1827

Walking Tour of Historic Water Street District Shullsburg, Wisconsin 2007

Shullsburg is located in the center of the Upper Mississippi River Valley Lead Mining District. Lead and zinc mining became very active in the Shullsburg area in 1862 and continued until 1978. The first written accounts of primitive lead mining in the region are of French Voyageurs prior to 1650. By 1700, European maps showed lead mines in the region. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 set the northern boundary of the future Illinois state at a point from the southern tip of Lake Michigan due west to the Mississippi. When Illinois became a state in 1818, the boundary was moved north to include the lead mines and river port of Galena. By treaty, mining was not permitted north of the boundary. In the mid 1820's, a fur trader for the Aster Fur Company, Jesse Shull, was shown great deposits of lead where Shullsburg is now located. He told others in the "old diggings" of Galena. In 1826, many prospectors ignored the 1787 treaty and came to mine lead.

Many of these first prospectors dug shallow holes in the ground in search of lead (and some even for their home). They were referred to as Badgers, which likewise scampered around digging holes in the ground. Hence - Wisconsin Badgers.

By 1827, settlements were established at Shullsburg, New Diggings, Mineral Point, and elsewhere. Initial architecture was crude, consisting of small log structures. A "wild west" atmosphere prevailed for several decades. By the 1840's, wood framed business buildings were being constructed on Water Street. Rock buildings were going up for public buildings and wealthy residents. The railroad arrived in 1881 when zinc mining became very lucrative. The 1880's saw new business buildings being constructed of rock and brick with metal cornices, iron facades, terra cotta detailing, and massive plate glass windows.

Quite a few buildings from the 1840's and 1880's still exist. Regrettable, too many have been lost to fire, neglect, and "progress".

The following is our introductory guide to the buildings of Shullsburg's Water Street District, dating back to when Shullsburg was part of the Michigan Territory.

Let's start at the beginning. Water Street- where's the water? A creek did run on the south side of Water Street in the early years of the town, and evidence of the creek can be seen in the basement below the Pub at Water Street Place. The creek was contained with stone masonry retaining walls in the early or mid-1800's, before any building was there. The south retaining wall was later used for part of the building's foundation. A wooden door, which once led the way under the road to the Opera House, was removed when the foundation and was repaired in 1999. A massive stone lintel on the opposite wall is still in place, showing where the creek flowed to, and under, the Brewster Café. Both retaining walls are still prominent in the basement of the Pub. The creek is now dry.

327 West Water Street -- Anton Aurit Building

A typical late 19th century commercial front with living quarters on the 2nd floor was built in 1893. Large front windows allow maximum natural light and visibility. Wood clapboard siding painted white was the popular siding of the time. This was the site of the Mike Browntown Mahoney Saloon until 1916 when Herman Hillenbrand purchased it. It was then the site of the Park View Hotel, where Julia Adkins had rooms for young ladies. From 1965 to the present, Glen Matl has operated Matl Custom Woodworking from the first floor, and the second floor is a private residence.

319 West Water Street -- Andrew Hebenstreit Grocery

Built in 1875 with side and rear walls of limestone and front façade of red brick. Often in recent times, the large store front windows and doors a reduced in size and surrounded with mismatched materials. Its original use was for the Hebenstreit Grocery and Liquor Store. It was then sold to George Whitechurch, continuing as a grocery store. Eva Whitechurch later converted it to apartments. Currently it is the Kut-Above Salon on the first floor and private residence on the 2^{nd} floor.

317 West Water Street -- Hebenstreit House

A modest vernacular building, with a decided English look to the design. Nothing definitive is known about this early history. The foundation and sill is pre-civil war (fire or storm damage?). In the early 1900's it was again restored, and a rear addition was added. It was purchased and restored a final time by Chuck and Jill Staab in 2003. From the 1900's through 1998 it was a private residence, often unoccupied. At this time, it is offered for sale for business purposes.

314 West Water Street -- Bergner House

Similar lines of construction to the Hebenstreit House. It was built in 1861 for the Bergener family residence. The Bergener's owned and operated a meat market next to the house where Kennedy Street is now. Part of the west wall is solid brick. We wonder why? The house is still a private residence.

313 West Water Street -- Hillemeyer Cash Store

This building consists of 3 structures. The front portion was built in 1861 by Conrad Hillemeyer for a General Store on the 1st floor and residence on the 2nd floor. The awning, through covered with aluminum, is an original feature of the building. In the early 1900's the rear structure (built in the 1830's or 40's) was brought in from an unknown lot. It was used for additional residences for Conrad's children, Frank and Mary. Frank and Mary, and later Franks son, continued to operate the Hillemeyer Cash Store until 1930 or so. John Hebenstreit then ran the general store for a short while. A decade or so later the rear shed type structures were added, the front windows and doors were reduced, and the entire complex was converted to apartments. It has been vacant since 1998.

309 West Water Street -- Michael Tierney House

This home was built for Michael Tierney in the 1860's. It was constructed of rock with a soft red brick front. Time has not been kind to this building. The rock and brick are very soft and have suffered considerable erosion. In 2005, the bad bricks were replaced and the joints repointed. Other early residents include Fred McGinley, John Stoycheff, and Barney Keller. It is now a duplex.

303 West Water Street -- Michael Tierney Grocery Store

Built in 1883 by Tierney as a general store. Other businesses have included John Mail's pool hall, Anton Pedersen's original site for the Shullsburg Creamery, Dr. Lawlor's Veterinary service, Dr. Louis Landau's Veterinary service, and now the Shullsburg Veterinary Services. The second floor is an apartment. Note the many changes to the first floor window and door openings. The white paint may have been originally applied to protect the soft bricks from decay.

306 West Water Street -- The City Hotel (Montezuma House)

Built in 1847, the City Hotel has also been known as the New York House and Montezuma Hall. We do know the Egan family bought it in 1891. Ryan's pizza parlor occupied part of the building in the late 1960's and early 1970's. In 1974, Charles Berryman purchased the building and restored it. It is currently used as rental apartments.

250 West Water Street -- Darwin Moulton Store

Built in the 1840's, this building retains most of its original Greek revival features. Initially, part of the store was used by shoemaker Theodore Pieffer, as a tavern by operators Mike Fields, Mike Morrissey, Frank Fleming, James Welch, and Herb Ryan Sr.Leighton Bennet later opened another shoe repair shop. It was fully restored in the 1990's by Dana Duppler. It operated for a number of years as "The Cobbler's Bench" retail store. Currently houses "Water Street Videos".

251 West Water Street -- McCarthy Building

Built in 1890, this building has housed many bars over the years, including John Brennan, Jerome and Andy Doyle, Louis Kilcoyne, Pat Hayes, John Bright, Austin Burns, Walter Krause, James Blatz, Pat and Lucy's Bar, L&M Tavern, and currently Big Mike's. Although the fabric has been modernized over the decades, the building could be restored to its original appearance.

246 West Water Street -- Hildenbrand Tavern

Built in 1930 by Herman Hildenbrand for a tavern. One of the "newer" historic buildings on Water Street. Harold Morrissey ran the tavern from 1930-1946, followed by Thomas McArdle, Fred Geissbuhler, Tom Bennett, and Jerry O'Neill's Irish Inn. Restored in the 1990's by Dana Duppler's Lead Region Historic Trust, it now houses Cub Hollow Antiques.

239 West Water Street -- Shepherd's Tailings Country Store

Built in 2003 by Donna and Jerry Shepherd for additional retail space for the Tailings Country Store. The architecture reflects Greek revival styling of the mid 1800's to compliment the original Tailings Store. This is an excellent example of how new construction can blend beautifully with old original buildings.

233 West Water Street -- Hempstead Building

Currently known as the Tailings Country Store, this is one of the oldest buildings on Water Street, built in 1844. It was restored to near Greek revival appearance by Dana Duppler in the late 1980's. many businesses have been here, including barbers Andrew Hebenstreit, Phil Burns, and Dale Ahern; George Paquette had Shullsburg's first public bath service; Dr. Hoesley's office and the McWilliams Law Office. The upstairs was an apartment at various times.

236 West Water Street -- Look and Hillemeyer General Store

Built in 1887 by local contractors Thompson and O'Neill. The building displays many fine Italianate features. Originally the Look and Hillemeyer General Store, businesses that followed included the Look Mercantile, Mrs. Kendall's Grocery Store, business operators Avene Townsend, Odella Woodworth, Colleen Harty, John and Betha Mueller, the Shullsburg Post Office, Weatherby Jewelry (they also sold pianos), the Masonic Lodge(from1887 to the 1900's) and a meeting hall for the K.C.'s. The building was restored in 2001 by Jim and Sandy Hansen. In December 2000 at the start of restoration, the building nearly collapsed from 30" of new snow on the roof. The outer walls began bulging out from the weight. Massive steel "clamps" were constructed to draw the walls back in place while interior walls were built. Currently houses Hanlers Unique Shops, and Frank's Place Italian Lounge and Restaurant.

240 West Church Street -- Look and Fox Implement Garage

Built in 1914 by Look and Fox for their implement business. Later the EJ Fox Tourist Garage sold Dodge cars here. Fred Blackbourn bought the business in 1937. The building remains relatively unchanged. Fred Blackbourn and Sons currently have their farm machinery business here.

226 West Church Street -- Centenary United Methodist Church

The church displays a unique mix of Greek revival and Italian ate features. It shows the excellent masonry skills of the crafts people of the time. The rock used is local limestone hauled by parishioners with 0their horses and rigs from the nearby Rennick Quarry. The cornerstone was laid on July 4, 1867. The stained glass windows were installed in 1897. The church continues to have a very active congregation.

224 West Water Street -- Art Stocker Memorial Park

This was the original site of the Jackson and Muldoon Livery. After the horse and buggy days, Joe Kane built a filling station, later owned by Victor Mortell, James Lembezeder, and Howard Lyne's Arco Station. It then became an eyesore. Purchased by Scott Stocker, CEO of the Shullsburg Creamery around 1990, the site was cleaned up and fuel storage tanks removed. The gazebo, built in 1998 by Chuck Staab, and the landscaping were added as a park to memorialize Art Stocker and his vision of what Shullsburg could once again become.

216 West Water Street -- P.C. Meloy General Store

Built in 1898, it has simple vernacular lines of construction. Charles Alexander had a restaurant here, followed by Ben Lyne, and Stasia Doyle. George Daacon opened a shoe store, followed by John Engels. The Knights of Columbus Hall was there -- currently owned by Steve Woodworth of Woodworth Insurance.

214 West Water Street – Priestly Block

Again simple vernacular construction, but still sporting the large store front windows with double entry and massive lintel, decorated at the top with saw tooth masonry. Built in 1882 for McGreane Bros. Harness Shop, then pool halls run by Harold Morrissey, Earl Morris, and Thomas Gensler, and Webster and Morrissey TV Shop, Wand and Webster TV Shop, AK Miller Electric, and the Senior Citizens' Hall. Now owned by the Shullsburg Creamery, it is currently being restored for Shullsburg Creamery's Retail Outlet Store, soon to be completed.

221 West Water Street – Judd Garage

Built in 1915 of precast cement block, which were becoming popular at the time. It was first the Jim Judd Garage, then Jack and Walter Casper sold Chevrolets, the appliances. Later a food locker operated by Cliff Gile Sr., Robert Gile, Jack Jensen, Cliff Sargent, and George Ubersox. Next, Lois Prine moved her bar there, followed by J.R.'s Place, the Triple T Saloon, and now the Night Owl Saloon. In the 1800's, the Lafayette House stood here where General Grant is believed to have stayed.

215 West Water Street – Thompson and O'Toole Furniture Store and Undertaking

Built in 1891, unusual in that it is set back further than other buildings, perhaps to allow for a front porch rather than awnings. Thompson and son had a furniture store and funeral parlor, taken over by Harry A. Thompson, then by Irving Thompson. George Alt then opened a plumbing and heating shop, followed by Jim Reilly's Plumbing and Heating. Currently home to Miner Mercantile (Craig Hardware Company) with an apartment upstairs. Earlier, this was the site of a log school house with Mr. Overton, the teacher.

211 West Water Street – Edward Vaughn Store

Built in 1842, with several additions in decades to follow. Known now as the Risken-Lee building, it was built by Vaughn, a merchant from Illinois. It served as bakery for many years by Reinhardt and Blankenhorn, then Frank and his sister Clara Lee, and Marco and Margaret Bastian. Tom Cherrey opened a pool hall, and Reilly Plumbing used it for storage. Now owned by the Shullsburg Creamery and operated by Pat Duffey, it was fully restored in 2002 by Dana Duppler and currently houses retail shops downstairs and guest lodging with three suites upstairs.

207 West Water Street – William Estate Building

Very interesting architecture. Built in 1884 with a broad Romanesque influenced corbel table along the top, long Italianate styled windows and classic round arched lower windows. It was built during the polychromatic Victorian period. Originally built for rental property, it later housed several jewelry stores. Then a string of barbers including James Fleming, George Kuelling, Phil Burns, John Kirkpatrick, Robert Baker, and Del Tregloan. Recently, it houses American Family Insurance. Restored in the 1990's by Dana Duppler, it was purchased by Lance McNaughton for his low practice. Lance McNaughton is the current mayor of Shullsburg.

201 West Water Street – Merchants Union Bank

Union Bank, the First National Bank in the East Room with the J.T. Brewster Drug Store in the west. In 1909, the Farmers and Merchants Bank took over the east side, Built in 1884 of Milwaukee Brick in an Italianate design drawn by Dr. C.C. Gratiot. Built by the JK Williams Estate, the building initially house the merchants operating there until 1967. Then, it was Honeycomb's Gift Shop, and in the early 1970's, it was purchased and restored by Dr. Martin Thorsen for his Family Dentistry Practice. In 2001, Dr. Thorsen restored the west room for the First Banking Center and is currently restoring the second floor for future guest lodging.

210 West Water Street – Brewster House

Built in 1855 as a two-store Federal style building, the third story and ornamentation was added in 1886. It was designed by Dr. C.C. Gratiot and is characterized by an Italianate influenced iron cornice with paired brackets. Built by J. M. Brewster for a first class hotel after the railroad came to town in 1881. It accommodated two sample rooms, with hotel office and dining room on the first floor, a broad stairway to the parlor on the second floor and 30 sleeping rooms on the upper floors. The east side was later operated as a tavern by Herman Hillenbrand, John Gerlach, Oren Rogers, Ralph Farrey, Tom Bennett and Kenneth Peacock, Herb Ryan and Dean Hendrickson. Hotel operators included John Gerlach, Peter Baker, Jack Hocking and John Feesm, Henry Pahnke, John Alderson, Mrs. Francis Cherrey, Ruby Griffiths, and Dorothy Dorsey. Purchased in the 1970's by Art Stocker of the Shullsburg Creamery, it began restoration by Scott Stocker in the 1980's. Since the restoration, it has housed the Shullsburg Creamery offices and the Brewster Gift Shops on the second floor, and the Brewster Café and Shullsburg Cheese Store on the Main floor.

208 West Water Street – McNulty Brothers General Store and exchange

Originally one store and built in 1866-67 of rock, the store front and second and third stories were added in 1882. The new railroad services allowed importation of such fineries as the iron rope twist columns for the new store front. Originally, the JM Brewster & Co. General Store and Exchange, then taken over by the McNulty Brothers. The Brewster family operated it again in the 1800's. Later known as The Big Store, it was run by John Hebenstreit with dry goods and groceries. In 1936, Anton Pedersen started a cheese factory and retail store. He sold the business to Art Stocker, and his son, Scott Stocker, currently owns and operated the Shullsburg Cheese Company. Restored in the 1990's for office space above and a dining room for the Brewster Café on the Main floor.

202 West Water Street – Brewster Block

Built in 1883 of Milwaukee cream brick by contractor Peter Richards of Elk Grove for JM Brewster for commercial rental property below and lodging above. An earlier building (1871) housed the Douglas Bank started by G.W. Douglas, pharmacist, who started an exchange and collection office. The Italianate building is characterized by iron cornice and tall windows. The exterior iron stairway was shipped by rail from Chicago. One of the first businesses was Thompson Furniture followed by the First National Bank in 1909 with professional offices upstairs including Dr. W. R. Blackstone and then Dr. Jack C. Hanifan's Dentistry, Calumet & Hecia Lining Offices, and many attorneys and judges, including J. B. Simpson, M.A. O'Brien, Harold Beanisley, Lloyd Rooney, C. O. Bergener, and Clifford E. Crowley. The First National Bank was the site of a violent bank robbery on the night of June 22, 1925. The New York Times mentioned it in the next day's edition. The bank's last year of operation was 1933, and all upper offices vacated by 1953 except for Attorney C. E. Crowley, After 1993, the Main level was used for the Post Office, the Shullsburg Library, the Electric Utility, the Police Station, and several small businesses. The lower level closed in disrepair and neglect in the 1980's. Purchased by Shullsburg Creamery in 1998 to provide urgent structural repairs to the foundation, then purchased and restored in 1002 by Chuck and Jill Staab to return it to its original use of mercantile and lodging. Currently houses Water Street Place Pub & Eatery and Historic Inn.

144 West Water Street - Copeland Opera House

Built in 1882 by a Galena contractor, C. C. Denio, of Local Brick from the Townsend Brick Yard. It, too, is Italianate influenced with a bracketed projecting cornice. Joseph Copeland built this building for an opera house on the second floor to seat 600 people. The elaborate frescoed ceiling, painted by Stanley and Slaughter, and much of the stage scenery may still be intact. Two commercial spaces on the first floor initially housed McKey Men's and Women's Clothing Store on the east and the Proctor Hardware and Implement Store on the west. Other businesses included Andrews and Richmond's Grocery Store, Gallagher's Store, Metcalf's Department Store, businesses run by Elmer Cody and Minnie McWilliams on the east. The west side had hardware stores run by Henry Meloy, Al Palmer, Christopher and Morris, and Lacke Hardware; then Dolly's Tap and Butch and Dori's Tavern. It is currently being used for storage.

149 West Water Street – Weatherby Block

Built in 1894 with an addition added in 1909, for many years the John Hebenstreit family ran the Cash Grocery, with the second floor their home. Prior to that, Judge J.J. Marvin held Circuit Court on the second level. It was later occupied by AKM Electric. It was then purchased in the 1990's by Joyce Peters and now houses JP's Green Thumb. The upstairs is apartments.

145 West Water Street – Post Office Building

Built in the 1870's, this is where the Post Office first located after being moved from Gratiot's Grove. It later accommodated the Burlingham Millinery Shop, Hugh Lee's Barber Shop, then with Howard Tarnish and Harry Hodgson as barbers. It was fixed up in 2002 by owner Joyce Peters and housed Copeland House Antiques. It is currently available for a new business venture. This building has been moved several times from one side of the lot to the other. Old post cards show it in its different locations.

141 West Water Street - Frank Gerlach Saloon

Built in 1903, it too shows Italianate influence. It was rebuilt after the Gerlach Saloon fire of 1902. Businesses downstairs have included a bowling alley in the 1920's, taverns operated by Herb Ryan Sr., Mike Schmitz, and Dolly Hollander. In the 1950's, there was a dry goods store. David Ubersox had Ubersox Insurance agency, the Richard Rupnow's attorney office and the Rural Mutual Insurance office.

135 West Water Street – Pic & Gad Newspaper Building

Gerlach's saloon, date unknown, suffered a devastating fire on Christmas Eve 1902. The school's ban instruments, store in the building were destroyed. The following spring, an Easter Ball was held to raise funds for new instruments. Rebuilt and reopened by the Law family in the spring of 1905. To help prevent new fires, it was rebuilt of rock and brick. For many years, the Law family's Pic and Gad Paper was published on the second floor, and they operated the Fair Store on the first floor. Then, Mary Ann Crowley lived in the upstairs. Other businesses downstairs have included Harold Morrissey's pool hall followed by Leone Edwards, then Irvin and Inez Jan. Paquette's Variety and Drug Store, and Dorothy's by Dorothy Hodgson and Champion's Karate Club. Purchased and restored in the 1990's by Pat and Roger Duffey, they own Coughlin's Christmas Store on the first floor and an apartment on the second floor.

133 West Water Street – CG Miller Dry Goods Store

The original structure was built in 1855, with the brick veneer of red Chicago pressed brick and cornice ornamentation added in 1884. This two story Italianate building has typical iron cornices with brackets and pressed moldings. The side and rear has Milwaukee or Watertown cream brick, with the foundation of rock from the Etna Quarry. The cost of brick veneer in 1884 was \$8,000.00. It was used by C. G. Miller as

a dry goods and general merchandise business until 1903. The second floor housed Dr. Ennis' office and a hospital with Dr. Henry Hoesley. Later it housed F. J. Gundry's grocery store. Roberts and Jackson bought the store in 1902. Later Jackson became sole owner and was known for many years as Jackson's Confectionery. Purchased and modernized in the late 1990's by Dan and Sue Morrissey, it is home to Miner Alley.

134 – 142 West Water Street – Copeland Block

Built in 1886, it is a commercial block designed to house three stores, and designed to support a future second store, never added. It has a Classical influenced terra cotta cornice with rows of stylized leaves, tongue and bead, and medallion designs that extend the full length of the building. The first store front houses a grocery store run by John Jamieson, the Pete Paquette, and later J. W. Doyle. Clair Fiedler opened a restaurant in 1958, later known as Cherrey's Café, Dumplin Café, Miner Dave, and others, including Butch & Dori's. The second store housed Hayden's Drug store, then Will Kane Pharmacy, C. A. Flynn, Herman Beau, Mae and Bernard Paquette, Wand and Webster TV, Webster TV. Water Street Pharmacy, and JP's Green Thumb. The third store housed E. J. Osbourne Clothing and Men's furnishing business, and businesses by Lawrence Ganshert, Erwin Beeck and Leo Waul, a Craft Corner, and Jeanie's Beauty Shop. The building now houses Neighbor's Bar, Inky Ideas by Coughlin, and Classic Cuts. The middle business, Inky Ideas, owned by Pat and Roger Duffey, show the interior restored to near original.

130 West Water Street - Justitia Lodge of the IOOF

Built in 1886 and designed by a local architect Dr. C. C. Gratiot in the Romanesque Revival style. It is made of local brick from the Townsend Brick Yard. The building had a small conical roofed tower on the west corner of the façade and wide cornice of ornamental brick work and terra cotta that was removed in the 1930's. Tom Dodge ran a grocery and dry goods store, later Gundry's and Tregloans. The adjacent building was originally known as the Palace Saloon (132 West Water Street). John Matl operated a soda fountain shop and pool hall there. F. J. Leahy bought both buildings with Leahy's Market, now owned by Dave Popp, still operating.

128 West Water Street – J. H. Blakey Building

Construction date is not known. It is a simple vernacular commercial building of the 1800's. Originally with large store front windows with a large lintel above, it too has been modernized. Blakely originally used the building for the sale of stove, tinware and as a furniture shop. Later the first floor was used by the Skewis family as a meat market and the second floor housed Harry Chamberlin's photo studio at the turn of the century. The Pic and Gad Newspaper moved to this location in 1923. It ended publication in the later half of the 1900's. The faded lettering of the Pic and Gad is still visible. It is currently used for apartments.

120 West Water Street – Lead Miners Memorial Park

A number of buildings have occupied this lot, all destroyed by fire. At first was Marcus Clothing Store with a house in the rear. In 1949 the Burg Theater was built and managed by Wally Nordquist, Bill Lind, F. J. Leahy, and Ron Foley. Foley also ran a liquor store after the theater closed. The Burg was destroyed by fire in May 1996. The park now serves as a memorial to the nine miners who were killed in the worst mining accident of the region in the 1940's.

127 West Water Street - Charles J. Meloy Hardware Store

Built in 1886, designed by Dr. C. C. Gratiot, the brick is from the local Townsend Brick Yard. Note the upper arched windows and the old louvered shutters on the inside. Most buildings had these same style shutters on the inside of the upper stories. Only a few examples remain. Charley Meloy originally used it for his hardware and tinware manufacturing and repair business. Ed Roy ran his hardware business with Dr. E. E. Roy's dentist office upstairs. The building was bought by the Mason's and still houses the Masonic and OES Lodges. The first level was later a Western Auto Store run by Roy and Alma Wunderlin, then Donald and Dorothea Drew. Then it housed Mulcahy Flooring, and now it is home to an antenna factory.

112 West Water Street – James Hatch Building

One of Shullsburg's original first generation permanent commercial buildings. There have been alterations to the original exterior, but not so many to loose the original appearance. It is vernacular styling with Greek Revival features. Will Jones used it as a tailor shop for many years. Others in this store included Virgil Ryan's Coffee Shop, the Tot Shop, the Golden Hanger, Dolly's Duds, Lacke Plumbing and Heating, and the Video Den. The upstairs is an apartment and the downstairs is vacant, waiting for restoration.

We hope you have enjoyed our tour. Visit again often.