Speaks

FEBRUARY 2009

"OLD ABE"

www.chippewacountywihistoricalsociety.org

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Monday, February 16

CCHS Annual Meeting
Hall of Fame Induction
& Mary Todd Lincoln!



Northern Apartments Restoration Project

JIM SCHUH

The Northern Apartments Grand Opening was celebrated November 18th. CommonBond Communities, the largest non-profit provider of affordable homes, invested \$5,350,990 to totally renovate the 43-unit apartment complex and to restore this historic structure. Housing, historic preservation and reinvestment are all imperative components of downtown revitalization.

Speakers included: Paul Fate, President & CEO, CommonBond Communities; Greg Hoffman, Mayor, Chippewa Falls; Bryan Antony, Wisconsin Housing Economic Development Authority; Mollie Crane, CommonBond resident and Jim Schuh, Chippewa County Historical Society Publicity Committee Chairman.

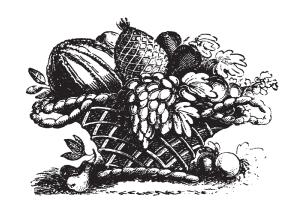
Jim Schuh said "The Chippewa County Historical Society greatly appreciates the local efforts of CommonBond Communities! They have purchased and restored the largest and most impressive structure in the Bridge Street Commercial Historic District. Public areas and exterior components of the former Hotel Northern have been restored to their original

CHIPPEWA COUNTY

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2007-2009

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Can You Believe the Things Our Parents Did!

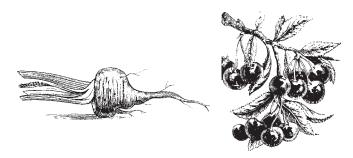
While sitting at the supper table a few days after Thanksgiving, a conversation came up about the things our parents did to put food on the table. June's parents Howard and Norma "Douglas" Langworthy and my parents Raymond and Evelyn "Peterson" Engel were mostly raised on the farm, my mother Evelyn being the only city kid. After marrying into the Engel clan she learned more about gardening than most of us will ever know.

Both of our grandparents families were well trained in the gardening trade. This carried on as a family tradition into our generation. To give you an idea what we raised in our garden on the home farm, here's a list of the produce grown: potatoes, horseradish and onions all of these being underground crops. Seeds that were sown on top of the ground then covered with dirt include lettuce, beets, parsnips, carrots, radishes, rutabaga, dill, sweet corn, popcorn, peas, squash, pumpkins, watermelons, muskmelons, pickles, green and yellow beans. Plants that we raised in hot beds include tomato, peppers, cabbage, tobacco and strawberries. We also had a rhubarb bed and an asparagus bed. We had volunteer little yellow tomatoes and ground cherries that came up on their own all over in the garden. We also had a good sized raspberry bed. There was a pear tree in our garden that only bore from three to a high of maybe ten pears per season, just enough to make you drool. It seemed to have a lot of blossoms every spring, but never produced much fruit.

Out side of the fenced in garden, we had apple trees including wealthy, yellow harvest, whitney crab, we also had some black walnut trees. What a job when it came time to harvest these black walnuts. They would fall to the ground about the time of the first frost. They had to be picked up quickly and then we would spread them on the southern facing roof of the woodshed to dry in the sun. This would dry the outer husk so it was easier to remove and get at the hard shelled walnut. If you have cracked walnuts at Christmas time, you have an idea how tedious a job this was, black walnuts seemed twice as tough.

We sometimes made elderberry or clover blossom wine. Mother made all kinds of jams and jellies from strawberries, blackberries, blue berries, choke cherries and plums. We even went up to George and Clarice Topper's farm on the Fisher River at Holcombe to pick wild cranberries. These were made into a jell or a sauce.

If this garden work doesn't sound like enough, we raised cash crops including peas, pickles, cabbage, sweet corn and tobacco. Our main crops for the cattle, hogs and chickens included corn, oats, hay and pasture. These crops were rotated with pasture being plowed under for the next corn crop. We also did a lot of custom work for other farmers in the area. One fall we filled 27 silos in the neighborhood. Besides the chopping and harvesting the hay for 7 or 8 farms, my Dad and Uncle Ford Engel, along with Bernard Lynn and his truck did this custom work. One of us older sons were usually taken along just to get the tractor and chopper plus another tractor and blower and the 2 trucks to the next





job site. We had quite a caravan on the township roads. Back to the garden, a lot of the crop was eaten fresh off the vine after growing to maturity, any excess was canned. Can you imagine going into Grandma's basement to get all this different produce? We had canned beets, tomatoes, potatoes, beans, pickles, strawberries, sweet corn, peas, carrots, blackberries, blueberries, we even had canned venison and beef. Cauliflower we purchased at a grocery store. Along with this we canned peaches and pears. These we bought by the case. Do you remember the soft wrapping on each peach or pear? This made a good wiping product for our outside toilet.

We did have indoor plumbing, but no bathroom. Our Saturday night bath was taken in a big wash tub. We had a gas kitchen stove, a kerosene fired refrigerator and a fuel fired heater in the dining room. On many a cold morning we would gather around this stove, pile our clothes on top to warm them up a bit before putting them on.

You would think with all these things going there would be no time for hunting or fishing, but we did a lot of each. Dad's favorite lake was Bob's Lake, north on County E, east of Bloomer. We also hunted rabbits, squirrels, partridge, pheasants, fox and deer. One year we had 32 fox hides hanging on the north side of our chicken coop visible to County Road F that ran past our farm, just to tease the other members of the Chippewa Rod and Gun Club that drove by. It seems they had a contest each year to see which group of hunters could harvest the most hides. The Engel Brothers were usually right in there with a top count. We also harvested a lot of carp and catfish from the Chippewa River. Dad would clean and scale the carp and clean and skin the catfish. Then he soaked them in a salt brine for 48 hours. The brine was strong enough to float an egg. This was then transferred to the smoke house. We used apple wood or corn cobs to create the heat and smoke required to bring the fish to a boiling temperature to cause the fat to overflow onto the fire grill and make more smoke. This made a tasty smoked fish, that if us boys ate it before getting on the school bus, the kids on the bus would say we know what you had for breakfast.

June and I have given up on raising a garden for just the two of us, but our fathers continued raising fruits and veggies till the good Lord took them home. We even talked of putting a fresh cabbage in dad's left hand as he lay in casket. This was not done, but it was a thought for his trip to the heavens.

That's all for now from Engel's Little House on the Wheaton Prairie. :

CALENDAR

Place these dates on your calendar

February 16

7:00 p.m. CCHS Semi Annual Membership Meeting

March 17

9:15 a.m. CCHS Board Meeting

March 24

1:00 p.m. Chippewa Falls History Coalition Meeting

April 21

9:15 a.m. CCHS Board Meeting

April 28

1:00 p.m. Chippewa Falls History Coalition Meeting

May 1

Articles due for May Newsletter

All meetings are at the Area History Center 123 Allen Street unless otherwise noted.

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

FEATURED ARTIFACT



Captain Perkins Collection

John Erastus Perkins, commander of Company C of the Eighth Wisconsin Volunteers was born in Massena, NY in 1811. He moved to Wisconsin 1857 and became active in real estate and politics. At the outbreak of the Civil War Perkins helped raise a company of volunteers know as the Eau Claire Badgers. The Badgers soon became the "Eagle Regiment" after an eagle was adopted as their mascot. In September 1861 the company was mustered into service at Camp Randall, Madison, WI. Perkins became its captain. He gave the eagle the name "Old Abe" in honor of then President Abraham Lincoln. Perkins led Company C into several battles with Old Abe inspiring the brave volunteers. Captain Perkins died on May 11, 1862 of wounds received during the battle of Farmington in Mississippi.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

A Message From Your President

There is exciting news from the Chippewa County Historical Society. In November 2008 the Board of Directors approved establishment of **The Chippewa County Historical Society Hall of Fame.** The purpose of the Hall of Fame is to recognize the members, officers and directors who have made a significant contribution to the Chippewa County Historical Society. Annually in the November newsletter the membership will be given an opportunity to nominate people for induction into the Hall of Fame. The Board of Directors each January will determine if any members of the society should be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Except for the initial class of inductees the maximum number of inductees shall be three each year.

Qualifications include but are not limited to:

- 1. Served as an officer or director for at least one full term.
- 2. Contributed major artifacts, books or manuscripts to the Society's collection.
- 3. Donated a significant amount of volunteer time to the Society and/or its collection.
- 4. Made a large monetary donation to advance the Society's mission.
- 5. Had a significant impact on the Society.

Hall of Fame living inductees will be notified of their election and presented with a plaque at the February Membership meeting. If possible families of deceased inductees will be notified of their relatives election. A Perpetual Plaque of inductees will be maintained in the History Center.

I am pleased to introduce the first class of inductees to the Hall of Fame:

- ★ Gene Harm Charter member of the Society, President 1976-77, Board Member, donated a major portion of the lumbering collection.
- ★ Joe Joas Charter member of the Society and on the first Board of Directors, President 1978-83, Board Member
- ★ Dolores Beaudette President 1984-89, Board Member, Author of a number of historical publications.
- ★ Winifred Glass Jenson Board Member, Secretary, Archivist for 17 years, Made major contributions in many areas.
- ★ Betty Plombon Board Member, Secretary, Responsible for policy manual and by laws
- ★ Marvin Nauman Vice President 1996-2004, Board Member, Responsible for operation and maintenance of the History Center

It will be my pleasure to present these people with their plaques at the Semi-Annual Membership meeting February 16, 2009 at the History Center at 7:00 p.m.

The History Coalition continues to meet. They are developing a business plan for a new museum in Chippewa Falls. The purpose of the plan is to be able to talk with the community about the value of having one large modern museum to bring tourists to Chippewa Falls. Another possible site has appeared, the Higher Ground building and the vacant lot next door. The building was the original Chippewa Lumber & Boom Company office and is located on the corner of Bay and River Street.

Don't miss the 2009 Chippewa County Activities & Attractions Guide. Chippewa County Historical Society along with three members of the Coalition pooled their resources and the four of us appear on the back cover of the Guide. Well that does it from the History Center, a lot is going on and we look forward to seeing you any Tuesday here at 123 Allen Street, Chippewa Falls. *Dave*



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Community Foundation Contributions:



LOCAL NEWS

Stanley Area Historical Society DAVE JANKOSKI, REPORTER

We quietly slipped into the season of winter. That also means that many of our volunteers returned to work at the museum for the winter months. We are fortunate in that Betty Plombon and several new volunteers worked with her throughout the summer and completed many projects.

Our 2009 featured exhibits will be on World War II. Many veterans of that era are leaving us daily so the exhibits and programs planned will be a good opportunity for our organization to gather more history from this important group of people. Best of all, there are a number of area veterans who have stepped forward in helping plan the exhibits and programs that will be featured during the summer and fall of 2009.

Thanks to the efforts of our President Connie Pozdell, our museum received one of the 18 awards of 2008 Mini-Grant from the Wisconsin Historical Society/Wisconsin Council for Local History. The \$700 received was used for purchase of shelving and archival storage supplies.

The year 2008 has been a historic one for our organization. In September we finished our formal summer programs hosting of the Town of Worden Reunion. A slide show showed much of the devastation that occurred from the tornado that passed through the township 50 years ago. Many people spoke of their recollections that remained from the devastating experience. We also hosted visitors from the Fall Creek Historical Society and in October we had over 50 people visit who were in town for the all school reunion.

Committees in sync—new members!





Jim Schuh

Chippewa County Historical Society Committee Members

*** Collection & Artifacts:**

* Nancy Schuh, Arley Engel, Lucyann LeCleir, Terri Stahr, Gail Willi, Jeff Pritchard

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* Building & Grounds: *Steve Rasmus Space Utilization Sub Committee *Steve Rasmus

* Education:

*Cathy Lee, Evalyn Frasch, Ann Gordon, Rosemary Broeren

Docent Subcommittee: Lalie Boos, Pat Ahneman

* Exhibits:

* Arley Engel, Nancy Schuh, Lucyann LeCleir

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 Design: Elly Rochester

* Chairperson

A VOLUNTEER PROFILE MARY MCKENNA



We usually associate gifts with Christmas. It so happens that a gift to our community was born on Christmas day on 1950 in Marshfield, Wisconsin. While in high school his passion was playing the drums and he did so in a popular rock band, "The American Tea Company." He still enjoys playing gigs today around the Valley. Jim said that in school history was his least favorite subject. He said "memorizing names and dates was not meaningful to him." His former history teachers would be impressed with the turn-about from the old school days to his involvement through the years and today with jobs and projects associated with History.

In 1971, Jim moved from Marshfield to work at the Eau Claire County Hospital. From there he moved to Los Angeles, California. Eventually he returned to Wisconsin where he was employed with the City of Eau Claire from 1978 to 1986 as the Commercial Rehabilitation Specialist and liaison to the State Historical Society. Among other duties, Jim revised the City's Historic Preservation Plan and directed surveys of historical sites and nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. He was also the city project manager of the Pioneer Block and Stone's Throw, the two largest building restoration projects in Eau Claire. Jim also produced educational videotape programs about building restorations. He is married to his wife, Nancy, who has been involved in numerous undertakings, writing projects and special events. Having a pair of *Schuh's* working for the same goals has been a major step towards the preservation of the history of the Chippewa Valley.

From 1992 to 1996, Jim was the Executive Director of the Eau Claire Main Street Association and from 1996 to 2008 he was Executive Director of Chippewa Falls Main Street. The Main Street program is a downtown revitalization program started by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1980. While with Main Street he was involved in numerous Chippewa Falls historical building restoration projects. The Korger's building, an architecturally compatible in-fill building was built on the Cobban Block in the center of the Bridge Street Commercial Historic District after a decade of working on recruiting a developer for this major investment. Dozens of historic themed murals were created in Chippewa Falls through events titled Brush Bash I and II. Two pictorial history books about Chippewa Falls were published under his direction and the Downtown Historic Walking Tour brochure was rewritten. The "Past Passed Here", an educational French fur trade and lumbering era re-enactment was created during Jim's leadership. Several of the forgoing projects won state awards and received national recognition through the Main Street program.

Jim joined the Board of Directors of the Chippewa County Historical Society in 1997. He has been a member of the Historic Marker committee for over 10 years. In 2006 Jim was involved in the planning, purchasing and placement of signs for the historic Yellow Stone



Pictured from left are Northern Apartments Property Manager, Connie Scott; CommonBond Director of Facilities Management, Jim Mitchell; Chippewa County Historical Society Board member, Jim Schuh; CommonBond employee, Stacy Eklohm; CommonBond President and CEO, Paul Fate and Northern Apartments Maintenance Technician, John Scott.

$\overline{ ext{Members}}$ hip $\overline{ ext{Form}}$

Trail which crosses through Chippewa County. Since retiring, he has become chairman of the Publicity Committee and editor of the "Eagle Speaks", the newsletter for the Chippewa County Historical Society. In addition, he has coordinated the Poor Farm Cemetery restoration project. Researching and writing grant applications for the Historical Society is also among the activities he added to his list of on-going projects.

It is our good fortune to have Jim so dedicated and willing to volunteer his expertise on a continuing basis for the past, present and future preservation of history in the Chippewa Valley which will benefit generations to come. Thank you Jim. ••

NORTHERN APARTMENTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

grandeur. This \$5.7 million project followed the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Senior Architect of the Historical Society of WI approved and oversaw the improvements. The building was also listed individually as a significant property on the WI and National Register of Historic Places in conjunction with this project.

The Chippewa County Historical Society and the Chippewa Falls Main Street program assisted early on in the process of this project by providing historic photos of the building exterior and by writing letters of support for funding and project approval. Thanks to their substantial investment and those of others over the last 20 years, the WI Main Street program and the State Historical Society recognize Chippewa Falls as a statewide leader in downtown historic building restoration. Our city has had more money invested in downtown historic buildings over the last 20 years than any other Wisconsin Main Street community with a population of less than 90,000."

The Chippewa County Historical Society presented a framed photo of the Hotel Northern taken on July 4, 1921, when it was decorated for a nation-wide raffle. The caption below the photo reads:

"We extend our congratulations and gratitude to CommonBond Communities for extraordinary restoration of the former Hotel Northern property in 2008 and for listing it on the National Register of Historic Places." Chippewa County Historical Society

Photo by: Chippewa County Historical Society President, Dave Gordon



Chippewa Falls, WI 54729



Mary Todd Lincoln

Captain Perkins continued

Mary Todd Lincoln Unveiled

In honor of President Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday we are featuring an historical portrayal by Betty Crowley as the program speaker at our February 16th Membership Meeting. In this presentation, Mrs. Lincoln rummages through a chest of memorabilia, evoking memories of her life with her husband Abe.

Mary Todd Lincoln has been shrouded under a veil of political intrigue by opposition press and opportunists. Because she is usually portrayed as a malicious, unstable albatross around Lincoln's neck, the general public has little knowledge or understanding of this highly educated, articulate helpmate of our 16th President. In her historical portrayal, Ms Cowley represents a 57-year-old Mary Todd Lincoln who attempts to maintain some sense of balance by constantly striving to supplement the many tragedies in her life with fonder memories of happier times.

The audience will learn of the forces that bonded these two people from such different backgrounds; will get a glimpse of their private family life and will realize how Mary's political ambitions and social skills were used to assist in Abe Lincoln's rise to the United States Presidency.

Betty Cowley has taught U.S. history for 35 years and has been actively involved in a Civil War skirmish/re-enactment organization for over 30 years. Nationally recognized four times for her classroom activities, Mrs. Cowley retired in 1999 and then conducted full-time research for the book she published in 2002 titled Stalag Wisconsin: inside WWII Prisoner of War Camps.

Photo: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

Grant Received

A Community Foundation of Chippewa County grant, from the Community Foundation Board Grant Fund, in the amount of \$500 has been received. Funds will be utilized to create additional Chippewa County Historic Markers and to maintain existing markers. The Chippewa County Historical Society Historic Marker Sub Committee maintains and keeps records of the historic markers, plans for new markers as appropriate to identify places of historic importance and promotes the locations of the markers. Thank you to the Community Foundation of Chippewa County for this grant!

All residents and visitors benefit from access to the educational markers located in 12 communities throughout the county. The 2009 Chippewa County Activities & Attractions Guide features a list of all Chippewa County Historical Society historic markers with abbreviated descriptions starting on page 22. The listing of markers with complete descriptions can be found on line at www.chippewacounty.com/visit/HistoricalMarkers.asp#markers. > -5The early correspondence between Perkins and his family and a memoranda book document Perkin's 1836 trip to Cartersville, VA where worked as a foreman for a contractor at the Long Sault Canal, then nearing completion, to a new job on the James River. In addition to describing the work, Perkins also discusses his health, weather conditions and crop and livestock prices with his family. The memoranda book lists stopping places and distance traveled each day during his journey, plus an expense account for the trip. The correspondence continues with notification of Perkins' death sent to his brother, a description of events surrounding John's death and burial on the shores of the Tennessee River at Pittsburg Landing and finally the family's efforts to settle his estate.

Perkins' sister Mrs. Mary C. Bradford preserved the artifacts in this collection. Personal items include a feather from Old Abe that was sent by Perkins to his family in 1862, a black necktie, an ivory colored toothbrush, white gloves and his diary with entries from January 1 - April 18, 1862 providing a day-by-day account of the company's movements and its encounters with the enemy. Other papers are from 1829, 1836-1837, 1849, 1857, 1861-1862, 1881, 1923 and 1925.

Later correspondence in the 1920s is composed of responses to W. B. Stoddard's request in the Eau Claire Leader for information about Perkins and includes biographical information not only about Perkins, but also about "Old Abe". 2

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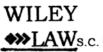
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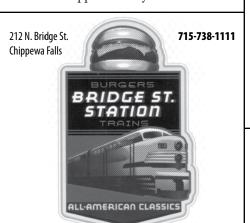
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