

Pepin County Historical Society  
 OLD COURTHOUSE MUSEUM & 1895 JAIL  
 Washington Square  
 315 W. Madison St.  
 Durand, WI 54736



# THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

Vol. XXXIV, No. 1

Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

April, 2020

**COLORED DOT HERE IS  
 A REMINDER TO RENEW  
 YOUR 2020 MEMBERSHIP**

IF YOU CAN  
 READ THIS  
 YOU HAVE  
 PAID  
 THANKS

Find us on the Internet!  
[www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org](http://www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org)

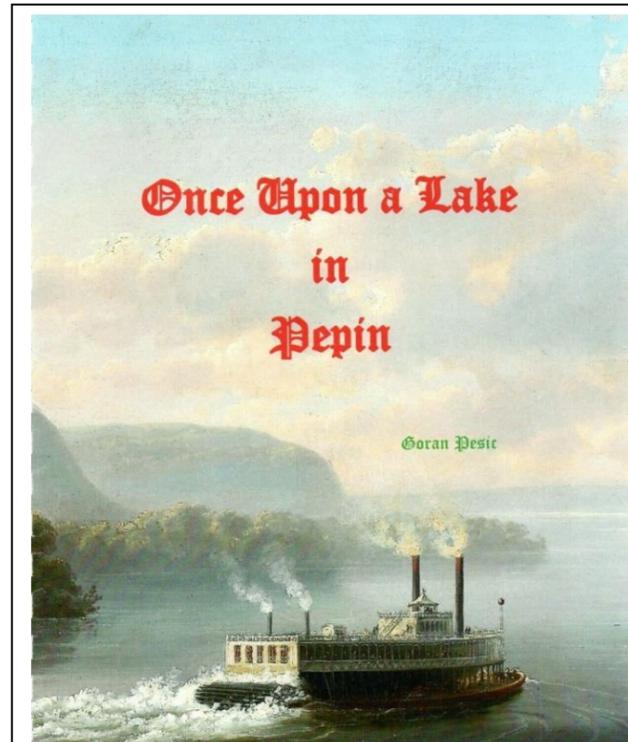
**Pass this newsletter on  
 to a friend & encourage  
 him/her to join PCHS!**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
 STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBERSHIPS:**

- \_\_\_ \$8 Individual
- \_\_\_ \$12 Family
- \_\_\_ \$25 Friends of Museum
- \_\_\_ \$25 Business/Professional
- \_\_\_ \$50 Contributing
- \_\_\_ \$100 Sponsor
- \_\_\_ \$1000 Lifetime

And, here's my extra donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_



Author and teacher, Goran Pesic, has released his newest book, *Once Upon a Lake in Pepin*. See inside for details.

## COVID-19 Making Its Own History PCHS Postpones Upcoming Events

The Pepin County Historical Society has indefinitely postponed the 2020 Annual Membership Meeting and Spring Education Event due to social distancing restrictions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. These events will be re-scheduled when the crisis has cleared. Board members, whose terms of office would have expired this spring, have agreed to remain on the board at least until new elections can be held.

Goran Pesic, author and teacher from Pepin, Wis., was scheduled to talk about his new book, *Once Upon a Lake in Pepin*, at our Spring Education Event. This event will also be re-scheduled to some future date. (see page three about Goran's new book)

The PCHS Board will continue to plan for the summer season and future events, but has a cautious "wait and see" feeling about setting any hard-&-fast dates for anything. We are tentatively planning our 2020 season opening at the museum for Memorial Day weekend and continue preparing for a special presentation in July or August about the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1920 ratification of the Women's Voting Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution.

The Saturday Volunteer Host List appears on page three of this issue. The COVID crisis will determine if we will actually have need for volunteer hosts or if/when we even open the doors to the public this year.

Most importantly, the PCHS Board encourages all members to pay attention to events as they unfold and to observe the recommendations of health care professionals. A quick look at the demographics of PCHS members reveals we skew heavily into the "at risk" category of older people, who may be more susceptible to some of the respiratory complications which accompany COVID.

As with many other disasters and events, history is not always easy or pleasant to watch as it unfolds.

GREETINGS! from your PCHS president

As the snow melts and the sap runs, it surely feels like spring. It's the season PCHS board members and staff plan for the coming year, but our postponed events will be held after the COVID-19 crisis has cleared. We'll start back up with our annual membership meeting and spring education event. PCHS members in attendance will elect three board members whose terms end this year -- Rita Conlin, Jean Kannel and Lois Laehn. All three have indicated their willingness to serve another term, but any PCHS member can have his/her name placed in nomination at the meeting.

A second affected event will be this summer's "Night at the Museum," which will center around the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of passage of 1920 the constitutional amendment granting women suffrage. Well-known women's right-to-vote advocate Susan B. Anthony gave a speech in our own courthouse in February 1878. Come hear her again.

Fundraising sales of our memorial bricks have closed. When it is safe to install the bricks, they will be placed around/near the Black School bell tower located on the front lawn of Washington Square.

More than four dozen people enjoyed Terry Mesch's presentation, "The Making of Pepin County," on February 27 at the Pepin School Library, and Mike Shoup has agreed to again work as the summer museum manager.

We are also looking for members who might be willing to share their time and talents as volunteer hosts, docents and board members; so please, contact the museum or any board member if you are interested.

God Bless you, and thank you to all the board members, the volunteers, the director, our summer museum manager, and all our faithful dues-paying-members; without all of you, the museum would not be possible.

Kim Wagenbach, PCHS President

## Museum Notes

The museum's display of century-old road signs advertising Durand Drug Company have been removed from public view. The signs depicted cartoon-like images of black people, which may be viewed as racist by some people. The board discussed the signs during several meetings and finally concluded the museum should be sensitive to the feelings of those visitors who might take offense.

At least seven of these signs were located on the road(s) to Durand in the early 1900s. They were found in the basement of the former Durand Drug Company by the business's new owner, August William Hoerer, in the early 1900s. The people depicted on these signs have stereotypic physical characteristics common to an art form now called "Pickaninny," which is considered to be a derogatory term, and some people find the depictions offensive. This art form began in the 1850s in drawings which appeared in Harriet Beecher Stowe's classic novel about slavery, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. The caricatures were created by white people and are consistent with other black-face characters portrayed by white people in minstrel shows and in other art forms and literature of the late 1800s America.

These signs reveal local attitudes about race in the early 20th century (the Ku Klux Klan was active in the Chippewa Valley in the early 1900s, from the village of Cornell in Chippewa County in the north to the city of Durand in Pepin County in the south) and may help us understand the extent to which racial prejudice is present today.

The display of racially offensive artifacts is controversial. The items distress some people, who believe they further marginalize members of minority groups and perpetuate racial stereotypes. Other people believe history is history, and these artifacts are appropriate for display, regardless of whether they show us at our best or our worst. However, as we become aware of the deeper meanings some artifacts hold for others, we feel obliged to honor and respect their feelings and beliefs. cont'd. →

"THE COLUMNS" is published three times a year by the Pepin County Historical Society.  
Editor: Terry J. Mesch

## Memorials Received:

For: Norbert Weinzerl  
From: Gerald/Vivian Levenske



The Old Courthouse Museum has five of the known seven signs advertising Durand Drug Co. over 100 years ago. Which roads they were posted along and who the artist might have been are unknown. The presumption is the artist was a white person unaware of his or her artwork's impact on others. Then, as now, Pepin County had a predominantly white population and many of its citizens had a basic fear of people of color. Fear of Native Americans, for example, stemmed from deeply held belief they were less than human and somehow inherently bad.

Understanding the subtleties of our own prejudices, whatever they are, is difficult.

## Other Notes

An option to visiting our museum is to visit us online at [www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org](http://www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org). We intend to make improvements to our website with the help of Town of Waterville resident Matt Sam, who has a B.S. degree in history and a minor in multimedia communication from UW-Eau Claire. He recently created a new Facebook page for "One-Room Schools of Pepin County" in a separate project. Check it out! He'll improve the museum's Facebook page as well.

## Pepin County Historical Society

Officers: President: Kim Wagenbach  
Vice-Pres: Dick Schlosser  
Secretary: Lois Laehn  
Treasurer: Galen Radle  
Directors: Rita Conlin, John Solie, Jean Kannel,  
Tom Garnevicus, Jane Jafferri

## Once Upon a Lake in Pepin

History book author Goran Pesic of Pepin has released his most recent book of Pepin County history, *Once Upon a Lake in Pepin*. Goran is a Yugoslav-born Pepin Area Schools educator, who develops history curriculum and textbooks.

*Once Upon a Lake in Pepin* recounts the events, landscapes, and people that made this area the charming place it is today. Goran reveals buried treasures, burial mounds, UFO sightings, a murder, bank robberies, kidnapping, mysterious caves, ancient artifacts, boat disasters, the B-24 bomber crash, Pepie the monster and more.

The book has more than 280 stories and 900 images and will be available for sale. Goran is the author of numerous books on various topics, including: *The True Controversy, Tangled Circumstances, The Rubbish Heap of Human Portrait, Once Upon a Childhood in Yugoslavia, and The Pepin Odyssey*. This last book, *Pepin Odyssey*, covers several centuries of Lake Pepin's and Pepin County's remarkable past.

Funds raised from sales of this book will be used for Pepin School's Social Studies programs and for academic competitions in which students demonstrate their knowledge of History and Geography. *Once Upon a Lake in Pepin* is available online at Ebay.com in color for \$32 or black-&-white for \$23. The author hopes to have books available in Pepin Area School's office, Pepin Village Hall, and gas stations, museums and restaurants in the village. The Old Courthouse Museum also plans to have the book available this summer.

## "WOMAN WANTS BREAD, NOT THE BALLOT"

...is the title of Susan B. Anthony's famous speech promoting a constitutional amendment giving women the right to vote. She delivered this speech in the upstairs courtroom of the stately new Pepin County Courthouse in Durand, Wis., on February 6, 1878, 42 years before woman's right to vote became a reality.

Anthony was on a lecture tour of the Upper Midwest that winter, Durand was just one of her stops. A week earlier she had lectures in Minneapolis, Minn., and the day following, February 7, she had another in St. Paul. Touring by horse-&-carriage and train challenged the stamina of this energetic 58-year-old; but by most accounts she impressed and entertained her audiences everywhere.

The Minneapolis *Star Tribune* ran a 2"x3" ad in its Jan. 28, 1878, edition announcing: **SUSAN B. ANTHONY "THE INVINCIBLE" Will deliver her great Lecture, "WOMAN WANTS BREAD, NOT THE BALLOT" AT ASSOCIATION HALL THURSDAY EVENING, January 31, 1878** On Sunday, Feb. 3, she delivered a different speech, "Temperance and the Social Evil," also at Association Hall, as a benefit for Magdalen Home, a local charity. cont'd. →

## 2020 MUSEUM VOLUNTEER HOST LIST

May 23 - Rita Conlin & Pat Rosenberg  
May 30 - Paul & Lou Simpson  
June 6 - Judy Schwellenbach & Joyce Haigh  
June 13 - Tom Garnevicus  
June 20 - Don & Jean Kannel & Linda Mason  
June 27 - Evelyn Pichler & Terry Mesch  
July 4 - Sharon Smith & Barb Kallstrom  
July 11 - Diane Bauer & Sarah Schutta  
July 18 - Bonnie Bock & Carol Bauer  
July 25 - Evelyn Pichler & Sarah Schutta  
Aug 1 - Gerald & Deanne Rippley  
Aug 8 - Dick & Judy Schlosser  
Aug 15 - Jane Jafferri & Lee Grippen  
Aug 22 - Gene & Mary Schlosser  
Aug 29 - Lynette & Kim Wagenbach  
Sep 5 - Don & Jean Kannel  
Sep 12 - Sharon Gingras  
Sep 19 - Rose & Glen Peterson  
Sep 26 - Sharon Gingras  
Oct 3 - Julie Reinholen

If you need to change the Saturday you are scheduled to host, please try to make arrangements to trade with another host or contact Lois Laehn at 715-672-4883 or Terry Mesch at 715-285-5659. Your help is very important to the success of the Museum. Other volunteer hosts may be needed for special events; if you are interested, contact Lois or Terry.

She then traveled by train to Menomonee, Wis., and by carriage to Durand for her speech on Wednesday evening, Feb. 6. She had to return immediately to St. Paul, where she would repeat her "Woman Wants Bread" speech the next day.

The *Saint Paul Globe* carried a news item reviewing Anthony's speech in its Feb. 8, 1878, edition:

A very large audience greeted Miss Susan B. Anthony at the Opera House last night and the listeners were well entertained. Miss Anthony...interests her hearers by her force and earnestness...[and] speaks with great ease and rapidity,... Her lecture was an earnest and forcible appeal for the adoption of [an] amendment...giving suffrage to women. She...[compared] the degradation of the colored race previous to the adoption of negro suffrage with their [women's] present condition, and claimed that women could never obtain fair compensation for her labor or equality with men...until the ballot was placed in their hands. It was her mission to educate the women of the country up to securing this great right. Her references to both the Democratic and Republican parties were the reverse of complimentary....

Not everyone was supportive of her cause. The Feb 5, 1878, *Bismarck Tribune* (Bismarck, N.D.) editorialized. "Susan B. Anthony, ...at Minneapolis, has been to that city recently lecturing on the right of water to run down hill. Susan is simply wasting her aged wind." Ten days later, the *Saint Paul Globe* printed a reader's comment, "Woman wants bread, not the ballot" - Susan B. Anthony. 'Ish dat all?' Will someone please pass the bread?"

PCHS is developing a special program exploring local reaction to Anthony's appearance in Durand and the ratification of the 19<sup>th</sup> amendment in 1920 to be presented tentatively in mid-summer.