



South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Ave., South Milwaukee, WI 53172
NEWSLETTER January, 1990

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Dr. Harold Hein	1991	483-4826
Mary Magnuson	1991	762-9428
Gertrude Endthoff	1990	762-8852
Steve Czerwicznik	1990	762-2089

EVENTS:

FEBRUARY 17 ANNUAL DINNER AT B.E. CLUB 5:30 SOCIAL HOUR,
SIT DOWN DINNER 6:30, CHICKEN WELLINGTON -
ENTERTAINMENT by BURLINGTON UKULELE BAND

JUNE 1 & 2 RUMMAGE SALE

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

I hope you all had a very happy and blessed Christmas and joyous New Year.

We had a very successful bazaar/bake sale this year. Thanks to all who brought in baked goods and bazaar items.

We also are adding more book shelves for the Lincoln Library. This work is being done by Scott Wranovsky who built the shelves for our office.

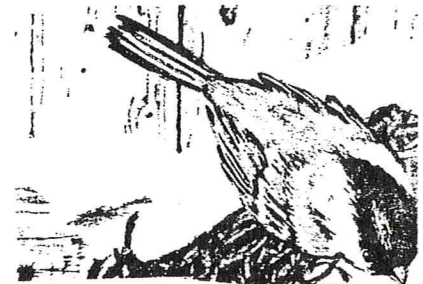
We still are having TROUBLE! with a capital T!! with the electrician. Hopefully, I will be able to give you a full report of this at the pot luck supper in April.

I hope to see all of you at the Annual Dinner Meeting on February 17 at the B. E. Club. If you need a ride call me.

A special thank you to Mrs. Lynn Rankin for making phone calls for me to all members through out the year for numerous projects that the society has. A very big THANK YOU LYNN.

See you February 17.

Richard Tangen, President



FOUNDED MARCH 1972 BY MR. AND MRS. DENNIS RANKIN

INITIAL DIRECTORS — DENNIS RANKIN • PENNY RANKIN • GEORGE HOOK • MARY MCCARRIER • BRUCE RAYESKE
DORA LEE SZEWCZUGA • WILLIAM DOMOE • LILLIAN DISHONG • CHESTER GROBSCHMIDT

SEARS ROEBUCK MAIL ORDER HOMES

In early 1921 Henry O. Fowle built one of the first mail order homes at 616 Marquette in South Milwaukee. The plans, precut lumber, plumbing equipment and fixtures, hardware, varnishes, paint and all other essentials to build his home were ordered from the Sear's Roebuck catalog of Homes. These materials were shipped to the designated area. (I don't think the basement foundation was included). The price of the house was \$2400. (There were no city building permits at this time. These however were required after 1924.) Two years later, John Schneider built his Sears home at 822 Minnesota Ave. In the year, 1925 Frank Ladwig(mailman) built his Sears home at 516 Marquette. A year later Mr. Stosick built his mail order home on the northeast corner of Fairview and Pine Aves. There has been mentioned that a Sears mail order house is also at 1431 Madison and 15th Avenue. There aren't records of this home.

by Lillian Fowle Rankin

SOUTH MILWAUKEE WIRELESS CLUB -- AS I REMEBER IT

for the South Milwaukee Historical Society by Harold Hein (1988)

The club started right after the First World War in 1919. Just before the war Clark Greene, who became the high school Vice Principal under my father, who was principal and superintendent of schools, told some of the students of the wireless club he had belonged to in Lake Geneva where he had taught just before the war.

Soon we had our primitive receiving sets with galena detectors and earphones set up in our bedrooms at home and received the international morse code signals that were being sent from stations around the world. With the tiny amount of power we could receive with just a galena or carborundum detector, we needed very sensitive ear phones and long high aerials highly insulated. Then we started buying Ford spark coils or stranger transformers up to one kilowatt in power, made our condensers from glass plates, many obtained from our friend Smoot, the photographer, bought telegraph keys and were soon transmitting messages around town in morse code. Some of our sets were quite powerful and we often had one inch sparks at the spark gaps and when we pressed the key all the lights in the neighborhood would dim. How the neighbors stood it I often wonder, also the radio operators on the vaious lake boats who sometimes roughly told us through their stations to get off the air, our wave lengths were so broad with our long aerials we interfered with their receiving messages.

About 1920 Dale Diefenderfer, who lived at 619 Hawthorne Avenue and was a strong member of our club, was able to have a second story build on their two car garage. This became our club headquarters and we had a club wireless station here. We put up a high pole in the Diefenderfers back yard and strung our aerial across the ravine 550 feet to a high tree on the south side of the ravine, somewhere across from where George and Laura Hook now live. (Minnesota Ave.) We stationed members in the clubhouse throughout the nights and one night during a bad storm we were struck by lightning, the charge coming across the aerial over the ravine and even with our number 10 ground wire and big switch it jumped the gap and entered the room and ruined our set and almost scared the wits out of our members, who were sleeping there that night. By then we had progressed to radio tubes,

first the Cunningham tube which looked like a wiener and had three wires coming out each end, then to the socket tube, invented by Lee DeForest. These cost us \$5.00 to \$6.00 a piece and that was a lot of money to replace in 1920.

I do not recall all of the members who belonged around 1920 but here are the names of some of them and highlights about them.

Dale Diefenderfer, who later moved to Indianapolis, Indiana, a brilliant man in the mechanical field.

Clark Greene who went into Bucyrus and was assistant Chemist. He became Scout master of old Troop 40 after Mr. Allen left.

Joseph Bethel who lived at 717 Milwaukee Avenue (now the South Milwaukee Historical Society Museum). I was at this home many times in 1920 visiting Joe at his station in his upstairs bedroom. Joe became a lawyer and died a few year ago.

Ed Petzold who was at an electrical shop on the north side of Milwaukee Avenue a few doors east of the old water tower.

Charles Quenten, who took Engineering at Marquette and became chief engineer at several of the big radio stations in Iowa. I sold him his first receiver and directional antenna for \$7.00 when he was just starting to become interested.

Other members were Clarence LaDuke and his brother, Ray, Leo and Art Carmody, Happy Weiland, who became a lawyer, George Megow, who became vice president of Allen Bradley Co. and was in charge one time when the president was in Holland for several months. More members were Gene Weber, Harold Reed, Lawrence Vogel and William D. a ham now with station W9BNM, and Norman Richardson, who rose to General in the Army.

The Historical Society would be glad to hear of any ommissions or corrections.

Harold Hein 3/18/88

BASKETS - FROM SHOPS TO FACTORIES (This is first in a series of articles about baskets made in South Milwaukee.)

One of the early industries in South Milwaukee, then known as Oak Creek, were the basket shops. Several were known to be located along the creek and in the town. According to the History of Milwaukee conty by H. Conrad, John E. Grover was said to have started the first basket shop in the state, in Oak Crek, in 1855.

Born January 3, 1833 at Mansfield, Mass., he went to school until 16 years old and then found employment in a basket factory, remaining there until he was 21 years old. He then went to Cecil County, Maryland and opened his own basket shop until early in 1855. After returning home for a short time, he came to Milwaukee along with his brother, James S. Grover and cousins, A.B. and Edward T.B. Day.

They came to South Milwaukee and opened the shop in the fall of 1855. The exact location of this shop is not known, but John Grover had purchased 67 acres of land on the southwest corner of what is now Marquette and South Chicago Avenues and James later owned two acres on Rawson Avenue, just east of the railroad tracks according to the 1876 atlas. It was part of land owned by the Rawsons and may have been a wedding present when he married Lois Rawson, daughter of Oliver and Lois Howes Rawson. Another daughter, Sarah Rawson and her husband, Charles Watrous owned several acres on the other side of the tracks.

Basket making was a job that could be done with few tools and at home. When the materials were at hand to gather or were accessable, it provided a way to make a living quickly, or done part time in the winter for added income.

An awl, a utility knife and pliers are usually all that are needed, but the work is harsh. In a letter Edward Day was to write to Marietta Rawson while serving as a clerk in the office of the Exchange Barracks at Nashville during the Civil War he said, "But Met, it is about as hard work to sit by a desk and write all day as it is to make baskets, I think." And in a later letter he says, "Well, this war won't last always, I am confident. If it does, my term will be out in seven months and then and then I shall have to work at home. But I think I shall be better recompensed than I am now."

But making a living as a basket maker was not to work out for Edward Day in this area. After the war was over, he lived in Cudahy with his wife Laura (Packard) Day and two sons, working at basket making until 1876 when he left them to return to Maryland, saying that he "could not make a living" here. Laura was granted a divorce, almost unheard of in those days, on grounds of desertion.

---to be continued---

WORK AT THE MUSEUM: SATURDAY, January 20, CLEAN UP DAY AT MUSEUM. Members will again meet from 9 a.m. to 12 noon on the third Saturdays of each month to work on items at the museum. Coffee and planning will take place at 9 a.m. promptly and will be followed by action at 9:15. Inventory, filing, cleaning, and museum drudgery will be intertwined with conversation, comraderie, laughter and radio music. If you are able to help -- come!

Geneology help wanted by the Historical Society. Payment included. Experience required. Call 762-8852.

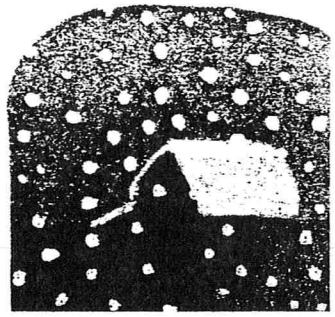
If you know of any members that are ill, please call Mary Magnuson, 762-9428 with the information, so she can send them a card.

RUMMAGE When cleaning cabinets --don't discard the things you haven't used in years. Save those things for the Rummage Sale. If you think they are antiques show them to Gertrude Endthoff. As curator, she decides if they will fit into the museum exhibits or storage. Tax deductible appaisals are given for donated items.

HOUSE: City Attorney Murphy recommended legal action by the historical society against Chris Herwick, electrician

NEEDED AND WELCOMED--SOUTH MILWAUKEE CITY DIRECTORIES FROM 1911.

DO YOU HAVE any family history that you can share for our files?
SEND INFORMATION TO: S.M.H.S., 717 MILWAUKEE AVE.,
SOUTH MILWAUKEE, WI 53172
For Genealogy research a nominal fee will be charged.
Published in Jan., Apr., Aug., Nov. each year.
Newspaper editor: Lois Schreiter



Dues are due each January. If dues are not received by March the members name will be removed from the mailing list. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT WITH TIME, MONEY AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S PROGRAMS.

THANK US BY BECOMING A MEMBER. YOU ARE NEEDED.

Dues:

Seniors \$3.00 Professional \$10.00
Single \$4.00 Life Membership \$100.00
Family \$6.00 HELP PRESERVE YOUR HERITAGE. YOU LIVE HERE.

Send to Laura Hook
703 Minnesota Ave.
South Milwaukee, WI. 53172

Name _____
 Street _____ City _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ I can help with _____
 Type of Dues _____ \$ _____

ANNUAL DINNER \$11.50 PER PERSON number coming _____ \$ _____
 total amount \$ _____

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