



# 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

published quarterly  
Non-Profit Organization 501c3

## December 2016

### **Christmas Cookies**

by Barbara Janiszewski

For as long as I can remember I have liked baking Christmas cookies. I never did too much other baking but at Christmas I was in heaven. I got a few of the old electric company cookie books, and I would rope in anyone who would help me - friends, neighbors, and relatives.

When I started to work outside the home the baking mostly stopped. Sometimes I'd bake a few but most of the time that was it. Then about twenty-five years ago my daughter Jill decided to help. She and I would each take a week's vacation, and we would bake, bake, bake.

The trouble was that I kept finding new recipes that I wanted to try. My son-in-law works at WE Energies, so I got a new cookie book every year. Jill rebelled and said that if I was going to add more varieties I had to cut some out. Not wanting to lose the help, I did. We now bake about fifty different kinds - over 3,000 each year.

I always had one rule though. No one, including me, could touch those cookies before Christmas. This was evidently pure agony for daughter Julie, and she penned this take on 'A Night Before Christmas'.

### **Cookie Torture**

by Julie Myszkowski

'Twas weeks before Christmas and all through Mom's house,  
The ingredients for cookie baking were stacked high on the shelves.  
We children (except Jill) were nestled snug in our beds  
While visions of peanut blossoms danced in our heads.  
With Mom at the table and Jill at the stove,  
The breezeway soon became our own cookie grove.

When out in the yard there arose such a clatter,  
Mom slowly got up to see what was the matter.  
Away to the window as fast as she could go,  
While Jill barked out the orders  
"Keep rolling that dough!"  
When what to her wondering eyes did she see  
But a woman wild with excitement and glee!  
She knew in a moment it was her youngest, Julie

continued page 2

For as long as Julie could remember  
There have been cookies to sniff,  
But never could she take a taste before the 25th.

This had led to frustration for some 32 odd years –  
Torture, deprivation, hours in tears.

“ENOUGH!” she cried, “This is more than I can stand!”  
So the very desperate Julie hatched herself a plan.  
“I’ll come when they’re busy, they’ll never even see.  
And even if they do, it would be worth it for two or three.”

More rapid than eagles her cohorts they came  
And she whistled and shouted and called them by name.  
“Now Joshua! Now James! C’mon Joel, be quick!  
Get the good ones but leave a few for St. Nick.  
With a little bit of luck  
We’ll be surrounded by cherry nut bells in the back of our truck!”

We took all we could hold,  
We could take no more,  
Then quickly as lightning we got out the door.  
As we sped from the driveway, our truck full of loot,  
We saw someone behind us. It was Jill in pursuit.  
As we patted our backs and said “What a team!”  
The alarm went off....It was only a dream.

Maybe next year.....

## **What’s New?**

**Membership:** Welcome new members: Ron & Kathy Larson, Janis Schandel, Ed Thompson, Jane Stoltz & John Idzikowski, Erica Drehfal, Mike & Anne McSweeney and Ken Tutaj.

**General Meeting:** Saturday, January 21, at 9:30 am. Election of officers. Speaker geneologist Sam Colon.

### **Pie Auction & Election Day Bake sale**

Our pie auction at the Harvest and Heritage Fest (Oct.2) was a success. Thank you to all who donated pies. A special thank you to city administrator, Mark Johnsrud, who donated four bags of sliced apples to use in the pie baking. We also had a successful bake sale on election day at the civic center.

### **Historical Society Display Cabinet**

Do you know someone who has a collection of items that they would like to display for a month or two? The historical society display cabinet (securely locked) is located on the north wall of the Society office. Call us at 414-316-4391 or email us at st.franchishistoricalociety@gmail.com

**Annual Christmas Dinner** at Polonez Thursday, Dec. 8 (see flyer page 7)

### **Donations:**

Please keep the St. Francis Historical Society in mind as you plan your will or estate. Your gift, no matter how small, will help preserve the St. Francis and Town of Lake history for the future generations.



Sal of Papa Luigi's Pizza returned to be our auctioneer

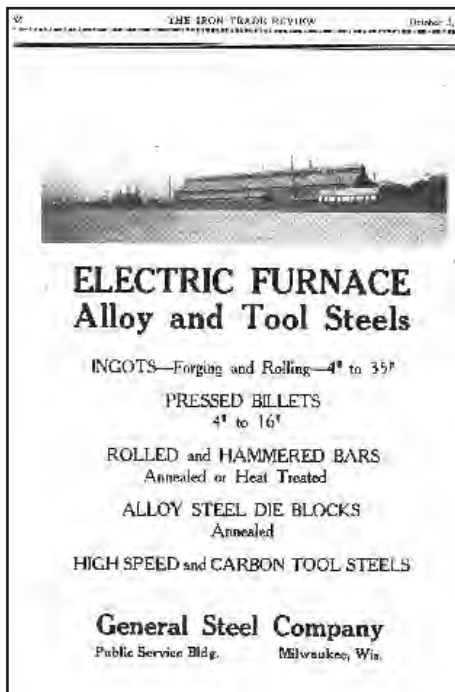
At the loom, Entela Kosova and her children Diona Kosova and Artimisa Kosova



Getting the pies cut for the pie auction at the Harvest/Heritage fest on Sat. Oct 4







## St. Francis Was...A Steel Mill Town?

by Glenn A. Gierzycki

At one time the city of St. Francis, or more properly the Town of Lake was home to a steel mill. While the research of this steel mill is ongoing, with some gaps yet to be filled in, this is what I've learned to date.

In 1917, the Valley Steel Company was organized in New York to build a steel mill in the Milwaukee area. A few months later the company was reorganized as the General Steel Company under the laws of state of Delaware. The mill was to be located in St. Francis and cost \$1 million. Construction began in 1917.

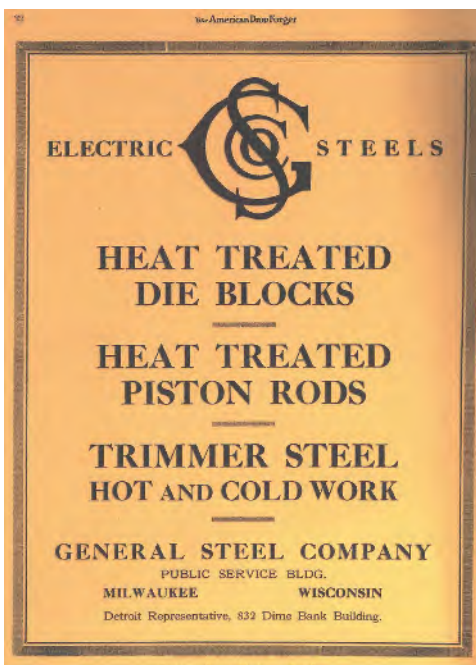
When the words "steel mill" are mentioned, most people think of the huge blast furnaces that dominated the Pittsburg skyline. The electric steel plate, bar, and billet mill in St. Francis was to use a different technology. It would use the electric arc furnace, in which the mixture of materials to be melted into steel are put into a large crucible and melted by large electrodes that were paced into the crucible. The building was to be 680' by 85'. Local headquarters were in the Public Service Building in downtown Milwaukee. It is interesting to note that although the city of St. Francis was not formed at the time of the mill (St. Francis became a city in 1951), most of the addresses I have seen list the mill in St. Francis.

The plant was erected at the eastern end of what is now Crawford Avenue and was adjacent to the east side of the Seminary Woods. The location may have been partly determined by the proximity of the Lakeside Power Plant, which was built a few years later, which would have provided a convenient source of electricity. The company utilized two 10-ton furnaces and one 1.5-ton furnace. The plant specialized in alloy steels, that is to say, iron that was combined with other elements to enhance its physical properties. Products included steel alloys in ingots, billets, bars, die blocks, piston rods, straight-bar forgings, and hammered forgings.

It was the only plant of its kind in Wisconsin. (As far as can be determined, the larger rolling mill on the lakefront in Bay View never produced steel from its blast furnaces, only iron). The plant was served by the electric "dinky" train that also served the Lakeside Power Plant. The plant was producing steel by early 1918 and by 1919 employed 200 people. The plant may have shut down in the early 1930's, and as far as I know, never reopened. The buildings are still visible on an aerial photo taken in 1937, but it is unknown if the equipment was still inside. If fully intact, I would assume it could have been quite useful during WWII.

As a kid growing up on Crawford Avenue, my friends and I would play in the Seminary Woods and the electric company open fields. We played around the concrete slabs in the field but we never knew why they were there. Now I know.

I don't know why the plant didn't have a longer life. My research on the later days of the mill hasn't been very fruitful. But for a while, St. Francis could take its place alongside its southern neighbors, Cudahy and South Milwaukee, as an industrialized suburb of Milwaukee.

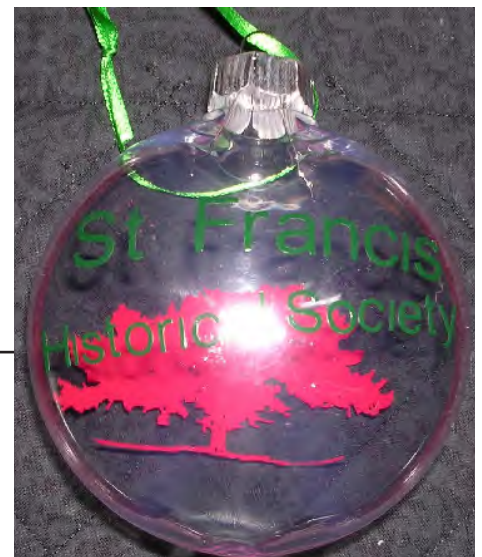


Top: A late 1920s/early 1930s ad from the *Iron Trade Review*; note photo of the General Steel Company

Bottom: A late 1920s/early 1930s ad from the *American Drop Forger* magazine.

## Arvid Christiansen explored the remains of the old General Steel Company building

Arvid grew up in the 1940s about a half block from the seminary. The old General Steel Company building had been razed, but he and his friends would squirm down into the basement of the remains of the old iron forge. According to Arvid, the former forge was located behind a golf driving range along the lake. Underground, the boys found a hallway leading to an area that contained huge porcelain urinals. "Definitely very spooky, especially to a kid maybe eight or ten. This place was to the south of where the orphanage used to be --- south of the long drive from the main seminary building leading to the lake," said Arvid. The Cousin's Center is now at or near that spot.



*Decorate your tree with a St. Francis Historical Society Christmas ornament.*

*One side says "St. Francis Historical Society" in black, red or green letters. Approximate size 4x3"  
The reverse side has the Society logo---the Cupertino tree in either red, green or black.*

*The ornament can be purchased for \$5 at the Society office at the civic center on Thursdays between 1-3 pm. or by mail (\$3 postage).*

*Send payment to St. Francis Historical Society 3400 East Howard Avenue  
St. Francis, WI 53235*



**Be sure to renew your membership  
or become a member!!!!**  
**Fill out and return by December 31, 2016**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want your newsletter send by email? \_\_\_\_\_ yes

Individual \$8.00

Small Business/Non-Profit \$5.00

Family \$10.00

Corporate \$100

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

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to donate an additional \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Society

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to donate an additional \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the Cemetery Fund.



Join us for our annual Christmas dinner at the  
Polonez Thursday, December 8 at 6:00  
see below for details



Dinner @ 6pm

\$25.00 per person

ST. FRANCIS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY



POLONEZ RESTAURANT  
at  
4016 SO PACKARD AVE

*Polish & American Menu Served Family Style*

RSVP BY DEC 4TH TO BARBARA JANISZEWSKI  
414-744-6813, 4007 SO LIPTON AVE. ST. FRANCIS 53235

DESSERT SPEAKER: ST. FRANCIS RESIDENT JANE STOLTZ -  
WALKING THE WISCONSIN ICE AGE TRAIL, A 1,000 MILE FOOTPATH THROUGH 31 COUNTIES





**St. Francis**  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

**Open immediately!!**

**Christmas Dinner**  
**Thursday, Dec 8**

**invitation enclosed**

**2016 Officers**

President..... Anna Passante  
Vice-President..... Sister Ceil Struck  
Secretary.....Stephanie Maxwell  
Treasurer.....Barbara Janiszewski

**Board of Directors**

Randy Borland  
Jan Pientok  
CoryAnn St. Marie-Carls  
Mary Drehfal

**Honorary**

Jim Goodwin  
Ralph Voltner  
Bill Drehfal  
Maggie Luczywko  
Lois Neubauer  
Richard Raatz

**Newsletter**

Anna Passante  
Barbara Janiszewski

**Mark Your Calendar**

**Board Meetings**

No December Meeting

**Annual Meeting:** January 21, 2017 election of officers; speaker 9:30 a.m.

February 18, 2017 9:30 a.m.

March 18, 2017 9:30 a.m.

**Facebook:** St. Francis Historical Society

**Email:** st.francishistoricalsociety@gmail.com

**Address:** 3400 E. Howard Ave.

**Website:** stfranciswihistoricalsociety.org

**Phone:** 414-316-4391