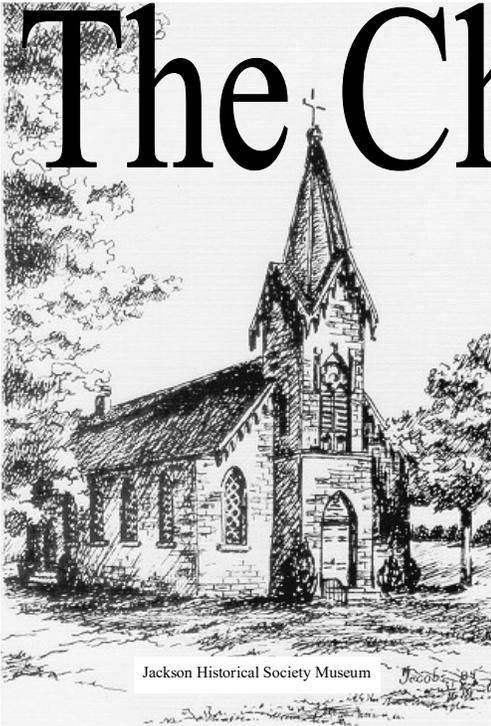




The Church Mouse

Volume 34 Issue 1 Jackson Historical Society April 2025



Jackson Historical Society Museum

TIMES, THEY ARE A'CHANGIN'!

Communicate? Grab your phone—done, your way!

But it was not always so. Improvements had to be made sometime/somewhere! A better way suggested and implemented!

Read on....

YOU'VE GOT MAIL! The Birth of the U. S. Post Office

In the mid 1800s, the Territory of Wisconsin was getting ready to become a state. Since the 1830s, the surveyors had been at work laying out 36 square mile towns, including Town 10 North, Range 21 East, in 1846 to become the Town of Jackson. In 1848, the State of Wisconsin would be born as the westward march across the United States continued. Immigrants from Ireland, Prussia, Scandinavia, and other countries, arrived to purchase available land, many to make Wisconsin their home. Some arriving immigrants cleared their land to begin farming while others set up businesses to provide citizen needs. Hamlets such as Kirchhayn, Thiel's Corners, Keowns, Salter, Reisville, grew up within the Town of Jackson to provide needed services.



Keowns - Casper & Schwinn Store



Kirchhayn - Tavern, Grocery Store



Salter - Stauske's General Store

Among the services that arrived in Wisconsin with population growth and statehood was the post office. Many of the hamlets in the town had post offices, usually located in a general store or tavern. People would stop by to pick up their mail. An early plat map of Kirchhayn showed the Young Hickory Post Office on the S. E. corner of Church St. and Western, although many in Kirchhayn remember picking up mail

(Post Office continued on page 3)

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Your annual **\$20** dues cover a calendar year starting in **January**. The current year for your membership is shown on The Church Mouse address label.

Your dues include a subscription to the Church Mouse and help us preserve Jackson history.

JHS MEETINGS TIMES

The Jackson Historical Society meets the 3rd Monday of every other month, Jan/Mar/May/Jul/Sep/Nov, at 7:00pm.

May/Jul/Sep held at 1860 Mill Road, Jackson, in our restored, log home. Nov/Jan/March held in Jackson Town Hall.

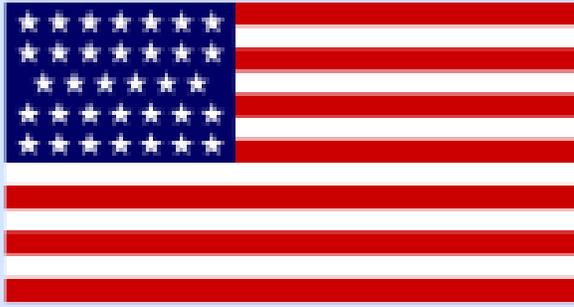
Jhsheritage.wi@gmail.com
Send mail to PO Box 197
Jackson, WI 53037

JHS OFFICERS

Clif Koeller—President
Russ Hanson—Vice President
Lenore Kloehn—Treasurer
Doris Koeller—Secretary

BOARD MEMBERS

JHS Officers, Gordon Ziemann,
Elmer Kloehn, Charles Schowalter



*Abraham Lincoln:
A New Birth
of Freedom*

MR. LINCOLN



Join Kevin Wood as Mr. Abraham Lincoln as he discusses Abraham Lincoln's life from the independence of our nation through the Civil War including an emphasis on the turbulent years 1854-1869.

The presentation also includes Mr. Lincoln's personal story.

Do not miss this opportunity to relive this important period in our nation's history.



PROGRAM

WHERE: Jackson Room—upper level

JACKSON TOWN HALL
3146 Division Road . CTH G
South of Hwy 60 roundabout on Division Rd.

Doors open: 6:30pm

Program: 7:00pm

WHEN: Tuesday, 20th of May 2025.

COST: FREE

(Post Office continued from page 1)

at the local tavern. Other post offices in Jackson were Casper & Schwinn general store in Keowns, Stauske's general store in Salter, Frank's Post Office at Thiel's Corners, and Reis general store in Reisville. These local Jackson post offices were part of a mail delivery system begun in colonial times that became the U. S. Post Office. Let's take a look at how this developed.

Stepping well back in time, spoken languages were created which then led to written language. With written languages, we had the ability to save, share, or send messages. Next, needing some material to write on, we progressed through writing material from the early use of stone or metal, not very portable, to papyrus then parchment, somewhat better. In 13th century Europe, paper from linen or cotton was developed and carried forward for a few centuries. In the 1800s, paper from wood pulp was created which provided an effective yet economical and easily transportable writing medium. The availability of cotton, linen, and later, wood pulp based paper, help develop a postal system in Europe that was brought to the American colonies by the early immigrants.

In the early years within the colonies, as in Jackson, letter writers often sent their correspondence by friends, merchants and Native Americans via foot or horseback and hoped for the best. During the same period most of the correspondence was between the colonists and their family members back home in their mother countries and the letters necessarily went by ship. Delivery was leisurely but effective.

In 1639, the Richard Fairbanks tavern in Boston was designated as the official site for mail delivery, as taverns were popular meeting places. 200 years later in Jackson, post offices were established in taverns for the same reason. In 1673, New York's Governor Francis Lovelace set up a monthly horseback post between New York and Boston. This was the first post road established to facilitate mail delivery via horseback riders. As need for delivery of mail increased, more post roads were created. A north American postal system for the colonies was established around 1692 with Governor Andrew Hamilton of New Jersey as Deputy Postmaster General. Benjamin Franklin was appointed Postmaster of Philadelphia in 1737 and joint Postmaster General for the Crown.

During his time as joint Postmaster General for the Crown, Franklin made important and lasting improvements in the colonial posts. He began to reorganize the service, setting out on a long tour to inspect Post Offices throughout the area. New surveys were made, milestones were placed on principal roads, and new and shorter routes were laid out. For the first time, post riders carried mail at night to speed service between Philadelphia and New York. When Franklin left office, post roads operated from Maine to Florida and from New York to Canada. Mail between the colonies and the mother country operated on a regular schedule, with posted times. The Crown dismissed Franklin in 1774 for actions sympathetic to the cause of the colonies. The war for independence was about to begin.

Three weeks after the battles of Lexington and Concord, the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia in May 1775 to plan for the defense of the colonies against British aggression and "to take into consideration the state of America." The conveyance of letters and intelligence was essential to the cause of liberty. A committee, chaired by Benjamin Franklin, to consider the establishment of a postal system was created. The committee reported back to Congress on July 25, 1775. The Continental Congress agreed to the committee's recommendations, creating the position of Postmaster General, and naming Franklin to it. Benjamin Franklin served as Postmaster General until November 7, 1776. He was in office when the Declaration of Independence created the United States in July 1776, making Franklin the first Postmaster General of the United States. America's present Postal Service descends from the system Franklin placed in operation.

In 1781, Congress voted to give the federal government the sole and exclusive right and power of establishing and regulating post offices from one state to another. New east-west post routes were created as the population expanded westward. In 1782, Congress passed an Ordinance revising and codifying postal laws and regulations giving the federal government a monopoly on mail, restricted censorship to times of war or when specifically ordered by the Postmaster General or Congress, and allowed post riders to carry newspapers at moderate rates.

Between 1789, when the federal government began operations and 1861, when civil war broke out, the United States grew dramatically. The country's population grew from 3.9 million people in 1790 to 31.4 million in 1860. The Post Office Department grew as westward expansion continued. The number of Post Offices increased from 75 in 1790 to 7,530 Post Offices in 1828 and to 28,498 in 1860. Post roads (roads on which mail

(Post Office continued on page 5)



THE PONY EXPRESS

In 1860, the Pony Express was created by William H. Russell who had tried and failed to get postal backing to carry mail. His ad in the newspapers seeking riders read: "Wanted. Young, skinny, wiry fellows not over 18. Must be expert riders willing to risk death daily. Orphans preferred." Other riders were later accepted. St. Joseph, MO was the starting point for a direct 2,000 mile route to the West. Except for a few settlements and military forts, the route beyond St. Joseph was a vast unknown land inhabited by Natives. Russell, with two partners, built relay stations every 5 to 20 miles, with fresh horses. There was an estimated 150 to 190 relay stations. On an average day a rider could cover 100



miles. Riders were paid from \$50 to \$100 per month, ranged in age from 11 to the mid 40s and weighed less than 125 pounds. Riders changed horses at the relay stations every 10 to 20 miles with the riders averaging up to 10 miles per hour. The cost of mail, a whopping \$5.00 per one-half ounce at first, was later reduced to \$1.00

per one-half ounce. The fastest piece of mail in the history of the Pony Express was President Abraham Lincoln's inaugural address. It was carried to California in 7 days and 17 hours.

With the transcontinental telegraph line being completed on October 24, 1861 and the Pony Express suffering from financial difficulties, it was sold to Wells Fargo, and became a legend. It had only lasted a year and a half!

MAIL TRAINS THROUGH JACKSON

A number of years ago, Reuben Schmahl, former Washington County Board Chairman and Jackson Town Board Chairman, who grew up in Jackson, wrote an article for the Church Mouse that described how the railroad delivered our mail. I have included the following excerpt from Reuben's article.

The trains coming through Jackson were important to the delivery of mail. Each day one of the trains had a mail car staffed with people who sorted the mail while en-route. Locally a postal employee placed the outgoing mail in a canvas bag and hung it on a wooden arm extending from a pole within easy reach of a mail clerk onboard the train who would haul it inside while the train was passing. Incoming mail in another canvas bag was dropped from the train onto the depot's platform and picked up by the local postal employee, who in turn delivered it to the post office. Around 1930, the post office was moved to the Hoge and Gumm General Store (located right across the street from the railroad). The Chicago & Northwestern Railroad began service to Reisville about 1872. Reisville was renamed Jackson about 1889.



(Post Office Continued from page 5)

Post Office Department operated the largest number of post offices in American history, 76,945. The next year, there were 1,000 fewer Post Offices. Despite a growing population and more mail, the number of Post Offices continued to drop each subsequent year. By 2015, the number of Postal Service managed retail offices dropped to 31,606, selling 12 billion stamps annually. Jackson, long ago, lost its hamlet post offices to free local delivery. In 1870, mail for Jackson was brought from Cedarburg to the Jackson Post Office #1 (Frank Post Office) by horseback riders. Today, mail for Jackson is brought from the Cedarburg Post Office to the Jackson Post Office by truck. I'm not sure of the horsepower!

****NORMAL PAGE 6 EXTRAS
START HERE!**

Awhile ago, I received a call from Russel Faber. He had in his possession several official looking documents relating to Faber farms in Jackson. What he had were called ABSTRACTS that list, in detail, the legal financial history relating to a Faber property. Abstracts were legally updated whenever a financial transaction involved the property. Today, in most cases, Title Insurance has been substituted for Abstracts.

A guess on my part is that title insurance was purchased at some time to protect the Faber property and the Abstracts were "retired" from that task. From a historic perspective, Abstracts are much more informative and we appreciate your donating them to the Jackson Historical Society.

Thanks, Russ for the donation.



(Post Office Continued from page 3)

travels) increased to 84,860 miles by the end of 1823.

As the country grew, people in new states and territories petitioned Congress for even more post routes, regardless of their cost or profitability. The Department ultimately made the decision to answer this public need. It funded post routes that supported national development and instituted services to benefit all residents.

Jackson Post Office #1 was established in 1870, John G. Frank, Postmaster, in the Frank General Store at the corner of Hwy. 60 and County M. It was later known as Frank's Post Office. Mail was brought to the post office from Cedarburg by horseback riders. Jackson Post Office #2 was established in 1874, Christopher Reis, Postmaster, in the Reis General Store in Reisville. With the arrival of the railroad, Reisville be-



Reis General Store & Post Office



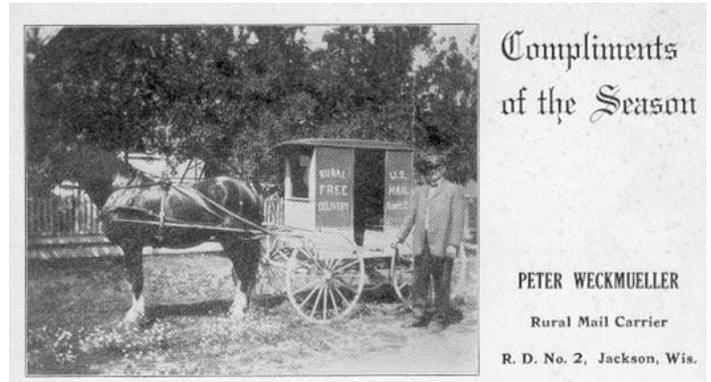
First Postage Stamps

came a principal hub for outlying post offices. Mail was delivered to outlying post offices by horse and buggy.

Initially postage was based on the number of sheets in a letter and the distance a letter traveled. Families, friends, or businesses further distant paid more to keep in touch. For instance, from 1799 to 1815, it cost from 8 cents/sheet sent 40 miles to 25 cents/sheet sent more than 500 miles. In 1845, the Department began charging rates essentially based on weight and whether a letter was going more than or fewer than 300 miles. In 1855, the rate structure was 3 cents for a letter weighing a half-ounce and traveling up to 3,000 miles, which included most of the United States and its territories. Letters going farther than 3,000 miles were charged postage of 10 cents per sheet. In 1863, postage for a letter was based solely on its weight and eliminated all differences based on distance, thus providing universal service to customers no matter where they lived in the country. In 1847, the first U. S. postage stamps that went on sale were the 5 cent Franklin and the 10 cent Washington. They came in non-perforated sheets which had to be cut into separate stamps by the postal clerk.

Prior to 1863, postage paid only for the delivery of mail from Post Office to Post Office. Citizens picked up their mail. An Act of Congress in 1863, provided that free city delivery would be established at Post Offices if income from local postage was more than sufficient to pay all expenses of the service. For the first time, Americans had to put street addresses on their letters and not just the community name.

In 1890, nearly 41 million people, 65 percent of the American population, lived in rural areas. Although many city dwellers had enjoyed free home delivery since 1863, rural citizens had to pick up their mail at the Post Office, leading one farmer to ask: *"Why should the cities have fancy mail service and the old colonial system still prevail in the country districts?"* Rural Free Delivery became a permanent service effective July 1, 1902. Farmers helped by putting out boxes for the rural carriers, everything from lard pails and syrup cans to old apple, soap, and cigar boxes. Postal officials decided a standardized box would improve service and, in 1901, asked manufacturers to design boxes to the following specifications: The box must be made of metal, 6 by 8 by 18 inches, and be weather-proof. Boxes should be constructed so they can be fastened to a post at a height convenient to the carrier without alighting. Manufacturers stenciled the words "Approved by the Postmaster-General" on satisfactory boxes. Postal carriers supplied their own transportation, usually horses and wagons, until 1929, when improved roads led to almost a complete change in Rural Delivery from horse-drawn vehicles to motor cars. The increase in the number of rural delivery routes led to a subsequent decrease in the number of small post offices. By 1901, the



Compliments
of the Season

PETER WECKMUELLER

Rural Mail Carrier

R. D. No. 2, Jackson, Wis.

(Post Office Continued on page 4)

****AREA HISTORICAL SOCIETIES & EVENTS WILL RETURN IN THE NEXT CHURCH MOUSE**



The Editor welcomes comments on the newsletter. Please mail all *suggestions for articles, etc.*, to The Church Mouse, 2988 William Koehl Circle, West Bend, WI 53095, or phone (262) 353-3641, or e-mail jhsheritage.wi@gmail.com. Send mail to PO Box 197, Jackson, WI, 53037. Russ Hanson, Editor

RAILROADS—THE POST OFFICE HEADS WEST

There were many early attempts to build and use railways. Some used gravity to move railcars in one direction and horses to haul them back. Some simply used horses to haul rail cars. In 1830, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad became the first common carrier in America, chartered from its inception to carry passengers and freight on timetables over vast distances with steam power. The 1830s and 1840s saw an expansion of railway lines that aided in the westward expansion of the United States. Early railroads carried freight and passengers more rapidly and economically than other period transportation methods. Railroads were soon adapted for another use, delivering the mail.

Initially, mail was carried by the railroads as freight, with all processing being done at local post offices. However, in 1862, the railway post office (RPO) was introduced in the United States using converted baggage cars. The first permanent Railway Post Office route was established in 1864, between Chicago, Illinois, and Clinton, Iowa. This service is recognized as the first time, the mail was sorted to and received from each post office along the route.

The July 1, 1862, Pacific Railroad Act signed by President Lincoln established government funding for the construction of a railroad from the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean with the express idea of opening a main line mail route across the western frontier. The act was officially entitled "*An act to aid in the construction of a railroad and telegraph line from the Missouri river to the Pacific ocean, and to secure to the government the use of the same for postal, military, and other purposes.*" The Act opened the door to government funded railroad mail routes across the American continent. By the 1880s, railway post office routes were operating on the vast majority of passenger trains in the United States. A complex network of interconnected routes allowed mail to be transported and delivered in a remarkably short time. In the United States, RPO cars (also known as mail cars or postal cars) were equipped and staffed to handle most back-end postal processing functions. First class mail, magazines and newspapers were all sorted, cancelled when necessary, and dispatched to post offices in towns along the route. Registered mail was also handled, and the foreman in charge was required to carry a regulation pistol while on duty to discourage theft of the mail.

When the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad laid down tracks and began service to and through Reisville (Jackson) in the 1870s, RPOs would have been part



Mail Hook

of the train. Mail bags would have been "grabbed" by passing trains and Jackson area mail dropped onto the station platform for local delivery. A more modern mail service would have arrived!

MEMORIALS

Jack Reis, of "Reisville" heritage has passed away. And he took with him all the hunting and fishing memories he used to share with us. You see, Jack took on the task of mowing the JHS grounds each week and did so until physically unable to, when son, Bob, graciously stepped in for his dad and got it done. Thank you!

Beginning with Franz, the Reis family **IS** the Village of Jackson, and there is a nice park in the village to honor the family heritage. Stop by!

So, so long, Jack. And thanks for the memories.

Russ Hanson, JHS

When Mary and I moved to Cedar Ridge Homes a number of years ago, I attended my first Friday Men's Coffee and one of the first men to welcome me was Tom Hanson. We soon discovered a like interest in history and Tom shared his knowledge and materials on Cedar's founding with me, a kindness not forgotten. Tom Hanson was that kind of man.

So, thanks, Tom, for caring and sharing your memories with us.

Russ Hanson, JHS

TODAY WILL BE HISTORY TOMORROW!