

Germanatown Historical Society **Newsletter**



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JUNE, 2022

From the GHS President

FINALLY, spring has sprung with some nice weather for us to enjoy. Winter in Wisconsin is way too long. Yet we have used the “down” time to continue working on organizing the old records and artifacts in the museums. We also have arranged several visits with interesting individuals who wished to donate family items like a wedding dress from the 1800’s, letters written at the onset of World War II from Germany and Hungary, and detailed family genealogies dating back centuries.

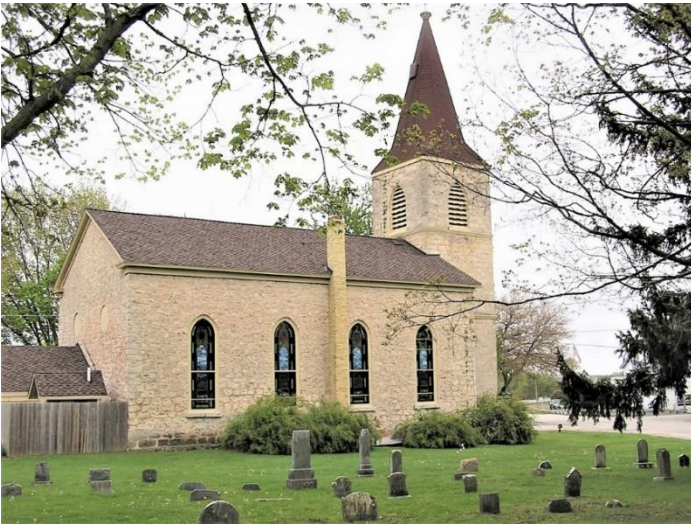
Some people think volunteering at the Wolf Haus Resource Center is boring, but we regularly discover something “new” and interesting almost every week. We have met a few new people who are now volunteering for a few hours weekly. They digitize old records and dig through old documents looking to discover the next unexpected “treasure.” We have a couple people who help from home researching the various artifacts online and reporting back with their findings. All have told me they find the experience enjoyable and rewarding.

As we look forward to plan for our Oktoberfest event, we are still in need of people who can volunteer to help by sitting in the museums to tell people about the building and displays. You can be easily trained, and you will find the experience rewarding. If interested in helping in any way, please contact me at ghsjdix@gmail.com.

This summer several major projects will be happening. The stained-glass windows in Christ Church Museum will be refurbished and given upgraded preservation. (See the article explaining that situation.) Rex Melius will continue to repair and restore the gravestones in Christ Church Cemetery. Ground Penetrating Radar will be used to search for lost structures and graves at the old St. Boniface grounds, and possibly at Christ Church Cemetery. Also, the Village will be refurbishing several items on the Wolf Haus exterior. The partnership between the GHS and the Village is working well to continue preserving these historic buildings for generations to come.

Jim Dix
President

Christ Church Museum's Window Restoration and Preservation Project



The beautiful stained-glass windows of the Christ Church Museum are lit every evening for the enjoyment of the community. This building is owned by the Germantown Historical Society, and we are proud to say it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. As such, we have an obligation to maintain it for the enjoyment of future generations.

This church was built in 1862, and the windows were installed in 1914. But now some maintenance is required to keep it preserved for years to come. Some of the metal framing that supports the stained-glass pieces is beginning to show rust. Also, the wood framing along the outside edges needs some immediate attention before it begins to rot.

The GHS has contracted with Essmann's Cabinetry & Millwork, Conrad Schmitt Studios, and painter, Tim McGuire to restore and preserve these artistic treasures this summer. The cost of this project will be \$33,000, but we thankfully have received a generous grant from The Theodore and Anna Grollmann Fund of \$3,155.

If you personally feel willing to donate specifically to this worthy cause, we would appreciate your consideration. Donations can be mailed to GHS, PO Box 31, Germantown, WI. 53022 or contact Jim Dix at ghsjdix@gmail.com Thank you.

VETERANS MEMORIAL MOVED TO HIGHGROUND



In April the Wisconsin Fallen Soldiers from the Vietnam War Memorial was relocated from the Christ Church Museum to the **Highground Veterans Memorial Park** in Neillsville, WI. It was disassembled and delivered by Dale Schuldt, Dave Souders, Dave Gierach, Jim and Sue Dix. It lists by village or municipality the names of the 1160 Wisconsin soldiers who died in Vietnam. It was created in 2016 by the Germantown American Legion Post #1 when the moving wall was brought to Germantown.

There were 14 soldiers who died from Washington County. Dale Schuldt created rifles with a helmet with the names of those 14 soldiers to accompany the display. He also made a white cross to remember the fallen and played a large role in making the display. The pictures show the banner with the 1160 names being presented to the **Highground** where they have on display the faces of all those people from Wisconsin who gave their lives in Vietnam. Also, the white cross was placed in front of their display, and veterans Dave and Dale holding the



helmets of SGT Andrew Moody Jr of Germantown and SGT Glen Dean of West Bend. The **Highground** will rotate two names in front of the Washington County veterans periodically. The other soldier from Germantown K.I.A. was PVC John North.



Thank you to all who served our country, and to all who

made it possible for this display to find a home in such an honorable location like the **Highground**. Visiting the 155-acre **Highground Veterans Memorial Park** is both an educational and emotional experience. It has been referred to as our nation's premier Veteran's Memorial Park, and their mission is "to honor, educate, and heal" all who visit. www.thehighground.us



Germantown history and genealogy.....

By Mary Herrick, Volunteer Genealogist

Part I

Bavarian Immigrants to Germantown

St. Boniface Catholic Church was founded by Bavarian immigrants about 1845. It was known as a mission church located in the wilderness where traveling priests rode an Indian trail from village to village serving parishioners' spiritual needs. It was one of the first of eighteen parishes in the state of Wisconsin and is the oldest Catholic parish in Washington County.

St. Boniface Catholic Church in the hamlet of Goldenthal, Village of Germantown, has a long history. It has been in existence for 175 plus years. St Boniface is the patron Saint of Germany; he is also known as the Apostle to the Germans. St. Boniface church became a parish when the area was still known as the Wisconsin Territory. It would be another three years before Wisconsin would become a State.

In 1844 Father Michael Heiss travelled from Milwaukee to the Goldenthal and Hubertus areas to begin administering the sacraments. Catholic pioneer settlers in the Goldenthal area gathered together to hold services in the homes of Johannes Knetzger, John Gruelich, and George Regenfuss.

In the fall of 1845, Johannes and Katherine (Hoffman) Knetzger donated 2 acres of land to the Milwaukee Archdiocese. The early Goldenthal settlers had erected a 20' by 30' crude log cabin and residence. It was located about one half mile east of the current corner of Goldendale and Freistadt Roads. The recording of the land transfer didn't take place until January 1847. Father Heiss used this location as a second home when he traveled to visit other mission churches along the route.

In June 1846 Father Francis Xavier Obermuller arrived at St. Boniface. He rode the circuit with Father Anton Maria Meyer. In 1847 Father Heiss was replaced by Father Joseph Salzman who was assigned as the first resident Pastor of St. Boniface and he moved into the log cabin.

Over the years there were many priests who served at St. Boniface Catholic Church and contributed to its' success as a parish. Father Joseph Salzman was one of the earliest priests to serve the people of Washington County. Besides administrating to the spiritual needs of the parish, he oversaw the growth of a number of parishes in the area.

Father Salzman noted that the number of settlers had increased, so he quickly requested a larger building be built for services. A decision was made to relocate the new church about a half mile west and across Freistadt Road in Section 20. The land in Section 20 was donated by George Regenfuss in 1848.

Father Salzman also realized there were too few priests who spoke German to serve the needs of the parishioners. With the population growth of new settlers and the large area of wilderness to cover he conceived the idea of creating a seminary at St. Boniface in order to increase the

number of priests in the vast wilderness. In 1849 Father Salzman was assigned to Old St. Mary's in Milwaukee. Later he was assigned to the diocesan seminary in St. Francis as its Second Rector.

Expanding the Parish

In 1861 construction of the new St. Boniface's parish buildings began. A stone church building was completed in 1867. During the construction, in 1865, the School Sisters of St. Francis arrive at the parish to teach in the new school. This group of women from Bavaria in southern Germany had been invited by Bishop John Henni to help with the needs of German immigrants.



St. Boniface Catholic Church, Convent and School at Goldenthal

Interior of St. Boniface Catholic Church in the 1890's



SECOND PARISH CEMETERY

The second parish cemetery, but first on the new property in Section 20, was established at the southeast corner of Goldenthal and Freistadt Roads. This cemetery is known as the 1850 Cemetery. The next section of the cemetery was in 1893 and was located adjacent to the existing Cemetery of 1850. Previously the cemeteries were family plots, this cemetery contained individual graves and an area reserved for babies.

In 1888 Father Henry Blum arrived at St. Boniface as the new Pastor. In 1889 he founded the school and saw to its construction. It was of a painted, wooden, four room two story school building. The building also included the convent which was on the second floor with the chapel. The residents were the teaching sisters from the School Sisters of St. Francis. Several years later an addition was put on the building. In 1889 St Boniface Parish had a membership of 90 families. By 1892 the Parish had grown to 132 families.

TRAGEDY

On March 4, 1954 tragedy struck the congregation when a fire totally destroyed the original stone church building.



The congregation joined together and completed construction of a new church building in 1955.

St. Boniface Catholic Church

Germantown history and genealogy.....

By Mary Herrick, Volunteer Genealogist

Part II

Germantown's Catholic history begins in Milwaukee

In order to understand the importance and significance of Germantown's place in history, there is an extensive amount of information to be written. The story begins in Milwaukee when the area was known as Wisconsin Territory. The Milwaukee Archdiocese was established in 1843, that same year Rev. John Martin Henni was appointed Bishop of Milwaukee.

In 1875 Bishop Henni became the first Archbishop of Milwaukee. He was succeeded in 1881, upon his death, by Bishop Michael Heiss who had served as Bishop of La Crosse and Coadjutor Bishop of Milwaukee.

St. Peter's Catholic Church

St. Peter's was the first Catholic Church in Milwaukee. It was dedicated in 1839. When Milwaukee became a diocese, St. Peter's became a Cathedral. St. Peter's offered religious services in both English and German but the growing population of German speaking Catholics wanted their own church.

St. Mary's Catholic Church

In 1846 St Mary's Catholic Church, now known as Old St Mary's, was built to serve the German Catholic immigrants from Germany. St Mary's is known as the mother church of Milwaukee's German Catholics. At that time one third of the population of Milwaukee was German. The church served French-Canadian, German and Irish and a small number of other nationalities.

St Francis de Sales Seminary

Rev. John Martin Henni established the first Seminary at his residence in 1845 in Milwaukee. In 1847 he appointed Father Joseph Salzmann to St. Boniface Parish, Germantown, he opened a small Seminary at St. Boniface.

Ten years later in 1855 Father Henni moved the Seminary from Milwaukee to South Lake Drive in St Francis, Wisconsin. It was dedicated January 29, 1856, which on the Catholic Church calendar was the feast day of St Francis de Sales.

Both Rev. Michael Heiss, the first Rector of the Seminary and Rev. Joseph Salzmann, the second Rector are buried under the chapel Sanctuary.

Germantown's history continues to have a major role in the history of Wisconsin. Father Joseph Salzmann served as the first permanent Pastor at St. Boniface Catholic Church in Germantown and was instrumental in the creation of the St. Francis de Sales Seminary.

In 1976 St. Peter's Catholic Church was moved from St. Francis Seminary to Old World Wisconsin in Eagle, Wisconsin. The small white church is located on the Main Street of the Village.



St Peter's Catholic Church

Schottler House



The Schottler house was located in Germantown. It was built in the 1830s by Christian Turck, and then purchased by the Schottler Family. This house was one of the oldest occupied dwellings in the State of Wisconsin.

In 1973 the house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The cedar log house is built in the German Blockbau style, made with solid logs stacked on top of each other. A summer beam runs down the center of the house at each level, with other beams connected to it by mortise and tenon joints. This type of construction requires chinking which is clay, rye straw and lime plaster. The Schottler House is important because there are few examples of this style of house remaining in Wisconsin.

In 1979 the Schottler house was disassembled and moved to Old World Wisconsin and reassembled. The two story log home was placed on the German Homestead at Old World Wisconsin. It shows pioneer life in Wisconsin in the mid 1800's.

Germantown's long history lives on at Old World Wisconsin

GERMANTOWN HUNSRUCKER OKTOBERFEST!

Saturday, Sept 24th, 2022 Noon – 11 pm

Sunday, Sept 25th, 2022 Noon – 7 pm

FREE!

FESTIVAL ADMISSION & PARKING!

German Entertainment - Music & Dancing! Family Fun!

ENTERTAINMENT SCHEDULE:

Saturday September 24th:

12pm-3pm Goodtime Dutchmen

3pm-4pm Dachshund Dash

4pm-7pm Music Venders

7pm-7:30pm Pommersche Tanzdeel Freistadt

7:30pm-10:30pm Copper Box (Pommersche Tanzdeel Freistadt during first break)

Sunday September 25th:

12pm-3pm River City Blaskepelle

3pm-3:30pm Pommersche Tanzdeel Freistadt

3:30pm-7:00pm Alpine Blast

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE A VOLUNTEER?

Germantown Historical Society is looking for people who would be interested in learning the history of Germantown. We have interesting projects you can help with, one day a week or maybe just occasionally.

Areas of help needed: research, computer data entry, scanning, IT, organizing documents, mailings, miscellaneous projects.

Contact Jim Dix at ghsjdix@gmail.com or phone 262-853-1953. In your email mention your talents, amount of time you can volunteer and availability.

2022 Dates to Remember:

June 1—Wolf Haus Opens for the Season

September 24 & 25—Oktoberfest

September 28—Wolf Haus Closes for the Season

The Wolf Haus & Genealogy Research Center will be open on Wednesdays from 1:00 pm – 4:00 pm from June 1st thru September 28th.

The Christ Church Museum of Local History is open by appointment only.

Bast Bell Museum is open by appointment only.

Please contact the Germantown Historical Society via GHS phone: 262.628.3170

or email at: Germantownhistoricalsociety@gmail.com

Tours are welcome by reservation at any time.

We Hope to See You!

GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. BOX 31
Germantown, WI 53022
262-628-3170