

South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Av

South Milwaukee, Wi. 53172

P R E S E R V I N G T H E P R O U D P A S T

**FOUNDED
MARCH
1972**

Founders

- Dennis Rankin
- Penny Rankin

Initial Directors:

- George Hook
- Mary McCarrier
- Bruce Rayeske
- Dora Lee Szewczuga
- William Domoe
- Lillian Dishong
- Chester Grobschmidt

OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT	ROBERT PFEIFFER	764-1135
V. PRESIDENT	LOIS SCHREITER	762-5214
SECRETARY	SUE ZIAREK	520-1959
TREASURER	RICHARD RAATZ	761-3941

BOARD OF CURATORS

JUDY BALESTREIRI
RICHARD THINNES
STEVE SCHREITER, GENEALOGY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

	(TERM EXPIRES):	
ADDIE BECKER	(2010)	764-2118
JAMES D ROTHSCHADL	(2010)	766-1633
BARBARA SCHOUTEN	(2010)	764-2315
ESTELLE HAACK	(2011)	762-8124
CAROL BRABY	(2012)	870-7857
BARB MUELLER	(2009)	762-2712
SUNSHINE CHAIRPERSON		



HONORARY BOARD MEMBERS
JEWELL HEISE,
BETTY CHOVANEC
EUNICE HAHN, CECIL POMAHAC

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

On behalf of the officers and board of the South Milwaukee Historical Society I want to wish all of you a very happy and healthy new year.

Thank you to all who responded to the survey. At the December Board meeting we discussed several ideas that were a result of the survey. We are looking at doing a bus trip to the State Historical Society museum and other museums in the Madison area, probably in late spring or early summer. Watch the newsletter for details.

The Board also decided to move our monthly meetings to the South Milwaukee Public Library. We invite all Society members to participate in the meetings. We will schedule programs from time to time and even provide refreshments. We are also still looking for people to act as guides for tours at the museum. If you're interested please contact any board member. Training will be provided to volunteers.

Mark your calendar for Saturday, February 13th. Our Annual Dinner will be at Pat's Oak Manor this year. Details are on the coming events page. We were lucky enough to get Jessica Michna as Mary Todd Lincoln for our entertainment. Some of you may remember her as Eleanor Roosevelt at the Library's anniversary dinner in September.

Hope to see you at the dinner and at upcoming board meetings!

Bob Pfeiffer

P.S. From the Editor/Secretary:

I've been working on an electronic version of the newsletter and think I might have the bugs worked out but need some volunteers to give it a try. If you'd be willing to receive future newsletters electronically send an email to sziaek@wi.rr.com with the word 'SUBSCRIBE' in the subject line by the end of January. I'll send you the winter newsletter as a test run and, assuming it works, you'll get all future newsletters by email.

GO GREEN! And save the historical society some money at the same time.

Sue Ziarek

A JEWEL FOUND IN THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FILES

The new Board of Curators is reviewing and updating our files. Found in a drawer with no supporting information were 3 pages on letter sized paper

Letter of Augusta Higgins

The following is a letter written by Mrs. Augusta Higgins, the first white child born in Oak Creek

"Uncle Jack Fowle, Moses Rawson and Mr. Higgins broke the first twigs and cut the first trees that started the town of Oak Creek. Mr. Elishu Higgins left the town of Franklin, Berkshire County, in the spring of 1835 with horses and wagon, to find a home in the west. The first place he came to was Chicago, a very small town then, surrounded with mud and water. He thought this is no place for him, so he drove on to Milwaukee, which he liked very much, yet he wanted a farm. He found work and stayed there all summer, then he sent for his wife in the fall. Mrs. Higgins came with her daughter Martha, two years old, and her brother, Moses Rawson. Mrs. Higgins and her brother came down the lakes from Buffalo in a steamer. Mr. Higgins found a home for his wife in a hotel owned and run by Mr. Chiles. When she arrived she saw something she had never seen before, five hundred Indians out for a dance. When asked if she was afraid, she said "No, I haven't done anything to them.". Mr. Higgins left the town of Milwaukee with a camping outfit, to look for the farm he so much desired. He met Mr. John Fowle, and they journeyed and camped out together. They came to a little creek, which Mr. Higgins called oak Creek, ten miles from Milwaukee. Here they were well pleased, and both took a farm. Wild animals were plentiful, mountain lions, panthers they called them, wild cats, timber wolves and black bears. The animals never troubled them much, nor did the Indians. The first thing Mr. Higgins did was to chop down a big tree for a bed by it's friendly side, as did Mr. Fowle. The timber was very thick, and the people could hardly walk thru on account.

The schoolhouse used to stand between the Congregational church and Mrs. Electa Mansfield's house on North Chicago Avenue. Then the school was made into a house and moved up the Chicago Road. This house is standing. Then the old part of the High School was built in 1871, and the present building in 1893.

Mr. E. Higgins built the first mill on the Creek, but the dam having been carried away in 1852, the building was abandoned. Before the erection of the first mill, the people ground their meal either in a coffee mill, or in a groove cut in a hard wood log.

The people made their own syrup and sugar from the maple trees which grew near the creek"

Available at the South Milwaukee historical Society Museum
Images of America, South Milwaukee, a picture history book
 By Nels Monson and Dean S. Marlow, Jr — \$20
Then to Now by Gert Endthof — \$10

FOR
SALE

Genealogy by Steve Schreiter

One hour of genealogy for anyone with a new \$10.00 membership. Basic information forms can be found at our website (www.southmilwaukee.org/historical_society) and should be mailed to Addie Becker with your dues.

TIDS AND BITS

A very belated *thank you* to garden volunteer Alex Foyer and to Pat & John Bordak who hosted a luncheon for the garden tour participants this past June. Your hard work and generosity were appreciated and we apologize for missing you in the Fall newsletter.

The Christmas Tag & Bake Sale was a success! We had a wonderful selection of home baked goodies and tables full of gently used Christmas items. Thank you to everyone who donated or purchased. A special thanks to Judy Balestreiri and Dave & Vicki Bartovsevitich for your 'last minute' help! If you're still sorting out your Christmas decorations please keep us in mind. Contact Sue at 520-1959 or Carol at 870-7857 if you have any gently used items you'd be willing to donate for our sale next year. We'll even come pick them up.

Happy Birthday Grant Park! Grant Park is 100 years old!. Our community is blessed to have Grant Park in our midst. It was the first county park and is the second largest. It also has the most wild flowers of all the county parks and of course the magnificent seven bridges walking trail. Look for the brochure "100 things to do in Grant Park", (written by our Vice President Lois Schreiter!), at area locations.

DON'T FORGET...

... to renew your membership for 2010!
If we don't receive your renewal by March 1st we'll have no choice but to remove your name from the membership list.

Our condolences to the family of Dolores Kowalski who passed away in December. She was a long time member of the historical society. Back in the early years, when Dottie heard the Historical Society had acquired an old house to serve as a museum, she put her special skills to work making curtains for all the rooms! Through the years she contributed much more to the Society, often serving as an officer and becoming one of the first Honorary Board members. She will be missed by all of us.

The 3rd Annual Holiday Tea, jointly sponsored by the Historical Society & the Friends of the Mill Pond was a big success. We served a delicious lunch to 84 people at the beautifully decorated Grant Park Golf Clubhouse. Thanks go out to J.B. Bulley (Mrs Claus); Mary Beth & Katie Garrett (Musical Interlude); Scott & Carol Paulson and Yukari Aoto (Past Perfect); Shari Franz (Fixx Coffee House); Greg's Soup-er Desserts (Catering); Patrick Garrett (Helper/Server); Jennifer Stolpa (Photographer); & Sue Ziarek and Carol Braby for their tea pot donations, as well as everyone who donated prizes for our raffles. Special thanks to the Friends of the Mill Pond for their elegant decorations and the Milwaukee County Parks crew for helping our event run smoothly. New this year was a bake sale and thanks also go out to everyone who donated those tasty treats. A good time was had by all and we're looking forward to the Fourth Annual Holiday Tea in 2010!

The Historical Society would like to extend our wishes, condolences or congratulations to its members. Please contact sunshine chairperson Barbara Mueller at 762-2712. Be sure to leave a detailed message or a number where she can contact you.

WHAT A GREAT DEAL!! ONLY \$10.00

Historical Society membership form: 2010

Name: _____ Date: _____

Street Address

City

Zip Code

Phone: (Day) _____ (Eve) _____

Type : _____ Amount enclosed: _____

Make checks payable to South Milwaukee Historical Society and mail to Addie Becker, 526 Sycamore Ave., South Milwaukee, WI 53172

Annual Dinner Reservations: ___ attending @ \$25 each, \$ _____ enclosed

Dues:

- Single—\$10.00;
- Family—\$15.00;
- Individual Life—\$100;
- Business—\$25

Due to the increased cost of postage & printing, we can no longer send newsletters to members who are not current with their dues. Don't let this be your last issue! Fill out the membership form and mail it in TODAY!!

COMING EVENTS

We're moving!! Well.....sort of. Starting in January, our monthly meetings will be held at the South Milwaukee Library. We'd like to invite ALL our members to attend. As added enticement, we'll be serving refreshments! Please come join us.

Feb 8 MONTHLY MEETING

6:00 PM at the South Milwaukee Library

Feb 13 HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL DINNER

Pat's Oak Manor, 1804—15th Avenue in South Milwaukee

Cocktails at 5:30PM; Dinner at 6:30PM; \$25 per person

Entertainment will be provided by Jessica Michna as Mary Todd Lincoln.

Reservations appreciated by February 1.

(Use the membership form on page 3 to sign up and don't forget to renew your membership while you're at it!)

Monthly Board meetings are held on the second Monday of each month

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