

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 3

Summer 1999

Membership

EHS Attains Goal

The Eagle Historical Society had 301 paid members as of July 24, 1999! Welcome to members who joined since our last newsletter.

Sustaining, \$25-49

Michael Shackelford

Sponsor, \$50-99

Tom & Patricia Heller

New Members

Bill & Jackie Adams, Howard Baker, Goldie Boettcher, Larilyn Carpenter, Mary Crosswaite, Roger Cole, Elaine J. Cook, Theresa Denio, Tom & Karrie Houlton, Robert J. Miller & Charlotte Fung, Steve & Faith Olson Sr., Art & Carrie Peavy, Mike & Cris Peters, Ruth Anne Rolfe, Kathryn Ruby, Toulia & Kim Sievers, Arta Walters, Larry & Diane Wilkinson, and Rich & Carol Wilton

Honorary Member

Clara Burton

Donations

Anna Chapman, \$25, Harriet Cruver, \$50, and Katherine Howard, \$50

These and future donations will be kept in a separate fund for improvements to the museum. ♦

Curator's Corner

By Elaine Ledrowski

We recently received the largest item (about 3.5 x 9 feet) ever donated, a livery sign from Tom and Karrie Houlton that was formerly on the north side of Novel's Coachhouse. What do you do with a large sign? Reorganize and establish a new area for the Bits and Pieces of Eagle display. The little room in the back of the museum is the setting for a new exhibit featuring items rescued from Eagle buildings.

Donations fall into different categories. The first type would be an object that pertains to the specific history of the area. For example, we have a photograph and wedding dress worn and donated by Jean Bowey. This artifact depicts the history of Eagle in 1943.

Equally important are representative history donations such as the wedding suit and photo of their grandfather donated by Virginia Dudzek and Mary Fleming. The suit is an excellent example of the style of clothing worn in 1881. Even though their grandfather lived in Oconomowoc, the suit is valuable because it very likely was typical of clothing worn by men in Eagle at that time. The photos, wedding dress, and suit are currently on display at the museum.

Another type of item to be collected is an object that is ephemeral by nature. A good example is disposable diapers. They were made to be used once and discarded. It is up to local history museums to collect and preserve these types of items. Think of all the disposable items produced in the last fifty years! Any items you have to donate would be greatly appreciated.

We have had many donations since our last news-

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EHS Incorporates

The Eagle Historical Society has been incorporated as of January 4, 1999. Its legal name is Eagle Historical Society, Inc. Forms have been filed and acknowledgement received for tax-exempt status. Official notification is expected prior to December 31. ♦



Volunteer(s) Needed

The late Mabel Thomas collected paper napkins, which are an example of an ephemeral (lasting a very short time) artifact. Her collection dates from 1900 to 1905. The napkins depict seasonal and holiday designs and, more important, record social life in the Eagle area.

She dated and labeled each napkin, listed the people in attendance, and often described the social function she attended. From her collection of napkins we know that the Eagle Opera House was the setting for masquerade balls in 1900, 1902, and 1905; box lunches were popular in 1902; and Priscilla parties were held often.

The napkins have been placed in acid-free sheet protectors, and eventually each napkin will be photocopied and shrunk to 8.5 x 11" size. This will be a time-consuming project, but it will preserve a valuable part of Eagle history.

If you wish to volunteer to work on this project, please call Elaine at 594-3301.

Work in your home at your convenience. Transcribe tapes of oral interviews. A time-consuming, but very important project. Call Irma Jolliffe at 594-2386 for more information. ♦

(Ed. Note: For a sample story from Irma's oral history project, see Memories of Eagle by Don Jones, which begins on this page.)

Memories of Eagle

By Don Jones

I remember lots of things from living in Eagle for nearly seventy years. I remember Eagle had fast-pitch baseball games. They played at night and were sponsored by the fire department. If my dad told me correctly, they hired players from Milwaukee. I would pop popcorn and take it to the diamond and sell it. They drew very large crowds. The diamond was located in the area of the municipal building. When they disbanded, the lights were sold to Lomira. I remember my dad pointing out these lights as we drove north to go fishing.

The other baseball diamond I remember was in Marty's Park down by the creek. My dad was very active in these ballgames. He would go down and drag the area with a drag behind his car. Don Marty kept his cows in the park, and so much of my dad's dragging was taking cow pies off the diamond. Then Eagle had a ballpark and the games were played there.

A lot of the buildings are gone, but I remember the pickle factory located on Sherman Street, next to the railroad tracks. My grandmother raised pickles and I would have to take them over there. They also had an egg factory behind the village hall. My grandfather worked there and put eggs in cases, but I don't remember where the eggs came from. The factory later became Hanson's Mill. We also had another mill, located across from the bank. It was called Dadmun's Mill. I remember that particularly, because there was a bank robbery in Eagle and someone went over to Dadmun's office and found a bomb that never went off. The idea was to take away interest from the robbery.

We also had the Masonic hall that has been converted to apartments and a beauty parlor.

Memories of Eagle

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We had a train depot and a bandstand located in the village square downtown. The jail was located approximately where the waterworks is located—behind Highway 59 and the railroad tracks. This building was of cement blocks, about ten feet tall, and had bars on the windows and a big cement door. I never saw it used, but some of the bums walking down the tracks would use it. Getting back to the Masonic hall, there were plays put on there, live on the stage, and it was a big deal. Eagle also had free movies in the park when I was growing up, and they were well-attended.

Later on, I got involved with the village board, four years as a trustee and four years as the village president in the early '60s. At that time we started developing the village park. Half of it was a cornfield out to Markham Road. We also built new outhouses.

When Kettle Moraine Days were started, they were held uptown. We soon outgrew that area and went to the village park behind where Harvey Wambold lives, and later on in the new park area.

Other memories I have include tearing down Hanson's Mill and building the village garage there. Another thing I can remember is the Splichter property. This property was first purchased by the state to put the park headquarters there. The state later decided to locate this between Eagle and Palmyra, where it is today. The village purchased the Splichter property (to be used for municipal purposes) and built the elementary school there.

When I was village president we hired our first village employee, Martin Breidenbach, to do the snow plowing and the grass cutting. We also purchased our first garbage truck. I remember this because when Martin went on vacation, I would drive it. ♦

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Curator's Corner

letter. Jeff Nowicki donated a glass display case, which will be used to display newly donated items on a short-term basis. Mr. and Mrs. Shropshire donated a large framed photograph of the Lins brothers. Jean Bowey donated some dolls; one has a leather body. Lee Janeck donated an autograph book from the 1800s.

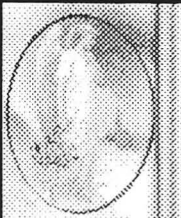
The following donated other items: Harry Bowey, Lise Busche, Clara Burton, Mary Carlson, Beth Conrad, Jean Dernell, Mabel Finney, Paul and Sandra Fischer, Wallace Fosnight, Mary Edith and Sam Foster, Diana and Eloise Hall, Helen Johnson Estate, Gerald Kasper, Ella Martens, Pat Monroe, Welthy and Edward Mueller, Bea Nowicki, Kathy Oswald, Elaine and Connie Potrykus, Janet Radabaugh, Dick Riddle, Jeanne Rindt, and Harvey Wambold. ♦

The Eagle Historical Society Museum

Hours: Fridays 9 a.m. – 12 noon
Saturdays 11-3 p.m.

Telephone: 594-8961 (there is an answering machine)

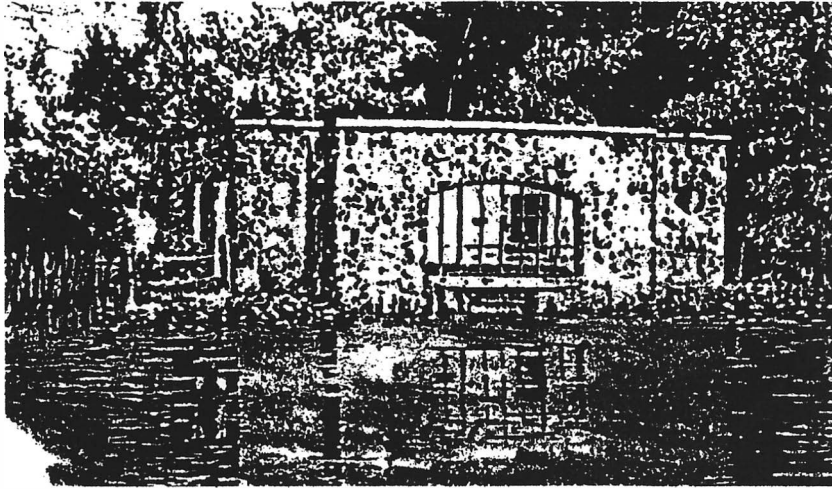
Website: www1.wcf.net/~ehsriddle



IN MEMORIAM Vince Skidmore

Paradise Springs

By Chris Meyer



Paradise Springs became famous in the late 1800s for its pure spring water. People would call it the Minnehaha or Eagle Rock Springs. People would drive to get fresh spring water for their health.

Paradise Springs is about 5 feet deep and has a temperature of about 47 degrees F year round. Over 30,000 gallons of water flow from this spring each hour. That is 500 gallons of water each minute. Paradise Springs sits in a bowl-shaped depression, where the water table can reach the surface.

Paradise Springs was owned by many different people over the years.

In 1855 William Le Fevre was a farmer who raised merino sheep. He kept the land natural. The area was named Le Fevre Springs. Le Fevre owned the springs longer than any other person. He owned the land for more than 25 years. Mr. Le Fevre sold the land to J. August Lins in the early 1880s.

J. August Lins built a pavilion over the spring. Mr. Lins installed a small railing around the spring and seats under the pavilion. He called this area the Minnehaha Springs. He built the pavilion to prevent small animals from becoming trapped in its 4-foot hole.

L.D. Nichols had the property in the early 1920s; he built a water-driven turbine. The turbine provided electricity for his house and grounds. The house was one of the first homesites to have electricity in the area. He also added trout to the spring pond and pumped water to the main house.

In 1927 Mr. Louis J. Petit, a multimillionaire, became the new owner. He built a horse track, fishing hole, tennis and shuffleboard court, and a fancy springhouse. The springhouse had a wooden and copper dome roof and colorful stone walls. The house helped protect the springs.

In 1948, Paradise Springs was a famous vacation and honeymoon resort. It was a 2-story building built from lannonstone. The resort had deluxe bedrooms, a dining room, a bar, and a garden with a sundeck when it was owned by Gordon Mertons. The last owner was Stephen Mickol, a pharmacist who bottled natural spring water called Lullaby Baby drinking water.

Today, Paradise Springs are still flowing, even though everything is not like it used to be. There is a ½-mile asphalt trail used for people with disabilities.

There is catch-and-release trout fishing in the pond. The Eagle Lions and Lionesses helped to make this nature area on Hwy. 59 and county road N. The land in Paradise Springs is now owned by the DNR. ♦

A Little Piece of History

By Beth Conrad

In October of 1989, my husband Tim, son Nick (6 months old), and I embarked upon renovating an old Victorian farmhouse located at 323 Sherman Street in the Village of Eagle. After living in Milwaukee all of my life, one of the main attractions for me was the 3.5 acres it sat on. The other attraction would only be understood by someone else who enjoys older homes as much as we did, and still do.

Although it was easy to see the home once had been very appealing, the lack of upkeep in former years was apparent. The former owners had lived in the house for approximately 30 years and—due to health problems toward the end of their lives here—well, let's just say the property needed a lot of T.L.C. With extensive help from Tim's father Jim and his wife Bette, we upgraded, insulated, replaced, removed, painted, sided, etc., in between going to work first and second shifts.

As far as the upstairs was concerned, the door to the upstairs had essentially been closed for the past 15 years and had not been reopened. When we toured the upstairs, we were greeted by occasional wasps and whatever else had crawled through the 10-inch gaps in those forgotten windows. When we finally convinced the loan officer we were serious about the house, as I walked down the steps with my husband trying to untangle a hornet from my hair, the man from the bank questioned, did we really want to do this? Actually, this was a statement we were to hear more than once. We decided we did.

One of the more pleasant surprises was the oak wood flooring under the ancient carpeting in two of the rooms. An addition which was added in approximately 1978 was the room we lived in for the first year while updating the bedrooms. In 1991, in between our stripping the old wallpaper and putting the new wallpaper up, our beautiful daughter Samantha was born.

At the closing, the former owner told me a story of how he had brought a cow home and his wife told him, "That cow isn't worth a nickel." So he named her

Penny. Originally, I hoped to house a horse on the acreage, but learned it was not to be, and so settled for a Malamute/Golden mix by the name of Moose. He and our Westie (Mae Westie) made a charming couple. While cleaning the garage, we found numerous small rectangular plaques with names such as Betsy, Cynthia, and Lola stenciled neatly on them. No, a brothel was not being run here, but rather a henhouse. We also discovered a sign which read, "Brown eggs for sale."

To me, there is always that special charm to an older home with its history (and mystery) which lay unseen in the walls of the past, a feeling that you can never quite capture in a newer home. I suppose that's what makes it all worthwhile.

A point of interest are the various deeds to the home given to us by the realtor, which read as follows: April 1901 – the home sold for \$400.00; May 1902 – the home sold for \$1,600.00; May 1958 – purchased by the former owners – amount unknown.

This story is dedicated to Jim and Bette Conrad for their tireless help those first years.

(Ed. Note: *Do you live in an interesting house? Articles describing your homes are welcome. Call 594-3301 for more details.*) ♦

Our Cement Sidewalks

The Village of Eagle has fine cement sidewalks on which the public may travel at pleasure and all are welcome to the convenience thus afforded. But to make these sidewalks attractive to pedestrians, they must be kept clear from rubbish and dirt, and therefore are requested to deposit it in the gutter as they walk along and thus save it from being wiped up by skirts and taken to the homes, where it is not wanted. Ladies who are in the habit of chewing gum are also kindly requested to keep it off from the gentlemen's shoes.

--Eagle Quill, March 15, 1907 ♦

Heirloom Perennials

Trying to weed your way through the grass-infested flower garden behind your century-old farmhouse, you find some old horticultural gems: Canada columbine, bleeding heart, and orange poppies. All were cultivated more than 100 years ago in "grandmother's garden," a popular American-style garden in the 1800s.

Canada columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*, seems to pop up in hidden places every spring – its seeds mysteriously volunteer. This native American beauty sports dainty, dangling red and yellow bells in late spring. American Indians used the flowers' seeds, which are fragrant when crushed. The Omaha used the seeds as perfume. The Meswake mixed the seeds with smoking tobacco to add fragrance. Pawnee men made a love potion by rubbing pulverized seeds in their hands, then tried to shake the hand of the desired woman. Europeans discovered this columbine in 1640 when the son of the gardener to the King of England sent the seeds back to Hampton Court. By 1800 Thomas Jefferson grew it in his garden at Monticello.

Papaver orientale, the hardy poppy, shines its brilliant orange in many old farmsteads. A Frenchman, Tournefort, discovered the poppy in 1702 in its native Near East and sent its seeds to France for King Louis XIV. By 1741 the plant was introduced to America when John Bartram, America's first botanist, received and grew the seed in his nursery. (1999 is the 200th anniversary of Bartram's birth, which is being celebrated in Philadelphia at the Bartram Museum and by issuance of a commemorative postage stamp.) Jefferson followed and grew the oriental poppy at Monticello.

Bleeding heart, *Dicentra spectabilis*, is thought of as very old-fashioned, but in horticultural history is fairly recent. The English sent Robert Fortune to Asia in the mid-1800s after England and China agreed to the Treaty of Nanking, ending the Opium Wars. (English merchants had supplied Chinese with opium to get favorable trade terms, the Chinese government did not like it and so the Chinese declared war on England, thus starting the Opium Wars.) In 1846 Fortune discovered the bleeding heart growing in a grotto on Chusan Island. He sent the plant to England and it immediately became a popular Victorian perennial. Today bleeding heart blossoms welcome spring in many old-fashioned gardens.



Aquilegia canadensis.



Dicentra spectabilis

When you grow these worthy plants, you preserve centuries of our living history—Eagle's local history as well as history of long ago and far away.

(Written by Betty Adelman, proprietor of Heritage Flower Farm, a nursery growing heirloom perennials at 33725 Hwy L, Caldwell. For information, call 662-3864.) ♦

The Owls Club

By Doc Crawley

The social life was rather dull in Eagle during the late 1930s and early '40s. Two nights a week there was a men's softball (or, as they called it, Kittenball) game under the lights on the field where the senior citizens building now stands. It cost fifteen cents and sometimes you could see a double header. The local team had such famous names as Joe Bach, "Butch" Belling, Dean Jones, Luke Enright, the Cruver boys, and Earl Crawley.

I used to sell hot buttered popcorn at the games for five cents a bag. I remember listening to a car radio when Joe Louis beat James Braddock for the heavyweight championship of the world. There was also a fight at home plate, where Tex Klix duked it out with Otto Marquardt. All of this changed when the war began and all of the young men went off to service.

The highlight of the month would be the "firemen's meeting," which was held at such various watering holes as Sasso's Pall Mall Tap, Mich's St. Paul Tavern, or Ed Price's place up on the hill. A short meeting was always followed by several card games of sheepshead or poker. Once a year they held a picnic which started early and ran late—or until they ran out of beer—at Marty's Park, which was down by the Jericho Creek.

The young women of the community belonged to the Ward Homemakers Club and St. Theresa's Altar Society, but elite socialites belonged to the Owls Club. You had to be over sixty to be asked to join. The membership was Amanda Amadan, Stella Beckert, Lillian Stewart, Tot and Anna Partridge (who lived in the house where the Historical Society is), Tessie Shearer, Anna Mockhold, Ethie Wilton, Aurel Pardee, Alice Baker, and Eleanor Crawley. They met once a month at the various members' homes and played games like Authors, Canasta, and Crazy Eight. They were called the Owls because Harold Pardee became upset when they stayed out until 10 pm, and he said that they were a bunch of night owls. The highpoint of the year was the annual Christmas dinner, which was always held at our house. (Because Mother was by far the youngest of the group, she was in charge of almost everything.)

Other than the Wiltons, I don't believe there is anyone else to mourn the passing of this gregarious group of senior citizens.

(Ed. Note: *Doc Crawley and his family lived in Eagle from 1930-1949. They rented a number of houses on Main Street before purchasing the home at 113 Eagle Street. Mr. Crawley—Doc's father-- was the principal at Eagle State School from 1931 to 1945.*) ♦

The Eagle Opera House

By Elaine Jones Cook

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 also 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. ♦

VILLAGE CAUCUS

A caucus of the qualified voters of the village of Eagle, will be held at the opera house, Monday, Sept. 25, at 8 o'clock in the afternoon, to nominate candidates for village office.

G. A. SHERMAN
F. V. VONRUEDEN
J. J. LURVEY
Inspectors of Election.

Proper village pride and public spirit ought to make it possible for all to unite at the village caucus. All those who have the interest of the village at heart will subscribe to the sentiment above expressed. Lay aside all politics, personal animosity and ill feeling, if any you have, and select capable men who will serve the interest of the village and tax payers generally. This is no time to get "even" at the expense of the community, nor is it just and right to fling the red flag at any one who may have erred in opposing the corporation movement. The interest of the village, the maintainance of law and order and the good of society and business interest of all demand harmony and unity.

--Eagle Quill, September 22, 1899

(Ed. Note: *Evidently not everyone was in favor of incorporation.*)

*A Tribute to a Volunteer Red Cross Lady**

Mary Sunshine

By William J. Tuke

When my days get gloomy and I want to cry,

Mary stops by and says I must try.

When I just want someone to hear my woes,

Mary stops by and all sadness goes.

When I need something small, but important to me,

Mary stops by and asks, "What will it be?"

When I just want to be alone in my shell,

Mary stops by and just wishes me well.

When I ask her why she does all that,

Mary stops by and just gives me a pat.

When all is said, and all is done,

Mary stops by and brings the sun.

(*Ed. Note: *Written by a vet at Wood Hospital about Mary Japp. Stop in the museum to see the exhibit of Red Cross items she donated.*) ♦

WISCONSIN COUNCIL FOR LOCAL HISTORY

1999 Southeastern Regional Convention

Hosted by the Palmyra Historical Society

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Representing _____



Number of Registrations at \$7.00 each _____

Total Enclosed _____

Mail to: Dorothy Johnson, Registrations
Palmyra Historical Society
P.O. Box 265
Palmyra, WI 53156

Please make checks payable to Palmyra Historical Society

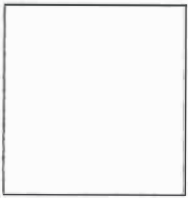
For more information contact Terry Tutton at (414) 495-4245

**THE DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION IS
FRIDAY AUGUST 13, 1999**

The program includes Jean Jolliffe and Joe Trewyn speaking about the Palmyra area's Cornish heritage. The day will conclude with a tour (to include the new Cornish heritage exhibit) of the Turner Museum and tour of the Carlin House.

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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



EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OPEN HOUSE

When: Friday August 27, 1999

Time: 6:00 to 8:00 P.M.

Visit the museum and meet the officers, board members and other society members.

Refreshments (wine and cheese) will be served.

RSVP Pat Wilton 594-2294
If no answer please leave a message