

3RD QUARTER · SEPTEMBER 2023

# COUNTY FARE

Official Newsletter of the Winnebago Historical & Archeological Society

## OUR MISSION

The Winnebago County Historical & Archaeological Society will represent, serve and involve community members in preserving the history of our area.

## ANNUAL MEETING

October 8th 1-4PM  
The Morgan House

Officer Elections  
Morgan House Conservation Update  
Clarence "Inky" Jungwirth Award  
Presentation

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Randy Domer

President

Austin Frederick

Vice President

Stacey Frank

Secretary

Greg Bellmer

Treasurer

Steve Davis

Julie Johnson

Cory McKone

Dawn McKone

Kim Nerenhausen

Dean Sandeman (Emeritus)

Chelsey Smit

Charles Williams

Newsletter Edited by

Michael McArthur





## MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

There comes a time in everyone's life when we are faced with difficult decisions. For me, this Right of Passage was not easy. I have announced my decision to the Board of my intent to retire as President and member of the Board effective October 31, 2023.

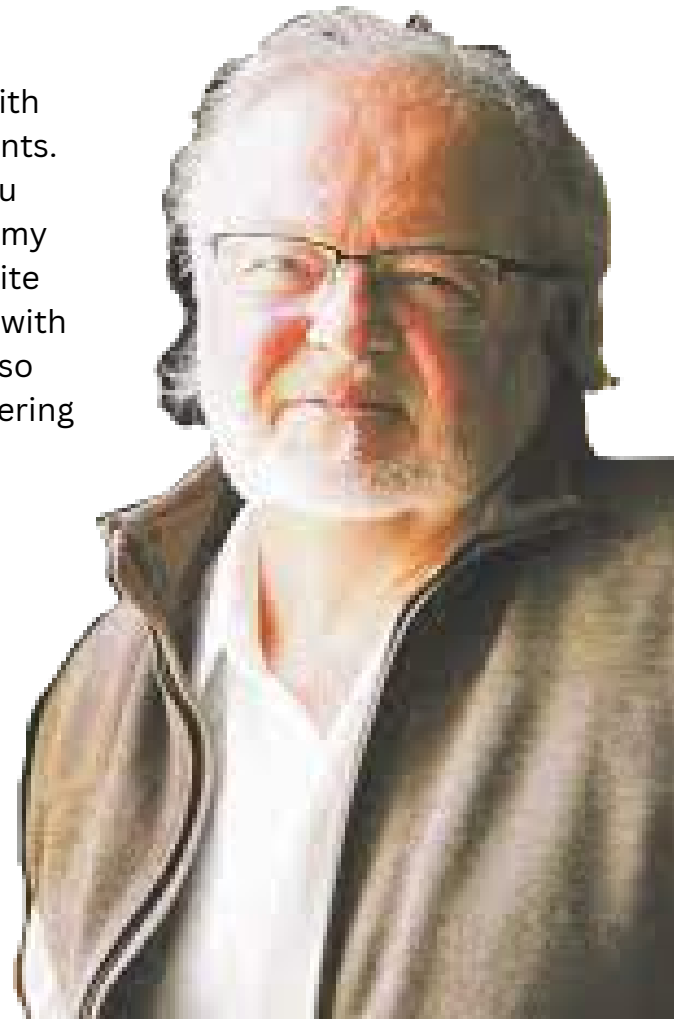
My struggle with coming to this decision was made difficult as I have always loved and enjoyed the responsibility that comes with being a WCHAS Board member. I was elected as a member to this Board in 2012 and recall how excited I was to become involved with such an important organization. I cannot begin to describe the honor and privilege I have felt in my role as President since 2015. As I look back on those years, I have immense gratitude on what this century old society has accomplished. We have come to where we are today because of the diligent and dedicated Board members and volunteers who have graciously donated their time and talents. Until you have served, it is difficult to realize the time commitment that goes "with the job" of being a Board member or volunteer. I've had the great fortune to have been surrounded by the best.

My reason for retiring now is hopefully one you can understand and relate to. I want more time to spend with my family, go to my children's and grandchildren's events. Those times together are priceless and once gone – you never get them back. I also plan to play more golf with my wife, Karen, do a little more fishing, and continue to write stories of our local history. I also plan to stay involved with WCHAS as a member and volunteer when time allows, so you may still see me selling pie in the summer or wandering the halls at historic Morgan House.

Finally, I want to recognize and give my sincere thank you to our current Board members who work hard and function great as a team. Thank you for all you do and have done.

Preserving Our Local History For Future Generations...

Randy Domer  
President – WCHAS  
rrdomer@gmail.com





# WCHAS DEDICATES NEW MARKER

The Winnebago County Historical & Archaeological Society (WCHAS) dedicated a new historical marker at the site that once was home to a series of institutions that provided social care and services for the community.

During the mid-19th century, several institutions resided a few miles north of the city. Four miles north to be exact. Social services and care were founded locally to treat those suffering from mental illness and tuberculosis, as well as those needing care due to aging, poverty, or those simply not able to care for themselves. These institutions were The Winnebago County Asylum, Sunnyview Sanitarium and the Winnebago County Poor House and Poor Farm.

WCHAS has placed a historical marker on the grounds where these institutions once existed. A public dedication of the site took place on Thursday, August 17. Keynote speakers for the dedication include Winnebago County Executive Jon Doemel, local historian Shirley Brabender Mattox, and WCHAS President Randy Domer.



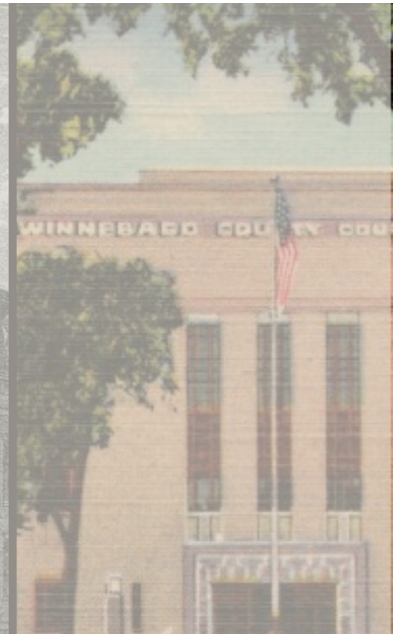
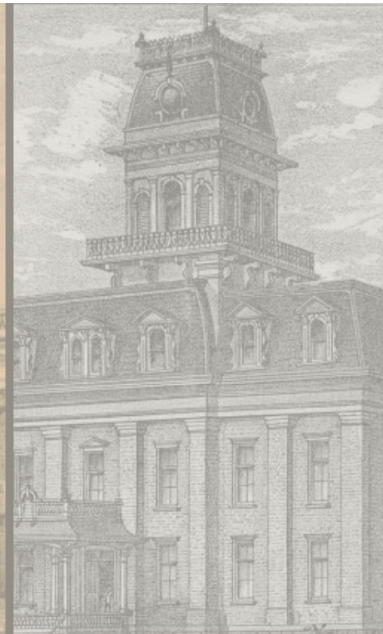
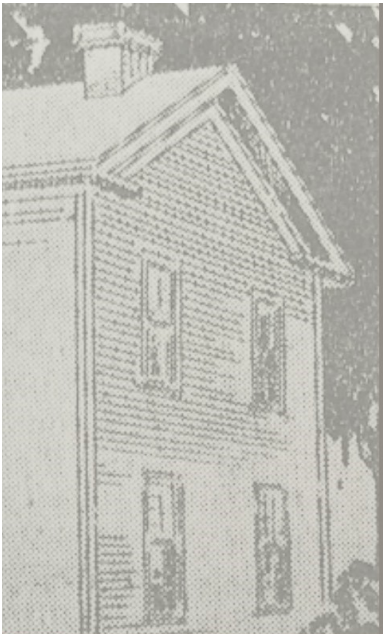




# Henry Auler: Premiere 20th Century Oshkosh Architect

**Saturday, September 9th  
1:00pm**

Discover the untold story of Oshkosh's cityscape. Join guest speaker and historic restoration pro Terry Laib of Laib Restoration as he unveils architect Henry Auler's extraordinary contributions, using Auler's own files. Don't miss this fascinating presentation!



## **WINNEBAGO COUNTY COURTHOUSES**

**A HISTORY**


By Austin M. Frederick



**THURS., OCTOBER 12, 2023 - 6 PM  
OSHKOSH PUBLIC LIBRARY-LOWER LEVEL**

*Sponsored By*  
Oshkosh Public Library  
Winnebagoland Genealogical Society  
Winnebago County Historical & Archeological Society





## That Time They Shot an Alligator in Winnebago County

By Dawn McKone

Fisk farmer Theodore Eberts shot an alligator in Eight Mile Creek in April 1900, surprising and alarming Winnebago County residents, and leading to speculation about how it got in the creek.

The *Oshkosh Northwestern* reported that Eberts had been walking beside the creek, carrying a gun. At a point near Shea's Bridge, he saw movement along the shoreline, and he fired, thinking it was a fish. When he went to investigate, he found an alligator measuring four feet, two-and-a-half inches and fifteen inches around at its widest point.

Several days later, the mystery of how an alligator got to the Town of Utica was cleared up. In the summer of 1899, Charles Fenton brought his family from Florida to visit William Longworth, his wife, and three sons in the town of Utica. As a gift, Fenton brought along three alligators in a cage. One alligator died in transit, and the smallest of the three was taken to Calumet County—although by whom is never mentioned-- where it lived for a few months before dying. The largest of the three escaped its enclosure and made its way to the creek after being chased through cornfields. Until the day Eberts took his walk, the family had hoped they would one day find the alligator.

The unsolved mystery was how the gator had survived the Wisconsin winter.

## A Tribute to Matt Hostak

By Scott Cross

I first met Matt Hostak when I started working as the Archivist at the Oshkosh Public Museum over 20 years ago. Matt wanted to donate some items to the museum. He and I started talking and found that we shared a mutual interest in, and passion for, historic preservation. We were both concerned about the loss of historic buildings in Oshkosh. This led to many conversations, and Matt started volunteering for me in the Archives.

He digitized dozens of historic maps of Oshkosh and Winnebago County. After stepping away from volunteering, he later returned and scanned thousands of historic photographs, more than I could possibly catalog! His work was an invaluable piece of the preservation process at the museum.

His interests led him to become an energetic amateur archaeologist. He discovered thousands of historic artifacts, many of these he donated to the Oshkosh Public Museum. His love of local history also led him to serve as a board member for the Winnebago County Historical and Archaeological Society.

The Oshkosh community has lost a dedicated advocate for the preservation of local history. Matt contributed to a better understanding of life in our community. He helped tell the story of Oshkosh and his loss will be greatly felt.

Scott Cross, BS, MA  
Retired Archivist



# PARANORMAL INVESTIGATION IN THE MORGAN HOUSE

OCTOBER 20 & 21 | \$40 PER SOUL | ORDER TICKETS ONLINE

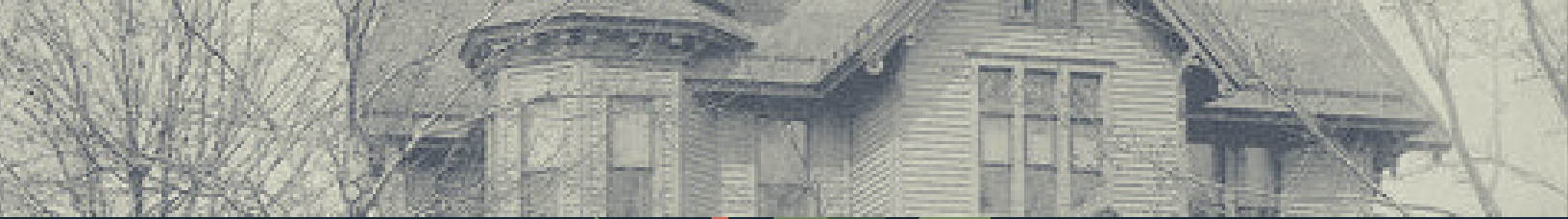
[PARANORMALMORGANHOUSE.EVENTBRITE.COM](http://PARANORMALMORGANHOUSE.EVENTBRITE.COM)

## Morgan House Holiday Decorating

Saturday, Nov. 4th  
1-4pm

**Volunteers Needed**





# HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSES

**FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1ST  
5-8PM**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND  
2-5PM**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 27TH  
5-8PM**

At The Morgan House







# The Great

## "335" An 1890 Dating App

The Belle Epoch's Mrs. Astor may have had her 400, but Oshkosh society briefly had the "335."

Ladies of a certain wealth and prestige, concerned about the availability of suitable marriage partners for their children, could consult "Glimpses of Oshkosh Society, A Book With a Social List, 22 Pictures, and a Dissertation on Bachelors," published just in time for Christmas in 1890.

The publishers insisted that the list was based solely upon attendance at parties and afternoon receptions, and while they included both married and unmarried women, only unmarried men were listed. Although the Northwestern said the write-ups of the men were of a racy nature, two days after the initial announcement the editors suggested the ladies of Oshkosh write up their unmarried sisters, aunts, and cousins and give them equal time in the spotlight.

Of George Athearn, Jr. the publishers wrote:

*Too sensible to become a bachelor, but old enough to marry within a year or two. Hence, girls, attack him at any time.*

And of Edward Crane:

*Most cosmopolitan man in Oshkosh; polished and popular.... A rich paternal relative, so girls you understand.*

Crane married Lilian Felker, another member of the 335, in 1893, while Athearn waited until 1915 to marry Katherine McMillen. Overall, twenty-three percent of the bachelors listed were married within five years of publication.

The book featured twenty-two portraits drawn by Louise Mears, and evidently the ladies' faces were so familiar that no caption or description was necessary.



Katherine Morgan

The Morgan family was well represented, indicating their popularity at social functions. Mrs. A.T. (Mary Evans) Morgan made the list, as well as Mrs. R.T. (Ellen Roberts) Morgan and her daughters Katherine and Eva, Mrs. John R. (Eleanor Hughes) Morgan and her daughter Mrs. Mellen E. (Elnora Morgan) Rounds, and Mrs. T.R. (Lydia Jones) Morgan.

No second edition appears to have been printed.



# Calling all history lovers!



The WCHAS is looking for new board members to help us preserve and share our community's history. We are looking for passionate people to join our working board.

As a board member, you will have the opportunity to:

- Help shape the future of our historical society
- Make a difference in your community
- Learn more about local history
- Meet new people who share your interests

If you are interested in becoming a board member, please contact us at [winnebagohistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:winnebagohistoricalsociety@gmail.com) or (920) 267-8007.

## We're listening

WCHAS is seeking suggestions for a new historical marker to be installed in our community. The marker could commemorate an event, person, or place of historical significance.

Let us know what important piece of Winnebago County history deserves some recognition.

Contact us at: (920) 267-8007 or [winnebagohistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:winnebagohistoricalsociety@gmail.com)





# WINNEBAGOLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

EST. 1984

For nearly 40 years, the Winnebago Genealogical Society has supported genealogical researchers, conferences, projects, and programs throughout Winnebago County.

Your membership will include a vote at all meetings, annual election, and you will receive a quarterly newsletter.

**Meetings are the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6pm at the Oshkosh Public Library (lower level).**

Circle One: Single - \$10.00 Couple - \$13.00  
Complete Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Winnebago Genealogical Society and mail to:  
WGS  
PO Box 2124  
Oshkosh, WI 54903



WGS at Summer Farmers Market



## JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP WITH THE WINNEBAGO COUNTY HISTORICAL & ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

New Member or Renewal (circle one)

- \_\_\_ \$5 Student (15-25 yr old)
- \_\_\_ \$15 Individual
- \_\_\_ \$25 Couple
- \_\_\_ \$35 Family
- \_\_\_ \$250 Lifetime Membership

Mail this form with payment to:  
WCHAS  
234 Church Ave.  
Oshkosh, WI 54901

OR

Complete/Update Information

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Pay electronically via Paypal by sending payment to:  
winnebagocountyhistoricalsociety.org





Winnebago County

Historical & Archaeological

Society, Inc.

234 Church Avenue - Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901