



St. Francis

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NOJOSHING

Indian word for "straight tongue"

Land protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue

The Newsletter of the St. Francis Historical Society

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September 2017

School Days Memories

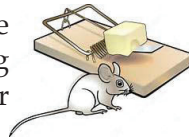
Memories from historical society members compiled
by Barbara Janiszewski

Before I started school, I used to listen to the older kids complaining about it and so I wasn't too enthusiastic about going to school. We moved to Greendale the year the village opened, so when my dad took me to school to register it was a brand new school. He took me to the kindergarten room, and I thought it was the most beautiful schoolroom imaginable. The room was big and bright with windows on three walls. All the little tables and chairs were new, and there was a walk-in dollhouse to play in, and there were lots of books. It was wonderful! I didn't want to go home. I liked school all the years I was there.

By Barbara Janiszewski

In 1955 my assignment at Sacred Heart grade school was to set the mousetraps every evening and remove the dead mice in the morning. It was fun to dangle a dead mouse hanging from the trap in front of the girls as I was taking it out to the trash. For an eighth grader it seemed like fun at the time.

By Ken Huber



I attended Milwaukie Grammar School in Milwaukie, Oregon, from K-6th grade. In the early years I learned to read with the *Dick and Jane* books and phonics worksheets. At recess we played on the playground, which consisted of a jungle gym, swings, teeter-totters, and a merry-go-round. We played tag, red-rover, hopscotch, jacks, and jump rope. I carried my lunch in a plaid metal lunch box with my sandwich wrapped in waxed paper. I was at times

humiliated to find my sandwich in a bread bag because we had run out of waxed paper. I didn't appreciate my mom's ingenuity and forward thinking in using a "baggie." I also remember the air raid drills when we crouched under our desks and the polio vaccine-laced sugar cubes we lined up to have placed on our tongues. I've revisited the old school. It still stands and looks great, with super shiny floors and only a few minor improvements.

By Jennifer Mertz

I attended Sacred Heart grade school and high school for three years at the St. Francis Minor Seminary, with my last year at Don Bosco high school, which doesn't exist anymore. When in high school a few of us boys used to eat raw vegetables in the Seminary gardens when it turned dark. I really liked the rhubarb. A few times at night we also rang an old church bell that was in someone's backyard near St. Paul's church. Pretty tame mischief compared to today.

By Joel Papa

Anyone who knows me well knows that I am passionate about old cemeteries. It all began with the St. Peter's Cemetery located on Mill Road at North 56th Street on Milwaukee's northwest side. My fellow students and I would wait for our yellow school bus in front of the cemetery, and we would gaze over the fence at the gravestones. There were a number of small children's graves in the Hassel family plot, and we children would make up stories about how the children died. The most popular story was that there had been a fire at the Hassel home and the children died in the fire. As an adult I found out the truth. The babies had died of various childhood illnesses.

By Anna Passante

I attended grades K-8 at Sacred Heart of Jesus grade school in St. Francis. Some of my memories include the large hand bell signaling the beginning and ending of the school day. Chocolate or white milk in 8 ounce glass bottles. Having a school day afternoon off for a "paper drive." We would use a wagon to go door to door for old newspapers and magazines and take them back to school to be placed in a large truck. I'm not sure but I imagine the school received the proceeds from our efforts. End of the year school picnics at Humboldt Park. Marching with my friends in the July 4th parade to Humboldt Park. Choir practice in the church, daily mass and so many other beautiful memories. Most of all I remember the dedicated Sisters of St. Francis of Assisi who taught us, including Sisters Honora, Myra, Paula and others and our pastor, Monsignor Philip Klein.

By Margaret Raclaw

I never liked Science too much but I really enjoyed biology, especially when we started dissecting various formerly living creatures. We were doing a large cricket type insect, and I turned around to talk to the person behind me. When I turned back the cricket was no longer on the tray. It was attached to the front of my sweater. Needless to say I was shocked!

By Barbara Janiszewski

I remember the school year of 1954/55 at the old Thompson Avenue School. That school year was the year I was in Miss Dolata's 1st grade class. It was a year that I was not ridiculed as a kindergarten baby but a real 1st grader who was learning to read and write. It made me feel great and more worthwhile. I also can recall it was the year that the school erected the monkey bars on the playground. It was the wish of every kid to climb on it but there were always just so many kids that it could hold. As you would have it, the bigger kids always seemed to get there ahead of me, and I was always left to stand on the sidelines and watch. This happened to me every day. I was always just hoping to get a chance to climb to the top and survey the vast vista of the school playground. Then one day Miss Dolata was taking our class outside to play some running games and before we left the



classroom she carefully instructed everyone not to climb on the monkey bars. As you would have it, as we filed out the door to the playground there were several boys in my class who ran to the monkey bars and started to climb. I decided to join them. It was my big

chance to climb to the top. All of a sudden I heard Miss Dolata's stern voice ordering everybody off the monkey bars. You could tell from her voice she was not happy that some of us had disobeyed her instructions. Everybody scrambled off as quickly as they had climbed on, except me. I had reached the top and realized that I was scared of the height. My first time on the monkey bars and I froze and was afraid to climb down. I remember staring at the ground with fear and Miss Dolata trying her best to coach me down. I remember asking God, "please do not let Miss Dolata climb up to the top to help me down." That would be so embarrassing. I was really afraid when I reached the top and now I was more afraid to climb down and face the ire of my teachers. When I finally reached terra firma I received my scolding and was ordered to the classroom. There would be no running games for me. My discipline would be dealt with later.

By Jay Wesner

When I was in the earlier grades I really looked forward to the beginning of a new school year. Summer seemed to last an exceptionally long time back then, and I was anxious to see my school friends and stop hanging around with my neighborhood friends. More than that it meant we could go shopping for school clothes. There were only three times a year that we got any brand new clothes: beginning of the school year, Christmas, and beginning of summer. If we did any unauthorized growing in between those times my mother simply 'let down the hem' of our pants, we wore short shirts and that was that. I liked getting new clothes and spent an inordinate amount of time deciding what to wear for the first day of school. After that it really didn't matter except for picture day when I would once again agonize over what the right outfit would be. We always took hot lunches and there were only a few things I didn't like. It was a big deal to go on a field trip because then we could pack a lunch. My mother would let us pick out things at the store that we wouldn't normally get. Hostess snacks and chips. That was definitely worth seeing the zoo, museum, and domes for the 6th time. I'm not sure we ever went anywhere else except Green Meadows Farm in 1st grade. Like most children, the older I got the shorter the summer seemed and the less I looked forward to the beginning of the school year when everything was new and exciting.

By Julie Myszkowski

What's New?

Membership

Welcome new members: Judy Meleski Cappleman, Paula Lewandowski Boknevit, Dwayne & Shanna Moses, GeriAnn Berg, Laura Hayes, and Veda Vandervest

Pizzeria Piccola

Thank you for all who participated in the Pizzeria Piccola fundraiser on Sunday, July 30. Between the raffle and funds raised at the restaurant, we raised just over \$1,200. These funds will be used for the restoration of the Lake Protestant Cemetery.

Display cabinet in rotunda

Come see the new display on household objects from our archives. Jennifer Mertz and Anna Passante put together the display in the moveable display cabinet in the rotunda. Come and try your luck in identifying some of the unidentified objects. If you have any memories pertaining to these objects---perhaps your mother or grandmother used them, let us know.

Lakeside Power Plant

The application for a historic marker has been completed and sent. You are probably familiar with the brown markers affectionately known as "history on a stick." If our application is accepted, the marker will be placed on city property (between curb and sidewalk) on the 3900 block of South Lake Drive. It will be visible to those who use the Oak Leaf Trail and those who drive by in motor vehicles. The cost is \$790. We Energies Foundation granted our Society \$500 and the Society will pick up the rest of the cost. If the application is accepted, the Society will have a dedication in summer 2018.

Passing of Richard Raasch

Richard Raasch, a long-time member of the Society and an Honorary Board Member died July 5th. He faithfully attended our meetings and joined us at most of our events to help in any way that he could. RIP

Coming Up

The annual Harvest and Heritage Fest will be held on October 1st. We will have a bake sale at the event. There will be tours of the Police and Fire Departments. See updates on the city webpage.

October General Meeting

October 21, 2017, 9:30 a.m. Speakers: Board members Randy Borland and Anna Passante will talk about the results of the Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) that was performed at the Lake Protestant Cemetery in July. The GPR found more than 100 unrecorded graves sites.

Cousin's Fund Raiser

September 6th is the date of the fund raiser at Cousin's on Layton Avenue. Eat in or takeout any time between 4-8 p.m. and your historical society will get a percentage of the profits.



• Have you ever wondered how you could
• make a significant difference in the future of
• the St. Francis Historical Society? One way is
• to make a bequest to the historical society in
• your will.

• St. Francis Historical Society is dedicated
• to preserving the history and the stories of
• St. Francis and Town of Lake for the future
• generations. Remembering the historical
• society in your will can help assure a strong
• future.

• A specific amount, a percentage of your estate,
• or all or part of what remains after other
• bequests are distributed can be bequeathed
• to the Society. Your attorney or other qualified
• estate planner can help you with this bequest.

• Any amount is important to the Society's
• future. For further information, please contact
• us at 414-316-4391.

Newly Published
From Nojoshing to St. Francis from Settlement to City, Part 2:
the Early Settlers of St. Francis, Wisconsin

by Anna Passante 200 pages, illustrated

Many of the early settlers' stories are gathered here. Read the stories of these courageous people, who in many cases left a more comfortable existence to seek a new life on America's frontier. And to spice things up a bit, a little scandal---attempted murder, murder, immoral behavior---was thrown in for good measure.

Interested in purchasing these books?

Book 1 \$15.00 + \$4.00 shipping/handling

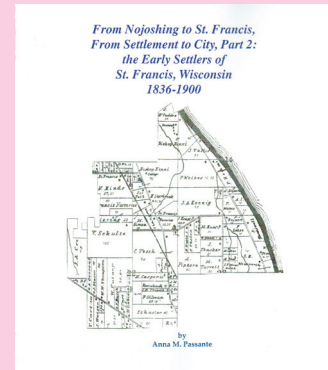
Book 2 \$20.00 + \$4.00 shipping/handling

Make out a check to St. Francis Historical Society
Send to: 3400 E. Howard Ave. St. Francis, WI 53235

OR purchase online from Half.com

Direct all question to Anna Passante 414-482-1781

All proceeds from the book sales goes to the St. Francis Historical Society cemetery fund for the restoration of the Lake Protestant Cemetery located at the corner of Barland and Norwich Avenues (3150 E. Barland Ave.)



Watch your mail for an invitation to a presentation by Cordelia Packard (b.1826-d.1907) who will return to earth to speak on Thursday, September 21 at the St. Francis Civic Center 3400 E. Howard Avenue. Refreshments at 6:00, Program at 6:30.

Hear Cordelia relate stories about her family leaving a comfortable life in western New York in 1836 to travel to the wild frontier in the Wisconsin Territory. Her father, Zebedee, and siblings (including Daniel for which Packard Avenue is named), came to start a new life. Hear about the building of a log cabin, clearing the land, dealings with Indians, and the everyday struggles to survive in this wild land.

Cordelia will also talk about Anna Passante's new book *From Nojoshing to St. Francis from Settlement to City, Part 2: the Early Settlers of St. Francis, Wisconsin*. Books will be on sale.

Photos of Past Events



4th of July

The Society took part in the 4th of July parade and had a table at Vretenar Park. Four easels were set up with pictures of some of the old houses in St. Francis---some still standing. Also displayed were pictures of former St. Francis schools, as well as the old post office building on the corner of St. Francis Avenue and Kinnick-innic Avenue---still standing!



National Night Out

Quite a few attendees stopped at our table. We had a spinning wheel demonstration, with free yarn bracelets for the kids. Attendees took a turn at weaving, as well as showing off their skill of cursive writing, which is no longer taught at the schools.

Pizzaria Piccola Fund Raiser

Thank you to all who helped with the fundraiser and to all who came to enjoy the food! Thanks to all who supported our raffle. We took in over \$800 from the raffle and will be getting a check for our share of the profits. All this goes to the cemetery fund to restore the Lake Protestant Cemetery, the City of St. Francis' own pioneer cemetery at the corner of E. Norwich and Barland avenues. Special thanks to the St. Francis High School National Honor Society members who helped and earned hours. They are pictured here with Mayor Coryann and Society President, Anna Passante.

The Aerial Survey of 1937

by Glenn A. Gierzycki

The first comprehensive aerial photographic surveys of Wisconsin occurred in 1937-1941. The black and white pictures are generally of good quality and very interesting to see. They give a view of a Wisconsin that has often been changed or lost. The aerial photos of the St. Francis neighborhood (then part of Town of Lake), taken on August 12, 1937, have a number of features that I think might be of interest to the readers.

The biggest difference between then and now is the lack of roads and neighborhoods in the photos. Most of St. Francis east of the railroad tracks is rural with fields and pastures. The contrast with Milwaukee is striking as the Fernwood area has densely packed housing that comes to the present-day St. Francis city boundary at Morgan Avenue. The city of Cudahy has some neighborhoods that border St. Francis but some of the Cudahy land adjacent to St. Francis is undeveloped. The areas further south in Cudahy are more densely developed neighborhoods.

Much of what was to become the city of St. Francis is open land with a few small orchards, small farm fields, and open spaces. Small neighborhoods are present but the density and most sites of our current housing is absent. There were more established neighborhoods west of the tracks than to the east.

The Lakeside Power Plant along the lake is visible. Winds from the northeast blow the smoke from the smokestacks in a southwest direction. The large coal piles and the power company's own electric railroad are clearly visible. A large building at the end of East Crawford Avenue is visible. That

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was a steel company that was built in the 1917-1918 era. I don't think it was in operation in 1937, but the buildings had not been torn down yet.

Seminary Woods stands out as a patch of forest with boundaries that are similar to those of today. Most of the buildings associated with the Catholic Archdiocese of Milwaukee land show up well. The trace of Deer Creek is defined by a thin ribbon of trees for part of its length. The house where my family lived for many years on Crawford Avenue is not on the picture as it was completed in 1942. Crawford itself seems to be a dirt road that leads to the steel mill.

The two sets of railroad tracks in St. Francis stand out well in the photos. Greene Park has several trails wandering through the area but not a lot of trees. The trace of the paths in Greene Park has totally changed in the ensuing years, and there are now more trees along Barland Avenue. The site of present-day Willow Glen Elementary School was an open field with scattered trees. The area of Norwich and Kansas avenues did not have any industries in 1937. I have used these black and white photos from the late 1930s to do research on other parts of Wisconsin in which I have an interest. They are fascinating to pore over.

The website on which I saw these photos is sponsored by the Wisconsin State Cartographer's Office. Over 38,000 photos of Wisconsin were acquired from the US Department of Agriculture. The images can be found on the Wisconsin Historical Aerial Imagery Finder page. The photos are available for download for free and without any restrictions on use. The site has recently been revamped and is now easier to use.





St. Francis Historical Society
3400 E. Howard Ave.
St. Francis, WI 53235

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Vice-President..... Sister Ceil Struck
Secretary.....Stephanie Maxwell
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Terry Duffey
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Newsletter

Anna Passante
Barbara Janiszewski

Mark Your Calendar

Board Meetings

September 16, 2017, 9:30 a.m.
General Meeting October 21, 2017, 9:30 a.m.
November 18, 2017, 9:30 a.m.

Cousin's Fundraiser:

Wednesday, September 6, 4:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m.
Sunday, October 1, 2017, Bake sale civic center

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Website: stfranciswihistoricalsociety.org

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