

The Wisconsin Union Railroad

In May 1872 the Wisconsin Union Railroad built a single north-south line with a stop called Oakwood Station just west of the settlement of Oakwood Village. This rail line crossed the South Branch of the Oak Creek in the exact spot where today the bridge of Bartel Court crosses the Creek. In 1906, the original track was abandoned and relocated 950 feet east to its present location for purposes of straightness, and increased to a double track.

During the 2019 construction of the Bartel Court bridge, the original quarried blocks of limestone (which had served as the railroad bridge abutments) were excavated and salvaged. These blocks are repurposed to commemorate this history, which you see around you in this historical monument park and are also used as functional outcrops along the Creek, slowing the speed of water in flood conditions.

Ryan Road Namesake

Amidst murky history, best evidence indicates that Ryan Road was named after Patrick Ryan [1849-1914] and his brother Richard, immigrants from Ireland in 1862. In 1887 they purchased adjoining properties at the northwest corner of the intersection of where today's Ryan Road and Chicago Road intersect, and Patrick Ryan's home still stands in 2020. At least one historical source claimed that Ryan Road was the first paved road in Wisconsin.

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by Capstone Quadrangle and General Capital Group

Historic Monument Park

Ryan Business Park – Oak Creek



The Tischendorfs and Bartels

Culminating in 2018 and in partnership with the City of Oak Creek, over a 15 year period private developer Michael Faber assembled 114 acres to create Ryan Business Park. The largest parcels were acquired from two families who had owned and farmed this land for generations. Additional land was acquired from Milwaukee County via a complex land swap which gave the public high-quality wetlands east of the railroad tracks. All this land was originally cleared from wilderness beginning around the late 1830's.

The eastern half of the business park, originally owned by A. Guenther, was purchased in 1928 by Ray Bartel [1896-1986] who supported his family exclusively by farming. Bartel farmed through the Great Depression until around 1973 when he began leasing portions to other growers. Bartel Court is named in his honor.

The western half was purchased in 1920 and farmed by Arthur Tischendorf [1891-1967] and his descendants, including his son Roland who perished in a house fire on the property in 2003 on his 82nd birthday. The family grew crops and raised livestock, and their barn had a milking parlor. In converting the farmland to create Ryan Business Park, components of the barn and farm have been repurposed for new uses in the Milwaukee area. In addition, beginning in 1867, Arthur's emigrant grandfather Franz [from Saxony, Germany], father August, and brother Harry all farmed various nearby parcels in what is now the City of Oak Creek.

Research contributions by Dennis Tischendorf, Chuck Koehler, and
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