



Historical Perspectives

PORT WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

www.portwashingtonhistoricalsociety.org

VOLUME 27, ISSUE 2

SPRING 2016

THE HISTORY AND MYSTERY OF HARRINGTON BEACH STATE PARK

Mary Flierl

Elaine Nulph, a Friends of Harrington Beach State Park member, will provide us with the history of the little hamlet of Stone Haven. Her talk will include the be-



Elaine Nulph

ginnings of the Lake Shore Stone Company and the limestone quarry that now gives us the beautiful quarry pond at Harrington Beach State Park.

There is a bit of intrigue in the history of the park that involves a murder. Elaine will reveal all at the Quarterly Meeting, 7:00 pm on April 20 at the Wilson House.

Correction to the January Newsletter

It has been brought to our attention that we were inaccurate in reporting the name of Sally Ziegler. It was her desire and the family's to have her known as Sally Gilson. Our apologies. Sally traced her roots to the Gilson family and Gilson Manufacturing, a company with a long existence in the Port Washington area.

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FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!

Many years ago, when Quarry Lake was a dry rock quarry, the above call alerted the workmen that explosives were about to be detonated. The Lake Shore Stone Company used explosives to break up the rock which they mined from 1900 to 1920. The limestone was quarried, crushed into three different sizes, then shipped to one of their three distribution yards in Milwaukee, Muskegon, or South Haven. The pictures and narratives on these panels sketch the history of this industry.

Before the stone was quarried, the topsoil had to be removed, and a donkey engine and cars were used to haul the soil or overburden. This overburden was transported to a point about 500' southeast of the quarry. To mine this rock, holes 6" wide and around 30' deep were drilled into the stone, filled with gunpowder, and detonated. This initial blast cracked the limestone. Dynamite was then put into the cracks and exploded, blasting tons of stone down into the quarry. Not all of the stone, however, landed in the quarry as planned; some dropped on nearby houses!!

As many as 150 people, mostly Luxembourgers and Italians worked in and at the quarry. Many families lived on the property in houses built by the company. When quarrying operations came to an end, the houses were moved to the village of Belgium, about 3 miles west of here.

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Historical Perspectives

is published four times a year

President's Message

Dear Members,

It is springtime in Wisconsin, and that brings increased activity for Port Washington and for the Historical Society. We start to see significantly more visitors to our community, and hopefully many of those visitors will make a tour of one or all of our properties part of their visit to Port Washington. We continue to work to make people aware of all the properties and combine tours of them rather than making a visit to just one. On May 27 the Light Station opens for the season. You are invited to come and see the changes.

Our April Quarterly Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 20. Elaine Nulph will present a program titled "The History and Mystery of Harrington Beach State Park."

This month marks the one year anniversary of the *Port Exploreum*. We have learned a lot in the first year of operation. The *Exploreum* continues to impress all who visit it, especially with wonderful additions like the Lake Michigan Table. On Friday, April 22, from 5-7 pm, we are having a one year anniversary celebration for the *Exploreum*. All Port Washington Historical Society members are invited to attend. If you have not visited the *Exploreum* yet or if it has been a while since you have been there, it will be an excellent opportunity to see the Lake Michigan Table and the 'Nothin but Nets exhibit.

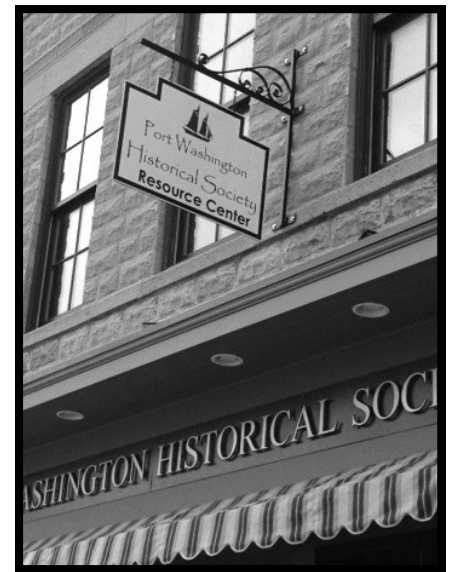
At our March 30 board meeting the board appointed Daniel Solorzano to fill the vacancy created when Sue Bruner decided to step down before her term ended. Daniel is Assistant Principal and Dean of Students at Port Washington High School. We are very excited about the experience and educational expertise that he will bring to the board.

Our need for volunteers is greater than ever. With the Society operating (and maintaining) three facilities, there are many volunteer opportunities at all three. The vast majority of volunteer opportunities do not require any special skill — simply your time and willingness to help carry out our mission. We especially need volunteers to serve as guides (docents) at the Light Station. You don't have to be a member to volunteer, so please encourage family members and friends who may have an interest to volunteer with the Society. It is an excellent opportunity for people who have recently retired to get a taste of volunteering! If you or someone you know is interested, please contact Haley Pfeuffer or make a contact through our website.

We are always looking to grow our member base. I want to challenge every member to encourage or recruit someone else to become a member of the Society. Perhaps you have a family member, friend, neighbor or co-worker that just needs a little nudge from you to join us in preserving and sharing our history!

Jeff Morgan, President

Port Washington Historical Society Board of Directors



NEWS FROM THE PORT EXPLOREUM

Wayne Chrusciel

Education Initiative Update:

The new Lake Michigan table has spawned a new initiative for the Historical Society centering on the table and the potential to teach all about Lake Michigan. Bill Moren is spearheading the effort with the help of an educational consultant. Together they have begun the process of making the *Port Exploreum* and the Society an integral part of the education process of Lake Michigan, in not only Port Washington, but all of southeastern Wisconsin.

Following is a synopsis of the initiative: The Lake Michigan Learning Lab project at the *Port Exploreum* will offer a set of experiential learning opportunities that promote greater understanding and action to preserve Lake Michigan ecology and maritime history. Local experts, community members and educators from the Port Washington-Saukville School District will participate in

the development of a set of learning experiences that includes two or three exhibits at the *Exploreum*, a pre- and post-visit curricular resource guide, teacher/volunteer trainings and a speaker series.

Learning experiences will focus on standards-aligned topics such as waves, erosion, pollution, shipwrecks, watershed issues and public water safety. The Lab will empower 40 teachers and thousands of students in grades 4 through 12 to learn, through technology and hands-on activities, to study Lake related issues just as scientists and historians do. In addition, involvement and participation by the community and schools will increase awareness of the importance of the Historical Society, increase attendance, memberships, collaborations and financial support.

We will be updating the progress of the Initiative as we move forward. Want to learn more or get involved? Contact Bill Moren at billmoren65@gmail.com.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

As the weather warms and the days grow longer, we are busily planning events for members and the general public alike. Here are a few of the events that will be happening over the next few months:

April 20th Historical Society Quarterly Meeting: The Quarterly Historical Society meeting will occur on Wednesday, April 20, at the Wilson House at 7:00 pm. The topic of the meeting will be "The History and Mystery of Harrington Beach State Park."

One Year Birthday Celebration for the *Port Exploreum*: On Friday, April 22, the *Port Exploreum* will celebrate its One Year Birthday with a members Only Happy Hour. We will be serving beer, wine, snacks, and of course, birthday cake to celebrate the occasion! That Saturday and Sunday we will also invite the public to celebrate with us and enjoy a \$1.00 off discount on admission.

1st Friday of the Month Movie Night at the *Port Exploreum*: On Friday, May 6 and June 3, the *Port Exploreum* will be hosting the "1st Friday of the Month Movie Nights." Just a reminder that admission is free for everyone, and popcorn, candy and beverages are available at very reasonable prices.

Light Station Opens for the Summer: On Friday, May 27, at 11:00 am the 1860 Light Station will be re-opening for visits and tours for the summer. We will again be in need of tour guides (docents), so if you have an interest please contact Haley Pfeuffer at 262-284-2406. To cele-

brate the re-opening of the Light Station, the Historical Society will be hosting an Ice Cream Social on Saturday, May 28, from noon to 2 pm. Please join us in celebrating not only the Light Station re-opening but also Memorial Day weekend!

Happy Hour and Port Washington Trivia Night at the *Port Exploreum*: We will be holding our second Happy Hour and Trivia Night on Friday, June 10, from 5 pm until 7 pm. Join us for drinks, snacks and a spirited game of Port Washington trivia.

Mother's Day and Father's Day: As we did last year, Moms on Mother's Day and Dads on Father's Day will be admitted free on those days to the *Port Exploreum*. Please let family, friends and neighbors know that the *Port Exploreum* is the place to celebrate Mom and Dad on their special day!

If you would like further information on these or other events of the Historical Society, please log into the Historical Society's website at <http://www.portwashingtonhistoricalsociety.org/events.html>.

I look forward to seeing everyone soon, whether it be at the *Port Exploreum*, during a Quarterly Meeting, or at either the Resource Center or Light Station. Please feel free to contact me at either 262-284-2406 or email at crwshall517@hotmail.com if you have questions, comments or concerns.

Wayne Chrusciel, PWS Executive Director

THE DRUECKER STONE QUARRY IN THE TOWN OF PORT WASHINGTON

Mike Didier

Like many stories from the Port Washington, Wisconsin, area, the story of the Druecker stone quarry in the Town of Port Washington begins with a descendant of Luxembourg. This quarry, located in the Town of Port Washington, now two miles north of the city at the end of Shady Lane Road off what is now County Road KW, has an interesting history little known to many.



1894 photo of the Druecker Stone Quarry in the Town of Port Washington

In 1856 at the age of 17, John Druecker voyaged to Wisconsin from Bissen, Luxembourg, with his parents and three brothers in search of a better life. By all indications, John was a businessman and was not going to let the American capitalistic system he and his family moved to go to waste.

Initially he found farm work but after a short time began working on the shipping and receiving pier in the City of Port Washington. He became proficient in accounting, bookkeeping and the English language, so he took a clerk job for local businessman, Barnum Blake.

Eventually, John opened his own business, a store/warehouse in downtown Port Washington. This lakeside warehouse was located on the south side of what is now Grand Avenue in the City of Port Washington.

His idea for the stone quarry was the result of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. John knew the city would rebuild and would need construction material — and a lot of it. Along with rebuilding needs, he heard new laws were passed requiring new buildings to be constructed with fireproof material such as brick, stone, marble and limestone. John intended to supply stone and lime for the rebuilding of Chicago and acquired the quarry land in the NW ¼ of section 9 (about two miles north of the current city limits) in the Town of Port in

1873.

This land was unique for the area, as the limestone was already at or near the surface, a rarity in the Town of Port Washington where bedrock is normally 60 to 100 feet below the surface. Another promising feature of his selected quarry land was the newly laid railroad (now Union Pacific) that went right through the area, allowing easy shipping of his stone and lime to markets.

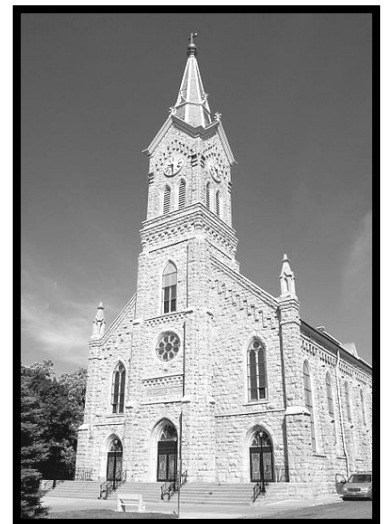
The quarry was up and running in 1874, and during the same year, to the business's advantage, Chicago again suffered another large fire in which 812 structures burned. The quarry was supplying Chicago's needs for building materials just as John had planned.

John decided to build a house at the quarry, and by standards of the time it was grand in scale and features. The home had two fireplaces, four chimneys and six separate entrances. The solid stone walls were 15" thick. Large sun rooms were built on the south side of the home with French doors leading to the spacious grounds. A separate building housed the horses, and a large glass greenhouse was constructed for raising flowers.

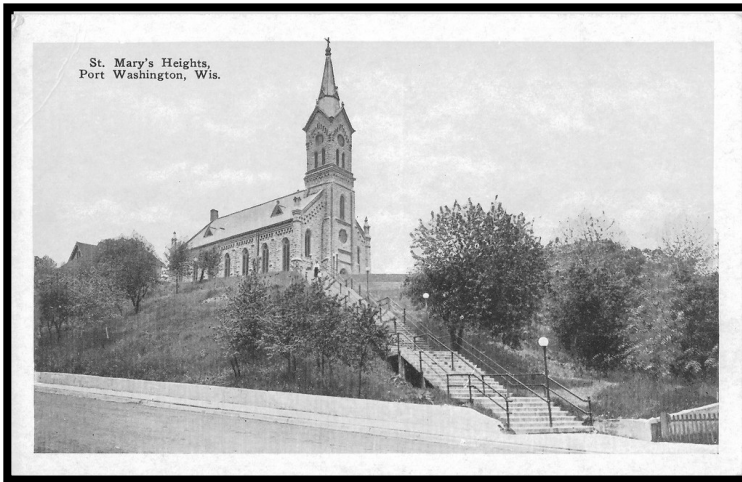
John eventually decided to move to Chicago to facilitate his sales, and his brother Joseph and son William J. Druecker stayed in Port Washington to run the quarry.

Although Chicago had a large customer base, not all stone customers were that far away. In the City of Port Washington in 1882, the beautiful St. Mary's Catholic Church was built high on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan using stone from the Druecker quarry. The impressive stone church was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and remains one of the most photographed buildings in the city today.

With the amount of labor needed to operate a quarry, the Drueckers hired many laborers, most of whom were Italian immigrants who John hired from Chicago. They lived in stone shacks at the quarry, and



St. Mary's Catholic Church



some brought their families to stay with them.

This was also the era of one-room schoolhouses, and School District No. 7 of the Town of Port Washington was conveniently located only about 1000 feet away on Middle Road (now County Road KW). This school was a wood frame building constructed in 1866.

Additionally, a small railway station was built near the quarry and was known as "Druecker Station." Once the station was built, the Druecker Post Office and General Store was opened across from the school (by this time referred to as the Druecker School) to serve the rural Town of Port Washington and adjacent Town of Belgium. It is assumed the mail would arrive on the train that stopped at the nearby quarry.



Joseph Druecker "stone mansion" (photo courtesy of Matthew Striebel)

In 1895, John's brother Joseph built what was described in local newspapers as a "stone mansion" for himself on 65 acres near the quarry on Middle Road. Construction costs at the time were reported to be \$50,000. John's son William J. Druecker moved into the older, large Druecker home at the quarry.

In addition to stone, John and his brother Joseph built lime kilns to manufacture and sell lime and cement. Huge kilns

were built along the property and the J. Druecker Brothers Lime Co. was officially started.

John and Joseph perfected the lime-making process and in 1887 were granted a patent for their new and improved kiln construction process. This new process re-burned the exhaust, thus improving efficiency. Two years later, they were granted another patent for a new form of kiln construction that burned oil in addition to wood.

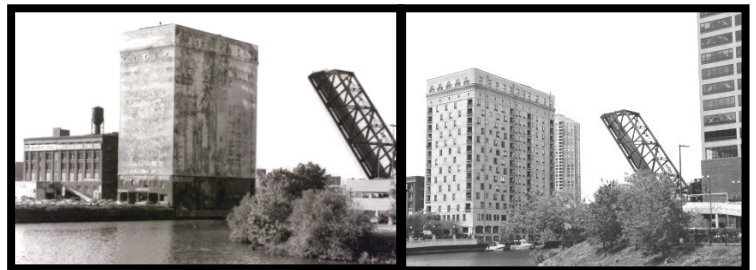
John traveled and sold this petroleum-burning system all over the country in competitors' kilns. Being able to burn oil was a great advantage, as the kilns had a huge appetite for wood that was difficult to meet from the local, predominantly agricultural area. Trainloads of wood often had to be shipped in from Crandon, Wisconsin, to provide fuel for the kilns.

In 1892, due to increased train traffic, a spur line was constructed at the quarry so train cars could be pulled off the main line to avoid interference with other railway and freight traffic. These new tracks also ran alongside the kilns to help load product for shipment.

In 1902, John's son William officially took ownership of the quarry. This was only logical with John still in Chicago and his brother Joseph spending much time assisting with the Chicago business that had grown to include warehousing, general sales, and real estate.

John's largest Chicago venture was the building of a 15-story warehouse in Chicago in 1897. This huge warehouse was said to be fireproof, as no wood was used in construction, and all the new fireproof methods that were realized after the Chicago fires were employed. Architect Frank B. Abbot was commissioned to build and design the structure, as he held many patents in the fireproof construction industry. Construction costs in 1897 were reported to be a staggering \$300,000.

This building was expanded in 1908 by a subsequent owner but still stands today at what is now 345 N. Canal Street in Chicago. It continued to be used as a warehouse until 1980 when it was converted to residential use. It is now known as the Fulton House Condominiums.



The John Druecker Building then and now

In 1905, Joseph Druecker passed away and only a few months later in 1906 John Druecker died in Chicago. Both deaths were sudden and unexpected with heart failure as the cause for both brothers' deaths. At the time, John's son William was still in Port Washington running the quarry and kilns. William married a lady named Alma, and they had four children, all born and raised at the Port Washington quarry.

(Continued on page 8)

WHAT'S NEW AT THE RESOURCE CENTER?

"Celebrating 75 Years of the *Ozaukee Press*" continues as the main exhibit of the Resource Center through the summer months. Included as part of the exhibit is the *Ozaukee Press* coverage of the tragic sinking of the fish tug Linda E. A reception for the exhibit was held January 23 following the Quarterly Meeting.



Artifacts from the Bienlein-Burke Maritime Collection are also on display. For those who enjoyed seeing the replica boats and tugs at NewPort Shores, watch for a new display featuring some of John Weinrich's creations.

In the archive center, work continues on cataloging the Ambrose Mayer Collection of more than 2000 photos donated in 2014 by Jeanne Mayer. An earlier donation of several hundred Mayer photos acquired in 2010 have already been catalogued. Ambrose's personal papers and scrapbooks are in the process of being cataloged as well.

Another large collection of photos, business and personal papers working its way through the process is that of William Niederkorn, donated by Mark Schowalter and Port Washington State Bank in 2014. Both of these collections have consumed several thousand hours of volunteer time.

Cataloging continues on hundreds of other individual items as well. Currently, there are nine cataloguers working on the second floor with four additional archive workers on the first floor. Donated items come in on a weekly basis and are evaluated for acceptance in accordance with the Society's Collection Policy.

A new face at the Resource Center is Jan Leone, a resident of Port Washington, retired and new to the area. Jan is volunteering her help with the archives and collections.

The Resource Center will shift to summer hours in May, adding in Fridays from 1:00-4:00 and Saturdays from 10:00-

2:00. Special appointments can be made by contacting the office at 262-268-9150.

Jackie Olson, Geri Zehren



PWHS MARITIME HERITAGE PROGRAM

The Historical Society's Board of Directors recently approved a new program for the Society which will allow the Society to take the next logical step in fulfilling its mission of preserving the history of Port Washington. Titled "Program in Maritime Heritage," the goal of the initiative is to "develop and improve practices and procedures for acquiring, managing, conserving, and exhibiting the Maritime objects/artifacts and their histories."

Our own Sarah Smith will be leading this initiative, and she will lead the creation and implementation of concrete rules and strategies for the acquisition, storage, care, conservation, and display of maritime objects and artifacts. As part of the program, a comprehensive in-

ternship will be developed in cooperation with the Museum Studies Graduate Certificate Program at UWM and the Anthropology/History departments at the Milwaukee Public Museum. Finally, Sarah will be responsible for the development of a biennial series of shipwreck-themed exhibits at the *Port Exploreum*, as well as an annual four-day public archaeology project at the Port Washington Light Station. While Sarah will be starting immediately, this initiative will take place over a period of several years. Watch for updates in future publications.

Wayne Chrusciel, PWHS Executive Director

OPENING DAY IS UPON US!

1860 LIGHT STATION NEWS

Our season opener will be upon us shortly—Memorial Day Weekend to be exact. And we have lost two of our steadfast docents—Bruce & Trish Shecterle. They devoted almost every Sunday to greeting and guiding for the 2015 season.

I turned over the “volunteer wrangling” reins to Haley, along with our contact list of present volunteers. We will definitely need many more people to help this year, and I’m hoping each member of the Society will talk up our need and enthusiastically help with recruiting. For more information about being a part of the volunteer crew, please phone Haley at the Port Exploreum: 262-284-2406 or the Society office: 262-268-9150.

As we are in the process of planning for several private tour groups, an art fair on the grounds of the LS in July, as well as our Summer Night at the Light evening soiree with music, appetizers, and libations, which is open to all Society members as well as the general public, the need for more volunteers is very real.

Maintenance:

As our LS Director, Rick Smith, will tell you, this is a never-ending project. The following are our most immediate projects:

We are taking action on the lifeboat from the clipper *Milwaukee*, which is displayed on the grounds east of the lighthouse. It is subject to all weather conditions, except when Rick builds a shelter each winter to keep ice and snow off. Nevertheless, the boat is deteriorating. We contacted Calibre Boat Repair of Door County to give us an estimate as to what it would entail/cost to do a restoration and protective coating. They will be on site

some time this weekend to see first-hand what is required. As we have a restoration line in our budget, we are hoping that by our next BOD meeting we will have an estimate/contract to present for approval.

We cannot re-open the Generator Building for tours until we find storage for the wood from the schooner *Challenger*, which is being stored there right now.

Considerable painting and a good deal of yard work must be done at the LS.

A leak has been noted on the east side of the gallery (lantern room) just above the last set of ladders.

We are looking for more storage space for relics we acquired. Also, we always welcome volunteers who want to assist with yard work, painting, and general maintenance.

Rick completed the following maintenance:

- Floors were redone and the building was vacuumed from attic to basement.
- Brass and silver was polished.
- Brass lamp was installed in the lens.

Future Needs for Consideration:

- We need to look into replacing the storm windows on the Generator Building.
- We should consider purchasing a carport cover for the lifeboat. There was some wind damage after the recent wind storm.

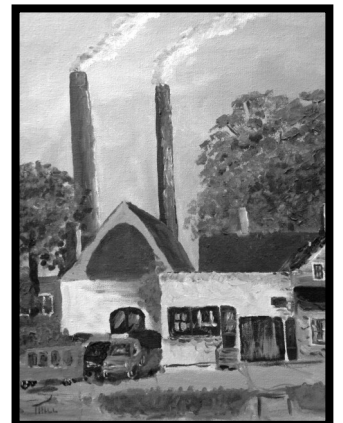
Kathie Uttech Gordon
Director of Tours & Marketing
1860 Light Station

MYSTERY PAINTING

Thanks to Leroy Bley and Mary Thill for providing the information about the painting featured in the January newsletter.

Henrietta (known as Detz) Knaff Thill painted the Port Washington scene. Mary tells us that Detz was born in Lake Church and always wanted to be an artist. She lived in Allenton and was involved in making harnesses. Detz took art lessons in Mequon and later moved back to Port Washington. She painted scenes from all over Wisconsin. At Christmas she gave her paintings as gifts to those that she thought would appreciate them. Locally, she was considered to be a “Grandma Moses.”

Leroy shared his thoughts that the street in the foreground is Pier Street. To the left was the parking lot for Schmit Bros. Ford and to the right was Carl Hensel’s Shoe Repair business with his garage and then home. The Braby home is behind Hensel’s with Washington Street behind not visible. On Washington Street, visible with its peaked roof, is the Knights of Columbus Hall (formerly the Methodist Episcopal Church). In the far background are the two Wisconsin Energy smoke stacks. The painting depicts a scene between 1943-1948.





DONATIONS & MEMORIALS



ANNUAL FUND DRIVE

Ardyce Ahsmann
Robert and Bernadine Bretl
Samuel E. DeMerit
Mike Didier
Mark Dbydahl
John Enright
Mary Flierl
James R. Fowler
Barbara Gilmore
Carol Heinen
Scott and Jan Hendrickson
Frank and Michelle Hince
Mr. & Mrs. James Horstman
Johnson Controls
(requested by John Enright)
Carol Jushka
Mark and Nina Koenig
Mark and Barb Matera
Kassie McManus
Elaine Nulph
Mark and Cathy Schowalter
Jo Ann Stade
Paul Thielke and Monica Demuth
Richard & Barbara Thomas
Bob and Holly Wilke

SOCIETY DONATIONS

James and Mary Burmesch
ITW Foundation Volunteer Program
(Kate Brown)

A Lu Steinert
Port Washington Kiwanis Foundation
Don and Susie Snider

SOCIETY IN-KIND DONATIONS

John Enright
Kaye McCulloch

1860 LIGHT STATION DONATIONS

Nancy Haacke

PORT EXPLOREUM DONATIONS

Mark Dybdahl – additional gift
Reed Fellers – additional gift
Alllyson and Dan Olivier – additional gift
Lincoln Smith

LAKE MICHIGAN LEARNING LAB at the PORT EXPLOREUM

The Brookby Foundation
The Greater Milwaukee Foundation

EXPLOREUM PAVER

Bill and Pat Moren
Jeff and Nicole Theys
Lynde B. Uihlein

BOOKS/PAPERS/PAMPHLETS/ ABSTRACTS/MAPS

Mark Federspiel
Jane Runkel Frederick

BOOTS WORN BY VERN BIEVER

Jim Bieber

BUSINESS ARTIFACTS

Jodi Dickmann
Mark Federspiel

PHOTOS AND NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS/PRINTS/POSTERS

Mark Federspiel
Elizabeth Galles
W.J. Niederkorn Library

ANTIQUE METAL & WOOD/ GLASS/FABRIC

Paul Albinger
Mark Federspiel
Lefty Fowler
Jane Runkel Frederick
David Smith, Lloyd Smith,
And Margaret Ann Smith
Sue Snider

(Continued from page 5)

Sadly, in 1914, tragedy struck the family when their two-year-old son William Jr. drowned in a small lily pond in the yard surrounding their home. The grieving family buried young William on the Druecker property near the quarry.

Although a family tragedy such as the death of a child could affect one's work, it was a world tragedy that had the greatest impact on what had been such a successful business. This same timeframe saw the beginning of World War I. By the time the United States officially declared war upon the German Empire, the American business climate shifted as it historically does in support of the war. With steel and manufacturing industries getting a boost from government resources, stone and lime was not an essential commodity during time of war.

In addition, building construction in the private sector slowed during the war. Due to these factors, William decided to shut down the quarry during the war. Although William reopened after the war concluded, the business found it difficult to remain profitable due to increased competition and advances in construction materials. Once again, he found himself having to close the quarry, this time for good.

By the time the Great Depression hit in 1929, not only was the quarry/lime business closed but also the post office and the

rail station. In 1928, William and his family loaded a train car at the quarry with their possessions and moved to California with their son John and two daughters, Jane and Helen. The younger son William Jr. who had passed away and was buried at the Druecker home, was reburied in Union Cemetery in Port Washington near his grandparents. This marked the end of four generations of Drueckers residing in Port Washington and the end of the Druecker stone and lime quarry.

William J. Druecker died in Pasadena, California, in 1955. It should be noted that William J. Druecker's grandson (Jane Druecker's son) Thomas J. Sargent (age 68) was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 2011.

Back in Port Washington, the abandoned quarry filled with water, providing a deep swimming hole for farm children that would wander to the area. It also became a popular dumping ground as was common in the days before regulated garbage collection and dumping sites. Ownership changed hands unremarkably a few times until a trucking company purchased the old quarry land for a dump site. This company filled in most of the quarry with fly ash, a byproduct of burning coal from the local power plant operated by Wisconsin Electric.

In 1955, the old Druecker house was converted into a tavern. The tavern was appropriately named This Old House Tav-

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(Continued from page 8)

ern and was considered one of the most popular taverns in the county. The business was unique as it operated as a Teen Bar or Beer Bar, as the laws of the time allowed those under 21 to drink beer. In fact, the tavern was so popular and remotely located that there was much discussion about car accidents and the morality of minor bars within the Town of Port Washington. In the 1960's, more than once, petitions were made to close the beer bars in the Town of Port Washington including This Old House. Ultimately, the Wisconsin State Legislature raised uniform drinking laws to age 21, thus ending the teen beer bars.



Today's view of the railroad as it goes through the old Druecker Stone Quarry property

By this time, the Druecker house/tavern had been separated from the quarry land and was under separate ownership. Fly ash that continued to be dumped in the quarry was causing concern for neighboring property owners. On dry, windy days, fly ash would blow around to nearby lands. The Town Board ordered the trucking company to take steps to prevent the fly ash from leaving the site, including seepage into nearby Sauk Creek. By 1971, the quarry was full and a 40-60 foot deep column of fly ash had been deposited in the quarry before being capped with dirt.

In 1981, the tavern reopened under the name Nicki's Cove for just a few years before the bar was removed and converted into a duplex house. In the 1990's, it was discovered that the fly ash caused contamination to the drinking water at the old Druecker House. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources investigated the site due to its close proximity to Sauk Creek and determined the amount of selenium present exceeded health-based standards. This was determined to be a direct result of the buried fly ash in the nearby quarry.

The power company now operating as WE Energies ultimately purchased the Druecker house and all of the former quarry land and remediated the entire site to EPA standards. This included tearing down the old Druecker home, capping the old quarry with a non-permeable product, and installing a compacted clay dome of earth over the quarry to prevent rain water from reaching the fly ash that lay below.

Today there is almost no visual indication of this long lost community once referred to as Druecker, Wisconsin, with a store, lime kilns, train depot, employee housing units, a school house, post office, horse stables and of course the rambling Druecker home.

The Druecker School was torn down in 1900 and replaced with a more modern brick one room school building ¼ mile north to the corner of Lake Drive and Middle Road (now CR-KW). This building was used as a school until 1942 and was torn down in the 1970's. The abandoned lime kilns were ordered destroyed by the Town of Port Washington due to safety concerns.

In 1913, Joseph Druecker's elegant stone mansion was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. When the interior floors burned, they fell and pulled the massive stone walls into a heap.

In 1993 the Town of Port Washington took a step rarely used by local governments and formally abandoned the entire length of the town road Shady Lane that lead to the old quarry. This process involved giving the roadbed to the neighboring land owner.



Recent photo showing a lone lime kiln ruin, was once the J. Druecker Brothers Lime Co.

Today, the only sign that the area was anything other than farm fields is the ruins of one lone lime kiln that looks oddly placed amongst the agricultural land that dominates the area. Although there is little visual indication of what was once in this area of the Town of Port, it is interesting to note that digitally the Druecker's have left a mark. If you use any of the popular mapping web sites such as Google Maps and type in "Druecker WI" — it will direct you to what is now County Road KW in the Town of Port Washington, just north of old Shady Lane — the exact area of what was once the Druecker Post Office.



Thank you to Mike Didier for researching and writing this article.
Reference list available at the PWHs Resource Center

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New Board Member

The PWHS Board of Directors appointed Daniel Solorzano to the board at its March 30 meeting. Daniel is filling the board vacancy created when Sue Bruner stepped down from the board before her term expired. Daniel will serve the balance of Sue's term through the end of 2016.

Daniel is the Assistant Principal and Dean of Students at Port Washington High School. He was a member of the Museum Advisory Board so he is very familiar with the Society and the *Port Exploreum*. Daniel lives in Mequon with his wife Mary. We are very excited about the experience and the educational expertise he will bring to the board.

Port Washington Historical Society

SAVE THE DATE!

Saturday, October 29th

**Port Washington
Historical Society
Gala Fundraiser**

Celebrating 25 Years

INFORMATION SOUGHT



FEATURES ITALIAN FOOD
Port - The new Piedegrotta restaurant overlooking the harbor in Port Washington will be opened this weekend, April 17, 1952.

Archival volunteers are seeking information about this photo that appeared in the *Ozaukee Press* in 1952 featuring the opening of the Piedegrotta Restaurant overlooking the lake. Please relay any information to the Resource Center at 262-268-9150.

WWII LIVING HISTORY EVENT Breaching the Reich

Saturday May 21, 10am - 10pm

Ozaukee County Pioneer Village
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For more information, visit the Ozaukee County Historical Society website:
www.ochs.co.ozaukee.wi.us

**PORT WASHINGTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

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www.portwashingtonhistoricalsociety.org

Upcoming Events

QUARTERLY MEETING
Wednesday, April 20
7:00 p.m.

Wilson House Lakeview Room

Light Station Opens for Summer

Friday, May 27, 11 am to 4 pm

Ice Cream Social

Saturday, May 28, Noon to 2 pm
1860 Light Station

July Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday, July 20
Wilson House
25th Anniversary of the Historical Society

For a complete list of PWHS
events, click here to visit:
[www.facebook.com/
PortWashingtonHistoricalSociety](http://www.facebook.com/PortWashingtonHistoricalSociety)
or
www.portexploreum.com/calendar/