

Museum Notes

by Kristen Parrott, curator
for the week of March 24 – 30, 2019

What do you think these animals have in common – bear, wolf, snake, fish, elk, deer, and buffalo? Or these birds – eagle, pigeon, and hawk? Well, they are all names of clans in the Ho-Chunk tribe. The animals are all earth clans, and this group also includes the water spirit. The birds are all sky clans, and this group also includes the thunderbird, for a total of 12 clans in all. This is a simplified explanation of the clan names, but it gives you a general idea.

Learn more, much more, at our next free public program on Tuesday, April 2, at 7PM. The speaker for the evening will be William Quackenbush, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Cultural Resources Division Manager for the Ho-Chunk Nation. He is a member of the Deer Clan. His presentation will be called, “Ho-Chunk History: Past, Present, and Future”.

The Ho-Chunk are one of just two Indian nations who believe their origins lie in Wisconsin (the other is the Menominee). Wisconsin is home to more tribes than any other state east of the Mississippi River, but most of them originated further east and were pushed here by early European settlers. The “first fires” of the Ho-Chunk, however, were lit at Red Banks, near Green Bay, according to oral tradition.

A number of resources can help provide some background to the topic of the Ho-Chunk Nation’s history. The new website wisconsinfirstnations.org is a good place to start learning about all of the tribes in our state. Their webpage wisconsinfirstnations.org/ho-chunk-nation provides useful basic information about the Ho-Chunk tribe. Books by Wisconsin author Patty Loew, including *Indian Nations of Wisconsin* and *Native People of Wisconsin*, also contain very informative chapters about the Ho-Chunk.

This program will be held in the museum’s handicapped-accessible conference room. Programs last about one hour. Refreshments will be served afterward.

April marks the start of the museum’s springtime hours. Throughout the months of April and May, the museum will be open to the public Monday through Friday, noon to 4PM. It is also open by appointment – contact us at 637-7396, or museum@vernoncountyhistory.org.