

# THE WAPSIPINICON

A newsletter published quarterly by the  
**TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

\* 2010 Volunteer Institution of the Year, Illinois Association of Museums

\*2020 Project Winner of Illinois Governor's Hometown Award,  
representing the Volunteers of the Tiskilwa Community

VOLUME 17

MARCH 2022

NUMBER 1

## MUSEUM ON MAIN AND GALLERY ON GALENA

More than 13,500 artifacts are displayed to preserve and interpret local history. The **MoM** is housed in an 1855 Illinois Historic Landmark Building at 110 East Main Street. The **GoG** is in the former Legion Hall, 550 North Galena, just south of the tracks.

**MUSEUM HOURS:**  
SATURDAYS: 10 – 1  
(PLEASE NOTE CHANGE)  
**GALLERY HOURS:**  
FIRST SATURDAYS: 10-1

Admission is free, and our volunteers will show you around. By appointment, call Ed Waca at 815.646.4016.

## Board of Directors 2022

Ed Waca, President  
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## BILL WENDLE LEADING THE CHARGE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING

*Editor's note: Since early December, your T-H-S board has been meeting twice a month to develop strategies to sustain our society in the long term. We've asked Bill to detail our progress so far.*

In the December 2021 issue of *The Wapsipinicon*, I briefly described an initiative by the T-H-S board to ensure we will have the resources (people and finances) necessary to continue serving members and the Tiskilwa community for the next 20 years. And I am pleased to report that we are making good progress. First, board members identified three top-level goals and then divided into teams to work on developing the associated strategies and tasks. Our goals are these:

1. **Expand the base of volunteers and potential board members** – Our total operating costs are relatively low (an average of \$16,700 per year) because most tasks necessary to operate the society are done by volunteers. But difficulty recruiting volunteers from the community to staff the museums on Saturdays and perform other tasks has meant that board members are working 90+% of the total volunteer hours. This is not sustainable. As a step toward the goal of increased participation in staffing our museums, we have shortened our hours at Museum on Main to 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Gallery on Galena has those same hours, open the first Saturday each month.
2. **Develop a plan to attract and retain future museum directors** – The impetus for this strategic review was the realization that a sudden departure by Cele Gerber would be the “beginning of the end” for T-H-S. Although she is not ready to step back from her role, when she does, it is highly unlikely we will be able to find a volunteer with the necessary skill set and fire to fill the museum director position. Consequently, hiring a part-time museum director will be part of our long-term plan.
3. **Assure we have the financial resources to remain viable** – Employing a part-time director to work 50 hours per month would more than double our total annual operating cost. In addition, our 167-year-old building will need several repairs and replacements in the coming years. As our finance team works on our long-term income and operating expense projections, it is clear we will need significantly more income to remain viable.
  - One option is to raise the income as we need it via an annual fundraising effort. This is not the board's first choice because T-H-S members will tire of constant appeals, plus fundraising is our board members' least favorite responsibility.
  - The preferred option is a single fundraising campaign in 2022/2023. Funds raised will be invested and the earnings used to fill the gap between projected income and expenses. The fundraising goal will be “backed into,” assuming a 4% average annual return.

Board members are planning for success, but we acknowledge that this campaign will be a kind of referendum on whether our community wants us to continue for 5, 10, 20 more years. We thank you, our members, for your continued support. Please stay tuned for more information. Our goal is to finish the strategic review and launch our fundraising campaign by the end of April 2022.

**2022 TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP — SO FAR! THANKS TO EVERYONE who has joined or renewed.**

**NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS**

◆ **INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES** ◆

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Bonnie Fredrickson Alm (Buda)  
Sharon Anderson  
Ted Bachman (DeKalb)  
Janet O. Balensiefen (Princeton)  
Bob Bitting  
Sharon Bittner (Putnam)  
Steve & Sandy Borge (Brimfield)  
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Ray & Jill Carrington (Wyanet)  
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Dean & Carol Rowe (Princeton)  
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Nita Vaughn Von Holten (Walnut)  
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Ed Waca  
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(Bath, ME)  
Robert Sash (Chicago)  
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THS Class of 1970

◆ **SILVER BENEFACTORS** ◆

Anonymous  
Bill & Margaret Wendle

◆ **PLATINUM BENEFACTOR** ◆

Caterpillar Foundation Matching Funds  
(CAT doubled 2021 donation matches)

**MEMBERSHIP GROWTH**

**2006: 45**  
**2011: 250**  
**2016: 304**  
**2021: 348**

## THE WAPSIPINICON, MARCH 2022

*Editor's note: This feature is reprinted from March 2008. The **Pettegrew Hardware** stood at the south end of High Street, where **Craig Zeigler** (THS '77) has constructed a new building behind his **Steimle Garage**. Here is the introduction that Jon (THS '67) wrote:*

*Memories of "The Store" are interwoven within every aspect of my growing-up years in Tiskilwa. For me, the memories are divided between "the old store" and "the new store." The old store was located off Main Street across from the **Curtis and Battey Lumberyard**. With thanks to **Carol Hughes, Tori Hughes Stegall, Barb Hughes, John Taylor, and Roger K. Hughes, Jr. (Kent)**, here are our memories of the past.*

### THE STORE by Jon Hughes

My earliest memories involve my dad, **Roger Hughes** (THS '48) along with **Ed Pettegrew**, (THS '28), the owner of **Pettegrew Hardware**, coming home for lunch in the small blue Chevy hardware store truck. Our homes were next door to each other in the west end of town. Every day, the noon whistle would sound off, and at 12:01, (after a one-minute commute) Dad would appear for lunch. He'd return to the store promptly at 12:55, with four minutes to spare. In those days, most businesses on Main Street (with the exception of the **Tiskilwa State Bank**) closed for a one-hour lunch break.



*Ed Pettegrew stands in the midst of his merchandise at his hardware store where the author's dad worked. This is one of 96 images on our DVD "The Way We Were: 1956." Both photos were transferred from Kodachrome images taken by Sid Durfee.*

Dad was in charge of deliveries of Skelgas to everyone, both in town and in the country. Many times, he would get a call from someone at night after the store had closed, asking if he could bring out gas as they had run out. I would go with him to the store and we would load up the gas cylinders and take them to the person's house. Other times, customers would simply go to the store dock and load up some gas themselves, and Dad would later "write it down."

My sister **Barb's** memories of this store include the smell of the wooden floor and my mother often saying, "Roger, you need to dust in here." Barb also remembers she was not supposed to use the restroom as it had "inappropriate" décor on the walls. Another memory was when **Barb, Jan Pruitt**, and her brother **Joe** needed paint for a clubhouse at the Pruitt residence. Dad supplied the paint and all went well until Mom and **Opal Pruitt** discovered that Dad had given the kids OIL-based paint and, of course, they all were multicolored messes.

My brother-in-law, **John Taylor**, remembers meeting Dad at the hardware store when he first moved to Tiskilwa from Indiana. On that first meeting, Dad let him choose one pop and some candy for free. After that, John thought Tiskilwa might not be too bad of a place to live after all.

"The Store" always seemed huge to me as a small boy. It had a basement, a second story, and a warehouse attached to it with all sorts of hardware stacked all over the place. It seemed anything I (or anyone else) needed could be found at "The Store."

Once a week, Dad would drive to Peoria and pick up items for the store. When school was out, I was occasionally allowed to make the "long" journey to Peoria (50 miles) with Dad and stop at the various warehouses. We would also have lunch at Steak 'n' Shake, so this was a thrill indeed for a young boy. I always wondered how Mr. Pettegrew was able to run the store when Dad had to attend to the undertaking business at the **Hughes Funeral Home**, but I guess they worked out a format.

In 1963, I believe, my dad bought the store from Mr. Pettegrew, and it became Hughes Hardware. As I got older, I began hanging around more and more at the store. **Bill Philhower** and I spent lots of time there as teenagers. We would go into the basement "shooting range" and attempt to outdo each other shooting at targets with rifles and handguns. I remember one time cutting Bill's hair in the back room. I don't remember why I did it or how it turned out. But I guess it must have been okay, since I don't remember that we got into trouble.

Many times, I would move out the hearse that Dad stored in the warehouse and pull my jalopy in there to work on it. I'd ask Dad to listen to my car problems, which he did, and then he had a habit of replying, "Well, fix it."

Once in a great while, I attempted to run the store for a few hours. It always amazed me how many different questions people had. When I had no idea, the customer and I would look around the store until we could find what was wanted. Then I would attempt to write up a ticket or more likely, record the item in a small notebook and put it on their tab.

Many of the farmers as well as town folks would stop by the store at least once during the day, either to buy an item or, more likely, simply catch up on the local news. Many times a day, **Davis Battey** would be back and forth between his mom's lumberyard and our hardware store. As I recall, often he would (somehow) be locked or nailed in the bathroom or have firecrackers fired at him during his run back to the lumberyard. Surprisingly, he survived it all and it didn't seem to stop him from coming back for more.

"The Store" was always a place I liked to go to and hang out since normally something interesting was going on every day.



*In this photo from "The Way We Were: 1985," Roger Hughes stands at the counter of **Hughes Hardware** on West Main Street, Tiskilwa. [DVDs of photos from Main Street businesses in 1956, 1985, and 2010 are available at Museum on Main for a donation.]*

**WANTED:** Your memories for future newsletters.  
Just get in touch with Cele or Jane, editors.



## UPDATES FOR MUSEUM ON MAIN AND GALLERY ON GALENA

### Behind the Scenes at Museum on Main

Since our December newsletter, we've attended to a number of ongoing maintenance projects, including purchasing a replacement for the exterior double door in Gallery 2. The big beauty has arrived and our "fixit" guys are waiting for hospitable weather to install it.



**Left:** One favorite display for our MoM visitors is the **Bill Vowels Collection** of Native American artifacts. In the 1940s and 1950s, Bill and his two sons, **Bob** and **Jack**, walked the fields of local farmers immediately after spring plowing.  
**Right: Sign of the Times:** As noted in in Bill's article on page 1, we've changed the hours at Museum on Main in an effort to attract more volunteers to greet visitors every Saturday. **Dave Sampson** volunteers as our sign-changer.

### Behind the Scenes at Gallery on Galena

A recent visitor made excellent use of our archival issues of Tiskilwa's newspapers (under various guises as the *Chief*, *Tiskilwa Weekly*, and most recently *Bureau Valley Chief*). New member **Ann Blaisdell Rothery** (pictured at left) of St. Louis pored over the bound editions, looking for articles connected to her family. Ann's grandmother was the youngest in her branch of the Russell family, with siblings **Dan Russell**, **Mamie Russell Johnson**, and **Harry Russell**. The newspapers are also available on microfilm.

At GoG, our collage of military photos donated by the families of service men and women seems to call out for closer inspection.



## BY THE NUMBERS

Even in the second year of the pandemic, we believe that our numbers were impressive for a small museum.

### Go Figure! Stats for 2021

**514 @ 5\*:** Number of attendees @ number of programs  
**734:** Number of visitors who signed in on Saturdays at **MoM**  
**164:** Number of visitors at **GoG**  
**348:** Number of Members & Sponsors  
**3,047:** Estimated volunteer hours

**FYI:** \* The pandemic prevented our usual slate of 10 events. In 2021, we hosted 3 days of Pow Wow, "Fiddler on the Lawn," Dirksen program, Black Hawk program, and Walk Tiskilwa.

### Wapsipinicon Editors:

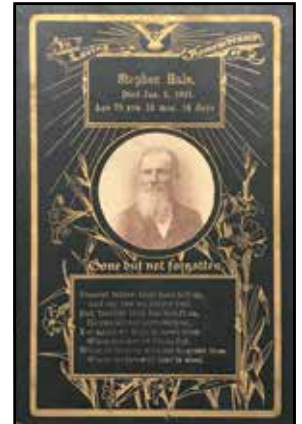
Cecille Gerber, [cecilegrbr2@gmail.com](mailto:cecilegrbr2@gmail.com)  
Jane Jones, [jjones215@gmail.com](mailto:jjones215@gmail.com)

## Good Samaritan Sends Boxful of Family Treasures

*Editor's note: "Kindness is both beneficial to another and unrequited. Kindness begins where necessity ends." Amor Towles*

A fellow from St. Louis, who'd never heard of the Hale family (let alone Tiskilwa!) recently sent numerous family letters, photos, and other precious memorabilia "back where it belongs."

The backstory: When working for a company that cleans out homes before sale, **Justin Summers** discovered a family collection and decided to make an effort to find the descendants of Stephen Hale [1826-1901]. Justin put an ad in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* to no avail, but then noticed notations for Tiskilwa, Illinois, on several items. He contacted us through our website with his inquiry. We didn't have to look far to find two Hale sisters and two Waca brothers who can claim old Stephen as their great-grandfather.



*Clockwise from lower left:* Cousins **Betsy Hale Salsman** (Wyanet), **Charlie Waca** (Princeton), **Ed Waca** (Tiskilwa), and **Jennie Hale** (Peoria) were on hand for a "Reveal" party of family treasures on January 29 at Museum on Main.

## IN MEMORIAM

*Delmar Beams*

*Benson Family*

*Blake Family*

*Isabel Bitting*

*David Brokaw*

*Gene Gustafson*

*Richard Hedrich*

*Mamie Johnson*

*Gail McCauley*

*Michael John Menery*

*Connie Miller*

*Bud & Madeline Nordstrom*

*Philpott Families*

*Louis Jerome Quick*

*Fred & Terry Roberts*

*Holton & Cherry Ann Rosenquist*

*Harry Russell*

*Cletus Sims*

*Ed Sims*

*Phyllis Sims*

*Paula Snow*

*Mel Tyne*

## ~ A NOTE ABOUT YOUR 2022 MEMBERSHIP ~

*If your name is not listed on page 2, perhaps you've forgotten to join in the new year. Sorry, but this is the final issue that we can mail to you without receiving your 2022 dues.*

## TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Annual dues: Jan. 1 to Dec. 31*

**MEMBERSHIP:** Individual \$15; Family \$20

**SPONSORSHIP:** (Includes membership dues – and it's tax deductible)

Friend: \$50 Promoter: \$100 Patron: \$250

Bronze Benefactor: \$500; Silver Benefactor: \$1,000; Gold Benefactor: \$2,500

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

*In addition, I'm enclosing a MEMORIAL DONATION of \$\_\_\_\_\_ in memory of \_\_\_\_\_*

**TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED = \$\_\_\_\_\_**

Please make check payable to **TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY** and mail it to P.O. Box 87, Tiskilwa, IL 61368. Thank you!

## Spring Roster of Programs Offers Variety

**Good news:** In early March, we switch to Daylight Saving Time, and the sun will not set on the 14th until 6:58 p.m. So, unlike our fall programs, you can arrive in the daylight! All programs begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Community Room, accessible by our stairway chairlift.

**Monday, March 14:** The Waca brothers, Charlie and Ed, will team up to share projected images and stories of the wooden figures carved by their dad over a lifetime of whittling. Many carvings reflect his wry sense of humor, as reflected in his self-appointed nickname, "The Tiskilwa Termite." His work has been on display since December in our Timeline Gallery, so perhaps you've seen it. Here's your chance to hear "the rest of the story."

**Monday, April 11:** We have the good fortune to receive a grant from the Illinois Humanities Council's Road Scholar program to host **Pamala Silas**, recognized as a Native American leader for more than 25 years. A member of the Menominee Indian Tribe and an Oneida descendant, Pam will share artifacts and stories as well as engage the audience in discussing topical issues of the Native American experience in contemporary culture.



**Monday, May 9:** We're happy to announce that **Abraham Lincoln** will be coming to Tiskilwa this spring! All right, let's explain that **Kevin Wood**, an IHC Road Scholar who bears a remarkable resemblance to The Great Emancipator, will join us that evening. His program brings to life the story of how both Lincoln and the state of Illinois grew from obscurity to greatness between 1830 and 1861. Over the past 20 years, Kevin/Abe has made more than 1,400 appearances in 31 states, plus Washington, D.C., Canada, and Spain.



## History Mystery for March



When **Mike Vaughn** of Princeton posted this photo on Facebook, we asked him if we could share it with our readers. Mike started out on December 30, camera in hand, to seek unusual nighttime shots. He told us that the farther south he drove that night, the denser the fog. He was struck by the look of this 1876 structure and shot several photos, using different settings for each. In Mike's words: "I was really glad I made the trip down."

**Question:** What is this mystery building, eight miles south of Tiskilwa?

**History Mystery Solved:** That was an easy one, right? **Lone Tree School** is a one-room schoolhouse, one of very few still standing in Bureau County. Although the school closed years ago, Wheatland Township continues to maintain and use it as a town hall. Through special efforts of **Fran** and **Dorothy Ary**, the structure was added to the **National Register of Historic Places** in 2004. For years, the "Lone Tree Gang" (**Wheeler family**) has decorated it at Christmas time.



Last November, local beekeeper **John Sims** (THS '74) spotted a hive without a home, high in a tree a few miles northeast of Tiskilwa. After some thought and discussion, John and his nephew **Don Sims** spent a day designing and building a two-part "bee house." When finished, the intrepid Don climbed a tall

stepladder they'd strapped to a platform on the back of their pick-up. He clicked together their set-up, protecting the colony from ice and snow of a Tiskilwa winter. Their discovery and ingenious work were detailed in the **American Bee Journal**, February 2022.

## A Tip o' the Hat to Illinois Humanities Council

We're sure you have noticed that, for the past several years, our little society has hosted an amazing assortment of top-notch presenters. Have you ever wondered how can we hire these professionals on our limited programming budget?

The answer, in part, is that several of these presenters are part of the IHC's program **Road Scholar Speakers Bureau**. In fact, for the past 25 years, the IHC has invited Illinois musicians, living-history actors, and historians to share their expertise and enthusiasm by offering cultural programs of high quality for a modest application fee from local non-profits. And then the IHC picks up the lion's share of the tab.

In order that many historical societies, libraries, and other groups can share in this bonanza, IHC limits each organization to two presenters per year. Over the years, our society has made a point of applying for a wide range of diversified programming. Remember some of these programs?

Here's a partial list: Fiddler **Dennis Stroughmatt** has visited twice (2021, 2014), most recently on a Sunday afternoon in September last year on the lawn. Road Scholar **Brian Fox Ellis** has presented an evening with Black Hawk (2021) as well as a portrayal of magnate John Deere (2019). In 2018, **Marlene Rivers** was a hit with her living-history portrayal of freed slave and Civil War nurse, Ann Stokes. In 2013, **Dr. Clarice Boswell** shared fascinating family details about quilts as "signposts" on the Underground Railroad. Seven years later, her daughter **Connie Martin** reprised the program. In fact, Connie's presentation was the only program we were able to host in 2021.

We thank the Illinois Humanities Council for continuing to assist us in offering our community these free-admission, thought-provoking, and engaging programs!



## TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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P.O. Box 87

TISKILWA, IL 61368

[www.tiskilwahistoricalociety.org](http://www.tiskilwahistoricalociety.org)

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



A preview of spring! Thanks to **Karen Parish**, Tiskilwa, who captured this charming photo of a yellow-rumped warbler along the Hennepin Canal in May 2019.

These generous businesses help  
pay printing and postage costs.

**JOHN F.  
HEDRICH**  
*Trial Lawyer*  
726 South Main Street  
Princeton, IL 61356  
815-872-1010

COUNTRY GETAWAY • SPECIAL EVENTS  
\* ENJOY OUR DESIGNER AMENITIES \*

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