



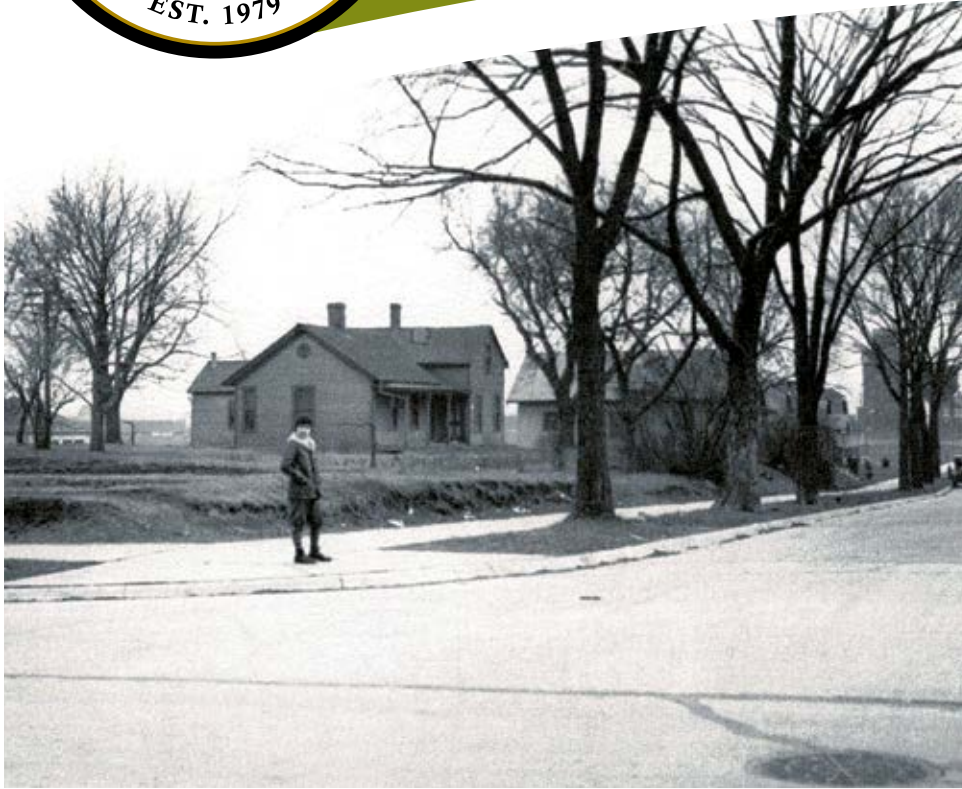
BAY VIEW Historian



VOLUME 2024, NO. 4

www.bayviewhistoricalsociety.org

DEC 2024



This Town of Lake map from 1876 shows the two branches of Cabeen Creek coming together on the Cabeen property and traveling north, ultimately flowing into the Kinnickinnic River on Enoch Chase's property at the top of the map.

Caption: Looking southeast from Euclid and Griffin toward the Theodore Van Beck farm.

Cabeen Creek

BY RON WINKLER

In the Fall "Historian," I wrote about Ray Van Beck, last of the Van Beck family farmers. Other Van Becks had farms throughout Bay View. One of them was Theodore Van Beck (1844-1878) who operated a 24-acre farm whose borders were from Euclid Avenue on the north to Ohio Avenue on the south and from Pine Avenue on the east to Howell Avenue on the west. He came to Milwaukee in 1854 from Germany. He and his wife Minnie von Orden had eight children.

Cabeen Creek was a tributary of the Kinnickinnic River. It had two branches and flowed through Van Beck's property. The east branch started in the vicinity of present day Whitnall and Clement. The west branch began a little further north along Whitnall Avenue (near present day Warnimont Avenue) where Morgan Burdick's home still stands. The two branches flowed north and came together in the approximate vicinity of today's Ohio and Adams on property owned by the Cabeen Family. The combined branches then flowed north and crossed to the west side of Howell Road

(as it was known then) at Oklahoma Avenue. It continued north, angling to the northwest until it emptied into the Kinnickinnic River on Enoch Chase's property just north of present-day First Street and Chase Avenue.

Flooding was always a concern, especially around the low-lying area of Howell and Oklahoma. That problem persists to this day during heavy rain. Cabeen Creek was diverted underground and the old creek bed was filled in. In the vicinity of today's Hide House, there was what was then known as Cabeen marsh. A sewer was built to collect the water from this area which was close to where Cabeen Creek flowed into the KK River. Flooding was very common there.

Cabeen Creek was filled in and diverted underground during Paul Gauer's tenure as Bay View's alderman. It's said that north of Oklahoma Avenue, some people can hear the flowing of the underground creek when they're inside their homes.



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\$20 Individual/\$17 Seniors (Age 65+)
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\$55 Corporate
Philanthropic Levels:
\$100 Friend
\$500 Leader
\$1,000 Patron
\$2,500+ Benefactor

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.

President's Message

Dear Members and Friends of the Bay View Historical Society,

As I begin my first President's Message, I wanted to first thank Margaret Herzfeld for her steadfast leadership, dedication and commitment to the Bay View Historical Society.

Her tenure as President, Board Member and member before that has enabled the Society to be in the strong position it is today. Margaret was the driving force to stabilize the Society's finances, increase our involvement in the community and build the foundation for future successes. We appreciate Margaret and her family's work very much, and extend an open invitation to support our efforts moving forward.

I also want to extend a sincere thank you to the current Board who have entrusted me with this position, previous Presidents and Board Members whose efforts we look forward to building upon and for our dedicated membership and volunteers who are the fuel that continue to push our Society forward.

In the coming weeks and months, the Board in partnership with membership and the community will work to strategically plan the future of the Society. This process will be participatory to ensure voices that wish to be heard will have the opportunity to do so. We encourage and look forward to all feedback for the Society so that we can have the greatest impact possible on the community. More will be shared on this shortly but please note all are welcome to email president@bayviewhistoricalsociety.org with comments or questions.

What originally motivated me to participate in the Society continues to drive me today: the rich and plentiful history that the Society works to preserve and share, the community members who have shaped this wonderful Society and the promising future we are poised to deliver upon through our collective efforts and vision.

With gratitude,
Drew Formentini

Letter to the Editor

Van Beck Farms

I thoroughly enjoyed Ron Winkler's article about the Van Beck truck farms. My first paid job was working at the Van Beck truck farm just north of Layton, and west of Howell. (As this was more than sixty-five years ago and my employment lasted only a few days, some of my 'facts' might not be entirely correct, but this is what I remember.)

I was only about ten or eleven years old, and the green onions were ready for harvesting, and the Van Becks needed help. I could get on the Howell Avenue bus at Humboldt Park and ride out to about Plainfield Avenue and walk a block or two to the north end of the field. After checking in with the field supervisor and receiving instruction on what was to be done, I was put to work: pull the onions from the ground and strip away the outer sheaths to expose the green/white interior. When one had accumulated a dozen, they were bundled together and secured with a red rubber band. After piling up a dozen of these bundles, the field supervisor would come over and record your production on their clipboard. As I remember, we earned a dime for harvesting those 144 onions. Not too bad for a little kid in the 1950's. After a few days the field was nearly picked clean and a few of the kids that weren't needed were loaded into the back of a pickup truck and driven to the facility on the south side of Grange, where there was a washing and packaging shed. We didn't perform any harvesting there and were assigned relatively simple mundane chores. Looking back on it, rather than sending the kids home with no pay, I think it was the Van Beck's way of slipping a few extra coins into the kids' pockets without expecting too much in return.

-Karl Bethke



Janice Mae Liedtke

DECEMBER 20, 1929 - SEPTEMBER 28, 2024



Janis Mae (Hansing) Liedtke lived her entire life in Bay View. A 1948 graduate of Bay View High School, Janis and her husband, Dick Liedtke, were early supporters of the Bay View Historical Society.

Janis was a very talented dancer. She opened a studio on Delaware Avenue. Her brother John began learning to dance from her when he

was quite young. During WWII, they both performed with a dance troupe organized by their mother and traveled to the hospitals in Great Lakes, IL to entertain the injured troops. Janis and John continued to dance professionally throughout the Midwest where they were billed as "The Dancing Hansings." Among other things, they performed on the first color TV broadcast in the Milwaukee area. In 1957, John opened a new dance studio in Bay View where Janis continued teaching.

All the while, Janis worked for 22 years as the librarian at Dover Street School. Her love of dance led her to become a Dresser for the Milwaukee Ballet for over 30 years. Janis was also the original choreographer for the Milwaukee Dancing Grannies and a participating member for many years. She volunteered at the Bay View Community Center and was a longstanding member of the Bay View Historical Society. Throughout her life Janis enjoyed Indy and NASCAR Racing, Brewer and Packer games, watching classic movies on TCM (Especially musicals), watching the game show network, doing

crossword puzzles, going for scenic car rides and speaking to and spending as much time as possible with her grandsons.



Janis & Dick Liedtke, Kathy & Frank Mulvey

When Janis turned 93, her daughter Sue still brought her to the Brinton House every Monday morning, where she worked with the archives committee and kept the clipping file up to date. Janis had a wealth of knowledge of Bay View and the BVHS and answered many questions for those of us who arrived on the scene later.

Boy, do we miss Janis!

A Bay View Street Sign

Do you know where this sign is located?



Answer: Arbor Vitae, WI

Humboldt Park to Receive Landmark Status

BY RON WINKLER

Humboldt Park will be the Bay View Historical Society's (BVHS) 2025 landmark. The ceremony will be held on Saturday, June 28th at either noon or 1:00 pm. Humboldt Park will be BVHS's 30th landmark. The event will be free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

BVHS Landmarks Historian Ron Winkler will present the plaque. The Beulah Brinton House, which has been the Society's headquarters since 2005, was the inaugural landmark in 1983.

The event is in the early planning stage. Look for more details in the Spring 2025 "Historian."

Part One of Humboldt Park's history can be found on page six of this issue.

Yingling at 414-227-3255 (yinglinl@uwm.edu) for more information.





Passing, Seen

BY BILL O'BRIEN

Humboldt Park has lost hundreds of trees in the past decade, many to the emerald ash borer. To bolster the park's future tree canopy, the Humboldt Park Friends launched the 100 for Humboldt project in 2019. The newest of a hundred-plus resilient trees were planted on October 9th, during a Tree Day program attended by students from several MPS schools.



To mark the completion of the project, 90 Park Friends gathered at the Pavilion on October 22nd for speeches, presentations, and the unveiling of a large west wall plaque; designed by committee member Ignacio Catral, it maps all the new trees and names all the project donors. Public and Park officials commended volunteers Dani Graf, Garry Hollander, Jane Le Capitaine, and Henry Szymanski. Park Friends founder and BVHS stalwart Ruth Simos was also fondly remembered.

Next came a preview of Humboldt in Harmony: Resilient Park, Resilient Community, ongoing efforts to maintain and improve the park. A complementary speaker series, on the second Tuesdays of January-March 2025, will focus on park history, water management, and gardening. John Gurda will present Green Milwaukee: a History of Our Parks and Open Spaces in the Pavilion at 6:30 p.m. on January 14th.

The site, species, and planting sequence of each of the newer trees can be seen on the FHP web site: <https://www.humboldtparkmilwaukee.org/100-for-humboldt-page/>

Word on the street: an update on curbstone dimensions. My September high estimate of the height of the limestone slabs once used to make curbs – 16 inches – was short by a half. Subsequent utility work in the 2900 block of South Lenox Street surfaced a full, cracked slab.



I photographed it with a 6-inch bank slip to give scale. You can see that the paper is a quarter of the width of the stone. I returned the next day with a tape measure to confirm the 24-inch width, but the pieces had been hauled off.





Archives Committee Update

BY KATHY MULVEY

The Bay View Historical Society's Archives Committee recently achieved its long-time goal of recording in our on-line database every item that has been given to us over the 45-year existence of the Society.

The 1,359 items include:

- 359 objects**
- 265 photographs**
- 274 books, and**
- 381 collections**

However, many of the items we now have do not meet the criteria we have developed over the years for accepting them. For example, the first question we now ask is: What does this item tell us about the history of Bay View? While many of the things we have collected over the

years may be beautiful or interesting in themselves, they do not shed light on the character and development of Bay View as a community. Also, there are many items that are repeats of things we already have. Or, they were left on our doorstep, and we had no opportunity to make a decision.

It was a great day when we bought the Beulah Brinton House. Before that, we had no place to display, or even to keep our things. However, space in the house is not endless, and we are approaching full capacity. Therefore, we want to begin to streamline our collection. If you have donated items to the Bay View Historical Society, please fill out the information requested and send it to the Archives Committee, Bay View Historical Society, 2590 S. Superior, Milwaukee, WI 53207.

Name _____

Address _____

Approximate Date of Donation _____

Items Donated _____



Making a Gift in Your Will

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

-- Winston Churchill

The Bay View Historical Society depends on the generosity of individuals now and in the future. The simplest way to make a future gift to the Society is through your will. Planning to make a gift this way allows you to make a difference in the Society's future. Please consider remembering the Bay View Historical Society in this way ... thank you.

For more information, contact: admin@bayviewhistoricalsociety.org

Is it Time to Renew Your Membership?

Please look at your Bay View Historian mailing label to see when your membership will expire.

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

Philanthropic Levels:

- \$100 Friend \$1,000 Patron
- \$500 Leader \$2,500+ Benefactor

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



Humboldt Park, Part One:

2025 August Walk to Feature Humboldt Park

BY RON WINKLER

Next year's Bay View Historical Society (BVHS) annual August Walk will tour Humboldt Park. It will be held on Saturday, August 2nd, starting and ending at the Humboldt Park pavilion, home of "The Vine" beer garden. Registration will be at 9:00 am and the walk will begin at 9:30 am. As usual, it will be led by BVHS members Ron Winkler and Sean Regan. Cost will be \$5.00 for members and \$10.00 for nonmembers. Anyone purchasing a membership that day will be admitted for \$5.00.

In 1890, the city of Milwaukee established five public parks. At that time, this was a new concept because there were no public parks. Although people gathered in beer gardens, they were either private or charged a fee. The popular gathering venues were Soldiers Home at Wood, WI or cemeteries such as Forest Home Cemetery. Forest Home Cemetery was designed by Increase Lapham and landscaped as a park with lakes, trees, flowers and meadows.

Milwaukee's five original parks were South Park, later renamed Humboldt Park, North Park, later renamed Sherman Park, West Park, later renamed Washington Park, Lincoln Park, later renamed Kosciuszko Park and Lake Park.

In 1900, South Park was renamed Humboldt Park for Baron Freidrich Heinrich Alexander Von Humboldt (1769-1859), German scientist, naturalist, explorer and statesman. The ocean's Humboldt Current which flows north along the west coast of Peru in South America was named for him. This current affects El Nino and La Nina. Humboldt was a lifelong resident of Berlin, Germany and Berlin's Humboldt University is a research facility named for him.

Humboldt Park's original boundaries were Logan Avenue (east), Howell Avenue (west), Oklahoma Avenue (south), and Idaho Street (north). The western thirty acres from Pine Avenue

west to Howell Avenue were purchased from Jane Wilcox for \$84,383. The eastern fifteen acres from Pine Avenue east to Logan Avenue were acquired from Henry and Mathilda Mann for \$37,600.

In 1922, the park expanded north of Idaho Street through the efforts of Bay View's Alderman Paul Gauer. Twenty-eight acres were purchased from the Sanderson Brick Works for \$97,593. Another parcel, north of Montana Street, formerly the old Burnham Brothers Brickyard, was also for sale, but the Common Council resolution lost by one vote. The twenty-eight acres purchased in 1922 were developed and finally opened in 1930. Two houses from this area were relocated to 359 E. Schiller Street and 2916 S. Austin Street.

There were changes to the original park south of Idaho Street. The original park entrance was on Howell Avenue, just north of Gauer Circle. It ran along the south side of the lagoon to Logan Avenue, just north of Manitoba Street. That old road was removed in 1928 when the present series of roads were built.

Water Park

When the park was created in 1890, one of the top priorities was creation of an artificial lake, known as a lagoon. It was completed in the spring of 1893, with a wooden boathouse on the south shore where rowboats could be rented. In 1909 and 1910, the lagoon was enlarged to twice its size and an island was created in its center. In 1910, the wooden boathouse was replaced with a concrete boathouse and a concrete footbridge connecting it to the new island. Visitors could picnic on the island or enjoy the view from the center of the lagoon. The boathouse had a pavilion, assembly room and refreshment stand. In winter, it became a warming shelter where ice skates could be rented. Unfortunately, it was razed sometime around 1960.



Henry and Mathilda's mansion still stands on a hill north of the park at 2931 South Logan Ave.



Original wooden boathouse built in 1893.

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Concrete boathouse constructed in 1910.

In 1894, a natural depression in the park's southeast corner was enlarged to create a lily pond. Water gardening was popular at the time and a variety of water lilies were introduced. The pond became one of the park's biggest attractions.

The park had a live-in policeman, whose Greek Revival home was on Howell Avenue, two blocks north of Oklahoma Avenue. The home originally belonged to Joel Wilcox, an early Bay View pioneer. It was moved when the Milwaukee Iron Company bought the Wilcox property on Jones Island in 1867. The family then purchased land bordered by Oklahoma Avenue and Howell Avenue onto which they moved their house. This was the land that became the western portion of Humboldt Park when Jane Wilcox sold it to the City of Milwaukee in 1890. The last occupant of the home, addressed at 2986 S. Howell Avenue, was Theodore Gerlach, the park's superintendent. The home was razed in 1960 and replaced by the current maintenance building in 1961. It was built by the Moran Construction Company for \$110,000. It has a large assembly hall, restrooms and adjacent tot lot with wading pool and playground.

Another Name Change?

After World War I, there was a movement to change the park's name to Pershing Park, in honor of John J. Pershing, the United States Army General, who led the American Expeditionary Forces to victory over Germany in World War I.

In 1921, after the war, Gustav A. Fritsche and Bernhard C. Korn principal and vice-principal, respectively, of Bay View High School, headed a committee that raised \$15,000 to construct a memorial. The octagonal kiosk is made of red Wisconsin Granite with eight pillars along the perimeter and a center pillar that connects to the side pillars to form a dome. On top of the dome is a ball on which sits a bronze American eagle with spread wings. A bronze plaque contains the names of twenty-two Bay View servicemen who died in World War I.

The original band shell, designed by Clas and Clas, was constructed in 1932 for \$8855 as a WPA project. Its interlocking arch construction framework was similar to those in Hollywood and Chicago, though on a smaller scale. The interior, coated with aluminum, reflected both sound and light. It could seat 100 musicians and 200 choristers. The gradually ascending lawn accommodated an audience of 20,000. After a 1976 fire destroyed the band shell, a chalet, designed by county architect R. Albright was built for \$2 million on the base of the old band shell in 1977.

Another WPA project designed by Clas and Clas was the Colonial revival Humboldt Park Pavilion, located across the park road from the west side of the lagoon. It was built in 1932 for \$16,210. The stone with wood trim gives the impression of a New England farm home. A later addition was tacked onto the south end. The previously described maintenance building on Howell Avenue was constructed to resemble the pavilion.

On November 12, 1936, the five original parks and all subsequent parks were transferred to Milwaukee County due to budget problems during the Depression.

End of part one.

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 (Fall 2024): Charles Nash founded Nash Motors in 1916 in Kenosha, Wisconsin. In 1920, he opened this assembly plant at 3280 South Clement Avenue on a former dairy farm. A 1954 merger formed the American Motors Corporation. In 1987 Chrysler purchased American Motors at which time the Bay View plant became the Chrysler Parts Distribution Center. Chrysler merged with Italian automaker Fiat in 2014 and then with French automaker PSA Group in 2019 to form Stellantis. Following a nationwide strike by the United Auto Workers in October 2023, Stellantis announced it was closing the Clement Avenue distribution center.





Calendar of Events

Please check the BVHS Website BayViewHistoricalSociety.org for upcoming events.

Monthly Open House

Come visit the historic home of Bay View pioneers Beulah and Warren Brinton.

1st Saturdays from 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Beulah Brinton House

Saturday • December 7

Saturday • January 4

Saturday • February 1

Saturday • March 1

BVHS Board Meetings

Board of Directors meetings are usually held the second Wednesday of the month at 6:30pm. The format is hybrid, meeting in-person at the Beulah Brinton House and via Zoom, and are open to members.

Wednesday • December 11 • 6:30pm

Wednesday • January 8 • 6:30pm

Wednesday • February 12 • 6:30pm

Wednesday • March 12 • 6:30pm

