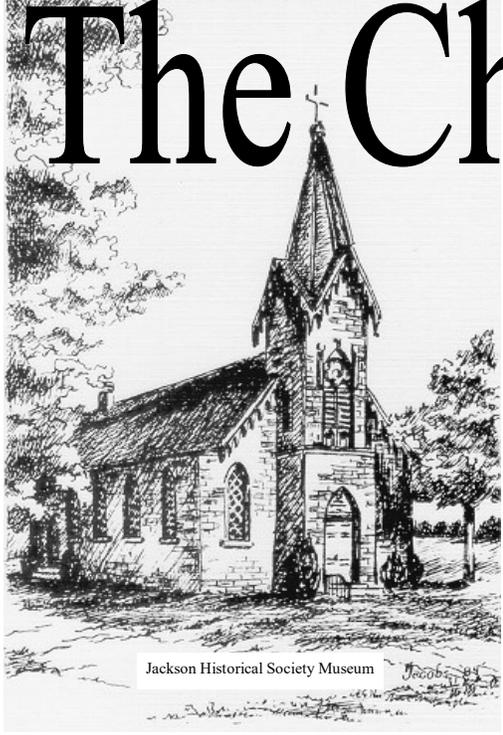


# The Church Mouse



Jackson Historical Society Museum

Volume 26 Issue 3 Jackson Historical Society November 2019

## LIGHT THE NIGHT

A glimpse back at lighting through the ages.

Early to bed, and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise. Or so said Benjamin Franklin in the 1870's. There was truth in the statement for many citizens, particularly "early to bed, early to rise." Of course, we all wanted to become "healthy, wealthy, and wise," but we went to bed with the setting of the sun because our natural lighting disappeared. It got dark! Sunrise began the new day.

During Ben Franklin's colonial period, candles provided much of the evening's light. Candles had been invented way back in the Egyptian times when the Egyptians took rushes and dipped them in melted animal fat. Later they developed the wicked candle by tightly rolling papyrus and repeatedly dipping it in tallow. These candles were used to light their homes and to aid travel by night. Through the years, candles were made in many lands from wax derived from many sources. Early Chinese candles used wax developed from insects and seeds, molded in paper tubes with rolled rice paper for a wick. Japanese candles used wax made from tree nuts, and in India wax was created by boiling the fruit of the cinnamon tree. Fortunately, candles improved through the years with the addition of other flammable materials. Beeswax became popular because it burned



cleanly and smelled good, but had a low melting point, causing the candles to bend in warm weather, and it was expensive. Colonial women discovered how to extract oil from Bayberry bushes by boiling the leaves. The wax smelled sweet and burned cleanly, but the candle making process was time consuming and the candles expensive. The search for better candles continued.

The development of the whaling industry in New England brought a major change in candle making. Spermaceti, or waxy "head matter" of sperm whales did not smell bad when burned and emitted a much brighter light. It was also harder than tallow or beeswax and didn't soften and bend in warm weather. Oil from sperm whales mixed with candle wax in New England produced the first "standard" candles, but again there was a limited supply and they were expensive to make.



The 1800's also saw the improvement in candle wax as chemists and inventors improved both the wax and the production of candles. Paraffin wax was developed in the 1850's when chemists learned how to separate wax from petroleum and refine it. It was a boon to candle making because it burned cleanly and was more economical. Although relatively soft, it was chemically hardened to finally

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### 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 3rd 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

- Russ Hanson—President
- Jerry Prochnow—Vice President
- Lenore Kloehn—Treasurer
- Nancy Ebeling—Secretary

### BOARD MEMBERS

- JHS Officers, Elmer Kloehn,
- Gordon Ziemann, Clifford Koeller



*(LIGHT Continued from page 1)*

produce an excellent candle. Unfortunately, candles as a major light source began to diminish as kerosene from petroleum and coal oil came into the market. Candles as an important light source continued for only about 20 more years. Candles may have lost their utility as a light source, but they remain popular today as a decoration.

Burning oils extracted from plants and animal fats for light goes back many hundreds if not thousands years. The Egyptians burned olive oil in pottery dishes. In the 18th and 19th centuries, at the height of the American whaling industry, liquid whale oil was purified and being burned in glass lamps. However, the whale oil industry's high costs led entrepreneurs looking for less costly oils to burn.



In the 1850s, petroleum extracted from the mountains of Pennsylvania was processed into kerosene. This clear liquid was comparatively cheap, easy to use and threw off so much illumination that it was even used in lighthouses like those along our Wisconsin lake shores. Kerosene lamps remained a standard feature of many Wisconsin rural homes well into the 20th century. In fact, the one room schoolhouse located on our JHS historical site is lighted by kerosene lamps.



Also in the 1850s, scientists found ways to extract natural gas from the ground and to manufacture it from coal. Gas could be stored in containers or, eventually, channeled through pipes into cities, where it fueled lamps in the Wisconsin Capitol. It burned bright but hot, and in 1904 the Capitol building in Madison was destroyed in a fire caused by untended gas lighting.

Finally, in the 1880s, Thomas Edison invented a way to create light by sending electricity through a tiny wick inside a special glass bulb. Although Edison invented the device at his lab in New Jersey, the first home to be lighted by electricity, however, was in Appleton, Wisconsin, and the first electricity offered for sale to consumers was put on the market there.

Soon electricity was powering everything from table lamps to streetcars. Light the night had truly come to pass.

Material excerpted from various internet sources.

## HEARTHSTONE HOUSE



In 1882, Henry James Rogers, was the owner of the first house lighted by electricity in the United States and the manager of the Appleton Pulp and Paper Mill. The house's source of electricity was the Appleton Edison Light Company, the first commercial electric plant in America, which was put into operation two weeks after a much larger steam central power station in New York City, known as the Pearl Street Station. The house and two paper mills were powered by a dynamo located inside one of the mills. Distribution wires were bare copper, with light amounts of cotton used to insulate it. Wires were fastened to the walls with wood cleats. Tape was wound around wires where they passed through partitions. Fuse blocks were made of wood, as were the sockets and switch handles. Examples of this equipment still operate in the Appleton home, a museum open to the public.

There were no voltage regulators, so operators regulated the voltage with their eyes. Lights went bright and dim, depending on power usage at the mills. Several weeks after the power station was built, service for customers was

*(Hearthstone Continued on page 5)*



## UP IN SMOKE!

### In 1904 a Fire Destroyed Wisconsin's State Capitol Building

The fire began on February 27th, around 2:30 a.m., when a gas jet used for lighting set fire to recently varnished woodwork in a closet on the second floor. Night watchman Nat Crampton was the first to spot the fire, which soon turned into one of the largest in Madison's history.

Among those to join in to fight the blaze was Gov. Robert La Follette, who rushed to the square when news of the fire reached him at home around 4 a.m. La Follette ran into the burning building and personally directed the effort to save documents, files, books and paintings. Drenched from head to toe in icy water, La Follette kept at it for about three hours when a doctor dragged him back to the executive residence to change into dry clothes. He was back within the hour and helped rescue documents in the basement.

By 4:30 a.m., with the fire overwhelming the local Fire Department, La Follette sent messages to Janesville and Milwaukee seeking help. Once they arrived, the extra men and machines from Milwaukee and Janesville didn't immediately provide much help, as the water in their pumper equipment had frozen on the way to Madison and had to be thawed out before use. Firefighters battled the blaze for 18 hours.

The state Capitol, Wisconsin's third, housed all of the state offices at the time. Lost to the fire were the records of the Civil War and Spanish American War from the Grand Army of the Republic Hall and the stuffed remains of Wisconsin's famous Civil War eagle, "Old Abe."

Several Wisconsin cities saw the burned out building as a chance to become capitol cities themselves. Milwaukee made the most eager bid this time with state Sen. Charles Cassius Rogers introducing a bill calling for the transfer of the Wisconsin state Capitol to Milwaukee. La Follette opposed such a move. Others agreed, after realizing the laws and amendments to the state Constitution necessary to enact such a move.

Only a few repairs were made to the Capitol after the fire. The East and West wings were destroyed along with most of the rotunda and South Wing. The North Wing was largely undamaged and remained in use during the construction of a new capitol. Construction on the new building began in the fall of 1906 and was finally complete in 1917.



## LOST CEMETERIES

A series of articles by Gordon Ziemann

As I drive through Jackson and surrounding areas, I often catch a glimpse of a small cemetery with a few monuments, often not very well maintained, sometimes in a wooded area, and I wonder about its history. Who is buried there? When? Family cemetery? Church cemetery? Has it been abandoned or is it still maintained? What is the rest of the story that is buried there?

With this issue I will begin a series of stories in the Church Mouse exploring the history of these Lost Cemeteries.

## EARLING TO SAUER TO HELD

No, it's not an infield double play combination, and well before my time, of course, but instead are names on many of the head stones in a small cemetery located on the south side of the Town of Polk. But wait, I'm getting ahead of myself.

When I began to think about all the lonely and in some cases forgotten cemeteries in Washington County, I went online to see what was listed. One in particular caught my eye. It was the Erler Cemetery in Jackson. Well, it turned out that it wasn't really an Erler cemetery No Erlers buried there, and it was in the Town of Polk. My wife's maiden name was Erler, but an Indiana branch. Lo and behold, the cemetery was located on Pioneer Road, just west of Hwy. 175. The names on the 15 or 16 headstones, were dominated by Held, Sauer, and Earling, with Earling being the most noticed. Thus someone mistakenly called it Erler Cemetery, recognizing that there were Erlers in Washington County at one time northeast of West Bend. You know Erler Lake, etc. The dates on the stones range from the 1850's to 1947. The 1947 burial was a World War II veteran, Sgt. Norvin Lied of the Army Air Corps. I wonder if he gets a flag on Memorial Day. The cemetery is not overgrown with weeds and stuff, so someone is tending it at times. It's not completely forgotten.

In perusing the stones, the names of Earling, Held, and Sauer are the dominate names, with one stone showing two of them. That one is for Elizabeth Sauer, and below that is "Wife of Constant Earling." It may have been a second marriage. On the top of her stone is engraved "MOTHER."

Nearby is the stone for Constant Earling with "FATHER" engraved on it. There were also other stones with boy's names on them such as Gunthar, Henry, Charles, and Phillip on the tops with "Son of C and ES Earling" on the faces of each of them. These all point out that this cemetery might have been a family cemetery, with all of the people interred in it related.

Now, with all these unanswered questions, I'm hoping to stimulate someone to come forward and continue exploring for the rest of the story. Maybe a family member knows all the facts to make the cemetery less forgotten or point out that it wasn't forgotten after all. I'm waiting to hear from you. You can reach me at [gordyoz@att.net](mailto:gordyoz@att.net). 'Till next time.

**TODAY WILL BE  
HISTORY  
TOMORROW!**

**HELP THE  
JACKSON  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY  
PRESERVE YOUR  
YESTERDAYS.**

**DONATE YOUR  
HISTORICAL  
ARTIFACTS**

**SHARE YOUR  
FAMILY  
HISTORY**

**Please Contact  
The Church Mouse  
[jshheritage@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jshheritage@sbcglobal.net)**



*(Hearthstone Continued from page 2)*

moved to a separate wheel in a lean-to shed attached to the mill so the electricity would not be affected by the mill's operation. Storms and fallen branches frequently caused short circuits. The power plant was shut down until the problem was discovered and corrected. Residential service was from dusk to dawn.

Rogers wrote the Western Edison Light Company on November 11, 1882 and said: "Gentlemen, I have used 50 lamps in my residence and have used them about 60 days. I am pleased with them beyond expression and do not see how they can be improved upon. No heat no smoke no vitiated air and the light steady and pleasant in every way and more economical than gas and quite as reliable."

Articles also appeared in two local newspapers.

*The Appleton Post* of October 5, 1882 wrote: The electric lamp consists of a pear-shaped glass, exhausted of air, into which is sealed a filament of carbonized bamboo, slightly thicker than horse hair. This filament, becoming incandescent by the passage of the current of electricity through it, emits a beautiful soft white light, absolutely steady and constant and equaling in intensity, or exceeding if desired, the illuminating power of a gas jet of the best quality.

*The Appleton Crescent* of October 7, 1882 wrote: These bulbs are connected with the wire and the current may be turned on and off as readily as a gas burner. Each lamp will burn 600 hours, and can be renewed easily, but at some considerable expense, of course. The price for the same amount of light as that of gas will be substantially the same. The electric light may entirely supersede the use of gas as an illuminator in our city, but that remains to be seen hereafter.

While there was still some lingering doubt as to the viability of electricity as a lighting source, *Hearthstone House* certainly proved its effectiveness.

Material excerpted from various internet sources.



### RASPBERRY FESTIVAL SILENT AUCTION Leader Needed

For many years, the **Silent Auction** has been a successful part of our annual Raspberry Festival, the major fund raiser for us each year.

Lenore Kloehn has organized and led the **Silent Auction** for the past 13 years and has decided to retire from the leadership role. Thank you, Lenore, for all you've done to make the **Silent Auction** a success.

SO, we will need a new leader to organize and lead the **Silent Auction** for our 20th annual Raspberry Festival. If you feel you'd like to take on that task, please contact Lenore Kloehn at 262-377-2142 or by e-mail at [elkloehn@att.net](mailto:elkloehn@att.net). She'll be happy to help you get started.

### RASPBERRY FEST 2019



The afternoon of the Raspberry Festival did not look promising. The weather was cool and a little windy with a threat of rain. As we approached our noon starting time, folks began to arrive. The Barn Band began their concert and folks kept coming. They lined up for brats and hot dogs and for Amish baked raspberry pie with Honey Grove *real* ice cream. The pie and ice cream were served from a new location in front of the log house, speeding up service.

The folks kept coming, some still heading for the food lines while others visited our many vendors, toured our historic buildings, hunted for bargains in our silent auction, or just sat with friends and listened to the music. Of course, the silent auction drew a large crowd, as it always does.

The entertainment changed and the crowd grew larger with a performance by the costumed sing-



ers and dancers of the Pommersche Tanzdeel Freistadt, Pommeranian song and dance for all to enjoy.

*(Raspberry Festival continued on page 6)*

### AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES EVENTS

RICHFIELD HISTORICAL SOCIETY Christmas at Richfield Historical Park, Saturday, December 7, 2019, noon to 3pm, Richfield Historical Park, 4399 Pleasant Hill Rd., Richfield, WI 53076 Please Contact [www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org](http://www.richfieldhistoricalsociety.org) for more information.

GERMANTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY Please contact the Germantown Historical Society at [germantownhistoricalsociety.org](http://germantownhistoricalsociety.org), for information on future events.

POMMERSCHER VEREIN FREISTADT For activities and information, please contact [Pommerscher.org](http://Pommerscher.org).

THE HISTORY CENTER Christmas Market @ Washington County Fair Park, November 30th, 10:00am to December 1st, 4:00pm. The History Center, 320 S. 5th Ave., West Bend, WI 53095. Contact [www.historyisfun.com](http://www.historyisfun.com) for more information on this and future programs.



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](mailto:jhsheritage@sbcglobal.net). Russ Hanson, Editor

### 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 a class as it was for their grandparents and great-grandparents.**

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

**Please contact the Jackson Historical Society\* at [jhsheritage@sbcglobal.net](mailto:jhsheritage@sbcglobal.net) or Doris Koeller @ (262) 677-3457 or [clifdoris@att.net](mailto:clifdoris@att.net)**

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

### DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Donations of family information, pictures, and other artifacts, expand our knowledge of Jackson history. We then preserve and share that history with others. We've recently received some nice donations from friends and members and want to recognize and thank the donors. Thank you all.

Jack Reis donated important Reis family pictures.  
Vera Sweeney donated historic pictures of Kressin related families.  
Mary Breuer donated a number of historic Wechmueller pictures and artifacts, with more to come.

### SCHMAHL LOG SMOKE HOUSE

Spring of 2020 will see a small log smoke house moved to our Mill Road historic site.

The historic Schmahl farmstead has been sold to the Village of Jackson for their new municipal building to be built in 2020.

The log smoke house dates back to the original Moersfelder farm purchased from the U.S. Government in 1843. The Moersfelder farm later became the Schmahl farm.

We are pleased to be able to add this historic smoke house to our Jackson Historical Society site.



*(Raspberry Festival continued from page 5)*

After their performance, the Barn Band returned with music for the rest of Raspberry Festival 2019.

Although the weather continued to threaten, the large crowd continued to visit, tour, and eat. In fact, their appetite for our great selection of food, depleted all our food shortly before the end of the festival. The cupboard was bare!

In spite of the threatening weather, Raspberry Festival 2019 turned into one of our best fall festivals ever. Thank you!



*Froehliche Weihnachten und  
ein Gutes Neues Jahr*