



The Union

**Prairie du Chien Historical Society Newsletter
November 2018 Volume 21 #4**

Official closing day for daily tours and hours was October 31. Activities still are scheduled during November and December. Tours are always available with prior arrangements. Just call or email with your request.

Currently ongoing is the Annual Raffle.

This year's prizes are a fire ring, a shepherd's hook for a hanging basket and \$50.00 in cash. Tickets are \$2.00 a piece or 3 for \$5.00. Board members are selling tickets and they are also available at the Museum. Winners will be drawn at the Annual Dinner Meeting on January 10th.

November 16th & 17th "Mingle and Jingle"

The Museum will be open on Friday and Saturday from 9:00am until 4:00pm as part of the PdC Main Street's holiday event that encourages folks to shop local. Come in and sign up for the drawing*. On Saturday a group of 40 Boy Scouts and 12 leaders from Postville, Iowa will be touring the site during the afternoon. Their tour will include costumed interpreters and the infamous "Mini-Militia" (kids love that!).

November 24th "Shop Small Saturday"

The Gift Shop and museum buildings will be open for the day 9:00am to 4:00pm. Bring out of town family and friends to the museum for unique gifts and historical books. There will be a *drawing for the book "The Becoming of the Driftless River Natural Park" too!

December 8th Holiday Cookie and Candy Sale

The sale is from 10:00am until 1:00pm or until all goodies are sold. **Please bring your own containers.** Christmas trees will be lit for the beginning of Christmas at the Fort. Sponsor a tree for \$50.00. **Form on page 3.**

Board of Directors

President
Mary Antoine

Vice President
Chad Fradette

Secretary
Janet Finn

Treasurer
Lori Bekkum

Joe Atkins
Bill Howe
John Mundt
Carolyn Sand
Terry Seeley
Cindy Standorf
Bob Ziel

Staff

Administrative Manager
Friday Wiles

Interpreters
Michael Haefer
Barb Rink
Jodi Russell

Buildings and Grounds
Gene Bouzek

Standing Committees

Collections
Education
Exhibit
Finance
Membership

Contact Information

Fort Crawford Museum
717 S. Beaumont Road
PO Box 298
Prairie du Chien, WI
53821
608 326-6960
ftcrawmu@mhtc.net
Kathy Koch
kgkoch@centurytel.net

Saint Germain *dit Gautier Coorough House

Now that the Prairie du Chien Historical Society owns the “Coorough House”, the organization is writing a business plan to provide thoughtful financial goals and priorities.

Important issues that need to be addressed are:

- The building needs to be stabilized and weatherized. Over the decades bats have called it home—they need to be removed and kept out. There are places where the chinking between the logs has disintegrated leaving holes in the exterior walls.
- Period furnishing from 1840’s will be needed to bring the interior alive and “warm” up the rooms.
- The types of programs, services and activities will be offered once the structure is opened to the public need to be established.
- Fund raising.

Mary Antoine, Joe Atkins, Jerry Wachuta, Bob Ziel and Kathy Koch met on Friday, October 26th to start the planning. **Anyone interested in helping please call the Museum—326-6960.**

***Dit** - French word (pronounced “dee”) means ‘also known as’

Wednesday, September 12th the PdC Historical Society hosted an Open House at the Coorough Log Cabin. Guests were treated to a tour of the old log structure. Stepping thru the front door was stepping back in time. The house is empty but the log walls are visible in the small rooms. It is dark and dank smelling from years of being closed up. And the cold bedroom on the 2nd floor is accessed up narrow steps. It makes one marvel at the conditions our ancestors endured.

One of the guests that evening was Lois Coorough Harwood, granddaughter of George and Mary Coorough who lived there when Lois was a young girl. It wasn’t long before a group had gathered around Lois to hear her reminisce with stories of her relatives who called the house their home. Listening to Lois was the perfect way to end the tour.



Missing Yearbooks

Yearbooks from Campion, St. Mary’s Academy and Prairie du Chien High School are organized by year and shelved in the Library/Reference Room at the Museum. They are readily available for interested people. But the sets are incomplete. We would like to complete our set. Does anyone have a yearbook from the list below that they would donate to the Museum? Here is a list of missing yearbooks:

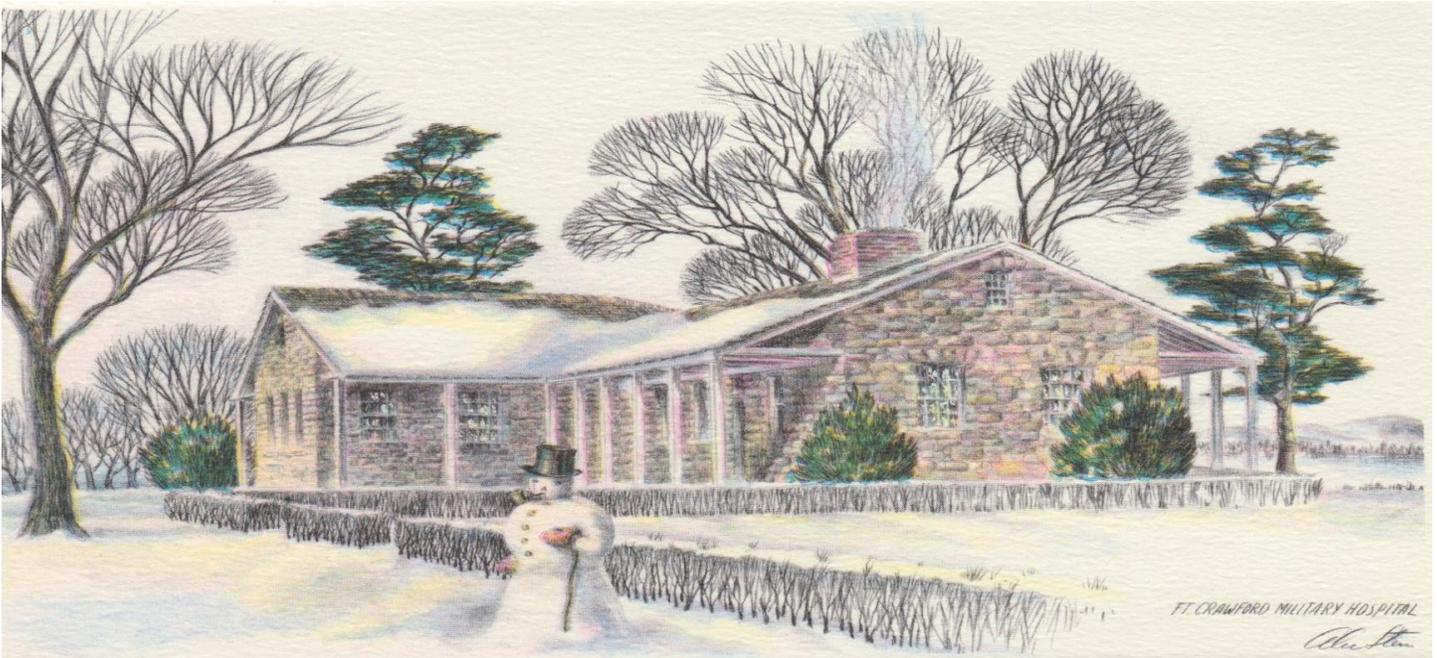
Campion

1913 thru 1923
1925, 1927, 1928
1932, 1934

Prairie du Chien

1911-1914
1919
1924-1929
1931-1933
1935, 1937, 1939
*1941, 1943, 1945, 1947
(war years)
1949, 1951, 1953
1976, 1979, 1981
1914, 1999, 2000
2012-2018

*I know that during WWII PdC High School yearbooks were published every other year. I don’t know what year that practice started or ended but it could explain why the four years are missing—they were not published.



Christmas at the Fort

Christmas trees will deck the porches of the Fort for the holiday season. **They need sponsors!** For \$50.00 a family, an individual, an organization, a business or a group of fun-loving people can have the opportunity to be creative and spread some holiday cheer. The trees will be up and ready for decorating by December 1st. We ask that trees be completed by December 7th. Call Janet Finn for more information at 326-6010.

Sponsorship Form

Fort Crawford Museum Christmas Trees 2018

Name/Business/Organization _____

Phone Number _____

Number of Trees _____ x 50.00 = \$ _____

Amount Enclosed _____

Mail to: Fort Crawford Museum, PO Box 298
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821 326-6960

The trees are purchased from the Prairie du Chien Fire Department. They are delivered to the museum around Thanksgiving time. Ted and Janet Finn are in charge of setting them up on the porches of the hospital. They are always looking for willing people to help with this. Contact the Finns (326-6010) and volunteer your help! The Christmas trees will be set up by **December 1st**. Between the first and the seventh is decorating time. The name of the sponsor(s) will be prominently displayed below the tree. The trees will be officially lit on Saturday, December 8th. This coincides with the Holiday **Cookie and Candy Sale** and the start of **Christmas at the Fort**. The uniquely decorated Christmas trees are festive to behold anytime, but the lighted trees at night are magical! The trees stay up until after January 1st. The Finns and crew make sure the trees are down and curbside for the City Christmas tree pick up.

It is a nice event—why not join the celebration!

You Just Never Know!

In the July 1, 2018 edition of the WI State Journal I read an article about a “priceless” wagon acquired for Baraboo’s Circus World Museum that awoken my memory cells blurred but cleared as I thought about it.

The article told the story of two directors of Circus World Museum, Harold Burdick and Scott O’Donnell, who had picked up a circus wagon in Onalaska for delivery to Baraboo. There it would be cleaned, restored and displayed. The circus wagon was the Beck Calliope Circus Wagon described as having “rich colors and intricate carvings and a calliope which produces sounds by sending compressed air through large whistles”. The wagon was built by Lance “Brownie” Beck in the 1940’s. Back then, Brownie travelled the area participating in fairs and parades with his wagon as his wife, Juanita Beck, played the calliope.

And now why my memory was stirred:

One sunny, beautiful autumn Friday of my freshman year at UW-Eau Claire Sue Waller (Jan Waller’s sister) and I and someone who I can’t remember decided to travel home. Without a ride we hitch hiked. We got a ride as far as Whitehall, WI (the hometown of my former boss and math teacher, Jerry Gilbertson). On the lonely outskirts of town on a very quiet portion of Highway 53 we were finally picked up by a friendly elderly man who didn’t think it was a good idea for young women to be hitchhiking. The usual conversation ensued—who are you, where are you from and where are you going. With our mention of PdC the driver said he and his wife visited there many times years ago with their circus wagon to be in parades. By chance I asked if he knew George and Emily McClure, my grandparents. Sure enough, he did. He and his wife stopped in to see them every time they were in Prairie. His name was Brownie Beck. He told me to tell my family hello.

A big dilemma—telling my family about meeting Brownie was admitting I hitch hiked. But I did tell them. It was too good of a story not to. My grandmother told me more about the Becks and she even had a record of Juanita playing the calliope. I saw the album and listened to it but I have no idea what happened to it.

Another time I hitch hiked home was that Thanksgiving. I was with a friend from Lancaster, WI. I don’t know why we did it. It was cold and snowy. Not good weather for catching rides. My memories aren’t clear but my Dad had to pick us up in LaCrosse late at night. He was not very happy about this. My Dad didn’t get upset very often with his daughters. When he did, you sat up and took notice. That was the last time I hitch hiked.

There are some lessons here:

The obvious is hitch hiking is a very poor way to travel, unreliable and stupid!

The more important one is pay attention and listen. There are stories and tales being told all the time. They are gifts from the past. I realize now that my mother and grandmother were good story tellers. I kick myself often for not being more appreciative and receptive of the gift they were offering me with their stories.

Kathy Koch

Annual Dinner Meeting
Prairie du Chien Historical Society
Thursday, January 10, 2019
Huckleberry's Banquet Hall

5:30 Social Gathering

6:00 Dinner

6:40 Business Meeting

7:00 Program

Dick Walter—Retired Surveyor for Houston County Minnesota.

Presenting: The Neutral Ground in Iowa: Relocation of the Ho Chunk.

The Evening's Dinner

Salad Greens with Raspberry Vinaigrette

Grilled Salmon over Wild Rice

Or

Campfire Cod over Wild Rice

Grilled Veggies

Assorted Rolls

Coffee or Milk

Please indicate your preference for the Salmon or Cod at the bottom of the reservation form.

Price per person: \$20.00

Please mail completed reservation form and cost of ticket(s) to:

PdC Historical Society

P.O. Box 298

Prairie du Chien, WI 53821

(608) 326-6960

Reservations due by January 4, 2019

Name(s) _____

Number attending _____

Phone number _____

Amount enclosed _____

I'll have Salmon _____ **I'll have Cod** _____

From the IPAD of Janet Finn

The Annual Bus Tour Fundraiser to St. Paul/Minneapolis taken on October 17-19, 2018 was a grand success. Everyone enjoyed visiting a historic mansion (The LeDuc House in Hastings, MN), 3 plays: "Holiday Inn", "The Great Society" and "Drinking Habits 2" in 3 delightful venues, a paddle boat ride on the Mississippi River, and a visit to the Walker Art Museum and Sculpture Park.

It is hoped many of you will put **October 16, 17, & 18, 2019** on your calendar and consider reserving a seat for yourself. Help us fill the 56 passenger bus to capacity, meet new friends, have great fun and raise money to support your local museum. The bus tour this year raised nearly \$3,000.00.



Koch's Challenge Update

Back in April, Gary & Kathy Koch initiated a \$3000.00 matching donation campaign to kick-off the Fort Crawford Museum's 22nd season. The total amount donated from family, friends and members far and wide was \$6889.49. A surprise addition by Chad and Jaclyn Fradette in September brought the total to \$9,889.49!

The others who met the challenge are:

Joe & Sharon Atkins
Donna Kinley
Doug & Nancy Boldt Wiltsie
Brad & Karen Boldt Johnson
Layne & Susan Boldt David
Joseph "Casey" Miller
Liz Mullarkey & Radio Rob Bryson
Denise & Carl Shedivy
Tom & Cathie Nelson
Laurie Cesar
Russell & Mary Steiner
Joan & David Skemp
Cheryl Mader & Dale Klemme
Jim & Sharon Noggle Ross
Hans & Judy Gill
Marilyn Haefer
John D. Davis
Carolyn & Ken Sand
Betty Nolan
Merle & Barb Frommelt
Ruth Mundt
Mark & Megan Pedretti
Sharon & Dick Martin
Melody Igou
Mary Campbell
Michael Haefer
Tom & Linda Munson
Nick & Jessica Pedretti
Bob & Ethel Sebastian
Diana Temte
Randy & Kathy Paske
Coletta Wegmann
United Methodist Church

The response to our challenge was humbling. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Kathy and Gary Koch