



The Bell Tower

The newsletter of the Oswegoland Heritage Association...

April 2020

www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org

Roger Matile, editor

The Oswegoland Heritage Association's

Board of Directors

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Directors whose terms expire this year:

Tina Beard
Brian LeClercq
Fred Mitchell

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Regular museum hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday; noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. Call ahead at 630-554-2999.

Find us on



www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org

Pandemic closes Oswegoland community

Late in 2019 somewhere in China, a virus mutated, allowing it to jump from its wild animal host to a human and from there to another human. Since no one had any built-in immunity to it, and it proved extraordinarily virulent, it quickly infected thousands.

From China, the virus spread all over the world. The virus's name was standardized by the international community as COVID-19, and the first U.S. case reported on Jan. 22. By April 24 there were more than 910,000 U.S. cases and 51,445 deaths from the disease. Here in Illinois, the first cases were reported March 4; by April 24 there were 39,658 cases and 1,795 deaths. In Kendall County by April 24, there were 191 confirmed cases and five deaths.

In March, Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzger issued a shelter in place notice for citizens and for all non-essential businesses to close. That order included the Oswegoland Park District and the Little White School Museum, which closed at the end of the business day on Friday, March 13.

Since then, we've been watching this historic, unprecedented natural disaster's effect on the nation and the world.

The virus's had numerous local effects. For instance, the Oswegoland Heritage Association Board of Directors has not been



A casualty of COVID-19 was the "At Home in Oswego's Past" exhibit that was to run from March 6 through April 5. Current plans are to try to extend it through the summer.

able to meet since the emergency was declared, the museum's offices and collections have been unavailable, dozens of events and special exhibits have been canceled, and this newsletter was delayed for more than a month.

Also, unfortunately, it meant few area residents got to see the museum's latest temporary exhibit, "At Home in Oswego's Past," curated by museum volunteer Stephanie Just with the assistance of museum assistant Sarah Kimes and assistant museum director Bob Stekl (see page 3).

While the event continues through the rest of this year, and possibly beyond, we're

...see "Pandemic," page 2

Annual meeting set for May 28

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of the members of the Oswegoland Heritage Association, an Illinois not-for-profit Corporation, is tentatively scheduled to be held at the Little White School Museum, 72 Polk Street, Oswego, Illinois, on the 28th day of May at the hour of 7:30 p.m. for the purpose of electing three (3) directors and for the transaction of such business as may come before the meeting. The meeting date and time may be rescheduled due to the COVID-19 emergency. Check www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org for updates.

The eligible members voting will be called upon to elect three (3) directors. To be eligible to be a director, a person must be an active member of the Association, at least 18 years of age, and a United States Citizen. A nominating committee appointed by the President will present nominees. Nominations from the floor shall be entertained. All directors shall be elected by a plurality of votes cast by secret ballot. ♡

Dated: April 1, 2020
Mary Church, Secretary

"Pandemic" from page 1...

also looking to chronicle the event and record how Oswegoland folks are coping with it. If you'd like to participate, go to our web site, <https://littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org>, and click on "Hometown Historians—We Need your Stories and Photos" in the right sidebar. You'll see instructions to send us your photos and your accounts of how you weathered the COVID storm—so far—so that we can archive them for future generations.

It's not often people realize they're living through a historical event as it's happening, but that is what is going on in 2020 America today—and apparently for the foreseeable future. ♡

Memorials create lasting tributes for friends and family

A memorial gift to the Oswegoland Heritage Association is an especially meaningful way to recognize friends, family, business associates, and special occasions, while at the same time supporting the mission of the only organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the rich heritage and history of the Oswegoland area. All families have to do is make sure their funeral director is informed that memorial checks should be made out to the Oswegoland Heritage Association and sent to Memorial Chair, Oswegoland Heritage Association, Box 23, Oswego, IL

World War II ammunition donation...

In late 2019, the Little White School Museum received a donation of a number of live rounds of World War II-era ammunition. We knew the ammunition, ranging from .45 cal. pistol rounds to imposing .50 cal. machine gun rounds, would be great additions to our annual "Remembering Our Veterans" exhibit, but we also knew we'd need to demilitarize them for safe storage and exhibit.

With the help of Oswegoan Bob Tripp, we were put in contact with Tim O'Meara of the Aurora Sportsmen's Club. Tim, in turn, enlisted



the help of Ed Janka and Jerry Janik and they were all able to make the entire collection safe to store and exhibit.

The collection includes a .45 cal. pistol magazine and rounds, .30 cal. M-1 carbine rounds and two magazines; an M-1 Garand clip loaded with blank rounds; one .30-06 round; and four .50 cal. machine gun rounds.

We're always pleasantly surprised at the willingness of people to help the museum. ♡

60543.

Since our last newsletter, Jack and Renee Weis and Laurie Sehie Krueger contributed in memory of **Kenneth "Mickey" Gengler**; and the Oswego High School Class of 1957 contributed in memory of **Minnie Wheeler Cubit**. Memorials to the Oswegoland Heritage Association are deposited in the OHA's new Endowment Fund designed to maintain the organization's fiscal health for years to come. Contributions are acknowledged with personalized thank-you notes.

The names of those honored are re-

corded in a permanent record book kept by the OHA for visitors' inspection at the museum's reception desk. In addition, the names of the individuals being honored are listed in issues of *The Bell Tower*.

With the help of thoughtful friends of Oswegoland history, we've collected and preserved tens of thousands of rare and irreplaceable Oswego-related artifacts, documents, and photographs.

Address all memorials to the Oswegoland Heritage Association Memorial Chair, Box 23, Oswego, IL 60543. ♡

More Oswegoland history preserved thanks to our donors...

Donations to the Little White School Museum have continued to roll in since we issued our last report in the December Bell Tower. As of March 9, there were a total of 32,519 items in the museum's collections database.

Items received since the end of November included: Roger Matile, handmade butcher's apron, clipping from Aurora German newspaper with World War I soldiers names, Camp Grant postcards; David Hornberg, U.S. Navy cap; Ted Clauser, Womanless Wedding playbill; Charlene Wheaton, two Kendall County atlases; Karel Thompson, set of 13 textbooks by Mabel O'Donnell; Deborah Heinze, toys and military medal; Gerald Testin, 1954-55 Oswego High School basketball schedule poster; Judy Wheeler, family items including Vietnam medals;

Bill Walper, Richard Walper memorabilia; Drew Mundsinger, Oswego school records; Barbara Weber, Junior Weber military memorabilia; David Schuering, Gaylord School photo album; Kathy Hopkins, Hopkins Family letter collection; Gail Ford, Shuler's Drug fever thermometer and Oswego Chamber booklet; Bob Stekl, Dari Hut dash plaque; Karen Campbell, Boulder Hill house plans; Danny Bliss, Oswego High School football jersey; Ramona Plock, four dresses and a hat; Cathy Cutter, Cutter family photos, album, and family history information; Jean Wormley Rothfus, 1890 OHS graduation program and a wedding invitation; Tim McCann, photos, a political banner, and miscellaneous Kendall County government materials; and Judy Wheeler, crocks and ceramic jars, bottles, and coffee pot.

Items purchased included Oswego school band and drama items; V.A. Kelly publicity photo; and a 1947 Camp Quarryledge photo.

Are you moving, breaking up house-keeping, or just doing some spring cleaning? If you are, don't throw anything away with a direct Oswego connection including photographs, documents, and advertising items. Don't think it's old enough? Remember, 50 years ago this year was 1970—time really flies when you're having fun! Before you throw Oswego-related family, school, or business memorabilia away, give us a chance to see whether we'd like to preserve it in the museum's collections. Contact us via email at info@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org or give us a call at 630-554-2999 during museum hours and we'll chat. ♡

Historical Notes...

All programs are subject to cancellation or rescheduling due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please check in the *Oswego Ledger*, or on the museum or park district's web sites for current information about all museum programming. Web site addresses are: <https://littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org> or <https://www.oswegolandparkdistrict.org/>

"At Home in Oswego's Past" held over this summer...

The latest special that is filling the museum's Roger Matile Room is **At Home in Oswego's Past. Its run has been extended through this summer.** The exhibit, curated by volunteer Stephanie Just, brought back home life of the community during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The exhibit opened on March 4, but attendance was cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the museum staff has decided to keep the exhibit open throughout the summer during regular museum hours.

The next special exhibit was to have been **Pollinators on the Prairie**, the importance of honeybees to Oswego's past farming and gardening history, during July. That exhibit has been postponed until next year.

For more information, call 630-554-2999, email info@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org, or visit the museum web site at www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org.

Join Oswego's "Hometown Historians" and report how you dealt with the coronavirus

Museum manager Tina Heidrich created the "Hometown Historians" project as the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated. Oswego area residents are invited to send in stories and photos detailing what life was like during the pandemic shut-down and how their families, businesses, and organizations dealt with the most profound health emergency in modern U.S. history. Send your stories and photos to heidrich@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org.

Oswego History Walks

On Sundays, June 14, July 12, and Aug. 14, step into a journey through time on

this guided walking tour of Oswego. From 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. each day, history will come alive for participants 16 and older as they learn about the homes, businesses, buildings, and more they pass. Pre-registration, \$5 per person, is required and space is limited. Participants should plan to walk for approximately 1 hour. The event begins and ends at the Little White School Museum. Presented by the Oswegoland Heritage Association and Oswegoland Park District. NOTE: The walk travels the same route for each walk.

Passport to Adventure now held year round

The Little White School Museum will again participate in the Kane-DuPage Regional Museum Association's Passport to Adventure program. Passports, which can be picked up at the museum, are stamped every time the holder visits one of the 60 plus participating museums and other facilities listed in their passport. Passports are free, as is admission to most of the participating institutions. The program runs for the entire year, divided into two seasons, summer and the rest of the year. Prizes will be available for participants in both seasons. This is the fifth year the museum has participated in the popular program. For more information, call the museum at 630-554-2999.

PrairieFest celebration moved to Labor Day weekend

Like many other community events, Oswego's annual PrairieFest community celebration has been moved to the Labor Day weekend, Sept. 4-7, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Normally, each year's PrairieFest is held over Father's Day weekend in June. This year, due to uncertainties about the duration of the emergency the easily spread communicable virus has caused, park district officials decided to move the event to the end, instead of the beginning, of summer this year.

Newest Cat's Meow building now available!

Last December, the Oswegoland Heritage Association offered a new addition to the miniature historic buildings in their Main Street collection. The newest offering is the iconic Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist. Past build-

Bell Tower sponsor: Your company's name could be in this spot

To become a Bell Tower sponsor, purchase a Business/Institutional membership, and your name will appear in this space in three consecutive issues. See pages 1-2 for membership information.

ings featured are the Korte-Zentmyer Building (My Lil' Sister's Donut Shoppe), Hoze-Cherry House, the Chapman House, the Crothers-Jolly-Denney House, the Dairy Hut, the Schwartz House (Tripp Insurance), the A.O. Parke Building (American Male & Company), the Durand House (The Village Grind), the Oswego Fire Barn (Oswego Cyclery), the Knapp Building (Masonic Hall-Oswego Family Restaurant building), the Rank Building, the Schickler Building (The Marmalade Tree and barber shop), the Little White School Museum, and the Oswego Woman's Civic Club's iconic "Welcome to



The iconic Church of the Good Shepherd United Methodist is the latest in the OHA's Cat's Meow series, now on sale at the museum for \$20 each.

Oswegoland" sign.

For more information, call the museum, 630-554-2999, or check the museum's web site, www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org for photos of the miniatures.

Tuesday Tales at the Little White School Museum

Every Tuesday from June 9-28, at 10:30 a.m. start your morning in beautiful Heritage Park on the grounds of the Little White School Museum! Enjoy a story and activities specially selected and presented by As We Grow Preschool instructors to make it a terrific Tuesday. Round out your morning with a step inside to explore the museum gallery or a bit of play at nearby

Continued on back page...

Free!
Please Take One

Oswegoland Heritage Association
Box 23
Oswego, Illinois 60543



Historical Notes, continued...

Village Green Park. Bring a blanket to sit on, as the program will be held outdoors. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Pre-registration is recommended but drop-ins are welcome for this free program for those age 3 and older.

Cities of the Dead

Cemeteries have traditionally been nicknamed "Cities of the Dead." A reflection of the living world, cemeteries appear worldwide and can be park-like, sprawling, or compact and tiny. On Saturday, Aug. 1, visitors 16 and older are invited to discover local history, burial customs, and tombstone symbolism at the Oswego Township Cemetery during this program sponsored by the Oswegoland Park District. Bring a blanket and wear comfortable shoes. Pre-registration, \$10 for park district residents and \$17 for non-residents, is required. The program, suitable for those 16 and older, will be held at the Oswego Township Cemetery 467 Main Street, Oswego. To register, call 630-554-1010

Oswego Heirloom Project

Do you have a treasured family heirloom with its own story to tell? Artifacts tell their own tales while having the power to capture a moment in time. Let your story become a chapter in Oswego's history! Email cheidrich@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org to coordinate a time to come to the Little White School Museum with your heirloom to be photographed and to tell its tale. Additional details will be sent via email once an appointment has been scheduled. ♡

✂ *Clip and mail*

Gift membership?

The Oswegoland Heritage Association has some exciting plans for the future. Why not take out a membership for a friend or relative who has an interest in Oswego's fascinating history and heritage? Benefits include museum store discounts, three newsletters a year, and more. Just fill out this form and mail.

Name: _____

Address 1: _____

Address 2: _____

City: _____ St. _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

I prefer to receive my newsletters electronically: _____

Membership type:

Friend, \$20 per person: _____

Sponsor, \$75 per person: _____

Business/Institution, \$150: _____

Lifetime Gold, \$1,000: _____

Make checks payable to the
Oswegoland Heritage Association and mail to:

Membership
Oswegoland Heritage Association
Box 23
Oswego, IL 60543

Check out our web site at www.littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org