

The PRAIRIE PICAYUNE

Lincoln's New Salem Newsletter

Volume 13 Number 8

www.lincolnsnewsalem.com - phone 217/632-4000

April 2008

WHAT'S NEW AT NEW SALEM?

Everything that starts with due to the lack of staff usually means bad news! But hopefully in this case it doesn't. We have struggled for quite awhile trying to find the time to fit in **continuing education classes, workshops**, and morning meeting speakers. While being extremely time consuming, I have asked Dona Walzer, a volunteer, to research and compile several different workshop possibilities for the future.

Workshops and continuing education allows our volunteers a chance to expand their knowledge, gain fellowships, and utilize their abilities in the village. If you feel you have a subject you would like to learn more about, or maybe a craft that interests you, let her know. Dona can be reached by email at dwalzer@macomb.com

And don't forget, any time a volunteer attends one of the site workshops you can put it down as volunteer hours. As an added plus, you earn the 10 cents per volunteer hour and receive the V-Notes distributed at the end of the year, for shopping at the Museum Store or New Salem Bookstore and Souvenir Shop.

Thanks, Candy

Springtime means buses!!! And that means that New Salem could use YOUR help almost any time, almost any day! Please call MaryAnn Russell at 217/632-4000 if you can volunteer to help out!

At the March Meeting, the New Salem Lincoln League elected officers. The newly-elected slate of officers is as follows: Allen Grosboll was elected *President*, Gabe Grosboll *Vice President*, Alia Montgomery *Recording Secretary*, Connie Davis - *Corresponding Secretary* and Donna Hitchcock *Treasurer*.

Prairie Picayune **Volunteer Questionnaire** Submitted by John Blankenberger

I am collecting information for a new *Prairie Picayune* column. Look for the first installment included in this issue. I hope to feature both volunteers and seasonal staff in the column. We work in the village and often see one another, but know little about each other, except a name. We don't have time to visit when we are busy with visitors. This column will take us behind the 19th century clothing and characters that we regularly see and introduce us to the 21st century person who lives outside the village of New Salem.

I invite all active volunteers and seasonal staff, no matter where you "work at New Salem the front desk, the village or a store to complete the attached questionnaire. I will select as many as we can get in the *Prairie*

Picayune each month as the featured persons of the month. Please dont be shy. I think every one will find each story interesting, but I need your help by sending in the questionnaires.

I appreciate your cooperation very much. Nominations for interesting volunteers and staff will be happily accepted.

PRAIRIE PICAYUNE NEW SALEM PERSONALITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to New Salem, or mail it to:

John Blankenberger, 2001 Westchester Blvd., Springfield, IL 62704. Thank you.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____--_____ Best time to call: Morning, Afternoon, Evening

My New Salem job is usually _____

I also often work at/in _____

I began my New Salem work in _____

The thing I enjoy most about New Salem

The most memorable visitor I have met was

This person is so memorable because

I began volunteering at New Salem because

I am 1.) Retired, ____ 2.) Working at _____ and my job is

I am 1.) Single, _____ 2.) Widowed, _____ 3.) Divorced, _____

4.) Married _____ and my spouse is _____

My hobbies are

(Please use the reverse for additional space.)

PLEASE PHONE!!

Dont forget about the daily schedule of events in the village starting weekends in May 2008!

These events will change from weekends only to a daily schedule throughout the week during the busy summer months of June, July, and August. These events will be scheduled to take place at the various log homes, barns, pastures, gardens, smokehouses, etc. throughout the village. They can range from 15 minutes in length to one hour Interpreters will be discussing a wide variety of everyday activities for example gardening, cooking or operation of the carding mill. Any topic that is related to the village can be interpreted!

This exciting new program *needs the assistance of our volunteers!* We know that the volunteers have specific knowledge and talents pertaining to the village. This is your opportunity to share! Volunteers can be scheduled to interpret any aspect of village daily life. If you would be interested in sharing your knowledge and talent or have ideas, please call Mary Ann at (217) 632-4000.

HOW CAN WE CELEBRATE LINCOLNS 200th BIRTHDAY?

Dont forget - The open meeting on **Sunday, April 6, 2008** at the **Visitor Center Conference Room at 2:00 PM**. We are hoping that everyone wanting to be involved with celebrating the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial here at New Salem can attend.

However, if you are unable to make the meeting and feel you have some viable ideas, feel free to call or e-mail Don Ferricks: don.ferricks@illinois.gov or Jane Carrington: jane.carrington@illinois.gov, Both can be reached by phone at 217-632-4000.

LETTER To the Editor:

I greatly enjoyed Carol Jenkins Shafer's article, *1809 Birthdays?*, in the March 2008 *The Prairie Picayune*, an essay that furnished two additional names to my own list of notable persons born in the year 1809. In turn I can add two additional names to Carol's list, composer Frederic Chopin, and British Prime Minister William Gladstone. In addition the name of Lincoln's first vice president should be corrected to Hannibal Hamlin. [*Editors Note: Oops! - CJS*]

The article also asks "Did Lincoln know about the theory of evolution?" In his 2006 book, *What Lincoln Believed*, Michael Lind asserts that Herndon declared that although Lincoln only barely glanced at the Darwin works that Herndon showed him, Lincoln was from his previous reading in the natural sciences pretty well convinced that evolution was a correct explanation for the unfolding of the various animal and plant species that are found in nature. (It should be noted that the idea of evolution had been around among natural scientists for several decades before Darwin published his "Origin of Species" in 1859. What Darwin offered that was new was a proposed mechanism for explaining evolution scientifically.)

Berkley L. Moore

[*Editors Note: For more about this book, check out BOOK CORNER in this issue -CJS*]

Box Office opens May 10, 2008
Hours: 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Performance Night Hours: 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.

TICKETS (All performances):

\$12 Adult, \$10 Seniors,

\$7 Children (under 12)

For reservations and to order call

217-632-5440 or 1-800-710-9290.

LINCOLN'S NEW SALEM VILLAGERS!

by John Blankenberger

Have you heard any of the children visiting New Salem say: Daddy, that man looks like Santa Claus! If you have, that child has great powers of observation. This month we are featuring a professional Santa Claus in this new *Prairie Picayune* column where you will learn more about those who inhabit New Salem in the 21st Century.

Ken Guernsey is one of the most easily recognized people in New Salem with his full, white beard. Children are correct when they think his beard looks like Santa Claus. Besides his many activities at New Salem, he loves to portray Santa. He has been the Santa at White Oaks Mall for several years, but his favorite Santa experience is visiting the homes of the families who invite him to be their personal Santa each year.

Family is important to Ken. As a matter of fact I first met Ken and his family at Christian Family Camp in 1981. We spent a week at Pre Marquette State Park with them and many other families from Central and Southern Illinois. Ken and his wife Mary Lou (who is also a volunteer at New Salem) just celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Their family includes 3 daughters, 8 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren plus one more on the way.

Ken was born in Mechanicsburg, IL. One of the schools that he attended was `<?xml:namespace prefix = st2 ns = "urn:schemas:contacts" />`St. James Trade School where, among the many subjects he studied, he learned woodworking. Woodworking became a lifetime interest and he has accumulated a collection of hand tools. Ken is most often seen in New Salem in the Johnston Family Home where you will see many of his tools. They are aids in his interpreting the wheelwright and cabinet maker Robert Johnston. One often sees him sitting at a carving bench. Ken says the bench is always an opening for visitors from Germany who call it a *Schnitzelbank*. (*Schnitzel* means shavings and *Bank* means bench. Does that immediately bring a German song to mind?) Ken was able to add to the Johnston experience this past spring and summer by planting and tending the garden.

One of the most interesting visitors Ken has become acquainted with is Walnut Hulling. Mr. Hulling is an artist. He comes to New Salem regularly to take pictures that he uses as the material for his paintings. Others he especially enjoys are the campers. They come back year after year and are not hurried when they visit the village. They like to sit and talk when he is not busy with other visitors to the village. He has made many friends among these folks.

It may seem trite to say it, but Ken became interested in New Salem naturally. His father is from Henryville which is on the Ohio River in Southeastern Indiana a few miles north of Louisville, KY. Henryville is not far from the Indiana Lincoln country. The Guernsey family migrated to Henryville shortly after the Revolutionary War. (This is a fascinating story in itself. Ask Ken to tell it.) The Guernsey family settled here because they were near a fort on the Ohio. Ken has become a good friend of Jim Patton and they discovered that one of Jims ancestors was in charge of this fort when Kens family came through the area. The Indiana connection is the first ingredient in Kens natural interest. The other is his fathers name **Lincoln** Guernsey. His father had no particular interest in researching his name, but Ken began his reading and study of Lincoln early in his life because of his fathers name, and that has continued to today.

Besides his woodworking, Ken enjoys writing and painting. If you know him, you know he is also a storyteller. He has several books of Mr. Lincolns stories and he has learned many of them. He loves to share this talent, especially with the New Salem Day Campers. I personally can attest to the fact that he enjoys singing, especially sacred hymns.

Ken began his New Salem activities about 6 years ago as a volunteer. He became a volunteer because he enjoys bringing history to people and it provides an opportunity to share his life-long study of Abraham Lincoln. He has become one of the seasonal staff. Recently he was elected to the New Salem Lincoln League Board of Directors.

He has an interest in using the resources of New Salem to help support the park selling things made by volunteers and seasonal staff to the visitors. If you like this idea, find the man with the Santa Claus look and discuss it with him.

Continuing Education Sessions

Hints on Interpretation

April 26, 2008 from 9 AM. 12 Noon

Cost - Free

Charlie Starling

Visitor Center. Conference Room

Seasoned interpreters will share their hints and ideas about interpretation along with their good and bad experiences that will be helpful to any new volunteer.

1830s Finance & Money

May 3, 2008 from 9 AM. 12 Noon

Cost - Free

Charlie Starling

Visitor Center Conference Room

An inside look at what was happening on the national, state and local scenes.

NOTE: Class size is limited to 30 people. Registration will be on a first-come; first-serve basis. Call Lincolns New Salem office at 217-632-4000 to sign up.

President Jacksons Election Campaign and a Cast Iron Frog? By Carol Jenkins Shafer

With all the upcoming history-making campaign news, theres likely to be interest this summer in historic presidential campaigns. In fact, the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum will be featuring an exhibit of presidential campaign memorabilia from now till November. Called ***PACKAGING PRESIDENTS: Two Centuries of Campaigns and Candidates***, it features many artifacts from various presidential campaigns.

Along with this exhibit, their gift shop is selling a book which features a very interesting item purported to be from Andrew Jacksons campaign. A life-size, cast-iron frog with I croak for the Jackson Wagon embossed on its back would seem to have been a good attention getter for Old Hickorys campaign!

Now we all know that Jackson was president during the New Salem years. So a local friend of mine who purchased the campaign memorabilia book was very excited to see the Jackson frog since he has an identical frog doorstep. However, he had been told that it was an advertising item for a wagon company out of Jackson, Michigan. He asked me what I knew about it.

I personally own a 40-year-old set of books which also includes the frog as a Jackson campaign artifact. *The American Heritage Book of Presidents and Famous Americans* is a multi-volume set designed for a wide audience but it contains a lot of valuable information and many great pictures including one showing the frog. The caption reads The life-sized cast-iron bullfrog seen above is one of the most unique items from Jacksons campaign.

So, with two books claiming that this is from Andys campaign, it seemed likely that it was an authentic piece of election memorabilia. But there were still questions about it. For example, we asked ourselves, how would the campaign have distributed life-sized cast-iron frogs? They would certainly have been too heavy to carry very far (especially by the boxful.) And Jacksons supporters were known to be somewhat impulsive (definitely not the kind of crowds you would want to arm with iron frogs!) Wouldnt campaigns be more likely to distribute items (like printed ribbons, armbands, badges, or buttons) that would be worn by supporters and put the candidates name before the voting public? How much value would a doorstep have in promoting your candidate? And, finally, we agreed that both claims (campaign and advertising) could be true since we thought it possible that the wagon company had made reproductions of the campaign article later in the 19th century and used it for their own publicity.

The internet was of limited help in my friends quest to get an answer he could find claims both for Andrew Jackson and for the wagon company. Since my American Heritage book credited the photo as The Hermitage I suggested that he contact Jacksons home and ask what they knew. Heres a copy of the response he got from them.

Hi

Thanks for your question about the I Croak for the Jackson Wagon door stop. Many years ago, someone published the information that this was a Jackson campaign item and it became firmly established among political collectors. Everyone accepted this and The Hermitage even sold reproduction door stops for years. About 25 years ago, someone did a little more research and found that the long held assumption about the frogs was not true and that they are in reality an advertising piece for the Jackson (Michigan) Wagon Company. So we took our frog off of exhibit and stopped selling the reproductions. Most current references on political memorabilia correct the Andrew Jackson connection, but there are still a few out there that continue to tell the AJ story.

Hope this helps.

*Marsha A. Mullin, Chief Curator
Vice-President of Museum Services
The Hermitage*

So, now, if you talk to any visitors this summer who have seen the Jackson Wagon frog door stop in a book, youll have the rest of the story to share with them.

TIMBER!!

Cutting any trees this spring? You might want to contact New Salem volunteer Ken Guernsey. As youve seen in the VILLAGERS article, Ken demonstrates woodworking in Johnstons shop and is trying to collect a supply of wood for his demonstrations. Ken also donates items he makes in Johnstons shop to the Museum Store where profits go to support special events and programs at the site. So, your wood could be used to support Lincolns New Salem!

You can contact Ken by calling the park or by e-mailing the Picayune. Well see that you get in touch!

Submitted by Berkley L. Moore

***What Lincoln Believed:
The Values and Convictions of America's Greatest President***
by Michael Lind (Doubleday, 2004)

In a "Letter to the editor" of *Prairie Picayune* I quoted from a book, and as a result I have been asked to write a short review of that book. As implied in its title, Michael Lind's *What Lincoln Believed*, subtitled "The Values and Convictions of America's Greatest President" discourses on the thoughts and beliefs of the Great Man rather than on his actions.

As some of Lincoln's thoughts, for example parts of his moral and religious beliefs, were always profound and occasionally a bit abstract, the average reader might fear that reading the book would prove tough going. The reader should not fear, Lind's lucid and concise writing style render reading this book almost as easy as reading a novel.

According to the author, Lincoln's political program and his notions of political propriety center squarely on the blueprint of his great hero, Henry Clay, and on the equality clause in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence as well as its Eighteenth Century Enlightenment presuppositions. Lincoln's great aims in his political career were to demonstrate to the entire world that even a large sectionally divided nation can function successfully with a republican form of government, and that sooner or later, slavery must be extinguished.

The concluding portions of Lind's volume take the reader through a fascinating whirlwind tour of American history since the end of the Civil War showing how Lincoln's beliefs and their antitheses wove in and out, and back and forth among the major political parties through several major stages of their realignment.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS!

Barbara Raycraft
Ann Schaddell

Fred Wassell
Nick Hinds

Linda Williams
Jane Carrington

Carol White

MAY BIRTHDAYS!

Maryann Hobbs	Al White	Judy Luecking	Josef Kleffman
Margaret Adkins	Andy Waters	Doris Wankel	James Hamilton
Diane Rigsbee			

26TH ANNUAL NEW SALEM HAMMER IN!

The 26th Annual Hammer In will be April 12 and 13, 2008. Times are 10am - 4pm each day. The event will be held at Lincoln's New Salem maintenance shop. **This years Event Demonstrators will be Elmer Rousch and Lynda Metcalfe of Brasstown, NC.**

Registration for New Salem Volunteers is free but the meal is \$5. Late registration or at the door: \$15.00. Free coffee & donuts will be provided each morning. A chicken dinner will also be provided to each PAID registrant Saturday evening.

Meals for volunteers and late registrants will be \$5.00. We must know if you want a meal so we know how much food to order.

Contact 632-4000 to make reservations.

For more information contact Allen Ortery at bluestoneforge@gmail.com

Music Review

John Blankenberger

I opened my *Windows Internet Explorer* a few days ago and I was surprised to see the headline of the day included "Lincoln." Naturally I read on. I found the lead story for the day was about a friend of New Salem, Chris Vallillo. Mr. Vallillo has a new CD out entitled *Abraham Lincoln in Song*. After I read the article I ordered the CD.

I was not disappointed when I received the CD. It contains 13 songs that are either from the Lincoln era or about Mr. Lincoln. Chris Vallillo is a wonderful singer of folk songs as well as an accomplished musician. (I have to admit my prejudice here. I have played the guitar for many years, though not accomplished, and love to sing folk songs.) He plays many instruments on the CD, including the jaw harp that is often heard at New Salem, which Vallillo plays on the song Hoosen Johnny. (By the way, did you know that Mr. Lincoln played a jaw harp?) The liner notes include the historical setting of each song, which adds to the attraction of the CD for amateur historians like me. I doubt that any of these songs were played or sung in New Salem and most post-date New Salem, but they are a wonderful collection that New Salem enthusiasts will enjoy.

The songs include: *Battle Cry of Freedom, Shawneetown, El-A-Noy, Lorena, Lincolns Funeral Train, We Are Coming Father Abram, Hard Times Come Again No More, Dixies Land, Aura Lee, Hoosen Johnny., Darlin Nelly Gray, Lincoln and Liberty, and Let the Band Play Dixie.* There is a nice mix of familiar tunes and songs new to my ears. Folk songs tell stories of the times and this collection does that well. Just as a walk through New Salem transports us back to the 1830s, this CD takes us on a musical walk with Mr. Lincoln through large portion of his life. I know you will enjoy that trip just as I have several times since I received the CD.

The CD is available on the Internet at www.ginridge.com. *[Editors Note: If you attended the program Chris did for the Lincoln League 3 years ago, you may remember that it included many of these great songs! I have checked with the shop manager and it may also be available at the New Salem Museum gift shop later this season. -CJS]*

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please e-mail your articles, letters, book reviews, and comments to Carol Shafer at cshafer@gcctv.com or to John Blankenberger at johnblankenberger@sbcglobal.net. Include Pic or New Salem in the subject line. Or send it to New Salem Volunteer Newsletter, PO Box 471, Athens, Illinois 62613 c/o Carol Jenkins Shafer. Please include your phone number and/or address in case we have questions or need to clarify something. Please try to plan ahead. We need to have submissions by the 20th to ensure mailing by the 1st of the next month.

2008 SPECIAL EVENTS

Its not too early to start planning for this summers Special Events. Remind your friends and neighbors that all Special Events are FREE !

May 3 - Antique Farm Show

Plowing demonstrations will be held at New Salem using draft horses & antique farm equipment. Hours 9am - 4pm, weather permitting.

May 31 & June 1 - Glory Days - An 1830s Militia Muster

An 1830s Militia Muster with signing up for militia service and drilling will be held. The sound of musket fire will be heard on the prairies and bluffs of New Salem. The public will be invited to march carrying weapons (brooms) where Lincoln and the men of Sangamon County marched off to war in 1832. 10am - 4pm both days.