



Richfield Historical Society
Box 268
Richfield, Wisconsin 53076
RichfieldHistoricalSociety.org

President Vice President Recording Secretary Corresponding Secretary Treasurer Past President
Joni Crivello Mary Kokan Katie Waln Mary Kokan Lois Hessenhauer Pete Samson

Directors *Linda Aicher Dan Jorgenson Doug Maschman George Piontek Eva Tuinstra Nate Walters*

Committees

Blacksmith Shop

Jeff Beegle/Kathy Lauenstein

Volume 28 Number 2

Collections

Deanna Einwalter

Education

Kathy Weberg

Events Coordinator

Daryl Grier

Historic Sites

Quint Mueller/Herb Lofy

Library/Newsletter

Marge Holzbog

LWC Welcome Center

Ruth Jeffords

Marketing

Doug Wenzel

Membership

Dorothy Marks

Mill House

Tonya Kleppin

Mill Restoration

Al Mayer

Pioneer Homestead

Susan Sawdey

Programs

Connie Thoma

Project Coordinator

Al Mayer

Volunteer Coordinator

Sharon Lofy

The Nature of the Outdoors

by Susan Brushafer

"We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors, we borrow it from our children."

This quote is believed to have come from a Native American Proverb.

With Spring in Wisconsin unfolding into Summer, we see changes all around us. Trees are morphing from buds to new light green leaves. Flowers are poking out of the earth as it slowly warms. Step outside your door on an early morning and take a deep breath. Depending upon where you live, this may be a pleasant scent of pine, or the subtle 'smells like rain' of an approaching storm. Picture your ancestors experiencing the same presence of nature in the mid-1800s.

During the 19th century, things started to change. A breath of fresh air as of a different quality. That's when our environment experiment experienced rapid degradation caused by progress: industrialization, urbanization and the exploration of natural re-sources.

Fortunately, something referred to as The American Conservation Movement emerged.

The Movement was one of reforms in America that occurred during the Progressive era and Conservation Movement that occurred during the Progressive era from 1890 – 1920.



www.american-historama.org/1881-1913-maturation-era/conservation-movement.htm

The Progressive Era and Conservation Movement were a backlash against the rise of big business and corporations that were led by wealthy, greedy, and unethical men, referred to as the Robber Barons. A *New York Tribune* article published on May 1, 1902, cited..."the fierce zeal of acquisition will in another generation have been succeeded by the sober desire for conservation. The Robber Barron era will have passed, ... and there will be time for much nobler motives to gain ascendancy and to work effectively for the public good."

As cities grew crowded and polluted, many people longed for the beauty and tranquility of nature. They were reflecting on their 'olden days' the same way we look back at ours. This nostalgia, combined with concerns about the depletion of forests, wildlife, and other resources, sparked efforts to protect and manage the environment.

The American Conservation Movement was championed by notable people like President Theodore Roosevelt. He believed in efficiency and believed that natural features in the country were being squandered and destroyed, endangering the most important and natural features of America. In his Seventh Annual Message to the Nation in 1906, President Roosevelt stated:

***"The conservation of our natural resources and their proper use
constitute the fundamental problem which underlies
almost every other problem of our National life."***

Other proponents of conservation, artists and writers, highlighted the beauty and cultural value of American's environmental legacy. This article's focus is on three authors who were inspired to preserve our natural world. The writings of John Burroughs, Aldo Leopold, and Bill McKibben bridge generations of the American Conservation Movement. Through their unique perspectives, this trio urged us to protect what is fragile, fleeting, and vital.

John Burroughs (1837 – 1921)

John Burroughs was born in Roxbury, New York, April 3, 1837; he died March 29, 1921. In the mid-19th century, he became thought of as the foremost naturalist of America. As a naturalist, Burroughs long maintained supremacy in his field. He recorded many volumes of writings which capture his observations. His information was considered accurate and includes his philosophy derived from a lifelong association with nature. His poetry reflected nature.

From Burroughs' poetry collection entitled *Birds and Poets*, these lines from "Early April" help us picture the arrival of Spring with its budding trees and return of birds that have been on winter hiatus. He emphasizes the importance of respecting the natural world.

***Behold the robin's breast aglow
As on the lawn he seeks his game;
His cap a darker hue doth show,
His bill a yellow flame.
Now in the elm-tops see the swarm
Of swelling buds like bees in May;
The maples, too, have tints blood warm,
And willows show a golden ray.***



**Photo (from negative) of
John Bourroughs, 1903**

In Bourroughs' poem entitled "Waiting", he subtly conveys his philosophy of patience and harmony with nature. He emphasizes the importance of respecting natural processes and trusting in the balance of the environment.

Waiting

***Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind and tide, nor sea;
I rave no more giant time or fate,
For lo! My own shall come to me.***

John Burroughs' writings reflected a transformative period in American history, spanning the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This era marked by rapid industrialization and urbanization also included significant advancements in science and technology. Because of these changes, there was a growing initiative to reconnect with nature and preserve the natural world, which resonated deeply with Burroughs.

Burroughs was part of the American Conservation Movement. The Movement included people like John Muir and Theodore Roosevelt. John Burroughs' essays often reflected the tension between the encroaching industrial world and the serene beauty of rural life. Burroughs also engaged with the ideas of Charles Darwin. Evolutionary theory was often incorporated into his reflections on nature and humanity's place within it.

Burroughs' perspectives and writings were influenced by his friendships with notable contemporaries like Walt Whitman, Henry Ford, and Thomas Edison. Burroughs' works gave a literary voice to the conservation ethos of his time, inspiring readers to appreciate and protect the natural world. His writings blended literary artistry with scientific observation.

John Burroughs' conservation efforts were primarily centered around his home in the Catskill Mountains of New York. Although there isn't direct evidence of his involvement in conservation activities specific to Wisconsin, his influence on the broader American Conservation Movement likely resonated in states like Wisconsin, which have a rich history of environmental preservation. He was an advocate for protecting nature and inspired early conservation efforts. Local newspapers across the country carried various articles about the Conservation Movement. Such an article was included in the *River Falls Journal*:

**River Falls (WI) Journal
February 4, 1909**

Conservation

The resources of the earth are the basis of our national wealth. By means of them alone, in material things, The Conservation Movement now fully under way embraces the forest movement as one of its sources and great divisions. Thus the cause of forest conservation throughout the country has won the powerful ally and a more effective support for the work that lies just before us.

Gifford Pinchot in New England Magazine

Aldo Leopold (1887 – 1948)

The second of the nature writers highlighted in this article is Aldo Leopold. We saw that Burroughs focused on the immediate experience of nature. He often wrote about birds, flowers, and landscapes, expressing his awe and appreciation. Leopold's works emphasize sustainable land practices and the interconnectedness of ecosystems.

Aldo Leopold is widely considered to be the father of wildlife ecology and to be the founder of wildlife management. His efforts helped open the field of environmental ethics. Leopold was born in 1887 and raised in Burlington, Iowa. After graduating from the Yale Forest School in 1909, he joined the recently created U.S. Forest Service as a ranger in the American Southwest.

He was assigned to the Forest Service's District 3 in the Arizona and New Mexico territories. In 1924, during his period with the Service, Leopold was instrumental in creating the Gila National Forest Wilderness, the first official wilderness area. Later, he was transferred to Madison, Wisconsin by the U.S. Forest Service. He continued his groundbreaking work in ecology and conservation during his time there, eventually becoming a professor at the University of Wisconsin.

Early in his career, Leopold was tasked with hunting predators like wolves and bears. Over time, he developed an ecological ethic that emphasized the importance of predators in maintaining balance in nature.

Among Aldo Leopold's best-known ideas is the "Land Ethic®," which calls for an ethical, caring relationship between people and nature. This land ethic continues today to inform the work, values, and goals at the Aldo Leopold Foundation located in Baraboo, Wisconsin. The land ethic also permeates the work of countless individuals and organizations worldwide – a testament to the power of Leopold's conservation philosophy.

A Land Ethic® may be viewed as a moral code of conduct that stems from these interconnected caring relationships: humans and other parts of the Earth – soils, waters, plants, and animals – "the land."



<https://www.aldoleopold.org/about/aldo-leopold>

Aldo Leopold was a forester, philosopher, conservationist, educator, writer, and outdoor enthusiast.

Leopold was an early member of the Wisconsin Conservation Commission, advocating for sustainable land use and zoning policies. His work in Wisconsin continues to influence conservation efforts globally.

Aldo Leopold's connection to conservation in Wisconsin is deeply significant. After moving to Wisconsin in 1924, he became a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where he taught the first course in wildlife management in the United States. He also conducted groundbreaking research on game populations and land use. *Game Management* (1933) was the first textbook on wildlife management. It laid the foundation for the field.

During his time in Wisconsin, Leopold began an experiment of sorts in nature, restoring a dilapidated farmstead located in the 'sand counties' (an area known for its sandy soils) to a flourishing forest. This ecological restoration at 'The Shack' in Baraboo is where he and his family worked to restore the land by planting trees and native vegetation.

This property is now a National Historic Landmark and part of the Leopold Pines Conservation Area. The result of this experiment led to his ground-breaking book, *A Sandy County Almanac*.

In the second part of the book, *The Quality of the Landscape*, Leopold describes various North American landscapes that he visited in his lifetime including those found in Wisconsin. In each section of this longer essay, he returns to the same themes, describing how spectacular the natural landscape is or was, and how human interventions are destroying and degrading it.

The book has become a conservation classic, selling over two million copies worldwide and translated into 15 languages. Leopold spent many years crafting these essays, which inspired readers to understand how the natural world works and to care for all things wild.

Aldo Leopold



“I am asserting that those who love the wilderness should not be wholly deprived of it, that while the reduction of the wilderness has been a good thing, its extermination would be a very bad one, and that the conservation of wilderness is the most urgent and difficult of all the tasks that confront us, because there are no economic laws to help and many to hinder its accomplishment.” ... Aldo Leopold

Bill McKibben (1960 - living)

The last person in the conservation trio this article focuses on is Bill McKibben. McKibben is noted for his urgent activism for combating climate change, and he is active today. His writings combine scientific insight with a call to action, making him a leading voice in contemporary environmental advocacy. Unlike Leopold, McKibben's focus is on global environmental challenges rather than personal observations. While Leopold's work is rooted in ecology and conservation, with a focus on understanding and preserving natural systems, McKibben addresses broader environmental challenges such as climate change, overpopulation, and consumerism.

McKibben has authored many books, the titles of which give us a glimpse into his focus before opening their covers. What ideas come to mind when seeing *“The End of Nature,” “Wandering Home,” “Maybe One,” “Hope, Human and Wild,”* and *“The Age of Missing Information”*? Let's take a look.

Bill McKibben has significantly influenced the American Conservation Movement by bridging traditional environmentalism with modern climate activism. His efforts have inspired grassroots movements, including the founding of 350.org, which campaigns for climate action worldwide. 350.org is an organization that advocates progressive environmental policies.

McKibben's writing career started early when he was just covering junior high school sports for a local newspaper for 25 cents per column inch. Soon, that newspaper was where he was working over his summers. Other summer work included service as a tour guide on the Battle Green in Lexington, Massachusetts. Lexington is called ‘the birthplace of American liberty’, where the first shots of the American Revolutionary War were fired on April 19, 1775. McKibben once helped start a homeless shelter in the basement of a church. After writing for *The New Yorker* from 1982-1987, he moved up into the mountains of the Adirondacks and found that he resonated with and loved the wild places and the wild creatures of that part of the world.



Amazon.com

When he was 28, McKibben wrote *The End of Nature*. *The Boston Globe* referred to this book as a “jeremiad” in its commentary on the book's tone and message. (Meriam Webster defines ‘jeremiad’ as a prolonged lamentation or complaint.) *The Boston Globe* used the term to highlight the book's urgent and lamenting style, which warns of the environmental consequences of human actions. The book sparked significant discussions in environmental literature.

He has written almost 20 books about the environment. *The End of Nature* is regarded as the first book for a general audience about climate change and has been printed in 24 languages.

Huw Spinner, (then and currently) managing editor of highprofiles.info published an article, “Time We Start Counting”, on the interview he had with Bill McKibben in 2016. McKibben was quoted as saying, regarding journalism and climate change, “One of the tragedies of climate change, I think, is for the most part we’ve walked somewhat blindly off this cliff – most of us – and to a large degree that’s a great failure for journalism.”

[PRWatch](#), an archive site known for its in-depth investigations into topics like money in politics, corporate influence, and public policy manipulation, stated in its September 13, 2012 edition: “McKibben is the United States' top environmentalist and one of the world's leading campaigners on the climate change crisis.”

Bill McKibben has been an active voice against the construction of the Keystone XL Pipeline, has spoken out against hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, and campaigns to convince universities and municipalities to “divest” from fossil fuels.

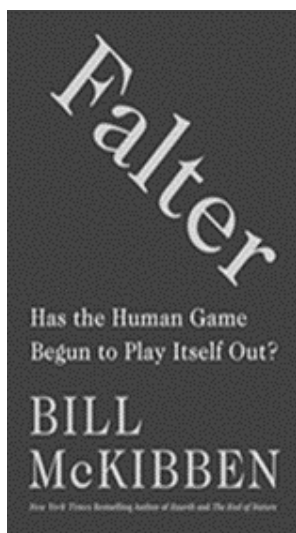
Bill McKibben's direct connections to conservation efforts in Wisconsin aren't widely documented. However, Wisconsin has a rich conservation legacy, particularly through figures like Aldo Leopold, whose work, as noted earlier, in ecological ethics and land stewardship has influenced McKibben's environmental philosophy. McKibben's writings and activism align with Leopold's principles, emphasizing the importance of sustainable living and the interconnectedness of humans and nature.

Bill McKibben continues to be a prominent voice in environmental activism and writing. In 2021, he launched Third Act, an organization focused on mobilizing people over the age of 60 to address critical issues like climate change, democracy, and social justice. It hopes to tap into the wisdom and experience of older generations to drive meaningful change.



www.billmckibben/bio.htm1

He has received numerous accolades for his contributions to environmentalism, including honorary degrees and awards that highlight his influence in the global sustainable movement. In addition, McKibben has continued to educate and inspire through lectures, workshops and role as the Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College in Vermont.



In 1919, thirty years after McKibben's book, *The End of Nature*, he published *Falter: Has the Human Game Begun to Play Itself Out?* In this book, McKibben argues that the human game is risking playing itself out because of “leverage”, the scale of change to the planet that humans are causing. The book focus is mostly about climate change but also shares some discussion of unregulated artificial intelligence and bioengineering. McKibben believes these are two other modern developments that pose significant risk to humanity.

The American Conservation Movement is alive and well in 2025, although it may be referred to by more modern designations.

Have the writings of John Burroughs, Aldo Leopold, and Bill McKibben given you ideas to think about? Will our grandchildren and great-grandchildren still think of conservation when they reflect on their ‘olden days’?

**Falter: Has the Human
Game Begun to Play
Itself Out? McKibben,
Bill: 9781250178268**

President

Joni Crivello

As the President of the Richfield Historical Society, I am thrilled to share with you the exciting events, programs, and opportunities at the Richfield Historical Park that celebrate our community's rich history. The Park is a treasure trove of memories, stories, and moments that have shaped the surrounding communities.

A Place for All Ages

Whether you're a long-time resident or new to the area, the Richfield Historical Park offers something for everyone. From our beautifully restored buildings to the captivating programs that tell the story of Richfield's past, there's no better way to experience the charm and history of our community. It's a wonderful place for families, history enthusiasts, or anyone who enjoys exploring the past.

Exciting Events and Programs – Throughout the year, we host a variety of events that bring our history to life. Whether it's our educational programs or seasonal events, there is always something exciting happening at the Richfield Historical Society.

Art at the Mill – June 21, 2025

An art and fine craft event featuring 80+ unique artists and vendors with live music and delicious food.

Thresheree & Harvest Fest – September 20 – 21, 2025.

A beloved event that brings to life the harvest traditions, food and sounds of Richfield's past.

Blacksmith Day – October 11, 2025

Watch skilled artisans bring the past to life, showcasing the art of blacksmithing and their wares.

Fall Luminary Walk – November 1, 2025

Enchanting lit walk through the forested trails of the Historical and Nature Park.

Join Us in Preserving the Past

We are always looking for passionate individuals who are interested in helping us preserve and share Richfield's history. Volunteering at the Park is a great way to get involved, meet new people, and contribute to the preservation of our community's heritage.

I invite you to visit the Richfield Historical Park, attend one of our events or programs, or get involved in any way you can. Together, we can ensure that the stories of our past continue to inspire future generations. Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for upcoming events and updates!

Thank you for your continued support of the Richfield Historical Society.

Past President

Pete Samson

A Sweet Success: Maple Syrup Family Day at the Richfield Historical Society

The Richfield Historical Society's annual Maple Syrup Family Day was once again a delicious and educational hit, drawing hundreds of visitors to enjoy the sights, smells, and stories of Richfield's past. The event brought together history, food, and fun — a true celebration of community and tradition.

Over 800 pancake breakfasts were served hot off the griddle, filling the grounds with the comforting aroma of maple syrup and fresh pancakes and sausage. Alongside the hearty breakfast, more than 900 cotton candies spun into smiling hands, adding a dash of sweetness to the day.

Guests gathered around live demonstrations of maple syrup production, learning how sap is collected from trees and boiled down into the golden treat we love today. The art of biscuit making was also on display, showcasing traditional techniques passed down through generations. Delicious hot dogs and sourdough bread added to the mouthwatering lineup of treats, keeping visitors full and happy as they explored the grounds.

Inside the historic Mill and Mill House, many took the opportunity to learn about life in Richfield 150 years ago. Volunteers shared stories of the town's original members, offering insight into the lives, challenges, and resilience of those who built the community. Visitors left with a deeper appreciation for the town's roots and the people who helped shape its history.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the incredible volunteers of the Richfield Historical Society. Their dedication, enthusiasm, and hard work behind the scenes — from flipping pancakes to guiding tours — made the event a true success.

Maple Syrup Family Day continues to be a cherished tradition in Richfield, combining old-fashioned fun with a taste of history, all thanks to the heart and soul of its volunteers.



Maple Syrup Family Day

Blacksmith Shop

Jeff Beegle/Kathy Lauenstein

In early America, the blacksmith was a cornerstone of the community, crafting essential tools, hardware, and even weapons. The tools of the trade for a blacksmith were numerous and varied, designed to shape and manipulate metal with precision and skill.

At the heart of the blacksmith's workshop was the forge, a hearth used to heat metal until it became malleable. Powered by bellows, the forge's intense heat allowed blacksmiths to work iron and steel. They used a variety of tongs, each tailored to grasp different shapes and sizes of hot metal safely. The blacksmith's hammer collection was also extensive, with different weights and shapes suited for specific tasks, such as drawing out metal into thin sheets or creating intricate patterns.

The anvil, a heavy iron or steel block, was the primary surface on which blacksmiths shaped their work-pieces. Anvils came in various shapes and sizes, and often included a horn (a rounded projection) for bending metal. Chisels and punches were used to cut and piece metal, while swages helped



Blacksmith Shop

to create grooves and decorative elements. A quenching trough, filled with water or oil, was essential for rapidly cooling and hardening metal items after they had been shaped. The early American blacksmith's toolkit was a fascinating blend of ingenuity and functionality, enabling these craftsmen to create everything from simple nails to complex lock mechanisms.

Collections

Deanna Einwalter

Shoemaking in the Old Days

Historically, footwear was constructed individually, tailored to the specific dimensions of each wearer. These shoes were predominantly crafted from leather, which was custom-cut and subsequently stitched together. The soles were typically constructed from wood, with the leather components affixed using nails. The introduction of the sewing machine in 1846 offered an alternative shoemaking method. A specialized shoe stitching machine was developed in 1856 and refined by 1864. By 1910, adhesive materials began to be incorporated into the shoemaking process.

Come see our large display of shoemaking artifacts.

Education

Kathy Weberg

Once again, the Education Committee will be sponsoring the Education Days at the Historical Park for neighboring schools' third grade classes. It is a privilege to showcase the expertise of many of our knowledgeable volunteers and make history come alive for the youngsters for a couple hours at our beautiful park with its many historic buildings.

School buses from HNR (Herman, Neosho, Rubicon), Erin, Holy Hill Area School District, St. Peter in Slinger and St. Boniface in Germantown will be bringing 194 third graders to the Park on May 13/May 15 where they will be washing clothes, kneading bread, making maple syrup and learning about blacksmithing, flour milling, grain processing and log cabin housekeeping activities. They will find out a little bit about the Messer and Mayer families as they tour the restored miller's home. New this year, playing games of years ago!

We always – and I mean always – get rave reviews from teachers, parents and students alike after completing the day of fun and discovery. A big thank you to those who share their time and talent to make this happen.

Events Coordinator

Daryl Grier

Gardening

We have a great group of volunteers working in the vegetable garden! We plant most of the garden in one day. If someone can't be there, we save a spot for whatever they want to plant. We'll have seeds and some plants...tomato, broccoli, squash and others. After the initial planting, folks go whenever they can to weed, water etc. We share what we've done and what needs to be done via email, e.g. "I picked green beans, tomatoes need water". We all share in the harvest.

If you can't be there planting day but would like to have some vegetables, stop by once a week or so & weed & pick. If you can help on planting day at the end of May (weather dependent), or any other time in either the vegetable or flower gardens, contact Daryl Grier, 262 628-4221, dgrier@charter.net

Events Committee

Our Events Committee meets prior to each event. We don't have a set date or time as we meet whenever we need to work on an event. If you have ideas/comments to share with me, please contact me or better yet, come to a meeting. We can always use new ideas.

If you have any suggestions for any upcoming event, contact Events Chair, Daryl Grier, (262) 628-4221
dgrier@charter.net

Silent Auction and Sweets 'n Stuff --NOTE: NO RUMMAGE!

We are changing the Sweets 'n Stuff tent. We will still have fabulous baked goods, but we will no longer have rummage.
So please don't drop off rummage.

Silent Auction: We still need silent auction items. They should be either **new** items to be added to a basket or a basket with **new** items. Please contact Delores Parsons with questions (414) 852-3733

Art at the Mill Bakers

BAKERY, MUFFINS ETC. FOR ARTISTS AT ART AT THE MILL

We always receive thanks and praise from the artists for our wonderful baked goods.

NOTE: We start serving the artists at 7:00 a.m. Therefore, bakery must be delivered the day before or by 7:00 a.m. at the Park. Call Daryl if you can bring breakfast items.

Deliver to: Daryl Grier, 1179 Wejegi Dr (262)-628-4221

Or –

Sharon Lofy, 4434 Pleasant Hill Rd. (262) 297-1546

Linda Aicher – Art at the Mill Chairman



Historic Sites

Quint Mueller/Herb Lofy

Perhaps Spring is finally here. Although the weather has been a roller coaster, temperature is gradually averaging upward. With that, comes a resumption of some of the major projects for RHS, some new for this year and some continuing from last year. Due to weather and other commitments last Fall, the roofs for the Horse Shed and Granary did not get completed, or even started for that matter. We're hoping to start these projects in May, as weather allows. Both of these are being done by our RHS crew.

In the last couple of newsletters, we've talked about the Mill and Mill Barn roofs. Those are next up on the priority list. Fortunately, we foresaw the tariff issues writing on the wall and purchased the roofing materials for both projects early this year. Between securing last year's pricing (6% price increase for 2025), avoiding the tariffs (Canadian product), and a discounted trucking cost for ordering both jobs at the same time, RHS saved approximately \$26,500. \$20,000 of that was in tariffs. Again, Great Lakes Roofing has been extremely generous in donating the labor to install both the Mill and Mill Barn roofs. Without them, it would not have been possible for RHS to take on both of these badly needed replacement projects this year. If you have the opportunity, please join us in thanking Great Lakes Roofing.

We have many other "priority one" projects on the list for this year, too many to list here, such as painting and building repairs. It's a long list that we hope to make significant progress on this year. If you would like to lend a hand and join in the fun that our crews enjoy together, please contact Al Mayer, Herb Lofy, Quint Mueller or any of the Board and Committee Chairs listed on the front page of this newsletter or our website. Any of us would be more than happy to connect you with the right person.

On a subject not directly related to our park projects, but related to activities at our annual Thresheree, we would like to make everyone aware of a one-time opportunity coming our way early this summer. A large national John Deere collector show will be in our "backyard" June 12-14, 2025. It's the Classic Green Reunion and will be at the Washington County Fair Park, West Bend. It is coordinated thru national, state and local committees over a period of several years. There has been a lot of behind the scenes preparation for this event.

There will be thousands of John Deere displays along with active demonstrations to include threshing, corn shelling, feed grinding and possibly plowing. John Deere equipment from over the last 100 years will be exhibited. Children's activities will include a "kids zone" which has been at our Thresheree and the "drive my first tractor" feature along with other hands-on fun things to do.

The annual Washington County Dairy Promotion Breakfast will be at the Classic Green Reunion on Saturday June 14, but admission will be in separate areas. The breakfast includes a tour of the Peters' Maple Woods Pumpkin Farm west of the Fair Park across Hwy 45. Busses will transport attendees interested in the tour. Breakfast does not grant admission to the Classic Green Reunion. Admission is \$15 per day or \$40 for the three days. Kids 17 and under are free.



**Classic Green Reunion
June 12-14 2025**

If you wish to exhibit anything, John Deere only, please go to the Classic Green Reunion web site. Interested in volunteering at the show? You can also sign up there.

Library/Newsletter

Marge Holzbog

While visiting the Art Fair, why not take a short trip north in the Park to visit the Welcome Center for a trip back into history. While there, visit the turn of the century General Store. While there, stop at the History Room to view the wall display of the Mayer family photos with images of the Mayer family, old photographs of the Mill, the Mill Dam break and more.

If you have questions about the history of your property or your family's genealogy, stop in at the History Room. We may be able to help you. Or contact me at envrnmnt21@aol.com

SHOPPING AT THE GENERAL STORE IN THE EARLY 1920S

In the 1920s, a popular item for purchase at General Stores was men's overalls. Typically, they were made of dark blue denim with wide cut legs that folded up over their work boots. Over the chest was a square bib front (often with pockets), and two straps that either crossed in the back like an X, or were met over the shoulders with a triangular bib on the back.

Levi Strauss & Co. was the original jeans manufacturer in the U.S. in the 1890s. Grace Howard and Jacob W. Davis created these long, denim garments for heavy labor and to protect workers as America quickly grew into an industrial powerhouse.

The term for this clothing is always the plural term overalls, as in "a pair of overalls" and is never stated in the singular "overall." Many men who worked on the railroads or panned for gold often wore these sturdy garments because they could handle the rough daily wear and tear.



Men's & Women's Overalls

Housewives were very creative and forward-thinking during the 1920s (and always). Rather than splurging for new store-bought overalls, some women visited the local General Store and purchased patterns to sew a set of overalls for their beloved husbands. At this time, denim was 50 cents per yard, and 3 to 4 yards of material were required: plus an additional 20 cents for the pattern. Very early fabrics that were used included "Osnaburg" (named after a German city) which was a very coarse linen-type material, woven with flax, or jute. In earlier days, this fabric was also widely used for slave clothing, wagon covers, and sheeting. Today Osnaburg is still used for bed linens and similar items.

Men were not the only people to wear overalls. Before the second World War, women were hardly seen wearing overalls. But as more and more women entered the workforce during World War II, their everyday garments were deemed unsafe for factory and farm work. For this reason, new designs were created and produced.



McCall's Overalls Pattern

Eventually more feminine details such as waists that could cinch and more feminine pockets emerged; eventually paving the way for overalls to be worn as a fashion garment, and not just for work. These days, women can purchase lovely overalls in a variety of fabrics and in various prints and patterns!

Marketing**Doug Wenzel**

If you live in one of three Richfield zip codes; 53076, 53033, or 53017, you should have received our 2025 direct mail flyer. We do this every Spring to give Richfield residents a preview of our coming events, as well as a little info about who we

are and what we do. Thanks to RHS member Janet Scholl for designing this colorful and attractive piece! Janet is also the talent behind our event flyers and newspaper ads.

Part of the Marketing Committee task is to come up with fresh entries for social media posts. It can get a little tough sometimes to come up with new angles. If you spend much time on Facebook, you will have noticed that an increasing number of posts from various sources have taken on an odd “sameness” in their use of language and tone. That’s because many social media posts are now AI-generated. If you agree with me that “iconic” is currently the most sickeningly overused word in our lexicon, I suspect that we have AI to thank for it.

I’ve experimented with AI, and while I’m often impressed with its capabilities, I don’t care for the uncanny uniformity of the results. Our future posts, just like this one, will be written by actual human beings. Or was it?

Membership

Dorothy Marks

New memberships for 2025 are flowing in nicely.

We, the members of the Library/LWC Committee, will soon begin our discussions regarding the future of our "Boutique at the Horse Shed". Stay tuned for further updates.

Mill House

Tonya Kleppin

The Decline of the Front Door

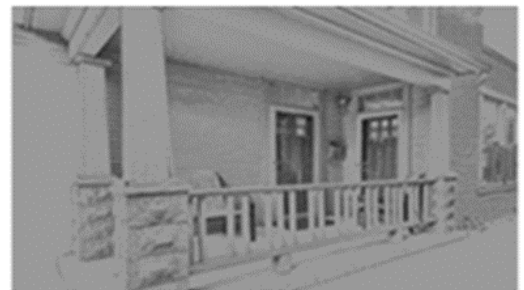
During the 18th and 19th century, some houses had two front doors that provided separate entrances to the home, opening to different spaces and a sign of wealth with multiple rooms. While one door may have led to a formal area, the other could have been used for day-to-day business. Homeowners likely wanted to greet guests at the formal entrance.

Eighteenth-century homes had a center hall dividing each floor into two rooms. But builders became more frugal in the 19th century. They eliminated the center hallway, which was absorbed into the two front rooms. These two rooms became the living room and the parlor, the latter used for company, funerals, weddings and other special events. Each room had a separate entrance.

When German immigrants arrived in the United States, they often built these homes in a style known as the "German-American two-door house," characterized by a symmetrical design with two front rooms, a front porch, and two sleeping rooms upstairs.

The front porch declined in popularity in the mid-20th century with the rise of air conditioning, television, and automobiles, leading to more time spent indoors. Front porches served as a gathering place for families and neighbors. As for automobiles, the use of the front door has declined for several reasons, including the rise of garages and side entrances, the perceived formality of front doors, and the desire for conveniences and ease of access, especially with cars and deliveries. Many homes now have garages, making it easier to enter through the garage door or side entrances, rather than the front door.

The back door is just better access for literally everything that isn't inside the house.



**Mill House Front Door (on right)
Mill House Kitchen Door (on left)
Front Porch**

Mill Restoration

Al Mayer

In the early 1900s, C.W. Mayer contracted with millwright Philip Eimermann to install a new revolutionary system of bolting flour in the Messer Mayer Mill. This piece of equipment, manufactured by Allis Chalmers Co. in Milwaukee, is known in the industry as a plansifter. The concept is different from the conventional reel bolter in that instead of tumbling the flour to sift it through a circular screen, it would be shaken on a level plane; and the flour would then sift through a flat screen.

The freshly ground wheat, referred to as meal, would enter the plansifter through one of six inlet sleeves on the top of the unit. The sifting would occur when a heavy iron weight, mounted under the plansifter unit, rotated at a speed that would cause the unit to shake. The finer particles will drop through the screens, and the coarser particles would travel to the end of the screens and be routed to an alternate exit to be reground or discarded.

The plansifter is supported by four 7/8" diameter rods on each corner, suspending it from the floor above. This makes it able to vibrate freely and isolates the building from the shaking action. The inside of this piece of equipment has 10 layers of wooden frames that the screens are mounted on. They create a labyrinth of channels to sift and route the resulting flour to one of six different exits. It would then be sent to be either bagged, reprocessed, or discarded.

As with the other machinery in the Messer Mayer Mill, our passion is to see this plansifter operating as it did over a century ago.

If you think you might have an interest in helping to restore the plansifter and other unique pieces of flour producing equipment we have in our mill, stop by on a Sunday between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and see what we're all about!



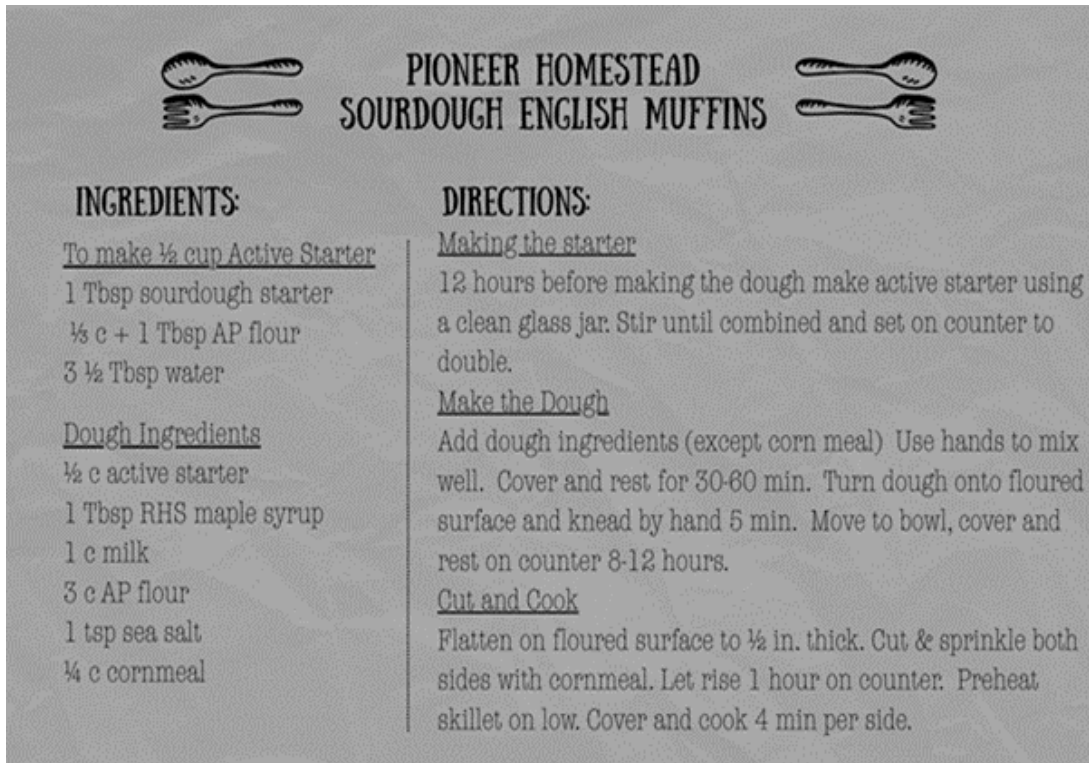
Plansifter

Pioneer Homestead

Susan Sawdey

Our English muffins were a huge success at Maple Syrup Family Day 2025! Cooking them on our wood stove had its challenges but such is life as an early settler.

Many of you asked for the recipe. So please add this to your collection and share your success on Instagram, Facebook, or better yet give us a google review on how you liked this year's Maple Syrup Family Day!



Programs

Connie Thoma

Our next Community Program presentation on **May 22** will be Wayne Rettig who will be portraying Buffalo Bill.

There are no meetings in **Summer**.

We will resume in **September on the 26th** with Jim Buchholz. He has retired from the Wisconsin State Park System. He will be presenting all you ever wanted to know about the Wisconsin State Parks.

Our **October 23** meeting will be Professor Patrick Steele from Cedarburg telling us how life was during prohibition in Wisconsin.

Our Community Programs are held at the Fire Hall on Hwy 175 at 7:00 p.m. They are open to the public and free of charge. Complimentary refreshments are served.

Hope to see you all there.

Project Coordinator

Al Mayer

Spring this year has been slow to warm up, and we've been limited to working on our many projects with the ground being so soggy.

We'll soon be replacing roofs on many of the buildings in the Park. The larger and higher ones are scheduled to be done by a contractor, the smaller ones we will be doing with the help of our volunteers. On Saturday May 17, we are having a workday inviting any members that are willing to help us with the removal of the shingles on the Granary to join us then. Then we're sheathing it with plywood and finishing with a metal roof.

Another major project we plan to tackle soon is the roof of the Horse Shed, which is near the Mill. This roof will also be re-sheathed, but will maintain its style of the cedar shingles.

Please feel free to come by and wander around the Park. It's a great place to spend some quiet time! If you happen to notice someone working in one of the buildings, they'll be happy to answer any questions you may have. We enjoy sharing the unique aspects of the Park and what it has to offer.

Volunteer Coordinator

Sharon Lofy

You can tell that it's Spring. One day it's raining. The next day is sunny with the possibility of snow in the forecast. Are you thinking of beautiful sunny days out in your yard or garden? What plants are you planning on planting this year? Be sure to order \$15 and \$25 plant certificates for Nehm's Greenhouse . Richfield Historical Society Fund Raiser with Nehm's Greenhouse will run from May 1 to July 31, 2025. They always have a great selection of plants, flowers, herbs, and vegetables. They also have seeds and other garden supplies.

Have your children or grandchildren give you a helping hand in planting. It's exciting to plant a seed; watch it grow and produce something to eat. Try some new plants this year.

You know how much needs to be done outside this time of the year. Maybe you have some extra time to help in the Park. (Yard work and buildings need sprucing up for all the events coming up.) Get in touch with the chairs for the different areas in the Park. If you can't find their information in the newsletter, call me. I'll help you get in touch with them. (262) 297 1546

Maple Syrup Family Day was honored with beautiful weather this year. Art at the Mill has plans well underway. The Thresheree preparation started after last year's event. Blacksmith Day is coming up with great ideas for this year. The Luminary Walk will peak your interest with what it has to offer. Mark your calendars. Hoping you can make it and enjoy the events.

Volunteering with a family member or a friend makes it a great outing. Part of your time in the Park you could enjoy the event and the other part you could spend time volunteering together. An email listing areas that need volunteers for the events is sent to members. If you do not have email or do not receive the volunteer event information, let me know.

Thanks again for volunteering and all that you do. Without our great volunteers we would not be able to present these successful events.