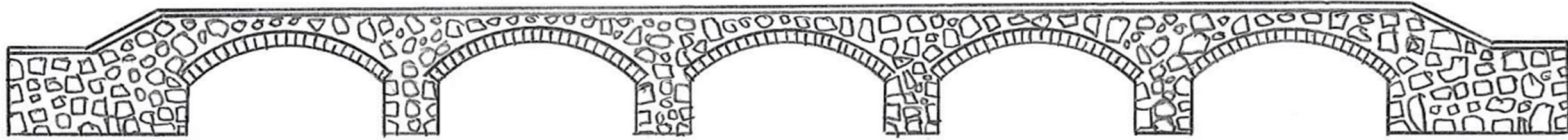


THE BRIDGE



Connecting the Past to the Present where the Rock River meets the Yellowstone Trail

Vol 1 #5

Official Newsletter of Theresa Historical Society
Theresa, Wisconsin

Sept 2025

2025: RECORD ATTENDANCE AT THS CAMPUS MUSEUM

Don't miss your last chance this season to take a nice Sunday drive to Theresa and visit us at the Theresa Historical Society Campus Museum on Sunday September 28th. Hours 1 to 4 PM.

We are easy to find right on Hwy 175, look for the big Theresa sign on our historical limestone wall and you're there!

Besides visiting our museum, there are a lot of nice things to do and enjoy on your Sunday drive to the Theresa area. Explore the area's rustic roads and stop on top of Hochhiem Hill, or Water Tower Hill and take in the fantastic view of Wisconsin's Wonderful Rock River Valley.

And while you're in Theresa, don't forget to stop at **Confections for Any Occasion** for out of this world's homemade chocolate treats and ice cream. You can't miss it! It's located right on HWY175 at the Rock River bridge.

Just up the street is the **Pioneer Keg Bar and Grill**. Experience some of the Keg's award winning Cheese Curds, burgers, pizza and other gastronomical delights. If you you're a big eater try the 3lb. Brew Master's Challenge, finish it in 15 minutes and you win a Brew Master's Challenge T-Shirt!

After you had your fill, just turn the corner on Henni St. and go a block and a half east and you'll find yourself at **Widmer's Cheese Cellars**, home of world award winning cheeses. Try some samples and take some home with you. It's a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon!



Another great day in Theresa at THS Museum Campus on Hwy 175-Yellowstone Trail.

**Don't Miss Our
September THS Meeting!
ALL Are Welcome!
Monday, September 15th
4 PM
THERESA PUBLIC LIBRARY
290 Mayville St.
Theresa, WI
BE THERE!**

Les Beck's: It happened In Theresa

1903 Village hall and fire station built. Corner of Milwaukee St & Henni St. Cost \$975. Paid off in 3 years by village saloon fees.



THS volunteer Mikki Polster visits with guests in the Solomon Juneau House at our July Open House.



Museum curator Jim Polster with a group of students from Lomira School district on recent field trip to THS Museum campus

From The Editor:

It has been a busy summer as we have welcomed a record number of visitors to our THS Campus museum . We premiered a new exhibit about WWI and WWII area veterans in the Schiefer house and are constantly working on up grading our existing exhibits. The 1848 Solomon Juneau House is a favorite with our visitors, along with the 1854 Reklau Log Cabin, 1848 John Schiefer House and the 1930s Beck Tourist Cabin. **Take a Sunday drive , stop by and visit us on our last campus Open House this season on Sunday September 28th, 2025.** It's fun and it's free, though a freewill donation is always appreciated.

Our community outreach program kicked off with your editor presenting "Rock River Settlement Stories" at the Rock River Archeology Society at the Horicon Marsh center in late August. If you missed it, that program will be presented at the Thersa Public library this fall. Watch for the date..

A big welcome our new members, Laura Bruederle, Stuart Dobberpuhl, Earl & Eugenie Hildebrandt, Ron & Diane Wendler, Kevin & Holly Rabe and Lloyd Hilgendorf. We appreciate your generosity support and hope you will join our dedicated volunteers whenever possible.

Volunteerism is the foundation of our organization and as such we rely solely on volunteer to maintain our society's treasures and mission. Without our volunteers we would not exist and the legacy of our treasured buildings and artifacts would not survive.

Here are some areas you can be of help, Greeters to welcome guests at our campus open houses. Help us archive and catalog our photos and artifacts, help us develop youth programs, design exhibits, or just brainstorm with us. Lastly we can always use a helping hand, moving things around, tidying up buildings and grounds, gardening, or ? We appreciate your interest and support of our society.

Rob Bowe Editor

THE BRIDGE



Published by: Theresa Historical Society

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Rob Bowe : Vice President

Cindy Bowe; Secretary

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Message From THS President Jim Rodell

It has been a busy summer since my last message to you in May. I am happy to report that Theresa Historical Society is moving forward in a positive direction. I also sense that support is growing for Theresa Historical Society and our mission to preserve and share our local history. As a result of increased publicity, the Theresa Historical Society has attracted new members who contribute valuable skills and fresh perspectives to our organization.

The Theresa Historical Society is blessed to have a group of active members who make our open houses on the last Sunday afternoon of each summer month possible. They meet and greet visitors, sharing the histories of the 1847 Solomon Juneau house, 1854 Reklau pioneer cabin, 1849 John Schiefer house, and the Beck tourist cabin and the many artifacts they contain. Many thanks to all who have given of their time and efforts. Our July and August open houses have been a resounding success. We've enjoyed great weather at all our open houses this year. Our next open house will take place on Sunday, September 28th.

Thanks to a new advertising sign, increased public relations promotion through social media, and our **The Bridge** newsletter, (a special thanks to new member Laura Bruederle, for her expertise in expanding our social media presence), recent attendance grew to around 50 people at the August 31st Open House.

With the support of my fellow volunteers, I was not needed on the THS site for the July and August

Open Houses and was able to open the nearby Oscar Miller blacksmith shop for visitors. It was a pleasure for me to share the history of this property and a bonus for our guests to learn more about Theresa's history. As special thank you to Chris Lehner, a Byron Historical Society member, who worked at the forge at the August 31st Open House and made the blacksmith shop come to life.

It was great to see all the visitors who were eager to learn about Theresa area history, especially families with children and thank you to those who donated so generously. All this confirms our work as a historical society is worthwhile.



In my last message, I announced that Alice Mirk planned to remain as curator until August when immediate past President Jim Polster would assume the position. The day of change arrived on August 15 when Alice officially resigned from her post. We thank Alice for her years of service as secretary and curator. We look forward to the book which Alice and Walter plan to publish to help perpetuate the history of Theresa and benefit the Theresa Historical Society.

Con't next Page

Les Beck's: It Happened in Theresa

1915 - Northwestern Band Convention at Beck's Park, Crowd of 5,000 watched parade.

As curator, Alice envisioned the future of Theresa Historical Society to include additional exhibits in expanded space in the Old Village Hall meeting room, and our members will continue to strive toward the goals which she established. Please be sure to thank the Mirks for their contributions to Theresa Historical Society, and please show support for Jim Polster as he begins his journey as the next curator.

With new eager members, more visitors, and more opportunities, enthusiasm is building at the Theresa



THS Volunteer Carl Benter explains the Reklau cabin story to a visitors at the August Open House. Photo Laura Bruederle

Historical Society. We are moving forward. Work is beginning at the Old Village Hall meeting room/library with the goal of restoring the beauty of the room's high ceiling and maple floor into a usable climate-controlled space for more exhibits, presentations, and an archives library.

We also have removed the tattered side curtains from the Koll wagon pavilion structure and await a cost estimate for renovation. Other plans are to upgrade the exhibits in the Reklau pioneer log cabin. After that,

more ideas will come forth for more improvements to the facilities and operations of Theresa Historical Society.



Visitor's to the Beck tourist cabin chat with THS Volunteer Bob Beck about the cabin and it's significance on the old Yellowstone Trail Highway. Beck's family operated a tourist court/service station/car dealership on the Yellowstone Trail in 1930s-40s-50s Photo Laura Bruederle

If you have not been to our history park lately, you have one more chance this year. **Our last open house date for the 2025 season will be September 28 from 1 to 4 p.m.** We look forward to your visit!

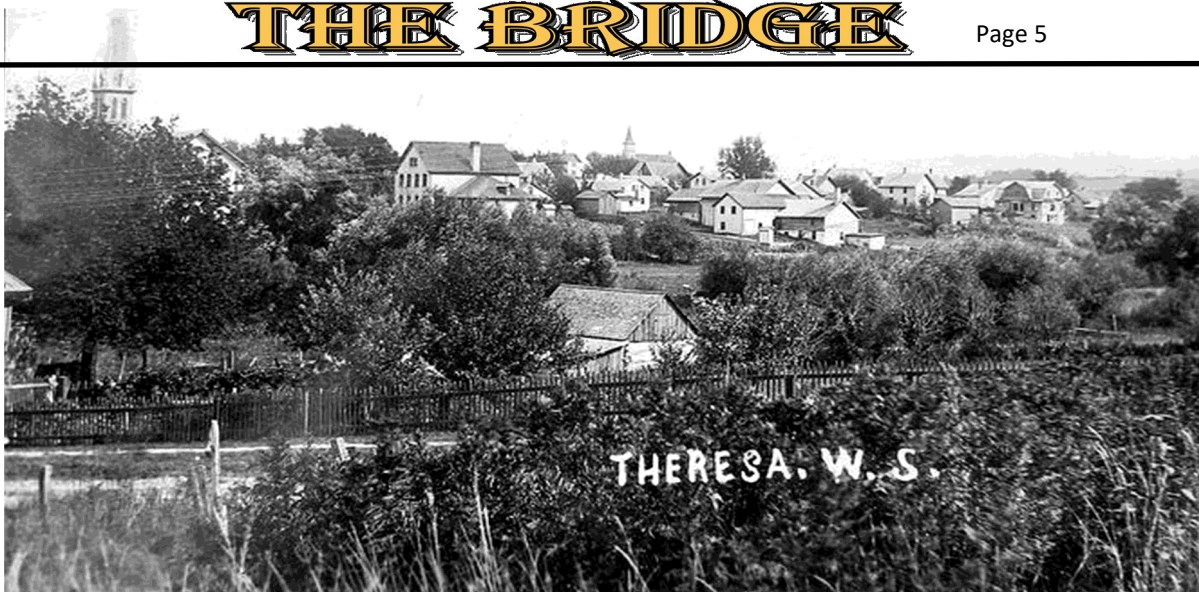
I would like to close my message with a quote credited to Henry Ford, manufacturing giant and organizer of one of the largest and best living history museums, Greenfield Village.

"Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success."

We have been working together at Theresa Historical Society. We are also reaping the rewards of success. To all our members and volunteers keep up the good work,

James Rodell, Jr. President, THS

**Les Beck's It Happened In Theresa
1890 Anninger's Hat & Dress Shop Opened.**



Theresa 1911 View from present Fireman's Park looking southeast: Left to Right skyline ,St. Theresa's Catholic Church, St. Theresa's Catholic School, St. Peter's Lutheran Church and below-current Widmer's Cheese Cellars.

Recognizing Our Valued Business Members

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our business members for their ongoing generosity. The Theresa Historical Society encourages all of our friends and supporters to consider these dedicated businesses for your future need and activities

Business Members Directory

Benter Builders Inc, N8492 Bancroft Rd, Theresa, WI
 Glorified Salon & Spa, 114 S Milwaukee St, Theresa, WI
 Bernhard Plumbing, N8210 St. Hwy 28, Mayville, WI
 Confections For Any Occasion, 101 N Milwaukee St, Theresa, WI
 Pioneer Keg, 122 , S Milwaukee St, Theresa, WI
 Widmer's Cheese Cellars, 214 W Henni St., Theresa, WI
 Dodge County Pionier, 106 , S Milwaukee St, Theresa, WI
 Slinger Family Dentistry, 340 E Washington St, Slinger, WI
 Steger Tech Services LLC, 202 Mayville St., Theresa, WI
 Success Mortgage Partners, (Laura Geiger) 105 S Main St, Mayville, WI

Recognizing Our Donors

Jack Schark

Lloyd Hilgendorf

Diane Boehm

Donna Gieger

Earl & Eugenie Hildebrandt

Benter Builders

Jody & Lynn Steger

Bob Beck

Stuart Dobberpuhl

Widmer's Cheese Cellars

Todd & Mary Bodden

Rick & Shawn Krapfl

Dave & Christine Steger

Betty Bodden

Kevin & Holly Rabbe

Joann & Denny Sabel

THANK YOU



Settlement Stories

“You're On My Land”

By Rob Bowe

Most of the German speaking pioneer immigrants who arrived in Wisconsin had a yearning for economic opportunity and freedom. These issues and government oppression would be the biggest factor in driving Prussians and other German speaking immigrants to Wisconsin in the 1840's. Like many Adam Bodden made the decision to immigrate and came to Wisconsin.

As a young man, Bodden had served in the Prussian Army during the Napoleonic Wars in the early 1800s. After the war Bodden married and for 30 plus years struggled to provide his family in a failing economy in his homeland in Prussia (Germany).

In 1847, at the age of 59, Bodden along with his family immigrated to America. The family was Catholic from near Cologne, Rhineland Province, Prussia and settled in Wayne Township, near Kohlsville, Washington County, Wisconsin purchasing land from the government for \$1.25 per acre.

In 1851, Bodden relocated to the Town of Theresa, eventually acquiring 140 acres about 2 miles southeast of the Village. Today that land is still owned by a member of the Bodden family. So why did Bodden move his family from Wayne Township, just a few miles west across the county line into Theresa Township, Dodge County?

Some years ago, I had a conversation with the late Russ Bodden. Bodden told me, “My great-grandfather Adam had gotten a good start on his farmstead in Wayne Township, building a cabin, some buildings, and started clearing land and planting. One day, about 3 years after

they arrived, another person approached my great-grandpa Adam Bodden told him his cabin and buildings are on my land.”

After a proper investigation it was discovered that an error had occurred in surveying, marking and interpreting the location of the original land plat. The Bodden cabin and buildings were indeed over the boundary on the other person's land. As a result, Bodden decided the best thing to do sell out and relocate west a few miles west into Theresa, township which had a better lay of the land for farming.

Not long after speaking with Russ, Theresa Historical Society Museum curator Jim Polster, told me a similar story about his ancestor, Michael Polster settling partially on the wrong land. Polster had been a neighbor to Adam Bodden. Polster's ancestor also relocated and ended up being a neighbor to Adam Bodden in Theresa township. Maybe both were victims of the same error???

So how did this happen? The most likely explanation is inaccurate surveying or misplacement of the section markers and other markers left by surveyors. The land that all the early folks settled on in this part of the world had been surveyed by government hired surveyors back between 1833-36. As more than 10 plus years had transpired since the US government survey, lush overgrowth may have hidden markers How accurate each surveyor was is open to question as surveyors of the day used chains and compasses. Mistakes happen.



Pioner Surveyor's Compass “Circumferentor”

There also could have been problems with some immigrants and language. Understanding the plats and maps provided at time of purchase from the US Government and locating could be tricky.



**Here is a sample legal description of a land sale provided at time of sale: 4PM T 12-N R-17-E ; Ali-
quots S (South) 1/2 SW (Southwest 1/4) Section 10,
Dodge County.** This would be the 160 acres plat
where the sewage plant in Theresa is today.

The equipment used by a surveyor was simple and more accurate than one might think. The compass or "circumferentor" consisted of a circular box housing a magnetic needle floating above a compass marking 360 degrees and was used in measuring angles. A wooden arm extends from the compass and includes sights located at north and south and was mounted on a tripod stand with a plumb bob suspended from the tripod center. It would be leveled horizontally and vertical.

A chain called a Gunter's chain was used to measure distance. It was made up of 100 light weight metal links, each link was 7.92 inches long, for a total length of 66 feet, which equaled 4 rods called a chain, so a rod equaled 16.5 ft) Every 10 links were marked with a brass ring to facilitate shorter measures. It took 80 chains 80 chains or 8000 links to equal a mile. The plumb-bob center on the ground was the start point of every measurement stretching the chain out.

Survey posts were set along township and section lines every mile. These locations were designated as section corners. 1 mile by 1 mile = 640 acres. 1 mile by 1/2 mile = 320 acres. 1/4 miles by 1/4 mile = 160 acres Additional survey posts were set midway between section corners. These were called quarter section corners. The quarter section corners allowed for the future divisions of sections into quarter sections (160 acres). At each square section (640 acres) and quarter section corner (160 acres), a survey post was constructed of wood from the forest and set into the ground, and in dense forest between 2 to 4 trees were identified as

"witness or bearing" trees and marked with ax cuts for location identification. The location of the corner, the type and diameter of each bearing tree as well as its compass bearing, or azimuth, and distance from the corner were recorded in the surveyor's notebook. In areas without trees like prairies and marshes, mounds of earth or stone were constructed to mark the location of the corners.

The chain was stretched out from the center point on the ground as indicated by the plumb bob. The compass had sights located at north and south. By sighting two points from the same location, a surveyor could determine the interior angle and by simple geometry calculate distance etc. This approach was commonly used for establishing the corner boundaries of a given parcel. This information was forwarded with maps and drawings by the surveyor to the Government Land Office (GLO) in Washington D.C. who then authorized the sale of surveyed lands at government land offices here in Wisconsin.

More than likely as the survey had been conducted in the 1833-36 era. In 10 plus years between the survey and the earliest settlers arriving on site, some these markers may have been covered by overgrowth, trees blown over or cut and some were possibly moved or destroyed by crooks. The government didn't really make allowances for errors or mistakes. If there were disputes, they were ultimately be settled in the court system. Often someone would get the "short end of the stick" and soon may settlers understood they needed to take every precaution to be accurate and careful in defining the boundaries of their land. Thus was a growing demand for attorneys knowledgeable in land transactions, which led to the development of the title insurance.

Les Beck's: It Happened in Theresa

1930 Theresa Population 427



The Last Threshere

By Rob Bowe

Best I can remember, it was about 1959 when mom's family had their last threshere. Mom's brother, Arnold Christian farmed with their stepdad Eddie Zimmermann, on Allen Road, Theresa township. Grandpa Eddie had a monster Oliver Haart-Parr "Red River Special" threshing machine. It was bigger than most of the threshers used in Dodge County. I was just 12 years old and in my eyes that piece of machinery was bigger than life.

The "Red River Special" was a mechanical marvel of whirling pulleys, drive belts, clanking chains and whizzing fan blowers. It shook, it shuddered and the sounds it made while running were awesome. It was just the kind of contraption that would capture a young boy's imagination.

"Thrashing" as the old-timers called it, was hard, sweaty work, taking place during the hottest days of summer, the end of July into early August when the oats turned golden. Families and neighbors would gather to provide the manpower and the means to get the grain harvested and "in the bin."

In the old days, a grain binder pulled by a team of horses would cut, tie and bundle the standing oats into sheaves, then drop them onto the ground. By the 1940s, tractors replaced most of the horses on field machinery.

A crew made up of men and boys then took the grain bundles (sheaves) and stood them up, grain heads up, to aid drying. This stack was called a shock. A shock

usually consisted of 6 to 8 sheaves of bundled grain. The shock stood for several days until it was completely dried. out. Then crop was ready to be threshed.

Meanwhile Grandpa Eddie was getting the "Red River Special," ready for the first job of the season. During the threshing season, Grandpa and Uncle Arnold would take the big thresher to several farms of those neighbors who didn't have a thresher and made up the threshing crew.

On the big day, after early morning milking and breakfast, family and nearby neighbors on the threshing crew showed up. Many came with their kids. The older girls would tend to the young ones and keep them from being under foot.

There was always a sense of excitement in the air for threshing day was a big day on the farm. Grandpa noted it was going to be a "hot one," meanwhile the women went about peeling potatoes and prepping the big meal that would feed the threshing crew. Some of the men headed to field to pitch bindles in the wagons while others went about helping Grandpa Eddie set up and block wheels the pulley tractor and threshing machine.



"Red River Special" Threshing machine, made by Oliver Hart-Parr Co. of Charles City, Iowa

The big "Red River Special" sat on the upper barn floor between the hay and straw mows. The bundle feeder conveyor hung out of the front door doors of the big barn facing the pulley tractor. A long drive belt was stretched between the tractor's pulley and the threshing machine drive pulley.



Before gasoline and kerosene/Oil tractors, heavy duty work on some farms was done by steam engines. This 1920 20 H.P. Minneapolis 8453 Steam engine tractor, was used for dray service on heavy loads, field work as plowing, and belt power to run saw mills, threshing machines and the like.
Photo Rob Bowe

This provided the power to run the big threshing machine. The straw discharge blower pipe extended out of the back doors of the barn about 15 feet, hanging over the barn yard where below a huge straw stack would soon be blown. Then there was the grain discharge pipe which extended from threshing machine into the granary. Grandpa's granary was like a little house built inside the barn. It was about 15' x 20' x 7' high with flat board roof in the straw mow area. Once threshing started it would be soon buried by straw being blown into the mow around and above it. The granary also had a double Dutch door to go in and out. This is where all the threshed grain (oats) would be stored in big bins.

The first wagon loaded with oat bundles arrived from the field and was backed in place. Grandpa started pulley tractor and eased the clutch on the pulley drive into gear. The belt started to turn, and the monster thresher came to life. Grandpa watched and listened carefully. Once Grandpa Eddie confirmed the machine was running smoothly, he gave a thumbs up and my dad, along with Uncle Lester Zimmel or Uncle Reinie Grulke started to pitch sheave bundles into the monster.

The first sheaves were pulled into the beast by giant claws, grabbing and pulling the bundles off the conveyor

into the beast. The tractor snorted a bit, belching black smoke out of the exhaust as the governor opened up a bit. The big machine bore down. Hidden flailing knives went to action cutting the twine and stalks up, dropping straw and oats onto the hidden separator racks, shaking below. Deep within the giant machine the process of separating the grain from the stalks took place. The machine rocked and shook a bit but did not move as it was securely blocked in place.

Once the grain separated from the straw, the fan & blower deep within the belly of the beast sucked up the straw and chafe and then blew it out of the blower pipe into the either the barn's straw mow or a straw stack outside in the barn yard. The threshed grain dropped and gathered in the belly of the beast and was sent by conveyor to either into a gunny sack filler or the granary, where we boys shoveled and leveled the grain as it piled up. Bundle after bundle was pitched into the machine and when that wagon was empty, another one was moved into place and the process repeated itself until the last bundle was threshed.

Grandpa was constantly observing and tweaking the machine, checking and making sure the oats were being

properly threshed out, oiling whatever needed oil and adjusting the direction of the blower pipe to evenly spread the straw that was blown into the mow or onto the outside stack. Occasionally, the men switched jobs, so one could get a bit of a rest while driving the tractor and empty wagons to field and bring back a loaded one.

Dinner time (lunch) was a big part of a threshing crew's day. It usually was a bit later, around 2:00 when the heat of the day was coming in. The later meal gave everyone a chance get out of the heat, relax a bit and eat. The women and girls prepared and served up big plates of meat, potatoes and gravy, fresh greens out of the garden, fresh homemade bread and lots of pie. The crew enjoyed good food and good conversation with lots joking and laughter going on, mostly in German. German was still the language of choice for the older generations

When the eating was done, the crew went out in the yard and stretched under the big shade trees to rest a bit and enjoy a bottle of Theresa's own Pioneer beer. It was common for a dad to give his son a drink from pa's beer bottle in those days. My cousins, Loren, Fritz, Allen and I hung around our dads, hoping they would offer us a 'schluck' of beer. At that time, our ages varied between 10 and 12, and the social norms were different from those observed today. We got our "schlucks" of beer and went away feeling like we had grown up a bit more that day.

Soon the men went back to work and the threshing continued

until it was done or the sun would set. If they weren't finished, they would come back and finish up the next day.

Meanwhile, the women and the younger kids would sit down and eat, followed by clean-up and washing dishes. After the women finished the dishes and such, they would pack up the younger kids, go home to do their own chores and start evening milking

Well, the crew finished up the threshing at Grandpa's and Uncle Arnold's that day. The next morning Grandpa hauled the "Red River Special" to another farm and the process would be repeated until all the farmers who were on the threshing crew had their grain crops "in the bin."

That year, a neighbor of Grandpa's, who had been a part of the threshing crew for many years previously didn't help. Instead, he harvested his oats crop with a brand new fangled, pull-type motor combine. It was quicker and needed far less labor than traditional methods of cutting, shocking, and threshing oats and small grains.

During the following winter, there must have been a bit of conversation about the new-fangled pull-type combine across the road. By the time the next grain harvest rolled around the following year, Grandpa Zimmermann and two of my uncles partnered up and bought a self-propelled combine between them and...It was the end of the line for the "Red River Special."



The Dobberpuhl threshing crew finishing up and enjoying some Theresa Beer in the 1930's. L-R Gerhardt Dobberpuhl, Ted Dobberpuhl (Standing on beer keg), unknown. Christian Dobberpuhl, August Dobberpuhl and Hilbert Dobberpuhl. The August Dobberpuhl Farm was in Sec 33, Theresa Township on Zion's Church Road. Today that farm is known as the Lindert farm.

Photo courtesy Rob Bowe



Beck Motors Showroom & Service Department in late 1970s



Jim's Super Store, 1980s

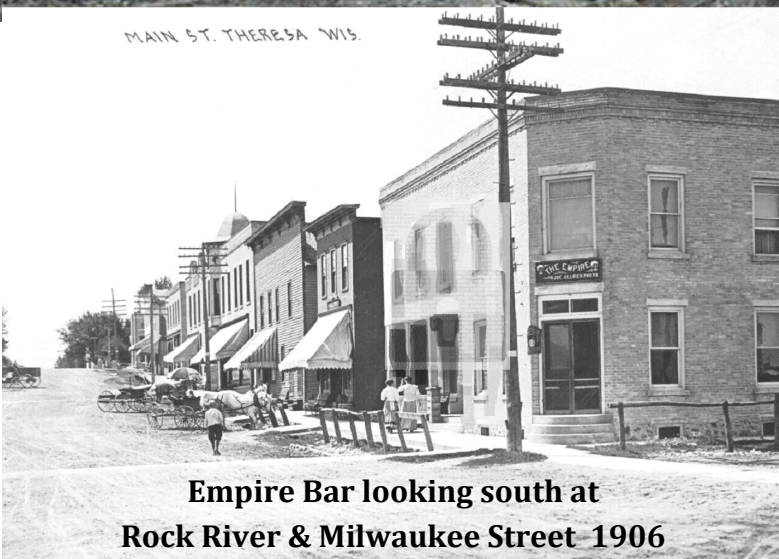


1915 Northwestern Band Day Parade Line-Up in front of Bandlow House

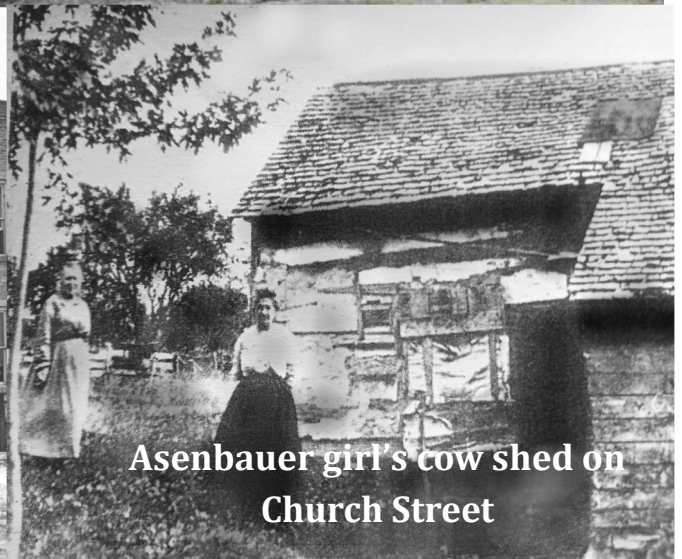


Theresa Montage

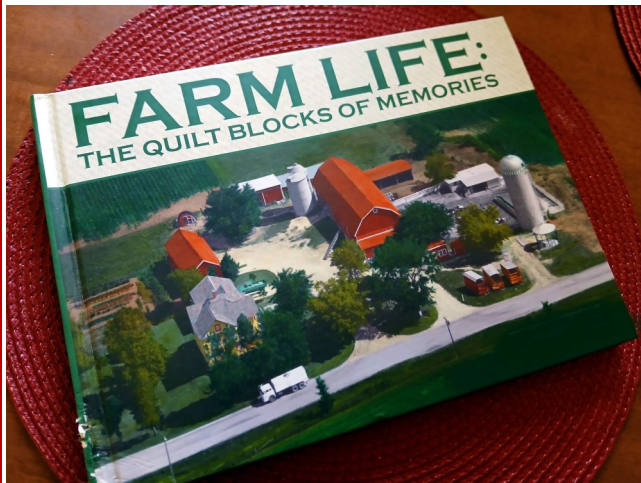
Ladies relaxing in front of Phoebe Anninger's Dress Shop 1910



Empire Bar looking south at Rock River & Milwaukee Street 1906



Asenbauer girl's cow shed on Church Street



Limited Edition ORDER NOW!

FARM LIFE: THE Quilt Blocks of Memories

By Diane Christian Boehm

A wonderful collection of memories about growing up on a dairy farm in Theresa Township, Dodge County, Wisconsin in the 1940s, 50s & 60s. High quality hard-cover book, printed on superior quality paper. Filled with wonderful memories and stories. Lots of color and Black & White photos. 106 pages
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Please send ____copy/copies of FARM LIFE: THE Quilt Blocks of Memories.

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Ship my order to : Name_____Phone_____

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Theresa Historical Society is 501(c)3 tax exempt charitable organization

The Theresa Historical Society needs your Help

Your can help to continue & preserve the history of our area. Here's how .

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\$ 15 Individual_____ \$25 Family_____

\$50 Business Sponsor membership _____

2. Donations to THS Historical Society \$100_____ \$50_____ \$25_____ Other_____

3. I would to volunteer time or others talents to help the society._____

4 . I have artifacts to donate. Please contact me _____

Please check the appropriate lines in number 1-4 above

Total Enclosed_____ Total Enclosed_____

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