



HISTORICAL NOTES

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Louis Johnson on board the *Three Sisters*, salvaging whatever he could from the schooner, stranded on a sandbar just south of Dyckesville in 1912. Photo courtesy of Virginia Johnson.

THREE SISTERS – Shipwreck at Dyckesville

by Jerry Abitz

The schooner, *Three Sisters*, left the Barrette & Leroy dock at Red River with a load of baled hay to be delivered to Cedar River, near Escanaba, Mich., on the afternoon of Nov. 23, 1912. The hay was intended for the horses working in the lumber camps that winter. En route, about halfway across the bay of Green Bay, a fierce storm arose with winds up to 60 miles an hour and rain that turned to sleet and then to snow. It overtook the ship – turning what should have been an uneventful trip into a fight for their lives. Elsewhere on Lake Michigan, the *Rouse Simmons* was also fighting for its life, last seen off shore from Keweenaw with a load of Christmas trees.

On board the smaller ship on Green Bay, the crew managed to fight the waves but, as darkness fell, the ship began to drift. By seven o'clock in the evening, the anchor that had been dropped in an attempt to save the ship from washing ashore from the northerly winds was lost. The *Three Sisters* breached on a sandbar about 300 feet off shore just south of the Barrette & Leroy dock in the area where the present-day restaurant, Paradise Cove, is located (long-term residents may remember it as the location of Ben DeBaker's Bar), where it remained throughout the night.

The crew, comprised of three men, included Captain Phillip Klumb, a 50-year old sailor and part-owner of the boat, 50-year old Soren Torgerson, and Andrew Hansen. The 69-foot boat, built in Fish Creek in 1901, was equipped with a gasoline engine and sails.

When dawn arrived, Gould Potier of Dyckesville saw two men waving frantically and calling for help on board the doomed ship. The shore soon was alive with people watching rescue attempts. The Sturgeon Bay life-saving station was notified, but they failed to appear until the *next* day!

All attempts to rescue the men were about to be abandoned when Rev. John W. Melchers, the local priest from St. Louis Church, appeared on the scene. After first procuring a boat, he led the rescue attempt assisted by Gould Potier and George DeBaker, setting out for the distressed ship. As they approached the ship, Phillip Klumb donned a life jacket and jumped into the water and slowly drifted on a spar toward the rescue boat. Suddenly he disappeared beneath the surface. Although Father Melchers immediately jumped into the icy waters, pulled Klumb into the boat and got him back to shore, he never regained consciousness.

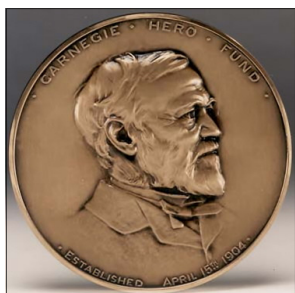
If you wish to receive notification that the most recent issue of the KCHS newsletter is available online, send your request to gabitz@centurytel.net with your name and email address.

Ed Delfosse reached the ship in a separate boat and found the other two men still on board. Andrew Hansen was already dead among the bales of hay; Soren Torgerson, although still alive, was utterly exhausted. Delfosse placed him in the boat but, on the way back to shore, it capsized—throwing both men into the water and trapping Torgerson under the overturned boat. Oliver Renier waded out from shore and helped Delfosse pull him in to shore. They took him to Potier's

nearby and attempted to revive him with liquor, but he never regained consciousness. Judging from this account, one could conclude that all three men died of hypothermia.

The next week, Louie Johnson, Klumb's brother-in-law and part-owner of the boat, stripped the *Three Sisters* of anything that could be of value such as the sails, the gas engine, etc. In time, the hull just broke up. Joyce Lampereur of Dyckesville emailed me this information, "My dad, Austin Allard, used to tell me he had gone out to where it [*Three Sisters*] was wrecked, and there were still parts of it down there. That was a long, long time ago."

Most have heard or read about the sinking of the *Rouse Simmons* on the same day on Lake Michigan – a loss of 17 lives, two of which were lost when waves swept them overboard; it was carrying Christmas trees bound for downtown Chicago. Several books have been written about this shipwreck. If you search for *Rouse Simmons* or *Christmas tree ship* on the internet, numerous websites show up. Even Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia, has an article. On the other hand, a search for *Three Sisters* results in only one article; it is listed as a postscript at the very end of the story of the *Rouse Simmons*. I guess Christmas trees as cargo are more memorable than bales of hay.



Front view of Carnegie Medal (1904-2003). Image courtesy of www.carnegiehero.org.

On May 7, 1915, the *Algoma Record* reported in its headlines, "ARE AWARDED HERO MEDALS AND \$1000 BY CARNEGIE COMMISSION. Edward Delfosse, George DeBaker and Rev. W. C. Melchers to Get Awards from Carnegie Hero Fund Commission in Recognition of Their Heroism." Although the Jail Museum does not have any

of the Carnegie medals from these individuals in its collection, Father Hodek of Holy Trinity in Casco did donate the one he received for saving a drowning girl.

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*An interesting aside...* Much of the precise information above comes from our own Virginia Johnson, manager of the KCHS Research Center in Algoma. Her husband's grandfather, Louis Johnson, was part-owner of the *Three Sisters* (see picture on page 1).

In reading the accounts in the three Keweenaw County newspapers published at that time, they were in disagreement about the details. An earlier, but less detailed, account based on interviews with the late Lema Willems and John Ropson, was published in October 1990 in this newsletter.

## HOPPE'S BOARDING HOUSE — A Home Away from Home

by Jerry Abitz

In this day and age, a boarding house seems to be an anachronism. Rarely heard of these days, boarding houses were common in the early and mid-twentieth century. At one time it was a housing mainstay for single, unattached individuals. When one left home, one did not move into an apartment. One rented a room in a private home, with or without kitchen privileges, or sought out a boarding house that enabled one to live comfortably, but cheaply.

My first teaching job after graduating from UW-Madison in 1956 brought me to Luxemburg. I was single, and knew little about cooking or housekeeping. I had spent four years in the U.S. Air Force, and five-and-a-half years in student housing in Madison. Where could I live? I had insufficient finances to rent an apartment; furthermore, to my knowledge, there were no apartment buildings in the Village. Young families, looking for housing, rented flats (typically the second story of a home); the homeowner usually occupied the first floor. My new boss, George Gregor, suggested a boarding house operated by the Hoppe family; here one could rent a room that included a meal plan (three meals/day). I followed his advice, and never had any regrets.

This establishment catered exclusively to teachers. At the time I inquired, there was a room available temporarily, but it had already been promised to a new faculty member when school started at the end of August (whereas my employment as an ag teacher began on July 1). That gave me a grace period to make more permanent arrangements.

Emil Hoppe and his wife, Hanna, owned this early twentieth century bungalow a block off Main Street located across the street from what was then

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## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!!

As the Kewaunee County Historical Society strives to preserve its history and make it available to interested individuals and groups, the task is great. It is also ongoing, so there always will be a need for new KCHS board members who are willing to lead the society into the future. Each member of the board brings their unique perspective on activities, events, and business expertise to the board, and we welcome these new ideas. Many of our local citizens have numerous talents, skills, and abilities; the contribution of these volunteer efforts are gifts that can benefit Kewaunee County in so many wonderful ways.

- ⇒ One of our goals is to have the Jail Museum open seven days a week from 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m. during the summer, but we need volunteers to make that happen. Please contact Darlene Muellner (920-388-0117) if you're interested.
- ⇒ If you would like to help at the Research Center, contact Virginia Johnson (920-487-2516) on Fridays between 12:00 noon and 4:00 p.m.

Other things with which members can help include:

- ⇒ Represent the KCHS at local events/conventions
- ⇒ Help with organizing cemetery walks and other KCHS events
- ⇒ Research local history and write articles for the newsletter
- ⇒ Research and write local history briefs and books
- ⇒ Interview people to preserve local history
- ⇒ Volunteer for committees
- ⇒ Maintain, organize, upgrade, and/or inventory displays at the museum
- ⇒ Photograph events/people of Kewaunee County to preserve local history
- ⇒ Develop presentations of Kewaunee County's local history
- ⇒ Assist in making decisions regarding donations of items and monies to the KCHS
- ⇒ Anything that documents and preserves Kewaunee County history has potential

Currently we have no board members representing the Towns of Casco, Franklin, Lincoln, or Pierce, however we would welcome new members from any of the towns and villages we serve. The board of directors meets once a month (second Saturday at 10:00 a.m.) at the Research Center.

If you have time, enjoy some (or all!) of the above activities, and are interested in helping to preserve Kewaunee County's history, please consider joining the KCHS Board of Directors.

Simply contact Tom Schuller (920-388-3858),  
or join us at our next meeting.



Tom Schuller (l.) and Jerry Abitz, president and vice president of KCHS, planting plants and ground cover at the Jail Museum. Photo by Jill Dopke.

## HISTORIC HEIDER BARN LOST IN MORNING BLAZE

by Jill Dopke

An early morning blaze of undetermined origin destroyed the historic Heider barn in Carlton Town earlier this year on Friday, Feb. 6. Every barn has a history, and so does this one.



Heider barn raising (1938). Photo courtesy of Jane (Bruemmer) Zimmerman.

Built in the summer of 1938 on the Edwin Heider farm located in Carlton Town on the south side of Sandy Bay Creek in Section 24, it was originally constructed by a house builder. He used 2x12 planks harvested from the nearby cedar woods that were bolted together, not nailed; the carrier beams also were 2x12s. There were no cross beams, and the floors were tongue-and-groove planks. It was a sturdy structure, strong and beautiful, created by local people using local materials, and would grace the Lake Michigan shoreline for the next 33 years.

I can only imagine that Edwin was quite proud of his new barn as he planned a “barn warming” for his workers, friends, and neighbors. Hearing of a band in the area, he asked if they would play for the festivities, and they agreed. Little is known about the dance held at the Edwin Heider farm that summer – the local newspaper didn’t report it, and the only references are stories handed down by the people in the area.

Louise Ihlenfeldt related what she knows of the history of the barn to me this past spring. When the public service purchased the lands in southern Carlton Town for building the Nuclear Plant in the late 1960s,

they burned many of the historic old buildings. This barn, though, caught the eye of Harlan and Louis Ihlenfeldt who farmed nearby. In 1971 they purchased it from the public service and hired Eis from Mishicot to move it about a mile inland to their farm locating it on the northwest corner at the intersection of Hwy. 42 and Sandy Bay Road. They gave the barn a new look by painting over the faded red exterior with white paint, and there the barn remained for the next 38 years until the unfortunate morning of Feb. 6.



The Heider barn as it looked when moved to its new location in 1971, and then as it looked, painted white, on the Ihlenfeldt farm, until it was destroyed by fire this past February. Photos by Louise Ihlenfeldt.

### “And now, the rest of the story...”

As sometimes happens, the story regarding the Heider barn warming in 1938 seems to have changed over time as it was handed down from one person to another, and there are two versions.

Louise had heard from Eugene Jergenson (who was three years old at the time) that the Lawrence Welk Band played the event, so I spoke with him. Eugene’s father had helped build the barn, and told Eugene that Edwin Heider heard of a band touring in the area and asked if they could play, and that band was the Lawrence Welk Band. Equipped with this information, I sent an inquiry to the Lawrence Welk office in Santa Monica, Calif. Following is the reply I received from Margaret Heron Letterman of the Lawrence Welk Syndication.

*“I checked all of Lawrence’s books that he wrote and cannot find any reference to Sandy Bay in Carlton Town in Kewaunee County, Wisconsin. Most of 1937 the band was at the St. Paul Hotel, in St. Paul, Minnesota, and then on to the William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1938. Lawrence played hundreds of one-nights, so it could be possible?”*

Jerry Abitz, along with others, told me it was probably Louis Welk (1891-1966) who was living in Luxemburg at the time and had been a bandmaster in the

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## CARLTON TOWN PRESENTATION

by Jill Dopke

The presentation on the early history of Carlton Town on Sat., April 25, was a huge success – the Town Hall was packed! I was amazed with the number of people that attended, and I so enjoyed meeting and talking with all of you. I was very pleased that so many people could add information about Carlton Town from their memories, and I thank you all for your contributions.

I also want to thank June Cherveney, Dana Gruetzmacher, Louise Ihlenfeldt, Gene Jerovitz, Ken Krofta, Dale Pekarek, Ken and Julie Woodcock, and Jane Zimmerman for sharing historical photos/information, artifacts, and maps; Julie Bloor for preparing and serving a light lunch, and Jerry Abitz, Al Briggs, Gene Dopke, Dana and Carolyn Gruetzmacher, Barb Hartjes, Don Honnef, Tom Schuller, and KCHS board members for helping.



The *Early History of Carlton Town*, a book which traces the history of Carlton Town from pre-historic times through about 1900, was sold that day for the first time. It includes the names and ethnic backgrounds of the earliest settlers

and settlements along with many maps and photos. It is available for purchase (\$12.95, ISBN 978-1-61539-553-8) at the Research Center in Algoma, the Jail Museum in Kewaunee, or by contacting me (920-388-2830).



Attendee at April's annual meeting looks closely at Carlton Town display. *Photo by Tom Schuller.*



Jill Dopke and Gene Jerovitz during the Carlton Town presentation. Gene is holding a paleo-point — a manmade, pointed stone used as a spear tip; estimated to be approx. 8,000-10,000 years old, it was discovered on his land by his father, Clarence. *Photo by Tom Schuller.*

## HEIDER BARN DESTROYED

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Navy. In 1929, he became band director at Algoma High School, and then a few years later moved on to Luxemburg High School where he helped organize the first school band and chorus.

I searched for any written records of the Heider barn warming, but found none. So, readers, you are free to choose whichever story you wish. Today the remains of the historic Heider barn are no longer visible on the landscape, but at least it will never be forgotten.

*"This is Jill Dopke. Good day!"*

**WANTED** — Information leading to the location of any of the original blueprints from the Joseph Svoboda Church Furniture Co. Please contact Jerry Abitz (920-866-2719 or [gabitz@century-tel.net](mailto:gabitz@century-tel.net)).

### SS Cyril & Methodius Faith Community Chapel\*

3077 South Cty. Road T, Poland

Open every day — 8 a.m. to dusk  
for prayer and reflection.

*All are welcome.*

\*Now home of the original stained glass windows from St. John's Church once located in Krok.

## ANNABELL KELLY – Orphan Train Rider

by Jill Dopke

She arrived in Green Bay by train in 1893; a note with her name and birth date had been pinned to the lining of her coat – Annabell Kelly, born May 24, 1890.



Annabell Kelly, thought to be in her late teens or early twenties in this picture. Photo courtesy of Dodo Liebl.

She stood quietly on the train platform surrounded by the other children. Did she know where she was? Did she know why she was here? What was she thinking and feeling? How could someone so young have arrived at such a far away place, and without her family?

Meeting Annabell Kelly at the train station were her new parents, and they would take her home with them. Annabell's story begins that day in 1893. She has no history of her family or herself before that time.

Between 1854 and 1929, an estimated 200,000 abandoned and homeless children were loaded onto trains in New York City and transported to the Midwest where they were placed with families. Wisconsin received 2,700 of these orphans; Annabell Kelly was one of them. The philosophy behind the Orphan Trains was that these children had more hope for a happy life in the wholesome Midwest than in overcrowded New York. The Orphan Trains provided homes for many needy children, many of whom may have perished on the streets of New York without family, medical care, or a home in which to live; others, however, became indentured servants. In all cases, ties to family, parents and siblings back in New York were severed.

Recently I had the opportunity to talk with Annabell Kelly's daughter, Dodo Liebl, from Luxemburg. Dodo showed me an article, "Orphan Children" from Green Bay's *State Gazette* dated Sept. 27, 1893. Describing the children waiting at the train station, it states,

*"The little ones were all clean and well dressed, and many had that bright and happy expression peculiar to early childhood. In age the children ranged from 3 to 5 years and if well cared for promise to become useful men and women."*

Dodo believes her mother was on that train but, as with many of the Orphan Train riders and their children, family history was lost forever with train ride.

## Hoppe's Boarding House

(Continued from page 2)

St. John's Lutheran Church. Emil was part of the Hoppe family which ran a general store in Luxemburg, but in the past also operated in several locations elsewhere in the county. His wife, Hanna Fenske, was born in the Rio Creek area; her father had served the local area in the Wisconsin legislature. Both Emil and Hanna were along in years. They were a good, humble, and hard-working couple who looked out for their patrons.

As a boarder I had the run of the living room and dining room. A television occupied a prominent spot in the living room. The daily newspaper also was available for reading. I could also entertain guests here. I occupied one of the three upstairs bedrooms. My fellow boarders and I shared a common bathroom. The downside was George Gregor, one of the boarders, was also my boss. If I entertained any idea of doing a pub-crawl or staying out late, there would be no way to keep it under wraps; it would be like living with one's mother-in-law from whom there were no secrets!

The Hoppes were very solicitous, and they valued their reputation. Hanna was an excellent cook. I was never in fear that the meals would be skimpy – she simply did not have that word in her vocabulary. She operated on the theory that if she served something a boarder did not like, there were enough alternatives on which one could fill up. Second helpings were encouraged. And every meal except breakfast ended with a dessert made from scratch. It was like visiting your grandmother's house, and she wanted to fatten you up!

Not everyone at the table were boarders at Hoppe's. There were other faculty members with rooms elsewhere who came only for the meals. Once school started, I became one of the "foodies" since my room was now elsewhere on Main Street. My presence in their home ended with my marriage right after Thanksgiving and the renting of an upstairs flat on Maple Street.

Hanna's menu was varied, and one could never really predict it from day to day. Ah, but Thursday night was chef's surprise! It was "clean-out-the-refrigerator" day. There was always a mystery soup that sometimes left one guessing as to what it contained.

Hanna prided herself on her culinary skills. Joe Fierst, one of the foodies, commented how he looked forward to Hanna's excellent chicken. Their fruit cellar

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was filled with preserves they had canned themselves. And no cake mixes, frozen pies, or any other kind of instant food ever graced her pantry shelves.

She was a long-standing member of St. John's Ladies' Aid. It met once a month on a weekday afternoon, ending with coffee and dessert. When she came home railing about "these modern women" who didn't know how to bake, one could safely conclude that the hostess for this meeting had visited the bakery rather than making the dessert herself from scratch.

How long did this boarding house exist? Jean Hoppe, their daughter-in-law living next door, seemed to think it was "forever." I believe that both George Gregor and Frank Chalupka spent their entire teaching careers at the Hoppe boarding house. Gregor retired in the early 1960s; Chalupka retired in the early to mid-1970s.

Emil Hoppe was killed in an automobile accident in 1971. Hanna continued to have Gregor and Chalupa as boarders after Emil's death. When she was hospitalized, both men continued to stay in her home. Jean Hoppe would go next door to change the sheets and clean the rooms while both went out to local restaurants for food. When Hanna died in 1978, the house was subsequently sold—thus ending an era in the history of Luxemburg.



The former Hoppe boarding house, as it looks in 2009.  
Photo by Jerry Abitz.

### Woodland School Reunion Franklin Town Hall September 12 — 12:00 noon



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Thanks to all that have given so generously in this time of uncertainty.

*If you have made a contribution and your name has not been included,  
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