

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 Dornoe
- 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 BALESTRIERI	
	RICHARD THINNES	
	STEVE SCHREITER, GENEALOGY	
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (TERM EXPIRES):		
	ESTELLE HAACK (2011)	762-8124
	CAROL BRABY (2012)	870-7857
	ADDIE BECKER (2013)	764-2118
	JB BULLEY (2013)	762-7605
	BARBARA SCHOUTEN (2013)	764-2315
	BARB MUELLER (2013)	762-2712
	SUNSHINE CHAIRPERSON	



HONORARY BOARD MEMBER
BETTY CHOVANEC

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I hope all of you are enjoying the fine spring weather.

**INSIDE THIS
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The Board has been working hard on a number of projects. We are getting bids to replace the boiler at the museum and possibly adding air conditioning so that the museum can be used in the summer time. We are also digitizing a number of our photographs in an effort to preserve them as well as for insurance purposes.

Lois is working hard on the 4th annual garden tour in June. We are looking for volunteers to help with the tour. South Milwaukee has some very beautiful gardens. I hope you will participate and enjoy them.

Don't forget the potluck dinner on May 14th. This is also our annual meeting in which we elect officers.

Have a great summer. Don't forget to join us the second Monday of each month at the Library for our membership/board meeting. The meetings start at 6 pm and are held in the second floor meeting room.

Bob Pfeiffer

P.S. From the Editor/Secretary:

Help?? Do you have a memory of South Milwaukee you'd be willing to share with our readers? How about an interesting picture of a place or event from our city's past that we could use. Maybe you'd like to try your hand at writing a short article for the newsletter? Give me a call or drop me a line. I'd love to hear from you. And, as always....If you'd like to sign up for the electronic newsletter just send an email to sziarek@wi.rr.com and I'll add you to the list.

Sue Ziarek

BASKETS-FROM SHOPS TO FACTORIES

ORIGINAL ARTICLE BY DR HAROLD HEIN, DDS; EDITED BY JEANNE BOCK

This article originally appeared, in four parts, in the 1990 Historical Society Newsletters. Our curators have recently been doing some detective work trying to pinpoint the original site of this basket factory and we're hoping that by reprinting a portion of that article we might unearth some new clues! Read on.....

Perhaps one of the best-remembered basket factories was the Moore, later the Moore-Whitmore Basket Factory that was located on the south side of Oak Creek, west of Chicago Avenue and just south of what is now Parkway Drive.

In 1849, James Moore, his wife, Elizabeth Dean and several children came to Oak Creek from England. Moore purchased a sawmill with waterpower 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 Moore turned his entire attention to the manufacturing of baskets. After his death in 1888, his two sons, Thomas and James Moore, along with George Whitmore, carried on the business.

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, and included 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.

Today we have a first hand report from someone who was there : Harold W. Hein.

"Several of the fifth and sixth graders at the new high school, now the Junior High, worked afterschool at the South Milwaukee Basket Factory. We wove the strips in and out of the ribs and would do eight baskets by six o'clock, making five cents for each basket, forty cents an afternoon. After we had woven the market basket, full-time workers there nailed on the top edge and attached the handles on the ends.

One day I came to work and slapped Joe ??? on the back causing him to swallow a mouthful of nails. The workers kept a mouthful of nails in their mouths and with a magnetic hammer would touch the hammer to their lips attaching a nail, which then was nailed into the wood basket rim. Joe chased (us) all over the shop. He was so mad and of course I felt terrible. I hardly slept that night, but the next afternoon on getting to work I found Joe there working as usual."

If anyone has any information or stories or better yet...pictures of this area that might show the basket factory, please contact Steve Schreiter at 762-5214.

MAY POT LUCK MEETING



MONDAY, MAY 14TH

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

1111 S CHICAGO AV, AT 5:30PM.

THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY
TO GET TOGETHER WITH
FELLOW SOCIETY MEMBERS

BRING A DISH TO PASS!



We received this at the Museum and thought we'd pass it on to our members. Those who attended in the past said it was a fun experience!

Treasures of the Great Lakes Marine Collection

Central Library, 814 W. Wisconsin Avenue
Krikelas Room, 2nd floor

Tuesdays 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Mar. 20 May 15 July 17 Sept. 18 Nov. 20
Apr. 17 June 19 Aug. 21 Oct. 16 Dec. 18



Learn about a different aspect of the Milwaukee Public Library's Great Lakes Marine Collection each month. Of special interest to divers and genealogists, the program is free and open to anyone interested in learning more about Great Lakes history.

Upon reasonable notice, efforts will be made to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities. Make requests to the Library Director's Office at (414) 286-3021, 286-2794 (FAX), 286-3062 (TTY), or mail to Central Library, 814 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee, WI 53233 Attn: Accommodation Request. 2012



UPCOMING EVENTS

5th Annual Historical Society Garden Tour

**Your chance to peak into the hidden treasures of
Eight South Milwaukee Gardens**

**Saturday, June 30
10:00-3:00**

**Tickets are \$8 in advance;
\$10 day of the tour**

Available at :

**Parkway Floral
1001 Milwaukee Av in South Milwaukee**

**By calling Lois Schreiter
at 762-5214**

**At the Historical Society Museum
(717 Milwaukee Av)
on the day of the tour**

Tickets go on sale June 1st

TIDS AND BITS

The Downtown South Milwaukee Farmers Market will open on Thursday, May 24. As in the past we'd like to have a table there once each month. Lois Schreiter has signed up to staff the table in June BUT...we need people to help if we want to have a table at the market in later months.. If you would be willing to spend even an hour helping out please contact Bob Pfeiffer at 768-8195.

We would really like to encourage more of our members to get involved in the Society's activities, whether it's staffing the table at the Farmer's Market, helping with the open house at the Museum, working with the curators to sort thru files, writing an article for the newsletter, taking tickets at the garden tour or just attending the monthly meetings. This is YOUR Historical Society. To make it successful we need people! Not sure what we're all about? Join us at the Pot Luck meeting in May. It's the perfect place to check us out.

For the past couple years I've been asking members to switch to the electronic version of the newsletter stressing the benefits to the Society. Maybe it's time I pointed out the benefits to YOU. So... I put the newsletter together on my computer, print out a copy, then make a master Xerox copy which is what I use to print the ones I mail out. What you get in the mail is 3rd generation and no matter how good the printer or Xerox machine I use, each time I make a copy the quality deteriorates. What I see on screen just can't compare to the final paper copy I mail out. Remember the newspaper clipping about the blizzard in the Winter newsletter? People who got the electronic version could actually READ the original text that went with it! And the pictures from the Holiday Tea? They could practically count the sprinkles on the bake sale cookies and zoom in on individual ornaments on the Christmas Tree. If you have an email address I strongly encourage you to give the electronic version a try. I can send you a test sample of the newsletter. If you like it, wonderful! I'll add you to the mailing list. If you don't like it, no harm, no foul. I'll gladly continue sending you a paper copy. Please...Think about it....

sziarek@wi.rr.com Just ask for a test run.

This year the Regional Conference will be held at the Franklin Library on July 14. We'll try to publish more details in the summer newsletter for anyone who may be interested in attending.

Our thanks to Tanya Nahaie Ghanad who recently finished digitally documenting the Museum! She hopes to be able to start her next project for us, digitally restoring at risk photos & documents, in the near future.

We're still looking for 2 more gardens for the 4th Annual Garden Tour the end of June. Do you know anyone in South Milwaukee with a garden who might be interested in showing it off? Or maybe you're just seen a really neat looking yard while wandering around town. Contact Lois at 762-5214 if you have a lead. If you don't know who's yard you've been admiring just give Lois the address. She'll find a way to contact them!

How about volunteering to work at the garden tour? One of the perks is a pre-tour the week before that includes a luncheon, usually in one of those wonderful gardens. Again, contact Lois if you'd like more information or to sign up.

The annual dinner in February was a big hit. Unfortunately, our staff photographer, Lee Loveall, was recovering from shoulder surgery so couldn't attend. That means no pictures to share. The good news is Lee is recovering nicely so we hope to have lots of garden tour pictures for the summer newsletter!

According to the HVAC Committee we're very close to choosing a new heating system for the Museum. They're holding a special meeting this month to finalize their recommendation. Once the contract is awarded the work will only take a couple days to complete. Then it's on to the air conditioning. That's a little trickier since the Museum does not have forced air heating but they've found a system that sounds like it will work for us. We'll keep you posted as the project progresses.

Rhubarb season is fast approaching. That means time to make more Strawberry Rhubarb "Jewell Jam". We're always on the look out for jelly jars with lids. If you have any you'd like to donate please contact Lois.

We'd like to thank Lakeshore Photography for their recent donation of many South Milwaukee Bay Mists. The donation included many of the newer copies which we didn't have. Richard Thinner, one of our curators, got them all in order and they're available at the Museum. We still don't have a complete collection so if you have an old Bay Mist you'd like to donate please contact any one of our curators. Their names & numbers are on the front page of the newsletter.

We're still looking for more gently used Christmas items. If cleaning out the attic is one of your summer projects, please keep us in mind if you run across anything we could use. But please remember...no broken knick-knacks or strings of lights with missing bulbs or overly weathered outdoor decorations. We need *gently used, quality* items. Contact Sue (520-1959) or Carol (870-7857) to arrange a pick up or drop off.

Remember...The May meeting is when we elect new officers & board members. If you'd be interested in running, be sure to join us at the Pot Luck!

COMING EVENTS

Our monthly meetings are now held at the South Milwaukee Library. We'd like to invite ALL our members to attend. As an added incentive, we'll be serving refreshments. UPCOMING MEETINGS ARE: June 11; July 9; August 13

May 14 Spring Pot Luck Meeting

First Congregational Church, 1111 S Chicago Av in South Milwaukee
Dinner at 5:30. Bring a dish to pass!

June 30 5th Annual Garden Tour

Look in side for details!

Sept 10 Fall Pot Luck Meeting

Watch for details in the Summer Newsletter

Preserving the Proud Past



58172121504

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