

From: Grafton Historical Society info@graftonareahistory.org
Subject: The Krueger Dairy, Edmund Fitzgerald Program and Blues singer Ida Cox
Date: June 22, 2026 at 9:04 AM
To: tjkrueger1@me.com

DK



Newsletter

MISSION STATEMENT

The Grafton Historical Society is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization founded and operated by volunteers. We are dedicated to the preservation and sharing of Grafton area history.

GHS OFFICERS

Tom Krueger
President

Dave Antoine
Vice President

Debbie Krueger
Secretary

John Krueger
Treasurer

Nick Schanen
Archivist

Jim Wegner
Director

Steve Greger
Director

June, 2026

Message from the President

It is already the latter half of June and our weather in Wisconsin is sometimes like spring and sometimes like summer with drastic temperature swings, as much as 40 degrees. What kind of summer will it be? Well, weatherwise, you're always safe to bet "variable". It's Wisconsin! But at the Historical Society, we like to think the summer will be "historic". That is historic in terms of growth and interest in the Grafton Historical Society, as well as historic in our mission to share Grafton area history.

A few of the things we are planning for this summer include the follow-up on the relocation of the Spirit Rock from the Ahlers' family homestead to Lime Kiln Park. The relocation took place the end of October last year and will now be followed with the setting of a descriptive plaque at the new location, and another brief ceremony to again draw attention to the American Indians who first settled here and represent Grafton's very early history. Stay tuned for more information and further details on this coming event.

Another event we are working on is bringing a little bit of Blues music and history back to Grafton by way of a show or presentation or combination of both. This would be brought to us by David Watkins DJ, Analog Entertainment. As many of you may know, Grafton's connection to Blues music and Paramount Records is very real but also somewhat of a hidden fact that we hope to highlight and promote with this event. Again, we will provide more information and further details as arrangements become firm.

*Phyllis Wiggins
Director*

*Emily Engstrom
Director*

In closing, “sharing of Grafton history” is what we do best and how we connect with our membership and readers. We always enjoy hearing from you, whether it’s about one of our program presentations or just a question about a particular aspect or person of Grafton history. In many cases we are able to research and provide answers or history on these questions. That, by the way, is one of the benefits of being or becoming a member of the Grafton Historical Society. If you ever have any suggestions on what we can do better, feel free to contact any board member directly or communicate through the Grafton Historical Society website www.graftonareahistory.org

Working to “Discover, Preserve & Share” Grafton history

Tom Krueger
GHS President



The Krueger Dairy in Grafton

June is Dairy Month and Wisconsin has a history of dairy farming that goes back 1838 when dairy cows were first introduced into the state. In the early days, however, dairy cows were second to wheat farming. People on farms primarily produced dairy products like milk and butter and cheese for their own families, with small amounts put aside for bartering with neighbors.

The landscape for dairy farming began to change in the late 1850's. First, the price of wheat dropped and competition increased from farmers in Iowa and Minnesota. In the 1860's, along with the Civil War, came an insect

According to grandson, George Krueger, the dairy business actually began right on the farm with the bottling of milk. Into the late 1940's the dairy still delivered that milk by horse and wagon. "The horse knew the route and would move to the next stop when it felt the wagon move by my dad getting on," Krueger said.

In 1948 the dairy moved to its building at 706 Beech Street. The dairy was essentially a family business, according to Krueger. "Dad did most of the deliveries and mom worked in the plant. We did have some hired help," Krueger said. "The milk cans would come in and the milk went into a holding tank. The milk came in from several small farms, usually farms with 25-30

along with the Civil War, came an insect infestation of cinch bugs that would devour entire fields of wheat. In contrast, the future was looking brighter for dairy farms. One of the reasons was that the land that was worn out from producing wheat was perfect for dairy cattle. Another important factor was where the new immigrants to Wisconsin arrived from, and that was New York. That state at the time was the leading dairy producer in the nation. The New York settlers were skilled at commercial dairy processes and the German and Scandinavian farmers in Wisconsin were quick to adapt.

By 1867 Wisconsin had 245,000 dairy cows. By 1912, it had increased almost six fold to 1,460,000 cows. By 1916, Wisconsin dairy farmers were producing 3,000,000 pounds of cheese and a decade later that increased to 12,000,000 pounds.

With the farms in the area, dairies sprang up in small villages and towns like Grafton and were important to the people living there. One of the major dairies in Grafton was the Theodore Krueger Dairy, later known as just the Krueger Dairy. Operating well before the era of modern mega-dairies, Krueger Dairy bottled and delivered fresh milk straight from local farms to Grafton residents.

Krueger Dairy was born in 1927 when Theodore Krueger purchased a farm on what is now Beech Street.

head of cattle. From there the milk was pasteurized, homogenized, cooled and bottled. We produced skim milk and cream and half and half,” Krueger said, “but no butter. We would sell mainly milk – white and chocolate, but we did also sell orange drink and grape drink.”

Days began early at the dairy. “Work began at 5 a.m. and often we would deliver the route until late in the afternoon,” Krueger explained. “We served both Grafton and Cedarburg. Most homes in those days had a milk chute. We got to know the people on our route. They became friends over the years.”

Krueger began working in the dairy at a young age-- about 11 years old. “As soon as you got your license, you started making deliveries,” he said.

The Krueger Dairy closed in 1972, due mainly to a lower milk supply as farms were getting older and fading away, and from competition from grocery stores and supermarkets.

Krueger related a memory that hasn’t left him from those days, “It was the rural deliveries during snowstorms. You would make your way up a quarter mile snow-covered driveway and the customer would say, ‘we don’t need anything today.’”



Ida Cox

Ida Cox’s life reads like the arc of early American Blues itself—restless, resilient, and fiercely self-defined. Born Ida Prather in Georgia sometime between 1888 and 1896, she grew up in a world of limited opportunity but refused to be confined by it. As a teenager, she left home to join traveling minstrel and vaudeville troupes



Cox was also a savvy businesswoman. She managed her own touring company, the Raisin’ Cain Revue, and held her own, alongside giants like Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith. Paramount promoted her as the **“Uncrowned Queen of**

join traveling minstrel and vaudeville troupes, sharpening her voice, wit, and stage presence on the road.

By the early 1920s, Cox had transformed herself from a touring comedienne into one of the foundational voices of classic female blues. Her first recordings in 1923—"Graveyard Dream Blues" and "Weary Way Blues"—were immediate successes, launching a prolific period in which she recorded 78 songs for Paramount between 1923 and 1929.

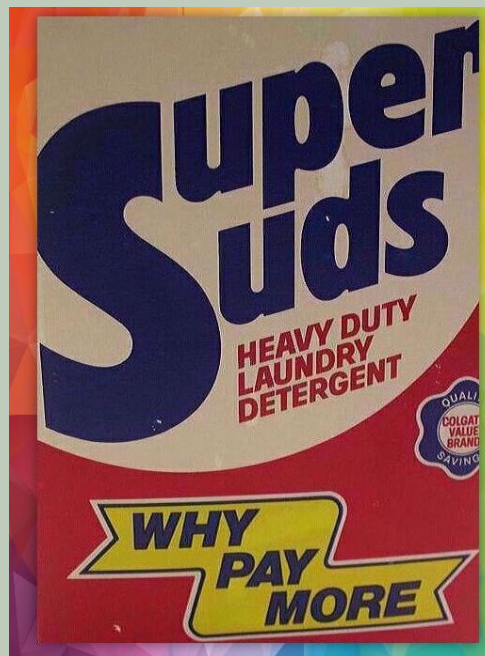
Her repertoire included songs like "Wild Women Don't Have the Blues", "Cemetery Blues," "Pink Slip Blues," and "Last Mile Blues". Her music explored themes of death, unemployment, and injustice from a distinctly Black female perspective. She wrote most of her own material, asserting creative control rare for women performers of her era.

the Blues," and she earned that title through clarity, poise, and a commanding stage presence.

Her career reached a national audience in 1939 when John Hammond featured her in the landmark *From Spirituals to Swing* concert at Carnegie Hall, introducing her artistry to integrated audiences newly awakening to the cultural power of Black music.

A stroke in 1945 slowed her public career, but not her voice. She returned for one final recording in 1961—*Blues for Rampart Street*—before retiring to Knoxville, where she died in 1967.

Ida Cox's legacy endures in the assertive, emotionally rich blues she helped define. Her songs remain touchstones of Black feminist expression, and her career stands as a testament to artistic autonomy in an era that offered little of it.



What would \$1 buy?

Excerpted from "Memoirs of my life in Grafton, Wisconsin, 1941-1967,"
by Gerald "Jerry" E. Mueller, Ph.D.

I offer these few words about wages

Soft drinks also cost 5 cents. Deposits

and the cost of living in Grafton in the late 1940's and early 1950's. I remember that for the adults, obtaining a wage of \$1 per hour was a real milestone. Although most full-time employees in the factories were at that level by 1950, I met a supervisor at the Grafton Woolen Mills who was making only \$1.25 per hour in 1960.

Here are some things I remember about prices. I know my dad paid between 20 and 30 cents per gallon for regular gasoline in those days, dropping to 14 or 15 cents during price wars between competing service stations. The standard cost of a candy bar or an ice cream was 5 cents, and a comic book cost a dime. I can remember when the local druggist claimed he sold a higher quality of ice cream and raised his price to 7 cents per cone. Many of us thereafter boycotted his soda fountain and bought our ice cream elsewhere.

on the soda bottles were usually 2 cents for the smaller and 5 cents for a 12 ounce bottle, there being no canned soda in those days. Bar prices for beer ranged from 10 cents for a glass to 15 cents for a short bottle to 25 cents for a 12 ounce bottle.

When my brother and I were quite young, our mother would send us to Pinke's Store on the northwest corner of Bridge Street and 12th Avenue to buy groceries. For many years she used a laundry detergent called Super Suds. This product cost 29 cents a box, but it usually contained one or more 10-cent coupons which reduced the price considerably. I remember when I would occasionally pay for a box with three coupons, getting a penny in change. I'm not sure how the soap company made any profit with such an arrangement. Merchants in Grafton, by the way, generally gave out utilitarian gifts to their customers at Christmas time, including calendars, glassware, carving knives and soup ladles.



THE SINKING OF THE EDMUND FITZGERALD

The Grafton Historical Society invites you to take an intriguing look at the last voyage and sinking of the Edmund Fitzgerald. The SS Edmund Fitzgerald was an American Great Lakes freighter that sank in Lake Superior during a storm on November 10, 1975, with the loss of the entire crew of 29 men. She remains the

**Thursday,
September 10**

6:00 p.m.

**Rose Harms
Legion Post
1540 13th Avenue**

**Free and open to
the public.**

largest ship to ever have sunk on the Great Lakes.
Join us as Rochelle Pennington takes us through
the history and last hours of that doomed ship.



Rochelle Pennington is an award-winning columnist and bestselling author of ten books. She is both a lively storyteller and an entertaining lecturer. She expertly weaves the perfect balance of humor, charm, and riveting facts into her captivating performances, with a focus on "the best of humanity."



Sponsoring
Partner:



**Suggested \$5
donation.**

**Refreshments
and Cash Bar**

**GRAFTON HISTORICAL
SOCIETY**

P.O. BOX 481

Grafton, WI 53024

Website:

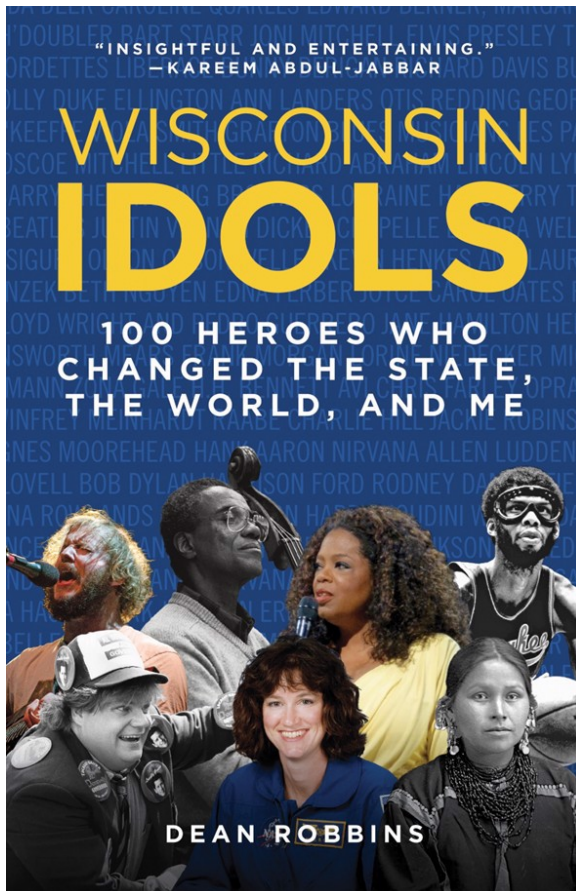
www.graftonareahistory.org

Email:

info@graftonareahistory.org

Facebook:

Graftonhistoricalsocietyof
WI



Robbins Entertains With Stories of Wisconsin Idols

It was a fun evening for those attending the June GHS presentation on Wisconsin Idols. The audience enjoyed hearing speaker Dean Robbins tell the humorous and surprising stories of people who had a connection to Wisconsin and, in his words, "changed the world."



GHS Archives Growing

Nick Schanen, GHS archivist, holds two United States military uniforms that were recently donated to the Society.

The GHS now has a home for its archives, having leased space in the Timothy Wooden Building.

Schanen has spent countless hours organizing and cataloguing the Society's historical papers and artifacts. Eventual plans call for a catalogue of the contents of the archives to be available on line.

If you have an item of historical value that you would like to donate, e-mail us at: Info@griftonareahistory.org.

Visit the Grafton Historical Society at Ladies Night Out

The GHS will again be at Ladies Night Out on **Tuesday, August 6**. Ladies Night Out offers an evening of shopping, sampling, and fun with friends. This year's theme is **The Diva Wears Prada** and guests are encouraged to dress up to match the theme and take part in the festivities. Visitors will enjoy special vendor promotions, complimentary samples, and a lively downtown atmosphere filled with fun activities.

Be sure to stop by the GHS table and say hi!



GRAFTON AREA
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

**The
Diva
Wears
Prada**
LADIES NIGHT OUT

Tues. Aug. 4 • 5-8 pm
Downtown Grafton

SCENE ALONG THE MILWAUKEE RIVER, GRAFTON, WIS.





Images from Grafton's Past

Grafton residents enjoy a leisurely trip down the Milwaukee River at the turn of the last century. Boating on the river was a popular activity for many in the area.

The Fifth Annual **FIRE UP THE FORGE!**

**Presented by Ozaukee County Historical Society,
Upper Midwest Blacksmith Association, and
StormCloak Forge, LLC**

Saturday, July 11th from 10am until 5pm

**Blacksmithing demonstrations
all day!**

**Try your hand at blacksmithing
with a "Make and Take" project!**

**Live Bluegrass Music Jam
from 1 to 5pm!**

**Food and Beverages will be
available for sale!**

Tour the historic buildings!

Visit the historic Blacksmith Shop!

And new this year, a local artist vendor area!



Ozaukee County Pioneer Village
4880 County Hwy I, Saukville, WI
\$8 Adults, \$6 Students 5-17 and Seniors 65+,
Children under 5 and OCHS Members are free!

OZAUKEE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESENTS

Bluegrass at the Village

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2026

OZAUKEE COUNTY PIONEER VILLAGE
4880 HWY I, SAUKVILLE

**Food &
Fun**

Kids Corner

Raffles

**Jam in
the Barn**

RAIN OR SHINE-UNDER THE BIG TENT!

GATES & CONCESSIONS OPEN AT 11:00AM • MUSIC: 12:00AM to 5:30PM

BANDS: 12:00 Sawdust Symphony
1:00 Valley Fox
2:00 Aidan Muse
3:00 Cerny & Ogburn
4:00 Fox Crossing String Band

ADMISSION: Admission Advance Ticket Prices: **\$12.00**
OCHS Members \$5, Kids 5 and Under Free
Day of Event \$15.00

VIP Tent Reservations \$75, 10 X 20ft, 4 Drink tkts & a rocking chair

Thank you to our sponsors: *Mueller Heating and Cooling,*

Linda and Poul Sandersen, Jon & Sandy Dehlinger, Badgerland Bluegrass Music Association, Wavesplitter Productions, VelnetskeLaw Offices, LLC, Charles & Sharon Lapicola, Saukville/Port Washington Rotary, Clifford Larson Allen, Big Joe's Gas & Convenience, Cedarburg Auto Repair Service, Summit Credit Union & Saukville Chamber of Commerce

Over 500 seats under the tent: Lawn
Chairs are welcomed. **No**
food/drink carry-ins & No Pets -
Free Parking

To purchase tickets or for more information
visit: <https://www.ochs.co.ozaukee.wi.us/>



DO YOU KNOW?

With this issue we'd like to continue our "Mystery Item" feature. If you have an idea what this item might be contact us at:

info@graftonareahistory.org.

If you have an item that you need help identifying and would like to submit it for a future newsletter edition, we'd be happy to include it.



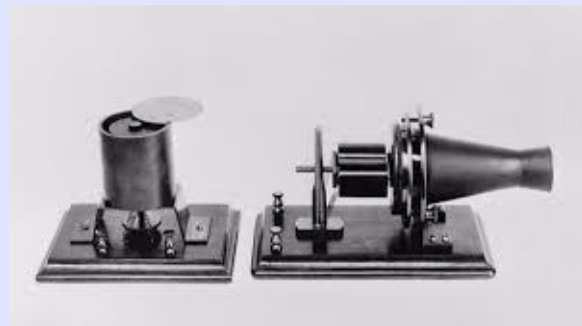
DID YOU KNOW?

This **Mystery Item** from the last issue of our Newsletter was ...

A very early telephone.

The first telephone call was made on March 10, 1876 as Alexander Graham Bell spoke with the historic words, "Mr. Watson. Come here, I want to see you."

Bell originally suggested answering the phone with "Ahoy." Thomas Edison, however, suggested "Hello" and that greeting won out around the world.



This message was sent to jkrueger1@me.com by info@grantonareanhistory.org
PO Box 481, Grafton, WI, 53024

 **Unsubscribe** SM [Unsubscribe](#) | [Manage Subscription](#) | [Report Abuse](#)