



HISTORY IS YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW
September 2003

GENERAL MEETING

It is once again time for our fall meeting. This year's meeting will be held on October 19, 2003 in the lower level dining room of the Fitchburg Community Center. The time for the meeting is 1:30 P.M.. The theme will be Fitchburg's railroads. We will have a speaker who will give us an overview of railroading in Wisconsin and then we will ask our members to add their memories of the railroads that ran through Fitchburg. Fitchburg was served by two railroads, which ran over three rail lines. The main line of the CNW ran north and south through Syene and Oregon to Chicago. The CNW also had a line that ran east and west through the northern part of Fitchburg to Verona and points west. The Illinois Central Railroad traversed south to north near the western border of the township. The trains came from Freeport Illinois to a station on West Washington Avenue. We would like to hear stories of all three lines. If anyone has photos of trains going through Fitchburg now is the time to dig them out and share them with the members.



PHOTOS FROM KOHLS

Many of you may have noticed the photos which graced the walls of the former Kohl's grocery store on Fish Hatchery Road are now gone. The management of the Copp's store has graciously donated them to the Fitchburg

Historical Society. We have had them cleaned and repaired and they are now ready to be displayed on the walls of the Fitchburg City Hall. We are indebted to the Copps for their generosity.

DAIRY FARM BREAKFAST



The Dane County Dairy Farm Breakfast held in June on the O'Brien Brothers farm was a huge success. After a gloomy weather forecast of possible rain the day turned out to be gloriously sunny. A large crowd of people accepted the invitation to eat breakfast under a tent and tour a working dairy farm. Many of these people stopped at the tent featuring ag-related products AND the Fitchburg Historical Society. We were able to present a nice display of farm articles including the butter churn used by Ella O'Dea Lacy that was pictured in a 1933 newspaper article in the Capitol Times. The display also included a grain cradle, corn planting and shelling equipment, lanterns, and photos of how farm work was done before the modern convenience of tractors. We had a photo arrangement of the process of haying that ranges from 1897 to the present. Children and adults were happy to have their pictures taken in our cut-out versions of "Fitchburg Gothic" and Clara the cow. Member Rich Eggleston was our "unofficial" official photographer. He took numerous quality photos around the grounds during the morning. Our hats off to him and a hearty thank you!

RECENT PROJECTS

One fine day in July four members gathered at our headquarters and cleaned books and boxes and the storage area in general. Because of a break down of the heating and cooling system in the old city hall building many articles had developed a mildew problem. The system has been fixed and it was time to get rid of the mildew. With the help of some elbow grease and sunshine we seem to have conquered (at least for the present) the problem. It was a pleasant way to reacquaint ourselves with some of the historical items we have in our archives.



The display case in the lower level of the Community Center has been changed to a back-to-school theme. We have used a student desk to center the exhibit. The crowning items however are the actual teacher's bell from Stoner School which was a gift from Gordon and Rosalie Vroman and a floor standing globe from the Fish Hatchery School which was a gift from Linda Byrne Kriz. The teacher's desk from the Fitchburg Center School, which is a gift from Doug Stebbins, is too large to use in the exhibit so we have used an enlarged photo of it.

Our most recent project involves the Fitchburg Police Department. We have received an early badge, a uniform patch and the uniform name pin from Mayor Tom Clauder. We hope to gather similar name pins from other retired officers. Our police department has grown from a township constable to a staff of approximately thirty-six officers. The growth of the department is another important aspect of Fitchburg's history. We would like to do a similar project about the growth of the



FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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fire department. The fire department started as a completely volunteer organization and is now comprised of volunteer, full time, and fire student personnel. We would appreciate any gifts of information concerning the fire department from its roots to the present.

OTHER HAPPENINGS

Reporters from Madison Magazine have contacted several people in Fitchburg in regard to an article about Fitchburg to be featured in the October issue. Be on the lookout for it.

The planning department of the City of Fitchburg has also contacted the FHS. Our activities and acquisitions are being factored into the long range planning efforts of the city. We have been able to present a favorable picture to them. Our work in preserving the history of Fitchburg will not go unnoticed. We need to continue our efforts to collect meaningful parts of Fitchburg's past and of course our present.

The Fitchburg Farmers Market was in need of someone to manage an ice cream social on August 14. Steve Leverantz, a member of the Fitchburg Center management team, called and asked if we would fill in for the group originally scheduled. It was a hot day and the ice cream was a huge success. Besides dishing up ice cream cones and sundaes we had a table with FHS brochures, books and general information. Hopefully people took note of our articles. Part of the proceeds of the event will be used to defray expenses at the Oscar Mayer observatory. The observatory is in dire need of paint and repair.

