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Events

ACFW has a new SW WI chapter, besides the Michigan and Chicago chapters. Find out more at ACFW.com/chapters

Book Releases

Suzanne Brazil, "An Ordinary Life" was published in Chicken Soup for the Soul: Thanks to My Mom, March 17, 2015

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by Pamela S. Meyers

I hope everyone has been enjoying a blessed Thanksgiving holiday!



A vintage postcard around 1900.

As I've shared many times on this blog, I've developed a love for my hometown's history in recent years, spurred on through researching for my novel, *Love Finds You in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin*.



I'm now focusing my new novel, (which is in the writing stages) on the 1870's when many of Chicago's wealthy came to Lake Geneva and built magnificent mansions on the lakeshore. But there is one gem that was built in 1885—a Queen Anne Victorian, complete with a turret, and a sweeping view of the lake. It wasn't built on the lake shore and sat back far enough that a road now passes between it and the lake.

The home has a colorful history, starting out as Redwood Cottage when Emily Baker built it in honor of her late husband's memory, then Lakeside Sanitarium, followed by the St.

The house today as sits behind the statue

Moritz, then Gilbert's. And now, at long last, [Baker House](#), after the family who first built the home. If you link to the Baker House website using this [link](#), you will be able to read in detail the history of the home and see photos of all the work done on the house by the current owners.

The photos I've posted here are ones that I have taken in the past where the house just happens to be in the background. I really have to wonder how I missed such a beauty hidden in plain sight.



Another shot taken from a distance

There is way too much information to include here about its past, but the most unique feature in the home's history is how in the 1890s it was purchased by Dr. Oscar King to become a part of his sanitarium complex. Dr. King renamed the home Lakeside Sanitarium and it became a very nice place for people to retreat to while they recovered from their ailments. After Dr. King's death the sanitarium eventually closed.

While I was growing up, many years after the sanitariums had left town, the house was repurposed as a restaurant and called the St. Moritz. After time passed, another restaurant took over called Gilbert's and that closed a number of years ago. It was then that the current owners took over and invested the needed funds to bring the aging building up to code, while lovingly restoring the thirty or so rooms to their 19th century beauty

Today it sits proudly right where Emily Baker first commissioned it was to be built and is tucked in between two very modern hotels. A throwback to an era when women wore long skirts and carried parasols to protect their skin from the sun, and people traveled about town in horse-drawn carriages.

I wonder what Emily would think if she came back today and saw what the house she built in her husband's memory looks like today. I think she'd be pleased.



A native of Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, author Pamela S. Meyers lives in suburban Chicago, an hour's drive away from her hometown which she visits often to dig into its historical legacy. Her novels include *Thyme for Love*, and *Love Will Find a Way*, contemporary romantic mysteries and her 1933 historical romance, *Love Finds You in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin*, released in April, 2013. She can often be found speaking at events around Lake Geneva or nosing in microfilms and historical records about Wisconsin and other Midwestern spots for new story ideas.

Posted by Pamela S. Meyers



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Labels: Baker House, Lake Geneva History, Lakeside Sanitarium, Pamela S. Meyers

2 comments:



Robin Steinweg November 29, 2013 at 6:11 AM

I've seen that house, and loved how it's character outshines the modern

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