

Historic Grafton Lime Kilns

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Limestone quarries and lime kilns are no longer of economic value to Ozaukee county. But the memory of what used to be is being preserved in Grafton through the work of a group of village residents.

The Grafton Lime Kiln Preservation Society Inc. received approval from the village board three years ago to do what its group name implies. Members are painstakingly restoring one of the five kilns that once supplied lime for building and purifying.

"The project is one of muscle power, a labor of love and dedication," is the way Ralph Zaun, president of the society describes the reconstruction.

Local service groups along with individuals have supplied man power and funds for materials needed in the restoration.

Kiln number two is being tuck pointed, its beams are being restored and a mason contractor will rebuild the fire box.

Historical Site

When the kiln is restored, it will become a state historical site and an appropriate marker will be placed at the park on Milwaukee Falls Rd.

While the preservation society perseveres in its work on the kiln, village officials are continuing the development of the park area where the kiln is located.

The park project is estimated at \$80,000 with half of the cost coming from the federal and state

governments.

The village has already spent \$18,561 on grading and seeding and about \$6,000 on restroom facilities and a well.

A toboggan slide has been ordered and should be installed in October for winter recreation use.

Bids are out now for landscaping the park.

"Since the project started a number of organizations have asked what they can do in the way of playground equipment and a permanent building," Emory Sacho, village administrator said.

"We are continuing our planning with this in mind," he explained.

But other planning is continuing as well.

Lake Possible

The possibility of developing a part of a pit in one of the quarries as a natural lake is being explored.

Nature trails along the Milwaukee River will not be touched.

"Basically, we are doing the necessary things to have the park in good shape as soon as possible," Mr. Sacho said.

"And we have one of the prettiest natural sights to work with according to the department of natural resources review," he explained. "With the restored kiln, we will have a unique park."

Few people realized that a park would occupy what was formerly a dump used by both Grafton and Cedarburg.

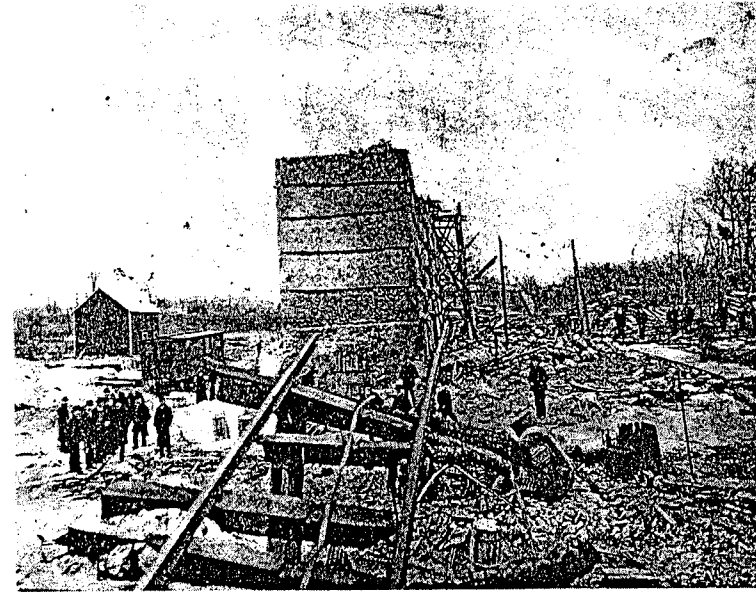
But the park was the future designation of the land, even when

one of the quarries on the land was being used for refuse.

"Luckily, the quarry used as a

dump was the least attractive and most shallow of the three on the land," Mr. Zaun stated. "The rate

at which it was filling precipitated the building of the Grafton incinerator."



time to builders, farmers and tanners.

Four quarries in the Grafton area produced the limestone that was hauled by donkey carts and dumped into the five kilns.

Started in 1891

Construction of the kilns with their outbuildings started in 1891 and was completed in 1893. Eugene Turner, Port Washington, built the kilns for C. F. Mintzlaff, Grafton, and William Liesenberg, Cedarburg, owners of the Milwaukee Falls Lime Co.

Mr. Mintzlaff was Ralph Zaun's grandfather.

The limestone rock was broken in a crusher house after the donkey carts hauled it to the

site. The crushed rock was placed in carts that were pulled up an incline to the top of the kilns where it was dumped in from the top.

Between 60 and 70 men were employed at the kilns where the pay was \$2 per day.

Cordwood fires supplied the necessary heat for reducing the crushed rock to lime. The fires went out in 1920 when wood became scarce. The quality of the rock in the quarries was not good enough to compete with similar operations elsewhere.

Although lime kilns and their supplying quarries are no longer part of Ozaukee County's economic life, the restoration of number two kiln by a group of dedicated workers means that a portion of this area's history will not be lost.

Two Natural

The dump is now covered, top soil has been placed over the area and the entire quarry seeded.

The other two quarries have been left in their natural state.

Destruction of the lime kilns was part of the village's original planning for the park. Number one and number five kilns had already been destroyed and the rubble used to repair the dam on the Milwaukee River.

The brick from all of the fireboxes had been removed hauled off for patios, firep' and garden borders. All outbuildings and housing gone.

The task facing the society three years mammoth.

The work began with 1 donated by Grafton State Bank, Joseph Uihlein, Grafton Lions Club and Grafton-Cedarburg Rotary Club.

Manpower came from the Jaycees with the Jaycettes giving the needed support in the form of food.

Now other organizations have provided additional muscle help, despite the primitive conditions and sweat power needed.

The hours they have put into the restoration means that a part of Ozaukee County economic history will be retained.

It has been over half a century since the kilns were supplying

