

*Preserving our  
Historical Heritage*



# Price County Historical Society Newsletter

Volume 38 No. 1 Spring 2020

[www.pricecountyhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.pricecountyhistoricalsociety.org)



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Director: Bonnie Salm, Fifiel  
Director: Sally McFadyen, Phillips

Director: Steve Eitrem, Fifiel  
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Director: Len Schmidt, Park Falls  
Newsletter Editor: John Berg,

## Price County Historical Society is Interrupting the 2020 Museum Season...

Greetings to all the members of the Price County Historical Society. As your newsletter editor, and on behalf of the Price County Historical Society Board of Directors, I believe it necessary to start our Spring Newsletter with a rather solemn tone.

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic the Board of Directors of the Price County Historical Society has decided not to open the Old Town Hall and Greenfield School Museums in Fifiel for the summer of 2020. It was a hard decision to make, but ultimately we did not feel that we could adequately have the appropriate measures in place to ensure safety for our hosts and individuals coming into the museums and that the most responsible thing to do for the health of everyone including the health of the community would be to keep the museums closed this summer. That means that we will also not be having our Pie Social or Strawberry Shortcake/Flea Market Fundraisers that we normally have over the summer. We are still planning to publish our newsletters, sell books on line through our website and have other historical photographs, articles and information available on our website and through the Price County Review. Maintenance work as needed on our buildings and grounds will continue in accor-

dance with recommended Public Health and safety guidelines. As I am sure many of you are, we Board Members of the Price County Historical Society, are looking forward to a better 2021 season.



Newly installed brick plaza at the Fifiel School Memorial. The original bricks were moved in front of the sidewalk and new bricks added.

## Price County Historical Society Continues Its Work Behind the Scenes to Preserve, Maintain and Protect its Valuable Structures, Artifacts, and Collections!!

Well we are certainly living in interesting and uncertain times! 2020 started out pretty much as usual for your Price County Historical Society (PCHS) Board members. The Board met on January 16 at the Phillips Library to start the new decade with its promising momentum. Board members met again on February 20 at Park Falls and developed an agenda for upcoming

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events as well as scheduled maintenance, upkeep, and staffing for the summer season. 2019 was a year filled with accomplishments as the museums saw continued strong attendance at both the museum and events carrying over from the previous year. At that meeting the Board outlined the proposed articles in the Spring PCHS Newsletter, to give our membership a means to plan for the coming year. We also had a recap of 2019 work done at the Old Town Hall and Greenfield School Museums. During the past year, several of our board members whose particular interest lies in buildings and ground, led by Tom Kaiser, Peter Dahlie, and Len Schmidt have overseen work stabilizing the foundation of the Old Town Hall Museum along with completing the exterior painting of the handicapped entrance and staining of the entrance, removal of several spruce and one large basswood tree and having a steel roof put on the building adjacent to the museum used for storage. Additionally, painting of the exterior siding and trim on the south and west sides of the Greenfield School was completed with plans to do the north siding on the Greenfield School as funding permits. The "Brick Project" for the Fifield School Memorial was another area of concern. The older bricks were removed from their current location and moved to the west side of the sidewalk. After that was completed an additional twenty nine more new bricks were added. The area directly in front of the monument was leveled and concrete placed in that area. So, as you drive by the Museums today, it is the Board's proud contention that you will be impressed with the appearance and structural and aesthetic condition of these structures. Long term the Board is discussing the placement of siding on the building next to the Old Town Hall Museum, which was purchased by the Society some years ago and is now used for storage. Also reviewed were the ongoing projects that involve the archiving and preservation of the Society's photograph and documents collections. Eric Tollefson works with Etola Foytek and Laurie Pilch to scan and document each photograph into the computer program called Past Perfect. This allows the PCHS photographs and documents to be entered in a digital catalogue with several related tags, providing the researcher with a cross reference to related photographs and documents utilizing a variety of criteria. For example, the accession number and

initial caption for a photograph of say, B.M. Holes' sawmill in Ogema, may be cross referenced with other Ogema area photographs through their accession numbers by the dates relative to that of the photograph, names of the village, town, or county in which it is located; businesses, industries, or important sites, significant personalities known to be associated with the photograph's image, and so on. It is estimated that the PCHS has nearly 5,000 photographs in its collection, and so one may appreciate the time and attention each photograph requires to make a proper entry. This committee project has been working one day per week at the PCHS Archives at the office of BW Papersystems, on the north side of Phillips.



Earlier this year Sally McFadyen donated this photo of Marinette Tomahawk & Western RR No. 10 off the tracks, possibly in the vicinity of Spirit Lake...Anyone know who these men might be?

While operations have been temporarily suspended because of concerns regarding COVID-19 and building access, members of the Society can rest assured that the collection is safe and secure. BW Papersystems has graciously provided a climate controlled, fire-safe, and access-controlled room for the storage of all the photographs, as well as a place to work on the project. The Society is very grateful for the foresight of businesses such as BW Papersystems whose leadership provides a secure home for valuable photograph collections from all of Price County.

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The Society has an online presence via its website. Board members Eric Tollefson and Laurie Pilch meet periodically to update general information regarding the Society and descriptions for the various books offered through the Society. Steve Eitrem is in charge of the facebook page and makes sure that important information is updated on that page. Numerous members who are associated with the varied historical societies in Price County keep lines of communication open when questions from interested individuals regarding potential donations, questions about Price County History, and book orders come their way. I [John Berg] have taken on the task of researching Price County history as well, applying that information and communicating with members to provide captions for the photographs seen in the "Throwback Thursday" in the *Price County Review*.

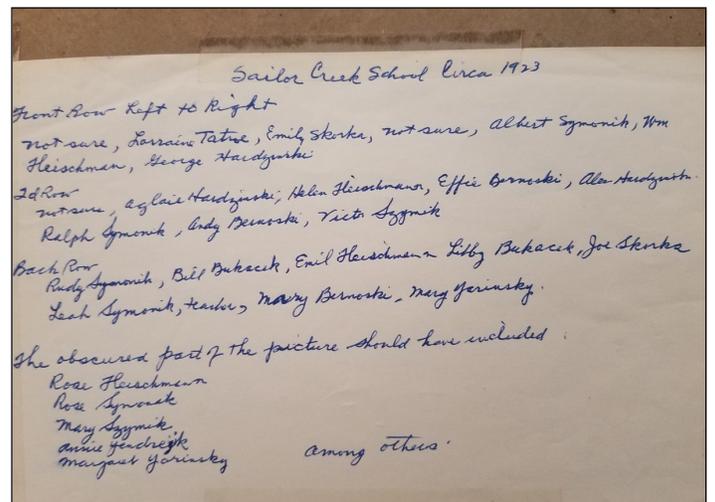
During the "normal" season, PCHS hosts a number of events for fund-raisers to meet ongoing expenses. As was previously noted our concerns regarding COVID-19 has put those on hold for 2020. Those events where planning for food is involved, the delicious meals prepared by Bonnie Salm and the desserts organized and provided by Arlene Morrison have brought in folks from all over the county. Sally McFadyen has been instrumental in organizing the flea market at the Strawberry Shortcake event at the museum site in the later summer, and combines her expertise to setting up displays at the museum as well as serving at the events and functions sponsored by the Society. Etola, Peter, and Laurie serve the Society as officers as well, managing the administration duties that keep the lights on, water running, and other bills paid, as well as managing correspondence to the various entities requiring information. Through phone and email communication we members of the Society's Board will keep in contact to ensure the museums are well-maintained through the next year.

It has been reported in the news that many of those who were sheltering safer at home started to do some serious spring cleaning. Are you one of those people who have done that and found items of historical interest? As has been broadcast in the past, the Society actively seeks direct donations of documents, photographs, diaries, plat books, and related materials pertaining to the history of Price County and surrounding counties. But what if you don't want to

part with your historically significant artifact[s]? Well, the Society has the means to scan and digitize the artifact, and will request to accession it as part of the collection as a "digital accession." We fill out a Donation Form and specify the donation as an electronically digitized artifact accession. We also ask the donor to give the Society permission to publish the image[s] or document[s], as well as give permission to bonafide and credentialed researchers who demonstrate appropriate research, permission to publish the image of the photograph or documents.



This digitally accessioned photograph from the collection of Jim Hardzinski shows the student body at Sailor Creek School in 1923, with the roster written on the back. Anyone who can offer other photos of this school, its teachers, students or history are encouraged to contact the PCHS.



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Most recently, that's precisely what Society member Blake Anderson of Phillips did on February 20, 2020, when he met with John L. Berg at the Phillips Library's meeting room. They spent four hours scanning and captioning photographs from his personal collection. Blake's grandparents were Willis and Evie [Shell] Anderson family; Willis and his brothers worked on the Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad. Sanford Shell, Evie's brother was one of the main engineers on the line, as was another relative, Rudolph Kieble. Other individuals have also recently contributed by either direct donations or sending scans through email. Dale Heikkinen, Jeff Hansen [from far out in Oregon], Jim Hardzinski, the LeRoy Samuelson family, Rick and Deb Schleife, Sally McFadyen, Kathy Cervenka and Charles Kandutsch are recent "digital donors" to the PCHS photograph collection, while Fred Jarosinski, Carol Mader, Jack Klebba, Joyce Bant and Robert (Butch) and Mary Lobermeier donated artifacts directly to PCHS this past winter. The generosity of each of these people in allowing the Society to accession their collection digitally or directly ensures that these important artifacts will be secured and accessible for future researchers. So! If you have historically important artifacts similar to these, please contact any of the PCHS Board members and discuss how your collection may either be donated directly or as a digital accession.



Butch Lobermeier donates a Soo Line Railroad Caboose Stove to the PCHS Museum in Fifiel

J.L. Berg



This previously unpublished photograph of Lake Shore and Eastern Railroad Second Number 218 hauling a load of logs from the Town of Emery in the 1920s was one of many scanned and digitally accessioned from the collection of Blake Anderson.

## 2020 is the 100th Anniversary of the Founding of Price County Public Health

BY John L. Berg

*"The board of supervisors of every county shall, within two years after July 1, 1919, employ upon the certification of the state board of health, as herein provided, one or more public health registered nurses, or public health instructors, whose duties shall be as follows: To act as health supervisor for all schools not already having inspection either by a physician or a school nurse; to assist the superintendent of the poor; to instruct tuberculosis patients and others in preventing the spread of tuberculosis; to assist in reporting existing cases of tuberculosis and other communicable diseases; to assist in investigating cases of delinquency, neglect, and dependency of juveniles, including state aid to dependent children, in counties not employing a probation officer; to assist in investigating cases of non-school attendance in districts where a school attendance officer is not employed; to assist in investigating cases of infringement on child labor laws; to investigate cases of crippled children due to infantile paralysis or other causes; to act as health instructor throughout the county and to perform such other duties as may be assigned to a few."* So mandated THE WISCONSIN LAW: Public Health Nurses, enacted in 1919, as presented verbatim in "Public Health Centennial Gazette," January Edition, fifth page. This gazette was intended as a year-long journal "Celebrating

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100 years of healthy people in safe and vibrant communities.” The “Gazette” is written by Price County Health and Human Services’ Chelsea Onchuck [RN/BSN], from research gleaned from archives of Price County and the Wisconsin State Historical Society and outlines the origins of the public health initiative mandated through Wisconsin Statutes in 1919.

What prompted such bold initiatives? Writing in *The History of Wisconsin, Volume V: War, A New Era, and Depression, 1914-1940*, [Madison, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1990. pages 57-58] historian Paul W. Glad summarizes the impetus behind the initiative, and provides striking comparisons to the COVID-19 pandemic we’re experiencing now. “A deadly influenza virus had entered Wisconsin, [in late summer 1918-ed.] probably carried by sailors from the Great Lakes Naval Training Station north of Chicago, and it was clear that silencing the guns of war in Europe did little to quiet fear of mortality at home. A pandemic of the disease – causing, according to one estimate, 20 million deaths worldwide – was at the height of its virulence. No one knew much about the Spanish influenza virus, and medical practitioners were uncertain about what treatment to advise. In Wisconsin, a common belief held that munching Horlick’s malted milk tablets (manufactured in Racine) increased resistance to the disease, and physicians recommended bed rest and castor oil for flu victims. But nothing appeared effective in counteracting influenza once it had struck. In the worst cases it produced severe inflammation of the respirator passages, pneumonia, and death in a matter of days. The one characteristic of the flu that seemed certain was that it spread through human contact. City health commissioners therefore closed schools and theaters and canceled public gatherings across the state during much of October, 1918. Teachers joined Red Cross volunteers in providing ambulance and other assistance to stricken families. Such measures proved effective. Milwaukee’s death rate between September 14 and December 21, 1918, was 0.6 per 1,000 population, lower than that of any other major American city. By January, 1919 the worst was over.” Further, Dr. Glad discusses some of the issues of the pandemic in Wisconsin: “The contagious character of the flu gave rise to various theories about the pandemic’s causes; it also elicited support of immigration restriction and the prohibition of alcoholic beverages

as public health measures. Some authorities reasoned that the merging of displaced populations during the war had helped to spread the disease. Others blamed the Germans. A *New York Times* article, for example, suggested the hypothesis that U-boats had delivered vials of the virus to German agents in key places. Those who believed the Germans capable of every sort of crime (they had, after all, employed poisonous gas on the battlefields) suspected the Kaiser of using biological warfare. The Armistice did little to allay their fear that the arrival of disease-bearing immigrants might well jeopardize the health of the American people. Anxieties over the Spanish flu also provided prohibitionists with new arguments for closing the saloons, and a committee of the Anti-Saloon League visited Governor Emanuel Philipp to make its case. The cessation of other activities, ran the argument, caused people to congregate in saloons to a greater degree than ever before. Holding that the contagion was even more likely to infest barrooms than it was other public meeting places, the Anti-Saloon League unsuccessfully urged Philipp to lock the doors of all public houses dispensing alcoholic beverages. Saloons remained open for a time, but influenza morbidity nevertheless gradually declined.”



January, 2020 Public Health Staff  
Top Row L-R Christy Hlavacek, Suzanne Daniels, Hailey Halmstad, Tiffany Palecek  
Middle Row L-R Amy Casey, Stacy Abraham, Megan Ziembo, Dani Hoffman  
Bottom Row L-R Keri Nelson, Chelsea Onchuck, Michelle Edwards

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Thus was enacted the statutes establishing county nurses programs which eventually led to a comprehensive state-wide county health program. In the first issue Chelsea Onchuck wrote, *“Throughout the year we will be publishing a monthly ‘Public Health Centennial Gazette,’ that will provide insight on the history of public health nursing during the past 100 years. We will compare our current public health programs with those over the last 100 years to show how some things changed but other remain the same, even after a century.”* Chelsea was able to get two issues written and published but then the onslaught of COVID-19 hit. Since February, the Price County Public Health staff has been focused on preparation and implementing the best service possible to meet the needs of Price County residents as they face this insidious disease.

Copies of the first issues of the “Public Health Centennial Gazette,” are available at the following link: <https://co.price.wi.us/966/Public-Health-Publications>. Take a look at the fine job Chelsea and her colleagues have done in starting to write the history of Price County’s history meeting the needs of its residents’ health issues. In the meantime, well-deserved encouragement, support, and appreciation are extended to Chelsea and all her colleagues at Price County Health and Human Services for all the hard work and long hours each of whom provide in this war of pandemic proportions! Thank you!

**1920 Health Committee Members:**

Mr. Aschenbrender—Chairman  
Ida Johnson—Secretary  
Ernestine Kandel, RN—County Nurse  
Mrs. W.B. Clubine—Member  
Mr. Owen—Member

**1920 Health Employee**

Ernestine Kandel, RN—County Nurse

**2020 Health & Human Services Board Members:**

Bruce Jilka—Chairperson  
Paula Houdek—Member  
William Teeters—Member  
Dennis Wartgow—Member  
Ginny Strobl—Member  
Peter Dahlie—Physician Member  
Suzanne Ocker—Registered Nurse Member  
Sally Huml—Citizen Member  
Gerald Swenson—Citizen Member

**2020 Public Health Staff**

Michelle Edwards, RN, BSN—Health Officer  
Suzanne Daniels, RN, BSN—Public Health Nurse  
Chelsea Onchuck, RN, BSN—Public Health Nurse  
Tiffany Palecek, RN, BSN—Public Health Nurse  
Dani Hoffman, RD, CD, CLS—Nutritionist  
Megan Ziembo, RDH—Public Health Hygienist  
Keri Nelson—HHS Fiscal Supervisor  
Hailey Halmstad—Program Coordinator  
Christy Hlavacek—HHS Assistant  
Amy Casey—HHS Assistant  
Stacy Abraham—HHS Assistant  
Stephanie Kotke—HHS Assistant



Price County Health Officer Michelle Edwards and her staff of Public Health Nurses prepare for the Community Wide COVID-19 drive through Testing Clinic at the Prentice DNR Ranger Station on May 17, 2020. L-R Tiffany Palecek, Michelle Edwards, Suzanne Daniels, and Chelsea Onchuck,



Members of the Wisconsin National Guard and Public Health Nurses from Price County Health and Human Services screened 51 people from Price County and the surrounding area. All 43 Price County residents screened tested negative.



## MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

To determine if your membership is active please check your mailing label on this newsletter. Next to your name in **Red** you will see the year that your membership is paid through and your current level of Membership:

I = Individual

B = Bronze

S = Silver

G = Gold

LM = Life Member

If you are not a Life Member and you still see 2019 after your name, your membership is due now. Those getting your newsletters by email will be contacted separately as to your status.