

The *Homes*
of the Historic Housewives



- 1 24 Olcott Street
- 2 180 East Division Street
- 3 5 South Park Avenue
- 4 272 East Division Street
- 5 375 East Division Street
- 6 303 Gillett Street
- 7 225 Sheboygan Street
- 8 27 South Park Avenue
- 9 197 Sheboygan Street



The
Historic Housewives
of Fond du Lac



- 1 Louise Hodges Pinther
- 2 Adelaide Wild
- 3 Anna Kraut
- 4 Emma Gerhard
- 5 Mary Meekin Hamilton
- 5 Kate Meekin Hamilton
- 5 Kate Hamilton Pier
- 6 Annie E. Hurd Cole
- 7 Nancy Tallmadge
- 8 Maria Galloway
- 8 Florence (Fawn) Knapp
- 9 Helen Simmons

HISTORIC HOUSEWIVES of fond du lac



Louise Hodges Pinther

24 Olcott Street

Louise was born in England in 1858 and married Henry Otto Pinther, a German immigrant, and registered with the Wright's business directory of 1904-1905 as a commercial traveler or salesman.

Louise raised two sons, Harold Otto Paul Pinther and Raynold Albertus Pinther, and two stepchildren, George Lyon Pinther and Laura Pinther. She passed away in 1957.



Adelaide Wild

180 East Division Street

Born Adelaide Jewell in 1857, she married Benjamin Wild, Jr, in 1880, who ran the top dry goods store in Fond du Lac. It was also recorded that the Wild family at one point in time owned and managed the largest bakery in Wisconsin. Benjamin was considered an influential and successful businessman who was often consulted for help and advice on social, business, and educational decisions affecting the local area. Adelaide was the daughter of a clergyman (Rev. F.D. Jewell D.D. from Missouri) and was a native of Albany, New York.



The couple built their home in 1875 and lived there with their two daughters, Mabel and Edith. Mabel resided in the house for a short time before it became the home of the Women's Club. Adelaide passed away in 1937.

Anna Kraut

15 South Park Avenue

Anna Brubach married Hans Kraut in 1907; they moved to Fond du Lac in 1924 where Hans became the President and General Manager of Giddings and Lewis from 1932-1942. The family held a respected position in the community, as under his leadership, the company grew from a small machine tool manufacturer to an international leader in industrial technology. Anna's children were highly educated: Ralph was a mechanical engineer, daughter Mona traveled to Chicago to study commercial and dramatic arts, and daughter Ruth attended classes in town at Grafton Hall. While Hans owned patents, likely linked to his business at Giddings & Lewis, a patent for a dishwashing device is registered to Anna Kraut and recorded from Chicago, Illinois in 1915.



Emma Gerhard

272 East Division Street

The Gerhard House was the home of Emma Gerhard from 1927-1942. Born in 1865, Emma was the granddaughter of the founder of the Gerhard Bakery. She grew up independent and strong-willed, insisting her heritage was not German—she was Prussian. Emma did not like the wives of her brother, Jacob—the first was considered a “low German” and Catholic, and the second was a divorced Catholic. Although Emma never married and lived at home until her father's death, she had an active social life, attending and hosting many local events. Emma was a member of

the First Presbyterian Church and also belonged to the Academy Club, and even attended the presidential inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt. Emma was considered quite stylish, becoming well-known for her beautiful hats and umbrellas. She did needlepoint and used her artistic talents to paint florals on china dinnerware. After the death of her father, Emma lived with her sister Lena and her aunt, Caroline.



Emma and Lena intended to live on the payments from farm mortgages they had invested in, but the mortgages were of little value during the Great Depression and after a drought; their primary income was from the rental income of the saddle

shop and clothing store next to the bakery, which was operated by her brother. Emma was the last living member of her immediate family. In the last years of her life, she lived in a Waupun nursing home, before passing away in 1958 at the age of 92. Emma is buried in Rienzi Cemetery.

Kate Meekin Hamilton

375 East Division Street

Less is known about Kate than her sister, Mary. Records show she married Henry Hamilton around 1843. They were married in a joint ceremony—the ceremony had been set for Katie and Henry— but after a courtship of one day, Mary and John, Henry's brother, were also wed. Both brothers and their families moved together in Fond du Lac in 1851 with records showing they each built houses and lived on Division Street.

The Hamilton House at 375 East Division Street was recorded as having been built by a Hamilton brother in approximately 1852 on the lot that is now 310 East Division Street. Another brother lived at the southeast corner of the same street for an unspecified amount of time. The actual name of which Hamilton lived there is unknown, however, research states that one of the brothers was Henry. Henry and John Hamilton were brothers who married sisters Mary and Kate Meekin before settling in the Fond du Lac area.



Mary Meekin Hamilton

Born Mary Meekin, she and her husband John were early settlers to the area. After moving to the area, they lived in a home on Division Street. Some years later, they moved to an area near the hospital. The Hamiltons raised three children: Henry, Kate, and George. Along with many of the prominent women in Fond du Lac, Mary spent much of her time donating her time and attention to the needs of the community through charitable causes such as *The Home of the Friendless*. She was a founding member and purchased a lifetime membership to the *Relief Society* for \$25. Mary and the other members purchased a residence and raised funds to provide a home for needy children, the elderly, the helpless, and anyone in need of a place to live after the great fires of Wisconsin and Michigan in 1871. The home continued on for many years afterwards and funds were primarily raised through donations of food and furnishings, but also through the sale of *The Fountain City Cookbook*, which proved to be such a success that two editions were printed, with copies sent to nearly every state.

The Sheboygan and Division Street homes were considered residences for the more prominent members of Fond du Lac society. The houses on these streets were considered the larger, more stylish homes in the early stages of the town.

Kate Hamilton Pier

Born in 1845 to Mary (Meekin) and John Hamilton, Kate attended the public schools, taught in the Empire school for three years (receiving board and five dollars a month as pay), and later taught in the Fond du Lac school. In 1866, she married Colonel Colwert Kendall-Pier, who had served under the leadership of General Ulysses S. Grant in the Civil War.

After her mother was widowed, Mary moved in with the Pier family, and Kate assumed the responsibility of caring for her parents' estate and assets. It had been noted that she was the apple of her father's eye and had accompanied him often to his business appointments while growing up; although she had no formal business training, she had become remarkably knowledgeable from observing his work.

As her business talents grew, the community increasingly sought her out for advice as a real estate and probate expert. Kate met often with people in her father's old office at First and Main Street and later in her husband's bank and law offices. Her own daughter (also named Kate) hoped to enter law school at Wisconsin State University. Kate and Colwert worried about their daughter's supervision as she was venturing into a field run primarily by men and wanted her to benefit from Kate's experience. For those reasons, Kate decided to personally accompany her daughter to Madison, and the pair began law school together in 1886. It was said, "Their manners were so perfect and their aims so high and womanly, that they met with general kindness and pronounced courtesy....in departing from the beaten path of "woman's sphere", she conquered many obstacles...feeling that the profession of law needs women in its ranks almost, if not quite as much as did the medical, Mrs. Pier is an enthusiast in her work."**

Kate and each of her daughters—Kate, Caroline, and Harriet—would graduate from law school and become counted among the first eight women lawyers in Wisconsin. Upon graduation, each girl took Kate's maiden name (Hamilton) and became well-known and respected in their professions. Kate is well-remembered as a pioneer in many areas: In 1893, she was appointed as Milwaukee court commissioner—the

first woman in the United States to be granted a judicial appointment—and she was the first woman to vote in the county, even before the suffrage act was passed. She died in 1925 at her home in Fond du Lac.

**(*A Women of the Century: Fourteen Hundred-seventy Biographical Sketches* by Frances Elizabeth Willard {1893})

Annie E. Hurd Cole

303 Gillett Street

Annie attended Fond du Lac public schools, graduating in 1868 at age 17; she was a teacher for three years, before she married William E. Cole in 1874. As a descendant of Revolutionary War Colonel Asa Whitcomb, she became a member and State Treasurer of the Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as the secretary of the WI Federation of Women's Clubs. She was a respected businesswoman, shown by her capacity as the President of the Cole Saving Bank.

Annie had two sons, William and Hubert; her family was widely esteemed in the community, due in part to her husband's instrumental part in bringing the Soo Line Railroad to Fond du Lac which was viewed as a major economic benefit to the city. The Coles resided at 303 Gillett Street from 1907-1932. It was remarked that "Mrs. Cole was a lady of broad culture and refinement, whose tact and graciousness well fit her for positions of leadership to which she has been called in social and club circles." (*History of Fond du Lac County*, edited by Maurice McKenna)



Nancy Tallmadge

225 Sheboygan Street

Born Nancy Eastman in 1825, she was a native of New York before moving with her family to Granville Township (now Brown Deer, Wisconsin) in 1835. and by the age of 18 she had married Montgomery Tallmadge.

The Tallmadge family was a well-known family; in 1846 there were 17 young men with the family name in the area, and Montgomery could trace his family heritage to William Floyd, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a member of George Washington's family. After their marriage in 1844 they farmed their original farmstead before selling and moving to another farm in 1862. By 1876, the Fond du Lac Business Directory listed Nancy as the owner of 100 acres of farm land, and the same year she purchased the Tallmadge House from businessman Cornelius Alling. The house is considered one of the early "stylish" homes in the area. They had nine children and continued to farm the land they owned until their retirement. Nancy died in 1902 at the age of 82.



Maria Galloway

27 South Park Avenue

Born Maria Henriette Adams, she married Edwin H. Galloway in 1850. Starting with nothing, she saved mending and egg money to buy her husband a secretary, which is on display at the Galloway House Village. Together, they had two sons and three daughters. After the death of Edwin, she moved to this residence, and later passed it on to her daughter, Florence. She was a major partner and shareholder in the Savings Bank of Fond du Lac. She served as President and her son-in-law Gaines Knapp was Vice-President of her brother-in-law Charles' bank, First Fond du Lac National Bank. Records from 1877 list Maria as owning 250 of 500 shares to the bank; the other shares were owned by Edward Pier (240) and Colwert Pier (10).

Maria had five children, one who died as an infant. Her family was known for "unsurpassed kindness and generous aid....their names and deeds are household words among the poor." When she was in her 70's the Gold Rush was on in Alaska, so she took a relative to see the excitement. She died in her home in 1928.

Florence (Fawn) Knapp

27 South Park Avenue

Daughter to Maria and Edwin H. Galloway, Fawn married Gaines Knapp under the "bluebirds of happiness" in the Galloway House Parlor on Old Pioneer Road in 1879 after attending Northwestern University in Chicago.

Florence and Edwin lived in the first home fully equipped with electricity in the city (the former home of her widowed mother, Maria). In decorating the home, Fawn used many items which were reflections of her personal life. The windows were made of wine glasses used at her wedding and an "oriental" room with grass paper walls was inspired by memories of their Far East honeymoon trip. The couple had one daughter, Anah.

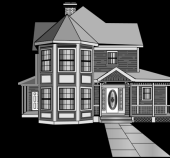


Helen Simmons

197 Sheboygan Street

Milton and Helen Simmons resided on Sheboygan Street from 1887 to 1932. Helen was born in 1850 in Greenbush, WI and was the daughter of Julia Wade Robinson. Her grandfather was Sylvanus Wade, who was an early settler to the Greenbush area, building and running the Wade House where stagecoaches and travelers often stayed. She married Milton who was a cashier at the Wells Banking House and later the Commercial National Bank, but the two never had children. Helen was a faithful member of Plymouth Congregational Church. She wrote *A Little Book of Thoughts in Verse* (the date of publication is unknown, but it is assumed she wrote it later in life) which held notes and poems of places she loved, including Greenbush, Banff, Manitou and DeNeveu Wood.

HISTORIC HOUSEWIVES of *fond du lac*



TOUR

