



**February-March 2022\***

\* See page 6 for the 2022 schedule of newsletters.

## Happy Birthday to Us! - February 6, 1975

It's not quite certain who first had the idea of establishing a historical society in Hales Corners. Although a number of residents expressed interest through the years, there was no forward movement until **Dave O'Brien** invited **Richard Kuether**, author of *A Historical Geography of Hales Corners, WI*, to speak to the Chamber of Commerce on May 4, 1971. When Kuether, a graduate student, indicated an interest in forming a historical society, **Marge Menzel**, seconded by **Miles Theurich**, moved that the Chamber form a committee to work on the idea. Dave O'Brien volunteered to chair the committee, and at the July Fourth parade in 1971 he distributed 2,000 flyers promoting the concept of a historical society.

In November 1973, the Village Board adopted an ordinance creating a Historical Commission. Commission members were **Bette Arey**, **Jean**

**Makreff**, **Leone Welch**, **Robert Ritzenthaler**, **Sally Dziedzic**, and **Mary Ann Sibley**.

The Hales Corners Historical Society that this group was to organize met for the first time on February 6, 1975. All who joined the Society by May 1, 1975 became charter members.

During its first year, HCHS began its taping of oral history interviews. A logo design contest was won by **Ron Kinart**, and his logo is still in use today (top left). In December 1975, the Village Board granted the Society space in the Ben Hunt building (formerly St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church, now the site of Confucius House restaurant). In 1984, HCHS moved to its current home in the Hales Corners Library. And the rest, as they say, is history. Happy 47th, everyone!

## Join Us March 23rd for Our First Historical Program of 2022

### THE HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF BREWING

Wednesday, March 23, 7:00 p.m.

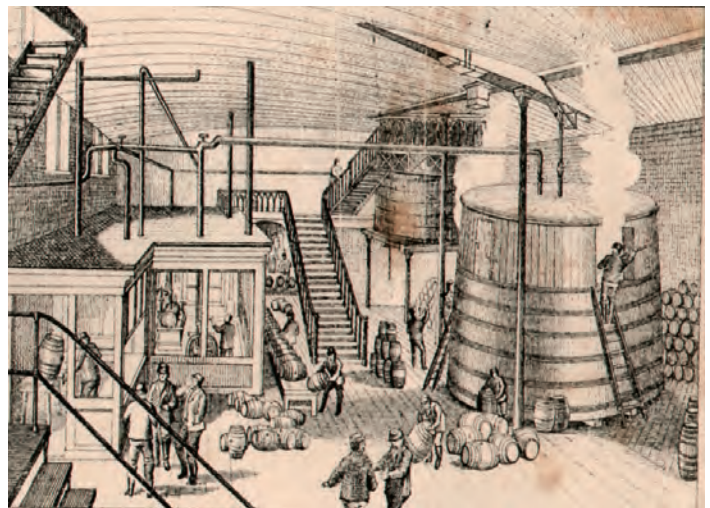
Hales Corners Library / Hunt Room

— Presented by **Greg Jenks**

Speaker for Osher Lifelong Learning Institute

Before retiring in 2017, **Greg Jenks** was employed for 32 years as a psychologist for the Franklin Public Schools. Retirement has afforded him more time to spend on one of his favorite hobbies – homebrewing. Greg has been producing beer, wine, and mead in his kitchen for over 10 years. He is also very interested in history and finds the history of brewing to be a fascinating aspect in the study of ancient civilizations.

The manufacture of alcohol dates back at least 13,000 years. Greg's presentation will focus on how alcoholic beverages have played a signif-



icant role in the history and founding of the United States. His program will also touch upon alcohol's discovery, first production, spread across the world, and growth into the multi-billion-dollar industry it is today.

## When the Ben Hunt Cabin Was On the Move - February 1, 1986

As we look forward to celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Ben Hunt Cabin in 2024, we also take a look back to February 1986, when the Cabin was moved from its birthplace to its current home beside the Hales Corners Library.

In 1982, HCHS learned that the sale of the residential property (originally owned by **Ben** and **Laura Hunt**) on which the Cabin was then located was a distinct possibility. **Priscilla Riebs**, our Society's president at that time, was responsible for determining whether it might be possible to purchase, move, and preserve the Cabin. She consulted with **Alan Pape**, former Head of Restoration at Old World Wisconsin, who was enthusiastic about the project.

A group of HCHS members formed a fundraising committee, and efforts were put into high gear in early 1985. Requirements were:

- \$9,000 to purchase the Cabin
- \$6,000 to move it
- \$17,000 for on-site construction and restoration
- \$7,000 additional for development and repairs

Wisconsin Bell was the first and largest contributor with \$5,000. Seven additional major donors came forward, and further contributions were received from businesses, charitable, civic, and religious organizations, individuals, and families. Ben's old Boy Scout Troop 598 pitched in as well.

In September 1985, the Cabin was purchased and plans were made for moving it. After delays because of bad weather, the Cabin was moved to the Library grounds in February 1986.



*This 1986 photo shows the rough condition the Ben Hunt Cabin was in.*

A gala opening was held in September 1986. Special guests were **Jean** and **John Krainik**, Ben Hunt's daughter and son-in-law.



*With just inches to spare, the Cabin was eased out from the back yard.*



*With considerable effort, the Cabin was lifted onto the trailer that would transport it to its new location.*



*Next, the Cabin made slow progress as it was towed along Janesville Road.*





**The Cabin was temporarily left in place after arrival in the parking lot of the Hales Corners Library.**



**The two pieces of the Cabin were lined up at their final location before being reconnected in Spring 1987.**

## TALES OF THE CORNERS - FEBRUARY

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

### 90 YEARS AGO (1932)

- Ernst Kastin, George Ackermann, and Gustave Sanders begin rebuilding the Hales Corners firehouse. The building had been destroyed by fire the prior month.
- A gigantic card party held by the Freede-Eckel American Legion Post at the Hales Corners School on Saturday and Sunday nights draws over 700 players.
- F. Utecht, who formerly worked at the Hotel Martin Barber Shop on South 6th and Mitchell streets, opens a new barber shop in the Fairview Gardens building (now The Bosch Tavern). According to an advertisement, the shop specializes in Downer and Windblown Bobs.

### 80 YEARS AGO (1942)

- The Hales Corners Study Club raises \$107 at a card party for China War Relief.
- A Victory Book Drive is started in Hales Corners to provide free books for the troops.
- Father David Ryan, pastor of St. Mary's, Holy Assumption, and St. Joseph's Catholic Churches, is called to service as an Army chaplain.

### 70 YEARS AGO (1952)

- Until Village officers are elected for the newly incorporated Hales Corners, Mabel Hansche, chairman of election inspectors, is responsible for administering the affairs of the Village.
- Square dancing lessons are given on Monday and Wednesday nights at Kelly's Hill Tap, on Forest Home Avenue across from St. Mary's Church.

### 60 YEARS AGO (1962)

- W. Ben Hunt forms the Washte Fe Juta Indian Dancers. The first meeting is held at the Richard Twelmeyer home.
- Rite Construction Corp. is selected to build a new Hales Corners post office on Grange Avenue and 108th Street.
- The Hales Corners Village Hall on New Berlin Road is torn down to make room for the county park that has been started. The Village offices had been moved in November to the Singer home on Janesville Road. (In 1970, when the Singer home was no longer needed as the Village Hall, it was moved to South 123rd Street and Godsell Avenue.)

### 50 YEARS AGO (1972)

- Carl Jungbluth, a member of the Hales Corners Police Department for almost 17 years, is appointed police chief.
- Hales Corners receives 10 voting machines. The Village had been the only municipality in Milwaukee County still using paper ballots.
- Air Force Brig. Gen. Alfred Verhulst, a former Hales Corners resident, is named Commander of the U.S. Air Force Reserve.
- The Hales Corners Community Theater presents *Plaza Suite*, with James Santa playing the three male leads.

**Research by Katy Galewski**

## Napoleon Bonaparte Hale, the First Settlers' Child, Was Born in Hales Corners - February 27, 1838

Our Village's co-founder, **William Hale**, was born on June 5, 1813. He and his wife **Bridget Fury** were married in November 1836 in New York State. They arrived in Milwaukee on September 1, 1837, aboard the steamer *James Madison*, and then traveled some 10 miles southwest of Milwaukee to where William's brother **Seneca** had settled.

William and Bridget are thought to have lived at first in a cabin on Seneca's land. It was there that their first son, **Napoleon Bonaparte Hale**, was born on February 27, 1838, it is said, "in a log house with no ceiling, the stars visible through the 'shakes' and the mercury at 15 degrees below zero." (Bridget was obviously one tough lady!) Their son was the first settlers' child to be born in Hales Corners. Four more children followed: Lucien F., Josephine (Barnes), Desdemona (Smith), and William, Jr.

As an adult, Napoleon B. Hale left Hales Corners and traveled first to St. Joseph, Missouri, and then to Helena, Montana. In both towns, he en-

gaged in mining for some time. While in Helena, he also learned the jewelry manufacturing trade and married **Adelia French** on August 26, 1866.

Adelia, a native of Grand Rapids, Michigan, had journeyed to Montana with her family in a covered wagon. Her father had purchased a mining claim there that, while not a great success, did generate enough money to finance his return to the east.

In 1874, Adelia's father became interested in southern California, bought a ranch near the Mormon colony of San Bernardino, and persuaded Adelia and Napoleon to move there and occupy the property until his arrival. Their journey was not uneventful, as the last portion was by stagecoach. Near Cucamonga, two bandits stopped the stage around midnight by firing shots that missed the driver but killed one of the lead horses and frightened away a couple others. With only three horses left, the stagecoach then made slow progress into San Bernardino. The bandits were captured within 24 hours and sentenced to 12 years in jail.

Soon afterward, Napoleon bought out a local jeweler in town, and he and Adelia lived in the rear of the store, one of the first adobe structures built in San Bernardino. Napoleon later moved his store into the Stewart Block on 3rd Street in San Bernardino.



*Napoleon Hale (center) stands in front of his first store, probably flanked by his sons Millard and Willard.*

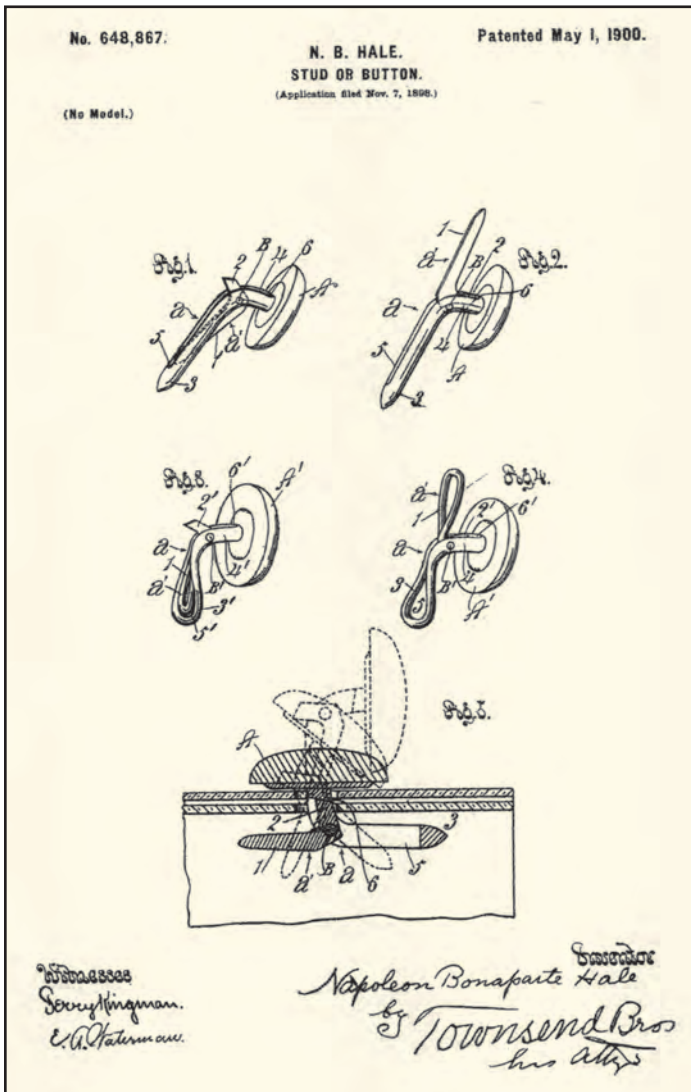


*Napoleon Hale (center) stands behind the counter of his second store in the Stewart Block. The man at right, probably Millard, appears in both photos.*



The Hales had five children: **Willard, Desdemona, Millard, Edward, and Dorothea**. Sons Willard and Millard also became jewelers after learning their trade from their father. In 1912, Napoleon retired and turned his store over to his son Millard. Napoleon passed away on March 17, 1915, and Adelia on June 26, 1936. They are buried in San Bernardino.

The two photos on page 4 were graciously sent to HCHS by California State University - San Bernardino, from its collection of **Walter Henry Clarence Steele's** photographs.



*Illustration by Napoleon B. Hale for his application to patent shirt studs accompanied by this brief excerpt describing his invention:*

*Be it known that I, NAPOLEON BONAPARTE HALE, residing at San Bernardino, in the county of San Bernardino and State of California, have invented a new and useful improvement in Studs or Buttons or Shirts and other Wearing Apparel, of which the following is a specification.*

## TALES OF THE CORNERS - MARCH

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

### 90 YEARS AGO (1932)

- As part of the American Legion's drive against unemployment, the Freede-Eckel Post is looking for about 20 full- or part-time jobs.
- Realtors James and Elmer Godsell agree to deed over a lot to be used for an American Legion Post building.
- A new Wangerin pipe organ is being installed at Emanuel Evangelical Church.

### 80 YEARS AGO (1942)

- Frank Nelson, principal of Hales Corners School, attends a food meeting at the Milwaukee County Courthouse. School principals are appointed to administer rationing programs locally.
- Because the Hales Corners School District residents vote against spending \$10,000 to build a two-room structure, the school board resigns. The district could lose \$2,800 annually in state aid if the current building isn't brought up to state standards.
- Registration cards and records on all Civilian Defense volunteers are being kept by Mrs. Ed Hunt.
- Both the Hales Corners Garden Club and Hales Corners PTA donate \$5 to the China War Relief Fund.
- Plans are made by the young people's committee to hold an overall and apron dance at Hales Corners School. Wirth's orchestra will play.

### 70 YEARS AGO (1952)

- The new Village of Hales Corners holds its first primary election.
- An additional 25 voters register in Hales Corners after the primary election is held. This brings the poll list up to about 800 names.
- The number of Hales Corners telephones in service increases from 845 in 1941 to 2,675 in 1951. During that same time the Village population has only increased by 29 percent.

### 60 YEARS AGO (1962)

- Radio station WAWA starts broadcasting from the U-Tell Discount Store in Hales Corners.
- Plans are announced to widen Highway 24 in Hales Corners.

### 50 YEARS AGO (1972)

- To raise money for the proposed library, the Hales Corners Lions Club sells tickets for its "Spring Thaw" contest. The winner will be the person who most closely estimates the time that the club's car breaks through the ice on Mud Lake.

*Research by Katy Galewski*

## In Memoriam

HCHS member **Roger Brinkmeier** passed away at the age of 80 on February 16, 2022. His service to the Village included an incredible number of projects over a period of more than 30 years. His contributions to our Society included the development and organization of a computer archive, the development of an internet presence, years of assistance with annual spring flower sales, and the production of a Village Walking Tour booklet.



Roger was our Society's "Top Techie" when it came to our quarterly programs. There once was an evening when our guest speaker failed to show up and no one could get in touch with him. Roger located several of the speaker's YouTube videos on-line, and was able to project them onto the Hunt Room's screen using only his cell phone to make the connection, thus saving the event.

Our sincere condolences go out to Roger's family.

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## HCHS Board Nominations

The nominations of HCHS Directors for 2022-2025 will be proceeding in March. Our Board has three positions open. Current candidates include **Katy Galewski**, **Chris Schachtlie**, and **Don Schwartz**, all of whom are incumbents. If you are a member of HCHS and have an interest in serving on our Board, please contact us at 5885 South 116th Street, Hales Corners, WI 53130 or by email at [info@HalesCornersHistory.com](mailto:info@HalesCornersHistory.com).

### 2022 SCHEDULE OF NEWSLETTERS

During most of 2020 and all of 2021, HCHS was not able to present our usual quarterly programs due to COVID-19 precautions. To continue providing value to our members, we instead published 12 monthly newsletters. This year, our programs are back on schedule, so we will be publishing eight newsletters in the months surrounding those programs.

After this issue, we will publish the following:  
April/May, June/July, August, September/October,  
November, and December.

## WELCOME, NEW\* AND RETURNING 2022 HCHS MEMBERS!

Kenneth J. Augustine  
James Bain  
Mary Bennett  
Joan Berg  
Dan & Diane Besson  
Robert Burnham  
& Patricia Laughlin  
Clavette Insurance Agency\*  
Esther Demerdash  
Ronald & Kathleen Dondlinger  
Matthew Eternicka & Lauren Klich\*  
Mike & JuDee Fischer  
Robert & Mary Forecki  
Katy Galewski  
Jean Hancock  
David & Margarete Harvey  
Michael Holmes  
Frank & Judith Humpal  
Jeffrey & Mary Javorek  
Mike Jedrzejewski  
& 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  
Don & Suzanne Schwartz  
Rosemary Selep  
Joe "Chuck" Sem  
Walt & Nancy Sievert  
Marjorie Stahl  
Daniel & Kayellyn Strasburg  
Al & Ruth Strekow  
Mark Thiel  
Brian & Laura Touhey  
Fred & Rose Mary Walecki  
Patricia Warchol  
Janice Zeit  
Kathleen Zellmer

*Membership roster current  
as of February 2022.*

## HALES CORNERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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