

THE EAGLE

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



SPEAKS

SEPTEMBER 2013

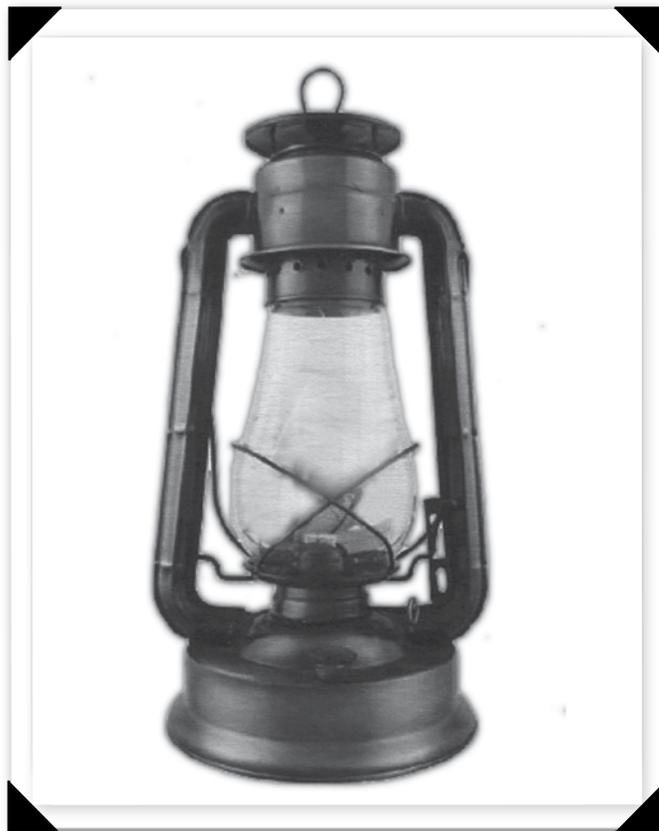
www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

“OLD ABE”

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Windproof Barn Lantern 



Mark your calendars
and save this date:

Monday, September 9 • 6:30 p.m.

**CCHS Bi-Annual Membership
Meeting & Program Lumbering in
the Chippewa Valley
Area History Center**

Can You Remember the Days Before Electricity?

BY ARLEY ENGEL

As we grew up on our farm in the Town of Wheaton, candlelight, lanterns and lamps were our source of light after daylight faded. We had running water about 1938. This was cold water only, as we had to heat water on the cook stove in a teakettle for general use or in a 5 gallon copper boiler for our Saturday night bath. This ordeal was done in the kitchen with the youngest in the family first then on down the line by age. Then mother and finally dad were last to use the water. A little more heated water was added as each person took his or her turn. With this procedure we didn't have to worry about throwing the baby out with the bath water.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 



**Thank you to the
William J. & Gertrude R.
Casper Foundation**

for their support of these projects
with a \$1,350 grant

- **Redesign of the Lumberjack & Lumber Industry Exhibit**
We will feature the display at our September 9th Membership meeting and Open House.
- **Priming & Painting of the Area History Center Exterior Wood Trim**
We hope to complete work on the first floor during the 2013 United Way Day of Caring.

The Eagle Speaks is published quarterly by the Chippewa County Historical Society, a non-profit organization established to promote and stimulate historical interest in Chippewa County, Wisconsin.

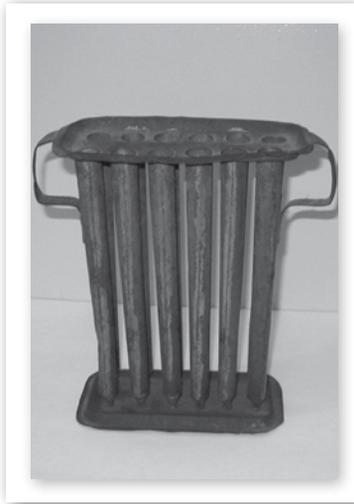
Mail any comments or future articles to 123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. 715-723-4399.

Chippewa County Historical Society
123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI

Delco
Windcharger



Can You Remember? *continued from cover*



12-Candle Mold

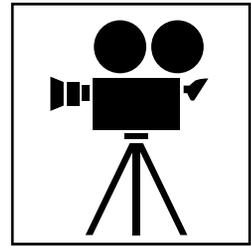
Mother had candle-making forms that were used to make candles. It was designed to make 3 candles at a time. First a string was put in the form then it was turned upside down and melted paraffin wax was poured into the form making sure the string extended at least 1/2 inch past the top end of the form. We made only 10-inch long candles that were about 1 inch around on the big end. These candles did not make enough light to read with so we used a kerosene lamp with an adjustable wick for reading. Mother also used this lamp to heat a curling iron to make curls in her hair. We had lanterns that would not blow out from the wind, when going to the barn. They had a special air vent in the top to let out the heat and smoke.

At this time we were still using an icebox to keep our milk, meat and fresh produce from spoiling. The ice for this icebox came from Gehweiler Ice Service,

located by the Glen Lock Dam in Irvine Park at Chippewa Falls. I remember the sign that went in our window with 4 different numbers on it, 25-50-75 or 100 pounds of ice needed. This way when the Iceman pulled in the yard he knew how many pounds of ice to bring into the house.

Our house had only 3 rooms at this time, a kitchen, a dining room, and a bedroom with no basement. We heated and cooked with wood. It was brother Gene and my job to keep the wood box full with split wood. There were smaller chunks for the cook stove and larger chunks for the wood heater in the living room. By morning it had usually burned down to a low fire making for very cool temperatures for us to get up and get dressed in a hurry. Our house was insulated with wood shavings, which settled down in the side walls leaving about 16 inches of air space at the top. This was extra cold air space that let a lot of cold air in the house. We had to be very careful with all these fires including the 2 stoves, the 2 or 3 lamps and the 6 or more candles.

At this time we were still using horses to farm with. The field corn, oats, sweet corn, cabbage and tobacco were all planted with horse drawn planters. We did have a Farmall F20 tractor that was used for the rest of the field work such as plowing, pulling the spring tooth harrow, the disc, a roller and a spike tooth leveling drag. We also used the tractor for cultivating the corn at this time; the corn was checked so it could be cultivated both ways. The horses were used to mow and rake hay and also pull the wagon for loading hay. We cultivated the tobacco, cabbage and sweet corn with a 1 row horse cultivator. This unit was also used in the garden.



www.cvctv.org

Chippewa Valley Community TV produces video of *The Past Passed Here*

For four days in May the Chippewa County Historical Society re-creates an 18th century fur trade rendezvous on the banks of the Chippewa. This year, Chippewa Valley Community Television (CVCTV) produced a video of the event. "The video of The Past Passed Here is excellent!—very professional. We enjoyed working with your crew and couldn't be happier with the result. CVCTV is a great resource for the community." said Jim Schuh of the Chippewa County Historical Society. The video runs frequently on cable channel 993, or see it on CVCTV's YouTube channel. The YouTube link is: http://youtu.be/Mt_mj1p5o

Can You Remember? *continued*

Back to the electricity, Northern States Power Company put a high power line past the farm in 1918 and Grandpa Bert helped them get permission from our neighbors to put a 10,000-volt high power overhead line through their properties. Power was supplied from the new dam at Lake Wissota, but this power was sent to Minneapolis and St. Paul. Some of the local farmers were very upset when they found out they could not get any electricity from this line.

I have the original copy explaining the operation of a 32-volt wind charger system that was installed at our farm. This system used 4; eight volt wet batteries and had 8 batteries, 4 on line and 4 on the charger. This system supplied power to Grandpa's house, his barn, the workshop, the milk house, the chicken coop, the harness shop and the granary. One of the operating sheets about the batteries has an installation date of Feb. 24, 1939. After talking with brother Gene we decided this must have been when some of the batteries were replaced. The batteries had to be checked every 5 to 7 days to get the maximum service and performance. Gene was born in 1933 and thinks he would have remembered if the big wind charger would have been put up in 1939 as the tower was about 50 feet tall and this would have impressed a young, 6 year old boy. So we are not sure when the 32 volt system came to the farm, it may have been when the house was built in 1918.

That's all for now from Engel's Little House on the Wheaton Prairie. 🍷



Heard & Seen About Town



Alex Price

Rutledge Home Centennial Celebration

Dave Gordon presented a plaque to Alex Price, Rutledge Home Director, at the Hannah Rutledge Home for the Aged Centennial Celebration June 14. The Open House featured tours, refreshments, live music.

Grandma's Kitchen Display Gets a Facelift

Mary and Jim Erickson volunteered to redo the household exhibit. The Erickson's live in the Minnesota Twin Cities area, spend their summers on Lake Wissota and are our newest high energy volunteer team at the history center.



Jim and Mary Erickson

Right: Dave Gordon welcomes Judy Henske to the History Center Open House.

Left: Dave Gordon read the Mayor's Proclamation creating Judy Henske Day and introduced Judy and Jerry Way at the Evening with Judy Henske Concert.



CALENDAR

Sept. 9

6:30 p.m. CCHS Bi-Annual Membership Meeting & Program Area History Center

Sept. 10

1 p.m. The Past Passed Here Planning Committee

Sept. 12

Mid-west American/Norwegian Regional Convention—group tour

Sept. 13

Annual United Way Day of Caring Exterior painting

Sept. 17

No Board Meeting

Noon Birthday Lunch

Sept. 21

8:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.

State Historical Society West Central Regional Meeting at Stanley Area Historical Society

Sept. 28

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Saturday Museum Open House

Oct. 3

Moose Lodge Group Tour

Oct. 15

9:30 a.m. CCHS Board Meeting

10:30 a.m. Historic Marker Committee Meeting

Noon Area History Center Birthday Lunch

Nov. 19

9:30 a.m. CCHS Board Meeting

Noon Birthday Lunch

Oct. 26

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Museum Open Saturday

A Message From Your President

Time flies when your having fun. It hardly seems possible that summer is coming to an end as I write this article. The last three months have seen some real exciting things happen at the Society.

June 4th was a very special day for the Society. An open house was held to show off our new music and surveying exhibits and celebrate the donation of Peter Lea's Civil War display to the Society. This was not just a chance to see the new exhibits but featured Peter Lea singing songs of the Civil War days, Bruce Sorenson playing his hardanger fiddle, Paul Omen talking about Maggie and Scotty and Judy Henske talking with folks visiting her exhibit in the music room. The day was topped off with Judy Henske and Jerry Way in concert at the Heyde Center. Seventy-five people attended the open house and 248 people heard the concert. This day was significant for the Society's exposure to the community. The four articles on the front page of the Chippewa Herald also helped.

For those who might not be familiar with Judy Henske, she is a Chippewa girl, who attended McDonell High and went on to become a popular singer beginning in the 60's. She traveled from her home in Pasadena, California just for the open house and concert. An event like this could not happen without a lot of work by all the volunteers at the History Center. Thank you, it was an all out effort by everyone. We were fortunate to have called Chippewa Valley Cleaning Service to clean for the Open House. After cleaning I asked for a bill and Jim Hebert said it was a donation to help the Society.

We had an exhibit of some of our household artifacts at The Solstice on Grand Art Faire. Thanks to the volunteers at the exhibit, who had a chance to talk with a lot of visitors. We have been asked to give a presentation on "Lumbering in the Chippewa Valley" at the 2013 West Central Regional Meeting in Stanley on Saturday September 21. If you are interested in going you need to register by September 12. Arley, Jim and I are putting this presentation together and will give it at our Membership Meeting on Monday September 9. The meeting will be at the History Center starting at 6:30 p.m. Our two new exhibits described below will be completed and featured Saturday, Sept. 28 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.. Please mark your calendars and join us.

The Board of Directors accepted Jim Campbell's resignation. We will miss him on the board but know he will continue to write his stories of the history of our area. To fill two vacancies the board voted to add Jerry Way and Donna Bourget. Jerry is well known as the musical historian of Chippewa Falls and Donna has been digitizing our photography collection for the past several years. They both are important additions to the board.

Our third intern, Trent Sobeck, started in June and is working with Jim to redo the lumbering exhibit. Jake Jacobson has joined this project to create a way to display our large logging hammer collection. Mary and Jim Erickson volunteered to redo the household exhibit. Mary's father was Fred Dinkel, the first president of the Historical Society.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7



Dennis Mickesh

CHIPPEWA COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2013-2014

OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

A VOLUNTEER PROFILE

MARY MCKENNA

Dennis

Our choice for the Volunteer Profile in this issue of the Newsletter is an appropriate one as he represents history in many phases. Dennis Mickesh lives in the township of Tilden. He owns a farm outside of Bloomer that his great-grandfather settled in 1883. The farm has been in his family for 129 years. It is still used as a crop farm and a recreational retreat for him.

Dennis graduated from Bloomer high school and attended Stout University for one year before continuing his education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison where he studied civil engineering and worked for the Wisconsin Department of Transportation during the summer. His job was to inspect the construction of I-94 from Hudson to Menomonie.

His first job was that of an electrical engineering technician and he later became the companies surveyor. He then went to work for a road contractor and supervised the construction of three bridges in the Cadott area on Highway 29. Next, he took a job with a consulting engineer firm and laid out a power line from Spring Valley to Greenwood.

It was after these various fields of employment that Dennis started his own survey company in 1964. He was elected County surveyor of Chippewa County and was instrumental in forming a Northwest chapter of the Wisconsin Land Surveyor Society. Then he became president of The Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors. He also formed a foundation for the Wisconsin Society of Land Surveyors. For a number of years he was president of Auburn Cemetery. He is presently the president of the Bloomer Historical Society.

This very busy man is married to his wife, Carole, and they have four grown children: Cindy, June, John and James. They also have been blessed with seven grandchildren and are active members of Our Savior's Lutheran Church.

Dennis first became involved with the Chippewa County Historical Society when he came to our Center about ten years ago to do some research in the Genealogy Department.

We were pleased to have Dennis as our guest presenter at our fall Membership meeting held last September, 2012 in Irvine Park. His wife, Carole, daughters and son, John, were also present that evening and those in attendance were impressed with his program. He even dressed in the garb typical of the early days of surveying and brought with him props that were used at that time. Due to his captivating program, the Rotary Club asked him to make a presentation at one of their meetings a few months later.

We've been fortunate to have Dennis set up our "survey room" in the History Center and have come to know the likes of this easy-going gentleman. Yes, Dennis has a wonderful background rich in history and we benefit from his sharing his expertise and time with us. We welcome visitors to our center to observe his display in the survey room and appreciate the efforts put forth by Dennis. We are indebted to him and wish to thank him for all he has done and continues to do.

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Dave Gordon, 6854 182nd St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-2647 (2014)
- * **Vice President**
Jim Schuh, 5432 178th St.,
Chippewa Falls 726-2376 (2014)
- * **Recording Secretary &
Corresponding Secretary**
Mary McKenna, 217 W. Elm St.,
Chippewa Falls 720-9635 (2013)
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Jim Falls 382-5511 (2014)

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Chippewa Falls 723-7468 (2013)
- * Skip August, 18416 54th Ave,
Chippewa Falls 723-8493 (2014)
- * Steve Rasmus, 936 N. Bridge St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-4339 (2014)
- * Jerry Way, 257 Dwight St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-2097 (2015)
- * Nancy Schuh, 5432 178th St.,
Chippewa Falls 726-2376 (2015)
- * Teri Stahr, 7493 County Hwy K,
Chippewa Falls 723-9007 (2013)
- * Arley Engel, 5294 90th St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-5124 (2014)
- * Marge Hebbbring, 7361 203rd St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-5278 (2013)
- * Donna Bourget, 1420 Miles St.,
Chippewa Falls 723-6559 (2015)

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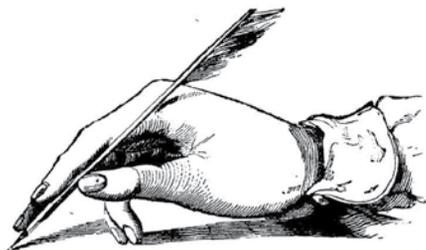
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Donations



COUNTY NEWS

Donations in Memory of:

From:

Rosemary Koepf.....Mr. & Mrs. Gordy Schafer
 John Bleske.....Arley & June Engel
 Arlene Stevens.....Arley & June Engel

Other Donations:

Visitors \$217.00
 Richard & Emogene Marquart 60th Anniversary..... 60.00

Presidents Message *continued from page 4*

Our very old copier retired and fortunately Terry Witt from EO Johnson found a trade in copier and her company donated it to us.

In past articles I mentioned a dream of a new museum in Chippewa Falls. In talking with the Director of Parks and Recreation he indicated he would be interested in having a new museum in Irvine Park. So discussions and dreaming continues. I plan to reactivate the History Coalition to help in this effort. In case you haven't heard Chippewa Falls Museum of Industry and Technology has reopened.

That's great news.

The Historical Society is shifting into high gear once again. Best drop by the History Center to catch the action. Better yet volunteer to help us move ahead, there is a lot to be done. *Dave*



Above: Paul Oman displays his Maggie & Scottie publicity and memorabilia collection.

Left: Bruce Hering shows Peter Lea the Hardanger violin that he made.



Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVID JANKOSKI, REPORTER

Two of our major summer programs are now history. Marble Mania held on June 1, drew over fifty friends and relatives of Murray Brothen, the 1946 State Champion from Stanley and two other contestants from state competitions—Jim Sneen and Lloyd Larson. The participants told stories of their experiences and at the end held a competition and Brothen remains Stanley's champion.

Then on July 6, 11 former milk haulers told tales of hauling milk to cheese factories and butter plants. Colorful stories about their patrons contributed to the interesting dialogue that ensued. A visual presentation of pictures of milk trucks stuck in the mud and pictures of by-gone cheese factories sparked many memories. The 73 attendees had a very enjoyable afternoon.

Aug. 10 brings our third program of the 2013 season. An Edson Reunion will feature Jerry Way and Amanda Tansar singing old historical songs. The museum's north gallery this year features many historical photographs from Edson.

On Saturday, Sept. 21 we will host the West Central Regional Convention. We urge all members of the local historical societies in Chippewa County to attend. The Regional Convention serves as a vehicle for sharing ideas on how to improve what things that you are doing and also as a means of gaining new ideas and insights. Bring back some fresh ideas for your society. Three members of the Chippewa County Historical Society—Arley Engel, Dave Gordon and Jim Schuh will be presenting an interesting program on "Lumbering in the Chippewa Valley." If you have questions on the program or on how to register call 715-644-5880.

Committees in sync!



Chippewa County Historical Society Committee Members

✳ **Collection & Artifacts:**

* Nancy Schuh, Arley Engel,
Lucyann LeCleur, Terri Stahr,

Photography Sub Committee:

*Lucyann LeCleur, Donna Bourget

✳ **Building & Grounds:**

*Skip August

Space Utilization Sub Committee

*Steve Rasmus

✳ **Education:**

* Marge Hebring, Catherine Lea,
Evalyn Frasch, Ann Gordon,
Rosemary Broeren

Docent Subcommittee:

Pat Ahneman, Jeff Pritchard

✳ **Exhibits:**

* Arley Engel, Nancy Schuh,
Lucyann LeCleur

Historic Markers Sub Committee:

* Tom Larson, Jim Schuh,
Arley Engel, Kurt Gaber

✳ **Finances:**

*Skip August, Kathy Forsgren

✳ **Membership:**

*Donna Bourget, Mary McKenna

Telephone Subcommittee:

*Mary McKenna

✳ **Publicity:**

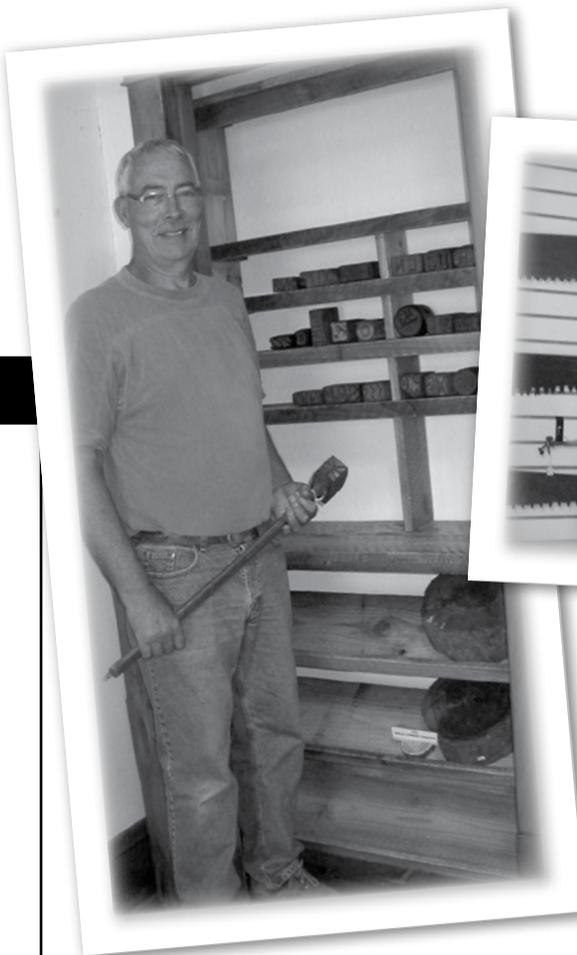
*Jim Schuh, Wayne Meyer

✳ **Newsletter:**

*Jim Schuh, author & editor
Elly Rochester, layout & design
Nancy Schuh, author & proofreader

Column Authors: Arley Engel,
Kathy Forsgren, Dave Gordon and
Mary McKenna

* *Chairperson*



Above: Intern, Trent Sobeck, with reorganized lumbering artifact exhibit.

Left: Volunteer Allen (Jake) Jacobson holds a log stamping hammer in front of the display cabinet that he created and donated.

Lumbering Exhibit Recreated

JIM SCHUH

UWEC Public History Intern, Trenton Sobeck, surveyed our collection for all lumbering related artifacts and recommended what should be used in the exhibit. He presented an overview of his plans for the display. On June 25th a crew of volunteers including, Arley Engel, Allan (Jake) Jacobson, Dave Gordon, Skip August, Steve Rasmus, Trent Sobeck and myself removed artifacts from the room, removed carpet and hung slat-wall. I revitalized the hardwood floor and Jake designed, built and donated a cabinet for displaying our impressive log stamp collection. Text for the exhibit was written, professionally printed and installed. Historic photos of white pine timber in the forest were duplicated on banners that cover the three windows in the room. The exhibit is dedicated to the late Delores and Eugene Harm who donated many of the lumbering artifacts. ♣

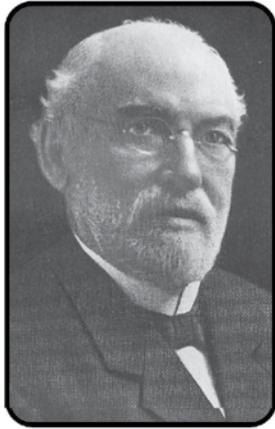
CCHS Bi-Annual Membership Program

Monday, September 9 • 6:30 p.m. • Area History Center

In the program *Lumbering in the Chippewa Valley*, presenters Dave Gordon, Jim Schuh, and Arley Engel will review the location of the significant mills in the Chippewa Valley and the technology that made them giants in their day.

The presenters will tell the story of an industry that left a significant mark on the history of the Chippewa Valley, including the lifestyle of lumberjacks, the tools of the trade, and the impact that remains with us today.

This will not be a potluck picnic but attendees may bring treats or snacks to share.



Sir Alexander B. McDonell, Pioneer Lumberman and Donor of McDonell Memorial High School.



Mary Regina



Daughter Emily



Son Donald

A new Historic Marker for the historic McDonell Memorial High School was created and installed near the elevator entrance on the north side of the building May 21. Check it out the next time you visit the Heyde Center for the Arts.

MCDONELL MEMORIAL HIGH SCHOOL

Lumberman, Alexander B. McDonell, although fortunate in his business dealings, suffered greatly in his personal life. In 1907 he built the McDonell Memorial High School in memory of his wife, Mary Regina O'Neil, whom he married in 1881 and who died in 1892, just one year after the death of their two-year-old son Robert. In 1900 the father now a widower witnessed the tragic death of his son, Donald, 14 and daughter, Emily, 16, who both drowned trying to save a woman. He was left with one remaining child, Alexander, and a fortune that he used to better the community in which he lived.

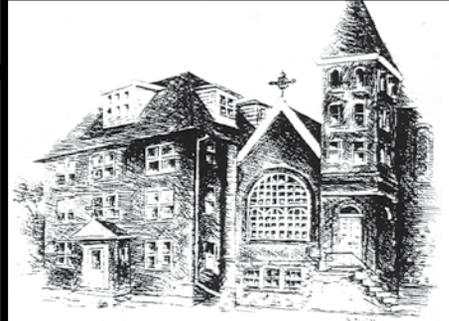
The building with more than 30,000 square feet was finished the following September in time for 69 students and five staff members to begin the school year. The new building, a magnificent example of Greek architecture, was state of the art in its time. Called "simple and strong in appearance" by a local newspaper reporter, the building was reported to have "richly colored woodwork that contrasts with the lighter tones of wooden floors," and "intricate arched windows grace the stairwells." The crowning achievement of the new building was the grand top floor auditorium. The reporter proclaimed: "from an artistic standpoint, no public building in the city has anything to equal the auditorium of this school." The 29th of May 1908 saw the graduation of 13 students.

The building was closed in 1964 when a new high school was built on the other side of town. For the next ten years the building was vandalized and allowed to deteriorate. In 1976, the founding members of the Chippewa Valley Cultural Association (CVCA) saw the beauty and potential in the building and organized to prevent its demolition.

The Association went through phases of inactivity, and at times the task seemed overwhelming. The project started in the 1970s, but it was halted by a lack of money. Then the project was taken up again in the 1980s when a feasibility study was done on the chances of restoring the building. In 1983 it was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The feasibility study was decidedly pessimistic; yet the members seemed to take each negative point and turn it around until they found a positive goal to work towards. Even then, it was not until the 1990s when the CVCA reached a critical mass of people and resources that pushed them through the restoration and improvement of the building and into its triumphant transition into the Heyde Center For the Arts presented to the public in 2000.

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Chippewa County Historical Society

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THE EAGLE SPEAKS



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