

SHADES OF THE PAST

Williams Bay Historical Society

Established 2013

Volume 3 Issue 3
Summer and Fall 2016

HISTORICAL SOCIETY INFORMATION PROGRAMS AND EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE

October 14 – Annual Dinner
Watch for upcoming details.

Wonders of Williams Bay Tour
Tour has been rescheduled to May of 2017. Watch for upcoming details.

UPCOMING HISTORY BOOK

A Pictorial History of Williams Bay
Watch for upcoming book details

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Upcoming Book Will Commemorate the History of Williams Bay

By Michelle Bie Love

The Williams Bay Historical Society got its start after a successful historical exhibit at the Barrett Memorial Library in 2013. Continuing the Historical Society's mission to preserve items of historical interest and provide educational opportunities a pictorial historical book on Williams Bay is in the works. Michelle Bie Love and Deborah Dumelle Kristmann in conjunction with the Williams Bay Historical Society are preparing a soft-bound collection of old images of the Village of Williams Bay.

The Historical Society is asking for your help to locate old photos from the late 1880s through the late 1930s. Here's your chance to do something with those old family albums collecting dust in the attic!

Of particular interest are photos of:

- Businesses
- Church Groups
- Family Gatherings
- Homes and Buildings
- Organizations
- Recreation
- School Activities
- Street Scenes
- Transportation

Submissions will be given credit if used in the book.

To help you share your photos we have a portable scanner and can scan your photos at your place or ours. Whatever works best for you! Please don't delay, contact us at: (847) 542-8470 or email wbpictorialhistory@gmail.com



The historical society continues to provide opportunities to learn about the unique history of Williams Bay. We have held several educational opportunities including a Speakers Series, a private tour of Geneva Lake Museum, a tour of the Wonders of Williams Bay, a look back at the 1965 Palm Sunday tornado that ravaged the village, and most recently, History Day in the Bay with a presentation of the history of the many camps that lined the shores of Geneva Lake by Jill Westberg, co-author of "Camps of Geneva Lake."

The Williams Bay Historical Society is a 501(c)(3) organization and an affiliate of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Michael Tobias Peterson

First in a series of biographies of early residents of Williams Bay, Wisconsin

The subject to whose life history the reader's attention is now directed has, by ceaseless toil and endeavor, attained a marked success in business affairs, has gained the respect and confidence of men and is recognized as one of the distinctively representative citizens of his community. In pursuing the history of Mr. Peterson it will be seen that he is a man of strong convictions of right and duty, and that once having made up his mind as to his proper attitude on any subject, he acts accordingly and in undeterred by opposition and difficulties.

Michael Tobias Peterson, merchant at Williams Bay, was born at Bremnes, Norway, February 18, 1885. He is the son of Peter O. and Bertha (Thompson) Peterson, who now live in Madison, Wisconsin, mention of whom is made in the sketch of Miss Anna Peterson, postmistress at Williams Bay [See Past Stories, People and Places Page, <http://wmsbayhistory.org/people--places.html>], who is a sister of Michael T. Peterson. Michael T. Peterson was about a year old when his parents brought him to America in 1886, and he grew to manhood at Williams Bay, this county, and here received his education.

When only nineteen years old he came into partnership with Henry W. Granzow, under the firm name of Granzow and Peterson, dealers in general merchandise chiefly staple and fancy groceries, gents furnishings, hats, etc. They were then in one store room, but their trade was constantly growing and about 1908 they took in the adjoining store room and they



Mr. and Mrs. Michael Peterson

Photo Credit: Kristin Rees Hunsaker

now have two good large business rooms, well arranged and neatly kept, and they carry a large and carefully selected stock of up-to-date goods, and have a high class and extensive trade, their customers coming from remote sections of this part of the county [See Parade of Progress Window in Winter 2015 Williams Bay Historical Society newsletter, Volume 2 No. 1].

Mr. Peterson was married in May 1906 to Lelia Ackley, daughter of Albert H. and Mary Ackley. She was born at Troy Center, this county, where she spent her childhood and where her parents still reside. Albert H. Ackley was born in Troy township,

Walworth county, May 30, 1949, and is the son of Charles B. and Louisa (Bunker) Ackley, the former born about 1820 in the eastern part of the United States, he having been the son of General Gad Ackley, who was an officer in the Revolutionary War.

Charles B. Ackley was a sailor on the Great Lakes in his younger days. He was among the earliest settlers of Troy Township, this county, and he lived there until he was about eighty-three years old. Albert H. Ackley grew up on his father's farm and he married Mary I. Lackey, a daughter of Joseph and Agnes (Murdock-Baird) Lackey. Joseph Lackey [brother of Thomas Lackey and Uncle of William Archibald Lackey, early residents of Williams Bay].

Mr. Peterson belongs to the Modern Woodmen, the Masons, and the Mystic Workers.

Excerpt from: History of Walworth County, Wisconsin, by Albert Clayton Beckwith, 1912, page 1307

Editors Note: Children born to Michael and Lelia Peterson were Marion, Gladys, Vivian, Hayden, Loretta, and Ardis. The Peterson family lived at 55 Elm Street, Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

Michael Peterson died in 1956.

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MISSION OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY:

The purpose of the Williams Bay Historical Society is to assist in the preservation and exhibition of items of historical interest that are within the boundaries of Williams Bay, and the immediate surrounding area. It will seek to provide the public with educational opportunities to learn about our unique local history. It will also seek to organize and assist in the commemoration of significant dates and events in village history.