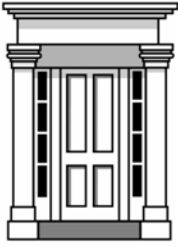


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
CENTER

The Researcher

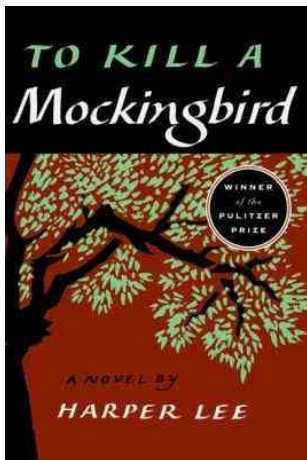
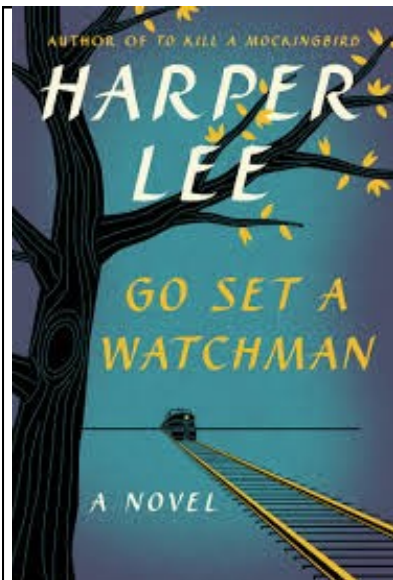
The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research Center

Volume XXVI Number 1 October 2015

ONE book. ONE community.



The Plymouth Chapter



Plymouth Reads — Harper Lee's new novel, *Go Set a Watchman* is the one book for this wonderful reading event sponsored by the Plymouth Public Library and Book Heads. Originally written in the mid-1950s, *Go Set a Watchman* was the novel Harper Lee first submitted to her publishers before *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Assumed to have been lost, the manuscript was discovered in late 2014. *Go Set a Watchman* features many of the characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* some twenty years later.

Events— All open to the public, free of charge

Tues, 10/13 - Screening of "To Kill a Mockingbird"

Held at 6:30 pm in the Plymouth High School Auditorium.

Thurs, 10/15 - General Discussion & Quotes

Held at 1pm in the Plymouth Public Library - led by Jim Beaver

OR

Held at 6:30pm at the 52 Stafford in Plymouth - led by Jim Beaver

Tues, 10/20 - Discussion on Feminism

Held at 1:30pm in the Library room at Generations - tea will be served. Led by Mary Lynn Donahue and Karen Rhyan

OR

Held at 7:30pm at Pourvino. Led by Mary Lynn Donahue and Karen Rhyan

Wednesday, 10/26 - Discussing the theme "Coming of Age"

Held at 7pm - Plymouth Brewing Company. Led by PHS English Teacher Brad Feick.

Tues, 10/27 - Open Discussion

Held at 10am at the Plymouth Public Library - led by Rachel Stoyke.

Tues, 10/27 - Screening of "To Kill a Mockingbird"

Held at 2pm at the Plymouth Public Library

Wed, 10/28 - Literary Criticism

Held at 7pm at the Plymouth Arts Center - led by Jim Beaver.

Mon, 11/2 - Open Discussion

Held at 7pm in the SJB Library- led by Brad Feick.

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 November 26, 2015 for Thanksgiving.

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 museum.

SCHRC Board of Directors

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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.

Fall Programs

The Lake Michigan Series in cooperation with the Sheboygan County Historical Museum Sheboygan County Historical Museum 3110 Erie Avenue, Sheboygan 6:30pm—8:30pm

Thursday, October 1, 2015; Maritime Commerce with Rocky Groh

Thursday, October 15, 2015; Sheboygan Area Shipwrecks

Thursday, October 22, 2015; Wisconsin National Marine Sanctuary

Thursday, October 29, 2015; Surf's Up Sheboygan with Larry and Lee Williams

The Lincoln Series with Steven Rogstad Returns Made possible by funding from the John and Hilda Holden Memorial Fund and Wisconsin Humanities Council Sheboygan County Historical Museum—3110 Erie Avenue, Sheboygan.

Wednesday, October 7, 2015: Abraham & Mary Lincoln's Psychologies of Death - 6:30 to 8:30pm

Saturday, October 10, 2015: Spiritualism & Seances in the White House - 9:30 to 11:30am — SS Museum

Wednesday, October 14, 2015 - 6:30 to 8:30pm Hour 1: Lincoln's Dreams, Omens & Portents of Impending Death and Hour 2: Ghosts Abide: Lincoln's Ghost and Paranormal Events Associated with the Assassination

Wednesday, October 21, 2015: The Plot to Steal Lincoln's Corpse - 6:30 to 8:30pm

Second Saturdays— Journeys Into Local History Made possible by funding from the John and Hilda Holden Memorial Fund

October 10, 2015 Steven Rogstad - Spiritualism & Seances in the Lincoln White House (Change of venue - to be held at the Sheboygan County Museum, not the PAC)

November 14, 2015 Jerry Apps - Wisconsin Agriculture: A History

December 12, 2015 John Eastberg - Grand Avenue Mansions and Milwaukee's Beer Barons

(History on the Move) Cedar Grove Public Library 131 Van Alton Avenue, Cedar Grove 6:00pm to 7:30pm Tuesdays,

October 13, 2015 - History of Postcards Tuesday,

November 10, 2015 - Great Surveys and Great Surveyors of Sheboygan County with Edgar Harvey, County Surveyor

(History on the Move) Lakeview Community Library 112 Butler Street, Random Lake 1:00pm to 2:30pm

November 5, 2015 Sheboygan County Connection, Part 3

December 3, 2015 Sheboygan County Connection, Part 4

(History on the Move) Oostburg Public Library 213 North 8th Street, Oostburg 1:00pm to 2:30pm Tuesday

Tuesday, October 27, Cemeteries, A Walk Among the Departed

Tuesday, November 24, 2015 A History of Farming

(Genealogy Classes) SCHRC

518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls 1:00pm to 3:00pm \$10 members, \$15 non-members

Monday, October 12, 2015 Advanced Class on Using Census Reports

Monday, November 9, 2015 Vital Records, Birth, Death and Marriage Records

Monday, December 14, 2015 Use of Obituaries in Research - Advanced

German Evangelical Reformed Zoar Church

Sheboygan County was once home to a church that carried the unusual name of Zoar. Historically, the biblical name of Zoar, was once one of five cities on the plain of Jordan which in the book of Genesis made up the Pentapolis. It was a grouping of rather notorious cities located around the Dead Sea. Zoar alone was spared the brimstone and fire which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah in order to provide a refuge for Lot and his daughter. Remember, Lot's wife was turned into salt.

Curious, that this town of Rhine German Reformed congregation when founded in 1862 was named Zoar. The congregation started when two students from Mission House organized a Sunday School or Sonntagschule. Soon arrangements were made to have a worship service every other Sunday. By Christmas Day, 1862 a new constitution was signed by 17 people, more followed the next year and the newly organized congregation took the formal name, the German Evangelical Reformed Zoar Church. For many years all of its services were conducted in German.

The church was originally located just north of Gerber Lake Road on the east side of Highway 57 at the same location as the cemetery. Members walked to services. The church had no basement and no modern facilities. In 1955, the church was forced to move location because of the widening of Hwy 57. The church was moved across the road and 1/8 mile north with the entrance of the church on the east side of the building. A basement was added and modernization was done. Rev. Ernest Gander, a graduate of Mission House, was pastor at the time of the renovation. In 1962 the church had 93 members. Family names included those of Gessert, Pickruhn, Frick, Menke, Feldmann, Mathes, Miller, Sander and Giese.

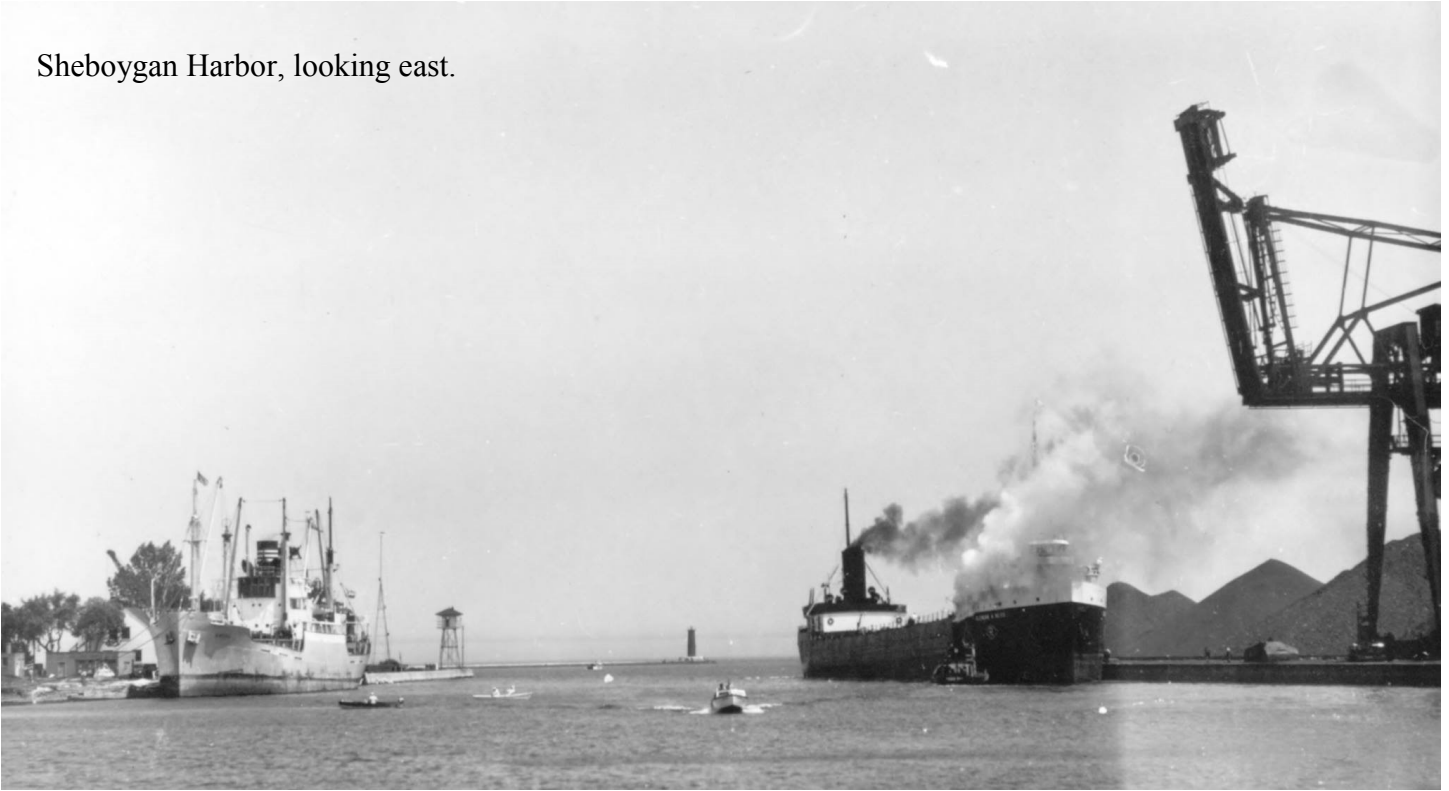


Membership decreased to the extent that a change was necessary. The congregation voted to dissolve in 1969. The church was sold is presently a residence. An auction for real estate and furnishings was held Saturday, July 12th. When evaluated by the synod prior to closing a number of problems (or perceived problems) were noted— They included: Non-attendance at worship services, 15 children in church school, no plans for future growth, and a personal favorite the congregation was listed as “a bit too much horse and buggy living with too much beer involved.” It was a small, close-knot congregation that had served its community for more than 100 years. Sadly, things changed and Zoar Church closed.

The images of the church being moved in 1955-1956 were provided by Willard C. Matzdorff. Thanks Willard.

C. Reiss Coal Company

Sheboygan Harbor, looking east.

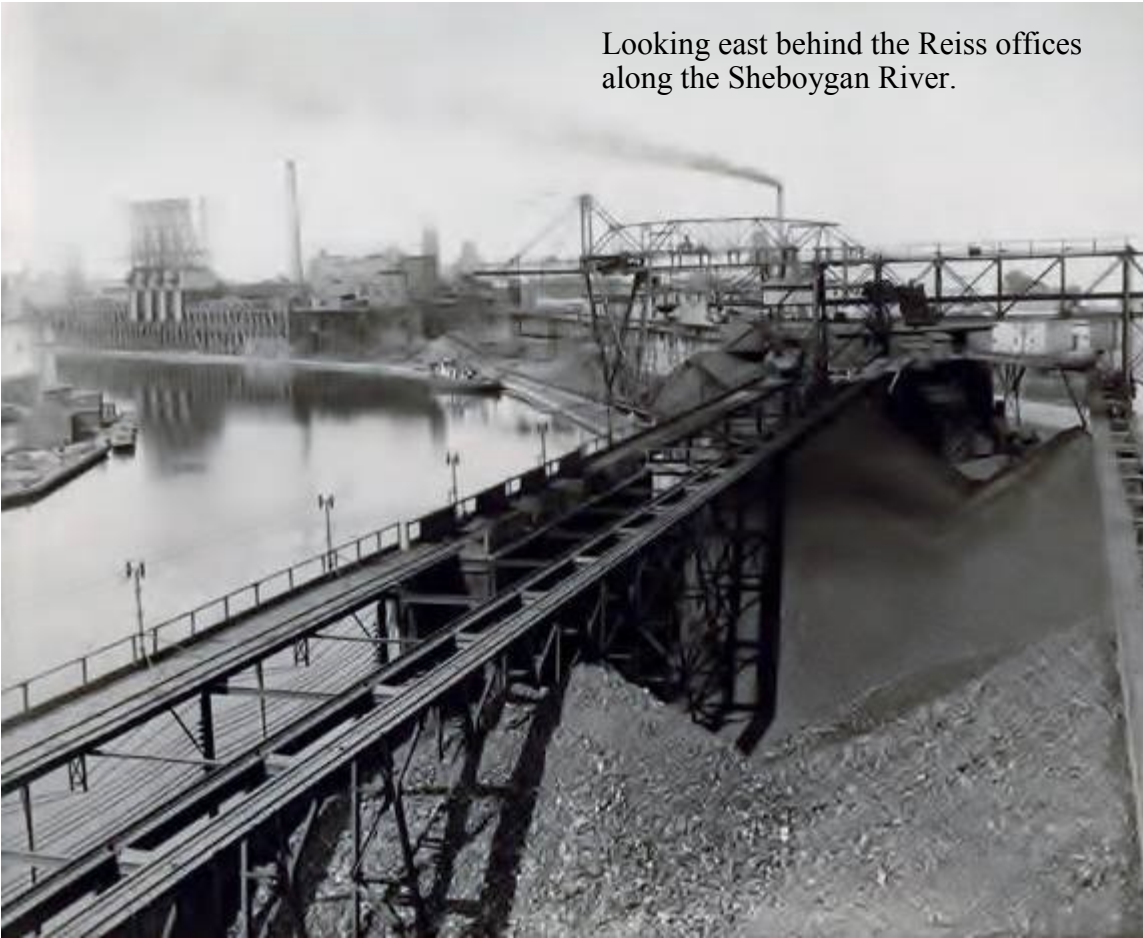


In 1880, Clemens Reiss founded the C. Reiss Coal Company at Sheboygan. This event dramatically changed the fact of the harbor. Huge coal freighters brought coal to Sheboygan and mountainous piles and heavy unloading equipment covered the landscape. For years the people of Sheboygan enjoyed watching the big coal boats unloading tons of coal at the Reiss dock, which was located south of the river where the Kirkland dock once stood. It covered the area from the lake to the 8th Street Bridge. From 1920 to 1969, 24 ships were owned by the company at different times. Three of the Reiss fleet ships, the Richard Reiss, the Reiss Brothers and the William Reiss are still afloat, but under different names. The Reiss Company also owned several tug boats which towed ships in and out of the harbor or towed ships to other ports on the lake. The tugs Peter Reiss and Green Bay are often seen in old photos. The company grew to huge proportions before being sold in 1986.

William A. Reiss



Looking east behind the Reiss offices
along the Sheboygan River.



The familiar “three-two” blast of the ship’s horn brought both children and adults hurrying by foot, bicycle and automobile to the dock to watch the boat maneuver into the harbor and unload its cargo. At its sale in 1969 the Reiss Steamship Company’s seasonal tonnage averaged 10 million tons or more. Four hundred sailors manned its fleet of 9 coal-fired steamers and two diesel carriers.

William A. Reiss

Volga Aid Society Baseball Teams

The Volga Aid Society was organized in 1924 in Sheboygan in order to have a group that would teach the American way of life to the membership and their children. It was also a fraternal organization that paid members sick and death benefits. It was also an organization which celebrated the ethnic heritage of the Volga Germans.

Photos donated by Peter Kaland



The Volga Aid Society team from 1925-1926 is seen above. A news article announces on June 9, 1926 that the I.C. team (Immaculate Conception) won from the Volga Aids in a 6-inning game by a score of 7-3. W. Jocis pitched and W. Debrauske featured at bat with three hits.

Below — 1928-1929 team—top row— Gottlieb Kober, Dick Welsch, Carl Roth, Henry Richter, Norm Wilbert, Ollie Schmidt, Dick Kerr, Seated: Left to right, Fred Hermann, Buddy Hilgenberg, John Thornton, Harold Richter, Buddy Kaeppler,, Christ Martin, Buddy Pfister.



April 9, 1926 Sheboygan Press - The VAS baseball team enjoyed a banquet Thursday afternoon at the H.C. Prange company fourth floor restaurant. Mrs. Ida Amend had charge of the banquet and the three-course dinner.

Trowbridge Foundry AKA Phoenix Iron Works

Request from a Seattle resident—

"I have just read in "Historic Sheboygan County" by Gustave W. Buchen and also a similar note on the Sheboygan County Rootsweb site about the Trowbridge Foundry (later rebuilt and named the Phoenix Iron Works). I have also read an account in "Spring Corners and Schwarzwald" by Edmund Schulz that many of the iron cross grave markers at the St. Joseph Cemetery in Schwarzwald/Herman Town, were made by the Vollrath and Kohler Companies. However, both of those companies did not come into existence until the 1870s or later. My interest is if there is any information whether the Phoenix Iron Works might have produced such traditional German iron cross grave markers in the 1850's. Being the only foundry between Milwaukee and Green Bay and closest to a cemetery of interest I have (St. Fidelis, Meeme, Manitowoc County) I am hopeful that this might have been a source for such grave markers."



Iron crosses found in Calvary Cemetery, Sheboygan.

So does anyone have verification that Phoenix Iron Works, once located in Sheboygan, might have made iron cemetery crosses.

Does anyone have a cross made by Phoenix?

A bit of background — Iron cross grave markers are a recognized and treasured feature of the material culture of the North American plains and Midwest. In the United States this body of material culture has been identified historically and culturally with the Germans from Russia. The iron crosses were particularly suited as prairie monuments: Unlike wooden crosses, those made of wrought iron or other metals were tough enough to withstand prairie fires, storms—even time itself.

Often, these wrought-iron crosses were crafted by local blacksmiths, in shops called "smithies." Using hammer, anvil and forge, these early artisans crafted crosses of iron, steel and other metals, often from pieces of scrap material. They worked in unlit buildings, watching with practiced eye the changing colors of the heated metal, pounding it as it melted, bending it until it formed the shape of a cross.

Many pioneer crossmakers learned their craft in the Old Country, serving for years as apprentices to experienced smiths before becoming smiths themselves. These "Eisenkreuzen" were crafted for generations by blacksmiths on the steppes of the Volga and the Black Sea region of Russia. These skills came with the smiths as they immigrated to America. The size, shape, style, color, design and symbols all have cultural significance.

Other wrought iron metal crosses found in Catholic German and French cemeteries are painted silver, white or black with decorative symbols added to the rectangular or heart shaped plate attached to the front.

Call SCHRC, 920-467-4667, if you have information on the Phoenix Iron Works or know something about iron grave markers.

Richardson Boat Plans

Information is needed on Richardson wooden boat plans. Rob Ecker, long time SCHRC donor, member and supporter, plans to enter the 2016 annual Midwestern Model Ship and Boat contest. His intended boat for that show is a Richardson boat from Sheboygan Falls WI. It is a 14' to 16' fishing boat built in the 1940s or 1950s. Very little information is available. There are no plans, but existing boats are helpful.

If anyone can help, please contact Rob at robecker@charter.net. Do you have plans or photos or even a real Richardson boat? Please help if you can.

**RESEARCH CENTER
518 WATER STREET
SHEBOYGAN FALLS, 53085-1455**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Wed, 11/4 - Character Comparison
Held at 7pm at Pourvino - led by Herb Stoltenberg.
Fri, 11/6 - Open Discussion
Held at 1pm in the Gathering Room at Generations - led by David Lagerman.
Mon, 11/9 - Open Discussion
Held at 6pm at the Plymouth Public
Library - led by Rachel Stoyke
Tues, 11/10 - Panel Discussion
Held at 7pm in the PHS Auditorium
- led by Lakeland Professors Dr.
Rick Dodgson, Dr. Linda Tolman
and others

continued on page 8

This project held in conjunction
with the Plymouth Public
Library's 100th year in service to
the community.

