

'NOJOSHING'

The official Newsletter of the St. Francis Historical Society

4235 South Nicholson Avenue
St. Francis, Wisconsin 53207
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Winter 1990

1989 - 1990 OFFICERS

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ANNUAL MEETING - JANUARY 29th

The 1990 St. Francis Historical Society annual meeting will be held on Monday, January 29th at the St. Francis Community Center, 3476 East Howard Avenue. There will be a potluck supper beginning at 6:00 p.m., followed by the business portion of the meeting which will include election of board members. This will be followed by a guest speaker to be announced in a separate letter.

The potluck supper and meeting are open to the general public - just bring a side dish or meat dish to the potluck. The meeting itself will begin around 7:00 p.m. After the guest speaker, the monthly board meeting will be held and officers will be appointed for 1990-91. Please join us, we appreciate your support and interest!



ST. FRANCIS HISTORICAL SOCIETY: WE ARE "SERIOUS ABOUT NOJOSHING"

ST. FRANCIS/OLD TOWN OF LAKE AREA TRAILS"

by Chris Barney

"TIPPECANOE AND NOT BAY VIEW"

Of the three most populated areas in the Town of Lake during its 116-year existence, the 'east side,' St. Francis, became a 4th-class city in 1951 and continues in existence to this day; the 'northeast side,' Bay View, was the first municipality in Milwaukee County to incorporate (as a village) after the City of Milwaukee, in 1879 — it was annexed by Milwaukee in 1887 but its strong identity has continued to prosper ever since; the 'west side,' Tippecanoe has, however, suffered from an identity crisis since its remaining area became part of Milwaukee 36 years ago. Since then, most of the area

from Howell Avenue east has been generally considered to be part of Bay View. Tippecanoe, however, has played an important part in the Town of Lake's rich history and deserves its own identity.

Here is an assessment of the Tippecanoe neighborhood as I have been able to uncover since 1987:

The area or neighborhood known as Tippecanoe is generally bound by East and West Layton Avenue on the south, and South 6th Street on the west. The other two boundaries are not as clear. However, here is my assessment of them based on my research. The northern boundary is an irregular one, being West Oklahoma Avenue, South Chase Avenue and East Holt Avenue. The eastern boundary is formed by the Chicago and North Western railroad tracks east of South Brust Avenue, along with the western border of the City of St. Francis.

The area was first settled beginning in the mid-1830s. Some early settlers in Tippecanoe were the Warnimonts, Burdicks, Howards and Austins. The area, which was largely rural un-

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"Tippecanoe and Not Bay View" (continued from page 1)
 til the 1890s, got its name when John Saveland, a retired Great Lakes ship captain and Milwaukee merchant who owned land north of Howard Avenue and about one block west of Howell Avenue, decided to build an amusement hall on the stone foundation of a barn built and owned previously by Samuel Austin. This is now Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church. Saveland also decided to sink an artesian well after excavating a lake bed on his property. To this day, the pond in Saveland Park is still referred to as Lake Tippecanoe. Saveland's naming of the amusement hall and man-made lake, which opened in July 1894, stemmed from his admiration of President William Henry Harrison of "Tippecanoe and Tyler Too" fame, Harrison's War of 1812 heroism giving him the 'Tippecanoe' nickname and sufficient popularity to win the 1840 Presidential election. Local residents and merchants paid to have the Howell Avenue streetcar line extended to Howell and Wilbur. The 'Tippecanoe' destination sign on Route No. 11 streetcars survived until the line was terminated in October 1956 and replaced by buses. The streetcar line once extended to Howell and Bolivar Avenues, but was cut back to Howell and Howard in March 1947.

After Saveland's resort opened, a business area developed along Howell Avenue centered at Howell and Howard where the Town of Lake Town Hall was built on the southeast corner of that intersection about 1915. It also became the base for the Town of Lake Fire Department in 1924. A combined water tower and town hall/municipal building was built in 1938-39 at 4001 South 6th Street. It opened in 1940.

The area of Tippecanoe north of Howard and east of 6th Street was annexed piecemeal to the City of Milwaukee between 1925 and 1940. The area south of Howard came into

the city when the Town of Lake was consolidated with Milwaukee by a general voter referendum on April 6, 1954. It became legally effective on April 8, 1954.

Several businesses carry the Tippecanoe name: Tippecanoe School at 357 East Howard Avenue (since about 1895); Tippecanoe Park at Clement and Saveland Avenues; Tippecanoe Hardware at 3955 South Howell Avenue (since the 1920s); Tippecanoe Linoleum and Tile at 428 East Bolivar Avenue; Tippecanoe Presbyterian Church at 125 West Saveland Avenue (since 1917); and Tippecanoe Neighborhood Library at 3912 South Howell Avenue (on the same site since 1960, at 3835 South Howell Avenue from 1931 to 1960). At one time there was a Tippecanoe State Bank, a weekly paper called the "Tippecanoe News," and in 1954 there was a last-minute motion filed to incorporate a portion of the Town of Lake as the City of Tippecanoe. However, the vote by residents of the Town of Lake and the City of Milwaukee to consolidate on April 6th of that year automatically killed the incorporation petition and the entire town became part of Milwaukee.

John Saveland's lake dried up when St. Francis Seminary tapped the same artesian spring, and the proliferation of the automobile hastened the closing of the amusement hall about 1915. The foundation of the church currently occupying the site uses bricks and stones from Austin's original barn. After his death, Saveland's descendants donated the land containing the lake bed to the Milwaukee County Park Commission in 1923. Another spring was tapped producing a smaller, spring-fed pond, and the land was named Saveland Park and developed by the Park Commission in the 1930s by noted landscape architect Alfred Boerner. "Lake Tippecanoe" is stocked with trout by the DNR, and is a popular fishing spot for young and old anglers alike.



The Town of Lake Fire Department and Town Hall, shown here in 1936, were located in the heart of the Tippecanoe neighborhood at 3900-06 South Howell Avenue. Fire Chief Adolph Schuster (left), of St. Francis, guided the Town of Lake Department for 22 years (1924-46).

Photo courtesy of Richard Schuster

HISTORY AROUND US . . .

The following is a look at what other historical societies in the area and the state are doing:

- † The **State Historical Society of Wisconsin** has announced a presentation by one of the nation's leading labor historians, **Robert H. Zieger** of the University of Florida, heading the list of labor history events planned for Founder's Day at Madison's Inn on the Park **February 16th**. Zieger's appearance coincides with extensive programs planned in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution's traveling exhibition, **Badges of Pride: Symbols and Images of American Labor**, which will be on view at the State Historical Museum until April 1st. Zieger has written a highly acclaimed history of the **Madison Rayovac** local union, among other works.
- A dozen important figures in Wisconsin radio and television history have been honored in the **Wisconsin Broadcasters Hall of Fame**, which was dedicated in SHS's headquarters' building lobby last October 20th. Alfred C. Sikes, chair of the Federal Communications Commission, attended the dedication.
- New corporate sponsors of the **Wisconsin History Foundation** are Golden State Warriors of Oakland, California, and WICOR Foundation, Inc. of Sheboygan.
- The Library has received a \$16,500 grant from the Brittingham Fund, Inc. to enhance its collection of Afro-American and Chicano serial publications.
- The **Wisconsin Humanities Committee** has received \$50,000 from the State of Wisconsin to support a research program called **LOCAL MATTERS!**, a cooperative venture of WHC and SHS of Wisconsin. Any non-profit organization may apply for a grant of up to \$4,000. The program is intended to produce interpretive materials on local heritage for Wisconsin residents and tourists. The deadline for proposals is March 1st, and certain restrictions apply. For more details, contact WHC at 608-262-0706, or Tom McKay in the Office of Local History at SHS of Wisconsin.
- The **South Milwaukee Historical Society** will hold its annual dinner February 17th, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with a social hour, a sit-down dinner at 6:30 p.m., and entertainment following dinner.
Here is an interesting recipe taken from the 1917 South Milwaukee Community Cookbook. The author of the 'recipe' for Home Happiness Cake is E.R. Weber: One cupful each of purity, honesty, unselfishness, justice and common sense; half a cup each of sense of humor and flower of love, sifted several times with 2 teaspoonfuls of mutual confidence; spice to taste with wit, nonsense and naivete. Bake in layers in a moderate oven. Filling: generous mutual appreciation; ice thickly with true courtesy.
- The topic of the **Oak Creek Historical Society's** Pioneer Night, to be held March 25th or 26th, will be The Churches That Served the Pioneers in Oak Creek Township. For details, call chairman Carolyn R. Haack at 761-3061.
The Society's **Museum Complex** is located at the corner of 15th Avenue and Forest Hill Avenue, and is open to visitors every Sunday from 2 to 4 p.m.

DO YOU REMEMBER . . .

- Twenty years ago on January 24, 1970, the **Wilson Park Recreation Center** first opened its doors to the public. The facility at 4001 South 20th Street provided ice skating and hockey practice facilities. It was built on the site of the Wilson Park Veterans Housing Project, a county-owned and operated housing facility consisting of 374 prefab, basementless Harnischfeger homes which were built on the Town of Lake site in 1947-48 and operated until 1963.
- Fifty years ago on January 20, 1940, the **Town of Lake Water Tower and Municipal Building** was first dedicated to public service. It has been in continuous operation as a water utility since December 1, 1939. William D. Darby, a West Allis architect, designed the art deco-style structure, which will soon become a City of Milwaukee Historic Landmark.



BOARD DIRECTIONS

- The terms of board members Kathy Schwingle and Millie Schimelfenyg expire this month. They are expected to seek re-election at the annual meeting. In addition, the board vacancy created by the departure of Adele Lenz will require a replacement. Nominations to the board will be taken during the business portion of the meeting.



PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

- The fate of the **Lakeside Power Plant Gatehouse** is still undecided at this writing. City of St. Francis officials have apparently not yet decided whether to grant our Society permission to move the structure to St. Francis Memorial Park. As soon as action is taken, we will include it in our publication.
- **The Town of Lake Water Tower and Municipal Building**, 4001 South 6th Street, was given unanimous recommendation by the City of Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission to become a historic landmark on December 18, 1989. The recommendation, along with an official resolution declaring the structure as a landmark, will be submitted to the Milwaukee Common Council during the month of January for approval, which is also expected to be unanimous. A 50th anniversary re-dedication ceremony is expected to take place in April or May. The general public is encouraged to attend. Both the water tower and municipal building are still used by the City of Milwaukee, but the last of the three original wells used by the Town of Lake Water Utility was abandoned in 1960. Lake water is now stored in the Tower's 1,000,000-gallon storage tank.

RE-CAP OF OCTOBER 29th GENERAL MEETING

Our society was treated to a tour of the recently renovated **Henni Hall** at St. Francis Seminary. Approximately 40 people attended the open house, which was followed by a slide presentation on the Seminary's history. Total cost of renovation, not yet complete, is approximately \$2,000,000. The work also removed existing asbestos and brought the building up to code standards, according to SFHS President Ron Tessmer. Ron also stated that the Seminary plans another open house when renovation is complete. Our thanks to the Very Rev. Daniel Pakenham, Seminary Rector, for extending the tour invitation.

1990 DATES TO REMEMBER

- January 29th** Annual Membership Meeting
St. Francis Community Center, 6:00 p.m.
Guest speaker to be announced
- February 7th** Board Meeting, Thompson School
Time to be announced
- March 7th** Board Meeting, Thompson School
Time to be announced
- April 7th** Board Meeting, Thompson School
Time to be announced

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