



# NOJOSHING

Indian word for "straight tongue"

Land protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue

Newsletter published quarterly

Non-Profit Organization 501c3

## September 2026

**This issue is dedicated to the Lake Protestant Cemetery and two pioneer men buried there: Jared Thompson and Daniel R. Packard. The St. Francis Historical Society is honoring these two men with new gravestones. The dedication of the stones will be late spring 2027.**

### Lake Protestant Cemetery: Our Pioneer's Final Resting Place

by Anna Passante

The Lake Protestant Cemetery (LPC) in St. Francis is one of the oldest cemeteries in Milwaukee County. It was first established for the burial of the Jared Thompson family who owned the land. Farm cemeteries were common in the early years of the county, as there were no public cemeteries nearby. It is thought that Thompson gifted some of the cemetery lots to his friends. One of those friends was Zebedee Packard. The oldest known grave is in lot 5 and belongs to John Packard, son of Zebedee. John was born November 1, 1843, and died at age two on August 1, 1846.



The three-quarter acre, 42-plot cemetery was incorporated in 1855 as the Lake Protestant Cemetery. Many church records, obituaries, and death records use the name Thompson Cemetery or Town of Lake Cemetery.

In fall 2016, the St. Francis Historical Society (SFHS) partnered with the City of St. Francis to restore the Lake Protestant Cemetery, located at 3119 East Norwich Avenue, at the intersection of Norwich and Barland avenues. Over the decades since its founding, this old, historic three-quarter acre cemetery had the reputation of being abandoned. And it was indeed abandoned for nearly 60 years, overgrown with weeds and trees, with broken and toppled gravestones dotting the cemetery. Some headstone breakage was due to vandalism, but much was due to the soft marble, a popular material for the grave markers. LPC wasn't the only abandoned cemetery in the state. Due to this neglect, in 1986, a Wisconsin statute required municipalities to take over and maintain abandoned cemeteries. Therefore, the City of St. Francis was required to take over ownership of LPC.

### *Cemetery Records*

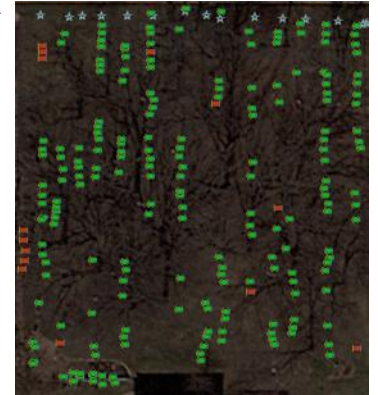
The city of St. Francis is fortunate to have a pioneer cemetery. Like Forest Home Cemetery, which is the "Who's Who" of Milwaukee, LPC is a "Who's Who" of the early settlers in the area. Many of the burials were children of the early settlers of Town of lake. The child mortality rate in the United

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States during the mid and late 1800s, for children under the age of five, was very high. As many as 40 percent of children did not make it to their fifth birthday.

Unfortunately, no records or ledgers have been found for the cemetery. In 2019, Anna Passante published a book, *Lake Protestant Cemetery, Our Pioneers' Resting Place*, about the people buried in the cemetery. The book is available for purchase through the historical society. The information was gleamed from Milwaukee County deeds, church records, obituaries, newspaper articles, death certificates, and Ancestry.com family trees.

Other cemetery research claims that LPC was a church cemetery, which is incorrect. No church connection is mentioned in the incorporation document. This document indicates that a cemetery association managed the cemetery and the cemetery lot owners elected the cemetery trustees. This type of management was common at the time. By the early 1900s, many of the trustees were deceased, which is probably why the cemetery became abandoned. Also, lot owners were buying lots in the newly created cemeteries on Milwaukee's south side, such as Arlington Park and Woodland. Some families actually removed the remains of their family members to another cemetery, possibly due to the neglect of the cemetery. In 1928, the Ollman family was moved to Arlington Park in Greenfield, Wisconsin. Members of the Jenni family were moved to Arlington Park in 1938.



The green dots on this GPR image denotes 217 possible gravesites in the cemetery.

### **Ground penetrating radar (GPR)**

In 2017, the historical society raised funds to have Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) performed at the cemetery. The historical society was aware of only 80 burials and hoped to locate more through the GPR. The GPR is done with a computerized machine that scans beneath the ground, looking for images of disturbed soil. If that disruption has a consistent length, width, and depth of a burial, it is marked as such. The GPR found 217 suspected burials. Anna's cemetery book documents about 200 LPC burials.

### **Fundraising**

The cemetery committee raised funds to replace some of the missing headstones. Nine flat grave markers have been purchased and installed: a single stone for Hildegard Schwan and her grandmother, Hanna Faehnel; Harold Phillips; Hugo Belz; the Schoenborn family; James and Emily Watson; Cora and Walter White; Israel Cross family; a single stone for George, Zebiah, and John Linebarger; and John Packard. The historical society also purchased a large, flat granite gravestone to honor three crewmembers who drowned in the *Sebastopol* shipwreck along the St. Francis shoreline in 1855. Also on the stone is Kate T. Haring, age ten, and an unidentified woman. Both bodies washed up on shore in St. Francis in 1856 and were victims of the *Niagara* shipwreck off of Belgium, Wisconsin. Their bodies floated down to St. Francis.

Proper signage is a priority for the historical society to help educate visitors, both residents and school children, about the cemetery. In 2020, a State of Wisconsin Historical Society sign was erected at the cemetery. It was paid for through a \$1,000 grant that Anna Passante won at the South Side Soup event that year.

There will be two new gravestones dedicated this fall. Recently, a new stone for Jared Thompson was designed by Randy Borland, a SFHS board member and a direct descendent of Thompson. The stone replaces Jared's original stone that was broken beyond repair. Another gravestone is for Daniel R. Packard, Sr., for whom Packard Avenue is named.



Todd Szymkowski operated the ground penetrating radar equipment.

### **Commitment to perpetual care**

When families buried their relatives in the cemetery, especially their young children, they expected perpetual care. We owe it to these early residents from the Town of Lake---now Cudahy, Bay View, and St. Francis---to do the right thing. Together, we will maintain the cemetery and bring dignity to the cemetery and to those buried at Lake Protestant Cemetery, and to the families who mourned their loss.

## Jared Thompson, Founder of the Cemetery

by Anna Passante

Like most of the early settlers of Town of Lake, Jared Thompson was from the East Coast. He was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, in 1805. In 1827, he married Frances Minerva Hayden in Barkhamsted, Connecticut, and they moved to Vermont the following year. In 1837, the Thompson family moved to Milwaukee, which was part of the Wisconsin Territory, with their five children. Thompson opened a tin store, said to be one of the first (if not the first) in Milwaukee on what is now North Water Street. Tin shops sold tinware such as kettles, pans, teapots, etc.

When the government land sale took place in February 1839, Thompson purchased his claim of 160 acres in what was then the Town of Lake. The acreage boundaries were present-day Pennsylvania, Barland, Howard, and Bolivar avenues. Thompson, who was a member of the downtown Milwaukee Methodist Church, had a small wooden-clad church on his farm property, located on present-day Norwich Avenue, across from the Lake Protestant Cemetery. The church, which was used as a school during the weekdays, served as a place of worship when Thompson and other nearby residents were unable to attend services in Milwaukee.

Thompson became active in local government, becoming affiliated with the Whig Party and then with the newly formed Republican Party. He was elected supervisor for Town of Lake in April 1842, and he went on to state assembly for the Sixth Ward in September 1842. In 1848, he served as one of the Town of Lake school commissioners, as well as the first chairman of Town of Lake Board in the 1850s, which automatically made him a Milwaukee County supervisor. In April 1855, he was elected justice of the peace and also as coroner. In 1864, Thompson sold most of his land in present-day St. Francis to Charles Tesch but he gave the wooden church/school and property to the Town of Lake stipulating that it be used as a school. (In 1885, the wooden church was replaced by a brick structure.) By 1880, Thompson was living in Oak Creek and died there in 1890.

### Jared Thompson, coroner, buries shipwreck victims in his family cemetery

In October 1855, the *Sebastopol*, a side-wheel wooden steamship, sank along the shore of Lake Michigan, a short walk from St. Francis Seminary. Cargo was strewn across the beach and at the bottom of the lake.

The bodies of the three drowned crewmembers, James Clark, Frank (last name unknown), and Morris Berry, were recovered from the lake. "I have had all three of the bodies taken to the Lake Protestant Cemetery and decently buried side by side," said Justice of the Peace Jared Thompson in a *Milwaukee Sentinel* editorial. The lot number for the burials is unknown, but the ground penetrating radar (GPR) done in 2017, found three graves side by side in a pathway next to Jared Thompson's family plot. The St. Francis Historical Society donated a gravestone for these three men. Also engraved on the stone is the name of Katie T. Haring, age ten, of Mackinac Island. Her fully clothed body washed up on shore near St. Francis in October 1856. A



Jared Thompson 1805-1890



Above: This house was formerly located on Thompson's property on Kinnickinnic Avenue. The photo was taken at the St. Francis Days Parade in the 1960s or 70s. At that point, the house was over 100 years old.

The photo below is the same house just before it was razed.



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handkerchief in her pocket had her name written in indelible ink. The other female was unclothed and could not be identified. Both of these females were casualties of a fire that destroyed the steamship *Niagara* off the coast of Port Washington, Wisconsin, in September 1856. Coroner Thompson buried the two females in the Lake Protestant Cemetery, most likely near the burial site of the three *Sebastopol* sailors.



## Plat Map

This plat map was created from the ground penetrating radar (GPR) results. The yellow markers at the top are the longitude rows that go north to south, from Norwich Avenue to the cemetery's southern boundary. There are 42 lots, with a center 10' pathway and 4'-6' pathways around the lots.

A number of the lots have deeds filed at the Milwaukee County Courthouse, which helped identify the people buried in the cemetery. Some of the lots are empty due to family members having remains of their loved ones moved to a different cemetery.

# Packard Avenue in Cudahy and St. Francis Was Named for the Pioneer Daniel Ransom Packard Sr.

by Anna Passante

When the Cudahy brothers platted their new town called Cudahy, they named Packard Avenue for Daniel Ransom Packard, the son of Zebedee Packard. Daniel's farm was situated along this road at the present-day southeast corner of Packard and Whittaker in Cudahy.

Daniel, born in Bennington, Vermont, on February 7, 1816, was nearly twenty-one years old when his family moved to Wisconsin. Three years after his arrival in Wisconsin, Daniel married Cynthia Burlingame, the daughter of Spencer Burlingame, also of Bennington, Vermont. Spencer Burlingame was one of the earliest settlers of Town of Lake. Daniel and Cynthia had nine children, but only five survived infancy, with some buried in Lake Protestant Cemetery.

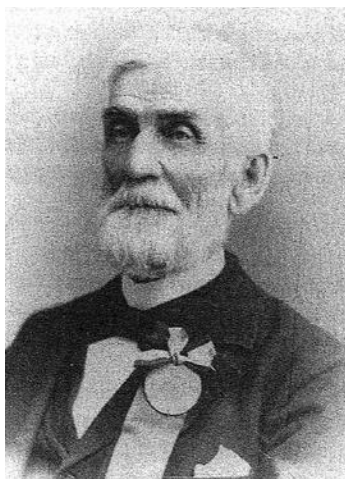
In 1836, Daniel filed a claim with the Milwaukee Claimant Union for 160 acres in Town of Lake (now in present-day Cudahy). He actually purchased the land at the government land sale in 1839. The present-day street boundaries of his property were Lake, Layton, Lunham, and Packard avenues. His farmhouse was located at 4344 South Packard Avenue. Packard was elected Town of Lake constable in April 1858. It was said that two months before his election as constable, he caught a horse thief, William Boone, and this apprehension helped Packard secure the post of constable.

After finishing his term as constable, he continued farming. In October 1891, Daniel sold his farm to Patrick and John Cudahy. It was during the platting of the streets that the Cudahy brothers named Packard Avenue for Daniel. He later moved to the city of Milwaukee, in what is now the Bay View neighborhood, residing at a home presently addressed 2957 South Kinnickinnic Avenue. He was a member of the Old Settlers' Club and attended Trinity Methodist Church (aka Bay View Methodist).

His wife, Cynthia, died at age seventy-six in 1895, after a month long illness due to a stroke. During the last twenty-five years of Daniel's life, he was having problems with his eye sight and was totally blind his last five years. He died in 1902 and is buried at the Lake Protestant Cemetery in St. Francis.

His obituary in the *Milwaukee Sentinel* said the following:

Even at the crowded corner of East Water and Wisconsin streets, he [Daniel] would not allow the policeman on the beat to help him, though he is well known to most of the officers, and they kept an eye on him until he got to a place of safety. When the Civil War broke out, the eldest son, Willard Packard, joined the First Wisconsin Infantry and for four years fought for his country. At the battle of Chickamauga, [Willard] was severely wounded in the right shoulder, narrowly escaping death. Mr. [Daniel] Packard was a member of the Old Settlers' Club and the Bay View Methodist Church. With the exception of Willard Packard [of Wentworth, South Dakota], all of his children will be present at the funeral. His daughter Dr. Nancy Packard Sherman, came to his side from Washington soon after he was taken sick. Besides his children, he left twelve grandchildren. Three of Daniel Packard's sons, Daniel Jr., Levi, and Willard, were living in the Dakota Territory in the 1880s.



Far left: Daniel's home in Bay View

Left, Daniel Packard

Above: A grainy 1938 newspaper photo, of Daniel Packard's house just before it was razed. The original log cabin, built in the late 1830s, was found under the clapboard siding.

## What's New

### Watch for the dedication of two gravestones at the Lake Protestant Cemetery in late spring 2027.

Jared Thompson, the founder of the cemetery, has a brand new gravestone. His original stone was broken into pieces and repaired decades ago. The repair didn't last. On the back of the brand new stone is information about Thompson's life.

Daniel R. Packard, Sr. was such an important pioneer in the history of Town of Lake that Packard Avenue was named for him. No original gravestone was found for Daniel, and it is not known if he ever had one. The historical society wanted to remedy that by placing a gravestone for him next to his wife's gravestone.



Here is Jared Thompson's original gravestone. Come and see the new one at the dedication in late spring 2027.

### Lake Protestant Cemetery book available for purchase.

The book *Lake Protestant Cemetery, Our Pioneers' Resting Place* is available for purchase through the St. Francis Historical Society. The entire purchase of the book goes towards replacing and repairing the cemetery gravestones.

### Are you into genealogy?

If you are into genealogy, you may want to check out the Genealogy Club that meets at the Kelly Senior Center at 6100 S. Lake Drive in Cudahy. According to club member Mary Wilhelm, the club meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each month. They have some cool equipment: Hesa 30 Scanner and Ivid-Pix Memory Station.

### Never too early to plan the Christmas Dinner

Put the annual Christmas dinner date on your calendar!!! The date is Thursday, December 3. Invitations will go out by mail in November.

### Friends of Greene Park

Friends of Greene Park is a volunteer organization to promote the preservation, enhancement and enjoyment of Greene Park for all. The group meets monthly at the park pavilion at 3337 E. Lunham Avenue. They have scheduled a number of events in the park, such as spring cleanup. Contact the group at [friendsofgreenepark@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofgreenepark@gmail.com).

### Bake sale at the November elections

We need bakers for our bakesale at the November elections that will be held at the civic center. We are looking for home-baked cookies, bars, quick breads, and such. We can do the packaging if need be. Contact the historical society (414-316-4391) about dropoff or pickup within the St. Francis area. Bakery can be dropped off the day of the election or the day before, but please call us (414-316-4391) with the drop off time.

### Do you have an interesting story for the newsletter?

The newsletter editor is always looking for some interesting stories about growing up in St. Francis or Town of Lake. Do you have an old newspaper article about Town of Lake or St. Francis history that may be of interest to our readers? You can submit the story or article to [passante.anna@yahoo.com](mailto:passante.anna@yahoo.com).

## Photos from past historical society events



### Left : 4TH OF JULY CELEBRATION

Left: Anna Passante, president of the historical society, poses with Miss St. Francis and Miss St. Francis Teen.

Right: Historical society board officers, George Ramponi and Jan Pientok, pose with the two ladies. The city's 75th anniversary was celebrated at the 4th of July event.



Above: At the St. Francis National Night Out on August 5, Juliet Hills and George Ramponi helped work the historical society table.



Above: The August program about Georgia Stebbins, the lady lighthouse keeper at Milwaukee's Northpoint neighborhood, was presented by Barb and Ken Wardius. The audience very much enjoyed the program.



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

### **2026 Officers**

President..... Anna Passante  
Vice-President..... George Ramponi  
Secretary..... Bill Drehfal  
Treasurer..... Jan Pientock

### **Board of Directors**

Mary Drehfal  
Jay Wesner  
Randy Borland  
Juliet Hills

### **Honorary**

Ralph Voltner  
Kathy Matthew  
Carol Wojtecki

### **Newsletter**

Anna Passante

### ***Mark Your Calendar***

#### **Meetings at the St. Francis Civic Center at 3400 E. Howard Ave.:**

**The monthly board meetings are the 3rd Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. Visitors are welcome.**

September 19, 2026

October 17, 2026

November 21, 2026

#### **Upcoming events** (see "What's New" column for details)

**Facebook:** St. Francis Historical Society

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**Website:** stfranciswihistoricalsociety.org

**Phone:** 414-316-4391