



South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Avenue, 53172

NEWSLETTER January, 2003

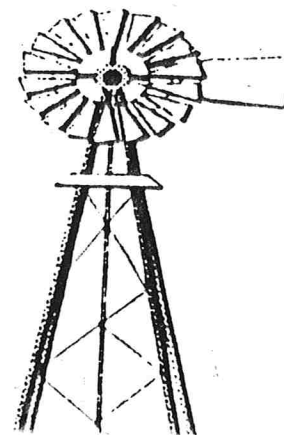
OFFICERS

President	Don Bulley	762-7605
V. President	Addie Becker	764-2118
Secretary	Joyce Bulley	762-7605
Treasurer	Ferdinand Brutvan	762-2073
Past President	Dean Marlowe	768-8790
Curator-Historian	Gertrude Endthoff	762-8852

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Term Expires)

Betty Chovanec	2005	762-3428
Cecelia Pomahac	2005	768-0167
Jewell Heise	2004	762-4650
Barb Mueller	2004	762-2712
Eunice Hahn	2003	764-3689
Dolores Kowalski	2003	762-4231

Barb Mueller is Sunshine Chairperson 762-2712



Dates to Remember: Sat. February 15 Annual Dinner at South Milwaukee Community Center, 5:30 Bar, 6:30 Dinner, Speaker: Supervisor Ryan McCue.

From the President:

It would be a lot easier to be enthusiastic about a brand new year if the year didn't start in January. Never the less, it does and the South Milwaukee Historical Society is off to a great start. The news about the Yellowstone Trail, which you will find in this newsletter, is quite exciting. I think we will hear a lot more about that in the coming year.

Our annual dinner is coming up on February 15th. The reservation form is in the newsletter. I urge you not to miss this evening. It promises to be interesting.

The Treasured Scenes Limited Edition Ornament sale with the "Seven Bridges" image sold out quickly. The joint project with the Association of Commerce produced a nice profit for both

organizations. Expect a repeat sale next Christmas with a different treasured South Milwaukee scene.

We learned last year that a former member of the South Milwaukee Mariners is researching articles on The History of Drum and Bugle Corps for a book. "Big Shows of the Past". Gertrude Endthoff has been locating and sending him information.

Don Bulley, President

We extend our sympathy to our Vice-President, Addie Becker and her family on the loss of her husband, Richard Becker, who died on Dec. 20 after a long struggle with cancer.

The South Milwaukee Historical Society would like to extend our wishes, condolences or congratulations to its members. If you know of someone who should be remembered please contact Sunshine Chairperson Barbara Mueller, 762-2712. If you leave a message please indicate if the card should be sent to their home, hospital or nursing home. The name of the hospital or nursing home would also be appreciated.

Curator's Corner by Gertrude Endthoff

Museum Visitations Call 762-8852 or 762-2519 Allow 45 minutes. The South Milwaukee Historical Society Museum is open for visitation by appointment. Visitors, school groups, scouts, families, clubs and individuals are welcome.

Museum Acquisitions:

One box of items has arrived but is not cataloged yet.

Membership mission: Make it your goal to recruit 2 new members this year. Share your newsletter with a friend.

1. 4 newsletters a year
 2. Access to a wonderful local museum
 3. Opportunities to participate in Heritage Week
 4. Two wonderful Pot Luck dinners a year
 5. Christmas at the museum
 6. Annual dinner in February
 7. An opportunity to participate in the community
-



South Milwaukee and the Yellowstone Trail

By: *Nels J. Monson*

From 1915 to 1930 South Milwaukee was a noted stopping point on one of America's first transcontinental auto routes, a 3,754 mile long amalgamation of roads known as the Yellowstone Trail. In the early 1900's, with automobile travel still in its infancy, there was no numbering system of roadways. Long distance routes were known by names instead. Standardized maps were non-existent at the time and the roads were identified by using colored markers to show the way. Hailed as being "A Good Road from Plymouth Rock to Puget Sound," the Yellowstone Trail began as a 25-mile stretch of road in South Dakota. In October 1912, the Yellowstone Trail Association was formed by J. W. Parmley, with its headquarters in Minneapolis, Minnesota. By 1917 the Yellowstone Trail had grown to become the main auto route for those travelling from the East Coast to Yellowstone National Park and the Pacific Northwest. While the Association did not build roads, it did lobby local governments in towns along the Trail to help promote the fledgling automobile tourism industry by building and maintaining "good roads." Trail towns paid the Association a small fee or "assessment" to help cover advertising expenses and upkeep of the Trail. Many towns along the Yellowstone Trail had a representative known as a "Trailman", whose duties included providing information to travelers and supervising the marking of the Trail with its distinctive yellow circle and arrow signs or yellow painted rocks. In the 1919 Yellowstone Trail travel brochure, Trailmen were described as being "...businessmen of standing in their communities, and will always be glad to welcome tourists and serve them in any reasonable manner."

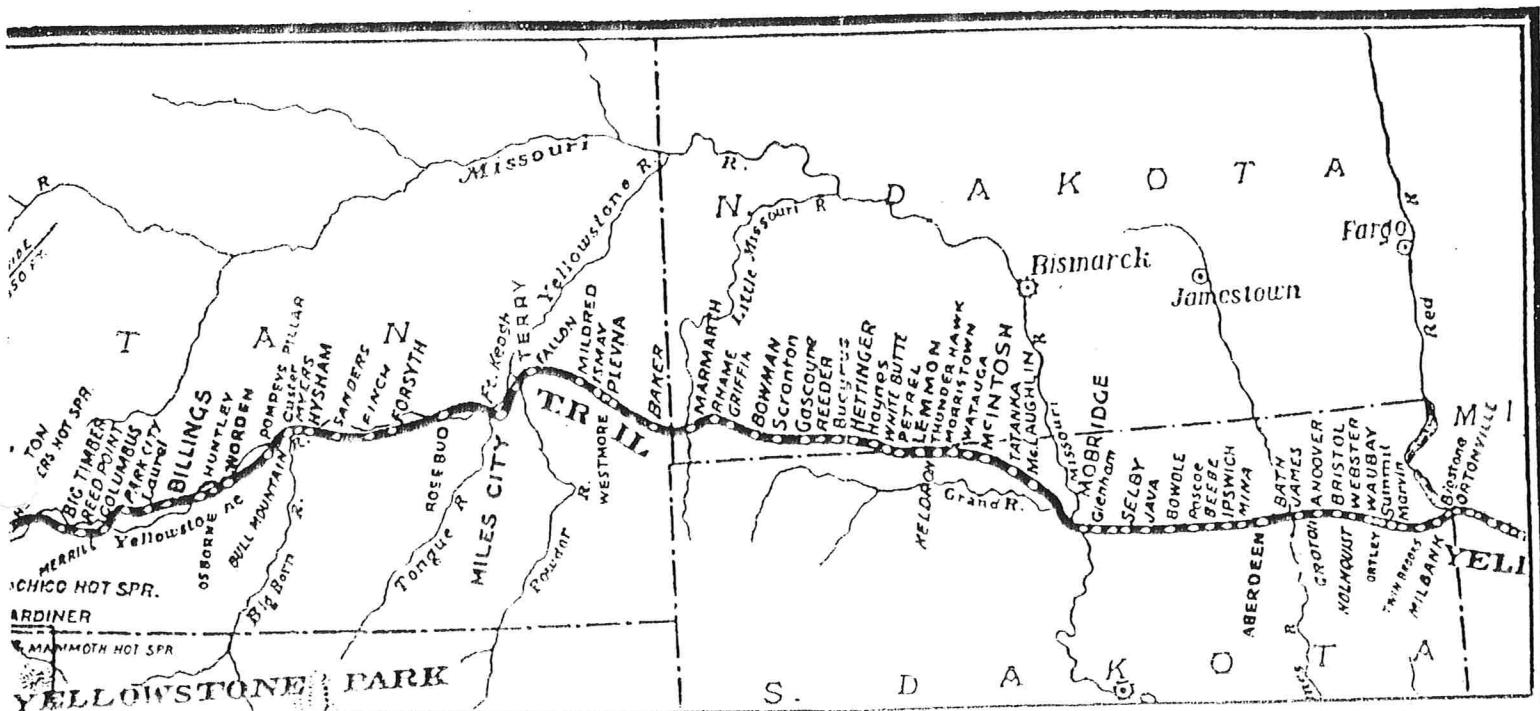
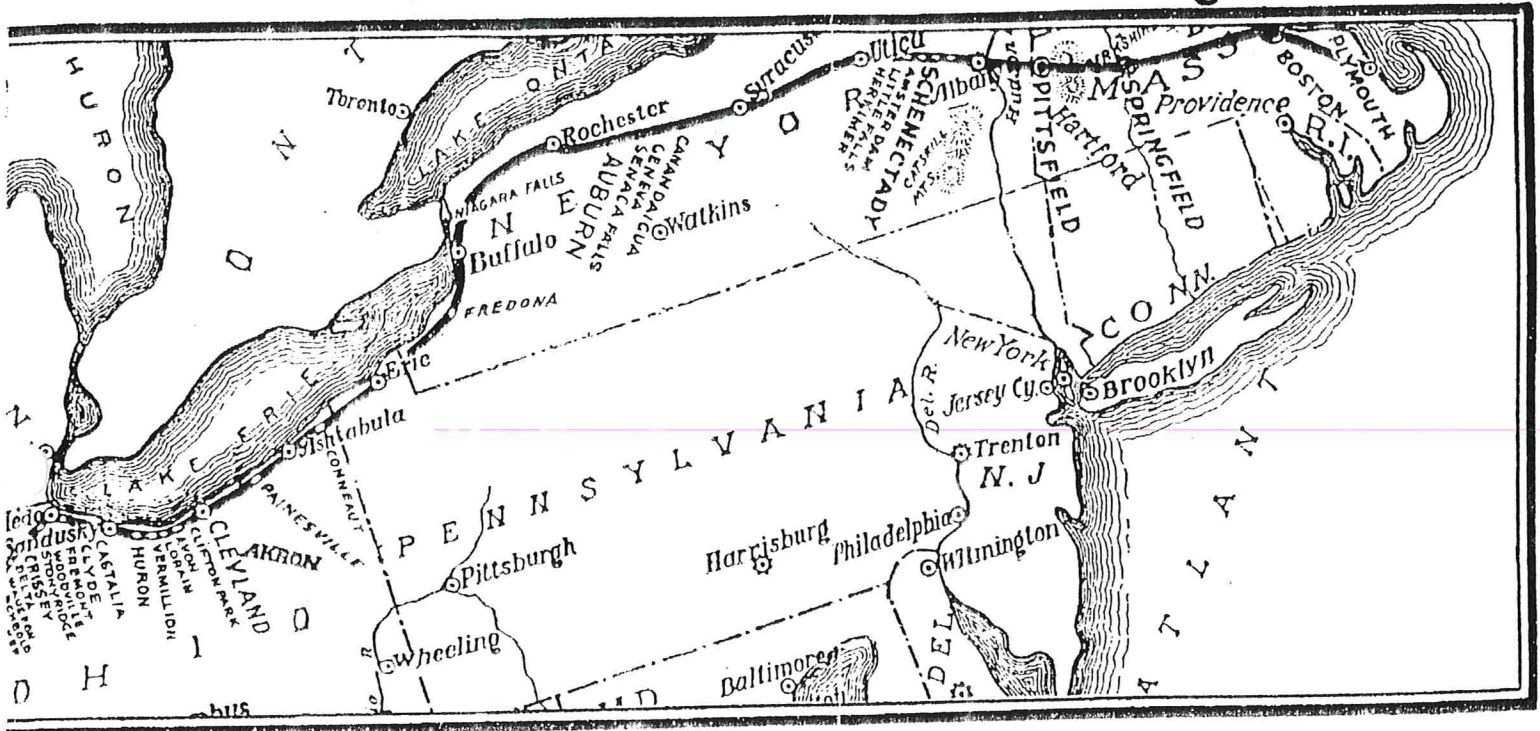
There were still dirt roads in South Milwaukee when the Yellowstone Trail first came through town in 1915. The Trail followed South Chicago Avenue to Marquette, then northward along 12th Avenue to Milwaukee Avenue, where the Trail turned east through the business district before turning north again at 10th Avenue and exiting the city via North Chicago Avenue. City leaders were quick to realize the importance of improving street conditions to meet the increased traffic demands. Drainage was improved and in 1917 the city purchased a new steamroller to help with road maintenance. The intersections of Milwaukee Avenue at 10th and 12th Avenues were widened, and new, gas-filled ornamental streetlights replaced the old magnetite arc lights along Milwaukee Avenue. Local "Trailmen," such as R.H. Knoll, Leo Joerg, and Charles Franke routinely appeared before the South Milwaukee Common Council. On May 21, 1921 the city paid a \$50 "assessment" to the Yellowstone Trail Association.

On September 4, 1920 South Milwaukee's newspaper, The Journal reported the opening of a new, modern design Deep Rock filling station at 10th and Rawson, noting, "Few cities have more through traffic of automobile tourists than ours. An artistic filling station, situated as this is on the main thoroughfare, advertises our city which takes a civic pride in its appearance." Later, The Journal would print "South Milwaukee is especially favored above many cities with an unusual number of tourists."





from directly west from Spokane, through Waterville, Wenatchee and the Blewett Pass to Cle Elum. During its life, the Trail followed roads which were graded dirt, gravel and macadam, and, in some areas, paved with concrete or asphalt. As the roads were improved, hundreds of small changes in route were made. Dozens or even hundreds of sharp corners were rounded, rail crossings were eliminated, and sections were rerouted to take advantage of better constructed roads. The building of dams forced the Trail out of river bottom routes in some places.

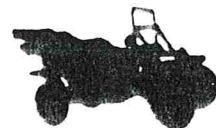
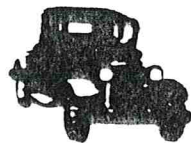


in effort to deal with the influx of travelers, in March 1921 the Wisconsin Highway Commission asked the city to establish a campground for "automobile tourists." That summer, the Grant Park Tourist Camp was opened, located where the Wil-O-Way Recreation Center sits today. Due to its superb location, the free Tourist Camp soon became very popular with travelers. Park superintendent Frederick C. Wulff reported that 247 cars carrying 850 people stayed at the campground that first year. Attendance peaked in 1929 with 2,502 registered guests. Then came the Depression, and attendance began to dwindle. However, the Tourist Camp managed to remain open until sometime around 1948.

Located across the street from the Railroad Depot, The Hotel Rogers was South Milwaukee's premier hotel during the Yellowstone Trail's heyday. Listed as South Milwaukee's "Tourists' Headquarters" in the 1927 city directory, the hotel cited "Special Attention Given to Auto Parties" in its advertisements.

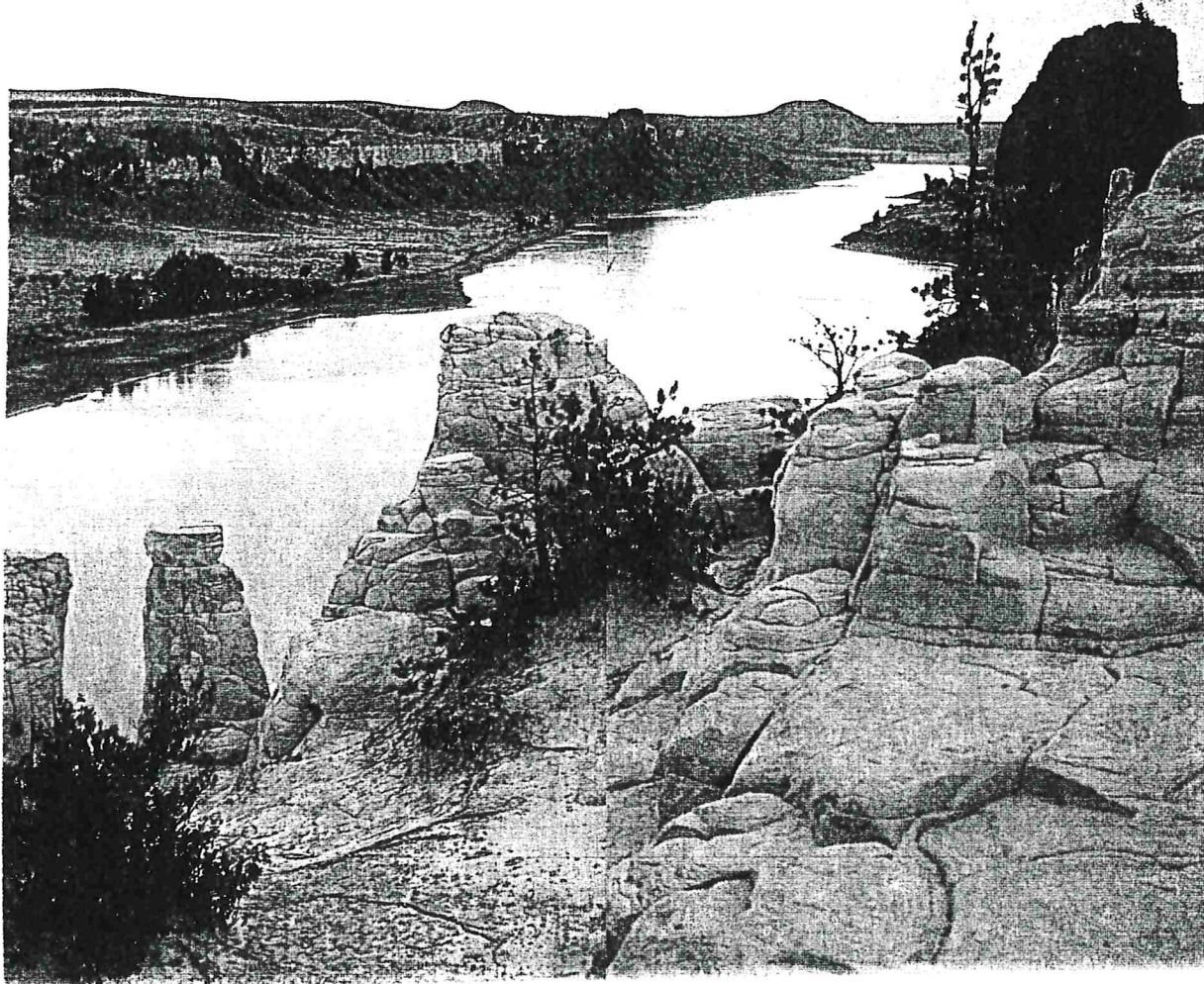
In 1918, Wisconsin became the first state in the nation to begin numbering its highways. By 1926, the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) had established the now familiar US Route numbering system (like the famous US Route 66). Standardized state maps had also replaced the need for the associations of "named" roads and their colored markers. When the Depression came, many towns could no longer afford to pay their "assessments." In 1930 the Yellowstone Trail Association closed its doors.

Today, visitors to South Milwaukee can find many of the old buildings along the Yellowstone Trail still in use. Sadly, others such as the Hotel Rogers, no longer exist. Still, if one would stand at the corner of 10th and Milwaukee Avenues to gaze down the road once traveled by so many, so long ago, you can almost hear the sounds of the "Flivvers" and "Tin-Lizzies" as they sputter past.



ELDERLY

While working for an organization that delivers lunches to elderly shut-ins, I used to take my four-year-old daughter on my afternoon rounds. She was unfailingly intrigued by the various appliances of old age, particularly the canes, walkers and wheelchairs. One day I found her staring at a pair of false teeth soaking in a glass. As I braced myself for the inevitable barrage of questions, she merely turned and and whispered. "The tooth fairy will never believe this!"



White Cliffs of the Missouri River
Commemorating Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery
1804 - 2004

SCHOOL

A little girl had just finished her first week of school. "I'm just wasting my time," she said to her mother. "I can't read, I can't write and they won't let me talk!"

Annual Dinner Reservations for South Milwaukee Community Center, February 15th, 5:30 Cocktails, 6:30 Dinner
Chicken kiev, baked potato, beans almonline, lemon pie

Name _____
Cost per person is \$15.00, Number of people attending _____
Reservation deadline is February 10.
I'm including my dues of _____



Senior, \$6.00; Single, \$8.00; Family, \$10.00;
Life, \$100.00; Business, \$15.00;

Make checks payable to South Milwaukee Historical Society.
Send membership dues to Treasurer, Fred Brutvan, 729 Monroe Ave.,
South Milwaukee, WI 53172 or Membership Chairperson, Addie
Becker, 526 Sycamore Ave., South Milwaukee, WI 53172 (414)764-
2118 Donations are always welcome.

Wanted--Jelly Jars with covers--Call Jewell Heise, 762-4650.
SAVE grocery receipts from Piggly Wiggly for Historical Society.
Mail to Jewell Heise, 1822 Manitoba Ave., South Milwaukee, WI
53172. Thanks for the added effort.

Newsletter published quarterly in Jan., Apr., July, and Nov.
News Editor: Lois L. Schreiter
Printing by Gertrude Endthoff
Labels by Stephen F. Schreiter

South Milwaukee Historical Society
717 Milwaukee Avenue
South Milwaukee, WI 53172

