



*Richfield Historical Society
Box 268
Richfield, WI 53076
richfieldhistoricalsociety.org*

Officers *President* *Recording Secretary* *Corresponding Secretary* *Treasurer* *Past President*
Pete Samson *Mary Kokan* *Joni Crivello* *Lois Hessenhauer* *Susan Sawdey*

Directors *Linda Aicher* *Dan Jorgenson* *Doug Maschman* *George Piontek* *Connie Thoma* *Eva Tuinstra*

Committees

Fall 2023 V26N3

BlacksmithShop
Kathy Lauenstein

Collections
Deanna Einwalter

Education
Kathy Weberg

Event Coordinator
Daryl Grier

Historic Sites
Quint Mueller/ Herb Lofy

Library/Program/ Newsletter
Marge Holzbog/ Connie Thoma

LWC Welcome Center
Ruth Jeffords

Marketing
Doug Wenzel

Membership
Dorothy Marks

Mill House
Clara Birkel/Cindy Schmechel

Mill Restoration
Al Mayer

*Pioneer Homestead /
Long Range Planning*
Susan Sawdey

Project Coordinator
Al Mayer

Volunteer Coordinator
Sharon Lofy



Messer Mayer Mill – 150 years!

The Richfield Historical Society’s Messer Mayer Mill’s 150th celebration commemorated its building in 1873 by Andrew Messer and its subsequent ownership and operation by the Mayer family with C. W. Mayer operating the Mill in its heyday

*Its restoration, since 1997 by the Richfield Historical Society, has been made possible by the many many hours of dedicated volunteer work allowing today’s generation to experience this historic structure and its contents. **A THANK YOU to all the volunteers who have made the Mill what it is today.***

The Great Depression, however, had a much different effect on Wisconsin's dairy industry. In 1933, several Wisconsin counties faced violence as farmers sought to hold the delivery of milk until they received better prices. Consumers had reduced expenses by cutting their grocery bills. Families tended to use inexpensive substitutes like oleomargarine in place of butter. Eventually, three dairy producer strikes ensued.

Near Shawano (1933), National Guardsmen were sworn in as deputies and confronted dairy farmers with tear gas and clubs. As noted in *The History of Wisconsin*, one Waukesha farmer described a gang of strikers engaged in stopping and dumping milk trucks: "Yesterday, they went thru Richfield, and there they ran into a bunch of Nat. Guard & deputies (who) ... surrounded the truck while one man with a gun lined them up and the rest pounded the hell out of them & I mean pounded. One man has a fractured skull." Each of the three strikes was short lived. They fostered violence but did not result in the higher prices for milk that farmers were demanding.

By 1938, there were over two million head of dairy cattle in Wisconsin. Wisconsin produced more fluid milk, more condensed and evaporated milk, and more cheese than any other state. Cheese types included brick, muenster, Swiss, Limburger, American, and Italian types.

The state produced 160,000,000 pounds of creamery butter! Wisconsin exported about 80,000 head of breeding stock to many areas of the world. Based on the products noted above, it was no surprise that almost half of the state's farm income came directly from milk. Holsteins and Guernseys were the dominant dairy breeds. They were followed by the introduction of Swiss and Jersey cattle.

Besides producing butter, what did farmers do with their abundant supply of milk? In the early 1940s, there were approximately 2500 cheese factories in Wisconsin. All had a similar look as they were built according to a standardized plan (supplied by the University of Wisconsin Agricultural College): long and low, white-painted siding, gable roof, and a large smokestack. Milk would be delivered by farmers in the morning and spilled into a copper vat which was heated from below. Rennet (made from the inner membrane of a calf's stomach) was added to coagulate the milk. When curds formed, the cheesemaker tested the process, literally, hands-on. He would plunge his bare arm into the vat and feel the curds with his fingers. He used a 'Swiss Harp' (a curd breaker, so named because



Wisconsin Cheese Varieties

of its closely spaced wires) to scoop the mass of curds on to a tray. The whey was pressed out on a wooden table and the curd placed in containers for curing. The temperature had to be kept uniform, and the cheese was treated at all hours of the day. The cheesemaker usually lived in the factory.

Wisconsin has long been proud of its cheese industry. One of the first celebrations, Cheese Day, took place in 1919 in Monroe. The seventh cheese festival, held in 1935, brought a crowd of 50,000 to the festivities. They enjoyed a parade, crowning of a cheese queen, and a feast of eight tons of Swiss and Limburger cheese. Cheese Days continues to be held on the third weekend in September, in even-numbered years, on the Historic Courthouse Square in downtown Monroe. Cheese Days is the oldest food festival in the Midwest!

With the expansion of the dairy industry in Wisconsin, new buildings began dotting the farm landscape. Although farmhouses didn't differ much from houses in towns, agricultural structures were designed for functionality. Silos evolved from simple trenches in early state agriculture.

In the early 1880s, the first cylindrical silo was demonstrated in Wisconsin. As dairying became increasingly popular, housing, feeding, ventilation, and temperature accommodations had to be provided for the animals. High, long barns became familiar structures. In 1889, F. H. King of the University of Wisconsin designed the Wisconsin Round Barn. The design extended to farms across the state. The round barn's main problem was that it could not be expanded.

Interesting fact: the World's Largest Round Barn, completed in 1916, is located at the Central Wisconsin Fair grounds, Marshfield, Wisconsin.



**Round Barn, Jackson Township
Washington County**

Enlarging a barn depended upon the land's contours. A barn might simply be made longer, or a wing could be added to the south, off the west end, providing a windbreak against northwest winds.

Although their birth falls outside of the timeline of this part of the farming history in Wisconsin, one can't take a drive through the Wisconsin countryside without seeing the 'Big Blues', the A. O. Smith (AOS) Corporation, with its headquarters located in Milwaukee, produced Harvestore silos. In 1949, AOS designed a silo made from bolted steel beer vats. The silos "filled from the top, emptied from the bottom, and were dark-colored to prevent wintertime freezing" of the feed stored inside. Seeing them on a jaunt through Wisconsin delivers memories to farmers who owned them and the employees (former and current) who worked for AOS.



Typical Wisconsin Dairy Barn

Progress continued in Wisconsin as the 20th Century moved forward affecting life on the farm. By the mid-1930s:

- nine-tenths of farms had automobiles
- three-fifths had telephones
- one-fourth had electric lights

These statistics were 50% higher in Wisconsin than in the United States as a whole! In addition, one third of farmers had trucks, a quarter of farmers had tractors, and three-fifths used gas or electric engines and motors. About half of farm homes had washing machines, an eighth had their own milking machines, and a third had furnaces. Running water was available in seventeen percent of kitchens, thirty-six percent of barns, and one-tenth of farms had water-heating systems. Wisconsin boasted more silos than in any other state. Remarkably, half of all farms were mortgage free.

Help for the dairy farmer who twice daily milked his cows started to evolve.

In 1898, the U.S. Department of Agriculture finally tested and gave its approval to a pulsator milking machine. The famous Thistle machine was the first to incorporate a pulsator into the design, which combined a steam-driven pump to effect both suction and squeezing movements. By the year 1900, hundreds of patents had been granted for milking machines. But none of them proved to be worthy on the farm. Milking machines quickly developed a bad reputation for ruining good cows.

Thistle Machine



By 1917, pasteurization of all milk except that from cows proven to be free of tuberculosis was either required or officially encouraged in 46 of the country's 52 largest cities. Pasteurization became widespread, and it was considered one of the major breakthroughs in public health in 1917 with pasteurization of all milk.

Recall, there was no electricity to farms in 1920. Most electricity did not arrive till 1937. Farmers tried anything to ease the work of hand milking. From the time that milking technologies emerged onto the dairy scene, there were many notable inventions that aided in further progressing the dairy industry, but the next big leap came in the 1960s.

Farm work allowed for frequent social interaction among the men. They hauled milk to the crossroads cheese factories each day and made regular visits to the local gristmill that ground their cow feed. What social activities existed for the woman on the Wisconsin farm? Social opportunities for women were few and far between. Jerry Apps, in *Wisconsin Agriculture: A History* detailed that women's work was essential yet often underappreciated.

Their farm chores included feeding the dairy calves, managing the vegetable garden, tending the chicken flocks, cooking, baking, preserving, sewing, washing, ironing, and repairing clothing. They bore the children, looked after them, and were the in-family nurses.

For the most part, farm women were stuck at home, especially during the long Wisconsin winter months. They had little contact with the neighborhood women except for the occasional quilting bee, card party, or neighborhood dance. Sunday morning church services provided a social outlet enjoyed by all family members, but church services were often missed during bad winter weather. Acquiring that family telephone was a great help to the farmer's wife!

What about the commodity that was the basis for the farm...the cows? The precious cows enjoyed a settled, consistent daily routine. Jerry Apps, in his book "*Simple Things: Lessons from the Family Farm*" described his personal experience on the dairy farm. Cows were pastured from April until October, depending on weather on both ends of the pasturing season. During the winter, cows stayed in the barns, locked into stanchions that fit around their necks. They were put outside, however, to exercise in the barnyard most winter days. Each cow, with names like Sadie, Ethyl, Mabel, and Doris, had its own designated stall. Each had its own personality as well. Some enjoyed being milked. Others, the kicker cows, hated it and would try to put a hind foot into the milk pail or attempt to kick or swat the milker in the face with a wet tail.



Guernsey cows

Cows generally got along with each other and somehow identified a boss cow who would lead the herd, in single file from the pasture to the barn twice a day, every day. A boss cow might 'reign' for as long as she carried out her leadership duties, sometime as long as ten years!

Agricultural growth in Wisconsin was dependent upon new tools. Wheat farming required little specialized equipment. 'Tools' included: a team of horses, a plow, a disc and a smoothing drag to prepare the earth, a grain drill to plant the seeds, a grain binder to cut the grain, and a threshing machine to separate wheat kernels from straw. A good wagon was used to haul the

grain. The 1900s dairy farmer needed all these tools, especially if he grew oats. To handle the corn crop, which produced feed for the cattle, the farmer needed new machines, tools, and a place to purchase them.

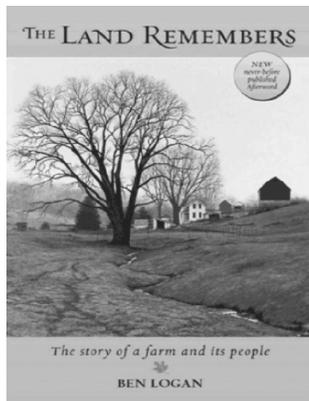
In the 1800s, grain mills and sawmills had been constructed along streams or rivers. Owners adjusted to accommodate the expanding dairy industry. Flour mills were modified into gristmills to grind oats and corn for dairy cattle feed. As technology evolved, farmers relied on implement dealerships. Cow dealers appeared next to horse dealers. Horse doctors expanded their businesses to treat dairy cattle. Lumberyards added products that farmers needed to build their dairy barns or enlarge horse and wheat barns to accommodate dairy cattle.

In 1910, nearly 39 percent of the state's population was engaged in agriculture. By 1940, only 28 percent lived on farms. However, in the meantime, the physical output of the state's agricultural business increased by one-third. The introduction of more modern farm machinery contributed to the industry's continued expansion.

As teams of horses replaced yokes of oxen, there came a noted expansion in the use of farm machines. There were improved plows, harrows, hay rakes, reapers, binders, and threshing machines. Horses were the work power, providing increased speed and energy in the operation of farm equipment. Horsepower gave way to engine power. The advent of the first portable steam engines ushered farming into the modern age.

Farmers bought large numbers of stationary gasoline engines in the first decade of the twentieth century. A wide variety of household chores were simplified by using stationary engines, including pumping water, washing clothes, and churning butter. Companies began developing gasoline-powered traction engines during the same period. These first commercial machines were sold in 1902, and quickly became known as 'tractors'.

Tractor Talk ... In his book, *The Land Remembers*, Ben Logan cites the type of conversations that occurred regarding the topic of tractors when his farm family was mulling over the idea of acquiring one...



“Any time a bunch of women got together they talked about tractors as if they were some kind of monsters that roamed the country eating people. Those women had all the news for a hundred miles around about tip overs, broken arms from cranking, fingers cut off in gears, and some poor man over in Iowa so chopped up and scattered it wasn't even worthwhile to buy a coffin. Some of it was true, of course. There was no arguing with the fact that one of our neighbors got confused and sat up there on the tractor seat pulling back on the wheel, yelling “Whoa,” and drove right out through the end of the machine shed.”

According to Wisconsin Farm Power and Machinery Bulletin #241, July 1943, the 75 years before World War I “brought more progress than in any other previous period.”

(Special note, one of the two authors of this Bulletin was Walter H. Ebling (1891-1973), a native of Richfield. In 1951 Ebling received the Distinguished Service Award of the United States Department of Agriculture.)

The investment for heavy equipment that could be justified on larger farms was extremely hard to finance for the smaller farms. Tractor power did not apply to all of a farm's operations. Processes such as seeding grain, hauling, planting, and cultivating of row crops were still mostly performed with work animals, using trucks, and in some cases, by hand. As a typical example, in 1939, about one-fourth of manure spreading was still done by hand rather than with spreaders.

Not all farmers immediately moved to tractor power. Equipment that still did the job was not retired until it became too costly to repair or quit working. Eventually, tractors replaced horses in operation of the following implements: plows, harrows, cultivators, mowers, hay rakes, grain drills, grain binders, row-crop planters, and corn binders. Modern farm equipment that replaced manual labor included corn pickers, manure spreaders, milking machines, and cream separators.

Although varying in different periods between 1850 to 1940, the values of farm machinery rose from \$81 per farm in 1850 to \$931 per farm in 1940 ... an eleven-fold increase! These early tractor models were large and expensive. Fairly quickly, the large manufacturers, including Hart-Parr, International Harvester, Case, and Rumely, had reduced the size and cost. Henry Ford, who had tinkered with steam and gasoline tractors prior to achieving his success with automobile production, introduced during World War I a small, inexpensive model which he called the Fordson. It was the first successful small tractor, taking average weights down to 2000-6000 pounds, and prices to under \$1000. These tractors

proved to be excellent at plowing and were quite capable of driving mowers and reapers. The large steel wheels, low clearance, and substantial weight made them unsuitable, however, for cultivating growing crops like corn.

Competition with Ford drove International Harvester to make significant improvements in its tractors. International Harvester in 1925 introduced a general-purpose tractor, the Farmall. With high ground clearance, small front wheels, and minimal weight, it was perfect for cultivating, plowing and cutting. Within a decade, 200 Farmalls were being built each day to keep up with demand. Competitors, such as Deere, Massey-Harris, and Case rushed to develop a general-purpose tractor (a 'GP') of their own, and by the mid-1930s, GPs had replaced the standard Fordson-type tractor. In addition, these same firms began the process of modifying the implements that worked with these tractors. Sadly, for the horse, its replacement as the power source on farms began in earnest.

One of the biggest improvements in farm tractors was the development of rubber tires. A tractor mounted on rubber was better suited for general transportation and hauling than the old types. Tractors equipped with rubber tires allowed operation at a lower cost and used less fuel. In addition, this upgrade to rubber tires greatly increased the comfort of the farmer operating the tractor.

By early 1941, there were more 80-acre farms in Wisconsin than of any other size. To be operated effectively on this size farm, the equipment had to be smaller in size, efficient, and reasonably low in cost. The investment for heavy equipment that could be justified on larger farms was extremely hard to finance for the smaller farms.



Farmall Row Crop Tractor, 1925

The years preceding the United States' entry into World War II saw a heavy flow of new, improved types of machines into agriculture. For many kinds of work, old equipment did not have the efficiency of newer machines. Heavy sales of new machines were recorded in Wisconsin in 1940, 1941, and part of 1942, playing an important part in all-out food production. World War II had its effect on farmers.

In 1942, the War Production Board drastically curtailed the production of many types of farm machinery, along with much of the output of consumer goods. There wasn't enough metal or other resources available to continue production and still support the war effort.

Interesting fact: Richfield Historical Society's own Herb Lofy owns a 1942 John Deere Slant Dash A tractor. You may see it when you stop by the General Store at the 2023 Thresheree and Harvest Festival, September 16-17.

For the first time since World War I, farmers found themselves with increased buying power and a good market for their products; at the same time, they were confronted with an increasing lack of farm labor and old machinery that needed

By a bout 1938, the technology of tractor development had achieved what is known as a 'dominant design.' The Farmall-type general-purpose tractors, both large and small, would change little, except for increasing in size and horsepower, over the next 30 years. Beginning in the mid-1930s, and despite the ongoing Great Depression in the United States, tractor sales increased rapidly.



John Deere Tractor

replacement. A program for rationing of machinery allotted to states was started by the War Production Board. Many of the companies making farm implements shifted over to making military goods. Agriculture Secretary Claude Wickard imposed a rationing requirement on all types of farm equipment in September 1942. The ration remained in place for more than two years. This constraint probably slowed the adoption of tractors by farmers, which nonetheless increased from 25 percent in 1940 to more than 40 percent in 1945.

Following World War II, farming in Wisconsin continued to grow...in different ways. The number of Wisconsin farms had peaked in 1935 at around 200,000; by 1950, that number was down to 168,561 and falling. At the same time, the average size of a Wisconsin farm increased from 117 acres in 1935 to 138 in 1950. In 1910, 35.7% of Wisconsin's citizens lived on farms; by 1950, that percentage had fallen to 21.3.

Rural communities changed dramatically. Crossroads cheese factories ceased operations as trucks and improved roads made travel from farm to market easier. With better roads and better cars, people traveled farther to large retail centers to shop; smaller villages lost business.

A writer for the Wisconsin Crop and Livestock Reporting Service noted, "By 1950, 87 percent of Wisconsin farmers had electric washing machines. Forty percent of the farm home wood heaters had been replaced with central heating. About fifty percent had water piped into the home." Not all farms, however, progressed as quickly due to financial constraints. Most farm families' upgrades took place in the barn before the house.

Young people left the farm to find employment in cities. Those who stayed on the farm felt the need to purchase more land and invest in the mechanization needed to support more acres. Dairy farmers purchased more cows, built larger barns and silos, and saw their debt rise. Some left dairy farming to concentrate on raising cash crops like corn and soybeans. Others left dairy farming to grow vegetables and other specialty crops.

This series of articles ends with exciting news for farmers in Wisconsin: we are rich in land and water; we have challenges to nurture them. The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters published a report based on a multi-year study, including two-and-a-half years of inquiry and discussion by many parties interested in the future of farming and rural life in Wisconsin. *The Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin: Findings, Recommendations, Steps to a Healthy Future* provides a list of top-tier major findings that emerged because of its study. You can read it here: https://www.wisconsinacademy.org/sites/wisconsinacademy.org/files/FOFbook_web.pdf

In his preface to the report, Rod Nilsestuen, former Secretary of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection stated: "The result (*of the study*) is that Wisconsin agriculture is on a roll, celebrating its diversity, unified as seldom before in its vision and optimistic about the future. It is indeed a good time to be a Wisconsin farmer."

This article's author can't help but ponder, what will an article on 'Farming in Wisconsin 2100' look like?

President

Pete Samson

Society News

For many reasons, 2023 is turning out to be a great year. Our Maple Syrup Family Day in March was quite successful despite the 10 inches of snow and cold temperatures, all thanks to our visitors and volunteers who continue to show up rain, sleet, or snow.

The Art Fair in June was another wonderful event that included 80 vendors who brought their wares for purchase. This event always brings new people out to the Park.

The 150th Anniversary of the Messer Mayer Mill was another special day for members and special guests. This event is something we would like to continue annually.

We are looking forward to a strong end to the year with the upcoming Thresheree in September, The Hammer-In at the Blacksmith Shop in October, and Luminary Walk in November.

In addition to the events, there are other exciting things happening in the Park including the repainting of the Mill House and building of a new pole barn just off site to the north. The pole barn will be used for much needed storage and possible displays in the future. We will be finishing work on the Engine Shed at the Mill and hope to have it somewhat running in 2023. We are also hoping to build a Buggy Shed and the Pig Barn in the near future. Both buildings were original to the Park and located southwest of the house.

Finally, a huge thank you to all of our members and volunteers who make all of these events and projects possible.

Blacksmith Shop

Kathy Lauenstein

With fall in the air. What happened to Summer?

It's Thresheree time, and the RHS smiths are looking forward to having visitors come and see them work. They love to make the metal move in ways we never thought of. We spend our life always learning something new. So, stop by - RHS Second Blacksmith Day Hammer In, October 7, 2023, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Some great demonstrations will be going on in the Blacksmith Shop at the Hammer In will have activities for children to hammer and decorate on metal. You will also find some very talented smiths working and selling in the Park. So, stop and check their work out. Food will be available so have lunch in the Park. Bring the family and make it a day.

Collections

Deanna Einwalter

We have many interesting things happening at the Historical Park this year one of which is receiving the porcelain doll from Louise Mayer when she was a child living in the Mill House. We are honored to receive such a nice donation. Come visit the Mill House and see her.



The Thresheree is coming up fast, and my team is working hard at getting the Museum organized for the Thresheree. Come visit the Museum and see all the interesting treasures we have in our collection.

We are also working towards having an Antique Sale tent this year. Your donation is always welcome to help out the Historical Society.

Louise Mayer Doll

Education

Kathy Weberg

Today's newsletter entry is another about item(s) which RHS has in trunk #2 of our four traveling trunks. These items pictured here are a corn husking glove and a corn husking peg. I really didn't know much about these items, but I recall as a young girl growing up on a farm, my dad did a lot of corn husking by hand. I'm not sure what kind of device he might have used, but after doing an investigation on the internet, I surely wish I had paid more attention!

There is a wealth of info to be found. One of the best sources for antique farm equipment is farmcollector.com. Specifically, to get to the corn husking instruments: farmcollector.com/equipment/tools/husking-corn-by-hand is

where you need to read about these items – more information that I could possibly put in this article. Farm Collector.com has sixty pages of antique items for you to peruse.

Briefly, these devices were prevalent in the 1900s – 1920s. Mechanization began in the 1920s but much corn was still husked by hand after WW II.

These items made removal of the husks (the outer portion of the ear of corn) much easier as the peg or the metal attachment to the glove slit through the husks in one motion and the ear removed without the husk.

We are fortunate to have these in our museum collection and in our traveling trunk. If you wish to have a presentation with our traveling trunk by our knowledgeable volunteers, please call Kathy Weberg at 262-628-0252 to schedule a visit for your organization.



Corn Husking Glove and Peg

Events Coordinator

Daryl Grier

At our Events Committee meetings, we review the last event; make notes for improving it next year and go over things to be done for the next activity. We have a worksheet for each event so we have a good foundation to complete the process.

Our next meeting will be after the Threshere. We will be focusing on the Hammer in at Blacksmith Day and the Luminary Walk. If you have ideas for an event, please join us or contact me, 262 628-4221 dgrier@charter.net

We Can Help You Get Rid of Household Stuff

Silent auction items, household treasures and books are needed for the Silent Auction and Sweets ‘n Stuff tents at the Threshere:

Silent auction will be on both Saturday & Sunday

Household treasures (rummage) & books will be sold at Sweets ‘n Stuff

If you are not sure where your item(s) fit, not to worry as we’ll make the best use of your donation.

Items can be dropped off at Daryl Grier’s 1179 Wejegi Dr. dgrier@charter.net 262 628-4221 or Delores Parson’s 4290 Belltower Pl., dapars1956@gmail.com, (262) 628-1070

Hello Bakers!

We need your baked goods to be sold at the Sweets ‘n Stuff Threshere tent. Let Daryl Grier know if you can bake cookies, bars, brownies etc. (Note: 2 cookies to a bag One brownie or fudge, **about 3”** square to a bag.) Please mark whatever you bring them in with the general ingredients, e.g., oatmeal raisin, ginger snaps, etc. Drop your sweets off at Daryl Grier’s, 1179 Wejegi Dr. 262 628-4221 or bring them to the Threshere on Saturday or Sunday AM.

Historic Sites

Quint Mueller/Herb Lofy

As another season progresses, changes and improvements continue to take place. The last newsletter

reported the new ramp to the LWC being nearly complete. That has now been completed. *Thank you* to our dedicated Thursday crew for making this happen.

Replacement of the decking on the Mill bridge is also now complete. On the subject of decking, you will also notice that the decking has been replaced under the hand pump, near the Wood Shed. (There is a photo in the Mill Well House article below.) While replacing the pump decking, we took the time to document the well, since the well had not been uncovered since we started the Park Project. One of the things we discovered is that the well is lined with cream city brick. That was a very interesting find.

The Mill House paint project is coming along. If you've been in the Park recently, you may have noticed the house is missing most of its paint and some of its siding. As Thoughtful Craftsmen (contractor) is stripping the paint, they are discovering quite a bit of rotted siding, unfortunately, more than we had anticipated. That missing siding will be replaced with new siding that matches as close as possible to the existing siding. They will also be addressing the exterior trim and window frames. This is a long project, so keep checking in when you're at the Park to see how it's coming along. We expect completion of the project sometime in October. Although the dry weather has hurt the area in many ways, it is helping us with this project.

Another major project you may have heard about by now is the addition of a RHS storage building. A new 60' x 80' building is in the process of being built to store much of RHS's equipment collection. Many of the larger items are currently scattered around at various offsite locations. Although the owners of those locations have been very supportive of our needs, it was decided that it was time for RHS to have its own storage facility. As of early August, the site excavation has been completed. It is now waiting for our place in the que for the building itself to be put up. This is one of those very big projects that was felt we should hire out, instead of burdening, risking, and taking time away from the RHS crew. It would take our crew most, if not all, of the season to erect this building. That also would have meant that many other needed and important projects would not have able to be addressed.

Many of you will have noticed a new addition to the Park near the south end of the Horse Shed. Thanks to an Eagle Scout project by Logan Creegan, there is now an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) accessible in the Park. Several of these were recently installed in the various Village of Richfield parks. Look for the miniature mill on a stone structure. These are accessed through the existing county 911 system.

Automatic External Defibrillator



As a follow up to the cut-a-way threshing machine article from the last edition, the machine has been taken to two tractor shows as of early August. It's been drawing a great deal of attention at these shows. If you didn't get a chance to see it yet, make sure you take the time to visit the threshing area at the RHS Thresheree to see it. It is a very good opportunity to see how the inner workings of a threshing machine function. This is a running exhibit, so you'll get a chance to see how everything moves and operates at a slow pace.

Of course, this is just a snippet of what is happening at the Park. Our ambitious and talented Thursday (and Sunday) crews keep the progress moving along. If you get a chance, check out the Park on a Thursday morning, or late Sunday mornings. If the activity looks like something you would like to be a part of, please contact Herb Lofy, Quint Mueller, or Al Mayer. Our contact information is listed elsewhere in this newsletter or on the RHS website (RichfieldHistoricalSociety.org).

Mill House Well

The well located between the Wood Shed and the Mill House was dug by hand and lined with “cream city” brick at an earlier day. The brick gets its color and texture due to the high level of calcium and magnesium in the clay deposits. This clay can be found throughout Milwaukee County. The clay deposits in the Menomonee River Valley were used extensively. Milwaukee got its nickname, “cream city” due to this brick.

The brick was used around Milwaukee starting in the 19th and early 20th century until the manufacture of cream city brick ended in the 1920s. Competition from national and larger regional brick-making companies who sold less-expensive and standardized red bricks took over the cream city market.

Frank Ward founded a pump company in 1889. One of his biggest competitors was the M. A. Love Manufacturing Co founded in 1897. In 1920, they combined as the Ward-Love Pump Corporation. In 1932, the depression forced them to close. Walter Davey took over the farm division at that time. W. L. Davey Pump Corp. stopped manufacturing pumps in 1966. Our cast iron well pump is marked “W. L. Davey Pump Corp”. It was designed to be either powered by a windmill or like ours by hand.

Our well is 20 feet deep and has a diameter of 3 feet with 6 feet of standing water. 10 full strokes of the pump delivers 1 ¾ gallons of water. The pump inlet pipe extends about 3 feet below the water level. We have posted a sign identifying this as non-potable water and should not be used for drinking. Unlike modern wells, this well may be contaminated by surface water.



(From left to right) Our W. L. Davey pump / Pump cylinder attached to the pipe below the water level / 20’ deep well with 6’ of standing water and cream city brick lining / Mechanism which fits inside the cylinder and lifts the water with each stroke.

Library/Program/Newsletter

Marge Holzbog/Connie Thoma

The **History Room at the Welcome Center** will feature a display of wedding photography drawn from our photo collection of Richfield weddings of the past as well as a collection of 20th century weddings photos. Stop in to see who you might recognize.

The photographs will be grouped by decade – 1840s, 1850s, 1860s, 1870s, 1880 and 1890s and include a collection of 20th century photography

Fall Community Programs – Connie Thoma

The program for **September 28, 2023**, “The Victorian Undertaker” provided by Steve Person of the Wisconsin Historical Society, displays an array of death-



related antique items from the 1800s and gives a humorous and fascinating presentation on the history of death, dying, and funerals in the Victorian Era.

The program for **October 26, 2023** will be guest speaker Steven Swiertz from the DNR who will speak on rules and regulations of hunting in our area with Q and A to follow.

Nationally recognized as one of the country's premier states for hunting white-tailed deer, Wisconsin has an abundant herd and a reputation for producing some of the largest bucks in the world. Hunters have several opportunities this fall. Our speaker will have much to tell.

At our **November 16, 2023** program, Leslie Bellais will present "Victorians' Secrets: The Revealing History of Women's Underwear -The huge skirts! The small waists!" How did Victorian women manage to create these fashionable looks? With underwear, of course. throughout the 19th century, women were constantly reshaping their bodies to ever-changing ideals using corsets, hoops, and bustles. Join Leslie Bellais, Curator of Social History at the Wisconsin Historical Society, to take a peak under the dresses of fashionable Victorian ladies, look at the layers of underwear needed to create the ideal silhouette, and explore how these undergarments reflected societal values. Ms. Bellais will also bring examples from the collection and reproduction bustles for audience members to model.

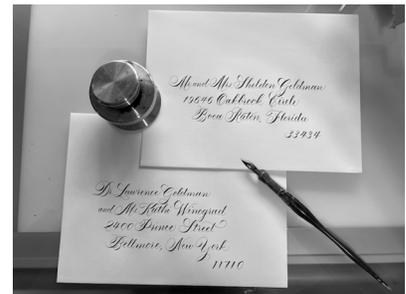
LWC Welcome Center

Ruth Gruen Jeffords

SPECIAL GUEST at the 2023 Thresheree

As we finalize details for the upcoming Thresheree, I am excited to report we'll have a few creative people on hand to demonstrate vintage crafts. One of those talented artists is Debi Zeinert, a very successful and highly sought-after Calligrapher. The word "calligraphy" simply means "beautiful writing," and Debi will demonstrate that special lettering (which has been practiced for thousands of years!) during the Thresheree at the Welcome Center!

Debi Zeinert has been a self-taught, left-handed calligrapher for almost 50 years. Her lettering interest began in high school, but long before that she would trace the beautiful letters on envelopes from her grandma. Debi's choice is pointed pen, done with 100-year old pen nibs and ink created especially for her from an ink maker in Kansas. The Spencerian and Engrossers way of writing is American Calligraphy, and the letterforms are made with pressure and release of the pen. Many American historical documents, including the Declaration of Independence, were written in this style.



Calligraphy Writing

Debi is happy to be part of this RHS event and would love to bring you back to the pen-and-ink days by **writing your name in this historical script**,

Marketing

Doug Wenzel

There's an old saying in the advertising industry: "I know that half the money I spend on advertising is wasted, I just don't know which half".

American companies and other organizations spend a lot on advertising – more than in the rest of the top ten countries, combined! On average, American companies budget about ten percent of their total revenue for

advertising expenses. America's biggest advertiser, Amazon, spent about \$20 billion (yes, billion with a "b") on advertising and promotions in 2022.

The RHS marketing budget is somewhat more modest. We've budgeted \$3,200 for 2023, but will likely not spend that much. Our total expenses came to only \$1,681 last year. To be fair, this number understates the total RHS expenditure because advertising for events goes against the event budget. As a result, an ad that I place for an event such as Art at the Mill is charged to the event Chairperson's budget, not mine. These ad placements can range from \$250 to over \$1,000 per event.

The biggest single item in my marketing budget is the direct mail piece that we send out every Spring. It includes descriptions of all our events, as well as information about the Society. It goes to all residential mailboxes in the 53076, 53033, and 53017 zip codes. Printing and mailing this piece costs us about \$1,500.

I'll spend about \$400 or so printing brochures, including the Membership brochure and the "Three-Ups" brochure. I keep these stocked in the information boxes in the Park, as well as other sites around Richfield. We also hand these out at all events.

Adding the money budgeted by the event chairs to my budget brings the total RHS advertising budget to just over 6% of our budgeted income. I feel that these expenses are well-targeted, and in our case, we're not "wasting half of it."

PS – A big shout-out to two local companies that are generously helping us keep our marketing expenses in line – Digital Edge for printing, and Conley Publications, owner of the Washington County Daily News. We appreciate your support!

Membership

Dorothy Marks

We, the ladies of the LWC Committee, are gearing up for the second year of our LWC's Boutique at the Horse Shed for this year's Thresheree on September 16th and 17th. Last year we had nine vendors, and this year it will be fourteen. Since we also offer home baked items, this year we are offering coffee. We have many lovely items and hope you will stop by to browse and/or shop. See you there.

Mill House

Cindy Schmechel/Clara Birkel

Toys, toys, toys will be the focus of our special display for this year's Thresheree. We have many original toys; toys that belonged to various generations of Mayer family children and many vintage toys that have been donated to us over the years. Of course, all those toys are "museum" pieces, but we will have many vintage toys that our visiting kids can touch and play with. Many of them will, hopefully, even bring back some happy memories for their parents too. Be ready to share your own stories with us as you enjoy our display.

We've had a wonderful year so far at the Mill House with visitors from all over the country. We had a Kissel car group come through the Historical Park, and they stopped to take tours of the Mill as well as the House. The cars were absolutely beautiful, and we were thrilled to meet interesting people from around the country and to show off our beautiful Mill House.

We also had the pleasure of welcoming home the last remaining Grandson of C. W. Mayer, Ralph Mayer, his lovely wife Susan, daughter Linda and her husband, also named Ralph. Once again, we heard more stories about the Mayer family and spent several hours with them touring the House. We truly enjoyed meeting them and look forward to meeting many more Mayer family descendants, as well as Messer descendants, in the future.

The Art Fair brought us almost 200 visitors, including our resident “star”, Bob Woods. He turned out to be our unofficial greeter, hanging out on the front porch of the House and talking to our visitors as they came for tours. For those of you who don’t know who he is, he is the husband of Carol Mayer Woods who was the last baby born in the Mill House, daughter of George Mayer and Martha Mauer Mayer. Sadly, Carol passed away last year, but we are blessed to still have Bob stop by from time to time to share his memories of courting Carol and of the Mill, Mill House and other buildings on the farm. We always enjoy listening to Bob’s stories as well as his company.

We are looking forward to seeing you once again at the Thresheree and to sharing the history of the House and of the families who lived there. We hope the kids, as well as their parents, will enjoy seeing all the toys in our display and will have their own stories and memories of toys from long ago.

Mill Restoration

Al Mayer

This summer has been a very busy time at the Richfield Historical Park, and the activities inside the Messer-Mayer Mill are no exception.

As this year is the 150th anniversary of the beginning of flour production at this mill, our goal is to have the engine running for demonstrations during the Thresheree that will operate a burr mill through the use of the clutch shaft that is original to the Mill.

Over the summer, we've been working to anchor the engine securely to the floor and supply the fuel and cooling water, along with an exhaust system, for the engine to function properly. Our initial goal was to be able to turn the millstone, elevator, and bolter. However, considerable work needs to be done with components of the millstone framework and its alignment before we can safely put these items into operation. We've continued work on the sash that adjusts the tension on the belt between the clutch sheave and the main shaft that brings power into the Mill. Other things being worked on include cleaning and mounting bearings on the different shafts. The stonework and siding are on hold, as they're waiting on foundation decisions.



Adjusting Sash

This summer we also had an exceptional opportunity to receive a visit from a group of members of the Great Lakes Chapter of SPOOM. (Society for the Preservation of Old Mills). They planned their summer meeting to be able to meet with us the morning of our Founders Day Celebration on July 23rd, and many stayed through the day and enjoyed the afternoon event.

We had an ideal chance to learn a lot about our mill and received pointers on where to acquire relevant information as we continue with the restoration of the various equipment in our mill. The chance to meet with and gain knowledge from people that have run and maintained grist mills was fantastic! (One member commented that he had not seen so many different pieces of equipment in one location as we have in the Messer-Mayer Mill.)



SPOOM Visitors

I Scream You Scream...Pioneer Homestead Ice Cream

The earliest forms of ice cream bear little resemblance to the creamy sweet stuff inside your freezer today.

The emperors of the Tang Dynasty are believed to have been the first to eat a frozen cow, goat or buffalo milk-like treat. Aromatic substances harvested from evergreen trees were added and heated with flour. The mixture was then placed into metal tubes and lowered into an ice pool until frozen.

Fast forward to 1770 when ice cream (more like sorbets) arrives in America. Proof of the early treat shows up in the first known newspaper advertisement for ice cream in 1773: "Just arrived from London, Monsieur Filippo Lenzi, confectioner, makes and sells candied fruit, brandy, pastas, jellies, dragees, every kind of sweets, with barley, with white or brown sugar, **iced products and fruit.**" At this time, "ice cream" was made in a pewter pot kept in a bucket of ice and salt and had to be regularly hand stirred and scraped from the side of the pewter pots with a 'spaddle' which is a sort of miniature spade on a long handle.

**Ice Cream Maker**

In 1790, the first ice cream parlor opened in New York. During the summer of the same year, our first president, George Washington, is said to have spent \$200 to satisfy his craving for the refreshing treat. Inventory records of his Mt. Vernon home indicate that he owned several ice cream pots made from tin and pewter. Records show Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln's wife Mary Todd were also fans of the icy product.

By 1843, Nancy M. Johnson creates and patents a machine with a manually operated handle to make iced products, and a quick two years later, William Young adds a motor to the operation.

The Ice Cream sundae made its debut in 1881. Cups of vanilla ice cream with various syrups, garnishes and decorations on top were born in Wisconsin's own Two Rivers. New Yorkers disagree stating Ithaca, New York is the birthplace of creamy confectionary known as the sundae.

The Ice Cream cone didn't appear until 1902 when Italo Marchiony was fed up with selling penny licks sold in hokey pokey glasses. Hokey pokey glasses were small thick dishes that "magnified" the amount of ice cream in the customer's dish. Patrons of Wall Street's ice cream carts were always disappointed in these penny licks (the cost of one dish was one penny) because of the illusion that they were getting more ice cream than they really were. Also, the fact that the hokey pokey dish was lightly rinsed out and reused for the next customer didn't help the spread of disease either. Thus, was born an edible dish called the waffle cone.

Stop by the Pioneer Homestead at this year's Thresheree to see our ice cream maker and how the Motz family would have made this sweet treat in 1880.

Project Coordinator**Al Mayer**

We've got a group of guys on Thursday mornings at the Park that is just awesome! 10-18 volunteers get together every week at 8:00 in the morning, catch up on the latest scuttlebutt for 15 minutes or so, and then set out to work on whatever projects need attention that day, whether it be re-decking the mill bridge, or cutting down trees from

a storm, setting up or taking down tents for an event, trimming grass, or collecting boiling maple syrup. On a typical Thursday, 3 or 4 projects are going on with a few guys working on each one.

In Spring, guys bring their log splitters, and we cut, split and stack all of the firewood for the next syrup season.

The array of talents that this group of guys possess is as vast as the type of projects we work on, carpenters, electricians, farm, mechanical, tech, etc. Collectively, we have quite an experienced crew!

Every Thursday, there are pictures posted on Facebook of the different things going on that day. This is a great way that members, as well as the general public, are able to keep up with the constant improvements that are taking place. I've talked to so many people that look forward to seeing what we do each week.

Though not as large, we do have a group of guys that meet on Sundays, from 10 a.m.-2:00 p.m. that mainly spend time working on the Mill. This group is geared to the members that aren't able to join the Thursday crew, but enjoy working to further the vision of getting the Mill operating. Most of our work, so far, has been focused in the Engine Shed, but we have been making parts and planning how to address the needed repairs that the framework under the mill stones requires. If this interests you, stop by on a Sunday, and we'll be around answer your questions and get you involved....

Volunteer Coordinator

Sharon Lofy

The 24th Annual Thresheree and Harvest Festival will be held September 16 & 17. The feature for this year is the 150th Anniversary of the Messer/Mayer Mill. With your many talents and volunteer time, the Richfield Historical Society has grown this event into what it is today - a Huge Success!! Also, Thanks go to all of our Sponsors that have donated throughout the years, especially to the Thresheree!!

- Did you enter the pie contest last year? Be sure to consider it this year. Encourage someone that you know to enter. The pie contest is Saturday and Sunday. Enter by 10 a.m. and judging is at 10:30 a. m. NO CREAM PIES - we do not have refrigeration available. Enjoy a slice of homemade pie after the pie judging.
- Check out the Silent Auction Tent for a variety of wonderful items that are donated by area businesses and individuals. There are items that are just meant to be for you or possibly a gift for someone that you know.
- Sweets 'n' Stuff will have great baked treats for everyone to enjoy along with donated books, household items, etc. If you are down- sizing household items or enjoy baking give Daryl a call (262-628-4221) or me (262-297-1546).
- The Boutique was a huge success last year located in the Horse Shed near the Mill. Dorothy and her group are busy working to make this another wonderful stop on your way to the General Store in the Welcome Center.
- The Messer/Mayer House will be exhibiting antique toys of years ago.
- Check out the Messer/Mayer Mill and Engine Shed.
- The Maple Sugar Shack will be selling RHS maple flavored cotton candy.
- The Blacksmith Shop will be busy hammering and doing demonstrations for you to view.
- At the Pioneer Homestead you will see goats and chickens. There will be pioneer cooking, churning ice cream, weaving on a loom, wool dying and spinning, along with doing laundry.

-
- Be sure to check out the log sawing, horse demonstrations, gasoline engines, Boom Town, encampments, Gehl Equipment display, tractor plowing, antique cars, tractors and trucks (American Truck Historical Society Beer City Chapter).
 - Put the Kids Zone on your “to see list.” Also, there are kid’s activities at the Mill.
 - Do not forget the FOOD. The Richfield Lions will be providing the food. There will be a beverage and ice cream tent. Check out the Scout’s sweet corn tent. Kettle Korn is a must.
 - The following will be located near the food tent:

Saturday

WTKM Live Broadcast will be at 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Ed Hause Band will be performing 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Kettle Moraine Musicians from 1:30 p.m.– 3:30 p.m.

On Sunday,

Tale Spin from 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Jefferson Davis from 12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Devotional at 9:30 a.m.

- Threshing will be Saturday & Sunday at 10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.
- The parade will be at 1 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday.

As members, you will be receiving an email showing all the volunteer opportunities that will be available for you to check out and sign up for if you have time available. If you do not have email, give me a call (1-262-297-1546). Check with neighbors, friends, relatives if they might like to volunteer with you. It is a great opportunity for students to volunteer for community volunteer hours.

The Society is always looking for volunteers not only for events, but to help the Thursday Crew, Committee Chairs, Marketing, Research, Tours, Education (traveling trunk), computer, baking, etc. Give a call and let me know what you might have an interest in. Thank you to all our volunteers for their help!

