

High Cliff Building Mirrors Past

1855 General Store Museum at High Cliff State Park

Back in the days of the mid 1800's, when men tipped their hats to women wearing long flowing skirts, and horses ruled the roads, the rural village of High Cliff, Wisconsin was a flourishing little mining town.

The focal point in this small village on the northeast shore of Lake Winnebago was the yellow brick General Store and Post Office. The bricks used to build the store were made from sand and clay at the brickyard located right on the shores of the lake.

In those days, the building housed a general store, post office, telegraph office and the main office of the Western Lime and Cement Co. It was the hub of the community where folks could talk with neighbors and meet new people passing through. The building looks about the same today as it did so many years ago.



The store operated from 1855 to about 1969. The decline and eventual closure of the General Store took place after Western Lime Co. decided to abandon



operations at High Cliff in 1956 to concentrate on more prosperous limestone operations at other locations along the Niagara Escarpment. Residents of High Cliff moved away to find work elsewhere. The State of Wisconsin incrementally purchased the surrounding land beginning in 1957 in preparation for a state recreational area. The store tried to stay open for as long as possible on a seasonal basis to serve park visitors and campers, but found it difficult to sustain itself through the winter months.

Today the building stands as museum containing photo displays and artifacts dating back to the building's construction. The museum is operated by park volunteers during the summer months on weekends. Groups can call for an appointment to view the museum on weekdays spring through fall. Youngsters learn a bit about the daily lives of past generations, while old-timers reminisce of days gone by. The rear half of the building, the former residence for the storekeepers, is now the park's nature center.