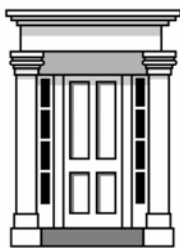


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
CENTER

**Cole Historic District  
Sheboygan Falls**

Bounded by Water, Adams, Michigan and Monroe Streets, the area is one of the few remaining historic districts in the state to display the early development of a Wisconsin community of the 1830s and 1840s. The district's two residences, mill house and hotel were all built between 1837 and 1848 in the Greek Revival Style. This area was first known as Rochester.

After construction of the bridge crossing the Sheboygan River in 1839, the area declined and Sheboygan Falls developed on the west side of the river.

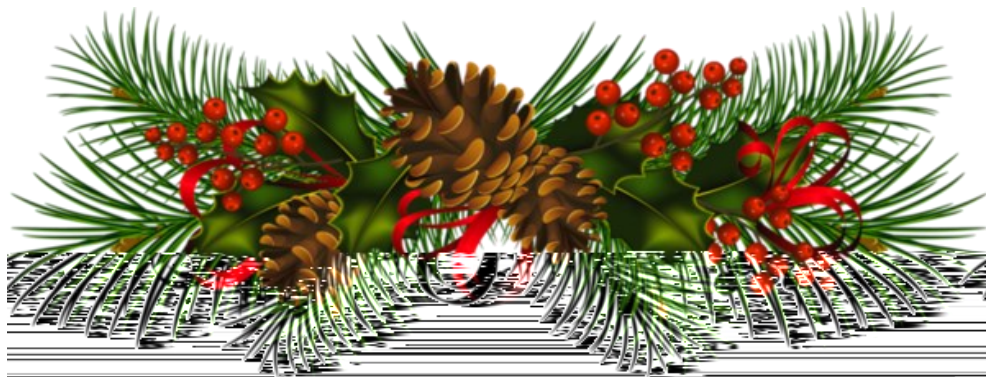
**Did You Know?**

The Sheboygan County Historical Research Center is housed in the oldest building in the county, the old Stedman mill house, built in 1837, and remodeled in 1860 to be mirror-style house.

# The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County  
Historical Research Center  
Volume XXXIII Number 2 December 2022

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



## Sheboygan's Driving Park



**The grandstand with seating for 1,000 at Driving Park.**

Have you ever wondered how neighborhoods or new subdivisions were named? Some monikers are obvious. Sheboygan has North Point named for the limestone ridge running east into the lake. Plymouth has Airpark named for Chaplin's airfield and its one remaining hangar.

Then there is Sheboygan's Driving Park addition. Taking up roughly the land between Weimann and Twentieth Streets and Saemann and Geele Avenues, it was home to one of Sheboygan's more curious recreation venues, the Gentlemen's Driving Park.

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.

The Research Library will be closed December 26 through December 30, 2022.

Phone: 920-467-4667

E-mail: [katiereilly@schrc.org](mailto:katiereilly@schrc.org)

Website: [schrc.org](http://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.

#### **SCHRC Board of Directors**

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Katie Reilly

Richard Stoelb

Beth Dippel, Dir. Of Ops.

**Check out  
schrc.org**

**And SCHRC  
on Facebook**

#### **New Members**

Thomas Francis, Atlanta, GA  
Martie Grubenhoff, Denver, CO  
Deborah Hardxer, Glenbeulah  
Robert Jagemann, Manitowoc  
Karen Mason, Kohler

#### **Testimonials**

I visited you on October 11 to research my family - the Guyetts - and found your help invaluable in finding so much information. Your held, kindness & dedication made me feel welcome in your center. You all went out of your way to answer my questions & were so willing to find old family photos & records, as well as make copies. Thank you so much!

#### **Marti Grubenhoff, Denver, Colorado**

Thank you very much for your assistance and encouragement last month during my visit to Sheboygan Falls. I was trying to identify any connection to my ancestor, James D. Bemis of Canandaigua, NY, to the Wisconsin Bemis family and if there is any connection to Rochester, NY. Thanks to your help...I now have a better insight into those questions...Thanks again for your assistance and encouragement!

#### **Bill Closs, Brooklyn, New York**

#### **Program Schedule**

##### **History on the Move - at Generations**

Wednesday, December 7, 2022 - 2:00pm

*H.C. Prange Co.—A Sheboygan Tradition* (NOTE: TOPIC CHANGE)

##### **Second Saturdays - at Plymouth Arts Center**

Saturday, December 10, 2022, 9:30am, Scott Spoolman,  
*Wisconsin State Parks and Waterways*

##### **Genealogy Class - at SCHRC**

Monday, December 12, 2022 - 1:00pm

*Creating a Fuller Picture of Your Ancestors*

#### **Lost Places**

Mulleton, also known as Bunces' Corners, was a neighborhood community located at the confluence of the towns of Plymouth, Lyndon, Sheboygan Falls and Lima, today situated where Sumac Road bisects Highway 57.

A crossroads community, it began early, 1850, with Captain Alonzo Beals, a Great Lakes freighter captain, who after retirement settled there. A man of action, Beals thought Cascade too distant to participate in Methodist services, so he hewed the timber and assisted building a school/church. Initially, the congregation grew quickly, and a new frame meeting place was built, but the community began to falter within a couple of decades. The tiny church had but one wedding from 1883 to 1942.

Closed in 1961, the building was bought by the Cascade United Brethren Church and moved in 1962 to become the west wing of their structure.



## “LET’S DEVELOP OUR CENTER”

In the October newsletter, I mentioned that the Center was hosting a new event we are calling a “*Treemendous Celebration*,” that will take place at the SCHRC buildings **November 25 – December 30, Tuesdays-Saturdays, 4:00 pm – 9:00 pm.**

The event will feature dozens of Christmas trees, which have been sponsored by numerous organizations, businesses, and individuals. In addition to the trees, people will have an opportunity to tour the historic Mill House building, which houses the Research Center and is the oldest structure in Sheboygan County.

This six-week celebration is a major fundraising event for the Center. It is being made available free to the public due to the generosity of organizations and individuals who are sponsoring trees and the event. As of this writing, there are nearly 20 event sponsors and 50 tree sponsors. The goal is to raise \$20,000 for the Center, so all monies raised are crucial to the overall financial sustainability of the organization. I hope you will consider giving a gift to the Center by either writing a check, making a donation at [www.schrc.org](http://www.schrc.org), or by feeding one of the donation jars when you attend the event.

Last January – just after Christmas 2021 ended – we began collecting the artificial trees you will see in our buildings. They came from Racine, Milwaukee, Oostburg, Port Washington, and communities throughout Sheboygan County. The SCHRC staff members were busy for several weeks picking up trees and transporting back to the Center for inventory. Some came in bags; some came in boxes; some were stranding in their stands inside homes; some were in many pieces. Then came the job of identifying the height of each tree. Many had to be re-assembled. Then came the process of making sure

lights worked on each tree. Then came the task of making sure each tree had a reliable stand. By June, we had a working committee of numerous volunteers, who have been putting in many hours each week to make this event the best it can possibly be.

I also wish to thank committee members Ken Richter, Dean and Beth Dippel, Katie Reilly, Marge Giesen, Carole Wagner, Mary & Jarret Parrish, Holly Wartke, Val Vansickle, Lorrie & Jerry Wilson, Jackie Fritsch and others who have so generously given their time, energy, and passion to this year’s *Treemendous Celebration*. The success of this event lays at the feet of this extraordinary group of people, who have surpassed all expectations and produced a truly memorable experience for the citizens of Sheboygan Falls and all of Sheboygan County!

Now is the time to support what our committee members and volunteers have accomplished. Please share the wonderful news about this event with your neighbors, family, and friends. We also have three special events planned during this special time:

Santa will be at the Center on Saturday, November 26, from 5:00 – 8:00 pm.

Northern Lights Choir will be singing at the Center on Friday, December 16, 7:00 – 8:00 pm.

“Crafting for Kids” event will acquaint research and genealogy methods to younger audiences in a fun and innovative way. Bring your kids and grandchildren for a fun evening! Pass on the love of history!

I encourage you to attend our ribbon-cutting ceremony on **Friday, November 25, at 4:00 pm.**, and be one of the first persons to attend opening night of what will be 26 days of brightness and Christmas galore at the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center.

Come to the Research Center this holiday season. I think you will be awed and impressed. I wish you a holiday season filled with fun, fellowship and brightness.

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

Sincerely,  
Steven K. Rogstad  
Executive Director





## Free Event

See over 50 trees decorated by local businesses!

Tuesdays through Saturdays • 4 pm to 9 pm  
(closed Christmas Eve)

November 25 - December 30, 2022

Cole Historic District  
518 Water Street & 511 Adams Street, Sheboygan Falls



## Special Event Nights

**Fri. Nov. 25**

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at 4 pm

**Sat. Nov. 26**

Pictures with Santa from 5 to 8 pm

**Fri. Dec. 16**

Choir performance from 7 to 8 pm

**Thur. Dec. 29**

Crafts for kids & history fun from 5 to 8 pm



Scan this code for  
updated event information!





## 2022 SCHRC Annual Meeting



**SCHRC held its 2022 Annual Meeting on October 7, at Amore Banquet Hall in Plymouth. It attracted over 100 people. Outgoing Board President Joseph Zagozen was given an award for over 10 years of board service. The new Board President, Steve Gallimore, thanked Joe for his dedicated service. Congratulations, Joe!**



**Maritime expert Brendon Baillo & Dr. Patrick Jung, MSOE, discuss a portion of Brendon's rare book collection at the 2022 SCHRC History Symposium on November 5, 2022.**



*The Milwaukee Sentinel* dated August 5, 1888, reported the following: “Sheboygan has a new driving and exposition park. After many long efforts, the initiators have succeeded in interesting citizens in securing for the county a park somewhat in correspondence with the city’s commercial importance and have purchased and completely equipped grounds just northwest of the city limits which in general excellence are unsurpassed in the Northwest. Twenty acres, carefully graded and enclosed, contain a half-mile oblong racecourse, 80 feet in width, an Exposition building, 26 feet high, 154 feet in length and 55 in width; a grandstand 150x20 feet, with a seating capacity of 1,000, and accommodations for sixty stock sheds. The driving park has two handsome entrances at the northeast and southwest corners, the latter being a terminus of the street railway.”

There were such grand plans for the sport of kings in Sheboygan. All during the mid-to-late 1890s driving clubs were formed, and matinee or amateur sulky racing was introduced not only in big cities but also in many small towns. Horse racing competition was everywhere.

The horse industry was important economically in every town. There were blacksmiths, wheelwrights, breeders, auctioneers, veterinarians, carriage builders, carriage painters, express men, teamsters, draymen, harness and saddle makers, and more. All depended upon horses, so racing was a big deal.

In March of 1893, the Franey brothers, Tom and John, leased the Driving Park for a period of two years. They intended to fix up the track, use it for training horses and for racing bicycles. They also planned to fix up the exposition hall which for several years had remained unused and was in poor condition. Experts in everything horse, the course was successful for a handful of years under the Franey.

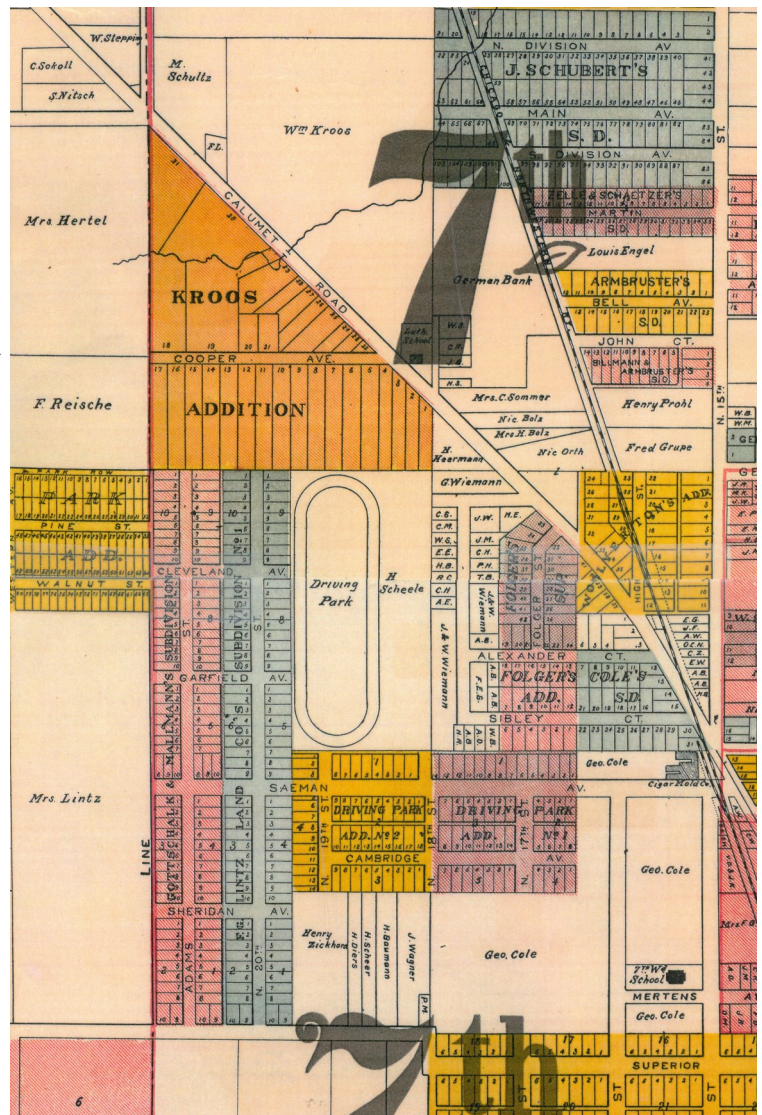
Sheboygan’s Gentlemen’s Driving Club was founded in 1899 with many local businessmen owning pacers and trotters. The start of the club gave a big boost to racing. Their annual Derby Day began with a massive parade where all drivers and riders displayed their colors. Over 3000 people attended the first gala. City streetcars ran the hordes of people to and from the Driving Park. In 1902, the races had 70 entrants. Other race clubs attended, coming from Manitowoc, Green Bay, Appleton and Fond du Lac.

The club lasted just five years, disbanding about 1904 as the automobile took over the interests of those with disposable income. It seems it was too costly to maintain two such luxuries and horse racing in the city wheezed to an end.

For years after, the land sat dormant, occasionally hosting baseball games and picnics. The last accounts of the land show that it became part of the Driving Park addition to the city of Sheboygan with lot sales beginning in May of 1921.

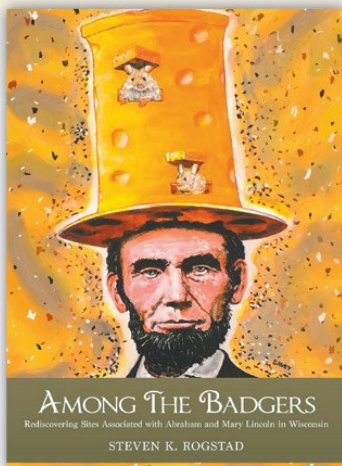
By the end of the 1920s, aside from a few peddlers, milk trucks and fire wagons, the horse vanished and with it a way of life. The Driving Park remains only as a memory and the name of an addition to the city of Sheboygan.

**1902 plat map showing the location of Driving Park**





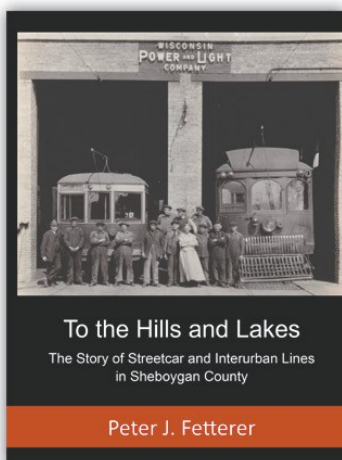
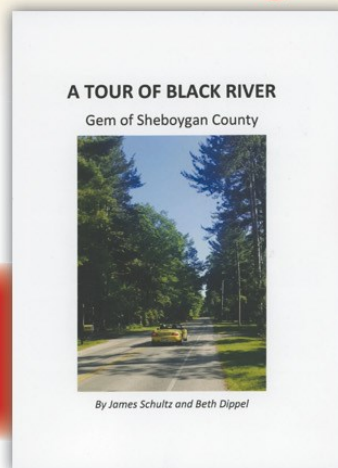
# Locally Themed Books about Sheboygan County



**Among the Badgers**  
by Steven K. Rogstad



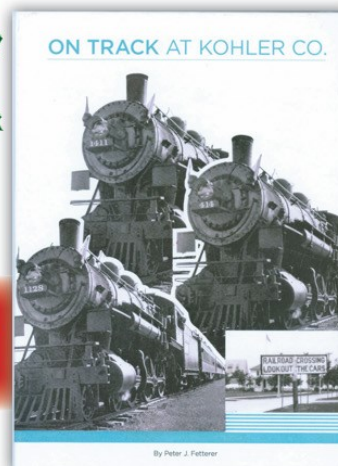
**A Tour of Black River**  
by James Schultz  
and Beth Dippel



**To the Hills and Lakes**  
by Peter J. Fetterer



**On Track at Kohler Co.**  
by Peter Fetterer



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



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Shop our book store online at [www.schrc.org/shop](http://www.schrc.org/shop)

**Sheboygan County  
Historical Research Center**

518 Water Street • Sheboygan Falls • 920-467-4667

Tuesday-Friday: 9:00am-4:00pm

**GIFT CERTIFICATES • GIFT MEMBERSHIPS • MAPS • PHOTOS**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



H.C. Prange Santa

1923

Dear Santa:

I want a pop gun, a game a book, box of handkerchiefs, a pair of mittens. Don't forget Mother, sister and brother. I want a Christmas tree, nuts and candy.

Your friend,

Charles Schmidt.

Dear Santa Claus:

I am a little girl 6 years old and go to school. Please bring me a mamma doll and buggy and a telephone and story books and a nice new school bag for my books. And lots of nuts and candy and a Xmas tree.

Elenora Hoehnke.

Dear Santa Claus:

I am a little boy 4 years old and I want a train on tracks and a little motorcycle to wind up and a boat and nuts and candy and don't forget my mother and Daddy.

Goodby from

Bernard Hoehnke.

Dear Santa Claus:

I am eight years old. I think I was a good boy this year. Please bring me a violin and a necktie. Please bring nuts and candy and tablets. And do not forget the poor starving children in Europe.

Yours truly,

Berthold Casper

Dear Santa Claus:

I am not old enough to write so my brother is writing for me. I would like a doll, and doll bed, a pair of shoes, a new dress and don't forget the nuts and candy.

Your loving baby,

Betty Jeanne Held.

Dear Santa Claus:

Please send me a bicycle, a bowling alley, a pair of jym shoes, and some games and books. Don't forget the cirstmas tree and nuts and candy.

Your loving friend,

John Held.

Dear Santa Claus:

If you can will you please send me a sandy andy, drum, horn and some books and games. Don't forget the poor children in Europe.

Your Loving Friend,

Eugene Held.

Dear Santa:

I am a little girl six years old. I want a doll, a buggy and some handkerchiefs. I want a story book, bedroom slippers, deck of cards, some nuts, candy and don't forget the Christmas tree. Don't forget my little sister Germaine.

Goodby Santa.

Gertrude Fetterer.