



EVERGREEN CEMETERY WALK

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Bringing Local History to Life

SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS
SEPTEMBER 30 & OCTOBER 1, 7, 8
2023

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Our partnership with the McLean County Museum of History
and Illinois Voices Theatre Echoes continues
with our commitment to the Evergreen Cemetery Walk.

We are grateful for the many individuals and organizations
that put in so much time and effort to make this historical
walk a success.

We would like to say Thank You to everyone who has been out
to take a walk back in time and educate themselves on our
local history.

302 E. Miller St.
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www.evergreenmemorialcemetery.com



McLean County Museum Of History Presents

EVERGREEN
CEMETERY WALK
XXIX

Public Tours:
September 30 - October 1 and October 7-8, 2023

School Tours:
October 3-5, 2023

Sponsored by:



Linda Garbe

**Deanna Frautschi
& Alan Bedell**





YOUR COMMUNITY OUR HISTORY

Over the course of almost 30 years, the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* has provided a unique and invaluable educational experience for students and adults alike. Working with Illinois Voices Theatre and Evergreen Memorial Cemetery (partners since the *Walk's* inception in 1995), and our new partner Broadleaf Media (who produces the *Virtual Walk*) this event has extended its reach even further, helping people who are limited by mobility or geography experience this nationally recognized, award-winning event.

The *Walk* has helped participants develop an understanding, appreciation, and respect for cemeteries as a source of history. This event has helped curb cemetery vandalism exponentially, not just at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, but at cemeteries around the region. The *Walk* has also helped members of our community understand the significant roles individuals from our past have played in local, state, national, and international history by exposing them to the educational benefit of acting and the arts, which brings our history to light and to life. That is the power and impact of this event.

Special thanks to our event partners: Dave Krostal, Susan Thetard, and Illinois Voices Theatre—Echoes, and the staff and trustees of Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, without whom this event would not be possible. We thank Kathe Conley and John Capasso for their research, interpretation, and creation of the guide scripts; Leisa Barbour for assistance with the teacher and student packets; Micaela Harris for graphic design; Nancy Hoover for playbill design; John Capasso, Madeline DeCosta, Genevieve Fritz, and Maria Mears for additional research and writing of biographies; and the entire staff and volunteers of the McLean County Museum of History. We are also extremely grateful for our grocery and restaurant donors who keep our volunteers and actors happy and well fed. And, of course, for our fabulous and fearless *Cemetery Walk* volunteers and interns. This event would be impossible without you!

Finally, we thank you—our community—for your continued support and participation (whether in-person or online)! No one expected this event would have the impact it has on our community and our shared appreciation for the historic value and creative potential of cemeteries. This event is a piece of history in its own right, and we hope that it continues for many more years to come.

Evergreen Cemetery Walk Coordinators
Candace Summers, Emily McCusker, and Eric Hansen



McLean County
MUSEUM of HISTORY

*We proudly present the Annual Evergreen Cemetery Walk,
one of over 300 programs the Museum hosts a year.*

MUSEUM MEMBERS MAKE *this* POSSIBLE

Sustained support from our members ensures the Museum can meet our mission. To say thank you, we are celebrating them all month long in November with:

- Exclusive activities and a special surprise gift
- Access to the Merwin Gallery before it opens to the public
- 20% discount in our Cruisin' with Lincoln on 66 Visitors Center & Gift Shop, as well as at the Children's Discovery Museum Store and the Miller Park Zoo's Gift Shop

Not a member yet? Join today to enjoy these perks! PLUS, new or lapsed members who join in the month of November will receive 14-months for the price of a regular 12-month membership.

PLEASE VISIT MCHISTORY.ORG TO LEARN MORE

The McLean County Museum of History is a nationally accredited museum in the heart of historic downtown Bloomington on the Museum Square. With five permanent exhibits, rotating displays and installations, an interactive children's discovery room, a one-of-a-kind library, and four accessible floors of exquisite architecture, there's something for everyone to discover at the Museum! We're open six days a week, Monday-Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and open late and offer free admission on Tuesdays until 8 p.m. Bring this playbill in with you on your next visit to receive free admission for up to four people.

For more information on upcoming programs,
scan the QR code

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Thank You

These patrons ensure local students and older adults living in senior care centers will continue to benefit from this valuable educational experience.

GIFTS RECEIVED AS OF SEPTEMBER 5, 2023

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Leisa Barbour	Jill Hutchison	Gerry and Donna Schroeder
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LIVE & LOCAL



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CHARACTER & ACTOR BIOS



Paul Rhymer (1905-1964) a Bloomington High School graduate, was considered one of the great writers of the 1930s “script” radio shows with his popular “Vic and Sade.”

The show drew 7 million listeners and was set in what was undeniably a fictionalized Bloomington. Prior to his radio days, Rhymer worked for the railroad, drove a cab, and was a reporter for the *Pantagraph* (where he was fired for fabricating stories). A practical joker, Rhymer was a private person despite his outgoing manner. He is visiting from Lexington Cemetery in honor of the recognition by the Bloomington Young Men’s Club for “Paul Rhymer Day” in 1938.

(Writer: Todd Wineburner)



John Jackson Mayes, Jr. (1851 -1918) known as J.J., was engaged in the photography business, and had a reputation of being an artist with a camera. Canadian born, Mayes moved to the United States in about

1868, and three years later witnessed the Great Chicago Fire. By 1877, Mayes had moved to Bloomington and established a photography business with Albert Bell, eventually venturing out on his own and even teaching photography for a short time at IWU. He later went into the business of training and breeding racehorses, raising them in a barn he leased on Bloomington’s west side. (Writer: John D. Poling)

John D. Poling (Paul Rhymer) This is Poling’s third time participating in the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. In 2015 he portrayed *Pantagraph* publisher William O. Davis, and in 2020 he



brought to life Bloomington entrepreneur Owen Lee Cheney. Poling has appeared in dozens of local productions over the years, most recently as “Pastor Paul” in *The Christians*. He has appeared in the films *The Little Vagabond* and *American Criminals*. Poling is also a director and a playwright, seeing some half-dozen of his short plays being produced.



Kevin Paul Wickart (J. J. Mayes) If Wick-

art looks familiar, it’s probably because this is his eighth *Cemetery Walk* appearance. He lives in Normal with his family and per-



forms with theatre companies from Peoria to Urbana. Wickart recently played “The Amazing Karnak” in the Station Theatre’s *Ride the Cyclone* and directed the hit play *She Kills Monsters* for Corn Stock Theatre. Other recent roles include “Antonio” in *The Tempest* (CUTC), “Nostradamus” in Eastlight’s *Something Rotten*, and “Cléante” in *Tartuffe* at Heartland Theatre.

CHARACTER & ACTOR BIOS



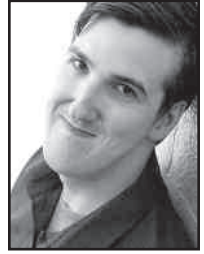
Samuel Noble (1834-1913) and Mary (Reed) King (1842-1928) were a force in the advancement of agriculture, and in the pursuit of educational and civic projects throughout Central



Illinois. S. Noble was considered a “pioneer” farmer, particularly in the development of crop rotation practices and use of fertilizers.

Mary (who had been an educator prior to her marriage) co-founded the McLean County Household Science Association, an organization that gave women educational opportunities to learn modern methods of household management. Upon his death, S. Noble deeded a generous part of his estate to underwrite the Jessamine Withers Home for Elderly Women, which was advanced by Mary with both her financial and personal involvement. (Writer: John Bowen)

Nathan Brandon Gaik (Samuel Noble King) studied acting at Illinois State University. He has been a Company member at Barn III Dinner Theatre in Goodfield since 2012. Most recently, he played “Ben” in Neil Simon’s *The Sunshine Boys* at Barn III this past summer. Aside from Barn III, Gaik has been in productions at Community Players Theater, Heartland Theatre Company, and New Route Theatre. Thanks to Patrick for his love and support.



Connie Blick (Mary King) is honored to be featured in the 2023 *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*, playing a part in keeping history alive. She was previously featured in the virtual *Cemetery Walk* as Emily Howard in 2020. Blick is an acting graduate from the School of Theatre and Dance at Illinois State University and has a strong presence in local community theatre, active on stage and off in productions at Heartland Theatre Company and Community Players Theatre. She is co-founder of Nomad Theatre Company, a site-specific theatre company that is quite literally “Theatre That Moves.”



CHARACTER & ACTOR BIOS



Frances Kessler (1887 – 1975) had a passion for music and education. Music was always an interest for her, and she credited her family for that life-long love and appreciation. Each of her immediate family members

played a musical instrument, with Kessler playing the piano. She received her teaching certificate from ISNU in 1907, a bachelors in music education from IWU, and a masters in music education from the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. She was among the first in the nation to teach music appreciation and to integrate radio in the classroom while teaching in Bloomington Public Schools.

Writer: Cristen Monson)

Nancy Nickerson (Frances Kessler) has appeared in productions at Heartland Theatre Company, Prairie Fire Theatre, Lincoln Community Theatre, Community



Players, and others. This will be her second *Cemetery Walk*; her first in 2018 as Jane Frankeberger Hendryx. Nickerson works part-time at Home Sweet Home Ministries and lives in Bloomington with her feline family.



Annie Ethel Jones (1899 – 1991) was a Black woman born and reared on a Mississippi farm, which her family owned. She married an older man and they moved to Bloomington in 1922 to be near one of

his daughters. Jones began working as a housekeeper but dreamed of becoming a doctor. Instead, she took a correspondence course to become an LPN, working first at St. Joseph's Hospital, then the McLean County Poor Farm working with older adults. Later, she also did private nursing for families in the community. An active community member, Jones was involved with the NAACP and her church, Wayman AME.

(Writer: Kathleen Kirk)

Darraugh Maxine (Annie Ethel Jones)

is honored to be performing in her first *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* after seeing it many times as a junior high student! Darraugh



is a graduate of Illinois Wesleyan University with a BFA in Acting. Previous credits include *Much Ado About Nothing*, *A Raisin in The Sun*, and *Crowns*. When not on stage, you can also find her making magic as a princess performer with A Royal Remembrance LLC. Thank you for coming today!

CHARACTER & DIRECTOR BIOS



Richard Blue (1842-1921)

was born in Ohio and came to Bloomington at age 9 with Judge Rayburn and his family. Blue joined the Union Army in 1865, serving as a musician in the 29th U.S. Colored

Infantry. After the Civil War, Blue worked as a janitor and door keeper for the Illinois General Assembly, was a barber in Bloomington, and was often a butler for large social events. He was heavily involved in community service and Black politics, including running for city alderman in Bloomington. Blue was also active in advancing Black literacy, helping start the Bloomington Literary and Protective Association.

(Writer: Cristen Monson)

Gregory D. Hicks

(Richard Blue) is happy to return to this year's *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*! You may remember him from his appearance in 2013 when he portrayed trades-

man and activist Henry L. Brown, or from the *Virtual Cemetery Walk* commercial in 2020! Olivia and Noah Hicks continue to be his reasons and his "why" for becoming his best self! He is represented by The Rock Talent Agency in Chicago.



Dave Krostal (Director) has performed in over 75 local productions including most recently *It's a Wonderful Life* at the Station Theatre, "Bar-dolph" in *Henry V* at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, "Norman" in *Table Manners* at Heartland Theatre, "George" in *Of Mice and Men* at Community Players Theater, "Paul Sheldon" in *Misery* at Peoria Players, and "Titus Savage" in *The Curious Savage* at Cornstock Theater.

Krostal has also acted and directed at the newly formed Nomad Theatre. He and his wife Cristen played circus performers Clyde and Emily Noble in the 2018 *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*, and he has also been a tour guide for the *Walk*. Krostal is a graduate of Illinois State University's Theater Education program and retired from teaching in 2016. This is his fourth year as director for the *Cemetery Walk*.



Susan Anhalt Thetard (Artistic Director and co-costumer) has produced the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* for six years after retiring from University High School. For 19 years she was blessed to teach English and Theatre to great students and produce over 50 shows. Thetard holds a BFA from IWU and an MFA in costume design from ISU; you may have seen her work at the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, Community Players, or Illinois Wesleyan University. Thetard thanks her husband, Jon, who helps far beyond moral support. Working with Candace, Dave, and the CW team has been a great way to “retire.”



Eric Hansen (Director of Volunteers), Candace Summers (Senior Director of Education), and Emily McCusker (Director of Youth & Family Education) are the lead Museum staff members responsible for the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*. Together, they bring a combined 20+ years of Museum experience with them to their planning of this signature event. With degrees in History, Archaeology, and Political Science, all three of them have a passion for our local history—one that they hope to instill in others through Museum programs like the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk*.

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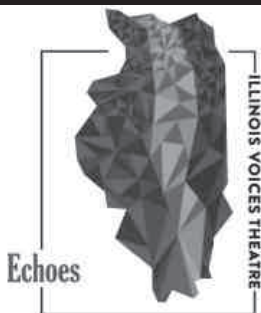


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Establishing a stage for **VOICES** of the community that have **GONE UNHEARD, been unspoken** or are *forgotten.*

Echoes is proud to produce the 29th Evergreen Cemetery Walk for the McLean County Museum of History. Thank you to everyone who has made it possible.

Follow ILVT/Echoes on Facebook or www.ilvoicestheatre.org

The Writers



CRISTEN MONSON wrote Frances Kessler and Richard Blue. Cristen works at ISU as the Theatre Department Academic Advisor and coordinates summer camps for The Illinois Shakespeare Festival. She has written and performed at the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* numerous times. She is co-founder of Nomad Theatre.



JOHN D. POLING wrote J.J. Mayes. This is John's first year as a *Cemetery Walk* writer, but he has performed in previous walks. Other plays of his have been produced locally. John teaches for Parkland College and is a social studies specialist for MetriTech Inc.



TODD WINEBURNER wrote Paul Rhymmer. Todd is a frequent writer for the *Evergreen Cemetery Walk* and appeared numerous times including as Jesse Fell and David Davis. Todd recently wrote and performed as Jesse Fell at the Normal Parks anniversary celebration of Fell Park. Todd works as a broadcaster in Bloomington.



KATHLEEN KIRK wrote Annie Ethel Jones. She is a frequent writer for the *Cemetery Walk* and the *History Makers Gala* and has appeared numerous times, most recently as Helen McCurdy. She works part time at the Normal Public Library, serves on the board at Heartland Theatre, and edits the online journal, *Escape Into Life*.



JOHN BOWEN wrote the King duet. This is his second years as a writer but has appeared in others. John is a writer, actor, husband and father. He's a regular in the local theatre scene and a co-host of the Next to Normal Story Slam.

Tech Team



L. Jane Thomley, Co-Costume/Props this is Jane's fifth year with the *Walk*. She retired from Thomas Metcalf School in 2014 after over 35 years teaching and directing and designing shows.



Grace Irvin, Production Assistant, returns for her fifth *Cemetery Walk*. Grace is involved in many theatres in town, especially ILVT Seedling Theatre. Grace is also a wedding coordinator with Palma Entertainment.

We would like to extend an extra special *Thank You* to our diligent and hard-working volunteers without whom we could not do this event!

Research and Writing Volunteers–2023

- Leisa Barbour • John Capasso • Ruth Cobb • Kathe Conley • Madeline DeCosta
- Mike DeVore • Denise Fries-Romack • Genevieve Fritz • Greg Koos • Carol Straka

Volunteer Tour Guides–2023

- John Capasso • Mike DeVore • Tom Eder • Denise Fries-Romack • Neil Gridley
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- Carolyn Yockey

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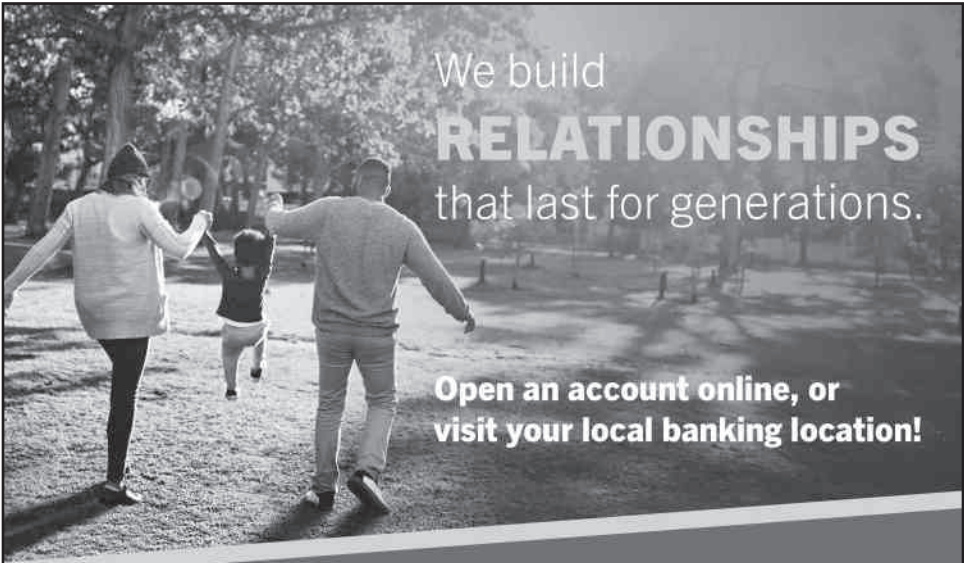
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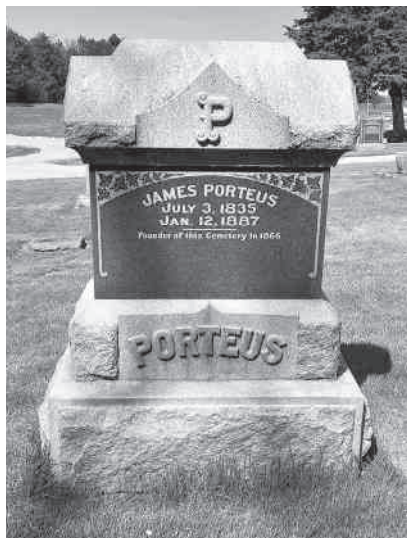
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EXPLORING McLEAN COUNTY CEMETERIES:

Lexington Cemetery

Our guest voice for this year's *Walk*, Paul Mills Rhymer, is visiting from Lexington Cemetery, located off P.J. Keller Highway in Lexington, Illinois.



**Marker for
James Porteus,
founder of the cemetery.**

Lexington Cemetery, originally called Porteus Cemetery, was founded in 1866 by Civil War veteran James Porteus and is the second oldest cemetery in Lexington. The first official burials in this cemetery were William and Elizabeth (McAboy) Dishon in 1866. However, it is believed that earlier burials took place in the area that would become this cemetery.

In 1888 Porteus Cemetery was renamed Lexington Cemetery and a cemetery association was formed to oversee its care and upkeep. In 1952 Lexington Township assumed management of the cemetery, which allowed taxes to be levied to support its continued care and maintenance.



**Paul Mills Rhymer grave, located in
section A1, Lot 4, southeast corner**



J.J. Kemp mausoleum, Lexington Cemetery

This cemetery is home to three family mausoleums, the most prominent of which belonged to John Jackson (J.J) Kemp, a well-to-do farmer, banker, and livestock and grain dealer. Built in 1892 out of Indiana limestone, the face of the mausoleum stands 22 feet high, and it covers a plot of land 35 by 38 feet. Notable features include unique statuary adorning it—it—two life-sized Newfoundland dogs who are at rest. The carved dogs keep watch and flank a marble angel placing flowers on a cross. The design is completed with two large, curved wings and four marble columns. Bloomington monument maker H.J. Higgins & Co. created this masterpiece.

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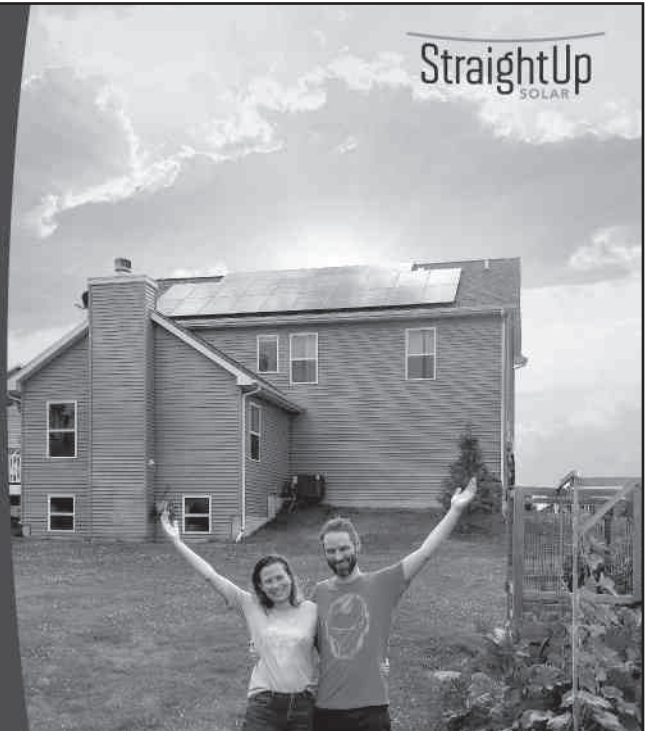
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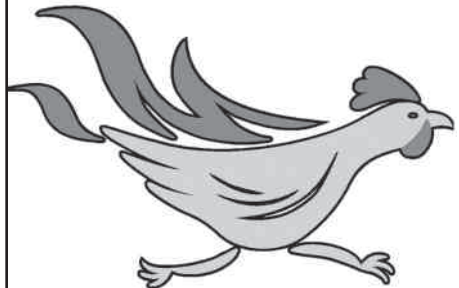
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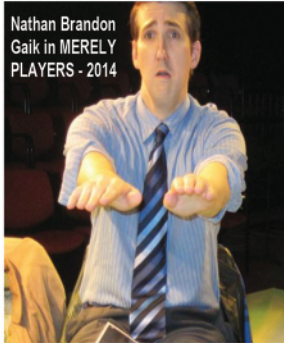
John D. Poling in END OF
THE TOUR - 2011



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Nathan Brandon
Galk in MERELY
PLAYERS - 2014



Kevin Paul Wickart in TARTUFFE
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