




Village President
1 Year Term

Photo*	Name	Term
	John Shelley	1868 - 1870
	George Hermann Kleffler	1870 - 1871
	Eckstein	? - 1876
	Leander Franklin Frisby	1876 - 1877
	Fred H. Haase	1877 - 1879
	George F. Hunt	1879 - 1881
	John Reisse	1881 - 1882
	Fred H. Haase	1882 - 1883
	John Shelley	1883 - 1884
	John Potter Jr. – office disestablished –	1884 - 1885

Village President Information

John Shelley -

(Feb. 1st, 1817 - Dec. 4th, 1886)

Born in Manchester, PA. Graduated at Pennsylvania college at Gettysburg, and was admitted into the bar in 1840. Shelley then moved to Wisconsin 1853, residing in Milwaukee for a year before moving to the Town of West Bend. There he established a law partnership with Frederick O. Thorpe, who would later serve as the local state senator from 1862 to 1868 as a Democrat. Shelley served as Washington County's judge from 1857 to 1881. When the Village of West Bend was incorporated in 1868 he was elected as the first village president, with his tenure lasting two terms from 1868 to 1870. Shelley left West Bend around 1884 after his third term as mayor from 1883 to 1884, to Racine and eventually Hartford where he died. He had no children.

George H. Kleffler

(Jun. 22nd, 1826 - ?)

George Hermann Kleffler was born in Rothenburg of Hesse-Cassel, Germany. He attended university at Marburg, Hesse-Cassel for three years before receiving a diploma as a surgeon. Then, in 1846, Kleffler moved to the United States, landing in New York before soon thereafter settling in Newburg. Kleffler then enlisted in the U.S. Army during the Mexican American War, and served under General Worth. Towards the end of the war Kleffler was assigned to Hospital Duty and served as a Surgeon Assistant until the end of the war. After the war, in 1848, Kleffler moved to Milwaukee where he formed a partnership with a certain Dr. Luening in the practice of medicine and surgery. In 1851 Kleffler left the partnership and moved to the Town of Barton where he continued to practice medicine for two years. In 1852, Kleffler became the Town Clerk for Barton, a position he held for a year until 1853 when he became the Deputy Treasurer of Washington County and moved to the West Bend area. He served in that capacity until 1856. Then in 1857, Kleffler was elected Clerk of the Circuit Court, and served continuously until 1865. During that time, he also served as Justice of the Peace. Kleffler was admitted into the Wisconsin bar in 1865; and returned to the Clerk of the Circuit Court position in 1867, serving there again until 1869. Kleffler was elected as an Assemblyman to represent Northern Washington County from 1868 to 1869 as a Democrat. Kleffler was also elected District Attorney for Washington County from 1868 to 1874. Kleffler was also elected Village President of West Bend in 1870.

Eckstein -

Village president Eckstein was most likely John Eckstein who operated a brewing company in West Bend, or Christopher Eckstein, who was John's father, who was very involved in multiple businesses in the area.

Leander F. Frisby -

(Jun. 19th, 1825 - Apr. 19, 1889)

The original owner of the "Frisby House" located downtown West Bend. He built it in 1865. Frisby was Washington County's first District Attorney and would also represent Washington county as an assemblyman (1861 - 1862). Frisby was a registered Republican, which was uncommon at the time in the area. He was very involved in the Free Soil Party during its active years, meaning Frisby was staunchly against slavery. Frisby would later serve as Wisconsin's 13th Attorney General from 1882 to 1887.

George F. Hunt -

(Aug. 24th, 1831 - Dec. 10, 1888)

One of the more well known doctors in the West Bend area at the time. He was first nominated for village president unknown to him. He represented Washington County as a State Senator from 1881 to 1883. He was appointed postmaster of West Bend from 1869 to 1877. Previously, Hunt was a member of the progressive Republican party before switching to the more traditional Democrat party in the late 1870s, most likely in response to the growing "radical" ideology growing in the Republican party under Ulysses S. Grant. He married Annie Salsbury (the daughter of the prominent Barton Salisbury). Hunt suffered from a stroke in 1885 and lived in an enfeebled state until his death in 1888 at the age of 57.

John Reisse

(Aug. 5th, 1818 - Dec. 19th, 1897)

Born in Hessen, Germany where he worked as an architect until he moved to New York City in 1844. Reisse then came to the Town of West Bend in 1847 where he ran a farm until in 1850 he moved to the unincorporated Barton community in the Town of Newark (now Town of Barton). There he ran a saloon and tailor shop before soon thereafter becoming a dealer for general merchandise. Reisse built a 70x30 feet brick general country store where he operated out of. Reisse was appointed Postmaster of the Barton community in the late 1850s and would serve in the role for 9 years. He also served 16 years as Justice of the Peace for the Town of Barton. Reisse's main employment became the manufacture of bricks where he would employ on average 18 men. Reisse moved to the Village of West Bend in 1875 where he opened another general country store. He was appointed postmaster for two years. He was elected as Justice of the Peace for the Village of West Bend for 4 years, as well as serving as the village clerk for 2 years. In 1880 he opened a saloon before he was elected Village President of West Bend in 1881.

Fred H. Haase

(Jan. 5th, 1831 - Mar. 28th, 1908)

Born in Mecklenburg Schwerin, Germany to Henry Hasse and Sophia Both. Before moving to the United States, Haase learned the brickmaker trade. Settled in the West Bend area on February 20th 1855. He acted as one of the first Justice of Peace for the newly incorporated Village of West Bend in 1868. Haase became the foreman of the brickyards owned by Charles Lemke in the Town of West Bend and Richfield. After working in that position for 8 years, he became unable after a severe case of typhoid fever. At that point in 1864, he started a saloon and hotel. Haase expanded his building in 1878. This business became what he was most known for. Haase was married in 1859 to Mary Ann Schmidt. They had six children,

John Potter Jr. -

The last village president of West Bend, but was elected the first mayor of the city of West Bend in 1885. Potter moved to Washington County in 1849

Miscellaneous

The Election of 1879 -

This election saw Dr. George F. Hunt nominated to run for village president, which he accepted. This was something Leander F. Frisby was very opposed to, seemingly because of bad blood between the two gentlemen. Frisby began soliciting around West Bend asking people to run against Hunt. After many people turned down his offer, he eventually convinced W. Johnson to run. Frisby ran most of Johnson's campaign, traveling down to Milwaukee to get supplies. One afternoon, Hunt was addressing a crowd in one of the restaurants in the area. Hunt was expressing his aspirations for the village, but also seemed to be talking badly about Leander Frisby and his "desperate" attempt to have him lose the election. Word of this eventually made it to Frisby, who was not known to calm his temper. An hour or two later Hunt was confronted by Frisby and 5 or 6 of his friends at the restaurant. Frisby accused Hunt of packing the caucus that nominated him, which Hunt rejected. Then, as Hunt turned away dismissing the gentlemen, Frisby's friends began throwing glass bottles at Hunt. Then Frisby charged him with his cane, delivering a blow to Hunt's head. Hunt was able to force Frisby away with his own cane, but he was then ceased from behind by Frisby's friends. Then Frisby attacked Hunt with his cane as his friends held Hunt in place. Eventually Hunt was able to break Frisby's cane in two just in time for a bystander to step in and break up the fight. G. F. Hunt ended up winning the election.