



Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society
Historic Times
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For research, call archivist Bev Silldorff: 262-242-3290

M-T Historical Society: Chapter 2

Contributed by Bob Blazich, President

“These are the times that try men’s souls.” Those famous words by Thomas Paine, writing under the pseudonym of Common Sense, were written in 1776 as the opening line of his series of American Crisis pamphlets.

Paine was writing at a time of major change for the colonies. The past was untenable, and the future was an exciting unknown. The Colonies were preparing to leave its close relationship with England and begin to function independently.

Independence is about to come to the M-T Historical Society. Unlike the situation facing our founding fathers, our historical society has been nurtured and supported for nearly 30 years by the City of Mequon. But like the Colonies, we are ready to stand on our own two feet and make our own way.

The Mequon Historical Society, the predecessor to the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society, was formed in the late 1980’s when the Mequon Men’s

Club ceased operation. The Men’s Club membership and civic activity had declined significantly and the club considered either disbanding or finding a new project to rejuvenate their organization. In the end, they did both.

Late in 1987, the Mequon Men’s Club voted to disband their organization and several of their members joined with Don Silldorff to incorporate as the Mequon Historical Society. Using remaining funds from the Mequon Men’s Club and

a generous donation from Ottomar Logemann, the newly formed Historical Society repurposed the space that had been occupied by the Mequon Police and Fire Departments.

The plan was to house the Historical Society in a large upper attic remodeled into an office and rent out the remaining space to non-profit organizations and community events. While this plan looked fine on paper, financial reality for the nearly penniless
Story continued page 3



The Logemann Community Center ceased operations at the end of 2015.

Inside This Issue . . .

Contact Us See Page 2

Interesting Historical Information See Page 2

Volunteering See Page 3

President’s Article Continued See Page 3

School District 10 See Page 4

Toll Roads in the Town of Mequon See Page 5

Acquisitions See Page 6

What’s Going On? See Page 7

Membership Form See Page 7

MT Historical Society 2016 Board of Directors

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Vice-President: Jennifer Hamm
Secretary : Bonnie Heintskill
Treasurer: Don Molyneux
Membership : Mary Sayner
Archivist: Bev Silldorff
Researcher: Ruth Renz
Members: James Schaefer
Paul Schreiber
Member Emeritus: Don Goniou
Member Emeritus: Gordy Hinrichs

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Website: www.mthistoricalsociety.org

Email: mthistory1839@gmail.com

MTHS Phone: 262-242-3107

Join Us

Join today. It's easy. Memberships also make great gifts!

Annual Membership:

Individual\$15
Family.....\$20
Contributing.....\$30
Business.....\$80
Sustaining\$100

Tax deductible 501(c)(3) donations are appreciated.

Send your check to: MTHS, 6100 W. Mequon Road,
Mequon, WI 53092. Membership form located on
page 7 of this newsletter.

Interesting Historical Information

Contributed by Bev Silldorff

THE FIRST INSCRIPTION OF AN ASSESSMENT
AND TAX ROLL TURNED OVER TO THE
COLLECTOR OF TAXES READ AS FOLLOWS:

Territory of Wisconsin
County of Washington

To Wm. F. Opitz, Collector
of Taxes of the Town of
Mequon in aforesaid County.

Greetings:

In the name of the people of this territory of Wisconsin, you are hereby commanded to collect of the server persons within named, the taxes charged in the annexed duplicate copy for the year A. D. 1846, and the delinquent road and school tax of 1845, by demanding payment of the persons therein named or by making sale of their Goods and Chattles if necessary, and when no goods or chattles to be found, to make return thereof to me, and pay over the monies by you collected to the Treasure of the Town of Mequon and County of Washington, Wisconsin, aforesaid on or before the Second Monday in December, A. D. 1846, and by the authority aforesaid you are futher commanded to return this precept together with the duplicate Copy of the Assessment Roll and your doings in the premises to the Clerk of the Towne of Mequon Washington County V C aforesaid on or before the 1st day of January next ensuing the date hereof.

Given under my hand and seal of the
Supervisor of Mequon Washington
County V C aforesaid this 27th day of
October A. D. 1846.

James Cleare
Town Clerk

Reprinted verbatim

Volunteering at the M-T Historical Society

Contributed by Mary Sayner

Since our winter newsletter, the volunteers at MTHS have accomplished much. To everyone who has offered support and effort to the MTHS cause, we offer a big THANK YOU.

One of the regular volunteers who comes to the archive each Tuesday morning is Judy Helgeland. She has completed an index of all the Fromm and Nieman materials pertaining to the fox farms in this area and in Hamburg, Wisconsin. In spare moments Judy also does filling of newspaper articles in family and business folders.

On Thursdays, Fay Walker spends several hours working on the Homestead High School files and other educational venues in the area including Concordia University. She has established a system that will allow for easy access to information. Anyone doing research in the field of education in Mequon-

Thiensville will benefit from her efforts.

Fay Walker and Amanda Heintskill have been very helpful in solving computer issues. Amanda scans pictures and other materials into our computer system. It is good to know that if there is a computer issue, Amanda and Fay are available for assistance.

There is a list of other members who are eager to volunteer. You will be called upon to help with the planned move and set-up at our new location. This is an exciting time for the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society.

Board members are always busy organizing, indexing, attending meetings, cooperating with other historical groups, planning for future events and promoting MTHS. Thanks to all their efforts the organization is moving ahead and looking to a bright future.

M-T Historical Society: Chapter 2

President's Message, Continued from page 1

Historical Society proved to be cruel. After taking over control of the building in the summer of 1988, the cold winter of 1988-89 brought with it large heating bills that the Society was unable to pay. They had no choice but to approach the City of Mequon for help paying for utilities and custodial services.

In January of 1989 the Mequon Historical Society created the Logemann Community Center and turned over management of the building to the Logemann board. The Historical Society became a Logemann tenant and entered into a \$1/year lease relationship that continued until the end of 2015 when the Logemann Community Center ceased operations.

Since its inception, the Historical Society has been dependent on The City of Mequon, and we cannot thank the city enough for the many years of unquestioning support. But, as with Thomas Paine, it is time for the Society to go through the trying times of gaining independence. We are about to take on

new and weighty responsibilities as a free-standing and self-sufficient organization.

As president of the MT Historical Society, I have been working with a great team of board members and volunteers over the past five years. We have worked hard to build and preserve the society's collection and maintain our important role in the community as the preservers and protectors of the rich history of The Town of Mequon and the two communities that grew out of it.

But, unlike the situation created by the Mequon Men's Club in founding the Mequon Historical Society, we are now a well established, membership-driven organization that I am sure will be sustainable for many years to come. The challenge of fundraising provides us with an opportunity to more broadly involve the community in our Society, and I look forward to expanding our visibility and connections as we move toward independence.

Information Needed: School District 10

Contributed by Mary Sayner

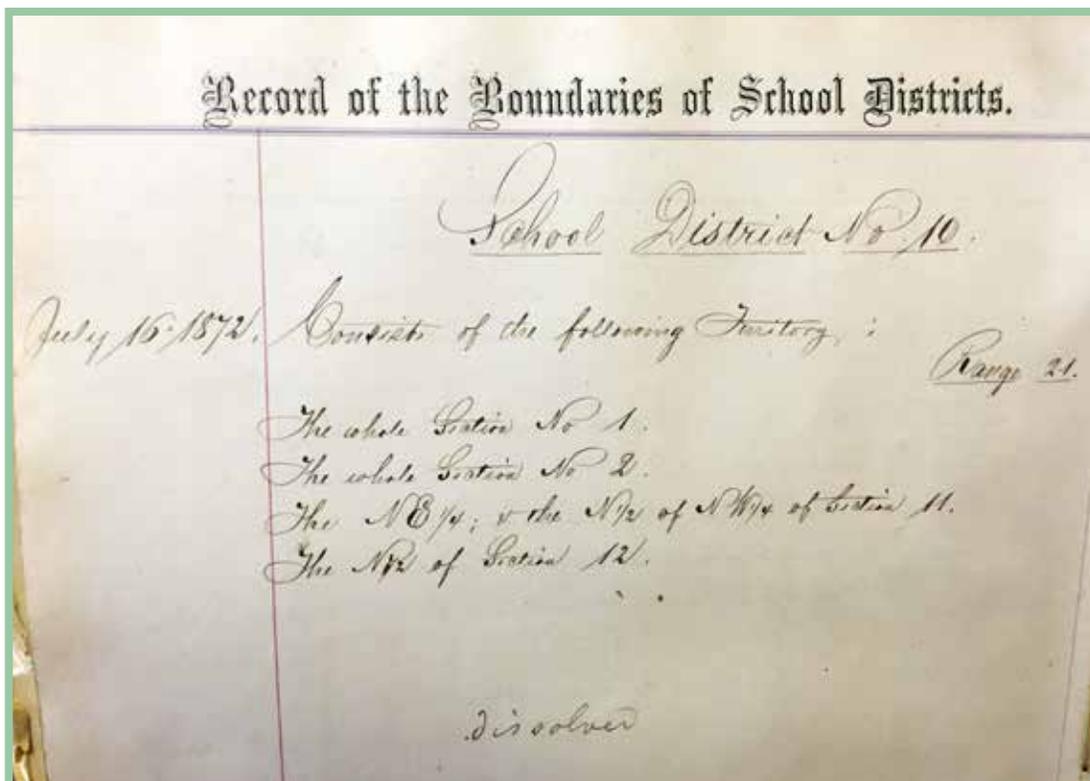
Being able to read and index the Town of Mequon Board of Supervisors' Meeting Minutes both monthly and annually from the year 1846 on has been, and is, a gift. Issues of financing a town, providing services, passing necessary rules and regulations, and providing for the education of children were big concerns for a developing community.

It was evident from the beginning that Town officials were very concerned about the establishment and support of schools ending up with 14 separate school districts. I was told, however, that there were actually only 13 functioning districts and that District # 10 always sent its students to other districts. Available school district maps date back to the 1870's and show no District #10.

While indexing the Board Minutes, there was evidence that District #10 did physically exist, received money on a regular basis from state-county-town taxes, and had teachers. Reports to the

County Superintendent of Schools listed the number of male and female students attending the school. Evidence showed that land was set aside for District #10 in November of 1850 and that on approval of the citizens was "dissolved" on July 16, 1872. With proper notice the Board of Supervisors of the Town of Mequon held a sale at the schoolhouse on August 3, 1872 selling all of the school furniture. The money (\$177.75) was turned over to the Town Treasurer.

MTHS has little knowledge of District # 10. We know that it existed for 20 years but other than Town Board Minutes and a few notes from the Superintendent of Schools we have little evidence of its 20 year history. There must be family records that show who taught in District #10 (MTHS has the name of one), what families sent their children to District #10, who graduated from the school, where the schoolhouse was located and what happened to the building and land after the district dissolved. Pictures of the school and students would also add to the collection.



PLEASE help tell the story of the 1800's Town of Mequon School District # 10. You are invited to look over the evidence MTHS now has in it collection.

Document at left is a Record of the Boundaries of School Districts and pertains to School District No. 10. Document written on July 16, 1872.

Town of Mequon Toll Stations

Contributed by Jennifer Hamm

In the 1800's travel was difficult at best causing citizens of Mequon and other areas across the State of Wisconsin to clamor for a new way to provide for local transportation needs.

At one-tenth the cost of railroads, privatized plank roads were proposed as a less expensive and more practical way to build suitable roadways

that allowed for the transport of goods and people between towns and to the marketplace. In the mid 1840's the Wisconsin State Legislature began incorporating plank road companies to fill this need. It wasn't until 1852, however, that a company was spearheaded to work on the stretch of roadway leading from Milwaukee through the Town of Mequon and north towards Fond du Lac. This organization, The Milwaukee - Fond du Lac Plank Road Company, purchased the materials and mortgages to start work on the Plank Road which was to closely follow the existing Native American trail leading from Chicago to Green Bay. In 1860 The Milwaukee - Fond du Lac Plank Road Company defaulted on their obligation and a new organization, led by Henry Kirchhoff and John Hintz, took over the construction and maintenance of the plank road. The corporation was then renamed The Milwaukee Cedarburg Plank Road.

To manage the affairs of the private corporation, a plank road toll office was constructed. This building was located at the north east corner of what is now the intersection of Freistadt and Main Street in Thiensville. Toll gates were also constructed, at no less than 3 mile intervals, in order to provide capital for the maintenance of the plank road. Prior to 1860, when the toll road was owned and managed by the Milwaukee-Fond du Lac Plank Road Company, the toll collected at each location was two cents per horse. However, upon new ownership, the toll was lowered to one cent per horse. Residents travelling to church



Town of Mequon toll station, 1/2 mile south of Donges Bay Road on present day Cedarburg Road, was owned and operated by The Oppel family.

on Sundays were an exception and were not taxed.

Toll gates and buildings were manned 24 hours a day by local property owners who often mortgaged personal property to become a stock holder in the corporation. Two such toll gates were constructed in the Town of Mequon. One gate, in existence until 1909, was located approximately 1/4 mile north of Highland Road,

and was owned by multiple citizens including Pickle Schmidt and Charles Olsen. The other toll gate, as seen in the MTHS calendar image, was located about 1/2 mile south of Donges Bay Road. This building was owned and managed by the Oppel family and continued to operate until 1913. As described by Leslie Rehm in his notes on Mequon history, "the gates consisted of a long pole with a rope attached on one end to pull it down, tightened on a pivot between two posts with a stone weight to raise the pole when the rope was released."

Unfortunately, it was not long before people realized that these roads were not a reliable means of transportation. Most of the year the plank roads were impassable. During the wet seasons planks were slippery due to mud and water. When the ground was hard and frozen, travel was equally as rough on the horses causing farmers to avoid the plank roads at all costs. Due to this tollways were unable to collect the funds necessary to maintain the roadway.

It does not come as a surprise, then, that the toll stations in the Town of Mequon such as the one pictured in the MTHS calendar eventually saw their demise. In 1913 the Cedarburg Plank Road was purchased by the County for \$1,500. In 1922 the road was transferred to the State, graded and paved, and designated as State Trunk Highway 57.

Details researched by Bev Silldorff

Recent Acquisitions at the Don Silldorff Archive

Contributed by Archivist Bev Silldorff (262-242-3290 or 262-242-3107)

The Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society thrives on the generosity of donors and local organizations. Below is a list of recent acquisitions.

Roy Wetzel:

- Various images of the area.
- Various newspaper clippings regarding businesses and events of the area.
- A copy of the History of the Wetzel Family and Blacksmith Shop by Roy Wetzel, and much more...

Roger Boesch and Jeanette Barth:

- Images of the fox farms in the area.
- Image of 1935 Dartball Team.
- Longfellow one room school house class picture circa 1942.
- Newspaper articles regarding local area churches, and more.

Connie Pukaite:

- Print no. 21 of 500 of fox with hut.

The Library League:

- 1957-1973 membership lists.
- Newsletters, minutes, treasurer's reports and more, from various years between 1967 and 2003.

Jerry Joseph Lorenz:

- The Konitzer Family History by Jerry Joseph Lorenz.

Bonnie and Ray Heintskill:

- Multiple black and white image of James W. Heintskill in WWII Army Air Corps uniform.
- Copy of pilots license for James W. Heintskill circa 1938 and 1947.
- Image of Villa Grove house, Heintskill's property on the Milwaukee River in Mequon circa 1950.
- James W. Heintskill Honorable Discharge Papers dated 12/6/1945.

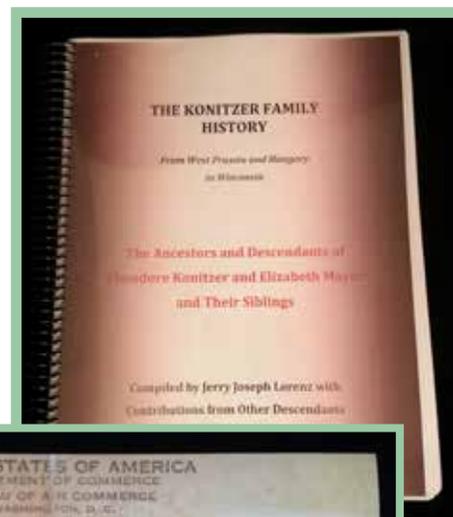
Judy and Glen Helgeland:

- 8 used white/gray 3-ring binders in good condition.
- Several sets of metal bookends.



1935 Thiensville-Mequon Dartball Team. Top row from left: Mel Stowell, Carl Blume, Ray Maus, Harry Steffen, Jack Cizny, Lyman Rigby, Bill Baake, Carl Ruege and William Eichstedt. From row from left: Edgar Boesch, Jack Helm, Eddie Boesch, Clare Hall, and Herb Boesch.

The Konitzer Family History by Jerry Joseph Lorenz.



Below: Pilot license belonging to James W. Heintskill. Issued by the United States of America, Department of Commerce, Bureau of Air Commerce, Washington D.C. on May 27, 1938.



What's Going On?

Contributed by Bonnie Heintskill, Board Secretary

The MTHS Board members have been very busy looking at rental spaces for our new "home". Bob Blazich, President of MTHS, has been spearheading the quest for new space. He reported at our February meeting that he had contacted over 20 different options and Board members had visited several. Please see the President's article in this issue for additional details.

The Society had a display on the second floor rotunda of F.L. Weyenberg Library for the months of January and February which was very well received by the public. The News Graphic provided a nice write up with photos of the display in one of the January issues. Watch for our next display in the front lobby of the Weyenberg Library during the month of August.

On January 30, 2016 Board members attended an all Ozaukee County historical societies meeting. We shared information about our respective societies and ideas for our collections and fundraisers. The first meeting was held in the community room of Trinity Lutheran Church and was hosted by Freistadt Historical Society. We intend to have regular meetings every quarter which will be hosted by different societies.

Much discussion has taken place during MTHS board

meetings recently in regard to fundraising ideas for the coming year. One suggestion was an "Antiques Roadshow" type of event. If you have any expertise in this field or a desire to help coordinate this event please contact our office for more details. In the Fall watch for our Duck Race fundraiser. Participants will have an opportunity to purchase a numbered rubber duck and watch it "race" down the Milwaukee River from the Donald J. Molyneux Park to the catch area below the Isham Day House. There will also be raffle prizes from local merchants. Donations for this race would be very much appreciated!

Secretary Bonnie Heintskill played "tour guide" to Shirley Roller Lee, a descendant of the Ellenbecker family. The Ellenbecker's originally had a farm located at Wauwatosia Road and Freistadt Road on the southwest corner. The farm was listed in the 1892 census. In 1907 they had moved to Thiensville and bought property for their dairy farm which was next to the railroad tracks and ran from Ellenbecker Road west to the Lutheran Seminary in Mequon. Bonnie and Shirley were able to talk to the current owner of the original Ellenbecker house who shared some verbal history of the family. The original house and barn are still being used. Shirley also donated a copy of the Ellenbecker family tree to MTHS earlier in the year.

I Would Like A Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society Membership!

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

Tax deductible 501(c)(3) donations are appreciated.

I would like the newsletter sent by Mail Email

Email Address: _____

I am interested in volunteering for the Mequon Thiensville Historical Society Yes No

- Annual Membership Levels:**
- Individual\$15
 - Family.....\$20
 - Contributing.....\$30
 - Business.....\$80
 - Sustaining\$100

Please Mail Checks to: Mequon Thiensville Historical Society, at 6100 W. Mequon Road, Mequon, WI 53092.



Photo provided by Roy Wetzel.

Image of Herbert Boesch next to a truck hauling hay bales for the horses that pulled fox-feeding wagons.

Looking forward to the future...

M-T Historical Society: Chapter 2

Historic Times

Megun-Thiensville Historical Society's

Megun-Thiensville Historical Society

Vol. 18 No. 2 Spring, 2016

6100 W. Megun Road, Megun, WI 53092

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Your Renewal is Due