

Museum Notes

for the week of June 5 –11, 2022
by Kristen Parrott, curator

Death records and obituaries will be the subject of the next genealogy class. The class will meet on Thursday, June 9, at 10AM, in the conference room of the museum. Teacher Karen Sherry will talk about how to find death records and obituaries, which so often contain valuable genealogy information. Classes are free for Vernon County Historical Society members, and \$5 for non-members.

The museum has a large collection of local obituaries. Most are stored in the oak cabinet in our main research room, organized alphabetically by last name, so you can pull out an envelope of Deckers or Havliks or Petersons or Trussonis plus many other names and find the individual you are looking for. You may come in whenever the museum is open to look through the obituaries, and make copies as needed.

Obituaries can also be found in the museum's large collection of local scrapbooks, if you don't find what you need in the obituary file. Years ago, a popular pastime was cutting out newspaper articles of interest and pasting them into scrapbooks, and many local people did this with obituaries. The scrapbooks are indexed, so researchers can search the index for a name, and then staff can pull that scrapbook for you.

Local death records and other vital records are stored at the Register of Deeds office in the Vernon County Courthouse complex in Viroqua. The state-wide requirement to officially record a death in Wisconsin was enforced beginning around 1880, and stricter enforcement began in 1907, but some earlier records are available. Death records can list information about a person's birth and parents, as well as cause of death and burial place.

Come to learn more about death records and obituaries at the June 9 genealogy class. New students are always welcome.

The month of June means Dairy Days and a focus on drinking milk. 100 years ago, Vernon County nurse Palma Grahn was very intent on convincing schoolchildren and their parents that kids should drink milk instead of coffee, and she wrote about this frequently in her regular newspaper column.

In a May 1922 column, she praised Viroqua's school nurse, Laura Chase, for serving "milk lunches" during morning recess, and noted that 10 rooms in the school had been awarded a "pot of beautiful spring flowers" because those children were drinking milk instead of coffee. Palma also noted that Asbury School in Wheatland was the first she had visited where none of the children drank coffee, just milk.

The museum is now on its summertime hours of Monday through Friday, noon to 4PM, and Saturday, 10AM to 2PM.