



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

Vol. XXI, No. 2

Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

June 2007

President's Message:

Greetings! We are now open for the summer season. We couldn't do it without the help of our volunteer workers. I would like to thank them and the members of the PCHS Board of Directors for all their time and talents.

At The PCHS annual meeting on April 15th, attendees re-elected to the board three directors whose terms were expiring. Serving for another three years are myself, John Solie and Jon Dodge.

At our May board meeting, we elected officers. Those officers elected were: President - myself; Vice-President - Jon Dodge; Secretary - Roberta Suart; and, Treasurer - Galen Radle.

Our summer potluck picnic is coming up Monday, July 16th at Round Hill. Bring a dish to pass, your own beverages, a lawn chair, and your own tableware and utensils.

- Kim Wagenbach

Pepin County Sesquicentennial 1858-2008

PCHS will be participating in the county-wide celebrations of Pepin County's 150th birthday, which will occur throughout 2008. PCHS will be leading a day-long observance on Washington Square in Durand scheduled for Saturday, August 9, 2008. Other county-wide plans include a Fall Dance in Pepin during October, '08, co-sponsored by the Pepin Area Community Club and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Society, and, the Red Hat Ladies from Arkansaw are planning a vintage clothing show and "antique road show" to coincide with Arkansaw Creek Park Days next year. We are still looking for suggestions about events and/or observances in Stockholm and Albany/Lima for this very notable occasion.

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.

PCHS Summer Potluck Picnic

5:30 p.m. Monday, July 16, 2007

Round Hill

South of Arkansaw, Wisconsin

Featured presentation following the potluck:

"The Founding of Pepin County"

by Terry Mesch

The PCHS Board of Directors invites you to attend an evening of food, fun, relaxation, and a bit of Pepin County history. Bring along a dish to pass, your own plates, cups and utensils, and a lawn chair.

The gathering begins at 5:30 p.m. with plans to begin eating by 6:00. Water is available. Beautiful and historic Round Hill will be a great back drop for the festivities.

After eating, feel free to stroll around the area, however the former Gilmore House will be rented out that evening. We must all respect the privacy of the renters and give some distance to the house.

Terry Mesch will later be talking about the controversial founding of Pepin County in 1858 and give credit to the man he believes is the "Father of Pepin County," "the Father of the Village of Pepin," and "Co-father of Dunn County."

Old Courthouse Museum to be a Featured Stop during Fall Fresh Art Tour October 5,6 & 7

The popular Fall Fresh Art Tour of the studios of artists throughout the Big Woods of western Wisconsin will include a new stop this year. The Old Courthouse Museum will be featured in the tour and could attract a lot of people. The museum will be featuring the works of numerous artists who lived and worked in Pepin County, including C.H. Gleason, Esther Baur, Ed Grippen, and others. The Museum will also host Guest Artist, Julie Bower, whose photographs and hand-made paper will be on display and for sale.

The Museum will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day, October 5, 6 & 7. Volunteer hosts are needed. Contact Terry Mesch at 672-5709 if you are interested in helping out any of these days.

MUSEUM NEWS & NOTES

On May 1, our first bus-load of visitors for the season arrived about 10:15 a.m. Fifty-five mostly retired residents from Eau Claire and Menomonie who regularly explore new places in western Wisconsin dropped by for a "whirl-wind" tour of the museum and jail.

Law Day-2007 held May 3 & 4 for fifth graders from Durand, Pepin, Assumption and Pepin Schools was a resounding success. More than 100 kids participated in mock trials in the old courtroom, viewed the exhibits throughout the first floor rooms of the museum, experienced getting locked-up in the lattice-iron-work cell-block in the old jail, and were treated to hot dogs and soda on the courthouse lawn.

Later in the month, the Arkansaw Elementary School third graders dropped by in three different shifts for all-too-brief visits to the museum and jail.

Our regular Tuesday volunteers (Judy Schwellenbach, Irma Bauer, Pat Ulwelling & Julie Rinholen) were on hand for all three events and were helped out by Jean Kannel, Roberta Stuart, and Lori Miller.

The Museum was also briefly featured on Wisconsin Public Television's "In Wisconsin" weekly travelogue about interesting places in the state. The program had never done a single piece on Pepin County and dedicated its entire half-hour show on May 24 to this beautiful little piece of the Badger State.

The following books are for sale through PCHS:

Durand 1881, compiled by Vera Slabey, published 1987 - \$3.00

Steamboat Navigation on the Chippewa River, by Peter A. Adler, published 2004 - \$10.00

Mary Plummer Clemenceau - Sweetheart of Pepin County, by Vern Pinkowski, published 1997 - \$10.00

Helen Parkhurst - Educator, by Vern Pinkowski, published 1999 - \$10.00

Elizabeth Clarke Hardy - Wife, Writer, Farmer, Poet and Editor, by Vern Pinkowski, published 2001 - \$10.00

A Pathway to Pepin County's Stone Age People, by Vern Pinkowski, published 2003 - \$10.00

A Vanished Community - The Waubeek Saw Mill Settlement, by Vern Pinkowski, published 2004 - \$10.00

Phil Scheckle - The Man & The River He Loved, by Don Rahman, published by PCHS in December of 2006 - \$10.00

Your purchase will help support the PCHS mission of "preserving the history and traditions of Pepin County."

Memorials received:

For:	From:
Kenneth McMahon	Galen/Bernadine Radle Steven/Mary Schwartz Richard/Vera Slabey
Patrick Achenbach*	Judy Schwellenbach

*Pat and Rosemary have been longtime Volunteer Hosts on Saturdays at the Old Courthouse Museum. We will miss Pat's energy and his ever-ready smile. Our sympathy is extended to the families of both Pat and Ken.



The Papal Cross - "Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice" (for Church and Pope) is the highest award the Catholic Church bestows on lay people. Awarded to Ethel (Mrs. J.A.) Rayburn in 1944 by Pope Pius XII; on display in Room Two of the Old Courthouse Museum.



A gift membership to the Pepin County Historical Society is a great way to show your thoughtfulness and care for someone special.



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, Lynn Coulson

"THE COLUMNS" is published three times a year by the Pepin County Historical Society.

Editor: Terry J. Mesch

HANGIN' TREE'S DEMISE RESOLVED

The demise of the infamous "hangin' tree" from which the notorious outlaw Ed Maxwell swung on November 19, 1881, has been discovered. Despite rumors and pictures in the Courier-Wedge which indicated it was taken down in 1978, another photo was recently discovered in the Aug. 20, 1959, issue of the Wedge, which is a more credible time-frame.



A farewell salute to the "hanging tree" in the Courthouse sq. appeared last week before the sturdy oak was felled. A medical type skeleton was suspended from an overhanging limb by persons who never have been identified. The skeleton now dangles in the basement of the present courthouse, waiting for someone to claim it. Old-timers remember when a horse thief and killer, Ed Williams, was hung from the tree after a brief trial at Durand in 1889.

Hager City Youth Gets Scholarship To University

The caption below the photo reads:

"A farewell salute to the 'hanging tree' in the Courthouse sq. appeared last week before the sturdy oak was felled. A medical type skeleton was suspended from an overhanging limb by persons who never have been identified. The skeleton now dangles in the basement of the present courthouse waiting for someone to claim it. Old-timers remember when a horse thief and killer, Ed Williams, was hung from the tree after a brief trial in Durand in 1889."

The editor was not a stickler for detail...however, this fits well with the "most likely" scenario for when the tree was "felled." The Pepin County Board of Supervisors had just approved the construction of the courthouse annex (the cream brick building) which was constructed next to the Old Courthouse during 1959 and first occupied in 1960. The photo doesn't show any reliable landmarks as to exact location of the tree. It is believed to have stood on the boulevard along 3rd Avenue West northeast of the courthouse.

Western Illinois University Professor's Story of the 1881 Shooting & Hanging Going to Press Soon

John Hallwas, a highly-regarded professor of English at Western Illinois University (WIU) in Macomb, Illinois, has just wrapped up his research into the shooting of Charles and Milton Coleman by Ed and Alonzo Maxwell in July, 1881. Hallwas's 500-page manuscript will be published within the next year and will have a tentative title of Dime Novel Desperadoes - The Story of the Williams Brothers.

A noted public scholar, Hallwas has been on WIU's faculty 34 years, teaching American literature and nonfiction creative writing courses and courses in intellectual history for the Centennial Honors College.

He has written or edited 22 books including the "Spoon River Anthology: An Annotated Edition" "Cultures in Conflict: A Documentary History of the Mormon War in Illinois" and "The Bootlegger: A Story of Small-Town America."

Hallwas has received a variety of awards and honors, including the Distinguished Professor Award (for excellence in teaching) and the Distinguished Faculty Lecturer Award (for career achievement) from WIU, and the MidAmerica Award (for distinguished scholarship) from the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. In 1998 "The Bootlegger" was nominated for the National Book Award for Nonfiction and the Pulitzer Prize for Nonfiction.

Hallwas has agreed to participate in the August 9, 2008, PCHS Pepin County Sesquicentennial Observance. Hopefully, his book will have been published by then and he'll do book signings.

John Hallwas - Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Western Illinois University at Macomb, will be on hand to help celebrate Pepin County's 150th birthday during August, 2008. His new book about the shooting and hanging of 1881 is expected to be published soon.

Pepin County Historical Society
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PRST STD
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PCHS POTLUCK PICNIC
5:30 p.m. at ROUND HILL
Monday, July 16
"Founding of Pepin County"

Find out who is the "Father of Pepin County"

(see inside for details)

DATES TO REMEMBER

- July 11 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- July 16 - Potluck Picnic 5:30 pm @ Rnd Hill
- Aug 1 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Sep 5 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Oct 3 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Oct 5,6,7 - "**Fall Fresh Art Tour**" - 10am-4pm
 featuring the works of C.H. Gleason,
 Esther Baur, & others from the past and
 present. Guest artist: Julie Bower
- Oct 13 - Last Day of '06 Season
- Oct 14 - Fall Meeting 2:00 pm @ TBD

Join us!

MEMBERSHIPS:

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

A **GREEN DOT** on your label indicates your 2007 membership dues have not been received! Please send ASAP!

Name _____

—

Address _____



MAIDEN ROCK - lithograph, Currier & Ives, c.1871 - printed with permission from the Muscatine Art Center (MAC), Muscatine, Iowa. MAC has the original lithograph on display along with numerous other original Maiden Rock and Lake Pepin works of art in the Center's "Great River Collection". Muscatine is located along one of those parts of the Mississippi where the river flows east-west, similar to our own Lake Pepin above whose shores the Maiden Rock looms.