

THE REPORTER

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

Open by appointment only—call or email for appointment

VOLUME 25 – NUMBER 2

Spring 2021

All Buildings Open By Appointment This Summer



As we head into the summer season, the Waupaca Historical Society will be open only by appointment at its three locations—the Holly History and Genealogy Center, the Hutchinson House Museum and King Cottage, and the Waupaca Depot. The WHS Board of Directors remains committed to keeping the health of our community, staff, and volunteers a priority during the pandemic but hopes to open to the public soon! This is subject to change, so be sure to check WHS's website at www.waupacahistoricalsociety.org.

There will be opportunities, however, to visit our sites for scheduled open hours this summer. The Depot will be open to the public during Waupaca's Strawberry Fest on Sat., June 19 from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Sun., June 20 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. We also anticipate that the Depot will be open for Arts on the Square in August. Masks are required, and a limited number of people will be allowed in the buildings on the grounds at one time.

We are also in the midst of planning several events

for this summer at the Hutchinson House Museum and Depot, so check our website often!

At the Hutchinson House, our first event will be Friday, May 14 at 6 p.m. (with the same program held on Sat., May 15 at 10:30 a.m.) as we host a potato program with the Waupaca Area Public Library. This event will be family -friendly and will include a storytime, scavenger hunt, and more! And you can take home a grow bag and seed potato to grow at home! Check out the article on page 3 in this newsletter to learn more.

If you are interested in scheduling an appointment at any of our buildings, please contact Tracy Behrendt at director@waupacahistoricalsociety.org or call 715-256-9980. Group tours of up to 5 at the Hutchinson House and 15 at the Depot are welcome. Contact via email or Facebook are the fastest ways to schedule appointments or get in touch with staff at the Waupaca Historical Society. We hope to see you out at our buildings this summer!

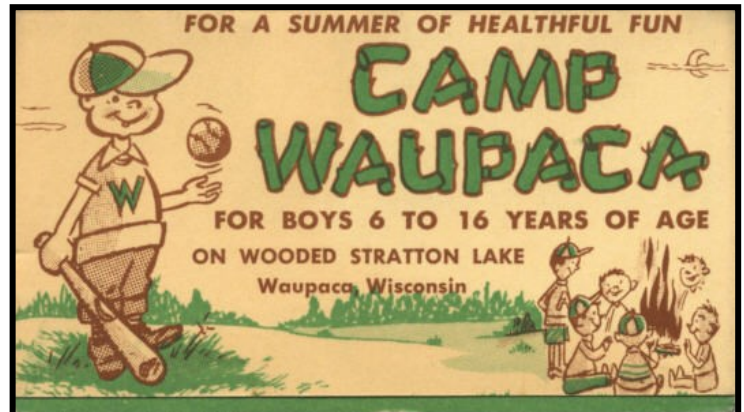
Behind the Scenes: New exhibits, collections find homes at Holly Center

By Tracy Behrendt

Our buildings may still be closed to the public, but visitors, researchers, and the community are welcome to make an appointment to stop in at our buildings. The Holly Center has been busy with at least one appointment per week this spring as many people resume genealogy and local research. We've also had appointments for gift shop purchases and to view the exhibits—we'd love to have you visit as well! Days and times for visits are flexible.

At the Holly Center, we have created several new exhibits and received a traveling exhibit on the 19th amendment from the National Archives and Records Administration. We also plan to add a new exhibit this summer on Camp Waupaca, which is celebrating its 70th anniversary. The camp was located on Stratton Lake and is now home to Camp Judaea.

In the last year, we have also catalogued nearly 1,000 new objects into our collections, many of which are now featured in our exhibits. New items added to our collections include a Civil War/Spanish-American War officer's jacket, life jacket from the Chief Waupaca, and photographs of the Waupaca brickyard. Our new high school volunteer, Kali Morgan, has been assisting with cataloguing.



This 1950s literature advertised Camp Waupaca, which was formed in 1951. Many of the campers were from the Chicago area, though later campers came from Omaha, Canada, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, and Green Bay.

In addition to the collections and exhibit work, staff and the Executive Committee of the WHS Board have begun strategic planning, laying out plans for the organization's next five years. We hope to complete our strategic planning in the coming months.

We also continue to post historic photographs, information, and updates on our Facebook and Instagram pages. If you haven't liked or followed us, be sure to look for the Waupaca Historical Society so you can learn more about Waupaca's history and all that is going at the Society!

Holly Center Meeting Room Now Open to Groups of 15 or Less



(715) 256-9980

In April, the WHS Board voted to open the lower-level Holly Center meeting room to groups of 15 or less people. All visitors to the Holly Center must wear masks, practice social distancing, and sanitize hands frequently. No food or drink is allowed at this time in the meeting room.

If you are interested in renting the lower-level meeting room or have any questions, please contact the Waupaca Historical Society at 715-256-9980 or email director@waupacahistoricalsociety.org.

Hutchinson House to Feature “Porch Programs” This Summer

In just a month, the Hutchinson House Museum will open for another summer season. Though this summer will still look a bit different, with tours only by appointment, the Waupaca Historical Society plans to host more programs outside at the Hutchinson House. The “Porch Programs” will feature a variety of interactive demonstrations, speakers, and open building hours throughout the summer. Tours inside the building will be limited to five people at a time. Masks and social distancing are required.

The first Porch Program will be “Grow Potatoes in a Bag,” a program and contest with the Waupaca Area Public Library. On Friday, May 14 at 6 p.m., enjoy a storytime, poetry reading, scavenger hunt and the opportunity to take home seed potatoes in a grow bag! If you can’t make it, stop by on Sat., May 15 at 10:30 a.m. instead! Both days will feature the same program. Then, on August 7 at the Depot, bring back your potatoes to see if

yours is the winner! We will also have food and activities that day to celebrate potatoes.

The second Porch Program will be “Lost Arts” on Sat., June 26 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Artisans and demonstrators will be on hand to show visitors



The Hutchinson House porch will be the site of several Porch Programs this summer.

popular arts, crafts, and hobbies from around 1900, the time period at which the Hutchinson House Museum is interpreted. Visitors can enjoy spinning wool, open air painting, wood carving, weaving, and much more!

The last Porch Program of the summer will be “Civil War Encampment” on Sat., August 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The program will

feature Civil War reenactors at stations around the Hutchinson House, each demonstrating of part of life during the Civil War—both on the battlefield and at home.

Masks and social distancing are required at these events at this time. All Porch Programs are family-friendly and free to the public.

Monthly Historical Programs, Family Fun Day to Return in July

The Waupaca Historical Society will again partner with the Waupaca Area Public Library to host “Family Fun Day at the Depot” on Sat., July 10 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The theme, “Tails and Tales,” coincides with the library’s summer reading program. The Depot event will feature tales from the rails, including hobo stories, storytime, and family activities.

WHS will also resume its monthly programs this summer. The programs will begin with author Zachary

Bishop and “In All the World, No Lakes Like These: Images of the Waupaca Chain O’Lakes” on Thurs., July 15 at 6 p.m. The program will take place at the South Park shelter, with limited seating available.

On Thurs., August 12, Susan Apps-Bodilly will present, “One Room Schools: Stories from the Days of 1 Room, 1 Teacher, 8 Grades.” at 6 p.m. at the South Park shelter. Masks and social distancing are required at WHS programs.

Volunteers Needed This Summer!

Do you have an interest in history and enjoy visiting with people? Are you passionate about our community? Then we'd love to have you volunteer with us this summer!

The Waupaca Historical Society is looking for volunteers at the Hutchinson House and Depot this

summer. Volunteers welcome visitors and give tours of the buildings during appointments and open hours. No previous historic knowledge is necessary.

The Holly Center is also looking for collections volunteers to assist with cataloguing. If interested in these opportunities, contact us today!

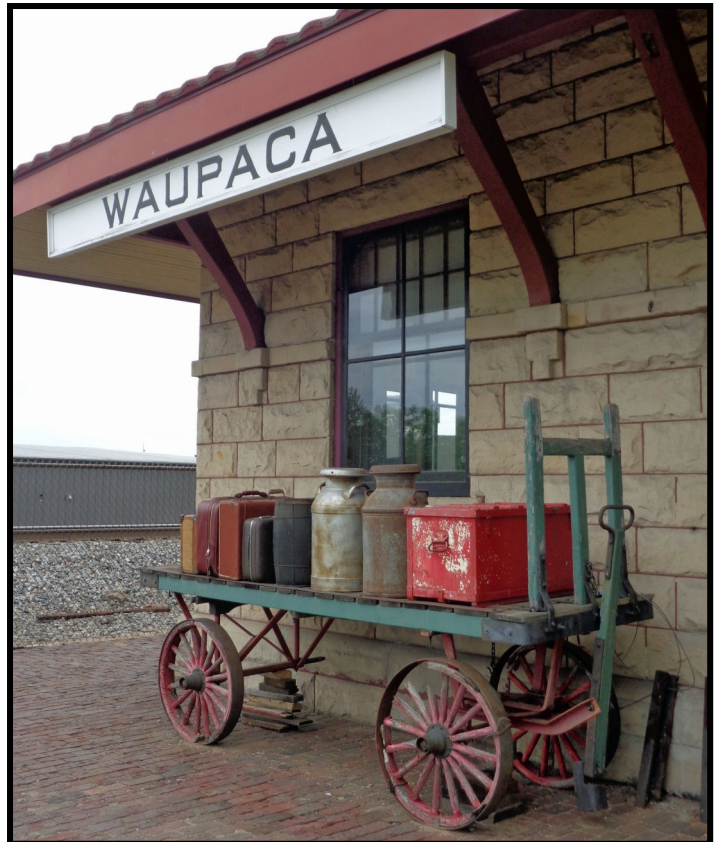
At the Depot: Preserving History Outside the Depot

By Mike Kirk

Sometimes our work at the Depot goes beyond our property lines. This winter, our work went to Balch Street, just southeast of the Depot. WHS Board members Jeff and Nancy Weasner learned that Waupaca County owned property on Balch Street where the A.M. Penney potato warehouse once stood. This land is near the Depot, just past Nelson's Strike Zone on Oak Street. The County had the property for sale with the minimum bid being \$500. After approval from the WHS Board, the Society bid \$500 and bought the property. Our long-term goal is to put up a metal pole building where we can house and display larger objects in our collections or those that have been offered to WHS. If you are interested in helping with the project, please let us know.

Our attention has also been on a horse-drawn wagon with a local connections in my own collection. A few years ago, I was purchased a 1920s-era horse-drawn wagon that was still lettered for Kreunen and Skinner. The business was located in the former Jens Hansen Carriage and Wagon Shop building on E. Fulton Street. The building now houses T-Dubs Public House, offices, and residences. The wagon is of a type that could have been used to haul potatoes. One of our volunteers, Richard Townsend, has let me keep the wagon in his barn, where we have been gradually restoring it. Richard learned of a woodworker between Big Falls and Marion, Wis. who repairs

wagon wheels. One of the wagon wheels needed work so I took it to him—someday I will likely donate the restored wagon to the Waupaca Historical Society. The man was also willing to work on an item in the WHS collection—the Depot baggage cart (pictured below)—which was in poor condition. The four baggage cart wheels will cost about \$300 each to be rebuild. The cart is a popular backdrop for photographs at the Depot. We hope to get the wagon wheels back sometime this year.



Recent Construction on Main Street Put Trolley History on Display

On March 29, the City of Waupaca began the reconstruction of four blocks of Main Street. The first portion of the project—from Fulton Street to Water Street—began with the unearthing of some largely forgotten Waupaca history. As the construction crews began to work on the road, the last remaining pieces of the old Waupaca trolley rails were found under the asphalt.

The Waupaca trolley first started service on July 4, 1899 and ran from the Depot on Oak Street to the Wisconsin Veterans Home and, later, the Grand View Hotel on the Chain O'Lakes. The trolley ceased operation in 1925.

On September 10, 1925, when the trolley shut down, the *Waupaca County Post* published an article remembering the trolley line:

“WAUPACA OWES HOMAGE TO ITS STREET CARS; We may now reflect on part played by them in popularizing our summer resorts.

“The oldest transportation system in Waupaca County is now no more. Like the duck in winter which swims about the edges of the pond to keep the ice from closing in, each trip is shorter, for with each trip now the Waupaca street car takes up a few more rails, shortening the track until soon it will be altogether taken up, even to the car barns. The city council has decided that the tracks must come up, and the 15th of September is the date on which the last rail must be pulled and off the streets. Although the need of a street railway from Waupaca to the lakes has been done away with, since the preeminence of motor car transportation, the Waupaca Electric Railway was once a most important link between Waupaca and the “Killarneys of America,” as the beautiful chain of lakes is so fittingly called. Thus it is not amiss to tell



Photo by Molly Reinke

The old trolley rails were pulled out of North Main Street and Water Street during the construction in March.



Photo by Rick Winters

The old trolley tracks are visible in the middle of this photograph on North Main Street during construction on April 4.

something of the history of the line.

“Irving P. Lord and W.B. Baker purchased the majority stock of the Waupaca Electric Light Company in 1899, at the same time obtaining franchise to operate an electric railway from the Soo Depot in Waupaca to the Wisconsin Veterans’ Home. Later the road was carried to the Grand View.”

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Waupaca Trolley Remembered

continued from p. 5

"On July 4, 1899, the road was completed, an excursion trip was run, and the cars were running on regular schedule on July 17 of that year. The road soon became increasingly popular and became one of the factors which enabled summer visitors to reach Waupaca's favorite resort at the Chain o'lakes, as well as serving as a means of rapid transit between the Veterans' Home and this city.

"At times the road was exceedingly popular as a means of transporting holiday crowds to picnic grounds. On Aug. 20, 1907 the State E.F.U. {Equitable Fraternal Union} picnic was held in this city and on that day the street cars carried 4,844 passengers, some of the fares being the minimum charge of five cents and others being the minimum charge of ten cents from Waupaca to Grand View hotel on the shore of Rainbow Lake. The total receipts have exceeded \$200 a day and in the years before the World War \$100 was considered an ordinary day's receipts.

"Today the street car has been superceded by its swifter rival, the motor car, and it is doomed to pass away, having served its time, even as the livery barns, the blacksmith shops, and the windmills, and other



The trolley tracks were removed from W. Fulton Street in the mid- to late 1920s.



The Waupaca Electric and Light Railway No. 16 trolley stops at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in King.

remnants of an earlier day are succeeded by more efficient or swifter vehicles of an industrial day where speed is an aim, efficiency is a necessity, specialization is a means, and money is the sole goal."

An article the next week on September 17, 1925 in the *Waupaca County Post* noted that the rails would stay in some of the streets:

"ELECTRIC SERVICE CO. PAYS DEBT TO DICY; RAILS MAY REMAIN.

"At the common council meeting on Wednesday evening a settlement with the Electric Service company was adopted whereby the rails are to be permitted to remain in

Main street and Water street.

"In exchange for this concession, the city received a check for the amount which the city expended for the Electric Service company when the improvement of Main and Fulton Street was made several years ago.

"The interest has been paid regularly by the Electric company and was paid to September 15th this year. The face of the note was something over \$2,300.

"The city will cove the rails and fill the depression along the old tracks with some composition of tarvia and small crushed stone."

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Fri., May 14 at 6 p.m., Porch Program: "Grow Potatoes in a Bag" at Hutchinson House

Sat. May 15 at 10:30 a.m., Porch Program: "Grow Potatoes in a Bag" at Hutchinson House

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Sat., August 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Porch Program: "Civil War Encampment" at Hutchinson House

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