



Neighborhood News

The Newsletter of The Old Third Ward Association, Inc.
Fall - 2001

Linda Muldoon - Editor

We're Having Company

Saturday, September 15 from 10 to 4 and Sunday, September 16 from 1 to 4 the neighborhood will be welcoming visitors for our Fourth Home Tour. The three houses which will be open are all on Prospect, represent very different architectural styles, and are part of the new Historic District. Also open for visits are St. Mary's (Sunday only) and the Atlas Mill.

Consider welcoming our visitors by turning on porch lights and by doing a little extra clean up. Also, please join our visitors to learn more about the history of the homes and people who created our neighborhood.

St. Mary's and the OTW

One of the delights of writing this newsletter and of investigating the neighborhood history is finding the connections between people and seeing how what we now take for granted on a daily basis came into being.

One such "larger picture" is exemplified in this year's home tour by St. Mary's Church. A structure such as this is not a stranger in our midst that happened to squat down on any old piece of open land. The early settlers in the OTW had intimate connections with the church and the building.

St. Mary's Parish grew from an early group of Catholic settlers, many Irish and some German, who came to Appleton in part to find work of the locks and dams after leaving the famine in Ireland and troubles in Europe. The first families arrived as early as the 1840's and many more in the 1850's.

Some of the first services were held in the early courthouse, the first Third Ward School, the John Nolan Boarding House, and the home of Adam Mertes (601-603 S. Walnut). These sites are all in the OTW. Many of the first parishioners were also neighbors who donated time, money and property to the building of the early church building.



St. Mary's Church before the towers were shortened by wind storms.

Some of those were: Timothy Garvey, J. Smudde, Anton Karls, John Kamps, John Koffend. Theodore Conkey (433 W. Prospect) and others donated the land for the building.

A common question is why two catholic churches exist so close together. In the 1860's the German-speaking portion of the congregation left to build

their own church - St. Joseph's.

At one time a large building known as Columbia Hall, a social center for the Catholic community, existed on the southwest corner of Seventh and State.

The architect of the current St. Mary's church was Thomas O'Keefe, Sr. The O'Keefe home once stood on the southwest corner of Sixth and Walnut. Thomas O'Keefe was born in Limerick, Ireland in 1817. He apprenticed as a carpenter and with his family he traveled to the United States in 1850. They settled in Green Bay because this is where the money ran out. Thomas visited Appleton while working on building a mill. He liked the city so much that he moved here in 1865. He became an architect and with his sons built the first Atlas Mill in 1878 as well as the Telulah Mill. He retired in 1882 but his sons continued in the business (in partnership with Thomas Orbison) where they reportedly designed most of the new mills on the Fox River built before 1911.

According to a long time neighborhood resident, the O'Keefe home on Walnut was surrounded by the loveliest of lilac trees. Perhaps some the many lilacs currently in the neighborhood are descendents.

The Atlas Gone

The Atlas paper mill was totally destroyed by fire between the hours of 7:30 and 9:30 Friday morning. When first discovered and upon the cry of fire from the mill, Beverly Murphy ran into the rag engine room and saw smoke arising from the elevator shaft which was situated near the south wall of the room. The fire was in the basement and had evidently gotten under considerable headway before being noticed, as after the first discovery it spread with a rapidity which defied control. When the crowd began to gather smoke was already pouring in dense black volumes from the windows and around the eaves where it leaked through under the roof. The wind very fortunately was almost directly from the south and blew the smoke and heat over the bluff instead of directing it toward the Vulcan mill or eastward upon the wooden buildings of the Appleton Manufacturing Company. The iron roof with which the Atlas was entirely covered served a very beneficent purpose also for the other mills. It confined the fire to the interior of the building and allowed no blazing cinders to arise whose fall would have menaced property for half a mile around. Not until the whole inflammable material within the structure had been devoured did the roof cave in. It had done its work well.

A host of people early arrived upon the scene and took positions upon the bluff and the Prospect Street bridge, and down upon the tracks near the mill itself. Others found vantage points up on the bridges and trestles in the rear of the burning building, where they were protected from the heat by the wind at their backs and could witness to the best advantage the seething carnage that was going on within. From this position they were frightened several times, however, by the explosion of chemicals in the chemical department, which possessed sufficient force to blow out the windows and scatter glass and burning brands about the surface of the river beneath.

The flames spread rapidly over the grease stuffed floors and soon the ma-

chine room and rag engine room and warehouse, the latter piled full of manufactured paper, were furthest removed from the original point of the fire, and the workmen of the mill and spectators went manfully to work to save what little might be rescued from the devouring element. The windows of the warehouse were broken out and the packages of paper thrown out upon the ground to be in turn removed to places of safety or loaded upon cars of the Lake Shore company, to which a locomotive stood continually coupled.

Meanwhile the fire was gaining in vigor and had now eaten its way through the ceiling of the rag engine room and was satiating its voracious appetite upon the rags and inflammable materials of the rag room in the second story. The grandeur of its play was simply terrific as it burst in tremendous volumes from the windows, the glass melting before it and curled around the walls above or was driven over the top of the roof by the fierce urging of the wind.

The firemen worked at disadvantage from the first. When they arrived the flames were too fierce to allow an entrance to be made into the building which is the only way such a fire can be successfully coped with, and their energies were all directed from the outside where they were of scarcely any avail. Much delay was also caused by the breaking of hose, no less than fifteen sections of which succumbed to the pressure. The mill was surrounded on two sides by water and access was rendered difficult on the other two sides that the firemen with their crippled streams did little but play on the outside. Mention should be made of the work done by C.C. Wayland (C.C.

Wayland became a prominent grocer and his house still stands next to St. Mary's on the corner of State and Seventh.) and two or three men from the Vulcan mill, who stood at the southwest corner of the Atlas where it is separated by only a few feet from the Vulcan during the whole siege and fought manfully with a stream from the Vulcan's pumps against the communication of the flames to the adjoining property. They did some splendid work and kept the fire under control in that corner of the Atlas.

The fire moved so rapidly that the walls fell in a mere half hour after the alarm was sounded. The warehouse, which stood to the far northeast of the mill, was the only portion remaining. The financial loss was considerable and was estimated at \$150,000. About 120 "men, women, and girls" were without employment.

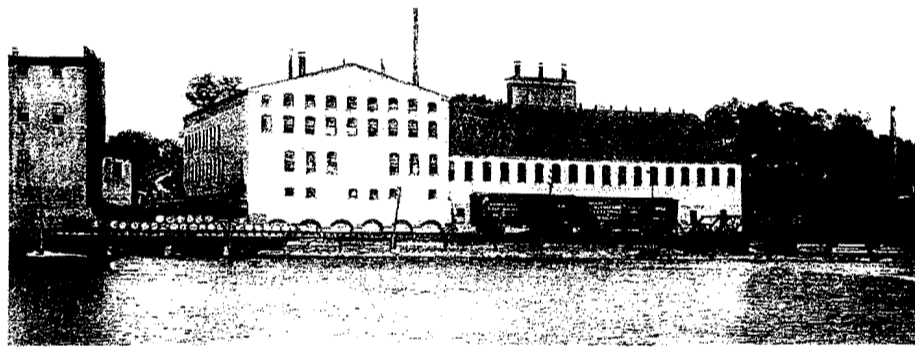
June 14, 1888, Appleton Post

What the Fire Teaches

From the fire yesterday morning which destroyed the Atlas Paper mill, several lessons may be drawn with profit by manufacturers and the public at large.

And first the Atlas fire simply added credence to a fact that has often been observed before at factory fires, namely, that little in the way of extinguishing such a conflagration can be done from the outside. (*The Post continues on to request training of millhands on the fighting of fires and the availability of materials with which to fight fires before the flames become uncontrollable.*)

Another thing. Yesterday the horses of No. 2 house, (*No. 2 House stood on the northwest corner of 8th and State.*) four in number, had started away with



The Atlas Paper Mill

the street scraper to grade Spencer street and had the alarm come in fifteen minutes later would have been out somewhere near the poor farm. As it was they were a long way from the house and lost many minutes in getting there and hitching to the carts. It would seem from this that at least in the dry, hot weather of summer, the horses should be kept in their stalls ready to answer a call if one should come in.

July 26, 1888, Appleton Post

At the Atlas paper mill the space between the railroad tracks in front of the building is occupied by massive timbers which are being shaped by a dozen carpenters. Many great round pillars are being made to support the roof of the machine room. In all about seventy-five men are employed on the mill. The masons have been working almost exclusively of late upon the machine room walls and they will probably be finished today ready for the process of putting on the roof to commence tomorrow. While the roof is being put on the machine room the masons will work on the engine room and have it ready for the roof as soon as the carpenters are finished on the machine room. That a paper machine will be set up in the machine room before thirty days are expired is the prediction now being made. A great deal of foundation

work has also been done which does not appear from the front. Brick arches have been built three feet thick from the water up to the south end of the engine room to provide for the eight foot addition to be made to that apartment. A vast quantity of great timbers are coming down from the north being furnished by Ramsey & Jones.

Scholarships Offered

Hey, you! Yes, you. Do you realize how unusual it is for a neighborhood to offer scholarships? Your neighborhood is offering free money to those who wish to learn about restoration skills and to those wishing to study subjects related to history, government, political science, land use and city planning. You do not need to be a traditional student. You can be 18 or 80. You can be studying for a four-year degree or taking a seminar. You must be an Appleton resident or current student or a graduate of an Appleton school. Spread the word.

For scholarship application forms and information, write to OTW, PO Box 2574, Appleton, 54914 or call 739-5762.

Short Notes

- If you have noticed many new and colorful butterflies in the neighborhood this summer, thanks goes to one of our neighbors who has taken the time to caretake the chrysalis of monarchs and swallowtails. He then has released these beautiful visitors in the neighborhood.

- Some neighbors have expressed interest in a neighborhood watch and/or networking to look out for the safety of the neighborhood children. If any of you would be interested in exploring these possibilities, call Board member Sharon Rorabeck-Allen or President Bill Anderson.

- With the heavy rains and winds this summer, some properties have suffered. In particular the intersection of State and Sixth has experienced extreme flooding. The cause seems to be inadequate storm water drainage pipes under Sixth Street. Some neighbors have contacted the City. If anyone is experiencing more water problems than usual, please speak up and let a board member know of your problems.

Become a Supporting Member of the Old Third Ward Neighborhood Association, Incorporated

Voting memberships are open to residents, both homeowner and tenant, and non-resident property owners. "Friends" are non-resident, non-voting members who wish to support the purpose of the association financially.

Membership Categories

Friend	\$10 or more	Sponsor	\$100 or more
Resident/Property Owner	\$15 "	Sustain	\$250 "
Family	\$25 "	Benefactor	\$500 "
Patron	\$50 "		

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

A/C & Phone: _____

I would like to volunteer _____ (state your interest)

Address checks and correspondence to: Old Third Ward, P. O. Box 2574, Appleton, Wisconsin 54913-2574

From the President

It's that time of year again for the Old Third Ward Tour of Homes. This year the homes of Mary and John Ensley, Jerry and Paula Sosalla, and Steve and Pam Kehn have been graciously opened for the tour. Also included on the tour are St. Mary's Church and The International Paper Hall of Fame (the old Atlas Mill). We would like to thank them for all the time and energy involved in preparing for the tour.

I would also like to thank all the members of the tour committee. The members involved this year include Chris Vander Wielen, Dave Bluma, Jean DeGroot, Mary Ann Jack, Jayne McCormick, Kris

Sager, Ann Sager, Brad Morrison, and Judy Worachek. We could not be successful without their enthusiastic involvement.

Another big thank you goes to Riverside Florists and Greenhouses and J & K Orchids who supplied the fresh flowers for the weekend.

The tour is an opportunity for people of the area to learn more about the historical homes and the significance of them to our community. It is also a wonderful fund raiser to support our efforts in preservation as well as the funding for the OTW two scholarships.

On another note, I am happy to report that Resolution 48 2001-2002, introduced by Supervisor and neighbor Michael Meyer was approved by the County Board. In 1995 an Ad Hoc Parking Study

Committee was established by the County Board. The purpose of this committee was to review the parking needs surrounding the Courthouse Complex and to examine the possible impact of such needs on the surrounding neighborhood and business district. The recommendations of this committee had never been voted on by the Board. With the recent positive vote, the boundaries of County growth for the near future have been defined. The entire neighborhood should thank and applaud the efforts of Supervisor Meyer and also the positive time and energy put forth by County Executive Toby Paltzer.

Bill Anderson President

Old Third Ward Board

Bill Anderson - Pres.	734-7484	Rebecca Baron, V.P.	738-0351	Steve Kehn	954-5973
Dave Bluma—Sec.	428-4595	Brian Bessett	830-0631	Sharon Rorabeck-Allen	739-4000
Hugh Beyer—Treas.	749-1677	Jayne McCormick	735-1601	Linda Muldoon	739-5762
		Chris VanderWielen	993-0631		

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