



## Mark your calendar for 2018 special MCHS events

**Thursday thru Sunday, July 5-8** Marquette County Fair booth

**Sunday, September 23** 1:30 PM Jessica Michna presenting Laura Ingalls Wilder: Road to the Little House

**Sunday, October 14** 1:30 PM Author Peter Shrake speaking on his book The Silverman about Indian Agent John Harris Kinzie



Junior Fairest of the Fair Charlie Ezell came to the Strawberry Sociable to remind everyone to come to the Marquette County Fair July 5-8. MCHS will have a booth there

The annual Strawberry Sociable was again a popular event. Volunteers scooped up ice cream and strawberries on home made short cake and below, Joan Ingraham waited for more visiting bears to fill the chairs at the Teddy Bear tea.



Have you tried out the Marquette County John Muir Nature and History Route mobile app? You don't need a smartphone to see it. Use your computer to go to

<http://muirboyhoodhome.toursphere.com> and learn all about Marquette County.

## Visit our website: [www.marqcohistorical.org](http://www.marqcohistorical.org)

Over 100 4th graders from Coloma, Oxford and Westfield visited the Marquette County Historical Society this spring. Teaching children about history is one of the most important jobs a historical society can accomplish. MCHS takes it seriously and invites school groups to spend a half day learning all about Marquette County history. The old Westfield jail cell is always a popular stop as is Riverside School where they learn about one room school houses. These tours are all done by volunteers. We love having kids come to MCHS.



**WE NEED HELP!** To keep the historical society active and successful, we need volunteers in all areas. Would you like to run for the board? Can you scan documents? Do you like to organize? Can you help with carpentry, renovation and the like? Please contact us or come to the museum on Wednesdays from 1 to 4.

**History of the Chicago & North Western Rail Road across Marquette County  
reprinted from 100th anniversary year of 2011**

The building of the Chicago and North Western railroad line took place in 1911. The line is now owned by Union Pacific and runs from Section 25 in the Town of Buffalo, northwest through Glen Oak, over Buffalo Lake between Packwaukee and Endeavor and on to Oxford, heading into Adams County. The line changed lives in Marquette County. It carried passengers as well as freight and although no trains stop in Marquette County anymore, they still whiz past on roadbeds and bridges first laid out 100 years ago.

On August 6, 1909, the Milwaukee, Sparta and North Western Railway was incorporated. According to Joe Pierson with the Chicago Northwestern Historical Society Archives, this railroad was a “paper railroad,” one that was incorporated by attorneys to pay construction bills. Such a company was then dissolved or sold, never taking any part in running the railroad. The Chicago Northwestern Railroad wanted a faster route to the Twin Cities and to South Dakota from Milwaukee. The line that runs through Marquette County, once built, was used instead of the slower route through Madison to these destinations.

The railroad was turned over to the operating department on October 19, 1911 and on October 26, directors of the railroad rode the line. It was reported that it was the largest fully equipped passenger train to go over the new line. On December 14 “The new Northwestern train service began to run on schedule time....”

On April 1, 1912, the Chicago and North Western Railroad purchased the Milwaukee, Sparta and North Western Railway, making the line the C&NW. Called “the Adams Cutoff,” it was the last major line constructed in Wisconsin.

One hundred years ago, people all along the new route were anticipating the railroad coming through. The construction brought business, new workers, and opportunity as well as an ongoing show of industrial ingenuity and might. Harvey Jones wrote in his history of Packwaukee, “What might be termed a turning point in Packwaukee business economy was the building of the C&NW Railroad in 1910 and 11. Much of the business formerly carried on by the Soo Line went to Glen Oak to the east, Buffalo Station, then known as Seaman’s Island, and to Oxford and Grand Marsh to the west.”

Jones’ recollections continue, “During the construction of the RR, Packwaukee being the closest place in the neighborhood where liquor could be legally obtained, a rough time was feared. A warning was issued that it would be unsafe for women to be on the streets after dark. But, except for an occasional fist fight, the crews of the imported workers were quite peaceable.

What I think of as an important role in the building of this railroad was the numbers of large, sleek, and beautiful horses used to haul cement and crushed Montello granite in huge hopper bottomed wagons from the side tracks of Packwaukee to Buffalo and Oxford where it was used to make piers and abutments for bridges. Some of the horses died on the road when the weather was hot and the sand ruts deep. On the Oxford route an attempt was made to use a crawler tractor designed to pull six or seven wagons, but proved to be unsatisfactory. Sand for the fill dirt was obtained from the several cuts of the road bed, the one just east of Oxford being ninety feet deep. A Bucyrus Erie Steam shovel was used in their operation and it was a real eye popping experience for us kids who had never seen anything larger than a scoop shovel. To see this snorting monster with no apparent effort handle a yard of dirt at one scoop!”

When asked about the RR workers who built the line, Joe Pierson said, “They often used their own people on construction, but sometimes hired local labor. Often their local labor stayed in box cars that had been converted for crew use for sleeping and eating, which make the work force mobile. Later on, the permanent workers lived locally.”

In 1978, Delilas Christensen wrote in the Olympian that Tony Utke, a Montello resident, worked as a carpenter building the shanties for the men building the railroad through Glen Oak. Horses were used to make the road bed and the railroad parked their steam shovels, three dinkys and 40 to 50 cars on property in South Montello, the old race track. They hauled the equipment to Glen Oak.

Many workers on the line stayed in Packwaukee and they were driven to the work camps along the tracks, some taken from the Kinney Livery in Packwaukee. Work camps were located along the route of the track, one on the Robert McDowell farm. Nellie McDowell told Fran Sprain that family members told of workmen carrying water from their well on pails hanging on shoulder yokes. The family could not harvest their grain until the 4<sup>th</sup> of July when the workers were on holiday because their horses were frightened by the “dinky engines” used to build the grade and overhead bridge.

CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

# Visit our website: [www.marqcohistorical.org](http://www.marqcohistorical.org)

PLEASE RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP or if you are reading this newsletter and are not yet a member, please JOIN NOW. Membership is due November 1. Remember, Life Time membership is \$225 and you never pay again! Individual \$15 Family \$30 Sustaining \$25(individual plus donation) Business \$50 (includes business card in newsletter for a year). We need your support.

The Marquette County Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) Non-profit organization founded in 1962

Marquette County Historical Society  
125 Lawrence Street, P.O. Box 172  
Westfield, Wisconsin 53964  
(608) 296-4700 / e-mail: [marqcohistorical@gmail.com](mailto:marqcohistorical@gmail.com)  
[www.marqcohistorical.org](http://www.marqcohistorical.org)  
Hours: Open Every Wednesday Afternoon (1:00-4:00 p.m.)  
Other Times Available by Appointment

#### Officers:

President: Leroy Stublaski	Vice President: Richard Faltz
Secretary: Carol Claesges	Treasurer: Kathryn Colmer
Curator: Carol Claesges	Office Manager: Janet Pope

#### Board of Directors:

Richard Faltz (2020)	Sue Standke (2018)
Allen Willkomm (2020)	Greg Smith (2018)
Joanie Ingraham (2020)	Kathleen McGwin (2020)
Dan Nickolie	

"Imprints: On the Sands of Marquette County" is the quarterly newsletter of the Marquette County Historical Society Editor: Kathleen McGwin

#### E-mail addresses and phone numbers:

Leroy Stublaski	<a href="mailto:architectureplus.llc@gmail.com">architectureplus.llc@gmail.com</a>	608-347-6467
Carol Claesges:	<a href="mailto:cardon@maqs.net">cardon@maqs.net</a>	589-5641
Kathryn Colmer	<a href="mailto:kathycolmer@gmail.com">kathycolmer@gmail.com</a>	920-2037419
Joanie Ingraham:	<a href="mailto:joanie@theingrahams.com">joanie@theingrahams.com</a>	296-2618 608-494-0871
Greg Smith:	<a href="mailto:roctor@maqs.net">roctor@maqs.net</a>	586-4332 608-369-3510
Richard Faltz	<a href="mailto:rfaltz@frontier.com">rfaltz@frontier.com</a>	608-297-7755
Allen Willkomm	<a href="mailto:awillkomm@maqs.net">awillkomm@maqs.net</a>	608-589-5121
Kathleen McGwin:	<a href="mailto:mcgwin@frontier.com">mcgwin@frontier.com</a>	608-369-1061
Neil & Pat Kruger:	<a href="mailto:pnkruger@maqs.net">pnkruger@maqs.net</a>	(emeritus) 608-296-4250 920-960-3712
Sue Standke:	<a href="mailto:sassysue7870@gmail.com">sassysue7870@gmail.com</a>	
Dan Nickolie		

## Join today! The Marquette

Members receive a the newsletter, discounts on gift shop items, and the pleasure of knowing you are preserving the wonderful, rich history of Marquette County.

## County Historical Society

welcomes new members.

### Membership Application

Please Print

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\$15 Individual

\$25 Sustaining (donation plus membership)

\$30 Family (dependent children and spouse)

\$225 Lifetime \$50 business (includes business card in newsletter)

Make check payable to:

**Marquette County Historical Society**  
**125 Lawrence Street, P.O. Box 172**  
**Westfield, WI 53964**

## Find us on Facebook

Be sure to LIKE us on Facebook and enjoy the changing posts about history in Marquette County. You can add comments about your own experiences or information about each post.

## Pick us as your Amazon Smile Charity

If you make purchases through Amazon, please consider making them through [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and choose the Marquette County Historical Society as your charity of choice. Amazon donates .5% of qualified purchases to the chosen charity. The Marquette County Historical Society has already received \$22 from one Amazon Smile user in just two months. It all adds up. If you purchase items on Amazon, please consider purchasing from Amazon Smile and naming the Marquette County Historical Society as your chosen charity.

OUR BUSINESS MEMBERS ARE MAKING HISTORY TODAY, PLEASE SUPPORT THEM.

# GRAND MARSH STATE BANK

Main Office  
Grand Marsh, WI 53936  
608-339-3351

Mound View Branch Bank  
Adams, WI 53910  
608-339-7722

Oxford Branch Bank  
Oxford, WI 53952  
608-586-5000

24-Hour Line: 608-339-2400

# Montello Care Center



251 Forest Lane

Montello, Wisconsin 53949

Phone 608-297-2153

## The Marquette County Tribune

*"Recording Marquette County History since 1859"*

P.O. Box 188, Montello, WI 53949

608-297-2424

[www.marquettecountytribune.com](http://www.marquettecountytribune.com)

# True Value.

## VIRCHS TRUE VALUE

220 S. MAIN ST.  
WESTFIELD, WI 53964-7507  
608-296-2444

# READERS' REALM

Gallery of New & Gently-Used

# BOOKS



**BOOKS,  
GIFTS &  
WHIMSY**  
147 E. Montello  
Street  
608-297-2200  
Open 7 Days a Week  
Special Orders Welcome

## MCCARTNEY CARPET

FLOORING & WINDOW COVERINGS

BILL & JOAN MCCARTNEY

EMAIL  
[mccartneycarpet@yahoo.com](mailto:mccartneycarpet@yahoo.com) (608) 296-4444

WEBSITE  
[www.mccartneycarpet.com](http://www.mccartneycarpet.com) 404 N. Main Street  
Westfield, WI 53964



## Johnson Homestead 1856, LLP

W7880 Cty Rd D  
Oxford, WI 53952

Joan M. Ondercin  
612.227.2005  
[jmondercin@aol.com](mailto:jmondercin@aol.com)



**HOMES LAND RECREATION**  
608-296-2462 • Westfield WI  
[www.kravickrealty.com](http://www.kravickrealty.com)



## Adams-Marquette Veterinary Service, Inc.

W8881 Hwy. 82 • Oxford, WI 53952 • (608)589-5768

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Other workers stayed in Oxford at the Reid House Hotel. Besides workmen, railroad lawyers, officials and engineers stayed there. A huge cut was made east of Oxford for the line and dirt from that location was used to build the grade for the 480 foot bridge over the Oxford Mill Pond.

The January 13, 1912 Stevens Point Journal reports that new railroad mileage added in the US in 1911 included “Chicago & Northwestern, 161.7 miles, from West Allis to Sparta.”

The building of the rail line through Marquette County was watched closely by the local newspapers and citizens. It affected the local economy both while it was being built as well as after the trains were running. The Central Union reported that the C&NW shifted eight regular freights from the Baraboo route to the new line, moving 50 railroad men with the freights away from Baraboo. The line also took some freight away from the Soo Line that went through Packwaukee.

In May of 1912, the Oxford Times reported that there was a “rumor” that trains would be stopping there for water as soon as a “tank is erected and the pumps installed.” The “North Coast Limited” passenger train, it said, makes the trip from Chicago to the coast in 72 hours. It had started running in March of 1912. You can still see the depot building in Oxford, once a busy stop for the train. The depot building design there was also used in Maribel, Wisconsin; Parker, South Dakota; Pulaski, Wisconsin; West Bend, and a few other places including Princeton.

The bridges were a real feat of engineering. Both the bridge over the mill pond in Oxford and the one over Buffalo Lake near Packwaukee stand as monuments still carrying rail traffic across Wisconsin. The bridge near Packwaukee was also called the Endeavor Swing Bridge. The drawbridge allowed steamboat passage on the Fox River. It was built by the American Bridge Company of New York. The building that sat at the top of the trestle where an operator could sit and rotate the bridge to allow river traffic to pass, was removed in the late 1950s, said Glenn Willkomm of Packwaukee.

People shipped all sorts of goods on the new line. The ice cream factory in Endeavor, built by Allie Baker and then by Charles Kempley, according to Fran Sprain in Places and Faces, took their ice cream in five gallon cans packed with ice in wooden tubs to the Buffalo Station near Packwaukee. It was taken by train to Adams.

It must have taken some getting used to, once the train was running. In 1912 the Central Union, published in Westfield, reported that Gust Hell, who was crossing the tracks near Packwaukee, failed to notice a freight train and one of his horses was struck and killed.

The train hauled granite, wheat, passengers, mail, and much more. It continued to change, riding the crest of railroad success and adjusting with the times. From the history of the railroad, on January 2, 1935 “the Chicago and North Western Railway inaugurated its 400 passenger train between Chicago and the Twin Cities. The name was derived from the train's journey of 408.5 miles in 410 minutes.” But most Marquette County folks will recall or have heard of the passenger service from Milwaukee to Adams and back, giving riders the opportunity of catching the “Scoot” in Glen Oak in the morning, ride it to Milwaukee, and return that night. Or they could take the evening train to Adams and return the next day. The 400 stopped running in 1963 and all passenger service on the Chicago and North Western ended by 1971.

Both WWI and WWII affected train service and rails were used to transport troops and equipment. They were also guarded closely as essential to the safety and security of the nation. C&NW history says, “1941 – 1945 World War II put a great strain on the physical plant of C&NW. Some passenger service that was considered a ‘luxury’ or seasonal, was discontinued; instead, long troop trains plied the C&NW.”

Glen Willkomm of Packwaukee remembers hearing the “rumble of freight trains” crossing the trestle as he lay in bed at night as a child. His mother’s father, James H. Pugh, worked with the crew building the trestle in 1910/11. During



WWII a young Willkomm recalls watching tanks, artillery, trucks and jeeps move along the tracks on flat cars. There were guard houses on either end of the trestle where hired men were to protect the tracks from sabotage. They were assigned a .45 pistol and trained how to patrol the trestle, meeting in the middle of the bridge. Bill Timme and John Brown from Endeavor, Willkomm recalled, were two of the guards.

Railroads were hit hard with the upsurge of the automobile and long haul trucking as well as better roads for these vehicles to travel. Union Pacific took total control of the C&NW line in 1995. Today, only freight trains run the route that was established 100 years ago, but you can see engineering marvels of beautiful bridges that stand in Marquette County and you can even wave at the engineer as the train rushes under one of several bridges along county roads.