

BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2020

P.O. Box 336
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202

info@baileysharbor
historical society.org

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8061 Highway 57
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Baileys Harbor
Historical Society



Lost Baileys
Harbor –
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WINTER - SPRING ACTIVITIES

We have begun celebrating the first decade of the Baileys Harbor Historical Society. This includes celebrating Roy Cole, whom we lost this winter, and his contribution to creating and developing our organization. The tree-lighting party at the town hall once again included our traditional ornament making. Three public programs have been planned for the summer season. We are working on a “storyboard” installation outside the Toft House, with possible expansion to other historically significant sites in the town. We never seem to run out of Baileys Harbor stories.

L.D.

2020 EVENTS –

June 17, 2020 – 7PM: *A Baileys Harbor Fishing Family*
by Dennis Hickey

July 15, 2020 – 7PM: *Soda Bottling in Door County*
by Stephen Pleck Johnson

Aug. 19, 2020 – 7PM: *Early Door County Grocery Stores* by
Patty Williamson

September 16, 2020: Members’ Annual Meeting & Breakfast

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society currently has 121 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! Our most recent members are Lisa Marie Neustadter and Mary Schillinger, who are the latest to join the Illinois contingent of BHHS.

LOST BAILEYS HARBOR —

You may be surprised to learn that this is a photo of the intersection of County Road F and Highway 57 taken around 1920. The building on the left is the current Cornerstone Pub (1891). At the time of the photo, it was used as storage space for the Brann Bros. On the far right is the second Brann Bros. Store (1901), which burned in 1928. George Gerdman eventually built a hardware store on the Brann site that later was expanded and sold and became Nelson's Shopping Center, currently empty. The little white building in the center was the Cape Cod Inn, a tavern owned by Larson & Viste; it burned in 1938 soon after a costly marine-themed renovation and was only partly insured. In the distance, on the left, is a structure that was a cheese factory, then a laundry, and now houses the Peninsula Pulse Publishers. Times sure have changed. The street was unpaved, and there were essentially no sidewalks. The telegraph/telephone poles were definitely first generation. Did you recognize this location?

Leann Despotos

THANK YOU, ROY COLE



The Baileys Harbor Historical Society (BHHS) lost one of its greatest benefactors and supporters this winter, Roy Cole. Born on November 6, 1931, Roy passed away on December 19, 2019, at the age of 88. He was raised in Homewood, Illinois, by Ken and Olava Tretsven Cole. He met Jo Wilson in high school; she was seated in front of him in math class. They were married in 1955 and shared their lives for over 64 years. Their daughter, Danita Cole Medved, her husband Paul, Roy's brother Dale, and his family also survive.

Roy Cole was at the very first meeting of the Town Board's volunteer committee, which was to become the Historical Society, as they investigated whether the town should buy a historic building. The notion of actually starting a historical society developed at that time, and Roy was there to provide guidance and advice every step of the way.

He loved to share the experiences he had while restoring his historic home in Wauwautosa, Wisconsin, eventually successfully nominating it and its neighborhood for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places, but he never mentioned that during his college days, as drum major, he led the Michigan State University Marching Band in two Rose Bowl parades and half-time performances. He never mentioned that he held master's degrees in both mechanical and electrical engineering. It always seemed that his understanding of the electric anomalies in the Toft House just sort of arose out of his restoration projects in Wauwautosa.

Patient and soft-spoken, Roy was happy to oversee the process of getting our BHHS bylaws written, to see that we were affiliated with the Wisconsin Historical Society, to help prepare plans for the display improvements in the Toft House, and to provide examples of all the forms and letters that have become part of the day-to-day operations of our organization. At our events, he and his lovely wife Jo always provided refreshments, and each year he made sure to take advantage of the matching donation policy of the Eaton Corporation, the last company he worked for.

In the last few years, one thing that Roy really wanted to happen was a BHHS public program on the log homes of Chapel Lane, a short wooded road in Baileys Harbor that has beautiful log homes built during the first half of the twentieth century. I am so pleased to report that he accomplished that; it was our last presentation in 2019. Roy prepared an excellent and well-researched program, and his daughter Danita did the presentation last September. It was one of the most highly attended programs in our ten-year history. If you missed it, you can view it on our website on our Newsletters & Events page.

We will miss Roy Cole, a member of our Board of Directors for ten years. Beyond that and all of his accomplishments, he had a generous spirit; he was a kind man, and he was a good friend.

Leann Despotes

LOCAL HISTORY ON THE SMALL SCREEN



The Baileys Harbor Historical Society has been producing historical programs and newsletters for an entire decade. Yes, it is our tenth birthday this year! Thinking about that caused me to turn to our website to see if we really have been sending Baileys Harbor history far and wide in accordance with our mission statement.

In 2019, our website hosted 15,600 visitors, averaging a little more than 40 visits each day. We certainly haven't gone viral, but considering what a small town Baileys Harbor is, the website's popularity is testament to the fact that the Historical Society has contributed to the growth of a vibrant Baileys Harbor community far more expansive than its population would suggest.

Specific data were available about the extent to which visitors look at videos of our public events, which typically attract an in-person audience of about 50 people. In particular, YouTube shows the number of views for each video, so I checked them all, and I found some interesting information.

The 33 presentations on our Newsletters & Events page have garnered a total of 7,112 views. The videos seem to fall into general categories: broad historical topics (like lighthouses), historic Baileys Harbor families, and town institutions like the baseball team or the fire department. Four particular programs have been viewed over 400 times! These are [A Lighthouse Keeper's Life](#) (716), [Shipwrecks in Baileys Harbor](#) (668), [4th of July in Baileys Harbor](#) (440), and [Kangaroo Lake History](#) (1,303). We don't know if these views came through the Historical Society website, through Google, or if there were events like a news story that triggered them, but they seem to make sense. Lighthouses and shipwrecks have great appeal both to local residents and to visitors; the 4th of July is an iconic holiday in Baileys Harbor; and Kangaroo Lake is a well-populated neighborhood outside of town.

Other presentations that have had an extended appeal include [The History of Björklunden](#) (373), [The Albert Zahn Family](#) (318), [Commercial Fishing in Door County](#) (333), and [R&R in Baileys Harbor](#) (resorts) (302). Björklunden operates as a part of Lawrence University; Albert Zahn is a nationally recognized artist; and maritime topics are a significant part of Door County culture, as is the world of resorts and vacations.

In addition to the above, one can enjoy the stories of pioneering families, the history of the fire department, the baseball team, century farms, the Baileys Harbor School, and more. One benefit of having our programs recorded and posted online is that all of our members have access to them even if they can't be present on the program date. This is also true for the public at large. If there is something you missed, remember, it's just a click away on our website. If you prefer a slightly larger image, the Baileys Harbor Library collection includes DVD copies of all our programs. There is no question that we are sending Baileys Harbor history far and wide.

Leann Despotes

A TUDOR REVIVAL COTTAGE WITH A PALEOZOIC FAÇADE – UNIQUE!



If you have walked or driven through Baileys Harbor on Highway 57, you may have noticed a house on the west side of the street, a little south of Howard Avenue, with a stone façade. The steep, front-facing, asymmetrical gable and round-arched door and windows are typical features of the Tudor Revival style, which was very popular 1925-1940. Stone, also a Tudor Revival feature, is not exactly a rare commodity in Baileys Harbor, but these stones were carefully chosen and artfully arranged. The house was built in 1934 for William and Ida Peil Oldenburg, according to the Door County News. It was reported on October 4, 1934, that they were quite settled when the Woman's Club held a housewarming party to help them celebrate moving into their new home.

According to his obituary, William came to America alone in 1889 at the age of twenty-two, started a harness shop on this site, and later became a shoemaker. Ida, the daughter of pioneer farmers, Carl and Augusta Peil, was born in Germany in 1876, and married William at age seventeen. One of their claims to fame in Baileys Harbor was that they were the first couple to be married, on November 17, 1893, in Immanuel Lutheran Church. Both William and Ida were active in the church throughout their lives. William also served



the town as town chairman, town clerk, and a school board member. Ida was active in the Woman's Club as well as the Ladies' Aid at church. They had five children.

Now that we have been introduced, let us return to the house. The Tudor style arch-topped door and windows are bordered with stones tipped on their sides. Even the shade for the porch light is a thin, flat stone set into the wall and protruding over the light. As your eye continues up the façade, you will see that ventilation was accomplished using nine thin horizontal stones spaced out, one atop the other. The overall effect is of a charming and cozy English cottage.

This can all be enjoyed from a distance, but you have to get up close to see the amazing detail that makes this house entry truly unique. Every one of the hundreds of stones on the façade is a local fossil, and many are impressively large. It is generally accepted that the fossils were found and selected by Ida Oldenburg.

About 400 million years ago, during the Paleozoic Era, Wisconsin was covered by a shallow, equatorial coral sea, and coral fossils are abundant in this area. As the pangaeon land mass started to break apart, plate tectonics caused the Niagara Escarpment (our bluff) to move to its present location. The receding sea left amazing numbers of fossils in its wake. As children, my friends and I collected them by the bucketful from the stony banks of the lake, but they were not nearly as impressive as those on the Oldenburg house. They were whiter, smoother, rounded, more worn down,



and had sparkling sand in their crevasses. Even as pictured, one can see that these fossils don't have the look of stones that have been tossing around in the lake for millennia. Their sharp edges are quite obvious. Most of them are types of coral, such as honeycomb coral or chain coral, which are easy to see in our sampling of pictures. In the left photo, we see a tube-like formation that I think looks like a cephalopod fossil, perhaps an early type of squid or the precursor of bony fish.

There is really no one to confirm this, that I know of, but I think that Ida collected this massive amount of fossils on her parents' farm. Every spring brought a new crop of stones that had to be removed from the fields and was then used to construct the stone fences that we admire and find so charming today. They really are a monument to back-breaking labor! Doing stone-picking duty, Ida may have noticed

that many fossils like those she had learned about in school were being found and, when the opportunity presented itself, she decided to use them to create a beautifully unique exterior for her new house.

Leann Desportes

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES...?



For a number of years, the Baileys Harbor Community Association has hosted the kickoff for the Christmas season with a parade from the Toft House to the Village Hall. This year's parade included Santa perched on the front of a fire engine, waving to very sparse crowds along sidewalks on side streets. A social with sweets and refreshments followed. The Baileys Harbor Historical Society sponsored the crafts event, allowing children, along with adults, to make Christmas trees out of birch logs, swags with pines, painted rocks, and decorated Christmas cards.

This year, however, proved a definite challenge; an ice storm the week preceding the event left the town's designated Christmas tree frozen, limbs plastered against the trunk --- a sad state of affairs to say the least. What are the chances??

No fear; just when things seemed hopeless, resources appeared almost miraculously. The large tree behind the town hall in the park that is usually lit throughout the season was chosen as the new site for the tree lighting. It was



ready and waiting. The parade changed course, now coming straight down Highway 57, with Santa leading the parade on the front of the fire engine. This year he was accompanied by a float and teens dressed in holiday lights dancing along. The social and craft-making was welcomed by many families. Candles were lit, singing was heard, and the tree-lighting ceremony seemed especially significant this year. Challenges bring renewed excitement. The Baileys Harbor Historical Society was once again privileged to be a part of this historical event. (Photos by Philip Graupner)



Marianne Newton

HISTORIC STORYBOARDS



Our Board of Directors has taken up another project to showcase Baileys Harbor history. Kriss Schorer is investigating designing and installing storyboard plaques that can be placed in front of certain significant sites in Baileys Harbor, displaying a picture and brief history of the site or building. These will use our popular brochure, *Historic Baileys Harbor*, as a reference.

These storyboards will be 18 x 24 inches, supported by a single pedestal powder-coated frame. The frame will hold a panel with picture(s) and verbiage describing the history of the building/site. These panels will be constructed of material like the panels at the Door County Coastal Byways kiosk in front of the town hall. The BHHS will be responsible for the content of each

storyboard. We hope to be able to install the boards on the yard side of the sidewalk at each historic site, facing the sidewalk. Of course, this will happen only with the permission and cooperation of the property owner of each location.

According to the County Planning Department, these are considered “incidental” signs, as long as they are less than 3 square feet and located outside of the road right-of-way. Incidental signs do not need a permit. It is hoped that the town Dept. of Public Works will have the proper tools to install the storyboards. Cost of each frame and story board is about \$750 plus shipping. Incidentally, any offered cost sharing for the selected sites will be appreciated.

Kriss brought this proposal to the Town Board on January 22, 2020. The first storyboard will be installed at the Toft House, as an example for future properties. This will be funded by the Historical Society. Board member Barbara Anschutz would like to see one at the Town Hall, and she confirmed that she will buy that sign and work with BHHS on placement and verbiage. The Town Board approved two signs, one at the Toft House and one at the Town Hall. Assuming positive outcomes, we hope that the town will approve future installations at Anclam Park and the Marina.

Kriss Schorer