

The Maryhill Historical Society

Maryhill
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



1338B Maryhill Rd., Maryhill ON N0B 2B0

website: maryhillroots.com

email: maryhillroots@gmail.com



Join Our Society— Become a Member

Membership: \$25 Annual

\$50 Lifetime

Summer 2020

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Greetings From The President

By now most of us are adapting to the new reality of the “Coronavirus”. Social distancing, face masks and hand washing are the new norms.

As a result of pandemic restrictions, Maryhill Historical Society has had to cancel ALL remaining events that we had planned to hold in 2020. Canada Day, Heritage Sunday, and all open houses have been cancelled for 2020. The Annual General Meeting may have to be moved

to a later date.

All is not a total cancellation. We hope to continue the newsletter and calendar. The wayside shrines are being maintained. The archive project is still ongoing. Facebook and the web site are being maintained and updated.

In the meantime, stay safe. We will survive this time in our history. If any inquires, e-mail or contact a member of the board.

Tom

An Item From The Past: The Smoke House

meat with salt and smoke made it last longer. Farmers packed fresh cuts of meat in tubs of coarse salt for several weeks before hanging them in a smokehouse to cure. Smoldering hardwood fires burned on the floor of the smokehouse, curing meat with smoke. The smoke would slowly cook the meat and infuse it with flavor. The process could take weeks, and the fire had to be carefully watched so that it smoldered and smoked at the right temperature. The result was dried, long-lasting, smoke-flavored meat that aged in the smoke house for months before eaten. The smokehouse also stored cured meats and kept them safe from insects, vermin and potential thieves.

There was a great risk of fire with a smokehouse, as they were often constructed of wood. Farmers were careful to ensure the fires inside were mostly smoke and little fire. Smoke-houses can still be found on local farms in the area.

The one pictured here is from the Schmuck home-
stead (Leonard Brohman’s farm). The original
smoke house burnt down in the 1940s and this one
was then constructed. It contained a cast-iron bowl
that would be packed with shavings.

Meat including hams, sausage and bacon were hung
on big hooks and would absorb the flavor of the
smoke. There are still a few smoke houses in the
area although now most serve as sheds.



From Our Community: Bob Fehrenbach

By Susie Motz

Luckily, we interviewed Bob days before Covid-19 became a global pandemic and all social activity came to a standstill under the State Of Emergency Orders. We were able to capture some great memories and stories from a local who has lived his whole life in Maryhill

Robert (Bob) Fehrenbach, was born, raised and has lived his whole life in the village of Maryhill. Born April 10 1932 to John and Annie (Ertel); there were 7 children in the family. In birth order:

Lorraine Weiler - 1921

Gertie Bruder – 1922

Lorne - 1924

Herbert—1926

Bob - 1932

John—1934

Jerome- 1939



Bob is the last surviving sibling in his family. His Great Great Grandparents, Mathias Fehrenbach (1800 – 1855) and Agnes Laule (1802—1864) were one of the original founding families of Maryhill.

Bob was raised on a farm on Maryhill Road, just at the edge of the village. The farmhouse had a summer kitchen, a woodshed, a smoke house, barns and of course, an outhouse. As a youngster, Bob remembers getting Scarlet Fever. Bob couldn't go into the daylight and was confined to his bedroom for quite a while. (With Covid orders, we can relate to Bob's plight!) Those were the days when Dr.

As a teen, Bob remembers a friendly "Ice Cream Eating Competition" he had with his friend Bernie Brohman. Bob ate 3 bricks of ice cream. Bernie ate 4!

McNally made a house call to care for him. Bob remembers Dr. Shantz took over after Dr. McNally and after that he remembers Dr. Austroff. Bob said he never visited a dentist until he was an adult. It just wasn't something that was considered a necessity for a farm family.

Bob spoke German at home and learned English at school. He recalls attending St. Boniface school with friends Eddy Brohman, Elmer Bruder, Jerome Bruder, Helen Moyer, Sheila Zinger and Madeline Schell. They all started school together and spent years as a group of good friends.

Bob says his family always walked to church from their farm, even on the coldest days in winter. His father said it wasn't worth hooking up the horses to take them to mass because it was close by. At that time he recalls that families paid \$5 annually to have their seats reserved. The pews in the church were numbered at that time.

Over the 88 years of his life, Bob has seen a lot of change. In 1947 (age 15) the farm got electricity. That same year his family purchased a tractor and their first family car – a 1937 Plymouth. Bob shared with us the home-delivery salesmen that once visited his farm. The rag man, "Georgie Baker" the breadman, and the man with his Stallion for hire as a Stud. Those were the days when a door-to-door salesman wasn't considered a stranger. You would invite them not only to have supper with you, but sometimes you would even let them stay the night!

Bob was able to get his driver's license at the age of 15 – for farm driving only. With his driver's license in hand, Bob landed his first job. He was hired by Vincent Keifer to drive a milk truck from farm to farm to pick up milk and bring it back to the Royal Dairy in Guelph. Later in his teens Bob was employed by Merchant Rubber in Kitchener. He worked there for a few years in Shipping and Receiving. In 1952, at the age of 20, Bob started to work for Boehmers driving a ready-mix cement truck.

Bobh Fehrenbach Continued ...

In April of 1955 Bob married Rose Steffler, a local girl. In 1955 they purchased the 118 acre farm from his parents and lived there for 11.5 years. Bob and Rose had 2 boys – Gerald and Ronald. In 1966 they sold the farm and built a house beside the farm, where Bob continues to live today. Bob's wife rose died in 1992; a picture of their house is inscribed on her tombstone.

Bob remembers when there was a store in the Halter hotel. He said it was located where the pool table is now. He recalls the hotel had a shed that was an ice house and a dance hall above the ice house. He remembers when the ice house burnt down. He also recalls when Walter Frank's blacksmith shop burnt down. Bob says he was about 6 years old; the year probably 1938. He remembers Cyril Brenner's store and the Zinger's Store where the Post Office was located. He said the Post Office then moved to the Brenner's store. He remembers cold storage in the Zinger's Store for those with no freezer.

Bob worked for Boehmers for 42 years, until 1993. During his tenure, Bob received 40 safety driving awards! Bob has a large collection of antique miniature working steam threshers and proudly shows them at Antique Farm and Toy shows. Today, Bob lives independently in Maryhill where, until COVID-19 hit, he was an active participant in weekly card parties. Bob, like the rest of us, is patiently awaiting for the pandemic to end so he can regain his social activities!

Mathias Fehrenbach

by Susie Motz

Much of the information below is from a book at the Halter House compiled by Marie Durrer-Voisin

If we follow the family tree of Mathias Fehrenbach, I am going to suggest that many of us can find ancestors in it; possibly on multiple branches.

Mathias and Agnes Fehrenbach, along with Felix and Joseph Scharbach and Christian Riech (Rich) were some of the founding families in Maryhill. In 1826 Mathias and Agnes left from Baden Germany which is now southwestern Germany. They traveled for 4 months before they reached our area. It took them 6 weeks to sail across the Atlantic and then another 3 to 4 weeks to travel up the Hudson River to the Erie Barge Canal. From there they traveled to Buffalo, crossing the Niagara River and eventually found their way to our area.

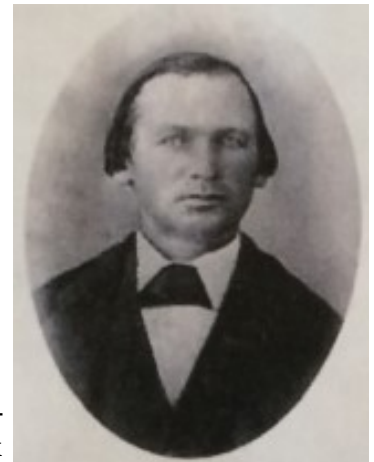
The group of new settlers purchased their land (GCT Lot 82) from Mr. Henry Weber, who had purchased it directly from Chief Joseph Brant of the Six Nations Reserve. Stories passed down from the elderly in the community tell us that Mathias and other early settlers were employed by Mennonite farmers living in the area. They were paid 50 cents a day in barter. They spent their nights sleeping in a 'tree house' off the ground to protect themselves from wild animals and the elements. Later they slept in barns and travelled back and forth from Bloomingdale to New Germany (now Maryhill). In their spare time they cleared land for themselves, cutting down trees, pulling stumps, and hewing logs for their buildings. Their new settlement was overrun with muskrats and thus they called it "Rattenburg".

The early settlers were not only adventurous and hard working, but they were also entrepreneurs. Mathias, Felix, Christian along with friend Joseph Thomas set up a partnership to develop land. They developed Bloomingdale and West Montrose.

In 1837 Mathias was in charge of the Post office for the area. By that time there were about 50 families or 448 people, living in New Germany

A man of faith, on December 11 1837, Mathias created a formal petition to the Hamilton Diocese to have a parish established in New Germany. Mathias prospered as a farmer and helped to build both the church and school.

Mathias died in 1855; he was a very rich man. His will is listed on the following page. It was written on August 10, 1855, the day before he died.



Will of Matthias Fehrenbach - 1855 (Transcribed as original, spelling mistakes and all!)

Matthias Fehrenbach, formerly of the Township of Waterloo, Yeoman, deceased, granted the thirteenth of September One Thousand Eight Hundred and Fifty Five. The petition of Jacob Borho and Joseph Scharbach, named Executors therein.

Yeomen was a term for a farm who owned land. ere farmers whom owned land.

I Matheas Faerenbach of the Township of Waterloo, Yeoman,, being weak in body

(1st) commit my Soul to the hands of my Redeemer and my Body to buried in a Christian order...

(2nd) Is my will that the Farm I own now shall after my decease belong to my son Matheas Faerenbach that is to say after he doth arrive to the age of twenty one years, and hath conditions and the consideration sum of Four Thousand Dollars, of the above said sum my son Matheas Faerenbach shall not pay anything till after the decease of my beloved wife Angnes or so long as she remaineth in the state of widowhood, and after her decease or second marriage the above said sum of \$4000 shall be paid by my son Matheas followeth that is to say it shall be equally divided in five equall parts and my son Matheas shall take his part first, then the remainder that is to say \$3200 to be paid as follows: Two hundred dollars shall be paid by my son Matheas one year after the death or second marriage of my widow and so yearly and every year till the above said sum of \$3200 are paid, in manner as followeth. The first termeen to be paid to my son John, and the second is to be paid to my daughter Catharin, and the third is to be paid to my daughter Magtalina and the fourth is to be paid to my son Joseph, and so alternately beginning at the oldest and so on to the youngest, without any interest on any of the termeens.

milchze = milk ?
parthage = path ?

(3rd) Is my will that my wife shall have a right to life in the house or my son shall build a convenient house for her near my house and convenient to the spring, and my son Matheas shall keep a cow for my widow and stabling in the winter and feed it, and in pasture in the summer, and also she shall have the right to put her *milchze* in the cellar, and the easterly part of the garden including one third part of said garden with a *parthage* to and from it and cellar room for her vegetables, and also my son shall furnish my widow with 200 pounds of pork or a fattened hog weighing 200 pounds, and also she shall have a right to keep a pig although she shall find fodderage for it and feed it.

(4th) Further, it is my will that my son Matheas shall give to my widow one third part of all the grain and produce that is raised on said farm, during her natural life or state of widowhood.

(5th) It is my will that my son Matheas shall furnish my widow with a sufficient quantity of wood for fuel or firewood fit for the use in the house.

(6th) Is my will that my son Matheas, widow shall have my kitchen cupboard, and also my cloth "drest" for to keep her clothes in it, also two beds ["bets"] with bedsteads and bed clothing, and coverlets.

(7th) It is my will that [after the decease of my widow or second marriage stroked out] all my moveable property shall be sold by publication and the proceeds thereof shall be equally divided among all my children and my widow so as to make it equal shares of it, that is to say at the time my son Matheas doth take the farm on his own hand.

(8th) It is my will that my son Matheas shall have one yoke of oxen with thes or to the above said farm, without further charge.

(9th) I declare this my Last Will and Testament and appoint for my Executors my trusty friends Jacob Borho and Joseph Sharbach.

Witnessed by Gottlieb Kurz and Bernhard Rich

Will dated 10 August 1855

Local Barns—Cut Outs

By Tom Schell and Susie Motz



“Cathedrals of the Fields” is a term that has been used to describe the century old barns in our area. Barns were much larger than houses; our ancestors built them as large as families could afford to house their livelihood – their livestock, grain and machinery.

Our German immigrant ancestors brought with them their customs, agricultural heritage, building traditions, religious and superstitious beliefs. Barns were built in a variety of styles that reflected the builders regional or national origin.

If you look closely at the gables in some of the barns in our area, you will find cut-out holes in the shape of a cross. Similar barns are found in Bruce County area (where many of our ancestors moved to). The George Schell/ John Wetzel Barn built in 1888 is an example of a local barn with cross cut-outs.

The purpose of these cut-out crosses is unknown, but we suspect

it was ornamental. The cross symbolized their Christianity or perhaps they were symbols of a St. Florian cross – the protector of fire. Big old barns, because of their height, were exposed to lightning and fire.

Farming practices have changed over the years and many have disappeared or repurposed for other uses.

If your family barn has cut-out crosses, send us a picture and we'll feature it on our website and Facebook page.



Found in Grama's Scrapbook

Fr. Diemert Given Purse At Maryhill

By Record Correspondent
MARYHILL—With the church filled to capacity by the congregation and many of his former parishioners, Father Joseph Diemert preached his farewell sermon at the solemn high mass Sunday.

At the close of the service Mr. Joseph Zinger read an address expressing their deep regret at his departure and thanking him for his zealous efforts in sports as well as his good works in the parish. A purse of money was presented by Mr. Linus Schuett on behalf of the parish. Father Diemert thanked them and bid them "auf widersehen."

It was on Sept. 27, 1930, that Father Diemert said his first mass at St. Boniface, his first parish after his ordination, and he will say his first mass at his new parish, Deemerton, on Sept. 27, exactly 23 years later to the day.

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And the 2020 History Award Goes to ...

Congratulation to Ian Gallagher who was awarded the 2020 History Award by the Historical Society of Maryhill. The award honours grade 8 students from St. Boniface School with significant achievement in history and encourages young people to become involved and excited about local history. Previous recipients include Seth Doerr, Alex Zettel, Scott Rebelo and Mason Garrett.



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Happy Retirement

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The Maryhill Historical Society and our 300+ members wish
Father Ronald Voisin

a wonderful and enjoyable retirement !



Father has served our community for 25 years as Pastor at St. Boniface RC Church in Maryhill. The community is very fond of Father Voisin and we will miss him.

We will pray for his good health and a lengthy retirement!

Father's last Sunday mass will be held on Sunday July 12 2020

His last weekday mass will be celebrated on Wednesday July 15th 2020.

The Last Word

Out of the Hotels and Into the Church

This story comes our way from George Isley, our past-president of the Maryhill Historical Society. George was a previous owner of the Maryhill Inn.



St Bonifacius Hotel circa 1903

George tells us of a story that more than one of his elderly hotel patrons shared. In the early 1900s the priest at St. Boniface RC Church noticed only the women were attending Sunday mass. The priest had a good idea he knew where the men were! Rumour has it the priest was Msgr. Stephen Foerster.

Fed up with the lack of men attending church and armed with a gun (apparently everyone had a gun back then), he walked down the hill and entered St Bonifacius Hotel., demanding the men in the hotel to attend mass. Apparently he chased the men up the hill and into the church.

The men of the parish would drop their ladies at Sunday mass and then proceed down the hill to leave the horse and cutter or wagon at the sheds/shelters below. The men would then go into the hotel (which had shuttered windows – closed, of course, on a Sunday morning) and drink their whiskey and/or beer, illegally. The hotels were not to be open on a Sunday.

I assume the church was full the following Sunday.



*This column will feature stories from years ago—often handed down by word of mouth.
Have a story you want to share? Contact us!!*