



The Union

Prairie du Chien Historical Society Newsletter February 2021 Volume 24 #1

2020 in Review

If 2020 was a normal year, the Prairie du Chien Historical Society would have met on the second Thursday of January to recap/summarize the season. But COVID 19 caused the Annual Dinner Meeting to be canceled this year.

This issue of The Union will be a review of the activities of the PdC Historical Society and the Fort Crawford Museum.

Due to the shutdown on March 16, 2020, the PdCHS board was faced with tough decisions for the upcoming season. Major events were cancelled including the April 26 event that would have saluted the people who donated to the hospital pillar project, all scheduled school tour groups, Pies-A-Plenty fund raiser, and the Twin Cities bus tour. Opening Day was moved to May 31st shortening our season by a month.

Hoping to retain the staff for the season, the PdC Historical Society applied and received funding through the SBA for two programs. The Economic Injury Disaster Relief Fund provided \$5,000 in late April based on our five (5) employees. We also received a loan as part of the SBA Payroll Protection Program for \$6,587 based on last year's monthly payroll. This loan recently became a grant.

On August 1 we received a \$7,500.00 grant from the Wisconsin Humanities Care Program to be used for operating expenses from 8/1/20 – 10/31/20.

The Society applied and received a \$15,000 loan from the SBA EIDL Loan program which provides loans at 2.75% for 30 years.

Thanks to the \$19,087.00 in grant money and the \$15,000 loan the Fort Crawford Museum withstood the COVID summer.

Board of Directors

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Friday Wiles

Jodi Russell

Brandon Brockway

Gene Bouzek

Committees

Education

Exhibit

Finance

Membership

Information

Contact Information

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Events



Friday, August 14, 2020
Afternoon Tea with Mrs. Beaumont

Not all events were cancelled. Our outdoor events; **Fridays at the Fort, Visiting Our Ancestors and Spirits of Fort Crawford** took place with masks, social distancing and hand sanitizer. Participation was good for the events. Thirty-four people toured three cemeteries for the Visiting Our Ancestors. Spirits of Fort Crawford, a new event last fall, had fewer people. There were about 20 people including volunteers but it was a cold afternoon in late October.

Brandon Brockway
Portraying Daniel Fenton
Visiting Our Ancestors 2020 Calvary Cemetery



Friday Wiles, a nurse administering typhoid shots during the Flood of 1965
This is scary!
Spirits of Fort Crawford



Janet Finn and Linda Munson worked very hard to ensure **Christmas at the Fort and the Holiday Cookie and Candy Sale** would happen and COVID safety protocols would be in place. Their hard work paid off. All twenty-five Christmas trees had sponsors and the cookies & candies sold out by 10:30 am Saturday, December 12. The event brought in \$1900.00 and gift shop sales for that day were \$411.34! The success of the event was a huge bright spot after the disappointment of cancelling the other major fund raisers for 2020. Thank you, Janet and Linda, all the fantastic bakers, and Ted Finn and Brandon Brockway for their Christmas tree help!

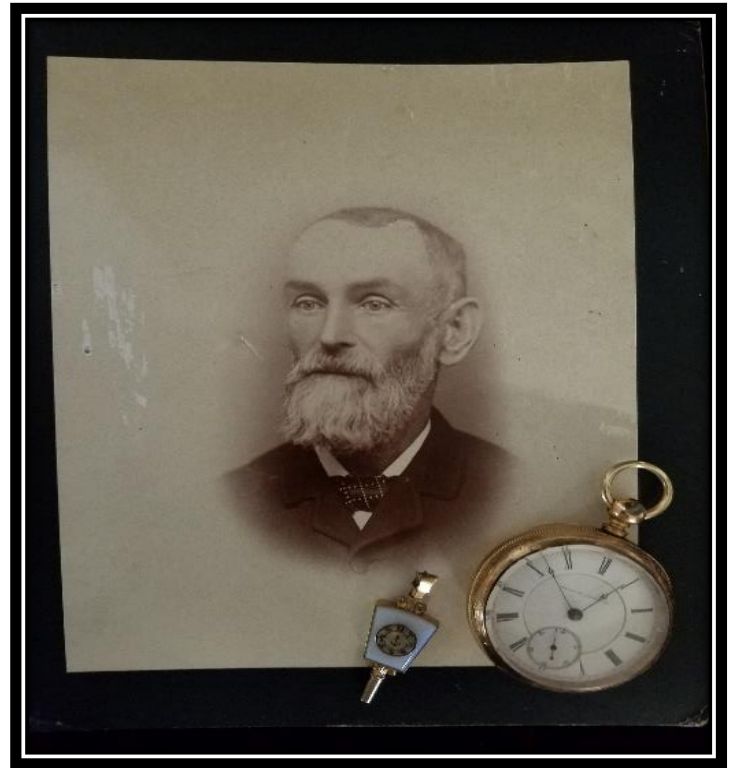
Collections

Carolyn Sand and Brandon Brockway continue to organize the collection workroom with additional shelving, files and storage boxes. Along with easy access and retrieval Carolyn strives to protect the artifacts with archival quality boxes and acid free protective sleeves for photographs. Diana Temte, Linda Cherrier and Sheryll Bunders volunteer their time to help Carolyn. Another volunteer working with Carolyn is Dakota Smith who spends his time compiling a database listing the reference books and school annuals in the collection.

In the last Union, an artifact that fascinated Brandon was showcased. It was a letter written in 1840 by a soldier stationed at Fort Crawford. Indeed, very interesting. Another artifact that interested Brandon is the pocket watch belonging to Captain Ira Bisbee.



Evergreen Cemetery



Ira Bisbee, pocket watch with key fob

Captain Ira Bisbee was born in Plymouth, Massachusetts on July 31, 1831. He moved from Cincinnati, Ohio to Sauk County, Wisconsin and then to Milwaukee, WI before settling in Prairie du Chien in 1858. He was married to Sarah Denny and they had 5 children. His obituary states he was “for years a captain on the Mississippi River, under the employment of the Milwaukee & Mississippi Railroad Co. and later the Diamond Jo. Line.” In May 1871 the Wauzeka Manufacturing Company was established in Wauzeka with B.F. Fay (first mayor of Prairie du Chien—1872) as president and treasurer, George L. Scott secretary and Ira Bisbee superintendent. The company made staves and other cooper stocks. The Bisbee Family did live in Wauzeka for a while. Ira Bisbee died on August 22, 1892 and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Prairie du Chien. His son Sherwin married Hattie Brunson, daughter of Judge Ira Brunson.

St. Germaine House



June 2020



October 2020

The french log house on St. Ferole Island was transformed from a bat infested, rickety building (on the left) to a charming and quaint dwelling (on the right) during the summer. It was opened to the public during the Chamber of Commerce's Wine Walk on October 2, 2020. Events at the St. Germaine House are being scheduled for this year. Hopefully, everyone will come and take a peek at the interior. Check out fortcrawfordmuseum.com to watch a video showing the work done through out the summer. It provides good detail of the work that took place on this Prairie du Chien relic.

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The Fort Crawford Museum web site is managed by Board member, Mike Rider. It is updated often with new and interesting tidbits. Take a look, Mike does a good job!

Annual Gift Giving Campaign 2020-2021

This was the 19th year of conducting the gift giving campaign. Over the years the generosity of the community has been remarkable, and this year was no exception. This year \$11,305 has been received. Thank you to all who contributed!

Reminder

The Membership Committee recently sent request letters with 2021 membership forms to everyone. This time of year, when the museum is not open, daily membership dues are a needed source of income to deal with costly utility bills. Please renew your membership soon. If you have already done so, **Thank You!**