



# St. Francis HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NOJOSHING

Indian word for "straight tongue"

land protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue

**Newsletter published quarterly**

Non-Profit Organization 501c3

### March 2018

### ***A Message From Your President***

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2018. I hope you like the new newsletter design with the addition of color.

The St. Francis Historical Society was very busy in 2017, and we look forward to another busy, productive 2018. Here are some highlights for 2018:

We have the honor of sponsoring the Wisconsin Historical Society Regional Meeting on Saturday, July 7, at the civic center. Members of area historical societies will be attending.

The Lakeside Power Plant historical marker, obtained through the Wisconsin State Historical Society, will be dedicated this summer. More details in the June newsletter.

Two civil war veterans headstones will be dedicated at the Lake Protestant Cemetery Saturday, September 29, at 2:00 pm. All are welcome. The Veterans Administration provided us with the granite headstones for William Beal and William W. Thompson at no charge to us. The Sons of Union Soldiers will conduct a ceremony during the dedication.

We are having two bake sales this year to raise money for our 2018 operating budget. Come visit us at the civic center on April 3 and November 6.

We will also be participating in 4th of July events, the St. Francis Days National Night Out, St. Francis Days, and Harvest Fest.

We hope to see you at one or more of the 2018 events. And thank you for supporting your historical society.

Anna Passante

### **Meet Your New Board Member: Nancy Goltz**

by Barbara Janiszewski

Nancy Goltz grew up in Cudahy. She was always involved in various school activities when her kids were in school. She was active in the PTO and was a den mother in Cub Scouts. She worked in the nurses room and did tutoring in the special education classes. In 1992 she married Dave, a now retired St. Francis firefighter. They have 6 children, 12 grandchildren, and 3 2/3 great-grandchildren. They got married in the St. Francis firehouse and asked for donations of food. They collected 750 pounds of food that was donated to Project Concern. Her hobbies include gardening, sewing, knitting, and crafting. She also loves to bake, especially when the grandchildren are over. She was involved in the Booster's Club at the high school, the band boosters, the Share Food program, and the programs at St. Ann's Center. She and Dave were on the committee for Concerts in the Park for 34 years. She and Dave have been involved in the Miss St. Francis Pageant, Dave for 45 years and Nancy for 35 years. They are both on the board of directors for the pageant. A very busy and involved lady and we are happy that she is now a board member of the St. Francis Historical Society.



## What's New?

**Membership** Welcome new members: Adam Michalski, Mary Ann Memmel, and David and Susan Melaven.

### **Bake Sale**

We will be having a bake sale in the rotunda during the April 3 election.

### **Display cabinet in rotunda**

Come see the new displays in the civic center rotunda. One side is Bert Maudie, the late husband of Carol Maudie who served in the Korean War. The other side is a military quilt done by Debbie Kober and celebrates the military careers of her family members.

### **Election of Board Members**

At our January 20, 2018 Annual Meeting the following were elected for 2018: Anna Passante, President, Sr. Ceil Struck, Vice-President, Stephanie Maxwell, Secretary, Barbara Janiszewski, Treasurer, and Nancy Goltz, board member.

### **Cousin's Subs Fundraiser**

Please mark your calendar for Wednesday, March 28th for our Cousin's fundraiser. We will receive a percentage of the sales from 4:00 pm to 8:00 pm. No coupon is needed. Please support Cousin's Subs, since they are very generous in their support of local charities and non-profit organizations.

### **Regional Meeting:**

The St. Francis Historical Society will be hosting the Southeast Regional meeting of the Wisconsin State Historical Society on July 7th. The speakers will be Mark Maurice from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Randy Borland and Anna Passante, speaking about the Lake Protestant Cemetery, and Bill Drehfal who will talk about the display cabinets in the Civic Center. There will be a tour of the St. Francis of Assisi Chapel and Lake Protestant Cemetery in the afternoon.

### **Cemetery Update:**

We have new headstones for two civil war veterans, William Beal and William W. Thompson, who are buried in our cemetery. There will be a program to dedicate the stones in the fall featuring the Sons of the Union Soldiers who will perform a ceremony.

## Thanks!!!

Thanks to all members who added an extra donation to their renewal notices. We truly appreciate your generosity. Every donation helps the historical society fulfill its mission to collect, preserve, and display St. Francis history. Your donation helps us offer historical talks, continue our historic landmark plaque program, present educational programs in our schools, and funds the Lake Protestant Cemetery restoration project. Thanks to the following members:

Kurt Koenig  
Randy & Lori Borland  
Terry & Diane Duffey  
George & Phyllis George  
Esther Graybar  
Helen Hachmeister  
Ann Howell  
Ray & Donna Klug  
New Assisi Archive  
Barb Perszyk  
Diane Piedt  
Jay Wesner  
Dennis & Carol Wojtecki  
Ann Buck  
Juliet Hills  
Carol Maudie  
Stanley & Margaret Raclaw  
Susan Staats  
Chris & Pam Barney  
John Janiszewski  
Jim & Sandra Jaskulski  
Beverly Rhoe  
Tom & Lynda Smith  
Jim Goodwin  
Jim Hempel  
Jim & Kathy Mathew  
Carl & Karen Kitzinger  
Lisa Polster  
Jim & Patty Robinson  
Rick & Joan Wier  
Tom Mlinar  
Robert & Mary Jo Hallfeld  
Tom & CoryAnn Carls  
Skip Buechel  
Dave & Helga Sartori  
Clare Ujcich

# Growing Up on Lipton Avenue

By Mary Ann Voltner Pronchinske

I'll start with summer, since when you are a kid it is the busiest. That would be pretty easy because every day, after doing some chores and having a Velveeta cheese sandwich at the Neubauers, we would head up to Sheridan Park on our bikes (my purple banana seat Schwinn which I still have) and go swimming for the day. We would all share a basket for 25 cents, and then the responsible one would wear the big safety pin with the number on it. After putting our feet up on the bench for a toe check we would jump in for the day until 3:15. Afterwards, if we didn't go straight home, we would stop at the Hobby Shop in Cudahy for some penny candy.

There always seemed to be a lot of kids around on the block. I never remember being bored or sitting and watching TV for long. Ah! The good old days prior to cell phones and video games. If you got really bored, you would just jump on your bikes and look for the house with all the bikes on the lawn outside. If you wanted to take a walk, you would head down Norwich and at the end of the street take the dirt path down the hill to Ola's. One of the Weinholds would be in their elevated office right in the front, which seemed so tall, where you would order a Slush Puppy. Or you could head up Lipton Avenue to Greene Park and use the swings, play basketball or tennis or roller skate around the big hill over and over again. Sometimes we would go to Grandma Neubauer's house to help her with the quilting. I didn't seem to mind sitting around with the other grandmas while they sewed. It was actually fun. Or we would play kickball in the street and yelling "CAR," and everyone would get up on the curb until the car went past. Who could forget when it really rained hard, running in the rain and sitting on the street by the curb and making dams with our bodies to see how much water we could hold back. At night it was either Ghost in the Graveyard, tag, or Red Light, Green Light.

Fall was going back to school. Walking to Thompson School when half way up Norwich, we would take the dirt path through the empty lot and the alley the rest of the way. Piling up the leaves from our big maple tree in front and jumping into them.

Winter was sled riding at Greene Park or ice skating on the flooded basketball court. Remember that rubber matting in the pavilion and putting your shoes in one of the cubbies? And then trying to be careful on that one step out of the building for that ramp down. One big memory is when my dear mother made several snowballs in advance, and when the kids walked past

to go home she mostly bombed them. A little embarrassing back then but some of the boys still talk about it. Of course during big snow storms, you would just grab a shovel and help out whoever needed help. That was the best of it. And who can forget the snow forts!

I remember having to check in with my mom when the streetlights came on. And when the Neubauers would ring their bell on the porch and yell "SUPPER." And when you wanted someone to play with, you would stand outside the door and yell "call for Margie" instead of just knocking and asking if she could come out to play.

It was a great block and a great childhood. I still remember most of the families. Good people and good memories!



**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.**

## Christmas Party at the Polonez

The historical society's Christmas party at the Polonez was a great success. We had a record number of attendees, more that 30 people. Caroline Donsing (reenacted by Anna Passante) related her experiences as a U.S. Army nurse during World War I at the Western Front in France. Caroline took the audience back in time to a hospital field station, so close to the trenches that the medical staff could hear the sounds of the artillery. Here are some photos of the event.



# Bay View Park: A Misnomer?

by Anna Passante

*mis·no·mer: a wrong or inaccurate name or designation (Oxford Dictionary)*

The term misnomer may very well apply to Bay View Park in Milwaukee County. Located along the Lake Michigan lakeshore south of Oklahoma Avenue, 88% of the park lies in the city of St. Francis, the other 12% in Milwaukee's Bay View neighborhood. So why is it named Bay View Park? Some historical information may shed a light on this question.

Between the mid-1830s to late 1890s, Bay View Park was farmland, the location of the James McFadden, Joseph Vallier, and Samuel Sexton farms. In 1925, Milwaukee County purchased most of what is now Bay View Park for \$84,000 (*Milwaukee Journal* July 21, 1929). The total parcel consisted of 41 acres, 100 feet wide by 4,000 feet long (*MJ* August 8, 1921), and stretched from Oklahoma Avenue south to the Lakeside Power Plant near Howard Avenue. Milwaukee County purchased 36 of the 41 acres, and the remaining five acres were purchased by the City of Milwaukee. The dividing line between the two parcels was the Milwaukee / Town of Lake border, which is just south of Rhode Island Avenue. The County established Bay View Park on these 36 acres.



Above: In the foreground, the Schlosser house is at its original location with an out building on the edge of the cliff. The Krones house is next door. There were four more houses. The 1923 Milwaukee city directory lists these four houses as being occupied by James Dixon and Urban Jonas (duplex), Martin F. Blenski, Laura Rostad and Otto Schettee (duplex), and Charles E. Hart.

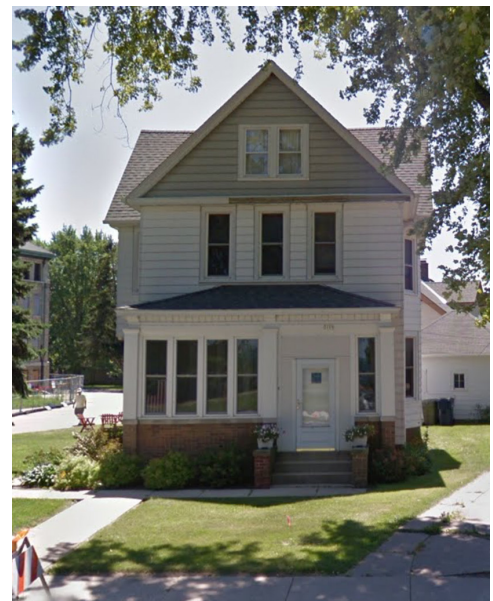


Above right and bottom right: The Schlosser house after it was moved to 3169 South Superior Street in Bay View and as it looks today.

Bottom: Postcard of Bay View Park Beach circa 1920s



Courtesy Milwaukee Public Library



On the five acres owned by Milwaukee, there were six houses in danger of falling into the lake and needed to be moved or razed, according to then Alderman Paul Gauer in his book, *The Gauer Story*. Two of the houses were moved to different locations in Bay View.

One of the houses was the home of Windand Schlosser, a lake ship captain. His two-story house was moved across the street to 3169 South Superior Street, where it remains today.

Herman Krones owned the other house, a cottage, built in 1910. It was moved to 3288 South Illinois Avenue in Bay View. Mary Schlosser-Dereszynski, a granddaughter of Schlosser, remembered a photograph that showed the back porch of the Krones house hanging over the lake bluff.

Milwaukee purchased the five acres for a couple of reasons. The city had ambitious plans to extend South Shore Park south from Meredith Street to include these five acres. The City also intended to extend the breakwater, to preserve the lakeshore from erosion. Soon, Milwaukee was eyeing the 36 acres owned by the county. Milwaukee envisioned the extension of Lincoln Memorial Drive all the way to the Lakeside Power Plant, and it was anticipated that from there, the County could extend the road until it linked with Grant Park in South Milwaukee.

With those plans in mind, in 1929 Milwaukee aldermen requested the County to transfer the remaining 36 acres to Milwaukee. County Supervisor Eugene Warnimont introduced a resolution that the County turn over Bay View Park to Milwaukee, and the County board voted unanimously to deed the 36 acres to Milwaukee.

But the stock market crash of October 1929 and the Depression that followed threw a wrench into Milwaukee's plans. The Depression caused financial difficulties for most municipal governments. With less money to run Milwaukee's city parks, merging the city and county parks was a solution to the financial problem. A referendum was held in 1936 and passed. On December 31, 1936, all Milwaukee's parks, including Bay View Park, were transferred to Milwaukee County.

Today, Bay View Park is a wonderful place for walkers and bikers, and to enjoy a picnic. It's a place to enjoy the beautiful view of the lakeshore, and the beach along the park is a favorite place to enjoy the surf.

But there still is the issue of the park's name. It has been known as Bay View Park since 1925, but perhaps it's time to repair the misnomer. Perhaps it should be renamed Bay View/St. Francis park or named for one of the early farmers of the land, James S. McFadden, Joseph Vallier, or Samuel Sexton. It wouldn't be the first time a park was renamed. Humboldt Park was originally South Park, Zablocki Park was Cherokee Park, McGovern Park was Silver Spring Park, and Whitnall Park was Hales Corner Tract.

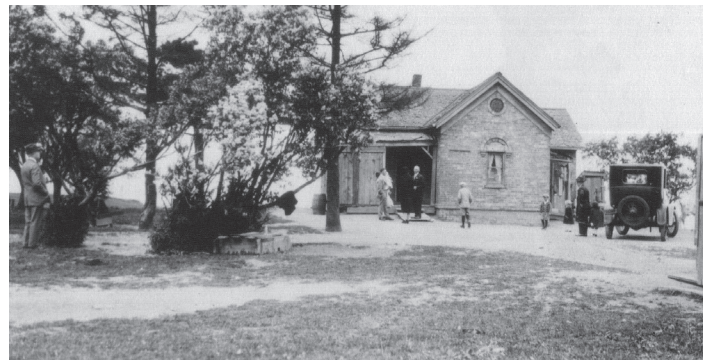
## *Farms originally on the site of Bay View Park*

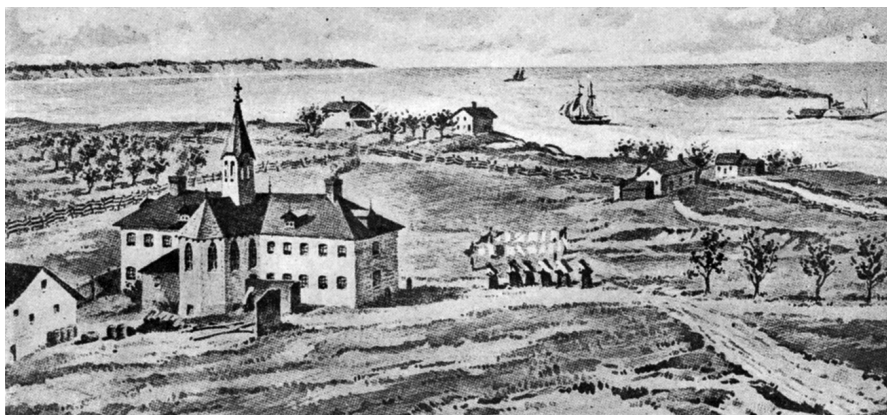
### **Samuel Sexton**

The Samuel Sexton farm was located at the south end of Bay View Park, just north of the Lakeside Power Plant. Sexton was born in Vermont in 1798. In 1850, he moved to Town of Lake and purchased 174 acres from Thomas Brock. His son Levi also worked the farm. A cream city brick house once stood on the property along the lakeshore where the FBI building is now located. This may have been the home of Levi Sexton.



In 1929, the Herman Krones house was moved to this location at 3288 South Illinois Avenue in Bay View.





The James McFadden farm was at present-day Oklahoma Avenue, east and west of present-day South Superior Street. In the drawing, the St. Francis convent is to the left. MacFadden's farmhouse is most likely the one on the right on the lakeshore.

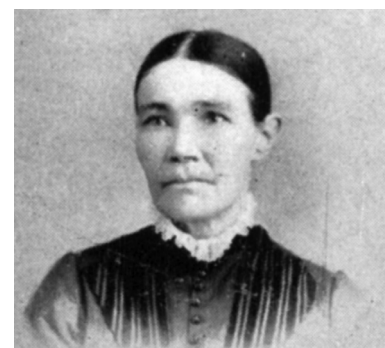
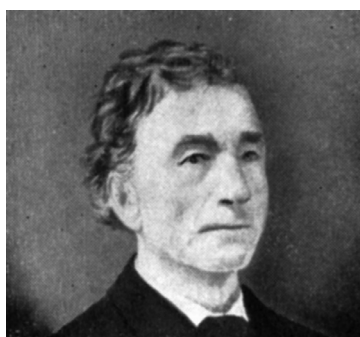
### James S. McFadden

James S. McFadden was one of the earliest settlers in Town of Lake. He was born in 1810 in New York and moved to Wisconsin around 1837. He purchased 158 acres at the February 1839 government land sale. Most of his farm stretched from present-day Oklahoma Avenue on the north, Pennsylvania on the west, Morgan on the south, and the lakeshore on the east. In 1850, McFadden sold land to Catholic Bishop John Henni for the St. Francis convent.

### Joseph Vallier

Joseph Vallier was born in Montreal, Canada, in 1810 and as an adult worked as a fur trapper. When he immigrated to America in 1845, he settled in Milwaukee's Walker's Point neighborhood. In 1858, he purchased 35 acres<sup>1</sup> or \$700 (\$14,000 today) along the lakeshore just south of the present-day St. Francis of Assisi Convent. Like many of the area farmers, Vallier had an apple orchard and was known to donate apples to the nearby St. Aemilian's Orphanage.

<sup>1</sup> A number of those 35 acres had been washed into the lake due to erosion by the time Milwaukee County owned it.



Left: The Vallier home in present-day Bay View Park, which was razed.

Center: Joseph Vallier

Right: Catherine Vallier, wife of Joseph



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

## 2018 Officers

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

## Board of Directors

Randy Borland  
Jan Pientok  
Jennifer Mertz  
Jay Wesner  
Nancy Goltz

## Honorary

Jim Goodwin  
Ralph Voltner  
Bill Drehfal  
Maggie Luczywko  
Marge Tessmer  
Kathy Matthew  
Terry Duffey  
Carol Wojtecki

## Newsletter

Anna Passante  
Barbara Janiszewski

## Mark Your Calendar

### Meetings

March 17 Board Meeting  
April 21 General Meeting  
May 19 Board Meeting

### Events

Wednesday, March 28 Cousin's Sub 4-8 pm  
Bake Sale: April 3 on election day

**Facebook:** St. Francis Historical Society

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

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

**Website:** stfranciswihistoricalociety.org

**Phone:** 414-316-4391