

Summer 2015

LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



A Busy Summer

On May 30th the Antigo Garden Club held its annual plant sale on the museum grounds with part of the proceeds going to the museum and part going to support the Boys and Girls Club. The garden club also helps the museum by volunteering to maintain the landscaping of the museum grounds. This effort is coordinated by Garden Club member Toni Thomas. Her work is what makes the grounds so attractive. It is enjoyed by those who picnic in the shadow of the locomotive on a warm, sunny summer day.

On June 6 the museum held its annual rummage sale of donated items. Once again it was a success thanks to everyone who donated items and the volunteers who

worked that day. The money raised, over \$1,000, covers a significant portion of our operating budget.

Towards the end of summer, on August 21, the museum will host the annual regional meeting for the Northwoods division of the Wisconsin Council for Local History. As an affiliate of the State Historical Society we gain skills and knowledge from workshops, meetings, and consultation with the State Historical Society and at events sponsored by the Council. This one day meeting brings together people from several museums



Garden Club Sale: In spite of dreary weather the plant sale went well.

in the Northwoods to discuss common goals and issues and learn from one another. Anyone who is interested in how small, local museums work may attend these meetings. A full agenda is not yet available but more information will soon be available at the museum.

Be Sure to Get Your Passport

The museum has its Family Fun Passports at the front desk. Stop in to pick yours up. The passport costs \$1 and lists 14 participating museums in seven counties of northern and northeastern Wisconsin. After visiting seven of the museums and having your book stamped you will be eligible for a drawing for a two night week-end stay at the Potawatomi Carter Hotel and Casino.



Passports: Curator Mary Kay Wolf accepts the Family Fun Passports from Sara Conner executive Director of Camp 5 Museum/Wisconsin Forestry Museum and part of the Family Fun Passport in Northeastern Wisconsin Project.

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:

- Antigo Fire Department: Pike pole used on 1939 fire truck called "Big Bertha"
- Harold Blumer: Cedar strip boat of Antigo Boat Company
- Kay Doran: Post cards, folk art view of a log cabin, Vulcan shoe trees
- Robert Duerwacher: Photos and papers related to Charles Fish and Elcho
- Judith Grimm: Child's bowling game
- Donna Knappek: Fur collar and muff
- Adrien Leiterman: Old Christmas ornament
- Cheryl Marx: Hamburger press decorated by Margaret Studios
- Connie Miller: Wisconsin railroad map
- Lorraine Royce: Doll buggy & children's dishes (from Irene Royce)
- Carol Schafer: Antigo Junior High School band uniform

Memorial Donations:

- In memory of: Al Jesse from Norbert & Lois Bressler
- In memory of: Michael Bartz, Marlene Below, Norman Cejka, Patricia Fermanich, & Raymond Schroepfer from Jim & Connie Hubatch

Monetary Donations:

- Paul & Kathleen Becket
Bobbi Roessier
James & Kathleen Wing
Braun Woodlands Foundation Trust
Remington Foundation
Sheldon Foundation
Vanguard Charitable

Membership Renewals:

- Dave & Judy Peterson
Jake Wojciechowski

Our Ship Has Come In

Where people look to getting their boats in the water. Years ago some of those boats were manufactured in Antigo or Elcho by the Antigo Boat Company. A recent donation to the museum provides a close up look at one of these classic wooden boats.



Wavemaster Boat Co.

The Antigo Boat Works manufactured cedar strip row boats from 1945 to 1948 at the north end of Elm Street. The factory later moved to Elcho, on the shores of Otter Lake, taking over a building that was a barracks for the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp. The company changed its name to Lakeland Boat Company. In 1950 the name again changed to

The museum's recent addition was built in 1945 in Antigo. It is a 12 foot long round bottom fishing boat with oarlocks and was used with a 7 ½ horsepower Marin out-board engine. It was called a "Cub" and was part of the company's Comanche Model series. The August Hoppe family purchased the boat for \$135 at Sheldon's Sport Shop in Antigo and used it at

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Top: The Antigo boat is on display in the museum.

Bottom: CCC Barracks: The boat company moved to Elcho and used an abandoned CCC barracks as a factory.

Our Ship Continued

Enterprise Lake. But as the Hoppe children grew up they preferred a more powerful boat suitable for water skiing. The Cub was placed in storage in 1956. Recently a family friend restored it and donated it to the museum.

This cedar strip boat reflects a special time of American history. The Depression and World War II were over and prosperity and optimism were abundant. The Baby Boomer Generation was growing up and there was a pent up demand for consumer goods. Family owned wooden boats reached their peak production in the mid-1950s. Eugene Seiss, who worked at the Antigo plant, recalls that the staff of three produced about three boats a day, year round. As Lakecraft Boats, the company produced nine different models in 1957, with nation-wide distribution. By the 1960s aluminum and fiberglass boats had replaced these cedar strip classics.



Rummage Sale: Thanks to generous donations the museum's rummage sale netted over \$1,000.

More Langlade County History Online

The museum continues to make more of its archives available on the internet. Recently material related to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Camp 657 in Elcho has been the focus of attention. The CCC was one of the New Deal's most successful programs. From 1933 to 1942 young men were enrolled, trained, and worked in a variety of environmental projects throughout the country. The enrollees earned money which helped their often impoverished families and left a legacy of parks, restored lakes, rivers, and forests that we still enjoy today, 75 years after the program ceased.

Camp 657 was situated in Summit Lake and Elcho. It was in operation for the entire duration of the CCC program. Thanks to donations of photographs and memorabilia to the museum from one enrollee and family members of others we have been able to compile a rich history of the camp. This will soon become available at two sites on the internet.

One site tells the history of Wisconsin through

descriptions of diverse objects. The site is run by the University of Wisconsin-Madison History Department and is called Wisconsin 101: Our History in Objects. One of the objects to be shown is a CCC Camp 657 commemorative pillow sham made by Rose Mary Drab for her brother Ed when he went off to the camp. It serves as a lead into the story of the CCC and its impact on Wisconsin's history. That site is at www.wisconsinhistory101.org.

Another site, Recollection Wisconsin, has hosted several collections from our museum archives, including photographs of Indians, railroads, logging operations, local soldiers in World War I, and documents related to Civil War experiences of Francis Deleglise and Rueben Sweet, and the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company of World War I. To this we now add a collection of photographs and documents related to the CCC Camp 657 in Elcho. The material has been scanned and catalogued with Dave Tlusty's assistance. The material will soon be uploaded at www.recollectionwisconsin.org.

The young enrollees who worked so hard at Camp 657 and documented their daily routines and accomplishments could hardly have imagined that their stories would one day be made available worldwide at the click of a computer mouse.

Life in Ormsby

Langlade County, like much of the northwoods, is dotted with logging ghost towns and crisscrossed with abandoned railroad spur lines. One of these villages was Ormsby in the Town of Peck, and its rail spur was the shortest in Langlade County.

Even before the railroad there was logging around Ormsby and log drives occurred down the west branch of the Eau Claire River. Around 1900 Kimberly - Clark of Appleton began operating a camp around Ormsby. The area became settled as the Northern Woodland Company became established. With successive reorganizations it became Cook and Brown, then the Union Lime Company, the Tigerton Lumber Company, and Heineman.

The rail line was a 4 mile spur from the sawmill to the Chicago & Northwestern line that ran along what is now County Road B between Deerbrook and Kempster. Track was laid in 1901. When logging ceased local farmers used the line to send produce to market. The line continued operating until 1940.

It was as the Union Lime Company, producing mostly wood for its lime kilns, that Ormsby was at its peak. The company employed over 100 men. A dam over the Eau Claire created a mill pond. Around the pond were the sawmill, cook shack, offices, blacksmith shop, general store and post office, barns, a boarding house and hotel, and a school. Mill workers with families lived in houses along Sucker Creek. The area was known as "Dogtown" because most families had at least one dog. The school was built in 1906.

Social life in Ormsby centered on the boarding house where local fiddlers provided music for dances. Sometimes some people used the railroad hand cars to attend dances in nearby Kempster and Deerbrook.

Logging continued into the 1920s and gradually farming replaced timber in the region's economy. Today Ormsby and its railroad spur line are often remembered not for



the logging but for the moonshine produced there during prohibition.

There are stories of rail cars full of corn or corn meal and sugar parked on a siding and left overnight. When the train crew arrived the following day the cars had been emptied of their contents. No questions were asked.

Lower Right: A Winter Excursion - A Family gathering in front of the general store prepares for a winter excursion.

Lower Left and Upper Right: Employee Cottages - A row of Heinemann cottages for employees were part of the streets of "Dogtown".



Antigo Island on Pelican Lake

Everyone likes summer getaway to a cottage retreat and back in 1896 for many Antigo residents that getaway was Antigo Island on Pelican Lake. The list of cottage owners represents a who's who of prominent early Antigo families. In those days there were no roads to Pelican Lake and cottagers travelled by train. The line was an offshoot of the Chicago & Northwestern, going to Pratt Junction about one mile south of the Village of Pelican Lake. That site was modified in 1905 to accommodate a boat dock.

In 1896 eleven Antigo residents incorporated as the Antigo Island Club "to buy, build, make and keep a clubhouse for the social enjoyment of themselves and their families... and for that purpose they are authorized to purchase grounds, erect buildings thereon, to own and have such boats and other paraphernalia as the club shall from time to time see fit to own and have."

The club started with 12 incorporators with 24 additional owners elected within the first year.

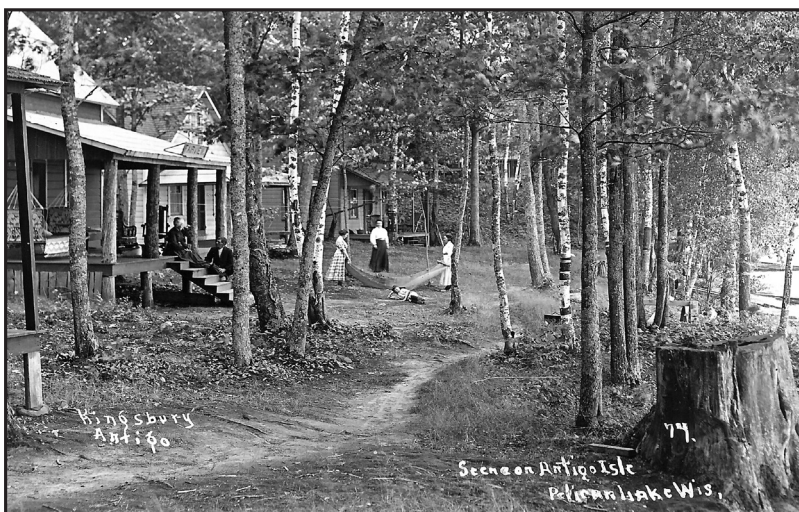
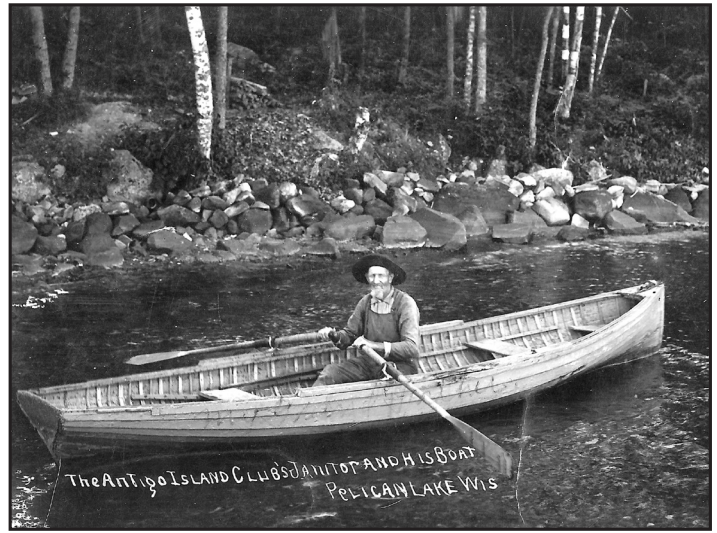
Antigo Island is 23 acres of woods with a single path along the perimeter connecting the cottages. Some of the first cottage owners included Thomas Lynch, Antigo's first mayor, F.J. Finucane, the first municipal judge of Langlade County, and Rev. Saille, who had come to Antigo to take charge of St. John's Catholic Church in 1893.

One cottager recalled his grandfather's story about fishing on Pelican Lake. "In those days they... always carried a 22 caliber pistol in the tackle box, since it

was the custom to shoot muskies in the head, rather than attempt to gaff or net them."

One of the cottagers was J.J. Kingsbury who owned a lumber mill in Antigo. His son, A.J. Kingsbury, became a well-known photographer and thanks to him there are many photographs displaying the summer lifestyle of Antigo Island.

In addition to members' cottages there were some communal buildings. These included a club house where people would gather for social events, an ice house stocked with ice from Pelican Lake for use as refrigerant and insulated with sawdust shipped from Antigo, a bath house for people to change clothes before or after swimming, and a row boat used to transport residents and their guests back and forth to the mainland. The boat was managed by a hired janitor for the grounds.



Photographs of cottages, leisure activities, and the island's janitor were taken by picture postcard photographer A. J. Kingsbury.

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**Monday August 31:**

The museum will host the Wisconsin Historical Society Northwoods regional meeting. Anyone may attend this all day meeting and meet others interested in small local museums and discuss common problems, achievements and goals.

ITEMS FROM THE MUSEUM

Instant pictures are now routine but in the late 1940s, when the Polaroid Land Camera was introduced, it was a revelation. Pictures were ejected from the camera body in one minute and fixed by rubbing a chemical stick over the surface. You no longer had to take your film to the store and wait a week for the results. This model dates from the 1960s.



404 Superior Street
Antigo WI, 54409