



January 2022

Hales Corners Marks 70 Years Since Incorporation

The milestone may not be noted on many (if any) calendars, but Hales Corners is celebrating a significant anniversary this month: 70 years since its incorporation.

Although Hales Corners was settled in 1837, it was not until January 19, 1952 that it became an incorporated Village. From 1924 to 1952, Hales Corners was unincorporated, operating as part of the town of Greenfield.

However, incorporation was occasionally considered by Villagers during those decades. The first recorded meeting on the topic took place on December 15, 1927. The *Tri-Town News* (below) reported that debate was bitter, although Ben Hunt, one of the debaters, claimed it was all in good fun.

*"Facts and figures, mixed with dirty digs, flew fast in the debate on incorporation at the meeting of the Hales Corners Advancement Association... The debate opened with **Earl Miller**, president of the Association...searching the four debaters and divesting them of all deadly weapons.*

*He found a revolver in the back pocket of **R.C. Nichols**, a mean-looking pistol on the person of **W. Ben Hunt**, an automatic and another shooting piece on **Richard Roll**, and a six-shooter on **Dr. A.W. Johnson**."*

A few years later, the Advancement Association completed a survey and map of the proposed incorporated Village, but interest waned until 1950. Why did it resume after all those years? "At that time a scare was going on," said **Elmer Faehrmann**, retired Director of Public Works. "The city of Milwaukee was gobbling everything up. The city could annex from a township, but not from an incorporated area." Hales Corners, being unincorporated, appeared vulnerable.

In response, the Hales Corners Businessmen's Association launched the first of its incorporation committees. One committee held a public meeting at which citizens voted to proceed with the incorporation process. Contributing to residents' feelings on the subject was the municipal tax

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The first officers of the newly incorporated Hales Corners posed during their first Village meeting in 1952. (l. to r.) Election Inspector Mabel Hansche, Assessor A. J. Cridelich, Trustee Sylvester Sweeney, Jr., Trustee Al Meares, Trustee William Meyer, Trustee Ben Hunt, President Walter Fehr, Trustee Walter Koehler, Trustee Art Kilps, Justice of the Peace William Carlson, Treasurer Robert Strandt, Constable Ralph Chatfield, Clerk Bill Holz.

(Incorporation, continued from page 1.)

rate. “It was cheaper taxwise to incorporate than remain in Greenfield,” said Faehrmann. “They (Villagers) thought they could operate more economically on their own. There was no Village tax in the beginning.”

Then came the task of officially defining the boundaries of the Village. According to incorporation committee member **William Link**, the original boundaries were determined by where the most people lived. “The incorporation had to have an urban character,” he explained. “We had to leave out certain parts of the Village that were farm land. We had to pay attention to urban areas, not rural areas. After we were incorporated, we then could annex them.”

In June 1951, the committee reported its results. The population of the approximate 1/2-square-mile recommended for incorporation was 1,350 persons. There were 377 homes and an estimated 400 families. (Annexation of 2.5 square

miles in 1955 brought the Village to its current 3.1 square miles.) When polled, 70 percent of the residents favored incorporation, 10 percent opposed it, and 20 percent were undecided.

The incorporation process was rolling along nicely when unexpected trouble hit. The Rapid Transit had recently gone under, and some Hales Corners residents saw the city of Milwaukee as the only answer to their transportation problems. Those residents agreed to circulate petitions to become annexed to Milwaukee if the city would pledge to revive the line.

In response, the incorporation committee decided to take action before the annexation petitions could be successfully circulated. Committee members signed and published the petition for incorporation on October 2, 1951. The court approved proceeding with the incorporation referendum and, on January 19, 1952, by a vote of 299 to 213, Hales Corners became officially incorporated.

Our Spotlight on History

Since 2018, Katy Galewski has been searching diligently through back issues of the *Tri-Town News* and *Hub* in order to compile “Tales of the Corners,” a regular feature of our newsletter. The nuggets of Hales Corners history she unearths often invite closer inspection, giving us the opportunity to share related photos and editorials from our collection. The following are two examples of Our Spotlight on History.

Mary Dreyfuss (1872-1947) continued to live at the Dreyfuss Hotel after it closed to paying guests, and after her husband’s death. Her grandchildren knew it as “Grandma’s house,” a marvelous place to go.

Mary was a generous soul who gladly took in whoever was orphaned or otherwise needed a place to stay. It was estimated that she must have taken in a dozen children to raise along with her own children. She felt that if somebody needed help, you helped if you could, which was a common attitude of the times.



The Dreyfuss Hotel, c.1950



Mary Dreyfuss, 1942

(Spotlight continued on facing page.)

The State Bank Hales Corners, founded in 1910, initially enjoyed the distinction of being Hales Corners' ONLY bank. It enjoyed a successful run until the difficult days of the Depression finally reached Wisconsin, and it eventually closed for a few days in 1932. **Rudy Holz** (1888-1976), like many businessmen, wondered if he'd ever see his money again.

As prospects looked grim, Rudy Holz and a small group of Hales Corners-area businessmen stepped in with a last-ditch effort to save their bank. They took over operational control of the bank, hoping their efforts would assure customers that their money was safe. This team of depositors, with Rudy as bank president, managed the business but did not own the bank. Under the depositor group's management, the bank maintained its solvency.

As the years passed, it again prospered with Rudy as its president until 1970 and its chairman until 1972. Because of this connection, the State Bank Hales Corners has always held a special place in the hearts of the Holz family.



Rudy Holz,
President of
State Bank Hales
Corners and also
the founder of
Holz Motors,
c. 1970



(l. to r.) The State Bank Hales Corners and the Godsell Building with a Holz Motors tow truck in front, c. 1940

TALES OF THE CORNERS

From the files of the *Tri-Town News* and *Hub*

90 YEARS AGO (1932)

- More than 300 people attend the Minstrel Show and dance sponsored by the Freede-Eckel American Legion Post at Heiden's Hall.

80 YEARS AGO (1942)

- Schmidt Brothers, Hales Corners, announces the store has a good supply of flour and sugar. Shipments had been delayed due to government allotments.
- Mrs. Julius Dreyfuss, honorary chairman of the local Red Cross, donates a room in the Dreyfuss Inn for Red Cross work. *(See article at left.)*
- R.W. Holz is elected president of

the State Bank, Hales Corners. *(See article above.)*

- At the annual meeting of the Hales Corners Volunteer Fire Department, Chief August Giese reports that 30 runs were made last year.
- Hales Corners School electors vote in favor of borrowing \$10,000 from the State Trust Fund. The money will be used to build a two-classroom structure that will be attached to the present school by a covered runway.

70 YEARS AGO (1952)

- The Rev. Gerald Hibbard is installed as pastor of Whitnall Park Lutheran Church.

- Hales Corners residents wishing to contribute to the Mother's March Against Polio are asked to keep their porch lights burning as a signal to volunteer collectors.

60 YEARS AGO (1962)

- The annual gathering and Christmas tree burning takes place at the Hales Corners municipal garage. Hot chocolate and doughnuts are served afterwards.

50 YEARS AGO (1972)

- The school board passes a new policy that allows students to graduate from Whitnall High School after three years if they have earned 16 credits.

Research by Katy Galewski

In Memoriam

HCHS member **Sally Stock** passed away at the age of 91 on December 13, 2021. She served our Society as a director from 1996-1999. Sally was also our chair of programming from 1999-2003. Presentations from that period featured author **John Gurda** and *Journal Sentinel* columnist **Dennis McCann**, and dance performances by Irish, Polish, Scottish, and Serbian groups.



Ecological causes were extremely important to Sally and she received a commendation from the Village of Hales Corners for her leadership in establishing one of the first recycling programs in the area. In 1971, Sally and **Dorothy Ander** began *Ecology Days*, a recycling campaign in the Village. Their committee was joined by **Bette Arey**, **Sue Duffin**, **Sybil Grandeck**, and **Barbara Klinger**.

With moral support from the Hales Corners Village Board and the assistance of numerous service clubs, the committee recycled tin, glass, aluminum, and newspapers. The money raised through recycling was used to further other local environmental purposes.

Our sincere condolences go out to Sally's husband of 70 years, **Sherman Stock**. His contributions to HCHS over the years are too numerous to mention here. See our October newsletter where we reported on his painting of former Village President, **Jim Ryan**.

Historic Sign No Match for Winter Winds

The largest of the 30+ historic signs installed throughout the Village by HCHS from 2000-2007 was blown over in last month's windstorm. The sign was located on Hwy. 100 in front of Walgreen's. The posts broke off right at ground level, but the sign itself is in good shape. **Randy Sannes**, **Chris Schachtlie**, and **Al Strekow** dismantled the sign and moved

it into storage until next spring when it will be remounted on new posts.



WELCOME, NEW* AND RETURNING 2022 HCHS MEMBERS!

Kenneth J. Augustine
James Bain
Mary Bennett
Dan & Diane Besson
Roger Brinkmeier
Robert Burnham
& Patricia Laughlin
Clavette Insurance Agency*
Esther Demerdash
Ronald & Kathleen Dondlinger
Matthew Eternicka & Lauren Klich*
Mike & JuDee Fischer
Katy Galewski
David & Margarete Harvey
Michael Holmes
Frank & Judith Humpal
Mike Jdrzejewski
& Sybil Grandeck
Celine Kashishian
James & Jacqueline Keuck
Bob & Dottie King
Gary Kohls & Karen Niessing
Scott & Judy Kruger
Gregory & Romaine Krystowiak
Mary Long
David & Kathleen O'Brien
Jerry & Marjorie Pagel
Mike Praedel
Frank & Audrey Reineck
Cornelio & Colleen Resendiz
Richard & Carol Ann Rose
Randy & Sandy Sannes
Chris & Caroline Schachtlie
Mel & Elaine Schmidt
Rosemary Selep
Joe "Chuck" Sem
Walt & Nancy Sievert
Marjorie Stahl
Daniel & Kayellyn Strasburg
Al & Ruth Strekow
Mark Thiel
Fred & Rose Mary Walecki
Patricia Warchol
Janice Zeit
Kathleen Zellmer

*Membership roster
current as of 1/17/2022.*

HALES CORNERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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