

One of Ringling Brothers stayed at Eagle Hotel: Ledger displayed at Historical Society's Annual Meeting

by Joan Holman

EAGLE - The Eagle Historical Society annual meeting November 9 offers

an opportunity to show and tell and have an opportunity to answer "Do You Remember When?"

On display, by the Society, will be the guest register of the Eagle Hotel (now Sasso's Kettle Moraine Inn). The trip from Waukesha or Milwaukee to Eagle in 1885 necessitated an overnight stay. In the great book of the Eagle Hotel are dates and signatures from 1882-1886 which prove this fact.

In September 1885 J. Ringling of the Ringling Bros. circus was a customer with five other members of the organization.

Marty Bovee, great nephew of former proprietor Matt J. Bovee, recently found this historic record book. Like an archaeological dig, Bovee said reading between the lines gave a clearer look into the village at that time.

"Writing was important. The dates must have been put down by Bovee with perfect penmanship. An Indian ink and quill provided for the thin lines growing into broad boundaries as the letters were formed," said Bovee.

"And most of the visitors had the same training for the signatures were clear and almost picturesque. Some sheets could make interest-

ing additions, framed and put on museum walls."

Friday, January 9, 1885 the ledger notes that Eagle String Band was enjoying a meal; probably before one of their concerts held in the former Masonic Hall, next to the present Village/Town Hall.

The name of J.S. Andrews of Mukwonago came up regularly. This was due to all the meals this man seemed to enjoy at the hotel.

The Great Book shows which of the 12 guest rooms were used by which guest, what meal was taken and if livery was needed. Often, it was just the meal without accommodation.

The Hotel letterhead informs, "Telephone connections with all parts of the state - good livery connected with the hotel." and "Opposite the depot."

Bovee says that in the 1800s, the railroad went from Elkhorn to Eagle. Horses were the major means of transportation and a long time was necessary to make the journey to Milwaukee.

On January 8, 1885, both H.B. Wolff and J. Schroeder

of Milwaukee asked for a breakfast call by 6:30 a.m. probably for an early start.

The date June 28, 1885 shows signatures of John Brown wife and boy of S.P. Co and eight additional names below. Bovee is not sure what or from where this company came or presented.

The notice on the top of the visitors' page announced "Guests without baggage please pay in advance. All money, jewels, coats, valises and other valuables must be left at the office and checks received for them otherwise the proprietor will not be responsible for any loss."

Thanks to the hotel ledger a slice of Eagle's history can be garnered. Bovee says the book will be part of the collection organized by the Eagle Historical Society.

The ledger plus other pieces of the past can be seen during the Society annual meeting November 9. For more information, contact President Elaine Raduechel at 594-2676.