

## Museum Notes

by Kristen Parrott, curator  
for the week of 7/9/2014

Viroqua Cemetery will be the site of the Vernon County Historical Society's annual cemetery walk on Sunday, July 13. Eight historical figures from Vernon County's past will be featured on the guided tour. The walk begins at 4PM sharp at the cemetery gate. This annual event is a fundraiser for the Society, and tickets are available that day at the cemetery for \$5 each. If it rains heavily, the event will move to the Vernon County Museum.

The Vernon County Historical Society is happy to announce that its new website is now up and running. Find it at [vernoncountyhistory.org](http://vernoncountyhistory.org). Many thanks to volunteer Carol Barlow for designing and running the new site, and to volunteer Suzanne Harris for expert advice. We will continue to tweak and improve the new website, so let us know if you discover any problems.

At our new website you can buy books, learn about upcoming events, and peruse a list of resources in our archives. You can also join the historical society, send us an email, link to our Facebook page, and much more. Check out the new site at [vernoncountyhistory.org](http://vernoncountyhistory.org).

Returning again to the Wisconsin Blue Books, I pulled the 1901 book off the shelf and found a list of new features in it. One new feature was a table of Wisconsin's "free libraries under control of cities," which shows us that the Hillsboro library was founded in 1898, and had 6,271 volumes in 1900. The Viroqua free library, also founded in 1898, had 1,347 volumes and a circulation of 10,130 in 1900.

Another new feature was a table listing Rural Free Delivery postal routes in Wisconsin. The book states that, "The free delivery of mail to residents in the country is of recent origin. It was undertaken by the postal department as an experiment in 1896....Some opposition to the idea was generated in its early stages by crossroads merchants, country postmasters and star route mail carriers, but this was speedily overcome, as the people began to receive and comprehend the value of the service...." In 1901, Vernon County had two Rural Free Delivery circuits, a 63-mile circuit from Viroqua, and a 50-mile circuit from Westby.

The biographical sketches of state politicians in the 1901 Blue Book include Oliver Munson of Viroqua, our state senator at the time, and Andrew H. Dahl of Westby, our assemblyman. Nice oval portraits are found by each biography. You are welcome to come to the museum to look at this or any of our Blue Books. Allow a little extra time for parking while the new medical clinic parking lots around us are under construction.

