

2020 IH Grantee Spotlight with:
BETSY BROWN

**Board member and Education Programs Coordinator at the
GEN. JOHN A. LOGAN MUSEUM**

PROJECT: *Junior Docent Camp (approved Dec. 2019)*

LOCATION: Murphysboro, IL

ORGANIZATION:

The General John A. Logan Museum is located in Logan's hometown of Murphysboro, population 7,500, eight miles west of Carbondale. Established in 1989, it occupies a large nineteenth-century house and owns many of the adjacent properties and buildings. Its exhibitions and programs explore Logan's life and career, the region's role in and experience of the Civil War, and many other facets of life in nineteenth-century southern Illinois. John A. Logan represented much of southern Illinois in Congress when the Civil War began. His support for the Union cause grew more fervent over the course of the war. He is the namesake of Logan Square in Chicago and Logan Circle in Washington, DC.



PROJECT:

The General John A. Logan Museum plans to hold a week-long day camp in July for students entering eighth through twelfth grades who are interested in becoming junior docents at the museum. It will include opportunities to learn about site interpretation, historical and archaeological research, artisanal skills such as spinning and weaving, and nineteenth-century games. The camp is intended to develop a pool of young volunteers who can conduct activities at the museum. It also aims to teach them knowledge and skills that they can apply in other contexts within the community and beyond.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

 Learn more on loganmuseum.org

 Like on Facebook at www.facebook.com/generaljohnloganmuseum



Q&A SESSION:

***The Q&A session was moderated by Mark Hallett, Program Manager, Grants on March 20, 2020.*

Question: *What is the most important thing people should know about your work?*

Betsy: *We're important to the town of Murphysboro, because Logan was born not far from where the museum is, literally across the yard. His actual boyhood home burned down, but buildings from the homestead still exist and the museum occupies one of these homes. In 1885, that homestead was broken up; large lots were sold, and houses built not that close together. It's important because this is the actual location where he walked. He and Daniel Brush – the founder of Carbondale – had horses and raced along the track where the gardens are now. You get the feeling. We still have brick streets around the area, on the block where the home is located. This is not a reproduction, it's the real thing. You feel like you've been transported to another time and place.*

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Question: *How do you see the arts/culture/humanities as being essential?*

Betsy: *Wow. People learn by either doing or by seeing examples. And you can give people books to read. But you need to have a broader experience in life. I firmly believe in the dramatic arts. I believe in the performance category of history fair. I was a sponsor. Living history – you get to see it done. It is so impressive. Without it, life would be so flat. Not to get too political, but if some individuals knew their history better, we'd be in better shape today. You have to know your history. And you have to show it in a variety of ways, because learning styles are different, and you need to address that. The [Illinois Humanities] Road Scholar program – people come, portray different figures in history. It's always fascinating.*

Question: *Anything else you'd like to add?*

Betsy: *Just that I have my personal passion, and that is getting children involved. I'm a retired teacher, taught in Carbondale for many years. It's a wonderful school district. That's actually how I got started here, creating a program on the Civil War. The Civil War was just one chapter, a short chapter in our textbook, but was so pivotal to what has happened to our country. I did programs with the museum, where I'd bring 5th grade boys and girls to perform Chautauquas. The students researched 1850 to 1910, Logan's primary period of influence, and then they'd perform for kids – kids older than they were. And it all took place in historic buildings. It was wonderful. The museum has a collection of costumes, and we had a Civil War ball at school. We raised money for a 5-piece bluegrass band to come and play.*