

Winter 2015

LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Langlade County Historical Museum Updates

In November the annual meeting attracted about 80 people to the banquet, business meeting, and presentation. The meeting was held at the Hoffman House, an Antigo landmark built in 1884. The Hoffman House is being renovated and available for use for special occasions. The meal at was catered by the Dixie Lunch/ Fifth Avenue Restaurant and Lounge. The “Dixie” is another local landmark, being the longest continuously operating, family run restaurant in Wisconsin. It was opened by Ed Ourada after he returned from service in World War II. Based on comments from attendees, the meeting was a huge success. We thank the proprietors of both the Hoffman House and the Dixie for accommodating the historical society.

Looking forward in 2015

Reduced winter hours do not mean no winter hours. The museum and the AVA art gallery are still open three days a week. But reduced hours provide an opportunity to regroup. Curator Mary Kay Wolf is constantly organizing and restoring the artifacts and preparing and changing displays. Tours, especially to school groups, may be arranged upon request. The AVA art gallery is being reorganized to host exhibits and sales of multiple area artists.

At the meeting Dean Blazek, Glenn Bugni, and Lisa Haefs were reelected to three-year terms on the board. Dean and Polly Blazek received awards from Otto Tieggs III on behalf of the National Brewery Museum in Potosi for their work. Joe Hermolin highlighted some of the museum’s achievements of the past year. These included about 2,900 visitors to the museum, presentations at assisted living centers and to service organizations, and working with other local groups. Our online presence is also attracting attention. The material we have posted on the web site www.recollectionwisconsin.org received the second most visits of any local museum in the state.

Once again we hosted Santa Claus who took requests for gifts. There

were 560 children, accompanied by 580 adults, who visited Santa. Each child received a gift and there was punch and cookies for all. Museum volunteers were Santa’s helpers, and the Antigo Daily Journal and Community Association of Retirees were important in arranging the event.

CURATOR:
Mary Kay Wolf

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

Elcho. Volunteers willing to help with scanning photographs and documents would be welcome.

Another project, still in the planning stages, is to compile oral histories of individuals involved with some aspect of local history. Anyone who knows possible interviewees and is willing to work with the museum to record those recollections is encouraged to help.

THANK YOU

Items Donated:

- Lloyd Anstutz: Forest Grange badges
Johnny Bond: Photo of Kennedy-Vilke Cheese Company
Walter Campbell Sr.: Peace Luthern booklet, old phone directories
Godfrey Gabriel: 28 volume set about the Civil War in honor of his great grandfather who served in the Grand Army of the Republic
Janice Jorgensen: Antique doll, hand coffee grinder
Michael Malish: 1931 school report card, 1948 warranty deed
Jane Martinsen: "Antigo Plate", cookbook, poems about Antigo & Norwood,
Ann Tatro: Police jacket of Robert Baraniak; police chief 1969-1980
John Zwicky: bicycle license plates from 1973

Memorial Donations:

In memory of: Polly Duchac, Carole Hackbarth, Janice McNinch, from Jim & Connie Hubatch

In memory of Donald Lopas and Richard Winter from Jim & Connie Hubatch

In memory of Jack Fermanich from Dean & Polly Blazek

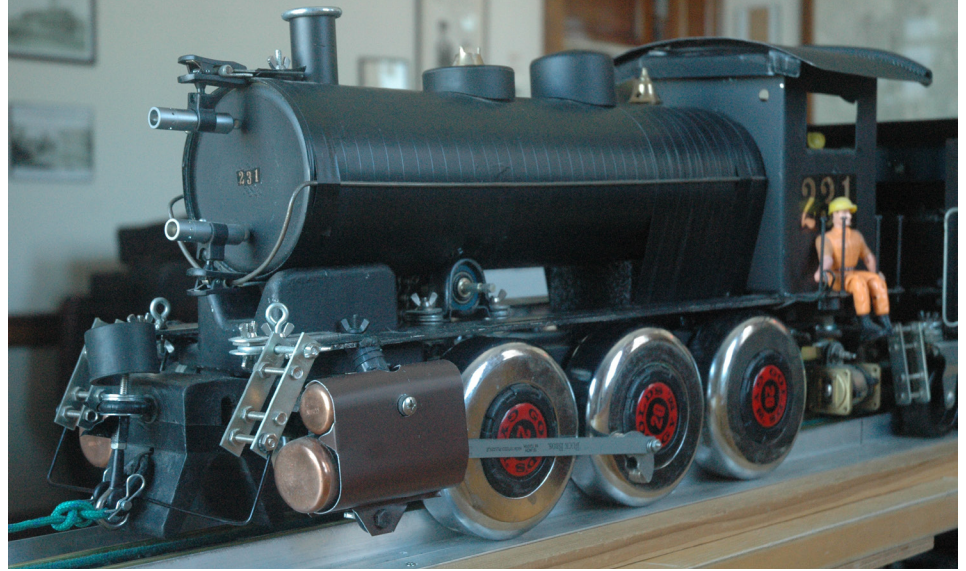
Monetary Donations:

Jim Aulik
Bill & Beth Kelly
Langlade County Genealogical Society
Suick Foundation
Janelle & Buzz Markgraf in honor of retiring physician Dr. J. Turnbull

Other:

We hosted a special tour for Tiger Scouts troop 643

LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Above: Krzysiak's model train is constructed of various materials. This model locomotive and tender is 6 feet in length and is an excellent example of folk art and how the railroad captures people's imaginations.

An Addition to the Railroad Room

The railroad room at the museum has been closed to the public for several weeks but is now open again. The room contains items that recall the days when Antigo was a major railroad hub. A recent donation, while not a direct reminder of the railroad in Antigo, is a truly remarkable piece of folk art which shows how trains capture the imagination of many people.

Ronald Krzysiak created a model of a locomotive and tender from a variety of found objects including dumbbells from a weight set (used for wheels), various hardware such as nuts, bolts and brackets, all accompanied by model action figures. The locomotive and tender are 6 feet long and run on a 14 foot track.

Krzysiak loved railroads since his childhood when his family relocated from Antigo to a home in Milwaukee within view of the rail yards. When the family returned to

Antigo, he would often hang out at the Antigo railyards as a child of 9. After time in the service, he lived and worked in Green Bay with the Bell Telephone Company; but on his retirement came back to Antigo and began work on this "self-taught art" gem.

According to Glenn Bugni, the locomotive is a Buddy L Gauge, the size and type that young children would sit on and get pushed around in the driveway.

When Ronald Krzysiak passed away recently, his brother and sister Jim Krzysiak and Kathy Rolling donated the model to the museum. Glenn Bugni and Cliff Hoffmeister reassembled it and constructed a display table for display.

The model is yet another example of how trains capture the imagination of people of all ages.

A Toast to the 107th TMB

The soldiers that formed the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company returned to Antigo after serving in World War I in a triumphant welcome in May, 1919. Most of them had grown up in Langlade County and trained and fought together as a unit. That kind of camaraderie does not easily dissolve. Within a year they formed 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company Association in order to keep in touch with each other.

Once again John Hanousek showed his support by providing the men with a club house meeting room. Previously he had purchased the Opera House and converted it into an armory; he had visited the soldiers and hosted a bar-b-que during training at Camp Douglas. He arranged for a large welcome home feast when the 107th returned to Antigo, financing a dinner for the soldiers, family, and friends that fed

about 800 people. It was for good reason that he was named "The Father of the 107th."

Reunions were held and newsletters published until 1978 when the Association disbanded due to dwindling membership. Their records are now in the museum archives.

One item that was donated to the museum along with the Association records was an empty bottle of Kentucky Bourbon, encased in a wooden enclosure. Harry Zuehlke, one of the

veterans and the Commander of the Veterans' Association, had purchased the bourbon in 1944, donated it to the Association, and specified that the last surviving soldier would receive the bottle. The "Last Man's Bottle" was always on prominent display at the speakers' table during 107th TMB reunions. There



Below: Last Bottle: The last bottle, in its wood framed case, and gavel used at Association meetings are now in the museum. The bottle was donated to the museum in 1978 when the association disbanded. The bottle was empty.



Above: With six active members, the Association voted to disband in 1978.

are stories that the bottle would make occasional appearances at local taverns throughout the county and would sit on the bar when the veterans would get together. The bottle was for display only and not to be opened. But the pact was broken, and Zuehlke's directive ignored when only a handful of survivors were left. Some of the veterans (perhaps between three and five) decided to get together and drink a toast while they still had some companions to share their memories with. The other soldiers who had made up the 107TMB likely would have approved.

The museum would like to hear from anyone who has more information on the "Last Man Bottle" and the veterans who gathered for the toast.

Winter in Langlade County

While many local retirees move south for the winter, those who stay enjoy many aspects of winter, even as work patterns change.

Changes in daily life used to be more dramatic. When there was less to do on the farm farmers went off to lumber camps. Horse drawn sleds replaced wagons and automobiles as standard modes of transportation.

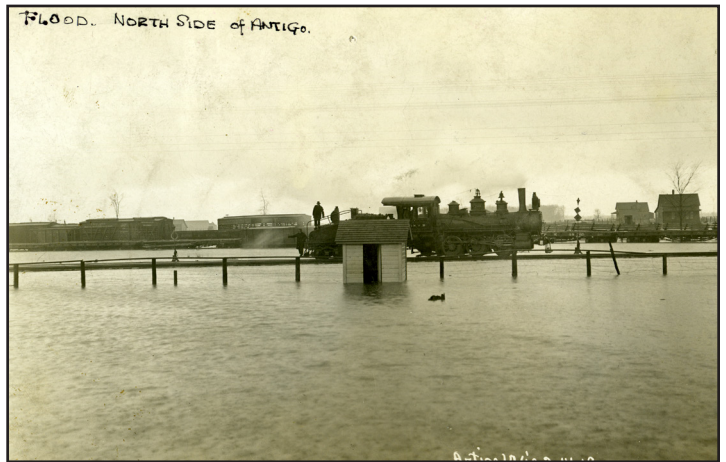
Kellogg's Pond (now Antigo Lake) was a popular destination for ice skaters. There was a warming hut on the shore where Antigo's youth would aggregate and socialize, and take a few spins around the

frozen lake. Further north, at Kraftwood Gardens near Elcho, the Kraft family would entertain family and friends on a ski outing.

Winter activities also include mechanized activities such as riding snowmobiles. In the 1970s Antigo hosted snowmobile races.



Some typical winter activities in the past. Snow mobile race (top right): Downtown Antigo hosted snow mobile races in the 1970s. Logging camp (second from top right): Many farmers logged in winter months One Horse Open Sleigh (third from top right): Sleighs were the mode of transportation. Skating (bottom right): Kellogg's Pond was important to the sawmills and factories that rimmed the lake, and it was also a skating destination. Kraft Family (above): The Kraft family and guests at Kraftwood enjoyed skiing north of Elcho.



Antigo as a Railroad Town

From its very beginnings, Antigo was a railroad town. In the 1880s the Milwaukee Lake Shore and Western Railroad connected Antigo to markets in southern Wisconsin. In 1905 the Chicago & Northwestern made Antigo headquarters of its Ashland division

and Antigo became a major railroad hub. During the heyday of steam locomotives, the railroad was the major employee in Antigo. Here are some views from the railroads of the past.

Above (from top left clockwise): Remodeled Depot: The depot was almost razed, along with other railroad buildings, but was saved and remodeled in the 1990s. Fish Car: Special cars carried fish from hatcheries in Madison to stock lakes in the northwoods. They were unloaded in Antigo and completed the journey by truck. New Depot: The new depot was a center of activity. Flooded Trestle: Trains brought logs to sawmills and factories in Antigo. Sometimes spring floods were a problem. Old Depot: When a new depot was built in 1905 the original 1883 depot was moved up the track and converted into a carpentry shop. July 4 Parade: Many Antigo parades began at the depot.

ADDRESS:

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 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

ITEMS FROM THE MUSEUM

This egg cup with an image of the Antigo Opera House is one item in a china collection featuring Antigo's landmarks that are currently on display in the museum lobby.



404 Superior Street
 Antigo WI, 54409