

BAILEYS HARBOR HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Spring 2019

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Lost
Baileys Harbor-
Can you tell which
building this is?
See page 3

WINTER - SPRING ACTIVITY

As usual, winter and spring are seasons for BHHS to plan and develop activities for the upcoming seasons of presentations and displays. I know that snow and cold put a stop to a lot of things that we normally do, even having meetings! We've had some interesting offers of donations, and we'll share that news when it is finalized.

Looking out at shoulder-high snowbanks, and experiencing record-breaking cold temperatures makes me wonder what it was like when lake shipping was closed, there was no clear highway out of town, and you started running out of coffee, or sugar, or whatever! How much of everything could the stores stockpile?

L.D.

2019 EVENTS – TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- June 19, 2019 -7:00 pm – Baileys Harbor Women's Club
- July 17, 2019 - 7:00 pm - John Fons Family
- August 21, 2019 - 7:00 pm - Log Houses of Chapel Lane
- September 2019 - BHHS Members Breakfast/Brunch (TBA)

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The Baileys Harbor Historical Society currently has 117 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. Our display cabinets at the Toft House are now complete, and the gardens are looking great, thanks to our generous members. 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! New 2018 memberships all occurred before October, so they were recognized in the Fall Newsletter, and none were remaining to celebrate this spring. That's sad! I'm sure there are plenty of Baileys Harbor friends who would be proud to belong to the BHHS. Let's encourage them!!



DONATION APPRECIATION!

BHHS would like to take this opportunity to thank all members who responded to our annual request for donations. We believe that supporting local history has educational value in understanding and appreciating our culture, enjoying the stories of the past, and inspiring our approach to the future. Our 2018 year-end fund-raising appeal was very successful. Contributions, in amounts large and small, totaled almost \$2,000.00 this year. These contributions will be put to use as we continue to improve our display areas, develop the Toft House gardens, and upgrade storage for artifacts. Also, many thanks to board members Phil Graupner and Nancy Rafal for handling the mailing. I was happy to send acknowledgements.

Leann Despotes

LOST BAILEYS HARBOR —

If you guessed the south end of the Nathan Nichols building, you would be correct. I remember getting mail there in the early 1950s. The Baileys Harbor Post Office has existed at many sites in town over the years. When the first Baileys Harbor post office opened in 1860, the town's name was spelled Bailey's Harbor until the apostrophe was officially removed by the United States Post Office Department. In the early days, the postmaster was often owner of a store and/or pier. Some of these include Moses Kilgore, Samuel B. Ward, Frederick Wohltman, Hugh Spring, Roger Eatough, Will and August Brann, and John Anclam. Some of the locations were Anclam's store (present-day Lutheran church site), William Toft house, the site of the Door County Brewery, the pictured site, and, of course the present site on Bluff Road. Having the post office in your business establishment must have increased commerce, and it also provided an annual salary for the postmaster. If the above has given you a taste for postal history, you can read about it in [Going for the Mail: A History of Door County Post Offices](#) by James B. Hale, and can be found in the Baileys Harbor Library.

Leann Despotes

PART I: A DISASTROUS "AXE-IDENT"

A June 13, 1881, article from the [Oshkosh Daily Northwestern](#) was brought to my attention a month or two ago. News had been telegraphed to them of a terrible accident in Baileys Harbor. A man, while carrying a railroad tie on his shoulder and a double-bitted axe in his hand, fell on the axe, creating a wound so severe that his intestines were protruding, and he had to hold them in as he looked for help, which involved walking miles until he reached John Wagener's house. They reported that a doctor was called, sewed the man up, but feared that he had no chance.

I thought this sounded like an interesting tidbit for the newsletter, so here we are. I definitely wanted to know who this man was. It seemed like he was probably working in lumbering, what with the railroad tie and axe. I don't think I could carry a large double-bitted axe for five hundred yards, and I found that railroad ties could weigh 150 lbs., depending on the type of wood. This must have been a pretty robust fellow! If you have any interest in the technology and vocabulary of antique axes and saws, you may want to check < <http://midmichigannatureandscience.blogspot.com/2013/08/logging-tools-part-1-axe-and-saw.html>>. Seems like everything is more complicated than you think!

According to the [Door County Advocate](#), the event happened in the woods in Baileys Harbor. The injured man had to wait a full day to be seen by Dr. Mullen of Sturgeon Bay, who sewed and dressed the wound. The [Advocate](#) reported that the doctor had little hope of the patient's recovery. All this was reported on June 9, 1881, and [The Advocate](#) seems to have been the Oshkosh paper's source.

But, there's more. One week later, we learn that the injured man's name is Charles Beyer, and that he is recovering remarkably well from his terrible accident, so well that the doctor will no longer be calling. The [Advocate](#) goes on to make sure that John Wagener receives credit for Beyer's condition. Before the doctor could be summoned, Wagener put the intestines back into the man's abdomen, from which they had protruded in great masses. He did such an excellent job that Dr. Mullen complimented him profusely on his competence.

You would think that a happy ending would be ensured, but at the end of the same article we find that Mr. Beyer almost died (again) when an attendant mistakenly gave him a dose of carbolic acid that had been placed on the table with other medicines. The large size of the dose caused violent vomiting, which rid his system of the poison and probably saved his life. Dr. Mullen made another trip to Baileys Harbor. On June 23, he deemed the patient to be critical, but hopes for his recovery were entertained.

Finally, on June 30, the Advocate reported that Mr. Beyer was getting along nicely, and had been moved to the house of Joseph Anderson, where he received the best care. To say the least, June 1881 was an eventful month for Charles Beyer. But—what came of all this community care of Charles Beyer?

Leann Desportes

PART 2: THE REST OF THE STORY



After experiencing the satisfaction of seeing Charles Beyer recover from two horrendous accidents in the space of a single month, I couldn't help but wonder what became of him. Who was John Wagener that he was able to rise to the occasion of saving a stranger's life in such an amazing way? Why would anyone have carbolic acid on the table in a sick room? Was it common for Dr. Muller come from Sturgeon Bay to treat people in the northern Door County towns? Why was it decided to move Beyer to Joseph Anderson's house? With the help of Professor Google and some excellent newspaper databases, answers emerged.

John Wagener, shoe and boot maker, moved his family to Baileys Harbor in 1876. The following year he began building a large barn, and in 1880, Wagener added harness making to his shop. John was active in a mutual aid society for German immigrants called the Sons of Hermann Lodge. He traveled to Sturgeon Bay

frequently with prominent Baileys Harbor businessmen. Surprisingly, in September 1888, the Advocate reports that the Wagener family had arrived safely in Seattle, Washington Territory, that John was taking up carpentry, and that all the Baileys Harbor people there were doing well. He seems to have been an ordinary, but capable and resourceful businessman.

Dr. J. F. Mullen was dedicated and well thought of throughout the county. He arrived at any and all emergencies when needed; Baileys Harbor for an ax injury, Sister Bay for scarlet fever. Dr. Mullen enlisted in the Union Army at the age of sixteen. He and his wife, Mary, had nine children; five lived to adulthood. He came to Sturgeon Bay in 1876, was mayor twice, and belonged to the Catholic Order of Foresters. He died in 1897 of Bright's disease at the young age of 48.

It seems that Charles Beyer had become the responsibility of the town, and on a few occasions individuals were sent



to Joseph Anderson's house on Ward Street for recovery. Joseph himself suffered with and recovered from typhoid fever in 1878. We know that Charles Beyer was sent there in 1881. The Andersons were divorced in 1883, with Jane receiving the house and custody of the children. Jane cared for the spurned wife of Walt Kniskin until her baby was delivered. An injured sailor was rescued from the lake and then taken to stay with Jane Anderson. It appears that Jane was the town's trusted go-to person to care for individuals without resources, and Beyer's care had been assumed by the town.

Now, why was that lethal-sounding carbolic acid sitting on the bedside table? Actually, it was carbolic acid solution that Joseph Lister, the founder of antiseptic medicine, sprayed around operating theaters and used to soak wound dressings in the 1860s. People came to depend on carbolic soap, ointment, powder, and solutions as disinfectants. It was common to pick up carbolic crystals at the pharmacy and mix them with lard or petrolatum to make an ointment. The carbolic on the bedside table was probably a solution for Beyer's wound dressings, and may account for his amazing recovery with no infection, but it is never to be ingested.

Finally, the future of Charles Beyer. He became a U.S. citizen in 1884. He married. The only other references I could find for him included brawling in 1883 and perpetrating an incident in June 1889, at age 32, that had dire consequences. He and his brother Fred were in their brother-in-law's saloon in Ellison Bay at closing time. As others were closing up, Charles and Fred were talking, and Charles wound up stabbing Fred in the groin with a ten-inch-long fisherman's knife. The sheriff and a doctor were called. Fred surprised the doctor by surviving, but the sheriff was stymied by Beyer because folks in Ellison Bay were so afraid of him that they wouldn't tell where he was. Finally, the law left and returned the next day by water and lay in wait at the saloon. The strategy worked, and Charles Beyer was arrested, eventually being sentenced to one year at Waupun State Prison. Upon his imminent release, he wrote letters to his brother-in-law threatening to kill him because of his testimony at the trial, then denied writing them. A judge demanded \$1,000 bond to ensure Beyer's good behavior and, lacking that, he was sentenced to nine months in the Menominee County Jail. I could find no further mention of him, and I surmise that he may have left the state.

Leann Despotes

ANOTHER HOLIDAY SUCCESS



Our annual Christmas party and Tree Lighting event was held in the Baileys Harbor Town Hall, sponsored by the Baileys Harbor Community Association. Many families attended for two hours of holiday fun and the making of old-fashion Christmas crafts. We had tables set up for the card decorating, one for pine cones, and one for painting and decorating stones. One of the most popular tables was making miniature pine trees on birch wood bases. The adults appeared to be having as much fun as the children making the decorations. No one went home empty-handed. The smiles were a sure sign that fun was had by all.



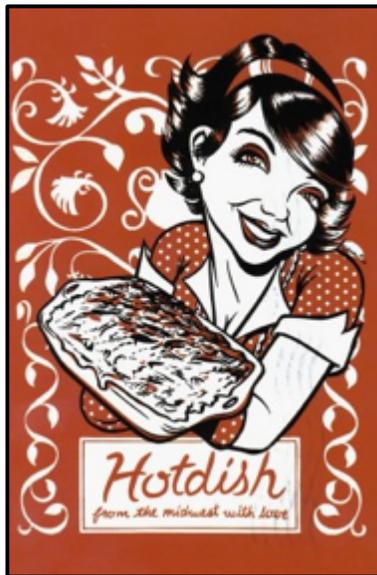
Of course, Santa was the star of the party, posing for pictures and listening to the children. When it was time to light up the outside tree and sing, everyone made their way out into the night. Meanwhile, Santa's helpers were cleaning up all the glitter, glue, and pine needles. We were trying to decide who had more on them, or was it the floor!

Thank you to all who participated in our holiday festivities.

Carol Schmidt



WISCONSIN HOT DISH



Hot dish or hotdish is considered to be a traditional part of upper Midwestern cuisine, including Minnesota, Wisconsin, and the Dakotas. I've learned that this is a term with many meanings and, like chicken soup, each family probably has its own "authentic" recipe. The question arises, "Is hot dish a recipe, or just another word for casserole?" It appears that both senses have their place. When I tell my family we are having hot dish (not a hot dish), they expect to see a hot mixture of ground beef, chopped onion, noodles, and tomato soup with a sprinkling of cheese on top. Sense number two includes tuna noodle hot dish, chicken noodle hot dish, etc., and I can testify that those and others proliferated in the Gibraltar High School cafeteria in the early 1960s.

Traditionally, hot dish was a main course, cooked and served in a baking dish, and consisted of ground beef, pasta, and cream of mushroom soup as a sauce and a binder. Over the years, hot dish became a staple at church potlucks and school picnics. This dish was also a quick and easy way to feed a family; you could toss in a can of vegetables, and voilà, a complete meal. Another feature of these protein-stretching recipes was that there was no need for fresh vegetables, which are so hard to come by in the cold months.

Condensed soup was invented in 1897 by the Campbell food company. In 1916, the Campbell Company published a 64-page booklet, Helps for the Hostess, that originated the idea of cooking other dishes with condensed soup. Cream of mushroom condensed soup appeared in 1934. This would suggest that early hot dish recipes originated at least 80 to 90 years



ago. Of course, the original recipes have spawned many iterations over the years, especially since the introduction of Tater Tots.

If you haven't tried it, below is a recipe for basic Wisconsin Hot Dish. Tweaking is in your hands.

Leann Desportes

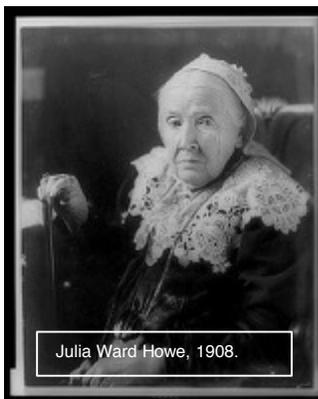
Wisconsin Hot Dish

1 lb. ground beef
1 can condensed tomato soup
1 med. onion, chopped
2 c. noodles or macaroni
½ lb. Velveeta cheese, or cheese of choice
salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 350°

Brown ground beef, add onions. Cook about 5 minutes. Cook pasta according to directions. Drain pasta. Mix with hamburger mixture, discarding as much of the fat as possible. Mix in tomato soup. Add salt and pepper to taste. Place in lightly greased baking dish, and top with thinly sliced or shredded cheese. Bake for 20-30 min.

A WOMAN'S PLACE...



The General Federation of Women's Clubs (GFWC) was founded in 1890 during Wisconsin's Progressive Movement. The general mission of the federation was to promote civic improvements through volunteer service. When the first Women's Clubs were started 150 years ago, women were expected to run their households and raise their children, but rarely had the opportunity to influence and change their communities. They certainly couldn't participate in the electoral process. An organization provided members with regular meetings in order to network, learn about social issues, identify civic problems, and devise solutions through volunteer effort. One of the first Women's Clubs was in Boston, and organized by noneother than anti-slavery advocate, Julia Ward Howe.

In 1913, some enterprising Baileys Harbor ladies got together and formed the Ladies Improvement Club. Their first project was to improve the town cemetery and, step by step, this was faithfully recorded in the newspapers of the day. After completing their cemetery work, they went on to tackle many civic projects over the decades. Eventually they became the Baileys Harbor Women's Club. And as many of you know, they continue to this day.

Kriss Schorer will regale us with the history of the Baileys Harbor Women's Club on June 19th at 7PM at the Town Hall. She will have tales to tell and artifacts to share, so be sure to join us and learn about all the BHWC has done for us over the years.

LOG CABINS OR LOG HOMES?

Buildings constructed with logs have an ancient history. In Baileys Harbor we can see the occasional early settler cabin by the side of the road and marvel that even one person, much less a family, could consider that humble structure a home. Yet we see evidence that those shelters did what had to be done. We know descendants of those early families, we sometimes see the comfortable farmhouse that was eventually built nearby on the property. Some farmhouses contain the now undetectable little cabin as part of their current structure. Log construction is a big part of our history, and will be represented this summer in two of our public programs.

Locating the humble cabin of the Fons family was featured in the Fall 2017 issue of this newsletter. You may refresh your memory of the story at our website. On July 17th, John Fons has agreed to share the Fons family history with us at the Town Hall. Before meeting John, I had only heard that surname once. When working on the Schram Hall project, I learned that Pauline Fons was the wife of Martin Schram. From speaking with John, I know we will find out where the Fons family went and why.



On August 21st, our event will center around another type of log construction as we learn about “The Log Houses of Chapel Lane” from Roy Cole. These structures were built as summer homes, mostly in the 1920s, to allow their owners to spend some time rustivating in cool Baileys Harbor. Many have been altered and enlarged over the years, and several are now year-round homes. These structures are quite a step up from the crude cabins of the earliest settlers.

Of course, every home has a story and I suspect that we will be hearing some fascinating Baileys Harbor history at both of these programs. Be sure and mark your calendars.

Leann Despotes