

# Historical Clippings

Three Lakes Museum

November 2024

## November - Deer Camp and Thanksgiving

Deer hunting in Wisconsin is an age old November tradition closely tied to the camaraderie of deer camp. Ed Epler of Three Lakes devoted an entire chapter in his book, *Eighty Years in God's Country*, to describing, from the beginning, a group of locals and their exploits at their deer camp, Backtrackers I and II, on 80 acres outside of town over the span of maybe 60 years.

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, another even longer standing holiday tradition is Thanksgiving.

*October 3, 1863, during the Civil War, Lincoln proclaimed a national day of thanksgiving to be celebrated on Thursday, November 26. The holiday was annually proclaimed by every president thereafter, and the date chosen, with few exceptions, was the last Thursday in November.*

At some point during the Backtracker's yearly camp, the men decided that the Thanksgiving holiday and deer hunting would be better served by cooking a big camp meal at the cabin and bringing the ladies out for the day. Ed Epler writes -

*For many years our camp members went to town with their families for Thanksgiving dinner. Then someone got the idea of having dinner in camp. At first the ladies prepared the dinner in town and one of the boys would bring them out and return them in the evening. Then I learned to bake beanhole beans in a dutch oven, baked in a hole dug in the ground and surrounded with hardwood embers, along side another dutch oven containing a hind quarter of venison-baked for 18 hours. This was placed in the ground the evening before to be ready for the noon meal. All the ladies furnished was the salad and dessert. When they arrived for dinner the table was set, including a center piece of evergreens with wintergreen berries in a foil wrapped coffee can. The menu consisted of a small piece of cheese and sausage on each tooth pick for hors d'oeuvres, a vegetable, mashed potatoes, bean hole beans, venison, cranberries, bread, butter, salad, dessert and coffee. The first year the menu was kept a secret from the ladies. When they arrived the table was set and all that was left was to uncover the beans and venison from the ground, and serve. This pleased them and it became an annual practice.*

And so another tradition. The things that bind families, friends and communities.



There are many similar unlabeled images to the one seen here in the museum archives. It's uncertain if this one is from the Three Lakes area, but, it still gives us a chance to think about these men, this time and their possible connections. And then to consider ours.

Reflect on your family, friends and community this holiday season. Cherish your traditions.

# Historical Happenings at the Three Lakes Museum in 2024

WOW! Thanks to all who made things Happen this year!  
It was all for you, because of you!



## Front Yard Landscaping Creating an Inviting Greenspace

Besides providing a much needed curb appeal facelift, the intention of the great grassy lawn with new trees is to be an inviting place for gatherings and “front yard events”

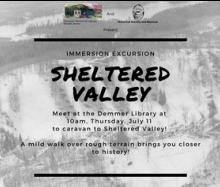
## Farmstand Corn Sale Summer Fresh and Sweet

In addition to bringing corn to Three Lakes by the Fourth of July, the corn sales (5500+ ears!) gave the museum staff a chance to meet and to talk to all of you!



## The Fish Boil It's Back !

With continued requests to bring back this community event, with ready and willing volunteers to make it happen, the Saturday after July 4th is once again the FISH BOIL!



## Immersion Excursions An Out of Museum Experience

In collaboration with the Demmer Library, this summer we traveled to six locations where Three Lakes history happened and talked about its significance to the community. Watch for next summers line up!



## History on the Lakes The Bridge to Bridge Tour

A different view on history from the water. The boat tours, available to members, identifies the history and stories of the homes, boathouses and landmarks of the Upper Chain between the bridges.



## The 1924 Tornado A Historical and Scientific Commemoration

The Museum partnered with other local groups to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Three Lakes Tornado of September 21, 1924. Kyle McMahon and Geoff Weller presented the history and science of that day that tested community resilience.



## Concerts in the Park and Gazebo Repair

Concerts finished its 20th year with some of the largest (and most generous) crowds ever. The Gazebo, built and donated to the town by the Historical Society, underwent needed repairs this summer completed again by generous donors.



## The Johnson House Exterior Repair

A capital campaign was launched to fund the first-ever major exterior renovation of the more than 140 year-old Johnson House. Be sure to follow the three phase project

Visitors / Members / Donors / Volunteers Thanks to All of You!

*We couldn't do any of this without your support!*