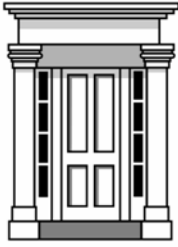


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
CENTER

Historical Trivia

Fact: Wisconsin created the highway system in 1917, and was the first state to number highways - erecting the first signs in May 1918. The system was later adopted nationwide.

Fact: Wisconsin's first stretch of interstate highway opened in Waukesha County in 1958.

Included in this edition of *The Researcher* we see a number of photos from the Lincoln-Tallmann Christmas, exemplary of what we'll see at A Tremendous Celebration this holiday season.



The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research Center
Volume XXXIII Number 1 October 2022

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

A Tremendous Celebration



A "Tremendous Celebration" is coming to the Research Center this upcoming holiday season! Starting Friday, November 25 – the day after Thanksgiving – and running through Friday, December 30, the Center will be profiling the Cole Historic District of Sheboygan Falls by displaying over 100 Christmas trees of various and eclectic themes.

There will be 80 lighted trees inside the Center's two facilities at 518 Water Street and 511 Adams Street, while additional lit trees will highlight Water Street and the grounds of the Research Center. The event will be open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 4:00 pm until 9:00 pm.

Special events during the six-week run include:

Visit Santa – Saturday, November 26

A dramatic reading of "A Christmas Carol" – Saturday, December 10

Choir Concert – Friday, December 16

Continued on page 2

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 be closed Thursday and Friday, November 24 and 25 for Thanksgiving.

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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**Check out
schrc.org**

**And SCHRC
on Facebook**

All events are **FREE** and **open to the public**. However, there will be jars available for free-will offerings to support the Center.

The event is a fundraiser and the goal is to raise \$20,000 for the Center.

We are looking for event sponsors and sponsors for individual trees. To date, we have nearly 40 tree sponsors, but we need 40 more! Any individual, business, nonprofit organization, church, civic group, school/school group, eateries, clubs, can sponsor a tree. Tree sponsors will be able to decorate their tree in whatever theme they choose to promote themselves. We have 80 pre-lit artificial trees in varying heights that you can decorate. You could also be an event sponsor if you are unable to decorate a tree. Call Steven Rogstad, Executive Director, 262-412-2511 for additional details and information.

The Center is also looking for more holiday lights for trees, wreaths, decorating. Do you have any that are in good working order that you can donate? If so, we would love to have them! Contact the Center at 920-467-4667.

More details about the event and its schedule will be coming soon. You can stay updated by checking the Center's website at www.schrc.org. Mark your calendars now! Come to the Grand Opening on November 25. Bring friends, family, neighbors and show your support for the Research Center this holiday season!



Sheboygan County Historical Research Center welcomes new Board Member, Ms. Terri Yoho

Terri Yoho has a long-standing interest in community service and education. She currently sits on the Wisconsin Historical Society Board of Curators, serving on their Executive Committee, Finance and Facilities Committee, and chair of the Nominating Committee. In addition, she serves on boards of the Wisconsin United Methodist Foundation; Milwaukee Audubon Society; Friends of the Wade House as treasurer; Friends of Fred Smith, Phillips, WI; and the Random Lake School Foundation. She is Lay Leader at Zion United Methodist Church-Batavia. Terri is also an advisor to the Ruth Foundation of the Arts, a national supporter and grant maker in the arts.

Terri served as the Executive Director of the Kohler Foundation, Inc., an organization that supports the arts, education, and charitable initiatives from 1999 through 2017. In addition to the foundation, Terri administrated the Kohler Trust for Arts and Education, as well as the Kohler Trust for Preservation, a supporter of the Wisconsin Historical Society, Nature Conservancy, Aldo Leopold Foundation, and other named beneficiaries. Prior to Kohler Foundation, she had twelve years of management and administration experience at Kohler Co.

She and her husband live near Adell and enjoy hiking, gardening, and travel. Terri holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Lakeland College, Sheboygan, WI and a Master of Science degree in applied economics from Marquette University, Milwaukee WI.



“LET’S DEVELOP OUR CENTER”

At left:
Wisconsin
Governor Tony
Evers and Steven K.
Rogstad, SCHRC
Executive
Director

The Center recently participated in a project that honored Dr. Raymond Evers, who was in charge of healthcare at Rocky Knoll medical facility in Plymouth for 32 years, from 1950 to 1982. Originally built in 1926 as a sanatorium for tuberculosis (TB) patients, Rocky Knoll later transitioned into a long-term care facility, where Dr. Evers worked and lived until his death in 2006.

The project was established primarily due to the efforts of Sheboygan County Administrator Adam Payne closely working with the Evers family to determine a suitable memorial to Dr. Evers. During those discussions it was determined that a large exhibit board would be created to present both Dr. Evers’ career at Rocky Knoll and the wide positive influence he had with both his patients and their treatments. This signage would include photographs and narrative.

The Center participated in the project by identifying, locating, and obtaining photographs for the exhibit. Over the course of several months, we were able to obtain needed images by scanning photographs from our own collections, and obtain additional images from other organizations. This September 9, the exhibit was unveiled in front of about 200 people on the grounds of Rocky Knoll with Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers – Dr. Evers’ son – in attendance. This project is another reminder of the important ways in which the Research Center continues to work with organizations, businesses, government agencies, families, and individuals – providing images and information that help tell stories and histories that need to be preserved.

A major service we provide is the scanning of documents and images. In 2018, the Center launched a large-scale two-year scanning project for Sheboygan County that digitized vital tax records. Other scanning projects have included architectural records, business collections, and family records. We are currently working with two families that want images and documents digitized. One of these families is also seeking help from the Center in commemorating a prominent Sheboygan County business and building.

Revenue generated from these scanning projects is crucial to meeting budgets and making the Center more financially sustainable. They also make the Center more relevant. Rather than hiring outside scanning firms from around the United States to digitize corporate, business, and organizational records, the Center can perform the same service at a lower cost. The money stays in Sheboygan County and financially assists a local non-profit organization. It is a win-win all around. The more information we scan into our database, the more material we have on file for researchers and historians. It is yet another way to preserve Sheboygan County History.

Of course, scanning requires the technology and individuals to perform the work. Some scanning projects have involved having a person scan records 4 hours a day for several days a week. The County project already mentioned went on daily for nearly two years. The Center can always use more scanners and more people to perform the work. Please consider supporting our scanning lab by making a financial gift for additional equipment. Also, please spread the word about our scanning capabilities and what organizations they may benefit.

Last, our upcoming “Treemendous Celebration” will be launched on the evening of Friday, November 25, with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. So, mark your calendars and attend the opening night of what will be 6 weeks of fun and festivities. We will be profiling around 130 Christmas trees of various themes and décor. Good times are coming! Get excited! I am already excited!

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

Sincerely,
Steven K. Rogstad
Executive Director



Programming

Second Saturdays– Journeys Into Local History, PAC, 520 East Mill, Plymouth

9:30am to 11:30am (Free of Charge)

Saturday, October 8, 2022

Indian Mounds of Fond du Lac/Washington Counties - Kurt Sampson, Dodge Cty. Hist. Society

Saturday, November 12, 2022

Greendale, A Planned Community - Daina Pekunas, Wis. Hist. Society's State Historic Preservation Officer

Genealogy Classes

Research Center, 518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls, 1:00pm to 3:00pm (\$15 members, \$20 non-members)

Monday, October 10, 2022 - Documenting Your Genealogical Finds

Monday, November 14, 2022 - Maps, Their Uses and Importance in Genealogy and History

History on the Move

Generations 1500 Douglas Drive, Plymouth, WI 2:00pm to 3:30pm (Free of Charge)

Wednesday, October 5, 2022 - Smorgasbord

Wednesday, November 2, 2022 - The 1950s and 1960s

2022 Annual Meeting

Friday, October 7, 2022

Amore, 18 West Mill Street, Plymouth, Wisconsin 11:00am to 1:00pm

Steven K. Rogstad will share his research on Helen Brainard Cole. Call to reserve.

E-News

SCHRC has launched a new monthly E-News email that is full of information and fun. It is just another way to keep in touch. Please **check your spam filters** if you haven't received a copy. **Please add bethdippel@schrc.org to your contacts** so it doesn't get sent to your Spam. It's not fundraising, it's just fun.

Wilbur and Orville Ride Again, A Story of the Old Brotz Airfield



View of the original Sheboygan Airport Hangar built in 1923 and the JN-4D before the fire that leveled this hangar. The J-1 can be seen just inside the hangar. This photo was taken just before the storm and lightning strike of September 18, 1925.

Anton Brotz, engineer from Kohler, was a man who would be at the forefront of the aviation industry in the county. He was a man who watched Lincoln Beachey perform the first fly over of Sheboygan in September 1911 as part of Wisconsin's greatest air show to date and caught the flying bug.

It took ten years, but a decade later, after he completed pilot training in Chicago, Anton Brotz brought home his first airplane - a war surplus Standard - and established his own airport at Sheboygan, the first on Lake Michigan's western shore.

Brotz Field, also known as the Sheboygan Airport, was located on the southwest edge of the city at the time. Maps place the 31-acre site on the south side of Union Avenue south of today's Veteran's Park. The Milwaukee Road railroad tracks and the old roundhouse formed its eastern perimeter. Today Piggly Wiggly's Distribution Center sits on the site.

When the first hangar was built in February of 1923, Brotz already had two of his own planes there. The 48-foot x 48-foot wooden building was built at the west center of the property. Under construction, a heavy windstorm on February 13 flattened the partially erected structure. Gusts were clocked at 50-80 mph, and it was termed the worst storm in 50 years.

When the hangar was rebuilt, a lean-to was added for further storage. The site was also designed as a refueling station. It was hoped that the establishment of a service station in Sheboygan would guarantee air traffic from local and cross-country travelers and a notation on some of the first aviation maps being produced. Sheboygan was painted in large letters on the nearly flat roof of the hangar flanked by two large Sheboygan Airport markings.

The landing field was marked by a huge 50-foot-wide circle sunk into the ground and highly visible from the air. Each line was three feet in width and filled with brilliant, crushed, whitewashed stone. The hangar had the usual wind cone or windsock flying above. The terrain of the field was smooth and relatively flat.

Exciting things happened on a regular basis at the airfield. Each Sunday when the weather was good the Brotz planes carried passengers into the skies for a nominal fee.

Orville and Wilbur Brotz (yes, really), sons of Frank Brotz, brother's of Anton, were the lucky passengers taken aloft on the first flight out of the new airport on May 13, 1923. A big crowd of 60 to 70 cars showed up to watch the event.

On May 29, 1923, night flying was successfully attempted for the first time. Pilot Werner Bunge, military aviator, took up two passengers, Marvin Grasse and W. Wendel, about 8:00pm. They marveled at the beauty of the lights of the city that night.

Phillip and Charles Voigt, Jr. sons of the District Attorney took rides in Brotz's Curtiss on Memorial Day 1923. Nineteen other passengers went up while crowds watched. Weight was a real factor at the time. The boys were small and made up just one adult, so both could ride at the same time. On the other end of the scale, Nicholas Opgenorth, a healthy 255 pounds, went solo. Fred Kneever of Kneever Hotel fame also made the trip. Imagine the conversation in the restaurant.

Stunts performed by pilot W.O. Bunge that day included loop de loops, rolls, dives and tail spins. The new airport received a surprise on Sunday, October 21, 1923, when Mel Thompson of Quarry, Manitowoc County, dropped in for a visit. Thompson, 24, a flight pioneer in his own right started with an engine and built his plane around it. His entire craft weighed less than 600 pounds and had a wingspan of just over 18 feet. He stayed for about two hours and then flew the 37 miles home.

Disaster struck the hangar again when a lightning strike sent the building up in flames on September 18, 1925. At 12:45 am, neighbors were awakened by a house-shaking thunderclap in the midst of a wild thunderstorm. The roaring and crackling of flames soon followed. Firefighters were helpless to do anything. The nearest hydrant was close to a mile away at Nineteenth and Georgia. Firemen kept an eye on the blazing projectiles that shot into the air and towards homes. The only thing saved was a 250-gallon gas tank. It was thought the lightning struck the windsock. Thousands showed up to watch the pyrotechnics that night, most still in their pajamas. The hangar was deemed a complete loss. Both planes were destroyed in the fire.

The building was quickly razed, and by April 1926 a site was ready for a new one. This time the hangar was an all-steel design with two bays 36 x 40 in size.

In May of 1927 disaster struck again. What was termed a cyclonic storm destroyed the new steel hanger and caused extensive damage to one of the airplanes. A type 2 Woodson Express was picked up and dropped on its tail. Parts were strewn over the entire field. Witnesses saw the wind pick up the building, spin it, flip it and hurl it.

Later in 1927, Anton Brotz knew he had to move his airstrip to make way for real estate agents who planned to subdivide the airport into residential lots. In November, Koerner Land Company purchased 33 acres of land within city limits from the Henry Mallmann estate. This included the Brotz airport. There were a couple of attempts to locate land elsewhere, but it seems they were unsuccessful.

Hearing of the notice to vacate, Walter J. Kohler, Sr., then Governor of Wisconsin, suggested Brotz look for a site in Kohler village. It made sense since Anton was head of research at Kohler Co., the President of the village of Kohler and the first resident of Kohler village.

After finding a suitable site just north of the factory for the air strip, a new hangar was built in the fall of 1927 out of salvage from the steel hangar that had been ruined by the squall. A second and considerably larger hangar was built in the fall of 1928.

The new Kohler Airport was dedicated on August 20, 1930. Interestingly, the land on which the old Brotz Airfield once operated wasn't subdivided for nearly two more decades. It continued as Sheboygan Airport until the end of the 1940s.



2022 Genealogy Seminar DNA 101 - A Class for Beginners

Friday, October 21, 2022

Plymouth Arts Center, 520 East Mill Street, Plymouth, WI

9:00am to 12:30pm

\$30.00 per person/ \$50 per family

Among other things this seminar will tackle the following topics. It is 3.5 hours of information to help you understand DNA for Genealogy.

1. Introduction to Genetic Genealogy – Understanding Your Match List
2. Applying DNA – Cousin Matching
3. Ethnicity Estimate
4. Company & Test Comparisons

Dana Kelly, Executive Director of the Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library in Madison, WI will be the presenter.

Please register ahead of time either online at schrc.org/shop, by check or call 920.467.4667.

It's Time to Register Now!



2022 History Symposium - Great Lakes History - Promise and Peril

Saturday, November 5, 2022

Plymouth Arts Center, 520 East Mill Street, Plymouth, WI

9am-3pm

\$40.00 per person/ \$60 per family

Theodore Karamanski - Sailing America's Inland Sea: Lake Michigan in the Age of Sail

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

Brendon Baillod - The Lady Elgin Disaster: Milwaukee's Civil War Tragedy

Todd Gordon - The Eastland Story

Please register ahead of time either online at schrc.org/shop, by check or call 920.467.4667.

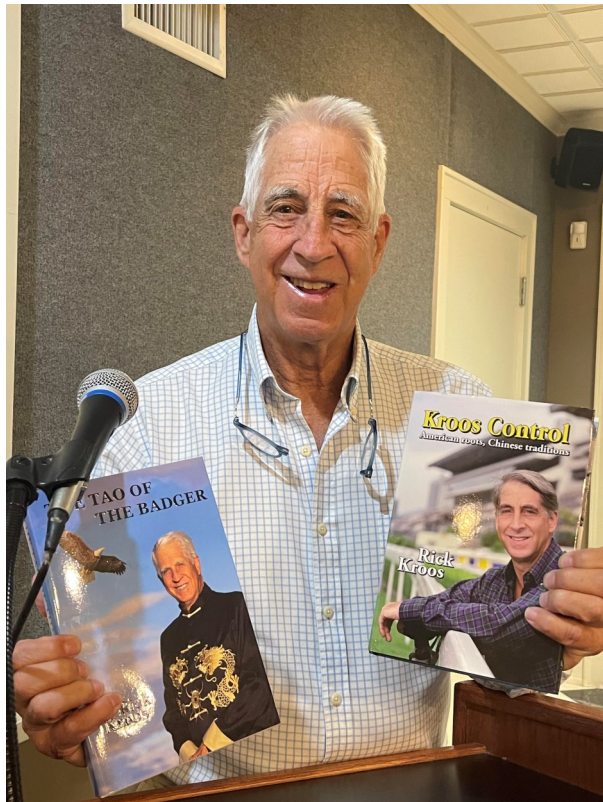
This will be a day of exceptional scholarship focused on Lake Michigan.
Don't miss these stellar speakers!

It's Time to Register Now!

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The Tao of the Badger **Wrap-up**

SCHRC member Rick Kroos delivered an enjoyable and riveting presentation on the subjects of Hong Kong, China and Taiwan this past September 7.

Based on his two autobiographies, *Kroos Control* (2012) and *The Tao of the Badger* (2022), Rick expounded upon the development of Hong Kong through the last several decades.

A Sheboygan native, he has lived in Hong Kong for most of his adult life. Thanks, Rick, for sharing your insights with us!

You can purchase a copy of his latest book at our bookstore or at www.schrc.org.