



Museum Matters

the Winter 2013-2014 newsletter of the

Elk Rapids Area Historical Society

Exploring the past... Understanding the present... Envisioning the future

Elizabeth Roberts Williams, Elk Rapids Artist

by Dolores Hibbard

In 1987 Michigan celebrated the Sesquicentennial. Elk Rapids participated by highlighting a woman artist, who helped bring culture and beauty to our area, Elizabeth Roberts Williams. She represents the numerous unsung people who contributed to the area and the state.

Elizabeth June Roberts was born on April 12, 1838 in Rochester, New York, where she experienced a relatively privileged upbringing. By sixteen, she had completed high school requirements and was asked to teach. After one year of teaching, she attended LeRoy Seminary for Young Women. It was here she was introduced to painting.

Elizabeth first came to Michigan on a visit to her sister in Albion. At a time when Universities and most colleges did not admit women, she returned to Albion to live with her sister and attend Albion College. Here she met her future husband. In August of 1862 Elizabeth married Fitch Reed Williams and set up a home in Albion. Their first home featured a "widow's walk."

After eight years, Fitch received a job offer from Dexter and Noble Iron Company in Elk Rapids. So they packed up the wagon, including her paints, his books, their brass bed, and a canvas tarpaulin for shelter at night on the trip north. Their first home in Elk Rapids was a company owned house on the main street. Here, Elizabeth had her studio in an upstairs room. There was a barn, where they had horses, a cow, chickens, geese, and rabbits. Elizabeth also raised peacocks for their beauty and because they

provided protection for the chickens from hawks.

Elizabeth and Fitch both enjoyed trips into the wilderness. They would load up the wagon with camping supplies - including the brass bed. They often "camped" for a week or two at a time. Elizabeth's paints and

brushes were always part of the essential camping supplies. However, she began to prefer using watercolors, as they proved easier to pack and use on camping trips. She also enjoyed the watercolor paper over stretched linen canvasses needed by oil paint.

On August 25, 1874 a son was born, named Fitch Roberts Williams and called Rob. When her son was older and in school, Elizabeth traveled to Grand Rapids to study with a painter. Besides his law practice, Fitch was active in politics, serving in the State Senate. The family was able to afford the necessary help, which allowed them such mobility.

As Elk Rapids continued to grow, the Williams family moved to a residential part of town. It so happens, this house had a "widow's walk", and can be seen today on River Street.

The family continued their enjoyment of camping in the woods, including duplex tents, the brass bed, and dining tables. Elizabeth needed to share her

love of painting and started a Northwoods group of artists. She also taught painting classes.

Fitch Williams died in 1904. To deal with her grief, Elizabeth painted. She did small, jewel like paintings, which she gave to friends.



Elizabeth Roberts Williams

continued on page 4

Vision Statement

The Elk Rapids Area Historical Society and Museum will be a distinguished leader in defining the unique history of the region by connecting the past, present and future through:

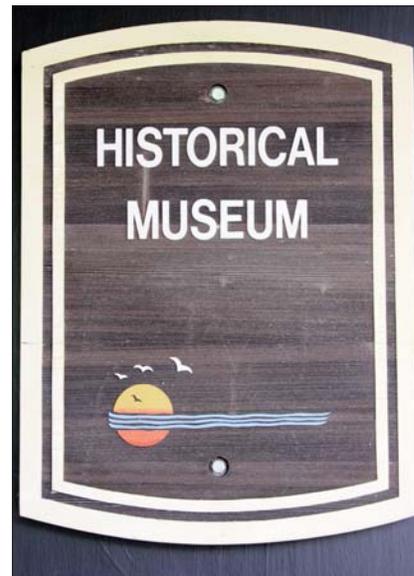
- Historical Preservation
- Community Collaboration
- Educational Programs
- Research Documentation

Mission Statement

The Elk Rapids Area Historical Society and Museum is a center that inspires people to explore the past, understand the present and envision the future.

We accomplish this by:

- Serving as the authority on regional history
- Preserving artifacts pertinent to the region
- Promoting, collaborating and supporting community activities
- Providing a center for community engagement and education
- Assisting with research and learning
- Ensuring history is an integral component of community development
- Sharing our past as the foundation for the future



ERAHS Board of Directors:

- Dan LeBlondPresident
- Craig HandleyVice President
- Adam SchulerTreasurer
- Marcia Graham ...Interim Secretary
- Inez GottsTrustee
- Jane LundTrustee
- Daniel WettlauferTrustee



MUSEUM MATTERS is published periodically by The Elk Rapids Area Historical Society.

Contributors: Karen Szymanski, Jane Lund, Dolores Hibbard, Dan LeBlond, Glenn Neumann.

All editorial and correspondence should be sent to:

Craig Handley, editor, Post Office Box 2, Elk Rapids, MI 49629-0002

email: president@elkrapidshistory.org

Copyright © 2013 by The Elk Rapids Area Historical Society.

President's Report:



Spring is finally here after a long, hard winter. We had so much snow that the plows ran out of places to pile it. (See photos below.)

Flooding has been a problem in many areas, but our waterproofing efforts have paid off and we experienced no major problems. Now its time to look ahead to an active 2014 season. You'll find a list of planned programs for this season elsewhere in this issue and there is something for everyone.

We are also please to open our doors for the Elk Rapids Library Author Lecture Series. The Library will present the following authors to speak at the museum:

Lee Whipple	June 7	Saturday	3 pm
Jane Panagopoulos	June 21	Saturday	3 pm
Julia Gibson	August 21	Thursday	7 pm

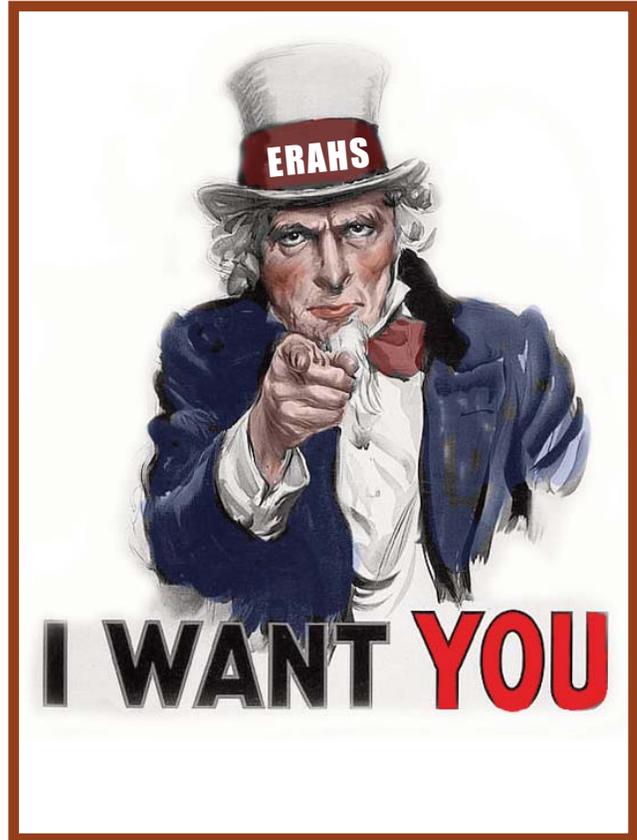
Board Vacancies

We have some vacancies on the board that we would like to fill. Last winter we had to cancel a board meeting because we didn't have enough trustees available to have a quorum. It doesn't take much time and your input and ideas will help us greatly.

If you would like to participate in making ERAHS a more dynamic force within our community, we'd welcome the opportunity to have you on our team. Please contact me at: president@elkrapidshistory.org.

Community Cash

The Village Market's "Community Cash" program continues in full swing. From now through Memorial Day, shop at any Village Market location and save your receipts (including gas receipts) for the Elk Rapids Area Historical Society. **Rick Young** awards a percentage of all receipts turned in for participating non-profits. Most people have a group they save for, but if anyone can spare a few for us it would be helpful. Last year we missed a cash bonus by only \$16.00! **Linda Pillsbury** graciously volunteered to coordinate this on behalf of the museum. If you have any questions, you may call her at (231) 264-9475. ✝



continued from page 1

Rob took over his father's law practice. He married Margaret Morrison at her parents Seven Gables farm home on Elk Lake Road. The marriage produced two sons.

With her son established, Elizabeth felt she could take a trip she had dreamed about to the west coast. She saw the sights of the vast country west of Michigan from the train. All the little

towns developed along the railroad tracks, the Rocky Mountains, and the Pacific Ocean.

Elizabeth died - in the brass bed - after an extended illness, in 1921. She was 83 years old and had lived in Elk Rapids for 51 years. She had produced more than 500 paintings in her life. Four of her paintings are housed in the local Historical Society. In 1987, Elizabeth Roberts Williams was publicly recognized as an important contributor to Northern Michigan Art History. ✈

Welcome Volunteer, Lin Meeker

By Jane Lund

The Elk Rapids Area Historical Society would like to welcome volunteer Lin Meeker. Lin has joined us as a genealogist consultant and brings with her decades of experience in family history research, computers and photography.

Lin belongs to genealogy and historic societies in Connecticut, Michigan, Missouri, New York and Ohio and has researched in over 50 libraries and archives, including the New England Historic Genealogy Society Library in

Boston, NARA and the DAR library, both in Washington DC, as well as the LDS Library in Salt Lake City.

She had generously made available to us a variety of genealogical computer research tools.

We would like to introduce Lin at a meeting on July 17 at 7pm at the ERAHS museum at 301 Traverse St. in Elk Rapids, jointly hosted by the Job Winslow Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the Grand Traverse Area Genealogical

Society (GTAGS).

Lin will explain the Family Bible Transcription Project, which provides a way to preserve the records of family history found in family bibles.

July 26 has been set aside for individuals to bring family bibles to the auditorium at Presbyterian Church in Elk Rapids by appointment from 10 am to 4 pm. For further information, call Jane Lund at (231) 264-9828. ✈



This artist's rendering of Elk Rapids in earlier days is on display at the Elk Rapids Area Museum.

Programs for 2014

(1st Thursdays of the month) & 1 Special Event on May 17th - Third

Saturday:

(as of 03-17-2014)

May 17th, 2014 (Third Saturday of May, 10:30 AM):

A Special Story Hour for Children of All Ages: "Look About You"

a book by Erin Anderson and presented by magician Ben Whiting

ERAHS website URL: http://elkrapidshistory.org/may_17th_2014.aspx

June 5th, 2014 (1st Thursday of June, 7:00 PM):

Mark Thompson - "**Great Lakes, Great Ships**"

ERAHS website URL: http://elkrapidshistory.org/june_5th_2014.aspx

July 3rd, 2014 (1st Thursday of July, 7:00 PM):

JoAnne Gasco - "Anishnabek of the Grand Traverse Region"

ERAHS website URL: http://elkrapidshistory.org/july_3rd_2014

August 7th, 2014 (1st Thursday of August, 7:00 PM):

Dan Packer - "**Women of WWII: America's Secret Weapon**" ERAHS website URL:

http://elkrapidshistory.org/august_7th_2014.aspx

September 4th, 2014 (1st Thursday of September, 7:00 PM):

Lee Scott - "**History of Coca Cola**"

ERAHS website URL: http://elkrapidshistory.org/september_4th_2014.aspx

October 2nd, 2014 (1st Thursday of October):

Dan LeBlond - "**Potluck Dinner & Annual Meeting**"

ERAHS website URL: http://elkrapidshistory.org/october_2nd_2014.aspx

Walking in a Good Way

by Hank Bailey

Editor's Note: Hank Bailey presented an educational and enjoyable presentation at the April monthly program. Despite the weather, the program was well-attended with people coming from as far as St. Ignace to hear Hank talk of his people and his culture. Much of what he said is in the following article that Hank wrote for Barefoot Magazine, a publication for visitors to the Leelanau Sands and Turtle Creek hotels. It is reprinted here with the author's permission.

My name is Hank Bailey. I am an Anishinaabe and a Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians tribal member who is Odawa (Ottawa in English) of the Black Wolf Clan. I also am a father, grandfather, Elder and traditional dancer. I work for the Grand Traverse Band's Natural Resources Department as a Fish & Wildlife Technician as well as the Natural Resources Department Liaison.

I was recently asked to explain a little bit about what Native Americans mean when they say they are trying to "Walk in a Good Way." I thought it would be easy to explain, but when thinking it over, I realized it would not be as easy as I originally thought. I think the best way to try to explain it would be to just look at it from my point of view.

Walking in a Good Way is what I think about when I reflect on my journey through life. What is the Path I will choose? What are the steps I will make while on the journey? What impact – good or bad – will my steps have on the world around me? Will I be able to look back on my journey and feel proud? Have I truly tried to "Walk in a Good Way?"

My knowledge of our traditions is somewhat limited and I think I am in the same canoe as many of my fellow tribal members. There are many reasons why a lot of us are struggling to retain and live by our teachings. I will not go into those reasons now and I will not let this stop me from

choosing a good road. The truth is I do know enough tradition to help guide me on a good path!

One of the first things I think of when reflecting on my life is what we refer to as the Circle of Life. We have many teachings about this that are found in what is known as the Medicine Wheel. The Circle of Life encompasses everything that we know of and many, many things that are out of our view. As you picture a circle, think about the fact that the circle does not end. This is my view on life: EVERYTHING has its place in the circle. To keep harmony and balance in the world I must do what I can to keep the circle intact by not destroying parts of it to the point that they are lost. To achieve this, one must have respect for all things. Sometimes this is not easy.

One of our teachings that helps us to work in this direction is known as the Seven Grandfather teachings. These seven teachings are: Love, Respect, Courage, Humility, Truth, Honesty & Wisdom. Each and every one of the questions that come to us in life can be answered by thinking of the Circle of Life and the Seven Grandfather Teachings.

What I find is that I may not take the time I need to think about these things. This is something simple but hard to achieve at times. The saying, "taking time to smell the roses," is very true. We all need to make time where we can be "alone." This will allow us to think about our life and the direction we are heading. This also allows us to see the beauty in nature and in turn have respect for it.

A teaching I follow is the use of Asemah 'tobacco.' We are taught to always use Asemah in a respectful way. We are told to greet each new day by offering a bit of Asemah by laying some on the ground near a tree or using a pwaagan (pipe). This



also helps us to start the new day in a good way by having good energy and positive thoughts. We also are taught to use Asemah as an offering when we harvest something from Mother Earth. This helps us to remember the importance of whatever we may be taking to use. This is to show respect so that we do not take more than we need and therefore do not harm the resource.

When the newcomers to our land saw how beautiful and plentiful the land was on arrival, I believe they did not understand that our teachings and ways of looking at the world were the reason everything was pristine when they saw this new place.

This way of looking at the world and how we are to fit into it translates into a simple thing such as the way I dance as a traditional dancer. I have seen in Hollywood movies where it shows us stomping around on the ground while we are dancing. The truth is we are taught to step lightly on Mother Earth, just as we are to walk on Mother Earth in life without leaving much of a footprint. As little disturbance as possible is the way to go. So

therefore we step as lightly as possible while dancing.

Another example of why the area we inhabited looked as it did is what is known as the Seventh Generation philosophy. This way of looking at our world describes how we are to do things. For example, if we are building something, we need to think about how this will affect those coming in the seventh generation. Will whatever we are doing now have a negative or positive effect on the place and those that will be coming?

In reflecting on what it means to “Walk

in a Good Way,” it means many things and is truly a way of going through life with leaving the smallest footprint possible, and thinking carefully about the choices you make. The best way to get started is to take time out from our everyday lives to pause and look around ourselves. When we slow down, it gives us time to think about how we are treating our fellow human beings, how are we treating Mother Earth and all that she has to offer.

Learn to be in balance, stay positive, work to be a helper and a nurturer. Strive to have a good rhythm/balance with all

things. Leave as little disturbance as possible. Look for the beauty in Mother Nature’s creations.

Ask yourself this question:

Am I Walking in a Good Way?



ERAHS Vice President, Craig Handley welcomes Hank Bailey to the museum.

THANK YOU.....and you.....and you.....for all your help!

When one puts on an event or program, more than likely, it took a “bunch” of special people to make it happen. This is so true when describing how “Noble Christmas/Victorian Era” came about.

Thank you..... docents and greeters.

Thank you..... Committee Members who had the vision.

Thank you..... volunteers who set up, took down and packed away the decorations and exhibit.

Thank you..... those who baked the goodies and hosted the Open House/Preview Night.

Thank you..... Margaret V. for playing holiday music on our antique piano.

Thank you..... members who loaned items to be used in the exhibit.

Thank you..... community members who visited our Museum as part of their Holiday Celebration - Elk Rapids style!

Thank you..... writers who wrote articles and publicized our Event.

Thank you..... Christ the King Church (Acme) for the loan of Christmas decorations.

Lastly, THANK YOU to the Library for agreeing to be part of this exhibit. We were so fortunate to have the building we were highlighting still a vibrant part of our community. What a great community experience this was for us!

--Glenn Neumann and Karen Szymanski, Co-Chairman

Yes! I want to support The Elk Rapids Historical Museum!

Gift Amount: \$50 \$100 \$200 \$500 \$1,000 \$2,500 Other

I have enclosed a check payable to ERAHS

Please print clearly:

Name _____

Summer address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Winter address (if different) _____

City/State/Zip Code _____

Phone _____

E-Mail _____

I wish to be recognized for this donation Yes No

If yes, please list my/our name(s) as _____

I would like to give my gift in Honor of in Memory of

Name _____

(please include a note with acknowledgement information)

I would like to volunteer for the following:

- Development
- Programs & Events
- Finance
- Technology
- Assist Archivist
- Greeter

The Elk Rapids Area Historical Society is a 501C (3) non-profit corporation. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Thank you for your support!
www.elkrapidshistory.org

Mail to: ERAHS, P.O. Box 2, Elk Rapids MI 49629-0002



Elk Rapids Area Historical Society

Post Office Box 2, Elk Rapids, Michigan 49629-0002

Contact: Dan LeBlond, President (231) 264-5692 or (231) 264-8984, Email: president@elkrapidshistory.org, Web site: www.elkrapidshistory.org

Deliver to:



The snow is finally gone and once again it's time to look to the water for recreation. Some things never seem to change.

Visit us online at www.elkrapidshistory.org and "like" us on facebook.