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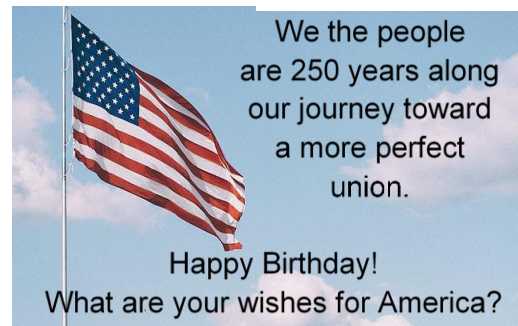
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RHS will bring the celebration of our nation's 250th anniversary to all of our events this year. One of the ways that we will mark this milestone in our nation's history is by asking our members and guests at events to share their wishes for America as we celebrate our collective birthday.



Stories set in the time of the American Revolution can inspire us to expand our knowledge of civics and increase participation in our democracy. Let's all resolve to become more knowledgeable about our local governments and increase our participation in our local community.

- Register and plan to vote in the April and November 2026 elections

As we explore ways to celebrate collectively and as individual families several ideas emerge.

- Create a time capsule as a family or as a community to commemorate what is important to us in 2025. Samples of what to include in a time capsule will be shared via the emailed Communicator.
- Record stories of elders, adults and children through recordings, photographs and writing.
- The Library Committee would like to expand the Richfield heritage family's folder on our electronic kiosk in the Welcome Center to include pictures and stories of current families who comprise our community. For information on contributing your family story, email Mary at Marykokanrhs@gmail.com.

The Not-So-Innocent Town of Richfield

By Susan Brushafer

Rural American ads from the 1920s–1930s often described towns like Richfield with themes like “country living,” “old-fashioned values,” and “small community hospitality.” A small advertisement in the June 1905 Hartford Press invited visitors to “stop at Richfield on your way to Holy Hill,” highlighting the town’s hotels and general stores. A May 1908 business ad promoted a Richfield filling station, noting “motorists are welcome to refresh and refuel in Richfield.”

Richfield...a lovely rural community where the local gossip sheets highlighted birthdays, weddings, and just a tad of innocent, neighborly intrigue. Or was it innocent? This article looks at a few pieces of Richfield history that weren’t quite so neighborly.

A Murder?

The next time you visit Sloppy Joe’s in Hubertus to enjoy a tasty meal of smoked ribs or its famous fish fry, know that you are in a building that houses a chilling piece of Hubertus history. Known as Stuetngen’s Saloon it, along with other like venues of the times, sometimes attracted rowdy behavior or traveling workers.



On September 10, 1905, a local farm hand, Joe Jonas, got into a dispute with the establishment’s owner, William Stuetngen, and William’s brother, Joseph. Calmly, William asked the man to step outside so they could settle things. That’s where Father P.W. Gersbach from the nearby rectory of St. Hubert’s Catholic Church witnessed the violent street brawl. You might say Father Gersbach had a ring side view!

Joe Jonas brandished a knife and stabbed William in the carotid artery in his neck.

William Stuetngen	
BIRTH	21 Jan 1850
DEATH	2 Feb 1905 (aged 55)
BURIAL	Saint Hubert Catholic Cemetery Hubertus, Washington County, Wisconsin, USA
MEMORIAL ID	36671876 · View Source

William staggered into the saloon and is reported to have said, “God help me; I am going to die.” Shortly after, William died, and Joe Jonas was found passed out on a bench in front of the bar. The bloody weapon was still in his pocket.

For the curious, it just happens that the current owner of Sloppy Joe’s, Joe Hennes is no newcomer to Hubertus. Hennes’

history with Hubertus goes way back to 1858 when the family planted its roots in a home just a mile and a half up the street from Sloppy Joe’s current location.

Bootlegging & Prohibition-Era Shenanigans?

Prohibition, which began in 1920, was touted to be a cure for one of society’s greatest ills: drinking. But the perceived temperance forced drinking underground, leading to millions of Americans regularly breaking the law.

Washington County was not innocent when it came to moonshine involvement. During Prohibition (1920–1933), rural areas like Richfield and Hubertus were ideal for hidden stills and underground liquor operations. Wisconsin’s deep German roots and beer culture made resistance a given.

German-American communities, especially in Washington County, saw Prohibition as an attack on

their heritage. Brewing and drinking were viewed by many locals not as crimes, but as cultural rights.

Unfortunately, one of the effects of bootlegging was alcohol poisoning, due to poorly distilled moonshine. Such moonshine could contain toxic substances like methanol, which might cause blindness or even death if consumed. Although this poisoning was not often publicized, public health officials recognized these dangers as legitimate reasons for the criminalization of moonshine.



Basement ‘Still’ from the Roaring ‘20s

Local taverns and farms often doubled as distribution points. Places like the Goshel Tavern (known for Saturday night dances and the ‘hardscrabbles’ (fights) that followed), Sail Inn, and Stuetgen’s Saloon were rumored to have hidden stills and underground tunnels for moving moonshine. Farmers often distilled liquor in barns and sold it to local taverns. Some even used milk trucks to disguise deliveries. Farm wagons and fishing boats were employed to disguise the cargo they carried. Farm- based unlicensed Prohibition bars were referred to as ‘blind pigs.’

With Washington County’s proximity to Milwaukee, smugglers made it a convenient stopover when moving booze to the Northwoods from Chicago. Richfield and Hubertus were part of the rural bootlegging corridor that connected Milwaukee to the Northwoods. Roadhouses and supper clubs in the area were known to serve alcohol behind closed doors, often protected by law enforcement which conveniently turned a blind eye to local operations. There was disagreement, however, regarding Prohibition. Local clergy and politicians were split with some condemning the trade and others quietly participating in it.

Favorite transportation routes included Lake Five Road and Highway 164, considered key arteries for moving moonshine. Holy Hill Road and Hubertus Road offered cover from law enforcement due to their winding routes. They were perfect for getting liquor between farms and speakeasies (illegal drinking spots). Friess Lake and Glacier Hills with their beautiful, wooded terrain provided nature’s hiding spots for stills and storage caches.

Although Prohibition ended on December 5, 1933, with the ratification of the 21st Amendment, illegal gambling and prostitution continued in local taverns and roadside inns

Gambling?

While Richfield and Hubertus weren’t as bold as other communities, private gambling rooms in taverns, barns, and roadside inns were common. Stuetgen’s Saloon, mentioned earlier, was rumored to host card games and dice nights in its back room. Private barns and sheds often became inconspicuous gambling dens during harvest festivals and hunting seasons. Weekends often featured barn-based dice games and informal betting for festival goers and hunters.

Dice Game



These establishments were also often tied to traveling salesmen or local farm hands looking for weekend excitement. Nearby Elkhart Lake, 50 miles north of Richfield, was described in a 1928 *Milwaukee Journal* article as a “gambler’s paradise.” It featured open games like roulette, chuck-a-luck (aka, bird cage dice).

Interestingly, during Prohibition, taverns couldn't call themselves taverns. They used coded terms like 'soft drink parlor,' 'refreshment stand,' 'resort,' and 'dance hall.'

Brothels & Houses of Ill Repute in OUR Neighborhoods?

No, not in Richfield and Hubertus! Well, we residents might like to think our cozy towns wouldn't have considered offering certain services. While Richfield and Hubertus weren't documented as heavy contributors, oral histories suggest "ladies of the night" operated out of upstairs rooms in taverns and boarding houses.

Sheboygan County, another location just northeast of us, had nearly 40 brothels operating between the 1920s and 1940s. Many of these businesses invented creative names like "The Greenhouse," "The Tin Roof," and "The Farm" to disguise their brothels.

A 1916 Department of Labor study found that the most common legitimate women's jobs at the time, department store clerks, housekeeping and light manufacturing, paid an average weekly wage of \$6.67. At the time, that was considered a subsistence standard of living. Meanwhile, the study reported that 'soiled doves' earned between \$30 to \$50 per week when skilled male trade union members averaged roughly \$20 per week. The draw to this kind of 'easy' money would have been difficult for an impoverished woman to not consider.



Easy Money

Washington County had unofficial red-light zones, especially near taverns and hotels. Patrons could rent by the hour an upstairs room in establishments like the Lake Five Hotel. Washington County court records from the early 20th century occasionally mention charges like "keeping a disorderly house," which could imply illegal alcohol sales, gambling, or prostitution. These were rare and not tied to specific long-term establishments. **Speaking of Brothels...**

Was Joe Mama's A Former Brothel?

The building that is the current home of Joe Mama's dates to at least 1910, when it operated as the Lake Five Hotel and Saloon. The structure was originally a boarding house and tavern. Local lore suggests it also functioned as a brothel during the early 20th century. The location was ideal. It is isolated enough to be discreet (long before the 164 roundabout), but close enough to Milwaukee to encourage clientele visits. Lake Five was a popular getaway for hunters and traveling businessmen. Ice houses and cottages around Lake Five supported seasonal tourism and discreet overnight stays for those seeking more than just a drink.



**Former Uncle Johnny's
2016 photo**

The brothel operated in a gray zone. It was never officially acknowledged but rarely challenged. Locals referred to it with names like "The Roadside" or "The Farm," and its reputation was quietly passed down through generations.

Today Joe Mamma's embraces its colorful past serving burgers and beer in a space once filled by secrets. The building changed hands several times over the years operating as "The Road Side" and "Uncle Johnny's" before in 2016 becoming the current very popular restaurant.

It's possible. Wisconsin's wooded hideouts were popular with Chicago mobsters. Al Capone and his brother Ralph were known to frequent Northwoods resorts and taverns that offered slot machines and brothels. While there's no documented direct link to Capone in Richfield, rumors persist of his associates using the Richfield area as a midway point between Chicago and northern Wisconsin. In addition, mobsters like Capone got rich from the illegal alcohol trade by supplying bars and speakeasies. If the market craved whiskey, moonshine, beer, or blended spirits, Capone met the demand.

A Wisconsin Public Radio article from March 7, 2023, stated, "There's something about all the stories of Chicago gangster Al Capone roaming America's Dairyland: Good talk, not much game. Capone had a house in Kenosha! He hung out in Door County! He sold cream puffs at the State Fair."

During Prohibition, Richfield and Hubertus, as noted earlier, offered rural taverns, lakeside resorts, hidden basements, and 'soft drink parlors.' Because these places often felt like speakeasies, locals liked to attach Capone's name to them.

So, what really drew Capone to Wisconsin? He enjoyed what many Wisconsinites enjoy most, a chance to get away and lots of secluded spots to kick back and lay low.

Notable Crimes?

Probably the most prominent crime, which was covered earlier, was the 1905 murder at Stuetgen's Saloon in Hubertus. This was one of the earliest and most documented murders in Hubertus history.

During Prohibition, taverns in Hubertus and Richfield experienced some of the same crimes as current-day roadhouses. They became targets for moonshine thefts. There were cash robberies from illegal gambling operations. Assaults were connected to disputes over gambling winnings or liquor deals gone awry. Some taverns supposedly had armed guards or lookouts to prevent raids or thefts!

Other illegal liquor purveyors also experienced bootlegging violence. There were serious confrontations between rival bootleggers who hosted hidden stills in barns and basements. The moonshine routes were places where territorial disputes took place, sometimes escalating into sabotage and fistfights.

Of course, as in any rural town of the early 20th century, there were most likely other infractions of the law. Horses were still prominently in use for labor and transportation, so horse stealing was a serious offense, much like stealing a car today. Communities sometimes formed 'horse thief detective associations' to find the culprits. Let's not forget that horse betting or informal races may have been crowd-drawing activities at fairs and threshing events.

Other crimes included the starting of barn fires, trespassing, and engaging in arguments that became physical over livestock and land. In addition to the moral offenses referred to earlier, such as 'keeping a disorderly house' (aka, brothel), domestic violence likely occurred and may have been under-reported, if at all. If we throw in a bit of vandalism, drunkenness, and petty theft, we are probably touching on topics that appeared in the gossip sheets of the local newspapers.

Yes, a Bank Robbery!

Most Richfield residents have heard about the dramatic Depression-era holdup that left one man near death and launched a multi-county manhunt.

The Copper Dock Resort Pre-Prohibition was a dance hall. During the 1950s, Mildred and another person went to get something out of a closet at the resort and found old-fashioned slot machines. Mildred noted that these “should have been smashed by the FBI.” There is no connection to the current business.

Bars often housed brothels to make money and stay in business. During the 1930s, before it became Joe Mama’s, the restaurant was a roadside tavern. There was a house behind the restaurant that could be rented. It had a lower level and upstairs. Mildred knew of a woman who used to live in the upstairs area. The rooms were small, approximately 9 feet by 12 feet, too small for a dresser to accompany a bed. One day, Mildred visited the woman who used to live there. Mildred learned that the house was owned by the woman’s mother-in-law and the women’s parents before that. The woman was quick to share, “This used to be a whorehouse!”

Also in our area, Mildred remembered that the Distillery, previously known as Madame Belle’s, was a brothel during Prohibition. Confirming Mildred’s statement, a January 28, 2010 article in *The Sunday Post – Washington County, WI* stated, “The watering hole did a brisk business, and so did the ladies in its upstairs rooms.”

So, was Richfield, Wisconsin Ever Truly Innocent?

As a reader of this article, you be the judge. Those of you whose families lived in the Richfield-Hubertus areas before or since Prohibition, the ‘Roaring ‘20s’, may have chuckled when reading about these events. Maybe you and your families have their own stories...maybe you’re breathing a sigh of relief. From Prohibition pours whispered rendezvous. Richfield and Hubertus played host to more than their fair shares of mischief. Sure, the dust from 100 years ago may have settled.

My bet is that the stories still stir, if you know where to look.

President

Joni Crivello

President’s Message – Looking Ahead to 2026

As we turn the page to a brand-new year, I’m filled with gratitude, pride, and optimism for what lies ahead for the Richfield Historical Society. Our shared mission—to preserve, celebrate, and pass along the story of Richfield—continues to shine brightly because of YOU: our members, volunteers, partners, and friends.

Thank You for an Incredible 2025

This past year has reminded us just how strong our community truly is. Whether you gave your time at the Richfield Historical Park, supported our events, helped maintain our collections, or simply shared our mission with a neighbor, you made a real difference. Our volunteers continue to be the beating heart of this organization, and our members provide the foundation that keeps us moving forward. I want to extend my deepest appreciation to each of you. Your enthusiasm and generosity are what allow our history to thrive.

Building Momentum for 2026

The coming year promises exciting opportunities for growth and connection. We will continue to

expand our educational programs, enhance the visitor experience at the Park, and strengthen our preservation efforts.

In 2026, we hope to welcome new faces into our organization while continuing to honor the legacy of those who have built the Society into what it is today. Together, we will keep investing in the future of our past.

Join Us on the Journey

As we begin this new year, I encourage you to stay involved, bring a friend to an event, or consider volunteering in a way that inspires you. Your support doesn't just sustain the Richfield Historical Society—it energizes it. And together, we will ensure that Richfield's heritage remains alive, accessible, and celebrated for generations to come.

Thank you for all you do. Here's to a bright, meaningful, and history-filled 2026!

Warm regards,
Joni Crivello - President, Richfield Historical Society

Blacksmith Shop

Jeff Beegle/Kathy Lauenstein

Forging Ahead: Exploring the Heart of the Blacksmith Shop

In the world of blacksmithing, the forge stands as the beating heart of every shop. It's where raw metal transforms into tools, art, and functional pieces through the power of heat and craftsmanship. But not all forges are created equal. From traditional coal setups to modern induction systems, each type offers unique advantages for today's smiths.

The Backbone of Blacksmithing

A forge is designed to heat metal until it becomes malleable, often reaching temperatures above 2,000°F. This intense heat allows blacksmiths to bend, shape, and weld metal with precision. The choice of forge depends on factors like fuel type, temperature control, and the scale of work.

Types of Forges in Use Today

1. Coal Forge

The classic choice for traditionalists. Coal forges deliver high heat and are ideal for heavy forging and forge welding. However, they require proper ventilation and regular maintenance due to smoke and ash.

2. Charcoal Forge

A cleaner alternative to coal, charcoal forges are easier to source in some regions. They burn cleaner but consume fuel quickly, making them better suited for hobbyists or small projects.

3. Gas Forge (Propane or Natural Gas)

Modern and efficient, gas forges offer consistent heat and easy operation. They're portable and clean-burning, making them popular among knife makers and small-scale smiths.

4. Electric Forge (Induction Forge)

The cutting edge of forging technology. Induction forges use electromagnetic fields to heat metal directly, offering precision and efficiency. They're costly but perfect for high-tech applications.

5. Oil Forge

A powerhouse for industrial-scale work. Oil forges burn waste oil or diesel, reaching extremely high temperatures. While efficient, they require complex setups and careful handling.

The Future of Forging

As blacksmithing evolves, so do the tools of the trade. While coal and charcoal forges keep tradition alive, gas and electric options are paving the way for cleaner, more efficient shops. Whether you're a seasoned smith or a curious beginner, understanding these forge types is key to mastering the craft.

Collections

Deanna Einwalter

The Rath of WWII for the Mayer Family

George Mayer bought out his brother's share of the Mill/Farm back in 1930. He and his wife Martha raised two kids, Vernon and Carol, right there on the property.

During World War II, Vernon was called to serve as a soldier, but sadly, he didn't come home. WWII was a huge global conflict, and many lives were lost, including Vernon's.

Recently, I received a donation of a WWII poster that listed 2,063 men and women from Washington County alone who lost their lives in the war, and Vernon's name is among them.



WW II Poster

Education

Kathy Weberg

Our traveling trunk program is a component of the Education Committee. A popular component!

We have four trunks which have been "traveling" to our senior communities so much that a fifth trunk is now put together to help out those facilities who have seen all four trunks.

Trunk number five has as its focal point a treasury of smoking items - a couple of cigar boxes, a Prince Albert tobacco can, interesting ashtrays, a very antique wooden cigar mold and drinking glasses with Hollywood celebrities pictured with their stylish cigarette holders. This trunk's introductory presentation at one of our favorite assisted living homes brought forth much conversation – which is our main goal.

If you'd like to see Trunk #5, please give me a call to schedule a visit from our traveling trunk team.

Events Coordinator

Daryl Grier

The Events Committee has received some great ideas from RHS members and friends to enhance our events in 2026.

We don't have a set meeting day as we meet as many times as we need to before each activity. Our first meeting will focus on Maple Syrup Family Day. If you have ideas to share, contact me, Daryl Grier dgrier@charter.net, 262 628-4221

Watch for a baker sign-up email closer to the event. If you don't have email and would like to bake, contact me.

Historic Sites

Quint Mueller/Herb Lofy

Day by day, it has been hard to tell if it's Winter or Spring. Even the robins seem to be confused, as a few have been seen in the area. Whether it's Winter or Spring, your Sites Committee and the Thursday Crew are still hard at work. 2026 brings some new projects and many projects that have been on the list previous years.

I've been talking about roof replacements for several newsletters now. We have made very significant progress. The Mill, Mill House, and Mill Barn now have new synthetic roofs. Unless you look closely, it's barely noticeable they are not cedar. The change will provide RHS with many years of reliable life. In addition to these roofs, the Granary roof is nearly complete. That cedar roof was in desperate need of replacement. Instead of cedar, it was replaced with a raised seam metal roof. This provided a considerable savings in the material and will also result in many more years of reliable life than another cedar roof. Even with all this roofing progress, we are not done.

There are still other buildings, such as the LWC, Horse Shed, Sugar Shack, Pioneer Homestead log buildings and Wood Shed that will require their roofs to be replaced in the coming years. In 2026, we will be targeting the Horse Shed and obtaining material for the Sugar Shack., The LWC will likely follow in 2027 or 2028, as well as the Pioneer Homestead buildings in the near future. We're planning to clean and treat the Blacksmith Shop roof this year to extend its life, as it will come up for replacement soon as well, even though it is the newest building in the Park.

This year we will be capping off the first phase of the berm project in preparation for planning of the second.

This will involve completion and cleanup of the work completed last year to give it a finished appearance, including planting new grass, and bring it up to the standards of the rest of the Park.

Of course, there are many more projects to keep our crew busy, including weekly maintenance, general improvements, and unplanned repairs. It might be easy to forget that all of these tasks require many hours of commitment. Our dedicated crew of volunteers makes it all look easy, but it really is a huge effort distributed among many capable people. Without this dedicated crew, and others like them, RHS would not be able to accomplish the projects that have made the Richfield Historical Park the gem that it is.

THRESHEREE

The RHS Thresheree management team is looking for individuals with various skills to head up or help with several aspects of the event planning and coordination. Some of those needs are listed below.

Exhibitor/Vendor Registration, State Occasional Sales Report, Exhibitor/Vendor area layout, Beverage and Food coordination (food is currently provided by the Richfield Lions), Announcements, Silent Auction. None of these are monumental tasks by themselves. If you have an interest, or know someone that might, please contact Quint, Herb or Sharon for more information.

Library/Newsletter

Marge Holzbog

As one might expect, the 2026 feature in the Welcome Center History Room will present history on a number of important 2026 issues - #1 the 250th American Birthday Celebration will include an up-front piece on the event #2 photos on the north wall of many early American presidents. #3 the swing Board will display a treasure of material on early American schools and education including numerous Richfield classroom photos with all students identified. Much of the material was provided by Mildred Jung an early Friess Lake and Amy Belle teacher.

Stop by and see what remembering these early photos conjure up.

LWC Welcome Center

Ruth Gruen Jeffords

2026 is a Social Year!

As you all know our country is 250 years old in 2026, and the Lillicrapp Welcome Center / General Store will participate in the celebration!

The building will be decorated in patriotic colors; and a special brochure will be available depicting favorite recipes of the early Presidents – (some written in their own handwriting) as well as some of their favorite flowers.

And we do plan to include some of those special flowers in the front garden at the Welcome Center; so be ready to take in all the excitement during our special events throughout the year!



250 YEARS

Membership

Dorothy Marks

We have had several successful years utilizing our Horse Shed for the display of handicraft items that reflect modern interpretations of old time crafts. This year in honor of our Nation’s 250th Celebration the Horse Shed will display a collection of posters honoring this event.

Stop past on your way to the Welcome Center to have a look.

Mill House

Tonya Kleppin

Homebrew –

Beer is one of the oldest beverages in human history, dating back more than 7,000 years to ancient Mesopotamia, where people accidentally discovered that fermented grains created a safe, flavorful drink. Over time, brewing traditions spread across the world, especially through Europe. Germany became one of the great brewing centers, perfecting techniques like laagering—cold-fermenting beer to make it smooth and crisp.

When German and Czech immigrants began settling in Wisconsin in the mid-1800s, they brought those brewing skills with them. Wisconsin was the perfect place for beer making: it had cold winters for natural refrigeration, fertile farmland for grains, and clean freshwater from lakes and rivers. Breweries like Pabst, Miller, Schlitz, and Leinenkugel grew rapidly, turning Wisconsin into one of the most famous beer-making regions in America. Today, Wisconsin still continues that tradition with dozens of craft breweries that blend old-world techniques with modern creativity.

The celebration of **America’s 250th** anniversary in 2026 is all about honoring our nation’s history, culture, and local traditions — and beer brewing fits perfectly into that story. Beer has been part of American life since colonial times, when early settlers brewed with local grains, and Wisconsin later became one of the country’s most iconic brewing regions.

“There may be no official record of the Mill House families brewing their own beer, but let’s be honest—someone surely was in Richfield, and the echoes of history may tell the tale.”

Beer Making



Mill Restoration

Al Mayer

In 1895, when the new roller mill system was installed in the Messer- Mayer Mill, there were two very unique units installed on the third floor that vastly improved the quality of the flour produced over the original French burr mill system. These are called middling purifiers, and they revolutionized the quality of flour produced ever since.

When the grain was ground into meal on the grist stones, the wheat berry entered through the center of the stones; and as the upper stone rotated, the whole berry was reduced to the finished flour product, still containing all of the elements of the original grain.

In a new concept that is called the "new process roller milling," the whole berry would be sent through the first roller mill that is designed to crack the berry open which will expose and release the bran, germ, and remaining hull from the berry. Now exposed, this fractured berry is elevated up to the middling purifiers. The middling purifier is a machine that would then remove the germ, bran, and loosened impurities from the meal in a very ingenious way. (Photo 1)

Upon entering the purifier, the meal lands on a flat screen, and flat brushes pass down the screen on the underside. Above the screen, a fan turns causing a suction of air to move up through the screen and lift the lighter bran, germ, and other impurities away from the heavier remaining meal. The brushes under the screen help break loose and remove the impurities. They also assist in moving the meal along the screen to where it would exit the unit and continue to the roller mills.

The resulting meal, free of the effects of the bran and germ, will rise better and more evenly when mixed with yeast, have a longer and more stable shelf life, create lighter, softer breads and pastries. Also, the appearance of the flour and the finished products are much more appealing. (Photo 2)

The middling purifiers we have need new screens and alot of TLC. But they are still in place, ready to resume their prior activity as they did 130 years ago.



Middling Purifiers
Photo 1 Photo 2

Programs

Connie Thoma

SCHEDULE OF COMMUNITY PROGRAMS FOR 2026

January 22, 2026 – Sophie Gosetti from Cedar Lake Conservation - Land Conservation in the area including the Ice Age Trail.

February 26, 2026 - Theodore Koth owner of the Lions Performance Hall – Transformation of the vacant Methodist Church in Richfield into a performance venue.

March 26, 2026 – Thomas Vergeront – Doing an impression of Curly Lambeau

April 23, 2026 – Author Susan Apps-Bodilly- History of logging in Wisconsin's north woods.

May 28, 2026 - Peter Shrake – Archivist from The Circus World Museum in Baraboo, Wisconsin on the history of the circus in Wisconsin.

September 24, 2026 – Professor Patrick Steele- The Milwaukee Braves and why they left town, including more on the subject of baseball.

October 22, 2024 - Author Susan Apps-Bodilly – One Room School Houses.

November 19, 2026 – RHS Annual Meeting. Program to be announced.

Please Join Us!

Admission is free and refreshments complimentary.

Project Coordinator

Al Mayer

The autumn of 2025 has been a busy time for many of us at the Park! Since the Threshere, we've had a series of events that have brought a multitude of people to view our buildings that are representative of

Richfield's earlier generations and to enjoy the beautiful atmosphere of the spacious grounds that surround the Historical Park.

The weekend after the Thresheree, we had a Saturday full of bicyclists from all over the Midwest competing on a challenging course set up throughout the Nature and Historical Park. This is their third year of racing here and really enjoy holding their event at our park.

Blacksmith Day was two weeks later and featured almost two dozen blacksmiths from Wisconsin and Illinois. Visitors were a steady flow all day long. The blacksmiths all had a great time working at their forges and sharing their love of the craft with the crowds. All are looking forward to next year's event, along with encouraging other smiths to come.

A few weeks passed, and RHS then featured our annual Luminary Walk, a wonderfully clear Saturday evening with a briskness in the air with the parking lot filled to capacity. Visitors enjoyed chatting with friends around the bonfires, food, beverages; and, of course, the lighted pathways to guide their walk around the Park.

Along with putting on these events, we have volunteers clearing fallen trees, splitting firewood, fixing benches, mowing, painting and all of the other tasks to keep the Park well maintained.

This time of year the weather tends to hinder the kind of projects we work on, but we are always glad to welcome a new face and expand the variety of talent that the Richfield Historical Society has received over the years!

March 28th is the date that we're holding our Maple Syrup Family Day this Spring. We would love for you to come out and enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast in the natural beauty of what is the Richfield Historical Park!

P.S. Enjoy our Nation's 250th. Anniversary!!

Volunteer Coordinator

Sharon Lofy

"2026" starts another busy year for presenting the many Richfield Historical Society's events (Maple Syrup Family Day, Art at the Mill, Thresheree and Harvest Festival, Blacksmith Day, and Luminary Walk). These events showcase all the buildings and areas that our volunteers developed and maintain. Hands on activities and historical information are presented in these locations (Messer/Mayer Mill, Messer/Mayer House, Welcome Center, Pioneer Homestead, Sugar Shack and Blacksmith Shop).

If you have an interest in volunteering in a certain area, give me a call (262-297-1546). The chairs for the Richfield Historical Society events and all our special buildings are always looking for a helping hand.

Thank you go to all the event chairs, all those that chair the historic buildings along with the Thursday Crew for all their time and talents. Also, thank you to all who volunteer their time and talents to keep all these events running smoothly.

You will be receiving a volunteer email listing areas and time frames where volunteers are needed. The Event's Committee and event chairs figure out this schedule that will be emailed to you. If you

know of someone that would like to volunteer, let me know. It's a great way for students to do community service.

Spring will be on its way. Keep in mind the Richfield Historical Society Plant Fund Raiser with Nehm's Greenhouse. These certificates (\$25 and \$15) make a great gift for young and old.

Each year at the Threshere, exhibitors register and receive a dash plaque (about 3" x 4"). Every year a feature is picked, and a photo of it appears on the dash plaque. If anyone is missing a dash plaque from the past 26 years, let me know. There are extras that we would like to make available. You do not need to be an exhibitor to be a collector. The 2026 feature is the John Deere Thresher.

Pioneer Homestead

Sunsan Sawdey

An Early Settler's Independence Celebration

Early Settlers started celebrating Independence Day shortly after the Declaration's adoption in 1776. Many traditions for celebrating America still hold true today but may have a slightly different look than in the late 1800s.

Some old traditions that you may see throughout the Historical Park this year:

- Public readings of the Declaration of Independence
- Bell ringing and gun fire
- Parades and concerts
- Fireworks
- Patriotic decorations
- Picnics with food and games

Speaking of picnics...The Richfield Historical Society will take you back to an early Independence Day celebration with food, drink and fun at this year's Appreciation Picnic.

You're invited, so mark your calendars for the **RHS Volunteer and Member Appreciation Picnic Sunday August 2nd, 2026.**



Invitation to Volunteer and Membership Appreciation Picnic August 2, 2026

Maple Syrup Family Day Returns March 28, 2026

Our annual **Maple Syrup Family Day** returns on **Saturday, March 28, 2026**, from **9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**, and it's shaping up to be our biggest and best celebration yet. Each year we add new experiences, and this year's event offers a full day of food, history, hands-on activities, and good old-fashioned fun for the whole family.

The day kicks off with our **3rd Annual Maple Syrup Contest**, where more than **25 local maple syrup makers** compete to see who produces the best syrup. It's a favorite tradition and a great way to celebrate the skill and craftsmanship behind this sweet local product.

No Maple Syrup Family Day would be complete without food! Our popular **all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast** continues to grow each year. For those looking for other options, we'll also have **hot dogs and hot chocolate** available throughout the day. Be sure to save room for one of our most-loved treats — **maple sugar cotton candy**, made fresh and available all day. We'll also have **delicious sourdough bread** for sale.

Visitors can enjoy a wide variety of **hands-on demonstrations and activities**, including leather work, cooking and weaving on a **100-year-old loom**, preparing home-cooked meals, rendering lard, shelling and grinding corn, and even log barn repair. We will also have farm animals weather permitting. In this area, you'll also find many **maple-flavored products for sale**, from cookies to maple popcorn and more.

Of course, maple season wouldn't be complete without seeing how it all begins. Guests are invited to take part in **hands-on maple sap collecting** and watch as sap is transformed into maple syrup right before their eyes.

The **Blacksmith Shop** will be open with skilled smiths at work, and visitors can also try their luck at our **spinning wheel**, where a variety of prizes await. All of our **historic buildings will be open**, and there is **no charge** to explore them.

As we look ahead to the coming year, we are proud to take part in the celebration of **America's 250th birthday**, adding even more meaning to this special community event.

Maple Syrup Family Day is always well attended, and we look forward to welcoming both familiar faces and first-time visitors. Come hungry, come curious, and come ready to enjoy a wonderful day celebrating maple syrup, history, and community.

Pete Samson Maple Syrup Family Day Chair