



Richfield Historical Society  
P.O. Box 268  
Richfield, Wisconsin 53076  
www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org

**Officers**

**President**

Jim Metzger

**Vice President**

Del Schmechel

**Recording Secretary**

Jane Kyle

**Corresponding Secretary**

Dawn Mueller

**Treasurer**

Lois Hessenauer

**Past President**

Frank Buzz Carr

Spring/Summer 2017 / Volume 20 No. 1

**Directors**

Clara Birkel

Norm Grier

Harry Niemann

Pete Samsen

Diane Pedersen

Paul Wickesberg

**The Blacksmith Shop**

Each old-time blacksmith shop had an atmosphere of its own which reflected the personality of the smith and character of the community. The village blacksmith was an ingenious fellow in possession of muscle. Blacksmith shops, until the end of WW II, had so long been part of every community that they were more than a necessity. They were a solid link with the past.

**Committees**

**Education**

Kathy Weberg

**Event Coordinator**

Daryl Grier

**Historic Sites**

Quint Mueller

**Library/Program/**

**Newsletter Editor**

Marge Holzbog

**Lillicrapp House**

Aerona Smith

**Long-Term Planning**

Jim Metzger

**Marketing**

Frank "Buzz" Carr

**Membership**

Judy Lehman

**Mill House**

Clara Birkel/

Cindy Schmechel

**Mill Restoration**

Harry Niemann

**Museum**

Jean Happel/Norb Berres

**Project Coordinator**

Del Schmechel

**Volunteer Coordinator**

Sharon Lofy



One of the two blacksmith shops located at the Pleasant Hill Crossroads (right foreground)

Like other craftsmen and artists, the blacksmith was no better than his tools. However, unlike other craftsmen and artists, he owned his own tools. Any well- equipped shop had a fascinating variety of tools, mysterious in shape and ingenious in construction. There were only five or six categories of tools and equipment, all of which were necessary to the smith down through the ages. Forge and bellows, anvil and stock tub, hammer and tongs, swage and cutter, chisel and pinch, file and drill – these were the basic categories of equipment.

Blacksmithing was virtually an industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and, while some country shops may have been operated with only one or two helpers, smithies in towns and cities often had ten to fifteen apprentices and journeymen.

Whether in a large city or small settlement, the blacksmith would make according to his own design, or that of his patrons, the hammers, axes, adzes, plane bits, files, arrowheads and other necessities of all the farmers and craftsmen in his community.

**Our very own blacksmith shop in the south end of the Park near the Sugar Shake will be dedicated at the September Threshereer.**

---

## **Making A Life in America: The Mayer Family Story – Linda Derrick**

Imagine being newlyweds and leaving your homeland to travel across the ocean to start a new life never to return again. In 1851, that is just what George Mayer and his wife Juliana did. They are married in February of that year; and shortly thereafter, they leave their home in Germany and sail on a ship called the "Southampton" bound for America.

It can't be easy to leave their families behind. They are married only two months when they land in New York. For several more weeks, they continue their travels to get to Wisconsin where they settle in Washington County. We assume they chose Wisconsin because George's sister, Katherina (Mayer) Messer, had settled in this area with her husband and children just five years earlier. George and Juliana probably stay with Katherina's family for the first year they are here. George is a farmer by trade. And, like many German immigrants, he is probably drawn to southeastern Wisconsin. The land is good for farming, and the rolling countryside is similar to the land they left behind.

In October of their first year here, Juliana gives birth to a son. Unfortunately, he only lived two days. We don't know the circumstances surrounding his death; but regardless, that first year is most likely a challenging one for these newlyweds.

By the end of 1852, they are able to purchase 40 acres in the Town of Polk. Now they can build a home of their own and begin to farm their own land. Another year goes by, and they welcome their second son. However, again, tragedy strikes when this child dies after one month. Over the next 20 years, Juliana gives birth to 11 more children. Only five of them live past childhood.

In the Mid-1800s, it isn't uncommon for one in every five children to die before reaching adulthood. But, for George and Juliana, the survival rate of their children is far worse. But, they don't give up. They work hard farming their land, and they continue to prosper in their new homeland.

In 1874, George's nephew, Andrew Messer, is killed in a horse accident leaving his young family with a farm, a saw mill and a grist mill to run. Andrew's widow can't manage all of this; and George and Juliana purchase the property including the mills, the house and the farm. This is the property that today is the Richfield Historical Park. At the time they purchase this property, George is 52 years old. His oldest living son, Charles (better known as C. W.), is 19 years old. George and C. W. take over operation of the two mills.

We don't think that George and Juliana ever live in the mill house. They probably continue to live on their homestead in the Town of Polk. C. W. may have lived in the house by himself for a while. As the mill operator, it is convenient to live there since it is a short walk across the yards to the mills.

A few years go by and C. W. marries Marianna Kurtz. By this time, his father George is close to 60 years old, and C. W. purchases the property and the mill businesses from his parents, George and Juliana. C. W. is sole operator of the mills now, and the businesses are providing needed goods and services to the immigrants who continue to arrive in the area. The saw mill produces lumber for building as more and more farms are established. The growing farming community depends on the grist mill to process the grains.

Throughout the late 1800s, C. W. and Marianna's family is growing. Their first child is a daughter, followed by five sons and finally another daughter. C. W. and Marianna are enjoying a busy life raising their family in the mill house, operating the mills and managing a working farm. The mills continue to prosper.



Juliana Mueller Mayer



C. W. and Marianna Kurtz Mayer

*To be continued in our next newsletter ... "Living into the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the Mill House."*

### **Helen Nenka – Alpine Retreat Restaurant -Where Verse Painting Was Her Main Ingredient**

Helen Nenka was a part of the Richfield community for many years coming to Richfield at the time she and her husband purchased what was known as the Alpine Retreat Restaurant in 1941.

Helen Nenka was born in Door County as Helen Kujawski. She and her family moved to Milwaukee when she was 15. After attending Bay View and South Division High Schools, she studied at the Old Milwaukee Vocational School and was destined for the convent. The plan changed when she met Walter. They were married and had two children – Sue and Walter D.

Helen and Walter started their W.S.N. Restaurant (his initials) at South 26<sup>th</sup> and West Burnham Streets in Milwaukee. Specialties included stuffed squab and chicken.

In 1941, they moved to the Town of Richfield and took over the modest operation started by Larry Rupprecht, called "The Old Frontier Inn." It and the Dickel Hotel were the only two eating places for people who visited the Holy Hill Shrine.

The property included 60 acres, a stable and a scattering of rental cabins. Except for an interruption in World War II when Walter went to work for A. O. Smith in Milwaukee, they ran the Alpine Retreat until 1970.



The Old Frontier Inn

Over the years, Helen raised a family while cooking for the Alpine Retreat Restaurant. Although cooking, poetry and painting seem an unlikely combination, they were long a mixture in Helen's life. Poems had flown from her pen since she was 8 – some 1500 were published. Her poetry has been published in "Pen Woman," "Holy Hill Magazine" and other periodicals. Her two small books of verse, "To My Love" and "Island Seed" (inspired by a soldier who had returned from Korea) were sold at the restaurant.

Helen, as a poet and artist, also had numerous community activities which included her column "Tender Conscience" in the Hartford Times-Press and a program "Reminiscence in Rhyme" which she hosted on WTKM.

Many of her paintings hung on the walls of the Alpine Retreat. With her love of poetry, it is not surprising that she often included lines of poetry in her paintings. Her poetry and paintings have certainly given pleasure to many through the years.

**Walter and Helen Nenka's son, Walter D., has donated FIVE of Helen's most outstanding paintings to the Richfield Historical Society for selling at the Art Fair on July 25<sup>th</sup> along with several copies of her books of poetry. The paintings and books will be available for purchase at the Welcome Center. Walter D. has generously donated the proceeds to RHS.** The Society has also been the recipient of a grandfather clock which stood to the left of the entry door at the Alpine Retreat for many years. It can be viewed in its new home in the Photography Room at the Welcome Center. Thank you Walter D. for this donation as well.

## **President**

**Jim Metzger**

I am very happy to report that the RHS Board of Directors, the Village of Richfield and Harry Farchmin from Bloom Companies have agreed on the revised set of plans for phase three of the mill restoration. We shall know in three or four weeks which contractor will be awarded the project. There is every reason to believe that the project will be completed by the end of this year.

This a huge milestone in the history of the RHS, as most all of our resources and fundraising events involving thousands of hours of volunteer time went into this endeavor. As you may recall, when the RHS agreed to take control of the restoration of the grist mill, farm house and other buildings, the grist mill was most in need of attention. It was quickly determined that the mill foundation was in serious disrepair; and the building was, in fact, leaning and not too far from falling over. A committee was formed and with the help of many people, including the "Thursday Crew," the mill was stabilized and supported with a temporary structure in the basement. Since repair of the walls was a job much greater than the personnel of the RHS could attempt, contractors were called in and asked to bid. It was determined that doing the job in three phases made the most sense financially. The original bids approached \$750,000.00 to \$900,000.00 for all three phases.

The figure mentioned above was a staggering amount of money for this newly formed RHS group, coming from all walks of life, but with no formal fundraising experience. What they did have was the willingness to dig in, work hard, and succeed. Most of the contributions have come from the greater Richfield area. The Village of Richfield and its officials also played a key role in the success of the project. As you may recall, the Nature Park which is connected to the Historical Park is owned by the Village of Richfield.

While fundraising was going on, a new roof, period correct windows, replacement of deteriorated wood, painting and other tasks took place. The mill, from the outside, took on a different look. However, the foundation repair was still the main focus of the capital campaign and our motto "Let's Get It Grinding" was adopted. Now that the grist mill foundation is near completion, the Superior gas engine project can go forward along with rebuilding the line shaft mechanism, bolting machines and cup elevators.

The RHS wants to sincerely thank everyone who has had a hand in this project. From a group of people that did not exist, as the RHS, twenty years ago to what has been accomplished now is remarkable.

## **Collections**

**Jean Happel/Norb Berres**

In February, during our early burst of summer, we received a very nice collection of old tools and vintage books as well as a donation unique to the past. It was a horse blanket, not like today's horse blanket which is meant to keep a horse warm; but a blanket made from the hide of a horse to be used as a lap blanket while riding in the open conveyances of centuries past. The hide, complete with the hair, was tanned as a nice supple leather and lined with a grey wool cloth.

In olden days, it served to shield the folks from the cold winds as they travelled in open wagons, sleighs and buggies. When old "Dobbin" had come to the end of his useful time with the family, his hide could live on protecting his family in a new way. The blankets were a product of some of the many furriers that plied their trade "back in the day." One such business was John Figued Fur Co. in Milwaukee who turned out hundreds of these useful lap coverings.

Like button hooks and corset stays, these blankets have been relegated to the ash heap of yesteryear and are a rarity today. But strangely enough, three days after receiving this blanket, we received another from a totally different source. It was identical to the first, even the color of the horse hair was the same. Today, their value seems to have escalated as the few remaining ones are now on E-bay with asking prices from as little as \$100 to as much as \$1200. I doubt any sell for the larger amount, unless the hide was from a Derby winner or pulled a presidential funeral wagon; but they have been saved by many. So, if your car heater is failing, you have an alternative. The ones we have will be displayed during some of our events, weather permitting, wherever it seems appropriate such as in the Christmas time cutter display at the Mill House or the Doctor buggy at the Barn entrance

**Education**

**Kathy Weberg**

The education/activity days sponsored by the Historical Society underwent some nice changes this year. The Lillicrapp Welcome Center hosted two new stations. On the east end of the Welcome Center is the general store display. Children were mesmerized by the colorful sights and sounds and undoubtedly wished they could grab some of the old-fashioned candy in the old-fashioned jars and containers! They were invited to play "What's that sound?" Do you think they would have trouble identifying the dialing sound of a rotary telephone?

On the west end of the Welcome Center, children were treated to photography of the "olden days." An 1880s Scoville camera was explained which had no shutter and not moving for twenty seconds to take a picture proved to be a long time! Looking through the late 1800s stereoscopes seemed to be an engaging activity for the youngsters.

In addition, way on the other end of the Park, the blacksmith was able to set-up in the partially-constructed Blacksmith Shop. Our volunteer blacksmiths, Kurt and Kathy, agreed it was nice having walls, a gravel floor and a roof for their demonstration area rather than a tent as in the past. But let's not forget the other stations that have successfully provided students with hands-on opportunities and learning experiences for seven years. Thanks to all who make these days sure-fire hits with the third grade attendees.



**Norm Grier in the Mill**



**Students with the Hand Pump**



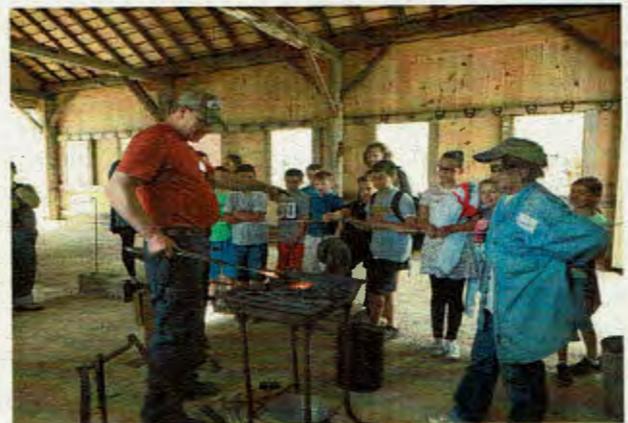
Diane Pedersen at the Motz Cabin



Jane Kyle at the Pioneer Village



Eileen Collins at the Welcome Center General Store



Kathy Lauenstein and Kurt at the Blacksmith Shop

**Event Coordinator**

**Daryl Grier**

**Our Beautiful Park** - Our park is beautiful. However, our weedy flower gardens take away from that beauty. We are going to change that but we need your help! We have had two garden days and made great progress (Take a look at the garden around the Mill kiosk and the two in front of the Mill House.) We have a Master Gardner who is helping us, and she is working on getting more help from her group.

You **DO NOT** have to know what is a weed versus “good stuff”..... we’ll show you what to dig etc. It’s not all hard work! We do have areas where we will dig out plants, and you can sit and pull the grass out from the plants’ roots so that we can re-plant. Later, we’ll mulch.

If you are interested in helping, let me know. I’ll include you in the next request. If you don’t have email, give me a call. Daryl Grier 262 628-4221 [dgrier@charter.net](mailto:dgrier@charter.net)

**Want to Help RHS AND Get Rid Of Stuff?** - We know how you can declutter and support RHS at the same time, we can help! Just donate your items to the Silent Auction or Sweets ‘n Stuff for the September Threshere. If you don’t know what category something would belong in, just contact either of us. We can figure out where to get the “best bang for our buck.” All proceeds benefit our society!

There are three areas where you can donate:

- Live auction: new this year. We'll have a live auction on Saturday after the Tractor Parade.
- Silent auction: on Saturday & Sunday.
- Household treasurers (rummage): at Sweets 'n Stuff.

Contacts: Jane Kyle for Silent Auction, [ekyle@wi.rr.com](mailto:ekyle@wi.rr.com) (262) 255-4119  
 Daryl Grier for Sweets 'n Stuff, [dgrier@charter.net](mailto:dgrier@charter.net) 262 628-4221

**Hey All You Wonderful Bakers!** - Baked goods are needed to sell at the Sweets 'n Stuff tent at the Threshere: cookies, bars, brownies etc. Please let Daryl Grier know if you are able to bake. All items can be dropped off at Daryl Grier's or Sharon Lofy's. Baked good may also be brought to the Threshere on Saturday or Sunday a.m..

- Two cookies to a bag and one brownie or fudge, about 2" square to a bag

Contacts: Daryl Grier [dgrier@charter.net](mailto:dgrier@charter.net) 262 628-4221, 1179 Wejegi Dr.  
 Sharon Lofy, 4434 Pleasant Hill Rd. [hsl1725@yahoo.com](mailto:hsl1725@yahoo.com) (262) 297-1546

**Antique Appraisal & Chili Lunch** – Lois Hessenauer

On a very nice Sunday, February 19, 135 treasures were brought to the Antique Appraisal & Chili Lunch to be evaluated by five expert appraisers: Lee Bernard, Colleen Craig, Bill Heuter, Dave Hunsicker and Tom Staats. There were vintage toys, lamp shades, jewelry, military artifacts from WWII, pottery, paintings, books, postcards, coins -- even an old fire alarm box. Some visitors found their items were worth more than they thought -- others found out they were delightful memories to keep but would not finance their retirement.

An added benefit was a bowl of tangy or mild chili - whichever you wanted - with all the fixins' plus a corn muffin and brownie. Hot dogs and chili dogs were served to round out the menu. An additional treat was a slice of delicious homemade pie - apple and blueberry and pumpkin and cherry! A variety of items in the Silent Auction made it a big hit. Richie Raccoon, the Historical Society's friendly mascot, came to visit and greeted those who attended. There were even little Richies that you could buy.

A heart-felt Thank You to all who attended and volunteered. This successful event was sponsored by the Richfield Historical Society. Its profits help with the restoration of the Messer/Mayer Mill and the Society's other projects. You, too, could help with this restoration by contributing to the Messer/Mayer Restoration Fund.



Getting the Value



Cindy Schmechel and Clara Birkel - Serving Chili

**Annual Maple Syrup Family Day another Success** – Linda Derrick

The RHS Sugar Shack was abuzz with activity on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> as many families braved the brisk, but sunny, weather to come out and see first-hand how maple syrup is produced at the Park. It was a great opportunity for kids of all ages to see how maple trees are tapped, how the sap is collected and brought to the Sugar Shack to be boiled down into syrup. The finished product was available for purchase; and thanks to our many volunteers, hot dogs, beverages, and homemade goodies were also for sale.

The fun didn't end there. From the Sugar Shack, families could climb on the people mover to ride through the Park to tour the various historical buildings. With a stop at the Pioneer Village, they visited the Motz Cabin and the Messer Log Barn. At the other end of the Park, tours of the Mill showed visitors how grain was processed for the local farmers many years ago. Then, with a short walk up the hill, they could step back in time and tour the mill operator's house which has been restored to the early 1900s. To the north, visitors were greeted at the Lillicrapp Welcome Center where they viewed the old time general store and photo display.

If you missed Maple Syrup Family Day this year, there is always next year. Mark your calendar to visit the RHS website around the first of the year for specific details ([www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org)). It is a wonderful family event and the maple syrup demonstrations are free to everyone.



At the Sugar Shack



Oh Yum! That Maple Cotton Candy



What to Buy?

**Library/Program/Newsletter**

**Marge Holzbog**

The Library Committee has been most fortunate to receive four historic books on Holy Hill from Dick Werner. These books are very much appreciated and a significant contribution to material the Society has regarding Holy Hill.

- "Miracle Hill – A Legendary Tale of Wisconsin" by W. A. Armstrong 1889
- "History of Holy Hill" by J. M. Le Count 1891
- "History of Holy Hill" by Rev. P. Cyril 1923
- "History of Holy Hill" compiled by the Discalced Carmelite Fathers 1928

The 1928 selection contains an interesting accounting on the legend often mentioned regarding Father Marquette and Joliet having made an early visit to the Hill:

*"From the Potawatomes and their Chief Old Kewaskum, who camped near Pike Lake for a number of years, the early settlers learned that the Faith had been transmitted to the tribe through their forefathers who received it from a great and saintly "Black Robe Chief" who wore a crucifix and rosary at his belt while he prayed at the Big Hill where he planted a Cross. This statement was also corroborated by Old Monches, Chief of the Menomonees. That this priest was a Jesuit there is no doubt. Moreover, there was a good share of evidence at hand to support the belief that it was none other than the illustrious Marquette: for the French explorers were the very first to penetrate this region."*

**Correction note:** Last month's Newsletter had a front page picture taken in an earlier day at the Mill. Information from Carol and Bob Woods indicates that photo was taken next to the large tree on the south side of the outhouse looking west. Looking west today, it's very hard to believe, given the growth covering the field, that one day it was a farm field.

## Historic Sites

**Quint Mueller**

Each year we expect to see changes in the Park that the Historic Sites Committee is responsible for completing. This year has brought a change to the Historic Sites Committee itself. After close to 20 years of faithful and dedicated leadership of the Sites Committee, Herb Lofy has stepped down as Historic Sites Chair. Many of the great things we see in the Park each time we visit are due to the perseverance and dedication of Herb. Without him, we can truly say that the Park would not be what it is today. Please join me in thanking Herb for his exemplary dedication and service to RHS. Don't worry, Herb hasn't gone away. He continues to help and support RHS.

All of that being said, Herb has left a pretty tough act to follow. I doubt that I will come close to the accomplishments that can be attributed to Herb, but I will do the best that I can. The last few months have been a transition for us at "Sites." There are many projects planned for this year. Time will tell if they can all be accomplished in one season.

The biggest potential project this year is, of course, the Mill foundation. As of the writing of this article, that still is not a done deal for this year. If it happens this season, it will require support by RHS crews to some degree. That could result in a delay to other projects. That's ok, the Mill must come first, and we've been working towards its restoration for a long time.

The other big project is the Blacksmith Shop. If you've been in the Park this spring, you have seen the progress from last year. In fact, that progress never stopped. The "Thursday Crew" kept working on it all winter. It shows. Wonderful job guys! We also have Tim Einwalter to thank for the plans. Tim patiently worked with the Sites Committee as he would present a plan, and we would change something. In the end, a very nice design resulted, making use of some non-standard materials; and we are now able to provide storage facilities for the RHS people-mover wagons, as well as serving as our blacksmith shop. There is still work to be done on the building, but it's close to being a blacksmith shop.

Getting it operational and directing that operation will largely be the responsibility of Kathy Lauenstein. Kathy has been helping RHS work towards a blacksmith shop for many years now and brings many more

years of “smithing” experience and knowledge with her. Although we expect it to be “operational” by the Threshere, it will be a living exhibit. In other words, we’ll be improving it on a constant basis.

A few of the other projects for this season include widening portions of the south drive at select locations to provide “passing zones,” clearing lines of sight in some areas for safety and site visibility, and repainting of select buildings. Of course, mixed in between these projects are normal day to day maintenance and operational duties. Some of those “duties” include preparing and setting up for RHS events like “Art at the Mill” and the “Threshere,” as well as the new “Step Back in Time” days.

All in all, this is a very full schedule for the RHS crew. We can use extra help. If you think you might be interested in lending a hand at the Park, please contact either Del Schmechel (262-628-0919) or myself (262-644-5857). Additional contact information can always be found on the RHS website.

## **Lillicrapp House**

**Aerona Smith**

Even though it was cold and rainy for RHS Maple Syrup Day, several wagons full of visitors toured LWC. It was great having families visit. This year we are open for private tours, Education Days (first time), Art Fair, Threshere, Christmas in Richfield and Step Back in Time events.

A new addition to the General Store is a large red, double wheel coffee grinder (circa 1900). This antique grinder, along with several small hand-cranked coffee grinders, will be used for demonstrations and hands-on activities during tours/events.

In earlier times, one department in a general store was known as “Dry Goods.” This department included bolts of cloth, thread, ribbon, textiles, ready-made clothing, and men’s paper collars, etc. To add to our dry goods display, we were able to obtain (on loan) an early 1900s oak, Merrick 6 drawer spool cabinet desk. It originally came from a general store in Denmark, WI.

Our new exhibit for 2017 will focus on threshing and Richfield barn photography. These exhibits will be on display in both the General Store and Photography Room beginning at the RHS Art Fair through our Threshere event.



**Eileen Collins at the Coffee Grinder**



**Dave Lehman in the Photography Room**

The General Store theme, plus pictures of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, helps us convey and depict early Richfield, which ties in with our RHS mission statement, “to discover, collect, preserve, and promote the history of the Village of Richfield.” These areas also enhance our vision which is to “provide opportunities to connect to Richfield’s past.” LWC is handicap accessible.

(Our location is just north of the Mill and the Mill House.)

This is a very exciting time to be part of the Richfield Historical Society (RHS). Our long range planning will be broken up into two distinct time frames. The definition of long range planning will be three to five years, and longer range planning will be six years and more.

Short range planning includes the RHS concentration on the selection of a contractor to carry out phase three of the mill foundation restoration. The revised plans have been approved by Harry Farchmin of Bloom Companies, the engineering firm of record, the RHS and the Village of Richfield. The project will be posted and sent out for bid this month. After the bidding period ends in 21 days, we will have an idea of who the bidding contractors are, and a contractor selection will be made. We still believe that this last phase of the foundation restoration will be completed by year's end. The blacksmith shop is in its final phase of completion and will be dedicated at the Threshere in September. Various Eagle Scout projects are ongoing throughout the Park. We are very fortunate to have both local Girl and Boy Scouts involved in these projects.

As you may remember, Sharon and Herb Lofy have made a very generous gift of their farm to the RHS to include the land and buildings. At this time, various board members are investigating ways to incorporate the transfer of this property to the RHS so that the wishes of the Lofy's can be guaranteed and the needs of the RHS satisfied.

This year the Events Committee has added a new program to the calendar called "A Step Back in Time." It will be held once a month during May, June, July and August. Always ongoing is theme change and improvements to the Lillicrapp Welcome Center. There is also a constant need to maintain the present buildings in the Park along with maintaining the various gardens and grounds. The "Thursday Crew" does a marvelous job with this and many other tasks. (We can always use additional support in this area if you are interested.)

After phase three of the mill foundation restoration is completed, the 25HP Superior hit & miss gas engine will find a new home in the engine shed attached to the south end of the mill. At the same time, the line shaft apparatus that transmits power throughout the mill will be taken down and refurbished. In a quest to "Get It Grinding," the engine will be coupled to the gear box that turns the line shaft. (A gasoline engine was the second generation of power used to run the mill.) Rebuilding the current bolting machines and Oliver Evans pocket elevators are also part of the plan. The goal is to get all three forms of grinding, that are present now, operational eventually.

In the near future, funds permitting, a roof over the existing concrete pad will be considered to include the possible addition of side walls, windows and doors. Adding sufficient electrical power is also in the plans. Various bridges are also needed to facilitate people and equipment movement throughout the Park. In addition, we will need to start a dialog with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources regarding the restoration of the mill pond in an attempt to power the mill with water.

Thinking longer range, the goal of the RHS has always been to restore water to power the mill. The rebuilding of the foundation includes the provision of locating and refurbishing the water turbine so when water becomes available the mill can operate as it did at its inception. Reconstruction of the saw mill is also part of the long range plan and will be instrumental in the completion of the grist mill site as it was back in the day.

A municipal building to include a well and septic system, ADA compliant restrooms, heating and cooling, and kitchen facilities to facilitate indoor functions would be a great asset. Other buildings that are in the long range plans include a buggy shed and pig barn which were original to the property.

One of the goals of the RHS is to have the Richfield Historical Park become a prime destination in Washington County and Southeastern Wisconsin that depicts history in Richfield. As you can see, this is an admirable goal and requires the help of scores of people and resources dedicated to make this happen. If you can see yourself as being part of this group of people or want more information, contact any one of the people shown on page one of this newsletter.

## Marketing

**Frank "Buzz" Carr**

Last night at the May General Meeting, Jerry Apps, our speaker, mentioned that the Richfield Historical Society (RHS) was well known among historical societies in Wisconsin. What he meant is that others have taken note of our success and accomplishments. We are well known, in short, for getting things done.

This, of course, is because of the tremendous efforts of our many volunteers. Why only the volunteers you may ask? Because volunteers are all we have. We have no paid staff. We pay only for things and for services that we cannot do ourselves.

What does this have to do with marketing? I have been asking the attendees at our general meetings where they have been hearing of the meetings and the subjects of the meetings to try and understand where people are getting their information. The greatest number of attendees are reporting that they are hearing about our meetings from our own efforts – the newsletter, the website, our Facebook page and our flyers that we post on boards at businesses in the communities in Washington County.

This is another example of our efforts being successful, but it is somewhat limiting. We are trying to extend the word of what we are doing to people beyond the reach of those we are already connecting with. I have mentioned before that we are using print media, electronic media and the internet as best we can to get the word out. This has been successful, but we need new ideas.

Therefore, if any of you have suggestions about new approaches to marketing, please send them to me. My address is [carr3492@gmail.com](mailto:carr3492@gmail.com). I welcome any ideas or connections that you have that will help us reach more people. Thank you for your efforts and suggestions.

## Membership

**Judy Lehman**

Hello RHS Members, **Thank you!** - to you who have recently joined the Richfield Historical Society and to those of you who have renewed your membership. The Society is excited for the new interest and honored to have many long-standing, supportive members.

I am wondering whether any of you who are not presently doing volunteer work for the Society would like to begin, or begin again, to volunteer to do something for the Richfield Historical Society. There are many ways to be involved in keeping our society strong and vibrant.

On the back of the enclosed puzzle page, I have listed some of the known areas and the Volunteer Coordinator's contact information. Of course, you may offer new ideas and areas of interest.

**Please know you will be welcomed!**

### **Secret Answers for the Puzzle:**

- |                                 |                      |                                   |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Richfield Historical Society | 2. Messer Mayer Mill | 3. Lilicrapp House Welcome Center |
| 4. Threshere                    | 5. Blacksmith Shop   | 6. Log Cabin                      |
| 7. Mill House                   | 8. Maple Syrup       | 9. Tractor Parade                 |
| 10. People Mover                | 11. Art Fair         | 12. Antique Appraisal             |
| 13. Christmas at the Mill       | 14. School Days      | 15. Presentations                 |

**Mill Restoration**

**Harry Niemann**

Progress Report – Jim Metzger

As many of you supporters of the Richfield Historical Society already know, the Messer/Mayer Grist Mill is a diamond in the ruff in need of polishing.

The finishline is in sight regarding the completion of phase three of the mill foundation restoration, hopefully accomplished by year's end. This has taken many years and thousands of volunteer hours of fundraising to accomplish.

Next will be the building of the engine shed, the placement of the Superior gas engine and the refurbishing of the line shaft assembly to "Get It Grinding."



**Mill South Wall**

One of the tasks that has been accomplished recently, by Harry Niemann, is installing lighting and a motor driven mechanism that turns the large bolting machine on the second floor. This makes an excellent display, for people touring the mill, showing the movement of the bolting machine and the function it provided.

Last year a Powder Post Beetle Treatment was applied to all of the wood post surfaces in the basement of the mill. The environment in the basement is normally very humid, with standing water common. This provides a great home for the destructive work of powder post beetles. In time, if left unchecked, the damage to all of the wood posts could compromise the ability of the basement structure to securely support the mill.

This spring an electric circulating fan with louvers, controlled by a humidistat, was installed by the "Thursday Crew" in the basement of the mill. This system draws dry outside air across the basement; and, at the same time, picks up the present moisture in the air discharging that moisture laden air outdoors. This, along with controlling standing water, will preserve the wood structure in the basement for many decades to come.

Additional lighting has been added in the mill to facilitate mill tours that are very popular during our many events. Mill tour guides very effectively tell the story of how life was drastically different over a hundred years ago in Richfield. They relate why a grist mill was needed in the first place and what had to come first before the mill could be erected. If you have not heard the story being told during a mill tour, make it a priority this summer to take one in at one of our many events.

A new coat of red paint along with white trim paint is scheduled to be applied to the mill this summer. The red paint that you see now was applied many years ago during the rebuilding of the exterior of the mill and has held up extremely well. Money has been set aside in the budget, and a contractor is being selected.

There are five more RSH events to take place in the Historical Park this summer that will offer mill tours as well as tours throughout all of our buildings. For further information, access our website [www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org) for information on the five remaining events. Bring the family or a friend for there is much to see.

**Project Coordinator**

**Del Schmechel**

I shouldn't be surprised anymore by the generosity of people I meet. I believe you can break society down into two groups. The "Me" group is always looking out for number one, and the "We" group is looking to make our community better. Thankfully, we have lots of "We" people who constantly step up and ask "what can I do to help." Sometimes that help comes in the way of the donation of money or materials while other times it comes in the way of hours working in the Park. Both are very important and gratefully received.

Our current project is the Blacksmith Shop. It will be dedicated at the Thresheree this year. It could never have gotten to where it is without a long list of donations along with thousands of man hours of labor. Currently, we are cleaning donated cream city bricks that will be made into a forge with donated time from a member mason. It will have a beautiful side draft-hood made with donated steel and labor. The chimney, roof flashing and cap are all also donated items. These are only some of the examples of our wonderful "We Community" that I'm lucky to work with. . . . And, we always have room for one more.

Our society's future is bright partly because of the wonderful Park we manage but more because of our membership. It wasn't that long ago that I hadn't even heard of the Richfield Historical Society. It was due to a chance meeting with a neighbor that started me down the path to where I find myself today. I would encourage everyone to speak with friends and neighbors about our society. Somewhere out there could be a future president of our society who just doesn't know it yet. . . . .I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve.



**Blacksmith Shop Exterior**



**Blacksmith Shop Interior**



**Help the Blacksmith Shop – For a \$100 donation you can have a horseshoe on the wall bearing your name.**



**The Blacksmith Shop Crew**

**Volunteer Coordinator**

**Sharon Lofy**

Thank you to all who volunteered to make the Maple Syrup Family Day a huge success.

The Richfield Historical Society Plant Sale (made possible through the Sunny Point Gardens) sent out many orders for \$25 and \$15 Gift Certificates. Again, thank you for your support. A portion of the proceeds go to the Richfield Historical Society.

Also, new this year is "Step Back in Time." This event will take place on the 2nd Sunday of May thru August from 12 p. m. to 3 p. m. The Mill, Mill House and Lillicrapp Welcome Center will be open for tours along with hands on activities for all to enjoy. Volunteers are always appreciated.

Next will be the "Art Fair at the Mill" (July 22<sup>nd</sup>). You will be receiving calls asking if you have time available to give a helping hand. As you know, the Threshere is our big fundraiser. This also requires over 200 volunteers. So keep the dates in mind (Sept. 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>) and talk to family, friends, and neighbors. It's fun volunteering with a friend.

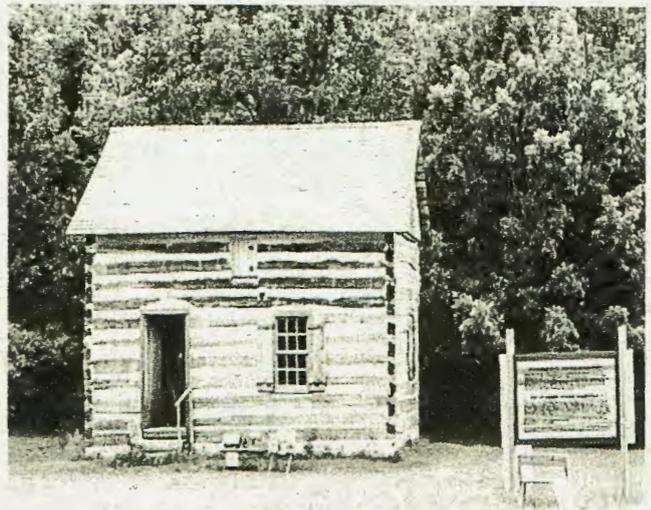
We are always thinking of ways to grow our volunteer resources. If you know of any organizations looking for volunteer hours/community time, let me know. Call 262-297-1546.

**I Want You!** - Norm Grier

Have you ever thought I'd like to take on one of those volunteer jobs at the Richfield Historical Society, IF ONLY I had the time?

Well, this may be just what you have been looking for, even if you didn't know it; a meaningful task that you can handle that requires a limited amount of time; time that will get you out to the Historical Park for a couple events plus a little additional time to coordinate activities with other volunteers just like you. This activity will provide an opportunity to interact with friends and neighbors pretty much on your schedule without intruding on your otherwise busy life.

The log buildings in the Pioneer Homestead area of the Park need someone to look out for them. The right person will have volunteers available for the summer RHS events to show visitors around, to tell stories of the olden days and to make sure that before guests arrive the buildings have been swept out and are ready for company.



**The Motz Log Cabin**

You will receive plenty of help putting together the story of these buildings and the others like them that were commonplace in early days of Richfield. You very well may have a better handle on these early days than you realize. Together, with existing RHS volunteers and others that you choose, you will have a "ball"chatting with and learning from the many visitors that attend the RHS events.

In time, you will put your stamp on this unique part of the Richfield story. Tap your inner-creativity, and help make this area as good as you can imagine it can be and the visitors' experience as fun as you'd hope it to be. Most importantly, you'll be an active part of the RHS family.

For more information please call Jim Metzger at (262) 628-7707 or Norm Grier at (262) 628-4221.



*9th Annual Richfield  
Art at the Mill  
Art and Fine Craft Fair*  
July 22, 2017 ~ 9am-4pm



Richfield Nature/Historical Park  
1896 State Rd. 164  
Richfield, WI 53076

[Richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://Richfieldhistoricalsociety.org)



- Free Admission & Parking
- 60+ Artists & Variety of Vendors
- Silent Auction
- Live Music & Great Food
- Tour of Mill, Farmhouse, General Store & Log Buildings (small fee)



**STEP BACK  
IN TIME**



Tour of Historic Buildings  
with Engaging Activities for All Ages

July 9, 2017 \* August 13, 2017  
Noon to 3pm

Richfield Historical Park  
4399 Pleasant Hill Rd — Richfield, WI

- |                    |                           |
|--------------------|---------------------------|
| Grind Coffee       | Play "What's That Sound?" |
| Shell Corn         | Scrub Clothes             |
| Ring a Dinner Bell | Pump Water                |
| Carry Ice          | Plus Other Fun Activities |

Tour: \$5 per person; Under 6, Free  
Homemade Goodies, Snacks, Water for Sale  
Free Cider Samples

[richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://richfieldhistoricalsociety.org)   

**EVENTS**

Step Back in Time: See flier above

July 9, 2017  
August 13, 2017

Events: check our website - [www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org) for details

July 22, 2017 – Art Fair at the Park – see flier above  
September 16 & 17, 2017 – Thresherec  
December 2, 2017 - Christmas at the Mill

**General Meeting**

September 28, 2017 – “Wisconsin’s Most Haunted Places” – Chad Lewis  
October 26, 2017 – “Hensler Petroglyphs” – Dale Van Holten  
November 16, 2017 – “Milwaukee’s Holiday Traditions”