



# The Crawford County Historical Museum News Letter

## Volume 1, 2017

97 East Michigan Ave., P.O. Box 218  
Grayling, Mich. 49738 (989) 348-4461

### ***"From The President's Desk"***

Why should anyone care about history? What is the point? At some time or another, most school students have asked these questions. I can certainly remember the days when I felt that way as well. My 9<sup>th</sup> grade history class consisted of our teacher opening his textbook and reading in a monotone for one hour. Then we got a student teacher who had the class put President Franklin Roosevelt on trial for treason over Pearl Harbor. Out of the entire 9 months, what would you imagine that I remember? It certainly was nothing that our regular teacher "taught" us. At the same time, for several years, I had become extremely interested in the Civil War (and still have that interest today). I studied it as much as possible, and also had tables set up to re-create some of the major battles.

As I have gotten older, I have seen a change in books that I have read. More and more I am seeing books that detail the personal experiences of our men and women in arms. It is those experiences which make military history come alive. Too often in the past, the teaching of history has centered around dates and large events. These are, of course, important. But I believe that history is far more than that. History is people who make and/or participate in events. History is our record of those people, dates and events. Studying history gives us a real sense of where we come from, why we are where we are today, and can be instructive about what to either do or avoid doing in the future.

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In history we can see the entire gamut of human experience, from the depths of evil to the heights of goodness. It can be disgusting when we see how badly we as humans can treat each other. It can be exhilarating when we see people in difficult circumstances being the best they can be and doing wonderful things for others, sometimes even at the cost of their own lives.

(Cont'd pg. 2)

### ***"January, 2017" -- Here We Go!***

2017 is here! The Crawford County Historical Society is looking forward to this new year and the possibilities which it brings. We have a number of projects and events which we are planning. One of the project involves both the inside and the outside of the Military Annex. You may have noticed that the outside is in serious need of some work. We are planning on putting siding on the building. Although it will not be exactly the same, it will help us protect the building and its contents. This will go along with the new roof that was put on in 2015. We have a new sign to put up on the front as well. Inside, we want to remove the old carpet, sand and finish the floors, then completely change the way we do the exhibits. The building will become more user friendly and we will be able to rotate items within each exhibit area in order to give visitors a fresh experience.

Our official opening is Memorial Day weekend. We are working on a 30-45 minute program of music and readings designed to honor the men and women who have given their lives in the service of our county. Later in the summer we are going to highlight the military history of Crawford County with a Military In The Museum day.

Talks have already begun to have firefighters and police officers come to the Museum to allow the public to meet them and to learn more about the history of these important services in our community. As these events are planned, they will be advertised to the community.

Admission to the Museum and its events is free. As a 501, c3 non-profit organization, the Society is not funded by any tax money. Everything we do is funded by the donations of people and organizations.

The Historical Society is excited about 2017 and what can be accomplished. Will you consider joining us in our efforts? We need volunteers to help man the Museum and do other projects related to our work. Because we are funded by donations, we ask you to consider giving a donation of any size to help us in our work.

You may send donations to the Museum at P.O. Box 218, Grayling, MI, 49738 or you may leave a phone message at 989-348-4461 with your contact information if you wish to volunteer. A volunteer application will be sent to you upon request. Consider a visit this summer. You will have a great experience!

Karl Schreiner, President

*(From The President's Desk cont'd.)*

The history of Crawford County is no different from that in other places. It is rich in people who have contributed greatly to making this a fine area in which to live. They have participated in business, public service, and the military. Logging, fishing, and recreation have been vital parts of making Crawford County what it is today. The famous archer, Fred Bear, made this his home and for many years where he conducted the business of Bear Archery. Lumber baron Rasmus Hanson gave the original land grant that allowed Camp Grayling to be started.

The list of people and their accomplishments could go on and on. It is the desire of the Crawford County Historical Society that you will develop an interest in your history. Come in and visit us! Because all our funding is by donation, we ask you to consider supporting our work by sending a donation to the Crawford County Historical Society, P.O. Box 218, Grayling, MI 49738. You might also consider volunteer to help us by volunteering to work at the Museum.

Karl Schreiner, President

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## ***"Made in Grayling"***

Recently your Crawford County Museum received a unique firearm made right here in Grayling by a local gunsmith named H. B. Williams. Very little is known about Mr. Williams. According to story's in the "Crawford County Avalanche, Williams was born around 1825 in Pennsylvania as was his father. His mother was born in New York. He appeared in Grayling by way of Newago, Mi about 1894. He was listed in the 1894 census as a Grayling resident, was 68 years old and widowed



The firearm is an "over and under" rifle/shotgun of about .45 caliber rifle and 16 gauge shotgun. The action is what is called a "side-break". When the action is opened it swings to the side for loading and un-loading. The skills required to manufacture a mechanism this complicated are those of a very accomplished craftsman.

This firearm was donated to the museum by Mark and Marie Howe who live in Washington State. Marie is the daughter of Don and Dorothy Sorenson, long time Grayling residents. The rifle originally belonged to Oscar and "Auntie" Bea Smith and hung on the wall of the Smith family cabin between Lovells and Lewiston. When they passed away the firearm was passed to the Sorenson family.

## ***"History and Young People"***

For some reason most folks that are interested in preserving history seem to belong to older generations. One of the most precious assets that a community historical organization can enjoy is young men and women with an interest in history. The Crawford County Historical Society and Museum is blessed in having Sarah Rakoczy, a Grayling High School student, participating as a volunteer at the museum.



Sarah has spent the last year working closely with President Karl Schreiner cataloging and organizing the museums collections. Sarah has also become a member of the Museum Board of Directors to give the organization a better sense of how history can be presented in ways that will attract the interest of young people.

In addition to her museum activities, Sarah is very involved with her church as a volunteer for the children's AWANA program during the school year and the Vacation Bible School during the summer. Sarah is also an athlete excelling in cross country running. She earned her varsity letter in her Freshman year and has earned eleven additional medals to date. She is a CCHS board member as well as a member of the Student Senate at her school. Sarah also enjoys traveling, kayaking, reading and horses. Sarah's goal is to attend university to pursue a degree in the medical field.

We at the Museum consider ourselves indeed fortunate to have a young lady of Sarah's caliber working with us to help make the Crawford County Museum an organization that the entire county can be proud of. Welcome aboard Sarah.

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*(Made in Grayling - cont'd.)*

Last summer Mark and Marie returned to Grayling to help Dorothy dispose of her home and move her to Washington to live with them. It was decided that, given its history and that the only marks on the firearm were "H. B. WILLIAMS GRAYLING, MICH.", it was appropriate it should remain in Grayling.

The Museum is currently working on an appropriate display case that will show the uniqueness of this firearm and still provide the security appropriate to its history.

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***If you like history and want to help preserve Crawford County's story, join us the first Tuesday of each month for our meetings, 6:30 pm at the Grayling City Hall.***

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