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4th Quarter 2022

The NEWSLETTER of the
WINNEBAGO COUNTY HISTORICAL & ARCHEOLOGICAL 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:

WCHAS

234 Church Ave Oshkosh, WI 54901

(920)267-8007

WinnebagoHistoricalSociety@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor:

Michael McArthur

A Message from our President

As we prepare to enter our holiday season, it reminds us that this time of year is a time for reflection and to give thanks for all the wonderful things we are able to enjoy that make our lives so much richer.

I am most thankful for the dozens of volunteers who worked with us in 2022 to help us fulfill our mission to preserve local history. Without the help of our volunteers and society members, this would not be possible. I also am thankful for our esteemed Board of Directors who selflessly volunteer their time and talents daily as they balance their time commitments with history, careers and family.

2023 will be a year of conservation at Morgan House. In February, we will begin work to conserve the historic wall coverings in Morgan House along with a major ceiling rebuild in the main sitting room. With the financial support of our community, this work will allow us to continue to preserve this historic treasure for future generations to enjoy.

I hope you will choose to join us at our Holiday Open House again this year. Morgan House has been beautifully decorated for the holidays in a lavish Victorian style and the December 3 open house will be a kids themed event so be sure to bring the kids and grandkids for some holiday festivities. Details can be found in this newsletter.

In closing, *thank you* to everyone for your support of the Winnebago County Historical & Archaeological Society... Wishing you the most blessed holiday season!

Randy Domer

President - WCHAS



WinnebagoCountyHistoricalSociety.org

Holiday Tours & Events at The Morgan House

'Tis the season for our holiday open house! You're invited to visit the Morgan House to enjoy rooms of beautiful decor and a guided tour.

Friday, December 2nd from 5pm—8pm

Saturday, December 3rd from 2pm—6pm

KIDS DAY! We will have activities for kids, stories with Fire Fighter John, coloring books/temporary tattoos, and a small gift kids can take home

Tuesday, December 27th from 5pm—8pm



Welcome New Members



Yuliya Azarenko

Rebecca Brown

Rob Clancy

Scott & Christine Cross

Donna Fedie

Jacob Floam

Clarence Koch

Julie Koning

Paul & Karen Morton

Kevin Radley

Sharon Slover

Visiting Morgan House

The class of Museum Studies at UW-O visited historic Morgan House on November 1. The objective was to learn and see first hand how a museum organizes and catalogs their collections. WCHAS Board member and archivist Dawn McKone hosted the class visit under the direction of Leslie Walfish, class educator.



WCHAS Holds Annual Meeting

The Winnebago County Historical & Archaeological Society (WCHAS) held its Annual Meeting on Sunday, October 9. Approximately 30 guests were in attendance. The meeting was facilitated by Randy Domer, President who gave reports on activities from this past fiscal year.

Committee chairs gave reports on activities within their respective areas and a Treasurer's Report was given by Society Treasurer Greg Bellmer. As required by their bylaws, members voted on the officers for 2023. Elected were Randy Domer – President; Austin Frederick – Vice President; Stacey Frank – Secretary; and Greg Bellmer – Treasurer.

The Membership committee awarded complimentary one-year memberships to volunteers who achieved prescribed levels of service. Each year, the Society recognizes persons, groups or companies that have gone above and beyond to preserve our local history.

This year's honor, the Clarence J. Jungwirth Award, was presented to Ginny Gross for her years of work in historic preservation.

A program on The History of the Winnebago County Courthouse was presented by Austin Frederick.

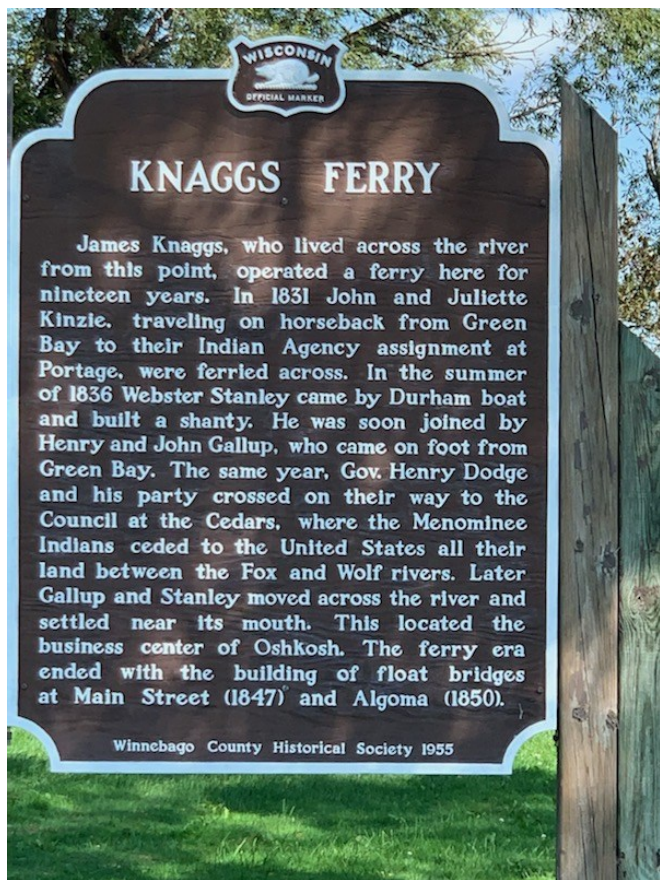
A door prize drawing was held and following the meeting, guests were invited to Morgan House for light refreshments and tours of the historic home once belonging to John R. Morgan.

Established in 1919, WCHAS is a non-profit, 501c3 organization and is affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society.



Randy Domer presenting award to Ginny Gross.

Your Historical Society at Work



The Knaggs Ferry historical marker was placed in Rainbow Memorial Park by this society in 1955.

In 2022, WCHAS Board member Stacey Frank restored the marker as illustrated in these before and after photos.



Prior to restoration.



Helen Farnsworth Mears was an accomplished sculptress and she lies to rest in Oshkosh’s Riverside Cemetery.

In 2022, WCHAS Board member Greg Bellmer cleaned Mears’ gravestone in honor of her memory.



Prior to restoration.

CIVIL WAR TOKENS OF WINNEBAGO COUNTY

by Jeff Reichenberger and Larry Spanbauer

PART THREE

(This article is a continuation of research and collaboration with my friend and mentor Larry Spanbauer, who passed away September 4, 2018. As many of you know, Larry was a treasured Oshkosh historian. What you may not know, is that he was also a highly respected numismatist. I write this in his memory.)



B.H. SOPER, DEALER IN FURNATURE, OSHKOSH, WIS.

**Three die varieties are known for the back of this token
(Bust w/Phrygian hat), (Head of Hermes w/stars), (Flying eagle left w/date)**

B. H. Soper started business in Oshkosh in 1855 under the name Soper & Barker. In 1857 Soper bought out Barker and became sole owner. Located at No. 10 Kansas Street about a block from the river, the business thrived and in 1867 he built an elegant three-story store at No. 23 Main Street, still retaining the property on Kansas St. for the purpose of custom manufacturing of furniture of all kinds and items for the burial trade: caskets, coffins, and burial cases. Here he also kept a splendid hearse for the purpose of "Undertaking to order on short notice". B. H. Soper & Company remained in business into the 1900's. Soper died in 1909 at age 82.



H. RANS, DEALER IN CLOTHING, OSHKOSH, WIS.

Three die varieties are known for the back of this token

(Bust w/Phrygian hat), (Head of Hermes w/stars), (Head of Hermes w/o stars)

So far, we are unable to locate information about the H. Rans Clothing store. But surprisingly there is a reference to the token itself in a March 1937 issue of the Oshkosh Daily Northwestern.

A gentleman in North Dakota had one of these tokens and offered it to any descendant of H. Rans who came forward. No one did.



WM. L. WILLIAMS, CHEMIST AND DRUGGIST, 43 FERRY ST, OSHKOSH, WIS.

Two die varieties are known for the back of this token

(Head of Hermes w/date), (Head of Hermes w/date w/signature)

William L. Williams advertised regularly in directories and newspapers. He resided at 43 Ferry Street, 'opposite the Bank of Oshkosh'. He was a Chemist and Druggist dealing in Paints, Oils, Varnishes, Glass, Putty, Dye Stuffs, and Family Dyes. Also, Stationary, Perfumery, and 'Fancy Goods'.

In one ad he thanks his customers in the eloquent language of the times:

"The subscriber takes this opportunity of tendering his thanks to his numerous friends and patrons, for their liberal support during the past fifteen years, and hopes by strict personal attention to merit a continuance of the same".



**ALLEN VOSBURG & CO., MUSIC STORE, OSHKOSH, WIS.
STEINWAY'S PIANOS, SMITH'S MELODEONS & TREMOL HARMONIUMS.**

Limited (but interesting) information exists for the Allen Vosburg Music Store. The 1866 City Directory lists an A. K. Vosburg as an Artist, living on Merritt Street. We do not believe this is the Vosburg from the Music Store. The reference 'Commemorative Biographical Record of the Fox River Valley Counties of Brown, Outagamie, and Winnebago' offers a George Vosburg – we believe this is our man. Born in 1839, George came to Oshkosh at age 8, received formal education at Hillsdale, Michigan Academy and returned to Oshkosh around 1861 to open a Music and Musical Instrument business. He married Louisa C. Allen, whom we speculate accounts for the Allen in the business name 'Allen Vosburg', although this would have been unusual for the times.

The business only lasted about two years.

The reverse die on this token is also unusual in that it mentions two brand name musical instrument companies: Steinway, and Smith. The Smith instruments, melodeons and harmoniums are small keyboard-style reed organs; the tremolo is a paddle-wheel device that stirs the air over a bank of reeds and imparts a wavering or tremolo effect.

CONCLUSION

These Civil War Tokens are a historic reminder of life during the Civil War Era, a time when Oshkosh was in its early developing years. The information here is incomplete, as more research may uncover interesting facts about each proprietor and their business.

If readers should have any information regarding the businesses or proprietors in this article the author would be very appreciative to receive it.

Information Sources

Early City Directories, Oshkosh newspapers, Neenah newspapers, Menasha newspapers, The Wisconsin and Minnesota Gazetteer, The History of Winnebago County. These references are all in the Public Domain and were researched at the Oshkosh Public Library, Neenah Public Library, Menasha Public Library, and the Wisconsin Historical Society wisconsinhistory.com.

George Fuld, Melvin Fuld, John Ostendorf; U.S. Civil War Store Cards - Third Edition; 2014 Civil War Token Society

Inky Jungwirth; A History of the City of Oshkosh, The Early Years; 1993 Inky Jungwirth

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

OR

Pay electronically via Paypal by sending
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Winnebago **C**ounty
Historical & **A**rchaeological
Society, Inc.

234 Church Avenue - Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54901