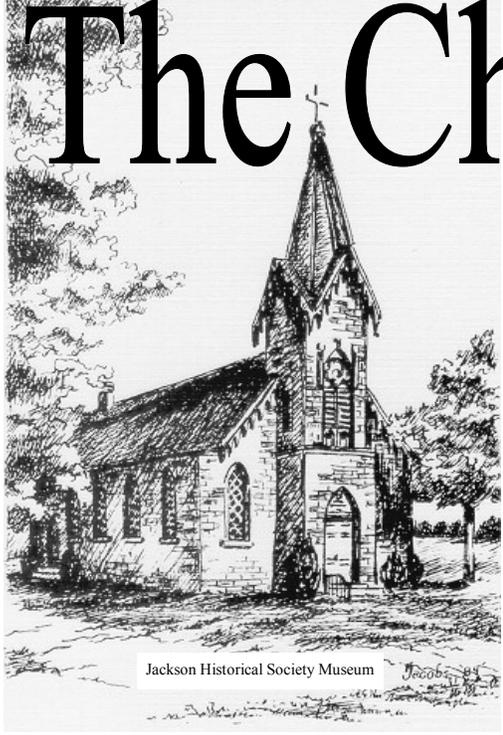


The Church Mouse



Jackson Historical Society Museum

Volume 18 Issue 1 Jackson Historical Society February 2013

BADGER ORDNANCE WORKS The Beginning

In the years leading up to Pearl Harbor and the U. S. entry in WWII, the sentiment in the country was isolationist with little interest in rearming for war. However in the late 30's with the German putsch in Austria and the German aggression in Czechoslovakia, Fascist defeat of Republican Spain, Italy's war with Ethiopia, and the Japanese attack on China, it became readily apparent that we were rapidly progressing toward World War II. That war began in earnest with Germany's invasion of Poland in 1939. The United States reacted with President Roosevelt declaring a national state of emergency, congress instituting the first peacetime draft, and the war department beginning a huge rearmament program.

Production of munitions was a very important part of rearming the nation. We did have a number of government arsenals and commercial munitions producers, but it was recognized that they would not be able to produce the many tons of explosives needed to fight a modern war. New munitions sites would have to be developed.

Many factors came into play when selecting a site for a munitions works. For security reasons, the Ordnance Department requested a location between the Rocky Mountains and the Appalachian Mountains located at least 200 miles from the Mexican and Canadian borders. The War Department added engineering considerations such as topography, soil capability, available gas, oil, and electrical power lines, rail transport and a good water supply. Safety required a large land area permitting long distances between production lines in case of explosive accident. And, as we as a nation were just emerging from a depression and a project of this size would provide an economic boost to struggling communities, there was a political component. The President would make the final site decision.

On October 29 , 1941, U. S. Representative William H. Stevenson announced that the Hercules Powder Company would construct a \$65,000,000 powder and acid works at Merrimac on the Wisconsin River. The project, approved by President Roosevelt, was designated The BADGER ORDNANCE WORKS.

Operations began at the Badger Ordnance Works on January 6, 1943.

Even before operations began in 1943 and through it's decommissioning in 1997, Badger Ordnance Works has been an important part of our Wisconsin heritage. Learn more about this interesting period in Wisconsin history by attending our FREE program on March 5th in the Jackson Town Hall. Additional information on page 6.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Your annual **\$15** dues cover a calendar year starting in January. The current year for your membership is shown on The Church Mouse address label to the right of the zip code.

Due to increased costs, it has become necessary to increase our dues to **\$15** per year..

JHS MEETINGS TIMES

The Jackson Historical Society meets the 2nd Monday of every other month, Jan/Mar/May/Jul/Sep/Nov, at 7:00pm.

JHS meetings are held at 1860 Mill Road, Jackson, in our restored, Karl Groth log home. Visitors are welcome.

JHS OFFICERS

- Nancy Ebeling—President
- Jerry Prochno—Vice President
- Lenore Kloehn—Treasurer
- Jim Kliese—Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

- All JHS Officers, Russ Hanson,
- Royal Natzke, and Elmer Kloehn



MILWAUKEE JOURNAL HEADLINE
Wednesday, October 29th, 1941

\$65,000,000 POWDER FACTORY IS GIVEN TO
WISCONSIN HAMLET

Land Acquired at Merrimac—U.S. Approves

Construction of a \$65,000,000 powder and acid works by the Hercules Powder Co. of Wilmington, Del., at Merrimac on the Wisconsin River in Sauk County, has been given final approval by the War Department, it was learned in Washington, Wednesday.

Representative William H. Stevenson, La Crosse Republican, in whose district the new plant will be located, said that construction was scheduled to start as soon as contracts could be let. Stevenson, whose Washington office was notified of the War Department's final approval, indicated that 5,000 to 10,000 men would be employed on the project. The plant will be completed by Jan. 1, 1943. It will provide 300,000 pounds of smokeless powder a day. Stevenson said that the new project would be known as the Badger Ordnance Works and that the \$65,000,000 represented an initial outlay. He said he believed the cost would eventually be in excess of the \$65,000,000 estimate. Of the money authorized, \$42,000,000 will be spent for buildings, \$21,000,000 for equipment, \$1,020,000 for land, and the balance for improvements. This particular location was selected because it is ideal for a powder works, Stevenson said. The area is well drained and sandy and is hidden away. It is considered desirable to have plants of this type established away from the seacoast and away from large centers of population.

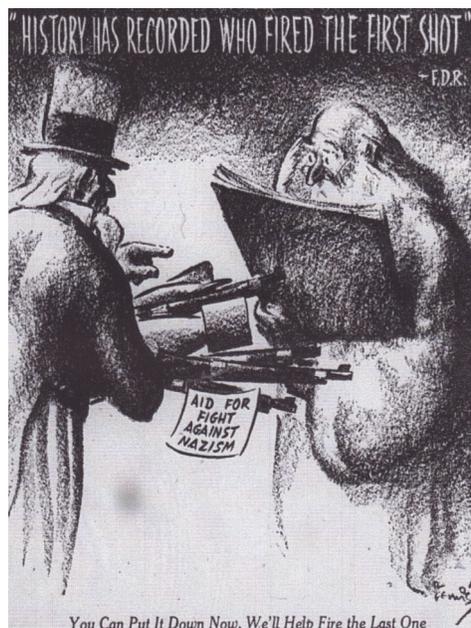
Electricity required by the powder plant will be supplied by the Wisconsin Power & Light Co. which has a 30,000 kilowatt power plant and dam at Prairie du Sac, according to Grover C. Neff, Madison, President of the company. He explained that the Prairie du Sac plant was tied in with other company power plants within the state and that the company in recent months began plans to step up power output.

Merrimac, a quiet village on the Wisconsin River, claimed a population of 234 in 1940. Thirty-one miles from Madison and twelve miles from Baraboo, it is on State Hwy. 113, connected with the territory to the southeast across the Wisconsin River by a state run free ferry which operates from Apr. 15 to Nov. 10. State Hwy. 78 starts at Merrimac. The

power dam on the river at Prairie du Sac 10 miles below Merrimac has created Lake Wisconsin which backs up to the little village. The North Western Railroad runs through Merrimac, but no trains stop there. The nearest station is Lodi, seven miles away, to which two trains run daily. Other rail connections are through Baraboo. The village has no industry. Many of its residents work at near-by Arlington. The surrounding country still bears the impress of old mountains, the Baraboo range, which millions of years ago towered as high as the Rockies do today. The territory around Merrimac is known to hundreds of thousands who have never heard of the village. It is the setting for novels by August Derleth, widely known Wisconsin writer, and was also the setting for many of the writings of the late Zona Gale, who lived in Portage. Six miles from Merrimac is Durward's Glen, one of the state's beauty spots. Bernard Issac Durward, a Scottish artist and poet, built his home here in 1861, and added a rock studio in 1887. The St. Camillus novitiate is near here. It contains a small log chapel and living quarters for the father and brothers. It was built in 1935 by the Camillian Fathers of Milwaukee.

Contracts are now being made to buy the needed land from farmers and other owners at a cost of \$1,020,000. Much of the land is sandy and unsuitable for farming and it has been estimated that it may be sold for as little as \$10 an acre, although other parts of the tract undoubtedly will bring higher prices. When the government wants a piece of land for defense, there is no bargaining. The land

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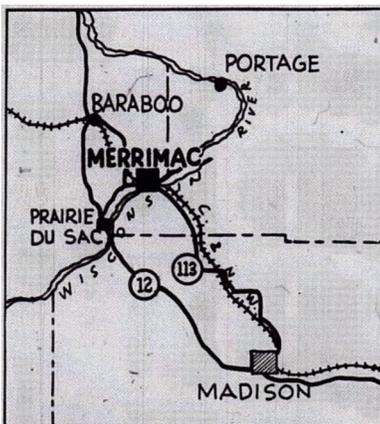




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owner accepts what is offered. The value of the land is fixed by appraisers of the Army Ordnance Division, consisting of officers who have had experience with realty values in civilian life. If the owner is dissatisfied with an appraisal he has the right to appeal to the federal court, where he can get a jury to fix the value of his land, but meanwhile the government has the authority, under its powers of eminent domain to move in and take the land.

From the War Department it was learned that in selecting a site for a powder plant the availability of vast amount of water is an important factor. The Merrimac site, of course, is adjacent to the largest



stream in Wisconsin, the Wisconsin River. Another desirable feature cited is a level terrain and isolation from a heavily populated section, so that in case of explosion there will not be a heavy loss of life or property. At the same time, the War Department wants a powder plant near an adequate source of labor so transportation will not be a tremendous factor.

As requested by Gerard D. Reilly, solicitor of the Department of Labor, Jerome B. White, Secretary of the Madison Building

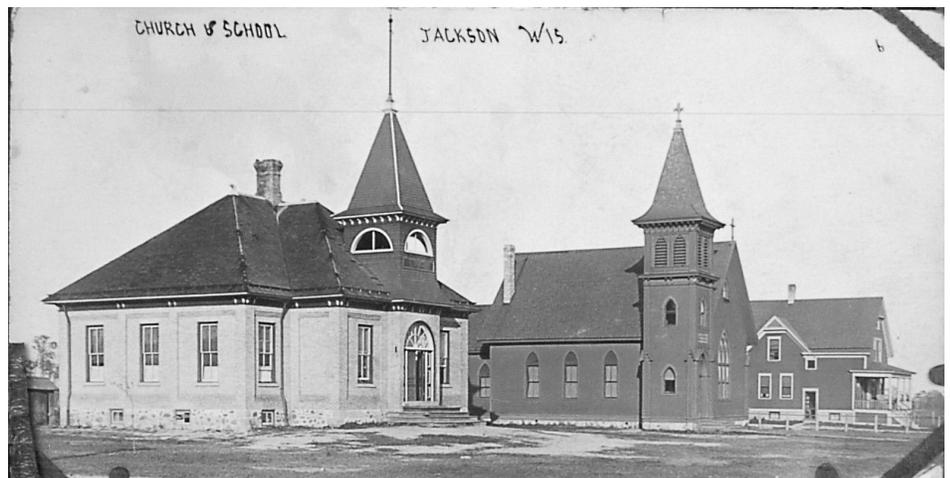
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CHRIST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Beginning 1898—1968

In 1898, a wish was expressed by Jackson citizens for a preaching station be established in the village. The response was immediate and encouraging and was the beginning of the new church. Incorporated under the name Evangelisch-Lutherische Christus-Gemeinde von Jackson, Washington County, Wisconsin, the articles of incorporation were signed by six members: Henry Haufschield, Carl Eggert, August Quade, Ferdinand Procknow, John L. Froelich, and John Klind. Carl Eggert, Ferdinand Procknow, and John Froelich were the first trustees.

In a meeting held in the Procknow home on July 23, 1899, a committee was appointed (Louis Bitz & Ferdinand Procknow) to look into the matter of purchasing a suitable site to build a church. They recommended a lot east of the Jackson Public School grounds. On August 29, 1899, the committee was instructed to contract for plans and specifications for a small but attractive church. During the fall of 1899, the foundation was constructed with the rest of the church built in 1900. Dedication was



scheduled for October 7, 1900. Thereafter, services were held every Sunday; a Sunday School was begun and religious instructions were given. In June of 1904, the congregation purchased land from Paul Nicolaus for a cemetery. The cemetery is located on Cedar Creek Rd. about a mile northwest of the church in the Town of Jackson.

The Rev. R. W. Grabau, founder of the congregation, listed about fourteen charter members. These records are incomplete, however, and we were only able to list the following names: Ferdinand Procknow, August Quade, Louis Bitz, John L. Froelich, John Klind, Henry Haufschield, Carl Eggert, Otto Groth, Paul Nicolaus, and Albert Nicolaus.

As the years passed, new names appeared on the roster and old ones disappeared. In 1907, the name of H. B. Woldt appeared on the church council. In 1920, he was elected chairman of the congregation and held that position until 1947.

Pews were added to the church in 1910, replacing chairs. In 1916, a sacristy was added and an addition to the Sunday School room was complet-

(Church continued on page 4)



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Trades Council, provided minimum hourly wage rates payable for construction of the Merrimac project. These included: Carpenters, \$1.15; Roofers, \$1.25; Stone Masons, \$1.37 1/2; Steamfitters, \$1.37 1/2; Sheet Metal Workers, \$1.25; Ironworkers (rod & reinforcing), \$1.37 1/2; Structural Ironworkers, \$1.50; Glaziers \$1.15; Electricians, \$1.38; Dynamite men & Blasters, \$1.10; Concrete Mixer Operators, \$1.00; Bricklayers, \$1.37 1/2; Cement Finishers, \$1.45; Watchmen & Water Boys, \$.50; General Laborers, \$.57. It was further indicated that this scale might be raised to conform with the scale being paid in other areas for similar work. It is expected that a large amount of labor for the Merrimac project would be imported from Milwaukee as well as from more nearby cities like Madison, Portage and La Crosse.

The government is also planning a large project to house construction workers and workers who will be employed when the Merrimac plant gets into operation. There is no large amount of housing available in the Merrimac area. It is understood that the housing project will be handled by the Public Buildings Administration which built the housing for workers at Manitowoc where submarines are being built for the government.

It is believed that another factor in the selection of the Merrimac site is the proximity of large Wisconsin companies turning out war orders, such as A. O. Smith Co., of Milwaukee, which Monday got a \$26,716,000 order for aerial bombs, and the J. I. Case Co. of Racine which is making shell casings. This leads to speculation that these

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ed. A pipe organ was installed in 1936.

The fortieth anniversary of the church building saw an extensive remodeling program, with the inside of the church finished off with insulated paneling, linoleum laid on the floors, and a new heating unit installed.

In 1947, it was decided that more room was needed for the Sunday school and for social purposes. A committee was formed and plans got underway for extensive remodeling and enlarging. This included the relocation of the church, a full basement with all modern equipment, a new narthex, the replacement of the old steeple with a new larger one moved to the east corner of the church, and the remodeling of the former Sunday School room for a choir loft. Land was purchased on the east end of the Village of Jackson for the new building. Ground breaking services were held on August 14, 1949; a basement was built and the church was moved from its old location to the new basement. Building committee members for this project were William Schroeder, Robert Frank, and Alfred Liesener. Much of the labor for the remodeling program was donated by members of the congregation. The cornerstone was laid on November 6, 1949. The original bell of the church was retained and is in the steeple. Rededication services were held on June 4, 1950.

Christ Lutheran Church was a daughter congregation of St. John's of Kirchhayn. A number of families were released from St. John's to form the nucleus of the new church in Jackson. The two churches were served jointly by the same pastor until 1956 when it was decided to call a pastor to serve Christ Church solely. A new parsonage was built just west of the church for the new pastor. There have been ten pastors serving this congregation, the first six having served jointly for St. John's and Christ. They are:

Rev. R. W. Grabau	1889-1905
Rev. K. A. Hoessel	1905-1907
Rev. H. B. Guse	1907-1923
Rev. L. L. Hasely	1924-1928
Rev. H. C. Melius	1928-1944
Rev. David Rath	1944-1955
Rev. Herbert Lange	1956-1960
Rev. John Gast	1960-1961
Rev. David Kramer	1961-1969
Rev. Gerald Monge	1969

The Ladies Aid was undoubtedly the oldest organization in the congregation, aside from Sunday School, having been organized in January of 1908. One of the first Presidents was Emma Procknow. Due to their careful planning, a modern kitchen was installed and financed by the ladies. In 1938, a Missionary Society was organized and Mrs. H. H. Melius was the first president of that organization. A joint Luther League with St. John's youth was very active. Records show that the men organized a Brotherhood in November of 1928. The first organist of the church was Mrs. H. B. Woldt, at that time Miss Louise Procknow. When the new American Lutheran Church was formed in 1960, the ladies organizations

(Church continued on page 6)



1860 BASEBALL RULES

Although Spring seems a long way off, it is not that far in the future. Spring training for the major leagues is set to begin and soon our own parks will become alive with local baseball teams taking to the field.

The game of baseball has been around for a long time and the rules have been changed through the years. Here is a look back at a few of the rules for the game as it was played in the 1860's.

Strikes & Balls

A strike is called only if the batter or striker swings at the ball and misses.

A batter may wait for his pitch. If, however, he abuses this privilege, the umpire may begin to call strikes. Likewise, the umpire will not call balls on a pitch unless the pitcher continually throws bad pitches and abuses his time on the mound.



If, however, he abuses this privilege, the umpire may begin to call

Fair or Foul

A ball is considered fair or foul depending on where it first lands. It does not have to pass first or third base. Foul balls are not considered strikes.

Outs

A ball is considered out if the player strikes out, if the ball is caught in midair or if the ball is caught on the first bounce in fair or foul territory. If the batter connects with any part of the ball and the catcher manages to catch it on the bound, even behind home plate,

the batter is considered out. If a ball is caught in mid-air, the striker is out and the runners must return to base along the baseline or be tagged out. Runners may not tag up and advance on a caught fly. If the ball is caught on the first bounce, the striker is out, but runners may advance.

Other

A dropped third strike is treated as a fair ball unless it is caught on the first bounce. Runners may attempt to steal bases, but not home plate should the catcher miss a pitched ball. Runners may not over-run first base. Stealing bases, sliding and leading off did not occur.

Baseball was considered a gentleman's game and players were expected to act courteously, refrain from foul language, and observe the highest standards of sportsmanship. It seems that not only the rules have changed through the years.



Wisconsin Department of Transportation

JACKSON'S SUPERHIGHWAY

The Wisconsin Department of Transportation is planning for the "new" Hwy. 60 linking Hwy. 45 with Grafton. In meetings held at the Jackson Area Community Center attended by many concerned citizens, WisDOT presented options for locating the "new" Hwy. 60. A public meeting is planned for mid or late 2013.

Options include substantially widening Hwy. 60 through the Village of Jackson, or constructing a northern or a southern bypass. Project maps are available

on the internet at www.dot.wi.gov/projects/seregion/60. Inform yourself. Look at these maps. See how the community will be affected by each option. Would you like to see a different route or highway design? Do you feel that this *Superhighway* through Jackson is really necessary? **WisDOT expects to have an environmental assessment available for public viewing in 2014.**

The Jackson Historical Society is concerned that this *Superhighway* as proposed will destroy or marginalize much of the greater Jackson community, including many historic structures. Your Village of Jackson and Town of Jackson governments have both passed resolutions against construction of the "new" Hwy. 60 as proposed.

If you wish to voice your concerns about the effects of this construction on your community, you may contact Beth Blum, Project Mgr., WisDOT-Southeast Region at 1-262-548-8644, by mail at P.O. Box 789, Waukesha, WI, or by e-mail at beth.blum@dot.wi.gov.

Please share your concerns with your elected representatives.

Let your voice be heard, NOW!

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bombs and shells may be loaded at the Merrimac plant.

U. S. Representative William H. Stevenson announced in October of 1941 that initial production at the Badger Ordnance Works was planned for January 1st, 1943. First production actually began 5 days later on January 6th, 1943, quite an accomplishment.

Information for this story came from October and November 1941 issues of the Milwaukee Journal.

AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES EVENTS

RICHFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY Antique Appraisal & Chili Lunch, Sunday, February 17th, 10am—3pm. Richfield Fire Hall Contact www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org for more information.

GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY Contact the society at <http://germantownhistoricalsociety.org/> for more information.

POMMERSCHER VEREIN FREISTADT Tour of Pomerania—Brochure available. For information, write Pomeranian Tour, P.O.

Box 204, Germantown, WI 53022, or call LeRoy Boehlke 262-242-0653 or send e-mail to information@pommerschervereinfreistadt.org

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY Show 'n Tell with Mike Paul, Tuesday, March 19th, 7:00pm –9:00pm. Antique appraisal. Please contact the historical society at <http://www.historyisfun.com> and scroll down to *Upcoming Events* for more information.



The Editor welcomes comments on the newsletter. Please mail all suggestions for articles, etc., to The Church Mouse, 1921 Hwy. 60, Jackson, WI 53037, or phone (262) 677-3888, or e-mail jhsheritage@sbcglobal.net. Russ Hanson, Editor

BADGER ORDNANCE WORKS



In the fall of 1941 word came to the residents in the Sauk Prairie area north of Prairie du Sac, that this was to be the site of the world's largest ammunition plant. WWII was just beginning and the U.S. needed to produce more ammunition to support the war effort. Costing \$65,000,000, construction of the huge facility on 10,565 acres began by March 1st, 1942 going into full swing, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. Ten months later the first production area went into operation in January of 1943.

The **BADGER ORDNANCE WORKS** served the U. S. military needs until 1997 when it was declared excess and was ordered shut down.

What: This is a huge story that starts with a glacier and ends with today. Along the way we will encounter the stories of the Indians and settlers who called the Sauk Prairie home and the ammunition plant that was built here. Pictures will accompany the presentation.

Who: Join Verlyn Mueller, President & Archivist of the Badger History Group as he tells the story of the Badger Ordnance Works.

Where: Jackson Room—upper level
Town Hall—Town of Jackson
3146 Division Road

When: Tuesday, the 5th of March 2013, at 7:00pm

Cost: Free

Sponsored by THE JACKSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

*Jackson Town Hall is south of Highway 60 on Division Rd. (CTH. G)

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were disbanded and a new Women of the Church group was formed with three circles. Each circle had its own monthly meeting with a quarterly meeting for the entire group.

As the years rolled by, it was decided that additional facilities were needed. In May 1967, construction began on an educational unit, adding six classrooms and a full basement. The current building was enlarged and renovated and a large foyer was constructed which connected the two units. Seating capacity was enlarged, new pews and carpeting were installed, an office built in part of the church, a new alter, pulpit, lectern, and baptismal font added. Rededication of



these facilities was held in the fall of 1968.

We thank Mr. & Mrs Herb Sponholz for this historical perspective on Christ Lutheran Church.