



Quarterly
Newsletter
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The iconic Crow's Nest overlooked Lake Wawasee for Years...Mary Hursh

This month, the museum will highlight the history of the Crow's Nest located at East 1100N (NE Wawasee Drive).

Visitors can view several pictures of the Crow's Nest and read about the history of the eight-bedroom home built in 1865.

Included in the display will also be an original advertisement by Mrs. Martha Crow Fick for the Crow's Nest Inn, pictures inside the home, pictures of sailboats moored at the pier below, a picture of Nathaniel Crow around 1900 at his home and bank receipts kept by Martha Crow Fick during the time the Crow's Nest functioned as an inn.

Eli Lilly's much-read book , *Early Wawasee Days*, gives an interesting account of Nathaniel N. Crow, the builder of the iconic Crow's Nest home located on the east end of Lake Wawasee at 1100N (NE Wawasee Drive).

After arriving by horse in 1853, Crow and his wife Eliza began buying up land and soon became the owners of 500 acres. Eighty of those acres were purchased



for \$1.75 an acre. (Today, a typical lakefront foot on Lake Wawasee sells for about \$14,000!) By the time he died in 1912, Crow owned more than 1,200 acres.

The land Crow purchased around the time of the Civil War became known as "The Sheep Wash" because farmers drove their flocks of sheep through the woods and into the water to wash the fleece before clipping.

The Crow's Nest...Continued from page 1

Nathaniel Crow built a sprawling farmhouse on two of his acres facing Lake Wawasee. The northern end of the home was constructed around 1861 and the southern portion was added in 1911 when the property was turned into an inn.

Since Crow's death, the home has had many occupants. From 1911 to 1920, Martha Crow Fick, one of Nathaniel's daughters, leased the home to innkeepers for lodgings. When Martha finished nursing school, she moved back to the home and became the innkeeper.

In her advertisement for rooms, Martha said that the house was built on a well-drained elevation with "sanitary and healthful surrounds and supplied with water pumped by hydraulic from a cold, bubbling spring which has been analyzed and found to be pure."

When she left inn keeping, Martha leased the property to a theatrical troupe from Illinois for performances. The actors lived in the home and performed in a tent. When a storm destroyed the tent, the actors remodeled the



barn near the home for their performances. The barn became known as the Country Playhouse. The first show was "Night Must Fall" by Emmlyn Williams. The playhouse closed for a short time in 1942 and was revived in 1952 as the Wawasee Playhouse. Performances ran until 1955 when the troupe of actors moved to Enchanted Hills Theater.

In 1977, the home was leased by the fourth generation of the Crow family to a group of sailors who called it the Crow's Nest Yacht Club. In 1979, the name was changed to the Sailing Rendezvous. The club flew a blue and gold burgee. Many members slept on their boats anchored down the steep hill, while others slept in second-floor bedrooms. Two families each week cleaned the facility. Membership was limited to 45 members.

The Crow farmhouse has overlooked the eastern shore of Lake Wawasee for over one-hundred years. In early February, the large home was torn down and the lot offered for sale.

Pogonip By Jamie Clemons

Pogonip...This is how western Native American tribes refer to the freezing fog phenomena that our area occasionally experiences. On February 17, 2021, conditions were perfect for pogonip to occur.

What is pogonip? Pogonip, simply put, is freezing fog. "Freezing fog consists of frozen water droplets that attach to whatever they encounter. This happens because the droplets have been super cooled, and their temperature is below the normal freezing point; yet, they remain liquid. This is a scientific phenomenon that differs from ice fog, which wholly consists of tiny particles of ice. [...] The freezing fog so adversely affected the native peoples' lives that they called it 'pogonip,' which translates to 'white death.' They stayed inside their shelters until the weather warmed." (Alonzo)



Freezing fog makes for a beautiful backdrop. Any and all outside surfaces are covered in a white frost which sticks out, the frost often being called a "white rime" or "hoar" frost. You can see each individual crystal structure formed, and it makes trees and bushes appear as if they grew great white foliage overnight. The slightest breeze causes the crystals to fall from their positions and makes it look like it is snowing in a very tiny area.

Despite the beauty of the landscape during a pogonip, it can cause problems with people. These problems usually arise in the very young and the very old in the form of respiratory issues. "Native Americans knew from experience...that [people] exposed to it suffered sore throats, difficulty breathing, and some died from pneumonia." (Alonzo) If any of you have breathing issues, such as asthma, you understand the exact problem Native Americans and early settlers experienced when a pogonip set up in the area for several days.



In more modern times, we rarely see pogonip for longer than a single day. Our overall weather in the past several decades have shown a shifting cycle in weather patterns. It is not unheard of to have a pogonip event for more than a single day, but conditions must be just right in order for the phenomena to occur.



The museum recently hired a new staff member, Stanley Bender, and his sole responsibility is to “work” on and light up the under side of the Mier automobile.

If you’ve ever visited the museum, you have probably seen the light that was placed under the Mier in an effort to allow the public to see the underside of the motor in the mirror that is placed on the floor. While the light was safe, in our effort to be more energy efficient, the museum board and staff decided a change to the light needed to be made. Board members also wanted an opportunity to have a light on in the museum during hours that the museum was closed, but the community center was open.

Board member John Heckaman took on the job of updating the light to an energy-efficient LED bulb. Through some trials and errors, and some unfortunate glass breakage, he designed and constructed our new staff member, Stanley. Stanley now tinkers on the car 24/7. I just hope that he doesn’t scratch anything and make Patrick Appenzeller upset...

Recent Donations

- **Roger & Darlene Feters**—Full mannequin, 2 hair dresser head mannequins, calendars
- Marilyn Davis—The Frozen Frog Channel photo
- Garry Ringler—Various items found in Lake Wawasee
- Bob & Jean Kennedy—Vintage hats and a 16mm home reel-to-reel
- John Heckaman—New vacuum cleaner
- Joan Stoelting—Various Thornburg’s Drugs items and costume jewelry

So, the next time a pogonip event occurs, bundle up (because you know it is chilly out there), grab the camera, and go out there and take some pictures to share with everyone!

Pogonip...Continued

Resources:

Alonzo, Amy. “Native Americans Feared Pogonip, the ‘White Death.’” *Reno Gazette Journal*, Reno Gazette-Journal, 7 Dec. 2019, www.rgj.com/story/news/local/leader-courier/2019/12/06/native-americans-feared-pogonip-white-death/4363158002/.

“Beware the Pogonip.” *Old Farmer’s Almanac*, www.almanac.com/fact/beware-the-pogonip-the-word-pogonip-is-word-definition.

“Ice Fog.” *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 1 Feb. 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ice_fog.

US Department of Commerce, NOAA. “Freezing Fog.” *National Weather Service*, NOAA’s National Weather Service, 28 Mar. 2018, www.weather.gov/safety/fog-freezing.

Upcoming Events

- **Second Saturdays, 10a.m.-2p.m.**—Hands-on family activities focused on historical crafts and the community. Each month's activity will take place on the second Saturday of the month inside the museum.
- **Youth History Club, Thursdays, 10am.-11:30pm, June 3-August 5**—Youth History Club teaches about the rich history of our area. This year will once again welcome Cathy Draeger-Williams and, weather permitting, she will show us how to use atlatls. We will make corn husk dolls, moccasins, and more. All of this while learning about the great history of our area. Due to the need to prepare supplies, we ask that you pre-register. The full schedule of activities will be released in early May.
- **Annual Meeting and Artist's Presentation, June 19 at 10:30**—The Annual Meeting is an opportunity for the public to learn about what the museum has done over the past year, as well as getting a glimpse into the overall financial health of the museum. Artist Cindy Newcomer will be our featured artist. Cindy has been painting a series of lake views from different times of the year.
- **Centennial Homes, July 10 at 1:00pm and August 14 at 10:30am**—Our yearly Centennial Homes will make a return this summer. Stay tuned for topics for each month. If you have a centennial home and would like to present at some point, please get in touch with the director or Ann Garceau to get on the schedule.
- **Indiana Archaeology Month Program, September 2-4**—Indiana Archaeology Month is a time to celebrate the various aspects of Indiana archaeology. The museum and Chautauqua-Wawasee will again partner to bring you this fascinating series of varying topics over a 3-day period. This year will feature Notre Dame's Dr. Mark Schurr, Joe Zdbebko, Mike Smith, Jeff Mesaros, and others.



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Have you seen our online "Donate" button?



This link allows you to securely donate using your credit card or PayPal account.



Saying Goodbye...



Lera Reinholt has stepped down from her long-held position as board member and museum Treasurer as of the end of 2020.

Lera, a retired teacher and business owner, is a fountain of knowledge on many aspects concerning the town of Syracuse. She has given bus tours of prominent areas around town and was a key person in helping to update our walking tour map of past businesses in the downtown area.

We will greatly miss her constant input, but wish her all the best in her retirement. Don't be a stranger!



If you carry a “Family” or “Individual” membership, your membership to the Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum is up for renewal. Membership entitles you to first-hand information of Museum happenings and the knowledge that you are helping the Museum carry out its mission of preserving local history.

To continue your membership, please fill out this brief form:

Name:	
Address:	
Telephone:	
E-Mail:	

Membership Type:	Price:	Total Enclosed:
Individual	\$30 Annually	
Family	\$50 Annually	
Corporate	\$100 Annually	
Donation		

Thank you for your support. Please make checks payable to “Syracuse-Wawasee Historical Museum” and mail with completed form to:

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Questions? Call 574-457-3599 or E-Mail: director@syracusemuseum.org

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