



Calumet City Historical Society Newsletter

760 Wentworth Avenue, Calumet City, Illinois
708-832-9390 or 773-814-4520 • calcityhistory@aol.com
www.calumetcityhistoricalsociety.org

September–October 2023

Vol. II • No. 5

A Note to the Members...

MEETING & PROGRAM

The September General Membership Meeting is Sunday, September 11, 2:00 p.m. After the meeting, a light lunch with sandwiches and desserts will be served. There will be a tribute to 9/11. Author and historian Professor Joseph Bigott will give a very informative talk about searching for facts about the early history of West Hammond and Calumet City. He will cover the area when it was unincorporated settlements, such as Freitag, West Hammond, and Sobieski Park. Then, the original incorporation of the Village of West Hammond in 1893 later changed to a city form of government in 1912 to become the City of West Hammond and finally changed the name to the City of Calumet City in 1924. This program should be a fun-filled and informative afternoon!

JULY & AUGUST PROGRAM RECAP

Once again, we had outstanding turnouts for both speakers. Gerry Surufka had a very informative digital presentation on water. And if you missed the August program, we have a few copies of *City Trees* by Kenneth Schoon at our souvenir/book table. Be sure to get your copy!

**Calumet City
Historical Society Center**
760 Wentworth Ave.

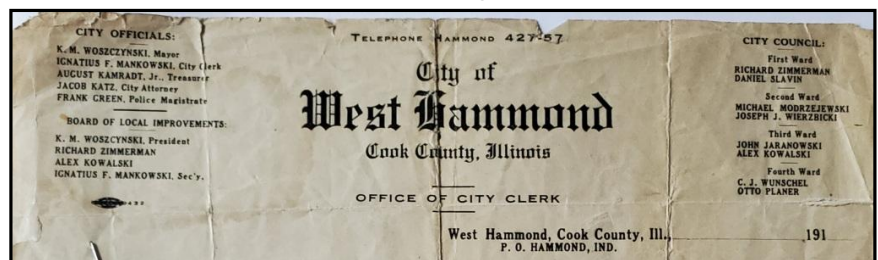
Museum Hours:
Thursday 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Hours Feb-Apr & Jun-Nov:
Tuesday 2:00-4:00 p.m.
Thursday 1:00-4:00 p.m.
2nd Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

**General Membership
Meetings & Program:**
2nd Sundays
Meeting 2:00 p.m.
Program 3:00 p.m.

TFN CLASS OF 1973 REUNION

Thornton Fractional North class of 1973 is planning its 50th class reunion on Friday, September 15, 2023. Before their event at the banquet hall, the CCHS Museum will be open from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. for anyone wishing to visit.



September 10 ~ Meeting & Program

2:00 p.m. ~

**General Membership Meeting,
followed by light lunch and refreshments,
last call for raffle tickets.**

3:00 p.m. ~

**Program “Researching Early History of West
Hammond and Calumet City” by Joseph Bigott.**

4:00 p.m. ~

Grand Raffle Drawing.

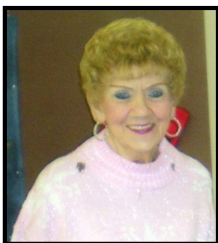
HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY, DOROTHY!

Congratulations to long-time member Dorothy Polus, who has become our oldest member on record, turning 100 this month! She was born and raised in Calumet City. Dorothy has spent a century in Calumet City and volunteered for decades for the historical society, St. Andrew Parish, the Polish Women’s Alliance, and many Catholic organizations. We hope to see her at the upcoming meeting.

ARTS & CRAFTS AND FLEA MARKET AT THE HERITAGE CABIN

For a second year, CCHS will host this event on Saturday, September 16, 2023, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Three dozen vendors and artisans will display and showcase their local talent of items and food products. CCHS will have a basket raffle, Country Store, bake sale, refreshments, food, and tours to benefit the log cabin fund. ■

In Memoriam. . .



Romayne Badyniak, 76, has been a CCHS member since 2007. Romayne attended meetings and volunteered for the Post Holiday Luncheon, Heritage Day, and the Holiday Train Show (seen here). She was a long-time Calumet City resident. She was active with

many organizations, senior groups, and the Knights of Columbus Ladies Auxiliary. Romayne was a long-time parishioner of St. Andrew and volunteered for many groups in the parish. Her leadership spirit will be missed.



Raymond Bilinski, 88, has been a CCHS member since 1988. Ray was the husband of Casimira for 29 years and a U.S. Army Veteran. Ray came to almost every meeting and volunteered for many events, including the Labor Day parade — you can always find him greeting and welcoming the people to Heritage Day (seen here at German

Fest). He was instrumental in bringing the Lionel Train Club to the Calumet City Historical Society for a unique holiday train show for many years in December. Raymond was a long-time resident of Calumet City and a long-time parishioner of St. Andrew the Apostle church. Ray will be missed, and our condolences to the family. ■

Welcome New Members. . .

Welcome new members, we are glad to have the support.

- **Margaret Housinger, Lansing**
- **Marie Walsh, Orland Park**
(aka Marie (nee Harris) Berwanger)
- **Vicki Zack, Calumet City** ■

The Calumet City Historical Society, Inc.
is an Illinois non for profit corporation,
and a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization.

Mail: 760 Wentworth Ave., Calumet City, IL 60409

Email: calcityhistory@aol.com

Board of Directors 2023

Mike Wolski, President
Sue Warner, Vice President
Marilyn Schultz, Secretary
Louis Krawczyk, Treasurer
Joseph Plovich
Frederick Schrum

Annual Raffle. . .

The Calumet City Historical Society Annual Raffle is well on its way. Each raffle ticket costs \$2 or 3 for \$5, and additional tickets will be available through September 10. The five cash prizes are:

1st place ~ \$300

2nd place ~ \$200

3rd place ~ \$150

4th and 5th place ~ \$100

The drawing will be at the September General Membership Meeting & Program on September 10 at 4:00 p.m. following the program. A light luncheon is planned for that day as well. It will be an enjoyable afternoon with an excellent history program by Cal City native Joe Bigott, fellowship, and maybe several winners present.

Thank you to the sponsors and donations who supported this year's Annual Raffle. The Ticket Printing Sponsor is M&M Car Car Center (Owners Jason and Jen Smith were born and raised in Calumet City, and they have a new Hammond location at 7431 Calumet Avenue, in addition to Dyer and Merrillville, Ind.). The postage, mailing, and luncheon event sponsors and donors are Dyer Historical Society, Mike Grelecki, Debbie Helminski, Marie Kalemba, Nancy Melnyzenko, and Jerry & Lori Munda. We appreciate everyone's donations! ■

Munda Anniversary Recap. . .

During the July General Membership meeting, Jerry and Lori Munda were honored and congratulated for celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary! The large turnout of members celebrated with cake and refreshments with Jerry and Lori. Lori sends a heartfelt thank you to everyone at the Society for making their day wonderful while celebrating 60 years of marriage, with a special thank you to Sue, Patrick Owens, and others who helped to make the day extra special. Copies of Jerry's artwork were also on display. Jerry was TFN dean and coach for 33 years. ■



Cal City History. . .

KONSTANTINE M. WOSZCZYNSKI

“While America has been the land of opportunity for the millions of Europeans, it is proof of unusual ability, exceptional business integrity, and leadership among men, when a young man can come across the seas and in a few years reach business success and besides his official relations with banks and business organizations be honored as mayor of a city and take a prominent part in public affairs. Such has been the distinction of Konstantine M. Woszczyński, now mayor of the City of West Hammond.

Konstantine was born in German Poland on August 12, 1872, a son of Vincent and Theophila Woszczyński. The father was a farmer. With an education acquired in the common schools of his native land, Mr. K. M. Woszczyński came to America in 1889 at the age of 17 and, for the first six years, was employed in a bicycle factory in Chicago. His residence at West Hammond dates from 1895, and he was known as a worker in the Simplex factory. He was a machine hand for three years and then was made foreman in the polishing and plating department of the Tube Works, which place he held for two years. For three years, he was a foreman in the Enterprise Bed Company and then gave most of his attention to the operation of a moving picture house in East Chicago. In 1908, he established a saloon on State Line Street.

For three terms, Mr. Woszczyński was a trustee of the Village of West Hammond and was elected mayor in 1911 and served as mayor from 1912 to 1915. He is a former president of the Board of Directors of the public schools of West Hammond and was part of the management. It was due to the enterprise of Mr. Woszczyński that the King John III Sobieski No. 1 Building and Loan Association of West Hammond was organized in 1901, and he has been secretary since the beginning. Mr. Woszczyński is a director of the West Hammond Trust & Savings Bank. In November 1895, in Chicago, he married Mary Bizan, born in German Poland. Their four children are Mieczyslaus, Alfons, Henry, and Alice. The family worships in St. Andrew Church.” *[History written ca. 1913, extracted by Renee Adams].*



Konstant's Saloon, 311 State Line St



Wedding, Nov. 23, 1895, Holy Trinity Catholic Church, Chicago, Ill.

John Hessler was the first President for two years and then re-elected to lead again in 1909. In 1911, there was a vote to change the form of government to a city form, but it was tied up in the courts until 1912. Konstantine Woszczyński won the April 1911 election by nine votes, but it stalled while the case was in court. The village board canceled further meetings until the election in April 1912, when the court cleared the way to count the votes to change to a city form, and Woszczyński won again overwhelmingly and was mayor from 1912 to 1915 until Paul Kamradt won as mayor. Mayor K.M. Woszczyński was a reformer and tried to rid the city of prostitution. At the time, it was difficult to prosecute the business owners because the businesses were only licensed, not bonded. The mayor started to bond the owner residents so they could be arrested, and he successfully closed down many gambling houses and prostitution. He did not publicly shame the owners so that the image of West Hammond maintained a positive light to the general public. He told the residents that this method was the best practice to protect their property. He may have lost the 1915 election because, in 1914, he had to raise taxes to pay for debt incurred by the previous administration and pay for public improvements of streets. In 1915, Mayor Kamradt praised his reform work. *[Extracted from Cottage to Bungalow, Bigott].*



Woszczyński Family Portrait, l. to r., Mieczyslaw, Mary, Alicia, Alphonse, Konstant, and Henry.

“Sunday, December 3, 1939, 1st Mayor of Calumet City Back in Town — The first mayor left Calumet City for Poland in 1921 to recover property left to his wife by her parents. By his astute business judgment in Posen, Woszczyński acquired coal and lumber yards and became wealthy. However, during the 1930 depression in Poland, he lost practically his entire fortune of \$150,000. Like most Poles, he gathered the remnants of a lost fortune and, by frugal living and as prosperous times came back, he again built up his business. He then expanded his operations to include a small apartment hotel and several stores in Posen. He and his wife came back to this country in July. Since that, the war has broken out, and Poland has fallen into the hands of the Germans. “I have not heard anything of my daughter since the war,” he told Frank Stachowicz, former Calumet City justice of the peace, “I do not know whether I can return.” *[Indiana, 12-3-1939].*



Konstant in 1939.



Calumet City Historical Society

760 Wentworth Ave
Calumet City IL 60409

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



*Konstantine Woszczyński —
Mayor of the City of West
Hammond from 1912 to 1915.*

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Upcoming Events. . .

September 10 – 2:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting.
Program - 3:00 p.m.: “*Researching Early History of West Hammond and Calumet City*” by author and history professor Joseph Bigott, searching for facts before and after the incorporation of the Village of West Hammond in 1893. Enjoy a luncheon and the Annual Raffle drawing (see pg 1).

September 16 – 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Arts & Crafts and Flea Market at the Heritage Cabin.
Free admission. (see page 1)

October 8 – 2:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting.
Program - 3:00 p.m.: “*Family Heirlooms — Plus Family History Papers & Photographs: What & How: Save & Donate Ideas*” by Peg Kapustiak. We will share many helpful ideas for sorting and deciding what to do with your family heirlooms, photographs, and family history research. Please come and share the projects you or others have done.


November 12 – 2:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting.
Program - 3:00 p.m.: TBA. ■

JOIN US FOR AN

»»» *Arts & Crafts* «««
»»» *and Flea Market* «««
»»» *at the Heritage Cabin* «««

presented by the
Calumet City Historical Society

←————→
Saturday, September 16, 2023
10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.



Sale to include:
Arts & Crafts
Flea Market
Antiques
Historical Society Country Store
Bake Sale / Light Refreshments
Raffle Baskets

Tours of the 1836 Heritage Cabin will be available!

»»» Heritage Log Cabin site next to Veterans Park
Heritage Drive (166th) west of Burnham Avenue
Calumet City, Illinois «««