

PRESS RELEASE



Elkhart Explores a Different View of Illinois' Bicentennial with a Performance of Two Faces of Illinois' History

Sparks will fly in this recreation of a dramatic debate between our Territorial Governor Ninian Edwards and Potawatomi Chief Gomo on Friday, November 2nd at The Wild Hare Cafe. Doors open at 5pm with dinner starting at 5:30. Tickets are \$40 and reservations are required and can be made by calling 217-947-2238. Dinner will consist of Beef or Chicken Pasties Pies served with baked squash, sweet corn and rolls as well as stewed apples topped with whipped cream or ice cream topped with chocolate sauce. The program will be held not far from the place where Edward's Trace crosses through town. This original performance is part of the official Illinois 200 Bicentennial Celebration.

Two hundred years ago, as the original thirteen colonies were bursting at the seams, as early pioneers came flooding over the Alleghenies, and the tribes of the east were being pushed to the west, as Illinois was struggling to become a state, there were a series of events that are often left out of our history books. Yet these events were pivotal in forever shaping our state history and influencing our nation's relations with Native Americans. From the War of 1812 to the burning of the French Village of Peoria and the Fort Dearborn Massacre in Chicago, this engaging program will challenge the audience to reconsider what they think they know about Illinois' story.

First they will meet Illinois' Territorial Governor Ninian Edwards as he speaks on his role in The War of 1812, the creation of our state constitution, and the Cahokia Council with the Indians. While Fox changes characters the way some folks change shirts, the host will lead a brief conversation to help the audience more deeply consider Governor Edward's stories. Then they will meet Potawatomi Chief Gomo and listen as he shares his side of the story in the rescue of the French women and children of Peoria, his relationships with the other principal chiefs of this region, including Black Hawk, Tecumseh, and The Prophet, his relationship to the Fort Dearborn Massacre, and his speech responding to the Governor.

Much of the text for this program is taken directly from the speeches these two men delivered to each other at Cahokia as they squared off to determine the future of this region. Storyteller, Brian "Fox" Ellis steps into each of their shoes to bring to life a controversial story in this vital moment in the birthing of Illinois. This program explores American History unvarnished and promises to inspire a lively discussion!

Brian "Fox" Ellis is a storyteller, author and historian. He is of Cherokee descent and strives to give voice to many of the characters left out of our history books. The performance is part of a state wide tour Retracing Edwards Trace. It is funded by Humanities Illinois and the Forgotten Illinois Grant. Fox is also available for school programs while in the area. For more information please visit

www.elkharthistoricalsociety.org