Celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Waukesha County Museum

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THE WAUKESHA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY & MUSEUM

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A dynamic cultural resource and premier destination point for the region.

Our Mission
We serve Waukesha County and beyond as an educational and cultural resource while preserving and sharing county history.

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I hope you enjoy this issue of Landmark. While volunteering at the museum research center, I came across the photo I used on the cover. I thought it fitting that during this sesquicentennial of the Civil War, we should share it.

We have stories from our stable of Landmark authors - Fred Keller, Marilyn Cohn Kagan, Charles Thiesenhusen, Linda Hansen, and Libbie Nolan. They have been part of the backbone of our magazine for many years.

Our last article was originally published in the New Berlin Almanak. It tells of four early Irish families who settled in New Berlin.

If you are interested in submitting a story to Landmark magazine, please contact me by email or regular mail at the addresses above. We are always looking for new material.

John Schoenknecht
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Landmark is devoted to publishing Waukesha County historical records and articles and is funded in part through the Henry M. Youmans Memorial Fund.

The museum exhibits its collections and has data for research purposes in the historic courthouse in downtown Waukesha at 101 W. Main Street. The museum is open Tuesday through Saturday, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The Research Center is open by appointment. Please call to secure an appointment. The Museum Store is open during museum hours.

Members always have free admission to the exhibits and the Research Center.
Single copies of LANDMARK are $3.50 each ($7.00 double issues) at the Museum Store.

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THE JEFFERY FAMILY

by Fred Keller

In 1859, the Jeffery family of Scotland claimed 350 acres of land on North Lisbon Rd. and Colgate-Woodside Rds. By 1872 the family oversaw 450 acres. The claim began with a modest 40 acres purchased for $1.25 per acre.

By 1914, the claim had dwindled to 130 acres and was down to 100 by 1980. It completely disappeared when Wm. Domann bought out the last spread and soon the Friday Canning Company owned it. Then, in 1999, the last Jeffery land was made into a subdivision off North Lisbon Rd. called Wooded Ridge Preserve. The only visible remainder of the Jeffrey land is the old silo on the east side of Wooded Ridge Trail which is the entrance to the upscale subdivision.

This photo was taken around 1908 of the Albert Jeffery farm and home on North Lisbon Rd. Jeffery is on the left in a raccoon skin coat while his wife, Margaret Butler, is on the right of the two girls in the doorway. The two girls are Ethel Jean and Mildred May.
THE HOUSE IN 1980 AFTER THE TWO DAUGHTERS DIED. THE LISBON FIRE DEPARTMENT RAZED IT IN A PRACTICE BURN.

A list of the former owners of this subdivision includes land speculator John Hodgson who claimed 360 acres in the 1840s for $1.25 per acre for a total of $450.

The Jeffery family started coming from Scotland in 1843 and had to pay more than the claim price for most of their land. John and William Jeffery were the first big names to settle in the area. John (1820 -1901) built a mansion on his land that was the focal point of an 1879 map. John and his wife, Mary Ann (1823-1903), had 11 children. Albert J. Jeffery was the youngest. He married a neighbor girl, Margaret Butler, who was one of 12 children.

Both Margaret and Albert were born in the Civil War era. They had two daughters, Ethel Jean, born in May of 1899 and Mildred May, born in May of 1905. These daughters were extremely different from each other. One swore like a mule trainer and the other was a Carroll College student studying to be a teacher. However, their father turned over the farm to the daughters; and they lived
out their lives as recluses. They piled up the house with newspapers, books, collectables, old calendars and junk. When they died one could hardly move from room to room. The home became something of a haunted house.

William Domann was the representative of the estate and ultimately the owner of the land after the ladies died of old age. The Lisbon Fire Department used the house for fire practice.

The extended Jeffery pioneers came from Scotland and England. When they came in the early 1840s, the population of Lisbon was 140; and by 1846 (according to a special census taken when Waukesha County split from Milwaukee County), the population was 836. There were 36 square miles in Lisbon with 23,000 acres which came out to less than one person for every two acres in the pioneering township,

In 1891 Albert Jeffery called the land the Elmwood Stock Farm. Then the farm’s name changed to Maple Ridge Stock Farm according to the 1928 Waukesha County farm directory. Today it is called Wooded Ridge Preserve.
RUSSIAN WAR RELIEF IN WW II

by Marilyn Cohn Kagan

The above slide was recently found in the archives of the museum. For information about it, I turned to Marilyn Cohn Kagan, whose father was involved in the efforts to bring relief to Russian Jews during WW II. Her explanation follows.

My father was extremely active in the organization. My family were immigrants from Russia. The Russian War Relief was located next door to Cohn’s Shoe Store on the Clinton St. side of the building. I believe there is a law office there now. Before the Russian War Relief, it was occupied by Rudy’s Liquor, owned by a Mr. Rudolph. This is where my father sent me for more liquor for the VJ celebration. His family belonged to the Waukesha Temple Emanu-El.

The exterior picture shows two men on the left. The first is Richard Sylvester who was the county clerk in the 1950s. He signed my 1950 marriage certificate. The man next to him is Mr. Rudolph. His family lived next door to my Uncle Phil and Aunt
Esther on Maple Ave. Mr. Rudolph’s daughter Ruth was a Wave during the war.

Regarding the people on the right of the sign, the couple on the far right were very active in the group. I don’t remember their names, but I remember seeing them repairing and sorting clothes and shoes.

The photo from 1943 (below) shows my father kneeling as he sorted shoes. Mr. Sylvester is at the far left looking in the box and Mrs. Rudolph is fourth from left in the back.

Because of the connection to Russia, there are many interesting family stories.
RURAL ROADS IN WAUKESHA COUNTY IN THE 1920s

by Charles L. Thiesenhusen

The Thiesenhusen Brothers’ dairy farm ledger books are fascinating to me. An entry stood out that was different from the others. It was listed as a Road Work Order dated August 19, 1924 for $24.30 on the receipts side in the ledger (See fig. 1). This was unique as all the other receipts were for butter, vegetables, fruits, milk, and two calves. These were all products of the farm and understandable. Of course anything different is fascinating! What was a Road Works Order? Another hint was in the extra papers stored in the ledger. A blank Town Highway Claim fell out of the ledger. (See fig. 2) It was from the Town of New Berlin, Waukesha County for the 1920s. It was to be signed on the front by the Town Supt. of Highways. I then looked for other road work orders and found four - April 1924 for $14.70, April 1925 for $20.15, July 1926 for $17.30, and August 1927 for $6.50. So this looked like a service that the farmers provided to the town of New Berlin that was usually paid annually. The August 1924 payment was about the same value as selling a calf weighing 184 pounds. The farm

![Image of a road work order in a ledger book.]

FIG. 1 - ROAD WORK ORDER IN LEDGER BOOK.
was located on the west end of Small Road in New Berlin - the old stone house, farm home, and buildings are still standing. The payments were probably made to my relatives to keep Small Road from College Avenue (Hwy. HH) to Calhoun Road driveable for the year. (See fig. 3). A family photo from the early 1920s shows Small Road looking west from the Thiesenhusen Brothers farm. A herd of young cows is being driven from one farm to another. None of them look to be in much of a hurry. (See fig. 4) The road is unpaved, tamped down dirt and seems to be one lane wide with wide shoulder areas. The ledger entry for road work and the photo of Small Road as a narrow dirt road with cows being herded in the road spurred my interest in the history of rural farm road maintenance and history.

In the present day we are very accustomed to the county highway or city street department workers taking care of our streets and highways. Highway departments, especially at the township
level, did not exist in the rural areas of the county in the 1920s. It was a time when the farmers took care of the roadway along their property for the township or county. They were either paid directly for this work or it was to “work off” their road tax. Getting to this point of the farmers maintaining the roads had a long difficult history.

**The Good Roads Movement**

The history now goes back to the late 1800s and the organization called the “Good Roads Movement.” It was organized in 1880 in Rhode Island. Chapters were organized across the United States and it was well represented in the Milwaukee area. This was not an automobile focused group (Charles Duryea invented the first gas powered vehicle in 1893). This group was the “League of American Wheelmen” which formed to protect the interests of bicyclists! There were 15,000 bicyclists in Wisconsin by the 1890s driving on what were considered to be poorly maintained roads. They were extremely active in influencing legislatures to pass laws to improve road conditions for safer and smoother bicycling. The monthly *Good Roads Magazine* was supplemented with a 68 page pamphlet *The Gospel of Good Roads* in 1891 by Isaac B. Potter. The first paragraph in the pamphlet read:
“To the American Farmer: In these days, when the voice of your complaint is loud in the land, and a thousand partisans are declaiming a thousand theories to account for the “decline of agriculture,” I will try to write you a letter, in which, I believe, I can make it appear that the greatest remedy for the cure of unprofitable farming lies in your own hands.” (The remedy was good roads!) Immediately one notices the main focus of this organization was to convince the American farmer to support the good roads movement for his own economic improvement. The farmers were very skeptical of this whole idea. They were very satisfied being slightly isolated and functioning on their own. The idea of higher taxes to support this movement was an anathema to the independent thinking farmers.

The 1848 Wisconsin state constitution had a clause that stated “the state may never contract any debt for works of internal improvement, or be a party in carrying on such works.” This clause was used by the anti-road improvement groups to great advantage to block all Wisconsin legislation for road funds. Many times bills were put forth for money for road betterment only to be
voted down, especially by the rural farmers’ strong legislators.

Change is difficult for many people. One very effective appeal to the farmers was a pro road improvement poster from the late 1800s. (See fig. 5). It directly appealed to the rural core values.

“Good roads mean an opportunity for: 1. Neighborhood social life, 2. Consolidated schools, 3. Prompt mail service (the Rural Free Delivery of mail was started in 1893), 4. Church attendance, 5. Prompt medical attention, and 6. Cheaper hauling of produce (commerce depended on the railroad until then).

The poster also proclaimed: “Poor roads put the family ‘in a rut’ and keep it there.” How could anyone argue with that? It was in November 1908 that a Wisconsin constitutional amendment was finally passed by the legislature and accepted by popular vote. It stated: “The state may appropriate money in the treasury or to be there after raised by taxation for the construction or improvement of public highways.”

The acceptance came about because of the rural voters. The farmers could see the importance of getting their produce to urban markets on which they were dependent. The farmers also acknowledged the rise and future import of the automobile that needed good roads to function. A remarkable improvement in public finance occurred about 1903 with greater government support of
roads - it would not be a tax coming just from the farmers. Pockets of resistance after the 1908 amendment still existed especially in southeastern Wisconsin - the newer, less developed northern rural areas were all for road improvement.

**Drags, Harrows, Discs, and Planes**

The Good Roads Movement also educated farmers on how to care for their area roads. Newspaper articles appeared with very specific instructions for road care depending on soil type, drainage, and type of road damage. The type of equipment was familiar to the farmer as they used most of the implements in the fields after spring plowing. These were used in a specific order after plowing - first the disc or spring-tooth, then the drag or harrow to achieve a smooth, even planting surface. Horses and later tractors were used to pull the equipment.

There was an abundance of articles that appeared in the *Waukesha Freeman* instructing the farmer on why and how to care for the public roads along their property lines. The June 20, 1907 *Waukesha Freeman* carried the article “There Is No Excuse for Rough Dirt Roads.”

The article’s first paragraph was “If the farmers can once get clearly fixed in their minds that there is no good excuse for rough roads in any part of the corn belt during the summer season we will get along much faster in the solution of the dirt road problem...The intelligent use of the drag (usually an array of heavy metal chains), where roads have been properly drained and graded, will absolutely prevent all roughness...Where the roads are too

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**FIG. 6 - MAKE YOUR OWN HARROW.**

A is a flat iron one and one-half by three-eighths inches, split from C to D, and bolted to the pieces of wood, which are two and one-half inches square. It is hinged at X and the draft is attached at K. This makes a cheap harrow, says the Missouri Farmer, with no mortises to rot out. Use teeth of any size and any quantity.
dry to drag the harrow or the disc (for even drier roads) can be used to good effect.”

There was even a following article entitled “Make Your Own Harrow”. (See fig. 6) An example of a farm made drag is from the Wisconsin Historical Society. In fig. 7, we see wood boxes used as a drag being pulled behind a tractor to level out the road bed, yet forming a proper crown. The men standing in the boxes could pick up rocks that appeared in the spring and put them in the boxes for weight. Later, when the New Berlin Township also worked on the roads they may have used a road plane. (See fig. 8) The planes were usually too expensive for an individual farmer to use.

The Waukesha Freeman consistently carried articles on the import of road care through the 1920s.

1. June 10, 1920 “Chief Engineer Hirst Gives Good Road Talk” This article said that roads should be well drained and ditches maintained.

2. “The Good Roads of Waukesha County” October 27, 1924 - It was the duty of the township road supervisor to call out the
farmers to work out their road tax - from one to two days to each farmer.

3. “Agri-grams - Dedicated to a Better Understanding between City and Country” March 4, 1925 - There will be a curtailment of expenses in Wisconsin as far as road building. The people are becoming a little rebellious over the tax situation.

4. “The Gravel Road” June 16, 1926 - Gravel or macadam roads are by no means to be scorned, especially when they are given a binder of oil or tar (macadam is the gravel plus binder) to keep out the water and keep tire-suction from tearing them up.

**Beyond the Rural Roads**

While some of the rural areas were working on their dirt roads, the city of Waukesha was building more concrete streets in the 1920s. The city had a large, concentrated population and taxing base to deal with these more expensive projects. They also had a greater population interested in automobiles and bicycles than the rural areas. “Permanent roads are a good investment - not an expense” trumpeted the Portland Cement Association ad in a 1924 *Waukesha Freeman*. The ad also stated: “While the automobile industry made paved highways an economic necessity, the mileage of such roads is today years behind the requirements of modern traffic. Happily motorists everywhere are boosting for more and wider paved highways, thus assuring tax payers more for their money.” These ads were not so subtle influences to use their prod-
uct, but of course only for the consumer’s benefit!

In the March 1, 1927  *Waukesha Freeman*, an article outlined the continued street paving plans for the city. “Council to Act on Specification for the Paving of Nineteen Streets - Should the city council ratify plans the greatest road construction program in the history of Waukesha will be sanctioned...nineteen streets will be paved (sections of Grand Avenue, College, Barstow, West, Park etc.)...the project is estimated at $115,000 - $97,000 will be paid by property owners on those streets. The remaining $18,000 will be paid by the city.”

Also 320 miles of the Waukesha county trunk highways were either concrete or heavily graveled by 1924. At this point in time there was a general improvement in the economy and the automobile was becoming indispensable. The pronounced high tax rebellion of earlier periods for road development and care did not occur.

**First in the World**

On the back of the 1919 first Official State of Wisconsin Highway Map is a chart of the “State Standard Signs and Markers.”(See fig. 9 -1919 WI Highway map) This was very sig-
nificant. Prior to 1917 there was a plethora of road signs by tire companies, oil companies, road clubs, and tourist organizations which made driving directions very confusing. The Wisconsin State Legislature in 1917 passed a law prohibiting all these separate groups from posting “trail” signs without state approval. In 1919 there was only the Federal “Yellowstone Trail” which passed through the northeastern edge of the county by Menomonee Falls. This was the only federal highway in Waukesha County then. The Wisconsinhighways.org website noted: “During one week in May of 1918, all route designation signage was erected and Wisconsin became the first in the world with a signed system of route-numbered highways.” By 1929, there was one state trunk highway - Hwy. 14 (now National Avenue - Highway 15) running diagonally through New Berlin Township. It was marked with a triangular sign. The only Federal Highway was 18 (now Greenfield Avenue - Highway 18) at the northern border of the township. It was marked with a shield-shaped sign. The rest of the roads were township roads indicated by a letter or letters in a circular sign (later a rectangular sign). Small Road was T and College Ave was HH. Many
of the county, state, and federal highways were being paved at this time.

**Summing up**

It has been a fascinating journey for me from the unusual Thiesenhusen Brothers farm ledger book entry in 1924 for a Township of New Berlin Road Work Order. I then looked back to the time period of the Good Roads Movement (late 1800s to 1910) to understand how important the farmer was to the development of rural roads and their upkeep. I looked also at how the roads were actually maintained with the evolution of roads over time from dirt/gravel or macadam and on to concrete in the mid 1920s. In 1918 Wisconsin had the first in the world uniform route numbered highway signs. Amazing what history develops from unexpected places. (See fig 10 - my Uncle Ed Thiesenhusen ready to “hit the road.”)

**Sources:**

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“1919 Official Map of the State Trunk Highway System of Wisconsin”

Illustrations:
Thiesenhusen Farm Ledger page - 1924
New Berlin Township highway claim - 1920s
Plat Map detail New Berlin Township - 1914 (HH along the bottom, Small Road the diagonal, Calhoun the next north road. The dash marked roads are the RFD routes)
Cows herded along west Small Road - early 1920s
“Good Roads Movement” poster - late 1890s
How to make a Harrow - 1907 *Waukesha Freeman*
A Box Drag leveling a rural road - 1920s
Antique road plane - gold award at Chicago World’s Fair 1893
Back Cover of the 1919 Official Map of the State Trunk Highway System of Wisconsin
My Uncle Ed getting ready to hit the road - 1920s
CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF LISBON ROAD AND MARCY SCHOOL

by Linda Hansen

I lived in many places in Milwaukee and Waukesha County growing up. Most of them were in the city. But for some reason, I remember the most detail from our stay in rural Brookfield when I was between 9 and 10 in the late 1950s.

We lived in a ranch-style, newer home on 165th and Lisbon Road. It was definitely “in the country” in those days. Just across the street from us was Menomonee Falls. Living on Lisbon Rd. meant that you could have a business, a home, a farm or any combination on the same block. Right across the street was a small repair garage combined with a gas station. On the same side of the block as us was a tavern. But my best friend from school lived on a huge farm on Lisbon Rd.. My school was also on Lisbon Rd. a little further west in Marcy. Behind us, however, there was a subdivision that was pretty large on very big wooded lots. We lived on the corner of Meadowview East. If you took your bike up the hill, you could ride through this subdivision and eventually come out on Meadowview West, which was at the end of our block.

The Victory Outdoor Theater was a short way east on Lisbon, where it was always a treat to go on a hot summer night in your p.js and try to stay awake through the first movie. Where Hampton and Lisbon intersect, you could choose Hampton and be in Butler. This town always fascinated me because of the wide street with cars parked on an angle. It reminded me of a Wild West town, just like on TV in the 50s. They held western-themed celebrations then.

Marcy was a small, country town consisting of a tavern, a church, a cemetery, and a school. The church was St. Dominic’s Catholic and was very old. This church has been torn down and a new St. Dominic’s was built on Capitol Dr. in Brookfield. The school was Marcy School. The old three-room schoolhouse was there, and my fourth grade class met in that building. However, there were new additions built in 1955 and 1957. For fifth grade, my classroom was in the newer section and shared by fourth and
fifth grade. Since the school was quite a way from our house, I had to ride the school bus everyday. This was a new experience for me. To catch the bus, I had to walk up the Meadowview East road to the top of the hill to wait with the other neighbor kids.

Something I never had at any other elementary school were the Friday night dances held periodically. I’m pretty sure they were only for the upper grades. The only real memory of this was when my neighbor friend asked me to dance to the Mexican Hat Dance with an actual hat on the floor. The activities I remember on the playground at recess were playing in the cement sewer pipe (no longer considered “safe”) or playing marbles. There were all kinds of other play equipment as well (all metal in those days). We could also play tether ball, hopscotch, jump rope, tag, or dodge ball.

Marcy School has a very long history beginning in 1866 when a quarter-acre piece of land was purchased to build a one-room school. By 1888, the enrollment was up to 73 students, so a new school building was needed. One acre of land behind the old school was purchased and a larger two-room school was built. The one-room building was made into a toolshed. Concerns were voiced about the bad influence of the saloon next door on the students. Eventually, however, it was decided it was all in peoples’
heads, so another room was added onto the school in 1896.

By 1923, the need arose again for more space. “Should we remodel or rebuild?” An addition of eight rooms was added onto the north side of the school. In 1939, lavatories, running water, and a furnace were added. At this point, there was no transportation to school, so a hot lunch program was instituted. In 1951, the school was overcrowded and first and second grade classes were moved to Evangelical Lutheran Church on Calhoun Rd. Another four classrooms were added in 1955.

Also, up until then, parents were paid to drive their children to school, but it was finally decided to start a bus program. In 1957, another four rooms, administrative office, and a multi-purpose room were built on six more acres. At this time, new legislation
was passed that limited what a teacher could do to discipline a student. No longer was it appropriate to hit or spank a child. This was the history of Marcy School when I arrived in 1958.

I remember how dark it would get at night out there in the country compared with living in the city. My dad, a farm boy at heart, felt free to shoot a few rabbits for dinner during our time there. We had a large corner lot with a big backyard. I had a swing my dad attached to a big tree, and my favorite place was at the top of the hill in my own cozy spot with a lot of shrubs all around.

There was an old house next door on Lisbon where an older woman lived alone. She and I would get together in the summer in her yard and play cards, usually some type of solitaire. I remember she grew a lot of different berries in her yard.

I had a lot of good neighborhood friends to play with. In the summer we were always together playing until dark. We could be seen riding our bikes all through the subdivision behind us or playing red light green light in our yard under the willow tree until the one street-light came on. I was kind of a latch key kid for a while because my mother worked in Milwaukee. A lot of the time I went across the street and stayed with my friend and her mom while I waited for my parents to get home.

It’s amazing how many things that I remember are still there today. I checked it out recently, and the repair shop across the street is still there along with the small house next door and the tavern. The neighborhood behind us has changed very little with a new house here or there. I checked and there is still only one streetlight. Marcy School has changed since 2004 because there is nothing left now of the school buildings or playground I remember. Still it’s nice to know that some things have remained the same for 55 years.

I’m so glad I was able to experience what it was like to live in the country, if even for a short time, while growing up.
LEXINGTON AND BEYOND
Our American Revolutionary War
A Personal Story

by Elizabeth Faulkner Nolan

It was 238 years ago, on April 19th, 1775, that the first battle of our country’s Revolutionary War was fought at Lexington, Massachusetts. A year later, July 4, 1776, our Declaration of Independence was signed, thus declaring our collective colonies to be a free, independent country!

NOW THE WAR HAD PURPOSE AND MEANING

Already the colonies had stored ammunition and were alerted to the British red-coated troops’ every move by our patriotic spies.

Remember “The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere?” That was how our Lexington militia faced the surprised Red Coats that April day. The Red Coats faced an armed militia, the Internet tells us, when an unknown shot was fired. The Red Coats shot, killing four and wounding eight more as the militia moved into the woods shooting from behind trees. Because the Red Coats fought in formation, they retreated from the scene.

Two centuries later - would you believe two friends who have lived in the little Midwestern village of Mukwonago, Wis., would discover an unusual and strange coincidence? They found that they were both descendants of two of those militia men who fought in that Lexington skirmish.

Bob Figie had seen the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution insignia on my door and said he also had an ancestor who fought in the Revolutionary War. He brought me a copy of his family records. Imagine our surprise to read that his ancestor had also fought in the Battle of Lexington and also had come from the same state of Connecticut.

Bob’s ancestor, Roswell Graves, was born in 1740 in Haddam, Conn.

My ancestor, Gidion King, was born in 1747, in Suffield, Conn.

WHO THEY WERE

My great grandfather Thomas Faulkner’s great grandfather
Gideon King fought in the Battle of Lexington, the first battle of the Revolutionary War.

Family records indicate that my great great grandmother Lydia Butler Moore Cheney’s grandfather, Samuel Butler, also had fought the British at the Battle of Yorktown, where Lord Cornwallis surrendered to General George Washington, thus ending the Revolutionary War.

An unusual bit of history: Here is a family that has an ancestor who fought in the first battle and another ancestor who fought in the last battle of the Revolutionary War that created a free and God loving country in the world.

ADDED NOTES

Roswell Graves did not survive the war. He was captured by the British and was starved to death in prison.

Gidion King settled in New York and founded the hamlet, “King’s Landing” on the Genesee River. He died of the Genesee fever in 1798.

Elizabeth “Libbie” Faulkner Nolan is a 30 year member and past historian of the Waukesha Continental 13 DAR chapter.

Bob and Marilyn Figie moved to Mukwonago 24 years ago.

Libbie graduated from Mukwonago High School 78 years ago.
FROM FANTASY TO FACT

by Marilyn Kagan

now fell gently on our little group gathered at the store window. We stood there mesmerized by the black and white images of the new sensation flickering on the tiny screen. Pictures and sounds came from far away in real time. This was so different from our familiar radios. Our imaginations furnished those pictures. We could also do other things while listening to the radio. Now, this television was exciting, including the ads. What was once science fiction was part of our real world! We couldn’t know that someday we would watch the assassination of a president and a man walking on the moon. Color television and remote controls were even more far fetched.

Today, our world is full of computers - apps, tweets, dot coms, iPads, laptops, emails, smart phones, Facebook, tablets, texting, Google, Yahoo, Skype, downloads, Kindle, .orgs, .edus, .govs, online shopping, and the entire Internet. GPS devices have replaced maps. The world is never fast enough and we are always searching for ways to speed it up. Post offices and snail mail are decreasing in use. Children rely on calculators; things work with the movement of a finger. We don't need to be home to receive messages or turn things on. We don't need to go to a bank, a store, or even a doctor’s office at times. We push buttons to heat or cool our homes and work places. New cars almost require an engineering degree. Furniture comes out of boxes and dinner meals out of a freezer.

I think today’s children would be astonished by my childhood world. In the 1930s and 1940s, our latest technological devices were a department store escalator, a telephone, a brownie camera, super 8 movies and vinyl phonograph records. This was the world when television first appeared.

When the first sets began arriving in neighborhoods, everyone was invited in to watch. You selected from the three channels by turning a knob. There were news broadcasts, dramas, comedies,
sports and game shows. Popular shows were Edward R. Murrow’s See It Now, I Love Lucy, What’s My Line, and Your Show of Shows. This show was watched by everyone on Saturday night. Everything was scheduled around it. Taping shows was inconceivable. People gathered for TV parties and there were lots of discussions, opinions and arguments. Compared to the world of our parents, this new world moved very fast and opened up the world as never before. So much was brought right into our living room. TV sets became stylish furniture and occupied prominent places in our homes. Soon, rabbit ears and antennas filled our neighborhoods.

Although television has been an incredible change, there were many other inventions through the years.

The garage door once required pulling or pushing to open. Now we have the automatic opener. Basements once contained coal bins and coal furnaces and we shoveled coal every day in cold weather. Water heaters needed to be lit and required time to heat up. A wringer washer and clothesline took care of the laundry. Electric blankets replaced our big quilts and fans were our air conditioners in warm weather. The living room contained a cabinet radio and often, a phonograph. Newspapers were delivered each day and were carefully read. Mail was answered with handwritten replies or on a typewriter. It was important to know how to write a proper letter with good handwriting and correct spelling and grammar. A
telephone call to a business or agency resulted in talking to a human being.

In the kitchen, there was a pump at the sink. Food was stored in an icebox and big blocks of ice were delivered to homes. The electric refrigerator was a big improvement, especially if it made ice cubes. Washing dishes required a dishpan, dishcloth, soap, sink drainer and dishtowel. Stove ovens were lit with matches and brought varied results. No wonder microwaves were so well received. A percolator stood on the stove and only fancy ones were electric. Can openers were hand operated and mixing and beating were done by hand. Hand operated food grinders processed our food and outdoor grills replaced our Hollywood broilers. Toasters had to be watched, as they were not automatic. Lots of scraping took place when bread was not removed in time. Kitchen knives were not electric. Kitchen cabinets and freezers now contain mixes, convenience foods, and frozen foods. The only mix I remember is Bisquick.

Travel was usually by car or train. Flying was not common then. We were yet to be amazed at jet engines and space programs. Now, as I look at all that has taken place since my childhood, I wonder if a little girl of today’s generation will someday write about her childhood world for a future generation. What wonders are yet to be?
A LITTLE BIT O’ IRELAND IN NEW BERLIN

by Mary Ella Milham,
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In the southeast corner of New Berlin, in what was the Elmwood school district, clustered one of the strongest ethnic groups in early times, the Irish. They owned more than 4 sections (square miles) near the present Beloit and Small Roads, and Grange and College Aves. As early as 1836 two trails crossed this area from Milwaukee, the original Beloit Rd. and the Janesville Rd., bringing many Irish settlers not only to New Berlin but also to Muskego township and eastward into the towns of Greenfield and Franklin. St. Mary’s Roman Catholic Church at Hales Corners was the spiritual center for this colony.

It is clear that most of these early Irish were literate, kept careful accounts and arrived with enough money to buy land.

In the 1840 US Census, we find such names as Boylan, Gamble, Goff, Kelly, Kerwin, Madden, McCannon, McGowan, Murray, Riley, Quade and Small. Some of these families were gone very soon; others are still represented in the same area and sometimes on the same property. The selection made in this story is purely arbitrary, since the history of the community, or even such a family as the Smalls, would occupy a book.

A Sad History

The British attempt to conquer Ireland, which had a rich history of its own, goes back at least 800 years. But when Henry VIII renounced Catholicism in 1534, a new struggle over religion was introduced. Queen Elizabeth I was the first to send English citizens to Ireland in an attempt to dilute Catholicism. And later kings, after the union of Scotland and England, sent so many Presbyterian Scots (and some Welsh) to Ireland that Protestants became a majority in the 6 northern counties. Many of these people found so many tensions and difficulties in the Irish situation that they emigrated as soon as new lands opened up on other continents.
MANY IRISH SURNAMES ARE SEEN IN THIS SMALL SECTION OF NEW BERLIN TOWNSHIP. THE MAP IS FROM 1859. ONE OF THE KELLY LAKES IS SEEN IN THE LOWER RIGHT PORTION OF THE MAP.

The Great Potato Famine
Potatoes were the staple food of Ireland; but in 1842 a new disease struck Irish potatoes and brought on a terrible famine. At that time there were estimated to be 8 million people in an area the size of Wisconsin. Between 1846 and 1855 almost a million died and another million left Ireland.

The Streets of New Berlin
Grange Ave. is obviously a Milwaukee Co. name; but in the past it was long known as Irish Rd. The subdivision around Kelly Lakes, though, contains more personalized names: Albert Ave. for Albert Kelly, Frances for his wife, Rosemary for a daughter.
Goff

Peter Goff was born in Leinster, Co. Louth, Ireland, about 1808 and arrived in the United States in the 1820s. In 1838, he came to New Berlin and settled on the north side of College Ave., west of Sunnyslope Rd. About 1842 he married Mary Loughney, who was at least 15 years his junior. Their first son, Thomas, died at 9, but 4 other children survived: Matthew L., Eliza, Mary Ann and Theresa Jane, all of whom were sent to Carroll Academy in Waukesha. The side-saddle which the Goff girls used to ride to Waukesha for school (liveries regularly boarded horses) is now in the New Berlin Historical Society collection.

Matthew L. Goff, the first son, was born in 1845, spent 1877-78 in and around Nebraska, but returned to New Berlin. In 1879, his father died. In 1880, he married Annie M. Burns, daughter of John Burns, a pioneer of the Muskego side of College Ave. Matthew died about 1890.

Eliza Goff, the eldest daughter, was born about 1849. She was still single and died about 1896. Mary Goff, born about 1853, married John Kelly and remained in New Berlin; but Theresa, born about 1855, married Charles Shields of the Town of Franklin and went there to live. Their descendants are amazed that Peter Goff — Catholic, Democrat, and militant tee-totaler allowed his youngest daughter to marry one of the Protestant, Republican, hard-drinking Shields, who nonetheless lies beside her in St.
Mary’s Cemetery.

Mary and Theresa lived to old age, expecting Theresa’s son, George Shields, to take them each year to the old Goff farm to walk around the boundaries. The stone wall is still at the back of the farm. At the front on the north side of College Ave. just west of Tess Corners Dr. (as of Autumn, 1987) is the house lot and its shrubbery and trees. The ladies spent their winters in Florida, a rather far cry from the frontier on which they were raised.

George Shields, who married a Biwer, was the father of George F. Shields, who gave much of the information for this story. His other children were Charles Shields and Peggy (Shields) Jaeger, who gave the saddle to our Society.

Kelly

In 1839, Peter and Felix Kelly came to New Berlin and settled on either side of Grange Ave., just west of Sunnyslope Rd.

Felix Kelly owned 40 acres in each of Secs. 26 and 35; but by 1850 he seems to have died, for only his wife Mary (38), was listed in the census with daughters Nancy (8), Elizabeth (7) and Louisa (6). Curiously, in 1848 Felix had deeded his property to Nancy, then 6. The 1880 census listed Mary (69), Nancy (32), Elizabeth (30) and Louisa (28), a household of single women who had become younger with the years.

Meanwhile Peter Kelly had married another Irish Mary; and in 1850 they had Ann (10), Maria (7), Ellen (5) and John (3).
1860 census added William, then 8. Peter Kelly must have died about 1877 because at that time his sons went through a series of transactions on the home farm. In 1880, the Kelly property was sold to another Irishman, Daniel Packinham, who gave his name to “Packinham’s Hill” on the Sunnyslope Rd. Part of this farm is now in Valleyview Park; but as of 1987, Kelly’s barn still stands on the original homestead.

In 1874, however, Peter’s son John Kelly purchased the Richard Hennesy property on Grange Ave., where he lived with his wife Mary Goff. In 1900 the Kelly children were Harriet, who married Dr. Wilkinson of Hales Corners; George (19), who also became a doctor, Albert (17), who became a Milwaukee attorney, Louis (15), who stayed on the farm, and Frank (12), who became an attorney in Washington, D.C. Frank Kelly returned briefly to New Berlin to run for the U.S. Senate on the Republican ticket because he had become disillusioned with Pres. Wilson. Unknown now at home and flaunting traditional Irish Democratic sympathies, he was embarrassingly defeated in the primary of Sept. 7, 1926.

Louis Kelly not only farmed his father’s acreage but also twonearby farms purchased by his brothers. His wife was Anna Biwer, and his daughters are Kathryn K. Winkowski, Milwaukee, and Violet K. Kelm, Muskego. His only son Alan spent most of his career in business but remained on his father’s property, his home being at 13488 W. Grange Ave. where his widow Lucille lived, while his five daughters had left New Berlin.

**Loughney**

In 1841, Matthew Loughney, already 55 years old, arrived in New Berlin with his entire family, all born in Co. Mayo, Ireland. His first farm was on the south side of Beloit Rd. not far from 124th St.; but eventually he also owned the farm directly south on Grange Ave. as well. The 1850 census listed Matthew, his wife Winnifred (55), and sons John and Michael (32) (twins?), James (15) and Matthew (12). The 1860 census added Anthony, then 27. Mary Loughney had married Peter Goff soon after her arrival, and Ellen had married a Brougham, probably of the Muskego family.
Anthony Loughney later bought a farm in Muskego, married Catherine Carroll and had 9 children, his only surviving son being Matthew, who remained a bachelor. Anthony died by his own hand in 1907.

Matthew’s son James B. Loughney seems to have been a very independent thinker. In 1856, when he was 21, he was a signer to the founding of the Republican Party in New Berlin. He may have been the youngest member, and the Irish were traditionally Democrats. In 1860, both he and Matthew were listed as teachers; but by 1862 he enlisted for the Civil War in Co. G, 28th Wis. Infantry and served for three years. After his return he married Helen M. Barnes, bought a farm on the Muskego side of College Ave. and had a family of at least five children. In 1880, he moved to Waukesha. The younger Matthew Loughney was deeded part of the farm by his father in 1870, when he was listed as married to Rose Ann (Carroll) and having two infants, but he was also living with his parents and brother John, then 54, a bachelor. The farm was then crossed by a stream feeding Upper Kelly Lake along which the Indians had camped. Matthew not only had traded with them, but the family continued to gather a fine collection of artifacts at the site, including not only arrowheads but grinding stones. This collection is still owned in the Loughney family. In 1880 Matthew was living at his home on Grange Ave. with his wife and
87-year-old mother and children George (13), who later became a priest, Mary (11), who married James Small, John J. 6, Alfred A. (4) and Rose Ann 6 months.

James Loughney’s son Henry was born in 1874, graduated from the University of Wisconsin and became an attorney in Waukesha. In 1906 - 07 he was a State Senator. He was later District Attorney and, briefly, on appointment by Gov. Heil, was Circuit Court Judge in 1939. He left the Catholic Church and always spelled his name Lockney in the English way. Sometime before his death in 1944, the State Historical Society received his father’s papers, which include all the details of the founding of the Republican party in New Berlin, his Civil War diary and his correspondence, including his war letters to his brother Matthew.

Matthew’s son Alfred married Mary Brierton but had no children. He, his wife and sister Rose lived on the Beloit Rd. property. Rose survived until 1967 to the age of 88. John J. married Cecelia Verbrick, a neighbor, and had two sons, Gerald and Clement. Gerald married Florence Maney and lived on Grange Ave. until 1959, when he moved to Big Bend.
McGowan

Among the Irish to arrive in 1839 were Anthony and Michael McGowan. Anthony purchased the 80 acres which contains the Kelly Lakes and Michael the 80 acres just west of him. The 1850 census listed Michael (35), his Irish wife Rose (23) and two small children, but the next house must have seen a tragedy, for there were no parents, only Margaret (9), Mathilda (8) and Michael McGowan (6). These must have been Anthony’s children, somehow orphaned.

The 1859 map shows that the Anthony McGowan property belonged to Mrs. A. Cunningham. By 1865, it was returned to Michael McGowan for $800. The grantors were an unnamed Cunningham and Oliver McGowan. Michael, the son of Anthony, sometimes listed as Jr. and sometimes as 2nd, enlisted in 1864 from Taycheedah in the Civil War, in Co. A, 1st Wis. Cavalry, a unit which saw only scouting and supply duty. After the war he returned to New Berlin and for 10 years owned, or operated, his father’s farm. He was married by 1870; and by 1875 had three children, when he moved west of Sunnyslope Rd. on Grange. By
1900 his wife was dead; but his son John and wife were living with him and six other children. Into old age he was known as “Fond du Lac Mike,” probably indicating where he had lived as an orphan.

To return to the elder Michael McGowan, the pioneer, the 1855 state census suggests that 2 more people had come from Ireland to his household, but they do not reappear. In 1860 he and his wife had Margaret (8), Michael (6), Catherine (5), Elizabeth (3) and John (1). The 1870 census added Rose, (6 mo.) who later married a McKeveitt. After 1865 there were three Michael McGowans living along Grange Ave. The property is even more confusing, for from the settlement in 1839, through Michael Sr.’s purchase of the next farm in 1856, to the final exodus of the family in 1929, 240 acres of land on the south side of Grange Ave. was bought, sold, repurchased and repeatedly mortgaged. As of 1987, Michael’s own original home still stood at 13075 W. Grange Ave. on the land he took up from the government, but so does the later McGowan home, which his son Michael J. lived in, at 13475 W. Grange Ave.

Michael J. McGowan, the son of Michael, married Lorraine Reynolds and in 1887 had an only child, James Clarence. Clarence McGowan married Mary Byrne and left briefly but returned, varying his farming with service as Town Clerk of New Berlin 1919-27. In 1929 he left for Milwaukee. His daughter Margaret McDwyer lived in West Allis.

The Kelly Lakes

Upper and Lower Kelly Lakes did not receive those names officially until the incorporation of the City of New Berlin, when they were named for the family who owned and last operated the farm. Through most of its history, the upper lake was known as Mud Lake, a small body of water extending into the Town of Greenfield. The two were also known as Big and Little Lakes, the smaller being small enough to have been ignored on the earliest map. It was for a time called Kurtz(e) Lake for the owners of its shores. These are the only natural lakes in New Berlin and are part of the Muskego Lakes water system.

When the Kelly brothers managed this property, they had a
prosperous business from the ice which was harvested and stored in the large ice house still standing behind 12401 W. Grange Ave. in 1987. They also rented boats to fishermen, and swimming was common, although local residents feared the lakes because of a long history of drownings. The smaller lake was considered bottomless because it was said that bodies had failed to surface and that an anchor dropped 300 ft. had not struck bottom. In the past, the entire larger lake was clear, but the pollution which has invaded part of it may clear now that the City has installed sewers in the area. The city owns access to Upper Kelly Lake, over which it spent more than five years in litigation.

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