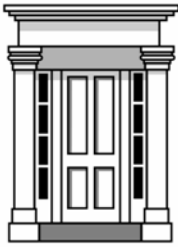


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
CENTER



REMINDERS

MAKE SURE TO RENEW
YOUR MEMBERSHIP WHEN
YOUR INFO ARRIVES IN THE
MAIL

CHECK OUT THE
BOOKSTORE, LOTS OF NEW
SALE ITEMS, SCHRC.ORG OR
AT THE RESEARCH CENTER

SCHRC'S ANNUAL
CAMPAIGN CONTINUES
A DONATION IS ALWAYS
APPRECIATED.

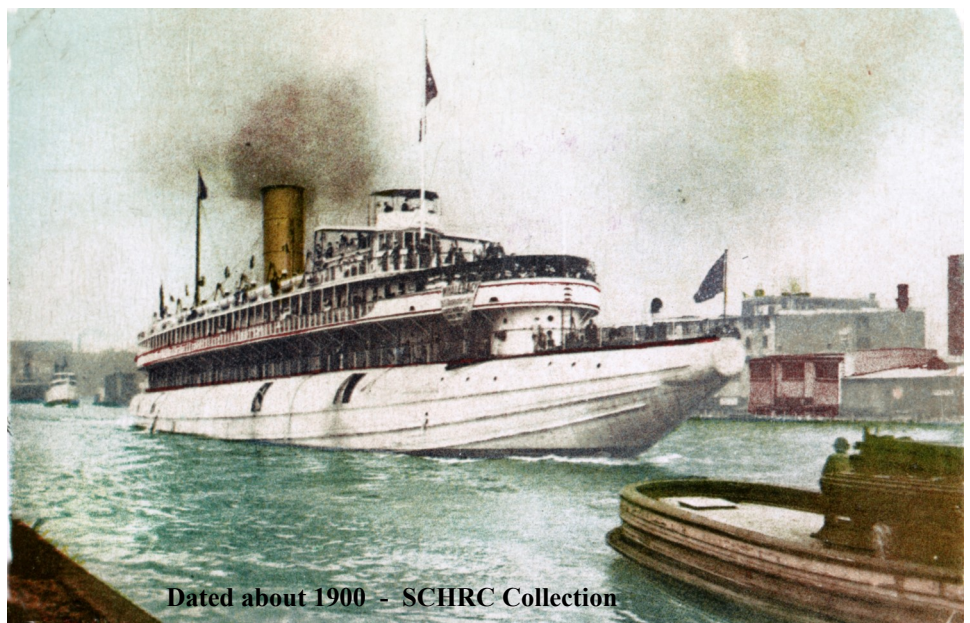
The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research Center

Volume XXXI Number 1 October 2020

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

THE SS CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS, A REMARKABLE AND UNUSUAL VESSEL



Dated about 1900 - SCHRC Collection

The SS Christopher Columbus was an American excursion liner used on the Great Lakes. Built in 1892 at Superior, Wisconsin, by the American Steel Barge Company, she ferried passengers to and from the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (World's Fair). She later provided general transportation and excursion services to various ports around the lakes until 1933. She was scrapped in Manitowoc in 1936.

The only whaleback ship ever built for passenger service, the Columbus was designed by Alexander McDougall, developer and promoter of the whaleback design. Now just what is special about a whaleback? McDougall developed the idea of the whaleback as a way to improve the ability of barges to follow a towing vessel in heavy seas. Whalebacks were characterized by distinctive hull shapes with rounded tops, lacking conventional vertical sides.

Cont. on page 4

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

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

Closed Thursday, November 26, 2020 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 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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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.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Michael Short, Sheboygan - Legacy Society
Sarah Lorenz, Madison - Legacy Society

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.

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 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.

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



“LET’S DEVELOP OUR CENTER”

Steven K. Rogstad
Director of Development

I think we would all agree that this year has been challenging, frustrating, and at times even somewhat depressing. We have been advised and directed to stay in our homes, in our yards, close to our homes, away from family and friends,

away from businesses, and away from public gatherings. The new and foreign concept of social distancing, of course, has interrupted the familiar ways in which we work, play, shop, and socialize.

We have witnessed these same things at the Research Center. A few of our volunteers have returned to the building to process collections and work on the newsletter, while others have not yet felt comfortable enough to venture out from their homes. While the book store is open, many people are choosing to purchase publications online through our website and have them mailed, rather than visiting the Center and peruse the inventory. Some of our programming has been suspended due to governmental rules, health advisories, and good common sense. In recent weeks, we have cancelled both the annual Lincoln Seminar and Bus Tour, both of which were scheduled for October.

This brings us to an interesting and rather provocative conundrum for how we plan to keep our supporters engaged and aware of what we are doing. Most work environments and nonprofit organizations are being compelled to use virtual events and activities almost exclusively. While this can be entertaining and educational, it is also quickly becoming *blasé* as a communication format. The question that nonprofits are asking is: How much discretionary time does the average person spend each day – or *want* to spend each day - watching videos *after* they possibly have spent a full day at work in Zoom meetings, video conferences, and virtual events? Analytics are showing how many “hits” (or views) a video receives, but persons who view it may only watch a few minutes of a ten or fifteen-minute video. attention span has become short, and we are already “videoed out” in this new era of *virtual everything*.

As we ponder what novel ways will work best to keep *you* informed and entertained, I encourage *you* to reach out to our staff or myself (steverogstad@schrc.org) and tell us what kinds of communication work best for you and what types of videos you would enjoy watching.

We are still in the midst of our Annual Campaign, which is a perfect time to remind you that the financial needs of the Research Center are always there. While several programs have been cancelled or postponed, the costs of operating the Center have not been cancelled or postponed. They continue as they always have. Therefore, in the absence of several programs that raised vital revenue, such as the Annual History Symposium, Genealogy Seminar, the Lincoln Seminar, and annual Bus Trip, the Annual Campaign is a crucial component to raising the funds needed to continue the fine work of the Center to preserve the documentary and photographic history of Sheboygan County. Please help your Center today with a financial contribution!

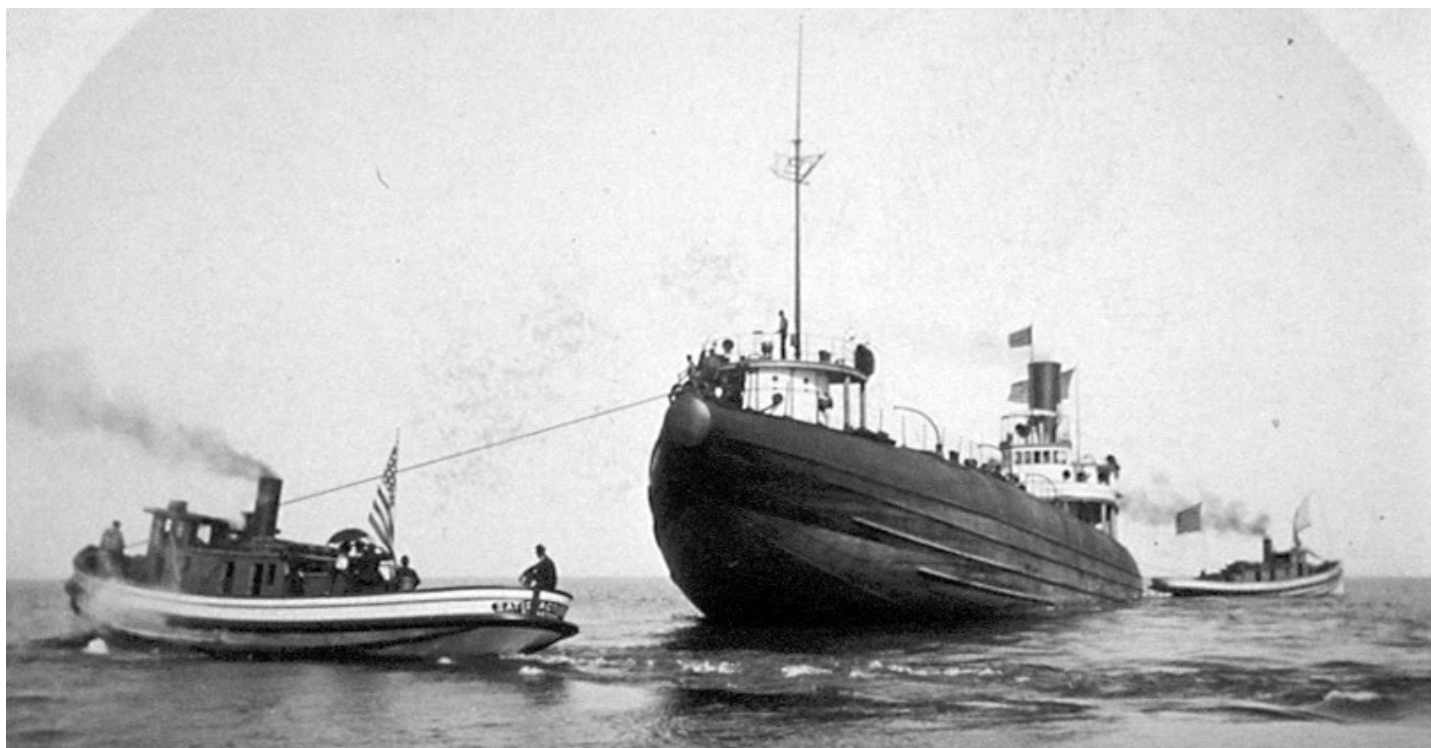
I would like to conclude this message by offering you a few suggestions for some really fantastic videos that are available online for you to watch *free*. You may recall the 1976 and 1977 television mini-series entitled, “*Eleanor and Franklin*,” which was about the Roosevelt marriage. You can view the entire series in two parts (nearly 6 hours). There are also several very informative and fascinating documentaries on FDR and his physical disability. You can view these wonderful videos by going to **YouTube**, and typing in the Search Bar:

Eleanor and Franklin (1976 television movie)
Eleanor and Franklin: The White House Years (tv 1977)
World War Two 1945 the Wheelchair President
FDR Volume 1
FDR Volume 2 Title3

Thank you for all you do to support and help develop our Research Center!

Please remain safe, healthy, prudent, and vigilant!

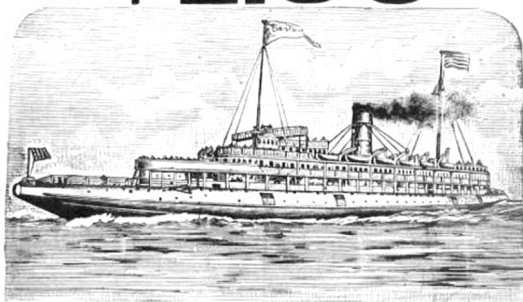
Sincerely,
Steven K. Rogstad
Director of Development



SCHRC collection - The SS Christopher Columbus being towed out of the Sheboygan Harbor by two local tugs.

A scan of a poster commonly found advertising the whaleback's twice weekly Milwaukee excursions. Local Collector image.

THURSDAYS AND SUNDAYS
MILWAUKEE
 ROUND TRIP **\$1.00** ROUND TRIP



THE PALACE WHALEBACK STEAMSHIP
Christopher Columbus

Will leave VAN BUREN STREET PIER at 9 a. m. every Thursday and Sunday and reach Milwaukee at 1 o'clock p. m.

ENTRANCE TO PIER OVER VIADUCT. TAKE CENTRE PASSAGEWAY.

RETURNING—Leave Milwaukee at 6 p. m.; Arriving at Chicago, 10 p. m.

SECURE TICKETS EARLY AS ONLY A LIMITED NUMBER WILL BE SOLD

TICKETS NOW ON SALE. AT VANBUREN ST. PIER TICKET OFFICES

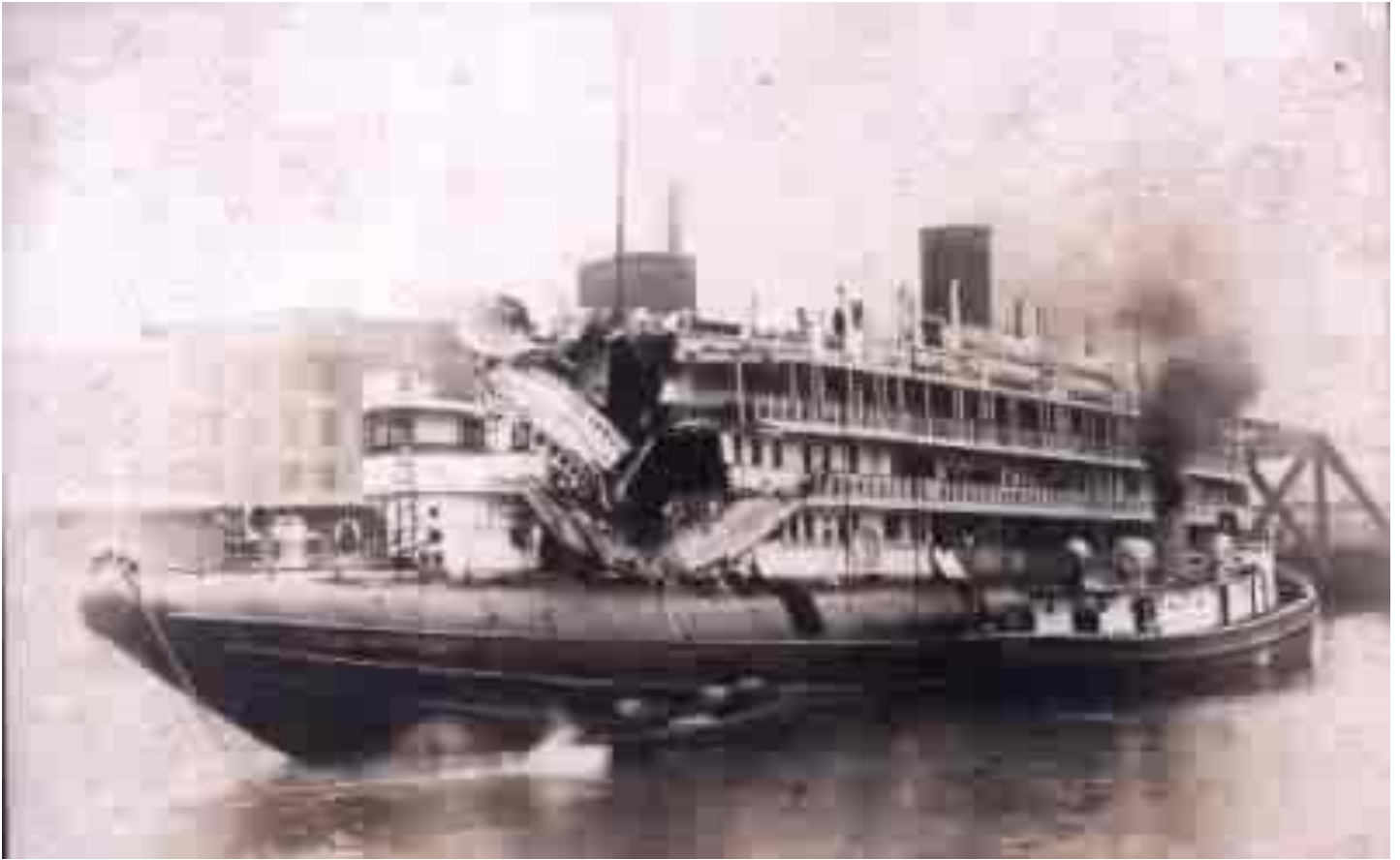
There is positively no overcrowding on this Boat, the U. S. Officials will not permit it.

A. L. SWIFT & CO. PRINTERS, 148-150 MONROE ST.

Waves broke across their hulls with considerably less force than when striking a conventional hull. Water could also flow around the rounded turrets which resembled gun turrets on contemporary warships; the superstructure and deckhouses were mounted on these turrets.

Designed to carry 5,000 people, the Columbus was 362 feet long with a 42-foot beam. For a brief period, she was the longest vessel on the Great Lakes. In addition to being big, the Columbus was fast, modern, and elegant. McDougall promised she would make the trip between Chicago and Jackson Park in 20 minutes. In open water, she cruised at 20 miles per hour. She had electric lights. There were restaurants and a large dance floor. Her two passenger decks were adorned with oak paneling, lush carpeting, etched glass, leather furniture, and marble countertops. For the World's Fair, she was painted in an all white livery.

On June 30, 1917, disaster occurred in Milwaukee. At least thirteen were killed and more than a score others were injured when the whaleback steamer Christopher Columbus, in swinging away for her return trip to Chicago, crashed into a dock on the Milwaukee River, causing a huge water tank to fall from the top of the five-story Yahr & Lang warehouse onto the deck of the vessel. There were said to be approximately 400 passengers on the whaleback, including a number of students from the University of Chicago, who were return-



Sheboygan Press Collection, SS Christopher Columbus whaleback steamer damaged in the

ing from an outing. "The current was too strong for the tugs," said Captain Moody. "Six inches more or leeway would have saved the vessel. I was pinned down for a short time after the big water tank fell, but managed to extricate myself and was not seriously injured. The impact with the dock tore away the underpinning holding the lofty tank."

Just as it had done many times before, upon reaching the turning basin, the tug Knight Templar dropped the bowline, crossed over, and fastened a line starboard. Only this time, when the big excursion vessel began coming around the tug Welcome could not hold her back. Captain Moody put his engine in full reverse and yelled for passengers to get back. He ordered the Knight Templar to drop her line and move to safety. But the whaleback's long snout clipped the legs of a steel tower attached to the Yahr & Lange Drug Company building. This tower supported a large tank filled with water that was part of the building's sprinkler system. The tank and support structure tore away and collapsed onto the Columbus.

People were knocked or washed into the river. The pilothouse was demolished with Captain Moody and a wheelsman barely escaping serious injury. The forward structure, which included cabins and a dining room, was severely damaged. While boats pulled people and bodies from the river, the COLUMBUS was secured at the Canada-Atlantic Transit Company dock across the river. The final toll was 16 dead and 20 injured.

With Captain Moody in command, the Columbus left Milwaukee under her own power on July 2 and headed for Manitowoc. While early estimates were very optimistic, it would cost at least \$30,000 and take four to six weeks to make the necessary repairs. She did not return to service in 1917.

Happier days were in store for the Christopher Columbus when in 1919 the ship was the centerpiece of an enormous excursion that ran from Sheboygan to Sturgeon Bay. C. Reiss Coal Company and Northern Furniture hired the boat to do a one-day trip for 2,250 of their employees. The day was deemed a complete success, and was recognized as one of the largest excursions to ever leave the port of Sheboygan.

2250 WORKERS LEAVE ON CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS TO ENJOY TRIP TO STURGEON BAY

Amid the screeching of a high-keyed, falsetto siren, and the inspiring music played by Sheboygan Concert Band of forty pieces, the four-decked steamer Christopher Columbus moved majestically from the Goodrich dock and out of the river mouth into Lake Michigan at 9:25 this morning. The members of the Sheboygan Concert Band, dressed in their natty white uniforms stood upon the upper deck, making a beautiful skyline above the decks of the steamer. All of the other decks were jammed with happy pleasure seekers, the employees of the C. Reiss Coal Co., and the Northern Furniture Co., their families and friends.

According to figures given by George Heller Jr., 2,250 persons were aboard. Frank Van Patten, inspector of Milwaukee, was present and assisted by Geo. Heller, Jr., and Geo. Leberman, made the official count of the passengers as they passed up the gang plank from the dock onto the steamer.

A large crowd of people and a number of automobiles caused a congestion around the Goodrich dock, eager to get a glimpse of this magnificently constructed leviathan of the lake, that has carried millions of people in and out of Chicago and Milwaukee, since it was first launched just prior to the world's fair, held at Chicago in 1893.

The joint picnic of the Reiss Coal Co. and the Northern Furniture Co., is doubtless the most gigantic water excursion ever attempted in Sheboygan and the sight of this monstrous boat was an innovation for those who never saw the peculiarly constructed boat. They gasped at the whale-shaped hull with wonder and surprise, marvelling how any boat of this shape could remain in an up-

right position with so much weight at the top.

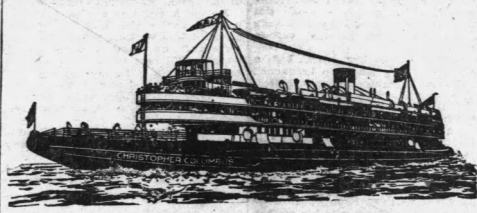
The dock was filled with cracker-jack, chums, ice cream and other delectables inviting to the tongue of most people, and while the passengers were passing up one gang plank, stevedores were busily engaged in loading the large amount of refreshments furnished gratuitously by the two companies, up the other plank leading into the hull of the steamer.

The main deck was reserved for dancing and the Amphion orchestra was engaged to furnish music for this purpose.

The employees of the two companies, accompanied by the officials and their families, will be taken to Sturgeon Bay where a short stop will be made before starting upon the return trip. Every family and couple carried baskets or other receptacles containing lunch, and with the ice cream, soft drinks and other appetizing things furnished by the two companies, the excursionists will find no difficulty in getting all they want to eat and drink.

Four large conspicuous banners, bearing the words "Employees of The Reiss Coal Co. and The Northern Furniture Co." the work of A. C. Rinne, were hung on the sides of the steamer.

**Whaleback Christopher Columbus
Will Carry Employees of C. Reiss
Coal Co. and Northern Furn. Co.
On Outing Trip to Sturgeon Bay**



Sheboygan Press
September 2, 1919



AN EXHIBIT AT KOHLER CO. SHOWCASING ONE OF THE IRON CEMETERY CROSSES OR EIZENKREUZEN, PRODUCED BY KOHLER, HAYSSSEN & STEHN.

Iron Cemetery Crosses Made in Sheboygan

Burial crosses come in all shapes, sizes and composition. Meant to memorialize the dead and speed their transition to the afterlife, crosses grace cemeteries all over the United States.

The earliest grave markers were usually made of natural fieldstone, sometimes cairns, sometimes crosses. Wood, if available, was used if available, but because of its short lifespan, 50-100 years at best, few old examples survive. Sandstone, granite and marble followed as society put more importance on death rituals.

Style-wise, Latin crosses had a three-step base signifying the Holy Trinity. Celtic Crosses, sported a circle intersecting the upright and the crossbar. One theory is that the ring is a halo, or the sun. It is also thought that Irish monks combined the sun-god idea with the Christian cross to ease the transition for those of the old Irish religions. The crucifix, one of the most common types of cross, depicts the corpus or the body of Christ.

There is also the metal cross. Wrought iron crosses were found in Catholic German and French cemeteries. Painted silver, white or black, they were adorned with decorative symbols. St. Ann Cemetery, town of Russell, has great examples.

Particularly suited as monuments on the vast stretches of Great Plains or in places like Wisconsin, where winters are brutal and hard on anything left exposed, these wrought-iron crosses were first crafted by local blacksmiths, a trade often learned in the Old Country. Using hammer, anvil and forge, these early artisans crafted crosses of iron, steel and other metals, often from pieces of scrap.

These "Eizenkreuzen" were also 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 and to Sheboygan, where a vibrant Volga German population forged thousands of them as they were hired at local factories.

By the end of the 19th century, production of iron cemetery crosses turned commercial, mainly by the firm of Kohler, Hayssen and Stehn, here in the county.

In 1873, John Michael Kohler and Charles Silberzahn took over the Union Iron and Steel Foundry from Jacob J. Vollrath. In 1878, Kohler bought out Silberzahn, but a fire the following year saw Kohler take on two new partners, Herman Hayssen and John Stehn.

Their original plant occupied a building at the corner of Ninth Street and St. Clair Avenue. After 1880, the company moved to a location on Jefferson Avenue between Seventh and Eighth Streets where it remained for 20 years.

Within a few years the art of enameling was developed in the plant and a wide range of products were developed kitchen stove reservoirs, iron manger, cauldrons, water and steam jacket kettles, watering troughs and drinking fountains.

In 1891, cast iron enameled bath tubs, wash bowls, other sanitary ware, drinking and ornamental fountains, vases, garden settees and cemetery crosses were added.

Three cast crosses were produced circa 1891: They were described as 1) 3' 6" painted white, border ornaments and inscription bronzed; price \$10; Painted white, border, ornaments and inscription gilded: price \$12. No two is a gothic 5' 2" high. The white or black painted one with ornaments and inscription bronzed is prized at \$16 or painted white or black, inscriptions priced at \$18. The third is 5' 2" high bronzed and gilded sells for the same price.

In 1899, the company moved from Sheboygan to its present site in the Village of Kohler. A destructive fire in December 1900 totally destroyed the plant and the J.M. Kohler Company (Hayssen left the company and Stehn died in 1886) returned to its old location while the company was rebuilt.

For decades, cast crosses filled cemeteries, especially those where employees of the local manufacturers were laid to rest. Cast iron crosses were cheap, affordable to a new immigrant factory worker. They were uncomplicated to acquire; they could be ordered and delivered by mail, or purchased directly from the factory. They could be inscribed or left plain; and they lasted.

Many more than a century old, iron cemetery crosses live on as symbols not only of one's brief life on earth, but of the era of iron crosses. Like prairie dogs and grain elevators, iron cemetery crosses have been hailed as sentinels of the Great Plains, or survivors of Wisconsin winters.

One thing important to remember, that while the cross represented the sacred; the iron represented strength—telling attributes of the pioneers they honored.

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

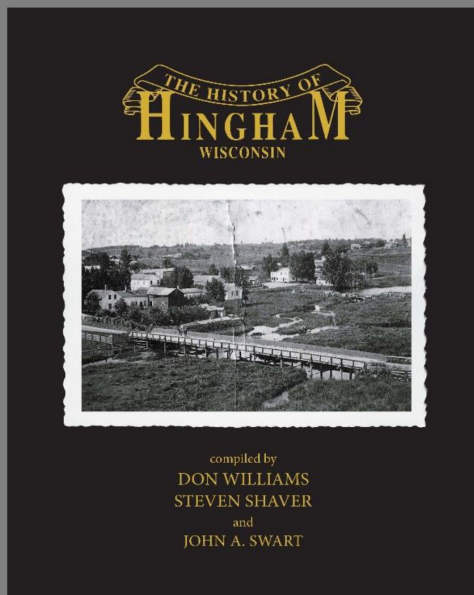
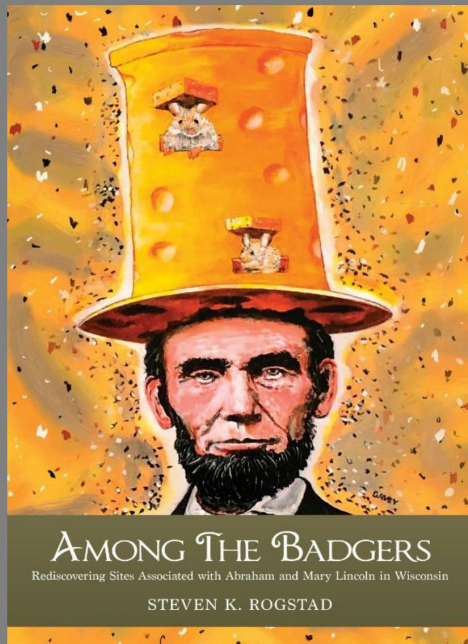
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IRON CEMETERY CROSSES AT ST. GEORGE CATHOLIC CEMETERY, TOWN OF WILSON

New Books Fall 2020



PRE-ORDER NOW AT SCHRC.ORG/BUY

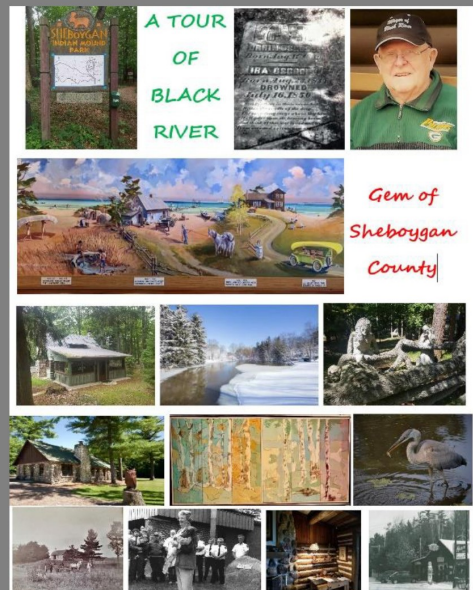
ALL BOOKS WILL BE AVAILABLE BY
THANKSGIVING.

A TOUR OF BLACK RIVER, GEM OF SHEBOYGAN COUNTY

SHEBOYGAN, A CITY DEFINED BY WATER

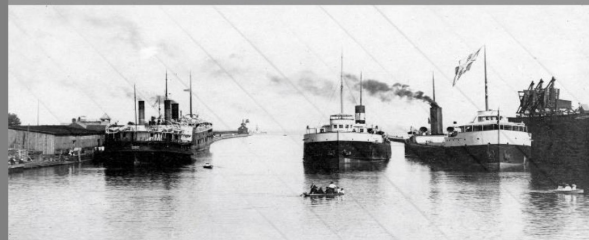
LINCOLN, AMONG THE BADGERS

THE HISTORY OF HINGHAM, WISCONSIN



These two are working covers. Not final.

SHEBOYGAN,
A CITY DEFINED BY WATER



A TRIP ALONG THE LAKE MICHIGAN SHORELINE AND THE SHEBOYGAN RIVER

Among the Badgers: Rediscovering Sites Associated with Abraham and Mary Lincoln in Wisconsin.

\$30.00

Steven K. Rogstad

This professionally designed 400 page book by Steven K. Rogstad retails at \$30.00 per book. Part history book, part travel book, it's something special.

This study represents the first scholarly treatment of the visits Abraham and Mary Lincoln made to the Badger State. Although they collectively visited Wisconsin five times, they traveled into the state at different times and never together. Abraham Lincoln entered the state's borders for the first time in 1832 during his military service in the Black Hawk War, returning in 1859 to make speeches in Milwaukee, Beloit, and Janesville. Mary traveled toured northern Wisconsin and Racine in 1867, returning five years later to take advantage of the healing waters of Waukesha.

Aside from the visits, Wisconsin has numerous monuments, memorials, and markers which honor the Lincolns. Most of them are concentrated in southern Wisconsin, although some unusual tributes can be found in the Northwoods region. The monuments in the book have their own unique and sometimes unusual history, including donors who died prematurely, a sculptor who demolished his statue with an axe, a statue with a plaque that misidentifies its creator, and a Will that was contested all the way to the Wisconsin Supreme Court to prevent funds from being used to create a Lincoln monument.

The accounts about the Lincolns in Wisconsin, and the histories of their monuments, have never been collected in a single volume. Highly illustrated, including maps, this book will appeal to historians, travelers, tourists, families, scholars, and history lovers.

Sheboygan, A City Defined by Water
\$25.00

By SCHRC and Peter J. Fetterer

Topics covered in this book include the businesses along the Sheboygan River including the shipyards and fish shanties, the parade of bridges over the Sheboygan River, the port and growth of the harbor including use of the regions first steam shovel, the construction of the piers and breakwater, the variety of lighthouses, the jetties, the development of Broughton Drive, the Yacht Club, the Naval Reserve and the Life Saving Station. There is a fantastic section on the C. Reiss Coal Company, *When*

Coal Was King, with beautiful images of the fleet.

A Tour of Black River, Gem of Sheboygan County
\$25.00

By James Schultz

Black River is one of Sheboygan County's most beautiful and historic areas. Running most of the length of the town of Wilson adjacent to Lake Michigan, Evergreen Drive is the backbone of the community.

Prior to European settlement, the largest Native American gathering in the county, a continuous line that stretched for ten miles along the sandy shoreline, was the eastern edge of Black River. Though the last Indians camped at the mouth of the Black River as long ago as 1877 their influence remains.

An 1862 Town of Wilson plat map shows the area settled by farmers with pieces of land from 40 to 160 acres in size, typical of early settlement patterns.

A 1916 map shows the first small subdivisions for summer homes and cottages. By 1930, Black River had become a summer haven for those looking to get away from the hot temperatures of city life. Evergreen Drive began to take shape.

This book full of beautiful color photos, will be a fun tour of the area, its history, the areas' artists, the environment and wildlife, its Native American history and so much more.

The History of Hingham
\$20.00

Donald Williams, Steven Shaver and John Swart

Hingham was platted on Sept. 5, 1850, by Edward Hobart. The land was acquired from Mrs. David Giddings, who had bought it from the U.S. government in 1846. A Hingham resident, Lemuel Tibbitts, who was a deputy county surveyor, did the platting. Streets on the original plat included Water, Center, Spring, South and Main Streets. The name "Hingham" was chosen after the town in Massachusetts. Located in the town of Lima, Sheboygan County, it is a beautiful little burg with a fascinating history.

This book is a reprint of an earlier, out-of-print publication, but it has many updates, upgrades and additions. The photos are outstanding, as are the new stories. This is a great addition to your library.