

AAHM Sojourner

**Newsletter of the
SPRINGFIELD AND CENTRAL ILLINOIS AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MUSEUM**

VOLUME 4, NO.1

WINTER-SPRING 2020

INSIDE LOOK



Joan Joyner joins
AAHM Board
PAGE 2



Logan Jaffe,
"Sundown Town"
author to speak at
Springfield's Lincoln
Library, February 20
PAGE 3



AAHM Announces
2020 Gala Theme
PAGE 4

Valiant Women to be Featured during National Women's History Month

Story by Minnie Gillespie

On March 21, 2020, the Museum will celebrate National Women's History Month. The theme this year is **Valiant Women of the Vote**. The theme honors the "brave women who fought to win suffrage rights for women and the women who continue to fight for the voting rights of others". The program will include a panel discussion with

guest speakers focusing on the importance of voting in the 2020 election. A voter registration drive is also planned. We look forward to our members and supporters attending this event. We know that women play a vital role in voting and in elections. During this program we want to highlight the important role women play, and to encourage all women to participate in the process. The program will be held at the museum from 1 to 4 pm.

Negro Leagues Baseball Exhibit Coming in June

Story by Carolyn Farrar

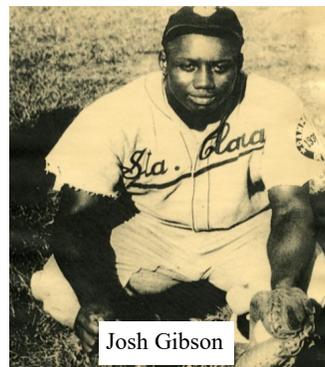
The AAHM will present on April 11 through June 23, 2020 the *Traveling Exhibit: Negro Leagues Baseball*, a production of the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City, MO, at the African American History Museum, 1440 Monument Avenue in Springfield.

The exhibit honors and explores the rich history and connections of African American baseball with Hispanic cultures, communities and countries beginning in the late 1800s.

The exhibit features profiles of significant baseball players, a timeline of American and Hispanic baseball history, and detailed baseball

histories of several countries. The exhibit is bilingual, presented in both English and Spanish.

Unique stories of athletes with ties to the United States and Hispanic countries will be featured. They include Minnie Minoso, Willard

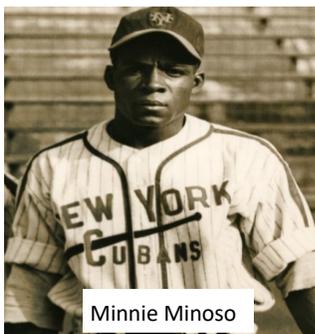


Josh Gibson

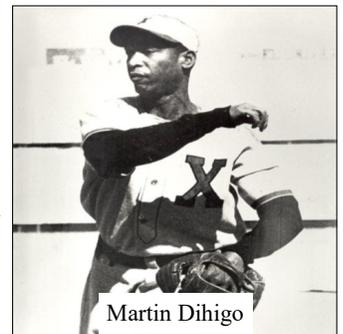
Brown, Oscar Charleston, Ray Dandridge, Martin Dihigo, "Rube" Foster, Josh Gibson, "Pancho" Herrera, Monte Irvin, Jose Mendez, Emilio Navarro, "Buck" O'Neil, "Satchel" Paige, Alex Pompez, Pat Scantlebury, Pedro Sierra, Luis

Tiant, Sr., and Willie Wells.

The Negro Leagues' Springfield connection will be presented by highlighting **Josh Johnson** who lived in Springfield and played in the Negro Leagues and by highlights of events and games played in Springfield and Central Illinois.



Minnie Minoso



Martin Dihigo



Joan Joyner Broadens the Talents of the AAHM Board

OUR MISSION

* We will tell authentic stories about African American life in Central Illinois, past and present, celebrating and sharing our history and culture while planning our future.

* We will do this through scholarship, oral history, exhibits, partnerships, our board of directors, our supporters and our friends. We are and will continue to be community builders.

* We recognize that our stories are unique but connected to those of other communities and we will support those interconnections. We will be integral to the cultural life of our area. We will partner with like-minded organizations. We will be proactive in our community. We will study and apply best practices in business, scholarship and communication.

The AAHM is proud to announce that Springfield native Joan Joyner has joined the Museum’s Board of Directors. Joyner works at Horace Mann Insurance Companies as an Insurance Operations Specialist.

Ms. Joyner is a member of the Capital City Temple #818 of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the World (I.B.P.O.E.) and has been involved in numerous community activities in the Central Illinois.

Joyner has an extensive background in performing arts, having taken part in dramatic presentations, drama and interpretive dance. Joyner explained, “As a new board member, my aspirations are to broaden the awareness and knowledge of African American history in unique, vibrant and innovative ways.”

Welcome Joan Joyner; we are happy to have you on board.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Nell Clay, *Recent President*

Elizabeth Alexander,
Second Vice President

Lacey Brown, *Recording Secretary*

James Lewis, *Treasurer*

Vincent “June” Chappelle

Carolyn Farrar

Kathryn Harris

Douglas Holt

Ocheng Jany

Joan Joyner

Ann Joseph, PhD

Ernestine Lawrence

James Lewis

Aaron Pearl-Cropp

Gail Simpson

Kevia Maloney, *Museum Coordinator*

Managing Your Membership

Story by Elizabeth Alexander, Membership Chair

Becoming an integral part of the Museum family by utilizing your membership status makes sense. Because you receive museum notifications you are quickly alerted to our programs and perhaps you can see opportunities to help us and we would get to know you better.

Also, as a member, you receive early notice of coming events and can make your plans for future outings. It’s fun to attend events with others, so this way you can make plans together with friends and family.

In 2020 we have made it easier for you to pay your annual dues. Everyone is due in January; as a result you don’t have to make yourself a note when your payment is due for the next year; just pay it in January. It will be due again the following January. You will receive a note making you aware it arrived at the museum, or if it didn’t.

Another perk we have added is when you pay your annual dues, you will have your name submitted to our gift shop for a 10% discount if you come in to make a purchase and show your membership card.

Become an active member of the museum. Volunteer with us, make a donation, visit more often, attend our programs and exhibits, share our location, our vision and our excitement, with your family and co-workers.

AAHM website: spiaahm.org
Email: siaahf@yahoo.com
Address: 1440 Monument Ave.,
Springfield, IL 62702
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 301,
Springfield, IL 62705
Telephone: 217-391-6323
Follow us on Facebook



is the quarterly newsletter of the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum, 1440 Monument Avenue, Springfield, Illinois. Sue Massie, editor

AAHM Announces Upcoming Events

Reporter Logan Jaffee to Discuss Sundown Towns

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Sponsored by the AAHM and SCHS

Story by Vicky Whitaker

It took 100 years for Springfield to officially mark the 100th anniversary of the 1908 Race Riot. It has taken even longer to have its location designated a national historic site.

Sometimes lost in the Race Riot's telling is, as one prominent historian noted, "a hidden dimension," the racist actions of white residents in some of the smaller communities surrounding Springfield who barred entry, threatened and refused aid or shelter to black Springfield residents fleeing the riot for their lives.

Known as "Sundown" towns, either by ordinance, practice and/or signage, they barred African Americans (and in some cases other ethnic or religious groups) from being in their communities after sunset. And although their actions in the 1908 riot may have faded with time, their long-term impact on residential and racial demographics of Illinois has not.

Taking a closer look on the subject will be Logan Jaffee, a reporter for Chicago-based ProPublica Illinois, whose story on contemporary Anna, (population 4,000) in Union County, Illinois, "*The Legend of A-N-N-A: Revisiting an American Town Where Black People Weren't Welcome After Dark*" was jointly published with ProPublica in the November edition of *The Atlantic Monthly*.

Jaffee will be the Sangamon County Historical Society's guest speaker on Tuesday, February 18, in a program co-sponsored with the Springfield and Central Illinois African-American History Museum.

The free program begins at 5:30 p.m. in Carnegie Room North, in the city of Springfield's Lincoln Library.

A-N-N-A, whose name became a catch phrase to describe racist Illinois Sundown communities, drew the interest of Jaffee, an investigative reporter who traveled to the downstate community after reading James Loewen's extensively researched book, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, published in 2005 and updated in 2018. An Illinois native and college professor, Loewen started researching the subject in 1990, expecting to find about 10 in the state and 50 around the country.

Much to his surprise, he found 507, two thirds of all the towns in Illinois. In the preface to his updated book, he noted that Sundown towns in Illinois as elsewhere, are on the decline as the nation becomes more multiracial.

Jaffee, who came to ProPublica by way of *The New York Times* and Chicago Public Media (WBEZ), talked to Anna residents and officials, studied census figures and demographics, historic documents and probed the question of whether the community is aware of or willing to confront its history like some other Midwest former Sundown towns have done. For the February meeting, Jaffee will talk about both her research and the interview process by which she put her article together.

No stranger to the topic, Jaffee was the multimedia producer for WBEZ's Curious City, a journalism project fueled by audience questions about Chicago, and previously an embedded mediamaker with *The New York Times'* Race/Related newsletter in collaboration with the documentary showcase POV, in which she reported and produced an audience-driven project confronting the pervasiveness of racism through everyday objects. Jaffee was also a producer with *The New York Times Daily 360* project. In Chicago, she was a recipient of Chicago Filmmakers' Digital Media Production Fund for "Battle Flag," an interactive documentary which questions the meaning of the Confederate battle flag in America. A Miami native, Jaffee earned her degree in photojournalism from the University of Florida in 2011.

AAHM Annual Meeting

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Museum members are invited to an evening of entertainment and celebration with live music, dinner and lively discussion of the Museum's activities. The annual meeting will begin with a selection of beverages and a hearty meal of lasagna, salad, and French bread. A variety of desserts will also be available.

Ya Bendi Tatu will provide music throughout the evening. Band members Steve Alexander, Judy Betts Davis and Allen Davis will provide a repertoire in their distinctive Tatu-style. A lively look-back at last year's activities will be followed by a preview of what you can expect in 2020.

Members should make reservations by Monday, February 10 by calling the Museum at 217-391-6323. You may become a member and RSVP for the evening at the same time.

3rd Annual Greek Christmas Tree Displays

Article by Ernestine Lawrence

In December, various African-American Greek Organizations participated in the 3rd Annual Greek Christmas Tree Display at the African American History Museum. The purpose of this event was to introduce Greek Organizations to the community, showcase their history, and highlight their service in the local area.

The Greek Trees were not traditionally green, but instead were the color that represents the fraternity or sorority. The Museum display consisted of blue trees, white trees, gold trees and black trees. The Delta Sigma Theta tree was unique with bookshelves.

The displayed tree voting was held from November 11 to December 16, 2019 and brought in many visitors to the Museum. Each time one visited the museum they could vote for a tree.

The **Zeta Phi Beta Sorority** won with their white tree dressed in blue ornaments, as 723 visitors voted for this tree.

Participating Fraternities and Sororities:

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
- Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority
- Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity
- Sigma Gamm Rho Sorority
- Zeta Phi Beta Sorority



***Sororities and fraternities, mark your calendar to display your festivity tree on November 9, 2020!**

Celebrating Empowerment Through the Ballot *Fundraising Gala 2020*

Article by Nell Clay

If you missed the Museum's 8th Annual Fundraising Gala, you missed an outstanding affair. We had an excellent band by the name of *Soulfield*. They had us smiling, "grooving", singing along with the music and just enjoying their great sound. You missed our silent auction that included some of the best items we have ever had. A special thank you to all who donated. The group that sang, *The Black Theatre Alliance*, should be recording right now. They were magnificent.

Last year our theme was "Celebrating Organizations that Support and Empower the Black Community by Paying It Forward". The organizations honored were the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Illinois, Frontiers International Springfield Club, Lincoln Home National Historic Site and Union Baptist Church. We had our two excellent moderators, Patricia James Davis and Andre Jordan, who kept us focused and on time.

If you missed all that goodness last year, don't despair for you will have an opportunity to celebrate our 9th Annual Fundraising Gala on October 29, 2020, at the Crowne Plaza. Mark your calendars, save your money, plan to dress up and have a good time.

Our theme for the 2020 Gala is **Celebrating Empowerment Through the Ballot**. We considered the fact that 2020 is the 100th year anniversary of the 19th Amendment and a year to vote for congress and the presidency. In the near future, we will receive nominations for groups and organizations that have systematically and regularly encouraged and registered individuals to vote.

Soon we will announce on our website, Face book page, emails and Instagram how you can help support our fundraising efforts. Another way to support is to become a Museum member. Always remember that without you, the Springfield and Central Illinois African American History Museum would not exist.

AAHM's 8th Annual Fundraising Gala



CONGRATULATIONS
2019 HONOREES

Other Noteworthy Happenings at the Museum



Plans for this year's **BLACK HISTORY BOWL** are well underway. Again, this year all three city schools; Lanphier High School, Southeast High School, and Springfield High School; are participating. The Preliminary Round will be January 28, 2020 at Lanphier High School. The Finals of the Black History Bowl will held at the African American History Museum on February 22, 2020 from 1 to 4 p.m. The public is invited.



On Saturday January 18, the Museum launched a novel event, an **INDOOR GARAGE SALE**. Planned as a fund-raiser for the Annual Meeting, the event mushroomed with shoppers arriving for a week to enjoy the warm and friendly sale. Thanks to everyone who donated items, volunteered their time and/or made purchases.

ILLINOIS AFRICAN AMERICAN FIRSTS, another new exhibit at the Museum, recognizes individuals who were first in their fields. Among those are Curtis Ferrell Clay, Dr. Alonzo Kennilbrew, Dr. Carla Diane Hayden and Father Augustus Tolton.



An **EXHIBIT OF SPRINGFIELD ARTISTS** was mounted in December, 2019, featuring paintings and photography of artists Gladys Blackwell, John T. Crisp Jr., Rhonda Cook, Ginny Lee, Tracey Moras and E. Vern Taylor. The variety and quality of the pieces are well-worth a visit to the Museum.



THE MUSEUM STORE

is stocked with many new items, including scarves, hats and gloves hand-knitted by Kevia Maloney and blankets crocheted by



Patricia Davis. Prices range from \$10 to \$250.00.

2020 Calendar of Events

MUSEUM HOURS: TUESDAY THROUGH FRIDAY, NOON TO 4 P.M.; SATURDAYS 10A.M. TO 5 P.M.

All events will be held at the Museum unless otherwise noted.

February 18, 5:30 p.m., **Sundown Towns where Black People Weren't Welcome After Dark**

Presentation by noted journalist and author Logan Jaffe
Co-sponsored by the Sangamon County Historical Society and the African American History Museum
Location: City of Springfield's Lincoln Library, 1st Floor Carnegie Room North

February 20, 5 to 7 p.m., **The Museum's Annual Membership Meeting**

Drinks and dinner at 5:00, program at 5:45. No charge.
RSVP by February 10 by calling the Museum at 217-391-6323

March 21, 1 to 4 p.m., **Valiant Women of the Vote celebrating National Women's History Month**

April 4, 4 to 6 p.m., **Second Chance Christmas**

Celebrate Christmas in springtime with costumes and food from around the world.

April 11 to June 23, **Negro League Baseball *Beisbol* Exhibit**

The Traveling Exhibit of The Negro Leagues Baseball Museum located in Kansas City, MO, hosted by the Museum

June 1 to 5, **Summer Camp for 5th through 7th Graders**

July 11, 5 to 7 p.m., **Grand Opening of "Springfield's Five Oldest African American Churches" Exhibit**

July 25, 5 to 7 p.m., **Celebration of African Countries**

October 4, **A Walk Through Oak Ridge Cemetery**

October 29, **The Museum's 9th Annual Gala**

6 p.m. Reception, 7 p.m. Dinner
Location: Crowne Plaza, 3000 South Dirksen Parkway, Springfield, IL

African American History Museum
Springfield and Central Illinois
P.O. Box 301
Springfield, IL 62705-0301



MEMBERSHIP

Members receive membership cards, the *Sojourner* newsletter and museum communications. Members at the Sustaining level and above also receive invitations to previews, grand openings and special VIP events.

Membership Categories

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$ 25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting \$ 100-\$ 199 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$ 50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$ 200-\$ 499 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Youth/student \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing \$ 500-\$ 999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$20 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$1,000 |
- Business Member \$500-\$999 (includes business listing at museum events)
- I would like to pay now for three years of membership . AMOUNT enclosed \$ _____
- Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Name _____

Street address _____

City, state, zip _____

Telephone number _____

Email address _____

Your check should be made payable and sent to the African American History Museum of Springfield and Central Illinois (AAHM) , P.O. Box 301, Springfield, IL 62705-0301