

Museum Notes

by Kristen Parrott, curator
for the week of August 18 – 24, 2019

Remember to attend the Vernon County Historical Society's annual Pork Chop Dinner this Friday, August 23, beginning at 4PM. The dinner will be held on the lawn of the Sherry-Butt House at 795 N. Main St. in Viroqua. Tickets are \$10 each, and carryouts are available. If it rains, the event will move next door to the Expo building at the Vernon County Fairgrounds.

Summer is coming to an end, and so are the museum's summertime hours. Through the end of August, the museum will be open Monday through Friday, noon to 4PM, and Saturday, 10AM to 2PM. Beginning September 1, the museum will switch to its fall hours, which are Monday through Friday, noon to 4PM.

As we continue to prepare for the upcoming Vernon County Fair, today we'll look again at a few of the history quiz questions that will be asked at our Fair booth. The Vernon County Historical Society's booth always features a local history quiz, a free quiz with a candy prize, so it's time to study up on local history.

One question for adults asks, Who was the famous abolitionist and women's rights activist who spoke in Viroqua on July 4, 1856? The answer is Lucy Stone. A stone marker in Viroqua's Pioneer Cemetery marks the approximate spot where she gave a speech on that Independence Day over 160 years ago. Lucy Stone, a well-known speaker across the U.S., was visiting Viroqua that summer while her husband worked on a land deal in the area.

About her speech, the local *Western Times* newspaper of July 19, 1856, noted that "She is a very excellent speaker – her anti-slavery and a portion of her women's-rights opinions are all well enough, yes, very good; but women never will demand universal suffrage, and accept the responsibilities and unnatural hardships inseparably connected with the exercise of that natural attribute of man." As we plan to celebrate the centennial of women's right to vote in 2020, we now see how wrong that writer was.

Younger visitors are asked to name the occupation of another famous person, Jeremiah Rusk. The answer is that he was Wisconsin's 15th governor. Rusk Avenue in Viroqua is named for him. Like Lucy Stone, Rusk also has a historical marker noting his presence here. The large marker created by the Wisconsin Historical Society is on North Main Street in Viroqua, near where the Rusk family's home and farm were once located.