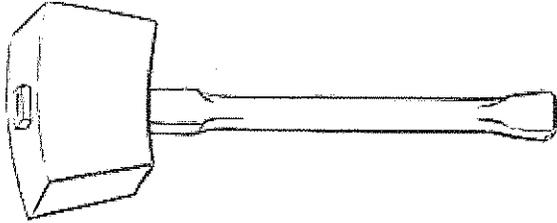


MENASHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

September 2011

COOPERS HAMMER

(A long-gone era of Menasha's industrial growth)



The cooper's hammer was a craftsman's tool, unique both in its construction and in its use. In the days when wooden pails, tubs, and barrels were the principal containers used in American industry, practically every cooper made his own hammer with meticulous care. It was shaped, balanced and assembled to the individual's own requirements. Such factors as physical stature, the length of the cooper's arm and the size of his hand were taken into account in making a hammer that would be used in the highly-skilled craft of producing wooden containers.

Most often, the hammer was made of hackberry wood. This hard, tough wood came from a large tree that was native to the eastern and central United States. There was also a shrub form of hackberry that bore dark purple, edible berries, as did the larger tree.

Cooperage, which includes the construction of pails and tubs as well as barrels, is one of the oldest of crafts. It still thrives, although not so extensively as it did before the invention of corrugated board containers in 1927. One of the principal uses of wooden barrels was in the manufacture of whiskey, which is generally aged in wooden casks.

There are two types of cooperage, slack and tight. Slack barrels, made to hold dry products, can be made of soft woods and do not require workmanship as precise as the tight barrels which are made to hold liquids. Tight barrels, constructed of high-grade woods, have a bunghole for filling and emptying; the slack barrel does not. Slack barrels were usually made of pine, although hardwoods were used for some relatively high-value products. Tight barrels were usually made from white oak, although red oak, gum, ash and Douglas fir were

sometimes employed, depending to a large extent on what was to be packaged in the barrel.

The Menasha Wooden Ware Co., used the cooper's hammer for so many years, was at one time the largest firm of its kind in the world, selling its products in practically every foreign country, as well as the United States. By the early 1920's the cooperage business was changing rapidly. In 1921, the manufacture of wooden pails was discontinued, and Menasha Wooden Ware Co. placed more emphasis on the manufacture of butter tubs, which still demanded the cooper's craftsmanship. In 1926 the company was split into two corporations. The Menasha Wooden Ware Co. became a holding company and the Menasha Corporation was formed to operate the manufacturing divisions. The growth of this Fox Valley enterprise has become legendary, but it captures the imagination to realize that it all began with the Cooper's Hammer, made by craftsmen and used by craftsmen who built a tradition while they built an industrial giant.

(The Cooper's Hammer (well over 100 years old) recently returned "home" at the Menasha Historical Museum and is now on display after "resting" at the Menasha Public Library for many years. Originally it was presented to the Historical Society's president, Amos Page, by William Erickson, president of the Menasha City Council. Mrs. Dorothy Weber,



a member of the society and librarian at the Elisha D. Smith Public Library, then put it on display. The hammer was made by Clem Massey's grandfather and later passed on to Clem Massey's father, Elmer Massey, who used it in his trade as a cooper for nearly a half-century. He was employed by the Menasha Wooden Ware Co. for a period of over 40 years.)

**WELCOME BACK AFTER A "HOT" SUMMER'S VACATION!
"KICK-OFF"
TO
ANOTHER FUN, INTERESTING & EDUCATIONAL SEASON**

SEPTEMBER 8 – Potluck Picnic-NOON-Smith Park Pavilion.

Yes it is also Packer "Kick-off" that evening. Therefore, note time change of OUR "opening day" to hopefully accommodate everyone.

(Packer garb is certainly permissible!)

The society will be furnishing Spanish hamburger/buns, plates, cups, silverware & lemonade. All you have to do is bring a dish to pass (perhaps your favorite-recipe included), beverage if you so desire, and of course YOURSELF. Also ask a "historically-interested" friend to accompany you and become a member of our growing organization. Hope to see many of you there as it is always refreshing to renew friendships.

**Tax-exempt membership (any age) dues are payable at this time:
\$15/individual, \$25/couple**

WELCOME

Bob Smarzinski is the latest addition to our Board of Directors. As noted in past newsletters he has been volunteering his carpentry expertise and we now welcome his input into the society's direction for the future. Thanks Bob for accepting this position. (As noted below we still have another board position open)

THANK YOU

During the summer we have begun to digitalize our inventory with the help of a faithful volunteer, Jenny Fitzgerald. We also welcome 2 new members, Stacey & Gideon (a Jr. at MHS) Hoekstra. They are both very interested in history and have been volunteering on Monday mornings. In addition we now have a portable "Open" sign (constructed by our own Bob Smarzinski) which is placed on the terrace in front of our permanent Menasha Historical sign giving us more exposure to the passerby. (It was set out on Monday and we had 2 visitors, a donation and sold a historical book!) THANKS to all.

POSITIONS OPEN

Board member position is still open (Meetings are held the 1st Tues. of each month)
Miscellaneous help-inventorying, filing, etc. (Monday – 9:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
Knowledge/experience cataloging collections/data for computerized references
Webmaster

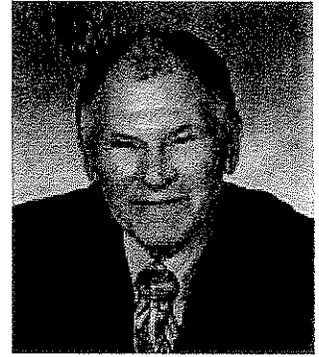
WANTED

Display Cases
Used paperback books - drop them off at the Resource Ctr./museum any Monday 9:00 am-12:30 pm or call Katie 725-3634 or Jean 722-7349 for other arrangements. Children's books also draw interest.

POSITIVE THOUGHTS/POSITIVE THINKING

“Attitude is everything. That’s what will determine the quality of your life.”

- Cancer survivor Bill Rosenberg (founder of Dunkin’ Donuts)



“The great thing about getting old is that you don’t lose all the other ages you have been.”

- Author, Madeleine L’Engle

“The only disability in life is a bad attitude.”

- Skater, Scott Hamilton

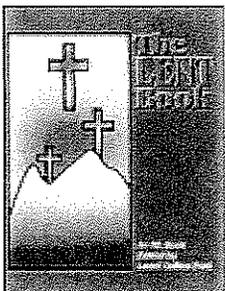


“We all take different paths in life, but no matter where we go, we take a little of each other everywhere.”

- Tim McGraw

“Every exit is an entrance somewhere else.”

- Oscar winning playwright Tom Stoppard



“It is often between the lines and in the empty places where we hear God.”

- Author, Lonnie Collins Pratt

“Keep your mind on the objective, not the obstacle.”

- William Randolph Hearst



VOLUNTEERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

It's not for money, it's not for fame;
It's not for any personal gain;
It's just for love of fellow man;
It's just to give a helping hand;
It's just to give a little of oneself;
That's something you can't buy with wealth.
It's not for medals worn with pride;
It's for that feeling deep inside.
It's that reward down in your heart;
It's that feeling that you have been a part
Of helping people far and near,
That's what makes a VOLUNTEER.



RESOURCE CENTER & MUSEUM

(Located at 640 Keyes Street)

P.O. Box 255

Menasha, WI 54952

jchew2366@yahoo.com

menashahistorical@yahoo.com

www.menashahistorical.webs.com



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MENASHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P. O. BOX 255

MENASHA, WI 54952

menashahistorical@yahoo.com

www.menashahistorical.webs.com

NAME _____
(Please Print)

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ CELL PHONE _____

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP	
_____ Individual-\$ 15.00	_____ Couple-\$25.00

Make tax deductible checks payable to Menasha Historical Society

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES	
_____	<i>Computer literate (typing, entering data, scanning, internet/web savvy)</i>
_____	<i>Filing/cataloging/categorizing (at the Resource Center)</i>
_____	<i>Extended hours for the Museum & Resource Center to be open to the public</i>
_____	<i>Fund Raising</i>
_____	<i>Grant writing</i>
_____	<i>Advertising & Marketing</i>
_____	<i>Education (schools, etc.)</i>
_____	<i>Publicity</i>
_____	<i>Webmaster</i>

Signature _____

Date _____

The purpose of the Menasha Historical Society is to preserve, advance and disseminate knowledge of the history of Menasha. In order to do this we...

-hold on-site historical programs
-take historical tours
-research and relive Menasha's history
-become acquainted with former public figures
-assist the school children in understanding their past
-preserve artifacts
-assist researchers into Menasha's past by providing facts, pictures, etc.
-encourage fellowship with other historians

We invite you (any age) to become a member, attend our interesting programs, and participate in our continued preservation of artifacts and information. Dues are \$15.00/individual, \$25/couple per year payable in September. The Resource Center & Museum hours are Mondays 9:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. or by special appointment.

For further information call Katie 722-4364

or

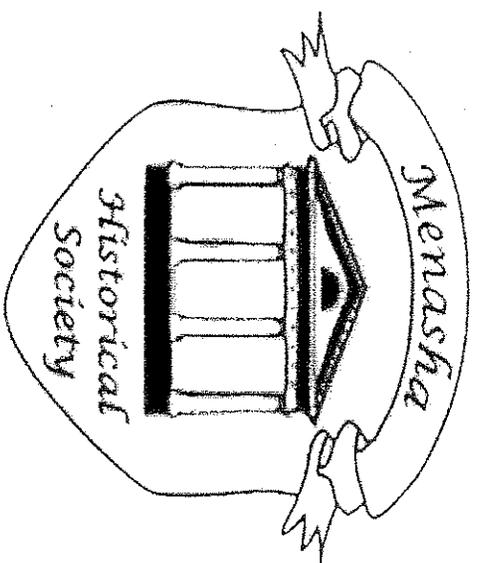
ichew2366@yahoo.com

menashahistorical@yahoo.com

www.menashahistorical.webs.com

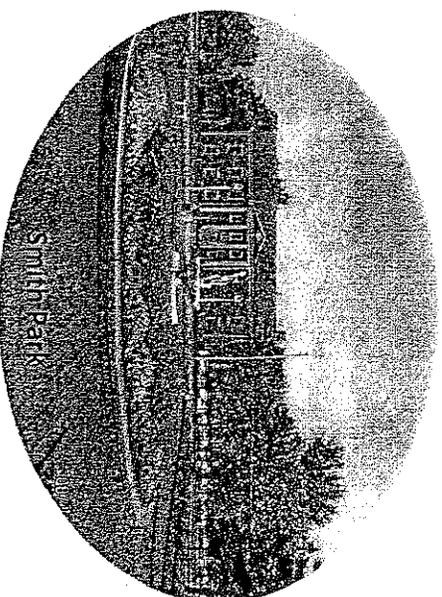
Presidents Of the Past 55 Years

1956-1958	Harold Bachmann
1958-1963	Florence Wilterding
1963-1964	Charlotte Auer
1964-1965	Jay Joslyn
1965-1966	Harold Bachmann
1966-1968	Mary Cory
1968-1970	Amos Page
1970-1972	William Herziger
1972-1975	Douglas Strong
1975-1977	Zoe Hayes
1977-1979	Genevieve Schierl
1980-1981	Anthony Simon
1982-1985	Randolph Haase
1986-1987	William Herziger
1987-1989	Dolores Gear
1990-	Edward Hill
1990-1991	Raymond Felt
1992-1996	Winifred Pawlowski
1997-1998	Mary Jane Van Lieshout
1999-2001	William Herziger
2001-2005	Dolores Gear
2006-2008	Beverly Sund
2008-	Nancy Barker



2011-2012

Resource Center & Museum
located in the
Memorial Building
across from Smith Park
640 Keyes Street
Menasha, WI 54952



OFFICERS

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VICE-PRESIDENT *Katie LaMore*
SECRETARY *Dolores Gear*
TREASURER *Nancy Ropella*

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Bob Smarzinski

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Director of Resources/Museum
Katie LaMore
Office Admin./Newsletter Editor
Jean Chew
Caboose
Dick Loehning
Jim Chew

2011

SEPTEMBER 8-Noon
(Smith Park Pavilion)
Potluck Picnic

OCTOBER 13 – 7:00 p.m.
(Elisha D Smith Library
Company E Room)
Geneology
Presented by Karen Hale

NOVEMBER 10 – 7:00 p.m.
(Elisha D Smith Library
Company E Room)
*Film interviews of local
Korean Veterans*
Public Invited

DECEMBER 8 – 5:00 p.m.
(Germania Hall-Menasha)
Annual Christmas dinner
History of Menasha Taverns

2012

JANUARY 14 – No Meeting

FEBRUARY 11 - No Meeting

MARCH 8 – 7:00 p. m.
(Elisha D Smith Library)
Menasha High School Basketball
Presented by Bob Smarzinski

APRIL 12 – 7:00 p.m.
(Resource Center)
History of the Brin Theatre
Presented by Nancy Barker

MAY 10 – 9:00 a.m.
(TBA)
Annual Trip