

HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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March, 2008

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LETTER FROM A VOLUNTEER

Hello Historical Society Patrons,

My name is Ila Cosgray and my husband's name is Wayne. I was born in Lansing, Michigan and Wayne is from Stockbridge which is near Lansing.

When I was nine years old, Stockbridge became my home and, in 1948, Wayne and I married. After years of farming, Wayne and I moved our family to Manton, which is near Cadillac in the north-western part of the state. The year was 1959 and we lived there for forty-seven years.

We have two children who

still live in Manton. Our daughter, Diane, works at Manton School and John works at Michigan Rubber in Cadillac. Our daughter, Joanne, lives in Mesick and works at Tendercare in Traverse City.

Our son, Bob, and his wife Kay, whom many of you know, live in Grayling.

Wayne and I are new to the area, having moved here about a year and a half ago from Manton. I hope this is the last move. We are living in a subdivision called Viking Village and are very happy there.

I guess Kay thought I would have time on my hands, so she suggested my volunteering at the Museum. I joined R.S.V.P. and offered my services at the Museum last summer, spending three hours a week there until the Depot closed for the winter.

I expect to volunteer again this season; it has been very interesting, getting to know people and seeing the different artifacts. Everything about the museum is quite interesting.



TIDBITS

"A few minutes before train time, an old black horse runs regularly down to the Grayling depot, hangs about till the train departs and then runs back to the commons till another train whistles. He has been known to wait two hours for a late train. For three years, he has been as regular as clockwork and it is quite a common saying among the citizens that 'It is about train time as Jack (old Tige) is going

down.' Jack is the superannuated servant of a drayman." *Detroit News, 1896*

"An unfortunate affair occurred in the village on Monday evening last, in the destruction of Mr. David Shoppenagon's residence near the bridge. The inmates, his wife and five children, barely had time to escape the devouring element and saved nothing of much value, as the structure was a very flimsy affair

and highly flammable. Mr. S. was 'way up down the river' at the time and, when he returned the next day, was 'heap mad, he', as this was the 2nd burnout he has experienced since his advent among us. Our sympathetic and kindhearted citizens have raised a sum of money to build him a new house at once."

Crawford Avalanche

February 24, 1881

LOVE LETTERS

August 6, 1925 (on the train)

"Dearest, I can't help but write. I am thinking of you all the time, dear. It is now 25 minutes after 2. I suppose you are asleep. Well, little girl, dream on about me.

I will be a happy boy when the 22nd of August comes. I am cussing my head off at the car in which I am riding. The darn thing keeps rocking so bad that I can hardly write. The boys in the car ahead are all drunk. I just lit a smoke. Oh God, little girl, if you only knew how much I love you, I would be happy. Well, I will finish this letter tonight. Goodbye sweetheart. We are getting near Saginaw now.

Good morning, Marjorie. We have been in Bay City now since 3 o'clock. It is now 9

minutes past 7. There, the locomotive just hit us. I suppose we will soon be going. Another Guard unit just pulled up along side of us. Sweetheart, you will let me come to see you when I get back, won't you? My God, but I am lonesome for you. A bunch of boys are singing. I just got back from a trip around the cattle cars. Well dear, I will close for a little while again.

Well, I just ate my dinner at 2:00, rather early. Dearest, I have been thinking about you all day. Sweetheart, I am waiting for Mess Call now. I just long for you and Flint. Goodbye dear. I am sending all of my love to you, little girl. Love from Carl"

August 7, 1925 (camp at Alger)

"Dearest, I am in Alger tonight. It is raining like h-ll. We had a good march today. Only made 8

miles but will make 12 tomorrow. I just wish that I was back home with you dear. I am awful lonesome tonight for some reason or another.

What are you doing to keep you busy, my little girl? Once again, I want to ask you if I can come over to see you Sunday, August 23rd.

Have you been out to see Mother yet? I have not written home yet but I think I will Sunday. Well little sweetheart, I will write you a nice long letter Sunday. I have not got very much time because I have some Duty to do. So please excuse me for this time, will you? I am sending you all the love I can and I suppose you know how much that is. It is all I have to send. With love from your beau, Corp. Carl"

To be continued . . .



HATS OFF TO. . . JOHN SELESKY!

John Lawrence Selesky was born March 11, 1918 in Detroit, Michigan. His father, Alex Selesky, was also born in Detroit and his mother, May Baty, was from South Haven. John is of German ancestry.

When John was 19, he moved with his family to Rose City (his parents had moved there when John was a baby but subsequently returned to Detroit).

In April 1938, John joined the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). He was assigned to Camp Higgins Lake, 10 miles south of Grayling. He began by drafting surveyors' maps and

later became a surveyor himself. The boys were paid \$30 per month. They kept \$5 and the other \$25 was sent to the family. The Camp also held classes where the boys could learn to read and write.

During this same time, Joe Louis, the famous Detroit boxing champ, worked at CCC Camp Mack Lake near Mio.

While with the CCC, John was a Golden Gloves amateur boxer. He had heard of Minnie Hartley, owner of Minnie's Cash and Carry grocery store in Grayling (which became Black and White grocery when

Minnie sold it). Minnie sponsored a boxing team for Grayling, so John thought he would talk to her. During one of his visits, Minnie introduced John to her daughter, Virginia. The couple married in 1939 and that was the end of John's time in the CCC—no married men allowed.

The couple remained in Grayling, Virginia busy taking nursing courses and John helping Minnie run the store. Eventually, the couple had 5 children.

To be continued . . .

*Happy 90th
Birthday to you,
John!!*

HISTORY'S NUGGETS

THE ICEHOUSE

An icehouse was built in the late 1800s by the Michigan Central Railroad Company and still stands on its original location at 509 Norway St. in Grayling, near the Depot. It was built to bear the heavy load of ice and to be insulated against heat.

Using sleds pulled by horses, men would cut big blocks of ice, 2 x 3 feet, from Lake Margrethe and surrounding lakes.

When the men arrived at the icehouse, they used pulleys to lift the blocks to the second floor. The blocks were then packed in sawdust and woodchips. When ice was needed in any of the train cars, it was put on a chute which swung out from the second story of the

building. The shoved ice went down a ramp right into the cars. The large blocks of ice were the refrigeration for transporting dairy and meat.

The walls in the building are 5 inches thick and are insulated with 5 layers of boards and tar paper. The room upstairs is 3,000 square feet. Its floor is made of 4 x 12 inch beams spaced 12 inches apart. They were covered with sheet metal (now with wood) which sloped. When ice melted, it flowed down a spout into the ground outside the building.

There was nothing downstairs except a dirt floor and the staircase. As well as the staircase, the beams, walls and roof

(except for new shingles) are all in their original condition.

There were actually 2 separate icehouses built but, in 1982, they were joined together. The right one was inferior but usable, having sawdust in the walls for insulation.

As refrigeration equipment was invented, the purpose of the icehouse became obsolete. It was later used to store feed, beer and building materials. In the 1930s, it was used as a warehouse and in 1980, Dave and Jill Wyman turned it into a top rated quilt shop.

Now, Ali and Ted Bayhnam welcome visitors to see a unique piece of Crawford County history.



WEBSITE UPDATES

Our website has been further updated by Ken Wright. All sidebar photos on the Main Page are now labeled with a name or place.

The videos and photos on the Museum Tour Page are also labeled. The videos now have music and sound effects.

For example, upon watching the Lobby video, you will hear the arrival of the train with all the sounds of the steam engine.

While watching the Schoolroom, "School Days" is played. The sound of an antique sewing machine is heard in the Seamstress video. There is narration in the Saloon video, and re-

member "The Sting"? Other old songs will surely put a spring in your step and a smile on your face!

When you click on the photo of the Canoe Marathon display, you can listen to the start of the 2006 race, called by Dave Sherbert and Larry Roberts of WGRY radio. Happy viewing!

*Working to make
the website a fun-
filled experience.*

SPONSOR



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The Crawford County Historical Society expresses its deep appreciation to Charlie's Country Corner for sponsoring this month's newsletter.

**Crawford County
Historical Society**

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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. 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:

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Grayling, MI 49738

Our telephone number is:

(989) 348-4461

Our website is:

grayling-area.com/museum

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Please consider helping us defray the cost of the newsletter by receiving it via email. Simply drop us a line at the address to the left. Thank you.

Your questions, comments and ideas are welcome.

MUSEUM HOME PAGE