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STURGEON BAY Historical Society Foundation, INC

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PRESERVING STURGEON BAY'S HISTORY. TELLING
STURGEON BAY'S STORY, ONE BUILDING AT A TIME

Seeds of Change: Summer Project Advances Mission of the Door County Granary Rehabilitation

by Beth Renstrom and Kim Krueger

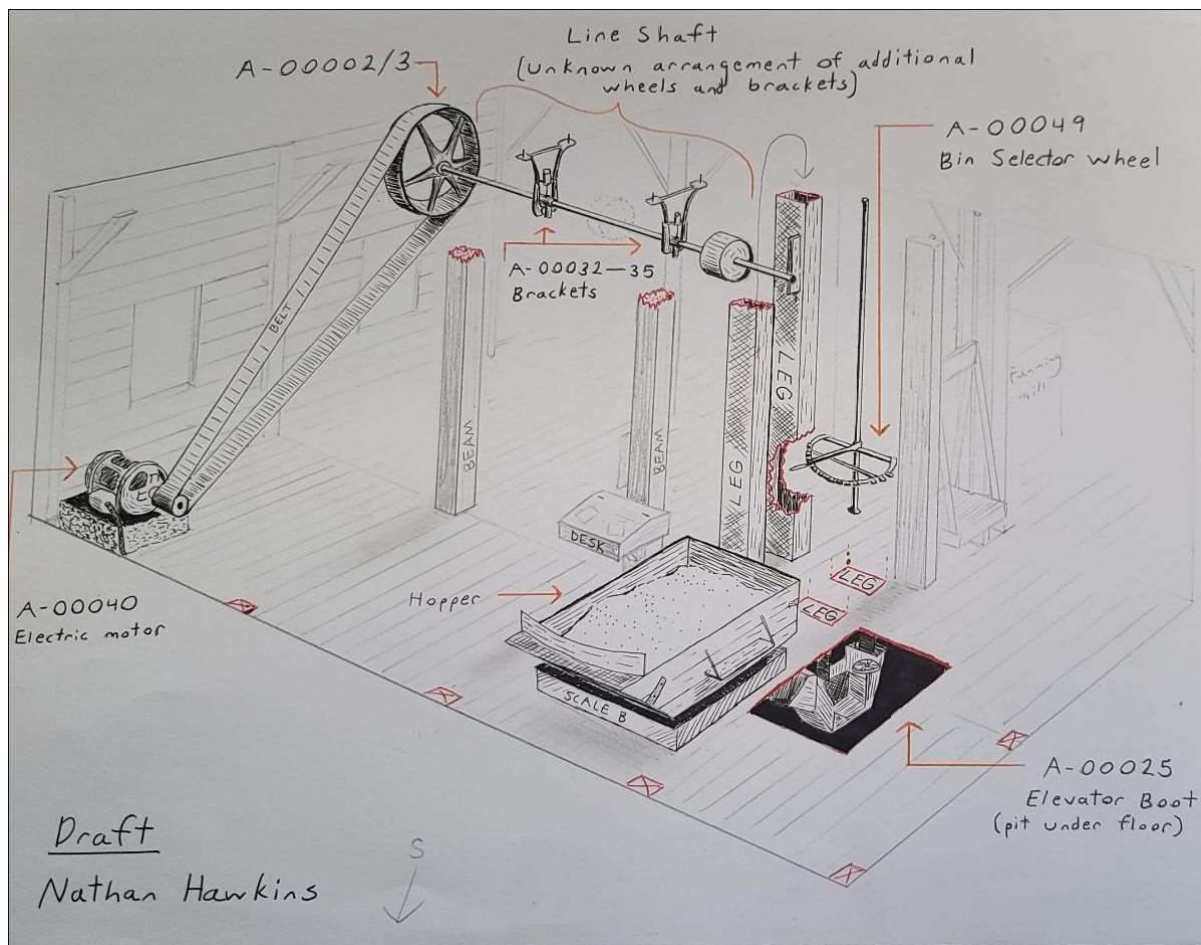


What IS a grain elevator, anyway? Essentially, it's a giant machine that processes and houses dry grains like corn and wheat. Grain unloaded at ground level is raised mechanically through the building, then stored in huge bins, using the power of gravity to pour the bulk grain into the bins. Gravity reduces the amount of power and manual labor required. Elevators emerged in the United States in the late 1800s, as agriculture expanded from subsistence farming to a cash-market economy. Grain elevators were - and still are - an essential part of life in rural America. Their preservation is vital to understanding the history of the American Midwest and food production. Door County Granary summer project associate Nathan Hawkins of Terre Haute, IN, stands amid the many artifacts saved from the Teweles and Brandeis Grain Elevator.



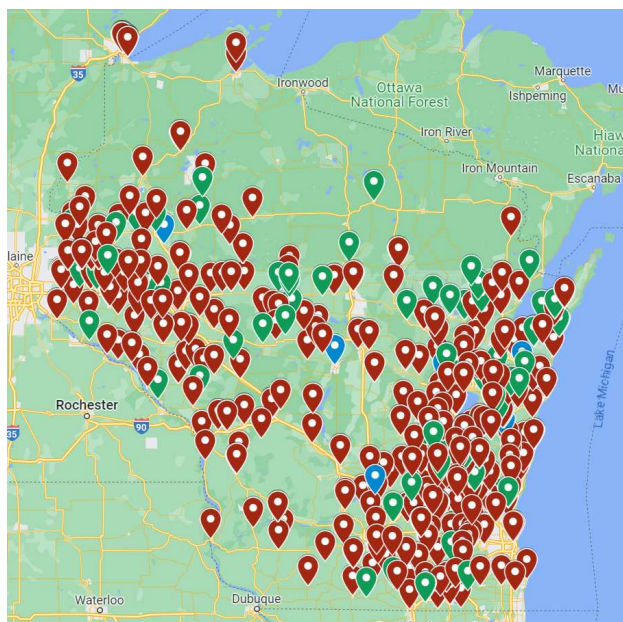
Hawkins, a rising freshman at Carleton College in Northfield, MN, assisted SBHSF Board Member Beth Renstrom in cataloging over 60 objects that were once part of this massive machine. Each item was tagged and photographed, and then its physical description, location in storage, and purpose (if known) was entered into a master spreadsheet. Ultimately this information will be used to decide which objects will be physically displayed in the repurposed granary, and which will be digitally preserved.

Hawkins created this schematic drawing illustrating how key mechanical artifacts were used in the operation of the Teweles and Brandeis Grain Elevator.



His research enables us to envision previously unidentified objects as essential elements in the Granary's function as a useful tool for the agricultural community of bygone Sturgeon Bay.

The map shown depicts the locations of over 450 extant and lost wooden grain elevators throughout the state of Wisconsin, documented by Hawkins.



This data is valuable historical information showing the growth and decline of grain elevators in Great Lakes port and other rural towns.

The creation of grain elevators enabled farmers to take advantage of economies of scale, leading to greater food production and growth in communities throughout the state.

One Last Hurdle: Door County Granary Project Works to Access Federal Funds

The Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation has been diligently working with the USDA Rural Development to secure the \$3.3M in congressionally directed spending earmarked for the Door County Granary in January of 2023. This summer was spent fulfilling USDA requirements, such as completing a Floodplain Evaluation. The Granary, once located at the end of a dock, sits on filled lakebed within a flood hazard zone. Fortunately, when new pilings were sunk and a new foundation poured in 2022, the Granary was raised well out of the floodplain. Project Manager Nicole Matson worked closely with USDA environmental coordinator and hydrogeologists to complete the 8-step process which included a detailed technical report and the publishing of several notices giving the public the opportunity to comment on the proposed project's impact. The evaluation was completed and received concurrence on August 11.

Just when we thought all requirements had been fulfilled, SBHSF received notice that a State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review, called a Section 106, was also required to access the funding.

Historian Larry Desotell, in a lecture last spring, called the Door County Granary “the Little Granary that Could.” At 122 years old, the Teweles and Brandies Grain Elevator (aka the Door County Granary) has survived much. Many grain elevators, because of the combustible nature of grain and their nearness to train tracks, succumb to fire. (The outer steel cladding serves the purpose of protecting the underlying wood from railway sparks.) Our granary has survived the threats and ravages of time along with a more recent raze order and two moves across the bridge. During this time, the Granary has not only survived, but thrived as the community learns more about how elevators work and the historical significance of our particular elevator.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that when federal funds are used on a project, a review is necessary to “take into account” the potential impacts on historic properties. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Teweles and

Brandeis Grain Elevator is considered a historic resource for its significant contribution to commerce and the economy. Above, SBHSF receives designation from SHPO for the Teweles and Brandeis Grain Elevator to be added to the Wisconsin State Historic Registry in Madison, WI, August 2017.



SBHSF and LA DALLMAN Architects will be working with SHPO to fulfill its review. We expect this to take one to two months. Once the Section 106 review is complete and we receive SHPO concurrence, the USDA will release funding and construction on the next phase of the Granary will begin. We'll keep you posted!

Photo credit: www.centerlineforum.org/shpo-lists-grain-elevator



State Hires Wood Expert to Stabilize Potawatomi Tower

by Debra Fitzgerald

Originally published in the September 1, 2023 issue of the [Peninsula Pulse](#)

"The state hired the same company to do the job that assessed the tower four years ago for the Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation (SBHSF): Dan Tingley with Timber Restoration Services (TRS) in Oregon, also known as Wood Research and Development. The SBHSF had hired the company in 2019 to assess the tower, and in May of this year, the state hired the company to update that first inspection."

"A copy of the Aug. 23 letter from the State Department of Administration to TRS delivered a fully executed contract to the firm to do the work for \$467,371 beginning on or after Aug. 24, with completion required by Nov. 30."

Photo: Potawatomi Recreation Tower postcard circa 1956

[Read the Full Article HERE](#)

The Sturgeon Bay Historical Society Foundation, Inc., founded in 2016, is a 501(c)3 organization of volunteers dedicated to preserving Sturgeon Bay's living history, which defines our community character and cultural evolution, for future generations through advocacy, preservation and education. We do this by saving, restoring, repurposing, and sharing the story of Sturgeon Bay's authentic historic structures.

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