

2ND QUARTER · JUNE 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.

Pie on the Porch

Every Saturday Farmer's Market this summer!

525 N Main St



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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

I have some very important news to share with you today. The work to conserve our historic wall coverings at Morgan House has now been completed!

Our main floor rooms are glowing thanks to the preservation methods applied by historic conservator Conrad Schmitt. You will recall our lovely anaglypta and lincrusta wall coverings were suffering the ill effects that time and the lack of temperature and humidity control have taken over the past 140 years.

We also had part of the ceiling collapse in the Main Parlor room in 2022. That ceiling has also been repaired. In the process, we discovered what the original ceiling paper pattern was and have now installed a reproduction of that original. It is absolutely gorgeous! You will find photos of the work being done in this issue of County Fare.

We plan to have the house open for complimentary tours from June 3 to September 2 and invite you to stop in and see the improvements made this past winter. Tours are available every Saturday this summer from 10 am to 1 pm. Also, this summer we will have Morgan House open for tours on “First Friday” from 6-8 pm. (1st Friday in June, July, August, September)

Warmly,
Randy Domer
President





CONSERVATION PROJECT COMPLETED

By Randy Domer

It did not happen overnight.

It was during the pandemic period in late 2021 that a growing concern became serious with the Society. Morgan House is now 139 years old.

After well-over a century of enduring endless changes in temperature and humidity, our historic lincrusta and anaglypta wall coverings were showing serious signs of deterioration. Areas in several rooms were showing significant peeling, cracking, and pulling away from the horsehair plaster walls beneath.



Damaged Wallpaper.



Lady's Parlor during Conservation Project.





Main Parlor, 2023

The process began to seek help. Several companies with long-standing reputations in historic conservation were interviewed to preserve our precious wall coverings.

Conrad Schmitt, a company based near Milwaukee, was selected. Conrad Schmitt has previously done restoration work in the area with The Grand and The Paine.

Their first step was to schedule a visit to assess the scope of the project and present a detailed bid to the WCHAS Board of Directors. After lengthy discussions and review, the BOD approved the bid to complete the project. The bid was approximately \$143,000.

Through meetings with the Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, a plan was developed to approach select philanthropists asking for support. Support was generously offered by the JE Kuenzl Foundation, The Oshkosh Area Community Foundation, The Oshkosh Convention & Visitors Bureau (grant) and a few anonymous donors. Funds from the WCHAS Morgan House Historic Preservation Fund were also used. With the generous support of these community organizations, all the funds needed to complete the project were raised.

Then, an unexpected incident occurred. Before work could begin, part of the ceiling in one of the main floor rooms collapsed. No one was in the house at the time and nothing was damaged other than the ceiling. This brought another \$8,800 expense that we were not expecting.

A new HVAC system has now been installed to provide a controlled climate atmosphere for future preservation. It will also make our summer tour groups happy to stroll the halls of our historic home in air-conditioned comfort.



Wallpaper Damage.





Fully restored Lady's Parlor.
May 2023



Work began in late February and was completed in late May, in time to open Morgan House for tours in early June 2023.

Our beautiful and historic Morgan House is once again shining as the crown jewel of our fair city.

Why not stop by this summer and see all the wonderful conservation that has taken place.





WINNEBAGO COUNTY
HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
EST. 1919

Presents

Library Lecture Series

History of the Yellowstone Trail

Featuring Guest Lecturer Peter Christianson

Tuesday, August 1st, 2023 at 6:00 PM

Oshkosh Public Library - 106 Washington Ave, Oshkosh

Henry Auler, Premier 20th Century Oshkosh Architect, from His
Files

Featuring Guest Lecturer Terry Laib

Saturday, September 9th, 2023 at 1:00 PM

Oshkosh Public Library - 106 Washington Ave, Oshkosh



THANK YOU, WEBSTER STANLEY! & HATS OFF TO THEE!

By Charles Williams

"Webster Stanley Hats Off To Thee" was the school song of the 1954 Webster Stanley Junior High School "Warriors". Now known as the "Wolves" and Webster Stanley Elementary and Middle School after school additions in 1965, 1980, 1992 and 1997, the last day of school at "Webster" will be June 2, 2023. The school will then close and be demolished to construct a new 600 student Menominee Elementary named for Chief Oshkosh's tribe. The school is scheduled to open in the Fall of 2024 at an expected cost of \$35.5 million.

Beginning in fall of 2023, Webster Middle School students will attend the new Vel Phillips Middle School named after the African American woman anti-segregationist, attorney, judge, and politician Vel Phillips. Webster Elementary students will attend Merrill in 2023-2024 before its planned razing for an athletic field.



When construction began in 1954 Webster Stanley was the first junior high built in Oshkosh after Merrill in 1931 and South Park in 1940. It was the first junior high with an auditorium that seated 492, intended to serve as a “community center”. The 1954 Webster was designed by the Chicago firm of Perkins and Will in association with Oshkosh architects Sandstedt and Knoop and Irion & Reinke.

The capacity was 500 seven thru ninth grade students plus pupils of the “School of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing”. Rasmussen Construction Company of Oshkosh was the general contractor and the cost of Webster when it opened in Fall of 1955 was \$1,174,000.00.

In the early 1950’s overcrowding at Merrill Junior High School with students from 1870 Dale, 1883 Washington, and 1914 Longfellow elementary schools led to calls for a new “East Side Junior High School” and elementary school. The city under Mayor Siewert and board of education then received proposals to develop Longfellow Elementary into a junior high and build a new elementary school in Menominee Park on the NE corner of Irving Ave and Hazel St. west of the Naval Reserve.

To be Continued in Q3 Edition of The County Fare.



WELCOMES WEBSTER STANLEY DESCENDANTS

Two great-granddaughters of Webster Stanley were welcomed Sunday afternoon by Prin. Hugo J. Radkey to the new junior high school which bears the Oshkosh pioneer's name. Stanley's descendants, both of whom attended the dedication of the building, are from left, Mrs. Eric Froberg, Escanaba, Mich., and Mrs. Axel Sandell, Milwaukee.

Junior High Dedication Draws Capacity Crowd

Madison Man Principal Speaker At Webster Stanley School Event

Oshkosh Northwestern, November 21, 1955



Webster-Stanley Interiors circa 2023. Courtesy of Charles Williams





Pie on the Porch

In celebration
and memory of
Jane Westphal

By Julie Johnson

Our very first "Pie on the Porch" took place on the porch and front lawn of the Morgan House on Saturday, June 7th, 2008, which corresponded with the Oshkosh summer Farmer's Market located directly across from the Morgan House in City Hall parking lot.

Rose Metz (pictured right) serving our first customer the very first piece of Pie along with a cup of coffee. The porch is set in enchanting fashion....card tables covered in quaint old fashion table cloths, vases filled with spring flowers and later small stems of roses (mostly from Jane's garden), real china, real plates, real coffee cups, real creamer and sugar bowls, and real forks and spoons. There would be absolutely no paper plates or plastic anything!! The back of the chairs all had white cloth covers.

Greeting our guests to the Morgan House are two large flower urn's on either side of the entry of the walkway to the front porch. These were filled with beautiful flowers and coleus along with a row of Hostas lining each side of the walkway to the porch. The old large tree's in the front yard made for great shade as guests relaxed and enjoyed a delectable piece of homemade Pie.

For all you history buffs the two large urns which are still present at the entry-way to the Morgan House originally lined the walk-way and second story balcony of the Frank Stein & Company, Ladies Ready-to-Wear and Millinery shop at 123 Church, once located almost directly across the street from the Morgan House.





What fundraiser ever invented made for a more delightful and enjoyable Saturday morning? This was the first of many to come.

God graced the morning of Saturday, June 7th with beautiful weather and guests wasted no time in filling up the tables and ordering take-out Pies.

Inside the Morgan House was just as busy in activity. The morning started early 6:00am. One team helped with outside set up, others made coffee and lemonade. As members dropped off their Pies others made ready in cutting each Pie making it quick and easy to fill orders. As the servers penned their orders the cutters were swift in filling each order. A team kept dishes, cups and silverware washed. All was choreographed to perfection.

The mastermind behind all this was Jane Westphal, Society President. All who knew Jane are not surprised at this level of perfection for that is who our Jane was. I say our Jane because she was so loved by all. She had a personality that attracted everyone to her. To me the most unique thing about Jane is that she was so genuinely sincere toward everyone she met and this made her most popular with all.

Jane thought big and was very accomplished at everything she set her mind to. Jane also knew how to push people in getting a job done. All her conceived fundraisers were on a big scale and I for one can attest to the many months of planning and work they all took.

Our Victorian House tours were immensely popular. Who could forget the grand scale George Proknow fashion show at the Grand Opera house where just about every seat in the Opera was filled, along with our very popular Victorian teas. All these brainstorm ideas were immensely successful due to Jane Westphal not to forget all Winnebago County Society members involved. All done in order to advance the Societies finances in restoring our beautiful Morgan House.

Fifteen years later Pie on the Porch has become the Societies main fundraiser. The Oshkosh Farmer's Market has moved from the City Hall parking lot to downtown Main Street where the success of Pie on the Porch continues. There is a great deal more to say about Jane Westphal who has gone on to be with the Lord. She would be just as proud of our continued efforts with Pie on the Porch as she was proud of our accomplishments than.

Jane, the Winnebago County & Archeology Society honors and salutes you for your unselfish dedication in advancing the restoration of the historical Morgan House and the history of Winnebago County.





FIELD TRIP!

Sunday, August 6th

WCHAS will be organizing a field trip to the Omro, Winneconne, and Winchester historical societies.

If interested, please email Austin Frederick at AustinMFred@gmail.com



WINNEBAGO COUNTY COURTHOUSES
A HISTORY



By Austin M. Frederick

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

Sponsored By:
Oshkosh Public Library
Winnebagoand Generalogical Society
Winnebago County Historical & Archeological Society





WINNEBAGOLAND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Established in 1984, Winnebago Genealogical Society (WGS) meets the **2nd Thursday of each month at 6pm at the Oshkosh Public Library (lower level).**

WGS led numerous genealogical projects over the past 38 years including:

- The Vital Records Index (available at [The Oshkosh Public Library](#))
- The Winnebago County Cemetery Transcription Project (available at [The Oshkosh Public Library](#))
- Identifying the interned at the Poor Farm Cemetery
- Hosting the Wisconsin State Genealogical Society Gene-A-Rama

Winnebago County was the test pilot county in WI to go digital with their vital records because WGS had already gone through the old, dusty record books and created indexes of the early records registered at the county level. The State asked WGS to share their digital files, and they did without hesitating!

Oshkosh Library hosts a Genealogy Lock-In once or twice a year and reach out to WGS to assist in helping those who attend.

UW-Oshkosh's Forest Polk Library staff wanted to host a seminar and reached out to WGS to assist with the event.

The Society organizes field trips in June and August and visits other area historical societies and their libraries. There have been gold mines found in these organizations that you would never find online!

Oshkosh Library reaches out to WGS to help develop programs for their genealogy series as well.

We have round tables and try to assist breaking down those brick walls (that difficult and evasive ancestor). Sometimes there's a Show & Tell night where you can bring your prized heirlooms to show off!

WGS will be at Pie on the Porch this summer at the Oshkosh Farmer's Market from 8am-12pm.

WGS will be there for your genealogy related questions!

Clip and mail your membership:

Name(s):

Address:

City: State: Zip

Email:

(quarterly newsletters are sent electronically whenever possible)

(Circle One)

Single - \$10.00

Couple - \$13.00

Make checks payable to Winnebago Genealogical Society and mail to:

WGS
PO Box 2124
Oshkosh, WI 54903

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





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

Complete/Update Information

Name: _____
 Street Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Email: _____

In an effort to be more green and reduce postage costs, newsletters will be sent via email unless you signify you require a printed copy below.

Please send me a printed copy of the newsletter .

Interested in Volunteering? Let us know what you're interested in! (check all that apply)

- Give tours of the Morgan House (docent training available)
- Historical research on specific topics determined by committees
- Social Media/Publicity
- Newsletter Editing or Content Creation
- Locate and/or events and speakers
- Decorate for the Holidays
- Develop exhibitions (in-person and digital)
- Transcribe Historical Interviews
- Event Photographer/Videographer
- Archive artifacts

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

OR

Pay electronically via Paypal by sending
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Winnebago County
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Society, Inc.

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