

27TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON ILLINOIS HISTORY



THURSDAY & FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2-3

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library
112 North Sixth Street
Springfield, IL 62701

PRESENTED BY THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY & MUSEUM

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON ILLINOIS HISTORY 2025

AGENDA AT A GLANCE

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2025

7:30 – 9:00	Registration and Breakfast
9:00 – 9:45	Plenary Session
10:00 – 11:30	Session 1, Concurrent
12:00 – 1:30	Lunch Presentation “1976 – 2026: Looking Back to Look Ahead – The Future of the Humanities in Illinois”
2:00 – 3:30	Session 2, Concurrent
3:45 – 5:15	Session 3, Concurrent
5:30 – 6:00	*NEW* Mini Sessions, Concurrent
6:00 – 9:00	History Trivia Night and Dinner at the Museum

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2025

7:30 – 8:30	Breakfast
8:30 – 10:00	Session 4, Concurrent
10:15 – 11:45	Session 5, Concurrent
12:00 – 1:30	Lunch Presentation “Mourning in America: The Assassinations of Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, and William McKinley”
2:00 – 3:30	Session 6, Concurrent
3:30 – 4:30	Closing Networking Gathering

LUNCH PRESENTATION

Thursday, October 2



GABRIELLE H. LYON, PHD

"1976-2026: Looking Back to Look Ahead – The Future of the Humanities in Illinois"

In 1976, Illinois marked America's Bicentennial. Now, 50 years later, we prepare to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. But this time, we do so as federal public funding for history, culture, the arts, and research is being deeply eroded.

What might Illinois' humanities landscape from 1976 illuminate about today—and tomorrow?

Join Gabrielle H. Lyon, PhD—Executive Director of Illinois Humanities and Chair of the Illinois America 250 Commission—for a thought-provoking lunchtime talk exploring the past, present, and future of the humanities in Illinois.

LUNCH PRESENTATION

Friday, October 3



LOUIS L. PICONE

"Mourning in America: The Assassinations of Abraham Lincoln, James Garfield, and William McKinley"

"No one would wish to hurt me." – William McKinley, September 6, 1901, hours before he was assassinated.

Political assassinations were once believed to be a foreign scourge, but not a concern in America, where the political process provides means to remove the head of state. But within a span of 36 years, three American presidents were murdered: Abraham Lincoln (1865), James Garfield (1881), and William McKinley (1901).

Join presidential historian Louis L. Picone as he explores presidential assassinations. Learn about the circumstances of each presidential assassination, the motives of their killers, the story of the presidents' final days and hours, the depth of public mourning, and their impact on American history.

The presentation will include:

- "Sic semper tyrannis! The South is avenged!" John Wilkes Booth shot 16th President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theatre on April 14, 1865. Lincoln died the following morning.
- "I didn't kill him, the doctors did." On July 2, 1881, Charles Guiteau shot 20th President James Garfield in a train station in Washington, DC. After two and a half months of suffering, Garfield died on September 19.
- "I am not sorry for my crime." On September 6, 1901, Leon Czolgosz shot 25th President William McKinley at the Pan-Am Exposition in Buffalo. McKinley died eight days later.

A book signing with the author will be held 15 minutes after the presentation in the lobby of the ALPLM Library. Copies of Mr. Picone's book will be available for purchase at the book signing.

SESSION 1

Thursday, October 2, 10:00 – 11:30

ILLINOIS AT 249/ AMERICA 250: A REVIEW OF INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Moderator: Debra Dudek – ISHS Board

Panelists: Christina Shutt – ALPLM

Michelle Donahoe – DeKalb County History Center

Liz Klise – Peoria Historical Society

PUBLIC DINING AS PUBLIC HISTORY IN THE LATE 19TH TO EARLY 20TH CENTURY CHICAGO

Panelists: Bruce Kraig and Ellie Carlson

UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Panelists: Chad Boehlke: *"Runaway from the Subscriber..." Waverly's Involvement with the Reeds*

Laura Keyes: *Finding Lucy Pettengill Amid the Archives*

Frank Kalisik: *Ichabod Codding and the 'Political Gospel' of Radical Republicans*

PRESERVATION CHALLENGES AND HIDDEN HERITAGE: EXPLORATIONS OF ROUTE 66 AND ROCK RIVER FARMS

Panelists: Laura Shih, Casey Weeks and Anastasia Ervin

SESSION 2

Thursday, October 2, 2:00 – 3:30

WHITE SUPREMACY AND RACIAL DISCRIMINATION IN ILLINOIS HISTORY

Moderator: Mark W. Sorensen – ISHS Board

Panelists: Darrel Dexter – Independent Scholar and Retired Teacher

Caroline Kiesel – DePaul University

Alonzo Ward – Eastern Illinois University

Bill Kemp – McLean County Museum of History

EDUCATION

Panelists: Thomas Suhrbur: *Issues Confronting Illinois Public Education: Taxation, Racism, Privatization, Religion, Gender and Unionism, 1825-2025*

David Veenstra: *The Future of Hometown Universities: Challenges Facing Small Liberal Arts Institutions in Illinois and Teaching Illinois: Challenges and Opportunities in the Undergraduate History Curriculum*

SPURRING THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT: A TRANSATLANTIC RADICAL AND ABOLITIONISTS IN 19TH CENTURY ILLINOIS

Moderator: Stewart Winger

Panelists: Graham Peck: *Morris Birkbeck and the Making of an Antislavery Freedom*

Jeanne McDonald: *Oppressors of Their Species Perceive That Their Craft Is In Danger*

SOIL & SOUL: FARMING IN THE SANGAMON RIVER VALLEY

Moderator: Anne Moseley – Sangamon Experience

Panelists: Bill Harmon, Tom Martin and Garry Niemeyer

SESSION 3

Thursday, October 2, 3:45 – 5:15

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS: ON DOCUMENTING PROTESTS IN CHICAGO

Panelists: Keith Yearman, Jack Siegel, Vicki Oddino and Chris Turley

ANDY AURORA: HOW A CITY MASCOT INFLUENCES IDENTITY

Panelists: Fatima Hernandez-Trinidad, Salma Frausto, Mariana Villagomez and Noor Singh

EDUCATION: LOOKING FOR LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS

Panelists: Sarah Watson, Heather Feezor and Steven Varble

THE COMMUNITY OF SPRINGFIELD

Panelists: Mike Kienzler: *The Springfield Survey, 1914*

Abby Troxell: *The Lasting Impact of the 1908 Springfield Race Riot*

MINI SESSIONS

Thursday, October 2, 5:30 – 6:00

Grace Mary Perez: **1870 Illinois Constitutional Convention: Women's Suffrage**

Milton Nelson: **Illinois at Christmas: Two Artists and Two Poets**

Nanci Gasiel: **Doughnuts in the Trenches: Illinois Salvationists and World War I**

Mark Motsinger: **Ancient Fortifications: The Stone Fort Tradition of the Lower Ohio Valley**

SESSION 4

Friday, October 3, 8:30 – 10:00

200 YEARS OF EDUCATING ILLINOIS: ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE MUSEUMS, SITES, AND HISTORIES

Moderator: Will Shannon – ISHS Board President, St. Clair County Historical Society

Panelists: Bonnie Laughlin-Schultz – Eastern Illinois University

Jenn Parsons – Independent Scholar, Sycamore

Erin Pults – Princeville Heritage Museum

REDISTRICTING IN ILLINOIS

Moderator: Mark DePue

Panelists: Senator (retired) John Cullerton (D) – Senate President from 2009 – 2020

Senator Steve McClure (R) – 2019 to present

Kent Redfield – career journalist and Professor Emeritus, Department of Political Science, UIS

THE BLACK SPRINGFIELD, 1900 – 1910 PROJECT

Moderator: Jacob Friefeld

Panelists: Brian Mitchell, Devin Hunter and Anna Newby

THE GAMES WE PLAY: HOW SPORTS HISTORY INFORMS SOCIAL HISTORY

Moderator: Robert Sampson

Panelists: Eric Berg and Paul Spyhalski

SESSION 5

Friday, October 3, 10:15 – 11:45

AFRICAN AMERICANS AND CIVIL RIGHTS IN 20TH CENTURY ILLINOIS

Panelists: Caleb Bolha: *Devoted to the Cause: Earl Conrad's Lifelong Commitment to Civil Rights Activism*
Renatto Carr: *The 1943 "Lynching" of Hollie Willis in Fulton County, Illinois: The Challenge of Definition*
Mary Frances: *Doc Helm's Images of Illinois 1940's – 1960's*

ILLINOIS SOLDIERS

Panelists: Rachael Mellen: *The Civil War Letters of William J. Kennedy of LaSalle, 1861-1863: How a Personal Account Can Link the Student to Authentic Understanding of the War Experience*
Brian Conroy: *Jesse Hawkins – "A Forgotten Illinois Resident to Remember"*
Sam Ayers: *Drawings, Sketches, and Letters: The Civil War Experience of First Sergeant Thomas Doge Colvin*

EDUCATION: TEACHING JANE ADDAMS IN MANY CONTEXTS

Panelist: Kristin Lems

CELEBRATING SPRINGFIELD'S PUBLIC RADIO STATION: 50 YEARS OF NPR ILLINOIS

Moderator: Anne Moseley – Sangamon Experience

Panelists: Evie Rodenbaugh, Randy Eccles, Karl Scroggin and Tara McClellan McAndrew

SESSION 6

Friday, October 3, 2:00 – 3:30

NAVIGATING INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVES: UNDERSTANDING IMMIGRATION IN ILLINOIS

Moderator: Greg Koos – ISHS Board, McLean County Museum of History

Panelists: Diego Bonesatti – Michigan United/Immigration Advocate
Pete Stehman – Museum Manager, Collinsville Historical Museum
Norma Asadorian – Madison County Historical Society
Joann Condellone – Mount Olive Mother Jones Museum

EDUCATION: CLASSROOM RESOURCES FROM THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Panelist: Heather Feezor

GETTING YOUR KICKS ON ROUTE 66: ORAL HISTORIES OF THE MOTHER ROAD

Moderator: Erika Holst

Panelists: Gabriella Antonacci and Amanda Bryden

THE LINCOLNS

Panelists: Stewart Winger: *Lincoln and the Wealth Tax*
Pam Brown: *Mary Lincoln's Sanity*