



251 North Wolf Road • Wheeling, Illinois 60090

# WHEELING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

WINTER 2011-2012

## A walking tour of Wheeling's town center in 1900

Back in 1950, Carol Bellmore wrote a newspaper article titled, "A Visit to Wheeling business district fifty years ago." This piece was published in the Wheeling Herald approximately 60 years ago. Carol introduced her readers to a time long gone. It is reprinted here for your reading pleasure.

### A visit to Wheeling business district fifty years ago

"Let us travel back through the years that have wrought so many changes in Wheeling to the turn of the century, 1900. We will walk along the two-plank sidewalk, bordered on one side by a rough dirt road and on the other by a barb wire fence enclosing farm yards.

As we enter the town proper from the north, we see on our left the hardware store owned and operated by William Fassbender at the corner of Dundee rd. and Milwaukee ave. Across the street in the Masonic building is a grocery store run by John A. Schminke.

South of Schminke's is a grocery store and postoffice operated by Christ Bollenback and Emil Sigwalt. The post office has all call boxes, no locks. Emil Sigwalt had been serving as postmaster since 1886.

Next to the store and postoffice is a butcher shop owned by Ben Stryker.

Across the street we see a blacksmith shop operated by Walter Riswick with a barber shop just south owned by Joseph Bellmore. Next to the barber shop is the Herman Kaiser Meat Market.

On our right we see the old Columbia Hotel, bordered on the north by Reinhold Schneider's harness shop. The proprietor of the hotel at this time is Chris Utz, who was shot accidentally and killed in later years in the bar room.

South of the Columbia Hotel is the Union Hotel, owned by John Behm (completely destroyed by fire on December 26, 1925).



Fassbender's Hardware Store, built in 1845, stood on the southeast corner of Milwaukee and Dundee.

The Union is a stop-over place for those taking part in the 100-mile bicycle races which are so popular at this time. Full meals are served to the travelers for twenty-five cents apiece! Rooms at the hotel are rented for \$2.50 per week. The Union is also a popular stopping place for the telephone men who check their territory by horse-and-buggy and cannot travel to their headquarters each night.

Dances are held often and are attended by many in the dance hall south of the hotel. This dance hall is also owned by Behms and the dances held there are popular with all the people from the surrounding country.

Just south of the dance hall is Louis Fischer's wagon making shop. Across the street is William Metz's Blacksmith Shop and the old Chicago House on the south. The Chicago House at this time is owned by Everett Mason.

At the south end of town is the large brewing company operated by John and Henry Perolat. Across the street on our right is a beer bottling shop owned by Martin Kufar.

Then we may return through town to the corner of Dundee and Milwaukee. As we look east on Dundee rd. we see the local

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WHEELING  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

Located in the  
Wheeling Park  
District's  
Chamber Park  
251 Wolf Road  
Wheeling, Illinois  
60090

Museum Hours

2011-2012

OFFICERS

President

Joan Wiener  
Vice President

Bill Hein  
Treasurer

Marilyn Chromy  
Secretary

Christine Brady

DIRECTORS

Barbara Forke  
Elaine Simpson  
Becky Vogel



Curators

Patti Steilen, Curator  
Donna Vallas, Assistant

Web Site

Terry Steilen  
Newsletter Editor

Donna Vallas



Wheeling Park District

## Message from the President

Dear Members and Friends,

Happy belated Christmas and a Happy Healthy New Year. Welcome 2012. Where did the past year go? I say that every year and every year seems to go a little faster. What a great winter we are having so far; let's hope it keeps up.

Hope all of you had a good Holiday Season. Lollipop Lane has come and gone again. We had a record turnout of old and new visitors over nine days: approximately 1,600 total; 800 were children. We gave away 2 bikes and 9 other prizes. We also sold out of ornaments and did very well with the cookies. Santa was very busy every day.

In **January** we have a board meeting on the third Wednesday, the 18th, and there will be no General Meeting. **February** brings the White Elephant Auction. So check your closets and attics for something to donate. Invite your friends and relatives to come, too.

Thanks to everyone who helped and put in so much time and effort into Lollipop Lane, and thanks to those who made donation of prizes, cookies, and money. It takes a lot of time and effort but it's worth it. We always get the best response and this year was no exception. Hope to see you in February.

Historically Yours,

Joan Wiener, President



## Curator's report

A new year begins in the museum. We had a wonderful showing at Lollipop Lane. We had a free raffle this year with 11 donated items. This is the first year we sold out of ornaments. We decided on a new design: a glass lollipop ornament. Tied onto the ornament is a red ribbon imprinted with Lollipop Lane 2011 and bordered by snowflakes.



We'll be changing some exhibits and have started to go through the files to see if there are any duplicate articles we can remove. As always, we have Bev, Patti, Marilyn, Joan, and myself organizing and working on small projects downstairs.

We received some very cute letters from the second graders who came to see the Museum in September. There is one letter on the website and

more may be seen in the newsletter. We are also looking for information about Martha Smith Hopps who was the first woman murdered in Wheeling, by her husband. Her great-great-granddaughter is interested in any articles we may have.

Patti Steilen  
Curator

Visit our website at [www.WheelingHistoricalSociety.com](http://www.WheelingHistoricalSociety.com)

Date: Oct

Dear Wheeling Historical Society,

Thank you for tea  
the history every  
very cool I really  
alot I mostly like  
snake it was fun  
the farm too.  
bicycle was not fun I like  
every thing

Dear Wheeling Historical Society,

Stamp A Thank you For  
helping us learn  
I had a wonderful  
day it was the best  
day ever I wished  
it never end I liked  
Stamp A it so much I just  
Stamp want to say thank you  
so much I had so  
much fun and I hope  
I go there again.

Date: 10/17/11

Dear Wheeling Historical Society,

Thank you for teaching  
us about Wheeling's  
past and about the  
cariges the black smith  
shop the phones and  
the fireman.

Dear Wheeling Historical Society,

I realy like the farm and  
church Also I liked the museum.  
thank you! for teshing me and  
I appreciate and thank for  
every thing and it was the  
best field trip.

Date: Oct, 14, 2011

Dear Wheeling Historical Society,

Thank you for teathing me  
Wheelings past I like the  
rattel snake I like when  
I act like a student from  
the past. My favrite part  
is the rattel snake. Thank you  
for telling me that the farms  
from the past need 8 roots.  
Thank you for telling me  
ol kinds of stut.

Here are a few of the letters we've received from children who visited the museum in September 2011.

## WHS Website Stats

—By Terry Steilen

November was another good month for the Wheeling Historical Society. Over 500 hits so far, and from all over the world!

We almost made 10,000 hits by the beginning of December. Maybe Lollipop Lane will help us get over the top!

	State/Region	Country	
318 Hits	63.60% Illinois	United States	
36 Hits	7.20% Arizona	United States	
25 Hits	5.00% California	United States	
25 Hits	5.00% Minnesota	United States	
24 Hits	4.80% Florida	United States	
16 Hits	3.20% West Virginia	United States	
16 Hits	3.20% Wisconsin	United States	
7 Hits	1.40%	United States	
4 Hits	0.80% Massachusetts	United States	
4 Hits	0.80% Pennsylvania	United States	
3 Hits	0.60% Western Australia	Australia	
3 Hits	0.60% Delaware	United States	
2 Hits	0.40% Ohio	United States	
2 Hits	0.40% Nevada	United States	
2 Hits	0.40% Maryland	United States	
2 Hits	0.40% Ontario	Canada	
1 Hit	0.20% Texas	United States	
1 Hit	0.20% Sao Paulo	Brazil	
1 Hit	0.20% Tel Aviv	Israel	
1 Hit	0.20% New York	United States	
1 Hit	0.20% Michigan	United States	
1 Hit	0.20% Rheinland-pfalz	Germany	
1 Hit	0.20% Virginia	United States	
1 Hit	0.20% Moscow City	Russian Federation	
1 Hit	0.20% Kentucky	United States	
1 Hit	0.20% South Carolina	United States	
1 Hit	0.20% New South Wales	Australia	

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### Wheeling's 1900 business district

creamery owned by Henry Bomer. To the west is the white frame community school house and across the way, the Presbyterian church.

The village government is now headed by Jacob Schwingel as mayor. Trustees are Fred Schmidt, William Brandt, Frank Forke, Christ Wendling, Martin Kufar and William Fassbender. Reinhold Schneider is serving as village clerk, John Schminke as treasurer, Henry Hipp is marshal, Henry Lips is fire chief, Frank Miller first assistant and John Schminke second assistant.

And now as our tour of Wheeling ends and the evening descends, we see the gasoline lamps begin to flicker as Henry Hipp begins his nightly task, carrying his ladder and the lamp blower on the rounds of the village.”

## Wheeling Historical Society 2012 Calendar

Wednesday, February 22

“White Elephant Auction”

*Bring something to auction!*

Dinner with Auction

Price \$12.00 per person

Wednesday, March 28

“Decades of Dresses”

*Fashion show with dialogue of each dress, all from the 20th century*

Wednesday, April 25

Election of Officers

*Antique appraisal by*

*Wheeling Sales Barn*

*Cost \$3.00 per item*

Wednesday May 23

Annual Installation Dinner

The Wheeling Park District presents:

Winter Wonderland

Sunday, February 26

1 to 4 PM at 131 North Wolf Road

Chamber Park will be transformed into a Winter Wonderland—skating, snow-shoeing, snowman building, and more. Warm up inside the Church building with hot cocoa and snacks! ❄️

