



# Langlade County Historical Society Newsletter

Spring, 2009

**Curator:** Mary Kay Wolf

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- Sue Baginski
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## Indian Beadwork

Prior to European contact, North American Indians used shells, animal bones, antlers and porcupine quills as decorations. These materials were used in areas where the materials were not locally available.

Europeans introduced glass beads and they were readily incorporated into the art form and spread throughout North America. While regions had specific styles, there was extensive exchange of materials and styles. The artifacts now at the museum are examples of wide-spread trading networks and communications

that existed among the various tribal groups.

Consulting cultural anthropologist Jeanne Connors and museum officials of the Menominee and Lac du Flambeau have been researching our collection.

The items will be on display in the Antigo Public Library during all of May. On Tuesday, May 12, at 6:30 p.m., Joe Hermolin from the museum and anthropologist Jeanne Connors will give a presentation describing the collection.



*An Ojibwa woman and her baby wearing items decorated with floral patterned beadwork typical of the woodland Indians. This is like the items in the museum's new collection.*

*Photo by A.J. Kingsbury ca. 1910*

## The Lady Sheriff of Langlade County

*Emma Leonard in 1924 when she was appointed sheriff of Langlade County. She was Wisconsin's first woman sheriff.*



March was Women's History Month and so we acknowledge Wisconsin's first woman sheriff, Emma Marion Leonard of Langlade County. Emma's husband Dan Leonard was elected sheriff in 1922. When he died in office in 1924 Governor John Blaine appointed his widow, Emma, to complete his term. It was not

difficult for her to take over his duties since she had been running the office for several months during her husband's protracted illness.

Emma Leonard (nee Kupps) was born in Antigo in 1879 and was one of the first children born in Antigo. She was a lifelong resident of the city and died in 1953.

## Farming: Kent was Once a Major Area for Potato Breeding

As early as the start of the 20th century, Langlade County had pioneers in the field of potato farming. John Smith was born in England in 1861 and moved to the U.S. with his family in 1892. In 1900 he moved from Chicago to Price Township in Langlade County to farm. There he did significant work in potato breeding and developed a white strain of Triumphs. His 280-acre farm attracted the attention of many potato breeders from as far away as the Bahamas. Many agricultural research stations ordered seed potatoes from him.

In 1919 his Triumphs won first prize at the Wisconsin State Fair and were praised for their yield, quality, and disease resistance. In 1920 the University of Wisconsin awarded him a certificate recognizing “the eminent services of John William Smith as a leading potato grower whose pioneer work in developing a new strain of Triumph seed stock is considered one of the great achievements in the industry.”



*John Smith with a group of potato growers touring his fields.*

## The Original Economic Stimulus Package



President Obama’s economic stimulus package recalls the first time the federal government funded infrastructure improvements. Benefits that Antigo received from FDR’s New Deal of the 1930’s are still evident today.

Kellogg’s Pond (now Antigo Lake) had been created by a dam on the Springbrook River in 1879. By the end of

*Top Photo: The dam built in 1936 where Antigo Lake empties into Springbrook at Fourth Avenue.*

*Bottom Photo: Looking north from Seventh Avenue, at the banks of Springbrook with the bridge in the foreground.*

the 19th century, four sawmills circled the lake playing a major role in Antigo’s growth, which at the time depended on logging.

By the 1930’s the dam and river banks had deteriorated. In 1934 Franklin Roosevelt’s Federal Emergency Relief Administration provided funds for Antigo to build 10 bridges over Springbrook, rebuild the dam, and shore up the river banks. These projects were completed within two years. They not only improved Antigo’s infrastructure but provided much needed employment to many members of the community.

## The Museum Expands with Art Displays

The museum is undergoing some rearrangements in order to provide a space to display the work of local artists. We began with a display of paintings of Frank Vavruska (1917-1974) who was born in Antigo and worked in many places particularly Chicago, New York, and Mexico.

In future months we hope to have displays of current artists in the area working in various media.

*Frank Vavruska's brother Ed (seated) with Joe Hermolin (president) and Mary Kay Wolf (curator) at the exhibit of Frank Vavruska's paintings.*



## Members' Rummage Sale as a Museum Fundraiser

On Saturday, June 6, beginning at 8 a.m., the museum will be the site of a membership-sponsored rummage sale.

The Langlade County Historical Society is seeking donations for the sale. Proceeds will be used to maintain the building. You can donate furniture, glassware,

knick knacks, small appliances (that work). We cannot accept clothing.

Please bring in items or call with questions during regular hours (Wed.-Sat. 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.)

Sale items will be only those that are donated. We will **not** be selling items from

the museum.

Our museum is an historic building, but it is over 100 years old and in need of major maintenance.

**Note:** Our annual spring picnic at the museum has been moved to July or August. Watch for details.

## Thank you

### Donations:

**Jon Belisle:** Hotel Quigley memorabilia

**Dean Blazek:** C&NW sign

**Daniel Brandow:** Railroad map

**Nancy Bruce:** Postcards

**Walter Campbell:** C&NW memorabilia

**Dee Cofer:** Photos

**Jennifer Lyon and family:** C&NW ledger

**Rita Mattek:** Clothing

**Tim Orthman:** C&NW ledgers

**Mr. & Mrs. R. Parish:** photo album

**Ann Schranz:** photos

**Dorothy Svaton estate:** books

### Cash Donations:

**Thelma Moss estate**  
**Langlade County Genealogical Society**

**Betsy O'Neill in honor of**  
**Dean and Polly Blazek**

**Steve Peterka estate**

**Jan Reynolds estate**

**Sheldon Foundation**

**Dorothy Svaton estate**

**Vera Tveten estate**

**Helen Winski**

### Membership Renewal:

**James and Mary Damos**

### Special Thanks:

**Ross Fischer** for scanning our photographs and **Jay Koepfel** for photographing and cataloguing our artifacts.

**From the Curator:** April 19-25 is National Volunteer Week and Mary Kay Wolf would like to thank those who regularly help out at the front desk: **Elaine Artymiuk, Nancy Bugni, Elvera Frisch, Alice Gamsky, Joe Hermolin, Marion and Cliff Hoffmeister, Jeff Marx, Jeannie McMeekin, Helen and Ed Morrissey, Jim Posselt, Louise Schleis, Judy and Red Turney, Betty Zittel.**

*The museum can always use volunteers especially with summer approaching. If you are willing to help call Mary Kay at the museum.*

### In Memory of:

Thelma Moss passed away on January 17, 2009. She had worked as a volunteer at the museum when it was located at the former St. John's Convent. We are grateful to her for remembering the museum in her will.

404 Superior St., Antigo, WI 54409  
Phone: (715) 627-4464  
Email: lchs@dwave.net  
web site: www.langladehistory.com  
Museum Hours:  
Wednesday to Saturday:  
9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**New Membership Dues**

Individual, 1 year: \$25  
Individual, 3 years: \$50  
Family, 1 year: \$30  
Family, 3 years: \$70  
Junior (18 or younger), 1 year: \$3  
Business, 1 year: \$100

**Upcoming Events**

**All of May:** Indian beadwork display at the Antigo Public Library

**Tues., May 12, 6:30 p.m.:** A presentation by Joe Hermolin and Jeanne Connors at the library about the significance of the museum's Indian beadwork collection

**Sat., June 6, 8 a.m.:** Membership-sponsored rummage sale to benefit the museum's building fund

**Ongoing:** Book describing Antigo's Landmarks is on sale at the museum

**Items from the Museum:**

In the past, before college dorms had clothes washers and dryers, students often sent laundry home in special suitcases such as this one. Clothes were washed, ironed and returned by the parents.

This suitcase is addressed to: Mr. Jerry Worman, Jordan Seminary, Menominee Michigan and dated Oct. 30, 1959.



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