

Road reconstruction affects many aspects of neighborhood life, especially when it involves a main artery such as Oakland Avenue that pulses directly through a residential community like Shorewood.

This year's newsletter series will highlight the stories of the Village's Main Street.

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Newsletter Editor:
Karen de Hartog

Contributing Writers:
Karen de Hartog
Kathy Kean

Proofreading:
Hasti Soltani

Graphic Design:
Natalie Carroll

SHOREWOOD

from the river to the lake

News from the Shorewood Historical Society

Issue 3, August 2026

GROWING UP ON EVOLVING OAKLAND AVENUE

by Karen de Hartog

Oakland Avenue in the 1920s was not a "main" street. Small businesses were starting to pop up on both Capitol Drive and Oakland Avenue but primarily on the corners at cross streets. Each corner grocery store or gas station served a small section of the neighborhood. On Oakland Avenue, apartments and single family homes filled in the areas between corners. These homes were particularly attractive to anyone in need of public transportation, which at the time was the street car.

There were five homes on the east side of the 4100 block of Oakland Avenue between Jarvis and Olive Streets. The home at 4108 N. Oakland Ave. belonged to the C.J. Holgate family.

Mary Holgate Dohmen, the oldest child in the family, was about seven years old when the family



Mary Holgate graduated from Shorewood High School in 1936. The graduation ceremony was held in the brand new high school Auditorium.



There were five single family homes in the 4100 block of Oakland Avenue from the 1920s into the 1990s. Some were converted into businesses. Goldi's and Blockbuster Video replaced the last remaining home (Corazon Day Care and Wells Fargo Bank today). Today the 4100 block stretches from Stone Creek Coffee to Starbucks and faces Metro Market.

settled in Shorewood in 1925, and she lived in the Village until 1964.

She shared her memories of growing up on Oakland Avenue in an oral history interview with the Historical Society.

Mary remembered the National Guard Light Horse Squadron Armory just across the street from her childhood home. "The horses would graze in the fields, and then practice fancy drills that were really something to see," she said. On Memorial Day guard members on horseback led the parade. Children liked to climb on the canons.

(Cont. on Page 3)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Summer is a great time to learn more about our historic village. Whether you are walking on a quiet residential street, trying to dodge the orange barrels on Oakland Avenue or attending the 4th of July parade, paying close attention to your surroundings can lead to new knowledge and insights.

For example:

- While walking you may pass by rows of bungalows, blocks with homes in a variety of styles and modern apartments. Check out the Birthday Markers for clues on neighborhood development. Ponder what was happening mid-century to cause the building of apartments. (See "Researching Your Shorewood Home," p. 4)
- Oakland Avenue has been in a state of continuous change since 1900 when there was a 9-acre National Guard Armory on the corner of Oakland Avenue and Capitol Drive. By the 1920s, single family homes and apartments lined the east side of Oakland. Remember the dozens of businesses that have come and gone. The street itself and additional infrastructure have, of necessity, been repaired and replaced numerous times. (See "Growing Up on Evolving Oakland Avenue," p. 1)
- While attending 4th of July activities or the Men's Club Chicken Barbecue consider the role traditions play in the building of neighborhoods and community.

Some of your observations may lead to questions that we would be happy to help you answer. There are many ways for residents to feel "at home" by learning more about their neighborhood and past community life. The Society's archived collection of photos, maps and other documents help to visualize and understand change over time. Our digital archives, available from our web site, inform and enrich our stories. (It is safe to say that no new building project in the Village took place without controversy.) Our collection of subdivision records, telephone directories, yearbooks and pictures are available for house history researchers.

Shorewood is a "living village" that is constantly evolving. Having a historical perspective can assist us in making wise plans for what to preserve as we plan for future development. The challenge for any community is to balance what current residents perceive are needed updates with preservation of buildings and traditions that contribute to community identity.

As Village Trustees and residents evaluate spaces such as the DPW site and housing needs along the evolving commercial streets, we have the responsibility to monitor the debates and help shape the decision.

Kathy Kean

keank@aol.com

H: 414-962-2450

C: 414-581-3883



Kathy Kean leads a guided tour on June 3, 2026, exploring Shorewood's architectural evolution from earlier 20th-century homes to Mid-Century Modern buildings such as the Fountainview Apartments, 3909 N. Murray Ave.

New Board Members Welcomed

A lovely Lake Drive home was the location of the Society's Board of Directors meeting on June 8. Marilyn White, the homeowner and a Society member, graciously invited us to tour her 100-year-old home and admire all the beautiful tile work and the view of Lake Michigan before getting down to business. We welcomed four new members to our Board and then discussed priorities and plans for the coming year.



Pictured on the stairs of the White home are (front) Bob Dean, Jennifer Anderson, Paige Hammond, Mary Jorgensen, Chris Mueller, Mara Kuhlmann, (on stairs) Natalie Carroll, Priscilla Sharpless, Kathy Kean, Karen de Hartog, Gretchen Fairweather, Hasti Soltani and Alan Purintun.

("Growing Up on Evolving Oakland Avenue" cont. from Page 1)

The Light Horse Squadron moved to Richards Street in 1929 and the community used the abandoned 40 acres for a softball field, horseshoe courts and even a temporary high school football field. Mary remembered the day the Armory was torn down in 1936. By that time the building was in poor condition. The Armory Apartments on the northwest corner of Oakland and Capitol were constructed in 1930. The rest of the area filled up slowly with businesses, homes and parking lots after the Armory was razed.

In the 1920s, Shorewood had many indoor entertainment spaces as well. On Saturday nights, Mary and her family would attend movies at Arnold Hall at Atwater School. Later they would visit the Shorewood Theater which opened in 1927 on the southwest corner of Oakland Avenue and Lake Bluff Boulevard (4321). The beautiful Spanish-style building included retail businesses as well as a bowling alley and dance studio. For young Mary, it was a great place to enjoy Saturday afternoon cartoons.

The Holgates' neighborhood had everything the family regularly needed within walking distance. They were active members of the Presbyterian Church which was a block south of their home. On the north end of the 4100 block was a Wadham's Gas Station. For groceries, they walked just a block south of their home and turned east on Capitol Drive to shop at Imse's, a particular favorite of the children due to its large supply of penny candy. Other nearby neighborhood businesses included Bell's Meat Shop and Vann's Model Bakery.

Mary attended Atwater Elementary School and graduated from Shorewood High School in 1936, the first class to have their graduation ceremony in the brand new auditorium. She continued her education and became a teacher.

Mary said, "One of the nice things in those early years was that you knew your neighbors. You could walk anywhere in the Village. One night a year, a friend and I would walk completely around the whole Village. We got an ice cream cone at one drug store, another one at another drug store. It was a wonderful time to live in Shorewood."

Many things have changed in Shorewood since Mary lived here in the 1920s. The Armory she played at is now a Metro Market. The Shorewood Theater she frequented closed and was razed in 1967 and replaced by apartments. The 1921 "little white church" she and her family attended was replaced by North Shore Bank in 2018. What hasn't changed, however, is that it's still a "wonderful time to live in Shorewood."

(Mary Holgate Dohmen's oral history interview was recorded by Sonja Ivanovich in 2000. The extended interview can be read in "A Shorewood Sampler" published by the Shorewood Historical Society, 2014.)

OAKLAND AVENUE MEMORIES

*4108 N. Oakland Ave. and
Mary Holgate Dohmen*

In the 1920s when Ping Pong was as popular as Pickle Ball is today, a large ping pong (or table tennis) parlor opened in one of the huge stores that went up after the old Armory was torn down on the northwest corner of Capitol Drive and Oakland Avenue. "The huge store had eight or more regulation size table tennis spots, and a lot of the young people would congregate there. Shorewood also had some of the top table tennis players in the state."

~ Mary Holgate Dohmen



*Out
with
the
Old,
In
with
the
New*

Shorewood is currently in the process of upgrading Village street lighting and replacing lampposts, as seen here on east Jarvis Street.



RESEARCHING YOUR SHOREWOOD HOME WHEN HOME IS AN APARTMENT

Many Shorewood residents have requested our help in researching the history of their home and are delighted when Mary Jorgensen, our In-House Research program director, can help them find the names of previous owners, assessor's records and, if lucky, an early picture of the block or home in question.

Mary herself lives in an apartment in the 3900 block of Murray Avenue and was excited to find pictures of the individual homes that originally lined her block. The homes are either bungalows constructed in the 1920s or older wood frame "farmhouse" style. There were at least a dozen homes on the west side of the street and four more on the east side alongside the Village Hall and Fire Station. They were replaced by three apartment buildings in the 1960s.

Pictured on the right are three examples. We know who lived in the homes in 1932 (from the earliest telephone directory in the Historical Society archives) and in 1962:

- 3901: Marie and Laura Falkins (1932), Douglas and Joan Perry (1962)
- 3921: Frederick Shepard (1932), Donald and Elsie McGee (1962)
- 3955: Henry Miller (1932), Armin and Toni Tretow (1962)

By 1967, all the individual homes were gone. The telephone book lists residents of the three big apartment buildings on the west side of Murray Avenue, and the new Shorewood Library on the east side of the street. The concept of "urban renewal" (popular in mid-century) had inspired the Village to purchase the homes and replace them with apartments.



The only house that survived the "urban renewal" effort in the mid-1960s on Murray Avenue was physically moved to the intersection of Menlo and Morris where it resides today.

The Village initially attempted to sell the houses; however, when no buyers came forward, the houses were slated to be demolished. All of the homes were demolished EXCEPT for one, which was physically moved to the intersection of Menlo and Morris and is still in place today.

The homes may be gone, but they are still part of the story of Murray Avenue and the development of the Village.

In-House Research

Looking for assistance researching the history of your Shorewood home?

Contact Mary Jorgensen to request an appointment at
shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com



The Fountainview Apartments, 3909 N. Murray Ave., replaced several of the homes on Murray Avenue demolished during Shorewood's urban renewal phase in the 1960s.

3901



3921



3955



HIDDEN HOUSES *What's the Story?*

Familiar Oakland Avenue store fronts may look quite different when viewed from across the street or through the alleyway behind them, thanks to redirected traffic during construction!



2009 – Joe the Barber occupies North half.



2011 – Joe the Barber in North half and Hummingbird Boutique in South half.



2015 – Joe the Barber has moved out. Draft & Vessel now occupies the North half, and Waxwing Boutique occupies where Hummingbird Boutique had been.



2017 – Draft & Vessel occupies entire storefront and includes a street parklet for additional seating.



**4417 N. Oakland Ave.,
current home of
Draft & Vessel.**

Note the house peak visible behind the storefront.

According to Village assessment records and telephone directories, the attached house (currently listed as 4413 N. Oakland Ave.) was constructed in 1922.

The store front was not added until 1930 and was originally a shoe repair business. Did the home owner construct the store front for his own business?

Many businesses have occupied the store front as shown at left.

These streetscape photos illustrate the transition of businesses occupying the small storefront at 4417 N. Oakland Ave. in the course of a few years.



**4429 N. Oakland Ave.,
current home of Vanity Fur
Pet Grooming.**

The large gray apartment building attached at the back was constructed in 1917 but the store front does not appear in directories until the 1940s when it was a hair salon called The Vanity Shop.

Can you add to our information about these buildings? Are there other Oakland Avenue buildings that inspire questions?

Contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com

Missing Pictures

Our stories are enhanced by good pictures.

Help us find pictures of fires that took place at multiple businesses over the years on Oakland Avenue. Specifically we are looking for pictures of fires and clean-up that occurred at:

- Kohl's Food Store, 4145 N. Oakland, 1970
- A&P Store, 4081 N. Oakland, 1975
- Koebel's True Value Hardware, Pete's Café and the Nail Tech Academy, 4100 block of Oakland 1993.

We are also seeking pictures of the houses that were on the east side of the 4100 block of Oakland. See story on "Growing Up on Evolving Oakland Avenue," pg. 1. The last houses were razed in the 1990s.



Cloud Red on Oakland Avenue in Shorewood used to be a George Webb's — back in 1987.

Contact us at

shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com

if you have pictures or other memorabilia to share. We can copy or scan items and return the originals to you.

CONGRATULATIONS SHOREWOOD WOMEN'S CLUB

To celebrate their 90th Anniversary, members of the Shorewood Woman's Club gathered at the Woman's Club of Wisconsin for a delicious lunch on April 16. While enjoying each other's company, they shared stories of the club's history and favorite projects. They have much to be proud of.

From their start in 1936, the Club provided a way for women to become involved in their community both socially and as productive volunteers. New friends were made over festive luncheons and while conducting screenings for the health department. Continuing education enlightened their understanding of current events and helped them identify organizations and projects worthy of their time and talent.

They played a significant role in expanding the Shorewood Library from a storefront on Capitol Drive to a permanent structure and assisted in the development of the Shorewood Senior Center. They collected supplies for the Red Cross, purchased specialized pediatric

emergency bags for EMTs, sewed and gathered supplies for Operation Smile and provided gifts for Sojourner Family Peace Center. In addition they have provided scholarships for Shorewood students and women returning to college. They continue to fulfill the club motto, "Educate Engage Empower," by providing support for the community and each other.

A program entitled "Remarkable Shorewood Women" followed the anniversary lunch. Historical Society member Karen de Hartog was the speaker. Two of the Club's founders, Mary Hubbard and Mabel Gile were included in the review. Current member and luncheon attendee, Pat Mueller, was also highlighted. Pat has been a leader in the organization for over 50 years, serving three terms as president. At age 103 she still refers to herself as a "club woman."

For more information about the Shorewood Woman's Club visit their web site: shorewoodwc.org. The organization's scrapbooks are housed in the Historical Society archives and are available for viewing or research.



Members of the Shorewood Women's Club

SCHOLARSHIP AWARDED

Bodi Kuthari-Schmitz, SHS Class of 2026, was awarded the Historical Society's Sonja Ivanovich Scholarship at the district Awards and Scholarships program in May. The \$2000 scholarship is awarded annually to a student who has demonstrated interest in history, public service or related topics. Society President Kathy Kean presented the scholarship. Bodi will attend the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana in the fall.

The Society's scholarship is named in honor of Sonja Ivanovich who was an exceptional social studies teacher at Shorewood High School for over 30 years and also served as President of the Historical Society.



*Scholarship recipient
Bodi Kuthari-Schmitz with
Society President Kathy Kean.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ryann Beck & Josh Pollack	The Lawrence Family
Jacqueline Boynton	Doug Seipel
Esther Chan	Hasti Soltani
Jean Erickson	Elizabeth Turner
Kerri Giese	Ben Tyjeski

Discover the story of your home!

Contact us
for an appointment at
shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com

We also welcome donations to our house history files such as "before and after" renovation pictures.

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

SHOREWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2026-2027

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414-962-2450

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Shorewood Historical Society
3930 N. Murray Ave.
Shorewood WI 53211

www.shorewoodhistory.org

Email: shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com

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.



UPCOMING PROGRAMS 2026:

* REMARKABLE WOMEN OF SHOREWOOD September 30, 10:00-11:30am, Village Center

For almost 200 years, remarkable women have helped to shape our community. They asked, "How can I use my talents and willingness to work, to make my corner of the world safer, kinder, healthier, educated, and comfortable." Meet remarkable women who have supported our community and others who have used the talents they developed in Shorewood to make us proud.

Presented by Karen de Hartog

(Sponsored by the Shorewood Senior Resource Center and the Shorewood Historical Society; pre-registration encouraged:
call 414-847-2727 or email src@shorewoodwi.gov)

* BACK TO CRAFT: THE ART OF LABOR BY HAND October 12, 6:00pm, Village Center

Through the lens of beautifully handmade tiles, artist and writer Ben Tyjeski will share ideas on balancing an Arts & Crafts lifestyle while navigating the challenges of the 21st century. He will present on his adventures exploring faience tiles and architectural ornament in Shorewood and the Milwaukee area, and talk about the lessons these tiles offer on how the arts improve our daily lives.

(Sponsored by the Shorewood Library; admission is free)



* PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUPPORT LOCAL: Help keep our Oakland Ave. businesses in business!