



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

Vol. XXIV, No. 1

Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society

March, 2010

President's Message:

Greetings, All. Our busy season is just around the corner and board members and museum volunteers have been working diligently to get things ready.

New lighting has been installed in Room One (the "Durand Room"). It illuminates the displays and exhibits better and makes the room feel warmer. The board will be considering more lighting changes throughout the building.

The PCHS Board is busy planning a small celebration for the 25th Anniversary of the organization. Although, many early meetings were held in 1984, PCHS was formally incorporated and recognized by the state of Wisconsin as a corporation in 1985. A silver anniversary planning committee has set July 10-12 for special events and activities.

The Annual Membership meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, April 11. The terms for three seats on the board will be expiring, so we'll hold board elections. We will also get to hear about the history of the Eau Galle Cheese Factory. Maybe we'll have samples!

Other events this year will include the museum's participation in the Spring Fresh Art Tour May 14-15-16; photographer Dennis Newton will be our featured artist. We are also proud of all the original art work included in our permanent collection. Stop in to browse Dennis' work and to see our other beautiful art.

The PCHS Summer Picnic will be held July 12 and the Fall Educational Event October 10.

The Board has approved hiring of an intern again this year, which allows us to be open four days a week through the summer. The museum is more than ever a key to the county's visitor attractions and the jewel of downtown Durand.

Once again a big THANKS to all our volunteers who help to make all this happen.

- Kim Wagenbach

"History of the

Eau Galle Cheese Factory"

Guest Presentors: Carol Buhlman, co-owner - Eau Galle Cheese Factory & Bob Grundvig, Business Manager

ANNUAL PCHS MEMBERSHIP MEETING & SPRING EDUCATION EVENT

2PM SUNDAY APRIL 11
Durand Jr-Sr High School Cafeteria
Durand, WI

Leo Buhlman, founder of the Eau Galle Cheese Factory, apprenticed for eight years as a cheese maker in Switzerland before coming to the United States in 1926. After working at a number of Wisconsin cheese factories and learning English, Leo purchased the then closed cheese plant in Eau Galle, Wisconsin in 1945. It became known as the Eau Galle Cheese Factory.

He made and marketed Swiss cheese for the next thirteen years. In 1958, he made and marketed cheddar cheese. Within a few more years, he began making hard Italian cheese, which to this day is Eau Galle Cheese Factory's niche.

In 1964, his son, John, took over management of the plant. Leo continued putting in long days making cheese until he was 89 years old.

In 1986, the Eau Galle Cheese Factory built a new state-of-the-art facility four miles east of Eau Galle on State Hwy 25, two miles north of Durand; but, it retained the name of the village where it all began.

In 2005, the factory underwent measures to improve its facility and added all new automated equipment. The plant was also certified in 2005 for production of organic hard Italian cheeses.

Join Carol and Bob for this journey back in time and learn the history of western Wisconsin's most famous and favorite cheese factory.

Your **Old Courthouse Museum & Jail** are **OPEN YEAR 'ROUND** by appointment - Call (715)672-5423 or (715)672-5709 to set up a time to visit.

Find us on the Internet! www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org

SOCIETY NEWS

More than 100 people attended the PCHS Autumn Education Event last October to hear Brian and Evan Gabriel talk about their experiences exploring the landscape and history of the Chippewa River between Caryville and Meridean. It was one of the largest audiences PCHS has had during the past few years

PCHS had another successful financial year during 2009. Expenditures totaled \$7,145, almost half of which was what the society paid for its summer intern in wages, income taxes, social security, unemployment insurance, etc. Revenues from memberships, memorials, donations, and sales of books and cards, etc. totaled \$4,505 and transfers from savings and certificates of deposit were \$3,152 for total revenues of \$7,657. PCHS held no major fundraisers during 2009.

At the year's end, the society's checking and savings accounts and CDs totaled \$27,175, which was \$1,353 less than where it finished in '08.

Anyone interested in seeing budget details can contact PCHS Treasurer Galen Radle.

MUSEUM NEWS & NOTES

Changes continued at the Old Courthouse Museum as the staff created new displays and modified existing ones. Room Two has been partly re-designed to include a display celebrating music and musicians. Musical instruments, a bandstand and costume used by county residents are on exhibit. Also, new halogen lighting has been installed in Room One.

Recent acquisitions include a silver asbestos-lined full-body firefighters suit and helmet donated by the Durand Volunteer Fire Department and a hand-written thank you note by Helen Parkhurst to Horace (Hank) Hougen donated by Greater Insurance Services.

An estimated 600 hours were donated by a couple dozen volunteers to operate the museum during 2009; plus, nearly 300 hours of paid staff time for the summer intern. Volunteers include our Saturday Hosts, a regular Tuesday work crew of four or five, and several other intermittent workers. We couldn't do it without our volunteers!!

Unique Gift Ideas from PCHS

Dime Novel Desperadoes-The Notorious Maxwell Brothers, by John Hallwas, published by University of Illinois Press, 2008 - \$32.00

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

Memorials Received:

| For: | From: |
|------------------|---|
| Anna Pelke Fedie | Lee Grippen |
| Warren Walters | Mary Ellen Brue |
| Linda Pabst | Lee Grippen |
| Gerald Sundstrom | Galen/Bernadine Radle, Richard/Vera Slabey |
| H. H. Hougen | Nancy Johansen |
| Lee Milligan | Steven/Mary Schwartz |



Old Courthouse Museum Featured on "Spring Fresh Art Tour"

The Museum will once again feature the photography of guest artist Dennis Newton during the "Spring Fresh Art Tour" on May 14, 15 & 16. The Museum will be open from 10AM to 5PM all three days. Many of Newton's photographs are of landscapes, buildings and other settings in Pepin County. He has an exceptional eye for beautiful colors and unusual subject matter. Newton lives near Pepin in rural Pepin County. (above photo: "Bean Field" by Dennis Newton)

The Museum will also host the annual "Law Day" event developed and produced by members of the Tri-County Bar Association. Fifth graders from Durand, Pepin, Mondovi and Plum City will participate in a mock trial and tour the Old Courthouse Museum and Jail. Law Day is scheduled for May 6 & 7.

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



Gravestone Returned to Pepin County

Jeffrey and Peggy Watson of Minneapolis discovered this marker in the garage of their recently purchased home last Fall. With a little bit of historical investigation, they were able to track it to Pepin County.

The marker appears to be the gravestone of Miletus Knight, an important resident of Pepin County during the late 1800s-early 1900s. Miletus was a deputy sheriff for Pepin County in 1881 and figures prominently into the events leading up to the infamous shooting of the Coleman brothers by the Maxwell brothers in July of that year. He was also on duty at the time of Ed Maxwell's lynching in Durand on November 19, 1881.

Knight was a successful business man, farmer, postmaster in Arkansaw, and was County Clerk for one term. He also served one term as sergeant-at-arms of the Wisconsin assembly and two terms as transcribing clerk of the state senate.

2010 Saturday Volunteer Host Schedule

| | | |
|---------|---|------------------------------------|
| May 29 | - | Rita Conlin & Pat Rosenberg |
| June 5 | - | Gwelda Glaus & Lou Simpson |
| June 12 | - | Judy Schwellenbach & Joyce Haigh |
| June 19 | - | Gary & Barb Bauer |
| June 26 | - | Alice & Roger Bauer |
| July 3 | - | Don & Irma Bauer |
| July 10 | - | Dick & Judy Schlosser |
| July 17 | - | Diane Bauer & Carol Danzinger |
| July 24 | - | John & Linda Solie |
| July 31 | - | Pat Miller & Carol Forster |
| Aug 7 | - | Gerald and Deanna Ripley |
| Aug 14 | - | Kim & Lynette Wagenbach |
| Aug 21 | - | Pat Ulwelling & Evelyn Holmsted |
| Aug 28 | - | Lorraine & Bun Brenner |
| Sept 4 | - | Roberta Stuart & Rosemary Carlisle |
| Sept 11 | - | Donna Setterlund & Jean Kannel |
| Sept 18 | - | Galen & Bernadine Radle |
| Sept 25 | - | Rosemary & Joan Achenbach |
| Oct 2 | - | Linda DeLong & Julie Rinholen |
| Oct 9 | - | Lynn & Kelly Coulson |

If a conflict arises for the Saturday you are scheduled as a Volunteer Host, please try to make arrangements to trade with another host or contact Lois Laehn at 672-4883 or Terry Mesch at 672-5709. Your help is very important to the success of the Museum. Other volunteer hosts may be needed for special events, if you are interested contact Lois or Terry.

Orientation sessions for Volunteer Hosts can be arranged by contacting Terry Mesch at 672-5709.

LEGEND OF BATTLE ISLAND

[Battle Island is located in the Chippewa River in the east 1/2 of Section 15, T23N, R14W, about 4 miles upstream of the confluence of the Chippewa and Mississippi Rivers near the east side of the river (Buffalo County). The following was related to Jim Boettcher, a Wis. Dept. of Natural Resources Hydrologist, by Chauncey Weitz, a former Game Warden with the Wisconsin Conservation Department 1933-1966 and his son, David Weitz, Public Information Officer for Wisconsin DNR 1978 to 2007.]

“At the time of the battle Chippewa Indians living at Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation had to travel to Fort Snelling in Minnesota to receive allotments of goods and supplies from the U.S. government. The primary means of travel at the time was by water as there were no roads.

“On one of the trips for goods and supplies a party of Chippewa got into a fight with some Sioux at Fort Snelling and killed several. As the party of Chippewa passed the present site of Pepin, Wisconsin they saw a group of Sioux at Pepin and hollared and shook the scalps of the people that they had killed at the Sioux on the shore.

“The Sioux naturally took offense at this behavior, gathered a group of warriors and cut across country to the Chippewa River. This was likely with the aid of horses. The Chippewa were at a disadvantage because they had to go downstream to the mouth of the Chippewa River and then paddle upstream against the current of the Chippewa River.

“The Sioux caught up to the Chippewa at what is now known as Battle Island and killed the entire party except for an old woman and a baby. My recollection (which may be incorrect) is that 22 Chippewa were killed. The old woman and baby survived by playing dead and hiding.

“After the Sioux left, the old woman walked to Eau Claire where she died shortly after arriving. The baby was adopted by owners of the Murray Lumber Company in the Shaw Town portion of Eau Claire. The child eventually made her way to the Lac Courte Oreilles Reservation. Some years later, as an adult, she returned from the hospital after having a baby to find her husband in bed with someone else. She left with her baby and the clothes on her back and returned to Pepin where she eventually married John Weitz, father to Chauncey and grandfather to Dave.”

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



"History of the Eau Galle
Cheese Factory"
2 pm Sunday, April 11
DHS cafeteria
(more info inside)

**ORANGE DOT IS A
REMINDER TO RENEW
YOUR 2010 MEMBERSHIP**

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

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY _____
STATE/ZIP _____

MEMBERSHIPS:

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

And, here's my extra donation of \$ _____



Leo Buhlman, founder of the Eau Galle Cheese Factory, holding a wheel of Parmesan cheese. Photo taken in 1982 when Leo was 81 years old.