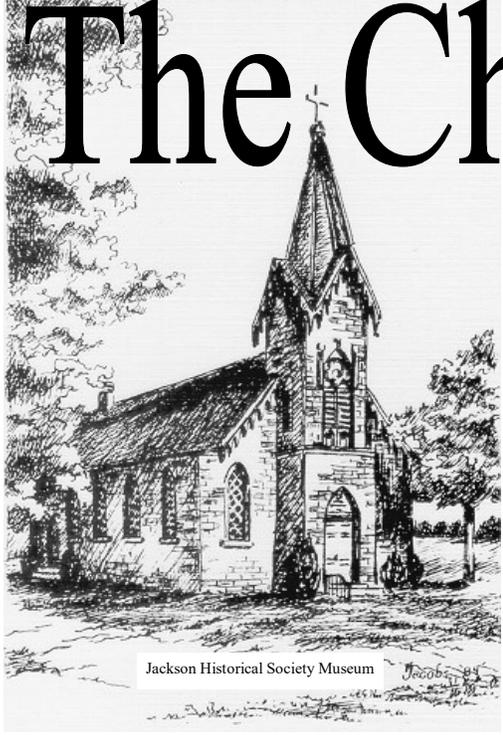


The Church Mouse



Jackson Historical Society Museum

Volume 22 Issue 1 Jackson Historical Society February 2017

YOU'VE GOT MAIL! The Birth of the U. S. Post Office

In the mid 1800s, the Territory of Wisconsin was getting ready to become a state. Since the 1830s, the surveyors had been at work laying out 36 square mile towns, including Town 10 North, Range 21 East, in 1846 to become the Town of Jackson. In 1848, the State of Wisconsin would be born as the westward march across the United States continued. Immigrants from Ireland, Prussia, Scandinavia, and other countries, arrived to purchase available land, many to make Wisconsin their home. Some arriving immigrants cleared their land to begin farming while others set up businesses to provide citizen needs. Hamlets such as Kirchhayn, Thiel's Corners, Keowns, Salter, Reisville, grew up within the Town of Jackson to provide needed services.

Among the services that arrived in Wisconsin with population growth and statehood was the post office. Many of the hamlets in the town had post offices, usually located in a general store or tavern. People would stop by to pick up their mail. An early plat map of Kirchhayn showed the Young Hickory Post Office on the S. E. corner of Church St. and Western, although many in Kirchhayn remember picking up mail at the local tavern. Other post offices in Jackson were Casper & Schwinn

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.

Your dues include a subscription to the Church Mouse and help us preserve Jackson history.

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

- Rob Mielke—President
- Jerry Prochnow—Vice President
- Lenore Kloehn—Treasurer
- Nancy Ebeling—Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

- JHS Officers, Russ Hanson, Elmer Kloehn, & Gordon Ziemann



Kirchhayn Tavern, Grocery Store



Casper & Schwinn General Store

general store in Keowns, Stauske's general store in Salter, Frank's Post Office at Thiel's Corners, and Reis general store in Reisville. These local Jackson post offices were part of a mail delivery system begun in colonial times that became the U. S. Post Office. Let's take a look at how this developed.



Stauske's General Store

Stepping well back in time, spoken languages were created which then led to written language. With written languages, we had the ability to save, share, or send messages. Next, needing

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GREAT LAKES SHIPWRECKS OF WISCONSIN



The *Rouse Simmons*, the *Christmas Tree Ship*, was a three-masted schooner that sank in a violent storm on Lake Michigan in 1912. The ship, bound for Chicago with a cargo of Christmas trees, foundered off Two Rivers, Wisconsin, killing all on board.

Dive into the history beneath the waves with the Wisconsin Historical Society's Maritime Archaeologist, Tamara Thomsen.

Explore Wisconsin's Great Lakes shipwrecks through underwater video, historic photographs and archaeological discoveries! Learn how the Wisconsin Historical Society documents these time capsules of our maritime past.

What: Our FREE program is a story of maritime history on Lake Michigan, and the many shipwrecks that occurred. Through underwater video and historic photographs, explore the many shipwrecks that lie on the lakebed near our Wisconsin shoreline.

Who: Join Tamara Thomsen, Maritime Archeologist for the State Historic Preservation Office of the Wisconsin Historical Society, for **GREAT LAKES SHIPWRECKS OF WISCONSIN**

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

When: Thursday, April 6th, 2017, at 7:00pm, Doors open 6:30pm

Cost: FREE **Information:** jhsheritage@sbcglobal.net

Sponsored by **THE JACKSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY**
*Jackson Town Hall is south of Highway 60 on Division Rd. (CTH. G)

WET WISCONSIN

Big lakes, little lakes, Great Lakes. Thank you glaciers! Rivers of all sizes including “Old Man River” the Mississippi. Today, much of Wisconsin’s surface water is used for recreation. Go back in history and our rivers and lakes were used for exploration, discovery, and commerce. Wisconsin was early on explored by a French Canadian priest, Marquette, and a fur trader, Joliet, paddling canoes though Lake Michigan and via rivers to the Mississippi. Many years later, sailing ships and steam ships brought new citizens to Lake Michigan’s shores as Wisconsin grew into a state and many of our major cities grew up next to these water highways.

However, there were times when our big Lake Michigan grew angry with strong winds and huge waves that were too much for ships caught up in them. Tragedy! Many sank with loss of life and cargo. Our program April 6th, 2017, will explore the shipwrecks that lie on the Lake Michigan lake bed and the history behind them. Come hear their stories.



Tamara Thomsen

For the past thirteen years, Tamara Thomsen has worked as a Maritime Archaeologist with Wisconsin Historical Society's Maritime Preservation and Archaeology program. Her research has resulted in the nomination of forty-two Great Lakes shipwrecks to the National Register of Historic Places. For her dedicated work, she has received awards from the Association for Great Lakes Maritime History, the Great Lakes Shipwreck Preservation Society, and in 2014, she was inducted into the Women Divers Hall of Fame. Tamara has worked as a photographer, researcher, and research diver on projects including the USS Monitor with NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries, and RMS Titanic with Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

Please join Tamara as she presents GREAT LAKES SHIPWRECKS our FREE program on April 6th, 2017, at the Jackson Town Hall. Mark your calendar.

(Post Office continued from page 1)

some material to write on, we progressed through writing material from the early use of stone or metal, not very portable, to papyrus then parchment, somewhat better. In 13th century Europe, paper from linen or cotton was developed and carried forward for a few centuries. In the 1800s, paper from wood pulp was created which provided an effective yet economical and easily transportable writing medium. The availability of cotton, linen, and later, wood pulp based paper, help develop a postal system in Europe that was brought to the American colonies by the early immigrants.

In the early years within the colonies, as in Jackson, letter writers often sent their correspondence by friends, merchants and Native Americans via foot or horseback and hoped for the best. During the same period most of the correspondence was between the colonists and their family members back home in their mother countries and the letters necessarily went by ship. Delivery was leisurely but effective.

In 1639, the Richard Fairbanks tavern in Boston was designated as the official site for mail delivery, as taverns were popular meeting places. 200 years later in Jackson, post offices were established in taverns for the same reason. In 1673, New York's Governor Francis Lovelace set up a monthly horseback post between New York and Boston. This was the first post road established to facilitate mail delivery via horseback riders. As need for delivery of mail increased, more post roads were created. A north American postal system for the colonies was established around 1692 with Governor Andrew Hamilton of New Jersey as Deputy Postmaster General. Benjamin Franklin was appointed Postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737 and joint Postmaster General for the Crown.

During his time as joint Postmaster General for the Crown, Franklin made important and lasting improvements in the colonial posts. He began to reorganize the service, setting out on a long tour to inspect Post Offices throughout the area. New surveys were made, milestones were placed on principal roads, and new and shorter routes were laid out. For the first time, post riders carried mail at night to speed service between Philadelphia and New York. When Franklin left office, post roads operated from Maine to Florida and from New York to Canada. Mail between the colonies and the mother country operated on a regular schedule, with posted times. The Crown dismissed Franklin in 1774 for actions sympathetic to the cause of the colonies. The war for independence was about to begin.

Three weeks after the battles of Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in May 1775 to plan for the defense of the colonies against British aggression and "to take into consideration the state of America." The conveyance of letters and intelligence was essential to the cause of liberty. A committee, chaired by Benjamin Franklin, to consider the establishment of a postal system was created. The committee reported back to Congress on July 25, 1775. The Continental Congress agreed to the committee's recommendations, creating the position of Postmaster General, and naming Franklin to it. Benjamin Franklin served as Postmaster General until November 7, 1776. He was in office when the Declaration of Independence created the United States in July 1776, making Franklin the first Postmaster General of the United States. America's present Postal Service descends from the system Franklin placed in operation.

In 1781, Congress voted to give the federal government the sole and exclusive right and power of establishing and regulating post offices from one state to another. New east-west post routes were created as the population expanded westward. In 1782, Congress passed an Ordinance revising and codifying postal laws and regulations giving the federal government a monopoly on mail, restricted censorship to times of war or when specifically ordered by the Postmaster General or Congress, and allowed post riders to carry newspapers at moderate rates.

Between 1789, when the federal government began operations and 1861, when civil war broke out, the United States grew dramatically. The country's population grew from 3.9 million people in 1790 to 31.4 million in 1860. The Post Office Department grew as westward expansion continued. The number of Post Offices increased from 75 in 1790 to 7,530 Post Offices in 1828 and to 28,498 in 1860. Post roads (roads on which mail travels) increased to 84,860 miles by the end of 1823.

As the country grew, people in new states and territories petitioned Congress for even more post routes, regardless of their cost or profitability. The Department ultimately made the decision to answer this public need. It funded post routes that supported national development and instituted services to benefit all residents.

Jackson Post Office #1 was established in 1870, John G. Frank, Postmaster, in the Frank General Store at

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(Post Office continued from page 3)

the corner of Hwy. 60 and County M. It was later known as Frank's Post Office. Mail was brought to the post office from Cedarburg by horseback riders. Jackson Post Office #2 was established in 1874, Christopher Reis, Postmaster, in the Reis General Store in Reisville. With the arrival of the railroad, Reisville became a principal hub for outlying post offices. Mail was delivered to outlying post offices by horse and buggy.

Initially postage was based on the number of sheets in a letter and the distance a letter traveled. Families, friends, or businesses further distant paid more to keep in touch. For instance, from 1799 to 1815, it cost from 8 cents/sheet sent 40 miles to 25 cents/sheet sent more than 500 miles. In 1845, the Department began charging rates essentially based on weight and whether a letter was going more than or fewer than 300 miles. In 1855, the rate structure was 3 cents for a letter weighing a half-ounce and traveling up to 3,000 miles, which



Reis General Store & Post Office



First Postage Stamps

included most of the United States and its territories. Letters going farther than 3,000 miles were charged postage of 10 cents per sheet. In 1863, postage for a letter was based solely on its weight and eliminated all differences based on distance, thus providing universal service to customers no matter where they lived in the country. In 1847, the first U. S. postage stamps that went on sale were the 5 cent Franklin and the 10 cent Washington. They came in non-perforated sheets which had to be cut into separate stamps by the postal clerk.

Prior to 1863, postage paid only for the delivery of mail from Post Office to Post Office. Citizens picked up their mail. An Act of Congress in 1863, provided that free city delivery would be established at Post Offices if income from local postage was more than sufficient to pay all expenses of the service. For the first time, Americans had to put street addresses on their letters and not just the community name.

In 1890, nearly 41 million people, 65 percent of the American population, lived in rural areas. Although many city dwellers had enjoyed free home delivery since 1863, rural citizens had to pick up their mail at the Post Office, leading one farmer to ask: *"Why should the cities have fancy mail service and the old colonial system still prevail in the country districts?"* Rural Free Delivery became a permanent service effective July 1, 1902. Farmers helped by putting out boxes for the rural carriers, everything from lard pails and syrup cans to old apple, soap, and cigar boxes. Postal officials decided a standardized box would improve service and, in 1901, asked manufacturers to design boxes to the following specifications: The box must be made of metal, 6 by 8 by 18 inches, and be weather-proof. Boxes should be constructed so they can be fastened to a post at a height convenient to the carrier without alighting. Manufacturers stenciled the words "Approved by the Postmaster-General" on satisfactory boxes. Postal carriers supplied their own transportation, usually horses and wagons, until 1929, when improved roads led to almost a complete change in Rural Delivery from horse-drawn vehicles to motor cars. The increase in the number of rural delivery routes led to a subsequent decrease in the number of small post offices. By 1901, the Post Office

Department operated the largest number of post offices in American history, 76,945. The next year, there were 1,000 fewer Post Offices. Despite a growing population and more mail, the number of Post Offices continued to drop each subsequent year. By 2015, the number of Postal Service managed retail offices dropped to 31,606, selling 12 billion stamps annually. Jackson, long ago, lost its hamlet post offices to free local delivery. In 1870, mail for Jackson was brought from Cedarburg to the Jackson Post Office #1 (Frank Post Office) by horseback riders. Today, mail for Jackson is brought from the Cedarburg Post Office to the Jackson Post Office by truck. I'm not sure of the horsepower!



Compliments
of the Season

PETER WECKMUELLER

Rural Mail Carrier

R. D. No. 2, Jackson, Wis.



THE PONY EXPRESS

In 1860, the Pony Express was created by William H. Russell who had tried and failed to get postal backing to carry mail. His ad in the newspapers seeking riders read: "Wanted. Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred." Other riders were later accepted. St. Joseph, MO was the starting point for a direct 2,000 mile route to the West. Except for a few settlements and military forts, the route beyond St. Joseph was a vast unknown land inhabited by Natives. Russell, with two partners, built relay stations every 5 to 20 miles, with fresh horses. There was an estimated 150 to 190 relay stations. On an average day a rider could cover 100



miles. Riders were paid from \$50 to \$100 per month, ranged in age from 11 to the mid 40s and weighed less than 125 pounds. Riders changed horses at the relay stations every 10 to 20 miles with the riders averaging up to 10 miles per hour. The cost of mail, a whopping \$5.00 per one-half ounce at first, was later reduced to \$1.00

per one-half ounce. The fastest piece of mail in the history of the Pony Express was President Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address. It was carried to California in 7 days and 17 hours.

With the transcontinental telegraph line being completed on October 24, 1861 and the Pony Express suffering from financial difficulties, it was sold to Wells Fargo, and became a legend. It had only lasted a year and a half!

MAIL TRAINS THROUGH JACKSON

A number of years ago, Reuben Schmahl, former Washington County Board Chairman and Jackson Town Board Chairman, who grew up in Jackson, wrote an article for the Church Mouse that described how the railroad delivered our mail. I have included the following excerpt from Reuben's article.

The trains coming through Jackson were important to the delivery of mail. Each day one of the trains had a mail car staffed with people who sorted the mail while en-route. Locally a postal employee placed the outgoing mail in a canvas bag and hung it on a wooden arm extending from a pole within easy reach of a mail clerk onboard the train who would haul it inside while the train was passing. Incoming mail in another canvas bag was dropped from the train onto the depot's platform and picked up by the local postal employee, who in turn delivered it to the post office. Around 1930, the post office was moved to the Hoge and Gumm General Store (located right across the street from the railroad, today housing Sonya's Rose). The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad began service to Reisville about 1872. Reisville was renamed Jackson about 1889.



JACKSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ONE-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE CLASS VISIT

For many years, school was taught in one-room schoolhouses throughout Washington County

Let your students experience school as it was for their grandparents and great-grandparents

Arrange a class visit to the Jackson Historical Society's fully restored one-room schoolhouse

Contact the Jackson Historical Society at
 jhsheritage@sbcglobal.net or
 Royal Natzke at (262) 334-9811 or
 rdnatzke@yahoo.com

Jackson Historical Society, 1860 Mill Road*
 *On the Hwy. 60 round-about at Division Road (G), go south to Mill Road, turn west to site.

FACEBOOK

Check out the Jackson Historical Society's Facebook page for what's happening at JHS.

HELP! VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED!



Spring is just a couple of cold snaps away. It won't be long before the grass will begin to green-up and then have to be mowed. Your Jackson Historical Society needs help mowing its lawn. If you can occasionally volunteer a couple of hours during this summer to help mow our lawn, please contact us. Call Jerry Prochnow at 262-338-8867, or Elmer Kloehn at 262-377-2142 and sign up. Our e-mail is jhsheritage@sbcglobal.net.

HELP WANTED

The Jackson Historical Society could use some help putting our office in better order. If you'd like to give us a hand, we would appreciate it. Please e-mail us at jhsheritage@sbcglobal.net. if you're able to volunteer some time.

AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES EVENTS

RICHFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY March 25, 2017, 11am—4pm, Maple Syrup Family Day, Richfield Nature/Historical Park, 1896 State Road 164, Richfield, WI 53076. Please Contact www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org for more information on events.

GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY Dheinsville Olde Time Bier Garden, May 28, 2017, 2pm—5pm, Dheinsville Historical Park, Contact the Germantown Historical Society at germantownhistoricalsociety.org for more information.

POMMERSCHER VEREIN FREISTADT June 25, 2017, Pommerntag, Rotary Park, For more information and events, Please Contact—pommerscher.org

WASHINGTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY March 25, 2017, Show 'n Tell with Mike Paul, Old Courthouse Museum, 6:30pm—8:30pm. May 29, 2017, Memorial Day, FREE Old Courthouse Museum admission, 11am—3pm. July 13 and Aug 3, 2017, Father Rehr's Rectory and Exhibit @ St. Agnes Historic Site, 12pm—2pm. Please contact WCHS at historyisfun.com for information.



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

RAILROADS—THE POST OFFICE HEADS WEST

There were many early attempts to build and use railways. Some used gravity to move railcars in one direction and horses to haul them back. Some simply used horses to haul rail cars. In 1830, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad became the first common carrier in America, chartered from its inception to carry passengers and freight on timetables over vast distances with steam power. The 1830s and 1840s saw an expansion of railway lines that aided in the westward expansion of the United States. Early railroads carried freight and passengers more rapidly and economically than other period transportation methods. Railroads were soon adapted for another use, delivering the mail.

Initially, mail was carried by the railroads as freight, with all processing being done at local post offices. However, in 1862, the railway post office (RPO) was introduced in the United States using converted baggage cars. The first permanent Railway Post Office route was established in 1864, between Chicago, Illinois, and Clinton, Iowa. This service is recognized as the first time, the mail was sorted to and received from each post office along the route.

The July 1, 1862, Pacific Railroad Act signed by President Lincoln established government funding for the construction of a railroad from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean with the express idea of opening a main line mail route across the western frontier. The act was officially entitled "*An act to aid in the construction of a railroad and telegraph line from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean, and to secure to the government the use of the same for postal, military, and other purposes.*" The Act opened the door to government funded railroad mail routes across the American continent. By the 1880s, railway post office routes were operating on the vast majority of passenger trains in the United States. A complex network of interconnected routes allowed mail to be transported and delivered in a remarkably short time. In the United States, RPO cars (also known as mail cars or postal cars) were equipped and staffed to handle most back-end postal



processing functions. First class mail, magazines and newspapers were all sorted, cancelled when necessary, and dispatched to post offices in towns along the route. Registered mail was also handled, and the foreman in charge was required to carry a regulation pistol while on duty to discourage theft of the mail.

When the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad laid down tracks and began service to and through Reisville (Jackson) in the 1870s, RPOs would have been part of the train. Mail bags would have been "grabbed" by passing trains and Jackson area mail dropped onto the station platform for local delivery. A more modern mail service would have arrived.



Mail Hook

