

# THE EAGLE SPEAKS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

JUNE 2021



“OLD ABE”

www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

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Photo by Kip Rubenzer

## Chippewa Area History Center Capital Campaign Update

BOB HOGSETH, CAPITAL CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIR

You may be interested in keeping current with the progress of our Capital Campaign for the new History Center. So, here is a summary of some of the highlights of the project.

The Eagle Speaks February 2021 issue, reported the campaign had raised \$3,175,000 of the \$3,500,000 public campaign goal. As of April 15, we have raised \$3,295,000. I’m hopeful the remaining \$205,000 will be raised before construction of the building is completed, that being estimated as September.

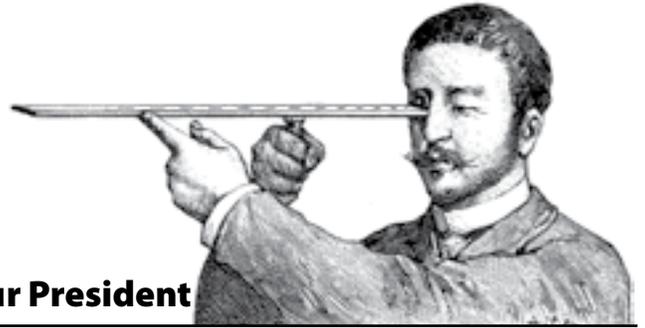
On a related matter, I would like to briefly address a recent front page story in the Chippewa Herald that might have alarmed some readers. The article included the status of our \$3,500,000 public campaign goal, but also talked about our rapidly rising construction material cost estimates. The article also mentioned a “silent” campaign to pay for unpredicted additional costs and said we needed to raise “an additional \$4,000,000.” That’s wrong. The correct wording should have been that “total costs” are now over \$4,000,000. More than a year ago, the Campaign Committee was informed that construction costs were increasing rapidly, which is approximately 28% more than

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3



**There is still time**  
for you to donate to our new  
**CAHS building project**

and join our group of  
distinguished donors.  
Please see page 3 for details.



# CALENDAR

## A Message From Your President

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

**June 8**  
1 pm | TPPH Wrap Up Meeting – Area History Center

**June 15**  
9:30 am | CCHS Board – Heyde Center for the Arts

**June 22**  
9 am | Capital Campaign Committee – Raihle Law Office

**July 13**  
11 am | Historic Marker Committee – Area History Center

**July 20**  
9:30 am | CCHS Board - Heyde Center for the Arts

**July 27**  
9 am | Capital Campaign Committee – Raihle Law Office

**Aug. 17**  
9:30 am | CCHS Board – Heyde Center for the Arts

**Aug. 24**  
9 am | Capital Campaign Committee - Raihle Law Office

- NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:**  
 Jim Schuh . . . . . Author/ Editor  
 Anne Keller. . . . . Author / Proofreader  
 Jim Erickson. . . . . Author / Proofreader  
 Dave Gordon. . . . . Author  
 Marge Hebring. . . . . Author  
 Tom Larson . . . . . Author  
 Frank Smoot . . . . . Author  
 Elly Rochester . . . . . Design / Layout

DAVE GORDON

Last week, thanks to Jim Schuh, Marge Hebring and the committee, the 18th annual The Past Passed Here was a success. TPPH was different this year in two ways. The pandemic prevented the fourth grade students from attending as a class, but it was open to the entire community and was well attended. Second, it was held at the new location, Marshall Park, across the street from our new under-construction museum. The new location eliminates flooding issues experienced in the past.

Visitors to TPPH could see the progress on the Chippewa Area History Center.

The building is now enclosed with the cupola taking shape. We can't wait to get a view of Chippewa from 50 feet on top of the building. Underground electrical and plumbing are complete and floors are being poured and installed. In the next three months all of the inside construction will be completed. "Good Lord willing and the creek don't rise," the CAHC building will be completed this fall.

Just so you don't get the wrong idea about the completion of construction, Frank Smoot pointed out we are not at the finish line but at the starting line now. We are just beginning with getting exhibits built. Moving 7,000 artifacts, 10,000 photographs and thousands of genealogical research items. Figuring out how to open a gift shop. Welcoming 25,000 visitors a year. Operating a new building. Having an auditorium and meeting rooms. Having a large staff of volunteers to operate the museum. Having a new modern genealogical library. Sponsoring visiting exhibits and educational programs. These are tasks we are working on now.

All of this needs your financial and volunteer support. The Capital Campaign needs your donation. Watch for volunteer opportunities and join us in a whole new way of celebrating our rich history. *Dave*





Interior view



Don't forget to renew your membership!

**CAPITAL CAMPAIGN** CONTINUED FROM COVER

expected when the Campaign began in 2017. However, we decided to keep the \$3,500,000 “public” goal in place and conduct a silent campaign to pay for additional unexpected costs. Great news: three of our initial major donors understood our predicament and donated/pledged an additional combined \$600,000 to the silent campaign. A few other generous donors have also contributed to this silent campaign as the cost of materials went up. Many thanks to all of you!

Raising the remaining \$205,000 public campaign funds will not be easy. Please help us spread the word that even though the building is going up, we still need many more donations. Also, I want to recognize and thank fellow members of our Campaign Executive Committee: Dave Gordon, Dave Raihle, Jim Schuh, Wendy Sullivan, Skip August and Anne Keller. We have been meeting at least once a month for the past five years, and it has been a rewarding pleasure.

Please visit [www.chippewaareahistorycenter.org/donate](http://www.chippewaareahistorycenter.org/donate) to learn more about how to make a donation to support local history preservation and education and to see the current “Gifts & Pledges List.”



# Donations

Thank you to the following for your generous financial support!

**The Past Passed Here Donations**

Casper Foundation, Lumberjack Tools, Harold MacDonald Foundation, Hogseth Family, Mason Companies

**Grants in Support of Historic Markers**

Dean Arnold: New Cobban Bridge Marker

**Memorial Gifts**

IN MEMORY OF:

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 Mary McKenna by Barbara & Mark Strobel  
 Mary McKenna by Gerald & Carol Way  
 Mary McKenna by Suzanne Poniewaz  
 Lanny Roth by Judy Roth

IN MEMORY OF:

Gerald Joas by Doris M. Blake  
 Gerald Joas by Mary Blake  
 Edith O'Connor by Anne Keller  
 Jackie Hepfler by Kristine A. Berchem

**Donations to Operating Support of CCHS**

Dennis Mickesh, Susan Delong, Val Carroll

**New Lifetime Members**

William Greenwood, Sara and George Abendroth

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CITY

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TELEPHONE

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**Individual**

\$25 (1-year)       \$70 (3-year)

**Family**

\$35 (1-year)       \$100 (3-year)

**Contributing Member**

\$60 (1-year)       \$170 (3-year)

**Life Membership**

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

I would like to make an additional donation

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL TO:**

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



## The Past Has Moved

JIM SCHUH

By all accounts, moving The Past Passed Here (TPPH) to Marshall Park was a wise decision! Everyone we asked enjoyed the convenient parking and increased safety the new site offered us. Although they missed being at the confluence of Duncan Creek with the Chippewa River and higher visibility, they didn't miss the potential flooding, uneven grounds, traffic noise and awkward parking. A big plus for the future is that our new Chippewa Area History Center will be open right across the street, making set up and moving supplies to the new site convenient.

Of course, everyone missed seeing the 600+ fourth graders that previously have enjoyed a day in camp each year. The Covid-19 pandemic canceled our event last year and prevented the school system coordinated field trips this year. To date, more than 9,400 students have experienced 1700s and 1800s Chippewa County history first-hand at our event. Hopefully they will be part of the 2022 event!

Thanks to Jim Erickson who quizzed the re-enactors about their opinions of the new site and documented their feedback, we will make improvements next year. In summary, Jim said: "Hats off to the many, many people who worked to make this event the success it obviously was. But especially to TPPH committee and all those who formed the backbone of all the planning, work, problem anticipation, dealing with the new site and the endless details they faced. They did a tremendous job. And to the volunteers filling in for the myriad of tasks at hand."

In addition to our dedicated volunteers, we must thank the City of Chippewa Falls and the Parks and Recreation Board and staff for their amazing support! Our event would not be possible without the financial support of our generous sponsors: The Lumber Baron level included: WEAU 13 News, William and Gertrude Casper Foundation and a Grant from the Harold McDonald Endowment Fund in the Community Foundation of Chippewa County; Timber Cruiser: Express Disposal, Inc., The Donna and Bob Hogseth Family, Lumberjack Tools; Trader: Country Treasures, Fries Financial, Lee Beverage of WI., Mason Companies, Northwestern Bank; Trapper: Chippewa Herald, Horan Funeral Home, Anne Keller, Old Dutch Foods, Olson's Ice Cream, Pederson-Volker Funeral Chapel, Rooney Printing, and Westconsin Credit Union

Thank you to Dave Boese, who has volunteered for the last few years. Our food booth ran smoothly because he recruited his fellow members of the Tilden Lions Club to organize the concessions. These volunteers were: Dave Boese, Bill Brenner, Tom Clark, Al Goettl, Joe Meinen, Tom Schimmel and Jim Schmidt. In addition to recruiting this great group of people, Dave helped with planning, signs, set up, pack up and also took orders the whole time the food stand was open.

My TPPH planning co-chair, Marge Hebbring, contributed countless hours of work for many months to make this event the wonderful success that it was. Thank you, Marge for your dedication to making this event such a huge accomplishment! ♣

*Hats off to the many, many people who worked to make this event the success it obviously was!*



## My Walk Back In Time

MARY ERICKSON

Dressed as a pioneer woman, I stepped through the stockade-type gate about to take a “walk back in time” at the “Past Passed Here.” I had attended in past years, but this time I decided to spend the day taking pictures and asking visitors how they were enjoying this event as well as chatting with the many re-enactors dressed to represent fur traders, voyageurs, lumberjacks and Native Americans. They were all eager to tell “their story.”

Many canvas tents were spread around the grassy field with pots of soup, stew, or a tasty fruit crisp cooking over fires. I peeked in to see cozy sleeping areas and austere, but functional, washing-up areas near the tent. Walking farther, a blacksmith was demonstrating his skills with a large bellows. Kids were combing and cleaning a Bison robe and jumped at the chance to touch and sit on the furry hide and learn about the importance of these great animals.

Hearing laughter and cheers, I watched a voyageur demonstrating how to play Cat and Mouse, a game of skill while standing on a stump and doing a tug-of-war type action to get an opponent toppled off their stump. All ages were having fun with this. Hatchet throwing, archery and lacrosse were other activities some tried their hand at. And everyone cheered when the cannon was fired. Some other games were hook-the-ring, ring the antlers, and I even saw some boys sitting on the grass playing checkers.

Vendors had furs, beads, toys and many other period items for sale in Trader’s Row. Authentic period food was also available to be enjoyed.

The last stop on my walk back in time (before enjoying a bowl of voyageur stew) was a stop at the mobile logging history trailer. Inside were several pictures of life in the lumber camps including a great picture of the largest sawmill in the world under one roof located at the then “falls” of Chippewa Falls. Many old saws, axes, pitchforks, and other logging camp tools and equipment were also on display. Looking across the street from the trailer, I could see our new Chippewa Area History Center building under construction. It is designed to resemble the original sawmill and will possibly be open for tours by this next Christmas. Another great outing!

In talking with several children, they all had different, favorite things! Games, shopping, making a necklace, unusual food, and the big boom of the cannon. And seeing how people lived was one more highlight. They liked being able to actually talk with the re-enactors, too, and when asked about coming back next year, they answered with a big “Yes!”

Several re-enactors said parents thanked them for providing this valuable learning experience about the area in which they live. Parents told me they thought the event was most authentic, well done, and interesting for young and old.

As I was leaving, I thought back to many years ago when I was a child and tried to remember if we learned about Chippewa’s wonderful history in school. If we did, it was very limited. As a former teacher, I am so happy the children are learning about their important history and even more so, they appear to be eager to learn more about where they are living. I, too, enjoyed learning more myself and look forward to next year’s “Past Passed Here” walk. ♣



*Parents told me they thought the event was most authentic, well done, and interesting for young and old.*

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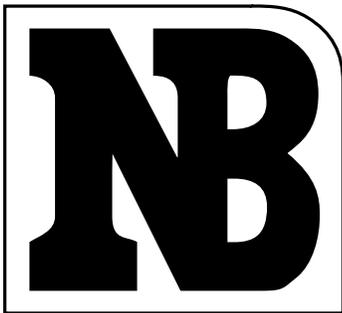


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Jerry Burt and his Pump Cart



CHIPPEWA COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

## GENEALOGY CORNER

ANNE KELLER, CCGS PRESIDENT

Chippewa County Genealogical Society volunteers have been quite busy. We've answered queries by phone, by "snail mail," and by email. Its library is again open so that researchers may come into the building to do some family-tree research. There are many printed resources available and volunteers are there each Tuesday to help you find what might be pertinent information for your specific family research.

Volunteers are also diligently planning for "the big move" to our new Historical Society/Genealogical Society building, located at the entrance to Irvine Park. It will take lots and lots of boxes and organization to pack up books and papers, computers and more books, which has to be done in such a way that a specific item can be found once it is in the new building. Hopefully the moving event will take place at the end of summer or into fall. It will take lots and lots of hours to accomplish the move, so as you read this and feel you'd like to help, please stop at 123 Allen Street on any Tuesday and we'll find a project for you to do! ♡

# The West Hill Pied Piper

JIM SCHUH

Now that construction of the new history center and museum is well underway, we are receiving calls from people who have artifacts to donate. Recently John Thaler called and asked if we would be interested in a pump cart. He explained that it belonged to a man who used it to travel around Chippewa Falls. I said I was aware of that person and we are definitely interested. I asked where he got the cart. John said that former Chippewa Falls mayor, Doug Sandvick, had given it to him and asked if he would put it in storage. I contacted Doug (a friend I have known for more than 20 years) and he provided the following colorful story about his uncle Jerry (Gerald Burt):

"The pump cart was built by my Grandfather, Vernon Burt, who was born on the family farm in Cadott. His grandfather was Daniel Corbett, who fought in the Civil War in most of the major battles out east (Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Wilderness, etc.) for the Wisconsin 5th Regiment. (Old Abe, the War Eagle from Chippewa County, was the mascot of the Iron Brigade.)

Now the why and for whom. It was built for his youngest child, Gerald Burt, who contracted polio in the early 40s. Against the urging of many in Chippewa Falls on the west hill (family house was at 708 Mansfield), my grandparents refused to send Jerry away. In fact, they refused to keep him shut up in the house. My grandfather, a mechanic for the Chippewa County Highway Dept., built the first of many versions (you have the final one) of what the family called "The Pump Cart." Jerry would go all over town, up and down even the steepest hills, in that cart and built an upper body no Olympic gymnast could rival. For decades and every day (weather permitting), Jerry could be seen all over town visiting with hundreds of his friends. He would also walk people's dogs and sell his arts and crafts.

He had many nicknames, including the Pied Piper of the West Hill, as the Chippewa Herald called him in one of the articles they wrote about him. I have an original of the Pied Piper one. I estimate over 500 people paid their respects at his visitation at the Horan Funeral Home in 2002. The Horan boys knew Jerry well also. He was a true icon of perseverance and good will and a true Son of Chippewa.

Uncle Jerry once told me: "I never feel sorry for myself. There are plenty of people who got it a whole lot worse." He was right! He was loved by his family and beloved by his community. His war-hero great grandfather would have agreed with me that Jerry was also a hero and an inspiration to the thousands who were blessed to know him. (FYI — one of the benches in Harmony Courtyard that I purchased has a dedication plaque to Jerry Burt.) Thanks for reaching out and helping to preserve that cherished piece of Chippewa history. I am so lucky John Thaler kept it all these years since 2008. He truly loved Jerry like many in the community." ♡





## Remembering the Cobban Bridge

While the Society has been quite busy getting a new building off the ground, literally, it hasn't stopped sharing history with the public as you've read in these pages: our ongoing marker program, the return of The Past Passed Here — and a collaborative effort to mark and remember the Cobban Bridge.

CCHS has been working with Fred Anderson, project manager for Chippewa County Highway Department, and John Vogel of Heritage Research in Menomonee Falls, to create long-lasting, vandal-resistant interpretive signage memorializing the Cobban Bridge site as the bridge comes down after a century steadfastly serving the traveling public. The panels will be placed at the wayside just south of the bridge.

This series of panels, already designed and edited, detail the engineering of the bridge, its history as well as that of the Cobban settlement, and efforts to keep the bridge in service as long as possible.

Travelers up Highway 178 will learn that people have been living in that immediate area for thousands of years, that the bridge — quite unusually — spanned the river in two different places, and that at one time a thriving Cobban community boasted a cheese factory, railroad depot, boarding house, blacksmith shop, and post office.

The panels and installation design are currently under review with the Wisconsin Department of Transportation and will be installed in the process of removing the old bridge and replacing it with a brand-new span.



# Historic District Nomination Successful

JIM SCHUH

The Chippewa Falls West Hill Residential Historic District has been added to state and national registers of historic places.

Two years ago, on April 25, 2019, the Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS) assisted the Wisconsin Historical Society with scheduling and promoting a public informational meeting at the Chippewa Falls Public Library. We were pleased with the attendance of about 60 people and the positive feedback from residents. Following the meeting, frequently asked questions about historic districts were posted on the CCHS Facebook page.

Wisconsin Historical Society press release: "The Wisconsin Historical Society placed West Hill Residential Historic District (Chippewa Falls, Chippewa County) on the State Register of Historic Places on November 20, 2020.

The beautiful West Hill Residential Historic District includes a range of residential architectural styles popular during its period of development between 1870 and 1970. The district conveys a sense of historical and architectural cohesiveness through the designs of over 140 homes, fine and often outstanding examples of the most popular architectural styles including Italianate, Queen Anne, Craftsman, Bungalow, Prairie School, Tudor Revival, and Colonial Revival styles. Collectively, these buildings reflect national trends in domestic architecture and typify the stylistic and historic evolution of the district itself and of the larger residential area that surrounds it. The district is also noteworthy for being the home of many of the most prominent persons that lived in Chippewa Falls during this period. The homes within the West Hill Historic District are well maintained, resulting in a district of distinction and beauty.

The State Register is Wisconsin's official list of state properties determined to be significant to Wisconsin's heritage. The State Historic Preservation Office at the Wisconsin Historical Society administers both the State Register and National Register in Wisconsin.

To learn more about the State and National Register programs in Wisconsin, visit [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org).



Dick Hebert and John Jimenez. Photo by VolumeOne Magazine.



## COUNTY NEWS

### Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVID JANKOSKI, PRESIDENT

COVID-19 canceled our April 2020 Quarterly Meeting. We did open for the 2020 Season the weekend of June 20-21 and remained open weekends until the end of September. Visitor numbers were down, but those who visited did appreciate having the opportunity. Use of masks, hand sanitizer and social distancing were encouraged.

With the melting snow last spring came the revelation that our roof on our original museum building had to be replaced. That was completed at a cost of \$22,500, which we just about have paid for. We did resume quarterly meetings and held them in July and October. After our fall closure, some volunteers resumed work and a major new exhibit on one of our business districts was completed. Also, a number of wedding dresses have been exhibited. Work is currently being done on updating a Foreign Wars exhibit. In March 2021, the digitization of our collections resumed. There is a backlog of donations that need cataloging, entry in Past Perfect and digitized.

Last summer we hired a UW-Eau Claire student as an intern/worker, and have done the same for this coming summer. We are opening at our regular time – the first weekend in June and closing October 2.

Most of our regular volunteers have now returned to work on Tuesdays. Unfortunately, we suffered the loss of our Vice-President Fred Evans who died January 29, 2021. Jean Ketterhagen has replaced Fred as Vice-President.

With volunteer docents the Stanley Area Historical Society, will be open on Saturdays and Sundays 1-4 pm, beginning the weekend of June 5-6 and running through October 2. As always, we invite you to visit us this summer. ♣

## Changing of the Parks and Rec Guard

JIM SCHUH

Congratulations to Dick Hebert! He retired at the end of March as Park Director after working for the Chippewa Falls Parks, Recreation and Forestry Department for 37 years. The Chippewa County Historical Society (CCHS) has worked with Dick on numerous projects over the years, including the improvements to the circa 1881 Ole Pederson Bjerke pioneer log home that was donated to the CCHS in 1979. (During 1987 the building was moved to Irvine Park and furnished by the CCHS. Dick coordinated the reroofing of the log home with cedar shake shingles in 2014.) For the last 10 years he assisted us in holding The Past Passed Here on city park property. The CCHS in turn reciprocated by producing historic displays for the new Irvine Park welcome center a few years ago. We also created the historic timeline of Irvine Park history on the wall of the welcome center. The book, *Irvine Park – The Bear Facts*, was published by the CCHS in 2018, which documents the history of the park and the other 26 Chippewa Falls park areas.

The new director as of April 1st, John Jimenez, took time out of his busy schedule to visit The Past Passed Here and get acquainted with our event as well as the history of our groups working together over the years. Thank you to both of these gentlemen for their help and support! Welcome John, to a generous and wonderful community with a rich history! ♣

## SPILL THE BEANS

**Meaning:** To reveal a secret

**History:** In Ancient Greece, beans were used to vote for candidates entering various organizations. One container for each candidate was set out before the group members, who would place a white bean in the container if they approved of the candidate and a black bean if they did not. Sometimes a clumsy voter would accidentally knock over the jar, revealing all of the beans and allowing everyone to see the otherwise confidential votes.



# Chippewa County Historical Society

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