



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

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Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

June, 2017

GREETINGS! from your PCHS President –

As we roll into summer, we are gearing up for a busy season. We are planning extended hours Wednesday evening, July 12 at the museum; something for all you Civil War buffs (see the article to the right). We are holding a second “Night at the Museum” to encourage even more visitors to come and enjoy all the exhibits. Bring along family and friends who may be visiting our area. We’re always updating and changing exhibits, so you will always see something new even if you have visited before.

We had a good turn out in the Old Courthouse upstairs courtroom for the presentation of “The Lynching of Ed Maxwell” by Terry Mesch, held during Durand Funfest. He has promised to perform the dramatic reading again in a venue more accessible than the upstairs courtroom.

We are happy to have Mike Shoup working as intern again this summer. He will be working especially on a new farming exhibit and day-to-day museum operations.

Thank you again to all the board members and our volunteers for all their work involved in keeping the museum alive and active.

God Bless. - Kim Wagenbach

The Old Courthouse Museum and Jail is open 11am to 4pm Thursday through Sunday Memorial Day to Labor Day ... or ... open by appointment **anytime** year round. Call 715-672-5423 to schedule a time and date.

NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

Wednesday, July 12, 2017
at **Old Courthouse Museum**
Durand, Wisconsin

Open House 6 to 9 pm

Educational Presentation at 7pm

**“Wisconsin’s 16th Infantry
Regiment 1862-1865”**

presented by

Rose (Richardson) Peterson

The Old Courthouse Museum’s 2nd Annual “Night at the Museum” is scheduled for 6 to 9pm on Wednesday, July 12. The featured presentation, “Wisconsin’s 16th Infantry Regiment 1862-1865” by Rose Peterson, will begin at 7pm.

Rose Peterson and her husband Glenn of Arkansaw, Wis. have spent vacations in the southeastern United States tracing the movements of Wisconsin’s 16th Infantry Regiment during the American Civil War. Their travels took them through the states of Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Georgia to visit the grounds of famous Civil War battles like Shiloh, Corinth, Jonesboro, Kennesaw Mountain, Atlanta and to follow the famous Sherman’s March to the Sea. Rose’s presentation will include photos and historical narrative of the 16th Regiment’s activities.

Rose’s great grandfather, Charles Richardson, was a member of the 16th along with a dozen or more young men from Pepin County with names like Brunner, Marks, Alcott, Barry and Allen. Many of them mustered in at Camp Randall in Madison on Jan. 31, 1862 when the regiment first formed and mustered out July 12, 1865 when it disbanded.

Charles served with distinction, rising through the enlisted ranks to Color Sargent and was the one who carried the flag into battle. As testimony to his bravery in battle, a local newspaper reported that when Charles mustered out, he “...delivered up the flag torn, blood stained, and with 26 bullet holes in it.”

History Quilt – Arkansaw Methodist Church

Last summer, Pepin County native Connie Harmon donated a Harmon family heirloom to the museum: a 7'x6' quilt made in 1925 by her grandmother, Betty Miles Harmon. The quilt contains all the names of the hundreds of members of the Arkansaw Methodist Episcopal Church up to that point in time. According to the "History of Buffalo and Pepin Counties" published in 1919, the church's history began in 1855 in a log home on the Dead Lake Prairie "...with the first religious services held in the town of Waterville conducted by Rev. Mr. Kellogg, at which only four persons were present."

In succeeding years meetings were held in homes, schoolhouses, or any other place that was convenient. A permanent church was eventually built in Arkansaw, a 30'x40' building dedicated as a Methodist Episcopal Church in the summer of 1869. In 1892, a parsonage was erected. In 1898, the congregation approved plans for the addition of a kitchen, parlor, alcove and hall. The contract was let to William J. Seeley, of Durand, with the interior work done by local painter and artist, C. H. Gleason. The windows were all of memorials donated by relatives of various deceased members. The church addition was dedicated Dec. 12, 1900. Soon after, a Kimball organ was presented to the church. In 1902, electric lights were installed and, according to the 1919 History, "The church is therefore a comfortable, convenient, modern building, fully adequate for its needs as a religious and community center."

The Methodist Episcopal Church united with the Methodist Episcopal South and Methodist Protestant Church in 1939 to become "the Methodist Church" or "United Methodist Church" in Arkansaw.

#

Memorials Received:

For: Roberta Stuart
From: Christi & Joe Lieftring

MUSEUM & SOCIETY NEWS

A new farm display is in the development stages and will involve what is currently the Tool Room. The farm exhibit centerpiece will be a scale model replica of a classic gambrel roofed barn built by PCHS member, Bernard Brantner.

Law Day for county fifth graders was held at the museum in early May. The students participated in a mock trial in the upstairs courtroom and then took a whirlwind tour of the museum (about seven minutes in each room and the jail).

A planning committee has begun work on development of PCHS's 50'x80' Main Street property in downtown Durand. The board has determined to create a public greenspace historical site to honor Helen Parkhurst. The committee hopes to complete basic ground preparation this year, including replacement of the upper layer of sand and debris with topsoil and installation of sidewalks and underground electrical conduit. PCHS will pursue having the property named to the list of Wisconsin State Historical Sites.

Grant Supports Summer Intern Program

Once again, the Curt Stine/Judy Lively Fund of the St. Croix Valley Foundation has provided the financial support to continue the Old Courthouse Museum Summer Internship in Museum Operations Program. Funding pays for salary, income-medicare-social-security taxes, and other expenses. PCHS in cooperation with UW-Eau Claire's History Department offers graduate students in the Public History Master's Degree Program the opportunity to get valuable hands-on experience in day-to-day operations of a small history museum.

Pepin County Historical Society

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Editor: Terry J. Mesch

W. H. Huntington – “Public Spirited Man”

W. H. Huntington’s place in history of the city of Durand and of Pepin County looms as large as the city’s founder, Miles Durand Prindle, or William Boyd Newcomb, the “father” of Pepin County and the village of Pepin. Huntington was the editor and publisher of the *Pepin County Courier* newspaper from 1873 to 1885 and figured prominently in the story of the infamous 1881 shooting and hanging in Durand.

Testimony to Huntington’s importance in history can be seen in his obituary published in Durand’s *Entering Wedge* in 1916:

[He]was a public spirited man and for many years was a strong factor in the up-building of our city and the surrounding country. ... Though he never had the advantage of a college education he was one of the best informed men in this portion of the state.

In his history, “The Lynching of Ed Maxwell”, author Terry Mesch alleges Huntington was a lead conspirator in the plan to hang Maxwell for the shooting deaths of two local law enforcement officials in July, 1881. However, records show a grand jury convened to investigate the lynching and uncovered no evidence on which to base an indictment of anyone. Legal or not, the violent death of Ed Maxwell in the eyes of local citizens was judged to have been justifiable and deserved. Huntington’s alleged involvement in the lynching did not appear to negatively impact his future endeavors. It may have even curried him favor.

In 1882, he was elected to one term in the Wisconsin Assembly. He served on the Pepin County

Board of Supervisors and was board chair in 1886. In 1887, he was a member of a group that went to Madison to get Durand incorporated as a city and became its first clerk. He later helped organize Durand Light and Power Company, and was its Secretary and manager, a position he held until he retired in 1903.

Huntington’s public spiritedness is evident in his career accomplishments as newspaperman, civil servant and businessman. Even during his retirement, it was common to see him walking about downtown Durand and visiting with shoppers and storekeepers.

C. J. Roland worked with Huntington when they were both young men just starting out in the newspaper business in Durand. Roland, in a letter printed in the *Entering Wedge* in 1915, recalled:

Before Huntington actually purchased the *Times*, Foster engaged him one winter to take charge of the paper while he filled a clerkship in the legislature in Madison. And here, I want to tell you, Huntington and I gave the people of that old town such a newspaper as they had never had before, and as a result some of the leading merchants of the town—Tarrant, Dorwin, Topping, Vautrot and others— urged Huntington to buy it, and he did.

Had the grand jury that met in April, 1882 to investigate Ed Maxwell’s lynching found evidence of conspiracy, Huntington’s life would likely have taken a very different course.



Terry Mesch, Manager of the Old Courthouse Museum, performs a dramatic reading of “The Lynching of Ed Maxwell” during the recent Durand Funfest weekend. An estimated 75 people were in attendance to learn more about the most significant event to occur in the life of the old Pepin County Courthouse. Maxwell was lynched Nov. 19, 1881.

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



Pepin County Courthouse at Durand, Wis. lithograph from "Illustrated Historical Atlas of Buffalo and Pepin Counties - 1878"

Find us on the Internet!
www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org

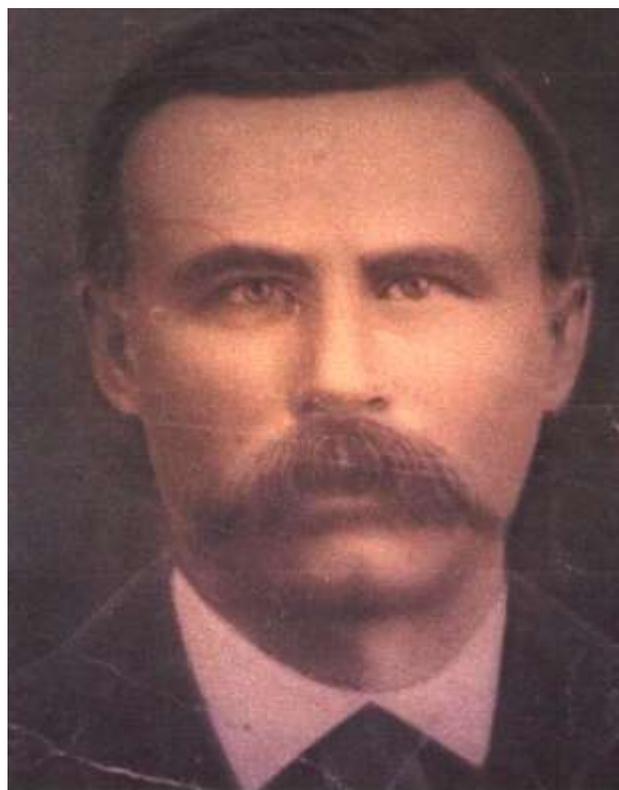
***Pass this newsletter on
to a friend & encourage
him/her to join PCHS!***

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 \$ _____



Charles Richardson (circa 1870s) moved with his mother and sisters to Pepin County at age 15 in 1857. Five years later he enlisted in the Wisconsin 16th Infantry Regiment and fought in the Civil War. The 16th Regiment will be the focus of "Night at the Museum" Wednesday, July 12.