

SHADES OF THE PAST

Williams Bay Historical Society

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BECOME A MEMBER OF THE WILLIAMS BAY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Dear Friends of the Williams Bay Historical Society, The Williams Bay Historical Society invites you to renew your annual membership for the 2022 season. Membership forms can be found on our website: www.wmsbayhistory.org

The Board of Directors appreciate your past support and hope you will continue to be a part of our membership. We rely on your dues to achieve our goal of preserving the history of Williams Bay. A computer program has been purchased to enter all of our inventory and articles. One of our future goals will be to make all of this information available for public use. Another long-term goal would be to acquire a building or space that we could exhibit these items. Donations are also appreciated.

Please keep your email address up to date so you can receive our semi-annual newsletter. Please encourage friends, neighbors and others to join our membership. You may contact us at website:

MISSION OF OUR HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

The purpose of the Williams Bay Historical Society is to assist in the preservation and exhibition of items of historical interest that are within the boundaries of Williams Bay, and the immediate surrounding area. It will seek to provide the public with educational opportunities to learn about our unique local history. It will also seek to organize and assist in the commemoration of significant dates and events in Village history.

What Does Your House Have to Say?

By Pat Grove

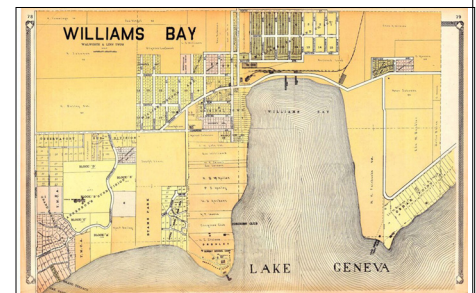
Michael Rehberg, the Lead Interpreter at Black Point Estate and Gardens presented a program entitled "Getting Your House to Talk" in partnership with Barrett Memorial Library on Saturday, February 19th. Michael is a noted historian with many years of extensive research experience locating historical records through books, libraries, institutions, mapping, plat books, newspapers, and websites.

The first steps toward settlement of Walworth County were made by the Government in surveying the domain acquired from the Indians by the treaty of 1833. John Brink and John Hodgson were the original surveyors, having taken the contract to run the town lines of what are now Rock and Walworth Counties in 1835. The surveyors created maps called plat maps for each county. The counties were divided into townships and each township was divided into sections. Surveyors used chain-like tools to measure each section.

Abstracts, titles, and land patents were then drawn up and photographed, Land patents are records what show who first bought the land from the government. The Bureau of Land Management was the responsible for recording land purchases.

The University of Wisconsin in Madison and Whitewater have an extensive collection of maps. Local County Courthouses and register of deeds have plat maps. Local libraries may have plat maps and the Lake Geneva Public Library presently has an extensive map display.

The Wisconsin Historical Society is an excellent source of information in different categories. On the home page of their website it is recommended to search "Your Family History" and "Collections." The Historical Society's collections include architecture and history inventory and historic Wisconsin photographs. Family records can be found on ancestry.com familysearch.org, and in the



1907 map of Williams Bay

genealogybank.com. Newspapers, phone books, obituaries, and cemeteries are great sources of information.

The Williams Bay library and historical society have received many inquiries for information about old houses in the Bay and surrounding area. Unfortunately, there is limited information available at the library and in the historical society archives. A limited number of property records for houses in Williams Bay can be found on The Wisconsin Historical Society website: www.wisconsinhistory.org/

Michael Rehberg presented a follow-up workshop on February 26th designed to help participants research a house they currently own or those owned by family members. During this presentation, Michael showed the group how to find further information including aerial photographs taken of the State of Wisconsin in 1937 that can be found at this link: <https://maps.sco.wisc.edu/WHAIFinder/>

We would like to thank Barrett Memorial Library and Micheal Rehberg of Black Point Estate and Gardens for sharing this interesting presentation.

A Pictorial History of Williams Bay

By Pat Grove



The Williams Bay Historical Society has published a book, "A Pictorial History of Williams Bay On Beautiful Geneva Lake 1836-1939" co-authored by Michelle Bie Love and Deborah Dumelle Kristmann.

The book is an account of the settlement and development of Williams Bay from 1836 until 1939.

The Village has a diverse and colorful history beginning with Chief Big Foot and the

Potawatomi who favored the land around the bay for hunting and gardening and was the site of burial sites including Chief Big Foot's wife on Elm Street; and its settlement by Captain Israel Williams who built the first home in Williams Bay in 1838.

The arrival of the Chicago & North Western railroad in June 1888, opened the Village to endless opportunities. Maintaining its quaint rural atmosphere, Williams Bay became the setting for camps, resorts, and the world-renowned Yerkes Observatory.

The book can be purchased at Barrett Memorial Library, Daniels Sentry in Walworth, and online from Amazon.

Amazon Purchases Help Support Historical Society

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the total of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the Williams Bay Historical Society!!

You must FIRST go to smile.amazon.com and enter your regular Amazon login information. You can then search and designate Williams Bay Historical Society as the charity you wish to support. It's that EASY!!

The AmazonSmile Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private foundation created by Amazon to administer the AmazonSmile program. In turn, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates those amounts to the charitable organizations selected by Amazon customers.

Frederick H. Webster, Son of Composer J.P. Webster Early Teacher in Williams Bay

Reprinted from the Webster House Museum Facebook page

The very first school in the Village of Williams Bay was organized in November 1899 at the home of Festus Williams, son of village founder Captain Israel Williams.

William H. Orme was hired as the first teacher with a monthly salary of \$30. When Mr. Orme resigned a couple of months later, Frederick Webster, son of the famous composer Joseph P. Webster of Elkhorn was

hired in January 1900 for the same salary.

Frederick Huse Webster was the youngest of the four children born to Elkhorn's Joseph Philbrick Webster and his wife Joanna and



Frederick Huse Webster

the only one of the Webster children to get married.

Frederick was born in Elkhorn Wisconsin on December 24th, 1864. He grew up in Elkhorn and graduated from High School as the Class valedictorian in 1882. He became a School teacher and taught in a number of rural schools in Walworth County.

He later earned a Bachelors degree from the Western Maryland College, and a Master degree at the North Carolina University in Raleigh. He taught at Colleges in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Connecticut.

While Teaching at the State College in Pennsylvania he married Mary Bird on August 21st, 1928. The couple returned to Elkhorn Wisconsin in 1931 when his older



Webster house in Elkhorn ca 1900

brother, Louis became ill and the couple would then live at the Webster Family home.

Frederick's teaching career would cover over 50 years. His brother Louis passed away in 1944 leaving Frederick and his wife as the last heirs of the family home. The couple never had any children so their (sic) are no direct decedents to the famous Composer Joseph P. Webster. At the age of 83, Frederick H. Webster passed away at the Lakeland Hospital on May 12, 1948. He was buried in the family plot at Hazel Ridge Cemetery in Elkhorn Wisconsin.

His wife Mary Bird Webster remain living in Elkhorn until her death on November 14th, 1951. She was buried next to her husband. During World War I she enlisted in the United States Navy and served at the Register Office in the U.S. Navy Building in Washington D.C. from October 23rd, 1918 to July 9th, 1919. per the Pennsylvania, U.S., World War I Veterans Service and Compensation Files, 1917-1919.

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Crane Farms Provided Rest and Recreation to Crane Company Employees and their Families

By Michelle Bie Love



Richard Teller Crane

In 1855 Richard Teller Crane founded Crane Brass & Bell Foundry in Chicago. Crane Company produced valves, fittings, and specialty castings for a growing industrial America.

On July 4, 1855, Crane founder R.T. Crane,

who was in his early 20s at the time, wrote his business philosophy: "I am resolved to conduct my business in the strictest honesty and fairness; to avoid all deception and trickery; to deal fairly with both customers and competitors; to be liberal and just toward employees and to put my whole mind upon the business."

In 1904, Richard Teller Crane said, "a loyal employee gives something besides his labor and the employer should recognize that fact." Toward the end of his life he set aside one million dollars as a fund for "the purpose of taking care of my men."

Two years after Crane's death in 1912, members of his family honored this wish by establishing The Crane Fund to "provide a means for giving support to deserving and needy employees after they have, by reason of age or disability, become unable to engage in active work."

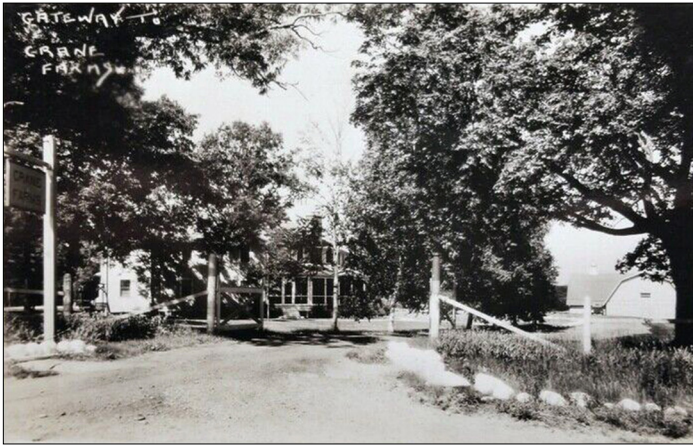
In 1928, executives from Crane Company, following the commitment of the late R.T. Crane to care for the employees and families of the company, opened Crane Farms on 510 acres of land along what is now Highway 50.

Crane Farms included a sanitarium and summer camp for company employees and their fam-

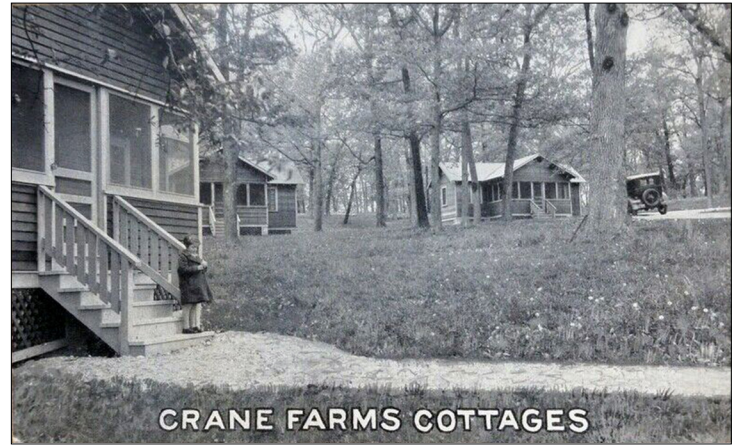
ilies. The sanitarium could host up to 14 employees, providing a place for rest and convalescence from tuberculosis and heavy metal poisoning, a common ailment among employees of the era due to the manufacturing processes prevalent at the time. In addition to the sanitarium, several cabins were built north of the barn provided lodging for both children and adults. Children were welcomed to Crane Farms for two-week camp sessions throughout the summer, all at the company's expense.

Steeped in history, this section of land on Highway 50 was inhabited as early as 700 A.D. by Late Woodland Indians. It was discovered that the land contained more than 40 effigies and remnants of Native American dwellings, all of which were studied and documented by the state of Wisconsin in 1989. In the early 1900s the land from Highway 67 to Lake Como was the location of two beautiful estates, Crane Farms owned by R.T. Crane II and Kemah Farm owned by A.W. Harris.

Crane Farms remained operational until 1958, when following the lead of A.W. Harris, it was donated to the Chicago Boys Club.



Entrance to Crane Farms on Highway 50 circa 1930s



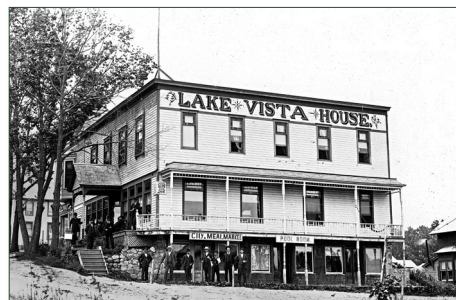
Crane Farms cottages circa 1930s



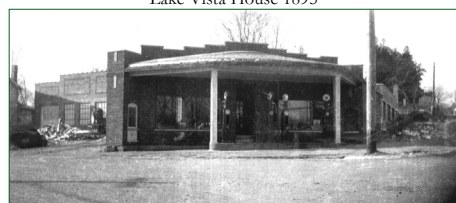
Cottages and playground equipment at Crane Farms circa 1930s



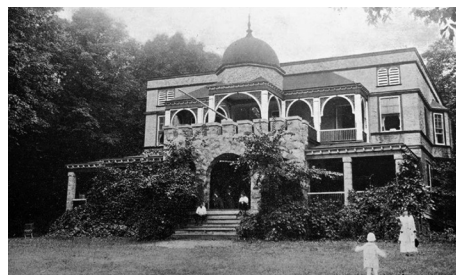
Crane Farms Sanitarium, today, the original, historic sanitarium building has been thoroughly renovated and serves as the site of Geneva National's Hunt Club Steakhouse.



Lake Vista House 1895



Hopkins and Walker Garage



Ferndale Hotel

Back in the Day Walworth Avenue



The inside of the William Stein Drugstore, taken approximately 1919-1920. Woman unknown, William Stein Proprietor, and his son Reinhardt Stein. Location, wooden building, which was next to the Lackey building on Walworth Ave. Copyrighted photo above courtesy of Randall T. Johnson



Lackey Building and Stein's Drug Store



Granzow and Peterson Grocery Store



Williams Bay Cycle Service



Bay Shore Inn

