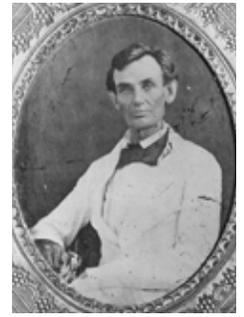


Lincoln Newsletter

Spring 2012

A publication of the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum Commission
Beardstown, Illinois



‘Way We Worked’ a critical success

Who made America,
Whose sweat and blood, whose faith and pain,
Whose hand at the foundry, whose plow in the rain
Must bring back our mighty dream again.”

Langston Hughes, “Let America Be America Again”

1938

hibit in its 12 crates. These were picked up by volunteers from Savanna, the next stop on the tour.

The display consisted of five free-standing kiosks that displayed photographs from the National Archives, along with some artifacts, an introduction and four theme-based displays: “Where We Worked,” “How We Worked,” “Who Worked” and “Why We Work.”

The exhibit officially opened to the public on Jan. 7. The formal opening took place a week later with a talk by Robert A. Bruno, the state scholar for “The Way We Worked.”

Museum on Main Street (MoMs) is a part of the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibit Service (SITES), designed for small towns in mostly rural areas. The Illinois Humanities Council is sponsoring this traveling exhibit in six towns: Carbondale, Marshall, Savanna, Ottawa, Waterloo and Beardstown.

There are several MoMs exhibits. One closed in Macomb in December 2010, and another is due to open in Nauvoo next September. Thanks to the Illinois Humanities Council, the state has been one of the most active in hosting MoMs



The Smithsonian Institution’s exhibit “The Way We Worked” has moved on, but not before many people came to the Beardstown Houston Memorial Library to experience it.

The exhibit depicted incredible stories of American workers over the past 150 years, showing their hope, strength, dedication, unity and bravery as working Americans. “The Way We Worked” asked visitors to look at these stories and consider how we play a part in them today.

We began on Jan. 3, when Kevin Massie and Jess Chelette made the trek to Marshall with a big trailer and lots of tiedowns to get “The Way We Worked” exhibit to Beardstown.

The next morning, a small band gathered at the Beardstown Houston Memorial Library to unpack and assemble the exhibit. With Matt McClure reading directions, Jess Chelette, Ann Chelette, Suzie McClure, Pastor Bob Schoolcraft and Paula Woods were able to erect the exhibit in approximately four hours.

On Feb. 20, the crew reversed the process, packing the ex-

hibits.

The OLCM Commission was approached in November of 2010 to host “The Way We Worked.” The commission was joined by the Beardstown Houston Memorial Library, providing a fine location. Beardstown was considered a good venue for West Central Illinois, and perhaps it was the only site brave enough to handle a January and February exhibit date. The weather, however, cooperated nicely.

Unknown to us were the Beardstown connections in the display. There are several “for more information call this number” plaques scattered through the exhibit. One of these, in the “Who Works” section, focuses on the immigrant experience. The narration is taken from interviews with Cargill employees done by University of Illinois graduate students. A second connection is found in the display of technological artifacts – punch cards. William Houston who gave the seed money for the library, made his fortune in punch cards. A third connection was discovered by Brent Krumboltz during

Continued on next page

a Kiwanis visit. He appears in the picture of the Iowa National Guard members sandbagging an electric utility substation in Hills, Iowa, during the 2008 Mississippi flood.

One of the requirements for hosting a MoMs exhibit is to provide a site specific display related to the theme. Bill Barnhart, ably assisted by Ann Chelette, designed this display of how Beardstown worked. Bill located a number of interesting and unusual photographs and Ann found more. They raided the museum, particularly the River Museum, for photographs and artifacts. Dale Robertson provided some items. Judging from comments, visitors, both out-of-town and local, have shown interest in this part of "The Way We Worked." In fact, "fascination" might be a better term.

Another requirement was to hold three public programs related to the topic. Thanks to a generous grant from Ameren Illinois, Leigh Morris was able to present three talks about Beardstown's working past. He spoke on the history of newspapers and newspaper editors in Central Illinois. "From Hostlers to Gandy Dancers: Working on the Railroad," the types of work done on railroads, relating jobs to rail lines in Central Illinois. Third in the series was "Now You're Cooking with Gas! Working at Beardstown's Manufactured Gas Plant." These talks were most informative, providing a glimpse into Beardstown's past.



A program designed for young children, "Lincoln at Work," celebrated Lincoln's 203rd birthday. Hershel Logsdon related his experiences on the river to Lincoln's. Brent Krumboltz spoke about the role of the National Guard and how the Guard is similar to the militia that Lincoln joined in the Black Hawk War. Milton McClure talked about Lin-

coln's career as an attorney and his connections to Beardstown and the courtroom.

Although visitors primarily came from Beardstown and surrounding communities, several out-of-state persons visiting in Beardstown and even two visitors from Ecuador toured the exhibit. Additionally, a number of elementary school classes have visited the exhibit. The students seemed to have learned much, and they demonstrated knowledge of the different kinds of work that the display presents. Some students returned to see the exhibit in more detail and to give tours to parents and friends.

The big public program is yet to come. On April 14 and 15, "The Way We Worked" final presentation will be "Workin' It Out . . . Beardstown" by Ken Bradbury.

"The Way We Worked" has been an enlightening experience for both visitors and the volunteers who donated hours to guiding tours and explaining the exhibit. Each found something new with every tour and by simply wandering through the display.

—Paula Woods

Bradbury play to conclude MoMs on April 14 and 15

As a part of the Museum on Main Street (MoMs) exhibit "The Way We Worked" public programs, "Workin' It Out . . . Beardstown," a readers' theatre production by Ken Bradbury, will be presented on April 14 and 15 at the Beardstown Grand Opera House.

Well known to Beardstown area audiences, Bradbury is an award-winning author of numerous plays and the popular "Coonridge Digest," a weekly column appearing in several newspapers.

Asked to describe "Workin' It Out," Bradbury said, "Taken from the interviews of two dozen Beardstown residents and with pickings from Beardstown's past, 'Workin' It Out . . . In Beardstown' is a readers' theatre presentation of what it was like working in Beardstown and what today's workaday world has become."

Bradbury wrote the script and will direct the play which contains original music and features a cast of 16 actors from Lincoln Land Community College.

It is the good fortune of the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum Commission and the Beardstown Houston Memorial Library as sponsors of "The Way We Worked" to be able to present the final element of the Museum on Main Street in the historic Beardstown Grand Opera House. This institution, for many years underused, is undergoing renovation. An elevator has been installed and a campaign is on to "Raise the Roof."

Performances of "Workin' It Out . . . Beardstown" are scheduled for Saturday, April 14 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday April 15 at 3:00 p. Tickets are \$5.00. Because seating is limited, reservations are required. For reservations, call Paula Woods at 217-323-4514 or e-mail: pmw41@casscomm.com.

OLCM bright ideas for the 2012 season

This new year is off to a fast start, but many more special activities remain that will make this another outstanding season.



We got the ball rolling on Jan. 7 through Feb. 18 with the Museums on Main Street (MoMs) exhibit that was on display at Beardstown Houston Memorial Library. Many people passed through the doors to see the exhibit from the Smithsonian Institution and our local museum. Special accompanying programs were also presented, including a birthday event celebrating Abraham Lincoln's birthday.

The final presentation accompanying the MoMs exhibit,

“Workin’ it Out,” a new play by Ken Bradbury, is coming up in April. More about this performance can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

During this time our annual Winter Work Days also were accomplished. A summary of our achievements appears in another article in this issue.

And we’ve only just begun! Here are the activities planned thus far for 2012 that you won’t want to miss:



2012 Calendar of Events

March 31 – Official Flag Raising Ceremony
April 2 – Museum Opens for the Season
April 13 – Third Annual Essay Contest Reception
April 14 & 15 – “Workin’ it Out” by Ken Bradbury
June 9 – Friends of the Courtroom reception
September (date TBA) – Fourth Annual Trivia Night
October (date TBA) – Ghost Walk
November (date TBA) – Veterans Event
Dec. 1 – Christmas in Beardstown

As the omitted dates and other events not listed become solidified, updates will be placed in the newsletters and newspapers. Mark your calendars NOW!!!

Thank you! Gracias! Merci!

Thanks go to the volunteers who made Beardstown a stop on the Illinois tour of “The Way We Worked.”

Chris and Kevin Massie for providing the truck and trailer in which the exhibit was transported from Marshall to Beardstown.

Kevin Massie and Jess Chelette for transporting the exhibit.

Jess Chelette for supervising the assembly of the exhibit and taping those pesky electrical cords.

Matt McClure for interpreting the assembly instructions.

Pastor Bob Schoolcraft, Ann and Jess Chelette, Suzie McClure, Connie and Ross Foley for providing the muscle necessary for assembly and disassembly of the exhibit.

Bill Barnhart and Ann Chelette for designing and setting up the site specific exhibit.

Don Chipman for serving as publicity chair.

Hershel Logsdon, Brent Krumboltz and Milton McClure for giving their time and expertise for the children’s program.

Leigh Morris for his three interesting and informative programs.

Ken Bradbury for developing the readers’ theatre presentation and to Carnell Korsmeyer for helping with the interviews.

And while not volunteers, Molly Rice, Luis Beltran, Sharon Sutterfield, and other members of the library staff for extending the library hours.

And to those volunteers who gave their time and developed expertise as docents for “The Way We Worked,” without whom the exhibit would not have been possible: Ann Chelette, Connie Foley, Corky Kinstle, Matt McClure, Suzie McClure, Milt McClure, Peggy Meyer, Dale Robertson, Alice Tracey.

Many thanks to all. If I have left anyone out, please yell at me.

Paula Woods

Program Director, MoMs in Beardstown

(she who is yelled at when something goes wrong)

Courtroom hosts Pledge event

Across the country, communities gathered in February to take part in our American tradition of saying the Pledge of Allegiance, which continues to be recited by public school children after 120 years.

A “Stand Up & Say the Pledge” event took place on Saturday, Feb. 11, in the Lincoln Courtroom in downtown Beardstown. Students, families, service organizations and our many civic-minded residents were in attendance.

Three very special attendees for the event were brand new American citizens sworn in the previous day in Springfield. Teko B. Afatsawd, Sadikou Ouro-Agoro and Tomvereo Mahini, along with members of their families attended the event and proudly recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of their new country.

“Stand Up & Say the Pledge” is a national effort to share the history and meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance. The local event was sponsored by the Beardstown Exchange Club.

Exchange Club President Lora Davis, attorney Milton McClure, Exchange Americanism Chair Don Chipman, Mayor

Bob Walters and Circuit Judge Bob Hardwick participated in the program.

The event concluded with all present saying the Pledge of Allegiance in their native language.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written in August of 1892 by Baptist minister Francis Bellamy, who identified himself as a Christian Socialist. It was first published on Sept. 8, 1892, in *The Youth's Companion* magazine. It was as follows:



Francis Bellamy

I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Bellamy had toyed with the idea of including the word “equality” in his pledge so it would have read “...with liberty, equality and justice for all.” However, he decided against it. At the time, Bellamy chaired a National Education Association committee of state superintendents of education. He knew the majority of those superintendents opposed equality for women and blacks and thus the inclusion of “equality” in his pledge would have created a major controversy.

Nonetheless, as the committee chairman, he prepared the

program for the public schools' quadricentennial celebration of Columbus Day in 1892. Used throughout the United States, the event featured a flag raising ceremony and the recitation of his Pledge of Allegiance.

In 1923, the words “...the Flag of the United States of America...” were added. Now it read:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

The words “under God” were added in 1954 in response to the Communist threat. Bellamy’s granddaughter opposed the change, contending her grandfather would have found it objectionable. No doubt, that would have been true as Bellamy favored strict separation between church and state.

On display...

The Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum is proud to display the American Flag.

Visitors will note several flags throughout the museum with different numbers of stars representing various periods of local history. One of our oldest flags is an 1850s vintage flag with 32 stars. Recently, it and another of the older flags were taken to Paris Dry Cleaners in Springfield for cleaning. Paris Dry Cleaners is honored to clean flags and does so at absolutely no charge.

When the 1850s flag was examined, they decided that due to its age and the fragility of the fabric, they would not take the chance of dry cleaning. The OLCM salutes Paris Dry Cleaners for their patriotism, and invites everyone to come to our historic site to view the flags and the several updates that have been completed throughout.

Flag raising ceremony...

Plan now to join us on March 31 for the formal opening of our 2012 courtroom and museum season.

The courtroom and museum maintain regular hours for



visitors from April through November. We like to get the season started with something special and this year we believe it will be extra special.

As detailed in the last issue of our *Lincoln Newsletter*, a new flag pole has been crafted and installed on our courthouse building through the efforts of volunteers and the financial support of The Beardstown Savings Bank.

The formal flag raising ceremony will begin at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, March 31.

The flag that will be raised is the 31-star flag. This is the flag that would have been in place when Abraham Lincoln defended William Duff Armstrong on May 7, 1858.

OLCM 2012 work days achieve much

How many volunteers does it take to turn benches upside down for painting purposes?

Only one, if you're left handed.

This inside joke will be understood by the faithful volunteers who came out to paint and refresh exhibits at the annual Lincoln Courtroom Work Days – 2012 edition.

On Jan. 27 and 28 and again on Feb. 4, 15 volunteers emptied a room, cleaned the woodwork and floor, painted the woodwork

and floor, fixed a dangerous light socket, moved a cast iron stove to the courtroom, attached a pipe to the stove for authenticity, painted the courtroom benches, painted the entry hall display cabinets, took down Christmas decorations, arranged storage areas, repaired a couple of hangers on pictures, hung an antique mirror, remodeled a display case, hung a flag in a very precarious location, took another flag to be dry cleaned, started the process of turning an air duct into a chimney, and worked on squaring away the gift shop.

Oh yes, and the furnishings were returned to the room.

These projects, along with others were accomplished in



relatively short days with much laughter and camaraderie. Lunches were served compliments of the Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum Commission, and the crew went home satisfied with a job well done.

Everyone is welcome to join the fun when we have our work days, so if you are interested in joining in next year – and being in on the “inside joke,” let Suzie McClure know, so your name can be added to the mailing list.

Thank you to the following individuals who volunteered their valuable time and talents:

Paul Blakeman • Ann and Jess Chelette • Jim and Linda Crum • Lisa Evenson • Ross and Connie Foley • Dottie Gohlson • Judge Bob Hardwick • Kevin and Chris Massie • Eleanor Meyer • Suzie McClure • Dale Robertson • special thanks to Milt McClure for delivering lunches lest we collapsed from hunger.

We hope to see you there next year!

Come on in and set a spell, but bring a chair

If you've visited the Old Lincoln Courtroom anytime since the 1960s, you have probably had an opportunity to sit down on a long uncomfortable bench.

The OLCM Commission is interested in retiring the benches and returning the seating accommodations to chairs, which historians believe were originally used when the building was erected in 1844.

The goal is to place 60 antique chairs in the room to accommodate our guests more comfortably – and more authentically. For every donation of \$25 to our “Have a Seat” fund, your name will be placed on a plate affixed to the back of the seat of your donated chair.

The chairs will be scouted from antique shops throughout the area and country and brought to full repair. As our funds accumulate, we will keep you updated on our most current seating capacity.

Come on in and have a seat!!!



Abraham Lincoln Essay Contest



The Third Annual Abraham Lincoln Essay Contest is underway. For the first time, the contest is open to adults, in addition to middle school and high school students.

Essay topics have been assigned. Middle School students are asked to choose a question they would have asked young Abraham Lincoln during the time he was practicing law in Beardstown, and why. High School students are to explain their rationale for a question they would

have asked President Abraham Lincoln. Adults are to discuss the advice they would have asked of Abraham Lincoln during his presidency.

Each essay should consist of three paragraphs and be orig-

inal work. Essays will be judged on content, organization, originality, grammar and punctuation.

Completed essays must be submitted online to annchelette@gmail.com or given to the school principal by 3:00 p.m., Friday, March 16, 2012.

Winners will be honored and their essays read at a reception in the Lincoln Courtroom on Friday, April 13, 2012. This reception will again be televised on cable TV.

Essays have consistently been excellent, and family and community members present have expressed their pride in our young authors.

Commissioners

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Dale Robertson, Vice Chair – 217-323-3344
Connie Foley, Secretary – 217-323-5205
Ann Chelette, Treasurer – 217-323-2559
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