

Fitchburg Historical Society



Fox Hall



McCoy House



Mann House

Fitchburg, Wisconsin

History is Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

MAY 2017

APRIL MEETING

What do wristwatches, zippers and donuts have in common? They are among the things that attained perfection because of WWI. Wristwatches replaced hard to manage pocket watches in the trenches, a primitive zipper went through many changes to be of use for flying suits and money belts, and the donuts were welcomed as eat-in-your hand treats for soldiers on their way to war. These are just some of the points brought up at the FHS's Annual Meeting talk about WWI. Russell Horton, the Reference & Outreach Archivist from The Wisconsin Veterans Museum, presented an interesting program with stories and other memorabilia to put on display. That, along with the pictures and documents in the display case, made for great conversation among the attendees. A short business meeting preceded Russ Horton's presentation. The election for the Board of Directors resulted in four members being re-elected for another term and Kay Phistry and Bill Hauda were elected to fill the two vacancies. We now have a full compliment of twelve members for the board.

DISPLAY CASE

The display case on the second floor of the library has been changed with the theme of "Miniature Memories." Charlotte Milsner, Fitchburg resident and member of the Madison Area Miniature Enthusiasts, has generously agreed to showcase

some of the intricate pieces she has assembled. Be sure to stop up and admire them. The display will be up until fall.

NEVIN STATE FISH HATCHERY

The Nevin State Fish Hatchery located at 3911 Fish Hatchery Road was established in 1876 as The Madison Fish Hatchery. It was the first fish hatchery in Wisconsin and one of the first in the United States. The site was chosen for the location of the nearby natural springs which could supply cold, clean water for hatching and raising fish. The streams and rivers of Wisconsin were being polluted from nearby lumbering, manufacturing and agricultural uses. Salmon were the first fish raised but by 1880 the fish hatchery was planting a variety of fish in Wisconsin and Michigan waters. Trout of various varieties predominated. From the 1870s to the 1920s railroad cars designed specifically for hatchery use were used to haul tanks of fry to streams and lakes throughout the state. The last remaining "fish car", Wisconsin's Badger #2, has been restored and is on display at the Mid-Continent Railway Museum in North Freedom. Fingerlings and yearlings are now trucked to the waiting waters. Each year between 800,000 and a million fish are stocked at fish hatcheries throughout the state. Up until the 1960s visitors could enjoy the grounds, have a picnic and walk through the pond areas to view the different stages of fish life. A gazebo was

a popular spot for families to gather. At the end of the school year the students from the one-room schools in Fitchburg held play-days with the various schools competing in sack races, tug of war, and softball games. In recent years the hatchery has been closed to public use for safety reasons. The Madison facility is now the DNR's South Central Regional Office and Service Center. It has been renamed Nevin Fish Hatchery in honor of a long-time superintendent of Wisconsin fisheries, James Nevin. Fish are still raised there and tours are offered to view the trout ponds. Call first to inquire about times. (608-275-3276)

MINI GRANT FUND DRIVE

The FHS is applying to the Wisconsin Historical Society for a mini-grant to help digitize our archives. WHS awards mini-grants to affiliated societies twice a year for projects amounting to \$700.00 or less. In order to receive the grant we need to have matching funds. Our request will be for various items including two external hard drives, a good scanner and software to enable us to bring our archives up to date with modern technology. Our total for the items we have listed comes to a bit over \$600.00. We are requesting \$319.00 with the hopes of reaching matching funds of \$320. This is our first request for such a grant and we hope to be among the societies that are chosen. Donations with the notation "Fund Drive" can be sent to FHS, 5530 Lacy Road, Fitchburg WI. 53711. All donations to the fund will be acknowledged at the FHS archives and in future newsletters.

MEMBERSHIP

Summer is on the way. Memberships in the FHS run from April to March 31st. Don't let the change of seasons get in your way of thinking of the FHS. If you have not sent in your membership for 2017-2018 this would be a good time to renew.

FITCHBURG HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ City/State/Zip _____

INDIVIDUAL \$10.00 _____ FAMILY \$12.00 _____ BUSINESS/PROFESSIONAL \$50.00 _____

TELEPHONE _____

Email _____

Fitchburg Historical Society 5530 Lacy Road Fitchburg WI 53711
608-727-1783 woodedarchives@gmail.com

HISTORY BOOKS

There are very few new copies of *Fitchburg-a history* left for sale. Because copies are available on loan from libraries in the area and at the State Historical Library a decision has been made to not have it reprinted again. From time to time they show up at garage and book sales. All used copies will be welcomed at the FHS Archives.

NEWS FROM OUR NEIGHBORS

The Mount Horeb Area Historical society has been in the process of a new venture for several years. Their museum and archives have been strained to the breaking point. Now they have completed their new facility, The Driftless Historium, a history and research center with a focus on the southwestern part of Dane County. They are having a Grand Opening on Saturday, June 3rd from 9am to 5pm with a full schedule of events including tours and musical performances through the afternoon.. After the Grand Opening the usual summer season hours will be Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Historium is located at 100 S. Second Street in Mount Horeb.. They have an interesting website at www.driftlesshistorium.org. For more information call 608-437-6486

ORGANIZATIONS

Does your organization or neighborhood association have an article that would be appropriate on the fitchburghistory.org website? You can use the drop down tab on the home page to contact the web-master