



NOJOSHING

Indian word for "straight tongue"

land protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue

Newsletter published quarterly

Non-Profit Organization 501c3

March 2019

An Easter on Crawford Avenue

By Karen Gersonde

Easter was always a special time for me as a kid growing up on Crawford Avenue in St. Francis in the 1960s. It ranked right up there with Christmas time. I loved the smell of fresh Easter lilies. I loved all of the springtime flowers like tulips, daffodils and irises. My father always had a garden full of springtime flowers that my mom would pick and make the whole house smell so fresh and fragrant. It was a time to go to church for Easter Sunday mass at Sacred Heart of Jesus Church where the church was decorated in all of its springtime glory. And of course, being a kid, I couldn't wait for the Easter Bunny to come. Oh that big fluffy Easter Bunny, filling our baskets with wonderful candy and chocolate.

Being a true south sider, it was no surprise that my brother and I were lucky enough to get Quality Candy in our Easter baskets. We left our empty baskets in our house by the front door, why I'll never know. Like the bunny came in through the front door! And on Easter morning, we were up bright and early to search for our baskets which the Easter Bunny had hidden. My brother was always quick to find his. Me, not so much. There were times that I had to hunt and search and still couldn't find it, even though we had a small Cape Cod house. Finally, when I was just about to cry because I thought the bunny had forgotten about me, my dad would make suggestions as to where I should look for my hidden treasure. And there it was! What a clever father!

Oh sure, we got jelly beans and such, but the best treats were all of the chocolate candy

that said Quality on them.

We always scored one huge chocolate rabbit, which we immediately ate the ears off of. Poor rabbit, he looked so silly, all body and no ears. We also got the foil wrapped chocolate bunnies or eggs. Those were always scattered in the Easter grass in the baskets, so you had to pick the candy out of the grass. Usually it was messy but we didn't care. We tore into the chocolate and ate all we could. Mom usually had to take the baskets away as it was time for church, so the chocolate goodness had to wait. We also got chocolate covered marshmallows or whipped cream eggs. All Quality Candy, all heavenly goodness! The baskets sat out for the rest of the week until the candy was gone. We were off of school all week, so it didn't take long for all of the candy to disappear. And yes, my dear brother Glenn, I did steal chocolate out of your basket when you weren't looking, because my stash was dwindling and I didn't think you would notice. I did it because I liked chocolate. Always did, always will! It is my weakness. I'm a chocoholic and I admit it!

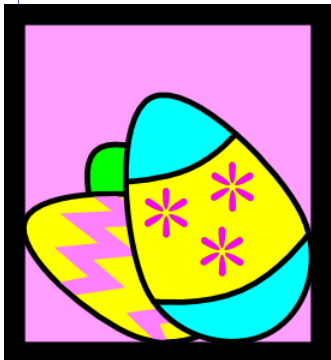


chocolate bunny with ears intact



Karen Gierzycki Gersonde

Although those days are long gone, I still have my original Easter basket. I swear it still has that smell of candy and chocolate. And it brings back such fond memories of Easter's long ago. So Happy Easter and happy springtime to everyone.



Remember, always eat the ears first on your chocolate rabbits. And if you ever run into me on the streets...I like chocolate! And oh ya, sorry about that, Glenn! I'm bad! LOL

Thanks to all members who included an extra donation to their renewal notices. Every donation helps the historical society fulfill its mission to collect, preserve, and display St. Francis history; offer historical talks; continue our historic landmark plaque program; and fund the Lake Protestant cemetery restoration project.

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Please consider including a gift to the St. Francis Historical Society in your will, trust or beneficiary designation. For more information, please contact Anna Passante at 414-316-4391 or st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com.

What's New?

Welcome new Members:

John Zajackowski and Carol Gostomski.

Bake Sale:

Come to the historical society bake sale on April 2 at the civic center. All proceeds will go to a new gravestone for shipwreck victims buried in the Lake Protestant Cemetery at Norwich & Barland avenues.

April 20 General Meeting:

Come hear Robert Hallfeld's talk about the Harley Museum. Board meeting 9:30 am with the Harley talk to follow.

Operation Eat Local:

In an effort to support local businesses, we ate lunch at Red Bar after our February meeting, and a good time was had by all. After Robert Hallfeld's talk at our April meeting, we will be going to Swayz Mexican restaurant on Packard Avenue. We'd love to have you join us.

Coming Up:

Several programs scheduled this spring.

The first program: April 11-- A joint effort with the South Milwaukee Historical Society. Carl Baehr, local historian will be speaking about his new book, *From the Emerald Island to the Cream City, a History of the Irish in Milwaukee* and will highlight the Lake Elgin shipwreck. Copies will be available for purchase. (Baehr's also wrote the book *Milwaukee Streets: The Stories Behind Their Names*.)

The second program: May 9--- Jessica Michner, an actress/reenactor, will be performing as Golda Meir. Both programs are free at the St. Francis Civic Center, 3400 East Howard Avenue. Refreshments 6:30 pm and program at 7:00 pm. We hope to see you there!

Christmas Dinner

Our Christmas dinner was well attended, and member Skip Buechel gave an interesting presentation about the geological history of southeast Wisconsin. Also, congratulations to Skip for becoming Citizen of the Year in St. Francis!

Cousin's Subs fundraiser

Eat at Cousin's Subs, 3058 E. Layton Ave. on Wednesday, March 13 from 4 pm-8pm. No coupon necessary. Cousin's automatically give us 10% of the profits from 4 pm-8pm.

Meet Your New Board Member Juliet Hills

By Barbara Janiszewski

Juliet grew up in Woking, England, a town about thirty miles south of London. It was also the birthplace of H.G. Wells, who wrote *War of the Worlds*. In fact, in that book, Woking was the town the Martians attacked. Julia earned an Associate Degree in Library Science from North London University and worked in local history museums for ten years.

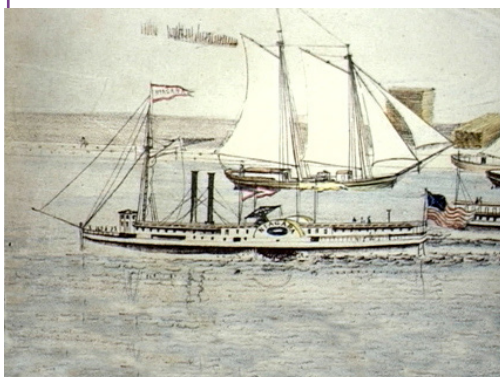
After Juliet married, she moved to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where she worked as a private school librarian and attended the Massachusetts College of Art part time. She came to Milwaukee to attend Marquette University, where she studied anthropology and worked part-time at the Milwaukee Public Museum while in school. Juliet then entered the chaplaincy program at St. Luke's Hospital but couldn't transfer the credits, so she instead attended St. Francis Seminary for three years. She served her residency at St. Luke's, then worked at Froedert Hospital for a year, and then did home hospice for eight years. She began working as a volunteer at the Milwaukee County Historical Society office. When a job opened up at the front desk, she took that job and worked for six years until her retirement last year. In retirement, she now gives talks all over on various subjects, some as a representative of the Milwaukee County Historical Society. Two of the talks are on the history of hymns and children's literature. She also belongs to the Marine Historical Society, the Milwaukee Art Museum, and the Racine Art Museum. She moved to St. Francis thirteen years ago and loves living here.



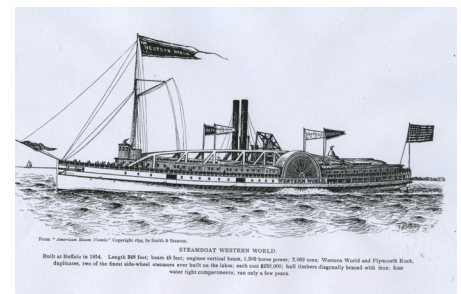
The St. Francis Historical Society plans to place a gravestone in the Lake Protestant Cemetery, located at East Norwich and Barland avenues, to memorialize five shipwreck victims that washed ashore near the St. Francis Seminary in 1855 and 1856. If you would like to be a part of this historical endeavor, please send a donation to the St. Francis Historical Society 3400 E. Howard Avenue, St. Francis, WI 53235. Put "shipwreck stone" in the note section of the check.

In September 1855, the steamship *Sebastopol* ran aground off the shore of Lake Michigan near the St. Francis Seminary. Three male crew members lost their lives. All three were buried side-by-side in the Lake Protestant Cemetery in St. Francis, Wisconsin.

The following year, in September 1856, the steam ship *Niagara* burned off the coast of Port Washington, Wisconsin. At least 60 people lost their lives. Two of the bodies floated down to Milwaukee and washed up on shore between the St. Francis Seminary and Oak Creek. One the two female bodies was Kate T. Haring, age 11, of Mackinaw Island. The other female body could not be identified.



The palaced steamship *Niagara*



Steamship *Western World* similar in style to the *Sebastopol*

Do You Remember...Bronze Baby Shoes?

By Glenn A. Gierzycki

I was wandering around the house during the holiday season and found my pair of bronzed baby shoes from the 1950's. It got me to thinking, where did the tradition come from?

The practice of bronzing special items goes back to at least 600 BC. In 1934, Violet Shinbach of Columbus, Ohio, noticed a pair of bronzed baby shoes in a department store and thought she could start a business from the concept. She started the Bron-Shoe Company, which later became the American Bronzing Company. The company became the largest bronzing company in the world. A search on the internet found the company is still in business as a privately held and family-owned company. It still does shoes and quite a number of other items. Today there are a number of companies that also compete in the market.

Technically, the baby shoes are not bronzed. Pouring molten bronze on such an item would burn them up. The shoes are preserved by the process of electroplating. The shoes are dipped in a liquid material and coated with a copper-infused solution. This makes the shoes conductive. The shoes are then placed in electroplating tanks that make the copper cling to the shoes by electro-chemical reaction. So, instead of having bronzed shoes, the result is actually a copper-coated shoe.

The two pictures that accompany this article are of my baby shoes. I don't know which company did the work, but they have held up well for over 60 years and should be good for decades more. I don't know if it will show in one of the photos, but the date of my birth is etched in the soles.

Bronzing of baby shoes has come in and out of vogue since the 1930s. It seems to be making a comeback today, but it probably won't be as big a phenomenon as in the past.



Glenn's bronze shoes

Editor's Note:

After reading Glenn's article, I dug out my husband Ron's "bronze" shoes. They are more a toddler shoe and are mounted on what looks like marble. Anna P.



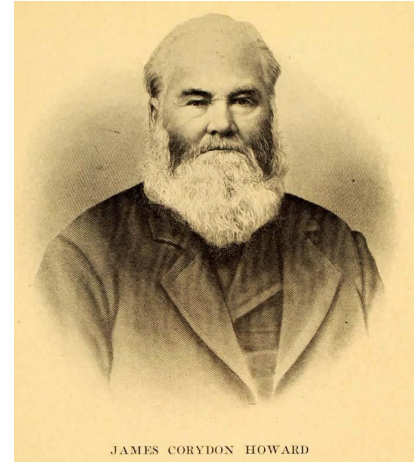
St. Francis Street Names and Their Origins

Howard Avenue

by Anna Passante

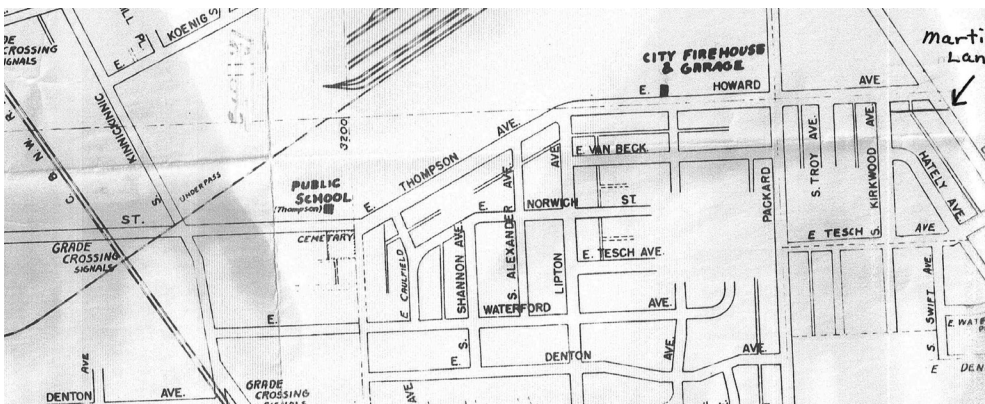
According to Carl Baehr in his book *Milwaukee Streets: The Stories Behind Their Names*, Howard Avenue was named for James Corydon Howard in 1884. Howard was born in Vermont in 1804. He was raised in St. Lawrence County, New York. He married Sopronia Porter, daughter of Israel Porter, in 1831, and in 1836 they moved to Milwaukee and purchased land in Town of Lake near present-day Howell and Howard avenues. The couple had 15 children. He became active in Town of Lake government.

Due to marshy land, Howard Avenue didn't exist between Kinnickinnic Avenue and Lake Drive until the 1990s. Up until then, one had to drive on Thompson/Norwich Avenue to travel west from the lake (see drawing).

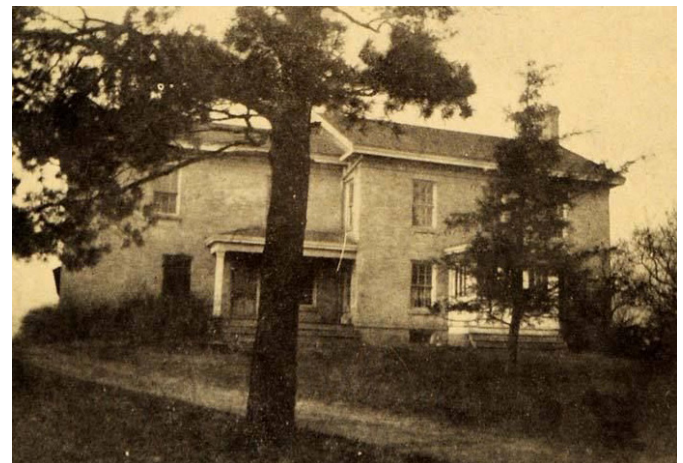


JAMES CORYDON HOWARD

James Corydon Howard



Note that this older map shows Howard Avenue traveling east from Lake Drive curving down to Thompson/Norwich Avenue. Howard Avenue did not go through to the lake until the 1990s. The location of Martin Lane is shown on the top right.



Howard house built 1859 replaced the log cabin

Martin Lane

by Anna Passante

When Howard Avenue was being extended between Kinnickinnic Avenue and Lake Drive in the 1990s, the section of Howard Avenue between Lake Drive and South Kirkwood Avenue was made a separate entity from the rest of Howard Avenue. That section of roadway was renamed Martin Lane for Patrolman Gregory Martin.

Martin was a native of Milwaukee. He served two years in the U. S. Air Force after graduating from Milwaukee's Marshall High School. He worked as a campus police officer at UWM and earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Mount Scenario College in Ladysmith.

Martin became a patrolman for the City of St. Francis in 1978, partnering with Patrolman James Burgess, who would later become chief of police. He was the first police officer to hold the rank of captain for the St. Francis Police Department. He held that position until his death of a heart attack in December 1998 at the age of 46.

The resolution for renaming the road was prepared by then City Attorney Richard H. Staats. Staats called Martin a "gentle, kind, and caring person who was admired and respected by many persons."



Courtesy of St. Francis Police Dept.



Captain Gregory Martin & friends



Courtesy of St. Francis Police Dept

Mystery Letter From the Historical Society Archives

Help solve the mystery. Do you know the writer of this memoir?

During the early years of my life, I lived in the Town of Lake. Our house was in the eastern most portion of the 2100 block of Tesch Avenue, a block that consisted of only four houses, and three of those houses were the relatives of the Grabske clan. It was a good life with lots of space to roam. Grandpa had a small chicken coop that provided eggs for daily meals and on Sunday chicken dinner. For a few years we had a donkey that managed to escape every now and then, wandering the streets of the town. Dad got tired---[chased] him down and traded him in on a horse, which I rode everywhere.

There were open fields to the east and south. The bridge over the train tracks on Norwich, sometimes called "Suicide Bridge," was only a block away. To the west was another open field that extended to a factory or two. One of those was EZ Painter, and I think the other was a screw machine factory. It is now the large Shur-Line facility, which grew into that space, including those four houses. And to the south, there was an entire open block used for storage of construction equipment.

There were things to do in all seasons. Winter was a favorite. There were several hills for sledding and tobogganing. One of these went straight east from grandpa's house down towards the railroad tracks. A second, shorter, but steeper hill, went down from the Wisconsin Electric coal train tracks. I would call that train the Dinky. These Dinky tracks formed the back property line of the four houses.

In 1951, the newly formed city of St. Francis claimed this part of the Town of Lake. Each winter during my grade school years, they would get out the bulldozers and push some ground around on the corner of Norwich and Iowa. The big Shur-Line sign is located in what was the northeast corner of the depression those bulldozers created. They would then bring out the fire hoses and flood this area for a local ice skating pond. Boy, I spent a lot of time there chasing around the ice, playing stick hockey with other neighborhood kids. The warming house was a shabby old trailer, maybe an old Airstream-style one, with a wood burner and storage for the skater shoes and socks.

Ah yes!! I remember the snowmen, sleds, toboggans, and snowball fights, but the best by far was the ice skating pond.



L-10 locomotive that pulled the coal cars and which some refer to as the "Dinky"



Courtesy Chris Barney



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

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Newsletter

Anna Passante
Barbara Janiszewski

Mark Your Calendar

Meetings:

March 16, 2019, Board Meeting 9:30 am
April 20, 2019, General Meeting 9:30 am
May 18, 2019, Board Meeting 9:30 am

Events (see "What's New" for details)

April 2---Bake sale at civic center during election
April 11-- Carl Baehr's book talk---*From the Emerald Island to the Cream City* about the Irish in Milwaukee
April 20---Robert Hallfeld's talk about the Harley Museum
May 9--- Jessica Michner, an actress/reenactor, will be performing as Golda Meir.

The historical society office (3400 E. Howard Avenue) is open most Thursday afternoons from 1:00 to 3:30. Please call Anna Passante at 414-482-1781 to confirm that we will be in the office.

Facebook: St. Francis Historical Society

Email: st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Address: 3400 E. Howard Ave.

Website: stfranciswihistoricalsociety.org

Phone: 414-316-4391