



# THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

Vol. XXI, No. 3

Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society September 2007

## President's Message:

As I write this I realize another summer is coming to a close and so is our season at the Museum. We've had some busy Saturdays and some fairly quiet ones. We are always in need of new volunteer hosts on Saturdays; it's only three hours and is fun and educational. Anyone interested in becoming a volunteer host can contact Lois Laehn at 715-672-4883 or Terry Mesch at 715-672-5709.

We had a nice turnout for our Potluck Picnic at Round Hill in July. The food was great and we finally found out who the "Father of Pepin County" is. His picture is right next to the front door at the museum, so if you missed the picnic, stop in the Old Courthouse to find out for yourself.

Our Fall Meeting will feature author and historian, Kitty Latane, of Pepin. I would like to invite everyone to attend.

I would also like to invite you to get involved in your historical society. We can't operate without our volunteers, who do a tremendous job with archives, exhibits, cleaning, and other chores. We'll take all the help we can get, so VOLUNTEER!

- Kim Wagenbach

## PCHS 2008 Sesquicentennial Calendar Now Available

A special 2008 Pepin County Sesquicentennial Calendar will be available by the end of September. Historical pictures showing landmarks, buildings and people from Pepin County are featured in this calendar. PCHS Board member, Jean Kannel, has been instrumental in gathering photos and lithographs and researching and writing the captions which will accompany each picture. The calendars will be for sale for \$5 each. Contact a PCHS Board member or call the museum at (715)672-5423 to place an order.

## 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 Fall Meeting Sunday, October 14 Durand Jr./Sr. High School Cafeteria

*Featured presentation:*

### *"Travel Back to Historic Pepin"* by *Catherine Latane*

Catherine (Kitty) Latane, from Pepin, Wisconsin, will be the featured speaker at the PCHS Fall Meeting scheduled for 2 p.m. on Sunday, October 14 in the Durand Jr./Sr. High School Cafeteria. Kitty has prepared a 45-minute slide show about the history of Pepin, entitled "Travel Back to Historic Pepin," which she will be presenting at the PCHS Fall Meeting.

Kitty has been collecting photographs and stories about Pepin's history since she moved to the village 25 years ago. She has been editor of "Notes From the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society" for the past ten years. She and Martha Kuhlman developed and produced a walking tour of the Village of Pepin. She and Martha also wrote and published a book, "The Village of Pepin at the Time of Laura Ingalls Wilder," which describes the setting, houses and buildings of the village as they were in the late 1860s and early 1870s.

Kitty is an excellent historical researcher and dynamic speaker. Kitty and her husband, Tom (a blacksmith), have participated for many years in the village's annual "Laura Ingalls Wilder Days" celebration.

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

The Old Courthouse Museum will be featured at Site 17 in the **Fall Fresh Art Tour** this year. 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

The Museum staff of volunteers are preparing for the **Fall Fresh Art Tour** the first weekend in October. The pen-&-ink drawings of Esther Baur, which were taken from a 1923 "Kapka" (the Durand High School yearbook) have been framed and hung, and, we are awaiting the arrival of numerous works by Edmund A. Grippen, which will also be on display during the art tour.

The Old Courthouse will also feature the paintings, photos, and hand-made paper of Julie Bower of Durand, which will be for sale all three days of the tour. Bower's work will be on display in the Main Hallway and Room One of the Museum.

Although the staircase to the upstairs courtroom is a long way from being handicap-accessible, it is a bit safer and less challenging with the recent installation of sturdy, strategically placed handrails on both sides of the steps. New galvanized water pipe was used and is consistent with the old painted galvanized pipe already in place. The old handrails were adjusted to a "better fit" related to height from the steps and distance from the walls. (Perhaps we'll find an "angel" to provide the finances needed to install an elevator, so everyone will be able to appreciate the old courtroom.)

The cupola (or belfry or bell tower) which stands atop the pediment above the front porch was apparently rebuilt many years ago. The workmen were a bit lazy and neglected to remove all the old boards, flashing, shingles, tar buckets, etc. They also ignored the 2-3 inches worth of dove doo (pigeon manure) on the floor. A couple volunteers recently removed the old building materials and scraped up the doo into a couple big piles. A "bucket brigade" will be needed to carry the stuff down. Any volunteers for that doo-ty?!

### Unique Christmas Gift Ideas from 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:   |
|--------------------|---|
| Ronald P. Bauer    | Ray Bauer Family & Pat Martin   |
| Patrick Achenbach  | Mary Buchholtz  |
| Patrick Paul Black | Mary Buchholtz  |
| Janet Kraft        | Children of Janet's oldest sister, Virginia (Loyd) Miller: Judy (Darrell) Wrolstad, Jane (Jay Woodson) Olson, Joy (Tom) Grossman, John (Barb) Miller, Jeff (Stephanie) Miller, Jennifer Miller (deceased) |



Arkansaw Flycatcher

This painting was done by John James Audubon, but the descriptions give no clue how "Arkansaw" (note the correct spelling) became attached to the bird's name. The birds were said to be "...remarkably noisy and quarrelsome, and...suffer nothing of the bird kind to approach them without exhibiting their predilection for battle and dispute."

### Pepin County Historical Society

#### Officers:

President: Kim Wagenbach

Vice-Pres.: Jon Dodge

Secretary: Roberta Stuart

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Rita Conlin, John Solie, Lois Laehn,

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Editor: Terry J. Mesch



### **VFW Howitzer Moved to Washington Square**

This World War II vintage Howitzer stood for many years guarding the front door of the Veterans of Foreign Wars building located on 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue East in Durand. The VFW sold its building and had to move the cannon to a new location. Memorial Park in downtown Durand was first suggested, but ensuing discussions among city officials, the VFW and the American Legion led to the idea of creating a veterans' memorial at Washington Square where a Civil War monument already stands.

The City and the American Legion approached Pepin County, which still owns the Square, and asked if they could place the gun, the small monument now at the southwest corner in Memorial Park, and new flagpoles in Washington Square. Plans are still being discussed for installing a formal memorial in the northeast corner of the square near the Civil War monument.

### **Artists from Pepin County**

At least three artists who lived in Pepin County at sometime during their lives will have their work displayed at the Old Courthouse Museum during the Fall Fresh Art Tour, including Charles Hovey Gleason (1874-1950), Esther K. Baur (1904-1993), and Edmund A. Grippen (1917-1983).

Eight of C. H. Gleason's paintings are already a part of the Museum's permanent collections and are displayed in Rooms One and Two. Three of these are very large oil paintings, impressive for their size alone. Gleason was born in Pepin County in 1874 and was a prolific painter. He painted murals on the walls of numerous homes in and around Durand, some of which still exist, and has one work hanging behind the altar in the Little Plum Lutheran Church and a 12'x24' stage backdrop in the old Opera Hall in Theilman, Minn.

Esther Baur's artwork appeared in the 1923 Durand High School yearbook, "Kapka." Her pen-&-ink drawings have been framed and will become part



### **Model of Maple Ridge School Recently Acquired by PCHS**

A handsome model of the Maple Ridge School was recently acquired by PCHS, a gift of Connie Harmon, who attended the school in the 1950s. The model was made by Connie's father, Wayne E. Harmon.

Maple Ridge School, formally known as District No. 9 Waterville Township, Pepin County, stood on the east side of Harmon Road in the northwestern part of Pepin County. The building, upon which this miniature was modeled, was built around 1900 and replaced an old log school. In 1905, a front porch was added. Then, in the 1920s, the front door was replaced with a window and a new door and porch extension were installed on the south side of the building.

The school operated until 1962 or '63 when it was sold. It burned to the ground on November 21, 1978.

Of course, the building did not have all the modern conveniences; note the outhouse at the lower right of the photo. Wayne Harmon paid attention to detail by including the flagpole in the foreground and the interior, which includes blackboard, bookshelves, coat racks, and students' and teacher's desks.

of the Museum's permanent collection.

Edmund Grippen's works will likely be the most familiar to local viewers. By day, Grippen worked for the U.S. Post Office in Durand, but during his own time, he had a sign lettering business. He also pursued his great interest in painting, particularly landscapes, most of which are of scenes from throughout the Chippewa Valley. The Grippen family has generously agreed to lend the Museum several of Ed's works for display during the Art Tour. The Museum's permanent collection does include one of his works, "Careers Unlimited," which depicts a livestock auction at the Pepin County 4-H Fair.

Pepin County Historical Society  
OLD COURTHOUSE MUSEUM  
Washington Square  
P.O. Box 74  
Durand, WI 54736

PRST STD  
Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. postage  
**PAID**  
Durand, WI  
Permit No. 5



**PCHS Annual Meeting  
Sunday, October 14**

**"Travel Back to Historic Pepin"**  
*presented by*  
**Catherine Latane**  
(see inside for details)

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

- 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 @ DHS

**Join us!**

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

**MEMBERSHIPS:**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



The Trail Blazers Saddle Club arena east of Pepin, Wis., is known to archeologists as the "Armstrong Site." In 1949, Rev. Thorley Johnson first conducted an archeological survey of the site and reported it to measure about 600 feet square. From artifacts Johnson found on the surface and in a few selective dig sites, he concluded a village of indigenous people had been located there 1000 years ago. In 1971, Dr. William Hurley conducted extensive excavations on the site and reported his findings in "The Wisconsin Archeologist," published in 1978 by the Wisconsin Archeological Society. Hurley concluded the site was a seasonal village of about 11½ acres and may have had a couple thousand inhabitants during the times it was used.