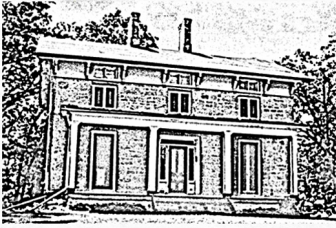


Fitchburg Historical Society



Fox Hall



McCoy House



Mann House

Fitchburg, Wisconsin

History is Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

JANUARY 2018

A NEW YEAR

Another year has passed and we are all set for a prosperous 2018 at the Fitchburg Historical Society. Plans are underway for the Annual Meeting to be held on April 22. The topic for the meeting is the 100th anniversary of the Spanish Flu that took so many lives in 1918. That meeting will also be the time to renew memberships.

FALL MEETING

On October 29th Adam Dorn, Public Education Director from the Fitchburg Fire Department, talked about the department. He gave a brief history from being an all-volunteer department, which was on call from the county by pager to establishing the current permanent department in 1971 with Herman Pfund as the first chief. The FFD has changed from the all-volunteer department to a current staff of 82 people including firefighters that live on the premises, paid on-call, interns, and other support staff. He added figures as to the number of fire department related actions over the last few years. Most calls occur in the northern third of Fitchburg where there is the most population. Improving response time is always being worked on. Chief Pulvermacher spoke in the second half of the meeting telling about the quality of service and the training of the current staff. The FFD is responsible for emergency responses for fire,

rescue, and medical support. He noted the fire department is involved with prevention, education, and investigation as well as putting out actual fires. The opening of new fire station #2 was explained and he spoke of plans for fire station #3 in the future.

PROGRESS ON MINI-GRANT

In July 2017 we obtained a matching funds mini grant to digitize our collection and to develop a robust database that could incorporate these images. This project was funded in part by a grant-in-aid from Wisconsin Historical Foundation, Inc., administered by Wisconsin Council for Local History, Inc. and by matching donations from our FHS members. Our ultimate goal is to place at least parts of our digital collection on our website to make it possible to view and search from remote locations. Our first step was to buy the necessary hardware and software. These items have been purchased and are now being used. Over the last few months a working database was developed and continues to be refined. Of prime importance is for our databases to accommodate images and searchable pdf files. To date we have scanned and optimized nearly 800 photographs in our collection and stored them as both high and low-resolution images. The high-resolution images are linked to our database. Each photograph is given an ID number, subject and description information on the

location of the original collection item. The database is searchable. At present this file is placed on our website (www.fitchburghistory.org) under the main menu FHS Collection. The file is searchable using the browser find function and is periodically updated with new records. High-resolution images can be obtained by contacting us. The newsletters from 1989 thru 2017 are also searchable from the same site. Both files are large and may take a rather long time to load.

PIONEER CEMETERIES OAK HALL

Are you aware of the two pioneer cemeteries in Fitchburg? In 1854 a group of settlers sought to



have a burying ground for their families. A piece of land in Section 32 on what is now Highway

M was purchased and the Oak Hall Cemetery Association was established. By-Laws were formulated and lots were sold. By 1987 the Association had dwindled to two families and it was not feasible to continue. State rules on Cemetery Associations mandates that if the association is dissolved the cemetery reverts to the municipality where it is located. The Oak Hall Cemetery became part of the City of Fitchburg and was put into the hands of the Parks Department. The department kept the grounds mowed through the summers and placed flags at the graves of veterans on Memorial Day. In 1999 the City of Fitchburg purchased land along the east and north side of the original cemetery and began selling lots to interested parties. A list of the original burials is on the www.fitchburghistory.org website.

ST. MARY CEMETERY

The other pioneer cemetery, known as St. Mary's Cemetery, is located in Section 35 on Highway M, 2.6 miles east of the Oak Hall site. That cemetery was founded in 1857 when Barney McGlynn deeded two acres of land to the Archdiocese of Milwaukee to be used as a Catholic Church. The

site contained the church building, a parsonage and a cemetery. When the church building became too small for the growing congregation a new church was built in the Village of Oregon. Burials continued at the original site until 1898. After that time burials took place at the new St. Mary Cemetery in Oregon. Some of the bodies that had been buried in Fitchburg were re-interred at the cemetery in Oregon. Others were re-interred in the Catholic cemetery in Madison. However it is a general consensus that some bodies remained at the site. Through the years the cemetery fell to ruin; brush and brambles took over. When it was deemed necessary to clean up the cemetery it was done by removing the remaining head stones and clearing away the brush and brambles. The remaining headstones were piled along the edge of the cemetery where passing motorists stopped and helped themselves. An area farmer took it upon himself to plant corn on the site. Steps were taken to make sure this did not happen again. The Wisconsin Department of Corrections who operated a facility next to the property, agreed to mow the area and keep it presentable. In 1998 the Fitchburg Historical Society along with Holy Mother of Consolation Church in Oregon and the Oregon Area Historical Society rededicated the cemetery. Some of the tombstones had been recovered and plantings were put in by the Department of Corrections. Decorative fencing was installed and a local stone was moved in to hold a plaque describing the area. A list of most of the original burials is found on the FHS website. More information about the cemetery and the church can be found in the book *Holy Mother of Consolation Church, A History 1856 - 2006*. A copy of the book is on the non-circulating shelf of the FHS.

