

Liberty School News

Volume 16, Number 1

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Liberty School News is edited by Michael and Toni Meier and is published by **German Settlement History, Inc.**, an organization dedicated to the preservation and development of historic artifacts in the Town of Spirit, Southeast Price County, including “**Our Yesterday House**” built in 1885, **Liberty School**, built in 1919 and “**The Machine Shed**” housing logging and farming tools and equipment from 1880 to 1950. You may contact us at N894 S. German Settlement Road, Ogema, WI 54459. (715)564-3299 or gshinc@centurylink.net. Check out our web site at www.germansettlementhistory.org GSHI is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit tax exempt organization. **You are welcome to visit us at any time, but call ahead to make sure we are home to show you around.**

**The Board Members of German Settlement History, Inc.
Invite you to join family and friends on Memorial Day
Weekend for an evening of fun and socializing!**

**10th Annual G.S.H.I. Barn Dance/Fund Raiser
Sunday, May 25th, 2014 --7:00 p.m. - Midnight**

At the Darrel & Luann Lind Farm located 3/4 mile north of County
YY or 2 1/4 miles south of Hwy. 86 at N1169 German Settlement Road
in the Town of Spirit, WI.

Free Will Donation gets you into the barn dance. There will be free refreshments of pie, ice cream, coffee & lemonade. Funds raised this year will be used for the ‘Liberty School Room’ display.

**Gary Edinger will be calling square dancing.
DJ Music provided by Eric Gladson ‘That 1 Productions’**

A Silent Auction will be held during the dance. If you would like to donate items for the silent auction please contact Luann at 715-564-3340 or to make a cash donation make checks payable to: G.S.H.I. and mail to: German Settlement History, Inc. N894 S. German Settlement Road Ogema, WI 54459

See You at the Barn Dance!

And...Coming Attractions:

**Friends of German Settlement History Picnic,
Saturday, July 26, 11:00 – 3:00**

Page 2—
Mother’s Day
Snow

Page 4—
Mother’s Day

Page 6—Doc
MacKinnon

Page 9—4-H in
Spirit

Page 13—
Amongst the
Russians

Page 17—
Mowing

Page 18—Game
Warden

Page 20—
Greywood

Page 24—Stone
Lake Story

Page 25—Obit

[A special note to our readers:

In every issue we include an annual membership form. It may be that you already signed up for the year so please don't be offended that we included the form in your copy of LSN, we include the form in every copy.

Please also note that you don't have to be a member or contribute to stay on our mailing list. We are glad to have you as our friend and we appreciate your encouragement.

Our next issue should appear in August, 2014.

Now, here's a question for you—would you like to receive LSN electronically? We are now able to do that. Just send your email address to us at gshinc@centurylink.net and request that we take you off the snail-mail list and put you on the email list.

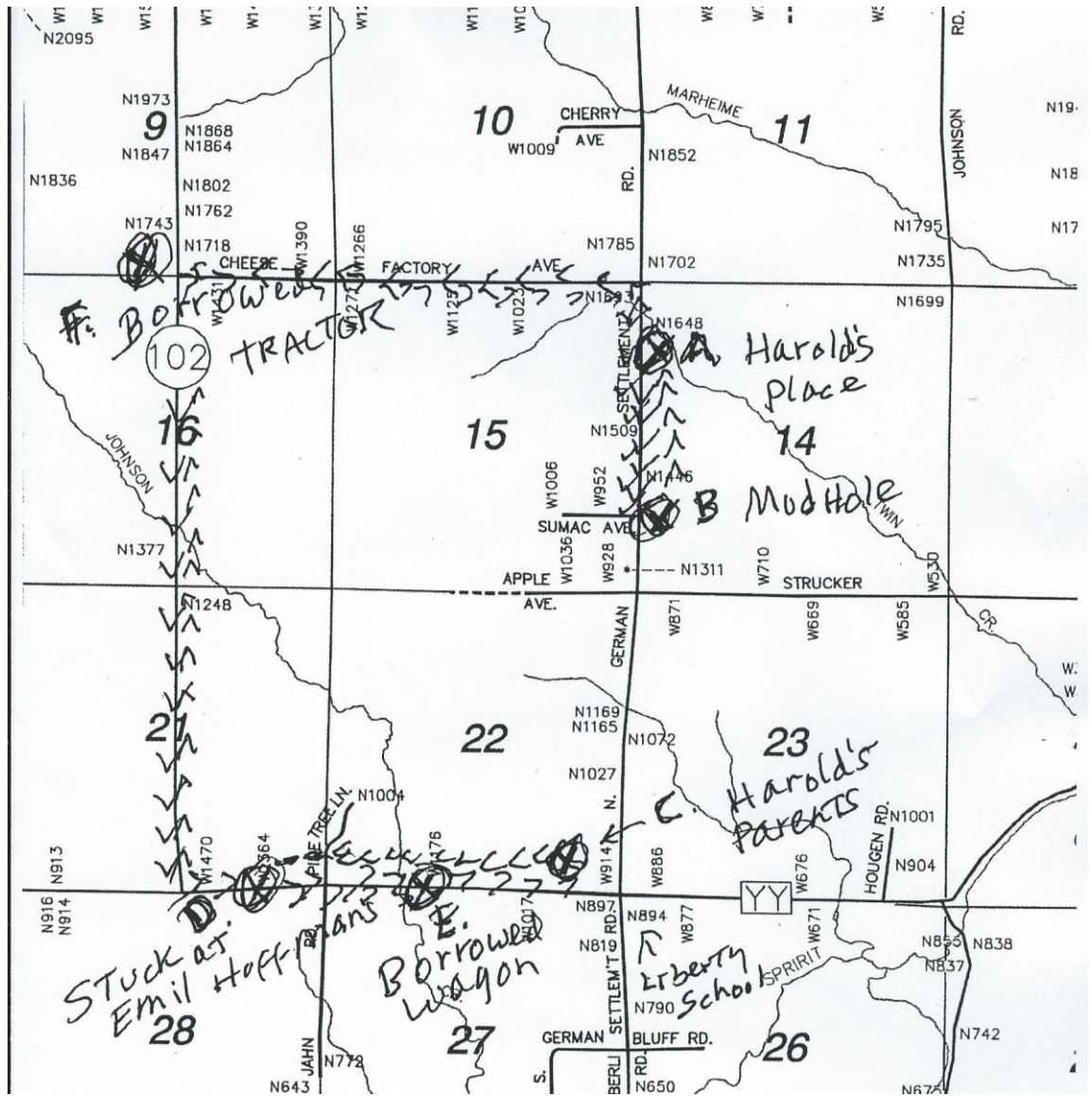
Mother's Day Snow by Harold Rhody

Grace says it was 1960—the year of the great Mother's Day snow. It was already about the year of the muddiest roads. We had put in a bulk milk tank in response to a premium offer, but the tank truck couldn't get here through the mud, so we had to can off our milk, as the can truck could get here from the north.

At about that time we were running out of hay, as it was still early in May, and the pastures didn't amount to much. We had some hay in the barn over at my parents' place two miles away, (corner of YY and North German settlement Road, kitty-corner from Liberty School) so on Saturday morning, the day before Mother's Day, I started over there with a tractor and wagon. I only got half way there when the tractor bogged down. It was so stuck that I could turn the rear wheels by hand, but of course the tractor wouldn't budge. Ronnie Meier had a tractor parked there for that purpose, so with that I was able to pull my tractor out and get turned around to head back the other way.

By going up Cheese Factory Ave. and south on 102, which was already paved by then, and east on YY, which was not paved, I got there and threw on a few bales of hay and started home. When I got as far as Emil Hoffman's the wagon got so stuck that it wouldn't budge. The tractor was mobile though, so I unhooked and drove down to Komarek's just below the hill. I borrowed a wagon there and pulling alongside I transferred the hay over so that I was able to get going with that, but by then the light was beginning to fail, and it started to snow. Well, I didn't see any other traffic, and my lights worked, but then the distributor on the tractor started to get wet. Instead of being able to bowl along in high gear when I got to the blacktop, I had to keep downshifting, because the engine would not burn a full charge of gas.

I made it to Cheese Factory Avenue, but by then I was sure the tractor wouldn't make it all the way home, so I unhooked it and parked it under a pine tree. I walked back to the Olson Brothers' and borrowed a tractor from them. That way I got my hay home 12 hours after I started by going 10 miles instead of four and with a borrowed wagon and tractor.



It snowed about a foot that night, and we were glad to have a little hay to feed our animals. My brother Carl had a little hay in a shed at 86 and River Road, and he let me use some of that, and when the snow melted the grass came on fast, so the pasture wasn't too long in picking up. We waded through the snow and mud the next day to get to my Mother's house, and we had a jolly Mother's Day.

Grace Ann [Rhody] Hansen sent this piece that her dad wrote. She also said "I absolutely love Ronnie's community spirit to leave a tractor for people to pull their vehicles out of the mud."

(Harold started (A) south on German Settlement road, got stuck in the (B) mudhole, pulled himself out with Ronnie's tractor, went back north to Cheese Factory Avenue and then west to 102 and south to YY, then east on YY to get hay from his (C) parents, then back to the west until his wagon got stuck (D) by Emil Hoffman's, then back to the east to borrow a wagon from (E) Komareks, then west again to 102 until at Cheese Factory Avenue he had to borrow (F) a tractor from the Olson Boys then east to German Settlement Road and then south to his home.) (page 3)

Mother's Day

by

Michael Meier

The previous story by Harold Rhody tells of one recent Mother's Day I remember well. I say "recent" because 1960 **is** recent for me. It may not be for younger people, but for me it is not ancient history. World War II is ancient history. The Great Depression is really ancient (I wasn't born in time for that!) But, 1960? We were modern already then! Look at the cars from 1960! There had been a big step forward in styling in 1955. Now there was great leap forward when 1960 rolled around.

My adult life began about that time and that is part of the reason why it seems like only yesterday. I graduated from Rib Lake High School in 1958. By 1960 I was in my second year of college. That Mother's Day was memorable for me because I came home from college in St. Paul and my brother, Albert, met me on Friday evening at Lechner's Corner (where 102 meets YY) with the Massey Harris 444 and a hay wagon. The mud road was, like Harold said, impassible except with a big tractor. On Sunday, Mother's Day itself, we all rode (standing) on the hay wagon the 2 ¼ miles from the end of Meier Road to church (including Mom who was wearing the new hat she had gotten for Easter). Impassable mud roads as recently, as **RECENTLY**, as 1960!

Unfortunately, I haven't always remembered the Mother's Day holiday. That is not a good thing. In fact, it is a rude thing, especially if you forget to honor your own mother. Without her, you wouldn't be here.



My parents built this log house in the winter of 1932. This is where I was born in 1941. The log house was 16x24 feet and had two rooms. My two older brothers, Albert & Marvin, and my older sister Rosalie [*who died when she was six weeks old*] were also born in the log house. I believe my older sister, Gladys, and my younger brother, Tim, were born in hospitals.

My dad told about my birth in his Memoirs:

“The baby was due in late August, and it brought back memories of Rosalie... We had made arrangements to have the three kids stay at Al & Mamie’s when the new baby was born. Aunt Clara [*Clara Rhody Marheine, Mrs. Walter Marheine, who served as a midwife for many births*] would stay ten days. Ella [*Ella Meier Rhody, Harold’s mother, Dad’s sister*] wasn’t feeling too well at the time but she agreed to come over so when Olga figured the time had come we called Dr. MacKinnon and I got Ella and took the kids to Al & Mamie’s and went to get Aunt Clara. It was still early in the night; it didn’t take Aunt Clara long to get ready so we were back quite soon.”

“The doctor’s car was at the gate; we didn’t have a driveway to the house yet. As Aunt Clara was halfway to the house she said, ‘The baby must be there already because I heard a baby cry.’ I said, ‘No such luck here; the baby won’t be here for several hours yet.’ But, lo and behold, when we opened the door there was Ella with the new baby. What a wonderful surprise because we never dreamed a baby could be born so easy. He was a little smaller than the others and I guess everything went just right. We had picked a girl’s name but no boy’s names, so Olga asked me what we should call him. I, in high spirits because of the easy birth and trying to be funny, said, ‘Let’s call him Mike.’ And to my surprise, Olga said, ‘I always liked the name, Michael;’ So that was it.”



So, here we are, Mom and I, at the door of the log house when I was a few weeks old in the fall of 1941

A few months after I was born the family moved into the new house which was barely a stone’s throw away. My siblings tell me that they were overwhelmed with how big and roomy that 24x26 foot two story house seemed to them.

Here’s a photo of the new house in 1941/42



**Dr. MacKinnon delivered me, and nearly 3000 other babies.
I am a “Dr. MacKinnon baby.”**

Here is a little bit more about him:

**Dr. George Elliot MacKinnon MD
Family Doctor, 1882-1948**

Adapted from an article by William Nichols and Lewis C. French of the Milwaukee Journal

Dr. George Elliot MacKinnon was born of almost pure Scotch ancestry in Cape John, Nova Scotia, October 17, 1882. Upon completion of eight years of elementary school at Cape John, and graduation from the River John High School, young George had a yen to get away and he made his first trip to the USA. He spent a year working in Providence, RI, as receiving clerk for a thread company. He then returned to Nova Scotia and spent the following years teaching school in rural communities in western Canada.

...

An urge for higher learning led “Doc” to Kingston, Ontario, where he entered the medical school of Queens University, one of Canada's foremost educational institutions. After completing seven years of work at Queens, George Elliot was graduated in the class of 1914 with a B.A., M.D. and C.M. degrees.

In 1914 Dr. MacKinnon came to Milwaukee for a year of internship at the Milwaukee Hospital. In the spring of 1915 he wrote his State Board examination at Madison and was licensed. It was then that H. H. Stolle, head of the logging and mill operations at Tripoli, wrote to Milwaukee for a doctor, and Dr. MacKinnon was sent. He arrived in June, 1915.

Dr. MacKinnon started practicing at Tripoli. He came to Prentice a few years later, but used his office only as a base of operations from which he served lumberjacks in their camps, farmers at their backwoods places and Indians in their villages.

When Dr. MacKinnon first came among the Finns in this area, they wondered how he could count in Finnish. The fact that he had spent three summers teaching school in a Finnish community in western Canada explained his familiarity with Finnish numbers and names.

During Dr. MacKinnon's first year at Tripoli, he used horses or made calls on foot. The country was undeveloped, and travel in the winter and during the spring was difficult. The roads were neither graveled nor graded, so rain meant plenty of trouble, and getting stuck even in the summer was a common occurrence.

In 1915 he bought his first car, a Model T Ford, which was a great help but which was to give him a variety of experiences, for road building had not progressed with the speed of the car industry. In 1923 he acquired a Snowmobile, a car fitted with skis in front which he used for several winters until the county and town plows took over the snow removal.

In July of 1916, Mr. L. C. Prentice, who was then editor of the *Prentice News-Calumet*, persuaded Dr. MacKinnon to come to Prentice, but he continued to serve the people of Tripoli and the area within a radius of 30 miles.

One night, Doc was called to Brantwood. It took Harold Branch and Doc from nine o'clock in the evening until midnight to open the road, a distance of six miles—yet they beat the stork.



Doc With a Newborn Baby
a snowmobile, and seventeen motor cars. At any hour on the clock, he was right there, ready to take care of his people and knowing he'd never be paid—all in a typical day. Dr. MacKinnon never turned down a call, and never sent a bill.

In 1917 he went on the 9 o'clock morning train to Catawba to answer a call. A storm came up and no trains ran for 3 days. On the second day, Doc got horses to take him seven miles through the woods. When they reached the open country, they had to turn back because of the snow drifts. He walked seven more miles carrying his grips through the drifts.

He was a tall, graying family doctor for a small Wisconsin lumbering town and for the surrounding the countryside. Working under tremendous handicaps, he was the doctor in that territory for over thirty years. And during all that time nothing much happened to Doc MacKinnon. Nothing much, that is, except that he brought into the world approximately 3,000 babies. Most of them in humble homes and many after hours of breaking road through blizzards and storms. In his day and night rounds on backwoods roads, he wore out a sleigh, a buggy,

He was written up in *Life Magazine* & *The Reader's Digest*.

The November 26, 1945 issue of *Time Magazine* gave this report under the heading:
“Country Doctor George Elliot MacKinnon”

Doc MacKinnon Day, November 15, 1945

In Prentice, November 15th was Doc MacKinnon Day. The citizens of Price county had decided to do something for the man who had diagnosed, bandaged, prescribed, and delivered for them for 30 years. Years ago, when Dr. George Elliot MacKinnon got around by horse and buggy, the lumbermen in one village used to settle all grudges while the doctor was around so he could be right at hand to patch up the losers.

He was the "stork" for approximately 3,000 babies—he doesn't know just how many more. The American Legion came by the colors. There were floats, and a team of oxen, and there was an old horse and buggy the doctor used to use. A flatbed truck had a large stork tied up with the words below that read “Relax, Doc, We'll Hold Him Today.” But most important were all those to whom the good doctor had helped start life.



There stood the doctor in his sheepskin coat, thinking it over—the seven years of hard study at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario, and the summer months of teaching in backwoods schools to earn his way. Then an internship in Milwaukee and the nurse in whom he developed a

wholly nonprofessional interest. "I told him to forget the cities and I would be happy wherever he went," says Mrs. MacKinnon. "And I have been."

He recalled the old days—how he used to keep two horses, one for the morning and the other for afternoon and night. He remembered how he used to shovel snow, once for three miles, to reach a backwoods home. He remembered 1918 when the flu hit, and he was going day and night, dog-tired until, completely done in, he would pull up the horse behind some haystack and sleep in the rig, knowing the minute he returned home there would be another call. When he left the platform, all he said was, "Well, they all represented a lot of lost sleep, but it was worth it."

Now what had come over Prentice, Doc wondered? On the street, last week, people kept telling him, "Please don't have any babies on Thursday." On Wednesday his wife insisted that he get his calls all cleaned up. The next morning (after getting up at 5 to deliver baby No. 2,891) he discovered why: it was "MacKinnon Day" in Prentice.

Parade on Main Street

By early forenoon 2,500 people had crowded into town and Doc MacKinnon was standing in a reviewing stand watching 450 of his "babies" march past, with stork-decorated floats, and a band. After that he was presented with a shiny 1946 Ford, and led before a microphone.



"I knew you were about to blackmail me some way," he said, "but I didn't know just how." Then his voice choked up and that was the end of his speech.

But MacKinnon Day was just beginning. The Lutheran Ladies' Aid gave a smörgåsbord. The Monday Study Club gave a reception. School was closed and children gathered at the Village Hall presented the Doc with a 21-jewel Hamilton watch and sang: ". . . of his skill we love to tell; Doc MacKinnon makes you well."

That night there was a Community Club dinner in the Lutheran Church. Just as it ended Doc got an emergency call; Earl Ames over in Ogema asked him to come right away. Everybody in town went to the town hall for the evening program, anyhow. The school principal made a talk. Mrs. Tyler of Tomahawk was introduced as the "Songbird of the North" and sang If I Had My Way. The crowd sang too. They were still there at 11 o'clock when Doc got back to report: "It was a feet-first case. The mother nearly died, the baby nearly died, I nearly died, but we all lived. The baby was blue and I had to dip him in hot and cold water."

While everyone applauded, Doc was handed a check for \$1,300 drawn on the State Bank of Phillips. Some people thought he looked a little tired when the gathering broke up. But he was up early again, next morning. As usual, he had plenty of calls to make. It can truly be said that his main vocation and avocation was serving the people, with sincerity, unselfishness, and genuine sacrifice.

Country Doctor George Elliot MacKinnon, 1882-1948

Are you a "Dr. MacKinnon Baby?" Let us know, we'll make a list!

4-H in Spirit

by

Donna Lind Stolhammer

The Busy Beavers 4-H club in Spirit, Wisconsin was a big part of my young life. Growing up there in the '50's & '60's, I spent 9 years as a member in the club. I think every family in the neighborhood was involved in one way or another through-out the years.

The 4-H club played a huge part in developing young people to one day become useful citizens. 4-H leaders & other adults came along-side & invested their lives in us kids. They taught us to "Learn by Doing," which is still the slogan of 4-H clubs across our land.

Every month we had a 4-H meeting at a different club member's home. There, we would "pledge our heads to clearer thinking, our hearts to greater loyalty, our hands to larger service, & our health to better living, for our club, our community, our country, & (as added in 1973), our world."

Our colors were green & white. The green emphasized our youth, life, & growth. White stood for purity & high ideals. We tried to live up to our motto of "making the best better."

4-H was a wonderful part of life in Spirit, & I couldn't wait until I was old enough to join. My two older brothers, Darrel & Duane, were already part of it. Normally, you had to be 10 years old. But...in 1957, when I was not yet 10 by January 1st, I was told that 9-year-olds could join as associate members starting that year. I was thrilled!

I signed up for the sewing project. I remember my first experience with the sewing machine. Helen Meier invited Darlene Larson (a new member also) and myself to come to her house one Saturday afternoon. She had no thread in the machine. She had us girls take turns learning to "sew" on lined paper. We guided the paper as we tried to keep the needle straight on the line. It was a great accomplishment when we advanced to using actual cloth and having real thread in the machine! I sewed my first skirt that year, got a blue ribbon, & was on my way to sewing my own clothes for years to come.

At that time, Mary Kathryn Scheller was a junior leader. Later on, she graciously took me under wing & taught me to cut out patterns & do more complicated things. She was wonderful & so very patient with me. (I also remember being thrilled that I'd get to drive our Ford tractor up to her house, a mile away, so I wouldn't have to walk or ride my bike with all my fabric, etc.)

We learned so much in 4-H, & a lot of our social life, in those days, was centered around the club. I don't know what we would have done without it.

In January, we would elect our own officers, and we would plan events throughout the whole year, along with working on our projects, of course.

There was usually a sleigh-ride each winter. We'd also have an ice skating party, either on Roy Meier's pond or on the river by Swansons. I remember trying to warm my toes by the fire, & roasting marshmallows on clear crispy winter nights. Those were great times.

A roller-skating party at the Town Hall was always a popular event. Who can forget the flash-light skate, where the flash-light would shine on you, & a different boy would cut in & skate, until the light shone again? And I remember there being young men at the Town Hall who knew how to skate backwards, & turn around & could actually teach you to dance on skates. What a thrill.

I remember one Valentine's Day, we tried having a record dance at the Town Hall. That wasn't the most popular of our events, though I sewed a new shirt-waist dress for the occasion & remember having quite a wonderful time.

The Town Hall was also where we hosted the Brayton Family from Kennan one night. They sang so beautifully together, and I will never forget their teenage son, Bill, singing "I Love You Because" to a packed audience.

One night we sponsored another concert there, featuring Ronnie Hughes. He sang a lot like Hank Williams, & it seemed as though we had our own Grand Ol' Opry star right in Spirit!

Toward Spring each year, we would host a basket & pie social at Liberty School. I remember well how we'd decorate our boxes & fill them with a delicious meal & treats. Then we girls would wait to see who would bid on our baskets. It was especially fun to make a double basket with a friend. Two boys would buy it & then both couples would eat together. I got to do that a couple of times with my good friend, Karen Swanson.

Once school let out in May, we spent long summer days getting our projects ready for the Price County Fair & the Spirit Fair.

We would, however, manage to plan a 4-H picnic for summertime. The potluck meal was always delicious, & then we'd get to spend the whole afternoon in the water while our parents visited. We usually went to Stone Lake.

In the Fall, once the fairs were over, there would be record books to get in order. It was time for the 4-H Achievement Awards night in Phillips. We could win pins for excellent performance in certain projects. Autumn was also the time of the year when we'd normally plan a hayride followed by a bonfire.

We always finished out the year with a 4-H Christmas party for our December meeting. I remember Deacon & Adeline Siroin hosting those in my early years. (In 1955, Adeline called & invited my Mom and all seven of us Lind kids to the party. She said Deacon would pick us up & take us all home. I was only eight, & so thrilled to get to be a part of such a special event.

I also remember one year that our gift for the gift exchange had to be exactly 19 or 29 cents (not sure which.) We got to each choose from the assortment of wrapped gifts. I got a little mug that was in the shape of a Santa's head & painted so colorfully. I kept that mug for many years, a treasure from my 4-H memories, along with all my pins for various achievements.

One of my most memorable achievements was the year I entered 11 garments I had sewn. I got 10 blue ribbons & one red on them [first prize was blue, second prize was red] at the Price Co. Fair (You were a great teacher, Mary Kathryn.)

That was also the year that I finally got to take a Dairy project. I had done the sewing, cooking, canning, gardening, photography, home-furnishings—all the girl-projects offered, but I had never gotten to take an animal to the fair. (With five brothers, perhaps we ran out of cows?) Anyway—FINALLY—I got my own Guernsey calf to show. I named her Dixie & led her around the yard each day to train her. I kept her scrubbed clean. (I no doubt wanted her mostly so I could stay overnight at the County Fair.) I got a blue ribbon on her & almost won for County Showmanship. Roy Meier, our club leader, told me later that the judges would have chosen me, if only my Dixie wasn't lop-sided. (When my brothers had de-horned her, something had gone wrong, & the one horn grew a bit, giving her an off-balanced look.) No matter. I had a great time staying at the fair. The rides—the Dairy Bar—the Midway—meeting other 4-H friends. What warm and tender memories.

The County fairgrounds was also where most of us had our first experience of going to camp. The club would pay our way once, when we became a junior higher. There were meetings, games, swimming, & even a dance. AND...it was the first time I ever heard of a s'more. We had them after a cook-out one night, & I thought they were about the best thing I'd ever tasted. I remember the fun of staying in the bunkhouse with Karen Swanson, Susie Larson, Carolyn McCumber, & Anita Nyberg. What fun we had whispering & giggling long into the night.

The fairgrounds was where we went to compete with our demonstrations. (At each club meeting, someone would share how to do something.) I competed at County one year with my "Tricks & Treats with Fruits." I was chosen runner-up to present it at the State Fair.

I also got to be 1st runner-up twice at Rally Day at the fairgrounds in June. There, we would spend the whole day modeling garments we had sewn. I never did get to compete at State Fair, but in 1962, Bernice Bergeson took some of us teenagers down to Milwaukee to enjoy the fair. What fun!

Another thing that was huge in 4-H was getting to go to State 4-H Club Week in Madison, WI. I don't remember just how that trip could happen, but I do so remember that I got to go! What a thrill to see the Capitol & meet 4-H'ers from all over the state. A trip of a lifetime for me. I loved it all—everything about 4-H and the warm little community of Spirit where I got to grow up.

But, the high-light of 4-H, if there was one, was probably, for me, the Spirit Fair. It was held each year, toward the end of August, at our Town Hall. On Friday night, we clubbers would go to the hall to enter all our exhibits, except for the animals. They would be hauled in early on Saturday morning. As a club, we would also set up a booth that would try to make some kind of point. We would compete with the Wilson Workers, the Hillbillies, an Ogema club, & later the Rib Lake 4-H club, if I remember correctly.

All day on Saturday would be the showing of animals, the chance to see which ribbon your other exhibits received, the visiting & eating with friends, licking dripping ice cream cones, & taking turns working in the pop stand. 10 cents a bottle—taken from a tub of iced water—bottle-top popped off—& the sale was good. Around 4:00, we would gather up all our exhibits and head for home. We would do farm chores, eat supper, & get ready to head back to the Town Hall for the Spirit Fair finale at 8:00.

Each club would do some part of the talent show. I remember the year that Karen Swanson & I did a skit, & got a lot of laughs. I also did a humorous monologue that year. What I remember

about that night are the comments made after: “Donna sure reminded me of her Dad up there.” “Wasn’t she just like Roy?” Somehow, I knew those were very special compliments & I have always been warmed by those memories.

After the talent show, the dress review would begin. Each girl would come out & model the special garments she had sewn. What an encouragement it was all those years to see our County Agent, Milo Johanson, & his sweet wife, always in the audience, smiling, & cheering us on.

At the end of the night, one teenage girl would get to be crowned 4-H queen. That is a special memory I have from even before I got to join 4-H. My Dad was on the Fair Board. I remember him being on stage with some other men, planning to announce & crown the queen. But somehow the crown had gotten misplaced. Sharon Barr had been named the queen, but alas, no crown. I remember my Dad teasingly starting to put his dress hat on Sharon. The crowd all laughed, & soon, the crown showed up. (That is my last memory of my Dad at the Spirit Fair. He died of polio in the fall of 1955, when I was 8.)

During the 60’s, my sister & I each got to be crowned queen of the Spirit Fair & it was a special honor.

It may all seem silly & trite in the day we live in now, when kids have so much materially, and travel all over creation...But...for me, a farm girl growing up in the 50’s & 60’s, 4-H was major. We were taught to honor & respect God, others, & our country. I learned so many things in 4-H that marked me for life. I still use many of the skills I learned in those days. I am still “learning by doing,” & trying to “make the best better.”

Cheers to you who continue to invest in young lives, & to pass on such a good & worthwhile heritage, that was ours in 4-H, even years ago.

Blessings

(2014 copyright © Donna Lind Stolhammer)

[Thanks Donna!]

Making Hay at the Scheller Farm



Pitching Hay on a Load
This photo from about 1925



Hayloader Loading Hay
This photo from about 1933

Hayloaders were a big advancement from the days of pitching every blade of hay from the ground up to the top of the load. In the first picture Max Jr. is on the load while Max Sr. and Clarence are pitching. Mabel is by the horses. In the second picture we see Wayne, Max Jr. & Clarence. (photos courtesy of Bill Hoffman and Ed Scheller) [Thanks Bill & Ed!]

Living Amongst the Russians

by

Andrew Prochnow

I'm of the Prochnow clan from Gilman, Wisconsin. My grandfather is Arthur Prochnow and my grandmother is Gladys. My father and mother, Larry and Jeanne Prochnow, have lived in Milwaukee for about 40+ years now, which is where I was born and raised. My connection to the Liberty School is through my grandmother Gladys, the sister of Olga Meier (Carl Meier's wife).

I have memories of visiting the farm of Carl Meier (now Albert Meier) and greatly enjoyed hunting and Thanksgivings in the area. The hay loft, running around with cousins, and those vast forests are strong memories—especially from my younger years.

After college I joined the United States Peace Corps and was stationed in Russia in 2000. The commitment was for two years, though some volunteers extend to three, on occasion. That's the subject around which this story is spun.

You can indicate preferences for where you want to be stationed in the Peace Corps, but I had a background in business (accounting/finance) and the organization wanted volunteers for Russia to help with the change from communism to capitalism—so I agreed. Our mission was to help with business education—creating financial reports like we have in the Western world and helping Russian business people learn English business terminology.

So I was mainly a teacher of business English and of financial statements analysis (income statements, balance sheets, statements of cash flows) for adults in business. The program was kind of like an early Russian edition of what we call an MBA here in the States.

The first three months of the Peace Corps, generally the same anywhere around the world, includes a three month stint in the host country's capital city. Volunteers live with a host family and attend classes on language, culture, health and safety, etc... The process is designed to get a volunteer acclimated to their new foreign surroundings.

I remember looking at the Russian alphabet on the plane ride over for the first time. The language utilizes the Cyrillic alphabet which has about the same number of letters as we have, but different shapes and different pronunciations. It took some work to get accustomed to it, but I did manage to learn it eventually.

My host family was very nice and accommodative. They included a grandmother (babushka), a mother, and two boys—around 8 and 15. On the first night, the grandmother (around 70 years old and did most of the cooking) made pizza. It was a very close approximation to what we have here.

The mother of the family had a job at a factory and very much loved classical music. Even at the age of 40+, she was very interested in learning new things, as were her children. They are some of the nicest people I have ever met.

While I was living in Russia, Time Magazine produced a map showing where the United States' nuclear missiles were aimed during the Cold War. Some of those weapons of mass destruction

were pointed at the exact area where my host family and I lived in Russia—right outside of Moscow.

It was an eye-opening experience for me to think that these fine people were in the cross-hairs of something so terrible (at one point, if not still [today](#)).

I learned first and foremost in my experience that the Russian people are very much like Americans. They want to find success in their chosen profession, they want their children to get the best possible education, and they want their children to be happily married with a family. Despite some differences in language, cuisine, and cultural norms (don't cross your legs ever such that the bottom of your shoe faces a person, that's insulting) what amazed me was actually how similar I found the people to be in Russia to Americans at home.

After my three months with the host family, I was then stationed in a town named Tver, not too far from Moscow. It's kind of like Milwaukee is to Chicago. The smaller city, Tver, is about 100 miles from Moscow, but enjoys a lot of its own personality.

While living with my host family I found a kitten living outside their apartment block and brought him with me to Tver. My new host "boss" (director of school) named him Putin, after their newly elected President.

Many Russians live in those Soviet blocks you see pictures of, but the inside of the units can be very nice and well-constructed. Country people in Russia have houses similar to the farm houses we see in rural parts of the USA, wooden but with a slightly different architectural design. The kitchen is of course the center of activity, as it is here.

I was assigned to a smaller, cozier Soviet block in Tver that had only about 5 stories, and maybe 20 apartments. It was well heated (winter there is VERY cold and long) but didn't have hot water. I had to have a small hot water heater installed for around \$150 because cold showers in the Russian winter are tough. A couple months of that was enough.

In general, I found the people of Russia to be very friendly, very interested in the USA, and very positive on the USA. Nothing like I really expected. I was invited to dinners at people's homes, parties, and other gatherings. They were much like here in almost every respect.

Holidays are a big time for family in Russia too. One cool holiday they celebrate in big fashion is the end of WW II—they call it Victory Day. There are parades, parties, and it's a very big deal. Veterans are honored to a very high degree on that holiday.

Also, the first day of school every year is huge. Every parent and child goes to school, parades occur, speeches are given, flowers are presented everywhere to everyone. It's a great sight to see.

Life in Russia isn't that different than here—in fact it's very similar. People work, there is public transit, there is college, there are restaurants, there is stratification between rich and poor. The two big cities, Moscow and St. Petersburg, aren't much like the other parts of Russia. They are very rich cities and the locations from which the country is governed.

A big difference that one becomes aware of is blatant corruption/bribery. I'm told that nothing happens in business terms without it in Russia. I never dealt with it myself, being a teacher, but

I heard of it often. It's said that many directors of businesses simply "got them" when communism switched to capitalism. So being in the right spot at the right time was a key during that difficult transition.

I had the chance to travel a lot for conferences and to visit other Peace Corps volunteers, which was really great. I saw the Black Sea, the Caucasus mountains, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Murmansk, Yekaterinburg, Lake Baikal (the largest fresh water body in the world), and Siberia. I rode the rails on the TransSiberian from Moscow to Siberia, to Mongolia, and all the way back.

The Siberian towns are actually some of the best parts of the country. There are large cities out there with millions of people. The economies there thrive on commodities—oil, ore, coal, and other minerals that exist in Siberia—some towns are very prosperous. Their isolation helps make them more authentic than the European side of Russia—in my opinion.

The summer there is crazy with mosquitos and ticks. I know that in Siberia during the summer there are 1,000 ticks per square meter and they often carry tick-born encephalitis—which can be fatal to humans.

People don't go out into the wilderness in summer, that's what I was told and so we didn't. My friend said that in Siberian winter the temperature would get to -30F, and often. Animal fur there is worn for survival, not fashion.

One difference from the US, at that time at least, was that lots of trash was thrown around outside. Not just in Siberia, but everywhere, and mostly in cities. I didn't like that aspect too much. In the Spring, crews raked it up into piles and then burned them—a terrible smell and unforgettable. That may have changed more recently, at least I hope so.

All in all, I had a wonderful time in Russia. I met amazingly nice people, saw amazing sites, and experienced a great culture. Of course, the country is vast, so I probably barely scratched the surface of what's really there.

Red Square in Moscow is a highlight—right outside the Kremlin. The word kremlin means "fortress", and is always the center of a Russian city (at least the old ones). "The" Kremlin is the biggest one, which is in the capital of Moscow. The place where Ivan the Terrible lived, and the current regime now rules. Moscow is well over 800 years old—the city had its 850th birthday when I was there—an amazing time.

Politically, Russia has a very different feel than here in the USA. Obviously, the political histories of our countries are different, so the outcome [today](#) is too. Without delving too deeply into a complicated subject, I'll say that one obvious difference seemed to be the more detached feel the people of Russia seemed to have from their rulers, as opposed to here.

I believe people there really don't feel they have a voice in what happens. Although we here may often feel that way too, it's probably relative, depending on one's perspective and experience.

President Putin was elected to office in 2000 and then elected to a second four-year term in 2004 (2000 to 2008). Then, he became the Prime Minister for four years, and proceeded to run for President again in 2012. They changed the law when he was Prime Minister to make

Presidential terms six years instead of four. Russia had the rule of only two Presidential terms like we do, but it was said “successively” in the language of their constitution, so Putin could apparently run again after a break from the office.

That means that Putin could theoretically be President of Russia all the way through 2024, which would make his total time in office 20 years (or 24 if you include the four as PM, which maybe you should). I’m told that’s longer than Stalin.

My point here is merely to illustrate that politics work differently in Russia. While we (as Americans) may outwardly have a wide range of opinions on those politics, one thing to remember is that the people of Russia, as I met them, are good. The fact that our two countries may have differences in politics may not be a good indicator of the opportunity for us to understand each other and collaborate as citizens of developed nations. I know for a fact my host family would be readily liked, understood, and accepted anywhere in the USA.

I think that's an important differentiation to make, at least in this case, where I have some experience. The fact that the policies and relations of governments don't always perfectly mirror the possibilities for friendship and understanding between their people.

That’s my “piece” on Russia for now and I hope it was interesting to the Liberty School News readers, of which I am one. I write regularly about the Green Bay Packers and Milwaukee Brewers, amongst other topics, for the internet website Yahoo. Feel free to follow my additional work there as I would love to count the Liberty group amongst my readership.

If you made it this far, I appreciate it.

Andrew Prochnow (son of Larry Prochnow) (grandson of Art Prochnow) [Thanks Andrew!]



Let the Grass Grow! We Love to Mow!

by
Marilyn Erickson

I'm writing this on the 1st day of Spring, 2014. Outside the snow is still 3 feet deep on the lawn. It has been covered with snow since mid-November. Will there be grass to mow in a couple of months? I sure hope so!

It was last summer, while mowing, that I had these thoughts. The summer of 2013 was a real mowing season. It was slow, at the start. When it got going it was definitely a mow every week, or oftener, season.

I think lawn mowing is something that most women like to do! I think it is one "man job" that we women can do just as well as a man! I'll add a quote from one of our old time German Settlement women, "Good as a man, better than some."

It's a job that "shows" when it's done, and will last for nearly a week. Not like doing the dishes, making beds or sweeping the floor. Driving this little tractor is fun!

I remember Aunt Olga mowed the lawn. She never drove a car and maybe not a tractor, at least not very often. I know she enjoyed it! I think my mother wished we had a rider!

Another memory: When Ruthie was a teen-ager, a neighbor hired her to mow their lawn. When she got there, the wife, Susie, said, "I'd rather you watch the kids, I love to mow!"

I must not forget this: During this long winter, someone who mows the Spirit Cemetery said, "I can hardly wait to be mowing the cemetery again." Luann gets to drive the big tractors and she still likes lawn mowing!

So as you drive by homes this summer, notice how many ladies are out ther on the lawn mowers. Don't feel sorry for them, they probably had begged their husband to let them mow!

[Thanks Marilyn!]



Memorial Day, 2013

Standing beneath the flag, local veterans are reading the names of departed comrades.

As each name is read a young girl drops a bright red poppy flower to the ground.

This is at the Spirit Hillcrest Cemetery that Luann keeps mowed all summer!

More Game Warden Stories

In the last issue we told some Game Warden stories and several people said they wanted to hear more. An excellent book that is now out of print is "The Brush Cop" by John G. Marcon. It was originally published by Chronotype Publications of Rice Lake, Wisconsin. The copyright is 1983 by John G. Marcon. I recently located one copy for sale at the Al Libris web site. The price was \$7.99. So, it is not readily available unless someone has better luck searching for it than I have had. Meanwhile, I thought I would give you a little taste of this Game Warden's reminiscences. The events take place in the 40's and 50's.

From The Brush Cop, Chapter II, "Price County Hitch" by Warden John G. Marcon

"...A few days later John found some traps set for beaver. Beaver trapping season would open in two weeks. He discussed the situation with Warden Lawrence as it was in his area. They decided to try to catch the trapper.

Very early the next morning the two wardens headed for the beaver pond from a different road than the one used by the trapper. It was just breaking day when the wardens settled themselves in their sleeping bags some distance apart. They were both out of the range of the circling trapper.

Most illegal beaver trappers circle the trapping area to see if their traps are being watched. Fortunately a light snow during the night had covered the tracks of both trapper and warden.

It was a short two hour wait. The trapper appeared and circled the area. With a short handled ice chisel he opened up the sets. As he was resetting the trap John had sprung, John got out of his sleeping bag and started approaching the trapper. All went well until he had an open space to cross. Half-way across the open area the trapper looked up and spotted him.

The trapper dropped everything and started running down the trail that led to his car. John was still in deep snow. The trapper was widening the distance between as he had less snow on the beaver pond to hamper him.

Realizing that it was only a short distance to the road and that the trapper had a good chance to get away, John decided he would try to bluff him. If the trapper changed directions perhaps he could be caught. John stopped and shouted, "Hey, Swede, get him! He is running right toward you."

The trapper stopped and looked around. He saw John west of him. He saw Warden Lawrence to the south. Looking north toward the road he saw nobody, but he walked slowly back toward the beaver house. The two wardens arrived at the house at the same time.

John placed him under arrest and pulled up the traps. His trapping license was checked for identification.

"Yes," said the trapper, "you caught me this time, but you never would have if you didn't have me surrounded. Who is this fellow called Swede and where is he?"

Warden Lawrence, who was down wind and had not heard what John had shouted, replied “The only warden I know called Swede is our supervisor and he is not here. There are just the two of us.”

This made the trapper very angry. “That’s a dirty trick to fool a man this way,” he said.

“Not half as dirty a trick as you pulled on the other trappers in this area by starting ahead of season.” John replied.

With the average beaver pelt worth about forty dollars, the fine of twenty-five dollars did not seem adequate. However, the loss of his hunting, trapping and fishing license for one year was a good penalty.

Other traps were found on other beaver ponds, but due to the circumstances the traps were picked up. It was a waste of time to watch for a trapper if a fresh snow did not cover the warden’s tracks or the warden was seen in the area.

March came in like a lamb. It also brought very good news. A letter from the Chief Warden’s desk contained John’s permanent credentials effective March fifth. This called for a celebration. The family drove to the Prentice Drug Store for malted milks...

...Though it was March, several illegal deer hunting complaints were received. Evidence of deer kills were found, but no evidence to link the illegal hunters. While checking near the East Dover School, one of the hunters was tracked, caught and taken to court. He paid a fine of fifty dollars and costs.

Dogs running deer complaints were time consuming. Several cases of many deer killed by a pair of dogs were investigated. In two cases the dogs were seen in the act of chasing deer and shot. In one case the unbelieving farmer was shown where his two cattle dogs had killed nine deer. Convinced it was his dogs he requested that the dogs be taken away from the farm and shot. This was done...” (to be continued in the next issue?)



Photo of Rib Lake
Lumber Company
Camp Number 2

1908

Welcome to Greywood

<<<Greywood was located along the Spirit River near the eastern edge of Section 24, Town of Spirit.

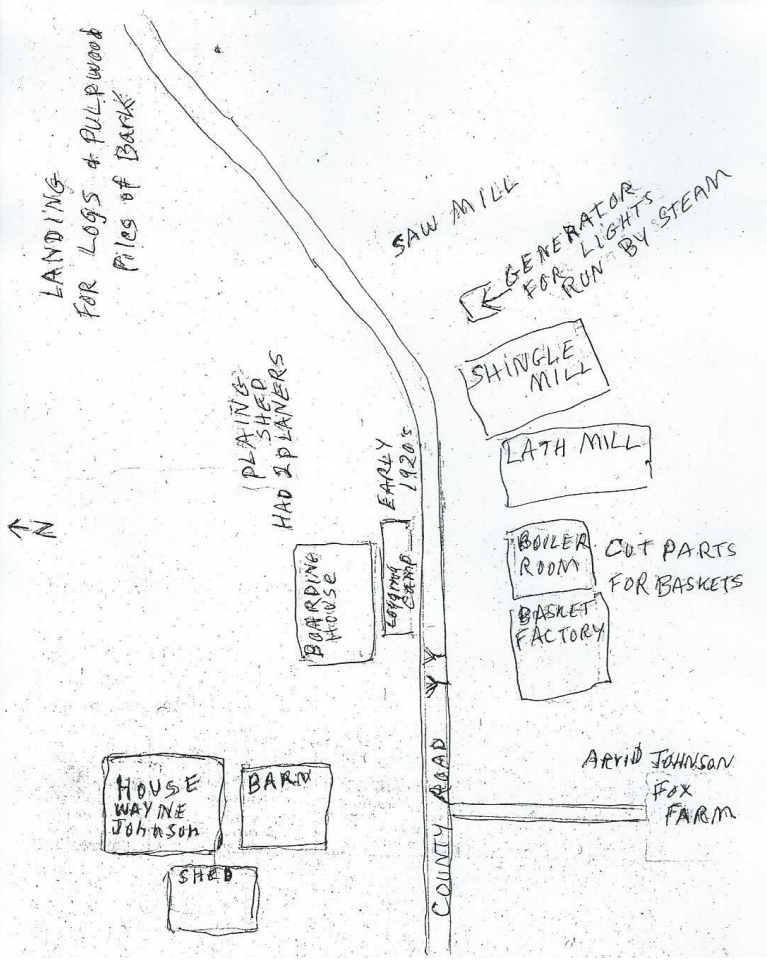
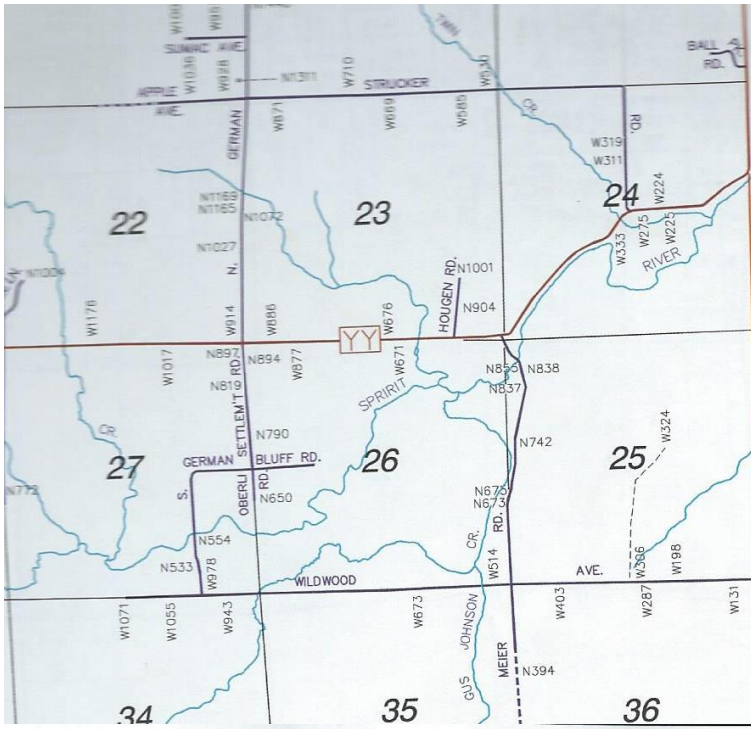
It was almost two miles on County Road YY from Liberty School which is located at the intersection of YY and German Settlement Road

Greywood's location is often now referred to as "Johnson's Mill"

The drawing to the left is copied from one made by Max Scheller.

Carl Rhody wrote in *The Saga of Spirit Valley* that "Peter Johnson built a fine steam powered mill. This was not only the latest thing in sawmills but contained a planing mill and a grist mill to make flour...The Johnson family had a wanigan in their house where work clothes and tobacco could be obtained by the crew. Before long there was also a post office along with the wanigan. This was called 'Greywood.'...After a while Henry Walstrom started a one-man basket factory in the mill yard, which he operated until his death in 1926."

LINCOLN COUNTY (N1300, N900, N500, N100)



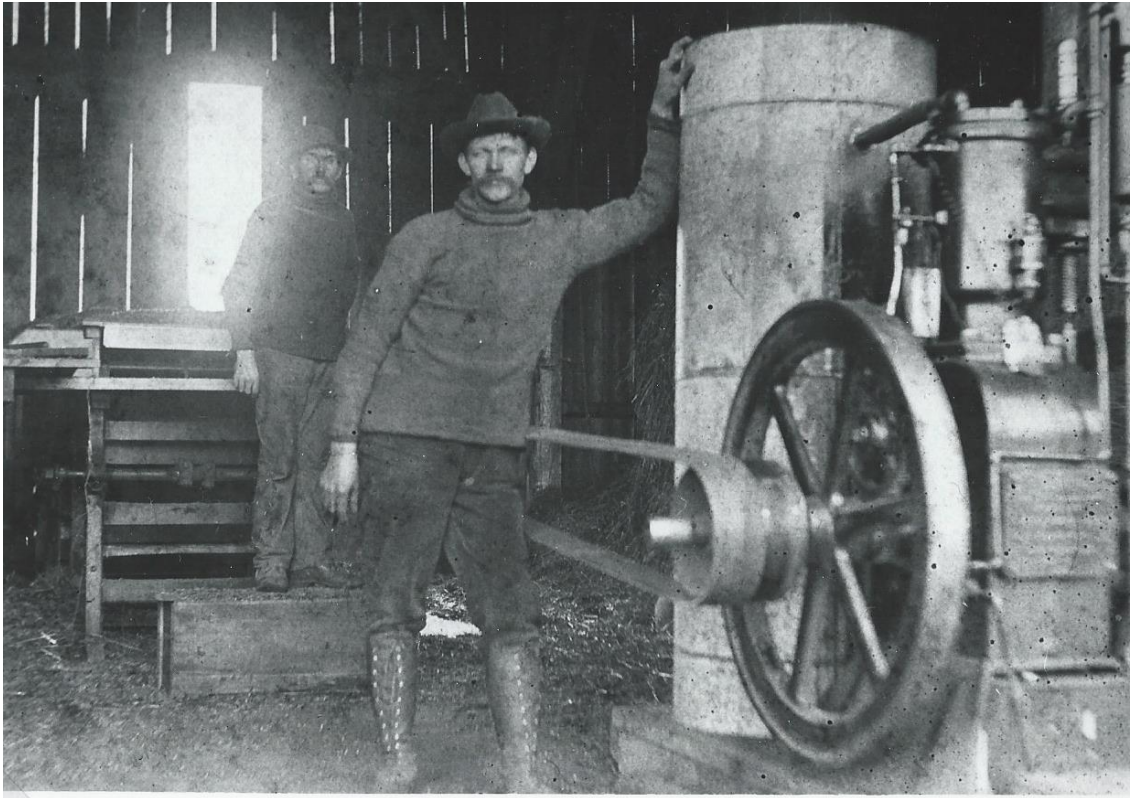
running away in the twilight. There was no time for pursuit if they were to save the mill. Although the river ran right past the mill, the fire had too much of a start for them to put it out. This was the end of Greywood. With no insurance to cover his loss, it was many years before Mr. Johnson was able to rebuild. His second mill was not as fine as his first. He then built a separate planing mill but the grist mill was never replaced. Johnson's mill remained a community center for many years."



Peter Johnson's saw mill



Peter Johnson's saw mill crew.



Boiler room of H. Walstrom's basket factory.



Aug. 1921

Stella Johnson standing in middle of tracks.



The landing near Peter Johnson's saw mill.

The railroad ran right by Johnson's mill. For a time one could go west to the Rib Lake Company rails or east to Spirit Falls and Tomahawk.

The locomotive in this photo was probably owned by the Marinette, Tomahawk & Western (MT&W) which still operates on six miles of track and is known as the Tomahawk Railway.

This locomotive seems to be rather large for a northwoods logging railroad. It has eight large drive wheels and is running on rail that was much lighter than modern rail. But, the company may have purchased this locomotive from a mainline railroad when it was nearly worn out, near the end of its days.

As this photo and the previous photos show, Greywood was the center of a great deal of lumbering activity and was a rather advanced "industrial area" for the Town of Spirit nearly one hundred years ago.

Thanks to Bill Hoffman, Wayne Johnson, Ed Scheller and Gene Meier for these photos and the accompanying information.

Story from Stone Lake

by

Herb Magnuson

One of the many great things about our part of Wisconsin is the building that was done by the pioneers. The first homes in our neighborhood almost always had an ornate front door. The first millwork (doors and windows) was ordered from a catalog and was brought in by the railroad.



When the first lumber yards appeared the millwork was brought from them. At our farm the elaborate trimmed hardwood door had an oval glass insert. The nice front doors on most farm homes sat there as a part of the scenery and the family traffic went through the kitchen or back door. These doors were usually made by carpenters and were constructed of overlapping pine or basswood boards.

A memorable front door was at the house where my good friend, Al Schmudlach was born. It was located at Spirit Lake on the Spirit side of the county line road. We could all agree that it wasn't much of a house but it had an ornate front door with trim and a glass insert.

It was an old country practice to tack important letters to the inside of the kitchen door. I recall seeing World War I discharge papers on a Bergeson house. In the Carlson house the prices of ginseng and golden seal were found there. In the Nat Johnson place the prices of saw logs were tacked on their door.

My father told me a story about the Hultman house from the spring of 1925. One of the most destructive tornados that was ever in that area came right over that house. It started down near Thorp and lessened when it got to Vilas county. It killed some people along its path. It spared the Hultman house but destroyed the farm buildings and two forties of virgin timber. That tornado did such strange things at the Hultman farm. It drove straws through fence posts. It rolled their workshop down the hillside but left a barrel full of rainwater standing alongside that building. It took the Hultmans several years to log off the timber that had blown down. It made such poor lumber and when one would drive a nail into the board, they would fall apart.

Dad was visiting there on Sunday afternoon and when he tried to close the kitchen door it blew away. It was found much later in a hayfield northeast of Brantwood. It had tacked onto it some letters that were addressed to the Hultman family. The Hultmans got a check for \$25.00 from the American Red Cross. That was a big sum in those days and was looked on in the neighborhood as a grand gesture. The fellow running that big disaster relief for those flood years was Herbert Hoover. He did such a good job and he was elected President. All went well till the depression hit in 1929 and then everything went kaput.

One admirable home in the community was the Johnson homestead located on Highway 102 and was four miles south of Spirit Lake. It is gone now but in its time it was a show place. It had a door between the dining and sitting room that opened by sliding it into the wall. I call those pocket doors. It runs on a track and rolls into the wall. Our boy, Carl has one in his home in Wausau and I have one in our home and it is located in the bedroom hallway. When the kids are gone we close it and then we have a one bedroom home, In Rib Lake one big home was built by the first banker in town. It had four pocket doors between the dining and sitting rooms. That place is now the funeral home.

I still like to think about the front doors of homes. In the house that Joan and I bought when we were married we painted the front door bright yellow. The front door in the house that we built on our farm has a red door. One must admire the front doors in the homes of our forefathers.

(Thanks Herb!)

We note the passing of another Liberty School student:

Lorraine McDougal, 1930-2014

Lorraine E. McDougal, age 83, of Packwaukee passed away on Friday, Feb. 28, 2014 at her home. Lorraine was born in the Town of Spirit, Price County at the home of her parents, Clarence and Clara (Schlieppe) Andreae on March 31, 1930. She graduated from Rib Lake High School in 1948, and in June of that same year she married Charles McDougal. Charles preceded her in death in December of 1990.

During her working years, Lorraine worked as a seamstress at the Berlin Glove Factory and the Montello Clothing Company. She loved to line dance, sew, and was known for her competitive spirit during card games. Lorraine loved her family very much and enjoyed spending time with them.

Lorraine is survived by her daughter, Sherri (Deb Randall) McDougal of Rib Lake, and two grandchildren, Jennifer Nicholle Jones of Medford and Jonathan Chvojicek of Madison. She is also survived by one great-grandson, Travis McDougal, and two siblings, Art (Shirley) Andreae and Rose Marie Truitt, as well as numerous nieces, nephews and friends.

Lorraine is preceded in death by her parents, husband, daughter, Linda Jones, as well as three siblings, Marvin, Ervin and Darlene.

The family held a Celebration of Lorraine's Life on Saturday, March 29, in Rib Lake. Internment will take place at Oak Hill Cemetery, Town of Packwaukee, at a later date. Crawford Funeral and Cremation Service of Montello and Oxford is honored to be serving the family.



This winter past was long and harsh and very cold with more snow and cold weather here than any year since 1917.

But the snow finally began to lose its grip on the “Teacher’s Garden” and a bright yellow crocus bloomed in the ramp garden.



And by the end of April we imagined that trees would bud and flowers would bloom again this year as in every year before! (At least we hoped so!)

Note the full-color brochure enclosed in this mailing, it tells a lot about what we are doing.

Come visit us!

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Growing Up Summer	Not Available		
The Saga of Spirit Valley	\$7.50		
The Saga of Spirit Valley - Part II	\$7.50		
The Saga of Spirit Valley - Part III	\$7.50		
The Saga of Spirit Valley - Part IV	\$7.50		
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Set of all 5 "Saga of Spirit Valley" books	\$35.00		
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	Orders over \$10 - add \$7.50 Shipping >		
		Total Order >	

Here is an order form for books that have been written by folks right here in The German Settlement. We have had several volumes reprinted and/or rebound and now have a sufficient supply of each of these titles. We think these books give an accurate flavor of life and people here from 1880-1950. You can order them from us or stop by and pick them up. They include:

- The entire "Never Miss a Sunset" series by Jeanette Gilge
- The "Saga of Spirit Valley" series by Carl Rhody
- "Spirit Falls Logging Boomtown" by Carl Rhody
- "The Pleasure of the Sorrow" by James (Jim) Rhody

For those of you who have asked, we are exploring the possibility of reprinting Jim Rhody's beloved novel, "Brant's Bear." Drop us a line if you'd like to see this classic reprinted.