



Richfield Historical Society
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richfieldhistoricalsociety.org

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Winter 2024 V27N1

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**Native Americans in Wisconsin: Part I -
 Prehistoric to Late 1800s** by Susan Brushafer

The Richfield Historical Society focuses on pioneers coming to our area, their lives, homesteads, occupations, and more. This article will give some insight into who inhabited Wisconsin before our immediate pioneer ancestors. It's worth our time to delve into the history of Wisconsin's first residents – the Native Americans.

It's believed that the first inhabitants in Wisconsin were what archaeologists refer to as the First Americans, and their cultures as Paleo-Indians.

These hunters and gatherers lived in our state between 10,000BC and 6,500BC. These communities followed the retreat of glacial ice northward across Wisconsin.

Paleo Hunters & Gatherers
 (greybrinson.weebly.com)



They created a mobile lifestyle that allowed them to follow game and changes in available plant foods. They were often isolated communities, but they did meet other groups. These meetings included important social functions, most likely occurring at spiritually charged locations.

Imagine yourself being a First American and looking out onto the horizon. You probably saw woolly mammoth, mastodon, and bison where today we may see deer and cattle. A site near Kenosha indicates human butchery of woolly mammoths during this period. Imagine using stone and copper tools to hunt for dinner rather than positioning today's scope-equipped rifles!

The different groups of Paleo-Indians who lived in Wisconsin could be identified by the different types of spear points that have been recovered in the state. Varied point styles may also reflect the changes these communities made as they adapted to new living conditions. *(Be sure to stop by the History Room in the RHS Welcome Center during one of our events. You'll see the display of arrow heads collected near Richfield and lent to us by the Laubenheimer Family.)*

Various cultures (Woodland, Mississippian, and Oneota Indians), skilled in agriculture, trading, pottery making, and mound building, eventually came into Wisconsin during what was known as the Woodland period (2,500 to 900 years ago). The Woodland Indians were the first to make pottery and domesticate plants. They adopted the bow and arrow as a weapon and began to raise corn. They also introduced mound construction, which is usually associated with the burial of the dead. Some of these mounds are still visible, especially in the Madison area and here in Washington County.

Before European colonization, there may have been more than 15,000 mounds in Wisconsin; around 4,000 remain today. Wisconsin is the center of effigy mound culture (mounds made in the shapes of animal/spiritual beings such as birds, turtles, bears, panthers, and humanoid forms, among others). For those interested in learning more about these mounds, find a great read at: <https://lakeshorepreserve.wisc.edu/native-americans-and-the-preserve/#Groups>



Drawing Courtesy of National Park Service

In addition to the mounds in the Madison area, where are the historic sites located closer to home? While most of the indigenous burial mounds that once stood in Milwaukee County no longer remain, two are still located in State Fair Park. If you've visited the DNR area during events like the Wisconsin State Fair, you've walked past one of the sites. On October 17, 2022, the 600th State Historical Marker erected in Wisconsin was dedicated for the Tee Sisikeja (Bad Waters Village) mound within State Fair Park. The dedication ceremony updated the placement and language of the burial mound historical marker already erected there.

It's interesting to note that the Milwaukee Public Museum, through the archaeological surveys and excavations it has conducted, has documented that Native American burial mounds can be found not far from Richfield! Sites include the Kewaskum Mound Group, Lizard Mound County Park, and the Ackerville Mound Group. The three sites contain conical and effigy mounds dating from about 500AD to 1200AD. As noted earlier, the mounds are associated with the Woodland culture, which developed pottery, trade networks, and agriculture. Although the number of known effigy mounds in Wisconsin exceeds 5,000, the group of 31 in Lizard Mound State Park is most likely one of the finest in the entire area occupied by the Effigy Mound culture. The mounds in this small park are what remains of an original grouping of at least 47 which were counted in 1883; many were destroyed when settlers cultivated the land.



Linear Mound, Lizard Mound State Park, West Bend, WI

OnMilwaukee.com published an article on Wisconsin's effigy mounds, stating: "A wooded path twists and turns through 28 Native American effigy mounds, including the one shaped like a huge lizard which gives the park its name."

"Old Mounds Are Mystery" - published in the October 4, 1925 *Milwaukee Journal* noted:

"Human remains are seldom found in the effigy mounds which are for the most part barren of relics. Occasionally a chief or notable may have been buried in these mounds, but this was an exception and must have been considered an unusual

privilege. The West Bend group has yielded pieces of broken pottery with ornamented necks showing some artistic taste. Stories are prevalent in the neighborhood concerning giant skeletons with teeth over an inch long and frames measuring eight feet, but for the most part these are idle tales. No scientific investigation has ever been made of this group, and the mounds in most cases are just as the Indians left them many, many years ago."

The Effigy Mound culture constructed their distinctive burial mounds across the southern two-thirds of Wisconsin. Visit history by hiking through several of these beautiful areas.

Before we leave the mounds builders, let's look at a story regarding a Richfield Native American burial ground. The following picture was published by the *Milwaukee Journal* on October 25, 1935. (Located for inclusion in this article by a Milwaukee Public Library researcher.) Although the text below the picture was hard to discern, I typed the verbiage from a larger version of the article.

Burial Plot in Field Probably Only a Happy Hunting Ground



When Ben Aulenbacher's plow turned up several skeletons Sunday on his farm near Richfield, Wis., he feared he had uncovered the burial spot of the victims of a mass murder. But later investigation disclosed that he probably had found an Indian burial group.

Here are left to right: Joseph Schumacher, Milton Aulenbacher, Mrs. Milton Aulenbacher, Mrs. Art Aulenbacher and Mary Jean 4, and James Aulenbacher 2, examining the pit where the bones were found.

Let's return to the history of early Native Americans in Wisconsin. From around 900AD, the Mississippian Culture (noted earlier) migrated to Wisconsin from the present-day St. Louis Area. They traded pottery and other goods throughout the Mississippi Valley. Their migration lasted until approximately 1200AD. The Mississippian Culture built fortified towns consisting of an open plaza surrounded by platforms and enclosed within wooden palisades. The most notable is Aztalan located in Jefferson County.

The Oneota Culture arrived following the Mississippians, who left Wisconsin around 1200AD, and gave rise to the Menominee, Ho-Chunk (Winnebago), and Dakota (Eastern Sioux) tribes. Several other tribes also migrated to the region. They included the Ojibwe (Chippewa), Sauk, Meskwaki (Fox), Potawatomi, Mascouten, Kickapoo, Ottawa, Miami, and Huron. These peoples came to Wisconsin from their homelands in Ontario, New York, Ohio, and Michigan because of eastern tribal warfare and, eventually, European contact.

French explorer Jean Nicolet reached Wisconsin in 1634 while looking for a water route to the Pacific Ocean. He landed at Red Banks, near Green Bay. Although he didn't find the river leading to the Pacific, he found that the Midwest was a very rich source of furs. The French realized they could turn a handsome profit if they brought furs to Montreal and shipped them to France. But they had to wait until the mid-seventeenth century Iroquois attacks ended.

Many archaeologists have speculated that epidemics of measles or smallpox could have swept through Indian communities in Wisconsin long before explorer Jean Nicolet's arrival (1634). French chronicler Bacqueville de la Potherie wrote of diseases in the early 1700s:

"Maladies wrought among them more devastation than even war did and exhalations from the rotting corpses caused great mortality."

Diseases shared with Native Americans by European settlers included:

- **Smallpox** – introduced by white explorers in 1760; raged through Indian communities into 1830s.
- **Measles** – an epidemic that may have swept through Wisconsin's Indian communities before 1634.
- **Influenza** – among first diseases imported into the Americas.
- **Typhus Fever** – another of first diseases imported into the Americas.
- **Malaria** – common among French, British, and later American troops; reached epidemic proportions during summer months.
- **Cholera** – dreaded disease that spread with frightening speed; exacted a far higher death toll on all Wisconsin residents.

Most people at the time expected these conditions to pass as settlements became more established. They were wrong.

Between 1600 and 1848, the predominant Native American tribes in the Wisconsin territory were the Ojibwe, Menominee, Ho-Chunk, Potawatomi, and Sauk. By statehood, all of Wisconsin had been ceded by treaty, and the American government had forced many tribes, including the Lakota, Meskwauki, Potawatomi, and Ho-Chunk to move further west. During this time, these tribes experienced significant changes. They interacted with European explorers, traders, settlers, and colonizers. They faced and survived the effects of colonization, wars, treaties, and removal politics that had displaced or eliminated many other tribes.

Let's focus on wars. There were more than a handful of wars, especially between the 1600s to 1700s.

The Iroquois Wars, which took place in the 1600s, involved the demand for furs. This caused traders and hunters to invade the fur-supplying areas to their west and in turn, caused many Indian tribes to flee into Wisconsin. The arrival of these tribes caused competition for furs and food among the tribes already in Wisconsin, contributing to numerous battles.

These conflicts, referred to as the Beaver Wars, were conflicts that took place between the Iroquois Confederacy and other tribes. The conflicts centered not only around the fur trade, but also territory in the Great Lakes region. Changes took place.

By the 17th century, the Native Americans living in Wisconsin were classified by language type. The Menominee, the Kickapoo, and the Miami tribes spoke Algonquian. The Winnebago, Dakota, and Iowa tribes spoke Sioux. Later in that century, other groups entered Wisconsin including the Fox, Sac, Potawatomi and Ojibewa (Chippewa).

The Native American tribes in Washington County were mainly the Potawatomi, Menominee, and Winnebago (Ho-Chunk – official name adopted by tribe in November 1994).

The following chart gives an interesting comparison of the Potawatomi, Menominee, and Ho-Chunk ways of life in the late 1600s.

Tribe	Location
Ho-Chunk	What is now eastern Wisconsin.
Menominee	Around Green Bay; later claimed much of what is now southwestern Wisconsin and northwestern corner of Illinois.
Potawatomi	Originally, lower peninsula of Michigan; moved to northeastern Wisconsin, then back to lower Michigan and region that became Illinois and Indiana.
Food and Hunting	
Ho-Chunk	Grew corn, squash, beans, and tobacco; participated in communal bison hunts on the prairies to the southwest.
Menominee	Hunted and gathered food resources; maintained small gardens of corn, beans, squash; known for their reliance on wild rice; fished intensively, especially for sturgeon. Individuals or small groups hunted using bows and arrows; occasionally organized larger hunts for buffalo and deer.
Potawatomi	Men hunted/fished; women planted/harvested crops and collected wild plant foods; hunted wild game including muskrat, squirrel, raccoon, porcupine, turtle, duck, goose, and turkey. Meat from wolves and dogs was featured at certain rituals. Large game such as buffalo and deer later became common.
Seasonal Habits	
Ho-Chunk	Settled in permanent villages of dome-shaped wigwams.
Menominee	Mobile lifestyle with outlying camps and special purpose gathering and processing stations; for part of the year, their seasonal cycle kept them on the move as they cycled between different harvesting areas and processing points.
Potawatomi	Semi-sedentary, living in agricultural villages in summer and separating into smaller family groups in autumn; moved to winter hunting grounds.

Moving into the early 1700s, Wisconsin remained unstable for Native Americans: smaller tribes found themselves caught in periodic warfare with the larger tribes; the Meskwaki fought the French almost continually until the 1760s. Other wars involved Native American allies and enemies. Some of the wider known wars included the French and Indian War (part of the Seven Years' War waged between France and Great Britain from 1754 to 1763). The American Revolutionary War was ended in 1783 by a peace agreement called The Treaty of Paris. The Treaty ceded most of the land east of the Mississippi River to the United States ... without consulting the Native American tribes who lived there!

More than 70 treaties were negotiated with Wisconsin Indians between 1804 and 1854. These negotiations quickly transferred nearly all of Wisconsin to U.S. ownership. In a single generation, under the pressure of overwhelming military force, Native Americans, who had lived here for centuries or millennia, lost their rights to their native lands. They were coerced into moving west of the Mississippi River or confined on reservations.

The Treaty of Prairie du Chien (1825) was significant in the history of Native Americans in Wisconsin. In August of 1825, thousands of Indians from Wisconsin tribes gathered at Prairie du Chien and federal officials engineered a general treaty of peace, designed to end intertribal warfare. These wars had disrupted the fur trade and created tensions between settlers and the Native American tribes.



Tribal Lands in Wisconsin, circa 1800
(Tribal Lands Map - Wisconsin First)

The tension between tribes was created because the United States government had used tribes against each other to gain more lands. The Treaty of Prairie du Chien established a treaty of peace between the tribes and demarcated boundaries between settlers and American Indians.

The Indian Removal Act, a law passed on May 28, 1832 by the United States Congress, authorized President Andrew Jackson to negotiate treaties with Native American tribes, granting unsettled western prairie land to Indian tribes in exchange for their much-desired territories east of the Mississippi river. The offers often included enough corn to get through the winter.

Imagine now, as a First American, looking out at a horizon that you didn't recognize, at a country that was not your homeland.

The Indian Removal Act precipitated the Black Hawk War of 1832. This was a bloody, but brief war between the United States and a coalition of about 1,000 Sauk, Fox, and Kickapoo tribes led by Black Hawk. This included about 500 warriors, women, and children. They crossed the Mississippi River for the purpose of reclaiming land.

The war began after U.S. officials opened fire on a delegation from the Native Americans. After winning some early victories, Black Hawk's band was weakened by hunger, death, and desertion. Many of the survivors retreated towards the Mississippi. The war ended with the Battle of Bad Axe, where U.S. soldiers attacked the remnants of this mixed-nation group of Native Americans (referred to as the British Band), killing many and capturing most who remained alive. Black Hawk and other leaders later surrendered and were imprisoned for a year.

Chief Black Hawk's autobiography, published in 1833, was the first Native American autobiography to be published in the United States (click this link to read!): <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/7097/7097-h/7097-h.htm>

It became an immediate best seller. Black Hawk's life and actions have left a lasting impact on the history and culture of Wisconsin. After 1832, Wisconsin tribes offered no further organized military resistance to the U.S. government.

Also in 1833, via the Treaty of Chicago, the Potawatomi surrendered land claims. This Treaty required that they leave their homelands. Some, who chose to remain, became known as 'strolling Potawatomi' with many of them being migrants who barely maintained themselves by squatting on their original lands, now owned by white settlers. To avoid forced removal, the Potawatomi resettled in northern Wisconsin, forming the Forest County Potawatomi Community



Black Hawk (WI Historical Society Wisconsinhistory.org)

The Wisconsin Territory (consisting of present-day Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota, and parts of North and South Dakota) was created in 1836. The territory became smaller when land west of the Mississippi became part of Iowa Territory. Wisconsin was admitted to the union as the 30th state in 1848. Settlers caused extreme changes. In addition to quickly taking over the Native Americans' lands through treaties and overwhelming military defeats, they cleared the land for farms, built houses, roads, and towns, and cut the timber for lumber.

Today, eleven federally recognized tribes call Wisconsin home. The oldest of these, the Wisconsin Oneida, is an Iroquoian-speaking tribe currently residing on a reservation in northeastern Wisconsin near Green Bay. The reservation was established by treaty in 1838, and was allotted to individual New York Oneida tribal members as part of an agreement with the U.S. government.

Although treaties were signed between the United States government and native American tribes, they often resulted in unfair and broken agreements. By 1871, most native Americans had been placed on reservations and the government discontinued use of treaties with them.

Native Americans, specifically the Potawatomi, interacted with settlers in Washington County through the 1800s. A few instances of these local areas can be found in excerpts like this one from wisconsinhistory.org, History of Washington County:

“One of these Indian villages, quite a large one, was a short distance south of West Bend, near the shore of Silver Lake; another one lay on the eastern shore of Pike Lake in the town of Hartford. But the only places in the county which have adopted an Indian name are the town and village of Kewaskum. It was the name of a noble chief of the Potawatomies, who with his community lived near the village that today bears his name. The wigwam lay on a hill of considerable height, which ever since is called the “Indian Hill.” In the vicinity, the grave of Kewaskum is shown up to the present day (*late 1840s*).”

Much has been written about the interactive lifestyles of Indians and settlers. An excerpt from *Washington County, Wisconsin: past and present, Some Incidents of Pioneer Life* states: “All old settlers who came in touch with the Indians agree that they were peaceable and friendly. There is no case known where a white man was harmed by a redskin.”

A few local stories stand out as examples of day-to-day life in the later 1800s. You may enjoy the following, as it was shared by Connie Thoma, a member of RHS’ LWC/Library Committee.

“When I was a young girl (1950) at Friess Lake, we had a very old man for a neighbor, and he told me that there were Indians living there when he and his family bought the land. I believe he was born around 1880, and he was a boy when his family bought the land. He told me they were friendly.”

Other interesting stories include this one:

In the summer of 1862, large numbers of the settlers in Washington and neighboring counties were seized by what is known as the ‘Indian Scare’ which almost caused a panic. According to Carl Quickert, editor of *Washington County, Wisconsin: past and present*, “a definite and final explanation of that great ‘Indian Scare’ has never been given. It was found to be altogether groundless, and today (1912) only humorous anecdotes are left of it.” Enjoy the tale:

About a dozen Indians had put up their wigwam at Horicon Lake, not far from Hartford. Nearby some Germans had settled, and one of them had shot a pony, owned by the Indians, that had broken into his corn field. The Indians apparently swore to take revenge on the German. The frightened-to-death German ran to his neighbors warning them of a horrible Indian massacre that was breeding. The bad news quickly spread, reaching Hartford in the evening. The dozens of harmless Indians had grown to five thousand bloodthirsty savages. Even the cooler heads were seized by the excitement. The following morning, a band of men, bearing all kinds of weapons rode on wagons to confront the supposed hostilities. Their women busied themselves at home, getting lint and bandages ready for the wounded –to-be.

The bravery of the Hartforders was not to be tested. When their main force had reached the lake, they found a few Indians, who



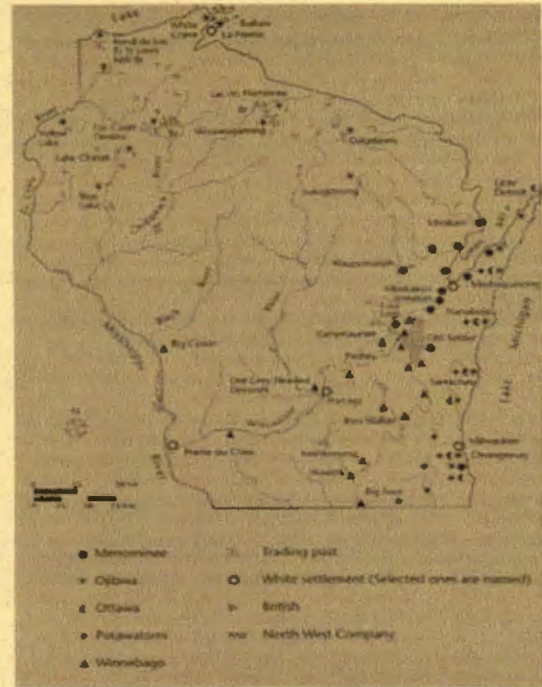
**Ho-Chunk (Winnebago)
wigwam
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki
Ho-Chunk](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ho-Chunk)**

at the sight of the armed men and their warlike attitudes were at least as frightened as the Whites had been before. The rear-guard of the heroes was met by a wagon full of Mecklenburgers (*a band of farmers who came from Mecklenberg Germany*) who convinced them of the uselessness of their trip. The Mecklenburgers were armed with old shotguns, pitchforks, and scythes. The excitement soon subsided.

Our article concludes with a look at the locations of the Indian Villages in Wisconsin 1870 (map on right).

Perhaps it also leaves you with a curiosity. As you read this article, did you wonder about what it would be like to have been an early settler in Wisconsin? Could you visualize seeing a mastodon or buffalo outside of your home? When you look at the map of 1870s Indian Villages, maybe you will remember some of what you read in this article as you trek to your cottage or favorite lake 'up north'.

The next article on Native Americans in Wisconsin will focus on their daily life from the mid-1800s to early 1900s.



Wisconsin Indian Villages 1870

President

Pete Samson

For many reasons, 2023 turned 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 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 looked forward to a strong end to the year with the upcoming Thresheree in September, Blacksmith Days in October, and Luminary Walk in November and were not disappointed.

In addition to the events, there were 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 2024. 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 are located southwest of the Mill 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

The Season flies by so fast. In 2023, more volunteer smiths came to help and their talent and creativity is

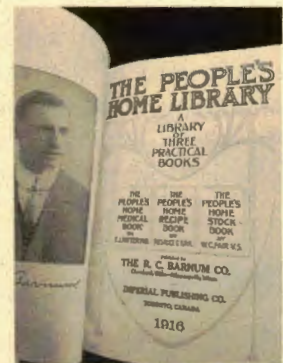
something you should not miss. They are always surprising us with new ideas. They are always trying to amaze us. Thanks to all who came.

Check out Blacksmith Day October 5, 2024. Plans are to have more guest smiths working and different designs children can hammer on each year. Make it a family day. Don't miss this day.

Collections

Deanna Einwalter

I had the pleasure of taking a donation of a book called "The Peoples Home Library". It was a very useful book in the 1900s. It was 3 books combined, one is a medical book, second is a recipe book and third is a stock book. It was a wealth of information from medical diagnosis and common treatments to information on farm animals.



For example: one way to fix Diarrhea and summer complaints, Stir together 1 Tablespoon flour and ½ teaspoon of camphor diluted with water. (The dose is 1 tablespoon 3 times daily.)

Come see the book in the Spring in our displays.

Education

Kathy Weberg

The Education programs are currently taking a well-deserved temporary vacation. The traveling trunk was popular in the Fall – volunteers presented its program at several facilities. As of right now, there are some illnesses occurring in some senior independent and assisted living facilities so we are playing it safe for both the residents and our volunteers by waiting until this time frame passes.

Education days for the area schools are scheduled for May 10 and 11, and communication with the schools will resume in January.

Members are always welcome to share their expertise through volunteering at either of these activities.

Events Coordinator

Daryl Grier

The Events Committee works with the chair of each of our events to make the event run smoothly. We review two documents about the event: a worksheet which lists the details of what needs to be done and a worksheet on what we should change from the year prior to make it even better. We also have a volunteer list that shows the number of volunteers needed, in what area and at what time.

Our activities in 2023 were great! We started off the year with Maple Syrup Family Day. Folks came and had a fun time even with 10 inches of snow! Art at the Historical Park offered varied and beautiful items. The Threshere and Harvest Festival had new activities. We increased the number of blacksmiths and children's activities for Blacksmith Day. Our last activity of the year, the Luminary Walk, was a tremendous hit! The weather was good. It was the second time we had the event, and we put out more flyers and word of mouth, helping us draw a large crowd. We were overwhelmed! We will do better next year.

Our next Events Committee meeting is January 19, 2024, at the Richfield Fire Hall. So please join us to share your ideas. Call me if you have questions or ideas, love new ideas!

Our 2024 Events are:

Maple Syrup Family Day - Saturday March 23, 2024/ 9 a.m.- 4 p.m.

Art at the Mill – Saturday June 15, 2024/ 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Threshere and Harvest Festival - September 21 & 22, 2024/ 9 a.m. -5 p.m.

Blacksmith Day – October 5, 2024/ 9 a.m.– 4 p.m.

Luminary Walk – November 2, 2024/ 5 p.m. – 8 p.m.

ART AT THE MILL – Linda Aicher

SAVE the date! SATURDAY, June 15, 2024

Share with your friends and family Art at the Mill on June 15, 2024. We are busy organizing the special event which will be held at Richfield Historical Park. There will be many talented artists and carefully selected vendors showcasing their amazing creations. The numerous unique and desirable items available make it difficult to limit one's purchases. When you decide to take a shopping break, you can relax to the music at the food area. Mark your calendars and spread the word Art at the Mill will be Saturday, June 15, 2024.

Historic Sites

Quint Mueller/Herb Lofy

With the end of 2023 comes the planning for 2024. The RHS Sites Committee has been discussing the condition of various roofs on Historical Park buildings. Several have reached their life expectancy and will need replacement in the near future. (As all us property owners understand, it is important to be proactive with repairs and replacements. We have witnessed the rapid deterioration of buildings when roofs are neglected.) Among the most critical are the Mill House, Mill Barn, Granary and the Horse Shed. It is agreed that the Mill House is the most important, because of its potential to cause serious undetected damage.

The Sites Committee will be researching options as to what type of roof is desired, and appropriate. Consideration to historical correctness and location in the Park are very important. Presently, all the roofs are wood cedar shingles. Options are to again use cedar shingles or change to a metal or synthetic composite roof. Cedar roofs are the most expensive option. A metal roof could be of a standing seam variety which has been used for about a century in some areas. This is an option being considered for select buildings. The synthetic composite roofing offers the advantage of looking similar to cedar, but having lower cost, longer life and much improved fire resistance.

Regardless of the material and method chosen for each building, the cost of replacing roofs is significant. As most people that have owned a home for 20 years, or more, are aware, replacing a roof is an expensive endeavor. It can't be ignored for long, before the consequences add up to an even larger bill. RHS will be addressing as many of the buildings as our crew is capable of. Some roofs are too large and too high to be safely done by the RHS crew. The most critical buildings will be tackled first. The roofs of all the buildings will be addressed over the next few years, as the RHS budget and crew resources are able to accommodate.

Watch for more details as the Sites Committee gathers information to present the best options. In the meantime, please consider what you might be able to do to help RHS fund the roof replacements and further preserve the buildings that the Richfield community is so proud of. A good quality roof is one of the most important cornerstones of a building's integrity.

New Home for Gehl Equipment, Historic Pictures, Slides and VHS Tapes – Herb Lofy

Many of you may recall that the feature of the 2008 RHS Threshere was the Gehl Company, West Bend, Wisconsin. Terry LeFever and Lori Heidecker from Gehl Company were instrumental in helping present the Gehl displays.

In September 2008, Manitou Group, a French manufacturer, purchased Gehl. Manitou's strength was telehandlers and decisions were made to dispense with some of the historic farm equipment pieces that Gehl Company had collected over the years. The Gehl Company roots go back to 1859. So there were numerous items collected. A donation of about a dozen machines was offered to RHS with acquisition accomplished in late 2009.

Over the years, very reasonable storage became available on the late Robert Wittenberger farm; Jean Happle offered free barn space; and items were stored as well on the Timm, Hansen and Lofy farms. Along with the equipment, many boxes of photos, movies, videos and marketing materials were stored at the Lofy home to protect them from temperature changes. RHS now has a new 60 x 80 storage building with a semi-controlled environment on the Lofy farm where the equipment can now be stored.

Mike Sorenson from rural West Bend, having a passionate interest in all things Gehl, has experience transferring and preserving historic pictures, films, slides and converting VHS tapes. Mike is giving his "Scout's best" in handling these conversions for RHS. His time consuming efforts are much appreciated.

Library/Program/Newsletter

Marge Holzbog/Connie Thoma

We are pleased to announce the program lineup for the next four months:

January 25, 2024 - We will welcome back Daniel Wittenberger. He has in his possession his Great-Grandfather's diary from the Civil War 1860 which he has agreed to share with you. If you have never heard one of Dan's presentations you're in for a very interesting evening.

February 22, 2024 - Our presentation will feature Dr. David Lehman. The title of his presentation is "Sustaining the Northern Wisconsin Forest of the Menomonee Indian Tribe." Dr. Lehman's slide presentation will show how the brotherhood of the Red Cliff Band of Ojibwe make birch bark baskets from the white birch trees that grow in the area.

On March 28, 2024 - Carrie Hennessy from Johnson Nursery in Menomonee Falls will be presenting on how to attract pollinators to your gardens. Ms. Hennessy will discuss "easy ways to make your yard friendlier to bees and butterflies to create a successful pollinator habitat."

April 25th, 2024 - We will feature a well-known author, Barbara Josse, who will speak on her book "Death's Door: True Tales of Tragedy, Mystery and Bravery from the Great Lakes."

A sneak preview of the fall line-up. . . . September will feature a skilled Blacksmith. November we welcome back Jessica Michna.

Hope to see you all at are monthly meetings which are held at the Richfield Fire Station #1 at 7:00 p.m. free to the public followed by refreshments.

LWC Welcome Center

Ruth Gruen Jeffords

A CHERISHED TRADITION - Christmas Cookie Recipe Books

In the tiny kitchen of the Lillicrapp Welcome Center, you will find assorted vintage baking items, such as mixing bowls, rolling pins, flour sifters, rotary hand mixers, cookie cutters, and a cupboard filled with spices and baking supplies used for (among other things) cookie baking!

A cherished holiday tradition was/is awaiting the arrival of the newest Wisconsin Electric Co. "Christmas Cookie Book." People would stand in line on the street, or wait in a line of cars, just to get their free copy of this wonderful cookbook – similar to the olden days driving to Chicago to enjoy the holiday windows at Marshall Fields.

The Cookie Book tradition began in 1928 by Wisconsin Electric Power Company for the main purpose of promoting electric baking appliances. (During some years, Wisconsin Gas developed their own recipe book giveaways that promoted gas-powered appliances.) The Electric Company cookie books were published nearly every year through 1973, when they were discontinued until a “commemorative edition” was produced in 1984. Cookie books followed in 1991 and 1998; and in 2002, WE Energies produced a desserts recipe book. Thereafter in 2006, WE Energies revived the annual cookie book tradition.

In the early days, many of the recipes were created in the test kitchens at the power companies. Among all the new recipes that made the cut (and are now included in the books every year) are the Spritz Cookie and Sugar Cutouts. Another recipe was for **Stollen**, the once-popular frosted German fruitcake. Recipes for savory dishes and desserts for holiday entertainment were also included in some of the cookie books.

Some of the best cookies were selected for the annual public display in downtown Milwaukee at the Electric Company's Public Service Building at 231 W. Michigan St. (later the WE Energies headquarters), with elaborate setups that showed every cookie in that year's book. Creating the books was a year-long process that intensified in Fall, and all photography of the cookies was done in-house.

At a time when both electric and gas companies housed up-to-date test kitchens, they also employed a small group of home economists and offered a wide array of services to customers. Cookie books were not the only consumer service the home economists provided. They also staffed a **RECIPE LINE** that people could call to have recipes read to them over the phone. A large circular file of binders was packed with thousands of recipes for reference. Back then, the dreaded recipe asked for at Christmastime was “**Head Cheese**”. This recipe was **four** pages long; so, whoever took that call knew they’d be on the phone for a very long time.

In today’s crazy world, who has time to bake? But, I believe no one can resist taking a brief break to sit down and page through these wonderful cookbooks – if for no other reason than to enjoy the pictures and remember when times were simpler and “sweeter”.



1935 PRINTED COOKBOOK

From 1928 to 1934, the cookbooks were similar to a stapled paper newsletter



Marketing

Doug Wenzel

A picture they say is worth a thousand words. Those of us who create ads, fliers, and several media posts for RHS are always on the lookout for good pictures that will add interest to our prose. An effort currently underway is going to make the search a great deal easier.

Earlier this year, I created a shared folder in Microsoft OneDrive where RHS members could upload pictures. Many of us had private collections of pictures we had taken. When combined in this cloud storage folder, they totaled several thousand pictures! (Note: These are not RHS historic photos which are housed with Lois Hessenhauer in a separate database.)

Susan Brushafer has volunteered to lead a committee to organize this large collection of RHS-related pictures. Susan is an RHS member active on the Library and Welcome Center Committee.

She is also pursuing a DTM (Distinguished Toastmaster) award, the highest level of educational achievement in Toastmasters International. Leading the RHS committee helps her fulfill one of the DMT requirements, so it’s a win-win. (Give her a shout if you are curious about Toastmasters.)

I've been in the Marketing Chair for about four years now, and I've learned a lot about promoting RHS, but I still have a long way to go. I recently took the opportunity (my first time) to talk to a sales rep for one of the local radio stations and got a quote for some short radio ads. The Art at the Mill Committee is considering this medium.

Membership

Dorothy Marks

Mother Nature brought us a perfect beautiful sunny day for the Thresheree.

For that event, the wonderful gentlemen of the "Thursday Crew" removed every last piece of wood/lumber from the Horse Shed. They also painted the exterior which now looks very nice. With a completely empty space, we could easily accommodate fourteen vendors for our boutique, this was five more than last year. We again had a nice variety of beautiful items. Turning the Horse Shed into a boutique seems to be a pretty good idea.

Because we offer home backed items for sale at the Thresheree, we set up a coffee table next to the Horse Shed under a big beautiful tree. We had comfortable chairs for our visitors to sit and relax with a cup of coffee. We are planning to do this again next year.

Just a reminder gifting a membership to the Richfield Historical Society is a very good idea,

Mill House

Cindy Schmechel/Clara Birkel

Twenty-twenty-three has been a challenging year for the Mill House committee. We began with the Maple Syrup Family Day tours and ended with closing our doors during the Thresheree due to the restoration work and painting being done on the outside of the House. Since the work was still in progress during the Thresheree, we were not able to give tours to guests or set up our planned Victorian toy display.

We have high hopes that the work being done and the cleaning of the residue and dirt left inside the House because of the painting will be done in time for next year's Maple Syrup Family Day event. Rest assured that we have every hope that the Mill House will again be open for tours as soon as possible this coming year.

We are both looking forward to greeting guests for tours of the Mill House at our events, to meeting new visitors as well as old friends and sharing the story of the Mill House and of the families who lived there.



Mill House Painting in Progress

Mill Restoration

Al Mayer

The Fall of 2023 was a very productive and inspiring time at the Mill of the Richfield Historical Society. We were able to bring together all of the systems needed to run the Superior engine, mounted in its place in the Engine Shed, and grind grain from the power transmission that will turn the stones and other equipment in the Mill in the future. This was a landmark achievement for us, to make this happen 150 years after the maiden year of the Mill's existence and to showcase this during our Thresheree and Harvest Festival in September.

Thank you for all of your support and for helping us to bring this mill back to life!

We now are working on some features of the Engine Shed, which include the walkway and steps that allow the miller to access the Engine Room, and also disengage the power to the Mill without going outside.

At the same time, we are working to reconstruct the supports for the shafts and gears inside the Mill that convey the engine and future turbine power into the building and to the various equipment that is needed to process the raw grains into usable flour. We've been able to cut on site from maple and oak logs that we cut 2 years ago during our annual Thresheree many of the beams and posts that we need for this project.

We have a team of members reconstructing the sheave pulley that mounts above the turbine, and brings the power into the Mill. The original has weakened; and with a strong new replacement, we can use the original as a pattern and artifact.

As this year goes forward, we will move more attention inside the Mill, specifically to the milling deck and hearst frame below it.

If you are interested in working with wood and timbers, or think you'd like to help clean up and restore the 100+ year old equipment and be part of getting it operating again, stop in at the Park on a Sunday around 10:00 a.m. There's a challenge here that's just been waiting decades for you to come along and spark your interest!



Steps to Engine Room



Sheave Pulley

Pioneer Homestead

Sunsan Sawdey

Who Will Help Me Make The Bread?

Pioneer Homestead Baking Sourdough Bread

When was the last time you thought about the story of the *Little Red Hen*?

Little Red Hen tied her apron around her feathery waist, placed a bonnet on her head and scratched around the Pioneer Homestead barnyard for a big fat worm to eat.

One day the Little Red Hen found a seed. It was a wheat seed. She knew it ought to be planted so she began to ask her barnyard friends for help. "Who will help me plant the seed?" she asked the Pig then the Cat then the Rat. All replied with a "Not I." So the Little Red Hen was left to do the planting alone.

The Little Red Hen chanced to notice how large the wheat was and that then grain was ready, so she ran about calling briskly: "Who will cut the Wheat?" Again she asked the Pig, then the Cat then the Rat. All replied with a "Not I." So, the Little Red hen got the sickle from the farmer's tools in the Messer Barn and proceeded to cut the big plant of wheat.

On the ground lay the nicely cut wheat, ready to be gathered and threshed. Poor Little Red Hen was so exhausted. Again, in a very hopeful tone, she called out, "Who will thresh the wheat?". Once more the Pig, with a grunt, said, "Not I," said the Cat with a meow, "Not I," and the Rat, with a squeak, said "Not I." Discouraged, The Little Red Hen said, "I will then." And she did.

Carrying the sack of wheat, she trudged off to the distant Messer/Mayer Mill. There she ordered the wheat ground into beautiful white flour. When Johann Mayer, the miller, brought her the flour, she walked slowly back all the way to her own barnyard near the Motz cabin.

The thought came to her that she must, somehow, make this wheat into bread. She was not in the habit of making bread, since she mostly ate worms. So after her children were fed and in bed, she hunted up the Pig, the Cat and the Rat for help. Surely, they would help her this time! "Who will make the bread?" Once more her hopes were dashed! For the Pig said, "Not I," the Cat said, "Not I," and the Rat said, "Not I." So the Little Red Hen said once more, "I will then," and she did.

Putting on a fresh apron, the Little Red Hen carefully followed the recipe and began to bake. Soon the Rat's keen sense of smell brought him near. The lazy Cat who had been sunning himself was not far behind, and the Pig's long drawn-out snores were interrupted with the sweet smell of baking bread.



Baked Bread

When the lovely brown loaves came out of the oven, the Pig, the Cat and the Rat all exclaimed, "Who will eat the bread" their eyes wide and noses filled with delight. But the Little Red Hen replied, "You will not."

Come to one of the Richfield Historical Society's events in 2024 and see how we make sourdough bread over the open fire at the Pioneer Homestead. Wheat was important to the pioneers who migrated west in the 19th century. It was a source of sustenance on long journeys, and it helped to keep pioneers healthy in their new and challenging environments. We recreate the process for you in the Motz Log Cabin, and you will be able to see how we bake risen bread in our cast iron spiders over coals in our fire pit.

Project Coordinator

Al Mayer

It seems we always have things to work on at the Richfield Historical Park. Every Thursday we are able to find plenty of projects to keep our crew of 12 to 18 members busy at various Park improvements.

We also prepare and set up, along with event volunteers, what's needed for the different functions that Richfield Historical Society puts on throughout the year. After an event is done, the clean-up and preparing for the next function is a collaborate effort of many of our volunteers.

Now that we're into a less active time of the year, we have time to work on maintenance and items that need attention. We also are able to sort and organize signs, tools, hardware, and other items for easier access.

Looking back at the year that just passed, there have been a lot of projects accomplished. Through the hard work of the Sites Committee and direction of Tim Einwalter, the Mill House has been re-coated with a long deserved, completely restorative paint job. We've also provided adequate room to keep our items that are stored off site with a new storage shed at the Lofy farm. The Mill House pump sits on a new deck, and fuel to the Mill engine is complete.

We've spent many hours removing dead trees, sawing, splitting, stacking, and using those cords of firewood to make award winning maple syrup.

What I see from all of the people that come out to the Park and offer their talents, whether it be Thursdays, Sundays, different committee members, or volunteers that help out at our many events, is that they are here because of their passion for the Park and sense of community, working together for a better neighborhood.

A little snow is on the ground. Thanksgiving has come and gone. The calendar has changed to December, and Christmas is gliding away.

Every year goes faster. 2024 will be a big year for the Richfield Historical Society's Threshere and Harvest Festival. It will celebrate 25 years of threshing and log sawing. The event has grown from a half day to a full day to two-day event.

During those 25 years, the Mill has been refurbished. The Barn has been turned into a workshop and museum area along with the Wood Shed and Smokehouse. The Lillicrapp Welcome Center/General Store was moved into the Park and renovated. In addition, the Boutique has taken up location in the Horse Shed. Clearing trees and paths have made a roadway to the Pioneer Homestead. The Log Cabin (Motz) and the Log Barn (Messer) represent an era before the Mill was built. Richfield Historical Society's delicious maple syrup is produced in the Maple Sugar Shack. Adjacent to the Sugar Shack is the Granary from Lake Bernice. The Black Smith Shop is growing in the number of blacksmiths participating. A bridge was put in so the grounds can be accessed in one circular route.

Hoping you have had a chance to take tours of the buildings or have walked around the grounds. The Richfield Historical Park is always open. The buildings are open during some events or tours can be arranged.

If you have an interest in helping in these areas or want more information, give a call to the specific building chair. Al Mayer is chair for the Mill tours and for the Thursday Crew. Clara Birkel and Cindy Schmechel are the Mill House chairs. They are always looking for tour guides and helpers to keep the house in order. At the Lillicrapp Welcome Center, Marge Holzbog keeps all records and information files in order. Ruth Jeffords has the General Store open for business. Dorothy Marks and her assistants keep the Boutique organized. If you are into gardening, give Daryl Grier a call. Her gardeners are always looking for help planting and taking care of the Mill House garden.

Also, Deanna Einwalter and museum gatherers can always use a helping hand. The Pioneer Homestead (log cabin, log barn and animal corral) is a working farmstead. Susan Sawdey and her many helpful farm hands demonstrate many activities (weaving, canning, making butter and ice cream, cooking over an outdoor fire, dying yarn, spinning yarn, and many other family farm chores). The Maple Syrup Shack has Pete Samson and crew working on tapping trees, cooking syrup, bottling and selling maple syrup. Kathy Lauenstein along with Jeff Beegle keeps the Blacksmith Shop hammering. Is there anything mentioned that might be of interest to you? Call the chair or give me a call.

All 2024 events have been mentioned in this newsletter. Keep those dates in mind. As you know from the past, a volunteer email will be sent to you, or I will give you a call. If you are missed, give me a call. When you get together with family and friends, share the information from this article. Maybe they would have an interest in volunteering.

Added Note: When the snow is blowing outside and you are house bound, pull out your plant lists. This will make you think of Spring. Nehm's Greenhouse (not floral) will be busy planting seeds and plants for RHS's Plant Sale. Again, we will have \$25 and \$15 plant certificates for sale. The certificates make great gifts. I know they help me with my gift shopping list. Our Society gets to keep about a third of the sales. We will be in touch with you in April.