

*Valentine*  
SNIPPETS of SALEM

440 – Fox River Valley  
Legend  
USA'76  
Spring, 1976  
Vol 1, Issue 1

Contents:

The first of two publications pertaining to the history of the area.

The second of the series is in booklet #439.

The original booklets were printed in two color.

Depending on the PDF size, the original pages may be in color.

There will not be a paper booklet of this PDF.

The original documents will be relocated to the WKCHS school house library.

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NOTE:

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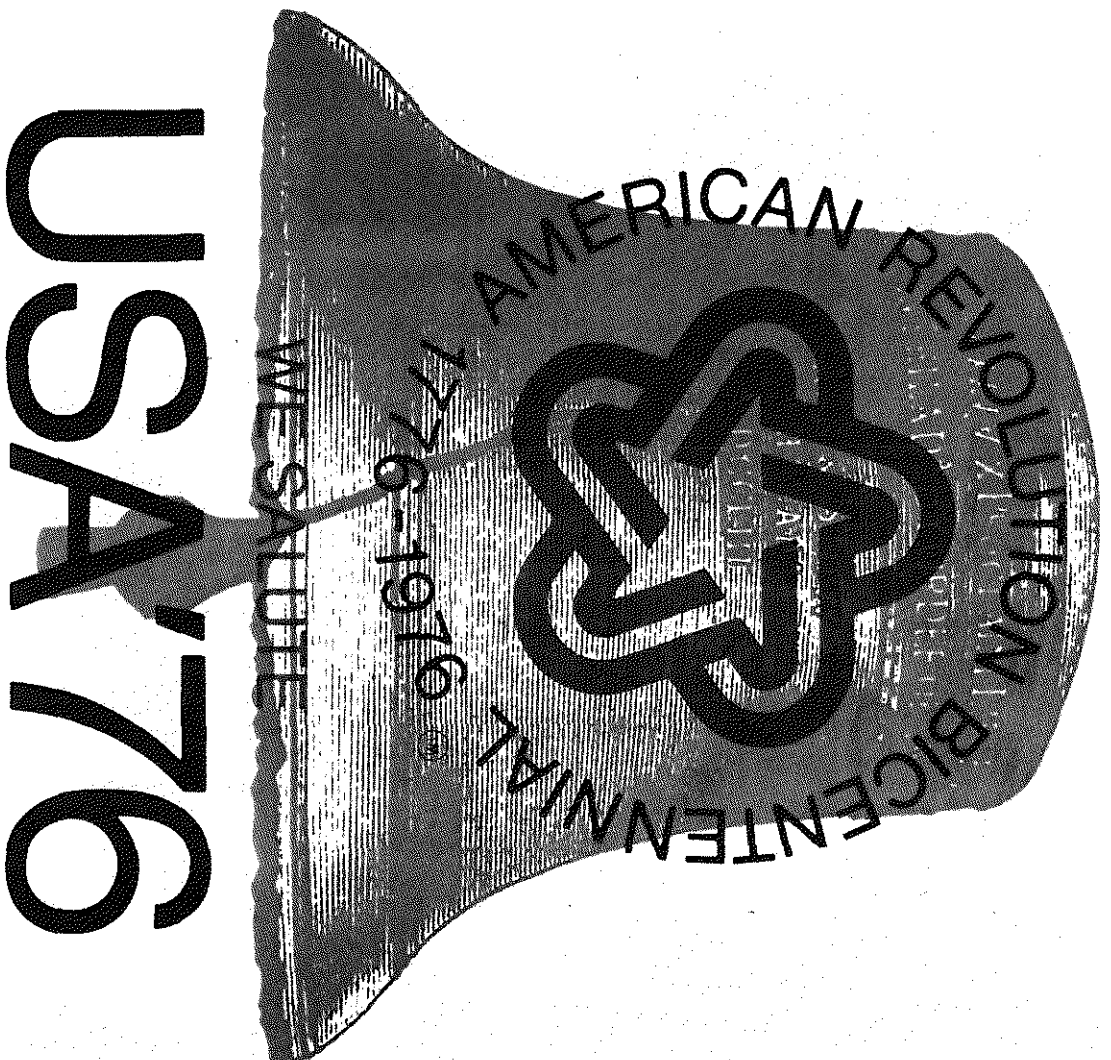
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Western Kenosha County Historical Society

**VALLEY** FOX RIVER  
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**USA 76**

## Congratulations Western Kenosha County!

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# RANDALL TOWNSHIP

VOLUME I      ISSUE 1

SPRING, 1976

Western Kenosha County Historical Society

## FOX RIVER VALLEY LEGEND

Published in cooperation with the Western Kenosha County Historical Society, a non-profit organization.

MICHAEL PALECEK  
EDITOR

JOHNSON BUSINESS FORMS  
PUBLISHER

The LEGEND is distributed free to all post office boxholders and rural route patrons residing west of Interstate Highway 94 in Kenosha County, Wisconsin.

BUSINESS OFFICE:  
Johnson Business Forms  
Highway KD  
Bassett, Wisconsin

Advertising Representatives:  
J. P. McBride  
R. D. Johnson  
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Address all inquiries and correspondence to: Editor, Fox River Valley Legend, P. O. Box 115, Bassett, Wisconsin 53101.

## Editorial

A historical society, to many, seems like a stuffy group of old people who have nothing better to do than to think of the "good old days" and to wish they were back there. In the case of the Western Kenosha County Historical Society, this illusion is a great disillusion.

Recently, I had the opportunity of attending the society's winter dinner, held in the home of one of its members. True, there were many senior citizens there, but on the other hand, there was a balance of younger people as well. These persons, some still only in their teens, do not just sit back in the group, in the back rows and stifled because they haven't been around long enough. They are as much a speaking part of the society as anyone else.

The society has a cross-section of persons from all walks of life, from ministers and teachers, to housewives, laborers, office workers and retirees. They are all equal, sharing their knowledge of old, as well as new-found information of Kenosha County's past.

They are amateurs, they are not scholars. They are common people, in their thinking, acting, and living, like the rest of us. I say this to encourage each one of you interested, to join. Input is requested and needed to further document our local history, but not demanded in the least. One need only attend and listen to accounts of yesteryear and witness the past come alive.

But why is all of this important? Some say "who cares about the past, let it be forgotten." But the past should be remembered, to learn from it and to appreciate things as they are now, because something can be appreciated better when it is understood and how and why it happened and what happened to it from its conception to the current moment.

The people of the Western Kenosha County Historical Society realize this idea, and they work to uncover the past for all of us to appreciate. For this, the LEGEND salutes them.

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## History Has Recorded-

### What's In A Name

*(Editor's Note: For a long time, persons have tried to compile a historical description of all settlements in Kenosha County. In the next paragraphs, the LEGEND presents a list of sketches on the communities of the area. Perhaps some will disagree with this listing, saying it is not complete. Perhaps they will say it is not representative of the total history. And, the LEGEND agrees, it is not a total history, only a small sketch. In the issues to come we wish to put down for all to read the history of each community in detail, not all at once, but a little at a time.)*

#### Kenosha County Boundaries

By an act of the Wisconsin Legislature, approved January 30, 1850, Kenosha County was created from portions of Racine County. The boundaries of Kenosha County were established as follows and remain the same to date:

Beginning at the southwest corner of township 1, range 19 east, of the meridian aforesaid in the southern boundary of this state, hence northerly along the eastern boundary line of this state to the township line between townships 2 and 3 north. Thence south on said range line to the section line between ranges 19

and 20 east; thence south on said range line to the section line between section 24 and 25, township 2 north, range 19 east; thence west on said section line to the range line between ranges 18 and 19 east; thence south on said range line to the place of beginning.

-Origin and Legislative History of County Boundaries in Wisconsin.

#### BAIN (Pleasant Prairie Twp.)

Bain is listed on train timetables, and has been for about 100 years. It was originally the stopping point for the Bain Wagon Works, but now is the stopping point for freight on the southwest side of Kenosha.

#### BASSETT (Randall Twp.)

Bassett is named after Henry Bassett, a local pioneer settler, having purchased 120 acres in 1842. The village was named in his honor when he donated land to the Kenosha and Davenport Railroad to build through the community.

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#### BENEDICT LAKE (Salem and Bristol Twp.) (Lake County, Illinois)

The Benedictine Fathers, owning the south half of the lake front property and some five hundred acres of local land, established a monastery and seminary here in 1945. The Benet Lake post office was established near the monastery, and the lake took on the name.

Some of the property owners on the north end of the lake objected to the change and took it to the county circuit court. The case was not contested, and in the end the judge decided the lake should have two legal names: Shangri-La for the

north half, and Benet Lake for the south half.

The lake was earlier named Cooper Lake. Benet comes from the old English form of the word "Benedict" one of the famous saints of England.

#### BONG (Brighton Twp.)

Bong was established as a site of an Air Force base in the late 1940's but was later abandoned, and fell

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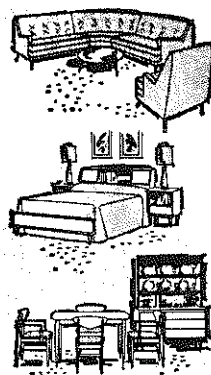
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into disuse. Overgrown, the property was originally condemned by the government and reverted back to Kenosha County and Wisconsin control. The county has recently turned portions of Bong Base into snowmobile trails, shooting ranges, natural areas, as well as golf courses. Part of Bong Base is also natural wildlife areas or hunting preserves.

Bong is named after General Bong, a Milwaukee Air Force Commander who was relieved of his duties during World War One for his ideas on aircraft use during war. His ideas were used in fighting during the Second World War.

#### BRIGHTON

Brighton, a farming community, settled by a mixed group of immigrants and New Englanders, was started in the early 1840's. During the years, much emphasis was placed on religion, education and family life as well as the necessary way of life for almost all farming. The township did not drastically grow, but wavered with population change, as crop conditions changed.

It is now beginning to grow with the very beginnings of urban sprawl in the region.

#### BRISTOL

There are two conflicting stories as to the naming of Bristol. One states that in 1837, with a mail route going to the community from Southport, a name was necessary, and the town was named in honor of Rev. Ira Bristol, a religious leader and early settler. The other story states that the name was suggested by David Wilder, an early settler who came from Bristol, New York. This story states that in December, 1837, a meeting was held at the home of A. B. Jackson, a community leader, where the deciding vote was taken.

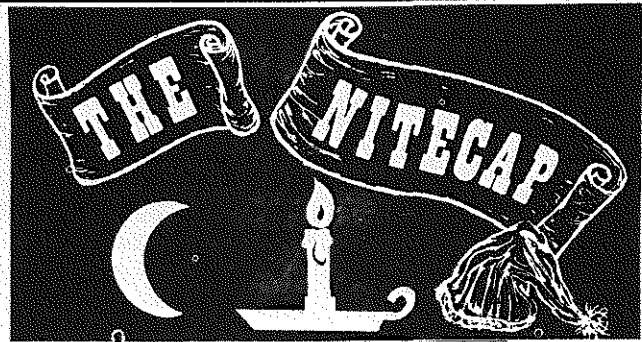
Either way, Bristol, as a stop on the Kenosha-Davenport Railroad, as well as along Highway 45 (an old Indian trail from Chicago to Milwaukee), grew to a significant central farming town.

#### CAMP LAKE (Salem Twp.)

Legend states that Camp Lake was named so because it was an old Indian campsite with a view of

three lakes, a rolling timbered hillside and a pleasant glade. Camp Lake grew through the ice industry and resort industry, due both to railroad transportation (Wisconsin

Central). Planned summer home subdivisions were later initiated at Camp Lake, and for a time during the 1920's, Camp Lake had its own radio station, WCLO-AM.



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Looking South along Bristol's Main Street. - Historical Society Photo

**FOX RIVER**  
(Salem and Wheatland Twps.)

The Fox River was named as an interpretation of Potawatomi "Pisteka" meaning Fox of Five River. Pisteka is the formal geographic and historical name for the river, for there are two other Fox Rivers in Wisconsin; one which flows into the Wisconsin River, and the other into Green Bay. The Pisteka flows into the Illinois River.

Once used for water power, milling and barge transportation, the river's

main purpose today is for municipal water service and water recreation.

**KENOSHA**

Kenosha is the Potawatomi Indian name for "pike" or "pickeral". The first white hunters and trappers are reported as having used Kenosha in reference to the region. The city was first called Pike and later Southport, because it was the southernmost port in Wisconsin. Kenosha incorporated as a city in 1850, at the same time the county separated from Racine County, the community and county took on the original Indian name.

served as a stopping point for settlers to traverse to other areas to settle. Liberty Corners served in its finest capacity as the social, religious, and education center of the rural area. During the 1840's, it was the site of the first fraternal organization in the area. During the 1860's, it was the center of the region's Congregational Church (remaining open until 1913) as well as the meeting point for the Kenosha County Teacher's Annual Conventions. Mary D. Bradford, famous Kenosha County educator, taught school at Liberty Corners, as well as at Paris in Kenosha County.

At one time, Liberty Corners was proposed as the site of a college but the town fathers would not permit its construction. The college pro-

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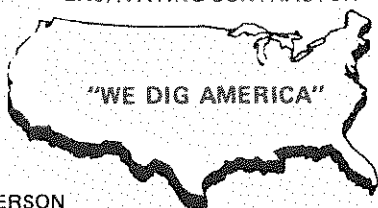


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posed, was later founded as Ripon (Wisconsin) College, still in existence today.

**NEW MUNSTER  
(Wheatland Twp.)**

This German settlement atop a glacial hill, one of Kenosha County's most scenic stops, was named by immigrants during the 1840's after Munster in Germany. It served as a farming center for northwest Kenosha County, as a stop on the stage route, and a refreshing inn area on the Geneva Road. It was recorded as a community in the U.S. Census of 1880.

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**PADDOCK LAKE  
(Salem Township)**

Paddock Lake was originally settled by the Paddock family in the late 1850's and became the site of the Old Settler's Association annual picnic. From that event, came the founding of the Old Settler's Park. Paddock Lake grew largely through the use of planned subdivision by George Illges, Jr. and Sr., and as a rural retreat for city folk, because travel to Kenosha is relatively convenient. The community was incorporated as a village in 1960.

**PARIS  
(Paris Township)**

The generally flatland township of Paris, serving as an agricultural region from its beginning, was founded by Seth Meryick in 1838 and named after his former home in Oneida County, New York. Not being blessed with lakes or railroads, the township has had either slow growth or decline in the past century, and is just recently showing an increase due primarily to urban spillover from the lakeshore cities.

**PLEASANT PRAIRIE**

Pleasant Prairie was named for its appeal to many settlers who saw the ease of planting and farming in the prairie, a place where there was neither log, or root or rock to make plowing difficult, with rich soil fertilized by constant natural prairie fires. The township was settled by 1844. Like Somers Township, it was affected, and will remain influenced by urban Kenosha.

**POWERS LAKE  
(Randall Twp.)**

Powers Lake was a recreation area until the ice industry came into the area in the late 1870's. There

was said to have been several huge hotels on the lake, some of which have burned to the ground years ago. After the days of the ice industry were over, Powers Lake became somewhat of a hideout for bootleggers, needing a place to make booze. It also served as a quick getaway spot to Canada and a site to set the cast for illegal activities. After prohibition, Powers Lake continued in its resort role to the present day. The name of the lake is believed to honor an early settler.

**RANDALL  
(Randall Twp.)**

Until recent years, Randall has been small in population compared to other Kenosha County townships,



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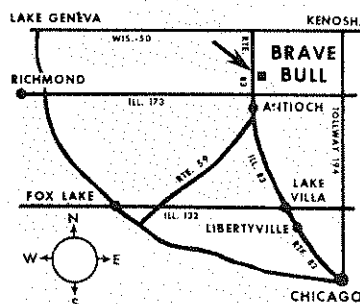
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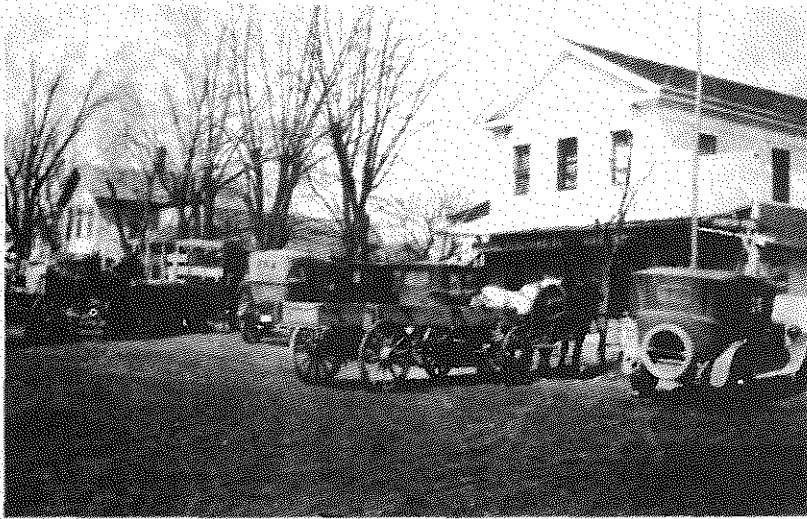
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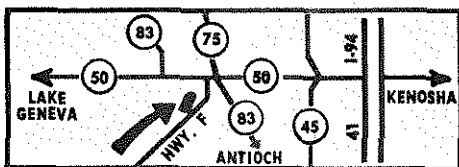


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and has been largely agriculturally oriented. It was split from Wheatland Township in 1850 when Kenosha County was created from portions of Racine County. Randall Township was named after Wisconsin Governor Alexander Randall, the governor at the time of the township's birth.

### SALEM

The community of Salem is another example of a group of farmlands which became a settlement where the railroad crossed a major pathway (now Highway 83). The town became the center of the area in the 1880's when the Kenosha-Davenport was constructed through the new town. It was originally known as Salem Station.

Salem Township was reportedly settled primarily by persons from New England and New York. Settlement occurred in 1837 in Liberty Corners.

### SILVER LAKE (Salem Twp.)

The village of Silver Lake, incorporated in 1920, was a main railroad junction in Salem Township. The

Kenosha-Davenport and the Wisconsin Central Railroads crossed one another just north of town. The community thrived through a combination of railroad commerce and the ice industry. At one time there were seven ice houses around the shore lines of Silver Lake. The village supposedly took its name from the silvery sheen of the waters in the evening moonlight.

General John Bullen set up the first inn at the Fox River in Silver Lake in the 1840's. The inn was terminal of the Kenosha Plank Road which ran from Highway K to the present Highway 75, and on through the old Brass Ball Corners (a block

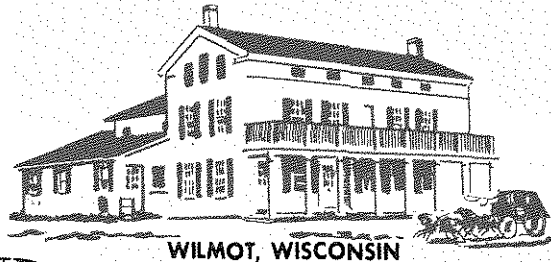
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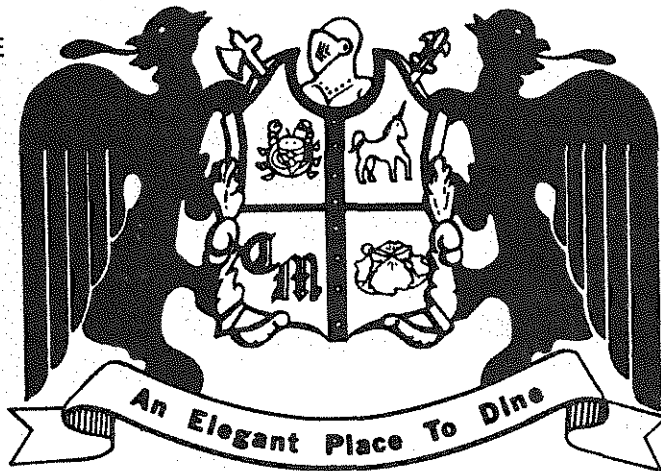
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west of the current corners). The road proceeded along Highway F to the Silver Lake Bridge, where Bullen's inn sat, as a toll booth and refreshment stop. The trail

westward from Silver Lake was hardly more than a beaten path. Bullen is believed to be largely responsible for the building of the plank road.

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### SLADES CORNERS (Wheatland Twp.)

Slades Corners, a junction between the old "Geneva Road" (Highway 50) and a path to Burlington, was probably named after a proprietor of a local tavern, the stopping point for the stage coach. Slades Corners later became a supply center for the area farmers and even produced a weekly newspaper for many years. Today the town still maintains its character as a small supply center for area residents.

### SOMERS (Somers Twp.)

The first settlement, in 1834, occurred along the Pike River in Somers Township. Before this time, no one resided in Kenosha County, save the native American. Somers was originally the farming fringe of the small city of Kenosha, but as the city grew, urban sprawl took place, and Somers became a group of residential suburbs of Kenosha. Farming still remains today, especially in the northern and western areas, where cabbage and corn are main crops. It is predicted that by the year 2,000, Somers will be completely urbanized, no longer a buffer zone between Racine and Kenosha.

The town was officially named Pike by the Act of the Wisconsin Legislature in 1843, and was changed to Somers in 1851. There is no record as to the reason for the change, but it is believed that the settlers named the town in honor of a wealthy Englishman named Somers who came and either provided money for the railroad, or the naming was done as an act to try to interest him in investing.

### TREVOR (Salem Twp.)

Trevor was no more than a group of scattered farms until the Wisconsin Central Railroad built its track through the community in the late 1870's. From that time it grew as a shipping point. Among feed mills, general stores, saloons, and hotels, Trevor had even a stockyard, where cattle were shipped, fattened and sent to Chicago when the market was at its peak paying point. Trevor is said to be named for one of the officials of the Wisconsin Central.

### TWIN LAKES (Randall Twp.)

Incorporated in the 1890's, Twin Lakes was a resort area from the turn of the century. Even in the 1870's, through railroad photos, the community was pictured as a most scenic spot for travelers to enjoy.

Twin Lakes was settled in 1842, and the Immesan family was the first to have twins, named Mary and Elizabeth. It is said that one day at a picnic it was decided to name the lakes for each twin. The community later adopted the same name.

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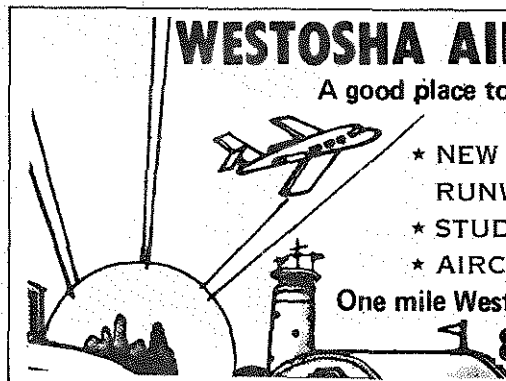
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## WHEATLAND

Although there are no records to date Wheatland's settlement and name, it is certain that the township was named in the early 1840's. The township, with a high German population, was in 1850, the largest of rural Kenosha County towns, but declined greatly in years to come due to wheat crop failures. Wheatland was probably named for the high yields of grain production in early times.

The community of Wheatland had access to railroad travel and prospered under it until the time came that automobiles became the king of the road. The community is basically agriculturally oriented today.

## WILMOT

(Randall and Salem Twps.)

As one of the largest of early rural Kenosha County communities, and still maintaining most of its charm by way of old and restored buildings, Wilmot has received most of the publicity for western Kenosha County communities.

Wilmot was truly the agricultural center of the western end of the county. Not only recorded as the population center in the 1880 census, Wilmot was the destination point for proposed highway construction from Kenosha and Racine. It was a transportation center by stage coach as well as by river.

Wilmot was called Gilead prior to 1884, named so by Asabel Benham calling the town that name in honor of his parents' hometown in Connecticut. However, in 1884, local citizens made protest to that name, and after heated discussion, a Mr. Wilber quipped that since there was so much talk of the Wilmot Proviso in recent weeks, that the town should be named after it. His suggestion was taken seriously and the vote made it Wilmot.

## WOODWORTH (Bristol Twp.)

Woodworth, in section 10 of Bristol Township, still today has a post

office, considered to be the last visible sign of considerable railroad activity a half century ago. In the middle 1850's, the Kenosha-Davenport railroad was built through Woodworth, and the location was

designated after the name of the local prominent family, the Woodworths. Without the railroad travel that made it a success, Woodworth today is mainly a farming and residential settlement.



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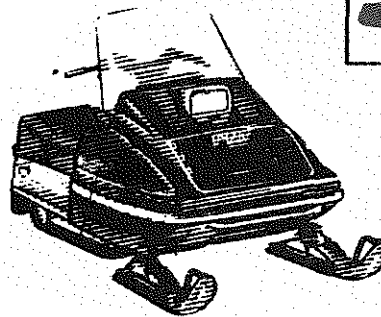
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It's funny how big people talk. Grandma sits in her rocking chair and tells stories of how things were in the good old days. She is so happy when she does that.

Grandma would say, "I remember when I was a little girl and we

moved to Kenosha County. There were hardly any people around. We found some good farm land and began to build a house. It was just a log cabin. My dad and older brothers would chop down some big trees and chop on the wood until it was almost square.

Then they would put the logs on the ground, piling them one on top of another, like one would make a Lincoln-log cabin. All the neighbors would come and help build. They would fit the logs as tight as possible. They would then patch the holes with mortar, a sticky cement-like mud, and they would stuff it in the cracks, too.

They wouldn't use any nails, because nails were so rare. Some places people would even use nails like money. When leaving a place to move somewhere else, folks would burn their houses down, just to get the nails back. They would dig through the ashes to find the nails.

In making the cabin, a doorway and a window hole or two would be cut in the wood. We needed some way to see outside, and also to let light in. The cabin was very dark, and needed all the light it could get.

The cabin floor was dirt, and in one corner was a stone fireplace. By the fireplace, my mother would cook all the meals. We would all sleep by the fire too, because it was so cold anywhere else. It helped some to put whatever cloth we had over the window holes, but dad usually put up boards in the windows to keep the cold out.

We would always help with the work. There was always so much

work to do. We didn't even go to school. That was because there weren't any schools around. Someone older would teach us by the fire at night when the sun set.

We would learn all of the necessary things to keep one alive by doing them. The girls would cook, sew and wash clothes. We would even make our own material, or use animal hides. We would also help on

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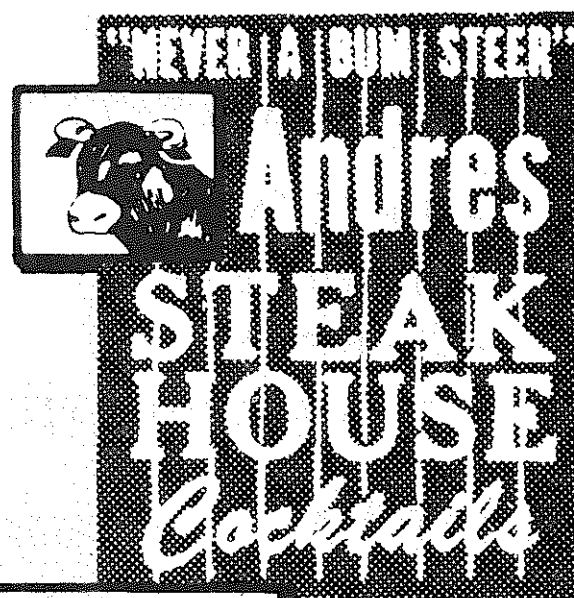
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ENTERTAINMENT  
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Camp Lake, August, 1909 - Historical Society Photo

the farm by feeding the chickens and milking the cows. During harvest, we would pick the vegetables.

The boys would work in the fields with our father. They would take the ox or horse and drive through the fields with a wooden plow at-

tached to the beast. This is how they made rows to plant seed. There were no tractors back then.

They would also weed and water the fields, so the crops would grow good. They would also hunt for

deer and other animals for food with heavy and loud guns.

Life was harder then than it is now. We were close as a family and happy most of the time. Sometimes when things got bad, we would have to go with little food, and then freeze in the cold all night. Everyone got sick a lot, and usually they would get better. But a lot of people never got better, and they would die.

Things are different now. People depend a lot on other people, where we could rely pretty much on ourself for everything we needed. No one was in a rush and things were peaceful."

Then grandma would smile and just look up with big soft eyes. Then she would say, "But, that's just an old lady talking." But we always liked to hear her stories.

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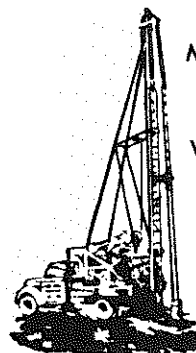
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## A Wisconsin Dairy Farm - 1890



1776

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THE STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF WISCONSIN PHOTO

State Representative RUSS OLSON suggests we take a moment to reflect on the fantastic advances in our way of life since the birth of our country when there were no

*automobiles or panty hose  
milking machines or cigarettes  
airplanes or aerosol cans  
indoor plumbing or TV dinners  
electricity or Green Bay Packers  
University of Wis. or Coca Cola  
hospitals or paper plates  
diesel tractors or ball point pens  
telephone or electric blankets  
astronauts or safety razors  
radio, TV or contact lenses*

*Mobile homes or synthetic clothing  
paved highways or disposable diapers  
funeral parlors or neon signs  
central heat or nursery schools  
skyscrapers or body deodorant  
movie theaters or permanent waves  
railroads, trains or power lawn mowers  
daily newspapers or golf courses  
miracle drugs or polaroid cameras  
school buses or water skis  
wrist watches or stereo*

Many facilities and government programs which we now accept as our way of life actually are relatively new in a country 200 years old. Do you remember these "firsts" in Wisconsin?

<i>Wisconsin Income Tax</i>	1911
<i>Social Security</i>	1935
<i>Aid to Dependent Children</i>	1936
<i>1st Life Insurance</i>	1792
<i>1st Labor Union</i>	1881
<i>University of Wisconsin</i>	1848
<i>1st Wisconsin Licensed Physician</i>	1897
<i>1st Wisconsin Auto License</i>	1905
<i>FBI</i>	1908
<i>1st Womens Vote</i>	1920
<i>1st Wisconsin Hospital</i>	1816
<i>1st Wisconsin High School (in Kenosha)</i>	1849

WE'VE COME A LONG WAY

**"Happy Birthday U.S.A."**

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

**RUSS OLSON**

66TH DISTRICT

## A Link With History- Mugwump, Agitator or News

The gathering and spewing of information has always been important in history. Newspapers in America have, since pre-Revolutionary days, been an extremely influential factor on the lives and attitudes of the readers, who were most of the citizens of the community the newspaper served.

The newspaper played the leading role, as it still does to a great extent today, in informing people on what was happening in their own community as well as in the rest of the world.

As well, it has been the main motivator, in countless cases, of change,

for newspapers would print to some extent what they wanted to have the public believe. Unfortunately, the public was too often too believing in the "news". On other items, the newspaper has greatly improved the human conditions through this editorial action.

Kenosha County newspapers have never been an exception to this set of rules. People eagerly awaited the daily or weekly call of "Extra, extra, read all about it", taking newspapers "just hot off the presses" and devouring every inked letter, and when through, hungering for more.

There was such a demand for news that throughout its history, Kenosha County had a total of 34 newspapers, four of which are printing today. Kenosha can also boast of having the second founded paper in Wisconsin, the Telegraph-

Courier, which began printing on June 16, 1840. An editor of the paper, C.L. Scholes, later invented the typewriter, now a necessity in office and newspaper work.

Most of the newspapers serviced Kenosha as well as gave some coverage to county events, but there were several newspapers that were published for use especially in the county.

The longest running of these newspapers was the Slades Corners MUGWUMP, a weekly that consisted of a page with news on both sides as well as a page of advertisements. The MUGWUMP was published from September, 1892 to 1941.

Next in contention for the longest-running title is the WESTOSHA REPORTER, currently being edited by Katherine Gallagher. Originally the TWIN LAKES REPORTER, from 1934 to 1955, edited by Albert Johnson and Albert Hagerty, this weekly newspaper was changed in name to the WESTERN KENOSHA COUNTY REPORTER in 1955 and was later changed in name to the WESTOSHA during the 1960s.

The WESTOSHA has a sister paper, the WESTINE REPORTER for the western portion of Racine County, as well as a member of the BURLINGTON STANDARD PRESS group, The WESTOSHA is published at Burlington.

The Wilmot AGITATOR ran from January 1901 to February 1913, a span of a dozen years. This weekly was an eight pager, published by the Swenson Brothers. The AGITATOR published news on events occurring in all of rural Kenosha County, having correspondents in various locales. The AGITATOR was noted for its coverage of social



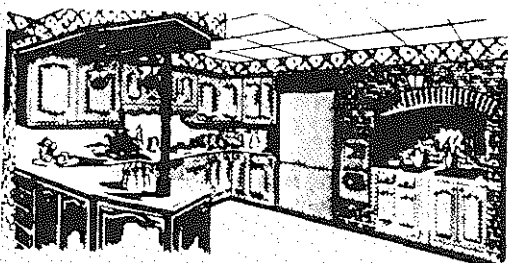
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events, of where people were traveling to and from, of who passed away and what their accomplishments were, and of poetry and light verse, often on a news or editorial

subject. The AGITATOR was also very outspoken on Wisconsin Government activities. They also ran syndicated news from across the nation.

The BI-STATE REPORTER, published in Antioch, Illinois for readers in rural Kenosha County, is probably the only other successful paper in Western Kenosha County history. This new paper is in its fourth year of publication.

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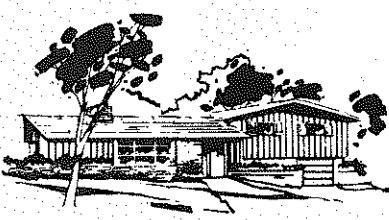
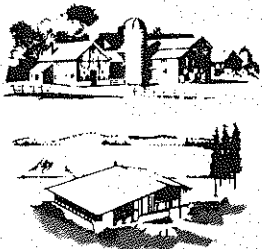
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There were also several short-term papers that didn't become a success and therefore folded within a short time of their inception. These papers, all published at Antioch, Ill. between 1888 and 1892, were the Wilmot WITNESS, Wilmot JOURNAL, Trevor TREVORITE, and Silver Lake CLIPPER.

In addition to these papers, was a magazine of thirty to eighty pages in length, published four to six times a year. The FOX VALLEY MIRROR, printed in Carpentersville, Illinois during the 1930's and 40's was a feature magazine of life along the Fox River villages of Northern Illinois and Southern Wisconsin.

In the MIRROR's mid-summer 1944 issue, Richard B. Swenson, past editor of the Wilmot AGITATOR, then Editor of the HERALD of Monmouth, Oregon, told of how the AGITATOR was started. He wrote, "It was at (the time Wilmot's second mill burned in 1899) that Destiny gave Wilmot a newspaper. I had tried out a larger field and found I did not have a constitution to stand it. Now with my brother, Chauncey, I bought a 7 by 11 foot power Gordon press, which had once belonged to Harry Marden, starter and finisher of several papers in Kenosha. We had a miscellaneous line of second hand type. I recall the first job we did was postal cards announcing his agency for Big Jo Flour for C.W. Voak. With a liberal use of "dutchman" whittled from pine, we got


"People encouraged us to start a paper and we picked on the somewhat sinister name of the AGITATOR. It attracted attention anyway and in time became quite well-known in our section of the state. Joe Moneghan, who had some sort of farm machine agency, used to laugh every week when we reported a subscriber in some state not previously included. In three month's time, we had a new press, a glorified army press, known as a Vaughn Ideal. This lasted a couple years when we traded it in for an improved country Campbell. With a Fairbanks-Morse engine, we were all set."

"My brother got some boxwood blocks, cut for the purpose by Louis Schmidt, the village carriage maker. He had artistic taste and some of these cuts made with wood carving tools, were clever. Later he got a chalkplate outfit and casting box. Then we went to town. I wrote poems or fables and he illustrated them."

Swenson then went on to tell of local events and how the paper became involved. Then he wrote, "Newspapers had become expensive operations looking towards linotypes and folding machines. My father and mother died within one week in 1912. This made it easier for us to feed the spirit of adventuring. I had one bad spell of sickness and felt this a hint toward a different climate." And so it ended, Swenson left Wilmot, without an editor, without a paper, to start yet another publication in the Far West.


ENTERTAINMENT

FOOD



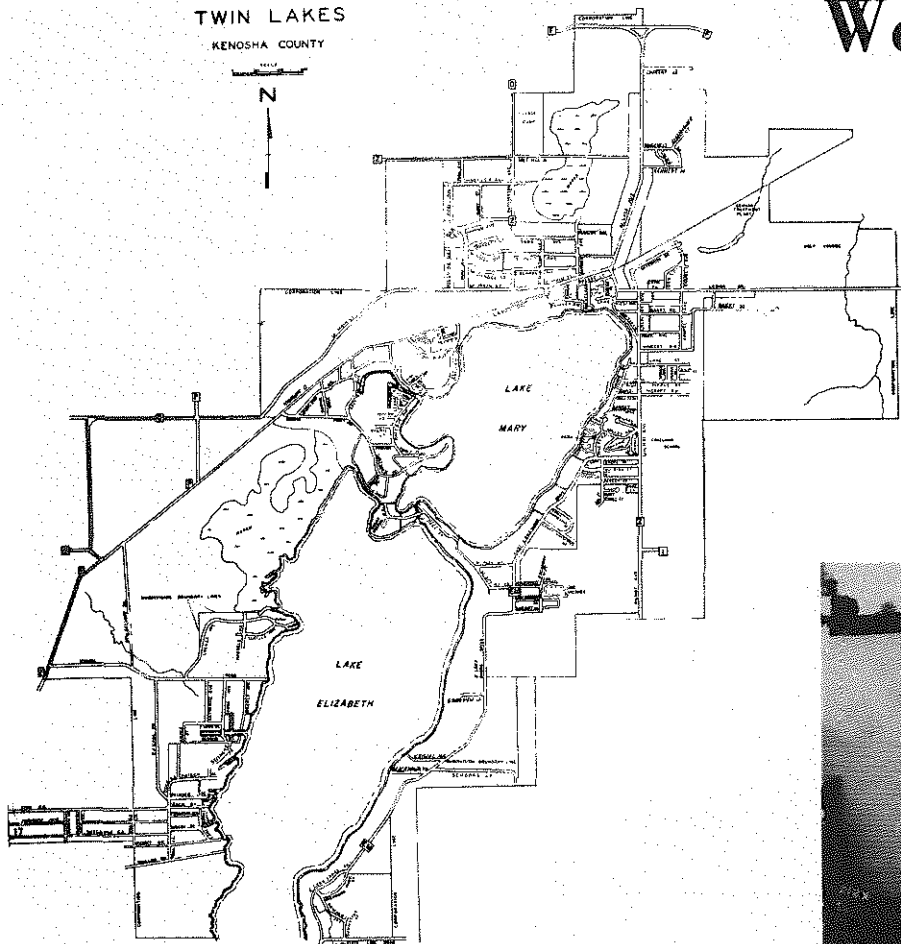
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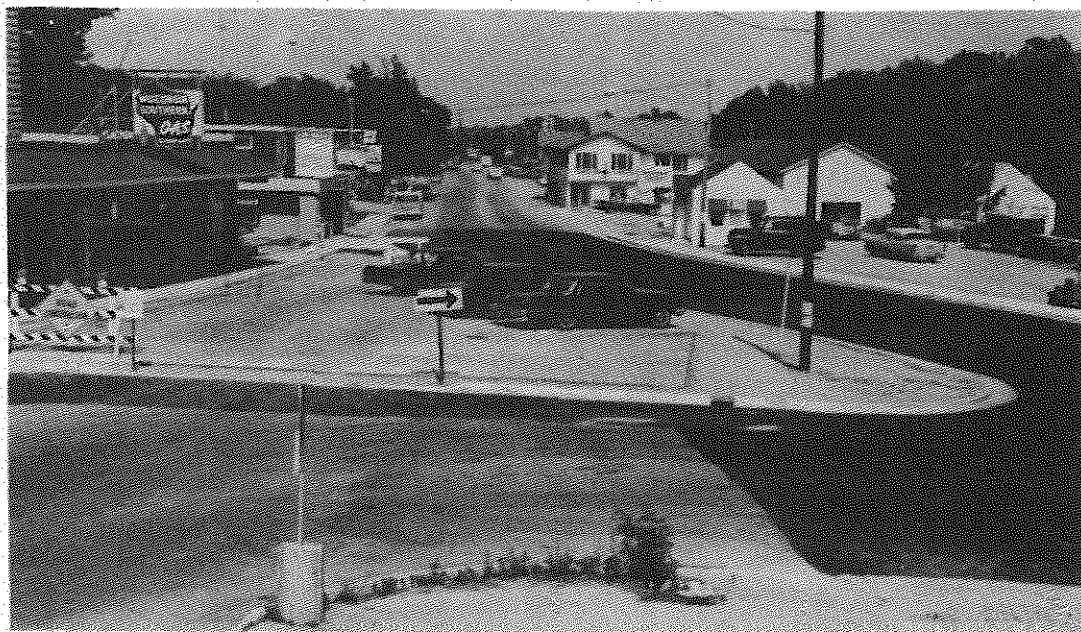


## We Salute . . .

Western Kenosha County and we are proud to be a part of the heritage of the county in this bi-centennial year. We look forward with anticipation of additional centuries of quiet prosperity and continued growth.



*Twin Lakes - 1885*



*Twin Lakes - Today*

# The Village Of Twin Lakes

## The Growing Of . . .

### Kenosha County West

Modern Statisticians tell us that five variables normally determined the pace of mobility: the relative per capita income in the expelling and attracting areas, the job opportunity in each, the distance separating them, population density, and regional affinity. A person adjusted to a distinctive social climate usually sought a similar social climate when he moved.

An analysis of census statistics for 1850, shows that the higher the job opportunity, the smaller the distance, the lower the population density (and hence the greater chance to secure land), and the more alike to the cultural and physical climate of a region, the larger the migration into it.

Statistical evidence, in other words, simply supports the generalizations of Frederick Jackson Turner and

his disciples; people moved to the frontier to secure more land and greater opportunity; they tended to shift into nearby areas least isolated by geographic barriers; they moved along isothermic lines rather than northward or southward into differing cultural areas. -Ray Billington, in *Westward Expansion: A History of The American Frontier*.

In agriculturally-rural oriented America one hundred and fifty years ago, when Kenosha County was totally unsettled, save by the Indians, the questions of movement are somewhat different than they are today. The technology and society of the era are separated and greatly different now than in 1850. But there are several constants. Job opportunity appears to still be a major constant in the selection of a place to live, as well as the regional affinity as a still very important

factor, while certainly none can dispute the importance of a relative per capita income in the expelling and attracting area, as selection for movement. Yes, even population

density is important in where one wishes to live or settle down.

Today, what are the differences in settlement choice? For one thing,

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America is not agriculturally oriented any longer. Perhaps one could say that the symbols of yesteryear were the plow and the farmsteading log cabin; today, history might say that the models are the computer and the apartment home. Relative per capita income, that years ago would have been excellent, as if one were a wheat farmer, for example, today would be considered as very poor materially. Yesteryear, a garbage man would have made less, where today this is not true. Instead of wishing for low population density, today's landseeker is looking for something conveniently close but convenient-

ly away from the city, where one can get the best of both worlds.

The pioneer settler of the area came for good, cheap farmland, Kenosha County's rich virgin till gave exceptionally high yields. As written in the Detroit POST in 1838: "This country has a high destination before it. As an agricultural country, it will surpass any other on earth. The farmer may locate himself here and undergo none of the fatigues of clearing his farm. The hand of Providence has done that for him. It has smoothed down the mountain and raised up the valley ready for his use. Wisconsin, in my humble opinion, is the Eden of our beloved country."

It becomes necessary to study aggregate population tracts to get some idea of the changes in Kenosha County's growth, and to historically recall occurrences that have molded such growth, or loss of growth.

By 1850, in Kenosha County, there were 10,734 residents, with only 32.2% living in the Kenosha Proper. This represents a relatively large

central settlement but at the same time shows the great importance of agriculture in the region.

By 1860, the transition from wheat farming to dairy and cattle farming, and emigration to the West in pursuit of minerals or better farm land was taking place. Between 1850 and 1860, Kenosha County suffered blight from insect pestilence and at the same time faced problems of growing transportation to the West and Great Plains, where farmers could easily and quickly ship their grains directly to market.

With the Advent of the railroads, cities were either made or broke by the rails, the new, faster, bigger and better mode of transportation. The editor of a newspaper in Wilmot (Salem Twp.-Kenosha County) recalling some forty years later, wrote: "Before the 'Soo', then the Wisconsin Central Railroad, was built, Wilmot and Antioch (Illinois) were towns of about equal size and prestige. There was rivalry as to where this railroad should be built. My recollection is that the deciding influence was that the Lehmann estate of Chicago, which owned lands

in the vicinity of Lake Villa (Illinois) and which was willing to do more in the way of financial encouragement. Lake Villa received special favors from the Wisconsin Central. All through our section, people who wanted to get to Chicago earlier were accustomed to take the 'Milk Train' to Lake Villa and then board the Limited which had no north scheduled stop short of Burlington (Wisconsin).

With the railroad built, Antioch grew steadily ahead of Wilmot, and quite a few of our residents moved there and went into business. The town (Wilmot) could never get a

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railroad. The star of hope burned quite brightly at times but Wilmot was out, as far as east and west railroads were concerned, because of the things that had made its creeks possible, the high range of land to the west. A railroad grade across it would be too expensive and the rails went north or south."

Kenosha was in an almost similar shape. Either Kenosha needed a railroad, or Kenosha would not be needed. So the community formed a railroad, the Kenosha and Beloit and sold shares to finance the rail. The line nearly became bankrupt many times, and with it the town, because nearly everyone had put all possible cash into making the railroad go. Not only is this fact documented many places, but the population figures of 1870 reflect it, with a total county loss of 147 persons.

Population losses were suffered in all of the county west of the current metropolitan boundary line, that of Somers Twp., Pleasant Prairie Twp., and the City of Kenosha. These losses were due to fi-

nancial depression as well as poor farming commerce. Still, in 1880 the city did not dominate yet 40% of total population. The county may have lost population with migration to the city.


There were gains in all but the three northern, poorest, and still today most sparsely settled areas in the county, Brighton, Paris and Wheatland Twps., all with a sizable German population. The City of Kenosha picked up a record total of 1,493 new residents, with a record trend continuing through 1930. This fact marks a significant boom in the industrial sector, with some limited commuting to the city for work.

Rural farming in Brighton and Paris still declined, and Wheatland made only small residential growth in 1900. The City of Kenosha on the other hand, doubled in size in the past decade, and at this time, contained over half of the county's residents. Randall Twp. doubled in size over a twenty year period, to show growth in dairy farming, and the township in 1910 would not be the smallest of Kenosha townships.

(Randall and Wheatland have an area of 24 square miles, all the rest have 36 sq. mi. or slightly more, with Kenosha being a part of Somers and Pleasant Prairie Townships.)

A near re-doubling of the size of Kenosha is recorded in 1910, and the city contained nearly 67% of all Kenosha County population. It has not been documented, but an inter-

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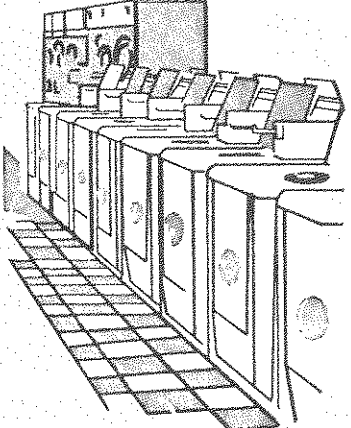
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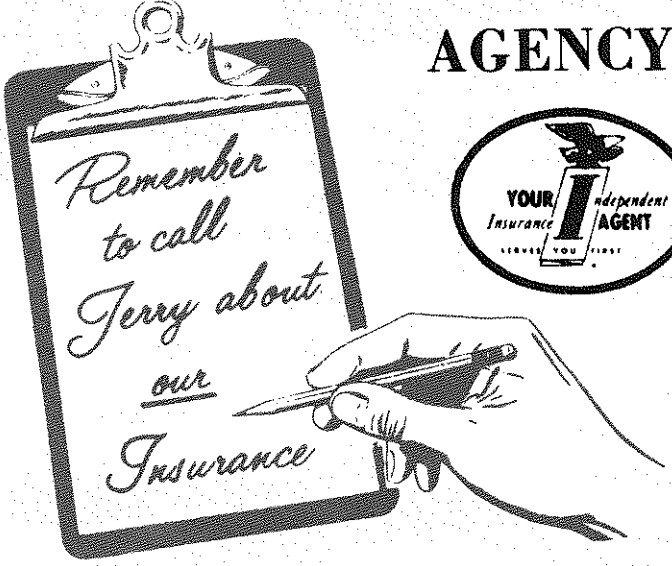

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POPULATION FIGURES FOR TOWNSHIPS (City of Kenosha excluded)

	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970
Brighton	880	1,238	1,185	1,024	926	850	838	843	765	827	814	1,081	1,199
Bristol	1,125	1,392	1,140	1,069	1,071	1,151	1,215	1,198	1,299	1,397	1,564	2,155	2,240
Paris	956	1,374	1,015	1,002	871	818	869	898	842	1,006	1,073	1,423	1,744
Pleasant Prairie	959	1,400	1,377	1,386	1,646	1,776	3,217	2,030	3,457	3,892	6,207	10,287	12,019
Randall	363	662	553	451	658	784	950	1,166	916	963	1,221	2,510	3,858
Salem	1,123	1,472	1,386	1,286	1,493	1,846	1,820	1,796	1,911	2,137	3,470	6,618	8,235
Somers	680	1,277	1,359	1,458	1,622	2,004	1,788	2,084	3,046	3,641	5,530	7,139	12,019
Wheatland	1,193	1,095	843	835	752	832	861	800	779	877	991	1,503	2,047

esting question is what political ramifications this fact had in county government. It certainly must have been great. Rural areas show only modest advance, and two townships: Salem, a typically moderately advancing area, and Brighton, which last registered an increase in 1860, are both in the red.

With 1920, is the third doubling of the city, which now contains a historic high of 80% of all population in the county. By the end of this decade, county government shows corruption, and this top heavy statistic may have been the item that stopped checks and balances between rural and urban interests of the day. Pleasant Prairie suffers a drop in population, most probably due to annexation into the most populated areas to the city. The remainder of rural regions show slow growth or decline, probably somewhat from migration to urban living.

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There is still great gain in 1930 in Kenosha. Rural areas suffer, as a total, losing 186 persons. All metropolitan areas register a goodly gain, and Pleasant Prairie and Somers Twps. double.

Due, probably to the loss of jobs during the depression, Kenosha city showed a large drop in 1940. Suburban Pleasant Prairie and Somers, show a sizable increase, and for the first time, all townships report gains. At this time, through improved transportation, mainly passenger train service, large numbers of rural residents become city commuters.

Excepting for minor decline in Brighton Township, the county registers another period of total increase, with Salem Twp. doubling in size. 1950 shows a large number of persons migrating to suburban and City Kenosha, with a total of a 9,807 gain.

1960 produces total gain for Kenosha City and County, with the City showing the largest increase, 13,531, but non-city areas are growing faster than the cities (this is shown by total percentage drop in city to total county population.) All areas show a great gain, signifying in part, influx of persons out-migrating from the Chicago area.

This trend of rapid growth and migration from metro Chicago to the far-far north suburbs continues in

1970, with a total and rapid increase in Kenosha County. This growth is also a repercussion of the Post-World War II baby boom. Kenosha City had 64.4% of all county population, showing continued suburban development.

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Through observation, several statements may be made. First, Kenosha County had, at all times, a dominant transportation point, the City of Kenosha, which provided the most number of higher paying jobs and opportunities.

Second, in the beginning (1840), land was cheaply available and farming was a popular way of life. Today that popularity has greatly declined.

Third, when crops fail, there is nearby industry, many people can live in the same community, commuting to the city, or move to the city when distance and hardship becomes too overbearing. One will

either move to a new agricultural area, or work in the local city's industrial sector.

Fourth, when cities become too large, it is desirable to move to a less dense environment, and to commute to work. Or cities can expand outward, and spread themselves out, both in the residential, industrial, and commercial sectors.

We are facing this state, mainly because of improved technology and cultural development. Somehow the problems related to this type of living must be approached, as many of these problems are beginning to be dealt with now, like zoning, traffic flow, education, police and fire protection, and housing, for examples, while at the same time the encouragement of agriculture, to provide food to non-farmers, must continue.

But what will be the next stage of the life environment of Kenosha County? Will it be a pseudo-urban-suburban environment, with industry focusing on the lakefront and consumer services on the industrial fringe and in the midst of residential clusters? It appears to be trending in that direction. We must pro-

ject ahead, ten, twenty-five, fifty, and even a hundred years in the future, to begin to prepare for it.

In 1926, a school teacher of Kenosha County wrote: "The farm home of tomorrow will be a modern up-to-date city residence placed in the pure, wholesome air of the country, with the city brought to its back door by auto, bus, train, and truck, and---perhaps-airplane." Some of these predictions she made have already come true, but the forecast is not yet complete. They may still happen.

One question remains unanswered: what of the current predictions for tomorrow? Shall we "humbug"

them, or listen and prepare for the future of Kenosha County. This question remains unanswered, and only us, the citizens of this county can answer it.

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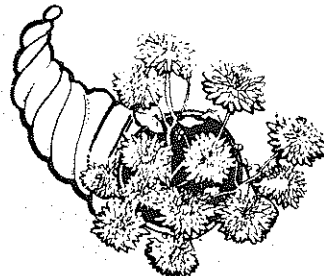
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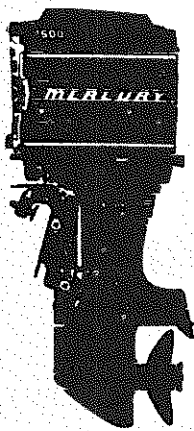
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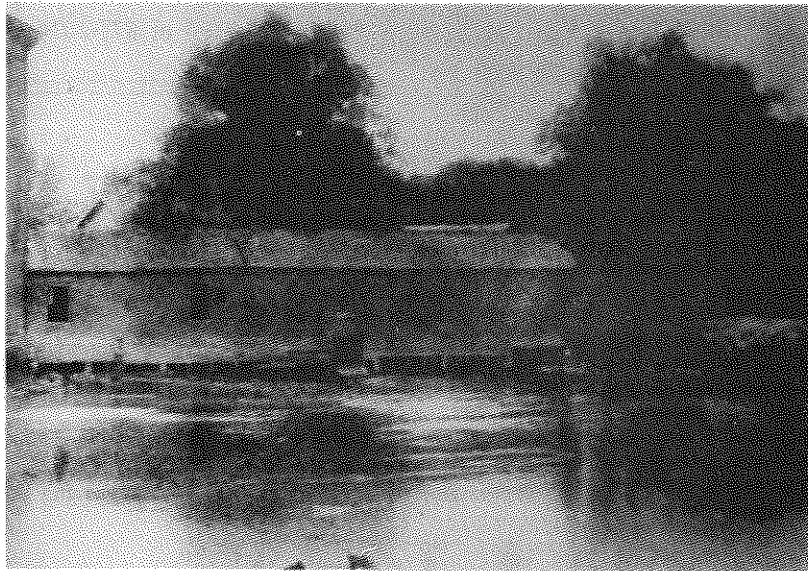
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"A mill is a needed thing for Western Kenosha County," was probably the thought of Asabel Benham when he bought the land surrounding Wilmot in 1839. That's because the milling business would not only be prosperous for him, but would attract outside business and residents to live on the land that he held title to.

Naming the area "Gilead" in honor of his parents' Connecticut hometown, and buying the land deed from Lewis Hatch in 1839, Benham began digging ditches in the marshlands to the hills west of Wilmot. By doing so, the water would drain downhill and power a small grain mill. While working on this project, he also, in 1844 began to construct the first frame house in the community.

The milling business became prosperous quickly. After all, it was inevitable, for the rich glacial till of the virgin prairie land was just right for wheat farming. It was so good in fact, that by 1850, Kenosha County became Wisconsin's highest yielding wheat producer, and Wisconsin was among the top growers world-wide. Business boomed for Benham. Farmers came from as far away as Waukegan by horse and wagon, a two day trip, to have their grain turned into flour at Benham's mill. Because of such demand, Benham built a dam and mill on the Fox River at the present site of Sonny's Bait Shop, that, according to a 1937 history of Wilmot, had two wheels to furnish power for the grinding of flour, buckwheat and rye with stone crushers in use.



Mill House spanning the Fox River at the turn of the century.  
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Benham's other boom came into being with more persons becoming attracted to the area, centered around the local need for the mill and other related central city services in an agricultural area. Businesses and homes rapidly sprang up, and these were all on plots sold by Benham to newcomers.

There was strong opposition to Benham's economic stronghold by the new frontiersmen who also wanted part of the say in what happened in the community. A major action of rebellion was a move for a new name for the village of "Gilead".

At a town meeting in 1848, there was a long and heated discussion over this important point. Legend or fact passed down over generations, has it that a Mr. Wilbur stood up and jokingly told his fellow citizens, "Well, since we're hearing so much about the Wilmot Proviso these days, why not name our town Wilmot." His humor was taken seriously, and Gilead became Wilmot.

The Wilmot Proviso, ironically, may have had something to do with the

economic ruin of Benham. Directly, the Civil War's effect on wheat farming in southeast Wisconsin and northeast Illinois and insect devastation of the crops was the cause of Benham's loss, but indirectly

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the Wilmot Proviso was involved. The Proviso, introduced in the United States House of Representatives in 1846 by Pennsylvanian David Wilmot, was a resolution to bar

slavery from western lands obtained in the 1848 war with Mexico. All over America, congressional arguments spread to the street corners where angry men shouted insults

or exchanged blows, to country stores for potbelly stove debates, and to farm gatherings and the discussions on streets of the community. Everywhere, including in Wilmot, men argued the merits of slavery which threatened national unity.

market thousands of miles away, and on the local scene grain could be ground more cheaply at larger graineries and immediately transported to eastern markets.

As of an 1878 writing on Wilmot, the milling interests were described as "at one time quite an item in the economy of Wilmot, but of late years, it has fallen off somewhat."

On March 14th of the following year, the mill was completely destroyed by fire, supposedly caused by a defective chimney. An employee, Emery Whaples, died while

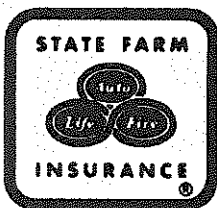
trying to save the records when a grain bin above him gave way and buried him in the burning building.

Emery Whaples' death was not the only mill related death. His father, S. W. Whaples, master mechanic of the mill, drowned in the mill wheel

The Proviso was a factor in bringing about the Civil War, taking men from the fields to fight. The lack of grain farmers to produce wheat thus destroyed Benham's prosperity.

Near the end of the Civil War, John Voak picked up ownership of the mill, after the deed passed briefly through the hands of John Carey. From August of 1864 when Voak owned the mill, he faced the problems of Wisconsin's decline in wheat production by insect pestilence and the economy's disruption from the Civil War, as well as a lower market value of wheat because of the increased production of the Great Plains and competition from more mills with lower service costs. The latter two problems resulted from improved transportation, particularly the railroad. In the Great Plains, wheat could easily be shipped to

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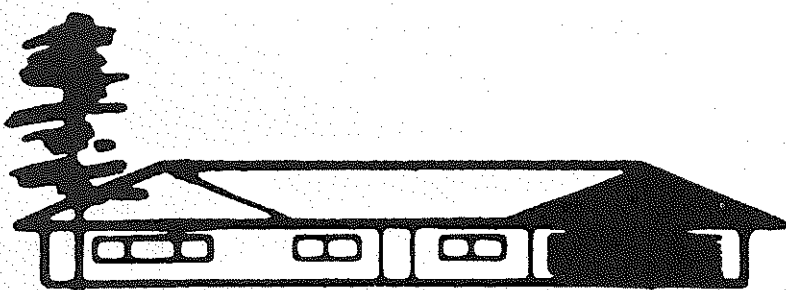
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base in 1860. He was said to be working alone repairing the mill wheel and was believed to have been accidentally caught in the wheel and swept underwater. Three unknown Irishmen also drowned in the river as they helped in the construction of the dam in 1846, when their skiff overturned.

After the mill fire of 1879, Voak rebuilt at the site. Previously the mill had a roller system and a capacity of 1,500 bushels a day. The new mill was three stories high, having the five water wheels with a capacity of one hundred barrels a day. John Voak retired from this larger mill when purchased by his sons, Charles and Edward in March 1893.

The mill was again razed by fire in April 1900. This time the fire

spread and destroyed a blacksmith shop, wagon shop and the Episcopal Church as well. The milling interests were sold to Walter Carey. Carey rebuilt, using a bun mill system for grist and a stone process for grinding buckwheat, rye and graham flour. At first it was operated by water power and later by a gasoline electric generator. For several years the mill also ran a lumber cutting operation.

Carey, who also owned two general stores, the Carey & Nett in Wilmot and Carey & Montgomery in Trevor connected the two with telephone lines in 1895. In that year, they were connected to his home in English Prairie, Illinois, making the lines the first interstate telephone line in the village.

Using power from the mill, Carey operated his telephone line and expanded his service to the community in the form of the New Era Telephone Company. With this company, Carey provided electric service to the area as well. By 1926 when all interests were sold to a Chicago party, the New Era had 125 miles of line and serviced 18 communities in Kenosha and Walworth Counties in Wisconsin and Lake and McHenry Counties in Illinois.

In conclusion, the mill was created and rebuilt because of the effort and ability of local persons, who used a renewable natural resource as a tool for mankind. But, in standing alongside the dam at Wilmot, pondering the story of the mill, is just like the swirling water of the Fox, it's all over the dam, just part of the past.

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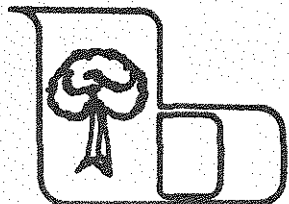
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## Four Glaciers Later . . . Kenosha County Prairie

by LINDA WILSON CURTIS

*(Editor's Note: Linda Wilson Curtis is an instructor of Botany and Life Science at the College of Lake County in Grayslake, Illinois. Ms. Curtis earned her Master of Science degree in Botany at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee in the summer of 1974.*

*She devoted much time to studying flora species of Kenosha County and wrote her masters thesis on "A Vegetation Analysis of Benedict Prairie, Kenosha County, Wisconsin". Edited for the LEGEND, a portion of this paper appears in this issue of the LEGEND.)*

During the past one million years, four glaciers crushed and gouged their way into the Great Lakes region. Before that time, the area was not hilly, but only winding and ancient river valleys. The thick ice

lobed from the north enlarged the valleys into basins that later filled with water melting from the ice to form the Great Lakes.

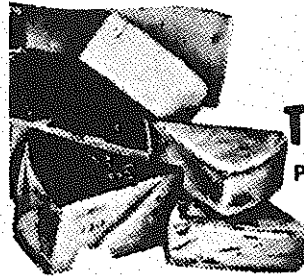
In the last substage of the Wisconsin glacier sheet, the land adjacent to Lake Michigan in Kenosha and Racine Counties of Wisconsin and Lake and Cook Counties of Illinois were shaped into a series of moraines, long north-south ridges of glacial debris. This glacier that created the moraines pulsed and retreated several times. The first of the final two pulses left a sand, gravel, and silty sand till, or soil, called the Haeger Till. The last advance of the ice left a distinctly different grey till called the Wadsworth.

When the final glacier melted some 12,000 years ago, vegetation that retreated southward due to climatic

change again advanced northward. At the same time, smaller lakes formed in depressions in the soil and accumulated pollen and plant remains on the lake bottoms. By

analyzing these bottoms, one can scientifically tell the history of vegetation growth in the area.

It is generally believed by such studies, that the climate slowly warmed



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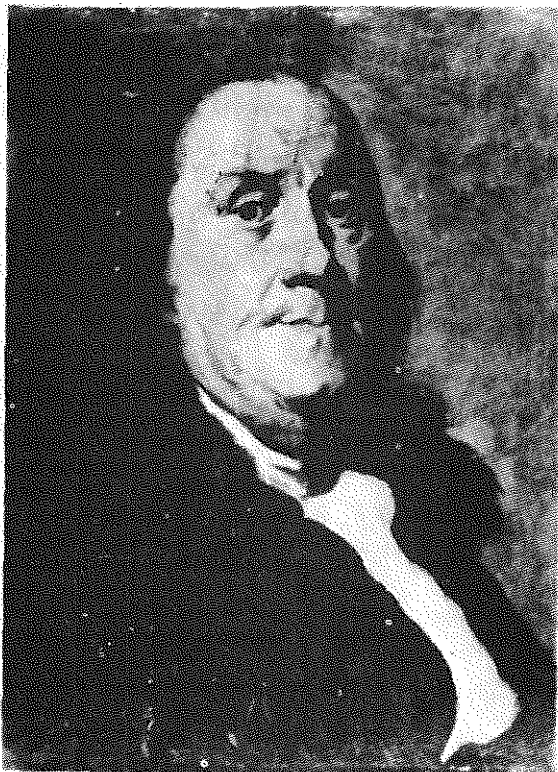


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# KENOSHA NEWS

SERVING GREATER KENOSHA FOR MORE THAN 81 YEARS

and became drier. Fossil pollen of spruce followed by mixed conifer forest and then hardwood forest in lake bottom sediment document this theory worldwide. Temperatures supposedly reached a maximum about 6000 years ago, with water levels in the Great Lakes as well as in inland lakes lowering drastically, with many smaller bodies of water drying up completely.

In this first period of dryness, grassland vegetation thrived. Forests died out locally, and grew in much moister climates. Grasslands extended far into middle Canada and even to the Atlantic coast.

Following this dry period was an era of cooler temperatures and increased rainfall. Water levels again rose on the lakes and forests grew locally once more.

About 500 to 1000 years ago was another dry period favoring prairie growth. A generally warm dry climate worldwide during the Middle Ages is reasonably documented by tree rings, historical records, Nile Valley floods, and remains of old settlements. The end of this dry cy-

cle about at 1100 A.D. marked the beginning of the current forest climate for the upper Midwest.

The prairies of southern Wisconsin mark the northern boundaries of the Midwest prairie peninsula. Only remnants remain now as most of the prairie peninsula in general, and the Kenosha-Racine area in particular, has many species in common with prairies as far west as Nebraska.

The prairie peninsula climate is cooler and moister today than in 1100 A.D. with occasional drought intervals. Because the climate now favors either grassland or forest, in this region certain soils and topography favor one formation over the other. The local area is a mosaic of distinct forests and prairies, rather than a smooth transition which the gently rolling topography would appear to favor.

Kenosha county has three distinct belts of landforms parallel to Lake Michigan. The first of these is a terrace of a mile to several miles west of Lake Michigan. This district's western border is a ridge of gravelly, sandy material which marks

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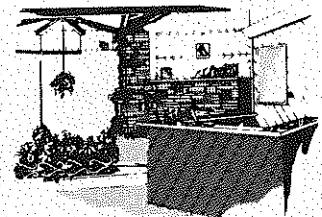
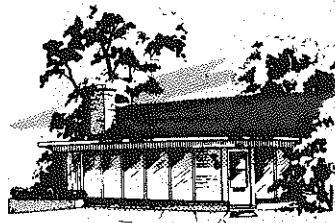


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143 MAIN STREET TWIN LAKES, WISCONSIN

the old beach line when Lake Michigan was much larger.

The middle belt, where the preserved prairies in Kenosha County lie, is a series of low moraines forming gently rolling plains. The soil was laid down as the main part of the glacier action as it melted.

The third belt is a recessional moraine of sand and gravel known as

the part of Valparaiso Moraine. Most of the lakes in this area were formed by ice blocks buried in the sand and gravel deposits as the glacier melted. This western belt is rolling and of broken ridges, having much forested area.

Prairie soils develop in unconsolidated material, usually sand, silt and clay. Prairie soils do not usually develop on bedrock. These soils have organic matter added directly into it through decay and prairie fire. The prairie vegetation develops a dark band of topsoil with much organic material formed by slowly decaying roots. Carbon 14 dates of

the top six inches of some prairie soils are from 300 to 500 years old.

Locally, a Milwaukee scientist discovered the Benedict Prairie, a one-half mile long abandoned railroad right-of-way, in Bristol Township in 1955 and considered it among the best prairie remnants for his study of prairie in southeast Wisconsin.

Historically, this prairie land was acquired by the Kenosha-Davenport Railroad and by 1862, the pick and shovel crew dug out the moraines and built up the low areas to prepare a level railroad bed for further construction. The winding creek nearby was straightened and channeled along the elevated bed. Fences were put up to prevent cattle from straying onto the tracks, but this also prevented grazing necessary for prairie flora to thrive.

The line being abandoned in 1939, the railroad ties and rails were removed in the early 1940's. Gravel was dug out of the bed and sold. After the land was acquired by a farmer of the area, it was later sold as part of an estate to Elmer

Benedict, for whom the prairie is named. Benedict used the pathway for a tractor access to adjacent farmland.

The prairie was purchased in 1963 by the Wisconsin Chapter of the Nature Conservancy, and is now a UW-Milwaukee field station. Soon afterward, the prairie was burned to bring natural growth to relife, and forest trees, including pines the Benedicts planted in 1960 were killed off. This was the first action of Whitford and the newly-formed Aldo Leopold Conservation Club. They mapped, tallied, and attempted to rid the prairie of woody species by slashing and burning. Re-

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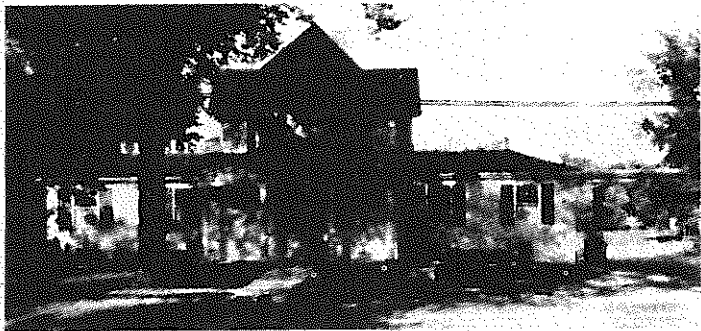
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### No More "Hitches" - SALOON It Is

(Powers Lake) -- With last week's ruling on the word "saloon" being permissible, a Powers Lake tavern is adopting it for a drinking establishment.

When Mrs. Blanche Miller found out she couldn't call her place "Miller's Saloon" she took her cue from all the "hitches" that were causing her trouble in getting her business organized and re-named her watering place "The Hitching Post."

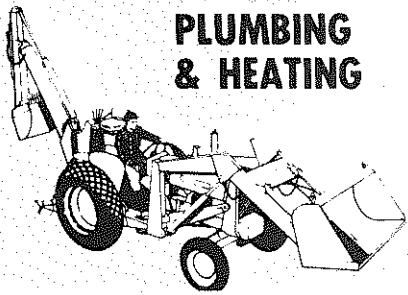
Then, on June 5, Dane County Circuit Judge Richard Bardwell ruled that it is unconstitutional to ban the word "saloon," a law that had been on the books since the prohibition era when unsavory connotations surrounded the word and lawmakers banned it.

So, the old state and local law is now "history" but Mrs. Miller had derived her choice of the name "saloon" from history a lot older than prohibition. She's using the Old West motif in her place and what else was a saloon called in those days other than a saloon?



Modern day winter woodland scene drawn by Wilmot artist Barbara Siebman

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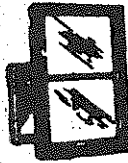
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sprouting from stumps and root stocks proved that fire was ineffective for eliminating many types of plants and shrubs.

Since the process of succession toward forest had begun, it would be a matter of time before the taller trees and shrubs would shade out the prairie species or reduce them to openings in the forested area. Occasionally, droughts, accompanied by fire, could reduce the woody shrubs to brush prairie, but with present tendency to cooler and

moister climate, the prairie will soon become forest unless there is a well planned, regular program of burn, cut and spray with herbicides. Presently, the Benedict Prairie still blooms in colorful layers as the taller species overtop others in the growing season. This prairie is one of our few reminders of the past and with a slight stretch of the imagination, one can visualize the adjacent fields as similar waves of color.

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## How "KD" Came To Be

Almost all of Kenosha County roads were named after persons, with their initials forming the letters designating county trunk highways. Here is a partial listing of the various county trunks and their explanations.

AH - Arthur Hartnell, past Salem Town Chairman.

BB - Named because of the crossing of Highway B.

CJ - Clarence Jackson, past county board member.

EA - Elaine Angelo, past highway department office.

EE - New extension of county trunk E.

EM - Elizabeth and Mary, the twin lakes.

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EU - Egan Uhen, past head of the county park commission.

EW - Eleanor Wagner (EU was changed to EW because of confusion of EU and UE).

EZ - Ernie Zanders, a tavern owner on 39th Ave.

FR - Fred Rasch, past Randall Town Chairman.

HH - Howard Herzog, past highway commissioner.

HM - Harriet Marlatt, highway department office.

JB - Jim Brooks, county board member.

JF - Joe Fox, past Salem Town Chairman.

JJ - Julius Ingwersen, past highway commissioner.

JR - Jay Rhodes, county board member.

JS - Jackson, past Bristol Town Chairman and Smith, past Salem Town Chairman.

K - Kenosha Road.

KD - Kerkman, past Wheatland Town Chairman and Dean, past Randall Town Chairman.

KR - Kenosha-Racine county line.

MB - Meredith, past Paris Town Chairman and Bacon, past Bristol Town Chairman.

ML - Marge Larsen, employee of the U. W. Extension office - Agriculture.

MS - Martin Schenning, county board member.

PH - Peter Harris, past county board member and highway committee

SA - Salvation Army.

T - Town Hall of Pleasant Prairie.

UE - Urban Eppers, past Brighton Town Chairman.

W - Wilmot Road

WG - William Gleason, past Bristol Town Chairman.



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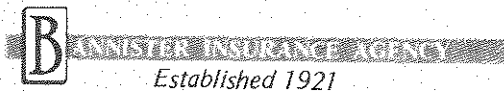
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## American Ice . . . Once Solid, Now Melted

The history of the ice industry goes back to 1799, when ice was cut from Canal Street in New York City and sent south to Charleston, South Carolina. Actually, farmers for centuries before cut pond ice and stored it in cellars for the summer months, however, this was the first recorded cutting for city use.

The first ice houses were farm root cellars. Pennsylvania farmers, for example, shoveled snow and ice into their root cellars just before the thaw in spring, packing it with meadow grass so that the ice would remain frozen throughout the summer.

By 1830, ice houses became standard farm equipment. These houses were built of two walls of cement or field stone with hay on the inside to serve as insulation. The other sides and the roof were made of thatched hay, and the ice was placed on an inner compartment of straw.

The first commercial venture of ice was in 1806, when Bostonite Frederick Tudor sent pond ice to the equatorial island of Martinique by

way of the ship "Favorite". He was ridiculed by Boston's citizens who said he would land with a boat full of water. He arrived on the island with the cargo unmelted, only to lose \$3,000 because there was no market for his ice. Introducing ice cream to the West Indies, his later ventures became a success and he hired hundreds of men to cut and haul the ice from the Boston area.

In the Midwest, the beginning of commercial harvesting of ice came much later than back in the East with the industry really getting under full swing just after the Civil War.

By 1869 the harvesting of ice in the Wisconsin Lakes and ponds became so large that the legislature passed a law requiring ice cutters to fence the openings with brush, or other material. In 1879 ice harvesters enjoyed a boom that was to continue for fifty years. After Christmas, workmen would gather at empty storage houses in search of work. Thousands of workmen were transported from the cities to the ice fields to work for six weeks

harvesting the ice. One Milwaukee company, at one time, hired 1,000 men to work the ice.

The work was hard, with icemen having to lift 200 pound blocks for ten hours a day, seven days a week for more than a month. During the working day, most of them would be exposed to the elements, harshest of the lakes and unprotected from gusts of cold Canadian winds.

Occasionally a man would fall into the water, and it was very common for teams of horses to break through thin ice. Men and teams of horses would pull as mightily as they

could to get the workhorses out of the freezing water, but it didn't always work, and sometimes horses would drown. Other times, men would be working on a huge chunk of ice, trying to break it up, and

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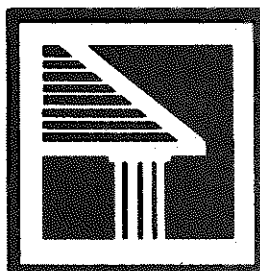
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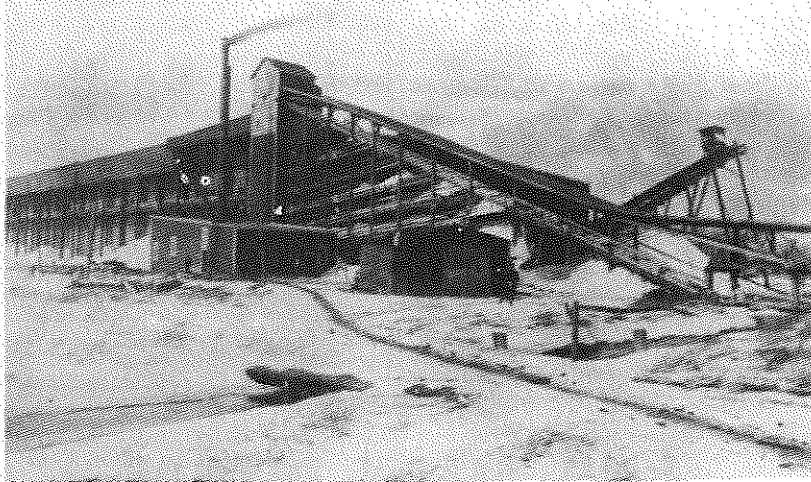
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Some ice houses, like this one at Silver Lake, were so large that clouds would form inside, and it would actually rain. -Historical Society Photo

it would break off from the main chunk and float free, with the men stranded on top of the berg. They would then have to be rescued. A fire would be kept going for the men to dry out.

At times a cable to haul the ice into the icehouse would break loose and the ice would slide down the chute at great rates of speed, endangering the cutters.

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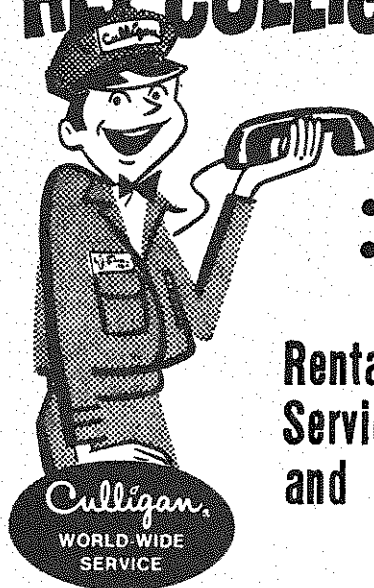
JIM & PAT MINNI

In the city, eventually laws were passed, requiring vendors to post on their wagons a sign saying from which lake their ice was harvested. This was a health measure, and because of it, companies would advertise "our ice comes from clear spring water having no swamps."

In 1920, Midwestern railroads discontinued shipping ice to the cities, and ice houses were no longer needed. The land, upon which ice houses stood, were sold as whole parcels, many of which were subdivided into the area's first planned communities.

Today only the foundations of ice houses stand. The lodges icemen lived in have been converted into homes and only the abandoned railroad beds remain of the ice harvesting era. The tales of ice harvesting are treasures in the memory of this toilsome trade.

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Who would pay hard earned cash for blocks of frozen lakewater from Kenosha County's own Twin, Silver, Hooker, Camp, Rock, Powers or Paddock Lake? Today, with electronic refrigeration, no one would. But, at the turn of the century Kenosha County ice was a multi-million dollar industry.

Everyone wanted and needed ice to keep their perishables fresh. A milk cooler, ice pick and ice tongs

were essentials to every kitchen. Living in the city, clear, fresh and healthy ice had to be transported from Kenosha County where ice was harvested as a "crop".

As soon as the ice was 24 inches thick, a large ice field was marked on the lake. It was a first come, first serve operation on the lake, and disputes were rare. It is reported, however, that the companies didn't hoard up ice, instead they took what they needed to fill their storehouse and ship to Chicago and left the rest for other ice harvesters.


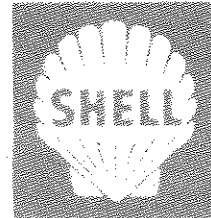
After the plots were drawn out, a horse drawn plow would mark off the ice into two by four foot squares. These plows would then begin to cut the ice, starting by opening up the center of the lake and working inland. A channel from the center to the ramp of the ice house would be opened and the



*Icemen breaking ice into single blocks (foreground), harvesters pushing floating blocks through canal (middleground), to be stored in icehouse (left background). The lodging house is in the right background. - Historical Society Photo*

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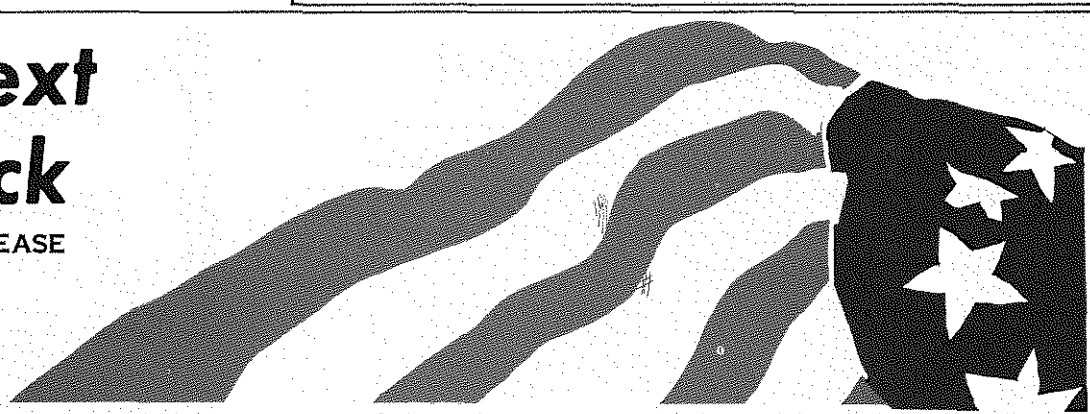
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huge chunks of ice would be floated and pushed with long ice poles to the ramp. The ramp, adjustable and elevated to the level that the ice was being stacked in the ice house,

was a drive chain with a wood housing that hauled the ice upwards. At the top of the ramp, the ice was hoisted by two men with hooks to a position on the

stacks, with another man packing the blocks as close together as possible so the maximum number of blocks could be stored, but at the same time the blocks could become separated from one another when needed. Layers of hay and sawdust

were placed on top of the ice and around it to insulate it to prevent melting.

The removable sides of the ice house would gradually be added on, and the ramp adjusted to greater heights to fit in as much ice as

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The future of the county and community is directly proportional to the activities of community organizations. We are proud to have been an active part of Twin Lakes' history and say "Thanks" to those who have led us as our commanders.

1950 - Elmer Winter	1964 - Thomas Johnson
1951 - Wm. Kayser	1965 - Urban Cappelli
1952 - Frank Platts	1966 - Claude Foubare
1953 - Fred Sarbacker, Jr.	1967 - William Meinke
1954 - Iles Rochette	1968 - Howard Peltier
1955 - Merlin Jahns	1969 - David Brunner
1956 - Harold Gauger	1970 - Eugene Belakiewicz
1957 - Fred Flesch, Jr.	1971 - Martin Bauman
1958 - John Kjellander	1972 - Edwin Lech
1959 - Edward Walsh	1973 - Phillip Prasis
1960 - Ellsworth (Al) Barton	1974 - Richard Burke
1961 - Victor Lucas	1975 - Richard Sarbacker
1962 - James Brandes	1976 - Phillip Fishback
1963 - Robert Fuchs	

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The railroad shipped ice loaded in insulated cars to the Chicago market. Most of the men employed all year around were local residents.- Historical Society Photo

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*The only ice-related activity off season, except loading ice on box-cars, was dewatering the lake, so the ice was purer. In several local lakes, weed control was a problem. Until the turn of the century, weeding was done by hand, as shown in the photo. Later on, mechanical underwater weed cutters were introduced by Chester Hockney in Silver Lake. Hockney invented the weed cutter. His first cutter was attached to a boat and was a set of sickle blades in a paddlewheel. Afterwards, he used a Model-T chassis adapted to floating on water, with a paddlewheel set-up for cutting. - Historical Society Photo*

possible, to store through the spring summer and fall, until the next harvest. During the off months, only the smaller group of local employees remained to ship ice on trains to the city and to make local deliveries.

Ray Loth, a local man who worked the ice in the 1920's, reminisced, "We used to make deliveries all around. Each block of ice weighed 208 pounds, and many of us could easily carry two blocks at a time. I used to go down to what is now

Vito's Tavern in Camp Lake and bet how long it would take for me to carry one ton of ice into the basement. It would take me less than five minutes."

Loth said the pay was little and the days were long. The better and faster you were, the more you got paid. The fellows working in the winter only received less than vet-



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BASSETT, WISCONSIN



Ice men guiding ice up the chute system to the warehouse. Note that one man has an open coat, and another has rags wrapped around his shoes. The strain of the work keep the men's bodies warm, but not their feet. Many "hobos" did not have overshoes and had to wrap rags around their feet to keep warm. - Historical Society Photo.

eran workers. A lot of the winter workers were bums rounded up in Chicago on skid row, put into a box car with the door locked so they wouldn't jump off. When they got here they were let out, and they worked, partially because they did not have any way back to the city. When the season was over, they

would all be taken back to Chicago. Local residents referred to them as "hobos".

Loth says that ice harvesting is harder work than anything else he has ever done, harder than most people can imagine. Inside the ice house, where the block was stored, he said workmen worked up such a sweat that it wasn't necessary for them to wear coats. Besides lifting the two hundred pound blocks, they had to steer them and work quickly, for the next one was there before one knew it.

The hearty iceman would spend his off duty time mainly either in the bunk or in a saloon. By locating where the old ice bunkhouses were, it is apparent that many a tavern thrived from their business, gone now some 40 or 50 years later.

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curiosity and display as an antique. But, at one time, This Kenosha County product had great importance in the homes of many Americans.

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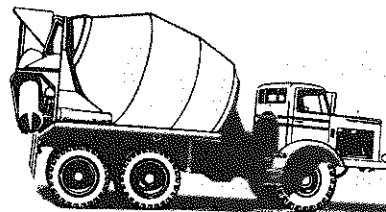
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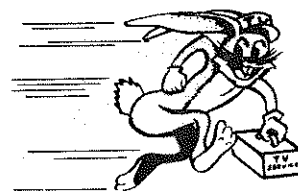
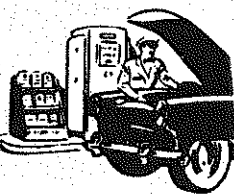


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**KENOSHA COUNTY  
DIGGINGS REVEAL  
FORMER RESIDENTS**

In the recent weeks, a Kenosha resident, David Wasion, discovered a skull of a person believed to have died in Kenosha County some 5,000 years ago. The skull, Wasion describes, was sticking out of the ground in a farmer's field. He dug the find out with the utmost care, but when the warm air hit the damp and partially frozen bone, it shattered into many pieces, which he later glued back together.

Certainly, this skull is the most interesting of his finds, but his most significant is an unannounced discovery in southern Kenosha along the abandoned lake beach, where he

found remains of an Indian village some 10,500 years old. He estimates the time through use of arrowheads, points, and tools that he finds in the vicinity. These tools match other points found in the four documented sites in the Upper Great Lakes, where expensive dating has been done. He also estimates age through use of bones of animals found in the firepits. He has found elk and bison bones at the site, which the Field Museum of Chicago has verified dates. His final method of dating is by tracing the sand level created by the beach to make comparisons with known dated levels. These levels are dated by both oceanographic geologic and anthropologic techniques. A key in this dating has been a petrified wood that has been found near the site, which dates, according to Carbon 14 dating and the level it is on to the time that Wasion makes estimation of.

Wasion is looking for a link between mastadon, or great-elephant, remains in Kenosha County to sites where this "paleo" Indian lived. He is looking for a spot where both their Indian hunting points and mastadon bones lie in the same spot. This would unquestionably verify that paleo man hunted these beasts until their extinction. This has been verified, but only speculated for the eastern half of the United States.

Wasion is searching for this link at a Paris Township site, where on one digging, there are paleo points. In the adjacent farmfield lies mastadon remains. There are three other sites to work at; one in Bristol, Somers, and Brighton townships.

He describes Kenosha County, as once one of the richest Indian sites in the Upper Great Lakes. Currently, through lack of recognizing evidence and the problems of white man's habitation and growth, he called ruins as "pitifully lost".

Wasion has openly revealed that he needs assistance in carrying out work, both in research and in actual excavation. He is a qualified archaeologist, having done work in several famous sites. If anyone is interested in working with him or giving him information about site locations, please contact him in care of the Western Kenosha County Historical Society, Wilmot, Wis. 53192.

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## A Concluding Comment

There is a history behind everything. This is the belief that everyone, every creation, everything is somehow significant during its lifetime. This is the idea that this magazine is founded upon.

But in history, all too often, only the "important" persons, places and things are remembered. The "common" is too quickly forgotten.

Why is it that it seems as if people don't care about anything less than the significant? Anything that does not register improvement or activity isn't remembered or mentioned.

Local history attempts to bridge the gap. Local history states everything is of some importance, at least in reflecting the attitudes and trends of the total and overall regional, national and worldwide picture.

For example, grandfather, who operated the town's general store for decades, is important, not only for how he lived his life, but as an example of a vital part of the community, for the man provided the residents with not only goods and services, but gave them a potbellied stove in a side room to discuss community events of the day. By his actions, he condoned discussion of outside events.

The housewife, caring for the family, by bringing up the children and instilling a community and family spirit in the life of the whole clan, illustrates another portion of history so important, but so terribly forgotten.

Even the traveling salesman who used to sell his wares with annoyingly slick salesmanship, trying to tell the local folk that his goods were the best, was important, for he brought not only improved tech-

nology, but touched this local culture with his own, intermingling and somewhat changing both worlds through his travels.

Who knows what tales lie unspoken behind the minds, lips and letters of so many of us. What stories, happenings and events are behind every single building in our Kenosha county? How did this area react and adjust to outside influence, and how did rural Kenosha county change part of the rest of the world?

It seems almost unbelievable to some of us that our farmlands and homesteads could move the culture, knowledge and technology of the rest of the plain, but it did.

This county prides itself with at least the father of the inventor of farm equipment vital to dairy production yet today, a jack-of-all-trades, creator of apparatus for healthier and more efficient home food storage, and a newspaper editor who assembled the ideas and machinery for the making of the typewriter. These are just a few instances of already recorded ac-

counts of how this area affected the world. What more still lies untold?

In the months and years ahead, a group of dedicated people, set on preserving the past for this generation and ages of the future to use and to understand the present, and maybe even project into the future, are working to compile facts and reasons, called "history".

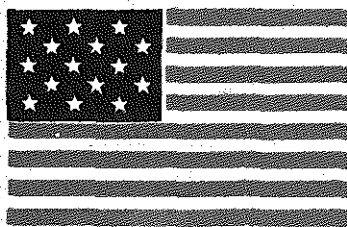
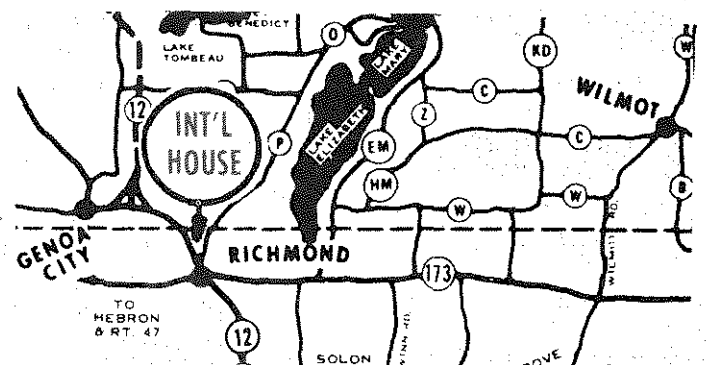
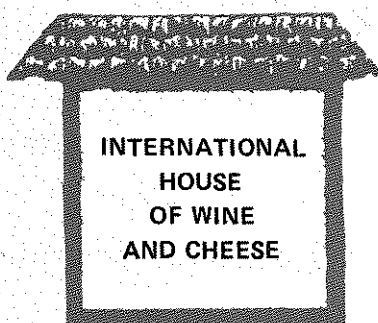
Through the LEGEND in months ahead, we will publish the results of their work. We will put in black and white for all to see, the forgotten but important history of rural Kenosha County, so that it will be forever remembered. The LEGEND will also help to compile contributions from all of the area's citizens to tell of this type of history, so that our local color may be preserved.

We ask, after you have read the LEGEND, for your contributions, your insight, your knowledge, however slight and insignificant you may consider it to be? For, to us, many so-called "insignificants" pieced together, make a well-jelled account of the heritage of all of rural Kenosha County.

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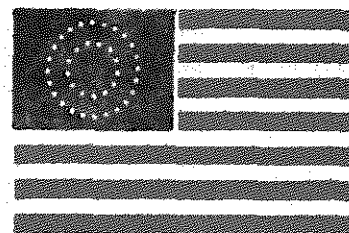
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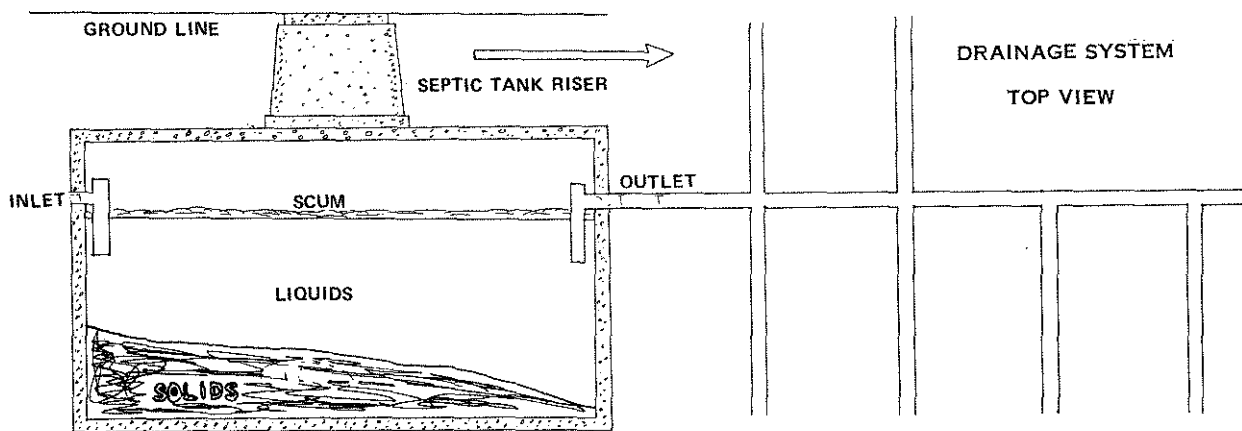


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