



The Bayfield Courier

Winter 2021 Edition

Board of Directors: Jerry Phillips (President), Marilyn Van Sant (Vice President), Marti Peterson (Treasurer), Sue Gerzina (Secretary), Kristin Connell, John Hanson, John Klungness, Robert Nelson, Dan Wilczek | **Executive Director:** Megan Boyle

Director's Update



I hope 2021 finds you feeling encouraged, as we turn the corner on vaccine distribution and get a glimmer of reuniting with loved ones and returning to the activities we have missed these past 11 months.

The new year brings with it some change. We wish to thank Bill Gover for his 12 years of service on the BHA Board of Directors. As many of you know, Bill was honored with the *Jerry & Mary Phillips Bayfield Award for Volunteerism* in 2018. He goes above and beyond time and again, and we are grateful to have him as part of our team. Bill is, thankfully, not going too far and will continue as our lead archivist in the Pike Research Center.

Thanks to a recent generous gift, BHA will be investing in a 3D camera and software in 2021 to begin creating a virtual museum experience. This will allow visitors to tour our museum and learn about Bayfield history anytime and from anywhere. Two other exciting projects in the works include: the digitization of our Bayfield Video Archives and a documentary style film on the Bayfield Flood of 1942.

BHA is deeply honored by the outpouring of generosity in response to our year-end appeal. **So far we have raised \$28,985 toward our \$30,000 goal!** Your donations affirm to us that we provide something of value to our community and of which you can be truly proud. For a small town history center, we are doing some pretty big things (thanks to you!).

You are our (hi)story.

Gathering Virtually

BHA's Annual Meeting & Celebration took place virtually on December 15. Wearing our festive attire from home, we gathered with our community to celebrate the year's accomplishments and look ahead with hope.

A moment of silence was observed to honor and remember those we lost in 2020: *Jerry Carlson, Jim Erickson, Scott Hale, Shirley Johnson, Lu Eckels, Ed Flitz, Jared Johnson, Marilyn Larsen, Howard Larsen, Ardy Kennedy, and Mary Rice.*

If you missed it, we invite you to watch our Annual Report video and view the Annual Meeting slideshow on our website '[News](#)' page.

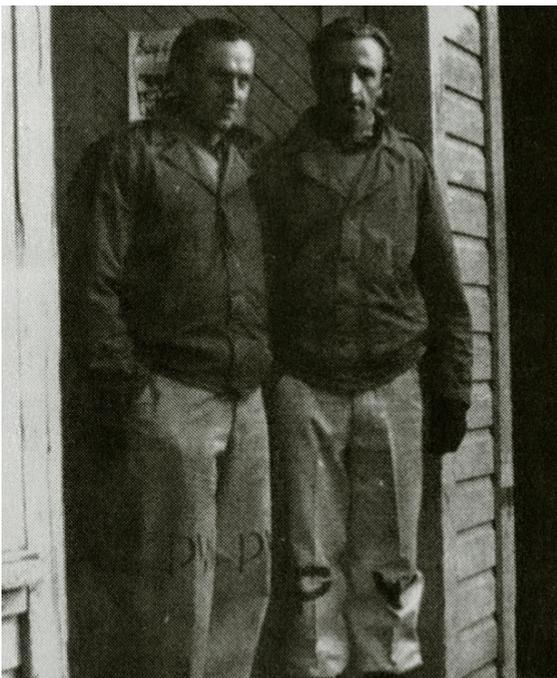
Our 2021 JMB Program Series kicked off on January 21 with Dennis McCann's presentation on German Prisoners of War in Bayfield. This was our highest attended program yet, capping at 100 viewers. Read more about the program on page 2 and plan to join us for these future programs:

February 18, 7pm: *Apostle Islands Folklore* with Bob Mackreth (further details on page 3)

March 31, 7pm: *Ace Fireballers: Bayfield Baseball 1878-1940* with Bob Nelson

April (TBD): *A Stroll Back in Time, Part 4* with Dan Wilczek

Also, watch for more information on the premiere of our *Bayfield Flood of 1942* virtual exhibit later this winter.



German Prisoners of War in Bayfield

By: Dennis McCann

Unlike today's tourists, the visitors who came to Bayfield in 1945 did not arrive on their own accord. They were German prisoners of war, brought to Wisconsin's northern rim to pick beans and apples and perform other critically needed tasks for which local labor was not available.

Despite some earlier misgivings about bringing the former enemy soldiers to the community, the help was much appreciated when it arrived. The use of prisoner labor began even earlier in other Wisconsin communities. But Bayfield's appeal for prisoners to help with the bean harvest in 1944 was denied, despite urgent pleadings from county officials that the labor shortage was dire.

Rudolph Thielicke and Ernest Schobert stand outside the Bayfield Cannery warehouse. 'PW' is printed on their pants to identify them as prisoners of war. Photo courtesy of Ruth Moon.

In 1945, however, US officials approved the request of Bayfield Canning Company's D.S. Knight and supplied a crew of 125 German prisoners, along with 35 guards, to help with the harvest of beans and apples. When the prisoners arrived on Aug. 25 Bayfield became one of 38 Wisconsin cities where temporary prison camps were established to help with agricultural production.

The prisoners were housed in bunk beds on the second floor of the former courthouse. Guards kept quarters on the first floor, and guard houses were erected on the courthouse lawn along with a perimeter snow fence to keep the curious at a distance. And in the days before television offered entertainment, many in Bayfield were curious enough to surround the courthouse block to watch prisoners get loaded into trucks in the morning or return from fields and orchards at the end of each day.

Under the rules governing prisoner care, growers were required to pay wages in exchange for labor, and willingly did. Between Sept. 1 and Sept. 29 the total earnings of PWs in Bayfield was \$6,695 for 10,163 man hours for the Bayfield Canning Company and another 1,237 for the Bayfield Fruit Co-op.

Despite rules that banned any form of fraternization, some Bayfield residents favored the prisoners with small gifts or made friendships that continued for years. And despite their early show of force from guards carrying rifles, there was little concern about prisoner escapes or the personal safety of local residents. As local resident Jim Hauser, whose farm benefitted from the labor of 8 or 10 prisoners, put it, "The guards were really relaxed and prisoners didn't seem interested in much more than picking apples."

By October, when the last of a very large apple crop had been picked and processed, the German workforce packed up and left, and a little known chapter of Bayfield history was over.

Learn more, and watch the program recording, at: bayfieldheritage.org/past-programs.

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Apostle Islands Folklore & 'Fake'lore with guest speaker Bob Mackreth

Thursday, February 18, 7:00 pm CST | Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86139017184>

"Is it true there was a ghost in that lighthouse? And what's the deal with those pirates I've heard about? Didn't someone bury a treasure on one of the islands? Was that the Hermit Island hermit, or was he just a legend? And what about that mansion that the rich guy built for his wife? And the lighthouse keeper who picked the pockets of the drowned sailors from some shipwreck?" There are all sorts of stories about Lake Superior's Apostle Islands. Historian Bob Mackreth examines some of the best-known tales to see which ones are based on fact, and which are myths that need to be busted.

Video recordings of past John Matthew Black Series programs are available on our website under '[Past Programs](#).' Our full line-up of educational videos, including those on the Bayfield Model Railroad and the Old Bayfield City Jail, can be found on BHA's [YouTube channel](#).

A Tribute to Mary Hulings Rice

By: John Hanson

Bayfield lost a huge pillar of its community when Mary Hulings Rice passed away on December 2, 2020 at age 80. BHA lost a good friend and loyal benefactor who supported our museum, programs and exhibits over many years with generous personal donations and grants from her foundation. Most recently, she curated "Sand Island by Sand Islanders," an exhibit in our museum about life on the island that she first came to as a girl for summer stays at Shaw Point - a place dear to her heart.



Mary founded a host of area businesses and cultural institutions, beginning in 1980 with Maggie's, her flagship, flamingo-themed restaurant. She followed with Mainstreet Maggie's, The Clubhouse on Madeline Island, The Egg Toss and her dining coup de grace, Wild Rice Restaurant. She was also a key figure in Big Top Chautauqua, the Ski Hill at Mt. Ashwabay, Madeline Island Music Camp, Madeline Island Ferry Line, CORE Community Resources and served on many boards, including Northland College, where the Hulings Rice Food Center bears her name. Mary touched many lives in our community with her unlimited generosity. She was discerning and strategic in her philanthropy yet immediately responded to emergency needs, often anonymously. She felt a deep responsibility for Bayfield, its history and welfare.

Aside from the restoration of Knight House where she lived, Mary bought and restored a number of historic buildings in Bayfield and purchased homes she would rent out at affordable rates to Bayfield families or teachers. Bates Bar—the site of her "Blue Moon Ball"—became Bates Art Barn and Gallery, and the Apostle Islands Outfitters store became Encore, the CORE Community Resources second-hand store. Most recently, she donated to the city the water fountain sculpture that she had installed in front of the Clubhouse on Madeline Island and oversaw its restoration and landscaping next to Marina Park. She worked tirelessly, often behind the scenes, to preserve and protect historic Bayfield.

Yet, the "Queen of Bayfield," as she was widely known, was as down to earth as anyone could be. Her home was welcome to all—no knocking on the door, just walk in—everyone, that is, except tourists who would wander in thinking her Queen Anne house was a B&B. She hosted countless gatherings and fundraisers there, formal and informal, including her infamous black tie "Spam" dinner and her annual "Northern New Years" party in late January. Good friends enjoyed many summer evenings on her deck, with wine, hors d'oeuvres and much storytelling and laughter. Mary loved nothing more than to sit with a circle of friends and, as she always said, "talk smart." As a hostess and friend to all, she had no peer.

We miss her dearly, and all of us at the Bayfield Heritage Association salute her life and enduring legacy.

Thank you for your generous support!

General Donations

- Anonymous (3)
- Jennifer Albrecht,
In Honor of Donald G. Albrecht
- Lois Ann Albrecht
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- Suzette Arn, Apostle Islands Realty
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In Honor of the Knight Family
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Fountain Garden Park Donations

- Paul & Dianne Nussbaum
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- Bill & Marilyn Van Sant

Thank you for your generous support!

Memorial Donations

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In Memory of Nora & Billy Miller
- Marilyn LaPointe Winterer,
***In Memory of: Mary Rice, Jim Erickson,
Marilyn Larsen, Jared Johnson***

In-Kind Donations

Thank you **Michelle McCumber** for donating Information Technology services, including setting up high speed internet, and enabling remote network access so that we could work safely from home.

Thank you **Tony Jeannette** for offering technical support for our monthly virtual programs and creatively shaping our growing educational video collection.

These services were essential to our smooth transition to a virtual work environment in 2020 and our ability to offer online programming.

Want to join in the support?

Donate securely through our website: bayfieldheritage.org/support.

Or mail a check, made out to the 'Bayfield Heritage Association,' to: PO Box 137, Bayfield, WI 54814.

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