

JONATHAN CLARK HOUSE MUSEUM NEWSLETTER

Term: Fall | Issue 4 | October 2022

JCH YOUNG HISTORIANS SPEAK!

Two of JCH's newest Young Historian recruits just happen to have scholarly pursuits as well. They were asked to share with us and our JCH Friends what they currently find interesting in history, and what the labors of their research has produced. Continue reading within to see what Sarah Daniels and Marcy Zimmer have found out about where the phrase "Sleep Tight" comes from, and about the importance of Wisconsin's Plank Road system to our local history.

OUR HARVEST IS YOUR BOUNTY

New in 2022 was the debut of JCH's newest annual celebration the **Fall Harvest Celebration!** With this community event, JCH welcomed Ozaukee County to the museum to join in **games, hands-on historic demonstrations, tours, and the harvest of our JCH potato garden.** Family fun was had by all as we celebrated together the arrival of Fall and the bounty of community that it brings. As always the fun is shared inside!

THE JCH YEAR END DRIVE HAS ARRIVED!

Every Fall we launch our Year End Drive Appeal to you all, and ask you to continue your support of everything we do at JCH. Our Open Hours, tours, events, and enriching programs serve your community, your family, and you as an individual. We can't do all that we do without YOU, so as Fall gives way to the long Winter chill, please continue to keep JCH warm and cozy with your generous Friendship into the New Year yet to come!

THE WINDS OF CHANGE REACH JCH

The sights, sounds, smells, and the winds of change have saturated our landscape here in our corner of Wisconsin. With this, we have some news to share with you, and the opportunity to help with the needs of our shifting Board of Directors.

Please read within our Newsletter for an important message from JCH Executive Director Dana Hansen, and to find out more information on how you can nominate, and vote for three new important JCH Board Members.



SLEEP TIGHT

BY JCH YOUNG HISTORIAN SARAH DANIELS

We say phrases that, when analyzed, don't really fit in with our modern language. It's common to wish someone a night of restful sleep by saying "Sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite" but have we ever thought about where this phrase originated? This, and many other phrases reflect our shared history through their persistence in our language and culture.

Starting in the 16th century, the base of a bed frame was strung with rope, and the elaborate woven pattern of the ropes required routine tightening. Taut ropes ensured that the mattress did not sag during the night, resulting in bad sleep. Like a hammock, the bed was only comfortable if the ropes were tight enough to hold the weight of the occupant. So, if one wanted to wish someone a restful night of sleep, they'd say "sleep tight".

Bed keys, referenced in the photo to the right, were used to tighten the ropes. Using a twisting motion, the bed key returned the tension to the ropes. The mattress was like a giant pillowcase, stuffed with straw, feathers, cornhusks, or other soft, packable materials, and it was placed on top of the net of ropes. Cotton or linen sheets were often used with a sturdy, thick quilt on top of the mattress and sheets. A straw stuffed mattress (the hired man's bed) and bed key (right above the hired man's bed) can be seen at the Jonathan Clark House Museum!



What about the "don't let the bed bugs bite" portion of the phrase? It's actually an extended version of the phrase. It was added on in the mid 20th century, making it unlikely to have originated from the rope bed itself. It was previously thought that the "tight" portion of "sleep tight" referenced tightening the mattress shut in order to prevent bed bugs, but that wasn't a common way to ward off bed bugs. Rather, cans filled with kerosene were put on bed posts to stop bed bugs from crawling into the mattress as the tightness of the sheets or mattress was not regarded as an effective way to prevent pests. It is widely assumed that "don't let the bed bugs bite" was simply added on because it rhymed and sounded good phonetically- it has no basis in the 1840's way of preventing bed bugs.



One is probably more likely to hear this phrase in the 21st century than in the 1840's. The first recorded use of "sleep tight" was in 1866. In modern pop culture, it's found in songs written by Lennon and McCarthy, in books ranging from children's picture books to novels, and even in movie titles. It has become incorporated into our everyday language, even though the use of rope strung beds died down in the 1870's with the invention of coil spring mattresses. Over 100 years

later, even with the extinction of rope beds, this expression has survived the test of time, and this is just one of the many examples of history intertwining with language.

PLANK ROADS: THE DOOR TO MODERN TRANSPORTATION

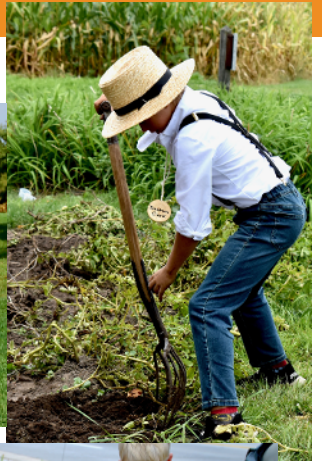
BY JCH YOUNG HISTORIAN MARCY E. ZIMMER

Wisconsin's early statehood emerged as a variety of rural cities scattered throughout the vast countryside of the new territory. Milwaukee quickly became an overflowing city of trade and growing industrialism while the rest of the state was forced to find new ways to travel to the urban center. Plank roads were at the center of travel within early Wisconsin, providing an advanced and efficient way for farmers to travel to Milwaukee and expand commerce. In addition, the innovation of plank roads provided new job prospects for the green settlers such as opportunities in lumber work, construction of roads, and managing tolls. The new roads were complete with flaws, but they proved themselves to be essential in paving the way for future methods of transportation. Plank roads proved to be a necessary step in connecting Wisconsin's cities, growing trade, and creating a transportation revolution.

Plank roads may appear redundant, useless, and ineffective, and this view of plank roads was not limited to the modern eye as even at the apogee of plank roads their necessity was questioned. Despite all of the difficulties that followed plank roads, they were absolutely essential in Wisconsin's early statehood. Before plank roads were commonly found in Wisconsin, it was waterways that carried the weight of intrastate travel. Early settlers in the 1820s believed it was through water that commerce would flourish, and they worked to create a canal at Portage on the Fox and Wisconsin rivers and proposed a canal to connect Milwaukee to the Mississippi River. The influx of new settlers quickly put these hopes to rest when the complications of low water periods and lack of harbors stifled the goal of efficient trade. The lack of state funding and refusal from the government to give money for a canal led to water travel no longer fixed as a priority. After this set back, a new approach was soon taken. With inspiration borrowed from Canadian travel, plank roads were soon introduced. In the 1830s, most of the territory was scattered with worn out dirt roads that quickly became sinkholes when it rained, making seasonal travel difficult and uncomfortable for farmers. As Milwaukee grew in wealth and continued to urbanize, the small cities around Milwaukee pleaded for roads to be extended to them so they could join in the increase of commerce. In 1846, the Milwaukee and Watertown plank road began its construction, now providing a connection within Wisconsin for safe and efficient travel. Plank roads quickly grew in popularity and became the ideal method of travel, with the simplicity of assembling them only increasing their popularity. Plank roads were typically made from oak or cedar because of their durability, and fortunately for the territory, they possessed an abundance of those woods. The wood was cut into 3 foot wide planks, and laid horizontally across the dirt path. Vertically, 2 more planks were placed at a road's length apart to keep the road's shape. The planks were secured in with stringers and dirt was piled atop of the plank's ends to hold them in place. Nails were typically avoided out of cost and caution for the safety

Article Continues on pages 9 - 11

FALL FUN AT THE NEW JCH FALL HARVEST CELEBRATION!



THE JCH 2022 YEAR END DRIVE APPEAL



Friends of Jonathan Clark House

*Bringing History to Life at the Corner of
Bonniwell & Cedarburg Roads*

Dear JCH Friend,

The end of 2022 is soon approaching, and the **Jonathan Clark House** is asking our Friends to help make 2023 the best yet! With your monetary support, we will be able to keep offering the education and fun you have come to expect as well as all the new enriching programming we have planned. Your generous contribution will also serve as an investment to help preserve this important and historic 1848 home, allowing JCH to continue to serve your community through 2023 and beyond. As a **Friend of the Jonathan Clark House**, any level you are able to give makes all the difference. So, please donate to JCH today to give the **Gift of History** to you and your neighbors for years to come!

To donate and become a Friend, complete and return the enclosed pledge form along with your check to the Friends of Jonathan Clark House. Donations via PayPal are also available on our website at <https://jonathanclarkhouse.com/support-our-cause>. Thank you so much for your consideration in joining us in "Bringing History to Life."

Sincerely,

Linda Chay

Linda Chay

JCH Board President

Nina Look

Nina Look, Ph.D.

Assistant Director

✉ jchmuseum@gmail.com

☎ 262-618-2051

📍 P. O. Box 634 Mequon, WI 53092

CONSIDER GIVING TO THE JCH YEAR END DRIVE TO BECOME OUR FRIEND (AND RECOGNIZED ON OUR ANNUAL REPORT!)

Want to support JCH today in their Year End Drive???

Print the form below, OR scan the QR Code to donate online

Thank you for your generous contribution.

Your gift will enable the Friends of Jonathan Clark House to purchase and preserve a unique historic treasure for generations of children and adults.



Jonathan M. Clark House
- 1848 -

Yes, I want to support historic preservation with my enclosed Gift to the Friends of Jonathan Clark House.

\$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 \$1,000 \$2,000 \$3,000

Other: \$ _____

Please use my gift for the following:

Preservation Projects Operational Expenses Use as Needed

Educational Programming Other: _____

In Honor / Memory of: _____

CIRCLE ONE

• • •

The Friends of Jonathan Clark House is a nonprofit, 501(c)3 tax exempt organization lead by a volunteer board of directors and staff. Donors over the age of 70 1/2 may have the option to donate directly from their retirement account. Please consult your attorney or financial advisor for tax and legal advice.

Bringing History to Life at the Jonathan Clark House.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Enclosed is my check payable to Friends of Jonathan Clark House for \$ _____

I will go to www.jonathanclarkhouse.com and donate through PayPal.


Use my/our name(s) on the JCH Donor List.

Do not use my/our name(s) on the JCH Donor List.



Jonathan M. Clark House
- 1848 -

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YOU'RE ALWAYS IN GOOD COMPANY WITH JCH FRIENDS

JCH Volunteers (and Friends!) Underwrite Museum Tea Kettle



The tea kettle is an essential hearth resource for the Clark family. It would have been in almost constant use, especially when heating water for tea or coffee. I found this tea kettle at an antique shop that specializes in early American antiques. I was certain that it would fit our interpretation of Wisconsin in 1848. I purchased it and brought it to the museum to display with our collection of cast iron hearth artifacts. I researched the style and construction of the kettle and was amazed to find that it dates to the period from 1760 to 1790.

The tea kettle has been generously underwritten by JCH Docents Ed and Laverne Foster. Come for a museum tour and learn about this and other intriguing artifacts. Perhaps, you too, would like to underwrite an artifact in one of our museum rooms. If so, contact me at jchmuseum@gmail.com

Fred Derr, JCH Co-Curator and Preservation Manager

Help us say THANK YOU to our recent Donors and Friends

Bank First	Dona Look and Ken Loeber
Cedarburg Toy Company	Kirsten Reinhardt
Ed and Laverne Foster	Alice and Bob Schilleman
Ellen Hickey	Harold Schnell
Marsha Hickey	Carol Vanney
Andy Krogstad	Janet Montgomery
Courtney Krogstad	Joan Horsefield
Fiddleheads Coffee	

JCH GIVES THANKS TO THEIR FRIENDS

Holiday Lights

Historic Jonathan Clark House Museum

on the corner of Bonniwell and Cedarburg Roads in Mequon



Join us as we
celebrate JCH's
10th anniversary!



Tuesday, November 29, 5P – 7P

Keyboard by Luke Edgewood

OR

Wednesday, November 30, 5P – 7P

Harp Performed by Dr. Jennifer Mackinnon

Please RSVP by November 21, to jchmuseum@gmail.com.
Indicate which night you plan to attend, and the names of those
in your group.



PLANK ROADS: THE DOOR TO MODERN TRANSPORTATION

BY JCH YOUNG HISTORIAN MARCY E. ZIMMER

of horses' hooves. In addition, 24 foot wide ditches were dug under the road to prevent flooding and damage. These roads were privately funded and therefore had to be maintained from private earnings. To upkeep the conditions of the roads, a toll system was put in place. There was no set toll system for every plank road, each one differed slightly in the handling of their fundings. The Milwaukee and Cedarburg plank road decided on four cents per one horse vehicle and eight cents per double horse vehicle, and the road had two major tolls. In contrast, the Milwaukee and Watertown plank road had one cent per animal per mile as a toll, and the road had five mile toll gates. Tolls were paid at gates that were typically made from wood bars with a makeshift lever that would lift the wood bar once the toll was paid. Although the roads were quite efficient, they had a multitude of flaws that ultimately led to their premature demise. The ditches dug under the roads were mostly faulty, leading to the roads becoming a swampy trap for wagons. The lack of nails on the boards also caused them to occasionally float during heavy rains, making the roads unusable. This flooding occurred so regularly that farmers became accustomed to carrying log chains in wet seasons to haul their wagons out of the marshes. The boards also had issues in the summer season. The hot sun would bake the wood and cause it to expand and become brittle, which caused wood fractures and broken legs for horses. The lack of state funding made repairs difficult since road keepers always had to rely on their tolls to upkeep the roads. People started to resent paying tolls because most of the time the roads were not in adequate driving condition, forcing farmers to drive through fields instead. The plank roads quickly returned to the dirt roads they once were, and the railroad ascended into the light of modern travel. Despite its many flaws, plank roads were not entirely useless. Without their creation, the Milwaukee economy would have failed to grow as none of the farmers could have traveled to the center of commerce. As a result, Wisconsin itself would not have received attention from the federal government, earning new railroads and expanding its trade across the nation.

Plank roads were essential to farmers in the 1850s. It not only greatly increased their trade, but their relations with one another. Plank roads made everyday life a little easier for farmers, allowing them more liberties in when they could transport their goods, and allowing them connections with not only Milwaukee, but their fellow farmers. On the Milwaukee and Watertown Plank Road a farmer from Elm Grove could be traveling with a farmer from Pewaukee. Although the two cities were only about nine miles apart, it is unlikely that any of those farmers would have interacted with each other if they had not taken the same road. With this new socialization of farmers came new innovations in crops. Farmers had opportunities to stop at taverns on their journeys and commute with one another, and in doing so, they could learn new ideas for farming and new techniques in crop keeping. They also became accustomed to helping one another haul their wagons out of the marshy areas of the roads or to fix a wheel. Milwaukee was fully dependent upon intrastate trade in order for

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Wisconsin to grow, and without the plank roads Wisconsin would not have seen this growth. Even in 1842 when Milwaukee received a railroad providing a connection to the Mississippi River, Milwaukee still had to focus on connecting itself with the rest of its state, thus utilizing the plank road. Further expanding the economy of Wisconsin, plank roads created new jobs, such as road keepers, tavern owners, and even lumbermen had their fair share of increased work. There was no small link in the plank road system, everyone who helped had been a part of the economic growth in early Wisconsin.

In the late 1840s, plank roads were tremendously popular across Wisconsin. It was hoped that all cities in Wisconsin would eventually have a plank road extending to Milwaukee or to another major trade center. These hopes were echoed by the mayor of Wisconsin, Byron Kilbourn, in his 1848 inaugural address where he stated; "With a good system of plank roads extending in all directions into the interior, and a railroad to the Mississippi, the foundations of the prosperity of our city would be laid deep and strong." A new influx of jobs followed the creation of plank roads and opened doors for settlers to join in the rising flow of commerce. Jonathan M. Clark took up one of the new jobs of plank road surveyor for parts of the Milwaukee and Fond du Lac plank road. The part that was controlled by Clark was "lying between the tavern of Wm. P. Optiz and, in the town of Mequon, and the village of Cedarburg." Clark's duties as a surveyor were listed in an advertisement posted by the engineer of the Milwaukee and Fond du Lac plank road, John B. Vliet, as he invited contractors to contact Jonathan Clark for any proposals of "grubbing, grading, or turnpiking that part of the Milwaukee and Fond du Lac plank road". All three of these tasks helped the process of construction for a plank road, and Vliet's message clearly states that Clark was heavily involved with constructing plank roads. Grubbing is the process of removing all vegetation in the place where the plank road will be placed. This involves clearing grass, crops, tree stumps, or any other natural barriers that may interfere with construction. After the land is cleared, the barren soil must be graded. Grading is the process where the land starts to be leveled in order for the planks to be evenly placed upon it. The final stage of construction is turnpiking, in which the road itself is laid out and built. As a surveyor, no parts of the road under Clark's control could be built or even cleared without his consent. This role was vital to keeping the plank roads comfortable, efficient, and safe. Clark had to make sure that the areas requested for a road to be built on were safe and on proper grounds, which was indispensable to the construction process. If the ground is not surveyed properly, serious consequences as listed previously could result from the uneven roads and poor placement could cause painful traffic jams. This vital bridge between Milwaukee and the rest of the state would not be possible without proper surveying and stable ground for the roads to be built upon. Thus, the greater result of proper surveying led to economic growth in Milwaukee, and Wisconsin itself as a result.

Plank roads were a connection between the past of transportation and its future. The positive impact

PLANK ROADS: THE DOOR TO MODERN TRANSPORTATION

BY JCH YOUNG HISTORIAN MARCY E. ZIMMER

they had on economic growth in early Wisconsin definitively outweighs the troubles involved with construction. If plank roads were never introduced to Wisconsin, Milwaukee's commerce would have been limited to only receiving goods from farms nearby and the efficiency and greater exchange of commerce would not have expanded. All jobs involved in the process of the creation of plank roads held great importance as the work of lumberman, toll managers, surveyors, and other greater or lesser roles provided Wisconsin with a transportation revolution. Plank roads created a strong foundation for Wisconsin's early economic status, and they provided the new state with many prosperous years of economic growth still to come.

GET TO KNOW OUR JCH YOUNG HISTORIANS SARAH & MARCY

Sarah lives in Cedarburg and is currently a senior at Divine Savior Holy Angels High School in Milwaukee, WI.

She enjoys reading, theater, and learning Latin and history, specifically the life and politics of Abraham Lincoln, and she plans to double major in history and philosophy with a minor in Latin. She plans on attending law school, eventually working as a prosecutor.



Marcy Zimmer currently resides in Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin, and she attends Divine Savior Holy Angels High School as a senior.

She studies Civil War Era military history and loves all things history related. She aspires to take her passion for history onto the battlefield and become a licensed NPS battlefield guide. Her dream is to work at Antietam National Battlefield and hopefully become the author of books about the civil war and its military history.

HEAR YE', HEAR YE'! JCH CALLS FOR BOARD MEMBER NOMINATIONS!

Do you or do you know someone that would like to serve on the Friends of the Jonathan Clark House Board of Directors? If so, submit your nomination today!

Friends of Jonathan Clark House Nomination for Board Membership

The Friends of Jonathan Clark House is accepting nominations for three or more board positions, each with up to three-year terms, starting January 2023. Nominations are due **November 15, 2022**.

Requirements for nomination

- . Nominator must be a Friend/member of the Friends of Jonathan Clark House on the date that the nomination is made.
- . Nominator must ask the nominee to review the list of board member expectations and ask if she/he will accept the nomination.
- . Nominee must be 18 years of age or older on January 1, 2023.
- . Self-nominations are allowed.
- . The Friends of Jonathan Clark House Board of Directors Nomination Form is due in the museum office on **November 15, 2022**.

Expectations for participation as an active Board of Directors Member

1. Participate in Friends of Jonathan Clark House Board of Director meetings, (There are at least four each year as specified in the By-Laws) and other meetings as scheduled when they apply to your position.
2. Serve a three-year term
3. Give personal time, talents, and treasure in one or more of the following:
 - a.) Serving on a board committee, i. e., Fund Development
 - b.) Reviewing the Board meeting packet prior to meetings
 - c.) Touring the museum and keeping current
 - d.) Attending museum events, when possible
 - e.) Volunteering in a fund development effort
 - f.) Consulting in an expert capacity
 - g.) Making a financial donation to the Friends organization
5. Serve as an ambassador for the Friends organization by bringing awareness of the organization to the community
6. Participate in the annual evaluations of the organization, the Board of Directors, and the staff

Friends of Jonathan Clark Board of Directors – Nomination Form

Date _____
Nominator name and address _____

Nominee name, address and telephone (E-mail address is optional)

Has the nominee consented to be on the ballot?
 Yes No (if no, the nomination will not be accepted)

Return this form to: Nominating Committee, jchmuseum@gmail.com
or Nominating Committee, JCH Museum, P. O. Box 634, Mequon, WI 53092

Due date: **November 15, 2022**

A LETTER FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DANA HANSEN

Dear JCH Friends,

The past year serving as your Executive Director has been extremely fun, enriching, educational, and personally life changing. It has led me to be a better leader, and to recognize and appreciate when to accept new opportunities and big changes. In order to maneuver with new developments that have come my way, I have made the very difficult decision to leave my position with the Jonathan Clark House Museum and have accepted a position in Milwaukee that has been long held as a personal and professional dream for me.



It has been an absolute pleasure getting to know and make what I feel will be lifelong connections, relationships, and of course, friends here in the Mequon-Thiensville and extended Cedarburg community. Every person that I have met and worked with here has gone above and beyond to make me feel welcome, and to be successful in helping to fulfill the Jonathan Clark House mission. I could not have done anything I have done during my time here without the help and support of our community partners, our dedicated volunteers and Board of Directors, and all of our JCH Friends.

I would like to particularly thank Nina Look, and Fred Derr whose work and dedication to JCH is well known, and of what I was witness to and in awe of. There are no better or caring hands than that of Nina and Fred, and I am certain that with their continued direction, the Jonathan Clark House will continue to serve and enrich your community long into the future.

Sincerely,

Dana L. Hansen