

Seymour History Bulletin



A publication of the Seymour Community Historical Society – Spring & Summer 2025

Dedicated to Preserving Seymour Area

History Bill Collar, Editor - (920) 833-6064

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If museum closed: (920) 833-6064

Summer hours: 1:00 – 4:00 Friday - Sunday

Board of Directors

Cathy Anschutz	Mike Keyzers
Bob Bock	Sue Keyzers
Kurt Boettcher	John Koenigs
Bill Collar	Karen Kuske
Janice Eick	John Pashouwer
Terry Lardinois	Joyce Zahn

Spring, fall and winter: 1:00 – 4:00 Sunday

Closed: January, February and March. Open by appointment anytime.

The Contents of this Issue

The purpose of our newsletter is to keep our members informed of events taking place at the museum and to keep Seymour History alive through relating past social, cultural and economic activities. In addition to the annual meeting, this publication includes excerpts of an interview that Seymour Community Historical Society member Cathy Anschutz conducted with society member Vera Holzer who attended Seymour High School in the 1940s. Vera, a lifelong Seymour resident who recently turned 100, provides a picture of what life was like in Seymour during the 1930s and 1940s.

Mission Statement

The Seymour Community Historical Society is primarily educational. It specifically collects and preserves records and physical objects relating to the history of the city of Seymour, Wisconsin and the surrounding area.

Readers will find pictures and a summary of the Kids' Christmas celebration where every visiting child picked out a present courtesy of a generous donation by the family of Bud VandenHeuvel. Since a fire at the **Seymour Press** office destroyed copies of the local paper prior to 1947, historians must research Green Bay and Appleton papers for Seymour news. Fortunately, the larger area papers included a "Seymour News" section every week or two and this issue of the **Bulletin** includes Seymour news from 1925. Readers will also find the Music in the Park schedule for 2025 and additional news about changes at the museum and model railroad display located in the former railroad depot.

The last several pages of this publication list our most recent contributors. Thank you for your gifts and donations necessary to keep our mission on track. The Seymour City Council recognizes the value of preserving our heritage and supporting an attractive museum through providing the museum utilities.

Museum Open on Memorial Day May 26

The Seymour Community Historical Society Board of Directors is pleased to announce the museum will be open Memorial Day, May 26 following the veterans tribute program at the Veterans Memorial Park on Depot Street adjacent to the museum. Visit the Museum and view the slide program honoring Seymour Area veterans. It will be open all summer on Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00. Several special programs are planned for the summer and they are explained in this newsletter. On Saturday, May 10 Jessica Michna, an outstanding actor will present at the annual meeting.

Dates to Remember - See Inside for Details

- * **May 26 - Museum Opens for Memorial Day**
- * **May 10 - Annual Meeting**
- * **June 11 - Music in the Park Starts**
- * **July 26 - Book signing with Sharon Nachtwey**
- * **Aug. 27 - Last Music in the Park**

For an inexpensive family outing visit the Seymour Community Museum, Old General Store and Model Railroad Layout and Museum - all located on Depot Street.

Annual Meeting Featuring Jessica Michna as Caroline Ingalls

Jessica Michna, recipient of the Presidential Service Center's Distinguished Service Award, is widely known for her riveting portrayals of First Ladies, notable women of history and fictitious characters. She has entertained groups throughout America including guests from as far away as New Zealand, Japan and Brazil. Audiences ranging from young children to senior citizens have been equally enthralled. She has appeared before historical societies, schools, libraries, living history museums, senior centers, churches, and has been guest hostess at parties and weddings.



Mrs. Michna's performances are compelling and emotionally enthralling. Audiences laugh along with her humorous anecdotes. She has a powerful effect on an audience. The SCHS is pleased to have Mrs. Michna return to Seymour for another outstanding presentation as Caroline Ingalls, the mother of Laura Ingalls Wilder, on Saturday, May 10, starting at 1:00.

Caroline Ingalls - May 10

Join "Ma"- Caroline Ingalls, mother of noted author Laura Ingalls Wilder, as she prepares for Christmas in 1886. Caroline shares the recipes and traditions of the season, collected over the years, as the family traversed the Midwest. Generations of children worldwide have been fascinated by the stories and books of Laura Ingalls Wilder. Her "Little House" series was the basis for a successful television series. But how did her life really evolve? For more insight into the life of Laura be sure to attend this unique presentation by Jessica Michna and her convincing performance as Laura's mother.

Mrs. Michna has presented in Seymour several times in the past as Helen Keller, Eleanor Roosevelt, Mary Todd Lincoln and three years ago as Laura Ingalls Wilder. All of her programs have been outstanding. She is a gifted artist who makes history come alive. This program is an excellent opportunity for anyone who has read the "Little House" books. Parents are encouraged to bring their children.

Coffee, juice and desserts, courtesy of the historical society, are available following the presentation. This is also a fine time to tour the museum. Admission is free.

2025 Budget for the Seymour Community Museum

To be approved at the annual meeting

Expenses

Cleaning Supplies	200.00	Bld. Maintenance	4,000.00
Office Supplies	700.00	Utilities	15,000.00
Tax Preparation	1,000.00	New Displays	3,500.00
Bands for Music	5,500.00	License and Fees	400.00
Advertising	1,000.00	Web Host & Tech.	1,500.00
Music Expenses	1,000.00	Flowers & Decorations	1,000.00
Special Events	1,400.00	Memorials & Gifts	1,500.00
Memory Forest	2,000.00	Postage	600.00
Newsletters	900.00	Miscellaneous	550.00
Display Maintenance	4,300.00		

Total Expenses - \$46,050.00

Income

Admission Donations	600.00
Music Sponsors	5,500.00
50/50 Raffle	3,100.00
Memory Forest	2,650.00
Gift Shop	500.00
Memberships	200.00
Donations	13,700.00
City of Seymour	18,000.00
Music Concessions	1,300.00
Special Events	500.00

Total Income - \$46,050.00

Review of the Kids' Christmas at the Museum

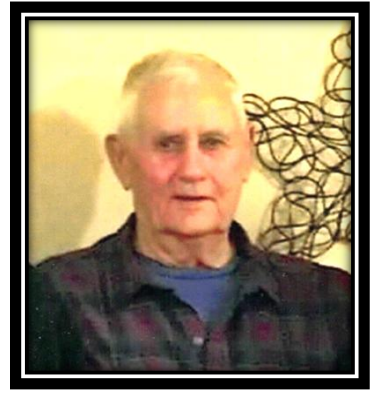
Sponsored by the family of "Bud" Vanden Heuvel

Numerous parents, grandparents and smiling children and grandchildren benefited from the generosity of the "Bud" Vanden Heuvel family and visited the



Cathy Anschutz, Joyce Zahn and Karen Kuske decorated the museum and prepared the toys for the children.

Seymour Community Historical Society board members Cathy Anschutz, Joyce Zahn and Karen Kuske decorated the museum and displayed gifts courtesy of the Vanden Heuvel family. The children could select a gift and a cookie baked and donated by Pam Zak and Cathy Rydzewski.



"Bud" Vanden Heuvel

Christmas at the museum display on Saturday, December 7. The first 100 children, accompanied by an adult, received a free gift courtesy of the family of Frank "Bud" Vanden Heuvel. Bud was a Marine Corps veteran, auctioneer, livestock dealer and longtime mail carrier in Seymour. He loved children and was active in the fair and supporting school activities.



Top left - Mark and Tammy (Vanden Heuvel) Kimball with Ryan and Alex Sperber and family.



Top Right - Beth and Bob Pashouwer with grandchildren and John Pashouwer.



A special "Thank You" to the Vanden Heuvel family for sponsoring this activity.



Changes in the Board of Directors

Three long-time members of the Seymour Community Historical Society Board of Directors have decided to not run for reelection for another three-year term. Bill Collar, Janice Eick and John Koenigs are retiring from the Board. Bill, who was one of the founders of the society in 1976, served seven terms as president. Janice was secretary for many years and was responsible for creating numerous exhibits in the museum. John, along with his wife Lynn, scheduled the bands for Music in the Park. He will continue to help in that capacity. Fortunately, three excellent candidates have volunteered to fill the vacancies and will be up for confirmation at the annual meeting May10.

Thank You Janice Eick

Few people have served the historical society longer and with greater zeal than Janice Eick. Janice was on the Board of Directors for ten terms (30 years) most of the time as secretary. She started the Memory Forest (Christmas trees) program, decorated the museum, planned exhibits, popped popcorn for years at Music in the Park and always volunteered to make snacks and tasty goodies for the annual meeting and other events. Christmas was always special when Janice and her sisters Jean and Joan, used many personal items and their expertise to decorate the museum to convey a festive holiday spirit. Many of our members enjoyed her delicious pies always served with a smile and kind word. She spent endless hours at the museum and also took great pride in planning and maintaining the 1930s General Store.

Janice was instrumental in designing and laying out exhibits when the new museum opened in 2012. She also spent hours scanning and labeling pictures for the photo gallery on the historical society website

(seymourhistory.org). Always willing to pitch in on any project, it's volunteers like Janice who help make the museum a special place.



Janice (Mrs. Claus) and sisters Joan and Jean



Mrs. Santa Claus



In the general store with Bob Bock and a friend.

History of the Memory Forest

Over the years many people have commented on the beauty of the Museum Christmas Display on Depot Street. Twenty-nine years ago Janice Eick, who loves the yuletide season, had the idea to brighten up Depot Street and celebrate the joy of Christmas. Janice, who was new to the historical society board of directors, took it upon herself to advertise that people could buy a tree for \$25.00. Rita Gosse, who was president of the historical society, made wooden placards shaped like trees, on which people could convey a message. At first everything from "Happy Birthday" to "Congratulations" was requested. After several years most people requested "In memory of", and that is how the title, "Memory Forest" came about.

Janice, who earned the reputation as being high energy, pounded the stakes and put up the trees with very little help. She recalls, "The first year the trees were \$25.00 and I learned that the stakes had to be anchored in pretty good. Several times after a high wind, I would drive by and a number of fully decorated trees would be laying on their side. I would get out in the cold and wind and tip them back up. Of course I was younger then!"



Depot Street Christmas 2024

"Eventually more people liked the idea and the past several years we have had 43 decorated trees. Because the cost that we paid for the trees continued to increase we had to increase what we charged and this year the price went up to \$65.00. We want to keep the cost down, but we also want to make a little money for the society. Fortunately, we have many generous people in Seymour and some people pay as much as \$100.00. In recent years I have been taking orders and laminating the message on the placard. Other volunteers have been pounding the stakes and tying up the trees. The students from the alternative school have been big help putting up and taking down the trees and decorations."



Gazebo Christmas 2010

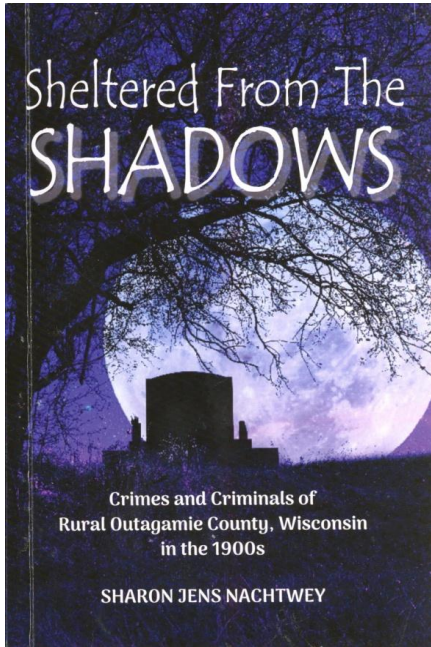


Gazebo Christmas 2024

***Sheltered From The Shadows* by Sharon Jens Nachtwey**

Reviewed by Bill Collar

Have you ever read a murder mystery where you are familiar with a number of the locations described? Or perhaps, you knew, or maybe even interacted with a number of the main characters? Sharon Jens Nachtwey, a lifetime member and avid supporter of the Seymour Community Historical Society and Museum, provides a close look at the crimes and criminals of Outagamie County in the 20th century in her book, ***Sheltered From The Shadows***.

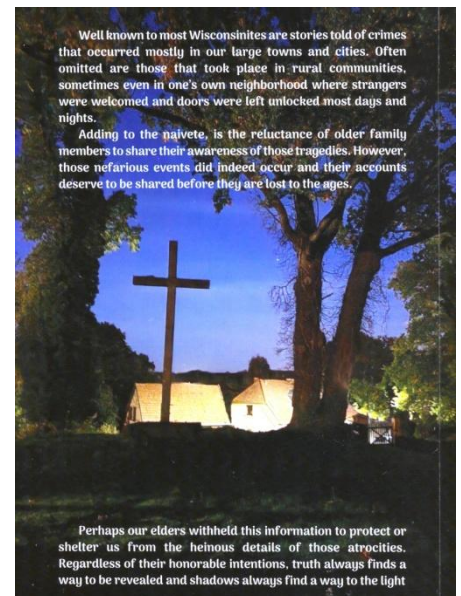


In her introduction Sharon points out that many of the crimes have been forgotten or hidden away because of deep sorrow or shame. Her extensive research included investigating, "Crinkled news clippings found in old, dilapidated scrapbooks, surfing the internet and casual conversations with local folks." She explains that it is, "Easy, when recalling past events, to focus only on good memories, avoiding the tainted truths that lurk in the shadowy past. But it is also dishonest, on historical grounds, to document only the virtuous recollections."

When asked: "What was your motivation for writing the book?" Sharon replied, "I hope to enlighten folks about early Wisconsin life and how settlers dealt with adversity and tragedy. Perhaps instead of viewing our past through idyllic eyes, we should accept the fact that immigrants who settled in rural Wisconsin were by no means perfect. They had sinister entities residing among them, just as we do

today. Hopefully good will always overcome evil and the better parts of our beings will always prevail."

As historian for the Freedom Moravian Church, Sharon wrote a history of the church for the 150th anniversary. While in the process many people turned over their scrapbooks to her. Often the books contained clippings describing crimes and criminals in the county. The articles were valuable resources when she decided to write ***Sheltered From The Shadows***.



- Having written four previous books, Sharon is an accomplished author.
- Her first was a children's book - ***A Mouse's Tale***
 - ***One Room Was Enough*** - A history of the rural school she attended as a child.
 - ***The 150th Anniversary of the Freedom Moravian Church***
 - ***This is My Story, This is My Song*** - A family History

This writer found the book so compelling that it was difficult to put down. It earned a rating of **Two Thumbs Up**. It is highly recommended, especially for those readers interested in local history. You may purchase the book directly from Sharon (\$20.00).

Saturday, July 26, 2025

Sharon will make a brief presentation, answer questions and sign books at the Seymour Community Museum 133 Depot Street. Refreshments provided by members of the historical society. This is an excellent opportunity to learn more about the crimes and criminals of Outagamie County.

One hundred years ago America was experiencing the "Roaring Twenties," a period of economic prosperity, cultural change, and social rebellion in the United States. It is characterized by the rise of jazz music, flappers, and the defiance of Prohibition, ultimately ending with the stock market crash of 1929. What was it like in Seymour, Wisconsin? How did your ancestors live? The next several pages provide an insight into life in Seymour through the eyes of the Appleton Post-Crescent and the Green Bay Press-Gazette

DARING FEATS AT AUTO DERBY

Crowd of About 5,000 is Thrilled by Federated Flier at Seymour Fair Grounds

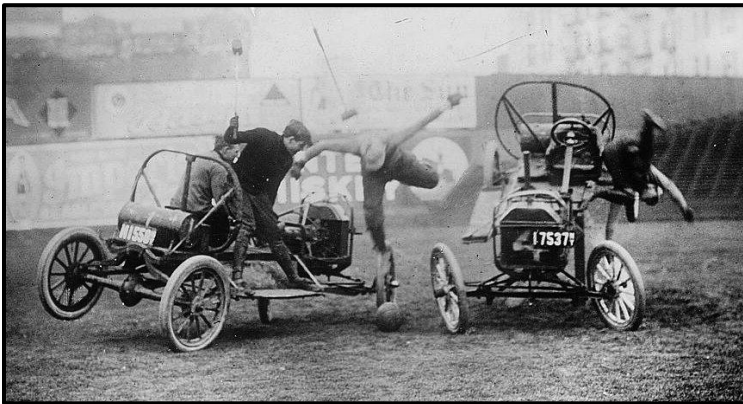
By F. Winsey Special to Post - Crescent

September 26, 1925

A huge crowd gathered at the fairgrounds to experience the thrills of auto polo and the death defying feats of the Federated Fliers. "Play to win, regardless of injury to the other fellow," is the slogan of auto polo, proclaimed an area paper, a full decade into a sport that combined the delicate ballet of a demolition derby with the terrifying prospect of being ejected and then run over, perhaps intentionally, by the other team. "Owing to the very frequent need of a physician," the article continued, "each set of players has a doctor and a nurse as a part of its outfit, both of whom are sometimes needed when a player has been seriously injured."

If that wasn't enough to fill your thrill bucket for the day, look to the sky and view three airplanes in the midst of acrobatic maneuvers often with daredevils hanging from the wings. For a closer look wait for the parachutists, hanging below a billowing white cloud, to land on the track dangerously close to the grandstand. Fun times in Seymour 100 years ago.

Seymour - Five thousand persons from Green Bay, Appleton, Kaukauna, other cities, villages, and rural areas were drawn to Seymour Sunday afternoon to see Federated Fliers under of the auspices of the Seymour Fair Association perform on the fairgrounds and each visitor was well paid in the thrills department.



Auto Polo was a dangerous and exciting game.

In the auto polo games, contending cars driven by experts shot in and out and backward and forwards with equal speed. Frequently they locked rear wheels or grappled in some other way in a struggle for clear way to the ball. Several times a car passed over the exposed motor or a axle of its rival. One car bumped hard by another rolled over twice and lay bottom side up with its rear wheels still spinning. Three cars turned turtle as a result of stiff bumps but were righted promptly and sent in

the game by the drivers, none the worse for bump or roll.

Flames shot up from the fuel supply of an upturned car. When righted it was returned to the game still blazing. So skillfully were they driven the cars grappled, tugged, wrestled, plunged and sprinted like players in a football game. Heavy steel hoops prevented injury to the occupants when the machines turned over.

With the rattle similar to machine guns, six motorcycles in two mile, four mile, and five mile races, kicked up a screen of dust that over hung the track as a dense cloud almost concealing the contestants as they shot around the track at the rate of nearly a mile a minute.



Thrill seekers entertained the grandstand crowd.

Up in the air as a fitting sequel, to the afternoon program were three airplanes sailing abreast in high levels or plunging downward in all

spins. They lunge into back somersaults, exposing performers in daredevil stunts on the extremities of wings or dropping men from dizzy heights clinging to parachutes as life preservers. They completely satisfied the desire of the great crowd to see extraordinary feats performed by fearless actors in the upper region.

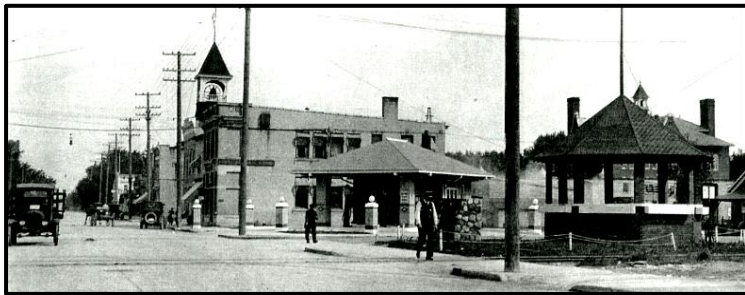
One of the most interesting and least dangerous numbers on the program was a game of automobile push ball in which two automobiles on each side were used to bump a ball eight feet in diameter down the field to the goal desired or to obstruct its course. The Seymour band filled up the gaps in the program with appropriate music. Officers of the fair association assisted in assembling and handling the large crowd.

SEYMOUR BAND IS REORGANIZED

Alvin Huth is Elected Manager and weekly open air concert's will resume.

Appleton Post-Crescent July 24, 1925

Dating back to the early days of settlement in the late 1800's, music has always been an important form of entertainment and enjoyment for Seymour residents. Shortly after World War I the Seymour Military Band was formed and the concerts at the gazebo adjacent to the railroad tracks on Main Street were very popular.



Seymour - The Seymour band at a meeting Tuesday night, was reorganized and officers elected as follows: Manager, Alvin Huth, Assistant manager Joseph Lotter, secretary and treasurer, Milton Kuene. The men voted to hold a band concert and ice cream social Thursday night, August 6. Residents of Seymour have missed the weekly concerts given by the band other years.

The teaching staff for the Seymour city and grade schools for the year are as follows: Miss Alvida Score, first grade; Miss Dedolph, second grade Miss Eva Mc Crary, third and fourth grade

Miss Eva Little, fifth grade, Miss Hazel Jansen, sixth: Mrs Evelyn Haue seventh and eight. High School F.W. Axley, principal; Alfred E. Rohloff, assistant principal; Miss Mary Elliot, English and Latin; Miss Frances Hadley, history; Miss Irma Look, music and Miss Loliita Maedke, commercial.

PLAN IMPROVEMENTS AT THE FAIRGROUNDS

Green Bay Press-Gazette June 14, 1925

The Seymour Fair and Driving Park Association was first organized in 1884 with a mission to provide an agricultural fair and to prove a race track for harness racing. For about 40 years Appleton, Hortonville and Seymour claimed to be the home of the official "Outagamie County Fair". Because of continued improvements to the race track, grandstand, quality of the entertainment and greater emphasis of displaying agricultural products by the end of the 1920s the Seymour Fair was universally recognized as the "Outagamie County Fair".

Seymour - At a meeting of the board of directors of the Seymour Fair and Driving Park Association it was voted to drain the entire parking field and build gravel roads throughout the entire ten acres so the association will have ample parking space for the patrons who attend the fair this year. Each car will be parked so it can leave at any time. It was also decided to build a new roof on the exhibition building and to raise and fill the



This 1927 view from the new grandstand shows the extended parking area north of the track.

exhibition horse barn so it will present a better appearance. The new free attraction stand will be built larger, higher and stronger to take care of the

large acts that are booked for this year. The new grandstand will accommodate 3,000 people.

The association expects to have every department in first class condition when the gates

open on August 25, 26, 27. The premium book is complete and anyone wishing one may write to the Secretary, George F, Fledler.

SEYMOUR ENDS LARGEST FAIR IN ITS HISTORY

Prizewinning Livestock Is Paraded Around Track Headed by Band

By W. F. Winsey, Appleton Post-Crescent Aug. 28, 1925

With a new grandstand, seating over 3,000 and enhanced parking, the Outagamie County Fair in Seymour attracted more patrons from surrounding communities. The fair continued to feature music, agricultural products, area baseball teams and horse races. Occasionally the crowd was brought to their feet when a horse threw its rider and took off on a wayward scamper.

Seymour - About 6,000 persons on Thursday witnessed the presentation of the closing

Let's Go — The Great Seymour Fair.

3 Big Days --Aug. 25, 26, 27

Absolutely the biggest fair ever held in this community. A fair of the people, for the people, by the people.

- Horse pulling contest
- Eight fast horse races- Huge purses
- Music - 120 Field Artillery Band
- Baseball Seymour vs. Anston
Pulaski vs. Zachow, Appleton vs. Duck Creek
- 10 Big Free Attractions

Grandstand Entertainment

Sir Victor's Amazing Miniature Ponies

Miss Loretta - Gifted Dramatic Soprano

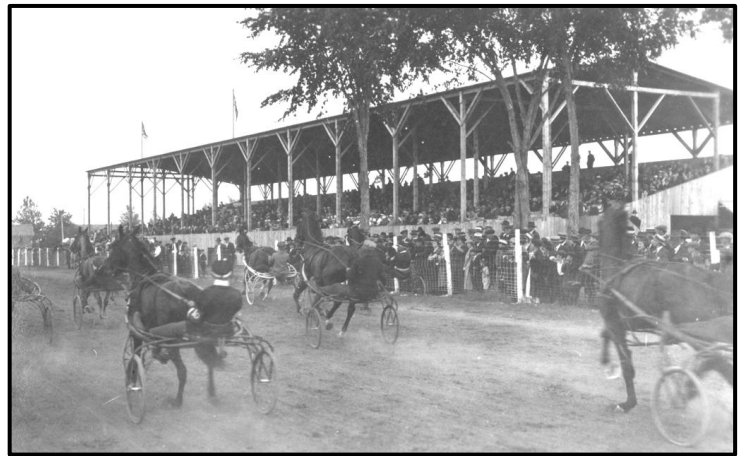
Madame Bedini's Famous Equestrians

The Beautiful and Aerobatic Merkel Sisters

of the Seymour Fair. With the exception of a change of opponents in baseball, the races and the stock parade, headed by the 120th Field Artillery band, the entertainment features of the program were the same as on the preceding days.

The admirable planning of the fair this year, the skillful execution of the plans by the officers and the public patronage drawn from the cities and rural districts about Seymour, combined to make the fair that just closed the most successful ever held in Seymour. The music, furnished by the 120th Field Artillery band was used to fill up the gaps

between the races and free acts on Wednesday. It was loudly applauded, and the announcement that this band would be present Thursday helped to a considerable degree in filling up the seats in the grandstand with repeaters on the last day of the fair.



The new grandstand, completed in 1925, provided excellent viewing for a wide variety races and other events on the track.

Thursday's program consisted of a baseball game between teams from Seymour and Anston in which Seymour won by a score of 21 to 9, a parade before the grandstand of the horses, a variety of free acts, premium winning cattle and numerous horse races.

In the featured race one of the horses threw its rider, dashed part way around the track, scaled the fence, jumped a ditch, bounded away toward the barn with its former rider following in hot pursuit on foot. At the judges stand another horse in the excitement of starting broke its bridle and carried its helpless rider twice around the track at breakneck speed.

SEYMOUR MAN IS INJURED BY AUTO AS HE FIXES TIRE

**Julius Damon Seriously Hurt while
conveying Pupils Home from School**

Appleton Post-Crescent April 27, 1925

Seymour - Jullius Damon, janitor of the high school here was painfully hurt about 11 o'clock Saturday night when stuck by an automobile while returning home from Oshkosh with students who took part in a high school music contest there. He is confined to his bed at his home here with body bruises and lameness but no bones were broken.



Mr. Damon drove one of the three automobiles containing pupils who took part in a high

School music contest. The cars had reached a point about a half a mile north of Appleton on highway 47 when a tire of the Damon machine was punctured. Mr. Damon alighted to replace the tire and as he did so a large automobile coming from the opposite direction struck him and threw him against his own machine. Professor Paulson of the high school, who was driving one of the other cars,

took the injured man back to Appleton for medical aid and then conveyed him to his home.

T.B. TEST COSTLY BUT WORTHWHILE

Appleton Post Crescent March 24, 1925

**Malen Krull says He's glad His Farm is Free
of Infected Herd of Cattle**

Seymour - Malen Krull, route 1, who through tuberculin testing made last summer, lost his entire head of 17 cattle. He has lately finished the replacing of the condemned cattle with top grade Holsteins and Guernsey's. As indemnity from the state for loss of his herd Mr. Krull received \$550. And from the packing plant to which the cattle were shipped an additional \$247.

Although Mr. Krull lost \$200 on milk during the period of readjustment and about \$100 on cows as results of the change from the old herd to the new, he is, likely pleased to feel that his farm animals are rid of tuberculosis. He says that he would not knowingly give unwholesome milk to his own children to drink nor sell dairy products of that character to be consumed by the public. Mr. Krull also lost two brood sows that had been fed skim milk. And he could not raise the weight of 20 hogs that he was trying to fatten above 120 pounds.

Chicago Bears Upset Packers

Local Professional Eleven Suffers Worst Defeat in a Number of Years

Windy City Squad at Top of Game, Score Three Touchdowns,

Two Via Forward Pass; Big Crowd at Game. *Green Bay Press-Gazette Nov. 25, 1925*

Chicago - The Packers bit the dust to the tune of 21 to 0 at the hands of the Chicago Bears before exactly 6,898 paid admission at Cubs park here Sunday afternoon. The Big Bay Blues didn't look much like a championship team. Nearly all the skirmishing was in the Packers' territory and the "Lambeausless" Bays were never even dangerous. It was the worst upset in the Packers' history.

Something was wrong with the Green Bay machine. True enough they battled stubbornly on the defense, but the offense was not even a one lungers. The Packers probably did not make five first downs during the game.

Bears Unbeatable

A few minutes after the game started It was plainly seen that the Bays were not hitting on all eleven. But it was a different story with the Bears. Sport scribes in the press box claimed that they had never seen the Bruins function in such a splendid manner. Their interference was wonderful as the runner was given ample protection at all times. The Chicagoans sprung a nice forward attack which was deceptive and it caused a lot of trouble in the closing quarter.

There was not a team in the country that could have whipped the Bears on Sunday, and that is no alibi.

Cathy Anschutz and Her Interview with Vera Holzer

I've known Vera for many years. We were both born and raised in Seymour, only she preceded me by about 30 years. My most vivid memory of her is in the capacity of child care. She had an excellent reputation for babysitting and could often be seen heading to the park with the children holding hands as they followed her. As I interviewed her I was impressed with her memory and the changes that she recalled taking place during her lifetime in Seymour.

1. How long have you lived in Seymour?

Vera - One hundred years and six months.

2. Where were you born?

I was born in Seymour in the house on the northeast corner of West Factory Street and Lincoln Street. Going west from Main there was the restaurant, Boyden's house, Kailhofer's house then us. It was the little white one on the corner.

3. Tell me about your family?

My parents were Jay Sherwood and Sadie Sherwood. She was Sadie Smith. I had six brothers and sisters. Roy was the oldest and Glen was the youngest. The Sherwood family has roots that go back to the early settlement of Seymour including the Mungers and Gardners. I've been told that I have ancestors on the Sherwood side who came to America on the Mayflower.

4. How long did you live in that house.

Until I got married: Then we moved to the farm in the Isaar area on Holzer Road.

5. Did you work on the farm?

Absolutely! My husband's parents had a 185 acre farm and I didn't know anything about farming. I didn't milk but I would wash the cows and get hay down. I remember one time I got second crop hay down and used it for bedding. I didn't know the difference between hay and straw. My husband wasn't very happy with me. I think that was the only time he was upset with me as long as we were married. I said, 'Don't get mad at me, I didn't grow up on a farm and you never showed me the difference between straw and hay.'

6. When you were a little girl what kinds of things did you do for fun?

We played hopscotch, roller skated, played Annie, Annie over the barn and rode bike. My brother Roy worked for Kuehne's and he bought a used bike. We took turns riding it. We played many different games and I had my chores, cooking and dish washing. My sister was supposed to do the laundry, but nine times out of ten I ended up doing it. They would say 'Shorty can do it.' That was my nickname.



7. What did your dad do?

He worked at the Woodenware.



Vera

Seymour Woodenware employees in 1941.

When my mom and dad first got married he worked at Hallada's Meat Market . He did something wrong with one of the machines and ended up cutting his hand off. After that he worked at the Woodenware, but didn't get paid as much as others because he only had one hand. He was told to keep the stump warm and he should be OK. In the wintertime my grandma would knit mittens and he always kept it covered. The doctors preserved his hand in a jar and it was kept upstairs in the house. I remember when he died. He had a heart attack by the post office on East Wisconsin Street on his way to work. I believe he was in his seventies. Then they buried his hand with him.

8. *Did your mother have a long life?*

Unfortunately, she was in a car accident when she was in her forties. My brother Glen was taking her to Appleton when somebody pulled out in front of them and he couldn't stop. She went through the windshield and was severely injured. She was never the same after that. I remember helping care for her.

9. *What other things do you remember growing up?*

I remember going to the Seymour Theater. It cost ten cents a ticket. I went to school with Jean Piehl. Her dad owned Miller-Piehl Lumber and my husband, Johnny worked for them when we moved to town. She had a birthday party and her dad was going to pick us all up. That was a real treat because I didn't get to go to the movies very often. I was surprised when my dad came in the theater and picked me up because I was supposed to be babysitting. I was so excited about going to the movie evidently I forgot! I was so mad at my dad because I missed the rest of the movie. I still remember it was something about Cinderella.



The Seemore Theatre in 1939 just prior to WWII. Notice the "America First" sign in the window.

I didn't like babysitting at that particular place because the father would often come home drunk and chase me. When he came in the door, I was out the door. I also used to babysit for a family down by the Woodenware and of course with all the railroad tracks it was dangerous because I had to walk there. Sometimes they didn't come home until 2:00 in the morning and often he was drunk. I was only 11 or 12 years old and I had to walk home. It was dark so I would usually run to Main Street where there was some light. Sometimes I didn't get paid because I was in such a hurry to get out of there. I also cleaned houses when I was that young. I always loved babies. I spoke with Doloris Pingel and told her I used to babysit Harold because his mother lived right across the street. The next time I saw him He said, "You used to babysit me!"

10. *So how many kids did you end up babysitting for in your entire career?*

Well, I remember one time the number got up to 200. I babysat as long as I can remember and I remember getting ten cents an hour during the early days. I gave my earnings to my mom because that was part of the family income. Of course my mom didn't work outside the home because she had all those kids to take care of. When my dad passed away my mom had to get a job and she worked at the canning factory. So who was going to take care of my younger brothers? Me! So I only went through my sophomore year and I had to quit school.

11. *Where did you go to grade school?*

I went to the big school on Robbins Street. It was a combined grade school and high school. I

started in Kindergarten there. In fact, I never missed a day. I even have a certificate to prove it. I liked school. I wanted to graduate and become a kindergarten teacher. ***(Cathy- In many ways you were a teacher, you babysat and homeschooled the kids).***



Seymour Public School Grades one through twelve.

12. Who were your friends back then?

Oh my gosh! There were many: Jeanie Piehl, Virgie Bunkelman, Betty Otto, Carol Beck, Claude Peotter, Dannie Duffey, Buddy Trace, Nancy Hittner, oh my, Junior Brusewitz, he used to put little candy bars in my locker. He was a pretty cool kid. Emil Gosse and many from

Black Creek. Claude Peotter was a good friend. He wasn't very good in arithmetic so I would help him.

13. Do you remember what classes you took when you were in high school?

My favorites were Arithmetic and English . I hated history! I liked school. It came easy for me.

14. What kind of activities did they have when you were in school?



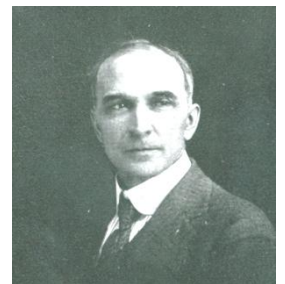
V. Lubinski, D. Radder, E. Kunstman, B. Otto, J. Gavronski, P. Heisler

They had archery and I was good at that. There was a contest between the boys and the girls. Emil Gosse was the best for the boys and I was the best for the girls. I remember we were in the auditorium and I had to go against Emil. Everybody thought he would win, but I beat him. if I remember nothing else from school, I remember that.

15. What teachers do you remember? I remember Mr. Reese and Mr. Loftus. They were friendly and always willing to help. When I was in the third or fourth grade I actually slapped one of my teachers. I got lice from a

girl who sat behind me and I missed two weeks of school.. When I returned, the teacher insisted that I sit in my original seat. When I refused to sit by her the teacher tried to force me. That is when I slapped her and then I ran home. My grandpa was there and he took me back to school and talked to the principal, Professor Axley, and eventually the teacher was fired. She never liked me. I had to clean the blackboards every night and take out the trash

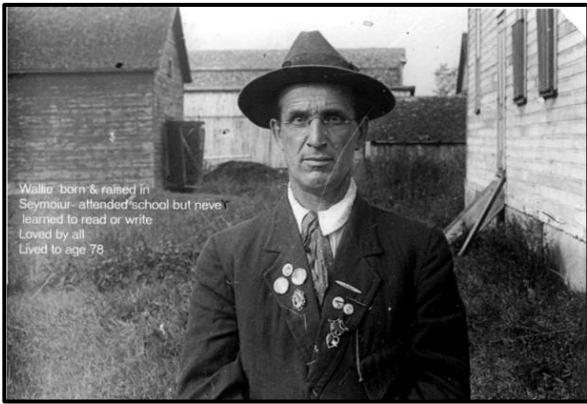
When my grandfather passed away the funeral was in his home and my sisters Opal, June, and I sang and Eleanor Tubbs played the organ. I'll never forget that.



Professor Axley

16. Can you recall any colorful stories or characters from Seymour?

There was Wally Wingate, Dr. Finkel, he was our magician, Russell Recknagel, he was a big man but a little different. Recknagel Park was named after him. His mother had a boarding house down near



Wally Wingate

where the Municipal Building now is. Wally Wingate wore this coat with all these buttons and when there was a parade he would march along. He was a real character.

17. What memories do you have of the fair?

My dad used to park cars. We would take his lunch to him then we wouldn't have to pay to get in. June and I would go together and we always got 35 cents to spend on rides and stuff. Then we would go back by dad and he would say, 'Boy that went fast.'

One time June and I were walking around the grounds and talking and this tall man stopped us and said, 'What type of music do you like?' and I said, 'I like country music.' He

asked, 'Who is your favorite country singer?' I replied, 'Johnny Cash.' He asked are you going to the show tonight?' I said, 'Oh no, I don't have any money for a ticket.' He handed me a ticket and said, 'You give that to the man at the gate and he will let you in. By the way I am Johnny Cash.' That night while he was performing he stopped and said, 'There is a young lady in the audience that I met this afternoon who is up there in the audience. If you are up there stand up and wave.' I wasn't going to stand up then June said, 'Stand up and wave.' So I did and everyone clapped.

Appleton night was on Thursday night and they had huge crowds. They had great fairs in those days. The country singers were fun. The rock and roll wasn't as good.

18. Do you remember Hamburger Charlie?



Oh yes, He had a stand with a big banner that said 'Hamburger Charlie since 1885' in big letters. He had good hamburgers. We always ate there and then we would go to the legion stand that was under the grandstand. They had cotton candy and that was a real treat.

19. Do you have any stories from the Depression years?

I remember this government truck would come around once a month to distribute flour, sugar, lard, a bag of apples that were half rotten. I hated that. You would get books of stamps that you would take

to the store to redeem. It was embarrassing for people because others would talk and say 'There are the people lining up for free food again. To this day I will not do that and have others talk about me. To this day I will not eat cornmeal or oatmeal. My mother would make cornmeal bread then she would slice it and fry it.

The Depression years were tough. There wasn't enough work for people. They were having problems at the Woodenware and a short time later it burned. Then my dad did odd jobs until they could rebuild. The kids all had jobs. I was babysitting and cleaning, Roy worked at Kuehne's, June worked for Dr. Brusky and Opal worked for a family at Pauly's Cheese Factory.

20. How much money did you make in those years?

Well when I babysat I got 10 cents an hour, for cleaning it was 15 cents. Mrs. Miller, who lived across the street always paid me a quarter an hour when I worked for her.

21. What were you doing during World War Two?

I was a teenager during the war years. All three of my brothers served. Roy was in Fort Knox Kentucky, Brian was in Texas and Frankie was at Fort Knox also. Two of my uncles fought against the Japanese and one lost a leg. These were difficult times for my mother who worried about the boys.

22. Where did you meet your husband?

I met him at Hauch's Ice Cream Parlor. That was located on the west side of North Main Street next to the hardware store. Then it became Reese's and later Johnson's Restaurant. Roger Gardner was my cousin and he was a police officer at that time. He had a motorcycle and Johnny, my future husband, had a motorcycle. It was a Sunday, my sister June and I went in and I ordered an ice cream float. When we started to leave he bumped me and I got ice cream all over my white dress. I was supposed to have changed clothes, but I didn't. I said, 'How am I going to get home I've got chocolate ice cream all over my white dress?' He said, 'I will give you a ride on my motorcycle.' Well, I had never ridden a motorcycle before. But, Roger said, 'Go ahead.' And that is how we met. After that we rode all over and he even taught me how to drive it.



Bill Reese purchased Hauch's Dairy. Later it became Johnson's Dairy

23. How old were you when you got married?

I was 19 and Johnny was 21. We dated about two years and got married on November 12, 1943. My mom had to go to the courthouse and sign for me because at that time you had to be 21 to get married without your parent's permission. We got married in my house. My sister June and Johnny's brother George stood up for the wedding. Two years later Johnny's brother married my sister June.

24. What changes have you seen in the community over the years?



West Main St. - Muehl Furniture, State Bank, Drug Store and a Variety store

When I was younger Seymour had many more downtown businesses. I went into all the stores. Everything you needed you could find in Seymour. You didn't have to go into Appleton or Green Bay. Hauck's and later Reese's Dairy were popular spots. They even made their own ice cream and delivered milk to your door. Slowly almost everything disappeared. We didn't have a car so we had to walk almost everywhere. After we were married Johnny's mother had a truck and she would take that to town to get supplies. If they were threshing or something I would drive the truck into town. I couldn't reach the pedals, so Johnny made wooden blocks so I could drive.

25. Did your husband teach you how to drive?

I kind of learned on my own. Back then you didn't need a driver's license. Of course it was a standard transmission so I would practice in the yard. One time I was backing out of the garage and cracked the side mirror. I thought, 'Johnny is going to be mad', but he never said anything until one day he mentioned, 'I must have hit something and cracked that mirror.' He knew I did it, but never blamed me.

26. What were Johnny's parents names?

His dad was Frank and His mother was Kay. His dad died when he was quite young. It was during

the Depression. Johnny never knew him. Johnny's older brothers Pete and George ran the 180 acre farm. When Ed came home from the service they built a house for grandma Holzer. When we lived in the log house on the farm there was no electricity or indoor plumbing. We lived there four or five years. Many of the rural areas around Seymour never got electricity until the late 1940s after World War Two.

27. Where did you live next?

George had a friend in Oregon and he told us how great it was there. So we moved to Oregon, but it wasn't like he said it was. I didn't like it there. It rained every single day. Johnny was gone to work and I missed Seymour and wanted to return. So we came back to Seymour and Johnny got a job operating a farm for an elderly gentleman. When he passed away they sold the place and Johnny worked on another farm near Hoffa Park. After that we moved back into the house of Factory Street and that is when Johnny got a job working for Miller-Piehl and I started babysitting. Jimmy was a freshman in high school and Joann and Carol were in grade school.



Vera in 1985

28. When did you and Johnny buy the house in Seymour?

When my grandpa passed away I said to Johnny, 'I want to buy that house.' He said, 'How are you going to get the money together to buy it?' We weren't making a lot of money on the farm. So I went down to the bank and talked with Mr. Nichodem. I can see him just as plain as day. He said, 'What can I do for you today?' I replied, 'I want to buy my grandma's house.'

He said, 'How will you pay for it?' I said, 'That's my problem and that is why I am here. He smiled a little bit. I always liked him. He was such a nice man. My dad said he wanted \$4,000.00 for the house. After some discussion we decided I could afford \$50.00 a month until the house was paid. It is the white house on the corner of Sally Street and Main Street.

Vera is an amazing woman. Even though she is over 100 years old she continues to maintain contact with the families she babysat for by sending them Christmas and birthday cards. Vera, it was a privilege to interview you. Thank you.



The Seymour Community Historical Society will celebrate 50 years in existence in 2026. Pictured in the first museum in 1976, (RR Depot) on the left, Bill Collar with friends and on the right Rita Gosse adjusting a display.

Visit the Model Railroad Exhibit and Museum

Many people don't realize that Seymour has an extensive model railroad exhibit and small railroad museum. Originally established mainly by Dave Fairbanks and Jim Baxter, with help from Dan Zak and Dave Tesch, Robin Baxter has taken over and opens it for the public. It is located in the former Green Bay and Western Depot on Depot Street. The facility is open during the summer on Saturdays from 1:00 to 5:00. Robin is also working to open up on Wednesday evenings during Music in the Park.

The original depot was constructed in 1873, and the current depot was built in 1915. It was the center of railroad freight activity in Seymour for more than sixty years. Due to competition from other forms of transportation, new technology, and other factors, by the 1970s the Green Bay and Western decided to close depots, including the one in Seymour. In 1977 the depot was converted into the Seymour Community Museum until the museum moved to the Miller-Piehl Building and the Seymour Model Railroad Club took over the Depot in the late 1980s. The last train through Seymour was in July of 1999.



The Seymour Community Historical Society led by Rita Gosse sponsored a fund drive to move the depot across the street from the original location. Seymour city employees and volunteers landscaped the area.



Robin Baxter, pictured with the current depot agent, has succeeded his father, Jim, in managing the depot. He is looking for more volunteers to keep the facility open additional hours.



The HO scale model railroad layout includes up to four trains running at one time through tunnels, unique landscapes and towns with animated characters. The museum area has toys for the little ones and railroad artifacts of interest to railroad buffs.



Depot Street is a busy place during the summer months. The Community Museum and General Store are open from 1:00 to 5:00 on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday with the depot open noon to 5:00 every Saturday. Admission is by donation.

Donations Since September 11, 2024

Listed in the order received

A sincere "Thank You" to all of our donors. Your generosity makes it possible to maintain the museum and offer a variety of programs.

Robert and Debra Court	Seymour, WI	In Memory of Ron Seidl	Sustainability
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Music in the Park - 2025

- June 11 - **Tom's Tunes** - The music season kicks off this year with a fun group singing many of your favorite tunes.
- June 18 - **Talk of the Town** - Back by popular demand playing jazz and the big band sound led by Kevin Van Ess and his hot clarinet.
- June 25 - **Rocker, Rocker, Rocker** - An area favorite, they have been entertaining rock and roll fans for decades. Doug always brings his best to Seymour.
- July 2 - **Jon and Sarah** - Jon's quick wit, vocals and musical talent teams with Sarah, one of the top fiddle players in Wisconsin - always a fun night.
- July 9 - **The Drovers** - Playing a wide range of hits, this Stevens Point band is back by popular demand.
- July 16 - **TNT** - The Natural Talent Polka band from Pulaski brings their explosive sound to Seymour as they warm up for Polka Days in their hometown.
- July 23 - **Thunder Country** - If you like classic country, this is the band for you. Playing the greatest country hits and they always throw in a few surprises.
- July 30 - **Nite Hawk** - Playing everything from country to rock, Nite Hawk features great vocals and guitar playing.
- August 6 - **The New Generation** - Jeff Maroszek and his relatives bring the Polish Polka sound to the Home of the Hamburger.
- August 13 - **"Rockin" Country** - Robin Wussow and local musicians rock the stage with classic country and rock and roll.
- August 20 - **The Reason Why** - Local musicians, Larry Wussow, Scott Skodinski, and Andy Huelttl play a variety of hits.
- August 27 - **Chad Przybylski and the Polka Rhythms** - An annual favorite. Chad and his band are noted for their high energy and great music. Veterans Night.

Help Sustain the Historical Society and Museum with a Donation

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In memory of (Optional) _____

Are you a lifetime member? If not, a family membership is \$50.00, a business membership is \$100.00

Mail your donation to P.O. Box 237 Seymour, WI 54165. The Seymour Community Historical Society, Inc. is a tax-exempt entity. Your donation is fully deductible as provided by law. The federal identification number is: 39-1235870.

Thank you for your support!

Seymour Community Historical Society
P. O. Box 237
Seymour, WI 54165

May 10 - Annual Meeting Featuring Jessica Michna as "Ma" - Caroline Ingalls - 1:00
May 26 - Memorial Day - Veteran's Program after the tribute at the park
June 11 - Music in the Park starts - 6:15
July 26 - Sharon Nachtwey book signing - 1:00

Website: www.seymourhistory.org

E-mail: seymourhistory@centurylink.com

Museum Phone: (920) 833-9835

If the museum is closed: (920) 833-6064

Museum Hours

Summer:

1:00 to 4:00

Friday through Sunday

Fall and Winter:

1:00 to 4:00 Sunday

Closed January through May

Open by request anytime

Admission:

Suggested donation - \$2.00 Individual

- \$5.00 Family

Life Membership - \$50.00

Year Individual - \$5.00 Year Family - \$10.00

Music in the Park - 2025

June 11 Tom's Tunes - Variety and Fun Entertainment.

June 18 Talk of the Town - Classic Jazz and more.

June 25 Rocker, Rocker, Rocker - Classic Rock.

July 2 Jon and Sarah - A variety of Hits.

July 9 The Drovers - A Stevens Point Band.

July 16 TNT Polka - Young Talent Kicking Off Polka Days.

July 23 Thunder Country - Traditional Country.

July 30 Nite Hawk - Country to Rock.

Aug. 6 The New Generation - Polkas and more.

Aug. 13 Rockin' Country - Classic Country and Rock and Roll.

Aug. 20 The Reason Why - A Variety of Hits.

Aug. 27 Chad Przybylski's Polka Rhythm's - Energetic Polka.