



Calumet County Historical Society Museum

**Open Sundays June-September 1:00 to 4:00
or by appointment**

2430.12

1922 Gold Class Ring Returned to Family!

By Jake Follis Summer of 2020

This summer, we decided to visit my brother, Monte, and his family in Chilton. As Monte and I discussed plans in advance of the trip, he suggested that I bring my metal detectors so that we could go hunting one day. He promised to get some good permissions, so I was excited about the opportunity to do some detecting in a new place.

A few days ago, the day finally came for us to go and we decided to begin by hunting the yard of a home that was built in the 1920s, is on one of the main streets in the town, and is currently owned by my brother's friend Jim. When we pulled up to the house I was immediately excited. I could tell by the look of the home and the location that there was a good chance that I would at least come across some old coins



I started hunting in the backyard, but quickly moved to the front. I liked the look of the old stone sidewalk that led from the house to the road. The first coin I dug was a wheat penny...which was a good sign. I kept hunting near the sidewalk and I continued to find coins, but nothing as old as the wheat penny. Of course, I was finding other small pieces of trash, too. I was starting to get disappointed.



After a while I moved from the sidewalk area to other areas of the yard. Eventually, I was under a tree and I got a signal that was in the gold range. I wasn't convinced it would be anything worthwhile. In fact, I considered not digging it at all because I had received similar signals in the yard that didn't amount to anything. But, I thought I might as well dig, so I did.

The ground was slightly moist, so it was easy to dig and the plugs were coming up in nice clumps all day. This plug was in an area of the yard that was shaded, so the grass was not very thick and there were some bare spots on the ground. I pulled a clump of dirt out of the ground and I couldn't believe my eyes.

Gold!

I put the clump back in the hole. Took a picture. And motioned for my brother to come over to where I was.

I pointed out the shiny gold to him, picked up the clump, and removed the gold. It was a small ring! I could clearly make out a "22" and within the "shield" design I thought I could see what

seemed like the letters "CHS."

It immediately hit me...this could be a 1922 Chilton High School class ring! Honestly, I was still a bit skeptical. Did they even have class rings in 1922? Would someone in this small town of Chilton, Wisconsin have a gold class ring in 1922? As I cleaned off the ring, I looked on the inside and could make out the initials "E.M.K." It WAS a class ring! I

also could make out 10k. Now I was determined to find the owner.

Monte went to get Jim and we showed him the ring and asked him if he knew who some of the previous owners of the home were. He did not know, so he asked his neighbor, who also did not know. We decided that when we were done hunting for the day we would start researching, but I couldn't wait.

Even after we moved on from Jim's house to another home, all I could think about was, "Who is EMK?" So, I found some shade and called the public library, hoping to find a 1922 Chilton High School Yearbook. There was no answer.

I then called the Chilton Historical Society. I spoke with a man named Terry. Terry was excited about my find and suggested I go to the library. I headed that way. When I walked in the door, the librarian said, "Are you the guy with the ring?" I guess word travels fast!

The librarian informed me that there were no yearbooks in 1922. But, there just happened to be a member of the Historical Society at the library right then. His name was Herb and he thought he could find out the original owner of the home. I left him my email address and left the library. Within a couple hours, Herb had made an important discovery!

The original owner of the home was Charles Krug who had a daughter named Ethel. Ethel Krug - E.K. According to an obituary, Ethel would have been 17 years old in 1922. Graduating age!

I then began my Google search and I found multiple obituaries that tell the story of Ethel Mabel Krug. According to the obituaries, Ethel had two daughters. I Googled their names. They owned and operated an orchard in WI that is 2 hours away from Chilton.

The next day I called the orchard. A woman answered. It was Ethel's daughter!

This past Thursday, on my way out of Wisconsin. I drove to the orchard and returned Ethel's ring to her two daughters.

It was an amazing feeling to return the ring to its rightful owners. It was also amazing to see how that ring brought about memories. Ethel's daughters shared pictures and stories with me about their mom, who had passed away in 2002 at the age of 98! They had never heard about the ring and they had never seen it before. It was a piece of their mother's story that they didn't know existed. They had never lived in Chilton, themselves. They had grown up in Chicago and had periodically visited their grandparents house in Chilton when they were children. The house where I had found the ring. They had played in that yard, never knowing that a few inches below the dirt where they walked there was a gold ring that belonged to their mom!

Even though Ethel's daughters can no longer hold her hand, they can at least hold a ring that was once on that hand...and I hope that as they hold the ring the memories of their mother make them smile.

