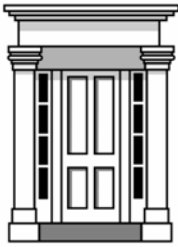


SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



HISTORICAL
RESEARCH
CENTER

**What is the origin of
St. Valentine's Day?**

According to Acta Sanctorum, February 14, is observed as the day of seven Saints by the name of Valentine.

The two greatest of them were a priest at Rome and a bishop in Umbria, both of whom lived in the third century.

As a lover's festival, St. Valentine's day has no connection with the Saints, but is probably a survivor of an old festival of similar nature in the Roman Luber-
calia.

It was observed in England so long ago that it is mentioned by Chaucer.



St. Patrick's Day celebrates the life of Saint Patrick—the patron saint of Ireland. This influential missionary has been credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland. St. Patrick's Day takes place on March 17 each year because St. Patrick's death is believed to have been on March 17, 461.

The Researcher

The Newsletter of the Sheboygan County
Historical Research Center
Volume XXXIII Number 3 February 2023

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

Sheboygan County's Center of Government



This postcard image of the Victorian-style Sheboygan County Courthouse shows the building after the north and south wings were added in 1893.

The land around Sixth Street and Center Avenue in Sheboygan has been the epicenter of judicial life in Sheboygan County since Europeans settled in the county. In 1851, a small frame building was constructed there, the home to the courts and jail. Used for just three years, another structure was built on the site of the former Sheboygan Press building (7th and Center), but it burned down in 1861. At times offices were housed in the old Otten block and the large brick building at 14th and Penn, but the focus always came back to Sixth and Center.

A beautiful domed courthouse, designed by Arvin Weeks, the first of the Weeks architects, was built in 1867-1868. It was the first permanent home for the courts in Sheboygan County.

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 Monday, February 20, 2023 through Friday, March 3, 2023 for archiving.

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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And SCHRC
on Facebook

Welcome New Members

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Burnell & Carol Eckardt, Kewaunee, WI

Nancy Eckardt, Fort Collins, CO



Understanding DNA Seminar Part II with Dana Kelly Friday, April 21, 2023 — 9:30-12:30

Dana Kelly from Norwegian American Genealogical Center and Naeseth Library in Madison will return for a short seminar and update on genetic genealogy. Dana will answer your questions and talk about:

1. X, Y, mtDNA & Chromosomes
 2. Triangulation, Clusters & Confounding Factors
 3. Surprises, Secrets & Ethics
 4. Company & Test Comparisons
- Cost per person is \$15.00.

Tickets can be purchased online through our website, schrc.org, or by calling 920.467.4667. **Register Now!**

Program Schedule

Second Saturdays

at Plymouth Arts Center, 520 East Mill Street, Plymouth, WI — 9:30am

Saturday, February 11, 2023 - Dr. Thomas Armstrong - Those Girls Can Really Play Ball! The Milwaukee Franchise of The All-American Girls Professional Baseball League

Saturday, March 11, 2023 - Dr. Sergio Gonzalez - Mexicans in Wisconsin

Saturday, April 8, 2023 - Steven Stuckey - The Story of Cream City Brick

Saturday, May 13, 2023 - Jim Gibbons - The 1893 World's Fair

Saloon Stories

at Chris & Sue's, W3820 Co Rd C, Plymouth, WI - 6:30pm to 7:30pm

Thursday, February 16, 2023 - Fox Cities Murder & Mayhem, Gavin Schmitt

Thursday, March 16, 2023 - Hauntings at the Green Bay Reformatory, Joe Verdegan

Thursday, April 20, 2023 - TBA

Thursday, May 18, 2023 - Topic TBD, Chad Lewis

Taproom History at Chris & Sue's—June through August

Steven Rogstad will explore presidential mortality and disability. Stay tuned for times and dates.



“LET’S DEVELOP OUR CENTER”

This year marks the 40th Anniversary for the Research Center! Anniversaries are the perfect time to commemorate great moments and celebrate what you have accomplished. It is also an excellent opportunity to plan for the future -

to identify things you want to achieve going forward.

The SCHRC began in 1983, and originally operated in the building that is now the offices for Chamber Main Street of Sheboygan Falls. It quickly outgrew that facility and relocated across the river to the historic Mill House on Water Street, where it operates to the present day. The Mill House itself was saved from imminent destruction in the mid-1980s.

Through the efforts of dedicated preservationists and supporters, the structure was renovated and refitted to accommodate the collections and functioning of the Research Center. For over three decades, the SCHRC has continued to acquire more documentary and pictorial history of Sheboygan County, making it the largest private archive in the State of Wisconsin. Now, 40 years later, the Center can boast of possessing over 1.5 million documents and 750,000 images.

The Center’s 39th year recently ended in grand style with its Tremendous Celebration. Nearly 2,600 persons toured the Center’s two buildings over six weeks to see gorgeous holiday decorations and over 50 Christmas trees sponsored by individuals, organizations, businesses, and non-profit organizations. Many stated it reminded them of the Festival of Trees that took place annually many years ago at the Armory in Sheboygan. A common message on the surveys we received was “we hope the event will be repeated next year!”

Now it *is* next year. It is 2023 – our 40th Anniversary! We already have events on the calendar we hope you will attend. Saloon Stories start on February 16. There are still four more offerings of Second Saturdays this season. Taproom History will be back in action this summer. There is a Genealogy Seminar

scheduled for April 21, and our annual History Symposium this fall. We are also looking to see what additional events we can put on the calendar to celebrate this milestone. Stay tuned, for more is yet to come!

We will be starting our Annual Campaign shortly. The organization would not have made it forty years without the benefit of donors and supporters like yourself who continually provide the funds needed to give adequate care to the collections and enable the Center to offer valuable service to the citizens of Sheboygan County in preserving the histories of families, buildings, organizations, businesses, and communities. The Annual Campaign is the Center’s major annual fundraiser, and your gift allows the organization to increase programming, perform collection care and management, enhance public outreach, and maintain the historic Mill House.

I encourage you to consider how you can support the work of the Center in 2023. Would you be willing to volunteer? Would you sponsor an event or program series? Please make this year special and give generously, so that the Center can continue its fine traditions of acquiring and maintaining the wonderful – and valuable – collections of documents and images that testify to the ingenuity, passion, dedication, and determination of the people of Sheboygan County.

This year will be fun! Stop in and conduct some research. Attend our numerous community programs. Sponsor someone you know for a membership. Spread the word that by helping the Research Center, you are helping preserve history – Sheboygan County history. Your history! With your help, the organization will grow!

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

Sincerely,
Steven K. Rogstad
Executive Director

Wisconsin Trivia

The term “cheesehead” actually started as a term the German soldiers used to insult the Dutch during World War II. These days, the term is used in a bit more endearing way to describe cheese-lovin’ Wisconsites. The first cheesehead was worn at a Brewers game, not a Packers game, and was a couch cushion with holes burned in the foam and painted yellow. From Travel Wisconsin.

A Treemendous Celebration 2022 in Review

What a success! More than 2500 people visited SCHRC to see the beautiful trees and Christmas decorations on view for the holidays. Thanks to all volunteers and sponsors of the event.



Above: SCHRC lobby featuring Santa and a gorgeous mantle loan to the Research Center by Corner Jewelry, Sheboygan Falls.



At left: Fire Fitness Sheboygan was the 1st to sign on with Treemendous.



Center: The outstanding wedding cake Christmas Tree, designed by Lorri Wilson and sponsored by Wenig Funeral Home.



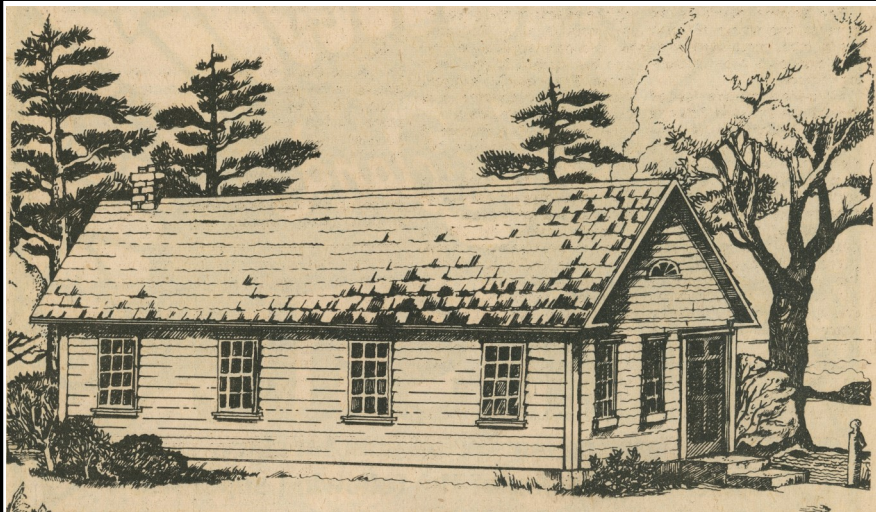
**At left:
The Thrivent
tree sponsored
by Cesar and
Kirsten Lemus**



**At right:
A beautiful tree
sponsored by
the Friends of
Mead Library**

**Below: Looking
west in the Tree
House during A
Treemendous
Celebration. At
center right is
the glass tree
by Sheboygan
Glass. Just to
the right is
Plymouth His-
torical
Society's tree.**





This drawing is of the small frame structure built to house Sheboygan County's first court. Built in 1851, it was located at 6th and Center.

ment, no solid foundation of fieldstone and mortar, just a base of bricks and heavy planks.

By July the structure was up to the second floor, and the masonry work was about half finished. The second floor was designed for county offices. Each of the offices responsible for collecting vital statistics had a vault for safekeeping of records. It also had eight fireproof cells for prisoners and the sheriff's office.

The third floor contained the courtrooms, jury rooms, and a law library.

The entire structure was heated by fireplaces, one in each of the large rooms vented through eight large chimneys.

The exterior of the building was constructed of brick eight inches thick. It was then covered in flagstone. The interior was decorated in marble.

North and south wings were added to the main building in 1893 to provide further vault space. A new jail was also constructed outside the courthouse along with an adjoining boiler house.

The clock in the tower was manufactured by C. Howard & Co. of Boston. Its works were a series of weights and pulleys (35 lb. and 50 lb. weights) and were housed in an enclosure or clock shed. Dials were placed on all four sides of the clock tower. The county hired a clock tender to keep accurate time. About 1903 the old dials were replaced by illuminated faces so that the clock could be seen after dark. After removal, the Seth Thomas clock was reinstalled in the tower of the Franklin School.

In a small tower room above the clock was a huge bell resembling the Liberty Bell. It originally tolled out the hour, day and night. Toward the end of its life, the bell was only rung at midnight on New Year's.

By the late 1920s, conversation began about construction of a new county courthouse. That lack of a solid foundation

Always frugal, citizens gathered money through taxation for years for such a project. No interest would be paid here! The Evergreen City Times reported on March 2, 1867, that work on the new Victorian-style courthouse was becoming fairly inaugurated, or more plainly, was moving along nicely. At that time the project employed fifteen full-time carpenters and joiners. The structure itself was made of 150,000 bricks, valued at \$65,000, \$1.3 million today. They were stacked in the yard ready for construction.

On June 15, 1867, it was announced that the foundation was complete. The term foundation is a bit generous. There was no base-



Dated 4-11-1930, this is an image of one of the court rooms in the old Sheboygan County Courthouse.

was causing trouble. Finding a new site was the first order of business. In February of 1933, after a number of bloopers, the worst suggestion among them locating the new courthouse in Fountain Park, the committee returned to the Sixth Street and Center Avenue neighborhood.

County supervisors decided in February of 1933 decided to accept the building committee's recommendations. Work began in April. Initial cost would be about \$575,000.

The old courthouse was used during construction, but the old jail, heating plant and garage were razed. The county jail was moved to the Taylor House and remained there until the new facility was finished.

The new courthouse is six floors, 230 feet long and 75 feet wide. The first floor was built about 7 feet above sidewalk grade. This allowed the basement to have oversized windows. Some 5,000 cubic yards of earth was removed for the basement. It was ready for use in May 1934.

On May 22, 1934, demolition of the old building began. The Goldman Wrecking Company of Chicago discovered that the cupola, 4 feet in diameter, sitting 120 feet above the ground, was terribly rotted. Afraid it would break loose and crash to the ground, great care was taken to remove 300 pounds of lead from the roof.

It was found that more than 100 people had scrawled their names into the inside of the dome. The windows in the cupola came out first. They sat 40 feet above the top floor. In order to get to the top, one had to ascend three sets of stairs and go through a trap door into inky darkness as there was no electricity.

By July 23, 1934, all that was left of the old courthouse were a few bricks and some scrap timber. It was hauled to the Vollrath Company lot for fill. No trace of a cornerstone was found.

After 66 years the beautiful Victorian-style courthouse was gone. Sheboygan County's courthouse had been modernized and moved into the Art Deco era we see today.



This wonderful image shows the new Sheboygan County Courthouse in the background and the old building sitting slightly southwest of the new. Taken early 1934 just before demolition began.

**RESEARCH CENTER
518 WATER STREET
SHEBOYGAN FALLS, 53085-1455**

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Dr. Patrick Jung, MSOE, packs the house at January Second Saturdays at the Plymouth Arts Center



About 120 people attended Dr. Jung's talk on Hitler's Forgotten Holocaust.