



PLYMOUTH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

2012

Fall

Ben Avon Farm

The long search for a picture of J. B. Gilfillan's Parkers Lake summer home at Ben Avon Farm in Plymouth was recently fulfilled. Meredith Campbell of Tucson, AZ sent an e-mail indicating she had numerous items to donate to PHS. One of the items was a wonderful 177 page book (coffee table type) published in 1898 by the Times Newspaper in Minneapolis. It is the "City of Homes" and contains pictures of the homes/mansions that belonged to the wealthy business families in Minneapolis. It also included their summer homes on Minnetonka and surrounding areas.

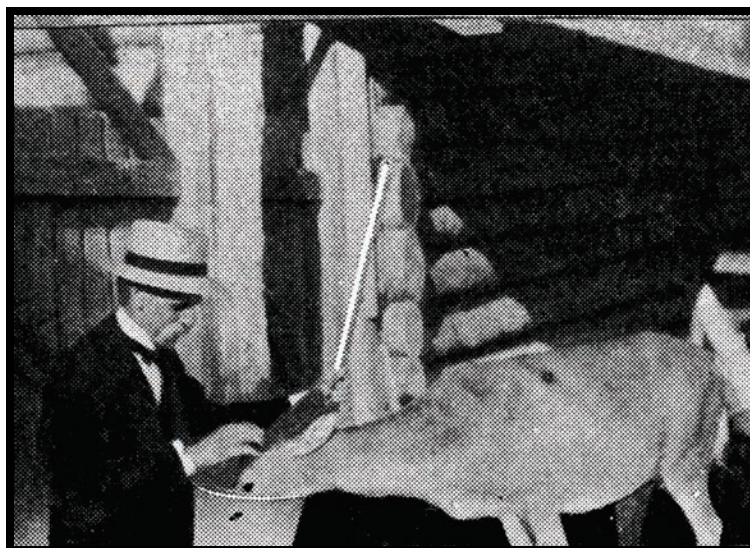
In reviewing the book there was that eureka moment while turning the pages; there it was, a collage of J. B. Gilfillan summer home and log cabin.





J. B. Gilfillan purchased 500 acres on NW side of Parkers Lake. He and his wife Lavina built there summer home in the early 1890's. The Victorian country home (60' x 40') was very grand – 1st Floor – six rooms, three fireplaces and two bathrooms; 2nd Floor – five rooms, two fireplaces and two bathrooms; 3rd Floor – four rooms and a fireplace. Huge kitchen, butlers pantry, walls were decorated with French and English tile. The house had a power generator, cistern, well, livery stable, servants quarters, large swing and grape arbor.

(Information on the interior details of the inside of the house was provided by Carol Creelman many years ago. As a young girl she had played in the house with the Work House Superintendents children in the early 1930's.)



J. B. Gilfillan feeding his pet deer outside of log cabin which he called “Deer Park”



Log Cabin circa 1895
(Recreated in Parkers Lake Park)



Inside of Cabin



Gilfillan house was torn down in 1933 and replaced with new one for the Workhouse Superintendent. It is believed there were two reasons – it was large and probably costly to maintain and it was heated with fireplaces. The new brick Superintendents Home was heated by steam radiators. The steam lines from the Work House boilers (3 large ones) ran under Watertown Road (Cty Rd 6) to the house and also to the dairy and pig barns on the north side.

The brick Superintendents Home was torn down and replaced with a park pavilion on top of the hill when Parkers Lake Park was developed. We still want to find pictures of the Vermont style barns, farm managers home and out buildings that were part of Ben Avon Farm. They stood just on the north side of Parkers Lake where the ball fields are located and were torn down when the Work House put up their huge barns.

Everybody be on the look out for any wonderful old pictures of Plymouth. Everybody has an Aunt who has the shoe box in the closet with old pictures. Let us have a look at them as they may also contain a “Eureka Moment”.

Old Fashioned Christmas

On Sunday, December 2nd from 2-5 pm, the Plymouth Historical Society and the Plymouth Park & Recreation Department are co-sponsoring the 26th Annual "OLD FASHIONED CHRISTMAS IN PLYMOUTH". The purpose of the event is to provide some old fashioned Christmas spirit and activities for families in Plymouth. Children can visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus will be right there to help the Elves hand out candy canes. A hay ride pulled by Belgian horses with bells jingling will be giving free rides, hot cider and cookies will be provided, carolers and making Christmas decorations are other activities for the children.

This year we again have our great story teller back. Bob Gasch will be telling holiday stories, something you don't want to miss! Also the Armstrong Chamber Singers will be singing holiday songs and delighting the children young and old.

On Saturday, December 1st starting at 9 AM, we will decorate the old fashioned Christmas trees and the building. We are looking for help in decorating and bringing items that could be borrowed for the day to add some more old fashioned Christmas spirit.

If you can help to bring decorations, please call Gary Schiebe, 763-473-4889.

So bring your friends, relatives, neighbors and kids ages 9 months to 90 years young. The annual event has attracted large crowds with some families having a perfect attendance record with their children since it started in 1987. We had a great time last year as we do every year.

Activities include:

Visit with Santa

Live Reindeer

*Old Fashioned Hay
Ride*

Hot Cider and Cookies

*Old Fashioned Xmas
Decorations*



Old Toy Train Display

Crafts

*Story Telling by
Bob Gasch*

*Music Groups
Armstrong Chamber
Singers
Messiah Recorder
Ensemble*

A New Look

Plymouth Historical Museum has made great progress in changing our exhibits to better display the many wonderful artifacts in our collection. It was a large undertaking lead by our residential interior designer. Little did we know that we had a Martha Berkkus (Martha Stewart/Nate Berkkus) clone amongst us? Actually her name is Kay Bertrand who had volunteers moving and rearranging displays following her master design. Below are examples of some of the changes.



2nd Grade Class Tours

Again this October the Plymouth Historical Society hosted second grade classes from Birchview and Oakwood Elementary Schools. The event was organized by Bob Gasch – story teller. The children arrived by bus with two adults for each six students. They were very well organized in groups and toured the museum, carriage house and Bob Gasch took them for a story telling walk in the “Big Woods” with the maple trees in full color. Kay Bertrand, Betty Jacobson, Dennis Jacobson, Vern Dotseth, Ben Broman. Paul Ellefson and Gary Schiebe dressed in period clothing hosted the young visitors.



Website

The Plymouth Historical Society has a web site. The address is:

www.plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com

Check us out!

Donations

Donated by Henry Willegale:

- Keystone Projector circa 1920's
- 16mm films and glass slides

Donated by Meredith Campbell:

- District Court filing dated August 26, 1939 for condemnation of properties to widen Highway 18.
- Tax statements for the Engman family from 1921 to 1948.
- A 170-page book titled *City of Homes* published by The Times Newspaper Company in 1898
- Two dresses from the 1920's or 30's
- A book of Golden Valley history 1886-1986.

Donated by David Heim:

- Linen 1/2 section maps of Plymouth in 1986.

Donated by Betty & Dennis Jacobsen:

- \$50 towards acrylic model covers

Donated by Joy & David Kurth:

- \$150 Life Time Membership

Donated by Plymouth Lions:

- \$500



Meetings

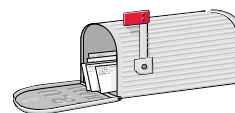
The monthly meetings are held on the 4th Monday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Plymouth Historical Society Building, located at 3605 Fernbrook Lane North, Plymouth, MN. The Museum is also open the third Sunday of the month in the afternoon from 1:00 to 3:00 PM during the Spring Summer and Fall. Open by special appointment in January, February & March.

Current Officers

The following are the present officers:

President	Ben Broman	763-559-5721
Vice President	Dennis Jacobson	763-972-0988
Secretary	Betty Jacobson	763-972-0988
Treasurer	Gary Schiebe	763-473-4889

Mailing and Membership List



If you are not a member and want to sign up or if you have any questions, please call: Kay Bertrand, 763-249-0138.

The 2012 annual dues are:

Individual	\$10.00
Family	\$15.00
Individual Lifetime	\$100.00
Family Lifetime	\$150.00

If you would like the newsletter delivered via E-mail please notify Kay Bertrand or send an e-mail to: info@plymouthmnhistoricalsociety.com

If you do, it is a plus for both of us. When you receive via e-mail it will be in color. When sent by mail it is in black and white and costs PHS about \$1.50 per copy to print and mail.