

BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Fall 2018

**P.O. Box 336
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historical society.org**

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**Lost
Baileys Harbor-
A view from the
school.
See p. 2**

SUMMER - FALL ACTIVITY 2018

We began our activities this summer with a time-traveling program that looked at many Baileys Harbor sites as they used to be comparing them with their present-day use and appearance. It was very interesting to see how the town has evolved over the years. The theme continued at the Faust family presentation, which showed how an old farm-house has changed over time but remains the heart of a close extended family. In our last program, Roger Kuhns provided a look at Jens Jensen and his environmental philosophy. Visitors and residents have enjoyed historical exhibits at the Toft House and the library.

L.D.

2019 EVENTS – TENTATIVE SCHEDULE (Held at the Town Hall)

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| June 19, 2019 | 7PM – Baileys Harbor Women's Club |
| July 17, 2019 | 7PM – John Fons Family |
| August 21, 2019 | 7PM – Log Houses of Chapel Lane |
| September 18, 2019 | Members Brunch |

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society currently has 116 memberships, representing many more individuals, of course, because of Family and Business memberships. Renewal reminders are sent each month as yearly memberships expire. Membership levels are: Business \$50, Family \$25, Individuals \$15, and Lifetime \$150. Members' dues help support our continuing research, displays outside the Baileys Harbor Library and at the Toft House, our events and presentations, and our newsletters. Please encourage your friends, neighbors, and family members to join BHHS so that they can enjoy supporting the dissemination of our local history, sharing information, and exploring the history of our community. A printable membership form can be found on the home page of our website <www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org>; just print it, fill it out, and mail it in.

WELCOME!

This is BHHS's way of giving a warm smile and a hearty handshake to our new members! Welcome to Karin Lukas, Stephan Pleck Johnson, Terry & Linda Brown, Tom & Shirley Kenney, Tom & Andrea Esau, and Ronald & Patricia O'Brien. We appreciate your support, and hope that you will enjoy sharing and participating in our ongoing exploration of Baileys Harbor history.

LOST BAILEYS HARBOR — A VIEW FROM THE SCHOOL

This photo was taken in the mid-1950s from the roof of the Baileys Harbor Grade School, now the Schoolhouse Inn, on Guy Street. We have lost our Quonset Hut Movie Theater (center, across the field), and the original Nelson Hardware Store (now The Brewery), but most of the other structures remain, many with changes. Homes and businesses have been built, but the biggest and most obvious changes concern the trees. The spindly cedar trees on the right edge of the picture are now a towering mass of green, and the open field in the center of the photo has filled up with other volunteer trees, including several apple trees of different varieties.

If you have the opportunity, take a drive or a walk along Guy Street and compare this photo with today's view. The Schoolhouse Inn has also mounted some historic school pictures near the edge of Guy Street. It's amazing to witness the changes that take place unnoticed, before our very eyes, in a mere 60 years.

Leann Despotes

BAILEYS HARBOR - NOW AND THEN

The June program, *Now and Then*, was presented by Suzanne Bauldry and Leann Despotes, linking photos of places important in Baileys Harbor's history with current pictures and narration. Highlights included:



John Anclam owned the dock and land we now call Anclam Park, as well as a general store across the street, on the present site of the Lutheran Church. From 1898 to 1915, the store also housed the village post office. In 1914, John's daughters, Eva and Elsie, became the managers of a new business, the Scenic Grove Resort, which became famous for its home-cooked, family-style meals. In 1915, Elsie negotiated for a first-class soda fountain for the resort and advertised the Anclam Ice Cream Parlor for a couple of years. Alas, in May 1918, her father advertised "Entire ice cream

parlor outfit, including 8 ft. soda fountain, tables and chairs. Will sell cheap if taken at once." "Wouldn't it be interesting," Leann commented, "to hear the family conversations about that?"

The resort closed in the 1950s, and the contents were sold at auction. Elsie Anclam continued as a businesswoman, renting her cottages on Ward Street and building what is now the Square Rigger Motel.

Lake shipping declined in the early decades of the 1900s, and the great piers that served Baileys Harbor went to wrack and ruin. In 1945, local businessmen tried to develop the Baileys Harbor Yacht Club on the site of the old Anclam pier. That dream ended in July 1948, with an event reported in a Menominee newspaper. "A great tragedy has overtaken the ambitions of Door County yachtsmen promoters. A Chicago yacht, the 46-foot *Airbanas*, ran aground at Baileys Harbor and some of the townspeople swooped down on the stricken craft like sea harpies and took away everything that could be picked up or loosened with a screwdriver, pipe wrench or jimmy." Today, the pier is part of Anclam Park, and includes a lovely walkway with benches, a sandy beach, and a picnic area.

In 1891, Tom Toft, Emma's father, moved his family to Baileys Harbor and in 1892 purchased for \$400 the Miles Carrington house at the corner of Doc's Hill (Dr. Voight) and Main Street (now the vacant lot east of the post office). The house next door (now the home of the Baileys Harbor Visitor Center and the BHHS) was built by Carrington in 1868, after losing his home and business in a fire. In 1900, it was purchased by Emma's brother, William Toft, for \$550. From 1918 to 1939, he operated the village post office in the southeast downstairs room. Emma, a Ridges Sanctuary founder and the person responsible for the Toft Point natural area, lived in the house for many years.

Prueter's Mill, located behind the present Kiehnau's Garage, was built in 1870 by Tom Toft, Tom Toseland, and the miller, William Bruemmer. It was eventually sold to the Prueter family, who had owned an earlier mill on the north end of town. It burned to the ground in just two hours in February



1923, despite what the *Advocate* reported as a “most efficient bucket brigade.” Ironically, the fire occurred just a few weeks after owner Carl Prueter had refused to take out fire insurance.

The Sands Motel, built in 1962 by Carl Jonas, a former manager of the Sturgeon Bay Yacht Club, is an example of the lost Baileys Harbor remembered by many. BHHS member Carol Thelen Schmidt was a housekeeper there when it opened and said that Mrs. Jonas was a demanding boss who required that the rooms be meticulously cleaned. Carol says that she still makes her beds in the same way. In 1966, the resort was sold to Bill and Jackie Cisewski, who ran it for more than 18 years. When it was decided to develop the land for the Harbor Sands Condominiums, the hotel was moved to Stevenson Pier Road in Sturgeon Bay and, since 1994, has been called the Countryside Inn. It is now owned by Liz Mercer, who hopes to recreate the 1960s flavor of the original motel.

Other old-time structures included in the program were the Lifesaving Station that operated from 1895 to 1948, Birds Park, the home of now-acclaimed woodcarver, Albert Zahn, and the original Lutheran and Catholic churches.

Patty Williamson

THIS OLD HOUSE, THE STORY OF THE CONRAD FAUST FAMILY



Ginny Siegel and Carol Schmidt presented the July 25 program on their great-grandparents, Elizabeth and Conrad Faust and their descendants.

The Faust coat of arms goes back to 1438. Family members were goldsmiths and were credited with helping Gutenberg develop the printing press. The Fausts are listed as being related to Charlemagne the Holy Roman Emperor (as are 75 percent of people of European descent) and also to Anne Catherine Emmerich, who lived from 1774 to 1824, experienced the mystical phenomenon of stigmata, and was beatified by Pope Paul in 2003.

Elizabeth and Conrad fell in love in Germany, but were of different economic classes, so did not marry until they reached Milwaukee County. They married in 1882 and, by the next year, had moved to Baileys Harbor and purchased 133 acres from County E to Summit Road for \$1,400 cash (equal to more than \$33,000 today). Another 40 acres north of Summit was added in 1917. In 1946, the couple’s daughter, Louise, built a summer home on the foundation of an old log house that had been on the property. Today it’s the home of Jody Jessup and her husband, Doc Heide.

The original log house had a kitchen, milk room, and bedroom on the first floor. Upstairs were three bedrooms and a copper-lined cistern to catch rain water that was piped to the kitchen sink. In 1899, Conrad made a long trip to Germany to collect an inheritance – “enough money to live comfortably the rest of his life.” He added living and dining rooms downstairs and three more bedrooms upstairs. Occupying five of those bedrooms were daughters Anna, 1884; Katherine, 1886 (Ginny and Carol’s grandmother); Elsie, 1887; Minnie, 1893; and Louise, 1886.

The local newspaper reported that Conrad was one of the most enterprising farmers in this part of the county, raising cows, pigs, chickens, and geese; operating a lime kiln to make his own fertilizer; and maintaining a cranberry bog until the new dam on the south end of Kangaroo Lake raised the water level and inundated it.

During WW I, when few young men were left in town, people wondered how Conrad always seemed to have plenty of help on the farm. Few realized that the “help” was his daughters, dressed in pants and hats.

In 1885, Conrad voted illegally, as he wasn’t a citizen, and was fined \$500 – a lot of money for that time. Elizabeth loved to entertain. In 1915, the local newspaper reported that she hosted a “dainty lunch” for Promoters of Women’s Suffrage, who “discussed many interesting topics.” Apparently, people in Baileys Harbor were more enlightened than those in Sturgeon Bay, where suffragettes met in the cemetery!



Conrad and Elizabeth traveled all around the county visiting friends, sometimes going as far as Southern Door and being gone for weeks.

In the 1930s, Katherine Faust inherited the 70 acres bounded by Summit and County E. She met her husband, Frank Candioto, in the millinery business, and they eventually owned three stores in Chicago – one on Lincoln Avenue, another near the present location of the Willis Tower, and the third on Michigan Avenue, near what is now the entrance to Millennium Park. Many people who’ve lived in Door County for a long time still call the homeplace the old Candioto farm.

Carol, the current resident of the farmhouse, found many interesting items when she renovated it in 1998.

Patty Williamson

2018 MEMBERS BREAKFAST

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society’s 2018 Annual Members Breakfast was held on September 12 at Karl & Karen Berndt’s Baileys Harbor Fish Market & Grille at 8:30AM. For those who were unable to attend, picture a brilliant, sunny, September morning with a light breeze off of our sparkling harbor. Entering, we were greeted with fresh coffee or tea and the opportunity to mingle as we waited for a truly sumptuous breakfast. Everyone seemed to have a wonderful time. Thanks to Marianne Newton for making the arrangements.

President Leann Despotos began the business section of the meeting by introducing the Board Members and describing their special contributions to BHHS. Members were informed of ongoing activities. Roy Cole is heading a research project on the 9 historic log houses of Chapel Lane. We are looking forward to that presentation in 2019. Also, Howard Williamson is investigating whether the Toft House may be eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. *Historic Baileys Harbor* booklets were distributed to those who did not already have one.

Suggestions were also made for future programs. Susie Bauldry said that she has spoken with members of the Anschutz family, and felt that they may be interested. Jo Cole suggested an investigation of the history of the Spikehorn Campground once located in North Bay and run by the Augustine family, and several information sources were offered by other members. John Fons also agreed to prepare a history of his family.

Leann also described the evolution of our mission to disseminate knowledge of the history of Baileys Harbor. Public displays are mounted in the Toft House and at the library. Our office is in the basement of the Town Hall. At this time, broader accessibility is provided as we create what amounts to an online archive of Baileys Harbor history. All of our newsletters and public events are available on our website as well as a brief history of the town's first hundred years, and ongoing and completed projects are described. Facebook and Twitter accounts are accessible, as is membership and contact information. In 2018, the site has had 33,381 visits as of the end of August. It seems to be working!

Finally, we completed the annual election of half of the Board of Directors. Nominations were solicited from the floor, but no additions were made to the presented slate. Board members Suzanne Bauldry, Roy Cole, Nancy Rafal, and Howard Williamson were reelected by acclamation for 2019-2020. The meeting was ended by 10:30AM, and members departed to enjoy a beautiful fall day in Baileys Harbor.

Leann Desportes

JENS JENSEN, AGE 86, ALIVE AND SPEAKING IN BAILEYS HARBOR



A huge crowd at our August 28 meeting at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall saw Roger Kuhns go backstage with a tan suit over his arm. But the man who emerged wearing that suit a few minutes later looked and sounded nothing like Kuhns.

Whom he did resemble to an uncanny degree was 86-year-old Jens Jensen – a bit stooped, with a bushy grey mustache, long white hair under a tan beret, and a white silk scarf, fastened at the neck with a silver ring. He spoke for an hour in an accent that never faltered. The year was 1946, five years before Jensen's death.

Jensen related that he first came to Door County looking for a place in the country. His wife, Anne Marie, was beside him in their Model T; his secretary, Mertha Fulkerson, and the Jensen children were in the back. "As we came up to Ellison Bay, this little town, for the first time, we got to the top of the hill," Jensen said, "and do you know what I saw? Over the hill was the lake, Green Bay. There was a bluff with a forest on top. It looked just like my childhood home in Dybbøl, Denmark. I was so excited that I said 'Anna,' and I took my hands off the steering wheel and we drove into the ditch!"

Jensen was born in 1860 into a farm family. As a young man, he was conscripted into Kaiser Wilhelm's Royal Guard and sent to Berlin, where he was fascinated with the beautiful parks – the inspiration for his career as a landscape architect. Later he fell in love with a young woman who worked in his parents' household. As the oldest son, he would have inherited the farm, but his father forbade his marriage to the "town girl," so in 1884 Jens and Anne immigrated to the United States, with fifteen cents in Jens' pocket.

Eventually, they settled in Chicago, where he found work as a street cleaner in parks that consisted of "mown grass, a single tree and a children's wading pool in the hot sun." By 1905 he was general superintendent of the entire West Park System. In 1920, he resigned from the park system and started his own landscape design practice, focused on "bringing the wilderness back into the city."

Jensen shared anecdotes about Frank Lloyd Wright (not a fan) and others he does respect – poet Vachel Lindsay, conservationist Aldo Leopold, and Door County artist Gerhard Miller.

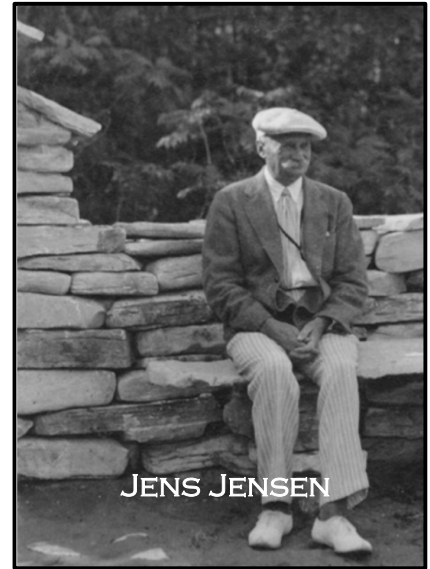
Anne Jensen died in 1934, and the following year Jens moved to Ellison Bay, where he founded the Clearing Folk School. But Jensen's soul mate, the person who shared his deepest feelings about the spiritual

power of nature and the need to protect and preserve it, was Emma Toft. “She’d make those Swedish pancakes with chopped apples and nutmeg and butter, and I could stay there for a long time. And, oh boy, we’d talk about all sorts of ways that we would improve society.”

It was Emma and Jens, of course, along with Olivia Traven and others, who saved the Ridges from becoming a campground. “Some of us knew where mosquitoes are born,” Jensen said, “and thought the joke would be on them, when they were camping in the middle of a swamp. I can think of a few people who would go in there and the mosquitoes would be frustrated, because those captains of industry had no blood in them.”

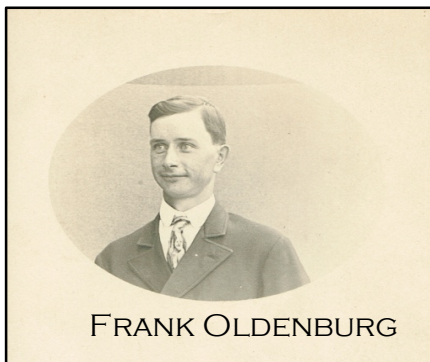
“When Emma was very young,” Jensen said, “her boyfriend was killed in the war. One time I asked her, ‘So you don’t need a husband?’ And she said, ‘What man could ever fulfill me so much as this forest?’ Then she said, ‘Well, maybe you, Jens,’ and gave me the lightest kiss on my cheek, like a hummingbird had breezed by. You see, she has a higher purpose. If we all had a higher purpose, think what we could do.”

Jensen appeared courtesy of the BHHS, the Clearing, Friends of Toft Point, and the Ridges Sanctuary.



Patty Williamson

FRANK OLDENBURG BUILDER, CHURCHMAN, NATURE LOVER



While doing some research on the Log Houses of Chapel Lane program that will be one of our public events in 2019, the name of Frank Oldenburg appeared as a builder of many of these structures. His name had arisen in other contexts, and I decided that his story should be shared as an important part of Baileys Harbor history.

Mr. Oldenburg was born in Baileys Harbor in 1884, the son of Mr. and Mrs. John Oldenburg. He spent his life in Baileys Harbor except for a few years in the state of Washington. He was a building contractor, and apparently a very well-regarded one. He married Blonda Woerfel in 1921. They had no children.

Frank was apparently a savvy businessman as well as a great booster of Baileys Harbor. In 1914, he served as president of the Baileys Harbor Country Club, which was organized to promote business and tourism in the town. In 1916 this became the Baileys Harbor Commercial Club, and he continued as president. The Commercial Club had a very busy agenda for a few years, but it seems that it faded away during World War I. Other, similar organizations emerged in the early 1930s.

Joining officers Anna McArdle, Emma Toft, and Olivia Traven, Frank became the first president of the Ridges Sanctuary, Inc. in October 1937. Frank and his fellow members began an aggressive campaign to raise money and to expand the Ridges. Within a year, the organization gained active support from the Town and the Ladies Improvement Club (Women’s Club) and quadrupled in size. Through the contacts he made building houses, Frank was able to interest many individuals in the mission of the Ridges Sanctuary. He was president until 1952 and served on the Board of Directors until his death in 1956.

The John Oldenburg family was one of the 15 founding families of the Immanuel Lutheran Church in 1892. Son Frank was also very active in the church, and was in charge of remodeling the church after it was lowered from Ward Street to a new foundation on Highway 57 in 1931. Frank's wife Blonda was a frequent hostess for the Ladies' Aid group. In addition to participating in conventional church activities, Frank was on the 1942 committee in charge of collecting scrap metal and rubber with the dual purpose of "Helping Uncle Sam Lick the Axis" and paying off the church debt before its golden jubilee. Frank was a lifelong member of Immanuel.



Frank Oldenburg's civic contributions to his home town are impressive, but so is the legacy of his work as a building contractor. Many of the homes he built are mentioned in the Baileys Harbor news in the *Advocate*. Other structures are iconic symbols of Baileys Harbor. In 1917, Oldenburg (with Henry Seiler) built the Baileys Harbor School on Guy Street (now the Schoolhouse Inn). He was the contractor who built Maxwellton Braes in the early 1930s for Michael McArdle, and in 1929, he built the original Bjorklunden for Mr. & Mrs. C. M. Vail.

The Vails were so pleased with their new Swedish-style home with all modern features that they hosted an open house on the Fourth of July that was attended by

more than 400 people. After a day of eating and games, prizes were awarded, and the ceremonies were topped off by the presentation of a silver coffee service to Mr. & Mrs. Frank Oldenburg in appreciation for their interest and splendid cooperation in the project. This was followed by a "spectacular display" of fireworks.

Following the designs of Professor Schook, one of the founders of the post-World War I Frogtown art school, Frank built the Schook's log home and studio on Muckian Road (now Chapel Lane), using logs from abandoned barns on the Charles Honold farm. This was soon followed by fellow artist Frederick Poole's home and studio. Schook also designed, and Frank built, other log houses on this road including for the Carlson family, the Van Wings, and the Lindauers.

As noted above, Oldenburg's skills were not limited to constructing log homes. His own frame home still stands just north of the Yum Yum Tree on Highway 57. He installed a Kohler electric light system in early 1926 and had a well drilled in 1928. (Yes, these details were reported as local news.) Toward the end of 1934, Frank completed a new home for Mr. & Mrs. Martin DeBoth on the old foundations of the Lakeside Lodge/Sunrise Hotel on Frogtown Road. It was reportedly equipped with all modern conveniences and one of the finest homes on the peninsula. In 1935, Genevieve Burke, long-time secretary to Col. Robert McCormick, head of *The Chicago Tribune*, sometimes stayed with the Oldenburgs while checking progress on the construction of her house up the hill and looking over the harbor across the street from Anclam Park.



Frank Oldenburg died in 1956, having begun his civic life in Baileys Harbor over 100 years ago. I'm sure he would be gratified today if he could see the school building, the Ridges Sanctuary, the new Immanuel Lutheran Church, and his log and frame houses not just standing but improved and cherished by the community. He was truly a significant figure in Baileys Harbor history.

Leann Despotos