



THE COLUMNS

Newsletter of the Pepin County Historical Society

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Affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society September, 2013

President's Message:

Greetings from the President's desk –

As I write this message there is a chill in the air; a reminder that winter is on the way and another year will soon be coming to an end. We at PCHS have had another successful summer season at the museum and were very pleased with our summer intern, Bob Bell. We have been very lucky with the quality of people from UW-Eau Claire who have come to work for us these past six years and we look forward to continuing our relationship with the university History Department in the future.

Bob, of course, will be our speaker at the PCHS Autumn Education Event October 13. The caliber of our other speakers this year has been remarkable - Arlyn Colby in the Spring and Father Bernard McGarty in July.

Now I would like to invite everyone to our Fall event [see *column to right*]. These events are always full of good historical information about our past and I encourage you to attend.

As always, I can't say enough about our regular Tuesday volunteers, our Saturday hosts, our board members and all of you who belong to PCHS or who donate time, goods, services or money to us. We would not have this wonderful asset in our community without you.

Also, special thanks go to Gordy Weiss and Weiss Realty for allowing us to use the old jail; it is nearly everyone's favorite feature at the museum. Plus, thanks to the St. Croix Valley Foundation for the grant we received to help provide for our intern this past summer.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to acknowledge the generosity and continued support of the Pepin County Board of Supervisors. As you know, Pepin County owns the Old Courthouse and helps us in our mission of "preserving the history and traditions of Pepin County" by allowing us to lease the building for \$1/year and assisting with the costs for heat, electricity and sewer/water. The County Board recognizes the Old Courthouse is one of the most important historic artifacts in the county and supports our efforts to make this building an integral part of the community and a focal point in downtown Durand.

We have a unique and very special historical gem here and are proud to be able to share it with the rest of the world. Thank you and God Bless.

- Kim Wagenbach, PCHS President

PCHS Autumn Education Event Sunday, October 13

Durand High School Cafeteria

"Native Americans in Pepin County & Western Wisconsin"

by Robert Bell

The PCHS Autumn Education Event, scheduled for Sunday, October 13 in the cafeteria of Durand Jr-Sr High School in Durand, Wis., will feature PCHS 2013 summer intern Robert Bell of Chippewa Falls, Wis. Bell's presentation will focus on the Native Americans who inhabited this area of the Upper Midwest when the Europeans arrived here in the 1600s.

He will discuss the importance of Lake Pepin to trade activities between Native American tribes of the area and the French. Bell will explain the Native American perspective of Father Louis Hennepin's trip to the Upper Mississippi River Valley and will address questions like why the Dakota held Hennepin and his two companions captive for nine months and how far up the Chippewa River Hennepin traveled in 1680.

During the past several years, Bell has received Bachelor's Degrees in both History and American Indian Studies at UW-Eau Claire and is currently completing the final requirements for a Master's Degree in Public History. He has focused his studies heavily on Native American history and has lectured on the Ojibwe/Dakota Wars and the Chippewa Indians' treaty rights for hunting, gathering and fishing in the territories ceded by Indians to the U.S. government.

Bell decided on a career change following many years in manufacturing and farming. He chose the study of history, in which he had had a life-long interest. This past summer Bell completed his internship in Museum Operations at the Old Courthouse Museum in Durand.

Find us on the Internet!

www.oldpepincountycourthouse.org

MUSEUM / SOCIETY NEWS & NOTES

The PCHS Summer Potluck and Education Event in July brought together a large crowd despite the hot weather. Following a delicious meal of summer salads, fresh vegetables, and other seasonal fare, Msgr. Bernard McGarty of La Crosse treated attendees to a PowerPoint presentation about the travels of Louis Hennepin in the Upper Mississippi River and Chippewa River Valleys in 1680.

Another summer season has concluded at the Old Courthouse Museum. The Summer Intern this year, Bob Bell, enjoyed his three months researching minutes of the Pepin County Board of Supervisors to glean any information related to the old courthouse and jail. His efforts will allow PCHS to put together a detailed history of the building, which will be the foundation of a Historic Structures Report. This narrative will support future architectural and engineering studies needed to apply for grants to help with long term goals of building restoration and renovation.

Museum Director Terry Mesch is now a regular guest at WRDN-AM radio station in Durand every Thursday morning between 9-10am. He talks about local history, of course, and brings in an artifact or manuscript or photograph from the museum.

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.

Memorials Received

For	From
Irene Amelia Bradshaw	Ruth E. Hofland
Gordon Hintermeyer	Lee E. Grippen
Reve Brown Szymanski	Sue (Mrs. Douglas) Christenson
Francis Bradshaw	Allan E. & Ruth P. Hefland

OLD COURTHOUSE MUSEUM 30th ANNIVERSARY

Next year will be the 30th year since the Pepin County Historical Society signed its first ten year lease with Pepin County to operate its museum in the old Pepin County courthouse. That lease was executed on November 13, 1984 and was subsequently renewed in 1994 and 2004. Rent was set at one dollar per year and has been not changed since.

The current lease agreement, which expires next year, stipulates the intended use of the building by PCHS is to collect and preserve historical records and data, to commemorate places and objects of historical interest, and to compile and preserve the history and traditions of Pepin County. It also indirectly states PCHS should not make major changes to the building without permission from the County Board and to "...relinquish use of the Old Courthouse building...at the end of the term in the same condition they were at the commencement of the term,...."

The most significant change to the interior has been the replacement of the long banks of fluorescent lights with track lighting in the main hall and exhibit rooms on the first floor of the building. The exterior has remained the same; however, the front pillars were replaced and new roofing installed in the late 1990s.

PCHS expects to renew its lease with the county for another ten year term during 2014. Moving into our fourth decade may be cause for celebration!

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

SAINT PEPIN?

You may be surprised to find out there is a St. Pepin ... actually there are a couple of them.

According to an Internet site called "Catholic Online": **St. Pepin of Landen** lived from 580 to 640 A.D. His feast day is February 21. Pepin of Landen was the mayor of the palace, duke of Brabant, and the chief political figure during the reigns of the Frankish kings Clotaire II, Dagobert I, and Sigebert I. Following an incident in which he reprimanded King Dagobert I for his adulterous life, he was exiled from the court and went into temporary retirement. Recalled to serve as tutor to Dagobert's three year old son, Pepin once more became the chief figure of the kingdom until his death. Pepin earned a reputation for defending the interests of the Church, promoting the spread of Christianity, and working to have only truly worthy bishops appointed to Frankish sees. While never canonized, he is listed as a saint in some old martyrologies.

St. Pepin is also a modern [hybrid](#) variety of [wine grape](#), mostly grown in North America. Bred by Elmer Swenson at Osceola, Wisconsin, it produces [grapes](#) suitable for making fruity white wines similar to [Riesling](#) or as a base for blended wines. The grapes also make a good table grape for eating. It has the benefits of early ripening and its fruit holds well on the vine with no shattering. The St. Pepin vine is vigorous with an upright growth habit and somewhat open canopy. The flowers are imperfect flowers and not self-pollinated so it needs to be planted near perfect flowering vines for cross-pollination to occur. Fruit set and low yields can be an issue. Swenson was assigned a patent for his saint in 1986.



MARK TWAIN WROTE ABOUT PEPIN COUNTY



The Maiden Rock

The following is taken from Chapter 59 – "Legends and Scenery" in [Life on the Mississippi](#) by Mark Twain, published in 1883:

"A little distance above Lake City is a famous point known as Maiden's Rock, which is not only a picturesque spot, but is full of romantic interest from the event which gave it its name. Not many years ago this locality was a favorite resort for the Sioux Indians on account of the fine fishing and hunting to be had there, and large numbers of them were always to be found in this locality. Among the families which used to resort here, was one belonging to the tribe of Wabasha. We-no-na (first-born) was the name of a maiden who had plighted her troth to a lover belonging to the same band. But her stern parents had promised her hand to another, a famous warrior, and insisted on her wedding him. The day was fixed by her parents, to her great grief. She appeared to accede to the proposal and accompany them to the rock, for the purpose of gathering flowers for the feast. On reaching the rock, We-no-na ran to its summit and standing on its edge upbraided her parents who were below, for their cruelty, and then singing a death-dirge, threw herself from the precipice and dashed them in pieces on the rock below.... Well, it certainly was a tragic business,.... [but] There are fifty Lover's Leaps along the Mississippi from whose summit disappointed Indian girls have jumped..."

MUSEUM SCAVENGER HUNT

Here's a challenge to even our most frequent visitors and volunteers: Can you find the suppository mold? Clue: It's located in what museum staff members refer to as the "Torture Chamber."

Find it and you'll win a free copy of "1881".

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



**PCHS Autumn Educational Event
“Native Americans in Pepin County &
Western Wisconsin”
by Robert Bell
Sunday, October 13 – 2pm
Durand High School Cafeteria**

**The Old Courthouse Museum and Jail
Open Anytime by Appointment
Call 715-672-5423**

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

Name _____
Address _____

MEMBERSHIPS:

- ___ \$8 Individual
- ___ \$12 Family
- ___ \$25 Friends of Museum
- ___ \$25 Business/Professional
- ___ \$50 Contributing
- ___ \$100 Sponsor
- ___ \$1000 Lifetime

A graphic of a Native American head profile where the face is a map of Wisconsin. The map is filled with a landscape scene showing a person standing in a field under a blue sky. The head is facing left, and the map covers the entire face area.

Wisconsin's Indian Head Country was the ancestral home for numerous American Indian tribes, including the Ojibwe and Dakota. Summer Intern Robert Bell, a UWEC graduate student in Public History, will be discussing the Native American presence in Pepin County and the surrounding area at the PCHS Autumn Education Event on October 13.