

Hometown Historians

Oswego museum's "Hometown Historian" project aims to record life during the COVID-19 pandemic

How is sheltering in place affecting your family, business, or neighborhood? The Little White School Museum in Oswego has created a "Hometown Historian" initiative to record and collect the community's unfolding history during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The museum is asking residents of its area of interest—the 68 square miles inside the Oswego School District—to send the museum photos and stories that document how individuals, families, businesses, and organizations are coping with the pandemic's unprecedented impact.

Residents are asked to think about how their lives have changed, how they dealt and are dealing with disruptions in their daily routines, how the closure of businesses, schools, churches, and other institutions have affected what used to be their normal lives. Also sought are the stories of people who are trying to cope with daily life as their sources of income are cut off and they are isolated in their homes and apartments.

Photos of empty store shelves, gloved pick-up service signs at the carry out restaurants trying to survive in town, and residents wearing protective masks and clothing to conduct daily chores are sought along with the stories of how families are coping now that they are forced to really be together. Some families and organizations are "gathering" via electronic means such as Zoom or Skype and we're seeking those stories, too.

"We'd like to gather as much of this information as we can while the shelter-in-place rules are in effect as a resource for future generations to understand how we coped in getting through this extraordinary time in our lives," explained museum manager Tina Heidrich.

"It would be valuable for this generation to have accounts of how our great-grandparents coped with the Spanish Flu epidemic of 1918 that struck the Fox Valley so hard," added museum director Roger Matile. "That's the kind of historical record we'd like to create and leave for our descendants."

For more information on how you can help record the on-going history of this time, or to send your stories, comments, and photos, email Heidrich at cheidrich@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org.