

THE EAGLE SPEAKS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JUNE 2024



www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

"OLD ABE"

Inside this Issue:

Calendar.....	2
Celebrating Century Farms.....	3
Cook-Rutledge Mansion.....	6
Donations.....	4 & 5
Finding Chippewa County's World Influence.....	8
Genealogy Corner.....	7
Introduction of CAHC Board Members.....	7
Hospital Insurance	6
Membership Form.....	3
Newsletter Sponsors.....	9 & 10
History in Motion	5
President's Letter.....	4
Stanley Area Historical Society	8
The Past Passed Here	1 & 2



New this year was a reenactment of the US 5th Infantry Regiment, which was active in Wisconsin and Minnesota during the early 1800s. The regiment participants demonstrated drill team routines, a wood sawing detail and a mock court martial.

The Past Passed Here

GAIL BENSEN

For the 21st year, re-enactors and volunteers brought history to life at our flagship event — The Past Passed Here. Celebrating Chippewa County's history, Marshall Park was transformed into a living exhibit of lumbering, fur trading, open-fire cooking, and camp life circa 1750. Nearly 600 third- and fourth-grade students from twenty-five area elementary schools experienced 18th century life on the banks of Duncan Creek. This event dovetails with curricular offerings focusing on local history. After studying the time period in the classroom, the students then immerse themselves in firsthand activities like sawing logs, archery, flint and steel fire-starting, and creating beaded necklaces. New to this year's event was a photo booth canoe with cutouts for guests to capture a commemorative shot of themselves with cartoon fur traders paddling down a creek. Several new vendors offered fry bread, hand-thrown pottery, and jewelry crafted from porcupine quills. Historical reenactors brought authenticity to demonstrations of ropemaking, blacksmithing, cooking in a logging camp, and other skills needed

Continued on page 3



Lunch & Learning

with Tom Larson

Big Blazes & Classic Fire Trucks

Wednesday, June 5

11:30 am-1 pm

See page 2 for details

CALENDAR

1ST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

Lunch & Learning Series

at the Chippewa Area History Center

The History Center will provide a sandwich, beverage, potato chips sponsored by Old Dutch Foods, and cookie to those attending.

June 5 | 11:30 am-1:00 pm

Cost: \$15 per person | \$10 members

The Chippewa Falls Fire Department — Big Blazes Over the Years and the Classic Fire Trucks Used to Fight Them

Presenter: Tom Larson

June 13 | 5-7:30 pm

"Evening at Irvine" a picnic dinner in the park with silent auction and live musical entertainment. The registration deadline for this fundraiser is May 31.

July 3:

Dennis Miller, screening of "What Was Uniroyal?"

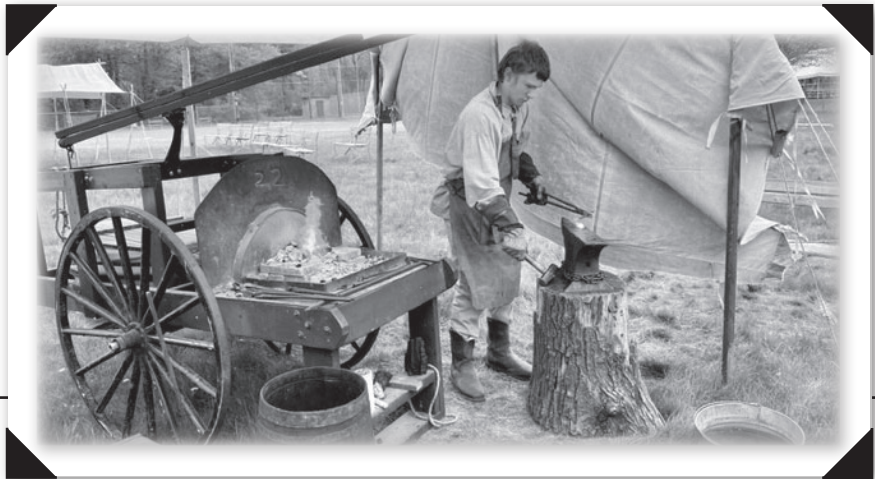
August 7: To be determined.

CCHS Museum and Store is open to the public Wed.-Sun. 11 am-5 pm (Closed on Easter, Sun. March 31)

CCGS Library open to the public Fri. Sat. & Sun. Noon - 4 pm (Closed on Easter, Sun. March 31)



The Past Passed Here images by Audrey Korte, News Reporter and Photographer for The Chippewa Herald and La Crosse Tribune. Go to Chippewaherald.com to find these photos and the story: *'I like to pretend to be a lumberjack': The Past Passed Here Brings Chippewa Falls History to the Present*



A blacksmith demonstrates the creation of metal objects by shaping them with a hammer after they were heated with a bellows in his forge until they were glowing red.

The Past Passed Here *continued from cover*

by early residents of the area. Bringing this mini camp to life for a week required many hands, provided by outstanding Chippewa Historical Society volunteers and staff. We thank them all for their tireless efforts.

Over a sunny Mother's Day weekend, the tent flaps opened to the general public with record-level attendance. Many of the students who attended during the week returned with their families. Parents who had attended the event as schoolchildren shared their memories and expressed joy that their children could also experience The Past Passed Here. The event garnered extensive coverage by local media outlets, including a lead-off story on WEAU Channel 13 News, and prominent articles in The Chippewa Herald, Eau Claire Leader Telegram and Volume One. Once again, local businesses provided generous sponsorship for what has become a signature event in Chippewa County (see list below). We are grateful for the community's continued support.



A big thank you to the 2024 Sponsors of The Past Passed Here

LUMBER BARON: Edward and Hannah Rutledge Charities; WEAU 13 News

TIMBER CRUISER: Chippewa Falls Parks & Recreation; CVCTF Community Workcrew, GFL Environmental; Harold McDonald Endowment Fund in the Community Foundation of Chippewa County; Lee Beverage of WI; Raihle Law Office

TRADER: Fill-Inn Station; Kwik Trip; Micon Cinema; Northwestern Bank; Old Dutch Foods; Olson's Ice Cream; Spring Street Sports

Trapper: Gaber Signs; Horan Funeral Home; Peterson Volker Funeral Chapel; Jim Schuh and Jerry Way



LEFT: John and Maria Meinen

RIGHT: Nicholas and Josephine Meinen. Children: Lawrence and Frank

Photos courtesy of Donna (Miller) Bourget.

FAMILY CENTURY FARM

John and Maria (Mary) Meinen

WENDY SULLIVAN

In 1864, John Meinen purchased 120 acres of land from Mathias Wagner in sections 14 and 23 of Township 29 North, Range 9 West (just south of Tilden) in Chippewa County, Wisconsin. Three generations of the Meinen family would farm the property until 1991; it became a Wisconsin Century Farm in 1981.

Generation One: John Meinen (1838-1929) was born in Prussia and came to Chippewa County in 1861. He married Maria "Mary" Bennesch/Benish (1843-1914) in 1868. Eight children (7 daughters and 1 son) were born to them. **Generation Two:** Theresa (1869-1949) m. John Benish in 1889, they had six children and farmed in the town of Howard; Nicklaus (1871-1936) m. Josephine Walloch in 1903, they had 5 children and farmed the home farm; Magdalena (1873-1938) m. Henry Schemenauer in 1894, they had 4 sons and 2 daughters and farmed before moving to Chippewa Falls about 1928; Mary (1875-1955) married Fred Heitmeier in 1910, they had one daughter and lived for 34 years in Milwaukee; Anna (1878-1951) m. Valentine Miller in 1906, they had 5 sons and 1 daughter and farmed in Tilden; An infant daughter (twin to Anna), born in 1878 but did not survive birth; Caroline "Carrie" (1880-1958) never married, planned to become a nun but wasn't able to due to a health issue, later became a nurse and started the first maternity ward at St. Joseph's Hospital, helped her parents manage the farm; Louise (1884-1964) never married, helped her parents manage the farm. **Generation Three:** Frank J. (1904-1991) and Lawrence T. Meinen (1905-1986) worked their entire lives on the family farm. Frank was an electrician, inventor, entrepreneur, writer of many articles in newspapers, CCHS member, and UWEC graduate at age 78. Lawrence grew seed corn, certified grains, and potatoes. Neither Frank nor Lawrence had children and the farm was sold out of the Meinen family after Frank died in 1991. **Another Meinen family member** is Donna (Miller) Bourget, the great-granddaughter of John and Mary Meinen, CCHS photo archivist and founding member.

The Meinen Family Farm Ownership Timeline:

1864: John Meinen purchased 120 acres from Mathias Wagner | **1931:** John Meinen died in 1929 and a quit claim deed for 100 acres of the farm was recorded from his daughters Theresa, Magdalena, Mary, and Anna to their brother Nicklaus for \$300 to each daughter. The remaining 20 acres were inherited by Carrie and Louise Meinen. | **1938:** Following the death of Nicholas Meinen in 1936, an affidavit was recorded stating that his property had descended to his widow, Josephine, and sons Frank and Lawrence. | **1950:** Josephine Meinen, widow of Nicklaus, died. The 100 acres were now owned by Frank and Lawrence Meinen. | **1959:** Carrie and Louise Meinen sold their 20 acres to Frank and Lawrence Meinen. The original 120-acre farm was now back together. | **1981:** Wisconsin Century Farm Ownership Certificate awarded to Frank J. and Lawrence T. Meinen. | **1991:** The farm is sold.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DATE

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE / ZIP

TELEPHONE

Type of Membership:

☐ Individual / Student \$25/year

☐ Family..... \$50/year

☐ Iron Business or Household..... \$125/year

☐ Copper Business or Household \$250/year

☐ Silver Business or Household... \$500/year

☐ Gold Business or Household... \$1,000/year

☐ Lifetime Membership

Household \$1,500

MAIL TO:

Chippewa County Historical Society
12 Bridgewater Ave.
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729



Message from the President

The Past Passed Here Sponsorships

- Spring Street Sports
- Raihle Law Office

Donations to Chippewa County Historical Society Historic Markers

- Gregory and Carolyn Helgeson

Donations to Exhibits

- Korgor's Decoration

Donations & Grants to Chippewa Area History Center Operating Costs

- Dean Arnold
- Russell Champion
- Diana Germain
- Ruth and Sheldon Gough
- Nancy Hebert
- Chuck and Chris Norseng
- Pat and Sue Quinn
- Mary Rose Willi

Donations to Museum Building Fund

- Nancy Hebert
- Mary Kelly Anderson

Chippewa County Historical Society Welcomes New Lifetime Members

- Laura Bickel
- Keith and Donna Jones

DAVE GORDON

I realize as I write this message a chapter of the story of The Chippewa County Historical Society has been completed. In 2016, purchasing the property at 12 Bridgewater Avenue began the eight- year chapter. With the help of many people and the residents of Chippewa County, the idea of a new Chippewa Area History Center was developed. What followed was a Capital Campaign that raised the funds, design and construction of an award-winning building, opening a new corporation to operate the facility, hiring a Director, new museum exhibits, and completing the first year of operation. What an accomplishment!

So now we once again get back to running the Society where we now can focus on our Collection, preserving the stories of Chippewa County, operating the Museum and the Education Program.

Let's start with the review and changes to the By-Laws, which the members will vote to approve at the September Membership Meeting. A copy of the new By-Laws is on our web site (chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org). Following are changes:

- Purpose and Objectives – wording updates
- Membership elects fourteen members of the Board of Directors
- The Board elects its five officers who may serve two three-year terms and a third term after a one-year break.
- Vice-President becomes President after the current President's final term.
- Corresponding Secretary a new officer
- New committees – Executive, Governance, Marketing (name change), The Past Pasted Here, and Historic Marker

The Education Program under Educator Jarrod Showalter has started a very successful monthly Lunch and Learning program. The Past Passed Here just completed its 21st year and has had more than 3,200 third and fourth graders attend. Group visits by school classes and community organizations are increasing.

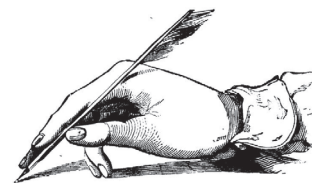
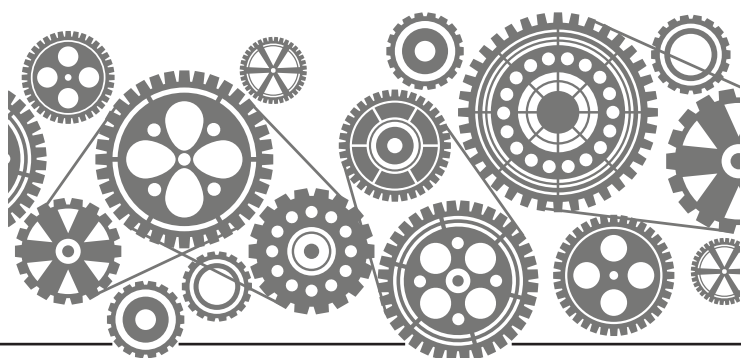
The Collection and Artifacts Committee with Archivist Elizabeth Peterson continues to manage our Collection (Artifacts 7,200, Photographs 10,000, Archives 7,200, Library 625, and now includes artifacts from St. Joseph Hospital).

The Exhibit Committee continues to change and add exhibits. Have you seen the two Cray Computers or the collection of Leine's delivery vehicles?

CAHC's first fund raiser is a fun-filled "Evening At Irvine" picnic dinner June 13, 5-7:30 pm, \$125 (\$100 is a tax-deductible donation).

See you at the Museum. *Dave* 🐾

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5 ➡



FROM THE DIRECTOR — FRANK SMOOT

History in Motion

In decades past, ambitious museums and historical societies planned long-term exhibits for their galleries — and that process itself was a long-term endeavor. First, apply for a planning grant and, if you get it, then plan. Once planned, apply for an ‘implementation’ grant and then, if you get it, build structures out of studs and drywall to create an interpretive path through the space. And then, finally, have a party and let the public in. Sometimes, it took years to open an exhibit, and it then might stay up for decades.

Nowadays, at least at the Chippewa Area History Center, we do things a little differently. New stories and artifacts seem to arrive nearly every day, and we open up spaces to welcome those precious things — then ponder how we can best help the public understand how they fit into the bigger narratives of our interwoven Chippewa County stories.

As you’ll read elsewhere, we just took in some important artifacts from St. Joseph’s hospital: a stunning statue of St. Joseph himself, stained glass dating from the ‘old’ West Hill facility, and a raft of documents. This story is still raw, and so we’re going to think a bit before we tell it. But, we found that we could just move a few things around and find a safe corner for them in the meantime. Our new facility accommodates this (sometimes just barely).

On the other hand, we moved the ‘lumber trailer’ (brainchild of Arly Engle and updated by Jake Jacobson, Skip August, Jim Schuh, and others) and set right to work filling the new floor space we gained with a walk-around logging and lumbering interpretation. It’s in process right now and probably will be for a few weeks. Come in and watch us work or see how far we’ve gotten.

Our Chippewa Area History Center is much more like a laboratory for interpreting history than it is a finished object, like a painting. A history lab. Psychologist Alfred Adler once said something like, “Your life is a painting that you paint your whole life” (paraphrasing here), and that’s more our model.

People sometimes think history is set: things happened. But there are always new ways to understand why those things happened, and what effects (effects we hadn’t considered before) those things had on other things. History is living, and so, we hope, is our framework for exploring it. ♡

DONATIONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Memorial Donations

- James and Karen Livingston in memory of Arthur Weiss
- Bob and Kay Hanson in memory of Patricia Elliott Andress
- Marge Bjork in memory of Thomas Lee
- Diane Whelan in memory of Thomas Lee
- Michael Bishop in memory of Roger Howard
- Donald & Barbara Dukerschein in memory of Roger Howard
- Gale & Mary Ann Engel in memory of Roger Howard
- Diana Germain in memory of Roger Howard
- Friends and Family in memory of Roger Howard
- M.J. & M.M. Heintz in memory of Roger Howard
- Mark & Diane Hubbard in memory of Roger Howard
- Rev. R. Dahm & Roger Warland in memory of Roger Howard



Hospital Insurance for just \$7.50 a Year

In our last newsletter we promised to share an article about health insurance offered by St. Joseph's Hospital in 1905 that was written by reporter Holly Meier and published by the Chippewa Herald in 1982.



Cook-Rutledge Mansion Events

June 13, 14, 15

Annual Thrift Sale on
Mansion Grounds

June 13 & 14

open 7:30 am-5 pm

June 15

open 7:30-noon

Call the mansion to donate
sale items. 715-723-7181.

505 W. Grand Avenue,
Chippewa Falls, WI

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further details.

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Elly Rochester Design/Layout

holly meier

off the beat



hospital insurance for just \$7.50 a year

CHIPPEWA FALLS—Anybody who has to spend any time in a hospital today without an insurance policy under the pillow might as well sell the home place.

If the ailment doesn't kill the patient, the bill he receives in the mail almost before he gets home will!

I know, because the almost daily letters coming into Paint Creek from Mayo's in Rochester aren't offering season's greetings.

It doesn't make much difference which hospital is involved, St. Joseph's here in Chippewa Falls, Bloomer Community Hospital in Bloomer, Victory Memorial in Stanley or Luther or Sacred Heart in Eau Claire—the price of being sick is very high.

Fortunately, a good insurance policy takes much of the pain from paying the bill.

AND IT HAS ALWAYS been this way, even "way back when" when St. Joseph's was the only hospital in this immediate area—at least from Chippewa Falls northward to the lumber camps.

This would be around the turn of the century, in the very early 1900s.

In those "good old days" an insurance policy covering medical attention at St. Joseph's was available for just \$7.50 a year.

Emery Paul, Chippewa Falls, has one of those old policies.

It was issued to his father, Albert Paul, on August 26, 1905, by "Agent" Joseph Durch.

Joe Durch's writing is a little hard to read, but it appears that the policy was sold to Mr. Paul at the "Blue Mill."

For his \$7.50, Mr. Paul was entitled to:

"Admission and medical and surgical treatment at our Hospital (St. Joseph's of the Sisters of St. Francis, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin) at any time during one year from the date of this Ticket; in consequence of wounds, injuries or sickness, disabling him from manual labor. Insanity, delirium tremens, venereal, fits, chronic and contagious diseases, and all diseases, ailments and injuries existing before the date of this ticket, or arising from intoxication, fighting, boxing or wrestling are excepted from this contract."

HOW WERE THE TICKETS (or policies) sold in those days?

Apparently many of them were sold in the lumber camps by a number of "Agents."

Martha Robinson, Edgewater Drive, Lake Wissota, Chippewa Falls, offers a contract with another Agent who was also named "Durch."

He was Albert Durch, and perhaps he and Joe Durch were related.

At any rate, Albert Durch had quite a territory to cover, going to lumber camps all through the northwoods.

According to his contract, Albert Durch had this exclusive territory:

All the Territory tributary to Lake Superior, west of Ashland, including White River, St. Croix and tributaries except Little Chief, the Nemakagan and tributaries, the west Fork of Chippewa River and tributaries, except Little Chief. Take in all the territory between St. Croix and Chippewa River north and west of Spooner, Wis.. Also the Rice Lake territory, including the Red Cedar River and along Lake Glenwood and vicinity. Take in Brunett River and tributaries, Thornapple and tributaries and East Fork of Chippewa River and tributaries. Different explanation: The Soo Line and spurs from Ladysmith to Murry and the Soo Line and spurs from Park Falls to Ashland. The Omaha Line and spurs from Crooked Rapids northeast to end of line. The Omaha Line and spurs from Spooner north to Ashland."

HOW MUCH WERE the agents paid for selling the "tickets?"

Albert Durch received, "Fifteen percent of all moneys realized for tickets sold in the above territory."

Which means that for every ticket he sold, he was paid a little over \$1.12.

His contract bound him to St. Joseph's for five months, during which he was expected to sell tickets, solicit patronage for the hospital, and do all he could to build up the business of the hospital. He was supposed to give the hospital his best efforts and strict attention. He was to obey all orders issued by the hospital in line of his business.

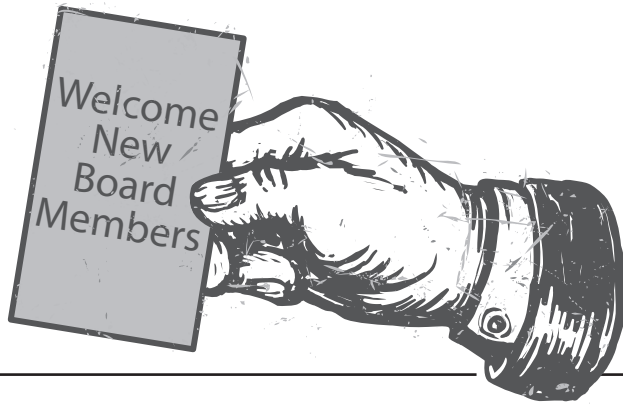
And he was expected to, "Abstain from the use of intoxicating liquors so far as not at any time to be under the influence thereof."

HERE IS HOW those old St. Joseph's tickets looked:



CAHC BOARD MEMBERS

President: Dave Raihle
Vice President: James Docksey
Secretary: Jim Schuh
Treasurer: Robert Hogseth
Dave Gordon
Diana Germain, CCGS
Rose Mary Willi
Skip August
Wendy Sullivan



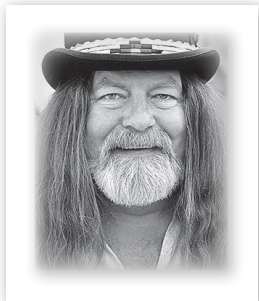
CHIPPEWA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

GENEALOGY CORNER

Board Members *continued from the December issue of The Eagle Speaks*

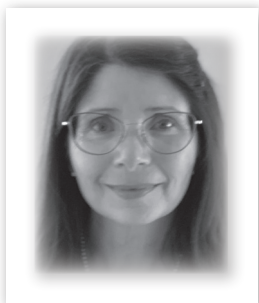
DAVE RAIHLE

As promised in our last edition of *The Eagle Speaks*, we continue with the introduction of the Chippewa Area History Center board members. The board is very accessible and willing to talk, reach out to us with any questions or concerns.



JIM SCHUH and his late wife, Nancy Schuh, are Heritage Society level donors for the Chippewa Area History Center. Jim has served 26 years as a board member of the Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS) including 10 years as Vice President. The CCHS Board elected him in 2022 to the CAHC Board. Jim has been a key volunteer for an annual educational re-enactment event known as *The Past Passed Here*, from its inception in 2003. Jim was inducted into the CCHS Hall of Fame in 2013. He co-authored two Images of America Chippewa Falls pictorial history books. Further, Jim has published the quarterly CCHS newsletter, *The Eagle Speaks*,

since 2006. He also co-authored the books *Lake Wissota –The Dam Story* and *Irvine Park –The Bear Facts*. Proceeds of those two books funded the new CAHC. He worked for 26 years in downtown economic development and historic preservation for the City of Eau Claire and implementing the WI Main Street Program in Eau Claire, Chippewa Falls and also state-wide. From the early 1980s on, Jim has volunteered his time and talents for 15 non-profit community organizations.



WENDY SULLIVAN grew up on a dairy farm near Arcadia, WI, the youngest of six children. She has a professional background in IT and banking and, while working at Ashley Furniture, she met her husband Scott, who grew up in Chippewa Falls. Over the next 27 years work took them to Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Colorado.

In 2002, Wendy and her husband founded Lumberjack Tools, and in 2013 they moved their business to Chippewa Falls. While they always knew Chippewa was a great town, they quickly learned that it was also a very welcoming place to be small business owners.

In December 2021, Lumberjack Tools was sold, leaving more time to volunteer with the community. A recent honor was to be chosen as the 2023 Festmeister and Festmeisterin for the Chippewa Falls Oktoberfest. Wendy and Scott have two children, Logan and Grace (Arturo), and one grandchild (Augusto). Wendy enjoys time reading, gardening, bicycling, and researching local history.

In 2013, while researching her husband's family history, she visited the Chippewa County Genealogical Society (CCGS) and the Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS). This led to her serving on the CCGS board since 2015 as Secretary, Director, and currently President. Wendy also served on committees for the new Chippewa Area History Center (CAHC) during the fundraising and building phases. Through local history research and her experience during the building process of CAHC, Wendy has discovered that Chippewa County truly cares about its local history and communities. 🌲

WENDY SULLIVAN, CCGS PRESIDENT

The volunteers at CCGS have been busy sorting and organizing some very interesting recent donations. In April, HSHS St. Joseph's Hospital donated many boxes of documents and artifacts to CCHS and CCGS. The documents will be kept in the CCGS library, and the artifacts will be with CCHS. In May, the Chippewa County Courthouse donated several boxes of maps and aerial photos. They have digitized these documents and felt that CCGS would be the appropriate place for the actual items.

We sincerely thank both organizations for entrusting us with the preservation of these items and we look forward to making them available to the public for family history and local history research. Many thanks also to the CCGS volunteers and Skip, Frank, Elizabeth, and Jarrod of CAHC for working on this project.

Upcoming CCGS Monthly Meetings:

- **May 25:** Gary Swartz and Rod Thorson will present a program on using maps, plat books, and GIS mapping to do genealogical research
- **Aug. 26:** Allyson Wisniewski, Director of the Chippewa Falls Chamber of Commerce
- **Sept. 28:** Anne Keller will present "How To Get Started With Your Family Tree"
- **Oct. 26:** Melanie McManus, Chippewa County Register of Deeds, "How to Use This Resource in Your Family History Research"

Library Hours:

Fri./ Sat./Sun. | noon to 4 pm

COUNTY NEWS

Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVID JANKOSKI, PRESIDENT

Our Digitization Team has been keeping up with the ongoing donations to the museum and are also working on digitizing our children's clothing collections. They have had the good fortune of having a former photographer return to help them. The other volunteers are working on two new major exhibits. One will feature the Stanley businesses located along East and West Maple Street in the 1950's and 60's, when Highway 29 still ran through Stanley.

The Stanley Area Historical Society has rolled-out of its new publication, "Vintage Views of Stanley Wisconsin Brought to Life with Color." The 160 page full color book was compiled by society member Dave Plummer, with research support from society historians, Betty Plombon and Dave Jankoski. The book provides an extra ordinary pictorial journey of Stanley history from the 1890's to the 1950's. Over 200 black and white photographs have been reconstructed in true vibrant color. The colorization process, while not eliminating all original blurriness, does increase sharpness, bringing out unseen features with some amazing new detail seen. Historic commentary adds to the meaning and location of many of the pictures featured. The photos brought to life with color, would have been the way our ancestors saw the scenery and the reader can imagine their ancestors walking down those same streets and seeing them in the way they can be viewed in the book. We have ordered 200 soft cover books which are being sold for \$35. Hard cover books are on order and it will be several months before we receive them. They will be sold for \$45. Shipping is \$10. Besides many historical pictures being featured in the book, pictures of a number of artifacts found in the museums exhibits have been in-bedded in the book's pages. 🍷



Finding Chippewa County's World Influence

Chippewa's "King Wheat"

JARROD SHOWALTER, CAHC EDUCATOR

The Civil War is frequently termed "the first modern war." This refers to its scale: of manpower, of geography, and of industry. Economics became a major battlefield, and agriculture was the key industry. Famously, the Confederacy built its wealth via an empire of cotton across the American

South, and Confederate leaders hoped to use "King Cotton" to influence European powers to aid its war effort.

The Union countered Southern cotton with Northern wheat. Napoleon quipped that "an army marches on its stomach," and bread filled the stomachs of Union soldiers. Wheat prices tripled during the war as demand soared. But it was not just soldiers that needed bread: large industrial cities across the North relied on Western grain, and so too did drought-stricken Europe.

When the imperial powers of Europe balanced whether to side with cotton or wheat, the answer was clear. Britain, France, and Russia declined Confederate pleas for aid and recognition, opting instead for status quo and the Midwestern grains it depended upon.

Wheat, like cotton, depletes soil rapidly when farmed. As a result, wheat farming has steadily migrated West in the United States. By the 1850s, wheat had reached Wisconsin, and production boomed in the Southern and Eastern parts of the state. It was the biggest crop in Wisconsin, and by the 1860s, it had migrated North and West in the state. Most of Wisconsin's 100 million bushels of wheat harvested during the Civil War were exported.

Newly settled lands in Chippewa County were perfect for wheat farming. New settlers often arrived from old wheat-growing areas of Wisconsin, the Eastern United States, and Europe. The first farmer in the county, a German named George Myers, grew mainly wheat in addition to other crops. By 1858, wheat was being shipped out of the county to markets in the East. Towns like Eagle Point, Bloomer, and, yes, Wheaton, quickly cropped up around the county, just in time for the national war of rebellion.

The Badger State was the second-largest producer of wheat in the nation during the Civil War. With many of its young men off to fight, women picked up much of the slack on the farm. A decade later, wheat would move farther West into Minnesota and the Plains states, replaced by dairy farming throughout Wisconsin. But for a decade, the Western Wisconsin wheat boom was a vital part of the Civil War "home front." 🍷



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