



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

Vol. XX, No. 2

Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

July 2006

BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED AT ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING; PCHS BOARD APPOINTS OFFICERS, FILLS VACANT SEAT

Galen Radle and Roberta Stuart were re-elected to three-year terms on the PCHS Board of Directors at the annual membership meeting held April 9 at Durand High School. At the Board's May meeting, Kim Wagenbach was elected to his first full-term as President of PCHS. Kim had been Vice-president of the organization and had been acting president since December, 2005. Jon Dodge, a resident of Durand and history teacher at Durand High School, was appointed to fill a vacant seat on the Board. One seat remains vacant. Anyone interested in serving on the Board should contact Kim Wagenbach or call the Old Courthouse Museum at 715-672-5709.

Due to busy summer schedules, the Board decided not to hold a potluck picnic, which had been tentatively scheduled for July 9.

IN MEMORIAM

PCHS lost a great friend and supporter with the passing of Madeleine Lieffring. Madeleine served on the PCHS Board of Directors for many years, continued her PCHS membership for more than two decades, and was always a strong financial supporter of our activities.

Another great supporter of PCHS was Fred Conlin, husband of current Board member Rita. Fred had a great spirit and was always willing to help when and where he could.

TOURS, RESEARCH, QUERIES

Persons interested in making arrangements for museum tours, doing research, asking questions about the collection, etc., should call the museum phone at (715)672-5423 or call the Pepin County Resource Office (715)-672-5709.

CITY OF DURAND SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION SEPTEMBER 16

Old Courthouse Museum prepares for state historical marker unveiling, guided tours, and vintage costume show

Staff members and volunteers at the Old Courthouse Museum are making preparations for several activities to be held in conjunction with the 150th anniversary of the founding of the City of Durand, which is scheduled for September 16. A new state historical marker honoring the Old Courthouse is being erected on the Washington Square in front of the building and will be dedicated that day. Free guided tours of the museum will be held hourly from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. And, a period costume/style show will be held on the front portico.

The Old Courthouse Museum is cooperating with the City's Sesquicentennial Planning Committee, which has a full day of activities and events planned. History is the theme of the day and activities in Durand will include a living history rendezvous, storytellers, spelling bee, wood-cutting, old time entertainment, and much, much more.

According to the History of Buffalo and Pepin Counties, published in 1919 by H.C. Cooper, Jr. & Co. of Winona, MN, "Miles D. Prindle and Charles Billings laid out a village in July, 1856, the survey being made by Lorenzo G. Wood." Earlier that year, Prindle, a native of Derby, Connecticut, had arrived in the area with the dream of founding his own city somewhere in the Upper Mississippi River Valley, which had recently been opened for settlement.

The Chippewa River was the primary means of transportation at the time. The only "road" that existed was a foot path used by the lumbermen to walk from North Pepin on the banks of Lake Pepin to the great white pine forests of the upper Chippewa River basin. Durand was about a day's walk from the Mississippi River and a natural spot for the loggers to stop to spend the night.

OLD COURTHOUSE MUSEUM NEWS

The old wooden double-doors covering the outside steps going down to the basement on the northeast side of the building have been replaced with new treated lumber and hardware. The entry door to the basement at the foot of the steps has been replaced by an insulated steel door. The badly damaged concrete steps will be removed and new treated wood steps will be built. Also, some holes around the basement entry door, created by deteriorating limestone and broken mortar, will be repaired. These improvements, which will more effectively seal out the cold and critters, will cost the Society about \$4,000.

The PCHS Board has also approved replacing the fluorescent lights down the main hallway with track lighting. The individualized light fixtures can be aimed and arranged to accent the displays, pictures, and paintings more effectively, and, will provide a more aesthetically pleasing look and feel to the hallway.

Bernard Brantner has built two new four-wheel dollies for the glass display cases in Room Two. Last year, Bernard built similar dollies for the three large display cases in the main hall. Joyce Haigh and Judy Schwellenbach sewed and attached attractive black fabric skirting around the bases of these three display cases. Not only are these cases now more accessible, but they also dress-up the main hall. Volunteers have also sewed and hung black drapery over the windows in Room Two and covered the foam inserts in the windows of Room One with fabric, which have made these rooms warmer and more attractive.

Volunteers are also working on two displays related to the City of Durand's Sesquicentennial Celebration: mannequins located throughout the building are being dressed in vintage clothing; and, a large display of photographs depicting the Chippewa River bridges at Durand is being developed in Room One.

OTHER NEWS & NOTES

The shooting of the Coleman brothers and subsequent hanging of Ed Maxwell in Durand in 1881 continue to capture the imaginations of researchers and writers from around the country. On Friday, June 16, John Hallwas, a professor from Western Illinois University at McComb, Ill., spent a couple hours doing some final research and verifying sources for his 500-page manuscript of a book he will have published soon. The following day, Les Kruger from Owen Sound, Ontario, Canada, poured over documents from PCHS archives for several hours for his intended publication about the infamous events of 1881. Both men promised to send copies of their books once they are published to the Old Courthouse Museum. It will be interesting to see how similar these two new interpretations of history will be.

Also, the Currents magazine, published by the Chippewa Valley Museum, contained an article about the 1881 shooting and hanging in the Spring, 2005, issue. And, the Spring, 2006, issue of Currents contained an article about events in Pepin County during the 1860's surrounding the murder of Ira Bradley Wheeler and the subsequent trials of his wife, Margaret, and James E. Carter, who were accused of the crime. Copies of both issues of Currents are on file at the Museum.

The museum is seeking copies of the History of Northern Wisconsin and the History of Dunn County for our reference Library. We're also looking for original documents, photos, letters, diaries and other information about William Boyd Newcomb, who founded the Village of Pepin in the 1850s. Anyone who has such information can contact the museum at 715-672-5423 or 715-672-5709.

MEMORIALS RECEIVED -

For:	From:
Marguerite Anderson	John J./Mary Jane Brantner Richard/Vera Slabey
Dorothy Brunner	Joe/Christi Lieftring
David Castleberg	Mary Buchholtz Lee E./Gayle G. Grippen Joe/Christi Lieftring
Fred Conlin	Donald E./Irma E. Bauer Georgene L. Britton Galen C./Bernadine J. Radle Judy Schwellenbach Richard/Vera Slabey
LaVerle Fahnel	Sadie Hagness
Leonard F. Knutson	Richard/Vera Slabey
Madeleine Lieftring	Dorothy L. Bowman Stephen J. Brantner Sadie Hagness Heit Realty Gerald/Vivian Levenske Nancy/Linda/Judy Lieftring David/Carolyn McMahon Thalice M. Nicklas Paul/Donna Oesterreicher Galen C./Bernadine J. Radle Mr/Mrs. Ruslin Schultz Judy Schwellenbach Richard/Vera Slabey Mary E. Yingst
William R. McMahon	Joe/Christi Lieftring
Elaine Mock	Galen C./Bernadine J. Radle
James F. Pattison	Galen C./Bernadine J. Radle
Hubert F. Spindler	Mary Buchholtz



Pepin County Historical Society

Officers:

President: Kim Wagenbach
Vice-Pres.: Jon Dodge
Secretary: Roberta Stuart
Treasurer: Galen Radle

Directors:

Rita Conlin, John Solie,
Lois Laehn, Jean Kannel

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Editor: Terry J. Mesch

Lake Pepin (cargo ship) served as
USS Lake Pepin in 1918-19

Lake Pepin, a 2240 gross ton steam cargo ship, was built in 1918 at Duluth, Minnesota. Her original name, *Muerthe*, was changed to the United States Shipping Board's "Lake" series prior to completion. She was acquired by the U.S. Navy and placed in commission at Montreal, Quebec, as *USS Lake Pepin* in September 1918. The ship served as a Naval Overseas Transportation Service coal carrier between the United Kingdom and France until May 1919, then returned to the U.S. with a cargo of ordnance. *USS Lake Pepin* was decommissioned in June 1919 and returned to the U.S. Shipping Board. Sold to private owners in 1923 and renamed *Samoa*, she was resold to the U.S. Government in 1946 and scrapped in 1949.

A recent acquisition from Helen Prindle Grant of Denver, Co. to the PCHS collection is the [History of the Chippewa Valley](#) compiled by T. E. Randall, published in 1875 by Free Press Print, Eau Claire, Wis. On the inside of the front cover is written:

*"M D & A M Prindle to Wm F & G A
Prindle 1876".*



Remnants of the pilings from the first Chippewa River bridge at Durand. Built in 1884, these pilings are still visible today during low water. This photo was taken by Don Rahman in June, 2006 (Round Hill is in the background). The 1884 bridge was a toll bridge made of wood and steel and entered the city at 6th Avenue West, where the Econo Foods Store stands today. The bridge stood until 1906 when a violent windstorm blew it off its peers. Fortunately, a new bridge had been built in 1902 two blocks upstream at 4th Avenue West. Staff at the Old Courthouse Museum are developing a display of nearly two dozen pictures of the Chippewa River bridges at Durand to coincide with the Durand Sesquicentennial and the opening of the newest bridge during the Fall of this year.



The old Post Office in Stockholm, Wis., is home of the Stockholm Institute, a historical society incorporated in 1984 to preserve and celebrate the history of the Stockholm area. The museum attracts visitors from across the country and around the world. The Stockholm Institute publishes a regular newsletter for its members and has been a sponsor of the Heritage Days in Stockholm.

Pepin County Historical Society
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DATES TO REMEMBER

- Aug 2 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Sep 6 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Sep 16 - Durand Sesquicentennial
- Oct 4 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Oct 8 - Fall Meeting 2:00 pm @ TBD
- Oct 14 - Last Day of '06 Season

Join us!

MEMBERSHIPS:

- ___ \$5 Individual
- ___ \$8 Family
- ___ \$25 Friends of
Museum
- ___ \$25
Business/Professional
- ___ \$50 Contributing
- ___ \$100 Sponsor
- ___ \$1000 Lifetime

Name _____
—
Address _____



"Honor a Teacher/
Mentor" bricks
border the walk to
Helen Parkhurst
Bell Tower
Memorial. PCHS
is accepting
requests for more
engraved bricks.

The **Honor a Teacher - Buy a Brick** is accepting orders for engraved bricks honoring important teachers, coaches, mentors, pastors, or other positive role-models like parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or family friends. Stop by the Helen Parkhurst Bell Tower Memorial at Arkansaw Middle School to see the 65 engraved bricks already in place. Twelve more will be placed soon. PCHS is taking requests now to fill an order of at least thirty more bricks later this year. Call the Old Courthouse Museum at 715-672-5423 for details.