



# Seymour History Bulletin

A publication of the Seymour Community Historical Society Inc.

*Dedicated to preserving Seymour Area History*

June 2009

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Web site: [www.seymourhistory.org](http://www.seymourhistory.org)

## Newsletter

The ***Seymour History Bulletin*** is the official publication of the Seymour Community Historical Society. The purpose of the periodical is to keep interested parties informed about the activities of the society and events promoted by the organization. This edition features events coming up this summer.

Please note the articles in this issue by society members, Karla McClone and Duane Ebert. Part of the purpose of the newsletter is to provide members with an avenue to communicate with others. Anyone who is interested in writing should call one of the numbers listed above. The articles and much more are also listed on our Web site: ([www.seymourhistory.org](http://www.seymourhistory.org)).

Look for the newsletter in your mailbox three to four times a year. We plan to include a variety of topics with an emphasis on local history. If you have something appropriate to offer, please contact either Bill Collar (833-6064) or Marge Coonen (833-2656).

## Are You a Member of the Seymour Community Historical Society?

The Board of Directors of the historical society has agreed to keep the membership dues at a level that is within reach of everyone. Perhaps you haven't got around to joining. In this mailing you will find a membership form and addressed envelope. Please consider becoming a member. Presently the organization has 78 lifetime family members (\$50.00) and 29 lifetime business members (\$100.00). An individual yearly membership is only \$5.00 and a family is \$10.00.

Your membership supports the following:

- Music in the Park
- Christmas display and memory forest
- Educational programs emphasizing local history
- Open house and bake sale
- Performers and speakers brought to you by the society
- Changing exhibits on display at the museum
- Access to museum files for research
- Reduced rates on bus trips
- The beautification of Depot St.

With plans for a new museum well under way, we are looking for continued growth in our membership. The new building will be much more than a traditional museum. It will be a community resource center.

## Annual Meeting Report

Seymour High School seniors John Vanden Heuvel and Dennis Schneider presented their award-winning program about German WWII prisoners of war who were held in Wisconsin. In the process of doing their research, the young

historians traveled to the Madison area to interview a former German soldier who was held at Lodi and Columbus. They showed the membership the culmination of their 2008 National History Day Project, a ten-minute documentary, including parts of the interview with the former POW. Dan Brice, Seymour High School U. S. History Teacher, accompanied the students and explained the nature of the history day program.

The students related that 38 camps existed in Wisconsin to house about 20,000 prisoners of wars. The prisoners supplemented the work force, often doing agricultural or other tasks not related to the production of war materials. Not considered a threat to escape, the prisoners often ate with the farm family. The former POW interviewed said the food was good, and they were limited by the terms of the Geneva Convention, to no more than eight hours of work a day.

Seymour resident, Ralph Melchert, supplemented the program with recollections from the days when as a child he

would accompany his father, Ray, to the canning factory to pick up a German worker. Ray, who spoke German, would get the worker in the morning and return him at the end of the day. The closest camp to Seymour was at Hortonville with a capacity of 305 prisoners. The Melcherts established quite a relationship with "Willie," their German worker, and traveled to Berlin to visit him in 1983.

The students did an excellent job with their presentation and considerable discussion ensued while attendees enjoyed the hospitality provided by library director Elizabeth Timmins. After an audited financial report, Ellen Piehl and Gail Dean were named to the Board of Directors to replace outgoing members, June Boettcher and Dan Beilfuss. The officers for 2009 remain the same: Janice Eick, secretary, Marge Coonen, treasurer, Lois Dalke, vice-president, and Bill Collar, president. For more information about the historical society and Seymour history, access the Web site at ([seymourhistory.org](http://seymourhistory.org)).



*Seymour students Dennis Schneider and John Vanden Heuvel (front) addressed the Historical Society. Seymour resident Ralph Melchert, and history teacher Dan Brice, supplemented the WWII POW presentation.*

## Mary Todd Lincoln is a Big Hit

Racine actress Jessica Michna, portraying Mary Todd Lincoln, entertained and educated an audience of about 50 at the Muehl Public Library. Dressed in period clothes, she vividly summarized her experiences from meeting a young Mr. Lincoln to her life as a widow. The skilled performer took the audience on an emotional rollercoaster as she captured the

wit of the nation's 16<sup>th</sup> president, and then interlaced the humor with poignant incidents of sorrow. Mrs. Lincoln not only lost her husband, but also saw three of her four boys succumb to illness by age 18.



Holly Collar, President of the Friends of the Library and Janice Eick, Secretary of the Hist. Society, meet Mrs. Lincoln.

After a presentation of about an hour, Mrs. Lincoln answered questions from an attentive audience. She defended her lavish spending as necessary to upgrade the executive mansion and to conduct herself in a manner fitting the first lady. When asked about her relationship with her oldest son

Robert, who had her committed to an asylum later in life, she said he was always a challenge and they never related very well.

Co-sponsored by the Friends of the Library and The Seymour Community Historical Society, the event was available to the public at no charge. Refreshments were served, including a cake made from an original Civil War recipe. Everyone agreed, it was a fun evening and a great opportunity to learn more about the President Lincoln and his family.

## The Man Who Made a Difference

By Karla Schmit Mc Clone

*"The purpose of life is not to be happy – but to matter, to be productive, to be useful, to have it make some difference that you have lived at all." Leo Rosten*



Babe Seidl made a difference in many lives in Seymour. Through his dedication to the community as a civic leader, volunteer fireman, sports enthusiast, husband, father, grandfather, neighbor and friend.

He made a huge difference in my life that could only be appreciated as I got older. My first memory of Babe was when I was 8 years old. I did not know this man nor did I like him, because he

was about to make a difference in my life.

My life was pretty good for a girl with 3 younger brothers, living on Howard St in Green Bay. I had friends, I was in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade at St. Patrick's school and I had my treasured library card from the Fort Howard Library. I loved that library, a big old house with lots of stories in it.

At the time, my parents were looking at buying a different house. I would have to change schools, but that was okay, because I wouldn't have to wear uniforms to school any longer, but most importantly, I would still live close enough to the library.

Then one evening a man came to our home that made a difference. Everything changed. We were moving to Seymour. Seymour...how could that happen? What about the new house, the new school, what about my library card. Seymour was so far away. I hated crossing the bridge in Oneida. Did Seymour have a library?

There were tears when the For Sale sign went up in front of our house, tears when we said good-bye to our friends, assuring them that we most certainly would be back, and there were tears when I told the librarian not to throw my library card away because I was sure we would move back.

Ever since Babe became ill and moved to the Good Shepherd Home, I had been thinking about the night the stranger came to our door in Green Bay and the difference that he made in my life and that of my family.

The Seidl's, Babe and Ellie, have always been an integral part of my life in Seymour. Friends of my parents soon became family. That tradition lives on with my family and friends. *Smitty* and *Babe*, along with their friends, spent their times at Legion Baseball games, Bobcat Hockey games, and bowling to name a few events. Together they were volunteer fireman, Legion and VFW members.

And then there were Packer Sundays. If they were not attending the game, they were with their friends watching it in someone's living room, screaming at Lombardi and Starr for missed plays or intercepted passes. Years later, I too understood that Sunday afternoon obsession.

Babe and Ellie were there for the fun family events, especially Christmas Eves at the Schmit house. But more importantly they were there for the rough times. Mom didn't have to worry about us being fed and cared for when she never left my brother's side when he was hospitalized for weeks. Ellie came to the rescue to baby-sit my 10-day-old daughter when I was admitted for appendicitis. Then of course, when my dad was sick.

It was important to us that when it was time to take dad to the hospital that he was surrounded by family and friends. It was Ron that we called to assist in the ambulance transport. After 2 days of waiting for the inevitable at the hospital, we realized that dad was waiting to say good-bye to his buddies. Once the Seidls and Johnsons arrived to say their farewells, peace came to him.

I was so afraid at the time. Babe and I sat alone in the stairwell at the hospital the day before my dad died. I told Babe that I needed to leave to buy dad a new suit to be buried in because his was going to be too big and wouldn't fit, but I was afraid to leave. Babe talked to me for a long time, calmed my fears and told me not to worry and that my dad did not need a new suit. Babe explained why and that everything would be taken care of. I trusted him and he was right. Again, he made a difference in my life.

I will never know how different my life would have been if the stranger, Babe Seidl, hadn't come to the door of our house in Green Bay one evening, long ago. But I do know this; because the stranger came to the door my life has been blessed and was different. I could go on and on about the differences he made in my life, but I am just one small part of the differences Babe made on people's lives in Seymour.

Babe and Ellie Seidl have lived their lives with laughter, compassion, commitment and love. They have made a difference. My life is a reflection of my parent's lives and that of their friends and the difference they made. I hope to honor them all by following in their footsteps with hopes of making a difference.

I did move away for a while, but Seymour was home and I moved back got married, raised my family and got a new Library Card.

**Karla Schmit McClone, April 2009**

# Early Baseball at Isaar

By Duane Ebert

About 1918-1920 baseball teams at Isaar were organized in a rather loose fashion. My father, Walter Ebert and Uncle, Frank Ebert both played. Dad, Walter, was the right-handed pitcher and Uncle Frank, whose nickname at the time was "Dumplings", was the left-handed pitcher. Dad would have been 16-18 years old and Frank 18-20. In later years, after my father married in 1925, he often returned to Isaar for visits with the family. On these occasions, Dad pitched for whatever Isaar team was playing. A more organized team at Laney, WI, wanted Dad to pitch for them, but his work as a cheese maker took him to Oconto County. Dad, had a uniform, probably second hand.



The uniform worn by Frank Ebert when he played for Isaar.

Across the front in big red letters, sewn on the uniform was ISAAR. Some years ago, I donated the faded and patched uniform to the Seymour Community Historical Society.

Other Isaar boys who played on the team were: Albert Schmidt, my mother's uncle who played second base, Phillip Schwab, Mom's brother Mike Kranzusch, and Amos Wilson, catcher. The names of other players are lost in history.

The baseball games were played in Charles Ebert's field across the road from St. Sebastian Church.

Some of the teams Isaar played came from the small hamlets of Briarton, Rose Lawn, Nichols and Laney. The manager of the Rose Lawn team was Nick Gerchack (sic).

In later years, other more structured baseball games

were played at Isaar. At this time, other men who played included the Krahn boys, who were outstanding players. The above information is from a life-long Isaar resident, Bernard Schmit, my mother's cousin, and from Ebert family reminisces.

## Seymour Baseball During the 1930's

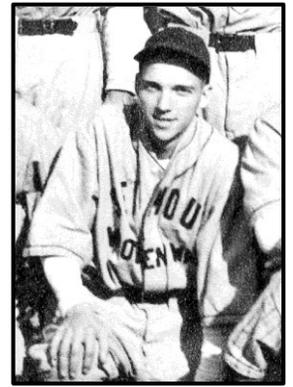
Interview with Roy Puls

Previous issues of the *Seymour History Bulletin* looked at baseball in the Seymour area around the turn of the century. Recently Roy Puls shared some of his memories of baseball during the 1930's. Baseball has always been popular in Seymour, and during the 1930's the local team dominated the competition.

Roy started playing ball in 1925 at age 12. Bill Row, the manager of the legion team, recruited Roy's older brother Ralph, and Roy tagged along. The Seymour nine played their games at the fairgrounds. Bill Row, who managed for about 20 years, took great care to improve the field until as Roy said, "Even though the outfield grass wasn't always mowed, we had one of the best diamonds in the area." He recalled getting beat by a Green Bay team 33-8 "because they mowed

the entire field and the ball just kept rolling." Years later, when playing at the Greenville Grange, Roy, a singles and doubles hitter, hit a home run when the ball got lost in the outfield grass. He said, "The next day the headline in the paper said Puls wins the game with a home run!"

Seymour played Nichols, Navarino, Black Creek, Gillett, Krakow, Bonduel, Cecil, Oconto Falls, and other area communities. Games were played on Sundays,



Roy Puls 1936. When he played with the Woodenware team.

and a play-off game would draw up to 500 spectators. Roy cited Nichols and Navarino as having some "talented players" and the most intense rivalry was against Black Creek.

Roy played for the city team for 12 to 15 years and remembered that he would have to hustle to get cheese made early on Sundays so he could get to the game on time. Ace centerfielder for Hortonville, Elmer Collar, described Roy as, "a good hitter and slick fielder." The team was comprised of players from Seymour and others who were actually paid "expenses" to travel to Seymour. Most notable were first baseman, "Cocky" Hammen, and catcher, Harvey Hartjes, who came from the Little Chute area. Roy cited "Smiley" Nickodem as being one of the best local players. Smiley, who played into his 40's, was a "good hitter, had a strong arm, and could run with the best." Regardless of the outcome of the game, the players usually socialized following the contest. In Seymour, everyone met at the hotel. Roy commented that he made many friends on opposing teams.

Seymour Woodenware sponsored the Seymour team. Roy recalled that Joe Adamski, the owner, was quite a sports fan. He traveled to Chicago with Joe and others to watch the Cubs

### 1936 Seymour Press Seymour Wallops Gillett 14 to 0

A determined ball team took the field Sunday against the supposed to be strong Gillett team and played the kind of ball that it takes to win pennants and trimmed Gillett to the tune of 14 to 0.

Wanie on the mound for Seymour was unbeatable. He held the hard hitting Gillett team to just 3 singles and breezed along in easy fashion to score his first shutout of the year. To do this Orville received swell support from his team mates Seymour played errorless ball and also had their heads up and were fighting all the way.

Seymour hitters also came to life and combed Gillett pitchers for 20 hits. Next Sunday the team goes to Krakow and must keep on with their winning ways to stay in the race.

Seymour	AB	R	H	E
Roy Puls, 2B	3	1	1	0
Vande Walle, SS	6	1	3	0
Nickodem, 3B	6	1	4	0
Hartjes, C	4	1	2	0
Hammen, 1B	4	2	2	0
Ness, LF	4	1	2	0
Krake, RF	5	2	3	0
Ralph Puls, CF	5	1	1	0
Wanie, F	5	1	2	0
Gillett	AB	R	H	E
Brozig, RF	4	0	0	0
Rusch, 2B	4	0	2	0
Baker, SS	4	0	0	0
Ehlers, CF	2	0	0	0
Schmidt, P	2	0	0	0
Gaulke, 3B	2	0	1	1
Zenke, C	3	0	0	0
Neuman, LF	3	0	0	0
Engel, 1B	3	0	0	0
Lademan, P	2	0	0	0
Bulolz, CF	1	0	0	0
Gillett	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0	0 0 0
Seymour	3 0 5	0 0 0	0 6 x	

Triples: Vande Walle, Hammen;  
doubles: Hammen, Nickodem;  
struck out by Wanie, 11, by Schmit  
0, in 2 and one-third innings, Lade  
man 7 in 4 and two-thirds innings;

and Packer-Bear games. With the coming of WWII, many players entered service, and area baseball slowed considerably until it was reborn again in the 1950's. (Perhaps we will investigate that era in a future issue. We need former players to contact us.)



Smiley Nickodem pictured at the fairgrounds.

***If you have any pictures or articles related to Seymour area activities and would like to donate them to our collection, please contact Bill Collar at 833-6064. We can make copies of your originals and return them to you.***

## New Exhibits at the Museum

Numerous members of the historical society contributed to cleaning, painting, and building new displays at the museum. A special "thank you" to Ed Machachek, Jeff and Karen Reed, and LaMont Kraft for painting. VerVoort Construction built new shelving, and Countryside Photography has been busy donating many hours enlarging photos and helping with exhibits. Be sure to stop and see the new look of the main room. Visitors will find the contrasting panoramic views of the



The Miller-Piehl area illustrates what life was like on Depot St. in the early 1900's.

city (100 years apart) fascinating. Since the building is one of the oldest in Seymour, the Miller-Piehl heritage is preserved along with numerous business ads from 100 years ago.

The Home of the Hamburger has donated a touch screen television so viewers can access the programs featured on the food channel and travel channel. Undisputable evidence verifying that the hamburger originated in Seymour is on display.

Find the time to bring the kids in to see the dolls and toys from days gone by. There is even a play area where the children can try out the wind-up and pull toys.

Whether you are interested in doing family research, would like to show the kids what life was like years ago, or want to take a nostalgic tour, the museum has something for everyone. The old time home on the second floor features an icebox, wooden washing machine, Edison record player, and numerous other items from the early 1900's.

Perhaps you have stopped to view the flowers or paused to investigate the window display. Kailhofer's donated the annuals, Pat Seidl keeps the perennials blooming, and Janice Eick and Lois Dalke change the window display monthly.

## Music in the Park, Summer Activities and Announcements

The enclosed yellow flyer contains important information please look it over carefully. John and Lynn Koenigs have lined up another great schedule for summer music. ***Please remember to leave the parking spots closest to the gazebo for senior citizens. Because of the close seating, music, many children present, and numerous blankets, etc. please leave all pets at home.***

### Farm Market

Visitors to the farm market (2:00-6:00) on Tuesdays, are encouraged to visit the museum which will be open from 2:00 to 4:00.

### Bus Trip to Door County

The historical society is teaming up with the "Friends of the Library" to sponsor a wine tasting and museum tour trip to Door County. All the details are listed on the enclosed yellow flyer. There is room for 50 people. Reservations will be taken in the order they are received. Clip the form and mail it to Holly Collar before June 15<sup>th</sup>.

### New Museum Project

Any person, group, or organization that would like to view a 10-minute presentation regarding the plans for the new museum should contact Bill Collar. Details about donations can be found on the Web site or obtained at the museum.

### Membership

We thank all our members for their support. If you are not a member, please consider joining. All money raised is spent on local projects. All workers are volunteers. It is a great community organization to help sustain.

### The History Bulletin

The **History Bulletin** is sent to you quarterly. Your membership fee helps us meet our expenses. If you would like to submit an article or be interviewed, please contact one of the editors.

### WWW.seymourhistory.org

All historical articles in this newsletter and in the newspaper are posted on the web site. If you haven't sent us your e-mail address, please do so. All information is available on our web site. We will keep you informed of special shows at the museum this summer.

### Mailing address

Please contact us if you have a change of address or if we misspell your name. We do our best to keep current, but because of the numbers involved, we do make mistakes.