

*In this issue . . .*

- Newsletter Archives . . . . .1
- Postal Museum Opens . . . . .2
- Facebook Memories. . . . . 4, 5, 7
- Calendar Succeeds . . . . . 6
- Foxtown Supports MTHS. . . . . 7
- Vertz Creates New Website . . . . . 8



The Newsletter of the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society      Volume 22, Number 1, Spring 2020

# historic times

## From our newsletter archives

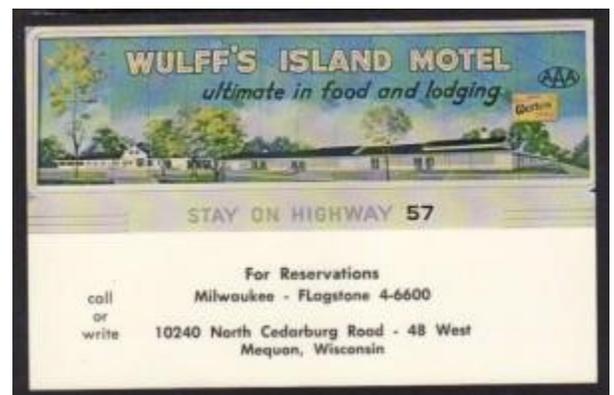
Bob Blazich, President, MTHS

This is a summary of an article written by our MTHS founder, Don Sillardorff. It appeared in the first of two 1995 newsletters of the Mequon Historical Society (as it was then known). The article discusses the history of the Wulff's Island property along east side of Green Bay Road and south of Donges Bay Road. I am excerpting and mildly editing Don's article and eliminating some of his comments about the inaccurate assumptions of a *Herald* newspaper reporter who had previously attempted to write an article about this property. If you knew Don, you will certainly remember his strong regard for provable facts and tendency to be very critical of "inaccuracies" (that is, anyone who disagreed with him).

### Wulff's Island Motel

### Reprinted from 1995

An investor named Taylor Heavilon bought the land that now houses Wulff's Island cocktail bar, restaurant and motel on March 13, 1839. This was the very first day of public land sale in Mequon. He also purchased 160 acres of land on the northeast corner of Freistadt and Wauwatosa Roads and an 80 acre parcel on the east side of Baehr Road north of Donges Bay Road.



Continued on page 3.

# Postal Museum's Inaugural Season Great Success

The opening ceremony for the Mequon River Postal Museum and Stamp Gallery was held at Mequon City Hall, June 20, 2019. More than sixty attendees were treated to guided tours of the repurposed 180 year-old Isham Day House across the street from the Council chambers. On display in the north room were panels recounting the history of four Mequon River postmasters who served before the Civil War as well as that of the Thiensville postmaster who served during World War I. In the south room the E.W. Krauthoefer stamp gallery made its debut with exhibits featuring the "First U.S. Air Mail Stamps," "A World War II Soldier's Collection of Stamps from New Caledonia," and "The earliest U.S. Stamps from 1847 to 1900."

The museum was open on Thursdays and by appointment throughout the summer and hosted visitors from the local community and as far away as California. Curator Sam Cutler has been pleased with the positive response from all those involved, especially those who have donated their stamps and artifacts. The museum always welcomes gifts of stamps and related material.



Cutler is looking forward to reopening this summer, virus containment permitting. Season Two promises some new exhibits and displays and possibly some expanded hours for patrons.

To learn more about the Mequon River Postmasters and early postal service in the area, visit the Mequon River Postal Museum at the Isham Day House across from Mequon City Hall on Cedarburg Road. The Museum is open Thursdays and by appointment. For more information, contact the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society at 262-242-3107.

## From our newsletter archives (cont.)

Heavilon previously bought squatters rights and homesteaded 104 acres where Alpine Village now stands. In 1843, he sold this land and another 160 acres to William Jaeger for \$2,500 having paid only \$300 for the same 264 acres.

Heavilon sold the Wulff's Island land, 151.8 acres, to a German immigrant, Carl Milbrath, in November of 1839 for \$800. This was more than four times what he paid for the land just seven and a half months earlier.

In 1844, Milbrath's two sons, William and Frederick, each bought 37.3 acre portions of the land. The land was between Cedarburg Road and the Milwaukee River. William, who owned the northern Wulff's Island parcel, built a house there and farmed the land for 46 years, eventually selling it to his son, Martin, in 1890. Frederick lived immediately south of William and had the distinction of having the Plank Road toll gate on his property.

After farming the land for twelve years, Martin Milbrath sold the land to Conrad and Martin Kreiter on June 4, 1902. The 1905 assessment records show that the Kreiters had four (4) horses, thirteen (13) cattle, four (4) mules and two (2) wagons. In that year they sold 20 acres of the land, with its 1869 house, to Frank Linacheck.

It is believed that it was Linacheck who changed the property into a summer resort. Then in 1909, one year after the interurban line started service, Charles Wulff bought the resort and operated the business as a restaurant. In 1916, the tax assessment records show that Charles Wulff owned one (1) cow, one (1) auto and \$400 worth of merchandise stock.

By Don Silldorff  
1995

## MTHS

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### Contact Us

<b>President:</b>	Bob Blazich, 262-242-4653 rb lazich@gmail.com
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<b>Email:</b>	mthistory1939@gmail.com
<b>MTHS Phone:</b>	262-242-3107

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### Support Us

MTHS is a 501(c)(3) donor-supported organization. Your tax deductible donations are greatly appreciated.

# Facebook Friends share photos

The Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society is becoming a better known and more valued part of the Mequon-Thiensville community. One of our most recent reaches into the community is a Facebook group called YOU KNOW YOU ARE FROM MEQUON-THIENSVILLE IF... From our startup last fall, we now have more than 4,000 members, and we are continuing to grow. Group members have posted questions and pictures about our community's history, stories about their school years, and an amazing variety of family pictures and history. We are averaging about 10,000 posts, comments, or reactions each month! Yes, it is a very active and informative group. Here are a few of the items shared, described, and discussed recently by group members.



This photograph (circa 1890) was donated by group member Kim Rae Nugent. It shows the Hollnagel family who settled on 63 acres along Lake Michigan in the mid-1800s. The elder of the family, Fritz Hollnagel, is sitting on the wagon. The land was eventually sold to Milwaukee shoe-store operator, George Virmond. When Virmond died in 1939, the land was donated to Ozaukee County which established Virmond Park in southeast Mequon. The Hollnagel family home seen in this picture still stands just north of the entrance to Virmond Park.

*This photograph, probably taken during the first decade of the twentieth century, shows the Mequon Depot of the Milwaukee, Lakeshore, and Western Railroads. The depot was located just south of Mequon Road east of the present I-43 interchange. One of our members identified Jacob Donges as the third person from the right.*



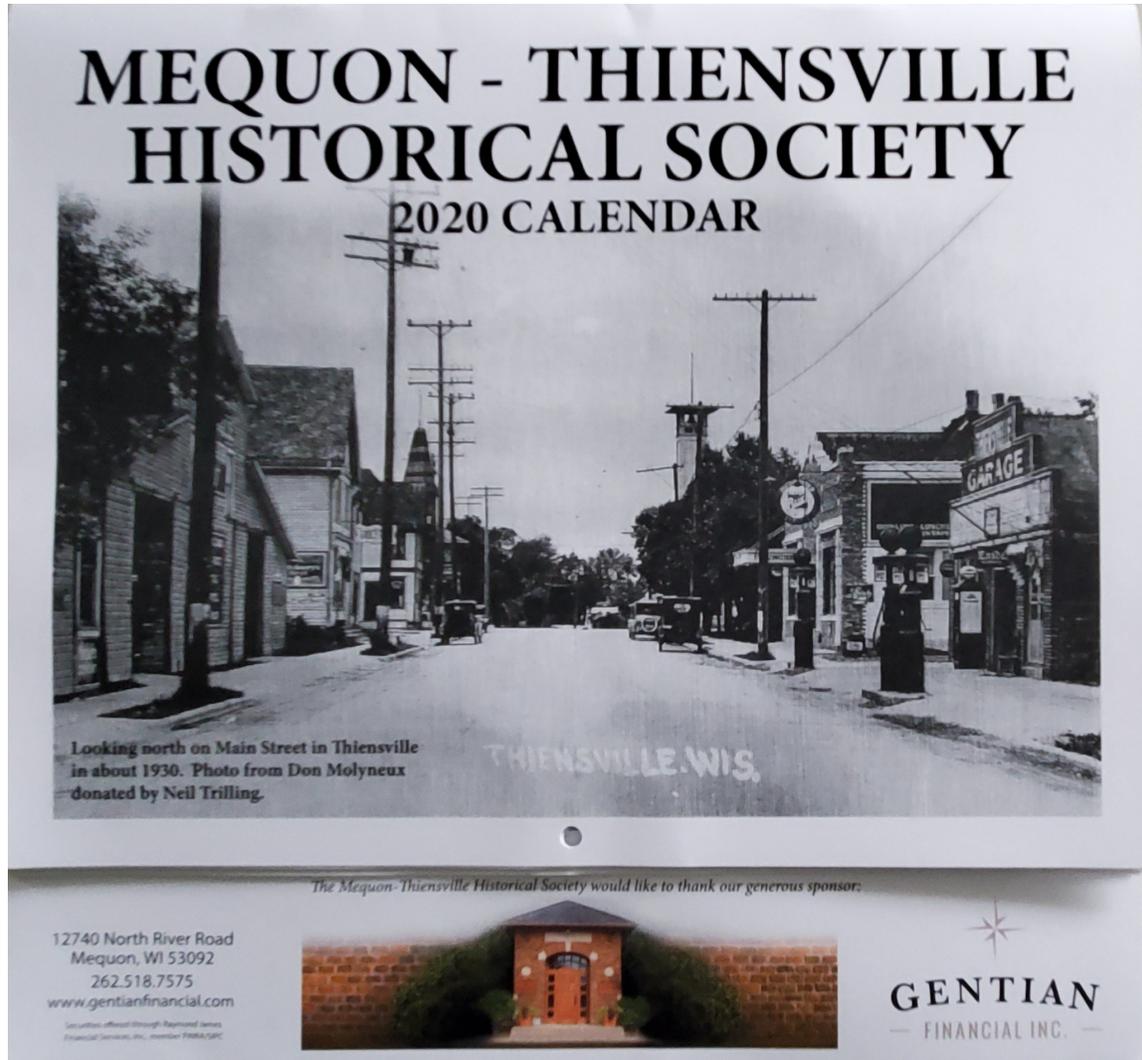
# Historic gems shared via Facebook



One of the most talked-about topics among members of our Facebook Group is the demolition of the popular Alpine Village restaurant. Originally built in 1843, the bar and restaurant has several family names associated with it: Gruenwald, Jaeger, Birth, and Buchel. In 2010, Alpine Village ceased operation. The site was a Mexican restaurant for a short time before it was vacated. The historic building stood empty and decaying for several years before it was razed in April of 2020.



# MTHS Calendar sales huge success



Thanks to our sponsor, Chris Doughty of Gentian Financial Services, our 2020 MTHS Calendar has been a huge success. For the first time, we had to go back to the Mequon Copymaster to have extra calendars printed. Part of the reason for the need for extra calendars was having them available at Chuck's Place in Thiensville. Ted, the owner of Chuck's, sold over 80 MTHS calendars to his appreciative customers. Other active pick up locations were Port Washington State Banks in Thiensville and Mequon and the Thiensville Village Hall where calendars were sold to property taxpayers.

## MTHS Wish List

**Please consider sponsoring one or more of the following archival storage items. We need at least ten of each item on the list, so your sponsorship at any level will be greatly appreciated.**

**Archival Print Boxes (\$20.45 each)**  
**High Capacity Photo Boxes (\$40.00 each)**

**Post Card Boxes (\$16.49 each)**  
**Photo Hanging Bars (\$27.90/50)**

**Photo Sheet Protectors (\$27.95/50)**

# Foxtown Brewery Supports Society



The photo includes MTHS members Mayor John Wirth (left), host Tom Nieman (center) and Wally Sommer (right).

Foxtown Brewery on Mequon Road in the Town Center hosted a major fundraiser for our historical society. Tom Nieman (center), the owner of Foxtown, and his manager, Kyle Smith, offered the opportunity for us to sell tickets to one of their soft openings prior to their actual opening date. Thanks to their generosity, we netted over \$7,000 from that one evening of fun.

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## Another memory via Facebook

MTHS member Nancy Perez submitted this sketch of the former Seyfert's General Store and Pharmacy that stood at the northeast corner of Cedarburg and Mequon Roads. The business was founded by Charles Seyfert in 1877 and remained in the Seyfert family for more than 90 years. Paul Seyfert was the last proprietor of the business.

### MEQUON-THIENSVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102

Thiensville, WI 53092

262-242-3107 | [mthistory1839@gmail.com](mailto:mthistory1839@gmail.com)

Open Thursday afternoons, 2-5pm,  
and by appointment.



***Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society***

*216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102*

*Thiensville, WI 53092*

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**VOLUNTEER!**

Call Mary Sayner, Volunteer Coordinator, at 262-242-3107 for information.

**New Historical Society Website  
coming soon**

Tim Vertz of Vertz Marketing in Mequon has volunteered to construct and host a new website for MTHS. Our current website has been sponsored by Sommers Automotive for many years but is no longer being serviced by GoDaddy. Thanks to Tim for stepping up and to Wally and Don for their many years of support.

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**Log on to**

**[www.mthistoricalsociety.org](http://www.mthistoricalsociety.org)**

**to check on our progress.**

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**VERTZ**

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