

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Summer 2001

Eagle, Wisconsin

2001 EHS Board

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EHS News

Ice Cream Social/Band Concert

Thanks to everyone who contributed time, items and/or money. Your generosity (and skill) make this event memorable year after year, and raise substantial funds for the Eagle Historical Society.

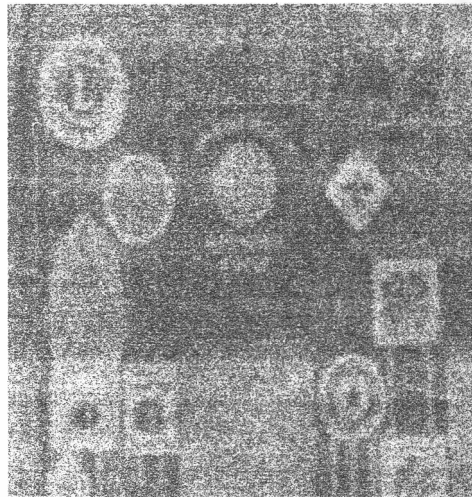
4th-Grade History Contest Winners

This year students worked in pairs, and created their reports in the form of brochures. Copies of the brochures are available at local businesses and the historical society. The three winners of this year's contest follow.

First Place:

A Glimpse of Eagle

By Dillon Doke and Dylan Kugel



Welcome to Eagle. We will tell you about historical things that took place in Eagle and things that happened around Eagle.

How did Eagle get its name?

In the year 1836 while 3 men were prospecting, a large bald eagle flew overhead. From that incident and time, the prairie and town were called Eagle.

Where is Eagle located?

Eagle is located in the beautiful Kettle Moraine State Forest. Milwaukee is about 50 miles to the east, and Madison is about 60 miles to the west.



What interesting things have taken place in Eagle?

There was a 6 year old boy named Troy Andersen. In 1975, he found a fossil that was 424,999,994 years old. It was made of sandstone. It was like a squid and lived in a chambered shell. This creature is called a Cephalopod and it lived during the Silurian age, when Wisconsin was covered by sea. You'll find fossils all over Wisconsin.

Eagle Diamond

One day when Tom Devereaux was dig-

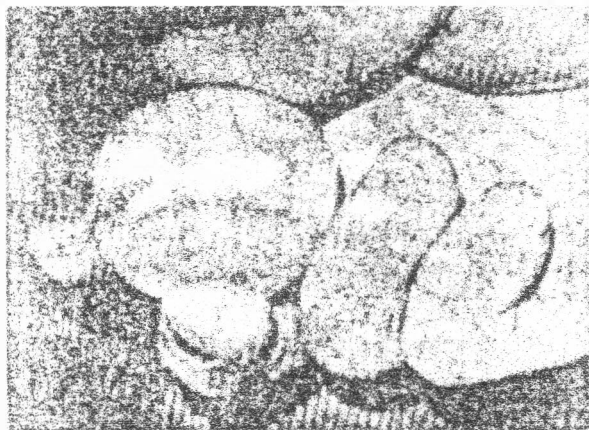
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ging on a hill for the new water tower. He found a diamond. It was one of the biggest diamonds in the world. Now we call the hill Diamond Hill.



This is a picture of the Eagle diamond.

What are some of the oldest Businesses in Eagle?

Harold Chapman was born in 1897. At age 21 Harold was discharged from army and soon after he got married. In 1924 he built Chapman's Gas Station and worked in it for 35 years until he retired in 1959. His brother helped manage the station.

Dog Races

Kettle Moraine Days used to have dog races. Mr. Benson had the care of the dogs during week or when they were in town before the big event. The return of exhibition greyhound racing to Eagle after an absence of 14 years was a community effort led by Terry Luedtke, chairmen of Kettle Moraine Days.

Greyhound racing was popular in Waukesha County in the 1930's but hasn't been done since 1969.

What are some places you can visit in Eagle?

Old World Wisconsin

Old World Wisconsin is the biggest outdoor museum. They talk about Wisconsin early settlers and how to use tools that the early settlers used. It is located on Hwy 67.

Paradise Springs

This is a nature area preserved by the state. It is located off hwy 59 and N about 1 mile west of Eagle.

Second Place:

History of Eagle Schools

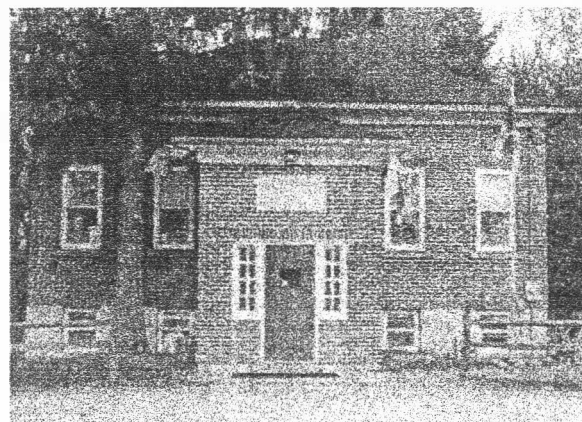
By April Booth and Amber Slaybaugh



Old Eagle Grade School—Hwy 67 just west of downtown

Palestine School

Palestine School was the first Eagle school. The land for the school was donated by A. R. Hinkley in 1849. He was the first settler in Eagle Township. The people wanted to spend \$300 dollars for a new school. Even back then, people could not agree where the school should be built. It took ten years to get that first school built. Palestine School was first used in 1854. A bell tower was added to the school in the 1880's. Over the years Palestine was changed from a log schoolhouse to a brick one.



Palestine School—located on hwy. 59 a few miles east of Eagle

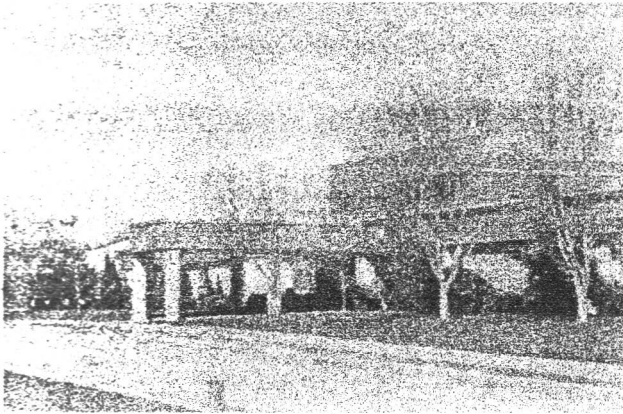
In 1854 they built a frame building and in 1928 they replaced it with a brick schoolhouse. For 124 years, students went to school in the one room Palestine. The one room Palestine schoolhouse closed in 1970. When the other Eagle school became too crowded in 1971, the Palestine School reopened as a kindergarten. The school closed again for good in 1980.

New Apartment, Old Schoolhouse

The outdated Eagle schoolhouse is now an apartment building because of Eagle's growing population. In June 1991 a group of Eagle Associates bought the building to begin the renovation. Rommell and another partner Dick Alexander felt the school building was right for 18 families.

Our Present School

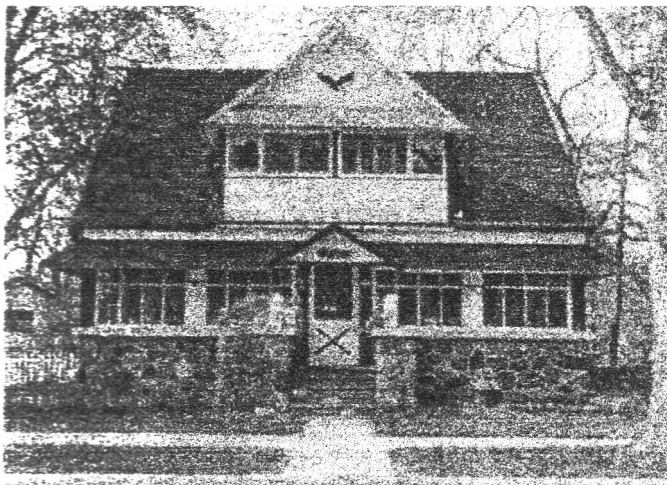
Late in 1987 the present Eagle school was built off highway NN. The new Elementary school is built on the east end of town.



Third Place:

The Old Clinic in Eagle

By Jordon Tate and Curtis Koehn



James J. Fitzgerald owned the house that was used as a clinic. In 1967 Elmer Kilian bought the house and lives there today. This house that served as a clinic is located at 224 Main Street. It cost 15,000 dollars to build.

James J. Fitzgerald served for over 50 years in the Eagle community. Dr. Fitzgerald was famous for his asthma

medicine. People from all around the Midwest came for his cure. His hobby was making rock gardens.



Map of Eagle

Dr. Fitzgerald delivered many babies at the clinic, after the babies were born the woman and the child stayed in the clinic for two weeks for the cost of \$125.00.



Later in life he lost his vision. He stitched up a boy's arm when he was blind.

In 1897 he married Theresa Lawless. They had one child who died as an infant. Mrs. J.J. Fitzgerald died April 30, 1901.



He found time to participate in many civic and political activities of the community.

He was honored by being named a member of the 50 year club of the Waukesha county medical society.

Dr. Fitzgerald, like most of the medical men of his time, felt it necessary for long confinement of illnesses.

He died in 1952.

This is a business card that Dr. J.J. Fitzgerald gave his patients.

Meet Your Officers



Jeffery A. Nowicki

Jeff was born in Milwaukee. After graduating from Wauwatosa East High School, he received an associate degree in applied science in automotive and diesel technology from Milwaukee Area Technical College, followed by two years of mechanical engineering studies at Milwaukee School of Engineering.

He has been employed at Waukesha Engine, where he works as senior product designer, for 34 years. In 1980, seeking open space and a small-town atmosphere, he moved to the Town of Eagle.

Jeff's hobbies are old cars and carpentry/woodworking. He is a member of the Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE) and the Sport Car Club of America. ♦

Eagle Cornet Band

For ten years in the 1880s and 1890s the band was one of the outstanding musical organizations of Waukesha County. Edmund J. Lins Jr. was the director. He employed Thomas Williams of Milwaukee to teach and train the 16 to 20 members.

You know Ed...could do almost anything. He managed the band; had men come out from Milwaukee to teach the fellows, and to lead on big occasions. One time we had to have a mandolin player, but where would we get one. You know, Ed got a mandolin, fooled around with it one afternoon and played it that night...We had a good band for years, good enough so we played at the Exposition.

-Waukesha Freeman, November 20, 1965

The Eagle cornet band of 1885 held a re-union on Sunday evening. All members were present and had a most enjoyable evening. The membership of this band consisted of Ed J. Lins, Frank J. Sprague, Frank Schmidt, Matthew Clohisy, George Wilton, Ben Breidenbach, Anton Kalk, John H. Faestel, Wm. Conden, Frank Kloppenburg Jr., N.A. Faestel, H.M. Loibl, Dan Clohisy, and Andrew Smith, all of whom are residing at Eagle engaged in various trades.

-Eagle Quill, March 2, 1900

On Monday evening the members of the Eagle Cornet band held a meeting at the hotel hall and effected the following organization: W. C. Olson, president; Forest Reed, treasurer; Miss Louise Breidenbach, secretary.

The following are members: Carl Sievers, bass drum; Grant Singer, snare drum; Forest Reed, E flat tuba; Gerald Vonrueden, slide trombone; Lawrence Cramp, slide trombone; Wm. C. Olson, baritone; Robert Shearer, alto; Arnold Krueger, B cornet, Gordon Enright, B cornet; Edmund J. Whettam, B cornet; Robert Peterson, B cornet; Louise Breidenbach, B cornet; Lillian Arnold, B cornet; Arnold Krueger, B cornet; John Smith, saxophone; Carl Belling, saxophone; Grace Belling, clarinet; Everett Krueger, clarinet; Vernon Ratzlow, clarinet; Robert Jolliffe, clarinet.

The first practice meeting will be held at the hotel hall on Monday evening, May 26th, at eight o'clock. At this meeting, the first lesson will be given by Prof. John T. Opferkuch of the Holton Band Instrument Company of Elkhorn. Carl Joseph salesman of the company will also be present and supply the band with music books.

-Eagle Quill, May 23, 1924

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John Opferkuch

Like the circuit rider of pioneer days, only with a conductor's baton and auto instead of a horse and Bible, John Opferkuch has spread the word of band music to thousands in southeastern Wisconsin. His itinerate teaching began in 1924 when Frank Holton & Company of Elkhorn, Wisconsin, sent him to teach new bands they had organized in nearby communities. Included were the Eagle Cornet Band in Waukesha County, so named in deference to the town's elderly banker and band supporter; the Smithton Farmers Band, the Clinton Community Band and the school bands of Sharon, Elkhorn, and Burlington.

Wealthy Milwaukeean Daniel W. Norris, founder of the Norris Farm for Boys in Vernon Town, also in this county, saw the benefits of music for his disadvantaged youngsters, and without fanfare purchased outright enough band instruments for a 25 piece band. Opferkuch was engaged to instruct the band.

The dedication of all these hopeful musicians combined with an aura of old-fashioned small community hospitality, was one of the instructor's most cherished memories. This spirit was also reflected in the groups' many public appearances, including participation in

their own band contest.

Wisconsin winters can be severe, as they were in those days with unpaved roads and unfriendly drifting snow. Consequently a snow shovel and strong back were prime necessities in Opferkuch's travels. However, more comforting during the extreme cold were the friendly cows in a Smithton Band member's barn who kept his parked car warm during rehearsals. Despite such diverse scheduling over the years, only once was there a foul-up when Opferkuch arrived at a band member's home, to his embarrassment, on the evening before the date set for a rehearsal there.

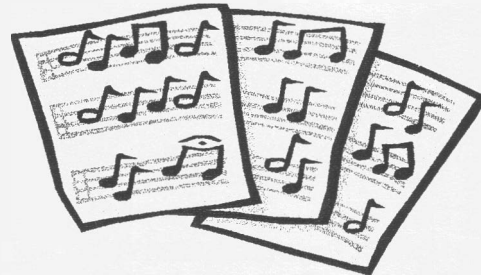
In further expanding his circuit, which had now become a full time occupation, he was dispatched to Racine where the Holton people had organized a new unit. With a carload of band instruments and scarcely room for the driver, he arrived at St. Catherine's High School in 1926. This was to be a significant point in his career, since that original one-day assignment grew into a 41-year tenure as the school's band director. After 2 years commuting once a week to the school, he was hired full time in 1929, which meant moving to Racine and leaving his band circuit. ♦ (Source unknown)

Palmyra-Eagle Community Band

By Alice Ventura

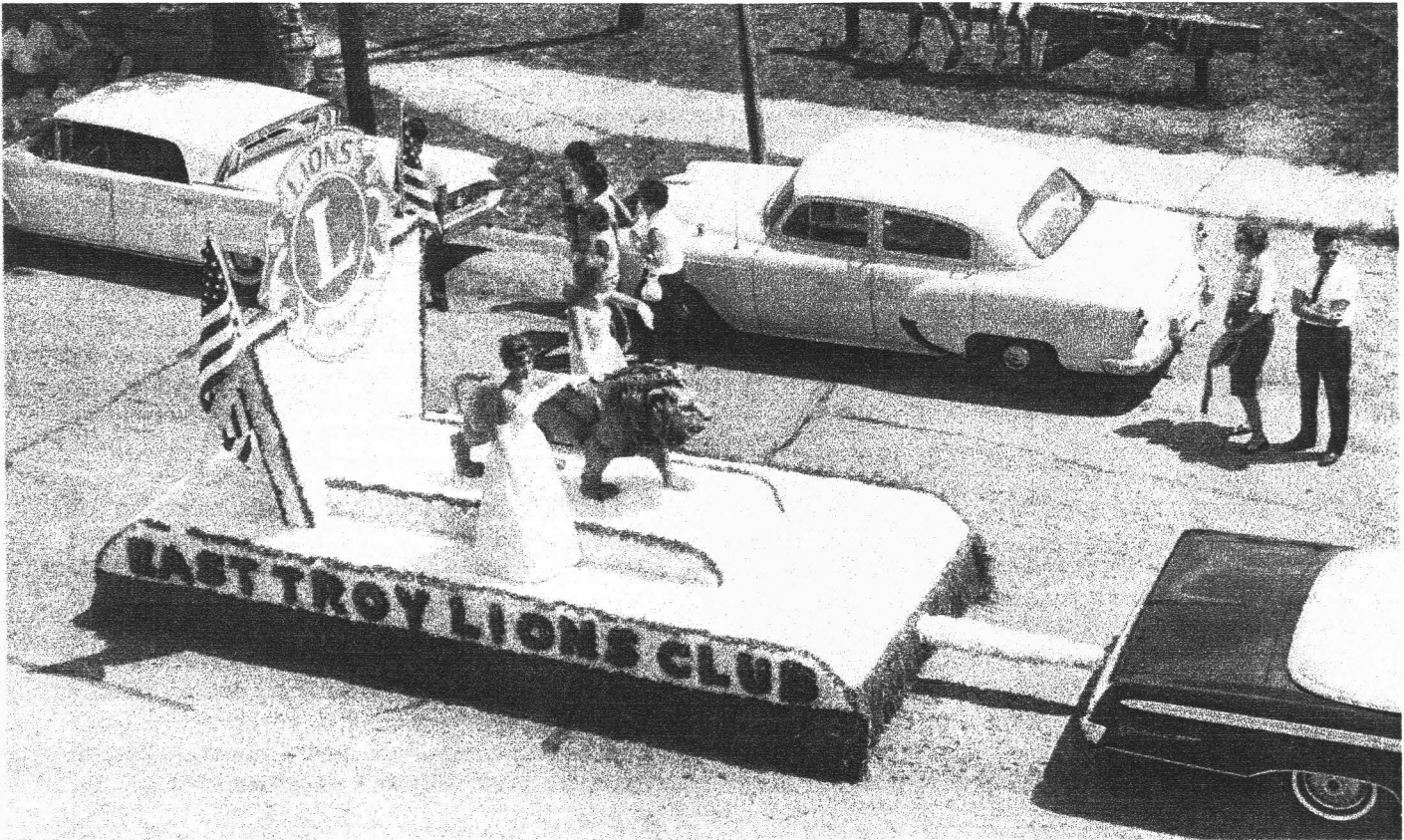
In January 1993, a letter to the editor was sent to the Palmyra Enterprise suggesting the possibility of forming a community band in the Palmyra/Eagle area and urging interested people to attend a meeting at the Palmyra Town Hall. Four persons attended: Clayton Clark, a former band director at PEHS; Glen Rehberg, PE Middle School band director, who had volunteered to be the unpaid director; Alice Ventura, would-be organizer; and George Ventura, Palmyra Township supervisor. This group listed possible instrumentalists, agreed to contact them by phone and set a date (January 21, 1993) for the first rehearsal. The initial rehearsal had four musicians attending; in eight years the band has grown to 25-30 members, three of whom were in the original four.

The first concert was on Flag Day (June 14th) at Palmyra Village Park, with the band now numbering 12-14 members from Palmyra, Eagle, Dousman and East Troy and ranging in age from high school to retired senior citizens. In August of that year the new band played at the dedication of the Irvin L. Young Community Center and later in the fall presented a concert at Fairhaven in Whitewater. The final concert of the first year was the first annual Christmas concert, held at the Irvin L. Young Center by a band of 22 members.



Funding for the band comes from various sources. Donations are sought on a yearly basis from the Village and Town of both Eagle and Palmyra and from most of the service organizations in both places. From the beginning, band members have willingly donated \$1.00 at each rehearsal. Donations have also been made by individuals in the area and by the Eagle Historical Society and other organizations for which the band has performed.

The band rehearses for two hours every Monday night at the high school or middle school. Since the summer of 1994, it has been directed by Ed Pierce of Ft. Atkinson. Current members come from Eagle, Palmyra, Dousman, Edgerton, Mukwonago, East Troy, Ft. Atkinson and Walworth. There have never been any tryouts for prospective members and current band members range in age from 15 to over 70. The group performs two free concerts in Eagle each year—a summer concert in the village park and a winter concert in the community building. ♦



Kettle Moraine Days

As told by Mike Sasso

Photos courtesy of Mike Sasso

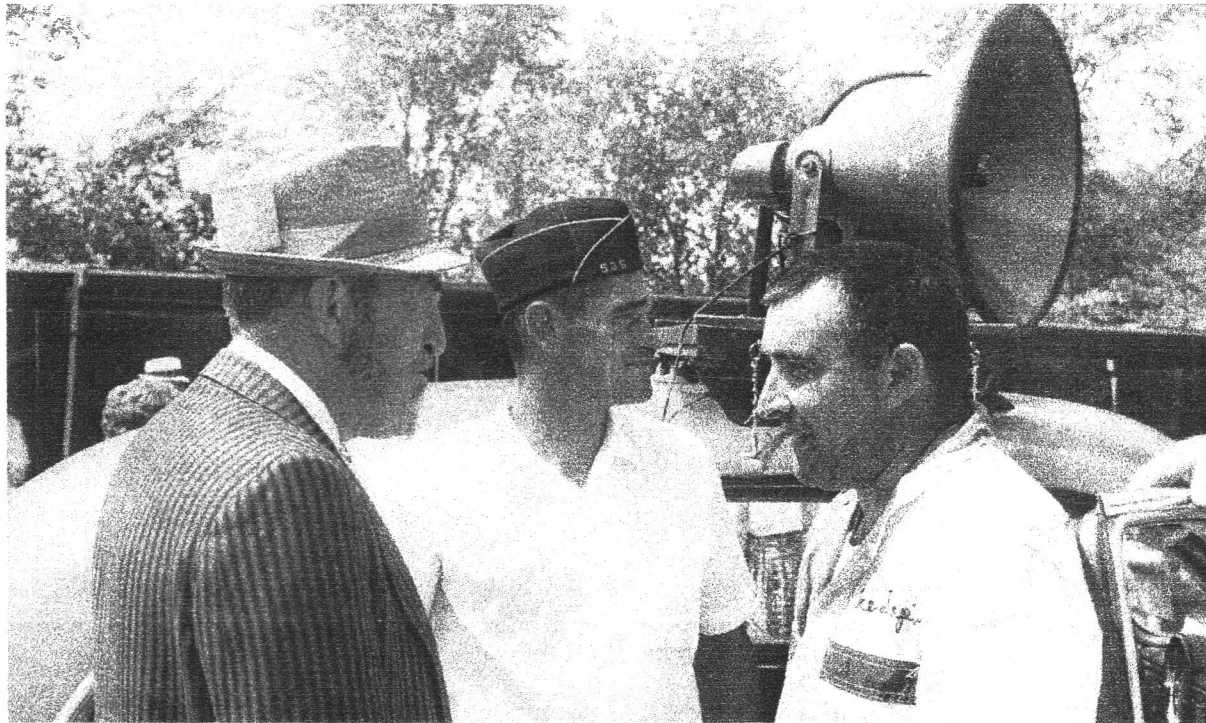
Our first Kettle Moraine Days celebration was held 39 years ago in 1962 at the village park. In 1958 and 1959 it had been held at the Village Square and called Legion Days. They had bingo, a hamburger stand, "Ring A Money" stand and a dunk tank. "Shorty" beers were sold 7 for \$1.00; hamburgers were 35 cents. In 1960 and 1961 the Legion Days were held in back of Harvey Wambold's house, because that was as far as the electric ran. In 1962 Mike Sasso and Herman Thiele came up with the name Kettle Moraine Days.

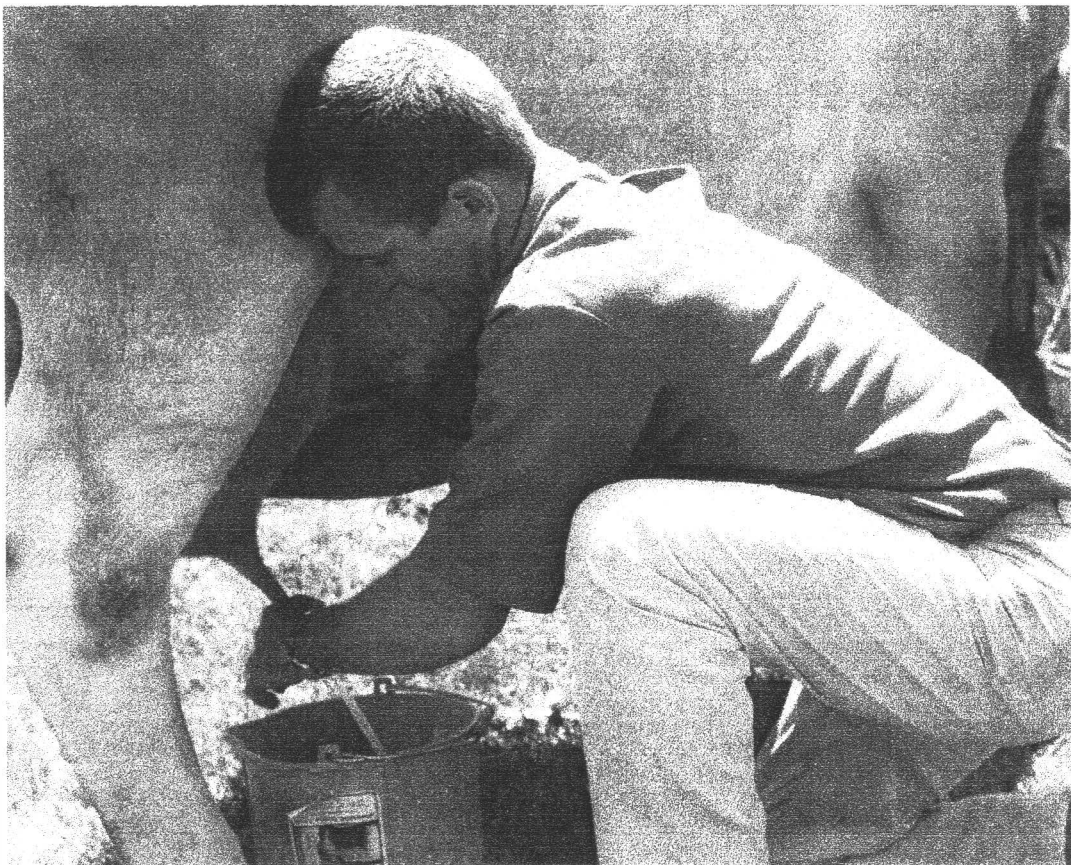
The first parade (held in 1962) had 2 bands—Mukwonago High and the drum and bugle corps from Elkhorn called the Titans. At that time it cost \$50 per band, a fee paid by businesses. Now bands cost \$500 to \$700. At that time all businesses had a float in the parade. We had fireworks just once in the beginning, handled by Norm Marks.

As the Kettle Moraine Days got bigger, the Legion members couldn't handle it, and brought in the fire department as well. Now the Lions Club is also affiliated with Kettle Moraine Days.

Eventually, draft beer was sold as well as the "shortys." For two years in the early 1970s we had greyhound racing during the carnival; Melvin Rockteacher, Tex Tabot, Orrin Benson, Phil Hall and Jack Rolfe went to South Dakota to pick up the dogs. We also had a milking contest, and one year WTMJ had a live broadcast, called "Farm Morning Report," from the village grounds. The first Bucket Brigade was held in Eagle; this is a contest between fire departments to see which can fill a barrel fastest by relaying canvas buckets of water up a ladder. (Canvas leaks!)

One thing different from every other municipality holding carnivals was that in Eagle all churches and other organizations had food tents dubbed "Taste of Eagle." This is still done today. The Legion Auxiliary made enough money from their food stand to have the first shelter built and donated to the village. In the past 10 to 15 years we've also had skydivers and helicopter rides. From a small carnival in the late 50s and early 60s, Kettle Moraine Days has grown into what we have today. ♦





MYSTERY HOUSE

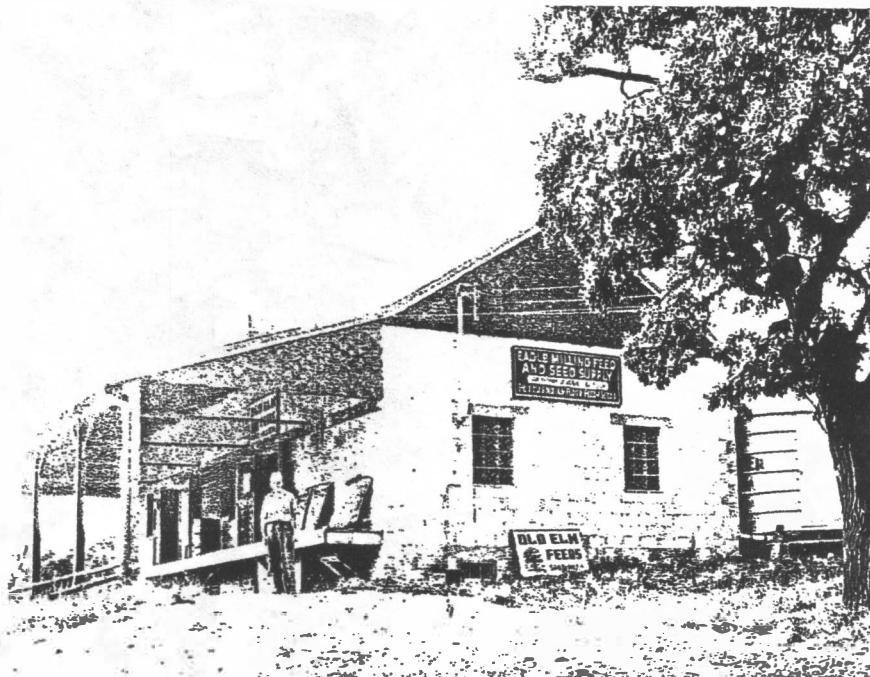
Were You Able To Find This House?



This mystery house is located at 22 Waukesha Road and built in 1849 by Augusta Verkins. A basement was dug in 1919. The cedar beams in the basement are pegged and hand hued. The different levels in the house indicate that additions were made as needed. Eileen and Jerry Juedes, the present owners, purchased the house in 1950 for \$4000.00 and the taxes that year were \$51.00.

NEW MYSTERY HOUSE

This House Is Located Somewhere in The Village



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



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

KETTLE MORaine DAYS

