

# EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

Oct 2021

Please check your newsletter label for the year "2021" to see whether you have renewed your membership. If you have any questions, please contact Elaine Ledrowski at 262-594-3301 or [elaine@ledrowski.com](mailto:elaine@ledrowski.com). Thank you.



If you missed our Open House, visit our Orin Benson Photo Collection currently displayed on the wall between the Town and Village Offices at the Eagle Municipal Building .

We are starting to plan programs for 2022. It was suggested that we have a display of dollhouses. First of all, does anyone have a dollhouse, and would you be willing to display it for one day at the museum for a program? Email me at [elaine@ledrowski.com](mailto:elaine@ledrowski.com) if interested in participating in this event. Thank you!

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### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS:

Franklin Historical Society  
Barbara Pforr  
Craig Pokwinski  
Vickie Schicker—  
Jefferson Historical Society  
Sandra Shorr  
Pamela Weinhaner—  
North Prairie Historical Society

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS:

**Senior \$8**  
Pauline Adler  
Ed Stephans—\$24.00  
**Individual \$10**  
Stephanie Stevens  
**Family \$15**  
Ashley & Kurt Bokern  
Claire Josten & Dale—\$18.00  
**Sustaining \$25**  
Theresa Denio  
Ellie & Bob Winzenried  
Bill & Judi Zell  
**Sponsor \$50**  
Rosann Day  
Todd & Debra Kruse  
**Patron \$100**  
Mark Lake  
Dorothy & Don Murphy—\$150

**EHS Board**  
**President**  
Jeff Nowicki, 2022  
**Vice-President**  
Eloise Hall, 2023

**Secretary**  
Art Peavy, 2022

**Treasurer**  
Pat Hawes, 2023

**Financial Officer**  
Jim Neist

### Board Members

**2022**  
Scott Bovee  
Jim Neist  
Jeff Nowicki  
Art Peavy

**2023**  
JoAnn Gilbert  
Diana Hall  
Eloise Hall  
Gina Neist  
Mike Rice

**2024**  
Pat Hawes  
Peter Jones  
Richard Moeller  
Carrie Peavy  
Carolyn Rosprim

**Curator**  
Elaine Ledrowski  
594-3301

**Newsletter Editors**  
Art & Carrie Peavy  
594-5454

**Webmaster**  
Mike Rice

**Facebook**  
Elaine Ledrowski

**EHS MUSEUM**  
262-594-8961

**OPEN HOURS:**  
Wednesdays: 3-6 pm  
Fridays: 9 am–Noon  
Saturdays: 9 am–Noon

**WEBSITE:**  
[curator@eaglehistorical](mailto:curator@eaglehistorical)  
[society.org](http://society.org)

**FACEBOOK:** Like us  
at Eagle Historical Society

## EHS OPEN HOUSE

Tuesday, August 17, 2021



Beautiful weather and a great turnout. Thank you!



Current owner of Orin Benson's famous Messerschmitt answered questions.

## PICNIC WITH THE POLICE

Saturday, August 28, 2021



Adults were asked to identify these artifacts (minus the hand sanitizer) and explain the function they served in times gone by.



A banner created by Eagle Elementary students to commemorate our country's bicentennial year was hung as a backdrop for our booth.

## ARTIFACT DONATIONS:

This is a partial list of items donated. Thanks to the following donors:

Jackie Adams—Notebook and drink coasters, Sasso's Tavern  
 Carol Blankenship—Books & family military history  
 Scott Dooley—Letter, deposit slips from Bank of Eagle  
 Vernetta Heare—Family history and photos  
 Ruth Anne Rolfe—Eagle State Graded School photos  
 Town of Eagle—Framed Print of George Washington



Would you like to honor a loved one by purchasing a memorial brick to be placed in the EHS Veterans Memorial Walkway or a subscription to the EHS Newsletter as a Christmas gift? Contact Elaine Ledrowski at 262-594-3301 or [elaine@ledrowski.com](mailto:elaine@ledrowski.com) for details.



Ruth Anne has fond memories of her life growing up in Eagle. She was born in 1933 to lifelong Eagle resident, Ruth Jones (daughter of Arthur and Annie Stead), and David Dean Jones from Siloam. She lived in the house next to the Methodist Church, 313 Front Street, with her siblings: Elaine, Don, John, and Dick. In those days Main Street was called Front Street and Eagle Street was called Back Street.

Her mother had told her that people brought food to them during the Great Depression and that her dad worked different jobs in order to survive the times. Her uncle lived across the street, and Mr. Belling lived next door to them. She remembers Mom giving her ration stamps to buy meat from Mr. Belling, and Dad would get milk from Juedes' farm when she was little, but later they had a milk man deliver it.

When her sister had scarlet fever, the family needed to go stay with her grandmother for a few weeks while she recovered, and a quarantine sign was placed on their door to advise the community of the illness. That was commonly done back then for illnesses like measles, polio, etc. It seemed to her that no sooner would one sign go down and then another would be posted.

All five Joneses had Miss Watt as a teacher at Eagle School. Ruth Anne remembers Mrs. Winecoff and Mrs. Holzinger also. The year she graduated from 8th grade they quit the two-year high school. She went on to Whitewater High School and rode on the Cardinal Bus Rockford Line which ran from Milwaukee to Rockford.

Dad worked for Waukesha County, and each year the family looked forward to the annual picnic held at Moose Lake. On Sundays the family went to baseball games that her dad coached. Ruth Anne played a lot of baseball with the boys by the side of the church. She played where they told her to play, and lots of times they didn't want her to. John or Dick broke the church window once, and Dad had to repair it. She and her siblings often biked all the way to LaGrange without worries. They just had to be home when the street lights came on or the whistle behind the Legion blew (7 am, noon, and 6 pm so the farmers knew the time) as she didn't own a watch until after high school. She went horseback riding only once on a horse named Ruth, and she was dumped off. In winter, they skated down Front Street as there were hardly any cars back then, and Mr. Splechter gave them permission to skate on a pond near the new school. They also sledged near Mealy's as there were no subdivisions—just all open fields.

As she fondly recalled barn dances at the Masonic Hall where she often opened the show with a song and tap dance, she proudly sang a line or two for us.



Photo above was donated to EHS by Ruth Anne Rolfe. Students pictured in back row left to right as noted on back of photo: Jerry, Billy, Russie, Dexter, Buckie, Elmer, Bobby, Charlotte, Ruth Anne, Lorraine, Nancy. Middle row: Janet, Patsy, Raymond, Kay, Betty Jean, Roberta, Marilyn S., Elizabeth, Marilyn V., Patty, Sally. Front row: Johnny R., Johnnie J., Harry, Arthur, Dickie B., Raymond, Ralph, Bobby.

(Continued from page 3)

Ruth Anne worked at Sherman's Store for Vint during high school until it closed putting supplies on the shelves of the walls and using grabbers to get them for customers. She also made ice cream cones, and people asked for her to scoop theirs up. Sealtest was the brand, and chocolate marshmallow was a favorite of the kids.

Free outside movies were shown against Brittingham & Hixon Lumberyard's wall where the gazebo now is. During intermission people could buy treats at Krestan's and Sherman's. There was a bandstand made of concrete there at that time. Bands played music such as Glenn Miller and Sons of the Pioneers.

Her brother Don started a root beer stand in an orange building in Palmyra. He later bought Peardon's Garage and had JJ's built. Carhops would bring hot dogs, cheeseburgers and the like to your car for many years. Her brother Don was also a milk man at one time, and her brother Dick served in the Pentagon Army.

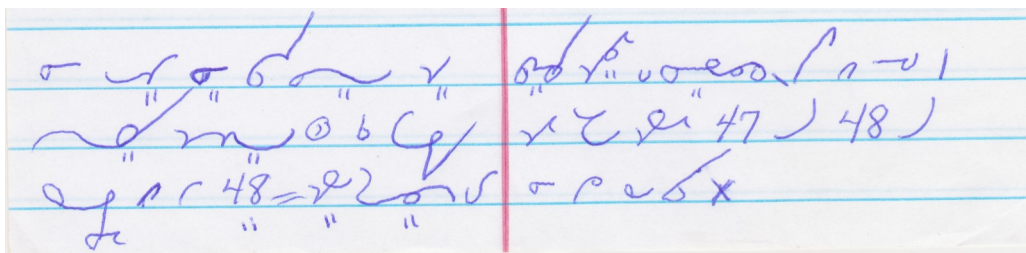
Ruth Anne married Jack Rolfe a year after high school. Her mother got permission to have the reception at the Masonic Hall with fancy red velvet curtains. She fondly recalls going to Paradise Springs after her rehearsal wedding dinner to share a drink in the hotel. Jack was drafted into the Army and served at Ft. Carson, CO, from 1953-1955 but never had to go overseas. It was about this time that they bought the family homestead. Jack so loved living in Eagle. He was one of the founding members of Kettle Moraine Days as well as a fire fighter for 40 years and chief for 12 of those years. He was also one of the men who went to South Dakota to get the dogs for Orin Benson and built the fence for the racetrack from scrap metal brought home from Trent Tube where he was a welder. His crew of helpers would set up the fence the night before the races carefully measuring out distances, take it all down, and then set it up again the next day. She also remembers kids dressing up like Indians and parading on their decorated bicycles.

She used to take the train to Waukesha to visit her sister but also sadly recalls seeing Billy Partin's casket on the train. He was a nephew of Grace and Chet Rohloff's who had grown up in Genesee and killed while in military service.

Many people held their wedding receptions at the American Legion. Ruth Anne helped the Legion's Auxiliary make hot beef sandwiches, and everybody wanted Ruth Anne's homemade desserts before others could take them. Her mom always had to make her baked beans for events, and Ruth Anne and her sister made candy. They also made cookies for an annual fundraiser held at Country Springs, and the proceeds went to various veterans groups. There were many canasta card parties back then, and she still remembers the three-digit phone number she shared on a party line with two other people after all these years.

Ruth Anne now spends her time playing bingo, reading and recalling the old times.

## SHORTHAND TRIVIA (continued on page 6)



My brothers and sister and I were reminiscing about the Eagle Opera House. This is what we remember: I, being the oldest, recollected the home talent show sponsored by the WLS Lulabelle & Scotty Show. While I did not participate, my little sister, Ruth Anne, did. I expect she opened the show, because she sang, "Howdy Do, Everybody, Howdy Do" and did her little tap dance. This was a big show for Eagle, and I can remember all the participants sitting on hay bales on the stage, clapping and providing excitement for all the contestants. There was a huge curtain covering the stage, with pictures and advertising painted on it. Wooden folding chairs covered the huge floor.

John and Dick remembered the Rottner Players, who brought their show to Eagle. It seems what they remembered most was the 5 or 10 cents Dad gave them to buy a box of taffy, one of which contained a prize. They never knew what the prize was because they never won.

The hall was used for dances and wedding receptions. My sister and Jack Rolfe had their reception there; Janet and Cliff Jensen did, too.

My brother Don, Fred Gale, and Jack Taege provided the musical combo for several functions.

Lest we forget, the 8th and 10th grade graduations of Eagle State Graded School were held in the hall, as well as the Palestine School graduation ceremony.

The Masonic Hall was located in the upstairs portion of the opera house where it remained for many years.

## **IVA C. BIGELOW WEAVER** *By Michael Rice*



Iva Bigelow Weaver

Iva C. Bigelow, 1875–1932, was an American soprano singer and music teacher based in Chicago and Milwaukee. Her performance circuit was most often in the Midwestern and Plains states, but she was critically recognized around the nation and sang in Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City and on radio in 1926. One reporter commented "Her voice is powerful, particularly sweet in the upper register and of splendid volume", and her performances were always sold out.

Iva was also well respected as a music teacher and ran music studios in Milwaukee and Chicago where she gained her reputation as a great vocal teacher. She was well loved by her students who went on to play many stages around the nation.

Iva was born on October 8, 1875, in Palmyra, Wisconsin, to Charles Bigelow and Leonora Stacey. Her father died when she was a girl and her mother remarried. Iva attended the Lawrence Conservatory of Music (Lawrence-University) in Appleton, Wisconsin, in 1894-1895, and continued her training in Chicago and in Europe. Her younger brother, Oromel H. Bigelow (1881-1966), became a mathematics professor at Whitewater State College (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater), and the Bigelow Residence Hall on the Whitewater campus was named after him.

Eva's life was cut short when she died after complications from appendix surgery in 1932. She was 57 years old, and the music world mourned her death. The Iva Bigelow Weaver Junior Music Club of Marshfield, Wisconsin, was named in her honor after her death and lasted into the 1970s. Eva is buried in Melendy's Prairie Cemetery in Eagle, Wisconsin.

\*\*\*Credit source information for this post from Wikipedia

*I am very grateful for Frances Frannie Hyland's tribute to her father, James Babcock, in the July newsletter. Jim was killed by a drunken driver in 1955. Many of the readers of the Historical Society newsletter never knew Jim. It is encouraging to let people know of the type of person that lived in the Village at that time.*

*For me Jim was an answer to prayer to me at that time I didn't know existed. From the moment I first had my hand on a baseball I was passionate about the game. By age 10 I wanted to be on a team and compete against other teams. Fat chance? There were no leagues for youth.*

*The Land O Lakes had been around for several years for adults. Then the Land O Puddles and Land O Brooks leagues were formed for youth. Jim Babcock organized a team in Eagle and gave Russ Chapman, Gerry Crawley, Dex Badinger, etc. an opportunity to play the great sport of baseball.*

*In some detail, Frannie expressed what a great public servant her dad was. He was a friend to all who knew him and obviously a fantastic husband and father.*

*On a personal note, Jim's tragic death provided me with a lesson I have never forgotten. My father, Luke Enright, showed me the spot where Jim died which is where Generac is located on Highway 59. This was before the current highway was constructed. Jim was going east over a knoll/hill when a drunk driver hit his vehicle head on after crossing the center line.*

*My dad told me to always stay as far as you can to the right when going over the crest of a hill. When I am in my right mind, I always follow my father's advice on whatever road I am on. I ride 59 often, and when I approach that spot it is very rare that I don't think of Jim Babcock; an extraordinary man and an answer to a young man's prayer.*

*Don Enright  
July 4, 2021*

## **SHORTHAND TRIVIA** (continued from page 4)

**Question:** When Ruth Ann attended Eagle State Graded School, she pledged allegiance to the 48-Star Flag of the United States of America. Do you know which states represent stars 47 and 48 and when their stars were added?

**Answer:** New Mexico and Arizona in 1912.



## Hinkley, Harold Lloyd (Red)

May 28, 1925—Sept. 10, 2021



Red grew up on a farm just outside of the small town of Eagle, Wisconsin. He attended Waukesha High School where he met the love of his life, Mary Lou Stead. Red and Mary Lou were married January 15, 1945 at Fort Polk, Louisiana, just before he shipped out to the Philippines where he served in the Army Signal Corps.

After the war Red returned to school at the University of Wisconsin (go Badgers). Red and Mary Lou spent most of their lives in Wauwatosa, WI, where Red was a chemical engineer for Miller Brewing and was active at the Wauwatosa Avenue United Methodist Church. Red was a 32 Degree Mason, member of Scottish Rite for over 70 years and was also an Egypt Shriner. He was an avid bicycle rider, and upon retirement they moved to Florida where he continued to enjoy riding in and around Sun City Center. After several years, Red moved to Mount Dora and enjoyed his last years living with his daughter, Robin Armitage, where he attended the First Presbyterian Church of Mount Dora.

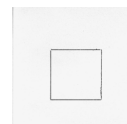
Red was a loving father to Paul of Coppell, TX, Marc of New Berlin, WI, Roger of River Falls, WI, and Robin of Mount Dora, FL. He was grandfather to Sarah, Alex, Samantha, Kristin and Michael. He is survived by many friends who enjoyed his company, his delightful sense of humor, and his many stories. He lived a long and full life and will be sorely missed by many. In lieu of flowers memorials were sent to the American Diabetes Association or First Presbyterian Church of Mount Dora.



Photo above: A recent donation from the Town of Eagle to our artifact collection. Thank you, Smokie Gardinier, PV Services of Little Prairie, for adding missing letters and welding parts of the sign.

Eagle Historical Society, Inc.  
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P.O. Box 454  
Eagle, WI

53119-0454



Mailing Label

## **PUMPKIN PARTY** **Sat., Oct. 30**



**Stomp on Over to**  
**THE EHS MUSEUM**  
**Discover Halloween Fun and Games**  
**12—3:30 PM**

