



County Courthouse, 1845. See article on page 6.

December 2007

Newsletter of the Waukegan Historical Society



President's Letter

by Harry E. Came

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Area Events

As the holiday season approaches I look back on this year as having been a very successful one for the Waukegan Historical Society. Our greatest success has been our Museum Supervisor, Ty Rohrer. He has been a great asset in the smooth running of the museum, outreach to the community, and his professionalism. We are so pleased to have Ty, and if you have not met him, please stop by and introduce yourself to a very nice young man who sincerely cares about our organization. The exhibit that Ty researched and installed, called *Waukegan Listens: From the Phonograph and Radio to the MP3*, will be available in our exhibit space on the second floor of the Museum until May 2008.

Replacing that exhibit next spring will be another one all about Waukegan. We are searching through our collections to present several looks at the history of our town, which will celebrate its 150th anniversary in 2009. We plan to share as many items from our collections as possible, from items manufactured here to souvenirs of Waukegan. We hope you will make a point to visit the museum for this very special exhibit which will open in May 2008.

The Waukegan Historical Society will be celebrating our 40th anniversary next year, and we are planning several events which we will share with our



Image of downtown Waukegan from our glass-negative scanning project.

membership in upcoming newsletters. Suffice it to say that we look upon this anniversary as an important milestone and wish to share our enthusiasm with our members and friends.

In September we were so pleased to have our resident historian, Ed Link, give a program entitled Waukegan, North Chicago, and the Movies. Ed told us about the early days of making and viewing movies in our area. Ed is such a wealth of knowledge that he always shares interesting and important new facts in his programs.

The next event which we want you to make sure you attend is the Annual Holiday Open House on Sunday, December 9 from 1-4 PM at Bowen Heritage Circle. The Museum will be open with tours of the holiday-decorated rooms and Christmas music in the parlor provided by Jane Hager. Lilac Cottage will have holiday music provided by several local groups, refreshments, and holiday crafts available for the children. The Board of Directors of the Society decided to try and make the event more attractive to families and provided different types of entertainment in conjunction with the Park District. We look forward to seeing you and your family at this, always well attended, event.

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

Historic Photographs of Waukegan

The next time you are in downtown Waukegan, stop by the City of Waukegan Parking Garage on the corner of County Street and Clayton Street. There you will find in the windows the photograph exhibit *Snapshots of Waukegan: 1840s through the 1960s*. The exhibit contains 20 enlarged historic photographs that portray the early history of Waukegan, Illinois. Photographs include the first and second courthouses of Lake County, storefronts on Genesee Street, and aerial views of the downtown and lake front. The exhibit is sponsored by the Waukegan Historical Society and the City of Waukegan.



Museum Supervisor's Report

December 2007

I have now passed my one year anniversary of working with the Waukegan Historical Society and the Waukegan Park District at the Haines Museum and the John L. Raymond Research Library! This was a very exciting time for me learning about the museum and library while trying to get a grasp of the rich history of Waukegan. I was able to finally put to use some of the knowledge that I learned from my university studies and apply it to real museum situations.

There were many changes that occurred to the museum over the past year. Some changes are visible to the public in the form of new exhibit spaces while others are more "behind the scenes", such as the organization of the collection's storage rooms. This next year will bring many more changes to the museum and library.

I would like to thank everyone who has helped me this past year, with special thanks to Harry Came, Claudia Freeman, Sara Griffin, Gretta Dieck, Scott Piner, Jackie Rios, Beverly Millard, Ed Link, and Ann Darrow.

New Volunteers

The Waukegan Historical Society would like to welcome Leighanne Aquino, Thai Pham, Cynthia Braze, and Sue Schwab as new museum and library volunteers. They are currently working hard scanning the society's glass negative collection in the library and helping with the collection inventory in the museum.

Historically Speaking

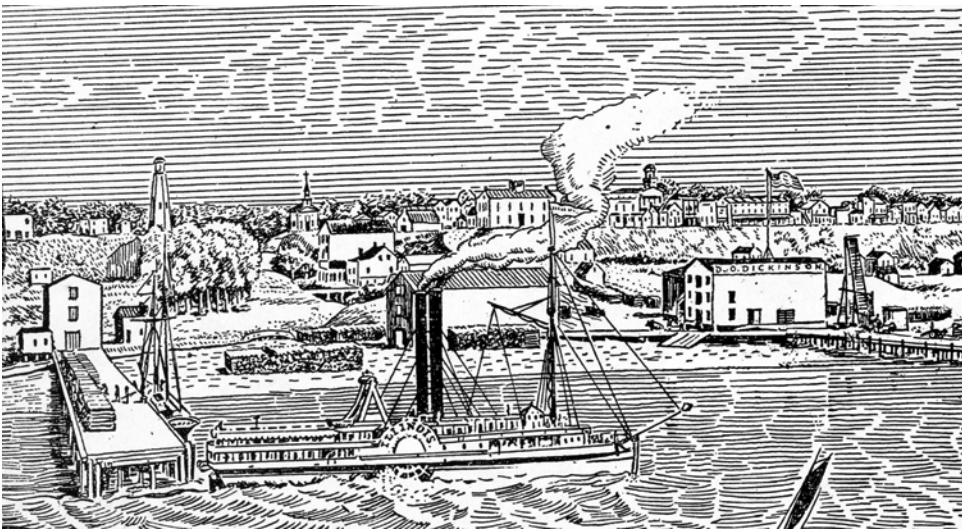
County Seat

by Ed Link

The town of Little Fort was incorporated on February 19, 1841. At the time the county seat was in Burlington (today's Libertyville). The population and the potential for development along the lakefront created some demand to re-locate it. A vote was held on April 5, 1841 and with 744 votes cast, Little Fort was selected by a margin of 188. The Burlington residents had been unconcerned about the election, assuming an easy victory. They were surprised by the election results, especially since it was estimated that there were just 486 voters in the county, with less than a hundred in Little Fort.

Controversy surrounded the election. Attempts were made to disapprove the results. Recorder and Deputy Clerk Archimedes B. Wynkoop disputed the results and moved his office back to Burlington. Clerk Henry B. Steele was from Burlington and did little to dissuade his deputy. The commissioners voted to discharge Steele and fine Wynkoop.

The problem was resolved eventually by the state legislature. By an act passed January 19, 1843,



the county seat was permanently located at Little Fort. There was a story that in an attempt to sway the legislature, Captain Morris Robinson went to Springfield. Because of snow and transportation difficulties, he walked all the way. Emotions surrounding the county seat location must have been running high.

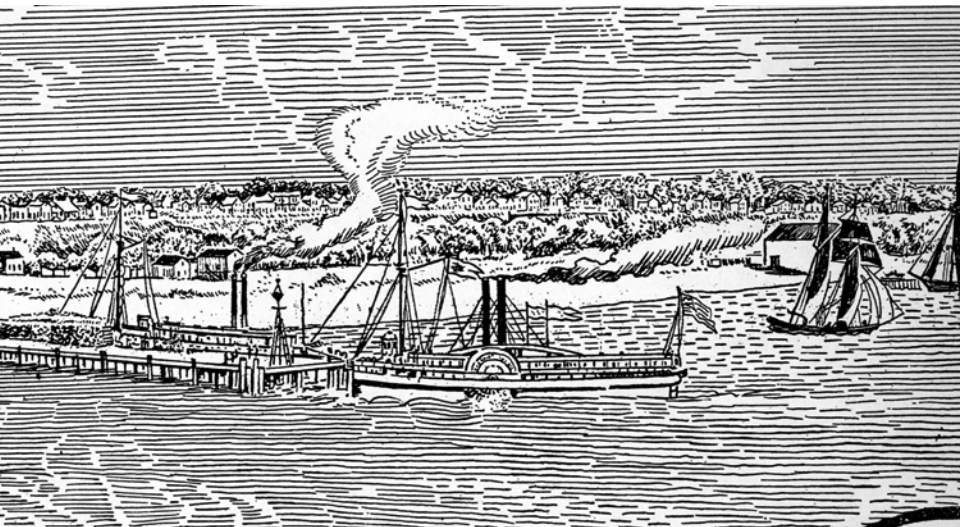
Now that everything had been settled, the county could move ahead. The commissioners had purchased land to build a courthouse. They were able to do so because of a \$200 loan from Elmsley Sunderlin. They bought 160 acres at \$1.25 per acre, kept enough property to build the courthouse and sold the remainder.

Sketch of Little Fort, Illinois

Artist: R.N. White

Date: 1847 to 1850

In this sketch you can see two of the three private piers on Lake Michigan. The D.O. Dickinson Grain Warehouse, the first Lake County Courthouse, and the lighthouse on Water Street are also visible. The steamer *Illinois* (lower left) traveled the Great Lakes and would have made stops at Little Fort.



Collections Cameo

Two New Donations

By Harry E. Came

Recently we have received two very interesting donations from former Waukegan residents who felt that their items should come home to Waukegan. The first is a parlor set from the mid-nineteenth century, given by the Ford family, descendants of the early Lake County pioneer Shumway family. The donation includes a settee, ladies chair, and side chair. Stephen Ford (the donor) and his aunts (Frances M. Ford and Florence E. Ford Dart) wanted the furniture to “come back to Waukegan.” The Waukegan Historical Society currently has several wonderful parlor sets in the museum, so accepting another and trying to figure out where to install it would probably have made us turn down the donation—except for one interesting side note.

Within the family, this set had always been called the “Lincoln set.” Family history said that it came from the Ferry House (located at the corner of County and Julian Streets), where Abraham Lincoln spent the night during his visit to Waukegan. This

was the home of Mayor Ferry and later became the Red Cross headquarters. Many years ago, the Society obtained several pieces of furniture from the house, including the Lincoln bed which is currently on exhibit in the museum. Although it can never be abso-



lutely proven that Lincoln sat on any one of these pieces, they are in the Rococo style of the 1850s, making it entirely plausible. The Society has gratefully accepted this wonderful donation and has installed the three pieces in the Lincoln Bedroom, alongside the Lincoln bed.



Early recollections from the Ford sisters

suggested that the furniture was originally covered in horsehair, so the Society has spent approximately \$1700 to recover the pieces in black shantung silk to approximate the look of horsehair. Several members have made sizable contributions to the Society in the past two years, and the Board decided that this would be a wonderful way to apply these funds to a project that will have a lasting impact on our collections. Our thanks to the Crombie, Munn, Salmon, and Domalski families for their donations which have made this project achievable.

The second new acquisition for the museum is located in the dining room on top of the Besley card table (purchased last year). We acquired four pieces of Besley silver plate from Charles Lange, founding member of the Society and current resident of Cassville, Wisconsin. Charlie has donated many items to the Museum over the years, and these pieces of Pairpoint silver plate from the 1870s belonged to the Besley family, owners of the Besley Brewing Company. These beautiful pieces of silver

are in wonderful condition and now sit again on a piece of furniture from the same family. We hope you will take the time to walk through the museum and see the newest additions.



Volunteer opportunities:

Collection inventory and management

Tour docents

Exhibit installation and care

Program development

Research

Special Events

Library assistant

Volunteers Needed

The Waukegan Historical Society is seeking volunteers for the museum and 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.

Thank You!

New Members

Mr. and Mrs. Luis Correa
Joann Perkowski
Susan A. Lerch
J. Brian Alleman

New Life Members

Nancy Salmela
Jeffrey Rothbart

Patrons

Mr. and Mrs. Sean Wiedel
Brad West
Waukegan Fire Department
Patrick Gallagher
Leibowitz Law Center



Metal Souvenir Coin Bank advertising "First Federal Savings and Loan Association—Madison at County Street Waukegan, Illinois 60085." Donated by Martha Sherer.

Recent Donations

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

Rob Proce

Phonograph Records

Kaino Videlka

Finnish Temperance Hall Memorabilia

Thomas Lutz

Sea Bird Disaster, from Manitowoc County, Wisconsin

John Steele

Barwell Goodfellowship Settlement Memorabilia

Mary Fran Troha

Christ Episcopal Info

June & Jim Maguire

Waukegan Centennial 1959 Necktie

Vince Levendusky

1939 Waukegan Yearbook

George MaKela

1917 & 1919 Waukegan Yearbooks

Faith Clark

Sargeant Dog Food Pamphlet

Kathleen Kinderfather

1947 Waukegan Yearbook

Reunion Video

McShane Service Station Photograph

McShane Life Saving Award

Blotters

Assorted Newspaper Clippings

St. Anastasia Info

Holy Child Reunion Booklet

Waukegan High School Memorabilia

Winnetka Historical Society

Postcard of Genesee Street

Packet of small postcard photographs

Larry Leafblad

WKRS metal sign

Newspaper articles

Chandra Sefton

Uniform & Certificate

Dan Drury

Patrick Drury Campaign Card

Edward Vlack Campaign Card

Dorothy Dolph

Mayflower Quarterlies & Membership
Lake County Geneological Quarterlies
Records Left Behind
Death Book-Paddock Publications
General Society of War of 1812
Lake County Early Settlers Certificate

Ann Darrow

2 Books-Great Lakes Light List

Terry Hogan

3 High School Yearbooks
1932 Waukegan Treasures Report

Carol Awe

2500 and a Dream-Fansteel Story

Norman Carlson

2008 Calendar-Shoreline Interurban
First and Fastest-Magazines

Sharon Laughlin

Newspaper Clippings
Scrapbook of Ruth Gregory

Lyn Albrecht

Miscellaneous papers
Immaculate Conception Church Book

Bill Kiddle

"Bensinger Family"

Steve Rosswurm

Maps of North Chicago and Waukegan

Sara Griffin

Waukegan Savings playing cards
Waukegan Savings pen
Rubberneck Ducky Farm Products toy

Martha Sherer

Sewing Box
Book titled, Shurhit Tips
First Federal Savings Souvenir Bank

John Barney

Ink pen

Purchased

Waukegan National Bank Ad
"North Shore Line" Interurban Freight



Area Events

Please call to confirm dates and times.

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

November 23-December 30. Holiday Tours. Fee.

December 11-January 5. Winter Wonderland Holiday Light Show, 6-10pm. Fee.

Fox Lake/Grant Township Area Historical Society (847-587-7198)

December 2. Holiday Social with Museum tours, Santa, refreshments, and carols, 2-4pm.

Continuing exhibits: *Forest and Lotus Schools*; WWII with uniforms, V-Mail, and lists of local servicemen and women.

Grayslake Historical Society (847-223-7663)

December 9. Holiday Open House with vintage sleigh and photos with Santa, 1:30-3:30pm.

January 13. Open House with continuing exhibit, *The 60s*, 1:30-3:30pm.

Historical Society of the Fort Hill Country, Mundelein (847-556-7743)

December 1. Holiday Open House, 11-3pm.

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

December 14. *Chocolate, Champagne, & Shopping: A Ladies Night Out*. Enjoy goodies while shopping at select vendors selling gourmet kitchen items, candles, jewelry, wine, confections, and handcrafted items, plus discount in museum store, 5:30-8:30pm. Adults only. Tickets available at the door.

December 30-January 20. New Exhibit: *Pocketbook Anthropology*.

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

Continuing exhibit through March 30, 2008. All Aboard! Railways and the Growth of a Community. Commemorates history of railroad and interurban systems.

Raupp Memorial Museum, Buffalo Grove (847-459-2318)

January 21. New Exhibit: *The Fabulous Fifties: Bowling Alley, Bomb Shelter & Baby Boom!*

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

Haines House Museum

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

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



PROGRAM

Holiday Open House

Sunday, December 9

1pm-4pm

Join us for music, refreshments, and children's crafts. The Haines Museum and Lilac Cottage will be open.

See page 4 for details.

