

Fall 2023

# Burlington Historian

A publication of the Burlington Historical Society 232 N. Perkins Blvd., Burlington, WI  
53105 [burlingtonhistory.org](http://burlingtonhistory.org) [burlingtonhistory@gmail.com](mailto:burlingtonhistory@gmail.com)

## Calendar

Sunday, Oct 8, 1-3 pm  
BURLINGTON'S EARLY INFLUENCERS, Cemetery Walk at Burlington Cemetery

Thursday, Oct 26, 6pm,  
VOLUNTEER THANK YOU EVENT, Coffee House at Chestnut and Pine

Thursday, Nov 16, 6pm,  
GETTING YOUR HOUSE TO TALK, Coffee House at Chestnut and Pine

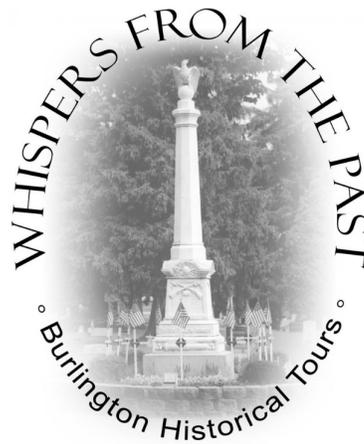
Follow our Facebook and Instagram accounts for up to date information on events!

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## Burlington's Early Influencers

This year, Whispers from the Past will be bringing to life some of the people or influencers, who helped create the city we live in today.

This year's subjects include Pliny Perkins, Eda Meinhardt, Dr. Edward Gelisha Dyer, Nettie Karcher, and Elias Nelson White. Each of these individuals were influencers at a critical point in Burlington's growth. Without their influence, Burlington would probably be a very different place than it is today. Re-enactors will greet you at the gravesites of these notable figures and share with you a part of the life and the time in which they lived.



Burlington Cemetery, 701 Browns Lake Drive, Hwy W, Burlington, WI



Sunday, October 8, 2023 at 1:00 pm

Register at:

[www.burlingtonhistory.org/events](http://www.burlingtonhistory.org/events)



**Come and join us!**

Proceeds to benefit the Burlington Historical Society and the Burlington Cemetery Association.

## Welcome New Members

Gerry Agnew, Pewaukee, WI

Karen Bassi, Waukesha WI

Experience Burlington, Inc.  
Burlington, WI

Shireen Ray, Norman, OK,

Deb & Tim Steager, Burlington, WI

Margie Vos, Burlington, WI

## Renewing Members

Beth Family Farm, LLC., Kansasville, WI

Mary Block, Burlington

John & Eileen Brown, Arlington  
Heights, IL

Kathleen Craig, Burlington, WI

Stephen M. Dow, Madison, WI

Bob & Victoria Gariepy, Burlington, WI

James R. Harkness, Muskegon, MI

Maria Ingram, Kansasville, WI

William Large, Burlington, WI

Marian MacCarthy, Burlington, WI

Richard Mangold, Tucson, AZ

Henry R. May, Orlando, FL

Kathleen McCarthy, Weston WI

Nancy Osmolak, Burlington, WI

Rev. Victor Prange, Watertown, WI

Marianne Roenna, Medina, IL

Annette Roesing, Burlington

Peter Sisak, Racine, WI

Wenzel & Edna Smetana, LaCrosse, WI

Bobbi Wagner, Lyons, WI

Matt & Diane Westrich, Vulcan, MI

Lewis Zwiebel, Louisville, KY

## Donations

Pamela Morong, Elk Grove Village, IL

# Museum Restoration Project



The first step in the museum restoration has been completed. The exterior has been pressure washed and a waterproofing seal was applied to the bricks.

The next steps are to rebuild and repair the windows, tuck pointing to areas of the mortar and bricks, and painting the trim.



Thank you to the donors who have financially helped with this project! We are still in need of additional funds. If you are able to help, please send your donation to: Burlington Historical Society, 232 N. Perkins, Burlington, WI 53105



**16**  
NOVEMBER  
2023

PLEASE CALL THE LIBRARY TO  
REGISTER 262-342-1130

# EVENT AT THE COFFEE HOUSE

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16  
AT 6 P.M.**

Brought to you by The Burlington Historical Society,  
Black Point Estate and Gardens, and The Burlington  
Public Library.



## Getting Your House To Talk....

How to learn about the history of your house



Michael Rehberg, Lead Interpreter  
Black Point Estate and Gardens

Please join us for this informative workshop with Michael Rehberg, Lead Interpreter for Lake Geneva's Black Point Estate and Gardens, operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Mr. Rehberg's illustrated slide presentation (with handouts) will discuss the strategies for researching the history of your house. You will learn about many of the resources available locally at libraries, historical societies, and city and county offices. You will also learn how to utilize maps, old newspapers and other important online resources.

This will be an informative session, with lots of "how to" advice. Michael will share some of the surprising things he's found working on several properties...and websites where you can start your searching. It will be an interesting hour, even if you don't expect to do a lot of personal research later.

# Happenings at the Museum



In 1847 Dr. Dyer, a leading abolitionist in Burlington, called a meeting at the old brick school house, now known as Whitman School. At that time it sat near the corner of Dodge and Madison Streets, just a couple of blocks from Dr. Dyer's home. Dr. Dyer, made it a point to say to everybody that they must turn out in force, so as to give encouragement to the speaker, Lewis Washington, a former slave.

On Sunday, August 13, 2023 visitors from Wisconsin Black History Museum visited Whitman School. Dan Meddaugh, a history teacher at Catholic Central High School, told the group of Burlington's role in the Underground Railroad, including the story of Caroline Quarles' and Joshua Glover's path to freedom.

The group also stopped at the Church of the Nazarene on Jefferson Street to visit the location where Frederick Douglas spoke in 1866.



*The Burlington Rotary Club visited the museum on Monday, August 14, 2023. Julie O'Neill, President of the Society, thanked the*

*Rotary Club for their generous donations to the museum for the purchase of shelves and filing cabinets.*

# YESTERDAY...

By: Priscilla Crowley

It's funny, sometimes the littlest thing will trigger a memory. Mostly its the little things that make you stop and pause and smile when it happens. For my sister and me it was the sound of crickets chirping away on a warm summer night. A common enough sound during the summer, just another pleasant summer memory. She looked at me and said, "That reminds me of Lyons." She was right - it took me right back to that little village where we grew up.

We didn't always live in Lyons, we started out in Burlington in a perfectly ordinary house on Perkins Blvd., where the School District Office is now located. There used to be four houses on that block and there was an alleyway that ran behind the houses from Market Street up to Wainwright Ave. We were on the fringe of town and across the street were the railroad tracks for the Milwaukee Road railroad.

My brother and sister were born while we lived in that house. I remember mom telling me that they were only expecting one baby and were more than a little surprised when they wound up with two babies. Mom was in the hospital so that left dad to go shopping for more "stuff" for the extra baby. I have vague memories of stacks of washed and folded diapers everywhere and bottles and bottles of formula stashed in our refrigerator. Dr. Erickson even made a house call to check up on mom and the twins. Imagine a doctor who made house calls!! Definitely something from the past.

We had some really good times in that house but like every family at some time or another, hard times came knocking and mom and dad needed to cut back on expenses and pay off some bills that had become a little overwhelming. That meant finding a different place to live with cheaper rent and cutting corners for a while until things got better. They did find a house in Lyons with much cheaper rent but with cheaper rent comes less. We moved from a house with running water and indoor plumbing to a house with no indoor plumbing and no running water. It was an old farm house that needed

more than a little love. It turned out to be one of the best things that could have happened to us.

We moved on my 6th birthday, the twins were probably around 3 ½ years old. We were really too young to know how awful this place was. I can remember mom standing in the backyard and crying, she wasn't a country girl, she was a city girl and Lyons was just overwhelming to her. Things got better, she made friends, we all adjusted and to us kids it was like a dream come true. It was perfect, sure the house was not what we had but we didn't care, to us it was just the way things were. I entered first grade at St. Joseph's in the fall and a couple of years later the twins followed me. It was a small school taught by nuns with 2 and 3 grades to a room. Everybody knew everybody. You didn't get into trouble because there was always someone who knew who knew who you were and they weren't above letting mom and dad know what you had been up to.



Lyons, WI 1977

Some of the best memories I have of that time are the summer evenings when we would play outside all day and only came home when the street lights came on. There were many nights when we sat on the front porch or in the yard and listened to the sounds of summer. June bugs hitting the screen, fireflies twinkling in the yard, crickets chirping, the sound of parents calling their children to come home, the rising of a full moon and watching a falling star race across the heavens.

During the day there were endless adventures to be had, baseball with the neighborhood kids, long walks, bike rides, going "downtown" to see what was happening, going to the Post Office to get the mail, going frog catching in the creek and any one of a number of other exciting things for kids to get into. We had such a good time and it didn't matter that we didn't live in the nicest house or that we weren't one of the richest families in town, we just had a great time. Yesterday was not such a bad time to grow up.

So take some time, remember your yesterdays and how many great times you had when things were slower and life was much more simple. Our kids don't know what they have missed out on, we need to share these times with them, paint them a picture they won't forget and maybe someday the sound of crickets chirping will bring back some happy memories for them.

Burlington Historical Society  
232 N. Perkins Blvd  
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Thank You.

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\_\_\_ **General Membership - \$10.00**      \_\_\_ **Contributing Membership - \$25.00**

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