



The Benjamin Church House (Kilbourntown House, Estabrook Park) is on the National Register of Historic Buildings located in Shorewood. See the list of Shorewood landmarks on page 2.

SHOREWOOD

from the river to the lake

News from the Shorewood Historical Society

Issue 2, May 2023

LIGHTING THE WAY – Shorewood Street Lights

by Margaret Sankovitz

Shorewood residents take it for granted that every several feet on either side of a block there will be a street light. But that has not always been so!

Early in the Village history, the few lamps that lighted the streets of Shorewood were gas lamps and those were mainly east of Oakland Ave.

It is not clear just when the change to electric lighting was made but clearly by 1923, when the Shorewood Radio was first published, electric lights were being installed in the Village.

Excerpts from the Shorewood newspaper show that the street lights were in use and continued to be installed throughout the Village.

• **Shorewood Radio, Nov. 2, 1923:** Our streets have been pretty dark lately but when the new electric system is completely installed and in operation then the whole village will be adequately lighted. ... a modern lighting system, like we are now getting, develops civic pride. It means increased physical beauty for our village, better business, a greater convenience and safety for all, and a more general spirit of cheerfulness.

• **Shorewood Radio, Nov. 30, 1923:** For the benefit of the people of Shorewood, and especially residents of the section bounded by Atwater Rd., Oakland, Edgewood and Downer Aves., the following information has been given out by the Village hall ... on the evening of Nov. 27... had the honor of pulling the switch which threw into operation the street light circuits.



In the early 1940s the intersection street lights were hanging on wires suspended over the area. This light was near St. Robert's Church at the intersection of Capitol Dr. and Farwell Ave. Note the electric utility poles near the curb.

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National Register of Historic Buildings - Shorewood Locations

(This list appeared in the April-June 2005 Society Newsletter)

1972 – Benjamin Church House (Kilbourntown House, Estabrook Park)

1984 – Shorewood Village Hall, 3930 N. Murray Ave.

1985 – Ernest Flagg designed stone masonry houses:

2614 E. Menlo Blvd. (built for Thomas Bossert),

1913 E. Olive St. (built for Erwin Cords),

3821 N. Prospect Ave. (built for Seneca W. and Bertha Hatch),

3559 N Summit Ave. (built for Henry A. Meyer),

4448 N. Maryland Ave. (built for George E. Morgan).

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

May is National Historic Preservation Month. The National Historic Preservation Act was signed into law in 1966. Subsequently, the Secretary of the Interior was given the authority to expand and maintain the National Register of Historic Places which today includes historic districts, sites, buildings, and structures of significance to American history.

Shorewood has a short list of individual properties on the National Register, but according to recent surveys, there are several more individual properties and eight neighborhoods that are potentially eligible for National Register listings.

The Historical Society's goal is to help home owners, Village officials and businesses understand the value of our century-old assets. We are committed to working with our Village to identify programs and policies that will preserve and promote our Village.

Currently we are providing background information and taking part in the discussion about the renovation or relocation of the Department of Public Works. We are well aware that the current DPW facilities are inadequate. However, the current DPW buildings (constructed 1927-1938) have potential National Register eligibility. Can we build a modern DPW facility and save some of the historic buildings? It will be many months before final decisions are made. We all have a responsibility to join the debate as options for the historic buildings and addressing the needs of our hard-working DPW staff are explored.

In the fall, we will have a new partner in our search for preservation alternatives. The Village will be the location for a three-year "UniverCity Year Alliance" (UW-Madison initiative). One of the three topics the UW students will address is investigating options for a historic preservation framework for Shorewood.

Annual Meeting

Society members gathered for the first Annual Meeting in three years on Wednesday, May 10, 2023, at Hubbard Lodge. New board members and officers were elected and will be highlighted in the summer newsletter.

We also thanked departing board members Jessica Carpenter and Marilyn John for their service. Jessica has been on the board for three years and helped get our archives renovation underway.

Marilyn has been a SHS member since shortly after it was founded and later joined the board serving 14 years as treasurer, and for the last 20 years has kept a file of all real estate activities in the Village. She has been active in program planning and the interpretive sign projects and in 2011, she was awarded SHS Volunteer of the Year for her efforts to document daily progress (3000+ photographs) of the reconstruction of Capitol Dr. through Shorewood.

We thank both Marilyn and Jessica for their volunteer service.

In honor of Historic Preservation Month and the return of summer weather, get out and explore our Village and reacquaint yourselves with our historic neighborhoods.

Kathy Kean

keank@aol.com, H: 414-962-2450; C: 414-581-3883



IN MEMORY OF ROBERT "PETE" PETRIE, 1940 – 2023

Longtime Village resident Pete Petrie passed away on Feb. 26, 2023. Pete was known for his incisive mind, quick wit and business skills. As a longtime resident and champion of the Village of Shorewood, he served as the chair of the Community Development Authority for 16 years. During his tenure, seven major real estate projects were developed, resulting in significant increases in property values and many new businesses in the Village.

Pete generously served the Shorewood community including the Shorewood Historical Society. As a trusted and capable advisor for the Society's Investment Committee, Pete provided prudent financial counsel and oversight that supported the Society's mission and goals.

Condolences to Pete's wife Lucia, their children Robert, Maryl and Nicholas, and three grandchildren. Thank you for sharing him with the community.

SHOREWOOD SHOW HOUSE – PART 2 *Re-Model Home: 4146 N. Murray Ave.*

By Karen de Hartog

The February 2023 edition of this newsletter included a story by Jennifer Anderson about the re-modeling of 4146 N. Murray Ave. in 1960. Part two addresses the question: How successful was the project?

In 1960 the Village was fully built. Many homes were close to 50 years old. In order to avoid housing “blight,” Village leaders felt homeowners needed encouragement and inspiration to renovate or remodel their properties to make it suitable for modern living and to continue to attract new home owners. The Murray Avenue remodeling project was organized by a group called the Shorewood Civic Study group with the support of the Village Board.

We have not been able to find any specific assessment information. However, checking through our digital files of the Shorewood Herald, we found numerous articles related to the re-model project. Between December 1959, when the home was purchased and late 1960, when the home was sold to new owners, the paper reported on the architect selection, construction progress on the house, and the numerous businesses that supported the project. There were also long lists of residents who had applied for permits, supposedly inspired by the renovation project, to update their kitchens, add garages or enclose porches. Permit holders could enter a drawing sponsored by the Herald for a chance to win a vacation in Door County. A local paint dealer reported that his paint sales doubled during the summer of 1960 over the previous year.

It doesn't appear that there was any plan to purchase and renovate more than one house. Rather, the planners did a super job of keeping the story in front of the public for a year and inspired many homeowners to maintain or improve their properties. It appears that the planners achieved their goal.

It would be interesting to know how many owners of our now 100-year-old homes can identify renovations that were made in 1960.



House at 4146 N. Murray Ave. prior to remodeling in 1960.

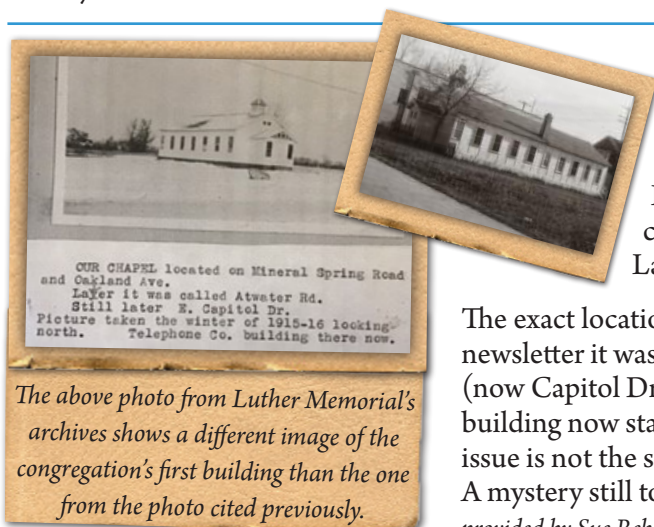


Present day photo of remodeled house at 4146 N. Murray Ave.

The Spector Family

Paul Spector, a member of the Shorewood Study Group, was chairman of the committee that worked all of the details for the purchase and re-model of 4146 N. Murray Ave. He was an active Village volunteer whose name appears in numerous newspaper articles.

Paul's civic engagement obviously inspired his son Michael who served on both the Village and School boards and was a founding member of the Shorewood Historical Society. Michael and his sons designed and financed construction of the ball field in River Park in memory of their father and grandfather, Paul.



The above photo from Luther Memorial's archives shows a different image of the congregation's first building than the one from the photo cited previously.

CORRECTION – Luther Memorial Chapel

In last issue's newsletter article, *Luther Memorial Chapel a Shorewood Landmark* (Feb. 2023, page 6) the name of Lawrence W. Brandt was omitted from the list of pastors who have served the congregation. Rev. Brandt was pastor 1958-70. Also, Rev. Michael Larson succeeded Rev. Kenneth Wieting.

The exact location of the first chapel remains somewhat of a mystery. In the last newsletter it was described as “a prefabricated building on Mineral Spring Rd. (now Capitol Dr.) near Cramer St. where the Shorewood telephone company building now stands.” Sue Rebbholz reports that the building pictured in the last issue is not the same as the building shown in the congregation's archives. A mystery still to be solved! (Photo and notation from Luther Memorial Chapel archives provided by Sue Rebbholz.)

(Lighting the Way – Shorewood Street Lights, cont. from Page 1)

• **Shorewood Radio, July 31, 1925:**

Sub headline – New Section of Shorewood West of Oakland to Get Permanent Street Lights as Soon as Possible

• **Shorewood Radio, Aug. 28, 1925:**

Editorial – The need of street lights from Larkin St. west toward the railroad tracks was particularly emphasized at 1 a.m. Sunday when two fugitives ... escaped after ... fired six shots at them. In this section the trees, bushes and rank growth of sweet clover, coupled with the darkness, offered an excellent avenue of escape from the Village...

• **Shorewood Radio, Oct. 8, 1928:**

With the completion of the ornamental street lights on E. Capitol Dr. within two weeks, the Electric Co. has been asked to remove the unsightly wooden poles used for the temporary lighting.

• **Suburban Herald, Oct. 31, 1930:**

Tonight – Hallowe'en Night – Shorewood will be bright! The new street lights will beacon its rays of white lights across every avenue and lane throughout the entire section north of East Capitol Drive, both east and west of North Oakland.

• **Suburban Herald, Dec. 1, 1932:**

Headline – Less Candle Power Lights will Save Village Money
It was predicted that a 100 candle power light in place of the existing 250 candle power light would result in a 40 percent savings.

As told in snippets, the history of street lighting has been one of slow progress, and progressive change. There have been additions to the system since the early days of the Village, including different types of lamps.

And the progress continues as the Village contemplates an extensive and expensive overhaul of the street lighting system.

On March 7, 2023, the Village Board gathered to hear a presentation by the Village engineer on the current system and the task to develop a streetlight system replacement plan.

The system, part of the broader infrastructure of Shorewood, dates to the early 1900s. At present there are approximately 1,200 fixtures on the Village's roadways, parks and municipal parking lots. Oakland Ave. lighting was upgraded in a 2007-08 streetscape improvement project. Capitol Dr. was updated during the 2010 WisDOT project.



The light fixture pictured is used currently in Shorewood.



A harp style street light on Murray Ave. in Shorewood is shown in this photo dated from the 1950s.

Lighting Shorewood

Harp lights originated in the City of Milwaukee in 1903. The distinctive style was used beginning in the early 20s in the Village of Shorewood as gas lights were replaced with electric lights.



The distinctive harp light fixture was used in Shorewood for several decades.

Residential, park and parking lot lights employ the concrete pole style that dates to the 1920s. The system is powered by wire buried directly in the soil with no protective conduit. This wiring was likely installed in the early 1970s. It is not grounded per the current National Electric Code. Residential lights comprise approximately 75 % of the total system.

In recent years there have been outages in various parts of the Village, occurring in clusters, no part of the Village exempted. The system is antiquated and parts can be difficult to obtain.

Still in the planning process, the system will be replaced. It is necessary to keep the streets of Shorewood lighted and safe for pedestrians, drivers and home residents.

More information can be obtained by going to the website: Street-light System/Shorewood, WI-Official Website

A look at the Milwaukee Gas Light Company's Old West Side Works

Before natural gas – before electricity – there was manufactured gas, also known as coal gas. The Milwaukee facility that gasified coal is now home to City Lights Brewing and other businesses.



The Power House for the Milwaukee Gas Company, designed in 1902 by architect Alexander Eschweiler, is now home to City Lights Brewing Company, 2200 W. Mount Vernon Ave., Milwaukee. Located on the Menomonee River, it produced the coal gas to light the city's early street lamps.

The Milwaukee Gas Light Company was established in 1852 to light the streets of Milwaukee. Soon after that, the company began offering domestic lighting services to the public as well.

In 1792, William Murdoch, a Scottish inventor, equipped his home with pipes that delivered coal gas to lamps, giving birth to “gas lighting. The coal gas combined with oxygen in the air to produce carbon dioxide, water vapor, heat and light. Coal gas is made by burning coal inside a closed container, which separates its constituent parts into hydrogen, carbon monoxide, and methane, as well as some solid by-products. Other common gaseous fuels include propane, butane, and ethylene. These are still used for grills and camping stoves.

In 1904 the Gas Light Co. built its west side plant to support its growing services. Designed by architect Alexander Eschweiler, the Richardsonian Romanesque building housed retort furnaces to super-heat coal into gas that was then stored in gasometers and piped throughout the city overnight. When the need for manufactured gas ended in the 1950's the plant was purchased by a trucking company, which removed all of the historic windows, and added a raised floor to aid in truck loading and unloading.

(This information was culled from Milwaukee Gas Light Company's website.)



Shown here in 2022 about to be razed (as well as the “Sunseekers” business next to it) to make way for an apartment building presently under construction, this former farmhouse was the childhood home of Richard Porth, whose job as a young man was to light the gas street lights by hand.

Illuminating the Past

Richard Porth, a Whitefish Bay resident now deceased, grew up in the farm house on the north west corner of Stowell Ave. and Capitol Dr. that was razed in 2022 to build the apartment complex now under construction on Capitol Dr. While interviewing Mr. Porth for the St. Robert Parish 75th anniversary book in 1987, I learned that Mr. Porth, as a young lad, not only pumped the organ in the church that was part of the building erected in 1913, but also was a Village lamplighter. He rode his bicycle from Capitol Dr. to Kensington Blvd. lighting the gas street lights each evening and again in the next morning to extinguish them.

- Margaret Mathews Sankovitz



Oil painting by Charles R. Porteus, "Milwaukee Street Near North Cambridge," c. 1928, on view recently at the Cedarburg Art Museum. When it was painted, the Shorewood High School copper dome was relatively new (1924) and is featured prominently in the background.

DISCOVERY IN THE DETAILS

In the last issue (Feb. 2023), the use of copper on early 20th century Shorewood buildings was featured, including the new copper cross atop Luther Memorial chapel and the Copperdome on the Shorewood High School administration building.



Present day photo from Cambridge Ave. with copper dome in the distance (circled).



Detail of 1928 painting with view of the copper dome, smokestack and yellow street car.

That subject was fresh in mind when Natalie Carroll, graphic designer for this newsletter, and her family visited the Cedarburg Art Museum for an exhibit featuring the artwork of Charles R. Porteus, a renowned local artist who was an early wax figure modeler and a scene painter of the dioramas at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

An interesting detail was spotted in one of the small paintings entitled "Milwaukee Street near North Cambridge," c. 1928. The Copperdome of the Shorewood High School can be seen in the background of the painting. The school and its dome were quite new at that time, the administration building being completed in 1924. The smokestack seen in the painting was at the TMER&L Co. streetcar barns. A yellow streetcar parked at the barns can also be seen in the painting. (The streetcars were actually orange.) The Company terminated operations at the car barns in 1968 and the Village purchased the property in 1970. It is now the location of Spector Field and the River Park apartment buildings.

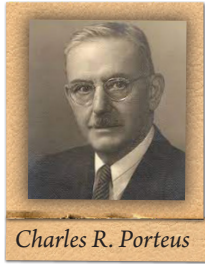


View from present day Cambridge Ave. at approximate spot where Porteus painted his scene in 1928. The copper dome can be made out in the distance, as well as the same double-gabled house. A car is parked in the same spot where the old jalopy was in the painting, but behind a newer garage. (Photos by Natalie Carroll.)

Natalie and her husband Clancy were familiar with the view from the north end of Cambridge Ave. where they had once lived and decided to investigate to see what changed and if the Copperdome was still visible 95 years later. Cambridge Ave. runs along the river bluff above the Oakleaf trail that was originally railroad tracks. The narrow street ends at Providence Ave., south of Edgewood Ave. They discovered the view is similar today except for the apartment buildings of River Park partially obscuring the Copperdome.



View of fountain and plaque in walkway between Village Hall and North Shore Fire Department.



Charles R. Porteus

FINALLY COMPLETE!

The long awaited plaque that describes the fountain and tile installation attached to the north wall of the Village Hall is finally in place. Thanks to David Cripe, maintenance man for the North Shore Fire Department, for constructing and installing the sign. Visitors to the plaza area between the Fire Station and Village Hall will no longer have to wonder where the fountain came from!



This new fountain, originally built on the site of the clock tower overlooking the middle of 21st St. Lake Drive. The stone was designed by Frederick R. Luchtmeyer for Captain and Laura Alm in 1926. After Harrison, Don Tjyski received the title Environmental Justice and the City of South Shore, (1924-1925). Their donation to the Historical Society was donated to the Shorewood Lake Drive museum was demolished in 2019. Published in 2022 - Shorewood Historical Society

We depend upon the commitment and support of people like you to preserve and promote Shorewood's rich history.

Send your application to: Shorewood Historical Society • 3930 N. Murray Avenue • Shorewood, WI 53211

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

(Your e-mail address will be used only to alert you to upcoming programs and events. It will not be shared with any other individual or organization.)

- Individual \$15 Family \$20 Contributing \$35 Sustaining \$100 Associate \$250 Life \$500
 Additional Donation \$ _____ Please make check payable to the Shorewood Historical Society.

All memberships are per calendar year except the one-time payment Life membership.

- I am interested in becoming more involved in Shorewood Historical Society activities. Please contact me with further information.
 I would prefer to receive the digital version of the Shorewood Historical Society Newsletter sent via email.

Support the Shorewood Historical Society by becoming a member. Join online at shorewoodhistory.org or contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com for more information.

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The Sheldon Room/In-House Research is located in the Shorewood Village Center (lower level of library) at 3920 N. Murray Ave. and is open by appointment via contact by phone: 414-847-2726 or email: shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com

The Shorewood Historical Society is a nonprofit 501 (c)(3) organization. Your donations and in-kind gifts are tax-deductible as allowed by law.



3930 North Murray Avenue
Shorewood, WI 53211

Please keep the Shorewood Historical Society in mind when cleaning out your attic or basement.

We are in particular need of pictures, abstracts and other information about Shorewood homes and neighborhoods.

CONTACT US AT:
SHOREWOODHISTORY@YAHOO.COM
OR 414-847-2726 WITH QUESTIONS
OR TO MAKE A DONATION.

Volunteers Needed for Spring Fling Clean Up Kilbourntown House, Estabrook Park • Sunday May 21st

Sponsored by the Milwaukee Country Historical Society

To volunteer, contact Mary Jo Knapp

mjknapp@milwaukeehistory.net or 414-273-8288



ARCHIVES RENOVATION PROGRESS

LAST CALL for 2023 Membership Renewals

If you have not yet renewed your annual membership in the Shorewood Historical Society, please do so today. We will be cleaning up our mailing list shortly, and we do not want to eliminate anyone from our current mailing list. As a member, you provide financial support for our organization. But more important, you confirm our belief in the importance of preserving Shorewood history and sharing our story with the community.

To renew, fill in the form on Page 7 and mail or renew online at shorewoodhistory.org. Questions? Contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com

Thank you to:

- Society members who sorted and packed archival treasures.
- SHS seniors Casey Anderson and Payton Barnes who moved all of the boxes, shelving and filing cabinets.
- DPW staff who disposed of all unneeded items (e.g. ancient filing cabinets, a dilapidated wicker baby buggy with only 3 wheels). They also installed new lights and electrical outlets, eliminated miles of unnecessary cabling, and have secured estimates for flooring.

Coming soon:

Paint and carpet removal to prepare for installation of new flooring.

Help!

Discovered while packing: many framed pictures of all sizes, most of which had been hiding in corners for years. Some will be chosen to hang on freshly painted walls, but ideas are needed for storing the remainder, preferably upright. Send ideas to shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com.