

Hello from Executive Director Adam Novey

As the new Executive Director and Curator, I'd like to introduce myself. Some of you already know me well since my work at the Agency House began in 2017 as an archives volunteer. During the 2018 season, I completed a museum operations internship, and shortly thereafter the NSCDA-WI hired me as Curator. As of mid-October, I now also have the great privilege of serving as Executive Director of the Historic Indian Agency House.

A little bit about me: I have my B.S. and M.A. in History from Liberty University, as well as a Museum Studies Certificate from Northwestern University. I also hold CNP certification through the Nonprofit Leadership Alliance. In addition to my HIAH internship, I also interned in the Oral History and Archives departments at the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison. If you're interested in knowing more about my academic and professional background—or just more about me personally—please ask. I'd love to get to know you, too!

Any worthwhile endeavor necessitates time, investment, diligence, and elbow grease. It takes the cooperative efforts of enthusiasts with a like-minded vision, each with something to contribute. Your time, talents, and/or resources are vital to the preservation and perpetuation of this amazing historical site. I invite you to join our team of volunteers. Together, we can work to fulfill the mission of HIAH. Please drop me a line and let me know how you might like to help. We have a place for you in our exciting season ahead! Thank you for your interest in the Historic Indian Agency House. Your support makes a difference!



Scraping and repainting the Stone Building (visitor center, museum, and office) was a late summer project. The pillars on the 52-year-old building were rotting and were replaced with long-life metal columns. This building stands as a testimony to the vision of the NSCDA and Polly and Stanley Stone who financed the project in 1967.



Tiny Artifact from 1800s has intriguing story

Artifacts are important because they can tell stories. Sometimes this significance lies within the piece itself. For example, a piece of china may hold intrinsic significance if it represents the first or only of its kind, or even if it is painted with an important scene. Other artifacts are

important because of their provenance. An otherwise ordinary antique may become historically significant based on who owned it, its cultural context, or where it was found.

This tiny (2 cm) artifact is one such piece. During an archaeological excavation on Garlic Island in Lake Winnebago at the site of the village of Ho-Chunk Chief Wildcat, James Petersen (then an anthropology student at Oshkosh) made an almost accidental

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20th century architect brought talent to restoration

When we hear reference to a “Wisconsin architect,” we often think of Frank Lloyd Wright, but there was another esteemed 20th century architect — another Frank — who brought traditional elegance to residential neighborhoods and shared his vision with the National Society of Colonial Dames of America when the Wisconsin chapter purchased the Indian Agency House in 1930. Frank Riley (1875-1949) provided guidance to the group as they made plans to restore the 100-year-old building that had most recently been a farmhouse, and before that a frontier tavern where a traveler could find a place to sleep and get meals.

Riley was born in Madison and attended the University of Wisconsin until he transferred in 1897 to MIT in Boston where he focused his studies on architecture for the next three years. He then worked as a draftsman and traveled to Europe where he visited and sketched old buildings. He returned to Madison in

1914, living there for the rest of his life. He acquired commissions to design homes for wealthy families in Maple Bluff and Shorewood. Examples of his work are also in several other Wisconsin locations, including three in Portage. Among the most prominent homes he designed is the Executive Residence for the Wisconsin governor, although the mansion first belonged to industrialist Carl Johnson and then Thomas Hefty. The state purchased the residence in 1950. Riley was also the architect for Madison East High School and Yost’s Department Store which was demolished to make room for the Overture Center. The French provincial façade of the store was saved, and now serves as the main entrance to the Center. Photos of Riley’s work can be seen on the Wisconsin Historical Society website .



Primitive bootjack donated by Riley to the HIAH collection.

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discovery. He was sifting through the soil of a historic midden— i.e., refuse pit—when, holding the sifting screen up to the sun, he caught the glint of a tiny, shiny object dangling from one of the wires. The object turned out to be this miniscule lead cross.

It is very common to find trade silver crosses left behind by Native Americans of the Great Lakes region. These pieces were produced in quantity and bartered through the fur trade to the region’s inhabitants as personal decorations. This piece, however, was made by a Native American craftsman. A crucifix’s form lightly imprinted into the soft lead—a detail uncommon in traded counterparts—makes the piece stand out further. This artifact’s location and physical characteristics point to an outgrowth of distinctly Christian ideas or art within Wildcat’s village. Garlic

Island was possibly visited by an itinerant Jesuit who would become well-known throughout Wisconsin: Samuel Mazzuchelli. Mazzuchelli’s canoe would have passed close by this island during his early 1830s voyages during which he distributed crucifixes to converts. Could this tiny cross be an imitation of these objects? We may never know, but this truly is an intriguing artifact with a tantalizingly incomplete story.

Want to see more? Visit the Agency House to see this unique artifact along with the entire Garlic Island collection on display for the first time in our 2020 special exhibit! Read more fascinating artifact stories on our Artifact Ambassador page at <https://www.agencyhouse.org/artifact-ambassadors>.

Visitors to the Indian Agency House in 2019 came from near and far, with guests from the Philippines traveling the furthest at over 8,000 miles. Other foreign countries recorded in the log book are Canada, Germany, Poland, Switzerland, and the Netherlands. There were visitors from at least a dozen states, and many cities and towns in Wisconsin. Twelve schools (including Nekoosa, Madison, Necedah, Baraboo, Portage, Pardeeville, Pittsville, and Plover) brought entire classes, and various adult groups arranged tours. And as usual, many individuals and families (some from local campgrounds) decided to spend an hour or two learning about what was happening in and around The Indian Agency House at Fort Winnebago in the 1830s. It was a busy season! We hope to see YOU in 2020.