

MISSION STATEMENT

Preserving the past for future generations by collecting a unique and enduring collection of Polk County history shared with the public through programs, exhibits and research.

MUSEUM HOURS

Thursday - Monday
Noon to 4pm
Open Memorial Day
Weekend
through Labor Day

ADMISSION

No fee for admission.
Donations appreciated.

102 Main Street
PO Box 41
Balsam Lake, WI
54810

715-485-9269

Email:
info@polkcountymuseum.org

HANDICAP ACCESSIBLE
ELEVATOR FOR ALL
THREE FLOORS



A Historic 2020 Museum Season

This year the word “historic” seems to describe my daily life and the events all around me. Like many historical societies, this year has stretched us in the ways we share Polk County history with our community. Despite the cancellation of our 2020 Museum Season, we have been working on sharing our collection through our website and social media. Our volunteers have clocked over 4,000 hours on projects while our doors have been closed to the public. These projects include updating museum exhibits, archiving documents and artifacts, creating online content, and accessioning new donations. Our latest donation from the Ledger Publications is truly a historic treasure for our community. That is why we are dedicating this edition of the *Chronicler* to the history of the *Polk County Ledger*.

Greta Palmberg, President
Polk County Historical Society

This is the building in which the Balsam Lake Ledger was first Published by H. A. Pease. (Circa 1900)

This first Ledger location stood on the east side of Main Street, on the southern side of town.



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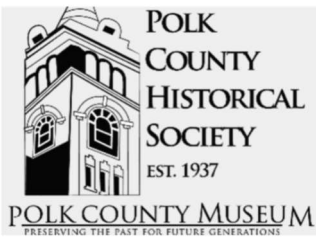
Membership & Museum Highlight **P.4**



A Historic Donation!

On behalf of the members of the Polk County Historical Society, we would like to thank Thomas Miller, the owner of the Ledger Publications, Inc., for the complete archive collection of newspaper publications and vintage printing press. This generous donation will ensure that Polk County history is preserved for the community and future generations.

*With deepest gratitude,
Board of Directors,
Polk County Historical Society*



At our October Annual Membership Meeting, new officers and three new board members were elected.

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greta Palmberg
President

Bernie Desmarais
Vice President

Hilari Henke
Treasurer

Caroline Rediske
Secretary

Ruth Mugerauer

Katie Cran

Tom Magnafici

Al Foxwell

Larry Smetak

Lisa Mosay

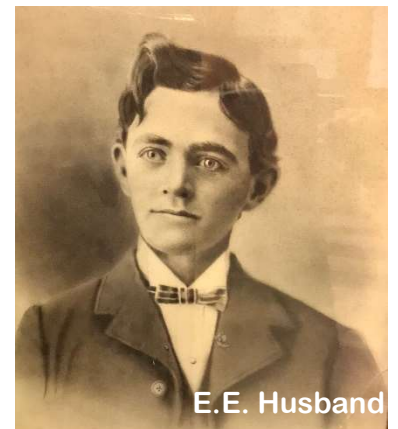
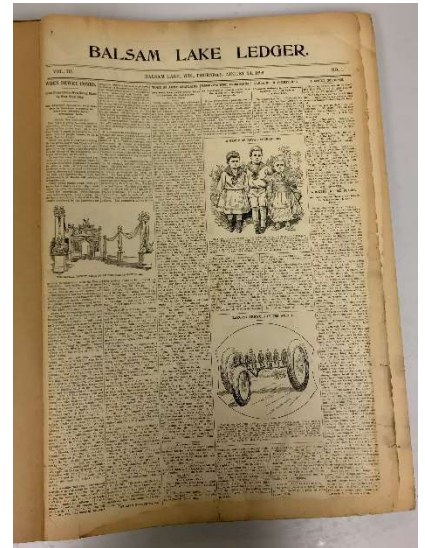
Bob Swanson

Board Meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of the month.

A Salute to the Editors of the Polk County Ledger

Newspapers in Wisconsin were not far behind the first settlers. Weekly newspapers, often the only source of news in rural areas, were the life-blood of small communities. Already struggling before the coronavirus, the Polk County Ledger joined the thousands of small town weeklies that closed this year. Here's a look at the Editors and Owners of the Polk County Ledger that recorded over 120 years of history in our county.

- *The Courier*, originally published in Clear Lake by H.A. Pease & Co. (Aug. 1897 – Nov. 1898) was merged to the *Balsam Lake Ledger* in 1898, a few days after the election that approved the moving of the county seat from Osceola to Balsam Lake. During the following year, Pease sold to S. H. Bradbury.
- The Polk County Ledger had a couple of names during its time. It was originally called the *Balsam Lake Ledger* (1898-1900), then *The Ledger* (1900-1904), and finally, *The Polk County Ledger* (1904 – 2020).
- Polk County Ledger Editors/Owners: S. H. Bradbury, 1897-1899; W. H. Hooper, 1900-1906; N. E. Johnson, 1906-1908; E. E. Husband, 1908-Aug. 1939; Curtis B. Gaylord, Sept. 1939 - Nov. 1986, Thomas C. Miller Nov. 6, 1986 – Aug. 2020.



"While conscious that my lack of experience in newspaper work will be a barrier in the path to success, yet, I hope by energy and stick-to-it-iveness to be able to overcome the obstacles and publish a sheet that will be a welcome weekly visitor in many homes..." - E.E. Husband

N. E. Johnson

Nicholas E. Johnson of Muscatine, Iowa bought the *Polk County Ledger* in 1905. Prior to purchasing the Ledger he served as an attorney, started an orchestra, bought a hardware store in Turtle Lake, ran a Balsam Lake boat livery, bought out a set of abstract indices and purchased lakeshore property. In the spring of 1907, Johnson wanted to move the Ledger to St. Croix Falls, however Balsam Lake did not like the idea and that is when Edward E. Husband purchased the *Polk County Ledger* for nothing.

E.E. Husband

On March 15, 1907, at the age of 30, Edward E. Husband purchased the *Polk County Ledger* from N. E. Johnson. Husband went on to say, "since which time the paper has become one of the recognized weeklies of the Northwest – an important factor in the politics of the county." He noted that the editorials were well written and the paper is newsy and readable. In a notice headed "To the Public," Husband announced: "For the seventh time in its history the Polk County Ledger comes out this week under a new proprietorship... While conscious that my lack of experience in newspaper work will be a barrier in the path to success, yet, I hope by energy and stick-to-it-iveness to be able to overcome the obstacles and publish a sheet that will be a welcome weekly visitor in many homes..."

Editors of the Polk County Ledger (Continued)

E.E. Husband – cont'd

Edward E. Husband knew nothing about printing when he purchased the paper. Printing was all set up by hand and continued until November of 1918, when he introduced the Linotype. In 1911, he took over the *Standard Press* in St. Croix Falls and folded it into the Ledger.

Husband served Polk County in many capacities over the years, including: teacher, Circuit Court Clerk, WWI Draft Board, Wisconsin Legislator, Register of Deeds, Deputy Sheriff, County Board of Supervisor, School Board, Village Board, Justice of the Peace, and one of the five founding members of the Polk County Historical Society. He was owner/editor of the *Polk County Ledger* until September 1939.



Pictured above: Curtis Gaylord (left), Thomas Miller (right)

Curtis B. Gaylord

On September 1, 1939, Curtis Gaylord became the owner of the *Polk County Ledger*. He managed and then owned the Ledger for 50 years. Curtis Gaylord came to Balsam Lake in 1936 and worked for the Ledger for about nine months when it was leased by Dave Hammergren, who had been the foreman at the *St. Croix Falls Standard-Press*. Hammergren gave the paper back to Ed Husband in 1937. During these years, Gaylord purchased the *Centuria Shopping News*, the *Luck Enterprise*, and the *St. Croix Falls Standard Press*. He consolidated all of these into the County Ledger Press in 1939. The paper grew from a circulation of 1,000 to nearly 10,000 when he sold it. The paper took first place in prizes in several statewide newspaper contests for general excellence, editorials and the column, "The Crucible". On November 6, 1986, Curtis Gaylord sold the Ledger to Thomas Miller.

Thomas C. Miller

Thomas C. Miller came to Balsam Lake in the fall of 1986 with his family from McHenry, Illinois where he was the Publisher of the *McHenry Plaindealer*. On November 6, Miller became owner of the Ledger Publications, Inc. During Miller's ownership of the newspaper, the nature of the production of the paper changed numerous times. Starting in 1989 cold type paste up replaced the existing photographic paste up that was used to layout the paper. Cold type paste up was used until 2007 when the newspaper went digital for production. In 1992, the newspaper took first place for a State Baseball picture and sports article in the Wisconsin Newspaper Associations newspaper contest. On December 14, 1997, there was a fire in the Ledger building in Balsam Lake. The publication of the paper continued at the Standard Press office in St. Croix Falls while rebuilding took place. In July of 1999, the County Ledger Press celebrated its 100-year Anniversary. Printing was brought into color during Miller's ownership with the retirement of the black and white printing press that was housed at the 105 Main Street, Balsam Lake location in 2009. The newspaper went digital with publishing of an e-Edition in 2014. After 120 years of continuous publishing, August 27, 2020 marked the final edition of the Ledger Newspapers (*Polk County Ledger Press, St. Croix Falls Standard Press and Luck Enterprise Press*).

ARCHIVE CORNER

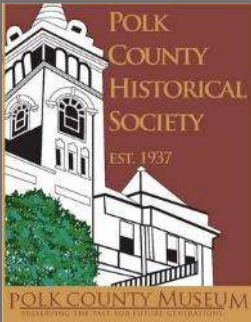
One of the goals of the Polk County Historical Society is to protect the well-being of the artifacts in our collection. Preservation of the fragile Polk County Ledger Publications take into account damage that can be done by light, dirt, humidity and temperature. The preservation of these copies required over 60 archive-quality boxes at a cost of \$1,400.



PCHS Board Members, Greta Palmberg and Ruth Mugerauer, prepare newspapers for storage.



Caroline Rediske, Board Member, boxing the fragile newspaper editions.



Membership

Please consider joining or renewing your membership to the Polk County Historical Society!

Individual: \$15.00
Family Annual: \$25.00
Patron Annual: \$50.00

Your membership is important to the success and future of the Polk County Historical Society!

Why is museum membership important?

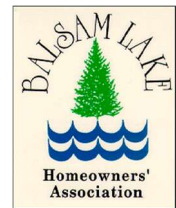
- **The Polk County Museum is a non-profit organization which relies on gifts, grants, donations and annual memberships for its financial stability.**
- **Membership dues supports our annual operating costs including work on preserving artifacts, documents and photos in our archives.**
- **Membership is an invaluable cultural component to the Polk County community.**

Not only do memberships provide significant financial support for our museum to operate on, it allows us to continue to offer FREE admission into the museum and offer free educational events and activities to schools, organizations, and our Polk County community.

How do I join or renew my membership?

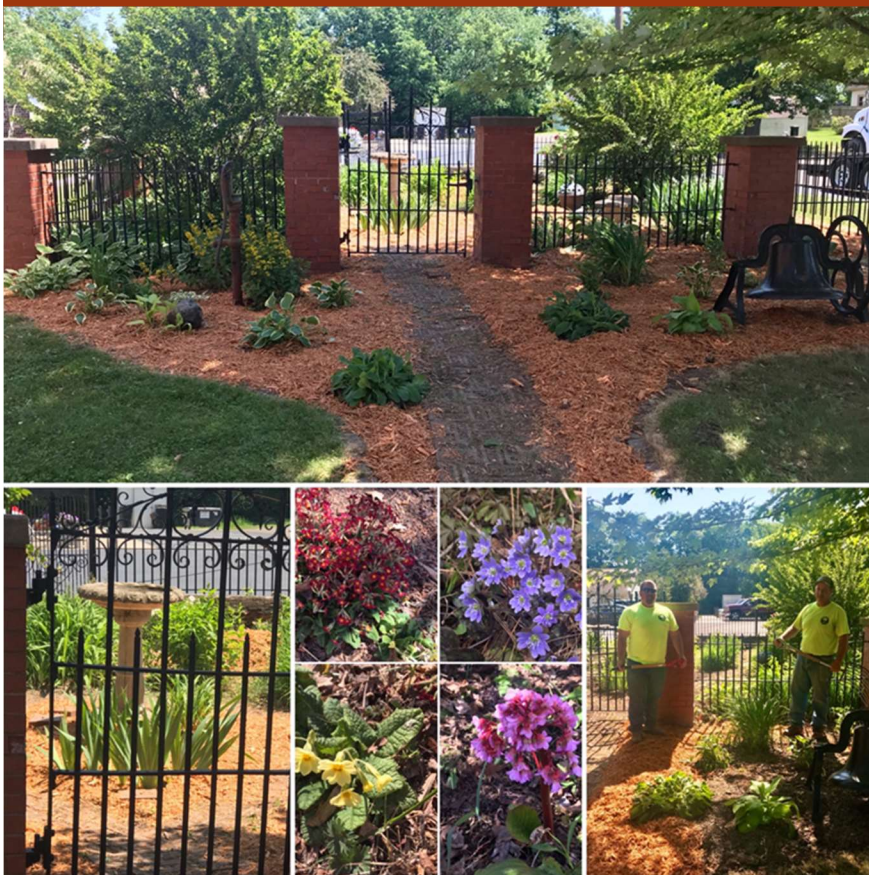
To become a member or renew your membership:

- ❖ Click on our “Donate” button on our website (polkcountymuseum.org) to sign up for membership
- ❖ OR Mail membership dues to:
Polk County Historical Society
PO Box 41, Balsam Lake, WI 54810



Thank You, BLHA!

We asked for your support and you responded! The Polk County Historical Society Board would like to thank the members of the Balsam Lake Homeowners for the outpouring of donations and memberships to the Polk County Museum this summer. At a time when our 2020 Museum Season was closed due to COVID-19, your donations mean so much to us! During this summer membership drive, we raised over \$2,000 that will help in preserving Polk County history for future generations.



Museum Highlight

This spring and summer our historic garden was given much needed love and attention by Pamm Torrance, PCHS Member. The Village of Balsam Lake also participated in the clean-up and delivered fresh mulch.

Did you know the museum garden holds its own historic treasures? The garden was started by Willis Erickson, Museum Curator from 1960, who gathered plants and shrubs with historic significance. The iron fence around the garden was purchased from the J.J. Hill Mansion when the Catholic sisters needed funds (\$900). One of the iron gates was from the Dresser Bank. Joyce and Carder Dedolph donated the East Lincoln School bell that was placed outside the entrance to the garden. The bricks in the path throughout the garden are from the old county jail, which was once located behind the courthouse. As the fall and winter put our plants to rest, we hope you will come back next spring to enjoy this historic garden in all its blooming glory!