

THB BATAVIA HISTORIAN

Vol. 17, No.1

Batavia, Il, P.O. Box 15

Regular Open Meeting
February 1, 1976

Time: Sunday, February 1, 1976

Place: Grace McWayne School Auditorium

Program: Our Country - Its Heritage and Triumph

Mrs. Charles Wunsch, well-known Aurora philatelist, will present, with the help of film and tape, this program as a tribute to America on its bicentennial celebration. Beginning with the discovery of America, she will follow the history of its development up to the present as expressed in stamps.

Local stamp collectors who have known her urge our attendance and the extension of cordial invitations to our friends. Mrs. Wunsch has won wide honors not only nationally but in international circles: Stockholm, Madrid, Munich, Lima, Mexico City, Hawaii.

There will be a mini-display of stamps of local interest by local people. If you have a few that you would be willing to show, please bring them with you. (Example: Arnold Gustafson has a Batavia Bank of Coffin revenue stamp, which may be the only one in existence).

This meeting has received the blessing of the Bicentennial Commission.

Business Meeting:

- 1.Old business
- 2.New, especially insurance
- 3.Election of officers.

Refreshments . . . of course.

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Irregular Associate Meeting

Time: Sunday, January 25, 1976 - 2:00 - 3:00 P.M.

Place: Batavia Public Library

Sponsor: Landmarks Preservation Council

Program: The Batavia Historical Society was invited to assist in making arrangements for this meeting. With the cooperation of Mrs. Sally Bast, librarian, and the Library Board, the above arrangements were made.

Half a dozen persons from the Chicago office will present slides, film and discussion. On display will be photographs of Batavia taken by Pauline Campbell. Some of her slides will be among those shown. The film will be a gold prize-winner, the destruction of Adler and Sullivan's Old Stock Exchange in Chicago. The discussion will concern the problems connected with the preservation of Landmark structures in the Fox Valley and what they as a council might do to help us solve them - evidently advice about grants and such.

All interested persons in neighboring towns are invited to attend but the Batavia residents and Historical Society members are especially urged. Historic structures are our specialty!

Condolences: Memorials have been started by the Bergeson family to honor Mrs. Hannah Bergeson, recently deceased, and to honor Mr. Elmer Peterson by Mr. and Mrs. David Hauman. Our sympathy is with Mrs. James Kane and Miss Joanne Kane on the death of Robert Kane. They are long-time and devoted members of the Batavia Historical Society.

Museum Gossip: The two ice-skating scenes, the oil painting by John Falter and the water color by a Florida artist, have certainly aroused a great deal of admiration. If you can identify anyone in the Falter painting, would you please do so on the Parkway Press print on the table in the John Gustafson library?

A Mr. William Davidson from Western Springs stopped in Saturday, December 10, to contribute some Coffin family artifacts to the Museum. The old-fashioned parasol and beautiful elaborate costumes were delightful to acquire. But even more valuable was the personal contact with the donor. He is the great-great grandson of Judge Samuel Drake Lockwood and the great-grandson of William Coffin, who lived in what was called the "Snow Place." (His wife was Mary Lockwood). Just by chance, the delightful picture of the Coffin Bank was on display. And on the library table was a pack of materials about Batavia Institute (pre-Bellevue) including a note relating to the Laconia Literary Society by his great-uncle Lockwood Coffin. I believe Mr. Davidson has more treasures to contribute later. I hope so.

Among our rich collection of documentary materials is one that would delight any local historian. It is the 1850 census complete with the occupants of each house, age, sex, occupation and place from which they migrated. Mrs. Ann Alexander is still working ahead stoically on the registration of all this material.

Final Remarks: We are happy about the reception of the HISTORIC STRUCTURES calendars issued jointly by the First National Bank and your Historical Society. The Bank has none left!

We have leads on an original Halladay windmill in Merrimac, Wisconsin. A series of strange associations and events has located the great-great granddaughter of Christopher Payne. She is the granddaughter of Payne's granddaughter who at the age of thirteen was the only survivor after an Indian attack on a convoy of settlers en route to Oregon in 1860. A professor at Iowa State at Ames has written for information about Batavia's role in the construction of windmills, names of resource persons and data about windmills as a source of energy. We may have more information about these matters at the February 1 meeting.

Prepare to pay your dues at the next meeting of the Batavia Historical Society . . .

\$3.00 for singles

\$5.00 for doubles

Life membership . . . \$50.00.

Join . . . because the Society makes a difference in the spirit of Batavia!

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Happy 1976! See you February 1 at the McWayne School!

Lucile Gustafson.

THE BATAVIA HISTORIAN

Vol. 17, No.2

Batavia, Il., P. O. Box 15

Regular Open Meeting

April 4, 1976

Time: Sunday, April 4, 1976 - 3:00 P.M.

Place: Congregational Church of Batavia

Program: OUR TOWN: ITS ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE AND ITS FUTURE

I. "A Fragile Mix of Architectural Types" . . . Guy Prisco

Mr. Prisco of Duffy-Prisco architectural firm brings a fresh appreciation of our local structures that tend to have become commonplace to us but, in reality, are quite unique. He will illustrate his remarks with colored slides taken by Mrs. Pauline Campbell and Mr. Frank Elwood.

Coffee Hour

II. "Assuring a Viable Future" . . . City Council

The purpose of the presentation is to inform the citizens of Batavia of the impending vote on a bond issue with its five facets that aim to further the development of Batavia and its resources.

The projection of slides and a tape narrated by Leigh and Penny Tracy assure a lively and pertinent program. Council members will be present to answer questions.

More About Historic Structures

Another phase of the Batavia Township Historical Society's inventory of local landmark structures is now completed. Bill Hamilton has taken beautiful photographs of twenty such buildings that are now on display at the Batavia Public Library. These will be placed in an album with an historic and architectural description of each. Another album will be placed in the Batavia Depot Museum. A third enlargement with the negative and application form is being sent to Springfield. This has to do with an inventory and has no legal pressure behind it. However, they may recommend listing with the National Register of Historic Places Inventory. In that case, the last enlargement will go there. Two applications have already been entered, one by the Park Board for the Depot Museum and the other by Fox Hill in order to apply for a grant. This may require agreement not to change exterior appearance. There is no such regulation with the state recognition. But the initiative for national listing will initiate with the owner, not with the Batavia Historical Society. So far the only local building listed nationally is the Krueger home.

The structures named on the following page have been listed:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 1. Coffin-Snow Place | 11. S. K. Wolcott-Allen Home |
| 2. Thomle-Phipps Store | 12. Methodist Church-McWayne Annex |
| 3. McKee-Hall House | 13. Patterson-Jaeger Home |
| 4. Moore-Stacy Nelson Home | 14. Conde Home (210 Washington Avenue) |
| 5. D. C. Newton - Library | 15. Alenson House - Buri Home |
| 6. F. L. Wright - Snow House | 16. Burr-Seaman Home |
| 7. Judge Lockwood-Gosselin Home | 17. Catholic Church |
| 8. Halladay-Wertz Home | 18. CB&Q Station - Depot Museum |
| 9. Bellevue-Fox Hill | 19. Congregational Church |
| 10. United Methodist Church | 20. Newton Wagon - Batavia Body. |

We have already started to process another twenty buildings. Please send your nominations for such listings to the Batavia Historical Society, P. O. Box 15, by April 6. Let us know, too, if you wish a copy of any of the photographs at \$3.00 each. All this may be one of Batavia's major Bicentennial projects.

The Many Faces of Batavia in 1976

Another album -- from buildings to people. Is a picture really worth a thousand words? We own an album of photographs of men (no women, note!) taken in 1909 by Tracy Holbrook. They are invaluable social history.

Mrs. Sally Bast, the new librarian, Mrs. Ann Alexander, museum curator, and Mrs. Yvonne Autenreith of the Batavia Historical Society are compiling guidelines for another 1976 Album of the many faces of Batavia. You, the people of Batavia, will be invited, urged, coerced, to take pictures for this documentary history. Various categories will be needed: Notables, doctors, lawyers, merchants, chiefs -- Tom, Dick and Harriets, your wife, husband, boss, secretary, citizen of the year; groups -- city council, Boy Scout troop, Brownies, fraternal organizations, firemen before the new engine; activities -- people swimming or playing tennis, little tots in a nursery, kids with pets. There will be no losers, but many winners, including the Batavia Library and the Depot Museum who will mount these in a big album as a major Bicentennial project. Watch the newspapers for more specific details.

News in Brief

Jean Conde almost singlehanded is running a tremendous membership campaign. We have a good and supportive group in the Batavia Historical Society but we definitely need new members both for help and cash. As our responsibilities increase our active membership has decreased. From a small business we have become a big operation. Our membership dues in 1975 amounted to \$573.00 while we spent about \$4000.00 on the Museum alone in its first year of existence. (Apparently we are way ahead of most museums in our protection of artifacts, for instance). Jean has mailed out 500 requests for membership, a newspaper article has appeared and you are urged to actively recruit members. Hail!

Mrs. Ann Alexander has arranged for a gala day for Museum volunteers April 2 from 12M - 4 P.M. All volunteers are invited to visit the Martin-Mitchall Museum in Naperville. Transportation and admission courtesy of the Park Board. Luncheon - Dutch treat at the Willoway Manor. Make reservations with Barbara Sawitoski, 879-1193.

More News in Brief

The Furnas Foundation has most generously contributed \$400.00 to be used as we see fit. We should like to apply this sum as a token payment toward an Elaine Cannon "room." The Historical Society has been fortunate to have had talented persons such as Elaine and Mary Bergeson as founding members. We trust now as landscaping of the site starts that the tree in Mary's honor can be planted.

The Batavia Historical Society is supporting J. B. Nelson elementary school kids in a float for the Bicentennial parade. Our role will include the use of the Newton wagon and other artifacts and financial support. Incidentally, Mrs. Charles Graver, owner of the Dainty Daisy Beauty Shop, has graciously volunteered use of a hayrack and truck for this event.

Honorary memberships in recognition of helpful friends will be announced at this meeting.

Jerry Miller has set up your treasury books in a double entry system - another sign of big business. A financial report will be distributed on April 4.

You're invited to a birthday party at the Batavia Depot Museum. Watch for details.

More later. See you at the next meeting, April 4, at the Congregational Church!

Lucile Gustafson.

THE BATAVIA HISTORIAN

Vol. 17, No.3

Batavia, IL, P. O. Box 15

"May the Wind Always Blow Strong."

Regular Open Meeting

September 12, 1976

Time: Sunday, September 12, 1976.

2:30 Business Meeting

3:00 Program

Place: Senior High School Cafeteria

(Civic Center not available).

Program: "The Historic Valley of the Fox" by Mrs. Robert Kubicek (Pat).

Pat Kubicek spoke on this subject several weeks ago in the NAL auditorium. A number of Batavians heard her and were so excited about her information, pictures and charm that they advised the program committee to engage her for the next meeting. And so they did. Her price would be out of range except that she offered to come free because of her appreciation of our architectural richness. She and her husband have a library of about 500 slides of this area, which she uses in connection with her talks in Chicago and various suburbs before art clubs and history associations. She will present the above lecture at the Fortnightly of Chicago September 23 to open the 1976-77 season. She has conducted bus tours here for four years in conjunction with her association with the Chicago Art Institute and the Museum of Contemporary Art . . . two are scheduled for September.

Coffee Hour immediately following the illustrated talk.

Batavia . . . the Windmill City of a Past Decade

According to a copy of The Fox Valley Mirror almost forty years old, a onetime visitor remarked, when speaking of our windmills, "More power to them. May the wind always blow strong." The Chamber of Commerce, as they adopt their new logo based on models of windmills made by the three local companies (the Challenge, the U.S. and the Appleton) may well consider this as a toast or motto.

Also, The Mirror informs us that a Mr. Murchie invented the flat bottomed bag. Murchie of Murchie and Gustafson Grocery Store. A Miss Murchie married Dr. Kerfoot.

The local fire department started something innovative . . . carrying a stretcher with them to use in case of emergency. When they got a little more money they planned to buy a first aid kit.

Welcome New Members

An oldtime member said the other day, "You know, with 200 members, the Batavia Historical Society is the biggest one in the state for the size of the town." Presently we are a society of over 350 members and are growing constantly. About eighty new members have been added in the past year! Moreover, it is doubtful if there are many historical societies in the state that have as members all the city aldermen, the mayor, and many city staff personnel. In addition, there are many oldsters and other ex-Batavians who keep in touch with the town through the Historical Society newsletters and other communications.

The Society aims not only to reach back to recall and record events but also forward to our town's growth and renaissance. Schools, churches, clubs, businesses, are some of those who constantly request information or assistance; we try to be obliging. Again, instead of having just one meeting annually, we meet four times annually but also have a continuity of a variety of projects, including the museum. The museum exists because of the Historical Society's foresight and capability but is not its sole project. (We anticipate that the Park Board will inform us before long that the building is again ready for occupancy. Hope there is a curator to work away at the backlog of artifacts. New members may not know that the Commissioners furnish building and curator's salary; the Society owns artifacts and movable furniture, "mans" the complicated volunteer activity program and pays operating expenses for the museum excepting for utilities (amounted to over \$4,000. last year).

We certainly do welcome the new members. We anticipate meeting you over a cup of coffee at the September 12 meeting at the senior high school. And we rely on you to help make Historic Batavia Day a great success . . . October 10.

Historic Batavia . . . October 10 . . . A Parade of Historic Structures

Batavia is fortunate in having a real historic heritage in many areas; scenery, religion, schools, industry . . . and architecture, which some of us tend to undervalue as an asset. Others do not. You know about the bus trips from the art institute . . . tourists pay money to see what we see free just for the looking. Architects walk the better to see. As far as being listed in the National Register of Historic Structures, Batavia has one already entered and two more are on the way to achieve this honor. Twenty are being reviewed favorably by the Illinois Conservation Commission. When the Archivent bus visited Aurora, three of the less than thirty structures selected for special display were from Batavia. The Instant Press has sketches of three in their 1976 calendar. The mural painting in the new Talman Bank in the Fox Valley Shopping Center featured three sketches of Batavia.

You see, there is continuity in our architectural styles and types: Greek Revival, Italianate (Villa and Manor), French Second Empire, Georgian, French Gothic, French Romanesque, American Gothic, Queen Anne-Victorian, Eastlake, Swiss Chalet, Frank Lloyd Wright, modern (Fermilab) and even one of the thirteen octagon houses in the state and various little cottages over a hundred years old. And in them lived famous inventors, and judges, and railroad presidents, artists, friends of Abraham Lincoln, wealthy manufacturers, workingmen who built houses that cost \$1,000, and now sell for \$25-30,000., tailors, civil war soldiers, the rich and the poor.

(Sorry ..• too long an introduction!)

Now, how to become an expert in an afternoon. Sunday, October 10, is going to be a perfectly gorgeous day. You, your friends, and hordes of out-of-towners will stop at the Batavia Depot Museum, buy an art map of Old Batavia designating not all but representatives of the major interesting styles and designs . . . forty-five, in fact. On the back is a precis of historic information concerning the specific places. The map will cost one dollar and will be a contribution to the projects of the Historical Society. (Shh, half price for Society members). One little boy, after a brief walk with his Bethany Lutheran vacation class said, "And all the time I didn't know we were walking in history!" Learn something to brag about to your out-of-town visitors!

We expect that merchants will decorate their windows appropriately and that many townsmen will cut their grass!

An Old Batavia Reader

One of the new adventures in the Society's activities is the issuance of a booklet of 40-50 pages of stories of early Batavia. Mrs. Miriam Johnson is directing this project. It will be a reprint in offset of materials about Batavia, principally accounts already written: the 1888 account of the history of Batavia; Ross' account of Mrs. Lincoln in Batavia; John Gustafson's story of Judge Lockwood; a story of doctors in old Batavia, Batavia in the Civil War, and many of that calibre. It is not a rehash of what is in the book by John Gustafson. The book was projected after consultation with teachers, so many of whom do a superb job of teaching about Batavia. It is hoped that newcomers will feel more a part of their town and that oldtimers will pick up a few interesting facts about Batavia from reading the book. The cover is of the clamp type so that new topics may be added later.

The Society has had several offers from merchants to assist with the cost of republishing the History of Batavia but it seemed wise to take a couple of years in order to research the materials since 1962, to edit earlier chapters, and to catch the renaissance that Batavia seems to be experiencing. A hasty edition would be no compliment to John's book.

On Preservation

The Museum is a place where gifts should be carefully preserved and not be permitted to deteriorate. Bill VanNortwick (fifth generation) volunteered to pay to have treated and restored by Donnelley's in Chicago the only extant copy of an 1854 CB&Q train schedule (worth \$500.) at a cost of \$205.00. Your Board likewise voted to have the original of Dan Halladay's 1854 catalog restored as the only surety that it would be around for future generations, to admire and study. That cost \$225.00. Fortunately, an unsolicited gift of \$600 from the Furnas Foundation will pay for this as well as the cost of erecting a windmill at the Museum site. How fortunate we are in our friends!

With Sympathy

It is with regret that we announce the death of persons who have been valuable and valued parts of our community:

Mrs. Nellie James was a charter member of Batavia Historical Society and attended its meetings for many years. She was a friend to many.

Mrs. Alice Wood, mother of Bill Wood, the much-beloved retired principal of J. B. Nelson School, has died since the last newsletter. A memorial was given.

Mr. Kenneth Wolcott, uncle of Oliver Wolcott and son of W. A. Wolcott who had a pharmacy on the Island for many years, recently died. The Wolcott family has long been an integral part of the town.

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Mark Your Calendars:

September 12 Regular meeting, Batavia High School, 2:30 P.M.
October 10 Old Batavia Day - A Walk In History

Membership fees due? Pay at next meeting or send to 210 N. Washington!

See you soon

Lucile Gustafson.

Regular Open Meeting

A Christmas Dinner Party

Time: Sunday, December 5, 1976 at 3:30 P.M. (note change in time)

Place: Holy Cross Hall Activities:

Activities:

1. 3:30 P.M. Business Meeting
2. 4:00 P.M. Program: Musical selections, Batavia Woman's Club Chorus
Director: Rev. James P. Jordan
Accompanist: Mrs. Carl (Miriam) Johnson
(This-is a real treat; they are very good!)
3. 4:30 P.M Coketale Hour . . . drink punch and tell tall tales.
4. 5:00 P.M. Roast Beef Dinner served by Catholic Daughters (This is absolutely the first time that Batavia Historical Society will have enjoyed such an event. And enjoy it we will, since it will be prepared by Catholic Daughters of the Holy Cross Church).

Price: \$3.00, except for charter members, who will be guests.

Reservations must be made before November 30, 1976. Call one of these: Freda Lundberg, 879-3594 Linda Hinds, 879-7670 Georgene Kauth, 879-5290 Eldora Hoover, 879-1933.

Note: Charter members call Eunice Shumway, 879-7059.

Decorations: Another innovation. Each guest is invited to bring any color candle in a candle-holder of his choice . . . pewter, wooden, glass, valuable or inexpensive. Maybe Grandpa's tin holder?? Whatever, each candle will be beautiful in juxtaposition with others at that table.

Mark your calendar . . . make your reservation right now.

Memorial Gifts in 1976

Generous families and friends have contributed toward memorials for the following persons:

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Elmer Peterson | Robert Kane | Mary Ann Judd |
| Forbes Bryant | Rev. Gilbert Johnstone | Alice Wood |
| | Maurice and Mary Marcuson. | |

Please write a note to Lucile Gustafson, P.O. Box 15 or telephone 879-1212 if there is an error in this list. In most cases money will be used for the landscaping project.

Museum News

I should like to be able to report that the museum is going full speed ahead, but I cannot. We are having increased attendance. Instead of less than ten appearing even on Sundays, we have from 25 to 50 writing their names in the register. The interesting thing about it is that at least half of the guests are out-of-towners who are either following signs, coming on the recommendations of friends who have visited the museum, or are with Batavia hosts. Evanston and Glen Ellyn seem to send most visitors.

Our difficulty is that we lack a curator to take care of the mass of accumulated materials which have long awaited accession, to advise us about preservation of materials, to arrange exhibits, to prepare research materials, to organize activities and do all the many tasks that are characteristic of a good museum. As you may have read in the papers, the newly hired curator quit the day he was to start work. Carla Hill will be assisting the three weekday afternoons that the museum is open. God bless her. She is imaginative and responsible.

This is a brief news letter, but we shall have a good visit over "vittles" December 5. New members are especially urged to use this opportunity to get a better "feel" of our town. No doubt some members will attend Advent service in their churches before coming to dinner at 5:00 P.M.; this is early enough to allow attendants to hear the Messiah at 7:30 P.M. Our appreciation goes to Georgene and Walter Kauth who made all the arrangements and procured all needed assistants, mainly within the church.

Happy Thanksgiving to you!

L.G.

P.S. The museum will be closed .December 5 unless some couple will volunteer to host/hostess for the afternoon before the dinner. Call 879-1212 to volunteer.