

HISTORICAL MUSEUM

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January, 2007

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Inside this issue:

Depot	2
Telephones	2
Caboose	2
Schoolhouse	3
Membership	3
Sponsor	3
Contact	4

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Historical Museum patrons,

My name is Kay Cosgray. My husband, Bob, and I moved to Crawford County in 2001. We decided to make this area our home for several reasons; that is, the historical background, the nice citizens, and the enthusiasm of the community to grow and work together for the citizens of Crawford County.

In October of 2003, a board member asked if I would attend the Historical Society meeting. I agreed in order to see what the group was all about. At that meeting, a new president of the society was elected and that person

is still the president for 2007, and I enjoy every moment. We have made some drastic changes at the museum due to the planning sessions that we have each year and because of a board who thinks outside the box. With the hiring of a curator in 2006, the museum has added three new displays and has increased the volunteers and the visitation, as well as the beautification project that Priscilla and others incorporated into our courtyard.

With the start of the new year, the Historical Society begins the process of evaluating our museum for 2007. I would like to encourage everyone to offer ideas during our planning session on Tuesday, February 6, 2007 at

the Grayling City Hall.

The Historical Society and the board of directors, along with all the volunteers, look forward to an outstanding 2007. Please be part of our efforts.



CATALOGING

The task of cataloging the 2,600 plus items into the computer has begun. Once the data entry is complete, the information sheets will be placed into four binders for museum personnel. Artifacts will be sorted according to item number in the first

one. In the second binder, items will be sorted by donor. For instance, if a son wants to see all that his mother has given, we could look in the donor binder and quickly find the items. The third binder will hold

items sorted by subject which will easily enable us to find a particular photo. Items will be sorted by location in the fourth. We need to know exactly where everything is in the museum complex. This is the beginning of a long but vital process.

DEPOT



In 1872, the Jackson, Lansing & Saginaw Railroad Company made a grade and laid track to Grayling. The JL&S built a freight house and named the area Crawford Station.

In 1882, the JL&S leased the rail stop to Michigan Central Railroad. MCRR built the two story depot that now stands. It was built using board and batten and its structural material is a wood frame with light

members—a balloon frame. The building was 30 feet by 131 feet. The northern 60 feet of the depot was razed in 1939. It held a restaurant on the main floor and hotel rooms upstairs. The depot has 19th century Victorian styling with beautiful molding and pillars.

The Company also built a roundhouse at the present site of the courthouse. Unfortunately, the roundhouse burned to the ground in July, 1939 at a

loss of \$150,000 and was never rebuilt. The roundhouse was made of pine; the fire started in the south end which had not been used for several years.

There were eight tracks between the depot and courthouse. There were seven northbound passenger trains and five southbound trains as well as freight trains, all of which went through Grayling daily. In its heyday, the depot was truly a terminal.

*The telephones are
black, quite heavy
and may have been
used in a hotel.*

TELEPHONES

There are two telephones which were made in 1900 that are in the Museum—one upstairs and one downstairs. The phones needed to be repaired this past summer.

Fay and Bob Bovee's son-in-law, Richard Smith, took the phones with him on his return trip home to New York and

found John Crist who specializes in antique phones. Mr. Crist made the necessary repairs as a donation and Mr. Smith paid the cost of sending the telephones back to us. Marv Hallett kindly reinstalled them. A word of thanks to these men for their generous assistance.

Many times visitors could not

resist picking up the receiver and turning the crank on the phone upstairs. They were quite surprised to hear a voice on the other phone as a volunteer spoke to them from the phone downstairs. Most of the time we did not hear a peep. It was quite fun for all and everyone, including the visitors, had a good laugh.

CABOOSE



The caboose that sits on the premises of the museum complex was given by Camp Grayling. It was built in 1929 and rebuilt in the 1940s. This particular caboose made many trips from Saginaw to Mackinaw.

The caboose is truly a piece of history since it is no longer

built or used. The one belonging to the museum is one of the last to be retired.

The caboose was a rolling apartment with a kitchen and beds. It was used to house the conductor and rear-end brakeman. Here, the conductor did his paperwork and from the cupola he observed his train

for possible safety problems. The cupola, the hole in the roof, was invented by T.P. Watson in 1863.

Caboose have been known by many colorful names over the years such as Cabin, Crummy, Hack and Van.

SCHOOLHOUSE

School was first held in Grayling in a cedar shanty which was located near the present County Building and later in a lumber camp building.

Growth took place and a schoolhouse was built in the mid 1870s. It was the first schoolhouse in Grayling. At the time it was built, the schoolhouse was half its present size. The building material is clapboard and the structural material is a balloon frame.

On April 2, 1883, the electors voted to purchase the schoolhouse for \$700.00 for the purpose of a town hall. A larger school had been built—the one that burned January, 1915.

The town hall was also used as a library. Helen Feldhauser recalls that, one day in the 1920s, she went to the library to get a book but was told she needed to return at a later date because a meeting was being held at the time by the city fathers.

With Grayling's centennial in 1972, the museum was established in the schoolhouse. The building was moved twice. On May 19, 1986, two days after the depot was opened to be used as the museum, the schoolhouse was moved onto the rail stop premises. Artifacts were transferred to the depot and the schoolhouse now houses the military items from the Civil War to Desert Storm.



MEMBERSHIP

The purpose of the articles in this newsletter is to show the historical significance and rich heritage of Crawford County.

The depot is now 125 years old and the schoolhouse even older. Let your thoughts drift back into time and imagine yourself having lunch in the quaint restaurant of the depot

or waiting for the train amidst the hustle and bustle of the day. What would have been on the menu? Who would you have seen getting off the train that you knew?

Stand in the schoolhouse and feel yourself caught up in the day when you would have been taught by one teacher and sat

with only five other students.

I am asking you to please help keep this history alive by becoming a member. Support the badly needed repair, maintenance and restoration of these buildings, caboose and more. Thank you for your active participation. Instructions are on the back of the newsletter.

*Preserving the past
for the
enlightenment of the
future.*

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**Crawford County
Historical Society**

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Grayling, MI 49738

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 2007. 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

The Historical Society offers its sincerest thanks to The Holiday Inn of Grayling for sponsoring this issue of the newsletter.



MUSEUM HOME PAGE