

THE MENASHA TIMES

December



2015

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MENASHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Park Street Revisited Presentation Recalls Bygone Era

Our Menasha Historical Society held its annual potluck luncheon on Tuesday, September 10. Twenty-seven members were present and enjoyed a delicious meal. We were honored to have Caryl Herziger as our guest speaker. Caryl's program was entitled 'Park Street Revisited – 1954 to 1984.' We were entertained by Caryl's stories about the families who were Park Street residents when she and her late husband, Bill, lived there.

Going far back to Menasha's early history, one of the first residents of Park Street was Elisha D. Smith. His home, built in the late 1800's, was located at the corner of Park and Keyes Streets. The three-story mansion consisted of 24 rooms and was quite a showplace. The home featured 4 chimneys and a ballroom. Unfortunately, the home is no longer in existence. However, while living there, the benevolent Mr. Smith donated the entire block of land across the street from his home for a park. Smith Park has been a great asset to the City of Menasha for over 100 years.

At the opposite end of Park Street (on the corner of Park and Nicolet Blvd.) was a lovely home surrounded by white stucco walls. It was owned by Jane (Smith) Haskin and her husband, Edwin. Jane was the daughter of E.D. Smith and his wife Julia. The Russell Flom's built a new home on that property in 1977. The stucco walls are still standing.

As Caryl described the families and their Park Street homes, our Interim President, Nick Jevne, and Tom Grade presented a slide show featuring photos of the homes. Caryl shared many interesting and humorous stories of her neighbors and what their lives were like during those three decades. She noted that Smith Park was a wonderful gathering place for the many young children who lived in the neighborhood.

To conclude her presentation, Caryl stated that "Park Street 1954 to 1984 was not any better or any worse than most streets in Menasha during those 30 years. It was, however, blessed with a great number of children who, since those years, have grown to adulthood and have taken their place in society. They are doctors, teachers, lawyers, businessmen, social workers, dreamers, planners, artists and musicians. All of them are, in part, a reflection of their childhood on this single street." Caryl has been a member of our Historical Society for many years. Her late husband, Bill, was a past President of the Society. We are very grateful for all the history, photos, stories and news articles shared by both of the Herzigers.



Smith Home



Haskin Home



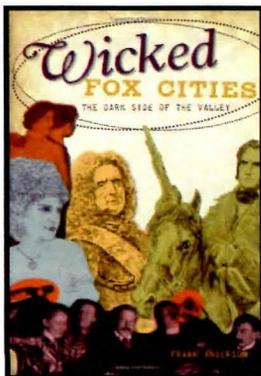
"The Hill of the Dead"

Increased use of the Trestle Trail has caused more questions to arise about the true story of Butte des Morts. Nationally known filmmaker and published historian Frank Anderson has provided some information.

The Hill of the Dead was a great burial mound, one of many in the region and a remnant of the great mound building culture that stretched across the upper midwest over 2,000 years ago. The French, who once dominated the Fox river valley, named it Petit Butte des Morts. (A larger conical burial mound existed in Oshkosh, hence Big Lake Butte des Morts) The great hill commanded the east shore of Little Lake Butte des Morts well into the 19th century. It predates Christ and was the burial site of many ancient Kings. Additional upper layer and surrounding burials were added by successive Native American cultures. Over time, the entire east shore of the lake became a dense, layered burial ground. To this day, bones are often found in sand bars and shallows near the shore line.

The French arrived in the area in the 17th century. The fur trade on the river became one of the new world's profit centers and the resulting the Fox Wars raged along it's banks. After 150 years of French and British rule the Americans arrived and the great hill was razed and destroyed in 1863 by the Chicago and Northwest Railroad. They were building a rail bridge across the lake into Menasha and the hill was in the way. The contents of the hill - bones, gravel and clay objects - provided aggregate for the new rail bed. The site where the mound stood is now Fritze Park. On the park grounds stands a state historical marker whose entire contents - a tale of the massacre and mass burial of Fox Indians by French soldiers and their Indian allies - is an amalgam of made up memories and half remembered incidents that never happened. The hill predates the romantic roadside tale by two millennia and whatever is left of it's once proud and sacred contents lie scattered beneath a bike trail and along the bottom the the lake.

To learn more about local history pick up a copy of Frank Anderson's book - ***Wicked Fox Cities***. Available for purchase at Amazon.com or in the Wisconsin History section at Barnes & Noble.



Sign Up Now For The Annual Christmas Dinner

Waverly Beach

Thursday, December 10

Social Hour 5-6 pm Dinner 6 pm

Program to follow

Keynote speaker: Larry Haase

Principal of Menasha High School

Performance by Menasha Swing Choir

send in a check for \$22.00 per person to the following address:

MENASHA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

P O BOX 255

MENASHA WI 54952

Checks Due by Friday Dec. 4th

This 1930's Christmas cookie recipe, provided by Nancy Ropella, was a favorite of her Aunt Maude.

Corn Flake Kisses

3 egg whites - stiffly beaten
into this add:

1/2 tsp salt

1 cup powdered sugar

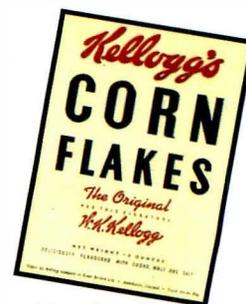
1 cup chopped nuts

1 cup shredded coconut

3 cups corn flakes

Drop by tsp full on a greased cookie sheet

Bake 15 minutes in a 350 degree oven



The following long-time members have recently passed away: Jim Reiland, Joyce Speech, Mary Alice Mueller. Our sympathy goes out to their families.

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