



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

- 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

Farming in Wisconsin: Part II
Mid-1800s to World War I – Susan Brushafer

Wisconsin, the Wheat State. As strange as that sounds, Wisconsin did not earn the title of America’s Dairyland until 1930. The phrase was added to Wisconsin’s license plate in 1939. Long before that, pioneer farmers started out by planting small plots of vegetables to sustain their families. If the growing season was a good one, there might be surplus to sell or to trade with neighbors and stores. In addition to maize, rye, carrots, radishes, turnips, potatoes, and beans, marsh hay (for the livestock) was also planted.

By 1860, Wisconsin was the second largest state for wheat production in the United States. Unfortunately, a decade later, in 1870, wheat cultivation began to fail. Farmers had to grow other crops and began to turn to dairy. The dairy industry didn’t take hold in Wisconsin until the late 1800s.



Wisconsin Agriculture

He referred to wheat as a dying industry and ‘queen cow’ as the future opportunity. Taking an active role in the promotion of dairy, the University of Wisconsin School of Agriculture encouraged dairy farming in the state. It began offering short courses and winter courses thereby educating farmers on the benefits of agriculture.

It might have taken center stage earlier, but milking and feeding cows, making butter and cheese was considered ‘women’s work!’ That belief changed, however, when William Dempster Hoard was the state’s governor from 1889 to 1891. Hoard encouraged men to refocus.

Let's refocus on 'Wisconsin, the Wheat State.' Although farming took place on depleted soil, wheat was the premier crop until the 1860s. Wheat production in Wisconsin peaked in 1873, producing 26.25 million bushels. Buffalo and St. Croix were among leading wheat-producing counties in the state from 1870 through the turn of the century. As late as 1878, the state still had more acres of land devoted to wheat than any other state; although yield per acre had dropped from 15 bushels per acre to 9 bushels per acre during those five years. Farmers had to deal with wheat rust disease and chinch bugs, both of which destroyed the wheat crops. As railroads emerged, more fertile land west of Wisconsin provided a ready market and more competition for wheat.

The time to harvest wheat depended upon the type of wheat grown. Winter wheat is planted in the Fall and goes dormant as it overwinters in the field. When Spring arrives, it grows rapidly and is ready for harvest in July. Spring wheat is planted in April or May and grows throughout the Spring and early Summer. It's harvested in August or September. Harvesting of wheat also requires factors that only Mother Nature controls: wheat is best harvested during dry weather as rain will damage the crop. Warm, dry weather will also cure the wheat quicker, which gives mice and birds less opportunity to take a share of your harvest. Imagine proudly viewing your beautiful, golden crop of wheat, knowing the intense labor that was soon to come...

The ancient implements of scythe and sickle were mandatory wheat harvesting tools well into the 1800s. Take ahold of these tools and picture the following: ten swipes yielded enough wheat stalks to create a sheaf of about one foot in diameter. The wheat might be flailed (beating the wheat stalks with short wooden sticks tied onto a longer pole by a leather thong) manually. Flailing knocked the grain loose. If horses were a resource, the team could be led around a hard-surfaced, circular area where they trampled the stalks. The farmer and his family or helpers removed the straw by pitchfork and gently shoveled the seed into burlap gunny sacks. They tried, of course, to keep out as much of the dirt and other debris as possible. Next, the grain was dumped and winnowed (separated) to isolate the kernels from chaff and dirt. This entire process was labor intensive resulting in a family possibly harvesting only two acres in a day. Those two acres 'might' produce fifty-to-seventy bushels of grain.



Cradle Scythe & Sickle

Few farmers could afford a horse-powered wheat threshing machine which was popular by the mid-1800s. The wheat product still had to be winnowed to clean the grain. A fanning mill to separate the grain from the chaff was expensive and required manual strength, prior to the introduction of small steam engines, to produce enough 'wind' to separate the grain from the chaff. It wasn't until the McCormick reaper came within financial reach of the farmer that wheat production boomed within Wisconsin.

How did wheat prices fare? Market prices varied between a low of 50 cents per bushel to a high of \$2.00 per bushel. (A story from the 1860s cited a farmer near Chippewa Falls who had been offered \$1.25 a bushel but held out for \$1.50. He had to sell at 50 cents a bushel the following Spring.)

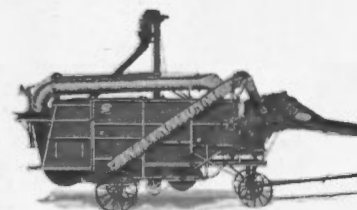
Farming machines may have had an impact on the Civil War; they were more common in the North. That meant farmhands going off to war had less impact on grain production. Grain prices were high during the Civil War, especially in the southern states where hand tools were more common. Production help waned as men left for war. Prices dropped with new markets opening west of Wisconsin. Droughts increased prices; bumper crops tanked prices.

Wheat farmers referred to wheat as a commodity as "good as money." In a governor's message discussing state agriculture in 1857, it was noted that wheat did pass as money in many cases. It was a cash crop that could be traded for almost any item the farmer needed. In some areas, wheat was stored in private warehouses and

'wheat receipts' or 'wheat tickets' passed as money.

In the earlier days of Wisconsin, the Wheat State, one large challenge loomed: harvesting. Hussey and McCormick reapers were available in Wisconsin during the mid-1850s. Many farmers didn't use them. There was a problem of reapers getting around stumps and roots. They were, however, used in the more-settled and developed southern part of the state. In 1856-1857 (Trempealeau County), a J. I. Case threshing machine cost \$725.

The 19th century spawned a revolution in farming technology. Machines were coming into factories in the city, and new machinery was changing the way farmers planted and harvested their crops. In some cases, farming at the start of the 19th century was not much different from how it had been done thousands of years ago. That changed dramatically with the invention of horse-drawn reapers which cut the grain and binders that tied the stalks into bundles. The early 1860s witnessed a dramatic change from hand power to horses, which historians characterize as the first American agricultural revolution. By the end of the 19th century, machines like those manufactured by J.I. Case, McCormick and International, did not just cut wheat; they threshed it and put it into sacks, ensuring it was ready for storage or shipment.



International Thresher



Threshing

Before reapers simplified the process, threshing time required hard-working laborers. Crews of threshers would form and travel from farm to farm. To thank the workers; and to ensure they were well fed, the women at the farm would fix a huge noon meal for the men. Occasionally, neighboring farm women would come in to help. The meals were hefty: beef, chicken, pork, or all three. Meats were accompanied by mashed potatoes and gravy, garden vegetables, bread and butter, pickles, jams, and jellies. Following this noon feast, large slices of cake and pie were offered for dessert.

Because it was cooler than in the hot kitchen, women often set up long tables in the yard, under breezy shade trees. It was no secret that the men compared meals from one farm where they threshed to another. The women worked hard knowing they were preparing the best meals they could, and the men returned to the afternoon of work with full bellies.

During its wheat-growing peak, the need for a milling industry developed; and the state developed an agricultural implement industry to meet the needs of wheat farmers and to improve production.

Similarly, quite a few lumber mill owners in western central Wisconsin had the financial means to start along rivers some of the early grist mills. As noted in the Richfield Historical Society's popular "Richfield Remembers the Past," at one time there were some 10,000 mills in Wisconsin! Although known as Mayer's Mill, a water powered-sawmill was built along the east branch of the Oconomowoc (Cooney) River in 1857, the builder was Andrew Messer. Messer expanded the sawmill operation in the early 1870s when he added a grist mill. The mill ground wheat and rye until the early 1890s.

Grist mills often served a purpose other than grinding grains. Rural neighbors lived far apart from each other and often didn't see each other except at religious services, if they could make them. Mills became places where people regularly gathered. The local mill would have been the community's social hub where farm families came to get their grain, but also to catch up on the news of the day.



Messer-Mayer Sawmill



Messer-Mayer Woodshed



Messer-Mayer Mill Horse Shed



**Messer-Mayer
Mill Privy**

What did a wheat farmer's farmstead look like? It usually consisted of a farmhouse, privy (outhouse), woodshed, possibly a small, three-bay threshing barn, a horse barn, a granary, a smokehouse, and a pump house. The Messer-Mayer Mill Woodshed (upper right) is a front-gabled building used to store firewood for the cook stove and main heater. A pigeon coop is located at the peak of the structure. The Horse Shed (middle right,) part of the Messer-Mayer Mill property, is a side-gabled building that was constructed of the same materials to match the original Horse Shed that was at this location. In its active days it was used as an animal barn or stable. Farmers having their grain processed at the Messer-Mayer Mill often used the Horse Shed to protect their animals from the weather.

Farmers who moved from New England and New York created their own ideas of barns. These earliest storage buildings were sometimes called 'English' or three-bay storage and threshing barns. Farmers whose home countries included Norway, Germany, Poland, Finland, Sweden, and Switzerland built the barns they were most familiar with – log constructions reflecting their countries' roots.



Beautiful Bank Barn

As the need for storage increased, so did larger barns. In Wisconsin, the most popular type built was called a 'bank barn.' It was so named because it was constructed against the side of a hill or bank. This allowed the farmer to haul hay harvested to feed the livestock directly to the second-story storage mow. The main floor was heavily bolstered and served as a surface where wheat could be winnowed. Conveniently, the lower level stable area was located partially underground, beneath the hay mow. This is where the livestock were housed. The walls of this lower level were often built of fieldstone in the glacier-formed parts of the state and of quarried rock in the non-glacier-formed parts. Early bank barns usually had gable roofs. After 1900 when dairy barns became prominent, gambrel-roofed barns with four planes appeared.

By the 1870s as the dairy industry took hold, European farmers, usually French and Germans, began creating pits in which they stored green corn fodder. As it fermented, it became silage. Early silage-making experiments caught the attention of farmers who were looking for storage sources of winter feed for their cattle. The first silos were

located inside the barn. According to "Wisconsin Agriculture, A History," in 1877 Levi P. Gilbert of Fort Atkinson is credited with building the first silo in Wisconsin. His was a straw-lined pit silo measuring 32 feet long, 12 feet wide, and 6 feet deep.

There was no initial rush to build silos. Some farmer claimed silage caused cows to lose their teeth or made trouble for the cows at calving time. Some claimed the cows became drunk and staggered around after eating silage! The biggest fear was that silage would affect milk quality. In April 1881, the editor of "Farm Journal" noted, "Practical farmers won't adopt it, except here and there; and in 10 years from now, the silos being built will be used for storing potatoes, turnips, beets, or ice." The editor's prediction was incorrect.

The most important advance of the 1870s was the use of both silos and the wide use of deep-well drilling, two advances that enabled larger farms and higher production of marketable surpluses. By 1889, there were an estimated 2,000 silos in Wisconsin. That number rose to 55,991 in 1915, and more than 100,000 by 1923, putting Wisconsin on its way to having the most silos of any state in the nation. Silos evolved.



Old Round Wooden Silo

By the late 1890s, upright wooden silos reduced the problem of mold which caused silage to spoil when stored in pit silos. Initially, wooden silos were still square, and mold continued to form in corners. Silos eventually advanced from wood staves (thin, narrow shaped pieces of wood to poured concrete, to concrete staves.

To illustrate the growth of farming in Wisconsin, one only needs to look at the government's 1860 Agricultural Census which counted kinds of livestock, types of crops, and production of other products. In 1860, the era in which the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) was created, this country had 2,044,000 farms, with an average size of 199 acres. A wide variety of livestock were also counted in our state, including horses, asses, mules, milch (milk) cows, oxen, and sheep. In addition to wheat, farms in 1860 were growing rye, Indian corn, oats, tobacco, wood, peas, beans, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, barley, and buckwheat.

Also included in that year's census were items referred to as products, including orchard products, wine, market-garden products, butter, cheese, hay, clover and grass seeds, hops, flax, maple sugar, sorghum, molasses, bees' wax, and honey.

Stepping ahead 30 years to 1890, the number of farms in the United States grew to about 4,565,000, averaging about 136 acres.

Thinking about the work involved with farming in the late 1800s into the early 1900s, one has to be curious about a farmer's social life. In "A History of Agriculture in Wisconsin," published in 1922 by the Historical Society of Wisconsin (author Joseph Schafer) provides a look at a farm family's social life. He notes that many farmers made "going to town" a weekly holiday. Saturday trade for local storekeepers was a kind of 'clearance sale' for them, although prices were not marked down and little cash exchanged hands. Farmers brought in whatever they had to sell, especially butter and eggs. The value of these items was checked off against purchases made.

Buying and selling during these weekly trips was not the only reason for making them. Farmers who had the 'habit of weekly trips' would make an excuse to go to town even if there was no business justification for it. They wanted to relax, dress up, and enjoy conversations. The visits allowed them to learn the news of the much wider neighborhood and "see what was going on." Author Schafer notes, however, that those who developed the saloon habit and wasted time and money on carousing were not considered in his (above) description.

The farming families took advantage of church services, the schools, the library, the theater, and recreational facilities as a means of keeping in touch with the outside world. If these families prospered economically, Schafer noted, they had no serious social problems to deal with. They might live as well as the prosperous families in town and mingle socially with such families.

Around 1900, the wheat market began to decline due to disease such as grain rust and the ability of the land to produce. This led to an end of the era when 'wheat was king' for the area farmer. Dairying began to slowly emerge as Wisconsin agriculture's most valuable alternative to wheat. The number of dairy cows in the state rapidly increased during 1880 and 1890; by 1899, they could be found on more than 90% of Wisconsin farms.

Part III of Farming in Wisconsin in your next newsletter starts with how Wisconsin made traction toward earning its future title of "America's Dairyland."

President

Pete Samson

So far 2023 is off to a great start! The Maple Syrup Family Day was a success despite the weather. We are looking forward to Art at the Mill in June. (This event continues to get bigger and better each year.) This year we celebrate 150 years of the Mill and plan to have a celebration in July.

We are looking forward to completing two large projects including the complete repainting of the Mill House in Spring and the building of a pole building in the Fall. A new pole building will allow us to have all of the items we currently store in various locations off site to be close to the Park.

I also have the pleasure of introducing Joni Crivello who will become the new Vice President/ President Elect beginning in April, 2023 and continuing in 2024. I will continue as President until Joni as President Elect takes over.

The Thursday crew continues to have 15-20 people show up every Thursday to work in the Park doing anything that is asked of them. Al Mayer does a great job organizing all of this. RHS is blessed to have so many volunteers. We thank them all.

Blacksmith Shop

Kathy Lauenstein

Some fantastic new metal designs will be at our Hammer-In event in October. RHS has two new designers who will show us their designs. Demonstrations will be in the main building and some great smiths will have tent displays with some of their work for sale.

Other activities will be offered at the surrounding buildings. Visit the Sugar Shack, Log Cabin and Barn. Check out what life was like in Richfield at that earlier time in history. Lunch will be available to make a great picnic day to enjoy the south end of the Park. Come and relax in the Park.

Collections

Deanna Einwalter

History of Cameras and Photography

Photographic cameras, while they may still carry the attraction and quality, have somehow lost their novelty. With a camera fitted in every phone and affordable equipment available at the drop of a hat, cameras have moved on from being a valuable luxury to an everyday tool. But with such a wondrous instrument now a part of our everyday life, we should take the time to understand how we got here.

Cameras of the 1830s were named the daguerreotype and were publicly unveiled in 1839. After exposure in the daguerreotype camera, the image was developed by mercury vapor and fixed with a strong solution of ordinary salt. Then in 1878, it was discovered that a heat-ripening gelatin emulsion greatly increased the solution's sensitivity finally making so-called "instantaneous" snapshot exposure practical.



Late 19th Century Studio Camera

George Eastman introduced the first Kodak in 1888. It was a very simple box camera with a fixed focus lens and single shutter speed. The Kodak came pre-loaded with enough film for 100 exposures and needed to be sent back to the factory for processing and reloading with film.



Kodak No. 2 Brownie Box Camera (circa 1920)

Next the 35mm became an innovation; and after WWII, newer models and features exploded the market. The first recorded attempt at building a self-contained digital camera was in 1975 by Steven Sasson, an engineer at Eastman Kodak. Digital technology evolved, and now just about every American has a camera on their cell phone. So when you take a picture with your cell phone, stop and think how we got here.

Education

Kathy Weberg



Weston

Bet you didn't know we have had a live-in resident at the Richfield Historical Park for a number of years. Yes, we did and still do. Unfortunately, this nameless dude became victim to the little critters that also make the Historical Park their home. Sadly, his clothes and insides (straw) were the attraction, and the clothes and insides got pretty well chewed up over the course of several winters. So his caretaker went to Goodwill to pick up some different duds in an attempt to make him a little more respectable.

He actually got a name, too. Wonder just who this could be? Well, his name is Weston; and he resides in, wait for it, the outhouse! His digs got cleaned up a bit too, and Weston seems to be much happier. So feel free to stop in and say "hi" to Weston. FYI Kids attending education days in May LOVE peeking in the outhouse only to find out it is occupied! Disclaimer: Weston's outhouse is for display only. Please use the portapotties elsewhere on the grounds for serious restroom type business.

Events Coordinator

Daryl Grier

What went into Making Maple Syrup 2023 – Pete Samson

What a year 2023 turned out to be at the Sugar Shack. This was the biggest year ever since we started collecting sap and making Maple Syrup in the Historical Park. We collected 1,782 gallons of sap and made 315 pints or just over 39 gallons of Maple Syrup. That is a ratio of 45 gallons of sap to 1 gallon of syrup. Last year was our

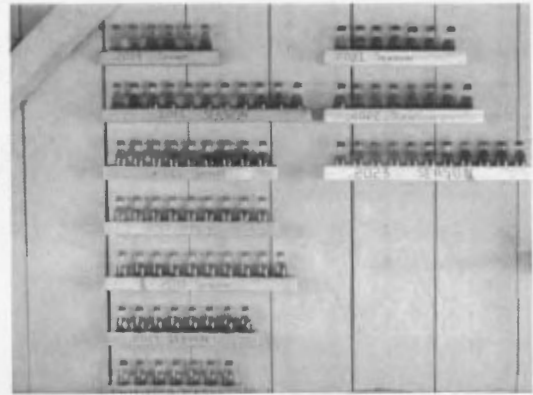
2nd largest collection of sap at 1,478 gallons that made 300 pints, just over 37.5 gallons. Last year the sap had a little higher concentration coming out of the trees. The ratio was 40 gallons of sap to 1 gallon of syrup.

What does it take to do all of this? Beginning February 23rd, we used 103 taps in 70 different Sugar Maple trees producing 11 batches of syrup. Each batch consisted of approximately 150 gallons of sap making a little less than 4 gallons of syrup. It takes approximately 20 hours of time to make each batch. We usually have 3 people cooking and bottling or 60 hours of labor to make the 1 batch. Each batch consisted of a minimum of 2 collections of sap. We had an average of 10 people come to collect and another 10 hours of labor per batch.

The 2023 season took approximately 770 hours of labor to make the 39 gallons of syrup. Thanks to all the great volunteers who showed up to help collect, cook and bottle. Without everyone's help, we wouldn't be able to produce our award-winning syrup that brings in a nice profit for the Park every year.

We also burned over 3 cords of wood this year using the Ash trees that have died putting them to good use.

Thanks again for everyone's help making this a fun and enjoyable project every year.



Maple Syrup Samples 2014 - 2023

2023 Art at the Mill - Lois Hessenhauer

Saturday, June 17, 2023, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Join your friends and neighbors for a fun event of artistry and entertainment...The 15th Annual Art at the Mill brings 75+ talented artists to the beautiful Richfield Historical/Nature Park and offers several other activities to make this a perfect day to enjoy the outdoors.

THE EXHIBITORS – What's on your shopping list? – Paintings, wood, jewelry, chocolates, textiles, basketry, pottery, photography, caramels, blacksmithing, metal, gourds, plus more. A silent auction will also offer the opportunity to purchase works donated by the exhibitors.

FOOD –The Richfield Lions are returning again with their great menu. Plus, ice cream treats will also be available.

LIVE MUSIC – VIVO will once again entertain you with their soothing contemporary jazz from 11:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

HISTORIC TOURS – Learn about your local history. The Messer/Mayer Mill is the showpiece of the Park, and it will be open from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. for free tours along with the Mill House displaying original furniture and the Lillicrapp Welcome Center with its General Store display.

The summer is busy, but this is an event you won't want to miss. Join us once, and you'll return again and again. So, mark your calendar, and we will see you there.

Free Parking: 1896 State Road 164 (Richfield Nature Park entrance), Richfield, WI.

Free Wagon Ride to the Exhibiting Area.

Admission \$3.00

More information and Sneak Preview of Artists' Work: Visit www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org

Baked Goods for Art at the Mill - Daryl Grier

All you wonderful bakers, how about baking something for Art at the Mill? We'll provide bakery, (muffins, etc.) for the artists.

We start serving at 7:00 a.m. so bakery must be delivered the day before, Friday June 16th by noon or by 7:00 a.m. on June 17th at the Park. If you can't make it to the Park Friday or Saturday morning, bakery can be dropped off at Daryl Grier's, 1179 Wejegi Dr. 262-628-4221 dgrier@charter.net.

MILL FOUNDERS DAY CELEBRATION – JULY 23, 2023 – Al Mayer

In 1869, Andrew Messer and his new bride Louisa, purchased 27 acres of land from his parents that he had grown up on, which contained a millpond, dam, raceway, and sawmill. On this property he proceeded to build a three story gristmill, now known as the Messer- Mayer Mill.

Four years later, in 1873, the Mill was up and running, producing ground flour from wheat grown by the surrounding farmers

The Mill still contains the two sets of original French burr stones, conveyor and bolter which will be on display as well as four double roller mills, bolters, plansifter, elevators, and conveyors. All added equipment at the time, was state of the art! It is all still intact today as it was installed years ago, and hopefully ready to be operational soon.

The 150th anniversary is a celebration of the evidence this Mill affords to experience the life our ancestors lived and the story that is displayed in the innovations and machinery preserved in this structure.

We welcome you to join us on Sunday July 23, 2023, from 2-5 p.m. to celebrate the 150-year milestone of what is the Messer- Mayer Mill in Richfield. We'll be having a picnic lunch and beverages, along with music and informal viewing of the Mill and its equipment. We encourage you to mark your calendar and spend your afternoon with us!

Threshere and Harvest Festival – Daryl Grier

Silent Auction and Sweets 'n Stuff

I'm looking for household items (rummage) including books to sell at the Threshere in the Sweets 'n Stuff tent. Also needed are auction items for the Silent Auction.

Contact Daryl Grier at dgrier@charter.net or 262 628-4221 if you have any questions or would like to make a donation. All proceeds benefit our society!

Join Us For

MILL FOUNDERS DAY

EXPLORE THE MILL - SEE HOW FAR WE'VE COME

CELEBRATING
150 YEARS
1873 - 2023



SUNDAY
JULY 23RD 2023 | 2PM - 5PM

 **MESSER MAYER MILL**
RICHFIELD HISTORICAL PARK

GRAB A BITE TO EAT AT OUR COMPLIMENTARY PICNIC
DRINK LOCAL CRAFT BEERS AND WINE
ENJOY TIMELESS MUSIC
ALL IN THE SHADOW OF OUR BEAUTIFUL, HISTORIC
MESSER MAYER MILL!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS, NO RESERVATIONS REQUIRED.

Fresh Vegetables! – Daryl Grier

If you enjoy fresh vegetables, join our volunteer garden group to help plant, weed and harvest the RHS vegetable garden. Manure will be spread, and it will be tilled prior to planting in late May. We'll have seeds and some plants....tomato, broccoli, squash and others.

I'll contact everyone interested in planting a few days before we plant. If you can't be there on planting day but would like to have some vegetables, stop by once a week or so and weed and pick. We communicate about what is needed to be done via email. So when you get home from the garden, send me an email or call me; and I will let the other gardeners know what needs to be done. For example, I need to know that you weeded the beets and beans but other things need weeding, or that you picked the yellow beans but there are lots of green beans. Call Daryl Grier 262 628-4221 dgrier@charter.net

Historic Sites

Quint Mueller/Herb Lofy

Although Spring has been an on again-off again affair this year, the RHS Sites Crew is moving ahead with projects. The Mill House electrical upgrade will be almost complete by the time this newsletter is published. This will be a nice improvement to the Mill House, as it will eliminate the exterior breaker box and conduit. It needs to be completed before the Mill House paint project is started.

The Mill House paint project will be getting underway soon after the electrical upgrade is complete. Of course, the paint project will be partially dependent on the weather. Spring, being potentially damp or wet, may delay it a little. This will be a turnkey project. In other words, the contractor will be responsible for all aspects (paint removal, siding repairs, final prep, and painting.) Typically, the RHS crew would be taking on at least part of this. In this case, it was decided to contract out the entire project to maintain the integrity of the project and responsibility as a whole. We're looking forward to this being a major improvement to paint retention on this building.

The new LWC entrance/exit ramp is nearly complete now. As you may recall, this ramp was deteriorating and needed considerable attention. The decision was made to completely rebuild it in a slightly different configuration. It now extends around the west end of the LWC and opens to the north. This will provide better visibility of the south side of the building and allow easier handicapped navigation of the ramp as well. Thank you to the Thursday Crew for a great job!

Other projects on the docket for 2023 include re-decking of the Mill bridge and well in front of the Woodshed. We've mentioned the bridge decking before, but the material has been somewhat elusive. We now have the needed white oak to complete that project. This is mostly for cosmetics, as there is a modern concrete culvert under that wood decking. Even if the wood is a bit deteriorated, it has no effect on the structural integrity of the bridge. We also now have the needed material to replace the deteriorated decking under the hand pump in front of the Woodshed. This has needed attention for some time, but we've only been able to make "band-aid" repairs to it so far.

Back to bridges; plans for a new pedestrian bridge next to the existing Mill bridge are underway. The intent is to relieve some of the congestion over and around the main bridge during large events by separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Although we have not had any pedestrian/vehicular incidents, we're keeping an eye to safety wherever we can. At this point, there is no schedule set, as it's still in the planning stages.

Of course, the ubiquitous maintenance projects around the Park, like grass and lawn repairs, dead tree removal, and weekly mowing keep the crews busy between projects. As always, if you're interested in being

part of the crews that make our park as great as it is (..and have fun doing it – It's not just work for our crew, they have fun at the same time) or just get a better look at what's going on with projects in the Park, 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.)

Thresheree Bonus

This may be a Sites article but there is a new unique display for the 2023 Thresheree that deserves a little publicity. A late 1920s Case threshing machine has been modified to expose the internal workings and have them moving at about twenty RPM.

The story on this machine goes back to 2005 when Herb Lofy purchased the thresher from an Amish gentleman near Manchester, Wisconsin. It was a favorite of the late George Hoffmann, a familiar face at all the shows. It originally was sold to the Amish by John Nettesheim, an old iron collector from Allenton who usually participates at the Richfield Thresheree. The machine had been used extensively and had wear issues but was still functional. At a suggestion from Travis Krueger, a renowned Richfield thresherman, Herb proceeded to remove the galvanized steel from the right side, so that all the internal mechanisms can be seen.

It now gets interesting. Tim Einwalter, our RHS resident architect and engineer, comes to Herb's rescue to power the display and further expose the grain elevators. Conferring with Quint, Tim with the assistance of his ever-capable wife Deanna, dives into the project. After only two weeks and the investment in materials, the thresher is now ready for display, using a small Honda engine. Thanks for the suggestions, expertise and work to make this an interesting piece to be displayed at local shows. Look for this piece at the Thresheree this Fall.

Library/Program/Newsletter

Marge Holzbog/Connie Thoma

Connie Thoma - As Robert Root narrates his walk through windblown hay fields and the crooked blue river, he asks us to see history echoing all around us in everyday places both unassuming and profound applying lessons he learned from his reading of Wisconsin's well know writers, John Muir, Aldo Leopold and August Derleth. Please join us on May 25, 2023 at the Village Fire Station #1 on Hwy 175 at 7:00 p.m. to hear Robert Roots presentation. All welcome. Admission is free.

Marge Holzbog - Your Library Committee has summer plans to conclude interviews of Richfield's seniors interrupted by the pandemic for interview book number three. Also to be published by the time of the Thresheree is a fascinating and entertaining memoir, "Come Laugh with Me" written by Florence McChonochie, a Milwaukee school teacher, who put her stake in a piece of land on St. Augustine Road here in Richfield to experience a "novices" dive into the world of rural living and farming.

LWC Welcome Center

Ruth Gruen Jeffords

It's Springtime!

The sights and sounds of Spring are a joy for all of us. Many of you have gardening talents beyond imagination. How would you like to join a Garden Club? This is another new concept we are considering. Think about sharing your knowledge and skills with other gardeners. Some of the Garden Club topics may include:

- Tours of gardens in the area; or road trips to local garden centers
- Plant exchanges with other members; bring a plant from home to share
- Invite professionals to speak to the Club.
- Garden Craft Workshops; take part in making garden-related crafts
- Garden Photography Contest; photos of YOUR garden to vote on

If you are interested in joining our Garden Club, please contact a member of the LWC Welcome Center Committee. Happy planting!

Marketing

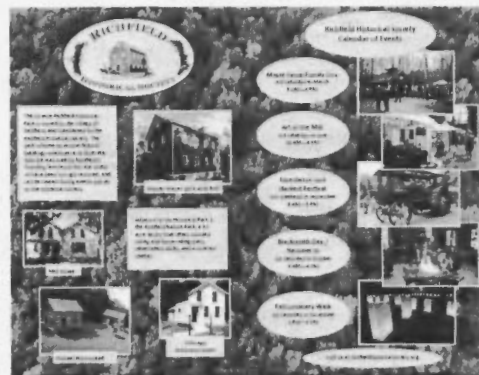
Doug Wenzel

Spring is a time for preparing our marketing materials for the coming year. We make sure that our upcoming events are all posted in the appropriate online event calendars, so we can be found when people are searching for something fun to do. We update our brochures and put fresh copies in the Park information boxes and other locations around the Village.

If you live in one of the three zip codes that comprise Richfield (53076, 53033, and 53017) you should have gotten our direct mail flyer. We use this to reach all Richfield residents with our calendar of events, an outreach for donations, and an invitation to join RHS. Thanks go to Janet Scholl for her excellent graphic design!



Direct Mail Flyer



Washington County Booklet

RHS is an active member in a roundtable of Washington County historical societies. This group was formed last year and has produced an excellent booklet showcasing the many opportunities that exist for learning about our past. Copies of this booklet are available in the Welcome Center, at the Village Hall, or contact me if you'd like some. The image to the right above is from the RHS portion of this booklet.

I'm looking forward to a busy Summer as we promote the 150th anniversary of the Mill and its return to operation!

Membership

Dorothy Marks

So far, for 2023, we have gained twelve new memberships. It is always a pleasure to welcome new members on board.

Also, we the members of the LWC Committee, are now getting plans underway for our Boutique at the Horse Shed for the Threshereee.

Mill House

Cindy Schmechel/Clara Birkel

The 2023 event season is well under way and began with a snow storm on March 25th for the Maple Syrup Family Day event. It was iffy at first as to how many people would make the trip to the Historical Park, but eventually many people from near and far came for a very fun day. The Mill House tours got off to a late start due to the people mover having to navigate snow-covered roads through the Park, but eventually we had almost 100 visitors come to tour the Mill House. Some came from as far away as Madison and Green Bay, and hopefully everyone enjoyed their day in our Park.

We heard many positive comments about the Maple Syrup Family Day pancake breakfast, maple cotton candy and all the goings-on at the south end of the Park around the Blacksmith Shop and Pioneer Homestead area. It seems that our visitors had a lot of fun, good food and truly enjoyed their time at our park, despite the weather.

We are excited about our upcoming season, especially as we prepare to show off an updated display of children's toys for the Threshereee in September. The Mill House has many vintage and antique toys that once belonged to children who were born and raised in the House, plus toys that have been donated to us over the years that are of the era of the Mill House, some of which are still available in stores today. Many of our guests and volunteers will probably remember playing with some of these same toys when they were children. So it should be a fun exhibit to put together and hopefully will bring back happy memories for many of you.

We look forward to hearing your childhood memories and to seeing you at the Threshereee. We also look forward to seeing you at the Mill House for the "Art at the Mill" event on June 17th. Tours at the House will start at 10 a.m. and will go throughout the day. Please join us for another great event at the Richfield Historical Park.

Mill Restoration

Al Mayer

The timber framework that supports the belting from the engine, to power the equipment in the Mill, is currently being fitted together as the original timbers were.

There are four timbers, 10" square, that are mortised into upper and lower beams, which support the two "idler pulleys," also referred to as sheaves. These idler pulleys perform two functions. The first is that they keep the belt aligned between the drive pulley (on the engine) and the drive pulley on the main shaft in the Grist Mill. The second function is that they keep the correct tension on the belt so it doesn't slip while the power is transferred into the Mill. A slipping belt will reduce the engine's efficiency, wear out the belt sooner, cause a lot of heat, or just plain fall off!



Original Timbers

In the second photo on the next page, you can see the condition of one of the old pulleys, and one of the two new ones built by some of our members. The pulley that guides the belt into the Mill is mounted directly to the timbers, and the other pulley is mounted onto a wooden frame that allows the pulley to be adjusted up and down. This gives the operator the ability to apply and maintain the correct tension on the belt.

The pulleys have not been mounted to the timbers as yet. But as you can see, in the third picture, when the pulleys are installed on the wooden frame, they will guide the belt powering the main shaft in the Mill.



New & Old Pulley

Mounting Timber & Wooden Frame



If you have an interest in helping with bringing this Mill to life again, you can contact me/text at 262-909-0129, or stop by the Park on any Sunday from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The Pioneer Homestead

Sunsan Sawdey

Way to Learn

Back in 2019 I had the bright idea to share early wool processing with visitors to the Motz Log Cabin. We had youngsters at Maple Syrup Family Day wash the wool in chilly temperatures and third graders at our annual Education Days trying their hands at carding the wool. But like most things, the 2020 COVID shutdown derailed our plans of spinning and dyeing our woolen rolags. We moved on to other things, but it's time to get back to what we started.

Our goal is to drop spindle as much of our wool as we can over the Spring and Summer in hopes to have enough to dye by September's Harvest Festival and Thresheree. We will be collecting goldenrod for the color green, black walnuts for brown, onion skins for orange, and beets for red. We might even get adventurous and try our hand using red cabbage for purple. Fall will be the perfect time to harvest our plants and vegetables to get the most vibrant colors. Stop by the Log Cabin and see us in action.

*If you are interested in hands-on-learning the process of wool processing or can donate supplies for dyeing wool (enamel canner or a stainless steel pot) contact me at rhsboard.2020@gmail.com for lesson days and times and donation information.



Dyeing wool



Dyed Wool

Volunteer Coordinator**Sharon Lofy**

Spring has come in full force. Summer is near.

Maple Syrup Family Day's weather was one for the books. Thanks to many brave volunteers, the event took place. Volunteers stepped up to the plate and pulled it all together. If some of you couldn't make it (volunteers or attendees,) it was totally understandable. We are looking forward to better weather next year.

Thank you again for making the Richfield Historical Society Plant Fund Raiser a huge success. Hope you will find all the plants that you are looking for and possibly add a few new ones. Your vegetable gardens, flower gardens and container plantings are always unique to each gardener. I know that my family always looks forward to plant certificates for Mother's Day, birthday gifts and even in their Easter baskets. Gardening is a great way for children to watch a seed or plant grow, blossom and produce things that they love to eat. It's a great family project loaded with lots of exercise. The kids can even grow their own pumpkin for Halloween!

June is noted for Art at the Mill. We are looking forward to seeing the many artists that set up in the Park. We totally appreciate all the volunteer hours that the Art Committee puts into planning this event, as well as the volunteer time that you as volunteers put in before, during and after the event to put the Art Committee's plans into action. Richfield Historical Society receives many kind responses from artists and attendees that the event is well planned and presented and that the volunteers were very helpful and pleasant.

Please mark Saturday, June 17 on your calendar for Art at the Mill. Hopefully it will work for you to give us helping hand. Maybe you know of someone that would like to help out. You could work as a team. Let me know (262-297-1546.)

Special Thank You to all Financial Donors (Members, Non-Members, Memorials), Silent Auction Donors (Art at the Mill & Threshere & Harvest Festival), Sweets 'n Stuff (Threshere & Harvest Festival)

Wheat (\$500 or more)

Dr. Don & Janis Crego (Threshere)
 Dehumidifier Corporation of America (Art at the Mill)
 Forte Bank (Threshere)
 William Gehl (Threshere)
 Legend Seeds (Threshere)
 Wisconsin Steam Cleaner Sales (Threshere)
 Wisconsin Sand & Gravel (Threshere)
 E. H. Wolf & Sons, Inc. (Threshere)
 5 Corners Dodge Chrysler Jeep & Ram (Threshere)

Rye (\$499-\$250)

Gehring Sales & Service, Inc. (Threshere)

Oats (\$249-\$100)

Forte Bank (Maple Syrup Family Day)
 Gundrum Insurance & Investments (Threshere)

Helena Agri-Enterprises (Threshere)
 Straight Arrow Financial Group (Art at the Mill)
 United Cooperative (Threshere)

Companies ~ Donate for Volunteer Hours/Match Donations

3M
 Artisans Partnership (Hamel Foundation)
 General Electric
 IBM
 Pieper Power
 Pfizer Foundation
 Wisconsin Energy Corporation

Goods/Services Donors

Campers Inn of Richfield (Threshere - Use of Camper)
 Christiana Woodall (Large Quantity of Paper Products)
 Conley Media (Discount on Advertising)
 County Wide Extinguisher (Threshere - Fire Extinguishers)
 Digital Edge (Printing Discount)
 Graphic Edge (Printing Discount)
 Home Depot (Threshere & Harvest Festival - Grill)
 Kwik Trip – Richfield (Maple Syrup Family Day/Richfield Day Parade Float)
 No Mosquitoes For You (Discount for Spraying)
 Old Germantown (February Program)
 Piggly Wiggly (Threshere)
 Pioneer Bowl (Maple Syrup Family Day)
 Richfield Fire Company (Use of Fire Hall: Programs/Events/Meetings)
 Rim's Edge Orchard (Luminary Walk - Apples/Apple Cider)
 Rockfield Short Pour (Concrete)
 Waste Management (Trash Removal)
 Wissota Sand & Gravel (Gravel)
 E.H. Wolf & Sons (LP Gas Discount)

Engine Shed Donors (Goods/Services/Discounts)

DuQuaine Concrete (Foundations)
 ECS Midwest (Soil Analysts)
 Gator Transport (Trucking)
 GRAEF (Architecture & Engineering Design)
 J & J Soil Testing (Soil Borings)
 Voss Trenching (Excavation)
 Wissota (Aggregate)
 Zignego (Concrete)

