



Fitchburg Historical Society
 5530 Lacy Road
 Fitchburg, WI 53711
 608-729-1783
 woodedarchives@gmail.com

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Our last newsletter reached you just as winter exited with an impressive 12+” snowfall. Now, we’re set to say farewell to summer with a series of days in the 90’s. Nothing like Wisconsin weather to keep us confused about what season we’re in! With fall, and then winter, on the way, we might be spending more time indoors. This newsletter features activities and content on our website that can help while away those increasing hours spent inside.

APRIL’S ANNUAL MEETING AND PROGRAM WAS A SUCCESS!

More than 50 people attended our annual meeting and spring program, Historical Places: Valuing Our Past and Moving Into Our Future. In 2019, Traci E. Schnell, completed a survey for the Fitchburg Landmarks Preservation Commission. Ms. Schnell shared updated information about the historic properties from her 2019 report. View the full presentation on our YouTube page at <https://tinyurl.com/25bn88pa>. In honor of the city’s 40th anniversary, several former mayors as well as the current mayor attended. We also conducted official business, approving the minutes of the previous year’s meeting, electing (and welcoming) new board member Nancy Dorman.



Long-term Board member and secretary, Adrienne Imilkowski, was recognized for her many years of service and dedication to the Society. Adrienne not only served as secretary, but also planned and installed library displays several times a year, and helped disseminate information about our activities. We will miss her!

FALL PROGRAM FEATURES THE SWAN CREEK SEWING CIRCLE
Sunday, October 15, 1:30, Fitchburg Public Library

Our fall program will highlight one of the area’s oldest organizations, the Swan Creek Sewing Circle. This 108 year old woman’s group was founded with the purpose of “neighborliness.” It provided a way to connect a group of rural women at a time when travel and communication options were limited. Four generations of women have continued the Circle’s traditions, and survived the challenges that COVID restrictions and precautions imposed.

Join us on Sunday, October 15, at 1:30 at the Fitchburg Public Library, 5530 Lacy Road, to learn about this unique group, how its members’ family histories are interwoven into Fitchburg’s history, and why keeping it active is important to its current members. And in accordance with one of the Circle’s most important traditions, a dessert will be served.



(Do you have a memory about Swan Creek Sewing Circle? Maybe a grandmother, great-grandmother, or aunt who was a member, or you received a shower gift. If so, we’d love to hear from you. Email us at woodedarchives@gmail.com.)

FITCHBURG'S ONE ROOM SCHOOLS: A VISUAL HISTORY LESSON

We are excited to share our current display in the Fitchburg Room on the second floor of the Fitchburg library. The display includes a large plat map (shown below) with the locations of all the former schools (green buildings), as well as current public schools (red buildings), and the current school district boundaries. (Verona is shown in pink, Madison in blue, and Oregon in peach.) Members of the community generously shared personal items, such as report cards and photographs, for use in the display. We received items that represent eight of the 12 one room schools that operated in Fitchburg at some point.



Rural schools existed across the country, typically small one-room buildings that served children from a nearby area. To many of us, the idea of a one-room school may seem like something that only existed in “the olden days” or in books. In reality, according to one source, there were about 190,000 in 1919, with fewer than 400 still operating in 2020, most in small Western communities. It may come as a surprise to learn that Fitchburg had one room schools into the 1950s and early 1960s. It may be even more of a surprise to learn that some of these structures still exist, although no longer in use as a school

building.

Bring a younger (or older) family member or friend to view the display – it will provide a wonderful opportunity to share memories and learn how your school experiences compare. Learn more about Fitchburg’s historic schools at <https://fitchburghistory.org/schools>.

INSIDER TIP: FHS' TALKING FITCHBURG INTERVIEWS AREN'T JUST ABOUT FITCHBURG

Since 2015, the Society has partnered with FACTv to provide an ongoing series of video interviews on topics, businesses, or people of interest to Fitchburg and the surrounding area. Recent segments featured several former mayors, including Francis Huntley-Cooper, the first Black mayor in the state; Jeanie Sieling, and Shawn Pfaff. We’ve learned about the growth of Agrace, Fitchburg’s Landmarks Preservation Committee, and had a walk-through of the new display about the history of Fitchburg’s one room schools and school system. Older topics cover a variety of items, such as lead road routes through Fitchburg, early Fitchburg history, and how COVID affected businesses and people. View the full list and access them through our website at <https://fitchburghistory.org/video-presentations>.

Send your suggestions for topics or people for future interviews to woodedarchives@gmail.com.

SUPPORT OUR WORK: BECOME A MEMBER!

Join Today

Our work may be carried out by volunteers, but we do have expenses, including website and speakers. We don’t have a nifty t-shirt or tote bag to offer, but we hope that won’t deter you from joining. Individual membership is \$10/year, family \$12/year, and business/profession, \$50. Fill out the membership form on our website at <https://tinyurl.com/4rf8vkh9> or send your name, address, email address, membership level and check payable to Fitchburg Historical Society, to Roger Tesch, 3417 Brighton Place, Fitchburg, WI 53713-2842. We’d be happy to renew your membership or begin a new one at our fall program on October 15 (see article above for program details).