

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

DECEMBER 2022

NUMBER 4

MUSEUM ON MAIN

AND

GALLERY ON GALENA

Our collection includes thousands of artifacts, displayed to preserve and interpret local and state 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:

EVERY SATURDAY: 10-1

GALLERY HOURS:

FIRST SATURDAYS: 10-1

**Admission is free,
and our volunteers
will show you around.**

For private tours at
either museum,
call Ed Waca
at 815.646.4016.

Board of Directors

2022-2023

Ed Waca, President
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"CATCH THE SPIRIT"—WALK TISKILWA ON DECEMBER 10

We're hoping that everyone will bundle up and **CATCH THE SPIRIT** when Tiskilwa Historical Society invites the community to Walk Tiskilwa. Yep, we are organizing our sixteenth almost-annual holiday event. As you vividly recall, 2020 was a bust in just about every way. But the holiday spirit is in the air again along Main Street, and it's time to mark your calendars for **Saturday, December 10 between 10:00 and 1:00**. Come on down and delight in down-home cheer.

Our Museum on Main and **Gallery on Galena** will offer cozy places to wander around, whether or not the weather outside is frightful. Three special features for holidays: In Gallery 1, **Nancy Joiner Harmon** (THS '76) will be selling four difference choices of 2023 calendars with her outstanding photos of Tiskilwa's birds, other wildlife, and historic places. The **Waca Brothers, Ed** (THS '66) and **Charlie** (THS '64), are again teaming up for their traditional Lionel train display -- circling a tiny tree in Gallery 1. As you enter the Timeline Gallery, our December showcase will feature a snow globe collection belonging to **Julie Perry Sampson**. (THS '67)

After festivities wrap up at 1:00, winners will be announced for the tree-decorating contest as well as various raffles drawings held by Main Street businesses at **1:15 p.m. in the community room of Museum on Main**. Immediately following that, **Nancy Harmon** will present a program with examples of her photography that show the beauty all around us throughout the seasons.

The Tiskilwa Community Church will host their traditional bake sale and craft sale in the church basement. Thanks to Pastor Renee Kindle, who helped organize the whole event this year. They're inviting visitors to enjoy free coffee, snacks, and fellowship while purchasing items of their choice. **Santa Claus** will be on hand to listen to gift requests and check his list. (Twice.) Last year's visitors (*pictured at left*) included **Rayylee, Briinuh, and Jazzlyn DePauw**.

The Tiskilwa Public Library will join in the merrymaking by setting up crafts tables for kiddies. Everyone is welcomed to stop by, and library personnel will be on hand to offer cheerful assistance to crafters.

The Tiskilwa Inn, 140East, and **The Sugar Maple Inn** will host Open Houses for visitors to see what's new – and old: Tisk Inn for spiced cider, cookies, and a fearsome Nutcracker collection; 140East for a Victorian Christmas look; Sugar Maple Inn for holiday treats and a walkabout. Other businesses on Main Street, including **Kelly's Place**, **the Indian Valley Inn**, the new **Luce Art Gallery**, and **MD Hardwood Floors**, will catch the spirit, too.

Country Christmas Vendors in St. Mary's Church Hall: **Janet and Curt Dugosh** (THS '85) have invited and organized numerous vendors to display their wares. [A full list can be found on page 5](#). Weather permitting, a few friendly alpacas will be greeting visitors on the lawn of the church hall. The family of **Bill & Janice Jamison** (THS '44 and '50) will once again roll the 60+-year-old Nativity scene into pride of place on the St. Mary's church lawn, featuring new statues of Mary and Joseph along with the traditional creche crew of Wise Men, camels, and other colorful figures and critters. Baby Jesus is again expected to join the group very early on December 25.



*Thank you to those listed here who recently joined or renewed,
our early-bird members for 2023.*

(Members are from Tiskilwa unless otherwise noted.)

NEW AND RENEWED MEMBERS

◆ INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES ◆

Barbara Grebner (Wyanet)
Joan Hickey (Memphis, TN)
Randy & Cathy Philhower
Roxana Stowe Martin (Petersburg)
Margaret Sinclair (Naperville)
Dan & Mary Thompson (Princeton)
Sally Ary Trumpinski (Sublette)

SPONSORS

◆ FRIENDS ◆

Lynda Kunkel-Abbey (Pleasant Hill, CA)
Ed & Jan O'Neill (Dunlap)
Jim & Connie Sutton (Princeton)

◆ PROMOTER ◆

Dale & Chris Anderson
Karen Miller (Asheville, NC)

2023 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

For this issue only, we've used postal mail for all members; however, the newsletter will still be available on our website. We've enclosed a renewal form and envelope. Above your name of the address label is the date of your most recent renewal. We sincerely appreciate your support, and we hope it continues!

CLARIFICATION: We truly appreciate your generous response to our 20-year Fundraiser! (*More details on page 4.*) To clarify, those "20-year" contributions are in a separate account from our membership drive donations.

The annual contributions to our Membership/Sponsorship are what keep the wheels turning at our two museums. We use those funds for displays, programming, building and grounds maintenance, office supplies, and a host of other items. As you know, our society's day-to-day work is done by volunteers.

1903 Oldsmobile Roadster with Charming Drivers in Lovejoy Homestead Parade



On Saturday, September 10, we participated in Princeton's Fifty-first Lovejoy Homestead Parade. Two of Ed Waca's daughters, Amy and Sania, steered our replica Roadster down the avenue for us. Built in 1963 by longtime Tiskilwa resident Albert Lee, this adorable buggy was donated by Nancy Sims in memory of her husband Cletus.

Left: Amy Waca and Sania Waca joined in the fun, all decked out in 1900s apparel and demeanor.

Two Fall Programs Draw 129 Visitors

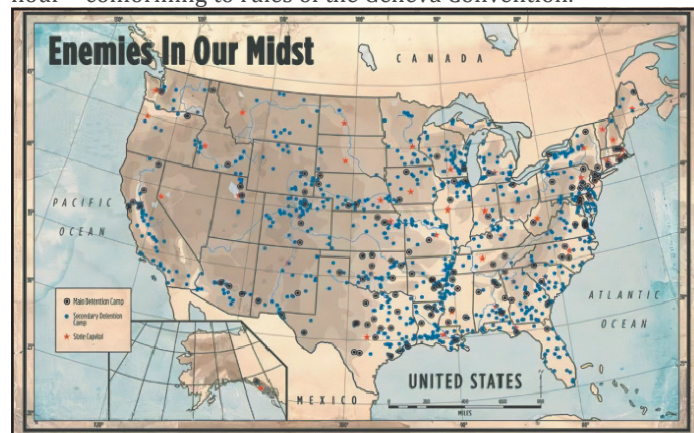
In addition to our "homies," folks from Sparland to Princeton to Neponset turned out for programs that we hosted in October and November. *Editor's note: Our September program of Clark Thompson's retro rock band was canceled because of the illness of a band member.*



On October 10, Sara Phalen shared a fascinating tale of 1842 construction of 140 East (formerly known as the Stevens House) and the restoration and renovation that she and hubby Brad Kimme have completed.

Neighbors Rich and Cheryl Barnett were among the 84 visitors that evening.

The November 14 program began with our annual Salute to Veterans, as we asked all vets in attendance to stand and receive a token of appreciation for their service, presented by Randy Senneff (THS '73) of the Tiskilwa Alumni Association. (*A photo of the keychain is in the Collector's Corner box on page 5.*) An informative presentation by Ron Dickerson (THS '70) followed, with fascinating details about the various locations of POW camps, especially throughout Illinois. German POWs engaged in harvesting crops, canning, and public works construction. Ron explained that they were paid in script – equivalent to 81 cents an hour – conforming to rules of the Geneva Convention.



A map from the 1940s shows the locations of POW camps scattered throughout the United States from 1942 to 1945.

Psst! It's That Time Again: Let's Deck the Halls!



Let us know if you can join us for the fun of creating a holiday atmosphere at the Museum on Main and Gallery on Galena. We'll meet at 10:15 a.m. on Monday, December 5, at the MoM.

IN MEMORIAM

Thank you for memorials received since our September newsletter.

STEPHANIE COLBY-ABURTO
KATHRYN GORMAN
ANN KUNKEL
BEVERLY NORA
KATHY WACA

Editor's note: Recently, one of our new neighbors on Main Street, T-H-S member **Sara Phalen**, volunteered to increase the online presence of our society. We're thrilled to accept her generous offer! In this article, she explains a plan for the future. Thank you, Sara!

History Goes Digital by Sara Phalen

As we look to a new year and new resolutions, the Tiskilwa Historical Society is making a new commitment to digital engagement of a wider audience.

Museums and historical societies have learned a lot over the past few years about connecting with communities in additional ways through social media, and I am excited to be helping to expand the reach of Tiskilwa history even farther!

Displays in the Museum on Main and the Gallery on Galena do wonderful jobs of showcasing the story of Tiskilwa. But as people continue to look for history and experience "life in the past" online, we will be further promoting tales of Tiskilwa on both Facebook and Instagram in 2023.



The road "Lusty Hill" leads out of Tiskilwa from the southwest corner of the West Park. Originally the **Galena Trail and Coach Road**, it eventually was known by the name of the family living atop the hill.

Historic postcards have been capturing the interest of our extended community for decades! We have quite a stockpile of cards on display in our museum collection, and soon you can also check them out in our upcoming #MailbagMonday features.

Photographs and local history stories will start popping up more frequently in posts, sharing memories and little-known bits of history in the Gem of the Valley.

If you don't already follow the historical society on our website (tiskilwahistoricalsociety.org) and our Facebook page (*Tiskilwa Historical Society*), be sure to do so. And make sure to tell your friends who have moved away from town but still love the community and its rich history. (Editor's note: As you may recall, we fondly call these former residents and distant friends "Tiskilwannabes.")

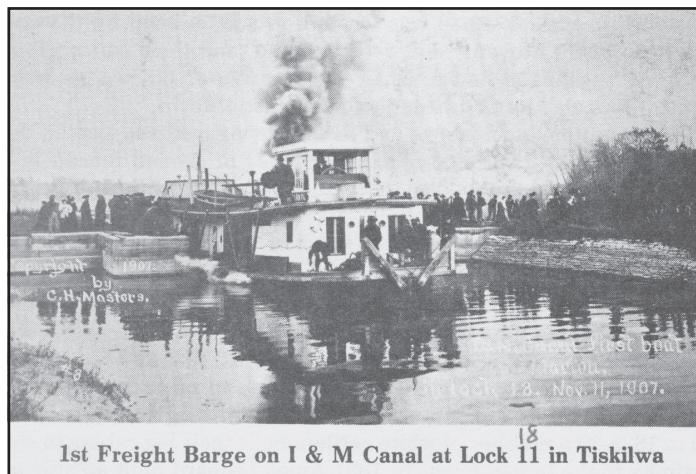
Of course, we hope you will continue to stay up-to-date with "all things Tiskilwa" here in the *Wapsipinicon*, in our press releases, and at our museums, but we hope you enjoy these enhanced social media showcases, too.

By the way, if you have a suggestion for a feature or a question about local history you'd like to see highlighted in a post, DM (direct message) us or drop us a line at TiskilwaHistory@gmail.com.

TISKILWA ALMANAC

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER OF THE PAST

October 7, 1897: The Board of Trustees of Tiskilwa publishes 19 ordinances, including "it shall be unlawful to ride any Bicycle or other mode of conveyance at a faster rate of speed than 10 miles per hour on any street, alley, or public highway . . . and any person so riding shall, upon conviction, be fined not less than \$1.00 and not more than \$10.00 for each and every offense."



The Marion arrives at Lock 11, mismarked on photo as Lock 18.

Photograph courtesy of Davis Battey (THS '65)

November 11, 1907: The *Marion*, the first barge to navigate the I&M Canal, (*Illinois & Mississippi Canal, later known as the Hennepin Canal*) arrives at Lock 11. The canal remained open to commercial traffic including coal, grain, and lumber until 1951, with 52 lock houses where employees and their families lived.

November 11, 1918: The Great War Armistice is signed! School lets out early! Two yahoos fire off guns to celebrate! Two school kids injured! (Editor's note: News item as "interpreted" by Museum on Main's humorous volunteer, Woody Wendt.)

December 19, 1953: Grand Opening at the new building that houses **Tiskilwa Farm Service** and **Russell Cattle Company**, featuring soil-testing laboratory. Telephone 135 or 2137.

Gerber's Food for Thought . . . by Cele

Many of our visitors at Museum on Main are drawn to our displays of Native American artifacts found in the Tiskilwa area. Archaeologists at **Dickson Mounds State Museum** in Lewiston have confirmed that a number of these items date back 8,000 to 10,000 years!

There is only a silent record, trampled into the earth by feet and covered by soft dust, wind-blown or washed down the slope of the bluffs by the rain of the centuries. In the ground are fragments of . . . the work of tool-makers, homemakers, and hunters. In small cemeteries, these people quietly sleep . . . America's first people.

Americans in Search of Their Prehistoric Past by Struever & Holton

(Editor's note: This book is now available for checkout from our museum library.)

UPDATE FOR 20-YEAR FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN:

“Keeping the Home Fires Burning”

**Great Progress to Report
on One of Our Two Strategic Goals**

by Bill Wendle, Committee Chair

During the latter part of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022, our nine T-H-S board members completed a strategic review focused on assuring the organization’s viability for the next 20+ years. This target requires achieving two inter-related goals.

1. **Raise \$250,000** and invest it, so that the earnings can cover a significant share of the costs associated with hiring a part-time director as well as contracting more services that volunteers become unable to perform.
2. **Recruit additional volunteers** to pick up many of Cele Gerber’s duties, as well as staff the museums on Saturdays and help with grounds and building maintenance.

Strategic Goal #1 -- We are excited to report that in just six months, **92.7% of the \$250,000 goal has been raised:** a whopping \$115,900 from members and supporters, added to \$115,900 in matching funds from our anonymous donors.

In early May, we mailed just over 300 letters describing our needs for additional funds and volunteers, and an amazing **53% responded with a financial gift.** (30% is considered “good” by industry standards.) And thanks in part to Caterpillar Foundation’s matching gifts programs, twenty percent of the funds raised to date came from a handful of Caterpillar employees and retirees. Their generous gifts were matched by the Caterpillar Foundation and then, both these individuals’ gifts and foundation’s gifts were matched by our anonymous matching-gift donors, resulting in a four-fold match.

The fundraising campaign will continue until mid-2023, with the dollar-for-dollar match available up to a cumulative total of \$125,000 in gifts.

Strategic Goal #2 -- **Now we need to focus on recruiting additional volunteers.** Since its inception in 2006, T-H-S has been a 100% volunteer organization, including the time of our director Cele Gerber who spends more than 100 hours each month on T-H-S duties. Cele will gradually step back from her director role over the next few years. A part-time director will be hired to cover half of Cele’s duties, and we will need volunteers to step-up to cover the balance in areas such as programming, displays, events, and publicity.

Our “Tiskilwa Tight” management has enabled the T-H-S to operate with total expenses of less than \$20,000 per year, with those funds derived annually from our members and sponsors. Our three biggest expenses are utilities, printing & mailing the newsletter, and insurance. The addition of a part-time director for 45-50 hours per month will almost **DOUBLE** our total operating expenses. The good news is that we’ve added five new volunteers in the past few months to help with staffing the

museums during open hours, but we still need more people to step up.

Here’s a breakdown of volunteer hours worked during the period January through October 2022.

	HRS.	PCT.
Director Cele Gerber	1,056	43%
Remaining eight board members	995	41%
Other volunteers (23 in total)	<u>384</u>	<u>16%</u>
Total	2,435	100%

In the coming months, we will better define and communicate our volunteer needs with task descriptions, hours per month, desired skill set, and whether or not the task can be performed remotely. We hope many of you will consider heeding the call.

AND THE BEAT GOES ON . . .

Volunteer work as well as contracted services continue to make Tiskilwa Historical Society a vital, well-maintained asset to the community. Since our September newsletter went to press in mid-August, here are a few of the activities and projects we’ve completed.



Repainting our “entrance-to-Tiskilwa” sign and re-staining the railing at the Gallery on Galena were among the tasks we completed.



During our surprisingly balmy November weather, **Rick McCauley** (THS '72) and his worker **Billy Nordstrom** of McCauley Construction finalized the long overdue tasks of repainting soffits and replacing fascia. They also removed the gutters which had served the venerable old building for decades. Doing all this required rental of an 85-foot manlift! We have hired Always-Flow Seamless Gutter Company of Dixon to replace all gutters and downspouts in late November.

Wapsipinicon Editors:

Cecille Gerber, cecillegrbr2@gmail.com
Jane Jones, jjones215@gmail.com

Over the creek and Down the street to...



Christmastime in the Valley

WALK TISKILWA

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2022

10:00 am to 1:00pm

Tiskilwa Community Church - Bake Goods and Craft Sale

Tiskilwa Library - Crafts for Kids and Miscellaneous Library items for sale

St. Mary's Hall - Local Vendors, Crafters, & Baked Goods for sale

Dugosh Farms, Maupin's Providence Homestead, The Flower Shed, Terenna Lafferty Crafts,
Dugosh Designs, Earrings by Ang, Lizzy Buchanan Crafts, Alyssa's Custom Creations, Julie Jamison,
Cynthia Ann Crafts, Handmade in 61368

Tours & Treats - Sugar Maple Inn (520 W Owens St), One Forty East (140 East Main St)

Tiskilwa Inn Bed and Breakfast (155 High St), MD Hardwood Floors (127 W Main St)

LUCE Art Gallery (107 W Main St) - Paintings and Pictures

Gallery on Galena - Military and Country School displays

Museum on Main - Lionel Train Display, Nancy Harmon's 2023 Calendar sales,

Raffle Ticket Sales (\$5.00 each or 3 for \$10.00) for

Beautiful Candlestick Holders (Donated by DOC'S)



Support our Local Restaurants for a Great Meal and Special Deal

Indian Valley Inn (IVI) - Christmas Cinnamon Rolls

Kelly's Place - Raffle for Two \$25.00 Gift Certificates

1:15 at Museum on Main

RAFFLE DRAWINGS and PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM



History Mystery for December



Our speaker in November, **Ron Dickerson**, told us that his interest in learning more about German POWs in America originated in conversations with his stepdad, **Russ Poff**, about his wartime experiences. In memory of Russ, Ron presented the society with the above shadowbox, including an "ehrenring." Can you read (above) how Russ acquired it? (If not, see column 2!)

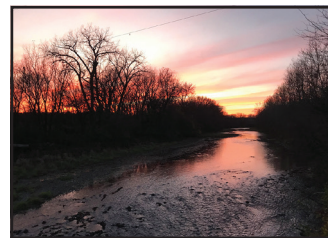
History Mystery Solved: During his MP Guard Escort duty, the nineteen-year-old Russ made several crossings of the Atlantic accompanying POWs. For the most part, the MPs and POWs apparently interacted without conflict, probably because of their humane treatment. On one voyage, a young English-speaking German officer offered to trade his *ehrenring* (honor ring) for a few packs of Lucky Strike cigarettes and candy bars that the GIs were issued. A man of few vices, young Russ made the trade and ended up with the ring.

How Volunteers Make Things Happen at Our Museums



Always plenty of filing to do! At left, **Jan Lohaus** (THS '73) tackled some stacks during her Saturday staffing in early October. Princeton High School senior **Alex Parish** has helped us A LOT as part of his PHS community service.

Sunrise, Sunset – Swiftly Flow the Days



Thank you to **Nancy Joiner Harmon** (THS '76) and **Cecille Gerber** (THS '63) for sharing these images captured recently at the **Hennepin Canal** (misty sunrise) and **Big Bureau Creek**, just east of Tiskilwa. BTW, Nancy's photo is one that she has used in her 2023 calendars of images from the Tiskilwa area.

Please consider using **Smile Amazon** for your online shopping and designating Tiskilwa Historical Society. It's a simple way for you to support our cause whenever you shop, -- at no cost to you.

A Collector's Corner of Holiday Ideas

Suggested donations: T-shirt \$15 (navy or gray); Long-sleeved gray shirt \$20; Directory \$15; DVDs = \$10 each (\$3 postage)

ALUMNI DIRECTORY: It's handy to own this 2009 booklet since it has a listing of all THS graduates (1878-1995). In addition, it has a photo history of Tiskilwa's schools and the Tiskilwa Alumni Association.

TISKILWA KEY CHAIN: With image of The Chief for \$5.00

"THE WAY WE WERE": We offer three DVDs of Tiskilwa as captured through a camera lens during the 1950s, 1970s, and 2009. Enjoy a virtual trip down Tiskilwa's Memory Lane, with all participants identified.

LONG-SLEEVED GRAY SHIRT with TISKILWA printed down the sleeve in bold black letters. Just right – for indoors! – this time of year.

TISKILWA T-SHIRT Choice of navy or gray in varied sizes, including Youth. If we don't have a special size you want, we'll include it in our next order.



TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

110 EAST MAIN STREET

P.O. Box 87

TISKILWA, IL 61368

www.tiskilwahistoricalsociety.org

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

RAFFLE DRAWING ON DECEMBER 10



Once again, our talented Tiskilwa blacksmith with a flair for the artistic, **Doc Schertz**, has donated her copper candlestick creations for a T-H-S fundraiser raffle during **Walk Tiskilwa**. For a small donation, you can enter the raffle by writing down your name and phone number. Raffle tickets are now at the Museum on Main and will be available until the time of the drawing at the 1:15 p.m. program on December 10.

These generous businesses help defray postage costs.

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

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222 W. Main Street • Tiskilwa
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