

THE PRAIRIE PICAYUNE

Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site Newsletter

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What's new at new salem?

**TO ALL VOLUNTEERS!!
PLEASE!
YOUR HELP IS NEEDED!**

For Fur, Feather, Fin:

The third edition of Fur, Feather, Fin will be on September 20, 2008. Each year the event has expanded to include more demonstrations, interpreters, and cooking. This year is no exception! We need volunteers to fill the log homes, quilt, spin, make butter, run the lemonade stand, cook wild game, anything pertaining to the village. The carding mill will also be scheduled to run for the last and final time of the year.

Do not miss this opportunity to get reacquainted with fellow volunteers and have a great time!

If you would like to participate or have an idea which will add to the event, please contact Tim Guinan at (217) 632-4000.

For Candlelight Tour:

October's Candlelight Tour is fast approaching. Call Mary Ann soon to schedule a building. As well as staffing the buildings from 7pm to 9pm, we also need help lighting the lanterns on Friday or Saturday, putting the lanterns out on Friday and Saturday at 9pm, cleaning the pans on Friday and Saturday nights, setting up for Saturday, putting in new candles, checking papers and matches, etc,

and finally putting the lanterns away on Sunday. Also staffing the buildings during the day on Friday and Saturday is needed.

There will be a meal served on Friday night in the Museum Basement at 5:30. Call soon to schedule a building or help in another way!

FOR EVERYDAY!

Now, more than ever, we are in great need of help in the village on Wednesday thru Sunday; 9-1, 1-5 or all day. The front desk can use help on Saturday 1-5 and Sunday; 9-1, 1-5 or all day. Let Mary Ann know if you have time to help out.

❖ CHANGES IN PLANS:

☞ **Fundraising Supper** Due to recent staffing changes at New Salem, there have been concerns raised about having enough volunteers for the Candlelight Festival as well as the ham and bean supper that was being planned. So a decision was made to postpone the Ham and Bean Supper until February and possibly have it as part of the Lincoln Bicentennial festivities. Stay tuned for more details in future issues of the *Picayune*!

☞ **Evening Program** - Plans previously reported for an evening program by New Salem's Karen DePauw to speak on clothing of the 1830s have been postponed due to the reduced hours and staffing cuts at the site. Information will be in the *Picayune* when this program is rescheduled.

🌟 HELP!!! As many (hopefully most) of you know, last month's drastic budget cuts have deeply affected Lincoln's New Salem! All seasonal workers were laid off leaving

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the site critically understaffed! See Letters to the Editor for more on what YOU can do!

**WORKSHOP:
Clothing of the Jackson Period
1820 – 1840**

**Presented by: Custom Vestments, LTD
Josef Kleffman and Su Miller, Proprietors**

www.customvestments.com

DATE: October 18, 2008 Two Sessions

TIME: (9:00 – 11:00) & (1:00 – 3:00)

WHERE: Conference Room

COST: None /Free

This will be a Powerpoint presentation of original clothing from different historical societies, state museums, along with drawings and lithographs of the same period.

The slides will show side by side examples of a period picture, painting, etc. with an extant garment along side.

The class is offered twice on October 18, in case you are not able to make one or the other.

Original garments will be on display along with reproductions.

Josef Kleffman, master tailor, has been sewing for over 20 years. At the age of 8 he was asked what he wanted to be when he grew up and he answered “a tailor”. His tailoring talents went professional in 2005 when he began charging for his work, as members of various reenactment groups and societies admired his clothing and wanted some of their own.

Su Miller, journeyman tailoress, has been sewing for over 20 years. Though degreed in English Literature, she worked for over a year in the costume shop of her college theater, learning the basics of sewing, altering, and creative design. She has worked on Renaissance era clothing, American Revolutionary War, and early to mid-19th century clothing.

Josef and Su met 3 years ago and after a long conversation Joe offered Su an apprenticeship. She studied under him learning all she could about period tailoring and after 3 years took and passed her journeyman exam and is on her way to becoming a master herself.

Together, Josef and Su have visited multiple museums, societies and historic sites to view and document their clothing collections. Along the way they have even begun to amass their own collection of extant garments.

**More Costuming Workshops
with Hope Wright**

Everyone interested in learning more about costuming, with a primary focus on hands-on lessons geared to making period costumes, is welcome to attend. Programs will be held from 5:15 pm to 7:15 pm on the third Monday of each month at the Lincoln Home Conference Center, located at the corner of Capitol and Eighth street, downtown Springfield. The first part of each program will consist of “Show and Tell,” so if you are unable to arrive at 5:15 pm, please feel welcome to come when you are able! **Registration in advance requested, so adequate handouts and supplies will be available:** Make reservations with catzman@springnet1.com or leave CAT a phone message at 787-2282. For additional information on this group and topics for future workshops contact CAT Mancuso at 787-2282 or Catzman@springnet1.com

Monday September 15 - "Using a Flower Iron," to make flowers to embellish bonnets or dresses, or for a nosegay or flower arrangement. This technique originated in the 1700s and was taught in Boston by 1791; Hope has instructions and patterns from many issues of nineteenth century periodicals. Although molds can be used, this is how many of the more expensive artificial flowers are made even today. Hope learned this technique from a class with Judy Ford Hogan, the author of the only book currently available that discusses the period techniques and the consultant for the Smithsonian on creating flower arrangements for period rooms. There will not be sufficient time to prepare the silk fabrics during the workshop, but how to do that will be discussed as part of the program. Certain papers can also be used and were popular during the Civil War and later.

Kits with necessary supplies will be available for purchase; there will be some variety of materials and flower patterns so kit costs will vary up to \$25 for the September workshop. Please bring the following additional tools: paper cutting scissors, fabric cutting scissors, sharp lead pencil to trace pattern, sewing awl if you have one. If you already have the new Clover Mini Iron with detachable heads, it contains the basic heads of a flower iron, so please bring it. Registration limited to 12, additional sessions will be scheduled if there is sufficient interest.

October 20, 2008 -- "Braiding/Passementerie" is trimmings or edgings of applied braid, cord, embroidery thread, fabric tubes, and optionally beads. This technique originated for military uniforms, and was adapted for many ethnic costumes. In the 19th century, it was used as an embellishment on ladies' fashionable dresses and accessories, with the cords etc sewn directly to the fabric in a pattern, before construction of the item. Hope learned the basis for this technique from several embroidery instructors.

Godey's Magazine, in 1835, printed 5 very simple edging/border braiding designs, with a suggestion for using on a *reticule or workbag* (this is a timeless design that could be carried throughout the Lincoln and Victorian Era, and later – even today). Godey's and Petersons, particularly in the 1850s and 1860s, included patterns from simple to ornate in most issues. Some of the patterns were borders, others a corner design that could be extended; there were yet others adapted to the shapes of slippers and baby shoes, purses, smoking caps, and collars.

In order to learn the technique, we want to get right to the embellishment instead of spending time transferring the design. Therefore, you have three options:

- 1) Transfer a design yourself to your fabric prior to the program*;
- 2) Mini kits will be available for \$3 to make bookmarks, pincushions, or ornaments, with patterns pre-printed on fabric.
- 3) To make a reticule/workbag, bring a half yard of washable fabric; kits with patterns pre-printed on a water soluble transfer material will be available for \$2.

A variety of threads, cords, and braids will be available

during the workshop, or you may furnish your own (also bring matching color sewing thread). Many people will be able to complete the bookmark or ornament during the workshop. How to construct the 1835 reticule/workbag will be demonstrated, but few people will have a completed workbag at the end of the evening. Bring sewing scissors, needles, thimble, embroidery hoop or frame; a frame weight or clamp is optional but useful.

*Braiding patterns (dated as to source) will be available at both the September and October workshops, to make many other items for re-enactors to wear, for use in theatrical costumes, or to embellish modern-day clothing. A dozen (free) patterns may be printed from <http://hometown.aol.com/hopewsew/>

Registration in advance requested please, so adequate handouts and supplies will be available: Make reservations with catzman@springnet1.com or leave CAT a phone message at 787-2282

Did you get your 2008 Village Squares Quilt raffle tickets?

It's your chance to help raise money for the Education Fund and you can even have a chance on winning this beautiful quilt made by the Ann Rutledge Quilters of New Salem! Be sure to stop by the Visitor Center and admire the magnificent hand quilting - where else would you get the chance to have such beautiful work for the small cost of the ticket?

And, there are more tickets available to sell if you've already sold the 12 you received in the mail. Simply call the site and ask to have some saved for you at the desk (217-632-4000). Every ticket sold adds an easy dollar to the Education Fund which goes toward various activities to bring continuing education to volunteers.

New Salem Goes to the Illinois State Fair

By John Blankenberger

Lincoln's New Salem State Park was invited to

join a number of other tourist sites at the “Welcome to Springfield” tent at the Illinois State Fair. While it may seem that a quick geography lesson would show anyone that New Salem is not in Springfield, a visit to the tent would explain why New Salem was invited. The concept behind the tent was to promote tourism in Central Illinois. Springfield is the gateway to all the attractions in Central Illinois and therefore was the “host.”

Looking around the tent one could see representatives of the Dana-Thomas Home, the Henson-Robinson Zoo, Central Illinois Tourism Council, City of Springfield, the Lincoln Home and others. With the short staff at New Salem volunteers were recruited to staff the Lincoln’s New Salem State Park table. I was fortunate to be able to represent New Salem on two days during the fair. Volunteers wore period clothing so we stood out in the crowds. (Have you ever wondered through the fair grounds dressed in 1830’s clothing? What was strange however, was the fact that I did not seem to attract too much attention. Maybe people were too polite to point out the strange looking man for another century.)

My first day at the fair was Monday. I decided to sit in front of the table so I could meet people without a barrier between us (a table.) I greeted people as they came by and told them I was from New Salem. At least 75% of the people who responded said, “Oh, I thought you were closed.” I hope they are not representative of the entire population. Their reading of the news was that budget cuts had closed New Salem. That small group now knows we are not closed, but what about the rest of those folks out there with this misconception? I learned that we need to point people to our Web site where they can get the latest news and hours that New Salem is open. Our friends in the media can help us get the correct information out as well.

My second day at the fair was Friday. I took the same position so I could meet as many people as possible, but I decided to ask a question. To engage folks in conversation I asked almost everyone who passed the table: “When did you

last visit New Salem?” A surprising number responded that they had been there within the last year. I was pleased to hear that. But, one person said they had just been out to New Salem and there were only two buildings open in the village the day they visited. That reminded me that I need to encourage volunteers to fill the void until the budget is settled. One unfortunate trip will turn folks away for good, and we can avoid that if we are there on the days the site is open. Many people commented that their recent experience was at the Candlelight Festival. We volunteers need to work with staff to insure the success of that fabulous event as well as the rest of the events scheduled this year.

The next highest response was: “Well, I went when I was in elementary school on my class field trip.” Some of those folks have not been in elementary school for a LONG time. I spent some time explaining to those folks how different New Salem is when viewed through adult eyes. Word of mouth spread by readers of the *Prairie Picayune* might get many of those folks back to visit again and again.

Most of the rest of the answers could be grouped together. “I have never been there. I am not even sure what it is. Where is it?” These answers came from folks who could find their ways to Springfield for the State Fair, but had no idea that there was a wonderful place to visit just 20 miles away. I also know that, if you do not know there is a New Salem, one will have a hard time finding it on the Internet. I tried to find it by going to the State Tourism Web site and it took me a lot of clicks before I finally found it. If I had started with the key word “New Salem,” I would have been there in just a click or two. We have to work hard to promote tourism with the rest of Menard County’s Historic Places.

I actually spent a third day at the fair volunteering at another tent. Far fewer folks came through that tent, but we did not have cold water available as an attraction. Why is that important in this story? These folks were not looking for places to visit. There was a fairly steady flow of people through

the “Welcome to Springfield” tent. People are looking for places to visit. We are one of the best. It is imperative that we keep things going – volunteers can do that – until things settle down again. By putting in a few extra hours we demonstrate that we love New Salem and are not willing to let it be diminished by the budget problems. Our positive attitude will win friends for Mr. Lincoln and the citizens of the little village on the hill above the Sangamon River.

Springfield as Urban Frontier 1818-1836 Exhibit

Want more examples of how folks lived in Central Illinois during New Salem’s era? Check out the Farrell and Ann Gay Museum of Springfield History, lower level of the Elijah Iles House, Seventh & Cook streets. Items include a letter from October 21, 1823, that records a conversation between two of Springfield’s earliest citizens, Elijah Iles and Daniel Pope Cook. The exhibit also features tools and typical domestic items from the early 1800s. Hours: Noon to 4 p.m. Wednesday and Saturday **Dates:** September 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 20, 24, 27, October 1

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS!

Leah Boyenga	Charlie Starling
Marilyn Osgood	Mark Graber
Mary Lou Daniels	Hope Wright
Brenda Hamilton	David Hobbs
Kirk Boyenga	Michael Rader
Dorothy McNeal	Pete Ellertson
Deann Shelabarger	

LINCOLN’S NEW SALEM VILLAGERS

By John Blankenberger

I was struck by a number when I looked at the resume’ of this months Villager. **1-9-8-6** jumped off the page before any other words or images.

That was the answer to the question – “*I began my New Salem work in _____*” on the **Prarie Picayune New Salem Personalities Questionnaire**. There are many volunteers that have given years of service to New Salem and this month’s Villager, **Barbara Raycraft**, represents all of those folks to whom we owe so much. Barbara began volunteering in **1986** (that number that jumped out at me). That translates to 22 years of driving from her home in Sherman, IL to New Salem and back to help keep the village alive.

She is a volunteer who has a skill that she shares. You will find her entertaining folks at the Hill House or clerking at the Museum Store. I have watched from a distance when visitors gather around as she plays her dulcimer for them while she interprets. Many have never heard this instrument and are enchanted by the droning sounds and the melody that seems to float from the little “box” that sits in her lap. Barbara did not know how to play the dulcimer when she began volunteering. She says another New Salem Villager, JoAnn Surber, encouraged her to take up the instrument. She says, “I am not a ‘pro’ on the dulcimer, but good enough that the visitors (especially children) enjoy my efforts.”

Barbara related that one of the most memorable visitors was actually a “group of visitors” from Russia. The group happened to be composed of young men and they were enjoying hearing her play. Barbara said: “I did not know any Russian songs to play for them, but I did know a Hungarian one. I played that for them and it sounded ‘Russian’ enough that they were delighted.” This typifies why Barbara has stayed on so long as a volunteer. She said “The thing I enjoy most about New Salem is meeting the many visitors from all of the USA and many foreign countries.”

Barbara began volunteering because she has always been interested in history. She said that a neighbor volunteered and encouraged her and her husband, John, to try it. As the saying goes – they tried it and they liked it. Barbara said, “My husband (John) liked to work in 2nd Berry Lincoln

Store and sit on the porch making whisk brooms. He grew gourds in our garden in Lincoln and he got me into doing gourd crafts. We made birdhouses and many other craft items for our gourds. Hundreds of our gourd creations have been sold in the Museum Store over the years.”

Barbara is now a widow. John passed away in 2002 and it was very difficult for her to come back to New Salem alone. But, like so many others, she said it was something she wanted to do, especially since she had made so many friends at New Salem. John and Barbara had four children and the twelve grandchildren keep her busy. She is retired, but not sitting still. She enjoys her hobbies: music, gourd craft and photography, and, of course, volunteering at New Salem.

I hope you will invite **your** neighbors to become volunteers. Barbara Raycraft is an example of the kind of people who might respond to your invitation. Think about the experiences that you may be offering to your friends when you open that door for them. She did not play the dulcimer when she was invited to join the volunteer group, but she found that skill inside her. Who knows what gifts those you invite might bring to share with people “from all over the world?”

L E T T E R

T o t h e E d i t o r :

Received from **Toni Leamon of Mason City:**

Volunteers Mary Lou Daniels and Bernadine Evans wrote a Letter to the Editor which appeared in the *Mason City Banner Times*, *Prairie State Journal*, *Olympia Review* and *Manito Review*. (Our paper publishes all of the above.)

They were informing the public about the problems at New Salem, how important New Salem is and why it would be impossible to be run totally by volunteers. They end by requesting

protesting to our State Rep, Gov and our legislative leaders.

EDITOR’S NOTE: This is something all of us can do! You can write your local paper and your elected officials. Remember, they are interested in what their constituents say or New Salem folks would have said “The squeaky wheel gets the grease!” Let’s start squeaking!

Here are addresses of two state-wide officials you could contact:

Governor Rod Blagojevich
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706-1150.

Senator Richard Durbin
525 South 8th Street
Springfield, 62703

You can usually find the addresses for local elected officials in your phone book – write to your district’s representatives and tell them how important Lincoln’s New Salem is to you, the state of Illinois, the United States, and the rest of the world. Use your own words and be sincere – that always more effective than a form letter. Remember, we need to be heard!

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please e-mail your articles, letters, book reviews, and comments to the *Picayune’s* Editor Carol Shafer at cshafer@gcctv.com or to Associate Editor 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.

THANKS FOR HELPING NEW SALEM COME TO LIFE!

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2008 SPECIAL EVENTS

Remind your friends and neighbors that all
Special Events are FREE

September 6 & 7 - Traditional Music Festival

Impromptu demonstrations and performances of early 19th century music & 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 & trapping in Central Illinois during the 1830's. See how early pioneers put food on the table and clothing on their backs. Demonstrations will include hunting with bow & arrow, fishing with nets, the trapping of various animals, & operation of an 1830s smokehouse. Hours: 9am to 5pm. This event is also part of the *Stitches in Time* Series.

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 6 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.

Basket Raffle at the Ham & Bean Supper Also Postponed!

Since the Basket Raffle is in conjunction with the Ham & Bean Supper, it has also been postponed until February. That means you have about 4 extra months to come up with ideas! Who knows, it might even offer you an opportunity to clear out some of those "white elephant" gifts you may receive in December!

We still have very high hopes that this will be a huge money maker, so keep your eyes open for ideas as holiday time grows closer. Of course by February folks will also be looking for spring and gardening ideas – that's another theme you might consider. But don't forget the edible themes – by February we'll all have forgotten about those New

Year's resolutions. And we'll certainly be tired of our post-holiday diets!

Please contact me and let me know that you would like to donate a basket and your theme. If you want to go together with a friend, please do. If you need an idea, I would be happy to help you come up with one. For questions or to sign up please e-mail me at: pat_jacobs@hotmail.com or phone me in the evenings/weekends at 309/663-4414.

If we want the Lincoln Bicentennial to be truly the "Year of Lincoln" here in the "Land of Lincoln," we need to get Historic Preservation's funding restored! PLEASE write to your elected officials!