



# Langlade County Historical Society Newsletter

*Fall, 2012*

**Curator:**  
Mary Kay Wolf  
**Directors:**  
Dean Blazek  
Steve Bradley  
Nancy Bugni  
Glenn Bugni  
Judy Grimm  
Lisa Haefs  
Joe Hermolin  
Jim Klapste  
Terri Torgerson

## Langlade County Historical Society Annual Meeting

This year the annual meeting will take place on Thursday, November 15 at the VFW Hall. The hall is located at 1216 Elm Street, Antigo. We will gather at 5pm for cocktails. Dinner will be served at 6pm and the meeting and program will begin at 7pm. One need not attend the dinner to attend the program.

This year the meeting will include a brief report on the financial status of the Historical Society and a building fund by treasurer Glenn Bugni as well as the election of three officers.

The program speaker will be Joe Hermolin, coauthor of a recently published book of photographs of Arthur J. Kingsbury. Kingsbury was based in Antigo but trav-

elled throughout the northwoods photographing for his picture post card business. His images from the early decades of the 20th century document a transition in the region, logging was slowing down, the railroad was expanding, resorts were becoming more commonplace, and the Indians were adapting to a new way of life.

His photographs preserve a glimpse of a region undergoing drastic changes as the 20th century progressed.

Thanks to a donation by Henry Ehlers who took over Kingsbury's store in 1953, the museum has many of Kingsbury's negatives in addition to prints and post cards. These formed the basis of the book and will be described in the talk.

## Business at the Annual Meeting

The Langlade County Historical Society is governed by a board of nine members. Board members serve three year terms and each year three members are up for re-election. This year terms expire for Steve Bradley, Nancy Bugni, and Joe Hermolin.

Nancy Bugni and Joe Hermolin are interested in continuing to serve but Steve Bradley has decided to resign. The museum is grateful for his past efforts and trust that he will

continue supporting the museum's efforts.

The board would like to nominate current members Nancy Bugni, Joe Hermolin and new member Diane Zuelzke to serve three year terms. There will be an opportunity for nominations from the floor at the meeting. Anyone wishing to know more about duties of a board member may contact the museum.

The meeting will be held on

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*Kingsbury in his car loaded with photographic gear in the back seat*

Thursday November 15 at 7pm following the dinner. In addition to elections of board members Glenn Bugni, treasurer, will speak briefly about the museum's financial status.

Members are welcome to attend the business meeting and presentation about Kingsbury without attending the dinner. There is no charge for those wishing to attend the meeting and presentation.

## The Story Behind the Museum: Windows to our Past

The museum, which we are now working to maintain with a major fund-raising effort, started out as a library of considerable historical significance.

Andrew Carnegie who funded the construction also funded over



*The library exterior and interior as shown in a post card views of A.J. Kingsbury, about 1910.*

1,600 libraries throughout the U.S. in the late 19th and early 20th century. He was inspired to do so by his own experiences as a young working man with no access to books until an Allegheny merchant opened his private library to local working boys. Carnegie felt that this availability to books enriched his life and enabled him to be successful. He wished to provide the same opportunity to others. Cities and towns throughout the U.S. are justifiably proud of their “Carnegie Libraries”.

The Antigo Library has another claim for historical significance. It was designed by Allan Conover of Madison, one of Wisconsin’s most prominent 19th century architects and engineers. The building is in the Georgian Revival style typical at the time when it was built (1903-1905). He modified the style somewhat to include 20th century

influences and the needs of a public library.

Conover was born in Madison in 1854 and worked as an engineer after graduation from the University in Madison. He later joined the faculty, first in mathematics and then in civil engineering. In 1884 he worked on the plans for Science Hall which led to an architectural practice. In partnership with L.F. Porter and then alone, he designed many buildings state-wide. The Antigo Public Library was one of his last commissions.

In 2003 the Langlade County Historical Society commissioned a “*Historic Structure Report*” which outlines the historic significance of the building and lays out a plan for repairs, prioritizing the urgency of those needs. It is this plan that we are following, as much as finances allow, in maintaining this local architectural treasure.

## Clayton Bailey Comes Home to a Standing Room Only Crowd

This past August Clayton Bailey entertained a standing room only audience with a presentation describing his art and his early life in Antigo and how it influenced his artistic development.

The event was held in the museum and sponsored by the Historical Society and Antigo Visual Arts. In addition to the presentation people had a chance to chat informally with Clayton and visit the AVA gallery. Refreshments were provided by BB Jack’s, Sartori Cheese, and Renate Bromberg.



*Clayton Bailey, now living in northern California, described how growing up in Antigo, reading Mad Magazine at Vosmek’s Drug Store and painting flames on car fenders launched his career as an artist.*



*School crossing guard Bonnie Rossier donated a Kingsbury print for a drawing during the exhibit in the AVA Gallery. She drew the winning entry at the show’s closing. The winner was Cindy Hardin.*

## Sharing the Museum's Archives

The Langlade County Historical Society preserves our local history through its collection of artifacts and documents. These items are accessible to the public visiting the museum. Those who established the museum in 1927 could not have imagined that the archives might be viewed on the internet.

The museum makes some of its material available through its own web site ([www.langladehistory.com](http://www.langladehistory.com)) and also by working with state wide organizations.

The Wisconsin Decorative Arts Project is creating a listing of significant items from around the state. Furniture from the Deleglise home, a chair made by the Crocker Chair Company, cloth-

ing items, and home decorations such as floral arrangements made from hair have been posted. These may be viewed by searching for *Wisconsin Decorative Arts* at [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org)

Wisconsin Heritage Online (WHO) seeks to post images of important documents from around the state.

The museum is working to get our photo archives on the WHO web site ([www.wisconsinheritage.org](http://www.wisconsinheritage.org)). We began with the Kingsbury photos of the Indians and are now working on the logging pictures.

We took a brief detour to post the letters Francis Deleglise written to his family while fighting in the Civil War. That collection of letters is now available on the

WHO web site. We are now into another detour from the Kingsbury collection; cataloging the World War I photographs of William Wessa who fought in the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company and documented the Company's training and action with a small camera.

Posting our archives is made possible by several volunteers at the museum and Emily Pfothenauer of WHO. Recent volunteers have included Jim Klapste and Jamie Spychalla. A mini-grant from the Wisconsin Historical Society and the Wisconsin Council for Local History helped fund the purchase of archival storage boxes and photo pages. Curator Mary Kay Wolf is busy organizing the archives.

## Deer Hunting: A Fall Ritual in the Northwoods

In fall, for many, a Wisconsinite's thoughts turns to deer hunting. The hunt has been part of the northwoods lifestyle since before written records were kept.

Indians relied on deer not only for the meat but for the hides. Even bones and antlers were used to fashion tools and decorative items. Early pioneers lived in much the same way. Before 1860 there were only about 1,500 people in the northwoods and deer populations flourished.

The coming of loggers meant a greater pressure on the deer population since the loggers hunted for food. But logging also created cutovers which led to new growth. This helped the deer and offset effects of increased hunting on deer

populations.

By the 1860s demand for venison and hides from city dwellers resulted in commercial hunting with meat being shipped to Milwaukee and Chicago. By the 1890s the railroad was bringing sport hunters into the area and deer populations declined. The years just prior to World War I saw a low point in deer population and an awareness that something must be done. In 1915 a defined hunting season and protections for does and fawns were instituted.

But new pressures developed; automobiles. A 1917 report stated: "Deer...have a new weapon pointed at them, more deadly and harder to escape...as it reaches out into the remote districts where the

deer once sought refuge safe from the pursuit of the hunter. The automobile has annihilated this space and distance will no longer protect them."

Regulations instituted in 1915 to manage deer populations continue to be modified to the present day as conditions vary.

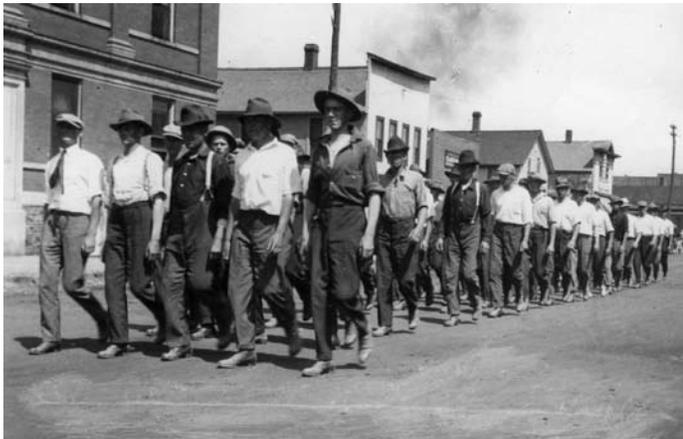


*Deer hunters in a photograph taken by A.J. Kingsbury in about 1910.*

# Photographs of the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company

The centenary of “*The War to End All Wars*” (World War I) is approaching in 2014. The United States entered in 1917. The armistice ending that war on November 11 is commemorated as Veterans’ Day. Men from this area formed the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company. They trained in Antigo, then at Camp Douglas, then in Texas before going overseas and seeing action in Belgium and France.

William Wessa, a photographer in the 107th TMB, documented its history with a small, portable camera. The photographs were donated to the museum by his daughter, the late Betty Fogeltanz who also edited Wessa’s account of his experiences. The photographs and the story are being prepared for posting on the internet.



*Top Left: Training in Antigo Right: Training in Texas  
Middle: The 107TMB saw action in Belgium and France and suffered casualties  
Bottom Left: Action in France Right: Coming home in 1919*

## School is Back

Autumn brings the reopening of school as classmates and teachers returning to familiar classrooms. But in 1917 students and teachers returned to a brand new building.

Antigo's first high school was a wood frame building that stood where the museum is now. A newer, brick building was proposed and Francis Deleglise donated land just around the corner from the original site. That high school was built in 1890 on a lot containing a thick stand of timber.

The school, built at an original cost of \$16,500, served Antigo's high school students until a cold morning of January 6, 1916. An Antigo Gas Company employee heard an explosion and discovered a raging

fire. Firemen responded quickly but the building could not be saved. Extreme conditions (temperatures of -22 degrees and strong north-west winds) made fighting the fire impossible and it was all that firemen could do to prevent the conflagration from spreading. All school records and trophies were lost.

Immediately various businesses, lodges, and churches offered classroom space. Teachers and students dispersed throughout the city and classes continued while plans were laid for a new building on the same site as the old school. An architect from Milwaukee prepared plans and a Fond du Lac construction company awarded the contract for a new building, built at a cost of \$96,000. Construction began in

the summer of 1916. Some classes were held in the spring of 1917 but the school, modern in every respect, officially opened in the fall of 1917. Today that building, with some remodelling, is Antigo's Middle School.



*The burned out shell of the old high school was photographed by Arthur Kingsbury.*

## Thank You:

**Lloyd Anstutz:** Fair ribbons, poster, photographs and postcards,

**Ludwig Bauer:** Logging camp items

**Richard Brock:** Indian beadwork and other Indian artifacts and books

**Mary Sue Kestly Dakin:** Photograph and poetry book

**Jerry and Gale Demlow:** Opera House poster and picture book, in honor of Frank Charles

**Jason Hancock:** 1880 arithmetic school book

**Jennie Helm:** Stanley Flak military items, jewelry

**Mary Sue Koepfel:** Marx family history, photos, dolls, newspapers

**Janet Larsen:** Doilies, old high school diplomas and yearbooks, 1938 World's Fair ring, WWII medals of Paul Larsen

**Sandra Newcomb:** Book about Robert Koehler

**Michael Petrick:** 1880s portrait of Plzak family

**Frances Schneider:** Photos of Antigo teachers, art class calendar

**Gerald Verhasselt:** Family genealogy

**Dolores Wojan:** School and misc. items, camera

### Monetary Donations:

Dr. John and Elsa McKenna  
Langlade County Genealogy Soc.

### New Members:

Katie Dwan  
Sandra Newcomb  
Jake Wojciecjowski

### Renewing Memberships:

Bill and Marge Bussert  
Hope and Gary Fleming  
Natalie Fleming

Gerald Verhasselt has compiled an interesting and thorough family genealogy which describes one family's experience. He tells how his ancestors came from Holland in the early and mid 19th century, why they left home, what they hoped to achieve and what hardships they faced. Much of the story is told through transcripts of surviving letters, reproductions of photographs and documents. The immigrants initially came to New York State but later moved to various places including the Phlox region.

This is a story that in some ways is unique to one family but in many ways is typical of the many people who came to America from Europe.

**Address:**

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 Email: [lchs@dwave.net](mailto:lchs@dwave.net)  
 web site: [www.langladehistory.com](http://www.langladehistory.com)

**Museum Hours:**

Oct 1. to May 1  
 Thursday to Saturday:  
 May 1 to Oct. 1  
 Tues. to Sat.  
 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

**Membership Dues**

Individual, 1 year: \$25  
 Individual, 3 years: \$50  
 Family, 1 year: \$30  
 Family, 3 years: \$70  
 Junior (18 or younger), 1 year: \$3  
 Business, 1 year: \$100  
 Life Member: \$250

**Upcoming Events:**

AVA Gallery Show of local artists: from late October to December  
 Annual Meeting: Thursday November 15 at VFW Hall  
 Civic Music Concert Refreshment Stand: January 30, 2013

**Items from the Museum:**

When Ed Drab enlisted in the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933 he was assigned to Camp 657 in Elcho. His sister made him a sweater vest and pillow sham to commemorate the CCC. These items from our museum have been documented and are described on the Wisconsin Decorative Arts web site. They may be viewed by searching the Wisconsin Historical Society's web site at:  
[www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org)



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