

THE REPORTER

Volume 14, Issue 5

The Newsletter of the Waupaca Historical Society

Fall 2010

WHS Board of Directors: Dick Bidwell, President, Mike Kirk, Vice President, Betty Stewart, Secretary, Robert Kessler, Treasurer, Gerald Chappell, Vera Dueterbeck, Jim Boyer, Glenda Rhodes, Dennis Lear, David Trombla, Joyce Woldt, Marge Witt, Don Witt, and Tracy Behrendt

WHS Director: Julie Hintz

Hutchinson House Museum Curator: Barbara Fay Wiese

Review of the Events of the Waupaca Historical Society for 2010

During June through August **The Holly History Center offered a Special Exhibit** wherein Julie Hintz displayed vintage wedding gowns and wedding photographs.

Through June **The Heritage House Committee** of Betty Stewart, Mike Kirk, Dave Trombla, Dennis Lear, Julie Hintz, and Joyce Woldt **Moved Stored Material Elsewhere.**

The Family Bible Project Was Completed by Joyce Woldt, Jerry Chappell, and Darlene Ryan as they placed historic data into family folders.

On August 21 and 22 **WHS Participated in the Art on the Square, Art at the Depot** with Mike Kirk, Dave Trombla, and Dennis Lear showing the work of five different artists, **and Art at the Hutchinson House** with Julie Hintz and Barbara Wiese displaying hand crafted needlepoint and cross-stitch.

Hutchinson House Museum Was Open Summer weekends and for the Strawberry Festival (June 19), The Fourth of July (July 4), and The Rod and Classic Car Show (August 28), as well as the Fourth Grade Tours (Sept 27, 29, 30 and Oct 5, 6, and 8). The docents included Barry and Ruby Shaw, Don and Vera Deustersbeck, Chris and Jerry Chappell, Jan Hanke, Marge Witt, Barbara Fay Wiese, Julie Hintz, Betty Stewart, Nyma Larkee, Ruth Sieward, and Pat Young. }

The Waupaca Depot Was Open for tours for the Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Luthern OWLS Group, Lionese Club, Soo Line Historical and Technical Society, and the Old Car Club. The Ice Age Trail Group had a meeting and quarry tour. We had twenty or so high school students for a community service work day. The depot was open for "Trick or Treat". And hundreds of hours of restoration work was completed.

WHS Held an Old Fashioned Pie Social with Joyce Woldt, Barbara Wiese and Jerry Chappell selling pie in the lobby of the Waupaca Area Public Library on September 11 in conjunction with the Waupaca Library's Lincoln Memorial Exhibit and the Old Abe Camp # 8 Civil War Encampment.

WHS Celebrated a Very Good Year At Their Annual Meeting enjoying Hors D'oeuvres, Wine and Punch, and spirited Conversation at the Holly History Center Tuesday September 14.

Culvers Restaurant Acknowledged WHS by giving us ten percent of the evening proceeds on September 21.

WHS Participated in the Waupaca Book Festival with Jerry Chappell, Joyce Woldt, Dave Trombla, and Marge and Don Writt hosting authors Arthur and Ursula Rathburn's participation on October 2 at the Holly History Center.

WHS Participated in the 2010 Fall Think Tank on October 9, when Julie Hintz, Joyce Woldt, and Jerry Chappell toured The New London Historical Society's Heritage Historical Village and visited the Therm Farm for lunch, a program, and a tour of the historic home and barns where the New London Fairs were held from 1891 to 1912.

WHS Published Five Issues of *The Reporter* and Submitted Seven Indian History Articles for the *Waupaca County Post West's* Prime Time Section.

On September 14 **WHS Re-nominated the Executive Committee** of Dick Bidwell as president, Mike Kirk as vice president, Bob Kessler as treasurer, and Betty Stewart as secretary **and Welcomed Two New Members of the Board of Directors** - Don Writt and Tracy Behrendt.

During October 19-22 **the WHS Collection Committee** of Joyce Woldt, Dennis Lear, and Jerry Chappell **Collected Hospital Records** by selecting and filing valuable brochure, photo and newspaper items from a stack of materials offered as a donation.

Correction of a reference

In the page 3 sentence (In July 1914 there was an unsuccessful movement to change the name of South Park in honor of Congressman Tom Brown) of the article "The Early Years of Waupaca's South Park 1884-1976" in the Summer Special edition of *The Reporter*, the proper name should have been Congressman E.E. Browne.

Milestones in the Early History of the Waupaca Area Public Library

A history article by Jerry Chappell

This article offers some developmental highlights of the library history for the Fall issue of the *WHS Reporter*. Focus at this time upon the early historical growth of the library is most fitting because of the remarkable contributions its staff has, in general, consistently offered central Wisconsin since its onset in 1900, and in specific, under the directorship of Ms. Peg Burington, has recently hosted the National Constitution Center's Exhibit, "*Lincoln: The Constitution and the Civil War*," as well as an eleven author *Waupaca Book Festival*. Drawn from Marie App's excellent comprehensive account entitled the *History of the Waupaca Area Public Library*, 2000, selected excerpts present a condensed version of a remarkable history. I also thank Marie for editing this short early history of the library's growth and expansion, as I thank my other proof readers of *The Reporter* issues, Chris Chappell and Joyce Woldt, who have been with me from the start.

Marie App reports the beginning events:

"The first action taken toward organizing a free public library in Waupaca began with . . . the Women's Club of Waupaca. {The Monday Night Club also constantly sponsored library development from its onset}

{Miss Lutie} Stern's encouragement {of the Wisconsin State Library Commission} for the library project, as well as public support from citizens and members of woman's clubs, moved Mayor R. N. Roberts to appoint (1889) the first library board of nine members, president C.A. Spencer, vice-president Mrs. R. N. Roberts, secretary F. S. Baldwin, treasurer H. J. Peterson, trustees C. R. Showalter, Mrs. E. E. Browne, Mrs. W. C. Baldwin, Mrs. C. J. Vosburg, and Miss Lillian Phillips, and librarian Winifred Bailey. The board began to solicit monetary subscriptions for the purchase of books.(p. 5)

On February 28, 1900, the first Waupaca Public library was opened in a rent-free room over the Post Office at 208 South Main Street. Heat and electricity were furnished without charge by the Waupaca Electric Light and Railway Company. The librarian was paid \$100 a year, but any expenses incurred for her summer schooling were subtracted from her salary. The library's collection totaled 759 books. (p. 6)

On June 19, 1900, the Women's Club asked the city council to levy a tax on all taxable property in the City of Waupaca for a sum of not less than \$300 for the use of the new library board in maintaining the public library. In its annual report, the club announced that its needs for the next year were \$125 for the librarian's salary, \$35 for magazines and papers, \$25 for heating bills, \$50 for new books, \$25 for incidentals and \$50 to replace books condemned by the Wisconsin Board of Health . . . {and} book binding, book insurance (\$700), {and} fixture insurance (\$100)[. . .]"(p. 7)

Ms. App provides background on the millionaire philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie, whom the library board first approached for financial assistance in 1902, then again in 1905, and finally in a grant application in 1913:

"In 1853, Carnegie took a job as a clerk and telegraph operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad. He rose through the ranks, even surpassing his boss as division superintendent. While working for the

railroad, Carnegie invested in several iron companies, an oil company, and the Woodruff Sleeping Car Company. While on a trip to Europe in 1872, Carnegie realized that the demand for steel would increase dramatically in the years ahead. The following year, he and several partners established the most modern steel mill of the time, the J. Edgar Thomson Works, near Pittsburgh.

Carnegie survived two nationwide business slumps by continuing to expand his business while others were cutting back. In 1892 Carnegie combined three of his companies into the Carnegie Steel Company. This was sold in 1901 for \$480 million to J. P. Morgan. Carnegie retired with a fortune estimated at \$500 million. He began to give his money away, using it for the benefit of others. Libraries were Carnegie's first choice, and his monies financed libraries built in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, South Africa, the Seychelles, Mauritius, and the Islands of Fiji. In the end he had endowed 2,811 free libraries. The total cost to Carnegie was over fifty million dollars."(p. 11)

"Wisconsin was the recipient of 63 Carnegie public library grants, seventh highest in the U. S. The most grants, 203, were awarded in 1903, one year after the Waupaca Library Board contacted Carnegie for the first time."(p. 12)

"In one of his essays, Carnegie, a self educated man, wrote that 'the main consideration should be to help those who will help themselves; to provide part of the means by which those who desire to improve may do so; to give those who desire to raise the aids by which they may rise; to assist, but rarely, or never, to do all'."

"Carnegie once said that the best gift that can be given to a community is a free library, providing the community maintains it as a public institution. "The library gives nothing for nothing, because it helps only those that help themselves . . . (It) stretches a hand to the aspiring and places a ladder upon which they can only ascend by doing the climbing themselves." (p. 11)

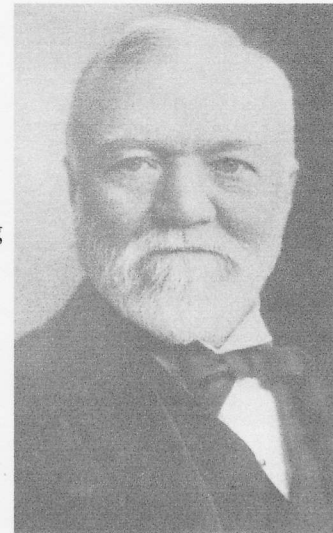
James Sickel ("Carnegie Libraries in Northeast Wisconsin," *Voyageur*, Volume 18, No 1, 2001, p.12) adds further reference to Carnegie's philosophy about reading and giving:

"The New York Times quoted Carnegie as saying 'let no man know more of your specialty than you do yourself. Then far less important, but still important, to bring sweetness and light into your life, be sure to read promiscuously and know a little about as many things as you have time to read about, one domain, your work, and the other, your recreation. Severe study of scientific books must not be permitted to exclude the equally important duty of reading the masters of literature and, by all means, of fiction.'"

Carnegie, in his article "Wealth," wrote that: 'wealthy men were to live without extravagance, provide moderately for the legitimate needs of the dependents and then consider all the remainder as surplus funds which they, as trustee, should distribute in their life time for the best promotion of welfare and happiness of the common man.'"

Ms. App discusses the building of the new Waupaca Carnegie library:

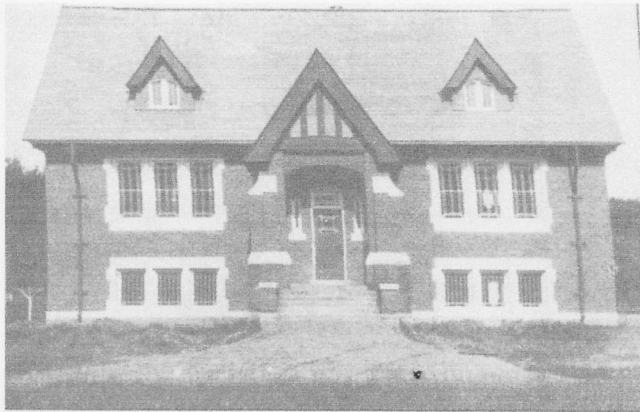
"On October 8, 1913, the *Record Leader* of Waupaca reported that the Waupaca Public Library Board gave the contract for the construction of the new library to Starmont and Son of LaCrosse for the sum of \$8,198, with instructions that work was to begin at once. Architects Bernard Parkinson and Albert Sockendorff began the sketches, adhering to guidelines set by Carnegie. They built a red brick structure



Andrew Carnegie. Courtesy of Marie App, *History of the Waupaca Area Library*, 2000, p. 10.

and added the classical components that proclaimed it a Carnegie library. They used symmetrically balanced dormers, windows and front entrance. They designed a wide, unenclosed eave overhang, classical pediment, decorative false beams, and a porch supported by square columns. The building was simple, solid, and functional.

"In fewer than nine months, on June 30, 1914, the new Waupaca Public Library was completed. From the monies donated by Andrew Carnegie and the people of Waupaca, the library board bought the land, erected the building, and insured it for \$10,000. It then turned the property over to the city. Insurance costs were \$97.50 for three years. The city paid \$1,000 for maintenance, including librarian Mary Benlick's salary of \$35 a month and a janitor \$15 a month." [. . .](p. 15)



Waupaca's Andrew Carnegie Library. Courtesy of the Waupaca Historical Society.



Mary Benlick. Courtesy of Marie App, *History of the Waupaca Area Library*, 2000, p. 20.

"The library board at the time of the new construction included president Mrs. R. N. Roberts, vice-president Mrs. E. E. Browne, treasurer C. H. Hansen, secretary J. C. Hart, trustees, Mrs. H. M. Lea, Mrs. Page Knight, and E. H. Miles, and librarian Mary Benlick." (p. 17)

"Circulation of books in 1917 was 19,566, with fiction accounting for 14,785. The library owned 4,101 books, 359 reference books and 20 magazines. Patrons totaled 1,501.

The first attempt at landscaping took place in 1918, when a landscape artist from the University of Wisconsin planted evergreens, cedar, and hemlock near the library entrance and wild sumac along the east property line."(p.18)

The following are key events from Ms. App's discussion of what occurred in the 1920s through 1950s:

"To encourage reading in 1925, the library participated in a national movement, Better Book Week, and scheduled adult and child activities all week long. It was the first time the library held Storytime for children, and 476 children attended Storytime that week.

At the helm of the library in 1928 were board president W. C. Baldwin, vice-president Mrs. Irving Hansen, treasurer C. H. Hansen, secretary Mrs. Belle Chamberlain, and trustees Mrs. Robert Crosser, Dr. H. I. Lewis, and G. E. Watson." (p. 21)

"The installation of a new rubber tile floor in the library caused its closure for two weeks in April 1939, and a thorough redecorating closed it again in late October of the same year. At this time the

library subscribed to the *Waupaca County Post*, *Iola Herald*, and the *Chicago Tribune*." [. . .](p. 25)

"Nina B. Smith began work as Waupaca's third librarian on April 1, 1950, following Mary Benlick who had been librarian from 1909 - 1950. (The first librarian was Winefred Baily, 1899-1909) Smith remained until February 1, 1957, when she retired and was followed by her assistant, Helen Brooks. Smith and Brooks began the practice of Children's Story Hour in November 1950. The librarians expected about twelve children for the first story hour. The event was heavily advertised, promising adventure, Indian, animal and fairy tales and classics, too. More than one hundred children showed up."(p. 26)

"In 1951 and 1953 the Monday Night Club sponsored book fairs and library Christmas parties.

The library board in 1958 consisted of president Hazel Dance, Guy Schmahl, Mrs. Ike Drozd, Kenneth Pinkerton and Mrs. Ida Smith."(p. 27)

"Book circulation in 1959 was 19,352. The library owned 10,000 volumes.

A major library remodeling took place in 1959. The improvements included acoustical ceilings, new plumbing, freshly painted walls, lighting fixtures and the addition of a ladies room. The renovation was paid partly by the city and partly through a bequest from the late Mrs. Herman Felker. The Monday Night Club remodeled the library kitchen in 1960."(p. 28)



Helen Brooks. Photo courtesy of Marie App, *The History of the Waupaca Area Library*, 2000, p. 27.

Finally some milestones from Ms. App's account of the happenings of the 1970s:

"In 1975, the library sponsored an "Honor Our Trustees Tea" in gratitude to library board president Mrs. Robert Donaldson and trustees Mrs. Ward Fonstad, Mrs. George Drivas, Mrs. Doug Loomis, Albert Holly, and Ken Pinkerton. Pinkerton had been on the library board for 15 years. He became mayor and soon requested that the city hire another full time person to help handle the library's growth. Trustee Holly was especially singled out for thanks since it was he who volunteered time and labor to maintain the library grounds, remodel the library workroom, build new cupboards and storage areas, insulate the attic, and construct the storage shed on the library grounds." (p. 37)

In 1976 the Waupaca Area Library {and the other Waupaca county libraries} merged with the Outagamie County Library System to form a two-county Federated Library System (Waupaca Outagamie Library System - OWLS) that served over 85,000 persons. The federation included Appleton, Hortonville, Kaukauna, Kimberly, Seymour, Shiocton, Clintonville, Marion, Iola, Manawa, Fremont, Scandinavia, Weyauwega, Black Creek, and New London. The circulation at this time was over 56,000 with rural patrons accounting for more than half. The collection included 19,379 volumes, 622 items were interloaned, 60 records were owned, and \$979 was spent in a single year in reference books. By merging into the federation, Waupaca received around \$32,100 in state aid and started a mailbox library program.

Marie App speaks of other advantages and stipulations:

"Other services available would be a rotating collection of specialized books {including books in large print and art prints} and a collection of 16mm films, filmstrips and tape recordings which could be borrowed by individual libraries.

In the federated system, each library would function independently to provide its regular services and would be under the jurisdiction of the local library board. Budgets for operating expenses would be dependent upon the local community. The library board would be responsible for services and financial aspects of the cooperative services provided by the system."

"Other changes in the library in 1975 included the addition of daily morning hours and a new policy that prevented people from borrowing books until all their fines for overdue books were paid. Fines were one cent per item per day for days one through seven and five cents for all additional days.

The "Story Lady" for several years in the mid 70s was Ruth Ann Strassburg, who read to children every Wednesday morning during the summer months."(p. 38)

"Library director Gerald (Jerry) Brown was hired as a full time employee in 1975 and became director in 1978."(p. 44)

"During Brown's first year as director, the first Bed Time Story Hour was organized with the help of Doris Kneuppel and Phyllis Stiebs; the first Green Thumb worker, Marie Peterson, was hired and the library's rural mailbox system of book deliveries reached 20,500 rural boxholders. Barbara Jean Martell was hired as the first full time children's librarian. She drew 125 children to the summer reading program in 1978 to see a University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point drama workshop, Showagon, perform "Cinderella" on the library lawn. Also in 1978, autographed books were received by authors Steven Englund and Ray Hemingson." (p. 45)

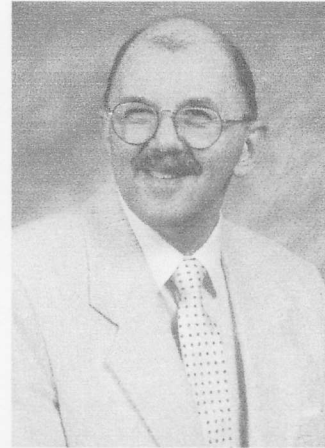
"In the following year, 1979, the remodeling and opening of the Youth Services Department in the lower level of the library occurred. Because of the cost of remodeling, painting, carpeting and furnishing the youth department, pleas for money were sent out to community organizations. The responses helped make the children's room a reality. The Waupaca Volunteer Fire Department, Waupaca Lions Club, and the Waupaca Nomads each donated \$500. The Kiwanis donated \$100 and the Waupaca Lioness Chapter donated \$50. The city council voted to give \$5,000 for the cause."(p. 45)

"The Waupaca Library Board during this time of growth and change included president Jack Brueckner, secretary Jane Christenson, treasurer Al Holly, Fay Fonstad, Jean Donaldson, Carl Strassburg, Jim Smith, and Roland Bernhagen (replaced by Ernest "Les" Jenner when Bernhagen moved to Barbados)"(p. 46)

"A group of library supporters formed the Library Associates of Waupaca (LAWS) in 1980 under the leadership of Jean Brecke {and Patricia Hollenbeck}. The group recruited volunteers who provided services as they were needed."(p. 46)

"By 1982, a state of overcrowded conditions for patrons and books existed in the old Andrew Carnegie building. Complaints of crowding were seen in newspapers and heard at meetings, until in 1986 Mayor James Boyer appointed a Library Building Committee to assess the library's space needs. By 1988, the need for a larger library was voiced by city organizations, library patrons, local newspapers, and librarians."(p. 49)

It was just a matter of time until the Carnegie Library would no longer be the Waupaca Library. But that's another story.



Director Gerald Brown.
Photo courtesy of Marie App, *History of the Waupaca Area Public Library*, 2000, p. 44.

Waupaca Historical Society
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Waupaca, Wisconsin 54981-1745

Keeping History Alive

And Making History

The Waupaca Historical Society will participate in the Christmas tree display fundraiser at Hansen's Appliance Store, Friday, November 19, through the first week in January. Here's how it works: stop in at Hansen's anytime between November 19 and December 24. "Vote" for your favorite tree by putting a contribution into the canister for our tree. We will receive the donations from our canister. If our tree collects the most contributions of all the trees on display, we will win the \$100 donation from Hansen's. Cash or checks are accepted. Please make your checks payable to "Waupaca Historical Society". This is a good way for you to make a year end donation to our Society and help us win the contest at the same time. If you make your donation with a check, you will receive an acknowledgment in the mail in January of 2011. Please stop by Hansen's, enjoy the trees, and vote for the Historical Society tree! Donations of every size are welcome!