



Cable/Namakagon Historical Museum
Dedicated to Keeping History Alive in the
Cable/Namakagon Area!

JUNE 2020

PREZ SEZ by Paul Jenkins

Just like every other organization, our board of directors has been grappling with how to manage in the midst of the corona virus pandemic. At our last board meeting on June 1st, we decided to not open the museum at this time but that we would review this decision at our next meeting on July 6th. After much discussion, the board also decided to discontinue offering lifetime memberships. Those of you who are current lifetime members, rest assured that we value the investment you have made in the museum and will always honor your lifetime membership. You will find information on membership categories and new rates for annual membership on the back page.

Finally, as many of you know Kathy Rondeau Lang passed away last year on Christmas day. Kathy was a board member and for several years served as president of the Cable/Namakagon Historical Museum. Kathy was not a complainer, she continued to work at her job as a med tech and at the museum for as long as she could, giving back to her community. Kathy took part of our hearts with her but she left us so much more. Kathy's daughter Anna wrote a tribute to her mother which you will find below. Thank you, Anna.

In Memoriam of Kathy Lang
by Anna Lang

It is no secret that Mom put her heart and soul into everything she did, and the museum was no different. She treated her community and its members just like she did her family...with love, compassion, respect, and pride. Mom had a lot of personal memories of the community having grown up in Cable and living here her whole life, but she also took the time to reach out to many elders of the community to gather their stories and get to learn about their experiences and traditions that helped to make the area so special.

Mom was elected president of the museum at a meeting she wasn't even present at (she was at work at MMC of course). She was very honored to represent the museum, and she took her role very seriously. She spent many hours making sure so many people got to experience the history of our area. In her last "the Prez Sez" letter she wrote: *"This museum has a strong board that will continue to make things happen. As I turn over the reins, it is in very good and capable hands. I will greatly miss working with everyone and being able to share our rich history."*

Although we all miss her incredible energy, her giving spirit, and her contagious smile, we can find some peace knowing how lucky we were to have her in our community and in our lives. She adopted the motto "CHOOSE JOY" during her cancer fight. I hope during difficult and challenging times all of us in the Cable Namakagon community can try to live by Mom's motto. May her memory live on in this community forever.

Remembering Watershed Woods



by Sue Rosa

A few years ago when I placed the potatoes I'd just dug out of my garden on the kitchen counter, I was drawn back to one afternoon when I was young when I helped my father plant potatoes in our garden at home. It was about 1950 and we lived, along with two other families, at Watershed Woods, a small lumber camp located a few miles outside of Cable at the end of Big Brook Road. The camp sat back from the dirt road behind a row of trees. The driveway leading into the camp split with one fork leading to the right into the lumber yard and the other circling left past three modest houses built for the men who operated the mill and their families. Between the driveway and the row of trees along the road was a large garden space shared by the three families who lived there.

An ice box sat on our back porch for meat and a few other things that needed to be kept cold, and a tiny house-like structure straddled the spring in the back yard where it was cool enough to keep milk, eggs and butter from spoiling. We had electricity but no running water. Water came from a pump on the kitchen counter. There was an indoor toilet upstairs on second floor, but you had to carry a bucket of water with you every time you used it. Most of the time we used the privy out back. Toward the rear of the lot was an old

hunting shack that was rented out to groups of hunters during deer season. Behind that was Big Brook where we swam in the summer and skated in the winter. A big dirt pile provided endless hours of road building for our toy cars and trucks. The rest of the camp consisted of a saw mill, the ever-present mound of sawdust, a machine shed for logging equipment, and piles of logs and stacks of lumber. The pungent smell of fresh cut wood permeated the air. There was also a three-sided structure for Dick and Dan, the two draft horses that hauled the logs out of the woods that covered the hills looming beyond the camp to the west.

I must have been about five or six when we lived there. I learned to ride a bike in the driveway in front of the house and was taught how to embroider from the lady next door. One warm spring day I got to help my dad plant potatoes. The garden was primarily for growing food. The earth was sandy, good for growing potatoes, and we grew a lot of potatoes. There was also always a row of sweet peas that my father planted because they were my mother's favorite.

Planting potatoes took a lot of work. My father first had to till the garden, which he did by hand, and mark out the rows where the potatoes would go. He prepared seed potatoes by cutting a big potato into smaller pieces making sure that each piece had at least two eyes in it. He got the potato planter out of the shed and checked it over. The planter was the old-fashioned kind with two wooden arms 3 or 4 feet long connected at one end to a V-shaped pocket that was hinged in such a way that both the top and bottom of it
(Continued on next page)

opened or closed depending on the position of the arms. With the arms apart, the top of the pocket opened and the bottom of it closed. When the arms were pushed together, the top of the pocket closed and the bottom opened up.

On the afternoon set aside for planting, we carried the sack of cut-up seed potatoes and the potato planter across the driveway to the garden. Working side by side, my father began by holding the planter with the arms spread apart and pushing the planter with his foot into the prepared soil so that the top of the pocket was roughly even with the ground. At this point the top of the pocket was open and ready for the seed potato. My job was to reach into the bag of potatoes, pull out a piece of potato and place it in the pocket. Then my father would force the handles of the planter together opening the bottom of the pocket and allowing the little piece of potato to drop into the hole formed in the process. My father then pulled the planter out of the ground, stepped on the hole left behind to fill it in and tamp the soil lightly. Then we moved on to the next.

There was a rhythm to the way we worked, shifting back and forth between working the planter, dropping the spud into the pocket and moving on. I was totally absorbed watching the way that little piece of potato disappeared into the ground and how my father's strength and skill moved the planter with such sure and steady movements.

I have no doubt that because of this experience so many years ago I now enjoyed gardening so much. For whenever I work in my own garden, whether preparing my own seed

potatoes or planting a tree in my yard, I never fail to recall that balmy spring afternoon working side by side with my father, when time stood still and all was perfect in my world.

Homesteading in Northern Wisconsin



By Jean Hansen Zirn

Did your ancestors homestead in the Cable Namakagon area? Many early settlers in this area took advantage of the 1862 Homestead Act signed by president Lincoln after the southern states left the union. The first filings were allowed after Jan. 1, 1863. Any person who was the head of a family, at least 21 years old, and a citizen of the U.S. (or who had filed papers to become one), or had performed service in the Army or Navy was entitled to apply for up to 160 acres of surveyed government land. If a family already owned and lived on a property they could apply for contiguous land under this program, the total not to exceed 160 acres. The land had to be used for settlement and cultivation and the person filing could not move or abandon the land for more than 6 months at a time for a period of 5 years after filing. After the Civil War, Union soldiers could deduct the time they served from the residency requirements. Deed of title was granted (continued on next page)

after the 5 years had passed and other requirements such as a 12'x14' habitable dwelling and cultivation of the land were fulfilled. Single women could also apply if they were the head of the household There was an option to buy land for \$1.25 and acre after only a 6 mo. residency and small improvements. Namakagon consists of two 6 mile by 6 mile townships in size. Range 5 West had no government issued homesteads. Range 6 West had 3 homesteaders, Allen Akerly, Andrew N. Anderson and Joseph La Pointe. Of these 3, descendents of Anderson and LaPointe later wrote books about their families homesteading experiences. Namakagon Memories by Lillian M. Meyer and "Hey Joe" The Portrait of a Wisconsin Woodsman by Kenneth V. LaPointe. They are both out of print. Cable also consists of 2 townships in size. Range 7 west had 14 homesteads and Range 8 West had 19 homesteads. Cable of course was aided by the availability of supplies once the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha railroad reached town in 1880.

To find more information the website blmglo, (Bureau of Land Management, Govt. Land Office) has listings of all land patents by township and range or by the applicant's name. The search can be refined to show only homesteads. A copy of the original deed can be printed from this site. To obtain the complete homestead record from Washington D.C. was \$50 at last check. It contains the original affidavit in the applicant's handwriting, 3 witnesses, information

about size and number of buildings and crops and may contain military records. However, if you find yourself in Washington the records are available for copying for a minimal charge. Do you have any written family records of the homestead era? The museum would be interested in copying your information. Does anyone have contact information of a descendant of the Akerly or La Pointe family? For more information Contact: Jean Hansen Zirn, Cable/ Namakagon Historical Society.



ANNUAL MEETING

It is at the August Annual meeting that we elect the Board of Directors and approve the minutes of the last year's meeting. Since the actual physical annual meeting is a question at this point we would appreciate your responding to the list of Board of Directors on the next page by

1. Emailing your vote response "yes" or "no" to the slate of Directors listed under **Current Board Members** and your approval of 2019 minutes to info@cablehistorymuseum.com
OR
2. Provide the requested information on the postcard included with the newsletter sent by regular mail and return to us.

Please return your choices by August 17

You can view the minutes at our website at: www.cablehistorymuseum.com/memberships-newsletters.

Cable/Namakagon Historical Museum

Come visit us to take a step back in time and explore the area's rich and exciting history

Open:

Memorial Day through Labor Day

Hours:

Tuesday-Friday 11 am - 3 pm

Saturday 10 am - 1 pm

Street Address: 13405 Spruce Street

Located on the corner of

Spruce & Kavanaugh

715-798-5070

Our website is www.cablehistorymuseum.com

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