



The AKEY BrAKEY News

a bi-annual newsletter from the Richland County Historical Society

October, 2019 Volume #11 – Issue # 2 – promoting and supporting the History of Richland County and Southwestern Wisconsin

NOTE that this is the second in a series provided by Dr. Jerry Bower which will be continued in future issues.

THE O. J. BURNHAM BUILDING -- 159 EAST COURT STREET

By Jerry Bower

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE:

The 1987 Survey report states that the O. J. Burnham building is significant as an example of the “Italianate commercial style.” This style is “characterized by a projecting metal cornice ornamented by large and small brackets, metal medallions and a rectangular shaped pediment.”

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE:

Oliver J. Burnham (1842-1918) was an important Richland Center businessman. Oliver’s family moved from Vermont, where he was born, in 1855 to Bear Creek in Sauk County. Here Oliver worked on the family farm and taught school in the winter. Oliver served a three-year enlistment, 1861-1864, in the Union Army during the Civil War as a bugler and officer. After his discharge, Oliver returned to Bear Creek to farm and teach school.

In 1871 he became the principal of the Lone Rock High School. He served until 1873, when he came to Richland Center to become the first principal of the city’s high school. Oliver held this post until 1876, when he and brother, William, opened a drug store on Court Street. Five years later, 1881, William moved to Dakota. Oliver operated the drug store alone until 1887, when he partnered in a produce business with Logan.

In 1889, when he built this store, Burnham took a new partner, John T. Scott, whose produce business on the northside of Court Street had been destroyed by fire in early March 1887. The new store had a cold storage area in the rear which was stocked annually with ice from the Pine River. Burnham and Scott bought butter, eggs, and poultry from area farmers and shipped them by rail to Chicago and New York.

In 1899 the partners started a creamery in the rear of their store. They greatly expanded their creamery operation in 1902, when they purchased a creamery located on the Pine at the north end of the city. This purchase also included five skimming stations located in Dayton, Marshall, and Richland Townships. Eight years later they combined the creamery operations downtown, in addition they built in the rear of the store to the east, toward Church Street. Now the creamery and butter churning operations were just across the alley from the Toms Furniture Store. In 1913 Oliver J. Burnham retired and sold his interest to Scott. Both Burnham and Scott died in 1918.

Orla J. Campbell continued to operate the produce and creamery businesses, which he had purchased from Scott, until 1931. Then, the Buchen Brothers assumed control. The produce business continued into the early 1970s.

** ~ **

A Warm WELCOME to those with NEW Memberships to the RICHLAND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY from the fall of 2019.

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| Rod Perry | Jamie Johnson |
| Terry Moen | Jeff Behrens |
| Judy Barnicle | Therese Scheckel |
| Mary Stowell | Mike McNair |
| Craig Rasmussen | Marcia Carlson |
| Janet Babbitt | Doug Landsee |
| Bob Nugent | *Rob & Felicia Rynes |
| Ken Auz | Harry & Michelle Dugan |
| James Burke | Dale & Rachel Schultz |
| Ashley Rutkowski | Denis McHugh |
| Jelayne Brewer | Laura Selgeby |

* a Lifetime membership

Also a sincere THANK YOU to all donations; those that continue to re-new their memberships and those that have Lifetime memberships.

From the April edition **THE OLIVER J. BURNHAM HOUSE** -- *location* 361 NORTH PARK STREET

<https://content.mpl.org/digital/collection/rchr/search/searchterm/burnham>

+++++



Richland County History Room, 325 N Central Ave, Richland Center, WI 53581, richlandhistory@gmail.com, (608) 647-6033

RICHLAND COUNTY Pictures of rural schools used by Steve Fogo in the REPUBLICAN OBSERVER during 1952-53
<https://content.mpl.org/digital/collection/rchr/id/6797/rec/17>

Richland County Historical Society Board

- Nick Studnicka – President**
- Ken Thiede – Vice-president**
- Dianne Nachtigal – Secretary**
- Paul Wiertzema – Treasurer**
- Directors -- Rob Bender**
- Jay Buchanan- Mueller**
- Jerry Bower**
- Ken Lewis**
- Barb Cody as Webmaster**

The Akey School Museum located on County TB



PRESIDENT’S CORNER by *Nick Studnicka*

We have closed the 2019 Akey School summer season with 111 visitors. We are always looking for volunteers to help keep the museum open each Sunday during the 2020 season. Please contact me at studnicn@hotmail.com if interested. If You have not yet got the chance to see the documentary, “One-Room School” with Jerry Apps, I would Highly Recommend seeing it due to the fact that it features the Akey School.

Upcoming Projects: We are looking at some major maintenance projects that will have to be done in the near future. We are looking for someone to paint the exterior of Akey School; if anyone knows a good painter that is reasonable or would be willing to donate part of their labor to help us repaint the exterior let me know. Also, the roof is starting to show its age, currently no leaks but the Historical Society needs to start looking at replacing the roof. If anyone again knows of a roofer/roofing company that does good work and potently willing to give the Richland County Historical Society a break on materials or labor.

I would Like to thank all the volunteers that helped make the 2019 Akey Museum a success. Also a thank you to Paul for his work on the bell.

The Richland Center High School Band performing at Gov. Vernon W. Thomson's Inauguration in the State Capitol rotunda, Madison, Wisconsin, January 7, 1957



Richland County History Room, 325 N Central Ave, Richland Center, WI 53581, richlandhistory@gmail.com, (608) 647-6033

https://classic.nga.org/cms/home/governors/past-governors-bios/page_wisconsin/col2-content/main-content-list/title_thomson_vernon.default.html

VERNON W. THOMSON -- was born in Richland Center, Wisconsin. He attended Carroll College in Waukesha for two years and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1927. He went on to the University of Wisconsin Law School and was admitted to the Wisconsin Bar in 1932. From 1933 to 1935 he was enrolling officer for the Civilian Conservation Corps. He also served as Richland's Assistant District Attorney in 1933 and City Attorney from 1933 to 1937 and again from 1942 to 1944. He was elected to the Wisconsin Assembly for eight consecutive terms from 1935 to 1949, serving as Speaker in 1939, 1941, and 1943 and as Republican floor leader in 1945, 1947, and 1949. He was elected Wisconsin Attorney General in 1950 and re-elected in 1952 and 1954, winning the governorship in 1956. In exchange for receiving increased salaries and living expenses, state legislators agreed to Governor Thomson's demand for enactment of what became one of the strictest lobbying laws in the country, designed to prevent lobbyists from covering significant portions of legislators' personal expenses. During his term as governor, Thomson also approved legislation providing group life insurance for state employees and revising the public retirement system. He was defeated for reelection in 1958 by Gaylord Nelson, after which he practiced law for two years. In 1960 he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Richland County, a seat that he held for seven terms.

He served as Governor of Wisconsin from January 7, 1957 to January 5, 1959 now over 60 years ago.

“RE-SEARCHING” THE EARLY HISTORY OF RICHLAND COUNTY

This article concept was introduced in earlier editions to provide for ongoing information highlighting various topics of local interest.

<http://www.usgenweb.info/wirichland/books/1906-9.htm> **Chapter 9. - Educational Development.**

The law requiring the establishment of public schools in Wisconsin went into effect in the first years of statehood, but it was a good while after that before anything closely resembling the common school system of today had been evolved. But it should not be hastily concluded from this that education was neglected. Parents who could afford it gave their children the advantages of good schools, as good as could be maintained, and among those who were very poor there was much self-sacrifice that the children might be educated and prepared for better success than their fathers and mothers had attained in the struggle of life. Some very poor boys in Wisconsin, in that period when the common school system was in its infancy, supplemented the little schooling they could obtain by fire-light reading, and so beginning, became in later years the great men of the state, and some of them have stood among the great men of the nation.

The first school taught in the county was opened in 1847, in a room of Peter Kinder's house, in the town of Richwood, and from that small beginning has grown and ramified the present full tree of education.

The first school houses were built of course in most instances of logs, and considering the abundance of timber, they could well have been constructed much larger and more commodious. A description of one of them would doubtless answer for all. The desks were placed around the wall, and the seats were mostly made of basswood logs, split into halves. Upon these rude and uncomfortable seats, pupils of all ages and conditions were compelled to sit the six hours of the school day. These pioneer schoolhouses were in strange contrast with the light, airy and commodious school buildings in every district in the county today; and yet it is a fact that as much solid work was done by the pupils in those early school buildings as in the more elegant ones of the present. Wood was furnished by the patrons in proportion to the number of children sent. Often, it was drawn to the schoolhouse by the parents, in the log, and cut up by the pupils. Most of the pupils found their way through the woods to the schoolhouse, roads being comparatively unknown. Along these trails they went to school, and at night to spelling-schools, lighting their way, in the night time, with torches made from the bark of hickory trees.

The old fashioned spelling-school is seldom now heard of, but it is doubtful if any modern entertainment can equal it in interest or in lasting benefit to the participants. The younger people would go miles to attend one of these events. It was district against district, and it was wonderful how each would back their champions. The method was different at times in spelling down. Sometimes they would stand up and spell around, and the last one up was the winner. Another method, and by some thought to be a more thorough test, was to stand up two and two, and the one who was able to spell the whole crowd down in that way would carry off the championship. Those friendly mental contests were often very exciting and continued until late into the night. Webster's Elementary spelling book was used in some sections, but it finally gave way to McGuffey's. That the pupils in our common schools then were much better spellers than now is beyond all question.

There was a general uniformity of school books throughout the county, McGuffey's readers, the old edition, being introduced into the schools at an early period. In some localities other books may have been used as readers, the New Testament probably being among them. No uniformity in regard to arithmetics was practiced until the adoption of Ray's series, and these were in quite general use for years. His "Third Part" or "Practical," was the standard for many years, and there are many who think it has never been excelled for the purpose for which it was designed. No particular system of penmanship was taught, the styles being as various and ever-changing as were the teachers

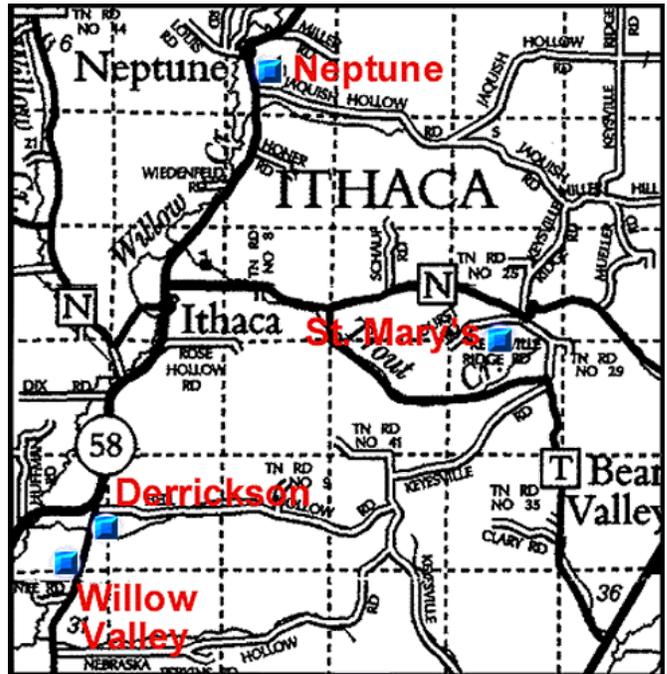
** ~ **

Check out our website for the past issues of the AKEY BrAKEY News

→ www.richlandcountyhistoricalsociety.weebly.com

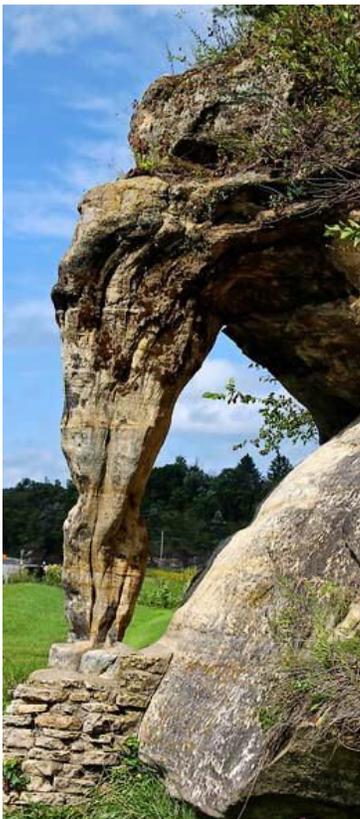
WHERE in Richland County is NEPTUNE located?

From the popular "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiago?" there are locations in Richland County that many are not aware of and only some have heard of. This ongoing series will highlight some spots of interest while covering the History of Richland County.



Neptune is located north east of Richland Center on Highway 58 and is a part of Ithaca Township near Jaquish Hollow

"When Dr. Joseph Sippy had the little village platted in 1855, he accepted the name that the government had given to the post office here."-- as excerpted from page 230 of the book Romance of Wisconsin Place Names by Robert E. Gard.



This is a picture of the Butternut Cheese Factory which was located between Neptune and Loyd taken in 1908.
Identifiable in the photo are Scott Sippy, Charles Grassman, Everett Sippy, Albert Grassman, Jay Wenta,

Maurie Jewett, Charlie Brown, William Lounsbury, Bert Hart and Vernie Pahl.
The photo was submitted to the Republican Observer by Scott Sippy.

Elephant Trunk Rock is located to the south and a vintage picture of the Butternut Cheese Factory was to the north.

Neptune Cemetery, Ithaca Township, Richland County, Wisconsin USA

Tales The Tombstones Tell - Republican Observer September 29, 1955

A Visit to the Neptune Cemetery

Quite out of sight from the roadside which passes it is the Neptune Cemetery atop a rocky ridge. The road passes the foot of the not high hill so close that the little cemetery is hidden from view. A couple of large pine trees can be seen as you approach the cemetery on the state truck highway which leads from Ithaca to Neptune. A glimpse of a tombstone or two can be noted as you pass Elephant Rock; they are straight ahead.

The Neptune cemetery site was given as burial place by Thomas Sippy, son of Dr. Joseph Sippy, back in the long ago. Mrs. Lena Reagles of Neptune, is the present secretary of the cemetery association and has the old, old records but for some reason or other they, do not bear any dates. Mrs. Reagles gave some information about the cemetery when we called at her home some time ago. She showed us the old record, and, according to it, the cemetery contained 113 lots. Seven Civil War veterans are buried there and there are government markers for some of them. Among the old soldiers who rest there are Theodore Dockerty, Phillip Warren, John Van Allen, H. H. Butts, Harlow Stoddard and Wm. F. Krause.

Many of the older settlers of Neptune and vicinity have found a resting place in the shadow of the tall pine trees. These trees, we were told, were set out by Thomas Sippy, to mark the grave of a Dr. Slack, who was buried there. He had no relatives in that area so far as is known and Mr. Sippy, besides planting the trees, put up a rough stone to mark the spot. Dr. Slack's name appears upon the record but some say the name was not Slack but Slaughter.

Among the older settlers to be buried in the cemetery are Mr. and Mrs. Phillip Warren, Mr. and Mrs. H. H. Butts, D. J. Gwin and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Abel Reagles, and Mr. and Mrs. John Philip Schlafer. On the Schlafer lot are markers for five infants, all born dead or lived but a few hours. The stones are marked: Clarence - Clara, twins, 1884 - 1884, Leon 1888-1888; Gertrude 1889-1889; Louisa 1891-1891. Another one was for Agnes who lived two years, born in 1892 and died in 1894.

Standing in the cemetery is a marker for Emmett Jaquish, a soldier boy. He is not buried there however. The monument reads: Emmett Jaquish Co. H 46th Wis. Vol. Died May 5, 1864 aged 14 years, 6 months, 19 days. Buried at Chicago. It might be of interest to know that Co. H had as captain Amasa Hoskins, Richland Center, and in the company were 81 men from Richland county. Opposite to the inscription is one for John W. Jaquish who died March 10, 1898, aged 82 years, 10 months and 26 days. Note that Emmett, the young soldier boy was less than 15 years of age at the time of his death. He was indeed a youthful soldier.

Abel Reagles and his wife Priscilla are among those buried on the hill. A large stone marks the spot where they are resting and at the base of it are two smaller ones which bear pretty verses, one reads: "We look for thy coming, but you came not, we miss you everywhere, the chair is vacant. I loved you in childhood, I loved you in age; though dead I love you still. Our lives are but a dream, a time flowing stream gliding swiftly away." On the other stone it reads: "Farewell, dear friend, I will never come back any more, so plant ye a tree that may wave over me; Come at the close of a bright summer day, come when the sun sheds his last lingering ray."

On the Mark Squires lot the monument notes the passing of several children, Freddie died in 1881, aged 8; Jay passed away on February 12, 1881, aged two years; Earl, July 14, 1888, aged three; Frank, June 14, 1896 aged 14, and Lois, June 17, 1885, aged three years.

The first child to be buried in the cemetery was Cora Sippy, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Sippy. A simple stone marks her grave; it reads: "Cora Sippy. In memory of little Cora." Nothing else appears upon the marker; no date and no verse, though a little wreath carved in the stone is on top of the marker. The Sippy home was at the base of the hill, a stone's throw from the cemetery. Mrs. Sippy had the child buried at the brow of the hill so she could see the monument from her front yard. The farm, then owned by Mr. and Mrs. Sippy, is now owned and occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Meeker.

On the monument for Dr. Joseph Sippy, who's son gave the land for the cemetery, are these inscriptions: "Joseph Sippy died September 11, 1870, aged 79 years, five months." "Martha, wife of Joseph Sippy, Died July 9, 1880, aged 84 years four months." Those are brief words for ones who were so prominent in the affairs of Neptune for it was Dr. Sippy who platted the village of Neptune in 1855 and he gave the village its name. A post office was opened in 1854 previous to the platting of the village site and Dr. Sippy was the first postmaster. As a post office the office was named by the authorities at Washington and Dr. Sippy also chose the same name for the village. At the time there was a log house on the site owned by Daniel Gwin. Stephen Reagles opened a store. The post office was on a route from Sextonville and mail

was received once a week. Previous to this Dr. Sippy started the erection of a saw mill which was completed in 1854 and he continued to operate it until 1866 when he sold to Rufus Taplin who in 1883 added a feed mill.

Dr. Sippy was born near Harper's Ferry, Virginia, in March 1791. His father was a native of France and came to America with LaFayette during the War for Independence. Dr. Sippy was a stirring patriot and served for a time in the War of 1812. He was married to Martha Cogswell whose mother was a sister to General Gates of Revolutionary War fame. In 1813 Dr. and Mrs. Sippy went to Ohio, making the trip with one horse, without a wagon, packing upon the back of the horse their household goods including bedding and camp kettles. The couple settled in Indiana and in 1852 Dr. Sippy made a trip to Richland county on horseback. He liked the place and came here with his wife and son Thomas and settled in Ithaca. They were the parent of a number of children, one of whom, Thomas, was at one time the sheriff of Richland County. Two of Dr. Sippy's grandsons, A. F. and Bertram W. became noted physicians, the former practiced in Ohio for many years and Dr. Bertram in Chicago until his death.

Dr. Bertram Sippy married a Richland county girl, Miss Mabel Lamberson, who is still living. Thomas in later years moved to Akron, Ohio, where his son Dr. A. F., practiced medicine, and it was there that Thomas died.

Able Reagles, mentioned elsewhere in this article, went to work for Dr. Joseph Sippy, when 14 years of age and lived with him until 21 years old. He was then married to Priscilla, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Sippy and came Richland county in 1854. Times were hard and food short. Going to Sextonville some corn and beans were bought by Mr. Reagles and his neighbor, Henry Short. They returned about midnight tired and hungry. The Reagles family had gone to bed without food. Some beans were hastily cooked and eaten with a relish by one and all. Ginseng became in great demand and the whole Reagles family went to work with a will to gather it. This kept the wolf from the door and proved the turning point in their fortunes, from which they prospered, and, as the story books say, "lived happily ever after."

Thus were the lives and fortunes of all the pioneers bound together. Their efforts were not in vain as fine farms, a prosperous countryside prove that the pioneers of the Neptune area were worthy men and women.

100 YEARS AGO - The 19th Amendment in 1919 with historic connections to Richland Center, Wisconsin



ADA JAMES 1876-1952

Ada James a Wisconsin suffragist leader who worked for women's rights & other reforms in the early 20th century.

Ada Lois James lived in Richland Center, Wisconsin, for her whole life. Both of her parents actively supported rights for women, including the right to vote (suffrage).

Her mother, Laura Briggs James, helped start the Richland Center Woman's Club, which may have been the first organization in Wisconsin to fight for women's suffrage.

<http://womeninwisconsin.org/ada-james/>

Her father, David G. James, was a state senator who introduced a bill that led to a statewide vote (a referendum) in 1912 about amending the state constitution to allow women to vote. But only men could vote in that referendum, and a majority of them voted against the amendment.

Ada James graduated from the University of Wisconsin. She taught school for a while but spent most of her life working as an activist. She served as vice president of the Wisconsin Woman Suffrage Association when Olympia Brown was the organization's president. In 1911 she organized the Political Equality League of Wisconsin, and she served as its president for two years. She was a leader in the campaign for the state women's suffrage amendment.

After that amendment failed to pass, James and her father both continued to work for women's suffrage. When the U.S. Congress finally approved a constitutional amendment guaranteeing all American women the right to vote, all of the states had to "ratify," or give consent to the amendment to make it official.

James campaigned to get Wisconsin to ratify the 19th Amendment, and her father was the special messenger who took the ratification papers to Washington, D.C., in June 1919.



AKEY SCHOOL

Left to right: Lelah Kuykendall, Oma Nitcher Parduhn, Edna Angell, Amy Warner Hackl,
Leola Nitcher Looker, Miss Preston (teacher), Jay Warner, Boyd Kuykendall,
Buford Dooley, Earl Reed, _____.

<https://content.mpl.org/digital/collection/rchr/id/357/rec/81> Akey School - Miss Preston's Class ca. 1902