

BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2016

P.O. Box 336
Baileys Harbor, WI 54202

info@baileysharbor
historicalsociety.org


Board of Directors

- Leann Despotes
President
- Suzanne Bauldry
Vice-president
- Marianne Newton
Secretary
- Mary Moran
Treasurer
- Roy Cole
- Nancy Rafal
- Howard Williamson
Town Board Liaison
- Roberta Thelen
Newsletter Editor
- Leann Despotes

Visit us at
The Toft House.
8061 Highway 57
*

Enjoy our
Historic Display Cases.
Baileys Harbor
Town Hall
2392 Cty Road F
*

On the Web
www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org
*

Find us on 
Baileys Harbor
Historical Society



Lost Baileys Harbor:
Can you tell where
this early Baileys
Harbor school was?
See page 2.

FALL AND WINTER ACTIVITIES

The fall and winter season kicked off with Halloween Trick or Treating at the Toft House, honors being done by Mary Moran. December brought the annual Community Tree Lighting Party at the Town Hall. The Historical Society again participated, providing opportunities to make old-fashioned ornaments.

The History page on our website is now sporting a link to our *Historic Baileys Harbor* tour booklet. Please have a look at the historic images and descriptions included in the first edition. We've also featured the Community Mural in the booklet.

Thanks to a couple of old high school friends who are also BHHS members, our organization has received an extensive and interesting donation of information on the very early days of Baileys Harbor and photographs spanning decades of our town history. (See page 8.)

We would also like to thank everyone who gave so generously to our end of the year fund drive.

Tentative 2016 Events Schedule

(Held at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall)

June 15, 2016 -7PM: A Lighthouse Keeper's Life

July 20, 2016 -7PM: Otto & Hedwig Peil: A Pioneer Story

Aug. 17, 2016 -7PM: St. Mary of the Lake Catholic Church

Sept. 14, 2016 -7PM: Rural Schools in Northern Door
County

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society currently has 107 memberships, representing well over 107 individuals, including 34 Lifetime Memberships. Three new memberships have been established since our Fall 2015 Newsletter. 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 our website <www.baileysharborhistoricalsociety.org>; just print it, fill it out, and mail it in.

WELCOME!

The BHHS would once again like to extend a welcoming smile and a hearty handshake to the new members who have elected to join our organization this winter. We hope you will enjoy and join in our exploration of Baileys Harbor history. Glad to have you aboard, Gordon & Naomi Rowley, Helen Cordon, and Mark Mattke!

LOST BAILEYS HARBOR —

This Baileys Harbor school was lost in December 18, 1916. It was situated just south of the present Door Deli. The interior had been recently rebuilt and included 2 hot air furnaces. At 9:30AM smoke was noticed coming through the floor. Principal Sam Londo and Primary teacher Anabel Jameson evacuated the children and started the alarm by ringing the bell. It was followed by blowing the mill whistle and the children ran to spread the alarm through town. Even the Coast Guard crew turned out to help. Soon a bucket brigade made progress with the basement fire, but the roof was then seen to be alight, and within two hours all was lost except a stone wall and chimney.

The citizens, including the children, saved all they could from the smoke-filled building. A temporary school was established in the old town hall until a new school could be built at Howard Avenue and Guy Street, now the location of Orphan Annie's.

Leann Despotos

BHHS/BHCA: A POSITIVE PARTNERSHIP



The town of Baileys Harbor owns the Toft House and has made it possible for the Baileys Harbor Historical Society and the Baileys Harbor Community Association to share the building. The Visitor Center and BHCA Office occupies the south side of the house, and the Historical Society uses the north side rooms as display areas. The two organizations share the cost of phone and WiFi connections, which gives us a phone number, and storage areas are shared. Brynn Swanson-Stimers is the BHCA administrator and has been generous in every way as we develop a relationship as housemates.

One of the benefits that accrues to BHHS is that the excellent docents on duty in the Visitor Center also act as representatives for us, answering, as well as forwarding, questions that are brought concerning the history of Baileys Harbor. (See: We Get Letters- page 4) If needed, some BHHS members have filled in when there are no available docents. This is also a location for us to sell DVDs from past programs and mugs to support the Community Mural. We provide interesting displays and exhibits for visitors to enjoy as they learn about the history of Baileys Harbor. We are looking forward to another season of mutual support working with Brynn and the Community Association.

BHHS JOINS BHCA FOR THE HOLIDAYS AGAIN.



This winter's community tree-lighting party was even bigger and better than in past years. The Baileys Harbor Community Association began the celebration at the Toft House/Visitor Center with cookies, coffee, and other beverages donated by Bearded Heart Coffee. Carol Wuollett Pinkalla's miniature Christmas scenes were on display for everyone's enjoyment. Brynn Swanson-Stimers also organized a snowman scavenger hunt, and had the whole site beautifully decorated for the season.

After the festivities at the Toft House, everyone paraded to the Town Hall to light the community tree, share their Christmas wishes with Santa, and create old-fashioned tree ornaments with the Baileys Harbor Historical Society. BHHS provides materials and workers to assist in making fun Christmas tree ornaments. It's always a joy to see the children and their parents get involved in creating their own projects. It's hard to tell who has more fun, those who help or those who take home their own work of art. This is what Christmas is all about. Sharing time, talent, and a lot of smiles.



PARK'S NAME REFLECTS HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE



The town of Baileys Harbor has been fielding a baseball team for almost 150 years, back when Baileys Harbor still had an apostrophe, and baseball was written as two words. Much of that very early history is somewhat murky, but we know from newspaper stories that the first team was named the Foresters, and we know from word of mouth, as well as from photographs, that the ball field was situated right in the middle of town at 8113 State Highway 57, at least from ca. 1910-1948. This location was known as Brann's Field, first owned by Jacob Brann, and later by his sons, August and Will, who did business as Brann Bros. in Baileys Harbor. Another brother, Andrew, owned the town hardware store. The Branns were unabashed baseball enthusiasts. August's 5 sons were noted players, and their cousin Andrew, Jr. (Andy) was highly acclaimed before leaving to fight in World War I.

Town Board member, Bob Schultz, suggested naming this park area just east of School Alley to reflect its historic significance, and to include an explanatory plaque. On August 10, 2015, Don Sitte made the motion, and the Baileys Harbor Town Board decided to officially name the town property that was part of the historic old baseball field Brann Field.

Proudly pictured are Bill and Janice Brann, who maintain a vacation home in Baileys Harbor. Bill is a great-grandson of August Brann, and both he and Janice are enthusiastic supporters of our current baseball team, the Baileys Harbor A's.



WE GET LETTERS....

The study of local history is full of surprises, not the least of which are some of the inquiries that are directed to the Historical Society. We have always received occasional questions about Baileys Harbor families and institutions via email, but since we have taken up residence in the Toft House with the Visitor Center, the volume has increased, and the variety is interesting. Here is a sampling of some engaging inquiries from 2015.

Judy wrote to ask about photographs of Nels and Inger Anderson, who came to Baileys Harbor from Denmark in 1881. She had evidence that these pictures of her ancestors did at one time exist and she thought that they might have been donated to us. They hadn't been, but from information she had, we were able to direct her to the Fillis and Hammersmith families, and she reported meeting distant relatives and finally seeing the pictures she was seeking.

Tom phoned to ask if anyone could corroborate his childhood memory of two brothers who lived between Baileys Harbor and Jacksonport. He remembered a green trailer or small house, and rumors that the occupants had a lot of money buried somewhere, and that they kind of wandered around. Eventually, we found and reported back to him that the mysterious brothers were probably Frank and Cole Cardy. Using historic newspapers helped to track them down.

Their story was not a happy one, and the rumor of hidden money was just that, a rumor. Tom was happy to have closure on his nagging childhood memory.



In the 1950s, Baileys Harbor produced and shipped some of the best strawberries ever. This was according to Jim, who called to ask whether there were any examples of the strawberry variety called Sultan that had been grown in North Bay by Philip Erickson. This ever-bearing variety could produce 3 crops in 2 years. Jim is a retired strawberry grower but still interested. We found the people who live in the Erickson house, and they reported no strawberries. Finally, consulting with a neighboring family of strawberry growers, we were able to report that there was nothing remaining of the variety; they had all reverted quickly to a wild state.

Our final example is from Judi, who, with her mother, was looking for her grandfather's 1930s Pentecostal Tabernacle church in Baileys Harbor on Highway 57. We were able to find several references to her grandfather and the church in the historic newspapers, and even spoke to an individual who was once featured in a church program. None of this took us to the church, however. Then she emailed a picture, and the building was instantly recognized. It was indeed on the west side of Highway 57, but just south of German Road on the way to Sister Bay. Its cedar-shingled façade still shows the outline of a round window above the front porch.

We look forward to unraveling more knotty questions about Baileys Harbor history. After all, who doesn't love a mystery?

AN "OLD-FASHIONED" HISTORY

As you may know, the official Wisconsin state animal is the white-tailed deer, the official flower is the wood violet, and the official bird is the robin. If Wisconsin has a traditional, though *unofficial*, signature cocktail, it is probably the Brandy Old Fashioned, our take on the classic Old Fashioned cocktail. All Old Fashioneds must include bitters and be garnished with an orange slice and a maraschino cherry. The original and "classic" Old Fashioned was made with bourbon or rye whiskey, not brandy, and in most places is still made that way. Why do so many Wisconsinites complain that so many places just don't know how to make an Old Fashioned? I guess the real question is, "Why brandy?"

Actually, there are a few stories. There was a time when it was said that Wisconsinites consumed more brandy than all the other states combined. In 2012, Margie Healy, director of public relations for California-based Korbel, said, "We export 385,000 cases of brandy a year, and 139,000 go directly to Wisconsin. That's one-third of our total production." Korbel introduced their *truly American* brandy at the Columbian Exposition in 1893, and it was such a hit that it migrated to Wisconsin due to the huge attendance at the World's Fair and a preference of Wisconsin's German and Scandinavian immigrants for a sweeter liquor. Another tale suggests that there was a shortage of whiskey due to World War II rationing, and since brandy was made from fruit instead of grain, it was more available. Some opine that Korbel sent cases of brandy to soldiers overseas during either the Korean War or World War II, and the taste for brandy stayed with



them when they returned home. The general consensus seems to be that no one can definitely state why residents of the “brandy belt” of Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Upper Peninsula of Michigan have developed such a love for brandy.

If you would like to take a ride on the Wisconsin brandy bandwagon, here is the absolutely simplest way to prepare a good-tasting Brandy Old Fashioned Sweet. Place lots of ice in an Old Fashioned glass, add 2 oz. of brandy, a couple of splashes of bitters, finish with 7-Up, and garnish with an orange slice and a maraschino cherry. Enjoy while pondering the Packers, winter temps, depth of snow, and the last time you saw the Northern Lights.

TOWN HALL DISPLAY CASES



These past years the glass cases at the Baileys Harbor Town Hall have been a place that people have looked forward to visiting to see what was on display. We want to say a special thanks to Kristen Peil for all the beautiful and creative displays she has done for the Historical Society in the past. She has passed the torch to others to take on this task. We plan to continue this tradition.

This past Christmas we did a “Christmas in the 50’s.” Leann Despotes, Carol Schmidt, and Suzanne Bauldry all shared some of their family treasures with us. It was a combination of many things that reminded us of a special time in our lives. It made us smile and say “Do you remember when?” And we did.

Starting in January the display was changed and “Spring Bling” went in. This showcases a part of Suzanne Bauldry’s stunning collection of costume jewelry. Combining silk flowers with the jewelry makes us think of the beauty of the coming season as we all look forward to spring. Reflection from the glass doors makes it hard to get a good picture of the whole display, but we have been able to picture some details here. We hope they will inspire you to stop in.

Our next display will be a collection from Jo Cole of vintage mechanical toys. We are really looking forward to that and are always looking for others who would like to share their collections with everyone. After the lights in the cases are repaired, the displays will be seen to even better advantage. Our displays are up for about 6 weeks. Please let us know if you would like to participate.

Suzanne Bauldry

COSTUME JEWELRY IS SPRING BLING

Many of you may have noticed that BHHS has taken advantage of Suzanne Bauldry’s generosity several times in lending portions of her costume jewelry collection to be displayed. This spring she has concocted another imaginative exhibit right outside the McArdle Library. (See previous article.) Interestingly, the advent of costume jewelry made a significant difference in the lifestyles of the not so rich and not so famous.

The 20th century brought about a sea change in how jewelry was perceived and used. Before then, women adorned themselves with jewelry made of precious stones and metals, usually as a means of flaunting the wealth of their husbands. But early in the 20th century, thanks to new materials and industrialization, fashion designers started to experiment with jewelry as an expression of style and creativity. Because these pieces were made of inexpensive materials and not meant to be keepsakes or heirlooms, they could be more trendy and outrageous, tossed out or replaced when a particular look went out of fashion. This allowed the average woman to sport as much sparkle and glamor as the wealthiest society women.

As one might expect, those very items, from gold-plated azaleas to rhinestone-encrusted zebras, have become popular collectibles. They are relatively small, often beautiful, creatively designed, and not outrageously expensive. Designers included Chanel, Swarovsky, Eisenberg, Trifari, Hobe, and Dior. Even Marilyn Monroe and Joan Crawford made public appearances in rhinestones, and Mamie Eisenhower wore costume jewelry to the 1953 inaugural ball. For more information, please visit: www.collectorsweekly.com/costumejewelry.



MECHANICAL TOY DISPLAY

Jo Cole has filled our library display cases with her charming collection of mechanical toys acquired as an aid in teaching deaf children. In her exhibit description she explains that teaching the names of objects and people was fairly easy using pictures or things in the classroom. It was much more difficult to teach verbs such as *eating*, *running*, or *playing*.

Jo's head teacher discovered that using mechanical toys for this purpose was exciting and motivating for the students as they interacted with the toys as well as the teacher. This inspired Jo to begin her collection, which she is pleased to share with us.

The popularity of automated toys, now a sought-after collectible, grew out of advances in clock making in the 1600s. Generally, though, wind-up toys were powered by keys and cranks that activated small springs, which turned tinplate gears when released. Beginning in the 19th century, increasingly affordable versions of these wind-up toys were produced but often designed as adult novelties rather than children's playthings. By the late 1800s, simpler wind-up models made from painted tin were created just for children.

Racing horses, carousels, bicycling figures, and even wobbling drunks suddenly came to life on playroom floors. Circus-themed toys were common, as were vehicles and animals. During the 1940s and 1950s, wind-up designs reflected new childhood favorites like Disney characters and cowboy figurines. The rise of plastics and other synthetic materials following World War II resulted in a major decline of wind-up toy production.

For more information, see <collectorsweekly.com>

Leann Despotes

BEVERLY ANCLAM'S BOOK DONATED



The Baileys Harbor Historical Society is happy to announce that we have just been given the gift of the book Baileys Harbor's Early Days From Its Beginnings Through 1880 by Beverly Anclam. The daughter of Alfred and Clara Anclam, she was born and raised in Baileys Harbor. Love of her hometown inspired her to dig into its beginnings and compile this history of its earliest days.

The 426-page book is a comprehensive collection of articles from the earliest records and newspapers about the formation of the town of Baileys Harbor, beginning in 1839. Beverly spent an unbelievable amount of time gathering and researching all this information. One can only wonder just how many hours she spent doing this.

Although Beverly wasn't able to complete assembling the book before she died in 1992, her daughter Ann Williams found the material and set about the Herculean task of finishing her mother's work. It would have been so easy to just put it aside, or worse yet, throw it away, but she chose to honor her mom's work, gathered it all together, transcribed it, and had it printed. Ann has graciously shared this with us and she, along with the rest of her family, has offered an extensive collection of vintage Anclam family photographs of Baileys Harbor. We are planning to prepare an in-depth article on Beverly and the family's donation for a future newsletter.

We all feel like we have won the lottery in receiving this awesome gift. We hope to make the book available for examination this summer at the Toft House.

Suzanne Bauldry

OUR HISTORY IN OBJECTS

"Wisconsin 101: Our History in Objects" was a presentation given on Saturday, February 13th by the University of Wisconsin, Department of History and the Wisconsin State Historical Society. An audience of Baileys Harbor Historical Society members and the general public was asked to think how objects from the past shape our occupations, habits, and traditions. Objects can document past events and serve as physical reminders of the thoughts, values, and experiences of people long gone.

By visiting the website www.wi.101.org you can explore a growing catalog of objects from around the state, each object telling a set of interconnecting stories about Wisconsin's history, people, and places.

If you would like to nominate an object, the above website contains full information about making a submittal. You can also view some of the objects that have been catalogued in various categories.

Roy Cole

A PORTRAIT MYSTERY



As long-time Baileys Harbor resident Julie Collins was clearing out the nooks and crannies of her house in preparation for sale, she came across some items that she thought would be worthy of donating to the Historical Society. These included a pair of wire-framed glasses, an album of vintage postcards, and a pair of large, unframed portrait photographs (pictured here) that were found tucked up in a corner of the attic. Julie had no use for any of these items, all of which were in the house when it was purchased from the estate of Franz Esser, Jr., in 1965. Her only regret was that she couldn't identify the couple in the matching portraits.

Knowing the frustration of owning old, unidentified photos, I was moved to do a bit of thinking and research. I knew that Franz Esser, Jr., once a plumber in town, was the child of a Chicago violinist, Franz Esser, Sr., and a daughter of Thomas Toft. Using that information, I went to the Door County historic newspapers and other sources.

I learned that Franz Esser and his friend, cellist Carl Brueckner, visited Baileys Harbor as tourists in 1895 & 1896 and that Franz married Olive Toft (sister of Emma) on June 2, 1897. Olive was 22 years old, and Franz was 27. The Esser family, including sons Walter and Franz, Jr., were frequent visitors to Baileys Harbor, often staying with Toft relatives. Eventually they moved here and lived in a farmhouse on Bluff Road. Franz, Jr., continued to live there, and after his death, the Collins's bought it and its contents.



It was common in the latter part of the 19th century for couples to have studio portraits like these done to hang in their homes, and judging from the hairstyles and clothes they seem to come from that era. Franz Esser would have been 30 years old in 1900, and orchestra pictures show him as a young-looking man. This can't be him. Olive Esser would have been 25 years old. In my opinion, this is a portrait of a more mature woman. So who is this couple, and why would the Essers have the pictures?

Perhaps they are parents of either Franz or Olive. I found no evidence that Franz's family ever came to the United States, so I zeroed in on the Toft family, and consulted Roy Lukes' book, Toft Point: a Legacy of People and Places. There are no formal portraits in the book, but in comparing the book's photos with ours, facial resemblances lead me to think that these are portraits of Thomas and Julia Anne Toft, parents of Emma Toft and her 6 siblings. Thomas was born in 1844, and Julia Anne in 1858, which seems to jibe with the maturity of the portrait subjects.

Further research is necessary to make a definite identification, and I hope to reach out to the Toft family to see if they have similar or contemporary images of Mr. and Mrs. Toft.

Leann Despotes

OLGA OLSEN, BAILEYS HARBOR PHOTOGRAPHER WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH HONOREE



At a time when women were not encouraged to embark on business ventures, and in fact, were often discouraged from work other than in the home or on the farm, Baileys Harbor was home to enterprising photographer Olga Olsen. Miss Olsen, born May 24, 1877, emigrated from Sarpsborg, Norway, in 1910. She came to live with her sister and brother-in-law, Richard Noelck, in Baileys Harbor, and opened the Olsen Photo Studio in Baileys Harbor in October 1913 located at 8112 Highway 57. According to a Baileys Harbor news column in the *Advocate*, "She will be prepared to attend to anything in this line, her equipment being strictly up-to-date. A studio was one of the greatly needed businesses of this town."

Women photographers were becoming quite acceptable in Northern Europe, and though we don't have hard evidence, she probably arrived here at age 33 with the requisite skills to open her business. Her brother-in-law was a successful businessman, and possibly helped her become established. She advertised frequently in the local papers, accepting telephone appointments on both the Door County and Wisconsin lines, offered seasonal specials, and had a large "Olsen Photography Studio" sign over the awnings shading the front of the building.

Olga became an active part of the community. She was a member of the Baileys Harbor Commercial Club, the Ladies Progressive Club, and the Ladies Improvement Club. Sometimes she hosted meetings and other times provided refreshments. Her name appeared frequently in Baileys Harbor newspaper columns.

In May 1918, Olga purchased a photo gallery in Kewaunee and worked there for about a year, returning and reopening her Baileys Harbor studio in May of 1919. According to newspaper accounts she was missed but all wished her well and were pleased at the re-opening. Her sojourn in Kewaunee was not without results; while there, she met her future husband, Peter Peterson, owner of a large farm in Rio Creek.

They were married September 22, 1920, the bride "attired in a gown of white crepe de chine and wore a picture hat of white Georgette crepe carrying a bouquet of bridal roses." Her father-in-law hosted a reception for over 100 invited guests, who showered the couple with presents and good wishes.

Mr. and Mrs. Peterson periodically visited friends in Baileys Harbor, but we no longer see active citizen and entrepreneur, Olga Olsen. She is not mentioned other than as Mrs. Peter Peterson, even in her obituary in the August 11, 1949, *Advocate*. It does eventually state that she was the former Olga Olsen, who operated a photo studio in Baileys Harbor.

Leann Despotes

