

Fond du Lac

bike

Historic Preservation Commission

T O U R
Fond du Lac

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Veteran's Park



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T O U R
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Lakeside Park Bandstand

(Early 1900s)

In the early part of 1900, one of the most needed buildings at Lakeside Park was said to be a bandstand. William McDermott, a well-known resident of Fond du Lac, gifted the City with the bandstand. The original plans called for an octagon-shaped building which is 30 feet tall, topped with a 12 foot flagpole which was later removed. The building architect was Hiram P. Thompson. The platform is elevated to eight feet with a liberal amount of ornamentation such as beaded posts, brackets, and scroll work. A protective railing was built around the platform. Original access to the platform from the ground level is located inside the building via a stairway and a trap door. At a later date, an outside stairway was constructed for easier access to the platform. Sunday afternoons were popular times for the people of Fond du Lac to meet around the bandstand and enjoy a concert by the Military Band of the City, and it was eventually named in honor of Joseph Schmitz, who conducted many concerts there. The May 30, 1959 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* drew national attention to the Bandstand when it featured a color photograph and short article about it. This brought a request from the mayor of New Berlin, New York, for the plans of the bandstand, but it is not known if a copy of the bandstand was made.



Supple Marsh

Lakeside Park

Supple Marsh is a 107 acre wetland in Lakeside Park. Named for the original owners, the Supple Family, the DNR states that the marsh was probably formed during the retreat of a glacial ice sheet. As the ice retreated, gravel and rocks were deposited, forming a large lake called Glacial Lake Oshkosh. Centuries later, this lake became known as Lake Winnebago. The Supple Marsh adjoins Lake Winnebago which has long been regarded as an excellent haven for fish and game. The Winnebago Native Americans fished and hunted in the marsh years before the settlers came. As the years progressed and the population grew, hunters and anglers came to the marsh to hunt and fish for profit, sport, and food. As its popularity grew, the state leased the area as private duck hunting ground and later leased as one of the best areas for mallard, black duck, teal, and muskrat hunting. On March 25, 1929, Mathias Supple purchased the marsh from the Wisconsin Central Land Co., the holding firm for the Soo Line Railway. The Supple family started a fur farm here in 1932, harvesting as many as 6,000 muskrats in one year. The family also worked as ice merchants, cutting large ice blocks during the winter months to be stored in a Water Street warehouse. From there, the Supple ice trucks would deliver the blocks throughout the city for refrigeration needs and use by the railroad. In 1967, the City of Fond du Lac acquired the marsh from the Supple family. Hunting and trapping are no longer allowed, as Supple's Marsh has become a nature conservancy for all to enjoy.

TOUR fond du lac

Pier Cemetery

132 Old Pioneer Road (County VV)

Located in Section 22 on a small family plot, the Pier Cemetery contains the natural remains of the first pioneer settlers of Fond du Lac, starting with the passing of Fanna (Kendall) Pier, wife of Colwert E. Pier in 1838. It is also the burial ground for Pier, the first permanent white settler who helped build the Fond du Lac House in 1836. This small cemetery also contains the remains of Kate (Hamilton) Pier who came to Wisconsin at the age of 8. She graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1888, becoming the second female lawyer in Wisconsin, and the first to serve as a Circuit Court Commissioner. Colonel Colwert K. Pier served in the Civil War.

Rienzi Cemetery

N6101 County Road K

The name *Rienzi* may come from the last Roman tribute—Cola di Rienzi—a popular Italian leader who believed he could help restore ancient Rome’s greatness, or it may be named for an 1840 opera by Wagner. Rienzi Cemetery is one of the oldest local cemeteries, three years before Wisconsin achieved statehood. The land started out as a family burial ground for the Tallmadge family, but when William Davies Tallmadge, the 19 year old son of territorial Governor Nathaniel P. Tallmadge died in 1845, Gov. Tallmadge decided to donate 8.5 acres of his land for the of a public cemetery. In the weeks leading up to his death, William selected the name for the family plot and his burial place. Rienzi Cemetery serves as the final resting place for over 1,000 veterans including Civil War General Edward Bragg and many early, local settlers including Nathaniel Tallmadge and Dr. Mason Darling, often referred to as the Father of Fond du Lac.

Galloway House (1847)

336 Old Pioneer Road

The Galloway House is a 30-room Victorian mansion, elaborately furnished with decorative woodwork inside and out. The original portion of the home was built in 1847. Edwin H. Galloway purchased the home from Selim Newton in 1868. Although Mr. Galloway lived in the house for just a few years, he had greatly enlarged and embellished it. The Galloway House represents a classic Midwest version of an Italianate villa of Victorian elegance and beauty. Edwin P. Galloway, grandson of the original owner, donated the home, carriage house, and the land on which it stood to the Fond du Lac County Historical Society in 1954. The Galloway House is an on-going project of the Fond du Lac County Historical Society and is listed on the National Register of Historical Landmarks. Edwin H. Galloway was outstanding in the early history of Fond du Lac. He arrived in the area in 1848 and quickly became active in banking and lumbering. He served two terms in the Wisconsin State Legislature, several terms as Chairman of the Fond du Lac County Board of Supervisors, was Mayor of Fond du Lac, and was strongly supported for the Republican nomination for Governor in 1871. Edwin H. Galloway died in 1876.



Niagara Escarpment

This geological feature—running along the northeast side of Lake Winnebago and continues on through the Door Peninsula, Canada, and upstate New York—is credited as a key reason for the formation of the Great Lakes. The landscape is a circular basin which is believed to have been formed when a glacier split the cliff of the basin. Due to the landscape and cooler climate along the escarpment, unique plants and wildlife have been found thriving in the area, causing it to be a popular area during the French fur trading era. The limestone along the escarpment was also seen as a valuable resource for building and houses, churches, and other buildings during Wisconsin’s Industrial Age. Much of the escarpment area continuing past Fond du Lac along Lake Winnebago and into the northern part of the state contains historically designated sites and effigy mounds along Lake Winnebago and has been declared as State parks or protected land.



Doty House (1839)

County Road K

The Doty House, also known as “The Homestead”, was built in 1839 and is possibly the oldest structure in Fond du Lac County. The house was built of square logs with plastered interior walls. The interior still retains the random-width plank flooring, narrow steps to the loft, and exposed (tamarack) tree trunk beams in the basement. James Doty held one of the original land grants issued for the Wisconsin Territory and became owner of the site in 1836. He lived in the house from 1839-1843. Doty founded the Town and Village of Taycheedah and was responsible for platting the City of Fond du Lac. He served as territorial governor of Wisconsin from 1841 to 1844. The Doty House is located inside the Taycheedah Correctional Institution grounds and is not accessible to the public. The home and a playground is utilized for the extended visit program which allows incarcerated mothers to spend time with their visiting children in a residential setting.

Taycheedah Correctional Institution (1921)

In the early 1850s, female offenders were housed in the state prison known today as *Waupun Correctional Institution*. In 1912 work began for a facility in Taycheedah and in 1921 the *Wisconsin Industrial Home for Women* was opened. The first inmates were mostly committed for “crimes against morality,” while repeat and more violent or serious offenders continued to be housed in Waupun. In 1931, work began on the *Wisconsin Prison for Women*, located adjacent to the Industrial Home. The facility was completed and opened in 1933, and the women housed in Waupun were transferred. The two facilities operated separately on the same grounds until 1945, when they were consolidated as the *Wisconsin Home for Women*. In 1975, the legislature officially changed the name to *Taycheedah Correctional Institution*. TCI is now a maximum and medium-security facility for adult female offenders.

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Gurney Refrigerator Co. (1879)

24-26 South Brooke Street

The south portion of this building was built for the *LaBelle Wagon Works* which was founded in 1869 as *Farnsworth, Knapp and Co.* In 1874, interest in the company was purchased by Benjamin F. Moore and A.G. Ruggles and the name was changed to the *La Belle Wagon Works*. As of 1874, the company produced 3,000 wagons annually; in 1880, a county history identifies that 200 workers were producing 20 wagons a day. In 1887, the company was sold to Minneapolis parties who planned to relocate the firm to Minnesota. The building was purchased in 1890 by the *Gurney Refrigerator Company*, which was organized in Oshkosh and moved to Fond du Lac after a fire burned the Oshkosh factory. In 1901 a fire burned down expansions from 1895 and all that remained with the original three-story building. The expansions were rebuilt within six month. By 1890 the company was moved to Superior, Wisconsin. In 1922 a 60’x140’ three-story addition was built. A 1910 newspaper indicates the firm employed 200 hands, manufactured more than 200 styles of refrigerators (as well as custom orders) sent throughout the United States. Gurney was a successful company, but did not survive the Great Depression, closing between 1934 and 1936. Part of the building now houses *The Garten Factory*, a landscaping company and plant nursery.

Northern Casket Co. (1919)

16 North Brooke Street

According to a 1917 city directory, the *Northern Casket Company* was incorporated in 1872, with a capital stock of \$400,000. In 1906, the structure was operating as the *Nehrbass Casket Company*, having acquired the building which had been used for a few years as a canning company, and improvements were made to the original two-story building. Nehrbass was then purchased by the Northern Casket Company, which had been taken over by William A. Mauthe of Fond du Lac (the owner of William Mauthe Furniture). In 1917, land was purchased in order to expand the factory to include a facility for metal working, as the company had recently developed a non-corrosive, sheet steel and statuary work casket and a three-story factory addition was added in 1919. The *Northern Casket Company* (headed by Mauthe until his death in 1942 and then by his son Armin) closed between 1962 and 1963. The building stood vacant for a year before *Wells Manufacturing Company* purchased the building and utilized it for their engineering department while manufacturing automotive ignitions, replacement parts and fuel pumps.



Giddings & Lewis

142 North Doty Street

Giddings & Lewis began in the mid-nineteenth century when John Bonnell opened a machine shop to provide services to the booming lumber industry in Fond du Lac. In 1866, the company added a foundry and named the firm *Novelty Iron Works*. By the turn of the century, George Giddings and O.F. Lewis had acquired the firm, naming it *Giddings & Lewis Manufacturing Company* and making sawmill machinery and steam engines. After the waning of the lumber industry, the firm moved into the production of other types of machine tools for the booming factory business in the country; manufactured lampposts and catch basins for the City of Fond du Lac; and was contracted, first by the British, then later by the American government to manufacture shell lathes during World War I. During the 20th century, the company grew and expanded its product line under the guidance of the Rueping family who now owned the company. After the Great Depression and World War II the company continued to expand and diversify. In 1994, *Giddings & Lewis* ranked as the largest North American industrial automation and machine tool company and one of the largest firms in the world, Theissen/Trekker. It was acquired by the Paris-based Fives Group in 2013 and was renamed *Fives Giddings & Lewis*.



First Baptist Church (1907)

90 South Macy Street

The First Baptist Church of Fond du Lac was organized in 1845 and joined with the People’s Church, an unaffiliated body, in 1905. With the increase in size the congregation had to construct a new building to accommodate families and over 500 Sunday School attendees. This locally and nationally designated structure is an example of early 20th century Neo-Gothic design. The building incorporates the coloration and proportion of Craftsman design with the ornamental and structural features of Gothic tradition. The interior is still virtually intact: the Estey organ (purchased with a matching grant from Andrew Carnegie), baptistery, pews, and entire Sunday School with its gallery, chalkboards, and curtain partitions remain as they were in 1907. The congregation moved to a smaller structure in 1980.

Chicago & Northwestern

Depot (1890)

182 Forest Avenue

The railroads have been very important to Fond du Lac. The Northwestern system began its career in the Village of Fond du Lac on July 10, 1851 with the construction of the Rock River Valley Union Railroad. The C&NW and other railroads have offered a great deal of employment opportunities to area residents. In the early years, Fond du Lac had 46 passenger and 54 freight trains every day. The passenger depot, located between Forest Avenue and Second Street, was built in 1890 and was enlarged shortly thereafter. The depot was built to replace the previous depot at Division Street. All passenger services ceased in 1975, and the depot was unused except for its telegraph office. The depot is a classic example of railroad architecture and stands as a monument to the railroading era of the past century. The Chicago & Northwestern Depot was designated a historic landmark in 1975 by the City of Fond du Lac.

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Hotel Retlaw

1 North Main Street

The Hotel Retlaw (built in 1922-1923, with an addition n 1927), was built by Walter Schroeder (Retlaw is *Walter* spelled backwards), a prominent Milwaukee hotel and insurance magnate. From 1925 until the 1970s, the Hotel Retlaw was the only first-class hotel in Fond du Lac, continually playing a prominent part in the city’s social and commercial life. When the Retlaw officially opened on March 2, 1923, *The Daily Commonwealth* devoted a special section of the day’s paper to the “palatial new Retlaw” and called the occasion “....Epoch Making in City.” Article after article extolled the virtues of the new building and detailed its equipment and vital statistics. An editorial pointed out the importance of the impression such a building would make on visitors to the city and also noted that the Retlaw would employ 90-115 people which, even in 1927, would have made the hotel the fifth largest industry in Fond du Lac. From 1923 to the 1970s, the Retlaw maintained its position as Fond du Lac’s leading hotel. National figures John F. Kennedy, Hubert Humphrey, and Eleanor Roosevelt were all entertained in the Retlaw’s ballroom; other famous former guests include Tom Cruise, Gene Autry, Brad Pitt, and Paul Newman.

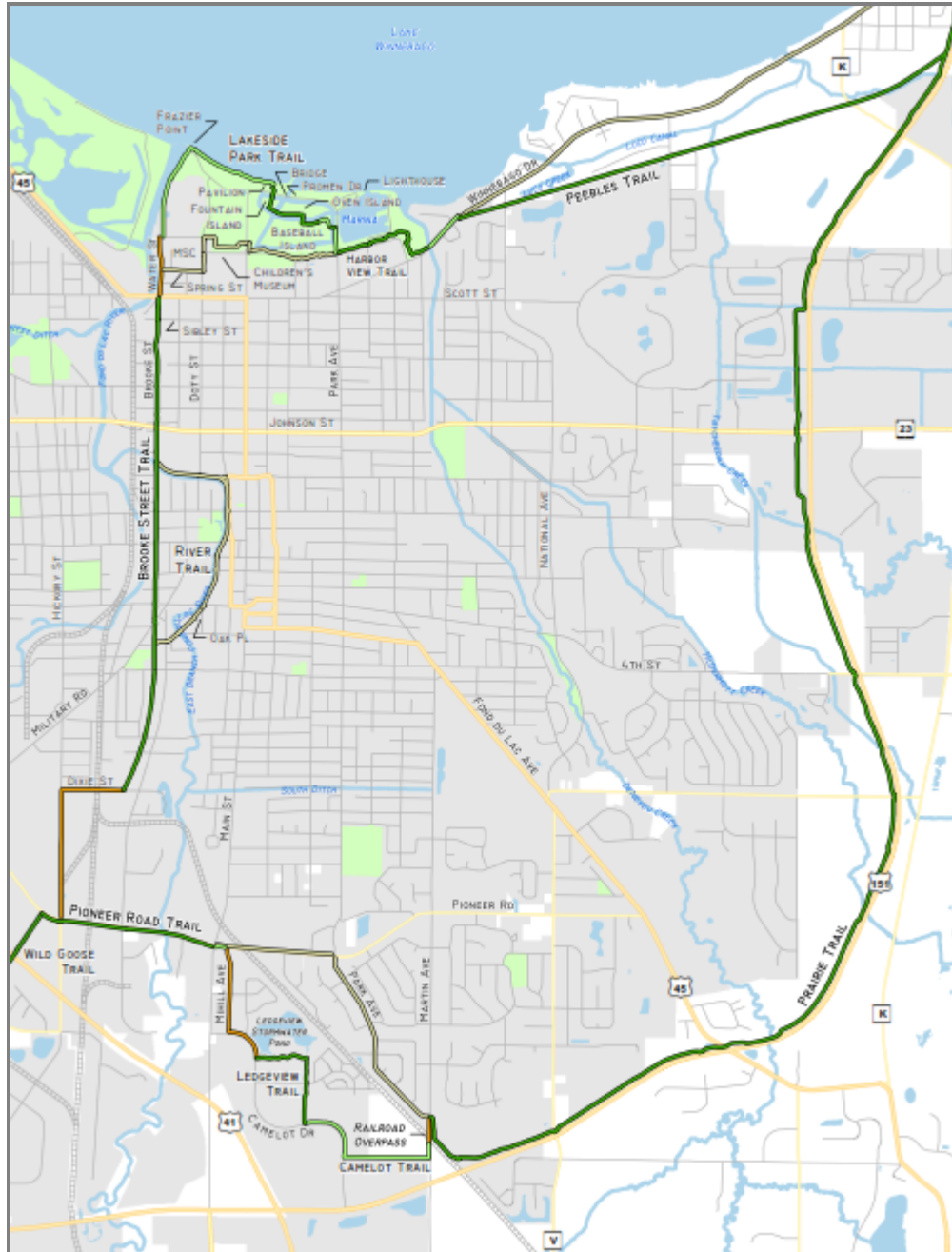


Civil War Monument (1902)

Veteran's Park

Local artist Mark Harrison arrived in Fond du Lac in 1852. When he died in December of 1894 at the age of 75, he bequeathed \$1,500 for the installation of a clock on the bell tower of the courthouse and designated \$500 as a personal donation for a Civil War monument on the courthouse lawn in tribute to the young men of Fond du Lac County who answered the call to serve. The monument was purchased eight years later and became the unfortunate focus of one of the county’s most celebrated scandals. No sooner had the monument been erected, Post 130 of the Grand Army of the Republic demanded an investigation, insisting the monument was cheap metal “not worth the \$5,423 the county board committee had authorized.” Residents expected granite, marble, or bronze and were angry the statue and base were composed of an unspecified metal not identified until decades later as “white brass”. The statue was an object of ridicule and referred to as “the tin soldier”. The cost included a plate bearing the names of the committee members, and the county board ordered the names covered, not believing committee members should be memorialized with the soldiers. To calm the storm, a new plate with “Shiloh” engraved was bolted over the names. Despite concerns, the investigating committee insisted the monument purchased from the Bronze Monumental Company of Bridgeport, Connecticut “is of great durability and will withstand the encroachments of time and weather for many future generations.” The monument has indeed stood the test of time. It was refurbished in the Spring of 1987 and the east facing statue was turned to face west because of the height of the WWI memorial trees. It should be around for generations to come.

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