

The Coloma "Soo Line" Depot circa 1907.

Coloma Area Historical Society Newsletter

April 2009

CAHS P.O. Box 245 Coloma, WI 54930

www.colomahistorical.org

FLASH!

CAHS DISCOVERS MASSIVE FINANCIAL WINDFALL

Read about massive financial funds available to the CAHS. See the accompanying article for full details of this unexpected opportunity.

We are saddened to hear of the loss of Milton Busse. We extend our deepest sympathy to Mary Jo McKay, other family members, and his many friends.

Milton was a major supporter of the Coloma Area Historical Society.

The caption to this lovely post card says, "Salvation Army girl sings for donations." I suppose that was before the kettle and bell, but I bet it was just as effective.

In this issue:

- Read about the windfall
- A note from the President
- The Clausons update
- Because you asked...
- Corrections
- Caught On The Web
- Little Tidbits from my memory
- Readers letter and picture

↓ Please read on



Because You Asked....

Bob writes: "I enjoyed seeing the picture, in the Coloma Coffeehouse, of the old post office showing William Robblier as postmaster and his wife in the background. Then someone told me that the CAHS Spalding Store was also the Coloma post office. Can you share a little background on the various post office locations and postmasters?"

Bob, with the help of the United States National Archives document: "**Record of appointment of postmasters, 1832 – September 30, 1971, Wisconsin**" and with a lot of help from Sue Semrow, who held the postmaster position from 1983 until 2004, we will attempt to cover the postal history of the Coloma area, for you, over its 154 year history.



The first Coloma postmaster was Huntress Ross. Ross assumed charge on May 11, 1855. From this, we know that the first Wisconsin Post Office to have the name Coloma was established in today's Coloma Corners and had the name Coloma. Gilbert Hubbell replaced Ross on April 21, 1858. Moses Forst replaced Hubbell on November 11, 1858. Arba Shorey became postmaster on May 5, 1860. Huntress Ross again took charge on May 8, 1861.

James F. Spalding replaced Ross on November 24, 1865 and continued as postmaster for some twenty years until he was replaced on October 12, 1885. It was during James F. Spalding's tenure at Coloma that the first post office was opened at Coloma Station on January 4, 1877. We will look at Coloma Station later, but for now we'll continue with Coloma. Please remember that from 1877 until about 1908 both Coloma (now Coloma Corners) and Coloma Station (now Coloma) both had Post Offices.

James McGlarfin replaced Spalding as Coloma postmaster on October 12, 1885. McGlarfin continued as postmaster until the closure of the Coloma Post Office at about the end of 1908. During his twenty-year tenure at Coloma, Coloma Station had several postmasters, as we will see next.

This covers the life of the Coloma (Coloma Corners) Post Office, which operated from May 1855 until about January 1908.

Next we will follow the postmasters of Coloma Station until its name was changed to Coloma.

Henry B. Munson became the first postmaster at Coloma Station on January 4, 1877. This appears to be the opening date of this new Post Office located near the new railroad stop. Other sources tell us that the railroad was completed over the winter of 1875-76. The depot opened on September 19, 1876, and scheduled rail service began on November 15, 1876. This would all be consistent with the opening of a new postal service, via rail, at Coloma Station January of 1877.

J. A. Gilchrist replaced Munson on November 9, 1877.

James Brown became postmaster on April 15, 1878.

Leroy Grover replaced Brown on May 14, 1878.

Henry Carpenter took over as postmaster on March 17, 1880.

Frances Smith replaced Carpenter on September 30, 1887.

Frances Bishop replaced Smith on November 14, 1896.
George Sherman took charge on May 3, 1898.

William Smith became postmaster on January 28, 1905 and served in that capacity until April 22, 1918. It was early in his tenure that the Post Office at Coloma was closed and all service for the area was handled out of Coloma Station. It was also during his period as postmaster that the name of the Post Office was changed from Coloma Station to Coloma. That occurred on June 20, 1908.

From this point onward, Coloma (as we know it today) became the Post Office for the area. William Robblier became the Coloma postmaster on April 22, 1918 and continued in that position for some 22 years.

Hollis A. Parkin replaced Robblier on January 3, 1940.

Iva E. Parkin became postmaster on June 7, 1949.

Richard E. Graichen replaced Iva Parkin on March 15, 1951 and served for some eleven years.

Mrs. Iva E. Beech assumed the position on April 6, 1962.

The microfilm documents, from which the above was taken, end in 1971. Sue has



This is the Spalding Store mail slot as snapped by your editor before the store was moved. For a clearer and cleaner view, visit the store this summer

supplied us with the remaining names and dates.

Mrs. Iva E. Beech served until 1973.

Norma Wiesjahn assumed the position in 1973 and was Postmaster until 1983.

Sue Semrow was appointed Postmaster in April 1983 and continued in that position until Oct 2004.

Mary Schmitt was appointed Postmaster in 2005 and held the position for almost a year before leaving.

Since that time Jeff Zaremba has been Officer in Charge. The Post Office has not appointed another Postmaster to date.

Send your question or questions to us at frankbr@ix.netcom.com and we will do our best to research it to your satisfaction.

CORRECTIONS

In the article on the Coloma Airport history in the January 2009 issue, we perpetuated an error that was contained in our source material. The sentence reading "...Smith, Follett, and Condon incorporated to form their own school in 1948..." should have read "...Smith, Follett, and Carl Phelps Congdon incorporated..."

Thanks to Jim & Cheryl Congdon for correcting our error.

In our March issue the *Because You Asked* article said that the Jim and Rosalie Weisenberger purchased the old Schudlach property on the Mekan River in 2007 when in fact they purchased the property in December 2001.

Thanks to Rose Weisenberger for the correction.

Remember, if you receive your copy of the CAHS Newsletter by email, you must tell us when your email address changes and of course you must keep us informed of any postal address change if you receive it through the mail.

Renew your membership today and stay connected

=> It's so easy using this form <=

Mail this form with your check to: CAHS PO Box 245 Coloma, WI 54930

Name: _____

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Email: _____ Phone _____

Please circle one: Individual \$10 Family \$15 Junior \$5 Individual Life \$125 Family Life \$225

Hugh sum available to CAHS...

Dateline Coloma, April 1st, 2009. While searching for some light reading material this week Society President Sue Semrow, picked up a copy of the recently passed 1,700 page *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act* and began a leisurely perusal of its contents. Somewhere between page 977 and 981 she almost dropped her bookmark when she read a handful of sentences describing an “earmark” for none other than the Coloma Area Historical Society in the amount of \$121 million. Hardly believing her eyes, she called several other members, whom she knew would be enjoying reading the tome also, and directed their attention to the subject pages. All agreed, there it was for the world to see and in clear, “un-inside-the- beltway” language. Concerned about the adequacy of the funding to meet our needs, a hasty meeting of the financial committee was called, chaired by the Treasurer, Mary Jane Bandt, and several spreadsheets were run. It certainly appears that the \$121 million in the *Act* is adequate to push back any need to increase our dues well into next year. In fact, a quick calculation indicates that if we can hold our spending level to a mere \$1,000 per day (365 days per year) these funds, without interest, will last us for some 331.5 years. Most agreed that this seems like a reasonable and prudent fiscal policy for the Society to pursue, although three members felt we should not spend on Saturdays and Sundays, thereby extending the life of our funding to 463.6 years. It was agreed to appoint a Study Committee to investigate each plan and make a recommendation to the Executive Committee later this spring. A Steering Committee will be established to recommend the composition of the Study Committee to respond to the Financial Committee (hey, we’ve got \$121 million, we can afford lots of committees.)

In a related development, it was learned that people outside of the Coloma area were also studying the *Act*. We were told by the owners of the Coloma Hotel, Susan and Dennis Apps, that they have had overtures from the Donald Trump organization suggesting that Trump would like to buy into the hotel, expand it, and rename it the Donald Trump Coloma Hotel and Casino. With money freed up by the recent collapse of his Chicago venture, he is thought to be in negotiations with some local Amish carpenters to construct an additional 1,500 rooms at the hotel and enlarge its current lounge to accommodate Los Vegas and Atlanta City style shows. This of course caught the eye of the village planning board, which is rightfully concerned, about the added automobile traffic this would put on County Highway CH, which might require an additional lane from the Marquette County line into the village. To alleviate as much surface traffic as possible it was suggested, by the board, that we should look into reopening the Coloma International Airport with the aim of making it the center of transportation into and out of the Greater Coloma Area. Either a bus or light rail system could

then be used to transport folks from the airport to the village. Although contacted by the village, the Soo Line has shown little interest in relaying their tracks through this area. We will keep you posted on how this windfall will be used by your Coloma Area Historical Society. If you see Senator Feingold or President Obama, please thank them for including this little earmark in their recovery act for the much deserving CAHS.

Where Does One Find A Tooth Fairy?

The office of Tooth Fairy is still open this month. If you would like to help us move forward with the Spalding Store project or just help us get a head start on the 2009 Chicken Chew weekend, please don't be bashful. The Tooth Fairy can offer any amount to be matched by other contributors and is all tax free to the givers. If you prefer to just make a donation, please feel free to contact Sue or Mary Jane and arrangements will quickly be made. Even though the previous April Fools Day article would lead you to believe otherwise, we can use your financial and your volunteer help to get 2009 off to a ripping start. Thanks in advance for your generosity.

More on the Greyhound Bus Service to Coloma.

As you will recall in the 'Because You Asked...' column of the February issue of this newsletter, we answered Jenni's question about the Greyhound bus service through Coloma. This article traced the Coloma bus service from about 1925 till George Machan's retirement in 1982 when he sold his station to Bill and Karen Clauson. At the end of that article we mused about getting the Clausons to carry the story on to its conclusion. We just received the following from the Clausons and are delighted to share it with you. This will complete the history of bus service for Coloma that spanned some 61 years from 1925 to 1986. A big thanks to Karen and Bill for closing out this tale for us.

“Hello from the Clausons”

Regarding the Greyhound Bus service at the gas station in Coloma, WI during the time we owned the station...



Remember that wonderful facade

It was a very interesting time with the Greyhound Bus from Stevens Point stopping daily at 11:00 AM. Many passengers arrived and many passengers boarded the bus. The bus driver who we nicknamed “Cool Hand Luke” because he was always calm and had a special assurance about him in handling any kind of weather or situation that might arise. He returned from Madison at about 5:00 PM with the northbound passengers and packages. (Ed: In those pre UPS/FEDEX days, one could call a supplier in Madison or Point and order a quickly needed part and the supplier would put it on the next bus to Coloma. One could call Madison in the morning and have a needed item by 5:00 PM the

same day. Not bad for those slower days!) We had an orange bench that sat up against the outside wall of the gas station where passengers and greeters would anxiously await the arrival of the bus. Luke would step off the bus with a smile and unload the packages and suitcases from the outside compartment located on the side of the bus and reload with the out-going packages and suitcases. We made friends with many of the routine travelers and sometimes would be concerned if we hadn't

seen them for a while. They would buy newspapers and snacks from our gas station and we would exchange conversation. In 1986 Greyhound Headquarters notified us that they were discontinuing service to the small towns along this route. Passengers would have to board at Portage or Stevens Point. Sad to say, Coloma was on the list to be discontinued. Now we wish we had taken lots of pictures of this daily bus stop, but who knew our friendly Coloma stops would ever be discontinued?

It certainly would have made a great Norman Rockwell illustration on one of his scenic calendars!! It's fond memories now of a great time that we, the Clauson family, had the privilege of being a part of it all.



What part would ever need to be ordered?

A Note From The President

A Note from the President...

The time is flying by. Soon it will be time to open the Spalding Store after so much hard work by our building committee, but so much remains to be done. There are so many ways you can help! We are now collecting items to display in the store. In last months newsletter we gave you a list—but that is only to get you started... We'd like to receive items as soon as possible. Many people are thinking they'll just bring them to the store, but if we could get them now, it would help us figure out what we will have and how we will display it. It will also help us catalog every item before it can be put in the store. If you can bring them to National Exchange Bank on Thursday morning, we are there (in the basement) from 9:00-11:00. If that won't work, you can drop off items at Arden and Mary Jane Bandts back porch. They are at 147 Main St. (228-5761). You can call any members of the committee if you have questions or if you need assistance or the item picked up. Committee members: Sue Semrow 228-2371, Dianne Rudolph 228-4682, Susan Apps 228-2622, Pat Pintar 228-2095.

How else can you help? As soon as the heat is installed, we will be having a cleaning day. We'll let you know. Old dirt is

more fun than the everyday stuff in our homes! We need your ideas on displaying photos, setting up the store, planting flowers, and so much more!

We will need help once the store is open. More on that in the future.

A dream is soon to be a reality... with your help. Thank you!

Sue

Little Tidbits from my memory

This month we have some more wonderful memories from Ron Ploetz about the 1930s and early 40s living, working, and attending school in Coloma. This is part 2, the professional baseball years, so set back and enjoy.

Now, something about baseball. While attending high school in Milwaukee, on some Sundays I would travel to Coloma and pitch for the Coloma team and one time for Harrisville at the county fair.

Upon graduating from high school, I was approached by a number of baseball scouts to sign a contract. This process, which included trips to major league parks, was very exciting. One I regret not being able to make because of graduation exercises, but really wanting to, was a road trip with the Yankees.

When the White Sox came calling, quite frankly, they were one of the last clubs I thought I would sign with. I never was a White Sox fan and really didn't follow them through radio or sport's news. The Yankees and Phillies were number one and two with me.

Then why sign with the Sox? The head of the Sox farm system was John Rigney, a former pitcher for the Sox. They also had Red Ruffing, a former pitcher for the Yankees.

Coupled with those two facts, they also offered me a major league contract.

So I signed with the White Sox and reported to Waterloo, Iowa. That first year in pro ball was quite a change from sand lot ball. I found out that the batters didn't swing at a lot of bad pitches, translating into a lot more bases on balls. Actually, that was a problem I had during the five years that I played pro ball. Those five years were spent at Waterloo, Wisconsin Rapids, Superior, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Gastonia, N.C., and Memphis Tennessee.

During the off-season, after the fifth year, I was sold to the New York Giants. I was to report to Minneapolis, the Giants Triple A team in the American Association, and I was really looking forward to it.

During January and February I always worked out in a gymnasium in preparation for spring training. During that year's preparation getting ready to report to the Minneapolis camp, my Dad had a serious cancer operation and the prognosis was uncertain. I did not want to leave home right then under those circumstances. Then my thirty-three year old brother had a massive coronary and died. This also kept me from reporting to spring training. Apparently I did not take the necessary precautions while working out and then going out into the cold. As a result I developed bursitis in my pitching arm and needless to say, this ended my pitching career.

In looking back at playing the game that you loved and getting paid for it, playing with and against some of the great names in baseball, was a real privilege to be blessed with.

I'll always remember some of the spring training games, two of them especially, when

the Yankees and Boston Red Sox stopped at Memphis on their way home from spring training. On the Yankee's team there were such greats as Joe Dimaggio, Phil Rizzuto, Yogi Berra, and manager Casey Stengel. We played them on a beautiful Easter Sunday with the stands packed overflowing for batting practice.

Dimaggio was hurting from a bone spur on one of his heels and because of that he sat in the dugout and only came out to take his swings when it was his turn. When he did this he received a standing ovation from the crowd! What a great tribute to a great ball player! He only played part of the game but even that was very memorable. Our pitcher tried to throw a fastball by him and Joe hit a rocket (I think that ball may still be in orbit) over the center field fence.

During the Yankee game we had the bases loaded, it was a 3 and 2 count on the batter with 2 outs. It is the automatic count for all runners to run on the next pitch. The batter hit a towering ball straight up over the pitcher's mound. All of the infielders, the catcher, and the pitcher all had their eyes on the ball. The end result was that nobody touched it, three runs scored, and the batter was standing on second base. I can still see ole Casey coming out of the dugout, his jaw going ninety miles an hour.

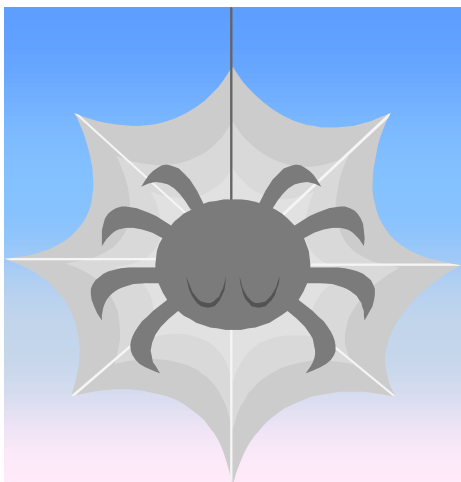
As for the Boston Red Sox, they had Ted Williams, who in my estimation was the greatest hitter. He was also a very friendly guy as well.

I can't leave this without a comment on baseball today. I think all of us that not only follow baseball, but sports in general, are very disappointed about the use of steroids and subsequently lying about using them to defend themselves. I hope they apply some stiff penalties/suspensions to put a halt to this and get back to using their God-given abilities, period.

Elaine, thanks for the phone call that stirred up all these pleasant memories and I hope your readers have found a few smiles and sighs in them.

Ron has agreed to send us other memories of his time in the Coloma Area and baseball memories. He is also gathering information about the early days of F. W. Ploetz and the founding of the Pleasant Inn Resort. We look forward to his sharing more with us.

Caught On The Web



www.colomahistorical.org

The CAHS website was designed, created, and is maintained by Mark & Vicki (Janke) Botner. They will use this column to keep us informed about changes they make. This month Vicki writes:

Hello, we have had nice feedback from viewers of the CAHS website on the current slide show and all the great pictures.

Remember to check back often as the site is regularly updated with new material

If you have something you would like to see added, send us a note and we will do our best to meet your needs. This is a very easy way for you to share your stories, pictures, etc with the entire membership and a lot of nonmember visitors from around the world.

Please continue to visit and enjoy the website.

Speaking of sharing, here is a letter and picture we received from Laura Congdon about a recent CAHS Newsletter article.

I just read the column "Because You Asked" in the March issue of the CAHS Newsletter. We took a ride on Sunday March 1 and explored the area described in your article. Attached are photos I took that day. I think it is the same view featured in the Mecan River card.

Just thought I'd share! I am really enjoying your newsletter!

Laura Congdon, Mayville WI



**The beautiful Mecan River at the old bridge
Thanks Laura, Jim, and Cheryl for
sending it to us**

We hope you enjoyed our little April Fools Day article. Unfortunately, the copy we were reading was only the 217th draft and our support was removed from the final version of the *Act*. So, it appears that we will continue to need your support of the Society with both your time and money. Thanks to all of you for being there.
