

## OZAUKEE COUNTY TOURISM

## Hidden historical treasures abound for county 'staycationers'

By Terry Schoessow  
Special to the News Graphic

OZAUKEE COUNTY — “An expert is someone from out of town,” the old saying goes. The saying may also apply to visiting historical attractions. Vacationers’ thoughts often begin with road trips or flight schedules. But with expensive gas and massive flight cancellations, perhaps this is the year for a “staycation” in your home county — the Land of Oz.

Ozaukee County is filled with hidden historical treasures that you perhaps drive past every day. Sure, stop in Cedarburg for milk or gas, but there’s a reason it has been featured in national magazines as a prime tourist destination. Some “locals” may not realize that the city has more than 200 preserved buildings in its historic district and eight on the National Register of Historic Places.

Become one of the first Friends of the Cedarburg History Museum! Check out details at cedarburghm.org. “A Treasury of Milwaukee Baseball and Cedarburg Hometown Teams” is the museum’s signature display this season.

Don’t forget to mark your calendars to attend the annual Ozaukee County Fair on the north end of Cedarburg. Held this year from Aug. 3 to Aug. 7, it is the last fair with free admission in southeast Wisconsin and is celebrating its 163rd year.

Cedarburg boasts a number of museums that celebrate its rich history in art as well. The Cedarburg Art Museum is housed in a grand 1895 home built for the family that ran the Wittenberg Woolen Mill (now home to the Shops of Cedar Creek Settlement and the Cedar Creek Winery) and houses an amazing collection of artwork. The Wisconsin Museum of Quilts & Fiber Arts is located in a 150-year-old historic Midwest farmstead that includes seven original stone and timber structures, the dairy barn with silo, a farmhouse, ice house and summer kitchen/smokehouse.

If you leave Cedarburg and travel south on Cedarburg Road, you will pass the Jonathan Clark House. Built

in 1848, it is one of the oldest houses in Ozaukee County and is open the first Friday and second Saturday of every month from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. In addition, it offers special events and tours by request. The popular Heritage Days are returning this year as well. Visit jonathanclarkhouse.com for details.

Farther south on Cedarburg Road is the Mequon River Postal Museum. Located in the 1839 Isham Day House, directly opposite Mequon’s City Hall, it houses a wealth of information about the earliest leaders who served as the community’s postmasters. This little 18-foot-by-24-foot home was the community’s hub of business and political life in the pre-Civil-War years. It is open on Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. during the summer months. Other times to visit can be arranged by contacting the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society at 262-242-3107 or by emailing mthistory1839@gmail.com.

Head west on Freistadt Road to its intersection with Granville Road and you’ll discover why the road was named. Officially now part of Mequon, the hamlet of Freistadt was settled in 1839 by Pomeranian immigrants in search of religious freedom. That story and much more is told at the Trinity-Freistadt Historical Site, located just southwest of that intersection. The site has 12 buildings, including a log cabin, a blacksmith shop and changing displays. The next event is an Ice Cream Social on Aug. 21, but it is open for rentals and tours at other times. Visit Trinity-Freistadt Historical Site on Facebook.

Did you know that many of the most important recordings in blues history were made at the studio of Paramount Records, located on the grounds of the Wisconsin Chair Company factory in Grafton? Founded in 1917, during an era when 78rpm records were often sold at furniture stores to promote sales of phonographs and phonograph cabinets, Paramount recorded a wide range of music, but today is most famous for the blues recordings it began making in 1922. Between 1929 and 1932, Mis-



Submitted photo

Jonathan Clark House Assistant Director Nina Look, dressed in an era-appropriate dress, greets visitors to the museum.

issippi-born blues pioneers traveled north to record here. Challenge yourself to find the historical marker with more information, and be sure to visit Paramount Plaza as well.

Port Washington’s marina and shops rival those of Bayfield or Door County. While you’re there, think about stopping at the PW Historical Society Resource Center just “around the turn” on Main Street. It houses the organization’s collections, offices and research area with its original tin ceiling, wood floors and plaster walls which were revealed through the restoration of the building. The building, which was awarded a Historic Preservation Excellence Award in 2014 by the Wisconsin Association of

Historic Preservation Commissions, currently has a special WWII exhibit. The exhibit continues across the road at the Port Exploreum. The Exploreum also offers amazing hands-on exhibits that feature the Great Lakes. Just up the street is the 1860 Light Station. For more details and a list of special events, visit PWHistory.org.

Also in Port Washington and located on Grand Avenue, you will find the Judge Eghart House. Built in 1872, this year celebrates 150 years! The house is a Victorian cottage restored through the generous donation of W.J. Niederkorn. Furnished by pioneers and families of the Port Washington area, the Judge Eghart House is a living example of a Victorian Home. Guided tours are on

Saturdays 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Memorial Day through Labor Day. Adults \$3, children \$1 and groups can call for an appointment.

If you head west on Highway 33, you will be near the Saukville Crossroads Museum operated by the Saukville Area Historical Society. Dedicated to Saukville’s local history, the museum is housed in a restored firehouse that was built in 1912, and serves as the historical society’s headquarters. The group is hosting a genealogy workshop in July and a River History Day this fall. Check Saukville Historical Society on Facebook for details.

A little northwest of town is the Ozaukee County Pioneer Village, an open-air museum that preserves 24 buildings from the 1840s

through the early 1900s, providing a snapshot of village life in early Ozaukee County. A recent Google reviewer stated the village has “beautiful scenery, well maintained buildings and knowledgeable staff.” Run by the Ozaukee County Historical Society, it is open every weekend and also offers a variety of special events.

Belgium hosts a fascinating museum called the Luxembourg American Cultural Society & Center. The center offers interactive displays and research opportunities. You can participate in Luxembourg Fest Week from Aug. 11 to Aug. 14. Celebrate Luxembourg Heritage with a parade, Kids’ Zone, live music, food and drinks, a treppen-eating contest and so much more. More details are available at www.lacs.lu.

On June 14, 1885, in the first formal observance of Flag Day, Stony Hill School teacher Bernard J. Cigrand instructed his students to write essays about what the United States meant to them. The purpose was to commemorate the Continental Congress’ 1777 adoption of the flag as a national symbol. In 1949, Congress designated the date as National Flag Day. Although the Flag Day celebration is over for this year, you can visit its grounds and see the outside of the beautifully restored schoolhouse on Highway I outside of Waubeka.

From south to north, the Land of Oz has much to explore. Don’t forget your ruby slippers!



Left, The Cedarburg History Museum’s Milwaukee Baseball History exhibit contains baseballs, bats, jerseys, programs and lots of information about the history of America’s pastime in Milwaukee. Right, the blacksmith shop is one of 12 buildings available for tour on the Trinity Freistadt Historical Society grounds at 10729 W. Freistadt Road, Mequon.



Submitted photos