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Tabern Times

News & Views from The Warren Tavern

3S540 Second Street ☐ Warrenville, Illinois ☐ 630/393-4100

Looking Back On A Very Cold Beginning In 1838...

By all historical accounts, the Winter of 1838 was tough across the country. But it was truly harsh in the little settlement of Warrenville, astride the banks of the DuPage River, just east of the Big Woods, in DuPage County of northern Illinois. Even so, the young village greatly enjoyed its brand new civic center for social life that Winter. It opened that year through the efforts of the town's founder, an enterprising young gentleman named Colonel Julius Warren.

The settlement of Warrenville now boasted a sawmill, two stores, a schoolhouse, six homes, and farmhouses for miles around. The Colonel had just been appointed its first Postmaster, and he ran the Post Office from his home. He had built that house in 1834, and it still stands at the corner of Main Street and Batavia Road...now reportedly the oldest pioneer building in DuPage County.

While the soil was rich, wild game bountiful, and timber resources plentiful, day-to-day life remained a struggle for even the heartiest settlers trying to make a new home in the frontier wilderness. For the eternally resourceful, enterprising, and ambitious Colonel Julius Warren, it would be the first Winter to be enjoyed in the cozy confines of his latest business enterprise . . . the Warren Tavern.

He built the sturdy little three-room hotel, a stagecoach stop between Chicago and points west, from native timber, saw-milled locally. The grounds had several out-buildings as well. In that time, smaller sheds would surround a country hotel for cooking food, doing laundry, stabling the horses, and providing outhouse privies. Fear of fire prompted this separation of facilities. Firewood in an iron stove heated the Tavern itself, with a little warmth seeping upstairs through floor grates.

Inside the Warren Tavern, the ground floor was taken up by a Men's Parlor and a Lady's Parlor. As one might expect, drinking, gambling, and coarser behaviors took place in the Men's Parlor. As such, it was not considered respectable for ladies to venture from their own parlor into that occupied by the gents. But come bedtime, everyone trooped upstairs and slept together in an open floorplan. Travelers slept in their clothes in those days, and bathed infrequently.

For social occasions and public meetings, the cots upstairs would be folded up and stowed away. Soon after opening, the Warren Tavern became a nexus for regional society, with many a ball conducted . . . as well as the place where family events were planned, elections were held, and political meetings were conducted.

As it turned out, the Colonel would only operate his hotel for a dozen years or so before a succession of other owners would follow. For a time, it was known as Grant's Tavern but business was slow and that

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A WORD FROM THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

On February 23, 2020, our first Winter Wishes Event was held here at the Warren Tavern. We were excited about the new year ahead and the fresh, new events we had planned for this year. Having fantastic sponsors ensured a financial basis to meet our monthly bills and provide for ongoing maintenance, thus allowing for our group to plan a series of community events, all to be open to the public.

The Burls, a ceilidh (kay-lee) band were going to kick off events with a free concert in May, followed by the Model A Club bringing in all their restored cars for a Car Show in July.

Filling in the gaps, we anticipated another busy schedule of bridal and baby showers, bible study groups, crafting clubs, and some public meetings to fill up our beautiful historical building with activity.

We needed Sponsors to make these visions a reality and this support blossomed at Winter Wishes when you all showed up and generously gave to the Warren Tavern cause.

Then, COVID-19 struck our country and the world ground to a halt. We hoped that an eight-week shutdown here in Illinois would give our residents enough time to remain safe within the safety of their homes while the virus exhausted itself elsewhere. But the eight weeks turned into eight months and here we are at the end of the year, faced with another severe shut down.

Reflecting on the tortuous path of this past year, let me reiterate a huge thank you to all of you, our sponsors who gave so generously this past February. True, our vision for your donations was vastly different than the real world scenario that has played out. But the reality is, only because of your donations were we able to keep the building going through this very difficult year of virtually no income. So, we remain deeply grateful to all of you.

Looking ahead, in 2021 we will continue to recognize & honor all sponsorships from 2020 as well as those received for 2021 in every way possible. Your names will appear in all of our communications and those who donated at a level that became entitled to free rentals will remain so honored in 2021. It is only because of your generosity that we were able to survive this very difficult year, which we will continue to publicize.

If you're able to repeat your generous donation this year we will be even more grateful. And when life returns to normal again, we'll look back and take pride in having gotten through these challenges together. Meanwhile, stay safe and remain healthy!

All the Best,

*Barbara Thornbury,
Managing Director, Warren Tavern*

folded in the mid-1850's. During the Civil War, John Perry bought the place and tried to revive the business as Perry's Hotel. His daughter, Sarah, and her family, the Stafford's, continued operations for many years. But by the turn of a new century, "the Colonel's Tavern" (as it still called) was run down. Its commercial career was over

In 1910, it became a private home for the Peter Anderson family, and the building was enlarged and modified with additions to accommodate the needs of family life. As the building reached age 100 in 1938, it changed hands again. The George Aegler family moved in that year, and continued the family use with their own improvements and updating. In later years, the elderly Mrs. Alice Aegler would be the very last person to live there in the mid-1980's.

The old place then sat vacant for several years. But the choice site where it rested at the intersection of Warrenville Road and Winfield Road had become prime developable real estate. First there was interest in a Shell filling station, then Walgreens wanted the site. With demolition impending, The Warren Tavern Preservationists stepped forward in late 1991 to relocate, restore, maintain, and interpret the Colonel's Tavern . . . now an historic 1838 relic of Warrenville's pioneer past.

Progress was made on restoring the building over the next decade. By 2002, work was completed, and the old Tavern entered a new era of service to the community.

Ever since then, the Warren Tavern Preservationists have maintained and managed the facility as a restored meeting place and community center with help from patrons and sponsors.

"[Colonel Warren] built a fine hotel and spacious hall in it for dancing. It was patronized by the elite of Chicago as well as Naperville and the Fox River towns, and here it was that John Wentworth made his debut into social circles. No more refined and truly aesthetic circles than these dancing and private parties have ever graced the elegant drawing rooms of even Chicago since that eventful period."

RUFUS BLANCHARD, History of DuPage County, 1882

SETTLEMENT OPENED UP FOR ILLINOIS, BUT AT A PRICE

Black Hawk War Hastened Along The "Trail of Tears"

The Black Hawk war of 1832 was just a brief conflict between the United States and Native Americans led by Black Hawk, a Sauk tribal leader. The war began when Black Hawk and a band of the Sauk, Meskwaki, and Kickapoo tribesmen crossed the Mississippi River into Illinois from Iowa Indian Territory in April of that year. Black Hawk hoped to resettle on ancestral Indian tribal lands here in Illinois even as whites from back East were founding settlements like Warrenville.



CHIEF BLACK HAWK

Government officials were convinced that the band was hostile and mobilized a frontier militia that battled Black Hawk from northern Illinois into Wisconsin, where Militia forces under Colonel Henry Dodge caught up to Black Hawk's band and defeated them at Wisconsin Heights. Weakened by hunger, death, and desertion, native survivors retreated towards the Mississippi, where U.S. soldiers subdued the remnants of their band at the Battle of Bad Axe. Black Hawk and other leaders escaped, but later surrendered and were imprisoned for a year.

Interestingly, the Black Hawk War gave Abraham Lincoln a chance for brief military service, although he saw no combat. Other participants who later became famous included Generals Winfield Scott and Zachary Taylor, and Confederacy President Jefferson Davis. More ominously, this small war gave impetus to the U.S. policy of Indian removal. For 20 years (1830-1850) Native American tribes were pressured to give up their lands and move west to Oklahoma to reside. The "Trail of Tears" was a series of painful forced relocations by the United States government of 60,000 Native Americans between 1830 and 1850. The worst year was 1838, the same year that Colonel Warren built and opened The Warren Tavern....

MANY THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS WHO HAVE HELPED KEEP THE WARREN TAVERN GOING THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME!

Acorn Level \$25 - \$50:

Alan & Sigrid Pilgrim
Barb Pfister
Kate Perkins & Kent Archie
The Wilkie Family
Mary Ellen Nelson
Ron & Lisa Mentzer
Sharon & Maury Goodman
Leah Goodman & Nick Graf
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Brad & Barb Thornbury
Catherine and Tim Toth

Jan Skewes

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Warrenville Lions Club
Monica & Andy Johnson
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Oak Level \$500 +

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