



History of the Edwards Trace at Rock Springs Center

The history of one of the earliest and most important roads in Illinois will be the subject of a March 6 program at Rock Springs in Decatur. David Brady, a local historian associated with Prairie Archives Bookstore in Springfield, will give a presentation on the Edwards Trace at 2:00 in the Visitor's Center Auditorium, 3939 Nearing Lane, an event co-sponsored by Richland Community College.

An historical marker in Sangamon County describes the history and significance of the trail: "Called the Edwards Trace, an early word for trail, its use reaches back to antiquity when herds of bison and other large mammals traveled along its path. For millennia, prehistoric people utilized the trail for seasonal migrations, trading, hunting, and waging war. As early as 1711, French priests and trappers began traveling along its path. This overland route offered an alternative to the waterways.

"From Kaskaskia in the south, the trace passed up through Cahokia and the Edwardsville area and by this point on its way to the Illinois River near present-day Peoria. During the War of 1812, Territorial Governor Ninian Edwards, who later became the state's third governor, led a contingent of 350 rangers to Peoria along its pathway for action against the Kickapoo. As a result, it became known as the Edwards Trace.

"For early Illinois inhabitants, this was the main land route between southern Illinois and points north. Along its course came many of the pioneers who settled the Sangamon Valley. After Illinois became a state in 1818, this road carried heavy traffic north and south, including a variety of goods and commodities" www.historyillinois.org.

For more information on the March 6 program, call 217-423-7708. ♦

2005 Illinois Authors Literary Weekend Celebration

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White welcomes all to celebrate our state's diverse literary heritage at the 2005 Illinois Authors Literary Weekend celebration. This year's event takes place March 4-5 at the Illinois State Library, Gwendolyn Brooks Building, 300 South Second Street in downtown Springfield.

Festivities will commence at 6:00 p.m. on the evening of the 4th with a formal dinner to honor our Illinois authors. The gala evening (black tie optional) will feature cocktails, dinner and a keynote address, a silent auction, and a raffle. Proceeds from the evening will benefit the activities of the Illinois Center for the Book, an affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The mission of the Illinois Center for the Book, a non-profit organization, is "to celebrate the printed word and to create an environment that promotes reading, the literary arts and appreciation of the state's rich literary heritage." A private reception for sponsors will be held at 5:30 p.m.

On Saturday March 5, the Illinois Authors Book Fair will take place at the Illinois State Library, starting at 10:00 a.m. The Book Fair is a family-friendly event that celebrates the literary talents and accomplishments of Illinois authors. More than 30 Illinois authors representing a variety of genres will meet with young and old alike to sign books, take part in workshops, panel discussions and book readings. Acclaimed professional storyteller Linda Gorham will give three performances, and the popular children's area will host a variety of fun activities for the kids. An on-site bookstore will be available for those wanting to purchase books written by our participating authors.

For more information about the 2005 Illinois Authors Literary Weekend celebration, including details about sponsorships and tickets for the Friday evening dinner, please contact Bonnie Matheis at 217-558-2065 or bmatheis@ilsos.net. ♦

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