



# Langlade County Historical Society Newsletter

Summer, 2012

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## “Windows to our Past”: Preserving our Heritage

The building which houses the museum is well over 100 years old and shows its age. However, its construction in 1903 to 1905 is a remarkable story.

Antigo was one of many cities throughout the country that was part of the Public Library Movement gaining momentum in the late 19th century. The effort to create a library in Antigo was spearheaded by a local chapter of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) who believed that “...in the intelligence of the people lies the strength of the nation, and that the free circulation of good books in the community would be a counter-attraction to the saloon and its influences.”

The Antigo Public Library was formed in 1897 but, typical of the times, occupied whatever retail space was available. Antigo’s library had to move three times before finding a home in the new city hall.

Antigo’s first library was a rental library operated by Louis Mendlik. The WCTU tried, in campaigns in 1894 and 1895, to raise funds for a free public library, falling \$400 short of its \$900 goal. By 1897 they were able to open a reading room and free public library in a store on Fifth Avenue and issued

360 library cards. As the library outgrew its space, it moved to different stores on Fifth Avenue. In 1900 the WCTU convinced city officials to house a library in the newly completed city hall and to appropriate \$500 to maintain it. Other contributions included \$15 per month from the Women’s Club toward the librarian’s salary of \$30 per month. Other fundraisers included a rummage sale and an exhibition football game between Antigo and Rhineland. T.J. Kellogg supplied wood from his sawmill for the shelving. By mid-1901 the library had 2,100 registered borrowers, 20% of the city’s population.

Three more years would pass before a separate library building would be planned and an additional two years before it would open to the public. Three people played significant roles in the building of the library: Andrew Carnegie whose foundation funded it, Alan Conover, a professor of civil engineering at the University

*When the new city hall opened in 1900, the city provided a home for the library and took over its administration. The library board hired Miss Jane Ogilvie from Madison as its first full-time paid librarian at a salary of \$30 per month.*

### Inside:

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of Wisconsin in Madison who designed it, and Charles Dallman of Antigo who built it. How that building came into existence will be described in a future newsletter.

That new building would serve as Antigo’s library until 1997 and today it houses the museum. Efforts are underway through our recently launched “Windows to our Past” campaign to insure that the building continues to serve the community.



## Boy Scouts in Langlade County

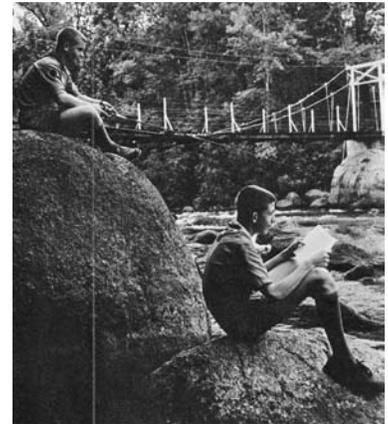
To many boys summer vacation means Boy Scout Camp. Two large camps lie within Langlade County. Camp Makajewan is in the northeast part of the county near Pearson, and the Camp Gardner Dam Camp is in the south eastern part of the county on the Wolf River.

Gardner Dam on the Wolf was used during the logging era and, as early as 1908, there were plans to erect a series of dams there to generate hydroelectric power. Various plans were put forth but none was carried out. In 1932 a group of scouts from the Appleton area were hiking in the area and overheard men from the power company discussing the possibility of selling their holdings on the Wolf. They reported this to their scoutmaster Harold Brown who knew that the Valley Council based

in Appleton was looking for a spot to replace a nearby camp that had been destroyed in a fire in 1930. Thus, in 1933, the Wisconsin-Michigan Power Company deeded 1,380 acres of land to the Valley Council of the Boy Scouts.

A few years earlier the North Shore Council, based in the northern suburbs of Chicago and boasting a membership of almost 10,000 Boy Scouts, also chose Langlade County for their camp. Land around Spring Lake, near Pearson, was purchased from the Forest County Lumber Company. The lake itself and surroundings were an ideal spot but the proximity of the Wolf River for canoeing and the Menominee Reservation for field trips were important factors in choosing Spring Lake over about 30 other lakes being considered. The camp was planned to accommodate

250 Scouts at a time. Clearing and construction began at once and by August 1929 Camp Ma-Ka-Je-Wan was officially dedicated.



*Detail from a Camp Gardner Dam Bot Scout Brochure.*

**NOTE:** Thomas Krief has written a detailed history of Camp Gardner Dam. The book and accompanying DVD are available for reading and viewing at the museum.

## Foot Trails in Old Langlade County

In addition to rivers, many important foot trails ran through Langlade County; some following paths established by the local Indians. One of the earliest was the Lake Superior Trail, established in 1861-1862. It started in Shawano and ran to Lac Vieux Desert. The trail was used in winter to drive cattle and deliver supplies and mail to the copper mines in the Michigan Upper Peninsula. From around White Lake to Pickerel, it ran along the western bank of the Wolf River. The trail became impassable in summer. This trail would later form the basis for the trails that the lumbermen would use to transport supplies from Wausau and Shawano to the lumber camps.

Another foot path that opened Langlade County was the Military Trail. It was commissioned by Congress in 1863. The United States was engaged in the Civil War and the sympathies of the British and their colonies in Canada were uncertain. Congress wanted to move troops to the Canadian border in case of invasion. The Military Trail ran through Langlade County from Elton through Langlade and Ainsworth Townships. The trail would not be completed until the 1870s, but it served to open up the area to traders and lumbermen. In fact, some think that the Military Road was promoted more to benefit the lumber industry than for its military utility.



*Picnic area at the northern end of the Superior Trail in Lac Vieux Desert*

**NOTE:** Keith Fawcett has written a detailed history of Lake Superior Trail as part of Tom Krief's history of Camp Gardner Boy Scout Camp. The book and accompanying DVD are available for reading and viewing at the museum. Material for this story and the photo are from his book.

## Photographs of A.J. Kingsbury in the AVA Gallery

On June 8 Antigo Visual Arts and the Langlade County Historical Society hosted a reception in the museum. The AVA exhibit featured photographs by A.J. Kingsbury and was mounted in conjunction with the publication of a book of Kingsbury's works called *Langlade County*. A presentation by book co-author Joe Hermolin was part of the evening's event. The photo exhibit continues through September 10. The book is available at the museum. The museum will also accept orders for reproductions from the book. An 8x10 photo, matted, is \$25 and a 11x14 photo, matted, is \$40.

Bonnie Rosier donated a photograph to be raffled at the end of the show. Visitors to the museum and gallery may enter to win a reproduction of a photo of their choice from the book.

*The Langlade County Historical Society and Antigo Visual Arts thanks BB Jacks, Sartori Cheese, and Renate Bromberg for providing refreshments at the reception for the Kingsbury photo exhibit.*

*Top: School crossing guard Bonnie Rosier donated a photo for the raffle. Bottom: Museum webmaster Teresa Sprecher and president Joe Hermolin view the photo exhibit.*



## The Willis Cabin



Robert and Doris Willis lived in their home at 229 Wilson Street for many years collecting items relating to the area's history, including logging camp items.

When Robert wanted a retreat he had built an old style log cabin in

his backyard. Unlike the Deleglise cabin, this one had electricity and so Robert could watch the Packers, surrounded by his memorabilia. Recently many of these items were donated to the museum by his widow.

Families planning a summer excursion to any of the Wisconsin Historical Society's historic ten sites or museums may want to take advantage of the coupons below. A number of these sites have special programs. A detailed description of the sites may be found at the Wisconsin Historical Society site: [www.wisconsinhistory.org](http://www.wisconsinhistory.org)

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(608) 264-6400  wisconsinhistory.org

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Valid normal operating hours only through Dec. 31, 2012.  
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## The Wolf River: At Work and Play

The Wolf River in eastern Langlade County played a significant role in the county's history well before Francis Deleglise built his cabin in what would become Antigo. Before the railroad, rivers formed the "roadways"; and it was there that early settlers built their homes, and where logs were transported to mills and where people turned for recreation.



Top row: Logging drives began in the 1870s and 1880s and were documented here by photographer A.J. Kingsbury in the early 20th century.

Middle Row: Dams at the Dells of the Wolf and Gardner Dam, and other sites, controlled water flow.

Bottom Row: The Wolf was a site for recreation on the Menominee Reservation and other places.

## June Has Been a Busy Month

Thanks to donations from the community and to the efforts of museum staff and volunteers, our spring rummage sale was a huge success. The museum earned slightly more than \$800 for our programs and building maintenance.

Soon afterwards we were again in action preparing for our summer picnic. On the morning of the picnic, rainfall and severe thunderstorm warnings forced us to prepare to move indoors, but the



## Thank You:

### Items Donated:

**Lloyd Anstutz:** Olive-Anstutz-Frazier uniform and medals, burial flag

**Phil Beck:** Photos, Antigo High School Hi-Light book

**Jo Ann Belanger:** School projects from 1930s

**Bob & Kenlyn Blecker:** hand planer, victrola

**Nancy Blood:** 1940s Doll house

**Elon Case:** Bible

**Bob Curran II:** Farming oil sampler used by Joe Prochaska, kerosene kitchen stove

**Jennie Helm:** Dictionaries

**Mary ann Masterson:** Photos

**Phillip Norton:** Magazines

**Kay Olson:** Antigo High School material, pamphlet about piano

clouds dissipated, the sun came out and dried up all the rain and picnickers enjoyed an evening of brats and burgers grilled by celebrity chefs Mike Haefs and Steve Bradley, ice cream served by the 4H Tree Toppers, and music by the group Slidin' on Ice.

Thanks to Steve Bradley for the ice cream, Kwik Trip and Pepsi for soft drinks and ice, FS for ice, Baginski Farms for potatoes, Gus Ourada at the Dixie for the potato salad, Lisa and Mike Haefs for the burgers.

teacher Dorothea Runge

**Louise Schleis estate:** Various household items

**Donna Schroepfer-Tatro:** 1951 Communion photos and dress

**Ed Vavruska:** Phillipine wood carvings

**Robert & Doris Willis:** Military and misc. items

### Monetary Donations:

Bonnie Rosier

Langlade County Genealogical Society

### Donations in memory of:

In Memory of Mary Hardin from Judy Grimm

In Memory of John Krause from Ruth and Judy Grimm

*Lower left: Dining with the music of Slidin' on Ice*

*Below: Mike Haefs and Steve Bradley*



## Summer Events Continue

On Friday Aug. 10, at 6:30 pm the museum and Antigo Visual Arts will host *An Evening with Clayton Bailey*. Clayton Bailey grew up in Antigo and is now a renowned artist, living in California. He will speak about growing up in Antigo and how it has influenced his art.

Bailey works in ceramic and metal sculpture. His work has been described as a fusion of "Einstein with Alice in Wonderland to make art that is challenging, profound and fun."

## New Members:

John Barker

## Renewing Memberships:

Lee & Perk Dinsmore

Hope & Gary Fleming

Natalie Fleming

Theodore Weaver

This past spring we hosted tours from NTC Partners' Program students and Spring Valley Elementary School

**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:**

AVA Gallery in the museum: Photographs of A.J. Kingsbury until September 10

Friday August 10: Artist Clayton Bailey will be speaking about growing up in Antigo and how it influenced his art.



**Items from the Museum:**

Kingsbury's Typewriter:  
Arthur Kingsbury owned a Blick typewriter. It was the first portable typewriter, invented by George Blickendorfer in Germany in 1891. It was introduced into the United States in 1893.

Langlade County Historical Society  
404 Superior Street  
Antigo WI, 54409