



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

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Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

July, 2018

GREETINGS! from your PCHS President -

We are in the middle of our busy summer season when we extend museum hours with the help of volunteer hosts and our summer manager, Mike Shoup. We have been busy in our former Tool Room, which now will become our Agricultural Room. Please stop in and check it out during our next "Night at the Museum" August 23.

We have been experiencing moisture in the basement with water seeping in near the southwest corner bathroom. A small area of the front porch concrete floor collapsed and rain water was funneling in. We have covered the hole with a tarp and will be fixing the problem. But, while the problem persists, we are renting a port-a-potty for our visitors. We are also checking into larger and more efficient dehumidifiers.

The former Arkansaw Elementary School has another new owner; so, we have to think some more about moving the Big Arkansaw School bell tower. The new owner says it's okay where it stands for now, so we have some breathing room. We were planning to move it to our lot downtown, but plans are on hold for now.

Thank you for your continued support for the development and upkeep of our wonderful museum. We've made several big changes over the last year, including the new Gleason Gallery and Little Plum Church display in the upstairs courtroom and jury room. Stop in and visit the museum and 1895 jail. Bring someone with you, young or old.

You can arrange a visit and tour anytime by calling the museum at 715-672-5423 or visit during our regular summer hours 11 am to 4 pm Thursday through Sunday Memorial Day to Labor Day. God Bless...

- Kim Wagenbach, PCHS President

"Night at the Museum"

Thursday, August 23 - 6:00 – 8:30 pm

Grand Opening – NEW Agricultural Exhibit

and the **Poetry of Elizabeth Clark Hardy**

and **Scavenger Hunt for Kids**

at the

Old Courthouse Museum & 1895 Jail

Washington Square - Durand, Wis.

The public is invited to a **"Night at the Museum"** to celebrate the Grand Opening of the new Agricultural Exhibit at the Old Courthouse Museum in Durand, Wis. from 6:00 - 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 23. This dramatic new display celebrates farming and depicts the importance of cooperation among neighbors, families and friends to the early success of farming in Pepin County.

Visitors will be treated to readings of some of Elizabeth Clark Hardy's finest and most famous poems. Museum Director Terry Mesch will perform Hardy's work with brief biographical sketches interspersed between poems. Performances are scheduled for 6:30 and 7:30 p.m.

Historical Treasures Scavenger Hunts for the kids will be held throughout the evening and prizes will be awarded for every scavenger hunt list completed. Names of successful hunters will be entered into drawings for \$5 gift certificates to the Panther Drive-In in Durand.

The new farming display has been in development for two years and was initiated by PCHS member Bernard Brantner's donation of a scale model dairy barn he created several years ago. The barn has its own history after a state tour several years ago as part of the Wisconsin Historical Society's "Barn Again" travelling display. Summer Manager Mike Shoup has been the catalyst behind the exhibit's development and was instrumental in the development of two previous exhibits of Helen Parkhurst and Elizabeth Clark Hardy.

The museum has a collection of several dozen Hardy poems and essays. She started writing as a young girl in the mid-1800s and continued throughout her life. She was the editor of the household and homemakers column for the "Wisconsin Agriculturist" for more than 20 years; a position she held at the time of her death in 1929.

This "Night at the Museum" is an open house event and is free to the public. Refreshments will be served at the Back Steps Bistro.

MUSEUM NEWS

Museum workers noticed water puddling in the southwest corner of the basement of the museum following a heavy rainstorm early this spring. Source of the water was discovered to be a small collapsed area of the front porch concrete floor. A tarp has stopped the flow of water into the building and we are trying to find a contractor to help repair the damage. Carpet covering the porch floor effectively hid the collapsed area and had to be cut away to assess the damage. While we are in the process of repair, we have rented a Jul's John to serve visitor needs, since our one working bathroom was affected by the rainwater seepage.

A large maple tree branch blew down on the front lawn during a severe storm in July. No damage was done to the Old Courthouse, but the former Courthouse Annex, now owned by Greater Insurance Service, suffered minor damage. The broken branch revealed serious decay inside the tree, so the whole tree and its root ball were removed.

Early this summer, the mortar in the stone foundation was repaired by Harley Cochrane of Stockholm, Wis. The foundation looks much better and will be a more effective barrier against critters. Harley is a mason specializing in limestone and sandstone. Much of his work can be seen in and around the villages of Stockholm and Maiden Rock.

THREE NEW DISPLAYS & more to come?

Museum staff has been busy all year putting together three large new exhibits. As noted in our last newsletter, the donation of a large C.H. Gleason oil painting from Little Plum Lutheran Church congregation was the catalyst for development of two new exhibits in the upstairs courtroom and the jury room. The Old Courthouse Museum likely has the largest collection of Gleason's work, most of which have been brought together in one location on the back and side walls of the upstairs courtroom. We are now calling this the "Gleason Gallery". The jury room contains our largest Gleason painting, which also serves as the centerpiece of our new "Little Plum Church" display. The Little Plum is representative of the hundreds of small congregations which built churches and thrived in rural Wisconsin throughout the 20th century.

The third new exhibit will be formally opened for public viewing during our open house at "Night at the Museum" on August 23. However, visitors have been able to view our work-in-progress since we began emptying the former Tool Room earlier this summer. Huge wall-sized enlargements of farm and farm-related photographs will set the backdrop for the exhibit's centerpiece, a scale model of the dairy barn located on the farm where the model's creator, Bernard Brantner, grew up in the Town of Durand.

Finally, another smaller scale project by Mike Shoup will invite the visitor to "create your own adventure" in a book of choices about what to do and where to go that could affect a person's life. Mike's first "create your own" book is based on the life of Charles Richardson.

☪ ☪

An 1880s photo of River Street (now Main Street) in Durand looking down river to the southwest. The bridge in the foreground crosses a creek about where 1st Avenue crosses Main Street today. The creek once flowed through Memorial Park and is now routed through an underground culvert to the river. All the buildings in the photo were destroyed in a fire on Dec. 24, 1881.



The Old Courthouse Museum is **open anytime by appointment!** Call 715-672-5423.

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Pepin County Historical Society

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Rural Logic

By Elizabeth Clarke-Hardy

Publ: *The Wisconsin Agriculturist*, Aug. 26,
1909

It's a mighty sight more pleasanter
A-fishin' at your ease
Down beside the flowin' river
Underneath the shady trees,
Than it is out in the blazin' sun
A-hoein' of the corn;
But you have to hoe to get a crop,
Ez sure ez you are born.

An' in the race of honor
Ye kin allers tell a drone;
He's the feller that jest gits there
Ez the rest are comin' home;
But the chap that carries off the belt -
The champion of the track -
When drones are bringin' up the rear
They meet him comin' back.

There's a premium fer industry
A-top of labor's hill;
Ye can hump yerself an' get it
Er the other feller will.
But the chap that likes his leisure
Finds it doesn't pay to stop,
Fer ye hev to keep a-climbin'
Ef ye ever reach the top.

And its easier for a feller
To lean up agin the fence,
An argy with his neighbor,
Ef he can't talk common sense
"Bout the tarriff an' 'bout politicks -
But to argyfy and shirk
Won't accumulate the sheckles
Like a little honest work.

An' ye'll allers find the feller
Thet is down upon his luck,
Is the feller that is lackin'
In enterprise and pluck;
But the chap that keeps a-diggin'
In the sunshine an' the rain -
He takes no stock in luck an' chance,
But he gets there just the same.

❧ ❧

In this poem, E.C. Hardy creates a dialect for a narrator's voice other than her own, a technique she used in a few of her other poems in the Old Courthouse Museum's collection. Her positive outlook on life, her views about how to raise children, her love of country, and her hope for mankind are all reflected in her work.



The Arkansaw Cooperative Association is a classic example of farmers joining together to help themselves succeed. The westward expansion in the U.S. during the first half of the 19th century created a surplus in agricultural products as those lands were settled and cultivated. Adverse economic conditions for farmers included low prices, wide marketing margins, high freight charges, and high interest rates. Marketing cooperatives were organized by farmers to counter these conditions.

Farmers in many small, rural Wisconsin communities started cooperatives early in the 20th century. Cooperative businesses, today, remain a powerful force in the commerce of Wisconsin and the Midwest. The U.S. Department of Agriculture ranks Wisconsin fourth nationally among those states with the largest number of cooperatives.

The cooperative movement remains alive and well in Pepin County. Not only are farmers served by present day Countryside Cooperatives, but many of them are also provided with electricity by a local cooperative affiliate of the Dairyland Power Cooperative system and receive their telecommunications (phone, television and internet) services from Ntec (Nelson Telephone Cooperative) located in Durand. Some of them may even shop for food at a cooperative grocery store.

The first recognized cooperative business in the U.S. was a mutual fire insurance company, founded in 1752 by Benjamin Franklin, which continues to operate today. In Pepin County, Stockholm Town Mutual Insurance Company is policyholder-owned, organized and operated to protect its members from loss from fire and other disasters. Organized in 1872, Stockholm Town Mutual is located in the village of Stockholm, Wis. in a former bank building it purchased in 1932, when the bank went bankrupt during the financial collapse of the Great Depression.

Cooperatives have been a vital part of the development of Pepin County and, since the mid-1800s, have had a huge impact on the local and regional economy.

The picture above is a portion of a large format photo which is included in the museum's new Agricultural Exhibit.

Pepin County Historical Society
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Find us on the Internet!
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 \$ _____



What were these menfolk celebrating? The answer can be found in the NEW Agricultural Exhibit at the Old Courthouse Museum and 1895 Jail. Grand Opening of the display will be held during "Night at the Museum" 6:00 to 8:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 23. Also, Terry Mesch performs the poetry of Durand's Elizabeth Clark Hardy. (See details inside.)