

LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



Museum Tours

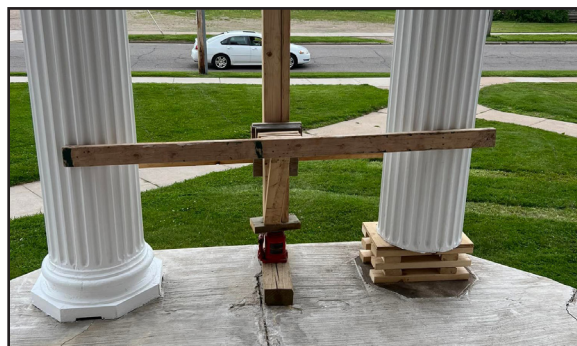
Spring is always a time of renewal and we at the LCHS Museum are happy to return to our educational school programs providing local history with interactive components to children of all grades.

Structured tours, geared to elementary school students began three years ago, organized by Patricia Kennedy. That program has been a success with the schools since its inception in 2019. After a hiatus due to the pandemic and museum remodeling it has grown and been adapted to accommodate older students and adult groups.

In 2022 we welcomed Pre-school through High School students, home schoolers and

Senior Citizen groups to partake in the treasures of our beautiful Museum. We look forward to hosting more groups to share in the interesting history of Langlade County from the Glaciers of 100,000 years ago, to the first inhabitants migrating here over 9000 years ago and the current local tribes, the European settlers, the logging, the railroad and more, reaching into the present day.

Please contact Mary Kay Wolf or Patricia Kennedy at the Museum at 715-627-4464 or lchs@dwave.net for additional information or to schedule a free tour available April through October.



Museum Tours: One of the first school tours organized by Pat Kennedy.

Work Resumes: Work on the south portico, as well as the original main entry and landscaping, will resume once weather permits.

Work Resumes

With the arrival of spring comes thought of picnics, Music in the Park, baseball – and construction. Major remodeling of the museum has been complete for almost two years but repairs to parts of the original structure and landscaping were still required. Some of these problems were addressed last summer but, as happens so

often, winter came before the work was done. JAS Construction will be onsite again soon to complete the restoration of the south portico and main entry to the original, National Register recognized, Carnegie Library which was completed in 1905. Landscaping of the grounds will also be completed although details are unavailable at this time.

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

Items Donated:

Randy Rustick: Fish hatchery sign, fuel glass container

Carolyn Westen: Women's and baby's clothing

Monetary Donations

In memory of Ludene Kommers from Dean & Polly Blazek

New Members:

Patricia Hammel

Member Renewals:

Elvera Frisch
Jeff Holm
Patricia Kennedy
Cheryl & Jeff Marx
Sandy Robrecht
Walter Rugland
Nick & Jeanette Salm,
Dumaine & Judy Turney

Life-Time Members:

Hope Reynolds Flemming & Gary Flemming

Wisconsin Historical Society Affiliates Program

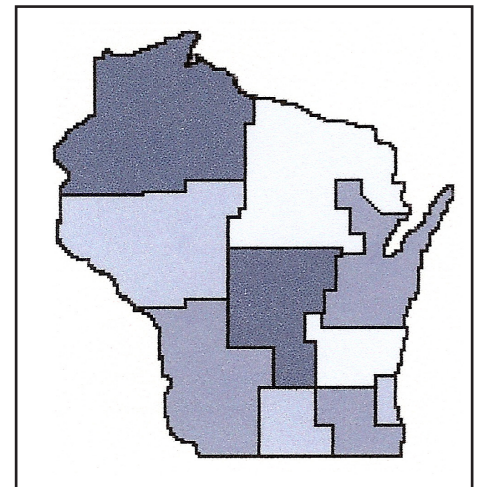
Even before Wisconsin became a state, in 1848, the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) was established to preserve its history. In 1898, at the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the WHS, Reuben Thwaites, its director, proposed that the WHS institute a new program to assist "auxiliaries" or local historical societies in their mission to preserve their local history. Two auxiliaries were named, Green Bay and Ripon. Wisconsin was the first of any state's historical societies to establish such a program to help local communities preserve their own histories.

The nature of the relationship between WHS and its "auxiliaries" has evolved over the years and continues to evolve, especially with plans for the new Wisconsin History Center, scheduled to open in 2026. "Auxiliaries" are now known as "affiliates" and their numbers have increased from two to about 440. Affiliates are primarily regional historical societies but also include societies devoted to a specific topic rather than a region: such as forestry, labor history, ethnic groups, etc.

In 1961 the WHS established the Wisconsin Council for Local History (WCLH) as the official organization of the affiliate program. The WCLH, through its board, works to coordinate programs among the affiliates, provide funding through mini-grants, and acts as a liaison between the affiliates and the WHS. The WCLH has divided the state into 10 regions, each with its own representative on the 15 member board of directors. Langlade County Historical Society, along with those in White Lake, Elcho, and Mattoon, in this area, are all part of the Northwoods Region.

WCLH helps organize an annual meeting each October with workshops, seminars, and opportunities to network with other local historical societies. The 2023 meeting will be held in LaCrosse and celebrations are being planned to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the affiliate program.

While some local museums are well funded and have professional staffs, most, particularly those in northern and rural areas, are all volunteer organizations who have no special training in museum management. Our museum is an exception in that we have the funds to hire a curator (albeit part-time) thanks to the generous funding of the community. Mary Kay Wolf, our curator, and the volunteers are enthusiastic and hard-working. But to fill in the gaps in expertise, it is good to know that the WHS, the affiliate program, and the WCLH are there to help. The 125th anniversary of the program is indeed something to celebrate.



Affiliates are divided into 10 regions. Langlade County is in the Northwoods Region.

A Library Evolves

Almost as soon as Antigo was incorporated as a city, its citizens recognized the importance of a library in order to become a thriving community. Various groups, with different goals, worked to create a lending library. All felt that access to books was important to personal development and civic engagement. Little could they envision all that a library would entail in the future: providing meeting space for civic groups, internet access for those without computers or connections, children's story time, lending DVDs, CDs, recorded books, ebooks, and access to archives for genealogists and researchers. But access to books alone was a motivation enough for Antigo's pioneers.

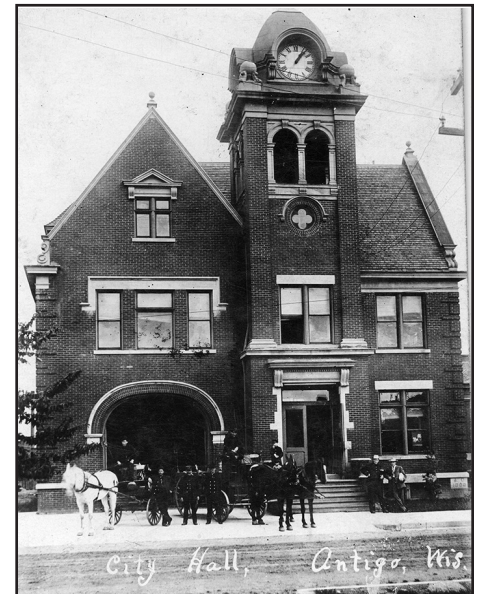
Louis Mendlick established Antigo's first lending library, a rental, from his stationery store on Superior Street in the early 1890s. At the same time, as throughout the U.S., the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) attempted to establish a free lending library in Antigo in the belief that access to books would deter people from bad behavior. The Antigo WCTU statement of purpose read "in the intelligence of the people lies the safety of the nation, and that the free circulation of

good books in the community would be a counter-attraction to the saloon and its influences." After two unsuccessful attempts in 1894 and 1895, the WCTU worked with other civic minded people to successfully establish a free lending library, located at 711 Fifth Ave.

The library proved popular and soon outgrew its space, moving to space offered by John Ogden, publisher of the Antigo Republican newspaper in his newspaper's offices. The space was rent free and volunteers staffed the library. Books were donated or purchased through cash donations. The new space soon proved unworkable due to its popularity and sought a new home. City officials granted the library space in one of its buildings with the thought of creating a city subsidized free lending library in the new city hall, then being planned. After some negotiations the city agreed to set aside space in the new city hall for a library and set aside funds for its maintenance. The WCTU donated its collection of 750 volumes.

The concept of a free library, open to all, had advanced from being a volunteer organization run by the WCTU, struggling to find rent free

space in local businesses into a more permanent space in a public building supported by taxpayers. But this was just the end of the first phase of the history of Antigo's Public Library and the start of the next steps to getting a library building of its own, staffed by professionals.



City Hall housed Antigo's first taxpayer supported free library after several years of a free library run by volunteers and located in various businesses. Charles Dallman who constructed City Hall would also later build Antigo's Carnegie Library.

Calling All Bakers

A summer tradition is Music in the Park and along with the music are refreshments. The museum will be serving on Monday July 24, when the Sloppy Joe Band will be performing. In keeping with the band's name we will be serving Sloppy Joes. We always look forward to meeting people, describing our efforts, and, of course, raising much needed funds in order to carry on our work. We ask volunteers to bring donations of

pies to the museum before 4:00 pm or to the shelter at City Park by 5:00 pm on that day (or to the Heinzen Pavilion in case of rain). Watch for further notices.



Watching for Fires

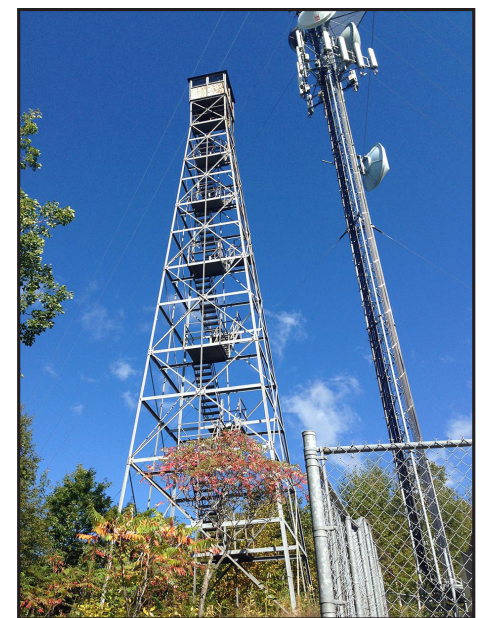
It was the demand for lumber that first brought white settlers to northern Wisconsin in the years after the Civil War. By the early 20th century the Northwoods rapacious logging companies and slash left by them and by the building of logging rail lines through the forests created major fire hazards. Forest fires became a routine event. The deadliest was the Peshtigo Fire of 1871 in which it is estimated that between 1,500 and 2,500 people lost their lives.

Wisconsin for decades had a mixed record on recognizing the needs to create a conservation policy. Legislators recognized the importance of controlling forest fires as early as 1867 when they established a committee to look into the matter, chaired by Increase A. Lapham. But no significant action resulted until 1903 when a State Board of Forestry was created and a state forester appointed.

From 1899 to 1915 a number of state parks were created, Fish and Game wardens were appointed. All of these various groups were combined in 1915 into a conservation commission. In 1927 the legislature established the State Conservation Commission which divided the state into four major regions: Northern, Northeastern, Northwestern, and Central. These were further divided into districts.

One district headquarters was originally in White Lake. Its territory covered parts of Oconto, Shawano, Marathon, and all of Langlade County. In 1935 its headquarters were moved to Antigo. Another district headquarters was based at Summit Lake where the State Conservation Commission relied heavily on the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) for cooperation in their efforts. The Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) was a federal program and was an important part of fire control. Camp 657, in Elcho, erected and manned watch towers, established fire lanes and fire breaks, constructed telephone lines, and trained enrollees in fighting forest fires. CCC Camp 657 in Elcho existed from 1933 to 1940.

By the end of the 1930s major efforts to control forest fires were in place. In an era before drones and aerial surveillance, the fire tower became important. Today, Wisconsin has almost 13 million acres of forests under the state fire protection program, in all or parts of 32 different counties. The forests of Langlade County are an important economic resource and also a source of recreation and tourism. There is a reason that we call our region the Northwoods. The history of how we care for this resource is an important part of our history.



Fire towers were vital for early detection of forest fires. Shown are one built and maintained by the CCC and one currently standing along the Harrison Hills segment of the area's Ice Age Trail.

With winter in the rear-view mirror, it's time to think about spending time outdoors and traveling. Below are pictures of popular tourist destinations from years ago.

Left column:

Scenes from Bare Foot Charlie's Club in Land O' Lakes

Right Column:

Top: A Pelican Lake resort

Middle: Maple Beach Lodge at Pelican Lake

Bottom: Lake View Inn at Pelican Lake



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

The museum at Music in the Park
Monday July 24 (see page 2)

Cemetery Tour at Elmwood
Sat/Sun Sept 9 & 10 from 1:00-3:30 pm

ITEM FROM THE MUSEUM:

Elvira Frisch's Wedding Dress

Elvira Frisch was a dedicated supporter and volunteer at our Historical Society, since long before we were in our current location. She is shown with her wedding dress from the 1940s. Elvira passed away recently at the age of 100.



404 Superior Street
Antigo WI, 54409