



# Osceola Historical Society

MARCH 2023 NEWSLETTER

## 2023 Board Members

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Pat Kytola

### Vice President & Secretary

Barb Hoverman

### Treasurer

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## Upcoming Programs

**April -- TBA**

**May** – Members-only tour of a couple of houses on River Street. This is a change, so stay tuned for more details.

**June** – History of the Horse Creek Store

**August** – Special members' train ride

## This Just In

May Benjamin Harding's 1961 book Of Men and a River has been revised and updated and is now

available for purchase. You can

[find it on amazon](#), or

at The Staple, or the

Polk County

Information Center,

or contact one of the

board members. Also

available are

\*Osceola: A Village

Chronicle,

\*A History of

Farmington

Township, Polk

County, Wisconsin,

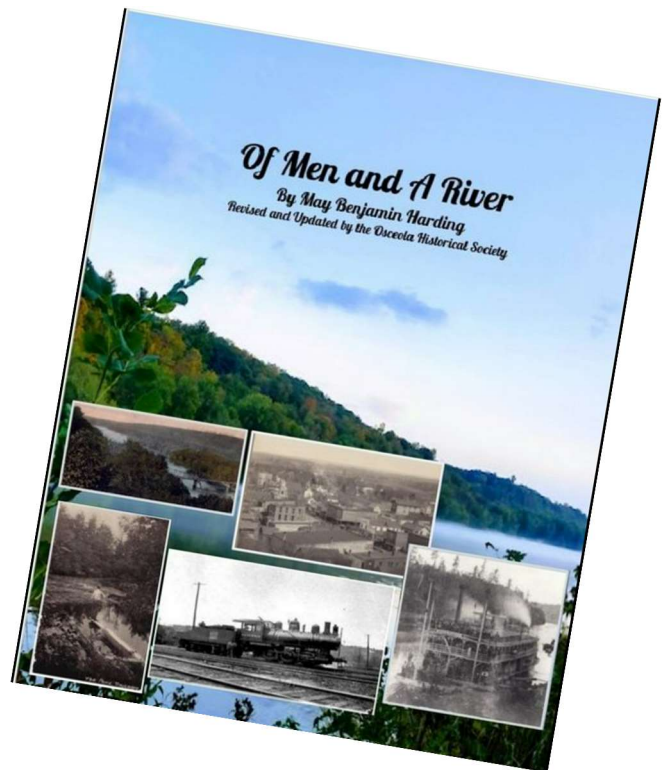
and

\*Trinity Evangelical

Lutheran Church,

Celebrating 100

Years of God's Grace.



**In case you missed it.** Attendance was low at our Vietnam Veteran's Panel in November, due to the first snow of the season, but our veterans did a fabulous job. Many, many heartfelt thanks to them for shining a light on a part of our history we rarely get to see.

*Thank you for being a member of the Osceola Historical Society!*

Regular memberships are \$10 for individuals, \$15 for families, and \$25 for corporate members.

Lifetime Memberships are \$100 for individuals, \$150 for families, and \$250 for corporate members.

*If you have not already sent your 2023 memberships, please do so soon. No membership form is required for returning members*

Remember to check out [our YouTube page](#) for videos of past programs. You can find them all by following the link above. Our Vietnam Veteran's Panel is being edited, and should be up very soon.



We also have some more special things that will be added shortly – they should be a real blast from the past if you went to Osceola High School....

**History Wall** Currently showing “FIRE!!” stories of several of the fires that have shaped and reshaped our village, especially the downtown area. Next up in April will be Troutmere and the Osceola Fish Hatchery, and Bethania Mineral Springs. The History Wall is directly across the hall from the Public Library on the corner of Chieftain and 4<sup>th</sup> Ave.

**Protecting our Past** In light of the proposed redevelopment of the old hospital site, we have been in communication with the State Archaeologist's office regarding early burials in or near that location. LeRoy Hubble, the first of our settlers to die here, was buried there in 1846. Mrs. Samuel Close, wife of the first settler out by what is now the fish hatchery, and a child of John Toban were laid to rest there as well (The child has since been removed). There may be others. *Exactly where* is a question we have been trying hard to find the answer to – it may be that these graves are under the current building or surrounding parking areas, or further down the slope. The State Archaeologist has alerted the developer to the possibility of finding human remains, and is requiring that an archaeologist is present and monitoring the situation when any stripping and excavation begins. If you have any information on the exact location of these burials, please let us know.

**Still waiting....** Speaking of protecting our past, we are still waiting for the first of our digitized newspapers to be delivered. These will be the earliest papers published in Osceola, from the mid-1850s, and the anticipation is intense! So many questions to answer... So much family history to enrich...For a while the papers published in Osceola were actually county papers, so these early editions could hold answers for folks in neighboring areas as well.

**For our next number** Our big project this year will be a physical inventory of all the Historical Society's holdings – photos, clothing, dishes, maps, rugs, furniture, books, documents...We are working with Lora Tatinger from the Chisago County Historical Society, learning how to use the **CatalogIt** museum software to photograph, describe, organize, and acknowledge each item in our collection. This will be a huge undertaking, but it is very much needed. Each little item will have its own accession number and description, so we will have much more complete records of what is held in our collections, so we can protect their significance, and lay our hands on them more easily when



\*Photos of Osceola – school events, random shots of town, community activities, etc.

\*Copies of family histories

\*An abstract of your property (shows all the previous owners) or just a simple history. Did your grandpa buy it from the railroad? Did you inherit it? Do you have an old foundation on your property?

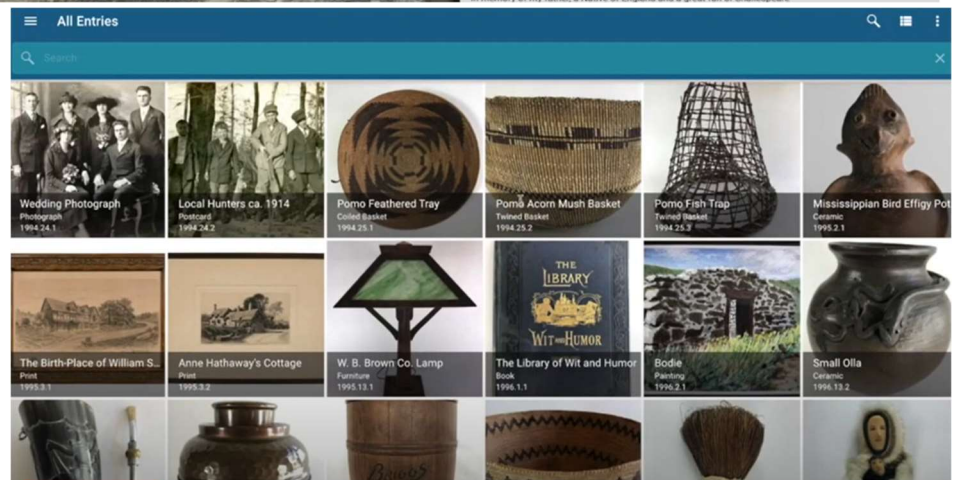
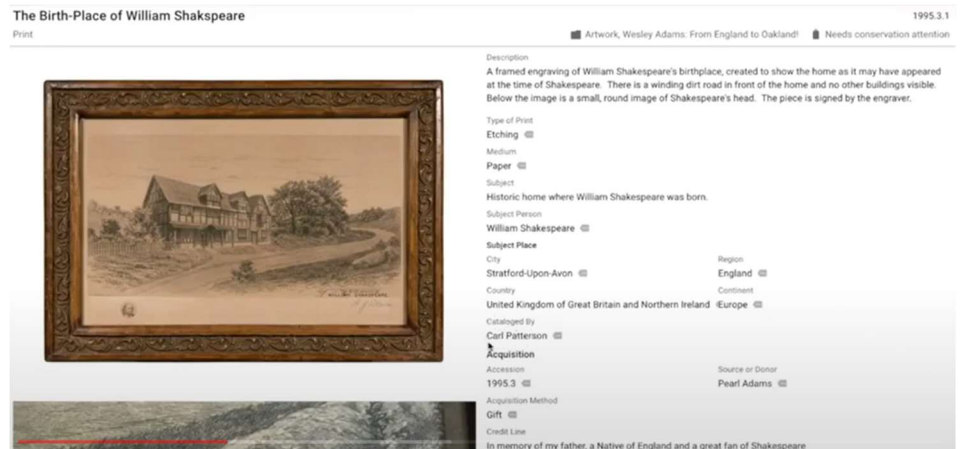
\*A brief history of your business. Even a few lines telling the name, address, owner, and what years it was in operation would help, but if you can provide any other history of the building or business, that's great. We keep a little book of all the street addresses in town, but it is incomplete!

\*Diaries, journals, letters

Please don't think your history is unimportant!

they are needed.

Below are a couple of screenshots from the CatalogIt tutorial, just so you can get a feel for what sort of program this is.



### George Kyle and his Water Wheel

George Kyle (1881-1956) was quite an interesting person. He came from the



Downing, WI area.

Technically listed in the censuses as a farmer, he had at one time been a clown with the Ringling Brothers Circus. He operated Kyle's Koffee Kup Kafe from about 1940-1949. (Photo at left from 1945 – Kyle's Koffee Kup is the white building on the far right). He was

also hired to run the Spanish Garden Theater in 1940. (Bud Stocker had run it previously, and stayed on as projection man.) George was a member of the





All this takes work!! If you are interested in or passionate about preserving and presenting our history, please step up.

- We have a hard time getting some things done because no one is available during the week – meeting workmen, opening the Society House to visitors, even making phone calls are all small things, but they can be a challenge for those of us who are still working regular jobs.
- If you'd like to help with research, that can be done largely at home.
- If you have a particular area of expertise (or even interest), perhaps you'd be willing to share it in a presentation, or let us interview you so that we can.
- Our **CatalogIt** project is going to take some time. Extra careful help with that will be very much appreciated.

American Legion, and a well-known entertainer and Master of Ceremonies all across NW Wisconsin. The photo below, taken in 1945 shows George A. Kyle third from right.



### Water Wheel

George Kyle, enthusiastic village civic worker, is shown above with Bob Scottum and Greg Nelson in front of the water wheel soon to be installed in the stream below the Cascade waterfall in the Osceola glen.

Nine feet in diameter, including paddles, the wheel is covered with aluminum. Twelve pie-shaped panels are painted alternately red and blue. Large white letters will spell out Osceola, Wis., as the wheel rotates. The twelve paddles will be attached when Fred Steffen and Sons install the wheel in the stream.

The wheel project was conceived and promoted by Mr. Kyle and was financed by village contributions.

**Historical Photos of the Future** taken December 17, 2022 *Main Street looking south from Third Ave.; the Christmas display at Treasure Alley (formerly the Spanish Garden); and the old Baptist church, now housing the Chocolate Gnome, Rivergroup Financial, and Lundgren's Realty.*



**Do you know?** We have a request for information on the Dunn family who lived “in the big brick house that sat next to the railroad tracks.” Not much to go on, but if you have a clue, we could sure use it! This would possibly have been fairly recent history, like the 1950s.





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