

North Wood County Historical Society

Mansion Newsletter

Marshfield, Wisconsin

December 2019

From the President

A Happy New Year to members and friends,

As I was pulling thoughts together for this message the last of our 2019 activities at the Upham Mansion were winding down towards Christmas. The annual membership meeting, holiday potluck and Christmas events at the Upham home were well attended and received. In fact, the society had a full and successful year thanks to the efforts of our members, friends and many volunteers. Thank you to all who shared time, talents and resources to help with our activities and events, and thank you, too to those who joined us to enjoy each one. One thing that events have in common is the need for dedicated volunteers willing to roll up their sleeves to make them happen.

While we appreciate every volunteer and everything that they do, we recognized three supportive individuals with a Certificate of Appreciation for their efforts on the society's behalf at the recent annual meeting. They are:

* **Diane Wolf** who served as a member of the Board of Directors (2017- 2019), Secretary (2018-2019), Chair of Annual Pie and Ice Cream Social, and as a member of the Nominating Committee, Strategic Planning Committee and others;

* **Laura Ptak** who served as member of the Board of Directors (2012-2019), Treasurer (2012 -2019), Chair of the Annual Christmas Wreath Fundraiser, and member of the Pie and Ice Cream Social Committee, By-laws Committee, Nominating Committee and others; and,

* **Pat Passo** whose long history of volunteerism at the Society includes providing Upham Home tours, indexing projects, archive collections care and management, and more.

If the opportunity presents itself, be sure to extend your appreciation to these amazing individuals for all that they have done, and will continue to do, to help us preserve and share our local history.

At the annual meeting members elected four individuals to the Society's Board of Directors each for a three-year term ending 2022. Jerin Turner and JoAnn Gougeon, who were filling unexpired terms of former board members, as well as Erin Howard and Kris Coleman, were each elected to their first terms as directors. Congratulations and welcome. Other election results include Andrea Jackan's election as treasurer and my re-election as president.

During the annual meeting we discussed some of the opportunities the New Year will bring to the society. Kim Krueger and Andrea Jackan demonstrated their work on an app, Izi Travel.com, aimed to facilitate greater access to the Upham House and the community's collection of historical memorabilia. They also briefly mentioned a developing podcast program for Central Wisconsin history. These are just two of the society's planned activities leading up to the City of Marshfield's 150th Anniversary in 2022.

Planning for that anniversary, along with our annual events and care of Marshfield's historical artifacts will be included in upcoming strategic planning sessions early in the New Year. Anyone with an interest in our local history is encouraged to participate. Let Kim in the office know of your interest so that we can keep you in the loop. I look forward to working with you during the upcoming months.

Best wishes always, **-schnitz**



Don Schnitzler



Board of Directors

President - Don Schnitzler
Vice President - Jerin Turner
Secretary - Kaylin Speth
Treasurer - Andrea Jackan
Past President - Brad Allen

Directors

Andrea Jackan
Mike Meyers
Kim Krueger
Nancy Sternweis
JoAnn Gougeon
Erin Howard
Kris Coleman

Coordinator- Kim Krueger

Consulting Rosarians
Tom Ptak & Tom Stram

Tour Hours

Wednesday - 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.
Saturday - 1:30 – 4:00 p.m.
Or by appointment
Groups are encouraged

Office Hours

Monday - 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Wednesday - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Thursday - 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Phone - 715.387.3322

Email -

nwchs@uphammansion.com
Web - <http://uphammansion.com>

Grieving parents receive a belated Christmas present

Submitted by Kaylin Speth

A centavo bill issued by the Japanese Government during WWII as it invaded the Pacific uncovers a dramatic story — one that happened on the home front.

The bill was discovered in a box of foreign currency at a store in Largo, Florida, and shared with the North Wood County Historical Society. It includes a few scribbled names and places, one of them R. W. Stoiber of Marshfield.

Richard “Dick” Stoiber was a 20 year-old U.S. Navy third class ship fitter when he was reported dead in the Dec. 16, 1941 edition of the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune. A navy telegram had stated he was lost in action at Pearl Harbor. He was on the U.S.S. California.

A requiem high mass was sung on Dec. 22 at St. John’s Catholic Church as Richard’s parents, Raymond and Ida Stoiber, spent the holiday grieving over the news of their oldest son.

But in a dramatic twist, they received the Christmas present of their lives when a letter postmarked Dec. 25 arrived at their N. Maple Ave. home the morning of Dec. 29 — their son was alive!

Both had already headed to work at the Roddis Lumber and Veneer Company plant and the Stock-Gro plant when their daughter Elaine called them to let them know the news. Mrs. Stoiber took the day off “almost delirious with joy” to go home and read the words that brought her missing son back to life.

Word spread quickly through the city and the Stoiber’s telephone was kept ringing as disbelieving friends called to verify the rumors.

In an interview with the paper, Mrs. Stoiber said there was always doubt in her mind and she hadn’t stopped praying for her son’s safe return.

Richard’s letter revealed nothing about his location, but he verified that he was okay, though he had lost all of his possessions. Apparently unaware of his status back home and the subsequent grief it had caused, he said, “This Christmas isn’t so merry, but I can be thankful at least that I am still alive.”

He explained that circumstances prevented him from writing any sooner but he had worried they might think he wasn’t okay. While the speed of the letter’s arrival indicated Richard wasn’t far from the coast, his parents and four siblings were content not knowing exactly where he was — just as long as he was alive.

In October 1943, Richard, now a petty officer first class, married Virginia Braem where he was stationed in Bremerton, Washington. Both had graduated from Marshfield High School.

Together with Ginny, Richard enjoyed attending many U.S.S. California ship reunions around the nation as well as Pearl Harbor anniversaries in Hawaii. Richard died November 24, 2001.



“Yes Virginia... the first Santa in Marshfield was a woman!”

Submitted by Mary Rose (Kerske) Hafenbredl for the Marshfield story, “Piecing Together our Past, 1997.”

Slim (Norma) Regenfuss was born in Marshfield, Wisconsin on October 16, 1905. The Regenfuss family lived on East Fourth Street. After her mother died, she and her father, J. J. Regenfuss, lived with the Rudolph Kerske family. Her employment consisted of housekeeping jobs, which paid \$3.00 a week, and she was a ward attendant at the Wood County Hospital.

The reason I want to write this story about Aunt Slimmy is that she was the First Santa for the City of Marshfield. She was brought into town either by sleigh and reindeer or by a fire truck. There was much excitement for the children that day. They would have her sit in one of the stores to give the children their bag of candy. After the candy was distributed, she would walk up and down the street to visit with the children.

Marshfield's Santa (Aunt Slimmy) also made appearances for the Nuns at Marshfield Parishes and one in Hewitt. Two or three nights before the appearances, Mr. Rembs would pick up Santa and two nieces Margaret and Mary Rose Kerske to prepare the gift bags. On the night of delivery, Mr. Rembs would take them to the parishes. It was a lot of fun watching the Nuns perform for their gift bags. Santa would have them sing a song or tell a story. The Nuns really enjoyed it, one trying to out do the other.

Santa (Aunt Slimmy) also visited nieces and nephews. When they started to get "too smart", Richard, brother to Mary Rose and Margaret, took over the Santa appearances. He still has the original suit, beard and wig.

I hope this will bring back many memories of getting a bag of candy from Santa. On April 9, 1958 Santa (Aunt Slimmy) passed away, leaving many memories for all who knew and loved her.

The Knights of Columbus Hall, 400 W. Upham Street, was razed during December to make way for a Hampton Inn & Suites. The KC Hall served as a venue for numerous weddings, special events and even some great Friday night fish fries during the past 49 years. The origin of Marshfield's John Eisen Council, No. 1799, Knights of Columbus dates back to May 16, 1915, with the initiation of a charter class of 39 men, and the transfer of 19 members from other councils. The council was named in honor of Father John Eisen, a former pastor of St. John's Catholic Church, Marshfield, who died May 20, 1907.



Forty-nine year old landmark makes way for new hotel

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(Above) The familiar Knight of Columbus Hall; and (right), the Hall being razed during December 2019.



Christmas was in the air at the Upham Mansion



A traditional decorated House greeted guests at the Upham Mansion this year.



Following a house tour, guests were treated to some awesome goodies and hot cider during the open house.



The fire place served as a source of heat for the Mansion as well as adding beauty to the room.



A number of luminaries welcomed guests during the three night open house.



(L-R) Carriage lap blankets, twirling tree lights, a silver tea set received by the Upham's as wedding gift, and beautiful bubble lights were all on display during the Christmas season.



Don and Vickie Schnitzler taught the ornament making classes at the House during November and December.



New goals and ideas for the future were presented at the annual meeting.



Some happy recipients showing off their creations following the ornament classes.



The front stairway was decorated beautifully and greeted visitors.

Spoken History Series

Those interested in learning more about the area's rich history are invited to attend a monthly lecture series called "*Spoken History*," at the Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library.

The series is a collaboration of area groups dedicated to the region's history:

- North Wood County Historical Society

- Marshfield Historic Preservation Association
- The City of Marshfield Historic Preservation Committee
- Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library
- Marshfield Area Genealogy Group

By offering a monthly lecture at a predictable time and location, it will encourage those interested to plan for these outings – maybe a weeknight getaway, a monthly date night or just an educational outing.

Upcoming Spoken History Lectures - 2020 Schedule (Subject to Change)

All lectures are held the first Monday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library-Felker Family Genealogy and Local History Room, unless otherwise noted.

January 6 - North Wood County Historical Society

Program: *History of the Marshfield Telephone Company*

Presenter: Mike Meyers, board member North Wood County Historical Society

February 3 - Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library

Program: "*Risking Everything and Freedom Summer*"

Presenter: Michael Edmonds, Writer and public historian, former Director of Programs and Outreach at the Wisconsin Historical Society

March 2 - North Wood County Historical Society

Program: "*A Look at American Funeral Directing through the History of Rembs Funeral Home*"

Presenter: Ted Jackan, Rembs Funeral Home

April 6 - Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library

Program: TBA

For Past Spoken History Series - Search

June 2

Sponsor: Historic Preservation Association

"History of the Adler Bakery Company" - James Adler, grandson of Adler Bakery, founder.

September 9

Sponsor: NWC Historical Society

"History of Marshfield's Schools" - Mike Meyers, Board member, North Wood County Historical Society.

October 7

Sponsor: Marshfield Area Genealogy Group

"Central Wisconsin Homesteaders" - Don Schnitzler, member of Marshfield Area Genealogy Group.

November 4

Sponsor: Historic Preservation Committee

"City of Marshfield's New Historic Buildings Driving Brochure" - Vickie Schnitzler, Chair of Historic Preservation Committee.

Something New!!

NWCHS "*Spoken History*" lecture series now has a presence on *YouTube*.

We hope that you will join us the first Monday of each month, at 6:30 pm in the Everett Roehl Marshfield Public Library's Felker Family Genealogy and Local History Room as the presentations are given. If that day or time doesn't fit your schedule though, you may view the presentation by visiting the North Wood County Historical Society's Youtube channel. To reach the channel, open YouTube and search for "NWCHS GovUphamHouse," (note NO spaces between Gov Upham or House) or visit:

url: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyMsPsMSfTIKJEjUJ4KE6Kw>

The 2019 presentations for January through December are available for viewing now. Several presentations, but not all, from the 2018 series are available too. Digital recordings are being added within a few weeks of their original presentation. Subscribers to the channel receive notifications as additional videos are uploaded to the channel.



Thanks to the Marshfield Clinic Print Shop, we are now able to send all our newsletters in color. They have graciously agreed to print our quarterly newsletter as a donation to the Historical Society.

(KC Hall Continued from page 3)

The charter members who started the council in 1915 were: John P. Adler, John M Berg, Mike T. Berg, Frank Binder, Frank Cramer, Paul R Cramer, Albert F. Davel, George H. Davel, Mortimer J. Dawson, Frank J. Deckert, Jacob Esser, Carl A. Fehrenbach, Ray T. Finucane, John T. Fitzgerald, Clement T. Fleckenstein, John Hasselbalch, Oscar J. Hoffman, George A. Huntzicker, Henry A. Huth, Adolph A. Kleinheinz, John A. Kestel, R. L. Kraus, Helmuth C. Koenig, Melvin H. Kraus, Robert L. Kraus, Jacob Leinwander, Dr. William H. Lind, Thomas F. McDonald, Edward E. Mechler, John O'Connell, Mike M. Phillipi, Joseph L. Pinion, Dr. Walter G. Sexton, Thomas D. Spaulding, Frank A. Stauber, Albert Steger, Rev. Hubert J. Stehling (founder of Sacred Heart Catholic Parish, of Marshfield), Thomas J. Tuchscher and Hubert J. Weber.

Transfer members were J. H. Burns, J. C. Byrnes, Larry Clark, George Dickof, John Esser, A. Michael Griffin, Ed Horgan, Anton Kleinheinz, Erhard Kleinheinz, Henry Lorge,

Joe Lorge, P. J. Lyons, J. J. McDonald, J. S. McDonald, E. C. Mechler, Leo Schoenhofen, and Frank E. Tice.

The original Council rooms were at the corner of South Central and East Fifth Street in the building now occupied by Crabby Dave's. As the council grew, it found accommodations upstairs in the old telephone building on East Third Street, above the old armory (Hartl Building) on West Second Street, the VFW Club on West Depot Street, and the old St. Matthews Lutheran Church on South Chestnut Avenue.

By 1968, the council recognized the need for larger facilities and built the new clubhouse at 400 West Upham on land donated by Mrs. Doris Rembs and Mr. Joseph Felhofer as a memorial to the late John Rembs. For nearly 50 years that KC Hall served the council and community well.

Excerpts from The Marshfield Story, "Piecing Together our Past," Knights of Columbus #1799 Father John Eisen Council, page 204; and the Marshfield News-Herald, 8 June 1972, page 19.

Attention Members and Volunteers

We need your continued support as members and volunteers. Dues are payable at the first of the year. Your active individual, family or business membership allows us to keep our programs going and we want to count you as an active member. .



NORTH WOOD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

Membership and Donation Form

212 WEST THIRD STREET, P.O. BOX 142
MARSHFIELD, WISCONSIN 54449

Phone: (715) 387-3322 E-mail: nwchs@uphammansion.com Web Site: www.uphammansion.com

Preserving North Wood County history since 1952

Please make checks payable to NWCHS. Send to: NWCHS P.O. Box 142, Marshfield, WI 54449

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Acknowledgement of donations will be emailed for those who provide an email address.
End of year receipts for all donations will be mailed out in January the subsequent year.

I/We wish to support the NWCHS –Governor W.H. Upham House for the year 20__

- Individual \$35
 Student \$10 (High School & College)
 General Gift \$ _____
 Family \$50
 Business \$100
 House Restoration \$ _____

North Wood County Historical Society
PO Box 142 (Mailing Address)
212 W. Third St.
Marshfield, WI 54449



The Board of Directors of *NWCHS* wish all the members, their families and friends of the Society a *Merry Christmas and a Joyful New Year*