Wexford County Historical Society Museum

P.O. Box 124 • 127 Beech Street • Cadillac, MI 49601
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The Wexford County Historical Society Museum is a nonprofit organization committed to the preservation and presentation of the history and culture of Wexford County.

Newsletter - September 2017

WCHS BOARD MEMBERS

President	Amy Schmid
Vice President	Mark Mitchell
Secretary	Patti O'Dell
Treasurer	Joe Sattler
Membership Secretary	Ron Jacobs
Past President	Pam Welliver
At Large	Kim Vranish
At Large	Susan Meyer
At Large	Johanna Carey
At Large	Mark Bliven
Alternate (non-voting)	Meril Matson
Alternate (non-voting)	Gwen Dubravec
Docent (non-voting)	Richard Kraemer

Our next biannual Meeting to which members are all invited to vote will be Wednesday, November 1, 2017 at 6:00 in the museum.

A QUESTION

The museum has dozens of pictures of groups sitting on the front steps of the Carnegie Library. The steps were steep, so folks on each step were at least a head above the row in front, and the back rows were not that much farther away than the front rows, plus the building provided a classical frame for the group. Graduating classes, women's reading groups, International Orders of Oddfellows rallies, family reunions, scouts, or governmental groups regularly had their photos taken in front of the library. (It would be nice if we had more than one picture of the inside of the library.)

In all these pictures there is never a horse and buggy or Tin Lizzie parked nearby, so did everybody that came to the library arrive on foot from walking distance?

FAVORITE NEW ITEM

Richard Kraemer

A packet of documents was given by Doug and Betty LaPe of Illinois contained many pictures of Hobart, a town on the Grand Rapids & Indiana RR six miles south of Cadillac. Their grandfather lived in the Hobart school after it closed in which their great grandfather was teacher and school board president.

The best part of their gift to the museum was a sheaf of school documents from 1896 through 1926 including such things as teaching contracts, state record forms, final tests for all grades, and books used by each class. Of these, my favorite was a form listing the students in the Wexford County Normal School. The Normal School was a two year teacher training school to prepare high school graduates for teaching in one-room school houses.

On that form I found that Cadillac's normal school admitted several young women that had not completed high school. They had "10th" and "11th" listed after their names in the column that asked for "Graduated From." The last names of those young women are not listed in the Cadillac year book, but each of their first names is under their family names. In other words after certain young women had to end their public schooling, they were welcomed to continue their schooling in the normal school. They did not receive a certificate for teaching school, but a certificate of completion – what we would call today a GED.

YOU ARE NEEDED

There is much that you can do to make the museum a better place.

- Manage our Facebook page and respond to any questions or comments posed on our Facebook page and email.
- Help or help find volunteers for any and all landscaping needs from watering our new foliage, to mowing, raking, and shoveling.
- We have boxes of old newspapers that need sorting and indexing.
- Identify and photograph the dozens of Jennings homes moved to Cadillac in 1923.
- Plot street scene photographs by their location and year.
- Scan documents and photographs.
- Make museum banners to hang on Mitchell.
- Repair broken picture frames and glass.
- Find the approximate value of items by searching on eBay.
- There is a great need for regular data input into our new artifact identification system.
- We can always use help with different cleaning projects throughout the museum.
- Calling and emailing members and volunteers to invite them to do some of these projects. (We let volunteers do just about whatever they want to do!)

A COUPLE ANSWERS FROM ON HIGH

A couple brought three postcard pictures dated May 19, 1927 of a "Cadillac Air Service" biplane wreck at the Wexford County Fairgrounds.

A couple minutes after the couple left and I could find nothing in the newspapers about the crash, Charles LaBar signed in, gave a donation, and answered half my questions.

A couple questions remained. And then Top Sjogren dropped in with the rest of the answers.

Thank heavens for wise angels that landed here.

The museum had a visitor, Brett, August 5th who was motorcycling to all 92 cities listed in the "*I've Been Everywhere*" song, (Cadillac rhymes with Fond du Lac in the third verse.) He has a website, everywhereman.me. His visit to Cadillac brought him to the museum… He tells the story much better than this newsletter can, and with pictures, at this page of his website: https://everywhereman.me/2017/08/05/mitten-gettin/#more-2040

Brett pretending to drive our ACME 1916 truck.

DOES ANYBODY HAVE?

- A cassette tape player
- Typewriter ribbons
- An IBM Selectric *Miracle Ball* Typewriter
- A 45 RPM record player
- A 33 RPM turntable
- Old fashioned board games

Sometimes stuff not old enough for a museum will tell a story young folks don't know.

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"CADILLAC" IN A SONG

MITCHELL FAMILY ALBUM

A gentleman from Sears, Michigan brought a gift to our museum of a photo album mailed to him from a relative in San Francisco who bought it at a yard sale in San Diego. It is filled with portrait photographs of Cadillac's Mitchell family: many of William, a few of George's wife, Marietta, Austin with his wife, Bertha, and several yet to be identified. The album is dated 1881 on its silver clasp. The photos are all new to our collection.

Austin followed his wife and children to San Diego, where they went to be with her family after Austin returned to Cadillac from his attempt to start a logging town in New Mexico. He was rebuffed by his wife when he returned with an unnamed disease he contracted in New Mexico. After following her to San Diego, he started on a world tour, choosing to "sleep beneath the turbulent waters of the Pacific" on his second day toward Hawaii.

This photo of Austin and Bertha Mitchell was taken in San Francisco where they honeymooned.

Taste of Autumn

Wexford County Historical Society
Fundraiser

Come join us for a wine and cider tasting at your Wexford County Museum
Saturday, October 7th, 2017
7:00 – 10:00 P.M.

There will be a pumpkin scavenger hunt with 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes.

Old fashioned board games will be available to play throughout the museum.

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FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Amy Schmid

Our museum is such a special unique building nestled high on a hill in the center our lovely community. I like to reflect on all the ways the building has been used to serve the Cadillac area. First, a library where children and adults would come to learn, research, and perhaps seek refuge by getting lost in a book - a safe place. Secondly, a police department which housed our local law enforcement officials who helped keep order in the community and where perhaps people sought refuge in times of trouble - a safe place. And now a museum, which preserves, protects and keeps our county's history alive and relevant. A place where people come to visit, research, and yet again to seek refuge by escaping the busyness of this world, even if it's just for a few hours by taking a walk through history - a safe place. Oh, if these walls could talk!

There has been so much we accomplished with all the restoration and maintenance projects done on our building over the years allowing it to continue to be the beautiful building it is. I am so very thankful to all the donors, members, past and current board members, and everyone who has helped raise funds and assisted with fundraisers to keep the museum building beautiful and viable. So… thank you!!! We all should be very proud of everything we together have accomplished!

As you can imagine, a building as unique and historic as the museum, still needs tender loving care. The current board has embarked on an all-inclusive project. The building committee met to prioritize the current needs of the building. The building committee procured estimates and bids and we have most of the information that we need to embark on a major fundraising drive. Our goal is to raise the funds necessary to complete all the necessary restoration and maintenance needs of the building together with making the building ADA compliant so it can truly be "Open to All." Those words are posted above the old front doors, a stipulation Andrew Carnegie required of communities receiving his grants to help build their libraries.

The board wants to make sure to dot every "i" and cross every "t" before fundraising - so more information will be forthcoming. For now, please accept my sincere gratitude for your continued support. Please visit and escape to that safe place, even if it's just for a few hours.

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