

THE REPORTER

Waupaca Historical Society, 321 South Main Street, Waupaca, WI 54981

Open Wednesdays, 12-3, Thursdays, 10-2, Fridays, 12-3

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SPRING 2017

May Brings More Open Hours to the Waupaca Historical Society

As we enter the month of May, the Waupaca Historical Society is gearing up for the summer season with more open hours. Beginning Memorial Day weekend, the organization's three sites will open its doors to the public.

The Holly History and Genealogy Center will expand to summer hours, opening its doors Wednesdays and Fridays 12 to 4 p.m., Thursdays 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturdays 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Visitors can enjoy new exhibits and its growing collections of research and family resources. The Waupaca Area Genealogical Society will staff the building on Saturdays. The Holly Center houses the WAGS genealogical and research collections.

The Hutchinson House at South Park will be open 1 to 4 p.m. Saturdays, Sundays and summer holidays. Visitors can enjoy tours of the Victorian-era home and the King Cottage, a former Wisconsin Veterans Home cottage located behind the Hutchinson House.

Summer hours at the historic Railroad Depot, located at 525 Oak Street, have been expanded in 2017. Visitors can tour the restored 1907



Mike Kirk photo

Volunteers Jeff Weasner and Mike Kirk installed a new brick walkway to the Hutchinson House this spring.

depot, lower-level model train display and outdoor caboose and car barn on Saturdays, Sundays and summer holidays from 12 to 5 p.m. The Depot will also have expanded hours during Waupaca's Strawberry Fest and Model Railroad Show, allowing train enthusiasts to view the Depot from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Celebrating 100 Years of the National Guard

by J.J. Johnson

This article is the second part of a two-part series on the Waupaca National Guard.

The men felt a need to re-establish Waupaca's National Guard organization after they returned from World War I. On July 8, 1920 they finally accomplished their goal when the men were reorganized as the 36th Separate Company Infantry. The Guard unit was assigned as

Company D, First Regiment Infantry on April 1, 1921. Captain Roy Holly and other civic leaders worked with officials in Madison to obtain an armory.

In July 1921, the community grew excited as Nathan Cohen was erecting a building on the east side of North Main Street (108 N. Main).

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Railroad Historian to Present Green Bay and Western's Final Days

Railroad historian and photographer John Gruber will present, "Green Bay and Western through Photographs" at the historic Railroad Depot on Thursday, May 11th at 6 p.m.

Gruber photographed the Green Bay and Western in its final weeks. At one time, the Green Bay and Western stopped in Waupaca.

Gruber was a founder and first president, from 1997 to 2013, of the Center for Railroad Photography & Art in Madison. He has been a freelance railroad photographer since 1960. Gruber has also written and coauthored numerous railroad books.

Refreshments will be served. Tours of the Depot and its grounds will also be offered.



John Gruber will present a program on the now-gone Green Bay and Western Railroad at the Depot on Thursday, May 11th at 6 p.m.

New Exhibits Highlight Summer Season at Holly Center

A new permanent military exhibit, along with several temporary displays, will be featured this summer at the Holly Center.

"Waupaca's Warriors" tells the stories of some of Waupaca's veterans, beginning with the Civil War and ending with today's veterans serving around the world. It features some little-seen military artifacts from the WHS collections.

A smaller exhibit also features the Waupaca National Guard, which celebrates its 100th anniversary this year.

Lastly, an exhibit by intern Ashlie Buck highlights the architecture and history of homes and buildings in Waupaca.



Waupaca's soldiers walk to the Soo Line Depot on Oak Street to leave for service in World War I on August 11, 1917.

Family Fun Day at the Depot Coming in June



The Waupaca Historical Society will partner with the Waupaca Area Public Library for "Family Fun Day at the Depot" on Saturday, June 24th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Visitors can enjoy tours of the Depot, caboose and car barn and also view the new model train display in the Depot's lower level.

Families can also enjoy railroad story times (times to be announced in future publicity and on our website), train activities, hands-on train tables and much more! Light refreshments will also be available for purchase.

This free program is open to the public and is also sponsored by the Waupaca Area Model Railroaders.

Those interested can check out the WHS website at www.waupacahistoricalsociety.org and "Like" us on Facebook for future updates.

Remembering Bob Kessler: Friend and Longtime Board Member, Treasurer



Bob Kessler (left) was instrumental in purchasing the historic Railroad Depot in 2004.

On Friday, March 17th, the Waupaca Historical Society lost a friend, supporter and dedicated volunteer in Robert Kessler, age 80.

Bob joined the board in September 2002 and served as the Treasurer since 2003. With his

business expertise, he skillfully managed the organization's finances, helping the Waupaca Historical Society grow not only in its number of buildings cared for but also its projects and community outreach. Bob was instrumental in purchasing the historic Railroad Depot in 2004, working with the railroad company to keep the Depot in its historic and original location.

Bob brought joy and laughter to board meetings and projects alike. Always behind the camera at the annual meeting, Bob happily photographed each program and meeting for the Waupaca Historical Society. With his many connections around Waupaca, he recruited volunteers each year for the Waupaca Triathlon, a large fundraiser for the Waupaca Historical Society.

Bob will truly be missed by staff and the Board of Directors. Donations in Bob Kessler's name will be used for a future project at the Waupaca Historical Society.

At the Depot

by Mike Kirk

A number of things have been happening at the Depot since the last newsletter. On April 28th, 21 high school students and their teachers worked outside, mostly shoveling sand and dirt. The landscaping of the steps from the top of the Depot hill to the street is now nearly complete.

In late March, the local Boy Scout troop came for a meeting and helped us with some work. Our volunteers have also been making good progress on the basement. Lisa Benitez is nearing completion of her painting behind the model train tracks.

We've also hosted a number of events. In March and April, we hosted the newly formed RISE, Waupaca's young professionals group, along with the Chamber of Commerce's morning and evening business events. It is great to see the Depot used more and more.

There are also several other events in the works. We also expanded our open hours this year: May 6 and 13 (Sat.), 12-5 p.m.; May 20-



Lisa Benitez has been busy painting the walls behind the model train display.

21 (Sat. and Sun.), 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend (Sat., Sun., and holidays), 12-5 p.m. and June 17, 18 (Sat., Sun), 8 a.m.-9 p.m.

Lastly, there is still no word on when the potato car arrive. We are hoping it will be in place by June. Until then, we are busy with many projects at the Depot. Stop by and see us!

WHS to Remember Vietnam War, Honor Veterans in May

The historic Railroad Depot will host a two-day Vietnam War program entitled, “Remembering the Vietnam War” on Saturday and Sunday, May 20th and 21st, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days.

The weekend program will feature a Vietnam reenactment group led by local resident Eric Percy. The group will portray Delta Company 3/187th 101st Airborne Division, which, on May 20th, 1969, had its last day of battle at Hamburger Hill.

The event, sponsored by the Waupaca VFW and American Legion, will also honor local Vietnam veterans. On both Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m., several Vietnam veterans will take part in a panel discussion about their memories and experiences during the Vietnam War, both on the battlefield and at home. Percy will also share a history of the 101st Airborne



Eric Percy photo

This gear was typically seen on the battlefield during the Vietnam War.

Division and the division’s part in the Vietnam War at 11 a.m. both Saturday and Sunday.

The program is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be available for purchase.

Holly Center, Depot Available for Rental in 2017



The Depot (above) and the Holly Center’s lower-level meeting room (below) are available for rent.



Looking for a space for your next business meeting, bridal shower or wedding?

The lower-level meeting room of the Holly History and Genealogy Center and the Depot lobby are available for rent throughout the year. With accommodations for 75 people at the Holly Center and 50 at the Depot, both sites provide the perfect historic backdrop for meetings, parties or your next informal gathering.

Rentals cost \$50 with an additional refundable \$50 deposit. Non-profit organizations interested in meeting on a regular basis can apply for a discounted rate.

Since 2016, the Depot and Holly Center have been hosts to local business and organizational meetings, weddings and rehearsals, Chamber of Commerce events and private parties.

All proceeds from room rentals go toward the Waupaca Historical Society’s efforts to maintain these historic sites. For more information and application forms, call (715) 256-9980 on Wednesdays or Fridays or email Tracy Behrendt, Director, at director@waupacahistoricalsociety.org.

100 Years of the Waupaca National Guard

(Continued from pg. 1)

Rumor had it that Cohen intended to open a movie theater with apartments on the second floor. But upon arrival in Waupaca, the state architect learned that he would be directing the construction of the building to meet the requirements for use as an armory. The building would provide a gymnasium area, storage for the unit's equipment and allow for once-a-week drill practices. It was thought that the men could hold dances and other entertainments throughout the year to raise money to pay the rent on the five-year lease.

Shortly after the unit was reorganized, Capt. Holly resigned and was succeeded by Bradley Barnes. When Barnes resigned in 1923, the company came under the command of Capt. Loren Gmeiner.

In 1926, the Guards moved their operations into the Danes' Home building on the north end of Main Street. In 1927 the Howitzer Company could boast having three officers, five sergeants, seven corporals, 15 first class privates and 40 privates. Their armory contained full field equipment, which included four field pieces. Waupaca's unit held the



Nathan Cohen built a movie theater at 108 N. Main Street in 1921. In its first five years, it served as Waupaca's first armory. This photo, taken in 1936, shows the building as the Adler Theatre.

position of having the best pistol and rifle team in the state, having won the trophy in 1926. The team attaining this high honor consisted of Captain Loren Gmeiner, Charles Larson, Myron Randall, Arthur Osborne, Earl Mather, Arthur Hewitt, Iner Torsell and Milton Paulson.

At the July 1930 training session at Camp Douglas, the men were inspected as to the condition of their tents, dining hall and conduct of the men. They were examined as to how

efficient their officers appeared and the men's attitudes during drill and work details. Throughout the various phases of examination, the Waupaca Howitzer Company rated so high that they received special recognition on Governor's Day. When field maneuvers were held in October, Waupaca's unit received a special commendation from the regimental commander of the 127th, not only for their conduct in camp but for the reconnaissance of routes, selection of firing positions and conduct of fire.

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JJ Johnson photo

The Waupaca armory, under construction in this photograph in 1930, was the home to the Waupaca National Guard until 1968, when it became the city police station.

100 Years of the Waupaca National Guard

(Continued from pg. 5)

In addition to these two noted honors, the Guards also looked forward to the construction of a new armory on the corner of Washington and Union Streets. The Waupaca armory was finished in 1930.

On May 17th, the National Guard was mobilized in response to the 1933 milk strikes in Wisconsin. The first strikes occurred in February as a cooperative of Wisconsin dairy farmers fought manufacturers for higher milk prices for farmers. The strikes escalated in May as the strikers blocked delivery of milk to the manufacturers.

The day before, on May 16th, some guardsmen were deputized to help with the situation in Shawano. That day, four men from the Waupaca's guards received minor injuries, the worst being a broken nose.

Though Waupaca County remained peaceful throughout the strikes, conflict was prevalent in Shawano. Following the May strikes, the Shawano sheriff was ousted and more than 1,900 guardsmen were on duty when 350 strikers were jailed in a single day.

When Waupaca County was finally opened to dairy traffic, uniformed National Guardsmen with full equipment, including arms, waited at Waupaca's Courthouse Square ready to assist the hundreds of men deputized to watch over the county deliveries.

After six peaceful years for the National Guard unit, the situation in Europe began to escalate and the United States readied itself for war. On September 20, 1939 Waupaca's National Guard Company was reorganized as Anti-

Tank Platoon, Headquarters Company, 127th Infantry, under Capt. Loren Gmeiner, First Lieutenant Philip Jenson and Second Lieutenant Edward May. Guardsmen were told to be ready to guard industrial plants in case of a threat of war. Specifically they would be called to patrol industrial areas to protect plants and prevent espionage and sabotage.

The Waupaca unit was put under federal service on October 15, 1940 for what was to be a 12- month period of intensive training at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana. However, on October 14, 1941 Congress, by one vote, extended the time the unit was to remain on active duty. It was further extended with the bombing of Pearl Harbor.

During World War II, members of the Waupaca Guards served in Australia, New Guinea, Leyte and Luzon. The unit was deactivated February 28, 1946 and reinstated as a Wisconsin Army National Guard unit on July 14, 1947. On this date it was noted that most of the men were scattered across the country and only five returned to Waupaca. Two members had enlisted in the regular army and two men had been killed in action—Gordon Holman (on Leyte) and James Robinson (in Europe).

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The Waupaca National Guard unit is seen marching down Oak Street toward the Depot on October 21, 1940.

100 Years of the Waupaca National Guard

(Continued from pg. 6)

The Waupaca unit was changed to a heavy mortar company of the 127th Infantry Regiment in November 1948. This company was awarded the Eisenhower Trophy for most outstanding unit of the Wisconsin National Guard. It was the first unit in Wisconsin to receive this award. In January 1949, the unit went on to receive the Wisconsin National Guard Review Trophy for its drill performance.

On February 15, 1959 Waupaca's unit was reclassified as a Howitzer Battalion with the 120th Artillery. During the Berlin Crisis in 1961, the soldiers served at Fort Lewis, Washington from October 15 until August 10, 1962. The men were officially released from active duty on August 10th, but the Waupaca unit was immediately reorganized as a State and National Guard unit retaining the same designation and personnel that had been in place when it was deactivated.

In honor of their return, the city of Waupaca, along with various veteran organizations, held a homecoming celebration on September 8th to thank the returning soldiers of Battery A.

On April 1, 1963, the Waupaca National Guard unit was re-designated as Battery C, 1st Battalion, 120th Artillery and reorganized as Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 120th Artillery on November 1, 1965.

But, within two years, the Waupaca unit was deactivated. On December 29, 1967, for the first time in 50 years, Waupaca no longer had a National Guard unit.

Then, in April of 1980, Waupaca's National Guards were reactivated as a part of the 120th Field Artillery, as Detachment 1, Battery C., 1-120 Field Artillery. The unit would be headquartered in Wisconsin Rapids.

To celebrate the return of the National Guard, Mayor Ivan Huffcutt proclaimed March 8, 1980 as Waupaca National Guard Day. A parade included a large number of local, state and National Guard dignitaries to honor the occasion. The Guards held an open house at the armory. Displays at the armory included a radar unit, weather station, field artillery fire

direction center, machine guns and an assortment of military equipment. Visitors were able to try "chow" from an army mess kitchen that had been set up for the event and an air gun range was set up for the children in attendance to test their marksmanship.

On November 1, 1981 the Waupaca unit was re-designated as Detachment 1, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 120th Artillery and was again reorganized, receiving the designation of Detachment 2, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 120th Artillery on March 1, 1985. As part of the 32nd Infantry Brigade (Separate) (Mechanized) Division, it was deployed to West Germany in January 1986 as part of the "Certain Sentinel" exercises of REFORGER '86. REFORGER (Return of Forces to Germany) exercises were conducted annually in Germany from 1969 until 1993. They were designed to test the ability to quickly support NATO forces in West Germany in the event of Cold War hostilities.

On January 15, 1990 Waupaca's National Guard unit moved into their new armory in the city's east-side Industrial Park. Dedication ceremonies were held on September 9th where Major General Slack spoke of the distinctive National Guard system of this country that had been called to the world's attention during the Middle East crisis of the 1980s. He recalled the air support provided by the Wisconsin National Guards overseas and their work within the state in responding to the recent floods. Slack noted that the Guards were "triple citizens" as they served the state and federal governments whenever the need arose while still retaining their status as private citizens. It was this readiness to respond by Guard units that was so important with the situations occurring in Kuwait at that time.

After October 1st, the armory also housed part of C Battery, First Battalion of the 120th, previously located in Stevens Point. Finally, on November 1, 1990, the Waupaca unit was reorganized and designated as Battery C, 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery.

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Interested in volunteering? Contact the Waupaca Historical Society today! We have many opportunities for volunteers, including cataloguing collections, serving as a tour guide and helping at the Waupaca Railroad Depot. Come volunteer with us today!

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The Waupaca Historical Society is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Its mission is to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of the Waupaca area. The Waupaca Historical Society owns and operates the Holly History and Genealogy Center located at 321 S. Main Street, the Hutchinson House Museum and King Cottage located in South Park, and the Waupaca Train Depot located at 525 Oak Street.

Thank you for your support. We hope that you will come and enjoy the displays and resources at the Holly History and Genealogy Center and visit the Hutchinson House Museum, King Cottage and Waupaca Depot with your family and friends. Please check our website for our open days and times.

WAUPACA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP/DONATION FORM

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Waupaca Historical Society
321 S. Main Street
Waupaca, WI 54981

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

All programs are held at the Holly History and Genealogy Center, 321 S. Main St., unless otherwise noted.

Tues., May 9th, Noon	Lunch & Learn: “Not Just Old Stuff” with the Waupaca Historical Society (at the Waupaca Area Public Library)
Thurs., May 11th, 6 p.m.	“Green Bay and Western Through Photographs” with John Gruber
Sat., May 20th & Sun., May 21st, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.	“Remembering the Vietnam War” Living History Event (at the Depot)
Memorial Day Weekend (Sat., Sun. and Mon.)	Opening Weekend for Hutchinson House and Depot
Tues., June 6th, 6 p.m.	“Remembering D-Day: The Role of the U.S. Airborne Forces” with Eric Percy
Sat., June 24th, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.	Family Fun Day at the Depot (at the Depot)