



July / August 2023

Join Us on AUGUST 23rd for Our Third Program of 2023

“HISTORY of WHITNALL PARK and the BOERNER BOTANICAL GARDENS”

Wednesday, August 23 (not August 16), 7:00 p.m.
Hales Corners Library / Hunt Room
Presented by Shirley Dommer Walczak,
Botanical Gardens Director
for Milwaukee County Parks



We've all enjoyed visiting Whitnall Park, but few of us know the full story behind its construction and continuing development since the 1930s.

At our August 23rd program, Shirley Dommer Walczak will share details we've never

heard before about the park's 660 acres that were purchased from nine farmers and developed with the assistance of CCC workers and WPA artists.

Shirley will also provide behind-the-scenes stories about the nationally renowned Boerner Botanical



Administration Building (current Garden House), 1930s



Drawing of the current Administration Building, 2002

Gardens, the Wehr Nature Center, the Whitnall Park Golf Course, and the recently built Margie's Garden. Don't miss this opportunity to learn more and ask questions about “the jewel of the Milwaukee County Park system.”

Looking ahead to next year's celebration:

The Ben Hunt Cabin Will Be 100 Years Old in 2024!

A 100th Anniversary Committee has been formed under the leadership of HCHS Vice President **Randy Sannes**. The banner shown here was the first announcement of the milestone during this year's Fourth of July open house at the Cabin. Various events are being planned for next year, beginning with the 2024 Fourth of July Parade.



Jessica Michna Brings “Wisconsin’s Civil War Angel” to Life

On June 14th, after welcoming audience members to HCHS’s second program of 2023, Society President **Al Strekow** announced, “And now I am honored to present to you the former First Lady of the State of Wisconsin, **Cordelia Harvey**.”

From the back of the Hunt Room, a petite woman approached the podium, walking slowly and with great dignity. She was costumed in a gray bonnet, black lace mourning gloves, a gray Civil War-era hoop skirt, and a matching jacket with a small oval portrait of her late husband pinned to it. Cordelia Harvey (a/k/a historical re-enactor and researcher **Jessica Michna**) began her presentation with the words, “I am the ‘spirit’ of Cordelia Harvey. The message I bear” (with which she concluded her presentation) “is just as important in your time as it was in mine.”

As Cordelia, she then related the story of how she had become an advocate during the Civil War for Wisconsin soldiers who had been wounded in battle or who suffered from physical or mental illnesses. Widowed at the age of 38 in 1862 when her husband, Wisconsin Governor Lewis Powell Harvey, drowned in Tennessee while on a mission to deliver food, clothing, and medicine to Wisconsin troops, Cordelia resolved to continue her husband’s work. She became a military hospital inspector in Confederate states and was increasingly appalled by the horrific

conditions the soldiers endured while in those hospitals. Realizing that she must help find a better way to provide care for them, she approached Gen. Ulysses Grant and recommended that recuperative hospitals be built in the North to treat Union soldiers. Rebuffed by Grant, she then wrote to U.S. Secretary of War William Stanton, but he did not respond. Finally, she wrote directly to President Abraham Lincoln, who agreed to meet with her in Washington, D.C. in 1863.

Cordelia took with her a petition signed by 8,000 Wisconsin residents who supported her proposal for a veterans’ hospital in Wisconsin. Despite that, the meeting did not go well; Lincoln feared that soldiers who were treated in the North would desert the Union Army after they recovered. But Cordelia persisted and, after several meetings with Lincoln, he agreed to her proposal, describing her as “a lady of intelligence” who “talks sense.” The Harvey Hospital for veterans opened in Madison, Wisconsin in 1863 with Cordelia as its administrator. Two more veterans’ hospitals were later opened in Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien as a result of her efforts.

And the message she referred to when she began her presentation? “I accomplished my task of getting hospitals built, but...As long as there is one soldier in need of comfort or care, that task will never be completed.”



Photo by Chris Schachtlie



Photo by Mike Fischer

TALES OF THE CORNERS - JULY

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

90 YEARS AGO (1933)

- The newly remodeled and repainted Hales Corners fire truck is brought back from Kenosha by George Ackerman.
- The second 10 percent payment on moratorium deposits at State Bank Hales Corners begins 10 days ahead of schedule.
- The new Hales Corners telephone directory is being distributed. It contains the names and telephone numbers of more than 500 subscribers served by the local office.
- Work is progressing on the roadways and bridges in Whitnall Park. The ridge formed by the old gravel pit has to be cut down to form part of the roadbed.
- The benefit dance for the Hales Corners Baseball Club is scheduled at Schubring's Triangle Inn. Joe Poznanski and His Rocking Farmers are slated to provide the music.
- Walter Heiden's advertises beer for 5 cents.
- The Freede-Eckel American Legion Post plans to hold a picnic at Will Ludwig's grove, at Drexel and Colby Rds.
- J. Allen Goff is unanimously re-elected treasurer of the Hales Corners School District.

80 YEARS AGO (1943)

- Swimming at Whitnall Park is popular at this time of year.
- Area garden clubs are changing their emphasis from flowers to victory gardens. Mrs. Richard Harmon is president of the Hales Corners Garden Club, Mrs. F. C. Marquardt is president of the Whitnall Park Garden Club, and Mrs. H.G. Harries heads the Hawthorne Garden Club.
- William Millard, president of the Wisconsin Dairy Goat Breeders Association, announces that the annual goat kid show will be held at the Conrad Goat Farm, two miles west of Hales Corners.
- Hales Corners Civic Association announces plans for a Victory Garden Fair and Fall Festival.
- Emanuel Church holds its annual picnic at Whitnall Park.

70 YEARS AGO (1953)

- Classified ad: Church building including heating plant and theater-type chairs, 38 by 44 feet. Sturdy construction. To be removed from premises, 5447 S. 111th Street.
- The Hales Corners Village Board approves a plan to extend the Village limits to Edgerton Ave., Rawson Ave., 116th St., and the Greendale Village limits.
- A budget of \$85,793 is slated to be presented to Hales Corners School electors at the annual school district meeting.
- Father Joseph McQuestion, pastor of St. Mary's Church, dies of a heart attack.
- Plans are made to have Hales Corners streets repaired by Greendale.

60 YEARS AGO (1963)

- The new Hales Corners Post Office is dedicated.
- W. Ben Hunt is this year's Fourth of July parade marshal.
- The original 1888 Emanuel Evangelical Church is being torn down to make way for a parking lot.
- The Hales Corners Police Department stations an officer to direct traffic at Hwy. 100 and Grange Ave.
- Although additional teachers and a \$15,000 building program are included in the proposed Whitnall School District budget, the tax rate is expected to decrease for the second year in a row.
- Joseph Starck is installed as president of the Hales Corners Lions Club.

50 YEARS AGO (1973)

- The Root River Action Committee files a \$5 million class action suit against Milwaukee County and a pipeline company for damages resulting from well problems in Greenfield and Hales Corners.
- Hales Corners Savings and Loan changes its name to Heritage Savings and Loan Association.
- Susan Sanders of Hales Corners receives a \$500 American Legion Auxiliary scholarship.
- The Hales Corners Newcomers Club honors its founder, Helen Nielson.

Research by Katy Galewski

Have you liked us lately? Go to facebook/halescornershistory

Thanks to Board member **Mike Fischer**, our audience on Facebook enjoys weekly postings featuring photos from our collection as well as from Mike's own sources, including information about them. So far, Mike has researched and presented more than 300 postings. So, check out our page and enjoy your Village history!

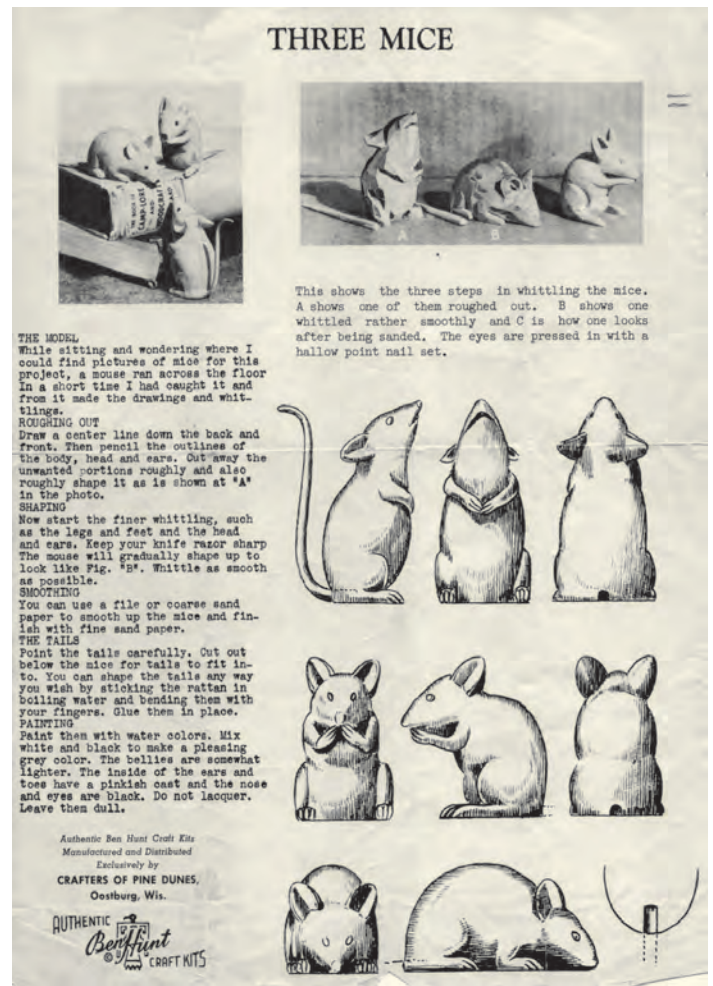
Items from Ben Hunt's Past Are Donated to Our Collection

In the 1920s, **Ben Hunt** and his brother **Ed** became partners in an art studio known as Hunt Bros. Their office was in the Montgomery Building in downtown Milwaukee. Also in that building was the **Bruce Publishing Company**, and the brothers received a number of commissions from that company. The relationship became even stronger in 1931 when Bruce Publishing issued *Lettering of Today*, the first of Ben and Ed's five books about alphabet styles.

Later, Ben published his own books on Indian craft, rustic construction, carving and whittling, cabin building, and silversmithing. Bruce Publishing continued to produce more than a dozen of those books from 1936 to 1967.

Recently, our Society was contacted by **Mary Bruce** of the Bruce Publishing family. She and her family members discovered a number of items related to the Hunts that they donated to us, including three books, five photographs, a newspaper feature article, a whittling instruction sheet, and a metal plate used by the Hunt Bros. for embossing.

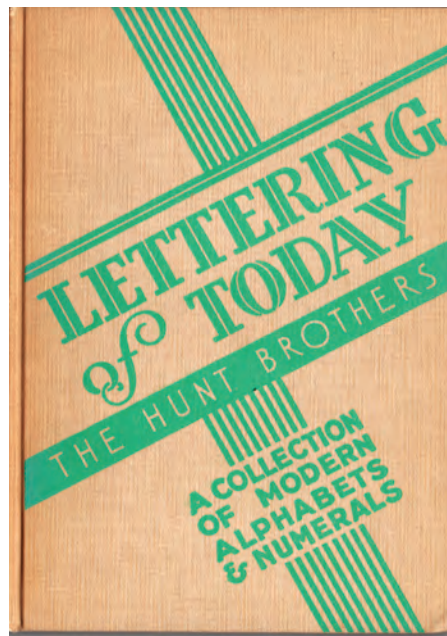
We are most grateful to the Bruce family for these wonderful additions to our collection. Thank you very much for thinking of us!



Ben Hunt's instruction sheet for whittling three mice



Photo of Ben Hunt's totem pole from the Bruce family's collection



Lettering of Today book features 38 alphabets



Embossing plate for Hunt Bros.

Another Great Photograph for Our Digital Collection!

Once again, we have received a colorized photo from **Sam Schmidt**. This time, he worked his magic on Holz Motors dealership and service buildings from the 1940s. Sam knew these buildings well as he lived right behind them. Thanks, Sam, for another great addition to our photo collection!



Holz Motors buildings and Getz Drugs during the 1940s

TALES OF THE CORNERS - AUGUST

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

90 YEARS AGO (1933)

- Paul "Swede" Schubring advertises a "free fish fry every Friday night" at the Triangle Inn. A 32-ounce glass of beer costs 10 cents.
- More than 700 chicken dinners are served at the St. Mary's Church picnic. The picnic is held at Phil Carr's grove on Forest Home and Woodlawn Aves.

80 YEARS AGO (1943)

- St. Mary's parishioners celebrate the 100th anniversary of their congregation and the 50th anniversary of their church. Movies of the event are slated to be shown at the Greendale Theatre.
- The Freede-Eckel American Legion Post of Hales Corners is dedicated. About 1,500 people attend the ceremonies.
- Mrs. W. B. Hunt entertains the Hawthorne Garden Club in the Hunts' log cabin at "Hawthorne Hollow."
- The Rural Cooperative decides to open a grocery market where Meir Grocery was located. Several hundred shares of stock are sold to finance the enterprise.
- Clarence Bosch, well-known local musician, is guest organist this week at the Blackamoor Lounge of the Wisconsin Hotel in Milwaukee.

70 YEARS AGO (1953)

- A resolution is passed by the Hales Corners Village Board to ask the electric company to remove its fence. The fence, about four feet high, runs along Hwy. 100 from Janesville Rd. almost to Edgerton Ave. It was erected many years ago to separate the high-tension wires and the Rapid Transit from the roadway.

- Representatives of area schools are studying the possibility of building a high school. The group includes Hales Corners, Greendale, Valley View, Jefferson, St. Martins, Willow Edge, Ben Franklin, and the Kneeland school districts.
- William Meyer takes over as commander of the Freede-Eckel American Legion Post.

60 YEARS AGO (1963)

- So far, 944 students are enrolled to begin fall classes at Whitnall Junior-Senior High School. The school will also have 14 new teachers.
- Kroger in Hales Corners advertises 22-pound watermelons for 69 cents each; peaches, two pounds for 29 cents; and a three-pound jar of peanut butter for 99 cents.
- An engineer for the State Highway Commission announces that the widening of the south side of Hwy. 24 (Janesville Rd.) from the Waukesha County line to Hwy. 100 will be completed this week.
- The Hales Corners Auxiliary Police Department makes plans for its annual dance.

50 YEARS AGO (1973)

- A firemen's picnic for departments from Greendale, Greenfield, Hales Corners, Franklin, and Oak Creek is held at the Root River Parkway. Barbecued chicken is served.
- An amphitheater is under construction at Whitnall Park's Wehr Nature Center.
- Classified ad: Hales Corners ranch, three bedrooms, garage, trees, \$28,900.

Research by Katy Galewski

Thanks to Our HCHS Volunteers for Their July 4th Service!

Once again, attendance at the Ben Hunt Cabin and the Seneca Hale Summer Kitchen topped 100 visitors! Some of those in attendance commented that they had lived in the area for more than 20 years but had never stopped by. We connected with some new folks and received \$85 in donations.

Volunteers at the Cabin included **Celine Kashishian, Randy Sannes**, and first-time docents **Mike Fischer** and **Scott Kruger**. Our Summer Kitchen volunteers were **Sybil Grandeck** and **Mary Javorek**.

Thanks so much to all of you, especially for working in July 4th's hot weather! We could not keep these local historic treasures open without your continued assistance.

HCHS at Night Out 2023



Our Society was well-represented during August 1st's Night Out event at Hales Corners Park. Board members (l to r) **Mary Bennett, Mary Javorek, Katy Galewski**, and **Chris Schachtlie** handed out membership brochures for the adults, and drawings to color (with crayons) for the kids. Thanks to them and also to **Jim Bain** (not pictured) for their coordination of this event. More photos will be in the next newsletter.

Aerial View of Forest Home Avenue in the 1980s

It seems like only yesterday... before the construction of the traffic round-about and the Village Market shopping center that's home to Pick 'n Save and other businesses.



HALES CORNERS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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