



Families of Couillardville

Togetherness Helpfulness Friendliness
It is about the people!

Seventh Edition—Fall 2013

Price \$1.00

Machine Shed Reunion #11



Seated from LtoR. Jim Jacquart, Charlotte Ihde, Carol Olson, Lucy Thome Schmidt, Helen Jacquart Roznowski, Ruth Thome, Rita Debauche, Gerald "Boo" Weigelt. Standing from the left, Leon Janssen, Jack Debauche, Phil Schmidt, Ron Carey, Gene Medford, John Jacobson, Sue Medford, Gary Janssen, Dan Carey, Bob Dumke, Lynn Janssen, Betsy Janssen, Doug Couillard, Marv Utech, Leah Huberty Dumke, Betty Couillard, Orville Utech, Kayla Hynek, Julie Roznowski Olson, Alicia Hynek, Judy Jacquart Salacinski, Molly Salacinski, Mike Hynek, Sarah Nichols Jevne, Marilyn Matravers Krueger, John Matravers, Barb Couillard, Ken Couillard, Dave Matravers, Leona "Pat" Konkel Rockteschel, Erin Conrad Kajewski, Bob Rockteschel, Diane Herald, Linda Carey, Dave Beyers, Darlene (K Evrard friend,) Darrel Beyers, Keith Evrard (Photographer Nicholas Jevne)

*We Remember...
We Celebrate...
We Believe!*

From a press release provided to and published by the Oconto County Reporter

Couillardville—September 14, 2013

Current and former residents of Couillardville met for the 11th annual Machine Shed Reunion at Meadow Brook Farm. The farm is currently owned by the great grandson of Couillardville founder Jacob Couillard.

Couillardville is centered at the intersection of County Road J and the Stiles Road, just north of the Oconto River on County Road J. Couillardville was once a thriving community with a school, church, parsonage, store and cheese factory and many neighboring farms.

The families of Couillardville, both current and former residents, have met each year to share memories of growing up in this special community. Video presentations based upon interviews and historic photos are made each year.

—Continued —

A photo album book of the Families of Couillardville is available for purchase at the Matravers Hardware Store in Oconto. A comprehensive NEW book of memories of the families of Couillardville is expected to be published before yearend that will include memories of some 30+ people who have been interviewed over the past ten years. The exact date of publishing will be announced later.

At this year's gathering the group recognized six people who have been lifetime Couillardville residents; were born, raised and currently live on the family farm. Those recognized were Don Glynn, Bernard Donlevy, David Matravers, Joe De-taeje Jr., Ruth Thome and Ron Carey.

Photos from the gathering on the next page

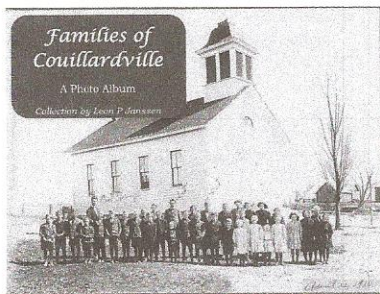
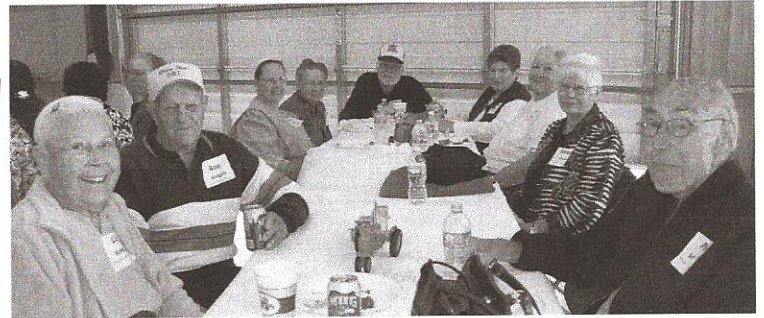
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Charlotte Ihde led the MSR attendees in singing accompanied by her autoharp.

Charlotte led off with "Mockingbird Hill" followed by a rousing version of "You are my sunshine." She then closed with a favorite of so many, "Amazing Grace."



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Couillardville Store

The old country store bore no resemblance to today's modern supermarket. It was a small enterprise, usually family-operated, offering a range of everyday goods from mercantile items to kitchenware, tools, and staple foods.

Generally, it had no refrigeration and carried few perishable items, though oranges were often available, especially around Christmas. But they always offered a tempting array of confections to delight the neighborhood children. Jacob Couillard was a merchant and established a store soon after his arrival in 1851. He had run a successful mercantile store in Oconto and brought his inventory with him when he canoed up the river to Couillardville.

Farm women depended on their country store for many staples, such as roasted coffee beans. Molasses and syrup in gallon pails were also in strong demand, as were baking goods, graham crackers, white and brown sugar, and smoking and chewing tobacco. Helen Janssen Jelinske, who grew up in Brookside, had many fond memories of the old country store there that she knew so well as a youngster: The Brookside store was operated for years by the Windross family. The ladies from the farms would bring in their eggs to trade for groceries. The eggs were put in cases, taken to Abrams, and shipped by train to Green Bay and Milwaukee. It was not unusual to see a farmer's wife come in with a milk pail piled high with fresh eggs to sell.

She went on to describe the display that the local children like best: In the center of the building was a long row of glass-enclosed cases with sliding doors. These held the candy and gum and small glass animals filled with tiny candies. There would be long strings of black licorice and red anise candy. Also, these cases held small gift items, such as pretty handkerchiefs or little bottles of perfume. Many small noses left smudges on the glass as they looked wistfully inside.

The Couillardville store predated both the church and the cheese factory.

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August Detaeje with son Joseph Sr. in approximately 1920 in front of the store

But Jacob's store was destroyed by fire in the spring of 1885, and it wasn't until 1913 when August and Mary Detaeje rebuilt it on its original site. The new store was furnished in the usual fashion with long green counters, shelving, and cupboards. Canned goods were stacked on shelves behind the counter, with barrels of bulk goods—flour, sugar, crackers, coffee, and so on—in front. Glass jars filled with hard candies lined the counters and strings of licorice hung on the wall behind.

The Couillardville store was busy day and night. Farm wives were in and out all day long, and their husbands began to show up after the day's chores were finished, often well into the evening. That was no matter to the Detaeje's since they lived in the store and kept it open whenever business was to be had.

Saturday nights were an especially festive time whenever Mary made ice cream. These occasions usually turned into a community "social," with Martin Vlies playing the violin and people dancing in the side rooms. Indeed, the store was the de facto social center of the town.

In 1921, Mary's sister, Eleanor, and her husband, Martin Jacquart bought the Couillardville Store and moved in with their young son, Harold, also known as "Syke." Martin was still working in the woods each winter, so Eleanor ran the store and cared for their growing family, which soon included Evelyn, Betty, and Jim.

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By this time, Couillardville was a bustling community. The addition of the cheese factory next door served to increase trade in the store. But other changes were in the air that spelled trouble for the local store and others like it. To see the threat, one only had to look out the front windows at the automobiles chugging down the road. These machines provided a new level of transportation convenience for work and leisure. They also made it practical to visit large stores in nearby towns where the selection was greater and the prices lower. The handwriting was on the wall.

By the late 1920s, large stores were operating in Brookside, Oconto, and Abrams. And most of the farm families around Couillardville had either trucks or automobiles to easily access them. Finally, in 1929, Eleanor and Martin decided to close the store. They put an addition onto the building, expanded their living space throughout the former store, and continued living there for many years. In time, they also added inside plumbing and electricity.

When Eleanor passed away in 1954, Martin decided to sell the old store and more in with his son and daughter-in-law, Syke and Lorraine Jacquart. He lived with them for the next three decades, passing away in 1985, at 97 years of age. Joe Jr. and Doris Detaeje bought the building and land from Martin and lived there for several years.

Though the old store no longer is standing, its special memories continue fresh in the minds of the many people who knew it so well in days gone by.

Written by: Gene Medford

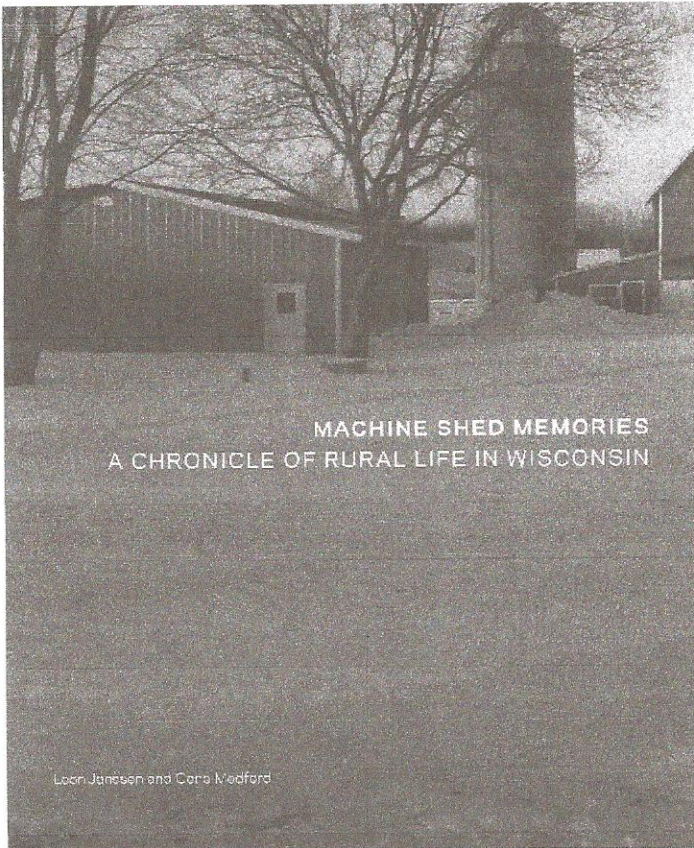
Research by: Helen Jacquart Roznowski

New Title!

Machine Shed Memories

A Chronicle of Rural Life In Wisconsin

*Thanks to all contributors to this record
of the history of Couillardville!*



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