



The Tour of Homes in on Sunday, June 22.

June 2008

Newsletter of the Waukegan Historical Society



President's Letter

by Harry E. Came

Inside

Page 5

Recent News

Page 6-7

Historically Speaking

Pages 8-11

Waukegan Historical
Society Museum

Page 12

Recent Acquisitions

Page 14

Area Events

When this copy of the newsletter arrives in early June, I will have completed my term as President and the new President will have taken on the responsibility of leading the Society into the next 40 years. I was so very pleased to have been able to contribute along with all the Board members, Officers, and volunteers to another successful year. The Anniversary reception held at Bacci's Restaurant in May was a total success and we entertained about 125 members with wonderful food in a beautiful venue, to celebrate our first 40 years. Our first President and founding member, Charles Lange, drove down from his home in Wisconsin for the event and we had nothing but compliments from everyone on the lovely reception. I want to thank Sara Griffin, Denyse Waters, and especially Gretta Dieck for their hard work in making the arrangements.

In order to celebrate the Society's 40th Anniversary and the upcoming 150th Anniversary of the City we have been working on two major exhibits at the Museum. The first exhibit which opened in April is on the Society's history; how we started, where we have been, and where we are going. The very special exhibit on Waukegan's 150 years will

open in June in time for the many visitors to the Museum during the Tour of Homes on June 22. Ty Rohrer, our Museum Supervisor has worked very hard on this exhibit in the main exhibit area on the second floor. Please make a point to stop by and see the many Treasures from Our Collections with special emphasis on items relating to Waukegan's history.

The Annual Tour of Homes will take place on Sunday, June 22 from 1:00 until 5:00 PM and we hope you will all be able to attend. This is a very special tour with a wide variety of buildings and styles to enjoy. Along with two Craftsman-style bungalows in the Near North Historic District and a mid century ranch in Bonnie Brook, we have a group of buildings which have been awarded landmark status by the City of Waukegan. These five buildings are all located on Sheridan Road and include Peterson Funeral Home and four former Shimer buildings immediately adjacent. Some of these buildings will be open for the Tour and some will only be viewed from the outside. This important group of buildings presents a wonderful opportunity to see some "works in progress" and some important architectural trends.

WHS Board

Officers

President

Harry E. Came

Vice President

Gretta Dieck

Treasurer

Sara Griffin

Secretary

Ellen Frew

Directors

Betsy Alleman

Margaret Martin

Steve Rosswurm

Yvonne Sylvester

Denyse Waters

Tour of Homes

Sunday June 22, 1:00-5:00pm

The Society's much anticipated annual Tour of Homes will take place on Sunday June 22 from 1:00 to 5:00pm. This year's tour will showcase the fine architecture and distinct neighborhoods of Waukegan. The private homes featured are:

821 North Avenue: a wonderful Craftsman cottage of the 1920s lovely restored on the inside and out with appropriate furnishings for the era.

2332 South Bonnie Brook Lane: a ranch house built in the early 1940s in a beautiful area of Waukegan that has not been featured on the Tour in many years. The new owners have downsized into this large single level home and are now trying to fit their beautiful antiques into its gracious rooms.

1341 Hickory Street: another beautiful Craftsman home built in 1925 and lovingly restored by a local graphic designer who has filled the home with wonderful artwork to compliment the interior.

1917 N. Sheridan Road: the Waukegan History Museum will be open showcasing not only period rooms of the 1870s but also exhibits on the 40th Anniversary of the Society and the 150th Anniversary of the City.

408-438 N. Sheridan Road: This very special group of buildings has been given Landmark Status by the City of Waukegan in recognition of their architectural significance. Beginning with the Francis E. Clarke house (Peterson Funeral Home) and extending north with five more buildings in the Shimer Historic District, the tour will highlight the exterior architectural details of these important "works in progress." Over the past year these buildings have been purchased from Shimer College and are in various states of restoration. Some of the buildings will also be open to Tour participants.

Tickets are \$12 in advance and may be purchased at the Waukegan History Museum, Jack Benny Center for the Arts, or Victorian House Antiques

(650 Grand Avenue), as well as by mail to: Waukegan Historical Society, 1917 N. Sheridan Rd., Waukegan, IL 60087. If ordering by mail, please enclose a self-addressed stamped envelope. Tickets will be \$14 the day of the tour and may be purchased at any tour site.

This is the Society's main fundraiser for the year and is regularly attended by several hundred people. Encourage your friends, family, and neighbors to participate in this enjoyable event that showcases Waukegan's finest homes and neighborhoods.

Current Exhibits

The main exhibition space in the Waukegan History Museum will hold *Treasures of Our Collections—Celebrating 150 Years of Waukegan History*. This exhibit will showcase the Society's collections in celebration of the upcoming Sesquicentennial of the City of Waukegan in 2009. The exhibit will open on June 22 for the Tour of Homes and will remain through 2009.

The rotating exhibit space features *Waukegan Historical Society: 40th Anniversary, 1968-2008*. This exhibit shows the involvements of the Society and its members over the last forty years. Included are photographs, newspaper articles, and past advertisements. The exhibit will close November 2008.

Historically Speaking

Centennial Celebrations

by Ed Link

Waukegan knows how to celebrate its history. Two actual and one pseudo centennials have been held and festivals have covered each occurrence.

In 1929 Old Waukegan Days was noted as “An Historic Fete”. The history of Waukegan from 1835 to 1929 was celebrated for the benefit of Goodfellowship Settlement. That organization helped to incorporate foreign-born individuals into the American way of life. Homes along Sheridan Road from Cory to Gillette Avenues were available for tours, used for exhibits or to hold groups

showcasing parts of Waukegan’s past. A re-creation of Thomas Jenkins’ store, the first building in town, was in Upton Park, along with musical performances and tables holding various items for sale.

By 1935 an actual centennial could be held, and it was from June 27 to July 4. The News-Sun produced a Centennial Edition the day before the ceremony began. In it the histories of the town, churches, schools, businesses, clubs and nearby townships were covered. A souvenir wooden nickel with a picture of Jenkins’ store was available. Actually it was a 2” by 5” strip of bark-like material.

A centennial historical pageant commemorating early settlers and significant events in the city’s history, along with a recognition of Waukegan’s diverse ethnic

background, was given three times. There also was a parade, music, carnival, fireworks and window displays. Unlike 1929 the festivities were spread throughout the city as Weiss Field, Roosevelt Park, and the high school were used along with the downtown area.

It is the 1959 Centennial that many residents will



Centennial events included a beard-growing contest.

remember. While the two earlier ones celebrated the founding of the town, this one commemorated the 1859 incorporation of the city. Much was written at this time. A 108 page official program included a brief history of the town and many photos. The Waukegan Weekly Gazette of Saturday, March 26, 1859 was re-printed. The League of Women Voters revised their 1954 handbook of city facts and figures. After the party had ended a Centennial Picture Story gave photos of all the events for only \$1.50.

Lake Michigan played a prominent part in the celebration. Excursion boat rides to Great Lakes or the dunes were available. The Navy’s U.S.S. Worland was at the harbor and welcomed the public aboard. There was an open house and boat show at Johnson Motors. Water shows were given on the lake.

A historical pageant “By These Waters” was presented seven times. There was a carnival, fireworks and parades. The past and future were covered by “The Waukegan Story” (Lake County Museum display) and “Waukegan of Tomorrow” at the hospitality center.

Some individual events also took place. A solemn pontifical mass was held at Weiss Field. The Archbishop of Chicago, Rev. Albert D. Meyer, was the celebrant, with priests of several local parishes assisting.

Ground breaking took place for the future Jack Benny Junior High School, with the honoree helping to move soil.

An All America Day at Weiss Field honored various ethnic communities. Folk songs and dances were presented by nine groups.

A time capsule was buried in the courthouse square. 86 depositors entered items that were not to be seen until the capsule was opened June 27, 2059. When the parking garage was being built in 1995, the time capsule was dug up for moving and found to be water soaked and ruined. No one had kept



Jack Benny breaks ground at a new middle school.

records of what items were included.

Finally, the men of the community grew beards and mustaches for the celebration and joined the Brothers of the Brush. Fred Burris was honored for the best all-around beard.

Glass Plate Negatives

Ty Rohrer

The project of scanning the historical society's glass plate negative photograph collection has been completed! Volunteers tediously scanned the 521 glass plate negatives to ensure that the images would be preserved for the future. The historical society has taken the proper steps to preserve the delicate negatives; however, they continue to disintegrate with time.

Some of you may have seen a glass negative before, or maybe you even have some in your own possession. You still may be wondering though what a glass plate negative is.

The first photographic processes were independently discovered by three men between 1826 and 1839: Joseph Nicephore Niepce (1765-1833), Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre (1789-1851), and William



Two glass plate negatives.

Henry Fox Talbot (1800-1877). British inventor Frederick Scott Archer expanded the previous discoveries and produced the first usable glass photograph negatives in 1851, known as the wet collodion negative.

The process that Archer created also allowed identical prints to be made in large quantities.

Collodion is a thick flammable liquid created by dissolving explosive cellulose nitrate (gun cotton) in ether, alcohol, and potassium iodide. The liquid was poured onto a sheet of glass the size of a finished print. The plate was then plunged into a bath of

silver nitrate, turning the collodion into a light-sensitive silver iodide. After the plate was coated, it was placed in a holder in the camera to be exposed. After exposure the plate was developed in a dark room. The process had to be completed before the collodion dried, so the dark room had to be close to where the photograph was taken. On a warm day, the collodion on the plate would dry in only five minutes, and this limited the medium to professional photographers.

By 1870, the factory-made gelatin dry plate was introduced. This offered a more convenient method of taking photographs since the plates could be stored for months after they were used. The dangerous and messy wet collodion was replaced by light-sensitive gelatin. This new medium allowed for photography to be pursued by amateurs.

By 1888, George Eastman sold the first Kodak camera that utilized flexible roll film. This revolution in photography led to the decline of glass plate photography, which disappeared altogether by the mid-1920s.

Most of the glass plate negatives in the historical society's collections were made by the gelatin emulsion technique and are 1/8 of an inch thick. When looking at the glass plate negative, it does not seem like it could produce a quality print and image. To our surprise and delight, it was possible to scan the glass plate negatives, and the images that we found were amazing. Each plate was an image that we had never seen before, and it was exciting to find out what we had in the collection. We were thrilled to find images from inside of the old courthouse!

Thanks again to the volunteers who put in hard work scanning and preserving our glass plate negative collection!



Nineteenth Century American Silver Plate

By Harry E. Came

The Waukegan Historical Society Museum has many interesting examples of late 19th century silver plate which always seems to intrigue visitors. Although most silver was used in the dining room, there are certainly examples seen elsewhere in the Museum. The Victorian era was the age of the industrial revolution and the rise of the middle class in America. The new industries started mass producing items which had previously been only affordable to the wealthy. New technology also made new products available, and the combination came together with the introduction of electroplating in the mid 19th century. The discovery of silver in vast quantities in the western United States made handsome silver pieces also available to many in the new middle class.

The Victorians enjoyed showing off their new wealth. If you look at the Society's logo, you will see that the Museum building in the 1870s had a tower over the front door with arched windows and a pagoda-like roof. I have been asked if the Haines family built it so they could look at Lake Michigan. In fact, decorative features like the tower were added to buildings mainly for one reason – because they could. Draperies with extra fabric “puddling” on the floor and fancy woodwork were added to show that they were people of means.

The dining room was often the fanciest room in the house as that is where formal entertaining took place. Special pieces of silver for every conceivable use were added year after year to enable the host to show they could afford more and more items. From epergnes in the center of the table, butter domes, napkin rings, salt cellars and pepper shakers, castor sets, and then of course the actual flatware for use by the individual guest. Thousands of patterns of flatware by hundreds of manufacturers flooded the marketplace in the second half of the century. The

special forks, knives, and spoons needed to eat soup, salads, fish, main course, dessert and other specialized delicacies made it difficult to figure out what piece of silver to use for what course. Aren't we lucky that we do not have to know the difference between a dinner fork, salad fork, seafood fork, pastry fork, ice cream fork, fish fork, or terrapin fork?

The Museum was pleased to recently obtain a tea service which originally belonged to the Besley family from Waukegan. It now sits in a place of honor across from another tea service donated several years ago to the Society.

In the west parlor there sits a fascinating piece of silver which always perplexes visitors. It is obviously a pitcher on a stand that allows the pitcher to tilt and pour. But what did it hold? Many assume it was a large coffee pot, but actually it was for ice water. Before refrigeration, ice water was real treat, and this double-walled, insulated silver pitcher allowed the hostess to fill it early in the cool morning from the well and have it stay cool for hours to serve to guests. A silver cup was usually included in the set, and these came in many different patterns and were often given as presents or commemorative gifts. In the bedroom there were silver



plated combs, mirrors, little boxes, and trays to sit on top of your dresser. Even the children started receiving silver plated items such as rattles and teething rings, baby mugs, and even baby and youth flatware.

Luckily for the homeowner of this period, labor was cheap and servants were plentiful, so keeping all of this silver polished was not a problem.

Recent Donations

Jim Maguire

Newspapers from 1970

City of Waukegan

Framed photographs of Chief Miguel Juarez, Dan Drew, and Robert Sabonjian

2 Jack Benny Sketches

Jack Benny Postcards

Ray Bradbury Posters and Newspaper Clippings

Otto Graham Jr. Posters and Newspaper Clippings

Otto Graham Jr. Day-Jan. 26, 1955

Benny Statue Photographs

History of Waukegan Folder

Oakwood Cemetery Walk Photographs

Waukegan Downtown Association 2002 Information

1998 and 2000 Waukegan Maps

Dan Drew Obituary Program

City Brochures 1999-2005

Nada Finn

3 Books-Funk Co. & Allen & Co.

David Brunberg

3 Advertisements-Stripe Golf Bag Carrier Co.

Jean Windberg

Karl Windberg Thesis on Power Mechanics

Hank Bogdola

Benny Statue Files

St. Dismas Book (1988)

Rev. Paul J. Cull Booklet

Friends of the Hungry File

Friends of Father Cull & Friends

4 Videos and Floppy Disk with Information

Photographs & Copies of 1958 Everly Brothers Polka Lads

Program at Genesee

1940 Copy of Waukegan Post

William Tyre

Cooke Simmons Research Files

Waukegan Research Files

Tim Vavrek

"Bill Krueger" Baseball Card

Sandie Moon by Dee Jay Kweder

Altrusa International of Lake County Scrapbooks,

Documents, Plaques

George Minkler

Swedish Glee Club Material

Lewis Clarke

Photograph

Thank you for your recent donations to our Museum and Library collections.

Poem Book

Christ Episcopal Books

American Landmarks

High School Yearbooks

Hand Drawn Poster of Little Fort

Edith Clavin

Masonic Chapter Medallion

Harry Came

Waukegan Wall Paper Company Trimmer

Door Bell



Free Tickets to the Tour of Homes

Be a Room Watcher and receive a complimentary ticket for the annual Tour of Homes. We need people to help direct visitors and watch the rooms during the Tour of Homes.

Sign up to work a 2 ½ hour shift, and we'll give you a free ticket to take the tour either before or after your work. Shifts are from 12:00-2:30pm or 2:30-5:00pm on June 22.

Invite your friends to participate and we will try to accommodate by having you and your friends work at the same location during the time that you choose.

To sign up, please call the museum at 847-336-1859.

Thank You!

New Members

Jerry Wiatrowski
Rev. and Mrs. Willard Blomquist
Roberta D. Flack

New Life Members

R. Vincent and Ann Hughes Johnson
John Stein
Rick and Judi Larsen
Raj and Rose Bhatt
Patrick and Nellie Galvin

Donations

Robert E. Abbott
Sophia Ninos
Kevin Kane and Mary Strubbe

Area Events

Please call to confirm dates and times.

Cuneo Museum and Gardens, Vernon Hills (847-362-3042)

June 25, Concert on the South Lawn, The Daddy-O's, \$10, 6:30pm.
July 9, Concert on the South Lawn, Sam Magdal: A Salute to Sinatra & Friends, \$10, 6:30pm.

Lake County Discovery Museum, Wauconda (847-968-3381)

Exhibit, The Mischievous Art of Jim Flora, admission, through August 31.

Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society (847-234-5253)

Exhibit extended, All Aboard: Railways and the Growth of a Community, free, through June 30.

McHenry County Historical Society (815-263-9540)

June 7, Bus Tour of McHenry County Historic Country Schools, 9am-3pm.

Warren Township Historical Society (847-263-9540)

July 1, Max and Donna Daniels portray Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln, 7pm.

Join Us!

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP

Senior (age 60+)	\$7.00
Student	\$7.00
Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00
Patron, Organization	\$50.00
Life, Individual	\$100.00
Life, Couple	\$150.00
My additional gift	\$ _____

Make checks payable to
Waukegan Historical Society.

VOLUNTEER

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

Contact Us

Waukegan Historical Society

1917 N. Sheridan Road
Waukegan, IL 60087
847-336-1859
info@waukeganhistorical.org

John L. Raymond Research Library

1911 N. Sheridan Road
Librarian: Beverly Millard
847-360-4772
library@waukeganhistorical.org

Waukegan History Museum at the Haines Farmhouse

1917 N. Sheridan Road
Museum Supervisor: Ty Rohrer
847-336-1859
museum@waukeganhistorical.org

Hours

John L. Raymond Research Library

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday
10am - 2:30pm

Waukegan History Museum in Bowen Park

Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday
10am - 4pm
Additional times by appointment.

Visit our website for more information
about events, exhibits, and our
extensive library.

www.waukeganhistorical.org



1917 N. Sheridan Rd, Waukegan, IL 60087

Free Ticket!

Get a free ticket to the Tour of Homes by volunteering during the Tour. See page 13 for details.

Save the Date!

Oakwood Cemetery Walk
Saturday September 27
12:30-5:30pm