



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 8, 1 P.M. to 3 P.M.

Featured speaker: Norman Gilliland from Wisconsin Public Radio

The McFarland Historical Society annual meeting will be short as usual followed by Norman Gilliland to play some excerpts of the evolution of radio comedy or stars of radio comedy. It promises to be a fun time. After Mr. Gilliland we will be reminiscing with some "oldtime" board games. Coffee, tea, milk, cookies and a deli platter will be served at the meeting. Come for the food and the fun.

Norman Gilliland has degrees in English and Broadcasting. He began hosting classical music broadcasts in the mid-1970s and joined Wisconsin Public Radio in 1983. He's the producer and host of a weekday classical music program, and co-host, with Stephanie Elkins, of Midday Classics. Gilliland also co-produces and hosts, with Professor Emily Auerbach, the University of the Air series, Old Time Radio Drama on Sunday evenings, and is the creator of Grace Notes, nationally broadcast vignettes drawn from the lives of classical music composers and performers.

The subjects of his non-musical productions range from "Back from the Shadows Again: A Firesign Theater Retrospective" to "Children's Pictures at an Exhibition: Art from Chernobyl." Since 1990 he has been the narrator for the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra's popular summer series, Concerts on the Square.

Gold Star Exhibit at the Library

by Crystal Lokken

An exhibit, documenting a fascinating piece of McFarland and U.S. history, was on display in the History Room at the E. D. Locke Library from last June until mid-January. It told the story of a McFarland woman, Mary Lyster Nelson, and her pilgrimage to France in the summer of 1930 to visit the grave of her son who was killed during WW I, just three days before the Armistice on November 11, 1918.

From 1930-1933 the U.S. government organized and conducted month-long pilgrimages to Europe so that mothers and widows of servicemen could visit their loved one's grave.

Displayed in the exhibit case was an American flag which was a gift to her from the City of New York. There were the gifts she brought from Paris for her family such as the mesh purse for her daughter, Dorothea, a necklace of crystal beads, one of three she brought home for each of her three granddaughters.

There was the ID which served as her passport and the diary which she kept with Dorothea's help. Mary, a Norwegian immigrant in 1884, found it difficult to write in English with a pen and ink on board ships and in hotel rooms! So she waited until she returned home when she could share the memories of her trip and her daughter could write it all down.

The exhibit included photos of Mary taken on the lawn of her home before her departure on the 5 pm train, with her pilgrimage group in New York City, in Paris at the tomb of the French unknown soldier, and at the Meuse Argonne cemetery where her son, Helmer was buried.

The entries in her diary tell about her trip. On June 10, 1930, Mary boarded the 5:21 p.m. train at MacFarland (sic) for Chicago. Changing to a train for New York City, she and the other Gold Star mothers in her group traveled via Cleveland, Ohio, first to Buffalo, N. Y., where they were taken by bus to view Niagara Falls, and then on to New York City.

On June 13th, Mary, with her Gold Star Mother's group, left on the S.S. President Harding for Cherbourg, France. From there they went by train to Paris, where they were given a tour of the city, participated in a ceremony of placing a wreath on an unknown soldier's grave and attended a reception where speeches were given by the Ambassador of the U.S. and General Pershing.

On Tuesday, June 24, Mary Nelson's 69th birthday, the group traveled to the cemeteries in eastern France. For several days Mary visited her son, Helmer Nelson's grave, at the Meuse-Argonne cemetery, where over 14,000 fallen American soldiers are buried.

After the visits at the cemeteries, the mothers returned to Paris where they were treated to 5 days of sightseeing, which included Notre Dame Cathedral, Versailles, where the Armistice was signed, Fontainebleau, the American Embassy and the American Church in Paris, and the Eiffel Tower at night.

The pilgrimage group returned to New York City on the S.S. President Roosevelt. After two days in New York City, they returned to their homes. The trip lasted just over a month, which may seem long to us. But travel was slower then, by train and steamship.

Though there have been several wars since, there has never been such an effort by the government to honor and aid mothers who have lost their sons in battle. The pilgrimages remain fascinating today and are worth remembering.

Mary Lyster Nelson died January 17th, 1944. At her funeral, her neighbors honored her memory with a floral offering of roses in the shape of a gold star.

Old Car and Tractor Help Needed

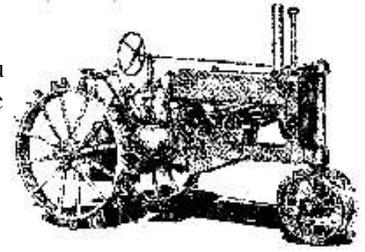
Do you have photos of old cars and tractors that were used in the early days? Are you a collector of machinery from long ago? If so, we need your help. Our 2009 theme for the museum lobby is "From Horse Power to Horsepower".

It will feature the transfer of our dependence on horses for work and play to mechanical systems. We want to show how the development of the internal combustion engine signaled the beginning of the end of animal power on the farm, and in villages and cities through the change to tractors and the horseless carriage in the early 1900's.

We are in need of old photographs that show cars and tractors from the 1950's and earlier, in any kind of farm use or family pose. If they had significance locally, that would be nice.

We are also looking for items, big and small, related to farm work and village life that show the inventive, adventurous, varied and practical nature of this post-horse era. Perhaps you have a vintage car or tractor or parts of these that could be displayed. Help us to tell the important story of old tractors, early automobiles and even the beginning of electricity in the lives of our relatives and in the community.

Please contact Wes Licht at **838-8178** if you can share some pictures to copy for our exhibit or an artifact to display. Thanks for helping us.



Membership

Please fill out your membership card and join us in preserving our village's history. Memberships pay our bills and enable our volunteers to maintain and display our history. All the work we do is volunteer and we have no paid staff of any kind. The McFarland Historical Society is thankful to its board and its members for remaining in good financial condition. We are still accepting donations to the furnace fund since we did not reach our goal. The furnace is a great improvement to the museum. Thank you!

Many thanks to McFarland Printers for its donation toward printing our newsletter!

McFarland Historical Society
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Third Grade Class Tours at the Museum

by Crystal Lokken

Every autumn, the third grade classes from Waubesa Intermediate School visit the McFarland Historical Museum as a part of their study of McFarland. In the fall, six classes of third graders were introduced to this year's theme display, "Horse Power for Work and Play", which shows the important part horses played in our history. They were encouraged to imagine the village of McFarland as it was during the "horse and buggy" days. At that time Main street was a dirt road lined with board walks, with hitching posts for horses all along the front of the various businesses!

Artifacts and photographs told the story of horses at work on farms and how they were used for travel during the years before the coming of the automobile. The big 100-year-old "Stoughton" wagon, commonly used by farmers for travel into town to haul home their purchases from the general stores, or to deliver milk to the dairy, was the focal point of the lobby display. Many other artifacts such as the side saddle, wagon jacks, the stick used for measuring the height of horses, horse shoes, blacksmith's tools, attracted the youngsters.

Photos of McFarland's Main Street where horses and wagons were hitched in front of the general stores where people came to "trade," of horses and buggies carrying people on visits, of a wedding procession, and many more, brought early McFarland's dependence on horse power to life.

Divided into smaller groups, the third graders were given a tour of the log cabin and the permanent museum exhibits. Board members David Houghton, Mary Dahl-

strom, Gini Nichols, Ginny Dodson, Dale Marsden and Crystal Lokken acted as tour guides, pointing out selected items in the many displays.

Out in the Skare log cabin on the museum grounds, Wes Licht showed the students what life in a log cabin was like when Albert Skare, (pronounced "Skarey") his parents and eight siblings, lived in it. (Skare's gift of the cabin and over a thousand artifacts forms the basis of the museum's collection.)

The classes, whose teachers are Mrs. Beam, Mr. Buhalog, Miss Case, Mrs. Dahl, Mr. Scharf and Mr. Webber, trekked all the way from Waubesa Intermediate School to *The wagon jack was* visit the museum . *very interesting.*

When it is open on Sunday afternoons in the summer, we often encounter some of these youngsters who come, with their parents and siblings, to visit the museum at a more leisurely pace, and to visit again, their favorite displays.



Wes grabs the students' attentions while explaining how to age a horse by looking at its teeth.



"Farm Stories, from the Good Old Days" in Third Printing

by Crystal Lokken

“Farm Stories” has been a huge success! This is a book of stories told by local farmers, and people who had grown up on farms in the area. They shared their farm history and memories, photographs as well as artifacts for the 2007 display of “The Good Old Days of Farming”. The stories were so interesting that the Society decided to make them available as a book. These interesting memoirs present an important picture of the farming history of the area which needs to be honored and preserved.

It’s been exciting to learn so much about the early farm history of the area, and to share the legacy of the rural lifestyle that helped form the McFarland of today through the publication of “Farm Stories”. There are still a few copies available at a cost of \$10. Please phone Crystal Lokken at 838-7892 if you want to buy one.

There was a wonderful response from people who received the book! Here are a few of the many nice comments we received:

Betty Egner McConnell, whose Egner farm story is in the book, said, “I sat right down and read the entire book. I enjoyed every minute of it!” Betty sent a copy to her niece, Betty Ofstead, St Paul, MN, who wrote, “What a delightful surprise! I sat down and read the entire book. It was almost like being there, especially because you have given me tours when I have visited you. What a great idea for the Historical Society to have a theme of farming during the early days and to interview and record local memories.”

In a phone call to Betty, Rodney McConnell, San Antonio, TX, said he read it cover to cover and just loved it! His wife, Lillian, said it was like reading Little House on the Prairie.

Margaret Alsmo Stolen who contributed the Alsmo farm history wrote, “Your stories about the farm families is delightful. They are very interesting and seem so comparable to each other in the way it was many years ago. Thank you for the good job.”

Mary Lokken emailed from Florence, Italy. “I’m reading the 'Farm Stories' - very interesting! You did a great job of documenting everything, while leaving a flavor of country story-telling.”



Hauling hay on the Gunderson farm.

Wedding procession of August and Pauline Freund, May 11, 1910



HOUGHTONS LEAVE MCFARLAND

By Wes and Jane Licht

Former McFarland Historical Society Board members Barbara and David Houghton moved from their century old home in the Town of Dunn last fall to live near their daughter and her family in Woodbury, Minnesota. Barbara served on the Board in the late 1970's and in the 1980's while David joined after he retired from the Meteorology Department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The McFarland Historical Society Board of Directors and Friends of McFarland Library co-hosted a reception on September 30, 2008, to honor the Houghtons and their many contributions to the Village of McFarland and the Town of Dunn over the past forty years. Several awards were presented to the Houghtons as well as a memory book containing many letters and photographs contributed by friends and neighbors.

It was Barbara's idea back in 1975 to write a history of the Village of McFarland and she enlisted Meg Nielsen and Jane Licht to help her. These young mothers planned the project, researched old records and interviewed over 100 people. The Village Board provided a small grant as part of a bicentennial project and the book, *City of the Second Lake, A History of McFarland, Wisconsin* was printed in 1976 as promised, the first printing selling out in 3 months. In 1998, the three women published a new version with different photographs and a new chapter on the Town of Dunn.

Both Barbara and David worked on cleaning, sorting and displaying artifacts during the early days of the museum. When "Pioneer Days" was established, they participated by demonstrating cider-making and butter-making, two activities that they actually did quite often at their home in the Town of Dunn. David's good organizational skills were applied to historical society projects and he often served as a tour guide for third grade classes at the museum. Recently David was one of the small group of board members that

volunteered his labor to help install a new heating system for the museum.

It was Barbara's suggestion to add the names of the women to the list of McFarland Historical Society life time members. For years the plaque only contained, for example, "Mr. and Mrs. David Houghton," with no mention of the female spouse's name regardless of her contributions to the Society. Board member David took on the project, making many contacts and conducting research until all the first names were accounted for and added to the plaque.

Last September, as a fitting conclusion for their many years of service to the Society, Barbara and David rode with other board members in the Huston's covered wagon and waved to the crowds at the Family Festival Parade. Barbara, always in tune with historical events, proudly wore her T-shirt from the very first Family Festival.

Barbara and David Houghton's ideas, enthusiasm, and commitment to the preservation of local history will be missed by their many friends in the McFarland Historical Society. However, their legacy of good works will be enjoyed by others for many years to come.

Board president, Dale Marsden, presents the Houghtons with a plaque in appreciation for their many years of service to the McFarland Historical Society.



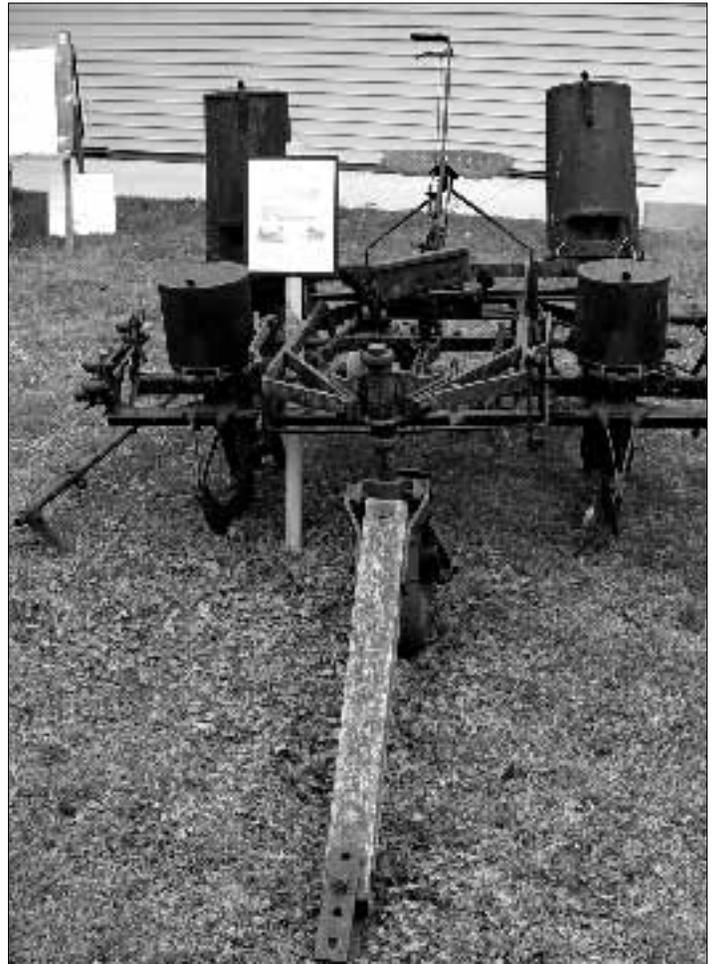
Horse Power Revisited

by Wes Licht

In conjunction with the McFarland Family Festival on September 28, the McFarland Historical Museum celebrated its 2008 theme “Horse Power for Work and Play” with several different activities. The museum opened at 11 AM so that early parade watchers could enjoy all the exhibits including a special horse-drawn farm machinery and vehicle exhibit on the lawn. A couple different plows, a cultivator, corn planter, harrow, potato digger, tobacco hoe, drag scraper, road grader, stone boat, a road cart and doctor’s buggy were brought in for the display. We wish to thank Earl Anderson, Dave Landerud, Tura Olson Graber, Wes Licht, Richard Sperle and Nathan Kirch for sharing their special farm antiques with us.

Returning again, especially for the kids, was Sara Licht with her horses Rowdy and Rainy. A small pen was set up for Rowdy, a miniature horse, and youngsters were invited in to pet and groom this gentle little equine. Holly Epli helped direct this activity while Sara demonstrated the proper procedures of traditional harnessing and hitching to the road cart. This was a very common and economical vehicle for early transportation a century ago.

The biggest feature of the afternoon was the team of Belgian horses, owned and driven by Wayne Huston, pulling a covered wagon and offering rides between the museum and the large family festival tent by the high school. Wayne and several of his family members provided assistance where needed so that everyone could enjoy the rides. The horses and covered wagon also participated in the parade with several members of the McFarland Historical



Society board as passengers, smiling and waving to the spectators along the parade route. We’d like to thank Washa Construction, Marsden’s Pure Honey and Ciel Rouge Salon for helping sponsor the Huston Belgians.



While the museum is now officially closed, anyone wishing to see the Horse Power display in the lobby or the other exhibits in the museum can contact one of the board members for a tour. It’s a great occasion for sharing with visiting family and friends.

Above: Corn planter modified to be drawn by a tractor.

Left: Sara Licht and her cart pass by the Huston’s Wagon loaded with pasengers.

Recent Deaths

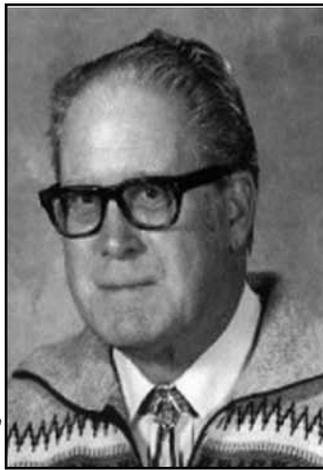
Harvey McFarland

Harvey McFarland, age 95, died on Monday, August 4, 2008. He was born to Joe and Mary McFarland on October 22, 1912 in the town of Dunn.

Harvey had two brothers and four sisters. He married Gwendolyn Lane in 1932.

Together they had three children, Connie, Tom and Joe. Harvey lived virtually his entire life in

McFarland until moving to Wisconsin Dells in 2005. He had an intimate knowledge of the history of McFarland which he enjoyed sharing with friends and family. Harvey was proud to be the grandson of the founder of McFarland, William Hugh McFarland. Harvey was a farmer, businessman and former member of the McFarland Village board. After retiring he worked part time for the McFarland School district. He was quick with his wit and contagious smile. We were all blessed to have him here for a while. Harvey is survived by his sons, Rev. Tom (Jackie) of Oshkosh and Joe of Wisconsin Dells; two grandchildren, Shelly and Shaun; four great grandchildren, Ashley, Justin, Ben and Paul; and siblings, Dorothy Kolofski of Florida and Jeanette Bump of Randolph.



Charles P. Phillips

Charles P. Phillips, age 84 of McFarland, passed away at Hospice Care in Fitchburg on Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2009, surrounded by his family. He was born in Madison on Sept. 9, 1924, a son of George and Mabel (Murray) Phillips, and graduated from East High School. Charlie was united in marriage to Magdalen Kuntz. He worked as a plasterer for Fix Brothers in Madison, and retired from the City-County Building as a painter. He was a devoted caregiver to his wife Magdalen for 41 years. Charlie was an honorary member of the McFarland Historical Society, on the board of McFarland Senior Citizens, a lifetime member of McFarland Lutheran Church, played first base for the McFarland Home Talent

Helgerson, Elaine M.

Elaine M. Helgerson, McFarland, age 72, died unexpectedly on Saturday, Jan. 31, 2009, at Meriter Hospital. Elaine was born on May 12, 1936, a daughter of the late Aden and Meta (Manthey) Schatzke. She graduated from Westfield High School and was married to Edwin Helgerson on Oct. 29, 1955, Elaine worked for many years at the Dane County Criminal and Traffic Court. She was an active member of McFarland Lutheran Church and the American Legion Auxiliary Post 534 in McFarland. Elaine worked as a poll worker and

at the Food Pantry in McFarland. She especially liked to travel and to go out for Friday fish with her many friends. Elaine enjoyed her friends and the time she spent at the cottage on Lawrence Lake. Elaine is survived by her son, Keith (Maxine) Helgerson, Madison; four grandchildren; 11 great-grandchildren; one great-great-granddaughter; two sisters, Eleanor Paulson, Madison and Arlene (Harve) Leppin, Fairwater. Elaine was preceded in death by her husband Ed on Oct. 8, 2000.

State Historical Society Grant

by Dale Marsden

Gini Nichols announced that the McFarland Historical Society had received a \$700 grant from the Wisconsin Historical Society in August last year. In order to receive the grant, the McFarland Historical Society had to match the \$700 grant from new donations, which we were able to do with our annual bake sale. The grant allowed us to purchase Past Perfect software which will be used with newly purchased computer equipment: a laptop, a printer-copier, and digital camera, to digitize museum records of artifacts and manuscripts, etc. Gini Nichols and Dale Marsden also traveled to Eau Claire to take a one day Past Perfect training course in October. Work has already been started entering records from cards for artifacts into the software on the laptop. Volunteers will be needed to input the information. **Please list your interest in 'entering historic data' on the back of your membership application.** Training sessions will be scheduled this spring and summer for members interesting in this volunteer work. Contact Dale Marsden, 838-3992 for more information.

Attention All Cooks

by Ginny Dodson

The McFarland Historical Society is compiling a heritage cookbook to preserve our treasured family recipes. We are looking for recipes about your favorite family food traditions, along with any information about ethnic background, anecdotes, and photos you wish to share.

Heritage recipes are recipes that have been passed down in your family for at least two generations, and are prepared from "scratch" rather than using pre-packaged ingredients. Please give your recipes to Ginny Dodson by mail, e-mail or phone. Forms are available in the local history room at the E.D.Locke Library in McFarland, local churches and a few other locations around the village. The deadline for submission is July 1, 2009.

McFarlanders Join the Circus

by David Houghton

McFarlanders of all ages, toddlers, youngsters, parents, grandparents, singles and couples joined the Historical Society's bus tour to Circus World Museum in Baraboo on August 27. Joining the circus for a day, the group was entertained in the Hippodrome where performers from Argentina were highlighted, leaving the audience breathless. In one segment they adapted their "bolos" to their stunning performance, which they explained afterwards were traditionally used for hunting and for lassoing cattle. A small circus band entertained while the jugglers, trapeze artists and other performers dazzled the crowd with their talent and skills.



had joined the group on the bus for the trip home, and everyone from youngest to oldest was ready for a nap. With the weather cooperating as it did, it was a great day to join the circus.

Left: Children were elephants and tigers and ringleaders at the children's circus,

Below: The elephant rides were truly the most fun anywhere.

Then there was the dancing elephant and the pony, and Roger the clown. Of course Roger got himself in real trouble when he tried to imitate the performers.

Many in the group toured the amazing circus wagon display, heard the band organ concert, rode on the carousel and visited the old buildings where the animals had been kept and where the costumes are stored. A few of the youngsters rode on the back of Kai, a gentle camel. Some of the older ones in the group had a ride on the elephant! The tour leader told the group that the circus, with its hundreds of workers, horses and many exotic animals, taught the U.S. army a thing or two about how they had expeditiously transported everything from one location to another.

Here are some comments from the group:

"I enjoyed the kids show at the circus. I thought they

were very brave to get up there and put on the costumes and they did very well as performers. I also liked the elephant and had a ride on it."

"Late in the day I listened to several performances of the huge circus "organs" on wagons in the area where dozens of circus wagons were on display. At one point Barbara and I did a few polka steps to the music."

"My favorite thing was the elephant ride. I also was totally captivated by the circus wagons. They have done a beautiful restoration job."

"My granddaughter and I thoroughly enjoyed the circus and the clown show, as well as the displays in the entrance building. We had such a good time, now she wants to go back."

By late afternoon when it was time to leave, a clown

