



# South Milwaukee Historical Society Newsletter

Volume I Number VI

Autumn 1975

Published Quarterly

Meeting Place - South Milwaukee Library Blue Room  
Meeting Time - First Monday of each month-7:30 P.M.  
Refreshments served following each meeting

## Officers

President - William Domoe	762-0675
vice Pres.- Ron Abrahamson	764-0714
Secretary - Barbara Schouten	764-2314
Treasurer - Lillian Dishong	762-4568

## Committees

membership	Jan Schumacher	762-0818
	Laura Hook	762-0635
Accessioning-	Jackie Granic	762-7955
Bicentennial-	Richard Grobschmidt	762-8460
Sunshine	-Lee Wendt	762-2971
Hospitality	-Lillian Rankin	762-9534
Newsletter	-Ron Abrahamson	764-0714
	Pat Abrahamson	
	Lillian Dishong	762-4568

## Churches

This is the first of a series of articles about the early churches in So. Milwaukee.

In 1836, before So. Milwaukee had a church, services were held in the log cabin of Oliver Rawson. Everyone attended regardless of their religion. In 1840 the first school building was built and was also used as a church. People brought quilts, blankets and foot warmers to keep warm. The first real church was built in 1854. In 1908 the church was remodeled. The First Congregational Church on No. Chicago Ave. still contains part of the original structure.

All members of the Historical Society are cordially invited to the Wisconsin Premiere showing of the Smithsonian Exhibit entitled "Women and the Labor Movement". Read poor Richard's Almanac for details.

Barbara Fritche and Dolly Madison will be selling American flags for the Historical Society at Home State Bank on October 24 and Marine Bank October 31. From now on through 1976 we will be taking orders.

Bennington Flag (collector's item, or the 50 star flag at \$10.00 each. The Society will receive \$3.00 for each flag sold. Let's make our American birthday beautiful with a flag on each home! You may order by calling L. Rankin-762-9534 or A. Kerlin at 762-1998 after 4 P.M.

## REGIONAL CONVENTION

On August 23rd our society hosted the 1975 Metropolitan Regional Convention. The day began with viewing of many interesting exhibits provided by our members. All of the societies in the region gave reports on their activities over the past year.

After a delicious luncheon, Mr. John Adams Thierry, vice president of Bucyrus Erie Company gave a speech on the origin of Bucyrus Erie and the role it has played in the community.

A slide presentation "So. Milwaukee Then and Now" by Gertrude Endthoff followed.

A bus tour of 26 historical sites in So. Milwaukee ended at the residence of William Domoe, President of our society where Mr. Domoe's fine display of carriages were shown, and some very welcome refreshments were served on the lawn.

Not enough can be said for the wonderful efforts of many of our members. It took tremendous planning and work to make the convention the great success it was. We have much to be proud of.

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 Gifts and Mementoes

Arden Degner - Shares of stock in So. Milwaukee Power & Light  
 Ethelda Gouza - Photos of Blake family  
 Ben Shogren - Dr. Parrott's World War I uniform and photostatic copy of Germany's surrender in W.W.I.  
 Mrs. Carol Schlueter - voice journals, early 1900's  
 Ella Malewski - Photo, early police and misc.  
 Rick Grobschmidt - Bicentennial Bumper Sticker  
 Carol Blessinger - pair of Ladies white gloves  
 Clarence O'Brien - Photo of Charles Franke and misc.  
 Hazel Gates - Howle & Minister Memorabilia

William Blix - folders on early settlements  
 Vance Chamberlain - Girl Scout items  
 Harold Reed - Scrap book of newspaper clippings

Mrs. Butler Jacobs - B.E. magazines (Scoups) Crossing Guard uniform and china  
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Printing Bee: Historical Society Museum

Bright and early Saturday morning, Sept. 6th, twelve young men from the Jaycees (service club) began to arrive for a day of painting. It was their project for the year. We were fortunate they chose to paint our museum.

Armed with ladders, paint buckets, scrapers and brushes, they set to work. It was exciting to watch as the color change on the house took place. Our ladies of the So. Milwaukee Historical Society donated the hot and cold dishes, coffee, etc. to feed the painters at noon. Helping to serve and see to their wants were Dennis Rankin, Jackie Granic, Penny Rankin and Lynn Rankin.

A cameraman from channel 12 T-V was there too, taking pictures for the six o'clock news. We worked until 5:30 P.M. then raced home to view the pictures on the six o'clock news.

Sunday morning, four Jaycees came back to finish the job. Lynn Rankin went for sweet rolls and made coffee to serve them breakfast, then later joined them in painting. Lynn and Penny cleaned up when they finished. A job well done!

Ride by and take a look.

Note: Our new Museum is at 717 Milwaukee Avenue. We now have a neat sign on the front so you can't miss it.  
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Have you been able to sign up a new member for our Historical Society? Our president, Mr. William Domoe has asked that each present member try to sign up at least one new member before the end of the year. Let's all try!

## MUNI BAND

South Milwaukee's Official Bicentennial Band.

This year, the Muni Band starts its 40th year of continuous existence. That's a lot of blowing !

This 40th Anniversary will be celebrated on Sunday, October 26th at a party, to which as many former band members as they can muster together have been invited. There will be a lot of "blowing" there, too !

The MUNI BAND is unique, in that their only requisites for membership are love for music and the desire and ability to pick up the old horn and play.

It was started back in 1935 by Art Drews, Frank Caveney and Dean Potter. Art was the first director; Frank, the first and present business manager; Dean, the first and present band president.

The MUNI-BAND has played at civic functions and in neighborhood communities. They have acted as host band for the Wisconsin Spectacle of Music for 30 years, this event being originated by Drews, Caveney and Potter.

Every year in August, they represent the city of So. Milwaukee on a good will concert or marching tour and are very well received. They have traveled as far north as Montreal, Canada; as far south as Dallas, New Orleans and Miami; west to Loveland, Colorado and east to Boston. Travel expenses of the Muni-Band are paid for through fund raising projects and individual band member payments.

They are a congenial, fun loving group and their irrepressible persistent spirit will, no doubt, carry them on to celebrate their 100th anniversary and beyond.

Our congratulations to the MUNI-BAND! They have surely shown INDEPENDENCE, THROUGH THE YEARS. They are, definitely, a delightful part of So. Milwaukee's history.

## POOR RICHARD'S ALMANAC....

News from the Bicentennial Committee

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED...

The Bicentennial Committee has been hard at work co-ordinating the showing of "Women and the Labor Movement" a Smithsonian Exhibit that So. Milwaukee will have the privilege of hosting the first showing in the State of Wisconsin. It is part of a series of exhibits of documents sponsored by the Smithsonian as a Bicentennial project. They are being shown all over America, in nearly every major city. It is indeed with pride that we invite Society members to a special invitational showing and reception on Sunday, Nov. 2, 1975 at the So. Milwaukee Library.

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## SUNSHINE NOTES

by Lee Wendt

Those of you who know me will attest to the fact that one of my most over-worked expressions is, "I can't believe it!" It's usually pronounced with a proper surprised tone. Well, as I sit writing this, I am even saying that very thing to myself, since I haven't needed to send any Get Well cards to any of you. It seems everyone of you has been blessed with good health. Keep it up, we may be setting some kind of record. I wish you all good health, but should you hear of a fellow member that needs a little sunshine, please don't hesitate to call me!

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DID YOU KNOW... Our society is putting on a huge membership drive to expand our group? If you have been a member in the past and are now a "dropout" Please think about rejoining. New members (or rejoiners) who join now, dues they pay will cover the balance of 1975 and the year 1976. Wouldn't you like to be a member in our Bicentennial year? If you know of any one who is interested in joining, call Laura Hook-762-0635

SOUTH MILWAUKEE  
FROM WILDERNESS TO THRIVING CITY

The spring of 1835 saw the first settlers to the area. Elihu Higgins, from Massachusetts, is credited with being the first settler. He was followed soon by Moses Rawson, John Fowle, Joseph Dibley and others. This small settlement led a primitive existence until about 1840 when Elihu Higgins and John Fowle built saws mills and the latter a grist mill on the creek. Later a steam saw mill was put up by the Howes family near Fifteenth and Rawson Avenue. A public school house was built in the early 1840's to educate the growing community. The teacher was paid from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per week plus board. Ship building was carried on, on a small scale. Around 1850 two vessels the "Honest John" and the "Julianne" were built, being used for lake trade between Milwaukee and other cities. One of the highlights of the early days was on July 2, 1850 when the P.T. Barnum Circus, on its way to Milwaukee, stopped here for a tent show. Brick making was an early day industry here. Joseph Dibley, John Blake and Mr. Parks ran a small brickyard in what is now the north end of Grant Park from 1856 to 1859. About 1870, Horace Fowle, the first white man born in Oak Creek, and Horace Wells started a large brickyard at the mouth of Oak Creek. Its famous cream bricks were loaded on boats from a pier and shipped all over the middle west. It produced bricks until about 1885.

The village centered around what is now the intersection of Hawthorne Avenue and North Chicago Avenue, with two stores which alternated in the possession of the post office, a blacksmith shop, a couple of basketshops, and a saloon or two. All the residences were along what are now Hawthorne, N. Chicago and Rawson Avenues.

The village moved along slowly until the summer of 1891 when rumors began to circulate about something big for Oak Creek. All of a sudden land that had been going without buyers at \$100 to \$200 per acre was being held at \$900 to 1,000 per acre and options were being grabbed up quickly at those prices. The South Milwaukee company, composed of prominent Milwaukee men, laid out a town site, graded streets and offered lots for sale. Manufacturing plants were brought here for the new prospective city. The Schutz Brothers Company put up the first factory building. The Bucyrus Steam Shovel and Dredge Company started their buildings soon after, in May, 1892. Other plants that soon followed were Hatch Cutlery Company, South Milwaukee Malleable Iron Co., Adamant Paint Co., Moore Manufacturing Co., Lownes Manufacturing Co., the Huntington Manufacturing Co. and the Eagle Horse Shoe Company. The name of the village was changed from Oak Creek to South Milwaukee late in 1891 and in the summer of 1892 the matter of incorporating the village was undertaken. An application was filed before the Circuit Court of Milwaukee County on October 10, 1892 and was signed by F. E. Mansfield, S. C. Stewart, Louis George, John Munzinger, J. E. Vollmer, Wm. C. Fadel, H. W. Donsing, E. L. Minster, Fred Koch and J. A. Bethel. The village grew and progresses until it became a city on July 6, 1897.