

Wisconsin's Ethnic Settlement Trail--ETHNIC WISCONSIN™

2003 Annual Report to Ozaukee County Board

Prepared by Carol Ann Rittenhouse, President/Project Leader December 31, 2003

Wisconsin's Ethnic Settlement Trail, Inc.--ETHNIC WISCONSIN™, (W.E.S.T.) remains highly challenged in the continuing struggle for funding. This year, another issue of the state *Wisconsin Heritage Traveler* was published including the *W.E.S.T. heritage tourism* project. In this four-color magazine, *W.E.S.T.* has two pages within which several locations in Ozaukee County are named; in addition, included is a full page map of the state. Heritage bookmarks listing the twelve state *heritage tourism* projects were not reprinted due to dollar constraints.

W.E.S.T. has begun to plan for a ***Green Bay Ethnic Trail*** website which will tie together the many heritage opportunities that exist along this Wisconsin 156 mile trail. The ***Green Bay Ethnic Trail (GBET)***, the first Wisconsin signed state heritage trail ever designated, and initiated by *W.E.S.T.*, traverses Ozaukee County and is planned to be published in 2004 in Ozaukee County publications. It is a most important route for the traveler, inviting enjoyment of the beauty, heritage and specialness of the area. It was made possible by many volunteers working together, and is the only state trail of its kind in Wisconsin. Eighteen State of Wisconsin historic markers now stand along this trail. Twelve ethnic historic markers were located by *W.E.S.T.*; all are located on or close to the trail.

This historic trail wended from Chicago's old Fort Dearborn. In Wisconsin, it officially begins at the southern state border. The first marker The *Green Bay Ethnic Trail* is placed in Kenosha County at 95th Street and Highway 31. The second marker is found at in the Town of Caledonia, Racine County at the *Bohemian School*, built in 1888. The third marker is located in Bayview at *Zillman Park*, and tells of area immigrants. In Milwaukee at Weissgerbers Restaurant on Old World Third Street is found the *Kilbourntown* original settlement fourth marker.

Continuing north through Ozaukee County, across the road from the *Isham Day House* in front of Mequon City Hall, the fifth *Wisconsin's German Settlers* marker is placed. The trail follows the Green Bay Road through Hamilton, Grafton, north to the Village of Saukville *Saukville Trails* marker at Triangle Park; then, north on LL into the Village of Belgium where *Wisconsin's Luxembourgers* is found. Traveling north to Highway 32 and into Cedar Grove finds *Early Dutch Settlers* at Windmill Park. North to Sheboygan Falls, a marker is located in *Settlers Park* at the river. Another marker is found adjacent to the *Meeme Poll House* in Manitowoc County. At Maribel is found the *Rock Mill* marker, then the *Denmark* marker in Denver War Memorial Park, and finally or first, depending on your direction of travel, is found the *Beginning of the Green Bay Road* marker at the river.

W.E.S.T. will again be a participant in the Wisconsin Department of Tourism booth in March of 2004 at the *Governor's Conference on Tourism*, held this year in Green Bay, close to the site of the northernmost historic marker.

In early December, **W.E.S.T.**, for the tenth year, was a sponsor and participant at the *Nonprofit Celebration of Diversity* at the Italian Community Center in Milwaukee. The celebration is organized by the Nonprofit Center of Milwaukee, and attended by many ethnic groups. It includes ethnic dancing, music, foods and gifts.

The Board of Directors of **Wisconsin's Ethnic Settlement Trail (W.E.S.T.)** was instrumental in helping to secure the Boeker Farm in Cedarburg, planned to be used as a *Wisconsin Quilt History Museum*. It worked with the Wisconsin Quilt History Project, Inc. (WQHP) until in August of 2001, the WQHP organization was able to achieve its goal to purchase the farm, and continues to fundraise for the extensive work that is needed.

The **W.E.S.T. Heritage Tourism Center** display at the National Landmark *Turner Hall* and Restaurant, across the street from the Bradley Center, Milwaukee continues to be maintained by volunteers. Current cultural local and state literature is solicited and distributed there. There is a glass cabinet for displays. Thousands of brochures have been made available to, and obtained by, visitors since the *heritage tourism* display was built in 1995. Several Ozaukee Country brochures are available there including the new Interurban Trail, the Village of Saukville *Historic Walking Trail* and the *Ethnic Ozaukee County* brochure published by **W.E.S.T.** A wall map about 5 x 7 feet in size features **W.E.S.T.--ETHNIC WISCONSIN**™ and the *Green Bay Ethnic Trail*.

At the Bayshore Mall (Glendale) **W.E.S.T.** shares an office with another non-profit international tourism organization at no charge except for telephone and some staffing costs. The office has computer access; the telephone is answered 20 hours per week, with an answering machine available for the remainder of the time.

W.E.S.T. continues to publish ethnic histories and auto cassette tour tapes (including Walloon Belgian of Door/Kewaunee Counties, Czech of Manitowoc/Kewaunee Counties, Dutch of the Lower Fox River Valley, Brown and Outagamie Counties, and Welsh of Waukesha County). In addition seven histories including Schleswig-Holstein German of Calumet/Manitowoc Counties, and Native American from east of Lake Winnebago, Calumet and Fond du Lac Counties have been developed. These ethnic products are sold throughout Wisconsin and the country. The Luxembourg auto cassette tour tape for Ozaukee/Sheboygan Counties has not yet been produced.

W.E.S.T. has produced through the years a number of festivals and exhibits in collaboration with *Cedarburg Cultural Center*, coordinated a *Smithsonian Institution* tour, and raised funds to "save" the old Payne Hotel in Saukville, and to restore Historic Turner Hall in Milwaukee. In 2004, it will be a participant in an exhibit of settlements at the Sheboygan County Historical Museum.

The **Wisconsin's Ethnic Settlement Trail, Inc--ETHNIC WISCONSIN**™ Board of Directors consists of volunteers to whom recognition of heritage and history are of great importance. Members work to honor and highlight settlement history in our Lake Michigan shoreline area, and to make the economic impact of *heritage tourism* grow in importance in our land. Ozaukee Report