

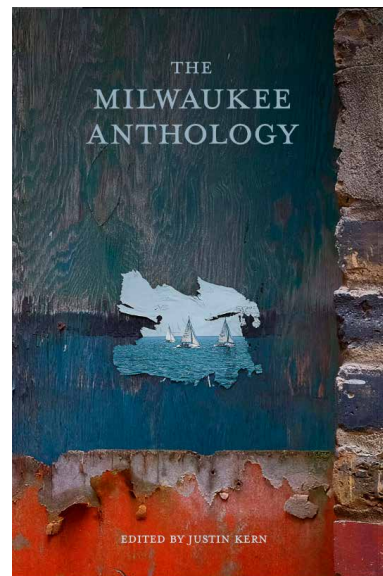


BAY VIEW Historian



VOLUME 2019, NO. 4

WINTER 2019



Traditions to Remember

DECEMBER 14 • 3-7PM • BEULAH BRINTON HOUSE

Join us for **Traditions to Remember** on Saturday, Dec. 14th from 3-7 pm at Bay View Historical Society. If you are looking for a good old-fashioned holiday celebration, then this event is a must for you. There will be music, songs, storytelling, decorations, and of course holiday treats and refreshments for all. Come join your neighbors and friends, and make new friends and acquaintances, as well as memories to last a lifetime. In this day and age, and the fast and hectic pace of life, sometimes it is nice to relax and take in the holiday spirit the way it used to be. Bring the children, too, as Father Christmas will read a story to them and be available to have photos taken with him. This is a family friendly event that I'm sure your kids or grandchildren will enjoy. Finding Father Christmas and the true holiday spirit is easy as it will all be here for all to enjoy. And I'm sure Beulah Brinton would have wanted it that way!

We're pleased to have the following for members and community to enjoy:

3pm Storytelling with Jean Andrew

4pm Hanukkah Music & Traditions with Jim Winston

5pm Sing-Along with Gnorman the Gnome

6pm Stories and Photos with Father Christmas

Enjoy an afternoon of refreshments and gathering of friends while you tour the recent remodeling of Beulah Brinton House kitchen and bathroom!

Many gift items are available for purchase: books, posters, postcards, tote bags, walking tours and more!

The event is free and open to the public so bring everyone you know, especially children and families!

BVHS presents "The Milwaukee Anthology"

BY JUSTIN KERN

FEBRUARY 3 • 7PM
BEULAH BRINTON HOUSE

The Bay View Historical Society is proud to host a presentation by Justin Kern, author of "The Milwaukee Anthology" (Belt Publishing). The book was released on Milwaukee Day in 2019 and quickly garnered praise for its diverse and unvarnished living history of our city. Justin Kern, editor of the anthology, gathers a handful of contributors for a night of readings that focus on perspectives, humor and challenges from our section of the Cream City. Kern, who also lives in Bay View and is a proud member of the Historical Society, will tote along copies of the book for signing and sale. "The Milwaukee Anthology" joins a long list of city anthologies released by feisty Belt Publishing ... [A] mosaic of a book." -Jim Higgins, *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*. This program is free to the public. All are welcome.

Bounding Main Holiday Concert

DECEMBER 7 • 6-9PM • BEULAH BRINTON HOUSE



Bounding Main will present a concert of Holiday songs with a nautical flavor.

The acapella quintet sings richly harmonic versions of traditional seasonal music. their shows are filled with spirit, humor and harmony, and their arrangements of traditional nautical music bring the listener into the world of fellowship, adventure and romance. This group has performed all over North America and Europe for the last 17 years.

Doors open at 6pm • Show starts at 6:30pm
Doors close at 9pm • Cost: \$20





It's Time To Renew Your Membership

All yearly membership terms run from January 1 thru December 31. Any new memberships will be current through the end of the calendar year (one year plus pro-rated months). Members receive our newsletter, *The Historian*, with interesting articles and the latest information on all our events as well as discounts at a variety of Bay View merchants. Thanks for supporting the programs of the Bay View Historical Society!

PLEASE RENEW MY MEMBERSHIP IN THE BAY VIEW HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Membership Dues

- ☐ Individual.....\$20
☐ Household.....\$30
☐ Senior (65 or older).....\$17
☐ Senior Household.....\$25
☐ Nonprofit/Small Business.....\$30
☐ Corporate.....\$55

☐ Also enclosed is a tax deductible contribution of \$ _____

Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$ _____

Please make checks payable to:

Bay View Historical Society

Name _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

E-Mail: _____

- ☐ Please contact me! I'd like to volunteer for a project or committee.
☐ Please save a tree and send *The Historian* to the email address above.

Send your Membership Renewal to:

The Bay View Historical Society

Attn: Membership
2590 S. Superior Street
Bay View, WI 53207

President's Report

Hello, Friends:

It is hard to believe but a year has passed and I enter my second year as President of the Board. Much has happened in our Society, in Bay View and in the world. As I reflect on 2019, I must focus on the profound changes that have been accomplished in our home base and headquarters, the Beulah Brinton House. Thanks to the tireless efforts of the Vision 2020 Team – Kevin Petajan, Anne Maedke, Joan and Joe Sliker, among many volunteers – as well as the skills and artistry of the architect, David Mayo, and the many artisans at Building Blocks Construction, the House's kitchen and first-floor restroom have been transformed into a 19th century kitchen with 21st century amenities. No small feat! That transformation is remarkable. If you haven't stopped by the House recently, please do so at our monthly Open Houses or our upcoming Holiday Potluck, *Traditions to Remember*, on Saturday, December 14.

Along with the House renovation, we witnessed ongoing efforts to archive the oral and visual histories of our members, past and present. The Oral History Project, led by the Archives Committee, Kathy Mulvey and Brad Wiles, continues to document the stories of our long-time members and Bay View residents. Also, Kevin Petajan and his Plum Media team created a documentary of interviews with many of us to celebrate and again, DOCUMENT, the 40th Anniversary of the Bay View Historical Society.

I am grateful to the current Board, our past and new Board members, our Committee chairs, and all of our volunteers as we look to 2020 and our efforts to showcase our beautiful landmark headquarters, the Beulah Brinton House. As always, we look forward while mindful of the past.

May 2020 bring you happiness, good health and an abundance of riches – seen and unseen.

Jane Taugher

Beulah Brinton House Concert Series:

Tropical Tomorrows Brazilian!

SATURDAY, JANUARY 11 • 7PM
BEULAH BRINTON HOUSE

Join us on Saturday, January 11 to get away from the cold with some music from the southern hemisphere. Tropical Tomorrows music is Brazilian style Samba with a mix of Bossa Nova to keep things diverse. Doors will open at 7pm. Appetizers and Beverages will be served. The concert starts at 7:30pm. \$30 admission for food, beverages and concert. A portion of the proceeds will benefit the Bay View Historical Society. **Please go to houseconcertsmke.com to reserve seats.**



Stephen Lee Rich in Concert

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16 • 3PM • BEULAH BRINTON HOUSE

Join us for an afternoon of music at the Beulah Brinton house on Sunday, February 16. Stephen Lee Rich is a Madison singer/songwriter, yodeler, comedian, and harmless crazy person who has been performing for over 40 years and is still at it! Before Stephen Lee Rich came to Madison, he spent a couple of decades on the Chicago folk scene. He puts heart and humor into his colorful array of folk, old-time pop and novelty songs. Stephen doesn't take himself too seriously – he plays parodies of old folk chestnuts, doo-wop, and even a couple of kazoo solos. Stephen is a model of topical and thought-provoking songwriting that's thoroughly entertaining. <http://www.stephenleerich.com/>
Don't miss it!





Renovation Reveal Open House a Success

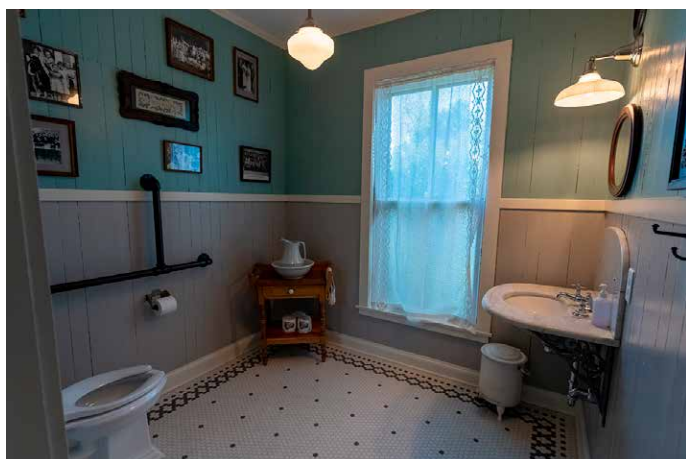
Approximately 70 people attended the Bay View Historical Society's grand reveal of its newly remodeled kitchen, bathroom and pantry on Saturday, September 14. There was a spirit of rejuvenation in the air as many indicated their happiness with the changes. There were many positive comments about the beautiful kitchen cabinetry, the antique-styled stove and

the historic photos in the bathroom. Ed Travis welcomed people with tours of the house. Heather Taylor, Jane Winston and Cheryllann Kelly provided food and refreshments. The BVHS documentary "Celebrating 40 Years of History" was presented by past president Kevin Petajan. Special thanks to everyone who made the renovation and this event a success!



From left to right: Kevin Petajan, Joan Sliker, Anne Maedke, Jane Taugher, County Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic.

Photos by
Joe & Joseph Sliker





A Different History of the Kashubes

BY H. JOHN MANKE

During the 1200 & 1300's, the people of Europe sought to find their freedom. A country to have these freedoms and that would accept refugees was Poland. Poland was surrounded by monarchies. Among the people seeking freedom were the Jews from Spain escaping the Spanish Inquisition. Irish and Scotts were trying to escape the danger from the King of England and his control of their homelands. In leaving their homeland, these people sought to live by the sea. They settled near the Baltic Sea.



The Kashubes were of Slavic origin. They were known for their ability to build, their great fishing skills and their lack of respect for any government. They were a blend of freedom seeking people. The Irish and Scotts blended in perfectly. Due to their lack of respect for government, they chose not to enter any army.

When in later years, the three monarchies, Russia (the Czar), Austria (the Hapsburg dynasty) and Germany (Prussia and the Kaiser or Koenig) decided to annex Poland out of fear that the freedoms enjoyed in Poland would spread to their countries. Earlier Poland had sought protection from the Teutonic Knights (German) from the Turks. The Teutonic Knights only settled instead of providing the protection needed. Swedish and Finnish governments had at one time-controlled parts of Poland.

In effect, the Kashubes became a blend of people. They were not German, nor were they Polish. They had their own roots. During the occupation of Poland by Germany (Prussia) during those years, the government decided to draft the Polish & Kashubes into the Prussian Army. This is when many of these people left the country and came to Canada and the United States.

One group of these people came from the Peninsula of Hel near Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland), Pomerania, Germany. They settled on Jones Island in Bay View. Jones Island was constantly being washed out by high tides and lake storms from Lake Michigan. The Indians had settled there and were washed out, Captain Jones had a ship repair shop on the island, it also was washed out. When the Kashubes arrived on Jones Island, they knew that they had a rough job ahead of them to build on a location where all of the other people had failed. They chose to build their homes on stilts to protect from being washed out. They also added soil to increase the protection from the lake storms.

These Kashubes developed a reputation for being tough. They built their homes in a random pattern. They also built two churches in Milwaukee. St. Stanislaus and St. Hedwig Catholic churches. As long as they lived on the island, the Milwaukee Police would not arrest any person there. They waited for the criminals to leave the island before arresting them.

Photos provided by Ron Winkler



If you got into a fight with a Kashube, you would find about six relatives there waiting to help them.

The reason that they were forced off of Jones Island, is one that they failed to file claims on their land, and two is that the Milwaukee Sewerage Commission needed land to build their sewerage plant. Some said that the Kashubes hated all government and this is why they never filed claims on their land.

As was their tradition, they blended into the Milwaukee population and most of their history was lost in time. When people from this region of the world take a DNA test from Ancestry, they will find a trace of DNA from the British Isles. They will state that either they are German or Polish and had no ancestors from the British Isles, and can't figure out where this strange DNA came from. I am trying to give you the answer.

A few years ago when I was talking to the husband of a past Polish Women's Alliance of America National President from Detroit, Michigan, he told me that he was a Kashube. He stated that the Kashubes settled in Canada, Detroit, Chicago and other German speaking cities. He stated that the research done by him and others discovered about the Irish and Scotts being in Poland and how they blended in with the Kashubes. There are still many Kashubes still in Poland.

I challenged him and did my own research through books and the internet, and came up with the same results. All four of my great-grandparents came from the region of Stettin, Pomerania, Germany. This area is now owned again by Poland. My own DNA sample showed this trace amount of DNA from the British Isles, although none of my family had ever been there. I would say that this is proof of what I have written here.



Passing, Seen

BY BILL O'BRIEN

Strolling to the farmers market or getting walked by the dog, you've passed the old Gibbs place in the 2700 block of South Shore Drive. Built in 1899, it is distinguished by a former owner's name and its original address set in small green tiles at the foot of the front steps.



William Howe Gibbs (1871-1948) was a Michigan native, a machinist who lived in Bay View for more than 30 years. He and his wife Minnie and their daughter Ethel had lived on Ellen, Kinnickinnic, and down the block before landing here in 1907. William and Minnie stayed for the 1910, 1920, and 1930 censuses before decamping to Southern California. Ethel, her husband Edward Vidito, and their children were here in 1930 and 1940, later following her parents west.

" Wm H (Minnie) 461 Beulah av

The tiled 461 is a remnant of the city's early numbering system, in which sequential house numbers started wherever a street originated. In 1930, street numbers were rationalized to run east and west of the Milwaukee River at Wisconsin Avenue and north and south of Canal Street. Streets that aligned – like the North Side's Sixth Street and the South Side's First Avenue – got matched up. Some streets were renamed, with Shore Drive taking the place of Beulah Avenue.

William wrote his address out as Beulah Boulevard in 1928 when he applied for membership in the Wisconsin Society of the Sons of the American Revolution. He gave his full name as William Woodruff Howe Gibbs and detailed his line back to paternal great-grandparents, Benjamin Gibbs (1747-1783) and his wife Thankful Landon (1756-1832). William cited family records, genealogical records of the Town of Litchfield, Connecticut, and *The military record of Connecticut in the Revolution* for his great-grandfather's war service. Benjamin had been a Corporal in the Seventh Regiment of the Connecticut Militia, which mustered in Litchfield in 1775 and was quickly dispatched to the siege of Boston, where it held Winter Hill.

It's good William made his mosaic at 461, affording a chance glimpse back to the 18th

century. Had he marked the steps at his previous brief residence on the east side of the street, 518 Beulah Avenue, it would have been swept away when South Shore Park was laid out. I'm thankful his mark endures.

| SHORE DRIVE SOUTH (formerly Beulah av) — From E Russell av south to E Texas av, 1 west of Lake Michigan | |
|---|------|
| New | Old |
| 2723 | 451 |
| 2727 | 453 |
| 2727 A | 453u |
| 2730 | 462 |
| 2730 A | 462u |
| 2731 | 461 |
| 2732 | 464u |
| 2734 | 464 |
| 2735 | 465 |
| 2738 | 466 |
| 2739 | 467 |

.....
The Milwaukee County Historical Society has a fine converter for the pre- and post-1930 addresses: <https://milwaukeehistory.net/street-name-conversion/>

The White House To Reopen As Restaurant

BY RON WINKLER

Bay View's White House tavern, 2900 S. Kinnickinnic Avenue (KK), built in 1891 by the Joseph Schlitz Brewery as a tied house, closed at the end of 2017. It is scheduled to reopen as a restaurant according to an article in the October 19 edition of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. The announcement calmed the fears of Viewites who were concerned that this Bay View landmark might bite the dust due to "development." The White House, a Bay View Historical Society (BVHS) landmark since 1991, was given landmark status by the Milwaukee Common Council last year. BVHS charter member John Ebersol led the movement for the designation by the city.

After closing, the White House was purchased in January 2018 by Franklin-based HCI Properties LLC for \$400,000. That is the same price MeinhardtByrne Properties LLC paid for the building in June 2019, according to state real estate records.

The restaurant, which will be renamed The White House of Bay View, will be operated by Allison Meinhardt, who hopes to open in late November. The menu will have a European flavor to reflect three ethnicities- Meinhardt is German, her husband is Irish, and their cook is Italian. Meinhardt and her husband plan to live on the second floor of The White House.

The White House is one of Bay View's most easily recognized landmarks with its finely detailed twin turrets and their conical roofs in the Queen Anne style. It has been a part of Bay View since 1891 and on its 100th anniversary in 1991, was awarded landmark status by the BVHS. It was the oldest tavern in Milwaukee still owned by the original family until it was sold in 2006.



The White House as it appeared about 1901. William is next to the street lamp, while his wife Wilhelmine is in the second story window.

Continued on Page 6



White House To Reopen *continued from page 5*

History

The history of The White House began in 1876, when the Danish immigrant Kneisler (pronounce K-nice-ler) brothers, William Christian, John Christian, and Henry Christian opened a feed store on KK and Maple Street. William operated a tavern in the basement of the feed store until 1881, when he moved his tavern to Union Park in Bay View. Outpost Natural Foods, 2826 S. KK, occupies that spot today.

Then in 1891, with financial assistance from the Joseph Schlitz Brewery, he moved his business a few blocks south to its current location on the corner of KK and Ellen Street. The Schlitz Brewery gave Kneisler an \$8000 mortgage to build the tavern in exchange for his promise to sell only Schlitz products. In those days, breweries built taverns as outlets for their products. These establishments were known as tied houses because they were tied to one brand of beer. (Another BVHS landmark built as a Schlitz tied house is Three Brothers Restaurant, 2414 S. St. Clair Avenue.)

This was also the era of the free lunch, courtesy of the breweries, when a barrel of beer cost ~\$4.75. I haven't seen beer sold in barrels today, but a half-barrel of beer (15.5 gallons or 165 12-ounce bottles) sells for ~\$100. We double those amounts to obtain a theoretical barrel of beer that sells for ~\$200 (31 gallons or 330 12-ounce bottles). At \$4.75 per barrel, the cost to the tavern owner was 1.4 cents per 12-ounce glass. Today at ~\$200 per barrel, the cost to the tavern owner is 61.6 cents per 12-ounce glass.



In 1991, the Kneisler Family commissioned the late Dick Doorneck, a Bay View artist, to sketch this pen and ink drawing of the White House.

On many maps, Kneisler's bar was referred to as Kneisler's Roadhouse. It was a profitable location on KK, along the main thoroughfare connecting Milwaukee with Racine and Kenosha. Kneisler's was the halfway point between South Milwaukee and downtown Milwaukee, the logical place to stop for refreshment.

When William died on April 27, 1919, the tavern passed to his son Herbert, who owned the tavern until his death in 1973. The last family member, Scott Hildebrand, sold the business in 2006.

In the old days, there were separate rooms for men and women to shield the ladies from the unrefined conduct of the men. In 1973, the pub's name was officially changed from "Kneisler's" to "Kneisler's White House." Legend says that the name White House refers to the gathering of politicians on Election Day when they would watch Herbert tally election results on a blackboard.

During its 100th anniversary year, Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist was a patron of the White House and declared December 31, 1991 as Kneisler's White House Day in the city of Milwaukee.



The White House, Christmas past, under a blanket of snow with lights in the windows.

Ghosts

There are many tales about the ghosts who haunt the White House. The best summary is in the October 25, 2005 issue of the old "Bay Viewer" newspaper. The White House is home to at least two specters. One is William's wife Wilhelmine whose presence is known in two ways. The first is by the trail of her dress as she disappears into the distance, and the other is when she blows on peoples' necks, creating an icy breeze. The second apparition is William's 9 or 10-year-old niece who fell while ice-skating on a pond at the Standard Brick Company (site of today's Sijan Field, 2821 S. KK) and developed a fatal blood infection.

The "Bay Viewer" article mentions that many former White House employees have told stories of similar paranormal experiences despite having had no contact with each other.

The Gift That Keeps On Giving

The Bay View Historical Society (BVHS) exists to preserve, celebrate and share Bay View's rich heritage. You can help assure that this mission continues for generations to come by including BVHS in your will. By deciding to remember BVHS this way, you will make a gift that keeps on giving for years to come. It is your opportunity to always be a part of BVHS and enable its good work to go on. *For further information, contact Nancy Tawney at 414.744.5674 or email ntawney@aol.com*





John Utzat *In Memoriam*



We are sorry to announce that John Utzat passed away on Wednesday, November 6, 2019 at the age of 82. John was a founding member of the Bay View Historical Society in 1979 and worked with Ray Bethke on the first BVHS historical walks, receiving a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012.

John also wrote a history of Bay View called the *Red Skies of Bay View* and co-wrote *Southside in the Sun* with Ruth Ruege. John spent many years on the Landmarks Committee, providing a wealth of knowledge for several Bay View landmark dedications. He was a great contributor to the society and will be missed.

News of John's passing came to us just before press time. We will feature an in-depth tribute to John Utzat in the Spring edition of The Historian.



Where in (Historical) Bay View?

By Ron Winkler

Do you recognize this Bay View landmark? Look for the answer in the next issue of The Historian.

Answer to last issue's quiz (September 2019): This is the original Grace Presbyterian Church, built by Immanuel Presbyterian Church in 1872 at 2218 S. Winchester Street on land donated by the Milwaukee Iron Company. The church was originally named Bethany Presbyterian Chapel, but the name was changed in 1884 to Grace Presbyterian Church. Although the original church was enlarged in 1910, by 1915 a new church was required. It was built for \$12,000 in 1916 at 2931 South Kinnickinnic Avenue.



List of Board & Committee Contacts:

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Hannah Hazelberg

Treasurer

John Toutenhoofd

Secretary

John Sargent

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Heather Taylor

Archives

John Sargent

Beulah Brinton House

Nancy Tawney

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Membership

\$20 Individual/\$17 Seniors (Age 65+)
\$30 Household/\$25 Senior Household
\$30 Non-Profit/Small Business
\$55 Corporate

Bay View Historical Society
2590 S. Superior Street, Bay View, WI 53207
www.bayviewhistoricalsociety.org

Bay View Historical Society is a non-profit organization with 501(c)3 status operating for educational purposes.

The Bay View Historian is published four times a year by The Bay View Historical Society.

Upcoming Events

Bounding Main Holiday Concert

Saturday, December 7
6 - 9pm
Beulah Brinton House

Traditions to Remember:

Holiday Open House & Potluck

Saturday, December 14
3 - 7pm
Beulah Brinton House

Open House

Saturday, January 25
1 - 4pm
Beulah Brinton House

Open House

Saturday, February 15
1 - 4pm
Beulah Brinton House

BVHS Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 8
6:30pm
Beulah Brinton House

House Concert:

Tropical Tomorrows Brazilian

Friday, January 10
7:30pm
Beulah Brinton House

BVHS presents

"The Milwaukee Anthology"

by Justin Kern

Monday, February 3
7 - 8:30pm
Beulah Brinton House

BVHS Board Meeting

Wednesday, February 12
6:30pm
Beulah Brinton House

House Concert:

Stephen Lee Rich in Concert

Sunday, February 16
3pm
Beulah Brinton House

