



Families of Couillardville

Togetherness Helpfulness Friendliness
It is about the people!

Twelfth Edition—Spring 2016

Price \$1.00

MSR 14

Saturday August 27, 2016



12:30
1:00
2:00
3:30

Arrive
Lunch
Program
Social Time

Bring a dish to share

Appetizer
Salad
Baked Dish
Or Dessert



**Bring Your
Antique
Tractor**

Couillardville Park



Did you know that there was an official Oconto County park named "Couillardville Park" located on the land of the former Presbyterian Church parsonage?

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

Well, there is such a place which is great news to many of us. Even some living in the Couillardville area were surprised to learn of the official status as a county park of this small plot of sacred land. Further good news is that this land and park are owned and maintained by the county which preserves it for the public. There are a couple important aspects of the park that could be improved. First, as you drive past the park there is no indication of what the park is, that it belongs to the public, and that everyone is invited to use it. Further, there is no indication that the immediate area is

the historical location of Couillardville -- a real opportunity to spread the word on this special community. On a recent tour of the park it was clear that the trees need trimming. In discussions with the Oconto County Department Head of Forestry, Parks, and Recreation, Robert Skalitzky, he expressed his strong support of volunteer efforts to improve the Couillardville Park. He also invited a proposal from Leon for a plan to improve and maintain the area for residents and visitors alike. (See article "Friends of Couillardville Park." on page 2)

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**Come See the CAREY FAMILY on the
"Families of Couillardville" Float
Oconto Copperfest Parade on June 11th 10am.**

“Friends of Couillardville Park”

Would you like to join a special group of historians and individuals dedicated to preserving the spirit of Couillardville?

At the moment it is just an idea, but an idea rapidly gaining momentum toward enhancing the impact of the Couillardville Park.

Who might want to join?

- People who are willing to commit resources (money, ideas, time, and effort) to enhance the attractiveness and historical significance of Couillardville, while potentially creating a model for other Oconto County communities.

Initial Idea

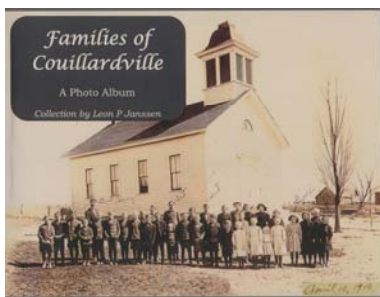
- Design, build, and erect a sign identifying “Couillardville Park.”
- Design and build a historical monument that commemorates the founding of Couillardville.
- Design and create a process allowing individuals and families to buy personalized “pavers” for permanent installation at the park site. This is substantially the same idea successfully used by various organizations to raise money and provide public recognition. Many of us are familiar with the Packers' "Walk of Pavers" at Lambeau Field.
- Create supplemental fund-raising for future park enhancements.

Next Steps

- Leon will prepare and present a written proposal to Bob Skalitzky, Department Head of Oconto County Forestry, Parks and Recreation for consideration and comment.
- Leon will present an updated proposal at the Machine Shed Reunion on August 27 for feedback on the proposed plans and to gauge community interest in supporting the project. In the meanwhile, your suggestions and comments will be appreciated.

New Guests The MSR is not a public event. Individual are invited to attend. If you know someone who has lived in Couillardville or has been a part of a Couillardville organization like 4H or Community Club, or is a descendant of someone from Couillardville contact Leon and he will extend the invitation to attend.

MSR 14 -August 27th
Please RSVP
to Leon



Available at
Matravers Hardware Oconto
A perfect gift

Stories of Life's Winding Pathways by Helen
A. Jelinske available for \$12 plus \$3 S&H

Other Couillardville Books

Available at www.lulu.com
Search on “Couillardville”

Printed books available for \$13.95

- Joseph and Julia Jacquart Family
- 1928 by Mary Ann Couillard
- 100 Tough (price \$15.95)
- The Norbert and Grace Carey Family
- Sam and Matilda Couillard Family

Now available as e-books \$3.99

- Joseph and Julia Jacquart Family
- 1928 by Mary Ann Couillard
- 100 Tough
- The Norbert and Grace Carey Family
- Sam and Matilda Couillard Family

Available - You Tube FREE
Anthony O. Carey
Yankee Soldier (Civil War story
of John Matravers)

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Couillardville Chronicles

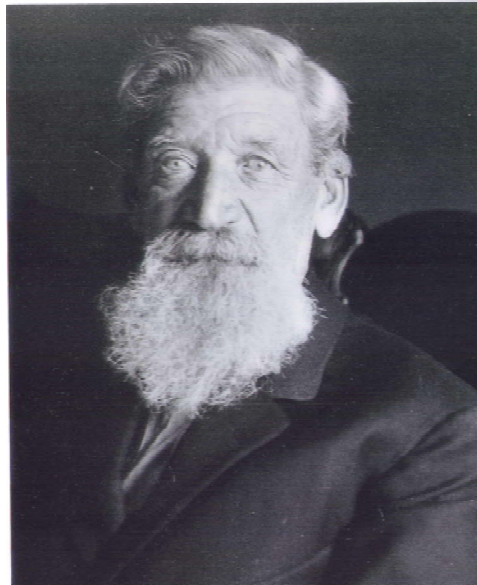
Lawlers Made Lasting Impact On Couillardville Community

With the passing of time, once familiar Couillardville family names sometime fade from the collective memory. Earlier generations die out. Sons and daughters move away to seek new opportunities.

The Lawler family is a good example. Though they were a very large local presence at one time, not many still remember when they were an integral part of life in Couillardville. Yet, their influence on the community and its inhabitants continues to matter to this day, though perhaps in not-so-obvious ways.

The origins of the Couillardville Lawlers trace back to County Carlow, Ireland, where Murtagh Lawler was born in 1789. He and his wife, Katherine Sparrow, along with their young son, John, immigrated to New York around 1850, then moved on to Oconto in 1862. It was young John, born in 1841, who established the family farm in Couillardville where he and his bride, Mary Mullett, also an Irish native, raised their three daughters and two sons. Their third son, baby Robert, lived for only a few months.

Their fourth-born child, daughter Margaret ("Maggie"), would grow up to marry James Herald, another native-born Irishman, and raise a handsome family of four daughters and five sons. "Herald Hill," their farm on N. River Road, is now owned by their great-grandson, Dennis Herald.



John Lawler 1841-1925

AGED RESIDENT
DIES IN TOWN OF
OCONTO MONDAY

APRIL 27, 1925

John Lawler, a Civil War veteran and an aged resident of Oconto, died at his home in the town of Oconto Monday morning at eleven o'clock from the infirmities of old age. He was eighty-four years of age, but up to a week before his death he was exceedingly healthy and vigorous.

John Lawler was born in Carlow County, Ireland, February 23, 1841, and came to Oconto County in 1862. In 1874 he was married to Mary Mullett, who died in 1884. July 16th, 1885, he was married to Mary Murray, who survives him. Mr. Lawler has been a farmer in the town of Oconto for many years, during which time he held numerous school and town offices.

He is survived by his wife and twelve children.

The funeral was held Wednesday morning at ten o'clock from St. Joseph's church. Rev. Father Becker officiating. Burial was in Catholic Cemetery. The pallbearers were Frank Carey, Ed Classon, Ed Couillard, John Merline, Henry Merline and John Runkel.

Following Mary's untimely death in the 1880s and faced with the challenges of establishing a thriving farm while nurturing his young children, John soon took a new bride. Mary Murray also came from Ireland and is thought to have been related to Mary Mullett. She clearly knew what she was getting into, so must have been quite happy to take over the duties as the matriarch of her new, ready-made family.

She and John immediately set out to dramatically expand the Lawler clan. Her six stepchildren - Catherine, Murtagh, Aden, Margaret, Hannah and Robert - were soon joined by Mary (known as Mae) in 1887, John R. in 1889, Ellenora in 1890, Ethel in 1892, William in 1893, Robert C. in 1894, Gladys in 1896, and Harley (also known as Edward) in 1898.

The Lawler farm was located at the north end of present-day Glynn Road near the Oconto River. It was a fine piece of property that reliably nurtured the expanding Lawler clan. However, the very size of the family greatly complicated the division of the land as the sons came of age and started thinking about careers of their own.

As it happened, when John died in 1925, at the ripe old age of 84, the children rallied around to help their mother continue operating the farm.

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It later passed to John and Mary (Murray) Lawler's daughter Ellenora – known to all as “Nora” – and her husband, Dennis Johnson. For a number of years, their son, Maynard, born in 1920, helped work the farm whenever his help was needed. His sister, Mary, born in 1922, established her own life-long connections to the community through her marriage to John (called “Jack”) Carey, the son of Frank and Louise Carey and the younger brother of Couillardville legend, Norb Carey.

For the other Lawler children, their challenge was to establish new careers of their own, whether as farmers, wives and mothers, professional people, or whatever. Inevitably, this led most of them to pursuits far from the rich soil along the Oconto River.

For instance, Robert, the third son of John's “second” family, had married Hazel Renier around the time that his father died. Though the newly-weds had no expectations of inheriting the Couillardville property, they stayed on for several years to help operate the family business and ease the transition. Their daughter, Claudine, was born on the farm in 1926, as was their daughter, Beverly, in 1935. Their son, John (“Jack”) was born in 1940 on the farm in Lena. Claudine attended Couillardville's one-room school, through the fourth grade.

As it happened, Hazel Renier's parents, who grew up in the Stiles and Pensaukee areas, owned a considerable amount of farmland near Lena where they operated a large dairy enterprise. So, during the waning days of the Great Recession, they invited their daughter and son-in-law to join them there and take over the family business. Beverly, though hardly three years old, still has hazy memories of the move to her new home. Claudine continued to live with Grandmother Lawler and the Johnson family at the Couillardville farm until she finished school that spring.



Bev Lawler with family car

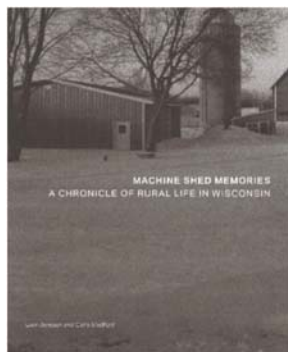
Sometime later Grandma Lawler moved to Lena to live with the Robert Lawler family. She was living with them at the time of her death in 1940.

Bev graciously agreed to an interview to give us a little more insight into this founding Couillardville family and her personal experiences growing up. Bev said she learned about the virtue of hard work from an early age, first helping her mother in the kitchen and doing small chores around the farmyard. By the time she was 10 years old, she was even helping out in the fields, especially at threshing time. Without many boys in the neighborhood, she ended up driving the tractor that delivered the shocks to the threshing machine. (This experience also founded her lifelong aversion to mice!)

Fortunately for Bev, her future lay not in the fertile grain fields of Oconto County, with their legions of field mice come harvest time, but in the classroom. She credits her 46-year career as a teacher in and around Lena and then Green Bay to the values she learned from her parents on the farm.

Though Claudine, Bev and their parents left Couillardville before World War II, they always remained close to the family and friends they left behind.

By Gene Medford



Share the stories of Rural Life in Wisconsin

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