

LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Annual Meeting

The Langlade County Historical Society generally holds its annual meeting in November. For the past two years we have either not held an in-person meeting or made it very low key due to pandemic concerns. This year we are proceeding cautiously, with a regular social gathering and speaker, in addition to conducting a business meeting.

As is our tradition, the meeting will be held a week before Thanksgiving, in the early evening of Thursday Nov. 17th. We have arranged to use the Gallery Hall at St. John's Church at 415 Sixth Avenue.

The evening will begin by gathering at St. John's at 5:00 pm. At 5:30 we will have a light meal of chili and sandwiches catered by the Dixie Lunch/Fifth Avenue. A brief business meeting including a summary of the year's highlights and election of three directors will

take place from 6:00 to 6:15 while continuing our light meal.

Our featured speaker this year is Matt Carter. Mr. Carter is executive director of the Dakota County Historical Society in South St. Paul Minnesota. He grew up in, and currently resides in, Menominee Wisconsin. Mr. Carter has researched the story of World War II German POWs who were housed in Wisconsin. This should be of local interest since Antigo also housed a POW camp. German captive soldiers worked on local farms and the pea canning factory, and interacted with local residents.

There will be a cost of \$8 to attend the event with a cash bar of wine and beer. Details and registration are in a separate insert in this newsletter. Please respond by the date specified in the insert so that we may plan appropriately for food.

Election of Directors

The Langlade County Historical Society Board consists of nine members, three of which have terms end each year. This year the terms of Fran Brown, Carol Gottard, and Chris Haedike are expiring. All three have agreed to serve another term and the current board recommends they be reelected. Nominations from the floor at the annual meeting will be entertained.

POWs in Wisconsin

After the United States entered World War II in Europe, there was a steady stream of ships crossing the Atlantic, taking soldiers and supplies to Europe. They did not return empty. The Allies had captured many German POWs and, with limited space to house them, brought them back to the U.S. POW camps were spread throughout the country, several in Wisconsin. Antigo was home to about 150 German POWs. When they were eventually repatriated to their homeland they left behind harvested fields and canned crops that most likely would have gone to waste due to a lack of manpower, a few souvenirs, and many pleasant memories of friendships. The story of these young men in Wisconsin, and how local people reacted to having them in their midst is the subject of this year's guest speaker at our annual meeting.

CURATOR:
Mary Kay Wolf

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:
President: Joe Hermolin
Vice-president: Lisa Haefs
Treasurer: Patricia Kennedy
Secretary: Mary Kay Wolf

OTHER DIRECTORS:
Dean Blazek
Fran Brown
Nancy Bugni
Glenn Bugni
Carol Feller Gottard
Chris Haedike
Diane Zuelzke

It's Not Over Till It's Over

Items Donated:

Susan Johnson: Two shawls owned by Alice Daskam Garland, pictures, 1927 St. John's School diploma, misc. items

New Members:

Jonathan Schultz

A Special Thanks:

To all those bakers and cooks who helped prepare pies, bars, cookies, pasta and sauce for our two events this summer: Music in the Park and the initial concert of the Civic Music series. These fundraising events provide vital financing for the museum's operations.

Major remodeling of the museum has been a time consuming, money consuming, and energy consuming project since the spring of 2020. Although we reopened about 1.5 years ago, we are not done yet. The pillars at the main entry and the south portico were badly in need of repairs, having been exposed to the Wisconsin elements for over 115 years. It was a major problem but JAS Construction, which did the addition and first floor interior remodeling, was able to develop and implement a repair plan over the summer. The rear entry to the building, while not used by visitors, is essential and that was also replaced.

Since it was impossible to know at first how disruptive the repairs would be to the grounds, we didn't do any landscaping in front of the main façade. That will wait till next spring. However, we did landscape the north side of the building, at the addition and entry and in front of the locomotive and caboose. Not only is that area now more attractive, it is no longer as treacherous to walk from the building to the locomotive and caboose.

In the original remodeling plans we hoped to replace the unfortunate and inadequate lighting on the first floor. This was accomplished and Antigo Visual Arts redid the lighting in their gallery on the second floor as well. However, the remainder of the second floor is still in need of some work. We have budgeted carefully and are able to do a little more interior remodeling at this time. So, next on the list will be replacing the fluorescent lights in some of the second-floor display area.

We have budgeted for landscaping in front of the main façade but winter is not gardening weather in Wisconsin. Stay tuned for more work next spring.



Top: South portico pillars being supported and aligned while repairs to the base are completed.

Bottom: Fluorescent lighting on part of the second floor will be replaced by track lighting



School Tours Are Back (They Never Left)

With the start of the school year comes a revival of student guided tours at the museum. In fact, the program did not really take a summer vacation. The Boys and Girls Club and the Peace Lutheran pre-school group each arranged for tours of the museum, cabin, and locomotive.

Originally these tours were planned for elementary school groups in grades 4 and 5, where Wisconsin history is taught. But the material has been modified as requests for school groups of other ages are received. Tours are now varied so as to appeal to preschoolers up to high schoolers.



In July the Boys and Girls Club visited the museum for a guided tour.

The tours focus on highlights of the history of this region from the retreat of the glaciers 15,000 years ago, through First Nations peoples, to the arrival of white settlers, the logging industry, the railroads, and the importance of the Deleglise family in the establishment of Antigo. To date, five school groups have scheduled tours for the fall semester. They include groups from Langlade County and from Eagle River and Merrill.

Cemetery Tour Redux

This past fall, once again, the historical society and Antigo Community Theater collaborated on a Cemetery Tour- the second in what is hoped to become an annual event. This year we had the additional help from the 4H Tree Toppers.

Over 120 people, of all ages, toured parts of Queen of Peace and City Cemetery where they were informed and entertained by actors who played the roles of individuals who made Langlade County what it is today. People represented included important community leaders such as Antigo’s first mayor, the first chief of staff of Antigo’s Memorial Hospital, Antigo’s “founding mother”, a nationally known and (unusual) female auto dealer, as well as ordinary people such as a “Kentuck”, a railroad worker, a CCC enrollee, and a woman who, in the 1920s, played piano in speakeasies on Friday night, accompanied silent films at the Palace on Saturday, and played the organ in church on Sundays.

Attendance was 50% larger than last year’s initial tour and we, at the museum, have received favorable feedback and inquiries about more information on the individuals portrayed. The museum, Antigo Community Theater, and 4H are all looking forward to next year’s event, with different highlights and probably a different cemetery within the county.



Top
The 4H Tree Toppers helped at the Cemetery Tour by serving refreshments and acting as guides

Bottom
4H member Laura Rydberg leads a group on the tour.

Logging Camp Life in the Pineries

In the late 19th and early 20th century, in the days of the pineries, as fall transitioned to winter, many farm hands would shift towards a life in a logging camp. Camps were set up in the fall, pine were harvested throughout the winter, and river drives in spring brought them to market.

A timber cruiser scouted a surveyed area for days and estimated the volume of timber. Then camp was set up on the highest ground, as close to the center of the tract as possible. A camp consisted of bunkhouses, cook shanty, blacksmith shop, feed houses, horse and oxen shelters. Roads were located, supplies, sleds, food for animals, tools, and supplies for the lumberjacks were hauled in.

Most lumberjacks earned \$18 to \$20 dollars a month. Teamsters would earn \$26 to \$30 a month. More valuable still were the sawyers who were responsible for maintaining the equipment. They earned from \$30 to \$40 per month. The cook would earn \$1 per day.

Once camp was built the logging could begin. The cook and assistant awoke at about 3:00 a.m. to prepare breakfast. The teamsters would get the oxen or horses ready before breakfast. After breakfast the crew got their tools and headed for the woods. Ada Moran, a "cookie" in a camp in the early 1900s, described logging camp life in an interview in the Antigo Daily Journal years later. "While the choppers and sawyers are getting logs ready, the swamper are clearing a path to the place where the ice road will be later on.

The logs are hauled on travois to this road and piled up on what are called skidways. This is dangerous work as the piles are very high and a man must go up to the top to place each log safely so there will be no tumbling of the logs before needed. . . . Four-horse teams and three-horse teams do the hauling, while the men who have been cutting now take care of the loading. Each man has two sets on sleighs. One he takes out in the morning and leaves at the skidway while he hitches to the loaded sleigh and goes to the landing. Road monkeys insured that roads were iced for easy hauling or strewn with hay on downhill portions where the sleigh had a tendency to go too fast." She reported: "There is much contention among the men of who can take the biggest load to the landing. The loaders help all they can, much depends on these men as a loose chain or a log out of plumb might cause a driver's death."

At the landing is the scaler, who is usually the foreman, and a checker. The scaler took his rule and estimated the number of feet of lumber in each log. He marked the log with the owner's private mark. This was kept in the tally book with the name of the man who delivered the load."

In addition to describing a typical day's work, Ada Moran portrayed the spartan life in camp. "Life in the bunkhouse was primitive. Beds were primarily pine and cedar boughs with denim covered quilts: - big, ugly, lumpy things".

She told what a typical day's dining consisted of when she worked as head cook with two assistants. A good cook was a valuable asset in any camp. "For breakfast we had fresh pork, beefsteak or sausage, griddle cakes, fried spuds, doughnuts and coffee. For dinner we had beef stew or pot roast, potatoes, onions or rutabagas, good brown gravy, bread and butter, pie or pudding and coffee. For supper there was provided fried potatoes, cold meat or fish, batter cake, prunes, coffee or tea, mince apple or prune pie. . . . In the winter of 1880, our beef was provided by the old oxen who had become unfit for work." On occasion the hide from those oxen was used to make footwear. During river drives in the spring the cook would accompany the crew downstream, sometimes preparing lunch on a raft called a "wanigan" and supper in camp in what must have been a moveable feast with interesting logistics.

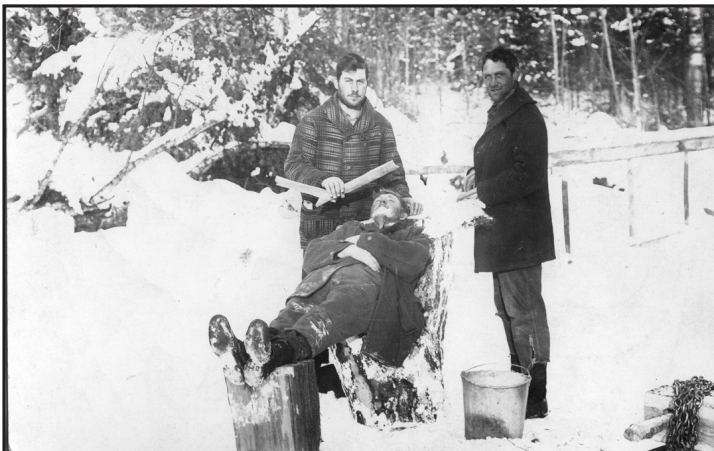
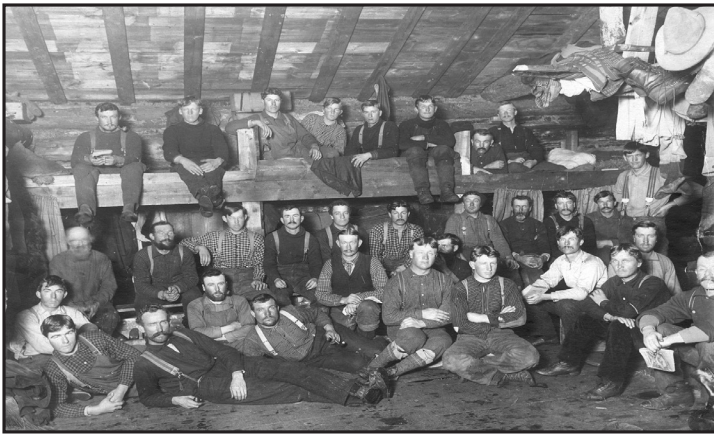
A day's work in camp did not end after supper. After supper, sawyers would sharpen their saws, road monkeys repaired the paths for skidding, and everyone dried their clothes. Then they might gather in the bunkhouse for a period of playing music, crafting objects, or exchanging stories- tales of Paul Bunyan were a favorite. There are accounts of some men being hired, not because they were such strong and hard workers, but because they were skilled musicians or story tellers who could lift the spirits on the crew. All in a day's work in the woods in winter.

**In winter many farm hands worked in lumber camps.
It was hard and dangerous work.**

Top row: *Right: oxen, originally used to haul logs, were later replaced by horses.
Left: An ice wagon (an early Zamboni) iced the roads to make skidding easier.*

Middle row: *Right: Bunkhouse sleeping accommodations
Left: A typical mess hall where a good cook was important*

Bottom row: *Left: Some hi-jinks during down time
Right: A sawyer sharpening his equipment*



ADDRESS:

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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

Thurs. Nov. 17th 5:00 to 7:30:

Annual meeting and guest speaker. (See details in insert inside)

December:

Dates and times to be announced: Santa Claus is coming to town and the museum.

ITEM FROM THE MUSEUM:

Logs cut by lumberjacks and hauled to the river landing were stamped on the end so that the loggers could be credited properly when logs reached the sawmill.



404 Superior Street
Antigo WI, 54409