



The Union

Prairie du Chien Historical Society Newsletter
October 2021 Volume 24 #4

This year has been one of ups and downs, changes and precautions. Events were planned and cancelled early in the year. Along came the vaccine for COVID-19 and restrictions eased. By opening day, May 1st, people were traveling and tourists were in town and stopping to tour the museum. We opened a museum store in the Knowlton House in downtown sharing space with Teresa Champion and her business The Planted Tree.

Pies-A-Plenty, the pie auction held during Rendezvous, did not happen this year. Instead a pie sale was held at the Prairie du Chien Library during Crazy Days. The library was gracious enough to accommodate us while holding their annual book sale. Pieces of pies were also sold outside the Knowlton House. Chairperson Linda Munson was very pleased with the results--\$2342.00 and she liked the set up at the library. This venue may become permanent.

After much deliberation Janet Finn, coordinator of the **Annual Bus Trip** to the Twin Cities, made the heartbreaking decision to cancel this year's trip. With the uptick of COVID cases, Janet's first concern was the health and safety of those participating. She didn't want to jeopardize anyone's health. Janet is setting her sights for next year—hinting at the possibility of earlier dates in October.

Visiting Our Ancestors held Saturday, October 2nd was a sell-out crowd. Visitors stopped at the French, Calvary, Military and Brisbois Cemeteries to meet and listen to the life stories of Joseph and Emily Rolette, Jane Dousman, Willoughby Morgan, Gwen Thein and Michael Brisbois. Thank you Gerry Wachuta, Samantha Matern, Janet Finn, Gene and Colleen Bouzek and Ryan Fox for bringing these characters to life. Well done!

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The Spirits of Early Prairie du Chien is an outdoor event suitable for all ages. Guests will walk the grounds in hopes of meeting a spirit from the past. And of course, it will happen, it is Halloween! Five costumed historical figures from the early 1800's who really lived and served at Fort Crawford will appear not to haunt but to tell their stories.

Colonel Willoughby Morgan was placed in charge of the construction of Fort Crawford during the summer of 1836 and he remained commander at Prairie du Chien until he died in April, 1832. Zachary Taylor replaced him.

Another Spirit will share the Menominee story along with the Menominee Massacre.


Lieutenant Mackenzie tells of his best friend, Reneka, and the tragedy that occurred after drinking too much. It is a sad story one can relate to today.

Matron Marie Genevieve Jolie Joly was married to the very famous Alexis Bidaguin St. Martin, whom Dr. Beaumont observed in his famous digestive experiments beginning in the 1820's. Matron Marie St. Martin assisted in caring for the soldiers, including her husband, who were at the Fort Crawford Hospital. Come and learn what her duties were like and where she conducted them.

Finally, you will enjoy meeting the soldier who tends the fire and reminds you of the gossip around Prairie du Chien and Fort Crawford in the 1830's. He might tell you that Sarah Taylor, Zachary Taylor's daughter, is being wooed by the southern Lieutenant Jefferson Davis. Or, he might mention the severe flooding that drove the soldiers out of the first Fort Crawford down on St. Feriole Island to move to the "newer" Fort Crawford built on higher ground. He might invite you to roast marsh mellow and sip steaming cocoa made from the milk of the Fort's cows.

Reservations are recommended for "Spirits of Early Prairie du Chien" held Saturday, October 30th between 6:00-8:00 P.M. at 717 South Beaumont Road, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, 53821. Phone Fort Crawford Museum at 608-326-6960 or message fortcrawmu@mhtc.net. Admission is \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for youth 12 and under. Toddlers and babies are no charge. Follow us on our Web Site/Facebook.

Upcoming Events

- Weekends Knowlton House Shoppes--The Planted Tree & Museum Store
Perfect birthday gifts and stocking stuffers.
Wednesday through Saturday 10:00 am until 4:00 pm
Closes for the season on December 18th.
- October 30  Spirits of the Fort
What ghosts will be haunting the grounds this year?
6:00 pm until 8:00 pm Reservations recommended.
- October 31 Closing for the season.
- November Annual Gift Giving Campaign
- December 11 Christmas at the Fort
Annual Holiday Cookie and Candy Sale
9:00 am until 1:00 pm
Christmas Trees will be officially lit.
- January 2, 2022 Bonne Annee
Celebrate the New Year as the early French Canadians did.
St. Germain dit Gauthier House 1:00 pm until 3:00 pm
- January 13, 2022 Annual Dinner Meeting
Huckleberry's Banquet Hall

When I came across this picture of Gordie and Lorraine Olson's Christmas display I knew I had to include it in The Union. There is no date on the picture but if you were living here in the early sixties then you and your family drove down to Olson's to walk around this magical Christmas display. The lights, the music and all the different scenes...it was the highlight of the season!

Gordie was our milkman and when he delivered milk to our house he walked in the back door and put it in the refrigerator.

Kathy Koch



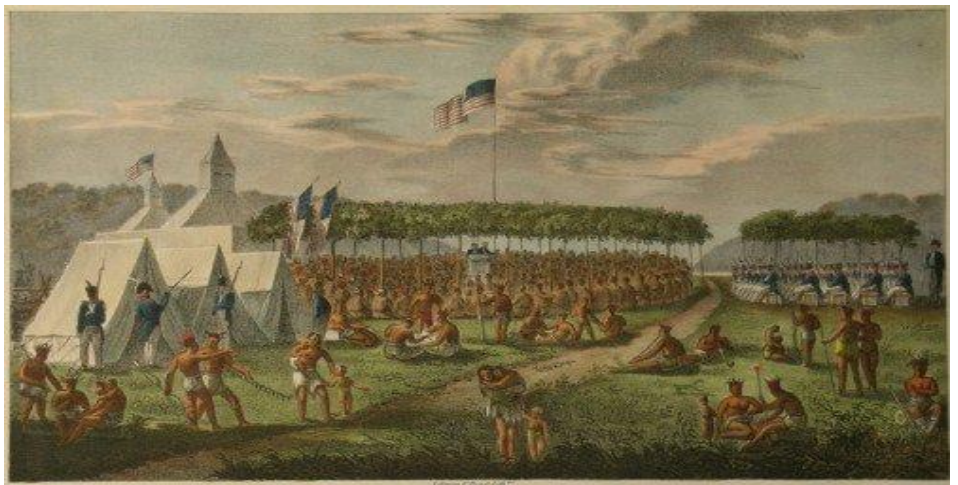
Photo from the Prairie du Chien Historical Society Collection

Dyrud Challenge Grant

In August James, Eric, and the estate of M. John Dyrud issued a \$6,000.00 challenge grant to the Prairie du Chien Historical Society to raise funds for a new exhibit focusing on the treaties signed at Prairie du Chien between the Indian nations of the upper Mississippi and the US Government. Such an exhibit has been on the Society's wish list for some time. The challenge grant came about because the Dyrud brothers wanted to help the Society's wish come true and it would be a wonderful way to honor the memory of their parents.

The three Dyrud boys are the sons of Martinus J. and Blanche Paris Dyrud, who lived in Prairie du Chien. Marty had a deep interest in the history of the area including the history of the Native Nations of Wisconsin. He was a collector and included in his collection are original prints of some of the chiefs who had attended the treaties held at Prairie du Chien.

There were four treaties negotiated and signed in Prairie du Chien between the Indian Nations of the Upper Mississippi and the US Government. The first was the Great Council held in the summer of 1825 at which borders between the Sioux, Sac and Fox, Menominee, Iowa and the Council of Three Fires were set. Two treaties



were signed in the summer of 1829. At the first, the Council of Three Fires ceded traditional lands to the United States. In the third treaty, the Ho-Chunk ceded much of their land to the United States. The last Treaty of Prairie du Chien was signed in 1830, in which the Sac and Fox, Sioux, Omaha, Otoe and Missouri relinquished land to the United States. All treaties were conducted on the grounds of Fort Crawford.

Donations are needed to match the \$6,000.00 so that this important era of Prairie du Chien history may be available to visitors. Donations may be made to the Prairie du Chien Historical Society, mailed or dropped off at the Fort Crawford Museum.

Annual Gift Giving Campaign

The Prairie du Chien Society will again be conducting its Annual Gift Giving campaign in November! It's more important than ever that you, your organization or Company support the efforts being taken to protect, promote and display the history of the Prairie du Chien area at the Fort Crawford Museum and Store, the Knowlton House Shoppes in downtown Prairie du Chien, and the St. Germain dit Gauthier House on St. Feriole Island. Your donations are taxable deductible and would be greatly appreciated!



Christmas at the Fort

Holiday Cookie and Candy Sale will be Saturday, December 11 from 9:00am until 1:00pm or until they are sold out. Heads Up: last year all holiday goodies were gone by 10:00am! Like last year, the sale will be held in the lower building, the Museum of Prairie du Chien, all cookies and candy will be pre-

packaged. Each plate will have a variety of cookies/candies, a dozen on a plate and wrapped in plastic. Pick a plate for **\$5.00 per plate**. **No need to bring your own containers**. Purchase as many plates as desired. Curb side pickup will be available. Call (608 326-6960) to place your order and volunteers will fill the request and deliver it to the car. And lastly, the Museum Store will be open for Christmas shopping. Masks recommended. Holiday special—10% discount on all purchases; members will receive a 15% discount.

Trimming of the Christmas Trees - Janet Finn has ordered 25 Christmas trees to decorate the porches during the Christmas Season. **The trees 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 on December 3rd. We ask that trees be completed by December 10th. The name of the sponsor(s) will be prominently displayed below the tree. The trees will be officially lit on Saturday, December 11th. The uniquely decorated Christmas trees are festive to behold anytime, but the lighted trees at night are magical!

The trees stay up and lit until January 1, 2022. Please retrieve your decorations by January 5th so the Finns and crew can have them ready for the City Christmas tree pick up.

If you would like to help set up and string lights on the trees, contact the Ted and Janet Finn (608 326-6010). They'd welcome your help.

Sponsorship Form

Fort Crawford Museum Christmas Trees 2021

Name/Business/Organization _____

Phone Number _____

Number of Trees _____ x 50.00 = \$ _____

Amount Enclosed _____

Mail to: Janet Finn - 724 S. Beaumont Road
Prairie du Chien, WI 53821

Chamber of Commerce Award Received

The Silver Anniversary Award from the Prairie du Chien Area Chamber of Commerce was presented to the Prairie du Chien Historical Society during the Chamber's annual dinner and awards banquet on Tuesday, September 14th. The Society was recognized for its 25 years of existence and of preserving the area's rich and varied history. The Society was established in March of 1996 and took over ownership of the Fort Crawford Hospital and property from the Wisconsin Medical Society. Receiving the award that night were: Joe Atkins-Board Member, Julie Metcalf Cull-Staff, Brandon Brockway-Staff, Janet Finn-Board Member, Jodi Russell-Staff, Cindy Standorf-Board Member and Mary Antoine-Board Member.



Also, Mary Antoine, was presented with the Historic Preservation Award for her work coordinating the restoration of the St. Germain dit Gauthier House on St. Feriote Island. The log house is owned by the Prairie du Chien Historical Society and has been open to the public on weekends and by appointment.

It is wonderful to be recognized for the hard work and commitment of our staff and volunteers. Thank you to the Chamber of Commerce and the community for honoring us.

