

Spirit Historical Society Newsletter

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by Spirit Historical Society, Inc.



In This Issue

- Pg. 2 Community Events
- Pg. 3 Obituaries
- Pg. 4 Memorial Day
- Pg. 5-8 Bunny's Story
- Pg. 9-10 The Old Furnace
- Pg. 11 Membership & Book Order



Check Your Statis

Do you want to continue receiving our newsletter? Yes or No
If yes, we have it available both in hard copy (paper) or we can send it to you electronically (by email) in color. Please let us know your preference. If you change to email, we need to have your email address.
Thank you to all who contacted us previously.

Do you know of anyone else that would like to receive our newsletter? Contact us at:
spirithistoricalsociety@gmail.com
or phone 715-564-3340

Big Plans for our Future!

SHSI will be moving ahead on a project to build a new Machine Shed at the present location of Our Yesterday House. We have been storing all of our Machine Shed artifacts in local sheds and it's time to put up a building so we can again display them to the public. You, our faithful followers, have always come forward when we have need of help, so we are asking for donations to help with this new project. Anyone donating \$500 or more will get their name on a building fund plaque that will be displayed by the Machine Shed. If you have any ideas for fund raising, we welcome those also. Donations can be made out to SHSI and sent to our address; P.O. Box 621 Ogema, WI 54459. Any suggestions or comments can be sent to our email at spirithistoricalsociety@gmail.com. Thank you in advance for any and all help with this new project.

To all Spirit Historical Society, Inc. members, board members and friends:

When I sent out letters accompanying this year's annual ballots I made an error in the wording explaining why this year's annual meeting would be held virtually and not in person. I made it sound like none of the board members are living locally any more. **That couldn't be further from the truth!!!** Most of our board members live in or close to Spirit where our Yesterday House Museum is located. I meant to say that SOME of our board members are not local and for that reason the annual meeting would be better presented and attended via virtual on line attendance.

To anyone I confused, please accept my apologies! I should take this opportunity to tell you all that if any one of you are interested in becoming more involved, we are looking to fill one more board member seat vacancy. We are also always looking for volunteers to help at the Yesterday House as well as our local events. If you are interested, please contact any board member you have access to. You can also contact our President Dawn Meier at (715) 544-0023 or you can send us a message through our Facebook page, or you can send an email to spirithistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

Thank you and I hope to see you at one of our events this year!
Pam Welch
Treasurer

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.

Community Events

Our next **SHSI meeting** is scheduled for Sunday, June 25th at 2:00 pm at the Spirit Town Hall. Let us know if you would like to participate online (phone President Dawn Meier @ 715-544-0023) and we will send you the link ahead of time. Everyone is welcome to join us or contact us with your input on issues.



SHSI Memorial Day Weekend Barn Dance



Spirit Historical Society will once again be hosting a barn dance, Sunday evening May 28th beginning at 6 pm, ending at midnight.

Location: N1169 German Settlement Rd. in Spirit at the Darrel & Luann Lind farm
Gary Edinger will teach square dancing to everyone. Karl Lind will be our DJ for music. Refreshments will be served immediately after the flag raising at 8 pm. Chances will be sold that night for baskets of goods and craft items. Proceeds going to the building of a new Machine Shed.

Spirit Legion Post 452 and the American Legion Auxiliary hold their monthly meetings on the 2nd Thurs. of each month at the Spirit Town Hall beginning at 7 pm. They will hold their annual **pancake supper** on April 29th at the Spirit Town Hall from 4 pm – 7 pm.

Memorial Day Cemetery Services Monday May 29th:

Spirit Legion Post 452 will be rendering honors at the following cemeteries:

Finlander – 8:15 am	Garden of Memories – 10:00 am
Clifford – 8:35 am	Levitt Creek – 10:30 am
St. Mary's – 8:55 am	Ogema Hillside – 11:00 am
Knox – 9:15 am	

Spirit Auxiliary will be serving lunch at the Spirit Town Hall from 11:30 – 12:45.

A program will follow in the upstairs of the Town Hall at 1:00 pm.

Following the program will be a march to Spirit Hillcrest Cemetery for the honors there.

Our Yesterday House will be open for tours when we come back from the cemetery.

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

The 81st annual **Spirit-Hill-Ogema 4-H Fair** is scheduled to be held Fri., Aug. 11. and Sat., Aug. 12 at the Spirit Town Hall. Details to follow in our summer newsletter. The spring meeting will be Thursday, April 27 at 6:00 pm at the Spirit Town Hall.

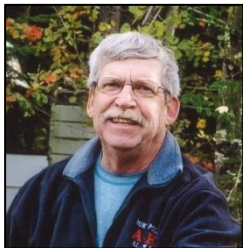


Tours of Our Yesterday House will be available this summer. To schedule a tour contact LaVonne Meier @ 715-564-2570

Obituaries



Elaine Emily Andreae, age 89, of Richland Center, died Wednesday, October 12, 2022, at Schmitt Woodland Hills. She was born in Price County in rural Spirit, WI, on March 20, 1933, the daughter of Gustav Herman and Anna Louise (Heller) Brietzke. Elaine married Arlen Edward Andreae on September 1, 1951, in Menasha, WI. She was a devoted mother and loved knitting, fishing, quilting, and most of all their cabin up North. Survivors include a son, Rodney (Ann) Andreae of Richland Center; a daughter-in-law, Pam Andreae of Richland Center; grandchildren, Ryan (Jenni) Andreae of Delano, MN, Beth Andreae of Stoughton, WI, Ty (Mark) Benson of Cazenovia, WI; 11 great grandchildren, Alec, Joshua, Cameron, Isabella, Liam, Mila Andreae all of Delano, MN, Tyler, Lauren, and Ethan all of Stoughton, WI, Gina and Maya Benson of Cazenovia; a sister, Gloria Jeanette Brietzke of Rice Lake, WI; other relatives and friends. She was preceded in death by her parents; husband, Arlen; a son, Terry Andreae; 8 brothers, Ervin Fredrick, William Emil, Arthur Leonard, Fredrick Walter, Victor Edward, Raymond Robert, Chester Alden, Kenneth Gustave; 3 sisters, Erna Martha, Caroline Ann, and Joyce Madaline.



Daniel F. Lind, age 72, passed away peacefully on December 29, 2022, at his home in Rib Lake, WI, surrounded by family after a four year journey with cancer. Daniel was born in Tomahawk, WI on July 8, 1950; the fifth of seven children to Roy and Agnes Lind. He grew up in Spirit, WI and was a 1968 graduate of Rib Lake High School. In 1970, he graduated from Taylor County Teacher's College and taught at Elk Mound for three years. He worked construction until 1980 when he started his 32 year postal career with the USPS in

Phillips (3 years), Brantwood (3 years), and Rib Lake (26 years). On August 12, 1978, Daniel married the love of his life, Jean Hebda, in Rib Lake. In his younger days, he was an avid softball player and took his Harley on many long rides. While they raised four children, he was actively involved and enjoyed passing his love of sports onto them. As his children grew, he not only coached many teams, he was also an AWANA leader and head usher at Woodland and involved in the Rib Lake Booster Club. He was blessed with many opportunities to go camping, hunting, riding wheelers, and traveling, which included a road trip to Alaska. His passion for the Dallas Cowboys is now carried on by his children and grandchildren. He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Jean Lind, of Rib Lake; four children, Gabe (Kelly) Lind of Phillips, Bonnie Johnson of Circle Pines, MN, Aimee (Dan) Vechart and Trevor (Tera) Lind both of Appleton; four brothers, Darrel (Luann) Lind, Duane (Joyce) Lind, Dennis (Deb) Lind, and Dave (Donna) Lind and two sisters, Donna Stolhammer and Diane Kruit; grandchildren, Dylon (Katelynn), Tyler, Hunter, Spencer, Parker, Owen, Jake, Hannah, and Finn; and in-laws and many nieces and nephews. Daniel was preceded in death by his parents; in-laws, Stanley and Dorothy Hebda; and two brothers-in-law, Tom Hebda and Don Stolhammer.



Renée C. Paris, age 66, of Wausau, WI, passed away on Wednesday, December 28, 2022, at Aspirus Wausau Hospital. Renée was born in Phillips, WI, on December 11, 1956, to the late William and Patricia (Marheine) Swenson. She was married to Mark Paris on September 7, 1985; he survives. Renée was a 1975 graduate of Prentice High School. Following graduation, she entered the workforce living in both Lodi, WI, and Madison, WI, before returning to the Wausau area in 1981 where she met her husband. She began employment at G3 Industries in Mosinee,

WI, retiring in December of 2021 after 37 1/2 years of service. Renée was a true animal lover and cared for all pets. She loved feeding and watching the squirrels and birds in her backyard and loved tending to her flower gardens, reading, going on camping trips, and enjoyed taking neighborhood walks. Renée especially enjoyed spending time with family and looked forward to family events. Survivors include her husband of over 37 years, Mark Paris, of Wausau, WI; her brothers, Brad (Lori) Swenson, of Prentice, WI, Todd (Diane) Swenson, of Sheboygan Falls, WI, and Hal (Dawn) Swenson, of Rib Lake, WI; and her sister, Aimee (John) Hein, also of Rib Lake; and her brother and sisters-in-law, Matthew (Christina) Paris, of St. Germain, WI, Kathleen Paris, of Fitchburg, WI, and Patty (Don) McKinnon, of Brussels, WI. Renée is further survived by her many nieces and nephews and great-nieces and great-nephews whom she truly adored, in addition to many wonderful friends. She was preceded in death by her parents, William and Patricia.

Memorial Day at Spirit Hillcrest Cemetery



Marching to the cemetery from the old Spirit Store corner. 1914

Veterans that are long gone, many of them buried at our cemetery.



1948

Marching down Hwy. 86 to the cemetery



Rib Lake High School Band Raymond Borg with the Sousaphone



Rib Lake High School Band 1971

MANY THANKS TO THOSE WHO FOUGHT AND ARE STILL FIGHTING ON OUR BEHALF.



May 30, 1907 - Town of Brannan Cemetery



Join your neighbors in the march to the cemetery this year.



Memories written by LaVon 'Bunny' Komarek

Thrashing in the 1940s-1950's

Spirit Historical Society, Inc on Facebook is always enlightening to me. I try to visualize how my surroundings may have looked many years ago. I did not grow up in Spirit, but I have lived here for nearly 50 years.

The first time I came here was the 4th of July, 1952. Bud Komarek worked for my cousin about 2 miles away, Wilber Stockwell. Every weekday after evening chores the neighbor kids would assemble at our country school, near our farm, and play softball. Bud was an excellent ball player and enjoyed meeting with all the kids so he joined us at our school. Families were large in those days so there was about a dozen of us. He was only 17 at the time and fit right in.



Bud (age 17) and Bunny (age 13) at a Lawndale School baseball game in 1952

Bud kind of had his eye on me and when the 4th of July came around, he asked if I wanted to go up north and picnic with his family. I was only 13 although he thought I was older, so I asked my mother. She allowed me to go, but my sister had to go too. I was not allowed to go with a boy at 13. I was so amazed to see Spirit Lake. The cars were parked along the lake from one end to the other of 102. It was full of people fishing and boating. We had no lakes near us south of Medford. Bud's family owned the Bill Reiman farm on YY West of the Liberty School. There was a creek to the west and a hill to the east and west of their property. Later Laurel and Betty Komarek bought the farm. In the 1980's it was sold out of the family.

I continued a friendship with Bud and his family. In 1954 Bud joined the Army and we wrote to each other. I was in high school and he was in Germany so we did not consider our relationship to be more than a friendship. He dated the Frauleins and I dated my classmates and enjoyed our school activities, the school proms and other dances. When Bud came home from Germany in November 1956, he came to see me. Now who can resist a cute guy in a uniform? So, he asked my mother for my hand in marriage. Well, he claimed she happily said, "sure go on take her." Well, that wasn't really how it happened. At Christmas we became engaged and on June 15, 1957, we were married. That is when I became a resident of Spirit. I like to say I was grandmothered in. So, it is with much pleasure and pride of being a resident I enjoy reading of the past history of Spirit.

As I was reading a post from Sept. 2022, I saw the farm of Bennie Swanson. In the foreground there was a large field of oats all cut and shocked. The picture brought to my mind our beautiful fields of golden ripened oats moving ever so gently back and forth in the late summer breeze. I was raised on a farm in Taylor County. Our beautiful farm was 12 miles southwest of Medford. It still is 2 miles south of Stetsonville and 5 miles west on Elm Ave. A cousin Tim Paul still owns and operates it as a dairy farm. My mother sold it to his father, Kenny Paul in 1957. My dad passed away in 1955, when I was 16, and she and I farmed alone for 2 years. It was a lot of work for a 50 year old widow and a 16 year old girl. I remember building fence. First, I had to use the post hole digger and make a hole 18 inches deep. The fence posts were taller than I was. So, I had to stand on the hay wagon to pound the fence posts in with a post maul. I was the only one at home with my mom, the youngest of 6 girls in an all-girl family. We girls worked in the barn and in the fields to help mom and dad.

As I looked at the picture on Facebook of Bennie Swanson's field it reminded me of a time when my sister, Nettie Troiber and I shocked a large field of oats that my dad had cut with our putt-putt John Deere tractor in the Autumn of 1952. Our machinery had been horse drawn and the draw bar was changed to accommodate the hitch on the tractor. Being pulled by a tractor instead of a team of horses was much faster and probably caused it to be maintained more often. My dad sold our horses in the fall of 1946.



1946 Bunny's Dad, Rudy Fritsche, the day he sold his faithful team of horses Queen and Colonel



'Puddle Jumper' which was a combination of tractor and car. Photo is similar to the one they owned.

At that time, he bought a puddle jumper. If you do not know what that was you can imagine an old 1920 something pickup truck with all the roof, sides and windows removed. The gas tank was mounted where the front seat passenger would have been seated. The exhaust pipe came out of the engine through the hood. There was a wooden boxed area behind the front seats. My dad had placed some larger rocks there for traction when pulling machinery through the fields. Chains were on the tires also to get through muddy areas. After 2 years of using the puddle jumper my dad purchased the John Deere. It was very slow and easy for us kids to drive.

My sister Nettie (who was 3 years older than I) was my best friend. We had such a fun wonderful childhood. We worked hard and never argued or fought. We enjoyed singing together and played together. One of our favorites was cops and robbers that

we played with all my sisters and some neighbor kids. I was quite little but I remember the outhouse was the sheriff's office. Such fun days. We worked hard but our fun nature made it enjoyable. One day we were shocking oats in a field about a half mile away along the road. Bud, who was working only a few miles away was driving past in his boss's pickup. He saw us working, slammed on the brakes, slid on the gravel road and parked the truck. He came running over to us and asked if we needed help. Well, who would say no, right? We were so happy to have help. It didn't take us long to get the job done. He was 17 and a hard worker, always in a hurry. If you ever knew any of the Komareks you would know they traveled in high gear, even when they walked. We really liked and appreciated that cute guy from Spirit.



1949 Nettie (age 13) & Bunny (age 10), dog Sam. John Deere tractor (and the outhouse) in back.

After the oats shocks had stood and dried out a few days the thresh machine would come. A crew of neighborhood men and boys would get the job done. They would go from one farm to the next until the neighborhood fields were all harvested and in the barns.



The horse drawn oats binder was a 2 wheel machine with a wooden windmill on each side. They were connected with long bars of wood that would push the grain against the cutting bar low and in front of the machine. From the cutting bar it was pushed onto a canvas that carried it up to a place that would bind the oats and tie it in a bundle with binder twine. It then dropped out of the side onto a field in rows. Standing the bundles to dry them and keep the rain from running through them was called shocking the oats. Usually, the younger members of the

family would follow the oats binder and take 2 bundles. They would lean them together with the grain being at the top. We would make a short row of 6 bundles, actually 3 shocks leaning together. We then placed one on top to protect it from the elements. We had to make sure the rows were straight and also wide enough for a hay wagon to drive between them.

Part of the threshing crew would follow the wagon down the row. With about 2 men on each side, they would toss the bundles onto the hay wagon. When they had it loaded the driver would bring it to the barn area where the thresh machine was set up. The steam tractor that pulled the thresh machine was now reversed and a large belt



Threshing on the Komarek farm

connected it to the thresh machine The men that loaded the wagon would pitch the bundles onto the thresh machine where a shaking process would remove all the kernels. The straw would be blown out the back of the machine onto a straw pile later to be sheltered and used to bed the cows in the winter.



The oats would drop down a chute that had a place to hang a burlap gunny sack on. It also had an open and close lever above the gunny sack. Once the gunny sack was in place the lever was moved to open the chute. The grain would quickly slide into the bag. A few shakes would settle the grain to the sides and bottom. The lever was quickly closed and the bag tied shut with a miller's knot. A miller's knot was made by holding the gunny sack top closed. a short piece of twine was used by holding it with one's little finger and wrapping it around the sack tightly about 3 times. The 4th time a loop was made towards the end and placed under the twine. Each bag weighed about 50 lbs. It was carried by a member of the crew to the grainery. Then the carrier would just pull the end of the loop tied to the gunny sack and it released the twine so he could dump the oats into the bin, and return for another sack full. There was a constant flow of the crew carrying the sacks. Some graineries were above the chicken coops or machine sheds and some were downstairs next to the chicken coops or under a haymow.

In 1951 our neighbor was the last one to harvest his oats. He kept an unusual schedule for a farmer. He was often milking cows at midnight and noon. So, harvesting so late in the season was not unusual for him. It was Sept. 18, 1951. I had just come home from school and made my daily trek to the plum trees to pick any remaining plums my mom had missed. They were so sweet and plump. A handful of plums was a good after school snack. School was dismissed at 4 pm and at 5:30 I would go to the woods with our German Shepherd dog and bring the cows home for milking. My mom would soon be cooking supper. It was odd that she wasn't home. My sisters would soon be home on the bus from Medford High School. Maybe they would stop and help our neighbor lady with supper for the crew. I had barely filled my pockets with plums when my school friend came running to tell me that my dad had an accident. He was carrying a sack of oats upstairs to the grainery and the rail he was holding broke. He fell down about 8 feet, breaking his leg above the knee. The ambulance had taken him to the Medford hospital. That was why my mom was not at home. My dad remained in the hospital with his leg in traction for 7 weeks.

He was not able to walk until Christmas. He did come and sit at the table at Thanksgiving with us. His first visit to help us in the barn was in early March. Before that first visit back to the barn my mom walked to the neighbor and asked to borrow some of Ole Paul's Copenhagen snuff. My dad always upon entering the barn would reach above the door to the ledge there and take down a can of Copenhagen and place a pinch of it in his cheek. Then before leaving the barn he would spit it in the gutter. My mom did not approve of chewing tobacco in the house. However, she remembered his habit. My dad had a big smile and a wink for her when he automatically reached above the door for his can of snuff and it was there. The winter of 1951-1952 my sister and I and my mom did the chores and the milking by hand. We threw down loose hay, cleaned the barn with a wheel borrow and shovel. We had about 20 head of cattle but mostly were springers (they were getting ready to calve in the early spring) so their production was not high over the winter.

The days of oats binders and thresh machines ended in the mid to late 1950's when the invention of the Combine came into being. No longer did the neighbors gather to harvest the oats, however, it was still a close knit community. Our country school held a card party once a month and the families took turns bringing a lunch. They had prizes for the winners and a door prize. The community remained close and often in the summer I would run across the road when our new younger neighbor was making hay with a hay loader and hay wagon. He needed to stop often to spread the hay evenly around the wagon. So, I drove his new Allis Chalmers tractor so he could remain on the hay wagon. My folks and 3 other couples played cards every 2 weeks at each other's homes. They had so much fun.



1950 Bunny's Mom, Verona Fritsche driving the John Deere. Bringing in a load of hay from the field about 3-4 mile away. Bunny riding on the fender.

The end of the threshing machine had come for most of the farmers in the area. The modern machine that replaced the method of removing the oats from the stalk has now in itself been replaced. The hay wagon and the hay loader are a long time gone and haybines have since come into being. More recently the large bales covered in plastic are lined up in some of the fields. Some however that feed beef cattle often leave them scattered in the hay field. Our young farmers are learning new more efficient methods of farming as did most farmers throughout history.

I want to thank the farmers. The work is hard, the weather often too wet or too dry. The days of rest are few. Do not take for granted the produce we are so blessed to have. However, I believe my childhood was the best. We so much enjoyed each member of our girl family and our dad was so very proud of his girls he called us his Queens. Our mother was a 4-H leader and taught us how to can, sew, prepare meals and much more. Our precious mom and dad taught us how to pray and how to attend church and keep our Sundays holy and honoring our Lord.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS Printed Jan. 28, 1971 in The Herald, Rib Lake, Wis.

NOTE: The rules below, unbelievable as they may seem to us, were actually posted in the Mt. Cory Carriage & Iron Works, back in the 1880's

1. Office employees will daily sweep the floors, dust the furniture, shelves and closets.
2. Each day fill lamps, clean chimneys, and trim wicks. Wash the windows once each week.
3. Each man will bring in a bucket of water and scuttler of coal for the day's business.
4. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to your individual taste.
5. This office will open at 7 A.M. and close at 8 P.M. daily, except on the Sabbath, on which day it will remain closed.
6. Men employees will be given an evening off each week for courting purposes, or two evenings a week if they go regularly to church.
7. Every employee should lay aside from each pay a goodly sum of his earnings for his benefit during his declining years, so that he will not become a burden upon the charity of his betters.
8. Any employee who smokes Spanish cigars, uses liquors in any form, gets shaved at a barber shop, or frequents pool and public halls, will give us good reason to suspect his worth, intentions, integrity and honesty.
9. The employee who has performed his labors faithfully and without fault for a period of five years in our service, and who has been thrifty and attentive to his religious duties, is looked upon by his fellowmen as a substantial and law abiding citizen, will be given an increase of five cents per day in his pay, providing a just return in profits from the business permits it.

BE WORTHY OF YOUR HIRE!

Signed: Zachary U. Geiger,
Sole Proprietor,
Mt. Cory Carriage &
Iron Works

Memories Kindled by Old Furnace by Madolyn Brown 1978

Where can one find a place with temperature extremes that may range from less than 32 degrees to a bone dry, throat parching 90 plus in a matter of hours?

Look no further than a home that is heated by an old-fashioned woodburning furnace. There, in the dead of winter, you will find Arctic cold and Sahara heat battling for supremacy while the family of the contrary creature in the basement alternately adds layers of clothing and peels them off, sweating and shivering in a constant effort to maintain their 98.6.

The furnace that resided in the home where I grew up was a huge cast iron monster squatting in the dark, cobwebby corner of the cellar, separate from the family but a vital part of its winter workings. It was not an octopus type with pipes reaching from its body in all directions and a blower to push warm air to every room of the house. Ours was a gravity furnace, and it expended all its benefits directly overhead through one pipe into the living room one floor above.



Naturally, this was the only really warm room in our house during the cold winter months, and our family life centered there. The temperature of our house did more for togetherness than any family counselor or designer of modern family rooms has ever accomplished. From the idle of September, when Mother first “fired up” in the evening, until sometime in May when the last chill was gone and windows and doors were flung open, feather beds and flannel sheets aired and stored away, we lived in that room.



A large metal floor register approximately 4 feet square fed the warm furnace air into the living room, and I would have been more correct had I said that family life centered around and on that square. Each evening, from the time school was out until bedtime, there we kids sat, stood or sprawled, crowded together over the heat, playing games, snacking, listening to the radio, talking or arguing. We shared our space with drying mittens, coats and boots with their musty smell, or sometimes, more pleasantly, with a bowl of bread dough set to rise.

On wash day we would have to arrange ourselves around the clothes bars hung with stiff from the line, wonderfully fresh smelling sheets, pajamas and long johns. What pleasure it was to put on those warmed pajamas just before that awful dash to an unheated bedroom.

In place of today’s humidifier, there was always a coffee can of water sitting on the register. This was kicked over quite regularly, and the furnace below would protest with a hiss of steam and a spray of ash. Water wasn’t the only thing that fell through the small squares of the register to the furnace below. Our furnace was also a marble eater. When my brother and I pulled out chairs over the heat and played Chinese checkers, the game was seldom finished. A marble or two would invariably roll off the board balanced on our laps and that was the end of the game until someone could round up replacements on another day.

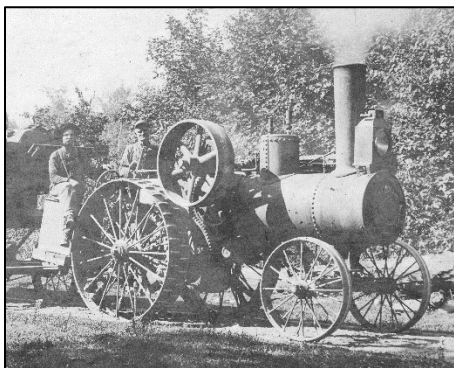
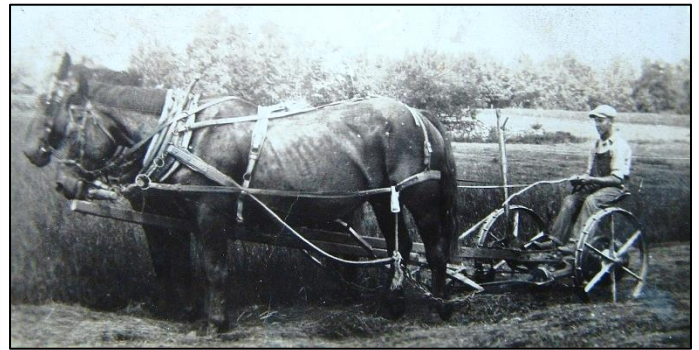
When we were small, we would peek down through the holes of the register, the heat stinging our eyes, and wonder what the furnace did with all the marbles, pennies and Cracker Jack prizes that disappeared into its dark recesses. If a furnace can have a personality, ours did. Only Mother could reason with it. The rest of the family could not control its moods. On its good days we could get a stick of wood to burn until we thought its heat was going to melt the fillings from our teeth. At other times, the driest kindling and the kindest words brought nothing but smoke and chill.

Mother, However, would use the shaker or the poker and hum a little tune under her breath and suddenly there would be flames and heat. The dry kindling would be crackling and popping – even the sound warming us. Mother believed in kindling, a fact that was a source of great embarrassment to me as a teenager. She could not walk past a good piece of kindling wood. I can still see her walking home from church, a purse and Bible in one hand and a bunch of dry sticks in the other. A treat for the furnace, she would say when I complained.

Winter mornings at my home were always unbearable, for no matter how much banking was done to the fire at night, it had a way of going out before the next day. I think that to this day, my distaste for getting up in the morning goes back to those days of my childhood when it took such courage to fling back the covers and put my feet on the icy linoleum. I would run for the comforting square in the living room, a handful of school clothes clutched against me. At that early hour the metal of the register was actually colder than the linoleum on my bedroom floor, but there was a promise, and I would stand, shivering, anticipating, listening to Mother in the cellar below clunking and shaking and humming.

Soon there would be a puff of heat, at first only a whisper, but before long a voice not to be ignored as I danced barefoot on the meta grid, unable to stand still on the hot squares. When spring came and the fire went out for the last time, the furnace was forgotten, and the register became only a piece of cold metal housing cobwebs in its holes, unnoticed as we went about our summertime life.

But on that first autumn evening, when there was a chill in the air and the dew was almost ice, when geese were overhead and the fruit flies had given up attacking the tomatoes and grapes stored on the back porch and disappeared, one of us would remember. “Are you going to fire up tonight, Ma?”



Spring planting time is soon here... time to get out the equipment and get ready!



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

Mail checks payable to SHSI and mail to:

Spirit Historical Society, Inc.

P.O Box 621

Ogema, WI 54459

Contact us at:

spirithistoricalsociety@gmail.com

www.spirithistoricalsociety.org

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Books we have for sale written by local authors

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