# THE REPORTER

Waupaca Historical Society, 321 South Main Street, Waupaca, Wisconsin 54981 715-256-9980 Web: <u>www.waupacahistoricalsociety.org</u> E-mail: <u>wauphistsoc@waupacaonline.net</u>

## VOLUME 19 – NUMBER 2

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Springtime is a very busy season for the Waupaca Historical Society. There is cleaning, yard work and getting ready for summer programs. Julie, Mike, and Barbara Faye are getting everything ready for events and visitors. The dedication that these three people have shown over the years is truly appreciated.

Jeff and Nancy Weasner take care of the grounds at the Holly History & Genealogy Center and the Hutchinson House. People have commented that the sidewalk at the Holly Center is always the first to be shoveled.

I would also like to thank Linda Kirk for cleaning the Holly Center and Dave Trombla for mowing at the train depot.

It takes the work of many people to keep these three historic properties preserved for future generations. The history of Waupaca will be remembered as long as we have people who care.

I would encourage everyone to visit the Hutchinson House, Holly History & Genealogy Center, and the Waupaca Train Depot this summer, and if you see any of these people thank them for their hard work.

Dennis Lear

#### Waupaca County Post July 17, 1919

NEW AUTO LIVERY – Messrs. Al Barnhart and Ralph Larsen have leased the Whipple & Felker barn south of Delavan Hotel and will conduct a Ford exchange and auto livery with day and night service.

CITY TO RETAIN ELECTRIC ARCHES FOR REMAINDER OF SUMMER – The Common Council Tuesday evening arranged to have the red, white and blue electric light arches which were put up for the Homecoming, remain until the first of September, and they will be lighted on band concert nights.

BUYS THE DELAVAN – Wallace H. Lord has purchased the Hotel Delavan property. This is the first move toward a new and modern hotel.

SPRING 2015

## MESSAGE FROM THE HOLLY HISTORY AND GENEALOGY CENTER From Building Director: Julie Hintz

The Winter months are always a good time to catch up on a few projects. (Well more like "quite a few" projects.) Things never slow down too much at the Holly History & Genealogy Center. Some of the projects that we tackled this winter were: 1) mailing letters to Waupaca area businesses about our 2015 Business Partner Membership Program; 2) redesigning our new website; 3) printing out a back-up computer record for each item accessioned in the previous year; 4) planning events and exhibits for the 2015 calendar year; and 5) sorting items that had previously been given to us, but that are still awaiting accessioning.

The Waupaca Historical Society launched its new website on April 1st. The website committee (Ron Arthur, Julie Hintz, Mike Kirk, and Barbara Fay Wiese) spent time reviewing suggestions and ideas for the new site. Our Board of Directors approved the use of "Zoho" software for the redesign of the website and we did the work "in-house" rather than hiring a web developer. We now have a new web address –

## www.waupacahistoricalsociety.org.

There are still a few things that need to be fixed on our new site, but overall the new site is looking pretty amazing! The "Contact Us" form is sending messages into the "cloud" right now (and we are having some difficulty retrieving them), so if you need to contact us, please phone or email us directly at <u>wauphistsoc@waupacaonline.net</u>. We should have this issue worked out in the very near future. We also plan to have the old web address redirected to our new one very soon, so that anyone searching on the internet can still find us. Make sure you add our new web address to your "Favorites" list on your home computer and please take a look at our new website!

The next exhibit at the Holly History & Genealogy Center will be "Come to the Fair". We will be showcasing items related to some of the World's Fairs or Expositions (Great Exposition of 1876 in Philadelphia, Chicago Exposition of 1893, Seattle World's Fair of 1962, and the New York World's Fair of 1964) and also items related to the Waupaca County Fair. The exhibit will be ready by the end of May and will stay up through the end of September. Stop down to the Holly Center sometime during the summer months to take a look at this wonderful exhibit.

The next Quarterly Membership Meeting of the Waupaca Historical Society will be held on Thursday evening, June 25th, at 6:30 p.m. in the meeting room at the Holly History Center. We will be showing the video "Waupaca Circa 1938" and serving popcorn and soda. I urge you to join us to reminisce about days gone by. Mark the date and time on your calendars and plan to attend

#### Have a "Happy Spring & Summer"!

## AT THE WAUPACA DEPOT From Building Director Mike Kirk

. Strawberry Fest is coming up in June and the depot will be open on Saturday the 20th, 10 am to 5 pm. As usual, we continue to work on the depot, so be sure to stop by and check it out.

The newly refinished floors look great. The last room should be completed by the time you read this. The smoking room has gone from a tool and supply storage room to an office featuring Tom Holly's roll top desk along with other railroad items.

Our largest current project is the excavation of the remainder of the basement to an eight foot depth. We are very grateful to have a conveyer loaned to up from Paul's Concrete. Without it, the project would be an overwhelming task.

We have gotten help from a number of people. A special thanks for labor goes to Roger & Virginia Hildebrandt, Jeff Weasner, Brett Peterson, high school community service volunteers, and Rawhide, as well as David Johnson for financial assistance.

#### Waupaca County Post August 14, 1884

The first set of lawn tennis brought to Waupaca was that of Mrs. Major Roberts who started the game on the lawn to the south of her residence last week. It "takes" in Waupaca and everybody will be playing it before the summer is gone.

## HUTCHINSON HOUSE HAPPENINGS From Building Director Barbara Fay Wiese

It will be a busy year at the Hutchinson house. Our first tour was given in April, when a troop of third grade cub scouts visited. The boys made button twirlers, then went on a historical scavenger hunt to find specific items throughout the house. The boys, parents, and leader did a great hunting job with photos of detailed parts of objects in our collection. Every item they sought was found!

Our season officially opens on Memorial Day weekend, Saturday May 23rd, and runs through Labor Day Monday, September 7th. Would you be interested in volunteering as a docent (tour guide) at Hutchinson House? We have guidelines and historical information to help you be informed — you provide the friendly and welcoming demeanor to ensure that our visitors have a memorable visit! We would like our docents to serve 3 or 4 times a month, if possible. The shift is either Saturday or Sunday, 1-4. Most months have 8 days that we are open. If you would like to learn more about docenting at the Hutchinson House, please call Barbara Wiese at 715-258-3996.

Changes are in the works for the upstairs display rooms. The Master Bedroom and the Children's Room will remain open to the public, with slightly updated displays. The Loom Room is being transformed for storage, and will be closed to the public. The Exhibit Alcove will undergo updates and remain on view for visitors. In preparation, clothes racks and shelving are being set up in the Loom Room, which will now be known as the Storage Room. Special thanks to Jim Abert for helping to initiate the process of change. Thanks also to Mike and Barb Homolka who removed the door, wrestled it downstairs (and back up again) to shave off the bottom and side so it fits shut, and then installed a hook eye so we can close it during tour hours. Now we will move the clothing that is packed tightly into the closet at the top of the stairs and in the wardrobes over to the Storage Room. Eventually, we envision the tiny room at the top of the stairs for boarders. All of this will take time — and volunteer help. We will provide information as this major change progresses.

Are you a Waupaca Garden Walk enthusiast? New or Frequent Garden Walkers: this year's Walk, Saturday June 27 will include Hutchinson House. Nancy Weasner and friends are lovingly tending the garden to present an array of heirloom plants with an emphasis on color, function, and scents. Our porch will be invitingly set with lemonade and old-time treats. VOLUNTEER REQUEST: do you or an acquaintance make violet or dandelion jam or jelly? We will be open 9am - 4 pm on June 27 for Garden Walk Day.

Other days that we will be open special hours this summer include Strawberry Fest, July Fourth, Arts on the Square, Rod & Classic Car Show, and Fall-O-Rama.

#### Waupaca Post February 1, 1883

Fire Escape: Mr. Henry Chamberlain, of this city, has made an application for a patent on a fire escape of his invention, which is designed to be used upon large buildings where such things are of necessity required for the safety of people in case of fire. It is thoroughly practical, cheap, and is sure to be adopted in our larger cities where buildings several stories high are common. It is simply iron rounds inlaid in the brick or stone wall from the bottom to the top of the building, making a complete ladder – one that cannot get out of place nor become damaged in any way. It cannot help from becoming universally adopted. If such an escape had been furnished at the Newhall House nearly all the inmates of the burning building could have been saved.

## Louis Olson and the Waupaca Co-Operative Creamery By J.J. Johnson

The Waupaca Republican Post reported 0n December 23, 1909 that the creamery run by the Kizer & Derleth Company would be leased to Louis Olson and would be opened thanks to Nathan Cohen offering to guarantee payment for the butter produced.

Cohen made his proposition to Fred Hess who secured an order from Judge Charles Webb to authorize renting the defunct creamery to Olson. "One of the arguments in favor of renting was the necessity of keeping up the insurance which would lapse in case the plant was idle. Cohen was willing to have a committee of farmers appointed to have charge of the money received from the sale of butter."

According to John Ware's A Standard History of Waupaca County, "Louis Olson grew up on a farm, attended the common schools and the Amherst High School and when a youth began learning the trade of butter-maker. To supplement his practical experience he took a special course in the dairy school conducted by the University of Wisconsin. His first important responsibilities were in the charge of the creamery at Amherst, later at Lime Lake and Blaine, and in 1908 he came to Waupaca."

At Waupaca he was employed as the bookkeeper for the Kizer & Derleth Company's creamery on Oborn Street and was in a prime position to take over the reins, with the support of Cohen and Hess. In 1911 farmers using the creamery decided the operation would work better as a co-operative. They organized with 140 stockholders. Among the first items of business by the stockholders was to hire Olson as manager of the new Waupaca Co-Operative Creamery.

According to David Leider in *The Story of Waupaca and Its Railroads*, "A milk drier and large boiler were installed in a new brick addition built in 1930 ... [as] a process had just been invented for making powdered milk. [Olson resigned as manager in 1941 and] Ed Tierney became manager. Later that year the stockholders voted to sell the plant to the Badger Consolidated Creamery of Shawano."

In Sophelia Kurkowski's 1954 Junior Historians booklet Lynda Minton recorded, "the new manager ran the creamery for two years when it was sold to Badger Consolidated in Shawano and everything was moved from Waupaca to Shawano. This we hadn't figured on but there was nothing in the contract that said they couldn't move it. The powdered plant was sold to [Vilas] Barnhart and the main building was torn down."

Leider wrote, "Barnhart owned a machine shop [where] in addition to his general welding and machining he invented the Weight-o-Bulk buggy for use in elevators. The Barnhart Company was located on the site of the creamery and later became the Waupaca Elevator Company."

#### PAST PRINTS

**Waupaca Post - April 7, 1887:** In 1887 seventeen women went to the polls to vote for city treasurer, clerk and assessor, claiming they had the right to vote for these offices under the new amendment to the Constitution. After a prolonged argument their votes were accepted – under protest. The women stated they had no interest in the election results but felt someone had to take the first step in the area to encourage other women to vote.

Incidentally, the wife and sister of George Chamberlain voted against him in the race for treasurer.

**Waupaca Republican Post - March 18, 1909**: Waupaca City Council - A resolution was adopted changing name of South Street, First ward, to Granite [Street] as the two streets in question are practically a continuation of same street. (Editor's Note: In 1909 there was also a street located south of Junction Street, off from Main Street, which was also named South Street. That street was eliminated decades later as part of negotiations with the Browne family and has since become part of the paved area of the upper parking lot at South Park.)

**The Republican Post - October 15, 1883**: The new street between Division and State Streets will be opened this week. Ed Selleck bought the half lot of VanTassel. It cost him, including the assessment he will pay the city, \$125, but gives him a very nice southeast corner lot eight rods square for residence and grounds.

The opening of this street is a great improvement to the property on the four corners as well as a great convenience to others.

**Waupaca Republican - April 27, 1888**: Waupaca City Council - A petition was presented to have Cemetery Street resurveyed and named High Street, which carried.

As a member of the Waupaca Historical Society, you are encouraged to patronize the following businesses which are enrolled as "Business Partner Member" supporters of our society:



## Book Review: A Review of Old and New Document Treasures in the Holly Center History & Genealogy Center

"Old Treasures" by Jerry Chappell- Come in to review and compare the changes that occurred to the county cities and townships during their early formative years from the trio of large books entitled Atlas/Plat Book of Waupaca County, Wisconsin 1889, 1912, and 1923. The photo on the right is of the stack of plat books with an open page to a section of the city of Waupaca. Other plats and maps are also housed at the Holly History and Genealogy Center.





## A Teen-Ager's View of Waupaca – This was

a project by Miss Kurkowski's 1953 class and contains many short historical articles collected and written by the students on a myriad of subjects. Many of the books at the Holly History and Genealogy Center are rare histories of this area, or like this book is one of the few known remaining copies. A similar book, **"We Remember"** was completed by her 1955 class of Junior Historians and "dedicated to the pioneers of Waupaca". Thankfully the contents have been preserved in better condition than the title page, shown at left.



## I Wish I Had Known Waupaca's 'Miss K' By Jerry Chappell

I was most interested learning that in 2014 the Waupaca Historical Society was invited to nominate a woman from the Waupaca area who most influentially and inspiringly made an impact on history at the local and/or national level. The Waupaca Historical Society nominated Miss Sophelia Kurkowski for inclusion in the "Wisconsin Women Making History" database/website.

When I first came to Waupaca a decade ago and started delving into some of its history I noted that the name of historian Sophelia Kurkowski kept popping up in newspaper articles and piles of student history articles. I soon learned that, among her many contributions to school and community, she had been an officer (Vice President) in the executive committee that initiated the Waupaca Historical Society in 1953, was Vice President of the Waupaca Centennial Planning Committee in 1957, was an outstanding American History teacher and librarian at Waupaca High School from 1926 through 1962, and directed the publication of the Waupaca High School Year Books (Crystal) most of her teaching years. So, being a history enthusiast, I would love to have known 'Miss K'.

I learned more specifically about her from the article 'Waupaca High Loses Miss 'K' after 36 Years of Teaching (*Waupaca County Post*, April 19, 1962)' that she was a popular librarian and history teacher at the Waupaca High School for 36 years. That retirement article said she was Waupaca high school's biggest booster of books and the doors they unlock. To many ex-students her retirement closed an era in the high school in which the library and Miss Kurkowski's American history classes were the hub of the school. The article went on to say that Miss Kurkowski taught over 3,000 students and oversaw the growth of the school library from a small 2,500 volume nook to an excellent 6,000-volume facility, including a fine periodical and reference room. Through it all she presided with her wry, unpredictable sense of humor which inspired the resourceful student to dig harder. "I've always given the student the key," she recalled, "but he's on his own after that."

With a master's degree in history from the University of Wyoming, she was hired by Waupaca in 1926 and became the school librarian in 1927. The article mentions that her 1953 History classes won the American Heritage Award for State and Local History Research. In 1957, she was also cited by the Wisconsin Historical Society as one of the Top 10 Teachers of Local History in Wisconsin.

The article "Waupaca Makes History' Written by Local Students (from *Badger History* and reported in *Waupaca County Post*, circa 1954)' is a good example of her project achievements with students as it records

that, under the direction of Miss Sophelia Kurkowski, members of the Chain o' Lakes Junior Historical Society were cited for placing wooden markers on, writing history accounts for, providing photos of, and providing a tour map for 11 historical Waupaca business places. Included were the Firestone Store which was the site of the first library and the Albert Kreeger barber shop that was the site of the first post office. In turn, the project told the story of the old courthouse, of the first city hall, of the First Methodist Church, of the first Episcopal Church, and of Henry Mead's bank and murder history.



Miss K ( on the right) going over a travel folder with AAUW members Mrs. D. A.Shambeau ( President, seated left) and Fund Co-chairman Mrs. Carl Turner and Mrs. Willard Olson (standing).

I was further impressed when I found the article 'Ex-Students Contribute \$900 for Teacher's Trip to Europe (*Waupaca County Post*, December 15, 1955) that describes how she received a check contributed by hundreds of her former students and friends that helped pay for a trip to Europe. She thereafter visited and saw the places in Europe that distinctly influenced American life and wrote articles for the *Waupaca County Post* about her experiences. The secret funding project, sponsored by the Waupaca branch of the American Association of University Women and led by fund chairman Mrs. Carl Turner, sent out two thousand letters outlining the proposal to honor the veteran teacher. All the letters accompanying contributions were turned over to Miss K prior to her trip. Half a dozen examples follow:

"It's always amazing to me – the spirit and drive she has within herself." - Mrs. Rose Hungerford Mehne.

"Miss Kurkowski has earned this trip to places about which she has taught so many of us."- Grace Moody, San Antonio, Texas.

"Her good nature was almost unfailing, and it took a tremendous amount of goading to make her lose it. Even when she finally became

cross, it served only to make us love her more. She is truly a grand lady, so grand that some of her goodness can hardly fail rubbing off on those with whom she comes in contact." – Philip A. Jenson, '29, Oshkosh.

"It makes me happy to think I can do this little bit for her, since she always went out of her way for her students and me." – Marjorie Hurlbut.

"The local citizenry can well be proud of Sophelia Kurkowski in many, many ways, and I feel certain the fund will exceed \$1000 – perhaps enough to add an inexpensive movie camera and some film." – Phyl Ginnetti Connell.

"In my memory Miss Kurkowski still shines brightly as an outstanding teacher and a vital personality. She is surely deserving of this tribute from her former students." – Margaret Miller Bassler, '30, Needham Heights, Mass.

"It is impossible to say 'Thank You' to Miss Kurkowski for the endless rewards she has given so many; perhaps this trip will help express our gratitude." Dorothy and Calvin Wood.



Retiree Miss K with three of her library pages: from left, Signa Porter, Kathy Bonnell, and Barb Mundinger.

So it's true, isn't it? – You were lucky if you knew and learned from Miss K. She passed away in 1974. More about Miss K can be learned from various sources at the Holly History and Genealogy Center.



Lois Schroeder Alfson identified this photo as being "taken in Madison about 1952 when Arline Nelson and I talked to the state library group about opening an elementary library and running it with student librarians at Waupaca Elementary School. Miss K just volunteered us to be on the program and then told us we would speak .... we were speechless at the thought but if Miss K said we should do it, we would."

Come learn of the many other historic activities, projects and events in which Miss Kurkowski was involved. Also, if you have a memory of Miss Kurkowski we would love to add it to her file at the Holly History and Genealogy Center for others to enjoy.

## CALENDAR OF MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Dates and times may be subject to change due to conflicting schedules so please check the Waupaca Historical Society website (<u>www.waupacahistory.org</u>) for any changes.

The Waupaca Historical Society's board of director meetings are held at 5:15 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month All events will be held in the lower level meeting room of the Holly History and Genealogy Center, 321 S. Main St., Waupaca, Wis. unless otherwise specified. Meetings are open to the public.

| January 8, 2015, Thursday    | 5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
|------------------------------|---|--|--|
| February 5, 2015, Thursday   | 5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
| March 5, 2015, Thursday      | <ul> <li>4:00 p.m. Quarterly Membership Meeting – with special guest speaker Jim Nicewander who will speak about "One Room Country Schools"</li> <li>5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting</li> </ul> |  |  |
| April 2, 2015, Thursday      | 5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
| April 18, 2015, Saturday     | Waupaca Book Festival   |  |  |
| May 7, 2015, Thursday        | 5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
| May 23, 2015, Saturday       | Hutchinson House Museum opens for the summer season   |  |  |
| June 4, 2015, Thursday       | 5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
| June 20, 2015, Saturday      | <ul> <li>1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Hutchinson House Museum Open during Strawberry<br/>Festival</li> <li>10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Railroad Depot Open House during Strawberry<br/>Festival</li> </ul>      |  |  |
| June 25, 2015, Thursday      | 6:30 p.m. Quarterly Membership Meeting - "Movie Night" showing of the vintage film "Waupaca Circa 1938". Popcorn and soda will be served.   |  |  |
| July 2, 2015, Thursday       | 5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
| July 4, 2015, Saturday       | 1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. 4 <sup>th</sup> of July at the Hutchinson House Museum  |  |  |
| August 5, 2015, Thursday     | 5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
| August 15, 2015, Saturday    | Arts on the Square, Arts at the Depot (tentative)<br>Waupaca Area Triathlon   |  |  |
| August 22, 2015, Saturday    | 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Hutchinson House Museum Open House during the<br>Rod & Classic Car Show  |  |  |
| September 3, 2015, Thursday  | 5:00 p.m. Board of Director Meeting – Annual Membership Meeting and<br>Picnic (Tentative, Location to be determined)  |  |  |
| September 19, 2015, Saturday | Fall-O-Rama in South Park, Hutchinson House Museum Open 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.  |  |  |
| October 1, 2015, Thursday    | 5:15 p.m. Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
| November 5, 2015, Thursday   | Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |
| December 3, 2015, Thursday   | Board of Director Meeting   |  |  |

#### Waupaca County Post April 4, 1935

#### Lone Pine Was Historic Guide To Wayfarers in Pioneer Days - 'Way Back When'

The Menominee Indians occupied this section of the country; they planted a pine tree on the top of what is now called Lone Pine Hill. This tree grew to an immense size and height; being pine it grew faster than the oak and in time towered far above the other trees.

It was a land mark for years before the railroads were put through. It could be seen as far away as New London and Berlin and was a guide to travelers on foot or horseback.

This tree was struck by lightning many times, and was partly burned at one time.

People came from far and near and carved their initials that could be seen as far up as the sight could reach.

At one time my father (the late John Morey), talked about cutting the tree down, but there were so many protests, because of its history, he decided not to.

After the tree blew down my father left two seedlings from this tree; one remaining, and can be seen above the other trees.

We have been told that bark from this tree is in the museum at Washington, D.C. and at Oshkosh. - Mrs. Maude Morey Hanson.

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**The Waupaca Historical Society** is a tax-exempt organization as per the requisites of Section 501(c) (3) non-profit 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 St., Waupaca; The Hutchinson House Museum and Heritage Hall located in South Park, Waupaca, and the Waupaca Train Depot located at 525 Oak Street, Waupaca.

**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, Waupaca Depot and Heritage Hall with your family and friends. Please check our website for the days and times that these buildings are open.

## WAUPACA HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

(Please type or print your name and address clearly)

| NAME:   |          |        |         |       |         |
|---------|----------|--------|---------|-------|---------|
|         | TITLE    | FIRST  | LAST    |       |         |
| MAILING | ADDRESS: |        |         |       |         |
|         |          | STREET | CITY    | STATE | ZIPCODE |
| HOME PH | ONE:     |        | E-MAIL: |       |         |

| Membership Category:   | Individual/General | <b>Couple/Family</b> | Supporting | Total |  |  |
|--|--------------------|----------------------|------------|-------|--|--|
| One Year   | \$ 15.00           | \$ 30.00             | \$ 50.00   |       |  |  |
| Life-Time  | \$150.00           | \$220.00             | \$300.00   |       |  |  |
| WHS provides valuable services. I enclose this donation in support of its mission. |                    |                      |            |       |  |  |
| Note: Donations are tax ded  |                    |                      |            |       |  |  |

Please return the above form with your check or money order, payable to: <u>Waupaca Historical Society</u>, 321 S. Main St., Waupaca, WI 54981.

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

