



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 surrounding areas. It is a repository for documents and images.

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## Program Schedule

See [schrc.org](http://schrc.org) or Facebook for more details.

### Second Saturdays: Journeys into Local History

at the Plymouth Arts Center, 520 E. Mill St., Plymouth — 9:30 am

**February 14** — Travis Gross presents “Sheboygan’s Memorial Hospital Neighborhood” — Travis Gross is back and will speak about the Memorial Hospital neighborhood on Sheboygan’s north side. This area is bordered from the lakeshore to North 8th Street and Geele Avenue to North Avenue.

**March 14** — Joe Verdegan presents “The Monfils 6 Case–30 Years Later” — Joe Verdegan is back to talk about his highly anticipated new book, “The Monfils 6 Case–30 Years Later.” The book details one of the highest–profile cases in Brown County history in which six Green Bay paper mill workers were convicted in the 1992 death of Tom Monfils.

**April 11** — Marie Blunt presents “Does It Count As A Lighthouse?” — Lighthouse enthusiast Marie Blunt is back to test your knowledge. Participants “vote” if a lighthouse “should count” as a lighthouse while learning how experts define lights, harbor lights, lighthouses, light stations, beacons, active aids to navigation, and private aids to navigation.

**May 9** — Caitlin Armstrong presents “Settled in Stone: Luxembourgish Stone Houses and Settler Farm Life.” This presentation will uncover the mystery of Luxembourg stone house architecture, investigate a few local stone houses, and learn what life was like for these early settlers.

### Genealogy Classes

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

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

Please pre–register by calling (920) 467–4667.

**February 9** — How to Use Historical Newspapers. Unlock fascinating stories hidden in old newspapers — from obituaries to everyday happenings — and bring your ancestors’ lives vividly to light.

**March 9** — How to Properly Cite Your Sources. Keep your research strong and trustworthy! Learn simple, practical ways to cite sources so others can follow your discoveries with ease.

**April 13** — Hidden Treasures at the SCHRC. Explore the unique collections and resources at the Sheboygan County Historical Research Center that can enrich your family history research.

**May 11** — How to Use Military Records. Trace your ancestors’ service through military records and discover the personal details that connect their stories to larger moments in history.

### History on the Move

at Generations, 1500 Douglas Dr, Plymouth — Noon

**February 17** — From Rancho de las Flores to the death of Ed Gein, the opening of the Mackinac Bridge and Fasching in Johnsonville: This presentation will review a variety of great stories and history from Sheboygan County.

**March 17** — Dan Buckman, president of the Plymouth Historical Society will present the second part of history along the Mullet River, the centerpiece of the city of Plymouth.

### Book Club

at the Research Center, 518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls — 1 to 2:30 pm

**March 18** — *First Family: Abigail and John Adams* (2010) by Joseph J. Ellis.

## Welcome New Members

Brian Barthels — Sheboygan Falls  
Raymond & D'Arcy Arpke — Longboat, FL  
Nancy & Richard Kapellen — Sheboygan  
Kendrick & Jan Ebbott — Plymouth  
Barbara Knoener — Elkhart Lake  
Nancy Kissel — Sheboygan  
Mary Beth Winkowski — West Bend  
Erin Cecil-Pigo — Milwaukee  
Kerk Evans — Sheboygan

## Can You Answer These Black River Questions?

1. There are crumbling 'stone pillars' at the driveway entrances of a few homes along Evergreen Drive. Do you know who created them?
2. There's some apparent shipwreck remains on Beachwater Court. Do you know or suspect that this is a remnant of "The Challenge?"
3. Do you have any background on the name "Wagouly?" Where did that name come from?

If you can help solve these mysteries, contact [katiereilly@schrc.org](mailto:katiereilly@schrc.org).

## Hildebrand and Lutz Grocers

In October of 1893, John Lutz purchased half interest of Joseph Diel in the grocery business of Hildebrand and Diehl, once located at 1015 Michigan Avenue. The firm's name changed to Hildebrand and Lutz.

In 1897, the store placed a Northwestern telephone in their business. The number was 313. The company purchased a fine delivery horse in 1891 for which they paid \$125. In 1895, the grocers removed their stock of goods from their former place in the Festerling building at 1125 Michigan Avenue to a new store front at

1019 Michigan. The firm found it necessary to make this change in order to have more room owing to the large increase in their business.

In 1906, the grocer's took delivery of a very large stock of bananas, 21 dozen to be exact. An ordinary delivery was about 12 dozen. Known for always stocking Booth's oysters at bargain price, they sold for only 40 cents a quart in December of 1909.

On March 31, 1911, a notice was issued in the *Sheboygan Press* announcing the grocery firm of Hildebrand and Lutz on Michigan

Avenue, which had been in business the past nineteen years dissolved its partnership. The business was to be continued by sole owner Charles Hildebrand. John Lutz, the retiring member of the firm, moved to Portland, Oregon, to find adventure. He went west with saloon owner, Michael Billman, who sold his establishment on Michigan Avenue.

In 1924, Arvin Hildebrand succeeded his father in the grocery business. He had previously purchased the Meyer grocery store located at 1525 Michigan Avenue. 🍀



The fresh bananas hanging outside the shop of Hildebrand and Lutz were a luxury of the time. Note the B. Bros., Sheboygan, Wis. on the box of cabbage, the crocks for sauerkraut near the windows and the fresh, hot roasted peanut machine. About 1906 at the 1019 Michigan address.



The Sheboygan Telegram, March 17, 1908

*continued from page 1*

under the old Herr Dry Goods store, later the Fair Store, where the Rex Theater stood at 931 N. Eighth. Diestelhorst Saloon one block south had alleys along with its auspannung or farmers' rest.

Originally balls were wooden. Mottled mineralite and hard rubber balls appeared about 1910. Early on alleys always furnished balls. No one owned their own ball or bowling shoes.

Holy Name Church had a set of alleys in the basement of the school by 1903. Bethlehem Lutheran Church also provided a place for a game of ten pins.

Popular from the beginning, bowling was even used as a marketing tool to bolster the enthusiasm of a Chicago church's flock. An October 30, 1908,

*Sheboygan Daily Press* article, announced "Preacher Wants Theater and Bowling Alleys Attached." It seems the Warren Avenue Congregation was suffering from waning attendance and deplorable social conditions. The Rev. Mr. Smith thought his congregation could benefit from some social enjoyment and fellowship.

Another 1908 article mentions Matsui Matsui, the proprietor of the Fortune Bowling Alley at Lake View Park, who was unfortunate enough to be the victim of typhoid, a not uncommon affliction of the time. He mentioned that he hardly ever drank lake water. His drink of choice was tea. Matsui lived on Indiana Avenue while his family still resided in Japan.



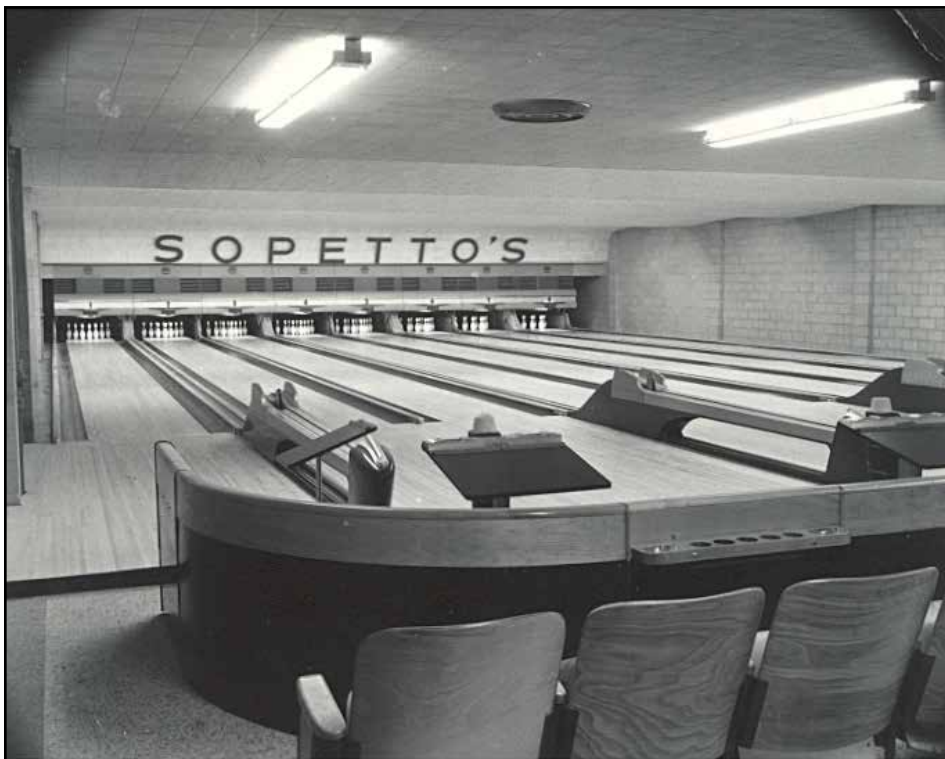
*Straus bowling house in Sheboygan*

A *Sheboygan Press* article dated November 18, 1911, boasts that "Alderman J.P. Mannebach, who conducts a saloon on South Twelfth Street, will install four fine Brunswick Balke Bowling alleys." It continues with, "There are a number of good bowlers in the southwest portion of the city who will welcome this good news." Bowling had arrived.

By 1953 there were 17 bowling establishments in just the city of Sheboygan and a dozen elsewhere in the county.

In 1966, Billy Sixty, Milwaukee Journal sportswriter, penned an article about the area's oldest bowling alley. Supposedly, in 1863 a German farmer named George Steinke started Wisconsin's bowling ball rolling in Cascade. Sixty was sure that in the dank cellar of Steinke's farmhouse — a cave they called it — George built two alleys said to be the first in the state.

Research has proven some of this false. The Steinkes, who didn't



*Sopetto's Bowling Alley. In 1941, the Old Thorpe Hotel was sold to Paul and Mansueto Sopetto, and extensive remodeling was done. In 1952, a bowling alley consisting of eight lanes was added to the south of the building. The alleys were removed in 1985 and the space remodeled into banquet facilities.*

arrive in Sheboygan County until 1882, did have a bowling alley in one of the sheds on their farm, but not in 1863. They were still in Germany. But, they also had two lanes in the basement of their saloon on Madison Avenue in Cascade by 1919.

George Steinke fashioned wooden balls that changed shape with a turn of the temperature and he made pins that were spotted by hand. Kerosene lamps and candles furnished the light were often blown out by gusts of wind.

Stops or pads at the end of the alleys were made of cornhusks. The balls would “klump, klump, klump” down the lanes, hit the pads and fall off occasionally breaking the crocks of homemade pickles stored nearby. The pungent smell

of pickles mixed with tobacco and beer created a not-to-be-forgotten aroma.

Local businessmen from Cascade were the alley’s patrons. They might bowl a few frames or take part in the marathon card games held in the cellar. The alleys were torn out during the tenure of Maurice “Red” Hughes in the 1940s.

Gone are Sopotto’s in Falls, Casey Jones in Plymouth, Bil-Mar of Cascade, the two lanes in the basement of the bank in Cedar Grove and the Knotty Pines lanes in Oostburg. Though still popular, competition for free time activities is fierce.



*Steinke shed bowling alley in Cascade*

Bowling facilities remain only in Sheboygan, Sheboygan Falls, Ada, Elkhart Lake, and Random Lake.

After more than a century, it seems we have found a different use for our spare time. 🍀



*1903 Plymouth bowling team “Red Reubens”*



With great sadness, we share that Jerry Apps passed away on December 23rd after a brief illness. Jerry was a good man, deeply loved by our community, and we were all fortunate to know him and have him as part of our lives. He gave so much to the Research Center over the years, beginning as our very first Second Saturdays presenter in 2001 with his program on barns in Southeastern Wisconsin, and returning annually until he stopped traveling. We extend our heartfelt thanks to Jerry for the many, many good things he did for us—his presence, generosity, and spirit will be long remembered.

## Life Goes On, but Being a Gold Star Family Is Forever

The Research Center recently received a small collection from a Gold Star family, that of Fred J. Nelson, Jr. of Sheboygan.

Stories about Gold Star soldiers are crucial for honoring their ultimate sacrifice, acknowledging the profound loss and grief of their families, and educating the public on the true cost of freedom.

A personal collection provides rich context that official archives might lack. It helps us know the soldier just a little bit better.

Fred Nelson was born in Sheboygan on June 16, 1918, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Nelson, Sr. of 924 Union Avenue. He attended Franklin School, South Side Junior High School, Central High School and the Sheboygan Vocational School.

A member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church Fred was confirmed in 1931. He served as an usher and was also a member of the Young People's Society.

Prior to his induction, Fred was employed with the Circulation Department of the *Sheboygan Press*. "Nellie," as he was commonly called, was honored at a farewell party by his co-workers shortly before he left for the service.

Fred was inducted into the Army on April 20, 1941. After several days at Fort Sheridan, Illinois, he was transferred to Camp Livingston, Louisiana, for Basic Infantry Training with the 32nd Division.

Fred's furlough from Camp Livingston was mentioned in the *Sheboygan Press*. He was one of two former employees of the paper to be home on leave at the same time. The article stated,

"Two *Sheboygan Press* employees are among a group of soldiers home for a two-week furlough from their Army duties at Camp Livingston, La. They are Private Jimmy Saye of Company E, 128th Infantry and Private Fred Nelson of Company I, 128th

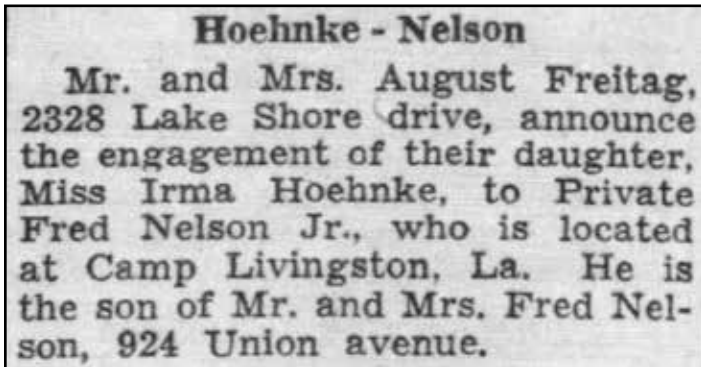


Photos of Fred Nelson, Jr. from his military record memory book.

Infantry. They dropped in at *The Press* office to renew acquaintanceships, and all of their friends observed that they are in excellent physical condition.

"Both report that they are getting plenty to eat, that they are properly clothed and housed and that the United Service Organizations, to which so many Sheboygan County residents contributed, are doing a splendid job. The men at camp, through the U.S.O., have a recreation hall and churches, and during the recent war maneuvers the U.S.O. followed the men and saw to it that they had movies during their spare time. The U.S.O. is also helpful in providing showers for men away from camp, the Sheboygan men report."

In December of 1941, Fred and Miss Irma Hoehnke of Sheboygan were engaged to be married. A gift of a ring was given at Christmas. Irma was the young lady who took care to note Fred's military service in the service record book that is a part of this collection. She was the keeper of his memory.



*Engagement announcement in the Sheboygan Press, December 27, 1941*

Fred continued his instruction at Fort Devins, Massachusetts, and was promoted to Private First Class, but left the division several months later when he was taken ill on a train bound for the west coast of the United States.

While other members of the division were embarking on combat duty in the South Pacific, Fred was stationed first at a hospital in Lima, Ohio, and later at an Army Base hospital at Columbus, Ohio. After four weeks of hospitalization, he was sent to Camp Custer, Michigan, for additional training, and then he took part in maneuvers in Tennessee and North Carolina.

In November of 1942, he received orders to report for overseas duty. He was stationed for eight months in Iceland before his transfer to England. He was then sent to Ireland for advanced combat training. He entered active service in France shortly after the initial invasion troops swept onto the Normandy coast.

On or about September 10, 1944, U.S. forces, particularly the 5th Infantry Division, were fighting to establish crossings over the Moselle River just south of Metz, France, to begin encircling the fortress city. Metz was defended by an extensive network of forts and strongpoints, including the formidable Fort Driant, which inflicted heavy casualties. Fort Driant was built into a hill as part of the French Maginot Line which was a major obstacle for Patton's Third Army in late

1944. It was known for its extensive underground tunnels and strong defenses that led to a costly and difficult siege by U.S. forces. Originally built by Germans before WWI, captured by France, and later re-fortified by both sides, it had become a symbol of German resistance.

It was in this fighting around Metz that Fred was killed in action on September 10, 1944. Fred held the rank of T/5 when he died on the battlefields of France. He was 26 years old.

Fred's remains were not returned to Sheboygan County until October 27, 1948. Two days later Ramm Funeral Home conducted services with the Rev. Walter W. Laersch of Our Savior's Lutheran Church officiating. Burial was made in the Lutheran Cemetery at Sheboygan.

Tragically, Fred was the second member of his family lost to service. Another son, Private Edward Nelson, was the first Sheboygan casualty of World War II. A member of the National Guard, Edward died of injuries received in an accident while stationed at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana, on December 2, 1940.

Though it holds precious memories the information in the collection also calls to mind the truism, Life Goes On, But Being a Gold Star Family Is Forever. 🍀



*Photo of Nelson's military record memory book*



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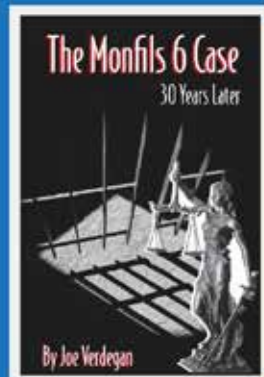
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# SECOND *Saturdays*

*Journeys into Local History*

March 14 at 9:30 am  
Plymouth Arts Center

Joe Verdegan, author and true crime enthusiast, is back to talk about his new book, "The Monfils 6 Case – 30 Years Later." The book details the 1992 James River Paper Mill death of Tom Monfils.



The  
Research  
Center  
will be closed  
for  
Archiving  
April 13 to  
April 24