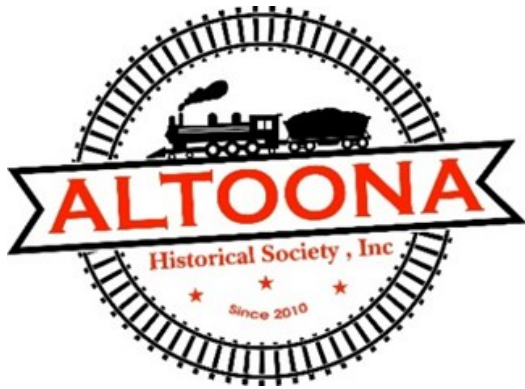




Mailing Address
Altoona Historical Society, Inc.
PO Box 1
Altoona, WI 54720

Newsletter

2026

July—December

Volume 5

Museum Address

Altoona Historical Society Museum
506 9th St. West



The Altoona Historical Society is seeking information and pictures of Military Veterans from Altoona, Wisconsin.

Please send information to altoonahistoricalociety@gmail.com or contact us with questions.

Veterans fought for our Freedom, we should fight for them.

Dates to Remember in 2026
Everyone is Welcome!
Meetings and Events are held at the Altoona Historical Society Museum unless otherwise indicated.
506 9th Street W
Altoona, Wisconsin

***July 5 PARADE Augusta Bean & Bacon Days**
1:30 in AUGUSTA, WISCONSIN

***July 11 HISTORICAL MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE**
1:00 - 4:00

***July - No Board Meeting**
***August 8 HISTORICAL MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE**
1:00 - 4:00

***August - No Board Meeting**
***September 12 HISTORICAL MUSEUM OPEN HOUSE**
1:00 - 4:00

***September 23 Historical Society Board Meeting**
10:00 – noon

***September 27 RAFFLE**
GOLDEN SPIKE BAR & GRILL
1:00 – 4:00
“SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE”

***October 28 Historical Society Board Meeting**
10:00 – noon

***November 18 Historical Society Board Meeting**
10:00 – noon
(Note date change to 3rd Wednesday)

***December - No Board Meeting**

AHSI EVENTS ARE FREE

From Your AHSI President

By Vicki Iverson

I have the honor of serving as the new president of the Altoona Historical Society. I hope to continue to help preserve the history of Altoona and to help our organization grow. If you have any ideas or suggestions for Altoona Historical Society, Inc., (AHSI), please don't hesitate to reach out to me through our email: altoonahistoricalociety@gmail.com

My connection to Altoona: I did not grow up in Altoona, but my grandparents did. My Grandpa, Herman Klingbeil (1909-1969), grew up right in the heart of Altoona as his dad worked for the railroad. Herman attended the Altoona Public School until the age of 14 when his dad passed away as the result of a railroad injury. Being the oldest child, Herman needed to quit school and start working to help support the family. My Grandma, Lucile (Brown) Klingbeil (1910-1967), grew up on a Dairy in the Town of Washington. She graduated from Altoona High School in 1928 in her class of nine graduates. Herman met Lucile while working on her family's dairy. They were married in 1929 and then Herman bought the dairy from his father-in-law. They raised six children and continued to operate Klingbeil Dairy, delivering milk to households, schools, and stores in Altoona until 1954. Herman, and his sons, also operated a milk hauling business and did custom farm work for the neighbors.

I attended Kindergarten and First Grade in Altoona before our family moved to Black River Falls. My Mom, Dawn (Klingbeil) Severson, got me interested in the Altoona Historical Society about ten years ago just to help put together a calendar. My love of local history and family history kept me involved in the organization along with a great group of volunteers to work with.

Every town has a story, and preserving Altoona's means safeguarding the heart of a community built on grit, railroads, family roots, and generations of shared memory.



New Trailer for the "Speeder"

By Vicki Iverson

Altoona Historical Society, Inc. (AHSI) extends a huge "thank you" to Don Winrich and Jim Hager for donating funds to purchase a new permanent trailer for our "speeder" track-maintenance car. At a cost of \$1,495.00, this would have certainly been a strain on the finances of our organization but thanks to Don and Jim, we now have a trailer to display the AHSI Speeder in local parades. Previously, equipment was used to lift the track-maintenance car onto and off from a borrowed trailer every time it needed to be moved or pulled in a parade. With the new donated trailer, the "speeder" can remain on the trailer to be accessed with little notice or effort. Assembly of the trailer with additional work to permanently mount the "speeder" for safety purposes was completed by Northwest Enterprises.

Our AHSI Speeder was built in 1963 by Fairmont Railway Motors, a rail transport industry founded in 1909 in Fairmont, Minnesota. Our thanks go to the City of Altoona for donating this to the Altoona Historical Society. We have been displaying it in three local parades (Altoona, Fall Creek, and Augusta) during the past several summers.

USA



USA



***A Life of Service:
Walter Kopplin
(1899–1976)***

Few individuals have shaped the educational and civic character of the Chippewa Valley as deeply as Walter E. Kopplin, whose life's work left a lasting imprint on Fall Creek, Altoona, and the surrounding communities. Born in 1899 in Fall Creek, Wisconsin, Walter grew up in a region defined by hard work, close-knit neighborhoods, and a deep respect for public service. Those values would guide him throughout a remarkable career that spanned education, business, and community leadership.

Walter began his professional journey in 1924, when he accepted a dual role as coach and principal at Patch Grove School in Grant County. It was an ambitious start for a young educator, and it set the tone for a lifetime of leadership. Later that same year, he returned to his hometown region to join Fall Creek High School, where he served in multiple educational roles for

nearly a decade. His dedication to students and staff helped strengthen the school during a period of growth and change.

In 1933, Walter took on a new challenge as principal of Cameron High School, guiding the school through the difficult years of the Great Depression. His steady leadership and commitment to educational excellence earned him deep respect from colleagues and families alike.

Walter's career reached a new milestone in 1942, when he became Superintendent of Schools in Altoona. Over the next four years, he helped steer the district through the complexities of the World War II era — a time marked by teacher shortages, shifting enrollments, and rapid community transformation. His work laid important foundations for the modern Altoona school system.

After more than two decades in education, Walter embraced a new chapter in 1946, opening Kopplin's Store in Altoona. For the next 15 years, the store became a familiar and trusted part of community life. His business success was matched by his civic involvement: Walter served on the Fall Creek Banking Loan Committee, participated in the Altoona Businessmen's Association, supported the Altoona Golden Age Home, contributed to the Altoona Lions Club, and even served as past president of the Wisconsin Independent Retail Grocers Association.

Walter E. Kopplin passed away in 1976 and is buried in Trinity Cemetery in Fall Creek, but his legacy continues to live on in the institutions he strengthened and the community he served.

His life reminds us that leadership takes many forms — in classrooms, in local businesses, and in the everyday work of building a stronger community. Altoona is better today because Walter Kopplin chose to dedicate his life to it.

This article was researched and published with the help of the Eau Claire Leader Telegram and AI.

Altoona High School
1956 Girls Shop Class



L to R: Twyla Kohn, Diantha Marquardt, Karolynn Lukes, Delores McKeeth, Ruth Faast. Barbara Friedrich, Lois Rindal

1956 Boys Home-EC Class



L to R: Tom Juno, Bill Kersten, Jon Sullivan, Tedd Winrich, Tom Benson, Gary Neill, Harold Moe, Dick Fenner

PROGRAM

TWENTY-EIGHTH ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT



ALTOONA HIGH SCHOOL
THURSDAY EVENING, MAY 28, 1942

THE GRADUATING CLASS

Jeanne L. Isaacson	James Richard McGuire
Vernon V. Larson	Daniel L. Fenner
John R. Thurston	Anna Mae Howard
Kenneth L. Vindal	Phyllis M. Sund
Lowell E. Pettis	Beverly B. Bowman
Lorraine E. Klohs	Daniel W. Bundt
William G. Underwood	William G. Thompson
Lawrence A. Radawitz	

★ ★ ★

CLASS MOTTO
"Succeed:—We Can, We Must"

CLASS COLORS
JADE AND PINK

★ ★ ★

HONOR ROLL
John Thurston Kenneth Vindal
William Thompson

COMMENCEMENT PROGRAM

PROCESSIONAL High School Band
A. M. Howe, *Director*

INVOCATION Rev. C. E. Nestande
Grace Lutheran Church, Eau Claire

SALUTATORY Kenneth Vindal
"Life's Game"

BARITONE SOLO Nora Emanuel
"Serenade" Franz Schubert

ADDRESS Mr. J. H. Murphy
"Democracy's Challenge" . Supt. of Schools, Rice Lake

VOCAL SOLO Jeannette Stoffel
"Indian Dawn" J. S. Zamecnik

VALEDICTORY John Thurston
"Today Decides Tomorrow"

PRESENTATION of HONORS . Mr. J. S. Jensen
Principal of High School

PRESENTATION of DIPLOMAS . Mr. F. J. Gloede
President of Board of Education

BENEDICTION Rev. Nestande

RECESSIONAL High School Band

History of Railway Track Maintenance Cars

By Vicki Iverson

Railroad crews used small cars to move workers and tools along the railway to inspect and maintain tracks. In the 1860s, they used handcars powered by humans, initially with a crank and later by 2 or 4 men working a pump, like a teeter-totter, to move the car. They could reach a speed of 8 mph and up to 15 mph running downgrade. In the early 1900s, gasoline motorized railcars were being used. Because they were faster than the human powered cars, they were known as "speeders" and could reach a speed of 40 mph. Other names for speeders included motor car, putt-putt, crew car, track-maintenance car, trolley, and inspection car. By the 1980s, dual-mode vehicles that could operate both on rail tracks and on roads were being used. They were converted road vehicles or purpose built dual-mode vehicles that had normal wheels with rubber tires for driving on roads, and additional flanged steel wheels for running on rails. The steel wheels were raised and lowered as needed. Dual-mode vehicles were sometimes called two-way vehicles, high-rail (highway and railway), and road-rail vehicles. Most speeders were replaced by dual-mode vehicles by the 1990s.



Dolly McKeeth
1895—1985
A Legend In Her Time

This article was published in the Eau Claire Saturday Mornin Newspaper on Saturday April 28, 1979 and parts of A front page that article below is from that newspaper. Author was Bill Gharrity

Altoona—meet 84-year old Dolly McKeeth—as much a part of the Chicago & North Western Railroad as anyone within memory. Yet Dolly was never a railroad employee.

Her roots go back to Spooner, where on March 22, 1895, she was born to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Cedarburg. Her father was a “pumper” for the railroad and when Dolly was a young girl, he was transferred to Altoona, where he manned the pumps that kept the railroad water

tower filled.

She was 15 when she went to work at Mooney’s Café in 1910. It was located across the street from the depot and catered to the railroad workers for who Altoona was, and is, a crew change point.

“We used to have an awful good business—and them were the days,” she recalled. I never regretted one speck of it.

“We waited on all the rails.” There were practically no transient customers at that time. I can’t remember what I was paid—it was no fortune in them days, but I always had money even though I got a few tips.

“I worked because I wanted to work and I wish I was working now. I loved my job waiting on them rails.”

“And all the men loved you too, Dolly” quipped Bill Glassbrenner a clerk in the depot where Dolly told here story.

Dolly spent 52 years as a waitress at Mooney’s and another 10 years next door at the 400 Café after Mooney’s closed in the early 1960s.

She worked the night shift exclusively, for a time, and she “daylighted” at the Railhaven Bar and Café.

She retired from the 400 in 1972 but couldn’t remain idle. Instead she worked the next five years as a housekeeper for Intermodal Leasing, the company that maintains lodging facility for layover crews.

Perhaps she still world be working today if she had not suffered several small strokes that caused her to be hospitalized twice in 1977. Along with that came a weakening of vision that made eyeglasses necessary for the first time.

Now, early in the evenings, she slips across the street from her house on First Street West and walks to the depot on Spooner Avenue.

She takes her place quietly by a window, exchanging quips and bantering with the railroad men as they go about their duties.

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“Wouldn’t be the same’

It wouldn’t be the same without her over here.” Glassbrenner said. “We start worrying about her if she’s not here each day between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m.”

Between sips of coffee, Dolly explained. “I come to the depot every night, every night— of my life. There’s a lot of nice rails over here. I come because I’m alone and get tired of sitting home alone and not talking with anyone. I enjoy sitting here by the window watching and talking to these guys.”

She was married to Hinkley McKeeth many, many years ago, but she can’t remember exactly when. Her husband was a brakeman for the railroad until his death in 1967. Her daughter Wanda resides in Milwaukee.

Dolly is an independent person and refuses to surrender to the encroachment of age and its infirmities.

She insists on paying her way. Each night when she visits the depot, railroaders keep her coffee cup full. She always pays for it, and if they won’t take her money, she leaves it on the table before she goes.

And she never fails to bring some treats for her beloved railroaders. The treats may be rolls, candy or other goodies, but she won’t let the railroaders pay for it.

She likes to talk with the men, but she also knows when to sit quietly when they are busy. It’s easy to see they all love her.

“I’ve known Dolly for 30 years” said engineer Bob Melland, who had reported in for work. She’s quite a gal. I ate at the restaurant, and she was the best waitress I’ve ever known. She always took care of the rails first.”

To say that Dolly can hold her own with the rough and ready railroaders would be an understatement.

Her language is salty and the men love it.

Bob Schauer, is a clerk with the railroad for more than 29 years, has known Dolly since he first started eating at the restaurant where she

worked, and he and his wife have more or less taken her under their wing.

“ You might say we kind of look after her, but she’s a very independent woman,” Schauer said. “For years I’ve been helping maintain her home, but she refuses to go for rides with us except to take her the doctor or something like that. She’s one of a kind.

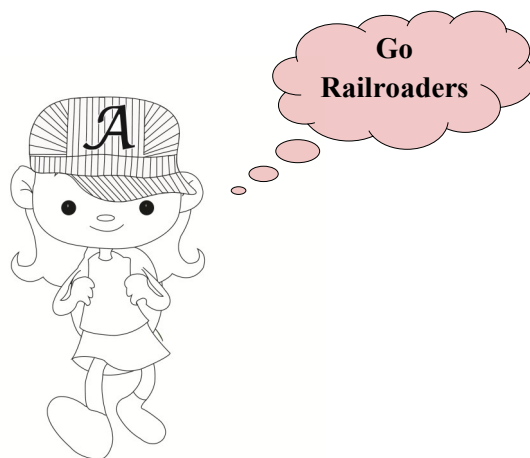
Her independence manifested itself when she balked at being interviewed and having her picture taken.

“I don’t like my name in the paper,” she said. It’s too foolish and seems like I’m putting on stuff I ain’t got.

But she relented at the urging of Glassbrenner and other railroad men on duty.

Her story was spiced with the salty language of the railroaders but after only a few minutes of conversation, it became apparent why the men of the Chicago and North Western Railroad love and honor Dolly McKeeth— a legend in her time.

The name “Altoona” was borrowed from **Altoona, Pennsylvania**, which itself was named after **Allatoona, Georgia**, and some believe German immigrants from **Altona, Germany** also influenced the choice.



Issac Hickock
The Lawman Without a Gun
By Roger Rasmussen



Wild Bill Cody was famous for shooting! He was a great marksman! He was also known as Wild Bill Hickcock. Altoona had its own sheriff, cop if you must, and I seldom saw Ike with a gun or a club. He didn't need one. His quiet demeanor, his soothing words, his capacity to unnerve the most difficult situations, including a few where I was involved as a teenager, his unswerving commitment to never arresting a person unless there was no resolution, and his dedication to the daily personal life of each resident, especially teenagers, rest in my mind as his greatest accomplishments. He was our peace officer; while he wore a badge and uniform, as a youth, I thought of Ike as one of my dearest friends. I gave him lots of reasons not to be my friend, too!

I agree with Herb's documentation on Ike, and I would add that 100s of other youth, now senior citizens, would second our thoughts, feelings, and appreciation for this

giant of a man who quietly but with assuredness patrolled the streets of Altoona during some difficult times.

Drunkenness was not an unknown attribute near the taverns on Spooner and 1st Street East nor in the railroad yards of the CNW Railroad. It was common knowledge, and my eyes and memory will attest to the frequency with which I encountered men, but periodically women, too, who were intoxicated. Altoona did not have more than its share of these-Fall Creek, Augusta, Fairchild, almost every railroad town, had their share too. Since I spent most of my teen years walking the streets of Altoona, between the Dairy Bar, D.L's Gas Station, Loo-by's, the Auditorium, and one of the two restaurants, Mooney's or the 400 Club, it was easy to encounter those men who enjoyed the bottle. Times could be tough, especially during WWII, and those frequent lay-offs where unemployed men had little to do but wander and wonder. It was during those frequent lay-off times, the early 1950's that Ike and his "Barney Fife" sidekick George Hoff, kept peace in Altoona.

Ike was not one to give tickets for speeding, drinking, or bad behavior even though many of my relatives deserved such. George, on the other hand, didn't mind giving a speeding ticket now and then. I heard once that he threatened to give his Dad a ticket, but I never confirmed it. I knew these men because they allowed me, and others too, to ride with them during their duty tour. This was especially true with George who worked weekends while Ike was off duty or on vacation; on that point, I don't remember Ike ever taking a vacation. I suppose he did! George, on the other hand, worked most weekends during the early 1950's. I enjoyed riding with him on Saturday nights for it was then that we patrolled "lover's lane" - Wilson Drive and Lake Altoona area. George loved to catch "lovers"; we would both have flashlights and we would drive slowly, without lights on, until we saw the car. Quietly we would sneak-up and with one movement shine

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the lights into the car. Most of the people in the car I knew; they were not young people always. Some were my friends. Once viewed, they became either my friends or they avoided me. I wondered, years later, why some people shunned me!

Well, it seems as though some members of my family enjoyed the fruit of the vine and so Ike periodically made a trip to my home; sometimes he brought a member home who couldn't walk straight, and some time he came to check on me—why I had bothered to try and steal watermelon from Mr. Peterson's garden; of course, I was guilty, along with six of my buddies. Paying the \$15 fine to Ike, who gave it to Bruce, wasn't nearly as bad as the fact that we failed to get even one melon. Hurting more was the fact that we had to wade through two swamps up to our waist to avoid being caught. Ike only asked once: "Roger were you at ...and he never had to finish the sentence—YES!" I was guilty more than once. I paid only once!.

Ike Hickock was no lawman; he was a peace -keeper whether that involved what we now call "family disturbances" or if it meant helping teenagers keep out of trouble. Ike believed the job of a cop was prevention first and punishment only when nothing else would work. I never saw Ike arrest a person during my many nights with him. He never arrested a member of my immediate or wider family, even though there were many times he should have. Altoona never got rich off of Ike.

Ike Hickock, as Herb Ruscin notes, made a difference in the lives of youth in Altoona, and as the picture notes, his dedication to their welfare was so richly known and expressed by the simple statement in the school annual of 1958—" your understanding and guidance" ! I would add- " your acceptance of us as young kids and your commitment to our well-being" to his monument, for as Herb would say, "what could we have done to deserve such a friend"? The peace trees planted in Ike's memory, by school kids, have grown into strong towering signs of the healthy nature of a small town called Altoona, just as we, the youth of

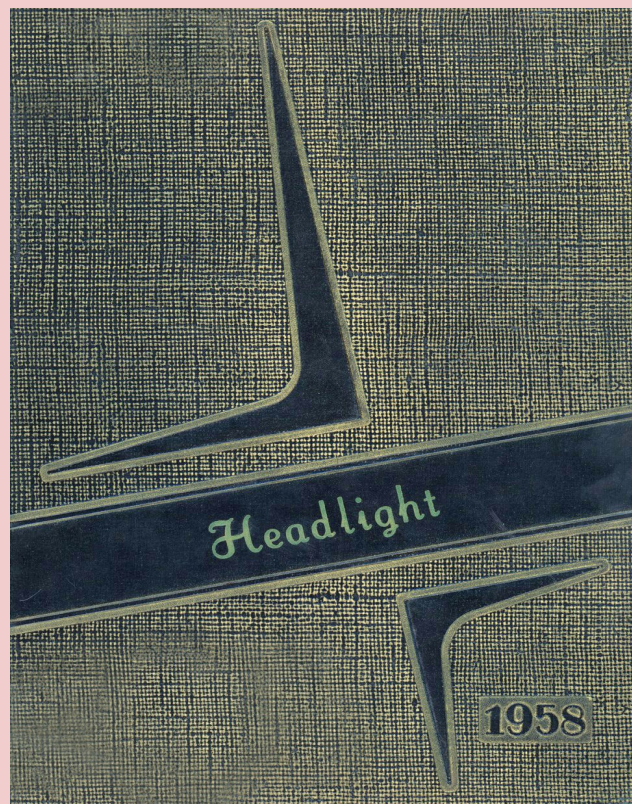
the 1950's, have grown into healthy citizens of our respective communities. Thanks to guys like Ike Hickock, his dream for us has been fulfilled because he helped us develop into worthy citizens." Everything good that goes around comes around in future generations." We thank you Ike for making the difference and being the difference in our lives. Every generation and every town is blessed with quiet disciples: "The Lord has a way of matching the needy with the givers." Ike was a giver!

Altoona High School Class of 1958

In appreciation of your interest and efforts in behalf of the youth of our community, we the graduating class of 1958 affectionately dedicate our yearbook to you.

Your understanding and guidance in making our Youth Center a reality exemplifies your willingness to contribute and cooperate with the young people of our community

This token of our esteem is our way of saying **"Thanks to you, Ike!"**





Father Herbert Zoromski

Father Herb

By Herb Ruscin

When Father Herbert Zoromski was assigned to St. Mary's Parish June 30th 1964 the old hotel was 83 years old. Father Smeenk had recognized the need for a new building and had taken the first step by buying the building from the Benedictine Sisters and closing the boarding part of the school to buy the parish time by opening up more desks for the parish students. But over 4 years had expired since the boarding school had closed and there were thoughts that the school should be closed, as there were parishioners that wanted a new church built instead.

On January 10th 1965 Father Herb dedicated the entire Sunday bulletin to the pros and cons of building a new facility. One of the points made against not building a new school was if the old school was closed down the parish would lose the services of the Sisters and it would be more expensive later because of the need to hire lay teachers. Father even went so far as to offer the

monies donated by the parishioners who were against building a new school the option of requesting that the money they donated be put in a separate fund for the construction of a new church.

Father Herb's three page letter must have inspired the parishioners as the monies were approved for an 8700 square 6 classroom school for the price of \$122,000. There was a lot to accomplish before ground was broken, as the footprint of the new school would be where the playgrounds equipment stood at that time. All playground equipment and the fire pit would have to be moved and the most western of the three garages attached to the school laundry would have to be torn down as it would interfere with the east foundation of the new school.

I had gone to that old school for 8 years and then worked as a janitor at the church and school for 3 more years. I loved that old building as it was the first thing I saw every morning out my bedroom window when I got up. But after attending high school for 8 hours and then working for a couple hours after school and on weekends I guess I was all schooled out. One day while walking to class at Regis with Mike Wagner he mentioned that I had gotten a new job at the Co-op gas station down town Eau Claire. The wheels began turning as that meant his 90 customer's paper route would need a different person to deliver the newspaper. That was in the spring of 1965, which meant that I wouldn't get in on the transition to the new school as I no longer worked at the church and school after I got the paper route. To further complicate any involvement in helping if needed I got involved with a girl right after school got out and that involvement would take up most of time till I went into the Navy in September of 1966. As I look back at all that Father Herb accomplished between the October 10th 1965 groundbreaking and the May 23rd dedication of the new school and the opening of the school in the fall I feel somewhat guilty for not being there to help.

Continued on page 11

Father Herb was a magician as in less than 2 years he convinced the congregation they needed a new school, had the plans drawn up for a structure that could be added on to. He made room for the new school and during the winter of 1965-66 he built the shelving for the new library in the rectory basement. The school was dedicated May 23rd 1966, and during that summer he, with the help of the students and the Sisters transitioned the school by moving everything from the old school to the new so that school could commence in the new building. At the same time as transitioning the new building he stripped down as much as was salvageable of the old building and had it razed August 5th, before the new school years commenced. The newspaper article announcing the opening stated that he laid rubber baseboards, hung clocks and paper and soap dispensers burning the midnight oil doing so. His impatience in how the construction was going probably led to the fact that the building cost per square foot was reduced from the estimated \$14.00 per foot to the final actual cost of \$13.00 per foot.

I can remember the day Father Herb arrived at St. Mary's to take over the reins from Father Sergo. I was changing the storm windows to screens on the church when Jerry Hoffman came over from the school with that Cheshire cat smile on his face. He always had that smile on his face when he knew someone didn't know what he knew. The new priest had just been over to the school and he bet I couldn't guess who he reminded Jerry of. This was only 7 months after JFK had been killed, so I should have guessed it. Father Herb was a good looking fellow, but he was no JFK, but then I am not a girl, so probably not an expert, but he did have something that reminded me of him.

But as time went on with Father Herb I found out how similar he was to our lost president. If he wasn't working on one of the school projects he was organizing a teen age choir group. If he wasn't answering the fire whistle after joining the Altoona Volunteer Fire Department he was organizing a coed softball team to travel down to Independence to play the co-ed

team he had organized when he was the pastor down there. He even came over to plow the snow at the school with his Club Cadet riding lawn mower when I thought playing our first game of basketball on the freshly plowed basketball court seemed to be more important than finishing the rest of the shoveling. He even invited some of us older choir members down to his basement for a bottle of his recently acquired case of Point beer a friend had given him.

My favorite memory of Father Herb was when I was in the choir loft with the group of teen who had joined the choir. Frank Stein was the organist and his brother Steve was the choir director. Frank used to bring his sheet music in a pouch. After the first practice when we met for the second time Frank unzipped his sheet music pouch only to discover the sheet music he needed wasn't in the pouch. A flustered Frank mumbled something about being so sure he had put the needed music in the pouch. He grabbed the pouch and headed for the Steins barely a block away at the time. We heard the church door close and all of a sudden the organ started to bare out with music that the church wasn't used to, Boogie Woogie. I turned towards the organ and there sat Steve, Frank's younger brother just pounding the keys, and the rest of the choir was enjoying Steve's playing. While playing one handed he pointed towards the window in the choir loft that you could see Steve's house from. One of the guys understood the guard duty he had just been appointed and walked over to watch for Frank. Steve must have played 2 songs before the Frank guard told Steve to quit playing. But before that happened something out of the corner of my eye caught my attention, and I looked down at the sacristy door where Father Herb was standing staring up towards the choir loft. He stood there for a few minutes, shook his head and I always told the story that I swore he tapped his foot a few times, and then turned and walked back into the sacristy. Steve did tell me he would hide Frank's sheet music better the next time.

The Altoona Historical Society is always looking for "Artifacts" that represent the history of Altoona.



Boy's standing at attention with the St. Benedicts Academy / St. Mary's grade school in the background. The current St. Mary's Church and School is now located where the academy and school once stood.



Cleaning out the St. Benedict's Academy / St. Mary's grade school before demolition.



Demolition of the St. Benedict's Academy / St. Mary's grade school in 1966.

From the Past
Altoona School in 1953



The Halls of Altoona High School in 1960



Altoona, Wisconsin
Altoona Historical Society, Inc.
Celebrating 250 Years of the USA
By Don Winrich



Early Settlers

Long before Altoona had streets, schools, or even a name, the first settlers arrived with little more than determination and a belief in possibility. They cleared dense forests, built homes by hand, and faced Wisconsin's unforgiving winters with courage that still echoes through our community.

Their legacy endures in the values they lived every day: **perseverance, neighborliness, and faith in the promise of America.** These foundations became the bedrock of the Altoona we know today.

Railroad Workers

Altoona's story changed forever in 1881 when the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway established its terminal here. Workers from across the region and across the world came to lay track, service engines, and keep the trains moving.

They labored long hours in demanding conditions, yet their work connected Altoona to the nation and sparked the growth that shaped our town. Their spirit of **hard work, ingenuity, and resilience** remains central to our identity.

Veterans

From the Civil War to the present day, Altoona has sent its sons and daughters to defend the freedoms we hold dear. Our veterans remind us that liberty is not inherited it is safeguarded by courage, sacrifice, and a willingness to serve something greater than oneself.

We honor them not only for their service, but for the example they set: **steadfastness, duty, and love of country.**

Together

Together, these three groups those who built, those who connected, and those who protected embody the American story. Their lives shaped Altoona, and their values continue to guide us as we preserve our history and look toward the future.

As we celebrate the United States this year, may we carry forward its spirit with gratitude, pride, and a renewed commitment to remembering those who came before us.

Carrying the Torch Forward

Altoona continues to grow, shaped by people who embody the same spirit as our early settlers, railroad workers, and veterans. Teachers, nurses, small-business owners, volunteers, first responders, city workers, and families who choose to call this place home all contribute to the vibrant, welcoming community we cherish today.

From the lively gatherings at River Prairie to the quiet pride of our neighborhood streets, Altoona's citizens carry forward a tradition of **service, kindness, and civic pride.** We honor the past not only by preserving it, but by living its values every day.

Altoona Public Library

The Altoona Public Library is dino-mite this summer! The Summer Reading Program registration opened on June 1st and includes events for all ages – kids, teens, and adults. Events include weekly reading prizes for kids and teens, children’s movies, clubs, weekly performers for the whole family, and more. The Kids summer program will wrap up with a picnic for readers and their families and the teen program will celebrate with a Teen After Hours Party for participants in grades 7-12. This year’s theme is “Unearth a Story” and there is something for everyone!

The Adult Summer Reading Program offerings include Book ‘Em Mystery Book Club summer meet-ups, puzzle race, guest authors, Plant Your Summer Pots class, Crafternoon @ the Library and more! This year we’re again offering a punch card for our adult readers with prizes along the way. Our Rail Readers silent book club is back for summer and fall and meeting monthly at The Yard.

Be on the lookout for Altoona Public Library at events around the community this summer. We kicked off the Summer Reading Program with the Cinder City Days parade in early June. We’ll also be at Peach Fest, Pride in the Park and more! Stop by and say Hi! You might even see our tyrannosaurus rex that’s visiting for the summer.

Many of the fall programs begin in September with something for all ages. Monthly adult programs include book clubs – Book ‘Em Mystery, Food for Thought, and Cookbooks Club, Word Weavers (Writing) Group, craft clubs such as Knit & Crochet Club, Crafternoon @ the Library and more. Most adult programs do not require sign up, but specifics are posted on the website (<https://altoonapubliclibrary.org/adults>). Teens are invited to participate in monthly Chess Club and Ping Pong Clubs and hang in the special Teen Zone near the young adult collection. Monthly children’s programs include Chess Club, LEGO Club, PJ Story Night and others. Sign-up for weekly Toddler Tales and Pre-school Story Time sessions begins early September. The Friends of Altoona Public Library group is a volunteer group that supports the library in a variety of ways.

The Friends of the Altoona Public Library (FOAPL) raise and receive funds to help supply books, movies, music, and other needs. They also sponsor special programs and events for the people of Altoona and surrounding area. They are always looking for new members to join - visit the website for more information and to complete an application. <https://altoonapubliclibrary.org/friends/>

The library is open Monday – Thursday 9am – 8pm, Friday 9am – 6pm and Saturday 9am – 5pm. There is something for everyone! From board books to large print, DVDs, video games, and our growing Library of Things collection, you’re sure to find something to fit your needs. Library staff are available to help request items from other libraries in the MORE library system if there’s something you can’t find.

Watch the website and social media accounts for details on upcoming programs. You can also sign up for the monthly library newsletter to stay up to date on any library events. The library staff is also happy to answer questions over the phone.

Altoona Public Library
1303 Lynn Avenue
Altoona, WI 54720
715-839-5029

<https://altoonapubliclibrary.org>
Facebook/Instagram: @altoonapl

Scan the QR code to the right
to sign up for the Altoona
Public Library newsletter:



AHSI DONATION FORM

Altoona Historical Society, Inc. is a nonprofit organization managed by volunteers consisting of a Board of Directors and Members. Your donation can help to preserve the history of Altoona, Wisconsin. All donations are tax deductible.

_____ Yes, I would like to help preserve the history of Altoona, Wisconsin by donating to AHSI.

Name (personal or business) _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Check one: Cell Phone _____ Other _____

Email Address _____

Donation Amount \$ _____

AHSI may list your name (personal or business) in printed materials and/or on the AHSI website.

_____ Please do NOT list my name (personal or business). I wish to remain anonymous.

Your address, phone number, email address will **not** be shared with anyone outside of the AHSI organization.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE MAIL YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS TO:

**ALTOONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
P.O. BOX 1
ALTOONA, WI 54720**

AHSI MEMBERSHIP FORM

AHSI members will be notified of meetings and will be able to participate in discussions and decisions regarding AHSI business. Your input will be appreciated. You will have opportunities to volunteer behind the scenes and at public events.

_____ Yes, I would like to help preserve the history of Altoona, Wisconsin by becoming a member of AHSI. Suggested Donation \$10/year.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone Number _____

Check one: Cell Phone _____ Other _____

Email Address _____

Membership Donation Amount \$ _____

I give AHSI permission to release my name and/or photos of my involvement with AHSI:

_____ Yes _____ No

Your address, phone number, email address will **not** be shared with anyone outside of the AHSI organization. To be more cost efficient, most AHSI information will be Emailed to members.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

PLEASE MAIL YOUR TAX DEDUCTIBLE MEMBERSHIP DONATION TO:

**ALTOONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
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"Railroads carve the path of progress, uniting places and possibilities."