

Old Franklin Township Historical Society Newsletter

June 2014 - Volume 7, Issue 1



Tenth Anniversary Celebration

The Old Franklin Township Historical Society was founded May 20, 2004 with the intention to restore the old Franklin Township Hall and use it as a museum to house artifacts and memorabilia that represent the area's history. Subsequently, its activities were broadened to include annual theme-oriented displays, education of school children through special events, publication of family and area histories and "Person of the Year" awards.

In 2006, the OFTHS signed a 25-year lease with the current Franklin Township Board for \$1.00/year for the use of the old town hall as a museum. A chili supper was held on October 28, 2008 to kick off fundraising in order to refurbish the old town hall. It was so successful that it became an annual held event in the fall of each year. "Brat"(bratwurst) fund raisers were held in June and September of 2007, which also became annual events to support renovation of the museum. This year's one and only fund raiser is something new that we're very excited about as we celebrate our 10th anniversary. Come join us in the Plain Park Pavilion and "Swing With The Bands." Help us make this year's fund raiser a success!

Swing With The Bands

Friday, August 15th - 7 pm to Midnight

Location: Plain Park Pavilion
925 Parkview Avenue
Plain, Wisconsin 53577

One block north of Hwy B, and two blocks east of Hwy 23
Everything is still in the planning stage. Watch for postings & updates.

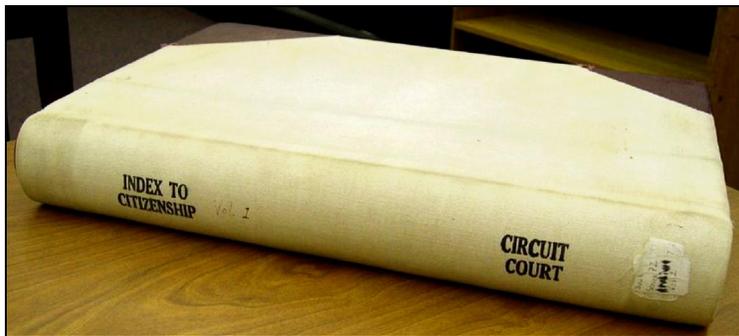


Naturalization In Our Ancestor's Time

by Debbie Blau

People who moved from other countries to settle into the United States were known as emigrants. If they wanted to become citizens, they had to apply at a courthouse in America. The papers they filled out were part of the naturalization process. The first naturalization act was in 1790 and said that anyone who lived in the US for two years was eligible for citizenship. In 1795, the residency requirement was changed to five years. Anyone born into nobility had to renounce their status. Applicants for citizenship had to publicly declare their intention to become citizens and renounce allegiance to their former country.

By 1802, the naturalization act was a three-part process: 1) Declaration of Intention to Become a Citizen; 2) Petition for Naturalization; 3) Certificate of Naturalization and Citizenship



Index to Citizenship, Circuit Court, Sauk County, Wisconsin [Wisconsin Historical Society, archive]

For a complete explanation of the naturalization process, see:
https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/United_States_Naturalization_and_Citizenship

People moving to Franklin Township in Sauk County, Wisconsin, generally applied for citizenship in Sauk County, but may have applied in Dane County or Iowa County as well. They may have gone to the courthouse in Baraboo in Sauk County for one part of their application and into another county for another part of the application. They filed the Declaration of Intention to Become a Citizen first. It may have been years later when they filed the next part of the application. Some never did file their last papers.

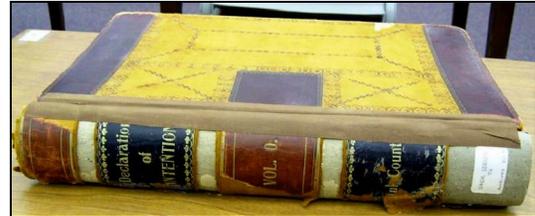
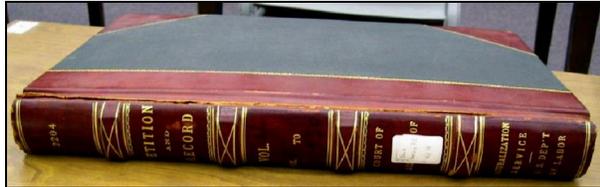
State of Wisconsin, }
SAUK COUNTY, } ss.

Joseph Blau personally appeared before the subscriber, the Clerk of the Circuit Court of said County, being a Court of Record, and made oath that he was born in *Germany* on or about the year *Eighteen* hundred and *sixty-one*; that he emigrated to the United States, and landed at the port of *New York*, on or about the month of *April* in the year eighteen hundred and *sixty-two*; that it is *bona fide* his intention to become a citizen of the United States, and to renounce forever all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign Prince, Potentate, State or Sovereignty whatever, and particularly *William Emperor of Germany*, whereof he is a subject.

Subscribed and Sworn to the *3* day of *November*, A. D. 18*84*, before me, }
W. J. J. J. J. Clerk.

Joseph Blau petition signed Nov. 3, 1884. Birth year was 1862 (not 1861 as stated here). He was born in Glissenberg, the son of Michael Blau and Barbara Dobmeier.

If your ancestor came from Germany and didn't speak English, they may have found it difficult to answer questions on the applications because the forms were written in English. How did they know they could apply for citizenship? Were they handed a naturalization brochure when they entered the country for the first time? Maybe they were already informed of this on the ship ride over the ocean, or had read about it in the newspaper. When they arrived at the courthouse, did someone translate for them? Perhaps the County Clerk could speak German and wrote their answers in English, or the applicants had learned enough English by time they applied for citizenship. The applicants had to sign their name on the forms, so that is a good place to see your ancestor's handwriting style.



Two naturalization books for Sauk County, Wisconsin, at the Wisconsin Historical Society archive.

The Petition for Naturalization required two witnesses who swore they had personally known the petitioner, they knew how long the person had resided in the United States, and knew the moral character of that person. Oftentimes the witnesses were neighbors. Petitions in the early 1900s included more personal information such as a physical description; occupation; place of residence in their homeland and in America; a picture; birth dates and places of the petitioner, names and birth dates of spouses and children; marriage dates and places; the full date of emigration; the ship name; and dates and place of departure and arrival.

Where can you find naturalization records? The archive on the 4th floor of the Wisconsin Historical Society in Madison, Wisconsin, has original naturalization books and also images of naturalization records on microfilm. Most of the books have indexes. If you cannot get to Madison, you can search for naturalization records online at FamilySearch.org. In their catalog, search for *Wisconsin Naturalization* to see the entire list of their collection. Iowa County records were at one time stored at UW Platteville in Grant County, but FamilySearch.org also has Iowa County records. The Reedsburg Public Library has some naturalization records on microfilm. If you don't find records for your ancestor in one place, look in another place, since the different parts of naturalization records can be scattered in various locations. The cornerstone for the first courthouse in Sauk County (in Baraboo) was placed in 1855; by 1857 the building was finished. In 1904, a fire destroyed the courthouse which was then later rebuilt. It's not known if any of the naturalization records were destroyed in the fire.

As with any record, there can be spelling and date errors. The applicant may have not remembered the date of emigration and ship name when filling out one form, but in another form had remembered this information.

2014 Museum Display Theme

The display theme for our museum is "History of Area Bands." We are looking for photos, memorabilia, news articles, artifacts or anything that could be donated or displayed temporarily in our museum. Please contact us by phone: 608-546-2108, 608-546-4562 or 608-588-7780. You can also email: plainofths@gmail.com.

For our display the Dean Blau family has donated a booklet "The Blau Family ~ A Musical History." Below is an excerpt from the booklet about the "Squeeze Box Serenaders." We plan on having enlarged photos from the booklet on display also.



Above, left to right: Joseph Wankerl, Harlan Blau, Duane Blau, Dean Blau, Michael Haller. Photo was taken in the summer of 1950 at the Joseph and Agnes Beer Haller farm home located about 3 miles north of Plain, Wisconsin. The car in the background is Dean Blau's 1939 Ford.

1950 to 1951 - Squeeze Box Serenaders

One day in 1950, the Blau boys went to the home of Mike Haller, probably to play some softball and hang out. Mike's mother, Agnes Beer Haller, loved to play the piano and sing. Joe Wankerl (a nephew of Agnes) was there with his guitar. Everyone ended up singing along while Mrs. Haller played the piano. A few days or weeks later, the Blau boys decided to go to Joe Wankerl's home with their accordions. One thing led to another and a group was formed with members Dean Blau, Harlan Blau, Louis "Louie" Nachreiner and Joseph Wankerl.

How or what date the group chose "Squeeze Box Serenaders" as their name is not known, but they went by that name from their first days together until the Blau boys went into the Army in 1954. "Squeeze Box Serenaders" first appeared in print when the group played in their first amateur contest at the Sauk County Fair in Baraboo on August 31, 1950. Dean recalled the group most likely didn't use that name every time they played. In the beginning, "Joseph "Merle" Alt also played guitar with this group for a short time.

Sometime before the Mary Prem and Bernard Brings wedding in June 1951, Joe Wankerl left the Squeeze Box Serenaders and went to play with the Fingerhut group called the "Badger Valley Boys." This is most likely when Duane Blau joined the Squeeze Box Serenaders with his guitar. Details are sketchy, but Duane was playing a guitar in August of 1950, and probably didn't formally play with the group until 1951.

Would you like to submit articles for our newsletter...?



Or do you have any unanswered questions dealing with local history or family genealogy? Let us know and we will print it in our next newsletter. Just email the society at plainofths@gmail.com

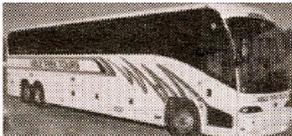
A Member's question:

Debbie Blau is seeking information about Johann (John) Wachter (1821-1895) and his wife Margaretha (1824-1900). What was her maiden name? Why was a street in Plain named for John Wachter? What other streets in Plain were named after local residents?



Email List...

Due to the costs of printing the OFTHS newsletter, members who receive the newsletter by mail will be sent a black and white version. For those members who have an email address, the newsletter will continue to be sent as a color PDF file. If you have an email address, please help us cut printing and postage costs. Let us know your email address at plainofths@gmail.com.

<p>The River Mill Food & Spirits Steakhouse · Sandwich Shop · Burgers 305 W. Main St. LaValle, WI 53941 (608) 985-7723 Mon: 4:00 pm - 10:00 pm Wed - Thu: 11:30 am - 11:00 pm Fri - Sat: 11:30 am - 2:00 am Sun: 11:30 am - 9:00 pm</p>	<p>Gudie's Bar & Grill 155 Main St, Loganville, WI 53943 (608) 727-2900</p>
<p> ABLE TREK TOURS 1-800-205-6713 Reedsburg, WI www.abletrektours.com Call us for a FREE 2014 Tour Description Catalogue</p>	<p>Richardson-Stafford Funeral Home 780 N. Winsted Street Spring Green, WI 53588 Telephone: (608) 588-2181 Fax: (608) 588-2170 staffordspringgreen@frontier.com</p> <p></p>

When visiting these sponsors mention that you saw the advertisement in the OFTHS Newsletter.



From the President's desk . . .

The Old Franklin Township Historical Society (OFTHS) will be celebrating their 10th Anniversary during 2014. The organization was initially formalized because of the interest shown by the residents of the Township of Franklin in a survey.

And, the OFTHS has continued to upgrade and restore the Old Town Hall to capture some of the earlier history of the township and the community which surrounds the township.

This year we have selected a project which will emphasize musical bands which thrived in Franklin Township and the Plain area. To carry this event forward, we will be displaying band and music memorabilia as our project theme.

To celebrate the music theme, the OFTHS is sponsoring "**Swing With The Bands**" event on the evening of **August 15th; at the Plain Park pavilion; from 7pm until midnight**. The OFTHS event will feature three bands which will play music from 1950s-1970s era with each band playing for at least an hour. To capture the mood of that era, you will want to schedule that date on your calendar, and join us. This is a major fund raiser to help with the improvements we are planning for the interior of the Old Town Hall, and to aid in the proper storage and display of various artifacts which have been donated to the OFTHS over the past ten years. Please look for media coverage of this event in the near future.

The OFTHS recently applied for a 2014 mini-grant from the Wisconsin Historical Society and Wisconsin Council for Local History to help protect and preserve our local family history archive-one of the major functions of the OFTHS.

Going into the summer and fall, I hope you will visit the OFTHS Museum to check out the music theme memorabilia theme we have focused on for the year 2014. Look for the "Open House" events in the Home News under the community calendar.

Thank you for your continued support of the OFTHS museum and the special events which we enjoy sharing with you.

Until next time! Eugene Hausner email: hausnergp@frontier.com



"History never looks like history when you are living through it."
~John W. Gardner

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<http://www.townoffranklinhistoricalsociety.com/>

PRESERVE OUR HERITAGE

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