



## The Union

Prairie du Chien Historical Society Newsletter

July 2018 Volume 21 #3

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### Summer in the City

It has been a busy couple of months. Visitors in May were steady but numbers picked up once school was over. It is not unusual for us or other museums, parks and attractions that are tourist oriented. Here's a recap of what has been happening at the Fort.

- New to the staff this season is Jody Russell. She also works at the Villa Louis and Stonefield Village as a cook. Her experience as an interpreter of history fits in very well at the fort.
- The Boy Scout encampment in April proved that despite snowy and cold weather, kids can have fun. There were 185 boy scouts with their troop leaders and 20 presenters who were cold and wet at the end of the day but enthusiastically said they would do it again.
- Gary and Kathy Koch's \$3000.00 challenge grant met its goal in early May. \$6798.49 was the grand total.
- Arrangements were made with the Prairie du Chien Correctional Facility for a presentation of Wisconsin and Prairie du Chien history to the History/Science class. Friday Wiles, Gene Bouzek, Michael Haeffer and Mary Antoine donned their period clothing and visited the facility. Over the years we have used the prison work crew for many labor intensive jobs. They have always done a great job. It was good to do something for them.
- The annual Pies-A-Plenty auction on June 16<sup>th</sup> brought in \$3515.60. Thank you to all who participated. It's always a fun event. Who doesn't love pie!
- June 25<sup>th</sup> the Women's Civic Club held an evening dinner meeting on the Museum grounds. It was a catered meal with wine and dessert. Following the Club's business meeting Mary Antoine lead a tour of the museum. If anyone is interested in holding a small get-together at the Fort Crawford Museum, call 608 326-6960 for more information.

The Prairie du Chien Historical Society will be selling cold and refreshing **root beer floats** for \$3.00 every Thursday night during **Concerts on the River**. The music starts at 6:30pm in Lawler Park. The last concert date is August 9<sup>th</sup>. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy the sunset as the music plays.

**June 23<sup>rd</sup>** marked the ribbon cutting ceremony for the official opening of the **National Mole Day Exhibit**. The Oehler Family, Foundation Board Members and former students were on hand for the event. Mole music, hors d' oeuvres and drinks added to the occasion.



Pictured are Maury and Letty Oehler in front of the new exhibit at the Museum. Included in the display are decorative mole pins, t-shirts, mole cookie cutters, original artwork, certificates and other memorabilia from Maury's Mole Day collection. The collection's new home is the Prairie du Chien Museum at Fort Crawford.

### Annual Twin Cities Bus Trip

Plans are being made for this fall's bus trip to the Twin Cities. The dates are **October 17, 18 & 19**. Janet Finn has hinted at surprises along the way...interesting. Final details will be available in August. Stay tuned.

### Preserving the French-Canadian Heritage of Prairie du Chien

On June 6, 2018 the PdC Historical Society received a letter from the Wisconsin Historical Society notifying us that our request for the St. Germain dit Gauthier-Coorough House to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places was granted. **YES!** Included is a copy of the official letter. The letter states the benefits and the advantages of designation as a historic place. One doesn't just call or write to the WHS and ask to be placed on the list; rather it is a labor intensive procedure of providing the historic background and the importance of the building/place where it is located. Good research techniques, good writing skills and enthusiasm are greatly needed. Once the nomination papers are submitted, it is a matter of waiting and hoping.

To be listed on the National Register of Historic Places not only helps us with fund raising for the house's restoration but it validates the PdCHS's belief that those old buildings are important to the community.

Rec'd 4/19/18



WISCONSIN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

**NOTICE OF ENTRY IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
AND/OR STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Name of property:** St. Germain dit Gauthier

**Location:** 419 Fifth Street  
Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin

**Date of Entry:** May 10, 2018

**Designation:**  State Register of Historic Places  
 National Register of Historic Places

The property listed above has been entered in the National Register of Historic Places by the Secretary of the Interior, and listed in the State Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Accordingly, this property is entitled to the benefits and protections of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended and under Chapter 44, Wisconsin Statutes. It will receive limited protection from encroachment by federal or state assisted or licensed projects or state facilities development projects, and may be eligible to apply for matching grants for research, restoration, acquisition, or stabilization. Certain tax incentives are available to depreciable properties listed in the State Register or National Register.

The State Register and National Register programs are administered by the State Historic Preservation Office of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Jim Draeger, State Historic Preservation Officer. Questions about the State Register and National Register programs in Wisconsin should be addressed to:

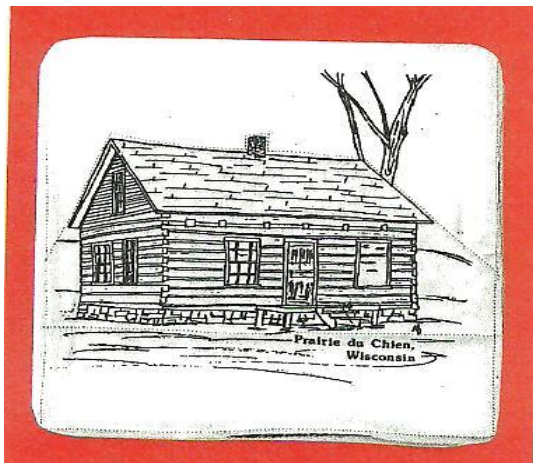
State Historic Preservation Office  
Wisconsin Historical Society  
816 State Street  
Madison, WI 53706  
Telephone: 608-264-6501

Collecting, Preserving and Sharing Stories Since 1846

816 State Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706

[wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org)

## The St. Germain dit Gauthier-Coorough House Story



Once upon a time, French Canadian houses, like the St. Germain dit Gauthier house stretched along the Mississippi River and French Town Road in Prairie du Chien. Now, all but a handful have been demolished. One of the survivors is this small log house at the corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Bolvin Streets.

The St. Germain dit Gauthier house is located in the former Main Village of Prairie du Chien. It is constructed of hewn logs set horizontally and joined at the corners by dovetails. Within its structural details are several elements consistent with a method of French-Canadian construction called *piece sur piece a que d'aronde*: the length of the house is a multiple of thirteen feet, the hewn logs are on average five inches wide, and Roman numerals are present on most timbers in the house.

The St. Germaine dit Gauthier house was constructed on Main Village Lot No.7 as delineated in the 1820 Isaac Lee map. Main Village Lot No.7 was confirmed to Jean Baptiste Caron as the lot had been occupied since 1790. Jean Baptiste Caron came to Prairie du Chien from Montreal in the employ of Berthelot and Rolette, Prairie du Chien fur traders.

The next occupant of the Main Lot No.7 was Guillaume St. Germaine. He was from Yamaska and engaged to work for Forsyth, Richardson & Company at Michilimackinax for three years. At the end of his engagement, St Germain remained in the *pays d'en haut*. He moved to Green Bay where he married Magdelaine Brunet and then arrived at Prairie du Chien about 1825.

Three generations of the St. Germain dit Gauthier family occupied the house and property until 1890 when it was sold to Nina Dousman McBride. Mrs. McBride first rented and then sold the house to Charles Gremore. He moved the house in 1900 to its present location. George Coorough purchased the house and property from Gremore in 1902. The house stayed in the Coorough family until the relocation of the residents of the Prairie du Chien 4<sup>th</sup> Ward in the 1980s.

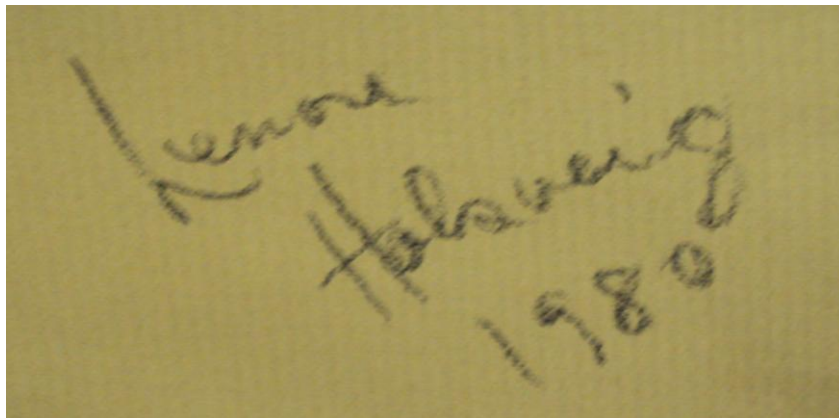
The St. Germaine dit Gauthier-Coorough house was one of three homes that were not demolished or relocated as part of the relocation overseen by the Corps of Engineers and the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The house has stood vacant for many years. The City of Prairie du Chien has turned over ownership of the house to the Prairie du Chien Historical Society and it was recently placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Plans are to restore the house and open it to the public. Funds are greatly needed for this project. Please consider donating to this unique endeavor. For a \$10.00 gift or more donors will be given a hot pad holder with a pencil drawing of the house.

Mary Elise Antoine

## Can You Identify These People?

For storage purposes and safe keeping Carolyn Sand recently removed the old and worn out frame from the picture of the 1937-1938 PdC Conference Champions. Hidden behind it she found this wonderful chalk drawing. There isn't any identification other than the artist signature and date which are difficult to decipher. Does anyone recognize the people in the portrait? Is anyone familiar with the artist? It would be so exciting to be able to return this lovely family portrait to its family.



Artist's signature and date



The drawing was behind this basketball picture. It has been in the museum's possession for years. It was displayed in the Prairie du Chien Schools exhibit until this winter when that exhibit was relocated and updated. At the bottom of this poster is a label that reads "property of Earl Rybarczyk or whoever has it". At one time this picture hung at the High School but it was removed due to updates of their Wall of Fame. Interested people were given the old pictures.

Was Earl Rybarczyk the first keeper of the picture? Did someone else have ownership during the years? At the present time we can't confirm who gave the Museum the picture.

If anyone has answers or knowledge of the portrait we'd love to hear from you. Call or email the museum. 608 326-6960 [ftcrawmu@mhtc.net](mailto:ftcrawmu@mhtc.net)

CONFERENCE RECORD				
WON 12 LOST 0				
* TOURNAMENT AND NON-CONFERENCE				
AT HOME	DATE	AVENUE	POINTS	OPPONENTS
WALSHAMPTON	NOV 22		21	19
	DEC 3	FURNAS POINT	27	21
FENNIMORE	DEC 10		30	23
	DEC 17	PLATTEVILLE	28	15
	JAN 7	LANCASTER	31	15
BOONEVILLE	JAN 10		31	15
BOONEVILLE	JAN 21		27	12
LANCASTER	JAN 22	FENNIMORE	25	14
MONTICELLO	FEB 11		30	12
MONTICELLO	FEB 12		33	32
	FEB 19		27	32
	FEB 22	BOONEVILLE	27	13
PLATTEVILLE	MAR 1		31	24
	MAR 8	WALSHAMPTON	28	25
	MAR 10	PLATTEVILLE	13	27
	MAR 11	FENNIMORE	24	31
WALSHAMPTON	MAR 11		31	20
		TOTAL	408	300

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## Fridays at the Fort

Every Friday until August 17 the Museum will host a free program for children and families. It starts at 1:00. This is an opportunity for outdoor hands on demonstrations and fun. Topics range from candle-making, what to look for in the night sky--star gazing, cartooning, and fur trading. Check our web site [fortcrawfordmuseum.com](http://fortcrawfordmuseum.com) or call 608 326-6960 for more information.

## Visiting Our Ancestors

The popular cemetery tour, Visiting Our Ancestors, is scheduled for Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>. The tour starts at 12:30 meeting at the Fort Crawford Museum. Each cemetery in Prairie du Chien is visited with the *piece de resistance* ending at the Brisbois graves atop the bluffs. Look for additional information closer to the event.