

# THE RESEARCHER

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE  
SHEBOYGAN COUNTY HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER

Volume XXXIV Number 3 February 2024

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



## Did You Know?

Wisconsin is the only state in the US with a Master Cheesemaker Program. Skilled cheesemakers with over a decade of experience enter this three-year program to perfect making specific varieties of cheese. It's like getting a Ph.D. in cheese!

Pam Hodgson of Sartori Cheese in Plymouth is one of only two women in the world to hold the title of Master Cheesemaker!



*Do you know some historical "tidbits" about Sheboygan and Wisconsin? Would you like to share them with our readers? Email to [richardstoelb@schrc.org](mailto:richardstoelb@schrc.org); put "Did You Know?" in the subject line.*

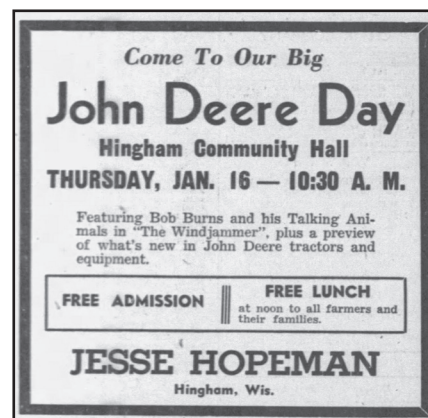
## Farmer's Day

By John A. Swart

As a young boy growing up in Hingham, Wisconsin, I remember the Farmer's Day events as a special day in the middle of winter. Classes were dismissed for the afternoon and all of the students in the Hingham grade school were expected to attend the activities in the hall at the base of the hill. The school was at the top of the hill on the corner where county roads "W" and "I" meet, while the hall was three blocks down the hill and in the middle of the business district of Hingham.

The Hopeman Implement Company was the local dealer for a number of farm related items. Since the middle of winter was a slower pace for farm activity, it was logical for the implement dealers to schedule events during this time of year and expect maximum turnout of farmers.

Hopeman Implement had a franchise agreement with John Deere since 1905 and after the war in 1945, John Deere was the major attraction for farmers in need of newer equipment. The Deere Farmer's Day events consisted of movies showing all the advantages of the John Deere equipment and usually a small item with the Deere logo and a sweet roll.



Farmer's Day Ad in The Sheboygan Press, January 10, 1947

*continued on page 4*



SHEBOYGAN COUNTY  
HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
CENTER

518 Water Street  
Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085  
Open Tuesday through Friday  
9 am to 4 pm  
(920) 467-4667  
[schrc.org](http://schrc.org) • [research@schrc.org](mailto:research@schrc.org)



*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.

### **SCHRC Board of Directors**

Steven Gallimore,  
President

Dr. Scott Peschke,  
Vice President

Dr. James Kuplic,  
Secretary/Treasurer

Tony Gentine

William Reiss

Steven Schmitt

Terri Yoho

Bridgitt Zielke

### **SCHRC Staff**

Steven Rogstad,  
Executive Director &  
Editor-In-Chief

Mary Parrish,  
Administrative Assistant

Katie Reilly,  
Research Team Leader

Kathy Jeske, Researcher

Richard Stoelb, Researcher



Visit  
[schrc.org](http://schrc.org)!

## **Welcome New Members**

David Holden — Corpus Christi, Texas  
Kathy Weyda — Greendale, Wisconsin  
Leonilla Karow — Greenfield, Wisconsin  
Debby Christman — Wales, Wisconsin  
Loretta Maurer — Kiel, Wisconsin  
Lisa Brotz — Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin

## **Program Schedule**

### **Genealogy Seminar**

*at Generations, 1500 Douglas Drive, Plymouth – 9 am to 12:30 pm*

Friday, April 19 – DNA 101: A Seminar for Beginners

*For seating purposes, please register ahead of time by calling (920) 467-4667.*

### **History on the Move**

*at Generations, 1500 Douglas Drive, Plymouth – 1 pm*

Thursday, February 15 – Sheboygan County Connection II

Thursday, March 21 – A Walk Through St. Michael's Cemetery in the Town of Mitchell

Thursday, April 17 – Stories of the Sheboygan Marsh

Thursday, May 16 – Sheboygan County Cheese Factories

### **Genealogy Classes**

*at the Research Center, 518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls – 1 to 3 pm*

\$15 for members, \$20 for non-members

Monday, February 12 – Organizing Your Research

Monday, March 11 – Online Resources for Research

Monday, April 8 – Getting to Know the SCHRC Library and its Resources

Monday, May 13 – Photos: Scanning, Archiving, and Analyzing

### **Second Saturdays**

*at Plymouth Arts Center, 520 East Mill Street, Plymouth – 9:30 to 11:30 am*

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

Saturday, March 9 – The Shipwrecks Abiah & 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 Contractor in the Building of the Key Maritime Settings for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, with Tom Lutz

### **Book Club**

*at Sheboygan Falls Memorial Library, 330 Buffalo St., Sheb. Falls – 1 to 2:30 pm*

Thursday, March 21 – *The Presidents Club: Inside the World's Most Exclusive*

*Fraternity* by Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy

*Please register by calling (920) 467-4667.*

### **Saloon Stories**

*at Chris & Sue's, W3820 County Rd C, Plymouth – 6:30 pm*

Thursday, February 15 – The Evolution of Racing in Sheboygan County presented by Roger Mueller and Henry Dickmann

Thursday, March 21 – History of Road America: America's National Park of Speed presented by Eric Mueller

Thursday, April 18 – Sheboygan County's Link to NASCAR presented by Jerry Mueller

Thursday, May 16 – The History of 141 Speedway presented by Joe Verdegan

# Let's Develop Our Center

So much of what occurs and is accomplished at the Center is the result of a large core group of volunteers, who very generously devote hours every week to their work. Some work on maps, photographs, and other images; others work on documents, obituaries and wedding announcements. Some process new collections that continually arrive, others labor on existing collections. A few individuals work on special assignments or scanning projects that bring in valuable revenue to the organization.

As we look to enhance our volunteer base — while honoring those persons who already give time and energy because of their passion for regional history — the SCHRC is making 2024 the “Year of the Volunteer.” We will be profiling current volunteers in our newsletter, recruiting new volunteers, and looking for new and fun opportunities that volunteers can participate in. I encourage all of our members and



supporters to consider volunteering at the Center. Volunteers make their own hours and set their own schedules. Our staff provides training and will assist you to identify tasks and assignments that suit you. Are you, or someone you know, looking for volunteer opportunities? We have them! Pay us a visit and see what is going on in the library. I hope we will hear from you soon!

I am very happy to report that the Center is close to completing a comprehensive upgrade to its multimedia collections. With financial assistance from William Collins Kohler Foundation, Kohler Foundation, Gentine Foundation, and private donors, the Center raised \$23,586, which allowed the Center to digitize 167 VHS video tapes and DVDs, 256 audio cassette tapes, and several reel-to-reel films. This extensive audio/video collection is now available to researchers online at <https://bit.ly/3U0U5NS>. Moreover, the Center has purchased a FOREVER® online account, which stores our existing multimedia collections, but also has sufficient capacity for adding more visual materials.

The Center also reached its goal of raising \$6,000 on Giving Tuesday last November 28! With matching funds supplied by SCHRC Board Vice-President Scott Peschke and another board member, the

Center raised over \$8,000! The funds will be used to furnish an entire room in the Adams Street building with industrial shelving to store collections. Thanks to all of our supporters who made this important project possible!

The new Book Club met last month. Nearly 20 persons have joined and met to discuss Robert Klara's fascinating study, *FDR's Funeral Train: A Betrayed Widow, A Soviet Spy, and a Presidency in the Balance*. The size of the group necessitated relocating from the Center to the Sheboygan Falls Memorial Library. The next book will be *The Presidents Club: Inside the World's Most Exclusive Fraternity* by Nancy Gibbs and Michael Duffy. We will meet on Thursday, March 21, at the Sheboygan Falls Memorial Library from 1 to 2:30. Participants are responsible for obtaining their own books. Contact Mary at 920-467-4667 or [maryparrish@schrc.org](mailto:maryparrish@schrc.org) to register for the club.

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 fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "S" and "R".

Steven K. Rogstad  
Executive Director  
[steverogstad@schrc.org](mailto:steverogstad@schrc.org)



*continued from page 1*

However, Hopeman Implement elected to drop the Deere franchise agreement in 1951 and picked up a franchise agreement with the Ferguson Company in 1952. Ferguson was in the tractor business also and Hopeman Implement felt that there was a niche market for the tractor Ferguson was manufacturing. The Ferguson model 30 tractor was smaller than most of the larger tractors and operated similar to the way a truck functions. The use of horses to pull the various farm implements was coming to a close and the Ferguson model 30 filled the need left by the horses.

The Ferguson Company had set up a program for the Implement dealers to use called "The Ferguson Family Jubilee Program." This program subsidized the implement dealers costs and provided professional entertainers for the Farmer's Day events. January 24, 1952, was the special Farmers Day Event that Hopeman Implement elected to use to attract the farmers of Sheboygan County. Two programs were scheduled for the day, one at 1 pm and a second program at 8 pm, with a free lunch at Noon and another after the evening show.



*Arkie the Arkansas Woodchopper—Luther Ossenbrink—played in Hingham in 1952*

The Ferguson Family Jubilee program included professional entertainers the Arkansas Woodchopper, Ray Klein, and Mary Jane from the Chicago Radio Station WLS, plus three educational color movies and entertainment by John Federwisch before and after each show. The Hingham community hall was filled for each of these performances.

I attended the afternoon program with my grade school classmates and was very impressed with the thought that these entertainers came all the way from Chicago to the little town of Hingham to put on a show for us. We had a family TV in 1952, but I never imagined that I would be in an audience of about 400 people in the local town hall with live performers.

The Hopeman Implement Company had a very successful year of selling the Ferguson tractors in 1952. In fact, it was so successful that Jess Hopeman, owner of Hopeman Implement, Inc., scheduled a similar event for 1953. However, in 1953 Jess Hopeman sent out an invitation to those farmers who had purchased a Ferguson tractor asking them if they drove their new tractor to the 1953 Farmer's Day event in Hingham, they would be offered a \$10.00 credit toward any purchase from Hopeman Implement. The incentive was very well received and almost 30 farmers showed up with their new Ferguson tractors. They were parked everywhere around the implement dealer, the community hall, and across the street next to the grocery store.

The 1953 Farmers Day event was similar to the 1952 show with a free meal, movies about the equipment sold by Hopeman Implement, and the professional performers from radio station WLS to round off the event.

In late 1953 and 1954, the Hingham Community Hall was remodeled. The wing on the southwest corner of the Hall was removed and a basement was installed with a full kitchen, new restrooms and shower facilities for use after sporting events.

Unfortunately, there was no facility in Hingham during this remodeling period and the next Farmers Day Event was rescheduled for January 1955. This happened to be the 50th anniversary year for the



*Farmer's Day in 1953*

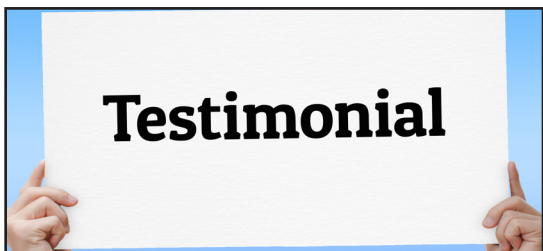
Hopeman Implement dealership and the thirtieth anniversary under the leadership of Jess Hopeman. Again, it was a big event. Lulu Belle and Scotty, from WLS, Chicago, were on hand to entertain 450 people gathered in the Hingham Hall after a free meal and handouts.

Nineteen fifty-five may have been the last year for the Hopeman Implement dealership sponsorship of Farmers Day in Hingham, Wisconsin. However, the Hingham Feed Mill, joined up with Purnia Company to sponsor mid-winter events and for a few years in the fifties giving Hingham two farmer appreciation events during the winter months. 🍀



SCHRC member Barb Jenkin writes, “I received the December issue of *The Researcher* yesterday. Great article you did on the Garton Toy Company! I have a Garton Toy coaster wagon from my childhood that we still use! We have re-painted it and put on new wheels, but aside from that it is in great shape. We use it to haul stuff around the yard. The coaster wagon’s original tires and rims were like those on the Garton Hot Rod pictured in *The Researcher*. My aunt, who lived in Plymouth, had a scooter that I’m sure was made by Garton (it was metal and heavy). We used it when we came to visit. And another

Plymouth cousin, I’m sure, had one of the cars. They were all certainly indestructible!”



Barbara and Rick Puestow, now residing in Jacksonville, Florida, came to Wisconsin for a wedding. They combined their trip with a visit to SCHRC and lunch with researcher Richard Stoelb. Barbara says, “We really enjoyed lunch and our visit with you. Thanks for the

information on the Dutch genealogy expert. My connection with SCHRC and with you has really enhanced my enjoyment of genealogy. After our visit, we toured the Sheboygan Museum and its outbuildings. It’s almost too much for one visit. I look forward to keeping in contact with you and thanks for all your valuable research.”





## Sheboygan's First Bicycle Livery

By Richard Stoelb

The photograph below, taken in 1898, is of the S.A. (Steven A.) Tift & Company Bicycle Livery located at 617 N. 8th Street in Sheboygan. The building was erected about 1860 and would later become the location for Citizens State Bank. Tift formed a partnership with Harry Pepper and claimed his bicycle livery to be the first in Sheboygan. Tift sold a bicycle named the “Yellow Fellow” made by E.C. Stearns and Company of Syracuse, New York. The bicycle came in a basic roadster model for \$40 (\$1,500 in 2023) and a racer version that sold for \$60 (\$2,300 in 2023). They were advertised as “light, stylist, staunch and speedy mounts.”



*The S.A. Tift & Company Bicycle Livery*

Edward C. Stearns transformed his father's hardware and wagon factory into a bicycle factory. Stearns was an excellent bike rider and opened his business in 1888. He watched it grow into four plants in Syracuse with 3,500 employees. Later, Stearns would have plants in Toronto, Canada, and Germany. At one time, Stearns was the largest maker of bicycles in the world. The “Yellow Fellow” has its own newspaper, published by Stearns, and was the subject of much

advertising and many racing competitions. In 1899, Stearns became part of American Bicycle Company.

Steven A. Tift was born on January 13, 1858, in Tomah, Wisconsin. He married Harriet DeSotal of Ludington, Michigan on September 25, 1881. The couple resided in Ludington until they moved to Sheboygan in 1898 where S.A. opened his bicycle livery.

In 1907, Tift left the livery and operated a restaurant and billiard hall in the basement of Schlicht Brothers (saloon and pool rooms, wholesalers in cigars, wines, and liquors) at 618 N. 8th Street. He was poultry manager at Pinehurst Farm for four years but retired because of ill health. S.A. Tift died at his home on March 20, 1930, after an illness of three months. Harriet died May 24, 1909, after a four-year battle with cancer. The couple had two children, Mrs. Jacob (Agnes M. Tift) Kampman and Mrs. Herman (Hazel K. Tift) Steinhaus. 🍀



*The Yellow Fellow Racer. Note the wheels are wood and it is a chainless drive.*

**SHEBOYGAN COUNTY HISTORICAL RESEARCH CENTER  
PRESENTS**

2024

***SALOON STORIES***

**THE HISTORY OF LOCAL AUTO RACING**

AN HOUR OF LIBATIONS, LAUGHTER, AND LEARNING



**BEGINS AT 6:30 PM**

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY



**HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH  
CENTER**

***EVENT LOCATION***



**Chris & Sue's**  
W3820 County Road C  
Plymouth

920-467-3223 - [chrisandsuesplace.com](http://chrisandsuesplace.com)  
Food & Drink Specials Available

GENEROUSLY  
SPONSORED BY



***FEBRUARY 15***

THE EVOLUTION OF RACING  
IN SHEBOYGAN COUNTY  
PRESENTED BY ROGER MUELLER  
AND HENRY DICKMANN

***MARCH 21***

HISTORY OF ROAD AMERICA:  
AMERICA'S NATIONAL PARK  
OF SPEED PRESENTED BY  
ERIC MUELLER

***APRIL 18***

SHEBOYGAN COUNTY'S LINK  
TO NASCAR PRESENTED BY  
JERRY MUELLER

***MAY 16***

THE HISTORY OF 141 SPEEDWAY  
PRESENTED BY  
JOE VERDEGAN



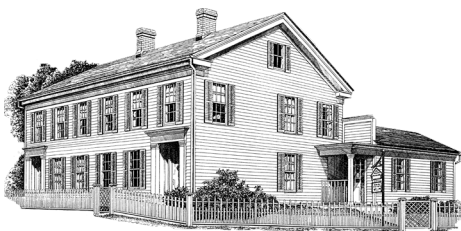
**DNA 101: A Seminar for Beginners with Dana Kelly  
Friday, April 19, 2024 — 9:00 am to 12:30 pm  
Held at the Generations,  
1500 Douglas Drive, Plymouth**

This 3.5 hour seminar will introduce newbies or those who need help to the fun of DNA testing for genealogy. Dana Kelly, Executive Director of the Norwegian American Genealogical Center & Naeseth Library in Madison, Wisconsin will present the following topics.

1. Introduction to Genetic Genealogy – Understanding Your Match List
2. Applying DNA – Cousin Matching
3. Ethnicity Estimate
4. Company & Test Comparisons – Do you choose Ancestry, 23 and Me or others?

Bring your own test results if you need help with interpretation. Doors open at 8:15 am. Coffee, juice, water and snacks will be available. Generations is fully handicapped accessible.

**For seating purposes, please register ahead of time  
by calling (920) 467-4667!**



Sheboygan County  
Historical Research Center  
518 Water Street  
Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PERMIT #19  
SHEBOYGAN FALLS, WI 53085



Do you love history? Do you love learning about local history? How would you like to play an important part in preserving it? The Research Center is celebrating its 41st year by looking for individuals who will assist in the care and preservation of its valuable photographic and documentary collections. Just a few hours of your time can really make a difference! Do you have some time to spare? We will train you, and you can pick days/hours that work for you! Come check us out, or call Katie at 920-467-4667 for details. We hope to see you soon!

## Multimedia Conversion Project

With financial assistance from William Collins Kohler Foundation, Kohler Foundation, Gentine Foundation, and private donors, the Center raised \$23,586, which allowed us to digitize 167 VHS video tapes and DVDs, 256 audio cassette tapes, and several reel-to-reel films.

These digitized files are being added to an online account where you can view the media conversions. Keep checking back as we will continue to add the files as they are completed.

Visit <https://bit.ly/3U0U5NS> or scan the code to view movies and listen to audio recordings associated with the history of Sheboygan County.

