



# Langlade County Historical Society Newsletter

Spring, 2012

**Curator:**  
Mary Kay Wolf

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

## “Windows to our Past” Campaign

The museum is undertaking a major campaign to perform a series of building upgrades. In 2003 a Historic Structures Report was completed. Specific recommendations included replacing the exterior storm windows, tuck pointing, and general repair and refinishing. In recent years we have replaced the furnace, repaired the entry masonry, and replaced the roof.

Maintenance expenses are a major drain on the museum’s financial resources and so we are creating a Building Improvement Fund. Our current goal is to replace the exterior storm windows on the first

floor which are in poor condition.

The museum was built as a Carnegie Library and opened its doors in 1905. Designed by Madison architect Alan Conover and built by the local construction company of Dallman and Peterson the building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

People are encouraged to donate to our “Windows to our Past” project. Any amount is welcome and all donors will be recognized in a pull-out flyer that will be included in the program for the society’s annual meeting in November.

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## Rummage Sale and Railroad Picnic, and Music in the Park



Scenes from previous picnics and rummage sales

With winter finally a distant memory, it is time to plan for outdoor events at the museum.

One annual tradition is a rummage sale fundraiser held on the museum grounds. This year it will be on Saturday, June 2. People are asked to look through their households and bring donations to the museum during regular museum hours or to call and arrange for a possible pick-up. We cannot accept large appliances or clothing. No museum items are included in the sale. The sale will run from 8 am until about 2 pm.

On Tuesday June 19, we will host our annual Railroad Picnic at the

museum, beginning at 5 pm. The picnic commemorates Antigo’s role as a major railroad hub in the days of the steam locomotive and celebrates our restoration of the 440 locomotive and our the railroad park. Once again we will be serving brats, burgers, potato salad, ice cream, and soft drinks for \$6.

Summer also means “Music in the Park” and on Monday, July 2, we will have an informational table and serve desserts at the concert in Antigo Park.

Also, watch for our table on some Saturdays at the Antigo Farmers Market.

# A Book about Antigo Photographer Arthur Kingsbury

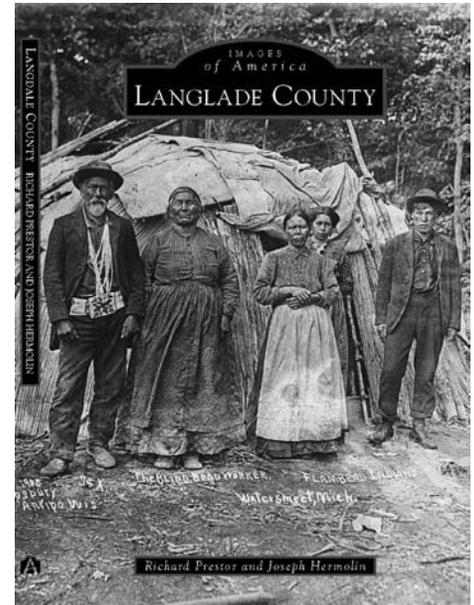
Joe Hermolin at the museum has been working with Milwaukee photo historian to write a book about Arthur Kingsbury and his photographs of the Northwoods. The book will be published by Arcadia Publishing and should be released some time in May.

Kingsbury was based in Antigo but travelled extensively in northern Wisconsin and the Michigan U.P. taking photographs for his picture postcard business. He was most active in the early decades of the 20th century but continued photographing into the 1950s. His post card views document Antigo and other cities, resorts, logging camps, the railroad, and local Indian tribes as the area was being transformed by growing settlements. His photographs are prized by collectors of “real picture postcards” and by archivists and historians.

Kingsbury’s store was at a number of locations over the years and for a while he had a branch store in Minoqua. When he retired

in 1953, Henry Ehlers took over the business. In the 1960s a disastrous fire destroyed many of the original glass plate negatives but those that survived were donated to the Langlade County Historical Society. Scans of the original negatives and of postcards have formed the basis of this book.

A display is being planned of some of his photographs at the Antigo Visual Arts gallery in the museum and a presentation about his work, but dates have been finalized yet.



*Top: Cover of the soon-to-be released book on Kingsbury.  
Bottom: Kingsbury as a young man in his travels with his photo gear.*

## The Langlade County Historical Society Online

The Langlade County Historical Society has recently revised its web site thanks to a major effort by a prized volunteer.

Teresa Sprecher is a society member who lives in Madison but vacations in Langlade County. She teaches web design at Madison Area Technical College and graciously agreed to help us revive

our web site. For the past several months, she has been working with people at the museum to plan the layout of a revised web site and to gather the necessary information to be included. Early in March the new format was launched.

The site contains some information about our history, a preview of upcoming events, and an archive

of our previous newsletters as well as information on how to become a member and help us preserve our heritage. There are links to various community groups and to other sources of information on local history.

We hope people take a few minutes to check it out at [www.langladehistory.com](http://www.langladehistory.com).

# Langlade Memorial Hospital: Beginnings

\$100—\$500—\$1000

**Langlade County Memorial Hospital**  
**Hotel Dieu of St. Joseph**  
 Antigo, Wisconsin

**5½%**

**First [Closed] Mortgage Serial Bonds**

Dated May 1, 1933 Due Serially



Total Issue—\$60,000 Security—\$186,500

PRICE: PAR (100) AND ACCRUED INTEREST TO YIELD 5½%

*In The Opinion of Counsel, These Bonds Are Legal for Trust Funds in Wisconsin*

**JOST-THOMPSON AND COMPANY**  
 Investment Securities

OSHKOSH NEW LONDON

Langlade Hospital is currently in the midst of a major expansion. It is worth looking back to the establishing of the original the original hospital. Antigo long recognized the need for a major hospital because the three “house hospitals” in the area were inadequate. Langlade Memorial was planned and construction began but was halted during the depths of the Great Depression.

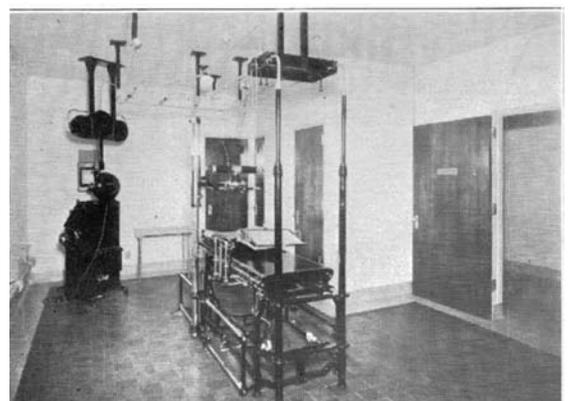
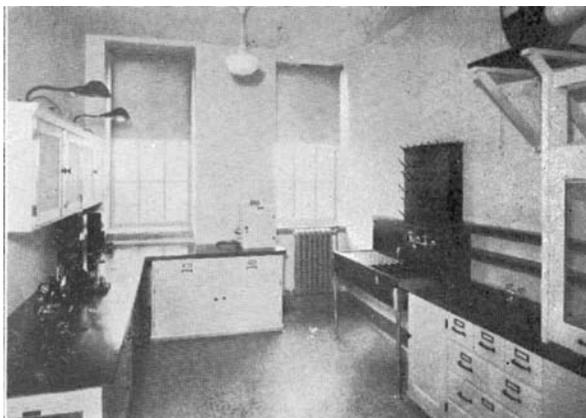
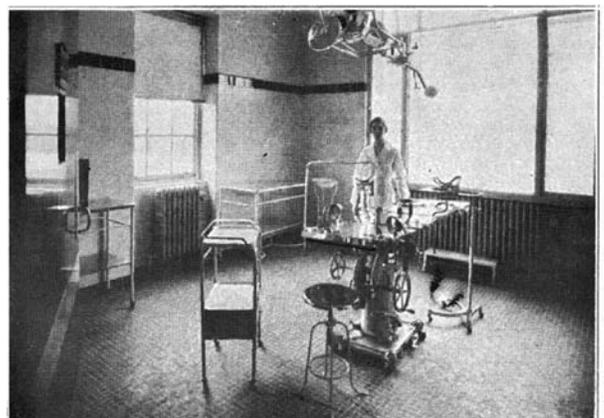
In 1933 a group of Antigo citizens convinced the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph, who were operating a hospital in New London, to take over the incomplete hospital.

### Photo captions

*Left: Brochure for a bond drive to finance the hospital*

*Below Clockwise from upper left: the maternity room, the operating room, the X-Ray room, the hospital lab.*

*In 1933 these facilities were the state of the art. The first surgery in the hospital was an emergency appendectomy performed by Dr. Eugene McKenna, a few days before the hospital officially opened.*

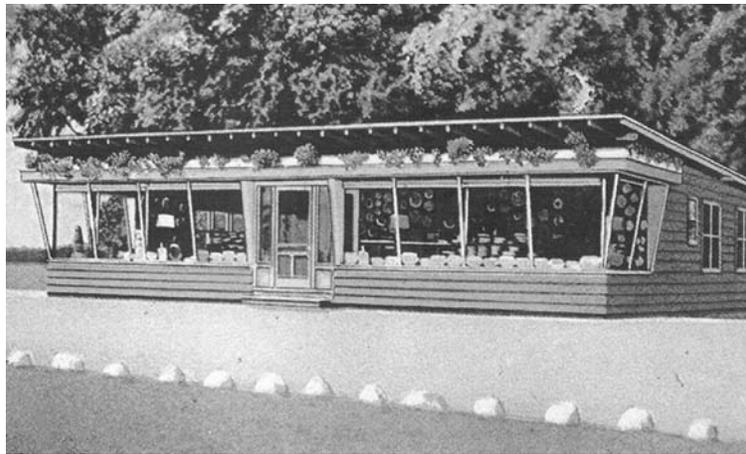


# Margaret Studios: A Folk Art Tradition Made in Antigo and Known World-wide

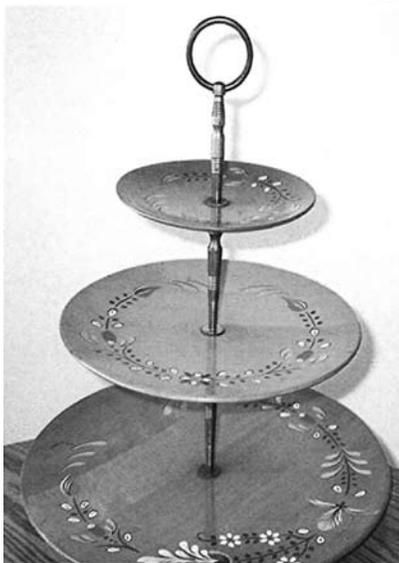
On July 31, 1946, the Antigo Daily Journal published an article entitled “New Antigo Industry Makes Hand Made Wooden Bowls.” Margaret Voigt was born in 1913 in Oostburg, WI. In 1934 she married Clarence Schroeder and, during the war, she began her career decorating butter tubs. They landed a contract to do 2,000 bowls if they could deliver them in a few weeks. Clarence worked the lathe and Margaret painted to complete the order.

In 1946 Margaret and Clarence set up shop in Antigo. They hired local people and purchased maple wood from the Menominee Indians in Keshena and walnut in Tigerton. Items were hand turned and decorated free hand. In its first five years in business, Margaret Studios put \$350,000 in circulation in Antigo, through salaries and purchases of supplies.

What had begun as a hobby in her home in 1940 became a business that sold its product to Marshall Field’s in Chicago and around the world. In the late 1950s the business moved to North Carolina.



*Above Margaret Studio Shop on Highway 45 just north of the city limits.  
Below: Examples of the studios wooden plated decorated with rosemaling.*



A book about Margaret Studios, with color photos and written by Connie Bruxer Hubatch, is available in the museum gift shop.

## William H. Wessa: Another Antigo Photographer of Note

A.J. Kingsbury was not the only photographer of note in Antigo's early years. There were others who, unlike Kingsbury, maintained studios in town and did portrait photography. One, William H. Wessa, ventured far from his studio on Fifth Avenue when, in 1917, he enrolled in the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company to fight in World War I.

Born in 1887, Wessa was a life-long Antigo resident. In 1916 he opened a photo portrait studio on Fifth Avenue.

His career as a studio photographer was quickly interrupted when

the United States entered World War I. But his service in the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company did not suppress his urge to photograph. Using a small film camera, he documented the 107th TMB as it trained in Antigo, then Camp Douglas and Texas, and saw action in Belgium and France.

After his discharge in 1919, he reopened his studio and continued doing portraits until his retirement in 1961. Many Antigo families and the museum archives have examples of how Wessa documented life in Antigo and the life of Langlade County's soldiers who served in Europe during World War.

*Left: Curator Mary Kay Wolf holds the small camera Wessa used in the 107th Trench Mortar Battery Company. She is standing beside his studio portrait camera.*

*Wessa's son-in-law Charlie Fogeltanz knew the camera and was to help us restore it but sadly he passed away recently at age 95.*



## Thank You:

### Items Donated:

**Anonymous:** U.S. Army recruiting signs from Antigo

**Joan Cline:** Photos from 1918

**Jerome King:** Items and photos from Vulcan

**John McGaver:** Kingsbury post-cards

**Milwaukee Historical Society:**

1940 telephone directory

**Randall Rohe:** Photos related to Yawkey-Bissel, White Lake, Parrish, Markton

### Monetary Donations:

Marie Berner Trust

Braun Woodland Foundation

Knitting Group

Elwyn J. Remington Foundation

Sheldon Foundation

**In Honor of Ed Vavruska's 100th**

**Birthday:** From Dean and Polly Blazek

### Donations in memory of:

In Memory of Ed Morrissey from his grandchildren Bryan, Andrea, Jason, Sara, Kirsten

In Memory of Jerry Tesch from Dean and Polly Blazek

In Memory of David Sullivan from Polly Blazek

### New Members:

Roger and Kay Doran

Michael Hagerty

Tonya Trabant, Patrick McKenna, Evie and Egan

Mary Schleis

### Renewing Memberships:

Georgine Auner

Arleen Bubon

Glenn and Nancy Bugni

Dr. and Dede Cromer

Jerry and Gale Demlow

Ludene DeWan

Judy Grimm

Joe Hermolin, Renate Bromberg

William and Beth Kelly

William Johnson

Ronald Koepke

William and Charlotte Kraft

Sally Jansen

Mary Josvai

William Johnson

Jeff and Cheryl Marx

Helen Morrissey

Jean Marilyn Preiss

Walter Rugland

Arleen Schmiege

Teresa Sprecher

Christine Spute

Kenneth and Patricia Steckbauer

Otto and Jeanne Tieg

Terri Torgerson

Dumaine and Judy Turney

Mitch and Sharon Zmuda

**Address:**

404 Superior St., Antigo, WI 54409  
Phone: (715) 627-4464  
Email: lchs@dwave.net  
web site: www.langladehistory.com

**Museum Hours:**

October 1 to May 1  
Thursday to Saturday:  
May 1 to October 1  
Tuesday to Saturday  
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:**

Kingsbury talk and exhibit: At the museum, In May, dates to be announced  
Rummage sale: Museum Grounds, Saturday, June 2  
RR Picnic: Museum Grounds, Tuesday, June 19  
Music in the Park: City Park, Monday, July 2  
AVA Gallery in the museum: Paintings and wood sculptures by Betsy Popp, currently and until May 12.



**Items from the Museum:** Log Markers: In spring logs were transported down rivers to sawmills. Logs from many camps were pooled. Each camp marked its own logs to identify them.

Langlade County Historical Society  
404 Superior Street  
Antigo WI, 54409