



A new urn graces the front of the museum. See page 4.

September 2008

Newsletter of the Waukegan Historical Society



President's Letter

by Sara Griffin

Inside

Page 4-7

Recent News

Page -9

Historically Speaking

Page 12

Recent Acquisitions

Page 14

Area Events

The Waukegan Historical Society is celebrating its 40th anniversary. As I begin my term as President I am reminded of the hundreds of people who have supported our group. Sadly, many are not with us anymore. Luckily new folks have joined the Society and have worked tirelessly to provide a first class museum and library for our community.

The Society formed in 1968 with 19 people who expressed an interest in preserving the history of Waukegan. Chuck Lange was our first President; we continue to enjoy his support. Ron Griesheimer was our first attorney and helped us establish a constitution and by-laws. Bus Brumund furnished our first headquarters, an office in the Genesee Theatre building. The Atterbery family donated a roll top desk for this office. We continue to use this first artifact in the Library at the Waukegan History Museum.

The early members really worked to find artifacts; the mission was to collect as many items as we could. We begged for donations, haunted basements, attics, estate sales and old houses. Soon we had outgrown our office in the Genesee building. We approached the Waukegan School District for space. The board generously allowed us to use the former offices of the Callahan Dairy (Meadow Gold) on Franklin Street. It

was not long before the Society needed more space. Of course we had no money, so finding a spacious location was a challenge.

Bus Brumund and I went to visit the late Bob Woodard at his barber shop on Tenth Street. Bob was a Waukegan Park District Commissioner. He mentioned a few rooms that were vacant in an old farmhouse in Bowen Park; we were so excited to hear about this space. Bus and I attended the next meeting of the Waukegan Park Board. Commissioner Richard Hyde, our current Mayor, made a motion to give us the space for \$1.00 a year. This action was the beginning of a wonderful partnership with the Waukegan Park District.

In future issues of our newsletter I will write about the restoration of the farmhouse and will ask Beverly Millard to provide articles about our wonderful research library.

Please plan to join us for our September 21, 2008 meeting. We are very proud of our former president Bill Tyre who has authored an excellent book on Chicago's fabulous Prairie Avenue. This is our first book signing, and we invite all of you and your friends to a most informative program on Chicago's first Gold Coast.

WHS Board

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Vice President

Gretta Dieck

Treasurer

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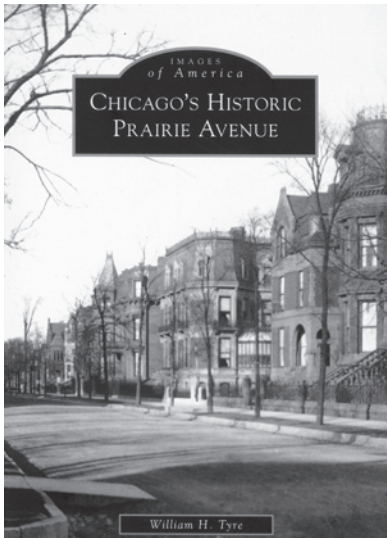
Steve Rosswurm

Denyse Waters

Free Event

Chicago's Historic Prairie Avenue: Presentation and Book Signing

Bill Tyre is the author of the book *Chicago's Historic Prairie Avenue*. This is the first book to focus



specifically on the fascinating history of Chicago's Prairie Avenue and surrounding neighborhood. Prairie Avenue evolved into Chicago's most exclusive residential street during the last three decades of the 19th century. Historical figures from Chicago's past such as Marshall Fields (retailer), Philip Armour (meat packing), William Kimball (pianos), and George Pullman (Pullman railway cars) had mansions on Prairie Avenue that was also known as "Millionaire's Row."

Bill Tyre is a past president of the Waukegan Historical Society and was chairman of the Waukegan Historic

Preservation Commission. He is currently the Executive Director of the Historic Glessner House in Chicago.

Sunday, September 21
at 2pm
Jack Benny Center-
Schornick Theatre
Bowen Park
39 Jack Benny Drive
Waukegan, IL 60087

Recent Purchase

The Historical Society made a purchase recently to beautify the grounds of the museum and Bowen Park. The purchase was a six foot tall cast iron urn, and it was installed just in time for the Tour of Homes. The urn represents the Victorian grandeur of landscaping and was acquired to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Historical Society as well as our partnership with the Waukegan Park District. The flowers were planted by the Waukegan Park District. A small bronze plaque will be installed at a later date to commemorate the Society's partnership with the Park District.

Free Event

Oakwood Cemetery Walk

An annual free event, the Oakwood Cemetery Walk provides specific tours of the city cemetery. Visitors to Oakwood have been taken back to a time and place that has ranged from pre-Civil War to as recent as 1979. Four to six "residents" are portrayed by local actors. This year the theme is Downtown Waukegan Businesses. Featured profiles include:

Fred Buck: Buck Meat Market

Thomas Higginbotham: Higginbotham
and Douglas Bicycles and Indian
Motorcycles

Robert M. Ingall: Ingall's Co. Jewelers

Henrietta Swanbrough: Millinery Shop

Martha J. Watrous: James A. Watrous
Hardware

Ida Miltimore Webb: Genesee Theatre.

There has always been diversity among the characters portrayed. Finding information about women and minorities has been challenging but rewarding. The cemetery walk has featured the first female physician in Waukegan and George Washington Bell, a former slave turned Union soldier. This annual event is a cooperative program between the Waukegan Park District, the City of Waukegan, and the Waukegan Historical Society.

Cultural Arts Tickets on Sale Now

Tickets are on sale for the upcoming seasons of the Bowen Park Theatre and Opera Company, the Waukegan Symphony Orchestra, and Concert Chorus. For more information please contact the Jack Benny Center for the Arts at 847-360-4740.

Saturday, September 27

Start at Lilac Cottage in
Bowen Park (1911 N.
Sheridan Road).

Busses leave
Lilac Cottage at:
12:45 pm
1:45 pm
3:10 pm

The Waukegan History
Museum will be open
from 11:30 am to 4 pm.

Parking is not permitted
at the cemetery.

Tour of Homes Recap

The annual Tour of Homes was held on June 22, 2008. A mostly beautiful day and a fine selection of homes resulted in several hundred tickets sold. The Tour of Homes was first held in 1969 and serves as the main fund raiser for the Waukegan Historical Society. In recent years the tour has become an important community event. The Society works with the City of Waukegan, the Waukegan Park District and the News Sun to showcase the fine architecture and neighborhoods of our city. More than half of the attendees come from outside of the community.

The event serves as an important opportunity to attract new residents who share our vision for a revitalized Waukegan that honors and respects our rich heritage. The 2008 tour included the Waukegan History Museum, five homes in the 400 block of Sheridan Road (part of the Shimer Historic District) in various stages of renovation, and three beautifully restored homes.

Significant assistance with the Tour was provided by the City of Waukegan, the News Sun, the Waukegan Park

District, the generous home owners, and the many volunteers who staffed the tour homes.

Special thanks to the tour committee, Harry Came, Gretta Dieck, Margaret Martin, Chandra Sefton, Ty Rohrer, Denyse Waters, Yvonne Sylvester and Sara Griffin. This committee works for many months to make this annual event possible.

Next year's Tour of Homes will be held Sunday, June 29, 2009.



New Exhibit

Treasures of Our Collections Celebrating 150 Years of Waukegan History

The new exhibition titled *Treasures of Our Collections: Celebrating 150 Years of Waukegan History* opened to the public on June 22 for the Tour of Homes. The exhibit showcases the collections of the Waukegan Historical Society. The Society has been collecting and preserving the rich history and heritage of Waukegan for the past forty years.

The exhibit focuses on the history of the City of Waukegan from its very earliest beginnings up to the present. The exhibit includes a detailed timeline highlighting interesting events and side notes from Waukegan's history. Artifacts on display include a relic from the Academy Theater/Fiesta Palace, the charred remains of one of the old courthouse's clock faces, a trunk used by Jack Benny during his early Vaudeville days, maps, a digital slideshow of Waukegan postcards, and souvenirs, trinkets, and other memorabilia.

The exhibit took months to develop under the direction of Museum Supervisor Ty Rohrer. The exhibit is presented by the Waukegan Historical Society and the Waukegan Park District. The exhibit will run through 2009 in celebration of the sesquicentennial of the city of Waukegan.

Many people helped prepare this exhibit. We thank Ed Link, Margaret Martin, Kirsten Lampi, Beverly Millard, Ann Darrow, Harry Came, Sara Griffin, Dr. Steve Rosswurm, Jim Maguire, Claudia Freeman, Yvonne Sylvester, Denyse Waters, Ellen Frew, Betsy Alleman, Susan and Stephen Rohrer, and Mike and Jean Anderson.



Historically Speaking

Fred Bairstow

by Ed Link

Often individuals who have contributed to the growth and development of Waukegan slip from memory simply due to the passage of time. We need to refresh our collective memory and remember the contributions of those men and women. The subject of this article is one such person.

Fred Bairstow was born in England November 23, 1852, one of ten children. He immigrated to the United States about 1871, settling in Rosehill,

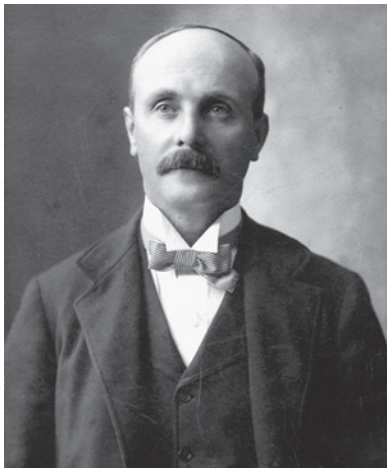
Cook County, Illinois, where he learned the trade of a stonecutter. He operated Bairstow Bros. with his brother William.

In 1879 Fred moved to Waukegan and opened Bairstow Bros. Marble, Stone and Granite Works on State (Sheridan) Street. Brother William continued in charge of the original company. In 1883 the brothers constructed the ornamental entrance and gate to Calvary Cemetery in South Evanston at a cost of \$10,000.

Business continued to grow as Fred branched out into new areas. Acquiring an interest in Monroe & Kennedy (which

became Bairstow & Kennedy) the firm then handled coal, wood, coke, lime and cement. The marble works were on the west side of South Genesee Street, the first building north of Water Street, and extended through the entire block to County Street. The coal yard was at the foot of Madison Street and a sewer pipe yard was at the corner of Spring and Clayton. It was a family business, employing Fred's sons as well as his brother, Jowett.

The Soldiers and Sailors Monument honoring veterans of the Civil War had been under consideration since the war ended, but construction never got started. When it finally was approved in 1897, Fred Bairstow received the contract for \$6,000. The



monument was dedicated on the court house square August 29, 1899 amid a huge municipal celebration attracting people from all over. It was constructed of Barre granite, from Barre, VT and has four bronze panels on the four sides representing the infantry, artillery, cavalry and navy, the military forces of the time. The monument now sits on the east side of the current court house.

Fred had married Emma Hostrawser in 1876 and they had six children. They lived on Mill Street where the Bairstow Pond was a major attraction for swimming in the summer and skating in the winter. In 1917 the Waukegan Park District purchased 6.5 acres, including part of the Bairstow farm, which became Powell Park.

He was active in the community, belonging to, and often serving as an officer of, many fraternal organizations, such as the Odd Fellows, Modern Woodmen of American and Independent Order of Foresters. He was a member of Christ Episcopal Church where he was a junior warden.

Due to ill health, Fred moved to the west for the drier climate. He returned to Waukegan in March, 1912 to put his affairs in order. He died August 30, 1912 and was buried in Oakwood Cemetery. The business was taken over by sons George and Charles who moved it to Belvidere Road.



Thanks to John Bairstow and Ann Darrow for providing the research for this article.

Museum Supervisor's Report

It has been another fun summer at the Waukegan History Museum. The new exhibit, *Treasures of our Collections: Celebrating 150 Years of Waukegan History*, was completed just in time for the Historical Society's annual Tour of Homes. I truly enjoyed developing the new exhibit. I was able to learn a great deal more about the rich history of Waukegan. Thank you to everyone who helped with the new exhibit!

The museum was busy during the Tour of Homes and the American Independence Day Parade and Festival. We had a combined 1000 people attend the museum during the two events. The next big event at the museum will be the annual Oakwood Cemetery Walk.

The focus at the museum during the next couple of months will revolve around strengthening our education outreach with the Waukegan Schools as well as continuing inventory of the museum's collections.

Also, in the coming months we will be having "docent training" at the museum for any new volunteers that are interested. The docent is an integral part to the museum. They give tours and are used as room watchers to help interpret the museum for visitors. Even if you have been a docent in the past, it does not hurt to have a little refresher course now and again.

On a personal note I would like to thank Kirsten Lampi for the exceptional job that she did during her internship at the museum. I would also like to thank the Waukegan Park District as well as Claudia Freeman, Superintendent of Cultural Arts, for providing the necessary funds for the museum's paid internship position.

"One of these days, Alice. Pow! Right in the kisser!"

Everyone has heard of stories of someone looking through their attic and finding interesting "treasures" that they never knew were there, such as lost pictures of loved ones or even papers from Abraham Lincoln.

The research library volunteers had their own experience with a "treasure find." A 4-inch by 6-inch frame was found in the museum containing two pictures from North School, and it was taken over to the library for proper care and preservation. The photographs were removed from the frame, and to our surprise they were covering up an autographed picture of iconic actor Jackie Gleason. Gleason is known for his legendary role of Ralph Kramden on the television show *The Honeymooners*. We will now contact the donor to let them know of our discovery and find out if they would like the photograph back or if they would like to donate it to the Historical Society. You never know what you are going to find when working with old "stuff."



Special Thanks!

The Historical Society would like to thank the Waukegan Park District for all of their hard work this summer at the museum. The lawn and flowers were beautifully landscaped, and the urn was quickly installed and planted in time for the Tour of Homes.

Also, Kirsten Lampi worked at the museum this summer through a paid internship provided by the Waukegan Park District's Cultural Arts Division. Kirsten is an undergraduate in History at the College of Saint Benedicts/Saint Johns University and is interested in pursuing a career in museums. We thank her for her hard work.

Recent Donations

Jim Maguire

Newspapers from 1970

Rich Ribando

Rubber Stamps, Bound 6-26-35 News Sun

1992 Water Glasses from New Sun

Negative of 12-8-1941 News Sun

Photo of March 1921 Camp Lewis

Dr. Steve Rosswurm

Book "Growing Up With Men and Machines" by Henry E. Beck

Dennis Rompasky

3 Boxes Newspapers

Betsy Alleman

Slides of old Waukegan

Globe Department Store gift box

Erwins Jewelers ring box

Oak Lawn Public Library

Map of Waukegan 1969

Dr. John Schwab

Cookbooks

High School Yearbooks

1934 High School Reunion Booklets

Chandra Sefton

Civil Rights Book

Photographs

1880 Waukegan High School Graduation Pamphlet

WWII Leather Ration Book with Coupons

Peterson Funeral Home Information

Julie Paulson Bell

Jack Benny Home Newspaper Clipping

Nada Finn

Waukegan Green Town Tool Kit

Copies from photo album

Ron Rayman

"South Waukegan" pamphlet

John Bairstow

Calendar

Copies of newspaper articles

Bairstow family history and family photographs

Newspaper clippings

Ann Leffler

Photographs

High School Yearbooks

Family history memorabilia

Waukegan Park District

Photo album of Bowen Park Baseball Field Construction 1966

Gay Lee Abbott (Lewis Clarke Sr. Estate)

Lake County Bar Association Membership Roster 1984-85

Gay Lee Abbott

Miscellaneous pharmaceuticals from Waukegan pharmacies

First National Bank patches

1984-85 Lake County Bar Association Roster

1st National Bank 125th Anniversary Pin

City Club of Waukegan Plaque for Lewis D. Clarke

Ethel Flesher

Advertisements

Books

Pamphlets

Micrometer from American Steel and Wire

Wire measuring tool from American Steel and Wire

George Clark Memoir

Newspapers

Marie Randall

Tickets to Kessie's Club Royale

Havey Family

Phonograph players

Radios

Wax cylinders

Nancy De Pauw

"Crazy Quilt" Skirt

Sara Griffin

Souvenir – Waukegan Produce Company



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

Thank You!

New Members

Kathleen Koppelman

New Life Members

Susan Foster

Donations

Yvonne Sylvester

Dorothy Evenhouse

Grayslake Historical Society

James Theivagt

Sandra and Joe Chess

Area Events

Please call to confirm dates and times.

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

September 14, Vintage Automobile Show, Cuneo Estate, 10am-3pm.

McHenry County Historical Society (815-263-9540)

October 5, 30th Annual Cider Festival, 10am-4pm.

October 15, "Historic Haunted Séance," admission, 7pm and 8pm.

Lake Villa Historical Society (847-265-8266)

September 13, A Civil War Ball at the Lehmann Mansion, \$50 per person, 6-11pm.

Deerfield Historical Society (847-948-0680)

September 7, 33rd Annual Fall Fest, Historic Village, 12-4pm.

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

in Bowen Park

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



Oakwood Cemetery

Walk

September 27

**See page 5 for
details.**