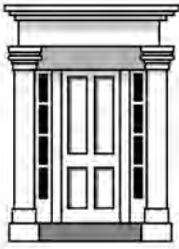


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
CENTER



Grace Episcopal Church
Sheboygan

The Researcher

**The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research Center**

Volume XXVIII Number 2 December 2017

Stories Told in Granite and Glass



"Stained glass" is the term used for pieces of beautifully colored glass held together by strips of lead to form pictures and designs. Stained glass is most often used for windows, because the beauty of the glass is best seen when light passes through it.

The process of coloring glass first appeared in ancient Egypt, but it was during the Middle Ages that the making of stained-glass windows developed as a major art form.

The art glass windows were important features of churches built in the Gothic style with their soaring windows and spaces, beginning in the mid-1100s. The windows filled the church interiors with light and color, delighting and awing worshipers with their beauty.

The windows were not only beautiful; they served an educational purpose. During the Middle Ages, the church was the center of learning. There were few books, and most people were illiterate, few could read. The designs in the first stained-glass windows usually depicted scenes from the Bible. Those scenes were important tools in teaching Christian beliefs to the people. In later years, workers' guilds and wealthy merchants paid for windows that glorified not only saints and kings but the donors themselves.

More than just decorative, the windows also taught local history and reinforced political ideology. Stained glass windows were the poor man's Bible.

Sheboygan County has hundreds of examples of beautiful stained glass windows. Most are found in the more than 100 churches found here. Some are found in secular buildings.

A number of years ago, the Research Center began a project to document

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 9:00am to 12:00 noon.

Closed Saturday, December 23, 2017 through Tuesday, January 2, 2018 for the Holidays

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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.

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

the churches and their windows. Hundreds of photos have been taken and have been archived. The project has a long way to go, but eventually we will have a record of them all.

From a marker in Enosburg Falls, Vermont
Here lies the body of our dead Anna,
Gone to death by a banana.
It wasn't the fruit that dealt the blow,
But the skin of the thing that laid her low.

Here lays Butch,
We planted him raw.
He was quick on the trigger,
But slow on the draw.
A tombstone in a Silver City, Nevada, cemetery

On the 22nd of June
Jonathan Fiddle
Went out of tune.
Read on a tombstone in a cemetery in Hartscombe, England

This corpse
Is Phoebe Thorp's.

Here lies Lester Moore.
Four slugs
From a forty-four.
No Les
No More.
The tombstone of gun-slinger, Lester Moore, a Wells Fargo station agent for Naco, Arizona in the cowboy days of the 1880's. He is buried in the Boot Hill Cemetery in Tombstone, Arizona.

Here lies the father of 29
He would have had more
But he didn't have time.

Oops! Harry Edsel Smith of Albany, New York:
Born 1903--Died 1942
Looked up the elevator shaft to see if the car was on the way down.
It was.



Where Have All the Grocery Stores Gone?

Krambo Food Store, Wisconsin Avenue (location of Mead Public Library)
 Schuchardt Grocery, 1929 North Eighth Street, Sheboygan (1937)



The Mystique of Dr. Eigenberger

Rarely has one house and one man generated so much crazy interest over such a long span of time. The object of multiple urban legends, Dr. Friedrich Eigenberger and his home, continue to pique the interest of Sheboyganites.

Rancho de las Flores, a Spanish revival-style home with its stucco walls and red tile roof, was once located on Greendale Road on Sheboygan's west side. Dr. Eigenberger, its owner, was a pathologist with a multitude of unusual interests and talents.

A native of Austria, Eigenberger came to Sheboygan in 1922 as a charter staff member of the Sheboygan Clinic. Considered one of the leading pathologists in the Midwest, he was frequently called upon by law enforcement agencies to perform post-mortems in criminal cases. He also spent decades searching for a cure for cancer. And his always curious mind additionally sent him searching for a treatment for rattlesnake bites.

Dr. and Mrs. Cordelia Schrader Eigenberger were a widely traveled couple. They made numerous trips to remote areas of the world filming their journeys and later giving travelogues. Those speaking engagements funded nursing scholarships at Memorial Hospital.

Their home on Greendale Road housed the many mementos of their world tours including a shrunken head from the Namba tribe in the New Hebrides islands (now Vanuatu) in the South Pacific.

Their greenhouses were noted for a remarkable collection of orchids. Many were native to the Mexican jungles, gathered there by the Eigenbergers. They had more than 700 varieties, ergo the name of the property, the "ranch or farm of flowers".

During the early years Rancho was also a zoo. At various times the Eigenbergers kept a collection of wild animals including a mountain lion, leopard and bear. The couple also raised and tamed a gibbon which was later given to the John Ball Park Zoo in Grand Rapids, Mich.

Much of Dr. Eigenberger's local fame came from his work with rattlesnakes. Venom was harvested from the snakes and used in the development of anti-venom among other things. In July of 1924, the Dr.'s rattlesnake cages at the Sheboygan Clinic were vandalized. The snakes were crushed to death in their cages stored on the roof of the clinic. It was thought to be an inside job.

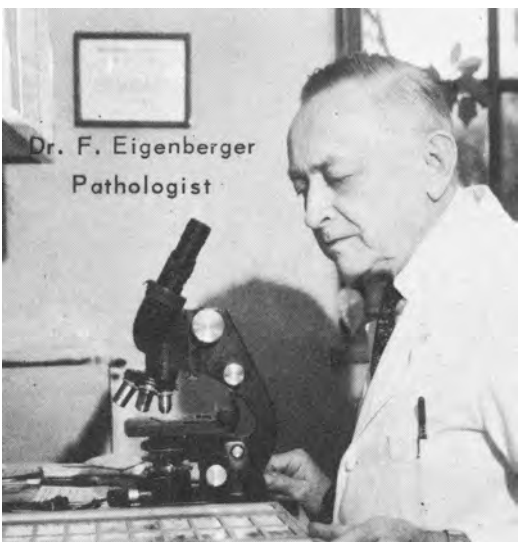
Perhaps truth, perhaps urban myth, it is rumored that Friedrich would inject himself with diluted venom and then note the results. Once his reaction bordered on the dangerous. His eyes burned and his face got numb. He lost feeling in his fingers and toes, and most frightening, it became hard for him to breathe.

Dozens of rattlesnakes, many purchased at Keitel's snake farm near Baraboo, were kept at the Greendale Road property. Supposedly their pen was impossible to breach, but that is questionable.

In September of 1925, Kohler and vicinity had a rash of alarming rattlesnake sightings. Dr. Eigenberger's "snake farm" was blamed for the infestation. Over three weeks a total of eleven snakes were killed or captured on four properties located between Upper Falls Road and Indiana Avenue. Remember, rattlesnakes are not native to Sheboygan County.



Dr. and Mrs. Frederick Eigenberger are seen viewing slides from their trip to Africa. In 1955, they visited Johannesburg, the Upper Nile River and Victoria Falls on their annual vacation.



Dr. Eigenberger also worked as a pathologist for the Manitowoc Hospital along with Memorial and St. Nicholas Hospitals in Sheboygan.

Earlier that year Eigenberger was bitten by a rattler. He was struck by the venomous fangs of one when dropping another snake into a cage. He immediately took the necessary steps to counteract the poison, applying a tourniquet, drawing the blood from the wound, and then driving to the hospital. But, between that episode and the serpent sightings, the neighbors were hysterical and wanted change.

The Dr. always denied responsibility, stating his snake cages were escape proof, but an editorial by Charlie Broughton, editor of The Sheboygan Press, called for Eigenberger to abolish his snake farm. He felt the herpetarium was a menace to the community.

One last item that made the good Doctor unusual was his perceived connection to the Nazis. Eigenberger belonged to the German-American bund, an organization dedicated to education and the German culture. Sheboygan was one of four Wisconsin cities to have a chapter.

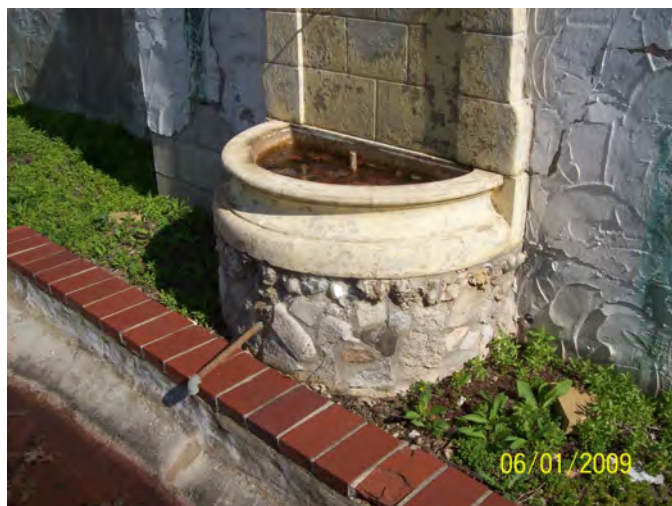
In 1937, New York Democrat Congressman Samuel Dickstein filed charges against the local group claiming they maintained a Nazi camp in or near Sheboygan and were really part of a subversive German spy system. Dr. Eigenberger strongly refuted the allegations saying, "We have no camps and no military practices, but are merely good, patriotic citizens. . ."

The bund group disbanded in 1940 due to lack of interest or perhaps fear of prosecution and a perceived association to Adolph Hitler.

Dr. Eigenberger died in March 1961 and his widow continued to live in the house of flowers. Cordelia died in 1999. The house sat empty for a decade before it was demolished in 2009.

Urban legends are fictitious stories with ghoulish elements deeply rooted in local popular culture. Usually entertaining, always strange, one even reported a number of murders taking place in the house. Our local authorities assure us that this is not true.

The Eigenbergers were smart, interesting, well-traveled and well-read citizens who gave much to Sheboygan County. Perhaps they were just a bit ahead of their time.



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

During its 175-year history the city of Sheboygan has really had three main thoroughfares. Initially, Center Avenue, which came up into the original plat of the city from the harbor was its main street. Once the railroad became the primary mode of transportation for the area, Sheboygan's main street switched to Pennsylvania Avenue. Finally, when transportation modes changed from rail to car, Eighth Street became the center of downtown Sheboygan.

Center Avenue

The great tide of foreign immigration and hundreds of sailing vessels were tied up at the pier near the foot of Center Avenue each year where they unloaded their cargoes of merchandise and human freight. And don't forget the sailors. All were in need of food and shelter, therefore most of the buildings on Center Avenue from the lake to Seventh Street were hotels.

Along the lakeshore from Center Avenue north to Wisconsin Avenue was a high elevation, but there was a deep marsh between this elevation and a point midway between Fifth and Sixth Streets. People then living east of the slough were compelled to cross a footbridge north of Washington court in order to reach Eighth Street.

This section of the city was then a cow pasture and when people went to church on Sunday night they had to carry lanterns to guide them on their way and prevent them from falling over some cow peacefully lying in the pasture chewing her cud.

In 1850, in order to accommodate all the sailors and immigrants, there were 11 hotels on Center Avenue. They were:

- 1) The Exchange Hotel was located on the north side of the street between Fourth and Fifth Streets.
- 2) Blocki's Hotel was on the northwest corner of Center and Fifth Street. This was later changed to Lossius Gardens and for years was a favorite resort for early German settlers. The rear of the hotel was built over a deep slough or swamp and the strains of the music which came from a concert hall at the rear of the Garden where intermingled with the hoarse croaking of bullfrogs in the slough. The garden was the Sunday meeting-place patronized by Sheboygan's prominent German families. Open-air entertainment was given every Sunday during the summer. There was also a bowling alley in the northeast corner of the garden.
- 3) Pat Lyman's hotel was located at the southeast corner of Fifth Street. This hotel burned down in 1862.
- 4) The American House, located on the north side of the street between Fifth and Sixth Streets, was later placed on a large scow and moved to Milwaukee.
- 5) The German Gast Haus, conducted by Mr. Armbruster was located at the northwest corner of Fifth Street and Center Avenue.
- 6) Harty's Hotel was located at the southeast corner of Sixth Street, purchased by the father of C. A. Rudolph for the large sum of \$400.
- 7) The Jefferson House was located at the southwest corner of Sixth Street, and later bought by a man named Kadow, who had the building torn down.
- 8) National Hotel, located on the south side of Center Avenue, west of Sixth Street, was a pretentious two-story frame structure having a spacious porch in front on both floors. One of the largest halls in town was located in this hotel and during that period was the center of social activities. When the men were joining the colors during the Civil War, they used to gather at this hotel and form in marching order before parading through the streets of the village.
- 9) The Franklin Hotel was located on the north side of the street between Seventh and Eighth Streets.



Grand Hotel.

10) The Kossuth Hotel was located on the south side of Center where the Grand Hotel was later erected. It was built by Konrad Testwuide's grandfather and was named for the Hungarian patriot who was then at his zenith of fame. (Louis Kossuth – revolt for independence for Hungary- a separation from the Austro-Hungarian empire). Just an FYI. The Grand Hotel was built in 1890 and purchased by Richard Warner in 1907. It was home to the Knights of the Round Table. The three-story brown brick building had a Lincoln Corner in the lobby of the hotel. Warner was a great lover of literature and Wisconsin history with a library of 2000 books. He collected letters from famous historic people. Miss Helen Brainard Cole lived in the hotel after returning from Washington D.C. to care for her aging parents. The hotel closed in 1963 and was razed in 1964 during Sheboygan's clean sweep of blocks.

11) The Washington Hotel and livery was located on the south side of the street between Eighth and Ninth streets across from today's City Hall. Built in 1860, it was a landmark for 93 years. Farmers congregated there every Monday to sell cheese through the Sheboygan Dairy Board which had its headquarters there. 50 to 60 buyers would be on hand. Ended in 1919. It also served as headquarters for visitors in the city. Had a little German band with scissors grinders and organ grinders. Patent medicine troupes staged shows to peddle their wares. It also served as the Sheboygan terminal for the old Franklin and Kiel bus lines. In 1923, it had two gas pumps and 24-hour service. It was razed in 1953 for a parking lot.

Next time — Penn Avenue

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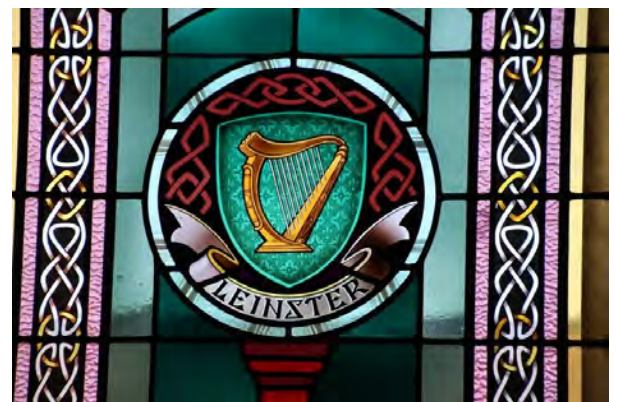
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Photos by Ken Pannier
52 Stafford, Plymouth

Thanks, Ken.



Though most stained glass is found in churches, 52 Stafford, an Irish Inn in Plymouth has some beautiful examples in the bar room and the Plymouth Guild Room. Symbols representing the four provinces of Ireland: Leinster, Munster, Ulster and Connaught.

The four traditional provinces of Ireland are popularly displayed quartered as the arms of Ireland and used by various all-Ireland sports teams and cultural organizations.

Stop in for a pint of the black stuff and a great meal, and check out the beautiful works of art.