

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 8, Issue 1

Winter 2001

EHS News

Election Bake Sale

By Welthy Mueller

Thank you to all of you who baked for the museum's bake sale on election day. We had a little food left over, which was donated to the food pantry.

We were pleased to see that you got busy and baked for us to sell. The only thing that was in short supply was pies—we only had 6, I guess.

We were busy all day, starting at 7 a.m. With free coffee, it was breakfast for some.

We also had fudge and almond bark crunches candy for sale, which went really well.

Thanks to all the workers; you gave me a chance to go home for a while!

(Ed. Note: This was the most successful bake sale the EHS has ever had. It made up for the lack of a Christmas house tour.)

Memorials

At the November board meeting it was decided to establish a memorial account. This money can only be used at the discretion of the full board for special purchases or improvements to the museum and cannot be used for normal operating expenses. A plaque will list the names of the people to be remembered. There is a suggested donation of at least \$50.00 to be listed on the plaque.

We received the following memorials:
\$100.00 Jerry Baker (Dorothy Baker)

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240.00 Ann Krestan (Harvey Wambold)
100.00 Dorothy Kau (Alvin Kau)
395.00 Eris Thurston (Carol 'Carl' Thurston)

Membership

Did you remember to renew your dues? 200 members have renewed as of January 14, including

Sustaining, \$25.00 - \$49.00

Bill & Jackie Adams
Luella Bowey
Tom & Patricia Heller
Harold & Mary Lou Hinkley
Donald & Elaine Ledrowski
James & Joan Pasterski
Kathryn Ruby
Toula & Kim Sievers
Tim & Diane Tate
Larry & Diane Wilkinson

Sponsor, \$50.00 - \$99.00

Dorothy Clark
Mary Cramer
John Eiring
Richard & Marjorie Friedman
Gerald & Lori Heckel
Ras & Donna Kalnes
Terry & Julie Pisarek

Patron, \$100.00 and over

Don & Dottie Murphy
Chet & Pat Poetsch
Russ & Jill Steinhart
Walter & Lois Zenner

The following are new members since the last newsletter:

Margaret Been
David & Mary Cass
Cheryl Gunkel
Mary Heizman
Theresa Kitzman Kelly
Carol Ann Rittenhauser
Curt & JoEllen Reid
Denise Harris

Those who renewed by January 12 were entered in a drawing for a free sweatshirt. The winner was Sue Gnatzig.

We received a matching grant of \$100.00 from the Miller Brewing Company thanks to a donation from Harold and Mary Lou Hinkley. ♦

Curator's Corner

By Elaine Ledrowski

Button, button, who's got the button? We do. In fact, we have many buttons, thanks to a donation from Edward and Welthy Mueller. Remember playing in Mom or Grandma's button box as a child? Many children learned to count and to sort objects by size, color, shape, and material as they played in the button box. Looking through old buttons can trigger memories of clothes worn long ago. Welthy pointed out four red anchor-shaped buttons that came from a uniform she had made in the late thirties when she worked at an East Coast beach house similar to a bed-and-breakfast.

Collectors are still playing in Grandma's button boxes and collecting all types of buttons. Celluloid, china, hard rubber, fancy metal, sparkly modern plastic, glass, Bakelite, and fun buttons are some of the classifications of buttons that collectors use. Care needs to be taken when cleaning buttons, since some of the early plastic buttons were constructed over several layers of cardboard. Wetting the cardboard could ruin the buttons. Buttons need air, and shouldn't be stored in a sealed jar or plastic container. The most desired way to display buttons is on an acid-free card.

If you have old or unusual buttons that are looking for a home, remember, they are welcome at the historical society museum.

Ruth Ann Mueller donated twenty copies of a new paperback book entitled "One Unforgettable Adventure," by Dale Mueller. The book features the writings of the late Dale Mueller. Hunters and gun enthusiasts will enjoy the descriptions and tales of hunting experiences. It also contains humorous stories about people in Eagle and offers insight into growing up in a small town. The book is available at the museum for \$15.00.

Other recent donations include the large meat market sign from Krestan's store and other items

from Bill and Ann Krestan. Beautiful baptism dresses and slips were donated by Jean Bowey. Other donations include:

- handmade quilts from Mr. & Mrs. Cliff Rundle
- a spun glass tree topper from Mabel Finney
- books from Warren Cook
- a toy polar bear from Charlotte Kuhl

and other items from Mary Japp, Don & Elaine Ledrowski, Pat Monroe, Ruth Ann Mueller, and Edward and Welthy Mueller. ♦

Wish List

We are always looking for anything relating to Eagle. This includes photos, poems, and written or recorded memories or impressions. No matter how brief they may be, or how commonplace they appear to you, we value them.

We plan to cover the subjects of farming and Kramer's mill in the next issue—can you contribute anything?

Hear Ye, Hear Ye



Do you have spare time? Internet service? An interest in history?

Please consider volunteering to research topics for EHS. The staff is stretched very thin, and this work really enhances the displays. If you can help, please call 594-3301. ♦



Chapman's Gas Station was built in 1924. This photo is one taken some time ago.

4th-Grade History Report

Chapman's Gas Station

By Kasey Snyder

In 1924 Chapman's Gas Station was built by Harold Chapman. Harold was born in Troy Center, Wisconsin in 1897. After he was discharged from the army he worked at Chapman's for 35 years and retired in 1959.

The price of gas back in 1924 was 15 cents a gallon and the price of fuel oil was only 7 cents a gallon. The price of gasoline today is \$1.00 more. The price of fuel oil is almost \$1.00 more also.

In 1956, Archie Chapman, Harold's brother, came to work for Chapman's. Archie Chapman (my great-grandfather) worked for Chapman's until he retired in 1978. Archie Chapman worked everyday at the gas station pumping gas and helping all his customers.

In 1956 my grandpa, Russell Chapman, started to work at Chapman's. My grandpa worked at the gas station with Archie Chapman, his dad, and he also delivered fuel oil to customers with oil heat for their house. He also delivered fuel oil to farms for their tractors. Russell Chapman remodeled the gas station to the way it looks today. He also built the new office building in Eagle. My grandma, Pat Chapman, works there everyday. On January 1, 1997, Russell Chapman retired from Chapman Oil.

In 1982 Rob Chapman came to work for Chapman Oil and in 1986 Daniel Chapman also came to work for Chapman Oil. Rob, Dan and Russell Chapman ran the business until Russell retired in 1997. Daniel Chapman left the company in 1996 to be a firefighter. Danny still helps out once in a while when he has a day off.

Rob Chapman is the owner of Chapman Oil and his wife Debbie helps him.

This last year Rob built a new station over in East Troy and it sure looks different than the one that Harold built in 1924. ♦

H. G. Chapman

FILLING STATION

Eagle, Wis. Phone 481

Tires and Accessories

**Wadhams and Delco Oils
and Greases**

**Exide Batteries and Dry
Cells**

**Ford Parts and Supplies
Solite and Red Crown
Gasoline**

Eagle Quill, January 26, 1923

SMART'S AUTO CO.

Eagle, Wis.

**Automobile Repairing
Battery Service Station
Tires, Accessories and Supplies**

Phone 481

**HAROLD G. CHAPMAN
President**

Eagle Quill, November 4, 1921

4th-Grade History Report

Chapman Oil

By Niki Chapman

Hi! My name is Niki Chapman. I would like to tell you about Chapman Oil.

It all started with my great Uncle, Harold Chapman. He was born in the year 1897. He grew up on a farm in the Town of Troy. When my Uncle Harold was 21 he was discharged from the Army and soon after was married.

He then worked for the Smart Brothers gas station. In 1917 he bought and took over the gas station. He named it Chapman's.

Uncle Harold managed and worked at the gas station for about 35 years. He then retired in 1959.

My Great Grandfather, Archie Chapman also co-owned the company with my Uncle Harold. When Harold retired my Grandfather continued to run the business on his own. He likes to tell my brothers and myself about the times when my Uncle Harold and himself went to Illinois with the Smart Brothers to drive back cars to sell at the Smart Brothers carlot/gas station. They would take the train down and it would take them 7 days.

My Grandfather, Russell Chapman worked for my Great Grandfather at the gas station. My Grandfather married my Grandmother Patricia. They had 4 children: Lisa, Diane, Rob and my father Dan.

Russell Chapman brought the station from Archie and Managed it by himself. Archie continued to work at the gas station but he did not deliver fuel any longer.

My father Dan and my Uncle Rob worked for my Grandfather for 12 years. My Father has changed professions and has become a fulltime fire-fighter for the City of Waukesha. My Uncle Rob now owns the business. My Grandfather Russell Chapman retired in 1997.

Uncle Rob opened another gas station in East Troy called Troy Amoco.

I hope you enjoyed learning more about Chapman Oil. I find it very interesting and think it is really neat that it has been a business in Eagle for as long as it has been. ♦

Harold Chapman

by Joan Holman (from a Freeman article)

Harold Chapman is proud of his rural background. Born in November, 1897, in the Town of Troy, he joined his four brothers and four sisters to make sure the family homestead was plentiful with its variety. His father's idea was to keep something of everything—like cows, pigs, chickens and horses—in case one item went down.

Chapman says keeping track of things, as he was taught on the farm, helped direct his interest toward bookkeeping. In 1916, he arrived in Eagle to keep books for Harry Smart, the Ford dealer in the area.

He's stayed in Eagle ever since, except for 1918, when he was drafted to fight in World War I. He was sent to Milwaukee for four months' training, but the war ended when it did.

Back in Eagle, dancing in the former Masonic Hall to the two-step and waltz brought pleasure and an introduction to his future wife, Ruby.

"Dancing to the music then gave you time to know your partner a lot better than the fast tunes now allow," he said.

It surely worked for this couple. They were together until her death at the Virginia Nursing Home last year. (Ed. Note: Ruby was born on Nov. 2, 1900 and died April 1, 1989 in Waukesha.)

Chapman married Ruby Rockteacher in 1920. Their home was built across from where he worked. The furnishings consist of mementos of events and shared pleasures.

Chapman was working as bookkeeper and sometime salesman. He says, "Joe Stute was the real dealer. But one day I sold two Ford touring cars, each for \$349. Of course, that was in the 1920s when that model was easy to sell."

In 1923, Chapman bought out Smart. A short time later, fire destroyed the building. In 1924, Chapman with help from his father-in-law, Fred Rockteacher, built the present Chapman's Station.

The senior Chapman knew it was time to retire when he couldn't call all the customers by name. He talks about the business as providing real service. The car windows would be washed and a check made under the hood and on tire pressure.

"Now there's no time for that; people are too busy and faces aren't familiar," said Chapman.

(Ed. Note: Harold Chapman died on December 29, 1996 at Westmoreland Manor House in Waukesha. The gas station he built was razed in November of 2000 and a new edifice is under construction on the same location. The house where he and Ruby lived still stands on this property.)



IN MEMORIAM

Harriet Cruver – Gilman Radcliffe – Carol "Carl" Thurston

Memories of the Eagle Opera House

By Doc Crawley

The Eagle Opera House, or Masonic Temple, was the center of attraction during the 30s and 40s. It was the largest building in town with the exception of the Catholic Church and had the only gym or theatre around. The chairs were attached to boards with six to ten attached so that they could be moved to the side to provide an open space or left in rows like a theatre.

One of my earliest memories of the place was when they had a huge "home talent" show sponsored by WLS and the National Barn Dance from Chicago. The first part of the show involved all the school children performing recitations, dances, singing, playing piano, etc. I was about ten years old and acted as the master of ceremonies and introduced each act with clever reports, e.g., "Come on, Jean, and tickle those keys." After an intermission the adults in the area performed. They had bales of straw around the stage and the performers all sat on them. I remember my grandfather, John Wilton, John Skidmore, Charley Cruver and others up there along with John Marty. WLS sent up some professional performers and there was a contest for the winning locals. A young woman from WLS was the judge and she picked a handsome young man by the name of Thayer from Palmyra. Her choice was questioned by the people from Eagle.

At one time Eagle State Graded School, which was first through tenth graders, had a high school basketball team. My father, Earl W. Crawley, was the principal and coach. We played other state graded schools in Waukesha County, such as Big Bend and North Lake. Once when the Von Ruden twins and the Cruver boys were in school, the team played Palmyra High School (which was a four-year school) and won. Palmyra would never play Eagle again.

Every year the sophomore class would put on a class play. My mother, Eleanor Crawley, would direct. Every member of the class would have to have a part, and sometimes it was like putting square pegs in round holes. One time Mary Lou Stead became so nervous before coming onstage she swallowed her smelling salts and became very ill. It was always a three-act play, and between acts grade-school children would perform. One time we had a quartet of Don Jones, John Kalb, me, and someone else dressed in "black face" and singing a novelty song. Anyway, at one point, we were to pretend to cry and wipe our eyes. When we did this, the makeup came off and the audience roared with delight.

In the spring it was the site of graduation exercises. There would be the eighth grade and the tenth grade, complete with valedictorian and salutatorian addresses along with the graduation speaker. The stage with the class motto would be covered with lilacs, purple and white, and the odor was so sweet it almost made you sick.



By Janet Kruse Radabaugh

In 1957 the Eagle State eighth-grade class was the last class to graduate in the Eagle Opera House.

Inside the opera house the walls were all dark wood, and also the chairs. I remember a small pot belly stove just before you went up the stairs to the back of the stage. There was a narrow hall all around the stage; you could walk from one end to the other end. This was where we would get dressed up for our Christmas play that Eagle Grade School would put on every year.

**"EAST IS WEST" AT
EAGLE OPERA HOUSE**

An engagement of "East Is West" which Constance Talmadge has brought from stage to screen, is announced by the Eagle Opera House.

"East Is West" is known as one of the most successful plays ever presented in America. Its filming marks Constance Talmadge's first really big—or perhaps serious—picture. It is directed by Sidney A. Franklin, who made "Smilin' Through." It has claims to Oriental sumptuousness unsurpassed in the annals of production. And altogether it is one of those things which don't come often enough.

Naturally, Constance Talmadge takes the role of Ming Toy, the part made famous on the stage by Fay Bainter; but Miss Talmadge has carried the character to lengths impossible on any stage. She has made it her biggest achievement, a composite of comedy and drama throughout every movement, from her escape from the auction block of the Chinese Love Boat to her arrival in Chinatown, San Francisco, where the desire to speak "dignified American language" and make "nice dance like shimmy" almost forces her into marriage with Charlie Yong, "Fifty-fifty Chinaman." That role is taken by Warner Oland while Billy Benson, the American, has Edward Burns for his screen sponsor. "East Is West" comes to the Eagle Opera House, July 11. Prices 10 and 30 cents.

Eagle Quill, July 6, 1923

**AT EAGLE OPERA HOUSE
SUNDAY, SEPT. 11, 1921**

Samuel Goldwyn will present Will Rogers in "Almost a Husband", by Opie Read, and directed by Clarence G. Badger, at the Eagle opera House 1 Sunday, Sept. 11, 1921.

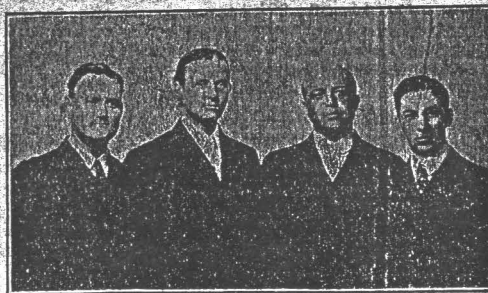
CONCERT!

BY THE

Triangle Quartet

Y. M. C. A. Milwaukee

Assisted by JOHN G. GREDLER, Impersonator, of Waukesha.



E. A. FOLLEY, First Tenor.

CHAS. PUEHLER, First Bass

P. B. WILLIS, Second Tenor

DR. J. ROYCE BROWN, Second Bass

MRS. E. A. FOLLEY, Accompanist

Quartets, Duets, Solos, Readings, Impersonations and Cornet Solos.

Mrs. A. R. Thurston of St. Louis will render a soprano and a piano solo.

Eagle Opera House

Tues., Sept. 8, 1908, 8 p. m.

Admission 25 cents.

Children 15 cents.

RESERVED SEATS 35 CENTS.

Eagle Quill, Sept. 4, 1908

This new Goldwyn play is perhaps the most original that has ever been shown on the screen. There are two reasons for this: One is its plot, the other is its star. Will Rogers, in "Almost a Husband", will please you as you have never been pleased

before. He is refreshing. He is convincing. He is really funny, (sic)—and you'll say so.

Admission for this presentation will be 10 and 20 cents tax paid. F.A. Rockteacher, manager.
Eagle Quill, Sept. 9, 1921

CHINESE WEDDING AT OPERA HOUSE TONIGHT

Tonight, Friday, November 18th, at 8 o'clock a novel ceremony will take place at the Eagle Opera House. The contracting parties in the ceremony will not speak a word nor will any minister or official perform the rites. In this ceremony, elaborate Budhistic (sic) idols and Chinese costumes will give an accurate picture of a real Chinese wedding. Chinese songs will be sung and a meal will be eaten with genuine Chinese chopsticks.

The Chinese Wedding is brought to Eagle by Mrs. Winifred Simister Nicholas as the first number on the Lyceum course. The whole fuss in the wedding will be made over Woodrow Mich, who is the bridegroom. The bride, Grace

Schuyler, will be completely ignored, as all brides are in China. The father, Warren Cruver, will carry on the marriage rites and unite the young couple. Loretta Mich, Thomas Schmidt, and Patricia Chapman will appear as brothers (sic) and sisters of the groom. Dorothy Schroeder will be the bride's attendant and Margaret Keller will appear as the bridegroom's mother. A Chinese coolie completes the cast and is none other than Donald Thayer.

Season reservations on the Lyceum course can still be made at Thiele's Hardware store for twenty-five cents. Individual reservations will be made for tonight's performance for ten cents.

Eagle Quill, Nov. 18, 1927

"COMING"

A series of ten dances, to be given by the Eagle "Club Orchestra" at the Opera Hall every two weeks, on Friday nights. The first dance will occur the evening of Nov. 4. Tickets are on sale now: Single, \$1.00; for the series of ten dances, \$7.50.

The personal (sic) of the orchestra will be Valley Blakely, Whitewater Normal, violin; Floyd Smart, saxophone (sic); Stanley Waters, Whitewater Normal, traps and drums; Kathryn Whettam, piano. Refreshments will be served at Stead's restaurant.

Eagle Quill, Oct. 14, 1921

(Editor's Note: The building still stands at 132 Main Street. Today it houses apartments and the Eagle Hair Studio.)

Meet Your Officers

Irma Jolliffe – Outgoing President



Irma, born in Mukwonago on October 27, 1915, is one of 10 children born to Mr. & Mrs. Herman Vollmer. She attended Frame School, a one-room schoolhouse located at the intersection of Hwy. 83 and Frog Alley. Irma remembers that the students learned from the other grades as they worked, and there were a lot of A students.

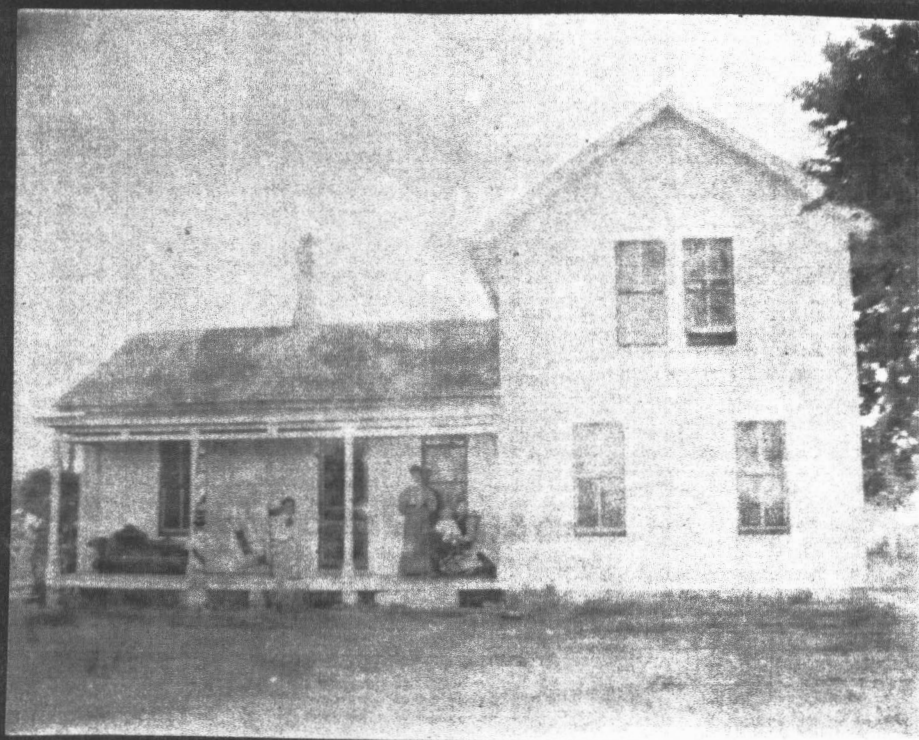
The Vollmers were farmers, and raised strawberries and vegetables, so there was a lot of work for all to do, including the children. Weeding was done with hoes. (Irma declares Santa to be a farmer, too—hoe, hoe, hoe!) She also did housework for other homes.

In 1933 she graduated from Mukwonago High School in a class of 25. Evan Hill was principal at that time. She met Robert Jolliffe on a blind date. ("See? They are successful!" she says.) The pair went to Waukesha Beach with a carload of others. They went on all of the rides, including a boat ride.

After two years of dating, they tied the knot on December 28, 1935 in a simple little wedding in St. John's Lutheran Parsonage, Mukwonago. Since

Robert worked on a farm, they had no honeymoon. They worked a farm near Little Prairie on shares—the landlord got half and they got half. Six years later they moved to Robert's father Steve's farm (on South Street) in Eagle. They had two children, Ronald and Patricia; three grandchildren; Steve, Donna, and Jennifer; and two great-grandchildren, Spencer and Sydney Arnold. Robert passed away in June of 1989, after more than 50 years of marriage. Irma sold the farm in the early 1990s. She regrets the significant loss of farmland in the Eagle area over the years.

Besides serving as president of EHS, Irma is president of the Eagle senior group, belongs to several card groups, and has received an award for her many hours of volunteerism at Old World Wisconsin. ♦



MYSTERY HOUSE

Do you recognize this Eagle home?

This photo was taken of the William Donahue family in 1908. Mr. Donahue was a barber in Eagle for six years. The family then moved to Clinton, Troy Center and then back to Eagle. Minor changes have been made to the front of the house.

The address of this home will be listed in the April newsletter.

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



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

