

F-06

Historical Events in the Kettle's

From 1833-1971

(Source Unknown)

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September 26, 1833 – The Potowatomic Nation cedes eastern Wisconsin Lands, including the Kettle Moraine to the national government in exchange for 5,000,000 acres west of the Mississippi River.

1834-35 – The lands of the Kettle Moraine Forest area are mapped and divided into townships, sections, and quarter sections by U.S. surveyors, John Mullet, John Brink, Hiram Buenhom and Nehemiak King.

April 28, 1844 – The first recorded settlement in the Forest occurs when Sylvanus Wade and family occupy their “holdings” on the banks of the Mullet River.

March 1846 – A Fourierite Group, dedicated to social reform, settles in the “Mitchell” area of the Forest, while the families of David Griffin and Myron Merrill become the first to settle in the Kewaskum Region.

1847 – The new settlements are hard hit by a smallpox epidemic and the occurrence of killing frosts throughout the year, which destroy their much-needed crops. Greenbush becomes the site of the first sawmill in the Forest. In addition, the first doctor, Luther Cary, and Horace Greeley, noted journalist and politician, visits relatives at Spring Farm Settlement on Section 1.

1848 – The first school in the “Kettles” is taught Miss Betsy Roberts and is held in a Greenbush maple sugar shanty. Two stagecoach companies begin service through the Forest on the Sheboygan-Fond du Lac Road. The first German and Irish settlers arrive in the Forest.

August 16, 1849 – A post office is established in Rathbun Settlement.

1850 – Hazel Clark builds a sawmill on Section 1, Greenbush Township. The newly-constructed Wade House opens for business and the “Jersey Settlement” is established by a group from New Jersey led by “Uncle Ben” Romaine.

1851 – The New Fane Post Office is established.

1852 – An epidemic of cholera sweeps the area. A plank road is completed through the Forest on the route of the Sheboygan-Fond du Lac Indian Trail.

1853 – The Greenbush sawmill is destroyed by fire, work begins immediately on a replacement.

1854 – A log structure, erected by Irish settlers on the NW ¼ of Section 21, Mitchell Township, becomes the first church building in the Forest Community.

1855 – The Methodist Church, of Greenbush, designed by Charles Robinson and constructed with lumber from the newly rebuilt sawmill, is completed. Sawmills at Long Lake (Dundee) and Eblesville (New Fane), begin operations.

1856 – Right-of-way grading begins in the Glenbuelah area for the Sheboygan-Mississippi Railroad, the first and only railroad to be built in the “Kettles”.

1857 – A financial panic halts railroad construction, forcing Irish railroad laborers to turn to the land in the northern Kettles for survival.

1859 – Abraham Lincoln passes through the area on the Madison Road (Cty F and State 67) on his way from Fort Howard (Green Bay) to Madison, no stranger to the Kettles, he had visited them at least once before in the “1840’s” while taking a walking trip through southeastern Wisconsin.

March 20, 1860 – Locomotive whistles echo through the “Kettles” with the completion of the railroad from Sheboygan to Glenbuelah.

April 15, 1861 – Survivors of Settler-Indian conflicts in Minnesota pass through the Forest on their way east.

September 3, 1862 – The Great Indian Scare: Tensions caused by the Civil War and Indian “troubles” in Minnesota, ignite in a panic, when boys shooting Passenger Pigeons in a Sheboygan County wheat field are mistaken for marauding Indians. The false alarm affects hundreds in the “Kettles”, valuables are buried, livestock is herded into the woods and many settlers flee to Sheboygan and Milwaukee for safety.

April 9, 1865 – Church bells ring throughout the Forest as news of Appomattox reach the locality. Over a hundred veterans return to the “Kettles”, their lives changed forever by wounds and illness, another fifty remain in southern graves.

1869 – The Sheboygan-Mississippi Railroad is finally completed from Glenbeulah to Fond du Lac.

1870 – With granite taken from surrounding lands, the fieldstone church of St. Johns at New Fane is completed by members of the congregation.

1871 – The first cheese factory in the Kettle Moraine Area is opened by Alonza Stoddard in the village of Greenbush. The first years production is 16,000 pounds which is sold for the average price of 12 ½ cents per pound.

March 6, 1881 – The “Blizzard of 81” buries the farms and villages of the region, cutting all communication, forcing farmers to tunnel to their barns and leaving the dead unburied. Millions of Passenger Pigeons perished when caught by the storm during their northward migration. Whether this event had any real impact on their eventual extinction is questionable, however, “old timers” of the area insisted that the “wild pigeon” was never seen in substantial numbers after that year.

September, 1885 – Francis McGovern, State Governor from 1913 to 1915, teaches school at District No. 1, Mitchell, located in the shadow of McMullen’s Hill.

July 31, 1892 – Modern technology comes to the Kettles when John Brogan of Section 19 purchases a new-fangled McCormick binder.

1902 – The first telephone line is built through the Forest, running from Cascade to Dundee to Rathbun and connecting twelve business places in the area.

Winter, 1922 – Hundreds of acres become victim of the axe and “crosscut” when the Long Lake – Greenbush Area is “logged” in the largest such operation in Kettle Moraine history. The hardwood logs are hauled by sled to Glenbuelah, where five hundred carloads are shipped out by rail.

August, 1924 – Torrential rains result in the greatest recorded flood in area history, washing out bridges, dams and railroad tracks, giving rise to concern for the stabilization of the Milwaukee River Watershed.

July 31, 1936 – The Izaak Walton League turns over its eight hundred acre Moon Lake Preserve to the Conservation Commission and the Kettle Moraine Forest has its beginning.

1937 – The Wisconsin Legislature passes a bill allocating \$75,000 annually to acquire and develop state forests in the Southeast portion of the state.

1938 – A reforestation program is initiated on newly acquired lands in the Moon Lake and Greenbush Area. Implementing the program are students, Conservation Department employees and numbers of the Works Project Administration. In the next twenty-five years, millions of seedlings will be planted on former agricultural land.

1939-42 – Moon Lake is renamed Mauthe Lake and a Forest headquarters complex is constructed on its shores by the Works Project Administration.

June 6, 1953 – In a ceremony attended by Carl Sandburg, the restored Wade House is presented to the State Historical Society by the Kolher Foundation.

1971 – The Wisconsin Ice Age National Scientific Reserve is created, with the Northern Unit of the Kettle Moraine becoming one of its nine components.