



The Union

Prairie du Chien Historical Society Newsletter
October 2020 Volume 23 #4

Holiday Cookie and Candy Sale COVID Style.

This year due to the COVID pandemic there will be extra precautions in place for the **Annual Holiday Cookie and Candy Sale on Saturday, December 12th from 9:00 until 1:00.** We want everyone to feel comfortable and safe coming to the Museum to buy the delicious treats and goodies.

First of all, the sale will be held in the lower building, the Museum of Prairie du Chien. It is very spacious and allows for tables and people to be 6 feet apart. Please wear a face mask.

Secondly, 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. The cost is **\$5.00 per plate.** **No need to bring your own containers.** Purchase as many plates as desired.

Thirdly, curbside pickup will be available. Call (326-6960) to place your order and volunteers will fill the request and bring it out to the car.

And lastly, the Gift Shop will be open for Christmas shopping. Holiday special—**10% discount on all purchases; members will receive a 15% discount.**

The Annual Dinner Meeting scheduled for Thursday, January 14, 2021 has been **cancelled** due to the uncertainty of the pandemic. Also, there will be no election of Board of Directors. The current Board will remain in place for the year 2021.

The PdC Chamber of Commerce held a wine walk on Friday, October 2nd. One of the stops along the way was the St. Germain log cabin. This was the very first time the house was opened to the public since its renovation. Visitors were impressed. One person said “I could live here”. It is astonishing! We’re very proud.



Visiting our Ancestors October 3, 2020

This year’s cemetery walk was reorganized due to the pandemic. Instead of busing the visitors to the six Prairie du Chien cemeteries people drove themselves and there were only three stops—the Old French Cemetery, Calvary Cemetery and Fort Crawford Military Cemetery. Tours were offered at 10:00 am and 1:00 pm. At each stop **Mary Antoine** presented the historical background of the cemetery.

First stop was the French Cemetery where Joseph Roulette (**Gerry Wachuta**) and his daughter Elizabeth (**Samantha Matern**) stepped out behind their headstones to talk about their life in early Prairie du Chien. Crossing the street, visitors were introduced to Emily Barrette (**Nancy Thurn**), Daniel Fenton (**Brandon Brockway**) and Jane Fisher Roulette Dousman (**Janet Finn**). The group drove back into town and met at the Fort Crawford Military Cemetery. Colonel Willowby Morgan (**Gene Bouzek**) and Gwen Greene (**Colleen Bouzek**) told about their life and death at the Fort.

The weather wasn’t very pleasant but 34 visitors enjoyed their experience. Our thanks to the interpreters who made the stories come alive.



Christmas at the Fort

The tradition continues! 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 on December 3rd. We ask that trees be completed by December 11th. Call Janet Finn for more information at 326-6010.

Sponsorship Form

Fort Crawford Museum Christmas Trees 2020

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

The Christmas trees will be up on the porches with lights by December 3rd. Janet & Ted Finn & Brandon Brockway will be setting the trees up. If you would like to help, contact the Finns (326-6010). They'd welcome your help.

Between the December 3rd & December 11th 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 12th. 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 and lit until January 1, 2021. Please retrieve your decorations by January 8th so the Finns and crew can have them ready for the City Christmas tree pick up.

Brandon Brockway, new to the staff this season, has been helping Carolyn Sand sort and organize vertical files for easier access. One item he was especially intrigued with was the letter shown below. The letter dated May 23, 1840 is from a soldier named William (no last name) to his sister written while he was stationed at Fort Crawford. Written in pencil on the back of the letter and in different handwriting is the note Fort Crawford May 23, 1840--probably at a later date. Brandon was kind enough to decipher the letter and share the contents with us. It reads:

Fort Crawford
May 23 (1840)
Prairie du Chien

Dear Sister, I arrived here on the 17th being 31 days on the march during which time I enjoyed excellent health and spirits. I do not know how long we will stay here. There are rumors that we will be ordered to Fort Winnebago but I do not believe there is any truth in them. The prevailing opinion is that we will remain here this summer and the ensuing winter when we will return to Fort Leavenworth. Fort Crawford is beautifully situated on the east of the Mississippi about 200 yards from the river on a handsome prairie and about a quarter of a mile from the village of Prairie du Chien. General Atkinson left here for Fort Winnebago and is expected back daily. Co. F of the 8th infantry were ordered by express to march to Fort Winnebago and will leave here tomorrow. There are 1000 indians at the Painted Rock, 14 miles from this place where there is to be held a grand council; there are Winnebago, Ioway Sac and Foxes. Farewell for the present give my best love to all inquiring friends. Your affectionate brother

William

P.S. There were 500 Winnebagos over? 10 days nations, at Fort Winnebago and immediately cleaned out no one knows where-

W

Fort Crawford } May 25
Prairie du Chien

Dear Sister I arrived here on the 14th being 31 days on
the march during which time I enjoyed excellent
health and spirits. ~~As~~ I do not know how long we
will stay here. There are rumors that we will be
ordered to Fort Winnebago, but I do not believe
there is any truth in them. The prevailing opin-
ion is that we will remain here this summer
and the ensuing winter when we will return
to Ft Leavenworth. Ft Crawford is beautifully
situated on the east of the Mississippi about
200 yards from the river on a handsome prairie
and about a quarter of a mile from the village of
Prairie du Chien. Gen. Atkinson left here for Fort
Winnebago and is expected back early. Co. F of the
8th infantry were ordered by express to march to
Ft W. and will leave here to-morrow. There are
about 1000 Indians at the Pointe Rock, 14 miles
from this place where there is to be held a grand
council; there are Winnebago, Sauk, Sac and Fox.
Love well for the present give my best love to
all enquiring friends. Your affectionate brother

William

P.S. There were 500 Winnebagos drew 10 days rations
at Fort W. and immediately cleared out no one knows
where -
W

Collection Work Continues

From the desk of Carolyn Sand

When someone donates an object to be added to our collection the work of accessioning begins. Each object is numbered, added to our collection database, and stored appropriately. In 2020 we have had 20 people donate more than 47 objects and 16 objects of significant historical value were purchased.

An artifact that is significant but in poor condition requires that we conserve it. To do this, we must order special materials or hire a professional to do the conservation work. Within the last few years, we have had funds donated to do conservation work. Recently we have had a 1920 – Lee’s Map of Private Land Claims donated that need appropriate conservation.

Photographs are an important part of our history. To document photographs, we need to have the people identified, the place noted along with a date when the photograph was taken. It is extremely helpful to have as much information about a photograph so that it can accurately save the history of Prairie du Chien or its’ people.

It is good policy to call ahead before dropping off items at the museum (326-6960). It could save time and maybe a second trip especially since daily hours will come to an end on October 31st when we close for the season.

October 24th **“Spirits of Fort Crawford”**

Saturday from 4:00 until 6:00.

The grounds of Fort Crawford will come alive with spirits from the past. A guided tour will lead visitors around the grounds to meet and listen to their tales.

An outdoor activity for all ages.

Admission: \$5.00 per person and \$15.00 per family.