

Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society Historic Times

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Open Thursday afternoons from 2-5 p.m. and by appointment.
For research, call archivist Bev Silldorff: 262-242-3290

175 Years of Town Center History

by Bob Blazich, MTHS President

For the past two years, we have been watching the new Town Center come to life on the corner of Mequon and Cedarburg Roads. The buildings on the corner provide shopping, eateries, medical and personal services and apartments. And future developments are on drawing boards for more Town Center construction to come.



Image of Bonnywell Village Shopping Center in Thiensville. (c. 1975)

harness makers, milling, taverns and the general store.

By the 1900's, several resort hotels were busy caring for visitors to the Milwaukee River and "Thiensville Lake", while automobile related services were established along "Highway 57" that we now know as Cedarburg Road in Mequon and Main Street in Thiensville.

I'm sure that many of you will be interested to know that a town center existed in roughly the same location for well over 170 years before the first shovel was turned on the current project. Starting in the early 1840's, Green Bay Road in what is now Thiensville served as the commercial hub for the southern third of Ozaukee County. The farmers in the area depended on the Green Bay Road strip for a variety of goods and services including blacksmiths,

Between 1950 and 1970, the population of the area grew rapidly. The population of Mequon grew from 4,000 to 15,000 during those years while Thiensville tripled from 900 to over 3,000. And the nearly 20,000 people in the area considered Thiensville's downtown and Mequon's Civic Campus to be their "Town Center".

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MT Historical Society

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Secretary : Bonnie Heintskill
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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 Facts

Contributed by Mary Sayner

Interesting Accounts Recorded by the Town of Mequon Board of Health:

- June 8, 1877 Town of Mequon Board of Supervisors establish a 3 member Board of Health with a Health Physician as one of its members. This Board of Health was appointed/elected on a yearly basis.

- April 21, 1885 First recorded action of Board of Health: Restricted the location of slaughter houses.

- December 6, 1887 Ordered a sick horse killed and a tree's limbs trimmed for Safety of People.

- August 22, 1894 Board of Health took people to Court for unloading privy excrement on a Mequon farm.

- April 24, & May 6, 1895 Small pox cases reported in Town of Mequon.

- May 10, 1895 Agreed that a doctor would be paid by Town to care for small pox patients

- May 17, 1897 Board of Health sent complaint to State Board of Health that railroad cars filled with spoiled grain were being left untended on the tracks at the Thiensville Station. The State Board of Health replied that Mequon Board of Health should nicely ask the Railroad Company to move the railroad cars.

Volunteering at the M-T Historical Society

Contributed by Mary Sayner

A BIG THANK YOU to all those loyal volunteers who helped with the daily running of the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society in 2015.

Such things as the participation in the Taste of Mequon, the Annual Meeting, indexing and cataloging, membership updating and contacting, newsletter publication, noting of acquisitions, researching, fundraising and numerous other things would not have happened if it were not for our VOLUNTEERS. You are appreciated, as well as needed, in order to keep MTHS a viable organization. We hope to benefit from your continued support in 2016.

Thank you, too, to the membership who have faith in the direction that MTHS is moving and to those who make donations to MTHS throughout the year. Together we can grow the organization and offer more service to the community.

Preserving and Sharing our History - The 2016 MTHS Calendar

Our goal at the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society is to preserve our community's history, and share this information with our generation and generations to come. Each year, we enjoy finding new ways to share our collections with the community, and we believe our newly released 2016 Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society wall calendar, made possible by the financial support for Suburban Motors Harley-Davidson, will reawaken your passion for our local history. Every month has a historic view from the Mequon-Thiensville area along with a few interesting facts from our past.

Did you get a copy of the 2016 Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society Calendar? If not, stop by the Society on Thursdays from 3-5 pm to pick up your copy for the low price of \$5.00 each. Members receive one free copy. If you are not currently a member, see page 7 for our membership form.

If you have suggestions or images that you would like

Recollections of an Old Timer by Henry Kaul

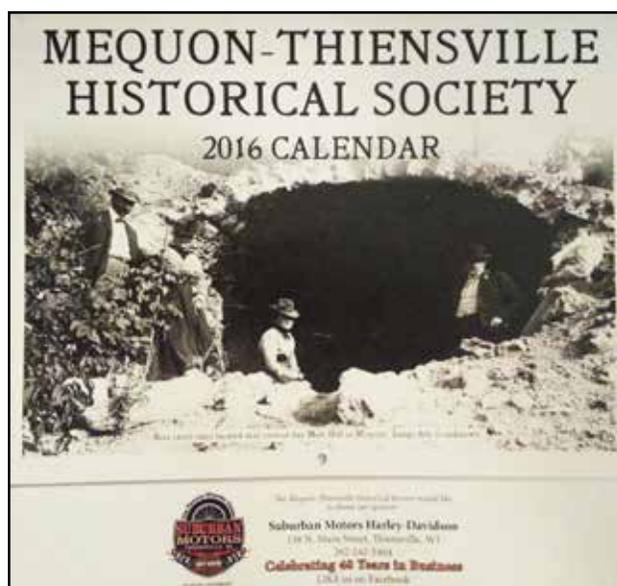
Born in the Town of Mequon, July 22, 1871

Pioneer Life in Mequon

Excerpt from Mequon Town Talks, April 1951

I was asked to write an article on my recollections of Pioneer Life in the Town of Mequon. I hope the following will be of interest to you - the people of Town Mequon. . . My folks built themselves a small two room log cabin. The timber was cut with a cross cut saw. I well remember the riff, riff, rifting sound of the sawing. The roof of the log cabin was covered with wide shakes or shingles. The only furniture my folks had at the outset was a huge wooden trunk (which i still have) and a spinning wheel. Those had been brought from Germany . . . The pioneers as a whole were quite jolly. They had no musical instruments, but they sang all kinds of folk songs for entertainment. They were also fond of playing jokes on one another . . .

To read the full article, stop by the M-T Historical Society or see our website at www.mthistoricalsociety.org.



added in coming years, please contact Bev Silldorff at 262-242-3290, or Jennifer Hamm via phone or email at 262-370-2232 / jenniferhamm53092@gmail.com to share your thoughts. We would love to hear from you!

175 Years of Town Center History

President's Message, Continued from page 1

During that 20-year period, Thiensville added a number of regional businesses and services to provide for the growing needs of the area. Supermarkets included Kohl's and Sentry. Walgreen's, Siefert's and Loppnow's were popular pharmacies, doctors and dentists opened practices, and several chain restaurants drew people to the area (Pizza Hut, KFC, McDonald's, A&W, Boy Blue and Red Barn).

The post office, public library and the Mequon swimming pool along with banks, hairdressers, car dealers and quality restaurants like Stemmler's also brought many people to the mile-long Highway 57 strip.

In the years since the 1970's, many businesses moved into the area, but several larger businesses either closed or moved. Commercial developments grew along I-43 and other outlying areas drawing shoppers, diners and patients away from the long-established commercial center of the area.

The Town Center that we now see nearing completion in Mequon and the new buildings constructed along Main Street in Thiensville represent a renaissance for this area. The area that started life over 175 years ago as a commercial center for Town of Mequon farmers is in the process of once again taking its historic place as the commercial, cultural and social heart of southern Ozaukee County.

Strip mall on west side of Main Street in Thiensville including Sentry Foods, Red Wheel dress shop, Loppnow's Drugs, Warehouse Shoes, and other retail establishments.



Shopping center in Thiensville including Coast to Coast and Ben Franklin store.



Image above courtesy of Kenneth Krueger. Thiensville looking north on Main Street. Notice Kohl's Food Store sign on the right in the background.



McDonald's restaurant located on Main Street, north of Freistadt in what is now Prime Minister Restaurant.



Winter Weather Through History

Contributed by Jennifer Hamm

Southeast Wisconsin has had its fair share of winter weather over the course of history, but certain dates stand out either due to the amount of precipitation or its impact on the people of the area. Three examples of such notable winter storms include the blizzard of February/March 1881, the winter storm of February 1936, and the ice storm of 1976.

In 1881, this area was inundated with record setting amounts of snow. With drifts as tall as 20 feet, the winter storm of February 27th through March 4th, 1881, ranks as one of the largest, if not the largest, winter snow storm in the area. Starting initially as rain, this storm turned snowy on Sunday, February 27 creating snow drifts ranging from 4'-12' in depth. A reprieve on Monday and Tuesday gave workers a chance to remove the heavy, wet snow covering the railroad. Wednesday night, however, brought about another round of disastrous weather that continued on through to Thursday, March 3rd and much of Friday, March 4th. During this last round of precipitation, businesses closed and transportation ceased. According to the *Weekly Wisconsin* published on March 9th, 1881, "During all of Thursday, the storm raged incessantly. Business in all branches was dead in Milwaukee, and on the railroads, not a car wheel turned in all Wisconsin during the entire day! For one day, the state was virtually without railroads."

The blizzard of February 8-10, 1936, as pictured in the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society's (MTHS) 2016 Calendar (See image at Right), created severe snow drifts in the area. Rural Route #2 carrier Peter J. Hiltgen (1889-1938) made every effort to deliver mail through the high snow drifts created by this winter storm. According to the February 10, 1936 *Milwaukee Journal*, "Plows were working hard in Ozaukee County, but the highway commission office reported that the snow was drifting in almost as fast as it was plowed out. All roads north and south of Port Washington were closed." MTHS Archivist Bev Silldorff remembers this storm and its high drifts from her childhood. "The road was only one car wide and they plowed niches so someone could pass you, . . . it was paradise for kids because you could go sledding in many places."

The more recent, but infamous, ice storm of 1976 became a memorable part of history due to its impact on the people of this area and beyond. Thunderstorms and high winds made the ice storm of March 4th and 5th, 1976 one of Wisconsin's worst natural disasters. Ice up to 5 inches in diameter accumulated on wires and tree branches damaging property and power lines. Up to 600,000 Wisconsin residents were without power during this storm, and some rural areas did not see restored power for over 10 days! Highway 57, near Mequon Road, was closed for a period of time due to the weather. The March 5, 1976 issue of the *Milwaukee Journal* stated, "Utility repair crews, augmented by workers from power companies in Michigan, Minnesota, Illinois and Missouri, were working 16 hours a day and still falling behind as ice coated branches ripped down some cables and others fell of their own weight."

What were YOU doing during the 1976 Ice Storm? Did you or someone you know experience the 1936 blizzard? We want to hear from you! Share your stories, thoughts, experiences, and images with us on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/mthistory, or feel free to stop in at the Society on Thursday afternoons, so we can share your experiences with others in the community.



Image of rural route #2 carrier Peter J. Hiltgen delivering the mail after the statewide blizzard February 8th through 10th, 1936.

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.

Bonnie Heintskill:

- Three Lumen Christi Church Directories dated 2007, 2011-2012, and 2013-2014.
- Latin-English, English-Latin Dictionary. (See image at right.)
- 2007 Mequon-Thiensville Community Calendar.
- Greater Ozaukee County and Vicinity Yellow Pages, January 2015-2016.
- AT&T Yellow Pages, October 2013-2014.

Suzie Feuling:

- Cash box with key.

Shirley Roller-Lee:

- Outline decendant chart for Theodore Ellenbecker.
- Register report for Theodore Ellenbecker.

Lorry Roensch:

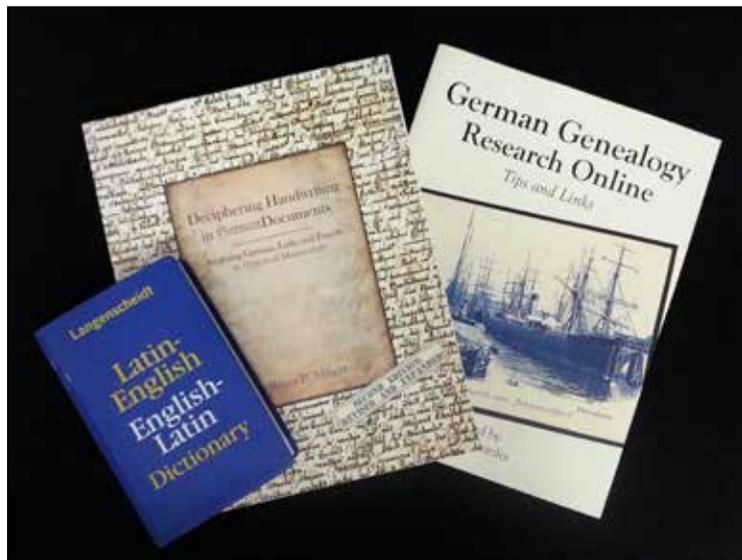
- Testimony of Donald A. Roensch before the WI Public Service Commission Docket#9308-SR-102.
- North Shore Cinema groundbreaking, June 5, 1990.
- Mequon Sewer Study, 1992, by Ruekert Mielke.

Art Sommers:

- 75 Xerox copies of the front and backs of postcards of the Thiensville area.
- Book called "A Family History" including five names: Boney, Brown, Ivy, Sommer, and Sommers.

Anonymous:

- Table top photo studio including lighting kit, tripod, cell phone holder, and photo box.



German Genealogy texts purchased by the Society for our collection, and Latin-English, English-Latin Dictionary donated by Bonnie Heintskill. This is an example of some of the genealogy research materials available for use by the public.



2007 Mequon-Thiensville calendar and local yellow page phone books donated by Bonnie Heintskill.

Correction: Pictures 2 & 3 of the Fall 2015 issue belong to Bernadine Szepinski's photo collection of family photos.

What's Going On?

Contributed by Bonnie Heintskill, Board Secretary

If you subscribe to the News Graphic, you may have read that the Logemann Community Center is closing and our historical society will be moving to a yet-to-be-determined location this coming spring. When the time comes to move, we would love to have extra hands to do the physical move.

In January and February, the Society will have a display in the Rotunda display at the Library. Please come check it out on the second floor.

2016 wall calendars were created as a fund raiser for the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society, and they made their debut at the Annual MTHS meeting on November 1, 2015. Board Member Jennifer Hamm and Archivist Bev Silldorff coordinated the project. Cost of the calendars is \$5.00. Please call the office for details if you would like to purchase a copy for yourself or a friend. **Thank you to Suburban Harley Davidson Motors of Thiensville** for sponsoring the printing of the calendars.

2015 Annual Meeting

Our annual meeting on November 1, 2015, was a great success. A large crowd witnessed a presentation by Jesse and Barkha Daily on the history and renovation of their building which is now Cheel Restaurant on

Buntrock and Main Street in Thiensville. Dr. Nina Look also presented an update on the restoration of the Jonathan Clark House. A special thank you to Jesse and Barkha Daily who donated a Chef's Table Gift Certificate for The Cheel Restaurant which was auctioned off live at the meeting. Alderman Connie Pukaite won the gift certificate and we thank her and the Dailys for their generous donations.

The following three board members were re-elected for three year terms at the November 1, 2015 Annual Meeting: Robert Blazich, Jennifer Hamm, and Paul Schreiber.

Officers Elected at Board Meeting

At the December 17, 2015 MTHS Board meeting, Amanda Heintskill, Board Member and Membership Chair, stepped down from her positions leaving a vacancy on the Board. The following officers were also elected during this meeting: Bob Blazich, President; Jennifer Hamm, Vice President. Don Molyneaux, Treasurer; Bonnie Heintskill, Secretary. Mary Sayner is Membership and Volunteer Chairperson. Openings are available on the Board. Please contact Bob Blazich at rblazich@gmail.com if you or someone you know might be interested.

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 of a Thiensville shopping center containing Kohl's Food Store, Walgreens, and other retail establishments. Image circa 1975.

Finding some common ground between the old and the new...

175 Years of Town Center History



Historic Times

Mequon Thiensville Historical Society's

Your Renewal is Due

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

6100 W. Mequon Road, Mequon, WI 53092

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