



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

JUNE 2022

NUMBER 2

MUSEUM ON MAIN

AND

GALLERY ON GALENA

More than 14,500 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:
SATURDAY: 10:00 - 1:00

GALLERY HOURS:
FIRST SATURDAYS: 10-1

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

Board of Directors 2022

Ed Waca, President
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KEEPING "THE HOME FIRES BURNING" FOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Potawatomi who settled in this valley in the 1700s called themselves the Keepers of the Fire. But as you know, under the Indian Removal Act of 1830, most of their people were eventually "relocated" west of the Mississippi River – to Nebraska, Kansas, and Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). These days, we try to honor the Potawatomi heritage in our museum displays and programs. In order to do this – and much more – we want to keep the home fires burning for Tiskilwa Historical Society, in our two museums as well as in our various contributions to the Tiskilwa community in other events that we organize. For those reasons, all of you – our faithful and supportive members – received a letter from us a couple of weeks ago explaining the reasons and requests for our next big thing: **The Fundraising Campaign of 2022-2023.**

In the letter mailed on May 7, you have the details of what it will take to remain a vital part of the community for twenty years and beyond. It's encouraging that new volunteers have already stepped up for staffing our museums and other duties. Of course, we'd love to have more! Besides that, we will continue to look for volunteers to take on tasks, such as programming and website correspondence, now handled by our director, Cele. The result will make it a more manageable position for a future director. We are pleased to report that we have heard from a significant number of you with donations. By press time in mid-May, we have raised \$24,700! A portion of these dollars came through employer matches such as Caterpillar Foundation, doubling the impact of each gift. Since all gifts up to a cumulative total of \$125,000 are being matched by anonymous donors, we have an **inspiring beginning of \$49,400 toward our goal of \$250,000.**

This is a wonderful start, and we are very encouraged! But it is only the beginning and we're all in this together. We hope that each of you will make a gift -- no matter how large or how small. We'll also be reaching out to non-members of the community as well – the many friends and neighbors who enjoy our museums and our programming but have not yet financially supported our efforts. We're counting on involvement from all directions to keep the home fires burning.

JUNE 12 SUNDAY MARKET ON MOM'S LAWN FROM 10:00 TO 2:00

We're trying something new this June! With the success of the Tuesday-evening markets offered by the **Dugosh Farms** and **Maupin's Providence Homestead**, we thought of hosting a different kind of "Welcome to Summer" in our valley. In addition to Curt's and Margaret's stands, Lynette Erickson of **The Flower Shed**, Manlius, and **Galassi Farms** (dairy and milk products), Wyanet, will be on hand for what we hope will be a sunny Sunday. If Mother Nature cuts loose with a downpour, the vendors will set up in the Community Room of the Tiskilwa Library, right across the street from the museum.



In this 2020 photo, Lisa Bettner makes a purchase from Jessie Turpen.

TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

(Recent additions to our membership list)

Thank you to all those listed below who have joined or renewed since our March printing deadline. We're currently at **352 members**, happily exceeding our "full-strength" goal of 350 for 2022!

NEW & RENEWED INDIVIDUALS & FAMILIES ♦

Roberta Albrecht (Appleton, WI)
John Bauer
Dave & Becky Cook (Princeton)
John & Theresa Cotter & Family
Eldon & Marilyn Eigsti (Buda)
Charlene Hall
Bob & Pat Law (Princeton)
Steven Longman (Huntington Beach, CA)
Charles & Neva Lucas
Sherry Nilsson (Fair Oaks, CA)
Brian & Lisa Padilla (Spring Valley)
Janice Sash
Barbara Reynolds Steigman (Rock Island)
Sally Trumpinski (Sublette)
Tynestead, LLC

NEW AND RENEWED SPONSORS

♦FRIENDS♦

Joe & Janet Ary Ballerini (New Lenox)
Mike & Mary Ary
Janet Evans (Buffalo Grove)
Barb Francis (Alviso, CA)
Janet Anderson Frazee (Pawnee)
Sandi Fredrickson (Anchorage, AK)
Frank Gingery (Seneca)
Barbara Hughes & John Taylor (Urbana)
Teri Miller (Columbus, IN)
Tom & Vickie Schertz of DOC's
Bert & Mary Beth Schlabach (Leesburg, VA)
Patricia Unzicker (Pontiac)

♦PROMOTERS♦

Joe Ary Family (Quincy)
Central Bank (Princeton)
Curt Dugosh of Dugosh Farms
William Jackson (Mineral)
Sara Phalen & Brad Kimme (West Chicago)
Betsy Hale Salsman (Wyanet)

♦PATRONS♦

Ray & Judy Anderson (Papillion, NE)

CLASSIC RIDES DISPLAY ON AUGUST 6

Don't miss a chance to show off your special car, truck, tractor, motorcycle, or bike! We'll again be hosting a "Classic Rides" display from 9:00 to 12:00. Pull up on our west lawn on Saturday, August 6, find a shady spot, and regale visitors with tales of glory.

Annual Meeting of the Spring Clean-up Committee
Vols played Pick-up Sticks, Pull-up Weeds, Haul-out Branches.



Thanks to **Ed Waca, Randy & Christy Senneff and Marg Wendle** who tidied up MoM's lawn and gardens in April. Over at GoG, **Dan & Joanne Yepsen and Jerry & Helen Murphy** did the same.

TISKILWA HIGH SCHOOL ALUMNI BANQUET

WHO: Anyone who has fond memories of THS

WHEN: SATURDAY, AUGUST 6, 2022

Social hour at 5:00 and dinner at 6:00

WHERE: Hundred Acres Orchard, Princeton

HOW to buy tickets (\$25/person): Purchase at Kelly's Place or Indian Valley Inn (both in Tiskilwa) or Heartland Bank (south branch in Princeton)

OR mail check to Sondra Compton-Owens, 734 Brewster, Tiskilwa, IL 61368 by 07/27/22.

TISKILWA'S POW WOW DAYS, 2022

FRIDAY EVENING, AUGUST 5:

WEST PARK: Dinner served in the West Park by Tiskilwa's Village Board Members, Kids' Tractor Pull, Ice Cream Eating contest, TCA Draw Down, local band Wild Card, TCA Beer Garden

MUSEUM ON MAIN: Open 12:00 to 3:00

GALLERY ON GALENA: Open 12:00 to 3:00

SATURDAY, AUGUST 6

PARADE: Kicks off at 10:30

COMMUNITY CHURCH: Serving lunch

WEST PARK: Lunch served by TCA members, Colonel Klink's Inflatables, Bean Bag Tournery, water fights, TCA Beer Garden and Second Chance Revival Band, featuring THS Alum Marty Smith

MUSEUM ON MAIN: Open 9:00 to 3:00

WEST LAWN: "Classic Rides" Display and Petting Zoo
100 ACRES, PRINCETON: Alumni Banquet 5:00 -8:00

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7

WEST PARK: Interdenominational Church Service: 10:30

MUSEUM ON MAIN: Open 12:00 to 3:00

GALLERY ON GALENA: Open 12:00 to 3:00

Editor's note: Many of our readers will remember Peoria's Block & Kuhl Department Store as THE place for many Tiskilwa residents to shop – short of a Christmastime train ride into Chicago. My mother's "Steimle sisters," **Mabel Hedrich** (THS '19) and **Margaret Hunter** (THS '18) were among the best of the shopping breed. Here's a memory from long, long ago.

Blue-Ribbon Shoppers by Cecille Gerber

A top award in shopping should have gone to my mother's sisters, Aunt Mabel and Aunt Margaret. In their heyday, I believe that they pounded their little navy-blue pumps to every existing counter in every major department store in downtown Peoria. There was a never-ending search for the right scarf, ideal fragrance, perfect shoes – or even shoelaces, for Pete's sake!

Since I missed out on receiving a shopping gene, I've blotted most of those shopping expeditions from my memory. But I do recall one particular Peoria excursion in the early 1950s, when I was about eight years old.

At the point this memory begins, Aunt Mabel was holding my hand as we hurried back to Block & Kuhl's to meet Mom and Aunt Margaret, who had sped off in different directions on separate missions. It had been a long afternoon of shopping, and we were to meet on Block & Kuhl's mezzanine floor at 4:00 p.m.



Postcard of Block & Kuhl, 124 SW Adams, Peoria, Illinois

Sensing my reluctance to keep up with her, Aunt Mabel tried this tack: "Say now, you should be able to step right along. You're young and light on your feet. I'm *much* older than you, and look how I'm walking." My mournful response was, "Yes, but your feet aren't broken!" Much to my dismay, my response became one of those family stories that is told and retold at virtually every holiday gathering. I still don't quite understand why it prompted such hilarity around the dinner table.

When we finally reached the store, I dutifully pulled open the big brass door for Aunt Mabel and then held it for a gray-haired grandma who was entering just behind us. In that split second when our eyes met, her deep gaze registered a look I didn't understand at the time. I now realize that she didn't expect a little white girl in her Mary Jane shoes to hold the door for a Black lady. As I recall, I didn't discuss that brief moment with anyone. Although it was only an instant a lifetime ago, I can still picture that

lady's sweet face. She may have been the first Black person I'd encountered in eight brief years in rural Illinois.

The moment passed, and I quickened my pace because we were headed to the best part of the whole store: the mezzanine. Our meeting at the RCA record store was great because I'd once again see my buddy, Nipper, forever cocking his huge white head to listen to his master's voice.



In 1929, "His Master's Voice" trademark was acquired by the Radio Corporation of America. That year marked the first appearance of RCA's beloved and iconic mascot, Nipper.

Along with every other kid in the store, I loved that huge old plaster dog. Even seated, his head was about even with mine – or so it seemed. I gave an affectionate pat on that big head to my silent, understanding pal.

Indeed, in my youth, I don't believe that I ever fully forgave our neighbors up the road, the Russells, for naming their fluffy new collie "Nipper." Of course, I didn't know that it was a somewhat common name for a dog. As far as I was concerned, it was an early case of identity theft.

Much to my relief, we soon assembled and gathered up all our bags to start off on the 50-mile trip back to Tiskilwa. But an hour later, as our headlights cut a path into a dark country road near home, I heard the conversation turning to whether the amount of gas in the tank was equal to the task of getting us all the way home.

It wasn't. The car sputtered to a halt, and all four of us left our precious cargo on the seats and in the trunk to walk to a nearby farmhouse. I wasn't afraid because I knew we were headed to the home of my classmate, Patsy Morris.

A knock on the door, a brief explanation, a phone call – and a few minutes later, my daddy pulled into the driveway. He came to our rescue, gas can in hand. I recall hearing a cryptic remark that he made to Mr. Morris: "These Steimle gals like to cut it as close as they can."

Nowadays, when my car's fuel gauge floats between "empty and absolutely," I smile to recall my irrepressible aunties. Perhaps I do indeed share at least one genetic trait of the women on my mother's side of the family.

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

Three Spring Programs Draw 167 Visitors

Our community registered a significant interest in the three programs that we hosted in March, April, and May.

On March 14, **Ed and Charlie Waca** wowed an engaged audience with a display of the craftsmanship in woodcarving by their dad, **Bill Waca**. For almost every piece in the collection, his sons provided a personal (and quite often humorous) backstory about its concept, source, or origin. Bill's whittling started at age 13 and lasted for the rest of his life, including during a World War II stint in the Aleutian Islands.



On April 11, **Pamala Silas**, a Menominee tribe member and Road Scholar sponsored by the Illinois Humanities Council, presented "Vibrant, Resilient, Still Here: Contemporary Native Americans." Because of their Menominee heritage, a number of our 62 visitors found a special resonance in Pam's program. Most of those pictured below are descendants of **Eileen Deer Burress**, who celebrated her 88th birthday in April.



From left, Row 1: Pam Silas, Eileen Burress, Carol Arteberry (of the Pawnee tribe and daughter of Dee Wright), Jennifer Fisher, KJ Fisher. Row 2: Lindsay Johnson, Kambri Fisher, Kelly Fisher Johnson, Kathy Fisher. Row 3: Kory Fisher, Kenny Fisher, Marty Nally.

On May 9, President Abraham Lincoln came to town! Another Road Scholar sponsored by the I.H.C., **Kevin Wood** portrayed Lincoln. He shared the story of the rise from obscurity to greatness for both Lincoln and the new state of Illinois between 1830 and 1861. Our youngest visitor in the crowd of 60 was fifth-grader **Brady Gross**, (pictured at right) who attended with his mom, **Wendy Sims**. They were among the many who lingered a bit for a photo op with this knowledgeable lookalike of the revered statesman.



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*T-H-S members **Chuck and Neva Lucas**, Tiskilwa, have loaned us more than forty-five items from their extensive collection of pieces from Chicago's World Fair: 1933 Century of Progress. Neva was a babe-in-arms when she attended the Fair with her parents. Then just for fun, she and hubby Chuck started their collection as newlyweds more than fifty years ago.*



IN MEMORIAM

Thank you for memorials received since our March newsletter.

David Brokaw	Mary Beth O'Neill Morrissey
Keith Delbridge	Keith & Marilyn Nye
Sue Ioder	Roderick Owen
Joe Kunkel	David Schindel
Raymond Schindel	

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 _____

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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!

Wapsipinicon Editors:

Cecille Gerber, cecillegrbr2@gmail.com

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We often have feedback from our readers that they enjoy seeing photos of the past. How 'bout this one from 113 years ago – taken in front of the old grandstands at the ball field near the depot? Incidentally, in the upper right corner of the photo, note the long dresses of lady baseball fans. These rough-and-ready Tiskilwa guys are identified in this way:

Front row from left: Royal Blasey, Eddie Quick, Fred Powers, Mike Johnson

Back row: Harold Kirkpatrick, Robert Kitterman, Clement Patterson, Mr. Miller, Supt., Terry Brown, Harry Stalter, Terry Byers, Dale Hunter

Never is heard a discouraging word . . .

Now and then, members tuck in words of encouragement with their renewal slips or send us a message through our website contact information. We always are MOST pleased to read them!

One sample from March: Got my Hist Society newsletter today.... It's like finding money in the pocket of a coat you haven't worn all season.

Here's one from a visitor who was shown around the MoM by staffers

Connie Kauffman and Larry Magnuson: I would like to thank you for showing me around your museum, Saturday, May 14, 2022. It brought back many memories of the past, your knowledge of the historical events, and many of the details of my family, was amazing. The historical collection of items, especially, the Tiskilwa school system was of great interest. Anyone with a connection to Tiskilwa should find time to pay you a visit!

History Mystery for June



This lovely foyer of the downstairs hall is in the home belonging to **Sara Phalen and Brad Kimme**, Main Street, Tiskilwa. To some, it is a mystery structure, with rumors of a second-floor ballroom. Do you recognize this Tiskilwa residence?

History Mystery Solved: You're looking at the grand entrance to the stately home at 140 East Main. Longtime residents refer to it as The Stevens House. Remarkably, the home remained in possession of the Stevens family for its first 125 years: 1842 – 1967. The structure is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

In cooperation with Tiskilwa Historical Society, Sara and Brad will be opening their home on Saturday, August 6, during Pow Wow Days. Specific tour times will be announced at a later date.

The original [east] section of the home, built in 1842 by John Stevens and his second wife Mary, faced High Street. Much of the home's exterior brick came from the Stevens Brickyard, south of Tiskilwa. The historic house, as it appears in its earliest photographs, had about half the floor space of today's structure.

By the turn of the century, the Stevens' grandson Alden and his wife Romelia had bigger, better, and grander ideas! They commissioned a highly regarded Chicago architect, George W. Maher, to create a design not only remodeling the exterior and interior but also orienting the structure to face north, toward Main Street and the block of brick buildings that housed businesses owned by the Stevens family. Numerous hallmarks of Maher's style are evident in the flowing floor plan, wood wainscoting, leaded glass windows, carved lions' heads, and hipped roof constructed to unify the home's original footprint with later additions.

Upon the project's completion, Sara and Brad plan to offer the house as a vacation and event rental for half the year and use the home for educational and cultural events the other half of the year. Sara explained, "We hope that the home can serve as a place of care and gathering for community revitalization and an example of how historical preservation can be put to equitable purpose."

Society Hosts Memorial Day Ceremony May 30

Again this May, Tiskilwa Historical Society has ensured that our community members will have the chance to pay their respects to all men and women who gave their lives in service to our country.

The program, organized by veteran U.S. Navy Corpsman **Jennifer Fisher**, began on Memorial Day at 11:00 a.m. in the East Park. LaSalle's **Mike Trench**, Commander, U.S. Navy retired, was the featured speaker. The traditional laying of the wreaths at our two monuments was performed by U.S. Army veteran **Amy Waca**, (Sergeant E5, personnel management specialist for the 82nd Airborne Division) and Vietnam War veteran **Jerry Murphy** (U.S. Air Force, road and runway maintenance).

Immediately following the ceremony, attendees were invited to stop by an Open House at Tiskilwa's Gallery on Galena from 12:00 to 2:00. (The former American Legion Hall, is just south of the railroad tracks, 550 North Galena.) A national holiday offered the perfect opportunity for citizens to see the ways in which our small museum honors area veterans, living and dead, for their service. The GoG portion of the society's military collection focuses on World Wars I and II, Korean Conflict, Vietnam War, and Gulf War, as well as the American Legion, the Mothers of World War II, and the Women's Auxiliary of the American Legion.



In past years, a crowd of about 150 has gathered to commemorate Memorial Day. Recently, Tiskilwa resident **Tom Bickett** (THS '82) of **Combined Cleaning & Restoration** volunteered to clean the Civil War Monument (above), first asking permission from the village. Tom said, "It was my honor to do it."

TISKILWA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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The appearance of the affable Mr. Lincoln around Tiskilwa and throughout our museum caused quite a few double-takes. Here, our honored visitor inspects the old pump organ from St. Mary's Church, Tiskilwa, donated by Steve Longman and Family in 2011.

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