

THE REPORTER

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The Newsletter of the Waupaca Historical Society

Winter 2011

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“Logs & Lumberjacks”

A Special Photo Exhibit at the Holly History Center

Article by Julie Hintz

The Holly History & Genealogy Center is currently featuring a special photo exhibit called “Logs & Lumberjacks”. The exhibit features photos from Wisconsin’s logging era, including photos of lumberjacks, logging camps, skids of logs, river jams, and Bartlet’s Sawmill (which was located right along the river in Waupaca). The exhibit runs through April 1st.

The Wisconsin Pineries that were located along the Wolf River furnished much of the timber that was manufactured into lumber by the great mills at Oshkosh, Winneconne, and other points along the shores of Lake Winnebago and Poygan. These mills contributed to the growth and prosperity of such places as Appleton, Fond du Lac, and the Fox River Valley. Many smaller mills sprang up along the banks of smaller tributary rivers, such as the Little Wolf River and the Waupaca River.

But the story of the logs begins with the lumberjacks. Early lumberjacks were often farmers who sought extra income during the winter months. They would be hired by a lumber company to harvest the forest. Tools used by lumberjacks included the ax, peavey, cant hook, cross-cut saw, and two-man saw. Trees were felled by “choppers” (usually a two-man team) using a two-man saw. Once felled, the tree was attacked by “swampers” or “barkers”, who sawed off branches and cut the tree into logs. The logs were marked with the logging company’s imprint (similar to a rancher’s brand) on the log ends. Cut logs were dragged by chain and horse team to the side of a logging road. There they were hoisted onto a sled or “skid” with a log boom and block & tackle. Cut logs were piled along the banks of rivers in the winter and secured with props.



When Spring came, the timber props were removed, allowing the logs to roll into the river to be carried downstream to a sawmill. Sometimes logs “jammed” and “River Rats” (the men who were in charge of making sure the logs kept moving down river) had the job of loosening the jam with their peaveys (a tool consisting of a spike and hook on a long pole). Sometimes dynamite had to be used to break up a large log jam. Sawmill owners would catch the logs in a “boom” on the river (a barrier to prevent the logs from dispersing or floating farther downstream). The logs were often sorted in the water, then piled into log piles near the sawmill. In the sawmill, metal saws were run with water power. Sawed lumber was shipped by wagon and later via railroad to Wisconsin’s growing villages and cities.

Please stop by the Holly Center on Wednesday or Friday afternoons to view this special exhibit.

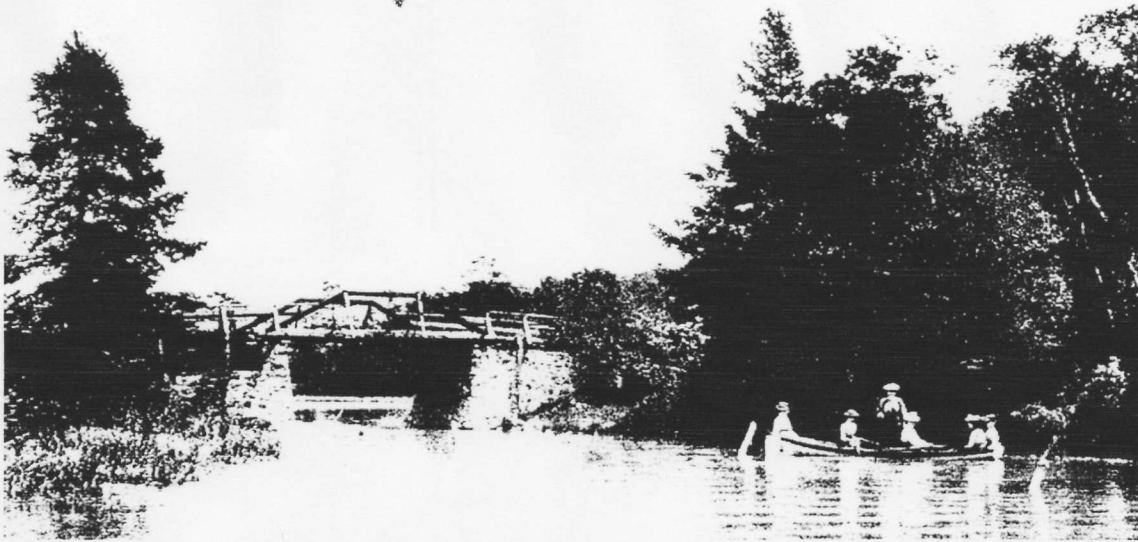
The History of Indian Crossing

A history article by Ron Reynolds

Prior to 1900, Native Americans traveled the trails they blazed from Northern Wisconsin to Lake Winnebago. They had several rest spots along the way, including overnight stays.

In the Waupaca area, the Chain O' Lakes in particular, the Indians built a bridge over the channel between present day Columbian and Lime Kiln Lakes. On the south side of the bridge, they had one of their rest camps, running from the channel, South for some 500', and bordered on present day Snug Harbor Cove of Columbian Lakes' eastern shore, and inland for about 300'. It was one of their larger rest areas, and it contained a virtual village of tents.

As the Chain O' Lakes became more and more developed by residential and commercial establishments, a wider, and more sturdy wooden bridge was built at Indian Crossing. The rest area also became a residential area for newcomers, and some eight cottages were built on the land, which was named, "Indian Hill Estates". Along the channel's south shore were built several cabins, running West from the bridge along the channel. The present day Indian Crossing Casino was built along the north shore, running West from the bridge along the channel.



Indian Crossing around 1900. Photo courtesy of the Waupaca Historical Society.

The Casino opened for business on July 4, 1925, and became a major dance hall to the sounds of several nationally acclaimed big bands. Thousands of people danced to these large swing bands for over two decades, and it continued into the rock 'n roll era as well.



The 1955 Indian Crossing Bridge. Photo courtesy of Waupaca Historical Society.

Another new bridge was built at Indian Crossing in 1955. It was rounded underneath, supported by corrugated steel, allowing one boat to travel under it at a time. This bridge was used for vehicular traffic for over fifty-five years, when it was again replaced with a new bridge in 2005. Construction began in February, and the bridge opened in June, 2005. Also, small parks were developed adjacent to the bridge on both sides of the channel at the north end. The new 2005 bridge received a major award from the ACEC (American Council of Engineering Companies) in 2006.

The newest bridge is wider, higher, and has pedestrian walkways on both sides. Being squared off underneath, it enables two boats to pass each other going in opposite directions. This has alleviated the boater traffic jams that occurred on most summer weekends under the old rounded bridge. On the busiest weekends, boats number fifteen to one over automobiles.

Today, it is still called Indian Crossing on Waupaca County Trunk Q. The Casino is still there too, and is open during the summer. The Casino property also includes Ding's Dock/Crystal River Trips and boat rentals. As a result of modern construction and techniques, Indian Crossing has indeed become an institution in the area, and shall remain for many generations to come.

A New Roof and Security System for the Depot

An update article by Mike Kirk

When the Historical Society acquired the depot in 2004, the depot had been heavily vandalized, the worst of all was the roof. Rocks and scrap iron had been thrown on the roof breaking many of the clay tiles. This caused leakage that rotted the deck, rafters and beams underneath. All sides of the building were damaged. The worst areas were the east end and the track side. Some sections of the heavy beams that held up the rafters were rotten and had to be replaced. Two of the braces supporting the beams also had to be made and replaced with materials from Larry Behm and cut and installed with John Lehman's help. I had to sister many of the rotted rafters in the six foot overhang. The rafters were bricked in place requiring removal of the bricks and mortaring them back in place after repairing the rafters. Once the rafters were restored I could put on the three quarter inch deck boards using rough sawed lumber from Larry Behm and planed myself. I installed rolled roofing which would stabilize the roof until we could put on a permanent replacement.

I wanted to keep the historic Spanish tile look of the depot so I did not want to simply do the easy thing



The vandalized depot roof. Photo courtesy of Mike Kirk.

and shingle the roof. Of the four similar depots built by the Wisconsin Central Railway, only the Waupaca depot still had its original tile roof. While working on the roof, I explored the available options for replacement roofing materials. The original 1907 tile was made by Ludowici Tile Company of Ohio. They still made the same type of tile but the price was prohibitive. One roofer that came and gave a price was Reid Riddle of Security Roofers. Ribble is our newly elected congressman. His price for a tile roof about two years ago was \$85,000. John Golke suggested I contact a metal supplier in Eau Claire. I went to Eau Claire and looked at the Metro line of alumasteel metal roofing that came in different styles including Spanish tile.

Working with Henry Veleker, we applied for a transportation enhancement grant in 2004 to fund the depot restoration. Although we applied during three consecutive biannual funding cycles, we were never successful in getting funding. We continued to be very careful with how we spent the funds we did receive, in hope of eventually being able to fund the roof. Finally, last year we received a \$5,000 grant toward the roof from the Waupaca Area Community Foundation. Archie Overby and the First National Bank contributed \$20,000, giving us enough, along with our existing funds, to go ahead with the \$30,000 Metro steel roof installed by John Golke. The tile has fine aggregate bonded to the metal. We selected a red color that looked similar to the weathered appearance of the old tile. Clay Tile Specialists of Little Chute agreed to remove the remaining old tile for salvage saving us the \$2000 removal cost. Golke's crew came in late November and installed the roof. It was exciting to finally get to see this most important part of the depot getting done.



The Waupaca Depot with its completed roof. Photo courtesy of Mike Kirk.

When the Waupaca Historical Society purchased the depot, the building had not been used for several years and was heavily vandalized. Since we have been working on it, the vandalism has mostly stopped but we still occasionally have a few problems. There has actually been a much greater problem at the quarry behind the depot and the freight house across the street. The possibility of additional depot vandalism still exists. With all the restoration work we have been doing and the valuable items we have there, installing a security system is becoming more important. Because of this, we decided to apply for a security system grant. Tom Pionke volunteered to design and install the system. Tom is very knowledgeable in electronics and installed the security system at Saint Magdalene Catholic Church. We received a \$2,559 grant from the Waupaca Area Community Foundation for the security system he designed. There will be the usual break in and fire detection system as well as several motion activated cameras outside. The cameras will help us protect the exterior where past vandalism has occurred. The car barn will also be protected. The system can be monitored in real time, by anyone on line with a computer who is given access. Tom has already installed much of the wiring in the depot. He is setting up and testing the system this winter in his home. He will install it early in the spring.

The Waupaca Historical Society extends sincere appreciation to all individuals and groups who gave a monetary contribution to the Society during 2010. Your donations help us fulfill our mission of preserving and keeping history alive!

\$0 - \$99

Alfsen, Lois
Andreae, Chris
Anderson, Don & Naoma
Brown, Gerald
Castle, Susan & Charles
Chaffee, Lucille & Clifford
Christie, Scott & Shelly
Damrau, Solveig
Dehlinger, Lori
DeQuaine, Ken & Grace
Dorow, Rose Marie
Eisenhauer, David
Faulks, Robert & Christine
Fulcher, Joanne & Jack
Goerman, Charles
Hanke, Jan & LaVern
Hathaway, Dr. David
Hebbring, John & Karen
Hintz, Julie
Holder, Carol
Hollenbeck, Patricia
Holly, Tom
Johnson, June
Johnson, Stephen & Jackie
Larson, Charles
Moede, Gerald & Elizabeth
Murray, LeAnn
Nell, Arline
Nelson, Richard
Niemic, Joan
Olfson, John
Olson, Roberta
Patterson, Joan & Charles
Perry, Yolanda
Perz, Tara
Phelan, Michael & Diane
Piggly Wiggly
Rolefson, Jerome & Carol
Runow, Romy
Salan, Dr. Jerry
Stewart, Betty
Trinity Lutheran Church OWLS
Trudeau, Kenneth & Judy
Ugorek, Peter
Vetter, Edna
Wiese, Barbara Fay
Working Together for Waupaca County
Writt, Don & Marge
Young, Patricia
Ziebell, Lillian

\$100 - \$500

Brown, Jeffrey
Culver's Restaurant
Farmers State Bank
Fico, James & Mary
Godfrey, Tom & Eloise
Gladysz, Margean & Edward
Gruer, Albert & Gloria
Gusmer, Carolyn & John
Hebbring, John
Johnson, David
Kessler, Bob & Betty
Kile, Dr. Patti
Kirk, Beverly
Kirk, Mike & Barb
Koch, Carl & Janet
Lear, Dennis & Laurie
Lorraine Evenson Estate
Pope, Dr. Rex & Linda
Shaw, Barry & Ruby
Soo Line Historical & Technical Society
Sosinski, Adrienne
Trombla, David
Wasserberg, Gene & Joan
Waupaca Duplicate Bridge Club

Over \$1,000

Overby, Archie & Margaret
Wurzbach, William & Mary

**Special Grants Received
During 2010 From:**

American Transmission Company
Waupaca Area Community Foundation

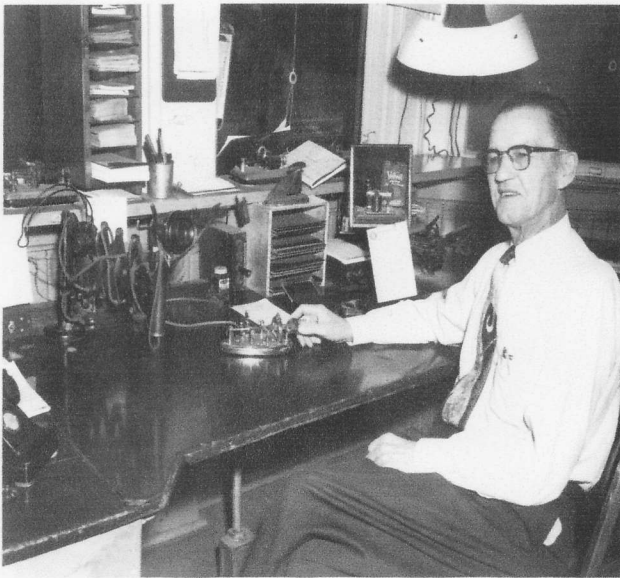
**If you have not replied yet to
our 2011 Membership Appeal request,
you may still mail in your
donations. Our member support is
greatly appreciated and helps
with our operating costs.**

A Depot Donation in Memory of Louis Seibert

On October 20th, the Waupaca Historical Society received a substantial donation to the Depot Restoration Fund from William and Mary Wurzbach of Oshkosh, WI, in memory of Louis D. Seibert. William is the grandson of Louis D. Seibert (1896-1968), a former Soo Line Railroad employee who worked at the Waupaca Depot. William remembers spending time at the Depot with his grandfather when he was a child.

Louis Seibert was born in Medina, WI, on January 18, 1896, the son of George and Ella Seibert. Louis worked on the family farm until going off to fight in World War I. Louis served as an airplane mechanic in France during the war years. Returning home to Wisconsin in 1919, Louis met and married Ruby Bock. Louis got a job as a railroad operator at the depot in Medina. In 1922, Louis and Ruby moved to Waupaca, when Louis became employed by the Soo Line Railroad and was stationed at the Waupaca Depot. Louis was a "3rd Trick Operator" and his shift ran from midnight to 8 a. m. He preferred working that shift because it allowed him to hunt and fish during the daytime and spend time with his family. Louis and Ruby had five children between 1921 and 1933. Their youngest son, Gustav, was born prematurely, and died on August 28, 1933. In November of 1933, Ruby went into the hospital for gall bladder surgery, but died three days later due to complications. She was 37 years old. Their eldest son "Jim" died on Dec. 29, 1945, on the last leg of his return flight after serving in

Germany in World War II. Three other children survived: Yvonne, Olene, and Douglas.



Louis hired live-in housekeepers during the depression years to help with the children. He also took a part-time job at the Savings & Loan to help make ends meet, despite still working full time at the Waupaca Depot. Louis would take food to neighbors in need and often gave hand-outs to hobos. In 1935, Louis married Ruby's older sister, Lora. The children called her "Aunt Lora" and she became a wonderful mother to the children and loving wife and companion for Louis. In the late 1940s, Louis offered to teach a course at the Waupaca High School for anyone interested in

becoming a railroad operator. His son Douglas and several others took the course and later went on to successful careers in the railroad industry. Louis had a good friend who also worked as a 3rd trick operator at Stevens Point. They often exchanged pleasantries over the telegraph during the quieter hours of the night. One evening his friend told Louis that it was his last night on the job and that he was retiring. Louis sent him a congratulatory telegraph message, but there was no response. A short time later, another railroad agent sent Louis a message telling him that he had

found Louie's friend dead of a heart attack at the telegraph key. Louis decided in that moment that it was time for him to consider having a life after the railroad. Louis retired in 1958 after working 42 years for the railroad. He and Lora enjoyed several years of retirement and reminiscing. Lora died in 1965 at age 72. Louis died three years later in 1968, also at the age of 72.

Louis Seibert ("Louie") always loved the railroad. It was an important part of his life and he shared his love and enthusiasm for his chosen profession with all he met. He will be long remembered by those he left behind.

The Waupaca Historical Society thanks William and Mary Wurzbach for their generous donation in memory of Louis D. Seibert. Their generosity will help continue the restoration work at the Waupaca Depot, including the refurbishing of the Depot ceiling and flooring.

A Taste of Victorian Christmas in 2010

The Waupaca Historical Society sponsored a tree at the Hansen Furniture Store Annual Festival of Christmas Trees this year. It was filled with popcorn strings and other traditional Victorian ornaments, all made by a study crew of WHS volunteers. The Tree Festival serves as a fundraiser for the participating organizations. People "vote" for their favorite tree by contributing money. Thanks to all the donors to the WHS tree, our tree came in 2nd, in funds collected. The trees are located throughout the store, and one of the clerks stated that we had the most people stop in to ask where our tree was.

It all began when Betty Stewart saw the December 2009 Festival of Trees and asked a clerk what we needed to do to enter the 2010 contest. This fall the owner called to notify Betty that a tree was available for us to decorate if we were interested. Betty received the Board's approval and we began planning. The

ornaments were all handmade and included Christmas cottons (little angel ornaments made with cotton batten), Christmas cones, vintage greeting cards framing historic Waupaca winter scenes, and picture pillows (featuring our three historic buildings) with a red beaded fringe. The reproduced image of a large Victorian angel topped our tree.

A special thanks to Tim and Mary Angsten of Hansen's Furniture Store for sponsoring this event.



Waupaca Historical Society

321 South Main Street

Waupaca, Wisconsin, 54981 – 1745



WHS Volunteers Being Honored For Service. Sitting, left to right: Don & Vera Duesterbeck, Julie Hintz, Joyce Woldt, Jan Schroeder, Betty Stewart. Standing, left to right: Don Witt, Chris & Jerry Chappell, Marge Witt, Mike Kirk, Laurie Lear, Dick Bidwell, Dennis Lear, Jim Boyer, Bob Kessler.