

# Old Franklin Township Historical Society Newsletter

June 2022 - Volume 15, Issue 2

This issue features some of the many unique artifacts housed in our museum.

## **Pedal-Operated Grinding Wheel** By Marian Burmester

Hermine Hausner donated this pedal-operated grinding wheel. These machines were indispensable on the local farms. It would have been used to sharpen ax blades, knives, hoes, and many other farm



implements. The grindstone was a flat circular stone made of natural sandstone center mounted on an axle. Foot pedals were connected to the axle. The farmer sat on the seat pedaling with the grinding wheel turning towards him. Sometimes there was a can mounted above the wheel with water dripping on the stone to prevent sparking as the metal tool ran across the stone. Without the can of water above, the farmer would have to manually wet the stone as he pedaled. The farmer could control the sharpening process by pedaling faster or slower.

The families of Hermine (Schwab) and her husband, Karl Hausner, lived in what is referred to as the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. Karl was raised on a farm in the village of Schwansdorf. With the end of World War II, the German troops left but the Soviet troops arrived in the Czechoslovakia villages and searched homes for German soldiers and valuables such as watches and jewelry. Men were taken to Soviet work camps and never returned. Many Soviet soldiers looked for young women they could sexually abuse, and some were killed. Some of the population fled to woods. The Soviet troops left after about four weeks. Then the Czech partisans took over and the situation worsened. Karl (about age 16) went into hiding, but eventually he was found, taken to a labor camp and forced to work in a coal mine. He developed some health problems along with an eye infection, which was aggravated by the coal dust. This may have accounted for his bad eye site as an adult. Eventually they were forcibly removed from Czech and taken in trains to Germany to various cities.

Hermine's Schwab family lived in Ober-Johnsdorf near Landskron. On May 17, 1945, truck-loads of Czech partisans arrived to hold a People's Court. They gathered the men, aged sixteen to sixty, and some older, leading them on foot to Landskron, and beating them on the journey. Hermine's father, Robert Schwab, and his uncle Reinhard Schwab were among the men beaten so badly that they died. In the spring of 1946, the remaining Schwab family along

with many others were expelled from their home and shipped on freight cars to an expellee camp at Kaufbeuren, Bavaria, to start a new life. The bitterness that the Czech partisans had toward the Germans of Sudetenland is difficult to understand without going through a history lesson. As always, politics before, between, and after the two World Wars had much to do with it.

Karl received a degree in engineering in Germany and immigrated to New York on June 26, 1952. There he worked as a farmer. Hermine immigrated from Germany to New York on March 12, 1956. They married in New York 4 days later. Karl found work at the farm of Herman Reisinger in Troy Township, Sauk County, Wisconsin. He eventually made his own way and became a successful inventor and businessman with his own medical instrument company in Illinois. With their love for the land, they started to invest in farmland. Being very devout Catholics in 1998, they built an Expellee Memorial Chapel, dedicated by Father Frank Brickl, on their main farm located on County Road B between Plain and Sauk City.

In 1998 they installed three large steel crosses overlooking Mill Road near Marklein Road east of Plain. It was dedicated by Father Gary Wankerl.



To read more about what the Hausner and Schwab families endured, Google the titles and authors below, and links will be listed for the following stories. When you click the link, a pdf will open.

"1945 In Memory": A Survivor's Report by KARL HAUSNER, 13 pages

May 17, 1945: The Day I Will Never Forget by HERMINE HAUSNER, 3 pages

**Happier Days for Hermine!** The photos below were taken when the last group from the Plain area traveled to their homeland of Waldmünchen and other areas of Europe from Sept. 7-21, 2010. Their Bavarian friends from Ast and Waldmünchen planned a very entertaining evening of Bavarian specialty foods, a keg of beer, songs by the Ast choir, and accordion music.

Hermine Hausner unveiled a glass picture during a dedication held at a small park near the church called "Pfarrer Arnold Platz" at Ast. Father Raimund Arnold blessed the picture. The people of Ast designed it as a surprise for their American visitors. The images in the picture depict Maria Himmelfahrt Catholic Church in Ast with a road leading to St. Luke's Catholic Church in Plain, Wisconsin. Engraved between the two churches are the words "von Freunden für Freunde" (from Friends for Friends). More information will appear in a future newsletter.



Father Raimund Arnold and Hermine Hausner at a welcome party in Ast on Sept. 9, 2010.

# Unnaturalized German residents in America were once called "Alien enemies"

By Debbie Blau

Because of World War I, U.S. President Woodrow Wilson declared on November 16, 1917, that all German-born male residents aged 14 and older who had not yet obtained their final naturalization documents were required to register as an "Alien Enemy" - a very negative term for hard-working immigrants. This proclamation included German women as of April 1918. At least 480,000 German enemy aliens had registered.

Each "alien" was required to carry an "Alien Registration Card" at all times during the period of the war. With no card, they would be subject to penalties and arrest. Because of the circumstances of the ongoing war, some law-abiding German emigrants felt shunned.

The United States "Alien Registration Card" featured here was issued to Michael Pfeiffer who registered on February 23, 1918, at Plain, Wisconsin. He had to provide a photograph and a fingerprint of his left thumb.

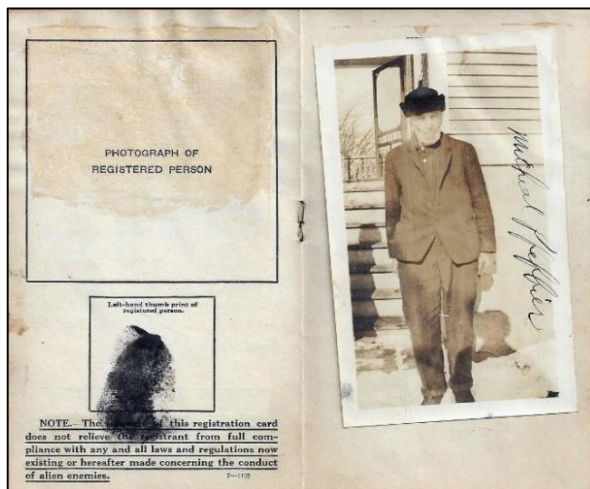
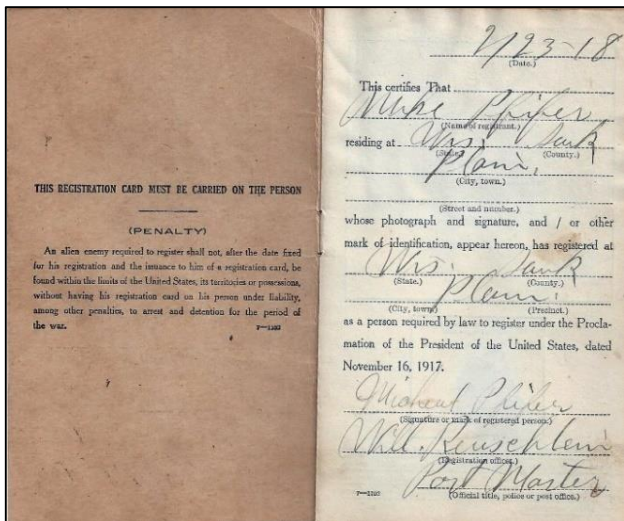
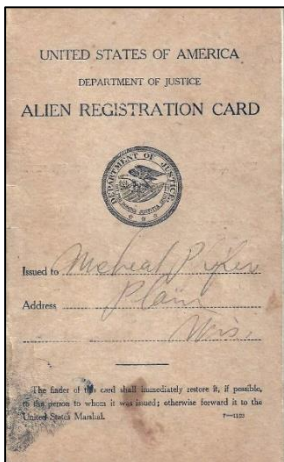
Michael Pfeiffer was born on March 23, 1833, in Treffelstein and married Margaretha Vogl on Oct. 1, 1865, in Tiefenbach. They lived in Irlach and had six children, two died in infancy. Word was received that

Margaretha's younger sister Theresia Vogl Schwartz died in October 1884 leaving her husband Thomas Schwartz with 8 children to care for, some being very young. Michael and Margaretha along with their four unmarried daughters, Catherine (Mrs. Andrew Ringelstetter), Theresia (Mrs. Michael Hetzel), Margaret (Mrs. Michael Ringelstetter), and Barbara (Mrs. George Hetzel), emigrated on May 27, 1885, on the *Fulda*, and arrived at Castle Garden in New York on June 6, 1885.

The Pfeiffers stayed briefly in the Schwartz home in Lower Wilson Creek in Troy Township until Michael purchased 120 acres of land at Upper Wilson Creek in Spring Green Township in July 1885. There the Pfeiffer family lived in a log house. In August 1886, Thomas Schwartz married his second wife, Margaret Mick. Michael Pfeiffer made his intention to become a citizen in October 1886. His final naturalization papers have not been found. In 1900, Michael and Margaretha donated money for a stained-glass window in St. John's Catholic Church in Spring Green. People in the Plain area recalled Michael was a weaver and farmer and could play an accordion and saxophone.

Margaretha died on October 28, 1901, and was buried at St. Luke's old cemetery at Plain. Michael was 92 when he died on April 30, 1925, at the home of his daughter Barbara (S11850 Raymer Drive) in Spring Green Township. He was buried at St. Luke's new cemetery.

Richard P. Ringelstetter donated the Pfeiffer Alien Registration Card to OFTHS in 2019.



## Dominican Nuns Rosary

By Marian Burmester



If you went to St. Luke's Catholic School in Plain, Wisconsin or any other Catholic school with Dominican nuns as teachers, you would remember their white tunic, scapular, belt, and black habit. From a kid's view, it seemed like a very, very long black rosary hanging from their waist belt. Sitting at your school desk you could hear the rosary beads hitting together as they walked down the aisle. The rosary along with the photograph of the nuns were donated by Carol (Hausladen) Walsh. It belonged to one of the two nuns in the photo: Sr. Renata (Fredonia) Hausladen on the left and Sr. Agatha (Eleanore) Hausladen on the right. They were born in Plain to George and Lola (Pulvermacher) Hausladen. Carol Walsh has donated numerous items which can be viewed in the museum when the OFTHS resumes open house events this summer.

You can read more about Sr. Renata and Sr. Agatha and other nuns and priests of St. Luke's in the book compiled by Phyllis Liegel Dearborn titled, *St. Luke's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 2007*. The museum has this book available for viewing.

## Wooden Wheelchair

By Marian Burmester



George Volk used this wooden wheelchair after he had a stroke which left him unable to speak and care for himself. He farmed first in Irish Valley, then at a farm located on Mill Road east of Plain. He later sold the farm to his son-in-law Herbert (Barney) Bindl.

George worked part-time as a stone mason on Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin in Spring Green and the Pew House on Lake Mendota in the Shorewood Hills area of Madison.

After his stroke, George was taken to the farm on Mill Road where his daughter Alvina Volk Bindl could care for him. During the summer, his other three daughters came to the farm to help Alvina. George was born on September 14, 1875, in Buffalo, Erie County, New York. He married Delia Fargen on January 14, 1903. He died at age 71 on May 2, 1946, and is buried in the New St. Luke's Cemetery, Plain, Wisconsin. (Photo and info from Ken Kraemer.)



George and Delia Volk

## Lard Press from the Meat Market

By Marian Burmester

This lard press was owned by Ray Ring when he ran a meat market on Wachter Avenue and later in his Main Street business in Plain. Several years ago the lard press was donated to OFTHS by Caroline Weiss Schweiss.



Here is how the apparatus worked. Pork crackling from the outer layer of skin and fat were boiled down to render lard.

The cracklings that remained were then retrieved from the rendered lard and added to the iron pot of the lard press.

A plate-like mechanism was placed on top of the cracklings. The crank at the top was turned, causing the plate to press the cracklings down toward a perforated plate at the bottom. The liquefied lard would then pass through the perforated plate and pour out of an opening near the bottom of the bucket.

Lard presses were also used to extract juice from fruits and vegetables. Lard is a semi-soft white fat. In the 19<sup>th</sup> and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, lard was used much like we use our shortenings and butter in cooking now days.

On page 82 of Hildegard Thering's book, *A History of Plain, Wisconsin*, she wrote the following about the first and second meat market locations: "John J. Haas and Henry Plon erected on Wachter Avenue a one-story brick veneered building, which opened as a



Ray Ring

butcher shop with Peter Plon in charge of the business. In July 1903, they built a slaughterhouse on John A. Hutter's premises, one mile east of Plain. In the ensuing years, the following changes of ownership occurred after that of Henry Plon, and John J. Haas: George Alt in 1912, Philip Volk and his brother Joseph in 1913, Joseph Hartl in December 1915, John Senger in January 1916, Fred Grauvogl and Alfred Frick in July 1916. As Fred Grauvogl left for the Army in World War I, Alfred Frick bought out his interest. Clem Frank started to operate the business in 1921, selling out to Raymond Ring in 1926, after which the business moved over to Raymond Ring's building on Main Street.

On page 88, Hildegard wrote the following in her story about the Confectionery Store on Main Street in Plain: "In August 1923 Raymond Ring took possession of the business from Frank Martin, remodeled, and started operation of a tavern. For several years, the meat market was located in part of this building under the management of Albert and Martha Ring. Later, the meat market was moved to the store of Mike Ring."



The Confectionery Store was later converted into a tavern. Pictured left to right in front of the tavern is Ray Ring, Herb Kraemer, Harry Frosh, Hank Wulfinger, and George Paulus.

# Immigration Trunk Boards and Butter Churn

By Marian Burmester

Phyllis Liegel Dearborn donated trunk boards and a butter churn among many other items. In the background of the photo below is the Brückl (Brickl) immigration trunk boards. Phyllis had attached the following note to the board: *These 2 boards were all that was left of a wooden trunk that was found on a junk pile in 1976 on the former Dan Nachreiner farm. Dan's mother was Theresia Brickl.* The German inscription on the board read: "Famile Brückl, nach Bremen, New-York, Kreis Wistkonsin & Springrün No 7." Bremen was the German port from which the Daniel Brickl family left to come to America in 1872 with the destination of Spring Green, Wisconsin.



Phyllis with news reporter at the first open house of the museum in 2004.

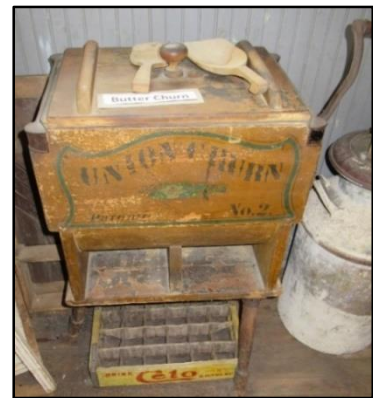
Phyllis was the first OFTHS president and was a big working force behind saving the Franklin Township meeting hall building from being torn down and organizing the historical society. She was born on August 11, 1940, at home in rural Loganville, WI, in the area of the White Mound settlement. Growing up and playing in the area inspired Phyllis to write the book, *Ghost Villages of White Mound And Its Surrounding Area "Billytown."*

For St. Luke's 150th Anniversary, she was asked by the parish to research and create an enormous display. At that time, she also researched and wrote another book, *St. Luke's 150th Anniversary 2007* with a biography of many of the priests that served the parish along with the sons and daughters that replied to the Lord's calling to the religious life as a priest or nun. She had a deep love of history and researched so many different things with the intention of writing more stories or books.

Unfortunately, many stories were left unfinished. She passed away at her home in Plain on May 20, 2008. To this day, as you walk around the museum and look in the files, you will find traces of Phyllis' work. The paperwork in the file cabinet might not have a name label on it, but I can always recognize it as hers.

## Butter Churn - Union Churn No. 2

Small batches of butter were made using this churn. After milking the cows by hand, milk is separated into cream by placing some milk into a shallow dish overnight. The next day, the cream is skimmed off the milk and poured inside the butter churn. The hand crank on the right side is turned at a slow and steady pace for about 30 minutes. Cranking causes the paddles inside the box to turn. The following photo shows the paddles from the Union Churn.



When whipped cream forms, it takes another half hour or more of cranking the handle until butter clumps begin to form. Buttermilk that settles to the bottom is drained out. The butter is scooped out with a paddle, placed in a clean cloth, then rinsed in water and drained. The butter is then formed into shapes. Salt and herbs can be worked into the butter.

Very little can be found on the web for information on this unique wooden butter churn. It may have a patent issue date of April 27, 1875. A No. 2 like this may hold almost 7 gallons. "The Sears and Roebuck catalog from 1896 through 1900 lists a No. 1 (5 gal), No. 2 (7 gal), and No. 3 (10 gal). From 1902 through 1916 a No. 5 (15 gal) was added. The cost of a 10-gallon Union churn from the Sears catalog was \$4.75 in 1896 and climbed to \$6.30 in the fall of 1916." <https://www.worthpoint.com/worthopedia/antique-union-no-2-butter-churn>

### **Become a member of the Old Franklin Township Historical Society**

Membership per calendar year: Individual \$15; Family \$25; and Sponsor \$100. All monetary donations are accepted. Send to: OFTHS, 915 Wachter Ave, P.O. Box 218, Plain, WI 53577  
Members will receive a newsletter by mail and can request copies of specific items in our new digital collection.

### **Recommended book available for purchase**

*Ghost Villages of White Mound and Its Surrounding Area "Billytown"* written by Phyllis Liegel Dearborn can be purchased at the museum or by mail. You will see many other items listed for sale at our website on the Merchandise page which includes a printable order form:

<https://oldfranklintownshiphistoricalsociety.weebly.com/merchandise.html>

**Correction for March 2022 newsletter.** On page 7, the correction should read, "After their marriage in October 1935, Herman Hetzel and wife Althea Riek built a new brick house." An updated newsletter can be downloaded from our website.



### *From the President's desk....*

The June newsletter of OFTHS brings you several interesting feature articles written by Marian Burmester, Debbie Blau, and Ken Kraemer of the OFTHS organization. You will certainly enjoy reading about the early pioneers in our community and their importance to the Township of Franklin and the community of Plain.

OFTHS is preparing for our annual Open House events which will be held on the first and third Sundays from June through the end of September from 1 to 3 pm. Highlighted this year will be Mary Jayne Liegel's display of 1920s to 1940s era wedding dresses. I hope everyone will take the opportunity to visit the OFTHS museum during the summer of 2022. The museum is located at 915 Wachter Ave (on Hwy. 23) in the village of Plain, Wisconsin.

The museum is also open by appointment. To make arrangements to see our collection, please contact us by email ([plainofths@gmail.com](mailto:plainofths@gmail.com)) or phone: 608-546-4562 or 608-588-7780

Wishing you all an enjoyable summer.

Until next time! í Eugene Hausner  
Email: [eugenehausner@gmail.com](mailto:eugenehausner@gmail.com)

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*History is never antiquated because humanity is always fundamentally the same.*

~Walter Rauschenbusch

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