

# LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## The Annual Meeting That Wasn't

**S**afety concerns because of the Covid-19 pandemic caused us to cancel our annual meeting and gathering. But some business had to be conducted and that was done by mail. Ballots included in our Fall 2020 newsletter were for three

vacancies on the board. Dean Blazek, Glenn Bugni, and Lisa Haefs, whose terms had expired, were each re-elected to another three-year term. At the regular December board meeting the following officers were elected: President- Joe Hermolin,

Vice-President Lisa Haefs, Treasurer Chris Haedtke, Secretary Mary Kay Wolf. There were no challenges or recounts to the general board election or appointment of officers.

## Remodeling: Phase 2 Begins

**E**xcept for a few finishing touches, Phase 1 of our remodeling project is complete. The addition housing an elevator and restrooms is complete, making the building completely handicap accessible. (See story on page 3 for the inauguration of the elevator.)

We are finalizing plans for Phase 2, which involves renovations to the first floor. Repairs to the ceiling are necessary since some acoustic tiles, installed in the 1950s or early 1960s are coming loose and hazardous. Replacing the fluorescent lights and the heating duct work will create an improved space to display our col-

lections and provide facilities and space to researchers.

Phase 3 plans are being developed, involving changes to the second floor and basement, but these will have to wait. To complete everything on our wish list we are continuing to raise funds.

Working with the Economic Development Corporation of Langlade County, we will also provide an inviting area for both visitors and local residents to gain information about interesting features, special events, and activities in Antigo and throughout Langlade County.

efforts but we are pleased with and grateful for the support we have received from this generous community. With the promise of better times in 2021, we hope that we can serve our community again soon. You may help us achieve our goal by contributing to:

Let's Make History  
c/o Langlade County Historical Society  
P.O. Box 215  
Antigo, WI 54409.

All donations are tax deductible.



*Nearing completion: the museum and its addition*

We are very pleased with, and have received numerous compliments on, the addition and will continue to work with architect Rod Cox and JAS Construction on Phase 2 interior remodeling. Work will continue through the winter and we hope to reopen in spring.

The Covid-19 pandemic and resulting economic downturn have hampered our fundraising

**CURATOR:**  
Mary Kay Morrissey Wolf

**DIRECTORS:**  
Dean Blazek  
Fran Brown  
Nancy Bugni  
Glenn Bugni  
Carol Feller Gottard  
Chris Haedtke  
Lisa Haefs  
Joe Hermolin  
Diane Zuelke

# THANK YOU

## Items Donated:

- Didi Cromer: Deleglise plate, book, glasses with state seal  
Lisa Haefs: Cameras, Deleglise print  
Hagerty family: Anna Deleglise's zither  
Patricia Kennedy: Sconces, library lamp

- Norma Winters: Presidential inaugural medal, framed coin collections

## Memorial Donations:

- In memory of: Dick Wagner from Glenn & Nancy Bugni

## Monetary Donations:

- Steve & Mary Bradley  
Michael & Pamela Brown  
William Johnson  
Norma Winter

## New Member:

- Lu Flemming

## To Let's Make History Fund from March 26, 2020 to Jan. 4, 2021

**Individuals:** John Barker, Thomas Bradley, Elizabeth & Norman Dickman, Gale & Mike Demlow, Robert Duerwachter, Hope Reynolds & Gary Fleming, Louella & Gary Fleming, Joe Hermolin & Renate Bromberg, Jonathan & Theresa Johnson, Sue Kramer, Jeff & Cheryl Marx, Barb & Carl McIlquham, Megan O'Brien, Nancy Pelzer, Sandra Robrecht, Marilyn & George Rock, Donna Ruf, Christine Schimmels-Spute, Beverly Sikora, Claude & Cathy Swoverland-Morrissey, Jean & Otto Tieg, Jim & Toni Thomas, Patrick & Tonya Trabant-McKenna, Karen Traut, Gary & Nancy Whitman, James & Kathleen Wing, Michael Worman, Ben & Carrie Zelazoski, Mary Zelinski, Sharon & Mitch Zmuda

## Organizations:

JAS Construction, Kiwanis Club, Lakeside Pharmacy, Langlade Ford, Parsons of Antigo, Vanguard Charitable Trust

## LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Listening to War: Wisconsin's Wartime Oral Histories

Years ago, Roland "Bud" McBain, of Pickerel, was introduced to the Langlade County Historical Society (LCHS) by a friend and museum volunteer. He had an interesting story to tell and he told it well. He related his World War II military career in articles in the Antigo Daily Journal and in presentations to the LCHS and the Seymour Historical Society. Now his story is available to a wider audience.

Recollection Wisconsin, with whom the LCHS partners, has completed an oral history project of first-person accounts of veterans and civilians from World War I to the Persian Gulf War. Recordings made from the 1970s to 2010s have been digitized, indexed, catalogued, and made available at <https://recollection-wisconsin.org/listeningtowar> Stories include those of soldiers, nurses, journalists, shipbuilders, people on the home front, Holocaust survivors and Hmong refugees who resettled in Wisconsin. The entire project was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.

One of the interviews is of Bud who grew up in Seymour WI. He worked

in radio communications during and immediately after World War II in Europe as part of the 72nd Publicity Service Battalion. In his interview, conducted in 2014, he described life in bombed-out London and his work with advancing U.S. forces after D-Day through Normandy, Verdun, during the Battle of the Bulge, Wiesbaden, and Berlin. In Berlin, at the close of the war, he interacted with occupying Soviet soldiers in the Russian sector. After the war Bud had a long career in radio in New York City and in Wisconsin before retiring to Pickerel.

By making his and other war related stories available to a wider audience, Recollection Wisconsin has preserved and made available an important history.

**Note:** The Recollection Wisconsin Listening to War oral history collection "went live" on November 11 (Veterans' Day) of this year. About then Bud contracted COVID-19. He passed away on November 26. It is with deep regret that we never had the opportunity to sit with him and listen to his interview.



**Left:** Bud reporting back to England and America from the front about allied advances. **Center:** Bud reporting on Eisenhower's address to the French upon the liberation of Paris. **Right:** Bud socializing with Soviet allies in Berlin in the aftermath of the war's end.

## Inauguration of the Elevator

Elvera Frisch never thought she would see her wedding dress again. Elvera has volunteered at the Langlade County Historical Society since before it was at its current location. For years she was there to greet visitors, show them around, and discuss the county's history and local genealogy. But, at 98, in retirement as a docent and with mobility issues, it appeared doubtful she would ever again see that carefully preserved gown and enjoy the museum she once knew.

That changed recently, when Frisch became the first person to "officially" ride the museum's new elevator, part of a massive construction and renovation project now underway at the 115-year-old facility. The site remains a construction zone and the museum is closed to the public. But Frisch, along with her daughter, Mary Winski, and daughter-in-law, Becky Frisch, received a private tour from curator Mary Kay Wolf and president Joe Hermolin.

The fact that Elvera Frisch could even access the entire museum was the result of an outpouring of generosity among community members, local foundations and businesses who supported the Society's half-a-million-dollar project to create that northside wing, which blends seamlessly with the existing building. Remodeling will set the museum up for the future as it partners with the Langlade County Economic Development Corporation to create a visitors' center.

Donations have slowed with the museum's inability to be open during the busy summer months. In addition, the board of directors was reluctant to push a new phase of fund-raising while so many in the community were seeing severe disruptions in their lives and businesses caused by the pandemic.

But with the next phase of work already underway there is a need for additional dollars. We urge people, clubs, foundations, and businesses to consider the museum in their charitable plans.

All donations are tax-deductible. They may be sent to Let's Make History, c/o Langlade County Historical Society, P.O. Box 215, Antigo, WI 54409.

As for Frisch, she was thrilled by the private tour and her newfound ability to see the museum once again that she has supported for all her life.



**Left:** Curator Mary Kay Wolf and Elvera Frisch enter the new elevator.

**Center:** Curator Mary Kay Wolf and president Joe Hermolin in the second floor lobby of the addition.

**Right:** Elvera is delighted to see her 1948 wedding dress, now on display in the museum.

# Ghost Towns

Old plat maps of the Northwoods reveal towns not on current maps. Mention “ghost towns” and images of the old west come to mind. But wherever a community is based on one resource, a ghost town may evolve once that resource had been depleted. Langlade County has many such communities, all based on logging and wood products. Towns of Heineman, Ormsby, Strassburg, and Pratt Junction are now memorialized, if at all, only as names of county roads.

Kent, north east of Antigo, was described by Dan Grant in 1932 in several articles in the Antigo Daily Journal. Kent developed in the decades after the Civil War when the lumber industry thrived in the Northwoods. Grant’s parents came to Kent in 1880s when the town’s industry was a sawmill operated by J.H. Weed which was supplied by holdings of the Paine Lumber Co. That mill burned in 1887 (a fate common to many mills). Weed moved to Antigo and continued in the lumber business. His abandoned Kent mill was taken over by Henry Sherry who had major lumber interests in much of northern Wisconsin, mostly around Neenah. Sherry rebuilt and enlarged the Kent mill, which primarily made shingles but he also ran a planing mill there. The Milwaukee, Lake Shore & Western Railway (later the Chicago & Northwestern) played a vital role to the town, supplying logs to the sawmill.

The community thrived with a

school, several family homes, a boarding house/hotel, a general store, a post office, a church, and several blacksmiths. A prominent feature of Kent was “Whiskey Hill” named for the bottles littering the area.

Dan Grant’s recollections include many humorous incidents of life in Kent. In one story, the logging camp “cookie” who wore wooden soled shoes kept at his bedside, had those shoes nailed to the floor by some loggers. When “cookie” awoke, at 3:00am, he stepped into those clogs, lurched forward and fell, tearing one of his clogs. In another episode related by Grant told of the time town folk went into Bryant using a hand rail car and encountered a skunk on the tracks. These, and many more stories, formed part of Kent’s folklore.

By 1895 Sherry had sold his mill and moved away and the mill was taken over by Antigo Manufacturing Co. But in 1902, on a hot and windy summer day, it too burned, along with some homes. Most homes survived, only to burn a few years later. The population gradually declined to nothing.

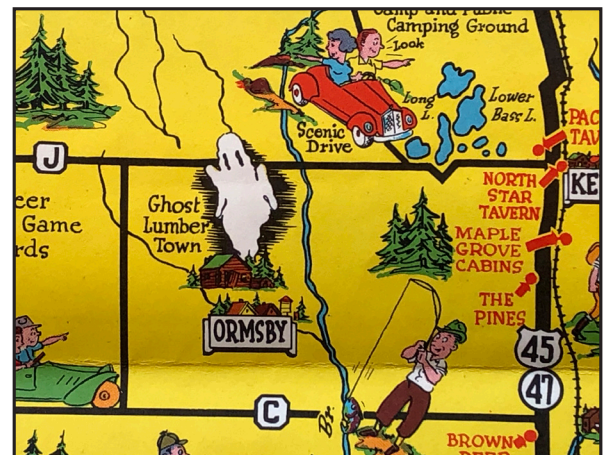
Grant ended his reminiscence: “No more will the old ox teamster drive his ox team, with the call of Ho Hish, among

those big pine in the Kent Hills on a cold frosty morning; pine that scaled up to a thousand feet and more.”

Two books that describe various ghost towns in Wisconsin are:

Fochs, Rhonda. Wisconsin’s Lost Towns. North Star Press of St. Cloud. 2017.

Rohe, Randall. Ghost Towns of the Forest: Vanished Lumber Towns of Wisconsin, Volume 1. Wisconsin Rapids. 2002



**Top:** A tourism promotion “fun map” from the 1950s identifies the ghost town of Ormsby.  
**Bottom:** Workers grade the land in preparation for building of a sawmill in Kent.

# Fill'er Up

Once, not too long ago, gas sold for 30.9 cents/gallon. These views of local gas stations and service garages were photographed by Clarence "Tubby" Toburen. He toured the region by car and in his plane, photographing and filming. Recently his son Todd, also a photographer (now retired), donated many of Clarence's negatives and equipment to the museum.



**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

**ITEM FROM THE MUSEUM:**

**Clarence Toburen's Studio Camera**

Clarence "Tubby" Toburen (1909-1967) was an Antigo based photographer who toured the county by car and in his own plane photographing and filming. His portrait studio, was first at 529 Superior Street and later at 721 Fifth Ave. His studio camera is a prominent part of a new photography display at the museum (currently closed for remodeling).



404 Superior Street  
Antigo WI, 54409