



South Milwaukee Historical Society

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717 Milwaukee Ave, South Milwaukee, WI

Meetings are held the second Monday in even numbered months at the Museum. Please join us to learn more about South Milwaukee's history.

The Museum is open on the third Saturday of each month from 10am to 3pm. You may also call 414-520-1285 for questions or to arrange for a private tour.

From The President's Pen—April, 2024

Hello once again!

It has been a few months since our last letter. We (Sue and Judy) have been hard at work both here and at the South Milwaukee Industrial Museum with new displays. There is a fun display at our museum on the candy stores in South Milwaukee. I wish we had many of the candies, etc. in the display for sale. They bring back many memories of my youth. (Boy! That goes back to the 40's and 50's! Holy Cow!)

We have also had our handyman, Brian Boll, doing work in the house, putting in shelves, work in the kitchen, etc. He does excellent work!

We are working on our summer talks – nothing for sure yet but keep your eye on our website for information. I hope you use the site as often as you can. We have a new phone number (414-520-1285) and new hours.

We also need new members and volunteers to help keep your society at full strength and open to new ideas to preserve our museum and society for future generations. That is so important! You can help by getting yourself and your family and friends involved. Help us to fulfill our mission to protect our past and preserve our promising future!

Thank you so much!

Richard Thinner – President

Preserving our Proud Past since 1972

Founders: Dennis Rankin, Penny Rankin

Initial Directors: George Hook, Mary McCarrier, Bruce Rayeske, Dora Lee Szewczuga, William Domoe, Lilia Dishong, Chester Grobschmidt

The power of social media

Just 4 days after putting out a call on Facebook for a Brownie uniform, our little mannequin was good to go thanks to Society member Lynn Meidam. Lynn donated her uniform from 1961 at Rawson School. She even helped get it on our little girl which is not as easy as you might think!

In March, Cheryl Orlando from the Cudahy Historical Society heard about our new Brownie and brought us a Brownie handbook from 1957. It belonged to her Aunt Viola (Dolly) Gerschke.



Our little mannequin really wants to become a Girl Scout but she's a bit too young! Anyone have a Brownie uniform they'd be willing to donate to the Historical Society to start her on her journey?



**A HUGE
THANK YOU**
to Lynn and Cheryl for their generosity and to Al Ladwig for sharing the story about his grandfather and Columbia Park. If you have a story you'd like to share please reach out. We'd love to hear from you!

What is it ???



Stop by during an open house to check it out in person



What was it???



It's a hair waver! Popular in the 1930s to get that famous flapper hair style.

Where Was Columbia Park—by Al Ladwig

When I was a young lad, my grandfather, Ed Ladwig used to come over to our house on Menomonee Avenue and reminisce about his boyhood in South Milwaukee. He was born in 1889, and he moved to South Milwaukee with his family in 1894. One of the things he talked about was playing football when he was young. Unfortunately I did not ask enough questions to get the full story.

The recent digitization of the SM newspapers gave me the opportunity to do some research on the subject. Beginning in the fall of 1900 there are stories in the paper about the high school boys playing football at Columbia Park. Of course my grandfather was too young to be in high school in 1900, and he told me that he had dropped out of school after the third grade.

An October 1904 story caught my interest.

“The Rivals of South Milwaukee have organized for the season and won a game last Saturday 10-0. The Rivals line up as follows.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Joe Brings, right tackle | Daniel Davis, fullback |
| John Pederson, left tackle | Newton Shepard, left halfback and captain |
| Ray Grover, right guard | Earl Ingalls, right halfback |
| Ed Ladwig, left guard | Harry Davis, right end and manager |
| Loyd Clare, center | Larry Ward, left end “ |

The left guard was my grandfather, but, a subsequent story about the high school football team listed a different set of players. Thus I assume this story referred to a town team rather than the high school team.

In 1907 this story appeared.

“South Milwaukee’s first football for the season was played at the baseball park last Saturday afternoon. The local team was made up of a few of the high school boys and others picked up around town.” I would suspect he played in this game.

The “baseball park” seems to refer to Columbia Park. This and several subsequent stories make a similar reference. So where was Columbia Park?

After scouring the newspapers with no luck, I tried the SM Library where I had a similar disappointment. Finally I contacted the Milwaukee County Historical Society where I located a 1910 Sanborn Fire Map of South Milwaukee.

Here is what I learned from the map. Columbia Mineral Wool Company moved to South Milwaukee in the 1890s and was located between 9th Avenue and the RR tracks a couple of blocks south of Marquette. Just north of the plant is an open field. When I was a young man, we called this baseball field Idlehour Park. Clearly this space was called Columbia Park and was used for baseball and football games in the early part of the 20th century.

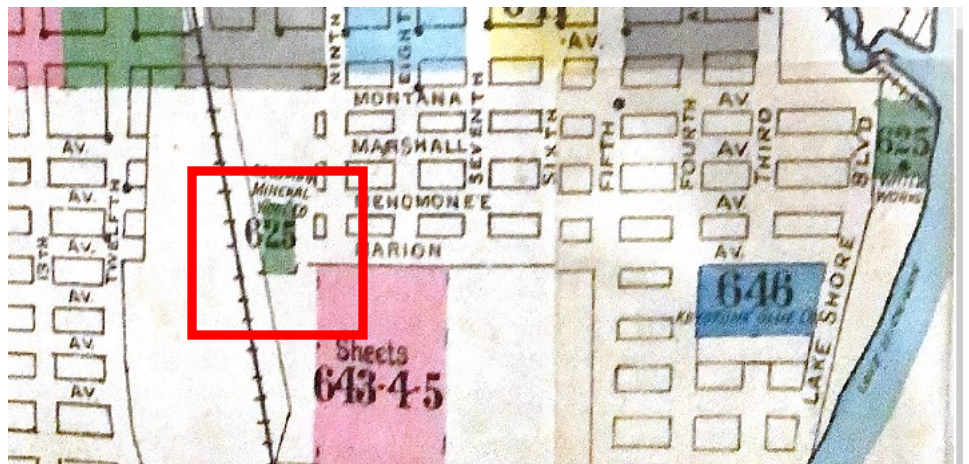
In the 1950s the first South Milwaukee Little League Park was built in this space.

The South Milwaukee Public Library and the South Milwaukee Historical Society both now have copies of the 1910 Sanborn Maps if needed for research.

For those of you wondering....

Sanborn fire maps were designed to assist fire insurance agents in determining the degree of hazard associated with a particular property. They were published by the Sanborn Map Co.

The Columbia Mineral Wool Co. is boxed in red. It began operating here in 1892 as the Standard Mineral Wool Co. Interestingly, there were quite a few fires at the factory but they always rebuilt and continued to produce mineral wool insulation into the late 1950s.



Save the date!

2024 South Milwaukee Garden Club & Historical Society Garden Tour

- *Local artisans sprinkled throughout the gardens selling their handcrafted garden related items and more!*
- *Guest musicians at each of the gardens.*
- *Raffle prizes and other surprises on the tour!*

& Art Fair

Saturday, June 22, 2024

Garden Tour 9am-2pm

The museum will be open that day selling tour tickets & raffle tickets, but you do not need to go on the tour to visit us and check out our gardens!

Reminder to New Members...

Your membership comes with one hour of free genealogy research. Contact Steve Schreiter at 414-762-5214 for details.

Tours

The Museum is available for tours to Scout Groups, Civic Organizations and School Groups. It is also available to individuals for research or tours. For more information or to arrange a tour, please call 414-520-1285

Come on in...

we're open!

Upcoming Saturdays
10am—3pm

April 20

May 18

June 15

July 20

August 17

Hope to see you there!

Visitors to the museum get a coupon for \$5 admission to the Bucyrus Museum

Thank you to everyone who signed up for the electronic newsletter. Our first attempt was a success! Going forward you will only receive the electronic version unless you ask to go back to paper. However....I did have a number of emails returned as undeliverable so if you gave us your email address but only got the paper version send an email to southmilwaukeehistory@gmail.com so I can add you to the electronic list. You can also send an email if you haven't signed up for the electronic version yet but want to give it a try. You can always go back to a paper copy if you decide you prefer that.

Back in the spotlight!

For many years this quilt was partially hidden hanging on the north wall. Recently we had our handyman, Brian Boll, rework some things in this room and moved it to the west wall. Dora Lee Szewczuga (now Belfield) drew 24 pen and ink sketches of sites and structures - from the early days of South Milwaukee as a settlement along the Oak Creek to an industrial city of importance. She then used log cabin quilt blocks to set them off and created the quilt. In 1988 she presented this beautiful work of art to the Historical Society. We're excited to bring all of it into the spotlight again. If you want to know what those sites and structures are you'll have to stop by and check it out!



The Sweet Side of South Milwaukee

The recent donation of the original mixer from Sally's Candy Cupboard inspired us to create a display featuring the sweet side of South Milwaukee at the museum. But when we needed a new display for the Bucyrus Museum we decided to share it with them. While looking for more information to include in that display we realized that candy was a big part of South Milwaukee!



That led to an entirely new display at the Museum. We ran out of room before we ran out of stores that featured ice cream, candy and even popcorn!! Did we include your childhood favorite?? Do you have a memory of your favorite to share with us?? Stop by the museum during an open house and tell us. We'd love to share your stories in a future newsletter.



We're still working on setting up the history talks for this summer. Watch our website for the schedule as we lock in speakers & dates. If you have a topic you'd like to present let us know. The commitment is for about an hour on a Saturday morning.

The South Milwaukee Historical Society is a 501.c.3 organization whose mission is "to preserve, honor and promote South Milwaukee's rich history for generations to come."

The Historical Society now has it's own phone number!! You can call & leave a message or even text and we'll do our best to respond within 48 hours.



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