



# The Society Story

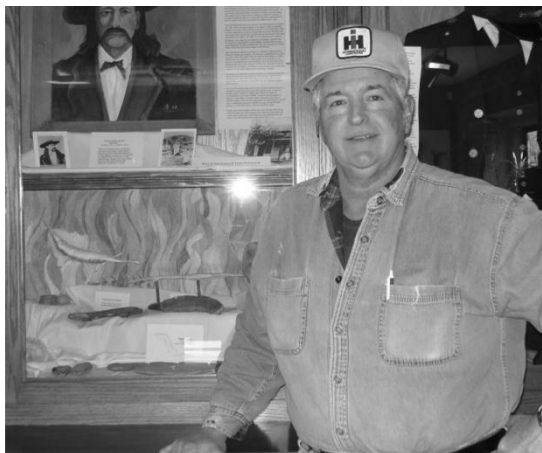
Newsletter of the LaSalle County Historical Society  
January 2012      ✂      815-667-4861

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## The Tully Monster

Recently a gentleman came into the museum to ask some questions about the Civil War Camp site in Ottawa. We were able to give him some information, and steer him to where he could find more. In the course of conversation, he asked if we had a Tully Monster in our Museum.

We showed him our exhibit, and he revealed that his name was Daniel Tully, son of the man after whom the fossil is named. He recalled going fossil hunting with his father, and being present when the Tully Monster was named the official State Fossil in 1989.



Daniel Tully stands by the Tully Monster exhibit

Fossilized remains of the Tully Monster are found only in Illinois, in the area near Mazon Creek in Will and Grundy Counties.

The Tully Monster was a soft-bodied invertebrate that lived during the Pennsylvanian Period, about 300 million years ago. This is the same period in which coal deposits were formed. Much of Illinois was covered by a shallow sea, bordered by swamps dominated by large ferns and mosses. Dead plant tissue piled up without breaking down and was buried and fossilized into coal. Between the layers of coal are deposits

containing a huge variety of fossils, both plant and animal.

Plants and animals including the Tully Monster were encased in silt. The bacteria that began to decompose the plant and animal remains in the mud produced carbon dioxide in the sediments. This combined with iron from the groundwater around the remains, forming encrusting nodules of ironstone, which created a hard permanent 'cast' of the animal.

Francis X. Tully was an amateur collector who found the unique fossil in 1958. Unable to identify the creature, he took his fossil to the Field Museum in Chicago for help in determining what he had found.

Paleontologists were unable to identify the creature, as it fit in no known phylum. To this day, the debate continues. Is it a worm? a distant relative of a snail? a squid ancestor? No one knows. It does not appear to be closely related to any creature, living or extinct.

It was an unusual creature indeed. Fossils found range in size from 3½ to 14 inches in length. They show a long flexible body, a tail with three triangular-shaped fins, and a long proboscis. At the end of the proboscis was a jaw or claw that contained small tooth-like structures. It is likely that this was used to pass food to the mouth. Further back on the head are stalks with swellings on the ends which may have been a form of eye.

Field Museum scientists nicknamed the fossil the "Tully Monster" in honor of Francis Tully, and when it was given an official scientific name, it was called *tullimonstrum gregarium*. *Gregarium* means "common" and refers to the

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*Tully Monster Continued*  
abundance of this type of fossil found in the Mazon Creek deposits.



The LCHS Museum has several specimens of the Tully Monster. We also have a model of the creature donated by Brian Nolan.

### **Museum Volunteer Honored**

Historical Society member Bob Barnett (shown in the rear of the car with wife Dolores) was honored at the Veterans Day services program sponsored by the Utica American Legion - Pierce Davis Post 731 on November 6th.



Barnett, a 1952-54 Korean War veteran, served as parade marshal for the annual Veterans Day parade. Bob retired from Unimin Sand Corporation and resides in the Utica area. Bob and his wife, Dolores, are frequently seen volunteering in the Society museum complex.

### **Blacksmith Shop Restoration Progresses**

The blacksmith shop that is owned by the LCHS dates back to the late 1800's. We understand that it has been continuously used as a blacksmith shop, possibly the only one in the area. Over the years the shop has been modified in various ways but always for blacksmithing.

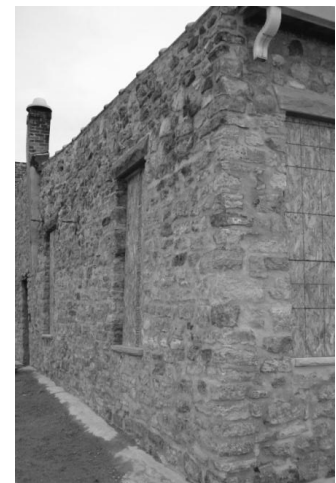
Recently there has been great concern about the crumbling north wall of the shop.

Proposals were solicited from three masonry contractors and the project was awarded to Ottawa Masonry, Inc. They were chosen because of cost, expertise in restoring historic buildings and their availability to finish the work before winter. The work included tearing down about 1/3 of the north wall and re-building it, tuck pointing the part of the wall that was not rebuilt, some repair work on the west wall and rebuilding the wall cap and roof flashings. The contractor did a great job of maintaining the old wall style.



Approximately one third of the north wall was disassembled and rebuilt. Some of the stone of the wall had crumbled but we were able to find new stone from the Utica quarry. We are very thankful that they donated the stone to the Society saving some expense.

Two old windows in the north wall were salvaged and will be restored by Dave Rabideau, owner of Noah's Ark Carpentry and Restoration. Dave will also construct replacement windows for the west wall in the style of the old windows. There is also more masonry work to do on the south wall which will be done as funds allow. If you can help us fund more restoration it will be greatly appreciated.



Many thanks to Tom Hoyt, Mike Gibson, Aaron Upton and Bob Martyn for moving the blacksmith forge and tools to make room for the re-construction work.

## Capital Building Fund Grows

Ralph and Barbara Bowermaster have donated a very generous gift to the LaSalle County Historical Society and designated it for the Capital Building Fund.

Gifts such as theirs are essential for the continued and future success of the Society. They enable us to fulfill our mission of preserving facts and data of the history of LaSalle County.

We are deeply appreciative of Ralph and Barbara and offer our profound thanks for their generosity.

## Halker to Sing

Bucky Halker, author, folk singer, scholar, and labor songster, will present "Booth Shot Lincoln: Illinois Historical Folksongs of Death and Disaster" as the first of the free third-Sunday series of the LaSalle County Historical Society, in January.

Halker, who holds a Ph.D. in U.S. labor history from the University of Minnesota, will present his perspective on Illinois folksongs Sunday, Jan. 15, at 3 p.m. at the Utica Township Community Center in downtown Utica. Halker's presentation is supported in part by a grant from the Illinois Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Author of "For Democracy, Workers, and God: Labor Song-Poems and Labor Protest," Halker has produced a four-CD series on Illinois folk music entitled "Folksongs of Illinois." In the spring of 2011 he released "Folksongs of Illinois #4," highlighting the folk and ethnic music of Chicago since 1945.



He has conducted studies of the state's music traditions and enjoys making people aware of them. "Illinois has a rich folk and ethnic

music heritage that seldom receives the scholarly, journalistic, or public attention it deserves," he said.

"The state may well have the most diverse and vibrant musical traditions of any state in the nation, and we'll explore some of them in Utica," he added.

There is no charge for Halker's presentation but free will donations will be accepted.

## Civil War Sesquicentennial

January 1, 1862: In both Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Va. presidential receptions were held to welcome the new year. At the Washington reception an Illinois guest lost \$50.00 in gold to a pickpocket.

January 10, 1862: Brigadier general James Garfield, in command at Prestonburg, Ky., ordered an attack upon Confederate forces. Both sides retreated and claimed victory. Garfield was elected president in 1880 and was fatally wounded by an assassin's bullet. Beginning with Harrison in 1840 the president elected every 20 years would die in office until the narrow escape of Ronald Reagan, elected in 1980.

January 11, 1862: Secretary of War Simon Cameron of Pennsylvania resigns and is appointed Minister to Russia. January 13 Edwin Stanton becomes Secretary of War.

January 17-22, 1862: Union gunboats attack Ft. Henry on the Tennessee River in Tennessee as brigadier general U.S. Grant begins the Ft. Henry - Ft. Donelson campaign.

January 30, 1862: USS Monitor is launched, the first iron clad ship to have a moveable turret.

January 31, 1862: Queen Victoria declares that Great Britain is "to observe neutrality in America".

## Quilt Classes

Quilter Jean Hulslander will offer lessons in quilting starting on February 4. The class will meet in the Museum library at 9:00 am. Call the Museum office to sign up today!

## Calendar of Events - 2012

Saturday, February 4 & 11 - Quilt Classes - @ Museum

Sunday, January 15, 2012 - Bucky Halker *"Booth Shot Lincoln: Illinois Historical Folksongs of Death and Disaster"* 3:00 PM, Utica Township Hall, Mill & Church Sts

Wednesday, January 18, 2012 - Civil War Round Table - 7:30 pm @ Ottawa High Cafeteria -  
Speaker Phyllis Revell - *"Five Forks"*

Saturday, April 28, 2012 - Open House @ LCHS Museum Complex - *The Way LaSalle County Works*

Sunday, October 7, 2012 - Burgoo Festival

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### **New Members**

We welcome new members Everett & Jeanine Solon, William & Sharon Simpson, Leo Ingmanson and Charles & Marsha Farley

### **In Kind Donations**

American Nickeloid of Peru, IL has donated acid-free tissue paper to the museum for 25 years. It is used for wrapping textiles and other artifacts.

### **Memorials**

*In loving memory of Bud and Ardeth Fleming*  
from Wayne Fleming  
*In memory of David Malinsky* from Dolores Passwater, directed to the LCHS library.

**Thank you** to Carol Elmore for the lovely table decorations at the Annual Meeting.