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# BUFFALO COUNTY LORE

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Newsletter from the  
**Buffalo County Historical Society**  
Alma, Wisconsin

## IN THIS EDITION

“**Otto Lerum,**” story by Modena’s  
Calvin (Cal) Hagen, 2001

Buffalo County Pioneer  
**Christian Arms’ 1857 letter**  
written to friends and family in  
Switzerland

“**Dexter,**” recollections of  
Julia Pfund Heike

**Area Historical Society News**

**Cookbook Clippings** from Modena’s  
Tabitha Ladies Aid

**Selection of Photos** from the  
BCHS Archives



Montana Salem United Methodist Church

Top photo:  
1901, Beef Slough Logging Company at  
Misha Mokwa  
Peter Benjamin identified on top  
left of load



## ROSIE’S REPORT

Greetings from your Executive Director,  
Addie Rose Elliott

**W**arm greetings friends and supporters! I hope this letter finds you all in good health and spirits. As promised, we present to you Christian Arms’ letter, brought to us by Richard Ruben of Fountain City. It is truly a treasure and I am so pleased we are able to share this first hand account of early pioneer life in Buffalo County. The discovery of it is quite a remarkable story in itself, having been discovered by Richard and his uncle, Armin Arms, on a trip to Switzerland.

In this issue we also bring you Cookbook Clippings from the Tabitha Ladies Aid of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Modena. I am glad for the opportunity to highlight this congregation, for it was with sadness that this Modena church closed its doors this past year, after nearly 150 years of services.

There is a saying that goes, “What happens to one of us, happens to all of us.” I relate this thinking to the closure of this small community church and others in recent years. A loss of one of these places effects the social fabric of us all. Over time, taken together, the loss of our country churches has very much affected our rural landscape.

My father currently preaches at two churches every Sunday, one in the city of Whitehall, and the other at the Montana Salem United Methodist Church. Attending services there last week, my mind momentarily wandered to the “days of old” as I gazed about and up to the balcony. The size of the church itself speaks to the changing landscape of our county. This church was meant to house the multitudes! Approaching from any angle, it appears monumental in scale and is topped by a bell-tower. The church was formed in 1863 to serve the growing rural community of mostly German immigrants who helped to establish this far eastern corner of the county. It is a finely crafted, solidly built church that has stood the test of time.

## OUR MISSION

To serve as an easily accessible source for local historical societies, genealogists, government and others by researching and preserving Buffalo County history, past and present.

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## OFFICE HOURS

Our office on the third floor of the County Courthouse, **407 South Second Street** in Alma, is open:

**9-4 Mon, Wed, and Fri**

**Tuesday and Thursdays by appt.**

**Phone: 608-685-6290**

Each time I attend services I am mysteriously drawn to the basement. I think it's the slightly musty, stale coffee smell that I love and feel compelled to breathe in. There is a stillness to this basement, a sadness in the knowledge that its busiest days are surely behind it. Church basements have historically been the domain of the congregation's hard-working women. Determined to put forth their best effort whether for a potluck, wedding, or funeral, they banded together to show up when called upon.

My mind was pulled back into the moment when, as he does every week, my father called upon the church to share what he calls their "joys and concerns." It is at this time that they tell of struggles and hardships, sickness and loss. And they're able to share joyous news as well; perhaps a member travelled to attend a wedding of a grandchild or paid a hospital visit to a recovering church member. The group takes note of what is said, and, knowing these wonderful folks, they begin to formulate ways to reach out and be of service in the areas of need.

While we can no longer speak with contemporaries of Christian Arms, the first generation of immigrants arriving in Buffalo County, we are so fortunate to have his first hand account. It reminds us of the immense struggle he experienced, but also of a community evolving around him that surely eased this struggle. When he first arrived here in Buffalo County, he enjoyed very few conveniences. He depended upon himself, his family, and his neighbors- many of whom were fellow immigrants from the same part of Switzerland. Only together were they able to carve out a successful and satisfying life here.

Buffalo County has undergone great waves of change since the earliest immigrants arrived. The first generations to establish themselves here worked hard to create community centers and gave of their labor and wealth to build churches, schools, and civic places. Family farms were carved out of the landscape by generations of sweat and tears and further improved upon over the years. They flourished until, sadly and for a myriad of reasons, many did not. When throughout history, our one-room schoolhouses were closed and our schoolchildren bussed to town, a great loss was felt by the communities who had such a long shared history. Over the years, so many of the youth scattered, moving out of our rural places and into towns and cities. Many went to college or sought work elsewhere. You're about to read Cal Hagen's story of Otto Lerum in the following pages. I'd like to draw attention to the last paragraph. His thoughts reflect so eloquently the loss felt in Modena as so many families moved away.

Many of us who have lived here for a length of time are keenly aware of these changes. We are living in such remarkable times; the eldest among us have been witness to more changes than perhaps any other generation before! I cannot imagine experiencing all of this in a single lifetime. I feel it's so important to better understand how things were once done before modern conveniences. How did these conveniences and the changes they brought play out here in our communities? There are many aspects we can examine in regards to these changes, but one thing that seems certain to me is while we rapidly gained conveniences, we just as rapidly began to lose touch with many of our skills of self-reliance.

Starting on as Executive Director during the Covid- era has been challenging for me because I've had a real hesitancy to draw people together. This is one aspect of the work I have been very anxious to begin. With our programming, I hope to bring together people of all generations, from the youth to our elders, and draw upon our strong and self-reliant rural heritage. Could we perhaps create a learning garden with old seed varieties? Hold classes on canning and preserving, maybe even sausage-making, along with history lessons on the subjects? Be regaled with fishing and hunting tales? Learn about old methods of farming? These are just a few of the ideas I'd like to build on. I would really appreciate input from our members and friends as I begin to plan for future programming. Until next time, please take care of yourselves and one another!

## Otto Lerum

By Calvin E. Hagen, 2001

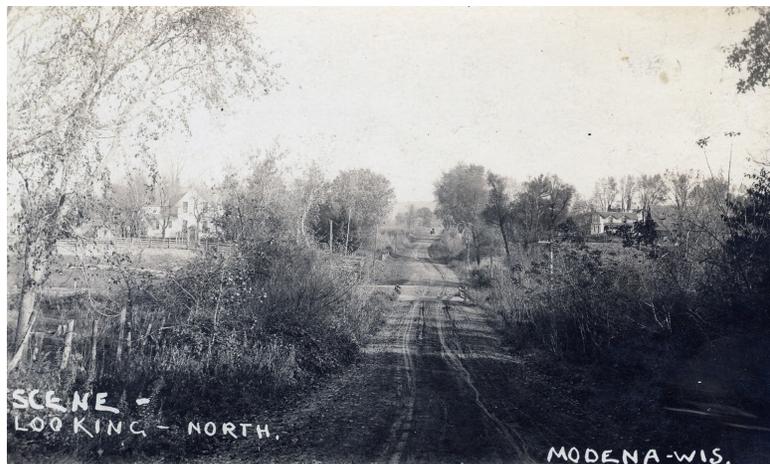
*The snow had begun in the gloaming and busily all the night,  
Heaping fields and highways with a silence deep and white.*

Little Tamarack Valley, better known locally as Poor Valley, was very quiet and covered with a fresh blanket of deep snow. Three miles of country road from our farm to Modena were nearly impassable after an all-night snow storm in December, 1927. Ditches were filled with drifted snow! Fence lines on both sides of the road were the only eye-ball guides to the center of the road. Otto Lerum, a farmer living on the out-skirts of Modena, had experienced snow storms before. He transported, by sleigh or wagon, the school children living in Little Tamarack.

To Otto, that morning in '27 was no different than other winter mornings. He harnessed and hitched his frisky team of horses to a sleigh filled with fresh straw and warm blankets, then donned his over-sized mackinaw with a large collar to protect his face from the wind and cold. A pair of large black horse-hide driving gloves kept his hands warm and alert. Otto was prepared to open a two and a half mile path through drifted snow from Modena to Jordet's corner. During bad weather, Otto and his horse-drawn school bus were often the only early morning movement into and out of the valley. From the turn at Jordet's corner to the first mile-post down the valley, twenty or more students crowded onto his sleigh. Big boys reserved spaces on the rear sleigh runners. Others ran in the tracks behind to keep warm. When village school mates heard sleigh bells ringing and saw the sleigh turn into the school yard, they gathered at the windows to announce, *Poor Valley scholars are here!* The horses' chests and eyebrows were covered with white frost; icicles dangled from their noses. Twenty bundled-up kids, all talking at once, noisily jumped off the sleigh, brushing straw and stomping snow as they joined their friends in the warm building. The sleigh bus left on a trot. Otto and his frisky horses would be back at four o'clock to make another trip up the valley to get the students home before dark.

Our parents were undecided about Alda, Marlin, and me trudging  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile through deep snow to meet Otto's bus. Pa had an idea! He went to the barn, put the bridle on Polly, our white horse, and waited bareback at the kitchen door for Ma to finish bundling up the three of us! She boosted Alda, the oldest, in front of Pa so she could hold onto me in front of her. Marlin sat behind with his arms wrapped around Pa. Vern and Sonny, their noses tight to a frosty kitchen window, watched and waved as Polly waded through knee-deep snow with four bareback riders who will always remember a special ride to meet Otto's winter-time bus at Jordet's corner.

Seventy-four years have changed the valley. Jordets, Larsons, Rustads, Hustads, Thompsons, don't live in the valley and there are no Hillmens nor Sandbergs across the bluff. Brotzmans, too, have moved. Mr. Lerum died of pneumonia that winter in 1927. His wife, Jennie (Sandberg) and their five sons -Harold, Arne, Palmer, Oliver, and Martin, sold the farm and moved to Nelson. Only two familiar mailboxes remained in the valley – NELSON and HAGEN.



*Writes Richard Ruben of Fountain City:*

In September of 1992, I travelled to Switzerland along with my uncle, Armin Arms. Having done some family research on previous trips there, we made arrangements to meet again with the Lorenz Arms family, having met them several times on previous trips. Lorenz was active in his local historical society and he gave me a copy of a certain issue of their newsletter, the Tondala, which contained this letter. It was published in this historical newsletter after being found by a local school teacher, hidden in a box of his father's old sermons. How it came to be there no one knows. I could understand enough Swiss-German to have some idea of what it was! After we returned from Switzerland, I had my uncle, Andrew Stettler, translate it and it was much better understood.



Fountain City, Wisconsin  
Buffalo County – Cross  
14 November -- 1857

Dear Friends,

Now that I have been in American a half year already, I will tell you as good as I can about conditions here. Since several folks have asked me to tell them what the opportunities an immigrant could have in America, I will just write this one letter and my relatives and friends can read it, I will not write each one.

The trip by rail from Valendas to Havre, France, the port of sailing, took forty hours with the occasional waiting stops which took extra time. The trip was uneventful. There was always plenty of food and drink available. Then on the sailboat, over 24 days on the water. Nothing to do on the boat, no cares, the trip really was quite agreeable. Food was good. Arriving in New York, everybody looked for the best and cheapest Gasthaus. Usually it cost  $\frac{3}{4}$  dollar a day, good food and a poor bed. The overland trip was filled with cares and worries. Many times the traveler is exploited in one way or another. Not knowing English well was different.

Government land is not available anymore, especially good land. Some secondhand land is more expensive. Land with a house on it costs many dollars. Kongress land sells for \$1.25 per acre. There are oak trees here, too hard for building. There are alder and birch trees—that is all. A hundred miles north you will find pine trees. It is healthy here. We have good water and it is quite warm in summer – you can really warm your back in the sun! In fall we get fresh air, then winter comes. Occasionally it snows like by you.

There are many wolves and they seem to withstand the winter very well. Bears are also numerous, and

there are so many deer, so tame that you could hit them with a good stick! We are eating more venison than beef or pork. Also, we get many fish out of the nearby stream. Here we also buy wheat bread to eat. Potatoes are plentiful and very good. Beans and many garden vegetables grow good here. In November and December, the farmers butcher hogs together. They fry potatoes in lard and eat speck (bacon).

I do not advise people to come to America since living here is not agreeable to everyone in the beginning. To settle here is sometimes very difficult. It costs money without end, and not to mention the implements and tools needed to farm which we have to buy. We need to buy, during the first year and a half, all groceries and clothing. For instance, a wagon costs 60-80 dollars, a plow 16-20 dollars. A yoke of oxen costs 150 dollars, a cow 25-40, and a small pig 1 dollar. Land with a house and barn on it is very expensive.

Winter wheat, corn, and potatoes are main crops. Cattle can graze daily in large pastures. The land is good for raising cattle and hogs. So far no sheep are being raised here.

When I first arrived here, I wasn't happy to need to learn all new kind of work, which was different from what I was used to. Now, after reflections, and being here for some time and thinking it over, I am really not sorry that I came to America- and Wisconsin. We need to buy shovels, forks, scythes, and cook-stoves, and they cost 30 dollars usually. It costs at least 20 dollars for boards to finish off a log cabin, and these can be very expensive.

Think this over and give it some forethought. If a person is over here once and it doesn't suit him, what can he do? Turn around and return to homeland? Think about it. Otherwise, I would not advise against coming here if one had some money left over after travel expenses. By diligence, thrift, and hard work he may be

able to get a fairly good farm and at least have enough potatoes, corn, and wheat bread.

Wages are high, 1 dollar a day with good meals. A good hired man can make 80-100 and up to 140 dollars a year depending on what kind of labor he does. Hired girls can make 6-8 dollars per month. Bring woolen clothing instead of cotton as woolens are expensive here. Many things are duty free and also bring along bedding from Switzerland.

Get yourself high boots. Low shoes are worthless since there is so much dew on the grass! There are also rattle-snakes, making high boots necessary. I have killed many of these poisonous snakes. We live in a valley, mostly all Swiss. Many a farmer has planted and harvested much grain. I have a nice piece of land, cattle, hogs, and, thank God, am always in very good health.

The farm crops are of good quality all over the state, and bigger than last year. We have more potatoes in the cellar than any one of you Vallendaser has ever seen! This is besides the wheat and turken (corn).

If anyone would risk or desire to come over here, to America, and would want information of things here then he should write to me and I will answer any questions about this land. Also, would someone please write sometime of happenings at home? Since I left, I have not received any letter from the homeland. You will have to excuse my poor writing since I must write in the evening by lamp light, which is quite dim, so that I can send the letter to town in the morning. By day I have work to do. We do not have as many "free" days as you in Valendas have. There is always something to do, every day. There are no mountains here, only hills which are level on top where you can build beautiful homes, but there is no water available on the hill tops. In respect to travel from Europe, do not bring new shoes or new clothing, no uncut cloth, as such may be held back at the customs office.

We are all in good health; also, my wife is well. We are satisfied with our lot. We go to church. Our minister is a Bundner named Felsburger. Two or three times we went to church service at the house of my brother Lorenz (*presently at the site of the Roy Fried farm*). He built the nicest house in the valley. Mother and sister Nanni "Anna" are living with them. They are farming at a place about three miles down the valley.

A Johann Joos lives about two or three miles up the valley from us. He is a bachelor.

Land buying for speculation is available further away from us valley folks. Five or six dollars per acre where no work has been done on it. If a neighbor from my home-land would want to come here, I will try to help him get started. If a person is industrious, he can make a better living here than in Switzerland. Strong desire

and endurance he must have since much difficulty and hard labor will be found. I do not especially advise anybody to come, as I will not want to make any excuses if the one coming is not well satisfied.

Mein Frau would like to you greet the young lady, Maria Wiebel. Also greet my brother Kasper and tell him I will write soon. Greet my cousins and friends around home.

My sister Magdalena married Martin Joos today, a Bunder – "Ein Schoner Mann." I hope she did well in her choice.

Greet Herr Gotti, Hauptmann (Captian), Stephan, and Christ Johannes' wife, Feliz Kaseli and especially all the folks who ask about me. Also greet Schulmeister (schoolteacher) W. Weiland in Brun.

With hearty greetings from all of us,  
Christian Arms



Photo from Murphy Library—Special Collections

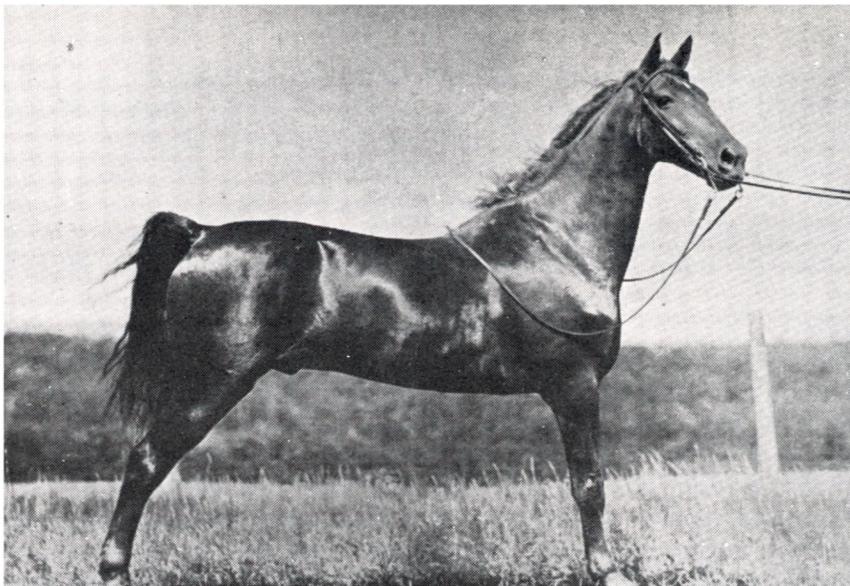
## Dexter

*Recollections of Julia Pfund Heike, from daughter Frances C. Heike's family history,  
"When I Was Born I Had Six Grandmas"*

Pa bought a colt from Sam Walker, Paul Walker's uncle. He wanted a horse lighter than our heavy draft horses, but one that could be used for field work as well as for a driving horse. When the colt grew up it was plain to be seen that he had quite a bit of Standard breeding behind him. He was a beautiful buggy horse, faster than most, and he also did his share of farm work. Paul called him "Dexter."

When Pa went to Mondovi he usually took a load of grain to be ground or to be sold, and then he drove a pair of heavy work horses. But sometimes, when he wanted to attend some business matters, or all we needed were groceries or light supplies, he would take Dexter and the buggy. We did all of our trading at Schaettle Brothers general store, and Johnny Voll, a clerk in the store and a good friend of Pa's, was always right there to wait on

him. (We children considered him our good friend too because we knew he was responsible for the white paper sack with red and green stripes filled with candy that was always to be found in the box of groceries which we were most eager to unpack when Pa got home.) He had a large family too, and the older boys were often down around the store with their father. When Pa would drive by, Johnny would come out, and, if the boys were there, say "Take Rudolph's horse to the livery stable!" Years later they told me that this was one of the highlights of their young lives – that they waited weeks for this chance. Before they took him to the stable they would drive Dexter



Dexter, ca. 1908

up and down the streets, one waving from one side of the buggy, the other from the other side, much to the envy of their friends (which was gratifying) and of those who weren't such good friends (which was better yet).

One of the main attractions during the annual Buffalo County Fair was the Farmer's Race, and Johnny was always after Pa to enter Dexter. Pa wasn't much of a sportsman and you couldn't have gotten him to drive that horse in a race for anything; in fact, he didn't think much of the idea at all. But Johnny kept after him. "I'll drive him, Rudolph," he said. Johnny was small, wiry, and probably weighed no more than a hundred pounds. "I can get a racing cart; you ought to let them see a real horse! I know he can win."

This sort of talk went on every time Pa came to town and finally, one day in early fall, fair-time, he came home from the field about eleven o'clock and unhitched Dexter from the corn binder. He had just finished cutting corn, and he told Ma he was going to take Dexter to the fair to race him. I was about fourteen, so this must have been either 1906 or 1907. We never did know why he changed his mind. Since none of us went along, we only heard the story of the race when he came back, and later from Johnny.

The race was held late in the afternoon, and after the rest of the farmers who had entertained thoughts of entering their horses saw their competition would be Dexter and Walter Houser's horse, they withdrew leaving

only the two entries. A great wave of applause greeted the Houser horse as it was driven out onto the track. Walter Houser had a large farm east of Mondovi, raised purebred cattle and horses, and was a figure of note in Wisconsin politics. Since Pa had decided to enter the race at the last minute, hardly any of our relatives, neighbors, or friends knew about it, so there was only a faint sound of scattered, polite applause as Johnny, dapper in a white driver's jacket and cap, drove Dexter past the judges' stand, touching his whip to his cap in the customary salute.

When Dexter started right out in the lead, the spectators just thought Johnny was an inexperienced driver and didn't know enough to save a horse until later in the race, but in spite of the whole crowd cheering him on, the Houser horse never came close. Dexter won by a good length. But, when Johnny turned around and drove up past the judges' stand in front of the grandstand, not one person applauded! The fact that the favorite, a horse of unquestionably good breeding, had been beaten by a practically unknown horse of doubtful lineage was just too much.

Pa's only comment was that such behavior just showed poor sportsmanship. He collected the twenty-five dollar purse, gave Johnny half, and after an hour or so drove Dexter home where we were all waiting to hear the news.



On the way to Confirmation instructions, ca. 1910  
Ella and Hilda Schultz, Eugene and Emilia Pfund and Fly

THANK YOU to those who have  
generously donated to the BCCHS!

The Castlerock Foundation  
Gary and Shelby Schlosstein  
Jeanne Hofer  
Roger Sessions  
Sandra Ebert  
Judith B. Miller  
Les Heinemann  
Donna Griffiths  
Ione Timm  
Lori Cloutier  
Tom Elliott  
Lee Salisbury  
Julia Bradburd  
Kim Wagenbach  
Computer Wizards  
James Dierauer

THANK YOU to our newest  
LIFE MEMBERS!

Aimee Ebersold Schultz  
Pat Jensen  
Curt Peterson, Sr.

## FOUNTAIN CITY AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Summer has flown by and the Society was kept busy with many visitors. They make a special trip or just drop in when passing through our little town or staying in one of our several Air B&B's. Towns along the Great River Way are extremely attractive to people living in large cities and are out for a drive or choosing a place to stay for a long weekend.

We have had many gifts and many inquiries about donations that people would like to make. We always say, "Call and ask." when it comes to donations. Don't just assume that we are not interested, as you would be surprised at what we have and what we will gladly accept.

This past St. Nicholas Day, Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>, we were surprised with a gift from the old gentleman. A scrapbook suddenly was made available to us. The family wanted to keep it, as their Grandfather, Al Moor, had put it together, and it held many family letters and mementos. However, it also contained many old Fountain City pictures and articles. The scrapbook was huge, 24 inches by 29 inches. We all commented on just where you would get such a large size. Mr. Moor had worked on this for a long time.

As it was a family treasure, we spent time photographing as much as we could. It was impossible to take things out, and impossible in many cases to get a really good picture, as the curves in the pages didn't allow for that. Nevertheless, we took many pictures and had a wonderful visit with Richard Brommerich and Arlene Moor. Both lifelong residents of the area, as was their family before them. Thank you for sharing this cherished item with us.

We recently completed our project of reaching out to the Cochrane-Fountain City School library with a donation of books. These books were purchased from the State of Wisconsin Historical Society Press, and on a variety of historical subjects and stories of Wisconsin citizens. All were chosen for a wide variety of ages and reading ability. We presented them to Mrs. Arneson, school librarian and 4 of the 4<sup>th</sup> Grade students who are now studying Wisconsin history.

Our yearly bake sale fundraiser was a tremendous success, thanks to many, many donations and generous buyers. Such a nice variety of goodies right before the

holidays. We are also selling our 2022 "Historic Postcard Calendar". This is our first calendar in color, and several postcards are in German. If your family likes history, this is your stocking stuffer "go to." Call Sandy Schmitt at 608-687-4879 or John Schlesselman at 608-687-8730 if interested. \$15.00 (you pick-up) and \$18.00 (to mail).

The Society continues to meet on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month, at 1 pm, at the Museum at 4 S. Main St., Fountain City. Winter meetings vary with the weather. The Museum is now closed until next spring.



Pictured: Gabriella Halgren, Mrs. Arneson, Isaiah Soriano Pina, Jeanne Fugina, Joseph Thompson, Katie Benson and John Schlesselman.



### **BUFFALO COUNTY BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY: 1853-2003**

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## Alma Historical Society News

The Alma Area Museum has closed for the winter. We will reopen again on May 28, 2022. We had a good summer in spite of Covid. Most of the people visiting the museum were from Rochester, the Twin Cities, and surrounding areas. Since visiting a small-city museum was their goal, they were very impressed with the Alma Area Museum Collections, frequently inquiring about the different exhibits and the history of Alma. This chance to interact is what makes volunteering at the museum so interesting and rewarding. Now is the time to consider giving us a hand at the Museum next year! We will be open Saturdays and Sundays from 1 P.M. to 4 P.M. We would appreciate the help on as many or few days as you may be available. Membership is not necessary to volunteer, but as always we would appreciate all new memberships!

A brief recap of some of the years activities of the Alma Historical Society would include our Bake-less-Bake Sale in February. It was a great success, and being our only fundraiser since we no longer have our quilt show, we were grateful for the support. A big *Thank You* to all of our members and friends for their generous donations to the sale.

Due to Covid, we held our annual meeting at our annual picnic, in July, outdoors at Rieck's Lake Park. President Max Bachuber awarded Dan Kordiak with the Historic Building Preservation Award for his preservation of the building at 305 N. Main Street.

We concluded the year with our annual Christmas party, held November 30 at the historic Burlington Hotel—which was wonderfully decorated and a great place to hold the party. A great potluck dinner and interesting conversation was enjoyed by all who attended! Thank you to Jennifer for her gracious hospitality. Everyone had a great time.

The Alma Historical Society wishes everyone Good Health in the New Year! We hope to see you all at the Alma Area Museum next year!

~ Dorothy Peterson



## Prairie Moon News

The Prairie Moon Museum has been having many visitors since it is a safe place for people to go and see the three different kinds of rock art.

The Herman Rusch Sculpture Garden, the Schlosstein exhibit, and the Mehringer Exhibit. The Herman Rusch Sculpture Garden was created on site, and the Schlosstein exhibit was moved from Cochrane, and the Mehringer Exhibit was moved from Fountain City.

Each type of rock sculpture is totally different from the other two. Some people consider it depression art because it was made with very little expense and lots of creativity. And some call it naive art and/or outsider art. These terms technically mean that all of the artists were not formally trained in the creation of art. They were inspired by their own thoughts and various things in life that influenced their creations. During the depression, there were articles about creating "rock art" in the Popular Mechanics magazines.

The site continues to be a place where you can have a sack lunch, sit at the picnic tables, and enjoy the fresh air, and the various sculptures. Be sure to check out the dinosaurs.

We hope to be open again by appointment for visitors in the next year and perhaps even have an Open House. Happy New Year and good health to everyone.

Marjorie KammueLLer, Pres. Friends of Prairie Moon.



**HAUL OF WALLEYES** — Pat Timm of La Crosse (left) and Howard Ludwigson of Eau Claire show catch of 12 walleyes weighing 84 lbs. boated below the Alma dam on the Mississippi River. The walleyes ranged from 5 to 11 lbs.

## MONDOVI AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

For more information about the MAHS, please email : [mondovihistory@yahoo.com](mailto:mondovihistory@yahoo.com) or check out our Facebook page.

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 Pandemic over the past year, 2021 was a busy year for the Mondovi Area Historical Society. At the start of the year, the Society resumed programming with a series of presentations via Zoom on various topics. The MAHS resumed in person meetings and programs in May. In all, the Society presented ten programs in 2021. After being closed last year, the Society's museum buildings were once again open on summer Sunday afternoons and by appointment. The MAHS also held its annual "The Past in the Park" on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and Society members staffed the MAHS's booth at the Buffalo County Fair. In addition to programming, work also continued on the Society's inventory project.

This fall, the MAHS presented two interesting programs. In September, Janice Gehrke spoke about the history of Marten Transport, a company her brother Roger Marten founded seventy-five years ago. Janice's nephew, Randy Marten, was also on hand to share recollections of his father and of the growth of the company. October's program was presented by Jeanne Anderson of the Rock Falls area who shared the story of Happy Island. Her presentation was based on her book "Where the Lilacs Bloom: The Story of Happy Island." On November 16<sup>th</sup>, the Society held its annual meeting where the election of officers was held and a budget for 2022 was approved.

Officers of the Mondovi Area Historical Society are Steve Mikelson, president; Lee Gehrke, vice president; Elizabeth Leasum, secretary; Beth Moore, treasurer; Annette Forthun, Roger Sessions and Greg Haas, directors.

The 2022 Mondovi Area Historical Society calendar is now available for sale. The calendar features thirteen photos of yesteryear in Mondovi. Calendars can be purchased for \$10.00 and are available at the Rural Life Museum. Those wishing to have a calendar mailed, please send a check for \$13.75 to Mondovi Area Historical Society, 463 W. Mill Street, Mondovi, WI 54755.



Putzier's Corner, Mondovi, ca. 1910. Gus Putzier owned the large frame building and built the brick building next to it in 1908.

### **2022 Mondovi Area Historical Society Programs**

Saturday morning, February 19 – Show and Tell

Tuesday evening, March 15 – "Epic Willys Adventure" – Adam Schultz

Tuesday evening, April 19 – Virtual Cemetery Walk – Steve Mikelson and Amy Koller

Tuesday evening, May 17 – Norwegian Immigrants' Artifacts – Gary Schlosstein

Tuesday evening, June 21 – The History of the Mondovi Co-op Equity – Lee Gehrke

Sunday, July 3 – "The Past in the Park"

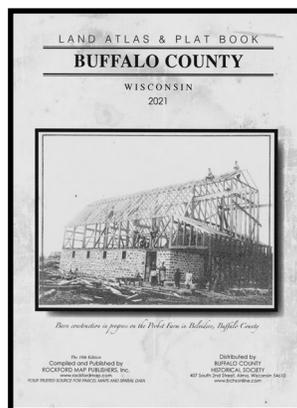
Thursday-Sunday, August 4-7 – Buffalo County Fair

Tuesday evening, August 16 – Picnic

Tuesday evening, September 20 – "Mondovi High School Mirror Yearbook: A Reflection of the Times" – Mary Segerstrom and Steve Mikelson

Tuesday evening, October 18 – Mondovi Football – Larry Winsand

Tuesday evening, November 15 – Annual Meeting and Year in Review



### **2021 Plat Books**

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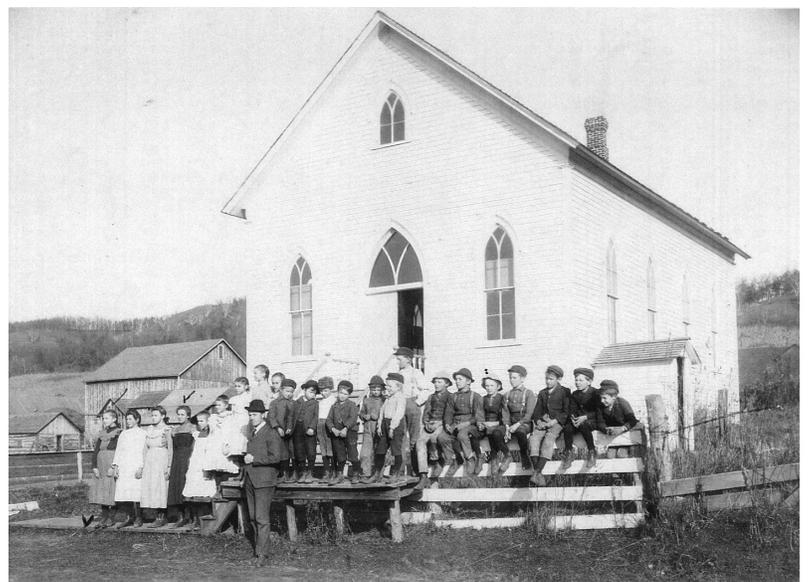
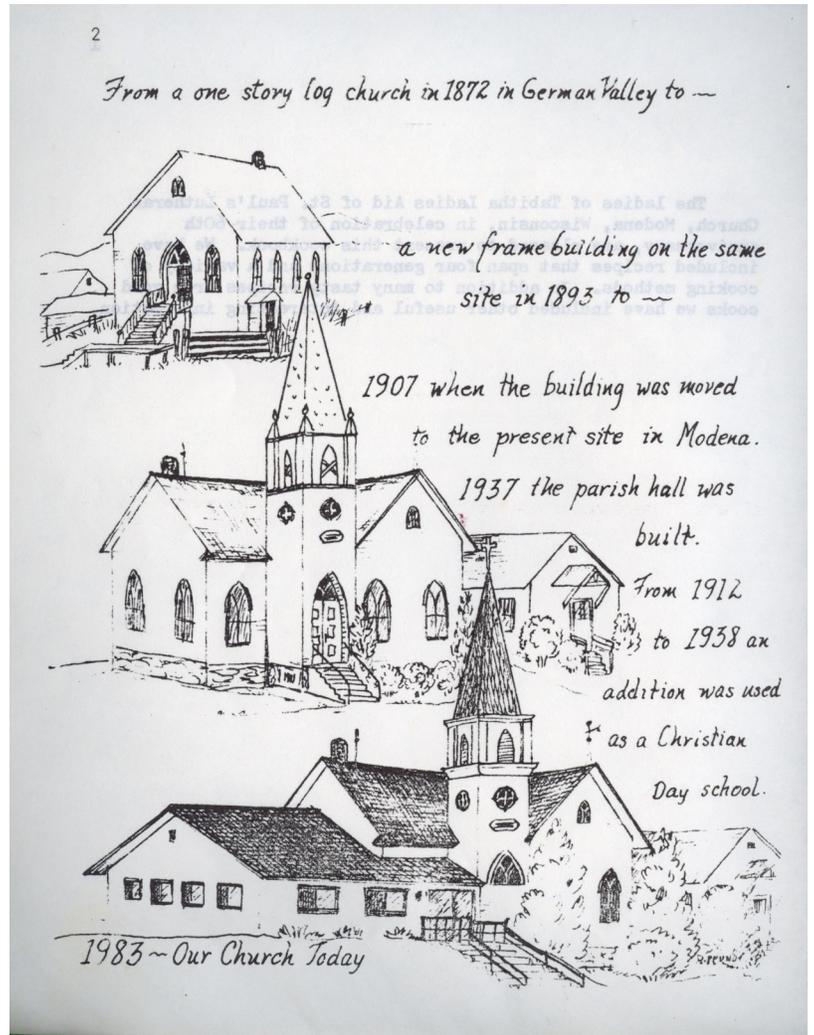
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# Cookbook Clippings

On October 24, 2021, Pastor Dan Pfaffe held the last service at St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Modena. After 150 years of services, the congregation voted to cease operations. Services were first held beginning in 1872 in a one-story log church. The church was formerly incorporated on May 18, 1890 and a new frame building was built on the German Valley site in 1893. Around 1907, the church was moved two miles to the outskirts of Modena using stump pullers to skid it over the frozen ground. Later, a parochial school was added and a parish hall built in 1937 to accommodate the growing needs of the congregation. The parochial school closed its doors in 1938. In 1977, a modern parish hall and indoor bathrooms were added. Ultimately, the number of congregants dwindled, making it difficult to continue services.

~ submitted by Lee Gehrke, trustee of the St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Modena



Ca. 1907, St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Modena. Pictured: Emilie Linse, Mary Senn, Melitta Pfund, Hattie Senn, Ella Stamm, Frieda Heck, Emilie Pfund, Julia Pfund, Hilda Marten, ?, Erhard Linse, Oswald Lauterbach, August Linse, Eugene Pfund, Elmer Heck, Edward Linse, Edgar Linse, Eugene Linse Teacher: George Hillmer

TABITHA LUTHERAN LADIES AID

On July 12, 1923 a group of women of St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Modena met at the home of Mrs. Eugene Linse Sr. for the purpose of organizing a Ladies Aid Society. Rev. Walter Huebner, Pastor, was also present at this meeting. The Society adopted the name Tabitha Ladies Aid.

Charter members were as follows: Mrs. Herman Heck, Mrs. Waldemar Heck, Mrs. Bertha Lauterbach, Miss Emelia Lauterbach, Mrs. Edward Linse, Mrs. Eugene Linse Sr., Mrs. Henry Linse, Mrs. Oscar Linse, Mrs. Adolph Marten, Mrs. Edwin Marten, Mrs. Eugene Pfund, Mrs. Hugo Pfund, Mrs. Otto Rieck, Mrs. Casper Schmidlin, Mrs. Sam Meyer, Mrs. Sam Stamm. These members are marked throughout the cookbook with one asterisk\*.

Over the years we have tried to live up to the name Tabitha, who was known in the Bible for her God pleasing works in sewing and aid to the needy.

In 1983 we purchased the cross for our steeple in honor of our 60th anniversary.

NOTE: Throughout our book pastors and pastor's wives recipes are noted with two asterisks\*\*.

LEFSE RECIPE

Yew tak yust ten big Potatoes  
den yew boil dem til dar don,  
yew add to dis some sweet cream  
and by cups it measures vun,

den yew steal 'tree ounces of butter  
and vit two fingers pench some salt,  
yew beat dis wery lightly  
if it ain't gude it is your fault.

den yew roll dis tin vit flour  
an light brown on stove yew bake,  
now call in all Scandihuvians  
tew try da fine lefse yew make!



CRULLERS

Mrs. Albert Gehrke  
Submitted by Eunice Gehrke

1 c. sweet milk  
1 c. sweet cream  
3 eggs

6-9 c. flour  
A little salt, about 1/4 tsp.  
Anise seed or oil  
A little baking powder, about  
1 tsp.

Mix ingredients together adding flour gradually to make a fairly stiff dough, so the mixture will leave the hands. Too much flour will toughen it. You can let the dough stand several hours or overnight. Roll as thin as possible. Cut into squares. Stretch each piece. Fry in hot lard to a delicate brown. As they rise to the top shake with a fork or push down into the lard as they increase in size while they fry. Sprinkle with sugar.

COFFEE CAKE

Emelia Pfund Heike

2 1/2 c. cake flour, or other 1 c. sugar  
2 tsp. baking powder 1 c. Crisco, or margarine  
1 tsp. soda 3 eggs, beaten  
1/2 tsp. salt 1 c. half and half or sour cream

Sift together the flour, baking powder, soda and salt. Set aside. Cream sugar and shortening. Add the eggs and mix. Stir in the half and half alternately with the flour mixture, beginning and ending with flour. Put half the batter in a greased 9x13 pan. Sprinkle on half the topping, spread on remaining batter and top with remaining topping. Bake 30 minutes in a 350° oven.

TOPPING:

3/4 c. brown sugar 1 1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
Chopped walnuts, if desired

LEFSE

Joan Anderson

12 c. riced potatoes 3 tsp. salt  
6 T. butter 4 c. flour

Add butter and salt to cooked, riced potatoes. When very cold, add 3 cups flour. Form into balls and refrigerate. Use the remaining flour, and more if needed, for rolling out as thin as possible. Bake on lefse grill.

STOLLEN

Mrs. Walter Huebner\*\*

1 lb. white raisins 2 eggs  
1 lb. currants 3 c. sugar  
1 lb. big puffed raisins 1/2 tsp. cardamon  
1 pt. brandy Juice of 1 lemon  
1 qt. milk Rind of 2 lemons  
1 lb. butter Red and green candied cherries  
1 c. lard 1 c. almonds  
2 pkgs. yeast, dissolved in 13 1/2 c. flour  
1/2 c. lukewarm water

Soak raisins and currants in brandy. Scald milk; add butter and lard. Heat until it bubbles; let cool. Dissolve yeast in lukewarm water. Stir in 8 cups flour; let rise for 1/2 to 3/4 hour. Add remaining ingredients, kneading in rest of flour. Set to rise at least 1 hour. Put into 8 buttered loaf pans. Bake 10 minutes in a 375° oven, then turn heat down to 325° and bake an additional 50 minutes.

NOTE: This is a prize winning recipe.

DIXIE BISCUIT - Served when the Minister came to tea

Mabel Loewenhagen

1927 Cappers Farmer Recipe

2 eggs 5 T. butter and lard  
2 c. milk 1 heaping T. sugar  
1 tsp. salt 1 yeast cake  
3 pts. flour

At 10 A.M. melt butter and lard. Add milk, salt and sugar and heat to lukewarm. Dissolve yeast in a little cold milk and add. Beat eggs well and add. Sift flour twice and add stirring until smooth. Cover. Keep in a warm place and let rise until 4 P.M. then mix lightly and roll 1/4 inch thick. Cut in two sizes. Put smaller one on top of each large one. Let rise until light, about 1 1/2 hours and bake 10 to 15 minutes in moderate oven.

DOUGHNUTS

Beth Goss Marion

2 eggs, beaten 4 c. flour  
1 c. sugar 4 tsp. baking powder  
1/4 c. butter, melted 1/4 tsp. soda  
1 tsp. vanilla 3/4 tsp. salt  
1 c. buttermilk

Cream the sugar, melted butter and eggs. Stir in vanilla. Sift the flour, baking powder, soda and salt together. Mix sifted ingredients alternately with the buttermilk until smooth. Roll and cut. Fry in hot (375°) fat about 2 minutes.



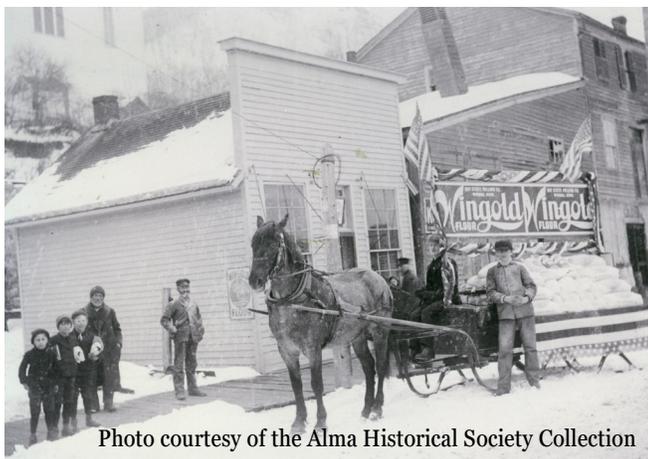


Photo courtesy of the Alma Historical Society Collection



*Excerpt from the Buffalo County Journal, 1953: (Cochrane) “Dobbin” Still Useful—* “Old Dobbin” and the sleigh, which has not been on our village streets for some time, put in an appearance on Sunday. The heavy snowstorm Saturday brought about 14 inches of snow and placed car travel at an almost standstill in the rural areas over the week-end. A high wind Saturday night whipped the snow into drifts several feet high in many places.

Lyle Hofer, who is in the habit of delivering his milk to the Cochrane Creamery with a jeep, found his road to the main highway impassible because of the huge drifts, but this did not stop him from making his milk delivery on time. He got out a sleigh, hitched up a team of horses, hung on a few sleigh bells for a wintery atmosphere, and glided easily to town over the deep snow and made his regular delivery of milk.

It proves that “Old Dobbin,” although out-moded by modern equipment, still has some usefulness and is worth keeping around for a few bales of hay and a small pail of oats now and then.

*It should be noted that Lyle’s wife, Jeanne, and their three year- old daughter, Brende, were along for the wonderful ride!*



Load of youngsters at the Alma train depot



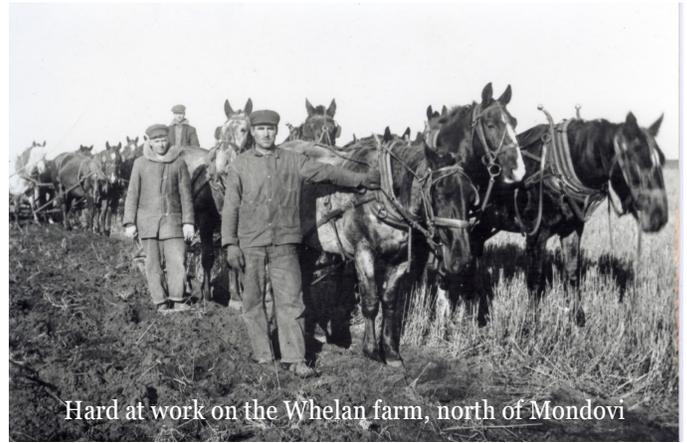
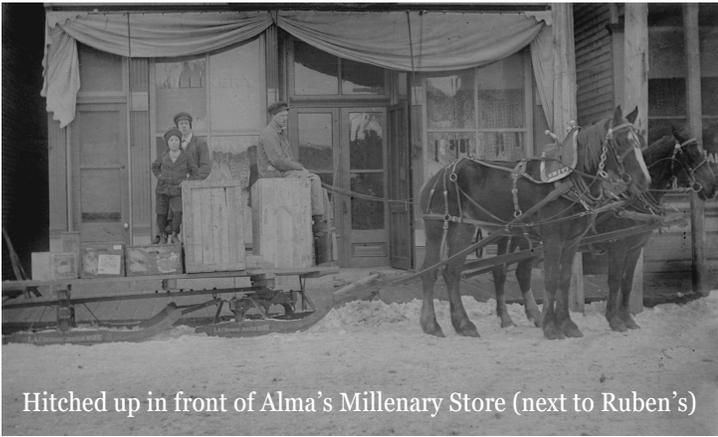
Robert Stirn hauling butter to the depot in 1905



William Gueltzow bringing a load of grain to the Cochrane elevator



Edwin and Mollie Keller Fetting pictured in front of the old Buffalo City jail



**“You who stand at the crossroads of history, take careful note of those of a former generation who are disappeared into the mists, for there will be no more like them. If the contribution and values of past generations have any validity at all— and I believe they have a great deal—it is imperative that they be strengthened in the present and preserved in the future.”**

**~ Hubert H. Humphrey**

Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Buffalo County Historical Society, as a forty year- old organization, has been so instrumental in promoting and preserving the history we proudly share. Some of you have been with us since the beginning while others may have just become BCHS members. To all, we offer our sincerest thanks for your support in our efforts. Now, more than ever, we need your help and support for our organization to grow and continue meet our mission of *“serving as an easily accessible source for local historical societies, genealogists, government and others by researching and preserving Buffalo County history, past and present.”*

I began as Executive Director just over a year ago now. It has been such a busy year, although in many ways it has looked different than perhaps I would have envisioned it. Programming and events such as the Backroads Tour had to be put on hold. In the meantime, great strides have been made in organizing and better systematizing our photographs, artifacts, and archives, all which are held at the Heritage Hall and our office in the courthouse. We are so proud of our collection, vast and varied as it is, and we thank you for helping us to grow it with your many donations over the years! We are honored that you consider us to care for your important historical items, and we take seriously the trust you put in us to preserve them.

Although our budget has been reduced this past year, we have been able to remain open three days a week at our courthouse offices here in Alma. It's been amazing how many visitors have come seeking answers despite the circumstances. In the last issue of the Lore, I included a list of the resources available for public use here at our offices. We have truly created a top-notch research facility here and over the years we are proud to have helped countless individuals and families. Further, we are excited to open Heritage Hall up to the public this summer to showcase objects and photographs from our collection to help share with the visitors Buffalo County's exciting history. We believe the space, with its excellent visibility on Main Street in Alma, can serve as a history hub from which we can point visitors to the wonderful local museums and area attractions.

It's membership renewal season again here at the BCHS, and we hope you consider filling out the attached form and mailing it back to us. Your support is essential as we look to preserve and share the rich and exciting history of Buffalo County! Thank you so much for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you!



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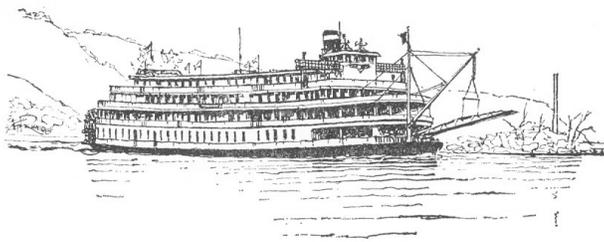
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