



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

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Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

June, 2012

President's Message:

Greetings! to all members of the Pepin County Historical Society. We're now in to our busy season, Memorial Day to Labor Day. The Old Courthouse Museum is now open four days per week, 11am-4pm Thursday through Sunday.

Welcome to our new summer intern, Charity Moore, who will be on hand to greet you. Stop in to say "hello" to Charity and spend some time viewing the exhibits and displays of our wonderful museum.

Our Old Courthouse Museum is one of those "best kept secrets" in the Chippewa Valley, but we would like to change that. First, you need to stop in to see the museum yourself. (If you never have seen the museum or haven't visited during the past few years, you will be more than pleasantly surprised with the new displays, new lighting, and more.) Next you need to contact your friends and relatives to let them know what we have to offer.

During late May, I was in Canada fishing with a high school classmate. He has been fishing in the same place for the past thirty years. His father-in-law purchased the cabin where we stayed in the 1960s. It was located on an island in the lake where we fished. I could feel the history in that place!

Early in June, I went to Mille Lacs Lake in Minnesota and one night fished on a large launch which was an antique commercial fishing boat. I could again feel the history around us every moment I was there.

I've learned over the years we simply have to take the time to relax and let the feeling of history come through. I get that same feeling every time I enter the Old Courthouse.

Please make the time in your busy lives to feel the history ... visit our museum.

And finally, big THANKS to all our great volunteers who make it all happen.

- Kim Wagenbach, PCHS President

UWEC Grad Charity Moore is 2012 Intern

Charity Moore has been hired for the summer of 2012 to provide staffing during extended summer hours at the museum and to assist with managing and expanding the exhibits and displays.

Ms. Moore recently graduated from the University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire with an undergraduate degree in Public History. She is a native of Milltown, WI and currently resides in Eau Claire. She believes this internship will provide her with an excellent introduction to various museum operations, as well as provide valuable hands-on experience.

PCHS Summer Potluck Picnic

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

**Little Plum Lutheran Church / Little Plum School
County Road N, Town of Frankfort**

"Reminiscing about a One-Room School"

PCHS members and the public are invited to attend the annual Summer Potluck Picnic on Monday, July 16 to be held at Little Plum Lutheran Church and the Little Plum School located at W8851 County Road N three miles south of Ella, Wisconsin.

Following the potluck supper in the church basement, everyone will be invited over to the Little Plum School to enjoy a variety of stories from folks who attended the school or knew someone who attended or taught there. These memories and stories will hopefully stir up reminiscences among other attendees who may want to share their recollections of the time they attended a one-room country school.

The Little Plum School is currently owned by the congregation of the Little Plum Lutheran Church (LPLC), which has done considerable work to keep the schoolhouse in good repair. It is one of the best maintained one-room country schoolhouses in Pepin County and has been open to the public daily for the past few years.

However, as the congregation at LPLC has dwindled, the church has found it harder to maintain the school and has approached the Pepin County Historical Society to discuss what it could do to help preserve this unique and historic building.

One option being discussed is for PCHS to take ownership of the Little Plum School and to be responsible for future maintenance, restoration and use of the structure. The PCHS Board of Directors will be happy to listen to your opinions and comments about such a venture.

Attendees at the PCHS Summer Potluck Picnic **are asked to bring their own beverages, plates, cups and eating utensils, and a dish to pass.** Coffee and water will be available. The gathering begins at 5:30 p.m. with plans to begin eating by 6:00. Beautiful and historic hills along the Plum Creek and Little Plum Creek valleys are a great backdrop for the festivities.

Find us on the Internet!

www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org

MUSEUM / SOCIETY NEWS & NOTES

The Old Courthouse Museum and Jail is now open for the 2012 season. Hours are 11am-4pm Thursday through Sunday now until Labor Day weekend.

Nearly four dozen people attended the PCHS Annual Meeting and Spring Education Event in April which featured Tracy Pooler talking about the modern day search for history through geocaching. Also at this meeting, Galen Radle, Roberta Stuart, and Lynn Coulson were re-elected to new three year terms on the PCHS Board of Directors.

More than 150 people visited the Museum during the Spring Fresh Art Tour during May. You may have missed the wonderful fabric art of Durand native Jane Foes.

From PCHS Gift Shop

25th Anniversary T-Shirts - sizes s-m-l-xl - cheap!

Dime Novel Desperadoes - The Notorious Maxwell Brothers, by John Hallwas, 2008, published by University of Illinois Press; winner - "Best Biography from the Midwest" by the Society of Midland Authors, \$32.00-hardcopy, \$25-paperback

Brothers in Blood, by Les Kruger, 2008 - \$20.00

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Phil Scheckel - The Man & The River He Loved, by Don Rahman, published by PCHS, 2006 - \$10.00

A Twisted Pig's Tale, by Vern Pinkowski, 2008 - \$10.00

Your purchase will help support the PCHS mission of "preserving the history and traditions of Pepin County." The Old Courthouse Museum is **open anytime by appointment!** Call 715-672-5423 to set up a time for you and/or your group to visit / tour the museum.



Patent inscription plate on cellblock of 1895 jail:

"P.J. Pauly & Bro.
St. Louis"

Memorials Received

For
Howard (Pete) Buros
Lorena Rischardson

From
Karen Sundstrom
Bernard/Lorraine
Brenner



PCHS / Old Courthouse Museum Summer Intern Charity Moore is working on several research projects this summer, including pouring over the meeting minutes of the Pepin County Board of Supervisors from 1889 to 1919 to find details related to the courthouse and Washington Square. The article on page three about the new jail built during 1895 is just the beginning of her research.

Pepin County Historical Society

Officers:

President: Kim Wagenbach

Vice-Pres.: Lynn Coulson

Secretary: Roberta Stuart

Treasurer: Galen Radle

Directors:

Rita Conlin, John Solie, Lois Laehn,

Jean Kannel, Dick Schlosser

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

STATE THREATENS TO CONDEMN OLD JAIL – COUNTY BOARD APPROVES NEW JAIL

The Annual Meeting of the Pepin County Board of Supervisors held in November of 1894 was a long one. During the meeting a letter received from E. Janes, President of the State Board of Control, was read, which stated a recent inspection of the Pepin County jail "...demonstrates unfitness of use and unsafety." The letter warned, if plans for a new jail were not provided for, the State Board of Control would begin the process of condemning the existing building. The existing jail was then located on Prospect Street at the southeast end of Wolcott Street (later changed to 4th Avenue West) in Durand, which is now occupied by the parking lot of the Cobblestone Inn. [This was the jail which housed Ed Maxwell on November 19, 1881, before his preliminary hearing at the Courthouse, and, back to which he was being taken when his guards were subdued and Ed was lynched by an angry mob.]

The County Board then resolved to build a new jail the ensuing year on the westerly side of the Court House Square. An amount not to exceed \$2000 was to be levied on county taxpayers to pay for the costs of construction. A Building Committee was appointed to make and prepare plans for the new jail; members were W.C. Hammond, Henry Hogue, and Fred Knaack.

The Annual Meeting was later adjourned temporarily and reconvened in January of 1895 when the County Board authorized borrowing an additional \$1000 at no more than 8% interest to cover additional expenses related to construction of the new jail. Also, the Building Committee was empowered to make all decisions necessary to complete the project by the time of the next Annual Meeting of the Board. (Up to this point, no specific mention was made about the sheriff's residence, which adjoins the jail. It can be assumed the residence was included in the overall jail project.)

In November, 1895, during the Annual Meeting, the County Board examined and inspected the new jail "...and sheriff's residence..." and "...found it conformed to the contract made with the builders thereof and, on motion of Mr. Hillard, the county board accepted the said building from Henry Bruenn and J.P. Fox as a completion of their contracts with the county."

The old jail building was officially declared closed and the new jail building officially declared open for use. The Committee on County Property was authorized to sell the jail lot at the end of Wolcott Street to the highest responsible bidder. Later at the same meeting, a motion was made to authorize the County Clerk to deed the jail lot at the easterly end of Wolcott Street to Robert Morsbach for the sum of \$1.00 reserving the buildings thereon. This Motion was defeated.

H



View of the entrance to the Sheriff's Office from inside the jail built in 1895. This doorway has two steel doors; the lattice iron door shown and a solid steel door immediately behind it. The "bird cage" like protrusion allowed the Sheriff to look into the jail proper without having to unlock the door itself. The cellblock, consisting of two four-bed cells, was designed by P.J. Pauly & Bro. of St. Louis, Missouri, which still builds jail cells and jail complexes today.

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



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Little Plum Schoolhouse
W8851 County Road N
Pepin County, Wisconsin

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

Name _____
Address _____

MEMBERSHIPS:

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



Little Plum School
Original watercolor by Jean Accola

One of the best preserved country schools in Pepin County is the Little Plum (formally called Little Plum School District #2, Pepin County). Built in 1899 for \$800, it was the center of learning for children in southern Frankfort Township and northern Pepin Township until 1954. Located along County Road N eight miles north of Pepin, the school was purchased by the congregation of the Little Plum Lutheran Church next door and was used for vacation Bible school and by the Chippewa 4-H Club for many years.