

# **THE COUNTY CHRONICLER**

**Polk County Historical Society**

Volume #1 Issue 3

May

2003



Come hear  
**Thomas Butcher**  
**7 pm May 27<sup>th</sup>**  
**Balsam Lake**  
**Center Building.**

**You cannot make soldiers of slaves....The day you make soldiers of them is the beginning of the end of the revolution. And if slaves seem good soldiers, then our whole theory of slavery is wrong.**

—SENATOR HOWELL COBB, GEORGIA

Mr. Butcher is a retired Amery High School history teacher. He has participated in Revolutionary Battle Tours throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia. He will be speaking on Wisconsin's involvement in the Civil War. Refreshments will be served.

Board of Directors meeting at 6 pm.

## **JUNE 13<sup>RD</sup> 2003 BUS TOUR**



### **The Bus is Getting Full !**

Our annual Historical Tour is less than a month away with the seats going fast.

**Be sure** you send your check for \$22 to  
Carl Johnson, 307 W. South St.  
Amery, 54001



Lloyd Johnson – see page 2

**Thank you: Rosalie, Art & Patty, Willis, Jim, Phyllis, Carl and Ralph for cleaning the museum.**

**Thank you, Rosalie for the ladies Victorian Necessity Room.**

**Thank you Unity students, Richard Pennard, Don Bruce and Avery Hildebrand for the muscles behind moving heavy items.**

**Thank you, Howard Tandberg, for the upkeep of our player piano.**

**The following students from St. Croix Falls helped with the beautification of our grounds: Karron Emholtz, Rachel Stanze, Ian Montgomery, Brandon Ably.**

**Thanks to all!**



Lloyd H. Johnson was born on August 2, 1919 on a farm in section 33 Town of Alden to Norwegian parents. He went to the Cedar Lake School for eight years and then to Osceola High School. He went to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls for three years but did not finish due to World War II. He helped run the family farm while another family member served in the US Army.

When John Sundbakken came to this country, he changed his name to Nelson. The farm was actively managed by John and his family for seventy years. In 1946, Lloyd bought the farm that was owned by his mothers side of the family, originally purchased by John Sundbakken in 1878. He married Eleanor Mullen in 1946 and they raised four children on the farm. Eleanor is also of Norwegian decent. So following Norwegian tradition in a more American way, Lloyd called the farm Sundbakken.

Lloyds great grandfather, Torger Johansen married Martha Gulbrandsdatter who was born on the farm Ragnildrud at Gran Hadeland, Oppland County, Norway. They bought the farm and tradition has it that you take the name of the farm that you own and so he changed his last name to Ragnildrud. Torger and Martha came to America in 1868. Lloyds great grandfather, Andrew, came a year earlier. The family came to Blanchardville, Wisconsin and stayed there for five years before coming to Polk County. The family changed their name to Johnson. For many years, John Nelson and Andrew Johnson were next door neighbors.

Lloyd has been involved with many civic activities throughout his life. He was selected to be a part of the Master Farmer organization in 1964 and has served as president of that organization. He is a former Polk County Board Supervisor and member of the Ag Committee for 15 years, served as the Alden Town Chairman for 18 years. He was a District Supervisor of the Soil & Water Conservation District and past President of the State Association of S & WCD Supervisors. He is a past director and served on the Executive Board of the Mid America Dairyman Cooperative for two years. In 1998, the farm was declared the Wisconsin State Conservation Farm of the Year.

He has served on the Osceola School District Board for many years and represented the district on the CESA 11 board.

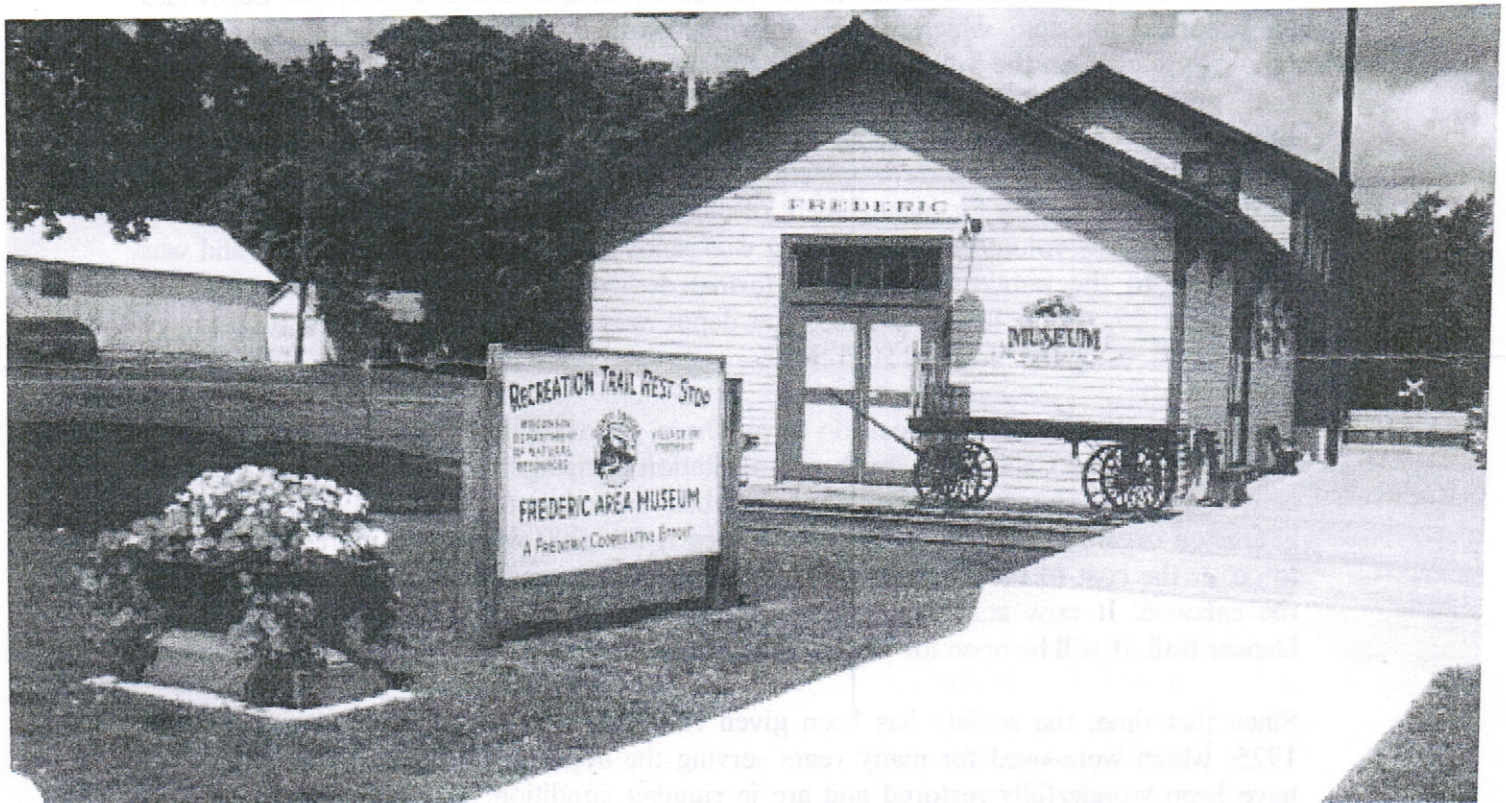
Lloyd has served many years on the West Immanuel Church Council in different capacities including President and Treasurer. He is very dedicated to the history of the church and wrote a regular article for the church newsletter called "Did You Know That?" starting in 1978. Many of the articles were put together in book form at the time of the celebration of the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the church in 1995.

He has been active in the local community club to take care of and promote use of the old Cedar Lake School. He has been on the board of directors since its creation. Both Lloyd and Eleanor have headed up the Card Parties hosted there for many years. Lloyd has been very concerned about preserving the history of the Cedar Lake School, put together a book in 1983 for the 106<sup>th</sup> year celebration, and improved for the 118<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the school district in 1995.



Lloyd has been very interested in the genealogy of his Norwegian roots as well as some of its traditions, especially in the area of food. A Christmas celebration would not be complete without a meal of lutefisk and lefse. He has maintained contact with many of his relatives in Norway over the years through correspondence and has visited there three times. Heidi Swanson, his daughter, put together a family history book with his help and knowledge to preserve the story of the family past. This book was completed and a copy was given to each member of the family in early 1998.

Thank you to Brad Johnson, son of Lloyd, for the profile on Lloyd. The Polk County Historical Society has appreciated Lloyd and Eleanor's help through the years. They have been willing volunteers. They recently donated the turn of the century time period light posts and lights on the front lawn at the museum.



**The Renovated Frederic Train Depot has recently been listed in the National Registry of Historical Places by the National Park Service. See page 4.**

The Depot was renovated and is maintained by the Frederic Historical Society. The society meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every month at 6:30 p.m., except December. They usually meet at the Golden Oaks Apartments but occasionally, in the summer, at the depot.

The officers are: President, Dr. Emory Giles, Vice-president, Carol Thompson, Secretary, Betty Fenton, Treasurer, Roxanne White.

Thank you, Dr. Giles for submitting this report and picture.



## **The Frederic Area Historical Society**

The Frederic Area Historical Society was first organized in June 1990. One of its purposes was to develop and operate a historical museum for the collection, preservation, and display of historical records and data relative to the Village of Frederic and the area immediately adjacent to the village. The society hit the ground running following organization and one of the first tasks it assigned to itself was to increase the membership. The society was characteristically active and the membership increased from 21 people when first organized to its current 79. An ancillary activity was the renovation of the old depot and its conversion to a museum. Both activities continue to be actively pursued by the society.

From the start, the Frederic Area Historical Society campaigned to convert the depot into an historical museum which would portray historical artifacts of village life and the railroads impact on the village and surrounding area. In 1995 the village received a one time grant of \$100,000 from the Federal, Inter-Modal Surface Transportation and Enhancement Act for the purpose of renovating the depot. The village provided an additional \$75,000 toward development of the museum. The village gave responsibility to the historical society for management of museum development and operation. With the help of countless volunteers, the building was renovated; the museum developed and was first open to the public in 1997. A formal dedication of the museum was held on September 25, 1999. In April 2003, the depot was listed in the National Registry of Historic Places by the National Park Service.

In 1999, the society made a decision to purchase, renovate, and place on tracks near the depot, a Soo Line Caboose. A mail-out solicitation campaign was organized and from the campaign, other interested people, the Kohler Foundation in Milwaukee, and other interested organizations, the society raised nearly \$20,000 which was more than enough to cover the cost of the caboose, moving the caboose, preparing the site, and renovating the caboose. It now stands, in white splendor, just north of the depot on the Gandy Dancer trail. It will be open for visitors when the museum opens on May 24<sup>th</sup>.

Since that time, the society has been given two Model T dray trucks, circa 1924 and 1925, which were used for many years serving the depot at Brainerd, Minnesota. They have been wonderfully restored and are in running condition. The society uses them in parades. We also inherited a 1930s fire truck, in running condition, that served the village of Frederic and surrounding communities for many years. The fire department also donated a fire hose cart that served the village in the early 1900s before the event of motorized equipment. It has been restored to mint condition. This past month the society received a gift of a 1919 Fordson tractor from the original purchaser of the tractor. It also is in mint condition and can be run if needed. Currently, the society has organized a fund raising effort to gather funds to build a building to house and show these large artifacts. As this is printed we have gathered approximately \$8,000 of our \$22,000 goal.

In April, a man from Minneapolis, Minnesota gave us a log cabin that he had purchased



## WE THANK THE BALSAM LAKES WOMEN'S CLUB

The Balsam Lakes Women's Club sponsored our fifth annual antique meeting. We had one of our best crowds yet, attendance of ninety and about 65 items appraised. The ladies served a fine lunch.

The Balsam Lake Women's Club was started in 1939, two years after our historical society, as the **Friday Club**. The name was changed to **Study Club** in 1942 and finally to **Women's Club** in 1994.

The Women's Club is involved in many Balsam Lake Community projects and events, such as contributing to the library, the Bloodmobile, a \$100 dollar scholarship for a Unity student and the Halloween party at the Unity school. They help with the fireworks and the Queen's Tea at our annual Balsam Lake 4<sup>th</sup> of July Freedom Festival. The group has helped with the beautification of Balsam Lake by providing trees and shrubs and banners. The ladies support CRA Women's Shelter, take food to the county food shelf and give Welcome Baskets to those who have recently moved into Balsam Lake.

The Women's Club holds meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, February to December, at the village hall with a variety of speakers. They enjoy outings; plays, picnics and parties. We welcome members. If you are interested in joining, call Rita Gisdice, 715-485-9005.

## THANK YOU, ALSO, TO OUR APPRAISERS BETTY JENSEN, TED ZINN & WILLIS ERICKSON

Three unique items brought in by Vernon Peterson from Siren are worth mentioning. The first was from the early logging on the St. Croix River, a river stamp hammer and the end of a log which actually had been stamped with it.

The second unusual item was a small brass flask with a long neck that had a lid that screwed off. It was a container for powder to kill bed bugs. You carried it with you while traveling and sprinkle the powder on the bed sheets before retiring for the night. The third item was a huge meat cleaver used for butchering on the farm.

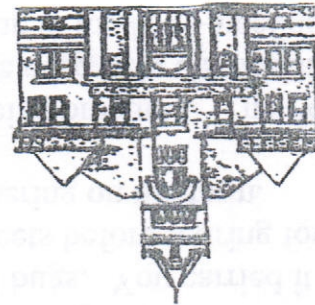
The summer season is almost here. The museum is being prepared. The Polk County 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary flyers and posters are prepared. We need help distributing the anniversary flyers and the museum flyers. Pick them up at the May meeting.

The forth Saturday of June and July will again feature music, arts and refreshments. This was a great success last year and we expect two good Saturdays again this year.

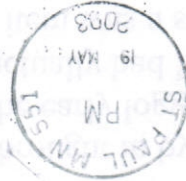
One HISTORY AND MUSEUM WORKSHOP is coming up. It will be held Friday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> at Prairie du Chien, WI. The topic is *"Exhibits and Interpretation for the Small Museum and Historic House."*  
*Rosalie & Darrell*



OPAL JOHNSON  
PCHS/L  
BOX 147  
ST. CROIX FALLS, WI 54024



Polk County Historical Society  
Box 41  
Balsam Lake, WI 54810



Can you help?

**Beautiful Polk County Celebrates 150 Years**  
at the  
**Polk County Fairgrounds St. Croix Falls**  
**Falls, WI**

August 23, 2003 9:00 am – 9:00 pm

Cloggers, Square Dancers, Irish Dancers, Strolling Strings,  
Fiddlers, Barn Dance

Story Telling, Local Authors, Bow Making, Rope Making,  
Fashion Show

Antique Tractors, Gas Engines, Snowmobiles,  
Outboard Motors, Blacksmith

Displays – Native American, Churches, Communities,  
School, Quilts, Photos, Stoneware

**Call Darrell at 483-3979**

