

Ashwaubenon
Historical Society
AND MUSEUM
NEWSLETTER

July 2012 Volume 4 Number 3



OUR MISSION

The Ashwaubenon Historical Society is a non-profit organization whose goal is the preservation of Ashwaubenon's past and present through the collection and interpretation of historical records and artifacts of the area.

Preserving the memories of yesterday for the generations of tomorrow.

HISTORIC FARM HOUSE RESTORED
Information and house photos provided by Mary Selner

The Bosar family farmhouse, located at 2253 S. Broadway, has been restored. The farm is one of Ashwaubenon's 53 original farms featured in the Ashwaubenon Historical Society Museum's "Our Agricultural Roots" display.

The farm came into the Bosar family when it was purchased in 1907 by Bernard and Lily Bosar. The couple had six children, the last four born in the farmhouse. Lily died in 1928 and Bernard in 1931. The farm was divided among the children. They drew names for the parcel of land with the house. Daughter Florence Bosar Lambert won but had to agree to allow her two sisters, Alice and Mabel, to live there for ten years or until they married. They did not marry and lived in the house until 1993 when Florence died. Alice and Mabel moved to an apartment, and the house was sold.

Although Florence had been an immaculate housekeeper, the house itself deteriorated. Later residents made no improvements, and the house deteriorated further.

In 2009, neighbors went to the Village of Ashwaubenon inspectors to complain about the house. The floors on the porches were rotted. The steps were boarded off so no one would go up to the doors and fall through. It was learned that supporting walls inside the house had been removed. The roof leaked, windows were broken, and woodchucks and starlings lived in the basement. In 2010, the family living there, gave up on the house, and foreclosure proceedings began. In 2011, the house was sold at auction to Property Source. The owner and his father completely restored the house, inside and out. It is now available for sale.



PICTURES ON RIGHT

- Top: Bosar farm and house on Broadway, early 1900's
- Middle: Bosar house in 2009
- Bottom: Bosar house in 2012 after restoration



MEET OUR MEMBERS

Mary Ann Mullin was there at the beginning of the Ashwaubenon Historical Society. She received a call asking her to help get the new organization started. She recalls going with others to the garages of Bert Baeten, an Ashwaubenon resident, and selecting artifacts for the new museum from his collection of historical items.

The Ashwaubenon Historical Society's first home was in the downstairs of Cormier School. One room was turned into an old-style classroom and the school gym was used for a variety of shows. When the old Ashwaubenon Water Department building on Cormier Road became available, it was remodeled and became the current home of the Ashwaubenon Historical Society and Museum.

Mary Ann was the Society's first treasurer. She also secured donations of chairs, tables, glass display cases from a store that was going out of business, and other needed items. In the 1980's, she was responsible for getting American and Packer flags put up on Oneida Street and Ridge Road near the stadium. She also organized bingo nights, held at the Air View Club on the first, third and fifth Mondays between 1976 and 1983, raising \$50,000 for the Society.

Volunteering has been a way of life for Mary Ann. She grew up in Escanaba, Michigan. After marriage, she and her husband, "Skip," who was an aeronautical

engineer, moved to Bloomington, Minnesota, where they lived for 17 years, and she volunteered at her church. In 1959, when her husband took a position as head of jet maintenance and ground service at Austin Straubel Airport, they moved to Ashwaubenon.

Mary Ann began to volunteer at Nativity Catholic Church. Until two years ago, she organized the senior citizen bingo games at the church, with up to 400 people attending. Mary Ann worked for the Village of Ashwaubenon, organizing games of cards and lunch for senior citizens at the Community Center, and began planning trips for seniors to a variety of places in the Midwest, including seven trips to Branson, and the Fireside Theater in Fort Atkinson. She later focused on planning trips to the Fireside for Nativity, inviting members of the community along. She also organized funeral dinners. In the midst of these activities, Mary Ann found time to serve 12 years on the Ashwaubenon Village Board, a position she said she "loved."

Mary Ann and "Skip" had two children. Tim lives in Minnesota and has two sons; Mary Margaret lives in Florida and has two daughters. "Skip" passed away seven years ago. Mary has lived at San Luis Manor for the past two and one half years. However, she continues to plan the Fireside trips and organize funeral dinners for Nativity. At San Luis, she participates in a cooking class and helped start a bell choir. When asked about these activities, she replies, "I'm not dead yet!" She sees her volunteer work as a ministry and a gift she has been given by God.

Source: Interview with Mary Ann Mullin. July 22, 2012.

COMING EVENTS

The calendar for the year is on the Society' website: www.ashhs.com

Aug. 23 6:30 p.m. General meeting
 Sept. 12 1:00 p.m. Executive board meeting
 Sept. 27 6:30 p.m. General meeting
 Sept. 28-29 Local History and Historic Preservation Conference—Madison
 Oct. 5 Newsletter deadline

Oct. 12 Newsletter printing
 Oct. 20 9:00 a.m. Fall clean-up
 Oct. 25 6:30 p.m. Annual meeting
 Nov. 29 6:30 p.m. General meeting
 Dec. 12 1:00 p.m. Executive board meeting
 Dec. 27 NO general meeting



TORNADO HITS ASHWAUBENON–GREEN BAY AREA–MAY 10, 1959



A tornado hit areas of Ashwaubenon, Green Bay, and Preble on Sunday evening, May 10, 1959, Mother's Day.

Though not large as tornadoes go, it left damage along a five mile corridor and was not more than a block wide. The tornado developed out of a thunderstorm and began in Ashwaubenon. It went over the Fox River and came down on Monroe Avenue in Green Bay and hit areas of East Mason Street and Preble. A Reiss Coal Company unloading bridge was blown into the Fox River. Three people in Green Bay received minor injuries.

The following article, reprinted with permission from the GREEN BAY PRESS GAZETTE, describes the experiences of three Ashwaubenon families.

NOISE OF STORM LIKENED TO A FREIGHT TRAIN'S ROAR MAN CLOSSES GARAGE DOOR SHORTLY BEFORE GARAGE VANISHES COMPLETELY

"It sounded just like a train coming"... "It just ripped through"... This was the description of most of the persons in homes in the path of the tornado which swept through a center portion of the Town of Ashwaubenon Sunday night.

Then, in the drenching rain, they carried mattresses and bedding from their wrecked homes to neighbors' homes where they spent the night—and maybe more nights.

Though there were few sightings of the funnel cloud in the darkness, one of those who saw it was Kenneth Cormier, 504 Cottage Grove Ave., whose house was stripped open on one side. When he saw it, he said, he was closing the door of his garage which, it turned out, was completely gone moments later.

Leonard Wisneski, who lives two houses east from Cormier, said that he, his wife, and their four children were asleep when the tornado approached. After he heard it, he said, he "closed the bedroom door and then the roof fell in. My wife and I ran to our children's rooms and took them into the basement."

Wisneski said that he definitely believed that his family would have been seriously injured had they stayed upstairs.

Between the Cormier and Wisneski residences was the Julius Alberts home which was moved 25 feet on its foundation while Mr. and Mrs. Alberts and their three children sat in the kitchen. Wisneski said that Alberts ran into his house and, all upset, and said, "My God. My house is gone."

Don Halron, who lives across the street at 489 Cottage Grove Avenue, mentioned that it was suddenly quiet just before the tornado hit. He said it struck right between two electrical outages in the entire area. The stopped electric clock in the Halron kitchen set the exact time of the tornado—9:50 p.m.

The Halrons, among the fortunate ones by the fact that their property was little damaged, took the Wisneskis into their home for the night and also served coffee to drenched county officers and Civil Defense auxiliary policemen on duty nearby.

Their house is on the south side of Cottage Grove Avenue, largely undamaged, unlike the Cormiers, Alberts, and Wisneski homes on the north side of the street.

In contrast to the loud train-like sound of the twister reported by those in its direct path, others just a few doors away said they didn't know of the tornado—other than the rain—until just afterwards when they looked outside and saw leaning utility poles or a missing garage or roof—or one where there hadn't been any before.

County Traffic Chief Lawrence Koeppen (himself a resident of the hard-hit Ashwaubenon area) made an apt comment while directing guard personnel. "Don't let anyone get too near or take a 'header' into that open basement or touch a wire. We were lucky that no one was hurt during the tornado; let's not have any now."

Source: GREEN BAY PRESS GAZETTE, May 11, 1959, pages 1 and 3. Reprinted with permission from the GREEN BAY PRESS GAZETTE..

KEITH CORMIER'S MEMORIES OF THE TORNADO

Keith Cormier was 12 years old when the tornado hit his family's home on Cottage Grove Avenue in Ashwaubenon on Mother's Day, May 10, 1959. He recalled that he was watching the movie, "Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo," when Channel 2 weatherman, Bobby Nelson, came on to report that a storm was coming. Keith's dad, Kenneth, was getting ready to go to work on the evening shift at Fort Howard. For some reason that he could not explain later, he went out on the porch. He immediately came back in and told his wife to get the kids and go to the basement. One of Keith's sisters was at a movie; three others were in a back bedroom. When in the basement, Keith's mom realized that the four-year old was not there and began screaming. There was a sound like that of a freight train; then it was quiet.

When the family emerged from the basement, they saw that their kitchen was gone and an unknown dog was there, running in circles. The four-year old sister was discovered in the bedroom, with covers pulled over her, sound asleep—she had missed it all. She had

doubled back when the rest of the family headed to the basement.

In the aftermath, neighbors were there to help, and the Brown County police set up lights to deter looters. Kenneth went to pick up the daughter that had been at a movie and was initially prevented from going back to his own home. Some items belonging to the Cormiers were later found in Preble, where the tornado had also touched down. While there was damage to some neighboring homes, the damage to the Cormier home was the worst. There was a picture of the Last Supper on the wall of the living room that was untouched, where another wall had been ripped away. Keith recalled that he was the only person injured. He was barefoot when the storm hit and stepped on some broken glass after the storm, cutting his toe.

The Cormier family lived with relatives in Green Bay until September 1959 when they moved back into their rebuilt home. Kenneth lived in the home until he passed away at age 92 last year.

Source: Interview with Keith Cormier, July 23, 2012

Ralph Klipstine and Janet Derouin (later Klipstine) were at a movie in Green Bay. They knew nothing of the storm until they left the theater and saw tree limbs down. They were told by authorities to get home as quickly as possible.

Ray Rottier was living on Hansen Road. He said they heard the tornado coming, and it took down a tree in their yard. The tornado seemed to skip, going up and down as it went along.

Lois Klipstine McAllister was a teenager in 1959. She recalls that she was already in bed when the storm hit the area. She remembers very loud, strong winds, but cannot recall any damage to the family farm on Hansen Road. Just before the storm struck, a man came to the door, asking for gas. Later, her dad wondered if the man was alright and if he had found a ditch to shelter in when the storm was at its worst.



Kenneth Cormier home after the tornado. Keith is the boy in the middle; his sister, Karen, is in the white sweater. Others in the photo are not known..
Keith Cormier photo. Used with permission.

MEMORIAL BRICK DONORS

Thank you to those who responded to our 2011 memorial brick appeal. Listed below are donations received since those listed in the April 2012 newsletter.

BRICK

Ken Bukowski Family
In memory of John Hans and Hilmer Eliason

DONOR

Ken and Marge Bukowski
Emerson and Mariann Marcks

ITEMS DONATED TO THE MUSEUM

Donated by Ilamae Buckoski

Lantern	Post-hole digger	Pick axe
Picture frames	Granite bed pan	Coffee grinder
Shaving kit	Crumb duster	Scythe

Donated by Alyce Berken

1952 wedding dress with train and veil, including five photos and history.

Donated by Gig Knack

White slaughtering coat worn by Wayne Knack who worked at Armour and Company from 1966-1980. It's on display with other Armour artifacts.

Are you looking for a place for a meeting? The Ashwaubenon Historical Society Museum is available. See building use policies at our website: www.ashhs.com Do you have photos of Ashwaubenon or stories about the Village for the newsletter? Contact the Museum. We will scan your photos and return them to you.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Emerson and Mariann Marcks

SCHOOL VISITS

On Friday, May 25, 2012, four groups of students from Valley View School visited the Museum. The pictures below show Museum volunteers giving presentations on the history of Ashwaubenon and how life was lived in pioneer days.



Mary Selner



Betsy Johnson



Mary Kugel



AND MUSEUM

737 Cormier Road
Ashwaubenon, WI 54304

HOURS

1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Wednesdays and Saturdays
Closed January - February
Admission: \$1.00

Phone 920-429-2863

Leave message or call 920-339-9519
if the Museum is closed.

E-mail: ahshistory@att.net

Website: www.ashhs.com

OFFICERS

President: Janet Klipstine
Vice President: Mary Kugel
Secretary: Lorraine Petersen

Treasurer: Ray Rottier

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Lois McAllister
Judy Schroeder
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ALTERNATE BOARD

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MUSEUM CURATOR

Annette Aubinger

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Jackie Burkat

To join the Ashwaubenon Historical Society, fill out the form below. We invite your active participation and you will receive our quarterly newsletter, meeting agendas and minutes, and free admission to the Museum.

MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR 2012 (January 1 to December 31)

MAIL WITH DUES TO:

Ashwaubenon Historical Society, 737 Cormier Road, Ashwaubenon, WI 54304

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE _____ **E-MAIL** _____

Student \$5.00 Couple \$18.00 Supporter \$50.00 Corporate Member \$250.00
Individual \$10.00 Contributor \$25.00 Honorary Member \$100.00