

# 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 15

JUNE 2020

NUMBER 2

## MUSEUM ON MAIN

AND

## GALLERY ON GALENA

Our collection includes more than 7,600 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, 550 North Galena.

### MUSEUM HOURS:

SATURDAYS: 9 TO 2

### GALLERY HOURS:

FIRST SATURDAYS: 10-1

Both museums are closed until further notice.

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

For private tours,  
call Ed Waca  
at 815.646.4016.

## Board of Directors 2020-2021

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## "STAYING TOGETHER BY STAYING APART"

The catch-phrases of the past few months have been paradoxical. We're living in a heartbreaking period of history in our world, and at Tiskilwa Historical Society, we are doing our small part by postponing our two spring programs and **cancelling our June Art and Strawberry Festival as well as our traditional annual picnic in July.** At press time, we learned that Tiskilwa Community Association has decided to cancel the Pow Wow Days. See page 2 for details.

Nevertheless, modern technology enabled us to share Tiskilwa's traditional Memorial Day commemoration. Society member and U.S. veteran Navy Corpsman **Jennifer Fisher**, (pictured at right in a 2005 photo) stepped up to organize a ceremony a few years ago when American Legion Post 346 disbanded. She is spearheading a 2020 plan to record Tiskilwa's Memorial Day commemoration. In past years, no matter the weather (including last year's rain and hail storm!) more than 150 folks have gathered in the East Park on the last Monday of May.

**MONDAY, MAY 25:** As we write this newsletter, plans are in the works to post a virtual ceremony early Memorial Day morning, honoring Tiskilwa's veterans and all those currently serving our country. Jennifer will host the program and her children, **Kambri** and **K.J. Fisher**, will participate. Staged at the East Park, the event will include remarks by Jennifer; laying wreaths at Tiskilwa's two war memorial monuments; recitation of the Gettysburg Address; and the playing of Taps. We invite you to view the YouTube video of the Tiskilwa Memorial Day ceremony at a link on Facebook's "Remember Tiskilwa" or "Tiskilwa Historical Society" or [tiskilwahistoricalsociety.org](http://tiskilwahistoricalsociety.org).



Although our lives may seem upside down right now, the people throughout the world as well as those in our little community continue to find strength in solidarity and the occasional comic relief. Tiskilwa resident **Nancy Joiner Harmon** recently captured this inverted tufted titmouse who seemed to be asking, "What the What??"

Other entertaining sightings occurred closer to home – at the Museum on Main's announcement board. Early in April, this big-footed critter was roaming the village. From across the street at **Zig's Station**, **Jody Saletski** was able to capture this photo of the elusive Man of the Woods. You have to admit, that cheery little garden flag seems to make him a bit less intimidating.



For a week in early May, the solemn couple at the left sat socially distanced – as evidenced by the yellow tape – outside the Museum on Main. Our sign states the sad fact of our suspension of all social events until we all can safely gather again with our friends.

## TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY (RECENT ADDITIONS TO MEMBERSHIP LIST)

Thank you to those listed below who have joined or renewed since our March printing deadline. We're currently at **317** members, happily exceeding our "full-strength" goal of 300+ for 2020! (If no state is listed, it's Illinois and if no city is identified, it's Tiskilwa.)

### NEW & RENEWED INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES

John & Theresa Cotter (Bradford)  
Sandie and Stub Friel  
Stanley & Nancy Harmon  
Leigh Hendrickson  
Jim & Trish Mosier (Gold Canyon, AZ)  
Larry & Julie Musil  
Jerry & Ellen Nick (Wheaton)  
Bev Nora  
Ann "Rooney" O'Neill (Normal)  
Richard Quick (St. Louis, MO)  
Louis Quick (San Jose, CA)  
Barbara Quick Schaefer (Peoria)  
James & Patricia Theodore and Nathan  
Tom & Sally Trumpinski (Sublette)  
Russ & Barb Wagner (Sheffield)

### NEW AND RENEWED SPONSORS

#### ◆FRIENDS◆

Mike & Mary Ary  
Cliff & Kathy Cartwright (Princeton)  
John & Sharon Kristofzski (West Richland, WA)  
John & Abby McAnally (Downers Grove)  
Ed O'Neill (Dunlap)  
Beverly Miller Read (Princeton)  
Barbara Reynolds Steigman (Rock Island)  
Peggy Stratton  
Kay Telfer (Princeton)  
Diane P. Wampler (Princeton)

#### ◆PROMOTERS◆

Linda Ioder Dodge (Alva, FL)  
George & Connie Kauffman  
Jeff & Amy Prusator (Mendota)  
Wes & Heather Sampson (Princeton)

#### ◆PATRONS◆

Anonymous  
Andrew & Julia Faville (Geneva)  
Bill & Peggy Harrison (Princeton)

#### ◆SILVER BENEFACTOR◆

Caterpillar Matching Funds Foundation (Peoria)

#### ◆GOLD BENEFACTOR◆

Bill & Margaret Wendle

**REMINDERS:** If you are a current employee or retired from ANY company, such as Caterpillar, that has a MATCHING GIFTS Program, we'll complete the paperwork.

Also, if you have Required Minimum Distribution from an IRA account, please remember that we are a 501(c) (3) organization. Contributing part of your RMD to Tiskilwa Historical Society might be good for both of us!

## Connie Martin Wows Enthusiastic Audience



On March 9, **Connie Martin** (far right above) shared a fascinating story of her family's connections in details of her presentation, "Pre-Civil War Quilts: Secret Codes to Freedom." **Tiskilwa Public Library** co-hosted an audience of more than 70 visitors, several of whom stopped by to speak with Connie after the program. From left above: **Julie Musil**, [Connie], **Rich and Cheryl Barnett**, Cheryl again, and **Liz Piacenti**.

## Virtual Meeting of Spring Clean-up Committee

Since we couldn't meet as a group in this spring of COVID-19, T-H-S members completed the clean-up little by little. **Jerry and Helen Murphy** tended to the garden at the Gallery on Galena; **Connie Kauffman** planted the "sign garden" with a colorful display of vinca; **Cele Gerber** clipped grasses and removed dead plants; **Rich Barnett**, **Fran Morse**, and **Jesse Sims** hauled off bio-debris. **Scott Owens** trimmed tree branches in the Indian Rock Garden. Thanks to all these volunteers, many hands once again made light work!

## TISKILWA COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION CANCELS POW WOW DAYS FOR 2020

From the TCA: Due to the COVID-19 pandemic mandates implemented by the State of Illinois, it is with great disappointment that we announce the cancellation of the 2020 Tiskilwa Pow Wow Days Festival for July 30 - August 2. Currently, there are no plans for rescheduling the event at a later date in 2020. We look forward to being able to continue the annual event next year on August 5-8, 2021.

Editor: Years ago, Capt. Sully Sullenberger said, "I think it's critically important to have a sense of civic duty and remind ourselves that as citizens, there are things that we owe to each other. We're not islands unto ourselves. Occasionally, we put aside our own needs and wishes."

## IN MEMORIAM

Thank you for memorials received since our March publishing deadline:

Bill Anderson  
Lester & Ester Behrends  
Walter & Muriel Harmon  
Mike Johnson  
Leo & Loretta O'Neill



**Editor's note:** Several years ago, **Patsy Yarrington Stickel** gave us this photo of the home of her ancestors, Dr. James Swanzy, his wife Catherine, and their children. For information about the Swanzy family and hospital, we have paraphrased and used direct excerpts from *The Bureau County Centennial: 1828-1928, Big Bureau and Bright Prairies* by **Doris Parr Leonard**, and **Jeanie Gelsomino's** feature "Local artist captures country health history through murals" in the *Bureau County Republican*, April 28, 1992. The sleuthing skills of **Jane Jones** were instrumental in sorting out the genealogical details that round out this overview.

## In the Days of the Country Doctor . . .

Shortly after end of the Black Hawk War, a young doctor and his bride set sail from County Monaghan, Ireland, then to travel overland to the new American state of Illinois. It was Bureau County's good fortune that they arrived in the Tiskilwa area, where Dr. James Swanzy built the first hospital on the Peoria-Galena Trail in this county.

Dr. Swanzy, a graduate of the Royal College of Surgeons, London, purchased land in Arispie Township in the mid-1830s, and after completing his brick home (*photo below*), he then built a two-story, 30-by-40-foot wood-framed hospital with eight rooms on each floor. Now both structures are lost to time, but the hospital stood to the rear of their house in the countryside southeast of Tiskilwa.



*Dr. James Swanzy made his own bricks from native clay on his farm and used them to build the handsome home depicted in this photo.*

As the first physician in the county who held a diploma from an outstanding medical school, Dr. Swanzy was unusual. At the time many doctors received their training by studying with practicing physicians rather than by formal schooling. In those days, college education for doctors or lawyers was a rare thing.

Perhaps Dr. Swanzy intended his hospital to be not only a center for treatment, but also a place to instruct pioneer doctors and share knowledge of medical advancements. To this end, he made a return trip to Europe in 1844 for medical research and to learn the newest techniques of treatment. He traveled by boat down the Illinois River to the Mississippi and on to New Orleans. From there, he sailed to Havana, Cuba, and then took passage on a sailing vessel to Europe.

In 1851, he crossed the ocean once more but in those few short years between trips, steamships had started crossing the Atlantic in regularly scheduled voyages.

Though living at the southern edge of Bureau County, Dr. Swanzy was known and respected throughout the entire county, making his house calls by horse and buggy. He was known to make journeys of many miles to attend patients too ill to travel to Arispie. For this service, he charged forty cents. As the Civil War raged in our country, Dr. Swanzy put a notice in the *Bureau County Republican* offering to treat any serviceman's wife free of charge.

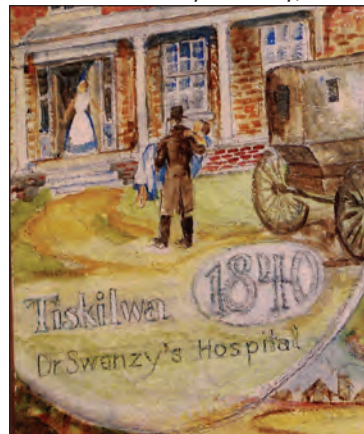
A gentleman and a scholar and man who could build his own house with brick he'd made himself, the good doctor accomplished a full lifetime of good deeds in his allotted 57 years. He left behind Catherine, his wife of thirty years, and five children. In what must have been heartbreaking losses, two of their daughters and one little son died in infancy. Catherine Milling Swanzy, whose obituary describes her as "a noble woman," died on June 11, 1880.

Dr. Swanzy's grave marker in Oakland Cemetery, Princeton, simply states this: "Dr. James Swanzy Died June 22, 1865 Aged 57 YRS 7 MO 6 DS." The legacy of his life's work serves as the epitaph to honor this good man.

## Swanzy Hospital Depicted in Health Department Mural

The painting below is the work of **Mary Win Walter Norris** (1914-2014), a highly regarded artist and teacher from Princeton whose work is still proudly displayed in many homes and businesses throughout this area and beyond.

The scene below is a detail from one of three murals completed in 1992 for the **Bureau County Health Department**. Mary Win donated countless hours of research, preparation and painting to complete these three-by-five-foot murals. They focus on health advancements in the county from the first hospital, founded by Dr. Swanzy in 1840, continuing through to the formation of the BCHD in 1991. Before she could begin the painting, Mary Win spent hours researching the project. In the 1992 feature in the *Bureau County Republican*, she noted that Tiskilwa resident **Eleanor Bacon Schertz** was very helpful in supplying information about Tiskilwa's early hospital. Her three murals may be viewed at the Bureau County Health Department, 526 Bureau Valley Parkway, Princeton, when reopened to the public



## UPDATES FOR GALLERY ON GALENA AND MUSEUM ON MAIN

Our museums may be closed during the COVID-19 health crisis, but that doesn't mean that our volunteer work is at a standstill. *This too shall pass*, and when it does, we'll have several new looks at our two museums and beyond.

**GoG:** We've updated our "Welcome" sign at the north end of the village, just south of the tracks. As you can see in the photo below, our new metal sign (produced by **Princeton Graphics**) has the names of both our museums as well as a fresh, colorful look. It will soon replace the now-faded canvas sign that served us well for years.



**Left:** Raylee DePauw (granddaughter of member **Christy Senneff**) happened to be on hand to show off our new sign, soon to be installed north of the GoG. **Center:** Our esteemed president, **Ed Waca** (THS '66), took it upon himself to level the east side of our GoG property by the tracks so that it can be mowed. **Right:** Our mannequin, "Roland," recently had his uniform spiffed up by an official USAF shirt and tie, donated by retired Lt. Col. **Ray Anderson** (THS '64). This uniform belonged to navigator and bombardier Roland Bills, married to Adele Briner, sister of **Doris Hamilton** (THS '50), who donated this uniform to T-H-S in 2016. Doughboy **Harry Quick** (THS '12) is depicted on the right.

**MoM:** We thought it might be interesting for our readers to know that, throughout our 14 years, we've received donations of Tiskilwa-related items, by mail or in person from 425 individuals or families! Our secretary, **Julie Sampson** (THS '67), files the Deed of Gift and enters the cataloging number into a database. For example, the number 2019.343.04 means the item was donated in 2019 by donor #343, and it's their 4<sup>th</sup> gift to the museum. We maintain both alphabetical and numerical lists to locate details on a given item.

**BFFs:** Thanks to our **Building Fund Friends** who have donated since our March issue, **Bill & Margaret Wendle** and an **Anonymous Donor**. It's heartwarming as well as reassuring to note that our donations have exceeded our current expenditures. We're expecting a few final expenses at GoG this summer for sidewalks and landscaping. Any donations in excess of our GoG costs will continue to be earmarked for the Building Fund.

## UPDATE ON FUND FOR REPLACING COUNTRY SCHOOL SIGNS

Following our appeal in the March issue, we have now received \$561, including new donations from **Stephen Benson Warner** and **Scott and Valerie Jensen**. Thank you! Since our tab for the signs was \$585, we're "calling it even" and proclaiming that we've reached our goal. On a sunny day in early May, **Paul** (left), **Randy**, and **Christy Senneff** (photographer) installed the seven new signs. In mid-May, **David** and **Julie Sampson** made the circuit of 15 school sites to place small American flags at the upper corner of each sign. Kudos to everyone who made completion of this project possible.



## Tell me about the old days, Grandma!

"Well, let me think a minute. Hmmm, I was born before we had polio vaccinations. There were no ballpoint pens, Frisbees, or frozen foods. Television, air conditioners, dishwashers, and clothes dryer had been invented, but nobody I knew had any of those things. We'd never heard of McDonald's, Pizza Hut, yogurt, or contact lenses. What year was I born? Well, it was 1954."

## Spring Programs Shifting to Fall Dates

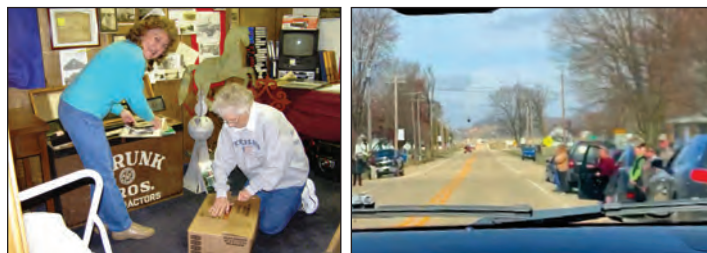
**Wednesday, October 14:** A visit to Tiskilwa by John James Audubon has been re-scheduled for October in the hope that by that time, we can gather 'round to hear storyteller **Brian "Fox" Ellis** bring the artist's adventures to life.



During shelter-in-place weeks, homebound folks throughout our nation have taken a new interest in the marvels of backyard birding. In anticipation of the Audubon program in October, member **Sally Munson** has put together a new showcase, featuring pieces by local artists as well as taxidermy by her son, **Trent Munson** of Tiskilwa.

**This Fall on a TBA Date:** "Mussels, Moonshine, and Music: Workers in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century along the Mississippi" will be presented by fiddler and historian **Dennis Stroughmatt**. He'll introduce us to river-based migrant folks who made their livings and their music all across Illinois a century ago.

## Farewell to Wonderful Community Members



**Left:** In 2010, when we moved the Museum on Main to our new venue in the former Methodist Church building, **Beverly Beams** and **Dorothy Ary** were right in the thick of things, helping us pack and then unpack all our treasures. **Right:** When **Walt Harmon** passed away in late March, friends organized a send-off to express their "Hugs to the Harmon Family," as one sign read.

This year we've lost a large number of special people from our small community. Four of those folks were society members, cheering us on and supporting our efforts from the start: **Dorothy Ary**, **Bill Anderson**, **Walt Harmon**, and **Ester Behrends**. Throughout their long lives, they were active and cherished members of our community. We send condolences to their families and our loving farewell to all Tiskilwa residents who passed away this year.



## From the Journals of John Henry Hedrich

Many of our readers will remember John Hedrich. Although he died in 1994 at the age of 82, for decades John was a familiar sight around Tiskilwa's Main Street and beyond. His nephew **Richard Hedrich** (THS '47) gave us his uncle's journals. John also wrote items passed on to us by Tiskilwa's Bicentennial Committee. Among the little slices of life in his journals, we were amused by a 1986 log of John's leisurely walk along the Hennepin Canal over to a tavern in Wyandot and back home again. This colored-pencil portrait of John, created in 1981 by artist **Carl Helrich**, was given to our museum by **Merle and Ruth Rossmann**, who had received it as a gift from John. At the time the portrait was completed, Carl was a member of Plow Creek Fellowship.

Friday April 11, 1986

Home	8:30
Cedar Point	9:00
Walnut Log	9:15
Cordley RR Bridge	9:45
Dogpatch	10:10
aqueduct	10:55
High St	11:15
Saloon	11:35
"	2:00
High	2:25
Post house	3:00
Dog patch	3:25
Cordley Road	3:45
Back to RR	4:00
" Road	4:40
Home	5:00



**History Mystery Solved.** The hearts displayed all over town represent Tiskilwa's way of showing Love in the Time of COVID-19. Many considerate deeds continue to happen, including surprise goodie bags appearing on doorsteps, homemade soup delivered to shut-ins, and other random acts of kindness that occur every day.

**Editor's note:** John Hedrich was friends with Tiskilwa blacksmith **Bill Slygh**. This story is "The Anecdote of John Crabb (1818-1889)"

Bill Slygh told of fishing on a Tiskilwa mill dam with other boys. Mr. John Crabb, whom Bill described as "a little Englishman" was also fishing. He used a stout line with some heavy chunks of iron for weight. The other end he tied into a button hole of his jacket. Bill said every time old John Crabb threw in the line with all that weight on it, it would almost jerk the old fellow in after it. Naturally, the boys were amused. Mr. Crabb had to leave the fishing for a while and tied the line to the dam. No sooner was he out of sight, but impish Bill pulled in the line and tied the lid of an old wash boiler that lay nearby, and then threw it back in.

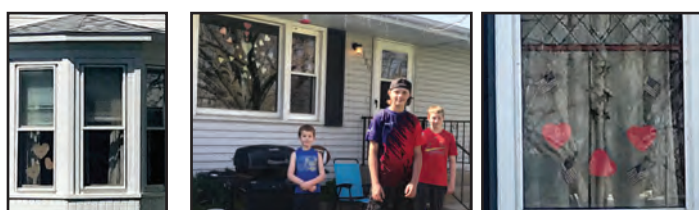
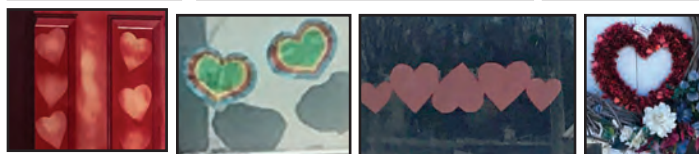
The boys kept their distance when Mr. Crabb came back. When he started to pull the line in, the resistance of the lid plus the current caused the line to make sideways excursions and gyrations. It so simulated a big fish that Bill said he thought maybe there was one. Finally, the line came in with the lid. Bill said they had plenty of distance from one the maddest individuals that could be imagined.

## Miss Celeste's Legendary Dance School Lives On

During the 1940s and 1950s, mothers throughout Bureau County collected their little kids and headed to the dance studio of **Miss Celeste Cirode** near Tiskilwa's West Park. At our museum, we've displayed several pieces of dance school memorabilia – tap shoes, programs, a dented top hat, photos, and a tambourine. **Peggy Norton Foster** even donated Miss Celeste's old player piano! The bunnies on the left are **Joan and Mary Grace Hickey**. Three of the little dancers pictured at the right are [from left] **Kathy Jontz, Sheila Webb, and Pam Reynolds**. But we've had trouble identifying the two cuties at the right. Can you help us?



## History Mystery for JUNE



Starting in mid-March, the sweet sight of hearts started popping up on doors and windows through the village and countryside.

*What's with all the hearts?* (Answer in column 2.)

*If you're not yet a member, would you support our efforts?*

## 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

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

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

*I'm also including 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!

## TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

110 EAST MAIN STREET

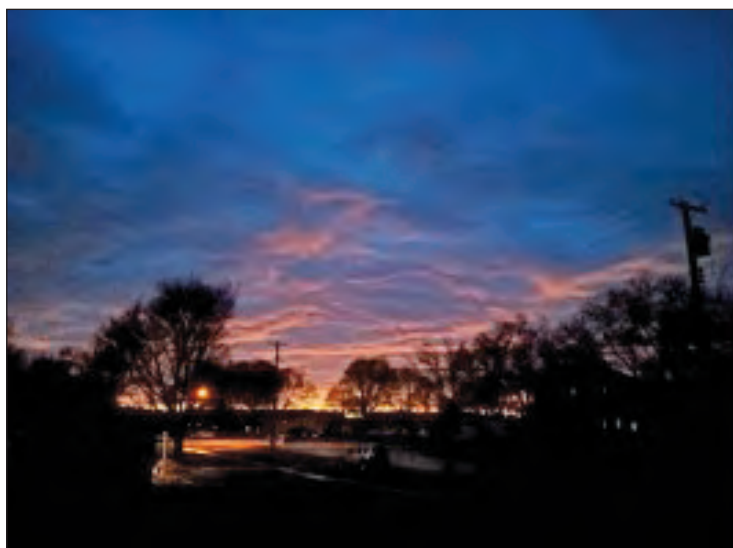
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We asked **Alan Delbridge** to share this photo, taken from his porch and posted on Facebook's "Remember Tiskilwa." Good job, Alan! Such a lovely look at Tiskilwa at twilight.

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the next several weeks.  
Sorry for any inconvenience.

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