



## The Union

**Prairie du Chien Historical Society Newsletter**  
**April 2019 Volume 22 #2**

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I was pleasantly surprised when I was asked to return a phone call to Ken Birrenbach to find out that he wanted to make a LARGE donation to the Museum! I felt very comfortable discussing with Ken the nature of the gift because I knew Ken and Dorothy had volunteered at the Museum in various capacities. I also knew Dorothy from working both for me and with her at the polling place of our local elections. She was always a steady hand, and engaged voters with a bright smile. I also knew the Birrenbachs from being a close neighbor to my in-laws.



It all started back in December of 2018, when we met a couple times to discuss the nature of the gift and the importance of creating a document that described the terms and conditions. After getting a rough draft of what would be contained in the agreement, I contacted my financial consultant and he was able to get his legal department to draft an endowment agreement. We reviewed and modified the agreement over several meetings, and Ken reviewed it with the family. This whole process took about three and half months!

The gift itself is the largest single gift to Museum that I am aware of! The name of the fund is the **Dorothy Birrenbach Friends of the Fort Crawford Museum**

**Fund.** The donation is \$25,000 to be distributed over ten years, at least \$2,500/year or more, if the investment of the funds is positive. The gift is to be used for the operation, maintenance, and promotion of the Museum. The gift also has a provision to allow anyone to make contributions to the Fund which will make the annual distributions even greater.

If you are thinking about a gift to the Museum, I would strongly encourage you to join the Birrenbachs in strengthening the financial security of the Museum for years to come. As a small local Museum, we are continually looking for ways to accomplish our mission to preserve and display our local history. Please keep the Museum in mind when you are making plans, either in the near term or in the future, by making gift to keep our local history alive.

Pictured is Mary Antoine, President of the Prairie du Chien Historical Society, receiving the donation from Ken Birrenbach.

**And finally, thanks again to the Birrenbach Family! I know Dorothy is smiling!**

Gary Koch

### Board of Directors

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Mary Antoine

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Janet Finn

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### Staff

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Friday Wiles

Interpreters

Barb Rink

Jodi Russell

Buildings and Grounds

Gene Bouzek

### Standing Committees

Collections

Education

Exhibit

Finance

Membership

### Contact

### Information

Fort Crawford

Museum

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## Calendar of Events 2019

May 1	Opening Day
May 18	Journey Thru Time
June 15	Pies-A-Plenty
July 12	War of 1812 Event
October 5	Visiting Our Ancestors
October 16-18	Fall Bus Tour
December 7	Christmas at the Fort

### Fridays at the Fort—Summer of 2019

Starting on Friday, June 14<sup>th</sup> the Museum will conduct a hands-on fun-filled learning experience for kids young and old. The free activity will take place on the grounds of the Fort Crawford Museum starting at 1:30. This summer's schedule is:

June 14	Tin Type Photography
June 21	Outdoor Cooking
June 28	Heritage Plants
July 12	Cannons at the Fort
July 19	Candle Making
July 26	Christmas In July
August 2	Cornhusks Dolls
August 9	Fur Trade
August 16	Tea with Mrs. Taylor



No preregistration is required. Just show up at 1:30 and have a good time.



#### **Margaret "Peggy" Smith Taylor**

was born September 21, 1788. She married Zachery Taylor on June 21, 1810. They had six children: Ann Margaret 1811-1875, Sarah Knox 1814-1835, Octavia Pannill 1816-1820, Margaret Smith 1819-1820, Mary Elizabeth 1824-1909 and Richard 1826-1879. While her husband was commandant at Fort Crawford during various times between 1829-1836, Peggy and her children lived in Prairie du Chien. And when Zachery Taylor was elected the 12<sup>th</sup> president of the United States in 1848 Mrs. Taylor became First Lady. She took no part in the formal affairs of the White House instead Mrs. Taylor delegated the official duties of the First Lady to her daughter Mary Elizabeth. The Taylor Administration was short lived due to the sudden death of Zachery in July of 1850. Mrs. Taylor died on August 14, 1852.

## James Aird - Fur Trader

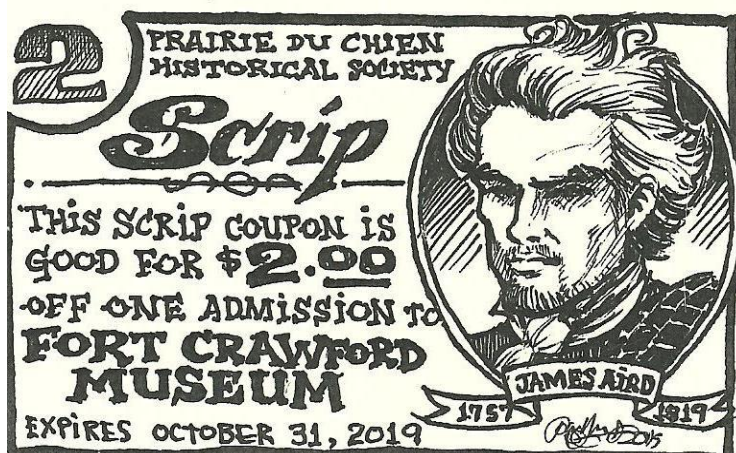


Again this year the Fort Crawford Museum participated in the St. Patrick's Day parade in Prairie du Chien. Costumed members of the PdC Historical Society passed out pencils and "scrip". The scrip coupon offered a \$2.00 reduction from an admission ticket to the museum. The scrip was an original art work of John Mundt and it commemorated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of James Aird, an early fur trader who died in Prairie du Chien on February 27, 1819.

James Aird was born on November 22, 1757 in Ayreshire, Scotland. Not sure when he arrived in North America, but there is mention of him in Mackinaw City, Michigan

between the years 1778-1779. Records indicate he was in Montreal in 1784 and then in Prairie du Chien in 1786. The Dictionary of Canadian Biography states, Aird spent four decades in the fur trade including time trading with the Sioux on the St. Peters (Minnesota) River, time on the Missouri River, the Big Sioux River in South Dakota and the Upper Mississippi River. It is remarkable the amount of territory he traveled with only a canoe. He also came into contact with important figures from our history books. In 1803 he encountered a United States exploring expedition let by Zebulon Pike and in 1806 Aird met Louis and Clark on their return trip from the Pacific Coast.

From 1815, Aird made Prairie du Chien his headquarters doing business mainly in present day Wisconsin and Minnesota, trading mostly for the American Fur Company. He never made much money but he was respected by those who did business with him. Aird was married to Mar-pi-ya-ro-to-win (Grey Cloud), a daughter of the Sioux chief Wahpasha. They had one child, Margaret.



John Mundt's version of James Aird is a very handsome and dashing young man. It is a romantic thought but John's rendition doesn't jive with my mental picture of fur traders who spend the winter in the same clothes and never bathe, comb their hair or brush their teeth.

## Gift Giving 2018-2019 Contributors

Janet and Ted Finn  
Diana Temte  
Huckleberry's  
Gundersen Prairie du Chien Clinic  
Ken and Carolyn Sand  
Barb Baxter  
Dennis and Alice Kirschbaum  
Marilu Bintz  
Tom and Cathie Nelson  
Tom and Linda Munson  
Anne and Jerry Kruse  
Coletta Wegmann  
Rick and Patty Hamann  
Norman and Virginia Lange  
PdC Kiwanis Club  
Bill and Mary Huser  
Layne and Susan David  
Debbie and Dennis Leeser  
Maury and Letty Oehler  
Philip and Mary Peckham  
Crawford County Title Services Inc.  
Adeline Sutton  
Lori Bekkum  
Joseph Schmitz  
Lynn and Norma Mueller  
Kramer Auction Service  
Blaschko Enterprises/Supreme  
Graphics  
Monte and Ann Steiber

Ruth Mundt  
Armella Kueter  
Frederick and Barbara Grelle  
Crossing Rivers Health  
Richard Hagensick  
Point of Beginning  
Eric and Betty Frydenlund  
Gary and Joan Howe  
Courier Press  
Delores Bonney  
Don and Sandi Knapp  
Erma Johnson  
Linda Cherrier  
Mark and Kati Forsythe  
Mary Campbell  
Mike and Shelly Rider  
Jim and Pat Boldt  
Roger and Marlene Dyer  
Thomas and Jean Farrell  
Mary Lou Garnsworthy  
Von and Jean Denlinger  
Marianne Carolan  
John Rybarczyk  
Gerald Wachuta  
Gordon Govier  
Ruth and Mike Hendricks  
Irene Beneker

Because of the generous donations of the people listed the Prairie du Chien Historical Society/Fort Crawford Museum received **\$10,515.00**. The contributions are vital to ongoing care of the museum and grounds during the "off" season.

**THANK YOU!**

## Field Trip

Thursday, April 11th Prairie du Chien Historical members Janet Finn, Cindy Standorf, John Mundt, Carolyn Sand, Diana Temte, Gene & Colleen Bouzek travelled to Mt. Horeb for a tour of the Driftless Historium Museum. The museum is owned and operated by the Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society and is located in the downtown area.

Destinee Udelhoven, Director & Johnna Bysse, Curator personally guided the group through the building which included their recently installed permanent & temporary exhibits, their collection spaces, their research room and the gift shop. The two groups shared ideas concerning planning for new exhibits and utilizing the talents of their volunteers. Carolyn Sand, Collections Chairperson, said she has “many ideas for future use”.

This museum is well worth visiting! Mt. Horeb is just a little over an hour from here. Good shopping and eating are plentiful there. It would be a great day trip!

## Map Restoration

Last year, a 1876 map of Prairie du Chien was given to the PdC Historical Society by Ben Reiser. It was taken to the Wisconsin Historical Society for evaluation. To repair it would cost \$444.00. In the April edition of The Union a request was made for funds to restore the map. We received \$100.00 from Nancy and John Diekelmann—thank you! If anyone would like to contribute to this project please contact the Fort Crawford Museum.

## New Exhibits

There will be two new exhibits on display this season.



The importance of **artesian water and wells** in Prairie du Chien will be explained and showcased in the Hospital Building. It was, and still is believed by many people that the artesian water in this area has medicinal benefits. With the expansion of the public library, the artesian well at that location was capped and is no longer there. But there are other wells in the city.

The picture shows Browsers Park. It was located on the north east corner of Parrish Street and Wacouta Avenue. The water fountain sprayed artesian water.

The other new exhibit will give us a glimpse into the **tobacco and cigar industry** in Prairie du Chien in the early 1900's. Many of the artifacts and information have come from board member Bob Ziel whose great uncle Ted Ziel, owned the Ziel Cigar Factory. The original factory building still stands along the alley behind the house at 1300 South Beaumont Road.

This exhibit is located in the Museum of Prairie du Chien.



## SAVE THE DATE

The Annual Fort Crawford Museum  
FALL BUS TOUR to Minneapolis/St Paul is scheduled for  
October 16, 17 & 18 2019

This year's Main Attraction is an evening at  
Chanhassen Dinner Theatre



And the night's production will be **MAMMA MIA!**

More entertaining venues, cost, and details will be available soon.  
Call 608-326-6010 to reserve your spot!

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### Something New—A Day Trip

What: Tour of the National Pearl Button Museum in  
Muscatine, Iowa.

When: Tuesday, June 11, 2019.  
Departing Prairie du Chien at 7 a.m. from the  
Tourist Information Center & returning by 6:00 p.m.



Who: Prairie du Chien Historical Society members & other interested persons.

How: Traveling by vans to the museum and lunch afterwards. On the trip home we  
would stop at the Hurstville Interpretive Center & the Lime Kilns.

Cost: \$30.00 per person with lunch on your own.

To register, call the museum 608-326-6960.

Deadline for registering is June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Limited space available.