

Fall 2015

## LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



### Annual Meeting

The Langlade County Historical Society will hold its annual meeting on Thursday November 19 at North Star Lanes. After a meal there will be a brief update about the museum, election of three directors, and a presentation by Sister Dolores Demulling about the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph and their role in establishing and running Langlade Memorial Hospital.

Before 1933 Antigo's residents were tended to by physicians, working singly or in groups, out of city homes converted into clinics. In the 1920s a high school student, Asher Treat, won first prize in an essay contest sponsored by the Antigo Women's Club on the theme "What does Antigo need most?". He suggested a new, state of the art hospital. Antigo's leaders had recognized that need and, in fact, began to build one. But, as Asher Treat stated in his essay: "It was to have been a large and beautiful institution. Characteristic of other Antigo projects, it blazed like a skyrocket for a while and then was forgotten." In fairness to Antigo,

the onset of the Great Depression had a lot to do with this and with many projects nation-wide.

In 1932 a prominent Antigo business man, travelling by rail to Chicago, broke his hip at a stop in New London. When his friends visited him they were impressed by how well the hospital was run. They approached the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph who ran the hospital to help Antigo. The Order was founded in 1636 in Montreal, Canada to run hospitals for the poor. It established its first U.S. hospital in Vermont in 1894 and then in several U.S. cities including New London WI. Three of the Sisters travelled to Antigo to take over the empty shell of a hospital. On March 2, 1933 the hospital opened, dedicated to World War I servicemen.

Recent years have witnessed major changes in hospital care but Sisters Dolores Demulling, Adele Demulling, and Jean Bricco are a living link to the history of how Antigo's hospital came into being and evolved.

Details of the meeting and presentation are contained inside this newsletter.

#### **The Museum needs bakers:**

On Sunday Oct. 18 the museum will serve refreshments at the Civic Music concert at the high school. Members attending the concert are requested to bring cookies or bars to be dropped off at the food stand prior to the concert



*The Langlade County Memorial Hospital opened in 1933, dedicated to World War I veterans.*

### Board of Directors Elections

The board of directors of the Langlade County Historical Society consists of nine members. Each year three members have their terms expire. This year the terms of Nancy Bugni, Joe Hermolin, and Diane Zuelske are ending. We would recommend that all three be reelected for another three year term. Elections will take place at the annual meeting on November 19th. There will be a call for nominations from the floor at that meeting. Board directors must be members of the Langlade County Historical Society. For further information about the board and its duties please call the museum during regular hours.

**CURATOR:**  
Mary Kay Morrissey Wolf

#### **DIRECTORS:**

Dean Blazek  
Fran Brown  
Nancy Bugni  
Glenn Bugni  
Judy Grimm  
Lisa Haefs  
Joe Hermolin  
Gary Whitman  
Diane Zuelke

**THANK YOU**

**Items Donated:**

- Terri Bartlett: Business sign
- Dean Blazek: Six glass display cases
- Winifred Cernoch: Photo of the Hill building while being built
- Bridget Hagerty: Set of china dishes originally belonging to Anna Deleglise Morrissey, then to May Morrissey-Sweetser
- Larry & Janet Krueger: Old children's school books (in memory of Alice Kretz)
- Adrien Leiterman: Logging pictures, song about Antigo
- Thomas Nelson: Early photo of Summit Lake, family genealogy
- Jeff Shannon: Old magazines & books
- David Swartwout: Old Edison records
- Erna Tomski: Bicentennial flag/blanket

**Memorial Donations:**

- In memory of: Bill Zelinski from Mary Zelinski
- In memory of: Dr. Donald Blomberg & David Schleis from Jim & Connie Hubatch

**Regional Meeting**

This past August the museum hosted a gathering of historical minds. The Wisconsin Historical Society divides the state into ten regions. We are in the Northwoods Region along with 29 other affiliated societies covering a diverse and geographically large area. Each year a one day regional meeting brings together volunteers and staff to brainstorm and hear presentations that affect all our museums. Thirty-eight people (staff and volunteers) representing 13 different Northwoods museums attended the meeting and engaged in lively discussions.

Janet Seymour, Field Services Representative for the Northern Region of the Wisconsin Historical Society, talked about strategies to engage newer (and younger) audiences. Suggestions for activities and displays that attract younger visitors were presented by Janet and meeting participants shared what worked at their museums.

Many potential programs intended

to engage younger people require working with the schools. In the past our museum has hosted tours for students and worked with the middle school and the high school on specific projects. As the school year enters high gear we will look for new ways to engage students. For these efforts to succeed we will try to enlist the help of current and retired teachers.

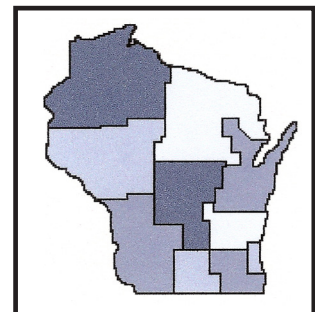
At the regional meeting Sara Conner of the Wisconsin Forestry Museum and Lumberjack Steam Train in Laona described the Family Fun Passport idea which she initiated. Fourteen museums, including ours, participated in the program and it seems to have been a success. We saw what worked well and how it may be improved the following summer. A future meeting will assess the program and strategize. Judging by the conversation at the regional meeting, the list of participating museums will likely increase. Stay tuned for next summer.

**Wisconsin Council of Local History**

The Wisconsin Council for Local History, which planned our recent regional meeting, is an affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society. In addition the coordinating regional meetings, the Council plays a major role in the annual two day Local History and Historic Preservation conference of sessions, workshops, networking events and tours.

The Council also provides mini-grants to local museums for collections management. In the past we have benefited from such grants. It helps sponsor National History

Day participation. National History Day is a yearlong program that helps students learn about historical issues, ideas, people, and events. Each year, students create projects (see page 3)



*The Wisconsin Historical Society's division of the state into 10 regions puts Langlade County in the Northwoods Region. This summer we hosted the Northwoods regional meeting.*

*(WCLH Continued)*

based on topics that fit the annual theme. The theme is broad enough to allow students to research a variety of topics, yet engaging enough to inspire student interest.

Through its online presence the Council provides expert technical advice to local museums and an opportunity for local museums to share ideas.

For the past 9 years Joe Hermolin from our museum has been the Northwoods Regional representative to the Council but his current term is expiring and there are term limits. A new Northwoods Representative will be chosen by the end of the year to represent this region.

## FHAW Annual Meeting

Forest products have always been a major part of Langlade County's economy and the region's forests are a major recreational resource to residents and visitors alike. In 1975, a group of scholars, local historians, collectors, and others interested in the history of logging and lumbering in Wisconsin formed the Forest History Association of Wisconsin (FHAW). They meet annually to present and discuss papers. Their proceedings have been published in annual reports. These proceedings bring together a wealth of scholarship not easily found elsewhere. They have proved invaluable in researching the history and impact of Wisconsin's lumber industry, and are available through the Wisconsin Historical Society's web site: [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org).

This year's FHAW's annual meeting will take place in Antigo from October 22-24th at the North-Central Technical College, Wood Technology Center of Excellence, 312 Forrest Avenue. Three presentations feature aspects of local history. Joe Hermolin of the Langlade County Historical Society will describe the history of the Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Elcho, Judy Peterson and George Rock from the White Lake Area Historical Society will describe logging operations on the Wolf River, and Sara Connor will speak on the glider school based in Antigo during World War II.

Details about the FHAW and the meeting are at the FHAW web site: [www.chipsandsawdust.com](http://www.chipsandsawdust.com)

## Elcho

Elcho's contribution to the history of logging in Langlade County extends beyond the CCC Camp and its reforestation efforts of the 1930s. Decades earlier it was the base of a large lumber operation-the Fish Lumber Company.

Charles Fish was born in 1878 near



When downtown Elcho was severely damaged by fire in 1923 lumber baron Charles Fish had it rebuilt. The Muskie Inn, the highlight of the reconstruction, was an Elcho architectural and social landmark.

Toronto Canada. A year later the family moved to Michigan where his father continued in the lumber business. In 1905, at the age of 27, Charles Fish, married and father of three, moved his family to Elcho and took a job as store clerk for the C.W. Jones Lumber Company which was based in Appleton. This was after a brief and unsuccessful detour from the lumber business to the Alaska gold rush.

While a store clerk for the Jones Lumber Company he invested in a small parcel of land, sold it to the company at a handsome profit and used that money to buy into the company.

After a fire destroyed much of operation he bought out his partners,

raised the funds to start again and became a prosperous businessman in Elcho, building homes, a luxury hotel, and starting a bank. In addition to his lumber interests in Elcho, he owned sawmills from Birnamwood to Hiles, including one in Antigo.

When Elcho's main street burned in 1923 Fish rebuilt the downtown business block. But by the late 1920s Wisconsin's lumber industry was in decline. Clear cutting, limited conservation efforts, and uncontrolled forest fires depleted what once seemed an inexhaustible resource. In 1927 Charles Fish was bankrupt. He tried potato farming in Elcho but four years later, at 53, moved his family to Washington State where he started over in the lumber business. Once more he was successful. By the time of his death in 1957 he was once again a millionaire and a revered member of the community.

# Museum Updates

Thanks to a generous donation from Dean Blazek the museum has several new display cases on the main floor and a new cabinet on the landing going up to the second floor. The new cases fit well with some of the previous ones while a few of the older ones have been removed because they were inappropriate in size or style. Curator Mary Kay Morrissey Wolf has rearranged the cases and the displays in them thus creating a much improved and consistent overall look to the main floor.



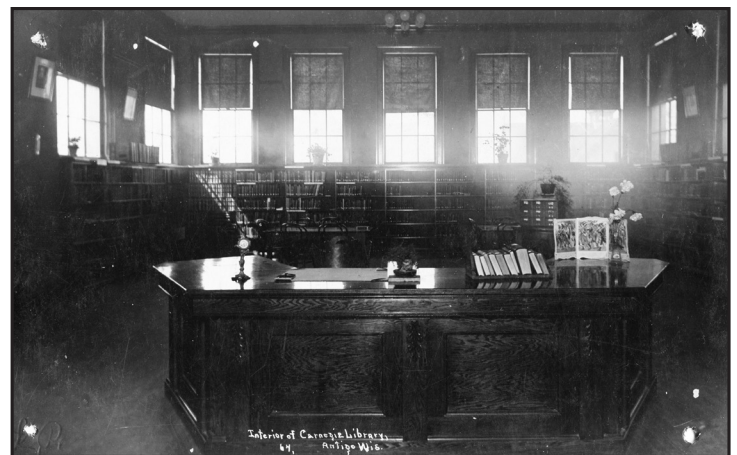
We will still have the space for Santa to greet children when the time comes.

*The new display cases, donated by Dean Blazek, have given the main floor a fresh look.*

*Shown here are the case showing Indian beadwork highlights, an arrangement of cases of different items, and a vertical case leading upstairs which displays ethnic costumes of early settlers.*



The museum is continuing with its plan to remodel the interior as part of our ongoing “Windows on the Past” campaign. The major thrust at this moment is the lighting on the first floor which is badly in need of replacing. We have consulted with a lighting expert and have developed preliminary plans for where to situate lights and what kind of lights would be most appropriate. To the extent possible, we would like to adhere to the guidelines outlined in a Historic Structures Report prepared in 2003 and replace the fluorescent lights with something more historically appropriate and suitable for viewing museum displays. Before replacing the lights we must decide on what to do about the ceiling tiles and heating/cooling duct work and try to give the museum a look which captures the sense of what the building was like when it opened as a library in 1905.



*The library interior when it first opened cannot be reconstructed and may not be suitable for museum displays but we hope to be able to capture some of its style as we renovate the lighting.*

# Schools

Fall is back to school time. In Langlade County many styles of buildings have served as schools.

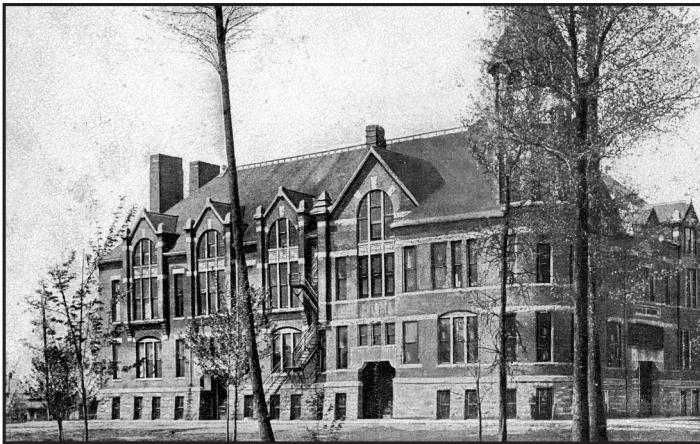


*Antigo's first school was a log cabin built in 1879 as a home by a man who then decided to move to Kempster.*

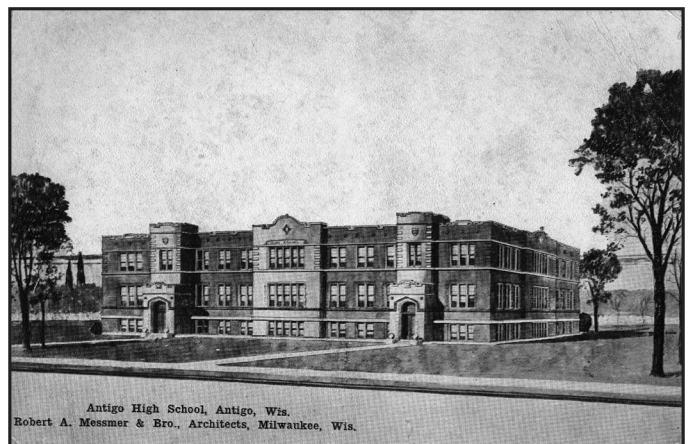


*Antigo's first high school, built in 1883, was on the grounds of the current museum.*

Antigo's First High School. This building was located on the site of the present public library.



*A new high school built in 1890 was destroyed by fire in 1916.*



*A new high school was built on the site of the one destroyed by fire. Today it is the middle school.*

Antigo High School, Antigo, Wis.  
Robert A. Messmer & Bro., Architects, Milwaukee, Wis.



*Elementary school in Polar*



*Antigo's Sixth Ward (at 7th and Virginia)*

**ADDRESS:**

404 Superior St., Antigo, WI 54409  
Phone: (715) 627-4464  
Email: lchs@dwave.net  
web site: www.langladehistory.com

**MUSEUM HOURS:**

October 1 to May 1,  
Thursday to Saturday

May 1 to October 1,  
Tuesday to Saturday

**10 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Individual, 1 year: \$25  
Individual, 3 years: \$50  
Family, 1 year: \$30  
Family, 3 years: \$70  
Junior (18 or younger), 1 year: \$3  
Business, 1 year: \$100  
Life Member: \$250

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Oct. 18:** The museum serves refreshments at the Civic Music concert

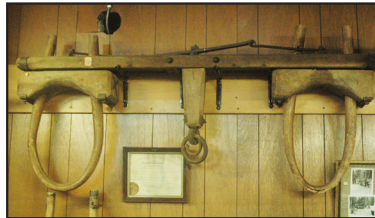
**Oct. 22-25 :** Forest History Assoc. of WI meeting in Antigo at NTC

**Nov. 19:** Annual meeting and banquet (see insert in this newsletter)

**Dec.** Santa at the museum (times and dates to be announced)

**ITEMS FROM THE MUSEUM**

An example of a yoke for a team of oxen. Oxen were used for farming and logging. Oxen were not dehorned so as to prevent the yoke from slipping over their heads.



404 Superior Street  
Antigo WI, 54409