

THE EAGLE SPEAKS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2024



www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

"OLD ABE"

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Chippewa County Historical Society Annual Meeting

Monday, Sept. 9 | 6 pm

Chippewa Area History Center
Diamond Classroom

See President's column for details. ➡



1941 Flood — Chippewa River.

Chippewa Falls: The City That Never Should Have Been.

TIFFANY WOGAHN

If you read historical books or newspapers from the area, you'll learn about what a horrible location Chippewa Falls is in. Floods have ravaged this town many times, bringing extreme devastation. Before we mastered the art of the log booms and river dams, we were at the whim of Mother Nature, and she could be vicious.

Flooding in the Chippewa Falls area by the Chippewa River can be dated back to 1838, 1847, 1855, 1856, 1866, and 1880. Destruction to streets, buildings, homes, businesses, and landscape was what the river left behind after it receded.

On Tuesday night, Sept. 9, 1884, an unexpected storm dropped 14 inches of rain in 24 hours. In Holcombe, the dam broke sending water and logs down the river. In Bloomer, the dam also collapsed, sending everything down Duncan Creek. The combination of events sent nine hundred million cubic feet of water toward Chippewa Falls.

Continued on page 2 ➡

CALENDAR

FIRST WEDNESDAY OF EACH MONTH

Lunch & Learning Series

at the Chippewa Area History Center

11:30 am-1 pm

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

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

Sept. 4: Rural Schools of Chippewa County (by Gary Swartz)

Oct. 2: Brewed in Chippewa Falls ... but not by Leinies (by Tim Wolter)

Nov. 6: Native History of Chippewa County (by Marge Hebring)

Dec. 4: Under the Christmas Tree of Yesteryear (by Sally Young)
This program will be repeated on the afternoon of Saturday, Dec. 7 (time not final)

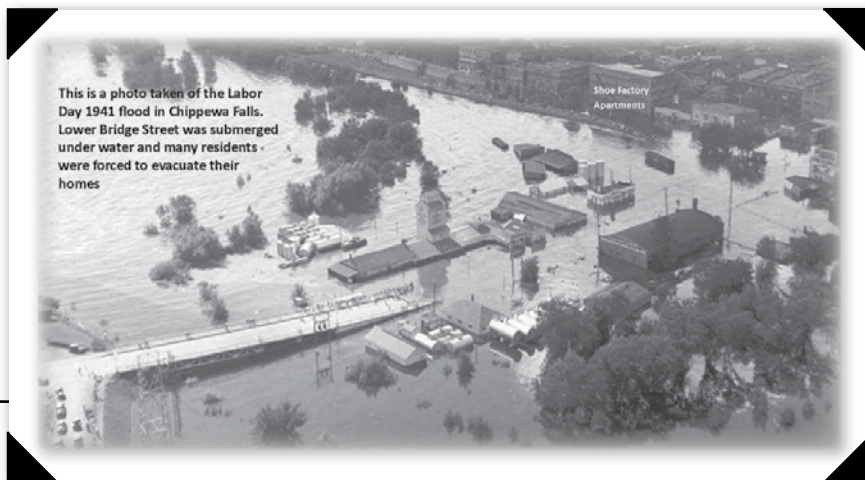
Call ahead to register. Let Jarrod, our educator, know if there are speakers or topics you'd like added in 2025!

CCHS Museum and Store is open to the public Wed.-Sun. 11 am-5 pm
(Closed on Christmas, Dec. 25)

CCGS Library open to the public
Fri. Sat. & Sun. Noon - 4 pm
(Closed on Christmas, Dec. 25)

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

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Chippewa Falls *continued from cover*

The booms overflowed and broke. Four hundred million logs were hurled with irresistible force against bridges, dams, houses and mills, crushing the strongest structures into fragments.

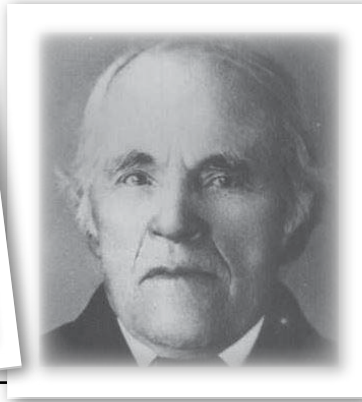
A newspaper from the area gave a description re-creating the feeling of that night: "The noise and din occasioned by the advance of the avalanche of liberated logs is described as having been terrible. Huge trees were shot up thirty or forty feet into the air, falling only to rise again. The groaning and shrieking of the logs as they moved in a seething mass completely drowned all cries for succor, and the gloom of night increased the horror of the situation." Flood waters on the Chippewa River finally peaked at a recorded mark of twenty seven feet above the normal mark. This eclipsed the previous record high mark set during the flood of 1800 at twenty four feet. Duncan Creek was up fourteen feet above its normal water level.

Not one single bridge was left standing in Chippewa Falls on Duncan Creek. Kehl's planing mill and the feed warehouse belonging to George Collins washed away. The livery barn of Messrs Stiles, Lego and Bailey was completely ruined too. Equipment was also lost during the dismantling of these businesses. Five horses and machinery from the machine shops were destroyed too.

Boats were used to travel up and down the street. With businesses and houses still underwater, clean up of the debris could only begin after the flood waters receded.

Across the bridge in Frenchtown, the bridge washed out leaving the south side isolated from the city. In the flood of 1882, the woolen mill, then located on the south side, was partially destroyed and subsequently moved over by the brewery across town.

The overwhelming task of rebuilding damaged or destroyed houses and businesses was only the beginning of replacing the devastated city. Not only did the flood consume the possessions of residents and businesses but they also lost jobs because the places of employment were either damaged or destroyed. The community of Chippewa Falls had to find a way to forage through the economic downfall caused by natural disasters like flooding. Affecting both residents and businesses, this disaster played a role in the transformation of the city of Chippewa Falls from a dominated logging industry to diversified manufacturing town. ♣



Generation 1:
Anna Weber
Stoffel, 1832-1913
and
Peter Stoffel,
1828-1905



FAMILY CENTURY FARM

The Peter and Anna Stoffel Family Century Farm

WENDY SULLIVAN

Generation One: In August of 1868, Pierre "Peter" (1828-1905) and Anna (nee Weber 1832-1913) Stoffel and their five children arrived at a small clearing five miles northwest of Chippewa Falls. In present times, this location is in Tilden, adjoining the south side of St. Peter's Church. The early story of the Stoffels in Chippewa County is like that of many local pioneer families; an ocean voyage followed by a cross-country trip. The Stoffel's were fortunate though to arrive to a familiar face. Peter's brother Francis "Franz" Stoffel arrived in Chippewa County several years earlier and he arranged for a log cabin that the young family would call their first home in the United States. Franz, who studied to become a priest, later sold the farm to Peter and Anna and became a religious teacher. The family settled into farm life. In the winters, Peter worked in the logging camps; spring and summer were spent clearing land and farming.

Generation Two: Nine children were born to Peter and Anna; the five oldest in Belgium, the four youngest in Tilden. Maria, Sister Mathisa, a nun (1858-1918); Peter, Jr. (1860-1944) married Theresa Harings, farmed in Woodmohr; Catherine (1862-1948) married Joseph Bowe, lived in Tilden and Chippewa Falls; Susan (1864-1935) married Sebastian Dachel, farmed in Edson and Pittsville; John (1866-1929) married Theresa Meinen, farmed in Cooks Valley; Magdalena (1869-1941) married Peter Hunz, farmed at Cornell and later lived in St. Paul; Michael (1871-1945) took over operation of the home farm in 1900 and married Elizabeth Hansen in 1904; Anna (1873-1954) married Peter Meinen, farmed in Cooks Valley.

Generation Three: Seven children were born to Michael and Elizabeth Stoffel; six daughters: Leona Zwiefelhofer, Eleanor Zenner, Agnes Miller, Louise Libersky, Clara Bohl, Mary Zwiefelhofer, and a son, Albert. Albert (1912-1995) married Irma Miller in 1935. Following the death of his father, Michael, in 1945, Albert took ownership of the farm; turning it into a modern dairy farm and building a new barn in 1952.

Generation Four: Five children were born to Albert and Irma Stoffel; three sons: Francis (Kathleen), Clarence (Diane), and Clement (Patricia), and two daughters: Marion (Richard) Anderson and Beth (Steve) Ashley. Francis Stoffel married Kathleen Loschko in 1957 and took over the operation of the home farm in Tilden

MEMBERSHIP FORM

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DATE

NAME

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STATE / ZIP

TELEPHONE

Type of Membership:

☐ Individual / Student \$25/year

☐ Family/Household \$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 \$5,000

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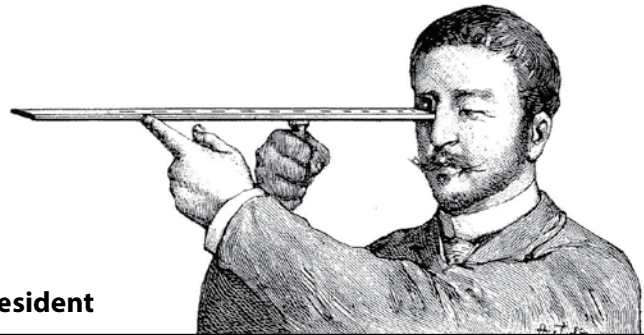
Chippewa County Historical Society
12 Bridgewater Ave.
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Continued on page 5



Donations

Message from the President



Donations to Exhibits

- Pierre Girard
- Evelyn Mahoney
- Tim and Connie Russell
- Gary Swartz
- Martin Treptow

Donations and Grants to Chippewa Area History Center Operating Costs

- Mel and Kathy Bollum
- Elinor Brady
- Gerald Brost
- Kristine Dimock
- Pam Frederick
- Judy Gaier
- Diana Germain
- Keith and Donna Jones
- Carrie Lies
- Chippewa Falls Lions Club
- Kathleen McMullin
- Catherine Murphy
- Christopher Perry
- Frank Smoot
- Francis and Kathleen Stoffel
- Rodney Thorson
- Kent Vandelaar
- James and Arlene Wright
Family endowment fund at
Community Foundation of
Chippewa Falls

Continued on page 5

DAVE GORDON

The story of our museum continues to change daily. We have a new hands-on children's exhibit, the "Victory Garden", which tells what people did to support the war effort. The exhibit has a woman standing by her Victory Garden with various vegetables growing in the ground. Each day opening the museum may have a new surprise. One morning, some items were missing, the garden had no vegetables in it. A search found them all in the large scalding pot. Obviously, a young visitor to the museum was making vegetable soup. How exciting to have our young visitors enjoy their visits to the museum.

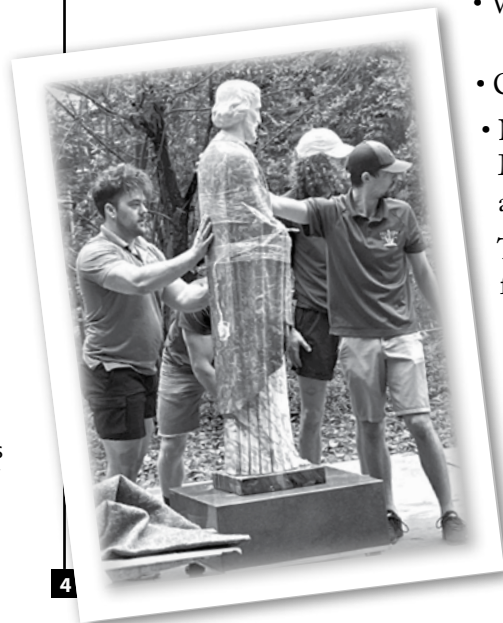
I want to remind you of the Membership Meeting Sept. 9 at 6 p.m. at the History Center. The new St. Joseph's Hospital exhibit will be introduced at our annual meeting. Numerous artifacts have been received since the hospital closed earlier this year. You may notice in the side yard a large new artifact going up. It is the gazebo formerly located at St. Joseph Hospital. It, along with stained glass windows from the original hospital, marble statue of St. Joseph and the hospital time capsule to be opened in 2051 is now in our collection.

At the meeting we will approve changes to the By-Laws and elect fourteen directors. A copy of the new By-Laws is on our website (chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org). Following are changes:

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

The Chippewa Area History Center's first fundraiser, a fun filled "Evening At Irvine" picnic dinner with musical entertainment by Jerry Way, raised \$11,000.

See you at the Center. Can you find the new exhibits in the museum since you were here last? *Dave*



RIGHT: Workers from Elite Movers recently delivered the statue of Saint Joseph from the closed hospital to the Chippewa Area History Center.



LEFT: Betty and Jake Jacobson working at the Past Passed Here in the Chippewa County Historical Society food booth tent in May 2018.



Thank You from the Past Passed Here

JIM SCHUH

Our flagship event The Past Passed Here has been held for 21 years and about 12,600 grade schoolers have journeyed back in time with us to enjoy a day in camp. There are so many wonderful volunteers who donate their talents and time to make this wonderful educational event possible.

Two people have needed to step down after many years of dedicated service. Jake and Betty Jacobson were instrumental in the design and construction of the mobile lumberjack museum in 2016. Jake also created the rustic camp entrance gates and stockade fence several years ago. He made and donated a shaving horse, a workpiece or holding device or clamp commonly used with a draw knife for carving and shaping wooden tools and furnishings of early America. Several other donated artifacts that are used with this museum included a draw knife, shingle making froe, two-man crosscut saw, wooden mallet and a cant hook.

Betty Jackobson coordinated the food booth for many years when the event was in Allen Park. This was much more complicated because the only thing we had access to were electricity and water. Everything else needed to be brought in to operate the food booth in a safe and efficient manner. Thank you both for your contributions and dedication to make our educational event such a success for so many years!

A big THANK YOU also goes out to Dave Boese and the Tilden Lions Club for staffing the food booth for the last four years. We have been notified that they will not be able to help in the food booth in the future so we will be recruiting additional volunteers. 🍂

Family Century Farm *continued from page 3*

in 1959 although his dad, Albert, continued to help with the farming. Around 1969-1970 the original log home was torn down and replaced with a new home. In 1980 the Peter and Anna Stoffel family farm officially received their Wisconsin Century Farm Certificate. What a journey!

Generation Five: Three children were born to Francis and Kathleen Stoffel: Julie, Jayne (Tony Bowe), and James. Jayne Bowe, like her grandmother Irma Stoffel, is a member of the Chippewa County Historical Society and the Chippewa County Genealogical Society. In recent years, ownership of the Stoffel Century Farm has begun to transfer to the fifth generation of Stoffels with James Stoffel purchasing part of the farm from his father. Let's hope this family tradition continues with future generations. 🍂

DONATIONS

Continued on page from page 4

Donations to Support Chippewa County Historical Society, "Lunch and Learn" program.

- Old Dutch Foods
- Jim Schuh
- Diane Hopkins Whelan



Memorial Donations

- Memorial donations in memory of Lyle Kelly given by those at ceremony in his honor
- In Memory of Melinda Smith from Mike Hilger
- In Memory of John Lien from John's friends and family
- In Memory of Les and Rosemary Davis from the Davis family





Milton Otto Walter Kressin (1918-1977)



Finding Chippewa County's World Influence A Bloomer Seabee

JARROD SHOWALTER CAHC EDUCATOR

The Second World War demanded a massive expansion of military capability, as this column has previously covered. Another aspect of this effort were the "Seabees," or members of the Naval Construction Battalion. This unit was a new idea, created to build specialized naval

projects, rather than using civilian contractors. The first recruits were skilled civilian construction workers, and other laborers were quickly added to the ranks in 1941 and 1942. All were trained in basic military techniques, but quickly put other specialized skills into practice.

Seabees (named for the initials Construction Battalion initials "C.B.") quickly proved their value by building staging bases used to cross oceans and take the fight to the enemy. They were synonymous with the modern materials they used to build makeshift bases: perforated steel landing strips, steel pontoon piers, and bulldozers. In the Pacific, the ingenious work of the Seabees facilitated the "island hopping" strategy used by American forces; this strategy meant bypassing heavily defended islands and focusing on the lightly defended ones instead. Seabees were the fulcrum of that strategy, turning rocky islands and virgin jungle into airstrips and naval bases that threatened the enemy and enabled another 'hop.'

One Chippewa county man, Milton Otto Walter Kressin (1918-1977), served as a Seabee in both ocean theaters. Kressin was born on his parents' farm in Woodmohr, near Bloomer. He had graduated from the District 7 school in Woodmohr, also working on his family's farm. By the time war was declared in 1941, he had married Irma Ziebell and was working at Bresina's Grocery Store near Bloomer.

In December 1942, Milton enlisted at the Chippewa Falls naval recruitment office, located in the post office building. He was sent to the naval induction center in Milwaukee and entered active duty that same month as part of the Naval Construction Battalion. He completed Spare Parts school and a bookkeeping course, and was stationed on active duty in the Atlantic and at Adak Island in Alaska, where Japan threatened invasion.

CAHC has been generously given photos and his uniform, in addition to other artifacts, from Milton's family members. We are thrilled to add another dimension to the "Service to County" exhibit area. ♡



Cook-Rutledge Mansion Events

As the end of the summer draws near, we are thrilled to announce that we have found a new curator for the Cook-Rutledge Mansion! A native of the greater Chippewa Valley, Katie Fenno has studied History and Anthropology at Southern Illinois University and Georgia Southern University, and Historical Preservation and Restoration at Savannah Technical College in Savannah, GA. We are eager to get to know her better and look forward to welcoming her into the Mansion in September.

In the meantime, the Mansion's back porch has been receiving necessary repair by TAG Builders Inc., including complete replacement of rotted sections of woodwork. Each of the four porches will be receiving this work over the next few summers and we are delighted to see the first phase of this work being accomplished.

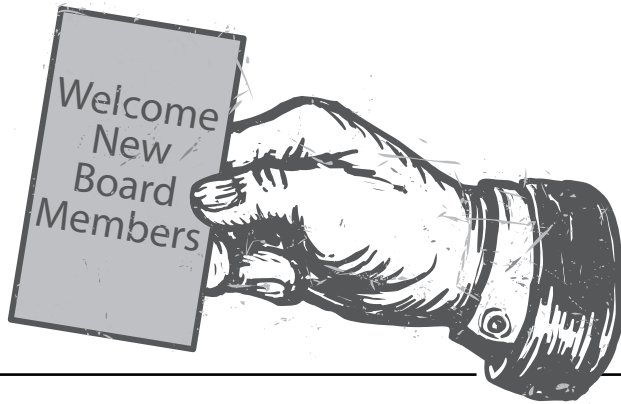
Call the mansion to donate sale items.
715-723-7181.

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Chippewa Falls, WI

Follow us on facebook for further details.

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CHIPPEWA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

GENEALOGY CORNER

WENDY SULLIVAN, CCGS PRESIDENT

The 21st Annual Chippewa Falls Oktoberfest is Sept. 20-21, 2024, and the Chippewa County Genealogical Society is excited to again sponsor the Oktoberfest Medallion Hunt. The Medallion Hunt is held the week leading up to Oktoberfest; clues will be posted daily on the Chippewa Falls Oktoberfest page. Each year, the clues are based on a person with German heritage who lives or has lived in Chippewa County. The medallion will be hidden on public property somewhere in Chippewa Falls and the lucky winner will receive 2 weekend passes to the Chippewa Falls Oktoberfest. All contest rules will be posted on the Chippewa Falls Oktoberfest page.

CCGS continues to work on a variety of projects in our library that will assist those who are researching their family history or local history in Chippewa County. A new project on the horizon is to index the many photographs that were printed in the 1920, 1969, and 1991 Chippewa County Plat Books. These photos were submitted by people from Chippewa County and are a great resource; they include people, buildings (some still standing and some that are now gone), important events, favorite pets, etc. Currently, the only way to search these is to patiently look page by page; indexing the photos will be a big improvement.

UPCOMING MONTHLY MEETINGS:

Sep 28: Anne Keller will present "How to get started with your Family Tree"

Oct. 26: Melanie McManus, Chippewa County Register of Deeds

Nov. 23: Catherine Parr will present on her Scandinavian heritage trip

Jan. 25, 2025: Martin Treptow will present on the Treptow family

LIBRARY HOURS: Friday, Saturday, and Sunday 12 noon- 4 pm.

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.



MARY ROSE WILLI

After 39 years of employment at Northwestern Bank, I retired in 2018 as Senior Vice President. My husband of 50 years, Dick, and I have 3 grown children along with their wonderful spouses and 4 beautiful grandchildren. I have an accounting degree from UW-Eau Claire which has served me well as a banker and also as a volunteer in various local nonprofit organizations. Currently I serve on 3 other nonprofit boards: Heyde Center, Family Support (Treasurer), and Partners of Wisconsin Hospital Association West Central District (Secretary/Treasurer). I love being involved in Chippewa Falls and it is an honor to serve on the History Center Board of directors.



DAVE GORDON

I was born in New Jersey and lived there until my dad was transferred to Minneapolis — even though our relatives were very concerned about the wild west. Attended Macalester College and University of Minnesota in Civil Engineering. Married Ann Lindsey of Chippewa Falls and joined the Navy as a Lieutenant. My job was watching Russian missiles in Cuba on U2 photography. Joined Procter & Gamble in Cincinnati, Ohio. For a change, attended Southern Ohio College in Radio and Television Management. Retired after 32 years with P&G and moved to Chippewa Falls. Became President of CCHS and involved with United Way of Greater Chippewa Valley, Open Door Clinic and Legacy Community Center/Agnes' Table. Then for something to do, bought and ran Foreign 5 and Lucy's Eatery until it closed recently. ♡

COUNTY NEWS

Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVID JANKOSKI, PRESIDENT

Our Digitization Team suffered a severe blow with the unexpected passing of Connie Pozdell. She has been with the Team since its inception and was a long time volunteer in several aspects of our organizations. Most noteworthy she served as our president for 10 years – 2000-2009. Other volunteers have now completed great exhibits on the Klu Klux Klan and the 100th Anniversary of the Stanley Auditorium. They are also rounding the corner on completing a major exhibit on the businesses on East and West Maple Street in Stanley in the 1950's and 1960's, when Highway 29 still ran through Stanley, rather than on the southern outskirts as it does today. On Sunday, Sept. 22, an open house will be held and the former businesses owners, or their descendants, will be invited to an open house, during which additional information will be gleaned and recorded regarding these businesses.

Our most recent publication, "Vintage Views of Stanley Wisconsin Brought to Life with Color," has been selling well. We are happy to report that sales have already exceeded our costs of publication and shipping. The 160 page, full color book, has also been getting very good reviews. The books remain on sale at our museum at \$35 for a soft cover book and \$45 for a hard cover book. Shipping is an additional \$10 for either. It makes a nice birthday or Christmas gift!

We have begun exploring replacing our heating and air conditioning systems in our original 1906 museum building. The units are just short of 40 years old and have served the museum well!

Our museum remains open Saturdays and Sundays 1- 4 pm through Oct. 5. Otherwise call 715-644-5880 for an appointment. Group tours are welcome. Hope to see you soon. 🍂

RIGHT: Elly Rochester shows off a shirt featuring the new CCHS logo.



A trophy musky is proudly displayed! The steering wheel from this boat that belonged to Lorenzo Newman was recently donated to the Chippewa County Historical Society's extensive artifact collection.

Unique Items!

ELIZABETH PETERSON, CURATOR

Hello Readers,

Since our last newsletter, we have taken into our collection some unique items. One of them being a beautiful chess set done in the traditional Norwegian Rosemaling style. Ethal Padrutt was the one who did the rosemaling on the chess set pieces, chess set case and table top. She taught a rosemaling class here in the area.

Another item was a boat steering wheel belonging to Lorenzo Newman who was a cashier at First National Bank and owned the boat. A descendant of Lorenzo donated the boat steering wheel and a few other items.

We also received a scrapbook assembled by Geraldine Capek in 1943. She lived in Chippewa County where she created a Victory Garden for a 4-H project. During World War II, Victory Gardens were an important part of the war effort. With the help of new CCHS board member, Sally Young and her sister, we developed an interactive children's garden. A photocopy of Geraldine's scrapbook is available at the museum so you can see what she collected.

We're eager to have you visit us to see the many changes we have made. And, if you have any inquiries about what artifacts you may have, let me know by either calling or emailing us at the museum. 🍂

Updated Logo and Great New Merchandise!

The CCHS adopted a sketch of the Notre Dame convent and Father Goldsmith Chapel shortly after moving into the building complex in 1990. Since moving to the new beautiful CAHC in 2023 we decided to update our logo. Because we have used a sketch of Old Abe, the Civil War Eagle, on The Eagle Speaks newsletter for many years we decided to adopt that image and add it to our old fashioned looking text font. The sketch was then improved by our volunteer graphic designer, Elly Rochester, who also has donated her time since 2007 designing our quarterly newsletter. 🍂





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Chippewa County Historical Society

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See page 3.

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MISSION: COLLECT, PRESERVE, INTERPRET AND
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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.

Mail any comments or future articles to: Chippewa County Historical Society, 12 Bridgewater Ave., Chippewa Falls, WI

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