
BUFFALO COUNTY LORE

Newsletter from the
Buffalo County Historical Society
Alma, Wisconsin

IN THIS EDITION

“Thoughts on Yesterday,”

Written by George Waste, 1977

Andrew Baertsch on the early days of
Fountain City, 1939

Local naturalist Mae Lees’
eloquent observations on Alma,
ca. 1927

Research Resources
Available at the BCHS

News from our Local Societies

Cookbook Clippings

Pickles, pickles, and more pickles!

Selection of Gerhardt Gesell photos

Cover photo:

Far left, Donald
Ambuehl, far right,
Marvin Schroeder

Any help identifying the children in the
middle would be appreciated.



ROSIE’S REPORT

Greetings from your Executive Director,
Addie Rose Elliott

Warm greetings to you all on this warm September day! What a whirlwind of a summer it has been. I can’t remember a summer that hasn’t seemed to have passed so quickly. All too suddenly those first budding trees and early blooms turn into giant zucchinis we can’t seem to pass along quickly enough! And just as suddenly summer inevitably passes into fall, marked by the flurry of the harvest-time. I imagine this particular time throughout history—from the ancient Native people to our ancestor immigrants— was marked by great activity when everyone banded together to accomplish the task of preparing for the long winter ahead. There must have been a great urgency and tension knowing that your harvest would have to sustain your family through the wintertime and into the spring.

Jumping ahead to modern times, one sound I particularly associate with the humid late-summer days is the very distinct popping sound that can only mean that my mother has been busy canning! A welcome and hard-earned sound it is, for it is the sound of a properly sealed jar of something delicious from the garden. I’m so proud of my mother and so thankful for the thousands of “pops” of love that come from her kitchen. Her spaghetti sauce and salsa are, to me, unmatched. It is true that her grown children still raid her basement of those glorious jars. She expects this and generously prepares for this, year after year, summer after summer. In the past, these jars would have been put up out of sheer necessity. I know that these days, my mother puts these jars up purely out of love.

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.

OFFICE HOURS

Our office on the third floor of the County Courthouse, **407 South Second Street** in Alma, is open from **9:00 AM—4:00 PM, M-F.**

Phone: 608-685-6290

Email: office@bchsonline.com

Website: www.bchsonline.com



HERITAGE HALL

Located at 316 South Main Street in Alma, Heritage Hall is home to BCHS archives and a treasure trove of antiques and Buffalo County memorabilia. Plans are underway to open it on limited basis for themed exhibits. Check our website for news of future events.

Undoubtedly, the beautiful valleys of Buffalo County have long echoed of the pops of sealing jars. We give thanks to our strong women who have put in such hard work feeding and sustaining our families.

If you read the last issue of the Lore, you may recall my mission to seek out our elder Buffalo County residents -to sit with them and record their stories and learn from their wisdom. I am very interested in talking with our area men and women about local food traditions and would like to mention that if anyone out there is (or knows someone who is) passionate about canning and food preservation, please reach out to me! Over the winter I will be working to prepare programming on this the subject of food traditions and for next summer. I am hoping we can meet to not only learn about the history, but to have hands-on workshops to ensure this traditional knowledge is preserved!

This issue's Cookbook Clippings includes selections that you may all enjoy if you too endeavor to preserve the season's bounty. Whenever I discover an area cookbook, I immediately flip to the back of the book, where I expect to find a good selection of pickles, krauts, jams, and the like. A community's preservation methods and recipes often echo of their old world roots.

Speaking of the "old world" and our pioneers, I am excited to include a selection written by Andrew Baertsch (Jr.) in 1939. Born in 1852, he witnessed the early days of the immigrant experience as lived by his family in Fountain City. I am very excited for our next issue of the Lore, as I will be including a first hand account, a letter written home to Switzerland, from an early pioneer of Fountain City as well, Christian Arms. This letter and the amazing story of its discovery will surely delight! Stay tuned!

Finally, I'd like to return to the photograph on the previous page featuring the four sweet children. Here at the BCHS, one of our primary objectives at the moment is in digitizing and organizing our collection of photographs and postcards. In going about this work, one day I picked this photo up and was immediately charmed by the children lined up in a row and the boys in their bib overalls. The sight of bibs always makes me nostalgic, and I thought of my grandpa and how he wore them daily. Upon flipping the picture over, I could not believe my eyes. The boy on the right was, in fact, my grandfather, Marvin Schroeder! What an amazing feeling to discover such a precious treasure, a previously unknown photo of my young grandfather. This discovery moved me to a deeper understanding of how important the work that we're doing at the BCHS is. We're creating a searchable database of our collection for the benefit of our citizens and their relatives for many years to come. This is truly an important endeavor and I thank you sincerely for contributing to this mission by being a member and/or in contributing to our growing collections. Some of you may have received this issue as a result of signing up for a one-time mailing at the Buffalo County Fair or simply because I hope you will join our mission. Please consider becoming a member today!

Thank you all and I wish you good health and happiness!

“Thoughts on Yesterday”

By George Waste, 1977

To all those who are interested, may I take you back a few years to when I was a child. My father was a very enterprising man; besides all the farm work, he drove a milk and cream route in Mondovi, Wisconsin, which was two miles away. From 1904 and for the next nine years he made a remarkable record of never missing a day of delivery! Even when a flood washed out the bridge, he figured out a way to make delivery. The milk was taken across the fast-flowing water by boat and put on another rig on the opposite shore. He prided himself on delivering milk ice cold to his customers even in the heat of summer. The milk which was brought from the barn was cooled in cans in ice water, bottled cold and then put on ice in the milk wagon, which kept it cold till it was delivered to the door. All for four cents a quart! By 1913 the prices had inflated to six cents a quart. Don't we wish we could buy it for those prices now!

Getting the ice for keeping the milk cold was quite a chore in itself. In the winter when the ice on Mirror Lake in Mondovi was twelve or more inches thick was the time we had for filling the ice house; a building about 18' by 30' and 12' high. Ice which was cut in squares was pulled up a long chute by horses to fill the ice house which is still standing to this day. Ice was carefully packed in sawdust which would prevent it from melting even during the summer heat. Often our neighbors, returning from town with their sleighs would bring ice blocks to fill our personal ice house. Then in summer they would come and get ice to make delicious home-made ice cream.

In high school I set two records: one in never missing a day; and two, in being tardy almost every day. Each morning after milking and chores I rode with Dad to school in the milk rig. A student would be suspended from school now-days for being late so much. The teachers then were just glad when farm boys made it to school at all. The milk delivery business came to an abrupt halt when we had a run-away with the team and the rig.

The feeling still is that a run-away with a team of horses is safer than a run-away with a car. I remember the days when the phone would ring and my wife would call to me, “There's a run-away team coming your way.” I ran for the road hastily grabbing a ladder on my way. I stood in the middle of the road as the team sped towards me. As the team neared me I held the ladder horizontally, ran towards them and yelled. Trembling with fear the horses stopped in their tracks and were easily caught. Another time brush was used in a similar manner. The owner was always grateful when he showed up later to claim his run-away team.

Drivers often stopped their teams at our farm where the large wooden water trough was handy and the cool wa-



Frank B. Waste Farm in Waste Valley

This photo was taken in about 1907 or 1908. It was donated to the Mondovi Historical Society by Doris Stener, daughter of George Waste.

(in cart) Frank B. Waste, Annie Waste, son Forest Waste.

(next to horse) Maggie Nix

It is noted on photo that son George Waste is in the house.

Two men by wagon are unidentified

ter inviting. Hot horses could not be watered at the end of their journey or they might flounder, an illness which adversely affected the usefulness of the horses for life. But the team could be watered along the way without danger to them which saved the farmer time when he got home.

I can still remember in 1914 my Dad stopped a driver and team going past with a load of flour. As the sky was very dark and ominous he had the driver quickly unload the flour and Dad hurriedly put the team in his barn. The tornado struck, uprooting a row of trees where the man would have passed. The man was very appreciative for the shelter during the storm.

Another story I like to tell is about the fire whistle blowing in town. If Dad and I were in town when the fire whistle pierced the air we would make a mad dash for the fire station. The first one to get hitched up to the hose wagon at the station would receive the enormous sum of five dollars. That was always an exciting time to see teams coming from all directions in town just as fast as possible.

Horse days were hard days. During horse days we depended on exchange work with our neighbors to get our work done. They gathered with their teams to feed the crops into the stationary harvesting machines, the threshing machines, the silo fillers, and the corn shredders. In 1935 I purchased a John Deere D tractor to replace the steam engine. It was a big improvement for no longer did we need to busy one or two teams to haul water for the steam engine, nor did we need a large stack of wood to power the steam engine. We all looked forward to meal time when we were away from home, as it seemed the farmers' wives were trying to outdo each other when it came to baking and cooking. We also looked forward to the companionship of working with others. Neighbors really helped helped neighbors in those days. I look back on those days with fond memories.

Besides replacing the steam engine in the harvesting bees, the John Deere D did the field work on my own farm. A new generation of harvesting machines; the combine, the forage chopper and self-unloading wagons and the corn picker ushered in a new era in farm work and ended the exchange labor. My John Deere D still labors each summer blowing chopped hay into the barn. Last summer in addition to its regular chores it had the distinct honor of pulling the prize winning 4-H float in the Mondovi Bicentennial parade.

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

**The Castlerock Foundation
Gary and Shelby Schlosstein**

Jeanne Hofer

Make An Offer LLC.

Vange Thaldorf

Tim Salwey

Dan Keller

Roger Sessions

Sandra Ebert

Larry and Morgan Farl

Jan Peterson

Leslie and Jim Wilkie

Greg Helgeson

Dan Ryan

Judith B. Miller

Thank you to our office volunteer, Tom Elliott.

Thank you to Donald J. Ganz for becoming a lifetime member!

Andrew Baertsch Writes About the Early Days

Taken from the Buffalo County Republican, August 31, 1939:

Publisher's Note - The following sketch was contributed by Andrew Baertsch of this city, who is probably the best authority on local history of any now living. This generous contribution of his, which we think is pretty well done for a man who is 87 years of age, is only one of many which he has furnished to the Republican, and to the compilers of history in the past. Mr. Baertsch has won many civic honors in the city and county. The record shows that he taught at the largest one-room country school in the county, at Alma, where the enrollment was over 85. And we must be sure to mention that he is one of the oldest, in point of time, subscriber to the Buffalo County Republican. He has been a subscriber for 30 years.

Writes Mr. Andrew Baertsch, "I believe I am the oldest man now in Fountain City, who was born here. My parents came from Switzerland in 1845 and lived in Galena, Ill., two years and landed from a river steamer at Holmes Landing at that time in 1847.

Holmes Landing at that time consisted of a boat landing and a half a dozen wood chopper's shacks clustered around the landing.

My father built a one room shack and settled his family, which in a few years' time had grown to have twelve children. My brother, Anton, was the first white child born in Buffalo County and I was born in the same wood chopper's shacks on January 17, 1852.

At that time the principal source of income for our town was furnishing wood for the steamers that plied up and down the Mississippi. The steamers at first tied up to take on wood, but a Mr. Wenger and his man worked all one summer chopping down oak trees and sawing them with a cross-cut saw into three- inch planks and after months of back-breaking work Mr. Wenger was able to construct a flat boat on which could be piled twelve to fifteen cords of wood. After that the upgoing steamers saved a great deal of time by tying the flat boat on the side and unloading as they steamed up the river. When the wood was unloaded the boat was cut loose and drifted back to the landing.

Father naturally took up wood chopping for a living and at first we lived near the landing, but later he homesteaded land a few miles from town.

I can remember that he was building a one-room



shack on the new farm and when he came to hang the door he did not have an auger to drill holes for the lock, but nothing daunted him, he carefully marked for the holes, stepped back, picked up his rifle and shot out the necessary holes. There were no steel hinges so raw hide strips were used for that purpose.

My father's rifle by the way came with him from Switzerland, and I still have it in my attic. It is now over one hundred and twenty-five years old and has two barrels, one above the other. On the end of the stock is a fixed steel projection, that was used in climbing the Alps. The rifle was evidently made to serve two purposes, as a rifle and as a staff in mountain climbing. The bullets for the rifle when I was a boy were made at home and it took exactly one pound of lead to make sixteen bullets.

It now seems as I look back, that the rifle was always near father and it was the common custom then to keep a rifle handy day and night, but the most common use made of it was to kill game. When one was out in the wild country away from the houses, wild game could often easily be shot, and it was a keen disappointment to have a good shot and be without a gun.

Curious customs were established in giving Indians whiskey, for instance, if my father met an Indian while out hunting it was alright to give him a drink from his flask, but if the Indian came to his shack and asked for whiskey he was refused.

During the first few years father went to Galena, Ill. every spring and fall for supplies and sometimes if he was unable to get down the river in the spring, we ran a little short on food. I remember one spring when all we had to eat for a time was corn which was ground in a large coffee grinder bolted to the wall, and salt pork. If it had been a little later in the spring we could have shot a deer, but the deer left for other points in the late fall and didn't come back until the late spring.

In 1853 about two hundred of the Sioux tribe with their ponies, women, children and dogs came from the north, shortly after renewing a treaty with the Chippewas, and camped in Fountain City for some time. The winter of that year a small Indian child died. The parents gathered drift wood from the river banks, fashioned a small coffin, and after placing the body in it, the coffin was left in the crutch of a tree until it was possible to easily dig a grave in the spring.

The name Holmes' Landing was changed about 1852, when three brothers name Pierce surveyed and platted the present Fountain City. The name suggested by the many springs that sprang like fountains from the hillsides. Several of our business buildings are built over springs that are active today.

When the railroad was built through in 1885, river traffic rapidly diminished and Holmes' Landing was supplanted by fast growing Fountain City. There was a great deal of wood chopped but instead of selling it to the river steamers it was hauled to Winona.

As wood was cleared off the land by the hardy pioneers who had come in the fifties to homestead the land around Fountain City the grubs were cleared off and the land prepared for crop. As more and more land was cleared for crops, an important change took place. When father came to Fountain City it was possible although there were no roads, to drive the oxen and wagon almost any place, but after a few years, the rains began to wash our rich soil into the Mississippi and ditches were created. The old Mississippi that had almost been clear as spring water became the muddy colored stream we see today.

I believe father was one of the most versatile of the old pioneers. He was a farmer, a wood chopper, justice of the peace, and even became the first dentist in Fountain City. He had brought with him from Switzerland, a couple of instruments used at that time to pull teeth. No anesthetics were used, you may be sure. The patient was seated on a kitchen chair and told to hang on, while father yanked and tugged to the accompaniment of assorted groans and yelps of pain.

Acting as the justice of the peace he married the first white couple married in Buffalo County. The happy couple were William Ashton and Elizabeth Falls. Miss Falls and family drove up to our house first in their ox cart and they became quite excited when the groom did not arrive, but after a couple of hours he came. Then the next problem was to find father who had gone out hunting but he finally arrived and the ceremony was performed.

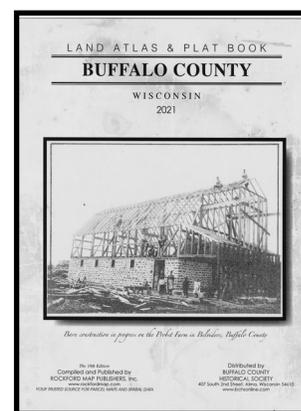
It is quite a long time now since I first saw the light

of day in the old wood chopper's shack, but memories of those early days are still vivid in my mind. The time the forest fire threatened our little home, and father hastily hitched up the oxen, plowed around our hay stacks and started a backfire, while mother carried water to throw on the steaming roof of our home. How us children slept in a rough place under the eaves, and father boosted us each night, because we had no stairway, and I will never forget the first pair of overshoes I bought when I was twenty-one years old.

I have been permitted to live a long and eventful life, thru the most wonderful period of history. I have had a small part in the education of some of our citizens now living, and many who are long dead, in



This 1911 photo of Fountain City was taken when the author was nearly 60 years old!



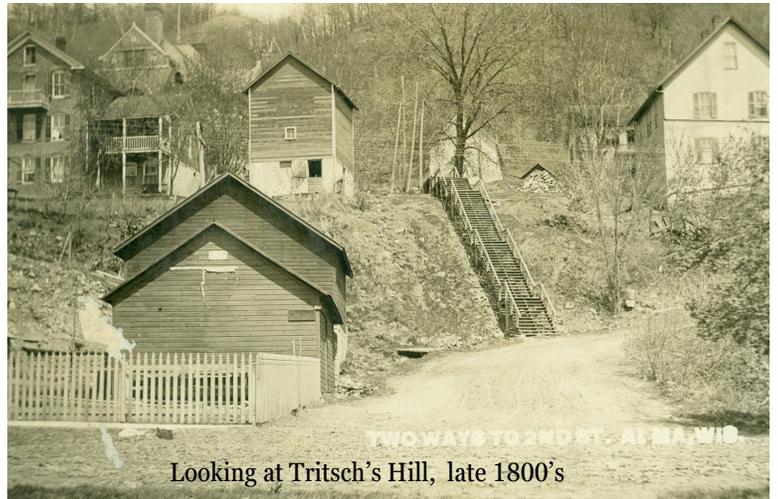
2021 Plat Books now available!

Call the office to schedule a pick-up or visit our website, www.bchsonline.com to have it shipped to your door!

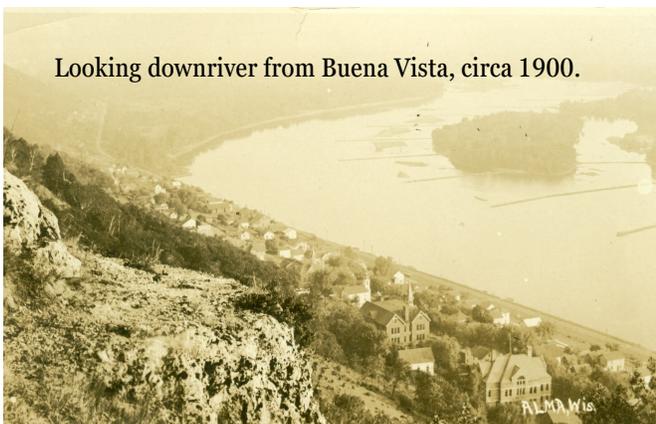


The following is a transcription of a letter handwritten by local naturalist **Mary (Mae) Lees** in answer to a school girl's request in 1927:

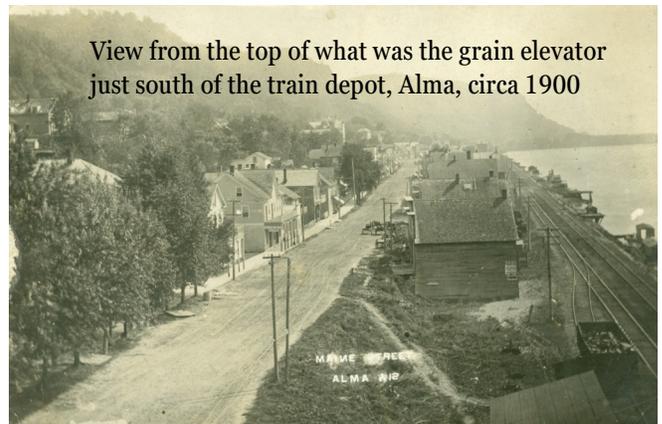
To the stranger who asks, "Is there a level spot in Alma?" I say, indeed there are. The river is level on a calm day and the sandbars are level in low water and, with the help of a heavy roller, the baseball meadow is quite level. Oh yes, we have level spots among our hills. But it is to our hills we point with pride. A friend of mine from the plains writes that she too points to her hill in winter. In summer it can't be seen for then the lilac bush in front of it comes into leaf and hides it. Hidden by a leafy lilac bush? Hardly. They hide the morning sun for two hours after its rising. Hard on daylight savings? Not at all. If the Alma day is shortened, its dawn is lengthened. And then the sheltering hills, warding off early frosts and late, bring our gardens into bloom a week earlier in spring and spare the fall blossoms for many weeks in full glow when neighboring towns are all frostbitten. Does a stony hillside permit of gardening? Well look about you. It's the stones that are the making of the gardens. No garden is without its terrace wall built of its own stones and so much the prettier for these very walls. True, now and then, a flood of rain brings down some wall crashing but the owner, taught by experience, builds it again and more solidly. Yes, Alma is rather irregular, rather jagged. More than one house on Second Street is a story high to the bluff and three stories high to river wards. But those oddities, those overhangings and outcroppings; how they please the artists who have discovered the town. Seven different artists have painted Alma seven different ways. One admires the houses built of Alma-made brick. Such vibrant color he cries. Every brick of its own rich mellowness. A brick wall in this town is like a bed of zinnias. And the second painter is taken with the old fashioned solidity and charm of the ancient houses. While the third has an eye for the gayety of the haphazard gardens dropped down at the corners of business blocks. To one those may balconies overtopping the main street call for painting. Another sees the picturesque in the winding irregularity of the needful stairways leading up from the river to Hill Street. A lady of this town went to Yellowstone last summer to see the picturesque, she said. She came home to find an artist sitting on her front doorstep doing the view from there. She had seen no artist painting in Yellowstone. Moral: If you love the picturesque, don't go to Yellowstone, rather, sit on your own front doorsteip, and that's just what most Alma citizens do on a summer evening.



Looking downriver from Buena Vista, circa 1900.



View from the top of what was the grain elevator just south of the train depot, Alma, circa 1900



A SUMMER “HELLO” FROM THE FCAHS

Well, the hot & muggy days of summer have certainly found us this summer. A drought has encompassed much of the Midwest and Western coast, and it burns! However, we here in Buffalo County, which hugs the beautiful Mississippi River, can count our blessings that we have avoided the worst of it.

As I write this, we are expecting a dark day full of thunderstorms, heavy rain and warnings of possible hail and straight-line winds. It seems like Mother Nature has decided to dump the heavy rainclouds, instead of letting it trickly gently over a wide area in a blessed “all day-er”.

The summer story of the FCAHS is that we have been busy, and continue our monthly meetings on the 3rd Tuesday, 1 p.m., at the museum. Friday afternoons the museum is open, and we have had a good number of visitors. Many people come to see our collections, and many come looking for information about their ancestors. This past month we have had people looking for Meili, Clark and Clausen family materials. It is always fun to chat with them, as often we can help them, and they can help us. People are usually generous in sharing their information and pictures. We appreciate this.

Work continues, on our yearly calendar, and this year we are doing ours in color. Sandy Schmitt and Richard Ruben have gathered some unique, colorful, and seasonal old postcards, that have distinct designs of the early 1900s and many in German. Layout and monthly comments continue the work. Soon it will be ready for the printer and then available for Christmas gift giving and gracing your wall with monthly unique charm of “old world” memories.

Sandy is also working on a newsletter with accompanying information about renewing memberships, memorials, gifts, etc. The year rolls around so fast and it is again time to address memberships as these \$\$\$\$, so help us keep our feet on the ground and moving forward on activities and services.

Jeanne Fugina continues her weekly Fountain City Area Historical Society column in the Buffalo County Journal. She has also been busy communicating with the State of Wisconsin Historical Society Press and CFC Schools in regard to the FCAHS gifting books to the elementary and high school library. She is reviewing the many choices available and will bring information about her recommendations and prices to the next meeting.

Ann Bohri continues her watch over the society’s physical materials and our finances. She is diligent in filing, organizing, answering questions, welcoming visitors,

watering our flowerpots outside the door, emptying the dehumidifier, and gathering new information about our history and families.

We again welcome John Schlesselman, as our President for the 2021-2022 year. He has been our faithful president for many years, and will continue to lead us forward with guidance, especially in understanding better the community in which we live and serve, and just how to communicate with it, so we have a better impact in the future. No easy task.

Our membership voted John-President, Fran Burt-Vice President, Sandy Schmitt-Secretary, and Ann Bohri-Treasurer. We are in good hands for another year.

We always encourage those with Fountain City area memorabilia, items of historic interest, written genealogies about our early settler families, photos unique to our area, etc. to please gift us that which your family would like to share. Do not throw away anything of possible interest to the FCAHS, let us look at it first, before the dumpster and landfill get it.

Come and visit us at 7 S. Main St. The museum is open during the summer on Friday afternoon from 1-4 p.m. If you need an appointment, please call John Schlesselman at 608-687-8730, or Ann Bohri

In Memoriam:

Christina Dorn

Given by Jeanne Hofer

Alma Historical Society News

Alma Historical Society Meeting Dates:

September 29—Note time and place change: 6 PM at Alma Area Museum

October 26—7 PM at City Hall

November—Annual Christmas Party—Check local newspaper for details

December and January: No meeting



Unidentified

The Alma Area Museum closed on Sunday, August 29th 2021, and will remain closed until next year when it will open Memorial Day weekend, 2022. We had people visit the museum every weekend we were open. Most of our visitors were from the Twin Cities and the Rochester areas. Just about every one said “Alma” was their destination. Usually those visitors from Louisiana, California, Texas, etc., were here visiting relatives and were interested in their family histories. We had many visitors comment that they were greatly impressed by our collection of artifacts and also by the quality and diversity of our exhibits.

Due to COVID-19, our annual meeting and our annual presentation to a community member of the Historic Preservation Award was held at our picnic at Rieck’s Park. The Alma Historical Society every year honors someone in the community who has preserved the nature and character of their building. This year’s award was presented to Daniel Kordiak for the great job in restoring his building at 305 N. Main St. President Max Bachhuber presented Dan with the certificate and the Historic Preservation Award plaque. After the presentation, everyone present enjoyed a wonderful picnic lunch.

Alma Museum put on a wonderful slide show. The slide show was an interesting collection of pictures of Alma “Then and Now” and other interesting pictures of Alma. We extend a big “thank you” to John Ambuehl for his many hours of work putting together the slides. John also plans to add more pictures to the slides you use for in the future. A big “thank you” goes out to all members who volunteered to work at the museum this year. Without your efforts we could not keep the museum open. We hope to see everyone back in the spring!



Castlerock Museum News

Castlerock Museum has had a very busy summer. Our Sunday hours have ended, but the museum remains open from 1-4pm on Fridays and Saturdays. Visitors are encouraged to wear a face mask. We are hoping to start having special events again in the fall. Check out the museum’s Facebook page or www.castlerockmuseum.com for the latest updates.

MONDOVI AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

For more information about the MAHS, please email mondovihistory@yahoo.com or check out our Facebook page.

It has been a busy spring and summer at the Mondovi Area Historical Society. While work continued on the Society's inventory project, members also worked on preparing the Society's museum buildings for the summer season and for "The Past in the Park". As a part of that preparation, several of the displays and exhibits in the buildings were freshened up with new signage and, in some cases, special attention was paid to cleaning artifacts and clothing that is on display. A new World War II exhibit also was put together in the Rural Life Museum. Finally, the Society has hosted several visitors by appointment to its buildings in the park.

The 10th "Past in the Park" held on Saturday July 3rd, was a success. Area residents took advantage of a beautiful day to come out the tourist Park to take in the sights and sounds of the HAHS's Annual event. Among other things and activities, those attending were able to see the Society's new World War II Exhibit, hear Mondovi Mayor Brady Weiss deliver this year's traditional Fourth of July speech and listen to the Mondovi Area Community Band's summer concert. The "Past in the Park's" World War II theme was carried over to the Society's booth at the Buffalo County Fair, Which was held July 29th through August 1st.

As we enter the second half of summer, the Society's attentions are turning back toward the inventory project. Each Wednesday morning, volunteers meet in the Society's City Hall Basement Museum Rooms to work on the Society's collections.

The Society's museum buildings in Tourist Park will be open on Sunday, August 22nd, from 1:00PM to 4:00PM. Those wishing to visit by appointment should call 715-835-0336.

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.

NEWS FROM PRAIRIE MOON!

The Herman Rusch Sculpture Garden and Museum, the Schlosstein Exhibit, and the Mehringer Rock Garden, have been visited by many people during the pandemic these past summer seasons. We welcome everyone and continue to make the building room available by appointment when possible.

Once again we are going to have a Quilt Show at the Annex in Cochrane and the Prairie Moon Building September 17th and 18th, providing CDC guidelines allow. Please come and see our many Quilts of Valor that will be presented to veterans from the area at ceremonies at the four schools in the county. The quilts shown at the Prairie Moon Building will be all of the other creations from the Valley Quilters group.

You are welcome to stop and tour the grounds whenever it is convenient. If you need more information, please call Marj Kammuller 608-687-8250 or Janet Fetting - 608-687-6020. Leave a message and we will return the call as soon as possible.

Watch the newspaper for news about the quilt show. Marj Kammuller, Friends of Prairie Moon



This castle-like sculpture is part of the Schlosstein Gardens at Prairie Moon. It was one of many small buildings built between 1920-1940 by Fred Schlosstein.



Research Resources of the Buffalo County Historical Society

Past Perfect Museum Software – search for photos and objects held in our collections

Access to Ancestry.com

Access to Newspapers.com

Buffalo County Cemetery, Church, and School information

Obituaries, Marriages, and Anniversaries, assorted, indexed

Family history files, collected

Probate Files, Buffalo County 1854-1900 (microfilm)

Deeds, Buffalo County 1854-1887 (microfilm)

Index to naturalization 1853-1902 (microfilm)

Area Historical Literature from our library (a small selection of our many volumes)

- Histories of Buffalo and Pepin Counties 1919, Volumes 1 and 2 with index
- History of Buffalo County Wisconsin 1888
- Buffalo County, A Pictorial History, by Mary Ann Pattison
- Books on Gilmanton and Dover by Hazel B. Amidon
- Native Americans 1880 by Jim Stokes Eau Claire, Wapasha band
- Alma on the Mississippi
- The Swiss Connection
- American Genealogy
- German Bohemians
- Just People of the Friendly Valley
- Some Pioneer Families of Wisconsin
- Geschichte Von (from the Fountain City Historical Society), Vols. I and II
- West Central Wisconsin and Mondovi History
- History of Northern Wisconsin 1881
- Who's Who in the Midwest
- La Crosse, Trempealeau, Buffalo Counties 1892
- Chippewa County, Wisconsin, Cemetery Index
- History of the Chippewa Valley
- Luster (5 volume set in Norwegian including Norwegian homeland information)
- Buffalo County: A Native Son Speaks, by E.F. Ganz
- Waumaundee, Wisconsin 1860-1890: An Affectionate Portrait, by LaVern J. Rippley



Obituaries and local news on Microfilm of the following newspapers:

- German Newspaper 1880-1888, 1891, 1896-1899, 1907-1910
- Buffalo County Journals/Alma Weekly Express 1861-1980
- Cochrane Recorder 1914-1981
- Buffalo County Republican (covering Fountain City) in English 1924-1959

Census Records on Microfilm 1840-1930

Old Atlases and Plats from 1878, 1896, 1914, 1930, 1955 and newer, up to present



PICKLES. RELISHES CATSUP

PICKLES

Take small pickles and soak in salt water overnight, then boil them in part vinegar and part water, take out and put in fruit jars. Boil another solution of vinegar and mixed spices and pour over pickles in fruit jar while hot and seal.---Mrs. Aug. Giesen.

DILL PICKLES

Fill jar with cucumbers, add dill. Make brine with 13 c. water, 1 c. salt and 1 c. vinegar, let come to a boil and pour over cucumbers and seal.---Mrs. Jos. Beffa.

SWEET-SOUR PICKLES

One c. vinegar, ½ c. sugar, 1 c. water, 1 tblsp. mixed spices, put in kettle and let come to a boil; this will make 1 qt. Pick pickles in morning and put in jar with 4 c. water and 2 tblsp. salt, let stand till next day; put pickles in water when solution is boiling and boil just long enough till pickles turn brown. Then put in glass and seal.---Lena Wolfe.

MUSTARD PICKLES

One qt. celery, cut into small pieces--1 large and 1 small bunch, 1 qt. small button onions, 1½ qts. small cucumbers, sliced, 1 large cauliflower divided into flowerets, 2 green peppers--chopped. Put all in brine made of 1 c. salt to 1 gal. water, let stand over night, next morning drain. Boil cauliflower separately until tender. Boil the rest in the following sauce ¾ hr. Make sauce of 1 c. flour, 2 tblsp. mustard, 2 c. sugar, 1 heaping tsp. tumeric. Mix well and add a little water to make a thick paste. Pour into 2 qts. boiling vinegar and then add the cauliflower.---Laura Fugina.

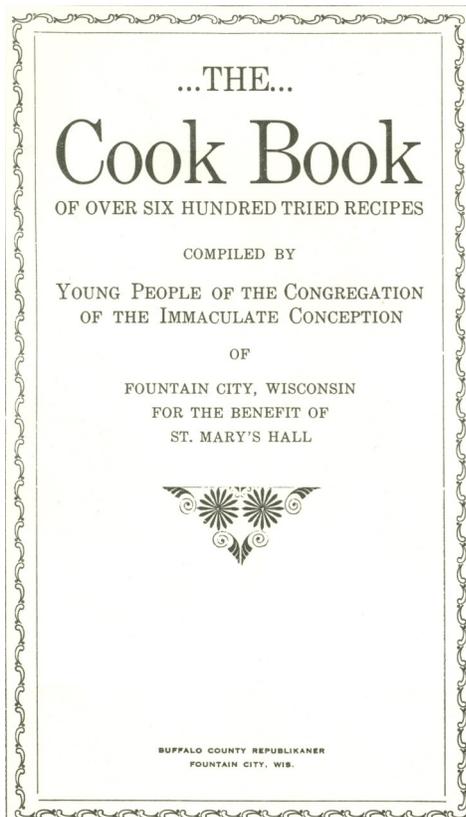
DILL PICKLES

Use medium size cucumbers, wash and wipe and put in glass jars. Boil 1 gal. water, 1 c. vinegar, 1 c. salt, piece of alum the size of a hazel nut. Put dill in the bottom of jar and cover pickles with dill. Pour the liquid over pickles boiling hot, then close jars very tight.---Mrs. John Baechler.

CUCUMBER PICKLES

One gal. vinegar, 1 c. salt, 1 c. ground mustard. Put into a stone jar, put in cucumbers as you get them, large or small. Good in two weeks. Will keep in open jar.---Mrs. W. J. Waseka.

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Cookbook Clippings

These wonderful pickle recipes are from the 1982 reprint of the **1920 Cookbook of Over 600 Tried Recipes**. This Fountain City area cookbook was created by the youth of the Immaculate Conception for the benefit of St. Mary's Hall. Thank you to Sandra Ebert for this wonderful donation to our area cookbook collection at BCHS. We also thank her for her longtime commitment to the BCHS Board of Directors. We truly appreciate you!



SLICED PICKLES

One doz. cucumber pickles, dill size, ½ doz. small onions, ¼ pt. vinegar, 1 c. sugar, 1 tsp. celery seed, 1 tsp. white mustard seed, 1 tsp. whole pepper, 1 tsp. tumeric powder. Slice cucumbers and onions together and salt well, let stand 1 hr., pour off brine and rinse well, put all together and boil a few min., put in glass jars and seal. This makes 1 qt.---Mrs. William Cook.

PICKLES—SWEET-SOUR

Small pickles, salted over night, put on stove to get hot, then drain well, pack in glass jars. Heat to boiling point, 2 c. vinegar, 1 c. sugar and add whole peppers and mustard seeds. Seal tight and hot. Enough for 1 qt.---Elisabeth Hellmann, Winona, Minn.

MUSTARD PICKLES

One qt. each of small whole cucumbers, large cucumbers sliced, green tomatoes sliced and small button onions, 1 large cauliflower divided into flowerets. and 4 green peppers--cut fine. Make a brine of 4 qts. water and 1 pt. of salt, pour it over the mixture of vegetables and let it soak 24 hrs. Heat just enough to scald it and turn into colander to drain. Mix 1 c. flour, 6 tblsp. ground mustard, 1 tblsp. tumeric with enough cold vinegar to make a smooth paste, then add 1 c. sugar and sufficient vinegar to make 2 qts. in all. Boil this mixture until it thickens and is smooth, stirring all the time, add the vegetables and cook until well heated through.---Mrs. Barbara Parent.

SWEET SLICED PICKLES

One doz. cucumbers, 1 doz. small onions, 1 tsp. white mustard seed, 1 tsp. celery seed, 1 tsp. cassia or cinnamon buds, 1 tsp. tumeric powder, 1 tsp. ground pepper, 1 tsp. ginger, 2 c. sugar, 1 qt. vinegar. Slice onions and cucumbers, salt and let stand 1 hr. or two. Drain, then boil in the vinegar, sugar and spices until tender, bottle and seal. ---Mrs. Herm. Heitmann.

DILL PICKLES THAT WILL KEEP

Soak cucumbers for three days in a brine strong enough to carry an egg, at the end of that time pack in a stone jar and cover with vinegar and water, using half and half, add a little alum and dill as desired.---Flora Eder.

GREEN TOMATO PICKLES

One pk. green tomatoes, 1 doz. sliced onions, ¼ lb. celery seed, ¼ lb. white mustard seed, 1 tblsp. ground mustard, 1 oz. cloves, 1 oz. allspice, 1 tsp. mace, 1 tsp. cinnamon, equal parts of sugar and vinegar to cover tomatoes. Slice tomatoes and onions, put in layers alternately one of tomatoes and onions and salt, about ¼ c. salt, let stand over night and drain the liquid off, put in kettles and cook with the vinegar, sugar and spices for about 20 min., put in jars and seal while hot.---Mrs. Jos. Hund.

TUMERIC POWDER PICKLES

Slice cucumbers, let stand in salt water a few hours. Then drain and boil in this syrup for a few min.: 2 c. sugar, 2 c. vinegar, 1 tblsp. tumeric powder, 1 tsp. celery seed, 1 tsp. mustard seed, 2 sliced onions. ---Mrs. Dan. Piel.

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Boating and log rolling near Alma as spectators look on.

Gerhard Gesell was a German immigrant who settled in Alma in 1876. Upon arrival he set up a studio and operated a stationary, book, and art store on premise until he sold the store to in 1890. He was a prolific and accomplished studio photographer; many area families today treasure images taken by him of their ancestors. He was a true artist of his time and he documented the world he lived in, a world rapidly growing and changing. He took great joy in travelling about the area and making candid images of life along the river and in the surrounding countryside. Many of these gems are held in the collections of the Wisconsin State Historical Society. Both the BCHS and the Alma Historical Society are also fortunate to have large collections of his photographs. The Alma Area Museum has a superb exhibit of Gesell's images, including many of photos from the Wisconsin State Historical Society collection, that is not to be missed!



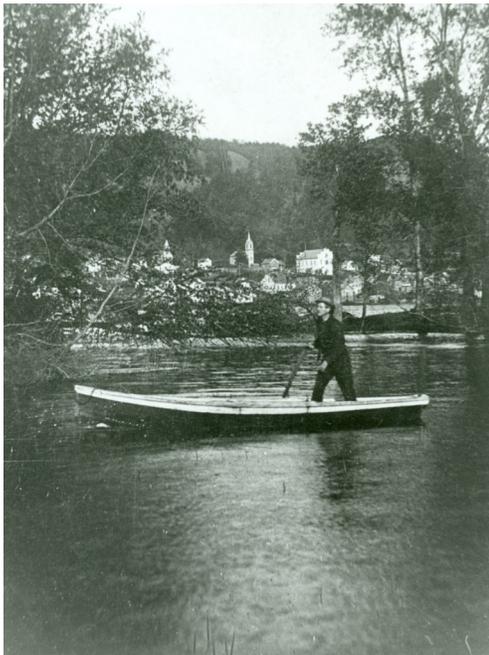
William Kuehn and Charles Dienger
in their classy coonskin coats



Albert Heur



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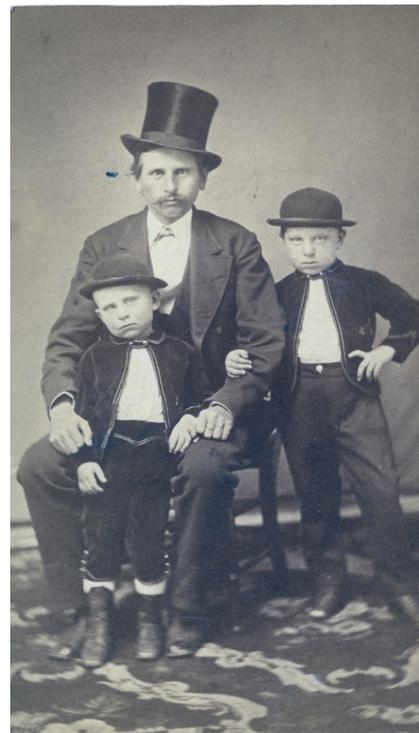
Gerhard Gesell posing in a skiff on island across from Alma, from a stereograph originally in possession of Louise Radke.



According to Gerhard Gesell's nephew, Herb Zeller, this is one of the last known photos taken by Gesell of his wife, Christina, and their five children before his death in 1906.



Cultivating corn on the Fred Zeller farm, Montana Township, around 1890. The Christ Kindschy farm is in the background. This photo was donated by Herb Zeller to the BCHS in our first year of operation, 1981.



This is a very rare and early portrait by Gesell out of his studio in Reads Landing, where he lived and worked before his arrival in Alma in 1876. Subjects unknown.



We are dedicated to continuing the work of digitizing our collection. While nothing can replace the actual, original photo, we can assure an extra measure of safety by creating the digital copy. We are looking forward to the day we can make these available online. If anyone has photos they'd like to share, whether to donate or simply allow us to scan and return to you, please contact us!



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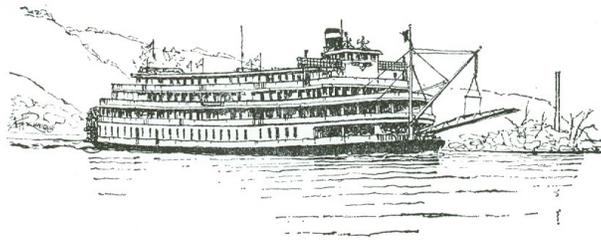
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