

View at Flink Lake, Valparaiso, Ind.



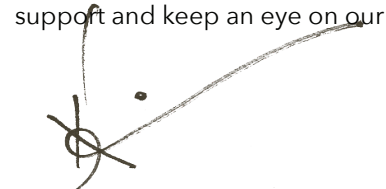
from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Several of our supporters have reached out to me expressing a common theme. The gist? Porter County has great history all throughout its borders and not just within the county seat. James Ruge wrote me a nice note about the history of the circa 1886 building that houses the Schoolhouse Shop in Furnessville. Jim Ton sent me a very thoughtful email pointing out how most people forget that our area's famed interurban also connected with Chesterton and Porter. The late John Schnurlein, who I miss dearly, asked me almost weekly about what the PoCo Muse intended on doing to spotlight the history of Kouts.

Why do I bring this up? To reiterate our commitment to meaningful storytelling beyond Valparaiso. Sure, our physical location weighs heavily on our collection and base of support, but it doesn't mean our focus has to be limited to our mailing address. We recently collaborated with the Westchester Township History Museum to make *A Calumet Tapestry* possible. *Connections*

features an incredible linocut block that Hazel Hannell made inside, and of, her Furnessville studio and home. Issue No. 5 of *PoCo Muse Magazine* is almost entirely devoted to south county stories, including a spotlight feature on the autographed embroidery quilt of the Morrison Community Club in Kouts.

Change doesn't happen quickly, but it is achievable if we work together. Our award-winning institution remains committed to connecting stories with artifacts that represent all of Porter County. All I ask is that you continue your support and keep an eye on our work.



Kevin Matthew Pazour
Executive Director • PoCo Muse

P. S.—Have you browsed our *Connections Exhibition Catalog* yet? Get your very own print copy with a gift of \$25 today.

ABOUT THE IMAGES

Cover • This hand-colored postcard from the Mockler Collection shows a view from Flint Lake. The postcard is dated 1909 and is addressed to Mr. Carl Aldrich at 1502 Washington Avenue in Springfield, MO. The message on the back reads, "Two of us girls were out here yesterday. It is a mighty pretty place. Will write letter Sunday. Ever yours, EWM."

Right • This circa 1911 photograph was taken on Main Street (today known as Broadway Avenue) looking east toward Valparaiso Street (now Calumet Avenue). Courtesy of Steven R. Shook Collection.



SPRING EXHIBITS AT THE POCO MUSE

April brings a few refreshing changes in our Robert Cain Gallery, which displays rotating artwork from Porter County artists in our collection. A few works will temporarily return to storage while never-before-displayed selections will be brought to light.

The PoCo Muse bids farewell to the *Prehistoric Pop-Up* on May 1. This award-winning exhibit debuted at the Porter County Fair in July 2022 and has been on display at the PoCo Muse since October. Plan your visit for one last look!

On May 12, the PoCo Muse unveils its new featured exhibit, *Ever Yours: Postcards from the Golden Age*. In the early twentieth century, postcards were still a relatively new phenomenon. When viewed today, postcards from this period are beautiful and accessible historical documents which reflect social fascinations of life at the time.



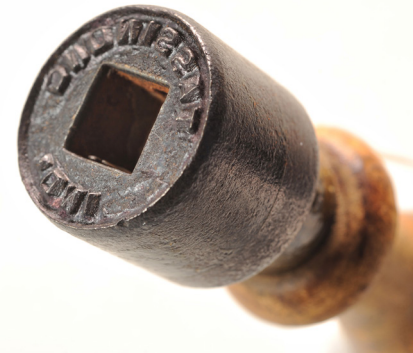
EVER YOURS: POSTCARDS FROM THE GOLDEN AGE
Montague/Urschel Gallery
Opens May 12

View the PoCo Muse's extensive collection of postcards from the early twentieth century to learn more about life during this time.



PREHISTORIC POP-UP
Montague/Urschel Gallery
Closes April 30

Our award-winning *Prehistoric Pop-up* exhibit from the 2022 Porter County Fair is on display. Stop by to learn about the mastodon remains Myron Benedict found on his Porter Township farm in 1949.



CONNECTIONS
Eunice Slagle Gallery

Take a closer look. Gathered at the twelve stations are pairs of objects that speak to each other in surprising ways. The objects may appear different at first glance, but after closer consideration, they reveal an important relationship.

WANT TO SCHEDULE A TOUR? Visit pocomuse.org/tours.



PORTER COUNTY ART
Robert Cain Gallery

The Robert Cain Gallery honors M. Robert "Rob" Cain (1930-2022), a lifelong Valparaiso resident and beloved Valparaiso High School art teacher. The gallery features Cain's work and a revolving display of other works from our permanent collection.



LOWENSTINE WWII ROLL OF HONOR

The *Lowenstine WWII Roll of Honor* commemorates Valparaiso citizens who contributed to the war effort during World War II. Originally displayed on the courthouse square between 1943 and 1973, it was installed in the PoCo Muse in December 2022.

APRIL

ROBERT CAIN GALLERY RECEPTION

Thursday, April 6, at 4-7p

PoCo Muse, 20 Indiana Avenue

See new works of art and old favorites from the permanent collection during this late afternoon reception inside the Robert Cain Gallery. Light refreshments will be provided, and a cash bar will be available for attendees 21 and older.

FIRE HISTORY GUIDED WALKING TOUR

Saturday, April 22, at 10a

PoCo Muse, 20 Indiana Avenue

Join Executive Director Kevin Matthew Pazour for a walking tour that explores some of the impactful fires that shaped downtown Valparaiso. The tour will begin at the PoCo Muse and last around 45 minutes. Come prepared for whatever the April weather might bring!

MAY

DONOR RECEPTION FOR *EVER YOURS: POSTCARDS FROM THE GOLDEN AGE* EXHIBIT

Thursday, May 11, from 4-6p

PoCo Muse, 20 Indiana Avenue

Supporters and their guests are invited to attend a special preview reception for the newest PoCo Muse exhibit.

PUBLIC OPENING OF *EVER YOURS* EXHIBIT

Friday, May 12, at 11a

PoCo Muse, 20 Indiana Avenue

JUNE

EXTENDED HOURS Thursdays, Open 11a-7p Beginning June 1

PoCo Muse, 20 Indiana Avenue

Enjoy additional evening hours every Thursday between Memorial Day and Labor Day from 4-7p, an opportunity made possible by our donors.

POCO MUSE BLOCK PARTY & LIVING HISTORY

Saturday, June 3, from 11a-4p

PoCo Muse, 20 Indiana Avenue

We are excited to announce the return of a favorite summer tradition—the PoCo Muse Block Party. Have a look at *Ever Yours*, our new summer featured exhibit, and enjoy complimentary food, drink, games, and family-friendly activities outside on Franklin Street next to the PoCo Muse. Our cadre of living history reenactors will be interpreting the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which was a “New Deal” work relief program that gave young men and veterans employment on environmental projects during the Great Depression. Company 1583 of the CCC was located in Valparaiso from 1936 until 1942.

ONGOING

FREE GUIDED MUSEUM TOUR

Saturdays at 12p

Would you like more insight and detail about what’s currently on display? Stop by the PoCo Muse at 12p for a free guided tour with Quinn Albert.

No need to RSVP for this tour, although we ask that you arrive a few minutes before the start time as a courtesy to the other attendees.

COUNTY'S SENIOR HARDWARE OFFERS ALTERNATIVE

By Mary Henrichs

Originally published in the Vidette-Messenger on November 30, 1979

When the gumball machine is sitting on the sidewalk at 15 E. Lincolnway, passersby can be sure Wark's Hardware is open for business.

"Nobody who knows me will even try the door unless the gum machine is out," said Jim Wark, 65, owner and sole employee of the oldest hardware store in Porter County.

Although the gumball machine has undoubtedly not always been the signal that the store is ready for morning trade, a hardware business has existed at that site since Hiram Bickford opened one in 1856.

Jim's father, Charles Wark, bought the operation in 1919, and by 1924 Jim was washing windows, sweeping floors, and dusting merchandise every day. His five brothers and some of his six sisters also did various jobs there through the years.

"The easiest way to learn the stock is by handling it," said Wark who seems to know every piece of merchandise crammed into the store from floor to ceiling.

"I like to wait on trade," said Wark. "I sometimes use the negative approach and people still buy."

If Wark doesn't carry the merchandise requested, he recommends particular Valparaiso stores where it might be found. He believes referring a customer to other stores helps the merchant who makes the referral because people appreciate the advice and return to patronize the person who gave it.

Some local residents seem to

believe Wark's Hardware will have stock not readily available elsewhere. One such seeker appeared on a recent rainy morning to ask for some obsolete electrical merchandise. "I figured if you'd ever carried them, you'd still have a couple around," he told Wark. But Wark said he had never handled the item.

Sometimes a customer helps get merchandise meted out. On the same rainy morning mentioned above, Wark cleared a small counter space for cutting surface and the buyer held rolls of plastic from which Wark measured and cut yardage.

After a customer has made his selections, Wark adds the costs of merchandise plus tax on a thick white tablet of paper and announces the total. He then rings the sale on a beautiful 65-year-old cash register (see page 11).

Wark, who graduated from Valparaiso High School in 1933 and who became owner of the original store in 1939, may be Porter County's original recycler.



People give him all weights and sizes of paper bags into which he puts purchases unless they need to be wrapped in the brown paper he saves from merchandise shipments.

Wark also reuses cardboard cartons, often filling them with nails sold by the pound.

Because of his recycling practices—which date to his father’s early days in the store—Wark doesn’t buy any packaging material except string. “I don’t trust Scotch tape. I’d rather use string.”

Although he claims most hardware stores have “gone modern,” Wark refuses to follow the trend. Browsers still stroll on the original wood floors and old electric fixtures provide light.

Behind the white pegboard lining both side walls of the long, narrow store are the original oak drawers which still house small hardware items.

How have hardware sales volumes changed in the past 50 years?

Big sellers used to be stove and

furnace pipe, elbows and dampers; wire screening, and weather stripping. Although he still carries these items, Wark sells very few of them.

Instead, he purveys tools, mailboxes, nails, rakes, shovels, kitchenware, pails, brooms, honeycomb, and an apparently endless list of other merchandise for home, car and farm.

He also has a new supply of old fashioned mousetraps—“the first I’ve been able to get in ages.”

Page 9 • *George Frailey stands in the hardware store opened by John H. Ross at 15 E. Lincolnway, circa 1916. The Vidette-Messenger, 1972.*

Right • *Jim Wark in his store, 1972. The Vidette-Messenger.*

Opposite • *National Cash Register 542-EL-4F, 1914, on display in Connections. Albert Photographic, 2022.*



FIRST SPIKE IS DRIVEN Miss Nora Strausberger Drives First Spike In the New Electric Railroad

Originally published in the Chesterton Tribune, Vol. XXVI, No. 26, Page 6, Column 3 on September 23, 1909

At 2:20 o'clock, Monday afternoon, September 20, the first spike in the first interurban railroad in Chesterton, was driven home by Miss Nora Strausberger, a well known young lady of Chesterton. The work was done at a point just in front of the Tribune office, and no man on the job drove one in better than did the young lady. Mr. Burton, of the Air Line News, was present and took a photograph of Miss Strausberger in her spike driving act, and the lady's picture will soon be circulated throughout the United States, and she will be known far and wide. Immediately after the spike

was driven the regular gang of twenty workmen began spiking the rails to the track in Valparaiso Street, and it did not take long to put the track in shape to run cars over it. The car men say that the work of building the line will be pushed as rapidly as possible from this time on, and that cars will be running into Chesterton before the first of the year. It is proposed to get the power from the Geist syndicate until a regular power plant can be erected.

There is a great deal of filling to be done on the main line to connect with the branch running here over the Valparaiso road, but the company insists that this work will be completed as soon as the track is laid from Chesterton to that point, and that all the work necessary to start the first car should be completed inside of sixty days. When cars are running from this point to Laporte it will be possible to go as far as Goshen by transferring to the Murdock line in Laporte. In fact, one will

be able to go almost anywhere east or south by electric cars from this station when this piece of road is in operation, as the connections that are possible are numerous.

Right • Miss Nora Strausberger drives in the ceremonial first spike on the Valparaiso & Northern Railway line in Chesterton on September 20, 1909. The Chesterton constable is seen behind her. This photograph, looking north, was taken on Valparaiso Street, now South Calumet Road, just south of Broadway Avenue. Incorporated in 1908, the Valparaiso & Northern Railway construction was financed by Valparaiso citizens and outside investors; the railway was to become one of the feeder lines to the Chicago-New York Electric Air Line Railroad. Courtesy of Steven R. Shook Collection.



ADVERTISEMENT FOR W. F. LEDERER: PIANOS, BOOKS, AND STATIONERY

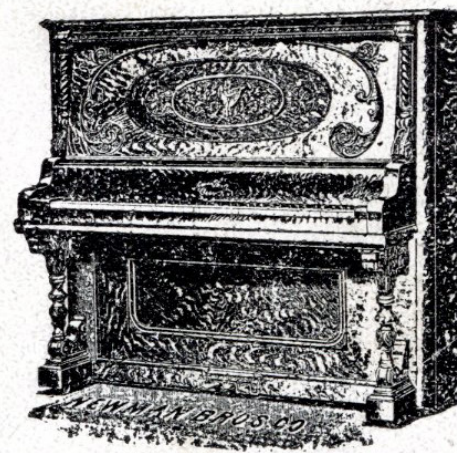
This new acquisition from Deni Weddle Jacks is a mass-produced, postcard-sized advertisement for Newman Bros. Co. Pianos and Organs with a stamp indicating that they were sold at W. F. Lederer Pianos, Books & Stationery in Valparaiso. It has a softly painted picture of two girls with flowers and an ornate border on the front. The back side advertises Newman Brothers Company Style Seven Piano and Five Octave Piano Case Organ. Newman Bros. Co. was a Chicago-based piano and organ manufacturer begun in 1880 by brothers Charles, L. M., and A. B. Newman. The company was very successful in its first few decades of operation. It ceased its manufacture of organs in the 1900s, which allows us to date the advertisement to the 1890s or early 1900s.

W. F. Lederer was best known in Valparaiso as a piano salesman, but he also had a stint as a city police officer in the late 1920s. Lederer left the area in April 1920 for a position in the sales department of Chevrolet in Flint, Michigan. Less than a decade later at the start of the Great Depression, Newman Bros. Co. would collapse and cease operations. This advertisement, which once adorned a scrapbook, is a beautiful reminder of two pre-Great Depression businesses that operated in our region.

Right and Opposite • Front and back covers of W.F. Lederer advertisement, circa early 1900s.



NEWMAN BROS. CO.,
 MANUFACTURERS OF **High Grade Pianos and Organs**
 Factory and Office, **CHICAGO AVE. & DIX ST., CHICAGO, U. S. A.**
STYLE SEVEN PIANO **FIVE OCTAVE PIANO CASE ORGAN**



A Leader in Competition



The Most Modern and Durable Organ on the Market.

A trial will please the most critical.

Send for our latest catalogues and price list.

FOR SALE BY

W. F. LEDERER

PIANOS, BOOKS & STATIONERY, VALPARAISO, IND.

general INFORMATION

POCO MUSE

Hours: Tuesday-Sunday, 11a-4p

The award-winning PoCo Muse maintains free general admission as this area's oldest institution devoted to the history and culture of Porter County.

20 Indiana Ave, Valparaiso, IN 46383

Visit our newly-imagined and fully-accessible building—the fourth home of the Porter County Museum since 1916.

MISSION

We engage Porter County's rich past with its evolving present to educate, enrich, and inspire our communities.

VISION

We believe our work of interpreting this area's history and culture empowers Porter County residents to form a strong and purposeful sense of place, identity, and community.

VALUES

Free, Open, and Accessible

We meet the needs of our communities as a welcoming and inclusive gathering place.

Meaningful Storytelling

We connect stories with artifacts to encourage imagination, introspection, and empathy.

Hands-on Learning

We create opportunities to learn from interactive and intergenerational experiences.

Collaboration

We work together with people and organizations aligned with our mission and vision.

Responsible Stewardship

We uphold the collection and history of our institution with integrity and accountability.

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