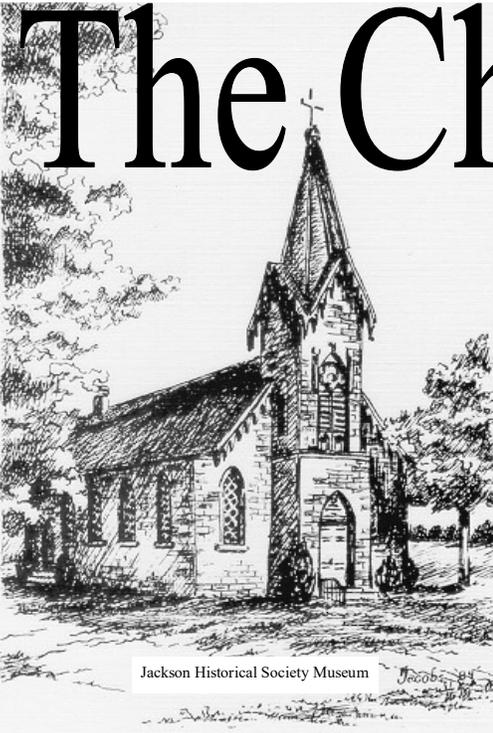


The Church Mouse



Jackson Historical Society Museum

Volume 33 Jackson Historical Society November 2024

AN INCREDIBLE VOYAGE—AMERICA'S NOTICE TO THE WORLD — WE'VE ARRIVED!



Rear Admiral Charles Wilkes passed away on February 8th, 1877, at the age of 79. He is buried in Section 2, Grave 1164 of Arlington National Cemetery. In my estimation, he earned the privilege.

Although involved in the "Trent Affair" during the Civil War, of greater importance was his assignment as Commander of **The United States South Seas Exploring Expedition in 1838**. Authorized by the government to conduct exploration of the Pacific Ocean and the south seas by sailing ship, this was to be the first major scientific expedition overseas by the young and ambitious United States and stands as one of the greatest achievements in the field of exploration that this country has ever undertaken.

A letter of instructions from President John Quincy Adams' Secretary of the Navy Paulding to the expedition, outlined the general purpose and course of the expedition. It listed many countries and

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Your annual \$20 dues cover a calendar year starting in January. The current year for your membership is shown on The Church Mouse address label.

Your dues help u preserve our historic site, Jackson history, and include the Church Mouse

JHS MEETINGS TIMES

The Jackson Historical Society meets the 3rd Monday of every other month, Jan/Mar/May/Jul/Sep/Nov, at 7:00pm.

May/Jul/Sep held at 1860 Mill Rd, Jackson, in our restored, log home. Nov/Jan/ March held in Jackson Town Hall

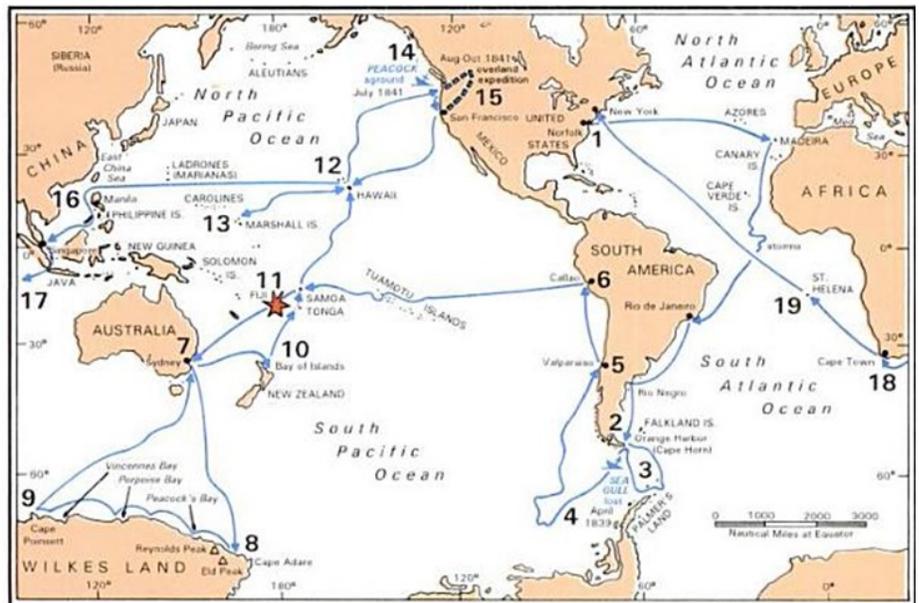
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Send mail to P.O.Box 197
Jackson, WI 53037

JHS OFFICERS

Clif Koeller—President
Russ Hanson—Vice President
Lenore Kloehn—Treasurer
Doris Koeller—Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

All JHS Officers, Elmer Kloehn, Gordon Ziemann, Royal Natzke



islands to be visited and directed that the Southern Ocean be explored and surveyed, and laid down a general code for dealing with natives of countries or islands visited. He wrote: *The expedition is not for conquest but discovery. Its objects are all peaceful. They are to extend the empire of Commerce and Science; to diminish the hazards of the Ocean and point out to future navigators a course by which they may avoid dangers and find safety.*

On the morning of August 18th, 1838, six sailing ships got under-

(Voyage continued on page 3)



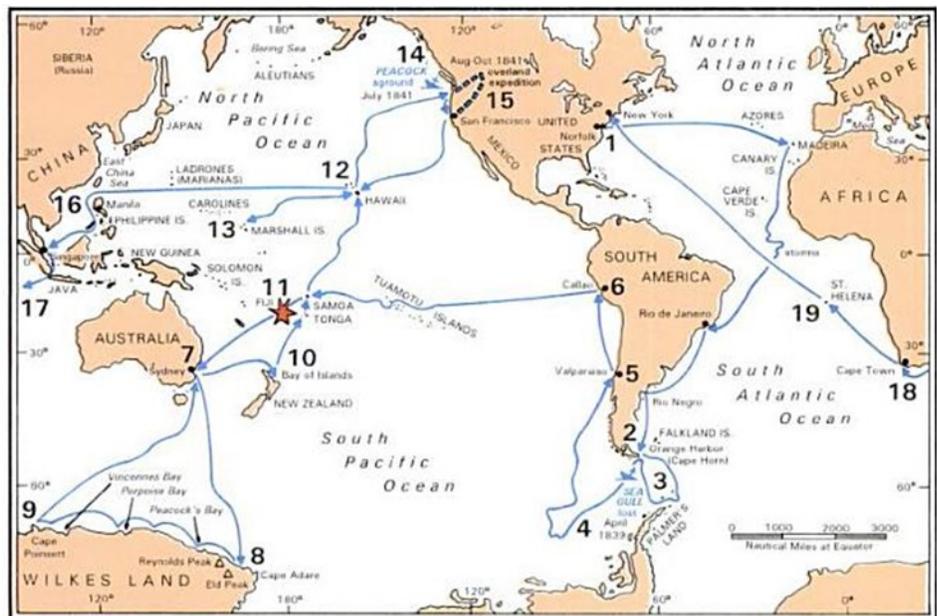
(Voyage Continued from page 3)

land. With the squadron reassembled, they pressed on to the south. Increasing cold encountered, icebergs loomed up around them and sleet and snow accompanied the storms they met as they drove steadily on. The ice barrier forced them to westward and on January 16th, 1840, land (8) they believed to be an island, was sighted in the distance beyond the ice barrier. Following the ice barrier as closely as possible, Wilkes continued westward hoping to find an opening through which he could proceed further south. On January 19th, mountains were observed looming up over the ice barrier to the southwest. The landfall was designated Cape Hudson by Wilkes.

Still seeking an outlet through the barrier ice to the south, the ships continued beating to the west along the ice barrier. On January 22nd, the Peacock was caught among the icebergs, her rudder was crushed and considerable damage was done as she collided with an immense ice floe. Skillful handling saved the ship from destruction, although the damage was so extensive that she was sent north until repairs could be made.



Sailing westward, the ships continued to skirt the ice barrier when on January 28th, they were rewarded with the sight of land directly ahead. They proceeded to within 1/2 mile of it but were unable to lower a boat due to a strong gale. As the land insight continued for a considerable distance, both east and west, and considering the previous land sightings, Wilkes now concluded that he was in contact with and of continental dimensions." I gave it the name of the Antarctic Continent," he wrote at this time. Still sailing west during February 1840, more and more land was sighted (9) although it was impossible to find a way through the ice barrier to make a landing.



The existence of the Antarctic Continent had now been confirmed, adding to the world's knowledge of geography, and 1,600 miles of coast had been followed to substantiate the claim.

On February 21st, 1840, Wilkes decided that his mission had been accomplished and they were going to head north and continue their explorations in more hospitable and temperate areas.

Arriving back at Fort Jackson (Sydney) (7), a badly needed overhaul was completed and the squadron headed for New Zealand (10). After a weeks stay, they headed for Tongataboo Island, one of the Tonga group. The Figi group was next visited wher two of the crew members were killed by natives. Leaving the Figi's on August 10th, the squadron proceeded to the Phoenix Islands and on to Canton Island, reaching the Sandwich Islands (Hawaiian Islands)(12) on September 23rd. Wilkes dispersed his ships to explore and survey other island groups, while the Vincennes remained in Hawaii.

While in the Hawaiian Islands, expeditions were sent to examine Mauna Loa, Mauna Kea, and Kilauea. A camp on Kilauea used by Wilkes to explore the volcano remains today.

The Vincennes left Honolulu on April 5th, 1841 and reached the mouth of the Columbia River 22 days later (15). After almost being wrecked off Destruction Island, Wilkes proceeded to the Straights of Juan de Fuca about ay 1st. For the next six months, various parts of the Straights of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound were surveyed and mapped. Several extensive exploring expeditions inland as far as Nisqually (Tacoma), Fort Vancouver

(Voyage continued on page 4)



(Voyage Continued from page 1)

way from Hampton Roads and made for Chesapeake Bay and the open ocean. The ships were the Vincennes, a sloop of war, 780 tons and the expeditions flagship; the Peacock, a sloop of war, 650 tons; the Porpoise, a brig, 230 tons; the Relief, a stores ship; the Sea Gull, 110 tons, and the Flying Fish, 96 tons, two tenders and former New York pilot boats. The vessels were packed with books, the latest scientific and navigational equipment, and a crew of 346 men. The Vincennes and the Peacock carried the scientific staff, including three naturalists, two botanists and a mineralogist, a philologist, a taxidermist, and two draftsmen.

Behind them lay the young, United States. Ahead lay four arduous years at sea and almost 87,000 miles of ocean. The map provided will permit you to trace their amazing journey during the four years of the United States South Seas Exploring Expedition.

On departure from Hampton Roads (1), the squadron passed by the Azores heading for Madeira. From Madeira, they journeyed south to the Cape Verde Islands passing near the Canaries. Wilkes continued on and arrived off Rio de Janeiro on November 23rd.

Sailing southward, they passed through the Straits of LeMaire, rounded Cape Horn, anchoring in Orange Harbor (2) on the southern coast of Tierra del Fuego, their rendezvous point for exploration of the Antarctic on January 30, 1839.

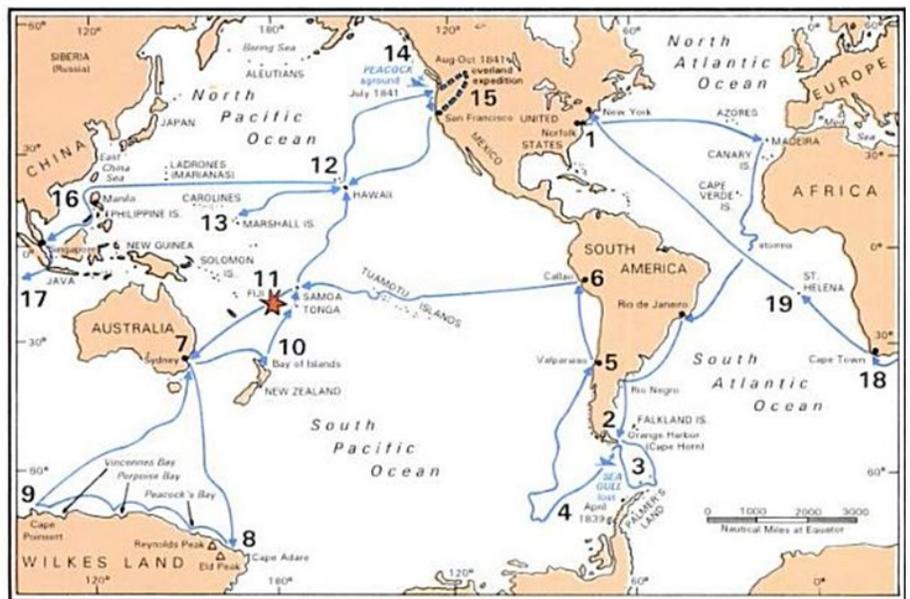
Upon arrival at each port, the routine was generally the same. An astronomical station was set up, a survey was taken while the scientists went ashore to investigate the country's geology, botany, etc. A general description was made with reference to history, type of government, manners and customs of natives, and the general subject of commerce. Castaways and shipwrecked sailors were often encountered and taken on board. At times they were called on to handle cases where members of whaling ships or other vessels had been murdered by the natives.

Although, as was soon discovered, they were starting south too late in the season, an initial attempt was made by the Porpoise and the tenders to reach a high southern latitude in late February, but was turned back by gales, fog, and ever increasing number of icebergs, rendering the cruise precarious. The Peacock, with Wilkes aboard, and the Flying Fish sailed further westward, but stormy weather and bitter cold and a few narrow escapes from colliding with icebergs, caused the ships to head back north.

The ships returned to their Orange Harbor anchorage at Tierra del Fuego prior to heading north to Valparaiso (5) on April 17th, 1839. The Relief sailed through the Straits of Magellan but the rest of the squadron sailed around Cape Horn and, with the exception of the Sea Gull, arrived at Valparaiso on May 15th. The Sea Gull (4) was last sighted on April 29th off Cape Horn and was never heard from again. Two officers and a crew of 15 were lost, probably due to foundering in a storm which had occurred then.

The months prior to their second attempt to sail south was spent in the Pacific with visits to Tahiti in the Society Islands and a visit to the Samoan Islands. November 10th, the expedition headed to Port Jackson (7) (Sydney) New Holland, or to give it its modern name, Australia. There they would outfit their squadron for their second Antarctic cruise.

Shortly after Christmas, 1839, the squadron left Port Jackson, heading for a rendezvous at Macquarie Is-



(Voyage Continued on page 2)



(Voyage continued from page 2)

just north of Portland and up the Columbia River and Willamette Valley to the Falls. Another expedition crossed the Cascade Range north of Mt. Rainier, penetrating to Fort Colville almost at the northeast corner of Washington State. Returning, they entered Idaho reaching Lake Coeur d' Alene. On June 27th, Wilkes received the news that the Peacock had been wrecked off Cape Disappointment (14), but that all hands had been saved. Unfortunately, many scientific collections stored aboard had been lost. Surveying was now discontinued and the ships got underway, arriving off Astoria on the 6th of July.

Wilkes shifted his command to the Porpoise and sent the Vincennes to San Francisco. The porpoise proceeded to survey the Columbia River up to Fort Vancouver (Portland). Continuing the surveying aboard the Porpoise, Wilkes sent an expedition to explore overland (15) from Fort Vancouver to San Francisco, joining the Vincennes there.

The Vincennes arrived at San Francisco, anchoring Sausalito on October 6th. A surveying expedition was sent up the Sacramento River, to beyond the site of Sacramento City. Meanwhile, the party that left Fort Vancouver was slowly wending it's way to San Francisco. They were afflicted with sickness and hostile Indians, but after two months, reached the Sacramento Valley. They journeyed down the river and joined the Vincennes. While in Sausalito, the brig Oregon was acquired to replace the Peacock. On November 1st, 1841, the squadron departed San Francisco, arriving off Honolulu (12) on the 17th. They replenished their supplies and left on November 28th.

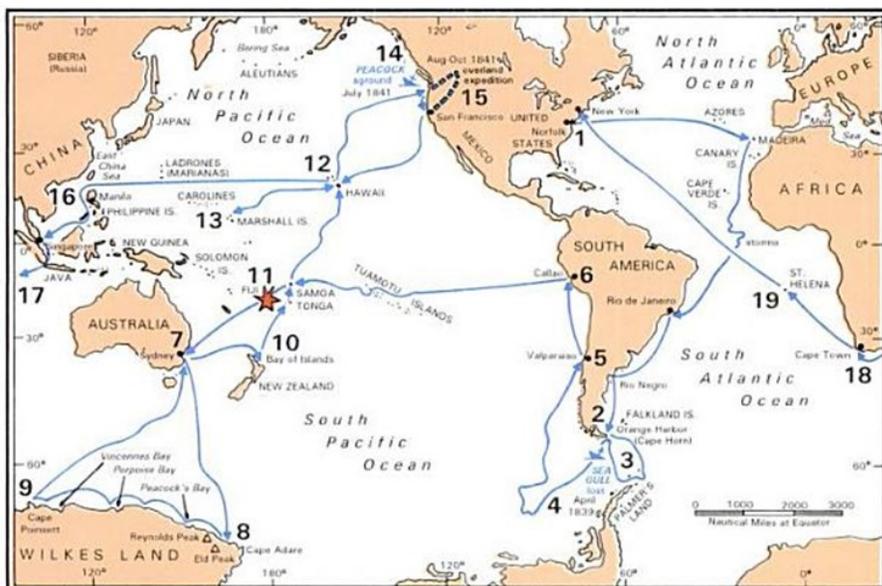
Wilkes orders were to return to New York by May 31st, 1842, and this left him little time. He split his squadron, with the Porpoise and Oregon exploring various small islands and reefs of the Hawaiian group; then heading for the Philippines, rounded northern Luzon and proceeded direct to Singapore. Wilkes, with the Vincennes and Flying Fish, headed southeast arriving at Wake Island on December 20th. They visited the Ladrone Group, discovered Assumption Island, rounded the northern end of Luzon and anchored in Manila Bay (16) on January 12th, 1842. Proceeding south into the Sulu Sea, Wilkes entered into a treaty with the Sultan, governing commerce between the United States and Sulu. He then joined the rest of the Squadron at Singajpore (17). After a s hort stay, the squadron sailed for Cape Town (18), arriving of April 13th, 1842. After a stay of only four days, the ships were again underway, homeward bound. On May 1st, 1842, the ships stopped at St. Helena (19).

The closing "leg" of the cruise was uneventful. On June 10th, 1842 the expedition dropped anchor off Staten Island (1), thus writing the closing chapter of one of the greatest epics of the sea. All hands were now called aft and Wilkes expressed his thanks to them all for the manner in which they had conducted themselves. A national salute was fired and Wilkes pennant was hauled down as he left the ship for his last time.

Wilkes and his men had zigzagged across the oceans,; filling in borders that had only been loosely sketched, they gathered a mountain of artifacts. Hydrographic surveys were made of some 280 islands as well as the inland waters of which is now United State territory extending form the Strait of Juan de Fuca to San Francisco Bay. The existence of the Antarctic continent had been added to the World's knowledge of geography and 1600 miles of its coast had been followed to substantiate the claim. 180 detailed charts were constructed by Wilkes as a result of the expedition.

In addition to the narrative of the expedition which consisted of 5 large volumes, some 14 volumes were

(Incredible Voyage continued on page 6)





THE U.S. EXPLORING EXPEDITION COLLECTION NEEDS A HOME

When the U. S. Exploring Expedition returned in the summer of 1842, it overwhelmed America's meager scientific resources. The number of ethnographic objects alone amounted to 4000 items. It is thought to be the largest every made by a single sailing expedition.

Even larger than the ethnographic collection were the 50,000 specimens of 10,000 species of pressed plants accumulated by botanist William Rich, the horticulturalist William Brackenridge and naturalist Charles Pickering. There were more than 1000 living plants and seeds from an additional 648 species. Titian Peale had brought back 2,150 birds, along with 134 mammals and 588 species of fish. The geologist, James Dana, had collected 300 fossil species, 400 species of coral, and 1000 species of crustacean. There were 208 "spirit jars" of insects and zoological specimens along with 895 envelopes containing 5,100 larger specimens.

In addition to all the collections brought back by the Expedition, there was an equally awe-inspiring amount of data. The Expedition's linguist had amassed notebooks of observations, unprecedented in their scope and thoroughness. Then there were the charts, a total of 241 of them. Laid down in these charts, with a precision rarely seen before, were 280 Pacific islands, 800 miles of the Oregon coast, a 100 mile stretch of the Columbia River, the overland route from Oregon to San Francisco, and 1,500 miles of the Antarctic coast. Wilkes and his officers had also assembled mountains of meteorological, astronomical, magnetic, and oceanographic information. The results of the expedition were larger and more complex than anyone could have imagined and they outran the intellectual resources of the country.

But, there was reason to hope. In 1838, an emissary had arrived in New York with the proceeds from the estate left by the Englishman James Smithson for the establishment of a new kind of institution for the "increase and diffusion of knowledge." No one was sure what the institution should be and a stalemate ensued. To force Congress' hand, former Secretary of War Joel Poinsett created the National Institute for the Promotion of Science to become the caretaker organization for the collections of the U. S. Exploring Expedition. With the help of outgoing Secretary of the Navy Paulding, space was secured in the great hall of the newly built Patent Office Building. With great difficulty and confusion, the Expedition's collection was unpacked and prepared for display. However, it was not until Wilkes replaced the Institute's curator that the collection was properly prepared for display.

The collection of the U. S. Exploring Expedition in the U. S. Patent Office became wildly popular. Over the course of the next decade, more than a hundred thousand people made their way each year to the Patent Office.



United States Patent Office



The Smithsonian Institution

Finally, in 1858, 20 years after James Smithson had donated his estate, and 12 years after it had been established, the Smithsonian Institution's museum was created by U. S. Congress as the first United States National Museum. The collection from the U. S. Exploring Expedition finally had a home as it became part of the Smithsonian's foundation collection.

Today, the Smithsonian Institution—the world's largest museum and research complex—includes 19 museums and galleries and the National Zoological Park.

For more information on the U. S. Exploring Expedition collections at the Smithsonian, click on www.c-spanvideo.org/program/SEexpl and www.c-spanvideo.org/program/300321-1.

TODAY WILL BE HISTORY TOMORROW

HELP THE JACKSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESERVE YOUR YESTERDAYS—JOIN US

VISIT YOUR HISTORY AT OUR 1860 MILL ROAD SITE—APPT. ONLY PLEASE

AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES EVENTS

RICHFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY Maple Syrup Family Day, March 22, 2025, 9:00am—4:00pm. Contact richfieldhistoricalsociety.org for event details.

GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY Contact the society at <http://germantownhistoricalsociety.org/> for more information.

POMMERSCHER VEREIN FREISTADT Please contact pommerschervereinfreistadt.org for information.

THE TOWER HERITAGE CENTER 320 S 5th Ave. or call 262-353-4678 to learn about their many historic sites and scheduled events..

(Voyage continued from page 4)

published covering the research in geology, botany, ethnology, meteorology hydrography, etc. and many botanical species were brought back and about 2000 sketches were made during the exploration.

A tremendous feat of navigation, the expedition broadened knowledge of uncharted areas of the world and helped expand American commerce industry and scientific knowledge. It cemented the nation's status as a new world economic leader.

APOLOGY

For those members and friends of the JACKSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY who have been waiting for a Spring issue of the Church Mouse, I apologize. Due to medical related needs and health maintenance requirements within the family. I have been otherwise occupied and the Church Mouse has had to take some time off and rest awhile. Not to worry, though. Even with age chasing me heartily, (unless caught) I have thoughts for issues in 2025. Of course, if someone would step forward and say “I can do that” I’d say “congratulations, you have a new title, Editor—Church Mouse!

THE JACKSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY The Keeper of Our Local History

During the Bicentennial Celebration of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, our nation took a look back at the 200 years of its history since that signing. History became something to celebrate and maintain. The celebratory period saw the formation of many historical societies including our own Jackson Historical Society.

Interest in determining and documenting the history of Jackson was actively pursued with members of all ages taking part in the society's activities. Meetings were held, events scheduled, and our first book, THE HISTORY OF JACKSON, WISCONSIN 1843-1976 was produced.

As the years passed, the society sponsored programs and festivals (we still do), secured funding to acquire and restore our Immanuel Lutheran Church historic site, started the Church Mouse, our newsletter, and began work on our updated and expanded HISTORY OF JACKSON, WISCONSIN 1843-2001 book, currently available. In 2003 we moved and restored a two story log home to our historic site. In 2014, we added a new history book, PIONEER CHURCH RECORDS SPEAK, thank you Royal Natzke, which remains very popular. We continue to offer group visits to our JHS museum, restored log home and one room school-house including school visits.

If you are an “old timer” and would like to renew your interest in the Jackson Historical Society, welcome back. Or, if you are recent to the Jackson area and would like to learn our history, join us. Come to a meeting. Let us know of your interest. We have a lot of knowledge to share.

If you are that person please let us know. We need your support. Or better yet, attend a meeting and get to know us. We meet at 7:00pm on the third Monday of every other month beginning in January.

Call Clif Koeller at 262-677-3457 and leave a message. Clif will answer or return your call A.S.A.P. or Email Russ Hanson, The Church Mouse, jhsheritage.wi@gmail.com or Phone 262-353-3641