



EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

October 2005

Eagle, Wisconsin

EHS Board

President

Jeff Nowicki

Vice-President

Irma Jolliffe

Secretary

Bea Marquardt

Treasurer

Pat Wilton

Members

Jerry Baker

Mark Dexter

Julie Dexter

Diana Hall

Pat Hawes

Barbara Jatczak

Donald Ledrowski

Margo Morner

Welthy Mueller

Bernice Nowicki

John Vymetal-Taylor

Curator

Elaine Ledrowski

594-3301

Newsletter Editor

Darlene Landmann

594-3430

EHS

museum/ library

594-8961

open

Fridays and Saturdays,

9 am to noon

Wednesdays,

5-7 pm

Website: eaglehs.org

EHS News

Membership

EHS now has over 300 members.

New Members

Welcome to Jim & Gina Neist.

Young at Heart

This month two of our board members had noteworthy birthdays: October 16 was Welthy Mueller's 92nd, and Irma Jolliffe's October 27 birthday marked a milestone for her—90 years. Best wishes to both of them.

Donations

We thank the following:

Item donations: Dick Baker, Jerry Baker, Jean Bowey, Louella Bowey, Audrey Casey, Bea Delaney, Diana & Eloise Hall, Dorothy Kramer, Welthy Mueller, Kay Perkins, Jack Rolfe, Bill Thiele and Kenneth Zuhlke.

EHS has received on loan from Newell Meyer a lovely painting of cut flowers done by Ann Meyer and exquisitely framed. It graces the entrance to the EHS art gallery.

We also gratefully received an evocative painting of a farmstead by well-known local artist Audrey Casey.

Monetary donations: the Village and Town of Eagle.

EHS is also grateful for the use of the museum building, which many visitors from other societies envied when they were here in August.

Wisconsin Council for Local History

On August 20 EHS hosted the annual Southeastern Region

Convention, which was attended by representatives from about 40 history organizations. We came very close to beating the record attendance for one of these conventions.

EHS was very fortunate to have John and Mary Vymetal-Taylor donate their professional talents to produce an impressive brochure promoting Eagle history; copies were ready in time for the convention.

All of the feedback from attendees was complimentary—some people even said it was the best convention they had attended!

Don and Elaine Ledrowski attended the annual state convention in Rhineland on October 7 & 8. The Friday session included a walking tour and a visit to the historical society. Dennis McCann, Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel feature writer, was the keynote speaker on Saturday. It was a very informative weekend and they came back with many ideas that they would like to implement at EHS.

Capturing Eagle History

By Elaine Ledrowski

Bill Thiele, Don and I have been identifying and photographing homes in the village and town of Eagle. Our

IN THIS ISSUE

WCLH SE Convention	Page 1
Featured Artifact	Page 3
Letter to Santa	Page 3
Eagle Post Office	Pages 3-5
Obituaries	Pages 6-7

purpose for each home is to identify the builder, the year the home was built, the people who lived in the home, and the impact they had on our community. We looked at homes that were at least fifty years old. A group of long-time residents met at the museum a few times to share their memories. Darlene Landmann and Jean Cisler served as recorders and I acted as moderator. That was like trying to rake leaves on a windy day—stories were flying in all directions around the table. Some we could use and some were not suitable for publication. We heard stories about Tiny, Twink, Addie, Fat, Coony, Lefty and Squirt; how hobos marked houses where the owners were generous; how bums and drunks would use the two-cell jail to “sleep it off;” about husbands who mysteriously disappeared, never to be heard from again; and tales about possible moonshining activities.

Doc Crawley boasted that he knew the name of every family in the village. He based this on the fact that he and his brother had a newspaper monopoly one year during which they delivered the Milwaukee Sentinel in the morning, the Milwaukee Journal in the afternoon and the Waukesha Freeman in the evening. Don Jones quipped that he doesn't remember where everyone lived but he does know where many of them ended up. (Don is in charge of Oak Ridge Cemetery.) We found out that Miss Grace Watt was a favorite teacher who taught in Eagle “forever.” At times it sounded more like a comedy club than a historical society, but we actually gathered a lot of information. The long-term goals of this project are: to have this information available at the museum, to develop a walking tour of the village and to put together a book of historic homes in Eagle.

Volunteers are needed to help complete this project. Help is needed to compose and mail a questionnaire to all the homes, to search addresses on-line to find tax key numbers (these are needed to research properties at the courthouse), to spend time at the courthouse researching historic homes and to identify the architectural style of the homes. If you're willing to share your time and help with this project, contact me at 594-3301 or at don4elaine@aol.com.

Thanks to the following people, who have been working on this project: Bill Thiele, Dexter and Marlis Badinger, Jean Bowey, Kathy Chapman, Doc Crawley, Pat Hawes, Don & Marie Jones, Don & Pat Wilton, Don Ledrowski, Jean Cisler,

and Darlene Landmann.

Calling all history buffs

The information-gathering meetings to discuss historic homes proved to be not only informative but also a lot of fun. We are considering having future meetings to discuss buildings that are no longer in existence—such as mills, the jail and depot—or subjects like growing up in the forties or fifties, school days, the beginnings of the fire department, past memorable events and persons who contributed to the history of Eagle. If you are interested in such a project or if you have additional subjects you would like to see addressed, please contact Elaine Ledrowski at 594-3301 or don4elaine@aol.com.

Any and all persons are encouraged to participate in this interesting history lesson. You may have information to contribute that no one else has or learn something you didn't know. At the very least, we promise you will have a good time.

New Board Members

Barbara Jatczak and John Vymetal-Taylor have joined the EHS board and both are serving on the Education Committee. EHS is happy to have them share their skills.

No November Bake Sale

EHS normally holds a bake sale each fall to coincide with a November election. Since there will be no election this November, there will be no bake sale, either.

50th Anniversary

Robert and (board member) Pat Hawes celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on October 8. Congratulations!



Dear Santa,

If I could have my heart's desire, it would be an addition to the museum with an art gallery to spotlight local artists, a meeting room on the first floor, and ample work and storage space. If this is not possible, I would be happy with any of the following items:

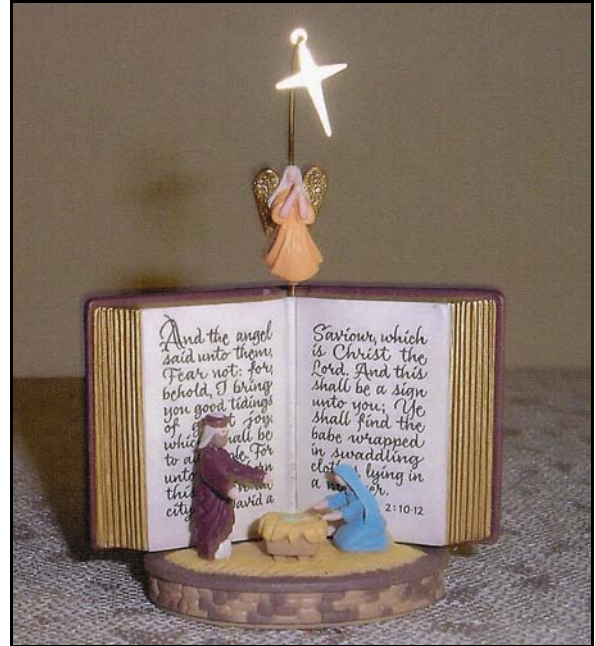
4x6 Glossy photo paper, Magnifying glass
 8x10 Glossy photo paper, Paper cutter
 #14 HP color inkjet cartridge, 8" scissors
 #14 HP black inkjet cartridge, Heavy-duty 8" shears
 Two-speed handheld vacuum cleaner
 Laptop computer (new or used)
 Ream of multi-colored computer paper

If you have trouble finding any of the items, don't worry—a check would be fine. I would leave cookies for you and the reindeer at the museum, but some of the volunteers have a sweet tooth and would probably get to them before you do.

Just Me (I still believe in Santa)

Featured Artifact

Jean Bowey donated over 90 nativity sets; this one is only 2.5 " by 3.5 ". The most unusual one is from England and made of wax. The museum will have a nativity exhibit in November and December.



The Eagle Post Office

Sources: U.S. Postal Service, [Memoirs of Waukesha County](#), [Symbols](#) by Jerry Apps, [linkstothepast.com](#)

The importance of the post office in rural America during the 19th century cannot be overstated. Post offices were the hub of activity for many small towns. A town may not have had a bank but it likely had a post office. For many, the local post office was the only contact with the outside world. If you wanted to find out what was happening, you found out through newspapers and magazines, which would arrive via the U.S. Mail. If you needed to order a piece of equipment, again you did it through the mails. Even after trains and telegraphs arrived, post offices continued to be a vital part of a community's well-being and stature. Churches, banks and many other businesses tended to group around locations where there was a post office. Early post offices were located in local businesses, such as a stores, and moved often as postmasters changed. Therefore post offices in small towns like Eagle have had many locations.

Postmasters earning less than \$1,000 per year were appointed by the Postmaster General, generally upon the advice of the local congressman or townspeople. Regulations required that postmasters execute a valid bond and take an oath of office, so minors and aliens were not eligible. Women have served as postmasters since the Revolutionary War and even earlier, under British rule. "Postmaster," and not "postmistress," has always been the official title.

Citizens of a community who desired a new post office generally submitted a request to the Post Office Department stating reasons why they thought a post office should be established, the number of patrons who would be served, and the names proposed for the post office. Other factors considered were the nearness of existing postal units and the relative cost involved, including the estimated expense of mail transportation to the proposed office. According to the 1897 Annual Report of the Postmaster General, "In cases where an office ceases to be a public necessity, or it is impossible to secure a suitable postmaster, the office is discontinued...."

Eagleville was the center of activity in the Town of Eagle in the 1840s. Andrew Scofield built a store there in 1844 and was appointed the first postmaster for the post office established about the same time. The community we know as the Village of Eagle was built in 1851 to 1852 when the Milwaukee and Waukesha railroad arrived; it was called Eagle Center because of its position in the Town of Eagle. At this time the post office was moved to Eagle Center. "Fifty years ago, all roads led to Eagleville, the metropolis of Eagle, which at that time contained the only post office in the town and which was a noted business center for the people for many miles around. Mail was carried by stage from Lake Geneva via East Troy and thence to Statesville and Summit to Oconomowoc... When the railroad was built through Eagle and a station was established at Eagle Center, so called by early settlers, it lost its prestige in the business world and the post office was closed." (Eagle Quill, June 10, 1898)



Records show that in 1853 S.H. Vedder (to May 3) and C. A. Bronson (from May 10) were postmasters in Eagle. Charles A. Bronson, who had built the first store in Eagle Center, was still listed in 1856, with a compensation of \$154.69. His building stood in the southwest corner of the lumber yard, then was moved to the lot between the lumber yard and the Masonic Temple. According to information from Art Stocks, the photo to the left is of the Bronson store/post office. Edward J. Burton is believed to have served as postmaster in this building.

In July of 1874, Francis Parks succeeded J. L. Perry as postmaster. For 1886, Eagle was listed as a money order and international money order office with 249 boxes on rural routes and 98 post office boxes at offices not having letter-carrier service.

Rural free delivery became law in 1896, and the number of post offices sharply declined in the ensuing decade. Once the rural mail carrier started making rounds, farmers began subscribing to magazines and daily newspapers. They also began receiving mail-order catalogs such as Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward; they could order goods and have them delivered to their door instead of the local railroad depot. The Eagle post office survived the change. Postmaster Joseph J. Lurvey, who had been appointed in 1897, died in 1909 and his daughter Christine became postmaster. J.J. Lurvey is second from the right in this photo from 1900.



Willis Engebretsen served as postmaster for eight years, resigning in July of 1942. The Eagle Quill of August 7, 1942, announced a Civil Service examination to fill the position. Ottilia Agathen took the position. In March of 1945 the Eagle post office moved to the Vinton Sherman building, also on Main Street.

When the post office building was replaced on the same site in 1964, Ottilia Agathen Tuohy was still postmaster. She appreciated the new brick building with an indoor toilet and central heating! The former post office building at 123 Main Street has been used as a video rental store for many years. The blue mailbox shown in front of the building in the 2003 photo below was removed in 2005.



Ottilia retired as postmaster in 1970 and John Eiring became postmaster in 1971. Pat Hawes became postmaster as of June, 1981, after John Eiring retired.

In 1987 a new post office building was erected at the corner of Main Street and Markham Road (see below). Pat retired in 1999, and Richard Dama was named postmaster.



Photo by Roy Leonhardt

The Eagle post office has survived in one location or another for over 150 years, but the internet, faxes and delivery services have been cutting into USPS profits in recent years, and in 2002 the Eagle post office cut its hours. Will we live to see the day that the following cartoon becomes reality?



Town resolution congratulates EHS

On July 21 the town board passed resolution no. 05-03 congratulating EHS. It states that:

"WHEREAS the Town Board recognizes the importance of supporting local history in the Town of Eagle and has assisted by providing a location for the Eagle Historical Society and Museum and by adopting a Historic Preservation ordinance;

WHEREAS the Eagle Historical Society and its volunteers put in significant efforts to collect and save Eagle's local history, and

WHEREAS the efforts of the Eagle Historical Society are being honored by its being selected to host the Southeastern Regional Convention of the Wisconsin Council for Local History.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Town Board of Eagle appreciates the efforts of the Eagle Historical Society and its volunteers and congratulates the Eagle Historical Society for the honor of hosting the Southeastern Regional Convention of the Wisconsin Council for Local History."

EHS appreciates the thought behind the resolution.

Obituary Clifford W. Jensen



Clifford W. Jensen, 85, died Friday, September 16, 2005, at Kiwanis Manor in East Troy. He was born April 22, 1920, in Chicago to James and Johanna (Langush) Jensen.

He had worked as a farmer, truck driver, gravel pit operator and operator of Troy Terrace Mobile Home Park in East Troy. He had also volunteered at Kiwanis Manor and Troy Center Fire Department.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Janet (Peege); his children, Chuck (Sharon) Jensen of New Mexico, Melinda (Don) Brunn of East Troy and Jeff Jensen of Eagle; grandchildren, Charles (Leslie) Jensen, Danielle Blankenship, Tim (Jill) Pett, Jason Brunn and Adam Czarapata; and great-grandchildren, Amanda Baker, Avery and Delaney Dopke and Parker Pett. He was preceded in death by his daughter, Robin Pett, and grandson, Chris Jensen.

A private family gathering was held and his body cremated, with ashes to be spread at the farm. Mealy's Funeral Home served the family.

The family would like to thank those who expressed love and appreciation to Cliff and his family. They would also like to express gratitude to Dr. Dan Cleary and the health care workers at Kiwanis Manor.

Cliff moved to his mother's farm in Eagle because his brother Leroy was unsuccessful in running it. He met Janet in the IGA store her mother (Helen Peege) ran on Main Street. Janet helped out in the store even while attending Lawrence College in Appleton. Her father (Herbert Peege) worked as a purchasing agent for Trostell Tannery in Milwaukee. Cliff and Janet married in the Eagle United Methodist Church in 1943 and had their reception in the opera house. On the farm, Cliff's mother lived on one floor of the farmhouse and he and Janet lived on the other.

About 1967 they converted pasture land in East Troy into a mobile home park. The rest of the farm is in the Town of Eagle.



Obituary Frederic K. Lake

Frederic K. Lake, 76, of Eagle, died October 7, 2005, at his residence.

He was born April 5, 1929, to the late Scott and Clara (Kern) Lake and lived in Eagle all of his life, with the exception of his years of military service. He had retired as a repairman and millwright from Wisconsin Motors after 40 years. He was a veteran of the 2d armored division (Hell on wheels) of the U.S. Army, having served in Korea; a member of the Palmyra Masonic Lodge (He was a 32d-degree Mason. The only higher rank is the honorary 33rd, which is reserved for dignitaries); and a member of the National Rifle Association.

He is survived by his wife, Carol (nee Bergstrom); children, Virginia (Dennis) Jost of Oak Creek, Rita (John) Lackovich of Bloomington, Illinois, Fred Lake of East Troy and Mark (Heidi) Lake of Eagle; seven grandchildren; one great-grandchild; nieces and nephews; and other relatives and friends. He was preceded in death by three brothers—Herbert Lake, William Lake, and Roy Kern—and one nephew.

A funeral service and Masonic services were held on October 11 at Mealy's Funeral Home in Eagle. Fred's body was cremated; the family is awaiting the arrival of an official U.S. Army marker before spreading his ashes. If desired, memorials may be made to the Lakeland Animal Welfare Society, PO Box 1000, Elkhorn WI 53121.

In addition to his regular business, Fred's father had the largest traveling penny arcade in the U.S. From April until October each year he traveled with carnivals and circus sideshows. By the time Fred was 5, he was traveling with his father, making change. As he grew, he learned how to maintain the equipment and vehicles. When Fred entered the Army in the 1950s, his father sold the machines. Fred used his knowledge on tanks.

Carol's uncle and aunt, Gordon and Marcella Mertens of Chicago, spent weekends in Eagle, where Gordon had purchased Paradise Springs in 1944. Also a resident of Chicago, Carol spent time in Eagle as a babysitter for them. She met Fred, and they were married in the Waukesha County Courthouse in 1954.

Fred grew up on the land his family owned on Hwy 59 on the east side of the village. When Fred and Carol married, Scott Lake gave them property for a house, and after a basement had been dug he and Fred put up their home, which is located on what is now N. Sherman Street.

Scott and Fred raised the roof on the old creamery and added a second-story apartment. The first tenant was Dr. Rosenkranz, who had just come to practice in Eagle in 1954. Carol worked in his office for 40 years, even after he moved to the Mukwonago Medical Center.



When Fred and Carol's children were in their teens, the couple bought used carnival rides—including a carousel, octopus and tilt-a-whirl—and rebuilt them to like new condition. The family worked at carnivals during the summer months, mainly at church festivals. This income provided higher education for the children. All during these years, neither Fred nor Carol ever missed a day of work.

Fred was also an avid collector of antique toys (especially trucks) and Army memorabilia.

Eagle Historical Society, Inc.
217 Main Street
P.O. Box 454
Eagle, WI 53119-0454



Mark your calendars!

DATE: Saturday, December 3
TIME: Ticket Sales 10:00 A.M.
Drawing Held 3:00 P.M.
PLACE: The Municipal Building
Main Street (Hwy NN),
Eagle

HOLIDAY RAFFLE

Sponsored by Eagle Historical Society