



March 2007

Newsletter of the Waukegan Historical Society



President's Letter

by Harry E. Came

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Upcoming Programs

It is hard finding good things to say when all you look upon is a gray winter of snow and ice and temperatures below zero. It was just such a day at the end of January when the Board of Directors got together, for a retreat at Lilac Cottage, to discuss the future of the Historical Society. Out of that meeting, and several other regular meetings, have come many innovative new ideas which the Board is going to implement in order to make the Museum and Society more available to the citizens of Waukegan and especially the young people who visit us. With the help of our new Museum Supervisor, Ty Rohrer, we are making physical changes in the period rooms as well as changing the way the visitors can interact with the displays. We are trying to allow visitors farther into the rooms and having items all over the building that our younger visitors can actually pick up and touch.

It has been recognized by the Board that while the period rooms are beautifully restored and are a credit to the Historical Society and the Park

District's hard work, there needs to be more displays showing the history of Waukegan and the many groups which have contributed to our rich history. We are going try to improve our displays showing that history and the various waves of immigrants who have contributed to the building of Waukegan.

The Waukegan Historical Society is the repository of our area's history and many of the groups of immigrants who made this city are now moving away or dying. All of our members need to look in their personal collections as well as their ethnic, religious, and civic groups and ask the question "when I die where is this information going to go?" The answer to that question should be simple. It should go to the Waukegan Historical Society so that it will be available to future generations.

We have been so very pleased with the positive response that has been received about the Waukegan calendar that was sent to all of our members. We are looking into the possibility of doing this again next year as a special benefit to our members.

WHS Board

Officers

President

Harry E. Came

Vice President

Gretta Dieck

Treasurer

William Tyre

Secretary

Ellen Frew

Directors

Betsy Alleman

Sara Griffin

Margaret Martin

Steve Rosswurm

Denyse Waters

Upcoming Exhibits

We have two new exhibits opening within the next few weeks. We will be adding to our permanent exhibit of American Legion and Grand Army of the Republic items in an exhibit opening at the end of February and scheduled through the end of the year. This exhibit will be in the Tower Exhibit space at the top of the main staircase.



An exhibit on various forms of communications from radios and phonographs through typewriters and business machines will open at the end of March in the main exhibit space on the second floor. Some of these items were actually made right in Waukegan and will be brought out of our storerooms for the first time in years.

We have decided that our Treasures from the Collections exhibit would be more appropriately scheduled for 2008 which is the 40th Anniversary of the Historical Society so we will have more time to go through the storerooms and our attics to find more treasures.

New Awards Program

The Board of Directors recently created a new awards program aimed at recognizing individuals who are contributing to the revitalization of the city through the stewardship of our historic structures. Projects to be honored will include the restoration or renovation of both residential and commercial structures as well as successful adaptive reuse projects. The awards will be presented at the annual meeting of the Society on Sunday May 20. If you have a suggestion for a project you feel is worthy of an award, please contact board member Bill Tyre at (773)545-4728 or w.tyre@comcast.net by March 31.

James W. Dorsey History Prize

The Waukegan Historical Society announces the inauguration of the James W. Dorsey History Prize for Waukegan High School students who produce the best entry on local history in the Chicago Metro History Fair. Each year a prize of \$500 will be presented to the winning team as judged by a representative from the Historical Society and from the High School.

James W. Dorsey taught at North Chicago High School and College of Lake County. Dr. Dorsey was an avid researcher into local history, especially the history of African Americans. He was a supporter of the Waukegan Historical Society, lectured widely throughout Lake County, and participated in the Oakwood Cemetery Walk for many years.

Volunteers Needed

The Waukegan Historical Society is seeking volunteers for both the Haines Museum and the John L. Raymond Research Library. We are fortunate to have a rich history of volunteer support that has been crucial to the success of the Historical Society. And now, as we are making exciting changes and offering new programs, we find the need for volunteer help is more important to our success than ever before.

Volunteering for the Historical Society will help us preserve our local history and make it available to the public. As a volunteer, you can participate as often as you choose. Some people may want to come in a couple of times a week while others may just want to be a part of special events.

To become a volunteer for the Waukegan Historical Society or for additional information, please contact Ty Rohrer, Museum Supervisor for the Haines Museum.

Volunteer opportunities:

- Collection inventory and management
- Tour docents
- Exhibit installation and care
- Program development
- Research
- Special Events
- Library assistant

Historically Speaking

The Bank at 1 S. Genesee Street

by Ed Link

An 1859 business directory for Waukegan lists grocers and wagon makers, lawyers and tailors; the necessities of a small city. All of those specific businesses have disappeared over time. However, one listing, through several name changes, has continued to serve the community to today — the Bank of Northern Illinois.

In 1852 Charles & Ransom Steele opened a bank bearing their names. Five years later it merged with the Bank of Northern Illinois and operated as such until 1861 when Charles Steele purchased the entirety of the company and brought back the name of C.R. & R. Steele, Bankers.

Following the passage of the National Banking Act, our bank applied for and received a national charter and began operating as the First National



March 2007

Bank of Waukegan on April 17, 1865. That was immediately after the end of the Civil War and the assassination of President Lincoln.



Initially located on Washington Street, about one building east of Genesee, the bank took its present site at 1 S. Genesee in the 1920s. Hoggson Brothers designed a stone-clad building in Classical Revival Style. Tall fluted pilasters are between the banks of windows and an eagle with spread wings is centered over the main entrance.

Inside the building are marble columns and counters. Plaster pilasters and cornice are included, along with a huge skylight. A stairway in the lobby leads down to the vault, with its round door behind an iron security screen. The beauty of the building caused it to be included in the Historical Society's 2005 Tour of Homes.

The name Bank of Northern Illinois reappeared in recent years, along with State Financial Bank. Today's Associated Bank is yet another title for Lake County's oldest bank and Waukegan's oldest continuing business. At the time of this writing Landmark Status is being sought to commemorate this building historically and architecturally significant.

Newsletter of the Waukegan Historical Society

Recent Acquisitions

Murray Driftmier

Photocopy of Orion Howe's Congressional Medal

Lynette Johnson

Photo Mathons Boat, 1 Photo Johnson Bros. Fisherman

Marcia Thomas

Wallace Aldrich Homily, 4- 1934 Class Reunion Books

Norman Carlson

North Shore Calendars, Magazines of "First and Fast"

Zion Historical Society

1970 & 71 Layout plans for Waukegan Memorial Airport

Hank Bogdala

Benny Statue Financial Records, 2 Polaroid Cameras, Benny Sweat Shirt, Benny Scrapbook

Ann Darrow

Mt Olivet and St Mary Partial Listings

Ann McCormick

1967 Lake County Atlas

Bill Tyre

8 Old House Interior Magazines, Lake County Art League Magazine, John C. Haines Cemetery Plot Photographs

Tim Vavrek

Durkin & Durkin Box, Globe Dept. Store Box

Jill Martin

Newspaper Clippings

Betsy Alleman

Johnson Motors Jumpsuit, Sunset House Coffee Mug, Newspaper clippings

Joyce Dever

Photo of Academy Theater

Audrey Siwula

Yeoman's Jewelry Box

Citizens National Bank bag and match books

First National Bank Bag

First Lake County Bank Bag

Holiday Sports Center Pen

Photographs of downtown Waukegan

Jackson School Photograph

Upstate Motors Photograph

War Savings Bond

Funeral home receipt

4 Chicago Daily Newspapers

Stuart Stefany

3 Sand Casting Industrial Patterns/Molds salvaged from the Waukegan Foundry

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

Museum Supervisor's Report

by Ty Rorher

My first few months as Museum Supervisor have been full of activities within the museum as well as the Historical Society and the Waukegan Park District. I am very pleased to announce that the museum is in the early stages of creating a better learning environment and experience for all visitors. One change that I am very excited about is that within the next couple of months, interactive children's areas will be installed throughout the museum.

With all of the changes taking place in the museum, in addition to the other activities with the Historical Society and the research library, we are in need of more volunteers. The Waukegan Historical Society has a rich history of volunteer support that seems to have tapered off over the last couple of years. We are making a strong push to rebuild our volunteer base and it can start with your time and support. This is a great opportunity for you to become an integral part of an organization that is very active within the community.

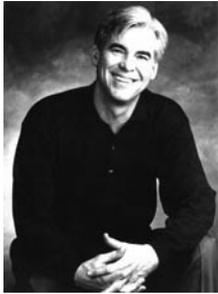
Remember, do not consider volunteering for the Historical Society as work, but rather think of it as a social gathering time with friends focused on the common goal of preserving our local history and presenting it to the public.

I look forward to working with many new volunteers as well as with the Board of Directors in the continued successes of the Waukegan Historical Society.

Bank bags donated by Audrey Siwula.



Sunday, 22 April
2pm
Schornick Theater
Jack Benny Center
Sheridan Road
Waukegan, IL



Rick Pickren— Songs from the Lonesome Prairie

Sunday, 22 April 2007, 2pm

The Historical Society is pleased to present Rick Pickren who brings traditional folk and cowboy songs alive with voice, banjo, and harmonica. Rick Pickren was a great success when he performed last summer in a Public Library lunch hour concert that the Historical Society decided to bring him back for more. Pickren has won many country music awards and has appeared with George Strait, Merle Haggard, The Judds, and Dolly Parton. He has also appeared in many TV shows and stage productions. Bring a friend!

Annual Meeting Larry Leafblad The WKRS Phenomenon

Sunday, 20 May

The long-time “on air” personality Larry Leafblad will talk about the amazing history of WKRS in Waukegan and the “Golden Age of Radio.” The station’s history will come alive with amusing stories and artifacts presented by Leafblad and possibly some other memorable characters from the past. Larry will tell stories of some of the famous “graduates” of WKRS and where they are now. This will be an interesting look into Waukegan’s past and the importance of “The 1220 Spot on Your Radio Dial.”

The Society is also planning a special exhibit this fall with additional memorabilia from WKRS. This free program will be held at the Schornick Theater in the Jack Benny Center in Bowen Park at 2pm.



Sunday, 20 May
2pm
Schornick Theater
Jack Benny Center
Sheridan Road
Waukegan, IL

Beverly Millard Named Citizen Volunteer of the Year

Our own Beverly Millard was named by the Illinois Park and Recreation Association as its Citizen Volunteer of the Year for 2007. In an elaborate luncheon at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, she was surprised with this honor in recognition of 15,000 volunteer hours spent in the Waukegan Historical Society’s John Raymond Research Library over the past two decades.

The Library is a resource much used by persons looking into the genealogy of their family, research on their homes, and students learning about the history of Waukegan. Beverly receives, catalogs, and does research for the Society’s vast archive of books, photos, newspapers, and books. Not only is she Librarian at our library but she is active in her church and has been one of the main volunteers for the very popular Oakwood Cemetery Walk held every Fall.



Donated by Audrey Siwula.

Collections Cameo

Dining Room Table

By Harry E. Came

I was surprised at how much positive feedback I received from my small article on the dining room sideboard in the last newsletter, so here we go again. After the dining room in the Museum had been finished with its beautiful “Gone with the Wind” draperies, dark green carpet, and the beautiful sideboard had been placed on the south wall, we knew we had to find a table. As a part time antique dealer I had been looking for something appropriate and asking our members if anyone knew where we could find a table which could hold its own in such a fancy room. No one came forward until board member Sara Griffin reminded me that I had bought a table several years before at an antique fair. I had put this beautiful, wreck of a table in storage until I could have it restored to use in my dining room. In the meantime, my mother had moved in with me and had installed her fine early 19th century table in my dining room.

The table I had stored away is a Renaissance Revival banquet table from the period of about 1865 to 1880 in solid walnut with burl walnut veneers applied on the legs and table skirt. Unfortunately, the table had seen better days and had none of its original leaves. Sara convinced me to sell the table for what I paid, and the Board voted to have it restored and have leaves made. My wonderful furniture restorer took the table and worked his magic. The table is beautiful and the leaves match perfectly along with their burl veneers on the skirts. When it was finished we bought new white porcelain and brass casters just like it had when it was new and placed it in its prominent position in the dining room. The table is exactly what would have been in a high end dining room in the 1870s.

After the table was installed we put the word out for chairs and Randy Bowcott donated four Empire side chairs from his attic and I donated another pair

which are almost identical to the others. These four chairs were restored and we covered the seats in dark green velvet and placed them around the table. The chairs are of the Empire period of 1815 through 1845, so they combine with the later table just as they would in a normal home.

There is another piece in the dining room which we have recently acquired which I will discuss in the next newsletter — a beautiful empire game or card table.



Thank You!

New Life Members

Nancy J. Pease
David VanAbel

Donations

Lucille Bruce
Thomas Fleming Co.
Mary Goodley
David Van Able
Waukegan Main Street

Annual Tour of Homes

Sunday, 24 June 2007, 1pm-5pm

Save the date!
Sunday, 24 June
Tour of Homes

Make sure you mark your beautiful Waukegan Calendar for the Annual Tour of Homes. This is our largest revenue-producing event each year, and we depend on the participation of our membership to sell tickets and to volunteer as room watchers.

This year we are very lucky to have two of Waukegan's grandest Sheridan Road homes as well as several other homes located in different areas of the City. Look for more information in the coming months.

Area Events

Please call to confirm dates and times.

McHenry County Historical Society (815-923-2267)

March 19. Lecture, Blizzards of the Past in Northeast Illinois, by Betsy Green, 2:00.

April 16. Lecture, Law and Order, McHenry County, 7:30.

Historical Society of Fort Hill Country (847-566-7743)

March 22. 20th Anniversary Open House 11-3.

April 23. Open House, Soo Line Depot Photos 11-3.

Grayslake Historical Society (847-223-7663)

March 19. Open House. Exhibit: Purses With Pursonality.

March 14. Speaker: Evolutions, the Quest and Discoveries of a Civil War Reenator.

April 11. Speaker: Do you Live in a Sears House?

Join Us!

NAME(S) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____ ZIP _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

MEMBERSHIP

Senior (age 60+) & 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

Haines House Museum

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

Hours

John L. Raymond Research Library

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

Haines House Museum

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

PROGRAMS

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