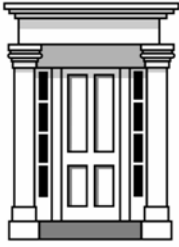


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
CENTER

CLOSED FOR ARCHIVING

August 17, 2020
through
August 30, 2020

Open again after Labor Day

ANOTHER NEW BOOK

Available in September, 2020

*Among the Badgers,
Rediscovering Sites Associat-
ed with Abraham and Mary
Lincoln in Wisconsin*

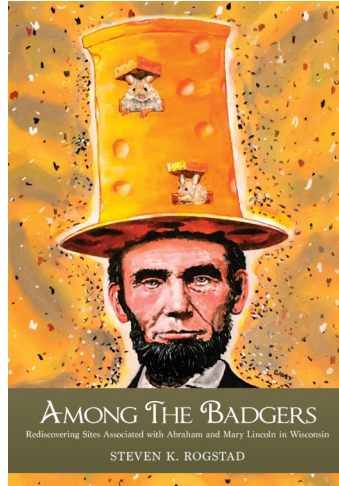
By Steven K. Rogstad

The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research Center

Volume XXX Number 6 August 2020

The Researcher is sponsored by Jay Christopher of Christopher Farm & Gardens.



*Among the Badgers,
Rediscovering Sites Associated with Abraham
and Mary Lincoln in Wisconsin*

An Interview with Steven Rogstad, author

Q. What is this book about?

A. This volume is really a history book, travel book, and coffee table book all rolled into one. It chronicles the known visits Abraham and Mary Lincoln made to Wisconsin in their lifetimes. Abraham was here in 1832 and 1859, while Mary came twice in 1867, and once in 1872. The book also identifies monuments and markers to the Lincolns in the state. It also tells

the stories of five people who were connected with the Lincolns, who are buried in the state. This is a book about Wisconsin connections to the Lincolns and identifies buildings, sites, monuments, and unusual places you can still visit that have a Lincoln presence.

Q. How long did it take you to write the book?

A. I started thinking about writing this book more than a decade ago. There have been three separate phases for this book. The first phase was determining what the overall theme would be and establishing criteria for inclusion. I actually wrote three essays for the book before deciding they did not meet my own criteria, and chose not to include them. The writing itself, the second phase, took about a year and a half. I finished the final essays earlier this year at home during the pandemic while the Center was closed. The third phase, which really ran concurrent with the writing phase, was selecting and organizing all the images for the book, plus writing the captions. The entire project has taken two years.

Q. You refer to the book's theme and criteria. What was the criteria?

A. The book is intended to be a sort of travel guide to Wisconsin history. Therefore, each chapter or essay had to be a site in the state where people can still visit and become reconnected to Wisconsin history. Naturally, the monuments, markers, and buildings are in the state. However, there are numerous and wonderful stories about Wisconsinites

Continued on page 6

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

Open Tuesday through Friday, 9:00am – 4:00pm.

Closed August 17, 2020 through August 29, 2020 – Archiving

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Website: schrc.org

The Researcher is the official newsletter of the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center, 518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin 53085.

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.

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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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Subterranean Grain Fields Resulting from “Moon” Mash Cause Sewers To Be Clogged

Sheboygan Press—June 13, 1924

Will the moonshine traffic in Sheboygan make it necessary for the city to plan a special disposal system to carry away the waste of that contraband product? It begins to look that way according to City Engineer C. U. Boley, who says that his department is continually confronted with the problem of opening up the sewers after they have been clogged with deposits of mash and subterranean grain fields that result. If a new drainage system, built especially for the purpose of carrying away refuse of an illicit business becomes necessary, then who would be compelled to pay for it? ...

Something Must Be Done

The condition is continually growing worse, according to Mr. Boley, and it is costing the city large sums of money to remedy it. If the moonshiner is honest or has any conscience, here is an idea that may suit: Realizing that there is a great deal of extra cost in cleaning mash-clogged sewers, he might be willing to cast his mite occasionally into what could be called a Conscience Box, which could be installed on some inconspicuous corner. The Conscience Box could be designed on the order of a strong box or safe, so that it would be impossible for burglars to break into it and steal its contents, and a special city officer could be designated to go the rounds several times each night to make collections.

Here the moonshiner who is fortunate to escape the law, might drop in a certain small—it would necessarily be small, very small—percentage of the profits he makes on his product, that the city may be re-imbursed to a slight extent for the extra labor and expense incurred in cleaning the sewers of their masses of foots, solid filth and growing plants that result from the bash being thrown into them because of the conveniences of modern times, and because this method of disposal destroys evidence, thus making arrest and conviction less probable.

Just recently, according to Mr. Boley, the city street crew struck one of the worst spots encountered since people started making their own, as well as a lot for others. Two blocks of sewer some place between N. Eighth street and N. Twelfth street on Michigan Avenue was so solidly packed with mash, growing corn and other root formations, that it was extremely difficult for city laborers to force a steel cable through. They had to get the cable from one manhole to another so they could pull a sewer cleaning machine after it. After much effort, they managed to get it through. Then, they drew through it a turbine engine equipped with revolving knives, and freed the conduit of its overload. ...

The Researcher is sponsored by Jay Christopher of Christopher Farm & Gardens



“LET’S DEVELOP OUR CENTER”

Steven K. Rogstad
Director of Development

Since the Center reopened to the public this past June 9th, normal operations have gradually and slowly re-introduced themselves into the daily routine of the staff and volunteers. Yet, how we operated earlier this year is very different from the way we are currently going about fulfilling the mission of the organization. A few of our volunteers are regularly – even daily – coming to the center to continue their valuable work of processing existing collections and new acquisitions. Visitors are returning to conduct research. Yet, these wonderful scenes of activity and enjoyment do not resemble the numbers of volunteers and visitors we had before last March, when ten people would find themselves huddled around the big table almost every day in the library, working on maps, obituaries, photographs, documents, wedding announcements, queries, and other research projects.

It is also the same for our program schedule. We reintroduced our summer Taproom History series, which has attracted over twenty persons at each of the first two sessions hosted by The Fat Cow in Sheboygan Falls. Last year, each of the three sessions produced over sixty attendees, but the persons who have attended this year are happy to be learning about some unusual aspects of Wisconsin history. Our final offering will be on Thursday, August 20, at The Fat Cow, at 6:30 pm. Patrick Jung will be discussing “Torture and Execution in Europe and Native America.” I hope you will consider attending and enjoying \$3.00 burger night, while hearing about some great history!

Annual Campaign. It has been a challenging year for nonprofit organizations. The national health crisis has kept many museums, historical societies, and historic sites closed. Our Center, however, is *open*. Our Center is *functioning*. Our Center is still acquiring and managing collections, hosting programs, and assisting with research requests. It continues to demonstrate its relevance by housing the documentary and pictorial history of greater Sheboygan County, and teaching the public about that unique regional history.

We recently launched our Annual Campaign, which is the Center’s primary annual fundraising event. This year we need your help as never before! The costs associated with operating the business have still been there during this difficult time. We now need *your* help more than ever before. A goal of raising \$51,000 has been set to help the Center continue its mission of preserving the documentary

and photographic history of Sheboygan County. I hope you will support the Center this year by thinking generously when you make your donation. You can send in a check, or pay on the Center’s website, www.schrc.org.

Scanning Digital Records: An Alternative Funding Option. Another way to help support the Center is to encourage groups, organizations, businesses, and corporations to use the Center to digitize their records. As I have discussed previously in this column, the Center started scanning material for organizations over a year ago. To date, we have scanned a substantial quantity of records for government agencies and small organizations. This benefits the Center in several ways: (1) it produces valuable revenue for the Center, (2) it places the organization in a unique position of performing the same work being done by private for-profit companies across the United States. By hiring the Center to digitize records, a group can financially assist a local nonprofit and keep the money within Sheboygan County, and (3) digital copies of the records can be also be added to the collection inventory of the Center, expanding its history of the county.

Many of us belong to religious, fraternal, and civic groups, which have corporate records stored in attics, basements, closets, garages, and storage facilities. Those paper records are at risk for destruction from fire, water, decay, and disposal. Many records are tossed out or destroyed because people no longer wish to store them, or because they are deemed old or unimportant by modern group leaders, or by heirs who may have inherited them in some way and do not realize their historical significance. Once paper records are destroyed, so are the histories in them! This is also true of family photographs or entire photograph albums!

I am encouraging you today to think about the groups you belong to. Where are their records? Are they safe? How many records are there? Have you ever heard someone from the group say they have thought of just throwing them away to make more space; that they are tired of storing them and do not know what to do with them?

Think about the photograph albums that are in your family. Who has them? Are they safe? Has a new generation of family members – perhaps not interested in family history – inherited them in some manner and are just storing them because nobody else will? What is to be done with them? How about the family who has five siblings and only one of them has all the photographs? What about the other four? Do they want copies?

Please share the Center’s scanning services with your friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family members. Valuable and memorable images and documents can be saved for perpetuity if they are digitally scanned and preserved!

Continued on page 7

Sheboygan's Singing Along!

(Compiled by member Mike Short, Sheboygan)

As their name implies, Concordia was “harmonizing” all along - for a long time! For the past 160 years without pause, the sounds of classic German songs have been heard throughout the City of Sheboygan and its environs delighting the many German immigrants who settled there. They brought with them their German language, cuisine, beer and culture, but it was the German music of their *Heimat* (homeland) that best linked them to the old country and could still be celebrated in the new world.



On February 9, 1860, Gesangverein Concordia of Sheboygan (in English: Concordia Singing Society) was organized by a group of 13 men, only seven years after Sheboygan was chartered as a city. No language in the world has a larger treasury of beautiful songs to exhibit than the German language. Germany and Austria have given birth to arguably the most and best of composers in the history of music, and this rich heritage and a love of singing is what has sustained the organization to this date. It has no religious or political affiliation, and remains one of the oldest German choral singing groups in Wisconsin.

The “Germans”, even if they are not of German descent and do not know the language, love to rehearse weekly, to sing and share “*Gemütlichkeit*” (friendliness, and good cheer). Now, just as it was then, singers come from nearly all walks of life. Choral *lieder* (classic songs) and folk songs of the ethnic past, as well as songs in English, are standard fare.

Initially rehearsals were held in private homes of members of the group. When the Civil War broke out, many members were called to defend the Union. The ensuing four years were trying times for the young organization. In addition to the City and the society growing rapidly, life in general had its challenges. Only some city-dwellers had horses. Railroads were just getting started. The first horse drawn street cars rolled down the dirt roads of the city in 1885. Eventually gas lights were used indoors, prior to electricity. Electricity and municipal water and sewer, as well as indoor plumbing, didn’t come into being until late in the century! (By the 1930s, 90% of urban dwellers had electricity, but only 10% in rural areas.) It wasn’t until the early 1900’s when a few automobiles were seen in Sheboygan.

Property was eventually purchased to erect a hall for rehearsals. The society had done much to cultivate a taste for good music, and rapid growth lead to forming a *Gemischter chor* (mixed gender chorus) and expanding the hall.

Professor Theodore Winkler took over the musical direction of Concordia in 1892. The number of male and female choir members combined, totaled about 80. Winkler guided the society’s destinies through very difficult times, two world wars and a depression, during his 54 year reign as director. He was Music Supervisor in the Sheboygan School District, and earned the title of “Father of Music in Sheboygan” for all his work with youth and community music groups.

In 1916, the society purchased a larger building, remodeled it on occasion, and it has been the Concordia’s club house ever since. Sometime after 1960, the society became a *Männerchor* (men only chorus), and since 1994, it has again been a *Gemischter chor*.

Singer Festivals Ever Popular

As early as October 1861, the first of many *Sängerfests* was held in Sheboygan. Societies attended from the Town of Wilson, Kiel, New Holstein, Manitowoc, Plymouth, and Two Rivers. Singing societies formed in areas throughout the state, almost everywhere there was a settlement of German-speaking immigrants. It is amazing, even in those early years, how much choir members traveled.

Though national associations were organized, their *Sängerfests* became too crowded and so regional festivals were organized. Shortly after the Civil War, the *Nordwestern Sängerbund* (Northwestern Singers Association) was formed, encompassing 50 to 60 German male choruses in the states of Wisconsin, Iowa, Nebraska, Illinois, and Indiana. In 1887, the Concordia Singing Society became affiliated with it, and the entire choir attended its bi-annual *Sängerfest* in Minneapolis in 1889, directed by Concordia’s director.

In 1892, the *Ost* (Eastern) *Wisconsin Sängerbund* was organized in Sheboygan, forerunner of the current Wisconsin *Sängerbezirk* (singing district), so that smaller communities could take turns hosting, and its first *Sängerfest* was held that year, in Sheboygan. In 1899, the two-day event was held in Plymouth, with 14 choruses attending: Brillion, Chilton, Kewaunee, Kiel, Manitowoc (two societies), Newburg, Newton, Plymouth, Port Washington, Sheboygan (two societies)



Concordia’s clubhouse in 2020.



German Concordia Singing Society,
Sheboygan, 1889

and Two Rivers.

Concordia's director Winkler figured prominently in all festivals during his time and Sheboygan hosted a gigantic *Sängerfest* in 1905, which again was considered a huge success, as was the one in 1913! When Sheboygan hosted in 1913, the entire city was all decked out, and a huge welcome with brass band escorts given, along with a Friday evening banquet, and lots of singing and festivities past midnight. The main concert was Saturday night, preceded by a general rehearsal in the afternoon. On Sunday, there was a monster parade and an outdoor celebration with more singing and *Gemütlichkeit*, followed by a dance in the evening. Choruses, most arriving by train, were from Appleton, Ashland, Black Creek, Elkhart Lake, Fond du Lac, Green Bay, Hartford, Kiel, La Crosse, Manitowoc, Marinette, Medford, Merrill, Milwaukee, Oshkosh, Portage, Port Washington, Plymouth, Two Rivers, Waukesha, and Wausau.

While the number and size of choruses has diminished in modern times, the tradition of

Sängerfests has been maintained. The Wisconsin *Sängerbezirk* is slated to host the *Nord-Amerikanischer Sängerbund* (North American Singers Association) National *Sängerfest*, in Madison, in June of 2022.



Camaraderie is High Note

The society has been a focal point for family gatherings and social events, including dances, card parties, picnics, and so on. In modern times, Concordia performs in nursing homes, churches and at community events, hosts an annual *Oktoberfest* Concert, Dinner and Dance (typically the 3rd Saturday in October), participates in various *Sängerfests*, the annual Milwaukee Germanfest, and in an annual singing competition of the seven active choruses (from Sheboygan, the Milwaukee area, Kenosha and Madison) that are members of the Wisconsin district. Concordia has also hosted a number of *Sängerfests* and singing competitions, and due to the success of their annual concerts and fundraising, have been able to continue offering college scholarships to area high school seniors, a tradition started in 1978.

Over the past several decades, Concordia has developed a close friendship with numerous musical groups, especially from Germany. They have enjoyed performing in Sheboygan and being hosted by Concordia, and Concordia in exchange has enjoyed their great hospitality when visiting and performing in their communities. Many singers have stayed in each other's homes.

The tradition of the Concordia Singing Society will continue, not only in the joy of singing, but also in keeping alive part of that rich ethnic heritage and culture. You may follow them at: www.facebook.com/ConcordiaGesangverein/ or on their website: www.concordiasingerswi.org/

who met the Lincolns or were connected in some way to Lincoln or his assassination. The criteria for including some of these people in the book is that they are buried in Wisconsin, so you can visit their graves as well. There are stories about a sculptor, photographer, executioner, pallbearer, politician, and hospital organizer. Although the Lincolns are the theme, the book is really about a multitude of average Americans, who performed some really marvelous things during their lifetime through their association or fascination with Abraham Lincoln.

Q. Have you written other books? How is this book different from your other writing projects?

A. I have edited two previous books, and written introductions for two others. I have also authored numerous articles, book reviews, and booklets. *Among the Badgers* is my first book. This volume is very different from many Lincoln books because it is highly illustrative and presents stories that most people may not be familiar with. For years I had been visualizing how it would look page-by-page. I wanted every page to be interesting in content and appearance. I have been very involved in the overall appearance of how this book presents the stories to the reader.

Q. You have written a book about one of the world's most admired and written about people. Is that any different than writing about some other topic?

A. Heavens, yes! At least it has been for me. The history has to be accurate. There can be no glaring errors. Your interpretations must be fact-based and supported by evidence in accordance with historical method. Prominent Lincoln scholars will read this volume with a critical eye, so I am aware that every one of my statements and interpretations will be microscopically examined by a myriad of historians. That is daunting. I have read and re-read every one of these essays numerous times, looking for potential errors or possible wrongful interpretations. I am very comfortable standing by what I have stated in this book. I think the Lincoln community will enjoy this book, since a majority of it will be new material.

Q. Is there new information about the Lincolns in this book?

A. Yes. Four new letters written by Mary Lincoln in 1867 from Racine have come to light recently. I have been allowed access three of those letters. In fact, I have held them and photographed them for the book! They have never been published before. So, readers will be able to see actual letters she wrote from Wisconsin. Also, there will be photographs of maquettes associated with Lincoln statues in the state that have never been seen before.

Q. Were there any surprises for you during the research, or did you have to change any opinions you may have held before doing your research?

A. Two things stand out. I thought I was very familiar with the account of Lincoln's speaking engagements in Milwaukee, Beloit, and Janesville. In fact, I had always thought that the Janesville and Beloit visits were rather unremarkable and not altogether interesting. Boy, was I mistaken! It wasn't until I peeled back the known facts and started piecing together what really occurred – and how it occurred – that I came to fully appreciate what Lincoln endured during his 1859 visit. I doubt he ever forgot his experiences in Wisconsin that year. I also anticipated that the story behind the seated Lincoln statue in Kenosha by Charles Niehaus would be somewhat dull. Again, when I closely examined the story, I was proved wrong. The story of Orla Calkins and how he brought that statue to his community ended up being one of my favorites essays to write.

Q. Any final words?

A. History is more fascinating than any fiction the mind of man can invent. This book has some very unique and unusual tales. There are stories you will laugh at, shake your head at, and maybe read with disbelief. But it all actually happened. You couldn't make some of this stuff up. I hope people will enjoy the stories and visit the places mentioned in the book.

The News of the Day - Sheboygan Press

April 3, 1916

Black Minorca Hen Lays a Large Egg

A black Minorca hen owned by Louis Metzner, 1917 North Eleventh street, has laid an egg eight and one-half inches in periphery around the ends and six and one-half inches around the middle. Some hen that!

Egg With Three Yolks At Newton

A report comes from Manitowoc County that a white leghorn hen in Newton laid such a large egg that it attracted the attention of Mrs. Joseph A. Linsmeyer and family. When the egg was opened, the surprise of the family was heightened by the discovery that it contained three yolks.



The two cylinder, four passenger "Brotz Special" made by Mr. Brotz in 1902-1904 from his own designs. Motor and parts were turned out on a foot power lathe. All parts—chassis, post steering apparatus, transmission, rear axle—were made at home. Mr. Brotz is at the wheel with Mrs. Brotz. The Brotz children occupy the front "rumble seat."

**Hinze's sold licorice-flavored black ice cream for the Fourth of July, 1940.

**Skinless wieners were more expensive than veal chops, rose fish, and pork roast at the A&P store in 1940. According to an H.C. Prange ad in the December 24, 1947 Sheboygan Press, a shopper could buy an entire chicken in a can for \$2.19

**In August of 1957, you could get a low calorie lunch of three Jello cubes, fresh fruit, and cottage cheese for 50 cents at Kresge's.

The Annual Bus Tour is Scheduled for October 19-23, 2020.

ONLY 28 SEATS ARE AVAILABLE THIS YEAR to ensure proper social distancing. Although the current health crisis had temporarily suspended almost all traveling, the Center is still moving forward with plans for another bus tour this year. The itinerary has been set and reservations are being accepted. It will be a five-day tour that explores historical sites in southwestern Wisconsin, northwestern Illinois, and southeastern Iowa. It includes a dinner cruise, dinner-theater, Herbert Hoover Presidential Museum, Ronald Reagan Boyhood Home, John Deere Historic Site, a trolley tour of Galeana (Yes, there will be shopping!!), Rock Island Arsenal, a couple of unique Lincoln sites, and – of course – the renown Trappist Caskets company! Contact Personalized Tours for information and reservations at **920-528-7600**, or check out the tour flyer at our website, www.schrc.org.

Please feel free to contact me with your ideas, suggestions, and recommendations for enhancing our development efforts. You can contact me at 920-467-4667, or email me at steverogstad@schrc.org.

Thank you for all you do to support and help develop our Research Center! Please remain safe, healthy, prudent, and vigilant!

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Hi All,

Just a note to let you know that our friend and fellow volunteer, Jeff Schmidtke, passed away on Monday, July 27, 2020 at his home .

Jeff was a good friend and kind soul. He spent the past four years indexing maps and processing obituaries. He will be missed.

Please keep his family in your thoughts.

SECOND SATURDAYS – JOURNEYS INTO LOCAL HISTORY 2020-2021 SCHEDULE

All presentations begin at 9:30am and are held at the Plymouth Arts Center

They are free and open to the public.

SEPTEMBER 12, 2020

BREWERS TO BRAVES TO BREW CREW WITH TOM ARMSTRONG

2020 is the 50th anniversary of the current Milwaukee Brewers franchise, yet professional baseball in Milwaukee extends as far back as the late 1800's. The rich and varied baseball history in the city has included seven teams, spanned five leagues, and has been played in eight different ball parks. But it is the stories and the intrigue away from the ballpark, as well as the characters on the teams themselves that bring this history to life in unique and revealing ways.

Dr. Tom Armstrong is a veterinarian and public speaker on a variety of topics, including presentations on leadership and organizational dynamics in his current divisional management role with National Veterinary Associates. A lifelong baseball enthusiast, he also enjoys studying baseball history and its connection to everyday life. So, whether you are a baseball fan or not, you will enjoy hearing the anecdotes behind the scenes of "America's Pastime" in Milwaukee.

OCTOBER 10, 2020

MYSTERY OF POVERTY ISLAND WITH RICHARD BENNETT

Richard Bennett, a professional diver and author of 'The Poverty Island Sunken Treasure Brief', has spent over forty-five years and \$100,000 of his own money searching for a Civil War treasure in Lake Michigan. His belief in the treasure has been bolstered by Steve Harrington, a maritime historian, but another historian, Chuck Feltner, debates the veracity of the treasure since there is no record of a ship sinking there despite flawlessly kept records of ships lost on Lake Michigan. However, Richard believes that there would be no record because the treasure was brought during a clandestine operation.

Despite that belief, there is a story that a group of sailors might have accidentally snagged one of the trunks in 1929. They discovered the trunks while pulling up anchor, but before they could get it aboard, the anchor chain snapped and treasure and anchor were lost in the water. A few years later, Karl Jesson, the son of the Poverty Island lighthouse keeper, reported watching a salvage crew that seemed to make an exciting discovery in Lake Michigan just before their ship was sunk by a storm. The sunken salvage ship Captain Lawrence from 1933 was discovered in 1993 and found not to contain the gold. Nevertheless, Bennett is quite confident that he is very close to the treasure.

NOVEMBER 14, 2020

CCC IN WISCONSIN WITH JERRY APPS

Between 1933 and 1942, the Civilian Conservation Corps, a popular New Deal relief program, was at work across America. During the Great Depression, young men lived in rustic CCC camps planting trees, cutting trails, and reversing the effects of soil erosion. In his latest book, acclaimed environmental writer Jerry Apps presents the first comprehensive history of the CCC in Wisconsin. Apps guides readers around the state, from the Northwoods to the Driftless Area, creating a map of where and how more than 125 CCC camps left indelible marks on the landscape. Captured in rich detail as well are the voices of the CCC boys who by preserving Wisconsin's natural beauty not only discovered purpose in their labor, but founded an enduring legacy of environmental stewardship. Join Jerry for a morning fun and great information. This will most likely be a virtual presentation due to Covid19.

DECEMBER 12, 2020

MILWAUKEE CRAFTSMEN WITH JOHN EASTBERG

John will explore the lives of two Milwaukee craftsmen—Cyril Colnik, Milwaukee's famous Wrought Iron Metalsmith and George Mann Niedecken, a Milwaukee interior architect who worked with Frank Lloyd Wright. Milwaukee's famed wrought iron metalsmith, Cyril Colnik, elevated many of Milwaukee's grandest homes and public buildings with his intricate designs. Explore through dozens of photographs how his work impacted both Milwaukee's past and present. Born 1878 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, George Mann Niedecken died 1945 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. George Niedecken was a painter, muralist, and teacher, but best known for his interior architecture and design.

JANUARY 09, 2021

HISTORY OF PLYMOUTH HOSPITAL WITH DAN BUCKMAN

The dream of Rev. Martin Schmidt of St. John Lutheran Church, the Plymouth Hospital opened in 1917 in a former cow pasture at the south end of Selma Street, three years after Rev. Schmidt began marshaling community support for the project. After additions in 1927 and 1956, continued growth and demand led to construction of an all-new hospital to the south, connected to the original hospital by an underground passage, which opened in 1970. The facility is no longer a hospital, but still serves as an acute care center and outpatient clinic. Dan Buckman, Plymouth Historical Society, will present a morning of memories.

FEBRUARY 13, 2021

WISCONSIN ON THE AIR WITH JACK MITCHELL

On a wintry evening in 1917, university professor Earle Terry listened with guests as the popular music of the day filtered from a physics laboratory in Science Hall into a receiving set in his living room. Little did they know that one hundred years of public service broadcasting had just begun. Terry's radio experiment blossomed into a pioneering endeavor to carry out the "Wisconsin Idea," a promise to make the university's knowledge accessible to all Wisconsinites, in their homes, statewide, a Progressive-era principle that still guides public broadcasting in Wisconsin and throughout the nation. In 1947, television was added to this public service model with Channel 21 in Madison, produced, like radio, from the University of Wisconsin campus. By 1967, when the Public Broadcasting Act created the Public Broadcasting System (PBS) and National Public Radio (NPR), the Wisconsin stations had been broadcasting for fifty years. A history one hundred years in the making, Wisconsin on the Air introduces readers to the personalities and philosophies, the funding challenges and legislation, the original Wisconsin programming and pioneering technology that gave us public radio and television. Author Jack Mitchell, who developed All Things Considered for NPR before becoming the head of Wisconsin Public Radio, deftly maps public broadcasting's hundred-year journey by charting Wisconsin's transition from the early days of radio and television to educational broadcasting to the news, information, and music of Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Public Television.

MARCH 13, 2021

ENDANGERED LIGHTHOUSES OF LAKE MICHIGAN WITH JAKE HEFFERNAN

APRIL 10, 2021

MISUNDERSTOOD MISSION OF JEAN NICOLET WITH PATRICK JUNG

For years, schoolchildren heard the story of Jean Nicolet's arrival in Wisconsin. But popularized image of the hapless explorer landing with billowing robe and guns blazing, supposedly believing himself to have found a passage to China, is based on scant evidence—a false narrative perpetuated by fanciful artists' renditions and repetition. In more recent decades, historians have pieced together a story that is not only more plausible but much more complicated and interesting. Patrick Jung synthesizes the research about Nicolet and his superior Samuel de Champlain, whose diplomatic goals in the region are crucial to understanding this much misunderstood journey across the Great Lakes. Additionally, historical details about Franco-Indian relations and the search for the Northwest Passage provide a framework for understanding Nicolet's famed mission. Patrick, a history professor at MSOE, also was a lecturer at SCHRC's 2019 Black Hawk War Symposium.

MAY 08, 2021

DAMN THE OLD TINDERBOX, MILWAUKEE'S NEWHALL HOUSE FIRE WITH MATTHEW PRIGGE

In the dead of an unassuming January night in 1883, Milwaukee's Newhall House hotel was set on fire. Two hours later, the building—once among the tallest in the nation—lay in ruins and over seventy people were dead. It was a tragedy that brought global notice to Milwaukee, with daring escapes and rescues and heart-wrenching tales of victims burned to death or killed as they leapt from the burning building. From the great horror emerged an even greater string of mysteries: Who had set the fire and who was to blame for the staggering loss of life? The Newhall's hard-luck barkeeper? A gentleman arsonist? What of the many other unexplained fires at the hotel? Had the Newhall's management neglected fire safety to boost their profits? Damn the Old Tinderbox! is the gripping tale of one of the Gilded Age's forgotten calamities, a fire that remains among the deadliest unsolved arsons in American history, and a significant chapter in both the history of Milwaukee and the Midwest. Join author Matthew Prigge for a great presentation.