



HISTORICAL NOTES

VOLUME XXVI, No. 4

OCTOBER 2014

SWISS MISSIONARIES MEET IN LUXEMBURG

by Richard L. Dorner

Immaculate Conception (known as St. Mary's) parish of Luxemburg celebrated its 150th year in June 2014. The early history of this parish does have some rather interesting events. From 1893 to 1896, Rev. Constantine Ulrich was pastor of St. Mary's and his classmate was Bishop Messmer of Green Bay. Considering the fact they were an entire continent away from their homeland, it's amazing that they were together here in America.

During formative years for the priesthood in Switzerland and at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, St. Mary's was establishing its roots in a far-away place called Luxemburg, which, literally, was being carved out of the woods of Casco Township¹ in Kewaunee County, Wisconsin. During this time, neither of these men could have possibly imagined how their missionary work would bring them together here in this new but yet undeveloped land — Swiss nationals and missionaries who served together. This Luxemburg connection was only one they would share in their lifetimes.

St. Mary's began in 1862, with an occasional mass held in a small school house. Rev. F.X. Pfaller, a native of Eichstaett, Bavaria, encouraged the German settlers to build a log church and establish a parish. He was followed by Rev. Edward Daems, a priest from Belgium, who had a much different approach. Daems encouraged the French Canadian settlers in Scarboro to build their own church, Sacred Heart.² Rev. Daems was able to bless this church in 1875. He also tried to discourage the Germans in Luxemburg from creating their own parish.

This reasoning was not in line with what the ethnic groups of settlers did throughout Kewaunee County. People groups, bound by language and customs, established churches and schools to find support from their friends and neighbors. The Germans of Luxemburg were no different than the Czechs who had established St. Joseph, Carlton (Norman) in 1873; St. Lawrence, Stangelville, in 1862; or the Belgians who established St. Louis, Dyckesville, in 1863; and St. Peter's, Lincoln, in 1857. Luxemburg built their first log church in 1864. The French church, Sacred Heart, really didn't have the potential to grow because of the limited French population. On the other hand, the Germans really began to swarm into Luxemburg in the 1870s and 1880s. The French church remained a mission to be served by the priests from Luxemburg and, on occasions, priests from neighboring parishes. Eventually, in 1910, this mission was closed; the building sold and razed. In contrast, St. Mary's has continued to grow.

St. Mary's special distinction is its status as a consecrated church. It was first consecrated by Bishop Krautbauer in 1885, and re-consecrated in 1906 by Bishop Fox upon completion of the new addition to the church.

Many of the early priests were immigrant missionaries from German-speaking lands. Bishop Messmer and Rev. Ulrich shared a common bond as Swiss countrymen and as members of the clergy. Rev. Ulrich was born in Luzerne on January 19, 1845, and Bishop Messmer

(cont. on page 2)



Left: Rev. Constantine Ulrich. **Right:** Bishop Sebastian G. Messmer.
(Photo courtesy of the KCHS photo collection)

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SWISS MISSIONARIES MEET IN LUXEMBURG

(cont. from page 1)

was born August 29, 1847, in Goldach, Canton of St. Gall. Both were ordained to the priesthood in 1871 – Ulrich on April 11 and Messmer on July 23. After ordination, Ulrich served in the Diocese of Rochester, New York, until 1893 at various parishes; Messmer was a professor of theology at the diocesan seminary at Seton Hall College, South Orange, New Jersey.

On March 27, 1892, Messmer was consecrated a bishop and assumed the office of Bishop of Green Bay on April 7, 1892. The following year, on March 30, 1893, Rev. Ulrich was accepted into the Green Bay Diocese and appointed pastor of St. Mary's Luxemburg. Their life-long friendship reunited them once again in Luxemburg. The occasion for this meeting was the confirmation ceremony that took place on October 3, 1895. Among Rev. Ulrich's confirmation class was Anna Marie Kelnhofer. She received this colorful German certificate, which reads: "In remembrance of the Holy Sacrament of Confirmation, which was received from Right Reverend Bishop Sebastian G. Messmer."³

Anna Marie Kelnhofer was the daughter of Margaret Weinfurter and Joseph Kelnhofer, who came from Bohemia. They had five children: Anna, Katherine,⁴ Nicholas, Margaret and Barbara (twins). There were three children from Margaret's first marriage: Rosa, Joseph and Eva Schneider. Their father had died when they were quite young. The Kelnhofers were only one of the many German families that belonged to St. Mary's parish at this time.

The common bonds between Messmer and Ulrich came to a most unusual conclusion. Rev. Ulrich, who was 85, was visiting his homeland in the summer of 1930, when he became seriously ill. He was hospitalized in Switzerland, again in New York, and a third time in Appleton, where he died on August 3, 1930.

Strangely enough, Bishop Messmer, who was visiting his home town of Goldach, Switzerland, died a few days after his friend, Rev. Ulrich. Both had spent their careers in the ministry in America and in northeastern Wisconsin. They held strong ties to their Swiss homeland as each made one last pilgrimage to Switzerland. Messmer and Ulrich, the Swiss missionaries who met in Luxemburg, were among many priests of different lands who served and assisted the ethnic parishes which developed here in Kewaunee County.



Upper left: German confirmation certificate. **Upper right:** Joseph Kelnhofer. **Bottom left:** Margaret (Weinfurter) Kelnhofer. **Bottom right:** Anna Marie Kelnhofer. Photos supplied by Richard L. Dörner from his Dörner family research album.

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Historical Notes

*The official newsletter of the
Kewaunee County Historical Society,
published quarterly.*

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Sources —

Luxemburg News (Luxemburg, Wis.), "Former Pastor Dies at Appleton," August 8, 1930.
Heming, Harry H. *History of the Catholic Church in Wisconsin* (Milwaukee, Wis.: Catholic Historical Publishing Co., 1896): 578-580.

MEMORIES FROZEN IN TIME

by Richard L. Dorner

“Old soldiers never die; they just fade away;” is Douglas MacArthur’s most famous quotation. This quote is not only a reflection of a great general, but also a reflection of a common man who served and was a contemporary of General MacArthur. Hamilton F. Masse¹ was a former editor of the *Kewaunee Enterprise* and a long-time, prominent Kewaunee businessman and civic leader.

He served as editor of the *Enterprise* from 1902 to 1918, after moving to Kewaunee from Green Bay where he was born on July 24, 1877. After leaving the *Enterprise*, he was foreman of the printing department of Leye Aluminum Company for many years; he also conducted an insurance agency as well.

During WWI, he was chairman of several Liberty Loan drives and, in WWII, he was county civil defense director. He served as secretary of the Congregational Church, as an assessor and justice of the peace in the city, and had been manager of the Kewaunee team in the Cherry Baseball League.

He married Emma Bohman in Kewaunee on August 21, 1902, and was the father of four daughters: Leona, Lenore, Marie and Ruth.

Mr. Masse was Kewaunee County’s last surviving veteran of the Spanish-American War, which was fought in 1898. He is wearing his uniform from the Spanish American War in the photo (*above right*). In it,



Edward Christensen holding photo of Hamilton Masse. (Original photo first published in the *Kewaunee Enterprise*, Kewaunee, Wisconsin, January 30, 1958.)



Hamilton Masse (Original photo first published in the *Kewaunee Enterprise*, Kewaunee, Wisconsin, May 9, 1957.)

Mr. Masse’s reflection is in a mirror, while he is looking at a framed photo of himself.

Edward Christensen, a staff photographer for the *Kewaunee Enterprise* and the *Luxemburg News*, planned this impressive photo for Memorial Day, May 30, 1957, intended as a tribute to Mr. Masse because he was the last surviving veteran of that war. This photo was taken in Masse’s home the day before he died at the age of 79.

The second part of this story is that Edward Christensen won first place in a major category of the photo contest of the Wisconsin Press Photographers Association.² Edward entitled his photo, “Reflection of Time.” He was the winner in the Feature Division and the only entrant as a weekly newspaper photographer. The photo (*at left*) with Edward holding “Reflection of Time” was taken by his wife.

The photos actually capture the spirit of two men — the spirit of Hamilton Masse, the old soldier who will never die, lives forever in a photographic moment conceived by the spirit and creativeness of the photographer Edward Christensen. Because of this photographic moment, both men together will never die; they will just fade away.

Sources —

Scrapbook Collection of Joseph Mach, Vol. 3. Collection housed in the Kewaunee County Historical Society History Center, Kewaunee, Wis.

¹*Kewaunee Enterprise* (Kewaunee, Wisc.), May 9, 1957.

²*Kewaunee Enterprise* (Kewaunee, Wisc.), January 30, 1958.

IN MEMORY OF...

by Jerry Abitz

LEONA BRUEMMER 1918-2014

Looking back to 1973 when I became the newest director of the Kewaunee County Historical Society, there was Leona (Bodwin) Bruemmer of Tisch Mills, hovering in the background. She, to my knowledge, was never a director, but certainly was very active with the KCHS. However, if one attended the county fair, there, in the 1956 quonset building, would be a display put up by Leona and her husband, Earl Bruemmer, as representatives of the KCHS.



Leona Bruemmer.
Photo supplied by
Jane Zimmerman.

Leona was on very good terms with the late Olga Sanderson in the 1970s who together helped to resurrect the KCHS from its long sleep.¹ She seemed to be part of that band of stalwarts who, if something needed to be done, they would do it, giving freely of their time as needed. According to her two daughters, Peggy Kohnle and Jane Zimmerman, she was very active in scrounging stuff from even their own personal possessions with the quip, "We need it for the Museum!" This was the aftermath of a drive to save the 1876 Jail and Sheriff's Quarters. Once that battle had been won, the County Board suggested using this National Register building as a museum where the Decker Collection² could be on display, thus freeing up office space in the Courthouse. They, along with the Harlows, George Richard and others, worked diligently to get the Museum ready for its grand opening in 1970.

While born in Edgar, an area just west of Wausau, she spent all of her adult life in the Tisch Mills area. Once the Museum was in operation, her presence lessened. However, as a Green Bay elementary teacher, I would see her each year I took my class on a field trip to the visitors' center at the Two Creeks nuclear plant. She was the specialist, guiding visitors who ventured off Hwy. 42 through this center.



THIS ISSUE'S AUTHORS...

✍ **Jerry Abitz** (see page 4) — Jerry has been working with and for the KCHS since 1973, serving as its newsletter editor since 1996. Married to Althea since 1956 and living along the shoreline of the bay, he enjoys writing about historical topics, and takes time to dabble in landscaping; he's a gardener, a voracious reader, and loves the outdoors. Equipped with a very curious and active mind, he's taught 45 classes for Learning in Retirement at UWGB, and is still going. If you'd like to contact him, send an email to gabitz@centurytel.net.



✍ **Arletta Bertrand** (see page 5) — Born in the Town of Lincoln (Kewaunee County), Arletta always has been interested in history and has invested hours in their family genealogy. She's the KCHS treasurer, active in the Luxemburg Legion Auxiliary, serves other organizations in a number of capacities, and volunteers at the History Center in Kewaunee. If you'd like to contact her, send an email to arlettabertrand44@gmail.com.



✍ **Richard L. Dornier** (see pages 1 and 3) — A lifelong resident of Montpelier Township in Kewaunee County, Richard has been delving into his family history for many years. It took six years to gather the info on the European connection of the Dornier family through the Plzen Archives in Bohemia, Cz. Richard has a B.A. in English, History, and German from St. Norbert College (De Pere, Wisc.). Research into his family history has given him "a chance to reapply what I learned from my years of study."



RUTH WAWIRKA 1919-2014



Ruth Wawirka. (Photo obtained from <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/greenbaypressgazette/obituary.aspx?pid=171883504>).

One day a visitor came to the KCHS Museum, the Old Jail and Sheriff's Quarters on Courthouse Square in Kewaunee. I was the volunteer that day. Ruth was seeking information on some topic and I was able to help her to find what she was looking for. We hit it off immediately, and had a long visit. I found out she was a fellow teacher who had spent her career working in the Two Rivers schools, although she lived several blocks away from our museum here in Kewaunee. I shared my experiences in the Luxemburg and Green Bay schools. She immediately told me about her first experiences teaching at Luxemburg High School, but in an earlier time period.

One thing led to another. I mentioned we had openings on our KCHS Board of Directors. With her apparent interest in our county's early history and as a life-long resident of Kewaunee, perhaps she would like to join us? I told her she would be an asset to our society. I must have impressed her because she did become an active director.

Eventually, health issues arose, and she stepped down. Because she lived alone, there were times she was confined to a nursing home. I remember visiting her at one in Luxemburg. There were a number of times that I would

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THOSE WHO SERVED

LUXEMBURG AMERICAN LEGION RALPH KLINE POST No. 262

by Arletta Bertrand

Legion Post 262 was named in honor of Ralph F. Kline, the first young man from Luxemburg to lose his life in World War I. The son of Mrs. Wensel Seidl, born in Michigan in 1896, he moved to and grew up in Luxemburg. In November 1917, he answered the call of his country, along with 23 others from Kewaunee County. When wounded in the Battle of Chateau Thierry, he was sent to a hospital; after he recovered, Pvt. Kline returned to the war. It was in the great Battle of Argonne Forest, October 17, 1918, that he lost his life, being among the number of valiant American boys to make the supreme sacrifice.



Ralph Kline (Photo from the KCHS photo collection.)

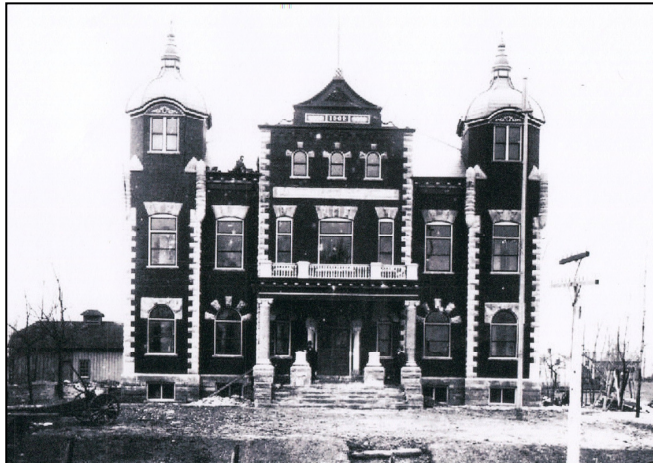
He was connected with the 168 Inf. Reg. of the 42nd Div., commonly known as the Rainbow Division. Private Kline was temporarily buried in Flanders, France. In 1921, his remains were brought home; St. Mary Catholic Church in Luxemburg was the site of the funeral, with the American Legion Guard of Honor in attendance. Private Kline was laid to rest in St. Mary Church Cemetery.

The Ralph Kline Post 262 was organized May 23, 1920, which, after 94 years, is still very active in the community. Legion and Auxiliary meetings are held in the Luxemburg Community Center on Maple Street every third Monday of the month.

Source —

Heidmann, Harold. *Kewaunee County Honor Roll and War History* Algoma, Wis.: Algoma Printing Company: (1929).

Starting with this issue, we are introducing a new column. We want to honor our servicemen and -women. We will start by featuring a different American Legion Post in each issue of this newsletter.



The Kewaunee County Courthouse (after addition in 1902; original built in 1873). Photo courtesy of the KCHS photo collection.

THE GHOST OF KEWAUNEE PAST??

by Arletta Bertrand

After finding an article in the *Kewaunee Enterprise* from June 20, 1902, I got to thinking about all the stories of the ghost at the Kewaunee County Jail Museum. Just maybe, there's more than one ghost...

According to the article in the *Enterprise*, the workmen engaged in digging for the foundation of the addition to the courthouse in 1902 found a box containing the bones of a man. It was determined they were the bones of Joe Bushey, credited with burning down Kewaunee County Jail forty years earlier in 1862 when Vojta Stransky was sheriff. At the time of the fire, Bushey was incarcerated for stealing clothes from various washlines, and known to have matches in his pocket at the time of the fire. When the jail was burned and Bushey with it, the opinion was expressed that he meant to set fire to his straw mattress and, while it was burning, make his escape, not expecting the whole building to burn.

After the fire, all that remained of the unfortunate man was gathered together and placed in a box, which was buried next to the courthouse building, remaining there for four decades. When discovered, the box consisted of a few bones and portions of the flesh which had become dry, but no head..? It was believed to have been buried with the body, but missing when the workers opened the box. So, now, the big question is, "Where is Joe Bushey's head?" Without an answer, the box and its contents were again buried, still without a head, somewhere in the Courthouse Yard.

The jail was replaced after the fire with what now is the Jail Museum. Strange things have been known to happen in that newly-built jail. My father-in-law, Robert Bertrand, was there to experience one of those strange

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NEWS FROM THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Report from the Trenches

by Historical Notes staff

VOLUNTEER LUNCHEON —

Kewaunee County Historical Society will be honoring the people who have helped us in the past year. We will be announcing the Volunteer of the Year for both the Museum and the History Center at this time. The luncheon will be held at the Grace Lutheran Church on Hwy. 42 between Kewaunee and Algoma on Saturday, Oct. 18; lunch will be served at 12:00n, with a speaker and door prizes to follow.



FOR SALE AT THE HISTORY CENTER —

DVDS: • St. Mary Church Luxemburg Cemetery Walk • St. Lawrence Church Stangelville 150 Year Cemetery Walk

BOOKS: • St. Mary Church Luxemburg 150 Years by Richard Dörner and Arletta Bertrand • Early History of Carlton, 2nd Edition by Jill Dopke

OKTOBERFEST — Ag Heritage will celebrate its annual Oktoberfest on Sunday, Oct. 12. Tom Schuller and Jerry Abitz will stage and man the KCHS display for this event which will include a continuous showing of a travelogue of Germany, as well as items that are typically German. It will be held at Heritage Farm, south of Kewaunee on Hwy 42.

WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S LOCAL HISTORY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONVENTION —

This year's convention, featuring workshops for local historical societies and historical preservation groups, will be held at the Osthoff Resort in Elkhart Lake on Friday and Saturday, Oct. 24-25. KCHS will be represented by Judy Srnka, Mary Reckelberg, and Jerry and Althea Abitz. We have had continuous representation at this annual event every year since 1981. The workshops are designed to help individual societies/preservation groups with information and feedback on various issues. As with the Northeast Convention, it is a time to recharge one's batteries and forge friendships with other groups. The displays of projects stimulates what can be adopted by one's own society. The Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) will have its display of recently-published books available for sale.

ANNUAL CHRISTKINDLMARKT — The KCHS will be participating in the citywide Christkindlmarkt on Friday and Saturday, Nov. 21-22. Stop in at the History Center and sign up for a door prize! Visit other area businesses to

shop and have chances to win prizes at every stop! A parade will be featured on Friday, plus all the music, food, and children's activities, including Santa!

WEBSITE — Although the new website is under construction, it can be viewed at www.kewauneeountyhistory.com.



AT THE HISTORY CENTER — Currently on display, *featured left to right in photo above:* • Naval uniforms, Korean War era, worn by John Wilterding Jr. • Army uniform, WWI, worn by Theophile Bader • WWII Marine uniform worn by Chauncey Shaw, who served in Saipan, and • WWI Army uniform worn by William Kinnard, both dress and daily uniforms. This picture includes our most recent donation, that of William Kinnard's uniforms. Also, *in photo at right*, Boy Scout uniform worn by Harold Lemens, donated by Harold and Bernadina Lemens. *Photos by Richard L. Dörner.*



These were the main items donated during the recent quarter of the year. KCHS also received a translation and a copy of a document for the parish church of St. Wenceslaus in the Pilsen area.

NORTHEAST HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONVENTION —

This one-day meeting was held at the Manitowoc Historical Society's headquarters building in July. The KCHS was represented by Tom Schuller, Darlene Mueller, Jerry Abitz, Bevan Laird and Al Briggs. Rick Bernstein from the WHS gave a presentation on the preservation of artifacts. It was a time to reconnect with our neighboring societies, share ideas, and get reenergized. After lunch, the attendees toured Pinecrest Village, the MCHS facility consisting of historical buildings moved there to preserve them, to give visitors a taste of what life once was like in the early days of Manitowoc County.

21ST ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE DAYS

KCHS again had a presence at the annual Ag Heritage Days at the Kewaunee County Fairgrounds in Luxemburg, Sept. 21-22. The focus of this year's display was area churches, five of which have celebrated a significant

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Report from the Trenches *(cont. from page 6)*

anniversary within the last few years. On display were DVDs of the Luxemburg St. Mary and Stangelville St. Lawrence Cemetery Walks. Also on display was the 150 Year Celebration book of St. Mary's of Luxemburg, produced by Arletta Bertrand and Richard Dorner, both KCHS directors. The DVDs and the history book were available for purchase.

JAIL MUSEUM UPDATE

— The Museum is now closed for the season. We want to extend our gratitude to both our volunteers who make this possible as well as our visitors for a wonderful season! *Hope to see you next year!*



IN MEMORY OF...

(cont. from page 4)

stop by her house on Second Street for a visit as well. I remember, too, when we asked for someone to step forward to help us obtain new computer equipment, there was Ruth with a generous donation of \$3000.

She was a “go-getter.” With her interest in schools, she spent countless hours traipsing around the county — interviewing former teachers, gathering information as well as photos of all of the county's numerous grade schools. Those schools were mostly one-room affairs, except for those in the incorporated communities. If you visit our History Center on Ellis Street in Kewaunee and view our information on the county's schools, you can thank Ruth Wawirka who collected all of it.

¹KCHS was founded in 1921 in a burst of activity, but entered a long inactive period when it did not meet. The late Olga Sanderson had related to me the difficulty of reactivating this group when the issue of razing the Jail and Sheriff's Quarters came up in 1969.

²Personal collection of artifacts and documents deeded to Kewaunee County in 1911 by Edward Decker, an important entrepreneur and land agent whose presence helped write the early history of this county. The compact stated this collection was to be displayed at the county seat in perpetuity.

THE GHOST OF KEWAUNEE PAST??

(cont. from page 5)

events in 1954. His uncle, Joe Kelnhoffer, was arrested for disturbing the peace and taken to the jail, then confined by leather straps on his wrists to a chair in the jail cell after being searched for any weapons. Left alone, locked in a cell, the straps were miraculously cut through, and he was free! Joe proclaimed, “I am free! I am free!” No knife or razor blades were ever found in the jail cell. So how did the leather straps get cut? Could Joe Bushey have been there to help him, looking for help himself? Yes... Unusual, unexplainable things have been known to happen.

So, stop by! To see photos of the Courthouse, visit our Museum, located on the Courthouse Square at 613 Dodge Street, or the History Center, 217 Ellis Street in downtown Kewaunee.

Source —

Kewaunee Enterprise (Kewaunee, Wis.), June 20, 1902.

Friends of the Kewaunee County Historical Society ~~ 2014 Donations ~~

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Trembl, Tony & June
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Waara, Jerry & Mimi
Werner, Tom & Renee
Zelewski, Norbert & Annette
Zimmer, Leon & Diane

Friends of the Kewaunee County Historical Society

~~ 2014 Donations ~~

History can inspire us to contribute to our community. We have generations of stories that teach us how we can make a difference. These stories can help us appreciate who we are, and it enables wisdom, if we are open to learning. History is one of the best tools we have for understanding the world around us. You can help ensure the Kewaunee County Historical Society's ability to collect, preserve and share stories by donating. We are a non-profit organization and have no affiliation to the Ag. Heritage Farm nor does the County fund us. Our only way of keeping the Society going is the donations we receive from our readers.

If you have already donated this year, we appreciate it very much; if you receive the newsletter by email, please consider donating — while the cost of providing the e-version *appears* minimal, we still have the expenses of creating and publishing the newsletter plus other overhead (building, utilities, etc.). We do take donations in memory of loved ones; you also can sponsor a newsletter in their memory that would include a short biography and photo of them. If you'd like to underwrite an issue, just contact any of our directors (see page 2).

We have included an envelope for your convenience.

Note: The listing on page 7 is based upon donations received from June 1 through August 31, 2014.

If your gift was received at a later date and not listed, it will be acknowledged in the next issue.

If your name is not listed and you gave, please contact our treasurer, Arletta Bertrand (see info below).

As a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are tax-deductible.

If you have a change of address, please notify Arletta Bertrand as soon as possible.

~~ **By mail:** 1106 Colle Street, Luxemburg WI 54217 ~~ **By phone:** 920-845-2972 ~~

~~ **By email:** arlettabertrand44@gmail.com ~~

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Courthouse Square at 613 Dodge Street
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Phone: 920-388-0117

September - May by appointment.

Summer (Memorial Day through Labor Day) —

Open daily, 12:00-4:00 p.m.

KEWAUNEE COUNTY HISTORY CENTER

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Email: kchistory219@yahoo.com

Open Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays —

10:00-4:00 p.m.

Other days/times by appointment only.

If inclement weather, please call ahead.