

# THE EAGLE SPEAKS

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2012



www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

"OLD ABE"

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The first street cars in the Chippewa Valley were horse drawn.

## Street Cars in Chippewa Falls

BY ARLEY ENGEL

**M**y! Yes there were street cars in Chippewa Falls. In 1898 the Chippewa Falls City Council granted the Chippewa Valley Electric Railway Company a franchise to build and operate the electric line. This would be an extension of the line from Eau Claire which had it's beginnings as horse and mule team drawn street cars as early as 1879. At this time Chippewa Falls and Eau Claire had already been connected by telephone, and new gas lights were being installed in both towns.

When looking up information on this subject, I found that in 1884 The Eau Claire Railroad Company employed 44 horses, 18 men and 7 street cars. By 1889 a new owner A. G. Bradstreet had converted to electrified street cars which could travel from Shawtown to the Omaha Depot in only 20 minutes. This was less than half the time that it would have taken with the horse or mule drawn cars.

The electric motors got their power from miles of wire strung overhead. The electricity was supplied by the power plant located at the Cedar Falls Dam near Menomonie until 1912.



### Monday, February 13, 6:30 p.m. CCHS Semi Annual Membership Meeting • Area History Center

- President's Progress Report & Hall of Fame Induction
- The Basics of Treasure Hunting Power-Point Slideshow by Kenneth Briggs from Three Seasons Treasure Hunters, LLC

This photo of Kenneth Briggs and the Cook Rutledge Mansion is featured in the White's Electronics, Inc. 2012 full color glossy calendar. The calendar highlights photos of treasure found with White's Metal Detectors in Antarctica, New Zealand and eleven locations across the United States. Calendar photo caption: "I was able to hunt the Cook-Rutledge Mansion grounds in Chippewa Falls earlier this year with my DFX. The mansion dates to 1873, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. All of the items found, including this 1883 Indian Head penny and amethyst ring, were turned over to the mansion." Kenneth Briggs will share his knowledge and experiences searching for buried treasure at the CCHS Semi-annual Membership Meeting on February 13 at 6:30 p.m.



## CALENDAR

### February 13

CCHS Semi Annual Membership Meeting, 6:30 p.m.

### February 21

- Area History Center Birthday Lunch, Noon
- The Past Passed Here Planning Meeting, 1:30 p.m.

### March 20

- CCHS Board Meeting, 9:15 a.m.
- Historic Marker Committee Meeting, 10:30 a.m.
- Area History Center Birthday Lunch, Noon
- The Past Passed Here Planning Meeting, 1:30 p.m.

### April 17

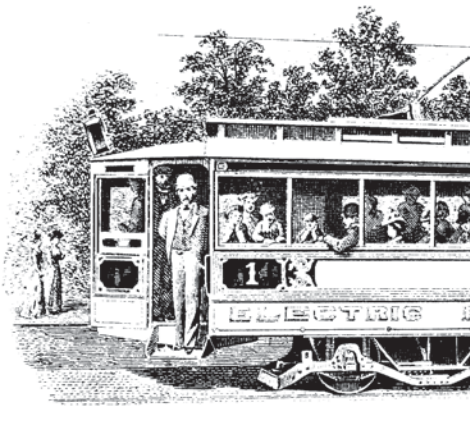
- CCHS Board Meeting, 9:15 a.m.
- Area History Center Birthday Lunch, Noon
- The Past Passed Here Planning Meeting, 1:30 p.m.

### April 27 - 29

Chippewa Falls History Coalition Display at Springfest - Northern Wisconsin State Fairgrounds

### May 9 - 13

The Past Passed Here in Allen Park



### Street Cars continued from cover

Eau Claire was just the fourth city in the United States to have an electric line, and reportedly the first in the nation to have electrically heated street cars in the winter.

As the connection was made to Chippewa Falls you may recognize some of these names First Crossing, Second Crossing, Dodges, Michaud's, Electric Park. These were all stops on the way to Lake Hallie, not the town but the lake itself. Electric Park was located here and was complete with a dance hall, band shell, amusement rides, and a ball park in 1910. In the late teens and early twenties, cars filled with ball teams, families and other baseball enthusiasts poured into Electric Park. The site also offered boat rides in the summer and later horse races.

Some of the other stopping places on the way to Chippewa Falls include Hansen's, Hagen's, Chippewa Junction, Stafford's, you then meet the city limits, where it continued on to the Holy Ghost Church, it then took a left turn on Main Street and continued across the bridge to River Street, then right to Bay Street, it then took a left to Spring Street, taking a right and going one block to Bridge Street, where it traveled north to Elm Street, then it turned right to Jefferson Avenue where it turned left and traveled on up to the Irvine Park Station. The track turned into the park just below the car entrance and ran to the bottom of the hill towards the band shell where it made a loop and headed back on the same rail to Eau Claire. The Irvine Park stopping station and the original sign are still located at this site (CCHS Historic Marker #22).

As time progressed the auto and bus became more popular marking an end to the rail type street car powered by an overhead electric line. The cost of riding from Chippewa Falls to Eau Claire was only 20 cents. The line was 12.4 miles long and took nearly 45 minutes to complete. The street cars ran every hour. Earlier plans had been made to extend the rail line through Bloomer and on to the Resort area at Long Lake but this plan was never mustered. Leinenkugel's Beer ran an ad in the Chippewa Paper. One of the copies that we have from 1897 states: "The Latest in Wheel Transportation Replaced the Bicycle." The ad continues, "work commenced this summer in hope's the line would be ready in time for the great Chippewa Fair." The cars ordered were of special design and furnished by the Pullman Palace Car Company.

On August 7, 1926 a newspaper article reads, "Chippewa Falls is without street car service today. A battered yellow car rolled toward Eau Claire at 12:45 o'clock this morning the object of all eyes awake at that time, and the occasion for one of the strangest celebrations in the history of Chippewa Falls. The car will not come back. Other cars like it will not come back. For the interurban line has been discontinued by the Northern States Power Co. after 28 years of uninterrupted service. People talked. They talked about the street car and it's passing. There was a man on the car by the name of John Thornton.

## Century Tree...

### Another Creation by Don Bichner!

For decades Don has been collecting salvaged wood from various buildings and locations in Chippewa County. He has begun creating intricate ornaments in his woodworking shop from this wood. Material for the first 10 ornaments came from St. Charles Convent, an Irvine Park black cherry tree, the Heyde Center for the Arts and the 12-Mile House. Don recently sponsored the purchase of the tree on which the ornaments are being displayed.



He had piloted street cars since they first began in Chippewa Falls. He remembers the bobbing four wheel cars of an earlier day. He remembers the day when bigger, finer cars came in. He loves street cars. So on that last ride he was a bit wistful. It was the end of another era.”

As a young lad, I remembered some street car rail still being on Spring Street and had often wondered where they traveled to. I'm sure my dad would say that I asked plenty of question's about them. Another article from the Chippewa Paper states, "A crew of men from Northern States Power Co. this morning 11-11- 26 started the work of removing the trolley wire along the old street car right of way. The work started on Bridge street in front of the court house. The crew then went northward. The trolley wire is made of copper and is of considerable value." While working in Racine in the 1950s, I rode on an electric bus that was powered by an overhead power line. As we pulled into Milwaukee, the driver pulled the bus sharply to the right to prevent hitting a car coming towards us in the wrong lane, this caused the power line to disconnect and took away our power. The driver asked the men on board to help push the bus back near the line, so he could reconnect to the line with an insulated stick. It all worked out and we were back on power. *That's all for now from Engel's Little house on the Wheaton Prairie.* 🍂

## We're Rolling Out Our Red Carpet for the Yellowstone Trail Centennial Celebration!

BY JIM SCHUH

It's a "mid-day & mid-way" old-fashioned picnic in the Irvine Park Main Picnic Pavilion that was built in 1908. Plans are in the works for this multi-county "Tin Lizzie Sociability Run" from Hudson to Stevens Point. Back in 2006 The CCHS Historic Marker Committee funded the Yellowstone Trail highway signs directing travelers through Chippewa County. Now our committee members are working on the planning with representatives of local antique auto clubs, Paul and Joann Oman; Yellowstone Trail book and guide authors, Alice and John Ridge and the Highway 29 Partnership. The CCHS event will be held Saturday, June 2. Hundreds of antique autos are anticipated. We are still working on the details, but we are hoping that our guests will enjoy amenities that were available here when the Yellowstone Trail was created in 1912. Sponsors are needed to help with acquiring picnic food, beverages, entertainment and door prizes.



## FEATURED ARTIFACT

### Generous Donations

We recently acquired some special artifacts from the families of two Past Presidents of the Chippewa County Historical Society.

Tom Joas, nephew of Joe Joas brought in an assortment of items that Joe had wanted to donate to the Historical Society. Two of the more noteworthy items are an original 1874 Birds Eye View of Chippewa Falls and a book titled *Memoirs of Father Goldsmith*. The Birds Eye View is framed and is in very good condition. The book was published in 1895, only five years after Father Goldsmith passed away at the very young age of 45.

Jim Barnier, son of Robert (Bob) Barnier donated a collection of items from his father. Among the items donated was a 30" x 24" print of the Soo Line 2719 Steam Locomotive. Bob worked for the Soo Line Railroad for over 40 years and had been an engineer on the 2719. He was the last engineer on a Soo Line Train out of Chippewa Falls before the advent of the Wisconsin Central. Jim also donated 3 scrap-books that chronicle the beginnings of the Chippewa County Historical Society. They start in the fall of 1969 and are filled with inspiring articles of the efforts and accomplishments of the early spear headers of the CCHS who worked so hard to insure that the history of Chippewa Falls would be preserved for future generations. 🍂

**The Eagle Speaks** is published quarterly by the Chippewa County Historical Society, a non-profit organization established to promote and stimulate historical interest in Chippewa County, Wisconsin.

Mail any comments or future articles to 123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729. 715-723-4399.

**Chippewa County Historical Society**  
123 Allen St., Chippewa Falls, WI  
**Open on Tuesdays | 9am-4pm**



## A Message From Your President



# Newest Hall of Fame Members

2012

KATHY FORSGREN

JACK O'NEIL

JOSEPH AND NILAH  
BRADFORD

*They will be inducted  
at the Membership Meeting  
on February 13, 2012.*

I just saw a snowmobile race across the lake as I sat down to write this message. It is a sunny, snowy, cold winter day in Wisconsin.

The Board of Directors at their January meeting elected three members to the Chippewa County Historical Society Hall of Fame. I'm happy to announce that Kathy Forsgren, Jack O'Neil and Joseph and Nilah (Nabor) Bradford are the newest members of the Hall of Fame. They will be inducted at the Membership Meeting on February 13, 2012.

Kathy has been volunteering at the History Center for twenty years. She has worked in the library, the photo room and as assistant treasurer. In 2006 she became a Director and Treasurer. As treasurer she has been responsible for the controlling the finance's of the Society. Her attention to detail while paying bills and keeping our funds well invested is why we are in good shape.

Jack O'Neil had been a volunteer at the History Center for fifteen years. He became a Director in 1998. Jack was the person who kept the History Center repaired and in good operating condition. Unfortunately Jack passed away in 2007. Our physical home would not be as good as it is today without Jack.

Joseph and Nilah (Nabor) Bradford had been supporters of the Society for many years. Joseph's great great grandmother's brother was Captain John E. Perkins, commander of the Eagle Regiment during the Civil War. The Bradford's donated a feather from Abe (The War Eagle) and some of Captain Perkin's personal items for our collection. The Bradford's were also financial supporters of the Society. Their final gift to the Society came in an endowment from their estate of \$183,000 which provides an interest income for operating costs.

We recently lost Joe Joas, a dedicated and valued "97 year young" Hall of Fame member. We miss Joe and would like to thank he and his family for remembering the Chippewa County Historical Society with a designated Endowment Fund through the Community Foundation of Chippewa County.

In past newsletters I have suggested that you might consider volunteering at the History Center. Well we have some pressing needs for help at the History Center today. We presently need more docent volunteers. If you are not familiar with the term, the docents are the tour guides for visitors to the museum. We have a docent handbook that helps with information about our exhibits and we will train volunteers. Marge Hebbing, Director and Chair of our Education Committee is the person to contact to volunteer (715-723-3790).

We also need a volunteer or volunteers to share keeping the History Center neat and clean. It is amazing how much better the History Center is with a little sweeping and dusting. Please contact Lucy LeCler to volunteer to help with this. (715-723-7468).

Hope to see you at the Membership meeting Monday, February 13, 2012 at 6:30 p.m. at the History Center. Don't miss Kenneth Briggs, Club President Three Seasons Treasure Hunters presentation "The Basics of Treasure Hunting". *Dave*

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Committees in sync!



# The Past Passed Here

ANNE KELLER

I wish I was in fourth grade now! Fourth graders in Wisconsin classrooms learn about the state's history. One of the most wonderful ways to learn about it is by experiencing it "hands-on." Here in Chippewa Falls, along Duncan Creek, in Allen Park, fourth grade students participate in the past that passed right here – the past that included the fur trade era during the late 1700's. Yes, it is several days of "The Past Passed Here."

Recognition and celebration of this significant period of the area's history began in Allen Park nine years ago by the Chippewa Falls' Main Street Organization; 2012 marks the third year of coordination by the Chippewa County Historical Society. Allen Park is the actual site of Ojibwa Indian and French fur trade era camps. Later it was near the largest sawmill in the world under one roof, operated by the Chippewa Lumber and Boom Company.

The "hands-on" activities will involve re-enactors - people who step back in time. They dress and speak and eat "authentically." Everything they do while living in the "camp" along Duncan Creek will be from the fur-trade era. Their activities that will include the students are music, games, canoe paddle races, a sawing competition, spinning and weaving, foods, jewelry-making, and some that haven't been announced yet. There will also be items for sale that are reflective of the era.

About 400 fourth-grade students from the Chippewa Falls schools will participate in those realistic activities. This year, nine more classes—from Stanley, Colfax, and Fall Creek, will learn about the fur traders and voyageurs. A class will attend the event during regular school hours on Wednesday, May 9 or Thursday, May 10 or Friday, May 11. The public may not attend during those days because of school regulations. They are welcome, though, after the children leave, from 3:00 to 6:00 p.m., on Thursday and Friday. The public is invited also on Saturday from 9:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, May 13 (Mother's Day) from 9:00 a.m. until noon. Cost is \$3.00 per person or \$10.00 for a family.

Community volunteers are needed; there are many ways to help. Financial sponsors are needed as well. The CCHS is a 501(c)3 non-profit, educational organization which means that donations are tax deductible. To become involved, call Mary Brown at 715-723-0619. Volunteer! Help make "The Past Passed Here" another successful event. 🍷

## Chippewa County Historical Society Committee Members

### ❖ Collection & Artifacts:

\* Nancy Schuh, Arley Engel, Lucyann LeCleur, Terri Stahr,

### Photography Sub Committee:

\*Lucyann LeCleur, Donna Bourget, Jeff Pritchard

### ❖ Building & Grounds:

\*Skip August

### Space Utilization Sub Committee

\*Steve Rasmus

### ❖ Education:

\* Marge Hebbing, Catherine Lea, Evalyn Frasch, Ann Gordon, Rosemary Broeren

### Docent Subcommittee:

Lalie Boos, Pat Ahneman

### ❖ Exhibits:

\* Arley Engel, Nancy Schuh, Lucyann LeCleur

### Historic Markers Sub Committee:

\*Tom Larson, Jim Schuh, Arley Engel, Kurt Gaber

### ❖ Finances:

\*Skip August, Kathy Forsgren

### ❖ Membership:

\*Shirley Liedl, Mary McKenna

### Telephone Subcommittee:

\*Mary McKenna

### ❖ Publicity:

\*Jim Schuh, Wayne Meyer

### ❖ Newsletter:

Jim Schuh, author & editor  
 Elly Rochester, layout & design  
 Nancy Schuh, author & proofreader  
 Column Authors: Arley Engel, Kathy Forsgren, Dave Gordon and Mary McKenna

\* *Chairperson*

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The railway shelter located at the entrance of Irvine Park was built in 1907



## NOTES FROM THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

# Searching for Your Family Tree

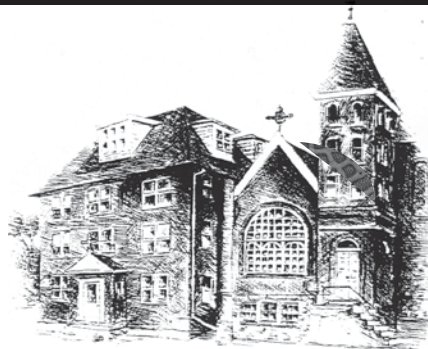
BY ANNE KELLER

The general idea (how can you have a “general idea” – either it’s an idea or it’s not an idea, except to be quite vague about what you’re thinking about) ... is to start your own family search with what you know about your immediate family and, from there, work backward (sometimes quite vaguely!) through time, finding as many dead relatives and stories as records will yield. Last week though, I had the enormous challenge of finding someone who (hopefully) would still be alive. Thus working laterally instead of back. At Christmas time, a young friend’s father told her that she has a sibling, ten years older than she, whom he had never before mentioned. She asked me if there was a chance the sibling could be found. I pursued the challenge by looking mostly through available on-line records, including census records and social security death indices. After following a paper trail from Pennsylvania to Florida to Michigan and back to Wisconsin, I did find her – in Ohio! Yes, she was alive and well and happy, and no, she wanted no part of a family she didn’t grow up with and knew nothing about. Moral of the story? Never never never never arrive at someone’s doorstep – or telephone – and announce that you might be their long-unknown-about half-sibling. Never never never. Always always always have a go-between approach that person.

Be a good genealogist. Be a good diplomat and respect that person’s right to say no. All stories don’t end happily ever after with people walking hand-in-hand into the sunset.

Members of the Genealogical Society are always busy. We usually meet the third Saturday to share our search experiences, and each Tuesday our volunteers answer “queries” —letters asking for information that can be found only in the records and stories within Chippewa County. Between Saturdays and Tuesdays, most of us are knee-deep in researching our own families. Often we are stuck at dead ends (yes, pun intended!) and often we like the challenge of someone else’s family search. Stop (or call) at the History Center any Tuesday – a volunteer there will be glad to help you “get started” with your own tree – be aware, though, that your tree may have some nuts, some squirrels, some fruits, and some that leave/leaf. 🌿

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- Family (1 Year) ..... \$25
- Contributing Member (1 Year)..... \$50
- Life Member (Individual)..... \$125
- Life (Couple) ..... \$175
- Extra Donation ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

MAIL TO:

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Chippewa Falls, WI 54729



### New Facebook Website Created

BY: JIM SCHUH, PUBLICITY COMMITTEE CHAIR

Our new Facebook site was created January 3. It includes photos and background information about our activities, goals and purpose. There is a link to The Past Passed Here Facebook site and to our official website. Social networking has become a popular way to communicate, promote events and recruit potential members. Visit us at: [www.facebook.com/ChippewaCountyHistoryCenter](http://www.facebook.com/ChippewaCountyHistoryCenter)

## COUNTY NEWS

### Stanley Area Historical Society

DAVE JANKOSKI, REPORTER

The Stanley Area Historical Society held their annual meeting on January 28. During the review of our 2011 activity, the highlight was determined to be the October purchase of the property just south of our museum complex. The purchase enabled us to eliminate a blighted property that posed a fire threat to our museum and provides a sizable lot for future development. Officer elections resulted in Janet Solie and Twila Plummer being re-elected secretary and treasurer and returned to the Board of Directors were Dick Davis, Margaret Fisk, and Betty Plombon. During 2011, we had more than 1,075 visitors at our museum and our membership in 2011 was 597. Fund raising to pay for the property purchase and related expenses is on target for reaching our goal early in 2012.

One of our volunteers is busy researching and assembling photos and artifacts for a Stanley in 1912 exhibit and others are working on this year's centerpiece exhibit—the Town of Edson, which will be featured in our north gallery. Others are working on the ongoing computerization of our collections, organizing our photo collection, repairing items, mending and recording special collections. Our kitchen exhibit is being thoroughly cleaned and rearranged and our 150th Anniversary of the Civil War and the Red Wing Pottery exhibits will remain for a second year. We also continue working on our book project that will be filled with the writings of Stanley area native's memories of growing up in the area.

Our new spacious workroom is turning out to be a real gem for the workers. The former workspace has been offered as an office to the Stanley-Boyd Alumni Association formed in 2011. The new group will have desktop space for a computer and storage for their records.



Marge Hebbring

### A VOLUNTEER PROFILE

MARY MCKENNA

*Marge*

Seldom has a new member of the Historical Society made such a huge impact in such a short period of time. Marge joined our organization a little over a year ago and her contributions have been impressive.

She is a native Wisconsinite, born and raised in Winter, Wisconsin. She married Eugene Hebbring in 1965 and they are parents of four children: Mike, Cheri, Jason and Rebecca and proud grandparents of four: Samantha, Maddie, Collin and Kolton.

The University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire is her Alma Mater, having graduated in 1994 with a Bachelor's Degree in Art Education. She obtained her Master's Degree in Educational Professional Development in 1997. Marge worked at the university in Eau Claire for eleven years as a grant director. She has since retired from this position in 2011. She presently works as manager of a local business, Picket Fence Antique Boutique, at 501 High Street.

Marge comes with a rich heritage, being a direct descendent of the Cadotte family, fur traders from Madeline Island. She is a tribal member of the LacCourte Orielles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe. She has been a member of the Les Voyageurs du Val du Chipewewa for several years and has participated in "The Past Passed Here" for several years. About a year ago, Marge attended a board meeting with Teri Stahr, another board member and an active participant and organizer of "The Past Passed Here" event. It was then that Teri suggested Marge get involved and join the board. Once elected as a new board member, she wrote a successful grant for "The Past Passed Here" that brought \$9,000.00 to the event.

This active board member has agreed to continue grant writing, chair the education committee and help with marketing the center. We were entertained last fall at our membership meeting when Marge, as our guest speaker, shared the history of her Cadotte ancestors along with photos and books in her presentation.

When time allows, Marge has been an avid NASCAR fan for over three years. She also enjoys music, art and history, traveling, camping and visiting family.

We are excited to have Marge involved in our History Center and appreciate the contributions she has already made. A big thank-you for joining us and getting so involved. ♣



**CHIPPEWA COUNTY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**2012-2014**

**OFFICERS & DIRECTORS**

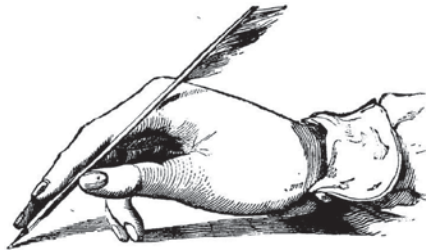
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- ✳ **Vice President**  
Jim Schuh, 5432 178th St.,  
Chippewa Falls 726-2376 (2014)
- ✳ **Recording Secretary &  
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Mary McKenna, 217 W. Elm St.,  
Chippewa Falls 720-9635 (2013)
- ✳ **Treasurer**  
Kathryn Forsgren, 18498 122nd Ave.,  
Jim Falls 382-5511 (2012)

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- ✳ Lucyann LeCleur, 201 S. Rural St.,  
Chippewa Falls 723-7468 (2013)
- ✳ Skip August, 18416 54th Ave,  
Chippewa Falls 723-8493 (2014)
- ✳ Steve Rasmus, 936 N. Bridge St.,  
Chippewa Falls 723-4339 (2014)
- ✳ Wayne Meyer, 622 S. 8th St.,  
Cornell 239-6239 (2012)
- ✳ Nancy Schuh, 5432 178th St.,  
Chippewa Falls 726-2376 (2012)
- ✳ Teri Stahr, 7493 County Hwy K,  
Chippewa Falls 723-9007 (2013)
- ✳ Arley Engel, 5294 90th St.,  
Chippewa Falls 723-5124 (2014)
- ✳ Rosemary Kilbridge, 18294 75th Ave.,  
Chippewa Falls 723-3995 (2012)
- ✳ Marge Hebring, 7361 203rd St.,  
Chippewa Falls 723-5278 (2013)
- ✳ Jim Campbell, 110 Chippewa St.,  
Chippewa Falls 723-5495 (2012)

**Donations**



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Joe Joas .....	June & Arley Engel
Joe Joas .....	Lucy LeCleur
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Joe Joas .....	Bill Zimbehl
Joe Joas .....	History Center
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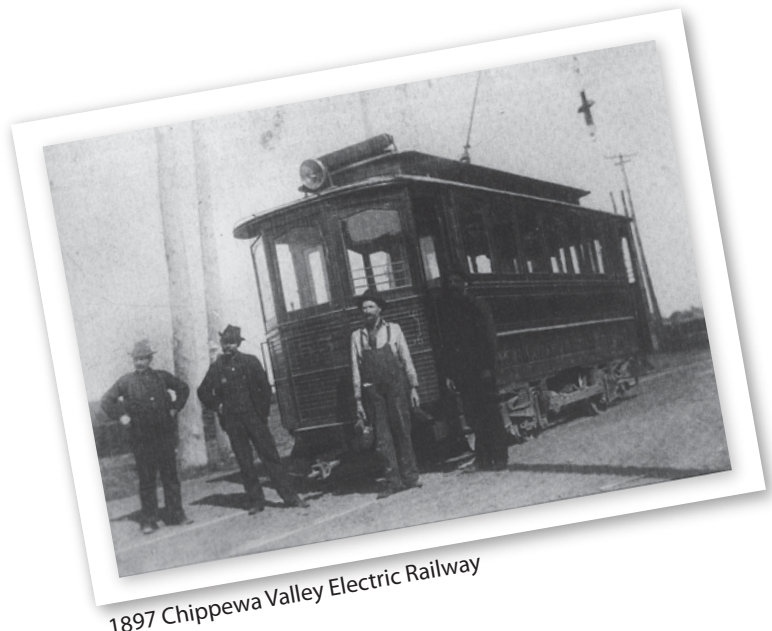
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