

# LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## Annual Meeting

The Langlade County Historical Society held its annual meeting this past November 21 at the Edison Club in Antigo.

The presentations covered the history of beer barrel making in Wisconsin and breweries in Antigo. Jerry Benishek told of the breweries in Antigo in the 1890s. His grandfather, John, was instrumental in establishing them, which would have occurred earlier had it not been for the temperance campaigns of Francis Deleglise. Benishek's presentation was followed by Gary Hess who

described the Hess Cooperage in Madison. It was founded by his grandfather Frank, an immigrant from Bohemia and Frank's four sons. The Hess Cooperage made barrels for many breweries in Wisconsin and throughout the U.S., including Antigo's breweries. Gary Hess is writing a book on this unique family business.

The business portion of the meeting included a summary of the past year and plans for the upcoming year. This is outlined on page 3 of this newsletter.

Three positions to our board were filled. New member Fran Brown



*Above: Board member Dean Blazek poses with his own Antigo Brewery barrel made by the Hess Cooperage next to the tools of the trade from Gary Hess' collection.*

was elected along with incumbents Judy Grimm and David Zingg to three year terms.

## Still Busy in Winter

The museum has reduced hours in winter and the locomotive and Deleglise cabin are not open to visitors. Yet it continues to be a busy place with special events and opening Thursday through Saturday. Once again Santa visited the museum to listen to children's requests. He was on hand on five evenings and on three weekend afternoons. Children visiting Santa



were treated to cookies and punch and each received a toy thanks to the Community Association of Retirees (CAR). In addition to CAR, Santa's visit was made possible by the Antigo Daily Journal, museum volunteers, and extra hours put in by curator Mary Kay Wolf.

In addition to limited hours we are open by appointment and two Boy Scout troops, from Hatley and Antigo scheduled evenings at the museum. From late November through early January the Antigo Visual Arts gallery in the museum held a successful exhibit and sale of arts and crafts.

We see many museum members

during the winter at the Antigo Civic Music concerts but this winter we will not be serving refreshments at the February concert.

We are still available to answer questions and arrange group tours while continuing to work on displays, archives, and the building during the winter.

### **CURATOR:**

Mary Kay Wolf

### **DIRECTORS:**

Dean Blazek	Lisa Haefs
Fran Brown	Joe Hermolin
Nancy Bugni	Dave Zingg
Glenn Bugni	Diane Zuelzke
Judy Grimm	

## THANK YOU

To all volunteers who helped Santa and the Antigo Daily Journal and Community of Retirees who made his visit possible and provided gifts to the children.

### Item Donations:

Lloyd Anstutz:	Portrait of Benjamin Freyer
Mary Bauschka:	Photograph of J. B. Bauschka, the Antigo High School band director for 40 years.
Vonnie Blahnik:	WWII army jacket
Richard Brock:	Photographs, Telephone glass insulators
Leroy Dyson:	Family photographs
Ludene Kommers:	Writings about Abraham Lincoln by members of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin
Randall Rohe:	Photographs of Pelican & Enterprise Lake
Jim Roesner:	WI Blue Books 1999-2012
Phyllis Veselak:	Coverlets

### Monetary Donations:

James Aulik  
John & Susan Zwicky  
Langlade County Genealogy Society

### Memorial Donations:

In memory of Betty Bradley from Dean & Polly Blazek

### New Members:

Frances Brown  
Wallace Eckardt  
Jame Vandehey family  
Membership Renewal:  
Judy Grimm

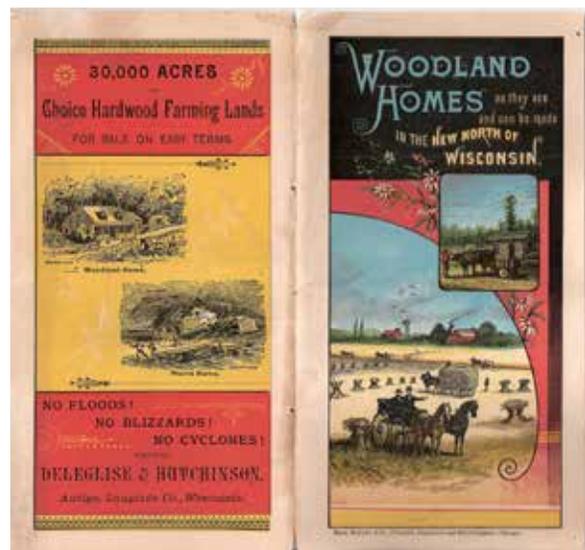
## LANGLADE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Promoting Langlade County

Among Francis Deleglise's contributions to Antigo's growth was his promotion of the county. In 1884, together with his business partner W.W. Hutchinson, they published a booklet that extolled the virtues of Langlade County. It stated that Langlade County was ideal because: "The soil is wonderfully fertile... The water cannot be excelled for purity...The timber is magnificent...The markets are steadiest and surest... The society is the best in the west...Occupations are a multitude...Recreation can be taken with pleasure and profit... Investments are safe and profitable."

The booklet proclaimed that one could acquire 40 acres for \$50. This could easily be paid off with sales of timber or maple syrup with a comfortable profit. It promised an absence of tornadoes, a good high school, wide streets, local shopping, and most important, no taverns. It noted that Antigo had grown in population from 823 in 1883 to 1,337 and predicted it would soon grow to 5,000.

The museum archives have letters from people seeking further information in response to the booklet. There are inquiries from the mid-west, from New Jersey, the west, and even Canada. People asked about timber & marketability, railroads, and quality of farming land. One man asked if it was hilly. Someone asked where Antigo



Above: Front and back cover of the promotional booklet published by Deleglise and Hutchinson in 1884.

was as it was not on his map. (Langlade had just been made a county). Some inquiries were from entrepreneurs thinking about starting businesses in the area. One asked about prospects for starting a newspaper. Others asked about the need for a dry goods store, harness shop, or millenary. Some letters were in Bohemian. Someone from Milwaukee considered setting up a machine shop. There were labor problems in Milwaukee that impacted his business and besides, he went on, "I do not particularly fancy Milwaukee for a permanent home. The German element does not suit me." Another writer from the Milwaukee area wrote on behalf of a group of German immigrants who were considering relocating to set up a German community. It was indeed a diverse group that was attracted to the promise of Antigo as described by Deleglise and Hutchinson.

## Looking Back ... and Forward

The coming of a new year inspires an examination of what we have done and where we are heading.

### Summary of the Past Year

Our Windows to the Past campaign has been successful. Repairs to the storm windows and south portico were done previously. This summer Ed Hill returned to the building he had worked on 25 years ago, when it was still the library, and did much needed tuck pointing repairs. Although the fund drive is officially over we continue to raise building funds. We thank the community for its support.

Through Recollection Wisconsin ([www.recollectionwisconsin.org](http://www.recollectionwisconsin.org)), the museum's collection of logging and railroad photographs are now available online, adding to our collection of Indian photographs taken by Arthur J. Kingsbury and the 19 letters that Francis Deleglise wrote while serving in the Civil War.

Our annual Railroad Park picnic was a great success. Rain or shine this is has become an Antigo summer tradition and this year weather cooperated and we were able to hold it outside.

Over 2,900 visitors toured the museum this year including many school classes and Boy Scout groups. Curator Mary Kay Wolf continually changes displays at the museum. We assist researchers who telephone, email, or write us with inquiries relating to projects

they are engaged in. These are generally for personal research such as genealogy or background on a particular house or property. But inquiries also come from those doing academic research and students working on projects.

In working with other groups we provided copies of some photographs to the Chippewa Valley Museum in Eau Claire for an exhibit, to the Wisconsin Council of Local History for conference displays and a brochure, and to the Antigo Daily Journal.

Collaboration with the Antigo Visual Arts created a small gallery in the museum. This enabled local artists to display their work and informed the community of local artistic talent. The gallery brings new people into the museum and they often become interested in our history as a byproduct of their gallery visit. A percentage of all gallery sales goes to the museum.

Bringing local history out from beyond the museum walls is a major goal of the society. Mary Kay Wolf sets up displays at city hall. We displayed material at public venues such as the Antigo Farmers Market and Market Days on Fifth Avenue. We gave presentations to service organizations and at Pine Meadows and Evergreen.

Scrambling to raise funds to maintain the museum and to run programs is a constant struggle. Donations by visitors and gift shop sales contribute to our funds but we cannot rely on that alone. We

apply for and receive receive grants, hold specific fundraising drives, and solicit donations through bake sales at community events such as Music in the Park and Civic Music concerts, and hold an annual rummage sale of donated items.

### Goals for the Following Year

Current activities are well received and we will continue with existing plans for museum exhibits, displays and activities outside the building, collaboration with Antigo Visual Arts, and assistance to researchers making inquiries.

Our Windows to the Past campaign for building improvements continues. Our next project is to improve interior lighting with respect to both energy efficiency and enhancing the appearance of displays.

Making our archives available online will continue with two collections. The first is William Wessa's photographs of and writing about the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company. This company, made up of young men from Langlade County, fought in World War I. The second is the Civil War diary of Reuben Sweet who was with Sherman during his siege of Atlanta and his March to the Sea.

# Marching Through Georgia

One hundred and fifty years ago, in early 1864, the Civil War was entering its fourth year and although there had been hundreds of thousands of casualties on both sides the end did not seem to be in sight. From May to September 1864 Sherman conducted a campaign to capture Atlanta. Then, from November 16 to December 21 he led his army from Atlanta to the port of Savannah. This became known as Sherman's March to the Sea. Sherman's army destroyed military targets and also industry and infrastructure. They advanced without a supply system and relied on foraging off the land. It was a strategy that Sherman and Grant felt necessary to finally defeat the South but remains controversial to this day.

One soldier in his army, Rueben Sweet, was from Manitowoc and he kept a diary from November 1863 to January 1865. Many years later his daughter, Flora Jackson, moved to Pickerel where she was a pioneer teacher. She inherited the diary and eventually donated it to the museum.

The Sweet family emigrated from Scotland first to Nova Scotia, Canada and later to Wisconsin, settling in Manitowoc around 1840. There were 10 children, five of whom were boys. Rueben was the youngest and born in 1839. When the Civil War broke out all five boys enlisted for 90 days. It was initially thought the war would be over by then. But the war continued and so did the Sweet boys who reenlisted and served throughout the war. Rueben served in the Illinois Fusiliers during his first enlistment of 90 days. He then reenlisted in the Second Wisconsin Infantry and later in Company E of the Fourteenth Wisconsin. It was with this company that he took part in Sherman's campaign to capture Atlanta and the March to the Sea. At the close of the war he marched in Washington in the Grand Review of Grant's and Sherman's Armies.

After the war Rueben returned home and married. He and his

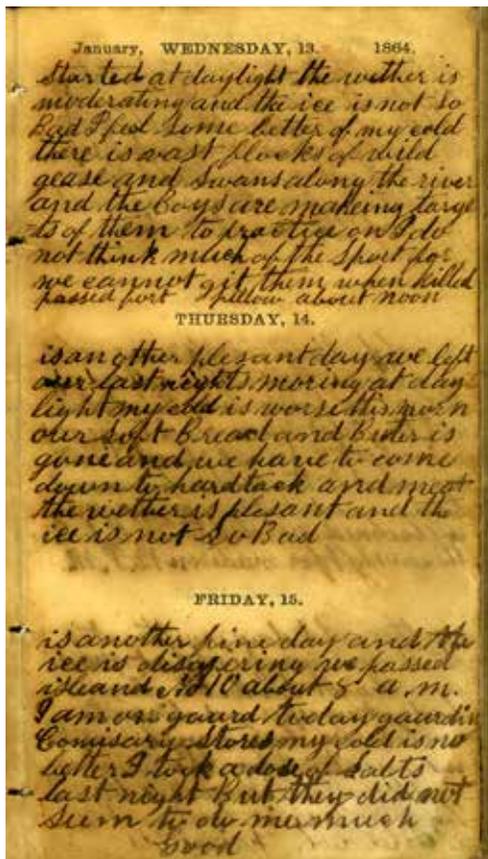
wife raised eight children. They settled on a farm near Shawano and Rueben became a Justice of the Peace in spite of a lack of legal education. By the time he passed away in 1924 at the age of 85 he was known as Judge Sweet.

Rueben Sweet's diary and a transcript have been scanned and will soon be available for viewing through Recollection Wisconsin. The writing on some pages is quite clear but others are faded and difficult to decipher. When the diary was originally donated in the 1920s a typewritten transcript was prepared maintaining Rueben Sweet's original spelling and grammatical errors. This has been preserved in the copy to be posted on the internet.



*Above: Curator Mary Kay Wolf examines Rueben Sweet's diary. Rueben Sweet described his Civil War experiences from November 1863 to February 1865 in his pocket diary.*

*Below left: Detail of Diary entry*



# Costume Jewelry Rage earth

Throughout the history of the United States the president's wife has been looked to as someone who sets trends. In the 1950s the role of the first lady in influencing styles fell to Mamie Eisenhower and her interest in costume jewelry. Costume jewelry has a long and varied history of popularity and that popularity reached new heights during the fifties.

It was a time when women, even those of modest means, were expected to dress up when in the public eye. Costume jewelry, often made in Japan and Hong Kong, was inexpensive and came in a variety of styles and colors. Acceptance of costume jewelry was not necessarily a result of clever marketing by Asian manufacturers or American retailers as much as it was due to the fact that costume jewelry was the preference of Mamie Eisenhower who was first lady from 1953 to 1960. She preferred it to the far more expensive "real thing". The world of haute couture frowned on her accessorizing expensive gowns with dime store necklaces, broaches, and bracelets but she was admired, and copied, by millions of American women who admired her down-to-

sensibility.

In Antigo stores along Fifth Avenue provided many opportunities to indulge in purchases of a choker for less than 50 cents or a multi-stranded necklace for \$3. Local businesses such as Molle Jewelry and Jansen Jewelry and chain stores such as Woolworths, J.C. Penny's and Montgomery Ward all had huge selections of costume jewelry.

A popular hobby also developed of using costume jewelry in home decorations in such things as wall hangings, table centerpieces, wreaths, etc. Juliet Galarowicz perfected this hobby by purchasing costume jewelry at local garage sales, by the boxful, and converting them into works of folk art. After her death the family donated one of her pieces to the museum. It is displayed annually during the



*Above: Museum volunteer Laurie Fellner admires one of the museum's more popular items: a costume jewelry tree made by Juliet Galarowicz.*

*Below: An Antigo Daily Journal ad for Spurgeon's Store durin Christmas shopping season of 1954.*

Christmas season and never fails to attract many oohs and aahs by parents and grandparents who bring children to visit Santa. It is one of the most photographed items in the museum.

So the next time you browse through your mother or grandmother's jewelry box and come across colorful multiple strand beads, broaches, pins, and bracelets with "Japan" or "Hong Kong" imprinted on the clasp, think of First Lady Mamie Eisenhower and those fabulous fifties when even a poor working girl could wear dime store beads and feel like a million bucks.



**ADDRESS:**

404 Superior St., Antigo, WI 54409  
 Phone: (715) 627-4464  
 Email: lchs@dwave.net  
 web site: www.langladehistory.com

**MUSEUM HOURS:**

October 1 to May 1  
 Thursday to Saturday:  
 May 1 to October 1  
 Tuesday to Saturday  
 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

**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  
 Life Member: \$250

**ITEMS FROM THE MUSEUM**



In the 1880s Antigo organized a fire department with unpaid volunteers. The city purchased a second hand steamer from Appleton but did not initially have a team of horses. When the alarm sounded someone usually showed up with a team that would be hitched up and proceed to the fire. Lacking a team the crew would hand pull the equipment to the fire.

404 Superior Street  
 Antigo WI, 54409