



Arcola celebrating 'Our Town' Friday, August 11

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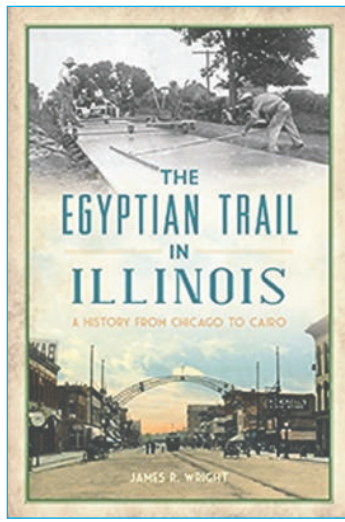
August 16, 2023

'Pulling Illinois out of the mud' — the story of Egyptian Trail

By Dominik Stallings

Travel by car is the preferred mode of transport for most people in Illinois nowadays. The convenience and freedom is hard to beat after all. Traveling wasn't quite so simple over 100 years ago. Horse-drawn carriages were bogged down by mud, as were the first automobiles.

James R. Wright, author of the book, "The Egyptian Trail in Illinois: A History from Chicago to Cairo," illustrates how Illinoisans organized themselves and improved their lives drastically by fixing up the roads, especially in the rural parts of the state. While we know it as a



country road that connects Arcola and Tuscola, it once connected Cairo to Chicago.

Wright's book feels like going on a road trip yourself. The destination is quite clear: The Egyptian Trail, one of the earliest improved roadways in Illinois. Like any good road trip, it's not a straightforward journey; Wright leads us on a few detours here and there that give us more context to the Egyptian Trail and other historical highways.

Wright does a good job of opening a window into the lives of people in the early 20th century. We meet a lot of different people involved in the creation of the Egyptian Trail, but thanks to concise writing, the information isn't

too overwhelming, nor does he stay too long on any one topic.

Wright begins the journey with the background of the Dixie and Lincoln highways, which are the more famous trails that connected Illinois to the East, West and South.

The book leans on photography, maps and advertisements to paint a picture of the era. I find the imagery helps immerse the reader. You can understand better why this trail was important to so many when you can see photographs of folks stuck in the mud. Scanned newspaper editorial pieces give a voice to the peo-

ple from the past as they work to build and fund the trail.

We learn how the Egyptian Trail came to be through entrepreneurs such as Dr. Iverson A. Lumpkin and his son Dr. William Lumpkin, with Dr. Iverson being the president and Dr. William the secretary-treasurer of the Egyptian Trail Association.

We also learn of Ernest Buford Tucker, another advocate for the trail, who wrote about a road trip he took with his wife. The two had quite a few difficulties from their travels

from Mattoon to Pittsburgh and show how improved road conditions might make travel safer and more convenient. Back then, they used thick travel guides which indicated routes with landmarks before highway numbering became the norm. You'd want to be sure not to miss a turn back then.

The Egyptian Trail was sectioned off in three parts: The northern section from Chicago to Paxton; the central portion

See TRAIL on page 6



Atwood Apple Dumpling 150th Sesquicentennial Festival



Tentative Schedule of Events



Downtown Atwood

Friday August 18, 2023

3:00-8:00 p.m.
4:00-5:00 p.m.
5:00 p.m.
5-7 p.m.
5:10 p.m.
5:30-7:00 p.m.
7:00-7:30p.m.
7:30-9:30 p.m.

Craft/Food Vendors/Inflatables Open
"Prairieland Pickers" (Main Stage)
Official Welcome by Village President Bill Fleming (Main Stage)
Sesquicentennial Village Open (West Central Street)
Star Spangled Banner sung by Sarah Rogers
"Gunny Sack" (Bluegrass) (Main Stage)
Apple Dessert Auction (Main Stage)
"Battle Creek" (Country) (Main Stage)

Saturday, August 19, 2023

6:00-9:30 a.m. United Church of Atwood Apple Dumpling Breakfast (at United Church of Atwood)
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Frank Bragg Memorial Antique Tractor Show (on Main by United Church of Atwood)
9:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m. Craft/Food Vendors Inflatables Open
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Sesquicentennial Village open (West Central Street)
9:00 a.m. - 9:45 a.m. Baby Pageant Registration (Beside Main Stage)
10:00 a.m. Apple Dumpling Baby Pageant (Main Stage)
10:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Kiddie Tractor Pull Registration (in front of United Church of Atwood)
10:00 a.m.- 1:00 p.m. Community Blood Services of Illinois Bloodmobile (108 S. Main Street)
11:00 a.m. Kiddie Tractor Pull Begins
12:30 p.m. Parade Registration (Magnolia Street)
1:00 p.m. "Keenager Kitchen Band" (Main Stage)
2:00 p.m. Honoring Atwood "150" Years Apple Dumpling Parade
3:00 -7:00 p.m. Sesquicentennial Village open (West Central Street)
3:00 p.m. Registration for Car Show (in front of United Church of Atwood)
3:00-4:00 p.m. "Collage of Faith" (Main Stage)
3:00-7:00 p.m. Car Show/Awards (in front of United Church of Atwood)
3:30-4:30 p.m. Dog Show Registration
4:00-5:00 p.m. "Mackville" (Main Stage)
5:00 p.m. Dog Show (Main Stage)
7:00-9:00 p.m. "The Henningsens" (Main Stage)
8:00 p.m. Miscellaneous Drawings (Main Stage)

***BOTH FRIDAY & SATURDAY: RAJAH ALL ALUMNI GATHERING TENT (South side of new Village of Atwood Office)

BRIEFS

Parade entries needed for "Big Cheese" Labor Day Parade

Arthur Amish Country Cheese Festival is celebrating its 50th anniversary this Labor Day weekend and the "Big Cheese" parade, sponsored by the Arthur Area Association of Commerce, will be held on Saturday, Sept. 2. The Village of Arthur Sesquicentennial celebration will also be held in conjunction with this year's festival.

The parade will step-off at 3:50 p.m. and lineup begins at 2:30 p.m. in the old Progress Tank facility located at 402 E. Progress St. Parade forms are going out this week as everyone is invited to be a part of the event. The committee strives to make it one of the best parades of the late summer and one of the highlights of the Cheese Festival.

Forms are also available at the Arthur Welcome Center, Arthur Graphic-Clarion newspaper office, or contact Stephanie Wierman at 217/620-7460.

Blood drives

There will be a blood drive from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 24, at the Tuscola United Methodist Church, 901 N. Prairie St. Reservations are required. Call 800-747-5401 or visit online: bloodcenter.org/group. The group number is 71203.

ImpactLife is holding a community blood drive from 9 a.m. till 1 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 19, in Atwood. The donor bus will be in the Kirby Clinic parking lot, 108 S. Main St. Appointments are required. Call 800-747-5401 or visit online: bloodcenter.org/group. The group number is 71038.

Rat Race Registration Underway

The Arthur Woman's Club Rat Race will be held during the 50th Annual Cheese Festival this Labor Day weekend. The race will be held on Monday, Sept. 4 at 7:30 a.m. There is a 10K course as well as a 5K course. Registration can be done online, on a paper form, or the day of the event. Please go to arthurcheesefestival.com to get a form or submit an online registration.

The race will be timed, and medals given to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place male and female participants in each age category. The top male and female finisher for each race (first to finish the course) will be awarded a plaque as well as a monetary gift. They are accepting donations to sponsor the race. If you would like to donate, please reach out to a Woman's Club member or Stephanie Borntrager at 217-254-3647. There is no one-mile fun run or cheese chaser race scheduled for this year. Come out and join in the fun.

Weather forecast

Wednesday: Sunny, with a high near 78. Light and variable wind becoming southwest 5 to 7 mph in the morning.
Wednesday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 59. South wind 7 to 14 mph, with gusts as high as 21 mph.
Thursday: Sunny, with a high near 82.
Thursday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 57.
Friday: Sunny, with a high near 81.
Friday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 61.
Saturday: Sunny, with a high near 88.
Saturday Night: Mostly clear, with a low around 67.
Sunday: Sunny, with a high near 91.