Museum Notes

for the week of November 1 – 7, 2026

by Kristen Parrott, curator

The genealogy class will meet for the last time this year on Thursday, November 12, at 10AM, at the Vernon County Museum and History Center. This will be the annual "help each other" class, with students sharing their own knowledge to help other students. Bring your thorniest family history questions, and we'll see what ideas all of us come up with together!

New students are always welcome to join the class. Vernon County Historical Society members attend for free, and non-members are asked to pay $5 per session. Classes are held in the first-floor conference room. The class takes a break in December and January, and starts up again in February.

Duane Hoff's autobiography *Never Enough Wheels* begins with a story that probably drives some genealogists crazy. Duane was born on a farm near Redmound on October 19, 1930. The attending doctor never got around to registering the birth at the Vernon County Courthouse, which was a problem when Duane needed a birth certificate years later in order to sign up for the National Guard.

To prove his birth, his family watered down some ink and his mother wrote his name and birthdate into the family bible. The watery ink made the writing look old and faded, and apparently that was enough proof. Keep that in mind the next time you are doing research!

Duane's autobiography was just published this year, four years after his death in 2022. The book has been edited and distributed by family and friends. We have copies for sale for $10 in our gift shop. Duane and his wife Dana owned Hoff's Mobil Service Station on Viroqua's Main Street for nearly 40 years.

We just got in more copies of another new book, *Wisconsin Tobacco Farming: A History*, by Gail Klein. They are for sale for $25 in our gift shop. The book is filled with photographs, including many of Vernon County scenes. Chapters cover the tobacco boom and decline, the "Norwegian impact", the tobacco pool, the tobacco warehouses, and other topics.

Our fall hours of Monday through Friday, 11AM to 4PM, continue through the month of November. However, we will be closed on Thursday, November 26, and Friday, November 27, for the Thanksgiving holiday. Then, we plan to be open on Saturday, November 28, from 10AM to 2PM, for Small Business Saturday, so you can get a start on your holiday gift shopping!