



# McFarland Historical Society

5814 MAIN STREET MCFARLAND, WISCONSIN 53558 PH: 608-838-3992  
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## Annual meeting at the E.D. Locke Public Library Sunday, March 2, 1 P.M. to 3 P.M.

### Featured event: Antique Roadshow

The McFarland Historical Society annual meeting will be short as usual followed by our version of "Antique Roadshow." We are asking you to come with one of your special antiques and share it with our members. It could be an old photograph, an historic document (even a letter), a book, a piece of clothing or any other item that you like to share. It promises to be a fun time. Coffee, tea, milk, cookies and a deli platter will be served at the meeting.

For those who can bring something very old to the Annual Meeting of the McFarland Historical Society on March 2, please use this form to guide you for sharing your antique with members of the audience.

My Special Antique

- 1) Your name.
- 2) My special antique is \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) How old is it?

- 4) How did you acquire it?
- 5) Why is it special to you?
- 6) What value would you put on it?
- 7) Please share any story of interest about your antique.

You are encouraged to bring pictures or other related items to accompany your special antique.

### Third Graders Tour Museum

Seven classes of third graders from Waubesa Elementary School brought lots of life to the McFarland Historical Museum. Their visits the first week of November were organized by teacher Mrs. Patricia Dahl. The children, beginning their study of the McFarland community, were keen observers and listeners as they moved from one display to another. Comments of all kinds, questions galore, expressive body language and vocal expressions of amazement and wonder filled the usually quiet museum. "Never a dull moment with the kids", was the consensus of board members Mary Dahlstrom, Ginny Dodson, David Houghton, Crystal Lokken, Dale Marsden, Gini Nichols and Wes Licht, who took turns guiding the groups.

As they got off the bus, classes were greeted by Crystal and Wes who introduced them to the window display featuring "Autumn Down on the Farm". The harvesting of corn picked by hand was compared to the modern techniques in full sway on farms just then. The fall butchering of hogs, and the use of pig's fat to render lard and make soap was intriguing to the students. They also enjoyed the "make believe" commentaries of the cow, "Gosh, I'm sure glad I'm not a pig!" and the rooster on the fence, "Me, too!" Inside the museum lobby, the Good Old Days of Farming was explained by pointing out the many items and old photographs in the display. Emphasis was placed on the important role of farming in the early life of McFarland.



Then small groups of third graders began their tour of the log cabin and the permanent museum exhibits. Board members acting as tour guides shared main ideas and pointed out selected items in the various displays and answered a myriad of questions posed by the visitors.

Third grade teacher, Mrs. Beam, wrote: "We learned a lot about McFarland and the Skare family. We loved seeing all of the old collections that you have at the museum. The war items, the old swimming suits and the Skare family cabin were some of our favorites. We really had a great trip and we want to come back with our families."



Visit Wisconsin's Historic sites this summer and save with this 20% off coupon and your McFarland Historical Society Membership card.

**McFarland Historical Society**  
**5814 Main Street**  
**P.O.Box 94**  
**McFarland, Wis 53558**

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## The Good Old Days of Farming

By Crystal Lokken

The Good Old Days of Farming” was our theme during 2007. As a relatively new board member, I was learning about museum work and trying to find my place in it. Having a background in art, and art education, I thought I might be helpful when it came to creating displays. But I had to stand back and see how it was done.

I watched as the exhibit in the lobby was changed from the 2006 celebration of McFarland’s sesquicentennial to “The Good Old Days of Farming”. Directly in front of the McFarland house facade, Wes Licht and Will Rossman built a barn front, down to the last detail! Remarkable! Then came a fence.

Farm artifacts from the museum collection were brought out and showcased by the fence, in front of the barn and along the wall. All of this took a lot of time, energy and dedication. I was amazed at the transformation

In the meantime, in order to find out something of



Wes Licht telling 3rd graders some interesting facts about McFarland’s rural farm history.

local farming history, it was clear that we needed to go to the source. I could help with that. One advantage I had was that I had known some of these people during my growing-up years in McFarland. So we interviewed local farmers and people who had grown up on farms in the area. That was exciting! They willingly shared memories, photographs and artifacts about their lives on the farm from the early days of the 1900’s and on.

We were loaned a number of artifacts to add to our exhibit. From Richard Sperle’s tobacco press to a toy-sized cardboard barn with many farm animals from Tura Graber, they helped illustrate the activities of rural life. The lawn windmill from June Viehdorfer brought realism to the barn scene.

The pictures that showed the farm activities of dairying, harvesting, tobacco raising and family chores were priceless! We enlarged and copied the snapshots which were shared with us. These were

mounted on the walls of the exhibit in relation to the artifacts. I insisted that we also show photographs of farm houses, including the one out east of town that I lived in until I was five years old.

What could we do with all the interesting stories? Some memories and quotes were used in the exhibit narrative to explain the life and times that we were sharing. And the rest? But we weren’t done yet. We needed a display in the window. By now I felt brave enough to take some initiative. I suggested that we display farming activities by seasons. If you visited the museum this year or walked by, or even read our articles in the “Thistle”, you saw the farmer, the cow and the rooster on the fence. With artifacts appropriate to spring, summer and autumn farm activities, we illustrated the hard work that was a part of early rural life. But when winter came and the work was all done, we showed that farm families enjoyed music and dancing at house parties, until it was time to go home and get some sleep before the early morning chores.

So many people helped us to make the farming theme come to life! We are indebted to Earl Anderson, Tura Olson Graber, Nathan Kirch, Crystal Carol Helmke Lokken, Betty Egner McConnell, Dori Siggelkow Matson, Lorraine Halvorson Norby, Dick and Connie Reiter, Pat Edwards Rossman, Hattie Halvorson Simpson, Richard and Barbara Sperle, Margaret Alsmo Stolen and June Viehdorfer for their contributions. We also thank the many people who stopped in on Sunday afternoons and told of their farming experiences. Without this wonderful participation we could not have done it!

Farming was an important part of our community history. Back in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, our small village of McFarland was surrounded by farms. In fact, in the earliest days, the Hugh McFarland family raised wheat and corn on fields that were located where the village main street is now, right where my Main Street house is (the earliest part of which was built in 1861)! Now of course, village homes have replaced many of the farms and a majority of you probably live on what used to be farmland. It’s been exciting to learn so much about our early farm history and to share the legacy of the rural lifestyle that helped form the McFarland of today.

### Grandson of William McFarland turns 95

Harvey McFarland celebrated his 95th birthday on October 22. He has been a life-long resident of McFarland and a living encyclopedia of the history of the village. He reads the Capitol Times daily and keeps up to date on local and national politics.

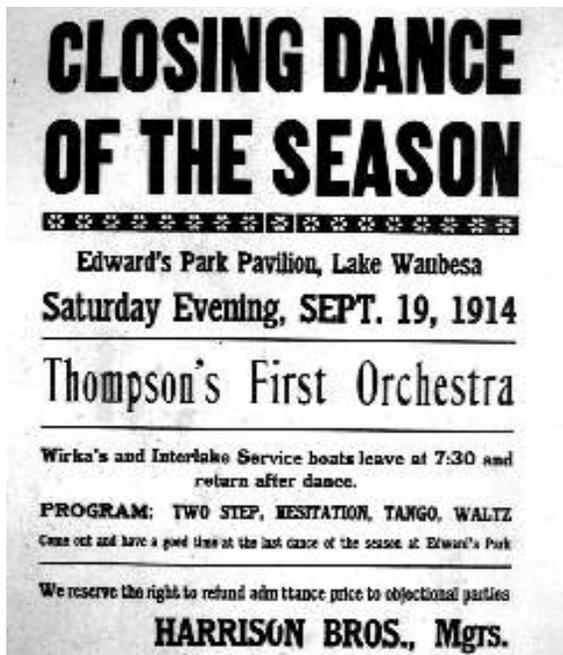
Harvey’s two sons, Tom of Oshkosh and Joe of Wisconsin Dells make weekly visits to see their dad. Harvey is a Life Member of the Historical Society.

## Recent Gifts to the Museum

### “CLOSING DANCE OF THE SEASON”

The poster is in pristine condition, having been stored in the hope chest of Eileen Hanson, wife of Arnold K. Hanson. Gift of Mike Simpson, grandson.

Virginia Strickland Sonn, who grew up next door to Edward's Park Pavilion, noticed the poster during a visit to the museum last summer. She said that the boats from Madison would come and tie up at the pier. People would walk rather quietly up to the pavilion to attend the dances. “But when the dance was over and they returned to the boats, they were much more jolly!” Virginia explained that when she went to the dances at age 16 she had to have a chaperone. Louise Cartright was her chaperone.



**Lard press.** Used to process fats for lard and soap making until after WW II. Lard was often used in place of butter if families could not afford to keep a cow. For soap making, the fat was mixed with lye and cooked down outdoors in a large kettle over a fire.

The soap was used for washing clothes. Crushed egg shells were added, which acted as an abrasive scrubber for washing grimy hands. To make a more gentle soap for washing the face, lemon rind was added. Gift of Cleo Kiergaard.

**Lewis Family Record.** - Gift of Tura Olson Graber.

### Two serving platters.

During the 1930s and '40s, it was possible to collect entire sets of dishes by saving up coupons found on cereal or oatmeal boxes. When one had enough, they could be

redeemed for plates, cups, saucers or platters. These two serving platters were once in daily use at the Main Street home of Dorothy Nelson Helmke. Gift of Crystal Carol Helmke Lokken.

### Photographs - J.S. Johnson General Store.

1) An early photo of the general store that also housed the Post Office. 2) The interior of the store in the late 1940s or early '50s. Pictured Siphord Johnson, son of J.S., and his wife Helen and four employees. Gift of Richard Johnson, grandson.

### Five trainride snapshots.

Taken of a McFarland School class which took the train on a field trip to Stoughton. 1966. Gift of Ernie Thieding.

### The Alsmo family Bible.

Printed in Norwegian. The picture on the front page is thought to be the father of Martha Ronni, wife of Ray Alsmo. Gift of Norman and Amy Alsmo.

### Newspaper Article.

“First Railroad in Wisconsin Too Poor to Build Depot” by John McFarland, son of William McFarland, village founder. From the Capitol Times, February 16, 1930. From the Wisconsin Historical Society web site.

### Wisconsin railroad map -Copyright - 1914.

### Specification Book - 1912.

Wisconsin Telephone Company. Instructions for building telephone lines. Gifts of Ernest Peterson.

**Comb and brush holder.** Made of tin. Sometime later it was painted black. Comb and brush holders usually hung on the wall near the sink in the kitchen. (There were no indoor bathrooms!) From the early 1900s, possibly the 1910s, '20s or '30s. Gift of Donald Everson.

### Visit by Grandson of Early McFarland General Store Proprietor

A June visitor to McFarland and the museum was Richard Johnson and his wife, Shirley, from Branford, CT. Richard is the grandson of J. S. Johnson, whose general store stood on the corner of the block on which the new library now stands. Richard says that he enjoyed helping his grandfather in the store. During his highschool days at East High in Madison, Richard picked up the meat from Oscar Mayer Co. and delivered it to the store. Groceries and other items came from Madison, Jefferson and other sources. Often orders came on the train.

On Saturday nights the farmers would come in to do their ‘trading’, leave their bags of groceries in the store and then enjoy the Saturday night movies which were shown outdoors on the back of the store.

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## Lawn Work at the Museum

On Saturday, the 17th of November, lawn work at the museum was in high gear. Earlier in the fall Earl Anderson, senior maintenance advisor, had requested some good topsoil be obtained and used as fill along the north side of the museum. Our thanks to Tom Gannon who generously donated about 5 yards of soil. Tim Mitchell and Wes Licht, using wheel barrows and shovels, moved the soil to both the north and west sides of the building as well as to low spots on the grounds.

Using his own grass seeder (not an antique from the museum), Earl broadcast grass seed where it was needed. Meanwhile, Gini Nichols, Mary Dahlstrom, Crystal Lokken and Ginny Dodson assisted Wes in planting a wide variety of locally collected prairie flower seeds on the filled area west of the museum. All seeded areas were mulched with clean oat straw.

Joining the seeding crew that morning, McFarland Brownie Troop #283 assembled to rake the lawn which was thickly covered with leaves. With a cadre of mothers, including troop leaders Veronica Gunderson, Mari Buchholz and Linda Budnar giving help and supervising, the girls raked the golden leaves into massive piles. After a chance to jump and play in the tempting mounds of leaves, the girls stuffed them into huge bags, which were then hauled away. Our thanks to the girls of Brownie Troop # 283, all of whom fulfilled community service toward a try-it patch for helping the museum with this work project.



## McFarland more complete.

Another beautification project for the museum involved planting bulbs for spring bloom. Ginny Dodson and Crystal Lokken planted nine pots of red, white and blue tulips and hyacinths for an early floral display in the planter box in front of the museum. We look forward to these colorful signs of spring.

With all these projects completed, the lawn was made neat and tidy and ready for winter. Several days later came the first snowfall!

## Obituaries

### George Milan Paulson

Died July 24, 2007, at age 94 at the Hospice Care Center in Fitchburg, Wisconsin. His wife, Cristel, had died in 2001. He lived in McFarland for 39 years from 1946 to 1985 and, along with his wife, was a lifetime member of the McFarland Historical Society. He also was active in the McFarland Lutheran Church.

Wisconsin State Journal

### Margaret Greene Kennedy

Died July 27, 2007, at age 88 at her home in Maitland, Florida. Her husband, George Greene, had died in 1968 and her second husband Orian Kennedy died in 1994. She donated the Skare collection to the McFarland Historical Society, as well as capital in memory of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Skare (Mrs. Skare was Gertrude Chindahl Skare, Margaret Kennedy's aunt). She was a life member of the McFarland Historical Society.

Florida newspapers supplied  
by David Greene, (her son)

### Betty G. Hrovat

Died November 28, 2007, at age 84, survived by her husband, Frank Hrovat. She had lived in McFarland for over 45 years and volunteered in McFarland schools, the Lutheran church, and other community groups in McFarland including the McFarland Historical Society.

McFarland Thistle

### Winifred Frieda Hertha Berndt Muenkel

Died November 29, 2007, at age 91. Her husband, Harold, had died in July 2006. She was a lifetime member of the McFarland Historical Society and active in many other McFarland community groups including the Lutheran church, and the public library.

McFarland Thistle

## McFarland Historical Society Tours Old World Wisconsin

Monday, August 20, 2007, was the date of the annual tour of the McFarland Historical Society, this time to Old World Wisconsin near Eagle. The group rode comfortably in a small air conditioned coach from Lazars Bus Service in Marshall. They toured the ethnic farmsteads and lunched at the cafeteria in the round barn.

Old World Wisconsin is made up of over 65 relocated and restored buildings on 576 wooded acres. Bev Lane was impressed with its size. She also noted, "The docents at each site were very well informed."

Among sites visited were the Blacksmith Shop in the Yankee area. Barbara Houghton was interested in how their work changed over time. Christi Mykytyn related "I enjoyed hearing about the history of blacksmithing." Jane Licht learned, "a talented blacksmith could custom finish pre-formed horse shoes and get all four of them on the horse in only 45 minutes!"

Marian and Gary Karl hadn't realized that there was an early African American settlement in Wisconsin. They enjoyed the trams which take visitors from one farmstead to the other. At the Danish farm, the Karls conversed with a visiting docent from Denmark.

In the German area, Dale Marsden and JoAnn Sorensen-Marsden got a lesson in harvesting, threshing and rye winnowing. They spoke with the handsome young man taking care of the Finnish dairy farm Gini Dodson, JoAnn Sornson-Marsden, Crystal Lokken, Christi



Mykytyn and Wes Licht take a break on the steps of an 1840's German family farmhouse.

"who was interested in coming to McFarland to see our museum." The Norwegian area turned out to be a favorite with many. Here there was a demonstration of tools used in threshing. In the farm house there were examples of early Norwegian-American furniture, a demonstration of spinning, and a display of woven items.

David Houghton appreciated the cooking demonstrations. He liked "experiencing the kitchen life of persons from the many different countries who settled in Wisconsin."

Carrol Vollmer enjoyed the one-room Raspberry School, because "I went to a one-room school in South Dakota for eight years!"

Gini Nichols, was struck by the primitive living conditions and hardships of early settlers no matter which country they emigrated from, and the willingness of the descendants of early families and owners of the buildings to give them to Old World Wisconsin.

We came away from our day at Old World Wisconsin with admiration for this beautiful place that offers a rich historical view of Wisconsin's past.

The McFarland Historical Society sponsors a tour each August to a nearby historical site. Where will we go next year? We haven't decided yet, but you are invited to come along!

## McFarlands Visit the Museum

On August 28, two grandchildren of William McFarland paid a visit to the museum. Dorothy McFarland Kollofski from Ft. Meyers, Florida, and her sister, Jeanette McFarland Bump of Randolph came to McFarland along with Jeanette's husband, Joe Bump, and their daughter Johnette. The McFarlands were welcomed and guided through the museum by board members Wes Licht and Crystal Lokken. As "Carol Helmke," Crystal had been a

classmate of Jeanette during their school days. Everyone enjoyed seeing objects relating to the McFarland family history and that of the village. As they prepared to leave, Jeanette and Dorothy were given copies of an article by their uncle, John McFarland, early tavern operator, which had been published in a 1930's issue of The Capitol Times, as well as copies of Wedding Certificates of three of the McFarland children, including that of Dorothy and her late husband. Both women are Life Members of the McFarland Historical Society.

## Good Old Days for Kids Was Good for Everyone

by Crystal Lokken

On the glorious September Sunday afternoon of the Family Festival, the society's Good Old Days for Kids event at the museum was kicked off. Right after the parade the fun began for both the kids and their parents! Old fashioned activities and crafts and carriage rides kept them busy all afternoon with Laradene Reinke handling the sales of popcorn, lemonade and ride tickets.

David Houghton had no difficulty attracting youngsters who came by the Mystery Box. They played by putting their hands into each of the six holes, and guessing what old fashioned object was hidden there. Every child got a



Bucky Badger sticker for their try. Parents sometimes participated in the fun too.

Red and Baby, two of Dale Marsden's beautiful Narragansett turkeys, had a good time strut-

ting around. These very tame birds amazed the visitors and showed off their uniquely marked feathers.

From other turkey tail feathers Dale made quill pens for the kids who then tried writing with them. Some even worked!



Many families enjoyed the carriage rides provided by Wes Licht. His Morab mares, Lena and Lady, made many trips around the block and the kids rewarded them with lots of petting.

Two colorful friendly rabbits, named Shorty and Chino, also received their share of petting from interested youngsters with Holly Eppli watching over them. They were pretty calm; their noses twitched a lot and their ears stood up taking in all the sounds of the event.

The funny painted lake scene was the site for group picture taking. Kids and parents alike stood behind it and put their faces into the holes. When their pictures

were printed, they found themselves dressed in old fashioned bathing suits! Jane Licht and Jackie Utter were in charge of that activity.

Corn shelling was a hit with the boys and girls and many remarked, "Cool or Awesome!" The museum's antique corn sheller, with cranking power from the children, shelled many ears of corn during the afternoon. Tim Mitchell took care that all participants who arrived with five digits per hand, two hands per person, left with the same! The corn cobs were then made into darts by adding feathers, similar to Native American tradition. A bushel basket and hoops suspended from the tree became targets. Cornhole was another game of ancient heritage. The youngsters put their shelled corn into zip lock bags and tossed them at a slanted board with a hole in it. They scored one point if it landed on the board and three points if it went into the hole.

Another old fashioned activity was making button buzzers. Seated on the picnic blanket, leader Christi Mykytyn gathered the youngsters. Using string and buttons, they made the buzzers which were then played with and enjoyed. One mother, who had grown up in Japan, said she had made and played with them as a child, proving that button buzzers are multicultural! Many parents added, "Grandma used to make them."

Rowdy, Sara Licht's miniature horse, attracted the kids like bees to honey! They were invited into his pen to pet



him, brush him and braid his long flowing mane. Occasionally Sara led the 34-inch mini around the lawn with lots of admiring followers.





In front of the landmark Skare cabin was the log cabin quilt square activity led by Crystal Lokken. Four views of the cabin were each printed on cloth squares. Using oil pastels, the children chose and colored a cabin and created the background. The squares have since been sewn together to make a quilted wall hanging and it is currently on display in the children's section of the library.

Inside the museum, Gini Nichols headed up the paper doll activity. Using vintage Caddie Woodlawn and Sterling North paper dolls familiar through books, kids colored sets of clothing for the dolls which they got to keep.



What a day! It was gratifying to see the excitement on the children's faces and hear words of appreciation from the parents. Activities from the Good Old Days had been brought to life all afternoon at the McFarland Historical Museum and they were definitely good!

### Horsepower for Work and Play

Our 2008 theme is "Horsepower for Work and Play." featuring the use of draft and light horses for farm work, travel and just plain fun. We are in need of some old photos showing horses in any kind of activity, and any old items, big and small, related to horse work, horse toys, old stories and other printed material to add to our featured annual display.



**Please help us to record and tell the important story of horses in the early days of our community with your stories, photos and artifacts.**

### A New Furnace

A new high efficiency furnace is being installed this winter and with a zone heating system. Even though we added 14 inches of insulation to the ceiling a few years ago, the fuel bills are still high. The whole system will cost approximately \$7,000 and we have set that as our goal for the **"Furnace Fund"** this year. Please include your donations to this fund with your membership renewal.

**Please Support the Furnace Fund!**