# HISTORICAL RESEARCH C E N T E R

# Historic Trivia

- 1. What were the "poverty flats."
- 2. Which township's name was changed during the Civil War?
- 3. The east side of Waldo was known by what name?
- 4. Where was Sheboygan Lake located?
- 5. When was Parnell Tower built?
- Poverty Flats were bachelor apartments in downtown Sheboygan located above Bodenstein Brothers tailor shop.
- The town of Sherman was once known as the town of Abbott. It as changed as the Abbott family were known to be Confederate sympathizers.
- 3. Onion River
- 4. Sheboygan Lake was a part of the Sheboygan County marsh as noted by early surveyors.
- 5. Parnell Tower was built in 1939 as a lookout tower for planes.

# The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center

Volume XXVI Number 4 April 2016

# From Sheboygan to Timbuktu



Above: A mud-built mosque in Timbuktu. Photo taken by Galen Frysinger, retired scientist who spends his retirement traveling the world. Below: Women from Mali.



Timbuktu is one of the most remote places on earth. It is actually located in the present day Republic of Mali at the edge of the Sahara desert. Founded in the 11th century by nomads that roamed the desert during rainy seasons in search of grazing lands for their herds and camels.

The historic town of Timbuktu is located at the precise point where the Niger flows northward into the southern edge of the Sahara desert. Timbuktu began as a trading city, but in time it developed into the educational and spiritual center of West Africa. Gold, ivory and kola nuts passed through Timbuktu, but the most important commodity was salt.

SCHRC has received a great collection of photos from world traveler Galen Frysinger and his trip to Timbuktu.

The Sheboygan County Historical Research Center is located at 518 Water Street in Sheboygan Falls.

Open Tuesday through Friday, 9:00am – 4:00pm and Saturdays from 8:30am to 12:00 noon.

Closed Saturday, May 28, 2016 for Memorial Day.

Phone: 920-467-4667

E-mail: research@schrc.org

Website: schrc.org

The Researcher is the official newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research
Center, 518 Water Street,
Sheboygan Falls,
Wisconsin.

It is published six times per year in August, October, December, February, April and June.

The Research Center is the local history archive for Sheboygan County and areas surrounding the county. It is a repository for paper records of all kinds.

The Research Center is a sister organization to the Sheboygan County Historical Society and Museum which collects the artifacts of the county.

If you file it, it comes to the Research Center.

If you dust it, it goes to the Historical Society & Museum.

### **SCHRC Board of Directors**

Rick Dodgson

David Gallianetti

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Nancy Jusky

Larschelby "Schel" Kidd

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**Go Paperless.** Receive *The Researcher* via email. Save paper. Save postage and receive a more colorful newsletter. Contact Katie at research@schrc.org to sign up now. Catch us on Facebook– Updates daily.

Don't miss Sheboygan County History column in the Saturday *Sheboygan Press* or online Friday through Sunday each week.

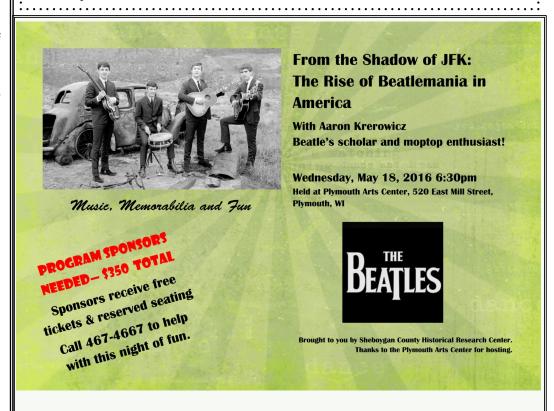
# **Volunteer Thank You**

Thanks again to the **NEWSLETTER TEAM**. Six times per year they gather and fold and tape and label nearly 1200 newsletters. Special thanks to Marilyn Mondloch.

Thanks to Jim Mohr for a great presentation on Kohler Andre State Park as part of our History on the Mover series in Cedar Grove.

Thanks to Richard Stoelb for his articles on ZMO and Wurst City in this very issue!

**ARCHIVE TEAM** Jane Klettke, Betsy Fuerst, Mary Burbach, Mary Meyer, Ian Morton, Don Lau, Kathy Jeske, Allison Markus and Katie Reilly for processing thousands of photos. Great work.



# (History on the Move) Cedar Grove Public Library

131 Van Altena Avenue, Cedar Grove 6:00pm Tuesday, May 10, 2016 - Lake Michigan Shipwrecks with Steve Radovan (Genealogy Classes) SCHRC

518 Water Street, Sheb. Falls, 1:00 to 3:00pm -\$15 members, \$20 non-members Monday, May 9, 2016 - Photo Scanning and Preservation

# Second Saturdays – Journeys Into Local History

Plymouth Arts Center, 520 East Mill Street, Plymouth 9:30am May 14, 2016 -- Gary Hess - Frank J. Hess and Sons Cooperage

# **Mead Public Library Series**

This free program is part of "Preserving the History of Sheboygan Through Digital Images," a series funded by a grant that Mead Library was awarded from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Held in the Rocca Room at Mead Library. Presented by SCHRC.

Thursday, May 19, 2016

Thursday, June 16, 2016

6:00pm-7:00pm

Sheboygan's Lakefront and Riverfront, A City Defined by Water

6:00pm-7:00pm

Sheboygan's Main Streets, Center Avenue, Penn Avenue and Eighth Street

# 2016 Local History Expo

**Saturday, May 21, 2016** 

10:00am to 3:00pm

Held at the Wade House Historic Site, two dozen <u>local historical organizations</u>, from Calumet, Manitowoc, Fond du Lac, Ozaukee and Sheboygan County, will exhibit during this event. Two extraordinary private collections, rarely available for public viewing, will be on display for this event. <u>Ralph Heidemann</u> has hand-crafted tabletop historic model motors and tractors that operate model farm machinery, including a threshing machine and an elevator and much more. <u>Charlie Bauer</u> has built tabletop models of more than two dozen area historic structures, in a cut away format, to show the early construction of these important buildings. His preparation includes historical documentation, extensive measuring of every detail and videos of the historic structures. A special program will feature <u>Mary Todd Lincoln</u>, as portrayed by professional actress and historian, <u>Jessica Michna</u>. Jessica will deliver a performance, in the entrance area of the carriage Museum, in the morning and again in the afternoon, and include a visit to the Wade House in between. Standard admission to the Wade House is required.



Dr. Brent Mai, Director of the Center for Volga German Studies at Concordia University in Portland, Oregon, will be the keynote speaker for the event. He has spoken world-wide on many topics related to Volga German history and culture. Dr. Mai, graduated from Bethany College in Lindsborg, and continued graduate studies at George Washington University, the University of Texas at Austin, and Vanderbilt University.

# Celebrating 250 Years of Volga German History 24-25 September 2016

The Center for Volga German Studies is hosting a Celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the founding of the German colonies along Russia's Volga River. The celebration will include a seminar series and other events to be held in Sheboygan, Wisconsin, 24-25 September 2016.

A Celebration for the 250th Anniversaries for the colonies of Reinwald, Schäfer, Schulz, Krasnoyar, and Enders will be featured during this event because of the large number of Volga Germans and their descendants who settled in the Sheboygan area.

The public is invited to attend.

### REGISTRATION

Because food is being served, please register by September 1.

\$30 per person (by September 1)

\$40 per person (after September 1)

Registration includes all sessions and a boxed lunch. To register & pay by credit/debit card, use the online form. If you prefer to pay by check, print the Registration Form, and mail it along with your check so that it arrives by September 1. If you have questions, please call Tanya at 503.493.6369. [Note: There is no discount for partial attendance of this event. Notice of cancellation before 1 September 2016 will receive a full refund; after 1 September 2016 will receive no refund.] Optional banquet: There will be an optional banquet dinner at Al & Al's Steinhaus on Saturday evening. The cost is \$20 per person, payable at the restaurant. To reserve a seat(s), please contact Travis Gross, Director of the Sheboygan County Historical Society & Museum by 16 September:

travis.gross@sheboygancounty.com or 920.458.1103. Email is preferred.

LOCATION

Sheboygan County Historical Museum

Registration and all events will be held at the Sheboygan County Historical Society Museum.

3110 Erie Ave.

Sheboygan, WI 53081

920.458.1103

# "Wurst City of the World" Sheboygan's First Bratwurst Day

Bratwurst, (pronounced *brahtwurst*) or brats (*brahts*) for short, the food of celebration, a symbol of togetherness. They are found at backyard family gatherings and celebrations, holiday outings, community picnics, fund raisers; just about any occasion you can think of where life and good times are being celebrated. We have the huge influx of German immigrants to the Sheboygan area during the 1840s and 1850s to thank for that delicious, mouth watering sausage.

Those early German settlers left much behind them in the old country, but they did bring their sausage recipes with them. Bratwurst is basically a generic term for roasted or fried sausage from the old High German braten; gebraten: to roast; to fry and wurst (vurst) for sausage. To "fry" can mean to cook, not necessarily in oil or fat, but over direct heat; it can also mean a social gathering where food is fried or cooked and eaten; hence the possible origin for "brat fry" and "fry out".



Sheboygan's centennial celebration and first Bratwurst Day.

Originally the sausage was made of chopped or ground veal combined with spices mixed according to carefully guarded secret family recipes. The mixture was stuffed into casings made of pig intestines and twisted into links about 4"-5" long. Pork was easy to find here; thus, it was used in place of veal for their weisswurst (white sausage). The sausages were roasted in an oven or "fried" over a charcoal fire until well browned, and served to family and friends. It is not known who first came up with the idea of putting a bratwurst in a semmel (roll). But, it was a good idea; it is brilliant in its simplicity. It required no plate, knife or fork to enjoy the sausage. One could move around while carrying the sandwich in one hand and a glass of beer in the other.



A family either made the sausage from a pig they kept or bought then slaughtered and butchered it themselves, or they had the entire process done for them by a local butcher. Bratwurst was not commercially available; but then, around 1862, a man by the name of Michael Gottschalk, Sr. came to Sheboygan from Des Moines, Iowa. He not only made but also began selling his own brand of pork sausage from his meat market, between 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Streets on Michigan Avenue, directly to the public for them to take home. Other meat merchants followed his lead and bratwurst soon became readily available to the general public.

In 1910 Jacob Johnson operated a permanent bratwurst stand at his tavern in Sheboygan's Lakeside Park on Sheboygan's far south side. He also had a bratwurst stand on

Michael Gottschalk, Sr. North 8<sup>th</sup> Street adjacent to the Prange-Guessenheiner Hardware Store in Shebovgan.

Joseph Spatt, Jr. and partner Albert Winter, Jr. both of Sheboygan set up a small restaurant on Michigan Avenue called "Come on Inn". It became the unofficial bratwurst headquarters in Sheboygan.

Sheboygan's appetite for bratwurst was obvious and seemed insatiable, and because of the number of sausage makers in the city. Sheboygan proclaimed itself "Bratwurst Capital of the World" and "Wurst City of the World". The city had the numbers to back-up the claims. For instance, in 1952 over the four day 4<sup>th</sup> of July week-end alone the five largest producers of sausage in Sheboygan reported they sold over 21,000 pounds of bratwurst; that does not include the bratwurst made and sold by smaller local meat markets such as Poth's and Luedke's.



The "Come on Inn"

# **Henry Poth Meat Market**

Henry Poth's Meat Market was a small corner business located on the south side of Sheboygan. Using the secret recipe he learned from his grandparents, Poth proclaimed his bratwurst as "Sheboygan's Finest" and many in Sheboygan attested to that. During the summer Poth's put out almost 6,000 pounds of bratwurst each week and through the winter months produced about 3,000 pounds per week. Besides being known for his bratwurst, Henry Poth is credited as the originator of the "double brat" (two brats in a roll) and the "fund raiser brat fry". He also persuaded a local baker to create a hard roll big enough to hold two brats. The result was the "Sheboygan Hard Roll" (Handsemmel), a large chewy roll with a delicate crispy crust identified by a single crease across the top.



Henry Poth



The Luedke Brothers-Max on left, Herman on right

## **Luedke Brothers Meat Market**

The Luedke brothers, Max and Herman, were skilled in the butcher trade and had been working for the Wieman Meat Market in Sheboygan for several years. In 1914 they decided to go into business for themselves and established their market on the site of the family farmhouse. By 1927 the Luedke Brothers Meat Market had gained a city-wide reputation for the high quality and freshness of their products. In 1953 they employed 15 fulltime and 5 part-time employees and were still doing their own slaughtering and butchering. At one time they had employed 25 butchers that were kept busy just making and selling hams and sausages. Luedke's closed their doors in 1996 after 82 years in business sighting declining sales, increased operating costs and new government regulations.

## **Centennial Week**

In 1953 the city of Sheboygan celebrated its centennial. To commemorate the milestone a week-long festival, running from Sunday, August 9 to Saturday, August 15, was planned. Each day would have a different theme with accompanying activities. A. Matt Werner, the publisher and editor of the Sheboygan Press at the time, suggested that Thursday, August 13, of Centennial Week be designated as "Bratwurst Day". It would be a day to pay homage to the city's rich German heritage and to the "noble" sausage that put Sheboygan on the world map. It would also be an opportunity to celebrate summer and show off everything that is good about Sheboygan. Overwhelming approval was given to the idea and thought by many that it could be the biggest day of the city's centennial celebration. The Sheboygan Jaycees would sponsor "Bratwurst Day" and operate their own stand and the six bratwurst manufacturers in the city namely; Wagner's Sausage, Sheboygan Sausage, Thielmann Sausage, Hertziger Sausage, Johnsonville Meats and Rammer Sausage would each have a stand to sell their products.

The agenda for the week-long centennial celebration was set; Sunday: Freedom of Religion Day; Monday: Governor's Day; Tuesday: Salute to All Nation's Day; Wednesday: Park and Recreation Day; Thursday: Bratwurst Day; Friday: Pioneer Day; Saturday: Laborers Day. 76 year old famed stage, screen, radio and television actor, *Charles Coburn*, accepted an invitation from the city which helped launch his career 53 years earlier at the old *Lake View Theater* at Lake View Park south of the city. Mayor Edward Schmidt presented the honored guest the traditional key to the city. Mr. Coburn stated; "I feel highly honored to be a guest at your 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party. In fact, I have always had a warm spot in my heart for Sheboygan and for the kindly folks I knew here those 53 years ago.

Miss Jena Senkbeil, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Clarence Senkbeil, was crowned Monday night (August 10) by Gov. Walter J. Kohler Jr. as "Queen of the Sheboygan Centennial". Here "Her Majesty" and contest chairman Roger Graefe welcome Charles Coburn, renowned Hollywood star to the festivities.





Left: Charles Coburn accepts key to city from Sheboygan Mayor Edward Schmidt.

Right: Wisconsin Governor Walter J. Kohler Jr.

Wisconsin Governor Walter J. Kohler, Jr., a Sheboygan native and veteran of many "fry-outs", proclaimed Thursday, August 13, as "Sheboygan Bratwurst Day" to help the city celebrate its centennial and to advertise itself as the "Bratwurst Center of the World". He also extended a public and official welcome "in honor of Sheboygan's pre-eminence in the manufacture of a superior roasting sausage".

The week-long centennial celebration opened on August 9, 1953 with a gigantic



four mile long parade complete with clowns, acrobats, approximately 20 marching bands, the 50 piece Naval Training Center Band from Great Lakes, reserve and regular military units, fire and police units, dozens of floats, old-time cars and horse-drawn wagons. As an estimated crowd of 75,000-80,000 was viewing the parade a plane flew over and dropped thousands of leaflets advertising Sheboygan's first "Bratwurst Day" coming up on August 13. Among the thousands of leaflets 225 were stamped with the words "free bratwurst".

Included with the many attractions was a downtown carnival midway, special outdoor events, a huge centennial costume ball and nightly fireworks displays. The highlight of the centennial celebration was a colorful historical pageant, "Salute to a Century", featuring a cast of over 800 presented every night Monday through Friday.

In keeping with the theme of the first Sheboygan Bratwurst Day members of the Jaycees went about changing street names. Eighth Street became "Bratwurst Boulevard". Erie Avenue; "Onion Oasis", Ontario Avenue; "Pickle Place", Niagara Avenue; "Smokey Lane", Wisconsin Avenue; "Semmel Strasse", New York Avenue"; Charcoal Court", and Center Avenue; "Mustard Mall".





First newspaper ad for Bratwurst Day

8<sup>th</sup> Street becomes "Bratwurst Boulevard"

# Thursday, August 13, 1953

# "Bratwurst Day"





Official observance of Sheboygan's first Bratwurst Day began at 8 a.m. with a bratwurst breakfast and opening remarks by A. Matt Werner, Editor of the Sheboygan Press. There was a feeling of "Gemutlichkeit", a German word that expresses congeniality and togetherness. All along "Bratwurst Boulevard" the air was filled with the smoke and the enticing, mouth watering aroma of bratwurst "frying" and stimulating the appetite of the crowd. A single brat sold for \$0.25; a double went for \$0.35 and a bottle of beer would cost you \$0.15.

The demand went far beyond expectations and all seven stands remained busy throughout the day doing a "landmark" business with a record amount of bratwurst being consumed. From 8 a.m. to midnight, 7,000 pounds of bratwurst were consumed. In addition to the bratwurst eaten 96 gallons of dill pickles, 288 bottles of catsup, 288 jars of mustard and 350 pounds of onions were used. Bakeries of the city were kept just as busy baking thousands of hard rolls to keep up with the demand and delivering them to the stands.

Providing entertainment in the downtown area were Turner Square Dancing Club, Original Oomph Band, Sheboygan Barbershop Chorus, Balkan Serenaders, Polka Rascals, Concordia Ladies Choir, Concordia Singing Society, Liederkrantz Singing Society and The Sweet Adelines International Chapter. The Wuerl Band gave a concert at Calumet Drive and Superior Avenue in conjunction with Calumet Drive Night sponsored by businessmen of that area. A street dance was held at Saemann Avenue and Calumet Drive from 9p.m. to 1a.m.

Fountain Park was the site for the selection and crowning of "Bratwurst Queen of 1953". The contestants were: Miss Pat Kroos, Miss Corliss Lannoye, Miss Royola Lienau, Miss Loretta Luedke, Miss Delores Stoelb, Miss Wilma Tellier, Miss Audrey Theobald and Miss Beverly Wodack.



Miss Delores Stoelb, daughter of Norbert and Gertrude Entringer Stoelb, and sponsored by the J.C. Penney Company, was selected as "Bratwurst Queen of 1953". Honored centennial guest Charles Coburn did the honors. Second place went to Miss Pat Kroos of the Alfred Jung Company and in third place was Miss Corliss Lannoye of The Fanny Farmer Candy Store.

Fountain Park was also the scene of the first bratwurst eating contest. Roger Theobald was declared the winner eating nine single brat sandwiches within the 15 minute time limit; 11 year old Dennis Leffin took second downing eight single brat sandwiches

Sheboygan's first Bratwurst day was a grand affair and so successful it became an annual event. However, like many highly successful endeavors, it suffered from too much success. Over the ensuing years as many as 100,000 people would come from all over to celebrate and it just got out of hand. Along with the huge crowds jammed into the downtown area came rowdiness, vandalism, drunkenness and other violations of the peace. After 13 years many citizens had enough. They felt Bratwurst Day had deteriorated into a day to just drink a

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lot of beer, eat a few brats and raise a little hell. It had started out as an event to showcase the city but had turned into one that had given it a black eye. In 1966 in an advisory referendum the citizens said "No More" and recommended to the city that it call off the annual celebration. The city took heed and discontinued Bratwurst Day.

In 1969 the Jaycees thought a smaller venue for better crowd control coupled with the civic pride of its citizens would allow the city to once again celebrate its heritage. The Jaycees proposed to change the name to "German Days" and to move the festival from downtown to Kiwanis Park. The city accepted the recommendations after a promise that the bad memories of the past would not be repeated.

In 1978 the city observed its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first Bratwurst Day. In honor of both occasions the celebration was once again called "*Bratwurst Day*" just like it first was back in 1953. The "new" Bratwurst Day has grown since then, but at a much slower pace than its predecessor, attracting smaller crowds of mostly Sheboygan and surrounding area residents. It continues to be celebrated every year the first Saturday of August in Kiwanis Park.

Today besides the traditional pork brats you will find beef brats, chicken brats, turkey brats, buffalo/bison brats, venison brats, Cajun brats, cheddar brats, jalapeno brats and even Italian brats. "Purists" may not recognize the new varieties as "real" brats, but they are indeed brats. They have their roots, their beginnings, planted deep in the pride and tradition those early German settlers brought with them to this new world and we are lucky enough to enjoy today.

The people of Sheboygan always have, still do, and most likely will continue to disagree as to who makes the best brats; however, I think they will agree the best brats still come from Sheboygan.













# Sheboygan County Historical Research Center 2016

Helping others find their identity in pieces of the past

# **Collaborations in 2015**

- ♦ Work with Lakeland College interns
- ♦ Work with Lakeland College research projects History Dept.
- ♦ Sponsor a UW-LaCrosse intern
- ♦ Collaboration with LTC interns— graphic design
- ♦ Sheb. Falls Sp. Ed. work experience
- ♦ RCS Empower Client work experience
- ♦ Smithsonian Museum of American History Peter Glass Project
- ◆ Ken Burns Production Company, research
- ◆Local History columns for USA TODAY Network-Wisconsin - Sheboygan Press
- ◆Exhibit on Seeley Hill Native Americans and their diet with Fresh Meals on Wheels
- ♦USA TODAY Network- Wisconsin- Green Bay Press Gazette
- Black Dog Bistro
- ♦ USA TODAY Network—Wisconsin—Fond du Lac Reporter— Hwy 23 project/Plank Road

# **Looking ahead in 2016**

- ◆From the Shadow of JFK: The Rise of Beatlemania in America in cooperation with the Plymouth Arts Center
- ◆ The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, a four part speaker's series with Steven Rogstad and the SC Historical Museum
- ♦ Mead Public Library history scan day
- ♦ Wisconsin Maritime Museum Wisconsin's Underwater Treasures exhibit
- ♦ Support for National History Day students
- ♦ Publishing new local history books—Five Men & A Boat (Maritime history), Rebuilding a Railroad in the 20th Century (Rail history), From Bootlegging to Brothels, Sheboygan County during the 1920s and 1930s (General history), Deeper Meanings, Stained Glass and Tombstones (General history).
- ♦ Each year, more than 3,000 researchers visit SCHRC from out of the county. They spend valuable dollars in our communities, at restaurants, shops and businesses.

SCHRC strives to be a valuable member of the county's business community.

# **Business Membership Options**

SCHRC has thousands of items detailing the history of businesses in the county since the 1830s. Images number in the tens of thousands. Please help us continue to collect and preserve business history by becoming a Business Member.

A \$100 business membership garners you:

Advertising in The Researcher, SCHRC's newsletter, sent to 1100 members, six times each year.

A \$250 business membership, in addition to advertising in The Researcher, gives:

Membership recognition at all SCHRC events, nearly 50 each year,

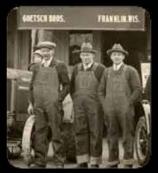
A \$500 business membership adds to the membership package:

Recognition our website for the membership year.

Please help us preserve history, and let us help you by spreading the word about your support.











SCHRC-working to inspire, teach and guide people toward their place in history.

# **Be a Member**

\$100 business membership garners you:  Advertising in The Researcher, SCHRC's newsletter, sent to 1100 members, six times each year.  \$250 business membership, in addition to advertising in The Researcher, gives:
Membership recognition at all SCHRC events, nearly 50 each year,
\$500 business membership adds to the membership package:  Recognition our website for the membership year.
Business name
Contact name
Address ———
Phone
Email
Checks can be made out to SCHRC or The Research Center. Please use the enclosed envelope to mail your membership payment.
Thanks so much for your support. We have an amazing year ahead.

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HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER