

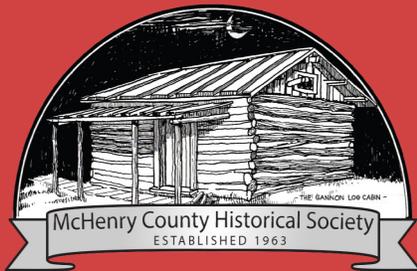
2020
2021



ANNUAL REPORT



SERVING
OUR
COMMUNITIES
SINCE
1963



McHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY UNION, ILLINOIS

THE
YEAR
IN
REVIEW



This publication contains reports from the following Standing Committees to be presented to the Society membership at the Annual Meeting as directed by the McHenry County Historical Society 2008 Bylaws, revised July 2018:
Executive, Finance, Governance, Membership, Building, Historic Sites, Education, and Collections Committees

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2020 - 2021

Karen Parks, President
Robert W. Frenz, Vice-President
Molly Walsh, Treasurer
Lonni Oldham, Acting Secretary

Geri Alten (New)
Kathy Bergan Schmidt
Arlyn Booth
Rob Cisneros
Maggie Crane (resigned)
Mary Ellen Heelan (resigned)
Catherine Jones
Henry Kenyon
Robert Lueders (New)
Dave Martin (resigned)
Lonni Oldham
Marianne Pigott (resigned)
Paula Rieghns
Dan Ring
Don Rose
Debra Silker

STAFF

Kurt Begalka, Administrator
Nancy Roozée, Office Manager (resigned)
Kira Stell, Curator
Karolina Kowalczyk, Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator (resigned)

MCHENRY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Administrator

The past year has been a little like starting up 2-stroke gas trimmer or chain saw after it's been sitting all winter. Every time you think you've got it up and running, something else happens.

During this relentless pandemic, we've also been confronted with the unforeseen, the unexpected. But we've managed to stay the course by adapting and with the unwavering support of our members. One good thing about COVID is it has brought the museum community together.

PRESERVATION

We've never had at least several irons in the proverbial preservation fire. Development pressures are relentless in the face of cost cutting and the allure of the next new shiny object. But what we're often left with is a homogenous streetscape of strip centers, woodsy sounding subdivisions and cookie-cutter designs. When you can't find your SUV in the parking lot because they all look the same, it's time for a new, old fashioned approach.

While it's true we've had mixed success over the years, we've certainly raised public awareness about preservation. It is rare (Old Courthouse in Woodstock) that there is a public mandate for preservation. Here's hoping it gets easier and that structures such as the Catty Building in Huntley, Memorial Hall in Richmond, the Coventry House in Harvard, the first county courthouse in McHenry and Cary's village hall can be repurposed into something special. With the cost of new construction nowadays, you'd think that would be a given.

PROGRAMMING

When COVID struck in March 2000, it turned our programming schedule on its ear. People remained interested in learning about local history, but they wanted to do so safely. For many, that meant remote learning. So in partnership with Illinois Humanities, we launched an all-virtual Sampler Lecture series this past spring. Topics ranged from county fair recipes to the Curt Teich post-card archive, to historic instruments to 19 century clothing.

After the 2020 Heritage Fair was canceled, we moved the car show to Cider Fest in October and then rebooted this year's Heritage Fair with its typical car show, a return of the White Elephant Sale, a record Garden Glitz plant sale and live entertainment. The roster included magicians Bruce Young and Kevin Sarnwick and Cajun fiddler Dennis Stroughmatt. It reminded everyone how things used to be.

FINANCES

Our members' generosity during our Annual Fund drive astounded us. They've also stepped up to adopt art, books, atlases and other rare collection items. The pandemic forced us to diversify our revenue stream by exploring grants, developing a Crystal Point Mall T-shirt for sale and crafting a planned giving policy. Investment performance and sound management enabled us to purchase the adjoining property to the museum at 17618 Washington St. and to hire a space consultant to advise us on coping with future growth. Financial pressures from a reduced schedule and a jittery public remain, but I believe we are headed in the right direction ... even if it is slower than we'd like.

ADMINISTRATION

• This year of change has extended to the board and staff. We lost our volunteer and outreach coordinator, Karolina Kowalczyk, and veteran Office Manager Nancy Roozée. Both will be difficult to replace. Nancy, in particular, provided years of loyal service to this organization – first on the board and then as a staff member. Thanks, also, to Mary Ellen Heelan for her years of service, as well as for the efforts of former board members Dave Martin and Marianne Pigott. We welcome Bob Leuders, Geri Alten and Nancy "I Couldn't Get Enough of You" Baker. Nancy is rejoining the board, now that she retired from the city of Woodstock. I am excited to be working with all of them! – Kurt Begalka

Executive

It is an exciting time for the McHenry County Historical Society and its Executive Committee, which is responsible for overseeing overall policy and planning for the organization.

MCHS sold the Schuette building, which lacked the environmental controls necessary for safely storing its collection. We then consolidated satellite storage into one larger location - albeit stuffed to capacity, already.

The board determined a space analysis was critical, so a task force produced a request for proposals (RFP). We since hired Studio GWA out of Rockford to do this study and we are anxiously awaiting the results. The subsequent report should help us make informed decisions on facilities and storage in the future.

In addition, MCHS purchased the parcel located next to the original Union school portion of our museum after it was suddenly put up for sale. With an eye to the future as our space needs grow, it made sense to acquire a little more elbow room.

Having completed the first edition of the museum self-assessment program (StEPs), the board will decide if it wishes to continue on to the second edition of this program offered by the American Association of State and Local History. It also will be revisiting and updating the organization's strategic plan.

Part of our current goals included creation of an organization chart, restructuring of our board committees, creating job descriptions for all board, staff and volunteers, and reviewing policies – as well as the bylaws. As you are aware, we proposed quite a few updates to the bylaws!

The pandemic has changed so much about the way we live and will probably impact much of how life unfolds as we move forward. We are looking forward to a productive year of getting membership and attendance back up – even exceeding previous years. Unfortunately, we had to suspend some programs. The casualties include most of last year's Sampler Lecture Series, the Perkins' Players historical re-enactment and our annual Historic Halloween.

However, we did host a White Elephant Sale and a modified Cider Fest –in a somewhat slimmed-down fashion because of public health concerns. Our education program stepped up with history kits for parents and others to pick up and do at home, as well as several, well-produced videos

Exhibits curator Kira Stell created several new exhibits and organized the Anderson Gallery to showcase restored, local art from the Society's collection. We hosted a museum and gallery opening for this new, two-year exhibit on June 4 to rave reviews. Our intention is to eventually restore all programs you enjoyed and appreciated prior to the pandemic, in addition to expanding online and outreach activities.

Karen Parks - President

Education

The past year has been very busy one for the Education Committee.

Being in lockdown for a large portion 2020, and into 2021, eliminated school tours and programs. But it also prompted us to consider alternative modes of delivery for the museum's education program.

We developed our first take-home kit on pioneer times. It was so well received that we continued to develop and deliver learning kits on trains, the Civil War, Grandma and Me, and quilting kits – one for children and a different one for adults. We shared the adult learning kit with several assisted-living facilities. As of March, we distributed 670 kits.

Also popular are road and walking tours that allow viewing of historic sites throughout the county. These include walking tours of Woodstock Historic Houses, the Woodstock Square (both ready to go onto the website. Road tours already available cover the northeast and southwest sections of the county. The committee is working on one for the northwest area, as well as updating and renewing our Quilted Barn Tour – complimented by a descriptive brochure.

Another educational endeavor has been the production of short videos available on our website and on YouTube. The first one focused on the West Harmony, one-room schoolhouse. A Master Gardeners' video at the Gannon cabin was next, followed by "Christmas in the Pioneer Cabin." Exhibit-related videos providing overviews of "The Fight for Illinois Suffrage," "Riding the Rails" and "Call to Arms" also are free to the public.

The last five videos were a series of "Cooking Up History" and included making butter, cookies, sourdough bread and canning. All showcased antiques items from our collection. The last video provided tips on scrapbooking family receipts, along with a history.

In terms of our Society's StEPs (Standards and Excellence Program for History Organizations) goals and strategic plan's outreach objectives we completed an interpretive plan which gives board members and staff direction on future programming and exhibits. The first goal under this plan is to survey the residents of the county to ascertain their wants and needs. Watch for our survey and please take the time to complete it:)

Karen Parks - Chair

Karen Parks - President

Membership

As it has been for all of the Historical Society since January 2020, it has been a challenging time for the Membership Committee. No activities to bring people into the museum, no outside events to attend and promote membership, an uncertain future – we find ourselves lucky to still have a strong membership base and good point to start from for going on to bigger and better things.

The work of our former Outreach Coordinator Karolina Kowalczyk was one of our main strengths. She supervised the take-home kits and made videos to keep our members and others engaged with the society. She never forgot to include a mention about joining us as a member in the follow up emails. The committee itself was a source of ideas and never became discouraged about the hand we had been dealt.

In terms of total numbers of members, we are currently holding our own. Total number is about 650. However, June and July are the largest months for membership renewals, (81 renewals due for those 2 months) so a more detailed accounting that includes number of members by category should wait until September.

There are things YOU can do to help increase MCHS memberships. Thank your township or municipality for being a member or encourage them to do so. Encourage businesses to become a Business Partner. Give a gift membership, always appropriate for the December/January holiday season, or for a birthday or “just because” gift. Help us to keep growing!

Kathleen Bergan Schmidt
Membership Chair

LIFE MEMBERS

Libbie Aavang	Nancy Hudson	Judy Porter
Helen Anderson	Robert Hughes	Dan Powers
Melodie Archer	Nancy Irwin	Donald V. Purn
Barabara Weter Bennett	Dennis Johnson	Norma Purn
Kathleen Bergan-Schmidt	Willis Johnson	Laura Rice
Ann Bormett	Shirley Johnson	Donald Rose
Rick Bormett	Stanley Korwin	Tracie Rose
Anderson's Candy Shop	Charles Liebman	Chuck Ruth
Edwin Colton	Judith Lovaas	Brian Sager
Aastri Cunat	Robert Lueders	Merton Sarvay
Trudie Dreyer	Mary Maurer	Jude Schmidt
Michael Easley	Arden Miller	Larry Schmidt
John Eickstadt	John Moline	Tom Schultz
Nancy Fike	Sherry Mueller	Wayne Schwartzman
Stephen Fike	Mr. & Mrs. L.R.O'Connor	Jane Setzler
Sean Foley	Lonnie Olham	Linda Stengele
David Gervais	Marlene Olson	Carl Stengele
Lori Geske	Peggy Palmquist	Susan Tauck
Carol Halma	James Peard	Theodore Thayer
Peggy Hart	Ethel Pearson	Cindy Thompson
Judy Beth Hervert	Kenneth Pearson	James Tonyan
Nellie Hohnsen	Janice Perkins	Ilene Wiedemann
	Peter Perkins	

DECEASED MEMBERS

Jane Dahm	Bob Nunamaker
Ann Hughes	Carol Sek
Jeanne Johnson	Katherine Schultz
Jo Mazurkiewicz	Phyllis Walters
Grace Moline	

If you know of any other member who passed in the last year and is omitted from the list, please phone or email the office.

Finance

Certainly this year has been a challenging time for all of us. The society is fortunate that the Northern Trust disbursements (McEachren Charitable Trust, MCHS Endowment and the Anderson Fund) which account for approximately 75% of our revenue continued with no interruption. Since the museum was closed most of the year, revenue from programs was significantly down. The bright spot was the tremendous financial support we received from our members. Donations from the Annual Appeal increased dramatically from \$21,952 last year to \$39,658.42 this year. We can not thank our members enough for their continued financial support. In addition, we had two important real estate transactions this year. We sold the Schuette building (home of the white elephant sale). We withdrew \$213,283.20 from the MCHS endowment to purchase property on Washington St. which is adjacent to the museum campus. The accompanying pie charts give you an overview of the society's revenue and expenses for the fiscal year ending June 30th 2021.

Budget for Fiscal Year 2021-22

The budget for 2020-21 reflects an anticipated income of \$369,607 and \$378,934 in expenditures. The difference (\$9,327) will be made up with the checking account carry-over. The budget reflects hiring a part-time bookkeeper (a new position) and a summer collections intern. We continue a withdrawal of \$30,000 from the Anderson bequest with half of the amount set aside to establish a capital fund for major building repairs and the other half to meet cash flow needs.

Investments

We saw increases in all three of our investment funds. All three funds are being managed by The Northern Trust with an investment strategy of growth with moderate income.

McEachren Charitable Trust market value

June 2020 \$ 3,554,453.60
June 2021 \$ 4,449,022.98

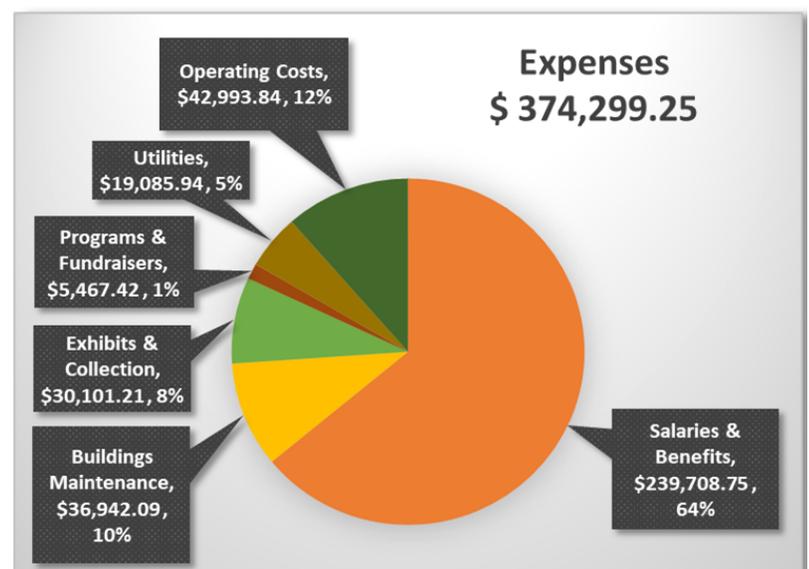
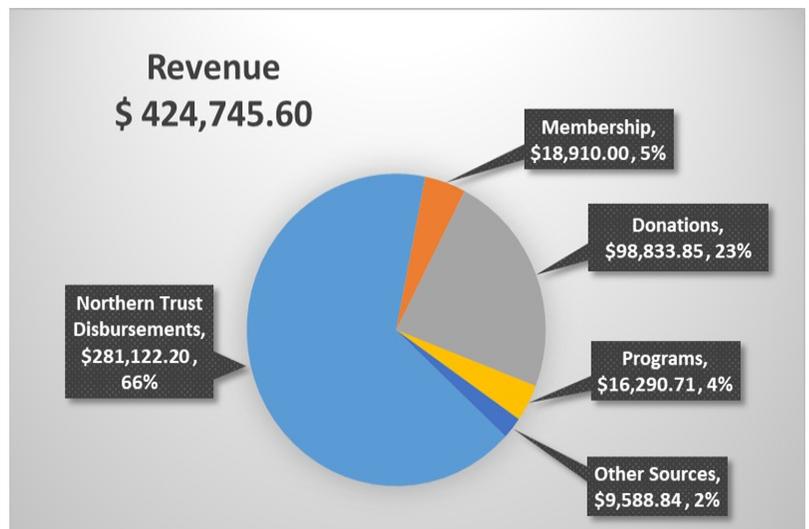
MCHS Endowment market value

June 2020 \$ 1,792,851.99
June 2021 \$ 2,225,360.97

Anderson Fund market value

June 2020 \$ 798,620.74
June 2021 \$ 1,000,178.22

With the museum now open, we look forward to seeing you in person.



Collections

2020-2021 Projects

Collections volunteers completed cataloging the back log of new artifact donations created during the Covid-19 shutdown.

The oversized artifacts in 3D storage are in the process of being inventoried and rehoused in storage boxes where appropriate by the Collections Committee.

The artifacts on display in the Drug Store, Hardware Store, and General Store exhibits are in the process of being inventoried and cataloged on our collections database.

A Collections Assistant is anticipated to be hired for a 10-week period later this summer to continue inventorying the oversized objects in our 3D storage.

Adopt-an-Artwork: Kira Stell, Exhibits Curator, established the Adopt-an-Artwork program to stabilize the MCHS art collection for an upcoming exhibit. A total of 20 artworks were adopted and are now on display in the new exhibit “Art of the Past: Viewing History through McHenry County Artists”.

Adopt-a-Book: Several John Brink survey notebooks in need of conservation were chosen again for this year’s program. 6 survey notebooks were selected. Also, a Tyron plat book containing several maps of McHenry County in 1890s, a 1927 Atlas of McHenry County, and an early 1900’s ledger from the Buffalo House Tavern. Members of The McHenry County Civil War Roundtable donated funds to adopt one of the John Brink survey notebooks that includes a roster of Civil War soldiers. The Tyron plat book and another John Brink survey notebook was also adopted. There were also donations given to the General Book Restoration Fund to help conserve future books. Visit gothistory.org to view the list of adoptable books.

2020-2021 Accessioned Artifacts: 446

Sample of Accessioned Artifacts: G.A.R. memorabilia; Borden-Wieland milk bottle from Spring Grove; Collection of abstracts from the Estate of William Caldwell; Todd School memorabilia; Ringwood Methodist Church memorabilia; Stickney family daguerreotypes, 1850s; McHenry County 1872 Atlas; McHenry High School class ring, 1933; Woodstock High School cardigan, 1940s; Desk from the Washer Tavern in Cary, 1940s; Doll furniture, 1950s; Algonquin Founder’s Day slides, 1960s; McHenry County political memorabilia, 1970s; Flower applique quilt, 1990s; Woodstock High School yearbook, 2001; McHenry County Covid-19 flier.

Current Collection Storage



2020-2021 Deaccessioned Artifacts: 224

Sample of Deaccessioned Artifacts: Todd School booklet (duplicate); Woodstock Beverage Company bottle (duplicate); McHenry Plaindealer newspaper, 1902 (digitized); Broken apothecary jar (poor condition); Marengo area scrapbook (digitized); Egg beater (poor condition); Woodstock Illustrated booklet (duplicate); Pabst beer glass (duplicate); Fox River Grove scrapbook, 1943 (digitized); Single salt shaker (missing pepper shaker); Obituaries Scrapbook, 1916 (digitized); Cardboard candy box (poor condition); McHenry County 1872 atlas (duplicate); Dress form (poor condition); Spools of thread (duplicate).

Kira Stell

Curator

Buildings

Governance

1. The 2019/2018 year for the Building Committee was the first year with an official budget. Last year we also had a capital improvement fund set up for ongoing building maintenance. We look forward to fixing the museum roof, museum tuck pointing and portico replacement.
2. The STEPs program progress has slowed down over the last two years. The handicap accessibility portion of the STEPS goals is dependent on an expensive lift for wheelchairs to reach the stage in the museum building. A grant application was denied two years ago, and alternative funding has not been found.
3. Many of the STEPS goals involve documentation for the buildings, such as applying for the National Register of Historic Places, which we have been unable to make progress on.



4. A decision was made to sell Riley church, but the church is not saleable. The Building Committee is undertaking a comprehensive proposal regarding the future of Riley Church.
5. Actions outside of the Building Committee's work that impacted the buildings included:
 - a. Purchasing a residence on the same block as the Museum, which can be used as it is for office and meeting space and for library space.
 - b. The Museum itself had a serious roof leak that was occasioned by a roof liner that was installed incorrectly.
 - c. The BOD hired a space consultant to add input to the stay or go question that the Building Committee spend significant time on. There is an ongoing discussion among the board about whether the Society headquarters should remain in Union or move elsewhere.

Paula Rieghns, Chair

The Governance Committee is please to nominate the following persons to serve a three-year term on the Society's Board of Directors:

• **Bob Lueders, Algonquin Township.**

Bob's keen interest in history reaches back to his childhood. For the past four decades, he has amassed a significant collection of historical signatures and documents. A native of Wheeling, Bob recently sold his company, Radicom, Inc. in McHenry. He retired as CEO and president, and moved to Cary. Bob earned a bachelor's degree in liberal arts, with a concentration in history, from Roosevelt University, and a master's degree in communication from Northwestern University.

Prior to his acquisition of Radicom (McHenry County Economic Development Corporation's 2006 Business Champion of the Year), Bob held various executive management roles with technology leaders Digital Equipment Corp., OCE-USA, and Comdisco. He currently serves as the vice chairman of the McHenry County Workforce Network Board.

• **Geri Alten, Dunham Township**

Harry and I have been married for 53 years and have two adult children. The children have grown up knowing their Dad was a vegetable farmer and their mother was involved in community events like Milk Day and clubs such as Business & Professional Women while working as a cosmetologist for 28 years. Harry's family moved from Palatine in 1956. My parents, Mr. & Mrs. Richard F. Kenny, lived in Mount Prospect. I was in the second graduating class (1962) from Prospect High School.

Starting in 1987, I attended MCC graduating with an associate's degree in science and by 1995 received a bachelor's degree with an emphasis in psychology. From that point on, my career was in alcohol, drug and violence prevention until 2009, when I retired from the Winnebago County Health Department in Rockford.

I believe all my work careers helped people. Cosmetology helped women feel better about who they are, and it allowed me to be home or close to home as my children grew. A physical issue forced me to look for a less physical type of career. With an interest in what makes people do what they do, it seemed to me like a natural progression to earn a degree in psychology.

This interest has led me to serve on the historical society board. A need to know what brings people to McHenry County, whether it was in 1800s, today or somewhere in-between. I want to help others to deepen their love of McHenry County history and learn more about their own history.

In 2009, I was elected Dunham Township Assessor. While I loved doing that, I will retire on Dec. 31, 2021. So my next adventure is yet to be determined. It will be an exciting time for me as I figure out what the future will bring next

• **Nancy Baker, Dorr Township**

Nancy is a lifelong resident of McHenry County, raised on her family's farm west of Harvard and after college moved to Woodstock. She was employed by McHenry County and later by the city of Woodstock as a planner working on a wide range of projects including farmland preservation, historic presentation, zoning and long-range transportation. Prior to retiring in 2018, she managed the stabilization and restoration of the Old McHenry County Courthouse. Nancy previously served on the McHenry County Historical Society board of directors. She authored the book, "Images of America, Woodstock, Illinois" with royalties donated to the historical society. In addition to local history, Nancy trains and competes in dog agility and has picked up where she left off 40 years ago learning how to play guitar.

Thanks to current board members, **Catherine Jones** and **Paula Rieghns**, who have volunteered for a new, three-year term.

The Society is grateful for the leadership and dedication of **Mary Ellen Heelan** who is retiring from the board. Mary Ellen has shared her musical talent and time which have been immeasurable. Thank you for your service! -- *Molly Walsh, Governance Chair*

Historic Sites



Historic Sites Chair, Grace Moline, passed away unexpectedly on June 23, 2021. Her talent and dedication to MCHS is a great loss and she will be missed by all who knew her. In lieu of her annual report, the following minutes are from Historic Sites Committee's last meeting.

McHenry County Historic Sites Committee Meeting Minutes June 15, 2021

Place: Grace Moline Residence, Crystal Lake Time: 7:30pm

In Attendance: Grace Moline, Mimi Bierman, Rick Bierman, Patrick King, Luann Mayer

Old Business:

- The Committee visited Glacier Park Conservation Area on March 24, 2021 to look at a building slated for demolition, which is rumored to have been relocated from the Chicago World's Fair of 1933, The Century of Progress.
- Grace relayed the Committee's questions regarding the new MCHS Board requirements of Committees. No update at this time.
- Karen Thennes announced her resignation during Covid-19 pandemic.

New Business:

- Upcoming Events: - June 19, 2pm – MCHS Civil War era baseball club, Independants VS. McLean County Prairie Chickens. Village Hall Park, Prairie Grove (Ames and Barreville roads)

- July 11, 9am – 4pm – MCHS 35th Annual Heritage Fair at MCHS. 2021 theme: "Local History: It's Only Natural".

Potential Plaque Progress:

- Howard-Mass Barn, McHenry: Applicant informed that since he does not own the building, he will need owner to pursue plaque.
- Margaret Reiland House, 21 Francis Ave, Crystal Lake: No update.
- Anderson's Candy, Richmond: Bev has taken over communication with application. Owner is currently in hospital. Bev to reach out again in a month for update.
- Port Edwards, Algonquin: Committee decided, upon further discussion, that there is not enough historical building to justify pursuing (original building < 50%)
- Margaret Mary Church, Algonquin: Not old enough and the school, which is old enough, does not meet Architectural Style requirements.
- Greenwood Store, Greenwood: Owner of building desires to sell building. Store owners are only leasing building. Plaque potential only if Store owners buy building, which appears to be financially unfeasible at this time.
- Alford Home, 1110 S. Shore Drive, Crystal Lake: Grace to visit site and check status of plaque. New owners have proceeded to undergo remodeling which does not conform with original Architectural Style.
- Pinky Harrisons Resort, Johnsburg: Patrick received word that paperwork in progress. Cabin has been repainted.
- James Road Cemetery, Spring Grove: Rick gave application to current caretakers. Rick will do a follow-up
- Patrick will pursue (2) plaque applications in Johnsburg: 1) Chester Gould home, built in 1967 2) 2-story 1930's Craftsman Style home located at 3316 N. Rocky Beach Road, Johnsburg. Owner of home was designer of Lake Shore Drive.
- Julie Bailey Ninos has requested a sabbatical from the Historic Sites Committee.
- Rebecca S. Graff, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Lake Forest College, has expressed interest in joining the Historic Sites Committee. Grace will contact Rebecca to discuss further, including logistics.
- The Committee reviewed photos from the building visit at Glacier Park on March 24, 2021. A patent number was discovered on the steel gusset plate, however, the number was not legible enough to decisively research. Patrick shared photos received from Morag Walsh, Senior Archival Specialist, of the Hollywood exhibit building. Upon further investigation amongst Committee, there is not a certainty that this is the same building. Research will continue.
- The Committee discussed a new project, digital Historic Sites Map with photos. Joe Petykowski, photographer, took on the project of taking current photos of all the plaqued sites during the Covid-19 pandemic. These photos will be incorporated into a digital map application and be downloadable on the MCHS website. Information for each plaqued site to include: Name, Address, Description and photo. The Committee will pursue further information on programs able to create this digital layout.
- The Committee discussed having another informational meeting. Luann will approach the Algonquin Village Hall along with the Algonquin Library for availability.
- The Committee discussed combined field trip to Pabst Mansion and Ambassador Hotel Lobby in Milwaukee. Potential month of August 2021. Grace will check their availability.

Future Business:

- August 10th – Rick and Mimi Bierman residence, Johnsburg 7:30pm
- September 14th – Patrick King residence, Johnsburg 7:30pm
- October 19th – TBD (Bierman's will be unavailable for meeting)