

THE WAPSIPINICON

A newsletter published quarterly by the
TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
*Named "Volunteer Institution of the Year" in 2010
by the Illinois Association of Museums*

VOLUME 14

DECEMBER 2019

NUMBER 4

MUSEUM ON MAIN AND GALLERY ON GALENA

Our collection includes more than 7,200 artifacts, 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, 504 North Galena.

MUSEUM HOURS:
SATURDAYS: 9 TO 2
GALLERY HOURS:
TBA

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

For private tours,
call Ed Waca
at 815.646.4016.

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CATCH THE SPIRIT! COUNTRY CHRISTMAS IS COMIN' TO TOWN

We're inviting everyone to bundle up and "Catch the Spirit" as Tiskilwa Historical Society hosts our fourteenth annual Country Christmas. Yes, it was known for the first few years as "Walk Tiskilwa." But no matter the name, mark your calendars for **Saturday, December 7**, between 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. to delight in some down-home fun. A holiday spirit is in the air, with the **Tiskilwa Community Association** once again lining Main Street with fresh fir trees, trimmed out by local organizations. Traditional light-post decorations, provided by the **Village of Tiskilwa**, add to the glitter. Walk your way through town to any or all activities.

8:00 onward: Begin your morning at the **Tiskilwa Community Church** with free coffee, treats, and fellowship, all while you have a chance to purchase baked goods, rag rugs, and great big bottles of vanilla. The sale will continue until the goodies run out!

9:00-2:00: At the **Museum on Main**, with its special displays and decorations, savor a place where "The Past Is Present." One highlight will be Lionel trains – engineered by the **Waca Brothers, Ed and Charlie** – when these classic model trains chug around a little Christmas tree in Gallery One. Keep walking south to Gallery Two, where hidden treats in the Potawatomi wigwam await the adventurous.

10:00-12:00: The **Tiskilwa Inn** will host a "Meet the Innkeepers" gathering in their restored 1848 Bed & Breakfast at 155 High Street, just south of the post office. **Ric and Jeremy Gassen** will be serving hot chocolate and tasty snacks along with lively conversation, as visitors stroll around to enjoy the festive decorations throughout the first floor. Their collection of a dozen German ferocious nutcrackers on the mantle is always a crowd-pleaser. A few alpacas will be nearby, if weather permits.



10:00-12:00: Bring along your kids and your creativity when you cross the street to the **Tiskilwa Public Library** to have fun crafting your own holiday decorations.

10:00-12:00: **Gallery on Galena** will be open in all its restored glory. This opening is especially for those who missed seeing "the finished product" on November 11, just because of a touch of wind or c-c-c-cold or snow or darkness – or all of the above! You can read more details about the new Gallery on pages 2 and 4. Suffice to say, we hope we've created a warm, welcoming, educational atmosphere in the former American Legion Hall, and we'd be happy to have you stop by for holiday treats and eggnog on December 7.



1:00-2:00: The **Bureau County Chorus** will fill **Museum on Main** with the sound of music. Don't forget to bring along a few items for the **Bureau County Food Pantry** for your concert "price of admission," as well as for a good way to Catch the Spirit.

THANK YOU to the early birds who've already joined or renewed. A list of the entire 2020 ["perfect vision" for T-H-S future] membership will appear in March.

REMINDERS: If you are retired from or currently employed by a company with a **MATCHING GIFTS** Program, such as **Caterpillar** or **Exxon-Mobil Corporation**, we'll happily complete the paperwork for your matching gift.

Also, if you have **Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from an IRA account**, please remember that we are a 501(c)(3), a non-profit organization. Will you join with others who contribute this way? **A DIRECT GIFT TO TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY FROM AN IRA TAX-FREE ROLLOVER** is excluded from your taxable gross income.

Gallery on Galena Officially Opens November 11



When **Helen and Jerry Murphy** [left] arrived at the GoG's opening, we asked them to pose for a moment near some of their landscaping handiwork on the west side of the Gallery on Galena. The Murphys donated their time, effort, and expertise to design a pleasing, colorful, welcoming look for our new digs.

Photo at right: Seems that **Margaret Ioder Wendle** enjoyed visiting with **Jim and Connie Sutton**. Jim was one of many local volunteers who helped with work at the new gallery.

About a dozen people stopped by GoG on that dark and stormy night between 5:00 and 6:30 to enjoy the new displays, pumpkin cider, and treats. We then adjourned to the Museum on Main for the evening's WW I program by **Mike Johnson**.

To begin our annual "Salute to Veterans," Board President **Charlie Waca** gave special recognition to the American Legion on the 100th anniversary of its founding. He shared highlights of its achievements and gave a tip o' the hat to the American Legion Ladies Auxiliary, also founded in 1919. In addition to its work in helping and supporting veterans and their families, Charlie noted some of the American Legion's lesser-known accomplishments. In 1925, it created the American Legion Baseball program. Today, more than 50 percent of Major League baseball players are graduates of this program. About 82,000 youngsters play on Legion-sponsored teams yearly.

2020 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. At the upper left of your address label is the date of your most recent renewal. We sincerely appreciate your support, and we hope it continues!

October 14: History of Tiskilwa Inn Draws a Crowd



Almost 90 visitors came to our October program, "The History and Architecture of the Inn," presented by innkeeper **Jeremy Gassen**. [Center, left photo] One of his fascinating points to ponder was Jeremy's display of a chart showing other events in America during 1848, the year this home was built. Those present took the opportunity to welcome Jeremy as the newest member of the Tiskilwa Historical Society Board.

[Above right] Four members of the THS Class of 1969 (from left: **Jane O'Neill Piccatto**, **Pat Sidebottom Hassler**, **Connie Magnuson Kauffman**, and **Cindy Madsen Davidson**) represented their classmates by presenting a check for \$1,069 to the Tiskilwa Historical Society's Building Fund. **Charlie Waca** accepted the gift on behalf of the whole organization and thanked the classmates for their generosity.

A Glimpse of World War I Conditions and Rations Intrigues Visitors on November 11



As part of Tiskilwa Historical Society's Salute to Veterans, **Mike Johnson** of Princeton [center, top row] and his grandsons, Alec [top row, left] and Arik [first row, second from right], showed dozens of examples of food rationed to soldiers on both sides of the trenches in World War I. They also explained about causes and impacts of "The War to End All Wars," as well as highlighting the participation of eighty-three Tiskilwa doughboys. After the program, **Princeton High School students from Mr. Eric Tinley's history class** gathered 'round for a photo. Following his presentation, Mike encouraged audience members to take a closer look at the collection, including items from the Red Cross and the Salvation Army.

Holiday Gifts? Collector's Corner

Suggested donations \$15: Directory or Shirt

ALUMNI DIRECTORY: Reprint of 2009 booklet with listing of all THS graduates, plus a history of Tiskilwa Schools and Alumni Association. Only 32 available!

LONG-SLEEVED GRAY SHIRT, with **TISKILWA** written down the sleeve in black italic letters

SHORT-SLEEVED T-SHIRTS IN NAVY BLUE OR GRAY, with an image of the traditional Chief Tiskilwa on the front and the logo of the Tiskilwa Historical Society on the back. Available in all sizes, including youth shirts.



Editor's note: Over the years, we've heard family stories from TiskHistSoc members. We've persuaded two to share with our readers. We hope you'll enjoy them as much as we have!

Memories of Muvver

by Julie Perry Sampson

As a young girl growing up on a farm seven miles south of Tiskilwa, going into town during the summer was a big deal and a real treat. Some weeks we children went into town only on Sunday mornings for Mass. Needless to say, if we got to go into town and visit our grandmother **Jessie Stalter**, to spend the day or an overnight with her, we jumped at the chance! We loved it, especially if we got to go alone – with no other brothers or sisters. We all called her “Muvver,” thanks to my oldest brother Jim’s inability to pronounce what he heard our mom calling her: “Mother.”



Several times on my visits, Muv would gather up her little wicker basket, garden gloves and tools, pack a lunch, fill a mason jar with water, hand me a quilt to carry, and say, “Let’s go tend the graves.” We would walk up the long, long steps to Mount Bloom to visit the grave of my grandfather, **Elmer Stalter**. He died at the age of 34 from injuries sustained in World War I. His daughter and our mother, **Yvonne Stalter Perry**, was 18 months old when he passed away. Grandmother Jessie was only 32.

We would clean up around his headstone, pull weeds, and dust everything off so it looked neat and clean. Then Muv



would say, “Let’s look around and see if anyone else needs some tending.” Then we would pull weeds and use her little whisk broom to clean off dried grass and dirt so everyone’s resting place looked “nice and respectable for visitors.” After we tended the graves, we would spread the quilt in a shady spot, and she would tell me stories about my grandfather Elmer and her life growing up in Chicago, as well as stories of some other folks

whose graves we tended. I have many fond memories of my grandmother, Muvver, but this has always been one that I cherished. I loved the cool quiet of the cemetery and how nice we made everyone’s gravestone look. It was years later when I would find people who thought that cemeteries were morbid or sad. I never felt that, as my grandmother always made Mount Bloom seem like a place with a lot of history and good memories – and for me, as a child, quite an adventure!

Great-Grandfather, John C. Albrecht

by Roberta J. Albrecht

The *Albrecht Book* (published in 1953) records the history of my family. In 1836, **Elizabeth and Christian Albrecht, Sr.**, and their nine children came to America from Bavaria. Many of their descendants still live in Bureau County. My purpose here is to share a family tale about my great-grandfather: **John Christian Albrecht**, born in America in 1849.

Often, when my own father was plowing the fields, his plow turned up arrowheads, Indian beads, and once, the remnants of a harness that had been strapped to John’s team. That old harness – and the Mennonite farmer who used it – is what my story is about.

John’s father, **Christian, Jr.**, was an adventurer who traveled to California with five other men to seek gold nuggets in early 1849. By 1850, he came home without any gold. However, **his wife, Katherine [nee Roggy]** had a more valuable gift for him: John Christian, born November 1, 1849.

Some few years later, little John had an adventure of his own. One day, sometime in the mid-1850s, Christian Albrecht’s wagon was lumbering past an Indian village on its way to the mill in Tiskilwa. Young John was riding in the back, sleepy from the monotonous sideways roll. Suddenly, the boy had a terrible fright.

He felt it. Something had changed. A young Potawatomi was squatting by his side. Neither could speak the other’s language. What did this mean?

Now alert, the boy ventured to make eye contact. The brave glared back, then stared off into space. The tension mounted. How to endure? Our family history doesn’t tell. Perhaps he remembered the 23rd Psalm as he fingered a buckeye seed, trying to keep calm. At any rate, our history tells that he was more than relieved when the Indian jumped off and strolled away without a backward glance. He had simply wanted a ride.



John Christian Albrecht and his wife Elizabeth [nee Reecer] are buried in Mount Bloom Cemetery, Tiskilwa. My own marker has been placed there too, beside that of the little boy who grew up to be my Great-Grandfather.

UPDATE ON GALLERY ON GALENA (FORMER AMERICAN LEGION HALL)

Following our snow-covered grand opening on November 11, we're officially settled in at our second venue: The Gallery on Galena. At our December 2nd board meeting, we'll be discussing a permanent schedule for visiting times at the Gallery. But we want you to know that whenever the spirit moves you or your outta-town company wants to have a look, just give Ed Waca a call at 815.646.4016.

As we make plans, we've already heard about staffing from a couple of local veterans, one of whom said: "Well, I feel like I should give a few hours a couple of times a year to keep it open." THAT's what we want to hear! We're also thinking that country-school attendees might like to step up. By the way, hosts would not be expected to

answer questions, but merely to meet and greet and maybe jot down a query. Please get in touch with a Board member (our names are on page 1) if you think that you could give it a try.



"Our Heroes!" Bill Wendle, Randy Senneff, and Ed Waca

Although numerous members (and even non-members!) have put in hundreds of volunteer hours to preserve and perk up the former Legion Hall, these cheerful

Three Amigos are responsible for the lion's share of planning and work. Thanks, Guys! In the photo at the right, we caught Randy and Bill hauling in a wonderful old roll-top desk, donated to us by **Eunice Morris** (THS '39, our most senior member at 98 years). The desk has quite a lengthy Tiskilwa pedigree, as it once belonged to **Bill Repine**, publisher of *The Tiskilwa Chief* from 1893 to 1907!



Since September, our additional **BUILDING FUND** donors are **Mike & Mary Ary, Cecille Gerber, Bill & Judy Kramer, and Phil Smith**. We have raised an astounding **\$40,893 in donations** in 94 separate gifts, sometimes in repeat performances by the same donors. The initial contribution arrived in June 2017. Not long after that, member **Bob Sash** pledged to match the first \$10,000 in individual donations. At press time in mid-November, **we'd spent \$40,408**. Major recent expenditures include a new furnace/air conditioner, baseboards, landscaping, a storm door, additional shutters, counter top material, main-floor window blinds, and exterior lighting at the rear door. Amazingly, most of this work has been accomplished by volunteers! We estimate **another \$3,500** in expenses to include purchase of basement shelving, concrete sidewalks, exterior sign framework, and cost of materials purchased while constructing our new ADA-approved ramp. Thanks to your generosity, we're almost there!

TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

BUILDING FUND SPECIAL APPEAL FOR 2020

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Please & thanks: Jot "BUILDING FUND" on the memo line, since it is a separate account from Memberships & Sponsorships.



"Little things mean a lot..." If you're doing any of your Christmas shopping on

Amazon, you can definitely help TiskHistSoc by shopping at smile.amazon.com. It's easy! As you begin your purchase at this site (rather than going to regular old Amazon.com), you can locate and click on **Tiskilwa Historical Society**. Once each fiscal quarter, our checking account will be credited with **.5% of all designated charity purchases, at no extra charge to you**. Every little bit helps, and we're very politely asking Santa for an added \$urpri\$e in our checking account next quarter!

Department of "Never Know Who's Going to Stop By!"



Above left: **Juanita Roberts-Beams** was staffing recently at the Museum on Main when one of her favorite actresses, **Kathryn Hays** stopped by for a visit. Kathryn's grandmother lived in Tiskilwa, and she has fond memories of visiting her "down in the valley."

Born in Princeton, Kathryn recently moved back to this area from Connecticut. Over many decades (1972-2010), she portrayed Kim Hughes on "As the World Turns" in 1,514 episodes, no less! In 1966, she received an Emmy nomination for her work as Gem in "Star Trek: The Empath." Her dozens of credits include "Man from U.N.C.L.E.," "Bonanza," and "Dr. Kildare." Oh, by the way, Kathryn graciously offered high praise for our extensive collection and engaging displays.

Above right: As we were putting finishing touches on the Gallery on Galena on November 8, Chief Warrant Officer **Heidi Engel**, a Tiskilwa native, dropped in to donate one of her combat uniforms.

An 18-year veteran of both active and reserve duty, Heidi recently graduated from Mobility Warrant Officer School in a ceremony at Fort Lee, Virginia. That day, she'd stopped for a family visit on her way to her current assignment in Los Alamitos, California, with the 79th Theater Sustainment Command. Heidi has been deployed to Iraq twice and has also served our country stateside at Fort Knox, Fort Lee, Fort Eustis, and Fort Rucker. When we asked Heidi to pose with "David" and "Lisle" (our two military mannequins), she recalled that David Hopper, whose uniform is on display at left, spoke to her second-grade class at Tiskilwa Elementary about his experiences in Desert Storm.

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. We'll meet in MoM at **10:00 o'clock, on Monday, December 2**. For sharing a couple hours of your decorating talents,

we'll treat you to hearty helpings of Piccolo's pizza, salad, and a soft drink. Possibly a partridge in a pear tree, too.

Gallery on Galena Houses World War I Treasures

When you have a chance to visit our new Gallery on Galena, we hope you'll be pleasantly surprised with some unusual artifacts highlighted there. One of the reasons we were pleased to be able to expand our displays to this additional home is that a few military items seemed to be "lost in the shuffle" of our large display at Museum on Main.

On the "military side" of GoG, we've set up display cases by period, and one entire case is dedicated to World War I memorabilia. Among the extraordinary items on display are a WW I gas mask and canister, donated by veteran **Les Saal**. Other curiosities include the photo below. In the handwriting of longtime Tiskilwa resident, **Marie Longman** (who lived to be 100+), we have the names of three of these World War I vets in a 100-year-old photo taken next to the Bureau County Courthouse [now replaced]. [Seated, lower left] **Harry Russell** and **Lewis Longman** (THS '14). Behind Lewis and to the right, **Dale Hunter** (THS '11). We're thinking that a few others nearby are from Tiskilwa. Can you help us identify any others of our returning doughboys?



Tiskilwa's Newspapers Program Hits a Homer with "Homies"



We'd like to thank **John and Ginger Murphy** for their fascinating presentation in September on the long history our village's newspapers – stretching back to 1856! People commented on several details of the remarkable and ever-changing printing process. John and Ginger explained the early typesetting of individual metal letters, followed by Linotype that produced lines of words as single strips of metal. By the 1960s, mighty little **Mary Murphy** was wrangling a huge, complicated offset machine. Nowadays, Ginger designs the *Bureau Valley Chief* on her trusty Apple computer.

HISTORY MYSTERY FOR SEPTEMBER



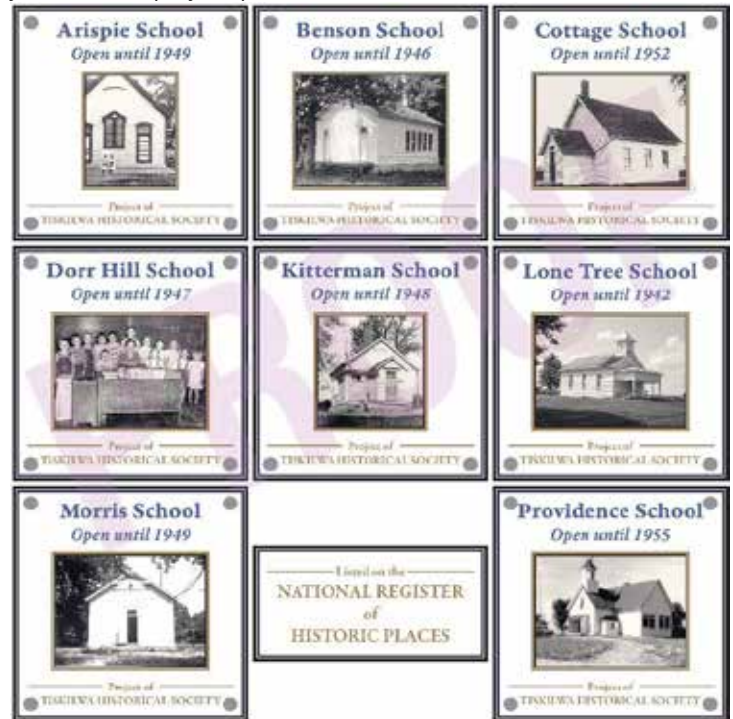
For our Country School signs, we were able to turn up good exterior photos of all 15 schools except **Dorr Hill**. (And we truly did some extensive research!) However, we're very pleased with this photo of happy campers surrounding Miss Alma Kaufmann in 1947. How many of these kids can you name? (See top of next column for an assist.)

History Mystery Revealed: Thanks to **Alice McCauley Malloy** (THS '56) for this darling photo. She's the little dark-haired cutie standing fourth from the right. Her classmates, standing from the left: **Don Schrader, Bob Ary, Gary Cohrs, Jerry Peterson, Jimmy Peterson, Pete Peterson, Joyce Peterson, Alice McCauley, Shelby White, Ruth Anne Kaufmann, Mary Ann White**. Seated by Miss Kaufmann are teacher's pets, **Paul McCauley** and **Marybeth Kaufmann**. What was your "recognition" score?

Update on Tiskilwa's Country School Signs

When **Dave** and **Julie Sampson** drove the country-school circuit in early September to photograph each sign and determine its "state of fade," they were pleased to find that about half of them are still in good condition. As a result, this week **Princeton Graphics** will print only eight replacement signs (See the proof sheet below) plus one informational description for the pride of the lot and the only school still standing: Lone Tree.

Each sign will cost \$47.00, and we're still on the lookout for any former country school kids who'd like to honor their old school and share the cost. That's what Alice Malloy did after she read our September newsletter. She sent a check to our P.O. Box 87 and wrote "COUNTRY SCHOOL SIGN FUND" on the memo line. If you decide to join us in this project, please do the same.



Wish List for Our Country School Classroom at the Gallery

Dear Mr. Claus,
We have heard all about your toys for good girls and boys. Our wish is for something a little different. Would you be able to find an old blackboard that we could use in our little school in Tiskilwa? Love from Your Admirers

IN MEMORIAM

Thank you for these memorials received since our September newsletter.

DAN RUSSELL
FAMILY OF BOB & OLIVE SCHERTZ

TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*We've asked Dave Horst to share two of his recent photos:
the "golden hour" at Lock 16 on the Hennepin Canal and Mother
Nature's Halloween trick of the early snow for Tiskilwa.*

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