

## Oswego: A Changing Community

The Little White School Museum's exhibits tell the story of a community settled in 1833 by pioneers moving to the Illinois prairie from Ohio, New York, and other eastern states. Soon after, settlers also arrived from foreign countries, including Germany and Scotland.

Primarily a farming village for most of its history, Oswego is now a suburban town most of whose residents travel to workplaces many miles distant. Today, Oswego's charm is found in its many architecturally unique buildings, and in its downtown area. Although growing quickly, Oswego has worked hard to maintain the feeling of a small farming community.

We are always looking for Oswego-related materials to add to our collections. If you have any items related to Oswegoland's history, including photos, diaries, account books, artifacts with a direct Oswegoland connection, advertising items, or other similar materials, please consider donating them to the museum. If you would like to help preserve Oswego Township's rich heritage, please consider joining the Oswegoland Heritage Association.

For more information, call 630-554-2999 or send an email to [info@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org](mailto:info@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org).

### *Oswegoland Heritage Association Membership Application*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership rates: Friend: .....\$20

Sponsor: .....\$75

Business/Institution:.....\$150

Lifetime Gold:.....\$1,000

#### **Member Benefits:**

- Museum store discounts
- Program discounts
- 3 newsletters per year

Make checks payable to the Oswegoland Heritage Association and mail to Membership, Box 23, Oswego, Illinois 60543

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## *Your Guide to the*



## *Little White School Museum*

*72 Polk Street*

*Oswego, Illinois 60543*

*630-554-2999*

*[info@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org](mailto:info@littlewhiteschoolmuseum.org)*

*A cooperative project of the  
Oswegoland Heritage Association and the Oswegoland Park District*

# Welcome to the Little White School Museum!

The Oswegoland Heritage Association began collecting historical materials related to Oswego Township in 1976. The Little White School Museum was opened in 1983, and thousands of interested visitors have toured the collection since then.

Your museum tour begins with Oswego Township's prehistory, where the titanic natural forces that created the present landscape are outlined. You'll also learn about a fossil, millions of years old, named after Oswego. Moving to the left, you'll see how the area's Native People lived in the days before Europeans arrived, and then learn about some of the contributions of Oswego Township's pioneers.

Learn about the contributions Oswegoans made during the Civil War, including producing Kendall County's only winner of the Medal of Honor.

After the war, Oswego continued to rely on the Fox River as an economic engine that featured a commercial ice harvesting operation and harvesting fresh water mussels for their pearls as well as to manufacture mother-of-pearl buttons.

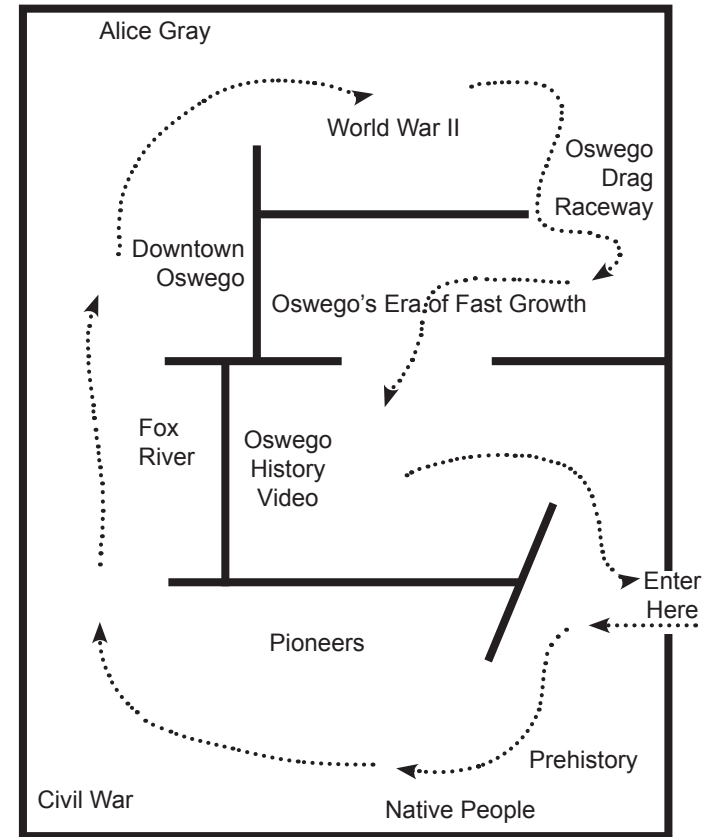
Equipment used by Irvin Haines, one of Oswego's pioneer photographers, is on exhibit. Along with Dwight S. Young, Haines captured dozens of images in the museum's collections and many of their images can be found throughout the museum. Continue on with Oswego's education history, including a map showing where each of the one-room schools that once served the community were located.

Oswego's downtown was the community's commercial focal point from the time of settlement. The Alice Gray Fire exhibit tells the tragic story of the fire that destroyed Alice Gray's home on a cold January day in 1918. The remains of her tiny home were accidentally discovered in 1991, and were excavated by local amateur archaeologist John Samuel and heritage association volunteers.

World War II had a major impact on the community and Oswego was greatly affected by the post-war economic boom, particularly the community's public schools. Be sure to watch the videos throughout the museum to learn more about the community's rich history.

**We hope you enjoy your stay; please visit us again!**

## Your map to Oswego history...



## From classroom to museum...

The Little White School Museum's exhibits are housed in a former classroom added to the historic building in 1936. The room was completely renovated in 1981–1983 as a museum, and then completely renovated again in 2019, with installation of a new core exhibit outlining the community's rich history. However, the old original maple floor was retained as a reminder of the museum gallery's days as a classroom (if you look closely, you can see where the old desks were screwed to the floor). Be sure to visit the museum's gift shop in the Roger Matile Room, where you'll find books, postcards, and other items with an Oswego Township history theme.

