



Weekly News

Sampson Street Revitalization Continues

In 2018, the Village began evaluating reconstruction of the Sampson Street corridor downtown in the heart of the business district. The overall vision of the project has been to create a safer, pedestrian-friendly, and aesthetically pleasing front door to Tremont.

Working with Village Engineers, the project began with the evaluation of storm sewer and water main pipes lying under the pavement. We installed new manholes at Madison, South, and Walnut Streets to provide access to the storm sewer pipes. Using digital cameras on small remote-controlled tractors we inspected the storm sewers and determined repairs were needed. The oldest storm sewer was clay pipe that required a reinforced fiberglass liner that hardens and provides structural integrity to the pipe without having to dig out old pipe and completely rebuild. The gravel in Sampson Street during the winter of 2019 was part of that process as lining was installed from Route 9 to Madison Street and voids beneath the pavement were filled. Interestingly, a penny was unearthed during this phase near South St that was from the 1890's leading Village Officials to surmise the storm sewer was installed at the turn of the Century..... The 20th Century.

By the spring of 2020, funds had been allocated, and work was initiated to replace a water main installed in 1912 in the middle of Sampson St. That original 8" water main was the pipe that carried water from the original town well located at the northwest corner of Sampson and Pearl St. (Route 9) to the original water tower on South Street.

These critical infrastructure improvements paved the way for today's revitalization of Sampson and begin a two-phase project. Phase one from Walnut to South should be finished this summer – possibly by the end of August. The second phase from Walnut to Route 9 will follow in the Fall of 2021 or Summer of 2022.

Highlights of the project include:

- Removal of almost all Ameren utility poles along Sampson Street
- All new street surface with new and safer parking spaces
- Energy efficient LED street lighting providing uniform light levels
- New sidewalks providing access for disabled persons
- Additional green space and improved landscaping
- Crosswalk enhancements
- Utilities to provide three electric car charging stations in the future

While the Village is investing a significant amount of money in these improvements, Winning Communities has taken on this project to assist with the aesthetic components of the project. We're excited to see the progress and believe the finished product will provide an excellent enhancement to the front door of our Village. Next week, look for more information on how you can help.



Tremont Museum

Plan a Sunday Afternoon Outing

Tremont Museum will be open Sunday, June 27 from 2-4 PM. We have several new displays, including one on the Underground Railroad, and one on the historic Jones-Menard "Red Brick" residence. Admission is cash only, for both buildings. There is something for everyone's interests!

Corner of S. Sampson and Madison Streets.

Tremont Baptist Church VBS

Tremont Baptist Church is hosting Vacation Bible School for kids ages 3 thru those who just completed 6th grade. It is June 28 - July 2 from 9:00-11:30AM at the church. You can register your kids by going to the church website at TremontBaptist.org and clicking on the VBS 2021 tab. There will be games, crafts, music, and snacks. The theme is Concrete & Cranes and kids will learn how God is at work in their life and how Jesus is our strong foundation.



Did you know...?

Who Were Tremont's Underground Railroad Conductors?

Last week's article was about two of the conductors, Absalom Dillon and John Albert Jones, two of the five known conductors.

Josiah and Levi Matthews

Just imagine a shadowy apparition bumping its way across the plowed fields in the dead of night to start a dangerous journey. Josiah and Levi Matthews carried several runaway slaves in their covered wagon, made just for that purpose. They likely traveled on Deacon Street, which was between Tremont and Morton, as they headed to Woodford County and north via many towns along the way. The Josiah Matthews farm is documented as the main depot of the Underground Railroad in Elm Grove township.

The Matthews farm is gone now. It once was at the dog-leg on Antioch Road in rural Tremont. But the barn was moved nearly 100 years ago to what is the Dan Schwiegert farm now on the curve on Antioch Road. Several years ago, I spoke with 93-year-old Chris Schwiegert at his farm. He told me about the barn and its secret history. He vividly remembered it being moved across the fields to his family's farm by steam engine on wheels about two feet wide and three feet high when he was a small child. The barn still stands, to my knowledge.

For generations, stories have been told about some close encounters with bounty hunters. Josiah was especially clever at deceiving them. One time, he had the people in his care cover their faces with flour, and then one of his sons took them into the woods to hunt, thereby fooling his pro-slavery neighbors. There are other stories that have been passed down by word of mouth, too.

In 1879, author Charles Chapman wrote in his History of Tazewell County, "Matthews was an earnest anti-slavery man, and helped to gain freedom for many slaves."

Freeman Kingman

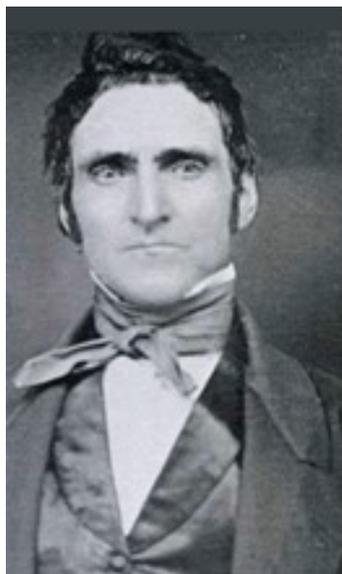
"He is a stout man of four score years, and has the appearance of a man of sixty, rather than eighty years old. He has followed stone cutting, but his time principally has been devoted to farming," wrote Chapman, back in 1879.

Kingman was also a trustee of the Congregational Church which once stood on the corner where the parking lot to the Tremont United Methodist Church is today. In the original deed to the Congregational Church, his name is listed with others who were known to be anti-slavery.

Kingman was said to have hidden slaves in the loft of his barn. His farm had been purchased from Benjamin Briggs, who lived on property near his. The Briggs were so vehemently against helping slaves that the Kingmans were more afraid of them than of the slave catchers! Charles Chapman also wrote, "He (Kingman) has transferred passengers on the line of the famous Under-ground Railroad, through Tremont Township."

There were others who were a part of the Underground Railroad in the Tremont area, no doubt. But these two men and John Albert Jones and Absalom Dillon are part of the five we do know about. They were men of conviction and action, and approximately 800 slaves reached freedom due to courageous men just like them across Tazewell County.

~Tremont Museum and Historical Society



Freeman Kingman

Variance Hearing

The Village of Tremont Zoning Board will conduct a Variance Hearing at 7:00 pm., Thursday, June 24, 2021 at the Village Hall.

The purpose of this hearing is whether to grant:

A variance to Chapter 404.1 (a) To allow the construction of a detached garage to be 1344 square feet, which is 844 square feet larger than allowed in an R-1a zoning district

A variance to Chapter 1203.4 to allow more than one accessory structure in an R-1a zoning district.

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: PIN # 12-12-18-334-006

Commonly Known As: 213 S Chestnut St. Tremont IL. 61568

PETITIONERS are: Evan Litwiller

All parties having an interest in this above matter are to attend said meeting, on the time and date at the location so specified above, to voice their concerns.

Respectfully,

Glen Gulette
Code Enforcement Officer
Village of Tremont

Tremont Library

Lifesize Candyland a Success!

We heard from so many folks that you enjoyed playing Lifesize Candyland. Thanks so much for playing! The Library welcomed 140 players last Wednesday, June 9th. We had a blast and hope you did too!

Thank you!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, to all the volunteers who made the Turkey Festival possible... but of course we are particularly grateful for our library book-sale volunteers! Whether you lifted boxes, sorted, or helped sell, we couldn't have done it without you!

To Be Continued... (ages 7-12)

Tuesdays, June 15th – July 27th, 2-3pm

Join Miss Lizzi for a virtual read-aloud book club weekly to hear a few chapters of our book. Book to be announced in late May.

Sidewalk Chalk Obstacle Courses (all ages)

Dates/Times: June – July

Jump, spin, hopscotch, and balance! Stop by the library for a reward and get your picture on our Chalk Champions board. New courses throughout the summer, location to be announced.

Story Hour (ages 3-6)

Dates/Times: Thursdays, June 10th – July 22nd

Check out our Virtual Read-Aloud Facebook group for read-alouds, rhymes, activities, and craft tutorials. Craft kits available at the library.

Story Walks (all ages)

New story up each week, June 1st – July 12th

Location: South East Pond

Walk or ride around the pond & follow signs displaying fun picture books!

100 Books this Summer (Ages 1-5)

Read 100 books w/ your child, June 1-August 7.

Summer Reading Game (Ages 5-12)

Complete a reading goal & earn prizes, June 1-July 17

Adult & Teen Summer Reading

Adults & teens, read 3 hours/week for a chance to win prizes! June 1-July 17



Thursday

Zoning Board Variance Hearing - 7:00PM
Village Hall

Around Town



Please send us your news stories and they will be included in upcoming emails. Deadline to include information is Friday, 6:00PM for the following Monday.

We accept information from official Tremont, IL businesses, organizations, and advertisers. We will also post Public Auctions and Open Houses.

Thank you,

Haas IT Solutions, Inc. on behalf of Tremont Winning Communities

Tremont Winning Communities | info@tremontil.com | <http://tremontil.com>