

Museum Notes

by Kristen Parrott, curator
for the week of August 26 – September 1, 2018

The museum changes to its autumn hours this week. In September and October, the museum will be open Monday through Friday, noon to 4PM, or by appointment.

The first free public program of the fall season will be held on Tuesday, September 4, at 7PM, in the museum's conference room. The speaker for the evening will be retired teacher Harlan Flick, who will reminisce about growing up in De Soto in the 1950's and 60's. He'll read from his recent memoir, *Coins in a Half-Filled Jar*, and have copies of the book for sale.

The Vernon County Fair is coming up in just a few weeks. To help you prepare for the history quiz at our booth, here is a sneak peek at a few more of the quiz questions:

Children are asked the easiest questions, and receive lots of assistance from older people. One such question is, Which Vernon County city celebrates its Norwegian heritage on May 17 each year? The answer is Westby.

Teenagers are asked a slightly harder version of the same question: What is the English translation of "Syttende Mai"? The answer is "17th of May". And adults get the most difficult ones: What does Westby celebrate on May 17? The answer is Norwegian Constitution Day – Norway drafted its own constitution on *May 17*, 1814 (although it did not become an independent country until 1905).

Another quiz question we ask children is, True or false: Hot lunches were provided in the one-room schools found throughout Vernon County in the late 1800s. The answer is "false" – students brought their own lunches. There was no cafeteria and no cook at a rural school in the 19th century, just your own lunch pail with homemade food like bread and butter, or maybe a baked potato that could be heated up using the school's woodstove.

Some quiz questions are historical, while others are more geographical. One question for teenagers is about Vernon County being located in the Driftless Area: What does "driftless" mean? There are several possible answers to this question. Basically it means that glaciers did not move across the area – "drift" is glacial deposit, and there is no drift in Vernon County because there were no glaciers here.

Here's an especially tough question for adults: Where did John McCullough, the first settler in Vernon County, build his cabin – in Viroqua, Liberty Pole, or De Soto? The answer is Liberty Pole. McCullough's story is featured on one of the stone markers along the Black Hawk Trail. The stone is just west of Liberty Pole on Hornby Hollow Rd., and explains that in 1844 John McCulloch built the first permanent cabin in what is now called Vernon County.

To play the quiz for yourself, be sure to visit us at the Fair!