



Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society
Historic Times
Vol. 20 No. 2 Summer 2018

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

Firehouse Feasibility Study Underway

By Bob Blazich, President

Several members of the MTHS board recently met with the Village of Thiensville Board of Trustees to begin a discussion of the possible move of our historical society to the second floor of the long-

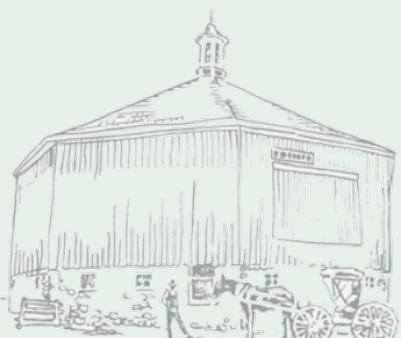
vacant Thiensville Village Hall and Firehouse building on the corner of Main Street and Green Bay Road.

The building, which was built in 1914 and housed the village offices on the second floor until 1974, is part of the ten building Main Street National Historical District as designated by the National Park Service in 2004. While the first floor has become a very popular walk-by firehouse museum, the upper floor has been vacant for the past 44 years.



MTHS board members visiting the upper floor of the old firehouse. Shown are, L-R. Paul Schreiber, Ron Knaus, Fay Walker, Jim Schaefer and Rachel Muchin-Young. Others present included Andy LaFond, the director of public works for the village, historic contractor David Salvaggio, village trustee Rob Holyoke, TBA executive director Rob Kos, and MTHS board members Doug Hansen and Bob Blazich.

"Firehouse Feasibility" Continued, page 3



Inside

Firehouse Feasibility See Page 1

Contact Us See Page 2

Our Members See Page 2

Annual Meeting See Page 2

Museum Update See Page 3

The Bonniwells See Page 4

Acquisitions See Page 5

Past Perfect See Page 6

News in Brief See Page 7

Membership Form See Page 7

MT Historical Society

2018 Board of Directors

President:	Bob Blazich
Vice-President:	Fay Walker
Treasurer:	Rachel Munhin-Young
Membership :	Mary Sayner
Archivist:	Bev Silldorff
Members:	Sam Cutler, Jr. Doug Hansen James Schaefer Paul Schreiber
Member Emeritus:	Gordy Hinrichs Don Molyneux

Contact Us

President:	Bob Blazich, rblazich@gmail.com 262-242-4653
Archivist:	Bev Silldorff, 262-242-3290
Membership & Volunteer	
Chairperson:	Mary Sayner, 608-881-9935 mcsayner@yahoo.com
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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, 216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102, Thiensville, WI 53092. Membership form located on page 7 of this newsletter.

New Members

Thank you to our newest members!

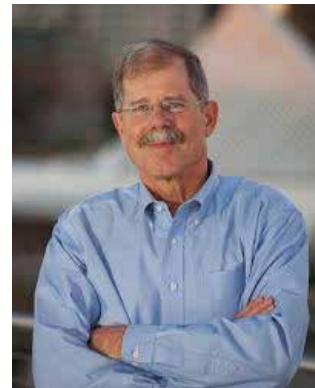
Joan & SK Buschman (Family)
Sara Unertl (Individual)

Save The Date

MTHS Annual Meeting 2018

Sunday, November 4th with speaker, John Gurda.

Details to follow in our October newsletter



Amazon Smile

If you are one of the growing number of people who shop on Amazon, this message is for you. Thanks to a program called Amazon Smile, a small portion of your purchase price can become a donation from the Amazon Smile Foundation to our MT Historical Society.

When you log on to your Amazon account, search for Amazon Smile and select the Mequon Thiensville Historical Society. It's that simple for you, and it will definitely help our organization.

amazon smile
You shop. Amazon gives.

Firehouse Feasibility, Continued from Page 1

Contributed by Bob Blazich, President, MTHS

The building itself has been found to be structurally sound, but it would obviously need major renovations to bring it up to ADA accessibility codes and to ensure the temperature, light and humidity controls needed to preserve our collection of historic documents.

Our board is bringing this possible move to you, our members. This is certainly a major decision, and the cost of the renovations will be considerable. As we did when we made the move to our present quarters in the Thiensville Professional Park, the decision to pursue this possible firehouse move is something that will need the backing of our membership.

At this point, we have more questions than answers, but that is exactly where we should be as we begin to consider the feasibility of moving our society's collection to the upper floor of the old firehouse. Would you be willing to work with us as we deliberate with the Village of Thiensville? Would you be willing to help us make this move financially feasible?

Please send us your questions, comments and suggestions.

Bob Blazich 262-242-4653 rblazich@gmail.com

Wait 'Til Next Year: A Museum Update

Contributed by Sam Cutler, Jr., Board Member

Sports fans often use that phrase to console themselves after a disappointing season and remain optimistic about the team's prospects for the future. That pretty much sums up the situation with the repurposing of the Isham Day House into the Mequon River Postal History Museum.

Beginning with the delay in getting a gas line to the building last summer and then the inevitable discovery of hidden water damage this spring, the reconstruction of the building is virtually complete.

The focus of our efforts can now turn to creating exhibits that will bring the history of the Mequon-Thiensville Town Center to life.

The 2018 season might just be the Brewers' year. 2019 will be Mequon River's time to shine.

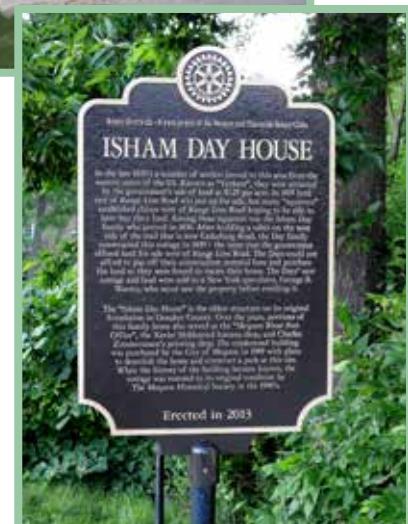
For more information about the Mequon River Postal History Museum including opportunities to make donations of stamps for the growing collection, please call us at 262-242-3107 or email us at mthistory1839@gmail.com.

Sam Cutler, Jr.



Isham Day House
prior to renovations.

Isham Day House
Commemorative
Plaque



The Bonniwells

Contributed by the late Don Silldorff, Founder of the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society

You may remember that in the last edition of our MTHS newsletter, we told you that we were going to go back into our newsletter archives and reprint articles written by our founder, Don Silldorff. Here is Don's article that appeared in our December, 1988, Newsletter, Vol.2 No. 1.

The only remembrance of the Bonniwells today is the Bonniwell Road and the Bonniwell one room school which still stands on the corner of Bonniwell Road and Wauwatosa Road. Then there is the "Bonnywell Shopping Center" at Main Street and Freistadt Road in Thiensville, an obvious distortion of the Bonniwell name.

Until November, 18, 1840 the area of Mequon was part of Milwaukee County, when local government was born in the home of William T. Bonniwell, located at the present site of the Noeske home on the Wauwatosa Road near the intersection with Hawthorne Road. It is noteworthy that the Bonniwell home continued as the seat of Washington County government until 1846. It was originally intended that the county seat would be Port Washington. (Ozaukee County was established out of Washington County in 1855).

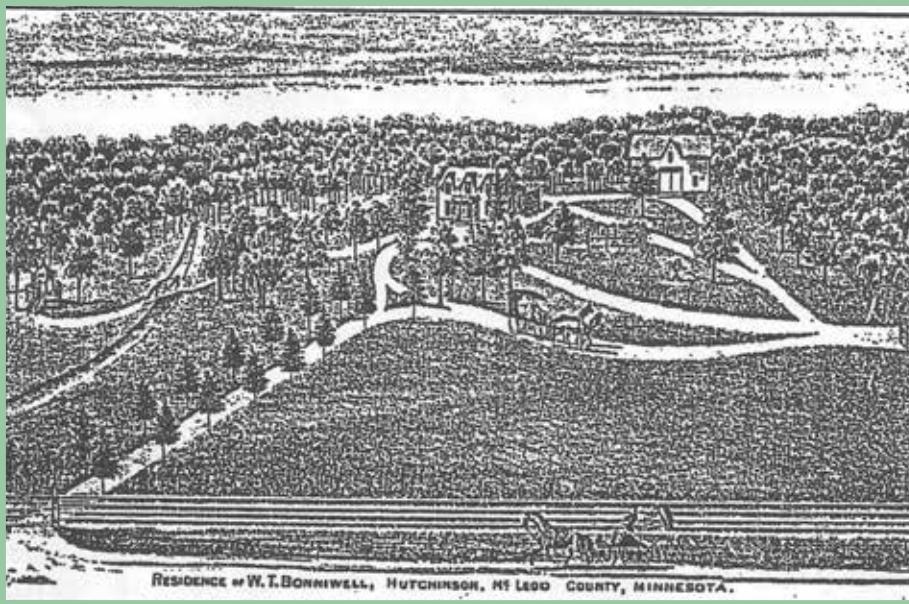
The Bonniwell family of seven brothers and a sister along with their mother, Eleanor Hyde, arrived in Mequon in 1839, purchasing a total of 1040 acres of land from the government. William was the most prominent of the family. He was elected the first Clerk of Washington County, and held numerous offices over the years.

What happened to the Bonniwells was difficult to determine. It was known that William along with other local residents lost their investments in Byron Kilbourn's ill fated railroad venture in the 1850's. In 1871 after the death of his mother (buried in Cedarburg) William joined his brothers George, Henry, and Walter in Hutchinson, Minnesota. Charles, the oldest, and Alfred remained in Mequon. Charles died in Sheboygan in 1905 at the age of 99 years. A younger brother, James, died in Hickory, North Carolina in 1893. Alfred married a sister (or daughter) of Peter Turck, who owned a saw mill located on Pigeon Creek south of the Hawthorne Road and west of Wauwatosa Road.

Alfred Bonniwell owned 80 acres of land on the Northwest corner of Hawthorne Road and Wauwatosa Road across the road from the William Bonniwell home. In 1895, at the age of 69, Alfred was killed by a train north of the Thiensville railroad station while walking along the tracks. The circumstances were uncertain

as indicated by the transcript of an inquest recorded in a ledger found in the City Treasurer's office.

The Bonniwells apparently prospered in Minnesota as can be seen by the accompanying rendering depicting the William T. Bonniwell Estate in Hutchinson.



The Bonniwell Estate in Hutchinson, MN

William died in Hutchinson at the age of 65 in 1874, three years after leaving Mequon. William's great great grandson, Clark Bonniwell, still lives on the original homestead.

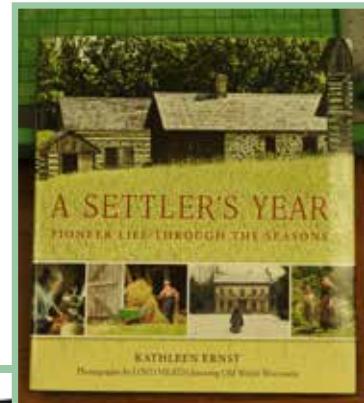
Recent Acquisitions at the Don Silldorff Archive

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.

Sam Cutler: Book, *A Settler's Year, Pioneer Life Through the Seasons*

A Settler's Year, Pioneer Life Through the Seasons donated by Sam Cutler, Jr. for use by the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society.



Walter Colegrove: Ed Scherer on Sporting Clay's

Computer desk donated by Mary Sayner



Charles Conrad: Numerous pictures frames and mounting materials

Sara Unertl: Antique desk for stamp museum

Mequon Community Methodist Church: News Graphics: 1961-1963, Weekly Witness: 1961
The Squire: 1962-1963, and brochure "Why Complete Homestead High School? Why Do We Need a New High School?"

OCHS: Numerous newspaper clippings dealing with Thiensville churches and church schools, Consecration Day Program and Open house Ceremonies for Mequon United Methodist Church, Various pictures of Methodist church, fund raising, church choir and graduation.

OCHS: Copy of chapter 2 (Towers of Ferment) of Jerry Apps'/Allen Strong's Barns of Wisconsin, Historic Wisconsin Buildings, Mrs. Arnold Barr info on silos and homes constructed of stone.

OCHS: Theis Family History, Info and clippings concerning Paul Seyfert and his origins.

Joe Groh: Colored post card with picture of SCHUCH'S RESTAURANT-HOTEL, undated

Bonnie Heintskill: October 2013-2014 YP-The Real Yellow Pages

Judy Helgeland: Copies of Voland Homestead Pictures, Post card of 10459 N. Wauwatosa Road

Walter Colegrove: 1970 Time Table of Mil. Division: Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad, photo of telegraph transmitter used in Interurban Depot of Thiensville, digital copy of Interview of Wally's Great Grandmother Gertrude Colegrove Giesfeldt nee Memmler.

Nina Look: History of 8110 W. Bonniwell Rd., Story of Bonniwell Settlement, Report to state of Bonniwell School listing parents & student in 1914.

Mary Sayner: Computer desk

Kashou Carpets: 17' by 13' Wool Carpet

Alfred Dobberfuhl: 3-ring binder, The Back Door of Mequon Highway Department, History of Mequon Highway Dept. 1841 – 2018

Katie Collen: Zoning Ordinance, Town of Mequon-1938, History of Town of Mequon –Brought Down to About 1870. Plastic 1951 Wallet-sized Calendar, advertising The Travelers Ins. Companies, Carl F. Wilbert, Agent.

Laura Joan Buschman: Newspaper clippings, Activity & Club programs, Awards, Copies of pictures, etc. telling of the participation of the Buschman family in the Mequon-Milwaukee area from the 1950's to the present day.

New M-T Historical Society Software

The Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society is buzzing with new activity. This year we entered the 21st Century of Historical Societies and Museums by purchasing the PastPerfect Software. We received a \$700.00 grant from the State of Wisconsin to help with the purchase of this software. This grant was matched by our generous MTHS members, Glen and Judy Helgeland.

With this program we will be able to keep details on records and collections easier than ever. For example – say Robert Smith is a member of MTHS and would like to donate a book – A Settler's Year – Pioneer Life Through the Years, we are able to categorize the book, assign a number, tell where it is located in the office, give a detailed description along with a picture of the book, and who donated or gifted the book.

Another great example of what this program can do is to link articles to the various newspapers for reports on what is happening to the Mequon and Thiensville area. This certainly will cut down the amount of paper that is cut and stored in our office. We can scan old newspaper clippings that are currently in our office, and categorize these articles so our members can easily look up old articles.

Since we have limited space in our office, we can now take pictures of artifacts that our members would like to share with us.

We have the history of some of the families currently in 3-Ring Binders. Obviously, there are missing items, perhaps pictures of the family members, a marriage, birth, or death certificates the family may want to share. We can scan these items and assign them to the family. Thereby allowing the original to stay with the family, but allowing future generations to view the documents.

Once in the system we can easily search for items, whether it is book, article, postcard, picture or photo.

This is a huge addition to our society. It is well worth the cost, time, and effort that is required. If you would like to volunteer we certainly would welcome and train you.

In addition to the Past Perfect Software, several other items are needed to fully utilize the system:

Item	Cost
AASLH**	\$118.00 Yearly amount
Desktop Computer	\$400.00
LED Monitor	\$199.00
External Hard Drive	\$180.00
Spider Microphone	\$70.00
Printer	\$200.00
Printer Warranty	\$20.00
Surge Protector	\$20.00
Cloud Storage	\$120.00 Yearly amount
Online Courses	\$150.00
Total Amount	\$1,477.00

***AASLH - American Association For State and Local History
As a member, we are able get discounts on all our continuing education and access to free webinars.*

As you can see, growth does come with a cost. Any donations to help with this program will be greatly appreciated. If anyone would like to sponsor a particular item, please indicate with your donation.

Fay Walker



MTHS News in Brief

LIBRARY DISPLAYS The MT Historical Society will have historical displays and artifacts on public display during the month of August. The items will be on the second floor of the Rotunda and in the display case in the entryway.



ATTENTION HOLSTEIN SCHOOL ALUMNI MTHS member Chris Doughty of Gentian Financial in Mequon runs his financial planning business out of the 1930 Holstein School building on the corner of River and Highland Roads (Image above). Chris has a very strong interest in the history of his building and is attempting to learn from persons who attended the school. If you attended Holstein School, please consider sharing your memories with Chris. He can be reached by phone at 262-518-7575 or by email at gentianchris@gmail.com .

DONATIONS SOUGHT It takes approximately \$1200 per month to keep the historical society viable, and we were counting on this fundraiser to help us meet our expenses. Please consider helping us make up this shortfall by upgrading your membership status, giving a gift membership to the society, or making a donation directly to MTHS. If you are over the age of 70-1/2, your financial consultant can show you how to donate directly from your IRA or 401K fund.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED As our collection has grown, so has the need to organize and properly protect the items. The Past Perfect software on Page 6 will go a long way to help with this archival work. But there is no substitute for "hands in the dough and boots on the ground". Please consider spending a morning or afternoon each week helping us at the society. It's interesting and fun work with a lot of great people.

ART EXPERT NEEDED The society received two very generous donations of artwork, however these works of art have value to us due to their worth and not their historical value. We would like to convert these items into cash and need to consult with an expert who can guide us through the sale process. If you know someone who could help, please let us know.

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: M-T Historical Society, at 216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102, Thiensville, WI 53092.

Mequon - Thiensville Historical Society's Historic Times

*Thiensville
Firehouse
and Village
Hall built
in 1914*



Become a Volunteer!
Contact Mary Sayner, Volunteer Coordinator, at 262-242-3107 for more information.

Your Renewal is Due

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102, Thiensville, WI 53092

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