



The Researcher is the official newsletter of the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center, 518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls, WI 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**

Jerome & Jane Dillon Gapinski — Sheboygan  
Connie Waterman — Durango, Colorado  
William & Peggy Nicholson — Kiel  
Jeff Kloppenburg — Wilson, Wyoming  
Carolyn Byrne — Milwaukee  
Judy Hartman — Plymouth  
Robert Muller — Madison, Mississippi

## **Program Schedule**

### **Second Saturdays**

*at Plymouth Arts Center, 520 East Mill Street, Plymouth, WI – 9:30 to 11:30 am*  
Saturday, October 14 – Sewer Socialists of Wisconsin with Tracie Grube-Gaurkee  
Saturday, November 11 – Life in the Past Lane: A History of Stock Car Racing in Northeast Wisconsin with Joe Verdegan

Saturday, February 10 – S.S. Christopher Columbus with Todd Gordon

Saturday, March 9 – The Shipwrecks Abiah and the I.A. Johnson with Steve Radovan

Saturday, April 13 – Small-Town Wisconsin: Fun, Surprising, and Exceptional Road Trips with Mary Bergin

Saturday, May 11 – Theodore Caspar Lutz, His Role as the Central Contractor in the Building of the Key Maritime Settings for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair with Tom Lutz

### **Annual Meeting**

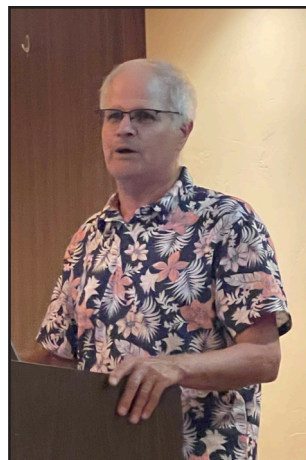
*at Amore, 18 W. Mill Street, Plymouth, WI – 11 am to 1 pm*

Friday, October 13 – Patrick Jung – Slavery in Wisconsin

Please call (920) 467-4667 to RSVP by October 6.



(Top) Greg Van Winkle, Steven Rogstad, Doug Dammann, and Kerry Trask at Doug's presentation in June for Taproom History. Other speakers for this past Taproom History season included Michael Jacobs (left) and John Schoenknecht.



We heard about common myths about the Civil War, the KKK in Sheboygan County, and the era of healing springs in Waukesha. Thanks to all who attended!

# Let's Develop Our Center

The Center's 40th Anniversary year has so far been one of celebration, activity and optimism for the future. This year we have commemorated four decades of service to Sheboygan County with a subtle form of rebranding by incorporating new designs into the SCHRC's business cards, letterhead, envelopes, newsletter, bookmarks, and other publications and marketing materials. The new colors and designs reflect a sense of movement, action, and energy that characterizes what the Center does on a daily basis to assist persons with their research needs.

This past summer we also launched a new activity that fits nicely into our dedication to historic preservation. On August 2, volunteers cleaned all of the headstones in the Cole family section at Sheboygan Falls Cemetery. As Charles and Sarah Cole were early settlers in Sheboygan Falls – and are credited with being its founders – it seemed appropriate to cleaned and restore

their graves, and those of their children and extended family. It should also be remembered that the Coles also owned the Mill House, which at one time was the residence of their two sons and their families. Take some time to drive by or visit the Cole section in the cemetery. The restoration efforts were entirely successful. Today, the head stones, along with the Cole family monument, are once again white and brilliant.

A second grave cleaning event was held last month at the Waldo Cemetery, where SCHRC staff members and volunteers cleaned 24 graves in 90 minutes. The grave markers included those for the Wierman family (prominent business people in Waldo and Onion River), Greene family (pioneers of Lyndon), Petersen family (the first village president of Waldo), Lawson family (prominent family in Waldo), and the Mey family (co-owner of the Onion River Mill).

A new group has been established at the Center with the formation of a standing Volunteer Committee. This committee will focus on recruiting new volunteers, supporting Center activities with staffing needs, and assist with event planning. As we expand programming and activities, the Center needs to enhance its efforts to identify and attract additional volunteers. To that end, it recently

participated in a special volunteer recruitment event at Generations in Plymouth.

There are several different ways persons can volunteer at the Center, including scanning photographs, processing collections, participating in activities (like grave cleaning seminars), presenting programs to audiences, and staffing events. Unfortunately, the Center is unable to host its Treemendous Celebration this holiday season due to insufficient staffing. Please consider sharing your passion for history, your energy and vision, and a few hours of your time to helping the Research Center reach more communities of people and fulfill its mission.

As we go to print with this issue of the newsletter, I am pleased to report that the Center recently received an opportunity to expand its physical space for administration, storage, and education/workshops. This is an exciting development that could cap off our 40th Anniversary in a profound way! I will keep you informed with more details as they become available.

We are in the midst of our annual Membership Drive. Please renew today if you have not already done so. Please consider sponsoring someone for a membership. We

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Iwo Jima is 5 nautical miles long by 2-1/2 nautical miles wide about 660 miles south of Tokyo. There were no streams and water was scarce. Mount Suribachi, is on the southern end of the island. The north end is hills and deep gulches. The Japanese had built heavily fortified positions. Hidden artillery, mortar and machine gun positions had all possible landing locations covered.

The island was prime real estate. The Japanese had built two airfields and had started a third. Japanese fighter planes from "Iwo" attacked US bombers. US fighter aircraft could use the airstrips to protect US Bombers flying from Saipan and Tinian to Japan, and as emergency landing

fields for damaged US aircraft returning from their bombing missions.

On the Shore Party Plan handwritten in pencil was the name JONES. Under the Headquarters Section a Lieut. (JG) Jones was listed as Liaison Officer. I was looking for a junior grade Navy officer named Jones, in the 133rd Construction Battalion, attached to the 4th Marine Division. I had no idea if the Jones I was seeking was even from Wisconsin, much less if his family was even on file. I searched the "Jones" file. I checked newspapers, obituaries, and US Navy Casualty Records. I looked for any clue that would identify Lt (JG) Jones. I found him in an

April 1945 "KOHLER OF KOHLER NEWS." Robert Jones left the Kohler Company in March 1943 and joined the US Navy Reserve.

He was an Ensign in the USN Navy, trained at the Naval Construction Training Center, assigned to the 133rd Construction Battalion, attached to the 4th Marine Division landing with division on Iwo Jima, was wounded and received the Purple Heart.

He was born in Sheboygan on July 25, 1913, to Charles Jones & Anna Winterstein

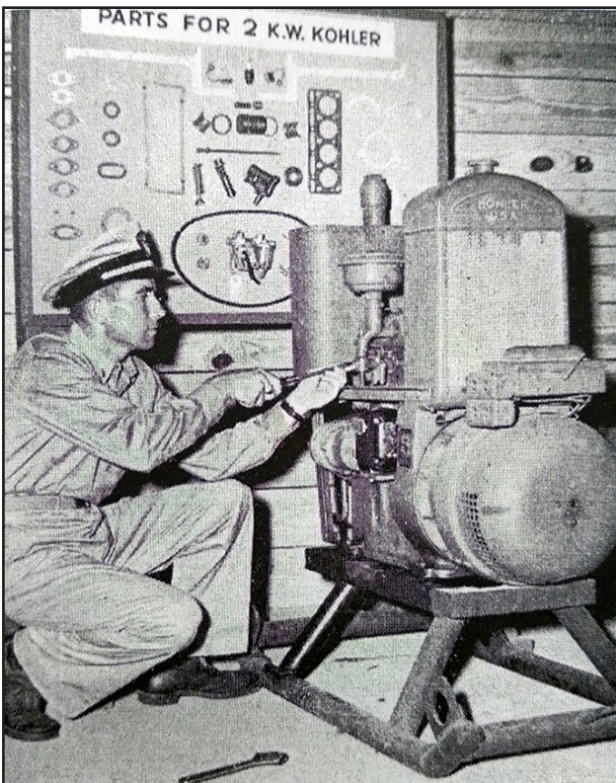


**Robert G. Jones**

Jones. Robert attended Sheboygan area schools. He graduated from UW Madison with a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering in 1935. He returned to Sheboygan and was employed by the Kohler Company as its first professional engineer.

He married Lucille Brotz of Kohler on November 24, 1937. They had two sons, Robert A. Jones, and Lance B. Jones, former Sheboygan County District Attorney (1969-1977).

Jones was working in the Kohler Engineering Department when he left in 1943 and joined the US Navy Reserve. He trained at Camp Peary, Virginia, in the Naval Construction Training Center. He was commissioned an Ensign in the US Navy Reserve Civil Engineer Corps with the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion (CBs/Seabees).



*The Seabees used Kohler Electric Plants in large numbers to operate power tools, pumps, compressors, and to floodlight rebuilding operations.*

In 1944, the 133rd was attached to the 25th Regiment 4th Marine Division for the invasion of Iwo Jima. On February 11, 1945, an armada of over 800 ships rendezvoused at Saipan to make the 700-mile voyage to Iwo Jima. The island was attacked daily from the air the Pacific Fleet also bombarded it. On February 18, the entire island was swept from one end to the other by a rolling barrage and rockets from landing craft. Planes from carriers strafed and bombed every visible spot of Japanese resistance.

On February 19, 1945 (D-Day), Jones and the 133rd Naval Construction Battalion joined the 5th Marine Amphibious Corps and the 4th Marine Division in the first assault wave. At 8:57A.M. (Hawaii Time) the naval bombardment lifted and at

9:02 armored tractors, each with a 75mm gun, lumbered onto the sands of Iwo Jima. At 9:05A.M. the first troop carriers landed followed by hundreds more.

Lt. Cook was the OIC of the shore party and Lt (JG) Jones was the liaison officer.

Upon landing the 133rd was given the responsibility:

- to secure the beaches after the first assault troops went ashore.
- to serve as the shore party maintaining supply lines to the Marines on the forward battle lines.
- to repair the island's three bombed-out Japanese airstrips.

The Japanese delivered murderous fire from their guns high on Mount Suribachi. The entire beach was covered by unrelenting fire from mortars, artillery, and machine guns located in the surrounding hills.

Artillery fire from the Japanese went on all through the night. On February 20, 1945, morning came with rain and cold gusty winds. Four-foot waves slammed the beaches hindering the unloading of equipment. Jones was wounded, shot in the hip. He received immediate care from a corpsman and transported to a hospital ship offshore. He recovered at a naval base in the Marianas and was reassigned to Ewa Marine Air Corps Station on Oahu, Hawaii as the Public Works Officer until 1946.

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*D-Day, 19 February 1945, to the beaches, with Mount Suribachi in the background (photo courtesy of National Archives)*



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On August 6, 1945, the US dropped an atomic bomb on the Japanese city of Hiroshima. This was followed by a larger one dropped on Nagasaki on August 9. On August 14, Japan agreed to surrender. The following September 2 (VJ Day), Japanese officials formally surrendered aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay. World War II was finally over.

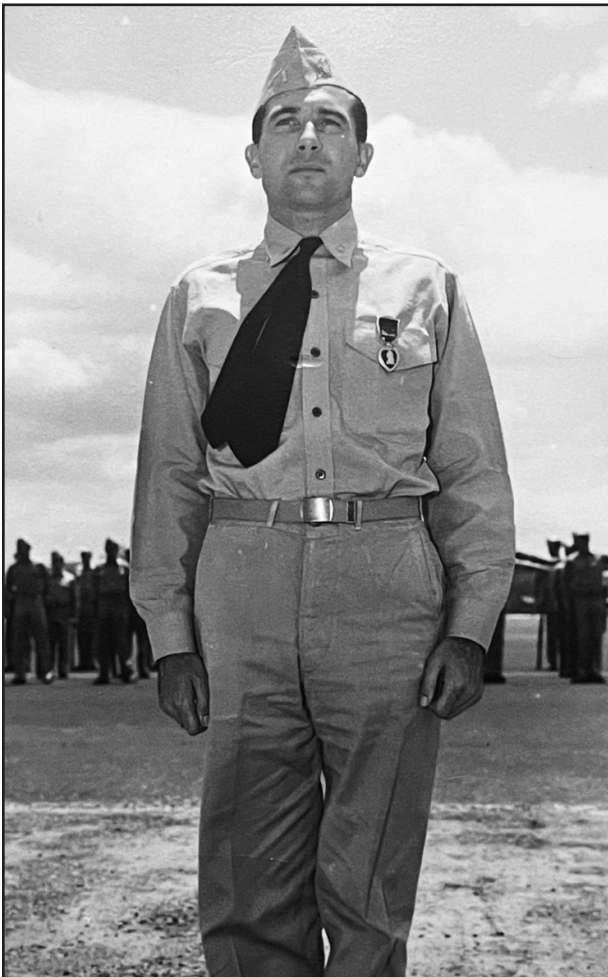
Discharged from active service, Jones came home to his family in Kohler. He retained his commission in the US Navy Reserve and received several military honors including the Presidential Unit Citation, the

Navy Unit Commendation, and the Purple Heart.

In 1948, he joined a small engineering consulting firm in Sheboygan named Donohue & Associates who at the time employed a full-time staff of 10. From 1948 to 1966 he served the company as its Chief Design Engineer and General Manager. In 1966, he was elected President and Chairman of the Board of Directors. When Jones retired in 1980, Donohue & Associates employed over 700 civil engineers and support staff. The firm now has 10 offices in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, Missouri, and Wisconsin.



*Lisa Jones Bershaw of San Diego, California, granddaughter of Robert G. Jones, accepts the scrapbook and documents from Richard Stoelb*



*Robert G. Jones*

Lucille died on April 8, 1977, and is buried in Woodland Cemetery in Kohler. Robert married Mary Ann Hyink Hoekstra of Sheboygan Falls on April 6, 1978.

Jones was active in numerous professional

societies, organizations, civic projects, and community affairs.

Robert Gordon Jones died on Saturday, March 13, 1999. He is buried in Woodland Cemetery in Kohler. 🍀

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added 29 members last year. In case you were not aware of it, the SCHRC can boast of having nearly 900 members! Let's add to that total and expand our community awareness, our reach, and our support base.

As always, thank you for all you do to support and help develop our Research Center!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steven K. Rogstad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steven K. Rogstad  
Executive Director  
steverogstad@schrc.org

## Sheboygan County Historical Research Center Welcomes New Board of Directors Member, Tony Gentine

Tony Gentine is the newest member of the SCHRC Board of Directors. His first introduction to the Research Center was through his efforts — and other area teachers — to spark students' interest in learning about history and actually conducting historical research. He considers the archives at the Center “a treasure for area youth and many others seeking answers and developing many more questions about the past.”

After teaching grades 6 to 12 for nearly twenty years, he returned to graduate school to earn a PhD in History through the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. He finished his Dissertation, “Common Ground over Common Water: Defining the Public Interest in the Milwaukee Watershed,” in December 2022. He is currently a history professor at Lakeland University, where he regularly teaches World History I and II. When not teaching or preparing Lakeland courses, he enjoys playing golf, exploring trails and rivers on foot and kayaking, and spending time with family. “I am honored to be asked to serve on the SCHRC board,” Tony tells us. “The desire to expand the Research Center to provide better public access to our county’s past and safe storage of archival materials is vital for historical researchers and a better understanding of the people within Sheboygan County.”

We welcome Tony to the Board and appreciate the time, energy, and passion that he brings to the organization!



### Testimonial

“One of my biggest sources of help and information was the SCHRC and Richard Stoelb, one of their researchers. In November of 2019 I attended SCHRC’s history symposium which was held in Plymouth. I met Richard there and told him of my project [writing my paternal grandmother’s life story]. Richard offered his help!

Richard has been invaluable in finding missing pieces of my Grandmother’s life. But more importantly, Richard showed me how to do research on my own. He pointed me in the direction of online genealogy websites such as Ancestry, Find-A-Grave, newspapers.com, and others. He also told me about the various repositories of Wisconsin’s vital records such as the Wisconsin Historical Society, county courthouses, and UW libraries.

With Richard’s research, and his encouragement of my own, I have been able to create a near-complete timeline of my Grandmother’s life that I will be able to use to write her story! I hope to start writing this winter. Thanks, Richard!”

— Barbara Jenkin, Spring Green, WI

*Right: Pictured is Barbara Jenkin, who grew up in Waldo, Wisconsin. She was close with her Grandmother Bessie Jenkin. Her grandmother had saved many papers and documents from her life. Despite having this information, Barbara realized there were many gaps about her grandmother’s life and she wanted to know more. The Research Center was able to help fill in some of those gaps.*







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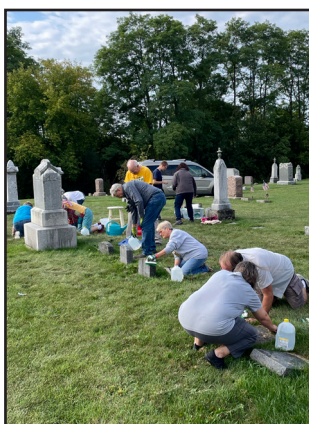


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Over 90 persons attended each of the 4 sessions of Steven Rogstad's 2023 Lincoln Seminar: "Mary Todd Lincoln: A Troubled Life."



Our second gravestone cleaning workshop took place at the Waldo Cemetery on September 23. Eleven participants learned how to properly clean gravestones. We cleaned 24 gravestones of Waldo's pioneer families, including the Lawsons, Wiermans, Greenes, Petersens, and Meys.

