

# THE EAGLE

CHIPPEWA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



# SPEAKS

JUNE 2015

[www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org](http://www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org)

"OLD ABE"

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Voyageurs, Suplice LaPointe (Rod Gont) and Alain Roi (Jim Lindberg) arrive in our new canoe for the student's welcome..

## The Past Passed Here

JIM SCHUH

My sincere thanks go out to Catherine Lea for writing the following article and for her efforts of coordinating The Past Passed Here 4th grade field trips over the past 12 years! It would not be possible to offer this wonderful hands-on fun learning experience for the students who have been studying WI history the last two semesters without her contributions. Like Catherine, most of our re-enactors and volunteers have been involved in this event since the beginning. Many original members are no longer able to participate due to aging and/or health issues. In order for us to continue to offer this exceptional event we need more helpers. If you would like to research, dress up and portray a character from the past or if you want to help behind the scenes we would welcome your participation. Please help us spread the word to your friends and relatives. Fortunately we have a few new volunteers who have fresh ideas that we plan to incorporate into the event May 4-8, 2016. Our planning committee is scheduled to meet next on Tuesday, July 21 at 1:30 pm at the Area History Center. Please contact me at 715-726-2376 if you are interested in getting involved. Thank you also to our generous sponsors!



**The Area History Center is open Tuesdays 9 a.m.-4 p.m.**

Plan a museum tour while children are on vacation or when company visits this summer. Also open for group tours by appointment.

# THE PAST PASSED HERE continued from cover

*from Catherine...*

The 13th annual historical celebration The Past Passed Here took place on the banks of Duncan Creek at the south end of downtown Chippewa Falls the Wednesday through Sunday of Mother's Day Weekend. This was the perfect coming together of weather and re-enactors: temperatures well above freezing and Duncan Creek well below its banks. Due to last minute health and other unforeseeable problems, the number of re-enactors was down but there were also a couple of newcomers. We were pleased to welcome re-enactors Brenda Frees and Robert Bell to this year's event.

As school coordinator and being there for the 4th grade education days, after the session on Friday, I got to catch up with a few of the re-enactors. As re-enactor Bluebird, (AKA Barbara Marquis) put it so aptly, "Early history is important,...if you don't know where you came from, you don't know where you're going". She and her husband Frenchy (AKA Lyle Marquis) are brimming with knowledge about the hunting and trapping pioneers of the early 1800s. Originally from Wausau the Marquis' currently live in Chaska, Minnesota, when they are not on the road participating in various Rendez-Vous. They have been doing so for 25 years and have been at The Past Passed Here for the last 9 years. Wayne Krefting of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has been participating in The Past Passed Here for 6 or 7 years, as the Clerk of the Fur Trade. For those with beaver pelts to trade, he will do the written accounting needed for the trading companies to keep track of the exchange of beaver pelts for pots, beads, and other desired merchandise. His passion for re-enacting came from his Eagle Scout camping background, his study of history at the U of M and his father's passion for fur trade history and collection of books Wayne inherited from him. These are only two stories I will share, but I heard over and over from the re-enactors about their passion to educate the kids and adults alike.

I am thrilled to have so many top-notch re-enactors willing to take time off work for 3 days of 4th graders. This year 4th graders from all 6 Chippewa Falls public schools, Stanley-Boyd and Fall Creek public schools, Holy Ghost Catholic school, Crestview Academy, and St. Marks Lutheran school attended. Close to 600 students!



Anne Keller  
welcomes  
visitors to  
the past



Wandering  
minstrels  
Amanda  
Tanzer,  
Jerry Way &  
Jim Schuh



Students  
visit  
Bluebird's  
Family  
Camp



Families  
tested  
our  
Cross  
Cut Saw



Thanks go out to re-enactors

**ROD GONT**  
**JIM LINDBERG**  
**WAYNE KREFTING**  
**TERRY KRUGER**  
**BRENDA FREES**  
**LAURA LINK**  
**DAN MEYER,**  
**DENNIS BROWN**  
**ROBERT BELL**  
**HANNIBAL HASSE**  
**SARAH LOSS**  
**ANN KELLER**  
**MARGE HEBBRING**  
**TERI STAHR**  
 and her loyal group of  
 medallion-necklace making  
 friends  
**CHUCK CARD**  
**JIM SCHUH**

Plus Dave Gordon and many and various other CCHS volunteers for helping at stations and tirelessly manning the front gate.

I also want to recognize Marge Hebbing and Jim Schuh who did a great job as co-chairs of the planning committee.

After all the wrapping up and thank-you writing is done I will close the book on this one....but look forward to the past passing here again in 2016!

*Catherine Lea, Community Resource Coordinator for the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District and School Coordinator for The Past Passed Here.*

Allen (Jake) Jacobson shows how to use a draw knife



Suplice LaPointe (Rod Gont) welcomes students and uses a long piece of cloth with stripes on it to illustrate how long ago the French Fur Trade took place



Visiting Hannibal the trader to shop



Marge Hebbing, Betty & Allen (Jake) Jacobson & Chuck Card serve up old fashioned treats



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## A Message From Your President

### GENEALOGY CORNER

ANNE KELLER

The Chippewa County Genealogical Society members continue to work on projects that will be helpful to those who are interested in their family “roots” from this area. On one Tuesday evening a month, we have a “work night.” We work on several projects, including the 1888 Plat Book, land records, library re-labeling and, sometimes, newsletter assembly. During the summer we will work on updating our cemetery book. Help is always appreciated!

Our new president, Gary Swartz, elected in January, has been working hard to make our CCGS indices user-friendly. He has taken our 400 indices, converted them from Works to Excel, then made a copy and combined them into a master Index. There are now 470,000 Chippewa area names that can be sorted by name and printed out! The index and shelf number is included with each name so each item can be quickly located. Now we know what we have and exactly where it is. Anyone can request a name or look through the index. If you have had a brick wall that might have limited your Chippewa County research, write to us via email or snail mail; we’ll look through this wonderful index and try to help you break your brick wall. 🍷

The big news at the Society is that we have received the American Alliance of Museums, Museum Assessment Program (MAP) Grant. The American Alliance of Museums founded in 1906 helps to develop standards and best practices, gathers and shares knowledge, and provides advocacy on issues of concern to the entire museum community.

The MAP is an assessment tool that can help the museum attain excellence in operations and planning through a confidential process of self-study and peer review. Nate had applied for this grant before he left. This grant is unusual in the respect that we receive no money, instead we receive \$4,000 in assessment services. We formed an Assessment Team (Dave, Jim, Nancy, Marge and Donna), which spent about 10 weeks completing the pre-work for the grant. This included a 38-page, 150-question questionnaire, two self-study activities, and additional documentation which included articles of incorporation, by-laws, our collection policy, a sample collection record, our budget, a donation form, our floor plans, a list of committees, a list of board members, position descriptions and a newsletter. The package was mailed to meet the May 15th deadline.

The two self-studies were very interesting. The first one was a Mission Activity, which the Board of Directors used their April board meeting to look at our mission statement. We quickly realized that the Society has an excellent Purposes and Objectives statement in our By-laws but we did not have a mission statement for our museum. The result of the activity was the following mission statement for the museum — *“To collect and preserve the history and unique heritage of Chippewa County for present and future generations.”*

The second self-study was Public Experience Activity, which was to help us be more aware of the public experience at the museum. We had nine people from the area spend time experiencing the museum. After touring the museum, they gathered to provide their reactions to the museum. To start the discussion we asked five questions i.e. what was your favorite exhibit, what did you learn about Chippewa that you didn’t already know and what are some programs you would like to see at the museum? We summarized their comments into 18 statements i.e. continue to document history focusing on people, give tours by appointment and some exhibits have too many artifacts.

Our Peer Reviewer is Delecia Huitt, District Supervisor of the Southern Missouri Historic District. She will come to Chippewa July 15 and 16 to help us look at our museum and develop plans to make our museum even better.

There are several changes to the Board. Lucyann LeCclair retired from the Board after many years as the Photo Archivist. We will miss Lucy and thank her for all she has contributed to the Society. New board members are Joe Niese and Dave Raihle, Jr. who each bring a lot of knowledge and interest in the history of the area.

If you missed the membership meeting in February you missed a very interesting and complete history of the Chippewa Falls Fire Department by Tom Larson. Look for lots of news in the next Eagle Speaks about new and improved exhibits. Why not get involved in the many activities of the Society. We are always looking for new volunteers especially at The Past Passed Here, which you can read about in this newsletter. It was a great event.

Dave 🍷



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## HISTORICAL MARKERS

JIM SCHUH

Melinda Roberts of De Pere, pictured here, has visited, photographed and posted links to 4,105 Wisconsin historical markers and sites, museums, lighthouses, and veterans' memorials, along with nearly 40,000 photographs, during the last three years. She is proud to have the most comprehensive survey of its kind anywhere online. She commented that we have one of the oldest and most active county historical marker programs in the state. To access our markers on her website visit: [wisconsinhistoricalmarkers.blogspot.com/2015/05/chippewa-county-markers-sites.html](http://wisconsinhistoricalmarkers.blogspot.com/2015/05/chippewa-county-markers-sites.html)

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Nancy Schuh, author & proofreader

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Left: These spiked lumberjack “calk” boots that were used for walking on floating logs were made in Chippewa Falls.

Right: This Hunkidori Sign is on loan to our museum from Ryan Metzenbauer.

## EXHIBIT UPDATE

# Give “Hunky Dory” the Boot?

JAMES ERICKSON

What does “HunkyDory” mean? Or Hunkey Dorey? Or Hunkidori? Or? And what is the historical connection to Chippewa Falls? The sources seem vague, but the term became popular in the 1860’s. From an 1862 collection of US songs, Christy’s Minstrels sang (last two lines) “With your smiling faces round, ‘Tis then I’m hunkey dorey.” Some have said there’s an Irish connection to the phrase. And one 1866 publication seemed perplexed as to why anything “hunkee doree” should be so admirable.

But popular it was fast becoming. The Galveston Daily News, June 1866, advised, “In the morning wash with Castile soap, in soft rain water, and you are all “Hunky-dore” as fresh as a lilly – as sweet as a pink.”

The phrase, itself, began with the word, “hunkey” which meant “fit and healthy.” How “dorey” became added is more than I want to research. Lazy, I guess. Besides, this article is about more. What more?

The falls of the Chippewa River (now Chippewa Falls) became a point at which steamboats could no longer proceed upstream. It also became a choice spot to build a sawmill to process the vast acres and acres of prime timber. Eventually to be the largest sawmill in the world under one roof. That alone is stunning. But from the endless woods and waters came the need for some pretty basic items. Warm, woolen clothes for all those dealing with the cold climate, logging tools, special boots for those having to perform the precarious log-handling, and amber beverages to squelch their thirst after days of hard work. The latter being Leinenkugel’s beer, of course, and other brewers. But what about Hunkey Dorey? Where does that come in.

Well, those men hopping from log to floating log needed a tall boot that kept out the water some and supported the foot, all the while providing solid traction in the sole. One boot maker that stepped up to meet the need (pun intended) was the F. & F. Shoe company.\* They made a boot, a pair of which the History Center has, that was a high-top, laced, oiled boot with a sole full of short spikes, each about the size of an overbuilt thumb tack. And what did they name this very serviceable boot? One that made safer their traipsing through the log jams? Why, “Hunkidori” of course. (See photos of the boot and label inside.)

A boot that was “quite satisfactory” and “fine,” as Hunkey Dorey was widely interpreted to mean, deserved such a name, even if the shoe company took liberties (as did many others) with the spelling. So the lumbering industry that spawned many other sub-industries, also fostered a boot that was made in Chippewa Falls. One that turned out to be a logger favorite and, in rugged, everyday, treacherous use, a boot that, for their purposes, was just “Hunkidori.”

\*The boot label is clearly F&F Shoe Co. but there is an indication that the Hand Made Shoe Co. had rights to the Hunkidori name, too. Regretfully, the lineage and legal implications are beyond the scope of this article. ❦

MARGE HEBBRING

The Chippewa Falls Public Library has installed a new display case and has offered the CCHS an opportunity to display small exhibits in it. The following is the beginning of an article that I wrote to post with our first display about the French Fur Trade.

### ***The Falls of the Chippewa***

The history of Chippewa Falls begins with the Fur Trade. The Ojibwa Indians or the “Chippewa” as the French called them lived at the confluence of the Chippewa River and Duncan Creek where Allen Park is today. Travelers would say: “We will go to the Falls of the Chippewa” referring to the nearby waterfall. The traders who traveled by canoe would be forced to portage wherever they found a waterfall or rapids that was too large to traverse fearing they would tip the canoe and lose all the trade goods and sometimes even their lives. Going around these dangerous areas required carrying the canoe and all the trade goods around the obstruction until calmer water was found. Portage is the French word for this cumbersome task. Trading posts were built in places where travelers were forced to get out of the river and became stopping places where traders could rest and replenish any needed goods and equipment. Indians often camped around the posts hoping to trade their lush furs.

Other surrounding villages were named in similar fashion. Jim Falls was named after James Ermatinger who ran a post at that site about 10 miles north of Chippewa Falls. Cadott was named after the trader who built a trading post on the Yellow River about 14 miles east. (Read more at the library display.) ❦

During the next few years each issue of our newsletter will feature an article on the 1913-1917 formation of Lake Wissota. Xcel Energy has provided the Chippewa County Historical Society and the Lake Wissota Improvement & Protection

Association with written materials and approximately 1,000 images of dam construction in Chippewa Falls. We greatly appreciate their support of sharing this information with residents and members of our non-profit organizations.



## CALENDAR

### June 2

- 10:00 a.m. Future Museum
- 11:00 a.m. Historic Marker Committee

### June 16

- 9:30 a.m. CCHS Board Meeting
- Noon Area History Center Birthday Lunch

### July 15 & 16

- Museum Assessment Visit

### July 21

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

### Aug. 18:

- 9:30 a.m. CCHS Board Meeting
- 10:30 a.m. Historic Marker Meeting
- Noon Area History Center Birthday Lunch



## WHAT WAS HAPPENING 100 YEARS AGO AT THIS TIME . . .

### Eau Claire Leader July 17, 1915

## LOWLANDS TRANSFERRED

The deals for the purchase of the lowlands on the Chippewa River by the Wisconsin-Minnesota Light and Power Company, of which the Independent has previously referred, were closed yesterday and now the company is in possession of a large portion of the lowlands which will be the flowage of the big Paint Creek dam where it is comprised. Those who sold are Fred Collette for \$8,400, John Mopaw for \$8,400, Leonard Gauthier for \$3,000 and Peter Leail for \$2,400. They received top-notch prices and are well satisfied with the deals. Now they will purchase other lands, as they are all practical farmers excepting Mr. Gauthier who is a carpenter.

What the plans are for building the dam have not been made known, but if you have ever taken notice to the width of the river at Paint Creek, you will realize that the construction of a concrete dam at that point is a big undertaking and will give employment to several hundred men. It will be a larger dam than the one at Cornell.

### Eau Claire Leader October 29, 1915

## WISSOTA IS NEW TOWN AT DAM

Village Acquires Name at Dam Site. Store building Commenced

Wissota is to be the name of the new village springing up on the site of the new Paint Creek dam. The name is derived from a combination of the Wisconsin-Minnesota company's name. The new town is fast springing up with bunkhouses, dinning hall and other buildings. Electric lights, steam heat and sewer connections will be in a few days.

The Paint Creek Supply Company has selected the site for its store building and work will begin at once. The contract has been let to Tschopp Durch and Camastral. The site selected is near the bunkhouses on the south side. The building is to be erected on a plateau sixty feet above the river. It is a magnificent location overlooking the entire valley. The store building will be 24 by 80 feet and will house the mercantile business, billiard room, barber shop and post office. The village is only a short distance from the state home and can be reached by taking the drive through the home grounds or by the state highway. The office of the power company, the warehouse and other buildings are nearing completion. The store company met yesterday afternoon and elected the following officers: President – W. J. Boyden; Vice President – A. C. Mason; Treasurer – Frank Joas; Secretary – P. A. Brunstad; Directors – R. D. Clark; A. C. Mason; Frank Joas; P. A. Brunstad and W. J. Boyden. ❁

 Caption for image at the top of page: A 1915 view of the confluence of the Chippewa River and Paint Creek prior to Lake Wissota dam construction. The lowlands that were purchased in July 1917 are visible..



## Field Testing CCHS Portable History Kits

DR. ERIN KRUTKO DEVLIN

University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire (UWEC) public history students have been working with the Chippewa County Historical Society this spring to develop portable history kits for the use of K-12 teachers and students. Portable history kits contain primary sources, photographs, and historical artifacts from CCHS collections. The kits also contain suggested lesson plans that are aligned with Wisconsin state social studies standards, and can easily be adapted to the needs of instructors.

UWEC students working on this project are enrolled in a Public History Seminar. Students in the seminar work collaboratively together in cooperation with community partner like CCHS to develop professional skills and fulfill needs in the community. The history kit project has allowed UWEC public history students to refine their skills in historical research and interpretation, program planning, design and production, as well as community outreach and collaboration. Working on behalf of a community partner like CCHS positions them as emerging professionals, and also encourages them to adopt professional standards of personal responsibility and accountability.

In February and March, UWEC public history students researched and developed thematic concepts for the history kits and pitched their ideas to CCHS board members Jim Schuh, Marge Hebbring, and Skip August. CCHS board members selected four kits for further development. The four kits selected examine different aspects of Chippewa County's history, including the development of the downtown landscape of Chippewa Falls, the significance of the lumber industry and related occupations, changes in local education related to changes in population growth and urbanization, and the experiences of Chippewa County residents at home and abroad during World War II.

Over the course of the spring, UWEC's public historians worked in teams to carefully select artifacts, primary documents like newspapers, letters, and city directories, as well as illuminating photographs that will engage the imagination of students and connect them to CCHS collections. The history kit teams sought feedback from local students and instructors by field testing their kits at the annual The Past Passed Here event. After refining their work with this feedback, the kits will be assembled in durable and portable containers for teachers to check out from the historical society and share with their classrooms during the 2015-2016 academic year! ✦

 New History Kits were field tested at The Past Passed Here. Pictured from left are public history students Mariah Ring, Steve Petrie and Dr. Erin Kutko Devlin with her daughter.



## FAREWELL

### From Nathaniel Green

I moved to Washington, D.C. in March to pursue other professional opportunities, while my wife, Jane, takes a new position with the American Historical Association. I haven't been here very long, but I've learned an awful lot while I've been here. What I'll take with me most of all is what I've learned about the important history of a small town like Chippewa Falls, and an appreciation for the efforts of the people at the Historical Society to preserve and tell that history.

During my time growing up, I learned very little about the history of my hometown. I didn't become really interested in history until college, and I didn't know enough about my own town's history to know that it was worth being interested in. I don't think I'm alone in this. I think people in small communities seldom understand the history that surrounds them. That is exactly the mission of public history institutions like Chippewa County Historical Society.

My experience in Chippewa Falls has taught me how uniquely fascinating the history of local communities truly are, and how uniquely challenging the mission of public history institutions is. As local public history institutions go, CCHS is quite fortunate. It has benefited from generous donations of money, time, and materials from the people of Chippewa Falls. But it also faces struggles. The building, while beautiful, is not ideal for preserving historic artifacts. Volunteers juggle busy schedules to make time for the museum. Yet through the challenges CCHS has made improvements, and our community is richer because of it. I have confidence that this is only the beginning of more improvements to come. It was a pleasure to serve Chippewa Falls. ✦

# Chippewa County Historical Society

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