

# EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

Oct 2022



Please check your address label for the year “2022” to determine your renewal status. If you have any questions, please contact Gina Neist at 262-594-8961 or [curator@eaglehistoricalsociety.org](mailto:curator@eaglehistoricalsociety.org). Thank you.

**Check out Eagle Historical Society on Facebook.**  
**Please like and share to add more friends.**

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### WELCOME NEW MEMBER:

Brehm, Andy \$10

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

**Family \$15.00**

Clark, Ralph & Marion

**Join us for a Pumpkin Party on the Patio**

**Sat., Oct. 29**

**12:00-3:30 pm**



**Games, crafts and treats.**  
**View an exhibit of Halloween costumes from the 1980s.**  
**Meet Dino the Dinosaur.**

Try your skill playing:

- the Eyeball Toss
- Rocket Launch
- Build a Tower
- Cartoon Trivia and more.

### ARTIFACT DONATIONS

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

Altenburg, Eileen—Class photo, auction bill  
Bovee, Scott—3 photos of Bovee Farm  
Duran, Gregg—Military Items  
Evans, Janet—Ration books & photos  
Hanson, Donna—Eagle baseball uniform  
Moeller, Dick—Eagle Hardware yardstick

Roberts, Mary Clohisy—Newspaper articles, photos, postcards, birthday book  
Rockteacher, Dave—KM Days photos  
Spurrell, Bev—Prayer book  
Steinke, Jesse—

Book, *Images Around Eagle*  
Tritz, Carol—Photo KM Days objects

### EHS Board

#### President

Jeff Nowicki, 2024

#### Vice-President

Eloise Hall, 2023

#### Secretary

Art Peavy, 2025

#### Treasurer

Pat Hawes, 2024

#### Financial Officer

Jim Neist

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#### 2023

JoAnn Gilbert  
Diana Hall  
Eloise Hall  
Gina Neist  
Mike Rice

#### 2024

Pat Hawes  
Peter Jones  
Richard Moeller  
Carrie Peavy  
Carolyn Rosprim

#### 2025

Scott Bovee  
Janet Evans  
Jim Neist  
Jeff Nowicki  
Art Peavy

#### 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

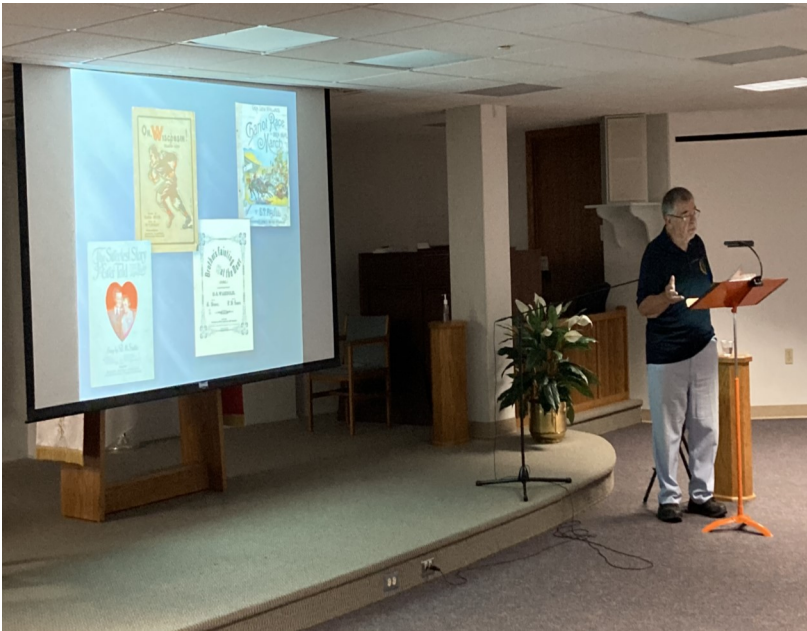
### WEBSITE:

[www.eaglehistoricalsociety.org](http://www.eaglehistoricalsociety.org)

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



## MUSIC: A MIRROR TO OUR STORY



Photos by Gina Neist.

Residents at Fairhaven in Whitewater enjoyed another presentation of Music: A Mirror to Our Story by noted historian, Ed Pierce, and his assistants back in June.



*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.*

## PICNIC WITH THE POLICE



Children had fun trying to beat the clock sorting out a selection of key chains from a collection donated by an EHS member.

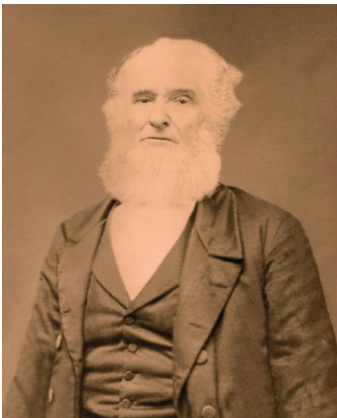
We had a beautiful day for this event in late August at the Village Park. Adults enjoyed reminiscing with Jeff Nowicki, Art and Carrie Peavy about the display of promotional artifacts from Eagle businesses which were often handed out to customers at Christmastime in years past.



## THE BOVEE FAMILY STORY (Part 1)

by Scott Bovee

My family story takes us back to a time when there were no phones. There were no planes, trains, or automobiles. Abe Lincoln was serving in the Illinois State legislature and would not become our 16th president for another two decades. The Territory of Wisconsin had not yet achieved statehood, and the Village of Eagle had not yet been established. The terrain was covered with marshes, prairie and burr oak openings. For the most part, the soil consisted of a rich loam and gravel, and the greater part of the land was tillable<sup>1</sup>, attracting settlers far and wide.



Matthias Jacob Bovee

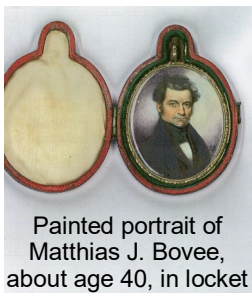
The Bovee foundational family patriarch, Matthias J. Bovee (1793-1872), was a native of Amsterdam, NY. He grew up with Martin Van Buren, the 8th U.S. President, and was distantly related. Their great, great, great grandmothers were sisters. He taught school in winter and worked the family farm in summer. Matthias served in the War of 1812 as a paymaster of the 121st Regiment of the New York State Infantry and in 1826 served as a representative in the 15th District New York Assembly. In 1834, he served in the



Elizabeth Maria Bovee

24th Congress of the United States and voted in favor of the first railroad charter in our country. He engaged in mercantile pursuits and became a successful businessman. Matthias married Elizabeth Maria Bovee (1793-1884), and together they had nine children, five boys and four girls.

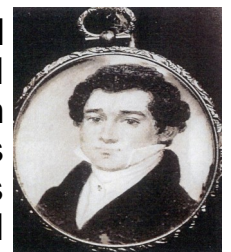
In 1842, Matthias and his brother decided to "Go west. . . and grow up with the country", and so they did just that by leaving NY to prospect this unsettled land with plans to relocate if deeming that feasible. We may not know what factors led to this decision, but we do know the impact that the families' efforts had on the early development of Eagle as well as their contributions to our state and our country.



Painted portrait of Matthias J. Bovee, about age 40, in locket

During the following year, Matthias' family of 11, his mother (Jane Dods Bovee), and his brother Phillip and his family began their 1100-mile journey westward over the Great Lakes. This trip to Milwaukee likely took about three to four weeks, and it is believed that they stayed in Mukwonago until securing a deed for a home dated July 1, 1843 in Eagle, Milwaukee County, Wisconsin Territory.

Matthias, son William and brother Phillip organized School District #9 Eagle Centre. Matthias, along with his son Marvin H., founded the Robert Morris Masonic Lodge #115 in Eagle. They were also both called to Madison to help frame the state constitution. Matthias served as a Justice of the Peace for 10 years. He engaged in agricultural pursuits and acquired over a thousand acres of land, some of which was turned over to his children.



Painted portrait of Phillip Vedder Bovee from a locket

<sup>1</sup>History of Waukesha County, pg. 736, Western Historical Company MDCCCLXXX

(Continued on page 4)

Interesting facts appear in the historic records of Matthias and Elizabeth's children. Eldest child, Sarah married Thomas Pittman who platted out Eagle and later turned down a proposal to have the town named after him.

Emily married Jeremiah Parsons who ran a hotel near present day Jericho Corners on Hwys. NN & E and from whom the name Jericho was derived (Jerry & Co.) He had built the hotel to catch the lead mine traffic.

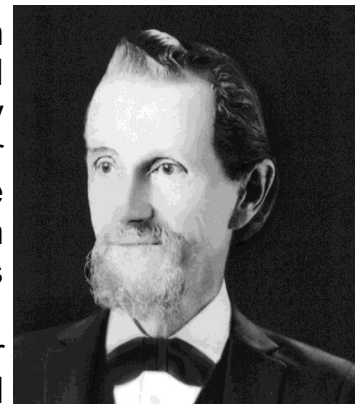
Elizabeth A. married another early settler and successful farmer, Joseph Sprague.

Edward originally located on a farm which is now the Sprague farm. Later he established a grocery store on Main Street in the building now occupied by the Steinhoff Law Office.

According to census records, Halsey was a farmer and Eagle Postmaster.

William helped build the Milwaukee-St. Paul Railroad. After 1850, he went by wagon train to California in search of gold (as did so many others during the Gold Rush) and returned to Eagle after only a few years. His daughter Ella's grave is the oldest in Oak Ridge Cemetery, and daughter Edna was the wife of Ezra Clemons, a superintendent of the St. Paul Railway in Seattle.

Marvin H. was only 16 when he and his family came ashore in Milwaukee but would grow up to become an educator and politician. He served as Town Chairman of Eagle and County Board Chairman of Waukesha County. While serving as a senator in the 10th Senate District he abolished capital punishment in the State of Wisconsin (1853) and was also prominently involved in prison reform. He received monetary and/or moral support for his cause from leading national figures such as Horace Greeley, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, William Cullen Bryant, and Oliver Wendell Holmes. In the late 1870s, he sold his farm in Eagle and moved his family to Whitewater where they are buried.



Marvin Henry Bovee

Matthias' sister, Polly, of Amsterdam, NY, was married to Benedict Arnold, a Major General in the War of 1812, and a nephew of the famed Benedict Arnold. At some point, Elizabeth's brother Jacob settled in the area; his grandson, Manley Scott Bovee, was an undertaker and operated a furniture store in Eagle which later became known as Mealy's.

Jane Dods Bovee was the first female settler to die in the Town of Eagle on June 16, 1844. She, along with Matthias, Elizabeth, William, Sarah, and their child Ella were all originally buried in the first Town of Eagle Cemetery. Those graves were all exhumed in May of 1907 and reinterred at the Oak Ridge Cemetery uniting them with other family members, while others rest in peace in the Oak Knoll and Jericho Cemeteries. Jane Dods Bovee, along with possibly another child, are still buried in the old cemetery.

My limb on the family tree belongs to Matthias and Elizabeth's third child, Benedict, who married Catherine Cramer. Benedict and Catherine had three sons Matthias 'Matt' John, Marvin W. (my great grandfather) and Frank.

*(Continued on page 5)*



Benedict Arnold Bovee

Benedict was a farmer in Eagle and donated land on the corner of Hwy. LO and Sprague Road where the first Eagleville School was built. Construction didn't start for another 10 years because of arguments over location. A house was rented for \$15 a year so that children could attend school. In 1859, the school was finally authorized and a 24' x 30' square x 12'-high, framed building was built. It



Catherine Cramer Bovee

remained on Bovees' corner for only 10 years. In the Autumn of 1869, it was moved to its current location below the hill. Benedict also served on the Eagleville School Board.

'Matt', a farmer, suffered a leg injury while serving in the 24th Wisconsin Infantry in the Civil War and ran a restaurant located along the railroad tracks around 1900. (See p.10.)

Marvin W. and his wife Margaret had five children: Ben, James (my grandfather), Leslie, Katherine, and Francis. He was a farmer and served on the Eagleville School Board.

Many battles of the Black Hawk War of 1832 were fought in Illinois and on lands that would eventually become known as southern Wisconsin. Peace treaties were still being negotiated when the Bovees were establishing their home in Eagle, and it was not unusual for early settlers such as them to see Native Americans return to this area to camp, hunt, fish and harvest crops from lands that their ancestors had occupied and called home for many, many years prior to their arrival.

In the words of my Aunt Katherine, the following is a story passed down by her father, Marvin W. Bovee—an experience he had as a little boy:



The Bovee Family Homestead above taken in the 1910s.

*In the Spring when the snow melted, a stream of water ran through a ravine on the Bovee farm below the house to Eagle Lake. The Potowatomis used to camp there. On one morning, the family woke up to find several Indians sleeping inside of their house on the floor to get out of the cold. They were friendly to my grandmother and father. One time they invited them down to their camp. As they neared the camp, something cooking smelled delicious. They were invited to eat supper with them. Fortunately, they had already eaten because they were cooking muskrat stew. He also mentioned seeing a little papoose hanging in its cradle on a tree, with tears running down its face from the smoke of the fire.*

(continued on page 10)

This story will be continued in a future newsletter. All photos were provided by Scott Bovee unless otherwise noted.



It has been a busy summer at 217 E. Main Street! The back porch of the museum has been removed in preparation for the construction of a meeting room on the first floor. This will allow us to host small gatherings for workshops and programs. We will have better storage available for our growing collection of artifacts.

Many of our members have already been hard at work on this project. Special thanks are extended to Pett Construction and Peter Jones for their efforts and expertise on the new foundation.

To kick off this expansion, we have already received a \$10,000 donation from Vernetta Heare and over \$6,000 from other sources. Thank you very much! Donors' names will be included on a plaque in the new meeting room. Thank you to our generous donors!

#### **Hummingbird, \$25 - \$99**

Annette Baker, Ann & Jessica Chamberlain, Donna Fanshaw, Eunice Kelso, John & Tammy McCormack, Lynn Sindel, Richard & Kathleen Thayer, Pat & Bob Walters, and Donations in our "Bird Cage" from *Music: A Mirror to our Story*, *Salute to Our Sponsors*, *Ice Cream Social* and *PECB Concert*

#### **Sparrow, \$100 - \$499**

Bill & Jackie Adams, 3 Anonymous Donors, Buscher Properties, Carol Calkins, Citizens Bank, Eagle Dental, Family First Care Clinic, Gibson Family Funeral Home, Bernie & Deb Gilbert, Roy & Ellen Gregg, Jeff & Ellie Hawes, Heckel Tool Mfg. Corp., Anne Jung, MPC Inside Designs LLC, Al & Martina Wegner, In Memory of Betty Weimer, and Donations in our "Bird Cage" from *Oak Ridge Cemetery Tour* and *Victorian Undertaker*

#### **Robin, \$500 - \$999**

Eagle Lions Club

#### **Barred Owl, \$1,000 - \$9,999**

Anonymous Donor

#### **Eagle, \$10,000**

Vernetta Heare



## KNIGHTS OF THE ALTAR AT ST. THERESA CATHOLIC CHURCH

*By Don Von Rueden*

Hello from Troutman, North Carolina. Recently, I had the opportunity to meet Elaine Ledrowski on the Eagle, WI, Facebook page. I grew up in the Eagle, WI, area being born in 1948 to Ray and Topsy (Eileen) Von Rueden on a farm about three miles southwest of Eagle on Hwy. 67 at the intersection of Highways 67 and N at the time. After Dad passed away and Mom moved to Eagle, it became a horse ranch. I had five siblings; I was the oldest and then Jim, Ken, Bill, Mary and Larry.

Elaine and I communicated back and forth in particular about St. Theresa Church where Mom and Dad were married and all of us were baptized, confirmed and went to church every Sunday. We also attended St. Theresa Grade School. I started school in the church where we had a classroom off the church as well as upstairs before moving to the new school. Our conversation carried into being a server at St. Theresa and an organization called Knights of the Altar. Matter of fact, I have a certificate of said organization hanging on my office wall. Today, as I watch mass servers on the altar, I think back to the Latin Mass days when servers had a lot more responsibility. During Holy Week services, we would have several practices with one of the nuns, and one did not dare mess up. LOL. We all did have to learn Latin prayers at the time, and they were extensive.

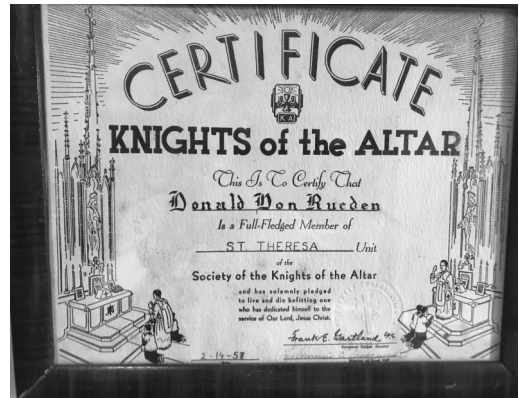


Photo above: A rosary case with rosary inside and inscription on case of "To A Faithful Altar Boy". The rosary I use today I got while I was at St. Francis de Sales Seminary by winning a contest in English. I think my teacher's name was Fr. Seramur but not 100% on that.

As I remember the Knights of the Altar, one could earn points, and then you got a pin. There was a center pin and then there were other pins that one earned, and each had a little chain that connected from the main pin to the new pin. I wish that I could remember more than what I just shared, but that's what I remember.

Another Knights of the Altar or server memory is that we had many more processions throughout the year. Corpus Christie—we had a procession out the church and down the road to the school. Christmas—the servers learned Latin

Christmas songs and marched around the church with lit candles. I remember when we served a wedding, we could take the veil, used to hold the Monstrance by a priest, to the back of church and hold it up in the doorway to get a little stipend from the wedding couple; that was tradition.



My brother Jim and me dressed for church.

*All photos for this article were provided by Don Von Rueden.*

## GROWING UP AT RT. 2 BOX 20

*By Don Von Rueden*

Growing up on a farm in Eagle included our huge garden of pickles. The time-frame that we are discussing is the early 1960s. One of the reasons that we had an acre of pickles is that we had a small farm for that timeframe and needed additional income. We only had 60 acres with 40 being tillable and milking 8 to 10 cows by



hand. Mom and Dad made it work with that scenario until I was a freshman in college. The reaction that I get from many folks as I tell the story is, "No way that your family made a living in the early '60s operating that way!" In my first article, I indicated that I had five other siblings, and one was born almost every year for a while so there was a good labor force. LOL. Everyone pitched in and did their part, and that created a close family. We said the rosary every night after milking the cows as far back as I can remember until

I headed off to college. During Lent, the TV plug got pulled, and we played together as a family such games as Chinese checkers, ping pong, etc.

Back to the pickles. For anyone that knows pickles, an acre of pickles is a lot of pickles. We picked a half-acre each day and hauled them to a pickle factory in Palmyra. One thing we learned quickly is that the pickles that brought the most income were the small ones, and if you were not on top of it you had big cucumbers which didn't bring very much income. We also would take different weeks to serve Mass at St. Theresa Church throughout the summer. Dad and Mom were busy with the farm and a huge garden besides the pickles that needed tending every day as well as laundry almost every day using a wringer washing machine and wash tubs. We boys had to get ourselves to St. Theresa, which was three miles away, so we rode our bikes. Those old enough to remember, Fr. Casey (Nickname), was our pastor at the time. One never gets pickle stain off of your hands when you do it every day, and one day Fr. Casey told us that we needed to wash our hands before serving. LOL. After we shared the pickle industry story with him, we were good to go. Besides, he needed servers every day.



I am 74 years old today and thinking back on those days. It was hard work, but it all paid off in the end because Larry, Mary, Bill, Ken, Jim and Don Von Rueden all went on to lead very productive lives! A great big "Thank You" to Mom and Dad... Topsy (Eileen) and Ray Von Rueden!!

*All photos for this article were provided by Don Von Rueden.*



## OBITUARY

### Chapman, Kathleen I.

*Jan. 18, 1930—Oct. 2, 2022*



Kathleen I. Chapman, 92, of Eagle, WI, peacefully passed away on Sunday, October 2, 2022 at Birchrock Castle Senior Living in Mukwonago.

Kathleen was born on January 18, 1930 in Waukesha County, WI, the daughter of Roy and Marguerite (Cruver) Smart. She was united in marriage to James L. Chapman at the Eagle United Methodist Church, and the couple would go on to enjoy 55 years of marriage together until Jim's passing in 2003. God blessed Kathleen and Jim with three loving children, Michael, Cheryl and Cindy. After working several years at Waukesha Memorial Hospital, Kathleen owned and operated the Eagle Variety and Coffee Shop with her husband in Eagle for 22 years. She had a strong work

ethic and enjoyed the many customers that she met along life's way. Kathleen was a lifelong member of Eagle United Methodist Church and was a volunteer for many church functions and events. She also volunteered for many years at the Eagle Food Pantry. She will be deeply missed by those she leaves behind.

She is survived by: her two daughters, Cheryl Chapman of Eagle, WI and Cindy (Bill) Kaether of McFarland, WI; her six grandchildren, Julie, Heather, Sarah, David, Jeffrey, and Brett; four great-grandchildren; two great-great-grandchildren; her sister, Paula Wade of Fort Atkinson, WI; daughter-in-law, Linda (Tim) Karbler of Hartland, WI; sister-in-law, Faye Chapman of Waukesha, WI; sister-in-law, Nancy (Melvin) Dey of Burlington, WI; sister-in-law Shirley Lenicheck of Wauwatosa, WI; and sister-in-law Barbara Chapman of Troy Center, WI. She is also survived by a number of nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends.

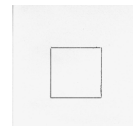
She was preceded in death by: her parents; her loving husband, James Chapman; her dear son, Michael Chapman; and her siblings, Fred Smart, Patricia Clarke, Maxine Kennel, and Pamela Luedtke.

Memorials in Kathleen's honor were made to Eagle United Methodist Church.

Kathleen was laid to rest next to her husband during a private family graveside service at Little Prairie Cemetery in Little Prairie, WI.

Gibson Family Funeral Homes of Eagle and Palmyra, WI served the family. Online condolences were placed at [gibsonfuneral.com](http://gibsonfuneral.com).

Eagle Historical Society, Inc.  
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Eagle, WI 53119-0454



Mailing Label



## THE COMMERCIAL HOTEL

M. J. BOVEE, Proprietor.

L. A. W. HOTEL.

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TO STOP :: :: ::

Large, well ventilated rooms, newly and elegantly furnished. First class  
table board. Board by day or week.

EAGLE, WAUKESHA COUNTY, WISCONSIN.

**Top Left:** Original railroad hotel (also called the Commercial Hotel). A 1900 census lists Matthias J. Bovee as the hotel keeper; the building was razed in 1958.

**Bottom Left:** Commercial Hotel is the second building to the left of present-day restaurant, Red Roof Station.

**Top right:** Listing from 1899 *Waukesha County Directory*. Photos from EHS archives.

If the Eagle Historical Society has provided you with meaningful information about the place we think of as home, please consider including the EHS in your will (estate?). Naming EHS as a donation recipient in your will or obituary is an easy way to help ensure the continuation of the important work done to preserve our history and heritage. If you have questions or want to know more, please contact Elaine at the Eagle Historical Society at 262-594-8961. EHS is a nonprofit corporation organized under the Internal Revenue Code 501 (c) (3). All membership fees and donations are tax exempt.