

EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Winter 2002

Eagle, Wisconsin

2001 EHS Board

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Meet Your Officers



Gerald Baker (1940)

I was born in the Town of Troy, Walworth County, on May 19, 1922 on my grandfather's farm, where my dad and all of this sisters and brothers were born.

Later my folks moved to a store in Eagle. In March of 1929 my dad bought a farm from his uncle, Alfred Baker. We moved with horses on bob sleigh because of deep snow. We didn't have any electricity or water in the house—just one cook—and woodstove. After three years, we built our electric line with the Betts family. It sure was good replacing the old gas engine! We had to have a wood burner in the tank to keep the water for the cattle from freezing.

I went to the Baker's School through eighth grade; then I went for four years at Whitewater City High. All the time working on the farm, I belonged to the 4H at Ward School and the Future Farmers of Whitewater. I won many awards.

On October 25, 1947 I married Dorothy Roberts from North Prairie. We rented a farm near Elkhorn. We farmed it for two years before we moved to Waukesha, where I took a job with Wem Farms driving a milk route. A young couple bought our livestock and machinery.

When my brother Howard moved to Oklahoma, I went back to farming with my dad. After we had been farming together for many years, he sold the farm. It had been in the family for 104 years. Taking eight head of my cattle with me, I took a herdsman job at Keystone Farms. Five years later, I took a herdsman job with the Morris farm at Walworth. I stayed a year at Morris, then bought a farm at Watertown. After two years, I sold the farm and took a job at Marquette University as an animal technician, taking care of animals and teaching students how to give injections, etc. I worked there for many years. I worked at Husco in Waukesha as a hydraulic tester for 20 years.

I retired at age 64 to take care of my wife, who had cancer. She passed away in March of 1996.

I am vice-president of the Little Prairie Cemetery. I have two sons and a daughter, two grandsons and a granddaughter, and one great-granddaughter.♦

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CORRECTION

In the last issue of the newsletter, Robert Baker's name was included in the **In Memoriam** section in error. While his cousin Howard did pass away, Robert is wintering in Palmyra as usual. Eagle Historical Society regrets any concern this error may have caused.

"The Christian cemetery is a memorial and a record. It is not a mere field in which the dead are stowed away unknown; it is a touching and beautiful history, written in family burial plots, in mounded graves, in sculptured and inscribed monuments. It tells the history of the past—not of its institutions, or its wars, or its ideas, but of its individual lives—of its men and women and children, and of its household. It is silent, but eloquent, it is common, but unique."

Joseph Anderson, as quoted in Mount Moriah by Helen Rezzatto

Eagle Cemeteries (part 1)

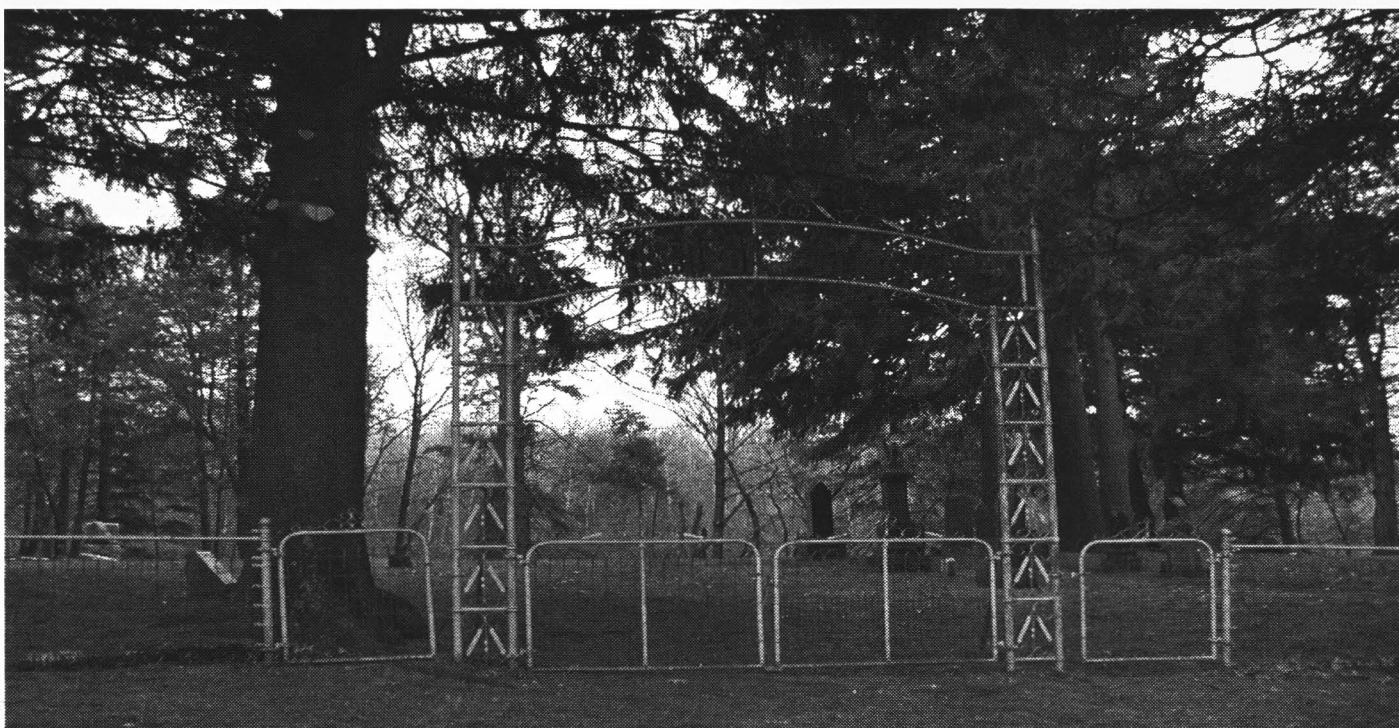
The first Eagle settler to pass away in the town is believed to have been Jane Bovee. In 1843 50-year-old Matthias J. Bovee of Amsterdam, New York, had settled in the Eagle area with his wife Elizabeth, nine children, his mother Jane, and other relatives. There being no formal burial place, she was buried on a hilltop on the family property.

Later a cemetery was established near Sprague Road on the farm of Ebenezer Thomas. Members of the Bovee family—including Matthias (died September 12, 1872) and his wife Elizabeth (died June 12, 1892)—were buried there. After Oak Ridge Cemetery was established, the family began using it. In May of 1907 the

remains of Matthias J. Bovee, his wife, Elizabeth M. Bovee, William R. Bovee, Sarah A. Bovee and Ella Bovee were transferred to Oak Ridge. By mere accident and without forethought, the removal of the bodies occurred on the anniversary of the marriage of William. R. and Sarah A. Bovee.

Another early settler, John Griffin, was buried on his farm, which is currently owned by Ed and Welthy Muel-ler. His tombstone is inscribed simply "John D. Griffin, died November 18, 1856, [age] 61 years."

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St. Theresa's old cemetery—Photo by Roy Leonhardt

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St. Theresa's Catholic Cemetery

By Bea Marquardt

The first Catholic cemetery for St. Theresa's was located on the south side of Highway 59 on Antique Lane, a mile west of the village, Section 21, Eagle Township.

The cemetery was established circa 1844, the date of the earliest known burial. It is now inactive, with the last burial in 1941. There was no room to expand, and burials for St. Theresa's Catholic Church are now at St. Theresa's Cemetery. The parish was founded about 1852.

Some of the soldiers buried in the old cemetery are: Mr. Fischer, Jacob Von Rueden, Charles Lins and William Fardy (as of June 01, 1928). The name of the old cemetery was changed to St. Theresa's Evergreen Cemetery in September, 1933. •

NAMES OF CEMETERIES CHANGED

The Catholic cemetery west of the village, known as St. Theresa old cemetery, has been changed to St. Theresa Evergreen cemetery, and the Catholic cemetery in the village known as St. Theresa new cemetery, has been changed to St. Theresa Oak Knoll cemetery.

Eagle Quill, September 8, 1933

St. Theresa's Catholic cemetery is located on the east side of Highway 67, just south of the Village of Eagle, Section 22, Village of Eagle.

This active cemetery was established as a public cemetery circa 1853; St. Theresa's Catholic Church took it over in 1923. It is run by St. Theresa's Congregation as of today. Additional land for the cemetery was donated by Arthur Juedes in the 1950's, and one more acre was bought for expansion in the 1990's.

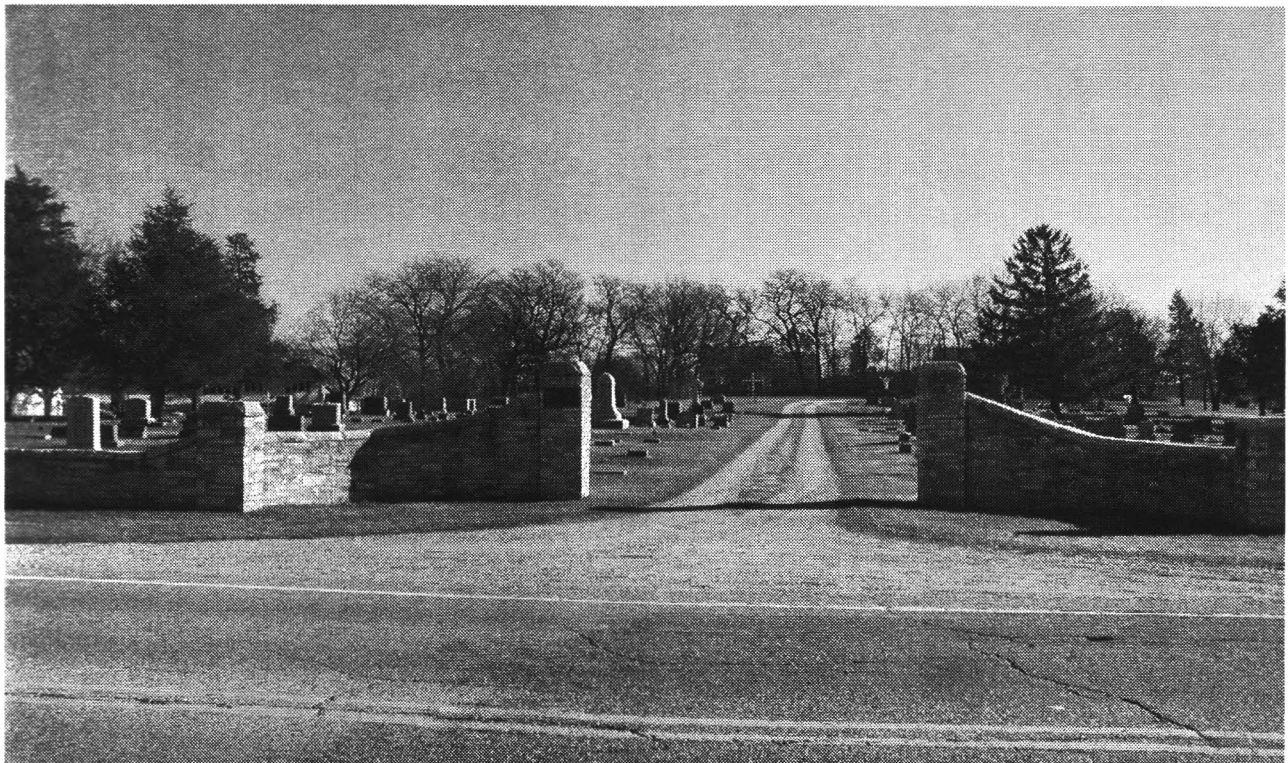
The extent of the cemetery records is not known. They are currently being updated; the older ones are in Latin and German. St. Theresa does have the parish records from 1865 to date. There are very few stones prior to the 1880's. •

Melendy's Prairie Cemetery

By Clara Howell Pierce, with additions by Carol Calkins

The cemetery is located near the Jefferson-Waukesha County line on Highway ZZ. It is across the road from

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St. Theresa's—Photo by Roy Leonhardt

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the farm which was originally the home of Daniel F. Melendy (1810-1887), the founder of Melendy's Prairie.

Mr. Melendy came from Gilford, Vermont to Milwaukee in 1836. In the spring of 1837 he made a prospective tour through what are now the counties of Waukesha, Jefferson and Dodge for the purpose of buying land for settlement. In 1839 he purchased many acres from the government. Mr. Melendy later disposed of parts of his land to other settlers in the 1840's.

The cemetery dates back to the early history of the area. When the settlers first came there was no formal burial place and the dead were buried anywhere their loved ones decided to have as their last resting place. Three persons were laid to rest in the corner of the farm known as the Bolser farm in the early days—the mother and two sons. Also, an infant brother of Walter Carlin was buried near the buildings on their farm. There were undoubtedly others.

Mr. Ebenezer Fisk Weld gave the land for the cemetery and it is believed he also offered land for a church at that time. We do not know the exact date, but believe it was in the 1840's. Most of the deceased of the Melendy's Prairie area are now laid to rest in this cemetery.

Some of the individuals and families buried there are: Daniel F. Melendy, E. Fisk Weld, Nicholas Piper, Leverett Sherman, Walter Carlin, Thomas Burton, Nathaniel Peardon, A. W. Gates, Dave Crearer, Giles Lean, Christopher Lean, Robert Turner family, Robert Charlie family, Stacey family, Rundle family, Thomas Lean family, the John Chapin family—and many more.

There are a few interesting incidents regarding some of the individuals buried in this pioneer cemetery. The Peardon family had many descendants in the area. One William Peardon was a cabinet maker, so often when a death occurred in the community the family would call on "Uncle Billy" (as he was affectionately called) to make the coffin rather than to make it themselves. No doubt it was a "pine box," as the coffins were often called. At first there was no formal way of burial and no burial permit or vault was necessary. The coffin was loaded on a wagon or sleigh to take the deceased to the cemetery. Eventually the conventional coffin was introduced and the horse-drawn hearse and undertaker became popular.

Another well-known Peardon family member buried at Melendy's Prairie Cemetery is Dr. Richard Peardon.

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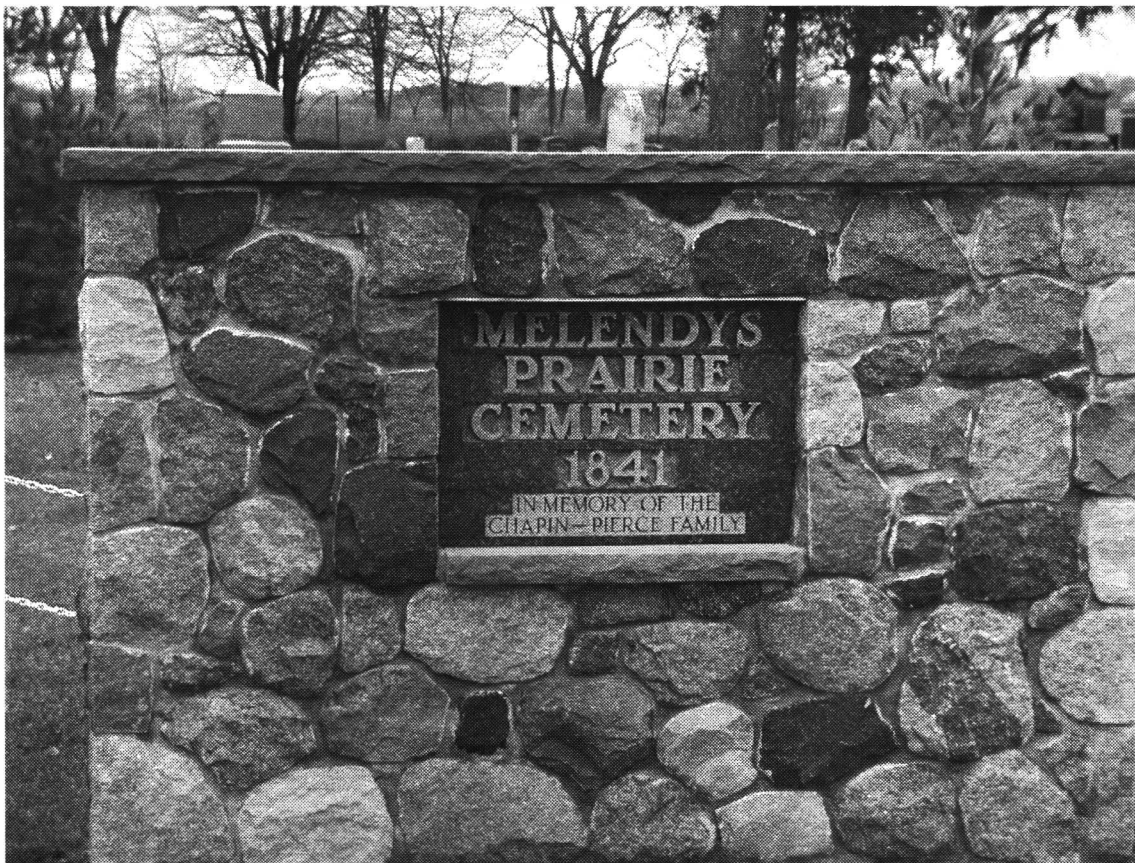


Photo by Roy Leonhardt

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Born in 1843, he graduated from the Philadelphia Dental College and the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania and was a medical doctor in Palmyra for a number of years. A very large field stone, brought from the former Joe Stude farm near Eagle, serves as Dr. Peardon's tombstone.

William Goodhue is also buried at Melendy's Prairie. His wife was Alice Weld, a daughter of E. Fisk Weld (who gave the cemetery land). William Goodhue marched with General Sherman "to the sea" during the Civil War, doing much of the engineering for General Sherman along the way.

Another interesting name is that of Christopher Lean. Many whose name is Lean are interred in this cemetery. Christopher Lean came from Cornwall, England to this country in 1846. A daughter, Rebecca, married Henry Stacey in 1848. Mr. Christopher Lean, according to the book "Portraits and Biographical Records of Waukesha Co.," published by the Excelsior Publishing Co. in 1894...was in very good circumstances in the "old country" and was considered a moneyed man here in those days, as he brought some \$4000 with him to this country.

Leverett and Sophronia Sherman and baby came from Vermont in the fall of 1837 by ox team and settled on the place that Dale and Pat Schroeder now occupy. [The Shermans'] daughter, Emogene, born in 1841 at the home of midwife Mrs. John Burnham, is believed to be the first white child born in the town of Sullivan. It was about 1841 that the Shermans built their "grout" house, which is similar in construction to the historical house in Palmyra...donated to the Palmyra Historical Society by Fisk Carlin.

Ebenezer Fisk Weld was a cousin of the Shermans. It was about this same time that he "staked out" a claim at Melendy's Prairie and then went to Mineral Point to work in the lead mines for a few years. This was still Indian country then, and Mr. Weld lived in a wigwam with the Indians during the winter of 1844 while he was building a log cabin. He was building the cabin to have a place to bring his bride to from Vermont the following spring.

Daniel F. Melendy first came in the spring of 1837 seeking a place to live. He erected for himself a log cabin, six feet square, covered it with bark and called it home. He had no visitors for some time except the red men of the forest who chanced that way on their travels, and his sleep was often disturbed by the howling of the prairie wolves. Undoubtedly, Daniel Melendy was one of the earliest white men to see this area.

The John Chapin family are our ancestors. They came from Vermont in 1843. Mr. Chapin was a stone mason and built the Stone School.... He used to walk from his home at Melendy's Prairie to Janesville to do mason work. Experienced stone masons received \$2.50 a day there in the 1840's. His grandson, Charles Chapin Pierce, who died in 1988, lived on the same farm his grandfather bought in 1845 from Mr. Melendy.

I have mentioned only a very few of the hard-working and interesting people buried in this local cemetery, which goes back to pioneer days. As a memorial to some of the earliest of pioneers, in the fall of 1980 Mr. Fisk Weld Carlin—a grandson of Ebenezer Fisk Weld—had a large stone placed near the front of the cemetery bearing a bronze plaque which reads: IN MEMORY OF THE PIONEERS WHO LIE IN UNMARKED GRAVES.

In 1993, the "Melendy's Prairie Cemetery" sign was given by Stewart and Carol Calkins in memory of her pioneer ancestors.

In 1996, John and Nancy Burton gave an acre of their land, which adjoined the cemetery on the east, to the cemetery association. This allows for further expansion as additional gravesites are needed.

The present officers of the Melendy's Prairie Cemetery Association are:

President—Rex Peardon

Sec.-Tres.—Carol Calkins

Trustees—Bruce Lee, John Burton, Art Thomas

Rex Peardon is also the cemetery caretaker. •

(Eagle Cemeteries to be continued in the next issue.)

IN MEMORIAM

Ruth Murphy

Lucille Von Rueden

Annice Younger

Did you identify the fall issue mystery building?



Photo by Roy Leonhardt

This building at 240-242 Sherman Street was constructed in 1904 as the Eagle Creamery Company. Output averaged around 9,000 pounds of butter a month. When the creamery went out of business, the building was converted to a pickle factory. Today the structure is a duplex, with upper and lower residential units.

FOURTH-GRADE HISTORY REPORT

The Van Holten Pickle Factory

By Melissa Egly

The Van Holten Pickle Factory was established on 242 Sherman Street sometime in the early 1930's. The factory moved from its original location on main street near the current Fire Dept. when the creamery that occupied the Sherman Street building went out of business.

Pickles seem to be a major part of the economy of Eagle during that time. Many of the farmers in the area had large "pickle patches." My grandpa remembers when he and his sister would pick cucumbers to take to the pickle factory. My mom and I talked to many people who had memories very similar to my grandpa's. Unfortunately, we were unable to find any written information, but the stories we heard contained many interesting facts.

Harvesting the pickles lasted the entire summer. The children played a very important roll (sic) in this not so easy job. The cucumber vines were very prickly and they turned your hands a yellowish color. Not to mention how hot it could get. When picking cucumbers for pickling, size was very important. The good cucumbers were between 3 and 4 inches long. These sold for 14 cents a lb. The larger cucumbers were worth much less at just 1 penny a lb. It was easy to tell when you did a good job picking when the cucumbers never got too big.

All summer long the farmers and their families would gather the cucumbers to take to the pickle factory. There they were met by the man who managed it, a Mr. Josph Studey and his 2 assistants, Mr. Whittam and "Pickle Jack"

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Agathon. The cucumbers were dumped into a huge sorting machine. The machine sorted them by size, smallest to biggest, into boxes. While this was happening, it seems all the kids had figured out it was a good time to sneak into Mr. Studey's office to snatch a pickle out of the small 3ft. pickle vat that was kept there. Everyone we talked to say (sic) they were the best pickles they'd ever had!

Once the cucumbers were sorted into their boxes, they were taken to huge vats behind the building. These vats stood about 15ft. high and were 20ft. around. They were filled with water, salt, brine, and dill. The Van Holten Pickle Factory only made dill pickles. The boxes of cucumbers were poured into these vats, once again by size, where they were left to "pickle." My grandpa tells a story about climbing up the ladder on one of the gigantic vats, lifting the lid and finding a rat floating in the pickles. After a time, the pickles were taken out with giant scoops and put into barrels. In the late fall, the barrels of pickles were loaded onto the train that went right past the building. From here the pickles were taken by railroad into Milwaukee and other cities.

By all accounts, The Van Holten Pickle Factory ran into at least the early 1950's. We haven't been able to find out an exact date, but everyone agrees it was probably between 1950 and 1955.

The factory was converted into a home and many families have lived there in the years since.

While researching this paper my mom and I talked to many interesting people and learned a lot about Eagle, how life was in those days and about the people and some of the things they went through. Everyone was very friendly and helpful.

Special thanks to Dr. John E. Crawley of Palmyra. "Doc" Crawley grew up in the area and was only to (sic) happy to share all of this childhood memories of his family's "pickle patch." It was thanks to that pickle patch that the Crawley family got their first refrigerator and television.

Thanks also to the following: Andrew Szymkowski, Larry Egly, Ed and Welthey Mueller, Diane Theumling, Pat Hawes, Art Stocks, and Don and Pat Wilton.♦

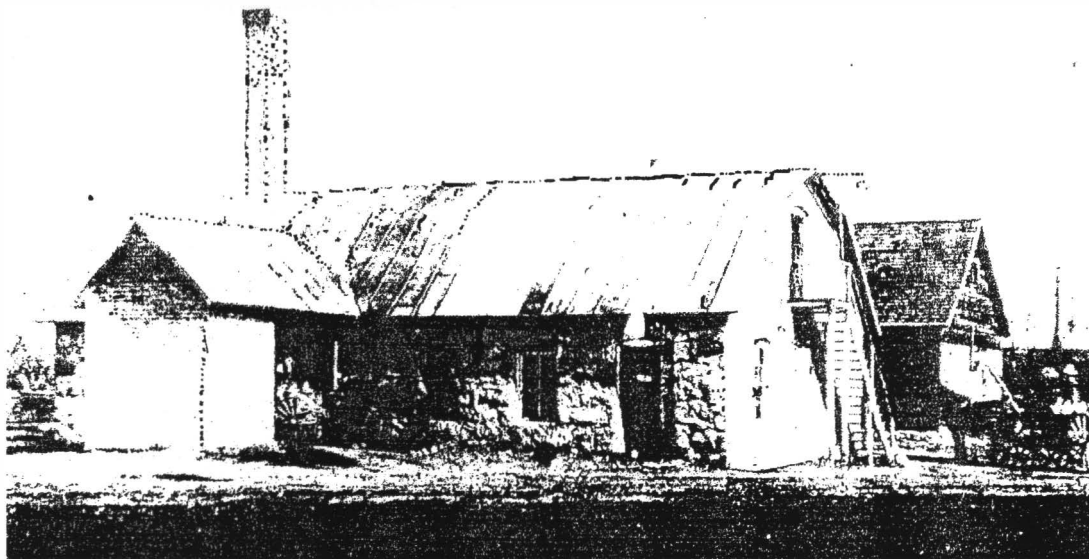


Photo courtesy of the Eagle Historical Museum



Reminder—Notify EHS of my temporary address so I don't miss the next issue of the newsletter!

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P.O. Box 454
Eagle, WI 53119

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Do you know where this house is?



Photo courtesy of Pat Wilton