



**PATRIARCH OF SCHNEIDER CLAN**—Pictured above (center) with his eight stalwart sons is the late Joseph Schneider, one of old Gross Point's true pioneers. Born in 1841, Joseph Schneider, accompanied his parents to this area from Germany when but a small boy and was for many years engaged in farming in the west section of the village (see biography elsewhere in this issue).

Shown in the oldtime picture above are: standing, Joseph, William, John, and Frank; seated, Edward, Anton, Joseph (senior), Mathias and Peter.

The elder Mr. and Mrs. Schneider also were the parents of two daughters, Mrs. Margaret Schaefer, and Mrs. Mary Thalmann. Pictured at the side are Mrs. Katrina Keil Schneider and the two daughters, Margaret (left), and Mary (right).

The Schneider family, one of the largest relationships in the North Shore area, is now in its fifth generation in this country.

## John Schaefer Area's First White Child

John Schaefer, forbear of one of Wilmette's largest families, was born in Gross Point October 23, 1844, and is said to have been the first white child born in the Wilmette area.

The son of Peter and Lena (Bleser) Schaefer, he resided here for well over a half-century, witnessed the phenomenal growth of the Chicago area and, according to a biographical sketch written in the early '90's gave his "support to its worthy enterprises."

John Schaefer was one of a family of 13 children, prominent among whom was his brother, Maternus, whose biography appears elsewhere in this issue. His parents were both born in Prussia, Germany, the father in 1805, and the mother in 1812. They emigrated to America in 1843 and took up their residence in New Trier township where they spent the remainder of their lives. His mother died in 1891 in her 79th year, and his father passed away in 1894, in his 90th year.

### Knew Hardships of Pioneer

Reared to manhood on the old homestead, son John Schaefer became inured to all the hardships and trials of pioneer life. He received his meager education in the district school.

On April 30, 1868, he married Miss Margaret Lohn, a native of Chicago, (born in 1847) whose parents came



to America in 1843 in the same ship with Mr. Schaefer's parents. They became the parents of seven children, among them George W., who was later the proprietor of a hotel in Gross Point; Anna, who became the wife of Peter Huerter of Gross Point; Katie, later the wife of Joseph Huerter, a Gross Point butcher; Christine, and Emma. Twin sons John P. and Joseph M., died in infancy. Mrs. Schaefer passed away in the late '70's.

### Eleven More Children

Mr. Schaefer was again married in 1880 to Miss Anna Spies, who was born in 1856, the daughter of John and Margaret Spies, natives of Prussia, Germany. Eleven children were born to this marriage, as follows:

John and Evelyn, twins, who died in infancy, Marie, John H., Peter J., Louis, Margaret M., Helen, Cecelia, William, and George.

### Industry Brings Prosperity

By dint of industry and energy, John Schaefer raised himself from humble circumstances to a position in which, wrote a biographer, he was "surrounded by the comfort and luxuries of life." He built a two-story brick hotel (later operated by his eldest son) and conducted business there for 26 years, his hostelry being "noted for its hospitality . . ." and where "he became a favorite with all who went his way." He was a staunch Republican and member of the Catholic faith.

Mr. Schaefer was for three years town collector, served as school director for several years, and was for an extended period treasurer of Gross Point, which position he assumed upon the organization of the village. He also served as assessor.

# Niles Was Shore's Only Post Office 111 Years Ago

**Later Mail Came Via Evanston; Wilmette Got Own Service in 1870**

As early as 1836, stage coaches going from Chicago to Libertyville on what was known as the Milwaukee Plank road, delivered mail to Niles. Niles in those days, 111 years ago, was a small settlement known as "Dutchman's Point," because of the peculiar ending of the forest there where the trees tapered off in density to a point.

Later a settler from Ohio by the name of Burrough built a tavern on the east side of Ridge road just north of what later became Noyes street. Mr. Burrough appropriately named his caravanserai "The Buck-Eye Tavern" and the territory around this inn became known as Ridgeville and later as Evanston.

**Northwestern university was founded in 1851, and inasmuch as the university needed the identity of a town Evanston was incorporated. As a town it needed to have a post office, so the first one was opened in Colvin's store on Chicago avenue and Davis street.**

To post a letter before Wilmette came into existence, early settlers along Green Bay road had to walk or go by horse and wagon to the Evanston post office.

When Wilmette was platted and surveyed in 1869, Alexander McDaniel built on the southeast corner of Wilmette and Central avenues what was then considered a very pretentious home with a white picket fence around it. In this house, in addition to his real estate business, Mr. McDaniel maintained an informal branch post office. A slot in the wall became the depository for mail which would be gathered by anyone going to the Evanston post office. Mr. McDaniel also had a rack with pigeon holes in which to place the mail after it had been brought and sorted from Evanston.

Mr. McDaniel's real estate office,



**POSTMASTER**—Lea J. Orr is Wilmette's postmaster, the ninth incumbent in that position. Previously Mr. Orr was village clerk (1925-1926 and 1928-1932), commander of the Wilmette post of the American Legion (1923-1924), and chief clerk of the Selective Service board.

then, was really the birthplace of Wilmette's post office.

**Because of Mr. McDaniel's service to the village, it is easy to understand how he became Wilmette's first postmaster, receiving his appointment sometime in 1870 and serving until 1889. About this time the post office was located in William H. Kinney's store which was situated at about the present entrance of the Odd Fellows hall.**

Mr. Kinney, Mr. McDaniel's son-in-law, was appointed Wilmette's second postmaster in 1889; he served until 1895.

Max Mueller, owner of a grocery store on the northwest corner of Wilmette avenue and Green Bay road, became postmaster number three. A building was erected at the present site of the Wilmette bicycle and sport shop for the exclusive use of the post office, where Mr. Mueller conducted the business of postmaster from 1895 to 1897.

Wilmette's fourth postmaster was Sam S. Dingee, who served from 1897 to 1908. During his term, in 1897, the village emerged from fourth class division to become a third class post office, and in 1901, entered the second class division. Mail carrier service was installed in Wilmette in 1905.

**From 1908 to 1913, Edwin Druery was postmaster of Wilmette and during this time the office was moved to a one story brick building now occupied by Stephens Wool company, 1160 Wilmette avenue, where it operated until it was moved to the one story building just south of the Episcopal church.**

W. E. Hess was appointed in 1913, becoming postmaster number six, and serving until 1922. Mr. Hess was followed by Joseph E. Schantz, who took over the postmaster's duties for the next 13 years. It was during his term of office that Wilmette became a first class post office.

In 1935, Herbert L. O'Connell assumed the office and during his tenure, the government erected the federal building which at present houses the Wilmette post office.

The present postmaster and ninth in number, Lea J. Orr, took office under Civil service examination and upon Presidential appointment in 1944.

The local office today has a regular staff of over 50 employees and does an annual business in sale of postage of \$200,000, the largest amount of sales in its almost 75 years of operation in the village.

### OLD TIMERS

Among the long-established business houses along Ridge road are B. E. Busscher, general merchandise, at No. 817; White's Grocery and Market, No. 821; Paul Bleser, barber, No. 729; Nicholas Bleser, grocer, No. 545; and Otto Kempe, shoe store, just north of Wilmette avenue.

### FORMER BANK

The First National bank of Wilmette, founded in 1916, closed its doors in 1932.