



Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society

Historic Times

Vol. 19 No. 2 Summer 2017

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Open Thursday afternoons from 2-5 p.m. and by appointment.

For research, call archivist Bev Silldorff: 262-242-3290

Come Celebrate Mequon's 60th Anniversary!

The MT Historical Society, the Fromm Family Pet Foods and a wide variety of local organization, individuals and businesses will be hosting a Community Celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the incorporation of The City of Mequon. The event will be on Sunday, July 30th, from Noon to 4 PM. Parking and shuttle service will be available at Crossroads Church on Green Bay and Highland Roads.



This home was built by Edwin J. Nieman, Sr. in 1929 and designed by Herman H. Bruns in the Tudor and Elizabethan Revival style. Much of the iron work on the inside and outside of the home was created by Cyril Colnik. Free tours will be available.

This event is made possible thanks to the support of our sponsors:

PRESENTING SPONSOR:
Fromm Family Pet Food

MAJOR SPONSORS:

- Sommer's Motors
- Merrill Lynch Investments
- Charter Manufacturing
- Former Mequon Mayor Connie Pukaite
- Gordie Boucher Village Ford

This is a **free** event that will include:

- Free Guided Tours of the historic Nieman home conducted by The Friends of Jonathan Clark House
- Free Ice Cream Sundaes thanks to the TM Rotary Club
- Free Children's Games and prizes provided by the MT Optimist Club
- Free Face Painting, Balloon Art and Lemonade thanks to individual members of the MT Historical Society Board
- Free Shuttle Service from Crossroads Church provided by Newcastle Place
- A silent auction including many historically significant items

ADDITIONAL SPONSORS:

Rockwell Automation, Shaffer Development, Mequon Woman's Club, the cheel, Port Washington State Bank, The City of Mequon, The Village of Thiensville, Lakeside Development and Doug Hansen Insurance.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors, this is a free, family-friendly fund raising event for the Mequon Thiensville Historical Society. Donations to the MT Historical Society on the day of the event will be greatly appreciated, and all donations as well as memberships are fully tax deductible.

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MT Historical Society 2017 Board of Directors

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James Schaefer

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262-242-4653

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MTHS Phone: 262-242-3107

Join Us

Join today. It's easy. Memberships also make great gifts!

Annual Membership:

Individual\$15
Family.....\$20
Contributing.....\$30
Business.....\$80
Sustaining\$100

Tax deductible 501(c)(3) donations are appreciated.

Send your check to: MTHS, 216 Green Bay Road,
Suite 102, Thiensville, WI 53092. Membership form
located on page 7 of this newsletter.

New Members

March 2017 - June 2017

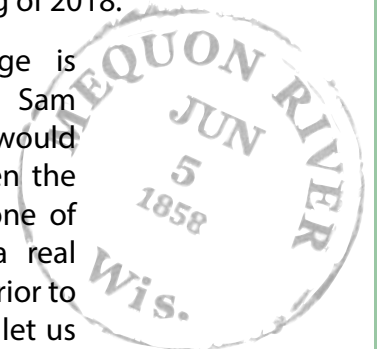
Ivonna Cheetham
Bette Feltz
Kay and Roger Reetz
George Munkwitz
Patricia Siefkes
Carol and John Vanney
Fromm Family Pet Foods
Merrill Lynch investments
Gordie Boucher Village Ford
Charter Manufacturing
the cheel
Rockwell Automation
Shaffer Development
Port Washington State Bank
Newcastle Place
Lakeside Development
Doug Hansen Insurance
TM Rotary Club
MT Optimist Club
Mequon Woman's Club

NOW OVER 200 VOTING MEMBERS STRONG

STAMP MUSEUM MOVING FORWARD

With the approval of the MTHS Board and the City of Mequon Common Council, renovation work is beginning the 1839 Isham Day House across from City Hall. The building will become a Postal Museum and Stamp Gallery under the direction of MTHS board member Sam Cutler, Jr. The project will be completed in time for its opening in late spring of 2018.

This postmark image is a reproduction, by Sam Cutler, Jr., of what would have most likely been the real thing. Maybe one of our members has a real copy of a postmark prior to the Civil War? If so, let us know!



1957: Mequon Becomes a City

Contributed by Bob Blazich, President, MTHS

We all know that Mequon is a city, not a town or village, and most readers know that Mequon incorporated as a city in 1957. But there is a very interesting and complex story that goes with the transition from a township to a city.

The Town of Mequon dates back to April of 1846 when the first Town of Mequon meeting was held in the home of John Henry Thien. That was two years before Wisconsin became a state and four years before Washington County divided to create Tuskola County which became Ozaukee County in 1853.

When the hamlet of Thiensville was incorporated as a village by the State of Wisconsin legislature in October of 1910, the Town of Mequon was left with a set of boundaries that did not include its "town center", Thiensville.

Let's move forward about 30 years to explore the period of dramatic change that led up to Mequon taking the leap from Township to City. As World War II came to an end in 1945, the Milwaukee area, like most metropolitan area in the US, faced a huge housing shortage and the majority of people seeking to build new homes looked outside the big cities.

By 1950, it was clear that a massive shift away from the City of Milwaukee and toward suburbia was taking place. This led to a period of annexation battles that left large portions of Southeastern Wisconsin with unusually jagged municipal boundaries. Between 1950 and 1957, the year Mequon was incorporated as a Class 4 City by

the State of Wisconsin, Milwaukee County saw the creation of eight suburbs: Glendale, St. Francis, Hales Corners, Bayside, Brown Deer, Oak Creek, Franklin and Greenfield. Much of this was done to protect small communities from annexation by The City of Milwaukee.

Between 1948 and 1956, the City of Milwaukee annexed an average of 1,338 acres annually (about twice the size of Thiensville) peaking in 1956 when the city added just under 3,000 acres. Battles over land ensued between the City of Milwaukee and the suburbs including a six-year long legal battle with Brown Deer over the unincorporated community of Granville.

While this annexation was going on in Milwaukee County, similar community protection was going on along Milwaukee County's borders. The Village of Menomonee Falls expanded to cover 32 square miles in 1958, Brookfield incorporated as a city in 1954, and New Berlin chartered as a city in 1959.



First meeting of the City of Mequon Common Council held on July 31st, 1957 in the newly renamed Mequon City Hall. From left to right: Werner Mueller, Ted Egelhoff, R. Logemann, Mayor Carl Wilbert, Donald Goniu, J. Teschner and George Knoll. Photo by Vern Arendt

Closer to home, the Town of Mequon lost its far southeast corner of land to Bayside in 1953 and a stretch of land on its northern border along then Highway 57 to the City of Cedarburg in 1956. A third land grab, a late 1956 Village of Thiensville referendum to annex 600 acres of Town of Mequon land, failed due to Mequon's application to become a city.

The Town of Mequon, which in 1950 included a population of 4,065 living in 48 square miles of land, was ripe for growth. The population of

Recent Happenings at MTHS

Contributed by Bonnie Heintskill

Our big news this quarter is that we are having a fundraiser at the Historic Nieman Home, owned by the Nieman family of Fromm Family Pet Foods. They have spent many months refurbishing the house back to its original state when it was built in the 1929. Tom has offered the use of the grounds and house for our event, Sunday, July 30, noon to 4:00 p.m. We will have two food trucks, free docent-led tours of the house, games, activities, ice cream, lemonade, cookies from Mila's Bakery, a silent auction, and more. Best of all it's FREE to the public! Our Fundraising Committee led by MTHS Vice President Fay Walker is spearheading the organization of the event. Other committee members include: Bob Blazich, Mary Sayner, Sam Cutler, Jr., Bonnie Heintskill, Pat Engelbert, Doug Hansen of Doug Hansen Insurance, Connie Pukaite former Mequon Mayor and Alderwoman, and John Graham from Fromm Family Pet Foods. We will also have displays featuring the year 1957, historic displays about the two communities, and about businesses.

We will have information about the July 30th event on the electronic sign at the corner of Mequon Road and Cedarburg Road and a 10-foot banner first at the corner of Freistadt Road and Main Street, Thiensville and then on the Old Thiensville Fire House for the months of June and July. Piggy Wiggly Grocery Store will be putting a flyer in grocery bags the

week of July 17.

Besides being a fundraiser for the Historical Society, we will also be celebrating The City of Mequon's 60th Anniversary on that day. Come help us celebrate both events!



The newly opened Port Washington State Bank branch in Thiensville includes a fifty foot long mural of historic local photos including many from the MTHS collection. Be sure to stop in and admire this display of our local history.



MTHS was once again part of the Fun Before the Fourth Parade. This year's participants included Steve Karthaus, who drove his family's Model A Ford. MTHS members Mary Sayner, Kelly Krause, Doug Hansen, Bob Blazich walked the parade route and handed out 800 invitations to the July 30th event at the Nieman Haus.

We have also been busy getting our name out with the following: MTHS had a display on May 30th at Newcastle Place, Mequon; May 1st we had a table display at the Ozaukee County Historical Society's Quarterly Meeting; and attended the quarterly meeting for the Ozaukee Co-op for Historical Societies.

The new Port Washington State Bank has copies of old photos as wallpaper above the tellers' windows and copies of the photos in each office.

We continue to receive donated family histories and are always looking for more! Volunteer Kathy

Hoffman has been busy expanding and organizing our family and business files to the point where we need MORE filing cabinets. If you have any to donate, it is tax deductible. We are looking for letter-size four-drawer filing cabinets that don't need the metal file inserts.

We received four beautiful scrapbooks from Homestead High School that Margaret Bussone (former HHS French teacher) and Cindy Bock (former MTHS teacher) had done on the early history of the high school.

Recent Happenings...

Continued from page 4

At the Co-op Meeting, Historic Photographer Gary Heller is looking for buildings to photograph in Mequon and Thiensville for the historical society. He showed us beautiful examples of his prints for the Ozaukee County Historical Society's Pioneer Village. If you have a heritage farm or business, please contact us to make arrangements for Mr. Heller to come do photographs. The photos will be the property of MTHS and we will sell prints or rights for businesses to use in an effort to raise funds for the Society.

We submitted an application to the Wisconsin Historical Society for a mini-grant to help us purchase Past Perfect Museum Software. This will help us with our membership files, load documents, photos, media, volunteer hours, produce letters, envelopes, labels and more. The Mini Grant is up to \$700.00 from the WHS but the actual purchase price of the program can be upwards of \$2,904.00, depending on the options we purchase. We have to match the grant of \$700.00. We already have a donation of \$600.00 toward the needed amount. If we go for the full package, we would still need to raise an additional \$1,604.00 to purchase the program. One of the nice features is we can put information, photos, etc. on the internet. As we continue to grow and inventory our collection, we need a central program to keep all this information.

To provide better service to our community, we felt that it was necessary to set up our own internet service. If you would like to help us pay for this monthly fee, donations can be marked as such.



MTHS is active on the web!
Be sure to check out our new website at www.mthistoricalsociety.org
and LIKE us on Facebook.



How Much Do You Know?

In 1957, Claude Baldwin, a black real estate developer, applied to build a home in southeastern Mequon, and he met resistance from his neighbors. In fact, some residents applied to have a road built on his piece of land "for safety reasons". Mequon's first mayor, Carl Wilbert, would have none of it, and the black family built their home.

When Mequon was incorporated in 1960, the new city was had more square miles of space than San Francisco, Boston or Miami!!!

Why is Mequon so big? When townships were being laid out by the federal government, they were based on squares of 36 sections, six miles by six miles. The sections east of Range Line Road and along Lake Michigan were too small to be a township, so those sections were combined with the sections to the west to form one town, Mequon, which covered 48 square miles.

Who was Mequon's most famous, internationally known resident in 1957? Milwaukee Braves star Henry Aaron.

Recent Acquisitions at the Don Silldorff Archive

Contributed by Archivist Bev Silldorff (262-242-3290 or 262-242-3107)

The Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society thrives on the generosity of donors and local organizations. Below is a list of recent acquisitions.

Nina Look:

- Book *Stalag Wisconsin, Inside WWII Prisoner of War Camps* by Betty Cowley, Copyright, 2002
*See Image at right.

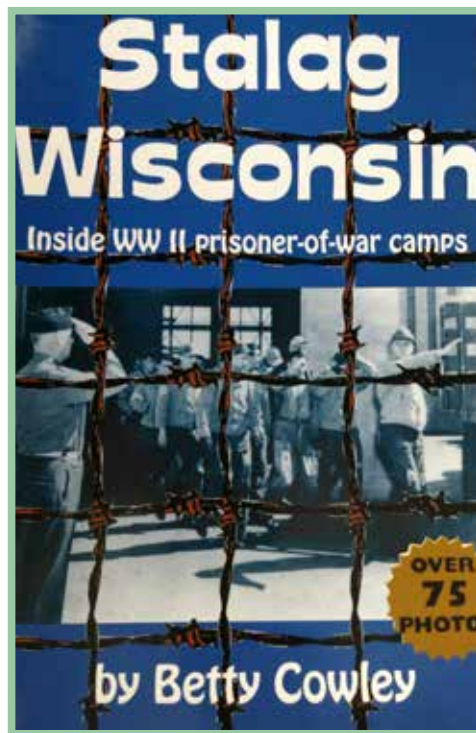
MT Library League organized and donated by Marian Held:

- History and minutes of meetings, book discussions and sales of used books, fundraising, with pictures and clippings from the League's 35th anniversary of serving the community.

City of Mequon:

- Two copies of reprints of *The History of Mequon Brought to About 1870*.
- Issues of *The City of Mequon Community News* (newsletters) from 1999 to 2010.

Recent families researched: Uerlings, Luedtke, Kailing, Nielson, Koehler and Kiekhaefer T-M Rotary Club Membership Directory (undated)



Book, *Stalag Wisconsin* by Betty Cowley, donated by Nina Look.

1957: Mequon Became a City...

Continued from page 3

600 acres of Town of Mequon land, failed due to Mequon's application to become a city.

The Town of Mequon, which in 1950 included a population of 4,065 living in 48 square miles of land, was ripe for growth. The population of Mequon more than doubled by 1960 and increased by another 80 percent by 1970. Between 1970 and 1980, the population of Mequon slowed to only a 7% growth rate. Unlike many suburban communities where housing expanded quickly to meet the demand, growth in Mequon was limited by a 1938 ordinance that required one-acre lots.

On May 23, 1957, the voters of the Town of Mequon were asked to cast a simple vote with two choices: For A City or Against a City. The vote took place as a

result of a petition signed by 3,242 requesting a referendum for the proposed incorporation of the Town of Mequon as a city. The referendum passed by a vote of 1536 in favor with 265 opposed. In July of 1957 Carl Wilbert, a real estate and insurance agent and former town clerk was elected mayor over Atty. Tom Tuttle. Six aldermen were also elected: Werner Mueller, Ted Egelhoff, Richard Logemann, Don Goniou, J. Teschner and George Knoll. Carl Wilbert went on to remain in office as the mayor of Mequon until 1965. Prior to his election as mayor, he served as the clerk of the Town of Mequon for 25 years.

Highlights of 1957

- The USSR launches the first artificial satellite, Sputnik 1
- Toyota starts selling cars in the US
- Dick Clark's American Bandstand makes its network debut on ABC
- Wham-oo introduces the Frisbee
- Elvis Presley makes his television debut on The Ed Sullivan Show
- The Civil Rights Act of 1957 enacted
- Dwight Eisenhower is sworn in for his second term as US president
- West Side Story makes its first appearance on Broadway
- The Boing 707 airliner flies for the first time
- The Milwaukee Braves defeat the New York Yankees in the World Series, 4 games to 3
- IBM sells the first compiler for the Fortran scientific programming language
- Leonard Bernstein's musical West Side Story makes its first appearance on Broadway and runs for 732 performances.
- Serial killer Edward Gein murders his last victim, Bernice Worden of Plainfield, Wisconsin, US
- December 19 – Meredith Willson's classic musical The Music Man, starring Robert Preston, debuts on Broadway.

Some favorite movies:

- 12 Angry Men
- Jailhouse Rock
- The Bridge on the River Kwai
- The Ten Commandments
- Around the World in Eighty Days

Some favorite singles:

- All Shook Up, Elvis Presley
- Love letters in the Sand, Pat Boone
- Little Darlin', The Diamonds
- Young Love, Tab Hunter also by Sonny James
- So Rare, Jimmy Dorsey
- Round and Round, Perry Como
- Bye Bye Love, The Everly Brothers

Popular Films:

- The Ten Commandments
- Around the World in Eighty Days
- 12 Angry men
- Jailhouse Rock
- The Bridge on the River Kwai
- The Three Faces of Eve

I Would Like A Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society Membership!

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Tax deductible 501(c)(3) donations are appreciated.

I would like the newsletter sent by Mail Email

Email Address: _____

I am interested in volunteering for the Mequon Thiensville Historical Society Yes No

Annual Membership Levels:

- Individual\$15
- Family.....\$20
- Contributing.....\$30
- Business.....\$80
- Sustaining\$100

Please Mail Checks to: M-T Historical Society, at 216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102, Thiensville, WI 53092.



Pictured: A section of the collage of historic photos on display in the lobby of the new Thiensville branch of Fort Washington State Bank.

Historic Times

Megunon - Thiensville Historical Society's

SAVE THE DATE!
M-T Historical Society Fundraiser on Sunday, July 30th, 2017 from 1am - 5pm at the Nieman Family Residence Mark your calendars! You are invited to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the City of Megunon at our free, family-friendly event at the historic Nieman Haus. Parking is available at Crossroads Church

Your Renewal is Due

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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