



The Union

Prairie du Chien Historical Society Newsletter
July 2019 Volume 22 #3

Museum Events

“Fridays at the Fort” is every Friday thru August 16th starting at 1:30 p.m. It is a relaxed and informative couple of hours—learning, participating and having fun. Everyone is welcome and it is free!

Root Beer Floats will be sold each Thursday night at Concerts on the River. The music plays from 6:30 until 8:00. Look for the PdC Historical Society’s stand for a refreshing treat.

Donia Russell has recently joined the staff to work in the gift shop.

Day Trip Rescheduled

The trip to the National Pearl Button Museum will be on Tuesday, August 6th. Details are:

- Meet at the Tourist Information Center where the vans will leave at 7:00 am.
- Tour the Museum in Muscatine, Iowa.
- Lunch (not included in the cost)
- On the way back stop at Hurstville Interpretive Center and Lime Kilns.
- Return to Prairie du Chien by 7:00 pm.
- Cost is \$30.00
- Deadline for sign up and deposit is Sunday, July 21st. No refunds.
- Questions call the Museum at 326-6960.

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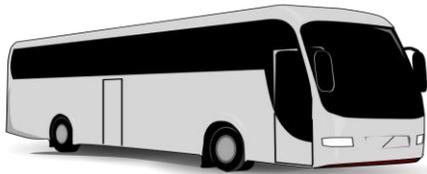
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Fall Bus Tour The Prairie du Chien Historical Society Needs You!

To make a reservation for the 17th Annual Fundraising Bus Tour to Minneapolis/St. Paul on October 16, 17, & 18, 2019! Featured performance of *Mamma Mia* at the Chanhassen Dinner Theater will kick off the fun-filled activities of the 2019 tour. Plans are being solidified to give everyone an adventure to remember. Cost will be below \$600.00 per person. Transportation will be by air-conditioned deluxe motor coach.



A deposit of \$100.00 is needed by September 1st to reserve your seat. Please send or stop at the Museum with your deposit check of \$100.00 to reserve your seat. Help preserve our local history by supporting this 3-day, 2-night getaway.

Guest Server Night at Pizza Hut The PdC Historical Society will be taking orders and serving pizza on **Tuesday, September 17**. Pizza Hut will match up to \$500.00 in tips received by the guest servers. The money from the night's work will go toward the much needed restoration of the porch pillars on the hospital building.

Fort Crawford at Prairie du Chien 1816-1856 is the title of Mary Elise Antoine's recently released book. The PdC Historical Society is very proud to be the publisher of the book. Over the years many visitors and local people have requested a book just about Fort Crawford. Mary gathered interesting photographs, drawings, paintings and other visuals to include in the book. The book is 75 pages in length, and the Cal Peters paintings are seen throughout. Original Cal Peters' paintings are prominently displayed at City Hall during regular office hours. The book is easy reading and provides all the pertinent facts and information surrounding the fort and the people who occupied it.

The selection of books offered in the gift shop has received many compliments. The subjects range from native plants, strange and unusual Wisconsin stories, Native American history, biographies of important people with connections to the Fort and Prairie du Chien's history. And not all books are for adults. There are many for school aged children. Stop by and browse. You may find a title or two to add to your collection.

Grelle Block 1900

Last fall the building at 129 West Blackhawk Avenue, Hare Magic Salon, under went a lovely face lift. The removal of the 50+ year old facade revealed exquisite details from a bygone era. Owner Mark Ihms restored the front to its original appearance.

Background Information

Christopher Grelle, a German immigrant, arrived in Prairie du Chien in the late 1840's with his family. He was a cabinet maker and undertaker. He conducted business on the corner NE corner of Blackhawk Avenue and Prairie Street. His son Charles eventually joined him in that business. But it was grandson Charles Jr. who built the structure in 1900. In Mary Elise Antoine's book *Prairie du Chien* on page 69 is a picture of the building. On the window is painted **Henry Whaley Furniture and Undertaking**. Two men stand in front with a long line of the most modern and desirable convenience of the day—the ice box. Charles Jr. had a dry goods store located where **Wall Street** is today. He had just rebuilt that building after the Fire of 1899 which destroyed more than half of buildings on the north side of the block. The building at 128 W. Blackhawk Ave. must have been an investment venture for Charles Grelle, Jr.

Restoration 2018



Exquisite details uncovered



June 22, 2019

You, Too, Can Be A Volunteer at the Fort!

With our limited staff, the Fort could not begin to function without volunteers. This year we've seen more people step forward, some Prairie du Chien Historical Society members and others who have just stopped in.

This year we have a member who is willing to call other members when we need help. We are now able to call on Nancy Becker to make telephone calls when we see the need for volunteers for a specific job. At the beginning of the season Nancy was able to call enough people to help do a deep cleaning of the hospital and the museum buildings. So when Nancy calls, please say "yes" when you can.

Keeping the outside appearance of our buildings is very important. Once again volunteers have been enlisted to mow the grounds. A much needed power washing of the lower building was accomplished. Three master gardeners along with an experienced gardener are now tending flower beds and the herb garden. A special thank you goes out to Donna Teynor who donated many period plants for the flower bed around the Beaumont stone.

Whether it is working with the collection, sewing costumes, painting, doing electrical or moving items when needed, an extra hand or two is always appreciated.

So whatever your interest or talent, please consider volunteering. You need not wait to be called – just call the Fort and say you want to help.

Carolyn Sand

Needed Drivers for "Visiting Our Ancestors" event Saturday, October 5

Drivers will drive a school van of people from cemetery to cemetery ending on the bluff overlooking Praire du Chien at Brisbois' grave. Hours are noon to 4:30. Five people are needed. This is a great opportunity to see this breathtaking view of our city and the Mississippi River.

Wish List

- 2 packages of Book Enclosures @ \$25.00 per package to protect old yearbooks.
- \$75.00 to purchase a wire roll file for the collection room.

Help Hold Up the Fort

Almost 100 years ago, the women of the Fort Crawford Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution began the effort to preserve the Hospital that was once part of the second Fort Crawford.

The effort to raise funds to restore the hospital building proved difficult as the United States was in a depression. In 1933, the City of Prairie du Chien received a grant from the Civil Works Administration, and part of the funds was earmarked to restore the Fort Crawford Hospital. This began the restoration, but more was needed, more than thirteen ladies could accomplish.

The Prairie du Chien doctors stepped in to help. They established the Dr. William Beaumont Memorial Foundation, named for the famous surgeon who had been stationed at the hospital. Members of the Foundation included Doctors O. E. Satter, T. F. Farrell, and E. M. Dessloch. Each of these men established hospitals and clinics, which served the residents of Prairie du Chien and the surrounding area for many, many years.

The State Medical Society of Wisconsin had long been interested in the Hospital, and in 1960, at the request of the Beaumont Foundation, the Medical Society assumed ownership and care of the hospital. The educational foundation of the Medical Society completed the restoration of the hospital and expanded the interpretation of the site to become the Museum of Medical Progress. After 36 years of curation, the Medical Society gave the Fort Crawford Hospital and the Museum property and collections to the Prairie du Chien Historical Society. Dr. Michael S. Garrity was involved in this transition and a board member for many years.

Through all these years and changes, pillars of the community and state have helped hold up the Fort Crawford Hospital. At the same time, 24 wooden pillars have also helped by supporting the Hospital veranda. Now, those wood pillars are deteriorating, some so badly, they are not providing any support.

Can you please help “hold up the fort” by supporting the Hospital and the Prairie du Chien Historical Society and adopt a pillar? There are 24 pillars, and a pillar can be adopted for \$600.00. You can even choose which pillar you wish to adopt. You can adopt in memory of a person, perhaps a person once associated with the Hospital. All donors will be recognized in association with “their” pillar.

With thanks,
Mary Elise Antoine, President