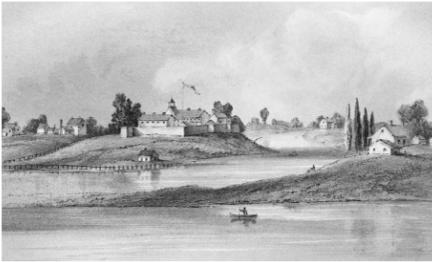


Special Artifacts Donated by Illinois Group

Our museum recently received a generous gift of artifacts which are slated to fill unique roles in helping us tell our story. The NSCDA-IL has been involved with Chicago area museums for many decades. Due to a recent change in focus for one of these museums, this genealogical group sought to find new homes for the Society's collections materials. Several of the objects were donated to the Agency House, ranging from an 1820s crock made in the town where Juliette Kinzie attended college to an early 19th century fire fender which exactly fits the Agency House's upstairs hearth.

One object holds particular interest. An unsigned watercolor painting of Chicago c. 1830-1840 was among the artifacts which found a new home at our historic site. This sketch highlights Fort Dearborn and the Kinzie family's Chicago home. It becomes especially intriguing when compared with a lithograph in Juliette Kinzie's



memoir, *Wau-Bun*. Take a look below. This watercolor was either painted based on Kinzie's lithograph in *Wau-Bun*, or this is Juliette's original work from which the lithograph was made. Your guess is as good as ours currently. Whatever the case, it is certainly a fascinating prospect!

www.agencyhouse.org

Thank You For Helping Make It All Possible!

Members, Financial Supporters, & Volunteers

Grantors/Business Sponsors

- Cissy VD Bryson Fund at the Greater Milwaukee Foundation
- Community Foundation of South Central Wisconsin
- Enbridge "Fueling Futures"
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- Healthy Community Partnership Grant from the SSM Health St. Clare Foundation
- Kohler Foundation
- Museum at the Portage / Portage Historical Society
- Portage Area Community Fund of Madison Community Foundation
- Portage Tourism/City of Portage
- Terrytown Plumbing
- US Fish & Wildlife Service "Partners" Program

2026 season is in memory of:

- Barbara B. (Bobbie) Collings
- Marilyn Grady
- David Hestad
- Mr. Francis J. Hogan
- Nancy Kamlukin
- Fred Langbecker
- Jordan Mueller
- Ted Rebholz
- Wyocena State Graded School Trips

...and in honor of:

- Parker and Peylen Kowalke
- Nancy Langbecker
- Barbara Joan Meyer
- Margaret Meyer
- The Novey Family
- George and Lydia Vierheilig
- Dr. Anne Vravick
- John Wackman
- Mary Zimpelman

A Bird's Eye Vista

History is like a river

History is a collection of the personal stories of all the people who have ever lived. The drama of humankind includes many emotionally-charged scenes, from the heartwarming to the incomprehensible. Here at the Historic Indian Agency House, we do not attempt to hide the shortcomings of players in our story. Just as an aged patina adds value to an antique, so does the tarnish of reality add something important to the big picture of history. We lose something if we try to shine it up. What the past communicates to us in the present is valuable.

History, like a river, surges forward, shifting and churning, tossing over rocks here, tearing fiercely through its banks there, drifting and swirling serenely at another bend. A river is made up of countless microscopic water molecules plus all the living and non-living components carried along in its current. We don't exclusively concentrate on individual water droplets or each grain of sand. We gain perspective by looking at the river as a whole and noting the factors, features, and forces which affect its movement. In the same way, we may not know something about every individual who has ever lived, but we can see how all their contributions together influenced the flow of the human story. The big picture of history gives us an important awareness as we survey its course from the very beginnings and then sweep our eyes toward the horizon where history disappears from view and becomes our future.



Wau-Bun Express

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Vol. 26, Iss. 1

The Big Picture

Surveying the historical panorama



Dear Friends,

The Historic Indian Agency House is a site of national significance. Its story is intertwined with the broader contours of America's past. Although surviving firsthand accounts allow us to dive deep into the stories that happened here, there are times when a higher vantage point can help us perceive the connections which bind people and events across time and space. From a bird's eye view, we gain a fascinating and valuable perspective which reveals that there is so much more to the story.

Join us as we explore "The Big Picture" in 2026!

Respectfully,

Adam Novey

Adam Novey
Executive Director and Curator

www.agencyhouse.org

1490 Agency House Rd., Portage, WI | (608)742-6362 | Wednesday- Sunday, May 15 - October 15

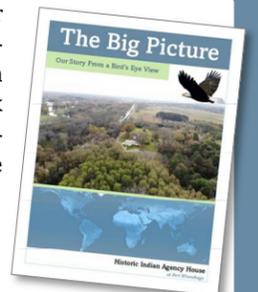
Prairie restoration gets big boost from US Fish and Wildlife

Have you noticed a change in the landscape surrounding the Agency House over the winter? As we enter our fifth season of historic prairie restoration, we are grateful for a special partnership with the USFWS "Partners for Fish and Wildlife" program which has accelerated the project in some dramatic ways. Existing and newly cleared restoration areas are slated for major advances in the coming year. Stay tuned!

Free Learning Guide

Each year an engaging, hands-on learning guide for families is produced based upon our season theme. Access your copy on our website, or pick up a printed-and-bound copy on-site this season!

agencyhouse.org/resources



Intriguing Speaker Series on the Docket

On select Tuesdays throughout the season at 6:30 p.m., a series of outstanding speakers is slated to investigate a wide range of topics based on the theme of “The Big Picture.” Admission is free.

Dr. Gabriel Loiacono, US-Oshkosh Professor of History, presents “Now What: US Politics After the Founding, 1790s-1820s” on June 9.

On July 21, UW-La Crosse Professor of Anthropology Dr. Heather Walder addresses “Large Scale Indigenous Trade Networks in the Great Lakes Region.”

August 11 brings Dr. Patrick Jung, Professor of History at MSOE, to speak on “Métis Families of the Portage.”

UW-Madison Professor of Military History, Dr. John W. Hall, expounds “The Big Picture of Jacksonian Indian Policy” on September 8.



Prying open the lid on a forgotten 1830s community at the portage

During the 1830s, mixed Indigenous/European families (Métis) constituted the resident majority at the portage beyond the walls of Fort Winnebago, second only to a larger seasonal Indigenous presence. This colorful community which stood at the intersection of converging cultures has largely faded from our collective memory today.

Who were these people? What critical roles did they play here at the portage, as well as in the big picture of national history? Come along as we reconnect the missing dots and endeavor to fill in the broader picture of *le portage métis*.

Start by enjoying a free seven-part online video series on our YouTube channel. A special exhibit is also in the works for our visitor center. In addition, we are collaborating with descendants of 19th century Portage Métis residents to fill in the fascinating “rest of the story” up to the present day. More soon!



www.agencyhouse.org/metisportage

Archaeology & Enduring Skills Planned

For the 6th and 7th years, respectively, our Enduring Skills Weekend and Archaeology at the Agency program are scheduled to return this summer for participants of all ages. Our staff and volunteers especially enjoy seeing multiple generations of family members, groups of friends, homeschooling pals, and retirees learning and making fun memories together at these events. Find details at: www.agencyhouse.org/events

Not only does the general public get the chance to contribute in real time to our understanding of this historic site through the science of archaeology alongside professionals, but university students gain some field experience each year, as well. Holding an artifact that hasn't been seen or touched for as long as 200 years is a pretty meaningful experience to be sure.

Enduring Skills Weekend serves up the opportunity to try your own hand at around two dozen historical skills and heritage arts. Every year we bring back some standby stations, as well as search out new experiences to try. There's something for everyone at this free two-day event. Many returnees identify Enduring Skills as a major highlight of their summer. Join us this year!

Redcoats on the River

As the United States turns 250, join historian Mark Tully to learn more about the westernmost battle of the American Revolution, the 1780 Battle of St. Louis. The expedition included a stop right here at Portage to assemble Native allies.



Enjoy this admission-free talk on Saturday, June 6, at 5:00 pm.

Ho-Chunk Cultural Arts Day Slated For June 27



Co-hosted by the Ho-Chunk Nation Museum & Cultural Center, this special event is an occasion you won't want to miss!

The Wisconsin Dells Singers & Dance Troupe of the Ho-Chunk Nation returns to share their extraordinary talent through an enjoyable and educational program for the whole family. Ho-Chunk artisans will exhibit their cultural crafts throughout the day. Make your own black ash basket with renowned artisan Kimberly Crowley. Pre-registration for the basket workshop is required. This remarkable opportunity (normally a \$75/person value) is free thanks to a grant from The Kohler Foundation.



Stroll Through a “Living Timeline” of History on June 6

1. Youth Backpack Workshop



Kids ages 5 to 10 are invited to have a blast learning and discovering as they journey back in time. Meet some fascinating folks from the past as you hike through a “living timeline.” Do hands-on activities at each station. Our volunteers are ready to explore with you! Be sure to wear comfortable clothes that can get dirty. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult (which means parents get to join in the fun right along with their kids). ...and it's free!

Each child receives a free backpack loaded with fantastic themed materials to keep the exploration, learning, and fun going at home, too. If you participated in one of our previous year's workshops, join us again. The activities and backpack contents are brand new each time. There

is a limit of 24 children (12 in the morning, 12 in the afternoon), so pre-registration is required. Be sure to sign up early. agencyhouse.org/backpack

This project is funded in part by a Healthy Community Partnership Grant from the SSM Health St. Clare Foundation; the Community Foundation of South Central Wisconsin; and the Kohler Foundation.

2. Public Event

From 10am to 4pm, the public is also invited to walk through this living timeline of the past. While the pre-registered youth in the backpack workshop are prioritized for the hands-on activities, the general public can also pick up a map for a self-guided stroll through time and enjoy interacting with presenters at each station. Journey from Wisconsin's Indigenous beginnings through the present!

More Living History to Experience

Saturday, May 30 (10-4)

Sunday, May 31 (12-3)

Reenactors from The Historical Timekeepers are on site adding 1860s living history ambiance to the physical setting of your tour. Free admission.

Saturday, September 19 (10-4)

The Galena Living History Society is planning a tailor made living history event just for us! Watch for more details on this free event.

