

THE COUNTY CHRONICLER

Polk County Historical Society

July 2008

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



July's speaker is author Michael J. Martin. He is pictured here with his companion Virginia at Civil War Enactment.

**Civil War Speaker
Tuesday, July 22, 7 p.m.
Justice Center Community Room
Board Meeting 6:45 p.m.
Refreshments served**

**Big Band Dinner Dance
August 23**



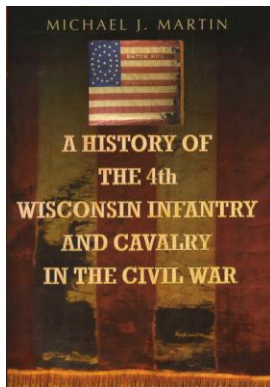
We welcome our new PCHS board member Greg Martin. Greg and family live west of Luck, directly across from the West Denmark Church. He is co-publisher, editor, and writer of *The Valley Wire*, a local alternative newspaper emphasizing St. Croix Valley.

**Join us for Music, Books, and
A Lovely Afternoon
on the Museum Lawn
With Local authors
July 12 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.**

MICHAEL J. MARTIN

July's speaker Michael Martin grew up in Mequon, Wisconsin, and graduated from Homestead High School in 1977; received a BS in Animal Science from Iowa State University and a MS and PhD in Animal Science from the University of Missouri-Columbia before doing two years of post-doctoral research at North Carolina State University where he taught. Michael spent 13 years genetically engineering and cloning pigs for biotech companies. He currently manages two swine facilities with the Spring Point Project, one in River Falls and one in Huron, South Dakota and makes his home in Amery.

Michael has had Civil War articles published in America's *Civil War* and *Military Images* magazines and authored *A History of the 4th Wisconsin Infantry and Cavalry in the Civil War*. His passion of Civil War history comes natural to Michael; his great-great grandfather was in the Fifth New Hampshire Infantry and was wounded at Gettysburg during the fighting on July 2, 1863. He is currently working on a book entitled *Break Not Their Sweet Repose* which contains biographies of every Wisconsin Civil soldier buried in the National Cemetery at Baton Rouge, Louisiana. "Those guys, most of whom died of disease, never made it home and deserve more than a footnote in history."



The 4th Wisconsin infantry was organized as infantry but two years later changed to cavalry. While its ranks were filled with men from primarily central and southern Wisconsin, Company G was raised in Hudson, Wisconsin, and included soldiers from Star Prairie, Osceola, River Falls, Rush River, Somerset and Cylon. The regiment served in the Eastern Theater during the Civil War's early months but transferred to the Western Theater (Baton Rouge, Louisiana), where it spent the remainder of the war. After the surrender of the Confederate armies in the spring of 1865, the 4th Wisconsin was sent to Texas where the regiment was broken up by companies and deployed in various outposts along the Rio Grande River. On May 28, 1866, Wisconsin's last regiment of Civil War volunteers was mustered out at Brownsville, Texas.

Muriel Pfeifer, our past PCHS president, is a member of Daughters of the Civil War and is working on recording the information on all the Civil War Veterans buried in Polk County. If you have any information please call her 715-268-6578.



JEWELRY STORE ARTIFACTS

Richard and Dolores Scholz brought more of W.W. Winchester's jewelry store equipment to add to the collection. Pictured here are two pieces.

The case on the left has drawers containing watch crystals. On the top of the case is a press to insert the crystals in watches and is operated by stepping on the lever in the bottom.

On the right is a pantograph for engraving. The drawers contain with many styles of letters. By placing a stylist into the font and adjusting the machine infinite sizes of letters can be created.

WILLIAM W. WINCHESTER

William W. Winchester, one of Polk County Historical Society's founders, moved with his parents to Wisconsin from Pennsylvania 1867. He received his education in Barron County and then took a course in a commercial college. He took up railroading and telegraphy for a year and then learned the jeweler's trade. In 1890 he moved to Amery and opened a jewelry store and at once took an interest in the business growth of the village. Winchester was a leader in every movement for the area prosperity, appointed court commissioner of the circuit court in 1902, mayor of Amery and president of the Business Men's Association in 1906. He served as justice of the peace, secretary, assessor, and clerk for the village of Amery. In 1892 William married Maggie A. Gaffney. The couple had five children: Vera E., Roy C., Susie A., William W. and Mae M.

My apology to Delores Scholz, Winchester artifacts donator, for the name error in June letter.

2008 HISTORICAL SOCIETY SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Speaker/Location
June 18	Brat Sale	Dick Market, Amery
June 24	The Soo Line	Bill Pfannes at Kennedy Park
July 4-6	Freedom Fest	Balsam Lake
July 12	Author's Fair	Museum Lawn
July 22	Wisconsin in the Civil War	Michael J. Martin
July 24-27	Polk County Fair	St. Croix Falls
August 23	Big Band Dinner Dance	Tac Lo Ban
August 26	The Meaning of the Dances	Dan Mosay / Pine Park
September 23	New Garfield Park	JoAnn Hallquist
October 4	Christmas Past	Afternoon at the Museum

GENEROUS FRIENDS OF THE SOCIETY

- George Motz, Balsam Lake, donated a flat of petunias that found a home in our garden.
- The Manfred Davidson family gave a monetary gift in memory of their father.
- A memorial was received in honor of O.J. Olson.
- Leona Cummings, Frederic, gave a monetary gift. Jim and Jerry Eichten gave their valuable services.
- Bremer Bank donated \$250 toward our August 23rd Big Band Dance at Tac Lo Ban.

Great weather, interesting speaker, audience participation, and spontaneous music contributed to a lovely evening picnic at Kennedy Park. Bill Pfannes has done a great job of bring life back to the Dresser Depot. Thank you, Bill.

MAJOR JOSEPH STANNARD BAKER

One of Polk County's early colorful citizens, J. S. Baker of St. Croix Falls was second in command during the seize and subsequent death of Lincoln's assassinator, John Wilkes booth. The following is Baker's testimony at the congressional investigation of Booth's death:

Q. Were you one of the party in pursuit of Booth?

A. I was. I had charge of the party until we arrived at Belle Plain.

Q. How far is that from where you found Booth?

A. We found booth three miles from Port Royal, which is twenty-five or thirty miles from Belle Plain.

Q. Who had command then?

A. Colonel Conger. When we arrived at Belle Plain, in the night, I told him—he being in an experienced cavalry officer, and being acquainted with the country that he better take charge of the party, and I gave up the command to him.

Q. Where did you first come across Booth?

A. At Garrett's farm, three miles beyond Port Royal in Anne Arudel county, I believe.

Q. Did you see Booth shot?

A. I saw him fall. I was at the door of the barn and had the lock in my hand. The moment the fire was lit in the barn I opened the door in order to give him an opportunity to come out. Coloner Conger lit the fire from the side of the barn. I had charge of the door all the time we were there, and had all the conversation with booth before he was shot.

Q. State the conversation you had with him.

A. ...When Conger was firing the barn, the last words that Booth said were, "One more stain on the old banner." I opened the door quickly, and the first I saw of Booth he was leaning against a hay mow, which a crutch under each arm, and a carbine resting in this way at his hip. He was in the act of getting up, and dropped one crutch, and started toward the fire. He got within six or eight feet of the side of the barn, and peered all about as though he seemed to give it up... The fire was rolling over the roof. He saw the door open, and he turned and dropped the other crutch and started toward the door... I heard the report of a shot.

***Baker, James Stannard, *Joseph Stannard Baker Memoirs from 1838 to 1865*, located at Polk County Museum Research Library.**



What a picture!
Steve and **work the finishing touches of our long-awaited-for addition.**

MUSEUM VISITORS HAVE CONNECTIONS

The Museum continues to have interesting visitors. **Janet (Hoey) Blattner** enjoys her stop in every year or so. She was born in Centuria, grew up and lived her adult life in Balsam Lake.

Katie Merrill and family of Luck visited June 24th. Archie Mosay's wife is sister to Katie's grandmother, Susie Lowe.

We enjoyed a good time talking to **Ruby Hansen**. Everyone's history contains many stories and Ruby's could make a book. I looked in my new scrapbook index to see if we could find any old newspaper clippings about her, and we came to her wedding write-up and found out that she is a twin to Ruth Elaine and that they married brothers from the Hansen Farm near Milltown. The fun part of hearing about this is that they all lived together on the as one household for five years. The

result of this was that the children grew up not knowing who their parents were. When asked they said, “The Hansen brothers.” That was when Grandma Hansen said it was time for her sons to get separate houses.

David Butler is researching Polk County with the purpose of compiling a book concentrating on the Half Moon area.

Diana Rian, Aitken, Minnesota, is looking for information on the **Lind family** of St. Peter’s Church, north of Luck.

Terri Palmberg’s grandmother, **Marie Lundmark**, was the first bailiff of Court House—now museum.

Mark Celloti, Amery, is looking for information on the Boy Scout Camp that used to be on White Ash Lake.

Dr. R. Ravenholt, originally of Polk County, now of Seattle, Washington, took an afternoon off from his time at West Denmark’s Folk Camp to visit the museum

**Polk County Historical Society Board
Special Meeting at the Museum on June 10, 2008**

President Darrell called the meeting to order at 5:40.

Those in attendance were Jay and Joyce Bergstrand, Darrell and Rosalie Kittleson, Art and Patty Young, Muriel Pfeifer, Carl Johnson, Patricia MacDonald, Greg Marsten, Larry and Linnea Phillipson, and Dorene Hendrickson.

The purpose of the meeting was to decide on the date for the 2009 Northwestern Convention which the PCHS will be hosting. We will plan on 120 people.

A Joyce/Greg motion was approved to have it on Sept. 19th. If that date is not available, Sept. 26th is our alternate. We discussed where we should hold the convention and settled on three possibilities; West Denmark Hall, Unity School Auditorium, and the 4-H building at the fairgrounds. Greg will get us a definite cost for using the West Denmark Hall.

Breakfast and lunch will need to be provided. All agreed that we should have the lunch catered.

The program is set up by the State Historical Society so we will need to provide only one speaker.

A booklet will be put together and will have information on points of interest in our area.

Some suggestions were: Luck Museum, Osceola Depot/ Train Ride, Polk County Museum, Frederic Depot, Baker Building, Scenic Boat Ride.

Submitted by Patty Young, Sec.

**Polk County Historical Society
Board of Directors Meeting June 24, 2008
Potluck Picnic at D.D. Kennedy**

Call to Order: President, Darrell Kittleson called the meeting to order at 5:30.

Carl introduced his brother, Milton, who recently moved to Amery.

Secretary's Report: Approved as printed in the newsletter.

Treasurer's Report: Rosalie went over the past month's activity which included the brat stands, the bus trip, and the elevator fund.

Director's Report: Given by Rosalie Kittleson. Wally Andren has come to the museum through the Experienced Works Program and has been a big help with various projects.

Curator: Darrell purchased a 1928 Johnson outboard motor at a garage sale

Old Business:

Placemats: Have been going out, Wayne's have already used their first bunch.

July 5th Freedom Fest:

Food, brats, buns, water ordered; cookies will be provided.

Flea market will be from 10:00-2:00.

Music by Larry Lindstrom, Larry Phillipson, and Wayne Thompson.

Parade--- Erling Jensen's son will drive a 1925 Pierce Arrow Roadster.

August 23rd Dance:

Tickets and posters are ready; tickets are \$30 each.

Silent Auction is being organized by Greg Marsten.

Food has been ordered, will be the same as last year.

Darrell will check on centerpieces.

Security Cameras:

Installation will proceed as soon as Indianhead Glass is able to finish the doors.

Building Update:

Roof still needs work to correct a water problem. Elevator can't be used until all work is finished and a walk through is completed.

2009 Convention:

We will host on Sept. 19th.

New Business

Attendance at the museum has been up this past week.

Polk County Fair is July 24th-27th. Russ Hanson will set up the programs for the Farmington School and will need help with staffing. The secretary will send a letter to the Societies asking for volunteers.

Completion of building: A suggestion was made to have the dedication of the addition sometime during the "Corn on the Curb" (Aug. 29-31) celebration.

Adjournment was at 6:15 on a Carl/Art motion.

Our next meeting on July 22nd will be hosted by Carl Johnson and Ralph LaDuke. Michael J. Martin will present a "History of Wisconsin's Involvement in the Civil War."

Respectfully submitted, Patty Young, Sec.

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Box 41
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<http://www.PolkCountyMuseum.com>

I would like to become a member of
the Polk County Historical Society:

Lifetime.....\$100
Yearly\$15
Student\$2

Name
Street
City
State & Zip.....
E-mail

darose@centurytel.net