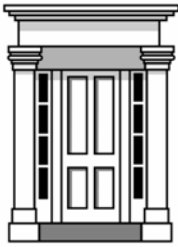


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



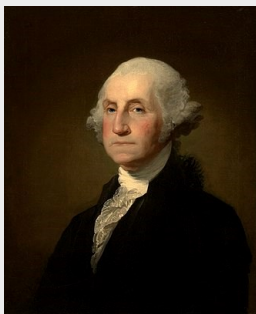
HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
CENTER

Did You Know?

The first typewriter was invented by Milwaukee newspaperman and politician Christopher Latham Sholes in 1867. The rights for his invention were sold to the Remington Company.



George Washington suffered from malaria, carbuncle, dysentery, smallpox, diphtheria and other chronic diseases.



The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research Center

Volume XXXII Number 5 June 2022

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

The Rise of the Tourist Camp



Tourist Camp at Devil's Lake, Wisconsin postcard. SCHRC collection.

Are we there yet? That's a question every parent hates to hear when on a road trip. It may well have been one of the more popular phrases heard on Wisconsin roadways during the 1920s when travel by car became a family event.

In 1900, Americans owned just 8 thousand cars; in 1920, that number jumped to 8 million. Early on few Americans could afford a car. An average annual salary in 1908 might be less than \$500, while a new Model T cost \$850.

Service garages, filling stations, and dealerships were few and far between outside of large cities. Mechanical breakdowns and flat tires were frequent making car travel a challenge, if not an impossibility. And finally, road conditions were abysmal. The few roads that existed had deep ruts, steep grades and often huge washouts.

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.

SCHRC will close for archiving August 15-August 26, 2022.

Phone: 920-467-4667

E-mail: katiereilly@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 katiereilly@schrc.org to sign up.

New Members Welcome!

Dave & Bev Dippel, Plymouth
Jeffrey Russell, Waunakee
Barbara S. Walker, Sheboygan

Programming and Classes

Genealogy Classes

1:00pm at the Plymouth Public Library, 130 Division Street, Plymouth, WI
Thursday, June 23, 2022 - Genealogy 101

Taproom History

Chris & Sue's, W3820 Co Rd C, Plymouth

6:30pm to 7:30pm

Thursday, June 16, 2022 - Civil War Medicine - Dr. Gordon Dammann

Thursday, July 21, 2022 - Dillinger's Wisconsin Connections - Steve Gallimore and Steven Rogstad

Thursday, August 18, 2022 - Wisconsin's Gangster's Past - Chad Lewis

2022 Symposium - Great Lakes History - Promise & Peril Saturday, November 5, 2022 Plymouth Arts Center 9:00am to 3:00pm

Theodore Karamanski - Mastering the Inland Seas: How Lighthouses, Navigational Aids, and Harbors Transformed the Great Lakes

Patrick Jung - Charting the Inland Seas: French Exploration and Mapping of Lake Michigan and the Great Lakes, 1534-1675.

Brendon Baillo - The Sinking of the Lady Elgin

Todd Gordon - Chicago's Eastland Disaster

2022 Plymouth Historical Society Annual Meeting Saturday, June 18, 2022, First Congregational United Church 1405 S Milwaukee St, Plymouth, 10:00am to 12noon

The Art of Being a Farm Wife - Plymouth Historical Society Annual Meeting

The Plymouth Historical Society will conduct their annual meeting beginning at 10:00am. Beth Dippel of SCHRC will present The Art of Being a Farm Wife beginning about 10:45 to 11:00am. This event is free and open to the public.

Available Now - New Books in the Bookstore - The Great Waukesha Springs Era and Stereoviews of Waukesha by John Schoenknecht, **The Tao of the Badger** by Rick Kroos and **The Light on the House at the Top of the Stairs (Port Washington)** by Patrick Curtiss. Check out schrc.org/shop or Facebook for more information. Call 920.467.4667 for a paper book catalog.

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



“LET’S DEVELOP OUR CENTER”

Steven K. Rogstad
Executive Director

The summer season is an excellent time to reconnect with history in exciting and tangible ways. My former college history professor Laura Gellott (who gave a presentation to our Second Saturdays program last November about her book, *Helen Perry Curtis and the European Trip of a Lifetime*) told the story in class one day about how her parents took her to historic sites as part of summer family vacations, which sparked an interest in history that grew into an academic career.

Like Laura, we all can learn about history through visiting historic sites and museums. However, there are other opportunities that include walking tours, cemetery tours, and searching for historic markers and graves. Visiting historic sites provides a connection to the past and enables us to make sense of the communities that came before us, gives a greater appreciation for cultures that preceded us, and extends an opportunity to experience feelings of pride, sadness, anger - even amusement - in response to sites and monuments and what they were/are meant to communicate. Such visits also inspire a young person’s curiosity about history that may result in the development of another educator, historian, archivist, or site administrator!

There are no shortages of historic sites to tour in this area of the state. There is the Wade House in Greenbush, Sheboygan’s James Tellen Woodland Sculpture Garden, Port Washington’s Exploreum Museum and Light Station Museum, Plymouth Historical Society, West Bend’s Tower Heritage Center (they have a great historic jail!), Fond du Lac’s Galloway House and Village, the Lincoln-Tallman House in Janesville, Pinecrest Historical Village in Manitowoc, Racine Heritage Museum, Sheboygan County Historical Society & Museum, and the three

public museums (Public, Civil War, and Dinosaur) at Kenosha.

Whether we realize it or not, history is all around us! We put flowers on graves and recall to memory relatives and friends who have passed on by telling stories about them. That is oral history. We trample through graveyards to find elusive and forgotten graves to fill a niche in our genealogical inquiries or for some special research project. That is historical research.

We appreciate history through nostalgia when we become fascinated by looking at old photographs of people, neighborhoods, streets, parcels of land, and old buildings. We treasure our photograph albums because they show the history of relationships and events we have experienced in our own past.

Opportunities are coming up to learn about more exciting historical topics. The Center just completed a 4-session series of Saloon Stories that attracted 389 people! Our popular summer program series, Taproom History, begins June 16 with Dr. Gordon Dammann discussing the fascinating topic, “The Story of Civil War Medicine.” In July, SCHRC board member Steve Gallimore and I will be tag-teaming on a presentation about Wisconsin connections to gangster John Dillinger. Chad Lewis will be discussing “Wisconsin’s Gangster Past,” in August.

I would like to extend a special word of appreciation to three new sponsors, who have graciously provided financial support this year for our outreach programs. H.C. Denison sponsored Saloon Stories this year. Van Horn Chevrolet is sponsoring Taproom History this summer. Our Second Saturdays programs are now being sponsored by Oostburg State Bank. We thank them for their support!

There are opportunities for other event and project sponsorships. Specifically, we are looking for sponsors to assist with publishing projects and a computer upgrade project. Is this something you may be interested in? If so, I would love to hear from you today! Make it a great summer!

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

Sincerely,
Steven K. Rogstad
Executive Director



Christiansen's Tourist Cabins 4 miles north of Sheboygan on Hwy 141.

free automobile camps located strategically alongside new stores and restaurants. The camps boasted washrooms, running water, and picnic tables. Competition was fierce between neighboring campgrounds, which numbered around 300 in the state in 1923.

Tourist courts were usually a series of very small one-room buildings separated from each other by the width of an automobile and were situated near tourist attractions like Mackinac Bridge or Wisconsin Dells. One of the most popular driving trips in 1925 was the 1,000 mile trip around Lake Michigan, stopping to watch freighters go through the Soo Locks.

In 1939, Wisconsin had 407 tourist camps according to the Wisconsin Blue Book, with receipts of \$559,000. By the 1940s and 1950s, many tourist courts offered room telephones, cafes, gas, and even swimming pools and air-conditioning.

Motor hotels or motels began to appear in the 1940s, offering even more luxury to travelers. They squeezed out the tourist court business which peaked in 1961.

The *Sheboygan Press* ran an editorial in January 1927 that urged the creation of auto campsites in the state. It suggested that every city in "this gasoline age has to settle and settle right. Most are finding it pays to bid for the tourist camper." In other words, there was money to be made.

Another *Sheboygan Press* article of November 1930 reported nearly 5,000 people were accommodated at the Sheboygan Tourist camp during the twenty weeks that summer. This was more than a 12% increase over 1929. The travelers came from all over the country. Average weekly attendance was 428. The quality playground, campsites, nearness to bathing beaches and shopping districts attracted visitors. A charge of 50 cents per car was made each day with a three-day stay being the maximum as it discouraged drifters from lingering. The camp was equipped with gas ranges, wood stoves, showers and rubbish receptacles. Future improvements included resurfacing the tennis courts and construction of horseshoe pits.

The Sheboygan camp, located south of Indiana Avenue and west of the beltline was managed by William Behring the caretaker. Established by the Sheboygan Businessmen's Association, the camp was owned by the city. It was second to none in accoutrements. Nearly every review was positive. One complaint we can all understand was from a group from Chicago. They complained that the mosquitoes were unduly pestiferous. How polite!

The camp was so successful that a group of folks suggested that Camping should be considered Sheboygan's fifth C, along with Chairs, Cheese, Churches and Children.

Each year the season ran from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Among the first to check in 1927 was a troupe of performers from New York playing at the Van der Vaart Theater. Campers came from every state. Some were here on business, some visiting relatives and many, just wandering the country.

In 1937, the Wisconsin legislature passed regulations for tourist courts and camps. The new laws included licensing, \$3 to \$5 per year for owners, registration by those staying at camps was made mandatory. It was also imperative that each camp have running water and adequate ventilation. All these regulations were designed to create a better and healthier experience for campers.

Blacktop and concrete were saved for the only the busiest roads.

Within a decade these challenges improved. Cars were more affordable and reliable. By 1925, the price of a Tin Lizzie had dropped to less than \$300 thanks to the efficiency of Henry Ford's assembly line. Road quality was much improved, and the middle class was desperate for a vacation.

Families began to camp outside wherever they parked, often leaving behind messes and creating general irritation for the owners of the property where they slept.

After World War I, the frequency of these travel issues grew. But, some communities saw a chance to profit from tourism. They opened



Marieanna Tourist Home, 1423 Marie Court, Sheboygan. Proprietors: Mr. and Mrs. H.O. Krepsky. Inspected and modern in every way. Junction 141 and 32.

The 1940 census reported 13,521 tourist camps and courts in the United States.

Sheboygan Falls had a tourist camp right along the east side of the Sheboygan River in the flats near today's Rochester Park.

East Oostburg had its Dutch Tourist cabins on old Hwy. 141.

The city of Sheboygan had the Marieanna Tourist home on Marie Court. That house is still there. And the Log Cabin in Howards Grove also had tourist cabins.

Though the camps and cabins have disappeared, they certainly were an essential part of Sheboygan County's early tourism business.

Entrance to Sheboygan Falls Tourist Camp located on the east side of the river in the flats near today's Rochester Park, the camp was finished and ready for business in 1923.



Notice the sign in Sheboygan Falls giving direction to the Free Picnic Grounds and Tourist Camp. The sign was located on the southwest corner of Monroe and Water Streets, the building that is today the Research Center can be seen in the background.



Spring 2022 Activity at the Research Center

Matthew Prigge, Milwaukee historian and author, entertained a crowd at 2022 Saloon Stories. His presentation, Milwaukee Mayhem was a hit.



Christine Tempas and Shirl Breunig of Sheboygan Falls Chamber Main Street deliver a beautiful pot of flowers that help in beautifying the entire downtown. Thanks Chamber-Main Street.



SCHRC's April genealogy class focused on the use of Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.com filled the house with interested researchers. We were lucky to have a couple of talented and expert members attend and help with wonderful explanations of the programs. What a great genealogy community!



Steven Rogstad, SCHRC Executive Director, and Adam Payne, Sheboygan County Administrator, meet for a quick meeting when Steven stopped in to deliver research provided by SCHRC for one of Adam's projects.

There are many theories as to how Sheboygan got its name, but the one most likely indicates Sheboygan was an Ojibwe word meaning "passage or waterway between the lakes."

Christian Mahloch Lime Kiln, Rockville, 1898



The Kiel area was blessed with much limestone, and when the area was settled by European immigrants, lime was in high demand for construction of farm buildings. This simple lime kiln was located on the Christian Mahloch property at Rockville, town of Schleswig, Manitowoc County, Wisconsin.

This image from Charles Mahloch was dated 1893, though it seems a bit earlier. In the background with the single rig is William Burns. On the roof, the man in his shirt sleeves is William Grabs. In the foreground is Mrs. William Mahloch, her daughter, Mrs. Fred Jacobi of Grafton, John Kasten, John Mahloch of Kiel, Mrs. John Jung nee Katie Mahloch and William Mahloch. The elderly man is Jacob Mahloch, 84 years at this time, and the last surviving Civil War veteran of the Kiel area.



At left - this partial 1873 map shows the 80-acre Mahloch farm (highlighted) located in the southeast quarter of section 21 in the town of Schleswig. Located on a tight bend in the Sheboygan River just east of Rockville, it was once was the location of a lime kiln. The area in black is the village of Kiel.

Rockville is an unincorporated community located in the town of Schleswig, Manitowoc County on the Sheboygan River. Centered around the intersection of Steinthal (once known as Mud Lake Road) and Rockville Roads east of Kiel and north of Millhome, the settlement once had a grist mill on the Rockville millpond.



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Personal hygiene was not forgotten for early tourist camp users. Yankee Paper and Specialty Co. out of Menasha produced Wash-up Kits filled with soap and water, perfect for use in the river or lake of your choice.