



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 October, December, February, April, June, and August.

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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Welcome New Members

Linda Bolgert — Sheboygan
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Program Schedule

See schrc.org or Facebook for more details.

Book Club

1 to 2:30 pm at the Research Center (upper level—no elevator access), 518 Water Street, Sheboygan Falls

November 18 — *Wisconsin for Kennedy: The Primary That Launched a President and Changed the Course of History* (2024) by B.J. Hollars

Genealogy Classes

1 pm to 3 pm. Classes held at the Research Center, 518 Water St., Sheboygan Falls. Cost: \$15 members/\$20 nonmembers. See schrc.org for detailed class descriptions and to register.

October 12 — Genealogy Show and Tell: Sharing Family Treasures. Bring your family heirloom, document, story, recipe, or photograph and share the story behind it. Let's celebrate the personal treasures that connect us to our ancestors and to one another.

November 9 — Researching Your Irish Ancestors. This class will introduce participants to the tools and resources used for Irish ancestry research. We will explore how to locate records, navigate Irish genealogy websites and archives, and use census, civil, church, and land records to uncover information about ancestors from Ireland.

February 8 — Researching Your Dutch Ancestors. This class will introduce participants to the tools and resources used for Dutch ancestry research. We will explore how to locate records, navigate Dutch genealogy websites, and use online archives, indexes, and family history resources to uncover information about ancestors from the Netherlands.

Second Saturdays: Journeys into Local History

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

October 10 — Wisconsin POW Camps with Bob Block. Most people are unaware that Wisconsin had POW camps during WWII and are surprised to learn that there were 38 of them having a total of 20,000 POWs. Learn about POW camps in the US and Wisconsin. This presentation tells interesting stories of those who may have lived in a community that once had a POW camp, those who worked side by side with POWs and those who were once prisoners in a POW camp.

November 14 — Stories from the Final Bridge with Steve Conto. In the spring of 2002, Steve embarked on a mission to locate the exact burial places of Wisconsin service members who were killed in the Vietnam War. His efforts created a bridge between their names on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C., and their final resting places.

History on the Move

Noon at Generations, 1500 Douglas Dr, Plymouth

October 20 — Torke Building with Dan Buckman, president of the Plymouth Historical Society. Dan will entertain and enlighten you with the crazy story of the Torke bombings that took place on October 11, 1928, and November 13, 1928, when explosions rocked Plymouth.

November 17 — History Uncovered with Katie Reilly. Katie will share great stories from Sheboygan County history.

Rocky Knoll, Serving Sheboygan County for 100 Years

Sheboygan County's \$400,000 tuberculosis sanatorium (\$7.5 million today) for the treatment of tuberculosis opened to the public August 1 & 2, 1926. Guides were on hand to show visitors through the building from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. giving them an opportunity to see firsthand what provisions have been made for the care of persons afflicted with TB.

Rocky Knoll was the most technologically advanced and best staffed tuberculosis sanatorium in the state. It was described as possibly the best treatment center to be found anywhere in the country. E.A. Stubenrauch of Sheboygan was the architect for the project.

According to newspaper accounts at the time of its dedication, it had a fumigating machine and an x-ray machine, which was nearly unheard of in the 1920s. It also had state-of-the-art dust control, which meant rounded metal corners and terrazzo floors — easy to clean. Sun cure porches, used for sleeping

in all types of weather, framed the front facade of the building.

The original plan was for a 40-bed hospital, but before the project began it was apparent that so many people in Sheboygan County were infected with TB that the facility would have to double in size. By the end of 1926, the 80 beds were all filled.

TB became an issue in 1921 when "chest clinics" revealed there were already 85 cases of tuberculosis in the county. This number did not include the 34 patients in other counties or servicemen in government hospitals.

The site for Rocky Knoll was chosen because of the need for isolated community life. Isolation suited the general public as well. Sheboygan County was a sympathetic place for TB treatment. It was not uncommon in some areas of the East to buy a TB patient a one-way ticket to Arizona, Colorado or California. Those dry climates of

the West were considered better for tuberculosis patients, but the one-way ticket was a rather inhumane way of ridding the area of a difficult problem. Sheboygan County rose to the occasion and learned to treat patients effectively and with compassion.

The Plymouth City Band, directed by Ruben Lehman, played a short concert for the 25th anniversary of Rocky Knoll before rain chased the entertainment indoors on Sunday afternoon, August 5, 1951. A day of speeches by government officials, music, food, a quick tour, remembrances of improvements and projects, pride in the quality of care and improvement in tuberculosis treatment and prevention all took place. Since 1926, Rocky Knoll succeeded in cutting the death rate from 43 in 100,000 to 10 in 100,000 in just 25 years.

As of October 1960, a *Sheboygan Press* headline announced, TB Down, But Hospital Care of Aged Goes On. Dr. Ray Evers, in his annual report, stated that patient stays in the hospital were shorter, the treatment more effective and recurrences were rarer. He mentioned that if the present trend continued, fewer beds would be needed for tuberculosis.

At the same time, the need for hospital beds for the chronically ill and aged increased. These patients had to be cared for in different areas of the hospital in order to properly isolate them from the TB patients.



Rocky Knoll Sanatorium

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When I arrived in Racine on September 2, 1923, to start as the boys' work secretary of the YMCA, I was disappointed to learn that the Racine "Y" did not have a boys' camp of its own. So I proceeded to get the administration of the "Y" interested in camp possibilities.

Judge E.R. Burgess, chairman of the Y's Boys Work Committee and Chester Beach and the Racine Optimist Club were especially helpful in the creating enthusiasm for the summer camp. With the special interest of "Uncle" Adolph Gillund, also of the YMCA staff, the necessary leadership was provided.

Adolph and I started a tour of inspection of the state, visiting various recommended locations. Finally, early one April morning in 1926 Adolph and I headed north in his auto to the Kettle Moraine area.

Finally, after stopping in the town of Plymouth for a noon lunch, a chance conversation with a native revealed the existence of a lake nearby and so well isolated, few of the inhabitants had seen it. A ride north from Plymouth some four or five miles brought us to the farm of Mike Hecker. We learned that he was down at the lake. After about a mile hike we emerged from the border of birch and hardwood lumber, and for the first time beheld the beauty of Little Elkhart Lake, and the site that would afford pleasure and provide lifelong memories for thousands of boys who would camp there in the coming years.



Photo taken by Chester Beach at the time the land agreement was finalized. Pictured are members of Anokijig's original committee: Louie Schoenleben, Ray Vance, Adolph Gillund, R.J. Ritz (Secretary of the YMCA), Dr. John C. Doctor, Ned Harvey, Mike Hecker (farmer), Tom Leslie, and Judge E.R. Burgess, chairman of the Racine Camp Committee (seated).

The picture we gave of the new possible camp site proved very attractive to the Optimist Club and the "Y" Boys Work committee. Several became anxious to get the camp started. But first it should have a name. A contest was announced. More than 600 entries were submitted. The judges selected Ray Van Galder as the winner, with Camp Anokijig as the name. Young Van Galder said Anokijig was an Indian word, meaning to be of help or to serve. So the new camp was given that title and the motto "We Serve" was adopted.

The name is known around the world because many young men from many foreign countries have camped at Anokijig. One of the great satisfactions and pleasures of my life is the opportunity to read many letters that arrive from

foreign countries from former Anokijig campers or staff members.

In a related article published in *The Journal Times* of Racine, Wisconsin, on June 17, 1926, the judges of the camp's naming contest awarded honorable mentions to the following entries:

- "Single Island Camp" by George Lubovitske
- "Birch Bark Camp" by James Finn
- "Goodfellowship Camp" by Adolph Pezanoski
- "You May Come Again" (Y.M.C.A.) by Freeman Kark

One hundred years later, Camp Anokijig hosts about 3,000 youth campers in nine weekly camp

sessions each summer. In the spring, early summer and fall, school groups come during the weekdays for outdoor education and other groups camp during the weekends for outdoor experiences.

New to Camp Anokijig is the construction of Centennial Lodge, a facility that will expand the camp's capacity to host winter programs and corporate events as it looks ahead to its next 100 years. 🍀



The waterfront at Camp Anokijig in the 1940s.

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Just two years later, the sanatorium wing of Rocky Knoll was rarely filled to capacity. The patient load varied between 45 and 65 over a year. Over the course

of the decade of the 1960s, the focus of Rocky Knoll became the elderly and chronically ill.

Still a county-owned facility, Rocky Knoll in 2026 specializes in the care of the elderly, patients with special needs, cognitive and physical, Alzheimer's patients and those in need of short-term rehabilitation. The facility, licensed to serve up to 149 patients, and its staff have served the needs of the residents of Sheboygan County by providing a caring home to the most vulnerable of our residents.



The sun porches at Rocky Knoll.

The emphasis of people in Rocky Knoll's care has changed, but their foundation has and always will be "Innovation with Compassion." 🍀

Tragedy in Random Lake

Just three years after Random Lake was incorporated as a village, tragedy struck the town.

On the evening of October 22, 1910, the entire Bichler business block—including the elevator, saloon and hotel of Peter Bichler, the saloon of Nicholas Schmitz, the residence of Dr. T. Malloy, and the meat market of William Rheingans—was destroyed by fire. Total loss was estimated to be between \$20,000 and \$25,000.

The Bichler business block fronted First Street, facing north, between the railroad tracks and Butler Street.

About 10:30 p.m., fire was discovered in the Rheingans meat market. It was initially believed that an overheated chimney had caused the blaze; however, investigators later suggested that it may have originated within an interior wall, and the exact cause remained unknown. In a few minutes' time the Bichler buildings were ablaze and the large elevator and hotel property was soon in ruins. The flames gained such headway that it was impossible to save any furniture

or hotel effects. The contents of the elevator were a total loss. Mr. Bichler estimated his loss at more than \$10,000.

William Rheingans, who operated the meat market in the Bichler buildings, suffered a loss of several hundred dollars.

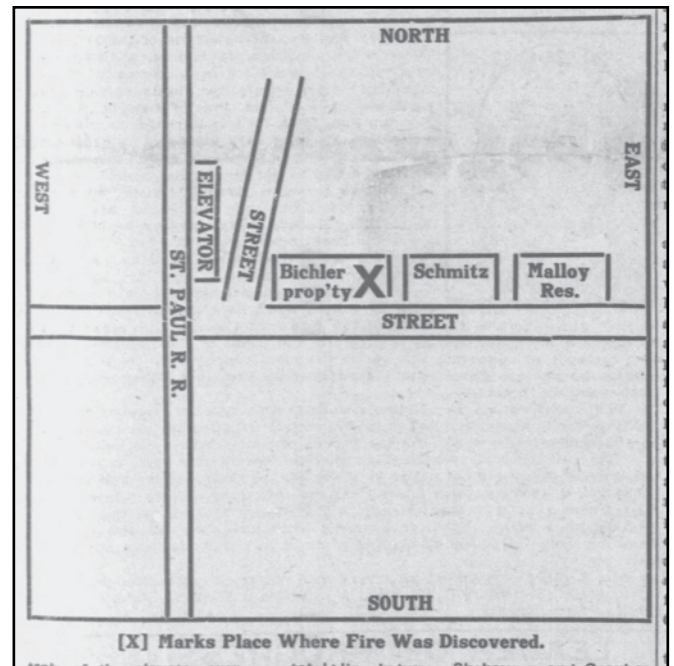
The fire quickly spread to the adjoining saloon owned by Nicholas Schmitz, which was completely destroyed, though not before volunteers managed to save a considerable amount of property. The building and its contents were valued at \$6,000. With the hotel, elevator, and Schmitz saloon all engulfed in flames, it appeared that the entire town might be lost. A call for assistance was sent to Fredonia, and the volunteer fire department arrived shortly before midnight with a hand-pumped fire engine. Around the same time, the residence of Dr. Thomas Malloy also caught fire. The house was valued at \$2,000.



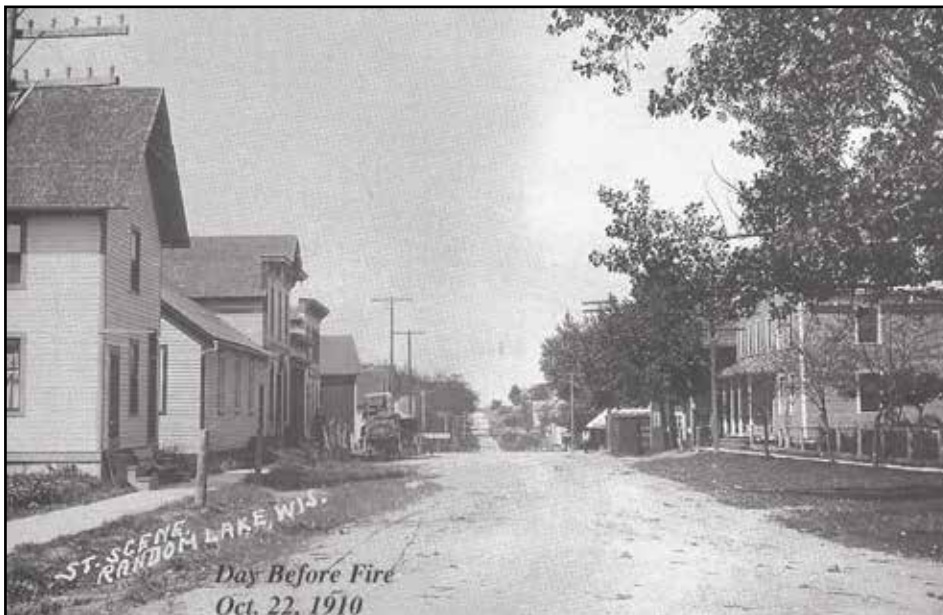
October 23, 1910, the day after the fire at Random Lake.

Not all was lost. Through the heroic efforts of the Waubeka company and the bucket brigade the barns, ice house and the dance hall directly behind Bichler's saloon were saved. The Altenhofen elevator and Haehnke and Conrad homes across the street were scorched but fully intact.

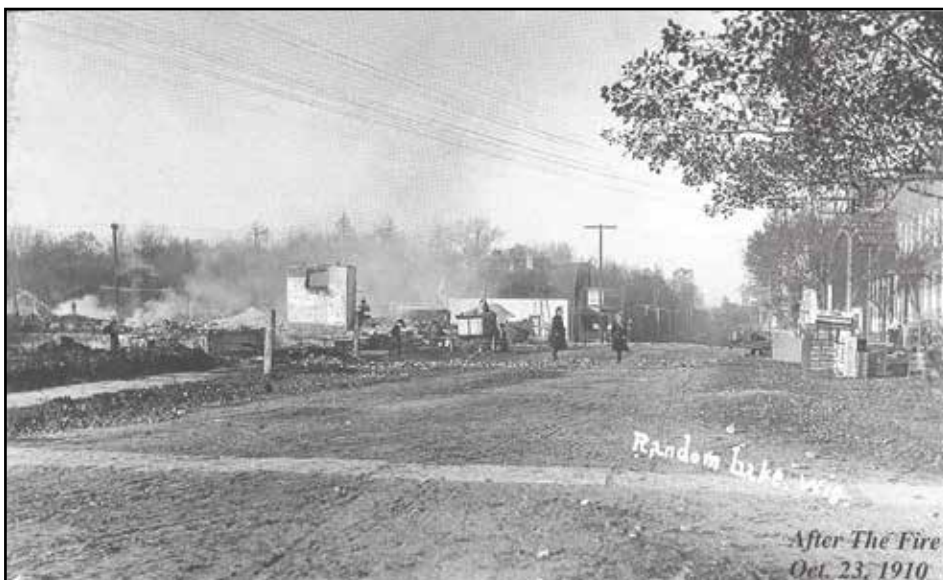
Immediately following the fire, village residents began agitating for a proper fire department. A nearly unanimous vote on December 20, 1910, 66 for and 2 against, bonded the village for \$4,000 to purchase a firefighting apparatus and to build a fire station. The engine, hose cart, about 1,500 feet of hose, and accompanying apparatus were purchased some time ago with the proviso that the outfit would be kept and paid for if the bond issue was approved by voters. 🍀



Above: Map of the fire scene from The Sheboygan Press, October 24, 1910.



Left: Before and after the Random Lake Fire, October 22, 1910. These photographs, taken from nearly the same viewpoint just one day apart, reveal the devastating transformation of the street-scape after the fire. Buildings that lined the street on October 22 were reduced to rubble and open ground by the following day, leaving a stark record of the fire's destruction.





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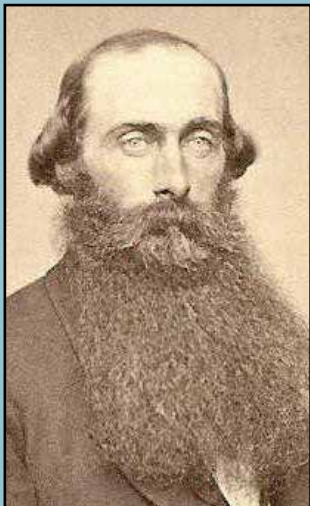
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An almost forgotten fact about Winooski is that it was once the site of the Sheboygan County insane asylum and the scene of a terrible tragedy. Glanville S. Jewett, the superintendent, erected a commodious wooden structure there to house the county's wards under a contract with the county board of supervisors. The facility opened in June 1876. On February 20, 1878, a fire broke out in the building, causing four of the 17 inmates to burn to death and nearly claiming the lives of others. With the original building completely destroyed, Mr. Jewett began constructing a new one to fulfill the remainder of his contract, but he died in April of that year before it was completed. The county paid Jewett \$4 per week to care for the residents. More information can be found in *All Roads Lead to Rocky Knoll*, SCHRC's newest book, available now.



Left: Glanville S. Jewett, superintendent of the Winooski facility. Above: 1862 map of the Town of Lyndon, showing Winooski, southwest of Plymouth. Right: 1875 drawing of the Glanville S. Jewett farm in Winooski.

