

Road reconstruction affects many aspects of neighborhood life, especially when it involves a main artery like 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.

IN THIS ISSUE

PAGE 1

Oakland Avenue – Shorewood's Busy Main Street

PAGE 2

Message from the Board
Welcome New Board Members

PAGE 3

Shorewood's Busy Main Street (Cont.)

In Memory of Nancie Baker

PAGES 4 & 5

It's 1933 – Oakland Avenue is Thriving

PAGE 6

New Member Highlights:
Brook McLeod & Dave Nomura
Questions About Your Home?

PAGE 7

Membership Form
Society Information

PAGE 8

Join Historical Society Today

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Shorewood
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Preserving Our Past For Our Future

SHOREWOOD

from the river to the lake

News from the Shorewood Historical Society

Issue 1, February 2026

OAKLAND AVENUE – SHOREWOOD'S BUSY MAIN STREET

by Karen de Hartog

As construction begins on Oakland Avenue between Capitol Drive and Glendale Avenue this spring, there undoubtedly will be complaints about dust, dirt, noise and lack of parking.

But as you walk along the street, think about all the changes in transportation, businesses, recreation and even trees that are part of the street's history. Throughout 2026, we will be highlighting stories about our "Main Street" to stimulate your imagination.

The Armory Led Development

Oakland Avenue is the oldest named street in the Village. In 1837, surveyors divided the area we know as Shorewood into four sections. The sections converged at the corner of Capitol Drive and Oakland Avenue and the first "streets" (probably dry or muddy paths) followed the section lines. Sometime in the last quarter of the 19th century, Oakland Avenue in Milwaukee was extended north along the section line to make travel easier for farmers and land speculators.

By 1898, the Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Co. (TMER&L) extended street car service from Milwaukee north along Oakland Avenue to Day Avenue in Whitefish Bay. Passengers from Milwaukee rode the street car to visit the Pabst Whitefish Bay Resort, Mineral Springs Park in Shorewood and summer cottages along the lake.

When East Milwaukee (later Shorewood) incorporated in 1900, most of the development was on the south end of the Village – primarily bars, rooming houses, and the amusement park.

(Cont. on Page 3)



WPA street crew, Oakland Avenue and Capitol Drive, Aug. 13, 1934.



Corner of Oakland Avenue and Capitol Drive showing Clancy Drugs and the streetcar line, ca. 1940s.



Oakland Avenue north of Capitol Drive showing Lighthouse Armory ca. 1910.

TO SHOREWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEMBERS, VILLAGE RESIDENTS:

Shorewood history is important!

Forty-two years ago, the Village Board encouraged and supported the formation of the Shorewood Historical Society. A group of energetic volunteers began collecting artifacts and preserving them, researching Shorewood history and educating the public. Programs were presented, “old-timers” were interviewed, newsletters were written.

Recently, we erected interpretive signs, sold home birthday markers, and digitized a large part of our newspaper collection. We emphasized respect for – and preservation of – our Village’s built environment. We remain an information resource for both Village government and residents.

Planning for the future

To be healthy and vital, all organizations must occasionally pause to assess what they have accomplished and plan for the future. Your Society Board of Directors is in that position. With the help of Shorewood-based consultant Sue Kelley, we completed a self-study, which helped us realize that we are missing some of the “tools” necessary to move forward sustainably.

We are reviewing all of our job descriptions and orientation materials for Board members, and reorganizing our committee structure to make better use of volunteers. We are recruiting new members and are recruiting Board and committee members. A number of new Board members will be in place by summer – at which point we will embark on strategic planning for the coming years.

Interested? We need your help!

We need Board members who are fascinated by history and can help us plan for the future. We also need committee members who will help us carry out the Board’s plans in the areas of program planning, communications, architecture, and preservation (archives).

If you are interested in either a Board or a committee position, please contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com for more information and to request an application.

To renew your membership (or become a new member) see page 7.

Sincerely,

Shorewood Historical Society Board of Directors



Welcome New Board Members, Paige and Alan

Two people are joining the Historical Society Board to fill unexpired terms. Alan Purintun and Paige Hammond were introduced at the Board’s January meeting.

[Alan Purintun](#) is a Shorewood grad and has also spent a good portion of his adult life in the Village. He brings a life-long interest in history, historical preservation and non-profit management skills to the Board. Alan recently retired from a career in investment/financial management and currently serves on the Historical Society’s Investment Review Committee. Previously, he served on the Board of the Shorewood Foundation and the Friends of Atwater Beach.

[Paige Hammond](#) is fairly new to Shorewood but has a strong interest in history, particularly local, people-centered stories. She looks forward to learning more about her Shorewood bungalow and her Cramer Street neighborhood.

As the Marketing and Communication Director for the Milwaukee Public Market, Paige brings skills in marketing, communications, public programming and storytelling to the Board. She already serves on the Village Parks and Recreation Spaces committee.

("Oakland Avenue – Shorewood's Busy Main Street" cont. from Page 1)

But the blocks north of Capitol Drive (then known as Mineral Spring or Atwater Road) started to fill in with construction of the Armory, home of the 105th Cavalry Unit of the Wisconsin National Guard (the Light Horse Squadron), on the northwest corner. Many small businesses followed on the northeast side.

The Era of Hot Ham and Rolls

By 1929, the National Guard had moved to Richards Street and the large Armory property was opened for development. An Art Deco building, which included the Shorewood Bank, was completed in 1930. Businesses in that building included a drug store on the corner, a Ben Franklin store and Heinemann's Restaurant. Eventually, most of the space was taken over by Harley's Store for Men.

On the east side of the 4000 block, there was another drug store and a number of small businesses. For example, Palmer House Delicatessen was at 4004 N. Oakland Ave. from 1948 to 1964. Owner John Palmer was a former Shorewood policeman and served as a Village Trustee for a number of years. Hot ham and rolls were a Sunday special.



Northwest corner of Capitol Drive at Oakland Avenue showing Shorewood Pharmacy and Harley's Store for Men.



John Palmer was proprietor of the Palmer House at 4004 N. Oakland Ave. from 1948 to 1964.

Miller Shoes was another well-known business on the east side of the street.

IN MEMORY OF ARCHIVIST NANCIE BAKER

The job of an archivist can be rather solitary. But Nancie Baker, a charter member of the Society and our archivist for more than 30 years, enjoyed working in our archive by herself while listening to the radio. She carefully examined, described and labeled each donation, issued a "thank you" to the donor, and then properly stored the object for preservation.

Nancie grew up on the west side of Shorewood near Estabrook Park and was a member of the SHS class of 1958. She lived in her home on Murray Avenue for most of her adult life and worked for 30 years at Kohl's Grocery store on Oakland Avenue until it was sold to Pick 'N Save in 2008. She was an avid traveler, visited many countries in Europe and enjoyed hiking in locations such as Denali National Park.

On a hiking trip to the Tetons, she met the late senator Herb Kohl on the street in Jackson Hole, WY. He remembered her from his family's grocery store and invited her to his nearby ranch for a tour and to watch a sale of young horses.

Nancie had five daughters and a number of grandchildren, some of whom are the third generation of her family to attend Shorewood schools.

Nancie died in September 2025. She was a dedicated, conscientious and knowledgeable volunteer who gave us a strong foundation for our Shorewood Historical Society.

Lillian Pachner, our current archivist, is transcribing Nancie's records into a digital, searchable file. Lillian said she can almost feel Nancie's spirit as she reviews hundreds of Society donations recorded in Nancie's neat handwriting.



Nancie Baker loved to ride horses. After her retirement, she volunteered at Erin Meadows horse farm near Holy Hill and taught many young people how to ride.

IT'S 1933 – AND OAKLAND AVENUE IS THRIVING

During 2026, the Historical Society newsletter will feature news and history from North Oakland Avenue as it undergoes re-construction. Here are the “Business Brevities” from a 1933 issue of The Shorewood Radio.



Oakland Avenue and Lake Bluff Boulevard construction, ca. 1922.



The Charles Westerlund Barber Shop was located in the Shorewood Theater building at Oakland Avenue and Lake Bluff Boulevard. Photo ca. 1932.



The Shorewood Theater building located at Oakland Avenue and Lake Bluff Boulevard was opened in 1927. It housed a number of businesses through the years including a real estate office, the North Shore Publishing Company, a dance hall, a bowling alley, a barber shop, a lower level tavern and a skating rink. It was razed in 1967.

None of these businesses survives today. But it's fun to imagine if they did.

- A steak being broiled, a roast being basted – that tempting aroma! Doubly so when you are using the choice cuts from Henry A. Witt's Lake Bluff Market, 4403 N. Oakland Ave.
- Whether it is a minor repair job or a complete installation, if it pertains to heating, it will be done efficiently, if E. P. Roller, 4483 N. Oakland Ave., handles the work.
- Prices have increased 25 to 50 per cent, but Mabel Kyle at the Shorewood Smart Shop, 4503 N. Oakland Ave., purchased before this increase, and offers her customers the advantage of this saving.
- The rendezvous of those who seek a pleasant and friendly atmosphere and a good glass of good beer is at Bob Keller's, 4118 N. Oakland Ave.
- When you patronize your local jeweler you receive an invaluable personal service. For a gift that lasts, buy quality merchandise from A. J. Nevermann's Gem Shop, 4006 N. Oakland Ave.
- Statistics show that many accidents that occur in the home are caused by defective electric circuits. Be safe! Have E. A. Klatt, 4109 N. Oakland Ave., do your electrical repair work.
- You can be all spruced up otherwise, but if your shoes are run down the whole effect is spoiled. Have them repaired at the Wisconsin Shoe Service Shop, 4022 N. Oakland Ave.

- Come in and browse around Doerr's Dry Goods Shop, 4326 N. Oakland Ave. You will find a large variety of charming gifts suitable for all occasions when gifts are in order.
- Even the tiny tots like to come to Charley's Barber Shop in the Shorewood Theatre Building to get their hair cut. There is a reason. It's because of the courteous, friendly and understanding service.
- Bowlers are enthusiastic in their praise when they speak of the fine condition of the Shorewood Theatre Bowling Alleys. It's a great sport and a wonderful exercise, this bowling.
- The delicious home baked products of the Lakewood Bakery, 4407 N. Oakland Ave., are as tempting to the oldsters as they are to youngsters. A trial will convince you.
- What a crowd! Times square? No, it's Teshner's Drug Store, 4000 N. Oakland Ave., and the noon-time lunch crowd. After you enjoy one of those tasty lunches you will understand why the crowd.
- America leads the world in the plumbing conveniences found in the home, office and factory. Common sense bids you to keep them up to date. Get in touch with the Zien Plumbing Co., 4322 N. Oakland Ave., when you need plumbing service.
- Is bicycling popular in Shorewood? Take a look around any school building during school hours. Some wheels, eh? And the boys and girls know where to go for repairs and service – Propp's Cycle Shop, 4489 N. Oakland Ave.
- Tempus Fugit, and it won't be long before the snow flies too. Have the Ayen Hardware Co., 4423 N. Oakland Ave., fix up your furnace and furnace pipes for winter service.

PHOTOS? STORIES? QUESTIONS?

Do you have questions about the history of Oakland Avenue? Or stories to share about buildings or activities on the street? Or photos taken along the street? Please contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com. We will try to answer your questions or use your stories in future editions of the newsletter.



Zien Plumbing and Heating Trucks parked in front of the Shorewood Theater, Oakland Avenue and Lake Bluff Boulevard. (The Shorewood Theater was razed in 1967.)



Oakland Avenue and Lake Bluff Boulevard looking south, ca. 1930s. The building seen across the street is currently home to Fiddleheads Coffee, 4334 N. Oakland Ave.



Reijski Drugs, corner of Oakland Avenue and Lake Bluff Boulevard. The drugstore shown here is currently home to North Shore Boulangerie, 4401 N. Oakland Ave. The Shorewood Theater building, also shown, was razed in 1967.

NEW MEMBERS HIGHLIGHTS:

Brook McLeod and Dave Nomura

From time to time this year, we will highlight new and recent Historical Society members. This issue, we introduce Dave Nomura and Brook McLeod.

They moved to Shorewood in May 2021, from Portland, OR. Dave, 40, is an industrial design manager for Milwaukee Tool. Brook, 41, is an artist and accountant.

Why Shorewood?

Dave: We had recommendations from co-workers and my manager. Our realtor said, You can't go wrong with choosing Shorewood. It's really pleasant, a lot nicer than we imagined.

Brook: It was like a Norman Rockwell painting, Americana at its best.

Why did you become members?

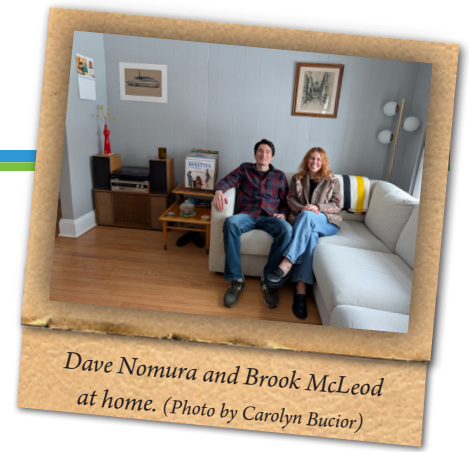
Dave: We wanted to know about where we live and the history in the houses.

What do you want to know more about?

Dave: We'd like to know more about the Village, decade-by-decade, through the newsletter and other publications, especially mid-century and onward, and what businesses came in and left.

Brook: Shorewood has a lot of architectural features and styles, on our street and west of Oakland, where it's more Craftsman-style and blue collar. When and why were they built? Why were they needed?

What do you want to know about your home?



Dave Nomura and Brook McLeod at home. (Photo by Carolyn Bucior)

Brook: The previous owner was here for 50 years, but what about the house from 1927 to 1970? We'd like to understand the first plans. We and our neighbors have oak floors up front, and maple floors and trim in back. Why is that?

What's impressed you here?

Dave: I'm always impressed with how community-oriented it is. We have a block party and all the neighbors seem to know each other.

Brook: Lots of people our age moved away and came back. That's a real testament to how nice it is.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Margaret Attermeier
Jeri Brooks

Melinda Vernon
Jess Durrett

Archive Donations Always Welcomed

Thank you Cathy Hoelter, daughter of Historical Society member Joan Brenk, for donating Shorewood High School and Health Department memorabilia to our archive.

Joan, who died in November 2025 at the age of 98, was raised in Shorewood and was a member of the SHS class of 1945. For many years, Joan taught English to new Americans.

Donations to our archive are always welcomed. Please keep the Society in mind when preparing for a move or cleaning out a home. Pictures, documents and other small items are preferred.

We do not accept larger items, such as furniture.

Contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com to arrange for a donation.

Note: we also do pick-ups!

QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR HOME? WE HAVE ANSWERS

People who contact Mary Jorgensen, our In-House Research Coordinator, are seeking information about the history of their Shorewood home:

- Who built my house?
- How many owners have there been?
- Have additions been made to the house?

Many also bring stories to share with us that we are happy to add to our house history file.

Beth and Michael Giacobbossi have lived at 3827 N. Prospect Ave. since 1986. The house was built in 1917. By checking phone directories, numerous previous owners were identified, including the Henry V. Kane family, Peter and Virginia Colosimo (Peter was a swimming coach at Shorewood High School), and John and Mary Ann Brost.

Beth said that the grandson of the original owner stopped by to see them one day and explained that the house has a shared driveway because his grandparents didn't drive and wanted the extra yard space! They were convinced to at least have a shared drive for the benefit of future owners.

Want help researching the history of your home? Contact us at shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com to set up an appointment.

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.

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, 2025-2026

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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.



JOIN THE SHOREWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY *TODAY*

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

Membership renewal letters were recently mailed to all current
members. If you have not yet completed your renewal or would like
to join, please clip and mail the form on page 7. Or join online today
at shorewoodhistory.org.

Thank you!



SAVE THE DATE: Shorewood Historical Society Dinner
at Hubbard Park Lodge, May 7, 2026.

PRESERVE the PAST

JOIN THE SHOREWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY

STRENGTHEN the FUTURE

Be a steward of Shorewood's history by becoming a member or renewing your membership in the Shorewood Historical Society.

Your membership:

- Helps preserve Shorewood's historic records, photos, and artifacts
- Supports research and educational programs available to students and the public

Volunteers are needed to:

- Serve on the Board of Directors
- Plan programs
- Maintain our archives
- Tell our story

Shorewood HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Preserving Our Past For Our Future

Interested in getting involved?
Join today online at shorewoodhistory.org
or contact us by email at:
shorewoodhistory@yahoo.com