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**Wausaukee  
Independent  
Headlines**

Help Us Gather Data

## Wausaukee Area History Page 3

Touch a picture for an enlarged view.

Touch underlined text for expanded document.

### Saint Augustine's Role



St. Augustine Church & 1st  
Street



St. Augustine Church  
& School



Dominican Sisters

Back Row L to R:  
S. Bernadette Marie  
Kolvek, S. Mary Margaret  
Christ S. Mary Maurice  
DeGroot S. Avita Helen  
DeGroot

Front Row L to Right:  
S. Lucy Eleanor Edelbeck  
S. Eleanor Lucy Edelbeck  
S. Pascal Josephine Benish

St. Augustine Church is the only structure still standing in the photo on left looking west. The Rev Charles Hoogstoel served as the first parish priest from the beginning until August of 1889. The Rt. Rev Monsignor John Augustine Selbach constructed the church in September 12, 1889 for \$208. Eighteen priests have been assigned to the parish from 1889 until 2009. Just right of the church is the church school. Over 100 nun's from the Sisters of St. Dominic, Racine, have been assigned to the church school as teachers during its history. The church established a convent in 1906 adjacent to the old Catholic school and rebuilt a new Ranch style building completed Feb of 1961 to house its nuns. The Catholic school was in operation from 1906 thru 1970. Rev John F McLaughlin was parish priest for the longest period of time, from Sept 1966 until June 1999.

60 page document created for the 1989 Centennial: [100th Anniversary  
Celebration Of St. Augustine Parish - PDF Download](#)

You will need Adobe Reader to view the document above.

[12/14/1895](#)

[01/25/1896](#)

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[1896 Wausauke a Bustling Town](#)

Contributions to our history can be sent to:

[brian@gipphoto.com](mailto:brian@gipphoto.com)

## Presbyterian Church History



1890 View



2009 View



100th Anniversary Pamphlet

The Wausauke Presbyterian Church was organized June 14, 1889 and the first services were held in the school until a church could be built. The first church was built in 1890 and a parsonage was constructed in 1895 on land purchased by the church. The congregation outgrew the church building and a new church was constructed and dedicated in 1925. [See PDF article written about the church in our 1987 Wausauke Centennial Issue.](#)

[View and save the 100th Anniversary Directory created in 1989 for the centennial of the Wausauke Presbyterian Church.](#)

You will need Adobe Reader to view the document above.

When I was young this town was divided religiously, Catholic's couldn't date Presbyterian. If you wanted to date a girl of a different faith, the father would meet you at the door with a gun. We met the girls at the McNeely drug store, took them to a show and then returned them to the drug store. We would follow them from a distance to make sure they got home safe. Years ago after a funeral there was a lunch at the catholic church and low and behold all the Baptist, Presbyterian ministers and Catholic priest were sitting down and breaking bread. Everything seemed to change for the better and there were no more divisions by religion. *Rudy Messar*

## Before Prohibition



Main Street approximately 1900



Location of Silver Slipper, Now currently the We Store



Silver Slipper Saloon's Interior



1910 View of Main Street Looking South East



Same View in 2009 looking South East

The main street view shows Laun Brothers Store on the left and in the distance to the rear right, you can see the smoke stacks of the Bird and Wells saw mill.

Site of the Silver Slipper Saloon is currently the Wausauke Thrift Shop which is the retail outlet for Wausauke Enterprises. This building was the former 2nd home of Smith's Grocery Store for one year and was rented for \$25 month until the sale of the building to Frank Pozniak forced Smith's to move to another building and the Silver Slipper Bar was born.

### Wausauke Independent July 20, 1901

If the 3,282 barrels of beer received here were equally divided among our people, each man, woman and child would receive annually about 800 glasses of beverage. As a number of our good

people do not drink (beer) at all, while some of us just nip at it occasionally, it can be plainly seen that someone is getting more than his share.

"While there are at least a dozen people in town who do not drink beer, still we will count them and estimate the population at 1,700 inhabitant. These figures are authentic and do not lie." Wausaukee Independent News

The view of the main street as seen looking from the south east in 1910 shows the sparse roadway leading up to the Hotel Wausaukee in the far background, the silver Slipper Saloon in front of the hotel on the left and another store as yet unidentified in the immediate front left. The Northwoods Traditions building on the right has gone thru a succession of businesses over the last century. It was originally Wilgus Grocery /General Merchandise store, Halstead's Grocery & General Merchandise, then became a shoe store, then Perry's auto parts supply store, a liquor store, then a silver smith called Desert Rose and she created her own jewelry and sold tourist gifts and finally to the current owner running Northwood's Traditions offering fudge, furniture, antiques and artistic gifts.

## History of The Grocery Business



Christ & Smith Original Store on Monroe and First St.

View Looking South West



Christ & Smith Original store from South looking North West



Smith's Second Store Location on Hwy 141



Smith's third store Location on main street. Former Wausaukee Saw Shop/Sports. 2009 Image



Smith's Last Location, currently Sal's Foods, 2009 Image

Amos Christ and George B Smith owners of Christ & Smith General Merchandise. The former grocery building was located on the corner of Monroe and 1st Street which is west of Hwy 141. The original store also had one of only two gas pumps for 10 miles. The main grocery building has a large coal burning stove in the basement to heat the two buildings. The ware house on the right was used for merchandise storage on the upper floor and coal storage and refrigeration on the bottom floor. George bought out Amos and his son Norm went into business together in 1931 as Smith's. Norm took over from his father in 1936. [Peshtigo Times Article](#)

Expansion forced a move to the building location where the WE Store now resides. The photo shows the The building had been vacant for 8 years and Norm Smith was able to rent it for \$25 per month. Smith's was open at that location for one year and the building was purchased by Frank Pozniak of Crivitz. Pozniak turned it into the Silver Slipper Bar forcing Smith to find another building for the grocery.

Smith's grocery then moved across the street (North-later known as Pete's Sports Shop and Marcusen's Wausaukee Saw Shop) for a rental of \$10 per month. The building was owned by a Mrs. Sody who was an in-law of Norm's barber in the area. She was a resident of Amberg. Norm Smith called her one day and said "the roof leaks in our building and she replied my roof leaks in Amberg too so go ahead and fix it yourself."

The Sody building was later sold to Pete Grochowski who ran a sports shop and it was sold to Loren Marcusen in 1969 and he ran a sport shop and The Wausaukee Saw & Sales until moving his operation to a new building just east of the old one on Van Buren.

Norm Smith later purchased the property's where the current North

Country Reality Bldg and adjacent Radtke home are located with the intent of building a grocery store. Norm Smith was approached by Roy Gustaveson about potentially purchasing Roy's building rather than building on the new land because Roy had mental health problems (Alzheimers) and it was a better site for Smith's store. Norm and Roy met for about 2 hours and Norm agreed to pay \$35,000 moved his store in 1956. He sold the two lots he had purchased to Ernie Wise for the same \$7,000 that he paid for them.

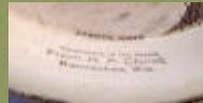
Roy Gustaveson's new International Harvester dealership replaced the Monroe Log Cabin. After WWII farmers bought many implements to replace those that had worn out during the war. However, business soon dropped off and Roy closed it down and sold the property to Norm (Boisey) Smith. Smith turned the implement dealership into a self service supermarket. The store prospered and greatly affected the grocery business at Launs, Payants, Weilgus, Ledvina and Tarltons.

The former Gustaveson store location has gone thru two renovations. There was a home originally built by George E. Bogrand Sr. located on the lot that the newest addition was added. That home had been the residence of Fred Naud up until the acquisition of the property. The building lumber was sold for \$1.00 and was demolished to make room for the second addition.

The Smith family then sold their store in 2012 to Sal & Paula Sorvello who currently run it as Sal's Foods.



Seasonal Porcelain Plate Sold at HP Christ Store



Close up of Text Printed on Plate

An artifact souvenir plate from the original HP Christ store was placed into Ebay Auction on 1/2010 from a seller in Oregon. The photos indicate that it was sold thru the HP Christ Store in Wausaukee WI for a holiday season promotion.

## Groceries in the 40's to 50's



Laun Bros



Payant



Ledvina



Smith



Wilgus



Tarlton's

At one time in the late 40's to early 50's there were six grocery/meat markets within the downtown area. Laun's, Payant's, Ledvina's, Smith's, Wilgus and Tarlton's. All were competing for the same food markets.

Laun Bros is now Gocht's Hardware, Payants is Stumbris Plumbing, Ledvina is currently going under renovation, Smiths Hwy 141 Grocery, Wilgus is Northwoods Traditions, and Tarlton's is Jerry's Venison Processing.

Charlie Payant's (Catholic Grocery Store) was about the size of today's typical convenience store. When Charlie died, his oldest son, Bud, took over the store and sold it when he retired in the late 70's to Steve Stumbris who used it for a plumbing shop. The store is still occupied by Stumbris Plumbing. Bud was stationed in Australia during WWII and brought home an Australian bride.

"Ledvina's market was brick with two big bay windows in front. George Ledvina was a portly, friendly person who had his wife, Mary, and son, Butch, help in the market. The market had a bakery of sorts. The market got its meat from Ledvina's farm south of town, across from the Laun farm."

*Hank Laun*

"Weilgus store had groceries, work clothes and work shoes. The Weilgus were Polish, attracted many of the Polish community and spoke in fluent Polish when talking to customers. Their motto was "We've got it, we'll get it, or it isn't made." Weilgus sold the business to Halstead when they moved to Pulaski."

*Hank Laun*

"The lot next to the town hall was empty until the mid 1940's when Marion Tarlton built a new brick meat market together with Nots Kadunc. Before that it was used as a Town Square. There was a large open well topped with a wooden cover that was used by the fire department. The village Christmas Tree was put up here every year and the town folks gathered while Adam Pleckinger, dressed as Santa, gave hard candy and peanuts to the kids. Then everyone sang Christmas carols--Catholics and Protestants together."

*Hank Laun*

Jerry's Venison Processing building was built by Marion Tarlton and sold to Ignatz (Ike) Kadunc, then to Phil Orlando & Rudy Messar (17 to 18 years) and finally to Gerry Wojcik in 1966. All operated a grocery and a meat market within the building. This building was demolished to allow the construction of the Dollar Store in 2012.

## Roy Gustaveson's Service



Gills Service Station



Winter Scene at Gustaveson's



Gills Service Clearing Snow



Gills Service Station with addition - 2009 Image

The Royal Crown Gas Station was owned by Roy Gustaveson and had a service manager called Salamanski who managed the station and pumped the gas. The station took on the mechanic Cletus Christ who formerly worked for the Kaiser/Frazier Dealership when it closed. The original building had an exterior stall that cars drove up on and the mechanic worked from the bottom of a pit. The station expanded by adding a two level garage and is across the street from the Hotel Wausauke, A & M Heating and Cooling is the current business operating out of the building. The north original granite building was demolished in 2012 for the new showroom. All granite parts of the original building were used as a retaining wall along side of the buildings north hill.

## Telephones and Autos



Telephone Building View 1937



Local Telephone Services in 1902



Telephone building - Decor Product Plant 2 - 2009 Image



Telephone Operator Mrs. Robson Barron



2009 CenturyLink Offices

Telephone service came to Wausauke in 1902 with the incorporation of

the Wausauke Telephone Co. by E.F. Fox and C.R. McNutt. The service was unreliable due to the problems with weather and cables and became financially unsound. It was sold to the Amberg Telephone & Telegraph Company in 1904. Old magneto phones were common with party lines sometimes sharing as many as 18 subscribers. The building was located between Hoovers Bar and Marquis Style Shop.

Much needed improvements were made in 1946 by the new owner Bob Keating, who brought his expertise from the Army Signal Corps which included dial service.

In June of 1969 The Amberg Telephone & Telegraph Co. combined with several others to form Central Communication Corp. (Cencom, Inc.) Keating served on the executive board as Vice President until his retirement in 1983. The phone service and offices were moved from the smaller building to the building that now houses Decor Products Plant 2 between the WE Store and the Hotel Wausauke.

The present office and service garage building was constructed in 1984 and operations were moved in to the new building that same year. PTI (Pacific Telecom Inc.) purchased the Cencom Company in 1983, in 1997 Century Telephone Enterprises completed the buyout of Pacific Telcom, Inc. and renamed it Centurytel. In 2009 Centurytel purchased a company called Embarq and renamed the business CenturyLink.

The first digital switch was installed in 1982 and the conversion from mechanical switching to digital switching was completed in 1986.

Services offered are Broadband and Telephone communications. Location of the building is on Hwy 180 and Cedar Street, Wausauke.

## Jehovah's Witnesses Relocation



Parking lot location adjacent to BJ's Boutique



Melchers Shoe Shop - First Jehovah Kingdom Hall



American Legion Former 2nd Jehovah Kingdom Hall



2009 Kingdom Hall

The former Melchoir Shoe Shop was owned by Pete Melchoir and was located in the parking lot area where the current hair stylist called Salon 615 is located. Pete lived in the back of the shop and it is unknown at this time when and how long his shop was open. The empty building was purchased by the Jehovah's Witnesses in 1943 and converted to their Kingdom Hall for worship.

This location was used by the Jehovah's Witnesses thru 1960 and they built their new hall on Harrison Street. This Harrison Street site is west of the former Spangler Welding/Harry Hardin Business that was destroyed in the Tornado of 1958.

This new Kingdom Hall was occupied by the Jehovah's Witnesses from 1960 thru 1986 when they built their third hall on Hwy 180 and Cedar Street. The Harrison Street building was sold to Shirley Hawley who built the Liquor Store/Restaurant Supply called the Blue Delft. When Shirley passed away, the building became vacant for a time and was then purchased by the American Legion who renovated the building and use it as their meeting hall.

The third Jehovah's Witnesses Kingdom Hall was built in 1986 and is located on the corner of Cedar Street and Hwy 180.



Essex Car Dealership



Knute Anderson Cigar Factory



Wickenberg Garage

This building was owned by Knute Anderson who also supplied slot machines to bars throughout the area. In 1905 slot machines were outlawed and all bars closed in the Village of Wausaukee and this building was used for storage of the slot machines. We are currently looking for additional information about the use of this building.

The former Wausaukee Essex Car Dealership. Hudson's Essex were sold from 1919 until 1933. After 1933 the Essex name was dropped and the car was sold as a Taraplane model under the Hudson name. The name of the owner and time this business was in operation is not known at this time.

#### [Essex Motor Cars](#)

Knute Anderson owned a cigar factory producing the brand Lavengo Cigars. He was known for walking around constantly with a cigar in his mouth. Joe the cigar maker and three other workers, including Mary Noha, hand rolled the Lavengo Cigars and they were sold all around Wisconsin and HG was one of their regular customers.

Just east of the Knute Anderson Cigar Factory and across the street was the Frozen Meat Locker storage building built by Sep Collier after WWII. It was made of cement block and was kept at freezing temperatures and contained lockers that could be rented to store frozen foods. People would keep their deer meat and butchered animals in the lockers until it was time to eat. When home freezers became available to the public in the early 1950's, the Cold Meat Locker went out of business. No pictures are available.

This building was the former home of Wickenberg's Garage and later his Kaiser/Frazer Car Dealership. His mechanic was Cletus Christ who later went to work for Gills Pure Service. [Kaiser/Frazer Motors](#)

The garage serviced many a car owned by members of the Wausaukee Club. We always stopped by for sure when we could see a Packard or a Cadillac being serviced and spent a lot of time arguing about which one was best. Kids were allowed to roam around the garage and watch the mechanics work on cars. After getting his new Kaiser dealership he sold his first car without fenders to Chet Ryan. [Hank Laun](#)

The building is located on Hwy 141, the lot north of the Hotel Wausaukee and currently the home of Decor Products Plant #2.

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