



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Curious History of the Mandolin Orchestra Topic of Monthly Talk at Illinois State Museum

Dr. James Stanlaw will discuss the central Illinois roots of Lloyd Loar

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. – The mandolin orchestra was extremely popular at the turn of the 20th century in America. On Wednesday, February 5, Dr. James Stanlaw, Professor of Anthropology at Illinois State University, will discuss the rise and fall—and rise again—of the mandolin orchestra in the United States as well as the central Illinois roots of musical virtuoso and acoustic engineer Lloyd Loar. The program is part of the Paul Mickey Learning Series presented at the Illinois State Museum from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

Loar, who was born in Cropsey, Illinois and grew up in Lewistown is one of the most important figures in American music history, though today his name is largely forgotten. Loar essentially established bluegrass music via Bill Monroe and the iconic Lloyd Loar F5 mandolin—the “Stradivarius” of the mandolin world. The mandolin orchestra tradition—a uniquely American musical contribution—has been largely relegated to history books and rare early recordings. Dr. Stanlaw’s presentation will discuss the history of mandolin orchestras in America, and Loar’s contributions to the genre. Included will be demonstrations of early Gibson mandolin-family orchestra instruments, which attendees will be encouraged to try.

This presentation is sponsored by an Illinois Humanities Vision Community Grant. Each month, the Paul Mickey Learning Series features a different speaker and topic in the Auditorium at the Illinois State Museum. For additional information, please contact events@illinoisstatemuseum.org or 217-558-6696.

The Illinois State Museum is located at 502 S. Spring Street in Springfield. It is open Monday through Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and Sundays from 12:00 noon to 4:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults ages 19-64.

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