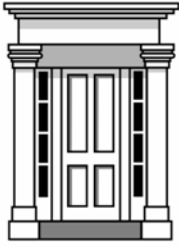


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
CENTER

It's Annual Campaign Time!

SCHRC has just begun its 2021 Annual Campaign, a fundraising event that raises money used to support the organization for the entire year. Your letter is in the mail. Thanks for your help.

Security First National



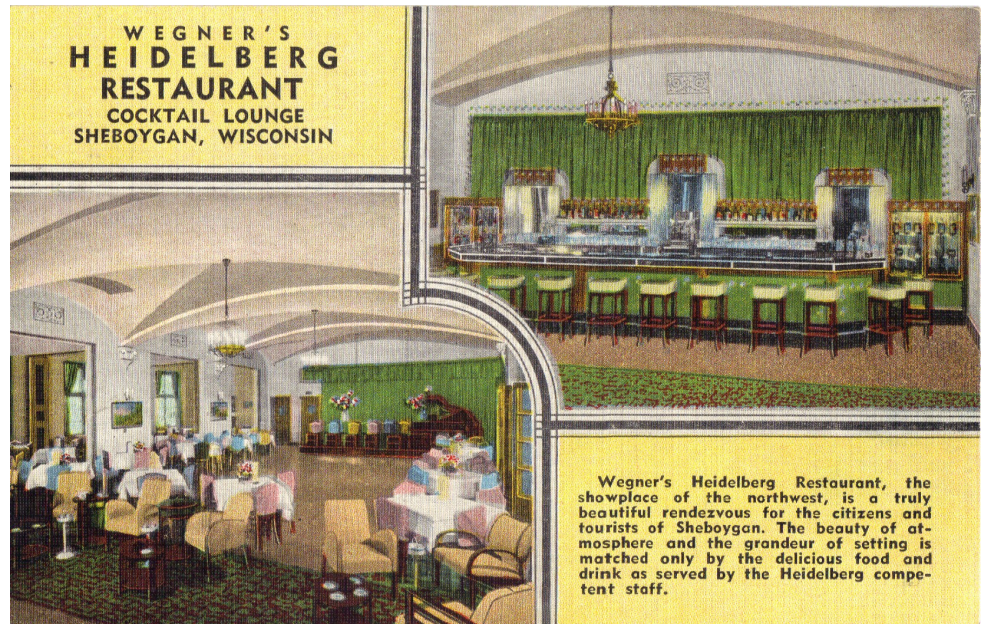
Its window-clad seventh floor was home to the famous Benedict's Heidelberg Club, the Sky Garden, Geno's Top of the First and City Streets before the building reverted to offices.

The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research Center
Volume XXXI Number 4 April 2021

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

The Heidelberg Club



This postcard was produced between 1945 and 1952 during the Wegner era.

Once the talk of the town, the hottest restaurant and bar in Sheboygan, Benedict's Heidelberg Club opened to the public on December 16, 1933. Renowned chef, William Benedict created a Germanic-themed grotto of luxury for discriminating folk as the newspapers touted. Benedict, born in Switzerland, once worked as for Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria. He also interned at the Hotel Schweitzerhof in Lucerne.

One of the drawing cards for the restaurant along with its fine cuisine and ambiance was its breezy patio overlooking Lake Michigan. As the restaurant grew and changed, it added catering to its services in the mid-1930s.

On July 10, 1945, William Benedict bid au revoir to Sheboygan. The restaurant was purchased by businessman Rudolph Wagner, a former restaurateur of Sheboygan.

Continued 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.

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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Welcome New Members

Kathy Buchanan, Plymouth
Andrew Burkart, Benton, KY
Jay Jackson, Park City, UT
Dennis Koepsell, Sheboygan Falls
J. Michael Kohler, Spartanburg, SC (sponsored by Tony Fessler)
Mary Prindiville, Sarasota, WI

Program Schedule

History on the Move

Generations, 1500 Douglas Drive, Plymouth 2:00pm to 3:30pm

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

From Kettles to Kames, Early History of the Kettle Moraine, Northern Unit
Take a trip through Sheboygan County's Kettle Moraine forest primarily located in the towns of Mitchell and Greenbush. We'll touch on the unique geography and fun history of the area.

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Stories Told in Granite and Glass

We'll visit some of the most interesting and beautiful stained glass windows and cemetery monuments in the county. We'll discuss the background and history of each form of expression and much more.

Wednesday, June 2, 2021

Camp Haven, Sheboygan County's Anti-aircraft training base
Until the late 1940s, the area that is now Whistling Straits, was strictly farmland, but because of its remote location, buffered by 118 miles of water to the east toward Michigan, it proved a suitable site for a military anti-aircraft training facility. For a decade, from 1949 to 1959, it would be home to Camp Haven.

Second Saturdays- Journeys Into Local History

Plymouth Arts Center, 520 East Mill Street, Plymouth 9:30am to 11:30am

Saturday, April 10, 2021 - Misunderstood Mission of Jean Nicolet with Patrick Jung

Saturday, May 8, 2021 - Wisconsin on the Air with Jack Mitchell

Saturday, July 10, 2021 - The History of Plymouth Hospital with Dan Buckman

Note: No June Second Saturdays

Taproom History

Fat Cow, 406 Broadway, Sheboygan Falls

6:30pm to 7:30pm

Thursday, June 10, 2021

Dr. Patrick Jung: "Why Conspiracy Theories are Bunk and Need to be Debunked."

Thursday, July 15, 2021

Steven Rogstad: "Examining Lincoln Murder Conspiracies"

Thursday, August 12, 2021

Dr. Kerry A Trask: "Coming of Age: Wisconsin and the Civil War."

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



"LET'S DEVELOP OUR CENTER"

Steven K. Rogstad
Director of Development

I am sitting down to write this message to you, excited about what lies ahead this year for the Research Center! Winter is gradually coming to an end, the snow from the heavily snowfalls has almost melted away, and the increased numbers of COVID vaccinations are resulting in more people returning to more familiar and social ways of life.

For more than a year we have been living in a virtual world in which many feel is not really living at all. We have become accustomed to virtual schooling, virtual programs, virtual meetings, virtual church services, virtual activities, and virtual events. I am happy to report that the Research Center has remained open since late May of last year, with both staff and volunteers showing up daily to process collections and conduct the work of the organization.

The one area we have especially missed over the past year has been the in-person programs we offer to teach history and enjoy fellowship. Almost all of the Center's programming was cancelled in 2020. However, 2021 is a new year and I am happy to announce that we intend to resume an in-person program schedule, starting in April. Here is a tentative schedule:

History on the Move - Resumes April 7
Second Saturdays - April 10
Taproom History - June 10, July 15, August 12
Annual Meeting Lecture - October 1
Lincoln Seminar - October 5, 12, 19, 26
History Symposium - November 6

Our Annual Campaign began last month, which is the Center's major annual fundraiser. The donations received are crucial, since COVID relief funds are no longer available to us. Therefore, I hope you will give thoughtful consideration to a gift that will make a dif-

ference. On the back of the letter you received for the Annual Campaign were ideas about how a gift from you can make a difference. I hope you will review those suggestions and support one of the categories listed.

There are numerous ways you can help and a multitude of programs, events, equipment, and supplies that need financial assistance in order that the Center can continue its fine tradition of maintaining its collections and teaching history to a variety of communities of people. Please donate today!

I am also excited to announce a new project and a new event that will take place in 2021. The Annual Meeting will be hosting a new lecture series! The annual lectures will also be published in booklet form. The speaker this autumn will be Dr. James Marten of Marquette University, who has been doing research on the Sixth Wisconsin regiment for a forthcoming book. A substantial amount of the men came from Sheboygan. Dr. Marten will be focusing on 83 of them, and what they experienced the last sixth months of the Civil War.

The new project is the establishment of a new audio/visual studio at the Center! This will allow us to reach new audiences with podcasts, 'live' Facebook programs, videos, audio materials, interviews, events, and a greater opportunity to showcase our collections, volunteers, artifacts, and a myriad of topics related to local and regional history. Perhaps you would be interested in funding aspects of the studio. If this appeals to you, please contact me.

This is shaping up to be a fun, exciting, and active year at the Center. Thank you for being an important part of its progress and growth.

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

Sincerely,
Steven K. Rogstad

Genealogy Tip

The location of some places can be difficult to find, particularly if they were never on any map, were not an "official name," and only known to locals who have long since passed away. One way to attempt to pinpoint these locations is to search for them in digital versions of old newspapers (using quotation marks around the phrase) or at sites that have out-of-copyright books like The location may not have been on a map but could easily have been referenced in a newspaper or 1800-era book.



At left: The airy patio restaurant surrounding the Heidelberg Club at the top of Security First National Bank.

Below right: The dining room of the Heidelberg Club was formal and elegant.

Benedict ran it until 1952 when he sold the establishment to Carl and Otto Horner of Milwaukee. The restaurant was renamed the Sky Garden in the mid-1950s.

On January 1, 1964, Gene Korman purchased the restaurant and renamed it Geno's Top of the First. It later underwent an upgrade and restoration and was closed for three months reopening in June 1967.

After a nearly 60-year run, the restaurant at the top of the bank finally closed. First Wisconsin Bank chose to



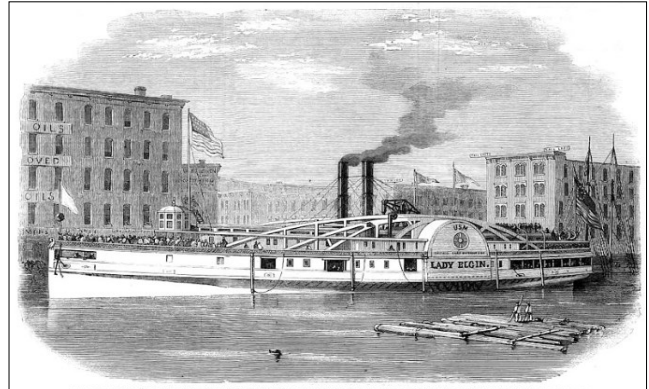
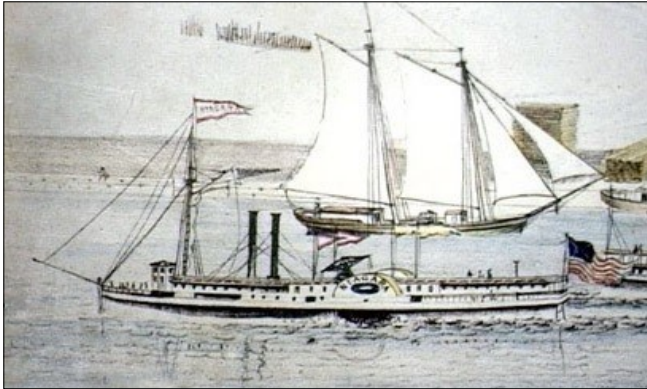
lease the seventh floor as office space rather than as a restaurant. City Streets, the name of the restaurant at the time, run by Pam and Bill Gottsacker, moved to the riverfront area in 1990 marking the end of an era.

William Benedict died in 1962 at the age of 68 in Miami, Florida. He

At left: The Heidelberg Club's lounge and dance floor during the era of William Benedict. July 15, 1942.

Early Immigration and Lake Traffic

From *Sheboygan, A City Defined by Water*, 2020.



The *Niagara*, at left, and the *Lady Elgin*, at right, frequented Sheboygan bringing new residents to the area. The steamer was a sidewheel palace launched in 1846. On September 23, 1856, she left Sheboygan headed for Port Washington, carrying 170 passengers and a heavy cargo load. Fire broke out, and the ship sank off Belgium. The *Lady Elgin* was a wooden-hulled sidewheel steamship that sank in Lake Michigan off the fledgling town of Port Clinton, Illinois. She was rammed in a gale by the schooner *Augusta* in the early hours of September 8, 1860. More than 300 people died in the accident.

Sheboygan was the main landing point for emigrants for all of eastern Wisconsin. It was the main port for Manitowoc County because the Manitowoc harbor was not open for steamship passenger traffic until 1854. With only two bridge piers and a shallow channel, Manitowoc harbor commerce was limited. The *Manitowoc Pilot* estimated that the village had lost in the single year, 1850, by not having a harbor, the sum of \$150,000. It was not until 1855 that Manitowoc was visited regularly by the Buffalo liners, *Lady Elgin*, *Niagara* and *Keystone State*.

Sheboygan was also the main landing point for emigrants for Fond du Lac and Dodge Counties. Travel by primitive roads was arduous at best, but the distance from Sheboygan to Fond du Lac was half the distance from Milwaukee or Green Bay.

An Emigrants Guide of 1848 stated, "Sheboygan owes, if not its origin, at least its rapid development to the prosperity of the settlements on Lake Winnebago."

"It already has more than 350 houses, large stores with all that the emigrant needs, inexpensive and comfortable inns, and there will soon be a sufficient number of drivers to take care of the transportation inland. The pier costs are small in Sheboygan. Emigrants, who are planning to settle here or in this region, will do well and will have only half the expense if they take tickets from Buffalo to Sheboygan, get out in Sheboygan and make the trip from there in one and half to two days with a bought horse and hired wagon. The trip from Sheboygan to Milwaukee takes eight hours with the steamer, from Milwaukee to this point takes four to five days by ox-cart. The population of Sheboygan is around 600. Persons from Dodge, Winnebago, and Fond du Lac counties make this their landing access point. Newberry and Farnsworth have a very fine pier where most of the boats and vessels of the Great Lakes make a landing."

A busy port, in 1845, there were 75 arrivals and departures of steamboats; in 1847, 423; and by 1848 there would be 525.

Milwaukee at that time was a city of 14,000 people, slightly smaller than Chicago's 17,000. There were

only 155,000 people in the entire Wisconsin Territory. Madison's population was just 626.

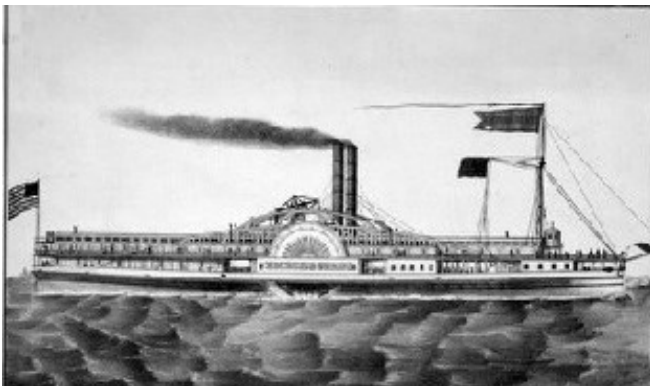
In 1820, only four steamers operated on the Great Lakes. From year to year the immigration to Illinois and Wisconsin continued to increase until a daily line of boats was established between Buffalo and Chicago. In 1841, the business from Buffalo to Chicago could be done by six or eight of the then largest size boats; in 1847, it required fifteen, more than double the capacity to manage it, aided by about twenty steam propellers of more than 300 tons each, and an almost endless number of large brigs and schooners, many of which carried from 10,000 to 15,000 bushels of wheat.

Commencing in August of 1844, the steamer *Empire* operated between Buffalo and Chicago on a twice per month schedule during the shipping season. It took 4 days to get from Buffalo to Chicago a distance of 1054 miles. The ship stopped in Milwaukee and Sheboygan before returning to Buffalo. It was the largest steamboat afloat on the Great Lakes at that time, being 265 feet long with a beam of 33 feet. The Buffalo and Chicago Steamship line ran 7 vessels between Buffalo and Chicago. The *Empire* and the steamers *Baltic*, *America*, and *Oregon*, as well as 2 steam packets ran on a staggered schedule, each leaving Buffalo and arriving at Chicago a week later.

Two other lines, the Reed line operating the *Niagara* and *Louisiana*, and the *Griffith Western* line also ran the route. The Peoples Steamship line operated from Buffalo to Chicago from the opening of navigation until November 1st with cabin fare of \$8 and steerage fare of \$3.

In 1845, steamship lines carried over 93,000 passengers, most of them on the daily runs to Detroit, Lake Erie and Lake Michigan ports. Travel to Chicago was frequent and usually took three to four days. For the well to do who could afford a \$10 ticket, it was a very pleasant experience in the best grand hotel tradition. Fine dining and ballroom dancing along with luxurious relaxation made a trip on one of these floating palaces a holiday in itself.

By 1847, one could take a train from New York City to Buffalo and then board the *Empire* for passage to Sheboygan from Chicago. Only five days after leaving the Atlantic seaboard you could be in Sheboygan.



The *Empire State*, seen at left, was launched on April 5, 1862. Built as a propeller, a term that distinguished her from contemporary paddle wheeled steamers, the passenger freight steamer carried passengers above decks and freight below. The vessel was reportedly popular, transporting many immigrants and prominent people westward.

The *Sheboygan Mercury*, April 8 1848
The Buffalo and Chicago line was represented by William Farnsworth in Sheboygan.

1848 BUFFALO & CHICAGO. 1849

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SEASON.

The new and splendid Upper Cabin Steam Packet A. D. PATCHIN. H. WHITAKER, Master, will perform her trips during the season of 1848, as follows :

LEAVES BUFFALO.		LEAVES CHICAGO	
Wednesday	April 23	wednesday	May 3
wednesday,	May 10	wednesday	" 17
wednesday,	" 21	wednesday	" 31
wednesday,	June 7	wednesday	June 14
wednesday,	" 21	wednesday	" 28
wednesday,	July 5	wednesday	July 12
wednesday,	" 19	wednesday	" 26
wednesday,	Aug. 2	wednesday	Aug. 9
wednesday,	" 16	wednesday	" 23
wednesday,	" 30	wednesday	Sept. 6
wednesday,	Sept. 13	wednesday	" 20
wednesday,	" 27	wednesday	Oct. 4
wednesday,	Oct. 11	wednesday	" 18
wednesday,	" 25	wednesday	Nov. 1
wednesday,	Nov. 8	wednesday	" 15

H. WHITAKER, Owner

AGENTS.

J. MYERS & Co, Buffalo.
B. L. WEBB, Detroit.
L. J. HIGHT, Milwaukee.
FARNSWORTH & SON, Sheboygan.

'Sunshine' Letters Warm Friends

By JAN HENSCHL
Press Staff Writer

It had been 35 years since they graduated from Cental High School — 28 years since all of them has been together, and when I got to them Saturday afternoon, they had been a couple of happy hours over lunch.

The five of them have kept a round robin letter circulating for more than 30 years — a real human interest story.

I had anticipated a quiet interview with five mature women, calmly reminiscing about the "old days" as we sat serenely in the park adjacent to the motel at which they were staying while attending the reunion. One or two of them, I imagined, might be knitting.

So much for journalistic intuition. I have had more dignified assignments with 13 year olds — but not nearly as much fun. The process of extracting information from these women was a bit like calling for a moment of silence at the height of a teenage slumber party. There existed a total over-ride of giggle and tease. I simply gave myself over to enjoying these females in their temporary regression as we draped ourselves, appropriately, over beds and chairs in a motel room.

Let me introduce the round-robinners:

Carol Miller Schreve of Beloit, married, four children, presently a part-time student at the University of Wisconsin-Janesville.

Alice Klimke Hlavachick, Sacramento, Calif., married, two children, two grandchildren, previously employed by the Bank of America.

Elinor Haack Longrie, Sheboygan, a widow, two children, three grandchildren, employed by the Sheboygan Yacht Club.

Joan Stolzenburg Sisul, Tacoma, Wash., two children, a purchasing manager for Ft. Stielacoom.

Ann Mikalofsky Bodden, Theresa, Wis., married, four children, two grandchildren, a registered nurse.

Are they different personalities, I ask them. Can they describe one another in a word or two? A great outburst of giggling, observation and counter-observation. "The thing we have in common is that we're all crazy," offers Ann amidst the laughter.

The women then agree that ... Carol is a card with a great sense of humor — a definite must for a good time. Alice has her feet on the ground (Alice initiated the round robin letter). Joan is the athlete and Ann was the gang's prize student. They cannot quite decide about Elinor.

What, I inquire, has been the bond that has kept the women corresponding for so many years?



The Tie That Binds

A gaudy 'traveling tie' evokes laughter and happy memories for five friends who gathered in Sheboygan during the weekend for their 35th high school reunion. The '40 graduates of Central High School, who have kept in touch for more than 30 years with a round robin letter, are

seated left to right, Joan Stolzenburg Sisul, Tacoma, Wash., Ann Mikalofsky Bodden, Theresa, Wis., and Elinor Haack Longrie, Sheboygan, and standing left to right Alice Klimke Hlavachick, Sacramento, Calif., and Carol Miller Schreve, Beloit.

"We have all known each other for so long," says Alice, whose friendship with Carol goes back to pre-school days, "and as young people we knew each other's families quite well."

"We all lived quite close to one another," Elinor chimes in, "and we all grew up sharing the same values."

They describe their teenage experiences as "clean-cut."

"None of us drank in high school," Ann says, "still we had the best times. We were all Girl Scouts together at one point, and we really enjoyed singing together. We all belonged to different religious faiths, but we used to have really good times singing hymns."

Someone refers to the slightly garish gold braid and sequin "tie" at Ann's throat and, again, the group explodes in laughter. It constitutes a standing joke among the women, and as it turns out, is a week-old facsimile (recreated by Ann) of the original.

The story goes something like this:

Ann's aunt sent the original "tie" to her amused family one year as a serious gift. When a party was held for Ann prior to her leaving for nursing school, Ann's mother, Dorothy (who greatly encouraged the girls' madcap antics) wrapped the gaudy tie as a fun gift. For years afterward, the "tie" invariably turned up as a gift at showers and weddings in all the girls' lives. Although the original tie was lost along the way, it's ability to evoke hilarious memories seems to be re-embodied in the latest edition.

Alice became a military wife, and it was she who began the round robin letter in 1954. Although her former classmates chide her for having been too lazy to write to all four of them separately, she says the round robin format was really the result of wanting "all of these friends to stay in touch with one another."

The women agreed that births and deaths became the high and low points of their collective correspondence over the years. Alice recalls her husband's assignment to Okinawa as exciting news, and Elinor remembers missing an expense-paid trip to Las Vegas one year, when her late husband, Elmer, failed by one vote to be elected a delegate to a bricklayers' convention. For Joan, her accomplishments as a runner (she started at 40) has made for pleasant news, and Ann states that finally acquir-

ing her nursing degree at Milton College in 1980 was an achievement she enjoyed sharing with her friends.

The letters, which often took a year to circulate, sometimes included accounts of troubles. "But even as teenagers, we never dwelt on problems," says Ann. "The thing about our friendship is that we always brought out each other's light sides."

"It's the same with letters," Carol interjects, "we always want something good to say." The other women nod in agreement, adding that letters were often held back until the writer felt "up" enough to write something cheery.

"I just love getting those letters," Joan says. "When they arrive I do everything I have to as fast as I can, so I can get off by myself with it ... they're pure sunshine."

Momentarily, the group falls silent. "I think other people would say we're basically serious women," says Ann. "But when we're all together the chemistry is such that we just automatically have a good time. It's great."

Then the happy chatter commences once more and the women begin to pour over an aging photograph album filled with pictures of posturing, giggling teenage girls ...

Cesarean Birth Classes Set

To help women and their families understand the Cesarean birth experience, a special two-hour class is being offered by St. Nicholas Hospital on Thursday, July 19 from 7 to 9:30 p.m.

Statistically, 20 percent of all babies in the United States are now born by Cesarean section, twice as

Klunck, maternity department registered nurse, will be instructor for the class.

Anyone anticipating or having just had a Cesarean birth, or persons just interested, may register for the class by calling 459-0628 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Originally published July 9, 1984 in the Sheboygan Press.

Submitted.

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The Heidelberg Club, once located on the seventh floor of the Security First National bank, in Sheboygan.

History Uncovered An Unexpected Awakening



Imagine the resounding boom that shocked everyone awake the morning of February 15, 1944 in the Sheboygan neighborhood around North Sixth Street and St. Clair Avenue.

At 4:30am that winter day, the home of Dr. Edmund and Josephine Reiss Knauf was shaken off its foundation by a massive explosion emanating from the basement.

Every window in the basement was gone. The force blew out all but one window on the first floor, the window frames shoved outside of the sturdy brick structure. All four sides of the building sustained major cracks.

A portion of the wall collapsed on the north side of the house; loose bricks were strewn everywhere. The

east façade bulged out from the foundation. All partition walls in the interior of the building were torn loose from the outer walls.



Thousands of dollars of furnishings on the first floor were ruined including furniture, dishes and rugs. The floors were pushed upwards enough to knock over the furniture, yet the Steinway piano managed to survive.

The Steinway Model L grand, made in 1922, sat in the music room on the first floor. The impact of the explosion tossed the piano, and had it hanging between the first floor and the basement. "It sure was a wreck," wrote Mr. Stanley Schlosser of the Edmund Gram Co., Steinway dealers in Milwaukee, "but what a glorious piano it turned out to be after reconditioning." We are reminded of the quote by renowned pianist, Arthur Rubinstein, "a Steinway is a Steinway and there is nothing like it in the world".

Mr. Ray Daniels, of the H.C. Prange Company, provided an itemized estimate of the furnishings that were damaged. If not ruined by the explosion, they were embedded with plaster and concrete dust. Two room-size Oriental rugs were shipped to Nahigian Brothers of Chicago for cleaning.

It was thought that the explosion was caused by the accumulation of coal gas in the basement being ignited by a spark from the hot water boiler. Coal dust suspended in air is explosive—coal dust has far more surface area per unit weight than lumps of coal, and is more susceptible to spontaneous combustion. As a result, a nearly empty coal bin is a greater explosion risk than a full one.



Coal replaced wood in home heating about 1885 and would remain the dominant method of home central heating until the 1940s when it was replaced by fuel oil. Forced air furnaces with duct work and an electric fan replaced coal burners, those giant octopus like ducts and floor registers.

Once thoroughly investigated, the mystery came back to old gas lighting pipes in the walls of the home. The pipes were never removed when the house was converted to electricity.

On the morning in question, Dr. Knauf was, by good fortune, called out on a house call. Once awake, he smelled the gas throughout the home and quickly evacuated his family. The gas ignited shortly thereafter exploding with great force.

Although the Knauf family was hopeful the home could be saved, it was damaged too severely. Christ Reimer, local carpenter and contractor, was granted a permit in September 1944 to demolish the house that once stood at 1215 North Sixth Street. Today an apartment building occupies the site.



The image below shows demolition of the home in the fall of 1944. The home's former location on the northeast corner of 6th Street and St. Clair Avenue is the site of an apartment building today.

