FROM PAGE 1

**PRESERVING A HISTORIC TREASURE**

**HOUSE**
From Page 1

**WADA addresses archival needs**

Thanks to a $700 grant from the Wisconsin Antiques Dealers Association, we are able to improve our capacity to care for the artifacts we steward.

WADA has generously provided funding for individualized archival mounts and custom storage envelopments to best protect the most vulnerable artifacts. We also plan to purchase hygrometers for monitoring microenvironments in storage areas and display cases to help us determine where to prioritize environmental control efforts for preservation.

**HIAH in Silent Sports magazine**

_Silent Sports_ magazine’s October issue features a great article on HIAH contributed by the Portage Area Chamber of Commerce’s Brad Conrad. The magazine was founded in 1984 “to provide solid, reliable and timely regional information on bicycling, running, paddlesports, multisports, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, in-line skating and other nonmotorized aerobic activities.”

**THE AGENCY HOUSE AT 190 YEARS**

**Wau-Bun Express**

**THE AGENCY HOUSE AT 190 YEARS
PRESEVING A HISTORIC TREASURE**

“[The Agency buildings, now erecting at this place...consist of a frame dwelling house, 30 by 34 ft. – two stories high, with a kitchen attached thereto of 16 by 20 ft, 1 ½ stories high and stone cellar underneath; also an outhouse of 6 by 8 feet. These buildings will be furnished, on or before the 15th prox….The house is well built; the work inside is plain and substantial….The buildings are on Indian land, and well situated for an Indian Agency….There are now more Indians who reach this place than in any other within your superintendency except Chicago.”

—Fort Winnebago Indian Sub-Agent John H. Kinzie to Territorial Governor George Porter, October 1, 1832

Exactly 190 years ago this month, the Agency House was receiving its finishing structural touches. The autumn months of the house’s completion coincided with a time of pivotal change, uncertainty, and critical decisions at the portage as decades of accumulating tensions came to a head. Before the plaster had dried on the house’s massive timber walls, hundreds of Ho-Chunk families had converged here. Numerous meetings took place, culminating in a poignant formal council as the Ho-Chunk Nation stood on the brink of forced expulsion from their homeland the following spring.

This weighty era in history marked the commencement of the Agency House’s journey through time. Serving as the epicenter of the unique narrative recorded by Juliette Kinzie in _Wau-Bun_, the house subsequently functioned as a frontier tavern (inn for travelers), a trading post, and a farmhouse as it kept in step with the shifting historic landscape throughout Wisconsin’s formative years. One century later, on October 22, 1932, the house officially began its story as a museum.

Today, the house continues to stand as a testimony to the stories and lessons of a significant period of history. Having weathered 190 years of time and elements, it feels the creaks and groans of age. A major part of our mission as a museum is to preserve the structure as it presses onward toward its second century of existence.

This past year, we were fortunate to have received a substantial grant from the Foundation for Advancement in Conservation in conjunction with the Institute of Museum and Library Services to fund a CAP (Collections Assessment for Preservation) assessment conducted by materials conservator Craig Deller and preservers.

Please see HOUSE, Page 4
THE HISTORIC LANDSCAPE

Discovering the Blue Mounds trail
A sign now stands in the Cherrywood neighborhood of Middleton marking the location of a trail traveled by Indian sub-agent John H. Kinzie and his wife, Juliette, in March, 1831. The lay of the land still harbors hints of this long-eraed trail that was so important to Native residents of the region two centuries ago.

Juliette wrote: “In this open country there are no landmarks. One elevation is as exactly like another, that if you lose your trail [as the Kinzies did] there is almost as little hope of regaining it as of finding a pathway in the midst of the ocean. The trail...is a narrow path, deeply indented by the hoofs of the horses on which the Indians travel in single file. So deeply is it sunk in the sod which covers the prairies, that it is difficult, sometimes, to distinguish it at a distance of a few rods” (Wau-Bun, 2021 Historic Preservation Edition, page 105).

Artifact Donations
We are so grateful for these generous artifact contributions which the public can enjoy and learn from now and into the future.

Dear Friends,

We find ourselves wrapping up another season of learning, exploring, connecting, and memory-making at the Agency House. As we investigated “The Historic Landscape” together, we encountered some unique opportunities along the way, one of which led to the installation of an important new exhibit in our visitor center. We were privileged to collaborate with many wonderful people — volunteers, donors, speakers, historians, the Ho-Chunk Nation, scientists, experts in various fields — who offered their skills and expertise. We hope you’ve enjoyed the season as much as we have!

More than a thousand visitors from the Midwest, across the nation, and around the world traveled to the Agency House this year to participate in tours, exhibits, events, and outdoor offerings. We invite you to join us for our upcoming off-season activities, as well.

Each year, we strive to look at history from a different perspective through thematic programming and special exhibitions. We are hard at work planning for next year and are looking forward to sharing our 2023 season offerings with you.

Respectfully,

Adam Novey
Executive Director and Curator

UPCOMING OFF-SEASON EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Prairie reclamation
Thanks to a grant from the Alliant Energy Foundation, we will continue with our prairie reclamation work over the winter. Invasive black locust trees will be felled, and we will need many volunteers to help cut up the branches with loppers and burn them. Let us know if you are willing and able to help. Many hands make light work.

https://youtu.be/YzZPO5G24Hg

Lunch break series at PCA
Are you looking for something enjoyable and educational to do over your lunch break? The Portage Center for the Arts hosts a Lunch Break Series which explores a wide variety of topics. Agency House director Adam Novey will be the lunchtime presenter on February 23 at noon in the Zona Gale Theatre. Explore the story of a period of America’s history which is rich with lessons and insights. PCA charges $5 at the door for its series.

https://www.portagecenterforthearts.com/brown-bag-lunch-series

THANK YOU
A “Rooted in Conservation” grant through CFSCW funded a walk-behind string trimmer this year to keep the two acres of reclaimed prairie mowed so prairie plants may compete to become established.

ARTIFACT DONATIONS

Baskets honor Ho-Chunk resilience
Portage resident Annette Monthey (right) recalls that a basket she donated to our new “Rediscovering Fort Winnebago” exhibit was made by local Ho-Chunk women who came to her parents’ Fort Winnebago-area farm to trade baskets for chickens and eggs in the 1930s. The older generations at that time told of Ho-Chunk families returning and traveling on the rivers from which they had been driven decades earlier. The Anglim family also donated four Ho-Chunk baskets (ca late 1800s) in memory of their mother, Margaret Anglim.

Timber-framing tools enhance exhibit
Dwain Schroeder (left) of Sun Prairie donated three historic timber framing tools—a timber slick, iron auger bit, & carpenter’s scribe—to supplement our Ft. Winnebago exhibit by illustrating construction methods of the era. Schroeder collected tools, including these unique pieces, from the older “timber framers” of the region.

First edition publication gifted
Allen and Jaime Kinzie (right) of Westerville, OH, visited HIAH and brought a generous gift with them: a first edition (1856) copy of Juliette Kinzie’s memoir, Wau-Bun. Juliette’s important lithographic drawings are only extant in these early editions as the original drawings burned in the Chicago fire.

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