

THE EAGLE SPEAKS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2016



www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

"OLD ABE"

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Several have suggested that the new building design should resemble the Chippewa Lumber & Boom Co. "Big Mill" pictured here.

New Local History Museum on Horizon

JIM SCHUH

Excitement at the Area History Center is running high! A major first step has been taken to create a new home for the Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS) and Chippewa County Genealogical Society (CCGS). The CCHS purchased the property located at 12 Bridgewater Avenue on December 31st. Donations from members; the CCGS and CCHS savings funded the purchase.

A capital campaign committee is forming, new museum design meetings are being scheduled and a new building fund has been created at Northwestern Bank. The CCHS, established in 1970, is an educational non-profit organization and donations are tax deductible.



Monday, February 8
CCHS Bi-Annual Membership Meeting
6:30 pm | Area History Center

Program: Greg Kocken, Head of Special Collections & Archives at the UW-Eau Claire, will talk about Albert A. Bish an early photographer in Chippewa.

See details on page 4.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

COUNTY NEWS

Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVID JANKOSKI, REPORTER

Greetings from the Stanley Area Historical Society. First off I would like to extend congratulations to the Chippewa County Historical Society on celebrating their 45th Anniversary. The Stanley Area Historical Society served as a Chapter under the umbrella of the Chippewa County Historical Society until February 1991 when we began operating as an independent organization. After becoming independent we attended the county annual meeting, until there were conflicts in schedules in more recent years. Certainly a part of our success is related to our early association with the county organization. Much has been accomplished by CCHS and we look forward to watching them continue to prosper.

With the arrival of fall our volunteers returned to the museum to work each Tuesday morning or afternoon. We have recently received many wonderful donations of artifacts and pictures that necessitate much work to accession them into our collections. So the volunteers are having no trouble knowing what they will be doing for weeks to come. Work has also started on the many new exhibits that are being planned or enhanced for the 2016 season.

Our Digitization Committee is hard at their task and it is doubtful they will ever run out of work as they continue the ambitious task of photographing our collections and computerizing the photos and information on each item. They are working out the early bugs in the process and are very task oriented.

We have contracted to have most of our 2002 addition painted and this has necessitated the removal of all wall adornments from throughout that building. You don't realize how many items you have on the walls until you are in need of removing them. It is a big job but the end product will be a nice fresh look.



The Mandelert Family in Chippewa Falls

JIM MANDELERT

My last installment was about the Mandelert Family and how the men came to the U.S. In this installment I will tell about three of them and how they fared.

Charles Mandelert was born on December 6, 1826 in France. He came to Chippewa Falls in 1856 and settled in Frenchtown on the south bank of the Chippewa River at the corner of Water and Central Streets. Engaged in the booming lumbering trade, he also did some farming on the side.

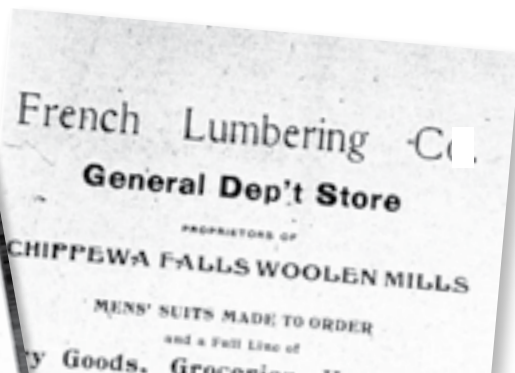
Joseph Mandelert was born in France on October 15, 1835. On his way to Chippewa Falls, he spent three years in Prairie du Chien, where he met Louis Vincent. Continuing to Chippewa Falls in 1862, the two of them formed the logging company named Vincent and Mandelert Company. He built a large house at 333 West Central Street.

By 1864 there was a second saw mill in Chippewa Falls known as the Gravel Island mill which was located on the south bank of the Chippewa River below what today is Casper Park.

On November 29, 1873, the French Lumbering Co. was incorporated with Charles Mandelert as Secretary and Treasurer, and Joseph Mandelert as a board member. This company purchased the Gravel Island mill and started producing 65,000 board feet of lumber, 12,000 lath and 3,000 pickets each day. It employed 40 men at the mill and had a winter logging crew of 90 men. An office and store was established at 109 West Central St. in downtown Chippewa Falls, a site that is now occupied by the Chippewa Falls Public Library.

The mill encountered trouble when it needed to store and sort logs on the Chippewa River as well as allow logs and rafts to float downstream to Eau Claire and markets beyond. Lawsuits by Union Lumbering Company and others resulted from the logging operation problems. The mill was sold to State Lumber Company in 1879 and the flood of 1880 damaged and subsequently idled the mill.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



MEMBERSHIP FORM



In 1885 the French Lumbering Co. built a new store at 124 North Bridge St. which today is the address of Amundson's Home Appliance Center. The city block that included that new store became known as the French Block. And business was reported to be very good at the store.

In addition to the other Mandelert-related endeavors, in 1893 the French Lumbering Co. took possession of the woolen mill that had been erected in Frenchtown by James Mitchell in

1882. The mill-made woolen goods were very popular and successfully sold at the new store.

Another activity in which Joseph Mandelert became involved was the establishment of a new bank, the Lumberman's National Bank. In 1887 Joseph attended a meeting at the Chippewa Lumber & Boom office to draw up the charter and to make plans to begin to offer banking services. Along with others, the initial Bank board included William Irvine and Joseph.

Joseph Mandelert's oldest son, Charles Augustus, was born on November 14, 1886. To avoid confusion over his name, Charles adopted the name Charlie as a child and CA Mandelert, or just CA, later on. He grew up at 402 Island St. and attended local schools. As a college student, he attended St. John's University in Collegeville, Minnesota. When he returned to Chippewa Falls he began courting Julia Severson of Dallas, Wisconsin, and subsequently, they married. Soon CA and his wife left Chippewa Falls for Duluth, Minnesota, to start a butcher shop and grocery store on Duluth's west side. Later, upon Joseph's death, board members of the French Lumbering Co. requested he return to Chippewa Falls to replace his father as company president, a position CA accepted.

Upon returning, CA also began examining the Mandelert family business and determined more capital was needed for the dry goods store and the woolen mill. Reviewing his father's assets, he noted the purchase of many acres of timber in Bend, Oregon. To determine the timber's value, CA wrote to his father's friend, Frederick Weyerhaeuser, and asked how much he would be willing to pay for it. Weyerhaeuser responded essentially saying, "Charlie, it's good to hear from you. Unfortunately, your father's timberland suffered a forest fire. I would be willing to pay you ten cents on the dollar." As he was growing up, CA had come to know how aggressive a person Weyerhaeuser could be. So, he booked train travel to Oregon to see for himself. Being a part of a lumbering family, CA was also acquainted with some people who knew the lumber business in Oregon. He needed someone who could give a fair appraisal of timberland value, and found a friend who was a "lumber cruiser." Together, the two of them determined the timberland to be of prime value. CA, accompanied by the cruiser, then met with Weyerhaeuser about the potential sale. It was alleged that upon seeing a cruiser who was fully aware of the real value, Weyerhaeuser realized the "Gig was up," and agreed to buy the timber for its actual worth. •

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MAIL TO:

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Historical Society
123 Allen Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729





A Message From Your President

EXHIBIT UPDATE

The Chippewa County Historical Society has the use of new display case at the Chippewa Falls Public Library. Last summer our display theme was the French fur trade and the fall display featured lumberjacks. In December and January our theme was "An Old Fashioned Christmas." The display included a 1940's Christmas Village that Mary Erickson loaned to us. For February, we have a romantic display of vintage Valentines. A big Thank You to Joe Niese and the Library for giving us the opportunity to display our artifacts. Another Thank You goes out to Mary Erickson, Marge Hebring and Nancy Schuh for their decorating expertise. Be sure to view our often-changing displays at the Library and visit our museum at the Area History Center.



Help needed!

The Chippewa County Historical Society presents it's **13th Annual The Past Passed Here** from May 12-15, in Allen Park, Chippewa Falls

Over the past 12 years about 7,200 fourth grade students have spent a day in camp learning first hand about early Wisconsin history. This reinforces what they have been studying the previous school year.

We need your help so that we can continue offering this award winning event. You could help with setting up, helping students make souvenir medallions, running a game, portraying a fur trader or lumberjack, cooking, serving food, welcoming the public and/or packing up. If you are interested in getting involved call Jim Schuh at 715-726-2376.

Well if you have not read a local newspaper or watched our TV stations or listened to the radio you missed the great news. Our Chippewa County Historical Society has taken a major step toward a new museum. The Board of Directors approved and we have purchased the property at 12 Bridgewater Avenue. The site is located next to Irvine Park and a block from Leinie Lodge. The Society used money saved over the years and contributions from the Chippewa County Genealogical Society and four loyal supporters of the Society.

You've heard the saying "Be careful what you ask for, you might get it". Well the work has just begun. A New Museum Committee has begun to plan a capital campaign and the design of the building. An architect is developing a concept for the building to show what the building might look like. This will help the capital campaign show what we are planning for a new museum. We think the new building and new exhibits may cost up to 3.5 million dollars. So you can see we have a huge task before us. We feel it is important to tell the story of Chippewa's rich history and the areas significant contributions to society. We set up an account at Northwestern Bank and will be accepting donations at 123 Allen Street, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729 to be deposited to that account. Watch for updates on the new museum in the media and *The Eagle Speaks*. Needless to say it will take several years to see our dream come true.

In 2009 the Society began the Hall of Fame to recognize the members, officers and directors who have made significant contributions to the Chippewa County Historical Society. The Board has selected three inductees who will be honored at the February Membership Meeting. I am pleased to welcome them to the Hall of Fame.

Teri Stahr has been on the board for a number of years and has contributed her appraisal skills to help us determine value of artifacts. She has been involved in every aspect of The Past Passed Here event since it's inception twelve years ago. Teri lives in her tepee in Native American costume and helps students make a souvenir of their attendance at *The Past Passed Here*.

Marge Hebring after joining the board several years ago has jumped in with both feet. She has become one of the producers of *The Past Passed Here*. Marge has used her grant writing skills to acquire a number of grants for the Society. She can be found every Tuesday giving visitors a tour of the museum. In her spare time she designed and put together our new fur trader exhibit.

Skip August has been a board member for a number of years. If we have a maintenance issue, need something built or need to make something happen you call Skip. He heads up the Building and Grounds Committee. His mechanical, carpentry and painting skills can be seen around the building and in our exhibits including helping with our newest lumbering exhibit on wheels used at *The Past Passed Here*.

There's never a dull moment at the History Center. Hope to see you at our next membership meeting Monday February 8th at 6:30 p.m. at the History Center 123 Allen Street. Don't miss Greg Kocken, Head of Special Collections & Archives at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, talk about Albert A. Bish an early photographer in Chippewa. Also our photo archivist Donna Bourget will have a display of some of Bish's photographs. *Dave*

Antique Appraisal Affair

Join us as the Chippewa County Historical Society offers
antique & collectable appraisals on

Saturday, February 27, 2016

from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at

Area History Center, 123 Allen Street, Chippewa Falls.

This is a fundraiser for our capital campaign to build a new Chippewa Area History Center on Bridgewater Avenue. Museum tours will be provided during the event.

Pre-registration is encouraged and can be done by calling 715-723-4399 and leaving a message with your name, phone number and number of items you will bring. Cost is \$5 per item; maximum two items per person. Antiques appraiser, estate sale expert and former Picket Fence Antique Mall owner, Teri Stahr, with assistance from Julie Sokup, will conduct the appraisals.



CHIPPEWA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

GENEALOGY CORNER

GARY SWARTZ, PRESIDENT

Hi. Now that we are past the busy holiday season, hopefully we can work on some of the material we gathered from our relatives. I received a link to a story from my second cousin asking if I could translate an article written in Czech. Using Google Translate, I copied and pasted the article and, in a few seconds, was reading the story in English. While it is not perfect, it is very close to it. Google Translate automatically detects the correct language, works fast and the price is right- it is free. I highly recommend it. Our CCGS fund, part of the Community Foundation of Chippewa County, started by Judith Loiselle Rubenzer, continues to grow. We can now collect interest off the principal and roll it back into the fund. This has become a great resource for CCGS. We continue to be amazed by the generosity of our members.

The projects are coming along. The PDF's are being checked for accuracy, the 1888 plat map index project is nearly completed, and we are always willing to help those who stop in to look for their own family information in our CCGS Library.

Our family's histories go "way back," but because we live in today's world, we have the advantage of today's technology, so "like" us on facebook and learn more about us by going to our website at ccgswi.wix.com/ccgswi !

New Museum

CONTINUED FROM COVER

The current Area History Center at 123 Allen Street houses the CCHS and CCGS. The 50 room former Notre Dame convent has been home to the societies for 25 years. Currently there are thousands of artifacts and photographs in the collections, as well as many family histories. About two-dozen exhibits are featured on four floors of the museum. Some exhibits have specific themes but many encompass various aspects of early local history including Native Americans, the French fur trade and lumbering.

Even though most visitors are very complimentary about our efforts to collect, preserve, interpret and share the rich history of Chippewa County, today's building is not meeting our long-term needs. Several major improvements are needed to make the building more suitable for use as a museum. To maintain a climate-controlled environment for protection of artifacts or provide elevator access in a leased building is just not financially feasible.

In mid July 2015 Delecia B. Huitt, who represented the American Alliance of Museums, conducted a Museum Assessment of CCHS. A 40-page report provides numerous recommendations. Several shortcomings of the building were highlighted, including the lack of handicap accessibility to the multiple floor levels. A lack of climate control for artifact preservation was another major concern.

During the last decade, numerous meetings exploring a more suitable, long-term museum location were held and several areas of Chippewa Falls considered. The property previously used by Dairy Queen, and most recently, Piff's Pizza, turned out to be an excellent location for the new museum, and the property was purchased. Being close to tourism attractions, including Leinenkugel's Brewery, Irvine Park, the Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds and historic downtown Chippewa Falls, is expected to be ideal.

Anyone who wants to get involved in the capital campaign, or who have questions should contact CCHS, president, Dave Gordon, at 1-715-222-1170. If you are interested in making a donation please send checks to CCHS New Building Fund, 123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI, 54729.

Thank you to local print, radio and TV media for helping us spread the word about our land acquisition. Our Facebook page has links to our coverage:
<https://www.facebook.com/ChippewaCountyHistoryCenter>.



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Dave and Ann Gordon	

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Arley Engel's Legacy Lives On...

The President of the Forest History Association of Wisconsin (FHAW) has requested permission to present a posthumous award to Arley's family at our Bi-annual membership meeting February 8. The following announcement was published in their last newsletter:

"The recipient of this year's Fixmer Award probably doesn't need any special introduction having been an active member of our Association for many years and a regularly attendee of our meetings.

At home in Chippewa Falls, Arley was a committed member and dedicated volunteer of the Chippewa County Historical Society. He enjoyed his involvement there and the opportunities to share stories about the rich Chippewa Valley history. Whether speaking to groups of school children or adults, or writing for the Chippewa County Historical Society Newsletter, the Eagle Speaks, Arley had a gift to share.

Since 2003 Arley was an annual presenter at the society sponsored, "The Past Passed Here," giving hundreds of 4th graders from Chippewa Falls Elementary Schools an up close look at 1800's style camp, including a Fur-Trade camp and a Lumber-era camp.

Over the years, Arley, authored 51 articles for the society's newsletter. Since his passing, the society has prepared a manuscript of these articles that is now available.

For his outstanding record of service to the Chippewa County Historical Society and his efforts to preserve Chippewa Valley's heritage the FHAW is pleased to name Arley Engel the 2015 Fixmer Award recipient."



COBBAN

LOCAL HISTORIC BRIDGE PROJECT UPDATES

RAINBOW MARSH ARCH BRIDGE

Thank you to the City of Chippewa Falls for their plans to preserve the Rainbow Marsh Arch Bridge. During late December the City Board of Public Works recommended that the city council approve the lowest bid for renovation. About this time Volume One magazine wrote: "The Marsh Rainbow Bridge is one of the most prominent landmarks in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin arching gracefully over beautiful Duncan Creek, it was built in 1916..."

The CCHS submitted letters to the city encouraging preservation during 2007 and 2009. The letters stated: "The CCHS Board strongly encourages the city to save this bridge from demolition. The bridge is architecturally significant and is a local landmark. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The Chippewa County Historical Society has recognized the importance of the bridge with a historic marker that is located next to the bridge along the Duncan Creek Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail."

COBBAN BRIDGE

Meetings were held in early January about plans for replacing the Cobban Bridge, which crosses the Chippewa River between Cornell and Jim Falls. A new bridge will be built about four to six years in the future. At the same time the historic Cobban Bridge is proposed to be removed.

The CCHS submitted letters to the county encouraging them to save the bridge for bicycle and pedestrian use. Last summer the CCHS Historic Marker Committee refurbished the Wisconsin Historical Society Historical Marker. There is a Facebook page titled Save the Cobban Bridge, which has 1,567 page likes, at this web address:

<https://www.facebook.com/Savethecobbanbridge>



CALENDAR

Feb. 8

6:30 pm CCHS Bi-Annual Membership Meeting (See cover for details)

Feb. 16

(Membership meeting took place of Feb. Board Meeting)

Noon Area History Center Birthday Lunch

1:30 pm The Past Passed Here, Planning Meeting

Feb. 27

9 am - 1 pm Museum Open Fourth Saturday

11:30 am - 1:30 pm Antique Appraisal Affair

March 15

9:30 am CCHS Board Meeting

10:30 a.m. Historic Marker Committee

Noon Area History Center Birthday Lunch

1:30 pm The Past Passed Here, Planning Meeting

March 26

9 am - 1 pm Museum Open Fourth Saturday

April 15

9:30 am CCHS Board Meeting

Noon Area History Center Birthday Lunch

1:30 pm The Past Passed Here, Planning Meeting

May 12 - 15

The Past Passed Here in Allen Park



This Nov. 13, 1915 photo shows a crew of workers cutting into the east bank of the river near Camp Wissota. Ten days later Fred Ling was seriously injured here during blasting.

WHAT WAS HAPPENING 100 YEARS AGO AT THIS TIME . . .

Eau Claire Sunday Leader 11-21-1915

Turkey Dinner At Wissota - Two hundred men at the dam will have a Thanksgiving.

A Royal Thanksgiving dinner will be served in the big new dining hall at Camp Wissota Thursday. Turkey and all that goes with it for a regulation Thanksgiving dinner will be the order of the day with over 200 men to participate. The camp is not fully organized and consequently any other form of holiday entertainment will be impossible. The men who are at work on the dam have perhaps never had as free a dinner as will be served to them by the camp chef next Thursday and it will no doubt be enjoyed to the fullest.

A big start has already been made at the site. Engineer Arnold's house is about completed and will be ready for occupancy Monday. By Christmas, Wissota will be a little city of its own ready for a community Xmas.

Eau Claire Leader 11-23-1915

Skull Crushed By Falling Rock - Serious accident to Fred Ling at Wissota Dam.

The first serious accident at the Paint Creek dam occurred yesterday morning about 11 o'clock when Fred Ling was working with a crew of men blasting on the eastern bank of the river near Camp Wissota when a large rock from heavy blast 200 feet away hit him. He was rendered unconscious and afterwards mumbled incoherently as they took him to the hospital. Dr. McRae was called and found a double fracture of the skull, one at the base and one just above the left ear. The injured man regained full consciousness during the afternoon and was able to tell his name and where he lived. He is in critical condition with little hope of recovery.

Xcel Energy has provided the Chippewa County Historical Society and Lake Wissota Improvement & Protection Assn. with written materials and approximately 1,000 images of dam construction in Chippewa Falls. We greatly appreciate their support of sharing this information with residents and members of our non-profit organizations.



Arley's wife, June Engel, signs a book for Thomas Chisholm and his wife Nancy, while Santa Claus and Arley's brother, Bert Engel, observe.

Celebrating Arley Engel's Memoirs

Book Release Parties for the late Arley Engel's new book: "That's All For Now from Engel's Little House On The Wheaton Prairie" were held at "Foreign 5 and at the Chippewa Falls Public Library in mid December. Within a month of the first printing of 300 books it sold out! The second printing is now available at Foreign 5 and at the Area History Center. Books will also be mailed upon request. Send \$15 checks to CCHS, for a book and postage.

THOMAS CHISHOLM'S BOOK REVIEW:

"The late Arley Engel, an amateur historian and devoted citizen of Chippewa County was a long time member and officer of the Chippewa County Historical Society. Deeply rooted in the topsoil of his childhood family farm and his home on the Wheaton prairie, Arley wrote vignettes of life and local scenes for the society's quarterly newsletter for thirteen years. His memoirs include more than fifty sketches of family, friends, farm life, sales people and associates plus his fascination and facility with machines, motors, auto parts and customers whose names he never forgot. The varied and often hard work with his father and siblings on an eighty-acre farm raising animals and crops including tobacco, prepared him for the mechanized world of pistons and pumps. He was well educated at Sunnyside School before high school and graduation from Chi High in 1954.

The stories begin with power: hand power and horsepower, harnesses, plows and steam engines. It was the Thirties, before indoor plumbing, hot tap water and the REA; before dial telephones, diesel-powered tractors and trains, corn pickers, Oldsmobiles, snowmobiles and seat belts; before automatic transmissions replaced "straight sticks."

Nicknamed early, Buck Engel was full of life, a raconteur, gifted writer, a son of the topsoil and the Chippewa River where he captained the "Huckleberry," his paddleboat powered from cobbled parts of old outboard motors. Arley traveled all the byways and highways in Chippewa and adjacent counties stopping at towns and villages, selling and delivering auto-parts to devoted customers. His travels were more than business ventures; he followed the Yellowstone Trail and visited numerous historic sites broadening his and our knowledge of early Wisconsin. Locally, he recorded all the grocery stores, gas stations and car dealers plus their locations and names in Chippewa Falls, a topography much changed since the Sugar Beet Plant, canneries and Tire Factory of the mid 20th century.

His last story, a few months before he said goodbye, describes a large dinner on the farm for family, friends, neighbors and relatives. Imagine a table full of mouth watering home cooked meat, veggies, spuds and fresh fruit all raised at home plus the scent of warm, baked and buttered bread with fresh milk from the cows. Arley's book records more than a celebration of life on "The Little House on the Wheaton Prairie," it is an image of Thanksgiving, Christmas Gifts and Freedom from Want, all harvested in fresh country air and pure water, the treasures of Mother Earth." ♡



A beautiful thank you card was received from June Engel which read:

There are not enough adjectives in the English language, to tell you how appreciative we are of the awesome book you put together in memory of Arley. The hard work of Jim, Nancy, Anne, Donna, Elly and all of the history center members and also thanks to Thomas Chisholm for the column in the newspaper. Our thanks goes to everyone involved in putting together the two book release presentations and to all of you who gave up some of your precious time during the busy holiday season. Thanks to Rooney Printing and all, for putting together the book in a short period of time.

What a labor of love from an organization that Arley loved. He wanted to write a book, and you fulfilled his dream. We know he was smiling as he watched his dream unfold. "Kudos" Thanks sooooo much from a proud family, June, Kevin and Terri!



Chippewa County Historical Society

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THE EAGLE SPEAKS



FEBRUARY 2016

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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:

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