

Fall 2016

LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Annual Meeting

The Langlade County Historical Society is pleased to celebrate, with the White Lake Historical Society, its year-long commemoration of the centennial of the founding of the Village of White Lake. Our annual meeting will feature Judy Peterson from the White Lake Historical Society who will recount the founding of White Lake and its prominence in the lumber industry and the Yawkey Bissel Lumber Company.

The meeting will be held on Star Lanes at 400 Prosser Ave. in Antigo. Preceding the presentation there will be a cocktail hour, dinner, and a brief business meeting. The business meeting will include a Society progress report and an update on building remodeling plans. The meeting will also include elections of three officers to the nine member board. Those who wish may come to the business meeting and presentation without attending the dinner.

Eastern Langlade County has a history that predates the much of the development of other parts of the county, including Antigo. During the Civil War plans were developed to build the Military Trail from Green Bay to the Michigan Upper Peninsula, following old Indian trails. Later the Military Trail became the route used by loggers to settle in the area. In late 19th century, with log drives along the Wolf River, eastern Langlade County was where the action was. Squire Taylor of Lily is credited as “the father of Langlade County” for his work in promoting the area to would-be settlers.

White Lake is a relative newcomer to the Wolf River Valley area when



White Lake depot is shown in a photo by A.J. Kingsbury in the 1920s. It later became the museum for the White Lake Historical Society.

compared to Lily and Langlade but it has become a major force in the development of eastern Langlade County. This year it is celebrating its centennial and we are pleased that Judy Peterson of the White Lake Historical Society has agreed to describe its history at our annual meeting.

Details for the meeting are in an insert in this newsletter.

Board Elections

The Langlade County Historical Society is governed by a board of nine directors. Each year the terms of three directors expire. This year members Fran Brown, Judy Grimm, and Gary Whitman will be up for reelection at our annual meeting. Gary Whitman was appointed to complete the term of a resigning member. Gary Whitman and Fran Brown have agreed to serve another term and the board recommends their reelection. Judy Grimm had decided to retire from the board and we are recruiting a new board member to fit a needed niche. Nominees from the floor will also be accepted at the meeting.

CURATOR:
Mary Kay Morrissey Wolf

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

THANK YOU

Items Donated:

- Phil Beck:** Photos, sewing needles for burlap, 100lb potato bags
- Robert Benishek:** Letters, medals, certificate from Chinese government owned by Loyal White
- Richard Brock:** 1957 Antigo High School yearbook, Ceramic teapot made by Clayton Bailey, Indian beadwork artifacts
- Bev Fleischman:** Bluebell School bell, in memory of Luella Fleischman
- Rose Hoffman:** Two antique Kestner dolls
- William Plonty:** Antigo souvenirs belonged to Mary Jo Teske
- Guy Porth:** Promotional item (screwdriver) from a Lily retail store
- Valerie Raisch:** Old photos, school diploma
- Dick Strasser & Hank Sperl:** Album of articles related to the C&NW railroad in Antigo
- Carleen Strobel:** Old bottles
- Tom Taylor:** Powder horn once used by Squire Taylor the "Founder of Langlade County"
- Lucienne Stege:** Wedding dress and veil
- John Zimmerman:** Vase
- Monetary Donations:**
- Joe & Peg Jopek** in honor of Don & Mary Mollet's 50th wedding anniversary
- Susan Johnson & Ron Schutte:**
In memory of Tom Strasser
- New Member:**
Patricia Ratzlaff

Museum Remodeling

The Carnegie Library, which now houses the museum, is a distinctive feature of Antigo's architectural landscape. Opening as a library in 1905, it became the Langlade County Historical Society's museum in 1997 when Antigo got a new library building.

Over the following two decades the building has undergone a series of transformations to accommodate displays and house archives. In addition the grounds have seen the restoration of the Deeglise cabin, Antigo's first home, and the addition and restoration of a steam locomotive. Major structural upgrades to the museum's roof, storm windows, and the heating/air conditioning systems have occurred. In 2003, thanks to a grant from the Jeffris Foundation, a detailed Historic Structures Report was carried out by architectural historian Art Chadek.

Recently, the board began planning much needed improvements to the lighting, trying to restore some of the historic character of the building while making it appropriate for museum displays. That plan expanded to include other aspects of the interior while heeding the recommendations of the Historic Structures Report. It soon became apparent that the technical aspects of the project were beyond the expertise of museum board members and other volunteers. Therefore we have decided to seek the advice of experts. Building and Grounds Committee head Gary Whitman looked into a number of options and the board has decided to hire the firm of Funktion Design Studio to advise us and oversee the project.

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The Carnegie Library under construction during 1903-1905. It was designed by Madison architect Alan Conover, built by the Antigo based construction firm of Dallmen and Peterson, and funded by Andrew Carnegie.

Museum Remodeling continued

Funktion Design Studio is based in Wausau and has extensive experience having worked on restoration of several historic structures in northcentral Wisconsin. These include the Dinesen-Motzfeldt-Hettinger log house in Mole Lake, The Little White Schoolhouse in Ripon (birthplace of the Republican Party), 112/114 Broadway business building in Green Bay, as well as other buildings in Wausau, Merrill, Ripon, Neenah, and Oshkosh.

Phase one of the project involves working with the board to examine the building, review building codes, develop a plan and a budget. Once plans are finalized Funktion Design will work with the board to hire contractors, coordinate and supervise the work, and help with grant applications and fundraising.

Rick Schroeder, AIA, of Funktion Design will serve as Project coordinator and work closely with museum board member Gary Whitman. Rick Schroeder and associate AIA Melody Hamlin of Funktion Design will develop a plan in the next few months to review options for the remodeling that will improve the museum's interior while maintaining the historic character of the building. Also included in this project will be much needed repairs to the exterior of the building, from the foundation to the roof and flashing. Wherever possible we will use local firms. Long term planning involves a review of options to provide handicapped accessibility.

Proceeding slowly and carefully in the remodeling should result in a well-coordinated design that will be more attractive, efficient, and cost effective in the long run. Remodeling will not begin this upcoming winter as originally hoped but will likely wait till the following winter. Summers, our busiest time, will be construction free.

Doll Homecoming

The museum has an antique doll area which generally receives a lot of attention, particularly children. Recently the are received two new residents- exceptional dolls with an interesting background story. The dolls, twin sisters you might say, were made by J.D. Kestner of Waltershausen, Thuringia, Germany (1889-ca.1920). Both are 30" tall, with bisque shoulder heads, jointed kid bodies, bisque arms and feet, with brown hair wigs and brown sleep eyes. The dolls originally belonged to sisters living in Antigo, Ester Fehring (born 1911) and Hilda Fehring (born 1913).

For 18 years Ester and Hilda's mother, Margaret (Kramer) Fehring played the piano at the Palace Movie Theater for the "silent" movies. While they were called silent movies, they were far from silent. Live musical accompaniment was typical and the pianist was kept busy with a pile of scores that were categorized for different scenes (chases, romantic, suspenseful, grandiose, comic, etc.). In spite of a hectic schedule, with constantly changing film programs to preview and select music for, Margaret managed to plan and sew new outfits for the dolls during screen breaks. Margaret Fehring must have had musical talents beyond what was required for silent movies for she also played in popular dance orchestras in the region and with a young Liberace.

The young girls, Ester and Hilda, close in age and almost like twins, got a new set of hand-made clothes for their dolls as Christmas presents each year. They named the dolls after themselves and so Ester and Hilda (the dolls) became as inseparable as their owners. The sisters ended up in Beloit. Both married and settled in Beloit and remained close. After Ester's untimely death in 1968 Hilda was at a loss and

befriended a 12 year old girl who lived nearby, Rose Marie. Hilda showed Rose Marie the two dolls which had been carefully tucked away in a cedar chest.

Years later Rose Marie Hoffman and her husband, both retired from the military and having lived in many places world-wide, were back in Wisconsin. Hilda requested a visit and so a trip to Beloit was planned. Hilda was getting on in years and it was important to her that the dolls go to a good home and that they stay together, as the sisters had been all their lives. Rose Marie gladly accepted the responsibility. Hilda passed away in 1992. Now Rose Marie, living in California, needs to find a good home for the dolls Ester and Hilda – a place where they will be kept side by side and where other people of all ages can enjoy viewing them and be reminded of a time when children's toys were simpler and a new outfit for your doll was a treasured Christmas gift.

The dolls recently arrived at the museum. Today they stand in a display case with other antique dolls just a few blocks from the old Palace Theater where their outfits were sewn by the pianist at the silent movies.



Hilda and Ester, the two larger dolls in twin outfits at the back, recently made their way back home to Antigo after spending many years in Beloit and around the U.S., most recently in California.

National History Day

The school year is now underway and history is one subject taught. History requires knowledge of events but also includes interpretations of how events influenced one another and impacted people in different ways. History is always open to reinterpretation as our understanding of events evolves and we consider the impact of events on different people or the environment.

This is clear in the theme of this year's topic for National History Day, an annual competition for middle and high school students. Begun in 1974, today over half a million students enter through their schools in five categories – documentary, exhibit, essay, performance, or preparing a web site. They proceed through regional competitions with winners going on to state, then national competitions.

This year's theme is: Taking a Stand in History. When people take a

stand, they defend ideas or actions they believe in. They might use force, like the American patriots did against the British or they might use peaceful actions, like Martin Luther King did for civil rights. A stand might involve workers organizing into unions and people promoting equality, peace and justice. While topics may be world – wide, entrants should focus on local events and relate them to a broader context. Topics may deal with military, social, agricultural, or cultural developments.

Middle and high school students interested in a project should consult with their teachers and seek help at the museum for materials and help. The Wisconsin Historical Society has published guidelines which the museum in Antigo has for consultation.



National History Day exhibits at the Wisconsin northern regional finals.

Langlade County's Namesake

Charles Michel de Langlade was born in 1729, in Michilimackinac MI (now Mackinaw City), the son of a French fur trapper and an Indian woman whose brother was an Ottawa chief. He played a prominent role in the fur trade and was a major influence in the Indian dealings with the French and British during their rivalries over the fur trade. He traveled extensively in the Great Lakes region and also to Montreal, headquarters of the French fur trading empire.

While the British and French fought for control of territory and the fur

trading trade so did their various Indian allies. Both the French and British had their Indian allies. The French were much better integrated into the Indian community than the British and Langlade moved comfortably in both cultures. During the French-Indian War Langlade achieved prominence in fighting against the British in the Ohio valley. He was later present at Quebec City in 1759, fighting with the French when the British won the battle that assured their dominance in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region. He returned to Michilimackinac, adjusted to life under

British rule, and fought with them in some Indian uprisings as far afield as Indiana and Fort Duquesne (Pittsburg). During the Revolutionary War he fought with the British and their Indian allies against the rebel colonists. He felt Indians would fare better under British than American rule. Once America received its independence he returned to his home in present day Green Bay where he had long ago established a trading post. He died in 1801 and is considered to be "the father of Wisconsin". There is no evidence that he ever travelled to the area of the county that bears his name.



Life on the Wolf River

Left column: The Wolf is central to the Menominee Indians

Right column: Log drives along the Wolf were a major part of the economy in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

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

Thursday Nov. 17:

Annual meeting and presentation by Judy Peterson on the centennial of the founding of the Village of White Lake. (Details inside)

ITEMS FROM THE MUSEUM

Powder horn of Squire Taylor: Beginning in the 1870s Squire Taylor had major logging interests around Lily and Langlade. He convinced many settlers to locate to the area and was instrumental in lobbying the state to create New (later Langlade) County. He is known as “the Father of Langlade County.”



404 Superior Street
 Antigo WI, 54409