

# THE COUNTY CHRONICLER

Polk County Historical Society

August 2007

**TUESDAY, AUGUST 28**  
**7 P.M.**  
**MUSEUM LAWN**



Danish Flint Knife

**FLINT KNAPPING** is the program topic at our August meeting.

**The speaker, Tom Lind,** has enjoyed practicing primitive skills including the ancient art of flaking layers off of stone to make a tool. The process is called flint knapping. Tom will bring a variety of stones and examples of his work as well as demonstrate for us.

Bring lawn chairs.  
Refreshments following.

**POLK COUNTY MUSEUM**  
**HOURS**  
**Memorial Day through Labor Day**  
**12 a.m. – 4 p.m.**

**Tours available by appointment**  
**(715) 485-9269**



**MUSEUM PETUNIA**

The petunia is the flower of the year. It sprouts up when and where no other dares. This one is growing in the edge between the sidewalk and wall in front of the museum. It could be a symbol of our elevator addition with both coming as a special blessing this hot summer.

The Polk County Property Committee has given their approval to go ahead with the **elevator addition!** It's been a long struggle and we're ready to have the groundbreaking. That will take place at the **next** Polk County Historical Society meeting on August 28 and will be at **7 p.m.** at the Museum. Please bring a lawn chair to sit on and a shovel to help with the effort! Our meeting will also take place at the museum and will follow the festivities. I hope to see a big turnout to show your support for the project.

President Muriel Pfeifer

## **MINATURE SCHOOL AND CHURCH**

Everyone enjoys the little log school and church in the courtroom upstairs. They were built and loaned to us by Duane Damon of Amery. Duane's daughter, Darryle, inquired about the buildings and was very pleased on seeing the display.

## **TIN SHOP**

Two groups of W. G. Jensen's family came this summer and were pleased to see the well-cared-for Tin Shop that was donated by W. G. Jensen. Bill Garrish and Willis Erickson set up this display and Jim Gisch has done much of the upkeep and care.

## **NORTHWEST WISCONSIN REGIONAL CONVENTION**

Superior September 15, 2007  
Janet Dykema, Northern District Field Services Representative will speak on *Collection Management Basics*. The lunch speaker and afternoon theatrical performance topic will be Superior's place in the labor movement, the impact of the Finnish culture, and the experiences of working class families in the port city. We encourage all historical society members to attend. Ride sharing for Polk County is in the plans.  
<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/localhistory/regional.asp>

## **D. D. KENNEDY PICNIC**

Wonderful atmosphere, many friends, new faces, good food, and an interesting speaker contributed to a great evening at D. D. Kennedy Park. The society appreciates Chief Dan Mosay's willingness to help us understand our local Native American organization and customs.

## **GLADYS WIEKERT**

We are sorry to report that our August scheduled speaker, Gladys Wiekert, is recuperating in Good Samaritan Home, St. Croix Falls. Gladys suffered a broken hip resulting from a fall and has had further surgery complications. We wish her a full recovery and look forward to seeing her rock collection at a future date.

## **ZION LUTHERAN 100 YEARS**

It is reported that the Zion Lutheran Church of the Bone Lake area had a wonderful 100-year celebration. The following are early Norwegian surnames: Nykreim, Gudvangen, Horton, Swanson, Svendsen, Mathesein, Haugsten, and Loven. The congregation still meets in the original building, designed by Ole Reno, on the two acres of land donated by Nels Swanson and.



**CARL JOHNSON**

### **HANDMADE VIOLIN IN MUSEUM**

Our museum's galleries include a special violin made of spruce from the ancient castle of King Carl the Twelfth of Sweden. During Johnson's extended tour visiting relatives in Norway and Sweden, he visited the castle as it was undergoing renovation. He noticed that they were removing a wooden partition and this gave him the idea of using the wood as a top for his violin. He had just come from a Swedish country fair where he tied with an accordion player for first place playing his violin in an amateur music contest.

Carl was a versatile Amery area resident who not only built his own violin but also invented a multiple-firing gun, played in Paul Whiteman's orchestra, was a gunsmith, carpenter, and a repairman.

Ing Berthelson learned that this talented man was living in Little Falls and after visiting him invited him to move in with him north of Amery where Carl lived until his move to Golden Age Manor. Carl is just one of the colorful past residents that are represented in our Polk County Museum.

**AN IMPORTANT PART OF OUR NEW MUSEUM ADDITION WILL BE  
CLIMATE CONTROLLED STORAGE AREA FOR PHOTOGRAPHS.  
THIS ONE CAME IN TO THE MUSEUM RECENTLY.**



**PETER LOUIS (OLIVER) MINEAU  
TWINS, GRACE AND MARY MINEAU**

Peter Louis (Oliver) Mineau was born in Lake St. Peter, Canada, presently Petersburg, Canada in 1825. He and his wife, Sarah Elizabeth Redmond homesteaded in the southeast corner of Eureka Township in 1870. Oliver helped organize Hillside School, served as Eureka town chairman, and chairman of the school board.

### **MUSEUM VACUMN CLEANER NEEDED**

Five years ago, our historical society decided to hire a director for our museum. The position had a job description a mile long—at least a page. Rosalie Kittleson with help from her husband, Darrell, has served in this capacity since that time. Rosalie is responsible for all the housekeeping—the spring cleaning, the fall cleaning, the in-between cleaning. This means she keeps two bathrooms clean and about eight thousand square feet of floors. The ongoing roofing project is a dirty job despite the good effort of the crew to keep things clean and the old museum vacuum cleaner is not adequate for the job. When asked what type of vacumn she would like, Rosalie said, “any type.” Let’s get her a good new one! Would anyone like to help with this purchase?



## MUSEUM ROOF UNLIMITED RE-ROOFING SPECIALIST



It started as a slate roof over 100 years ago. Many layers and changes since, this year the county financed the project of taking all the old layers off, repairing the large rotted roof under the slate, and applying new shingles. Vern Simon's roofing crew has worked in this heat as close to the sun as you can get—on top of the museum. Our thanks go to all the following crewmembers: Vern; Vern's father, Frank; Vern's brother, Jeff; Corbin Webster; Josh Dupuis; and Jamie Magnuson. It takes special people to tackle that dangerous, hot job.



**FRANK SIMON**





## **MUSEUM'S VICTORIAN GARDEN**

We've had many visitors this summer who have, or their family has, given artifacts to the museum in the past. Joyce and Carter Dedolph are among these. They have donated many items through the years, including the East Lincoln School bell that was placed beside the enlarged Victorian garden.

Marilyn Reiten and Rosalie Kittleson designed the champagne glass shaped addition and laid the brick walkway. Judy Wester brought what she calls the flower of the year—the petunias. Steve Strohschein modified the gatepost in order to extend the gate completely open. A young neighbor, Lucas Smith, has helped with the watering this summer.

Come take a stroll in the garden. We have a picnic table for you and your friends to sit and enjoy your lunch. It's a perfect autumn outing.

## **2007 POLK COUNTY FAIR REPORT**

The Little Red School House at the 2007 County Fair was hosted by the Luck Historical Society with Russ and Margo Hanson as point persons and Chuck Adelman and his wife as primary Luck representatives. Five persons from SEL and five from Luck worked in the schoolhouse during the fair to keep it open full time. We were able to keep at least two people in the school house from the history societies and often more. We were open Thursday 9 am - 8 pm, Friday and Saturday 8:30am to 10 pm, and Sunday 9 am to 6 pm.

There were 1720 persons officially tallied as entering the air-conditioned school house. It is estimated that there were at least 100 more as we occasionally got caught up in talking and stopped counting. There were also several hundred who stopped by the outside to see the vehicles without coming inside. We believe that we had a tally of about 2000 for inside and outside visitors to the school house.

We had special guest, Edwin Pedersen, of Luck to talk about his tool collection on Friday.

A very popular attraction was the laminated 1887 and 1914 Polk County Plat books. There were requests for having more recent ones available in the future.

The following organizations contributed displays: the historical societies of St. Croix Falls, Frederic, Osceola, SEL, and Polk County; the Polk County Genealogical Society; the Indianhead Rock and Mineral Society; and Lakeland Communications (100 years of communication display).

Mark Johnson of SEL coordinated the outside displays of autos and tractors. We had six automobiles and six old tractors there— different ones on different days. The autos, tractors, tools, rocks, and phone equipment attracted more men than we had last year.

The school was emptied and cleaned on Monday after the fair. The fair society is painting the stairs, ramp and deck. We left the Frederic display of fourth-grader's interviews up on the back bulletin board as Frederic said we could keep them. Thank yous have been written to the participants.

I think it was a very successful fair, primarily due to the shared responsibilities for exhibits and staffing.

Russ Hanson



## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Another season is coming to a close, and the attendance numbers are good so far.

	Adults	Students	Children
June	200	11	38
July	174	15	53
Two month Total	274	26	91

This does not reflect school tours.

The teachers and students had a great time in the Pioneer School sessions. We had five sessions at the Lanesdale School and one session at the East Farmington School.

The Little Red School House exhibit at the county fair was the best year yet with attendance over 2000. See Russ Hanson's report.

The museum now has a Fifties display thanks to those that donated articles and for the working hands of Martha Filip, Marilyn Reiten and Dave Knutson, who quickly and professionally put together the wonderful exhibit on the second-floor of our museum.

We welcome our new helper, Mitch Vezina, who has constructed the bell in the garden, done multiple repairs at the Lanesdale School, and continues to make improvements throughout the museum.

Although we are beginning our museum addition, our funds are not at the total cost of \$300,000, but we are still working toward it with grant-writing, fundraisers, and soliciting donations.

I will need help after Labor Day for closing up the museum for the season. The regular dusting, washing windows, and mopping and waxing floors are jobs that always need to be done before the cold winter days set in.

The roof is just about done. It has moved along smoothly. The roofers found many open holes and a large rotten area on the west side of the roof. The weight of the removed slate is guessed at 38 tons. Without a doubt, the roof will be much lighter after this large undertaking is finished.

Rosalie



## **POLK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD SPECIAL MEETING**

A special board meeting to discuss the elevation addition was held Wednesday evening, August 15 on the front lawn of the museum.

Muriel opened with the announcement that the county has given approval to begin building the elevator addition and the ground-breaking will be held August 28 at 7:00 p.m. and the project will commence September 4.

General contractor, Chris Nelson of Nelson Construction Services was awarded the overall contracting contract with his bid of \$297,474.36. Nelson explained what was covered in the contract and bids had been received for covering the following: survey, site preparation, concrete, interior drywall, painting, electrical, glass ventilation, plumbing, landscaping, and retaining wall. Nelson welcomed further suggestions for sub-contractors.

Darrell Kittleson will be point man to act between Nelson and the Historical Society. Please direct questions, comments, or suggestions to Darrell and he will forward them to Nelson.

Nelson suggested and it was discussed to shorten the length of north wall eight inches (one brick length) on each side. This improves the aesthetics of the outside. It was also discussed to move the second floor office window from the north wall to the west for the same reason. Drawings to take this into consideration will be redone by Bill Mika.

Financial concerns were brought up because at this time we do not have funds to cover the entire project. Nelson commented that the brickwork, painting, parking lot, and landscaping can be held off until funds are provided.

The group walked into the museum basement because ramps need to be installed, and some existing doorways need to be enlarged. Nelson assured us that this is not a concern and the contractors involved will do this.

We want the entire Historical Society to be informed and involved in this project. Please feel free to ask questions as it progresses. The board is content that the community and friends of Polk County will be proud of the museum addition.