



# LIBRARIES

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## Port Washington 1835 to 1985. [1985]

[Port Washington, Wisconsin]: Port Publications, [1985]

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/TYVRRTB6GXY748E>

This material may be protected by copyright law (Title 17, US Code).

For information on re-use see:

<http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Copyright>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.





VF--Port  
Washington  
Booklets of  
Port History

**REFERENCE**



# Port Washington

**1835  
to  
1985**

977.5 P

**\$3.00**









# Port Washington 1835 to 1985

George O. Lambert  
Mayor

This booklet is dedicated to all  
the citizens of Port Washington...

Let us pause for a moment to reflect upon our past  
in honor of those who strived to carve a niche for us  
by demonstrating our recognition of their foresight and  
achievement.  
By keeping their dream alive through the investment of  
our finest efforts  
in building a strong community... with by planning  
intelligently and...  
of the future of Port Washington.





*Dear Readers,*

*In the pages of this book, we present to you a brief history of the development of the City of Port Washington during the past 150 years, climaxed by the ongoing celebrating of events during this our Sesquicentennial Year of 1985.*

*I want to thank the Sesquicentennial Committee, the Chairman, the various Committees, City Officials and all the citizens that are making this Sesquicentennial Celebration a success.*

*Congratulations Port Washington, a Happy Birthday and may we all look forward to many more happy, prosperous and fruitful years in the City we all love.*

*George O. Lampert  
Mayor*

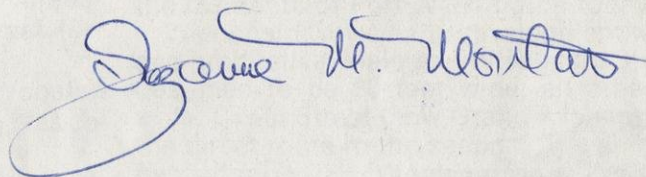
## **This booklet is dedicated to all the citizens of Port Washington...**

*Let us pause for a moment to reflect upon our past  
In honor of those who struggled to carve a place for us  
Let us demonstrate our recognition of their foresight and  
achievement  
By keeping their dream alive through the investment of  
our finest efforts  
In maintaining a strong community, and by planning  
intelligently, and with vision  
For the future of Port Washington*



*Many, many years ago, in a time greatly preceding the recollection of anyone alive today, the birth of Port Washington took place. Some of the story, as it is told in this booklet is based on recorded fact, a portion is the speculation of others who followed on the "how", "when", and "why" events took place, and some, no doubt, is legend - the cherished folk-lore of our history, passed from one generation to the next, as we attempt to hold on to the threads of our past which have brought us to this moment in time.*

Suzanne M. Montalto  
April, 1985



Printed by  
Port Publications, Inc.  
125 E. Main St.  
Port Washington, WI 53074



# Franklin Street



*This view north from Main St. showed wooden sidewalks and gas lanterns in place. The Union House on the right is now the site of the Wilson House. The Arcade Building is at the left.*



*The buildings between Washington Street and Pier Street about 1867 can be seen today by looking at the second story of the buildings now in the block. While the first floors have changed, the upper stories have remained the same.*



*By the early 1900s, the city had the Milwaukee and Northern Electric cars providing transportation from Sheboygan to Milwaukee, sidewalks, electric lights and a busy Franklin St. This view is to the north from Grand Avenue.*



*Appearing as though there was an endless vista, the view south from Washington St. showed the varying architecture of the buildings, which can still be seen today.*



*By 1950, the Wisconsin Electric Power Company plant dominated the view south from Main St. The "interurban" tracks were gone while some of the businesses along the street are still the same, others have changed drastically.*

*Photos courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*





*Forty-eight years after Port Washington was founded, the community was bustling, with sailing and steam driven ships visiting the harbor which was dominated by industry. Lumber yards, hotels, and retail stores abounded.*

## A Community is Founded

The year was 1835.

It was a year of rebellion. Andrew Jackson, the first "common man" to achieve Presidency of the infant 24-state republic, the United States, grappled with the hostilities generated by a rising anti-slavery movement, Texas' open defiance of the Mexican Government in assertion of its independence, and the repeated military intervention necessary in Indian uprisings, as the Native Americans challenged, with futility, the increasing invasions of the white-man in the vast territorial lands to the west.

But, it was also the year that General Wooster Harrison laid claim to the property which was to become the city of Port Washington.

The Wisconsin Territory was under military rule at the time, having been opened up for land purchase by a treaty made with local Indians following the Black Hawk War of 1832. Harrison, a native of New York, had become familiar with the location at the junction of a military road originating in Dekorra (Decorah, Iowa) opened in 1832 by General Dodge, and the Green Bay-Lake Shore Trail, extending from Chicago to Green Bay, during his trading expeditions along the coastal area. In the eyes of Harrison the small clearing located at the mouth of Sauk Creek, surrounded by bluffs which sloped to form a basin at Lake Michigan's shore, possessed all the natural attributes necessary for a thriving industrial and commercial city.

At the first land sale at the Federal Land Office in Green Bay in the fall of 1835, General Harrison and several partners made the first claim in this county, a parcel of 75 acres. They immediately cleared 16 acres, platted the area north of Sauk Creek, and named the settlement Wisconsin City. Street names recorded on the original plat filed in Green Bay include Jackson, Franklin, Wisconsin, Main, Milwaukee and others which are familiar to the residents of Port Washington today.

Wisconsin City's early development was steady and productive. Main and Wisconsin Streets were designed to be 80 feet wide; all others 66 feet wide. Canal Street (now Grand Avenue) was to be the direct route to the seaport. The area bounded by Wisconsin, Washington, Jackson and Milwaukee Streets was set aside as the town square. Stores, a tavern and houses were built, among them the home of Wooster Harrison on Pier Street. Industrial development began with the erection of a sawmill on Sauk Creek which supplied lumber for construction and fuel for seafaring vessels.

Confidence in the future of Wisconsin City was strong. . . trade was brisk, land values increased. . . it appeared that the town would be able to compete successfully with Milwaukee to the south and Sheboygan to the north as a manufacturing and trade center.



# The Panic of 1837

The decline of Wisconsin City was as sudden as its growth had been rapid. In the early days money was plentiful, produce brought exorbitant prices, land values escalated and speculation was rampant. Property changed hands almost overnight. In December, 1835, Wooster Harrison sold approximately 5½ acres to Thomas Holmes for \$100. One month later, in January 1836, Holmes sold a portion of this parcel to Solomon Juneau for \$500. The following month a 2½ acre tract adjoining the town plat was sold for \$1500. At one time almost all of Wisconsin City, with the exception of Harrison's property, was owned by absentee speculators. New settlers migrating to the Wisconsin Territory avoided areas affected by land speculation.

The excitement of early success turned to dismay as the inflated currency collapsed in the Panic of 1837, and new settlers failed to arrive. The original group eventually gave up hope and drifted away. Harrison stayed on for a time; his wife Rhoda died here in December 1837. Then he, too, apparently abandoned the little town. Wisconsin City became a ghost town.

Andrew Vieau, Solomon Juneau's son-in-law, arrived in the fall of 1838. In his "Recollections" he notes "A little settlement had been established here by Wooster Harrison and other Michigan City speculators, but the place had been starved out and practically abandoned. When I reached here, there were perhaps a dozen empty houses and stores, and a small deserted saw-mill. A post office had been established; somebody had to hold the office of postmaster, so I took the office for the winter. The only mail that ever arrived there during my term was for either my family or the family of Asa Case up at Saukville. There were no other white people in the region."



*Legends about Port Washington continue and none stronger than the visits of Abraham Lincoln to the Lake Michigan city. The story is that the future president stayed at the home of Wooster Harrison, the founder of Port Washington. The Harrison home was on Pier St., west of Franklin St. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*

Shortly after Vieau's return to Milwaukee in the spring of 1839, Aurora Adams and his family arrived, taking possession of one of the abandoned houses. He established a halfway house to provide lodging for travelers on the Lake Shore Road making their way between Milwaukee and Sheboygan. In 1840, when Washington County boundaries (of which Ozaukee County was originally a part) were established, the families of Aurora Adams and Asa Case were still the only two white families in the area. The wilderness began to reclaim the little town, and Indians, including the Sauk chief, Waubeka, again hunted on the bluffs and in the ravines of the deserted settlement.

## The Return - A Second Start

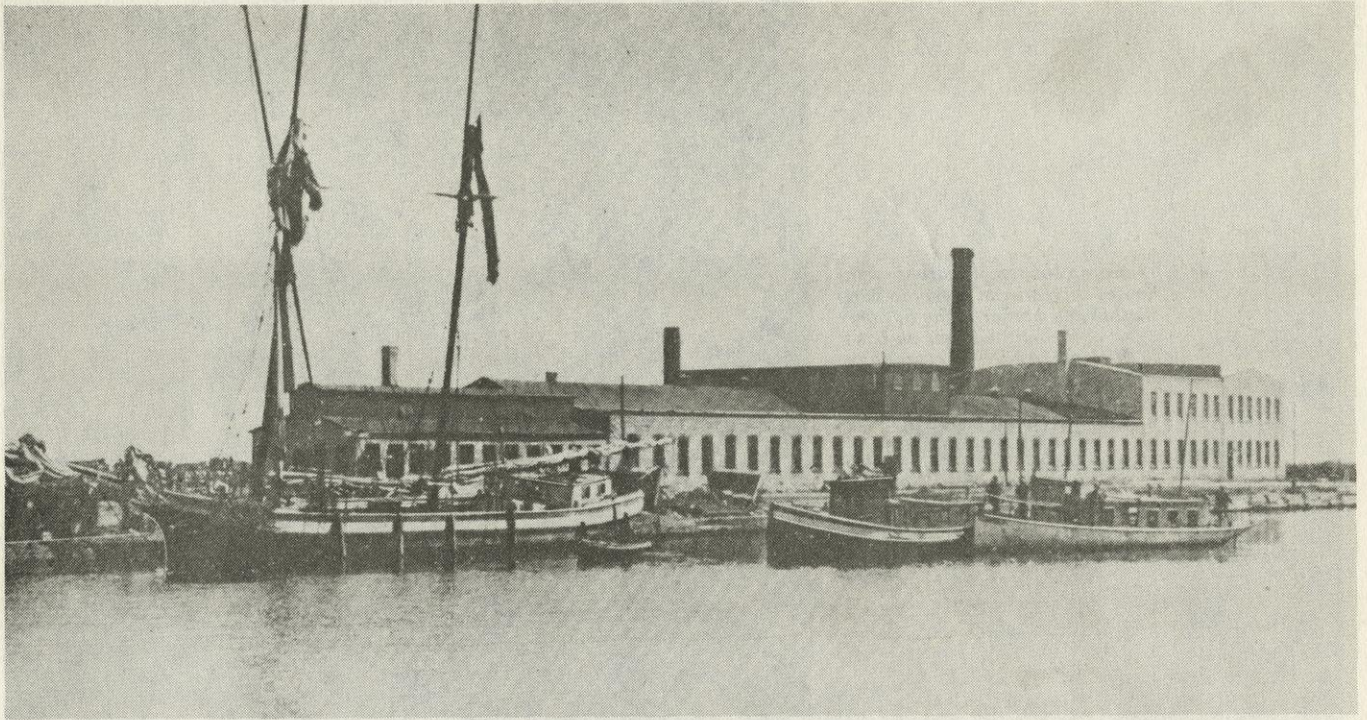
In 1843 General Harrison returned with a new group of settlers, Ira Loomis, Orman Coe, O.A. Watrous, Solon Johnson and Colonel William Teall, with the intention of reestablishing the community. The area's first legal battle occurred at that time, as the house occupied by Aurora Adams had become the property of Colonel Teall. When Adams refused to vacate the premises, Teall secured a writ of restitution. During an attempt to take possession of the building, Mrs. Adams is reputed to have opened fire on the intruders. She was arrested, and later taken to Milwaukee for trial, but was acquitted for lack of evidence.

The town was restored in rapid order. The name, Wisconsin City, was changed to Washington City to avoid confusion with two other cities by that name. A year later the name

was again changed to Port Washington at the bequest of George C. Daniels, an early resident. O.A. Watrous was appointed the postmaster. A pier was built out into the lake to enable ships to unload passengers and cargo.

Resettlement had just been completed when German, Luxembourg, and Norwegian immigrants began to arrive in large numbers. The Irish, many of whom immigrated via Canada and Newfoundland, located on what came to be known as the Canada side of Port Washington, south of Sauk Creek. Many of the Germans and the Luxembourgers claimed land in the wooded area surrounding the little town. After industriously clearing and planting crops in the rich soil, the farmers found that bountiful harvests soon provided them with the prosperity needed to erect comfortable homes and substantial outbuildings.





*Ships of all types visited the Port Washington harbor. The Turner Foundry was located along the north slip.*

The city however, remained largely under the control of the Yankees and the Irish, Hansen & Reymert opened the first store after the resettlement. Two attorneys set up a practice, and J. Arnet started the town's first crude brewery. The remainder of the 1840s saw the establishment of Woodruff & Richards Brickyard, the sawmill operating to capacity under the ownership of the Moore Brothers, the erection of a grain mill on the north bank of Sauk Creek by Julius and George Tomlinson, and the opening of Lyman Morgan & Company, manufacturers of grain separators. Dr. Powers set up a dental office, and an apothecary opened its doors on Franklin Street under the auspices of Dr. P.F. Clark. Jacob Moritz founded a brewery, which eventually became the Old Port Brewing Company known for its Premo brand beer, and Theo. Gilson and John Maas made plans to open a foundry.

The first newspaper, the Washington County Democrat, came off the presses of Flavius J. Mills in the summer of 1847. It was taken over by James W. Vail, who later became Port Washington's first mayor, and was merged with another paper, The Washington County Blade, which had been founded in 1849 by R.A. Bird.

Port Washington was incorporated as a village on July 20, 1849. Enthusiastic reports of the town's commercial enterprise and progress brought more and more settlers to the area. Steamers sailed into the harbor with increasing frequency, using the new lighthouse, built in 1849, as a navigational aid. In 1849, 414 ships docked at the commercial piers; by 1851 the number climbed to 740.

The population of Port Washington reached



*Ready to do their duty, the fourth call of selectmen was ready to leave Port Washington on March 29, 1918, for service in World War I. The building in the background is where the current Port Washington Post Office now stands. The group had assembled at the courthouse.*  
*Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*

1,500 by 1853, and the town consisted of 300 dwellings, 10 stores, five hotels, three mills, two breweries, a foundry, five blacksmiths, four wagon shops, six shoe shops and five tailorshops as well as the two commercial piers. Water commerce was brisk as steamers were loaded with cord wood, barrels of wheat, rye and flour, tons of potash, bushels of potatoes, thousands of bricks, and great quantities of lumber animal hides and fish. The original dream of General Harrison was showing signs of fulfillment.



*Once a commercial harbor, with limited recreational uses, the Port Washington harbor today has one of the best marinas on Lake Michigan while still catering to commercial uses. The west slip, lower left, and the north slip, center, were built before the turn of the century, the outer breakwaters in the 1930s, and the small boat harbor in 1980s.  
Photo by Vern Arendt*



## Fishing for Fun and Profit

Eventually three commercial piers were built off the shore at Port Washington to serve the settlements thriving shipping interests. The first pier, located at the foot of Jackson Street, was built by either Wooster Harrison or Solon Johnson around 1843, and was known as the North Pier or Old Pier. Blake's Pier was constructed sometime between 1848 and 1856 at the foot of Pier Street by Barnum Blake, a lumberman who also commissioned the construction of a small cargo schooner which was built on the city shores. The schooner lost at sea in 1898. The third, the South Pier was located at the site of the present south breakwater, and was owned by Lyon Silverman, who also served as an early sheriff.

The community was a bustling lake port from the mid nineteenth century until the early twentieth century. Many of the early settlers of the area disembarked from the schooners which docked at the piers, where the ships were loaded with local products for delivery elsewhere. Logs of ships' arrivals and departures were not kept until 1876, but in that year, 350 steamers and 460 sailing vessels were recorded as being frequenters of the Port Washington harbor. Passenger ships docked on a regular schedule. The ships were one of the primary means of transportation until the arrival of the railroad and the electric railway. For many years the lake was the town's main link with the

outside world.

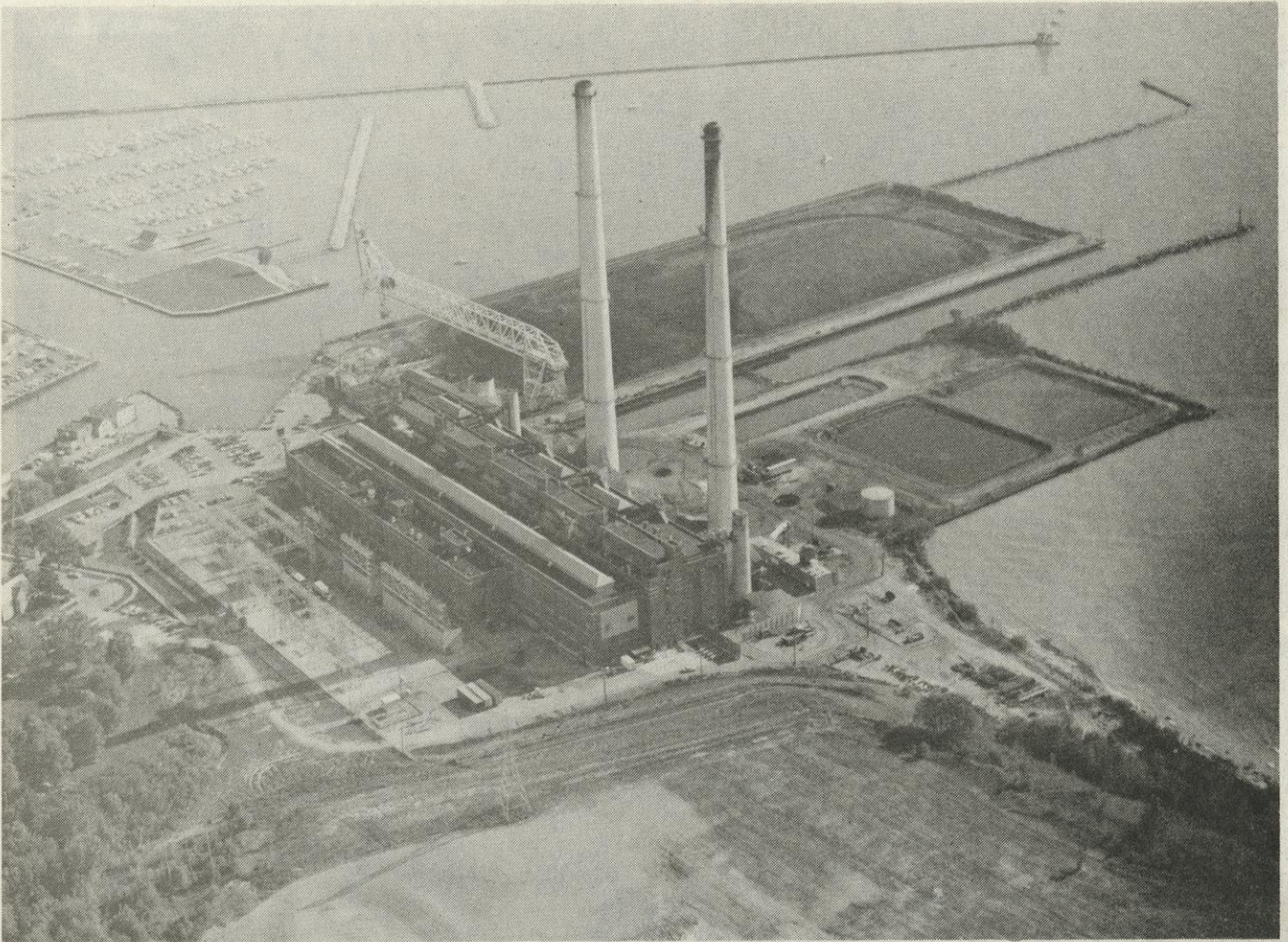
Efforts to create a protected harbor were begun when the Federal Government, concerned about the 60 mile distance separating the deep water ports of Milwaukee and Sheboygan, authorized funds for the development of an artificial harbor at Port Washington in 1870. Upon the completion of the dredging of what is now the west slip, residents were hopeful of creating even greater water born commerce. However, it soon became apparent that the harbor was still not safe from the roiling torrents of waves and water every time Lake Michigan was overtaken by a storm. Each time there was a strong northeast wind, high seas would wash out portions of the harbor and its banks.

Attempting to correct the problem, the Federal Government agreed to finance construction of the north slip, designed to dispel damaging wave action. But this effort also failed. Many times, after serious storms, the harbor had to be rebuilt, dismaying both the designers and the townspeople.

Lack of any harbor basin and natural land protection prevented Port Washington from ever becoming a major port of call. Regardless of that fact, a steady commerce was maintained at its piers for many years.

In 1929, Federal funds were again made





*Although the number of stacks at the Wisconsin Electric Power Co. Port Washington plant has changed during the years since the plant was opened in 1935, the plant has remained a dominant feature in the downtown area. Plans call for a new boiler system which could be installed in 1986 at the south end of the plant.*  
Wisconsin Electric Power Co. photo.

available for harbor improvement, ignoring the fact that all earlier attempts had been less than successful. Money was allocated not only to improve the existing harbor's condition, but also to provide the facilities for docking large coal freighters which would deliver the fuel necessary for the operation of a large electrical power plant under consideration for location at the foot of the south bluff.

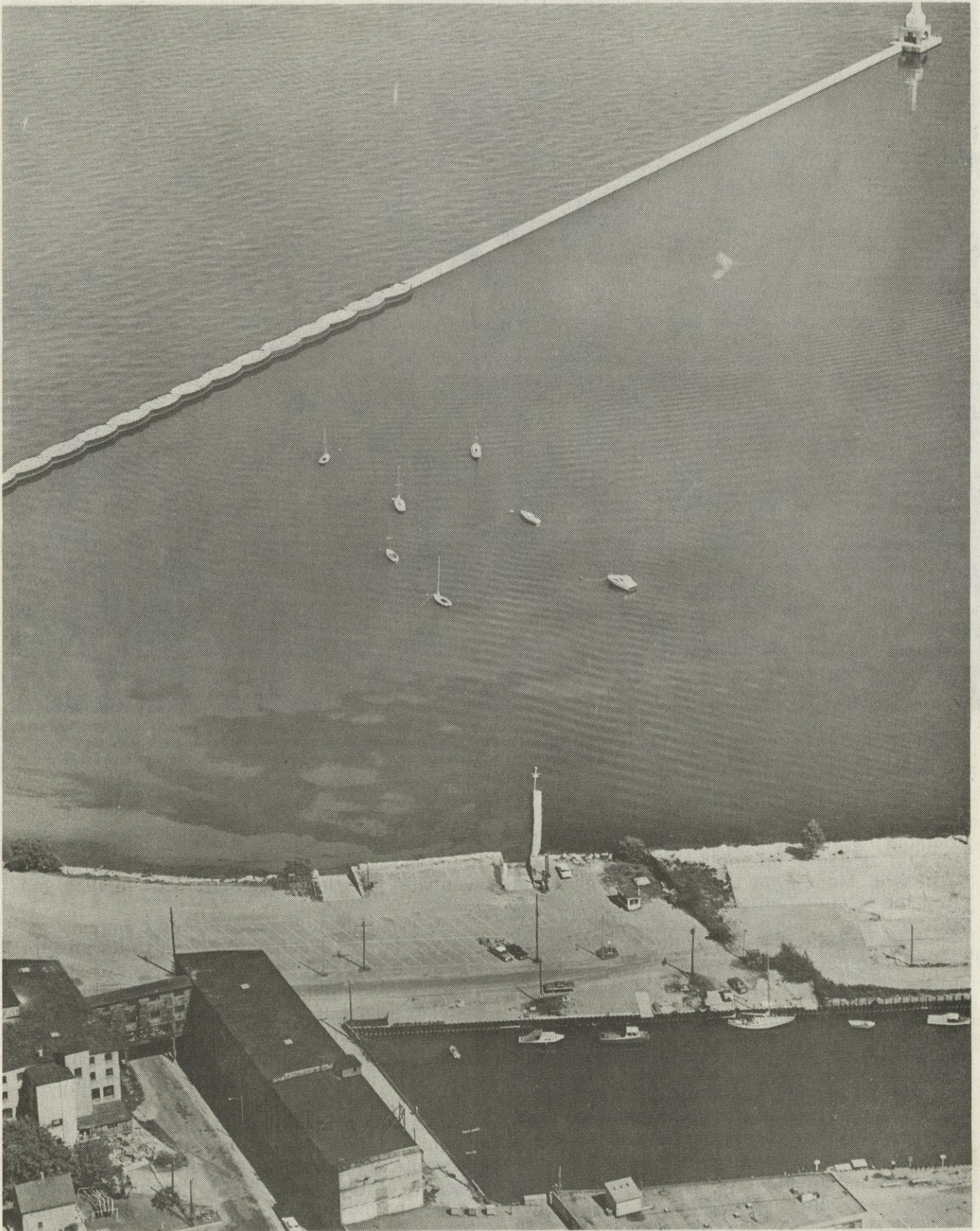
The S.B. Way, a 530 foot vessel, the largest up to that time to dock at Port Washington, successfully steamed into port on June 21, 1931. The visit was experimental to prove the feasibility of docking large ships in the Port Washington harbor. Following the successful effort, approval was received for construction of the electric power plant and enlargement of the adjacent harbor began. The expansion effort was laced with multiple setbacks, and in 1934, two weeks after completion of the project, the corps of engineers publicly admitted problems in the harbor design which again had failed to accomplish protection from the ravages of severe weather. However, commercial vessels continued to arrive to

discharge their cargo on a regular basis. Storms from the southeast remained a particular hazard, even with later improvements made in 1938 and 1939.

The Wisconsin Electric Power Company expanded its Port Washington plant to its present size in the 1940s. The additional capacity required an increasing number of visits of bulk freighters carrying tremendous supplies of coal to feed its five massive turbines. In 1979 the first of the enormous 1000 foot freighters arrived in the harbor with 39,000 tons of coal, just barely fitting into the 1,100-foot coal dock.

While the completion of the harbor and marina project in 1982 has done much to provide favorable protection for small craft, Port Washington remains only a fair weather port for larger commercial coal vessels, which often choose to ride out a storm in the relative safety of the open waters rather than to risk damage to the ship or the dock by remaining in the harbor at the mercy of the furious winds and the pounding waves.





*Twenty years ago, the Port Washington lakefront was a somewhat neglected part of the city. Portions of the Wisconsin Chair Company buildings, rebuilt after the disastrous 1899 fire, were still located at the northern end of the north slip and a few boats rode on moorings in the north slip. All of this changed in the next 25 years, with the planting of fish, the demonstrated needs for a recreational harbor and a change from a commercial harbor to one serving recreational needs. At the time the picture was taken, one lonely launching ramp and the Port Washington Yacht Club pier were the only evidence of the limited interest in Lake Michigan.*

*Photo by Vern Arendt*



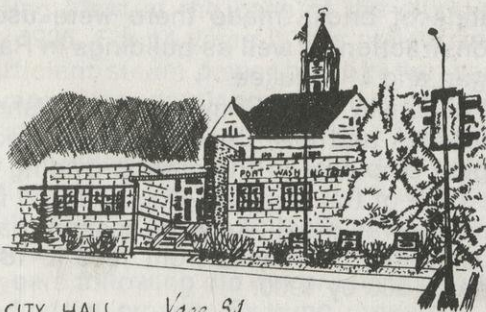
# County Seat, Yes, No, Yes

The Town of Port Washington, encompassing an area which included the present towns of Fredonia, Saukville and Belgium, was incorporated on January 21, 1846, two years before Wisconsin achieved statehood. Town officials were elected at the first town meeting held in April in the newly constructed school house. The first board of supervisors included Solon Johnson, Colonel William Teall and John McLean. Wooster Harrison was named a town assessor. Seventy-six names were registered on the first poll list.

One of the greatest controversies at the time was the selection of a town to serve as the county seat. An Act of the Territorial Legislature passed in 1836, dividing Washington County (which included Ozaukee County) from Milwaukee County, named Wisconsin City as the seat of justice, but after the town was abandoned, Hamburg (Grafton) was chosen in a vote taken in 1840.

In 1847 Wisconsin City, having been renamed Port Washington, was again made the county seat, a decision which generated animosity among the citizens of other rapidly developing communities, including Mequon, Cedarburg, West Bend, Belgium and Newburg, all within the county boundaries. The battle raged on for eight years. Many plans for solutions were submitted, and rejected by the voters. In 1852, the Legislature, desperate to end this matter, pushed a bill through which divided the area into two counties, Washington County to the West, having the county seat located at West Bend; Ozaukee County to the east, with Port Washington named as county seat.

Port Washington was incorporated as a village on July 20, 1848 with boundaries designated as Section 28, and the Southeast one-quarter of Section 29 in the Town of Port Washington. Thirty-three years later, in 1882, the village was officially incorporated under a city charter using the mayor-aldermanic form of government. James W. Vail, the founder of what eventually became the Port Washington State Bank, was elected the first mayor of the city. In 1917, the commission form of government currently in use, was formally adopted.

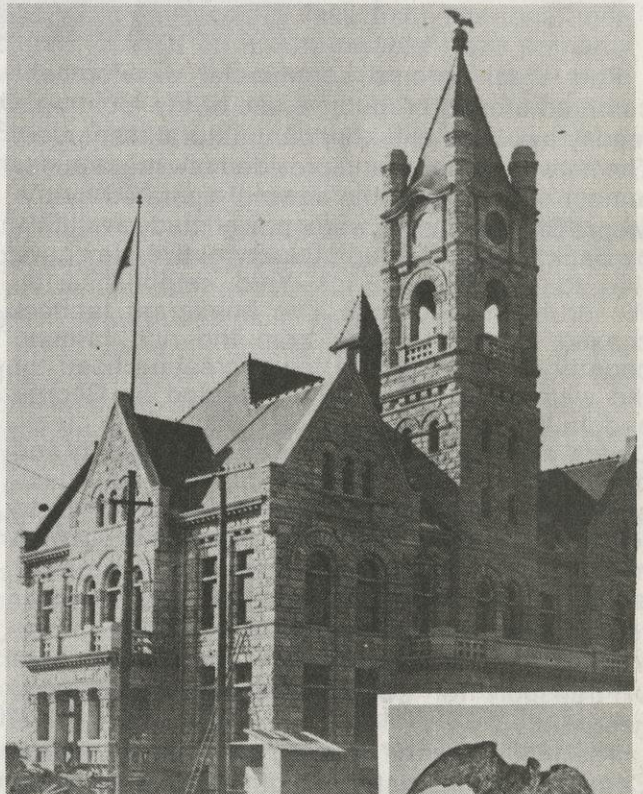


CITY HALL *Page 84*



*Standing in splendid isolation the Ozaukee County courthouse before 1898 also had the register of deeds office.*

*Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*



*Finishing touches were put on the new courthouse in 1901. The splendid building still stands with clock installed and eagle gleaming brightly. The building is on the national register of historic sites. Photos courtesy of Ambrose Mayer and Vern Arendt*





# Location Spurs Development

*Many businessmen were introduced to the City of Port Washington while on a summer excursion trip from Whitefish Bay. The Pabst Whitefish Bay Resort ran regular excursion trips to the city, where the visitors were greeted by a band and moved along Franklin St. to Columbia Park on Wisconsin Street where food and refreshments were waiting.  
Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*



Port Washington's commercial development centered around productive use of the location's readily available and abundant natural resources. The heavily wooded land provided raw material for lumber produced by the sawmill operated by the Moore Brothers using water power made available by Sauk Creek. The high quality native clay gave rise to the North Brick Yard established by Woodruff and Richards. The immigrant farmers coaxed bountiful crops from the rich farming country surrounding the town, creating need for the water-powered grainmill erected by George and Julius Tomlinson on the banks of the creek. Deep wells produced water of superior quality and purity which, no doubt contributed to the decisions of Johann Wittmann and Jacob Moritz to follow J. Arnet into the brewing business, but on a more sophisticated level. One of the greatest assets, Lake Michigan, provided limitless water for industry, bountiful catches rewarding the efforts of commercial fishermen, and a ready route of transport for goods which exceeded local needs.

The 1850s saw the opening of Lyman Morgan & Company, manufacturers of grain separating machines, erection of a foundry by Theodore Gilson and John Maas, operation of a tannery by Paul Wolf and James W. Vail's establishment of a money exchange, the beginning of the banking industry in Ozaukee County.

The second half of the 19th century brought the railroad to Port Washington after a heated battle with Saukville over which location was an appropriate route through the county. Contrary to the opinion of the Legislature that the narrow

county did not warrant two parallel lines, the warm fight resulted in two charters being granted, and the construction of two competing railroads at an average distance of less than five miles apart.

A large malt house was constructed near the new railroad by Messrs. N. Kemp & N. Poull. A planing mill owned by N.G. Ellenbecker, as well as three lumberyards provided work for men in the area. The Novelty Iron Works, a large employer, started by E. Schumacher, an enterprising Milwaukeean, was later taken over & operated by James Vail following Schumacher's early financial difficulties.

A larger brewery was built by Jacob Moritz, operated by Henry Dix, and taken over by Gottlieb Biedermann and John Bostwick in 1881.

The fishing industry flourished. Fine specimens of trout, whitefish and perch were shipped to other markets representing thousands of dollars worth of revenue annually.

Gottlieb Guenther opened his famous brickyards in 1885 in what is now lower Lake Park. Thousands of bricks made there were used in local construction as well as buildings in Racine, Waukegan and Milwaukee.

The Wisconsin Chair Company, established by John Boswick and F.A. Dennet in 1888, became the largest employer in the area, providing work for one-sixth of the Ozaukee County labor force. Its presence was most likely the reason that the city's population increased from 1659 in 1890 to more than 3,000 by 1900.



Surviving the financial crash of 1893, the Chair Company suffered its severest blow in 1899 when it was totally leveled by fire. The company showed its resiliency by immediately rebuilding, and for many years remained the backbone of Port Washington's economy. The incredible success story eventually ended as sales and profits became smaller and production slowed down, prompting eventual closure in the 1950s.

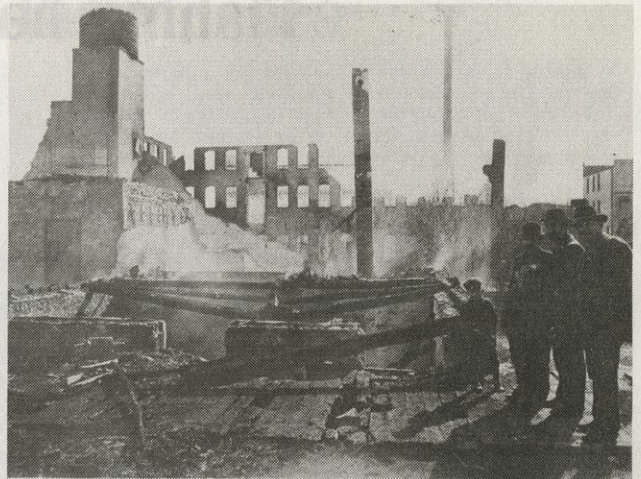
The beginning of the 20th century saw the start of many companies which are familiar to the residents of Port Washington today. The Gilson Manufacturing Company, originally a small foundry, has evolved into the Bolens Corporation, producers of internationally marketed lawn and garden equipment.

Other firms which have substantially contributed to the city's economy were established in the 1920s. Simplicity Manufacturing Company, the highly successful enterprise founded by one of Port Washington's native sons, William J. Niederkorn, produces a well-known line of lawn and garden equipment. The Kwik-Mix Concrete Mixer Company, is known today as the CED Division of the Koehring Company, manufacturers of heavy construction equipment. Modern Equipment, founded in 1921, produces hot metal pouring devices and other foundry equipment.

In the 1930s Port Washington's commercial fishing reached its peak. In the early days, small row boats or sailboats took the rugged fishermen two or three miles off shore to set their handmade nets. It took two days to set six miles of gill nets, and three hours to remove the trapped fish. The men were at the mercy of the unpredictable lake in their small craft; the waters being successfully navigated only with the great skill and experience of the captain. Development of larger, power-driven vessels and the net machine, an adaptation of the winch, enabled commercial fishermen to range farther into Lake Michigan's waters, increase the size of their catch through use of more nets, and reduced some of the dangers faced in earlier times. In 1935 eight major fishing tugs sailed from Port's harbor, making Port Washington one of the most renowned fishing ports on the Great Lakes, and the names Smith, Ewig and Bussler well known in the fishing industry.

The Milwaukee Electric Railway and Light Company, the forerunner of the Wisconsin Electric Power Company, opened its imposing power generating plant at the base of the city's south bluff in 1935. For 14 years it was considered the most efficient steam power plant in the world. It has remained a dominating structure on Port Washington's skyline, its smoke stacks being visible for miles over land and on the waters of Lake Michigan. On a clear day, the stacks can be distinctly seen from the Milwaukee shoreline, 35 miles away.

The years following did not produce significant new industrial growth. Existing industries grew and evolved to meet the needs of the changing



*Citizens of the community gathered the morning after the Wisconsin Chair Company fire to view the still smoldering remains of the devastated downtown area. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*

times; a few closed their doors, and some moved from the city. Commercial fishing suffered a number of reversals with new conservation laws, the arrival of the lamprey eel, overpopulation of the alewife, and identification of rising PCB levels which diminished the catches and restricted the sale of many types of lake fish. The local merchants carried on a comfortable trade primarily with residents of the area; one of the most well-known Port Washington enterprises being the Smith Brother's Fish Shanty Restaurant, which has attracted visitors to the city for many years.

The 1980s have generated new enthusiasm for development and expansion of Port Washington's commercial interests. Complacency has given way to increasing recognition of potential new avenues of economic growth.

After years of debate, the construction of the 180 slip small boat marina was approved, and the project completed in 1982. Port's new image as a recreational center offering excellent sport fishing, charter services, public boat launching ramps, and fish derbies in addition to the already well-established Fish Day celebration, is making Port Washington a favorite stop for an increasing number of tourists who arrive both by land and by sea.

Additional noteworthy events include the recent completion of Freeman Chemical's multimillion dollar world headquarters located on the west side, which incorporates the company's research and testing laboratories, and the decision of the Allen-Edmonds Shoe Company to permanently relocate in Port Washington following a fire which totally destroyed their main plant in Belgium.

These, and other proposals currently under consideration seem to demonstrate that fresh winds are blowing through Wooster Harrison's little city. A spirit of renewed enthusiasm, evolving concepts, and a new sense of direction hold promise for Port Washington's continued growth and development in the years ahead.



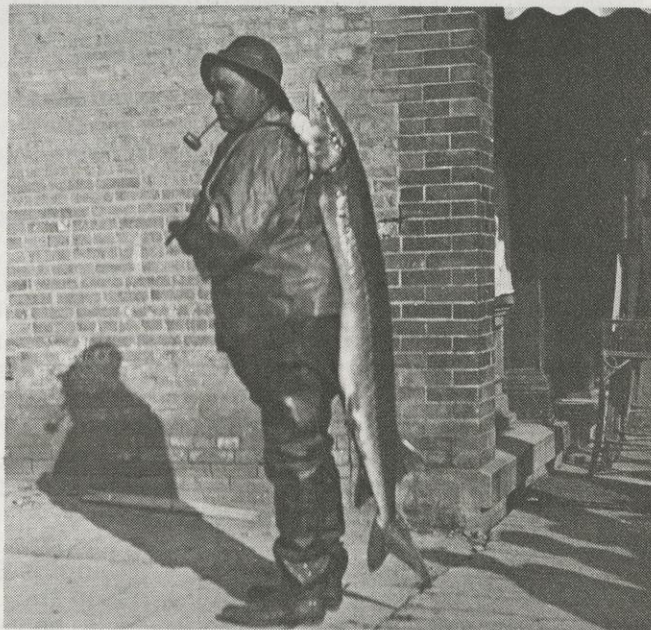
# Fishing has Changed



*Pound nets were once used by fishermen to bring in the catches off the Port Washington harbor. Working the pound nets took muscles and the pulling efforts of young and old.*  
Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer



*Weighing in one of the fish caught in a local derby is part of the fun on a summer weekend. The joy of landing one of the big fish is as great today as it was when fishing was part of the commercial lifeblood of the community. The pavilion used for the derby was donated by the Kiwanis Club and is located at the marina*



*Hauling home a sturgeon was all in a day's work for a fisherman at the turn of the century.*



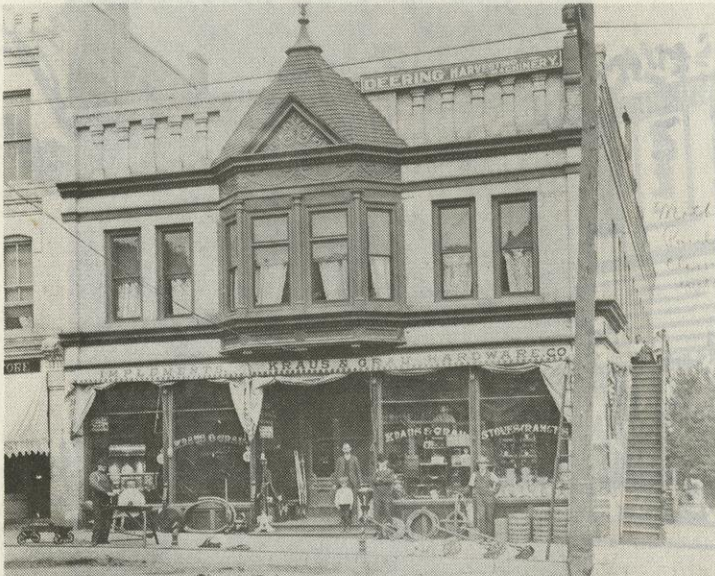
*Reminders of past fishing efforts, the lone commercial boat working the Port Washington area in 1985, and the fishing shanties which once housed net sheds and smoke houses, are still in evidence along with the sleek charter boats which call Port Washington home port.*  
Photo by Vern Arendt



*One of the few communities on the western shore of Lake Michigan to have a fish cleaning station, the facility is used constantly during the season. The station was a gift of the Port Washington Lions Club.*



# Busy, Busy, Businesses



Posing proudly, the men of the business stood in front of Kraus and Grau Hardware store while the women and children of the family were at the top of the steps. The building on Franklin St. at Pier St. now holds Biever Appliance. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer



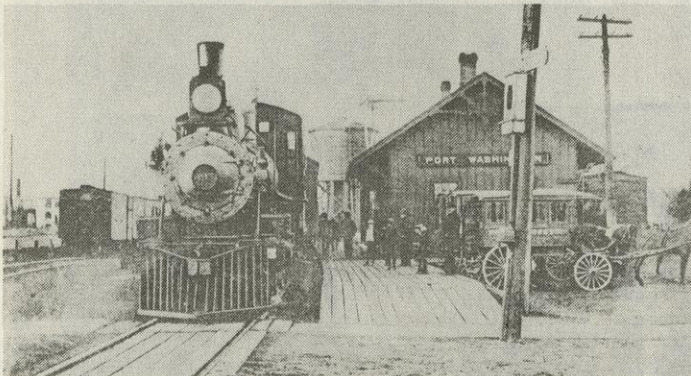
Inside the hardware store, the requirements of the day could be found, including the favorite fancy woodburning stove. Customers had stools to sit on while waiting to be served. The time was 1905.



Still in the Biever family, the building at the corner of Wisconsin St. and Prospect is now used as a warehouse, while the appliance business has moved several blocks south. The Biever family is no longer in the grocery business which was the basis of the current family owned businesses.



A community brewery owner, Johann Wittmann, built his home next to his brewery on Wisconsin St. The building was licensed as a tavern in 1889 and is now the Sundance Tavern.



Many of the salesmen calling on the Port Washington trade were taken to their hotels by waiting carriages which met each passenger train at the Chicago and Northwestern Railway depot which is still part of the city scene on Grand Avenue.

One of the hotels that the people visited was the Mayer Hotel. Those with cars used the garage on Main Street at Wisconsin Street. The building which once was Leland Stanford's office is at the far left. The Mayer Hotel is now the Port Hotel, located across Wisconsin Street from the courthouse. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer







W. J. NIEDERKORN LIBRARY  
Voge 84

## Reading Part of Lifestyle

Space for the Port Washington Public library, founded in 1898 by the Women's Club, was made available in the Courtland Drugstore at the corner of Main and Franklin Streets. The Courtlands offered to manage the books for one year without charge.

In 1910, the library was moved to the basement of the courthouse, and Mrs. A.R. Henze was hired as librarian for \$150 per year, the cost being shared by the city and the Women's Club. In 1924

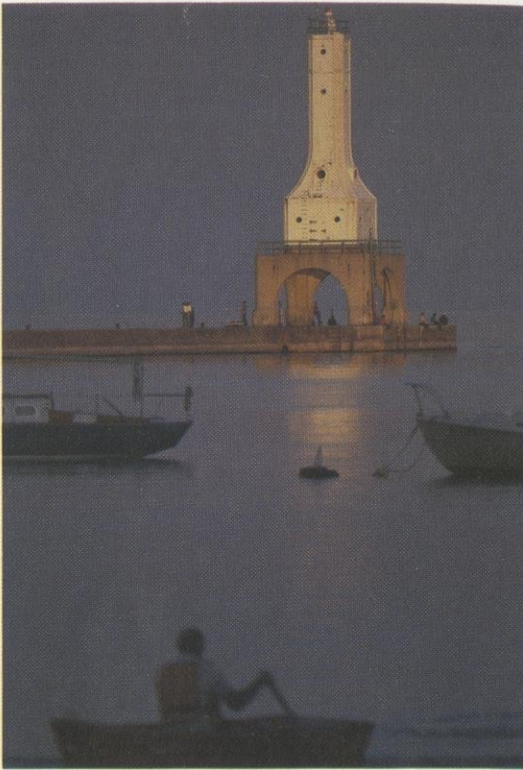
the city assumed full financial responsibility for the library following passage of a state law prohibiting private organizations from operating public libraries.

After occupying several other temporary locations, the library was moved to its permanent home, the W.J. Niederkorn Library building, constructed with a substantial donation from Mr. Niederkorn and public funds.

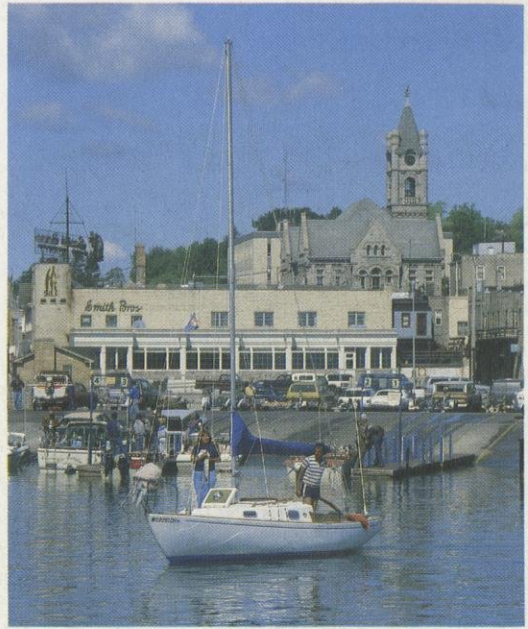
*Fire claimed the Wisconsin Street School which had been used for a variety of educational needs from grade school to high school, library to vocational and technical school before being left empty. The firehouse now stands next to the former school site. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*



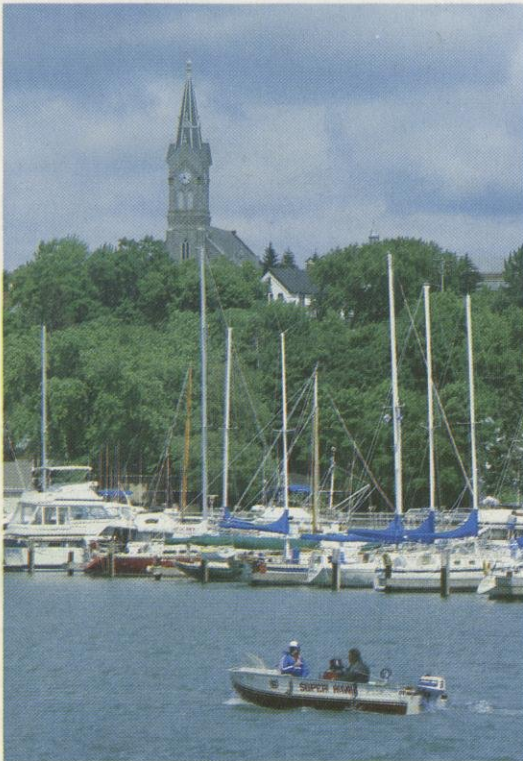




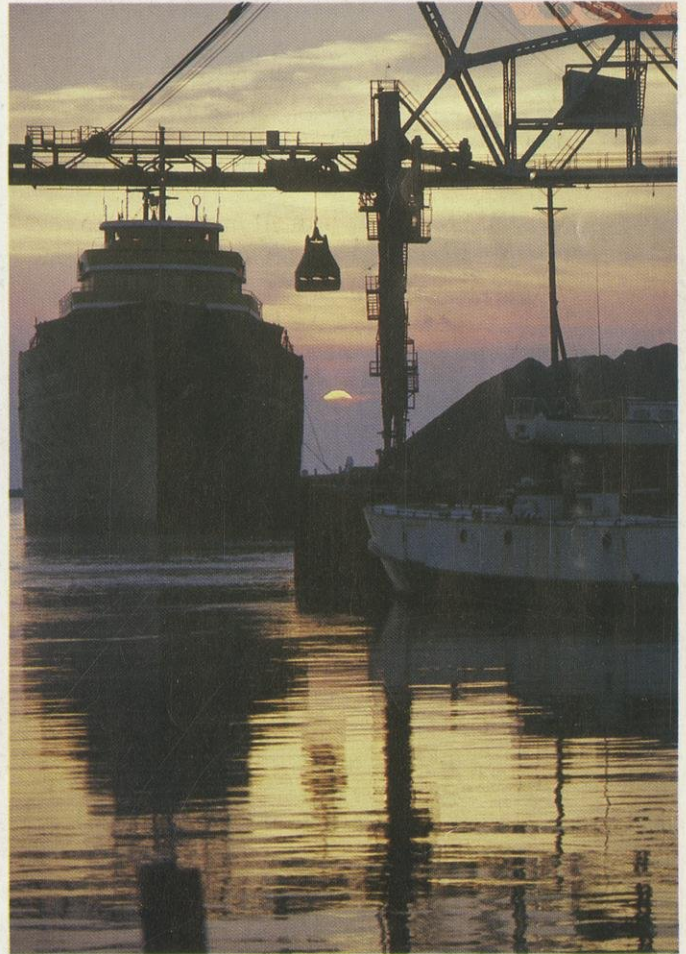
*Port Washington's symbol, the lighthouse at the end of the north breakwater, is used many times to indicate the community.*



*Rising above the downtown, the clocktower with the gleaming eagle on the Ozaaukee County Courthouse is as much a part of the city as the new marina and the shopping center on Main St.*



*Dominating the skyline of Port Washington, St. Mary's Church is a national historic building.*



*At the south end of Franklin St., the Port Washington power plant of Wisconsin Electric Power Co. is a 50 year institution. Coal boats delivering their cargoes, while the unloading bridge stands unused and gleaming blue at the dock, are very much a part of the community.*

# Misty harbor memories abound





*Franklin St., the heart of the business district, glistened in the rain.*

*Mile Rock is a favorite destination of Lake Michigan shoreline walkers. Located below the Upper Lake Park bluff, the rock is surrounded by water this Sesquicentennial year. It was named for its location by someone who once determined it was a mile north of the community. But the starting point was never learned.*



*An example of the fine homes and gracious gardens of Port Washington, the Niederkorn home on the southwest corner of Grand Avenue at Webster St. is one of the community's landmarks.*

**...of today's Port Washington.**

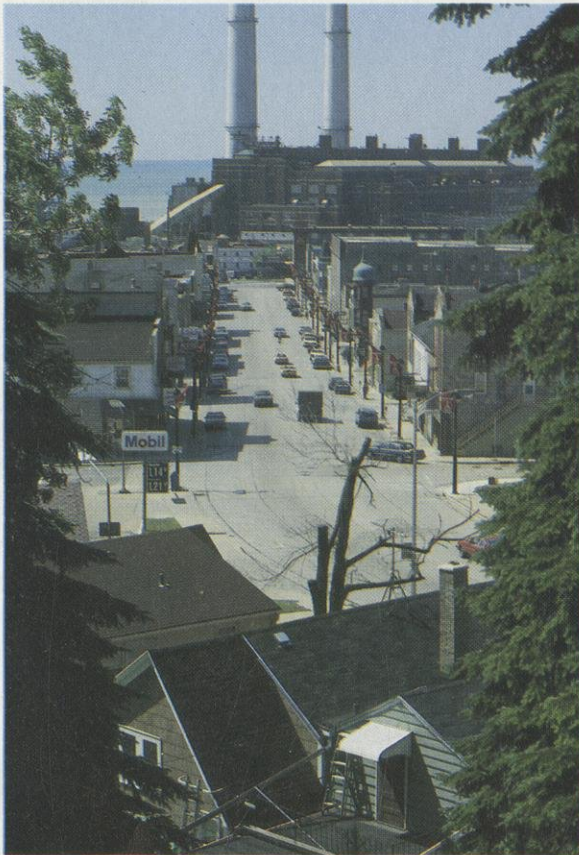




*Perhaps the most photographed scene in southeastern Wisconsin, Franklin St. looking north to St. Mary's Church is seen on the cover and in this photograph and in many other Port Washington examples.*



*Built in 1860, when an oil burning lamp with a widow's walk stood atop the building, the old lighthouse building on Johnson St. is now home to coast guard personnel, even though they no longer have to provide service to the automated lights at the harbor.*



*Although the number of stacks at the Wisconsin Electric Power Co. plant has changed through the years, the domination of the south end of Franklin St. has not changed.*



*Today the Chamber of Commerce office and information center in the 100 block of East Grand Ave., the Pebble House, a national historic register building, was built in 1848 of pebbles gathered along Lake Michigan's shore. For more than 50 years, where it served as a gatehouse for the power plant. It was moved to the present site in January of 1985 and dedicated on Memorial Day.*

**Built on yesterday's dreams**





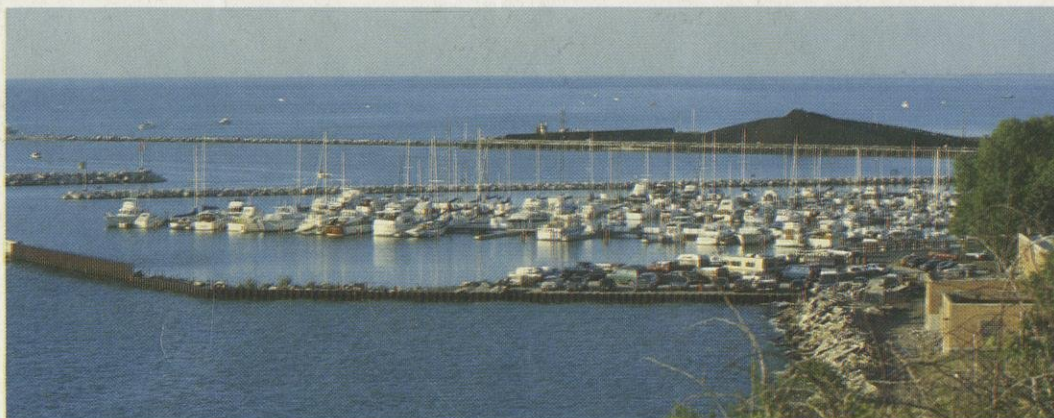
*Named after the founder of Simplicity Manufacturing Co., and the man whose generosity helped build the cultural center, the William J. Niederkorn Library on the northeast corner of Grand Avenue at Webster St. is part of a city owned complex with the Eghart House, a Victorian restoration standing to the east of the library. The Eghart House is operated by the members of the W.J. Niederkorn Museum and Art Center, and is open each Sunday, May through October, to the public interested in seeing how people lived at the turn of the century.*



*The breakwater. Although there are newer breakwaters encompassing the marina, to most residents and visitors, the breakwater is the north one, used for walking and fishing and viewing pleasures.*



*Once the city's firehouse, the Port Washington senior citizen center has been lovingly maintained and is in constant use. The center is located on Pier St. at Wisconsin, just across the street from the firehouse now in use.*



*The marina has become a focal point for the community, despite the bitter battles fought to get it built. This photograph will soon be an historic one because the exterior of the filtration plant, shown at the left, will be changed during this Sesquicentennial year.*

**and a mixture of old and new.**





*Several generations of Port Washington children were taught in the classrooms of Hill School, which stood where the park with the same name is now located at the intersection of Spring St. and Grand Avenue. The building was destroyed by fire while being used as a recreation center. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*

## School Bells Sounded Early

George W. Foster, Port Washington's first school teacher, accepted the position at the original schoolhouse on the corner of Jackson and Wisconsin streets for a "term of three months at \$9.00 per month and board." Discouraged with his law practice in Milwaukee, he had been traveling on foot to Sheboygan to find work in a lumber camp in 1845 when he met Orman D. Coe, Port Washington's first school commissioner, at a wayside tavern in Hamburg (Grafton). Coe was so taken with the young man's evident capabilities that he offered him the position without hesitation. Foster married Coe's daughter a year later, and subsequently set up a successful law practice in Port Washington.

In 1846, with a student population of 135, the village divided into two school districts. The Hill School, a log building, was erected on the corner of Grand Avenue and Spring Street. A three-year high school started in 1881 at the Jackson and Wisconsin Street location with a three-term school year, graduated three pupils in 1883. The Wisconsin Street School was erected across the street in 1893, with an addition added in 1903.

The high school's first football team played one game in 1897, beating Grafton 18-4. Players came from all levels including the seventh and eighth grades. Basketball was played in the old Community Hall with its pot-bellied stove and without showers.

The present high school on West Jackson

Street was built in 1931. Original plans were to construct the new high school on the south bluff, but the location was changed for various reasons, one of which was the proposed construction of the electrical power plant on adjacent property. At that time, part of the school district outside of the city limits withdrew from the district as the residents did not want to help pay for the new structure.

Due to the 1950 philosophy of the Board of Public Education, Washington Heights Elementary School was built next to the high school, concentrating kindergarten through 12th grades in one location.

As population increases demanded, a new elementary school named after former School Superintendent Walter Dunwiddie was opened on the west side in 1958. In 1961 the Lincoln Elementary School opened its doors and the Washington Heights building was converted to additional high school classrooms. Thomas Jefferson Middle School began operation in 1968 and will soon become the site of the Community Swimming Pool.

Present enrollment in the Port Washington School District is approximately 2400 students. The district also includes the Village of Saukville, Town of Port Washington, and portions of the Town of Saukville and Town of Grafton.



## St. Alphonsus Hospital

Ozaukee County's only hospital was built in 1941 on nine acres of city-donated land by the sisters of the Sorrowful Mother with a 50 bed capacity. A \$3,000,000 expansion program completed in 1960 modernized the facility and doubled the beds.

Currently St. Alphonsus meets the health needs of the community with a full range of diagnostic, medical, surgical, intensive-care, restorative and out-patient services, including 24-hour emergency room care and community health and awareness programs. Forty physicians are on the active staff, and an additional 60 physicians share courtesy staff privileges. St. Mary's Hospital is in the process of buying the hospital from the Sisters of Sorrowful Mother.



*Built on land donated by the city, St. Alphonsus Hospital has been serving the community since 1941 under the direction of the Sisters of Sorrowful Mother. St. Mary's Hospital, Milwaukee, and the Daughters of Charity announced in 1985 that they would buy the hospital and run it as part of the St. Mary's health care program.*



*Now the Chamber of Commerce office and tourist information center, the Pebble House is one of the city's treasures. Built 13 years after the community was founded, the Pebble House is another community building on the National Register of Historic Sites. It is located in the 100 block of East Grand Avenue, after being moved in January of 1985 from the Wisconsin Electric Power Co. Power Plant entrance where it had served as the gatehouse for almost 50 years.*

## Pebble House

In 1848 Edward and Elisabeth Dodge built a unique home of stone, ranging from egg to fist-size, which they laboriously gathered from the shores of Lake Michigan. The stones, worn smooth by the water, and possibly glacial in origin, varied in color from gray and brown to pale pink. They were assigned to their location in the construction of the walls according to size and color. The house, one and one-half stories in height with walls that are 20 inches thick, was originally built on the south bank of Sauk Creek. When the Electric Company bought the property in 1930 in anticipation of erecting the power plant, the unusual construction of the home prompted company officials to preserve it as an item of historical interest. The house was moved in 1935 to the power plant entrance. After it was restored, and a bay window and canopy were added, it served as the company gate house for many years. In January, 1985 it was moved, through the cooperative effort of the Wisconsin Electric Power Company and the city to its present location on Grand Avenue, where it is the office for the Chamber of Commerce and a tourist information center.



## Hoffman House

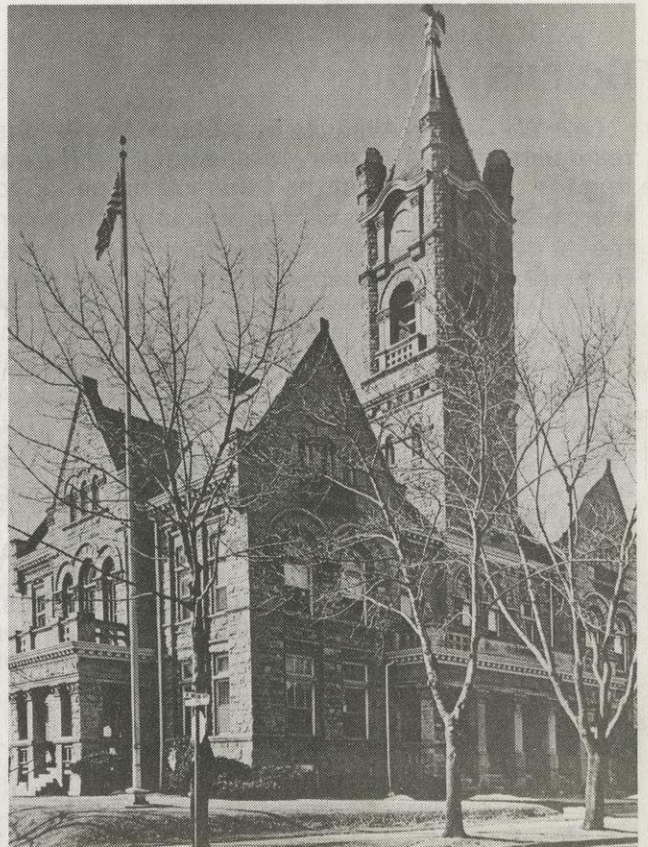
200 W. Grand Avenue. This classic building, completed in 1901 was constructed of brick manufactured in local brickyards. Owned by F. Louis Hoffmann, it served as a first class hotel for many years. It accommodated 60 guests in what were billed as "large, airy and clean" rooms, and provided first floor sitting rooms, a tavern and dining area. According to the *Jobber & Retailer*, a publication for travelers of the period, the "dining room is ideal in the things that appeal to guests - order, courtesy, good taste and promptness of service, and plenty of the best palatable food with frequent changes and variations "Easily the leader of Port Washington's four first class hotels." The exterior walls are simple in detail, trimmed with string courses which conform to two different styles of window arch. The corner bartizan possesses ornamental swags, panels and moldings all made of sheet metal. Currently the first floor is occupied by a restaurant, and the upper floors serve as rental units. The building was accepted for registry in the National Register of Historic Places in 1984.

*A hub of the community's social activities as well as a hotel and with a fine dining room, the Hoffman House has had a variety of names since it was built before the turn of the century. Now on the National Register of Historic Sites, the building is the home of The Haberdashery restaurant and with the upper stories serving as a rooming house for long term tenants.*

*Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer*

## Ozaukee County Court House

109 W. Main St. The third courthouse to stand on this location is of Romanesque design, and was constructed in 1901 of rock-faced limestone from the Cedarburg Quarry. The clock-tower, is topped by a gold-leaf eagle which reflects the rays of the sun, providing a landmark to sailors approaching Port Washington's harbor. The older portion is on the National Register of Historic Places.





## St. Mary's Church

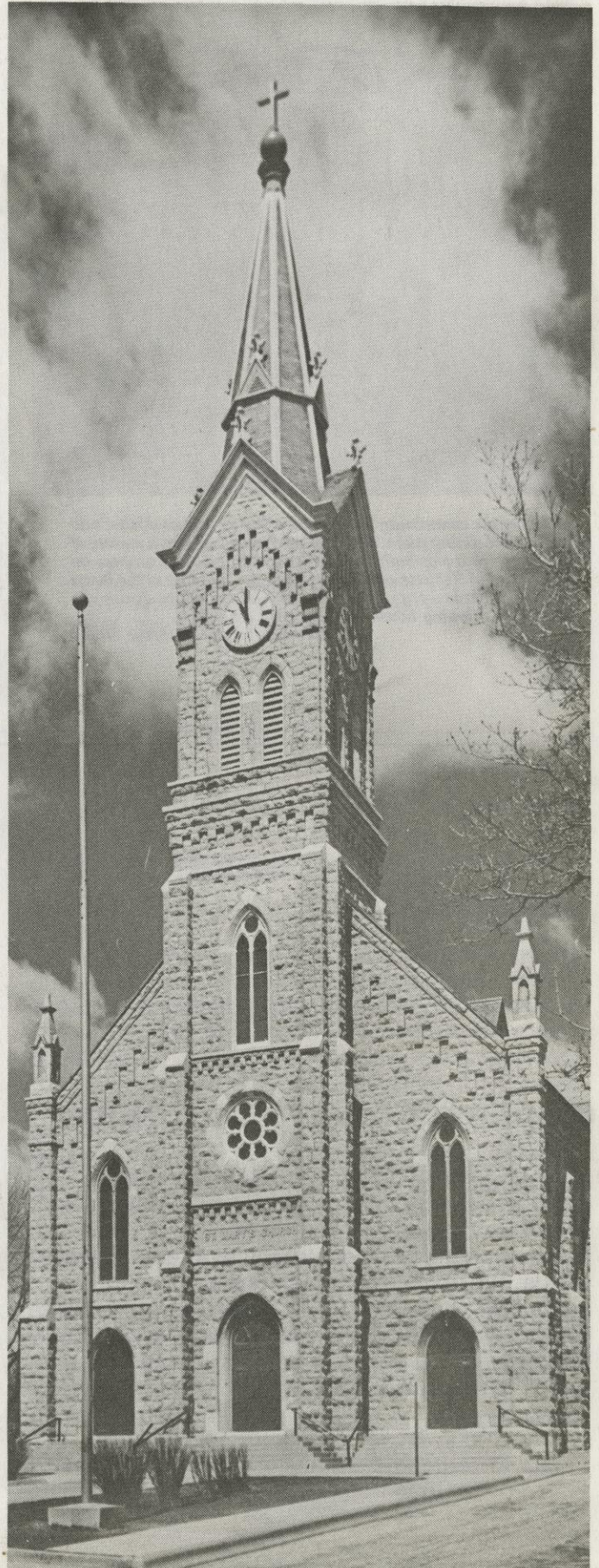
430 E. Johnson Street. St. Mary's, an imposing Gothic structure, constructed of rock-faced limestone from the local Druecker Quarry, replacing two previous churches built on the same site, was dedicated in 1884. Set at an angle atop the high north bluff, and centered over the city's main thoroughfare, the church dominates Port Washington in the same manner that medieval cathedrals dominated the dwellings clustered around their foundations. Rising above the highest land point in Port Washington, St. Mary's has served as a navigational aid to ships for over a century.

## Bolens Home

842 W. Grand Avenue. The Harry W. Bolens residence, a well preserved specimen representing the transition from the Queen Anne period to the Colonial Revival style of building popular in the early 1900s, was chosen for the National Registry primarily because of the prominence of Harry Bolens, one of the leading Port Washington citizens in the early twentieth century.

Bolens was not only a manufacturer and inventor, but also published a local newspaper, the Port Washington Star. In addition, he served Port Washington as an alderman and mayor, later becoming an Ozaukee County Supervisor and Chairman of the County Board.

In 1932 Bolens was elected to the State Senate, representing the 12th district, which, at the time, encompassed Ozaukee and Sheboygan counties. He was re-elected in 1936, and in 1938 ran for governor of Wisconsin, losing to Julius Heil of Milwaukee.





## Judge Eghart House

316 W. Grand Avenue. This Victorian cottage was designed and built for Louis Teed for his brother Byron in 1872. Purchased in 1881 by Judge Leopold Eghart, it was continuously owned and occupied by his family until the death of his daughter, Elsa, in 1969. Restored through a donation by William J. Niederkorn, it is furnished with Victorian antiques provided by local families, and is maintained by a group of citizens who hold it open for tour on Sundays from mid-May to October.

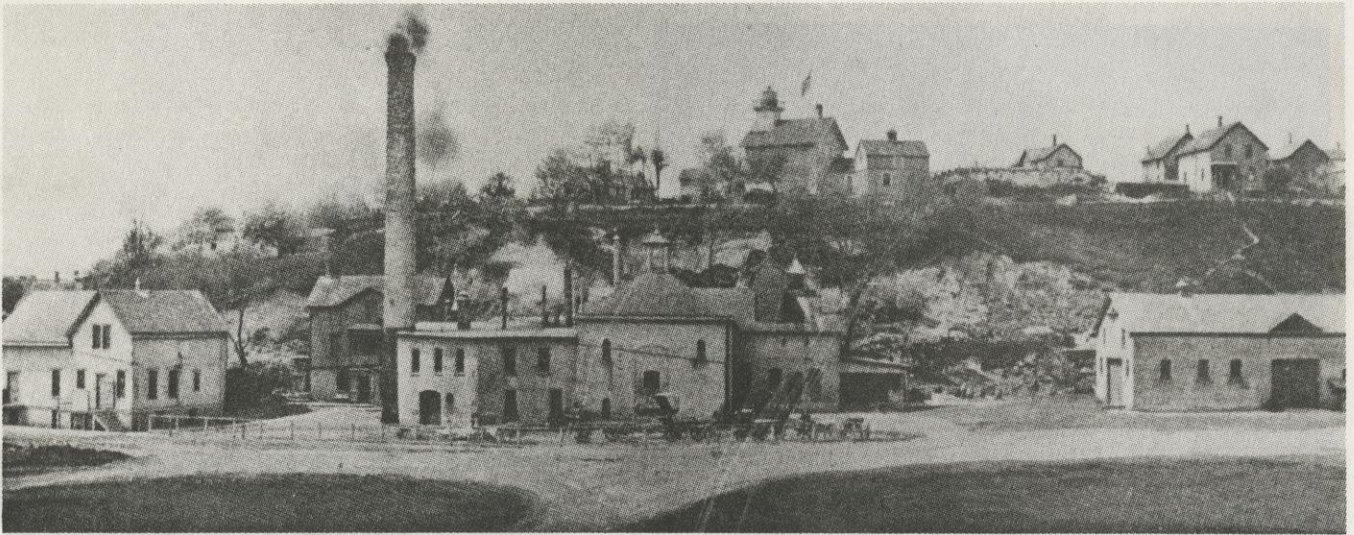


The original lighthouse for the mariners nearing Port Washington had its widow walk and oil burning lamp on top of the building which carries an 1860 date. The building still stands today.  
Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer

## Lighthouse

311 East Johnson Street. Situated on the north bluff, 106 feet above Lake Michigan, the building once served as a lighthouse, having a square iron tower on the roof which housed a standard iron lantern containing an oil burning lamp called a fourth-order fixed white light which could be seen for 20 miles out on the lake. It replaced a lighthouse built in 1849 on the same site on land donated by Solon Johnson, one of Port Washington's first settlers. The building presently serves as a residence for Coast Guard personnel. It was decommissioned as a lighthouse in 1889, when a lighthouse was built at the harbor entrance.





The beer that made Milwaukee furious, Premo Beer, was brewed by the Port Washington Brewing Company. The brewery was located on Lake Street and a portion of the building is now the Van Ells Schanen American Legion clubhouse. Notice the lighthouse on the hill behind the brewery with the lamp intact and the flag flying.  
Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer

## People, Places and Events

### Lincoln's Visit

The details are lost in the mists of time, but the story of Abraham Lincoln's visit to Port Washington in the mid 1830's persists, and is documented in a number of reputable publications. Historians agree that Lincoln did spend a period of time on the road in his early years, possibly affected by the untimely death of his beloved Ann Rutledge. Local belief is that he did spend at least one night, perhaps more than one, at the home of the city's founder, Wooster Harrison, while on a walking trip from Milwaukee to Sheboygan. Years later, while visiting Fort Monroe during the Civil War, Lincoln is reputed to have approached an officer, a Captain Beger, who when questioned about his origins, indicated that he was from Port Washington, Wisconsin. The President then, is said to have identified the location, and asked for the names of early settlers. When Harrison's name was mentioned, Mr. Lincoln confirmed the fact that he had been a guest in the home of Mr. Harrison.

### Leland Stanford

Leland Stanford, a young attorney from Albany, New York, having recently arrived in Chicago, heard of a promising village to the north known as Port Washington. He made his way to Port Washington in 1848, and purchased five lots for \$250 in the center of town with Barnum Blake, a resident of the village. By 1850 his holdings were valued at \$1000, and he returned east to marry Jane Lathrop. The newlyweds returned to Port

Washington, and spent several years living in a log house at the top of the Main Street Hill. From his office on Main Street, he wrote glowing reports of the city's growth and promise for the Milwaukee Sentinel, while conducting his law practice. In 1850, after being defeated for District Attorney, Stanford was elected as a village trustee, taking part in promulgation of ordinances such as outlawing "naked bathing in Lake Michigan." He served as the Village President pro tem from August, 1851 to the end of January 1852, after the resignation of B. O'Connor. Following the loss of his law library in a fire which destroyed a number of stores and the post office as well, Stanford chose to leave Port Washington to join his brothers in California. He went on to become the governor of California, President of the Union-Pacific Railroad, officiating at the ceremony during which the "golden spike" was driven, uniting the railroad between the East and the West. He served as a United States Senator from 1884 to 1897, and founded Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. Efforts made by Anna and Viola Ubbink to preserve Stanford's Port Washington office failed, and the building was demolished in 1976.

### Cholera Epidemics

In the summer of 1849 and the spring of 1854, cholera swept through Port Washington, causing death to touch almost every household in the village. The exact number of deaths which occurred in 1849 is not recorded, but the 1854 epidemic resulted in 65 deaths within a period of ten days.



## Lake Disasters - 1856

In August, 1856 the steamship, Niagra, caught fire four miles north of Port Washington at about four o'clock in the afternoon, just prior to her scheduled arrival at one of the village's commercial piers. Before help could arrive from other vessels in the area, half of the two hundred passengers and crewmen were lost. In October of the same year, the Toledo, at the time, one of the largest propeller-driven ships on the Great Lakes, was about to weigh anchor, bound for Chicago, after a Port Washington stop. A violent storm sweeping in off the lake, drove the ship back to shore, dashing the vessel against the pier. The steamer broke up in front of helpless onlookers, and all but three of the persons on board were drowned. A commemorative anchor in Union Cemetery marks the location where the victims are buried.

As a number of other communities coveted this title, and the associated benefits of being the local seat of government, a heated struggle ensued which lasted for many years. In 1840 the Legislature, noting that Port Washington had become a veritable ghost-town, and in response to local pressure, changed its original decision and made Hamburg (Grafton) the county seat.

Even though Hamburg had the official title, the designation was largely a hollow honor at that time, as county officials conducted their business at various locations based on the convenience of the moment. Historian, A. D. Bolens noted that these were disorganized times, as official records were moved from one location to another, resulting in much confusion in function of the county government.

In an attempt to resolve the problem, the issue was taken to a popular vote on numerous occasions. Each time, the results were inconclusive, and in many instances, there was evidence of vote fraud and ballot box stuffing. All communities were involved; some even reporting more votes than inhabitants.

In 1852, the State Legislature, tired of the endless controversy, again named Hamburg, now a thriving township, as the county seat, and voters in April of that year supported this choice over West Bend. This decision was short lived however, as County Clerk John Bohan again approached the Legislature with a proposal that the county be divided in two, the boundary lines being generally the boundaries of today's Washington and Ozaukee Counties. The Legislature agreed, but even this decision required a ruling by the Wisconsin Supreme Court as the land area of Ozaukee County was too small to qualify as a county according to definition in the State Constitution.

The high court solved the problem by ruling that the eastern boundary of Ozaukee County extends out into the middle of Lake Michigan, making Ozaukee the smallest county in the State of Wisconsin.

At the time of the county division West Bend was selected as the county seat for Washington County, and Port Washington received the honor in the newly created Ozaukee County. Even then, "old Washington County" officials refused to cooperate, and West Bend was denied the right to obtain its official records. A night raid was made on the courthouse at Port Washington by Register of Deeds Adam Schantz and Paul Weil of West Bend, who managed to escape with the records in question in spite of a town alert called by Sheriff Lyon Silverman, who noted a light in the Register of Deeds Office. The record volumes were hidden between the walls of Port Washington's Arcade Building, and were smuggled out of town by West Bend officials at a later date. One of the volumes was not recovered until 1878, 23 years later, when the Arcade Building underwent substantial remodeling.



One of the most extensively used buildings in Port Washington was the Opera House which stood where the city hall is located on Grand Ave. at Wisconsin St. The courthouse loomed over the building which was the community's dance hall, theater building, sports arena, city hall and police station. This photograph was taken in the early 1900s.

Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer

## County Split

In the earliest partitioning of land ceded to the whiteman by the Menomonee Indians in 1831, all the land south of Sheboygan was considered a part of Milwaukee County. In 1836 the Territorial Legislature created Washington County, designated as all the land area between Milwaukee and Sheboygan Counties. Port Washington was selected as the county seat.



## Indian Scare

During the latter part of September, 1862, the residents of Ozaukee County were thrown into utter panic and confusion by what became known as The Great Indian Scare. A report of unknown origin was circulated that the Indians were coming in large numbers, killing men, women and children, and laying waste to everything in their path. No one seemed to know which Indians were involved or from what direction they were coming. Panic spread rapidly; farmers gathered up their families, leaving everything behind. One family, while heading full speed toward Port Washington, lost one of the children on the way, not becoming aware of the fact until they arrived in the village. It was not uncommon for wagons to meet, flying in opposite directions, each driver claiming that the Indians were behind them. Word reached Port Washington in the evening hours. Town fathers were roused from their beds to find the village swarming with farmers armed with pitchforks, clubs and axes. Saloon-keepers rolled out kegs of whiskey into the streets as rumors were that the Indians could easily be dispatched with fire-water. Residents buried their valuables, and prepared themselves to put up the best defense possible against the invaders. Sheriff Jacob Bossler's wife raced to Milwaukee on horseback to spread the alarm, and a company of soldiers was dispatched to provide assistance. The soldiers found abandoned farmhouses along the route with doors wide open, and well stocked with food. They paused to feast along the way, and seeing no Indians, returned to Milwaukee. It was later learned that this charade involved the entire southern part of the state west to the Mississippi River, an event which must have been enjoyed by Wisconsin's native tribes.

## Draft Riots

The sounds of war in 1861 proved to be a vexation to the comfortably settled and prospering immigrants in the area. The foreign born citizens, many of whom had left their native lands to escape the demands of military service, were realizing the results of their laborious efforts in taming the virgin territory. Farm lands were cleared and productive, villages and towns had made order out of the wilderness, commercial and industrial enterprises were thriving. A sense of well-being and prosperity prevailed. But here was a war purely American, a controversy between the North and the South. What did it mean? Which side was right? Information relating to political activities of the time was limited. The Luxembourgers and the Germans, few of whom could read English, and most of whom were industriously involved in developing their new lives in this country, had little time nor inclination to acquaint themselves with political issues.



Making his rounds each evening to light the gas lights and again each morning to extinguish them was the 1893 job of Phineis Follett. This photograph was taken at the intersection of Pier Street and Lake Street.

Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer

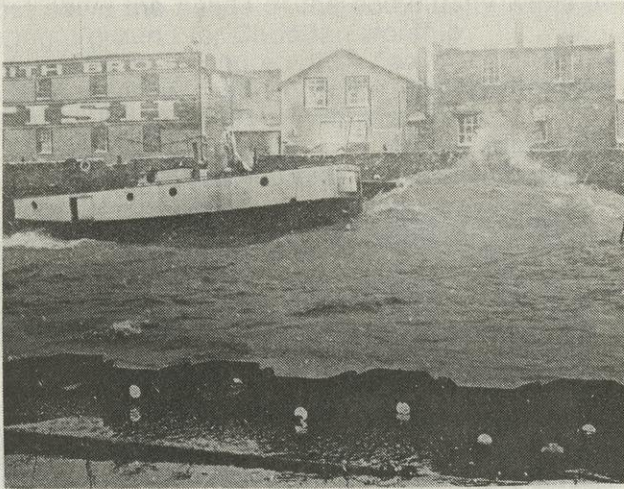
A quota of draftees was established as Ozaukee County's contribution to the call for Wisconsin troops. Examinations were initiated in preparation of a list of candidates for the draft. Great dissatisfaction developed as the selection was made, as it appeared that persons of position and wealth were being declared exempt. Feelings grew stronger as examinations progressed, and when the list was completed, and the day of the draft was at hand, public sentiment burst forth in violent opposition.

On the morning of November 10, 1862, when Draft Commissioner William Pors and his assistants arrived at the courthouse to begin the draft, he was seized by an angry crowd which had gathered there, the draft rolls were destroyed, and he was thrown down the courthouse steps. The rioters pelted him with rocks as he sought refuge in the Post Office where he hid in the basement. The angry mob then proceeded to his home, literally demolishing the interior, before marching on a destructive course through the town under a banner which proclaimed "No Draft." The marching men took possession of a four pound cannon, and loading it with the only cannon ball they could find, mounted it at the end of one of the commercial piers, defying "Uncle Sam" or anyone else to arrest them.

Governor Salomon sent a detachment of troops from Milwaukee to quell the riot. Eight companies were dispatched by steamer to Port Ulao, four miles to the south. Half of the troops disembarked, marching to Port Washington on foot, while the remainder landed at the pier, thus surrounding the dissidents. One-hundred twenty arrests were made, and the prisoners were sent to Camp Randall in Madison following a short confinement at Camp Washburn in Milwaukee.

Notwithstanding this disturbance, the war record of Ozaukee County compared favorably with that of larger counties, and many local young men provided distinguished service in the Union Army.





Storms tossing boats in the west slip have long been feared by Port Washington residents. This photo was taken in the 1930s, when commercial fishing was still very active in Port Washington. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer

## The Tragedy of the Three Fishermen

Early one morning in 1882, three fishermen, John Soule, Charles French and Gabriel Hollander, left port in their small fishing craft to check their pound nets located about three miles north of Port Washington. Just as they reached their nets, the sky blackened, and in an instant a roaring tornado raced over the bluffs and down into the lake, sweeping the waters high into swirling spouts. It is noted that the three men were most likely drowned before their little boat capsized in the raging waters. The overturned boat was all that remained after the storm swept across the lake. Two of the bodies were later recovered. Lake Michigan still holds claim on the third.

## The Chair Factory Fire

On the evening of February 19, 1899 the entire sky was lit up according to the recollection of Mary Bohnsack, a resident of Port Washington who at 94, remembers the night in question. The city's worst fire started in the Wisconsin Chair Factory, gutting everything east of Franklin Street to the lakefront, and from Grand Avenue north to Pier Street. The Chair Factory, 14 homes and 11 businesses were totally destroyed before the fire was brought under control by the Port Washington Fire Department with the assistance of fire departments from Milwaukee and Sheboygan. Daybreak found 800 Wisconsin Chair Factory employees without jobs. Within two months a new and larger chair factory was under construction, and the restoration of the downtown area was well underway.

## Rampage of Sauk Creek

On August 4, 1924, normally docile little Sauk Creek showed a side of its character not normally seen or expected. Its swollen waters rampaged through Port Washington, severely damaging the downtown area, and washing out Fisherman's Row. The creek raged over its banks following a six inch rainfall which occurred within one hour, undermining the Grand Avenue Bridge and destroying the Wisconsin Street Bridge as well as all the fish shanties lining the banks of the west slip.



When Sauk Creek went on a rampage, buildings were destroyed bridges undermined and thousands of dollars damage done. The Pebble House can be seen in the background in the right hand portion of the picture.

Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer

Taking advantage of the traffic created by persons who came to view the wreckage, Captain Delos Smith rented a vacant store, and opened a retail fish market to sell his fish to the visitors. The store provided his daughter, Evelyn, with an opportunity to test-market a fried-fish sandwich which became a very popular item. The fish sandwich eventually led to the creation of the first Fish Shanty restaurant in 1934, developing a reputation which brought many visitors to the city to dine at Smith Brothers, and to enjoy the view from Port Washington's harbor.



GRAND AVE. BRIDGE Voge 84



## 1964 Tornado

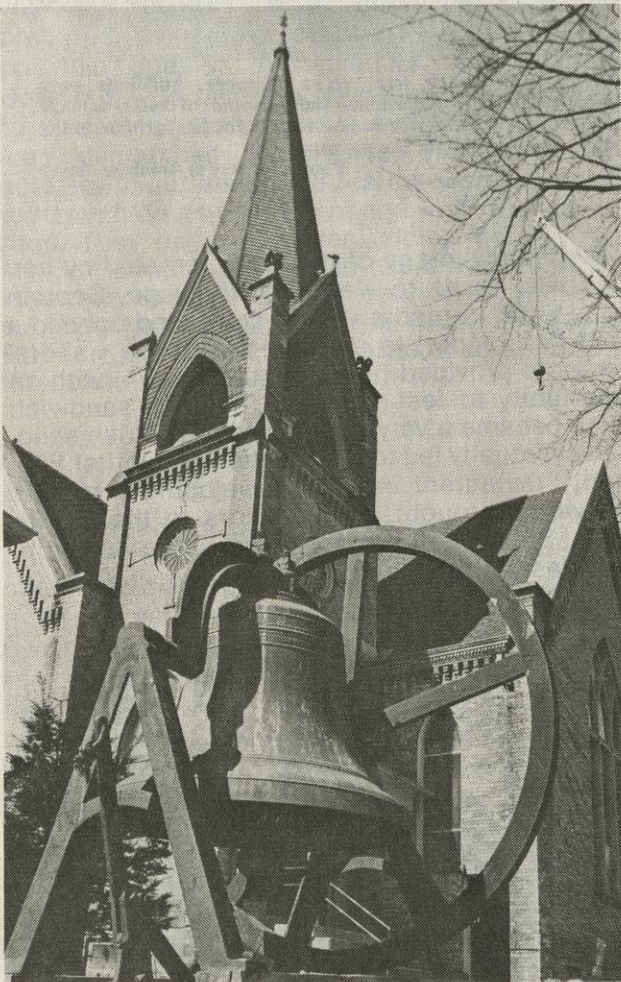
The widely accepted theory that "tornados never touch down near the lake" was struck down on Saturday, August 22, 1964, at 4:55 p.m. when a twister cut a path of destruction through Port Washington, starting at Highway 32 just south of the city limits, and spinning and grinding its way to the northeast through residential sections on the west side. Twenty homes were totally destroyed, 34 suffered heavy damage and 140 others were in some way touched by the event. A home on Webster Street was cut in half by a flying roof; the front door was all that remained of a house on Monroe; and another, under construction, completely disappeared. The Harnisfeger Homes plant sustained \$250,000 in damages. Amazingly, there were no serious injuries. Total damage was estimated at \$2,500,000.



Damage done by the tornado which roared through Port Washington on August 22, 1964, was extensive. This was the Jerry Lorge home at 944 N. Webster St.

Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer

## Churches of Port Washington



When the decision to build a new Grand Avenue United Methodist Church was made in 1966, the bell was removed from the tower and kept to be put in place in the special stand on the side lawn of the new church at 505 W. Grand Avenue.

The Methodists, according to available records, were the first denomination to hold services in Port Washington. A tiny congregation met as early as 1843 in private homes, later moving to the public school house. The first pastor, Rev. Lewis, like all pioneer ministers, traveled on horseback for distances of many miles to care for the needs of mission churches widely scattered in the wilderness. Two Methodist churches appear on the city map of 1883, the English Methodist Church on Washington Street between Franklin and Wisconsin, built in 1851, and the German Methodist Church built in 1862 on the corner of Jackson and Milwaukee Streets. In 1898 property was purchased on Grand Avenue by the Methodists, and a substantial new church was dedicated there in 1900. The Grand Avenue United Methodist Church, completed in 1966, now occupies the site.

Barnum Blake, a prominent early Port Washington merchant and owner of one of the commercial piers, donated a lot on Main Street at Milwaukee Street for a Presbyterian Church. Services were held there until 1864, when the Presbyterian congregation dissolved. The structure was purchased by the early Lutheran settlers, who had been meeting wherever they could find space since 1854. At that time, St. John's Lutheran Church was founded. The congregation met at the Milwaukee Street church until land was purchased on Webster Street and Foster Street, and a new church was erected in 1914, the site of the present church.

First Congregational Church was formed in the spring of 1898 when a large majority of the English speaking people of the community met to discuss forming a new church group that would



best serve the needs of the community while offering a ground for Christian worship.

By 1899 the congregation had conducted its first services in what is now the lower center level of the building at 131 N. Webster Street.

The upper center level of the building was dedicated in 1912. Today it is the church sanctuary.

Other changes have been made to the church building since that time.

In 1961, the congregation became part of the United Church of Christ.

Three Catholic families were meeting for mass at the home of Hans Gengler on Pier Street by 1847. Two years later this number had increased to 20 families, which prompted Hiram Johnson, a real estate speculator, to donate two lots high on the north bluff for a Catholic church. A small frame building, the first St. Mary's, was erected in 1849; the street fronting the little church was named Johnson Street in his honor.

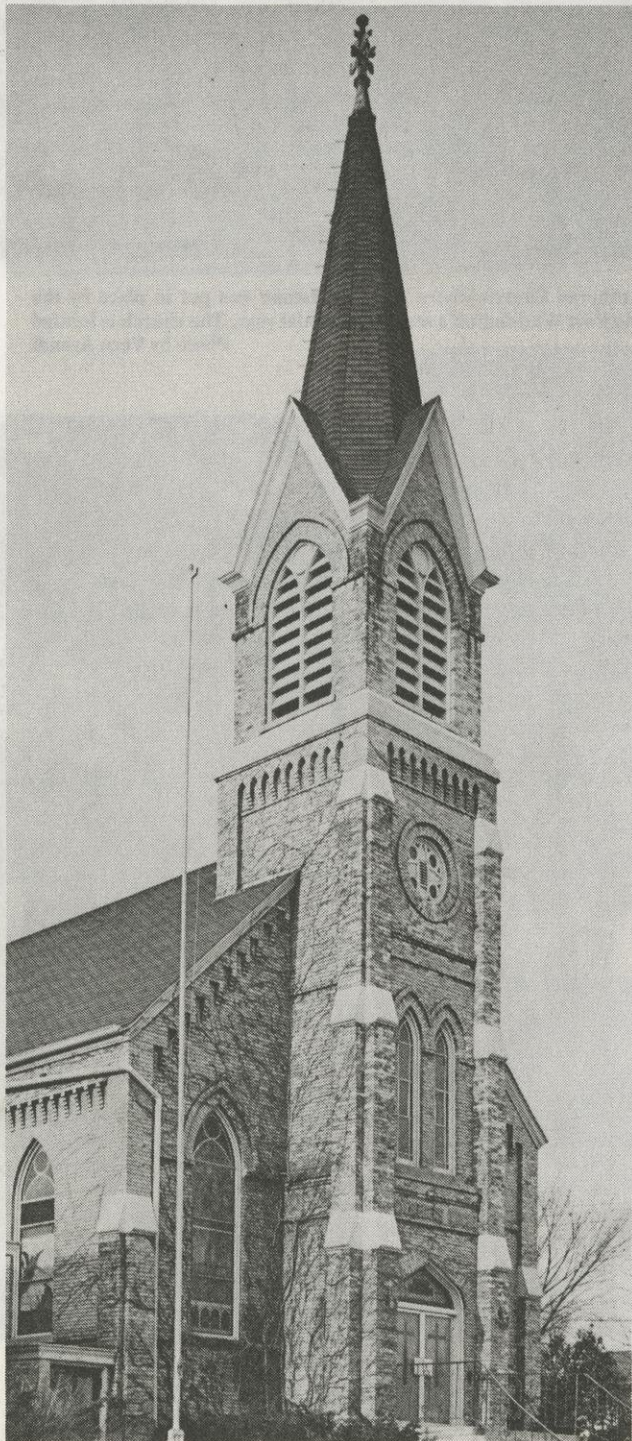
The Irish Catholic families of Port Washington, residents of the Canada Side of town, built a little church, St. Stephen's, on Webster and Chestnut streets. A severe windstorm completely demolished the church, and the parishioners were gradually absorbed into St. Mary's congregation.

Friedens Evangelical Lutheran Church was organized by a small group of German speaking people who met at the home of Jacob Engels in 1854. Their first church was erected in 1857. A larger church was constructed in 1889, and a school building was added in 1901. German was the language used by the church until 1924 when services in English were approved on a once a month basis. As a result of denominational mergers, Friedens is now a member of the United Church of Christ; Friedens, the German word for "peace," remains as a reminder of its Germanic history. The substantial cream-brick structure located at the corner of Van Buren and Harrison Streets, houses the second oldest congregation in the city and has a present communicant membership of 276.

In 1882 the cornerstone was laid for the present St. Mary's Church. The Catholic population of the area had grown to 250 families, creating a need for a larger place of worship. Much of the construction work was done by parishioners. Farmers from the area, using horses and oxen, hauled the limestones from Druecker's Quarry three miles away on stone boats and farm wagons. The building was completed two years later and dedicated in 1884. The four-faced bell-tower clock, each face being seven feet in diameter, was donated by the citizens of Port Washington, and has been keeping time for the community for the past 100 years.

St. Ambrose Lithuanian Catholic Church, formerly located on the corner of Montgomery Street and N. Pierre Lane, was erected in 1909 to serve the needs of the Lithuanians who settled in the Port Washington area around the turn of the century. When the church first opened, men and women were segregated during services, and a special pew was reserved for mothers with crying

**Friedens United Church of Christ houses the second oldest congregation in the city. The church stands at the summit of the Harrison St. and Van Buren St. hills. This photograph was taken in 1970.**







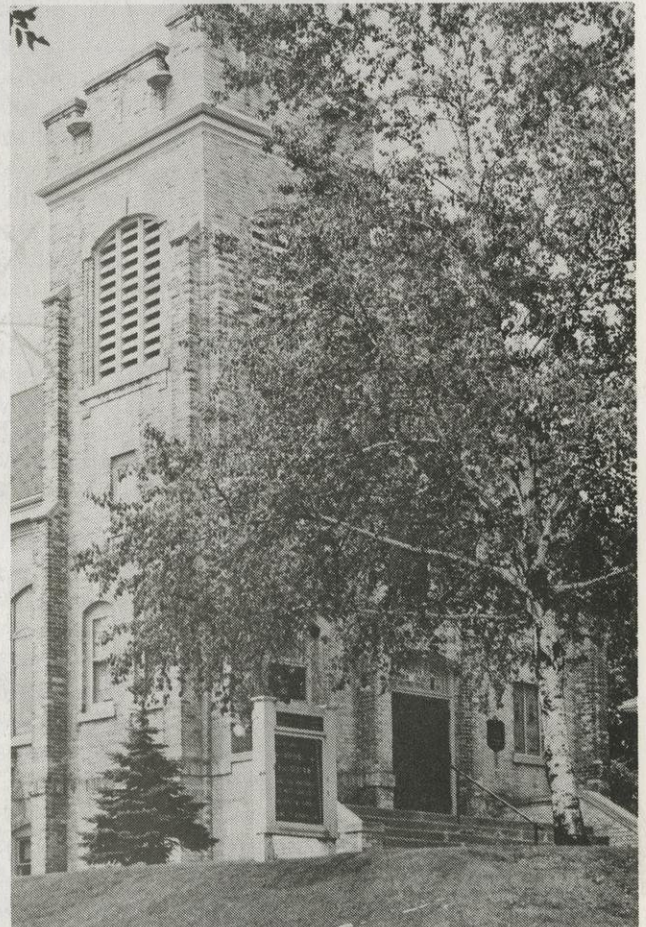
The newest church in Port Washington is St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church where the cornerstone was put in place by the Reverend Daniel Simons, Alvin Kultgen and Tony Branda in April during Port Washington's sesquicentennial year. The church is located on Grant St.  
Photo by Vern Arendt

infants. The church, always a mission parish, never had a resident priest. Due to a dwindling membership, the little church closed its doors after a final Christmas service in 1964 and was torn down the following year.

A second Catholic parish, St. Peter Alcantara, was created on the north side of Port Washington as the number of Catholic families had greatly increased by the early 1960's. A ten classroom school building was opened in 1964. Through the generosity of William J. Niederkorn, a parish house was added in 1969.

Christ The King Lutheran Church held its first service in a newly completed church building on Whitefish Road in September, 1963. Twenty years later, in 1983, ground was broken for a new sanctuary to provide additional space for educational purposes for the expanding congregation. Congregational members have always been generous in providing help in the building programs undertaken by the church.

Faith Baptist Church, Portview Christian Center, Open Door Bible Church, St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church and St. Simon Episcopal Church are among the more recent congregations to locate in the Port Washington area, indicating continuation of the strong religious character of the community.



St. John's Lutheran Church is located on Foster St. at Webster St. The church building has served the congregation since 1914 although the congregation had been meeting since 1854.





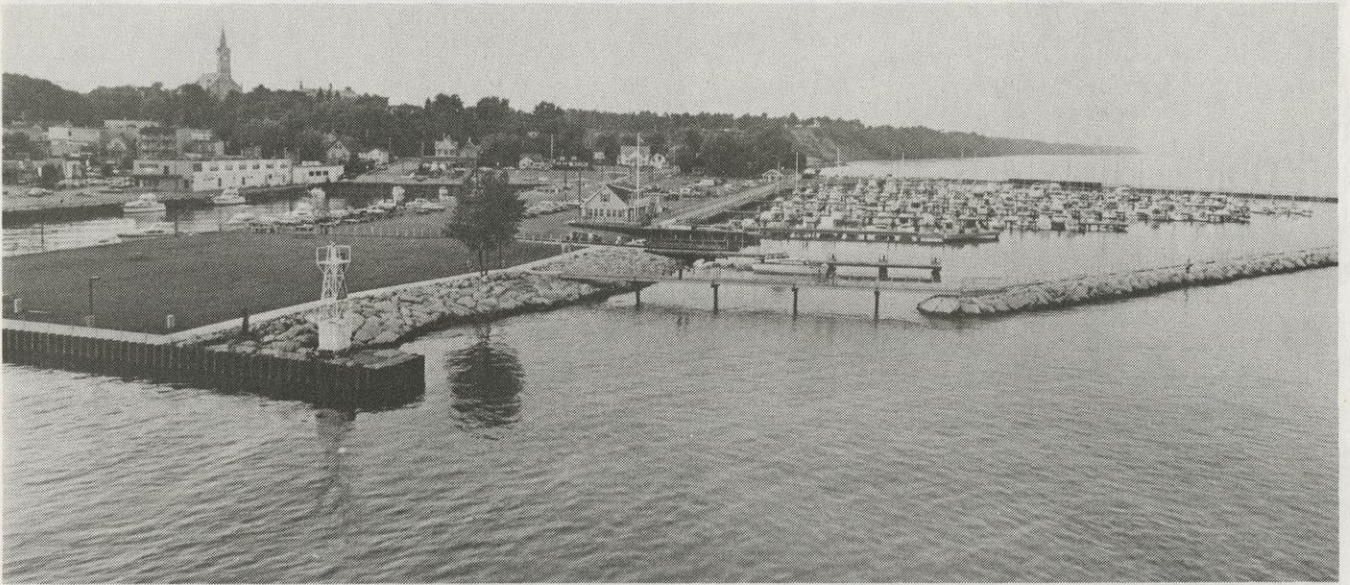
The original firehouse was located on Pier Street. It was also used as the city hall. This picture was taken about 1900. Photo by courtesy of Ambrose Mayer

Railroad House was the logical name for the building which stood on the north side of Grand Avenue at the west side of the tracks. Felix Werking delivered milk in the 1920s. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer



There was a time when the Girl Scout House, at the left, the swimming pool in the center and the wishing well were all part of the park area now known as Guenther Pond. The outline of the pool exists, as does the foundation for the wishing well, but the rest of the structures are gone. This photograph is from the 1940s. Photo courtesy of Ambrose Mayer



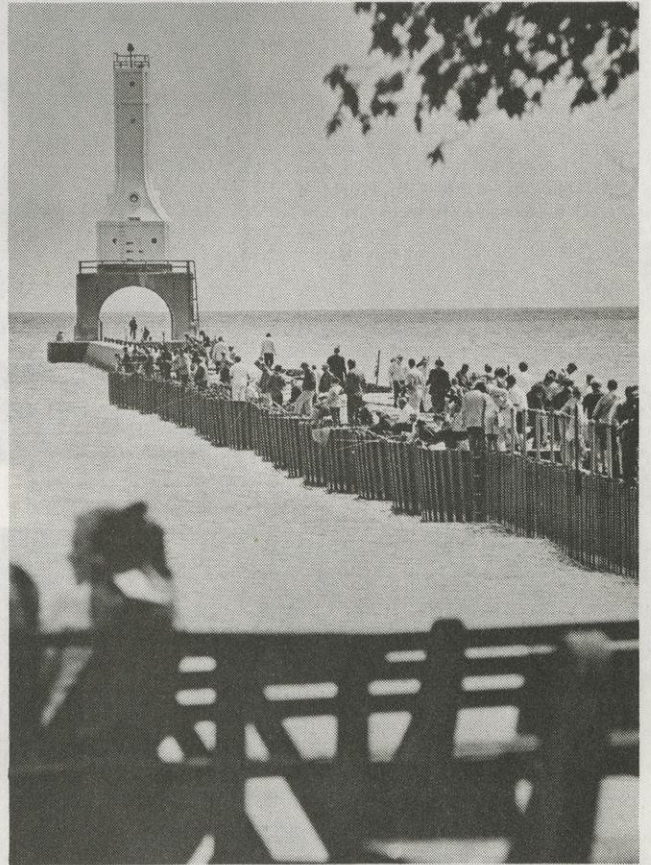


Just as a 1898 story on Port Washington predicted, the City of Seven Hills has become a place for tourists to tarry, to enjoy and to savor the marina, the focus of summer life with its beautiful setting, control building and service building. Port Washington's marina has given a new focus on the future of the community. Photo by Vern Arendt

## Today and Tomorrow

While Port Washington's reputation as a bustling port-of-call and a heavy commercial fishing center is now committed to the pages of history, Lake Michigan remains very much an important part of the lives of the city's 8600 residents. Completion of the \$6,000,000 harbor and marina in 1982 has been influential in redefining Port's image of itself. Once a city of heavy industry, the lakefront obscured by factories and foundries belching heavy smoke into the winds, the city has reclaimed the waterfront, creating park and recreational areas which offer residents and visitors alike, the opportunity to experience the exhilaration of exposure to the sweeping winds and surging waters, to inspect first hand, the variety of small craft nestled in their dockside berths, to stand in the majestic presence of a giant coal freighter as it discharges its cargo, or to share the excitement of a seawall fisherman as he lands a sizable trophy.

With the opening of the 180 slip small boat marina, and a growing reputation as an unexcelled sportfishing center, Port Washington has been playing host to an increasing number of visitors, which has opened new avenues for economic growth. Tourists and fishermen are contributing substantially to the welfare of downtown merchants; existing stores are expanding or remodeling; new business ventures are developing. While not anxious to become totally a tourist center, Port Washington is extending the welcome mat to out-of-towners by identifying their needs and initiating services designed to make their stay comfortable and enjoyable.



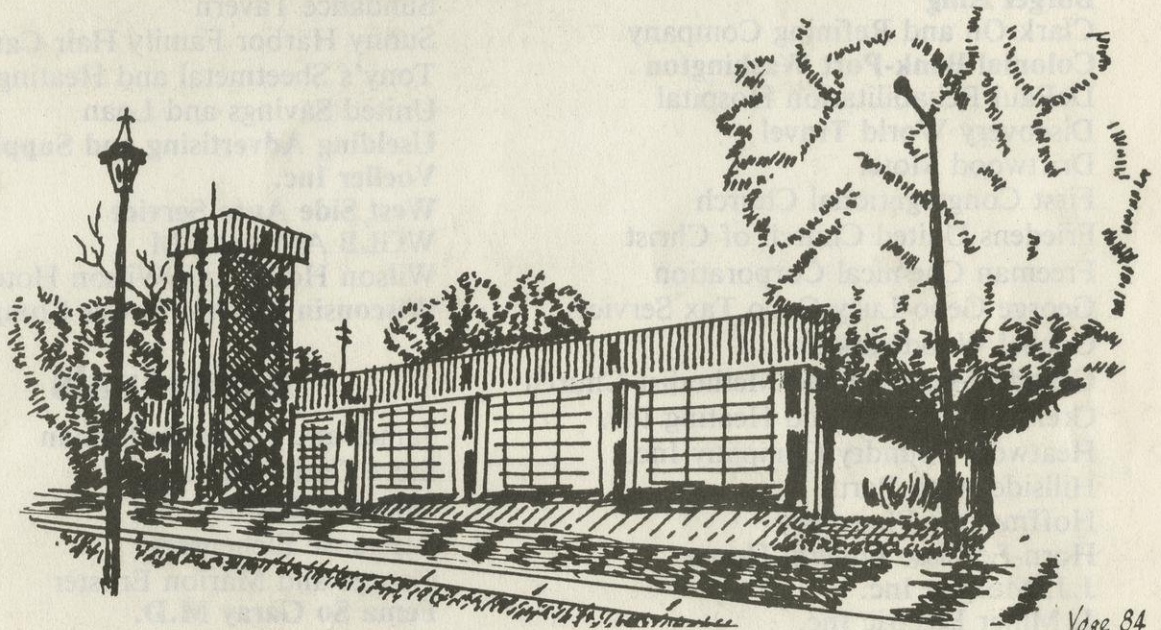
Today the major lighthouse at the end of the north breakwater is automated and newly painted. It has become a symbol of the community and will be found on the logo for the Sesquicentennial as well as badges and emblems of city departments.





Incorporating the best of what is traditional and looking toward the future, the Port Washington Senior Citizen Center is a place filled with laughter and living. The former firehouse is a vital part of the community.

Port Washington Fire Department



Page 84

Port's industrial base, however, remains the backbone of the city's economy. Ten major local industries provide employment for over 2,500 people. The decision of Allen-Edmonds, a renowned shoe manufacturing company, to relocate in Port Washington has renewed the city's faith in its ability to attract new industrial development.

The population, having shown a slight decline in recent years, is again upward bound as reflected by an increasing school enrollment and a steady rise in the construction of new housing units.

Promising events which will take place in Port Washington in the near future include the development of the north side of the city with the construction of an 8½ acre shopping center, is now in the final planning stage.

The Wisconsin Electric Power Company, having taken initial steps to secure the necessary funding, has selected the Port Washington power plant as the site of a pilot program for testing a

revolutionary new boiler system, which, if successful, could add years of service for the local facility.

Construction is about to begin at the Thomas Jefferson Middle School on a \$1,400,000 indoor community swimming pool largely financed by pledges made by local citizens and businesses, including a generous donation from Joseph Uihlein, Jr., a member of the Joseph Schlitz Brewing Company family.

A waiting list of more than 200 people who want to rent boat slips has prompted the city to consider the feasibility of adding more slips to the marina.

Fresh winds are blowing through the city of Port Washington. According to Mayor George Lampert, the city is moving forward in a positive, controlled direction - one in which the citizens of Port Washington can be proud - as would General Wooster Harrison.



# Booklet Sponsors

## Businesses and Industries

ADB Limited  
Allen Edmonds Shoes  
A.N. Ansay and Associates  
Aqua-Tech Inc.  
Ben Franklin Store  
Bernie's Fine Meats  
Biever Appliance  
Blong Ehrlich and Associates  
**Bolens Corporation**  
**Burger King**  
Clark Oil and Refining Company  
**Colonial Bank-Port Washington**  
DePaul Rehabilitation Hospital  
Discovery World Travel  
Driftwood Motel  
First Congregational Church  
Friedens United Church of Christ  
Freeman Chemical Corporation  
George Gebo-Lucy Gebo Tax Service  
Goebel Woodwork Inc.  
Grand Avenue United Methodist Church  
Greisch Plumbing and Heating Inc.  
Heatwole Foundry Company Inc.  
Hillside Auto Parts  
Hoffmann's Pharmacy  
Horn-Eernisse Funeral Home  
J.J. Morgan Inc.  
J. Miller Electric Inc.  
Knights of Columbus  
Koehring Construction Equipment  
Lakeside Movers  
News Graphic-Pilot  
Milwaukee Medical Clinic  
(Port Washington)  
Montgomery Ward  
Ozaukee Title Company Inc.  
Poole Funeral Home  
**Port Hotel**  
Port to Port Travel  
**Port Standard (Oswald) Station**  
**Port Washington**  
**Chamber of Commerce**  
Port Washington Clinic  
**Port Washington Fire Department**  
Port Washington Savings and Loan  
**Port Washington State Bank**  
Ratatori Vending and Distributing Inc.

Runkel, Runkel and Ansay, Attorneys  
**St. Alphonsus Hospital**  
St. Peter of Alcantara Catholic Church  
Schultz Sav-O-Stores (Piggly Wiggly)  
Sika Corporation  
Shipmate Laundry  
Smith Brothers Milwaukee  
Smith Brothers Port Washington  
Streff Shop  
Sundance Tavern  
Sunny Harbor Family Hair Care Center  
Tony's Sheetmetal and Heating  
United Savings and Loan  
**Uselding Advertising and Supplies**  
**Voeller Inc.**  
**West Side Auto Service**  
WGLB AM and FM  
Wilson House and Wilson Hotel  
**Wisconsin Electric Power Company**

## Individuals

James and Laura Batterman  
Steve Carini D.D.S.  
Dorothy Downs  
Alphonse Eichenseer  
George and Marion Ernster  
**Fema So Garay M.D.**  
George and Lucy Gebo  
Herbert and Jesselyn Johl  
Dennis and Sharon Kannenberg  
Robert Kortsch D.D.S.  
Attorney Perry Lieuallen  
Vivian Linden  
Raymondo and Oliva Luib M.D.  
Ruth and Ambrose Mayer  
Pat and Suzanne Montalto  
Margaret Morrison  
Wilbert and Mildred Prom  
Ruth Sova  
Mrs. William Skruby  
Margaret Stacker  
Lucy Uselding  
Walt Wildhagen Family

Major sponsors in bold face







