

The PRAIRIE PICAYUNE

Lincoln's New Salem Newsletter

Volume 13 Number 9

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

May 2008

WHAT'S NEW AT NEW SALEM?

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!

LINCOLN'S NEW SALEM'S POST OFFICE

Did you know that Lincoln's first US government job was Postmaster here at New Salem?

Did you know that you can get a Postmark from Lincoln's New Salem?

Yes, FREE LINCOLN'S NEW SALEM postmarks are available at the Souvenir Shop across from the Visitor Center. All you need to do is purchase a postage stamp – or bring your letter with an uncanceled stamp in for mailing!

This offer is available ONLY at the Souvenir Shop across from the Visitor Center!

(Post Office closed Sundays & Federal Holidays)

NEW DIRECTOR FOR IHPA

From Springfield State Journal-Register
Monday, April 14, 2008

Janet Grimes, executive director of the Illinois Capital Development Board, has been named director of the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

Grimes, 56, of Chatham has headed the Capital Development Board since 2005.

"I have great respect for the staff and mission of the Historic Preservation Agency, and I look forward to future opportunities to heighten awareness of the past. My top priority will be to make the most out of the Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial for Illinois and the nation," Grimes said in a news release. . . .

Jennifer Tirey has been acting IHPA direct, and she will return to her position as deputy director at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

Grimes began working at CDB in 1999 as manager of strategic planning and training. She was named acting deputy director in 2003. In 2004 she served as the agency's coordinator for the governor's Opportunity Returns economic development program.

She was named acting executive director of the agency in January 2005.

IHPA board chairwoman Julie Cellini said she is confident Grimes is the right choice to lead the IHPA in planning for the Lincoln Bicentennial.

“As the executive director of the Capital Development Board the past few years, Jan has played an important role in the planning and construction of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum and is very familiar with the state's historic sites and programs,” she said.

**THANKS FOR A SUCCESSFUL
26TH ANNUAL
NEW SALEM HAMMER IN!
BY ALLEN ORTERY**

I want to thank everyone that helped to make my first year of running this event a success. Without them the event would not have gone as smoothly as it did. The maintenance crew kept the area clean and moved set up and returned the bleachers so that the attendees had a place to sit. Volunteers Pam Golladay Earleywine, Don and Marilyn Ferricks, Mary Patton, and Carol Shafer worked helping my wife Carol Ortery on setting up, serving the Saturday evening meal, and cleaning up afterward. Albert Stiers loaned equipment and offered support wherever possible. And, of course, Jim Patton, who started this event 26 years ago, assisted in innumerable ways to help me keep it the quality event it had been under his leadership.

This year there were 93 blacksmiths, both from the site and from around Illinois who attended the Hammer In. There were even a few from out of the state. On Saturday morning Lynda Metcalf started a wall scone using 18th century techniques. She had worked on a reproduction box as a student in "the UK" and designed the scone using the hardware from it as inspiration. The reproduction box can be currently found locked in the Tower of London. Elmer Rousch, by request, made a bowl adz during the Saturday afternoon session. On Sunday morning Lynda finished the complicated scone, which involved a truly remarkable triple weld. In the afternoon Elmer, again by request, created an 18th century pair of box joint pliers which you might talk me into showing you,

As at all Hammer Ins, there was an auction of articles donated by the smiths in attendance and of the items created by the demonstrators. This auction, as well as the attendance fees and money above the cost of the meals help to defer the cost of the Hammer In for the Lincoln League, which offers it as a training workshop for staff and volunteers at New Salem. We are lucky that they sponsor an event that attracts people from such distances.

I am already working on finding another nationally known demonstrator for next year. I would welcome any suggestions you might have for people you have seen, or would like to see, in the future.

WEAK LINKS?

A pocket watch with a broken watch chain is a good example of what's happening at New Salem this season. The watch will still keep time but with a broken chain it's unhandy to use the watch. The serious cuts in seasonal staffing means New Salem will still be there but there won't be as many folks handy to help the visiting public enjoy the site. That's where the volunteers come in!

New Salem is all about time. For many of us it's an attempt at time travel, a chance to explore times past or just make time slow down. Yes, we know that you have lots of demands on your time, we all do! But, if you can share a little of your time with us, it will be very much appreciated! You'll also have the opportunity to share your time and your knowledge with lots of interesting folks from all over who have come here to see what we have to offer. Let's offer them our best – and that means YOU! Weak links? Hardly! New Salem folks have always been tough and now's the time for us to work together to forge a magnificent chain of community service!

This season we're trying something special - micro-events that 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 – you can pick your favorite topic. Any topic that is related to the village can be interpreted!

If you would be interested in sharing your knowledge and talent or have ideas, please call Mary Ann at (217) 632-4000.

AN EARTH-SHAKING KIND OF DAY?

by Carol Jenkins Shafer

Many residents of Southern and Central Illinois were roused from their beds very early April 18, 2008, by a 5.2 magnitude earthquake. However, if you had been a resident of New Salem old enough to remember 1811 (at least 25-30 years old in 1832), you would have remembered the greatest earthquake ever recorded in the United States, a quake that literally shook the whole country.

Originating near New Madrid, Missouri, the Great Quake was really a series of major earthquakes. Although seismographs and the Richter Scale which we now use to measure quakes were not around, many experts estimate that the three worst of the Great New Madrid Quakes would have measured at least an 8.0 magnitude. That would be more powerful than the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake or the KOBE, JAPAN earthquake in 1995.

It all started around 2 AM on December 16, 1811 and continued for months! The temblor rang church bells in their steeples and stopped pendulum clocks as far away as Boston, Massachusetts, and Richmond, Virginia. "Aftershocks" occurred in January that seemed to be as powerful as the original shock, some claimed it was worse. Near the epicenter, the mighty Mississippi River literally ran backwards for a short time before rushing back down its course. The result was a sort of river tsunami, wrecking boats, docks, and flooding the riverbanks. According to eyewitness Eliza Bryan as the river receded "A great many fish were left on the banks, being unable to keep pace with the water." But worst of all was the fact that this was not the end.

The quakes just kept coming. Eliza Bryan reports that following the second major quake (January 23, 1812) "the earth was in continual agitation, visibly waving as a gentle sea" until the February 4, 1812. She also remembered that people were afraid to move back into their home for a year or more. Even four years later, in 1816, when she wrote her letter account, she added in a PS "The shocks still continue, but are growing more light, and less frequent."

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

This journal account of the Great New Madrid Quake was reportedly written by George Heinrich Crist, living in Nelson County, Kentucky (near the Ohio River). It has been published by the Kentucky Division of Emergency Management Earthquake Preparedness Program.

This and other information about the New Madrid Earthquake can also be found at this website The Virtual Times: The Great New Madrid Earthquake <http://www.hsv.com/genlintr/newmadr/>

16 December 1811

"There was a great shaking of the earth this morning. Tables and chairs turned over and knocked around - all of us knocked out of bed. The roar I thught would leave us deaf if we lived. It was not a storm. when you could hear, all you cold hear was screams from people and animals. It was the worst thing that I have ever wittnesed. It was still dark and you could not see nothng. I thought the shaking and the loud roaring sound would never stop. You could not hold onto nothing neither man or woman was strong enough - the shaking would knock you lose like knocking hicror nuts out of a tree. I don't know how we lived through it. None of us was killed - we was all banged up and some of us knocked out for awile and blood was every where. When it got day break you could see the damage done all around. We still had our home it was some damage. Some people that the home was not built to strong did not. We will have to hunt our animals. Every body is scared to death. we still do not know if anybody was killed. I made my mind to one thing. If this earth quake or what ever it was did not happen in the Territory of Indiana then me and my family is moving to Pigeon Roost as soon as I can get things together.

23 January 1812

"What are we gonna do? You cannot fight it cause you do not know how. It is not something that you can see. In a storm you can see the sky and it shows dark clouds and you know that you might get strong winds but this you can not see anything but a house that just lays in a pile on the ground - not scattered around and trees that just falls over with the roots still on it. The earth quake or what ever it is come again today. It was as bad or worse than the one in December. We lost our Amandy Jane in this one - a log fell on her. We will bury her upon the hill under a clump of trees where Besys Ma and Pa is buried. A lot of people thinks that the devil has come here. Some thinks that this is the beginning of the world coming to a end.

8 Febuary 1812

"If we do not get away from here the ground is going to eat us alive. We had another one of them earth quakes yesterdy and today the ground still shakes at times. We are all about to go crazy - from pain and fright. We can not do anything until we can find our animals or get some more. We have not found enough to pull the wagons.

20 March 1812

"I do not know if our minds have got bad or what. But everybody says it. I swear you can still feel the ground move and shake some. We still have not found enough animals to pull the wagons and you can not find any to buy or trade.

14 April 1813

"We lived to make it to Pigeon Roost. We did not lose any lives but we had aplenty troubles. As much as I love my place in Kentucy - I never want to go back. From December to April no man- woman or animal if they could talk would dare to believe what we lived through. >From what people say it was not that bad here -They felt the ground move and shake but it did not destroy cabins and trees like it did in Kentucky. I guess that things was as bad here but at least they could see the enemy. on 3 September 1812 the Shawnees that William thought was friendly went crazy and them savages killed twenty four people...."

LINCOLN'S NEW SALEM VILLAGERS!

by John Blankenberger

Mary Disseler

I must tell a story about myself to introduce this month's featured Villager. A few years ago my wife and I attended a program at the New Salem Visitors' Center Theater. I had been a volunteer about a year at that time. I turned around and Mary Disseler and her husband, Jim Hoffman, whom I knew from other activities, were sitting behind us. We began to talk and in our conversation I mentioned that I saw a lot of folks I knew from my volunteering at New Salem. Mary looked around and said, "Yes, I am a volunteer, too, and I recognize a few faces." Well, honestly, Mary was not one of the faces I recognized as a volunteer. I figured that I just had not "worked" on the same days she did. A few days later I was walking through the village dressed in my period clothing and, as is my habit, I greeted everyone along the way. To my surprise one of the ladies said, "Hello, John." I did not recognize that person at all, and I wondered how she knew my name – we don't wear nametags, as you know.

The next time I was in the village, I again was greeting folks and I stopped to visit for a few seconds and I noted that the same lady was in the group and she spoke with me again as if she knew me. Then I realized that the lady in the dark dress and bonnet was Mary Disseler. I was almost shocked. This lady in the 1830s clothing did not look at all like 20th century Mary Disseler. She was completely immersed in her role as a resident of the little village of New Salem.

This story introduces our person in the spotlight this month, Mary Disseler. My lack of recognition has nothing to do with her selection. I asked for folks to complete a questionnaire last month and Mary was one of those who did. I remembered how well she conceals her real self as she portrays a villager, and I said, "Mary is the perfect example of what I would like to do with this column." I want folks to get to know who the volunteers are "behind the costume." If I did not recognize Mary, I am sure others did not, so this month Mary Disseler is in the spotlight.

Born in Quincy, Mary moved to Springfield to take a job with the State of Illinois in 1973. She worked for the Bureau of Disability Determination Services before moving to the Department of Public Aid's Central Office staff. She and Jim both took the Early Retirement option in 2003 which gave her time to become a

volunteer at New Salem. She also volunteers two afternoons a month at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum.

Mary's interest in Abraham Lincoln began early in life. She remembers visiting New Salem with her father as a child. He was a history buff and as she told me, "I loved my Dad and what he was interested in, was great for me." So, Mary became a history buff, too. After her retirement she saw an announcement in the Springfield State Journal-Register inviting interested people to become volunteers. She was excited to join the fun. She said it is the "cat's pajamas" to work at New Salem. She said of her volunteering, "It seems it was just meant to be." The way she fills her roles verifies that. She works at Burner's, Onstot's, Hill's and the Miller/Kelso home.

It was at Burner's that one of her most pleasant experiences happened. A group of tourists from Beijing were visiting the house. They were extremely positive in their response to her welcome. Mary described them as "just as sweet as they could be." She has some "props" she uses as an interpreter and that day she was using a Census Record that listed the Burners. One of the group really got into the entire scene and studied the record carefully and discussed it with Mary. She said it was obvious they loved Mr. Lincoln and were thoroughly enjoying their visit. I liked what Mary said about this group and her interaction. "If you are passionate, and show you are happy to be there, then people will respond like these folks." Mary also used an expression that I liked. "This is a 'tiny village' that the whole world walks through. We are community ambassadors as we welcome the world to New Salem."

Mary said the chance for continuing education is one of the unique benefits of volunteering at New Salem and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. The staff makes all the volunteers feel welcomed and wanted, especially with all the staff cut-backs. She said that it is important that people continue to volunteer to keep New Salem going. It is a wonderful place and needs to be kept that way.

Mary's hobbies include sewing, reading, traveling and baking. She and Jim enjoy their nieces, nephews and great-niece. Take time to visit with Mary when she is not "in character." You will find her a very interesting lady.

Mary told me two stories that exemplify the responses she has received to her welcome. The first is about a man from Scotland. He was fascinated with Abraham Lincoln, whom he called an "honest politician." During their visit Mary found that Europeans study American history and they are "hungry" for honest leaders. The second involved three small boys who were visiting the Guliher house. They were between 6 and 10 years old. They stayed in the house for about half an hour, talking and asking questions. Even at their young ages they were already fascinated with history and Mr. Lincoln. Mary said, (and don't all of us share this feeling!) "It was just a delight to share their youthful enthusiasm and inquisitiveness."

I wonder if there are other folks out there who took "Early Out" who would like to join Mary and the rest of us in this "Little Village" that the world comes to see. We are glad Mary found that it was meant to be for her.

MAY BIRTHDAYS!

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

CHECK THE WEB!

New Salem Volunteer Dona Walzer has reported that you can now download The Workwoman's Guide for free! This book, written by "a lady," provides a valuable resource for New Salem era clothing patterns and fashions. The subtitle "A Guide to 19th Century Decorative Arts, Fashion and Practical Crafts" only hints at the vast array of interesting and useful information. Originally printed in 1838, the book includes chapters on Clothing, Baby Linens, House Linens, Upholstery, Covers & Cases, Knitting, & "General Observations on Straw Plating." And, there are illustrations so you can see what you're supposed to end up with! If you don't already own this book, it's definitely worth taking a look at on-line at the address listed below. Thanks for sharing your find, Dona!

<http://books.google.com/books?id=JCsBAAAAQAAJ>

2008 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 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.

June 28 - All in a Day's Work

Observe cooking on the hearth, washing and mending clothes, spinning, weaving, knitting, butter churning, dipping candles; making baskets, and more. Home health care & home schooling were also part of everyday life as was gardening, tending the animals, chopping wood, toting water & fetching the eggs. The Ann Rutledge Quilters and The New Salem Fiber Guild will also display quilts and textiles at the New Salem Visitors Center. Hours: 9am to 5pm.

July 26 - Morgan Horse Demonstration

The Mississippi Morgan Horse Club will present a daylong exhibit and demonstrate the many uses of Morgan horses. Demonstrations will be held at 10:30am, 1pm, and 3pm.

September 6 & 7 - Traditional Music Festival

Impromptu demonstrations and performances of early 19th century music and dancing will occur throughout the pioneer village of New Salem. Hours: 10am to 5pm both days.

Sept. 20 - Fur, Feather & Fin: Frontier Style

Learn how New Salem's most misunderstood resident, Jack Kelso, made his living hunting, fishing and trapping in Central Illinois during the 1830's. Witness firsthand how early pioneers put food on the table and clothing on their backs. Demonstrations will include hunting with bow and arrow, fishing with nets, the trapping of various animals, & operation of an 1830's smokehouse. Hours: 9am to 5pm.

October 3 & 4 - Candlelight Tour

Bring the family to experience New Salem village after dark. Interpreters in period clothing will welcome you into the reconstructed log homes of the historic village where Abraham Lincoln lived for six years. Hours: 7pm to 9pm both nights.

October 4 & 5 - Historic Surveying

An 1830's surveying party will be viewing (surveying) the road throughout the village using period instruments and interpreting their function. Hours: 9am to 5pm both days.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please e-mail your articles, letters, book reviews, and comments to Carol Shafer at cshafer@gctv.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.

PLANNING LINCOLN'S 200th BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

Next meeting: May 18th

2 PM in Visitor Center Conference Room

The first meeting of the New Salem Bicentennial Birthday Celebration planning group provided an opportunity for folks to offer many ideas for consideration. At this point, the group is collecting ideas with more details to follow. Among the suggestions were – do a special play in the village or possibly a series tableaux vivantes; move the flatboat to a more visible location; invite local artists to practice their crafts in the village thru-out the summer, commission commemorative posters and jewelry; revive the indoor theatre; do something special for children; have a full out "Birthday Bash" during the summer; re-interpret Onstott's store as Lincoln's first property; and focus more on the Grist Mill as an interpretive site.

Do any of these spark your fancy? Do you have other ideas? Do you have plans for May 18th at 2 PM? Then come to the next meeting! We hope to see you there!

However, if you are unable to make the meeting and feel you have some good 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.

Theatre in the Park

BOX OFFICE HOURS

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.

"And Then There Were None (Ten Little Indians)" by Agatha Christie

Opens May 23 -25 & 29 - 31

"Kiss Me Kate"

June 6 - 8, 12 - 15

Songwriters Circle

June 20 & 21, 20

Paul Ingle, Tom Irwin, Ben Bedford and other regional area musician/songwriters sit in a group and take turns singing their original songs. May center around Sangamon/Menard County theme.

"John Brown's Body"

by Stephen Vincent Benet,

June 27 - 29 and July 3 - 6

New Salem Lincoln League Member Authors New Book

H. Donald Winkler, a NSLL member, has announced the release of his newest book, Civil War Goats and Scapegoats.

It examines the good, the bad, and the ugly among politicians and generals of the Civil War, describing major blunders made by generals in 17 battles in the eastern and western theaters. Mr. Winkler examines those who failed miserably on the battlefield and those who were blamed for the failures. He also examines some cases in which the verdicts of historians have changed over the years.

Civil War Goats and Scapegoats is a publication of Cumberland House Publishing. Mr. Winkler is also the author of Lincoln's Ladies: The Women in the Life of the Sixteenth President and Lincoln and Booth: More Light on the Conspiracy. He has written extensively about Ann Rutledge and the Lincoln-Rutledge relationship. A longtime member of the National Press Club, he is a journalist, historian, and political scientist who has received 84 national awards as a writer and editor.

WEB EXTRA!

Homes and Libraries of the Presidents (Third Edition)

There is no better way for the average citizen to get closer to the intimate environments, material possessions, or creations of American presidents than to visit their homes or the museums and libraries that house and interpret their lives and legacies.

Since 1995, Homes and Libraries of the Presidents has been the standard among guides to presidential homes, museums, and libraries. Not only does this book clearly identify, describe, and provide access information about nearly one hundred publicly accessible sites that commemorate and interpret the presidents of the United States, but it also provides detailed maps to assist visitors in actually finding sites that they might wish to visit and a short list of books and articles that help readers expand upon the information presented in the site descriptions. Homes and Libraries of the Presidents is also the most frequently revised of the available presidential guidebooks; the current edition, in fact, contains information that was less than one week old when the book went to press and includes reference to events that are scheduled to take place months after the book appears on the market.

Regularly priced at \$29.95/softcover, publisher McDonald & Woodward, is offering Homes and Libraries of the Presidents at a special 30% discount now through June 30, 2008. For more information about this book, the author, and the special discount, please visit www.mwpubco.com/HLP.htm.