The Chronicle

Weston Historical Society *Summer 2012* *Vol. 33, No. 2*

THE ANGEL OF DEVIL'S DEN

In our last issue we told you about a large business, a beautiful piece of land, and the heartache all of this caused the people of Weston. In this issue, we wish to tell you about another beautiful piece of land and a large company, but this time the people of Weston were grateful and happy about the outcome.

We are referring to the Lucius Pond Ordway/Devil's Den/Nature Conservancy land in Weston. It encompasses 1,756 acres of land, the largest protected piece of land in Fairfield County, hosting more that 40,000 people per year who walk the trails and enjoy nature at its finest.

As reported in the "Minnesota History Interpreter" newsletter, "In 1902, John Dwan, an attorney in Two Harbors Michigan founded the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company with four other businessmen. He agreed to rent the second floor of his office to the company which is where the articles of incorporation were signed for $15.00 a month.

"Originally the purpose of the company, known as 3M, was to mine material that could be used for grinding wheels. In 1905, the mining proved to be of little value and they moved to Duluth to begin the manufacture of sandpaper. The company did not do well until Lucius Ordway, a St. Paul businessman, invested enough money in the company to keep it going. Mr. Ordway wanted the company moved to St. Paul where he resided and the home office is now located. Richard Drew, a 3M researcher, invented Scotch Masking Tape in 1925 and a few years later he developed Cellophane Tape." As they say, the rest is history. The company now employs over 70,000 people, has 50,000 different products and operates in 60 countries.

You may be asking what 3M has to do with Weston. Katherine Ordway, a guardian of the land, was Lucius Ordway's daughter and she resided in Weston for over 50 years at 165 Goodhill Road in Weston. Katherine became one of the heirs of the 3M Company upon her father's death and with her love of nature and art, she transformed a huge tract of land in Weston into nature land to be preserved and used by not only residents of Weston, but to all the surrounding towns.

Katherine Ordway was a leader in land conservation in America, second only to John D. Rockefeller, Jr.

The Ordway's house at 165 Goodhill Road in Weston

As she was a shy and quiet woman, she named her foundation after the road on which she lived, the Goodhill Foundation, instead of using her own name. When the foundation was dissolved in 1984 (five years after her death), she had donated more than $64 million to conservation causes.

The very first land Katherine Ordway championed was in Weston. Through a series of donations from 1966

through 1968, beginning with a 1,100 acre purchase from the Bridgeport Hydraulic Company, Katherine Ordway created Devil's Den, named in honor of her father, Lucius Pond Ordway. In an Archaeological Investigations report of Native American Habitats done in Weston and Redding from 1967-1968, artifacts obtained determined the extent and manner of use which human beings have made of the Lucius Pond Ordway Preserve. This tract is drained to the south by Godfrey Brook and by the western branch of the Saugatuck River. A series of rock trending ridges run in a Northeast-Southwest direction through much of the tract providing easy human penetration only along the course of water drainage. The forbidding nature of the tract has contributed to the local stories that refer to it as the Devil's Den

One of the sites in the investigation was thought to have been used in approximately 100 A.D. Evidence from the shelter included pottery shards, quartz tool, point fragment and flake; and quartzite point and point fragment.

In another shelter two hundred feet west of the Godfrey Pond and approximately one hundred feet above the level of the point, excavation and screening were done in two-foot sections and four inch depth. In the second four-inch depth, fourteen artifacts were recovered from this shelter. These included quartz projectile points and tools, quartzite fragment, and flint projectile points. Some shell remains were also recovered in this shelter.

Not only is this area one of spectacular beauty, but it has also given us a glimpse of what times were like before the white man inhabited the area. We have Katherine Ordway to thank for this incredible resource. She was camera –shy and maintained a low profile as did her contemporary and fellow Weston resident Alice De Lamar. Alice was also an heir to a mining fortune and donated large amounts of land in Weston for nature preserves. Both women donated small fortunes for the art world as well. Katherine had amassed one of the finest private art collections in Connecticut which she donated to Yale University upon her death in 1979.

Katherine Ordway's legacy is the preservation of 64,000 acres of land in five states in America, including her home state of Minnesota. She is best known as "The Lady Who Saved the Prairies," due to the biography published by The Nature Conservancy with that title (available at the Weston Public Library). One reviewer wrote "no other woman in American has put her mark on lands from Hawaii to Virginia, and yet few people know about her." How wonderful that she left her fortune to the people and causes that she believed in. ❧

WE ALL SCREAM FOR...

By Cathryn Prince

July was National Ice Cream month. But just how did ice cream become synonymous with scorching summer days? Just like there are many legends about who stitched the first American Flag, or what city came up with the hamburger (New Haven), there are lots of origin stories when it comes to ice cream.

Some histories point to Alexander the Great who in the 4th Century B.C. liked to treat himself to ice flavored with honey now and again. Apparently Roman Emperor Nero ordered slaves to bring him ice from surrounding mountains. He flavored the ice with fruit and fruit juice.

There are stories pointing to Catherine de Medici as being responsible for ice cream's prevalence. She married the Duc D'Orleans, Henri II, when she was just 14. He was just 14 too. She became Queen Consort of France. Reportedly the child bride came to France with a yen for sorbets. According to www.whatscookinginamercia.net ice cream got its start during the wedding celebrations when her chef turned out a constant

rainbow of ices: lemon, lime, orange, cherry, and even wild strawberry.

So what about all those new flavors out there? On a recent visit to Double Twisters in Danbury, CT I was surprised to see a container filled with greenish ice cream. It was avocado-bacon. Double Twisters has all kinds of interesting flavors from cupuaco, sweet corn and guava. Just over the Weston line is Blondie's (the old Heibeck Ice Cream Parlor) on Route 7 – the wildest flavor there involves fruit. In Weston Center the Lunch Box serves Buck's Ice Cream from Milford, Connecticut.

"They made foie gras ice cream and puréed asparagus ice cream"

Unconventional ice cream flavors are not a new phenomenon. Apparently in the late 17th Century, early 18th century, people tried breadcrumbs, grated cheese and yes, even meat, into ice cream. They made foie gras ice cream and puréed asparagus ice cream.

No article about ice cream would be worth its weight in jimmies (sprinkles!) without mentioning First Lady Dolley Madison. Just to refresh, she was the one who saved George Washington's portrait while the White House was going up in flames in 1814. But she also knew how to throw a party. On March 4, 1813 Dolley Madison served strawberry ice cream at James Madison's second inaugural ball. Thereafter ice cream became an "official dessert" in the Madison White House.

Those who like bonnet, or dip, on their ice cream can thank Christian Nelson for that treat. In 1919 Nelson supposedly figured out how to cover and coat an ice cream bar with chocolate. And, according to some sources, an ice cream parlor owner tried to replicate the frozen treat but his daughter thought it was too messy to eat and so he put the whole thing on a stick.

Ice was a commodity in the 1800s. Here in Weston, long before refrigeration, people stored goods in cool cellars and ice houses. People gathered ice from lakes and ponds, like Godfrey Pond in Devil's Den. The ice was stored in ice wells or icehouses, like the one near Norfield Road. Ice wells were usually lined with bricks or stones and located in a shady spot. The wells usually had a domed roof to control the circulation of air.

Ice was packed into an underground chamber, often lined with sawdust. The shimmering blocks could last months – sometimes years – in the cold dark. It wasn't easy to harvest ice. Visitors to the historical society's barn can see some of the tools involved, including ice tongs, ice saws and ice buckets.

Giannitti ice box

Ice tongs and ice saws on exhibit in the Historical Society's Barn.

Ice house

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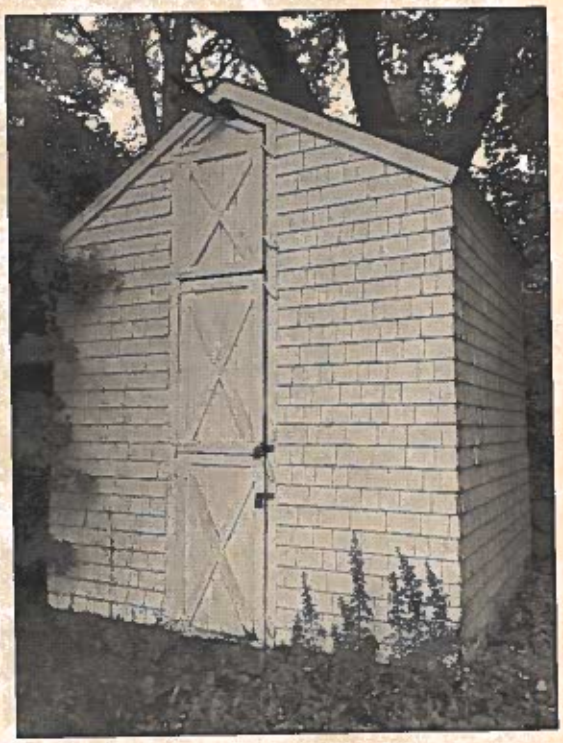

Ice house

100 YEARS AGO IN AMERICA

Here are some U.S. statistics for the year 1906:

* The average life expectancy in the U.S. was 47 years.
* Only 14 percent of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub.
* Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone (how would we have survived)
* There were only 8,000 cars in the U.S. and only 144 miles of paved roads.
* The maximum speed limit in most cities was 10 mph
* The average wage in the U.S. was 22 cents per hour
* The average U.S. worker made between $200 and $400 per year
* A competent accountant could expect to earn $2,000 per year, a dentist $2,500 per year, a veterinarian between $1,500 and $4,000 per year and a mechanical engineer about $5,000 per year.
* More than 95 percent of all births in the U.S. took place at home.
* Ninety percent of all U.S. doctors had no college education. Instead, they attended so-called medical schools, many of which were condemned in the press and by the government as "substandard."
* The cost of sugar was four cents a pound.
* The cost of eggs were fourteen cents a dozen.
* The cost of coffee was fifteen cents a pound.
* Most women only washed their hair once a month and used borax or egg yolks for shampoo.
* Canada passed a law that prohibited poor people from entering into their country for any reason.
* The tallest structure in the world was the Eiffel Tower
* Five leading causes of death in the U.S. were:
    1. Pneumonia and influenza.
    2. Tuberculosis.
    3. Diarrhea.
    4. Heart disease.
    5. Stroke.
* The American flag had 45 stars.
* Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico, Hawaii and Alaska hadn't been admitted to the Union yet.
* The population of Las Vegas, Nevada was only 30.
* Crossword puzzles, canned beer and ice tea had not been invented yet.
* There was no Mother's Day or Father's Day.
* Two out of every 10 U.S. adults could not read or write.
* Only 6 percent of all Americans had graduated from high school.
* Marijuana, heroin, and morphine were all available over the counter and the local corner drugstores. Back then the pharmacist said, "Heroin clears the complexion, gives buoyancy to the mind, regulates the stomach and bowels, and is, in fact, a perfect guardian of health."
* Eighteen percent of households in the U.S. had a least one full-time servant of domestic help.
* There were about 230 reported murders in the entire U.S.

What a difference a century makes. Imagine what another century will bring.

IN DEFENSE OF OLD GLORY

By Rebekah W. P. Nulkeley, 1898

Southport, Conn., July 2 – I write, as chairman of the flag committee of the Connecticut Daughters of the Revolution, to tell you of the work we are doing to foster a feeling of loyalty to the flag that has been honored and guarded in weary marches and perilous voyages. We need such an education of public sentiment as will loyally support righteous legislation for the purpose of enforcing respect for Old Glory.

It should hardly be a question of argument whether a man may wantonly and maliciously tear our country's flag into shreds or trample it; hardly less a question whether it ought to be used as a vehicle of advertisement for nostrums or liquors; yet instances of such misuse are too well known.

A stranger in Council Bluffs, Ia., rode up to a large American flag bearing a partisan banner and fired upon it with a shot-gun. A soldier shot at the mounted assailant, killing the horse and wounding the man, who escaped.

At Sedalia, Mo., a child was singing campaign songs and holding a flag in her hands. The flag was seized by a man of the opposing party and thrown upon a bonfire, and its destruction applauded by companions.

Clubs of oppositional political parties met at the railway station at Janesville, Wis., with the result that the national flag was rotten-egged and torn.

A procession marched through the streets of Lafayette, Ill., bearing the red flag at the front and trailing the American flag after it through the filth of the street.

We want the flag protected from all insults. We appeal to loyal Americans to stand by the DAR in this crusade. ❧

FINE PRINT

When someone tells you to read the fine print – do you? How many of us truly read the fine print and if we do, can we understand it? Well, one of our members, Elaine Deysenroth prides herself on reading the fine print on most everything.

She was looking at the advertisement on the back page of our latest issue. This was for a Fur Neck Piece for 95 cents. Sure enough in the last paragraph, under the fine print, was a list of products including trimmed hats, millinery, shoes, corsets, gloves, skirts, waists and the word Cravenettes. Elaine was immediately interested, curious to find the definition of Cravenettes.

She searched her dictionary with no luck. She then combed through an older dictionary, with still no luck. She did not give up and finally searched the trusty internet. There she found an explanation for the word Cravenette. The proper definition for the word is "to make a textile water repellent." Therefore we assume that a raincoat, or some sort of water repellent garment was available from the Chicago Mail Order Company, however, it was called a cravenette.

Thank you Elaine for reading the fine print. Please keep up the great work. We can learn something new every day. ❧

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Editor's Note

It is my pleasure to introduce everyone to a new contributing author for the Chronicle. Cathryn J. Prince recently joined the Historical Society and wanted to get involved. With her background in writing, she thought the Chronicle would be a good fit for her. I immediately agreed.

Cathryn is the author of the upcoming book "Death in the Baltic: The Sinking of the Wilheim Gustloff." It will be released April 2013. She is also the author of "A Professor, President, and a meteor: The Birth of American Science", for which she won the Connecticut Press Club's 2011 Book Award for non-fiction. She is also the author of "Burn the Town and Sack the Banks: Confederates Attack Vermont", and "Shot from the sky; American POW's in Switzerland".

Cathryn lives in Weston with her husband and children and we welcome her to our staff. I think you will enjoy her first article. Perfect summer for it. Enjoy!

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