

SHADES OF THE PAST

Williams Bay Historical Society
Established 2013

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HISTORICAL SOCIETY INFORMATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday, May 20 – Wonders of
Williams Bay Tour
Watch for upcoming details.

UPCOMING HISTORY BOOK

A Pictorial History of Williams Bay
1836-1939
Watch for upcoming book details

2017 ANNUAL DINNER

Watch for details later in the year

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Tenth Annual Local History and Historic Preservation Conference

By President Pat Grove



The Tenth Annual Local History and Historic Preservation Conference sponsored by the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Wisconsin Council for Local History was held October 21-22, 2016 at the Glacier Canyon Conference Center in the Wisconsin Dells.

Judy Bausch, John and Pat Grove attended to represent the WBHS. There is a Town Square area as part of the conference.

This is a popular networking opportunity that features table-top exhibits and information from historical and preservation groups

around the State of Wisconsin. WBHS had brochures available about events in the Williams Bay area and the Wonders of Williams Bay Tour.

Since one of the main sessions was a presentation on the History of Cemeteries, Monuments and Grave Markers, there was a great deal of interest from the conference participants in the East Delavan Union Cemetery Walk that John Grove researched. This historic cemetery will be a site to visit during the Wonders of Williams Bay Tour in May of 2017.

The 2017 conference will be held in Lacrosse, October 20 & 21.

History Book Progressing Mid-Summer Publication Date Anticipated

By Michelle Bie Love

The upcoming book on the history of Williams Bay is progressing and we are anticipating a publication date in the summer of 2017.

In addition to many amazing photographs, some that have not been seen before, we have uncovered some little known Williams Bay facts and information that will astound even the most ardent history buff.

A Pictorial History of Williams Bay on Beautiful Geneva Lake 1836-1939 is the first comprehensive book on the history of the village of Williams Bay. It will educate readers on the first inhabitants of the area around Geneva Lake, the arrival of the sons of Israel Williams to Geneva Lake and the growth of the village through 1939.

Miss Anna Peterson named Williams Bay Postmistress in 1907

Second in a series of biographies of early residents of Williams Bay, Wisconsin

Article and photo excerpt from: History of Walworth County, Wisconsin, by Albert Clayton Beckwith, 1912, page 928

Too few of us it is given to come within sight of the gracious castle of our dreams, but there can be no measure of doubt that too many earnest high-minded seekers after the truth, such as Miss Anna Peterson, the able and popular postmistress at Williams Bay, Walworth county, has been granted a tangible realization of many of the ideals of early youth,--the time of air-castle building,--which have been crystallized into worthy accomplishment in connection with the affairs of this work-a-day world. A woman of gracious presence and intellectual attainments, she is eminently qualified for the responsible position of which she is incumbent. Her commendable qualities are no doubt inherited from a long line of sterling ancestors, men and women who have been leaders in progressive movements in their day. They were Norwegians of the best type--person characterized by strength of mind, breadth of view, high-minded patriotism.

Miss Peterson was born in Leland, Illinois, and is one of a family of seven children born to Peter O. and Bertha (Thompson) Peterson, the others having been named



Tillie, Otto, Peter, Nathaniel, Rebecca, and Michael T. The subject was the third in order of birth.

The Peterson family emigrated to the United States in May, 1886, settling at Earlville, Illinois, after spending two weeks in Philadelphia. They lived in Earlville a year and at Leland near that place, then went to Chicago, where they remained ten or eleven years. Eventually they came to Walworth county, Wisconsin, and located at Williams Bay and there established a comfortable home in which they remained until March 1911, a period of twenty-five years, then moved to Madison, Wisconsin.

Of the children mentioned above, Tillie married Fred Rahn and they live at Lake Geneva; Nathaniel lives in Fresno, California; and Rebecca lives with her parents in Madison, Wisconsin, and is attending the State University; Michael T. is in business a partner at Granzow and Peterson in Williams Bay.

Miss Peterson received a good education and has long manifested an abiding interest in public affairs. She was appointed postmistress at Williams Bay in October, 1907, and has discharged the duties of the same to the present time in a manner that reflects much credit upon herself and to the eminent satisfaction of the people and department.

Prior to her appointment to the position, Miss Peterson had for a period of six years been a clerk in the local post office. When she was appointed she was one of the youngest postmasters in the state of Wisconsin.

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MISSION OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

The purpose of the Williams Bay Historical Society is to assist in the preservation and exhibition of items of historical interest that are within the boundaries of Williams Bay, and the immediate surrounding area. It will seek to provide the public with educational opportunities to learn about our unique local history. It will also seek to organize and assist in the commemoration of significant dates and events in village history.

Birds of Geneva Lake

Reprinted from Book of Lake Geneva by Paul Jenkins

“Not only “once upon a time,” but for a time that covered uncounted centuries together, the whole neighborhood of Geneva Lake, like many of parts of the continent for the same period was none other than a literal “hunter’s paradise” and such its Indian residents or visitors knew it to be and prized it accordingly. But if the remaining fauna of the surrounding hills and woods are comparatively few in number, the presence of wonderful native birds in great numbers and

notable variety more more than make up for any deficiency of other wild life.”

In the spring of 1922, in the months of April and May, 116 varieties of birds were noted along the north shore of Geneva Lake at the points between Williams Bay and Delavan Inlet by four observers, who joined forces for the purpose of noting the birds’ arrival.

Of the 116 noted, all may rightly be considered among the common birds of the Middle West, either

as residents or migrant visitors, except the swans, cormorants, western meadowlarks, cardinals, and yellow-headed blackbirds.

It is quite possible that more experienced, well-informed, and scientific observers would have found in the same territory and at the same time twenty or thirty more varieties.”

April-May 1922 Bird Count List

Bittern, American	Hawk, Cooper’s	Redstart	Warbler, Myrtle
Bittern, Least	Hawk, Red-Tailed	Robin	Warbler, Yellow
Blackbird, Red-Winged	Hawk, Sparrow	Sandpiper, Pectoral	Waxwing, Bohemian Wax-
Blackbird, Yellow-Headed	Heron, Little Green	Sandpiper, Spotted	wing, Cedar
Bluebird	Heron, Blue	Sandpiper, Least	Whippoorwill
Bluejay	Humming Bird	Scarlet Tanager	Wood Pewee
Bobolink	Indigo Bunting	Shrike, Loggerhead	Woodpecker, Downy
Brown Creeper	Jacksnipe	Sparrow, English	Woodpecker, Golden-Winged
Catbird	Junco	Sparrow, Field	Woodpecker, Hairy
Chewink	Killdeer	Sparrow, Fox	Woodpecker, Red-Headed
Chickadee	Kingbird	Sparrow, Grasshopper	Woodpecker, Yellow-Bellied
Chimney Swift	Kingfisher	Sparrow, Song	Wren, House
Cormorant	Kinglet, Golden-Crowned	Sparrow, Swamp	Wren, Long-Billed Marsh
Cowbird	Kinglet, Ruby-Crowned	Sparrow, Vesper	Yellowthroat, Maryland
Crow	Lark, Horned	Sparrow, White-Crowned	
Cuckoo, Yellow-Billed	Lark, Meadow	Sparrow, White-Throated	
Dickcissel	Loon	Swallow, Bank	
Dove, Mourning	Martin Meadowlark, Western	Swallow, Barn	
Duck, Canvasback	Merganser, American	Swallow, Eaves	
Duck, Bluebill	Nighthawk	Swan	
Duck, Mallard	Nuthatch, White-Bellied	Teal, Blue-Winged	
Duck, Pintail	Oriole, Baltimore	Tern, Black	
Duck, Red-Headed	Oriole, Orchard	Tern, Common	
Finch, Purple	Ovenbird	Tern, Least	
Flycatcher, Great-Crested	Owl, Screech	Thrush, Brown	
Flycatcher, Traill’s	Phoebe	Thrush, Hermit	
Goldfinch, American	Pied Grebe	Thrush, Olive-Backed Thrush,	
Goose, Canada	Plover	Wood	
Goose, White	Purple Grackle	Vireo, Blue-Headed	
Coot	Quail	Vireo, Red-Eyed	
Grosbeak, Cardinal	Rail, Carolina	Vireo, Yellow-Throated	
Grosbeak, Rose-Breasted	Rail, King	Warbler, Black-And-White	
Gull, Franklin’s	Rail, Virginia	Warbler, Blackburnian War-	
Gull, Large White	Rail, Yellow	bler, Black-Throated Green	



Maryland Yellowthroat

Save The Date - May 20, 2017!!!

Wonders of Williams Bay Tour

The Williams Bay Historical Society will again sponsor the Wonders of Williams Bay Tour on Saturday, May 20. The Tour will include historical locations throughout the village. Featured locations will include:

- Mastodons/Ice Age
- History of Yachts and Travel on Geneva Lake
- Train Display
- Kishwaukee Nature Conservancy
- Frost Park
- Potawatomi Burial Site
- Hotton Bldg (Bay View Bldg) and downtown
- Potawatomi Woman
- Yerkes Observatory
- East Delavan Union Cemetery
- Belfry Theatre
- United Church of Christ

Docents will be at each location to share historical facts and information with tour participants. Watch for additional information in the coming weeks.

Hollyhocks: Official Flower of Williams Bay



In 1933, the Garden Club of Williams Bay chose the Hollyhock as the village flower.

From the May 4, 1933 issue of Bay Leaves, “No one can have too many hollyhocks. Plant them at the back of the borders, among the shrubbery,

along fences, and in great clumps in any old corner, or around buildings. They may be allowed to foregather in unserried ranks as one often sees them in country gardens behind a white picket fence. Hollyhocks and white picket fences have a special affinity for each other. Hollyhocks are never amiss and are always beautiful.”

The Heavenly Blue Morning Glory was the second choice. Village residents were urged to “plant many of these flowers.”

