

THE EAGLE SPEAKS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2021



"OLD ABE"

www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

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Decorative and insulated wall sections manufactured locally by Huffcutt Concrete, Inc. were lifted into place by a crane beginning January 19.

Message From Your President

DAVE GORDON

I spent the morning of January 19 watching a crane lift the precast walls of the Chippewa Area History Center and place them on the foundation. It is quite a sight seeing the 12' x 30', 20,000 lb. panels being set in place. I must admit there were times over the past 14 years that I wondered if I would see this day.

Dave Raihle sent an email to the board to update them on the progress of CAHC. Let me share highlights:

"If you have not been by the site yet, our walls have been delivered and are in the parking lot across the street ... The crane should arrive Friday afternoon and they should start standing up walls Monday ... It will take four to five days for them to stand up the walls, then another one to two weeks to pour the interior floors and mezzanines. The steel has been completed now and should be delivered in approximately three weeks. As soon as the interior mezzanine floors are on, they will start to install the roof structure. The roof structure will probably take the better part of two weeks to install and another week or two to put the soffit and fascia and final trim on."



There is still time
for you to donate to our new
CAHS building project
and join our group of
distinguished donors.
Please see page 9 for details.



A Message From Your President

CALENDAR

History Center
Closed to the public.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we have been closed to the public and will continue to be closed until we move to our new building. Monthly meetings have continued at remote locations or by Internet Zoom meetings.

CALENDAR:

- ☛ CCHS Board: third Tuesday
9:30 am
- ☛ Capital Campaign Executive Committee: fourth Tuesday
9:00 am
- ☛ CAHC Building Committee:
first and third Wednesday of
the month
- ☛ Historic Marker Committee
meets as needed

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

Jim Schuh..... Author/ Editor
 Anne Keller..... Author / Proofreader
 Jim Erickson.... Author / Proofreader
 Dave Gordon.....Author
 Marge Hebbring.....Author
 Tom Larson.....Author
 Frank SmootAuthor
 Elly Rochester Design / Layout

CONTINUED FROM COVER

Based on the new timeline V&S, our general contractor, has put out, they anticipate they'll be substantially completed with the project in mid to late June. I would caution everybody, this is a projected date. Many things can change in a project like this that can affect the completion date. We still have the challenge of meeting our capital campaign goal. I wrote to all members of the Society, suggesting it would be significant for the Society to be able to share that 100% of our members have contributed. So I hope all members have responded.

This possible completion date is great news but also makes us realize that while we have a good start on packing artifacts, there is much to do. Our Exhibit Committee will be very busy designing new exhibits we will feature when the Center opens. Exciting but challenging times ahead.

On a sad note I report that Mary McKenna, our long time secretary and hall of famer, passed away January 9, 2021. The Society was fortunate to have had Mary moving the Society forward with her many contributions of her time. *Dave* ♡



Mary McKenna

The Chippewa County Historical Society has lost a wonderful friend. Mary McKenna passed away on January 9th. She first started volunteering at the History Center in 1999. Mary performed as Treasurer for five years and then was Secretary from 2006 until 2020. She kept the minutes for our meetings and wrote hundreds of Thank You letters to our donors. Mary also tracked membership. She was a loyal volunteer and always came into the office even when she was not feeling well. She was often the first person to greet visitors, answer phone calls and take messages. Mary was inducted into the CCHS Hall of Fame on February 11, 2013 for her significant contributions.

Mary was a wonderful cook. Everyone at the History Center enjoyed her deviled eggs at monthly potluck birthday lunches. She made beautiful homemade birthday cards. Mary volunteered at *The Past Passed Here* and usually worked at the gate, sometimes braving the cold wind to complete her shift.

Mary was a Mother and Grandmother who always talked about her children. We send our thoughts and prayers to her family. We will never forget her warm, outgoing personality. ♡



Elizabeth Peterson packing sea shells from the Gertrude Casper collection.



Don't forget to renew
your membership!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE / ZIP

TELEPHONE

Type of Membership:

Individual

\$25 (1-year) \$70 (3-year)

Family

\$35 (1-year) \$100 (3-year)

Contributing Member

\$60 (1-year) \$170 (3-year)

Life Membership

\$500 (individual) \$750 (couple)

I would like to make an additional donation

\$ _____

MAIL TO:

Chippewa County Historical Society
123 Allen Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

We Love Volunteers! We NEED Volunteers!

FRANK SMOOT, MUSEUM DEVELOPER

Now that the concrete wall panels are up, everyone can get an idea of the shape that the new Chippewa Area History Center is taking at the entrance to Irvine Park. There's still a lot of construction ahead, but as we get closer in the months ahead, we're going to be looking for a great corps of volunteers to actually "run" the place.

We'll need volunteers of all kinds, with all kinds of skills.

Of course, there will be many cheery volunteers working in short, flexible shifts at the front desk and museum store. But we'll also need volunteers to help run events, teach classes, and give workshops.

We'll have jobs for handy folks with carpentry skills to build exhibits and exhibit components, folks good with a paint roller or a paint brush, people with a good eye to hang pictures and text panels. We'll need people who are good at sewing and cleaning, people who like organizing, people who like data entry. And, we'd love a volunteer who's good at finding, inspiring, and scheduling other volunteers. We've found that retired teachers are excellent at this particular job.

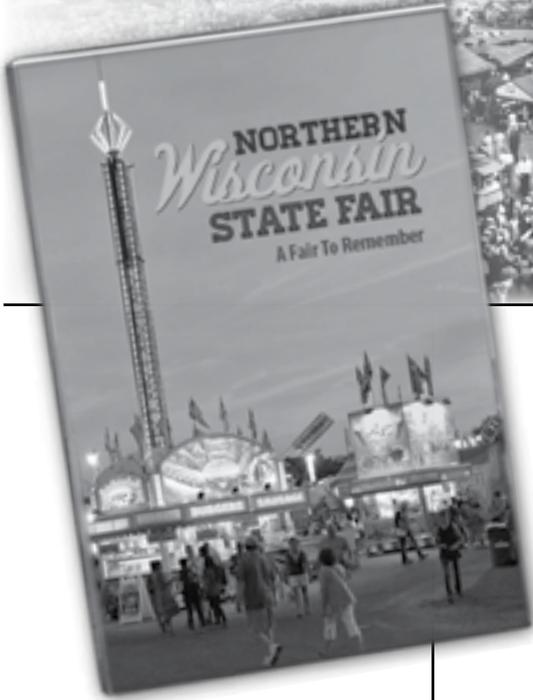
Whatever skills you have, we probably need them.

And not only you: if your child or grandchild, parent or grandparent might like a fun, fulfilling job with a fun crew, make sure you mention that we can use all the help we can get.

Almost every shift will be less than four hours, and volunteers can work one day a month or several days a week — completely up to you. And we'll provide all training, so even if you think you just might like something, don't be shy to give it a try.

The History Center won't be open until late summer at the earliest — more likely sometime in the fall — so there's no rush quite yet. But make sure to make us part of your plans! We'd love to see you down there, and we'll make sure you have a great time.

If you have questions, feel free to call us at (715) 723-4399, or email Frank Smoot at franksmoot@gmail.com.



Northern Wisconsin State Fair — A Fair To Remember

JIM SCHUH

The Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS) has published a new pictorial history book titled Northern Wisconsin State Fair – A Fair To Remember. This is the third book the local authors, Donna Bourget and Anne Keller, have produced since 2017.

Hundreds of photos and numerous news articles tell the stories and history about the Northern Wisconsin State Fair taking place during the last 123 years. Many area residents have also shared their memories of the fair.

This book will be the third of its type published by the CCHS. All sales proceeds will be contributed to the new Area History Center Capital Campaign. Sales of the other two books have raised more than \$50,000 for the building project. The first was published in 2017 in conjunction with the 100th anniversary of the building of Lake Wissota and is titled: Lake Wissota – The Dam Story. The second book, Irvine Park – The Bear Facts, was published in 2019.



Don't forget to
renew your
membership!
See page 3.

The book is available in Chippewa Falls at the following businesses:

- Chippewa County Historical Society, 123 Allen St.
- Chippewa Falls Main Street, 514 N. Bridge St.
- Collective Charm, 16 W. Columbia St.
- Country Treasures, 216 N. Bridge St.
- Foreign Five, 123 N. Bridge St.
- SandBar & Grill, 17643 50th Ave.
- Wayside Bar & Grill, 18091 Co. Hwy X

The book is also available in Eau Claire at:

- Chippewa Valley Museum, Carson Park
- Volume One Local Store, 205 N. Dewey St.

The cost of each book is \$20. To receive any of the books by mail, send a \$25 check, for each book, payable to the CCHS with the book name(s) in the memo and addressed to the Chippewa County Historical Society, 123 Allen Street, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. ♣



▲ The Joas Room — all packed!



▲ Granny's Kitchen—lookin' good.

Preparing to Move

FRANK SMOOT, MUSEUM DEVELOPER

I'm sure board president Dave Gordon would readily admit to this: He's said on many occasions that moving the collections from the current Allen Street facility to the new History Center was the thing that kept him up at night.

Quite understandable. As all of you know, the former convent on Allen Street is chock-full of artifacts. To put some numbers to it:

The building has 49 rooms, and many of those rooms have closets, and all of those rooms and closets had artifacts and documents in them. Every time we opened a door, we found a new trove. We've photographed much of the artifact collection, and those photos number 5,825. Hundreds needed to be "accessioned," which is just a fancy word for formally taken into the collection. Volunteer Debbie Smith was instrumental here.

We reorganized more than 1,300 documents in the curatorial collection. We've also newly catalogued well over 800 documents that were in the building but hadn't been catalogued yet. All of these 2,100+ are now happily encased in inert, archival sleeves, housed safely in sleek black binders. Much of this heavy lifting was done by Eileen Sommerfeld before the pandemic hit.

These numbers don't include the robust photo collection or the shockingly vast library of the Genealogical Society on the second floor (and the third floor, into which their collection has spilled over).

All this was before we could pack a single log stamp, rifle, or sewing bobbin. After a quick, rough count walking around the museum, we've packed a little over 730 boxes. In those boxes, the artifacts are mainly wrapped in acid-free paper, bubble-wrap, or both.

At the moment, we're packing Gertrude Casper's shell collection for transport. On its own, this is a crazy-big collection, more than 1,000 shells and pieces of coral, many of them fragile, all irreplaceable in the sense that they probably can't be collected by regular citizens any longer. Each needs to be tucked into a soft cloud of Poly-Fil in the center of a plastic container, and those containers themselves packed into larger bins.

It's been quite a job. However, even during this Covid-19 pandemic we've had some brave and unflappable volunteer help. Elizabeth Peterson, who readers of *The Eagle Speaks* may remember was one of our fabulous interns, has returned for more fun, diligently ►

working four days a week for months now. And board members Jim Lindberg and Mary Erickson have packed the bulk of what Elizabeth hasn't.

Museum developer Frank Smoot has done a bit of orchestrating — developing a strategy, offering packing techniques and, at the least, serving as cheerleader.

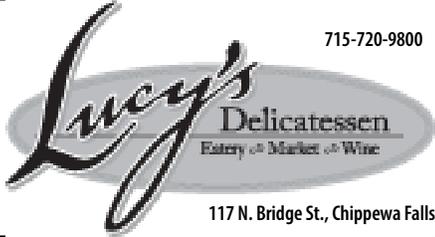
"I couldn't have done any of this without outstanding volunteers," Smoot said. "If not for Elizabeth and the rest of the crew, I'd just now be walking into the third room out of 49."

The goal of all this: get the artifacts to the new History Center without losing, denting, cracking, or scuffing any of them.

Some artifacts, the log stamps for example are pretty easy to pack — but others such as the mantle clocks might each take the better part of an hour to pack.

The next fun part? After they've moved, the artifacts need to be unpacked again and shelved safely and in a way that will allow us to find them when we need to. And that journey begins yet this year. ♣

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Memories of Curley Lowe's Root Beer Stand

Kathy Padrutt

As a child I remember walking down our alley to the millpond where all the kids were swimming. Then I was excited to be going down the street to the root beer stand. All the neighborhood kids had their bikes thrown down on the pavement and were congregated together to see which of their friends would show up for treats. I recall carrying a gallon glass jar to be filled with root beer. It would then be taken home and made into my favorite — root beer floats. We didn't do this too often, so it really was a treat.

My friends' parents, the Lowes, owned the root beer stand. The Lowes lived in the large brick house behind the root beer stand. Mrs. Lowe not only cooked for the large family but she also worked at the family business. All their children worked there too, taking turns serving some of the best food around including burgers, corndogs and French fries. The stand had a little screened-in area in front where people stood to be served. Usually the door was open because there were too many people inside. The unheated building was closed for business during the winter months.

A few years later the same neighbor kids were a bit older but still came down the alley path to the root beer stand after which they would go back to the neighborhood for a game of hide and seek or kickball.

64 years of Root Beer Stand History

- 1952: The Patrow Root Beer Stand opened by Glen Patrow
- 1955: Bushier Root Beer Stand owned by Glen Patrow
- 1958: Parkway Root Beer Stand owned by Glen Patrow
- 1961: Curley's Root Beer Stand owned by Floyd E. Lowe
- 1974: Irvine Drive Inn owned by Florian Hagen
- 1990: Dairy Queen owned by Julius (Pinky) Lee
- 2009: Grandma B's owned by Kathlene Weiss
- 2012: Piff's Pizza owned by Mike Rubenzer
- 2014: Vacant
- 2015: Purchased 12-31-15 by the Chippewa County Historical Society
- 2016: Building razed to prepare site for the new Chippewa Area History Center

SLEEP TIGHT

Meaning: Sleep well

History: During Shakespeare's time, mattresses were secured on bed frames by ropes. In order to make the bed firmer, one had to pull the ropes to tighten the mattress.



Donations

In Memory of:

- Myles Smith
from Gerald and Carol Way
- Duane C. Beaudot
from R & L Keyeski
- Mary McKenna
from Marge and Eugene Hebbring
- Mary McKenna
from Jim Schuh

Donations for Operating Support

- Alice Marshall
- Ruth and Donavan Olson
- Frank Smoot
- Patrick and Susan O'Donnell
- Susan Delong
- Thomas G. Perault
- Eagle Point Womens Club

Grants in Support of Historic Markers

- Chippewa Falls Elks Organization

New Lifetime Members

- Pamela and Thomas Kell
- Thomas G. Perault



Three new historical markers at the new downtown Chippewa Falls Riverfront Park.

The Past Passed Here Is Returning!

JIM SCHUH

Our 2020 event was canceled due to Covid-19. This year there is still uncertainty caused by the pandemic, but we will follow CDC safety guidelines with our plan to hold the lumbering and French fur trade eras re-enactments that will be open to the public May 6th, 7th and 8th. We had to come to the tough decision not to include coordinated school system activities, because the schools do not know if field trips will be allowed. So, classes of local fourth grade students will not be invited to attend this year. However, because our events have been so very well received and outright enjoyed those attending got some actual idea of things past, our hope is that next year we'll be able to resume and enhance everyone's experiences. But, fourth graders and their friends and families will be welcome and sincerely encouraged to attend on the weekend. We will do all we can to make it a wonderful experience at the new location.

Please take Special Note: That the new location is in Marshall Park directly across Bridgewater Avenue from the entrance to Irvine Park and the new Chippewa Area History Center (which is currently under construction). Our goals are to offer the 18th Annual living history presentation, give residents and visitors a chance to experience pioneer life, and keep our re-enactors participating while giving them the opportunity to become accustomed to the new site. ♣

2020 Historic Marker Program Accomplishments

TOM LARSON, MARKER COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

Your CCHS Marker Committee of Kurt Gabor, Jim Schuh, Jim Erickson, Chuck Nagel, Frank Smoot, Joe Neise and I have continued to press on and work through these troubling Covid-19 times to maintain and expand the Chippewa County Historical Marker program. Here is a short update of the progress made in 2020.

We now have 62 CCHS historical markers placed within Chippewa County with the most recent additions of #59 – The Glen Loch Ice House placed in Erickson Park and #60 – The Eagle Point Town Hall placed in Eagleton.

Also, after many years of planning and design work along with receiving a monetary grant from Xcel Energy, three new historical markers were installed in the new downtown Chippewa Falls Riverfront Park: #61 – Chippewa Loggers Baseball, #62 – Harnessing the Chippewa River, and newly created #18 – The Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company.

Marker #63 – Lake Wissota Hydroelectric Dam will be installed this spring in the Town of Lafayette Ray's Beach Wayside Park.

Several existing markers were rebuilt, re-roofed, and re-painted this past year by Kurt Gabor and his staff with donated labor by Gabor Signs.

We received a generous donation of 24 brand new wooden-built and painted marker houses from local Troop #13 Boy Scout Andrew Hunt, as his completed Eagle Scout project.

We continue to support and promote the national Yellowstone Trail (YT) Historic Highway system as it passes through Chippewa County. Two new replacement YT highway signs were installed and three new YT highly visible yellow painted rocks with black directional arrows were added along the Yellowstone Trail.

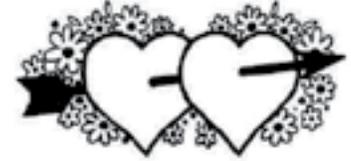
Some members of this committee attended meetings of groups of people working diligently to preserve some of the steel sections of the historic Cobban Bridge slated for demolition and replacement in 2022. The committee worked with the Chippewa County Highway Department to create four new panels documenting the bridge's history, unique engineering, impact on the community and reason for closure and removal.

An updated paper copy of all the markers text information was compiled.

The CCHS Marker program computer PowerPoint presentation was totally updated and is available for free downloading by anyone interested.

The committee thanks local attorney David Raihle, Jr. for graciously allowing us the use of his law office building meeting room to conduct socially distanced, mask-wearing meetings of our committee this past year. ♣

Chippewa Area HISTORY CENTER



Capital Campaign Update

BOB HOGSETH, CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR

I was asked to draft a campaign update for this newsletter. I can give you a quick dollar amount raised to date, but first I'd like to share some personal Campaign reflections. Since early 2017, I have had dozens and dozens of private meetings with individuals, business officers, and charitable Foundation Boards, to explain the purpose of building a new History Center and to ask for their financial support. Four of the five the largest donations to date have come from Foundations, ranging from \$150,000 to \$525,000. I noticed the last Genealogy Society newsletter included the 1921 obituary of German immigrant August Mason, and mentioned he was survived by his son, B.A. Mason. That got me thinking about the many meetings with the B.A. Mason Trust trustees, the Edward & Hannah Rutledge Charities Board members, the William & Gertrude Casper Board and the LE Phillips Family Foundation Board.

Some brief history and genealogy: Bert Mason was the past President of Mason Shoe Company and died in 1945. Edward Rutledge left Northern Ireland in 1834 as a young boy and became one of Chippewa Falls' most successful lumber businessmen, establishing a permanent local charity in 1911. Bill Casper was born in Chippewa Falls in 1902, and was a grandson of Jacob Leinenkugel. He retired in 1988 as Leinenkugel Brewery Board Chair. Lewis Phillips was born in 1899 in Lithuania, and came to Wisconsin when he was 2 years old. He became President of National Presto Industries, founded a charitable trust in 1942, and died in 1978.

A few days prior to the new History Center groundbreaking ceremony last September, it struck me. The largest gifts to this project came from people who died 20, 40, 75 and 100 years ago. All of those trustees and Board members I've been meeting with the past three years included their grandchildren, great grandchildren and grand nephews/nieces. How cool is that? There's no doubt in my mind that "Bert", "Ed", "Bill" and "Louie" would be very pleased they are key donors to the preservation and education of our local history.

As of January 1, 2021, the public Building Campaign Committee has raised \$3,175,000. The new Center's foundation is poured, the walls are going up, and we'll continue working hard to raise the remaining \$325,000 before the grand opening. We hope that will happen by this August or September. Thank you very much to the many people helping make this historic project a reality.

Please visit www.chippewaareahistorycenter.org/donate to learn more about how to make a donation to support local history preservation and education and to see the current "Gifts & Pledges List." ❁

Looking for the perfect gift for the history enthusiasts in your life?

Give the gift of history!

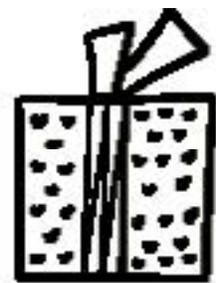
Give a meaningful local gift to your family and friends who love history. They'll love it and you'll also be helping local history preservation and education for years to come by supporting the Chippewa Area History Center, the Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS), and the Chippewa County Genealogical Society (CCGS.)

Three ways you can give the gift of local history:

1. Gift a local history book by local authors (see page 4)
2. Gift a Society Membership
3. Donate to the Chippewa Area History Center Capital Campaign in your friend or family member's name.

For more information, go to:

www.chippewaareahistorycenter.org/give-the-gift-of-history



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