

# ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## 2023 ANNUAL AWARDS PROGRAM



1

PEORIA ILLINOIS

# NON-BOOK SPECIAL CATEGORY PROJECT PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Prepared By: Bob Hoffer, Team Contact

Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project

November 2023

# PROJECT MISSION: THE MEMORIAL



**Commemorating those buried at Peoria's Moffatt Cemetery so  
"They Are Forgotten No More"**



## ISHS Annual Award Nomination

**Nominee:** Peoria Memorial Project Promotional Video Team      **Phone:** (309) 251-1953  
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**Nominator:** Prof. Debbie Hedemann, Teaching Chair for Communication      **Phone:** (309) 694-8424  
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**City:** East Peoria      **State:** IL  
**E-Mail:** dhedemann@icc.edu      **Zip Code:** 61635

### List the title of the specific publication or activity being nominated for an award:

FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE MEMORIAL -- PROJECT PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Contact Information for this Team is included. .  
Project Team Contact: Bob Hoffer Email: hoffers@mtco.com Cell Phone: 309-251-1953

### Category

#### PUBLICATIONS

- Scholarly
- Other
- Russell P. Strange Memorial  
Book of the Year

#### NON-BOOK MATERIALS

- Ongoing/Periodicals
- Meritorious Periodicals
- Non-book Special
- Projects Best Website

#### PUBLIC PROGRAMMING

- Multimedia
- Production Exhibitions
- Educational Programs

Collection Preservation

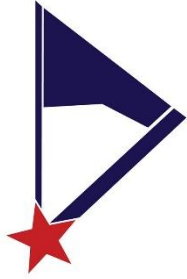
Special Projects

Lifetime Achievement

Russell Lewis Award for a Young Museum Professional

Complete and mail four (4) copies of the nomination form with four (4) copies of your supporting materials to: ISHS Awards, Illinois State Historical Society, 411 E. Monroe Street, PO Box 1800, Springfield, IL, 62705-1800. Nominations must be postmarked by November 30 of every year. **Please include a \$50 entry fee, made payable to the Illinois State Historical Society.** For more information, please call 217-525-2781 or email [OfficeManager@HistoryIllinois.org](mailto:OfficeManager@HistoryIllinois.org).

If you are submitting a publication for an award and would like it returned, please include a statement in writing to that effect.



# FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE

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## M E M O R I A L

### CONTACT INFORMATION FOR AWARD NOMINEES

#### PROJECT PROMOTIONAL VIDEO TEAM

**Bob Hoffer – 5310 N Weaverridge Blvd., Peoria IL 61615-8913**      [hoffers@mtco.com](mailto:hoffers@mtco.com)  
Local history enthusiast, amateur genealogist, Member: Peoria Historical Society, Illinois State Historical Society, Abraham Lincoln Association, Abraham Lincoln Museum, several genealogical societies, and Capt. Zeally Moss Chapter National Society, Sons of the American Revolution.

**Bill Poorman -- 5507 W Timber Oak Court, Peoria IL 61615**      [poorman.bill@gmail.com](mailto:poorman.bill@gmail.com)  
College Educator, Writer, Multi-media creator and producer, Lincoln enthusiast.

**Illinois  
Central  
College**

**309.694-5422**

**icc.edu**

11/30/2023

Dear Illinois State Historical Society,

Please let this letter serve as my formal nomination of the video "Freedom & Remembrance" for the Illinois State Historical Society annual awards.

I believe this project has done a superb job in its efforts to help present a part of Illinois history and draw attention to the need to preserve some of Peoria's lost history.

Hearing the stories of those who were buried in Moffatt Cemetery was enlightening. Also, learning about the efforts underway to recognize and honor these forbears shines a light on the importance of preserving this forgotten history. In addition, this video project has shown how the community has come together, which is very gratifying to see.

Still further, this video does an excellent job telling the story of Moffatt Cemetery through the great quality of the video production. The combination of photos, video, music, and narration help tell the story as it needs to be told. The professional production of this project should be considered.

Overall, the "Freedom & Remembrance" project did an excellent job in highlighting the need for the planned memorial. The video is intriguing and educational as well as being visually interesting and expertly produced. It is persuasive in its message of how important the idea of the Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Park is and will be for the community.

Sincerely,

**Professor Debbie Hedemann**

Teaching Chair for Communication/Mass Communication/Journalism

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309.694.8424

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1 College Drive  
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Riverway Business Park  
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# MEMORIAL PROJECT BACKSTORY

**By:** *Bob Hoffer, Project Team Member.* In 2015 my wife Evelyn asked me where her great-grandfather, Mons Nelson, was buried in Peoria. Having immigrated in 1879, family lore held that he died on Christmas Day 1885, on the way to or at Peoria's Swedish Lutheran Church. Peoria had a few newspapers then so it should not have been hard to find him, but that proved very optimistic. What I found went far beyond the answer to her simple question resulting in the creation of the Freedom & Remembrance Memorial.

The first clue emerged in a line from coroner files which said, "Wife had him buried at Moffatt." Next found at the Peoria library were WPA pages from the 1930s about our local cemeteries which said Moffatt Cemetery had been located at 3900 SW Adams but was closed in 1905. I went to that address only to find it covered with buildings and storage yards. Further research said it was originally a family burial plot for Aquilla Moffatt who came here in 1822. That site eventually became a business in the 1870s, but owners abandoned it after it was ordered closed. The grounds were cleared and sold in the 1950s. All records were said to be lost and all those buried there were said to have been moved.

A search did not find Mons was moved, but one cemetery manager said that 1800s Health Department records might list him. These big old books were given to Peoria County but were not in inventories. A search discovered them, and they spanned the entire commercial life of Moffatt Cemetery. Closer review indicated these would be valuable for genealogists since they included perhaps 3,500 unknown death and burial records. A Peoria County Genealogical Society project spanning several years transcribed over 32,000 records from these books into data bases to produce bound volumes now in public locations. Over 2,500 burials were for Moffatt, including Mons. More than 200 others were documented at Moffatt and about 100 had been moved. In total, 2,725 persons were buried there; more than 2,600 still remain under buildings and work yards.

In 2017, 48 Union Civil War veterans were identified on the site. A celebration of their lives and service was held near the grounds and a temporary memorial placed with their names. More research identified 52 veterans -- 49 Union Civil War and one each from the Spanish American War, the War of 1812, and the 1792 Virginia militia. Next discovered was Nance Legins-Costley who is known to history as the first enslaved person Abraham Lincoln helped free in a landmark 1841 Illinois State Supreme Court case.

The core team was formed in 2019 and began a project to commemorate those buried at the lost Moffatt Cemetery. This document tells of their work and creation of a small city park on Peoria's South Side, now hosting Freedom & Remembrance Memorial.

# THE PROMOTIONAL VIDEO

Very early in the Memorial Project, the Team realized the need for a more convenient, concise, and repeatable way to tell the 200-year stories of the pioneer founder, the cemetery bearing his name, the 2,725 buried there, its abandonment and destruction, and plans for a suitable memorial near the site in south Peoria.

Many presentations were being given to a wide range of possible interest groups in the Community, but reaching beyond that was logistically difficult and ineffective. Thus began work to create a video which could be shared widely using electronic communications and 'social media' without concern for distance, time and effort.

The Video Team of two prepared a storyboard and outline, wrote the script, gathered images, then recorded, edited and produced the video in about two weeks. The Promotional Video was then placed on YouTube on the Internet and duplicated into presentation materials. The effect on the project was immediately advantageous – people could SEE images, not just hear words, and thereby better understand the complex history and other subject matters, the thousands of people who would be commemorated, and the ideas and concepts for a suitable memorial.

The memorial is now in place, thanks in large part to the presentation value of this video, which has been viewed by many hundreds of people. This ISHS Award application package for the Project Video includes multiple images and content of the finished memorial and a few pertinent portions from the companion ISHS Award application for Peoria's Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project itself.

When reading this on a computer with Internet access, the video can be seen:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEqxrngzhc>

An electronic copy of the video may also be made available from ISHS.

Additional information about the entire project can be found on our social media outlets which chronicle the entire multi-year project:

- Website <https://peoriafreedommemorial.org/>
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/peoriafreedommemorial/>

# INFORMED OPINIONS – THE VIDEO

***Tim Shelley, News Director – WCBU-FM, Peoria NPR Affiliate***

It think this turned out really well. Clear and steady - not too fast or slow. The music was mixed well - not too loud to overpower, but loud enough to add an air of excitement or import. The video is a good use of imagery, particularly since limited visuals were available for early times. The narrative and pacing are well done.

The nine-minute mark is about perfect in terms of getting the story across without getting lost in minutiae. I come away from it with a sense of what the cemetery was, why it was and still is historically important, and what's being done to remember it and commemorate the people who were laid to rest there (and how that all came about). Overall, it's a job well done. Congratulations on the nominations - well deserved, and good luck!

***Ms. Debbie Hedemann, Teaching Chair for  
Communications/Mass Communications/Journalism – Illinois  
Central College***

8

This video does an excellent job telling the story of Moffatt Cemetery through the great quality of the production. The combination of photos, video, music, and narration help tell it as it needs to be told. The video is intriguing and educational as well as being visually interesting and expertly produced. It is persuasive in its message of how important the idea of the Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Park is and will be for the community. (Its) professional production should be considered.

***Extract from “The Project Journey” in the Project Award Application***

(The) Memorial plan was included in a video produced to tell the story of the Moffatt Cemetery, its historical origins, business operations, closure in 1905, abandonment, destruction, rezoning, and sale for commercial purposes. This video and other materials were widely presented to many community organizations and individuals to build interest and partnerships.



# INFORMED OPINIONS – THE PROJECT

A great deal of success for the Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project was the direct result of the Promotional Video to build understanding and interest and support. The following are informed opinions about the Project itself.

## ***Juliana Stratton, Lt. Governor - State of Illinois***

Ancestors, like those buried in the old Moffatt Cemetery, who spent their lives working for, fighting for, and praying for a better future for all of us, deserve to be laid to rest with dignity and respect and memorialized in a way that demonstrates that they are not just the forgotten citizens of Peoria. They were mothers and fathers and grandmothers and grandfathers. They were somebody's sons and daughters, and they were veterans. And they were fully human. And their humanity is what we are honoring today. Today is not just about preserving history. Today is an act of justice. In some respects, it is a way of reclaiming the land, placing markers in the ground to say that these souls will no longer be ignored or overlooked or diminished. And as a community, you have come together here in Peoria to make it abundantly clear. We will tell their stories. We will commemorate this history. And they are forgotten no more.

## ***Dr. Rita Ali, Mayor - City of Peoria***

Freedom and Remembrance Park will be a site that will provide education to our community, while acknowledging our local history, but it will also be a long-awaited memorial for these individuals and their families.

## ***Denise Jackson, 1<sup>st</sup> District Council Member - City of Peoria***

Well, this is an exciting day. And I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge God and thank him for the opportunity to be a part of this wonderful event. I must say, I was so excited when I heard about this story, sometime about a year ago.

This memorial is a testament to how cities and communities across this country are linked forever in history. We want residents all around the city and the state of Illinois to come and visit this site to learn about the contributions of the veterans and all of the other individuals who are buried here. And the contributions they made on behalf of this great country. We will never forget them.

***Rev. Marvin Hightower, President – Peoria Branch NAACP***

I, like many others, believe that history is our greatest teacher. I also believe that history shouldn't be covered up; it shouldn't be hidden away. It definitely shouldn't be banned, but it needs to be recognized so that we learn from history so that we won't be doomed to repeat history. And I believe that this day is a date marked out in history from the foundations of this world. And I also believe as the Bible says that the truth will make us free, and that's why I believe that history is important.

***Robert Johnson Sr., Board of Trustees President, Emily Cahill, Executive Director, Matt Freeman, Superintendent of Parks - Peoria Park District***

The Peoria Park District is honored to have been a part of this effort. Parks Service Staff is particularly proud to have helped install the historic memorial markers. Our organization is in awe of the commitment of the Project Team of local volunteers who were focused on bringing this important piece of Peoria history to the forefront. Our community is a diverse one with a rich history; this memorial helps showcase this and honor the impact of strong Peorians in the course of local, state, and national history.

The volunteer Team's work to engage and encourage participation of both public and private partners to not only make this a reality, but to also ensure its long-term stewardship and care is remarkable. We enjoyed working with the Project Team; their passion for history and service to commemorate forgotten Peorians is a blessing to all.

***Angie Sneeringer, Vice-President - Peoria County Genealogical Society***

The Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project provided an exceptional resource for genealogists in Peoria. Thanks to the early efforts of Bob Hoffer in uncovering Peoria County Undertaker Records dating back to 1872, our Society was able to assist this project by transcribing these early records. Because death registrations were not required until 1916, the names and records of 32,124 individuals are now available to researchers.

Documentation of burials in Moffatt Cemetery did not exist before those Undertaker Records were located. Not only did this committee identify the Civil War veterans, but they went above and beyond in introducing them to us. The Memorial Project has given us the opportunity to finally honor those who were nameless a few short years ago. We are grateful to the Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project Team for their efforts and dedication in making sure these veterans and others are "*forgotten no more*" by Peorians.

**Keith Bonnett, President - Capt. Zeally Moss Chapter, National Society Sons of the American Revolution**

We are honored that Peoria’s Freedom & Remembrance Memorial is being nominated for the Illinois State Historical Society’s 2023 Annual Award in the Special Projects category and take great pride in the results of this work done for our community which is connected to patriots the American Revolution. June 14, 2023, was a day I will not forget, not only for the ceremony but also for Project Team’s skills to make this historical commemoration happen. It was a great ceremony to officially share the Freedom and Remembrance Memorial with the Peoria community and the State of Illinois. Including our SAR Chapter as the Historical Honor Guard was very appreciated.

***Elizabeth Klise, Executive Director - Peoria Historical Society***

On behalf of the Peoria Historical Society, I express my whole-hearted endorsement of the Freedom and Remembrance Memorial Project. This effort has had an exceptional impact in preserving the history of a particular Illinois site, Peoria’s lost Moffatt Cemetery, and the 2,725 people known associated with it. Their stories were in danger of being erased from history but are now celebrated as a testament to their lives. This project has added substantially to knowledge of local, Illinois, and even national history, documenting our settlers, many veterans, and a woman whose court case first connected the early legal career of young Illinois attorney Abraham Lincoln with the abolitionist cause.

Thanks to extraordinary efforts of the Project Team, the memorial commemorates the life and stories of the long-ago individuals, some 2,600 in all who still remain buried at an unlikely spot in central Illinois. With connections to Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War as well as the Spanish-American War, the War of 1812, the 1792 Virginia Militia, the Revolutionary War, and Daniel Boone, whose great-grandson is buried there, the newfound history of this small Peoria location elevates its importance to a national level.

Onsite plaques recognized on Flag Day this year now recall and share the history of the cemetery, the many veterans buried there, and the remarkable legacy of Nance Legins-Costley. The project preserves a forgotten time and place in Illinois history and ensures that the voices of those once silent will now be heard. It is a remarkable achievement. I cannot imagine a more fitting recipient of an Illinois State Historical Society award.

***Charles Stanley, Board Member & Markers Committee Chairman - ISHS***

To all those who have contributed to this effort in any way, including your attendance here, the Illinois State Historical Society expresses its sincere appreciation. Thank you.

**Ms. Deryn Pomeroy, Trustee - William G. Pomeroy Foundation** On behalf of the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, we send our greetings from Syracuse, New York. The Illinois Historical markers you dedicate today for Peoria's forgotten Moffatt Cemetery and the legacy of Nance Legins-Costley, whose freedom was defended by Abraham Lincoln in a landmark State Supreme Court case that paved the way toward ending slavery, commemorate important moments in your community. We wish we could be there with you today for this important occasion in Peoria.

From all of our dedicated staff and trustees at the Pomeroy Foundation, we extend our congratulations to the Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project Team, Peoria Historical Society, City of Peoria, United Union of Roofers Local #69, and the Illinois State Historical Society on your Illinois markers commemorating Moffatt Cemetery and Nance Legins-Costley.

***Susan Rynerson, President Elect –  
Tazewell County Genealogical & Historical Society***

RE: Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project.

Words cannot express the appreciation all of Central Illinois, including those of us in Tazewell County, had when the Undertaker's books were discovered which in turn led to Bob's uncovering so many of the stories buried therein. The extra work to have the books published, the Moffatt site preserved, and the markers erected so that everyone would know that the Central Illinois history that had been buried there was now unearthed such that those folks would be forgotten no more.

We were especially delighted to find Nance as we had been trying for years to determine what had become of her but there were also many of our lesser-known Tazewell friends and families found in Moffatt too. Finally, no soldier of any war should ever be paved over and forgotten so it was very important to recognize them with their own plaque.

I know how much work and worry went into every phase of the years-long project and no one is more deserving of state level recognition than Bob and his team. It was icing on the cake when the Peoria and Tazewell marker projects dovetailed such that they were erected and celebrated just days apart. All history is local until it is woven together with other stories to become part of the Nation's fabric. 2600 threads are now entwined with the rest of the Illinois story.

*Susan Rynerson*

# PROJECT MISSION: THE MEMORIAL

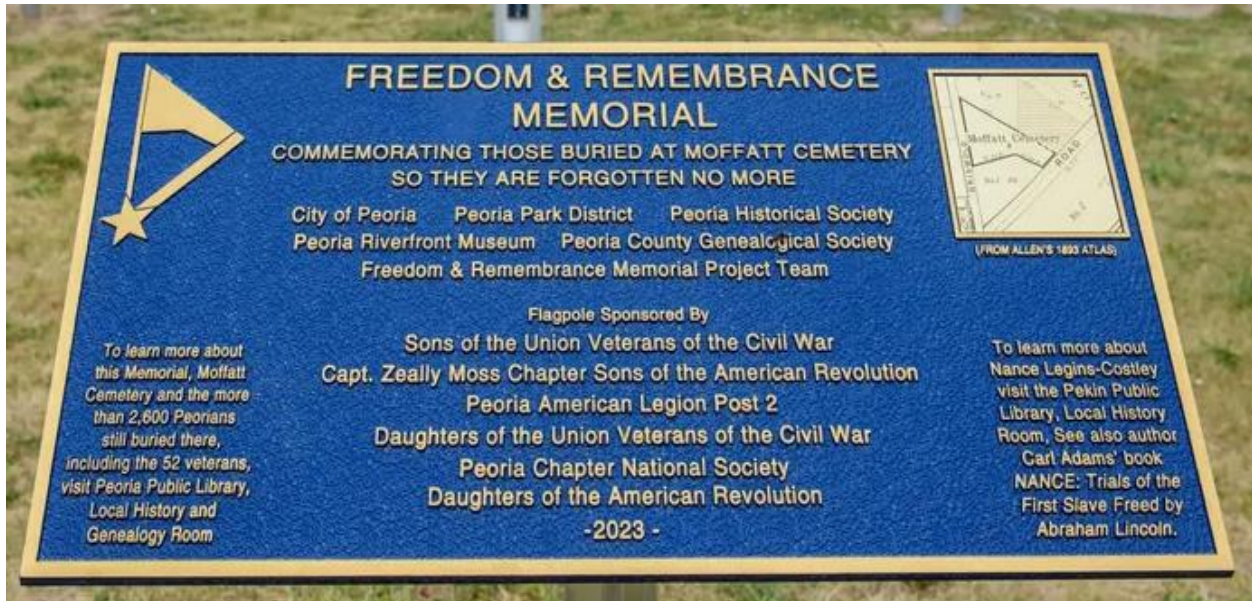


13

**Commemorating those buried at Peoria's Moffatt Cemetery so  
"They Are Forgotten No More"**



# FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE M E M O R I A L



## The Freedom & Remembrance Memorial is composed of five key elements:

The **Commemoration Storyboard**, shown above, provides general information, including the location of the lost cemetery (upper right) also represented by the memorial logo (upper left); recognition of community partners and flagpole sponsors; and where to find out more about those who remain buried there.

One ISHS marker tells the story of **Peoria's Moffatt Cemetery**, its founder Aquilla Moffatt, and highlights of some of those buried who are of particular interest.

Another marker identifies the **52 Veterans** known buried there, including their names, ranks, companies, and regiments. Some veterans of note are highlighted.

The third marker tells the story of **Nance Legins-Costley** who is known to history as the first enslaved person young lawyer Abraham Lincoln helped free in a landmark Illinois State Supreme Court case in 1841 which ended indentured servitude.

The **solar-lighted flagpole** is purposely centered to highlight and call attention to our Nation, the veterans, and all of our citizens who remain there yet today.



# FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE

## M E M O R I A L



### PEORIA'S MOFFATT CEMETERY

AQUILLA MOFFATT ARRIVED HERE IN 1822 AND BEGAN MINING AND MILLING VENTURES. ON RETURN FROM THE BLACK HAWK WAR, HE BUILT HIS HOME ON SOUTH ADAMS STREET AND SET ASIDE A SMALL BURYING GROUND FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. AFTER THE CIVIL WAR HE NAMED AN ADJACENT PARCEL "UNION CEMETERY" FOR THOSE VETERANS. IN THE 1870s HE SOLD THESE PARCELS ALONG WITH THE LAND BORDERING ADAMS AND GRISWOLD STREETS TO INVESTORS WHO FORMED THE MOFFATT CEMETERY ASSOCIATION. BURIALS INCREASED RAPIDLY UNTIL IT WAS ORDERED CLOSED IN 1905. THE CEMETERY WAS ABANDONED AND EFFORTS TO SAVE IT OVER FIVE DECADES WERE UNSUCCESSFUL. COURT ACTIONS IN THE 1950s GATHERED SHARE RIGHTS, THE PROPERTY WAS REZONED, GRAVESTONES AND TREES WERE CLEARED, AND PARCELS WERE SOLD TO BUSINESSES. CEMETERY RECORDS WERE THOUGHT LOST AND THOSE BURIED THERE RELOCATED, BUT ONLY ABOUT 100 TRANSFERS ARE KNOWN. UNDERTAKER REPORTS STORED FOR A CENTURY WERE FOUND, WHICH DOCUMENT BURIALS OF ABOUT 2,500 INDIVIDUALS. RECENT RESEARCH HAS FOUND MORE THAN 200 ADDITIONAL BURIALS. TODAY, 2,600 INDIVIDUALS KNOWN BY NAME STILL LIE BURIED THERE. ONE IS NANCE LEGINS-COSTLEY, THE FIRST ENSLAVED PERSON ABRAHAM LINCOLN HELPED FREE IN AN 1841 ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT CASE. FIFTY-TWO VETERANS WERE INTERRED: 49 UNION CIVIL WAR SOLDIERS, INCLUDING AN AFRICAN AMERICAN WHO WAS AT JUNETEENTH IN GALVESTON TEXAS, AND ONE EACH FROM THE 1792 VIRGINIA MILITIA, THE WAR OF 1812, AND THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR. ALSO INTERRED ARE REMAINS OF UNKNOWN BURIED IN A MASS GRAVE THAT WERE REMOVED IN 46 CRATES FROM PEORIA'S FIRST PUBLIC CEMETERY DURING WORK ALONG LINCOLN AVENUE. THOSE BURIED AT MOFFATT CEMETERY ARE A CROSS SECTION OF OUR COMMUNITY. MANY ARE INFANTS AND CHILDREN, MOST ARE HARD-WORKING IMMIGRANTS, AFRICAN AMERICANS AND OTHERS, WHO DESERVE TO BE "FORGOTTEN NO MORE."

SPONSORED BY  
UNITED UNION OF ROOFERS LOCAL #69, CITY OF PEORIA, PEORIA PARK DISTRICT,  
THE WILLIAM G. POMEROY FOUNDATION, ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

2022



# FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE

## M E M O R I A L



THIS PLAQUE DEDICATED BY  
 COLONEL JOHN C. BRYNER, CAMP 67  
 SONS OF THE UNION VETERANS OF THE CIVIL WAR  
 IN MEMORY OF VETERANS INTERRED IN MOFFATT CEMETERY

VETERAN	RANK	CO.	REGIMENT	VETERAN	RANK	CO.	REGIMENT
AMSLER, HENRY	PVT	G	14 IL INF CONS	JENKS, WM. H.	TMST		
ANDERSON, SIMEON	PVT	A	151 IL INF	KEELEY, WM.	PVT	G	26 IA INF
ASHBY, NATHAN ★★	PVT	G	29 USCT	LAWLESS, THOS. W.	PVT	C,E	139 IL INF
BAYLES, DANIEL	PVT		OH MILITIA, 1812	LOCK, HANSON	PVT	K	12 IN CAV
BOOTON, LABON			VA MILITIA, 1792	LONG THOMAS	PVT	I	146 IL INF
BOXLEY, NED/JOHN	PVT	E,B	3 IL CAV	MAIN/MAINE, WM. B.	PVT	I	17 IL INF
BRACKLEY, ALBERT				McCRESTAL, JAMES	PVT	D	17 IL INF
BRADSHAW, THOS. H.	PVT	E	51 IL INF	MILLER, ANTON	PVT	E	37 IL INF
CARROLL, JOHN	PVT		108 IL INF	MOFFATT, THOS. ★ SpAm	PVT	L	5 IL INF
DAGNAN, JOHN	PVT	F	47 IL INF	MOND, AUGUST	PVT	E,I	8 IL INF
DAVIS, WM. E.	PVT	B	125 OH INF	PITCHER, JAMES	WAG	M	14 IL CAV
DELBRATT, JAMES				REED, ANGUS	PVT	H	86 IL INF
DERBY, JOSEPH W.	PVT	G	14 IL INF CONS	SHAW, JABEZ	PVT	A	2 IL LART
DEWITT, JAMES				SMITH, AUSTIN	REV		
EDGAR, WM. S.	SURG	HQ	32 IL INF	SMITH, JOHN N.	PVT	K	14 IL CAV
ELLINGTON, GEO. ★	PVT	E	139 IL INF	STARK, GEO.			
ELLINGTON, JOSHUA	PVT	B	73 OH INF	SUMNER, LEVI	CPL	D	79 IL INF
ERB, DANIEL L.	CPL	E	79 PA INF	SWARTWOOD, WM.	PVT	F,D	47 IL INF
FOLKERS, GEO. W.	PVT	A	48 IL INF	TAYLOR, WM. F.	PVT	C	148 IL INF
FREED, JOSEPH D.	2LT	B	31 PA INF	THOMAS, HARRY			
GARBER, NOAH	PVT	G	108 IL INF	UPHOLD, HENRY	PVT	E	139 IL INF
GILSTRAP, LEVI	PVT	F	146 IL INF	VENTERS, WM.	PVT	A	2 IL LART
GLASS, WM. M.	CPL	A	55 IL INF	WEBSTER, WM. H.	PVT	F	47 IL INF
HALEY, GEO. W.	PVT	H	8 IL INF	WEIMER, JOHN M.	PVT	C	1 IL LART
HEDRICK, HIRAM	PVT	D	11 IL CAV	WILLIS, JACKSON	PVT	F	47 IL INF
HOLLEY, GRANVILLE V.	PVT	C	155 IN INF	WORMUTH, GEO. L.	PVT	B	115 NY INF

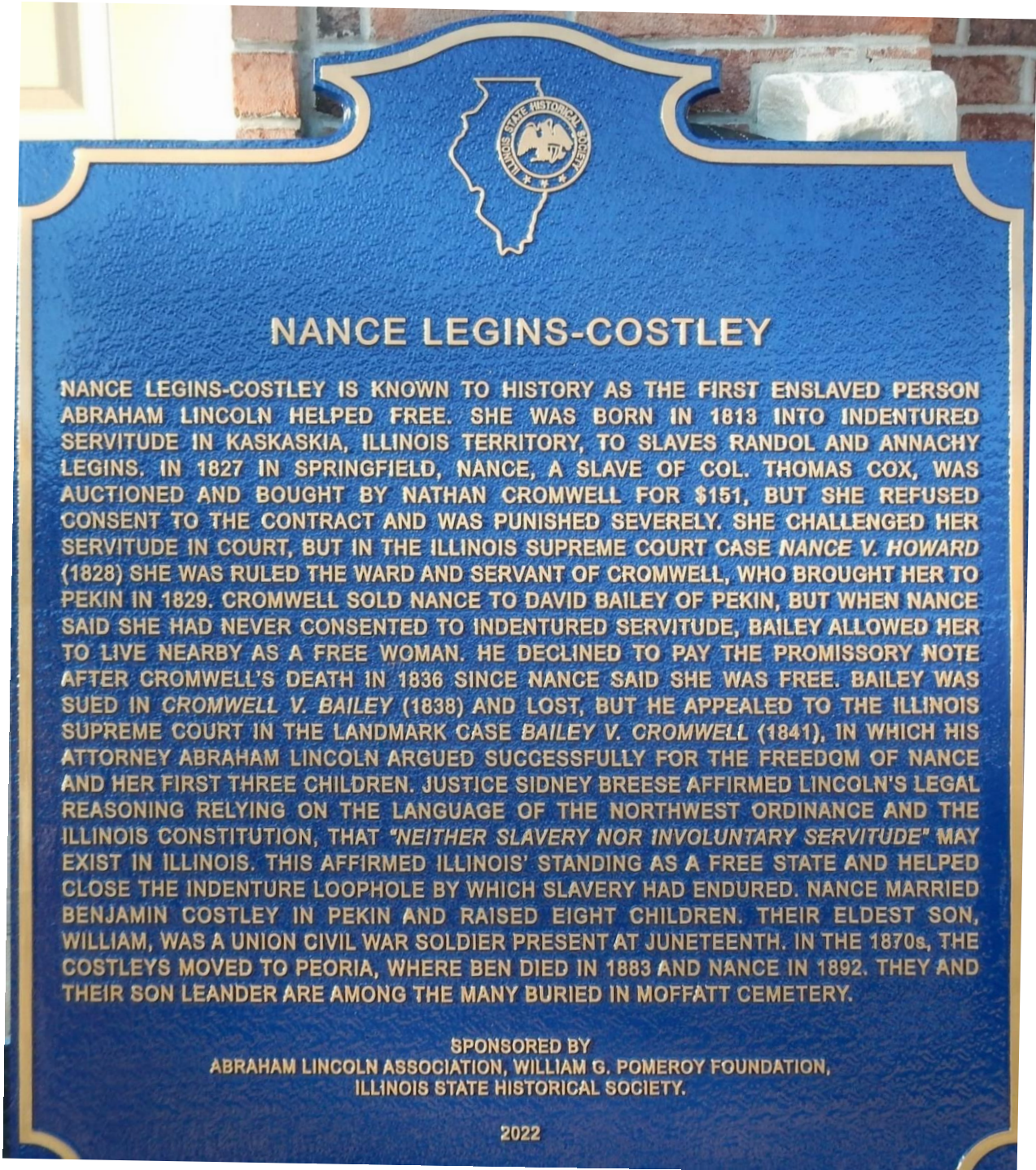
★ MOVED TO SPRINGDALE CEMETERY ★★ PRESENT AT ORIGINAL JUNETEENTH





# FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE

## M E M O R I A L



### NANCE LEGINS-COSTLEY

NANCE LEGINS-COSTLEY IS KNOWN TO HISTORY AS THE FIRST ENSLAVED PERSON ABRAHAM LINCOLN HELPED FREE. SHE WAS BORN IN 1813 INTO INDENTURED SERVITUDE IN KASKASKIA, ILLINOIS TERRITORY, TO SLAVES RANDOL AND ANNACHY LEGINS. IN 1827 IN SPRINGFIELD, NANCE, A SLAVE OF COL. THOMAS COX, WAS AUCTIONED AND BOUGHT BY NATHAN CROMWELL FOR \$151, BUT SHE REFUSED CONSENT TO THE CONTRACT AND WAS PUNISHED SEVERELY. SHE CHALLENGED HER SERVITUDE IN COURT, BUT IN THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT CASE *NANCE V. HOWARD* (1828) SHE WAS RULED THE WARD AND SERVANT OF CROMWELL, WHO BROUGHT HER TO PEKIN IN 1829. CROMWELL SOLD NANCE TO DAVID BAILEY OF PEKIN, BUT WHEN NANCE SAID SHE HAD NEVER CONSENTED TO INDENTURED SERVITUDE, BAILEY ALLOWED HER TO LIVE NEARBY AS A FREE WOMAN. HE DECLINED TO PAY THE PROMISSORY NOTE AFTER CROMWELL'S DEATH IN 1836 SINCE NANCE SAID SHE WAS FREE. BAILEY WAS SUED IN *CROMWELL V. BAILEY* (1838) AND LOST, BUT HE APPEALED TO THE ILLINOIS SUPREME COURT IN THE LANDMARK CASE *BAILEY V. CROMWELL* (1841), IN WHICH HIS ATTORNEY ABRAHAM LINCOLN ARGUED SUCCESSFULLY FOR THE FREEDOM OF NANCE AND HER FIRST THREE CHILDREN. JUSTICE SIDNEY BREESE AFFIRMED LINCOLN'S LEGAL REASONING RELYING ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE NORTHWEST ORDINANCE AND THE ILLINOIS CONSTITUTION, THAT "NEITHER SLAVERY NOR INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE" MAY EXIST IN ILLINOIS. THIS AFFIRMED ILLINOIS' STANDING AS A FREE STATE AND HELPED CLOSE THE INDENTURE LOOPHOLE BY WHICH SLAVERY HAD ENDURED. NANCE MARRIED BENJAMIN COSTLEY IN PEKIN AND RAISED EIGHT CHILDREN. THEIR ELDEST SON, WILLIAM, WAS A UNION CIVIL WAR SOLDIER PRESENT AT JUNETEENTH. IN THE 1870s, THE COSTLEYS MOVED TO PEORIA, WHERE BEN DIED IN 1883 AND NANCE IN 1892. THEY AND THEIR SON LEANDER ARE AMONG THE MANY BURIED IN MOFFATT CEMETERY.

SPONSORED BY  
ABRAHAM LINCOLN ASSOCIATION, WILLIAM G. POMEROY FOUNDATION,  
ILLINOIS STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

2022

# THE CELEBRATION PROGRAM – AS PRESENTED

**Flag Day – June 14, 2023** was the obvious date to hold this historic event to honor and commemorate more than 2,600 Peorians still buried at the old Moffatt Cemetery. It was a beautiful late-spring day, the program was filled with very meaningful speakers and patriotic expressions, and the large gathering was very encouraging and appreciative.

Call to Order	Colleen Johnson - MC
Posting of the Colors	City of Peoria Firefighters Color Guard
Pledge of Allegiance	Mayor Rita Ali, City of Peoria
Welcome, Opening Remarks	Mayor Rita Ali, City of Peoria
Keynote Remarks	Juliana Stratton, Illinois Lt. Governor
Acknowledge Special Guests, Sponsors, & Project Team	MC
Recognitions:	
Peoria and Community	Denise Jackson, 1 <sup>st</sup> Dist. Council Member
State and National	Charles Stanley, ISHS Board Member and Markers Committee Chairman
Commemorations:	
Forgotten Peorians	Bob Hoffer, Local History Enthusiast
Nance Legins-Costley	Carl Adams, Lincoln Historian, Author
The 52 Veterans	Joe Hutchinson, SUVCW Officer and Genealogist
Closing Comments, Introduce Moment of Silent Reflection	Rev. Marvin Hightower, Pres. Peoria NAACP
Battle Hymn of the Republic	Sherry Carter-Allen, Vocal Artist
Amazing Grace	Kevin Nickerson, Bagpipes Artist
Retiring of the Colors	Peoria American Legion Post 2 Color Guard
Attended by:	Historical Honor Guard, Sons of the American Revolution

Note of Thanks and Invitation to Visit the Memorial MC  
*(Photos and transcriptions of all speakers' remarks are on the Project Website)*

**PROJECT RESULT: COMPLETED MEMORIAL**



Sunset -- Flag Day -- June 14, 2023

# AWARD GUIDELINES & EXPECTATIONS

## GENERAL AWARD ELIGIBILITY

The Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project has definitely and significantly “furthered collection, preservation, and interpretation of several aspects of Illinois History” centered around Peoria’s abandoned, forgotten, but now found and documented Moffatt Cemetery which was extremely active in the Nineteenth Century. Accounts that all buried there had been moved and that all burial records were lost proved to be untrue.

Key to this project was discovery then transcription, documentation, and preservation by members of Peoria County Genealogical Society of Peoria Undertaker Reports not referenced for over a century. These old books contained more than 32,000 death and burial records, at least 2,500 of which were for Moffatt Cemetery. They are also the only death and burial records for as many as 3,500 other area individuals as records were lost at several cemeteries. These records are now preserved in digitized photographs, verified transcriptions, computer-accessible files, and hard-bound books.

Other aspects of and relationship to Illinois history highlighted by this project include: Fifty-two veterans documented as buried at Moffatt Cemetery, including 49 Union Civil War soldiers, one of whom was in the United States Colored Troops and was at the original Juneteenth with General Granger in Galveston, Texas on June 19, 1865; one soldier buried there served in the Spanish-American War, another in the War of 1812, and one in the 1792 Virginia Militia. Daniel Boone was provisioner to this unit.

Several resting there have links to the American Revolution, including the last three mentioned immediately above and Jesse Boone Holliday, Daniel Boone’s great-grandson. Most notably, the first enslaved person Abraham Lincoln helped free in an 1841 Illinois State Supreme Court case, Nance Legins-Costley, was discovered to still be resting there with her husband Benjamin and one son, Leander.

## SPECIAL PROJECT CRITERIA

Definition: This project was initiated in 2017 and completed in 2023 as a one-time specific effort developed, implemented, and also documented with Illinois State Historical Society cast metal markers and storyboard to achieve the specific purpose of commemorating those buried at Moffatt Cemetery so they are “Forgotten No More.”

Expectation: The Project Team believes these efforts and the resulting memorial have, without doubt, significantly increased awareness of local, Illinois and National history.

## EVIDENCE OF RECOGNITION

Extensive evidence of recognition for Peoria's Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Project is provided by the large numbers of Community, State and National Partners, Donors, and Media organizations listed here and detailed later in this package:

### **PARTNERS:**

- City of Peoria
- Peoria Park District
- Peoria Historical Society
- Peoria Riverfront Museum
- Peoria Housing Authority
- Peoria County Genealogical Society
- Tazewell County Genealogical & Historical Society
- Illinois State Historical Society

### **DONORS:**

- Peoria United Union of Roofers Local #69
- Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War:
  - o Col. John C. Bryner Camp #67, Peoria
  - o Illinois Department
  - o National Organization
- Peoria Chapter, National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution
- Capt. Zeally Moss Chapter, National Society, Sons of the American Revolution
- Peoria American Legion Post 2
- Peoria Flag & Decorating Co.
- Illinois State Historical Society
- The Abraham Lincoln Association
- William G. Pomeroy Foundation of New York

### **MEDIA:**

- WEEK-TV - NBC Network Affiliate
- WMBD-TV - CBS Network Affiliate & WMBD-FM
- Peoria Journal Star
- City of Peoria – Facebook pages
- Peoria Magazine
- Peoria County Chronicle
- Traveler Weekly – Peoria's Longest Running Black Newspaper
- WCBU-FM - NPR Network Affiliate & WCBU.org
- Mixcloud.com
- ISHS *Illinois Heritage* Magazine
- USA Today & Gannet Brands media outlets

# **MEDIA COVERAGE - SUMMARY**

(Number of Known Coverage Instances)

## **PROJECT TEAM COVERAGE**

- Website (Extensive – Life of Project)
- Facebook Pages (Extensive – Life of Project)
- Project Video on YouTube (Extensive – Most of Project)

## **COMMUNITY COVERAGE**

- WEEK-TV – NBC Network Affiliate (6)
- WMBD-TV – CBS Network Affiliate & WMBD-FM (4)
- Peoria Journal Star (1)
- City of Peoria – Facebook (1)
- Peoria Magazine (1)
- Peoria County Chronicle (1)
- Traveler Weekly – Peoria’s First Black Newspaper (2)
- WCBU-FM -- NPR Network Affiliate & WCBU.org (3)
- MIXCLOUD.COM (1)
- Peoria Riverfront Museum - Facebook pages (4)

## **STATE COVERAGE**

- Illinois State Historical Society (5)

## **NATIONAL COVERAGE**

- USA Today (1)
- Gannet Brands – Other media outlets (many; exact # unknown)

# PEORIA CITY COUNCIL BRIEFING & VIDEO CONTENT MATERIALS

The following briefing materials were provided to the Peoria City Council and Mayor of Peoria ahead of their February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, meeting to approve purchase of the memorial site, officially name the site Freedom & Remembrance Memorial Park, and recognize the Freedom & Remembrance Memorial. Some of the points in this piece, originally produced and slightly updated during 2023, may now be somewhat dated or incomplete.

Most of this material was also included in the Promotional Video which can be found on the Project Website in the 'Home' section at:

<https://peoriafreedommemorial.org/>

or simply clicking here below for just the video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YEqrnqhzhc>

The Project Facebook pages provided an ongoing account of the efforts, and can be found at:

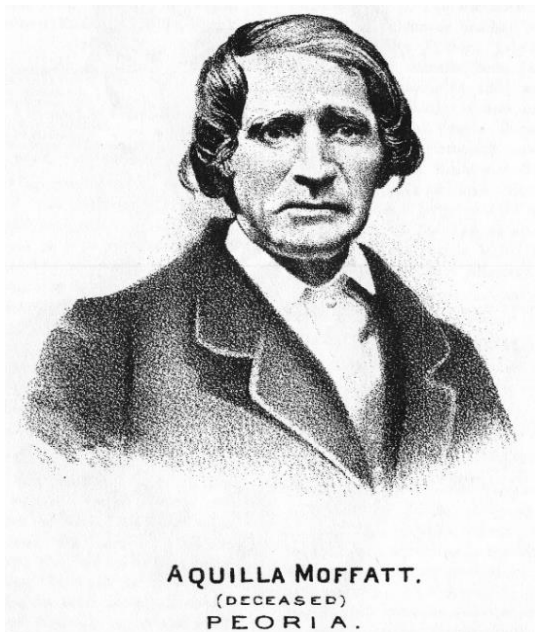
<https://www.facebook.com/peoriafreedommemorial/>

## THE MOFFATT CEMETERY STORY

Peoria's centuries-long history has international and patriotic roots as well as ties to national social justice and equity movements being revisited today. Our City's story also includes forgotten mysteries, some of which are tied to a nineteenth-century South Side cemetery now used for storage and light industry. Who started it; who is buried there; how did it disappear and how is it tied to Abraham Lincoln? The surprising answers span two centuries.

This all started when my wife asked me to find her Great-Grandfather's grave. He was an immigrant who worked in the rail yards and later a tenant-farmer. Family lore said he died on the steps of the Swedish Lutheran Church on Christmas morning 1885 which turned out to be mostly true. However, what seemed like a simple quest became something much more. The first clue was in old transcripts of coroner notes at Peoria Public Library where one said, "Wife had him buried at Moffatt." From this one line unfolded a much larger, and amazing story.

When Aquilla Moffatt came to Peoria in 1822 with his father and brother there were four cabins; they built the fifth near the river at the current State St.



Pen and Ink Drawing – Peoria Public Library

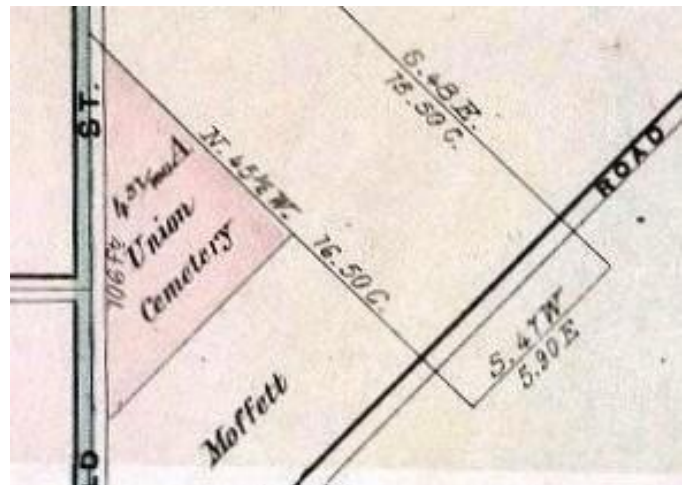
He immediately started several mining and milling businesses and after the 1832 Black Hawk War he built a stately home on South Adams and set aside a small burying ground nearby for family and friends.



3917 S Adams St. (1832-1949) -- Peoria Public Library

In 1836 he received a large land grant and began to develop South Peoria. After the Civil War he named a parcel near his home 'Union Cemetery' intending it for later use by returning veterans.

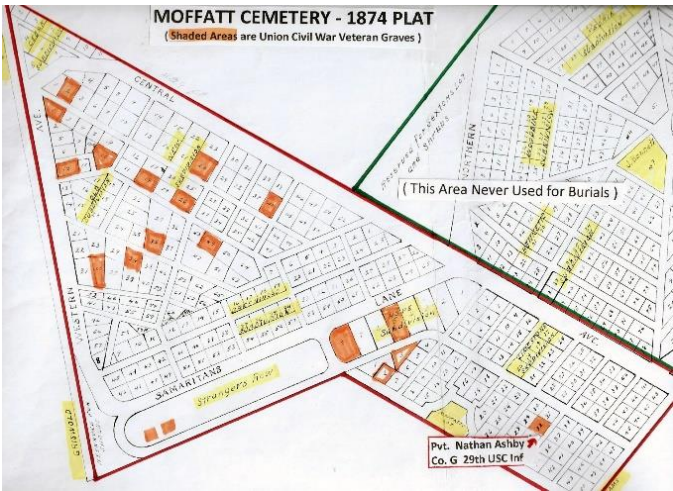
24



1869 Peoria Atlas – Peoria Public Library

In the 1870s he sold this parcel and the rectangular shaped land bordering Adams Street to investors who issued shares forming the Moffatt Cemetery Association. (*Shaded areas: known veteran graves.*)





1874 Plat – Peoria County Recorder of Deeds  
Large Area to the Right was never used for burials.

Investors used his name out of respect and recognition though he had no connection with the cemetery association. Burials increased rapidly until the City ordered it to close in 1905. It was soon abandoned and became a dumping ground and community eyesore. Various efforts over five decades to clean it up and save it ultimately failed.

Court actions in the 1950s gathered association share rights and the cemetery was declared defunct. Gravestones, trees, and overgrowth were cleared; the site was rezoned to light industrial, and parcels were sold to businesses.



Aerial View – 2015 USDA Photo  
Actual Cemetery Used Shown in Outlined Area

25



Peoria Journal Transcript 9/13/1936 – Montage Photo  
Peoria Public Library



Current View of old Cemetery Site from Griswold Street



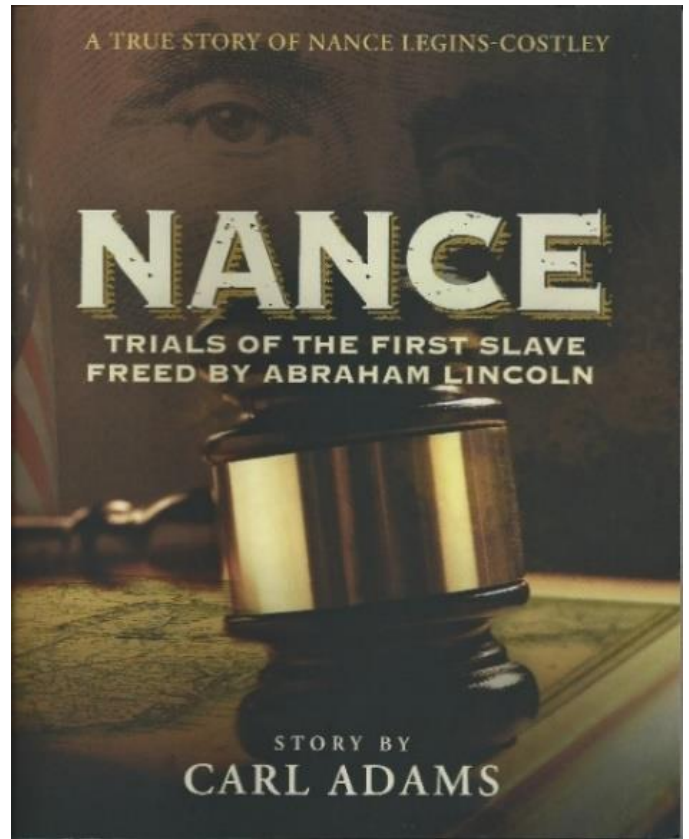
Current View of old Cemetery Site from Adams Street  
“Mr. Quick” drive-in was on gravesites here in the 1960s

Cemetery association records were said to be lost and those buried there had been moved, but fewer than 100 transfers have been documented. Fortunately for Peoria's history, Health Department 'Undertaker Report' books (1872-1915), unused and stored for over a century, were found at the Peoria Courthouse. These books record the death and burial of over 32,000 individuals, with over 2,500 at Moffatt Cemetery. About 200 other burials are documented resulting in over 2,600 persons, now known by name, who still lie at Moffatt Cemetery.



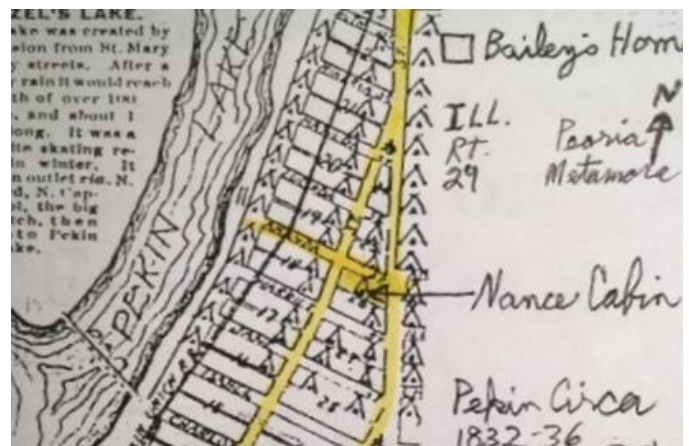
These huge old books were transcribed by Peoria County Genealogical Society members producing a database and bound volumes now available to the public. They are believed to contain the only known such records for as many as 3,500 Peorians, because of those lost at other cemeteries over the decades.

Who are these forgotten Peorians at Moffatt Cemetery? Perhaps the most famous is Nance Legins-Costley, known to history as the first enslaved person Abraham Lincoln helped free. Discovery of her burial location helped complete work by Lincoln historian Carl Adams to document her unrelenting quest for freedom in his book of her life and the efforts of her emancipator.



Nance's story is one of perseverance in pursuit of her freedom. She was born in 1813 into indentured servitude in Kaskaskia and in 1826 when just age 13 auctioned and bought for \$151; she refused consent to the contract and was punished severely. Nance challenged her servitude in court but was ruled a 'ward and servant' and then brought to Pekin in 1829 where she was sold to David Bailey. When Nance said she had never consented to indentured servitude, Bailey allowed her to live nearby as a free woman and declined to pay the promissory note.

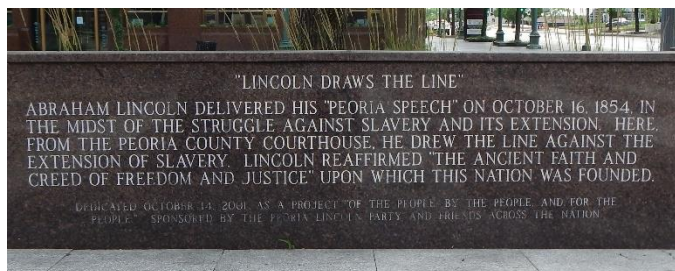
26



Wm. H. Bates 1910 Map of Pekin – Pekin Public Library

Bailey was sued and lost but appealed to the Illinois Supreme Court in the landmark case *Bailey v. Cromwell* (1841), where his attorney Abraham Lincoln argued successfully for the freedom of Nance and her first three children. Lincoln’s legal reasoning relied on the language of the Northwest Ordinance and the Illinois Constitution, that “neither slavery nor involuntary servitude” may exist in Illinois. This affirmed Illinois’ standing as a free state and helped close the indenture loophole by which slavery had endured. Nance’s story has been told in articles published nationwide in the past few years.

This court case had a profound effect on young lawyer Lincoln and his views toward slavery. Thirteen years later in his famous “Peoria Speech” he drew the line against slavery when he said: “There can be no moral right in connection with one man’s making a slave of another.”



Lincoln Memorial -- Peoria County Courthouse Plaza



Charles Overall's Painting of Lincoln in Peoria 1854

Nance married Benjamin Costley in Pekin and raised eight children. Their eldest son, William, was a Union Civil War soldier in the US Colored Troops present at the original Juneteenth in Galveston TX. In the 1870s, the Costleys moved to Peoria where Ben died in 1883 and was buried at Moffatt. When Nance died in 1892, she was living with her daughter Amanda at 226 N Adams.



Photo of 226 N Adams Street – Peoria Public Library

27

Interestingly, from there one can today see the Abraham Lincoln mural on the Peoria Courthouse:

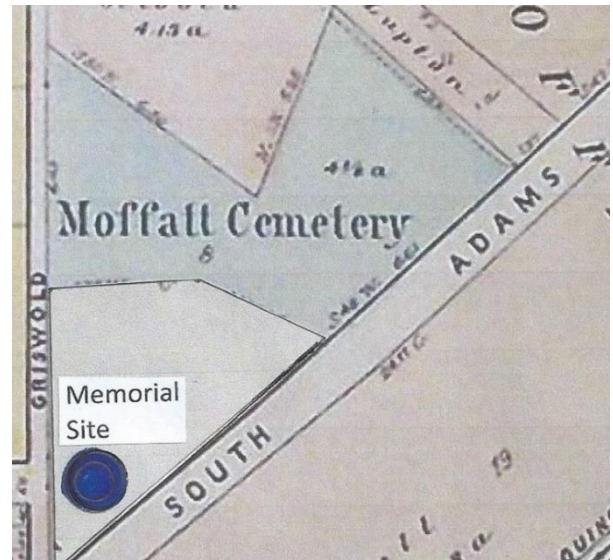


'Lincoln Blue' Mural, Peoria County Courthouse

Fifty-two veterans are also known to have been interred at Moffatt Cemetery: 49 were Union Civil War soldiers, including Nathan Ashby who was also in the US Colored Troops at Juneteenth; and one each from the 1792 Virginia Militia, the War of 1812, and the Spanish-American War. Several have ancestors who served in the Revolutionary War.

In addition to known persons at Moffatt Cemetery, there are also remains of uncountable unknowns buried in one mass grave. They were removed in 46 'soap boxes' from Peoria's old public cemetery while installing utilities along Lincoln Avenue in 1903.

All remaining at Moffatt Cemetery are a cross section of our community and region. More than half are infants and children; some are indigents; many are immigrants; more than 50 are African Americans; and more than a thousand are just early Peorians. They should all be: "Forgotten No More."



1896 Peoria Atlas – Peoria Public Library

## THE PLANNED MEMORIAL



A small group of local volunteers is working to create a memorial to commemorate those buried at Moffatt Cemetery who helped build and preserve our region, State and Nation. The name of the memorial evokes respect for the veterans and Nance Legins-Costley who fought for freedoms we enjoy today and calls all visitors to remember the more than 2,600 still buried there who have been forgotten for so long, right here in their hometown. The logo in red, white, and blue is shaped to represent the site of the monument, the bordering City streets, and the Moffatt Cemetery parcel itself.

The highly visible memorial site is on the inside corner of SW Adams and Griswold Streets. This location is on the original property of Aquilla Moffatt's house and is near but not on the actual cemetery parcels. (*Note: the large 'suarish' area to the right in the 1896 atlas illustration was never used for burials. It is now a separate parcel of land.*)

The small parcel for the memorial is being donated by the United Union of Roofers Local #69 whose office and training building is now approximately where Aquilla Moffatt's house stood for 117 years. The South Side memorial site has very high traffic volumes and ideal visibility from all directions.

28



Memorial Site Viewed from Across Adams Street

The site will be larger than the grassy area below.

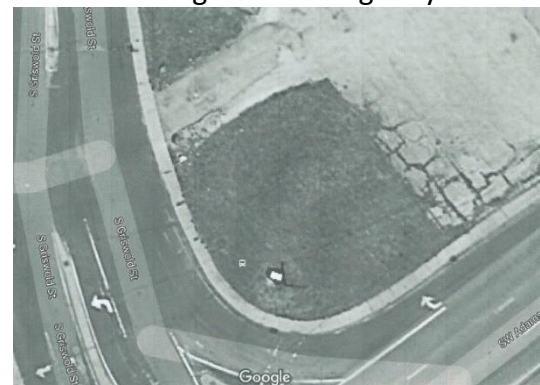
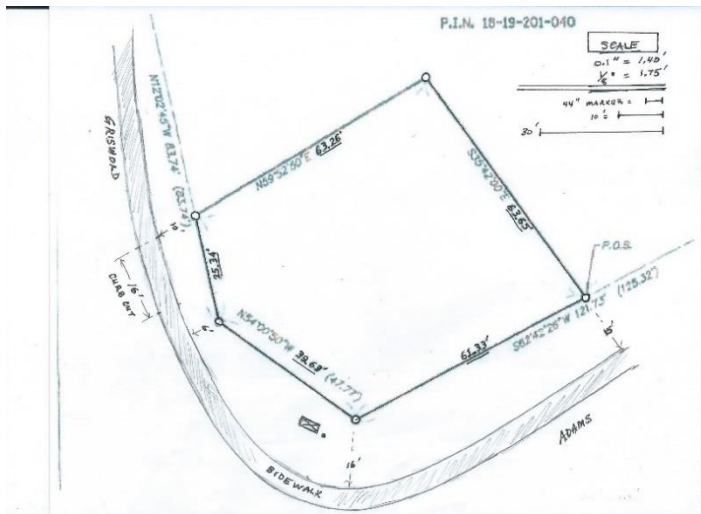


Photo: Google Maps

The finished markers on display downtown:



The Veterans Marker at Peoria Riverfront Museum



Sketch of Surveyed Memorial Parcel scaled to the Corner.

The key element of the memorial consists of three large (approximately 4' wide by over 4' tall and 115 lbs. each) cast aluminum Illinois State Historical Society (ISHS) markers set in an arc of a 15' radius.



Illinois State Historical Society Markers  
 Rendering of Marker Arrangement on Site  
 (Actual mountings will be large single poles)



The Moffatt and Nance Legins-Costley Markers  
 at Peoria Park District's RiverPlex Center

The left marker in the memorial tells the story of Peoria's Moffatt Cemetery and is sponsored by the United Union of Roofers Local #69, City of Peoria, Peoria Park District, William G. Pomeroy Foundation (of NY), and the Illinois State Historical Society.

The center marker highlights the Veterans -- names, ranks, companies, units, and service. This marker is sponsored by our local Colonel John C. Bryner Camp 67 of the Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War with State and National SUVCW grants and funding.

The right marker tells the story of Nance Legins-Costley and her unrelenting quest for freedom. It is sponsored by the national Abraham Lincoln Association, the William G. Pomeroy Foundation (of NY), and the Illinois State Historical Society.

In the memorial arc center will be a commercial grade 30' tall solar-lighted flagpole with internal halyard and security mechanisms. Completing the memorial will be a storyboard stand and 16" x 33' information panel located a short distance out from the flagpole opposite the center marker. This element, an example of which is shown below, will recognize sponsors of the flagpole which are at this time the SUVCW, DUVCW, Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), American Legion Post 2, and Peoria Chapter National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).



Example of Storyboard – Photo: Peoria Heights

The Storyboard will also tell visitors where they can find additional information about the various subjects and the memorial itself, including Peoria Public Library and Pekin Public Library.

## A COMMUNITY PROJECT OF NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Peoria's Freedom & Remembrance Memorial commemorates our forgotten citizens, many of whom were involved in shaping State and National events. This soon became apparent across our community and beyond.

Local partners quickly stepped forward to work together: Peoria Historical Society (PHS) (501c3); Peoria Riverfront Museum (displays, events); City of Peoria (own site and memorial, install flagpole); Peoria Park District (install markers); Peoria County Genealogical Society (PCGS) and Tazewell County Genealogical & Historical Society. Very significantly, the private organization of United Union of Roofers Local #69 generously made a very appropriate South Side neighborhood site available on land first owned by Aquilla Moffatt. Local history enthusiasts and scattered others soon began making contributions.

Illinois organizations soon joined in with Illinois State Historical Society (ISHS) as our strategic partner, both contributing funds and successfully advocating for valuable grants. ISHS sponsorship ensures widespread communication of the memorial, its location, meaning and relationship to other Abraham Lincoln historic sites. National grants came from: Sons of the Union Veterans of the Civil War honoring 49 fellow soldiers; Abraham Lincoln Association, William G. Pomeroy Foundation, Capt., Zeally Moss Chapter Sons of the American Revolution (SAR), Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War, and Peoria Chapter Natl. Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

Funding of memorial elements will be completed and gifted to the City. Appropriate installation, dedication and celebration events will be planned and announced.

The Project Team thanks all who made this possible: Carl Adams, formerly of Pekin: Lincoln historian, author; Jared Olar, Pekin: genealogist, Pekin Public Library History Room; Joe Hutchinson, East Peoria: SUVCW officer, genealogist; David Pittman, West Peoria: local activist, VP Peoria NAACP Exec. Comm.; Bill Poorman, Peoria: writer, educator, social media consultant; and Bob Hoffer, Peoria: history enthusiast, member PHS, PCGS, ISHS, and SAR..

(Slightly Edited 11/23)

# FREEDOM & REMEMBRANCE MEMORIAL



**Commemorating those buried at Peoria’s Moffatt Cemetery so  
“They Are Forgotten No More”**

