

Spirit Historical Society Newsletter

July 2024 Vol. 6 No. 2

Sharing historical information from Spirit, Hill, Knox and the Spirit Valley area for your enjoyment.



News from the last issue: We were able to give away over half of the old books we had. There are still books left and soon we will dispose of them. Call 715-564-3340 if you still want any of them.

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SHSI Brat Fry

Board Members and Volunteers held a successful Brat Fry on June 21st at Trig's in Tomahawk. It was a drizzly day, but we had a good sale anyway. 1st shift of workers were Pam Welch, Dawn Meier, Courtney Pierson and JaNelle & Tim Nelson. 2nd shift workers were Karen Baumgartner, Anne Marie Fries, Luann Lind, Mark Nyberg and Jachin Derk.



There is still time to give a donation to help us finish the Machine Shed project. Anyone giving \$200 and up will have their name put on a plaque. Anyone giving \$500 or more will have their name in a separate category on the plaque. Any amount of donations is appreciated! A big thank you to all of you that have donated so far. We are well on our way to paying for the whole shed.

Community Events

Our next **SHSI meeting** is scheduled for Saturday, September 21st at 10:00 am at the Spirit Town Hall. Let us know if you would like to participate online (phone Dawn Meier @ 715-544-0023) and we will send you the link ahead of time. Everyone is welcome to join us or contact us with your input.

Current Board Members:

Luann Lind-Pres., JaNelle Nelson-V.Pres., Maryalice McHugh-Sec., Pam Welch-Treas.,
Karen Baumgartner, Cheryl Pierson, Johanna Holliday, Anne Marie Fries, Dean Gilge, Mark Nyberg & Dawn Meier
We will be selling cheese curds at the Spirit-Hill-Ogema 4-H Fair on August 17th.

The 82nd annual **Spirit-Hill-Ogema 4-H Fair** will be held Sat., Aug. 17th at the Spirit Town Hall.
Participating 4-H clubs: Happy Hoboes, Hillbillies, Restless Rascals & Hamburg Hawks
Reigning Queen is Chloe Cummings. Exhibit judging begins at 9 am.

Brat Fry style lunch is served from 11 am – 2 pm. Games and Contests in the afternoon.

Program with skits and awards in the evening.



Fair Board Members: Darrel Lind-Pres., Ed Ulrich-V.Pres.,
Molly Lind, Mary Jo Ulrich & Colleen Schult-Sec./Treas.

Check out the fair at

www.facebook.com/spirithillogema4hfair



We are a group of quilters dedicated to sharing, learning, and teaching sewing strategies and techniques in our community and beyond. As quilters, we get together to make quilts that are given out to those in need of comfort due to fire, accident, and/or illness; also groups that support veterans, children or families in need, or treatment centers. We have one meeting a month, on the 4th Thursday, at the Spirit Town Hall.

We welcome any person that has an interest in joining. No experience necessary!

Contact Louise Lukes, president at 715-657-0841.

Visit our booth at the Spirit-Hill-Ogema Fair on August 17th to see what we are all about.

Spirit Town Board meetings are held in the Spirit Town Hall on the 2nd Tues. of each month, starting at 6:00 pm.

Town board members are: Darrel Lind, Bill Evans and Gary Siebert.

Clerk – JaNelle Nelson Treas. – Myrna Holmquist

Spirit Legion Post 452 and the American Legion Auxiliary hold their monthly meetings on the 2nd Thurs. of each month at the Spirit Town Hall beginning at 7 pm.

Spirit Historical Society Newsletter is published by Spirit Historical Society, Inc.

Tours of Our Yesterday House are available by appointment. Contact a board member.

Visit us on Facebook, email: spirithistoricalsociety@gmail.com, or

visit our website spirithistoricalsociety.org.

Obituaries



Kenneth R. Swanson, age 76, of Tomahawk, WI, passed away on Wednesday, April 3, 2024, at his home surrounded by his family after a long, courageous battle with PSP (Progressive Supranuclear Palsy). Ken was born in Tomahawk, WI, on May 23, 1947, to the late Bennie and Verona (Liebelt) Swanson. He was married to Cheryl Anderson on December 5, 1971; she survives. Ken grew up on the Swanson family homestead/dairy farm in the Town of Spirit and was a 1965 graduate of the Rib Lake High School. After graduation, Ken moved to Milwaukee, WI, and soon after, was drafted into the Army and served in the Vietnam War. After his military service ended, he moved back to Tomahawk and worked at Lampart Yards. In 1978, Ken began employment as a carpenter at the PCA Tomahawk Mill; retiring in 2013. He was a lifetime member of the Spirit American Legion, a member of the Spirit 4H Club, and a long-time member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Ken was an avid outdoorsman who had a passion for hunting, fishing, and ice fishing. He loved going for walks and spending time out in Spirit. Ken liked playing cribbage and watching the Packers, Brewers, Badgers and NASCAR races. Ken loved his family and especially enjoyed attending his grandchildren's sporting events.

Survivors include his wife of over 52 years, Cheryl Swanson; his daughters, Amy (Neal) Gebauer, and Michelle (Andy) VanderWyst; his son-in-law, Dan Lundberg, and his "bonus" son-in-law, Pat Lundberg; his sister, Karen (Terry) Johnson; and his in-laws, Debbie and Joe Bandura, and Chet and Doreen Anderson. Ken is further survived by his grandchildren, Connor, Emerson, Ryan, Mason, and Mackenzie; and his nieces and nephews, Karla, Todd, Jake, Eric, and Scott. He was preceded in death by his parents, Bennie and Verona; his daughter, Tammy Lundberg; and his father and mother-in-law, Chet and Darlene Anderson.



Dixie Lee Zastrow, age 90, Tomahawk, was welcomed into the loving arms of her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ on the evening of April 11, 2024. Born December 31, 1933 to William and Alice (Scheller) Garlow in Rib Lake, Wisconsin, she grew up on a farm in Spirit, attended Spirit Falls Grade School, and graduated from Rib Lake High School in 1952. God brought Leander (Andy) Zastrow and Dixie together at a roller skating rink and they were united in marriage May 31, 1952 at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Tomahawk, two weeks after she graduated high school. They resided in Tomahawk and were blessed with four sons. She was so proud to be their mom.

Through the years, Dixie was employed at the Ben Franklin, the Dr. W. I. Macfarlane dental office, Tomahawk Power & Pulp Company, Bake-Rite Baking Company and Wisconsin & Michigan Timber Producers, and she also served as an advertising representative for the Tomahawk Chamber of Commerce.

Immersed in her community, she, along with Andy and close friends, were the founding organizers of YesterFest and Music on the River. She was a member of the Tomahawk Ambassadors, Tomahawk Main Street Design committee, and Tomahawk Area Historical Society, where she served as president for many years. She wrote and published three books, two with Andy and a third with another society member. She established a local chapter of The Compassionate Friends support group following the death of their son Craig in 1977.

She found great joy in hosting large family gatherings as well as entertaining friends in her home, decorating, and organizing events for the Historical Society and others. She and Andy visited most of the states, especially enjoying Hawaii and Alaska, as well as their trip to Japan. Dixie was a member of Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tomahawk, where she served on the Evangelism and Social Fellowship Committees and the Ladies Guild. She cherished her church family.

Survivors include Andy, her beloved husband of nearly 72 years, and their three sons Kevin, Tomahawk, Kyle (Francy), Rhinelander, and Kirk (Becky), Tarpon Springs, FL & Tomahawk. She is also survived by her cherished grandchildren Adam (Ben), Natalie, Ryley (Lori), Maddie (Bobby), Kate, Elise and Logan as well as three great grandchildren. She has been reunited in heaven with her son Craig, parents, sister Sandra Gustafson, and many other family and friends, and awaits her loved ones.



Dennis Carl Lind, age 75, passed away peacefully on May 11, 2024, at Aspirus Hospital in Wausau, WI, surrounded by his family. Dennis was born in Tomahawk, WI on August 10, 1948; the fourth of seven children to Roy and Agnes (Zellinger) Lind. He grew up on a farm in the town of Spirit, WI and was a 1966 graduate of Rib Lake High School. He was drafted into the United States Army on September 12, 1968; served in Vietnam from February 3, 1969 to August 23, 1969. He was wounded in combat and was awarded the Purple Heart. He was honorably discharged June 11, 1970. On his first day home from Vietnam, he met the love of his life, Debby Plude, at Pic-a-Dilly Resort. They married on March 4, 1972 — their 52 years of marriage were a true testament that, “Life doesn’t have to be perfect to be wonderful.”

Dennis attended Barber school at CVTC, but was unable to pursue this career due to the wounds obtained in combat. He then worked several jobs, in logging, carpentry, and at Weather Shield, throughout his life until he was deemed 100% disabled by the VA. He was a long-time member of the Rib Lake United Methodist Church and the Spirit American Legion Post 452. Dennis has always had a love for sports. He played basketball in high school and was high scorer in many games (even without the 3-point line). He played fast pitch softball, coached the Wonder Bar basketball team in city league, umpired many Dairyland baseball games, specifically for the Spirit Twins. He loved to watch all Wisconsin sports - Brewers, Packers, Badgers - but nothing brought him more joy than the Rib Lake Redmen and anything his grandkids were involved in... from t-ball to state baseball, youth basketball to high school regionals, from volleyball to football. It didn’t matter who was playing or which sports season it was, we could count on seeing him in the stands or next to the dugout in his chair, and always saluting for the National Anthem. He will be greatly missed in the seasons ahead.

He is survived by his wife, Debby Lind of Rib Lake; three children, Melissa Lind of Medford, Josh Lind of Rib Lake, and Shanna (Ryan) Scheithauer of Rib Lake; three brothers, Darrel (Luann) Lind, Duane (Joyce) Lind, and Dave (Donna) Lind and two sisters, Donna Stolhammer and Diane Kruit; father-in-law, Larry Plude; three sisters-in-law Diana Deboth, Dawn (Hal) Swenson, and Darcy Johnson; grandchildren, Noah (Cassy) Weinke, Gracie Weinke, Talon, Tahlia, & Slade Scheithauer, and Gage Lind; great-grandson Emmitt Weinke; and many nieces and nephews.

Dennis was preceded in death by his parents; a special aunt and uncle, Carl & Vera Lind; in-laws, Sid & Eleanor Maki; brother, Danny Lind; three brothers-in-law Luke Harubin, Greg Deboth, and Don Stolhammer; sister-in-law, Denise Harubin; and grandson, Maddox Scheithauer.



Remembering Railroads in Spirit, by Harold Rhody Written circa 1997

When I was a small boy somewhat over seventy years ago the railroad went through about ¼ mile from our house. By the time of my recollection the trains no longer ran through from Rib Lake to Tomahawk and the rails had been taken up to within about a mile from our house. Here at the end of the track the trains could come out from Tomahawk and load out the logs “landed” by the local farmers. This I well remember. It was on this section of track that I had my first ride on the rails-not on trains, but on handcars. Handcars, as the name implies, are small cars that run on the rails and are propelled by one or more (preferably more) persons. If we could find one on a weekend, which wasn’t often, my older brothers and I could go for a ride down the track without fear of meeting a train. You can imagine the exuberance of four boys tooling down the track, pumping as hard as we could. More about handcars a little later, but first I want to mention one more memory of that particular track.

About the time I was eight years old, the Schellers who lived about a mile from our place, lost their husband and father through a hunting accident. Their only son, Raymond was about 14-years-old. He used to drive their Model T Ford to school so as to get home earlier for evening chores. We used to ride with him as far as “Scheller’s Hill,” as we called it. A more careful driver you could not find. That gives rise to my mention of this episode. Just a bit up the hill from the Spirit River crossing the train track crossed the road and presented a somewhat of a bump. There were no

trains coming at that time of the day, but Raymond would come to an almost complete stop and shift into “low” and of course would have to grind all of the rest of the way up the hill that way. To my eight-year-old mind it would have been so much better not to lose momentum and to go all the way up the hill in “high.” Well, it was probably about ten years or more later when we were again pumping handcars. By that time we were helping log off the large tract of timber owned by the Rib Lake Lumber Company. The worst of the [Great] Depression was over by that time, so they could sell lumber, and the sawmill was running at full tilt. That in turn made cutting timber necessary. We boys mostly worked as sawyers. When we could get one, we would pump a handcar to camp and back. One late winter I came down with the flu and was too sick to work. In a lumber camp—at least that one—if you didn’t feel up to walking to the cook shanty, you just went without eating.

Anyhow, I decided to go home. It did so happen that we had a handcar stashed in the brush near camp. How I got the car on the rails, I don’t remember, but I did and started down the track. It had snowed about an inch, and there had been no traffic on the track, which made for dreadfully hard pumping for one alone. I got along after a fashion until I came to a slight up-grade. Then in my weakened condition, it became more than I wanted to do. But I didn’t dare leave the vehicle standing on the track to present a hazard for any oncoming train. I got it horsed off all right, but I had to lift so hard that I broke my belt. From there I had to walk, and for anyone who has ever had to walk on a railroad track, you know that the ties are spaced just too far apart to take two to a stride and too close together to step on each one. Anyhow, as far As I can remember, that was my last handcar ride.

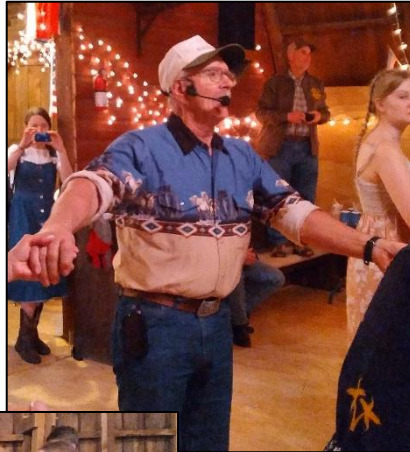
Basswood is not only soft and easy to cut, but it often grows in clumps of four or five trees, so you could often cut a dozen or so logs from one spot. However, it wasn’t very far along in the morning that we “hung” one up but it didn’t release from the stump. It took only a blow or two to cut it loose but then instead of rolling clear, it rode up on the sapling it hung in and the butt came straight back like a huge shaft. Since there were so many logs strewed about, I had to clamber some to get out of there—but not fast enough. That tree caught my right leg between knee and ankle and broke both bones. The blow numbed my leg so I didn’t know I was hurt until I tried to stand and the leg folded over. It wasn’t long before someone came to help and they carried me out to the track. The train happened to be in camp, and they backed it in and loaded me into the caboose for the ride to camp. I had just acquired a Model Chev Tudor for \$70 and since it hadn’t snowed and the tote road was well frozen, we had it to camp. They put me in there and Harvey drove me home. On that rough road, even by cradling my leg with my hands and letting my lower leg dangle, it was till an agonizing trip. From home, my parents took me to Rib Lake to the Dr. He said it required hospitalization, so they strapped me in a basket stretcher and hauled me down to Wausau memorial Hospital. The Company had elected to self-insure that year rather than hire a regular insurance company for workmen’s comp. so they weren’t very pleased with me at all.

It was night when they got to setting my leg. They hooked some sort of clamp on my heel and just pulled. Talk about hurt! The doctor remarked afterward that I was the toughest man in the hospital, but I wasn’t so tough, I just didn’t know any better. They didn’t tell me that if I had made a fuss they could have anesthetized me. They didn’t let me out of bed until sometime in January and it was June before I went back to camp, but my leg was still too sore to do a days’ work. By that time they were giving me such a bad time because I was costing them money that I signed off and never did go back to work for them.



Photos from Ben Kauer Collection

2024 Barn Dance was a huge success with over 100 young folks in attendance.



Early this year we sorted through a lot of historical "stuff" that has been collected. Here are just a few of the items we found.

4TH BOXHOLDER

ANNIVERSARY SPECIALS

WEDNESDAY - THURSDAY - FRIDAY - SATURDAY

OCTOBER 1-2-3-4

FREE COFFEE SERVED ALL DAY SATURDAY
 FREE GUSTAFSON ICE CREAM BARS FOR THE CHILDREN — ALL DAYS
 REGISTER FOR PRIZES . . . 70 CASSEROLES GIVEN AWAY TO THE LUCKY ONES

Grocery Dept. Specials	
CRISCO or SPRY, 3 lb. tin	.85c
LARD, 1 lb.	.15c
TOMATOES, 2½ size can	.25c
CUT BEANS, Green or Yellow, 2 cans	.29c
CAMPBELL'S TOMATO SOUP, 2 for	.23c
MONARCH VEGETABLE SOUP, 2 for	.25c
SILVER CROSS CATSUP, 2 for	.33c
ROSEDALE BARTLET PEARS	.35c
WHITE SAIL TISSUE, 4 rolls with wash cloth	.37c
CANDY, ½ lb. box	.10c

MEN'S WORK SHOES	
Were	NOW
6 in. top	\$9.75 - \$7.95
8 in. top	11.75 - \$9.75

Ladies' Summerettes	
Were	NOW
	\$3.89 - \$3.98 - \$2.98
	\$3.39 - \$3.59 - \$2.59

All Items Listed Subject to Stock on Hand

.. BARN VENTILATING FANS ..

Honeywell Mercury Thermostat	Automatic Aluminum Shutters
Balanced Aluminum Blades	Hood
¼ H. P. Rubber Mounted Motor	Thermo Overload Protector

16 inch - \$85.00 20 inch - \$95.00

DONALDSON - STROMBOM

GROCERIES - FEED - DRY GOODS - FERGUSON TRACTORS AND IMPLEMENTS
 OGEMA, WIS. - - - - - SPIRIT, WIS.

J. A. LARSON
 GENERAL MERCHANDISE
 Mc-CORMICK-DEERING TRACTOR MACHINERY
 Phone No. 12
 Ogema, Wis.

Town of Spirit 10/41

Reg. No.	Clerk	Account Forwarded
6-1/2 x 4	Bolts	39
2-1/2 x 3	"	12
2-1/2 x 2 1/4	"	10
1-5/8 x 6	"	13
6-6/8 x 6	"	30
2-5/8 x 2 1/4	"	20
2-5/8 x 3	"	20
		1.44
		.14
		1.30

Paid 8/30/41

WALTER OLSON
 HARDWARE, STOVES, RADIOS, WASHERS,
 TIRES, OIL, PAINTS, and AUTO SUPPLIES
 Ogema, Wis. 1941

Town of Spirit 28!

1	ACCOUNT FORWARDED
1	H. H. Hope 80
2	W. Cross 180
3	Condensed 23
4	Paints 29
5	
6	5.93
7	
8	Chgo
9	
10	By R. Meier
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	22

Your account stated to date. If error is found return at once.

First meeting of the Cemetery Board

Spirit Hillcrest Cemetery

COUNT OF SPIRIT

BRANTWOOD, WISCONSIN

APR 11 30, 1949

John Stagerberg	R. 1	Ogema
Leo Pierson	R. 1	Brantwood
Robert Andrae	R. 1	Ogema

PRESIDENT: Roy Meier, R. 1, Ogema
 VICE PRESIDENT: Edgar S. Johnson, R. 1, Ogema
 SECRETARY: Arthur Johnson, R. 1, Brantwood
 TREASURER: Richard A. Marheine, R. 1, Ogema

N. P. Michelson
 GENERAL MERCHANDISE
 Spirit, Wis. July 30 1941

Town of Spirit

PHONE 12-0

1	Account Forwarded
1	6 gal gas 6.80
2	1.80
3	8.00
4	1 oil can .20
5	8.20
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	4

Your account stated to date. If error is found, return at once.

STANDARD OIL COMPANY

PURCHASED FROM: R A C F DATE: August 28, 1941

NAME: Town of Spirit

P. O. ADDRESS: Ogema, Wis. R.F.D. NO.

ACTUAL POINT OF DELIVERY: Rural ROUTE NO.

IN TOWN: RURAL COUNTRY CONTRACT FOR CONTRACT

PRICES AND EXTENSIONS SUBJECT TO CORRECTIONS	GALLONS	PRICE	LESS DISC.	NET PRICE	NET AMOUNT	TOTAL AMOUNT
Perfection Kerosene						
Stanolux Furnace Oil						
Standard Tractor Fuel						
Solite with Ethyl Gas.						
Std. Red Crown Gasoline						
Stanolux Gasoline						

Wisconsin Motor Fuel Tax: 170 Gals. @ 4¢ = 6.80

Federal Excise Tax: Gals. @ 1¢ = .17

TOTAL: 8.23

ORIGINAL OF THIS INVOICE AND GOODS SHOWN HEREON HAVE BEEN RECEIVED BY: Roy R. Meier

PAYMENT WILL BE MADE ON BEHALF OF: [Signature]

RECEIVED PAYMENT STANDARD OIL COMPANY: [Signature]

DRIVER: [Signature]

DATE: 8/28/41

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT: The Perfection Kerosene covered by this sale has a Tag Open Cup Test flash over 120° F., burn over 100" and gravity test of from 48 to 48.5 times since. The Solite with Ethyl Gasoline covered by this sale has a gravity test of from 48 to 49 times since. The Standard Red Crown Gasoline covered by this sale has a gravity test of from 48 to 49 times since. The Stanolux Gasoline covered by this sale has a gravity test of from 48 to 49 times since. According to a certificate or certificate of approval issued by the State Oil Inspection Dept. (month) (day) (year)

OGU Wis. 1-40 La Crosse, Wis. Field

120—PRENTICE, WIS.

CUSTOMER'S ORIGINAL INVOICE

STANDARD OIL COMPANY

PURCHASED FROM: R A C F DATE: Jan 3, 1942

NAME: Town of Spirit

P. O. ADDRESS: Ogema, Wis. R.F.D. NO.

ACTUAL POINT OF DELIVERY: Rural ROUTE NO.

IN TOWN: RURAL COUNTRY CONTRACT FOR CONTRACT

PRICES AND EXTENSIONS SUBJECT TO CORRECTIONS	QUANTITY	PRICE	TOTAL AMOUNT
Perfection Kerosene	10	6.98	6.98
Stanolux Furnace Oil	80	1.69	13.52
Standard Tractor Fuel	105	8.35	8.77

TOTAL: 29.27

Less F.A.R.M. Discounts on Current Purchases

Net Product Total After Deduction of Discount as Above

Less Discount on Previous Purchases as per Form 35

Net Product Total After Deduction of Disc't on Prev. Purch's

Less Cash Discount @ %

NET TOTAL

Federal Excise Tax: Gals. @ 4¢ = 1.12

Federal Excise Tax: Lbs. @ 3/4¢ = .36

TOTAL: 30.75

GOODS AS SHOWN HEREON AND THE ORIGINAL OF THIS INVOICE RECEIVED BY: PEP

RECEIVED PAYMENT STANDARD OIL COMPANY: [Signature]

DRIVER: [Signature]

DATE: 1/3/42

PRICED BY: [Signature]

CHECKED BY: [Signature]

EXT. CHECKED BY: [Signature]

CUSTOMER'S INVOICE: STATION [Signature] Form 956-F-10M Rev. 11-40

Martin Repair Shop
 Spirit, Wis. 1/30 1941

Date: 1/30 1941

Town of Spirit

1	ACCOUNT FORWARDED
1	1 1/2 x 4 bolts 1.00
2	1 1/2 x 3 bolts .25
3	1 1/2 x 2 1/4 bolts .30
4	
5	2.15
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	
13	
14	
15	28

Your account stated to date. If error is found return at once.

Father Rene Menard and the Wendat-Huron of Chelsea Lake, Wisconsin

Written by Nancy Bowen

Wisconsin Act 31: Wisconsin Indian Tribes and Bands

I live in Ogema, the Ojibwe word for “chief”. In 2019, my family was privileged to acquire Liberty School, a one room schoolhouse in northern Wisconsin, the school that my father and grandfather attended. The building had been preserved and transformed into a home by another family member. At that time, we not only became keepers of a local historic site, we also became custodians of a legend-rich rock known in the community as the “Father Menard rock”. It is a granite boulder roughly the size, perhaps, of a large watermelon, and it has a distinct X or cross carved into one end. Someone, tired of lifting such a weighty object, had devised a rolling wooden stand in which it currently sits. This rock was found by family members circa 1917 nearby on the bank of the Spirit River, a tributary of the Wisconsin River. It is local legend that a Native American band may have carved the cross in memory of Father Rene Menard, a Jesuit priest, who lost his way in the woods while seeking them out. Who knows?

Let us step back in time and find out more. When French explorers and fur traders arrived in what came to be called North America in the 17th century, they referred to the area around the Georgian Bay of Lake Huron as “Huronía”, or the land of the Hurons. This, and lands adjoining, were home to the eastern woodland bands of Native peoples who had lived there for hundreds and even thousands of years before Europeans arrived. The French called these people “Hurons” in reference to how they looked to their French eyes; but like so many labels, it was a somewhat derogatory term suggesting a boar-like appearance (referring to their hair style). The people called themselves the Wendat, People of the Island, perhaps in reference to Turtle Island according to their creation story. The Wendat were prosperous farmers, and traded their produce with neighboring, related tribes of the Wendat Confederacy, all speaking Iroquoian dialects. The culture was very democratic, with individuals (men and women) retaining high levels of autonomy, leaders leading by persuasion rather than by authority.

The increasing pressure of trade with Europeans and immigration of settlers put a great deal of stress on existing native relations and commerce. The Haudenosaunee, or Five Nations Iroquois Confederacy, traded with the British and Dutch, while the Wendat traded with the French. As fur pelts became scarcer in the lands of the Iroquois, they began ambushing Wendat nations more frequently. The Haudenosaunee also had a system of replacing their own numbers lost to disease or war by capturing individuals from other tribes. Fierce conflicts ensued and came to be known as the French and Iroquois Wars, or simply the Beaver Wars. By 1649, the Wendat peoples were being forced to disperse and flee westward. This westward movement continued, pushing some Wendat groups southwest into Ohio and others to the shores of Lake Superior. The Wendats also suffered from new, European diseases until their numbers were a fraction of their former confederacy’s population.

Into this tumultuous scene came the French Jesuits, the Society of Jesus, who wrote detailed accounts of their experiences among the Native peoples of “New France”. These accounts were sent back to France in the form of letters which were compiled into a series of publications in 1899 called *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents* (Thwaites). The Jesuits seem to have been genuinely concerned with the welfare of the Wendat peoples and suffered much hardship themselves in attempting to help and encourage them. One such priest was our Father Menard of local fame. He was one of the first Jesuits to arrive and traveled with French fur traders and Native guides. Since he had spent time in the Wendat-Jesuit settlement in Ontario, he had a strong understanding of the difficult chronicle of this people group and perhaps even had some personal friendships with individuals. In any case, in 1660 he made an attempt to locate scattered bands of Wendat in Wisconsin. While stranded for the winter in L’Anse, Michigan, he heard an account of a “band of Cut-tail Hurons...who were living in a state of malnutrition and defeat near the headwaters of the Black River” near Chelsea Lake (Schmirler, 1961, p. 100), a band he then attempted to discover the following summer. His story is summarized by Albert Schmirler (1961), who also gives an account of his own attempt to retrace the path Menard may have taken. While the record is not absolute, it is clear that Menard was lost in early August of 1661 and never seen again. Local legend says that perhaps the Native band he sought inscribed this memorial stone (our Father Menard rock) in his honor. Because of Menard’s disappearance,

the Jesuit order was compelled to send another representative to look after the welfare of the Native bands. This replacement would turn out to be Father Claude Allouez, who established a mission on Chequamegon Bay and was later reinforced by Father Jacques Marquette of Marquette and Jolliet, who would travel together and push further into the continent.

Who were the Hurons of the Black and Chippewa Rivers that Father Menard was seeking? Did any survive their apparent desperate condition, the pursuit of the Iroquois, and the possible animosity of resident Midwestern tribes (such as the Dakota) to establish themselves and leave a posterity with us today? Just as it may not ever be possible to ascertain the end of Father Menard's story, we cannot look into the past and find the traces of the individuals he was seeking. However, we can see their story played out in our state among our current Ojibwe tribes. These also are descendants of the great Wendat/Huron Confederacy of eastern Canada as the Menard group was. It may be that the bands of Northwestern Wisconsin such as the Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa are directly connected to Father Menard's band since their home is very close to the historic goal of his journey. Though we cannot know for sure, their history seems to match the chronicles of the Wendat and the Jesuit priests. According to the account of Rick St. Germaine (Tribal Histories, n.d.), Wendat/Huron were living in the area of the current home of the Lac Courte Oreilles when Pierre-Esprit Radisson, a French fur trader, came upon them in 1659. It was Radisson that called these people the "Short Ears", or Lac Courte Oreilles, because of their practice of clipping their ears. St. Germaine describes an extremely arduous winter of 1659, which would explain why the Menard band may have been in such an adverse condition in 1660. Might Menard's "Cut-tail Hurons" be connected to Radisson's "Short Ears"? According to St. Germaine, the band either moved or dispersed after this winter of extreme hardship. We might guess that the survivors of the Menard band may have also moved on. The Lac Courte Oreilles, or Odaawaa-Zaaga'iganiing, later returned to their former home reestablishing their settlement in 1743 (Tribal Histories, n.d.) and they remain there to this day. As a sovereign nation, they have an extensive, well developed community to be proud of.

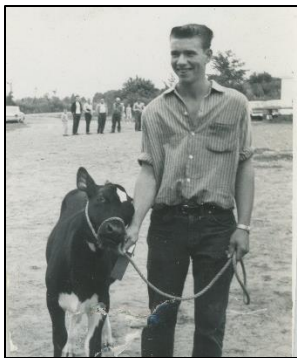
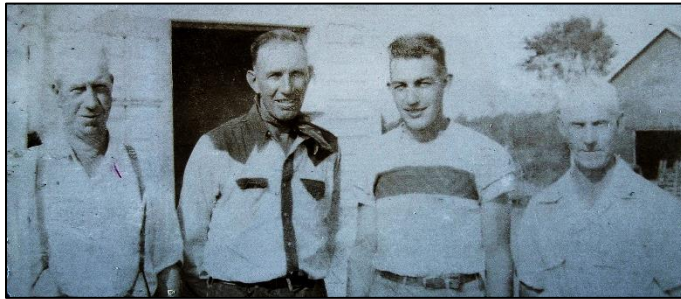
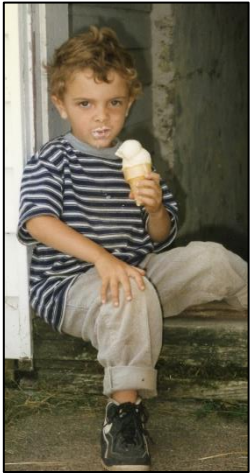
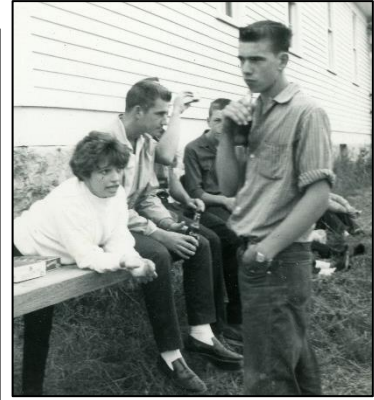
As I reflect on my readings of Wendat/Huron culture, it is their industry and diplomacy that stand out to me. Their concept of fatherhood and leadership is not one of authority but of generosity and caretaking. In this light, memorable individuals from this nation have influenced not only their own peoples and nation, but the fate of our nation and that of Canada as well. Kandiaronk, a Titonantati chief (directly related to the Wendat), skillfully saved his people from extinction by craftily negotiating with the French and the Iroquois and went on to be a very influential leader in the ending of the Beaver Wars in 1701 (Noakes, 2022). Chief Buffalo, Ke-Che-Waish-Ke, was another such individual right here in Wisconsin. As head chief of the Lake Superior Ojibwe, Buffalo led his people with wisdom and emphasized peaceful negotiations. When the Indian Removal Act threatened their Lake Superior home in 1852, at the age of 93 he traveled by canoe, steam ship, and train to Washington to meet with then President Fillmore in an effort to secure a permanent home for the Ojibwe. This effort established the solidifying of current homelands for the Ojibwe. Considering the history of three and a half centuries of removal, it is no wonder these lands are precious to the bands that call them home.

Meet Board Members Anne Marie (Harsch)Fries & Maryalice (Harsch)McHugh



Our family roots in Spirit run deep. Our Grandfather & Grandmother, Arthur G. Johnson & Olga Nelson Johnson were lifelong residents. They lived on Hwy 86 just east of 102 (where Ilmi Nelson's home now is). It was where our mother, Carol Johnson Harsch, was raised and where my great grandparents CB & Anne Marie Nelson homesteaded. Arthur was born in the Yesterday House in 1888. The log cabin was built by his father Albin Johnson and his wife's uncle Amandus Johnson. Art went on to be a charter member of the Spirit American Legion Post #452, served on the Price County Board, Price Electric Co-op, Spirit Town Chair, and received an award from the University of Wisconsin for his contributions to agriculture in Wisconsin. CB Nelson was the Postmaster in Spirit and had a small general store in their home on Hwy 86. The original Post Office can be seen in the Yesterday House. Upon his death in 1939, he was the oldest active Postmaster in the US and the Spirit Post Office closed. CB & Anne Marie Nelson were also charter members of the Spirit United Methodist Church. They donated the land for the church to be built on. In addition to our grandparents & mother being from Spirit, our family also includes our great great grandparents, Hilmer & Maria Olson, great grandparents Albin & Hilma Johnson. CB & Anne Marie Nelson and Christian & Alma Skov.

Spirit-Hill-Ogema 4-H Fair is coming up on August 17th at the Spirit Town Hall
Here are some memories from the past.



Spirit Historical Society, Inc.

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