



NOJOSHING

Indian word for "straight tongue"
land protrudes out into Lake Michigan like a straight tongue

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Three Sailors in Milwaukee

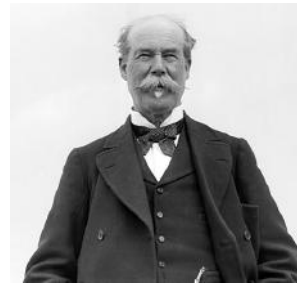
By Juliet Hills

Between 1779 (when the first sailing ship was spotted on Lake Michigan near future Milwaukee) and the arrival of the railroad, cars, and planes, three men in our area owned significant sailing ships. Each man became famous but in three different careers. The three sailing men, who either lived here or visited here, were Alfred James (1831-1904), Sir Thomas Lipton (1848-1931), and Patrick Cudahy (1849-1919).

Thomas Lipton was the well-known owner of a tea and grocery business in Britain. He brought his ship, the *Shamrock II*, to the Milwaukee Yacht Club during the time he was attempting to win the America's Cup. This race was named for the U.S. sailing vessel *America* that won the cup the first year. Lipton never did win that competition, but Cudahy honored him by naming a short block of a Cudahy street, Lipton Court. When the residential area sprang up along Kinnickinnic Avenue, Lipton Court was extended all the way up to Howard Avenue, near the present site of St. Francis City Hall. A banquet at the Pfister Hotel honored Lipton on October 16, 1906. Attendees included Mayor Sherburn Becker, Harry Bradley, Gustave Pabst, and George Brumder, among others. Brumder (1839-1910) was a German businessman and newspaper publisher. Pabst (1866-1943) was the son of Frederick Pabst, who started the brewery we all know.

Alfred James was born in Scotland and ran away to sea at the age of twelve. In 1903, he wrote a memoir of his earliest years on ships and canal boats for his grandchildren. James' family had emigrated to North Adams, Massachusetts, when he was young. In 1843, his family went to Barrington, Illinois. As a boy, James read Captain Marryat's adventure stories (which I read as a youngster) and at age twelve he worked his passage to Buffalo, New York, on the propeller *Empire State*. With only twenty-five cents in his pocket, he got a job on a canal boat that was carrying sand from the town of Black Rock near Niagara Falls. Returning with a cargo of wood, he rode the tow horse in the Niagara River.

When the Erie Canal was closed in the winter, James worked for a blacksmith. At age 15, he worked his passage to New York City and then signed on for a whaling boat, the *Candace*, which was smuggling duty free tobacco and goods. He sailed east around the world and



Top: Thomas Lipton
Middle left: Lipton's *Shamrock* ship
Middle right: Alfred James
Bottom: *Empire State*

eventually, in 1855, was made mate of the *Oxenbridge* clipper ship. He gave up the sea despite being offered the position of ship captain. James, residing in Milwaukee, entered the fire insurance business, becoming president of Northwest National Insurance Company. Previously, he was director of the Marine National Bank, at the invitation of banker Alexander Mitchell and meat packers Philip D. Armour and Patrick Cudahy.



Cudahy was an avid sailor, and so was his grandson Michael J. Cudahy. Patrick Cudahy spent some of his money from the meat business on a sailing ship and on a Milwaukee Yacht Club membership, which was a typical thing for a wealthy businessman in the 19th century. In 1932, Cudahy chartered the six-meter yacht, *Totem*, to represent the East Coast U.S.A. in Olympic trials.

Many sailboats have sailed along the St. Francis coast representing the money and enthusiasm of many wealthy families and the mixed blessing of the romance of sailing.

Researched through Milwaukee County Historical Society
September 10, 2024



Top: Typical clipper ship

Left: Patrick Cudahy

Letter to the Editor from Julie Hughes

I enjoyed reading your article in the March 2024 newsletter about the Lakeside Power Plant Waiting Room. After reading the article, I noted the insert drawing attention to the two women walking into the waiting room. Suddenly I had a funny feeling. The woman in the hat and coat looked strangely familiar. I thought it was my mom, Lorraine Czechorski. I got a magnifying glass and my husband, Dan, and I took a closer look. The woman's stance and how she was carrying her purse straight to her side was typical of Mom. Her coat, hat, and most especially her shoes, were exactly Mom's style. We knew it was definitely Mom. I sent the article to my sister, Helen. She agreed. My three children agreed it was their grandmother. Our son, Mike, who is an art director in Montreal, "cleaned up" the photo and colorized it. Next, I sent the article and photo to my childhood friend in Utah, Debbie (Bird) Butler. We grew up together on Kirkwood Avenue. She agreed it was Mom and shared her memories of the streetcar.

In our neighborhood, we called the streetcar the "Dinky". It was over a mile to walk up Howard Avenue to get to the #66 bus line. The power plant was generous enough to let neighbors ride the Dinky to Kinnickinnic Avenue and back. Mom had a schedule. We rode the Dinky to go to dental appointments, church, shopping on Mitchell Street, and to visit our cousins. Since streetcars couldn't turn around, there were controls on both ends of the car. The conductor would let us kids "flip" the backrests of the seats to face the direction we were going. I remember clearly the waiting rooms at both the plant and on KK.

What a treasure to have this photo of our mom from the past and the article that brought back so many childhood memories.



Christmas of Old

By Karen Gersonde

Christmas time in St. Francis was always a special time of the year for me growing up, in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. I loved the Christmas lights, Christmas trees, ornaments, presents, and most of all visiting family and friends during the holidays. I was going through old photos the other day, and I realized that I really didn't have many old photos of Christmas' long ago. But I did find a few photos of my family before I was even born.

These photos were of my mother, Fausta (Lefty) Gierzycki, my father, Albin Gierzycki, and my brother, Glenn, when he was about two years old in 1954. I was not born yet, as I came a year later in 1955. I love the old-fashioned real Christmas tree that was apparently flocked. I loved the old-fashioned ornaments and decorations. Obviously, my parents had just started their family, as they married in 1951. They were clearly young and in love. Nothing beats an old-fashioned Christmas with a little love thrown in!

Another photo I found brings back good and bad memories of Christmas. This photo was taken in December 1966. I was eleven years old at this time. My father had gotten a Santa poster somewhere and decided to mount it on plywood and display it on our house. My father loved Christmas and Santa Claus. He put a lot of time and effort into this project, making sure it was just perfect. I remember he was so proud when he hung it up. It looked amazing on our front porch. He had nailed it into the boards of the house, making sure it was quite secure. The entire block could see it when you came down East Crawford Avenue. The problem was, it showed off too well. It hung on our house only a few days and it was...Stolen. I remember the look on my parents' faces as we came home one evening after visiting my grandparents. Our beloved Santa was gone! We were all so devastated that someone would do this to us. It was irreplaceable! We called the police, of course, but it was never found. We searched the

neighborhoods surrounding us, but it was nowhere to be. The only surviving memento is this photo that I found of our Santa. Yup, the head is chopped off as Dad never could take very good photos. This was a Christmas that I will never forget. So, if any of you know who took our Santa from Crawford Avenue, please, I would like it back! It is never too late. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all!



Al, Lefty, and Glenn



Al and Lefty ready to kiss, with Glenn looking on



Stolen Santa

By George...I think he's got it!!!

by St. Francis Historical Society board member George Ramponi



Christmas in the SWPA (South West Pacific Area)

My pa, Corporal George Ramponi of the 32nd Division's 121st Field Artillery Medical Detachment (serial #21656267), celebrated his first Christmas overseas at Camp Cable just outside Brisbane, Australia. In a letter home, Ramponi wrote, "Everything is swell over here. The weather is a little bit hot, but not enough to discourage us from working. I'm not as tan as the majority of the boys are, but give me two more months." Over the years, George Ramponi's letters home were treasured by the family.

Pa continues in a letter, "The boys had shipped out of Frisco April 22, 1942, via convoyed transit, reaching Adelaide May 15. Camps Woodside and Sandy Creek being deemed inadequate, the 'brass' thought it best to move northwest to Camp Tambourine. The camp had been renamed to honor Gerald Cable, the Division's first casualty. A Japanese Imperial submarine had torpedoed his transport."

December 10, 1942, to sister Elsie: "Received your Christmas gift, thanks -also received birthday (Dec. 22) and Xmas cards . . . received a lot of sweets, toilet articles, etc . . . love to all the gals at Cutler Hammer [this was the era of 'Rosie the Riveter'] for the good Frisella cake and candy." Baked, toasted, and easy to ship, a Frisella is an Italian cross of bagel and pizza crust that can accommodate almost any available topping. It was more a snack food than cake.

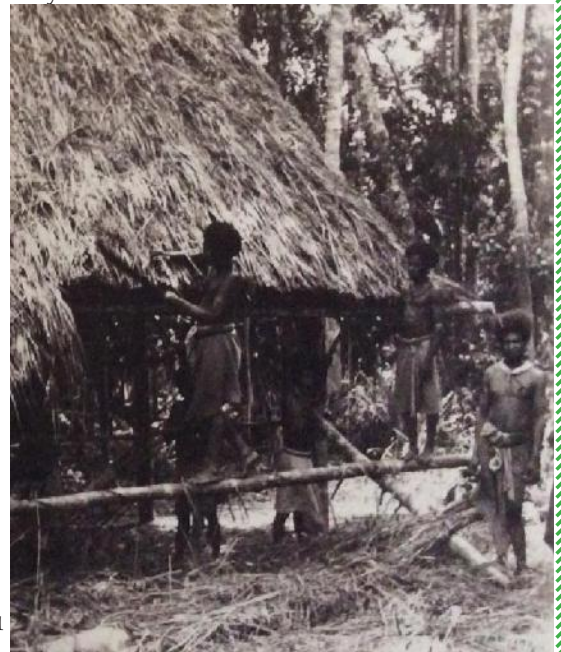
Dec. 28, 1942, to sister Elsie: "We had a fairly nice Christmas, but it never compared to the fun of my past Christmas seasons back home. There is nothing like the snow and cold for Christmas." Pa never mentions it to the folks back home, but Pa and the rest of the detachment were spending most of the holidays tending to over 12,300 sick and wounded casualties of the victorious and brutal Buna Campaign (Nov. 16, 1942 - Jan. 22, 1943) in northeastern New Guinea. Fifty percent of them had malaria, dysentery, and dengue fever.

January 18, 1943, to sister Elsie: "I would appreciate it very much if you wrote me a letter giving me in full detail 1st how you spent your Xmas holiday, how was the house decorated, all about New Years celebration and lastly Anne's big event [his big sister's wedding]." ---A palpable yearning for the reassurance of home. The next years Christmas was spent at Milne Bay in East New Guinea.

Dec. 24 1943 to sister Elsie: "We have a beautiful chapel. Most of the men of our church helped build it. Made from logs obtained from the nearby jungle. The natives made a decked roof from the kunai grass. Three of the boys and myself hauled stones from 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Stones were used to make a border around the chapel. We also used them to make a huge cross lying on the ground.

Christmas Day 1943 to Mother: "We had a concert last night in our camp. Theater Division Swing Band played. They opened with a 'tear jerker, 'White Christmas.' It certainly brought back plenty of memories to us all." Nowadays, an Irving Berlin's song is little more than aural wallpaper during the season. To the men fighting on the South Pacific, it had a deep spiritual resonance. It's worth noting that Bing Crosby hesitated singing it during his USO tours fearing it would depress the troops, but those same troops demanded it..

By January 1944, Pa knew he'd be mustered out soon: "I'll be home by Christmas, that is if the Lord permits it; you see we are new in combat and the going is stiff (during the drive to and through the Philippines), but I'll stick through it." And by next Christmas he was home.



East New Guinea natives construct a kunai grass roof on this hut.

What's New?

Christmas Dinner

Hope you will be joining us at the annual Christmas dinner on Thursday, December 5, at K Ranch in Cudahy. You should have received an invitation in the mail. Any questions, contact Jan at 414-744-1443 or pientokj@aol.com.

Historical signs for St. John's School for the Deaf

Work is continuing on the two historical panels memorializing St. John's School for the Deaf, that will be installed at Deer Creek Intermediate School at 3680 South Kinnickinnic Avenue. The signs will be installed and dedicated in spring 2025.

Vacancy on the Board of Directors

There will be two vacancies on the board of directors for 2025. Thank you Sister Ceil Struck and Stephanie Maxwell for serving as officers for over 10 years. Are you interested in joining the board of directors? At our January 19 annual membership meeting, we will be electing new officers and other board members. Come join us!!

SFHS took part in the St. Francis Days Parade

Society board member Jay Wesner (second from right) drove his classic Corvette in the parade, with George Ramponi (far left) in the passenger seat. Bill Drehfal and Anna Passante walked in the parade giving out candy.



Holiday (no yeast) Christmas Stollen

Ingredients

1 lb ricotta cheese
1/2 lb butter (softened)
2 cups sugar
3 eggs (room temperature)
1/2 teaspoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon fresh lemon rind
1/8 teaspoon almond extract
1/8 teaspoon rum extract
5 cups all-purpose flour
2/3 cup ground almonds (blanched)
5 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 cup raisins
1/4 cup diced citron
1/4 cup diced orange rind

Glaze

4 ounces butter (melted)
1/2 cup powdered sugar

Directions

- Preheat oven to 350°F.
 - Sift all dry ingredients together in a bowl and set aside.
 - Beat all other ingredients, except fruit, together in a large bowl.
 - Add dry ingredients to bowl and combine thoroughly.
 - Add fruit and mix well.
 - Place dough on floured surface and knead lightly. (If too sticky, add a little more flour).
 - Cut dough into 2 equal pieces.
 - Shape each piece into stollen shape and place both on large cookie sheet (keep loaves at least 4 inches from one another to allow room for rising in the oven).
 - Bake for 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 300°F and bake an additional 20-25 minutes.
- When done, wait 5 minutes and spread each with melted butter and sprinkle thickly with powdered sugar to form a glaze.





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

2024 Officers

President..... Anna Passante
Vice-President..... Sister Ceil Struck
Secretary.....Bill Drehfal
Treasurer.....Stephanie Maxwell

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George Ramponi
Jan Pientok
Mary Drehfal
Jay Wesner
Marge Tessmer

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 welcomed.

No December meeting

January 19, 2024

November 16, 2024

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

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