

Spirit Historical Society Newsletter

July 2021 Vol. 3 No. 2

Previously Liberty School News



Spirit Historical Society Newsletter is published by Spirit Historical Society, Inc. the successor of German Settlement History, Inc.

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Grand re-opening of "Our Yesterday House"

July 31st at the Spirit Town Hall site
on Hwy. 86

In conjunction with the Spirit-Hill-Ogema Fair (see schedule pg. 2), SHSI will sponsor a re-opening of Our Yesterday House at our new location on the Spirit Town Hall lot. Come and join us at the fair and take a tour. SHSI will also be grilling brats and hot dogs outside the town hall that day as part of the noon lunch.

SHSI is looking for someone who lives in the Spirit area who would have an area within their home to house several boxes of books for us. We need a dry area – not a basement or garage – to safely store the Jeanette Gilge, Carl Rhody and Jack Rhody boxes of books. If you have an area that would work for us, please contact Luann at 715-564-3340.



We want your memories for future issues. Please take the time to jot down your memories of growing up in Spirit or record them on a voice recorder and we will type them up for you. Also looking for old photos of your family or community events in Spirit.

Community Events

Our next **SHSI meeting** is scheduled for Sept. 19th at 3pm. We will meet at the Spirit Town Hall for those who are able to attend. Others will be joining us by Zoom. At this meeting we will begin discussion on construction of a Machine Shed to house our larger artifacts. Everyone is welcome to join us or contact us with your input on issues.

The 79th annual **Spirit-Hill-Ogema 4-H Fair** is scheduled to be held Fri., July 30. and Sat., July 31 at the Spirit Town Hall. The schedule for Saturday is: 9:00 am Exhibit Judging begins, 11:00 -1:00 Lunch, 12:30 pm Outdoor Games & Contests, 2:00 pm Exhibits Leave Fairgrounds, 6:30 pm Program (Skits & Awards)



At this time the clubs participating this year will be Happy Hoboes, Hillbillies, Wilson Workers and Hamburg Hawks. Fair board members are Darrel Lind, Ed Ulrich, Adam Kielsmeier, Lynn Peterson and Molly Kielsmeier. Sec/Treas. is Colleen Schult. For more information and photos go to www.facebook.com/spirithillogema4hfair

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We have been closed to tours since the summer of 2019 when we relocated the building. Artifacts will again be in place and tours will be given from 9 am – 3 pm on fair day July 31st. To schedule a tour on any other day, contact one of the board members of SHSI.

Spirit Town Board meetings are held in the Spirit Town Hall on the 2nd Tues. of each month, starting at 6:00 pm. Town board members are: Darrel Lind, Bill Evans and Gary Siebert. Clerk – JaNelle Nelson Treas. – Myrna Holmquist

Spirit Legion Post 452 holds their monthly meetings on the 2nd Thurs. of each month at the Spirit Town Hall beginning at 7 pm.

Obituaries



Patricia "Pat" E. Swenson, of Brantwood, passed away on Sunday, December 6, 2020 at Rib Lake Health Services. Pat was born on May 2, 1935 to Rhineholt and Ethel (Crowell) Marheine in Spirit. She attended Rib Lake schools and graduated from Rib Lake High School. She married William "Bill" Swenson on September 12, 1953 at the Norwegian Lutheran Church in Spirit; he precedes her in death. Pat worked at Harley-Davidson in Tomahawk for 32 years until her retirement in 1998.

In her retirement Pat enjoyed woodworking, watching birds and wildlife in her yard, knitting and crocheting numerous afghans for American Legion and church raffles, traveling, enjoyed spending time with her family and donating many gallons of blood to the Red Cross. Pat was an active member of the American Legion Auxiliary for many

years. She was also a member of Zion Lutheran Church in Brantwood. Pat is survived by her children, Brad (Lori) of Prentice, Aimee (John) of Rib Lake, Renee (Mark) Paris of Wausau, Todd (Diane) of Sheboygan Falls, and Hal (Dawn) of Rib Lake; 12 grandchildren and 13 great-grandchildren. In addition to her parents and husband, Pat is preceded in death by her sisters Audrey and Violet, and brother, Arleigh.

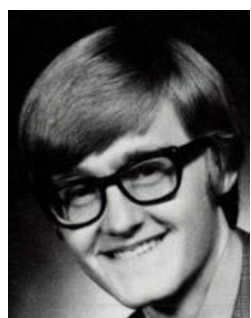


Estelle M. Borg, 92, of the Town of Spirit, passed away on Saturday, May 1, 2021 at her home. Estelle was born on November 17, 1928 to John and Susanna (Meyer) Kriplean in Medford. Her marriage to Vernon Hanke took place on May 24, 1952 at Ellsworth Air Force Base in Rapid City, SD; he preceded her in death on December 28, 1999. Estelle's second marriage to Andrew Borg took place July 15, 2006 at Good Shepherd Catholic Church; he survives.

Estelle enjoyed reading, embroidering kitchen towels for her family, gardening, playing pool, cards and darts. She loved being outside making maple syrup with Andy and watching nature. She cherished spending time with her family and friends. Estelle was a

member of Good Shepherd Catholic Church and the Christian Mothers, also the Rib Lake American Legion Auxiliary. In addition to her second husband, survivors include daughters Jean (Daniel) Lechmaier of Longwood, FL and Susan (Barry) Anderson of Rib Lake; stepdaughters, Sue (Joel) Toeppler of Neenah, and Karen (Dan) Freeman of Anchorage, AK; daughter-in-law Cindy Hanke of Rib Lake; sisters-in-law, Dorothy Hanke of Rib Lake and Corine Kriplean of Appleton. There are seven grandchildren, Chris (Tricia) Lechmaier of Longwood, FL, Brad (Tanya) Lechmaier of West Bend, Eric Lechmaier of China, Misty (Frank) Chavex of DePere, Tracy Anderson of Green Bay, Steve (Tiffany) Hanke and Keith (fiancé Linsey) Hanke, both of Rib Lake; 3 step-grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren. She is further survived by other family and friends.

Estelle was preceded in death by her parents and first husband; son, Greg Hanke; 4 brothers, Chester, Melvin, Lester and Russell; 3 sisters, Lucey, Delores and Marcella; step-daughter, Diane Borg; step-son, David Borg.



Mark Allen Blasel, age 63 of Ogema, WI passed away on Friday, May 14th in Green Bay, WI. Mark was born on July 6, 1957 in Sussex, WI the son of Harry W. and Mirella (nee Komarek) Blasel. Mark graduated from Prentice High School and proudly served in the US Air Force. Mark worked as a machinist for many years and loved working on model cars and airplanes, fishing, hunting, classic cars, coin collecting, travelling and being in nature. He is survived by his daughters Melinda Ann (Jason Packard) Blasel and Tina Marie (Liangting) Wang and by his grandchildren Sevrin Van Sleet, Joanna and Ling Wang and by

his father Harry Blasel and his life partner Cynthia Gillett and by many aunts, uncles, cousins, friends and his cat Hunter. Mark was preceded in death by his mother Mirella Joanne (Komarek) Blasel.

Sunny Hill Market, later Resort Located on the north shore of Spirit Lake

In the mid 1940's a new business began on the north shore of Spirit Lake. Jacob Ralph Fjeldheim along with his wife Ingeborg built two cabins just west of the bridge. They had come from Norway in 1920 settling in the Chicago area. They had relatives that lived in northern Wisconsin so they moved to the Northwoods and spent the rest of their lives here. They lived in a mobile home at first while they got their business going. They rented out the two cabins to vacationers and fishermen.



Jacob Ralph & Ingeborg Fjeldheim 1946

Cabins just south of the big curve on Hwy. 102.



Soon after they built a store and named it Sunny Hill Food Market, selling groceries, ice cream and sandwiches. Gasoline pumps were put in and they sold 'Pure' brand gas to travelers, eventually they changed to Skelly Gas.



The origin of PURE gasoline dates back to 1914, with the founding of the Ohio Cities Gas Company. Six years later, the company name changed to PURE Oil, and by 1926, it had moved to Chicago to establish its headquarters.



Ingeborg & Jacob with son Richard.



Jacob & Ingeborg's son Eddie.



Jacob built this beautiful birch fence on the south side of the Hwy. 102 curve coming down to the lake.



Winter of 1948



Left: Note the double arch stone bridge over the Spirit River on the north end of Spirit Lake.



Spirit River which has its beginning at the north end of Spirit Lake.

Ingeborg & Jacob waving proudly to the camera from the front of their resort.

Later they would add on to the store and change the name to Sunny Hill Resort with cottages, boats for rent, groceries, meats and fruit.



Jacob or "Ralph" as he was known to the local folks took good care of his end of Spirit Lake. He could be found often out on the lake trying to control the lily pad growth for the sake of boaters and fishermen.



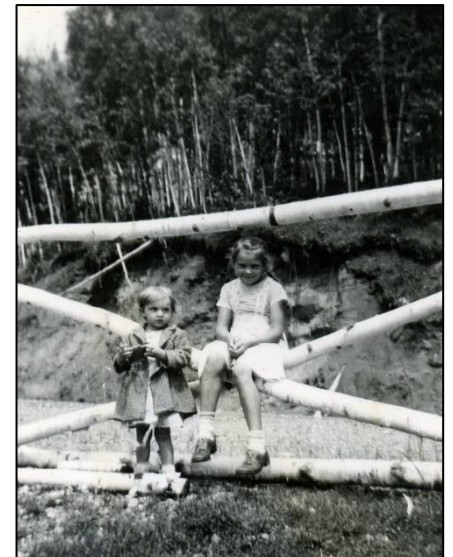
Fishermen showing off their catch from Spirit Lake.
Richard spent time in the summer enjoying the lake.



Sometimes the weather got
the best of Spirit Lake Hill!



Vacationers enjoyed staying at the
rental cabins.



Kids enjoyed playing on the
birch log fence.

Aerial photos of Fjeldheim's Resort and Hwy. 102 curving gracefully down the hill and over the bridge.



Today the north end of Spirit Lake is occupied by many seasonal trailers renting the space where the store and cabins used to sit. Pontoon boats and docks fill the shoreline and folks still enjoy their time on Spirit Lake.



Information for this article was given to us by the Fjeldheim family and we thank them for that. If any of you readers know the year the resort started or when it closed down, we would appreciate if you could share that information with us.

Jacob & Ingeborg moved to Ogema after closing the resort. They lived on the NW corner of old Hwy. 13 and Hwy. 86, Jacob died in 1971 and Ingeborg in 1975.

Hay Making - Memories written by Ronald Meier many years ago

The first I remember hay making was in 1934 when Dad and Carl went into Taylor County to cut marsh grass because the drought was so bad and the fields hardly grew. That was all hand cut with scythes. Dad cut his finger one day while sharpening the blade with the whetstone. It must have been hard to keep it from bleeding but he didn't want to walk the 2 miles home until the day was done. They carried the hay together in large shocks onto a wooden base and hauled it home with the logging sleigh in the winter.

The fields were mowed with a 4 1/2 foot sickle horse drawn mower; ours was built by Deering and Hogan. Someone else had a McCormick so they were both built before the two companies merged. The team of horses had no trouble walking in timothy grass, but it was difficult in first year clover, that was heavy and lodged. The sickle would get plugged with clumps of tangled clover; but it sure did smell nice. Clover did not dry out well. If it didn't rain by the 3rd day, it would be raked with the steel wheel dump rake into windrows; then formed into small hay shocks with pitch forks. Most farmers believed it should get a day in these piles to sweat; then spread out a bit so the sun could shine on the green clumps before bringing the wagon out to retrieve it. The hay was bunched into small shocks again and lined up so the team and wagon would pass between and if there was a man on either side, they would pick it up with their pitch forks and throw it above their head onto the wagon. One or more persons would be on top of the wagon to distribute and tramp the forks full so it would be a firm load.

The large barn had a conveyer system installed in the peak of the roof with a track and carriage guided by a rope and pulley system that could lift a large harpoon type fork full of hay to the roof. A team of horses was used on the ground to pull the rope. The fork full of hay would then roll along on the pulley system to be deposited in various places throughout the haymow. The mow did not have any movement of air and the hay generated heat so it was a hot place to work as it was packed down and cured. The Meier Homestead barn was 40 feet wide and 60 feet long so several loads could be dumped before it had to be spread out. Then one or two people could distribute the hay to outside walls during the unloading. It was a hot and dusty job either way.

Some folks had hay sheds or small barns that had to be all unloaded by hand. Bennie Swanson didn't build his large barn until 1947 which included the hay fork and rope system.

About that same time machinery manufacturers perfected the small balers that picked up direct from the windrows. The hay was packed tight in these new balers, so you couldn't have wet and green clumps as part of the bale. Six bales could be unloaded at one time using the rope and pulley system with a new style bale fork. Bales could be stacked tight in the barn so you had to be careful not to put too many tons of hay above the cows that were in the barn below.

The small row crop tractor could be equipped with a five or six foot sickle mower. So with engine power the mowing was easier than with the team of horses. Some farmers had shortened the pole on the horse mower and pulled it with the tractor. Carl and Albert Meier bought a Massey Harris 22 that had a 7 foot attached mower on the rear drawbar.

Marvin was able to hit the brake and steering just right to make a square corner without slowing down or shifting gears. Roy Meier and Max Scheller jointly bought a trailer type 7 foot sickle mower with power take off drive. It was more of a problem with the heavy clover hay when there was 7 feet of a tangled mess. New Holland and John Deere made a roller type hay conditioner to crimp the stems and fluff the hay so it dried faster. This needed another tractor and driver to go right behind the mower. About 1960 manufacturers came out with a haybine. It consisted of a 7 foot sickle bar with rubber rollers mounted directly behind the machine. The rollers threw the hay against a baffle plate before it dropped to the ground. The stems were crushed or kinked so hay dried much faster.

In 1947 Allis Chalmers perfected a small round baler that made bales about 50 pounds each, wrapped with twine and they could lay on the field for a week or more. Rain didn't soak in bad, so some left the bales on several fields before hauling them to the barn. They could be unloaded with the grapple forks into the barn but did lose their shape over winter in the hay mow. Each bale had many feet of binder twine so that was a nuisance especially for those farmers that dropped the bales out for cattle to self-feed.

The Vermeer company in Iowa perfected a large round baler that made bales about 5 feet high and 500 pounds each. These were wrapped with twine at first but later there was a choice of mesh wrap or solid plastic. They were popular with beef farmers especially in the Dakotas. The hay could be a bit too damp and cure in the field. Many tons could be rolled up by one tractor and driver. The small square baler pushed the bales up a chute to the flat bed wagon where one or two people stacked 100 or 125 bales. The baler with a throwing arm would shoot tied bales into a basket rack wagon. These were hard to keep square as they were pulled off and placed on the elevator going into the haymow.

About 1955 Ed Rhody bought the hardware store in Ogema where he sold Homelight Chainsaws and took dealership of Oliver Farm Machinery. He got a wholesale price on a 6 foot combine for his brother Carl and a small crawler (bulldozer) for his logging crew but I don't remember if he tried to sell much else. Carl felt that he could help pay for his machine by doing custom combining. The Oliver had a grain tank so when it was full they augered the oats into sacks on the hay wagon. No one felt they could invest in a wagon bin and auger.

When it came to combining, Max Scheller always had nice smooth fields with no weeds or rocks. Wet seasons were a headache as everyone wanted their oats cut before it lodged but if the ground was soft we made ruts, which would be there for several years as most oat fields were seeded with clover and alfalfa for the next year. We cut all around Spirit and also out to Blomberg's and the George Swanson's in Town of Hill.

The first self propelled combine was in 1975 when my brother Gene bought a used one. Dan King bought the farm next to the Town Hall and brought an International Harvester self propelled combine. It was ideal for small field as no grain got trampled down on the outside cut. More acres could be cut a day and large tires held up well in soft soil but if it got stuck the ruts were deeper.

Just a few of our artifacts that are waiting for a new Machine Shed to be built so they can come out of storage.



We sell books written by local authors

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Books by Jeanette Gilge	Quantity	Total	Books by Carl Rhody	Quantity	Total
"Pioneer Family Series"					
A Winter's Promise	\$5.00	_____	The Saga of Spirit Valley	\$7.50	_____
Never Miss a Sunset	\$5.00	_____	The Saga of Spirit Valley II	\$7.50	_____
All Things Heal in Time	\$5.00	_____	The Saga of Spirit Valley III	\$7.50	_____
Best of Intentions	\$5.00	_____	The Saga of Spirit Valley IV	\$7.50	_____
Satin in the Snow	\$5.00	_____	The Saga of Spirit Valley V	\$7.50	_____
As Long As I Have You	\$5.00	_____	Set of 5 Saga books	\$35.00	_____
Set of 6 Pioneer Series	\$20.00	_____			
City-Kid Farmer	\$5.00	_____	Books by James Rhody		
			Brant's Bear	\$10.00	_____
German Settlement History Pamphlet	\$2.00	_____	The Pleasure of the Sorrow	\$5.00	_____

Shipping – Orders for \$10 and under – add \$3.50 > _____
 Orders over \$10 – add \$7.50
 Total Order > _____

Please make checks payable to SHSI
 and mail to:
 Spirit Historical Society, Inc.
 P.O. Box 621
 Ogema, WI 54459

Spirit Historical Society, Inc.

Membership Application

You are invited to become a member of S.H.S.I.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____

Amount _____ Membership Year _____

Categories: Please check one

_____ Swamper (Non Member) - \$1.00 to \$24.00 per year

The following categories qualify you as a Member:

_____ Sawyer - \$25.00 to \$49.00 per year

_____ Teamster - \$50.00 to \$99.00 per year

_____ Woods Boss - \$100.00 to \$499.00 per year

_____ Homesteader - \$500.00 to \$999.00 per year

_____ Settlement Builder - \$1000.00 or more per year

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P.O.Box 621

Ogema, WI 54459

Thank you for your generous gift!

Spirit Historical Society, Inc. is a 501 (c)(3) tax exempt organization whose mission is to protect, conserve and display buildings, artifacts and documents of historical value for educational purposes. Members are persons who contribute \$25.00 or more at any time during the year. Membership continues through the month of January the following year. As a member of S.H.S.I. you will be contributing to our mission, receive our newsletters and will be eligible to vote in person or by absentee ballot at the S.H.S.I. January annual meeting.

Spirit Historical Society, Inc.

P.O. Box 621

Ogema, WI 54459

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