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RECOLLECTIONS

Monticello Area Historical Society News

Year 2017, No. 4

Country Schools were Small page 7

MAHS

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Collection Archivist

Jules Cappelle

Dear Member & Friends,

Another year has nearly ended and we look back on a successful season at our museum. Visitors leave encouraging comments in our guest book. The school- focused exhibit "Chalkboards to Smart Boards" has been dismantled and work has begun on our new exhibit "Monticello of Yesteryear". Our display will feature businesses that influenced the early years in our village and some that still impact Monticello today. We especially welcome any stories and memories that you can share from the past. After the first of the year serious set-up and organizing will begin and extra hands and brains are

needed. Give us a call if you are interested.

Our Collections Manager, Jules Cappelle has been very busy and is a true asset to our operation. Thank you, Jules! Also thank you to Karen Gempler for her time cataloging, and to May Burgy and Karen Brugger for the front window displays.

And Thank You to all of you for your continued support; you should be proud of our facility and organization. It is a work in progress, and needs fresh ideas and people to keep it alive and thriving. Be part of the process!

Happy Holidays,

Mary Davis

Museum

Open

Saturdays

May thru October
 from 10 am - 2 pm

Our docent coordinators

Bill & Kay Dickson welcome all

What You Need to Know

Christmas Wish List

Your continued involvement and membership

\$15,000 to put first 100 years of the Messenger online with the State Historical Society and linked to our website.

Monticello Historical Society Facebook Page

MAHSWIS
 (Monticello Area Historical Society - Wisconsin)

MAHSWIS covers the society's news, community participation and museum updates.

Museum's Facebook

Monticello Area Historical Society, Monticello WI - Museum

The Museum's page continues to hold all the historical photos and documents for browsing and research.

The following history of Monticello was shared with all Monticello 6,7,and 8th graders.

The Monroe Evening Times, Saturday, October 13, 1973

Monticello dates back to 1834; saw mill was first item

by Miss Edna Babler

The land occupied by the village of Monticello dates back to 1834.

That was the year Robert Witter came to the region and built a saw mill on the Little Sugar River. The mill was built for his brother who soon sold it to A.F. Steadman from Ohio. That same year Steadman was made postmaster on the mail route from Monroe to Madison and was given the privilege of naming the office.

Because the region contained numerous mounds or bluffs, he chose Monticello – meaning little mountain. Three years later he plotted the village on the south side of the river and named it Monticello.

In 1848, the property was sold to a Mr. Turman and in a few months two brothers, Jacob and Mathias Marty, natives of Switzerland, bought the entire village and enlarged it, with land on both sides of the river. In 1850 Jacob Marty gave one lot to Peter Wilson, a native of Pennsylvania, on condition that he - at once – erect a house. This he did: a frame dwelling, one-story high. This was the first house on the north side of the river. Several more buildings were soon erected; rather slow work when

compared with today's construction work. Among those built were a hotel by Marty Brothers; a combined store and house by Sylvester Hill; a grist mill, built of stone and earth by O.R. Bacon, the latter in 1854, operated until his death in 1896.

The mill was then operated by Jacob Steadtler, who sold his farm to Henry Babler for \$56 an acre. The power for the mill way which was furnished by a mill way which went under the existing main street. The body of water surrounding this area was known as Lake Steadtler and covered about 30 acres.

Today in place of Lake Steadtler are the highways and a man-made lake, named Lake Montesian, which is a spring fed body of water. The lake was named in a contest; the winner being Delbert Ott, who lives along the lake.

In later years, the mill was operated by the power and light company. When the mill no longer operated, in the 1930's the building was purchased by the village and converted into a Village Hall and in July 1948, public library was opened in the same building.

The fire station was also housed in the building - until the new fire station was built near the north end of Main Street. (2017 update: New fire station now village garage).

Most of the earliest settlers in the area were from England, Switzerland and Ireland. Others came from Germany, Wales, and Austria. Some of the settlers, who came in 1845, had made the trip by sailing vessel which took 39 days. They landed at

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Monticello Area Historical Society is the acquisition, documentation, preservation and exhibition of artifacts relating to the history and culture of the Monticello area. This collection will be located in our museum, the former Woelffer Drug Store on Main Street in Monticello, Wisconsin.

VISION STATEMENT

The Monticello Area Historical Society strives to promote an interest in the uniqueness of the Monticello area by collecting and displaying artifacts that tell our community history. We further endeavor to enrich the community by connecting them to the past and saving the present to enhance the future.

New Orleans, came up the Mississippi River to Galena, Il, and traveled overland to Green County , settling in the Monticello area. Some had but 50 cents; at most a couple of dollars. It has been said that the only capital they really had was good health and willing hands.

Several who came from Pennsylvania traveled by canal boats to Chicago and then hired a team of horses to come overland. In 1849, others started on a steamer from Boston; by railroad to Buffalo, by the lakes to Milwaukee, and then overland.

After purchasing land, the settlers had to travel by foot, horseback, or wagon to the land office in Mineral Point for their deeds.

One of the few stores in the county started by a Grange was in Monticello in 1875. John Richards, a native of England, became owner of the store and after his death, the business was carried on by his children. The building and contents were destroyed by fire. Shortly after that the Knight Estate, owners of the property, erected a fine business block upon the same site. Today, in 1973, in place of the Grange Store is newly remodeled Gempeler's supermarket, completed in July.

By 1888, Monticello had two railroads. The old wooden buildings were torn down and modern business blocks took their places. The village was incorporated and had a fine system of water works and electricity, both owned and operated by the municipality, two hotels, a sound bank, a meat market, several general stores, two hardwares, and various other businesses including numerous saloons.

Some years later, several of the business houses consolidated under the name of People's Supply Co. In 1943, People's Supply became Blum's Store and in 1967 William E. Blum sold his business to William F. and Thomas Dickson. Shortly afterwards William F. became sole owner. (2017 update: After Dickson's Grocery, building was Pederson Hardware and now is

Quilter's Compass LLC).

In the early 1900's the drugstore was owned by Pharmacist E.W. Van Norman, who sold to Royal W. Woelffer Sr., in October 1915. Since January 1949 Royal W. Woelffer Jr. has been the owner operator. All owners were registered pharmacists.

In 1866, a stock company was organized as Monticello Manufacturing Co., that built a woolen mill that same year and two years later a store house. Fourteen persons were employed at the mill that used about 20,000 pounds of wool per year. Blankets, woolen cloth, yarns, batting and even balmorals were made. A saw mill, connected with the woolen mills, was built in 1865, 10 years before the woolen mill.

Orrin Bacon was president of the company and Thomas Sears, secretary. Some years later the woolen mill was purchased and operated by Dominic Kennedy; later by his son and eventually his grandsons. In May 1950, the mill burned down and was never rebuilt.

The Monticello Post Office established in 1848, with A.F. Steadman the first postmaster, was then in a house. Among the early postmasters were L.B. Aldrich, E.F. Wright, Albert Edwards, Ira Pierce, and Charles Kennedy. In the 1920's the postmaster was E.J. Blum; from 1934-49, Roswell Richards, and from 1949 to 1961 Harry Walters. The present postmaster is Mrs. Wilbert (Viola) Stauffer.

The post office was located in several different buildings. In 1965, it was moved to the present location, in a new building, moving from the Lynn Block. The Lynn buildings had housed a locker plant for a number of years and is now the doctor's office (2017 update: now Tri-Insure LLC).

For a brief period, beginning in 1874, Monticello had its first newspaper. Monticello Items, was published by Stair and Lane, both editors and publishers. The paper was neutral in politics.

The present weekly, The Monticello Messenger, was established in 1896 by Earl Richards. In 1936 it was purchased by Clarence Wittenwyler, who continues its publication in its 37th year, (2017 update: Now merged with Belleville and New Glarus and called Post Messenger Recorder)

The first resident physician located in Monticello in 1854 was Dr. E.S. Knapp. Several others came later but the pioneer medical doctor remembered by older residents of Monticello is Dr. Flowers. He came here in 1875. He practiced in the same building as the late Dr. Edward Blummer, remembered by many.

Dr. Blumer died March 19, 1930, from pneumonia and complications attributed to exposure while going to the aid of Village Marshall Fred Jordan who had been gunned down and fatally wounded by Gottfried Gottier, Footville youth, charged and later sentenced to State Prison. Dr. Blumer at that time was also the village president.

Among other medical-surgical men were Drs. Helmes, O.S. Blum, C.O. Miller, Lucas, Benkendorf, Olson, and Stovall. Then for about a four year-year period, Monticello was without a resident doctor. Dr. E.C. Aquino started his practice in October 1967. (2017 update: Doctor "Ed" Aquino retired in March 2000. Dr. Aquino was affiliated with the Monroe Clinic which closed the Monticello office, leaving Monticello without a doctor.)

Monticello had an osteopath, Dr. John M. Harden, from about 1940 until his death in 1960. Dr. Driver took over a brief time during Dr. Harden's illness. The village now has one chiropractor, T. K. Freitag, who began practice in October 1970.

Steinmann Architects firm has been in business since 1912. J. C. Steinmann Jr. founded the firm and his son, John W. a registered architect, came into the firm in 1946. Howard Steinmann, brother of John W. has also been with the firm since 1946 and is specifications writer and firm manager. Robert

Getman is job captain and project coordinator the past 12 years.

John W.'s son, John, also a registered architect, joined the firm most recently.

In the past 12 years, the firm has designed buildings in 12 states. In the past 27 years their designs covered over a hundred million dollars of buildings. Just a few of them: Wisconsin Pavilion at New York World's Fair, New York City; Gonstead Clinic and Karakahl Inn, Mt. Hoerb; First National Bank at Stoughton; St. Joseph's Geriatric Hospital, River Falls; Karmenta Nursery Home, Madison, and many others. (2017 update: In Feb. 2014 Carl N. Fink established Fink Horejsh, LLC a structural engineering firm at 141 N. Main St.)

Voegeli Garage has been in business since 1916; the first two years the owners, Leon Voegeli and Ray Schoonover, sold Fords. They then sold out the Ford franchise to Karlen's and in years that followed sold Nash and Chevrolet; discontinuing the former lines in 1930. From 1934 on they have had the Buick and Chevrolet lines. Voegeli bought out Schoonover in 1946.

John Stenbrotten, son-in-law of Voegeli, joined the sales department and is now part owner. Since May 1, a corporation was formed and three grandsons of Voegeli are now active in sales and service departments.

The present modern garage was built in 1956 on the site where an old blacksmith shop once stood. In the Spring of 1972, the old garage, just north of the present, was removed. (2017 update: In 1987 the building was doubled in size.)

The Karlen garage was established 55 years ago – it was first known as Karlen & Sons; started by H.L. Karlen and Sons, Royal W. Sr. and Cloyance W. Last February the firm became known as Karlen-Wold. Inc. with Royal W. Karlen Jr. and Dennis L. Wold heading the new firm. (2017 update: The Ford dealership and

building was purchased by Steve Stenbroten in Sept. 1995. In 2015 the Ford dealership moved to its present location on Highway 69)

New buildings in Monticello in the recent years included Junior High School in 1966; Post Office building 1965; Durtschi Apartments 1968; Monticello Cheese Processing plant 1971; Laidlaw Plant 1972; Clear View Apartments in 1972; and Rolph Apartments in 1973.

Next Meeting
Thursday, 7 p.m.
January 25



Monticello second grade students visited the museum this fall. Thank you Kay Dickson.



Cheesemaker Ed Wittwer each Christmas had a party. Everyone attending received \$100. (Document found with deed of house during recent purchase.)

House located at intersection of Main and East Lake Ave.



Before our school house display was dismantled, Hans & Kathleen Sulzer, Lois Hopkins, and Roger Dooley shared their childhood experiences of attending a one room schoolhouse. All 6th, 7th, and 8th graders enjoyed the experience.





surprised me was that their food had to be rationed. Sugar was rationed along with butter because of the war. Also, they would collect milkweed at their homes and then take them to school. A man would then pick it up because people needed to make life jackets for the soldiers. They would also pick up scrap metal for all of the equipment. I thought it was really cool how the woman we were talking to would in the winter when the road icy would hop in her sled and get a push down the hill to her school. The woman we were talking to also said she lived in a very traditional family. Their house was on one side of the road and the farm on the other. The girls were not allowed on the other side. However, they did do a lot of gardening work on their side of the road. She said her family would do 100 quarts of each individual vegetable from their garden to prepare for winter. She also mentioned how she was very fortunate that her mother had a car and drove into town when needed so that they didn't need to walk. I was very surprised when she said it very rare to see a woman driving.

Student Journal

Talking to the woman we were put with was extremely interesting. One thing I found interesting was that there was only about 10 kids in the entire schoolhouse. I knew that country schools were small, but I would have never guessed that they were that tiny. One thing that

TO BECOME A MAHS MEMBER

Mail this form and payment to the museum address or give them to our membership chairperson.

Membership year: May—April

Individual dues - \$20/yr

Family dues - \$30/yr

▶ CASH CHECK PAYABLE TO MAHS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL: _____

PHONE: _____

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN

THE MONTICELLO AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEETINGS ARE HELD THE 4TH THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH, **EXCEPT** JULY, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER, IN THE NORTH ROOM OF ZWINGLI CHURCH ANNEX IN MONTICELLO, WIS.

MAHS Museum

P.O. Box 463
204 N. Main St.
Monticello, WI 53570
Phone: (608) 938-4216
Email: mahs@tds.net

Hours of Operation

The museum will be open
May 5 until October 27, 2018
but can be open by appointment for anyone or a
group wishing to stop by.

For special group or individual tours,
call the museum at (608) 938-4216 or send your request to
mahs@tds.net.

Admission to the museum is free and
a quarterly newsletter from your home
town is included.

Please consider including the Monti-
cello Area Historical Society in your will.

A guided tour of the museum can be
arranged for all groups anytime.

MAHS Museum
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