



4/1/2015 12:11:00 AM

## Learning about James Whitcomb Riley

James Whitcomb Riley impersonator Danny Russel of Indianapolis spent most of his day last Thursday in Sheridan, visiting Sheridan Elementary in the afternoon and then repeating his performance at Sheridan Public Library for the general public in the evening.

Sheridan Community Schools, the library and Sheridan Historical Society sponsored his visit.

"Russel's performance was lively, humorous and highly entertaining," said Steve Martin, the library's director. "His animated facial expressions and exaggerated body postures only added to his storytelling and poetic recitations."

Ron Stone, president of the Historical Society, also reported that Sheridan Elementary students were thrilled by the performance.

Russel, a native of Maine, studied acting in Chicago, and also performs as Abraham Lincoln.

Nearly 40 people were in attendance at the library for this event, which is part of the annual Boxley Lecture Series heritage programming which celebrates the life of Sheridan town founder George Boxley. Boxley was an abolitionist who fled to frontier Indiana from Virginia where he was under death sentence for inciting a slave rebellion.

Annually, the three organizations sponsor a Boxley program. Past years have seen actors impersonating Teddy Roosevelt, Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglas, Johnny Appleseed and others. The Boxley programs always include a visit with school children plus a performance in the evening for the general public.

Want TO JOIN?

What: Sheridan Historical Society membership.

How much: \$20 annually, \$100 lifetime.

Meetings: 7 p.m. second Monday of month, Sheridan Public Library, 103 W. First St., Sheridan.

Sheridan Historical Society museum: Open 1 to 4 p.m. Tuesdays and Fridays, 308 S. Main St., Sheridan.



Danny Russel impersonates James Whitcomb Riley during a free performance on March 23 at Sheridan Public Library. Photos provided by Steve Martin



James Whitcomb Riley impersonator Danny Russel talks with guests during a free performance on March 23 at Sheridan Public Library. Photos provided by Steve Martin