



HISTORY IS YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

JULY 2014

WISCONSIN HISTORY TOUR

The Wisconsin State Historical Society is sponsoring an outreach program this summer that involves traveling exhibits of history-related stories of various communities. Starting August 2nd the tour will be at the Verona Public Library. During the week of August 19 to 23 history will come alive when authors, genealogists and storytellers join the tour to present programs for all ages. The Verona tour will end on August 23 with a celebration of an "Old World Experience." Watch for news of the tour and join our neighbors for the party.

DAIRIES OF FITCHBURG

The dairy industry has a long history in Fitchburg starting with local creameries where farmers brought milk to be made into butter and cheese. Are you aware of commercial dairies that were located in Fitchburg? Many people who now live in Fitchburg remember the Bowman Dairy located on Fish Hatchery Road. (This is not to be confused with a large Bowman Dairy in Chicago). At one time there was a circular milking parlor attached to the facility that allowed families to come and watch the cows as they were being milked. The parlor has recently been renovated for other uses. But before the Bowman Dairy there were other dairies.

Bancroft Dairy, which was long

associated with Madison, got its start in Fitchburg on the Bancroft farm, which was located on what is now Glacier Valley Road. The dairy was started by Ben and John Bancroft and was known at various times as Bancroft Brothers, Wood Bend Farm Dairy, and Valley Spring Farm. The name was officially changed to Bancroft Dairy before it moved to Madison where it was located at 1010 South Park Street. The brothers sold the operation in 1933. The Madison location was well known for its dairy fountain serving malts, sundaes and sodas to the ice cream lovers of Madison. It went through several ownerships until it was mothballed in 2004. A paper written by a twenty-three year employee of the dairy, Vern Smith, is on file at the FHS archives. He tells interesting tidbits of the work he did, the innovations that made his work a pleasure (even though hard) and his admiration of his employers.

In the 1920s and 30s a small dairy operated by Mr. McCoy was located on Syene Road near what is now Clayton Road. A natural spring cooled the rich milk from Guernsey cows before it was made into ice cream. The archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society has photos showing people enjoying a treat at the McCoy Ice Cream Shop located at 507 State Street in Madison. Before the advent of home freezers many Fitchburg neighbors purchased ice cream at the Fitchburg location to take home for dessert. The

containers used were much like the carryout boxes from today's Chinese restaurants.

In later years Ben Meek operated a small farm on Fish Hatchery Road where he raised goats and sold their milk. Goat's milk was purported to be easily digested by people suffering with stomach ulcers.

Through the years there have probably been other farms in Fitchburg that sold milk to customers. An elusive evidence of this is an old, small cardboard bottle cap sent to the archives that is printed "Fitchburg Dairy Madison Wisconsin". There is no date or other information to identify where the dairy was located.

PHOTO DONATION

A recent donation to the photo archives of the FHS is an enlarged photo (ca.1910) of the business section of Fitchburg, the area along Wendt Road. The photo was taken about the same time as the photo used for the mural in the Fitchburg Room at the library. We extend sincere gratitude to Shelby and Bonnie Alcott of Greenfield, Wisconsin, who discovered the photo and sought out the FHS to make the donation. Research shows the photographer, Sherwin Gillett, grew up in the house that is located at 2627 S. Seminole Highway. After leaving Fitchburg, Mr. Gillett worked as a freelance photographer with a studio in Muscoda, Wisconsin. There is a large collection of his photos in the Archives of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

CAPITOL REGION MEETING

The 2014 Capitol Regional Meeting of the Wisconsin Historical Society will be held at the Brodhead High School on Thursday August 14. Highlights include "Bringing Local History Online", Understanding Collections Preservation, a regional round-table discussion and tours of the Depot Museum and the Kelch Aviation Museum. Lunch will be served. All members of the Fitchburg Historical Society are invited to attend. A \$20.00 reservation fee is due by August 8th. Registration forms can be

downloaded at info@brodheadhistory.org. or by calling Pat Weeden, 608-576-6645.

FROM THE BOOK SHELF

Preserving Your Family Photographs by Maureen Taylor is on the bookshelf of the FHS office (not the Fitchburg Room). The author gives detailed instructions on preserving precious family photos from years ago or current digital images. The book is available to members of the FHS to sign out by leaving a message at the FHS.

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CELEBRATING 170 YEARS

On June 29th, 2014, Mayor Shawn Pfaff extended congratulations in the form of a "Proclamation" to the Kinney family on the 170th Anniversary of ownership of their farm on Irish lane. Two brothers, Andrew and Michael Kinney, who originally came from County Mayo, Ireland, established what became a 200-acre farm in Fitchburg, Wisconsin in 1844. Andrew and his wife, Mary Jane, and their four children built their log home on the current farm site. There are currently five Kinney residences on the farm, which include nine members of the 7th generation. 160 people from ten states attended the big celebration June 28th and 29th. There were many family stories and much genealogy sharing as extended family members got to know one another. The weekend was filled with goodwill, laughter, and fun as the Kinney clan came to know so many of their relatives, and discover their common Irish roots.

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