

# HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Vol. 1, Issue 13

November, 2007

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## Inside this issue:

Logging Sled	2
Hats Off To...	2
History's Nuggets	3
Acquisitions	3
Sponsor	3
Contact	4

## LETTER FROM A VOLUNTEER

Hello Neighbors,

My name is Roberta Wright and I have lived in this community for sixty years. I'm retired and am now a volunteer at the Crawford County Historical Museum.

When I was in school (many decades ago), history was a required subject but not an especially interesting one at most times. There were many dates to remember and names of long-dead people.

The attitude of my peers and I was, who cares? That was the time before schools provided field trips to such places as museums, libraries and historical sites.

Today's students are fortunate to have the opportunity

to see much history in "living color." They are able to have hands-on experiences with items from the "old days." And do they love it!

While the children are busily enjoying their visits to the Museum, the adults are finding many things of interest too.

The ladies are especially intrigued with the old-fashioned and beautiful clothes on the mannequins and with the household items from their grandmother's day.

In the meantime, the men are looking over the riverboat which was made in 1915 by Arthur E. Wakeley. The boat hangs suspended from the ceiling in the lobby, on loan

to the Museum by the late Peter Stephan and his wife, Gloria.

The men are also interested in the fishing and paddling pictures and trophies, the military mementos, the old fire engines and the trapper's cabin.

The entire train station, as well as the yard, are packed with nostalgia and time-honored items that people are anxious to see. And everyone wants to go inside the caboose!

Don't miss your chance to take the tour.



## CDs

Ken Wright, the webmaster who created and maintains the Museum website, has made a CD for us.

The CD contains 86 photos of the October 2007 train event. Photographs from both days of the weekend are presented. The CD also includes a video that Ken made of the Pere Marquette #1225

steam engine pulling the train into the station as the crowd watches.

At first, you see a light far off in the distance. Then, there is the excitement of the crowd as they hear the sound of the train and see it appear. It is quite a good video.

Some of the photos and the video can be seen on the train

page of our website: [grayling-area.com/museum](http://grayling-area.com/museum).

We are selling the videos for \$10.00 plus 60 cents tax. Orders can be mailed to: CCHS, P.O. Box 218, Grayling, MI 49738. We will also sell them during the November 17th Christmas Walk at the Museum. They are a great gift idea!

## LOGGING SLED

One day in 1988, police officers Tim Coe and Bob Butzin were engaged in a diving practice in Lake Margrethe where they found a logging sled from the late 1800s. Sleds were used to transport logs across ice to the train at the other side of the lake. Tim said, "It was a pretty exciting find for a diver to discover something that large and old."

Because it was found in a part of the lake that is owned by the State, the sled went to Hartwick Pines. However, it was

given to the Museum in 1999.

Time and weather did their damage to the wooden sled and it became a safety hazard in the Museum courtyard. Rich Silvoa, Bret Black, Allen Dickie, Mike Arwood, Travis Roberts (Fire

official, will reconstruct the sled using a sawmill and special equipment he has at his home at no cost to the Museum. Joe said, "It's a worthy project to preserve history. It will take a lot of work but will also be a lot of fun." Travis Roberts will help Joe in this endeavor which will take about a year.

Another firefighter, Dwayne Morse, will work with Air Way Automation to sandblast the metal parts of the sled and paint them. This is truly a community project to reproduce and preserve a piece of Crawford County history.



Marshal), Justin Wethington and Jessie Cde Baca from the Grayling Firefighters Association dismantled the sled for us.

Joe Duran, the County's building



## HATS OFF TO . . . JAY STEPHAN!

In 1948, Jay began racing with Ted Engel who had never raced before. The two weighed about the same and had excellent muscle tone from working in construction. According to Jay, they made a good team. As Jay says, "I read the water and Ted paddled; sometimes he would shut his eyes and go. He depended on me to keep us in the river."

1950, 1951 and 1952 were the trophy years for Jay and Ted. In 1951, Jay won the beautiful Marston trophy for the largest margin of time between 1st and 2nd place which was 43 minutes. Jay still holds the record today. He says, "It should have

been an hour and a half but, when we went over Foote Dam, the turbines had not yet been turned on. They weren't expecting us until 8 or 9 a.m. but we got to the dam at 7. The officials turned the turbines on as soon as they saw us coming but that only gave us 15 minutes. We got 2 miles down the river and we were out of water. We had to walk half the way from Foote Dam to Oscoda. Ted and I were in Oscoda so early that the band was not there to greet us."

The Marston trophy was also awarded to the team who won three races. Jay still has the original trophy displayed in his

living room.

In 1952, Jay and Ted's only race training consisted of paddling 14 miles around Otsego Lake in Gaylord. Jay was in the best shape of his life and lost just 4 pounds in that race.

By 1953, Jay was working as a telephone cable repairman, working 16 hours a day, preventing him from entering the race. Jay says, "Also, the challenge was not there anymore after winning 3 races and the Marston trophy." Ted was a geologist in Venezuela at the time; he passed away in 2006. Jay still makes his home in Grayling. Hats off to you, Jay!!!

*Jay says, "It was the thrill of the challenge."*

## HISTORY'S NUGGETS

Charles and Maude Blair sold the Notch in 1920 to Rasmus Hanson who employed Henry Borchers to oversee the property, or farm.

In the meantime, a couple named Herbert and Kata Wolff needed a gardener for their home at Lake Margrethe and decided to hire Mr. Borchers. However, it was necessary for the Wolffs to find a place for Henry Borchers and his family to live while in their employ. So, in 1930, the Wolffs bought

the property from Mr. Hanson's estate with the house of ill repute intact. The Borchers had plenty of living space in one wing of the house and became the caretakers, raising animals and caring for the vegetable garden.

The Wolffs discovered that all the items in the "ill-repute" part of the house were in their original condition. Kata Wolff thought it would be fun to turn the Notch into a museum to hold relics of the early days

of Crawford County. Items were donated from beer companies and Kata received steins, glassware and dishes from many parts of Europe.

Eventually, the house burned down. Parts of slot machines, glasses, dishes and many other items were found, burned, in the Au Sable River. Another house was built on the property by a new owner about 45 years ago and has become part of a subdivision just outside Grayling city limits.



## ACQUISITIONS

One of the artifacts donated to the Museum this year is a 6 foot vault door used in one of the Salling, Hanson & Co. offices on Michigan Avenue. It's from the 1890s and has an original hand-painted Danish scene with scrollwork. The door was given by Robbyn Cudney of Three Lakes Abstract & Title Co. who is now leasing the building.

Another donation was given by Elsie Jansen which was her 1924 black wicker baby buggy, complete with porcelain doll and blanket.

Janet Gill, whose great-grandfather was Nels Peter Olson, donated several pretty dresses from the roaring twenties. She and her husband, Marty, also gave us one of her great-grandmother's beautiful dresses from the late 1800s. It's light green and ivory with lace and intricate bead work—delicate and quite lovely.

The couple gave us turn-of-the-century baby clothes as well. They are white cotton dresses with lace and embroidered

work, handmade from Portugal and the Philippines.

Janet's grandfather was Spike MacNeven who built Spike's Keg O'Nails in 1933 and opened the day after prohibition ended. He sponsored various sports teams in Grayling and brought the Detroit Tigers and Jack Dempsey to the city. He was a great asset to the community. The Gills have given us many photos.

All items mentioned are located in various areas of the Museum for the enjoyment of visitors.

*Preserving pieces of  
history for future  
generations.*

## SPONSOR



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The Crawford County Historical Society would like to express its deep appreciation to Xpress Copy Center for sponsoring this month's newsletter.

**Crawford County  
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## **MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

Help your museum continue to grow. We need your help today and any donation will be accepted. Memberships are good for one year, May through April. Any dues paid now will be good for the museum year of 2008. We look forward to adding new members.

### **DUES:**

\$5.00 Senior Citizen  
\$10.00 Single  
\$25.00 Family  
\$50.00 Supporting Member  
\$100.00 Memorial Plaque (one or two names inscribed)

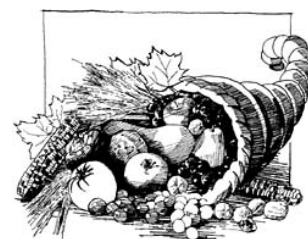
Please make checks payable to:

CC Historical Society  
P.O. Box 218  
Grayling, MI 49738

Our telephone number is:  
(989) 348-4461

Our website is:  
[grayling-area.com/museum](http://grayling-area.com/museum)

Our e-mail address is:  
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**MUSEUM HOME PAGE**