



Old Franklin Township Historical Society Newsletter

June 2007 - Volume 1, Issue 2

Pork Chop Benefit Dinner

On Sunday, May 6th Emil Diehl organized a pork chop dinner with the funds going towards our renovation fund. The Thering brothers cooked the chops & the I-Diehl Tap put together the meals.

Thanks to everyone's help the dinner raised \$728.00.

Old Town Hall Renovation



As you drove past the old town hall you may have noticed some digging this spring. By now everyone in the local area probably knows that last year the OFTHS signed a 25-year lease for a \$1.00 a year with the Town of Franklin. Last issue of our newsletter we mentioned our fundraising drive in order to remodel the basement of the hall to be used as an office, archive, & research area. To date we have raised \$26,968.11 toward our goal of \$65,000. With the money raised so

far we will only be able to progress as listed below:

- Ground work towards installing a bathroom
- Heating
- Basement floor

Since we are a non-profit organization we depend on community support. It is difficult to ask more of the community, but without your support the interior finishing will have to wait for more funding.





Grant Award

The Sauk County Arts & Humanities has just awarded our society a grant to document & write a book on the emotional and physical damage caused by the May 21, 1918 cyclone/tornado. Our project is scheduled to start June 1st and end June 2008. This storm had its start in Clayton County, Iowa traveling through the southwest corner of Wisconsin. It hit Lone Rock just before it left a path of destruction through Sauk County. Those of us that grew up in the Plain, WI area remember it; because of the photos of the beautiful St. Luke's Church after the storm.



Many people can still remember the stories that their parents told them about the storm. We would like to document those memories before all is forgotten. This past year our society purchased a digital recorder for the purpose of preserving memories & stories throughout our community. With this project we should be able to make good use of it.

We are also looking for photos that families have in their personal collection showing the damage & destruction from the storm. We understand that many families may not want to part with these photos. We would be happy to have the opportunity to make

digital copies of the original and this way the families' personal collection would stay intact.

Any person that would like to share photos or stories on this event please contact any officer listed on the last page of this newsletter.

Brat Stand

Watch for the OFTHS at the brat stand in the Village of Plain, this summer.



June 15 & 16 – Sept. 7 & 8.

Display setup at old hall

We would like to help St. Luke's celebrate their 150th anniversary with our open house in July. If you have any artifacts that you would be willing to share with the community, we'd love to show them off. Baptismal, Solemn & Holy (photos, certificates or dresses), graduation (gowns, pins, class rings, bracelets), projects that were completed at St. Luke's School (cards, term papers, woodworking projects), old class pictures, old prom dress & pictures, sporting events, or uniforms (CYO, boxing, bowling, basketball), play (pictures, pamphlets, tickets, costumes) anything that relates to St. Luke's. If you have anything please call MaryJayne Diehl Liegel at 546-4562 and she'll be happy to pick up your item, or copy and return your item.



2005 1st place winner



2006 1st place winner

*Can we do it again this year?
Watch for our float during the
Plain fire department's 3-day
celebration.*

Claridge Stone House

by Karen Ruhland Beth

William Claridge was born in Leicestershire, England, April 14, 1816. Elizabeth Felstend was born April 10, 1810. William and Elizabeth were married on April 19, 1841. William and Elizabeth departed for America on May 9, 1847 on the ship called the Washington at Liverpool, England. The ship manifest lists both William's and Elizabeth's occupation as a shoemaker. Their two children, George and Ann, came with them. Landing at New Orleans on July 20, 1847 the family came north up the Mississippi River partly on a steamboat and settled on a farm near Sun Prairie in Dane County, Wisconsin, where Alice was born. July 1850 they relocated to land in the southern part of Franklin Township, Sauk County, Wisconsin. After arriving the William Claridge family stored their china and clothes in a small dry cave across the road and proceeded to build a log house and

to clear the land for farming. William, Jr., was born two years later. On this fertile farm the Claridges prospered.

The William Claridge family quarried beautiful stone from their Franklin farm which they used to build a large eight-room, three-story house, with four-rooms on each of the two stories above the basement. The walls are made of limestone and the basement of sandstone. The inside of the basement walls show the remnants of white paint with a black or dark blue-stenciled border. The original woodwork is still intact and the window wells are 15-inches deep throughout the house. All the rooms except the kitchen are painted two different colors, with the ceiling color coming 1-foot down on the walls. Was this a common style of painting? Was it leftover from the Claridges or from the Hetzels? The year 1856 carved into a limestone in the wall of the house can be seen inside the enclosed porch. The enclosed porch was likely added after the Claridges sold the farm. The precision cutting and laying of every cornerstone in all the walls can be appreciated when looking at this fine old home.



This beautiful stone house is still standing where it was built 151 years ago, on Weidner Road just beyond the Paulus Road intersection. This same farm in later years was owned and operated by Mike Hetzel, then by his son Frank Hetzel, and presently by Wayne and Geraldine Bindl.

Imagine the excitement in the local settlements when the Claridges were building their wonderful limestone house. Were their neighbors helping them? Were meals shared when help was given in raising the stones to build the walls? There are many unanswered questions.

Is this the oldest house still standing in Franklin Township? OFTHS would like your help in determining:

- What is the oldest house still standing in Franklin Township?
- What is the oldest house still standing in the Village of Plain?

If you have any suggestions or information to help us answer these questions, please contact one of the officers listed on the back page of this newsletter.

The Claridge families are a good example of chain migration. One can guess that William wrote to his relatives in England, sharing the news of their good times in

Franklin Township. William's nephew Thomas W. Claridge, age 19, and his wife, Hannah Pollitt, age 18, were married in August 1856 and immediately sailed for America. They settled in the White Mound area in the northern part of Franklin Township. His father was also named Thomas. Thomas, Sr. was William's brother. In 1858 Thomas's parents also came to the White Mound area. They settled on Thomas's land and he bought more next to them.

William's wife Elizabeth died February 13, 1881 and was buried in the Pleasant Hill Cemetery on Highway B west of Plain. William married Abigail Bear (widow of John Bear) in the Dakota Territory on October 11, 1881. They then moved to Spring Green, WI, where they lived the rest of their days. William died April 23, 1898 and Abigail died July 25, 1915. Both were buried in the Spring Green Cemetery.



From the President's desk....

Renovation of the basement of the old Franklin Town Hall has begun. The water and sewer line is in, as well as the rough plumbing for the bathroom and sump pump. Drain tile has been laid next to the exterior north wall. Windows have been ordered for the basement. Won't it be nice to not see boarded up areas there once they are placed?

A final design for our sign above the door has been decided on and work should begin on it. We will begin to formulate our policy regarding use of the research area soon; we will plan to have policies similar to other historical societies in the area.

We really appreciated all the work Emil Diehl and Tim and Loren Thering and all the others "behind the scenes" put into the Pork Chop Dinner Benefit for us. Community support means a lot to us. Many thanks to all who ordered the dinner, too! Be sure to patronize the Brat Stand on June 15 and 16, when the OFTHS will be hosting as a fundraiser for our society.

Until next time..... Phyllis Dearborn email: pdear@dishmail.net

Recent donations since March 2007 to our society include:

- 1) 3 Scrapbooks of obituaries; one each from Plain, Loreto, and Spring Green area, donated by Sandy Stiemke. Also copy of bibliography of Plain from WI Hist. Library and copies of Sauk County School Yearly Reports from Franklin and Bear Creek townships.
- 2) Ledger from the Poplar Grove Cheese Factory starting in 1914, donated by Betty Luther Carpenter. Her grandfather, Fred Luther, owned that factory at that time.
- 3) 2 copies of large scrapbooks of wedding announcements, obituaries and other articles from various newspapers; an article about boarding at the Sister-house in 1928 along with pictures of children who boarded there; and an issue of the Zenith from 1929, all donated by Gertie Bindl.



Wish List

- 8-10 ft. used table-wooden top for research area
- 4-6 used wooden office or waiting room type chairs
- Copier or source for obtaining good used one
- Computers-at least 2 late model

Would you like to submit articles for our newsletter....



Do our readers have interesting local history or family genealogy?

Do you have any unanswered questions dealing with local history or family genealogy?

Let us know and we will print it in our next newsletter. Just send it to any of the officers listed on the back of our newsletter or email to Marian (Ruhland) Burmester.

Send email to Marian Burmester trkyhnr811@lycos.com to receive every newsletter.

Our newsletter is also post on the Village of Plain website <http://www.plainwi.govoffice2.com/>

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Old Franklin Township Historical Society

915 Wachter Ave.
P.O. Box 218.
Plain, WI 53577

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PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE

WE INVITE YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER

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S8552 Valley View Rd.
Loganville, WI 53943

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**MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 1ST
THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT
7:00 PM AT THE KRAEMER LIBRARY
IN PLAIN, WI. EXCEPT FOR SPECIAL
OCCASIONS.**

President: Phyllis Dearborn; 1525 Honey
Creek Dr.; Plain, WI 53577

Vice President: Mary Frances Nachreiner;
1240 Oak St.; Plain, WI 53577

Treasurer: Mary Jayne Liegel; S8552 Valley
View Rd.; Loganville, WI 53943

Secretary: Sandy Stiemke; E5551 Narrows
Creek Rd.; Loganville, WI 53943

Directors: Karen Beth; 101 Park St.; P.O.
Box 125; Rock Springs, WI 53961
Marian Burmester; E3225 Hwy. 58;
LaValle, WI 53941
Jim Geishirt; S8598 Valley View
Rd.; Loganville, WI 53543