

SUGAR GROVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

259 MAIN STREET, SUGAR GROVE
P.O. Box 102, Sugar Grove, IL 60554

PH (815) 218-4094



Cook Book, issued by *The Ladies Church Social Society of Sugar Grove, IL*. Anonymous, Progressive Era, 1890

A Housekeeper's Symphony

“To do the best I can from morn till night, to pray for added strength with coming light. To make the family income reach all way, with some left over for a rainy day.

To do distasteful things with a happy face. To try to keep the odds and ends in place.

To smile instead of frown at fate, which placed me in a family always late to meals.

To do the sewing, mending, and the thousand small things always near at hand. And to do them always with a cheerful heart.

Because in life they seem to be my part. To know the place for everything and keep it there.

To think, to plan, to cook, to sweep. To brew, to bake, to answer questions. To be the mainspring of the family clock and see that each tick tock.

Or meet of time, or tune, or soon, or late. This is the only symphony which I can ever hope to operate.”



Here is our stunning, new *Rail Fence* quilt to be raffled off as our 2026 fundraiser. The Rail Fence pattern dates back to the 1800s, and is a traditional design named for its resemblance to a split-rail fence built by early settlers. Size: 80 1/2 wide X 92 1/2 long.

Raffle ticket sales go directly to the Sugar Grove Historical Society's operations and upkeep.

Don't forget to renew your membership!

Officers and Board

President

Dennis Panagopoulos
(815)218-4094

Vice President

Dave Frantz
(630) 999-3620

Treasurer

Lori McCaffrey
(630) 881-4426

Recording Secretary

Karen Elifson

Historian

Rick Johnson
Clif Frantz

Next Annual Board Meeting:

April 21, 2025

The Sugar Grove Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly. Society members receive the newsletter as part of their membership.

Educational Director and Editor: Janie Panagopoulos
pandex1600@aol.com ©

From the President's Desk

Dear Friends and Members,

First, thank you for your tremendous support of the Sugar Grove Historical Society this past year. Without your support, it would be very difficult to continue to move the Society forward. We are most appreciative.

Last year, severe weather brought down a 250-year-old Burr Oak tree near the entrance to *Bliss Woods Forest Preserve*. Thanks to Ranger Alex Donat, several “tree cookies” were cut and salvaged. Our Historical Society, through the Bliss Woods Forest Preserve’s staff and volunteer efforts, was given first choice to select one of these cookies for a 250 year timeline project for display.

Mary and Irv Ochsenschlager (members) have generously stored the piece over the winter while preservation work continues with their help of their son, Andrew. Wood preservation, especially for a 250-year-old piece of wood, takes time, and we’ll share updates as progress is made. A special thanks to Mary Ochsenschlager for her vigilance in preserving this vital piece of Sugar Grove history, and to Janie Panagopoulos for her commitment, on behalf of the Historical Society, to further research and develop educational programming for our community. Others on the committee from the Historical Society include Dave and Cliff Frantz and Jack Shouba.

Lastly, a quick update on Bliss House and its ever-evolving physical condition; as we continue dialogue with the Township about the aging condition of both the interior and exterior, we look forward to springtime when the weather improves and some of the continuing work can resume in preserving our nearly two centuries (188-years) old treasure.

As a reminder, Bliss House, located at 259 S. Main Street, is open on Tuesdays, between 1-4 pm, and on the first Saturday of each month from 10-12 noon.

Sincerely,
Dennis Panagopoulos, President



Theodore "Ted" Phelps

November 27, 1932 - April 16, 2025

It is with deep sadness that the Sugar Grove Historical Society shares this Memoriam honoring the memory of long-time member and friend Ted Phelps, who passed away on April 16, 2025.

Born November 27, 1932, in Aurora and raised in Kaneville, Ted attended Northern Illinois University before serving in the military. He and his wife, Norrain Fox, shared 71 years of marriage and a deep commitment to preserving local history.

In 1978, Ted and Norrain relocated and restored the 1844 Ephraim Smith House from Galena Boulevard to a six-acre parcel off Ke-De-Ka Road in Sugar Grove, saving an important piece of our community's architectural heritage. Ted's faithful support of the Society reflected his belief that preserving history strengthens community.

He is greatly missed, and his legacy will remain part of Sugar Grove's story.

Thank you!

Donations

- Ceryl Benson
- Elizabeth & Wm. Chalberg
- George Finley
- Diane & Doug Frantz
- Wm. Frymark
- Ruth Anne & Bill Hartman
- Warren & Karen Majerus
- Reva Moore
- Mary & Irv Ochsenschlager
- Frank Sarnelli & Family
- Darlene & Irving Vickers

Supporting Membership

Bill Durrenberger

Allison Short

In Memory of Joh E. Shields Sr. and

Family:

Marlene Shields

In Memory of Becky Johnson

Rick Johnson

Lori & Bob McCaffrey

Dave & Vickie Frantz

Cal & Karen Elifson

Dennis & Janie Panagopoulos

**Please join us at the SG Public Library for
Sugar Grove Historical Society's Legacy
Writing program. Third Sunday of each
month, 2:30- 4:30**

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Editor J.L. Panagopoulos

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250th Anniversary of America!

The Semiquincentennial (250th anniversary) of the Declaration of Independence. Our Nation will commemorate the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 2026, a major milestone marking 250 years since the founding of the U.S.

In celebration of 250 years of American history, we at Sugar Grove Historical Society are excited by discovering and honoring your own family’s place in the story of **Sugar Grove History!**

As part of our nation’s 250th Anniversary, the Sugar Grove Historical Society is proud to present two special honors that connect today’s families with the brave pioneers who built our community:

The First Settlers Certificate

Do you descend from one of the earliest pioneers who arrived in Sugar Grove Township between **1834 and 1850?**

The First Settlers Certificate recognizes direct descendants of these courageous men and women who helped shape the frontier into a thriving community.

You do **not** need to live in Sugar Grove today to apply; if your roots are here, your story matters!

The Centennial Certificate

Has your family been part of Sugar Grove for 100 years or more?

The Centennial Certificate honors descendants of ancestors who arrived in Sugar Grove Township by **1925** and whose family members (at least one) have remained in the community for at least a century. Applicants must have a living family member currently residing in Sugar Grove Township.

This is a wonderful way to celebrate generations of commitment, community spirit, and hometown pride.

How to Apply

Applications and instructions are available:

- In person at **259 Main Street, Sugar Grove, Illinois**, or
- By mail — simply send a self-addressed, large stamped envelope to:
Sugar Grove Historical Society
PO Box 102
Sugar Grove, IL 60554

To apply:

- Complete the application form.
- Include copies of documents proving your lineage (census records, birth, marriage, and death certificates, obituaries, land records, etc.).
- Please use maiden names where applicable.
- **Do not send original documents** — they will not be returned.

We encourage you to make your application come alive! Include:

- A short narrative about your ancestors’ journey to Sugar Grove
- Family photographs
- Stories, memories, and information about children and later generations

Your family’s history helps enrich our community’s shared story.

Fees

- \$20 for members / \$25 for non-members (first ancestor)
- \$15 for each additional certificate for the same ancestor (for another descendant, such as a sibling or parent)

Continue...250th Anniversary of America

Applications are reviewed and verified by the Sugar Grove Historical Society (please allow up to 30 days).

All materials submitted become part of the Society’s permanent boxed and shelved historical collection in the main document room, preserving your ancestors’ legacy for generations to come.

Once approved, your certificate will be mailed to you or presented in person, a beautiful keepsake honoring your family’s place in Sugar Grove’s remarkable story. We are looking forward to honoring our first families during this remarkable celebration of America.

✨ Discover your roots. Preserve your story. Celebrate 250 years together.

If you have questions, please contact Janie Lynn Panagopoulos, Educational Director for Sugar Grove Historical Society (815) 978-5774

SUGAR GROVE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP

Individual Membership.....\$15.00

Family Membership.....\$20.00

Business/Organization.....\$30.00

Supporting.....\$50.00

Individual/Family Life Member...\$225.00

Donation _____

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Are you interested in Email Newsletter? Yes No

Mail check to Sugar Grove Historical Society, PO Box 102, Sugar Grove, IL 60554

250th Anniversary of America

The Sugar Grove Historical Society is celebrating our Nation's 250th Anniversary with three special heritage projects.

The **First Settlers Project** honors families who arrived in Sugar Grove Township between 1830 and 1850. The **Centennial Family Project** recognizes families who settled here by 1925 and still have descendants living in the community today. (See page 4)

To participate, contact the Sugar Grove Historical Society for an application and instructions. Approved applications will be preserved in our archives, and families will receive an official certificate presented by the Board.



The third project centers on a tree that recently fell in Bliss Woods. We have saved a cross-section, "tree cookie," and are carefully preserving it. Once the preservation process is complete, we will remove a pie-shaped wedge from the cookie to clearly examine and count the growth rings.

Our goal is to count the rings and build a Sugar Grove timeline that reaches back at least 250 years. By matching the tree's growth rings to significant local, state, and national events, we can connect natural history with community history in a meaningful way.

We are documenting each step of the process and will produce a video along with a curriculum designed for both classroom and homeschool use. When completed, we look forward to sharing the project and its findings with the entire community.

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