



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

*Winter 2018 – V21N3*

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**THE FRIESS FAMILY STORY**

The Friess Family lived in a beautiful section of Bavaria, Germany. The Merkel Family lived nearby. They loved their homeland, but it wasn't theirs anymore. Their boys were being forced into the army, the government was putting terrible restrictions on them. Revolutions were tried, but failed. Anton Friess did not want to see his four boys forced into the army.



**Friess Ancestral Home  
in Germany**

So, Anton and his wife, Margaret Stuetgen Friess, and sons George (Susanna Leides), Peter (Maria Konrath), Adam (Katherine Kohler) and John (Barbara Schwartz) and daughters Magdaline (Joseph Kohler) and Margaret (Nicholas Merkel) left their homeland for this new world where there was land enough for all and freedom and peace.

In the late spring of 1843, the family arrived in New York. They came by boat by way of the Erie Canal traveling through the Great Lakes to Green Bay. It is believed their friends and neighbors, the Merkels, came at the same time. After arriving in Green Bay, they followed the Fox River Valley and Lake Winnebago Green Bay trail to Milwaukee. They stopped for a night in the new junction - later to become Richfield which then had only a few buildings. They decided to check the area out and headed west on an Indian trail stopping when they came to a beautiful lake. They traveled around the lake and picked out a beautiful wooded spot just to the southeast of this unnamed beautiful lake. They immediately built a temporary log shelter and started about clearing the land.

On September 2, 1844, their patent was registered in the name of Anton Friess. (NE ¼ 160 acres Section 17) The neighboring farms were registered on the same date to son Fred Merkel (Apolonia Friess) and father John Merkel (Elizabeth Gerhard.) Each paid \$1.25 per acre for their land. Their lands were to the east of Friess Lake in Section 17.

Times were not easy. It was tough clearing the large native timbers of oak, maple, elm, walnut, basswood and the many tamarack in the lowlands by the lake. But they managed, and they also managed to build a sturdy fieldstone house on the hill just SE of the lake, in Section 17.

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Anton first paid taxes on his property in 1849 - \$7.37 on 160 acres with a value of \$280. It is not known when the lake became known as Friess Lake, but probably sometime after the children started getting married and establishing their own homes around the beautiful lake.

In his last Will and Testament filed with the State of Wisconsin in July of 1852, Anton Fries "considering the uncertainty of his mortal life and being of sound mind and memory" made provision for his "beloved" wife; daughters Magdaline, Mary, Apolonia and Margaret; and sons Adam, Peter, John and George --all receiving parcels of land in the area of his beloved Friess Lake.



The Friess homestead stone home still stands today. It remained in the Friess family for 126 years – five generations.



Nic Friess, great grandson of Anton, built Friess Lake Resort in the late 20s, renting out boats for fishermen, and also cottages (numbering seven) in the summer months. Today, the Friess Lake Resort is the Copper Dock Supper Club.

### **Kettle Moraine's Ship On The Hill – Susan Brushafter**

It's a crisp fall day in the mid- to late 1940s, and you're enjoying an invigorating walk. You find yourself hiking the Kettle Moraine in the area of Friess Lake, Fox and Hounds, and Alpine Retreat. As you shuffle through the golden leaves blanketing the ground, in the distance you marvel at Holy Hill, the remaining swaths of autumn color, and the ship on the hill. You stop. The ship on the hill?

The unusual vessel you're looking at is a full-scale model of a Greek cargo ship. Its history is equally unusual. Its creator, Dionysios (Dan) Saloupis, was born in Greece in 1890. Dan came to Milwaukee in 1910 to escape compulsory enrollment into the pre-World War I Greek army. Dan didn't, however, evade military service! He joined the U.S. Navy, serving as an interpreter from 1918 until 1922.

Dan was a soft-spoken gent who folks said was calm and patient. He spent six long years building the vessel perched on the Kettle Moraine hilltop to commemorate his birthplace and childhood spent in Kparissia, a port town in Greece.

Although Dan's father's craft was shipbuilding, Dan didn't return to the trade until the mid-1940s. He worked as a barber in Milwaukee and built a Spanish-style cottage near the future site of his ship. Sadly, the cottage mysteriously burned to the ground when he was in California in 1944. Dan tried to sell the property the cottage had sat on and received only low offers. Then, he was inspired to construct a ship-style home. He had sleeping quarters on the ship, and he prepared his meals in what remained of the basement of his old cottage. Dan also built a bunk house for friends who visited.

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The ship itself, which Dan used as a summer retreat, was securely anchored to the hill on which it perched in order to withstand the harsh elements of the Kettle Moraine. Ten guide wires supported the vessel. They were connected to creosoted cedar posts buried six feet deep under stone and sand. The ship's base was constructed of six feet of concrete. Dan proudly proclaimed that the only way his ship would blow away is if the hill itself jarred loose!

Continuing on your fall walk, you get close enough to the ship to notice its special qualities. Its siding, for example, is made from fir that was bent dry. Although oak is normally used on similar vessels, Dan steam heated the fir before bending it. Dan firmly believed that his ship could float! The façade of the ship includes Greek Key design, a decorative border constructed from a continuous line, shaped into a repeated motif. You linger over the pilot's wheel, which over a two-year period, Dan shaped entirely by hand except for the banister poles used as spokes. You marvel at the colorfully painted dragons on the ship's prow, the forward-most part of the ship that cuts through the water. Dan had commented that while the dragons may not be authentic, he seemed sure no one would have ever seen a real dragon.

You are not the first to discover Dan's ship during your walk: his unique home was observed by many others including the National Geographic magazine, which complimented its uniqueness as being the only vessel of its kind on the side of a hill.

Unfortunately, other observers were not as kind. When Dan came up from Milwaukee, he'd find parts of his ship missing. Even when he opened the ship to the public, vandals continued to strip pieces of it. Dan left a jar at the entrance of the ship, very similar to what we might contribute to for the upkeep of historic places we visit. As one might expect, the jar and its donations were stolen. Frustrated, Dan told neighbors that he was going to tear down his ship. That's exactly what he did, taking down parts of it with his bare hands. He gave his treasured pilot's wheel to neighbors. While other pieces were salvaged, most of what remained of the ship was hauled away.

Dionysios Saloupis died in California at the age of 76 on December 1, 1966. The story of Dan's vessel lives on in Kettle Moraine lore. And, had you taken that fall adventure walk in the 1940s, you might be sharing your own story about the ship on the hill!

## **President**

## **Del Schmechel**

A Historical Society such as ours requires many people to operate. We are lucky to have a Board of Directors who work throughout the year to make those countless decisions large and small. Together we strive to adhere to our Articles of Incorporation dated September 12, 1997. Those articles read as follows; "the purpose shall be exclusively educational and specifically to collect and preserve records and objects relating to the history of Richfield in Washington County."

It should be evident to our guests how seriously we take those articles. The transformation of the Richfield Historical Park from our formation to today is something we take pride in. I believe it to be an undisputed fact that without our intervention at the Messer Mayer Mill there would be little more than crumbling foundations remaining. Consider the local history that would have been lost forever.

The original site contained the Miller's Home, Sawmill, Horse Shed, Wood Shed, Smoke House, Barn, Pig Barn, Buggy Shed and Outhouse. Later the Grist Mill was added, and the Home doubled in size. The Home, along with original furnishings, looks much as it would have in the 1890s. Both the Sawmill, Buggy Shed and Pig Barn are no longer standing, and only remnants of their foundations remain.

This year saw the completion of the mill foundation restoration. Next year should see its Engine Shed rebuilt thus completing its original design. Once that is accomplished, powering the mill's equipment will be possible, and "Get It Grinding" may become a reality.

Additional buildings have been added over the years to complete the historical experience. Our Pioneer Homestead area offers a look at the life of an early settler of this area. Our docents provide explanations of food preparation and preservation along with working wool into clothing. Our Sugar Shack takes a look at methods learned from the natives to make maple syrup and sugar. The newly opened Blacksmith Shop provides demonstrations of pioneer metal items that would have been produced.

To complete the visitors' experience, we have added our Welcome Center. It features a country store that would have been common back in "the day." It would have been a place to share information, news of the day and purchase items such as salt, pins, buttons, clothe and possibly take care of your mail. It is also where we try to assist visitors with historical questions at our events or by appointment.

In order to carry on this work, we raise funds through memberships, donations and events such as our Thresheree and Art Fair. These events require countless volunteers, and the planning never seems to stop. The committee chairs learn from each event and work to make improvements where possible and correct problems when they arise. In past years, our biggest unknown was the weather, but next year we will also have Hwy. 164 construction.

I have a couple of requests to make. First, if you have never visited our wonderful Historical Park, please add it to your to do list. Second, if you have enjoyed our Historical Park, bring a friend next time you visit. You can count on us to continue to do everything possible to make it a wonderful experience.

**Chuck Boesel - 4/20/1938 - 10/17/2018**

What can be said about Chuck Boesel? Well, to start with I believe he was totally dedicated to making the Richfield Historical Park look its best. Sometimes that meant planting flowers, some plastic and some real. He could often be seen on his knees filling in pot holes in the road.

One of his "regular" jobs was to keep the grass cut. To that end, he even kept several of his own lawn tractors at the Park. A couple of times he cut a little too close to the creek and had to be pulled out. Chuck seemed to always be in good spirits and would meet everyone with a smile and a friendly comment. Not to be overlooked were the numerous bird feeders he maintained throughout the Park. It would be hard to calculate the amount of seed and suet he purchased to keep these animals fed throughout the year.

Chuck had a personal trademark that all of us could recognize. Chuck seemed to take special joy in applying silicone caulk on just about everything. It seemed he felt everything from tractor seats to birdfeeders was improved with white silicone. I hope his silicone will last as long as our memory of this gentle soul.



**Chuck Boesel**

Those of us who knew Chuck will never forget him. He was truly a special and unique person. I'm comforted knowing he is at peace and his failing health will never again trouble him. If there is a heaven, I'm confident he is already finding new uses for silicone and taking care of things as he did here with us. Everyone I talk to has a good story to relate about Chuck. He was truly unique and followed his own path. He will be missed. Rest in peace Chuck.

## Blacksmith Shop

Kathy Lauenstein

Sounds in the air were like the Fourth of July, lots of OOOs and AAAs and bangs in the Show. WOW, what a great Show! Lots of visitors to the Blacksmith Shop – that’s what the smiths like.

During the annual Threshere, seven smiths were working. The smiths demonstrated making many different hand forged items. Their skills were very interesting for the visiting public to watch. This year’s feature was tools to start blacksmithing – shovel, rake, poker and water dipper. You need these tools to start tending your fire. You also needed your hammer and tongs. The RHS smiths are hoping you will learn the craft and come in to join us. We’re always looking for members who would like to learn how to smith.

Whenever you are in the Park, add the Blacksmith Shop to your list to stop and see us. Stop by and see what has been done to make the Blacksmith Shop one of the best equipped shops of any in historical sites in Wisconsin. We feel the Shop is something all Richfield Historical Society members can be proud of. A great deal of effort has been put forth by many members to make the shop a must-see building.

Now is the time for several thank yous. Thank you to all members that had a part in working on the Blacksmith Shop. Thanks to all the blacksmiths who showed us their great talent in the Shop at the Threshere. You make the Show great for us to see. Thank you to the Thursday Crew for their assistance in working on the inside of the Blacksmith Shop. Especially, a huge thank you to Tom Jordan for supervising the installation of the weathered lumber inside the Shop and to John Schmidt for coordinating the electrical distribution throughout the Shop. Also, a thank you to Dick Rogen for building two period correct coal bins for the Shop. Additional space in the building was required because of the size and amount of blacksmith equipment being donated by Gary and Judy Gade. Presently, work is being done to make the Blacksmith Shop “period correct” for the 1880s.

And lastly, Jane Strutz came to visit the Shop and told me that the shop in Lannon belonged to Oito Joecks, and his main job was working on plow shares. Who was smithing here in Richfield? Who were the smiths? We need to hear from you – Pleasant Hill, Slinger, Hartford and Richfield – pictures and information are needed. Please send them in to RHS.

## Collections

Jean Happel/Norb Berres

### The Butter Churn – Norb Berres

Back in the 1850s or so, a man, whose name is lost in time, had started up a “creamery” as he called it, to gather milk from the surrounding farms to distribute to the city folks in this small New England village. The idea was slow to catch on. So the man had a lot of spare time on his hands. While taking his lunch breaks, he would often sit and read one of the Wild West dime novels that had become so popular at the time. The books were small so he could hold them with one hand, and his wife would have him agitate the laundry in the small “washing machine” they had concocted. A simple design - it had a plunger with a stick that went through the lid, and he would move it up and down while he read his book.

One day he was so engrossed in his western novel that he lost track of what he was doing and forgot to load the clothes and poured in a pail of cream instead of the soap water his wife had set near him. While he was churning the wash, he noticed the stick was getting stiffer and stiffer. It took a lot to distract him from his dime novel, but this was unusual. Setting his book down, he lifted the cover to discover that the cream had turned yellow and was unusually stiff, and the clothes were still in the pail beside him.-----  
BULL-ONEY That never happened!!

The real story is likely much older than this little tale. In the very distant past, before written languages and store-bought-----well, anything, when hunters were evolving into gatherers and had begun a less nomadic and more agricultural existence; people began living in clans and were domesticating some of the "wild animals," those that took comfort in herding up for safety from predators. They made use of what they had, and they did find uses for nearly everything they harvested. As an example, the stomach of a large animal like a cow could easily be used as a vessel for carrying water from a lake or stream or many other uses any bag-like organ would provide.

The butter churn is only one example of how mankind was not becoming a designer or inventor, but a discoverer. All things we regard as new are only a result of discovering what had been in place from all eternity, just waiting for one of us mortals to realize that two and two does indeed make four.



Butter Churn

**Education**

**Kathy Weberg**

A few weeks ago I had the privilege of taking one of our four traveling trunks to St. Paul's UCC in Erin for a presentation to a group of their senior members. I took trunk #4 and didn't take the time to review its contents. But with great confidence, I proceeded to show the items, talk about them and encouraged participation from the audience. One of the items in the trunk was a white porcelain pan (with red trim) which didn't seem to me to be much of an antique because my mother had a couple of these same things in her kitchen stash. Oops, think again. Since I am pushing mid 70s myself, I guess these could be antiques.



So I took a trip down memory lane....and decided I had a pretty darn good story....prompted by the porcelain pan. Here goes: As a young school girl in the '50s, I heard my mom say nearly every afternoon around 4 o'clock: "Kathleen, go downstairs and get the potatoes for supper." I was handed the white porcelain pan. Yes, I was called "Kathleen" in those days, yes, we ate "supper," and it was always at 5 p.m. because my dad had to start the milking at 6 p.m. Mom would peel the potatoes and then the directive for me was one of two things: "Throw the peelings out for the chickens" or "Throw the peelings in the manure spreader" depending on what time of year it was. Chickens were not outside in the winter.

Porcelain Pan

I doubt my kids and grandkids would believe this little memoir. This is what our traveling trunk is all about, to bring forth memories from the audiences that we visit and, most importantly, share those memories. Put down the cell phone, folks, share your life's stories!

**CHRISTMAS AT THE HISTORICAL PARK – Linda Derrick**

This year's "Christmas at the Historical Park" was another fun-filled, Holiday event free to the public. The weather was not so nice, but those who braved the elements were rewarded. *Like the Christmas song goes.... "The weather outside is frightful, but the fire is so delightful..."*

*AND, everything else was delightful too!...*Visitors arriving at the Lillicrapp Welcome Center were greeted with the sights and sounds of an old country store busy and bustling with the noises of days gone by. The store was all decked out for Christmas, and all who came enjoyed refreshments and Christmas cookies as they walked through the store.

Leaving the Welcome Center, it was a short, brisk walk across the bridge to the Mill House. Up the steps and opening the door, they were rewarded with the aroma of bread in the oven and the warmth of the wood-burning stove. Christmas carols were being played on the piano, and children were busy finding the pickle on the Christmas tree. More cookies and hot beverages also helped everyone forget the not-so-nice weather outside.

It was another old-fashioned Christmas at the Historical Park enjoyed by all who joined in on the fun!

**Daryl Grier**

Planning an event is an on-going process. Some things need to be worked out almost a year before the actual event. The Event Committee meets about once a month; we don't have a set date as we meet when we need to work on specific issues. Our next meeting is January 7, 2019. If you would like to see what we are working on or would like information about a meeting, contact Daryl Grier, 262 628-4221 [dgrier@charter.net](mailto:dgrier@charter.net). At the January meeting, we will be working on:

**The Antique Show & Sale, Appraisals & Chili Lunch, February 17, 2019.** We have broken down the tasks so that they are not too time consuming for one or two persons. We could use help with small parts of this event. If you can help in your society's fundraiser, contact Sharon Lofy at 262 297-1546; [hs11725@yahoo.com](mailto:hs11725@yahoo.com).

**Maple Syrup Family Day, March 26, 2019.** Here again, there are easy, fun volunteer opportunities, maybe serving hot dogs or making maple syrup cotton candy. Contact Sharon Lofy at 262 297-1546 [hs11725@yahoo.com](mailto:hs11725@yahoo.com) if you would like to help.

We'll have flyers about our events at meetings and events but the best advertising of our beautiful park is YOU! Give flyers to your neighbor and relatives; bring friends out to our events.



**Mill House Guides and Volunteers**



**Finding the Pickle on the Tree**

**Antique Sale & Show, Appraisals & Chili Lunch & Silent Auction**  
**February 17, 2019**

In 2019, the *Antique Sale & Show, Appraisals and Chili Lunch* will be at Friess Lake School allowing more space for both dealer booths and food sales. The dealers will be offering a large variety of Vintage, Collectibles, and Antique items. (Vintage items are 50-99 years old, and Antique items are over 100 years old.) The same trustworthy appraisers will be available and eager to see what treasures you might bring in. These Appraisers are knowledgeable with regard to coins and stamps, military items, Native American items, Civil War and WWII items, jewelry and general vintage or antique items. The cost for a single appraisal is \$5-per item and includes Free Entry to the Show. Show entry is \$2. The Silent Auction will include some interesting vintage or antique items, so be sure not to miss it.

A chili lunch will be available for \$7.00 which includes a bowl of chili, fixings, muffin, and your choice of beverage. Hot dogs, chili dogs and a variety of delicious desserts are available for purchase. We hope to see you Sunday, February 17, 2019, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Friess Lake School in Richfield. For more information, please check the RHS web site: [richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://richfieldhistoricalsociety.org). All proceeds help fund the various restoration projects of the Richfield Historical Society.

**Maple Syrup Family Day**  
**March 23, 2019**

Despite the sometimes chilly weather, we are looking forward to another great family event. This event is free and has something for everyone. Located on the south portion of the Park, the Sugar Shack offers tours and information on how our award winning maple syrup is collected and processed. It takes 40 gallons of collected sap to make 1 gallon of syrup. We will have some of our syrup available for purchase. Hot dogs, beverages, treats, and our own Maple Flavored Cotton Candy are also available during the event.

Directly across from the Sugar Shack is a fully operational Blacksmith Shop. Be sure to stop and take a look. A little North you will find the Pioneer Village where a horse barn and old log cabin will have storytelling and demonstrations. In addition to the Sugar Shack and Blacksmith Shop, stop and see the old Grist Mill and the original homestead, as well as the General Store at the Welcome Center on the north end of the Park.

The Historical Park should be enjoyed regularly, not only during our event days. The river and trails running through it make it especially scenic. The bridges, historic buildings and wagons throughout the Park are frequently used by professional photographers as their backdrops. Save the date for March 23rd. You won't be disappointed.

**Historic Sites**

**Quint Mueller**

Our annual Christmas event was enjoyed by all, and our big Thresheree show is over for this year. Each year it seems to be a relief when it's over, but yet we look forward to it each year as well. It's a stressful time, but worth it when we see and hear all of the people enjoying themselves. It doesn't hurt that it's our biggest fundraising event of the year either. Perhaps this year's attendance (or profits) didn't set any records, and we struggled a bit to find enough volunteers. But, in many ways this year's show was one of the best. I say that because the set up and tear down seemed to go remarkably smooth. Even with the unknowns due to the wet ground conditions, set up was done when we needed it. Tear down and clean up was, without a doubt, the most efficient ever. By the end of Monday, almost everything was taken down and stored for next year's show. That hasn't happened before! Of course, the weather played a role in this, but the main factor was our fantastic group of volunteers that pitched in on Monday after working all



weekend and much of the week before. Thank you to everyone that helped with the Threshere in any way. It's people like you that make that show (and others) a success.



**Sawing Logs**



**Inspecting the Superior Engine**



**Visiting at the Pioneer Homestead**



**Preparing the Goodies**

We're already planning next year's show. It will have some unique challenges due to Hwy. 164 road construction. We've been in touch with WisDOT regarding all of our events and will be continuing to work with them to minimize the traffic and access issues.

On the Sites Committee side of the line, work continues (as always) in the Park. With the Mill foundation structurally complete, we are now moving on to plan construction of the Engine Shed and reinstalling the equipment in the Mill that was removed to provide access for the foundation construction. Hopefully, we will be able to start construction in 2019. Look for more information on the Engine Shed in the next issue.

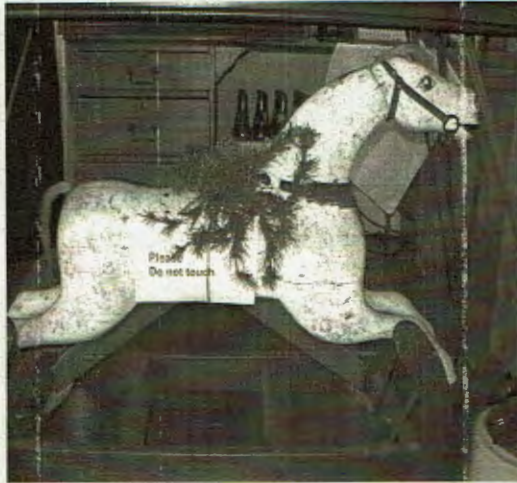
There are many more projects on the Sites Committee list than can be listed here. Other than the Engine Shed, look for many smaller improvements and maintenance projects around the Park. Some of those will include repainting of select portions of buildings, improvements to display areas, and general cleanup. These aren't exciting, but the type of projects that must be done to keep our park up to the standards that we expect.

Stay tuned to your future newsletters for continuing progress, or better yet, volunteer to lend a hand. The Sites Committee can use help of just about any kind, even computer and internet work. Check in with myself or one of the other board members to see how you can help.

**Lillicrapp Welcome Center**

**Aerona Smith**

In the General Store, preparing for the holidays was an extremely busy time for the storekeeper. The new toy displays were added to the already crowded store show cases. A popular toy, in the General Store, was the “rocking horse.” On Christmas morning, it was a dream of many children to find a “rocking horse” under their tree.



1920s Swinging Horse

“Rocking horses” have been around as early as 400 BC. Originally “rocking horses” were made for boys to mimic their father’s actions. An earlier form of the “rocking horse” was known as a “hobby horse.” It had a wooden carved head attached to a stick. Next, wheels were added, and it became a ‘pull’ toy.”

By the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, the horses now had ‘bow rockers’ and were large enough for the child to ride. In 1877, a new safety design was needed and developed by P. J. Marquay of Cincinnati, Ohio who patented the ‘swing iron safety stand.’ This stand helped to prevent the child from tipping over and falling off, as well as to keep the “rocking horse” in place. “Rocking horses” were painted and decorated and included a saddle, stirrups; and real horse hair was used for the mane and tail. These horses were especially popular among the wealthy.

On display, in the Lillicrapp Welcome Center General Store is a 1920s gliding horse. This child’s toy was called the “Swinging Horse” and was made by Whitney Reed. This style of “rocking horse” was made between 1904 and 1925. It is painted white with gray spots, has glass eyes, horse hair mane and tail, and still retains remnants of a leather saddle and trim. It glides back and forth on a red stand. This wonderful toy horse, once belonged to Betty Kindem. She and her husband, Rev. Ingolf Kindem, and their 4 children were the last to live in the Lillicrapp home. Betty is now in her 90s and resides in Seattle Washington.

The General Store was known as an important gathering place for the community, especially around the holidays. This year Richfield Historical Society’s Christmas event was well attended, and visitors enjoyed the old store decorations and tree displays. A special thank you to all LWC committee members and volunteers for all you help and support.

**Library/Program/Newsletter**

**Marge Holzbog**

**Library** – The RHS Library Committee will have four publications available for purchase at the Lillicrapp Welcome Center during our 2019 events or by ordering at 262 251 3882.

Richfield Remembers the Past	\$ 50.00	Life on the Farm	\$ 12.00
Richfield Cookbook	\$ 12.00	Downtown Richfield	\$ 15.00

Do visit the RHS History Room at LWC in 2019 where we will have on display Richfield, Washington County and Wisconsin maps covering the early years of 1859, 1873 and 1892 as well as Richfield’s original survey map from 1833. Wisconsin glacial and vegetation maps from 1881 will also be available for viewing.

**Newsletter** - You are reading the last newsletter of 2018. Your RHS 2019 membership renewal will bring you three newsletters in 2019 (Spring/Summer/Winter.) Each will include historically related feature material and news from our President and Committee Chairs about events, happenings and plans of your society.

## **Long Term Planning**

**Jim Metzger**

Calendar year 2019 will be an exciting year for the Richfield Historical Society (RHS) in that the Engine Shed for the Grist Mill will be constructed. As you may remember, there was a 25 HP gas engine powering the Mill in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century following the water power years that preceded it. It remained as the sole source of mill power until municipal power became available. When the Engine Shed is completed, our Superior engine will be permanently mounted and coupled to the main mill driveshaft via a gear box. Much of this work will be provided by our talented Thursday Work Crew.

Mill stone grinding was the first form of grain grinding at the Mill and will be our main focus. This, along with operating bolting machines (sifters) and cup elevators, will fulfill the slogan "Let's Get It Grinding" which was the centerpiece of our capital campaign. This feature, along with adding the various pieces of equipment in the Mill basement to the Mill Tours during our various events, will greatly complement and enhance the Mill Tour experience. Our goal is to have this completed by the 2019 Thresheree held on the third weekend in September.

Another goal for 2019 will be to construct a new bridge over the creek to allow the people mover to more easily access the threshing area during our various events. All the while this is going on, our very ambitious Thursday Work Crew will attend to the never ending maintenance schedule of the various structures that define the Historical Park.

With that said, it becomes very apparent that to accomplish this ambitious agenda many hands and minds will be needed. One of the most important, if not the most important, asset of the RHS are the people that make this happen. The seasoned Board of Directors continue to make good decisions regarding fund raising events and continued tweaking of our major events to keep them fresh and relevant.

An area of marketing that could use some additional expertise is that of a web social media director. Our web site ([richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://richfieldhistoricalsociety.org)) is a marvelous well developed tool to communicate everything RHS but could be more social media effective. Since social media is quickly becoming one of the most important vehicles to reach a younger demographic, it will be needed to perpetuate the mission statement of the RHS. If you see yourself as proficient in web social media development and would like to be part of this dynamic group leading the RHS into one of the best historical societies in the state of Wisconsin, please contact the President or any one of the RHS members on the first page of this newsletter and introduce yourself.

## **Membership**

**Warren Wiedmeyer**

### **MEMBERSHIP - What Does It Mean?**

The Richfield Historical Society is grateful for the over 200 members that we currently have. Without the financial support of our members, we would not be able to fulfill the mission of the RHS. But as is the case with most volunteer-based non-profit organizations, we really need two types of members within the RHS. Bottom line, we need members who support us through their financial gifts AND members who

also get intimately involved with our events and projects by volunteering. So, what types of members do we have today, and what do we need going forward? I'd like to spend a few minutes on this question.

For some of us, being a member of the RHS is limited to enrollment or gift giving on an annual basis. This allows us to support the mission of the RHS via our gifts and monies while enabling us to continue to juggle the commitments we have at home or work. There is nothing wrong with that! Those of us on the RHS Board realize that not everyone has the time or ability to help us with the events or other projects we conduct at the Park. Your financial support is extremely valuable and will never be discounted. Also, there are quite a few members who live out of state. It is not realistic to expect them to volunteer at the Park for an event or some other project. For those of you that don't live in the Richfield area, your support from afar is incredible. Thank you for that!

But, there is another type of member that is necessary to help us with our mission and to keep the Park beautiful and functional. This member, in addition to paying their membership fees, is also committed to volunteering their time and talents to the RHS. Maybe they have a little extra time to help out with specific events. Or maybe they just have a passion to get involved with the RHS and have made it a way of giving back to the community. Or maybe they have the capability of helping out with a specific project that takes advantage of their skills and abilities. Whatever the motivation, this type of member is also extremely valuable to the RHS!

Currently, we have a dire need for members who are also volunteers. It seems that we never have enough as we prepare for and hold the Art Fair, the Threshere, or the other important events at the Park. So maybe there are some areas of opportunity within the RHS that fit with a passion you have or skill that you possess. If you believe that you are ready to explore the aspects of becoming a member and volunteer, I encourage you to check out our main areas of need as shown below:

Buildings - carpentry, masonry, electrical, painting, etc., to maintain the structures within the Park

Outdoors - landscaping, lawn mowing, etc.

Genealogy - research, compile date, etc.

Newsletter - writing articles, help with preparing the newsletter, mailings, etc.

Fundraising - write grants, promote the RHS, create brochures, etc.

Marketing/Advertising - list events on social media, prepare fliers, solicit TV and radio coverage, etc.

Museum - help with the collection of artifacts, prepare visuals that describe the items on display, etc.

Tours - train tour guides and/or conduct tours of the Park and its structures, etc.

Education - prepare presentations about the RHS for schools or senior centers, etc.

Activities/Events - chair or organize all or parts of events that take place during our special programs, schedule volunteers, etc.

The RHS Board is comprised of Committee Chairmen and Directors who lead or are involved with all of the above highlighted areas. Feel free to seek them out by coming to a Board meeting, held the first Wednesday of every month at the Richfield Village Hall. They would be happy to talk to you. Or, spend some time on our Facebook page or website. There is great information on those sites to review. We also have a fantastic Volunteer Coordinator, Sharon Lofy, who can be reached at 262-297-1546. She can match your areas of interest with the needs of the RHS. Feel free to call her for additional details about all of the above. Maybe after obtaining additional facts about the opportunities for volunteering within RHS, you will find one or two areas that excite and inspire you to "dip your toe in the water." I'm sure that after you do you will find the temperature to be just fine!

**Mill House**

**Clara Birkel/Cindy Schmechel**

**BECOMING A TOUR GUIDE -**

About eight years ago, I was asked to become a tour guide at the 1867 Victorian Messer/Mayer Mill House, home to the millers and farmers who built, lived, worked and farmed here for more than 100 years. It is now part of the Village of Richfield's Historical Park.

Now, I admit I was very skeptical about becoming a tour guide at first, not really having much confidence that I could do a good job relaying the story of the Mill House or of the history of the families who built it with visitors who came to take tours during events held at the Park. I love history, especially genealogy, and I thought it would be right up my alley; but I still had so many reservations about learning what I needed to know and about speaking to people in a public forum. The ladies who invited me to become a tour guide gave me a set of 3 X 5 note cards with much of the factual information about the House and family on them, plus they gave me a private tour through the House, letting me ask as many questions as I needed to ask. I was also allowed to "shadow" tour guides at our events so I could begin to get comfortable giving tours on my own. The tour guides and descendants of the family who came by from time to time also shared with me a wealth of information about the House and the families, so that, eventually, I could share the heartfelt or funny family stories and bits and pieces of information that would make leading tours not only interesting but would make the family come to life. I began to feel a connection to the families who lived there, and I hope I am making them proud of what we do by sharing this house and their story with our many visitors.

At the end of each day at one of our events, after long hours of meeting new people and giving tours; I always bid George Mayer (the last miller) a goodnight. The House is quiet now, freshly vacuumed, shades drawn, doors locked and everything ready for the next day of showing people this wonderful, historic home. An old, black and white photograph of George Mayer sits atop the stove in the kitchen. In it, he is an elderly man, with a scruffy, unshaven chin; his plaid flannel shirt appears dirty and disheveled; his hat is a little cockeyed on his head. He is looking tired and weary from a lifetime of hard work and maybe already living there by himself following the death of his beloved wife, Martha. But in their bedroom upstairs, there is a portrait of George and Martha taken on their wedding day; looking young and beautiful, having high hopes for their future of living, loving and raising a family, working together to make this house their home.

I truly feel blessed to be able to share their story and the story of the generations of the Messer and Mayer families who lived here before them. It is more than a Richfield story. It is also the story of Wisconsin and the people who came here for new lives and opportunities. I've been giving tours here for a number of years now and have become a co-chair with the beautiful Clara Birkel, herself a Messer descendant. It is truly my pleasure to share some of the wonderful and charming stories told to us by Carol Mayer Woods who was born here, along with her husband, Bob Woods, and other descendants who show up at our events from time to time and share their family stories with us. I love sharing this House and its history with our visitors and hope that I am giving enjoyable tours to our guests.

If you haven't yet considered becoming a tour guide, please consider joining us at the Messer/Mayer Mill House. We have a lot of fun, meet a lot of interesting people and are always learning new things about the House and the families who lived here. We would give you all the tools you would need to become a tour guide and help in every way until you could feel comfortable. Please contact Clara Birkel or Cindy Schmechel for further information.



Mill House Committee Chairs

## Mill Restoration

Harry Niemann

Wheat was the reason for our mill. So, what's wheat? No one seems to agree where it was originally found; but, it probably came from the area around Mesopotamia and started out as a wild grass. Most ancient languages mention wheat and the fact that it was grown as far back as 6700 B.C. It was also known in China, Egypt and Palestine.

The wheat kernel outer bran or hull may be red or white or may even be purple. The kernel consists of three parts, and the outer bran makes up about 14.5% by weight. The white bran is slightly sweeter and makes a sweeter baked product. The bran is made up of insoluble fiber and helps digestion if included in whole grain bread.

The majority of the kernel is called the endosperm, making up about 83% by weight. This is the part that is made into white flour.

The smallest part of the kernel is called the germ. This is the embryo of the wheat plant making up about 2.5% of the kernel. The germ has a high fat content; and if included in the flour, it reduces the shelf life of the bread. This is usually removed during modern milling techniques. It probably stayed in the flour produced by our mill.

If the entire kernel is used to make flour, we have whole grain bread. This may have a shorter shelf life over white bread due to the germ content.

## Pioneer Homestead

Susan Sawdey

It was a busy couple of days at the Pioneer Homestead during the 2018 Thresheree. Visitors were welcomed by the sound of chopping wood and smell of apple butter in the air. Children were able to roll up their sleeves and help with household chores and our Fall harvest.

Our younger visitors were also encouraged to help make sauerkraut the "old fashion" way. After our cabbage was sliced on our 4 blade, an early 1900's kraut cutter, into a large wooden barrel; children reached in and layered our large crocks with the shredded cabbage and salt. In between each layer, the youngsters took turns mashing the cabbage with a large wooden masher. Their mashing created a natural brine in which the cabbage would be fermented for about 6 weeks and ultimately create homemade sauerkraut!

Our young visitors also experienced how to wash laundry with our washboard and lye soap before hanging the laundry out to dry. Meanwhile, with a little muscle power, children hand cranked the corn sheller and saw how it took corn off the cob and how long it takes to fill up a sack of corn.

We enjoy fostering appreciation of history with young people and plan on continuing interactive kids activities at the Pioneer Homestead at all our events in the future. If you have a suggestion or would like to help in our kids area, please contact us.

**19<sup>th</sup> C. Stepback Cupboard-** A kitchen essential. Held the lady of the house's essential kitchen items as well as linens.

**Grain & Feed Scale** – A useful tool for early farmers to measure grain for livestock and for buying or selling grains to the local mill.



19<sup>th</sup> C. Stepback Cupboard



Grain & Feed Scale

## **Project Coordinator**

**Del Schmechel**

Over this past year our crew of volunteers have been busy. We maintain 10 major structures along with several additional smaller ones. Each requires our attention.

Our barn has two new windows and Dutch door on the lower level. These items were long overdue to be replaced and might go unnoticed by most Park visitors. Our dedicated crew added a loft over the section of our barn used as our museum. This will allow us to store and rotate items put on display. (Our goal is to take full advantage of every square inch to provide and promote knowledge of our local history.)

We now have electrical power in all of our buildings at the south end of our park. This work, including all materials and labor, was donated by Bob Woloszyk who is a branch manager at Pieper Electric, Inc. Bob contacted me after reading a post I placed on our Facebook page. This is just one example of donations we often receive from friends of the Richfield Historical Society.

We are starting the process of reinstalling equipment in our Grist Mill. Line shafts, elevators along with structural components are now in the basement of the Mill and should be installed over the next year. A major goal for 2019 is to construct the Mill's Engine Shed. This will allow us to move the Superior engine into this building so it can power the building's equipment.

Step by step, we continue to get closer to our goal of "Get It Grinding."

I welcome anyone who would like to help maintain our Historical Park to simply show up any Thursday between 8 a.m. and noon. I'm sure we can find something for you to do.

## **Volunteer Coordinator**

**Sharon Lofy**

HAPPY 2019!!! Hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving. Were you able to make it to Christmas at the Mill House and Welcome Center? There is no doubt that Christmas was a great way to end 2018. Last year was filled with many accomplishments. With your volunteer time, talents and financial support, you made it all possible.

Now January starts the ball rolling with Thresheree planning. (Although some areas have already been addressed.) February's Antique Show & Sale, Appraisal & Chili Lunch & Silent Auction will bring about calls for volunteers. March's Maple Syrup Family Day is a great way to start the Spring. Also, this will be the time to start planning your garden and flower needs, and the Richfield Historical Society's Plant Certificate Sale will help you make your dream landscape come true. (Remember to buy extra certificates for gifts. If you need more than you purchased, I'm a phone call away.) Step Back in Time and July's Art at the Mill will be the summer focus.

There are many ways to volunteer. I will be calling you for help during our events. But throughout the year, there are also many jobs that need to be done. Some areas are: landscaping and yard work in the Park, helping committee chairs with their projects and upcoming events, baking, making phone calls, helping with mailings, etc.

If you have an interest in helping or questions about an area, give the chair a call. You are always welcome to call me (262-297-1546.) I will help you or get you in touch with the right person.

**Events –**

**Antique Show & Sale,  
Appraisal & Chili Lunch & Silent Auction  
February 17, 2019**

**Maple Syrup Family Day  
March 26, 2019**

**Book Club –**

**Meets the third Thursday of the month at  
1:00 P.M. at the “Nutman” on the corner of  
Hwy. 175 & Hubertus Road.**

**All are welcome!  
Call 262 251 3882 for book selections.**



**Wishing You & Yours  
A  
Happy New Year!**

**Programs –**

**The Spring 2019 schedule is listed below. All programs are held the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of the month at the Richfield Fire Hall Community Room at 7:00 p.m. Programs are free to the public.**

**January 24<sup>th</sup> – Prisoner of War Camps WW II  
Dan Wittenberger**

**February 28<sup>th</sup> – Milwaukee's First Public Schools  
Kyle P. Steele**

**March 28<sup>th</sup> - Magnificent Machines of  
Milwaukee  
Thomas Fehring**

**April 25<sup>th</sup> - History of Wisconsin Farming  
Dirk Hildebrandt**

**May 23<sup>rd</sup> - The Sinking of Lady Elgin  
Paul Timm**