



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

Helen Parkhurst Memorial
Black School Bell Tower
Arkansaw, Wisconsin

Vol. XXIV, No. 1

Affiliate of Wisconsin Historical Society

March 2005

Black/Big Arkansaw School Bell Tower Dedication

The bell tower from the former Big Arkansaw School was removed, restored and installed in its new location just in time for its dedication at last October's Fall Meeting of the Pepin County Historical Society (PCHS). PCHS, in cooperation with the Durand School Board, erected the restored tower in front of the Arkansaw Middle School (AMS) as a memorial to the world-renowned educator, Helen Parkhurst. This little country school, also known as the Black School, was located in the Town of Waterville and launched Miss Parkhurst's career.

Dedication of the memorial was held Sunday, October 17, 2004, at AMS. Parkhurst's life and achievements were recognized during a presentation by Vern Pinkowski, who has researched her life. AMS Art and History Teachers, Ann Oberding and Lori Bauer described student involvement during the project, including a mural depicting the school on the front of the building near the bell tower. Special acknowledgments were paid to Bernard Brantner, who restored the tower, and to Larry Wrycza, who owns the former Big Arkansaw School and donated the tower to PCHS. Past PCHS President, Richard Slabey, and former Old Courthouse Museum Director, Vera Slabey, were also honored for their many years of dedication and service to the Society. The ceremony culminated with the ringing of the bell in the tower by Haily Richardson, great granddaughter of Bernard Brantner, who assisted her.

PCHS will always be grateful to the many dedicated people who helped make this project happen
- Russell Haigh

NEW MUSEUM CONTACT PERSON FOR TOURS, RESEARCH, QUERIES

Terry Mesch is the new PCHS contact person for the Old Courthouse Museum. Persons interested in making arrangements for tours, doing research, asking questions about the collection, etc. should contact him by leaving a message on the museum phone (715-672-5423) or calling him at the Pepin County Development Office (715-672-5709) or at his home (715-285-5659)

PCHS ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, April 10, 2005
2 PM - Durand High School
(Multi-Purpose Room)

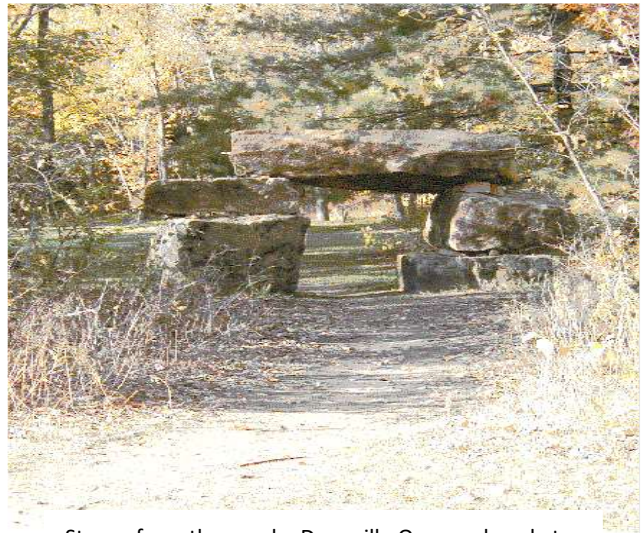
Featured Speakers:

Tony Wolf & Craig Thibado

and a film presentation:

"Tony Wolf - The Story & Life of a Stonecutter"

(Immediately following a brief Annual Business Meeting which includes the election of three seats on the PCHS Board of Directors)



Stones from the nearby Dunnville Quarry placed at the entrance to Rustic Ridge Campground, southeast

Tony Wolf has been a stonecutter nearly all his life. Craig Thibado owns Rustic Ridge Campground, including the old Dunnville Quarry, located near Downsville. Tony has been teaching Craig the art of stonecutting. In cooperation with the Dunn County Historical Society, they have made a film about Tony's life as a stonecutter and about the legacy of Dunnville stone and the quarry from which it was taken and carved.

A GREAT TURNOUT for the dedication of the "Helen Parkhurst Memorial Bell Tower" and PCHS Fall Meeting at Arkansaw Middle School last October 17th. PCHS can be proud of this wonderful new addition to the county's growing base of historical attractions. A brass plaque honoring Helen Parkhurst has since been installed on the front of the bell tower. Bernard Brantner and Russ Haigh are to thank most for the work and logistics that went into removing the tower from its original perch atop the former Black/Big Arkansaw School, restoring it to its original glory, and installing it at its new location.

PCHS PUBLISHED Vern Pinkowski's latest research, "**A Vanished Community - The Waubeek Sawmill Settlement**", during December. The book is being sold by PCHS for \$10 a copy. To order, leave a message on the Museum phone (715)672-5423.

PCHS ALSO PUBLISHED Peter Adler's "**Steamboat Navigation on the Chippewa River**" last summer and showcased it at the PCHS Grand Excursion exhibit last July. Also available for \$10/copy; to order, call (715)672-5423.

TWO STORIES involving PCHS or the Old Courthouse made the "Top Ten Stories of 2004" list by the "Courier Wedge": the Helen Parkhurst Memorial Bell Tower project and the Portrait of Pepin County Diorama in Durand's Tarrant Park, which enshrines a ten-foot-high replica of the Old Courthouse and advises viewers the real thing can be viewed in downtown Durand.

TOP PCHS STORIES of 2004 were the retirements of Richard Slabey from the Board of Directors and of Vera Slabey as Director of the Old Courthouse Museum. Both have tirelessly served the Society, the City of Durand, and all of Pepin County. Thank you, Richard and Vera!

"HONOR AN EDUCATOR - Pave the Way to Historical Preservation" project has received nearly 30 requests so far for engraved bricks. We need a minimum of 50 to make our first order. Some of the honorees so far: Byron Dale, Gary G. Bauer, Eliza Prindle, Jean Serum, Anita Moci, Mary Nothom, Lois Laehn, Russell Haigh, Patti Breitung Gould, Dorothy Maxwell, Blanche Maxwell, Angela Kitchner, Mary E. Wilcox Miles, Calista Mary Miles, Gladys Abel Ryan, Zelda A. Keys, Jean Herman. For more info or to order, call (715)672-5423

SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILIES OF:

Roger Britton, Sr. - PCHS charter member

Jim Bresina - PCHS charter member

Dayton H. Erickson - PCHS member

MEMORIALS RECEIVED -

FOR:

FROM:

Elwyn H. Auth

Madeleine Liefkring

Jim Bresina

John/Linda Solie

Roger Britton

Galen/Bernadine Radle

Audrey Hoeser

Madeleine Liefkring

Richard/Vera Slabey

Mary Endl

Mary Buchholtz

Donald Erickson

Tom/Judy Fagerland

Robert F. Goodrich

Mary Buchholtz

Audrey Hoeser

Thalice Nicklas

Madeleine Liefkring

Galen/Bernadine Radle

Richard/Vera Slabey

Tri-County Telephone Coop

Miles W. Hoffman

Mary Buchholtz

Dale A. Johnson

Mary Buchholtz

Virginia King

Glen Heath

Verena E. Komro

Mary Buchholtz

Patricia A. Krings

James E Krings

Bernard Pittman

Mary Buchholtz

Helen Plumer

Mary Buchholtz

Lee Grippen

Helen Polzer

John/Linda Solie

Margaret Rhiel

John/Linda Solie

Russell Walters

Audrey Hoeser

Madeleine Liefkring

Pepin County Historical Society

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PCHS Annual Meeting
Sunday, April 10 - 2 PM
DHS Multi-Purpose Room
- Board Election
- Featured Speakers
- Tony Wolf & Craig Thibado
& film: "**Tony Wolf - The
Story & Life of a Stonecutter**"

DATES TO REMEMBER

- Apr 6 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Apr 10 - Annual Meeting @ DHS 2:00 pm
- May 2 & 6 - Law Day @ Museum
- May 4 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- May 11 - Spring Cleaning @ Museum
9:00 am - Volunteers Welcome!
- May 28 - Museum Opens for 2005 season
1:00-4:00 pm (see list of Saturday
Volunteers elsewhere in this newsletter)
- Jun 1 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Jul 6 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Jul 11 - Summer Picnic (tentative)
- Aug 3 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Aug 20 - West Central Council of Local
History Regional Conference @ Alma
- Sep 7 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Oct 5 - PCHS Board @ Museum 5:00 pm
- Oct 9 - Fall Meeting
- Oct 15 - Last Day Open for '05 season

**RED MARK on your mailing label indicates
you've not paid membership dues**

Late breaking news:

Original Black School Bell Found

PCHS, relying on the tireless detective work of its President, Russ Haigh, has found the original bell that hung in the Black/Big Arkansaw School bell tower. Word-of-mouth through the local grapevine eventually revealed the current owner of the bell is Roy Bauer. Roy's father Ray purchased the bell at the auction in the 1960's when the former school's contents were sold. Roy has agreed to donate the bell to PCHS, so it can be hung back inside the restored bell tower.

MUSEUM WISH LIST*:

- new track-lighting systems in display areas
- risers on casters for display cases