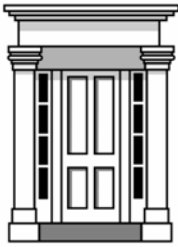


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
CENTER

#### Ancestral Homeland



Toormakeady or Tourmakeady is a Gaeltacht in south County Mayo in the west of Ireland. It is located between the shores of Lough Mask and the Partry Mountains.

A Gaeltacht is an area where the predominant language spoken is Irish.

Toormakeady is the ancestral home of the Hanahan Clan, but it is more likely that our Hanahans, Bowens and Lavelles came from an area around Ballina in North Mayo just before emigrating to the United States in the 1840s.

An **ancestral home** is the place of origin of one's extended family, particularly the home owned and preserved by the same family for several generations.

The famine of the 1840s displaced millions of people prior to their leaving Ireland, so they may not have lived in their ancestral homelands.

# The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County  
Historical Research Center

Volume XXXI Number 3 February 2021

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

## A Long Way from Toormakeady



### THE HANAHANS, LAVELLES, and BOWENS by Pat Hanahan Owens

In 1982, we found out we were Hanahans. Shortly before my father died, we were told he had been adopted by his maternal aunt and his name was changed to that of his adopted family. We did not have any living relatives to consult about our Hanahan family, so we started our tedious research. We began with city directories, census reports, land records, deeds, wills, maps, WW1 draft cards, vital records, and newspaper articles. Our search eventually led us from Green Bay to Sheboygan, WI. We really hit pay dirt when we found the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center.

The earliest record we discovered was the 1865 Wisconsin census with Michael Hanahan (our great, great grandfather) listed in the Town of Plymouth. We found a deed dated 1869 showing he purchased land in Parnell WI. We were able to pinpoint the exact location of the homestead with an 1875 Mitchell Township map. Today the Krebsbach family owns the land that once was the homestead. They knew our grand - uncle, Michael P. Hanahan, and were able to share some stories about him.

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 Monday, February 15, 2021 through Friday, February 26, 2021 for Archiving.

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**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**

Margaret Uhlig, Sheboygan  
Debbra Voss, St. Nazianz

#### **Program Schedule**

The program schedule is very fluid and will be until Covid is under control. Please check in regularly to our Facebook page and our website, [schrc.org/events](http://schrc.org/events) for the latest in updates.

#### **American Railway Express**



**SHEBOYGAN** - As late as 1928, horses were still used as delivery power for the American Railway Express, located at 701 and 714 Center Ave. The shipping company would deliver and pick up goods from a train and get them to their final destination. The firm also picked up shipments for customers.

In December 1928, the company purchased a fleet of Ford 1-ton trucks to replace the horse-drawn wagons. As the company entered the motorized age, it could spread out its territory and promise faster delivery times. For 20 years, the company was located at 522 N. Eighth St. In 1921, they moved to 701 and 714 Center Ave. This photo is from the 701 Center Ave. location.

One year one of the more interesting items shipped to Sheboygan was a mounted moose head, which was addressed to O. E. Zwerg in Sheboygan. Mr. Zwerg denied having ordered the magnificent moose head, which arrived from taxidermist Edwin Dixon of Unionville, Canada. The company placed the moose head in the display window until the situation was resolved.

As a way to supplement the company's bottom line, advertising was sold to be displayed on the sides of the firm's new 1-ton trucks.

Today, the property is a parking lot for the U.S. Bank building.

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





## “LET’S DEVELOP OUR CENTER”

Steven K. Rogstad  
Director of Development

We recently received a donation with the attached statement: “History still matters and so does the Historical Research Center!” As a history lover, you also understand how important

history is in times like these. It provides context and perspective during challenging times, and guidance for the future. That’s why even during these unprecedented times, we can’t afford to stop sharing the stories of our past and educating the next generation.

The Center is entering 2021 with both hope and expectation. The official definition of *hope* is the feeling that what is wanted can be had or that events will turn out for the best. Hope is in abundance at the Center as we enter this new year!

We are scheduling in-person events in 2021 for our regular programs, which include Second Saturdays, Taproom History, Lincoln Seminar, and History Symposium. We are hopeful that the introduction of the vaccines into society will assist in the dramatic reduction of active COVID cases and restore a sense of normalcy in our interactions with people in various environments. With hope comes the *expectation* that our society is heading for a solution to the pandemic and that the Center will be successful in resuming its regular programming.

A piece of good news that is worth sharing is that my new book, *Lincoln Among the Badgers: Rediscovering Sites Associated with Abraham and Mary Lincoln in Wisconsin*, has been selected for audio broadcast on Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR) in Madison in its “Chapter a Day” program. Starting in 1931, it is WPR’s longest-running program. This program will be carried by other WPR stations throughout Wisconsin. A chapter will be read for a half hour daily by four different readers for over a period of time. “Chapter A Day” can be heard weekdays on the Ideas Network at 12:30 p.m. and 11 p.m. Readings are archived for just one week after their broadcast.

Finally, we will be producing some provocative

and educational videos this upcoming year to expand the reach of the Center into other communities. They will profile scholars, artifacts, buildings, people, and sites connected with the greater Sheboygan area, and other things, too! We will broadcast these on our website and Facebook page, and other social media. So, stay tuned for some new and exciting productions!

We are still in the middle of our annual membership drive, so please renew your membership if you have not already done so. Consider sponsoring a person for a membership, or increasing your current level of membership. The cost of preserving and sharing history is always there, so your support is so important to the Center’s ongoing sustainability!

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

Sincerely,  
Steven K. Rogstad  
Director of Development

### Sheboygan Press Ad June 18, 1921

Christo Cola was a soft drink produced primarily during the prohibition years. Lakeside Bottling Works, 715 North 5th Street, Sheboygan served as the local agent for the Richmond, Virginia–based Christo Manufacturing Company, bottling and distributing Cristo-Cola and Cristo Ginger Ale. Christo dealt mainly in non-alcoholic beverages. The product was also distributed by Piggly Wiggly, another local supplier.

Today the rare bottles are valued collectibles.

**DRINK**  
**Christo Cola**  
The Nation's Joy Drink  
Delightfully Refreshing  
Order a Case  
**Lakeside Bottling Works**  
Exclusive Bottlers  
715 North Fifth St. Phone 478

## **Oxen were once Sheboygan County's choice beasts of burden**



**Logging with oxen on the land that would later become Kohler Andre State Park.**

“The ox is a most noble animal, patient, thrifty, durable and gentle.” What an elegant, almost reverential description by Peter Burnett, Oregon Trail traveler of the 1850s! Yet humor and practicality quickly enter as he continued, “But, best of all, the mammoth does not run off.”

This sentiment comes in direct contrast to the demeanor of horses, the animal most commonly portrayed crossing the Great Plains, settling the west. Though faster, horses were persnickety.

In America, oxen were a pioneer essential. It was these brutes that conquered prairies covered with grasses anchored by roots more than five feet deep, and wooded lands filled with stumps and undergrowth so thick you needed a machete to manage.

Since they were domesticated about 4000 B.C. oxen were the favorite beast of burden worldwide. Then, in the 40 years from 1850 to 1890, they all but disappeared in America. In 1850, the U.S. Federal Census reported there were 1.7 million oxen in the nation. By 1900, the census did not record working oxen. An era had ended.

So, just what is an ox? Oxen were not a separate breed of cattle; they were just steers over the age of three that were allowed to grow and be trained to work. They should not be confused with Asian water buffalo or Arctic musk oxen both of which are used as beasts of burden in their native lands.

Bull calves from any breed available were used. Shorthorns, an English breed of cow, was the most common type available in Wisconsin prior to the rise of the dairy industry in the 1870s. Once there was greater variety among cattle, large breeds like Holsteins were used for logging and smaller breeds like Jerseys were better suited for farm work.

Oxen learned to follow their teamster's (ox driver's) signals given verbally, by body language, or by the use of a goad or whip. The most common verbal commands were: get up, go, whoa, back up, gee (turn to the right), and haw (turn to the left).

A plowing team of eight oxen consisted of four pairs aged a year apart. With a working life of ten years or



more, they had an average life span of about 15 years. Once a pair was selected they became companions for life, working side-by-side and never far apart whether grazing in meadows or sleeping in the ox barn.

Working cattle had to be shod, and since they had cloven hooves, that involved fitting two half-moon shaped iron shoes to each foot, meaning a fully shod ox wore 8 shoes. No man was strong enough to hold an ox foot up for shoeing, and oxen were unable to stand on three feet while the fourth was being shod. A strong wooden frame with a wide belly-band had to be used to raise the animals from the floor. Of an obstinate nature, they usually had to be dragged into the blacksmith shop by tying a rope around their horns and pulling them in with a windlass.

Never an easy task, in Franklin, it was well-known that blacksmith Jacob Eifler distanced himself from shoeing oxen, while his colleague Peter Schneider took the difficulties all in stride.

Gustave Buchen wrote of the June 7, 1842 wedding of David Giddings and Dorothy Trowbridge in Sheboygan Falls. "Slowly chewing their cud as they walked leisurely along the old winding Indian trail, widened by the axe of the white man, an immense pair of red and white oxen with wide spreading horns, was observed approaching the festive scene in languid indifference to the fact that, momentarily at least, they were the center of interest. Their yoke was polished. They were sleek and fat, the admiration of the assembled guests and the pride of their driver, who was mounted on a log boat of the better type, made of two maple planks sawed with a hip on the old muley saw at the Falls, and fastened together by arched cross pieces to which the planks were firmly bolted. Thus, came David Giddings to his wedding. . . It was not poverty that compelled David Giddings to go to his wedding in this equipage. It was the simple fact that at this stage of the country's development, the ox was the only animal adapted to the work which confronted this farming community. Boys and girls grew to considerable size without ever having seen a horse."

Working in the woods, pulling stumps, and breaking up new land, especially, were jobs for the use of ox-power. If a plow share got caught in a tree-root or boulder, horses were apt to become nervous and excited, while slow-motion oxen were content to stand perfectly still, peacefully chewing their cud, while the driver worked to clear the obstacle. Oxen were also cheaper than horses, a yoke costing from \$90 to \$100, and a cow from \$10 to \$18, according to Peter Daane of Oostburg.

Likewise, oxen were often the choice of emigrants traveling west by covered wagon in the mid-1800s in the United States. Horses were considered ineffective because they could not live off prairie grasses. Needing grain to thrive, horses were expensive and finicky in comparison to their bovine compatriots; Oxen could live off grass or sagebrush and seldom had the bloat.

Useful for many other important jobs, Joseph Osthelder of Sheboygan Falls, delivered beer from the local brewery, located near the foot of Buffalo and Broadway, with a wagon pulled by oxen. During Osthelder's tenure in the mid-1850s, delivery by any other method was nearly impossible. With no real roads, only trails through the forests and swamps, oftentimes travel required two teams of oxen. One memorable trip involved Osthelder going to Abbott (Sherman) to retrieve barley for Sheboygan businessman, Michael Winter. Carrying \$500 in cash and battling wolves the entire trip, Osthelder was accompanied by Charles Michael and a couple of well-oiled shot guns.

Broken sod, improved roads and advances in farming eventually left the oxen behind. They had become a symbol of the past; no progressive farmer needed such a beast. Steam power made the ox obsolete.

But, in the settling of the West, and Wisconsin oxen were the unsung heroes. They made agriculture and road building possible. They cleared the dense forests of the state, and they symbolized the tough, rugged, demanding traits required to make a go of it in the American frontier.



**Car versus oxen, town of Herman, Sheboygan County, Schomberg family collection. Mid 19-teens.**

**Continued from page 1.**



**Typical town in Mayo today.**

They also let us walk the land and showed us where the original windmill stood. It was a thrill to walk the same land that our Irish ancestors homesteaded. It is just down the road from St. Michael's Church where our Hanahan, Bowen, and Lavelle ancestors were married, baptized and buried.

We were able to piece together information we gathered to help us understand something about our family. The 1870 census stated that Michael and Martin (our great-grandfather) listed their occupations as farmers and lived on the homestead in the Town of Mitchell, Sheboygan County Wisconsin. The census indicated that Michael was 60 years old and Martin was 35 years old. They were both born in Ireland and could not read or write. Michael was not a citizen, but Martin was listed as a citizen of

the United States. The deed that Michael signed in 1869 shows he marked an "X" for his signature" with "his" and "mark" above and below the "X", respectively.

Thomas Heraty's diary states "Mike Hanahan died at 6:00 P.M." on Tuesday February 24, 1880. His death certificate indicates he was 70 years old at the time of death. He was born in Ireland in 1810 and his parents were John and Bridget Hanahan. Cause of death was listed as Lung Fever.

We think Michael had a sister named Mary Hanahan. In the 1870 census Mary Hanahan is listed as living with the John Bowen family in the Town of Mitchell, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin. She is listed as the mother of Bridget Hanahan Bowen. Per Thomas Heraty's diary Mary Hanahan was referred to as "old Molly Bowen". The 1870 census did not list marital status so we do not know if she was a widow. However, Mary died on Friday October 26, 1877, at 5:00 P. M. Her death certificate stated she was born in Ireland in 1807 and her parents were John and Bridget Hanahan. This leads us to believe that Michael and Mary were siblings.

Our great-grandfather, Martin Hanahan, married Mary Ann Bowen on February 22, 1876. Mary Ann was the daughter of John Bowen and Bridget Hanahan Bowen. Due to above assumptions that Michael and Mary Hanahan were siblings, we think Martin married his niece. Mary Ann Bowen Hanahan died April 1, 1877, shortly after giving birth to a daughter born March 20, 1877. She was also named Mary Ann. Per Thomas Heraty's diary, Mary Ann Hanahan married John Clark in Merrill, WI on June 11, 1895. We are unable to find any record to corroborate this information nor do we know what happened to Mary Ann and John Clark.

Martin then married our great grandmother, Alice Lavelle, daughter of James Lavelle and Ann Cummings Lavelle, on June 25, 1878, at St Michael Church. Martin Hanahan died January 18, 1899. We have an obituary printed in the Plymouth Post dated February 2, 1899 for Martin Hanahan. The information is a bit confusing as it states that Martin was 82 years old at the time of his death. This does not support the age given on the 1870 or 1880 census. It does state that he was born in County Mayo, Ireland, and came to this country in 1840. We have not been able to find records to support this information. We do believe he did come from County Mayo. Alice Lavelle Hanahan was born on April 8, 1858 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. On February 20, 1919, at the age of 61, she married William Skelton who was 75 years of age. Alice died on November 5, 1938, in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Martin and Alice had 5 children, all born in the Town of Mitchell, Sheboygan County, WI:

\*Michael P. Hanahan (our grand-uncle), born March 16, 1879, died May 9, 1954. He married Mabel Hoy on May 4, 1910, and they had 3 children- James, Michael Hoy, and Gordon Hanahan. We know that Michael stayed in the Mitchell area and farmed the homestead. We also know that Michael was Town of Mitchell treasurer per election results posted in the Plymouth Post on April 15, 1908 and April 8, 1920. He purchased the Cosgrove Cheese Factory in the Town of Mitchell from Charles Piper per an article in the Sheboygan Press dated November 14, 1913. He scored 96 1/2 points for his Longhorn Cheese entered in the Sheboygan County Fair on September 13, 1918.

\*Martin J. Hanahan, born May, 1880. We think he may have died at a young age as he is listed as 7 months old on the 1880 census and is not listed in any record after that time.

\*James M. Hanahan (our grand-uncle), born January 16, 1882. He married Lillian Ruth Mayew in Green Bay, Wisconsin on June 16, 1918. They had 2 children- Kathleen and Jane. He was a conductor for The Milwaukee Road Railroad and died December 13, 1954 when, while working at the Union State train shed in Milwaukee, he was struck by a switch engine. At 72 years old, he was the oldest Milwaukee Road conductor in the division

\*John Thomas Hanahan (our grandfather), born October 18, 1885 and died August 15, 1939. We had an article that was posted in the Plymouth Post dated September 22, 1906 in Adell which stated, "John Hanahan and his wife of North Da-





**St. Michael's Church viewed through its historic lychgate. This 1860s church and burial ground is found in the town of Mitchell, Sheboygan County. The Hanahan, Bowen and Lavelle families are buried here.**

kota and Miss Hanahan of the Town of Mitchell were here visiting on Sunday.” This was one of those puzzling pieces. Then a few years later after checking the 1910 census we discovered that John Hanahan was listed as widowed and living in the Town of Mitchell. The light bulb flickered that he may have been married prior to marrying our grandmother. An inquiry to the University of North Dakota Special Collections Division produced a marriage license. John married Helen Fonbrit in Grand Forks, ND on August 13, 1906. He was widowed by 1910.

John Hanahan married our grandmother Maud Anderson sometime around 1915. We are unable to find a marriage record at this time. John and Maud Anderson Hanahan had 4 children- Francis, John (our father), Yvonne, and Gloria. Maud Anderson Hanahan died on October 16, 1925. Her death certificate lists her cause of death as septicemia; miscarriage of 4 1/2 months duration. My father was 7 years old at the time. He and his siblings were adopted by his maternal aunt and her husband. Their last names were changed to that of the adopted family.

We believe that our grandfather could not take care of all 4 of his children by himself so allowed his sister-in-law to adopt the children. Per his WW1 draft card registration, we found out that our grandfather worked as a switchman for The St. Paul Railroad. His occupation may have played a part in his decision to allow the adoption. We do not feel that once the adoption took place that our grandfather stayed in touch with his children. Again, there is no one still living to verify this. We were able to trace the whereabouts of our grandfather through small articles in the Sheboygan Press until 1927. Because he worked for the railroad and sometimes lived in Milwaukee, we checked the vital records in Milwaukee County. We found his death record and also found that he was buried in Mt. Olivet cemetery in Milwaukee in an unmarked grave. We finally found him!

\*Katherine A. Hanahan (our grand aunt) was born February 4, 1888 and died December 20, 1953. She worked as a saleslady for women's apparel most of her life. On February 9, 1945, she married Ward Lindahl in South Bend, Indiana. They had no children.

The families of Michael Hanahan, James Lavelle and John Bowen are listed as coming from County Mayo, Ireland. We think the families knew each other and most likely intermarried in Ireland. We think they all came from County Mayo about the same time. Several families (about 12-15) came from County Mayo, Ireland, and were listed on the 1850 census in the Town of Portage, Livingston County, New York. John and Bridget Bowen and their son, Thomas (7

months old), are on that 1850 census in Portage, and we believe they are our ancestors from County Mayo. John and Bridget have two other children- Ezekiel, whose obituary states he was born in Lock Port, New York, and another obituary that states he was born in Buffalo, New York in 1854. The other child, Mary (who married Martin Hanahan), is listed on the 1870 census as being born in New York.

We will never stop looking for information even though we keep hitting brick walls. We will continue to research each family until we find that one clue that will lead us back to our ancestral Irish land where we can trace their footsteps to find out what led them to emigrate to America. We are here because of them. SLÁN!

**Pat Hanahan Killian Owens, Joe Owens and Tom Hanahan Killian having a pint.**



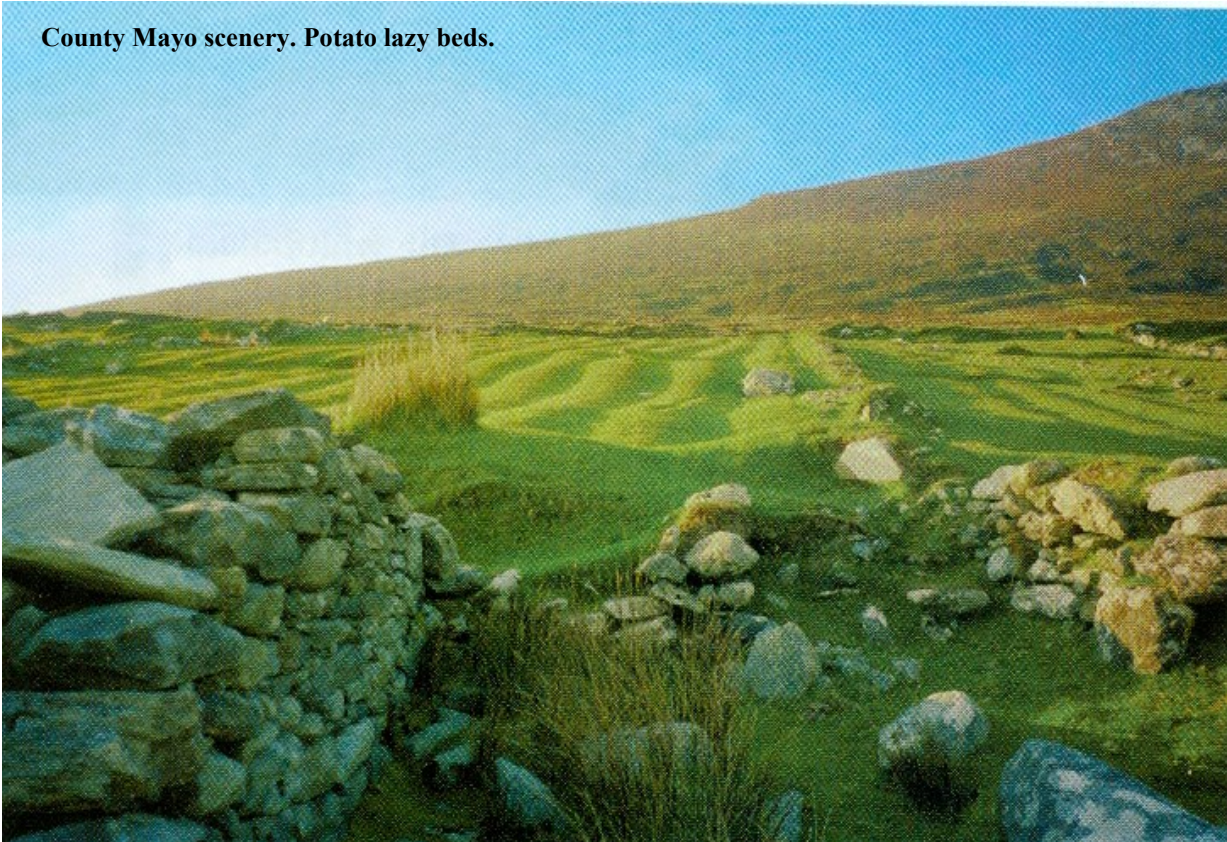


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**County Mayo scenery. Potato lazy beds.**



Potato ridges or lazy beds lie fallow and undisturbed since the Great Famine of the mid-1800s.

To make the land more productive English landlords turned the Irish off the land and replaced them with sheep.

Abandoned villages still dot the countryside of West Ireland where more than one million died and one million emigrated.