



This is a

Menasha History

Change Over Time

RESOURCE

Teacher Guide

Getting Around Menasha

Getting Around Menasha: Steamboats

Image 1: The Flying Merkel.

This brand of motorcycles was produced from 1902-1917. It was known as a racing cycle. For additional information see:

<http://www.theflyingmerkel.com/themerkel.htm>

Image ID# mpl_00701

Image 2: Convertible for two passengers.

This small convertible has been identified as a 1911 Brush runabout, photographed in 1916. The Brush was produced from 1907 through 1913. Both chassis and axles were made of wood. Note the steering wheel is on the right.

For the history of the Brush runabout, see this Smithsonian site:

http://americanhistory.si.edu/ONTHEMOVE/collection/object_1320.html

Image ID# mplss6475

Image 3: The John Strange family in car with chauffeur .

This car has been identified as a 1911 Oldsmobile 60.

Image ID# mplss6576

Image 4: “Our home and 1911 Cadillac” Frank. E. Grove, Menasha.

The Grove family lived at 418 Broad St. He ran a clothing store at 220 Main Street. Both buildings are still standing in 2007.

Image ID# 1911Cadillac

Image 5: Bicycle road race; July 6, 1895, Menasha Saturday Evening Press.

The term “wheelmen” dates from the days when bicycles had one high wheel.

See an 1882 engraving of high wheel cycles:

<https://www.georgeglazer.com/prints/sporting/indiv/harpwheelmen.html>

“Safety bicycles” with the two evenly sized wheels used today, were introduced in 1885.

The League of American Wheelmen was founded in 1880. It served as a lobbying group for better roads, as well as a social club, organizing races and excursions.

Image ID#bicyclerace1895_7_6

Getting Around Menasha: Steamboats

Image 1: B. F. Carter going through the Menasha lock.

Steamboat excursions were popular summer events. An organization would hire the boat, and sometimes arrange for a band to be aboard. Food might be family picnic baskets or catered. The trip might go to High Cliff, Fond du Lac, or Oshkosh. This could be a fund-raiser for the group, or a reward, like modern students earning a field trip to Bay Beach. The B. F. Carter was launched in the spring of 1876 and operated until 1910.

Image ID#mpl_bfcarterexcursionboat

Image 2: Steamboat leaving Menasha dock.

“The Fox” was built in 1892 and operated through 1900.

Image ID#mplss6069

Image 3: The Paul L. unloading lumber at Menasha Wooden Ware.

Photo dated June 6, 1915. The Public Library is visible in the background.

Image ID#paullunloading

Image 4: Excursion boats.

The Mystic in the foreground.

Image ID#dover10

Image 5: Boy Scout excursion, July 11, 1911

Scouts aboard "The Adonis" July 11, 1911

Image 6: Post Card of Menasha Lock, 1907.

Image 6.5: Menasha Lock, 2006.

Note that the crank to close the gates is the same in image 1, image 6, and image 6.5

Image ID#: 1907_menashalockpostcard_p90; Image ID#: mmlock

Image 7: K.M. Hutchinson at the Menasha dock, 1887.

The dock at this time is at the foot of Racine Street. The K. M. Hutchinson is a sternwheeler, named for its owner, an Oshkosh hardware dealer. It was built in the spring of 1886 and operated until August of 1895.

Note wooden buildings on the water side of Main Street. The Fox River House and the store on the corner of Main and Racine are visible landmarks.

Image ID#: hutchinsonatdock1887

Image 8: Schedule of steamboats, August 23, 1855, Menasha Advocate.

Image ID#: steamboats1855_08

Image 9: Schedule of steamboats, May 17, 1856, Menasha Advocate.

Gill's Landing was on the Wolf River three miles east of Weyauwega. Until railroads reached Stevens Point in 1871, the easiest way to travel there from eastern Wisconsin was to take a steamboat to Gills Landing, then a stagecoach the rest of the way.

Image ID#: Steamboats_1856_05

Getting Around Menasha: Railroads

Image 1: Train at Menasha Depot.

Milwaukee & Northwestern Railway passenger train pulled by engine #18.

Image ID#: menashadepottrain

Image 2: Menasha Wooden Ware Boxcar.

Menasha Wooden Ware Company had its own boxcars. The men pictured were part of the crew which maintained the cars in 1905.

Image ID#:menashawoodenwaretrai

Image 3: Wisconsin Central schedule, June 25, 1898, Menasha Breeze.

Image ID#: RRtimes_1898_06_25

Image 4: Wisconsin Central Advertisement, June 1, 1895, Menasha Press.

Image ID#:WCAd_1895_06_01

Getting Around Menasha: Streetcars

Image 1: Horse-drawn streetcar, 1886.

Horse-drawn streetcars began operation in July 1886. At first they went from downtown Neenah to downtown Menasha, turning around at the square as pictured here. In late 1893, the tracks were extended the rest of the way up Main Street.

Image ID#: 87-5324_15_1887detail

Image 2: Interurban streetcar "Menasha."

Image 2.5: Valley Transit bus in Menasha, 2007.

Electric streetcars began operation in 1898. While the horse drawn cars connected Neenah and Menasha, the electric cars were "interurban," linking to Appleton. As the network of lines grew, you could travel from Fond du Lac or Berlin to Oshkosh, change for Neenah, change for Appleton, and so on to

Kaukauna, Wrightstown and Green Bay. The book Badger Traction has maps and photos of these and other connecting lines.

Valley Transit still offers bus connections to Oshkosh and Kaukauna. Buses allow route changes to be made easily.

Image ID#: mplss1573

Image ID#: mmbus200

Image 3: Operations resume after winter break, April 2, 1887, Menasha Press.

Perhaps the snow covered the tracks too deeply for horse-drawn service through the winter months.

Image ID#: Horsecar_1887_04_09

Image 4: Big travel on the Interurban, July 11, 1898, Menasha Breeze.

The first weekend of interurban service. The car named "Menasha" is pictured as item one of this section.

Image ID#: Streetcar_success_1898_07

Image 5: To discontinue street car service, Oct. 5, 1925, Menasha Record.

Buses were alternating with interurban cars on some routes already, when the need to replace a bridge and therefore the tracks, moved the transit company to abandon the streetcars.

Image ID#: Streetcarsend1925_10_05

Getting Around Menasha: Airplanes

The first airports were privately owned. This one was named for George Whiting, a Menasha factory owner who was a major investor. It was located on leased land on the Wittman farm on Menasha Road, and had two 1600 foot runways. The airport opened for use in March 1928. The first airmail delivery to this area landed there on December 15, 1928. Sometimes in winter planes could not land on the gravel runways, so use for airmail was discontinued. Without that contract, the operation lost money and closed in 1930.

Image 1: Aerial view of Whiting airport, on Appleton Road.

Whiting airport, Appleton Road.

Image ID#: dover46

Image 2: Barn and plane at Whiting airport.

Whiting airport with parked biplanes.

Image ID#: dover48

Image 3: The hangar is now part of the Kitz and Pfeil Hardware Store, 2006.

Kitz and Pfeil hardware store, site of former Whiting airport.

Image ID#: mmkprear