



### Hosta History

As gardeners everywhere, sharp spade in hand, struggle to split those medusa-like roots of the hosta, rarely do they think of the history behind these shade-loving cultivars. The number one selling perennial in the United States, the hosta's story began centuries ago in the orient.

Japan is ground zero for hostas. Known as giboshi, they grow rampant and wild in Japan's mountains and along its coasts. Although the plant is also native to Korea and China, it is in Japan that you will find the greatest variety.

A member of the lily family, more than 3,000 varieties exist today. Grown for their beauty and ease of care, they have exploded in popularity in just the past fifty years. They can range in size from a few inches wide to a few feet wide and can be green, blue or yellow, variegated or uniform.

# The Researcher

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

Volume XXVI Number 5 June 2016

## Greendale Avenue was host to hosta haven



A talented woman named Eunice Fisher, was one of the earliest and most dedicated hosta enthusiasts in the country. She and a man named Alex Summers of Long Island, New York conceived of the idea of a plant society dedicated to hostas. They gathered together a small group of enthusiasts, four in number to begin with, and each worked to establish their own collection of hostas. This group also began "spreading the gospel" to other gardeners, extolling the virtues of the species.

Although planted in gardens, parks and cemeteries, hostas didn't gain popularity like other perennials, perhaps because early hostas had plain green leaves. But, in the 1930s, this small group of hosta gurus realized that some of the hostas at hand had developed variegated leaves. Hostas could be cross pollinated and changed. Perhaps a showier selection of hostas could be created?

A native of Oshkosh, Eunice introduced over 40 cultivars of hosta including H. 'Candy Hearts', H. 'Green Platter' and H. 'Misty Waters'. She also served as the first Secretary-Treasurer of The American Hosta Society when it was formed in 1968. Fisher also published the first hosta book for gardeners and collectors, *Hosta: The Aristocratic Plant for Shady Garden* in 1969.

The Olbrich Botanical Gardens in Madison, has developed the Eunice V. Fisher Hosta Garden in her honor. The AHS Eunice Fisher Award is named in her honor. Though not from Sheboygan herself, Eunice's family had a hosta haven on Greendale Avenue in Sheboygan. Her son, Edwin Fisher, was a lover of the outdoors, history and hostas. Known for his book, *Cheese Factories of Sheboygan*, p.8

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, July 2, 2016 for Independence Day.

Phone: 920-467-4667

E-mail: [research@schrc.org](mailto:research@schrc.org)

Website: [schrc.org](http://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**

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**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 **PHOTO PROCESSING TEAM**. Betsy Fuerst, Mary Meyer, Allison Markus, Barb Vetsch. These ladies are like a machine, efficient and hardworking.

Thanks to Steve Radovan for a great presentation on Lake Michigan Shipwrecks as part of our History on the Move series in Cedar Grove.

Thanks to Dick Stoelb for his Wurst City article in the last newsletter.

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: **DID YOU KNOW?** A cordwainer (/ˈkɔːrdˌweɪnər/) is a shoemaker who :  
: makes new shoes from new leather. The cordwainer's trade can be contrasted :  
: with the cobbler's trade, according to a tradition in Britain that restricted cob- :  
: blers to repairing shoes. :  
: .....  
: .....

### **Upcoming Events in the area:**

Calumet County Historical Society will be open on Sunday afternoons from 1-4 PM from June to September. Movie of Chilton in 1938 done by the Chilton Kiwanis is available to view on [CalumetCountyHistoricalSociety.org](http://CalumetCountyHistoricalSociety.org).

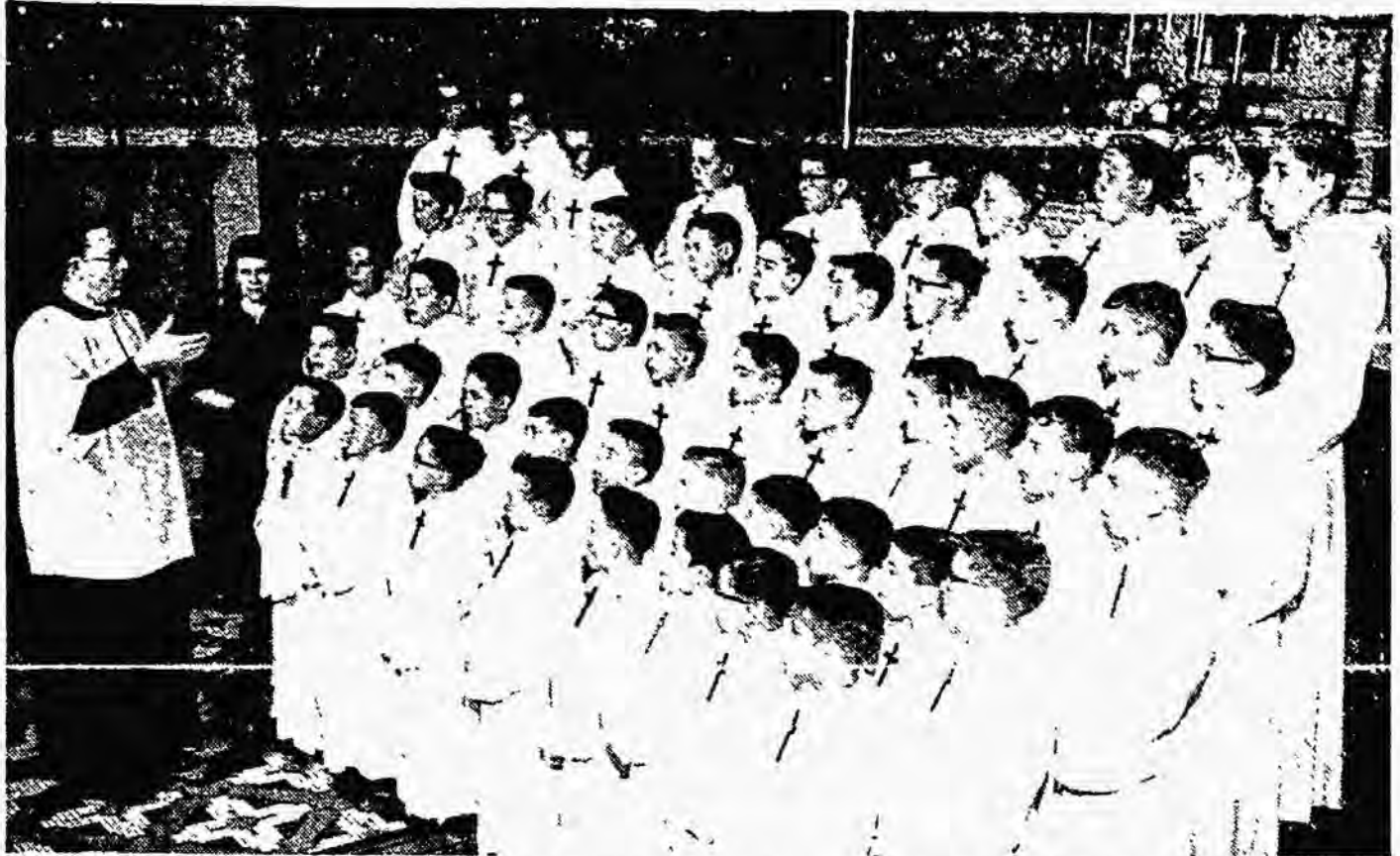
Centerville Settlement will have an Open House at the Lutze House Barn on July 23rd.

Kewaskum Historical Society will have Early Farm Days on Sunday, September 11th.

Thursday, July 21, 2016 Mead Public Library 6:00pm-7:00pm  
First Families of Sheboygan, Those Who Built the City - The first men and women who came to Sheboygan were true pioneers. Most came with nothing but their willingness to build new lives and own land in the wilderness. Others came to start a business and make a profit for themselves. A rare few dared to face the unknowns of a new, unsettled world just for the adventure.

Tuesday, July 26, 2016 (History on the Move) Cedar Grove Public Library 6:00pm  
Lost Places of Sheboygan County - Bomberville, Neith, State Road, Timberville and Romeo— Where were they? We'll take a trip through Sheboygan County's many forgotten crossroads and neighborhoods.

Thursday, August 18, 2016 Mead Public Library 6:00pm-7:00pm  
Sheboygan's Infrastructure, from its Scenic Parks to its Fire Department - Sheboygan is a city blessed with wonderful people and a great atmosphere. We'll take a trip through its parks including Vollrath Zoo. We'll learn about the development of its utilities, electrical, water and sewer and trace its transportation modes over time.



**THE CLAVERLADS** are shown with their director, the Rev. Joseph M. Wanner, and accompanist, Mrs. Loraine Hardy, at the left. The St. Peter Claver Boys' Choir will be appear-

ing in a concert Sunday, May 22, at North High Auditorium.—(Clair Kilton photo).

## The Claverlads To Have Spring Concert May 22

People of Sheboygan and the surrounding area will have an opportunity to hear the Claverlads, the St. Peter Claver boys choir, at the spring concert being called the "Claverlads Chorale", Sunday, May 22, at North High Auditorium.

Main performance will be at 8 p.m. and will include a wide variety of selections, ranging from the classics to modern music. At 1:30 p.m. there will be a matinee slightly shorter in length, geared principally to the interest of the young because the program will omit the more serious works.

The Claverlads are part of a great world-wide organization known as the International Federation of Boy Singers. With headquarters in Paris, the organization embraces hundreds of boys' choirs all over the world. The purpose of the federation is the promotion of good choir work among boys, especially, al-

though not exclusively, in the realm of church music.

Parent choir, the Little Singers of Paris, was world famous before World War II and since reorganization after the war, it has made an annual tour of the United States.

Distinctive garb of Boy Singers the world over, particularly appropriate to the rendition of sacred music, is the long white robe, the alb, a white cincture around the waist, an amice, a sort of white hood worn loosely off the neck, and a black wooden cross placed over the breast.

For singing secular music, the Claverlads have attractive new blue outfits, shirt, tie and trousers, with the Claverlads' crest on the breast pocket.

In the forthcoming concert, the Claverlads intend to do that for which they were organized—to honor God by making good use of His wonderful gift of music, both sacred and of the pure-

THE SHEBOYGAN PRESS, Thursday, July 30, 1959



**THE CLAVERLADS**, a group of some 30 St. Peter Claver Catholic School boys will perform on the Fountain Park stage Saturday evening to add to the entertainment of the seventh annual Jaycee Bratwurst Day. Two of the freckle-faced 'Lads are pictured here.—(Curtiss Nack photo).



## **Celebrating 250 Years of Volga German History**

24-25 September 2016

Church at Reinwald



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. Open to the public, the celebration will include a seminar series and other events to be held at the Sheboygan County Historical Museum, 3110 Erie Avenue, 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. This series of seminars is designed for the general public, genealogist, amateur historian and descendants of immigrants.

Because food is being served, please register by September 1. The cost is \$30 per person (by September 1) or \$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](mailto:travis.gross@sheboygancounty.com) or 920.458.1103. Email is preferred.

Registration and all events will be held at the Sheboygan County Historical Society Museum, 3110 Erie Ave., Sheboygan, WI 53081. Call 920.458.1103 for questions.

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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, whose father's side is Volga German, grew up in Western Kansas, graduated from Bethany College in Lindsborg, and continued graduate studies at George Washington University, the University of Texas at Austin, and Vanderbilt University.

# Conference Germans from Russia Conference Schedule (Tentative)

Sheboygan County Historical Museum, 3110 Erie Avenue, Sheboygan, WI

Saturday, September 24, 2016

- 8:00am Registration and Breakfast (Exhibits Available)
- 9:00am to 10:00am Session 1: Intro to the Volga Germans and their Heritage (Brent Mai)
- 10:15am to 11:00am Session 2: The Geography of the Volga Germans (Brent Mai)
- 11:15am to 12:15pm Sheboygan's Connection to the Volga Germans Panel Discussion  
(Emma Thieme, Brent Mai, Anna Dalhaimer Bartkowski and Peter Kaland)
- 12:15pm to 1:30pm Lunch and free time for exhibits, networking, book sales, etc.
- 1:30pm to 2:00pm Jacob's House, Life in Russia (Peter Kaland)
- 2:00pm to 2:30pm Sheboygan, As the German Russians Arrive (Scott Lewandoske)
- 2:40pm to 3:30pm Migration to the United States (Brent Mai)
- 3:30pm to 4:30pm Russian Villages – Reinwald Schaefer, Schula, Krasnojar, Grimm, Bauer+  
(Sue Hess, Peter Kaland, Kevin Greatens, Brent Mai)
- 4:30pm to 5:00pm Volga German Cooking (Anna Dalhaimer Bartkowski)
- 5:00pm Lectures end. Exhibits open until 5:30pm
- 6:30pm German meal at Al & Al's Steinhaus, 1502 South 12th Street, Sheboygan  
Brent Mai - Keynote speaker

Sunday, September 25, 2016

- 9:15am to 9:30am Gathering space at Trinity Lutheran Church
- 9:30am to 10:30am Churches of the Volga Germans (Brent Mai)
- 10:45am to 12:15pm Church Service
- 12:15pm to 1:15pm Lunch
- 1:15pm to 1:45pm VG genealogy sources (David Markgraf)
- 1:15pm to 5:00pm Village Table Networking with attendees, genealogy resources, and  
Brent Mai one-on-one genealogy sessions



Trinity Lutheran Church, Sheboygan,  
Mother church to Sheboygan's Germans from Russia.



## Places That Matter

The National Trust for Historic Preservation celebrated its 2016 Preservation Month in May with the slogan, *This Place Matters*. In NTHP's words, "Everyone has places that are important to them. Places they care about. Places that matter."

In the United States, one of the first historic preservation efforts was General George Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh, New York. It was here that Washington rejected the idea that he should be king after the Revolutionary War. This property has the distinction of being the first-ever property designated and operated as a historic site by a U.S. state, having been so since 1850.

Another early historic preservation undertaking was that of Washington's Mount Vernon beginning in 1858. Did you know the house's cupola is topped with a weathervane in the shape of a dove of peace? The two-story porch facing the Potomac River is one of the mansion's most iconic architectural features and was designed by Washington. In the 18th century, it was extremely rare to see such a grand façade on a private residence. The Wisconsin Historical Society's Division of Historic Preservation-Public History also helps people preserve places of enduring value. The Astor Fur Warehouse and Villa Louis, both located in Prairie du Chien, were honored in 1960, as two of Wisconsin's first historic landmarks.

Sheboygan County is no stranger to historic preservation. As early as 1976 Sheboygan County Landmarks Ltd. researched and named county locations as landmarks, creating an archive of stories and photos of more than 400 historic properties. This information is stored at SCHRC.

This June, the Sheboygan County Historical Society will be sponsoring a historic home tour featuring four plus notable buildings in Sheboygan. The tours run Saturday and Sunday, June 25 and 26, 2016 from 10:00am to 1:00pm. For two days, you can tour these structures (the Eliza Prange Home (Legacy Architecture) 603 Erie Ave., the Anton Hoenigsberg home at 225 Huron Ave., the Jerry Donahue home at 504 Ontario Ave., and the Masonic Temple located at 411 St. Clair Ave.) You will also hear about the people who built, lived or worked in each of these fascinating buildings. A fifth home or bonus property, the John P. Reiss mansion will be open on Sunday, June 25th from 1:00pm to 3:00pm only.

This is a special event being held as a fundraiser for the Society. The cost is \$20 non-members and \$15 for members of the Historical Society.



Designed by W.C. Weeks, and constructed in 1923, the brick Mediterranean-style brick Eliza Prange mansion, 603 Erie Avenue, was listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places in 2015. Eliza Prange, along with her brother, Henry, started Sheboygan's famed H.C. Prange Company. In an age when many women of her station didn't pursue a career outside the home, Eliza rose through the corporate ranks, holding many roles within the company over a span of 41 years, rising from clerk to vice president. Today, this beautifully restored building is home to Legacy Architecture, still boasting leaded glass windows, arched doorways and original millwork and fixtures.

**Eliza Prange home**



The Masonic Temple, 411 St. Clair Avenue, Sheboygan, was built in 1929 on the site of the former Frank Roenitz property for \$175,000.00. Tudor Gothic in style, it is built of Bedford stone with leaded glass windows. A. R. Clas of Chicago was the architect. The floors are of travertine marble. The walls seem to be, too, but they are, in fact, a work of trompe l'oeil, or a process done to fool the eye. This building is a truly unique and outstanding architectural gem.



**Donohue Home**

The Jerry Donohue residence, 504 Ontario Avenue, was home to a veritable dynasty of interesting people. Jerry Donohue Sr. arrived in Sheboygan Falls in 1857 and began a career in railroading. He worked his way up from a fireman to a conductor and then superintendent of tracks. He built this home about 1888. This Jerry was father to Jerry Donohue, the engineer, who worked on the Sheboygan Marsh project and virtually every other project of any size in the area. Jerry Donohue, of Donohue Engineering fame, had a son, Jerry Donohue, the physical chemist, who worked with Watson and Crick to discover the structure of DNA. This beautiful home saw three generations of Donohues make history.

The next home is located at 225 Huron Avenue. Built by Anton Hoenigsburg, president of Wisconsin Mirror Plate Company, in about 1918, it was sold to the Waldemar Newcomet family in the early 1930s. Newcomet was a vice-president and general manager of the Reiss Steamship Com-

pany. Larry Sands MacDonald, a Sheboygan businessman and community activist bought the house in the 1970s. MacDonald, active in the Sheboygan YMCA, was the driving force behind Sheboygan's peace pole, installed in 2005 at the confluence of Michigan Avenue, Broughton Drive and North Third Street.

The John Peter Reiss mansion, 311 St. Clair Avenue is a bonus stop. Once called the grand dame of them all, it is a stately red brick and stone home which sits on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. The original home had twenty-one rooms, five baths and living quarters above the carriage house. Designed on a grand scale, it had a dozen fireplaces of brick and forged metal, monogrammed iron gates, green marble entrance floor, three kitchens, a library, a children's playroom with built-in blackboard, a game room with a gargoyle faucet and a third floor ballroom.

In the style of an English townhouse, the Reiss mansion was designed by Milwaukee architect, H.W. Buemming in 1911 for John P. Reiss, the head of the Reiss Steamship Company. Buemming also planned the Sheboygan City Hall in 1915 and the C. Reiss Coal office building. W.C. Weeks was the builder.

Please note -- The John P. Reiss Mansion, 303 St. Clair, is open ONLY on Sunday, June 26 from 1:00 to 3:00. Please retain your ticket for admission to this bonus property.

Tickets for this special event can be purchased at the museum, 3310 Erie Avenue or at the Research Center, 518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls, and also at each location the day of the event. The cost is \$20 non-members and \$15 for members of the Historical Society. No food or drink is allowed in buildings. This is your chance to help Sheboygan County celebrate its Places That Matter.

**Reiss Mansion**



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He also volunteered for decades at the Sheboygan County Historical Museum and the Research Center. What most didn't know was that his property was a showcase for hostas, many of them his mother's work.

In fact, you can also see a great selection of Eunice's prize hostas gracing the east and north sides of the Research Center. The family supplied SCHRC with a number of cultivars as part of its 2014 landscaping project.

Hostas are popular for their ease of growing, especially in shade-loving areas. Gardeners find that they can be successful and tend to want more and more of them. It has been said, "If you can't grow hostas, give up gardening and take up golf."

Trends in new hostas include plants with red stems, ruffled edges, and fragrance.

Thanks to Eunice Fisher and a handful of other visionary gardeners, we benefit from the thousands of kinds of hostas available today. Our lives and gardens are richer and more beautiful because of them.





### **Our newest Legacy Society Members- 2016**

John and Deloris Ballhorn  
 William and LuAnne Cleary Benninghaus  
 James and Virginia Hoelter  
 Tom and Joanne Howe  
 Julilly Kohler  
 Steve and Jane Brasser Shaver  
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### **SCHRC's generous Legacy Society Members**

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### Annual Campaign 2016

*Helping others find their identity in pieces of the past*

Thanks to our Business members, Legacy members and every other member and donor who has supported the 2016 Annual Campaign with a financial gift.

You keep the doors open. You allow SCHRC to sponsor dozens of programs,  
serve thousands of people  
and preserve some of the greatest history ever.

If you haven't yet made your annual campaign donation, please do so now.  
We're so very close to our goal of \$35,000.00.  
Just a few added dollars, and we'll be over the top.

You make it happen.