

# NORTHWOODS GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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P. O. Box 1132, Rhinelander, WI 54501

December, 2020

## \*\*\*RHINELANDER CHRISTMAS\*\*\*

On December 16, 1939, *The Rhinelander Daily News* announced that the Rotary Club would hold a "Yule Lighting Contest" for the 3rd consecutive year. It was reported that a number of outdoor decorations are now available such as composition boards, metal foils, clear or colored cellophane, natural and artificial floral materials, floodlights and spotlights with lens and reflector. This had an emphasis on "outdoor" but could be combined with a scene from inside the house with various lights on the windows, poinsettia plants in full bloom, etc. (Continued below)

### DECEMBER 14, 2020 – 6 P.M. ZOOM MEETING

Meetings of the Northwoods Genealogical Society are "typically" held on the second Monday of the month (except July) in the downstairs meeting room of the Rhinelander District Library. Membership dues are \$10.00 individual, \$11.00 family.

**CHAIRMAN:** Augden Windelborn

**VICE CHAIRMAN:** JoAnne Rajek

**SECRETARY:** Martha Cole

**TREASURER:** Gloria Rahlf

**DIRECTORS AT LARGE:**

Ila Turgeon

Jan Jacobs

**NEWSLETTER:** Gloria Rahlf

**WEBSITE:** [sites.google.com/site/northwoodsgensocl](https://sites.google.com/site/northwoodsgensocl)

**NEXT MEETING:** January 11<sup>th</sup>: Zoom Meeting

#### Upcoming Events:

**STATE HISTORICAL LIBRARY, MADISON, WISCONSIN – LIMITED HOURS, SEE WEBSITE.**

**FAMILY HISTORY LIBRARY – SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH – CLOSED!** Offering free online consultations!

**RHINELANDER DISTRICT LIBRARY – CURBSIDE PICKUP ONLY – SEE WEBSITE**

**ROOTS TECH CONNECT 2021:** Register for the free and virtual Roots Tech conference

**THIS MONTH: ZOOM MEETING.** Last month's Zoom meeting went well. **WATCH YOUR INBOX FOR A ZOOM INVITATION.** Ugly Christmas sweaters are encouraged and have beverage of your choice handy for toasting.

**RHINELANDER CHRISTMAS (continued):** In December, 1944, the 'lighting contest' was still being held but there were no new Christmas lights available, so everyone would have to use what they had. On December 3, 1943, it was reported that the Rhinelander banks were paying out a total of \$42,369 in Christmas Savings Funds. A letter to Santa from November 26, 1929, ask for "silk pajamas, Victrola, electric iron and a flapper's doll." My brother wants "skis, airplane, car, and a wagon", and some fruit and candy for both. Submitted by Gay and Tome O'Malley

**"FIGGY PUDDING"** of the "we won't go until we get some" song lyrics. Recipe: One pound of figs cut fine; 1/2 pound of bread crumbs, 1/2 pound of suet (shortening); 12 oz. of brown sugar, a bit nutmeg, 2 eggs, one teacup of milk. Mix all together and steam for four hours. This pudding is very dark, sticky, and dense; not like the American pudding we know. Comment: I guess one could have a good visit while waiting for the pudding to steam.

**CHRISTMAS SEALS** program began in 1907, inspired by Emily Perkins Bissell of Denmark. She designed holiday seals to sell for one penny each at post offices. The funds would fight tuberculosis, America's leading cause of death at the time. Today, the American Lung Association also funds lung cancer and asthma research.

**WHAT ETHNIC PATH DO YOUR CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS FOLLOW?** Ethnic traditions vary widely. In Austria, for instance, the typical family had an Advent Wreath made from evergreen twigs and decorated with ribbons and 4 candles – one for each Sunday in Advent. Most towns had a Christmas market from late November to early December. Almost every town had a large Christmas tree in the town square, decorated with gold and silver ornaments and stars made from straw. A family's Christmas started around 4 p.m. on Christmas Eve when the tree was brought in and decorated and lit for the first time and carols sung. The most famous carol is 'Stille Nacht' (*Silent Night*) written in Austria in 1818. Some children believed that "Christkind" decorated the tree and left presents for them under the tree. Some children also got a present from "St. Nicholas" on December 6<sup>th</sup>, who was often accompanied by "Krampus", a big horned monster clothed in rags and carrying chains, symbolizing punishment for the bad children. The main Christmas meal was eaten on Christmas Eve which historically consisted of "fried carp". Desserts were chocolate, apricot cake, Christmas cookies, honey gingerbread, and almond cookies shaped like a horse shoe. Check out this website [www.whychristmas.com](http://www.whychristmas.com) to see the traditions that your ancestors likely shared and others like "Giant Lantern Festival" in the Philippines, "Kentucky Fried Christmas Dinner" in Japan, or "Yule Lads" in Iceland.