

WASHINGTON
Historical Society

PO Box 54, Washington, IL
(309) 444-4793



ORDER MAY DAY BASKETS
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ANNUAL MEETING
APRIL 15 - 7:00



BRICK SALES
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HERITAGE HERALD

www.washingtonilhs.com

March 2024

WEDDING DRESS FASHION SHOW - APRIL 12



Make plans now to join us at St. Mark's Lutheran Church on April 12 at 6:30 p.m. for this fabulous Wedding Dress Fashion Show. Tickets are \$25 each or you can purchase a table of 6 for

\$150. Tickets are available at Define the Home, Homespun, or at the Historical Society's website: www.washingtonilhs.com

This event is being planned by longtime Historical Society members Joan Ruppman and Jeanette Pritchard so you know it will be a wonderful evening. Grab your friends and make plans to come enjoy this unique experience.

WEDDING DRESSES THROUGH THE DECADES

You still have time to head up to the Historical Society to see the beautiful wedding dresses on display before this exhibit closes. The exhibit will be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10am to 1pm and on Saturdays from 10am to 1:30 pm through the end of March. These dresses and the accompanying accessories, photographs, and stories, will transport you to another time and place. You won't want to miss this exhibit! There is a suggested donation of \$5 / person to help defray the costs of this special exhibit.



The Washington Historical Society is hosting a wedding dress fashion show! The fashion show will feature wedding dresses from many different eras, as well as a few bridesmaid dresses and mother-of-the-bride dresses. This will be a wonderful event; in addition to the dresses being worn by your friends and neighbors, we will have music, share wedding facts, and enjoy a traditional wedding treat: cake and punch!



It is once again time for the annual meeting of the WHS. Please mark your calendar for **Monday, April 15 at 7:00 p.m.** The meeting will take place at our beautiful building on the square. Refreshments will be served beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Following this year's regular business meeting, we are going to explore the very early history of this area that later became known as Central Illinois. Native American expert, Michael, D. Wiant, Ph.D., will present a program entitled, **"Native American History in Central Illinois: The Journey from the Ice Age to the Present and Beyond."**

Michael Dennis Wiant has studied Native American history for over 50 years and is devoted to sharing his knowledge with the public. He was educated at Illinois State University (B.S., M.S.) and Northwestern University (M.A., and Ph.D.). Following several years of archaeological fieldwork with the Center for American Archeology, Wiant joined the staff of the Illinois State Museum in 1982, where he served in both curatorial and administrative positions. He retired in 2017, but anthropological and archaeological research and public lectures still occupy much of his time. In 2004, Dr. Wiant expanded his research to include 18th and 19th-century Native American history in Illinois, especially land cessions and Native American resistance to American settlement. He developed a series of presentations about William Henry Harrison, who governed the Northwest Territory from Vincennes and negotiated a series of land cessions that transformed the midwestern cultural landscape, the challenges of Native American tribes in the Midwest during the early 19th century including the local Potawatomi, and the Sauk warrior Black Sparrow Hawk, all of which resonate with increasing strength in contemporary society's discussion about Native American heritage.

To accompany Dr. Wiant's presentation, WHS member Howard Spring will lend us his collection of arrowheads to have on display that evening. Please make plans now to join us for our annual meeting and this very interesting program!

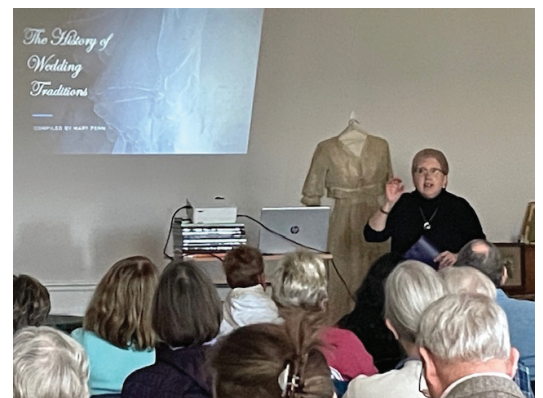
CHRISTMAS HOUSE TOUR 2023

Thank you to everyone who attended or helped out with our December Christmas House Tour. We could not do this without YOUR support.



WEDDING TRADITIONS THROUGH THE DECADES

We appreciate Washington's own Mary Penn who gave a wonderful program at the Society on January 20 about wedding traditions through the years. Those of us in attendance were treated to an entertaining and informative journey through all the traditions associated with weddings, including everything from the engagement to the honeymoon. Now we know that those bridesmaids are there to protect the bride from evil-doers and that we should schedule the wedding to occur shortly after our annual baths!



The video of Mary's program is available on the WHS YouTube channel so you can watch it again and again!

Thank you, Mary!

YOUR HISTORY MATTERS, TOO!

Yes, your history is important! We are asking members to share their remembrances of Washington. Responses will be compiled and shared in the next newsletter and archived to help future historians learn about OUR time in Washington.

How did you get to school as a child? Do you recall any interesting experiences that you had on your way to or from school?

*Please return your remembrance to the Historical Society at P.O. Box 54, Washington, IL 61571
or via email to washingtNILHS@gmail.com*

LAST MONTH'S QUESTION:

If you were at Ricky Walker Day on the square, what are your recollections of this momentous occasion in Washington's History?

I was there - very neat day! – Fred Faubel

It was so cold that some of the flute players lips froze to the flutes. – Jim Nofsinger

Ricky's class mate at St. Pats. We were all at the Square and The Ship visited the school so we all had a personal tour. – Warren Crabill

I was there. I thought he was so lucky. – Kathy Lucas Wehnes

I was there, and it was very cold! Band members wore gloves. – Marg Colley

Whole school walked from WGS and the sheer excitement of peering inside the spacecraft replaced any shivers!

I was so envious. – Kit Zinser



Rick Walker (right) with his brother Dennis Walker during their recent visit to the Historical Society

MAY DAY BASKETS

May Day Baskets will be made by the Washington Historical Society again this year and will be available for purchase for \$5.00. The baskets are each handmade with real planted flowers.

**PLAN TO PICKUP:
Saturday, April 27
10am – Noon
128 Washington Square**



Submit completed form with check payment to:

WHS, PO Box 54, Washington, IL 61571

Orders must be postmarked by April 19, 2024

Purchased by _____

phone _____

email _____

address _____

of baskets _____ x \$5/per _____ = \$ _____

WASHINGTON'S EARLY MOVERS AND SHAKERS

Washington has been home to many, many individuals who became "movers and shakers" locally and throughout the country. Here are just a few:



Silas Wright Eccles

Silas Wright Eccles was born January 3, 1852 in Washington to Joseph and Susan (Davidson) Eccles. He was raised in Washington, attended Washington schools, and loved trains. As a small boy, he spent much time at the T P & W depot begging them for a job, but they never would oblige. He then walked up the street where Mr. Champion at the C&A railroad depot at the south end of Wood Street took a liking to him and put him to work.

Eccles was a sponge for information on the railroad and the telegraph, and by the age of 17, had moved on from Washington, first to a depot at Roodhouse and then to Dwight. These stints were very short as Eccles was moving up the chain with surprising speed.

By the age of twenty, Eccles headed west and became a large part of the burgeoning westward development of the railroads in Kansas, Colorado, Utah, & finally California. From 1872-1900, Eccles had a hand in running no less than five different railroad companies.

By 1900, he was induced to enter the smelting business and became president of the American Smelting & Refining

Company. He did this while serving as president of the Copper River & Northwestern Railroad Company, as well holding the position of vice-president of the American Smelters Steamship Company.

At the time of his death in 1917, his yearly salary was estimated at \$100,000 per year which today would be almost \$2,000,000. He owned a 25,000-acre hunting ranch in Idaho which was considered one of the most game-rich preserves in the world. He had an office on Broadway in New York City. His estate at the time of his death, in today's money, was worth over \$16,000,000.

Eccles returned to Washington often during his exciting life visiting friends, Anthony Heiple and J.P. Wrenn. He embraced his roots and the importance of home and friendships.



David Cummings

May 20, 1903: Samuel and Helen Henebery Cummings welcomed a baby boy they named David Henebery Cummings. Some thirty years later, he met petite, dark haired Ella Wren Off while horseback riding and married her on September 12, 1936. Six children were

born to the couple: Patricia C. Powers, Susan C. Wiegand, Joan C. Knott, David Anthony Cummings (deceased), Charles H. Cummings, and John M. Cummings.

In 1937, they established housekeeping at the end of what is now known as South Cummings Lane on the elegant Hartley farm. Hartleys produced their own bricks to build the 1840's era colonial home. The Hartleys entertained frequently making good use of the guesthouse and icehouse. When Dave and Ella moved onto the property, there was ample barn and pasture space for their beloved horses. Ella's love for all things equine segued into riding lessons for generations to come.

The Cummings family had one of the first in ground pools. Ella and Bud Newell combined building skills to find the finished product featured in Parade magazine. Wagon rides, barn sleepovers, barn-dinner dances (sometimes with a slithery unwelcome guest), hikes and trail rides in the nearby fields and woods provided hours of fun for friends and family. The couple hosted two Steeplechases. Spectators like the Heinz and Budweiser families situated themselves on the hillside for a bird's eye view. A family could not have asked for a perfect setting to make memories. All things in nature was Dave's great passion.

Dave earned his bachelor's degree in 1925 from prestigious Georgetown University. From 1929 to 1957, he was president of Cummings and Emerson, an engine parts company in Peoria. From 1938 to 1958, he was vice president and director of Working Men's Savings and Loan. In a bid for Senator, Cummings' qualifications were listed as businessman, farmer, college graduate, veteran and experience with state business.

As with many patriots, David left his family safely in Washington while he served as Lieutenant Commander in the

Navy. His job in the supply section conveyed him from the Atlantic to the Pacific from 1942 to 1946. At the end of his duty, he did not hesitate to bring a young family in need back with him. Dave opened his home and provided a truck and a job. That is the kind of guy he was. In August of 1949, Governor Adlai Stevenson appointed Mr. Cummings to a six year term on the new Illinois Police Merit Board and in 1951, he was named state purchasing agent. He resigned the state post in September 1951. From 1961 to 1965, he was a Justice of the Peace in Tazewell County.

Included in his service to country and community, Dave was a loyal member of St. Patrick's Church and the American Legion, Post 100. David was committed to honesty in government and believed that no political party or its supporters should tolerate corruption in government. His concern for the welfare of the working person, farmer and small businessman benefitted all who encountered David H. Cummings.

DR. WILLIAM R.A. WILSON

It was Chapter Two of *The Rose of Normandy* that caught my attention – his style of writing equals any modern-day superhero format. In part and as Tonti (first main character) entered, an apparition appeared before him.

“The figure was a little over five feet and the features were small and sharp with the look of mingled cunning. The mouth was large and the lower jaw

seemed to hang like a half shut door and revealed three glistening fangs that resembled more those of a wolf than human teeth while saliva dropped incessantly from the corners of the mouth down the chin. The ears of unusual size originally had been clipped so only the lower two thirds remained. The eyes were most remarkable of all – a curious shade of gray which changed expression according to the mood of the owner. They gleamed alternately with mad fires of the hopeless maniac and again with the all but quenched rays of reason of an idiot.”

This is an introduction to the second main and oddly redeemable characters of this novel which received accolades from the *Boston Herald*: “The plot is new, situations dramatic and tale exudes flavor of Dumas and Gilbert Parker.”

Dr. William R.A. Wilson was the son of Dr. R.B. and Mrs. Wilson of Washington, IL. R.B. was a pioneer physician in Tazewell County. Their son William was born here in 1870 and received his undergraduate degree from Williams College and went on to the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Columbia University. He married Amelia Barnes of Louisville, Kentucky, in 1897. After practicing medicine in Peoria, IL, he semi-retired due to ill health and took to writing. He traveled extensively in America and Europe, contributing his literary skills to magazines while publishing two best-selling novels – the one previously mentioned and *A Knot*

in Blue. In 1903, he and Amelia settled in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where they made lifelong friends and relationships.

In the obituary article from the *Berkshire Eagle*, May 15, 1911, the paper states Wilson held a winning personality and charm, was widely read and cultured, original in thought and sane judgment. He was devout in his Christian work and belief and was a generous citizen. Dr. Wilson succumbed to his extended illness after a life of usefulness at the age of 40 at his home. (A telegram was sent to Washington News and that article stated on May 16 that he was 35 years old and his wife's name was Emma). Telegrams were often hand-written so mistakes were not uncommon.

This is simply another example of how small towns raise exemplary, worldly and influential citizens.



BRICK SALES

In 2023, the Historical Society was able to offer old Barr bricks that had been removed from Washington streets many years ago. As of press time, we have sold all of our bricks! We are very grateful to Lane Weaver, Scott Weaver, Leri Slonneger, and Buddy Lersch who have all helped with this project since the beginning. This project would not have been possible without their dedication and hard work!

We are also grateful to all of you who have purchased our bricks. We appreciate your efforts to beautify your yards by reusing these existing materials while, at the same time, helping the Historical Society.

BIG CHANGES AT THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY



The Historical society is excited to announce big changes that have been taking place inside our building that we hope will better serve our members and the public:

First, we have created a new library in the front room upstairs. This sunny spot with the best view in town of the Washington square is now ready for you to come in to do research. Our research library materials are in this room, and we are now set up as a Family Search Affiliate Library. This means that visitors to the Historical Society can access FamilySearch.com and Ancestry.com for free at the Historical Society. You can use our computers or bring your own laptop to do your genealogical research. This service is completely free though we do appreciate any monetary donations to help defray our costs.

In addition to the library upstairs, we have now created a new display room on the main floor. This display, like

the one upstairs, will periodically rotate. The first display downstairs is: Spring Dress Shop which showcases fashion trends through the years. This exhibit is in addition to the Dr. Museum exhibit upstairs.

To accommodate those who might want to conduct research or to view our displays, the Society will continue to be open on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays from 10-1 through the end of March, and then will be open on Thursdays and the first Saturday of the month from 10-12 and other times by appointment.

ROOTS RECIPIENT MEMORIAL – DAVID VAN DYCK

The Historical Society's 2014 Roots Recipient, David van Dyck passed away in Florida on November 22, 2023 in Ft. Myers, Florida. After growing up in Washington, van Dyck made his career in sports journalism. He wrote for The Sporting News, Sports Illustrated, and Baseball Digest, and had a 30-year career in Chicago working for both the Chicago Sun-Times and the Chicago Tribune. Mr. van Dyck was twice nominated by the Baseball Writers Association of America for the J.G. Taylor Spink Award, the top award in the nation for a sportswriter as recognized by the Baseball Hall of Fame. In 2008, he



was named Sports Writer of the Year by the Pitch and Hit Club, an organization that honors achievement in baseball.

The Historical Society offers our sincere condolences to David's family.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Friday, April 12 – 6:30 p.m.

Wedding Dresses Through the Ages at St. Mark's Lutheran Church

Monday, April 15 – 7:00 p.m.

128 Washington Square
WHS Annual Meeting with presentation by Dr. Michael D. Wiant

Saturday, April 27

May Day Baskets distributed

Saturday, June 8

Garden Walk, held in conjunction with the Town and Country Gardeners

December 10

WHS Christmas House Tour

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FROM THE TAZEVELL COUNTY REPORTER— MARCH 1942

Campaign On To Buy All Old Scrap Metals

Lloyd I. Blumenshine, proprietor of the Blumenshine Used Auto Parts, located one mile east of Washington on Route 24, has received an order from the government to ship as many cars of scrap iron, scrap metals and rubber as possible to be used in making war materials. In an ad on another page of the Reporter Mr. Blumenshine is advertising for scrap metal and he will pay the highest market prices for the scrap. Any kind of scrap metal will be purchased and he in turn will sell it to the foundries needing it for the making of war supplies and to keep the wheels turning in essential defense industries over the country. Each home in this vicinity undoubtedly has certain amounts of scrap metal that can be sold to Mr. Blumenshine in this drive. If you will gather the metal together and take it to the yard just east of the city, you will be helping in the production of war material and realize money that you can put in defense bonds and stamps, thus doing double duty for your country. Don't delay – get your scrap metal together now. Arrangements can be made with Mr. Blumenshine to call for the heavy pieces that you can not carry or haul in your car.

Don Ingle Won \$500 Scholarship at Carthage

Announcement was received during the past week that Donald Ingle of Washington, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ingle and a senior at W.C.H.S., had won a \$500 scholarship awarded by the Carthage college. There were only four students in the state awarded this scholarship and there were many contestants entered. Decisions were based on four merits: scholastic standing, character, participation in church activities and athletics. Elimination was made by the adaptability test. Donald will enter Carthage next fall.

Donald entered the local high school from Central school, northwest of Washington and has gained many friendships among his classmates and teachers by his winning personality, friendliness and willingness to cooperate in any and all activities. He has been on the honor roll all four years in High school. He is president of the student

council, publicity director, editor of the school newspaper and was president of his class in his sophomore year.

Upon asking Donald how he acquired his nickname, "Windy," which was given him when he was just a freshman and has since been his name among his classmates, he answered simply and frankly, "Well, I guess I just talk too much."

A Memorial Service to Be Held Sunday for Lieut. Walker Danforth Who Was Lost at Sea on February 18

Memorial Services for Lieutenant Walker J. Danforth who lost his life February 18, when his ship, the Truxton, ran aground in a heavy sea off the coast of Newfoundland, will be held at St. Mark's Lutheran church Sunday afternoon at 2:30 in charge of Revs. Carl Kammeyer and Ben Esch. Special music will be furnished by Henry August Esser.

War and its grim horror and the suffering that it causes to millions over the world was brought home to Washington in the death of Lieutenant Danforth. His death is the first for the City of Washington in World War No. 2 and it strikes a tragic note in this community. The sea plays no favorites when a ship goes down and to date among the more than 118 bodies recovered from the disaster, no trace of Walker's body has been found. Even the comfort of the finding of the body of this fine young man has been denied to his wife and parents.

Was On Convoy Duty: Lieutenant Danforth was on convoy duty when the two ships, the Truxton of which he was third in command and the Pollux, ran aground in a heavy sea where visibility was practically zero. The ships began to break up immediately under the terrific pounding of the waves fanned by a 60 mile gale. Rescue efforts were carried on by men of the fishing village and they were cited for their heroism by President Roosevelt. Lieutenant Danforth's wife, the former Miss Mary Reynolds of Brooklyn, N.Y., arrived here Tuesday and will be here with his mother and father for several days.

Handkerchief Shower For Mrs. Ernest Berry

A handkerchief shower was held at the home of Mrs. Leonard Turvill in honor of Mrs. Ernest Berry last Friday evening. Mr. and Mrs. Berry are soon moving to their new home in Spring Bay. Mrs. Berry received many lovely handkerchiefs. Games were played and prizes were awarded to Miss Bernice Hurst, Mrs. Orville Christ and Mrs. Harold Sweckard. A delicious luncheon was served at a late hour.

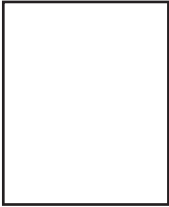
Will Immunize School Children Next Wednesday

As the result of the campaign for immunization of our school children which has been carried on for the past few weeks by the Parent-Teachers Association, the first of the shots for diphtheria will be given on next Wednesday, March 25. This program is to be carried on by the local physicians and the cost for each treatment has been fixed at \$1.00.

Small pox is on the increase and shots for this disease will also be given as well as for diphtheria. The second treatment for diphtheria will be given on April 15 and at that time the small pox serum will be given. Parents are urged to protect their children against these two diseases. The local boards of education have given their support to this campaign being carried on by the above group and in this issue of the Reporter appears a paid advertisement endorsing and urging the parents of this community lend their support to this movement.

Muller Herd Leads in Woodford Testing

The 21 Holsteins in the G. and R. Muller herd had highest production honors for February in the Woodford County Dairy Herd Improvement Association, Tester Raymond Camel has reported. Those cows averaged 40 pounds of butterfat for the month, three of the 21 head dry. The association average for 268 cows on test in 17 herds was 25.8 pounds of butterfat per cow. One of the cows in the G. and R. Muller herd produced 1,817 pounds of milk and 781 pounds of butterfat in February.



Help the Washington Historical Society

Remember: an easy way to help support the mission of the Washington Historical Society is to designate us as your preferred beneficiary through Kroger Community Rewards. This program sends money back to your designated charity based on your everyday purchases. We currently have 13 families supporting the Historical Society through this Rewards program and would love to double that number in the coming year. To select the Washington Historical Society as your preferred beneficiary for Kroger, please go to: <https://www.kroger.com/l/community/community-rewards>. Every dollar helps!



TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

2024 Membership - Washington Historical Society

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Choose your membership level:

- ☐ Student/ Free ☐ Single/ \$30 ☐ Family/ \$45
☐ Business/ \$75 ☐ Golden/ \$150 ☐ Lifetime/ \$400

Employee Matching: _____

(employer name & address) _____

Return by April 15 to: Washington Historical Society, PO Box 54, Washington, IL 61571

Please send a gift membership to:

Name _____

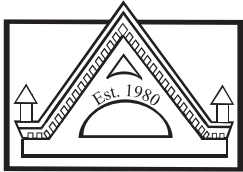
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Choose their membership level:

- ☐ Student/ Free ☐ Single/ \$30 ☐ Family/ \$45
☐ Business/ \$75 ☐ Golden/ \$150 ☐ Lifetime/ \$400



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