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# KEWAUNEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## *HISTORICAL NOTES*

VOLUME XX, No. 4

OCTOBER 2008

### EAST TWIN RIVER SCHOOL RETURNS TO LIFE

by Jill Dopke

INSIDE THIS ISSUE	
East Twin River School	1
East Twin River School (cont.) Courthouse Square	2
Courthouse Square (cont.) Reviving the Past Casco Post 319 Raises Funds for Memorial	3
Bruemmer House 100-year Birthday Party	4
Casco Post 319... (cont.) Research Center News	5
Research Center News (cont.)	6
The rest of the story...	7
The rest of the story... (cont.)	8

Passing by the East Twin River School this past July, I noticed construction work going on. The school is a mile north of Tisch Mills on land originally donated by pioneer settler, Anton Olson, and was built in 1889 by Henry Jonas. Furniture for the school was provided by Ransom Moore. This brick, two-room school replaced a log structure that had been built around 1860, and was located in the center of a deep woods on the William Jansky farm in Section 29.



East Twin River School, ca. 1900s. Photo — Kewaunee County Research Center Photo Collection.

I stopped to talk to the new owners, Kent and Lynn Wolfcale, and spent almost half the day there. Kent was eager to share his vision of converting the old school into a home and graciously invited me on a tour.

Plans for the interior include a combination great room/kitchen open to the cathedral ceiling that covers almost half the floor space. The other half includes a bedroom, bath, utility room, and closets. Above this half, they're creating a loft which will have a bedroom and a bath with a shower. They plan to move in this fall and have an open house sometime next year.

They're restoring, recycling, and reusing as much of the original material as possible and, although a new metal roof is necessary, Kent was able to remove and save the ceiling joists which are 2x12 inches by 28 feet long. He plans to position them again in the roof area by joining three together to resemble huge beams. Although he removed the maple tongue-and-groove wood floor to put in new beams and subflooring, he is refinishing the maple wood and returning it as the flooring in the combination great room/

Editor Jerry Abitz  
Co-editor Jill Dopke  
Prod. editor Susan K. Slikkers



Current owners, Kent and Lynn Wolfcale, are presently renovating the 119-year-old building. Photo — Kent/Lynn Wolfcale.

If you wish to receive notification that the most recent issue of the KCHS newsletter is available online, send your request to [gabitz@centurytel.net](mailto:gabitz@centurytel.net) with your name and email address.

(cont. on page 2)

## East Twin River School Returns to Life

(cont. from page 1)

kitchen area. He has also cut new windows on the west end and plans to add a sunroom on the east end. Other items he is reclaiming from the school and plans to use are a porcelain sink, a wood cabinet with old maps, slate boards, and the glass globes for lighting.

I was especially drawn to the antique merry-go-round outside on the school playground, as were Kent and Lynn. It still works great, but Kent will replace the worn, weathered boards.

As we were finishing the tour, I asked about the thick brick walls. In fact, there are three layers of brick walls – two on the outside, then a 6-inch space, then another brick layer for the interior wall. Kent said he didn't know how common this was, but there were only a few areas in the walls that needed some repair. It looks as if this school was built to last more than a lifetime, and it has. It is now 119 years old!

**Note:** Kent and Lynn continue to look for old photos and stories about the East Twin River School, and they would really appreciate your help. If you have any old photos or stories to share, contact them at (920) 776-1088.



East Twin River School merry-go-round. Photo — Jill Dopke.

## Courthouse Square

by Jerry Abitz

A few years ago plans were floated to build a new courthouse on Kewaunee's west side. It was an attempt to meet the Wisconsin mandates for courtroom security. That plan was rejected by the electorate. It did not make the problem go away, however. Eventually a partial solution was found when the St. Mary's Kewaunee Area Memorial Hospital closed. The county purchased the building and remodeled it into what is now known as the Administrative Center. Many departments were transferred to this new site.

Ground was finally broken this year for a \$4.7 million addition to the western façade of the existing building. The Selmer Co. of Green Bay was the contractor chosen. The gazebo that has dominated part of the square has been moved. Work has steadily progressed, and completion is on the horizon.

The interior of the old building has been remodeled creating two separate courtrooms with their ancillary quarters required for a

modern courtroom setting. Closed to the public, the south entrance will be the entrance reserved for any prisoners transferred from the nearby Safety building; a fenced courtyard will connect the two.

The grounds around the complex are being reconfigured. Gone is the little-used but massive outdoor stairway that once rose up the hill from Dodge Street. Gone too are the

(cont. on page 3)



Kewaunee County Courthouse. Photo — Jerry Abitz.



(Continued from page 2)

parking spaces on courthouse square. The area around the cannons and the statue have been reshaped with a massive curved terrace overlooking Dodge Street. The plaza in this area has been paved with brick and includes planting beds.

A monument dedicated to all veterans has been positioned on the west lawn in front of the new main entrance. This three-story addition is faced with a sand-colored material with horizontal bands of red granite. The canopy over the entrance is supported with pillars somewhat in the style of the former eastside entry. The dentils at the roofline, an architectural configuration, match the existing dentils on the 1908 building.

The bricks used in both plazas are awaiting the engraving of names as people purchase either the \$75 or \$150 commemorative bricks. A ramp is located just west of the Jail Museum making it accessible from Vliet Street. The steep hill on the south side of the Museum will be terraced making it easier to plant and maintain any landscaping.

For those working inside the building, the remodeling and the new addition will provide a modern and convenient setting. Security has been provided for courtroom procedures involving dangerous felons. For residents and visitors to the area, the brick courtyards and the landscaping will be pleasant to the eye.

## CASCO AMER. LEGION POST 319 RAISES FUNDS FOR MEMORIAL

by Jill Dopke

The Casco American Legion Thiabaud-Drossart Post 319 held a July 4th fundraiser in Casco to collect funds for a memorial to honor veterans from all wars. The memorial won't identify individual names but will be a salute to all veterans. It is to be erected in front of the Casco Village Hall. A generous donation of \$10,000 from the Ron Olson Foundation gave the Legion its start toward the needed funds. Members continued to raise money through a raffle.

(cont. on page 5)

## REVIVING THE PAST

by Bruce Vandervest

Lilac bushes and apple trees.  
A faint whisper on the breeze.

That is all that remains.  
Brush growing in the farm lanes.

House and barn fade away;  
not to endure to the present day.

A foundation long given birth;  
now only a hole in the earth.

Why would a family abandon a site,  
and leave it to what visits in the night?

Where a farmstead once thrived,  
no one has survived.

Few remember who lived there.  
As time goes by, less people care.

Memories kept alive  
will last.  
The Historical Society  
revives the past.



Drawing — Kerry Godsall at  
[www.allaboutdrawings.com](http://www.allaboutdrawings.com).



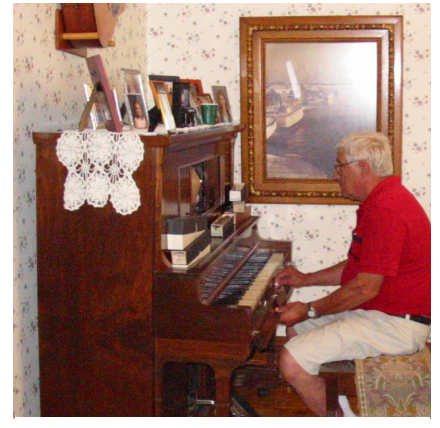
Back of parade float created by Randy and Sue Thiry, parents of Cpl. Jesse Thiry who died in Iraq, April 2004. Photo — Jill Dopke.



Gene Dopke, former resident, shows off downsized bedroom. Gene grew up in and gave tours through



Ann Schmitz, current resident of the Ernst Bruemmer House.



Larry Schmitz, current resident, playing the player piano at the party.

# Bruemmer House

July 12



2008

# 100-year Birthday Party

Photos—Jill Dopke and Hollie Neuman.



Joyce (Bruemmer) Heinrich (b. 1914) — Joyce was the last Bruemmer born in the house.



Dick and Carole (Dopke) Hanamann — Carole was a former resident of the Ernst Bruemmer house.



Judy Srnka, KCHS director, greets people in the dining room.



## Casco Post 319 Raises Funds

(cont. from page 3)

An Independence Day parade included the Rolling Thunder veterans' motorcycle group, vintage tractors, floats, the Pulaski-based Green Bay skydivers, and veterans from all five American Legion posts in Kewaunee County. Elmer Prodell was the oldest veteran in the parade and rode with John Maino, emcee for the program that followed the parade. Speakers were Rich Heidel, a retired U.S. Army major, Sen. Alan Lasee, and State Rep. Gary Bies.

Organizing the event were fund-raising chairman, Don Pavlat; committee members—Jim Detampel, Lloyd Drossart, Larry Kirchman, Tom DeBauche, Vince LeGrave; and Auxiliary members—Christine Legois, Julie DeBauche, and Bea Pavlat.



Parade participants from Luxemburg Post 262 (l-r): Francis "Frank" Hoida, Joe Wessely, and Dick Deterville. Photo — Jill Dopke.

Casco's Thibaudeau-Drossart post was formed in 1924 with Felix Kazmerchek as the first commander. The Auxiliary was organized with Mrs. Anna Dulik serving as its first president.

The American Legion was chartered by Congress in 1919 as a patriotic, war-time veterans' organization devoted to mutual helpfulness. It is a community service organization with nearly 3 million members, men and women, in nearly 15,000 American Legion posts worldwide.

**WANTED** — The Research Center needs plat books and county directories from all years, and Kewaunee Co. telephone books printed before 1990.

They can be dropped off at the Center (219 Steel Street, Algoma), OR you may call (920-487-2516) — your message will be returned within a week.

## NEWS FROM THE RESEARCH CENTER

2005 WINNER — GOVERNOR'S ARCHIVES AWARD

by Virginia Johnson

### WHS GRANT

The KCHS was one of 18 Wisconsin Historical Society affiliates receiving a mini-grant in 2008. This grant provides for map storage equipment at the KCHS Research Center. This year's mini-grants (totalling \$18,000) support preserving collections while improving public access to them. This grant program is made possible through the generosity of a donor interested in supporting local historical societies, schools and the cooperative efforts between them.

### FUNDRAISER

Sales receipts from Denny's Super Valu (Algoma) help KCHS. Denny's donates 1% of the receipt total to the organization chosen by the customer. The receipt slots can be found to the right of the door; KCHS is listed in the far right hand column.

Funds from this program are earmarked for the barn survey project, spearheaded by Lori Birr, a former director.

### HISTORY ... DULL?

Whoever thinks history is dull has not met Center staffer Nancy Kratz. During a discussion about the Stebbins Hotel, Nancy asked if anyone remembered the cupola on the roof and watching for enemy planes during the Cold War. Nancy and several friends were about 13 when they joined other Algoma residents taking turns scanning the skies for hours. The kids used seagulls as targets as they practiced sighting enemy planes.

As Nancy said, "Can you imagine the security of this country being in the hands of 13-year-olds?"

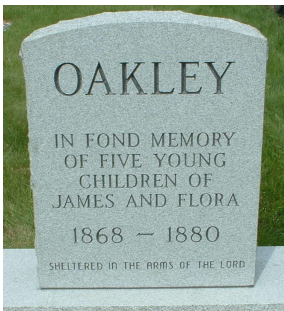
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(cont. from page 5)

### CEMETERY RESEARCH

No one is truly forgotten about until the last time his name is mentioned. So learned Dick Hitt, long-time family historian.

When Hitt mapped the Clay Banks Cemetery, just over the line into Door County, he came upon an unmarked child's grave. His natural curiosity led him to learn much about the five Oakley children buried there. Dick wondered about the circumstances of death, the family, and whether there were any living relatives. His persistence paid off. Over the past few years, his expertise has enabled him to construct a family history and locate living family members.



Gravestone for the five Oakley children. Photo — Dick Hitt.

Dick also provided for a monument that is a tribute to the five Oakley children. The tombstone was set in place this past summer, and is ready to be unveiled during a service this month. Oakley family members will be in Wisconsin for the commemorative service.

The Oakley children never reached adulthood, and they are not among those about whom history is usually written. Thanks to Dick Hitt, these children now have a place in history and have not been forgotten. Dick is quick to credit KCHS' Ken Wolske, SBHS' Mike Gallagher, and Renee Huehn of Huehn's Funeral Home in Sturgeon Bay, all of whom, says Dick, "taught me a lot and were very helpful in locating relatives."

### BARN PROJECT

As barns deteriorate and silos crumble, Kewaunee County is losing much of its evidence of historical structures. William Diefenbach's pre-1930 silos can still be identified by his trademark cement ball on the lightening rod, but who can find even a few of the hundreds of barns built by Julius Busch? The unique ethnic construction styles brought by the immigrants will never again be a part of the county's

landscape. Vice-president Jerry Abitz presented a slide program on barns for last winter's Local History Series, and will be presenting it for Learning in Retirement at UW-GB this fall. Lori Birr and Jill Dopke have been surveying and photographing barns in Carlton, and these photos can be seen at the Research Center.

Please help us identify the special barns of the county. Call the Research Center (920-487-2516) to leave a message.

### RESEARCHERS

Transportation costs do not appear to have had an effect on the numbers of people at the Research Center in recent months. Researchers have come from across the country, even as far away as Alaska! These visitors left with glowing comments about both the Center and the county.

### CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Lori Birr whose first-place winning photograph in *The Peninsula Pulse* was noted for its "brilliant use of color and fine-angled view." The paper called the work a "truly remarkable example of architectural photography." Lori has a degree in Fine Arts and has taught art from Poland to the Philippines. She received her M.A. in Museum Studies in Sydney, Australia. Look for Lori's work during gallery visits, or find her online simply by entering her name in Google.

### **Winter Local History Series**

**Friday afternoons at the Research Center**

**Jan. 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 20, 27**

**Ray Selner** talks about Bohemian immigration, Stangleville; **Jerry Abitz** presents the Germans; **Barbara Chisholm** role-plays her great-grandmother as she tells about Belgian immigration and the Peshtigo fire; **Don Honnef** portrays G. W. Elliot whose four sons were in the Civil War; **Virginia Johnson** becomes Edith Haucke who tells about the scams, political intrigue, violence and unrequited love in the early days; **Tom Schuller** tells stories of Kewaunee County.

**Further announcements coming  
in newspapers and on the radio.**

## ***“The rest of the story...”***

by Jerry Abitz

The year 2008 is drawing to a close, and this is our final issue for the year. Looking back on our accomplishments, it has been a productive year. We published four issues of the newsletter as promised. The KCHS Research Center staff produced a number of quality programs that were well attended. Several book signings took place there. If you live in or have visited Algoma, you would be aware of the quality displays in the window at 219 Steele Street.

### **CHANGES**

A former board member, **Lori Birr**, has begun working on a project documenting barns of our area. While having acquired employment guarantees that she will remain here as a resident, the job requires her to work on Saturdays, the day on which we hold our regular meetings. With her professional skills with a camera, we will be guaranteed an outstanding product. But like anything else funds are needed to make this all possible.

**Rhonda Hanson**, our production manager, has resigned from this important position. She gave freely of her time and knowledge to help produce these newsletters over the past year or so. We appreciate what she has done and do thank her. But time restraints caused her to move on. My neighbor, **Susan Slikkers**, has volunteered to help us out. If you have noticed changes in this newsletter, it is because of her experiences in doing this for other groups. As a journalism major at Andrews University she has ideas that neither Jill nor I could even imagine. You will be hearing more of this Holland, Michigan native.

The **Research Center** continues to grow with their collections. Our **website** keeps getting better and better. **Audrey Krautkramer** and **Merle Colburne** keep videotaping individuals with a story to tell; more than 80 such stories have been recorded.

We will begin holding our **annual meetings** in various towns and communities. By doing so, we hope to introduce ourselves

and what we do to areas of the county where our presence may not be strong. We hope to attract more people, and wish to encourage them to bring old-time photos, local anecdotal stories, and other memorabilia about their community(ies) to light so they can be preserved. We want you to know that we are serious about preserving whatever can be in this rapidly changing world. Our first stop will be in the Carlton Town Hall in late April / early May.

### **MUSEUM**

It was with regret we were unable to operate our museum this past summer due to construction on Courthouse Square. It was determined to be too dangerous with construction crews and equipment swarming all over the place. Several of you may have caught a director with a free minute or two, and received a personally guided tour of our facility. I know that I took four people through one Saturday afternoon. But we did get some grief as a result of not being open.

### **YOUR SUPPORT MEANS EVERYTHING...**

We are a certified non-profit, all volunteer organization which means any funds given to us can be used as tax deductions to the extent the law allows. If you are like me, I become very conscious of that fact in November and December.

If you are in a generous mood, we hope to hear from you. An envelope is provided to make it easier to contribute. For those who have given generously earlier in the year, we sincerely thank you. The health of this organization is based upon our friends.

The following have donated since our last issue was published through Sept. 23:

#### **Benefactors (\$100+)**

Alvin & Ginny Briggs	Sherry Steffell
Ray Michalski	Joe Wessely

**Patrons (\$50 - \$99)**

Dorothy Sadow Georgean Schuller  
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Gene E. Jerovitz Phil & Diane Steffen  
Bevan J. Laird Ken Wolske  
Andy Laurowe

**HELP!** — Anyone knowing about the trunk and Czech book left behind at the Algoma Library, please call Virginia at the Research Center (920-487-2516). The donor's name got separated from the trunk.

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

All area codes are 920

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Virginia Johnson, Center Manager  
Ruth Wawirka, Emerita Director

**KEWAUNEE COUNTY RESEARCH CENTER**  
219 Steele Street  
Algoma WI 54201  
Thursdays & Fridays — 12:00 noon - 4 p.m.  
Other days by appt.  
920-487-2516

**KEWAUNEE COUNTY MUSEUM**  
Courthouse Square  
Kewaunee WI 54216  
Daily — 12:00 noon - 4 p.m.  
Off-season by appt.  
920-388-7176 or 920-388-0117

**VISIT OUR FACILITIES...**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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