



# RECOLLECTIONS

OCTOBER 2012

## MAHS Museum

P.O. Box 463  
204 N. Main St.  
Monticello, WI, 53570  
(608) 938-4216  
MAHS@tds.net  
monticellohistoricalsociety.org

## Hours of Operation

Saturday 10 AM – 2 PM  
or by appointment  
Closed for the season  
November – April

## Board Members

President – Mary Davis  
Vice-Pres. – Donald Kubly  
Secretary – May Burgy  
Treas. – Jennifer Blumer  
Member - John Casey  
Member - Michael Wayland  
Member - Karen Brugger

## Collection Manager

William Zimmerman

## Collection Archivist

Karen Gempeler

## Volunteer Coordinators

Docents - Bill & Kay  
Dickson  
Programs - Donna Ferguson  
Membership - Carol Schultz  
Newsletter - Roger Dooley

## **Museum news:**

The July newsletter left the impression that the photograph of trenching on Monticello's Main St. was a companion to the sewer installation article below the photo. **Jack Stenbrotten**, who after years as village president certainly qualifies as an expert, identified the trenching as being for water lines. It seems that village water lines have always been installed near the curb and sewer lines are always installed in trenches up the middle of the street.

People have asked whether the airfield was built or not? It obviously wasn't built but I haven't had time to find out why. Maybe someone could dig up the facts for me?

This is the last quarter of the "Sports of all Sorts" display. Do stop in and see it before it disappears at the end of October. This winter we will create a new display titled "Women's Work Is Never Done" and have it ready for our 2013 season.

Our October 25th general membership meeting will feature **Angela Babler**, owner of the New Glarus bakery. I don't know if she'll bring samples or not, but come and find out.

Reminder: October's meeting will be the last for this calendar year because of the seasonal holidays. The next regularly scheduled general membership meeting will be January 24, 2013.

Our Collection Manager, **William Zimmerman**, is currently working at a part-time job in Indiana and expects to be gone for several months. During that time I've agreed to fill in as Interim Collection Manager.

**Karen Brugger** would like to make a window display about the area century farms. Anyone with artifacts or pictures they'd be willing to donate for a short period, please contact Karen or the museum.

In September we participated in the Monticello village garage sale days. Thanks to many generous donors we had a nice group of items to sell and, not surprisingly, we did rather well financially clearing \$1140.00. The common comment from donors was "We're downsizing, can you use some of our things for the sale?" Well folks, keep on downsizing and remember to set things aside for next year's historical society garage sale. We have to thank the Lions and Lioness club for allowing us to share their park shelter on those sometimes

rainy, blustery days. As a thank you we've offered to replace their doorknob lock assemblies. They appear to have been glued shut by some vandals.

It's almost the end of the grass mowing season so it's about time we thanked **Bill Dickson** for tending to the plot of grass behind our museum. It always looks great but too few people ever stop to admire it. Well done, Bill!

### **The following artifacts were donated this past quarter.**

**Mrs. Ruth Elmer** – Collection of photographs related to the Elmer and Theiler families

**Kim Tschudy** – Digital copies of old photos of road construction in the Monticello area and a cattle drive down Monticello main street

**Ms. Dorothy Schlapbach** – Collection of Indian artifacts found by **Waldo Zimmerman** on **Ed Blum's** Farm in Washington township

**Helen & Merlyn Loveland** – Wooden egg crate. Text stenciled on both sides: "When I Am Full Return Me To The Peoples Supply Co., Monticello, Wis." Used by **Mr. Clarence Loveland**  
Stereoscope picture viewer and slides from the estate of **Henry J. "Grocery Hank" and Rena Elmer**

**Mrs. Beth Tetzlaff** – Photographic postcards of early Monticello activities

**Mrs. Nancy Elmer** – Newcomb "Studio" loom, circa 1946, used by **Mr. & Mrs. Leon Elmer, Sr.** to weave rugs

**Grainger, Inc.** – Monetary triple match donation via **Don Kubly**

**May Burgy** – Memorial for **Alice Woelffer**

**Mike Wayland** – \$60

**Mike and Mary Davis** – Memorial for **Leon Gempeler**

**Lois Hammerly-Marty-Iverson** - Vintage ladies hats, vintage clothing from **Mrs. Maud Legler-Hammerly**, 50 photographic postcards circa 1913.



Recipe from a Peoples Supply Co. recipe pamphlet, circa 1915.

## **“Abie” Freitag Broadcasts Trombone Solo to Home Folks**

Monticello radio fans enjoyed an exceptional radio treat on Tuesday evening of this week, when they had the pleasure of listening in on a radio program which was broadcasted from station WCAE, Pittsburg, Pa., by Jack Denny and His Famous Band, one of Paul Whiteman's noted orchestras, now appearing at one of the leading theatres of that city, and with which organization Clarence F. Freitag, Monticello boy, “officialates” as trombone soloist.

Several groups of fans listened in at the several receiving “stations” in the village, and the program was also heard at several “stations” in the country roundabout. The home folks were out to “get” the program because of a telegram received by “Abie's” parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry F. Freitag, earlier in the day, advising as to the time and station from which the program would be broadcasted.

After the program was well under way the bunch at the “Midway station,” conceived the idea of sending “Abie” a telegram and Agent Wright, of the Milwaukee road, willingly volunteered to make the trip to the depot to get the message off. In the message there was a hurrah for the Denny Band and information that the home folks were listening in and the program was coming through fine.

The telegram was sent at 9:48 p. m. It was not more than ten or twelve minutes later when the crew at the Midway and other local “stations” were pleasantly surprised to hear the announcer at the Pittsburg station state in effect that “Clarence F. Freitag is advised by telegram that the home-folks are listening-in at Monticello, Wis., and he will play a trombone solo, entitled “The Girl I Love Belongs to Somebody Else,” for their special benefit.

Then followed the big treat of the evening. Not only was the solo a treat because it was cleverly executed and came through as clear as a bell, but it was doubly so because it came as a musical message from a Monticello boy to the folks in the old home town. It was, indeed, an event worthy of more than ordinary note and was a forceful demonstration of one of the more

recent marvels of the present age.

The Denny orchestra is now appearing at the Lowe-Aldine theatre, Pittsburg. It was announced that the orchestra would again broadcast tonight (Thursday) and also Saturday night, the programs to start at 10 p. m., central standard time, each evening.

In case atmospheric conditions are favorable, the programs will be “relayed” from the Karlen theatre by means of a Western Electric loud speaker.

—*MONTICELLO MESSENGER, MARCH 24, 1924*

**Note:** Clarence F. Freitag, also know as “Slim,” was also a Monticello aviation pioneer who, when his orchestra playing days were over, became vice-president of marketing for the Howard Aviation Co. of Chicago. This company went out of business in 1944.

## **'Abie' Freitag Covers 220 Miles in 1 Hour and 13 Minutes**

Flying one of 12 planes on an airport dedication tour throughout practically the entire state of Illinois, Clarence F. Freitag, better known to his many Monticello friends as “Abie” or “Slim,” has just returned to Chicago where he has made his home for a number of years.

“Slim,” who was piloting a new Stinson plane covered a stretch of 220 miles in exactly one hour and 13 minutes.

Dedicatory speeches at the airport stops were made by Governor Henry Horner, chief executive of the state of Illinois. On one day alone, the squadron covered 700 miles, stopping in six different cities for dedicatory rites.

“Slim” has been interested in aviation for several years and is a salesman for the Stinson company with Chicago as his headquarters. The former local youth, who has the distinction of having played for some of the country’s leading dance orchestras—including Wayne King, Roger Wolfe Kahn, and Jack Denny—has given up music temporarily at least and is now devoting his time solely to aviation.

—*MONTICELLO MESSENGER, NOV. 15, 1934*

## MAYTAG GYRAFOAM WASHER



### Demonstration In Your Own Home

We have been successful in securing the services of a factory representative for a short time to demonstrate the new Maytag Gyrafoam Washer.

## JOE J. VOEGELI

Call at our store or Phone 30 for a Free Demonstration at Your Home

### Woelffer's New Entrance

The work of installing the new front in the Woelffer building is progressing nicely and the work will doubtless be pretty well finished by the end of another week. This new front will differ from that of any other store in the village, in that it is of the recessed style and affords considerable more display space than that of the ordinary front. In addition to the two side windows, there will be a center display window set back several feet from the front proper, with an entrance on each side thereof. The entire front will be of copper and plate glass, making a welcoming addition to the many attractive store fronts on Main street. The work is being done by F. D. Taft and A. W. Stout, the former having the contract for the installation of the front. P. J. Aultman, electrical contractor, is doing the wiring for the electric lights.

—MONTICELLO MESSENGER, JULY 13, 1922

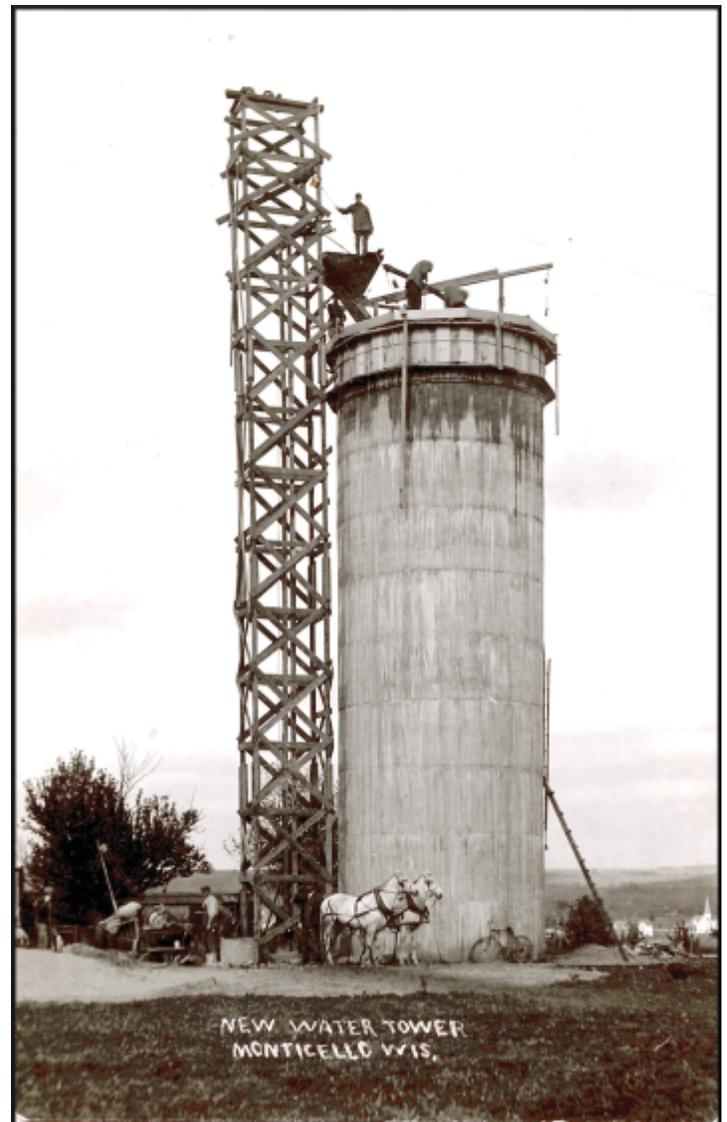
### Electric Light Service Curtailed

Owing to the present shortage of coal, especially as regards the local situation, the local electric light and power plant will be placed on a sixteen hour schedule until further notice, or until such time as a new supply of coal is received. During this period of curtailment the hours of service will be from 6 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock in the evening, excepting on Wednesday and Saturday nights, when the service will be extended to the usual time, 11 o'clock. Edward Blumer, M. D., Village President

—MONTICELLO MESSENGER, JAN. 18, 1918

Eggs will be high next winter, so begin early to pickle your winter supply. A special formula can be obtained at Woelffer's drug store.

—MONTICELLO MESSENGER, SEPT. 2, 1917



## **Herman Wittwer: Insurance Entrepreneur**

Herman L. Wittwer was born in Monticello the son of Albert and Mary (Dick) Wittwer. Albert and Mary operated Monticello's Wittwer Hotel (also known as the Grand Central Hotel) along



with Albert's brother Gottfried and Gottfried's wife Helena Dick, who happened to be Mary's sister. Both Albert and Gottfried died in 1908 and the Hotel continued to be operated by their widows. (Another Wittwer brother, Samuel, married another Dick sister, Rosina.) The Wittwer brothers were born in Spiez, Canton Bern and immigrated to Green County with their parents Christian and Maria (Schneider) Wittwer in 1879. The Dick sisters were born in Green County the daughters of immigrants Johannes Dick and his wife Verena Iseli. The Dick and Iseli families were also Berners – the Dicks from Etzelkofen and the Iselis from Wynigen.

Herman Wittwer attended the University of Wisconsin and following graduation worked in the insurance field. He decided business was not for him and enrolled at Marquette University Dental School. Wittwer played the clarinet and he used his musical talent to play in bands to earn money for his education. But he will not be remembered for his musical abilities or filling cavities but for the founding of Madison, WI's only Fortune 500 firm, American Family Insurance. *(Pictured is Herman Wittwer with his daughter Jane in 1919.)*

An idea formulated in Wittwer's mind that insuring farmers who owned automobiles might just be an insurance niche to develop. He founded the Farmers Mutual Insurance Company in 1927 which ultimately became American Family Mutual Insurance Company and American Family Life Insurance Company, of which he served as Chairman of the Board.

Herman Wittwer's idea flourished. Today American Family Insurance boasts \$16.8 billion in assets, \$5.4 billion in equity, \$6.3 billion in revenue and life insurance in forces is greater than \$86 billion. AmFam is a major area employer contracting or employing 11,300 people.

Wittwer died in 1968 and is buried in Madison's Roselawn Memorial Park.