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The Newsletter of the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society

Volume 23, Number 2, Fall 2021

historic times

MTHS Provides Storyboards for Community Gateway

Members of the MT Historical Society worked with the City of Mequon and the TM Rotary Foundation to erect informational signs at the Town Center Gateway on the corner of Mequon and Cedarburg Roads. The pedestals were created by Mequon blacksmith Sam Laturi at his Storm Cloak Forge on Green Bay Road. The tree-like pedestals were designed and paid for by a member of the MTHS board who also wrote the text for the five signboards. The topics covered are; Indigenous People, The River, Thiensville, Mequon, and Town Center.



Shawn Whalen joins MTHS Board

Shawn Whalen recently moved to Mequon, and joined the MTHS board. Shawn is the US Business Development Manager for Schwank Innovative Heating Solutions and is a member of the Mequon-Thiensville Sunrise Rotary Club.



Website intern joins Historical Society



Hemanth Datta, a student at Homestead High School, has joined the MTHS volunteer team as our website intern. He is working with our website host organization, Vertz Marketing in Mequon, to get up to speed and begin to keep our website fresh and updated. Check out Hemanth's work at www.mthistoricalsociety.org.

MTHS Board of Directors

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Support Us

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

CHICAGO, WISCONSIN ??

What if I told you that Chicago should be in Wisconsin? Well, but for a gentle twist of the arm, it should. Here's why.

The original 1787 plan for the Northwest Territory had the state lines for Indiana, Ohio and Illinois in line with the bottom of Lake Michigan. But when Indiana became a state in 1816, they were granted an extra 10 miles to the north to correct for a mapping error.



Illinois, seeing this opportunity to make an adjustment to the plan, requested an extra 50 miles (8500 square miles) of land to the north. The added population helped them meet the 60,000 resident requirement for statehood. Most of the new residents came from the mining town of Galena rather than the hamlet of Chicago.

So why did the US Government go along with the Illinois request? Mississippi came into the Union as a slave state in 1817, and the Missouri Territory, a slave territory, was close to becoming a state as well. To maintain a balance, the US Government rushed Illinois to statehood in December of 1818. The state of Wisconsin was formed in 1848 after losing an appeal to recover the lost land. The state line became permanent and Chicago remained in Illinois.

The two stories on this page first appeared on our very popular Facebook group, YOU KNOW YOU ARE FROM MEQUON THIENSVILLE IF ... Started two years ago, this group now has over 4600 members who post very interesting questions, comments, pictures, and detailed answers to the questions of others. If you are not currently on Facebook, this might give you a reason to join in. It's a very informative and respectful group of people who care about our local history.



TUSKOLA COUNTY??

Another interesting story has to do with the creation of Ozaukee County. When the Wisconsin Territory was formed in 1836, the eastern part along Lake Michigan was divided into several counties. Only one county existed between Milwaukee and Sheboygan Counties, Washington County.

Wisconsin City (now Port Washington) was set as the County Seat by the Territorial Legislature, but the hamlet was soon abandoned due to a food shortage and financial problems. County business was run out of the home of William Bonniwell in the Town of Mequon until 1844 when a small building was constructed in Hamburg (now Grafton). Several communities vied to become the official county seat including Cedarburg and West Bend.

In 1848, the newly formed State of Wisconsin Legislature proposed dividing Washington County along an East-West line extending to Lake Michigan. The northern half was to be Washington County, and the southern half was to be Tuskola County. This was put to local voters in 1850 and rejected 3:1. The legislature's selection of Grafton as the County Seat was also rejected by voters in 1852.

In 1853, Port Washington and West Bend successfully lobbied to divide the county along a line from North-South. This survived a Supreme Court challenge, and our present county line was formed.

"Ozaukee" is most likely from the Chippewa term for "People of the Yellow Earth", Osagig.

\$7500 CHALLENGE !!

MTHS has not hosted a fundraising event for nearly two years due to COVID. But during that time, our monthly rent (\$1200) has been paid on time without fail. Yes, we have had a cashflow problem. In response, the members of the MTHS board have put up \$7500 as a challenge grant for our members and friends. Your donations will be matched dollar: dollar by our board. You can easily donate online at www.mthistoricalsociety.org

“WE ARE YOUR COMMUNITY STORYTELLERS”

MTHS at Taste of Mequon

The Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society had a perfect view of the main stage at Taste of Mequon. Located across from the main stage in front of the Isham Day House, we exhibited unique historical items and offered new items for purchase.

Though the Mequon River Postal Museum had closed for the season, photos of the renovations of the Isham Day House offered visitors a glimpse into the past as they documented the 1996 renovations of the former post office. The photos also showcased the amazing transformation of the Isham Day House into the current Mequon River Postal Museum and its extensive stamp collection.

The Stamp Museum will reopen in May 2022. Keep your eyes peeled for our spring newsletter. Meanwhile, brochures describing the Stamp Museum are available at the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society office, 216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102, in Thiensville.



Board members Sam Cutler, Fay Walker, and Paul Schreiber greet our Taste of Mequon guests.



... and the Library



Special thanks to Kathy Hoffman and Fay Walker for their many hours preparing the displays for Taste of Mequon and The Weyenberg Library.



Annual Meeting

Sunday, November 7, 2021

1:30pm (doors open at 1pm)

Mequon City Hall

Native American Local History

Featuring

Kate Erickson



Kate is a member of the Oneida Nation and the History Faculty at Milwaukee Area Technical College where she teaches Native American, Wisconsin Indian, State of Wisconsin, and Early American History. Kate has been teaching at MATC for over a decade after starting her teaching career at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Kate earned her bachelors degree in American Indian Studies with a focus on History and Sociology, and earned her Masters degree in Public History and Museum Studies from UWM and the Milwaukee Public Museum.

Kate is a member of the MATC Diversity Equity and Inclusion Committee, the Wisconsin Indian Education Association, the Wisconsin Archaeological Society, Bridge the Divide, NAACP Ozaukee County, and the Milwaukee FBI Community Roundtable.

MEQUON-THIENSVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102

Thiensville, WI 53092

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FACEBOOK GROUP: You Know You Are From
Mequon-Thiensville If

Open Thursday afternoons from 1-4pm,
and by appointment.

For research assistance,
call archivist Bev Silldorff at 262-242-3290

MTHS WISH LIST

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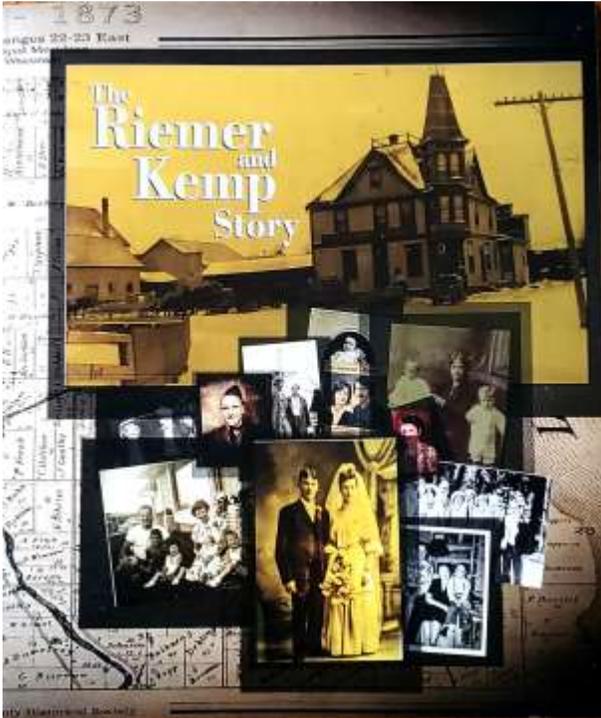
PHOTOS AND DOCUMENTS

DATA ENTRY HELP

ORAL HISTORY REFERRALS

The Reimer Kemp Family Story

Reviewed by Mary Sayner, Archivist



Rick Reimer's interest in his family's story began as a young lad when he sat listening to the stories told by his elders. This interest was noticed by extended family members; he unofficially became the Reimer Historian gathering photos, documents and stories. As his collection grew, his mother Nell encouraged him by assisting in separating "the historic from the frivolous" and suggesting ways to preserve the precious artifacts.

The result of his collection and extensive research is the publication of The Reimer Kemp Family Story now available at the Mequon Thiensville Historical Society archive.

The pictures, documents and notations offer a view of a family whose history is grounded in serfdom of Germany but through courage and determination sought freedom and land ownership in the new world.

The Reimer Kemp story is also an important part of the history of Mequon Thiensville. Riemers were not only landowners but they became successful businessmen and developers. As you page through the history you realize that the development of Thiensville and Mequon goes hand in hand with the Reimer family.

Stop in at the MTHS archive to view the Reimer Kemp Family Story but also to become aware of the other family histories that are available. You may be inspired to put together your family history or share the history that you have already written.

SUPPORT MTHS AND DO YOUR HOLIDAY SHOPPING.

SUGGESTED DONATIONS:

COLOR VERSION OF CALENDAR \$20 (B&W \$10)

FIVE HISTORIC REPRODUCTION POSTCARDS \$10



Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society

216 Green Bay Road, Suite 102

Thiensville, WI 53092

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

VOLUNTEER!

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



**I Would Like To Join or Renew
My Membership
in the Mequon-Thiensville Historical Society!**

Name(s) _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____ Tax deductible 501(c)(3) donations are appreciated.

I would like the newsletter sent to my Email Address: _____

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

Annual Membership Levels:

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

Please consider taking out a multi-year membership.

Please Mail Checks to:

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

Payments and donations are also accepted online at
www.mthistoricalsociety.org