

NAPER SETTLEMENT



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Museum moves historic agricultural building to campus, first relocation in 36 years

NAPERVILLE, IL — For the first time since 1983, Naper Settlement added a new building to its historic collection of thirty structures early Sunday morning. The Milk House, dating back to the early 1900s, signifies Naperville's strong agricultural history and early adoption of farming technology.

Originally part of the Maple Knoll Dairy Farm, owned by the Bauer family and established in 1900, the Milk House was used to store milk prior to transportation to a creamery. The property was in Naperville, bounded by Ogden Avenue, Washington Street, and I-88. Ownership of the farm changed hands in 1938 and the property became known as the Case Dairy Farm, which remained in operation through the 1970s.

The building was donated by ten grandchildren of former farm owners John and Esther Case – David J. Koller, Mary C. Ewald (Koller), Ed Lally, Meg Koller Murphy, Robert and Marjorie Koller and Family, Julie Lally, Bernadette Koller Payne, Eileen Lally, Heather Lally Stockley, and Nicole Lally Champion and Family.

“[Our Grandparents] helped transform the dairy industry and the hybrid seed industry. Naperville has some of the best farm land in the State of Illinois, but the key to the success of our grandparents in the agricultural industry was due to their grit, honesty, and early adoption of new technology,” said Robert Koller, grandson of the Cases.

This new addition further serves the museum's mission and current initiative to collect and interpret the community's agricultural history. Maple Knoll Farm and Case Dairy Farm were important dairy producers in the area, historically significant as the first farm to pasteurize its own milk on site. The building is an important beacon of Naperville's dairy production era, when cows outnumbered people for fifty years.

The Milk House will be sited adjacent to the Halfway House on the southwest side of Naper Settlement's campus. Its new location will complement the proposed Agricultural Interpretive Center, a capital project by the Naperville Heritage Society designed to showcase the region's rich agricultural history and the future of farming in the area through interactive exhibits and STEM-based learning. Fundraising efforts for the Agricultural Interpretive Center are currently ongoing.

"Today was an exciting milestone for the Naperville Heritage Society and Naper Settlement," said Rena Tamayo-Calabrese, Naper Settlement's president and CEO. "The addition of the Milk House to our museum's campus, in conjunction with the Smokehouse and Halfway House adds one more layer to the history of Naperville's farming community told at Naper Settlement. Their horizons became our frontiers, and through additions to our campus like the Milk House and Agricultural Interpretive Center, we look to them to inspire a new generation of agricultural trailblazers in the community."

The Milk House will be part of the museum experience during the museum's summer season, beginning April 1.

About Naper Settlement

Naper Settlement is a nationally accredited, award-winning outdoor museum set on 13 magnificent acres in the heart of Naperville. Located 30 miles from Chicago, the museum is home to thirty-one historical structures dating back as early as the 1830s. Featuring exhibits, special events, educational programming and more, Naper Settlement is where history comes alive and the community comes to connect. For more information, visit www.napersettlement.org or call (630) 420-6010.