



# NEWS from the *David Davis Mansion Foundation*

Spring 2023



Visit us online!

## *2023 Glorious Garden Festival*

Friday, July 14 and Saturday, July 15



Mark your calendars for the 2023 Glorious Garden Festival! Events are planned for gardeners and garden lovers, with special activities for the kids. All events run from 1-7 pm on Friday and 9am-3pm on Saturday.

Tickets are required for the Festival's **Garden Walk** of 10 gorgeous private gardens in prime mid-July bloom. No tickets are required for children 12 and under. Kids and adults alike will enjoy the **Scavenger Hunt** at each garden.

Admission is free for fun events at the mansion:

- The **Garden Fair** returns to the lawn with live music and 30+ local artists, craftspeople, and businesses selling garden-inspired art, plants and treasures, with refreshments available for purchase.
- Bring the kids to experience the **Story Walk** in Sarah's Garden, and community partner tables with **Art and Garden-Related Activities**.
- Enjoy **Free Guided Tours** of Sarah Davis' heirloom garden and the David Davis Mansion, both celebrating over 150 years of history.
- Shop the **Clover Lawn Museum Shop** at the Mansion for choice gifts, garden art, books, and Sarah's Garden heirloom seeds. Also available: Our beautiful sesquicentennial book, **The David Davis Mansion, 1872-2022: 150 Years at Clover Lawn**.

Advance ticket sales for the Garden Walk open June 15 and close at noon on Thursday July 13 at AB Hatchery & Garden Center, Casey's Garden Shop & Florist, Crossroads Fair Trade Goods and Gifts, The Garlic Press, Growing Grounds Lawn & Garden

Center, Wendell Niepagen Greenhouses & Garden Center and online at

<https://daviddavismansion.org/garden-walk-tickets>

Advance tickets are \$18 for adults, \$10 for kids 13-17 and free for children 12 and under. David Davis Mansion Foundation members receive a 20% discount for up to 2 tickets purchased in advance by contacting [programming@daviddavismansion.org](mailto:programming@daviddavismansion.org).

On the days of the event, tickets are \$20 at the ticket booth on the mansion lawn during event hours.

The Glorious Garden Festival is a fundraiser for the David Davis Mansion Foundation which supports the mansion's educational programming and preservation initiatives. For more information about what this event funds, please click [HERE](#). We appreciate your contribution!

### **Thank You Volunteers, Sponsors, and Advertisers!**

The Glorious Garden Festival's success hinges on the hard work of volunteers serving on the committee and welcoming visitors at the private gardens during the event.

Join us in thanking and utilizing services from the local businesses who support the event. Each are featured in the Garden Resource Guide given to ticket holders. Special appreciation goes to:

#### **Corporate Sponsors:**

- AB Hatchery & Garden Center
- Casey's Garden Shop & Florist
- Crossroads Fair Trade Goods and Gifts
- Green View Companies
- Growing Grounds Lawn & Garden Center & Florist
- Illinois Farm Bureau
- Serenity Creek Design and Landscaping
- Wendell Niepagen Greenhouses and Garden Center
- Zimmerman and Armstrong Investment Advisors

#### **Supporting Sponsors:**

- Busey
- Chizmar Landscaping

*Sponsorships and advertising for this event are still coming in! Please see our website and Facebook page for updates.*



## Mark Your Calendars

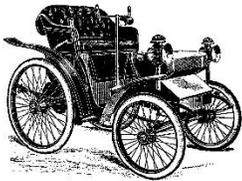
Check our website calendar [HERE](#) and our Facebook page [HERE](#) for details on these and other events.

### Upcoming Events at the David Davis Mansion

May 6	Book Talk: <i>Thousand-Year Statehouse</i> by David L. Finnigan*
May 13	Member and Volunteer Event: Behind the Scenes Tour*
June 3	Member and Volunteer Event: Sarah's Garden Tour*
June 4	Champagne British Car Show
June 17	A Saturday Stroll in Sarah's Garden
July 14-15	Glorious Garden Festival
August 5	Antique Auto Show
August 26	Children's Gardening Program*
August 29	Member and Volunteer Event: Gilded Age Mansion Tour*
September 9	Cruise-In at the Mansion

\* Advanced registration required.

## Summer Auto Shows: They're Back!



Summer is coming and before you know it we'll be axle-deep in car shows! First up is the **British Car Festival**, a fan favorite, on June 4<sup>th</sup>. See MGs, Triumphs, and Jaguars of course...but also Aston

Martins, Mini Coopers, and every once in a great moon we'll see a Rolls Royce or a Bentley on the mansion grounds. Next up on August 5<sup>th</sup>, we have the granddaddy of them all, the **Antique Auto Show**. In its 25th year, this show began as a way to show young people that you could work on cars without having a degree in mechanics. Come view the cars your grandpa drove and ask a lot of questions, because these guys love to talk about all the work they've done. Finally, we'll wrap up on September 9<sup>th</sup> with the **Cruise-In at the Mansion**. If you don't know what car you really like, show up and you'll figure it out. This show has everything from Model Ts to brand new Corvettes and Teslas. We have something for everyone! Mansion tours and picnic foods will be available at all events. Come see us this summer!

### Have You Visited Our New Website?

The current David Davis Mansion website, designed by Cybernautic, launched in January of 2022 is now over a year old! Have you checked it out? It's filled with beautiful photography and a wonderful updated design!

Please head [HERE](#) to explore!

## Special Edition E-Book

Do you like reading your books on an electronic device such as your phone, tablet, or laptop? We are pleased to announce that our 150th anniversary book, *The David Davis Mansion, 1872-2022: 150 Years at Clover Lawn* by Dr. Marcia Young, will soon be available in an electronic version! This e-book format will be available for sale through Amazon for \$ 9.99.

The print copy containing gorgeous contemporary and historic photographs remains available in our gift shop and online store at <https://clover-lawn-museum-shop.square.site/>

Please follow our website and Facebook page for upcoming news on electronic version availability. All proceeds from book sales benefit the David Davis Mansion Foundation.

## State of the Mansion

**By: Dave Oloffson, President - David Davis Mansion Foundation Board of Directors**

Spring has sprung at the David Davis Mansion, and as you can see by this newsletter there are plenty of opportunities and reasons to pay a visit. Whether you're attending one of our special events, have an interest in strolling through Sarah's Garden in all its glory, or you're just out for a weekend drive, we do hope you find your way to one of our area's true gems.

Over 150 years of history, stories and memories greet you at the front gate as you take a step back in time and ponder how the Davis family spent their days, and how the mansion was, and still is, a prominent feature of the ever-changing landscape of our community.

Also note that the preservation of this great historical attraction and the Davis family legacy does not just happen. A countless number of [staff members](#), [board members](#), volunteers, and supporters work hard every day to maintain the mansion in all its glory.

Please take a moment and click on the above links and send a note of gratitude to our staff, or let us know what the favorite part of your tour was. And consider [becoming a member](#) to discover new ways to support our efforts and earn yourself exclusive benefits. Either way we'd love to hear from you!

## *Voices from the Past: The Prairie Bird Wins the Silver Trumpet!*

**By: DDMF Researcher Pat Schley**



One of the high points of every 4<sup>th</sup> of July in mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Illinois was the statewide competition between fire departments from various towns. Usually held in Joliet or Ottawa, it did occasionally move to a different town. The Bloomington engine, Prairie Bird No. 1 usually won one of the 3 silver trumpets. These were awarded to the engines which shot a stream of water the farthest distance. The Prairie Fire Bird 1, is pictured at left (photo courtesy of the McLean Co. Museum of History). This photo is dated both 1856 and 1865 on the back.

David Davis and his son, 18-year-old George Perrin Davis enthusiastically followed these tournaments:

*There is nothing new in town – except that Fire Engine no 1 – took Silver Trumpet at Joliet – Great rejoicings thereat - Bloomington IL, July 6, 1860 (ALPL) DD-GPD*

The gentleman in the photo, at the left, leaning on the engine, is holding a silver trumpet! The Joliet *True Democrat* published this account of the event:

*Prairie Bird, No 1 ... of Bloomington, ended the programme, ... [and] threw a stream 73 ½ feet beyond any other ... taking the first Trumpet... After the Presentation [of the 3 trumpets] three hearty cheers were given, and the Bloomington boys departed.”*

The fire brigades had celebrations afterward which often included quite a bit of alcohol and, as a result, some rowdy behavior. The Bloomington fire brigade, however, were models of good comportment, at least in 1860:

*We must give the firemen credit for the good example they set. We saw many men reeling through the streets, but not one “red shirt” [part of the Bloomington firemen’s uniform] among them. The Pantagraph, Bloomington, Illinois, Wed, Jul 18, 1860, p.1.*

A good time was had by all!

## *Upcoming Events for Members and Volunteers*

A special **Sarah’s Garden Tour** will be given by master gardeners and Sarah’s Garden volunteers on Saturday, June 3 from 9-11am. You can register online by clicking [HERE](#). *Advanced registration is required and must be received by Wednesday, May 31st.*

A private **Gilded Age Mansion Tour**, given by Dr. Marcia Young, will be open for registration in August! A separate email will go out in mid-summer to sign up!

**We hope you will join us for these upcoming events, which we are pleased to offer to show our appreciation for all you do. Thank you for your generosity and service to the David Davis Mansion Foundation!**



## *New in the Clover Lawn Museum Shop: Online!*

You can now purchase your favorite mansion-related books and keepsakes without leaving the comfort of your own home! Our gift shop, which you can access [HERE](#), now contains seven different books, postcard packs, bookmarks, magnets, keychains, and Christmas ornaments! You can ship your purchase to any domestic location, or pick it up from the mansion visitor’s center during our regular operating hours.

## In the History Books

- So far, the David Davis Mansion has seen quite a few **field trips** in 2023! Here's a list of who has come to visit us:

February 8: Cornerstone Christian Academy (K-8)  
March 1: Glenn Elementary School (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
March 16: Bloomington Area Career Center  
March 22: Bloomington High School (Interior Design class)  
April 18: Fox Creek Elementary School (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
May 9: Oakland Elementary School (3<sup>rd</sup> grade)  
May 16: Washington Elementary School (5<sup>th</sup> grade)



- **Mr. Lincoln's Birthday Celebration** was held on

Saturday, February 11. Families enjoyed interacting with Mr. Lincoln (portrayed by the fantastic Randy Duncan) and having their photos with him, as well as enjoying birthday cake and Lincoln-themed art activities in the visitor's center. More images from this event can be found [HERE!](#)



- We welcomed approximately 100 families to the mansion for our annual **Spring Festival and Egg Hunt** on Saturday, April 1! This event is normally held on the mansion lawn, but the weather was extremely cold and windy, so we moved the entire event inside! Kids had an opportunity to choose a handful of their favorite candy, have their photo taken with the Easter Bunny, hear a Spring story, and shop for fun Spring merchandise in our gift shop. It was not what we had intended, but everyone still had an amazing time!



- The students from the Bloomington Area Career Center who attended the 3/16 field trip, with the assistance of their teacher Jeff Frantz, built a **new trellis** for Sarah's Garden using the old trellis as a template. It has now been installed in the garden and can be viewed on your next visit!



- Dr. Marcia Young presented "**Secrets of the David Davis Mansion**" to approximately 60 people as part of Illinois State University's Mornings with the Professors lecture series for Senior Professionals on Friday, April 28 from 9:30-11:30am. A table featuring several copies of *The David Davis Mansion, 1872-2022: 150 Years at Clover Lawn* was available for attendees to browse through and purchase, if interested. Are you ready to purchase your sesquicentennial book? Find it in our online store [HERE](#).

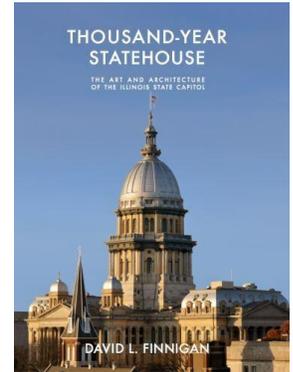


- Our **Behind the Scenes Tour**, which took place on Saturday, April 15 was sold out! 20 visitors enjoyed seeing areas of the mansion, learning new information, and hearing special stories that are not part of a standard daily tour. We are excited to offer this tour to our members and volunteers on Saturday, May 13!

## Capitol Book Author at the Mansion

Springfield, IL author and architectural designer David L. Finnigan gave a presentation on the *Iconography of the Capitol* and signed copies of his book at the mansion on Saturday, May 6th from 4 to 6pm. Entitled ***Thousand-Year Statehouse: The Art and Architecture of the Illinois State Capitol***, Finnigan's book is a magnificent photo tour through the historic rooms of this unique building in central Illinois, designed by French architect Alfred H. Piquenard, who was also the architect of the David Davis Mansion.

Over 150 full-page color photographs, supplemented with archival photos, show the story of this monument, its sculptures and paintings, and the architects and artisans who labored to complete the New State Capitol in the 1870s to 1880s. Original research into Springfield newspapers and the State Archives has resurrected long-forgotten stories about the people who worked in and around the Capitol, and its presence as a social center in late-19th and early-20th century Springfield.

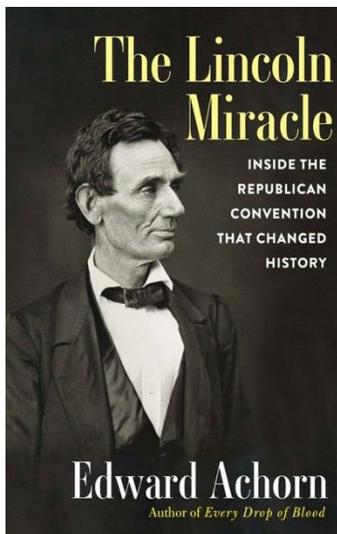


Find out more about the book at <https://www.illinoishistory.org/>.

**About the Author:** David L. Finnigan is a member of the American Institute of Architects. He currently works at Graham and Hyde Architects, Springfield. He has previously worked for FWAI Architects and Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. Finnigan earned his Master of Architecture degree at Southern Illinois University Carbondale in 2019.



## Looking Ahead



Join us at the mansion for an evening with Edward Achorn, author of ***The Lincoln Miracle*** on Wednesday, October 25! Here is an excerpt about the book from a review in The Grove Atlantic:

*Illinois lawyer Abraham Lincoln had a record of political failure. In 1858, he had lost a celebrated Senate bid against incumbent Stephen Douglas, his second failed Senate run, and had not held public office since one term in Congress a decade earlier. As the Republican National Convention opened in mid-May 1860 in Chicago, powerful New York Senator William Seward was the overwhelming favorite for the presidential nomination, with notables like Salmon Chase and Edward Bates in the running. Few thought Lincoln stood a chance—though stubborn Illinois circuit Judge David Davis had come to fight for his friend anyway.*

*Such was the political landscape as Edward Achorn's **The Lincoln Miracle** opens on Saturday, May 12, 1860. Chronicling the tense political drama as it unfolded over the next six days, Achorn explores the genius of Lincoln's quiet strategy, the vicious partisanship tearing apart America, the fierce battles raging over racism and slavery, and booming Chicago as a symbol of the modernization transforming the nation. Closely following the shrewd insiders on hand, from Seward power broker Thurlow Weed to editor Horace Greeley - bent on stopping his former friend, Seward - Achorn brings alive arguably the most consequential political story in America's history.*

*From smoky hotel rooms to night marches by the Wide Awakes, the new Republican youth organization, to fiery speeches on the floor of the giant convention center called The Wigwam, Achorn portrays a political climate way more contentious than our own today, out of which the seemingly impossible long shot prevailed, to the nation's everlasting benefit. As atmospheric and original as Achorn's previous **Every Drop of Blood**, **The Lincoln Miracle** is essential reading for any Lincoln aficionado as it is for anyone who cares about our nation's history.*

Advanced registration will be provided as we get closer to the event!

## *It's About our People*

### **Membership and Donations**

It's YOU we love! YOU – our members – are the ones who make what we do possible here at the mansion, and this year there are more special events, activities, and school programs than ever before. We are so excited, and we thank you for that, because it's your membership dues, special gifts, and extra donations that make it all happen.

Please click [HERE](#) to update or increase your membership or [HERE](#) to make a special gift to help us celebrate our 151<sup>st</sup> anniversary! We hope you will enjoy the convenience of handling your membership and donations online.

You can, of course, still mail a check to us if you prefer. To receive a membership envelope, email [director.ddavismansionfoundation@yahoo.com](mailto:director.ddavismansionfoundation@yahoo.com) or call and leave a message anytime at (309) 828-1084.

Remember, your membership comes with these benefits:

- 20% discount on most purchases in the gift shop
- Invitations to members-only events
- Early registration/discounts on special programs

It also gives you a piece of history by helping to protect this gem on the prairie!

### **Come On In!**

Please help us warmly welcome new foundation members Shawn Slagel of Normal, and Joseph Gibson of Bloomington, who both recently joined the Foundation.

### **Those We Are Missing**

Sadly, we note the losses of long-time members William Miller, Paul Pulokas, and Wally Yoder. We offer humble thanks for these lives shared with us.

### **Computer/Software Grant**

We want to express our very sincere gratitude to a very generous donor. Thanks to this sizeable grant, we will be replacing computers, some outdated software, and at least one printer in our offices very soon.

**Davis Mansion Foundation**  
a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization  
**President: Dave Oloffson**  
**Executive Director: Sheri Brownfield**  
**Program Coordinator: Adrienne Huffman**



## *The La Reine Rose: Sarah Davis Would Be Proud*

**By: Ellen Culver, Master Gardener**



Master Gardeners and community volunteers strive to preserve the 1872 Sarah's Garden. They often ponder what Sarah Davis would have thought about today's effort to maintain her garden and its original plants as well as the success of reintroducing some of her favorites. In

2018, our gardeners replaced 3 struggling roses with another hybrid perpetual rose named La Reine, purchased from [heritageroses.com](http://heritageroses.com). Selected for its form and 1842 introduction, the beautiful silvery pink bloom has a fragrant "old rose" scent and is doing well in Sarah's Garden.

Coincidence? Plan? Our gardeners recently discovered that Sarah Davis grew a La Reine rose in one of her early gardens. This June 12, 1857 letter from Sarah Davis to her elder brother George Walker provides the link:

*Then I called with Mrs Ja's Miller on a niece of hers and we all went to Mr Phenix's Nursery to see his tulips which were beautiful beyond description. Vegetation looks bright now—my yellow roses will open soon. I think in a day or two--- LaReine has a noble bud.*

Continued thanks to DDMF Researcher Pat Schley for compiling a document of letters detailing Sarah Davis's love of plants and gardens. Perhaps she has left other clues in her letters waiting to be discovered by her modern gardeners.

Stop by and enjoy Sarah's Garden during mansion events, at the end of house tours, and most Tuesday through Friday mornings mid-April through October when the gardeners are working.

**1000 Monroe Drive**  
**Bloomington, Illinois 61701**  
**Phone: (309) 828-1084**  
[davismansion@yahoo.com](mailto:davismansion@yahoo.com)  
[daviddavismansion.org](http://daviddavismansion.org)

*Hours: Wednesday - Saturday: 9am - 4pm*

*I do the very best I know how—the very best I can; and I mean to keep on doing so until the end. – Abraham Lincoln*