

County



Fare

1st Quarter 2022

The NEWSLETTER of the

WINNEBAGO COUNTY HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

WINNEBAGO CO., WIS.

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Mission Statement

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

Contact Us or Submit Articles:

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Newsletter Editor:

Michael McArthur

A Message From Our President

As I look out my window today, I see everything covered with a blanket of white and my thermometer is having a difficult time staying above freezing. But the GOOD NEWS is our days are getting longer - giving hope for an early spring.

I would like report a couple of recent changes with our Board of Directors. Mary Lord Janness has decided to not renew her term on the Board and Austin Frederick has returned to the Board after a brief hiatus. We thank Mary for her past contributions and look forward to once again working with Austin. If you are interested in joining of our Board of Directors, please contact me at rrdomer@gmail.com.

As we turn the page on the calendar, it serves as a reminder to renew your WCHAS membership for 2022. Our membership renewal form can be found in this edition of County Fare or renew digitally on our webpage winnebagoountyhistoricalsociety.org and click on "Become A Member" There you can pay with PayPal or credit card. While you're there, check out the volunteer page and learn ways you can donate your time and talents.

In closing, we wish you all a very happy and healthy 2022!

Preserving Our Local History For Future Generations!

Randy Domer

President – WCHAS

rrdomer@gmail.com



WinnebagoCountyHistoricalSociety.org

Restorations at The Morgan House

Several major restoration and conservation projects are in the works 2022.

One of the most unique features of the Morgan House are the lincrusta and anaglypta wall coverings. These highly ornamental, hand painted wallcoverings are original and are over 138 years old. The Morgan House is one of the few historical buildings in Wisconsin that possess these original wallcoverings.

Time and the environment have taken their toll, leading to significant damage to these historic wallcoverings. The Historical Society is planning to work with trusted historic restoration company, [Conrad Schmitt Studios](#) to restore and conserve these treasured artifacts of our past.

The Historical Society will also be installing a new climate control system to better regulate temperature and humidity inside the Morgan House. This step is critical to the long-term conservation of these irreplaceable artifacts.



Damage in Ladies Parlor Room



Damage first floor Sitting Room



Thank you



Our society relies on the support of our community to continue our efforts to preserve our local history. We would like to thank the following for their generous contributions during the fourth quarter of 2021.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Thomas & Alexandra Kloeckl | Jean Zimmerman | Richard Mohr |
| Tom & Denise Blaze | Larry & Pamela Lang Fund | Dr. Marc & Kathleen Blum |
| Theodore & Carol Zabel | Kenley & Carole Steinert Fund | Steven & Elizabeth Cummings |
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| Ted & Karen Bowen | Bradley & Sally Lehman | John & Susan Vette |
| Stannard Dry Cleaners | Walter & Lynn Scott, Jr | Bob & Bev Harrington |
| Valois Brothers | Robert & Mary Cummins | Dean & Jean Sandeman |

MORE THAN JUST SAWDUST

PART I:

By Steve Cummings

In the later part of the 19th century Oshkosh became known as "Sawdust City" due to the large number of sawmills that lined both shores of the Fox River. Timber came down the Wolf River from northern Wisconsin to the Fox River where it became lumber. The demand for lumber produced in Oshkosh's mills steadily grew following the great Chicago fire of 1871 and this nation's expansion west.

At one time an endless number of mills and lumber yards lined both sides of the Fox River which was becoming the industrial heart of Oshkosh. Over time the mills consolidated, and other industries eventually took their place. By the onset of the Twentieth Century, only three mills, Morgan Company, Radford Company and Paine

Lumber Company, remained and continued to be major Oshkosh employers until the last quarter of the century.

These companies once provided thousands of jobs for Oshkosh and people in the area, but their numbers began to decline because of the Great Depression and World War II. New construction materials and methods used for both residential and commercial construction further impacted the need for traditional building products.

Oshkosh has always been a resilient city evidenced by how quickly it rebuilt after each of its four devastating fires of the 1870s. Ironically, these fires were caused by the very businesses that provided jobs for the people whose homes were leveled by these blazes.



North side of the Fox River, West of Main Street bridge from *Oshkosh Illustrated* (1887). Source: Oshkosh Public Library

Many of the businesses rebuilt after the fires and flourished well into the 20th century. They became market leaders in the industries they served and participated internationally. Products which had the "Oshkosh " name were considered to be of the highest craftsmanship and quality. Other products from Oshkosh had earned the same reputation.

The Fox River is no longer the industrial heart of Oshkosh, as it has transformed into a recreational and mixed-use space for all to enjoy.

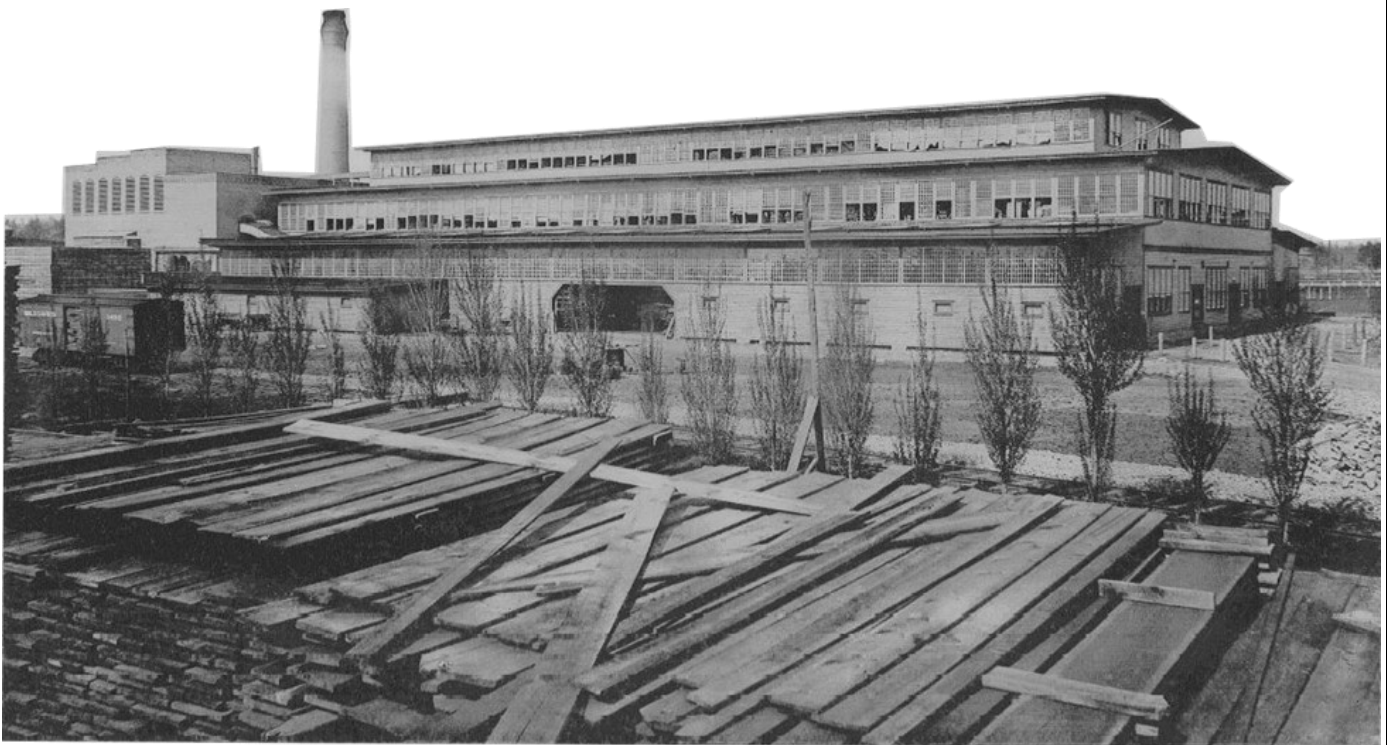
Many of us had parents, grandparents and even great-grandparents who worked in one of the many companies that have vanished, but we hope their names and the people who were employed by them will bring back fond memories.

We plan to include a story of one of these companies in future issues of *County Fare*. Our first story will focus on United

States Motors Corporation, which began life as Union Iron Works in 1853.

A partial list of Oshkosh Companies which once lined the shores of the Fox River or were located a block or two away follows.

Robert Brand and Son
Leach Company
US Motors Corporation
Morgan Company
Radford Company
Universal Foundry
Bell Machine
Cook and Brown
Oshkosh Trunk and Luggage
Diamond Match
Clark Carriage
Dearborn Furniture
American Excelsior
Paine Lumber Company
Victorylite Candle Company



Paine Lumber Company. *Oshkosh Illustrated* (1887). Source: Oshkosh Public Library

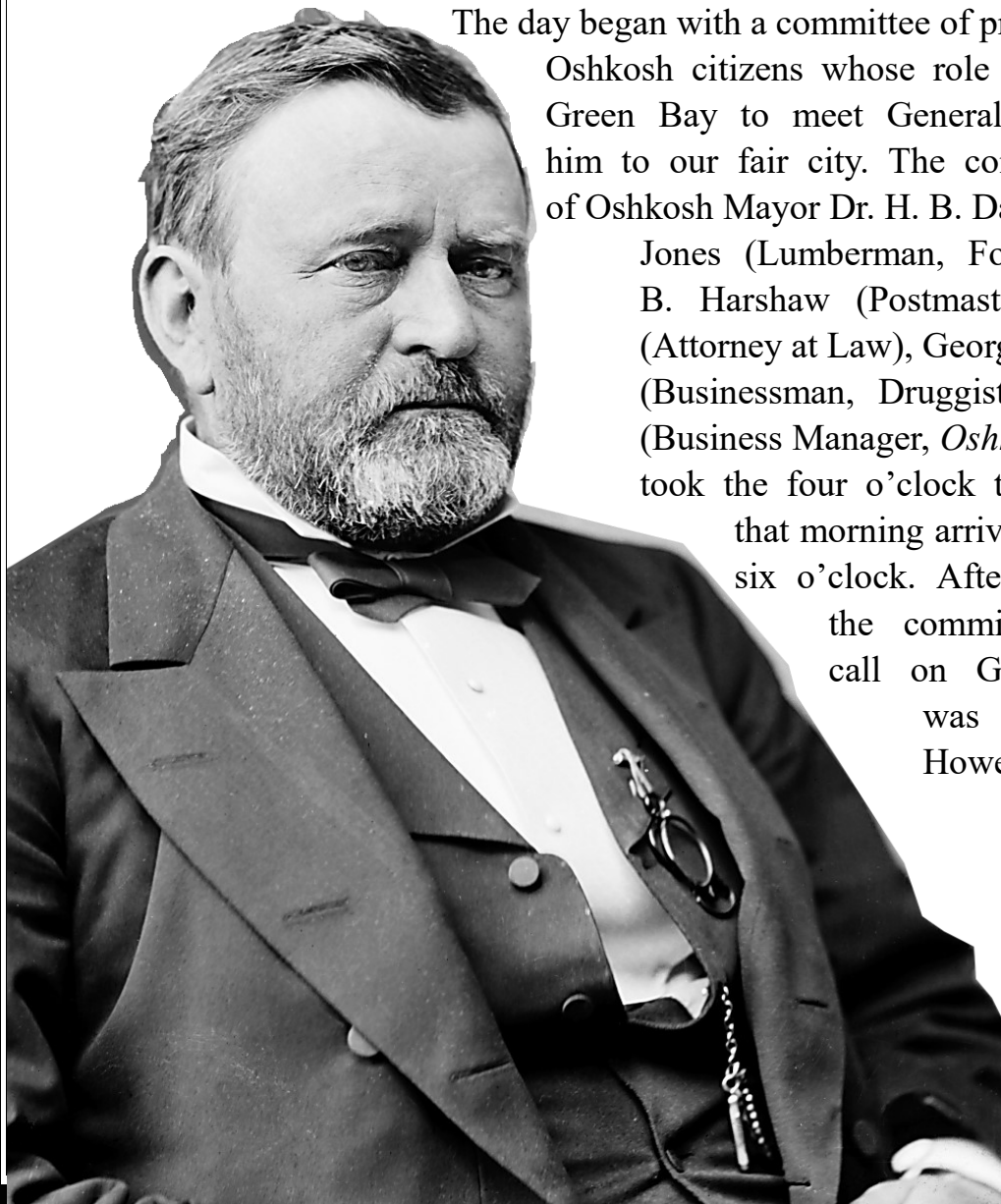
The Day General Ulysses S. Grant Visited Oshkosh

(Excerpt from "It Seems Like Only Yesterday" by local author Randy R. Domer)

It was a dark, gloomy, rainy day in 1880 that welcomed the historic Civil War General and former U.S. President to Sawdust City. But the weather did not deter Oshkosh citizens from venturing out on June 14 to catch a glimpse of this famous war hero, Ulysses S. Grant.

The day began with a committee of prominent Oshkosh citizens whose role it was to travel to Green Bay to meet General Grant and escort him to our fair city. The committee, consisting of Oshkosh Mayor Dr. H. B. Dale, James V.

Jones (Lumberman, Foster & Jones), H. B. Harshaw (Postmaster), C. W. Felker (Attorney at Law), George Bauman (Businessman, Druggist) and John Hicks (Business Manager, *Oshkosh Northwestern*), took the four o'clock train from Oshkosh that morning arriving in Green Bay at six o'clock. After having breakfast, the committee proceeded to call on General Grant who was staying at Senator Howe's home there.



After a brief reception, Grant travelled to the depot around nine o'clock by way of Senator Howe's private carriage. Included in this distinguished entourage was Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Torrey (sister of Senator Howe), and Miss Howe (a niece of the Senator).

The first stop on this journey came at Appleton where a great crowd had gathered. Grant stepped out onto the train platform in the pouring rain and said to the crowd, "I am sorry it rains. Thank you!" The excited crowd moved closer to the train, grabbing at Grant's hands, almost pulling him off his feet.

Down the road in Oshkosh, the skies darkened and rain continued to fall heavily. Undaunted by the inclement weather, crowds of people started to line the streets along the route the General would soon travel. By nine o'clock that morning, the sidewalks, doorways, windows and balconies along Washington and Algoma Streets were full of people, eager to see the famous Ulysses S. Grant. Nearly every residence and building along the procession route was handsomely decorated with flags and buntings. On Main Street flags were hung across the street while red, white, and blue buntings swayed in the breeze from the rooftops. The Yacht Club arranged to have steamboats and vessels in the river near the bridge, and they too had their colors flying.

Oshkosh Daily Northwestern.

OSHKOSH, WIS., MONDAY, JUNE 14, 1880.—5 P. M.

GRANT.

The Conquering Hero Has
Come and Gone.

An Enthusiastic Welcome to
the Great Soldier in the
Rain.

Incidents of the Trip from
Green Bay Here.

The Procession, the Crowd, the
Decorations and the Day.

The train arrived about an hour later than expected, the delay adding to the discomfort of the crowds.

Around 10:30 a.m. the courthouse bell began to ring, signaling the approach of the much-anticipated train. Steam whistles of local businesses joined in on the announcement and for ten minutes there was a constant tooting

of whistles, ringing of bells and an occasional booming of cannon which added to the crowd's excitement. Many of the onlookers took up post at the Beckwith House where it was reported that Grant's carriage would halt.

The train stopped at the Washington Street crossing and the parties stepped from the train into carriages that awaited their arrival. Oshkosh's Mayor Dale took the seat next to Grant and graciously held an umbrella over him. Former US Congressman and soon to be US Senator Philetus Sawyer joined the party and took the seat opposite Grant.

The beautiful carriage that would carry General Grant was drawn by four spirited horses from Athearn's livery stable. The horses were intentionally mismatched, each pair consisting of one cream and one black and those of the same color were arranged as such diagonally opposite each other. The horses and carriage were adorned with red, white and blue ribbons.

The carriages pulled away in a procession that included a band along with several local military and civil groups. Following Grant's carriage was the carriage carrying Mrs. Grant, Mrs. Torrey, Miss Howe and James V. Jones. A third carriage, carrying the remainder

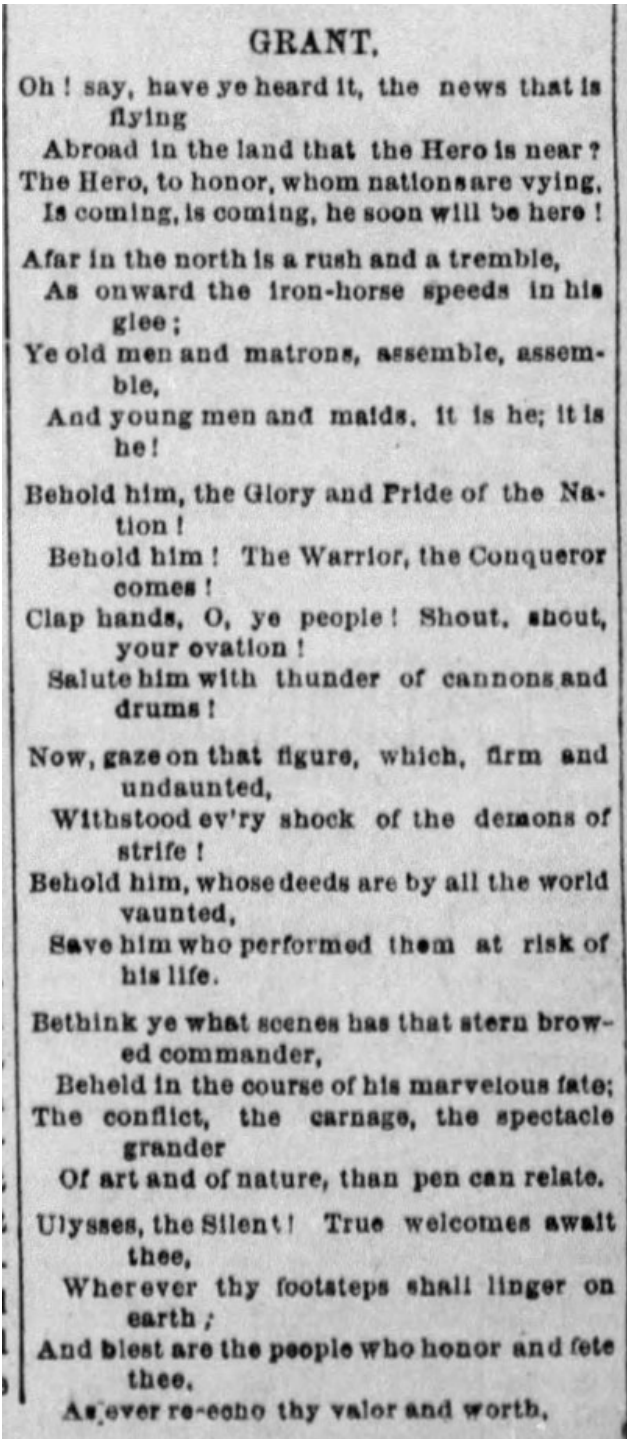
of the escort, then followed, along with a number of local citizens in carriages.

As the procession arrived at the corner of Washington and Main Streets, it stopped briefly. The mayor stood and welcomed Grant to the hospitalities of Oshkosh, then turning to the crowd he introduced Grant as "One of the greatest living Generals, a man of whom America is justly proud." Grant then responded "I am very much obliged to you indeed for this reception. I will not keep you here standing in the rain. I am very much obliged to you indeed."

The crowd had pressed close to Grant's carriage and eager hands reached out for the chance to shake his hand. The carriage eased forward and proceeded along Algoma Street to the high school yard where, in spite of the rain, a huge crowd of school children had assembled. The carriage stopped briefly and the General was offered a bouquet of flowers presented by a student of the senior class. Grant accepted the bouquet and bowed but said nothing as the procession again proceeded. The route then went north on Jackson Street to Church Avenue, then east to Main Street. At Main Street the route turned to the south and crossed the bridge to Kansas Street, as South Main Street was then known, and onto Ninth Street where the train was waiting at the depot.

Bonnie McCulloch presented the following poem, written by Mrs. M.E. Harmon, to General Grant during his Oshkosh visit.

The Oshkosh Daily Northwestern reprinted the poem in full.



Continued from page 7...

This entire route was lined with people and a huge crowd had gathered at the depot where Grant would soon depart. The crowd cheered loudly as Grant made his way from the carriage to the train car. Once the party was comfortably seated on the train, Mrs. J. B. Goe came aboard and presented Mrs. Grant with a fine bouquet made by Mrs. K. M. Hutchinson of Oshkosh.

Then the train departed. The historic Civil War General and former U.S. President had come...and gone.

End



Shirley Brabender-
Mattox

Christopher Corbin

Pat & Roger Shaw

Winnebago County Historical & Archeological Membership Form

Join or renew your membership
with the Winnebago County Historical & Archeological Society

(check one)

(check one

_____ \$5 Student (15-25 yr old)

_____ \$15 Individual

_____ New Member

_____ \$25 Couple

_____ Renewal

_____ \$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

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Pay electronically via Paypal by sending
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