



Booth Brothers of Wolf Creek were in the Civil War

***April 19th 7:00 pm Cushing
Community Center: SELHS
Presents Wally Milbrath
speaking on the Civil War.
Wally is a dynamic speaker
who brings history alive. He
will have memorabilia from
two Civil War soldiers and will
tell how he researched them
and how you can do research
on soldiers.***

**Sterling Eureka and Laketown Historical Society
Box 731 Cushing WI 54006**

Coming Activities

Thursday April 19th, the Sterling Eureka and Laketown Historical Society (SELHS) meeting. We have a business meetings at 5:45 to 7:00 followed by a program. Cushing Community Center.

Wally Milbrath, a lifetime Civil War enthusiast will talk to us about the Civil War. He has visited over a dozen major Civil War historic and battle sites. He will talk to us about how to research Civil War Soldier information. He will share information about two of his ancestors, Pvt C. W. Seebold and Captain H. E. Williams showing documents, photos, weapons and other mementoes of these two soldiers.

Monday April 23, 7:00 pm Polk Co Genealogy society Osceola Library. Russ Hanson will present his multimedia show "*What is New in Genealogy*"

Thursday April 26th 7:00 pm St Croix Falls History Society at the St Croix Falls National Scenic River Hdqtrts the River Road Rambler will be holding forth on "*The History of Cushing Wisconsin and its Most Famous Son, Dr. Squirt* "

Friday April 27th Laketown Lutheran Church annual pancake supper starting at 5:00 pm

Thursday May 17th SELHS Meeting. Loretta Pedersen of Blackberry Hills will demonstrate handspinning and weaving fleeces from sheep, llamas and Angora goats, and natural dyes. Cushing Community Center, business meeting at 5:45, program at 7:00 pm. See www.blackberryhills.com

Saturday May 26 Pioneer Cemetery Walk Evergreen Avenue on the Sterling barrens 1:00 pm

Sunday May 27th Laketown Lutheran Memorial Celebration We are working with the Laketown Lutheran members and neighbors to honor Roy Hennings (Dr. Squirt) who was a veteran of World War I, but has never had a veterans flag marker. Members of the Hennings family who helped start the church as well as were partners in the first store in Cushing will be attending. The program will begin with church service with a historical flavor 10:30 to 11:30, followed by recognition of Roy Hennings and Veterans. Several families including the Hennings family will be highlighted on a cemetery walk A light lunch will be served.

Monday May 28th: Wolf Creek Cemetery and Church. Program at 11:00; lunch afterwards and Cemetery Walk after lunch. Come for a traditional Memorial Day program, lunch and history walk!

Sunday June 24th Sterling Picnic (also called the Sterling Old Settler's Picnic). This is a pot luck celebration of our area that includes recognition of some of our older citizens. Sterling Township once covered all of northern Polk County as well as Burnett and Washburn counties, so everyone who shares an interest in the local area is invited, young and old!

This year we are looking for our neighbors to bring in their collections showing local history or local arts and crafts of an historic nature. Share your collection with us; your old photos; your Indian artifacts; your local rock collection, your family history; or whatever you think might be interesting to your neighbors. We are also looking for some local crafts people who still practice the old skills for demonstrations. Do you spin, weave, carve, do rosemalling, do leather work etc. We have a broom maker and hand spinner already planning to demonstrate their crafts!

All of these events are free and open to the public (most have a lunch paid for by your donation.). SELHS and the other sponsoring groups want you to learn about local history while enjoying yourself at the same time!

Thursday July 19th SELHS meeting

Thurs-Sunday July 26-29 Polk County Fair

Thursday August 16 SELHS meeting

Saturday August 18 Cushing Fun Days

Thursday September 20th SELHS meeting

Saturday September 22, Second Annual River Road Ramble

Outhouse on the Farm Russ Hanson

"I saw those snakes again!" exclaimed Mom having just brought me into the house from my toilet training session in our decrepit old outhouse on our farm behind Bass Lake. "We need a new toilet! Russell will never get toilet trained if he is scared of snakes!" I actually thought those snakes were pretty much fun to watch, but not Mom!

It was the late 1940s. We had just gotten electricity on the farm; the war was over; and Dad and Mom had 3 boys and the farm mostly paid for after only 7 years of living there. "Well," answered Dad, "we will need an approved one to get on Grade A milk at the creamery. Let me find out what the regulations are."

Grade A milk was milk produced under sanitary conditions and required the whole farm to meet strict requirements. A Grade A toilet was tight enough to be fly proof. It had to have automatically closing lids on the seats. It had to have an automatically closing door. It had to have a window, a screened vent and a "exhaust stack" for ventilation. It had to be far from the well and the milk house. Recommendations included siding, paint, concrete foundation, easy access to the waste bin and the use of ashes or lime.

Building on our farm always started with "I'll cut some logs out this winter and saw them into lumber." Dad had a small lumber pile left from building his garage/grainery the year before—mostly basswood.

The site chosen was behind the garage—out of site of the house and barn; a private location with a nice view to the north. Marvin and I watched as Dad nailed forms for the concrete foundation. He took his new B Farmall and trailer up the road to the Sterling gravel pit on the Gullickson farm and shoveled a couple of loads. He bought a sack of cement at Nels Simonson's lumber in St Croix Falls. We went along to get our customary dime from Nels to get a free bottle of pop.

Small batches of cement were mixed in a homemade concrete pan—a piece of flat tin nailed to two boards curved at each end. The gravel and cement were added with water and mixed with the garden hoe. After enough stirring the concrete mixture was shoveled into the forms. The toilet had substantial rectangular block as the entrance and floor and extensions to the rear to support the wooden building off of the ground. It was raised 18 inches off of the ground with footings one foot deep. Bolts were placed in the footings and block with their threaded part up to allow the wooden frame to be bolted securely down.

A separate rectangular step 6 inches high was poured in front of the main block. Dad took a spike and carefully scribed a large "Welcome" into the wet concrete and then added 1949 as the year.

Using rough lumber as it came from the sawmill and a handsaw, hammer, level, and square, Dad built a 4 foot square building bolted to the footings. He framed it with 2x4s; nailed boards as sheathing; and built a peaked roof with a small overhang. He used his lumber to make a door with a Z-brace to strengthen it. He cut a small rectangular opening and fit into it a piece of glass that he carefully cut out of a broken window with a diamond scribe tool. Another rectangular opening in the peak on the back was screened for ventilation.

Four 1x6 boards made the ventilation stack and were attached to the side of the building with a screened opening into the waste area. A tin can with the ends cut out was split down the seam and extended above the stack as a rain cover.

On the back he put a hinged opening for easy access to the waste area for cleaning. He carefully hand planed several boards on one side and made the seating bench and put the standard size junior and senior openings – a two holer (one neighbor had a large family and a three holer leading to "holier than thou" jokes).

When he was all finished he bought some aluminum paint (as recommended for Grade A) and painted the inside bench. The rest of the inside was left in the natural light color of rough basswood. The seat covers were rectangle boards with hinges that opened and closed over the holes. The four sets of hinges came from Jensen's Hardware in Cushing—two pair for the seat covers; one bigger set for the door and one for the cleanout door.

The outside was carefully shingled with asphalt siding. They were somewhat like roof shingles without cuts and overlapped only a little. They made a weatherproof, mouseproof, flyproof cover for the gaps in the boards. This was identical to the nearby garage. These shingles are still in good condition 57 years later.

A spike driven partially into the wall behind the seat cover prevented the cover from staying open on its own—self closing covers. A screen door spring closed the main door automatically. Gravity kept the upward opening backside cleanout hatch closed.

As soon as the new toilet was built, the old one was dragged away to be burned. The Grade A inspector approved as did the rest of the family. It felt very substantial to step up onto the concrete floor and sit down without any building shake. The snakes couldn't get in this building!

After two years the dirt area in front of the step had worn into the ground and become a mud puddle after rains. The final improvement was a running a new long platform/sidewalk step to fill in the hole. We asked Dad what he was going to write in the new step and after some thought he asked us to each bring a shoe and one from baby Byron. He carefully imprinted each of the four boys' left shoe into the surface and added 1952. They are not deep, but still show today.

Dad joked that he had to go to the office to think when he was heading to the outhouse. Byron bought a metal sign "Office" and mounted it on the outhouse door. From then on we went to "The Office" to do "Our Business."

Toilet paper was not yet in vogue on the farm. The primary surplus paper available was the outdated Sears and Wards catalogs. They provided reading material as well as substituted for toilet paper. Roll toilet paper did not become popular until people converted to flush toilets where it was necessary, and then found its way to the outhouse too.

There was a trick in using the color pages of Sears comfortably. Tear the page out and wrinkle it up into a ball and then straighten it out for maximum softness. Trips to the toilet for kids in a two holer was a social event. Even at Wolf Creek School we had outhouses, although there was a rain gutter trough for quickstops.

Barn lime was kept in the toilet to be sprinkled down the hole for sanitary purposes. Old National Geographic or Agriculturists along with the catalogs were reading material. An article in one of the farm magazines referred to cow manure as part of the profits of farming for its value as field fertilizer. We adopted the language so “spreading the Office Profits” was what we did every month to keep the outhouse clean.

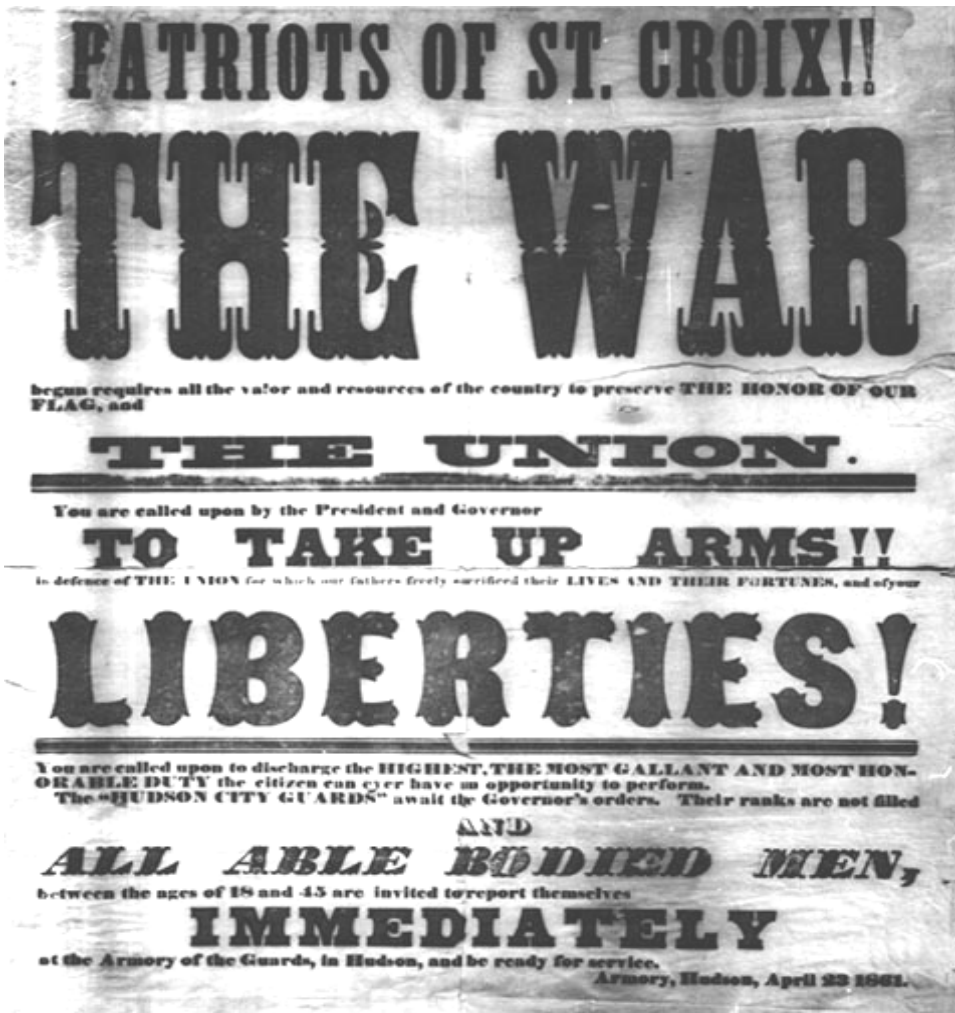
By the mid 1950s our progressive neighbors were putting bathrooms into their houses. Dad followed the trend and soon we too had indoor plumbing. We quickly adjusted and became equally proficient indoor or out. Dad really never felt comfortable with “going to the toilet inside the house” so used the outhouse in nice weather.

The toilet stands today ready for use: sturdy, well preserved; a memory of a young farmer building something “that will do me out.” As Dad got older he used that phrase often. The new roof on the barn will “do me out” meaning it would last longer than he would. It looks like it will do me out too.

When the 4th generation of Hanson kids stop by and look at the outhouse and wonder if it is legal anymore we tell them “yes, it’s use is grandfathered in.” Then we tell them that we Hanson boys were potty trained right here when it was 30 below zero; the wolves howling at the door; without toilet paper before TV and they settle in for a “good old days” story.



Skone Farm –Where Abe Skone lived –Grandpa Skone and boys (photo courtesy of Lorraine Larson)
In 2007 the house and barn are still is there straight east of Cushing on Hwy 87 on the south side of the road just where 87 turns north. Can you tell which direction we are looking?



Hudson Civil War poster

Sarah Skone taught at Wolf Creek in the early 1900s. Note the nice outhouse in the back!



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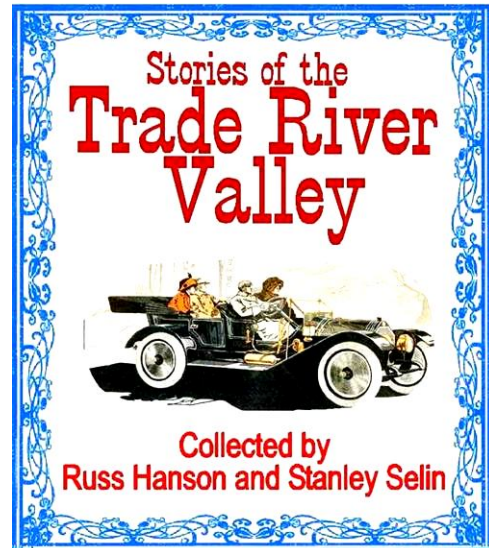
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Remember to renew your membership in July.
The Sterling Picnic is a good time when you can
take advantage of special offers!

Below, Cushing's most famous son, Roy
Hennings, better known as Dr. Squirt enjoys
downtown Cushing.

Cushing Fun Days, Saturday August 18th is a good day to visit
historic Cushing Wisconsin!



Cushing's Own Doc Squirt