

Early Wisconsin Agriculture *(Continued from page 3)*

Dairy production arose from the very beginnings of agriculture in Wisconsin, but the production of milk, butter and cheese for sale to a broad market was not common. The marketing of dairy was instead incidental to providing these items for the home. Until the early 1860s, the extent of the dairy industry was typically farmers exchanging butter and cheese with the local storekeeper for other groceries. This limited market for dairy caused farmers to give limited attention to their herds such as breeding, housing, winter feeding, and pasturing, or their methods of production and storage, or methods of selling.

The domination of Wisconsin as “America’s Dairyland” was the result of many factors but especially the development of professional associations, the science and organization developed at the College of Agriculture connected with the University of Wisconsin in Madison, and the cooperation of farmers in the practical execution of dairy plans and policies. These practices quickly proved to be successful. In 1867, Wisconsin



College of Agriculture, Madison, Wisconsin

boasted 245,000 dairy cows, a number that would rise to 1,460,000 by 1912. In 1869, the state produced over 3 million pounds of cheese, and that number would more than quadruple within 10 years. This glut in the market forced down the prices of cheese and butter. In 1871, the price for cheese was down to 8 cents a pound, and butter prices were likewise depressed.

Wisconsin’s dairy farmers banded together in 1872 to form the Wisconsin Dairy-men’s Association. The organization proved beneficial for marketing purposes and also provided a forum for dairy farmers to exchange successful ideas or new procedures.

Many of the new ideas and procedures

emerged from the College of Agriculture and its associated winter Dairy School that opened in 1887 as the first in the nation. The winter dairy school trained butter and cheese makers. Dr. Stephen Babcock helped establish Wisconsin’s reputation as a leader in the dairy industry. Babcock was an agricultural chemist who first began experimenting with milk analysis while at the New York Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, New York, in 1882. In 1887 he moved to Wisconsin to take a position in agricultural chemistry at the University of Wisconsin. Babcock’s main interest was in the chemical analysis of milk however the importance of the dairy industry in Wisconsin led him to begin testing the butterfat content of milk. The Babcock Test, a device he perfected in 1890, measured the fat content of milk which not only determined milk quality but also made it possible to fix standards for milk inspection and to set fair milk prices according to quality.



Williams Bay Historical Society
PO Box 678
Williams Bay, WI 53191

SHADES OF THE PAST

Williams Bay Historical Society
Established 2013

Volume 5 Issue 1 Spring 2018

HISTORICAL SOCIETY INFORMATION

Heirloom Garden Talk
April 28 at 1 pm
Barrett Memorial Library

May 2018
Dan Fres Site Director: Program on Old World Wisconsin
Date and time to be announced

June 2018
Pig Roast Fundraiser
Champs Sports Bar and Grill
747 W. Main St. Lake Geneva
Date and time to be announced

July 2018
2018 Art Fest
Edgewater Park, Williams Bay

October 2018
2018 Annual Dinner
Date and time to be announced

Board of Directors

President - Pat Grove
Vice President - Henry Kenyon
Secretary - Susan Vavra
Treasurer - Diana Woss

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Judy Bausch
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A Word from the President



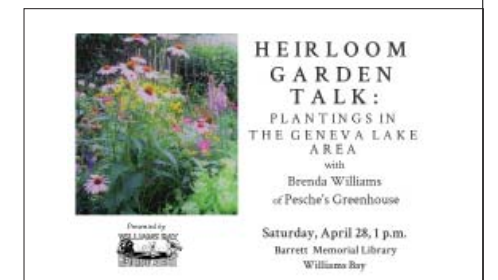
Our March 2018 year-ly calendar published by the Williams Bay Historical Society features a Circa 1896 photo image of ten workmen on scaffold-ings installing the dome on Yerkes Observatory. How ironic is it that the Uni-versity of Chicago owners of Yerkes made the announcement in March that they will be ceasing operations of the Observatory in October 2018? The board and members of the Historical Society were stunned and dismayed along with all the residents and to hear this announcement about the 122 year old icon and historic landmark. The Obser-vatory dome is featured as a logo for the vil-lage and the astronomers and families have lived in Williams Bay for over a century. A chapter in the “Pictorial History of Wil-liams Bay on Beautiful Geneva Lake” book is dedicated to Yerkes and is titled “Eyes Around the World Turn to Williams Bay”. The book may be purchased at the Barrett Library and at various vendors in the area or our website.

We took several steps to “preserve and educate” our state wide partners of the an-nouncement as this is the mission statement of our Williams Bay Historical Society. The Preservation Unit and President of the State Historical Society were notified, as we are an affiliate, along with legislators and coun-ty board members. We had a staff repre-sentative from Yerkes attend our last board meeting, requesting support of the Quest-or Museum that features the Astronomers. Board member Judy Bausch is the curator and will welcome assistance on Saturdays for this endeavor as the volume of visitors

has increased.

We had a successful Speakers Event on Saturday, March 17, 2018 at the Barrett Memorial Library. The presentation featuring “Antique Values” was led by Jim Kutzler, of Remember That Antiques and members and guests brought vintage items related to Wil-liams Bay history to share stories of during the event. Richard Carlson of Delavan pre-sented the historical society an oil painting of the “Blacksmith Shop” painted by his friend James Armour.

An upcoming Speakers Series event is scheduled for Saturday, April 28th at 1 pm at the Barrett Library featuring a “Heirloom Garden Talk” by Brenda Williams, Master Gardener at Pesches Greenhouse.



Did you know that the “Hollyhock” was named the official flower of Williams Bay by the Williams Bay Garden Club in 1933? The Heavenly Blue Morning Glory was runner up.

Members Bill and Laverne Duncan will be celebrating their 50th Golden Anniversa-ry in June. Bill is currently Village President and LaVerne is the First Lady of Williams Bay. The couple are graduates of George Williams College and moved to Williams Bay in 1970. They both have made many contributions to the Bay and raised their four children here. Congratulations Bill and LaVerne!

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Speaker Series: How to Identify and Research Their Value

By Pat Grove

Twenty four guests and members of the Williams Bay Historical Society gathered in the Community Room of the Barrett Memorial Library on Saturday, March 17th to listen to a presentation by Jim Kutzler, owner of Remember That Antiques in Salem, Wisconsin. The presentation included pointers researching antique values using Internet sites.

Mr. Kutzler pointed out a series of seven steps to follow and used a “sticking tomy” as an example from his private collection of colonial artifacts to illustrate the process of identification and value. The wrought iron candlestick was casted by a blacksmith and held a candle and was used by miners to stick into the mine walls to provide light.

Since attendees brought items to share during the event, Mr. Kutzler chose a dairy glass milk bottle that Ray Woss found in the ground in his farm field many years ago. Mr. Kutzler pointed out that the bottle was probably hand blown, from the 1950’s with a maker mark “W” or “M” on the bottom and it was etched with a faded decal painted on the front of the bottle. The dairy was not identified due to the age and condition of the bottle.



Michelle Bie Love shared an 1837 handwritten letter to Israel Williams, founder of Williams Bay, from

son Francis Williams and other members of the Williams family in Ashfield, Massachusetts. Michelle is co-author of “A Pictorial History of Williams Bay on Beautiful Geneva Lake” and the story of the Israel Williams family is highlighted in one of the chapters in the book.

Member LaVerne Duncan shared a 1916 George Williams College illustrated photo image of the shoreline of “College Camp”.

Pat Grove shared a decorative plate from the George Williams Gift Shop in the 1970’s.



Toby Case brought two Northwestern Railroad water glasses, a portable shot container and shared a story of how she inherited

them. Judy Bausch shared a blue ribbon that was awarded to the Williams Bay Garden Club and a souvenir plaque from Chef’s Corner that was given to guests at the restaurant.



Sue Vavra shared a vintage souvenir cup from Williams Bay.



Pam Lindley, formerly of the Bay sent photo images of vintage pill boxes that she found as a child along the site of the old railroad tracks.

David Valley shared a 1940s Williams Bay High School letterman jacket that belonged to his father, Warren T. Valley and also his father’s



Marine Corp canvas duffel bag that traveled with him during WWII. The bag had lettering with all the areas he served in during the war.

Richard Carlson of Delavan presented an oil painting of the old Blacksmith Shop in Williams Bay to the Williams Bay Historical Society. The painting was done



by his neighbor and artist friend James Armour. Mr. Carlson stated the Blacksmith

Shop was where the present Post Office is located in the Bay.



For more information on becoming a member of the Williams Bay Historical Society see the historical society website at wmsbayhistory.org; on Facebook: The History of Williams Bay; or email wmsbayhistory@gmail.com.

A Word from the President

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Member Carolyn Gramley will be celebrating her 98th birthday in April. Carolyn is a former director of George Williams College and was an avid golfer. The quint clubhouse on the G.W.C. golf course property is named in her honor. Carolyn is a treasured friend of 50 years to many members. Happy Birthday Carolyn!

For comments or questions please contact: wmsbayhistory@gmail.com

Or
Williams Bay Historical Society
P O Box 678
Williams Bay, WI 53191
Or visit

www.wmsbayhistory.org

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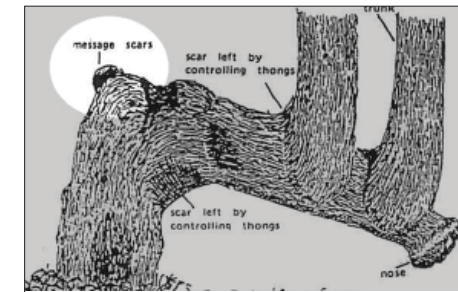


Affiliated Member of the Wisconsin State Historical Society

MISSION OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

The purpose of the Williams Bay Historical Society is to assist in the preservation and exhibition of items of historical interest that are within the boundaries of Williams Bay, and the immediate surrounding area. It will seek to provide the public with educational opportunities to learn about our unique local history. It will also seek to organize and assist in the commemoration of significant dates and events in village history.

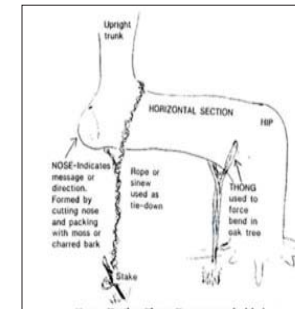
Trail Marker Trees



Details of a marker tree

It’s hard to imagine Wisconsin, a tourist state, without its ubiquitous highway signs of every shape, size, and description. But even early residents of the region needed help to get where they were going. Trees marked trails and pointed out river fords, burial grounds and other places of interest. There is debate today among archeologists as to whether Indians or early settlers actually manipulated trees to cause them to grow into unusual shapes pointing toward landmarks. But even without scientific evidence of accuracy, fascinating legends have developed around these unusually shaped trees.

An article in the Wisconsin Archeologist in 1965 by Phil Sander, a naturalist and conservationist, suggested that most permanent marker trees were made from hardwoods such as oak, hickory, maple and elm, be-



How marker trees were probably bent

cause of those trees’ flexibility and strength. According to Sander, the tip of a sapling might be buried in the ground or tied to a stake by twisted vines or strips of hide. As the tree continued to grow, the tip would die off and the trunk would assume a bent position. Usually a new upright trunk formed from the old tip. As the tree matured it took shape as a “living road sign that could be easily recognized and would last the life of the tree.”

Excerpted from *Every Root an Anchor: Wisconsin’s Famous and Historic Trees* by R. Bruce Allison ©2005 Wisconsin Historical Society

Marker tree images: Indianheadology.com

Early Wisconsin Agriculture

The farmers who first settled Wisconsin were typically from New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio and were primarily wheat farmers. Wheat was a favored crop for a number of reasons including it could be sowed and largely ignored until harvest time, leaving farmers more time to clear and break new land, and fence in the land already settled, as well as wheat stored well and brought farmers relatively good prices.



The settlement of Wisconsin and the preference of wheat by early farmers coincided with development of harvesting machinery. Cyrus McCormick patented his reaper in 1834, and began manufacturing them in Chicago in 1846. The threshing machine of J. I. Case was put into operation around the same time. By 1850, reapers and threshers were gaining in popularity enabling greater and greater yields though due to cost most early farmers still relied heavily on horses and manual harvesting practices.



J. I. Case Threshing Machine

The booming yields of the mid-1850s were supplemented by the newly completed rail lines of the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad, which made bringing the crop to market easier and more profitable. By 1860, wheat growing in Wisconsin had reached its peak with over 27 million bushels produced in the state. After this peak year wheat growing began to steadily decline. Farmers had often sowed wheat on the same land year after year, depleting the soil of necessary nutrients. Plant diseases and pests further discourage wheat growers, and prices for the crop declined.

By the late 1870s, wheat farming had run

its course in southern Wisconsin, and farming necessarily became diversified with the production of corn and oats as cash crops increasing dramatically. The production of corn and oats rose from just over 5 million bushels in 1849 to over 67 million bushels in 1879. Hay also had an increase in production over the same period, from 275,000 tons in 1849 to 1,907,000 tons in 1879. During this time period the production of wheat had declined by almost 4 million bushels from 1860 to 1879.



Field of drying corn shocks in Walworth County

By the late 1860s, the same climate and soil that had produced large wheat crops were found to be ideal for forage crops, and the land that was unsuitable for cultivation was good for pastures. The populations moving into Wisconsin at this time came primarily from New England and New York and immigrants from Northern European countries had experience with dairy farming. These favorable conditions began the dairy surge.



Early dairy farm



Alfalfa field at Manx farm Delavan, Wisconsin

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