

A WALK THROUGH TIME: Nature Institute brings history back to life in special event

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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GODFREY - With the help of some very passionate historical reenactors and lovers of local history, **The Nature Institute** welcomed the public to travel throughout time for their **Living History: A Walk Through Time** program.



This **Saturday, Nov. 21**, history lovers and their families traveled out to the institute in **Godfrey** and gathered in their **Talahi Lodge** to receive shelter from the brisk wind and snow flurries. Inside, guest speakers in both period and modern clothing shared their knowledge for the history-rich area.

“Each station represents a different time period at TNI,” **The Nature Institute Education Director Patti Brown** said. “We have everything from the fur-trading era of the late 1700s to **Larry Reid** dressed as **John M. Olin** from the 1930s and 50s up until present day.”

To start the day, Brown introduced **Steve Bollini**, a local taxidermist who showed his passion for his talent by representing one of the fur traders of the late 1700s.

Bollini shared that after the French made their travels out west, they brought their fine furs and other goods with them to trade with locals and Native Americans. He also noted that one of the hottest commodities that was being traded to the French was beaver pelts, which could be made into fashionable hats.



WBGZ Radio's Larry Reid used his plethora of knowledge gained throughout his lifetime to give an excellent presentation on John M. Olin, the famous businessman, conservationist and dog-breeding extraordinaire. As the predecessor of **Olin Industries**, Olin brought **Winchester Repeating Arms Company to East Alton** in the **1930s** right before the U.S. got involved with **World War II**.

Brad Winn from the **Lewis and Clark Historical Site** stayed in character during his whole presentation, describing the **Louisiana Purchase** and what land our country gained before **Meriwether Lewis and William Clark** started their expedition of the west at **Camp Dubois** in **Wood River**.

Author and storyteller Brian "Fox" Ellis, **The Nature Institute's own Ramona Puskar**, **Eric Robinson** from **Underground Railroad Tours**, former **TNI Discovery Day Camp Director Vern LeClaire**, **historians and anthropologists from the Alton Museum of Art and History** and the sons of the late **Mark Hall**, one of the founding members of **TNI** were also welcomed to speak.

Brown enjoys the opportunity to invite the public to the institute whenever possible, especially for these type of historical events.

“This is really neat whether you’re a history buff or want to know more about The Nature Institute,” she said. “It’s a great opportunity for people to come out and just learn.”

