

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2003

Eagle, Wisconsin

EHS Board

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Elaine Ledrowski

594-3301

Newsletter Editor

Darlene Landmann

594-3430

EHS News

Membership

EHS welcomes new member Robert D. Monroe. Thanks to the following for joining at a higher level:

Sustaining, \$25-\$49

Gregory & Larilyn Carpenter, Alan & Erica Ledrowski, Carl & Lynne Seitz, and Larry & Diane Wilkinson

Sponsor, \$50-\$99

Mary E. (Polly) Cramer and Arthur & Betty Isleb

Patron, \$100 & over

Russ & Jill Steinhart

Honorary

The society congratulates Orin Benson, who has become an honorary member

Donations

Donations were received from Danielle Birke, Donna Fanshaw, Irma Jolliffe, Beau Lake, Bruce Laine, Welthy Mueller, Eloise Richards, and Eileen (Topsy) Von Rueden.

Dues

You may notice that the notation "03" follows your name above your address on the back page. This indicates that you have paid your 2003 dues. If you do not see this notation, please pay your dues.

Plant/Rummage Sale

Eagle's 9th annual community rummage sale is scheduled for May 8-11. As in previous years, EHS will be selling plants and rummage in the municipal building on that Friday and Saturday, beginning at 8 a.m. Any donations of plants or rummage will be welcome.

Call Pat Wilton at 594-2294 for more information.◇

CORRECTION

The article on Vinton Sherman in the winter newsletter contained an error. It was his grandmother Stead, not Sherman, who ran the confectionary shop. The editor apologizes for publishing incorrect information. This error was overlooked until EHS received the following letter:

Dear Friends,

We always enjoy receiving your newsletter. Eagle is always "home" for us.

We've noticed a small error on page 6 of the winter 2003 edition. Regarding line 4, the confectionary store was owned by Vinton's grandmother Mary Stead (nee Smart) until her death, when it was inherited by her daughter, Sylvia Stead Sherman. Sylvia razed the original frame building and built the present brick structure.

My father, Jay W. Stead, lived there with his mother, Mary; his sister Sylvia; and his nephew Vinton. A "grandmother Sherman" never lived at the store's location.

Sincerely,
Mary Lou Stead Hinckley,
grand-daughter of Mary Stead ◇

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Thank You, Volunteers

By Elaine Ledrowski, curator

It takes many volunteers working on different projects to keep the Eagle Historical Society a vital organization. The board of directors would like to thank all of the members who volunteered, whether they worked at home, the museum, or at bake sales and other fund-raising activities. A special thanks to the ladies at the Eagle Meadows apartments on Park View for assisting with the mailing of our newsletters and to Frank Latona for using his woodworking skills to repair museum items.

At the general meeting on April 15th, certificates of appreciation were presented to the volunteers who had worked at and staffed the museum each week. Eloise Richards totaled the hours volunteers spent at the museum from 1998 to 2002; the grand total was over 4000 hours! Members receiving awards included: Virginia Dudzek, Irma Jolliffe, Don Ledrowski, Elaine Ledrowski, Ed Mueller, Welthy Mueller, Florence Neary, Gerald Neary, and Eris Thurston. These members volunteered a minimum of 100 hours.

Eris Thurston, who acts as docent on Fridays while working on projects, gave EHS 682 hours of her time. Only the curator and financial officer spent more time at the museum.



Ed and Welthy Mueller

Ed and Welthy Mueller, the oldest volunteers, also work at the museum on Friday mornings, and Welthy coordinates the bake sales. Ed has put in 365 volunteer hours, and Welthy, 510. They will both turn 90 this year and become honorary members of EHS. ♦

The "Good Old Days" Were Not for Sissies

Sometimes we forget how different life was in the 19th-century United States, and even early in the last century. The following selections indicate how difficult life was then.

100 years ago

The average life expectancy in the US was 47.

Only 14% of homes had a bathtub.

Only 8% had a telephone. A 3-minute call from Denver to New York City cost eleven dollars.

There were only 8,000 cars and only 144 miles of paved roads.

The average wage was 22 cents an hour. The average US worker made between \$200 and \$400 per year.

More than 95 percent of births took place at home. 90 percent of physicians had no college education.

The 5 leading causes of death were: pneumonia, tuberculosis, diarrhea, heart disease, and stroke. Insulin and antibiotics hadn't been invented yet. One in ten adults couldn't read or write. Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.

Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter at the corner drugstore. Coca-cola contained cocaine.

Taken from the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway website in January, 1991

Excerpts from

The Perry Family, Wisconsin Pioneers

Compiled by Virginia Perry Parker, 1952. This account is about her grandparents.

Sometime early in the spring of 1871, four covered wagons left Troy Center, Wisconsin, bound for homesteading in Nebraska. Among these pioneers was Aseph Perry. His wife, Mary Ann Fairbrother Perry, was then carrying their first child. Grandma Perry remained at home with her parents, the Richard Fairbrothers, Eagle, with plans to meet her husband sometime after the birth of the child.

There were no roads as we know them—simply trails off into a country populated with unfriendly Indians and other unpredictable and unforeseen dangers. Upon arrival in Nebraska, Grandpa filed a claim for a homestead in Franklin County. The major task was building some kind of dwelling. In the book, “Romance of the Rails,” by A.C. Laut, there is a fine description of sod house building: “Only Michigan and Wisconsin had lumber for houses. The first house was of tough sod, with fireplace or range for heat, or an outside bake oven for cooking. The window holes had parchment panes. The door hinges were straps of leather. The first floor was usually hard-tramped earth. It was a marvelously heroic period; but it took a terrible toll of human life in pioneer mothers hundreds of miles from medical aid in childbirth; and still more terrible toll of little children not born sturdy enough because their mothers had overworked. Of Life Comforts as we know them, there were none.”

In the fall, the sod-house well under way, it was time for Grandma to arrive with her new baby, Cora. Grandpa had made arrangements for her to come by train. They lived in the sod house until Grandpa became a railroad foreman sometime in 1875. Life in a sod house was far from civilized. Bullsnares considered it their special domain—they found the snug crevices between the sod chunks especially habitable. With the warmth of cooking and the smell of meat or milk, they would peer out or slither down the wall any time of day or night. Some westward-trekking pioneer gave the Perrys a female cat, who promptly produced a litter of kittens. The kittens disappeared one by one. Finally, one day, Grandpa found a large, well-fed bullsnares in the box—the last kitten gone. He killed the snake, and Cora, then about three, said, “Oh, pa, pa, you’ve hurt my ‘pretty!’” There were so few pets or toys that any living thing probably seemed attractive to a little girl. Rattlesnakes were not scarce, either, and the bulldog, Duke, saved the children many times from attack.

The family had buffalo meat occasionally. The buffalo meat was strong, stringy, and tough, but was a welcome change in a rather meager diet, which consisted mainly of breads, johnnycakes, dried beef, salt pork, potatoes, beans and, rarely, dried fruits. The foods were filling, but not too tasty or nourishing. Foods that had been common fare in Wisconsin were now considered delicacies. Before the government aided the settlers by sending supplements for their diet, the settlers lived on johnny cake, meal after meal. Baby Cora got no teeth until she was almost two years old. The circuit rider doctor told Grandma this was because of inadequate diet—lack of calcium and other bone- and tooth-building elements. Many children were in the same condition; in addition to which the strongly alkaline water made kidney complications common. Swelling joints, aching backs and painful urination were symptoms.

The Perrys abandoned their farm land in Nebraska when it became apparent that the prairie fires, grasshoppers, dust storms and drouths could not be combatted with a plow and team—that it would take irrigation, more rainfall, or both. So Grandfather, when the railroad came through Franklin County, became an employee of it. During the first days of railroad work, Grandpa became very ill with the fever, and decided he must see a doctor who was 40 miles distant. He was too ill to drive, so Grandma, with two or more small children, took the reins. Their road was a mere “trail,” compared to today’s superhighways—rough, rocky, bumpy and dusty. Grandpa sat with his rifle in the crook of his arm, to ward off wolves, or any irate Indians. While driving over a pitch-hole in the trail, the gun accidentally discharged, the bullet passing through his left elbow. There were still 20 rough miles to travel before they reached a settlement, so Grandma wedged the two smallest children between her knees, and whipping the horses, raced the remaining distance. There, at the village, a doctor dressed the wound, and being a circuit rider,

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

ing doctor, told them he would ride by a few days later and inspect the shattered arm. In setting the arm, the elbow joint had been so severely shattered, that the doctor told Grandpa he had two choices—to set it straight and stiff, or bent at the elbow—that it would have to remain at that angle for the rest of his life. He asked Grandpa which way to set it, and he said, “Doc, just set it so I can hold onto a plough handle when I get back to Wisconsin.” The family was also given a remedy to lessen the effects of the malaria. This medication was calomel. The grandparents returned to the construction encampment, where Grandma was to apply cold compresses to her husband’s arm. Cold, clean, water was an order almost impossible to execute, but by taking water from the river, boiling it to purify it, and putting the buckets of boiled water back in the cool river the water was not only sterile, but reasonably cool. She kept putting the compresses on the arm, but it continued to swell and fester, so she opened it with a sterile knife, and found embedded in the wound pieces of Grandfather’s shirt which had been impacted by the bullet. With this operation, the wound began to heal, and when the doctor appeared, Grandpa was well on the road to recovery. But for the rest of his life his left arm elbow-joint was stiff as a result of the accident.

Among a crew of fifty railroad men, Grandmother was the only woman. She cooked for her own family and also for fifteen other men.

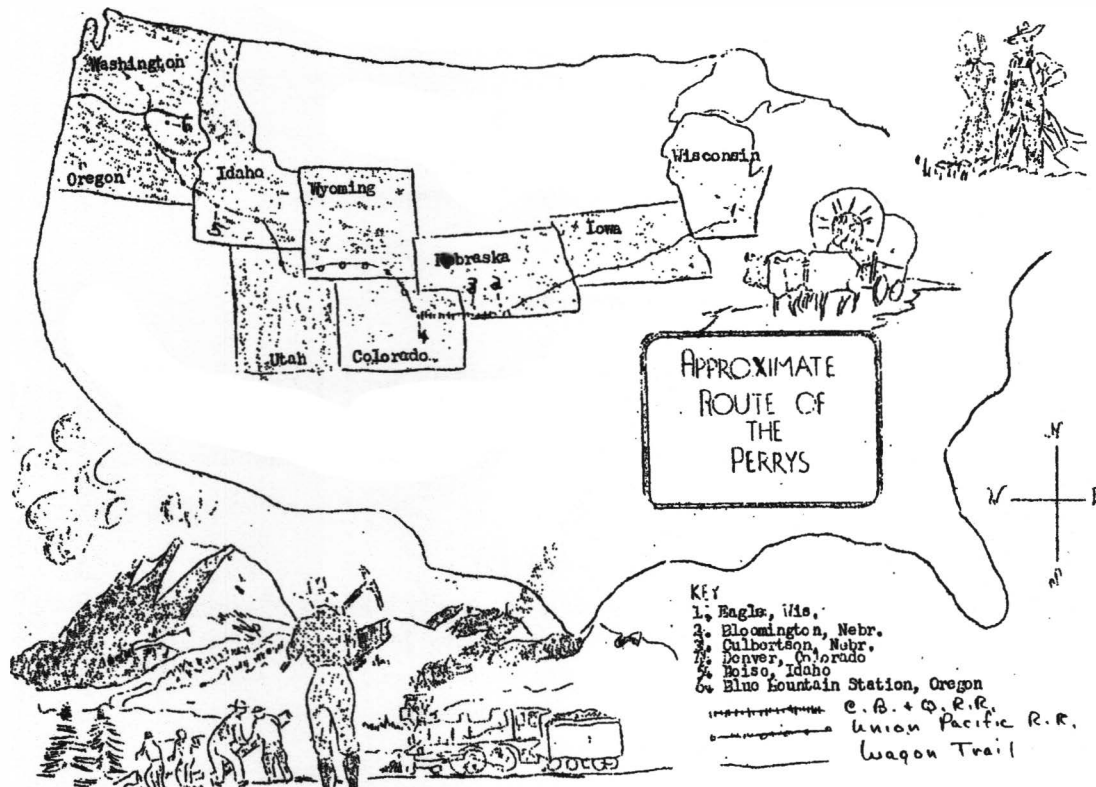
When using the covered wagon on the railroad constucting job, it was drawn by mules—twelve of them hitched in four spans of three each. When children were born—Guy and Frank, at least—they were born in the covered wagon—without medical assistance. Grandmother attended to all the details herself—even the tying of the umbilical cord. Along the route, Grandma helped to bring into the world many babies for other pioneer women who found themselves far from the comforts of home with no other assistance at the time of the birth of a new baby. Altogether during her lifetime, both in the west, and in and around Eagle, Wisconsin, she helped to deliver—most often without medical assistance—about 300 babies.

While the workers and the rest of the family were eating one day, Dad (Charles) then about six, resumed one of his favorite activities—playing with the many harnesses, bridles, saddles and whips—whips were his specialty. Picking up a long “mule-driver,” Dad flicked it across the hind-quarters of the nearest mule. The mule lashed out with his hoof, grazing the right side of Dad’s face. It was a serious wound, but fortunately no bones were broken—just a mighty patch of torn and ragged flesh. The crescentshaped gouge extended from above the eyebrow, across the eyelid and over the temple into the hair above his ear. The camp was fifty miles from the nearest town or doctor, so his mother, using a needle sterilized over a flame and threaded with linen mending thread, took the necessary stitches to close the wound. There was no anesthetic, no modern “wonder drugs”...just the faith of a worried family and as much care as loving hands had time to give. For six days the little boy lay under a canvasroofed tent in the hottest part of a prairie summer—the heat under the tent reaching well over 100 degrees; his eyes and mouth were swollen shut, his face an unrecognizable purple blob. Grandma had covered the wound with court plaster, leaving a small drainage hole over the ear, and bathed him as often as she could in her busy days with cool water. Yet, under these almost primitive conditions, Dad recovered completely.

The children attended schools if there were any organized within a reasonable distance of Grandpa’s work. School, formal education at least, then, was a “hit-and-miss” proposition. Dad first attended school in Blue Mountain Station, Oregon. The school, as Dad recalls it, was a tiny frame and log building, and only four or five children attended. A male school-teacher presided.

Sometime in the spring of 1884, after having received word of the death of Greatgrandfather Fairbrother (Grandma’s father), and that he had willed his farm in Eagle to Grandma, the family returned by train, to Wisconsin. After returning to Eagle in 1884, Grandma and Grandpa lived on their farm southwest of there until 1925, when they sold the farm and moved into the village proper. They lived there until their deaths, Grandma in March, 1932, and her husband in July, 1936. So ended the lives of two adventurous pioneers.

Note: While living in Eagle, Mary Ann Fairbrother Perry made many quilts. A quilt made by Mary Ann in 1920 and donated by Jean Lewandoski of Middleton is on display at the museum. (Information from Jean Lewandoski)



The following two pieces were taken from the website of the Smoky Valley Genealogical Society in February, 2003.

RULES FOR TEACHERS 1872

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the pupils.
4. Men teachers may take one evening each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go to church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school, the teachers may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool or public halls, or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.
9. The teacher who performs his labor faithfully and without fault for five years will be given an increase of twenty-five cents per week in his pay, providing the Board of Education approves.

Following are excerpts from an 1895 graduation test given at the eighthgrade level. In a July 9, 2000 article in the Salina Journal, Superintendent of Schools Gary Norris explained that very few people actually took the test, because very few went on to high school during that time period. Their graduation rate was only 10 percent. (Teachers generally had an 8th-grade education.) Samples of the exam questions follow.

(Continued on page 6)

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**EXAMINATION GRADUATION QUESTIONS
OF SALINE COUNTY, KANSAS**

April 13, 1895

J.W. Armstrong, County Superintendent

GRAMMAR

Define Verse, Stanza, and Paragraph

What are the Principal Parts of a verb? Give Principal Parts of do, lie, lay and run.

Define Case. Illustrate each case.

Write a composition of about 150 words and show therein that you understand the practical use of the rules of grammar.

ARITHMETIC

A wagon box is 2 ft. deep, 10 feet long, and 3 ft. wide. How many bushels of wheat will it hold?

District No. 33 has a valuation of \$35,000. What is the necessary levy to carry on a school seven months at \$50 per month and have \$104 for incidentals?

Find the interest of \$512.60 for 8 months and 18 days at 7 per cent.

Write a Bank Check, a Promissory Note, and a Receipt.

U.S. HISTORY

Give the epochs into which U.S. History is divided.

Name events connected with the following dates: 1607, 1620, 1800, 1849, and 1865.

ORTHOGRAPHY

Define the following prefixes and use in connection with a word: Bi, dis, mis, pre, semi, post, non, inter, mono, super.

Use the following correctly in sentences: Cite, site, sight, fane, fain, feign, vane, vain, vein, raze, raise, rays.

GEOGRAPHY

How do you account for the extremes of climate in Kansas?

Name all the republics of Europe and give capital of each.

Why is the Atlantic Coast colder than the Pacific in the same latitude?

Describe the movements of the earth. Give inclination of the earth.

How does nutrition reach the circulation?◇

IN MEMORIAM

James Baumann, James Chapman, Jerry Von Rueden

Excerpts from Letters

by Will J. Baker, written in 1972 (He was 95.)

Grandfather Baker (*ed: William B. Baker*) was a man with a wife and six children before he had ever had anything to do with training steers and working them. Have heard it said that an expert with cattle should let horses alone and vice versa with oxen.

Father was a slim, light boy when he and Grandfather started to pull stumps that day. A big white oak stump had a root showing on one side. Grandfather put the chain around this side root and started the oxen to walk around the great stump, thinking that it would turn the stump around. It only spit that root off, frightened the oxen and they started to run, and the chain hit Grandfather's thigh and wrapped around it, nearly squeezed it off. The thigh bone was splintered. (*Note attached to letter: Bill (the son) rode a horse to Milwaukee to get a doctor. The doctor set the bone as best he could and had a pail with stones in it as traction to keep the leg from getting short while it healed. After it healed, he could walk but had a bad leg. He was about 43 or 44 years old. Born in 1807.*) Grandfather was handicapped the rest of his life after his accident. He could no longer walk behind a team, and riding machines were unknown and could not be used between the stumps of the "openings" anyway. Father...sowed grain between the stumps. Dad was the eldest of the children and he had the most responsibility.

Still wet, but how lovely this lawn and big piece of oats would have looked to many hundreds of us about the end of July 1910!

Got away from Eagle in March. Relatives and friendly neighbors helped me load a box car more than 62 years ago, are all gone now. (*Note: Bill rode in a freight car with horses and possessions. Rented one car. Wife rode in passenger car. No children yet. They went spring 1910, came back August 1910. Met a full hard drought.*)

The freight with my horses and goods was side-tracked for a passenger at a little place with a water tank, small depot and stock-yards. What I first thought was a big celebration was people moving like a big hill of stirred-up ants. Horses tied to the sides of their wagons. The people milling around

the "Tank Town" in Dakota were there to beg water or buy it if they had to. All they could get was water for people to drink. I don't know whether anybody got any to get away with. ◇

How Did We Survive?

Looking back, it's hard to believe that we have lived as long as we have:

As children we would ride in cars with no seatbelts or airbags.

Riding in the back of a pickup truck on a warm day was always a special treat.

Our baby cribs were painted with bright-colored, lead-based paint. We often chewed on the crib, ingesting the paint.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors, or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes we had no helmets.

We drank water from the garden hose and not from a bottle.

We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride downhill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem.

We would leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back when the streetlights came on. No one was able to reach us all day.

We played dodgeball and sometimes the ball really hurt.

We ate cupcakes, bread and butter, and drank sugar soda, but we were never overweight; we were always outside playing.

Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment.

Some students weren't as smart as others, so they failed a grade and were held back to repeat the same grade.

That generation produced some of the greatest risk takers and problem solvers. We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all! *Source unknown* ◇



***EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.
P.O. BOX 454
EAGLE, WI 53119***

2003 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL ☐ NEW MEMBER ☐
PLEASE CHECK MEMBERSHIP DESIRED

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____

TELEPHONE # _____

MEMBERSHIP YEAR IS JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31 AND DUES ARE COLLECTED ANNUALLY

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sustaining \$25-\$49 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$50-\$99 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (65 & over) \$8 | <input type="checkbox"/> Patron \$100 & Over |

Amount Enclosed _____ **Date** _____
Please make checks payable to Eagle Historical Society Inc.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with research and documentation | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with cataloging and inventory | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with labeling of artifacts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with photography and imaging | <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with web site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clip and paste articles | <input type="checkbox"/> Perform general maintenance |
- ☐ I would like more information about the volunteer program

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE: WWW1.WCF.NET/~EHSRIDDLE

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



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Ice Cream Social & Band Concert



SUNDAY, JULY 20TH
VILLAGE PARK

SOCIAL STARTS AT 1 PM, FREE CONCERT BY
PALMYRA-EAGLE COMMUNITY BAND AT 2 PM