 6. If a director fails to attend three (3) consecutive board meetings, that person shall be deemed to have resigned as a director unless the Executive Committee consents to such non-attendance for good and sufficient reason. The board of directors shall fill his/her unexpired term of office by their election.

The amendment to Section 4 is being made so that the president and vice-president can serve more than one year as the single year limits what can be achieved. The amendment to Section 6 is made because it is felt that a director needs to prove themselves interested in serving on this board.

Curtis Mann's final report on -

Fort Taylor

PART IV

The end of the Taylors began on January 17, 1868 when Harvey and Lucinda were arrested by Sangamon County Sheriff Shoup for the robbery of W.H. Johnson and Company's store on the night of September 2, 1867. Lucinda's son, Simpson, was also arrested for this crime.

The house occupied by Taylor was searched, and a lot of rings were found, some of which were identified as those stolen from the store of H.C. Myers & Son on the same night. Several pieces of silk were also found, which were stolen from Johnson & Company. The examination of an old shed near Taylor's farm resulted in finding more of the jewelry taken from Myers' store; and in the barn on the farm, were found the tags and wrappings of silk taken from Johnson & Company.

The Taylors were arraigned on the robbery charges on January 22. They were defended by Hon. John E. Rosette and Gen. Palmer (John M. Palmer?) The paper reported that a large list of witnesses were sworn on the part of the prosecution and the examination of Taylor and wife commenced at 11 a.m. and continued up to the hour of going to press. The evidence seemed to be very strong against the accused." The *Illinois State Journal* devoted a great amount of space covering the preliminary examination

A grand jury later indicted the

Taylors for the burglary. The Taylors were given a hefty bail and were unable to make bail. They remained in the Sangamon County Jail. A motion was granted in Feb. for a change of venue to the Montgomery County Courthouse. On March 3, 1868 the Taylors were escorted to Hillsboro for the trial. They were soon brought back to the Sangamon County Jail because the trial was postponed until the September term of the Montgomery County Circuit Court. The Taylors spent the summer in the Sangamon County Jail waiting for their trial. In September they were transported back to Hillsboro for their trial. The trial was delayed once again and the Taylors remained in the Montgomery County Jail.

On October 1, 1868, Harvey Taylor escaped from the jail with the alleged assistance of a man named O'Conner. Law enforcement searched for him but failed to capture him. Soon a \$500 reward was offered for his capture. The *Illinois State Register* reported on October 19 that "the notorious Harvey Taylor has been arrested somewhere in Indiana." The *Register's* rival paper, the *Illinois State Journal*, took the opportunity to draw out an alleged relationship between Taylor and the Democratic Party.

"The Register man tries to be funny in announcing the arrest of the notorious Harvey Taylor, saying that he was captured in Indianapolis while trying to vote the Radical ticket. This is a base deser-

tion of its friend as our citizens well know that Taylor was one of its staunchest party men and wire workers before his arrest, ever ready to help the Democratic cause with his ill-gotten funds or with whatever influence he possessed among his friends. The Register is unkind in thus turning its back upon its party friend in the hour of his [need] We regret to be forced to add that the reported arrest of Harvey Taylor, the Democrat, proves to be untrue."

The Taylors, unable to pay the mortgage on their farm, applied for bankruptcy in 1868. The court ordered their real estate to be sold including the houses on Fourth Street and the farm west of town. George W. Chatterton purchased the property on January 29, 1869 for \$14,100.

The outcome of the trial is not known but Harvey and Lucinda disappear from Springfield forever. A Harvey Taylor is listed as a 39-year-old farmer born in Ohio in the 1870 census of Will County as an inmate of the Joliet Prison, but there is no evidence this is the same man. Lucinda simply vanishes and their reign of ten or more years as one of the top brothels in Springfield ended.

Sangamon County Historical Society
308 E. Adams Street
Springfield, IL 62701



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Annual Meeting

June 17, 2008

6:00 PM

Remembrances of a Historic Site Manager

Carol Andrews

SCHS President 1996-1997

Recollections of the reconstruction of the Old State Capitol

Augie Wisnosky

Island Bay Yacht Club

Report on April program -

Having warmed up his audience by having Carlie Shank sing a song from Muni's first offering this summer, "Hello Dolly", Tom Shrewsbury went on to demonstrate what he meant when he told his audience he had had a "lifelong passion for community arts."

Taking us back to the beginnings of musical theatre in Springfield, he told of a first show in the 1930s in Lanphier Park, and then the efforts to establish a permanent home for musicals, finally settling on a 40 year lease on 40 acres at Lake Springfield with finances backed by guarantors. An immediate success seduced the organization into over-extending themselves financially at the same time that air-conditioning and TV were changing lifestyles to indoor living and reducing attendance. Several theatre endeavors tried to make it on the grounds, but success was elusive and the grounds continued to deteriorate.

In 1964 Shrewsbury and others, in one last desperate attempt to revive musical theatre in Springfield, put on "Bye, Bye, Birdie" at the Douglas Park Bank Shell and found an audience. With high hopes they sought backing to again reestablish the Muni at the lake, only to be turned down by a twice burned business community. With the promise in their new by-laws that they would never borrow and would build a reserve from the profits of each show, the Muni group gained financial stability and developed a \$1 million facility with a year's worth of finances in reserve.

Shrewsbury went on to tell of his pride in what has been achieved for the community and for the young actors and actresses and stage hands, many of whom have gone on to bigger and better lives with theatre across the country.

Life Members

143rd Anniversary of the Death of Abraham Lincoln Commemoration

We thank Dan Buck for representing SCHS at Oak Ridge for the commemorative wreath laying on short notice as Hughes Diller was unable to serve this year.