

Ecology

Excerpts from: *When You and I Were Young* by Middleton Resident PEARL GEARY WILLIAMS

In the early years of this century the word ecology was not found in our dictionaries, but the earth wasn't suffering too much in those days, as everything was still more or less in its natural state. Trees, bushes, grass and various plants were allowed to grow where nature had put them. I remember most rural roads in Middleton had rows of bushes at each side, outside the farmer's fence-lines where birds could nest and small animals make their homes. As you walked in the country you often saw birds of colorful plumage, such as the scarlet tanager, blue bird, oriole and the will canary. With the advent of the automobile, roads were widened with hard surfaces, so the roadside bushes were destroyed. Winter driving with cars would be hampered by the wind-blown snow, when its speed was slowed by striking the bush, causing deep drifts on the roadbed. Horses with sleighs traversed the fields when roads were blocked, but cars needed hard surfaces for traction. I recollect one summer when Gammon Road was sprayed with some chemical to kill all the growth at the sides. It was a sorry sight for a long time, until it was completely grubbed out.

In by-gone days, the section crew of the railroad burned the dry vegetation on both sides of the tracks early every spring. Once in a while they lost control of the fire and it would damage nearby property, so chemicals were then used, sprayed by a slow moving train.

Years ago, trash was much less of a problem than now. There were no paper napkins, towels, wax

paper or aluminum foil products and even fewer newspapers and magazines than now. Kids in school used slates instead of paper for their written work. Even our note books were usually made of wrapping paper from the store, folded in a small size and sewed together. I had one my mother made for me, on which I drew a map of each of our states for our geography course in grade school. When we reached high school, we did have note books with hard covers which cost 5 to 10 cents each. There were no sandwich bags, so our lunch for school was packed into a coffee or syrup pail with no paper between food. If the sandwiches absorbed some of the cakes's frosting, we ate sweet sandwiches and were grateful for the sustenance our lunch contained. There was water to drink from the school's water pail. There were no coke machines, even in high school then, but our new building in 1903, boasted a well, in the yard, where you could pump yourself a drink. Pop bottles and beer cans and ice cream cups didn't litter the countryside.

The grocery sack wasn't necessary, for the farmers brought in cases of eggs to trade for groceries and after the eggs were removed, the cardboards uses for the eggs were folded flat and the groceries packed on top of them. If you lived in the village, you used a market basket to tote your purchases home.

The table scraps and garbage was taken care of by a flock of chickens or perhaps a disposal with four legs kept in a sty. Even people in the center of the village had a barn a short distance away, where animals were kept and all food waste was used to feed them.

President's Message ...

Believe it or not, June is here and that means Pie and Ice Cream Social. The details, pretty much the same as last year, are included elsewhere in this newsletter. I will just add that I hope to see you all there and that you enjoy our annual event! The big news during late winter was the new siding for the Carriage House. The old siding, a type of exterior plywood, had deteriorated quite badly in several places and large holes had developed on the west end. We decided that something had to be done right away to prevent damage to the interior which we had renovated a couple of years prior. After contacting several siding contractors and receiving their bids we decided to go with seamless steel siding from a Madison company, ABC Seamless Home Specialists. We also had them add gutters and downspouts to both sides of the building. Those folks did a super job and completed the work in several late-March days. The Carriage House now has a great new look and will certainly keep our displays and stored artifacts in a safe environment for many years to come

On April 30, we hosted our first School Tour of the year, a large group of 90 third-graders (plus teachers and chaperones) from Sunset Ridge School. This was a two-hour event with one-half of the students visiting Rowley House and one-half visiting City Hall between 12 and 1 PM. Then, at precisely 1:00 PM the groups switched locations and Rowley House hosted the second group of students. As you may know we divide each large group into 8 smaller groups who then visit all rooms in Rowley House plus the Carriage House and change rooms after only 6-7 minutes in each! Each room is staffed by a MAHS volunteer who repeats their message/stories 8 times during the one-hour period! Lots of fun but by day's end the tour guides are thirsty and tired! We really do appreciate the contin-

ued support of our volunteers for the annual school tours: Mel Krc, Dorothy Hawkins, Dave Baltes, Claudia Miska, Mike Lutz, Carolyn Mattern, Nancy Stratman, Donna Parks and Jan Martin! Our next group of visitors, some 227 (at least), came through Rowley House on May 18 as part of Middleton's downtown Art Walk. I was privi-



leged to be MAHS's sponsored artist that day and it was great fun to greet the many visitors, most of whom toured much of Rowley House. It was

certainly a good way to gain some visibility for the Historical Society and our collections of artifacts in the Museum.

The Grounds Crew, Alice & Steve Drake, Steve Olson and Jan and Jeff Martin, has been quite busy this spring, mowing the lawn, planting flowers, potting flowers, digging out weeds, moving the old pavers, trimming shrubs, etc. With all their hard work the old place is looking mighty fine for the upcoming open season. I hope you will stop by soon to see the results of their efforts.

Jeff Martin, President

Middleton Area Historical Society



Newly sided Carriage House at the Rowley House Museum.

MAHS volunteer gardeners, Jan Martin, Steve Drake, Steve Olson and Alice Drake, hard at work in the Memorial Garden. They planted over 80 geraniums donated by Rich Rittmeyer of UW-Madison's Horticulture Department ... along with two Weigela shrubs and additional flowers from Orchids Garden Center, on the Rowley House grounds.



Pie & Ice Cream!

The famous Pie and Ice Cream Social sponsored by the Middleton Area Historical Society will be held on Wednesday June 19, at Lakeview Park in Middleton, starting at 5:00 PM.

As usual, we will have a wide variety of pies (and other baked goods) topped with ice cream ... and, for your listening pleasure, the New Horizons Band will again be playing your favorite songs (starting around 6:30).

We will also have our Rowley House beer glasses available for sale and as a special bonus, those joining the Middleton Area Historical Society as new members will receive a free beer glass. Please mention this to family and friends ... let's see if we can solicit a few new members!!

If you are a baker and would like to contribute your delicious pies, cakes or cookies to the social we would love to have your donation. If possible, we would like to have these arrive between 3:00 and 4:00 PM so that our pie

cutters and servers can get them to the table on time. Please let us know if you will provide something by calling Jeff Martin at 836-4578 or email him at jmarfotowerks@gmail.com... it will help in our planning !!

So mark your calendar and plan to join us on June 19 ... see you then!

Doctors' Day 1949 * August 21, 1949

In this day of large health clinics it is hard to remember that once, some time ago, doctors made house-calls. While these hardy doctors mostly lived in the village, many of their patients lived in rural areas. Their practice was referred to as country practice and it was necessary to brave their way on dirt roads that were dusty in the dry weather and muddy after a rain. In the winter, when the snow was deep and the roads were badly drifted, a scoop-shove, a wire cutter and a hammer were as much a part of a doctor's equipment as were his medicine and instruments bags. Perhaps the greatest service the doctor rendered was in the case of child-birth. The doctor would travel to patients' homes and often out into the countryside

using a team and buggy. Sometimes using only a horse and two wheeled cart, on horseback or walking. Fur lap-robies and fur mitten, earflaps and woolen homemade

mufflers or scarves were listed as necessary apparel when driving in winter. Heated wood chunks, or sandstone, or even a lighted lantern were used to keep feet warm. Some doctors owned their horses, other rented or hired them from public livery stables.



Dr. Allen in his Cadillac

Middleton had two such doctors and on August 21, 1949, the citizens, of the village, honored them with a celebration designated as Doctors' Day. Large crowds came out to honor the two doctors with a parade, program and entertainment. The combined service of Dr. Charles F. Allen and Dr. A. Gilbert Rowley was 100 years.

Dr. Charles F. Allen was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 9, 1873. In 1899, he graduated from Milwaukee Medical College. He came to Middleton and lived with the Henry Schuster family, paying the sum of \$4.50 a week for room and board. He later made his home with the Mrs. S. Schroeder and F.W. DuFrenne families until his marriage.

*Dr. Allen
(L) and
village
president
Henry
Raemisich.*

Dr. Allen established his office, at the corner Elmwood Avenue and Parmenter Street. He experienced some of the travel challenges mentioned earlier and as road conditions improved, in 1904, he purchased his first car, a Cadillac. Two years later he purchased a two cylinder Buick.

When he began his practice here there were no telephones, but before long they were being installed, one here and there until they became a common convenience. He would eventually become a stockholder in the Farmers' Union Telephone Company.

Dr. Allen became president of the Bank of Middleton in 1915. During World War I, he and Professor Hans Ruenzell, the high school principal, organized a Volunteer Home Guard Company of 60 men. They had their own corps of officers and their own uniforms and drilled in military tactics and maneuvers.

Dr. Allen regarded his greatest civic achievement as the building of the light and power system for the village.

This was during his tenure as President of the Village of Middleton and took place during war-time when labor and materials became hard to obtain.



The Allen residence on Hubbard Avenue

During his practice, Dr. Allen cared for three generations of some patients. He officiated at the birth of nearly 1,300 babies (64 in one month, 3 in one night) with the average amount of twins. He was also in attendance at the birth of triplets and quadruplets which were premature and sadly, none of which survived. Dr. Allen had to do numerous emergency operations. Among these operations was a man who experienced an accident with a gun. Dr. Allen, together with Dr. Rowley, performed the operation on the counter of a store in Pheasant Branch. Another such operation took place when a man in critical condition was brought to him with a knife wound across his abdomen and the contents protruding. He promptly sewed up the incision and the patient recovered.

Dr. Allen married Miss Dorothy Lubcke of Middleton on July 11, 1928. He and Mrs. Allen traveled extensively in the United States and also Cuba and Mexico. Both were fond of flower gardening and filled the backyard of their Hubbard Avenue home with flower beds.

In our next newsletter we will discuss the other Middleton doctor honored on this day:

Dr. A.G. Rowley.



*The two doctors
and their wives
in parade on
Doctors' Day.*

A REMINDER: The annual **Middleton Area Historical Society Pie and Ice Cream Social** is: **June 19, Lakeview Park**, in Middleton starting at **5:00 PM**.

From Our Facebook Page.....

Did you know that the origin of the name of the bar “The Hody” was its shortened version of the longer “The Hotel Bar?” The original Hotel Bar was on the corner of Parmenter and Elmwood Avenue and was torn down to make way for the present day BMO Harris bank building.



Oscar Mayer was once one of Madison’s largest employers. Many Middletonians made the drive around the lake to the Oscar Mayer plant (now closed) on Madison’s northeast



side. Mardelle Ripp, who lived on Maywood Avenue, worked at the Oscar Mayer company store for more than 45 years, between the 1940s and 1980s. Even in her late 60s, Mardelle would drive to work in early morning snowstorms. Once at work, she’d call family and tell everyone “Don’t go out, the roads are too bad”.

This lard container is on display in the Museum pantry.

And

Remember to follow and **LIKE US** on Facebook.

This page of our newsletter is usually devoted to comments from the Facebook page:

If You Grew Up In Middleton, Do You Remember When...?

We are sad to report one of the two writers of these stories, has passed away.

Jeanie Sakrison Verlard and her friend of 65 years, Mary Lamm Feltman volunteered to write this column several years ago. It has brought us insight on what life was like growing up in Middleton.

Jeanie was born in Madison, Wisconsin on November 1 1946, being one of the first of the Baby Boomers.

Although she moved several times in her life, Jeanie was proud of the Sakrison family’s rich history in Middleton. The area that is now Sak’s Woods was once owned by Jeanie’s family. Many of you may have spent time at Peppermint Park, which was built by Jeanie’s dad Bob Sakrison.



Jeanie Sakrison Velarde, 1946-2019



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