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Manitowoc, Wisconsin: Manitowoc County Historical Society, 1984

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# History of School Hill, Wisconsin

Research Compiled and Written  
by: Al M. Bartel

*School Hill, Wisconsin a quite peaceful retirement community located in southern Manitowoc County at the junction of County Highway X, County Highway M, Marken Road and Spring Lake Road.*

1983 Population: 186

With the establishment of the Federal Land Office at Green Bay, Wisconsin, 1836, large tracts of land in eastern Wisconsin were made available to land buyers and settlers. Many of the pioneers gradually worked their way along and spread out from the military road that stretched from Chicago to Green Bay. Most of these first settlers were rugged individuals who would locate their claims and begin the building of homes and clearing of the lands. The families were brought in later.

It is not clear, nor is it known how the Village of School Hill began. However, when one studies an early plat map of the Town of Meeme dated 1893,<sup>1</sup> section No. 8 of the Town of Meeme where School Hill is situated, there are numerous small tracts of ½, 1 and 5 acre parcels. Therefore this would indicate that some of the first settlers located there in a close proximity to the junction where the early country roads that formed the basis of School Hill came together. One of the settlers probably started a repair and blacksmith shop, another opened a saloon and livery stable so important to the early traveler for his oxen and horse teams, another put up a store, followed by a church and there was the beginning of a community.

## First Area Settlers

Land records reveal that the first settlers came in the early 1850s. That these early pioneers of School Hill and surrounding area were predominately of German descent is evident from the family names involved such as:<sup>2</sup>

Fred Abel  
Henry Abel  
Peter Beniversi  
John Brost, Sr.  
Frank Buschmann  
Frank Dentinger  
Mathias Green  
Anton Gries  
Andreas Harder  
Michael Heckmann  
John Maas

Nick Mueller  
William Nellis  
Peter Netzer  
Anton Shad  
Jacob Schad  
Frank Schill  
C. Scharenbrock, Sr.  
Peter Stein  
George Sohn  
Gerhard Teporten  
and others.

## School District Organized

Many settlers arrived and located on the lands of Meeme township. Soon a school district was found to be necessary for the education of the citizens. Meeme School No. 6 was organized in 1859<sup>3</sup> according to the Town of Meeme assessment roll of that date. The district No. 6 consisted of sections 5, 6, 7 and 8 in that township. This area was not included in any other school district as indicated by Meeme assessment rolls prior to 1858.<sup>4</sup>

A school was built near the northwest corner of section No. 8 which was about center of the district. Tradition has it that first teachings were in the German language with pupils writing on individual slates. The first school was a gray frame building of average size perched on a hill overlooking most of the district and the German community that lay a short distance to the south. This school gradually became known as Schulberg the German words for School Hill, which eventually later became the name of the village.

## Holy Trinity Catholic Church

School Hill area settlers many of whom belonged to the Roman Catholic religion soon learned they had to travel considerable distance to attend church services. By the year 1869<sup>5</sup> a movement of 32 area families was underway to build a church. Construction of the church was probably begun that year. Although church records are vague and incomplete, it is believed the church was completed and put into

service late in the fall of 1871. The Rev. Ambrose Oschwald of the St. Nazianz settlement presided at the blessing, and the church was named Holy Trinity Parish.

## Some Church History<sup>6</sup>

**1871** — Thirty members listed. Primitive log house school begun. No attendance record.

**1874** — School House furnished.

**1883** — Congregation incorporated August 15, 1883.

**1907** — Two Church bells purchased \$253.87. Large bell 575 lbs. Small bell 350 lbs.

**1923** — Census taken. 32 families, 180 members.

**1929** — Thus far sermons were given only in the German language, but now English sermons will also be preached.

**1939** — Census taken. 31 families, 244 members.

**1968** — Demolition of old Church completed.

**1969** — Dedication of new Church June 1. The new Church built of attractive brick, consists of the Church proper, assembly hall, kitchen, lavatories and classrooms.

The Mens Club of Holy Trinity Church is actively promoting social activities in the community.

## Post Office Comes to School Hill

One of the first buildings in the pioneer Community of School Hill was a store begun by a Vincent Steffen.<sup>7</sup> This building stood at the junction of the present Marken Road and County Hwy. X the site of a home occupied now by L. Steffen 12011, Marken Rd. At that time the road that is now Hwy. X went past the cheese factory, then continued onward toward the east.

The store passed into the hands of Henry Abel during which time it became the first post office. He was the first postmaster. The date when the first post office was established is unknown. Research reveals that there was an active post office with daily mail at School Hill by 1883 according to the Wisconsin Blue Book.<sup>8</sup>



*The first Holy Trinity Catholic Church.*

### Naming the Post Office and Village

When U.S. postal authorities decreed that a post office be established for the Community located in northwestern Meeme township, there was need for a name. Since the post office was located in Abel's store, the postmaster submitted the name of Abel Post Office.<sup>9</sup> A reply came back from the Postal Department stating that there already was a post office in the State of Wisconsin by the name of Abel, therefore another name should be designated. Mr. Abel then called area residents to a meeting where it was decided to name the post office School Hill after the community school<sup>10</sup> built on the hill a slight distance to the north of the settlement which for some years had been called the German name Schulberg, and for the landmark hill<sup>11</sup> to the east of the village which was believed to be the highest point in the Town of Meeme. (see NOTE 1)

The Postal Department accepted the name School Hill and the village has been known by that name since.

Succeeding Henry Abel as postmaster were: H.F. Knorr, Peter Schueller, William Boeldt, Hubert Simon and Peter Hoffman. When W. Boeldt was postmaster 1899-1900, and H. Simon 1901-02 the post office was located in the Central Hotel a building which in 1983 is known as the Deehr's

Bar and Hall 12215 Marken Rd.

The School Hill Post Office was discontinued in 1904 when the rural route system was established. The mail since then is being delivered from the Kiel post office.

The Abel store was in turn operated by H.F. Knorr and Harry Silbernegel. It was then sold to another firm. In 1921 the building burned down. When Knorr headed the establishment in the 1890s it was perhaps one of the more successful businesses of the area. A listing in the Patrons Directory<sup>12</sup> of Plat Book Manitowoc County 1893 lists the following: Knorr H.F. Notary Public. Dealer in Dry Goods, Groceries, Hardware, Books, Stationery, Boots, Shoes, Hats, Caps, Paints, Oils and Farming Implements. School Hill, Wis.

### Some establishments and business people at School Hill for the years 1899, 1900, 1901 and 1902

Schmitts Directory<sup>13</sup> of the City and County of Manitowoc lists the following for the Community of School Hill, Section 8, Town of Meeme 1899, 1900:

- Post Office — Daily Mail
- Boeldt, William — Postmaster, Hotel and Saloon
- Buschmann, Joseph — Hotel and Saloon
- Fecker, William — Cheese Manufacturer



*Woodland School in 1919. It was commonly referred to as the School Hill school since it was located one mile northwest of the Village.*

Knorr, H.F. — General Store and Notary Public

- Kolwey, August — Flourmill
- Maloch, Christ — Blacksmith
- Rumpf, Fred — Blacksmith
- Simon, Hubert — Cidermill
- A Modern Woodsman Lodge — Meets last Saturday of each month.

- Officers are:
- V.C. .... W.J. Jenkins
  - W.A. .... August Kolwey
  - E.B. .... O. Schmeiser
  - Clerk ..... H.F. Knorr

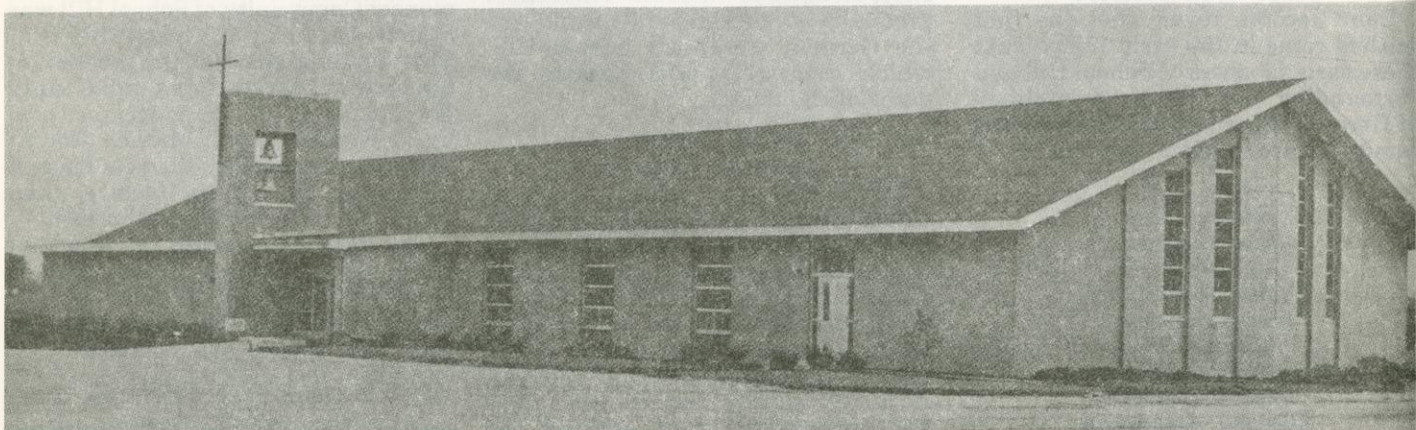
Schmitts Directory<sup>14</sup> for 1901, 1902: Post Office, Mail Daily — Peter Hoffmann, Sr. Postmaster Frank, Alvin — Blacksmith

- Hingiss, Henry — Creamery
- Hoffman, Peter — General Store and Saloon
- Jost & Born — Carpenters
- Klessig Bros., — Leo and Adolph — Creamery
- Nennig, Joseph — Saloon
- Rieck, Chas. — Saloon
- Stiefvater, Charles — Boots and Shoes

- Toepel, Carl — Mason
- Wieland, Otto — Blacksmith
- Wolf Wm.
- Westgate, Dr., Physician

Schmitts Directory<sup>15</sup> for the year 1909-1910 lists the following:

- Discontinued Post Office. Mail Daily from Kiel R. 1 Wis.
- Buschmann, Frank — Carpenter
- Buschmann, Joe — Saw and Flour Mill
- Hake, Theo. — Meat Market



*The new Holy Trinity Catholic Church, built in 1968-69. Dedicated June 1, 1969.*

Kirchheck, Fred — Hotel and Saloon  
Schneider, Herman — Harness  
Maker  
and others.

From the Patrons Directory of the  
Plat Book of Manitowoc County 1893,  
P. 75, we have the following:

Christ Scharenbrock, born in  
Prussia 1845. Came to America 1855,  
farmer at School Hill.

Voigt J., born in Germany 1836.  
Farmer at School Hill, Section 7. 143  
acres.

Rumpf Fred — Manufacturer of  
Wagons, Buggies, Sleighs, Cutters,  
Horseshoeing and repair work neatly  
done. Section 8, School Hill.

### School Hill Cheese Factory

A cheese factory and creamery soon  
sprang up at the heart of the School  
Hill community. It is believed that  
Henry Roethel was first cheesemaker,  
followed by Fred G. Meyer. William  
Fecker (Feger), Jac. Thielmann, Carl  
Maurer. The cheese plant was then  
sold to an organization of farmers  
known as School Hill Cheese and  
Butter Cooperative. This cooperative  
was quite successful and did a thriving  
business in succeeding years. During  
the 1940s to the 1960s as many as 60  
farmer patrons were supplying milk to  
the plant. Then a major Cooperative  
known as Lake to Lake began  
operations in the area and some larger  
producers of the School Hill plant  
joined the new Cooperative. The  
disposal of whey (a cheese by-product)  
also became a major problem for the  
factory located in the center of the



*Knorr's Store the sight of the first post office.*

village. In 1967 the remaining patrons  
voted to close the factory and affiliate  
themselves with the Osman  
Cooperative. The building was then  
sold and converted into living  
quarters.

The Central Hotel, saloon and dance  
hall was begun by Theodore Hake in  
the late 1800s. It eventually passed into  
the hands of William Boeldt, Hubert  
Simon, Edward Christel, Geo. Wick, A.  
Hoerth, P. Burkart, William Brunmier,  
Francis Deehr. In olden times it was  
the stop over place for dignitaries.  
Medicine shows, amateur contests,  
meetings and quite a few wedding  
dances were held there. For a time it  
housed the post office.

### School Hill Blacksmiths

School Hill spanning the years had a  
number of blacksmiths. Some by name  
were: Christ Mahloch, Fred Rumpf the  
wagon and sleigh builder, Alvin  
Franke, Otto Wieland, Jacob Hansen,  
Jacob Schad, Joseph A. Schad, Fred  
Klemme, Gustav Nimmer, Ernst  
Schwartz, Anton Noworatsky and son  
Roman.

Perhaps the most famous of these  
was "Old Tony" Noworatsky the four  
score blacksmith. Born 1891 into a  
large impoverished family in the St.  
Nazianz area, Anton Noworatsky  
launched his blacksmithing career at  
the age of seventeen when he started  
working at the Philip Koenig  
Blacksmith Shop<sup>16</sup> in St. Nazianz for



*This photo was taken around the turn of the century at the old School Hill Cheese Factory.  
Photo courtesy of Elwood Guetschow of School Hill.*

17¢ a day. He worked at different shops in and around this area including Spring Valley where he lived for 12 years before locating at School Hill.

"Old Tony" relates the following story, "It took a blacksmith a good four hours to shoe a team of horses if they were well trained. One day a horse became excited. He reared and pinned me against the wall. The horse would not yield to my shouts so I grabbed the pair of tongs which I had in my hand and nipped him hard behind the ears. The horse then released me."

Tony plied his trade until the age of 72 when he began the art of "knifemithing," forging and grinding knives out of scrap material especially broken hack saw steel which had the hardness to hold a keen edge. The fame and demand for the high quality knives grew and Tony kept busy producing knives made by the Village Blacksmith. At the age of 82 in the year 1974 "Old Tony" figures he had produced and sold some 8000 knives of every design.

The knives were especially popular at Christmas time when they made distinctive gifts. Tony Noworatsky died in 1981 at the age of 90 years. His passing also marked the end of the "knifemith" trade.



*Anton Nowaratsky "Old Tony" well-known for his blacksmithing and in later years for his "art of knifemithing."*

### **The Brost Butcher Shop**

Of the many businesses that flourished at School Hill from time to time only to disappear, the Brost Butcher Shop and Market is an exception. The names Brost and School Hill are synonymous for the mention of one includes the other. The fame of this family enterprise has spread over 3 counties and beyond as shoppers and customers returned time and time again to avail themselves of a tradition in services, quality and homemade flavors only found there.

Nic Brost<sup>17</sup> a pioneer settled on a farm to the south of School Hill at the northeast corner of the Town of Meeme in section 20. The farm has since passed into the hands of the Graf family. Nic Brost some years later



*Otilia "Tillie" Brost*

moved to the School Hill community and was active in different businesses. His sons Peter and John bought some land on the east side of School Hill Road (now Marken Road) and started the butchering business. Eventually John and his wife Tillie and Frank Fessler assumed control and pursued the family tradition.

The Brost Shop became a meat market for the farm animals of the area. The animals were slaughtered and processed with the meats being marketed to wholesale firms in Manitowoc and Sheboygan. A calf market was also started and at times as many as 100 calves were shipped within a week.

Custom butchering and processing of meats for people of the area was offered and was so well accepted that a reservation had to be made far in advance of a specified date.

John Brost, the father of Norman and Joe, died 1937 leaving the business in the hands of widow Tillie and the young boys. Tillie born Otilia Fessler was a hard worker and quite determined to carry on. The business grew with Tillie at the helm. Her gracious manner and willing service toward all was a trademark at the Brost store. Some called her "Ma" Brost and many knew her only as Tillie. For many years she tended to the store, and even at the age of 80 and beyond was bagging groceries and greeting customers and sending them along with a smile and best wishes. Tillie died 1979 at the age of 87 and truly can be referred to as the patroness of School Hill.

The Brost butcher shop has been rebuilt and enlarged and become known as a supermarket. The corporation offers employment to more than 20 full time and part time workers. There is still the same personal service and homemade flavors, so characteristic over three generations.

### **Other School Hill Businesses**

There were quite a few other businesses and firms that operated at

School Hill at one time or other. Some survived such as the School Hill Milling Co. and the School Hill Garage. In 1900 John Buschmann and Christ Hickman started a gristmill and sawmill on the Fred Meyer farm close to the School Hill Lake also known as Nellis Lake. This mill was destroyed by fire. A year later, 1901, John Buschmann, Jr. together with Peter Gries, Anton Miller, Richard Rieck, Otto Schmeisser, H.F. Knorr, Frank Scharenbrock and Frank Buschmann, Jr. organized the School Hill Milling Co. and built a new flour and gristmill and elevator that has survived the years. At about the same time some new homes were built, and School Hill was experiencing a business boom. A tavern was built on the south side of town by Joseph C. Buschmann in 1901 which in turned passed into the hands of Richard Christel, then Fred Kircheck, Peter Brost, Miller and Ketter, Joseph Fessler and Henry Hertel.

Anton Miller and sons started a cement block factory and brick factory in 1905 on the east side of town. The Millers together with five employees did a fine business producing blocks and also selling cement and lime.

Anton Miller and Ben Pritzl opened a garage on the south side of town. One evening the garage caught fire and burned down. Pritzl then rebuilt the garage using cement block and tin which were more fire proof. The Garage in succeeding years was owned by A. Schmitt, E. Brost, R. Schad and L. Rumpf.

The grist and flourmill became a landmark at School Hill. At the sawmill that stood at the south edge of the lake, lumber was produced for the surrounding countryside. In 1904, the mill was sold to Nic Brost and Joseph C. Buschmann. Ten years later June 1914 the mills were the scene of tragedy when a fine young man of 24 years, Joseph Brost, became entangled in some belting and lost his life.

About this time power<sup>21</sup> for the mills was furnished by what was called a gas producer plant built into the lower level of the elevator. Evidently this was a boiler fired by coal which developed a coal gas that powered the engines. The gas plant, believed to be the only one in Wisconsin, was expected to furnish power for the mills and light for the



*An inside view of the old Brost Store.*

entire School Hill area. Its use however proved to be impractical and was discontinued. The mills and the sawmill once again were driven by steampower. About this time the mills were sold to Otto Schmeisser who in the year 1915 sold the property to Henry Klemme of Kiel. The mills were known as the Klemme Mills for 12 years. In 1927 Joseph Fessler acquired the milling business and began the Fessler Feed Mill. Mr. Jos. Fessler in 1940 yielded the business to his son Alfred Fessler and son-in-law H. Schnell. The milling enterprise has since been expanded to include hardware, paints, television, appliances and bottled gas service.

There was also another sawmill at School Hill placed at the north side of the road a slight distance east of the village.

The lifespan of the School Hill Community now approximates 130 years. In recording these happenings from the 1850s to the present 1980s, School Hill has a history of an exodus of many establishments. This can be traced primarily to two principle factors, the loss of the post office in 1904 and later the failure of the railroad to connect it to other urban areas. Had these factors been favorable School Hill probably would have grown to become a city of some size.

Although many people and enterprises may have left the community, there also are those who have chosen to stay. And having stayed they put down their roots, and found it to be, a fine peaceful community in which to live. It has remained that to this day.

### **Sand, Gravel and Blacktop**

At the eastern outskirts of School Hill are abundant deposits of quality sand and gravel as left by the movement of the glacier a number of thousand years earlier, on the Math Binversie farm. Sand and gravel pits were opened and bulldozing service was begun by S. and U. Binversie. In 1956 the Reliance Construction Co. of Sheboygan brought in a crushing unit and an asphalt hot mix blacktopping plant was begun. Soon many thousand yards of hot mix blacktopping materials were rolling from these pits being carried by a fleet of trucks to surface the many miles of roadways, streets, parking lots, driveways and basketball courts throughout eastern Wisconsin. Sand, gravel and earth filling were also readily available. During peak blacktop season as many as 35 men and truckers were employed there.

### **School Hill Men In The Service**

The community of School Hill furnished its quota of patriots to help fight the wars of the nation. Civil War



*Fessler's Feed Mill and Elevator. Elevator built in 1901.*

enlistees included: Quincy Danforth, William Dittmar, John Eisert, Peter Groh, John Hertel, Seward Nellis, Fred Rumpf, Sr., John Schad, Peter Schad, Gerhard Scharenbrock, Adam Stien, Anton Willmas. Killed in this war was John Schad.

During the Spanish American War 1898, Gerhard Schambruck of the School Hill area served in the Cuban campaign.

World War I involvement by the United States 1917-1918 brought about another casualty when August Rautman lost his life, Some 20 young men from the area fought in this war.

Bernard Bonde was wounded in southeast Asia during World War II.

### **A Railway For School Hill**

In the early 1900s during the heyday of the Ironhorse when distant points and cities were joined by rails of steel, school Hill too was designated to be in line for a railroad.

A rail Company known as Green Bay and Eastern Railway Co. being a Wisconsin Corporation was organized for the purpose of connecting the Cities of Sheboygan and Chilton via Howards Grove, School Hill and St. Nazianz. This Company began raising money and selling stock for the proposed railway. That some stock actually was sold is supported by a stock certificate issued to Mr. John Brost of School Hill dated May 8, 1917. It is said that the Company began to chart the needed right-of-way and started to stake out the railroad bed. However not enough funds could be raised, the Company went bankrupt, going out of business. People who had invested by buying this stock never realized any return from the money so invested. The failure of the railroad was a serious blow to the future growth of the community of School Hill.

### **Karsteadt Wedding<sup>19</sup>**

John Miller I had a hardware store in St. Nazianz. He was also a Justice of the Peace. One day a young couple came from School Hill to be married. She was fifteen and wore a blue satin dress and veil. Her husband to be was Fritz Karsteadt. They were married right on the front porch of the store with all the pitch forks, hoes and

shovels sticking straight up in racks around them. It was a funny sight!!!

### **School Hill School (Schulberg)**

From the early beginnings until dissolution of school districts during the consolidation years of 1959-62, the Meeme Jt. 6 school was a center for learning and community affairs in the School Hill area. Meeme No. 6 was organized for school purposes in 1859 and a frame school built on the hill over looking the settlement to the south. Apparently sawed lumber was available to build this first school. Early settlers located the school near the northwest corner of section No. 8 the approximate central point of sections 5, 6, 7, 8 Meeme, that comprised the original district. Since that time various parcels of land have been attached to and/or detached from the district. Up until 1903-04 Meeme No. 6 was wholly within Meeme, but at that time the town clerk's records to the county superintendent of schools indicate that parts of the town of Liberty, sections 31 and 32, were added the district which then was known as Meeme Jt. 6.

In an essay contest conducted by the school in 1919 the name Woodland School was adopted and deemed appropriate because the school was situated adjacent to a lovely wooded area. However the school first called "Schulberg" by the early settlers was commonly referred to as the School Hill school.

Most of the history concerning the school has been destroyed so that facts obtained about the first schools are from older residents and some county records. The first students were not only children, but also older people well into their adult years. The German language was common, slates were used and heat for the building was furnished by an old fashioned wood stove. Both winter and summer classes were conducted until about 1874.

In 1882 a new school was erected on the school site at a cost of \$450.00 according to County records. School sessions were held in this building until 1906 when it was torn down and the third school, the eventual Woodland School was built, the new structure being a sturdy two room frame building cost approximately \$2500.00. Each room had a blackboard and separate cloakrooms for girls and boys. From 1906 till 1915 the district maintained a two room state graded school with Principal Eugene Knox and Margarit Stephenson as the first teachers.

The town clerk's reports to the superintendent show that in 1870 the enrollment was 32. Thereafter a gradual increase was noted so that by 1900 the enrollment was 68, for the year. A business boom in School Hill in the 1900-1910 period brought an influx

of families. School enrollment mushroomed to 90 in 1905, 106 in the year 1907 and 108 in the year 1909. Then the boom must have subsided and people left the community because by 1911 the enrollment had dropped to 71. In 1915 it became a one room school system with about 50 pupils attending. The vacant primary room was put to good use as a basketball court for young men of the community. Christmas programs, harvest fairs and spelling matches also were held.

In 1962 Woodland School and the School Hill area were highly honored when Mrs. Dederling, teacher at the school the past 12 years was named Wisconsin's outstanding Rural School Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Dederling taught at Woodland until 1970 when the school closed. She then continued to teach at the Kiel Elementary

After Meeme Jt. 6 was attached to the Kiel School System use of the building for school purposes was discontinued and the property passed into the hands of Dennis Hei in 1970. The School building was dismantled except for the belfry tower which was taken to the Manitowoc County Historical Pine Crest Village and there was placed on the Shadyside School, one of the complex of buildings there.

### Reminiscenses of Ed Berkedal

Monograph 30 — 76 Series  
Paragraph p. 10.

During the 1920s culvert construction work was largely done by private contractors.<sup>20</sup> One year no bids could be secured on work to be done, thus it was necessary that the County get a crew of men of its own to do the work. One of the early crews to do culvert work for the county came from the School Hill area. This crew of men worked so efficiently and well that they proved that it would be cheaper to do this type of construction in that way. Thus, after that year all culvert and bridge construction work was done by county crews.

### School Hill's Pig Fair

During the late 1930s and into the 1950s School Hill was the site of a monthly activity known as a "Pig Fair." It was usually held on the second Wednesday of the month. News of these events gradually spread by word of mouth and support was generally given by saloons and/or taverns which would benefit as farmers gathered at their establishments.

On the day of the Pig Fair, wagons, trucks, cars with trailers, and in wintertime sleighs many containing pigs, others empty, would be lined up along the streets of the village. Interested persons would journey from one pig seller to another to see where they could get the best deal. Naturally, many a time after a pig farmer had



*Mrs. Dederling was voted Teacher of the Year in 1962 by the State of Wisconsin.*

successfully completed a sale with a buyer, they would retire to their favorite saloon to "hoist" a few.

A Pig Fair was an event where farmers of the area were able to gather and engage in either the buying or selling of pigs and at times, other produce. In the days of the early settler and even on into the 1950s farmers generally had to provide for their own meat supply. This called for at least 4 to 6 pigs to be fattened and butchered to feed the family for a year. Some of the area farmers known as "pig farmers" would keep the old sows to produce the young pigs. On the other hand we had farmers who were looking for young pigs to buy and fatten either for their own use or to sell at the market.

Thus out of this need, there arose this day of exchange known as a "Pig Fair."

### A Story of the Early 1920s

It is said<sup>18</sup> that to the south and to the east of School Hill there lived a Mr. H. Davies who made his home amidst the fountains and the springs of the region. Davies never took unto himself a wife but it is said that one day "he struck a right fine transaction," and received therefore a check amounting to the grand sum of over a thousand dollars.

The next day he hitched his trusty team of horses unto his wagon and harkened to the county bank to exchange the check and received crisp green bills more commonly known as cash money. Davies took the cash money, carefully tucked it into his billfold and slipped it into his back hip pocket. The day being nearly spent he hastened the sturdy team and neared the friendly confines of the stable as dusk had fallen. Quickly he placed the horses within the barn and fed them their due, when his cattle raised such a clatter that they also be given of their rations. Davies fetched the hay and fed the kine and the tasks having been completed he soon found himself within his kitchen. There he put forth his hand unto his pocket to retrieve the

cash money — — Alas! Alas!! There was no billfold and no money!

Mr. Davies stood painfully and recounted his toils making reason that he did have the billfold in his pocket as he had entered the stable. It must have become lost as he dispensed the hay. The night had fallen and there being no light he waited patiently for the morning. Daybreak fond him anxiously searching the barn and belatedly he discovered the battered and badly chewed upon billfold in a corner of the cows manger. There it lay atorn, but nary a sign of the crisp green bills known as cash money.

Some days later Mr. Davies stopped at the School Hill butcher shop for a supply of meat and whilst there he recounted his woeful story. Spake he unto the butcher, "When thee day dawns that we haul that cow manure out to the fields, you can be sure that it is thee most expensive fertilizer that ever was placed upon thee land!"

### Big Frank Buschmann

There are many stories of the legendary Paul Bunyan and we all have heard about the fabled King Kong, but School Hill comes in a distant third with a strong man all it's own, Big Frank Buschmann. This man stretched well over 6 feet in height and pushed the scales to 400 pounds. Big Frank put his size and strength to good use as a carpenter and builder. It is said that when building barns Buschmann was able to swing a 16 pound sledge as easily as the next man could swing a hammer.

Big Frank Buschmann was in charge when the Liberty Pole was erected. The story of this feat alone could fill pages if it could be relived.

At one time Big Frank was putting in some shelving at the early Brost Market. The shelves had to go up high so he needed something to stand on. They finally found a sturdy stool about 2 feet high for him to use. Buschmann tested the stool for strength and decided that it would do. He stood on the stool and continued to put in the shelves. A short while later the stool suddenly gave way with a loud groan, collapsed and disintegrated into a hundred pieces from the weight it had to carry. Buschmann tumbled unceremoniously to the floor but stood up again unhurt and finished his work. It was not revealed what he then used to stand on, but it probably was a cement block from the School Hill block factory.

### School Hill and the Liberty Pole

School Hill, Wis. has the distinction of being the community closest to the Liberty Pole, a patriotic landmark located at the junction of County Hwys. M and XX formerly State Hwy. 149. Erected at the midpoint of the section line between section 20 and 21 of the Town of Meeme it stands about

1½ miles south and east of School Hill. The Liberty Pole was designated a Registered Landmark by the Historical Society of Wis. November 1973. The official insignia to denote this fact was attached to the Liberty Pole by officers of Manitowoc County Historical Society at a gathering of persons on June 15, 1974.<sup>21</sup>

### History of the Liberty Pole

As a young boy about the mid 1920s, I vividly recall my first glimpse of the famed Liberty Pole. On a trip to Sheboygan by my parents I was allowed to go along it being my first visit to a big city.

After having driven some two miles we came to a small town. My father announced, "Das here ist Schulberg," as we passed a dilapidated blacksmith shop its doors flung wide open and wagon wheels scattered about, there a low church building with white clapboard sidings and a bell in the steeple, then a cheese factory with white smoke pouring from its stack . . .

Soon we left Schulberg behind, a few more turns then suddenly there it was directly in our path. In the middle of the roadway stood the tallest pole I had ever seen. Straight and strong it stood with a flag fluttering in the light breeze. Near its top there was the veritable weather vane arrow and a bird, an eagle crowned the top. My father drove slowly around the pole so we could get a good look. As we continued onward I turned in my seat to watch it fade into the distance.

The first Liberty Pole was erected 1852<sup>22</sup> by the pioneers as an expression of their gratitude for the liberties and freedom found here in America. This first pole was destroyed by a sleet storm. The second Liberty Pole was donated and erected 1889 by a Mr. Dittmar and neighbors. It is said that the early settlers gathered at the Pole each 4th of July for patriotic programs and a picnic until the 1900s.

The second Liberty Pole was destroyed when hit by lightning June 1916. Another pole was also lost. To replace it the community of Meeme decided it wanted a steel pole. A fund raising drive resulted in raising \$400.00 to pay for a new steel pole made of gun metal that stands 62 feet in height. This Pole was dedicated the morning of September 3, 1922 by the American Legion Post of Kiel, Wis.<sup>23</sup> The program attracted a large crowd of approximately 1000 people. Judge Michael Kirwan a prominent Circuit Judge of Manitowoc County who grew up in the Community of Meeme was the first speaker. He spoke about the earlier days of the people who had founded the town, and who had erected the first Liberty Pole. They had implanted in their children a love for liberty, for education, for justice, for right living. He mentioned Michael and Andrew Herr as the first settlers in

**LOOK! IT'S COMING!**

# LIBERTY POLE DEDICATION

IN THE TOWN OF MEEME

## SUNDAY SEPT. 3

AT 10:00 O'CLOCK A. M.



MUSIC:

### Kiel Junior Band

SPEAKERS:

Hon. Judge Michael Kirwan and Hon. W. H. Bennett

Music and Song: America Raising of Flag Salute: American Legion Address: Hon. Judge Kirwan Music: Star Spangled Banner Address: Hon. W. H. Bennett Reading, History of Liberty Pole Music and Song, On Wisconsin

ANNOUNCEMENT: 12:30 P. M. Dinner and Banquet at Christel's Hall, School Hill Town of Meeme Free Concert all Afternoon in Christel's Park Tickets for Dinner and Banquet \$1.00 per Plate Make your Reservations by sending amount to Ed. Christel, R. 1 Kiel, Wis. Refreshments of all kinds served at reasonable rates.

All are Invited

BRANDT PRINTING & BINDING CO.  
MANITOWOC, WISCONSIN

Committee

*This is a reduction of the original poster announcing the dedication of the Liberty Pole on September 3, 1922.*

the town. The first marriage was of Nicholas Dittmar and Miss Eckhardt. Hubert Simon and Andrew Philipps were the first children born in the town 1848. The first clearing was done in 1848 by a man named Edson. "There was no flour mill in this neighborhood when I was a boy. The nearest one was at Howards Grove. It took my father two days to make a trip there, one to go, and one to return, using oxen which were the sole means of transport in that day."

The judge recalled that William Vits was the first man to build a mill in the community, and Henry Vits the son of William who later became the head of the Aluminum Goods in Manitowoc, earned his first wages driving an ox team in the Town of Meeme.

Judge Kirwan closed with a boyhood recollection. There was the annual school spelling contest and the winner would receive a prize donated by the town board. In the spelling test came a time when three remained, Michael Kirwan, John Nagle and Rose Bohne. Michael went down first but all were certain that Nagle would be the winner. However Rose Bohne spelled him down

and took the prize. The judge told this story because Rose Bohne came from a German family who probably spoke German exclusively at home. He and John Nagle knew no other language but English, yet the girl by natural brightness and application to a language foreign to her took the prize.

John Nagle later became a noted historian and a writer of the History of Manitowoc County, also a county superintendent of schools, and editor of the Manitowoc Pilot.

Another speaker at the dedication was W.H. Bennett,<sup>24</sup> a prominent Milwaukee attorney and a native of Meeme. Mr. Bennett declared, "Wherever I travel through the country and see the stonewall fences, I am very forcibly reminded of the men, women and children now gone to their final reward, who in former years toiled in the fields, the hot sun beating down upon their bent bodies, digging out and removing the stones and stumps so that in their stead there might grow grass and grain for future generations to harvest . . .

"We mean to honor them as well as to honor those who we know only in



memory, legend or story. This Liberty Pole is intended to be a suitable memorial to all who have traveled on these roads, to the living and the dead; to all who toiled and struggled to develop and build up this country and make it what it is today . . .

"It is not enough that we be frequently reminded of the ideals and achievements of our forefathers. We should take them to heart and strive daily to emulate and live up to them. If we do this all over this land, we cannot go far wrong and the future of our beloved country will be secure" . . .

Many years have passed since the dedication of the fourth Liberty Pole 1922. The roads have changed, the Pole was moved, but this symbol of Liberty still stands today in 1984, a memento to future generations first placed there by our forefathers.

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#### NOTE — No. 1

Diligent research failed to produce any evidence that the big hill to the east of School Hill ever was designated as school land or as a possible school site. It is extremely remote that it ever was planned to build a school at so inaccessible and rather dismal region. However it was considered prudent to include the hill in School Hill history as a landmark of the area.



*The Ph. Heckman Home, still standing at School Hill, believed to have been built in the late 1800's. This house for a time was under consideration for the Wisconsin Historical Village at Eagle, Wisconsin.*

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