



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Oak Creek history group to mark 50th anniversary at Fall Festival Sept. 7

The Oak Creek Historical Society will celebrate its 50th anniversary with special displays at its annual Fall Festival on Sunday, Sept. 7.

The free event will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the society's Pioneer Village at South 15th Avenue and East Forest Hill Avenue in Oak Creek.

The Historical Society traces its beginnings to the citizen effort in 1963 to save the Town Hall, which had stood at Howell Avenue and Puetz Road at the heart of the city since 1874 but was slated for demolition to clear the way for the new City Hall. A group led by Henry Mahr joined forces to save the hall – fund-raising efforts included a jamboree and circus in June 1963. The Town Hall was moved and renovated beginning that month.

The Historical Society then was formed when 15 people met to organize it on May 19, 1964. Oak Creek's population at the time was less than 10,000; today it is nearly 35,000. The Town Hall is now the centerpiece of the society's grounds, and several other buildings were moved there beginning in the 1970s.

At the Sept. 7 festival, displays of the society's history will be shown in the Town Hall, and will include photos of some of the group's buildings when they were at their original sites. Guides will discuss the many tools and furnishings displayed in each building. Genealogy research about Oak Creek families will be available, and visitors are invited to provide their own local ancestral information and photos for the society's archives.

A video of Oak Creek history will be running in the Miller Farm Shed, moved to the site in 1984. The oldest structure at the site is the Hughes Log Cabin from the 1840s, one of the oldest buildings still standing in Milwaukee County.

The festival also will include a demonstration of Civil War medicine and artifacts from the Red Arrow Wisconsin 32nd Division in World Wars I and II, along with other living history groups, re-enactors, a basket-weaver, spinner and blacksmith. Nancy Camden, an audio oral historian and freelance producer for Wisconsin Public Radio, will describe her methods of recording oral histories to preserve family and community stories.

Luncheon items, baked goods, honey, flowers and many other products will be for sale.

A handmade quilt is the grand prize in the Historical Society's fund-raising raffle, for which tickets cost \$1. The many other prizes include an autographed football from the 2013 Green Bay Packers. The drawing begins at 3 p.m., but participants do not have to be present to win.

More information is available from Diane Schumacher, festival chair, at pdschu@sbcglobal.net. The society's website is <http://plschu.wix.com/ochistorical>