



South Milwaukee Historical Society

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

OFFICERS 1989-1990

President	Rick Tangen	762-2199
Vice President	Resigned to return to school	
Secretary	Theresa Aghbashian	762-5623
Treasurer	Laura Hook	762-0635
Past President	Addie Becker	764-2118
Curator/Historian	Gertrude Endthoff	762-8852

BOARD OF DIRECTORS: (term expires)

Steve Czerwiczuk	1993	762-2089
Arline Barsamian	1992	762-3624
Lorraine Fuhreck	1992	762-1915
Dr. Harold Hein	1991	483-4826
Mary Magnuson	1991	762-9428

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

JULY 21 WORK AT MUSEUM 10 AM UNTIL DONE
JULY 22 - 29 HERITAGE DAYS EVENTS
JULY 29 SUNDAY ICE CREAM PARTY- TROLLEY RIDE AND TOUR- RUMMAGE SALE
12 NOON UNTIL 4 PM
SEPTEMBER 10 POT LUCK DINNER - SPEAKER - MAY THIBEAUDEAU AUTHOR
OF HER SECOND BOOK "I SHALL NOT DIE, I SHALL LIVE ON
IN YOU"

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT:

The month of July will be very busy for the South Milwaukee Historical Society. For Heritage Days, on July 29, from 12 until 4 in the afternoon, we will have a trolley to take people on tours of South Milwaukee. Gert has set up a route with places to see from the trolley. The profits from the trolley will go to the Heritage Committee.

We, YOUR society, hope to make some money by selling ice cream at the museum. We will need HELP on the 29th from about 11 am until 5 pm selling ice cream, running the rummage sale, taking people through the house, selling spoons and tie tacs. If you can HELP, PLEASE call me at 762-2199. THANKS.

We also have pewter spoons to sell. They have the society logo on the top of the handle. They sell for \$5.00 a piece and are a very good buy. The tie tacs also have the logo and they sell for \$10.00 a piece. The spoons are here and can be bought at the society museum. The tacs should be here the second week of July.

We still need help house sitting for July and August. PLEASE, Gert and I would like to spend some Sundays away from house sitting.

A special thanks to all those who helped with the rummage sale. We did not do well, thanks to the bad weather.

We have also received many interesting things for the museum. Stop in and see them. Remember, PLEASE CALL AND HELP ON THE 29th OF JULY.

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

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

In 1849 James Moore, his wife Elizabeth Dean and several children came to Oak Creek from England. Moore bought a sawmill with water power from William Shaw, which was located on the west side of Chicago road on the creek. He built other buildings to the south of the creek and installed machinery for the manufacture of cotton goods.

This business did not prove to be successful and Moore changed back to the sawmill and manufactured furniture frames, wooden wheel hubs, veneer and wooden butter dishes.

In 1872 he turned his entire attention to the manufacture of baskets. After his death in 1888, the business was carried on by his two sons, Thomas and James, along with George Whitmore.

In 1899 the Moore Basket shop was taken over by J.F. Conant, and by 1904, where there had been a small building, where baskets were made entirely by hand, there was a great factory, with "all the modern machinery known to the trade already in operation and dozens of workmen."

The chief product of J.F. Conant Mfg. was laundry baskets, also market and fruit baskets. Conant also added a furniture veneer department, putting up a factory 110 feet by 40 feet for that purpose. Also constructed were a Bayley dry kiln, 100 feet long, a stock shed for the basket factory and a warehouse. In the winter of 1904, Conant intended to add a sawmill to work into lumber those logs not suitable for veneer.

A 1911 Souvenir booklet about South Milwaukee speaks of the Conant Mfg. Co. as "one of the most flourishing factories of the kind in the state", but by 1922 it had changed hands several times and was known as the Milwaukee Basket Company. A few years later the site of the factory was purchased by Milwaukee County and became part of Oak Creek.

WICKER AND SPLINT BASKETS

Baskets----few tools needed: an awl, utility knife, pliers. Wicker and splint baskets are made where reed, cane, willow, oak and ash grow. Splint baskets are the workhorses of basketry. They were used for farm produce, potatoes, coal, etc...

Materials are flat, thin strips of wood, usually ash or oak. The weaves are uncomplicated, plain weave, over one - under one. Splints from black and white ash trees are traditionally made by pounding a log that has been soaked over the winter to loosen the annual rings of growth. All splints must be soaked at least 20 minutes before working with them.

Oak, cut into 4 foot lengths with diameter of one foot, cut into wedges and boiled for a length of time to make it pliable. An opening is made with a chisle, hit with a mallet and an oak lath is pulled off by hand with a width of 2-3 inches, length 4 feet and thickness of less than 1/2 - 1/4 inch. It is then put in a machine that cuts the thickness in half 1/16 inch, then planed and smoothed in another

machine. (This used to be done all by hand with a draw knife.) The rims were made with single lengths of hazel, boiled until pliable, then fitted around a form. When the baskets dry out, the lath sets hard, making the whole construction very rigid and strong.

WILLOW BASKETS

For willow baskets the harvesting is done in the winter by hand. The willow is bundled and left until spring. The bark is removed in a brake, by pulling through it is stripped from the rod. They are then left to dry out in the open, sorted according to lengths.

Basket makers sit on a platform called a plank, the worker usually has a shallow seat, he puts his legs apart on either side of the lap board, a rectangular board which slopes away a gently incline. By his side are willow rods, which have been soaked to make them pliable. The work in all baskets proceeds from left to right. Wash baskets are made by randing, a weave for economy and speed. Only one weaver used in front of and behind each stake.

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

WORK AT THE MUSEUM: THIRD SATURDAY, JULY 21-- 10 AM TO 12 AM

Our sympathy to member Tony Molthen's Family.

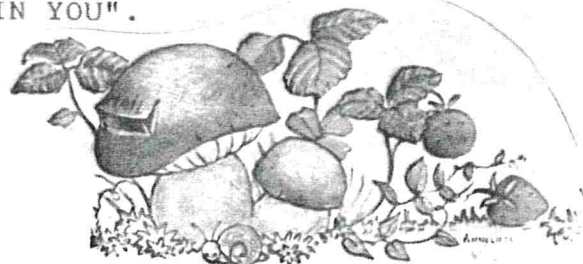
If you know of any members that are ill, please call Mary Magnuson, 762-9428 with the information, so she can send them a card.

RUMMAGE SALE-TOUR-PEWTER SPOONS-TIE TACS-ICE CREAM SALE-TROLLEY RIDES- ALL ON SUNDAY JULY 29- COME JOIN THE FUN. RUMMAGE ITEMS may be left on the back porch of the museum or call Rick Tangen. Your assistance is needed during this special day.

THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU

NOTICE BY-LAWS AMENDED: ALL MEETINGS WILL BE HELD ON THE 2ND MONDAYS.

POT LUCK - MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 5:30 PM, SENIOR CENTER, BRING A DISH TO SHARE WITH OUR OTHER GUESTS. OUR SPEAKER IS ONE OF OUR MEMBERS, MAY THIBEAUDEAU, AUTHOR OF BIOGRAPHY OF FREDERICK LAYTON AND HER NEWEST BOOK "I SHALL NOT DIE, I SHALL LIVE ON IN YOU".



SEND FAMILY HISTORY 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.

We are a little early with this newsletter because of the Heritage Days event.

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	\$4.00	Professional	\$10.00
Single	\$5.00	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 _____ \$ _____



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