

THE O'FALLON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Presents the

2008 LOCAL HISTORY RESEARCH CONTEST



- ☞ **What is the contest about?** We want you to discover something new about something old! Dig into the local area's history and research its historical past and tell us what you found. "Local area" is defined as anywhere within the boundaries of OTHS District 203, plus Scott Air Force Base.
- ☞ **Who can enter?** Any high school-aged student attending OTHS or living within the boundaries of OTHS District 203—this includes O'Fallon Township and most of Caseyville and Shiloh Valley Townships.
- ☞ **What does the winner get?** First place: \$200 Series EE U S Savings Bond; second place: \$50 bond.
- ☞ **When are entries due?** April 20, 2008 at contest@ofallonhistory.net
- ☞ **What should I write about?** Contestants are asked to find something interesting in the local area's history. The topic may be about a famous, infamous or otherwise significant individual; businesses; pioneer families; Scott Air Force Base or military history of the area; the cultural foundation of the area; building or geographic landmarks; etc. If you can find it in local history, document it, and write about it, then it probably qualifies.
- ☞ **What are the judges looking for?** The overriding criteria of the essays are that they are historical in basis and original works of the author. They will also be judged on creativity, effective use of research, and grammar and style. Each entry should include at least two bibliographic sources, which may include such unique sources as interviews, letters, court documents, business directories, census records, photos, maps, and diaries. If a student chooses to interview a long-time resident of the area, the interview counts as a bibliographic source. Sole use of the Internet or others' research work, such as published histories, will result in a lower scoring essay than those where the student showed effort at finding original or primary sources.
- ☞ **I'm stuck and can't think of anything. What should I do?** Call or stop by the museum! We'll have a special research night for students Sunday March 30 from 2 to 5 p.m. We'll point you towards some excellent sources for ideas, or you can wander around and find something you'd like to know more about. We've got everything from arrowheads to railroad parts to old high school yearbooks.
- ☞ **How shall I send in my entry?** Essays should be no longer than 1,000 words in length, in 10- to 12-point Arial or Times New Roman font, and submitted as part of an email to contest@ofallonhistory.net by April 20. *Do not send attachments as they will not be opened.* At the beginning of the email should be the contestant's name, age and grade, school, address, email address, and phone number. The essay should have a title representing the essay. At the bottom of the email should be the bibliographic sources. Word count only applies to the text of the essay.
- ☞ **Who are the judges?** Members of the O'Fallon Historical Society will judge all entries, to be announced in early May, the 20th anniversary of the establishment of OHS.

Still need more information? Call contest coordinator, Mrs. Andree Swanson, at 622-9952.
The O'Fallon Historical Society Museum is open Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays from 1-4 p.m.
101 West State Street, O'Fallon, Illinois
624-8409 – www.ofallonhistory.net

How to Make Sure Your Entry is the Best Possible

Judging will be based on the following criteria:

Originality/Creativity (40 points)

- Is the subject original? Has it been written about before?
- Is the writing interesting, designed to capture and keep the reader's attention?
- Does the subject show the author sought out a unique topic?

Effective use of research (30 points)

- Did the author seek primary sources, such as interviews, letters, court documents, business directories, census records, photos, maps, diaries, newspapers, etc.?
- Are secondary sources, such as previously published histories, used sparingly?
- Is the supporting documentation relevant to the subject?
- Does the author use at least two sources?
- Are the resources unique and diverse?
- Are the sources used *not* from the Internet?

Historical basis (20 points)

- Is the entry relevant to the O'Fallon area?
- Is the entry historically accurate?
- Does the author demonstrate an understanding of the subject?
- Is the material cited relevant to the subject?

Clarity of presentation (10 points)

- Is the essay written clearly and grammatically correct?
- Does the author understand and properly use sources?
- Are the bibliographic sources correctly cited?

Excellent sources both for ideas and supporting selected topics can be found at the O'Fallon Historical Society Museum (101 W. State Street), the O'Fallon Library, the St. Clair County Courthouse, the Belleville Public Library (holdings of the St. Clair County Genealogical Society), and the St. Clair Historical Society (Victorian Museum Home, 701 East Washington Street, Belleville).

Suggested topics:

- Interview former students of O'Fallon Township High School and find out what school was like, what traditions they had, and what activities they did.
- Find the location of a mine and learn who owned it, how long it operated, who worked there, and what a day in the mines was like.
- Find an early African-American family and find out what they did, and what life was like for them.
- Visit a cemetery, find an old tombstone and learn everything you can about the person buried there.

How you write it will help boost your scores on originality. Consider writing from the point of view of Ogle's Creek, an old oak tree, a miner, a Native American, a teenager of any time period, a rail car, or a shopper in downtown O'Fallon.

The OHS Museum will hold a special opening for students 2-5 p.m., Sunday March 30. OHS president and town historian Brian Keller will be available for ideas and source assistance.

You do not need to footnote your entry. Entries must be less than 1,000 words in length, not including title and bibliographic sources. Do not attach your entries to your email. Copy and paste them into the body of the email.

Use the following format to submit your entry by email to contest@ofallonhistory.net:

Name
Age and Grade
School
Address
Email address
Phone number

Title of Entry

Body of Entry, not exceeding 1,000 words

Bibliographic Sources