



**Carnegie Library Named to the National Register (see p. 7)**

**Spring 2014**

Newsletter of the Waukegan Historical Society

# Calendar of Events

## April

April 6  
Free History Program (p.5)

## May

May 17  
Society Annual Meeting & Luncheon (p. 6)

## June

June 7  
Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine* Fine Arts Festival

June 22  
Tour of Homes

June 29  
Waukegan's American Independence Day Parade & Festival

### WHS Board

#### Officers

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Dennis Moio

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Doug Stiles

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Ellen Frew

#### Directors

Betsy Alleman

Josh Bill

Gail Dever

Mary Goljenboom

Sara Griffin

Jim Maguire

Denyse Waters



Waukegan history students.

## History Down the Road: Why Local Historical Societies Should Be the Next Frontier for Your Classroom

Josh Bill

*In the few months since I wrote this article, I have realized that in addition to the Waukegan Historical Society, I also owe much of my success in studying local history to my work through Linking Learning Communities at Lake Forest College. I know that several members of this wonderful cohort are also members of the society. Truly, without your help, none of my success with local history (and otherwise) would be possible. Before an excerpt from this publication was put into this newsletter, I wanted to fix this oversight.*

My high school teaching job in Waukegan was supposed to be temporary: I pessimistically thought I couldn't possibly be happy in an economically blighted city where gang violence and drug busts dominated local newspaper headlines. Because of its location halfway between Milwaukee and Chicago, Waukegan is often either entirely overlooked or scrutinized only for its warts... The Waukegan Historical Society's archives transformed my vision of Waukegan and my career. Additionally, it allowed my students to find an authentic voice, teaching them to think analytically about the legacy and people of their community while sharing fresh interpretations with a proud public. Not least of all, it allowed them to think of themselves as historians.

Every year, I watch students who seem passionless and disengaged spring to life as they research Waukegan's history through their work on the Chicago Metro History Fair. After some initial hesitation in response to the enormity of the project (it begins in late fall and spans at least through the



winter, or further if they advance in the competition), students are liberated by the open-ended nature of the task and become enthralled by the stories that too often have lain dormant in the society's files.

Once they are at the society, students will come to life as they see pictures of or read about their neighborhoods. Several students have explored civil rights issues, including an exhibit on how race riots in Waukegan demonstrated the division between violent and nonviolent approaches to America's civil rights movement and a documentary on the legal battle to end de facto segregation in Waukegan elementary schools. The stories of the different immigrant groups that came to work in Waukegan factories throughout the 20th century have proven popular with Waukegan High School's first-generation Latino immigrants, who empathize with the struggles for acceptance and learn from the strategies earlier groups used to overcome the strife that is endemic to being new to America. In these stories, students discover disheartening accounts of inhumanity, but the stories also reveal the courage of those who set out to change systems of injustice.

Student enthusiasm for undertaking a local history project does not come magically; I spend significant hours ensuring that students' personal journeys to becoming historians are successful. Every year, in the late summer and fall, I reassume the role of a scholar, burying myself in the resources held in the Waukegan Historical Society. This essential step ensures that I stay acquainted with the rewards and pitfalls fundamental to primary source analysis—from the exhilaration of hunting for details about an intriguing subject to the confusion and bewilderment of hitting a wall. It's vital that teachers experience these moments so they can teach problem solving and coping strategies. In order to teach our students to be historians, we must stay engaged with the art of historical detection ourselves.

## Free Historical Program

# A History of Waukegan Township

Sunday, April 6

2:00 PM

Jane Addams Center, 95 Jack Benny Drive in Bowen Park

Al Westerman, local historian and Waukegan Historical Society Life Member, will present a program that highlights his newly published book *A History of Waukegan Township, Lake County, Illinois (1835-1850)*.

## From the Research Library

# Metro History Fair Update

Josh Bill

Each year, the Chicago Metro History Fair provides an opportunity for students in the Chicago area to complete a local history project. Thanks to an ever-growing partnership with the Waukegan Historical Society, most of our students are able to do so. Each winter, the Society's Raymond Research Library opens its doors to Waukegan High School students, and the results have been phenomenal.

We have had five Waukegan-based projects in the last four years advance to the National History Day competition in Washington, D.C. This year, Waukegan High School is proud to announce that six Waukegan projects are moving on from the Chicago-area to the state-wide competition.

In addition, each year projects are judged locally by a panel selected by the Society and a \$500 prize is awarded to the most outstanding project. The winner will be announced at our May meeting.

## Annual Meeting and Luncheon

# Annual Meeting and Luncheon

Saturday, May 17

1:00 PM

Bonnie Brook Club House

2800 N. Lewis Avenue

Waukegan

Mark your calendar for the Waukegan Historical Society's Annual Meeting. This year the Society will be hosting its members with a light luncheon to be followed by the President's Annual Report, Board Elections, presentations by the Waukegan High School Metro Fair winner and a look to the future. Details to follow in April.

## Museum Supervisor's Report

**Ty Rohrer**

The next few months will be busy as we finish out the school year working with teachers and students while at the same time gearing up for our summer events and activities. We are looking forward to wrapping up our education outreach programs and hosting the students at the Waukegan History Museum during end of the year field trips as well as talking the kids around Waukegan on guided bus/walking history tours.

There will be new exhibits opening at the Museum in the following months. Opening in April is the exhibit *History of the Lake County Courthouse*. Opening summer 2014 is a photography exhibit titled *Waukegan: Then & Now*. The last showing of the exhibit Back to School will be Saturday, June 7, 2014 during the Waukegan Park District's Ray

Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine* Fine Arts Festival.

Please keep the Museum in mind as you do your "spring cleaning." If you have a question about something that you would like to possibly donate, please do not hesitate to give us a call.

To learn more about what is happening at the Waukegan History Museum, like us on Facebook. If you are interested in history related events occurring throughout Lake County like "Northeast Historical Happenings" on Facebook.

## Preservation Corner

The iconic Waukegan Carnegie Library was recently placed on the prestigious National Register of Historic Places. Waukegan native, Hector Bryan Escobar, chose the structure to fulfill a classroom requirement while studying as a graduate student at Loyola University. Bryan went above and beyond his assignment and he submitted the application for official review. Bryan first made a case for the Carnegie with the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council and with their approval, paperwork was forwarded on to the National Park Service. The Carnegie Library was officially named to the National Register on December, 31, 2013.

## Congratulations Beverly!

Our research librarian, Beverly Millard was honored recently by Beta Sigma Phi, a member organization of the Lake County Women's Coalition at the coalition's annual brunch celebrating Women's History month. Each year at the brunch, nominees from the member organizations are honored. Beverly was recognized for her faithful and continuing commitment to our research efforts for the past 25 years. This year's theme was "Women of Character, Courage & Commitment." Beverly is a prime example of that theme.

## Historically Speaking

# George Kirke Spoor

### Ed Link

Born in Highland Park December 18, 1871 George moved with his family to Waukegan within two years. One of 11 children he was the son of Marvin Spoor, a Civil War veteran. George attended Central School.

As a young adult George worked for the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad in Chicago and was a co-manager of the Phoenix Opera House in Waukegan. He became acquainted with Edward Amet and the magniscope, a movie projector. Here the story gets a bit murky. In a May 10, 1944 speech to the Waukegan-North Chicago Chamber of Commerce, Spoor stated that Amet "was building a machine for projecting motion pictures" but needed money to finish. Spoor supplied \$25 and went into partnership with Amet. Throughout his lifetime the story shifted in Spoor's favor. George's obituaries in sources like the *Chicago Tribune*, *Variety* and a Hollywood paper credited him with inventing or producing the first projector.

Amet disputed that view. In an undated letter purportedly written by him, Amet stated "Our Company (the Electrical Advertising Company) had sold more than 250 machines before I ever met Mr. George K. Spoor. He had nothing to do with the conception or development of my Magni-Scope motion picture machine."

After a few years of producing and selling projectors the paths of the two men diverged. Amet went onto other interests while Spoor stayed in the entertainment business. George operated the National Film Renting Bureau.

In 1907 he and actor Gilbert Anderson formed Essanay (S for Spoor, A for Anderson) Studios in Chicago. At their location on Argyle Street they produced hundreds of films featuring major

stars of the silent movie era, including, for a time, Charlie Chaplin. Anderson set up a studio in Niles, California and made numerous Bronco Billy westerns, starring himself.

The partnership ended in 1916 when Anderson pulled out and Spoor remained as the sole owner. Soon, however, the lure of Hollywood and Chicago weather ended Essanay Studios as a movie producer.

In January, 1915 George bought the property at the northwest corner of Genesee and Clayton Streets and began building the Academy Theater. The name was carried over from the Waukegan Academy which operated at the site the previous century. The theater, the first built in Waukegan for the showing of motion pictures, opened June 10, 1916 with Walter Spoor, George's brother, as manager. The Spoor family continued to operate the Academy until it was taken over by Great States about the time of the Genesee's opening.

George invested much time and money in developing Natural Vision, a precursor of 3D movies. He had a public demonstration in 1930 and showed it at Chicago's Century of Progress in 1933. Although acclaimed the approach never caught on due to technical difficulties and cost. It would be another two decades before 3D movies were popularly produced.

At the 1947 Academy Awards George was one of four men given a special award for being film pioneers. He died November 24, 1953.



George Spoor

# Recent Donations

**Nancy Inskeep**

Photograph

**Dorothy Dorband**

Plate, Yearbooks

**Shirley Figeas**

Postcards, Newspaper Clippings, Books

**Sue Schwab**

St. Anastasia Book-1990 & 2000 Yearbook

**Debbie Harris**

Henderson Jewelry Memorabilia, Waukegan City Directory 1905-06

**Peter Popit**

Photocopies of St. Anastasia Students

**Francine Cunningham**

R.L. Strip Co. Photograph

**Cheryl Whitford**

Guenette Family Memorabilia, First Federal Savings & Loan Passbook, Midwest Bronze & Alum Co. Papers, High School Information, Coast Guard and Army Information, Local Business Advertising, Postcards, Genealogy Information

**Carl M. Yolz**

1867 Letter,

**Nancy Shumm**

George Washington Calhoun and Family Genealogy Research

**Marlene Graham**

Blumberg Receipt Book, First National Bank Book, 1938 Worlds Fair Bank, Yearbook, Newspaper Clippings, Heins Store Bag

**Tom Mellen**

Mr. & Mrs. Harry Saulson Photographs, Marriage Certificate, Cemetery Deed, Spanish American War Certificate, Assorted Memorabilia

**Margaret Boettle**

Newspaper Clippings Scrapbooks

**Jim Deram**

Johnson Motors

**Hank & Beverly Bogdala**

Misc. Items & Memorabilia, "Guide and Duties of Township Officials", "Handbook of Illinois Government"

**William Tyre**

2 Waukegan Postcards

**Thomas W. Strus**

Newspaper Articles about Andrew Cooke School, 1950s Photographs

**Penny Miller**

"A Little Bit of Verse" by Woodman, "History of Waukegan School Buildings" by Roman Miller

**Jean Walsh**

Jack Benny Letter

**Dr. John Schwab**

City Treasurer Report of Disbursements 1938-39

**Dan Drury**

Bernard Stiner Memorabilia

**Gerald McGonigle**

North Shore Photocopies

**Nancy Bjerstedt**

Waukegan North Chicago Coal Dealers Assn 1941-1955

**Ann Darrow**

1987 Commonwealth Edison Centennial Medal

**Tony Pignaloni**

First National Bank Books, First Federal Savings and Loan Assn Book, 1979 St. Therese Hospital Auxiliary Membership Directory, Assorted Photographs and Slides

**Joseph Neumann**

4 North Shore Railroad Photographs  
Warren Township Historical Society  
Waukegan High School Photographs (1920)  
Theodore Wm. Strang Memorabilia

**Waukegan Public Library**

17 "Thirsty Elephant" Books

**Alan Parshall**

1934 Audio Tape of Phyllis Farrar  
Sheet Music

**Jim Malecha**

2 Posters  
YMCA Memorabilia

**Betsy Alleman**

1926 Photographs  
1935 Snow Scene Photographs  
1924 YMCA Photographs  
First Methodists Church Photos

**Diana Laurent**

Book "A Promise For Life-The Story of Abbott"

**Denyse Waters**

1908 Pamphlet-First Methodist Church Membership List

**Cheryl Whitford**

4 Photographs

Newspaper Clipping

**Dennis Moiso**

PCB Info

Near North Neighborhood Notebook

**Al Westerman**

Book "A History of Waukegan Township, Lake County, IL 1835-1850" by Al Westerman

**Tom Sivia**

1980 Photograph of Waukegan Harbor

## Education Outreach

Students are back to school so our education outreach programming is gearing up for another great year! We have a few changes for the teachers and students this year. First for the teachers, we have lesson plans available to assist with preparing their students for the upcoming topic. For students we have incorporated two new programs. The first program will introduce the students to the Waukegan History Museum and the importance of studying local history. The second program looks at what it was like to be a student back when their school opened.

Teachers, don't wait to schedule history programs for your class. The calendar fills up fast!

**Native American History of the Waukegan Area\***

Early settlers of Little Fort\*

Waukegan and the Underground Railroad

Abraham Lincoln Goes to Waukegan

The Civil War: The War Efforts in Waukegan

Waukegan's Famous Civil War Drummer Boys\*

**The Early Industry Worker\***

"Firsts" in Waukegan\*

Waukegan: A History of Immigration

Lake Michigan History and the Lady Elgin Shipwreck

Waukegan's African American History

Influential Women of Waukegan's Past

Prominent Events and Visitors of Waukegan

Waukegan and the Motion Picture Industry

Ray Bradbury: Waukegan's Influence on a Visionary

Jack Benny: From Waukegan to Hollywood

Haunted Waukegan\*

*Titanic*: A Fateful Ticket at Waukegan

Jane Addams: Remembering Bowen Country Club

Play Ball: Baseball in Waukegan

Day in the Life of a Student (corresponds to the year your school opened)

"What-Cha-Ma-Call-It" History Trunk (hands on program)\*

*\*for school groups only (all other programs are for both school and adult groups)*

Program length is 45 minutes to 1 hour. Many programs are multimedia presentations with hands-on artifacts. Programs can be given for multiple classrooms on the same day. Programs able to be scheduled to be given on a weekly basis. Programs presented in the schools are based on Illinois Social Sciences Performance Standards.

The Supervisor of the Waukegan History Museum will present each program.

For more information and to schedule a free program, contact the Waukegan Historical Society.



### Find Us on Facebook!

Like the "Waukegan History Museum" on Facebook!

For more information on local historical events and programs, like "Northeast Illinois Historical Happenings" on Facebook!

# Thank You!

## New Members

Dieck Arenas & Associates  
Ann Richter  
Alan & Kris Young  
Susan Lerch  
Claudia Grace  
J. Brian Alleman  
Carol Alleman  
Vicki Mattson

## New Life Members

Patricia Foley  
Matthey Crabb  
Tom & Sue Koesser  
Douglas & Mariana Peterson

## Donations

Howard & Cleone Peterson Memorial Fund  
Baxter Employee Giving Campaign  
Baxter International Foundation  
Ann Richter  
Robert & Michelle Crombie  
William Tyre  
Gregory Alloian  
Joyce A. Ludovic  
Douglas & Mariana Peterson

**W  
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**TOUR  
OF  
HOMES**

SUNDAY  
JUNE 22, 2014

**WAUKEGAN**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Join Us!

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_

STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

## MEMBERSHIP

Senior (age 60+)	\$7.00
Student	\$7.00
Individual	\$15.00
Family	\$25.00
Patron, Organization	\$50.00
Life, Individual	\$100.00
Life, Couple	\$150.00
My additional gift	\$ _____

Make checks payable to  
Waukegan Historical Society.

## VOLUNTEER

Please contact me about volunteer opportunities.

## Waukegan Historical Society

Founded in 1968, the Society collects, preserves, interprets, and exhibits significant materials about the history of the Waukegan area. The Society, in cooperation with the Waukegan Park District, operates the History Museum and Raymond Library and publishes this quarterly newsletter.

1917 N. Sheridan Road  
Waukegan, IL 60087  
847-336-1859  
www.waukeganhistorical.org  
info@waukeganhistorical.org

Visit our website for more information  
about events, exhibits, and our  
extensive library.

[www.waukeganhistorical.org](http://www.waukeganhistorical.org)

## Waukegan History Museum in Bowen Park

1917 N. Sheridan Road  
Museum Supervisor: Ty Rohrer  
847-336-1859  
museum@waukeganhistorical.org  
Tuesday, Thursday: 10am - 4pm  
Saturday: 1pm-4pm

## John L. Raymond Research Library

1911 N. Sheridan Road  
Librarian: Beverly Millard  
847-360-4772  
library@waukeganhistorical.org  
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday  
10am - 2:30pm





1917 N. Sheridan Rd, Waukegan, IL 60087



Carnegie Library,  
interior