North Wood County Historical Society

Mansion Kewsletter

Marshfield, Wisconsin

September 2020

From the President

Dear members and friends.

The recent passing of George Winkler, Ruth Voss and Margaret Peterson, (see memorium p. 2) local advocates for history and historic preservation, members of the North Wood County Historical Society, and friends, causes me to reflect on the many contributions they and others have made in the preservation of our community's history.

George, Ruth and Margaret were team players who enjoyed collaborating on tasks. As the City approached its Centennial Anniversary in 1972, Margaret worked with Elizabeth Abbott,



Don Schnitzler

Gertrude Seymour, and others to research and publish Marshfield's *Highlights of History*, 1872 - 1972, a book dedicated to our community's pioneers. Margaret also edited and designed the booklet. Twenty-five years later, community members, working as the Marshfield History Project, created the *Marshfield History Books* to commemorate the city's 125th Anniversary. George and Ruth were members of the teams that helped with photo selection, editing, proofreading, and indexing for these books. George also wrote the history of Marshfield's Military Units and Marshfield's Railroads for the first book, and Ruth served as the Project's treasurer.

Here at NWCHS, Margaret and Ruth both served as members of the Board of Director.s As mentioned above, Margaret shared her talent as a writer but also worked with acquisitions. Both Ruth and George committed their Tuesdays, along with Gene Greenwald, identifying, cataloging, and curating the Society's historical photographs. That collection remains in great shape today because of their efforts.

When the Old City Hall (now Tower Hall) was threatened with destruction, Ruth along with Shirley Mook, Vern Baltus, Stan Custer and others fought to save the old building from the wrecking ball, and they won! From that effort, Citizen's for City Hall evolved and became the Marshfield Historic Preservation Association where George, Ruth and Margaret were active participants.

Often choosing to work behind the scenes, George, Ruth and Margaret's benefaction may have been unnoticed, but the results of their efforts leave for future generations a more accurate, more interesting, and more thorough history of the people and places of Central Wisconsin.

The Historical Society has been fortunate to have individuals like them step forward to volunteer their time and talent during the past 60+ years. Individuals like our first president, Clarence Meyer; Marshfield's First Lady of History, Amanda Henrichs; Augusta Roddis, Marie Carruthers, and so many more who felt it a privilege to establish and sustain the Society. Likewise, couples like Denny and Carol Nelson, Ken and Dolly Kobs, Roger and Bea Pittsley, Tom and Laura Ptak, and others found enjoyment and satisfaction in promoting interest in community history, care of artifacts, and maintenance of the society's biggest artifact, the Upham Home and gardens. (Continued on page 2)



Upham House

NWCHS 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

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

These are just some of the giants on whose shoulders we stand today. Each put forth their best effort on behalf of the community by serving as a volunteer, board member or officer of the North Wood County Historical Society. Their efforts will always be appreciated and remembered.

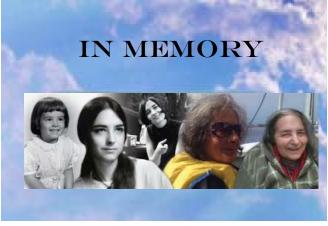
With that being said, the Society is always looking for like-minded individuals from Marshfield and surrounding North Wood County communities willing to become the history stewards of tomorrow, to become board members and volunteers today. Anyone interested in these positions may reach the Society by phone, 715-387-3322 or by email at nwchs@uphammansion.com.

Elections will be held at the Society's annual membership meeting planned for Monday, November 30 at 6:30 pm, at the Upham Mansion. While only Society members vote, all members of the community are invited to attend the meeting and learn about the organization and what it does.

Stay well,

--Schnitz





Darby Upham August 11, 1950 - March 29, 2020

The Historical Society recently learned of the passing of Darby Upham, granddaughter of Governor William H. Upham and his second wife, Grace. Darby's father, Bill Upham Jr., graduated from Marshfield's McKinley High school in 1934, lived most of his adult life in Milwaukee and passed in 2009. Our condolences go to Darby's sister, Monie Upham, and to her numerous nieces and nephews and their families.

Darby Kirkland Upham, age 69, died on March 29, 2020 in West Allis, Wisconsin. She was preceded in death by her beloved parents, William H. Upham. Jr. and Elizabeth Dentz Upham and her brother William H. Upham Ill. She is survived by her loving sister, Monie Elizabeth Upham. Close-knit and bonded by sisterhood, she and Monie shared many happy memories together. Darby's last visit to the Upham Home was on the occasion of the 125th Anniversary of the Great Marshfield Fire during June 2012. Gone too soon, Darby will be greatly missed by her many special friends and loved ones.

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT CLASSES ARE BACK

WITH 2020 SOCIAL DISTANCING





Participants from last year's class show off their creations.

North Wood County Historical Society will again host Christmas Ornament Classes at the Upham House. This year classes will be held Sunday afternoons during October and November from 1:00 - 4:00 pm. and will be conducted under safe and healthful guidelines as well as social distancing. The classes are free, but a free-will donation is appreciated. Space is limited to just 10 people for each class.

Pre-registration is requested. Call NWCHS (715) 387-3322 to register.

Sunday, October 18 - No-sew Quilted Pinecone Ornament

Sun

Sunday, October 25 - Decoupage Snowman Figurine and Ornaments





Sunday, November 8 - Folded German Tradition Star Ornament

Sunday, November 15 - Cookie Cutter Ornament



NATURAL PINE OUTDOOR CHRISTMAS SWAG CLASS

Have you thought of making a Christmas Swag to hang on your front door?

If the answer is yes, join us at the Upham House on

Sunday, November 22 at 1 pm for a class with Kris Coleman.

She will show you how to make a natural outdoor Christmas Swag for yourself, sharing techniques to create the swag and decorative bows. A \$10 donation for the class will be appreciated. Pre-registration is requested.

Call NWCHS (715) 387-3322 to register.

REMBS FUNERAL HOME: THE OLDEST BUSINESS IN MARSHFIELD A SPIRIT OF TRADITION

Written and submitted by: Theodore Jackan, Licensed Funeral Director

Rembs Funeral Home has been a part of the community for more than a hundred and thirty years. The funeral home was established in 1887. The history of Rembs can be traced all the way back to Austria, May 30, 1864 when Louis Rembs was born. Louis worked on his father's farm until he immigrated to America at the age of 19 and settled in the Rothschild area. Louis work at a Gary's Planning Mill and Lumberyard for nearly ten years, where he learned and honed

his carpentry skills. Back then, cabinet makers were often found to be ideal coffin makers and soon many furniture stores and carpenters began making coffins. Louis, being a young carpenter, moves to Marshfield and establishes himself in the furniture and undertaking business in 1893.

Two years later in 1895, Louis formed a partnership with Jacob Sturm and their business was located at North Central and Blodgett Street. Today, just think of the brown building between the Total Body Fitness (A.K.A. the old Walgreens) and Mary's Place. Following this, they purchased the stock in the Under-taking and Furniture Company started by Valentine Weber & E. C. Derby in 1887. As the business progressed, they moved into the building located at South Central Avenue and East Third Street as shown in the black and white picture (right) which was taken around 1909.



Rembs and Sturm Furniture and Undertaking, 301 South Central Avenue, about 1909.

Louis Rembs and Jacob Sturm built a new funeral home in 1915, however their partnership was dissolved two years later in 1917. The next year Louis Rembs brings his only son John "Shy" into the business and the company was renamed to "L. Rembs & Son". However, that same year a funeral rivalry begins in Marshfield when fellow undertaker William Baer and his partner, a barber of 14 years, Oscar Lange open their funeral home "Bear & Lange" embalmers & funeral directors. The competition was so fierce that they were advertising nearly identical adds in the newspaper. The two funeral homes could only compete so long before the three undertakers decided to merge. John Rembs, William Baer and Oscar Lange jointly purchased the interests of Louis Rembs and Son and each owner maintained equal interest in the business. This led to the formation of Bear-Lange-Rembs Funeral Service, and a new funeral home built in 1926



on 108 West Fourth Street. Their partnership continued for ten years, but during that time William Baer retired, and Oscar Lange was nearing retirement age. The young John Rembs saw an opportunity to leave the stress of business partners and create a new business.

In 1937, John Rembs left the partnership with Melvin Bear and Oscar Lange and opened up a new funeral home. Rembs wanted to have the most modern and classy funeral home in town, his mantra was: "Modern in every detail." His new location was at 202 West Fourth Street, which was formerly owned by Frank Upham. His work ethic and dedication completely ignores the expression "I leave work at work."

The open house brochure from 1937 states: "Mr. and Mrs. John Rembs will maintain a residence on the second floor of the Home. An attendant will always be present, night or day."

In August of 1939, John Rembs took his dedication to a new level. He discontinued the furniture business to focus solely on the funeral business. As the business grew, Doris' sister Lucine and her husband Joe Felhofer joined the business in the mid-1950s. However, the business was in need of young energy, which was solved on *(Continued on next page)*

March 15, 1956, when a young twenty-three year old veteran by the name of DuWayne Kundinger started his first day with Rembs.

The 50s were nearly over, and funeral service was changing. Communities wanted their funeral parlors to be dedicated solely for funeral services, and not in spooky Victorian houses retrofitted for wakes. Marshfield needed a modern funeral home, classy, elegant and one dedicated only for funerals. John Rembs

away on March 22, 1964, a few years after this modern facility was built.



John and Doris Rembs

wanted a new building that was dedicated solely to funeral service. This is how the current location at 300 South Oak Avenue was brought to life. At an estimated cost of \$100,000, John



In 1937 Remb moved his business to a new location at 202 West 4th Street, a building once owned by Frank Upham.

and Joe were very proud to open their truly modern funeral home to the Marshfield public officially on September 9, 1961. The Marshfield News-Herald had two pages dedicated for the open house. The entire community was in attendance and was the crowning achievement for the then seventy-four year old company. Sadly, John Rembs passed

However, the institutional memory of both John and his father Louis and their history permeate every brick of their "modern" funeral home. Pictures of former funeral homes and former staff cover the walls. Despite multiple renovations



John and Doris Rembs Joe Felhofer and his wife Lucine joined the business in the mid 1950s.

over the past sixty years, essentially, the funeral home retains the same layout as it did when it opened in 1961. At this funeral home, things are done "The Rembs Way", a phrase that has been used for generations.

Throughout its history, Rembs Funeral Home has had four sole owners since Louis Rembs. Joe Felhofer became the sole owner after John's passing, and in 1974 after decades of service to both John and Joe, DuWayne Kundinger purchased the business and was sole owner until he sold the funeral home to two long term funeral directors, John Person and Greg Jackan, in 1998. Their partnership dissolved in 2016 when Greg Jackan, a director with Rembs since 1983, became the fourth sole owner of Rembs Funeral Home on June 1, 2016.

The spirit of service to the Marshfield community and the memories of our past is what shapes how Rembs adapts to the future. Every owner of Rembs has worked decades before owning the funeral home, spending those decades learning from their predecessors. It's because of this, that their collective knowledge, experiences, and culture of a 130 years of Marshfield are buried in the bones of this company.



"Thank you" To Our Summer Volunteers!

By Kim Krueger, House Coordinator

We would like to thank those who helped with the inventory of our clothing collection this summer. Katie Streckert and Kris Coleman came in once a week to help with photographing and entering into a database each coat, dress, night dress, and undergarment that has been in one of the storage closets. This is a huge, still ongoing project, but these ladies documented close to 200 garments—completing a big storage area!

Emily Vance and Pat Passo worked together this spring to document and pack wedding dresses that had been sponsored with archival textile boxes. A project which started in 2018, the "Adopt a Dress" project allowed us to purchase textile boxes for the wedding dresses chosen by age and condition of the garment. The collection contains more than 50 wedding garments and through the "Adopt a Dress" project, sponsors helped us raise funds to preserve 20 garments.



Kris Coleman shows off a late 1890s garment.

Emily moved to the East Coast in March to take a job in historic preservation, and Katie left us for graduate school in mid-August. We wish them all the best. Kris and Pat continue to be faithful volunteers! Without our volunteers we simply could not accomplish the work to help preserve the North Wood County history!



Emily Vance (L) and Pat Passo (R) work together to pack away a late 1800s wedding dress.



Katie Streckert taking a photo of an early 1900s dress.

1820's Tree Traces Marshfield's History

By Kaylin Speth - OnFocus

In 1883, a growing settlement was officially incorporated as the City of Marshfield. By that time, an ash tree in Wildwood Park had already predated the city by almost 60 years.

When the tree dating to 1826 was cut down near Wildwood Station since it had become a hazard, Wildwood Zoo Manager Steve Burns knew the wood could provide a great opportunity to not only provide seating inside the new Welcome Center, but educate visitors at the same time.

Burns transformed a round slab from the giant tree into a handy bench with colored dots marking different rings on the tree. By pairing those dots with a nearby sign containing snippets of U.S. and conservation history, visitors can get a tangible sense of the passage of time.

"It's just one more avenue we can branch out, no pun intended, to explore this and educate people on different aspects of their community," Burns said. "It's cool to be able to reference different dates in history and see how the tree has aged over that time period."



Burns transformed a round slab from the giant tree into a handy bench with colored dots marking different rings on the tree.

The rings on the left side are paired with snapshots of local and national history. The tree was about 61 years old when much of Marshfield was destroyed by fire in 1887, a blaze that started in the lumberyard of the Upham Furniture Factory.

Sometime after 1904, Wildwood Zoo unofficially began when utility workers started caring for two orphaned black bears, much like today's Kodiak bears, Munsey and Boda. The tree was almost 80 years old.

With the rings on the right side, visitors can learn more about the foundation of the National Parks Service and growing conversations about the environment in the last century, from the publication of "Silent Spring" to the Kyoto Protocol.

"It seems like so long ago, but then when you put it in the perspective of one tree's lifespan, how much has really happened, those dates in history aren't that far back," said Burns. "We're not that far removed from some of those darker times in our history."



Further tying the zoo to greater themes of conservation, Burns repurposed lumber salvaged from city forestry projects to craft a second bench with leftover bike racks serving as the ends.

Further tying the zoo to greater themes of conservation, Burns repurposed lumber salvaged from city forestry projects to craft a second bench with leftover bike racks serving as the ends. The different colors of the bench are from the natural shades of oak, rather than wood stain.

"We wanted enough seating in here for people to relax while their kids play, but also keep it open for larger groups to be able to move around in here," he said.

Burns expects a busy summer for the Welcome Center, which officially opened last October along with the new cougar exhibit, and includes interactive displays on water and electricity, small animal and honeybee exhibits, and a viewing window for the cougar feeding area. "I'm excited to see people really come and enjoy the Welcome Center," he said.

Spoken History Series

Editors Note: Our in-person Spoken History Series has temporarily been discontinued due to Covid-19, and will resume when restrictions for indoor gatherings have been lifted. However, this is an excellent opportunity to review or watch for the first time past speakers on local history topics. 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 "North Wood County Historical Society" or visit: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyMsPsMSfTIKJEjUJ4KE6Kw

What is the 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.

Watch on YouTube the following recorded past "Spoken History" Presentations:

All lectures were 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.

Complete History of Marshfield Schools, presented by Mike Meyers

The Adler Bakery: Marshfield, Wisconsin, presented by Jim Adler

Wood County Parks: Their Creation and Projects, presented by Chad Schooley

Marshfield Historic Driving Tours, presented by Vickie Schnitzler

It Happened on Main Street, presented by Don Schnitzler and Mike Meyers

1905 Marshfield Illustrated, presented by Don Schnitzler

Marshfield's First Family, presented by Don Schnitzler

Voyage of the Comrade, presented by Kim Krueger

Wicked Wood County Wisconsin, presented by Rhonda Whetstone

Skunk Hill, presented by Robert A Birmingham

Beyond the Dress, presented by Kim Krueger and Vickie Schnitzler

Fill 'er Up, The Glory Days of Wisconsin Gas Stations, presented by Jim Draeger



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.

Did you know?

EQUAL RIGHTS - 100 years ago

Whistles and Bells Saturday Marked Advent of New Era in Political World

(from The Marshfield News and Wisconsin Hub, 2 Sep 1920, Page 1)

The adoption of the 19th amendment to the constitution, granting the women the right to vote the same as men, was celebrated Saturday during the noon hour by prolonged blasts of factory whistles and the ringing of church bells. As there was no advance announcement of the demonstration, the populace largely was alarmed, fearing a catastrophe (sic) of some kind,

but news of its meaning spread rapidly and the fears were soon allayed. The celebration was reported general the country.

The women of Marshfield now have the right to vote in the primary election next Tuesday and in the regular or presidential election in November.

First Women Voters (The Marshfield News and Wisconsin Hub, 9 Sep 1920)

Mrs. Tillie Fein of the 2nd Ward was the first woman to cast her vote in the Primary election in this city Tuesday, September 7, 1920. The first woman's vote in the 5th Ward was cast by Mrs. L. A. Millar.



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. Please consider bringing your 2021 dues to our Annual meeting on November 30, along with the membership application below.



Name:

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.uphamansion.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:			
City:	Sta	ate:	Zip:
Phone:	Email:		
En	knowledgement of donations will be emailed for all donations will be mailed for all donations will be mailed for all donations will be mailed for the NWCHS –Governor W.H. Upham	led out in January the	e subsequent year.
□ Individual \$35	□ Student \$10 (High School & College)	□ General Gift	\$
☐ Family \$50	□ Business \$100	☐ House Resto	ration \$

Did Marshfield ever have a Bus System?

By Kim Krueger, House Coordinator

During the past four months, a couple of volunteers and I have been busy with behind the scenes work at the North Wood County Historical Society. In the course of inventories and digging through nooks and crannies we have found some interesting artifacts which we thought might be fun to present to our readers. This Inter-Transit Bus token found in the collection brings up Marshfield's past bus services.

In August 1945 the Marshfield City Council adopted a resolution for a bus service to serve the Marshfield community. Eight months later Charles Cournoyer began the Marshfield



(from the Marshfield News-Herald, 29 June 1946, page 2)



Inter-Transit Bus token found in the NWCHS collection. (obverse & reverse)

City Bus Lines Inc. Two buses ran from 6 am to 11 pm and covered ten miles on paved roads only.

By 1949, due to equipment failure, disruptions to routes caused by water and sewer excavations which at times curtailed bus service, the Marshfield City Bus Lines found itself barely able to stay solvent.

In December 1949 the Marshfield City Bus Lines license was transferred to the Inter-Transit Company owned and operated by Irving T. Cherdron. Cherdron, looking to expand the service, brought in four used Madison school buses, replaced the former punch-card fares with tokens, returned to daily 6:30 am - 10 pm routes, and added three late night/ early service runs and the company continued to lose money. In June 1951 Cherdron proposed that for \$15,000 the city purchase and take ownership of the bus system. In July the city received a petition with 900 signatures for a referendum for the city to purchase the Inter-Transit Bus Co. lock, stock, and barrel "for the convenience and necessity of the people of Marshfield." The City Council, probably sensing Mr. Cherdron was merely desiring to off-load a failed enterprise, chose to table the referendum.

Wanted: Historical News From North Wood County

If you live in North Wood County the Historical Society would like to hear from you. In the past our newsletter has been featuring interesting historical stories and facts primarily about Marshfield. However, there are several cities or towns in North Wood County that have some fascinating historical background. Please help us to bring your area's historical news to our members and readers. You don't have to be a writer, just give us the facts, and especially photos, and we will format into a story for you. Please send information by email - nwchs@uphammansion.com or call us at 715.387.3322 or mail to: North Wood County Historical Society PO Box 142, 212 W. Third St. Marshfield, WI 54449

Happy Holidays from the North Wood County Historical Society

Fresh Wreaths and Garlands made by Bauman Nursery, Edgar, Wisconsin

The wreaths are made of hand-wound mixed pine boughs, decorated with pine cones and a red velvet bow

Proceeds go to help support the North Wood County Historical Society!

Wreaths				
Outside diameter 20 inches	Price			
	\$14			
24 inches	\$16			
36 inches	\$23			
48 inches	\$32			



Actual Photo of a Christmas Wreath

Special Items Price Door Swag (24" - 30") \$18 Balsam Garland (25') \$28 Small Centerpiece \$20 (~10 wide x 12-15" tall) Large Centerpiece \$26 (~18 wide x 16-20" tall)

As available more photos will be posted to NWCHS Facebook page **Centerpieces** (Disposable container, mixed pine boughs, sticks and cones) Orders are due by Friday, October 30 at 6 pm

----- Please detach and return -----

2020 North Wood County Historical Society Wreath Order Form

Name _____ Address _____ Phone _____ Email address _____

Description	Quantity	Price	Total
20 " Wreath		\$14	
24 " Wreath		\$16	
36 " Wreath		\$23	
48 " Wreath		\$32	
Door Swag		\$18	
Garland		\$28	
Small Centerpiece		\$20	
Large Centerpiece		\$26	
		Grand	
		Total	

Orders with checks are due by Friday, Oct. 30 at 6:00 pm

Please make checks payable to NWCHS

Mail to: North Wood County Historical Society P.O. Box 142 Marshfield, WI 54449

Questions or "Made-to-Order" Requests — reach us by Email: nwchs@uphammansion.com or by Phone:

> 715-387-3322 (Upham House) 715-207-6740 (Kris Coleman) 715-383-9775 (Don Schnitzler)

Pickup:

Sat., Nov. 21 Mon., Nov. 23 Wed., Nov. 25 10 am—2 pm 9 am—1 pm 9 am-1 pm

Governor Upham House 212 West Third Street, Marshfield

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



Monday, November 30 • 6:30 pm • Upham House

In these uncertain times, arrangements for our gathering will be shared as the date nears. We hope to gather as done in the past, but can't make any commitments at this time.

Please hold the date on your calendar.

