



Roselle History Museum Newsletter

Official Publication of the Roselle Historical Foundation

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Spring 2021

Frank Mikes, Hometown WWII Hero 1919-2020

FRANK MIKES, a World War II veteran, POW, master carpenter, and husband of the late Loretta Siems Mikes, died on November 30 at the age of 101. He was the father of three, grandfather of five, great grandfather of eight, and great-great grandfather of one.

To celebrate his 101st birthday last summer, the American Legion Post 1084 organized a drive-by parade to honor Frank, who enjoyed it from his yard.

This modest man, who shied away from personal attention, has an amazing story.

According to his nephew, Jay Mikes, "He was twice captured during the War. The first time was in North Africa in 1942. He was held in two different prison camps in Italy before he and two others escaped and made it back to American lines in southern Italy. He was sent back into action in 1944 when the Battle of the Bulge broke out in Europe. He was wounded and captured again but was freed about a month later when the Americans overtook the Germans."

Let's go back to 1941—80 years ago—prior to Pearl Harbor. Europe was at war, and the U.S. would soon become part of it.

Frank Mikes was a 22-year-old carpenter apprentice working for Fred Wilke, an Elmhurst contractor. An alumnus of Morton High School in Cicero and Glenbard High School in Glen Ellyn, Frank was then a student at Washburne Trade School in Chicago.

In November 1941, he was inducted into the army. After basic training in South Carolina and New Jersey, he was sent overseas in April 1942 to Northern Ireland and Scotland. In Scotland he volunteered for service with the



*Loretta and
Frank Mikes*

British Commandos and accompanied that group in the initial invasion of North Africa.

It was here that he and his comrades received their first baptism of fire; they were bombed and strafed continuously day and night.

In December 1942, he was captured by the Germans during the Commando raid on Bizerte in North Africa.

The Germans sent him to an Italian prison camp (Servigliano) where he spent 10 months. Some of the 56 commandos with whom he made the raid were killed, some were wounded, and some were captured.

In an exclusive interview with a *Press Publications* reporter in 1944, Sgt. Mikes said there were 1,200 prisoners at the camp at that time, 800 of whom were

Americans. The rest were British, Canadians, Cyprians, Greeks, and Poles.

Sgt. Mikes said, "If it hadn't been for the Red Cross, the men would have starved to death." Mikes lost about 30 lbs. in camp.

The Red Cross cheered the men up and relieved the monotony with regular shipments of food, musical instruments, library books, leather for shoes, socks, sewing kits, and cigarettes.

"Food was scarce. We were given a bun and a ladle of rice for a meal . . . sanitary conditions were bad, and last winter, when there was much cold weather, prisoners sometimes remained in bed to keep warm."

(Continued on page 6)

The Board Welcomes Two New Members



John Binneboese

JOHN BINNEBOESE is one of two new members of the Roselle Historical Foundation Board of Directors. A member of the Itasca Bank & Trust Co. Team, he holds the title of Senior Vice President. His offices are at the bank's Roselle location.

Although John lives in Itasca, he has strong roots in Roselle. He remembers, as a young boy, going to the

Richter House with his Grandma Binneboese to see her friend, Mrs. Richter—well before Mrs. Richter's house was moved across the street to become part of the Museum Campus. (*The Richter house originally stood where the Village Hall stands now.*)

"Mrs. Richter's son Bernie and his wife lived across the street from my grandma on Maple St. My paternal grandparents, my dad Arthur, his brothers, Harold and Victor, and their sister, Naomi, lived at 23 E. Maple. My maternal grandparents, the Scamehorns, lived at 230 E. Maple with my mother, Beatrice, and her brother, Merlin.

"Roselle was still a quaint little community 60 years ago. My Grandfather Binneboese was the first hired Principal of Trinity Lutheran School. My Grandfather Scamehorn owned and operated the R & M Chevrolet dealership at the corner of Park and Main Sts. My father worked at Roselle State Bank before helping start Itasca State Bank in 1948. The Bank has remained independent, but became Itasca Bank & Trust Co. when a trust department was added in 1968."

As a youngster, John spent a lot of time in Roselle. He remembers that almost every Friday night his parents played pinochle at his uncle Harold's in Roselle. "My cousins and I would walk up to Shirl's or the Rexall Drug Store on Main St. Then we'd stop at the Pizza Cottage, pick up a pizza or two for everyone. Invariably, a police officer would kindly pick us up and bring us back to my uncle's house."

John believes in the value of preserving Roselle's history and says the Museum does a great job of that. He encourages the Foundation to do all it can to talk to Roselle's aging population to preserve the images; for when these images are gone, they are gone forever.

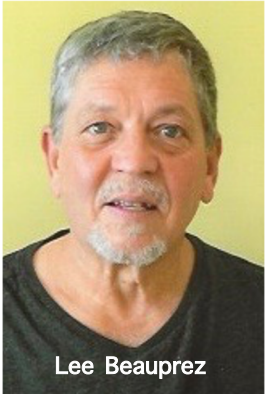
He knows the Foundation cannot live in the past. "We all need to be cognizant of the here and now, for that will become the past. In order to stay contemporary for all generations, equal effort will have to be made to preserve what is Roselle now."



LEE BEAUPREZ has always had an interest in history and collecting antiques. "My mom, Joan Beauprez, got me interested in the Museum when she became involved." That, combined with his experience in community service, led Lee to expressing an interest in becoming a member of the RHM Board of Directors.

He has volunteered at various local charities, non-profits, and chambers of commerce, including the Taste of Roselle.

Lee's professional background includes about 20 years in the printing business, both in partnership and on his own. For the past 15 years, Lee has been doing painting and remodeling work.



Lee Beauprez

He continues to help with repair and maintenance work at the Museum Campus, most notably the "re-do" of several rooms at the Sumner House in 2018, shown in the photograph.

Lee Beauprez grew up in Roselle. He's a Lake Park High School alum and has studied archaeology and anthropology at the College of DuPage.

His entire family—mom, dad, and three sisters—generously support the Museum in a myriad of ways.

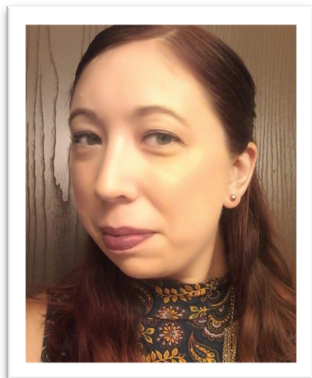
"I see the Museum in a transition with new technology and trained professionals who are hard at work to make the Museum a better experience for visitors," Lee said.

He sees the Museum's family of supporters growing, and he sees the Museum's exposure in the community expanding.

In the future, Lee says, he would like to see some additional events and activities to draw more citizens to the complex. "Virtual tours and research capabilities from your home computer" are among the activities he would like to see happen soon.



Keri Soukup
RHM's New Marketing
Manager



"When I attended the Christmas Open House last year, I felt very welcomed by the Museum staff and knew I wanted to get involved somehow," said

KERI SOUKUP when asked what it is about the Museum that interested her enough to accept the position of Marketing Manager.

Keri says she has always been interested in local history and museums; her hobbies and interests revolve around historical and genealogical activities. She added that she dreamed of working for or with a museum, so she started volunteering with the RHM. One of many tasks she has taken on is helping to proofread this newsletter.

Becoming an employee wasn't something she expected, but she's excited and grateful for the experience, and she's brimming with ideas for promoting the Museum.

Keri was hired as a part-time, contracted professional whose responsibilities include coordinating the marketing and public relations activities of the Museum, effectively promoting it to the community. "I update and maintain the Museum's website and Facebook page to keep residents informed of the goings on in and around the Museum." She also maintains the contributions records.

"The Museum was physically closed for almost half of the year, but I think that makes it even more important for the Museum to be able to have a presence in the community regardless." Currently, she is featuring many of the digital archive's photos on the website and on Facebook. These are treasured photographs of old buildings, businesses, families, and activities from yesteryear in Roselle that were digitized in a joint effort with the Roselle Public Library. It's a "great way for the community to stay engaged with the Museum and see the history despite the Museum not being physically open." Visit the website: www.rosellehistory.org.

Looking to the future, Keri thinks "we are at an interesting point right now. . . having hired an Assistant Collections Manager, we can get to work formally cataloging a ton of the Museum's collection of artifacts which will help to preserve the history of Roselle even further for generations to come."

Keri Soukup, who hails from Homer Glen, holds a BA from Illinois State University, and an MA in Organizational Leadership from Lewis University. A relatively new Roselle resident, she looks forward to becoming more involved in the community. At home, she's a proud cat mom to Ivy.



The Flags for Roselle program has an official logo, thanks to Angelique ("Angel") Munoz of Medinah, a junior at Lake Park High School, who won a \$500 scholarship in a recent logo design contest conducted by the FFR. A huge "Thank You" to the following sponsors: 8000 Miles, Briscoe Signs, Clyde's Donuts, Wickstrom Chevrolet, Law Office of Kory Atkinson, and The Smith Team-GMC Realty.

How does a logo come about? Much like creating a story, a novel, or even a building, there must be a plan that reflects a beginning, a middle, and an end. Angel had a plan (concepts) for the design she created.

It started with Concept A, a close-up of a rose, the symbol of Roselle (red) that resembled a flag from afar. From Concept B through E, she sharpened the design and added the American Eagle, symbol of the United States (blue). She continued to sharpen and reshape the edges and brought more detail into the eagle's eye, beak, and cheek. Finally, she added the flagpole.

And there you have it: A logo that clearly depicts the mission of the Flags for Roselle program, "to encourage patriotism and community spirit."

Angel Munoz has always enjoyed the process of creating artwork, so when she was encouraged by her school friends to enter FFR's logo contest, which was open to all Lake Park students, she did.



When asked about her interests, Angel said, "I think the ones that stuck always revolved around creativity and attention to detail. The one interest that I truly believe will stick around is graphic design. The process of analyzing and determining the most significant aspects of a topic is what I find most satisfying." She "leans toward" a future in "freelance work as a graphic designer or even entrepreneurship based on my artwork."

Angel credits her family for encouraging her in the arts—her mom pushing her to try new things, her dad teaching her to be independent, and her brother staying by her side, "taking the first steps so I wouldn't have to do it in the dark." Her dad encouraged her to ask herself at the end of each day to think about the things she accomplished and to ask herself, "Did you waste a day?"

A History of Roselle United Methodist Church

by Donna Benson
Part 1 of 2

The story of the Roselle Methodist Church is not just the story of a congregation of believers—it is the story of how America and its people grew and changed over the course of 160 years.

In 1833 the three Meacham brothers moved from Rutland, Vermont, buying 1200 acres in what is now called Medinah. Between 1833 and 1840, 12 to 15 families of English descent moved to the area. The wives and mothers of these families discovered they were living on the edge of a frontier—where safety and comfort were uncertain. They came for a better life, more opportunity. Hard work was a given, but hope for a better future was a driving force. They knew their children needed a church and a school.

During the 1840s, they gathered on Sundays in individual homes to worship following the teachings of John Wesley and the Methodists. By 1851 they were able to hire a theological student from a recently founded seminary in Arlington Heights—Rev. J.C. Stoughton. They grew in number and began holding services and Sunday School in the Meacham School.

William Battin, Superintendent of the Sunday School (still being held in the Meacham School), had been talking “new church building” for some time, but the congregation thought they couldn’t afford one. At the close of Sunday School one morning, he asked the children to stay in their seats. When the parents arrived, there was no place for them to sit, so the move toward the construction of a church building was initiated.

The exact date for the construction of the building is in doubt. The first recorded public function there, however, is known to be a farewell for the boys leaving for the Civil War.

The first wedding performed there was that of Elizabeth Allen and John Pierce on December 28, 1862. (See photo on next page.)



**1946: Roselle United Methodist Church
Corner of Park St. and Pine Ave.**

The first location of the church was on the north side of Irving Park Road, a quarter of a mile west of Route 53.

In September 1902, it was moved from this location by a crew of men using long timbers under the flooring. The building was moved to Meacham (now Medinah) a little east of the intersection of Medinah Road and Irving Park. It was named the Meacham Methodist Episcopal Church.

In those early days the church was served by circuit riders headquartered in Arlington Heights. They were hosted in parish homes, did their calling “on foot,” and usually preached Sunday morning and

evening. The community’s social life revolved around the church.

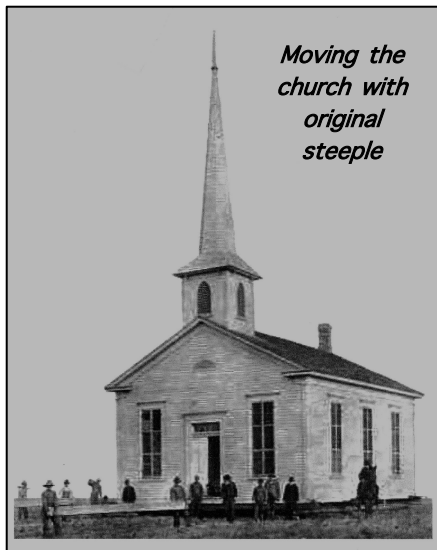
Gradually the community changed. Many older members sold their farms and retired to Elgin or larger city centers. The new settlers were largely of German descent and remained loyal to the Lutheran and Evangelical churches. The Methodist membership grew smaller and smaller. The village of Meacham remained rural.

By 1921 the population had shifted. Roselle was growing at a surprising rate. It had a flax or linen mill, a brick yard, the busiest railroad stop on what was then the Milwaukee Road, the Kee and Chappell state-of-the-art dairy, the Hattendorf and Bagge General Store, a grist mill, lumber yard, hardware and tin shop, a blacksmith, a grain elevator, a farm equipment dealer, and barber shop.

Roselle also had a reputation. It was known as “Raise Hell.” This was probably due to the fact that Roselle had six or seven flourishing taverns and a significant population of single men.

The educational and religious needs of families of German descent were well met by the Lutheran school and church. All church services and some school classes were taught in German. About this time the elders of the Lutheran church discussed buying a Bible written in English; however, it was considered an unnecessary expense.

For those of English descent (the Methodists), it was “slim pickin’s.” The public school was a one-room barn-like structure with a notoriously drafty outhouse. Sunday School classes for children and adults were held in the school house then located at the *northwest* corner of Park and Pine (later Salk Pioneer School). It was best to keep your coat on during the winter months.



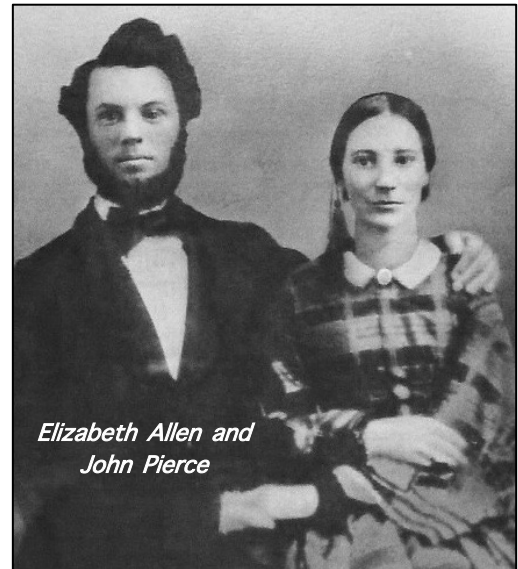
Moving the church with original steeple

By October 1921, 20 local residents scraped together \$100 and bought the Meacham Methodist Episcopal Church. The Walter Turner family donated the land on the *northeast* corner of Park and Pine across the street from the public school. The tall graceful steeple, which

was 60 years old at the time, became unstable during the move to the Park and Pine location. It was redesigned to be shorter, safer. A new entryway and a full basement were added doubling the square footage of the structure and allowing plenty of room for Sunday School classes. The church was rededicated to the service of the Lord in January 1922, and the name changed to Roselle Methodist Episcopal Church. (See photo on previous page.)

During the 1920s and 1930s, the Women’s Aid Society became the energetic heart of the church. They sang in the choir, played piano, taught Sunday School, and provided numerous pot luck dinners. With no functioning kitchen, the church literally did not have a pot. Members such as the Turners, Crandalls, Lakes, Sumners, Scamehorns, Pierces, and Roloffs brought their own plates and silverware for these frequent events.

By 1948, more changes were necessary for the growing congregation. The basement was enlarged to accommodate the Sunday School classes, and a fully-functioning kitchen and an apartment for the minister were built. From that time on, full-time pastors replaced the student pastors who had been serving the church.



Elizabeth Allen and John Pierce



The Meacham School

After World War II and into the 1950s, the Sunday School population grew astronomically. Classes overflowed the basement and began creeping upstairs to the sanctuary. You were lucky if your class wasn’t in the old cloakroom or the furnace room.

Early in 1953 the Official Board appointed a committee to consider plans for expansion. On March 16, 1954, the congregation voted 78 to 4 to construct a new building. The Walter Turner family donated a new site at Rush and Woodworth, and fund raising began immediately.

The original building, which still stands at the northeast corner of Park and Pine, is now the Canaan Apostolic United Pentecostal Church.

Thanks to Donna Benson for compiling this wonderful two-part history of the Roselle United Methodist Church. Part 2 of this story of faith, community, and progress will be published in the next issue of the RHMNewsletter, which will be mailed on or about May 10.



The only way prisoners had of learning of the outside world was through the Italian newspapers. Some of the prisoners could read Italian; they kept their comrades informed about the Italian version of the War. The press admitted the fall of Tunis and Sicily, but otherwise the reports were distorted, Mikes said.

He escaped from the prison camp on September 14, 1943, and trekked over mountain trails for 36 days. He made his way through the battle lines in central Italy and finally, on October 20, made contact with the British 8th Army.

Sgt. Mikes' parents were informed January 2, 1943, that their son was a prisoner. The prisoners were allowed to write one letter and one card home each week. Mikes received 14 letters from home during the time he was in prison—all came in June; he received none before and none after that time. He didn't receive any of the parcels that had been sent to him.



Loretta Mikes

First from the Roselle area to return home safely after effecting an escape from a prison camp, Sgt. Mikes, now 24 years old, would climax his 20-day furlough on New Year's Day by marrying the Roselle girl to whom he had been engaged for two years. (Frank carried this photograph of Loretta in his wallet throughout the War years until his death in 2020.)

Frank Mikes and Loretta Siems (the daughter of Henry and Emma Siems) were married on January 1, 1944, at Trinity Lutheran Church, Roselle, officiated by Rev. Walter Mehlberg, pastor. See photograph.

The honeymoon was short-lived. On Tuesday, January 4, Sgt. Frank Mikes reported for reassignment to active duty at Fort Sheridan. After a second course of training with the infantry, he was again sent overseas—to France—with the 42nd Rainbow Division, which was attached to General Patch's 7th Army. He was wounded in action for the second time, but returned to duty. On January 24, he was once again taken prisoner by the Germans. He was freed from this prison by the advancing United States 3rd Army.

Finally, it was a happy homecoming for Sgt. Frank Mikes when he could see his wife Loretta, meet their 7-month-old baby daughter, Nancy Jean, and see his parents, John and Mary Mikes, once again.

Frank and Loretta raised three children, Nancy Benware, Connie Lokanc, and Tom Mikes. Frank's wife, Loretta, passed away on Easter Sunday, 2019, at age 96.



Frank Mikes was devoted to his family, his church, and his community. He was a Roselle Village Trustee from 1949-1955, and was a founding member of the American Legion Post 1084. He and his brother, Jim, owners of the Mikes Brothers Construction and Supply Company, built many of the prominent buildings in Roselle.

OUR THANKS to Frank Mikes' daughter, Connie Lokanc, for her help with this important story.

Also, thanks to Jay Mikes, Frank's nephew, who provided the introduction, the treasured photographs, and the newspaper clippings, which appeared in the *Press Publications* and the *Roselle Register* during the WWII years, some of which are excerpted here. ~~~~~

The 2021 Flags for Roselle program is a GO! Memorial Day will



be the first of five holidays that flags will be flying in front yards and at businesses throughout Roselle. The other holidays are Flag Day, Independence Day, Patriot Day, and Veterans Day.

Residents and business owners may subscribe for the 2021 program today by sending a check for \$50 to Flags for Roselle, P.O. Box 72001, Roselle, IL 60172. Flags for Roselle is a 501(c)(3) corporation. Your contribution may be fully tax deductible. Questions? Send an email to flagsforroselle@gmail.com. Also visit the website: www.flagsforroselle.weebly.com. Deadline: May 1.

Congratulations to Katie Smith, the new President of the FFR Board of Directors.



Lake Park students installed over 50 flags at the school's West Campus on Veterans Day.



Every little while, we receive letters from readers sharing some of their precious memories of growing up in Roselle. Here are a couple from

NANCY BOKELMANN STETTER:

"I remember when there were three carnivals a year in Roselle. First at the northeast corner of Irving Park and Park, and later at the American Legion property.



"I also remember that Salk Pioneer School was named for Dr. Jonas Salk, inventor of the Salk polio vaccine. That school building, on the northwest corner of Pine Ave. and Park St., is now the North DuPage Special Education Cooperative (NDSEC)."



JOANNE JOHNSON remembers the old Roselle Library:

"I remember it when it was at 127 Main St. (it moved there the year I was born).

I loved going there as a child and always enjoyed the smell of the books as well as reading them. Books and libraries don't have that smell anymore. It was cozy to sit at a table and read. Now libraries are large affairs and offer so much more. Still, I remember fondly the simplicity of the smaller space."

Are these memories stirring up some of your own?

How about Shirl's Drive-In!

Watch for a collection of memories of Shirl's Drive-In in the next issue of the newsletter. A number of readers have shared some wonderful stories about the iconic "place to go" that stood for 42 years on Prospect and Main, where MyEyeDr/Langner Eye Care is today.



To share your stories and/or photos, simply send an email to editor@rosellehistory.org. Or you may call the Museum office at 630-351-5300. To send something in the mail: Roselle History Museum, 39 E. Elm St., Roselle, IL 60172, marked to the Newsletter Editor's attention.



What Else is New!

Museum Meetings are being held on

Zoom as we wait out the COVID-19 restrictions. The Museum Campus will remain closed until we get the "All Clear."

Historical Evening, typically held in Spring, has been rescheduled for October. Stay tuned. More coming.

A Centennial Committee has been established by

Wayne Domke to plan Museum activities for 2022, when the Village of Roselle will celebrate its 100th year.

Thank You Notes



to the *Garden Club* for decorating the buildings for Christmas. In addition, the group committed to include the Museum Campus on its list of properties that they maintain every year. GC members will also use the area to facilitate wildlife and pollinators—all no cost to the Museum.

to *Abigail Atwood* for spending 100 hours to organize and catalog the Museum's collection of artifacts.

to *Hank Kvintus* for arranging for the beautiful new sign in front of the Museum. Staff and volunteers look forward to the day when we can welcome you once again in person.



to *Briscoe Signs* for the making the beautiful new sign in front of the Museum.

to *Mark Boroughf* of Printing Plus, who continues to make us look good by providing the finest in printing.

Coming up! PGA's Presidents Cup

coming to Medinah CC in 2026. Thought you might want to mark your calendar.



ROSELLE HISTORY MUSEUM
39 E ELM ST
ROSELLE IL 60172



“That is one good thing about this world—there are always sure to be more springs.”
(L.M. Montgomery, Anne of Avonlea)

Mission Statement

To maintain and enhance a historically accurate museum with primary focus on Roselle and surrounding areas

To collect local facts and artifacts of today that will be our village history and pride tomorrow

To provide a dynamic historical and educational resource for our residents and visitors

Board of Directors & Staff

President: Ray Hitzemann

VP/Treas: Glenn Spachman

Secretary: Tom Piorkowski

Members: Joan Beauprez,
Lee Beauprez, John Binneboese,
Wayne Domke, Tim Grasso,
Hank Kvintus, Walter Lotz

Museum Mgr: Leslie Drewitz

Marketing Mgr: Keri Soukup

General Meetings

Second Saturday of the Month
10 a.m. Meetings on Zoom for now

Museum Hours

CLOSED temporarily
due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Newsletter Deadlines

Feb 1 – May 1 – Aug 1 – Nov 1

Editor: Kay Cahill
editor@rosellehistory.org

CONTRIBUTION FORM

Mail to: Roselle History Museum, 39 E. Elm St., Roselle, IL 60172

Name _____

Phone _____

Address _____

Email _____

City/State/Zip _____

Circle one: \$30 \$50* \$100 \$250 Other \$ _____

_____ *My contribution is at least \$50. Please send me a free copy of the *Remembering Roselle* history book.

I am interested in helping in one of the areas of the Foundation's work. Circle one:

Computer/Clerical * Docent * Exhibits * Parade Float * Research * Single Event * Buildings/Grounds