

The Ferdinand Hotz Legacy

A Door County Family History

*This short history details
the life and times of
the Hotz family and their
honored contribution
to what is now
Door County, Wisconsin's
Newport State Park.*



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Introduction by William E. Scheckler, MD

*Sponsored by the Newport wilderness society
in support of Newport State park*



About this Booklet

*This biography was funded
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*All the historical photographs
are from the Hotz archives
and were supplied by
Dr. Apfelbach. All current
photographs were taken
by Dr. Scheckler.*

*Designed by
Mara C. Scheckler*

Introduction

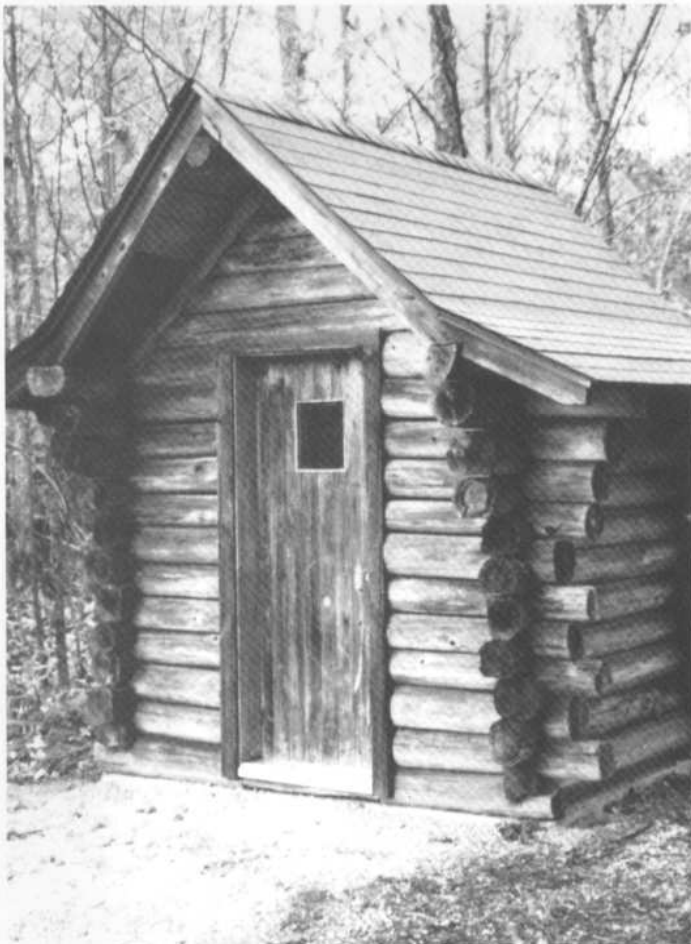
by William E. Scheckler, MD

Without the love of the land and the value of conserving natural resources embodied by Ferdinand Hotz and his family, Newport State Park would never have been possible. The Hotz family sold 1472 acres of the 2400 acre wilderness park to the state, including about ten and a half miles of shoreline on Lake Michigan and Europe Lake. This brief history was developed to document the legacy of a remarkable man and his family. It is a legacy worth remembering in the age of condominiums and shoreline development.

The Newport Wilderness Society in collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources obtained a grant to preserve one small remnant of the Hotz Europe Lake property remaining in the Park, an elegant log out-house which can be seen next to the Newport Park Office.



*Newport
beach:
October,
1994*



*Even the outhouse
‘was carefully
constructed.’*

The Hotz Europe Lake cabin site will feature a plaque commemorating the buildings that once stood there.

The biography’s author is Dr. G. Leonard Apfelbach, Ferdinand’s grandson, and a longtime supporter of the Newport Wilderness Society (NWS).

The Schecklers have enjoyed swimming in Europe Bay. Several years ago, I “discovered” the remnants of an old pier. No one could tell me its origin so I wrote an article for the NWS newsletter about the pier – the huge size of the cedar footings – and my speculations about its history. Len promptly wrote me a letter describing the pier in Europe Bay built by and used by the Hotz family. This biography presents pictures of the pier for the first time in public print. Len and I have spent many hours reviewing family albums and talking about the Hotz Newport property.



It is remarkable that between 1881, when the Dane Hans Johnson built Newport Pier, and 1967, when the state bought a major portion of Newport from the Hotz family, that only three families privately owned this magnificent property: Hans Johnson, Danish immigrant Peter Knudson and German immigrant Ferdinand Hotz.

All those who visit Newport Park should remember the good fortune that put Newport into the hands of such thoughtful custodians as Ferdinand Hotz and his family. We might all, in our own ways, preserve Newport and other natural areas of value wherever we find them.

As you visit Newport Park and wander its beaches and trails, think of those who have passed this way before, the Native Americans, the fur traders, the government surveyors, the European immigrants and those hundreds of thousands of Park visitors in the past thirty years.

a current
view of
Europe Bay,
looking
north



spring
thaw
floods the
Newport
picnic area
in 1996.



NEWPORT THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

The murmur of the people —
can you hear them?

The voices from the past —
can you understand?

The lake waters roll gently onto the old beach —
murmurs.

The wind rustles through aspen leaf and pine bough —
voices.

The mists slip slowly over land and lake.

Gentle fingers erase the sounds.

All is quiet, the land sleeps.

— William E. Scheckler, MD



Ferdinand
Hotz
circa 1903

Ferdinand Hotz

born March 14, 1868

died December 28, 1946

by G. Leonard Apfelbach, MD

German Roots

Ferdinand Hotz, the second of six children, was born on March 14, 1868 to Phillip and Maria Sophia Langguth Hotz in Wertheim, Germany. This village at the confluence of the Main and Tauber Rivers preserves today its half-timbered buildings, narrow streets, stone walls and round stone towers with a castle overlooking both rivers. These were to influence structures built by Ferdinand in Door County, Wisconsin. His parents lived on Fischgasse [street], a block from the Tauber, one of the main routes of transport in Europe during this era. The family operated barges on the rivers. His father died in 1877 when Ferdinand was nine.

Ferdinand chose not to follow in the family business and instead entered the Wertheim Gymnasium (1874-80) after "Volksschule" and then Realgymnasium (1880-84) in Heilbronn, seventy kilometers south on the edge of the Black Forest to become highly educated. Realgymnasium (now called Realschule) was one of the three German paths of education, equivalent to a vocational business degree today.

The ambitious Ferdinand (no middle name) at age sixteen proceeded directly to the United States in 1884, escaping military duty. In the United States, he was sponsored by his prominent uncle, Ferdinand Carl Hotz, MD, an ophthalmologist, author of many scientific papers and a founder of the Chicago Ophthalmologic Society. Ferdinand Hotz became a US citizen in 1887.

The Hotz family tree in Wertheim descends directly from Hans Hotz auf Most, who died in 1596. Two other brothers of his father, Christof and Christian, emigrated to Chicago and prospered in the Schuttler and Hotz Wagon Company, makers of horse-drawn wagons.

The Jewelry Business

Ferdinand began as a jeweler at Juergens and Andersen & Company, Chicago (1884-87), where he was especially skilled and happy in designing settings for fine jewels. Mr. Juergens advised him to get into a large retail house and to become a merchant. Meanwhile, a cousin, Gottfried Schenck, had gone to San Diego so Ferdinand followed via New Orleans where he had stayed a week. While in California he experimented briefly with work as a lumberjack and as a cage elevator operator at the Hotel del Coronado in Coronado, California. To this day, his carved initials remain in the tower of this historic structure and the

elevator is still in use. He and his cousin then went north to San Jose and San Francisco where Ferdinand joined jewelers George C. Shreve and Company in 1888. From 1889-92, additional experience in the jewelry business in Chicago resulted in his opening his own business in 1892 as a dealer in gems and maker of exclusive jewelry. His business was first located at the Masonic Temple building. Later, it moved to the McCormick Building, 332 South Michigan Avenue, and then to the new Pittsfield Building in 1928, where the business remained until its closing in August, 1994. He was given a thousand dollars to start his business. His method of business is best described in the autobiography of Eugene Prussing (1855-1936), another cousin:

"Ferdinand had an ingenious scheme. He was an excellent designer of fine settings and possessed extraordinary taste. He bought or obtained on consignment unusually fine stones, designed special settings in exact size to fit them on cards in watercolors, and then presented them to the richest people he could get introductions to, at prices which were considerably below those of the high priced jewelers they were used to dealing with. He was familiar with the price marking and methods of the latter and his overhead expense was almost nil. He picked as his first customers the rich brewers of Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis and other nearby cities and succeeded greatly. Then he repaid the \$1,000⁰⁰ we had loaned him. Next he asked me to introduce him to my friend John J. Mitchell, President of the Illinois Trust and Savings Bank. He sold him a pearl necklace and at the same time impressed him so with his ability and character, his prices and methods, that Mr. Mitchell introduced him to all his family connections and friends including James J. Hill (President, Great Northern Railroad). Through the latter he became acquainted with all

the wealthy people of St. Paul and Minneapolis as well as J. P. Morgan, Sr. and his partners in New York. He soon established a strong clientele among these. He sold pearl necklaces and grand jewelry to all of them and gradually to dealers in all large cities. He was constantly traveling back and forth between Chicago and New York and the larger cities of the East and Middle West with only a small office plant in Chicago, the actual goldsmithing being done for him by manufacturers. Every other year he made a summer trip to London, Amsterdam and Paris on business and to Germany to visit his mother and sisters. Meanwhile he had married the only daughter of Leonhard Schmidt, of the Brunswick-Balke Billiard Company. Schmidt furnished Ferdinand a credit of \$75,000⁶⁰ and enabled him to operate in a wholesale way. On one occasion he filled an order from Mr. J. J. Hill for three pearl necklaces at \$30,000⁶⁰ each, in four days. He now began to include the cities of the Pacific coast in his trips for many years and has spent a month or two in California and nearby. He has also enlarged his offices in Chicago but he has never changed his plan, he is still only a dealer in stones and a designer of jewelry. In this manner he has built up his large and unique business and a large fortune."

— *Eugene Prussing*

By 1912, documents show his jewel inventory was \$265,483⁶⁰ with liabilities of \$112,531⁶⁶.

His business records, drawings and designs of fine jewelry were preserved and provide insight into his rise to prominence probably reaching a peak in 1933 when he exhibited the 42-carat flawless blue diamond known as the Maximilian Diamond and a jewel-encrusted Czar Nicholas snuff box

at the Chicago World's Fair. Intricate color drawings were made to be shown to clients and then given to craftsmen to fashion gold and platinum settings for diamonds and colored gems selected from inventory or from the trade. Unusual specimens were bought on his travels. To develop a client base he created cross-referenced card systems of customers and referrals. He traveled extensively to gain access to the wealthy. Access to his Suite 2701 at the Pittsfield Building was by appointment only, through security including buzzers, barred window inspection and opening of locked doors. A six-foot wall vault and alarm system protected the inventory. The paneled office was adorned with gem mineral collections, art objects, jeweler scales, wall hangings of pictures of old Wertheim and a butterfly collection. The mineral collection has been donated to the University of Wisconsin Geology Department.

He traveled by railroad extensively and frequently with examples of his designs and finished pieces. He went from his home base in Chicago to Minneapolis, Spokane, Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Omaha and back. Most of his customers were in the Chicago, Milwaukee, Minneapolis, and St. Louis areas. He also had customers in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana. Railroad trips were made through Chattanooga, Jacksonville, Miami and Tampa. Several trips were made to Europe to purchase gems. In the 1930's, he had a New York showing with Harry Winston Company. His first referrals in the Milwaukee area were from the Uehlein

family (also from Wertheim), and his name spread rapidly by word of mouth in the Midwest German community. His record books reveal as customers professional and business leaders and account for the income which later permitted him to become the largest private landowner in Door County, Wisconsin. He combined a dominant personality, ambition, dignity, artistic skills, marketing, honesty and fair pricing with extremely hard work. He was a superb salesman. He was away from his family much of the time and found rare relaxation in Fish Creek, Wisconsin.

Ferdinand
at Champagne
Rock near
Cottage Row
in Fish Creek,
Wisconsin.



Clothilde sits at right on
the Europe Bay pier. Remnants
of this pier remain today.



The Hotz Family Begins

He married Clothilde Katerine Babette Schmidt on May 14, 1898, with Pastor G. A. Zimmerman officiating, at the Schmidt home at Goethe and State Streets (now the site of the Ambassador West Hotel), Chicago. The newlyweds lived there in this three-story home large enough to have a ballroom. The Schmidt home was red brick with ornate limestone window lintels, brownstone foundation and slate Mansard roof with frilly Victorian trim on porches and roof. Clothilde is remembered as a quiet homemaker who had musical interests, playing the piano and enjoying opera. She also enjoyed growing plants in a greenhouse attached to their home and delighted in her pet canary and feeding the wild birds.



The young Hotz family soon grew rapidly with the addition of Alice Clothilde Hotz on March 7, 1899, followed by Helen (Leni) on March 25, 1900, Ferdinand Leonard Hotz (Fedy) on March 10, 1903, and Margaret Hotz (Sissy) on June 21, 1906. In 1901, the family moved to an apartment at 1906 Oakdale Avenue, Chicago. In 1905, they rented a large home at 1072 Sheridan Road, Glencoe, Illinois, which they bought the following year from Mr. Melville Stone, publisher of the Chicago Daily News. As of 1996, Ferdinand L. Hotz still resided in this home.

In later years Clothilde had episodes of "melancholy" and developed diabetes which caused her death in April 1941. The next year, Ferdinand married Clothilde's second cousin Erna Steck at Glencoe Union Church (August 29).

Johann Leonhard Schmidt, Ferdinand's first father-in-law, emigrated from Rothenburg on the Tauber (Germany) and became a principal in the Brunswick Balke Callender Company (later Brunswick) of Chicago, a maker at that time of billiard tables. In the 1890's, Johann sold out his interest. Johann's death in 1909 undoubtedly supplemented funds Ferdinand used to buy real estate in Wisconsin, farmland in Chicago suburbs, Chicago Loop property, California land at Point Reyes and near Los Angeles, as well as stocks in corporations. While Ferdinand lost much of his wealth in the 1929 crash, he held onto much of his land.

Ferdinand employed Jens Jensen, designer of Chicago parks, to plan the formal gardens around the Glencoe house and along the ravine as well as area for a vegetable garden. The wooded area behind the large garage and chauffeur's quarters provided timber which Mr. Hotz enjoyed cutting, sawing and splitting for firewood even after his first heart attack in the 1940's. His son relates that he usually carried an axe over his shoulder when in the woods.





His love of forests, nature and gardens no doubt influenced his love of the land he was to purchase and maintain in its natural state.

Door County Land

On a 1905 business trip to Marinette, Wisconsin, Ferdinand had extra time, so he took an excursion boat to Fish Creek. His next visit was in 1908 with family staying at Dr. Welker's Resort followed by another visit in 1911 when annual visits began as well as acquisition of property. These purchases included Gibraltar Orchards on 4237 Cottage Row Road,

*'Newport' as
written by
Ferdinand himself
in this panorama
of the property*

and land at the top of the Fish Creek hill (9334 Highway 42) where he built a group of rustic cottages overlooking Fish Creek harbor. Land at 3993 Main

Street, Fish Creek was formerly the Vorous homestead, and the site included the birches now occupied by Fish Creek Condominiums. This property was given as a wedding present to Alice Hotz Apfelbach at her marriage June 28, 1923 in the garden at Glencoe.

Other tracts included Juddville Bay and bluff, Ellison Bay bluff, 600 feet of Fish Creek harbor shoreline from the present public beach to near the creek, much of the land around Cana Island, Mud Lake acreage, Clark's Lake land, Egg Harbor shore (Alpine Resort now), Wandering Road tracts and 280 acres on Highway 42 also bordering Spring Road south of Fish Creek. Gibraltar Orchard was planted with cherry and apple trees in May, 1911, and a large vineyard was planted at Juddville. The Fish Creek harbor property was later divided among his children.



Preserving Newport

Starting in 1915, his largest tract was put together in the Europe Lake-Newport area and included over ten miles of shoreline that now has become Newport State Park. The Newport property south of Europe Bay Road, 1302 acres and about seven miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, was sold April 1967 to the Wisconsin DNR for \$440,000 or \$338 an acre or about \$11⁹⁰ a shoreline foot. The remaining isthmus north of Europe Bay Road was 170 acres and approximately three and a half miles of combined Europe Lake and Lake Michigan shoreline and included his log home overlooking Europe Lake. This tract was sold in 1978 to the Wisconsin DNR for about \$700,000. His descendants chose not to develop this property preferring preservation in its natural state.

Why did Mr. Hotz buy all this land? Germans enjoy forests, hiking, mountain climbing and traditionally are attuned to nature. Owning his own land must have made him feel like an equal to the owner of the castle overlooking his home on Fischgasse in Wertheim. Door County was poor with failed farmers (stone farms and poor climate). Logging had taken the value from the land, so land was cheap. As difficult as it is to believe now, Ferdinand Hotz, according to family information, was performing charitable acts by purchasing homesteaders' land in order to help them in their desperate situations. He had no plans for development except for the Fish Creek harbor which was to be a large yacht harbor and

resort with toboggan slide and piers. Plans were drawn by renowned Chicago architect William Bernhard.

The buildings he built in Door County were very rustic. His first cottage was next to the present Fish Creek Public Beach (4108 Highway 42) and was clapboard with rustic trim and trellis. In 1913, he began the three cottages at 9334 Highway 42 at the top of Fish Creek Hill. These were of hand-hewn logs and native stone. Extensive trim using unusually shaped cedar and tree parts for benches and railings and porches and unusual stones and fossils were utilized. Being in the gem business, he was always on the lookout for fossils of Door County and actually bought examples found by farmers in their fields.

The three Fish Creek cottages were designed by Ravinia (Highland Park, Illinois) architect Lawrence Buck. Ferdinand added to the 9334 Hwy 42 complex a massive stone garage with a tower (Turm) reminiscent of the towers in his native Wertheim. One cottage was living quarters with a view of Fish Creek harbor, another was a dining and kitchen building with servants' room, and the third was a log cabin called "Studio Lodge" for the children. Even the outhouse was log! Pump house, washhouse and tennis court completed this complex.

In 1919, when Fish Creek became too hectic, he sought refuge by building a hand-hewn log cottage overlooking Europe Lake. There he could enjoy solitude. Again, he decorated this home with unusual objects of nature found

walking the old road
to Newport village and
beach, circa 1936



Hotz family picnic at
Europe Bay. Ferdinand and
Clothilde are at left.
Note the attire of the day.

on his hikes. The heads of two bucks locked in combat were over the fireplace and two Indian dugout canoes found on the Europe Lake shore hung from the porch ceiling. These are now in the Maritime Museum in Gills Rock. The DNR decided not to preserve this house in Newport Park. In the 1980's, it was sold, dismantled and carefully rebuilt near Sherwood Point at Cliff Top Road in Sturgeon Bay.



Hewing
logs
for the
Europe Lake
cottage

Kincaid (left) was one of two full-time caretakers Ferdinand employed. Clothilde is seated at center.



The original cottage as seen from the west side, which faced Europe Lake



original
garage
as seen
from the
cottage

*the original cottage as seen
from its south and east sides*

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*The Hotz
Legacy*



*the same face of
the Hotz cottage
in its current
location south
of Sturgeon
Bay overlooking
Green Bay.*



The Legacy

The Ferdinand Hotz philosophy of nature was to leave all living things in their place undisturbed. He planted but did not hunt. This ideal was instilled in his children and grandchildren who made the decision not to develop the Europe Bay and Newport land but rather to preserve it for posterity as Newport State Park with the request to the State of Wisconsin to preserve the land in its natural state as currently is being done. He and the family also donated land to the Liberty Grove Township for a park on Europe Bay and land, at 4097 Hwy 42, to Gibraltar Township for education uses at the grade school in Fish Creek (the school is now gone, replaced by the community building) and land for parking behind the structure.

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*The Hotz
Legacy*



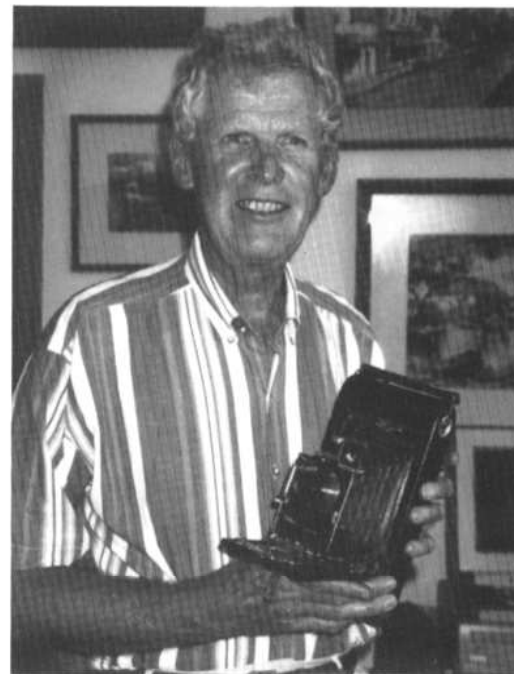
*Hotz archive image of Europe Bay
from its north end looking towards
the south shore of the Bay*

The Man and his Family

Ferdinand Hotz was a tall, thin man with erect posture who spoke perfect educated English with a slight German accent and was always well dressed with suit, tie and hat even when outdoors in the woods or on a boat. An 1898 US State Department document describes him as 5'10" with brown eyes and hair and a "round face." His pictures show a large handlebar moustache in 1899 which became smaller as the years passed and his hairline receded. His pictures also show a prominent forehead, high cheekbones and penetrating eyes. He was always precise, serious, and he must have instilled confidence in his customers. When he gave an order the family was expected to comply without hesitation. His grandchildren were to be seen and not heard. One could say he fit the German stereotype. There was little humor evident and one of his daughters remarked that the best times at home in Glencoe were when he was on a business trip (which was often). He traveled the Northwestern commuter train to Chicago to work and was driven about in a chauffeur-driven car, a 1920 Cadillac and later, an air-cooled 1931 Franklin until his death in 1946.

Recreation at home was found in his fully equipped billiard room furnished in the fashion of a male club with a massive Brunswick billiard table, oak and leather furniture, and a fireplace with a buffalo head mounted above. A large butterfly collection decorated several walls and geologic specimens filled the drawers. Fine wines and brandy were served.

Clothilde Hotz played the piano in the adjoining music room. Ferdinand's artistic talent for design did not result in recreational artwork. He was an avid photographer on his travels around the United States, taking pictures on postcard sized negatives with an 1890 Kodak folding camera which is still in like-new condition. Large numbers of negatives have been saved of Door County scenes. Existing and discarded negatives usually are of scenes outdoors, often of trees, streams and mountains, as well as of family and villages such as Newport and Fish Creek. Some of these are on display at the Fish Creek Gibraltar Historical Association.



author G.L.
Apfelbach, MD
with the 1890
Kodak camera.
behind him
are paintings
by both Alice
(author's
mother) and
Ferdinand L.

Organized religion did not play a large role in the family, but they were members of Glencoe Union Church for weddings and funerals. They tended to minimize funeral services. Spiritual satisfaction was achieved in walks through a forest and communing with nature. Education for his children was traditional. All completed New Trier High School. Alice graduated from, and Helen attended National Park Seminary in Bethesda, Maryland and the Art Institute of Chicago.

Alice Hotz, born March 7, 1899, married **George Leonard Apfelbach, MD**, on June 28, 1923 and had one child, **George Leonard Apfelbach, Jr., MD**, on March 10, 1931 (the author). Alice was a prolific artist and her talent was not limited to watercolor and oil paintings but extended to printmaking, collage and clay modeling with styles ranging from representational to surreal. She studied and played the piano as did her mother. She, like her father and brother

daughter

Margaret

at stern,

Ferdinand

L. on boat,

one of his

favorite

passtimes



Fedy, left extensive albums of photographs, still pictures and home movies from as early as 1927. She was interested in music and attended concerts. She enjoyed the outdoors with hiking, Indian archaeology, golf, swimming and even skiing, both snow and water. But one of her fondest activities was world travel, often by ship. She died on a Mediterranean cruise on May 4, 1983 and is buried at Blossomburg Cemetery, Fish Creek.

Helen (Leni), March 25, 1900 - September, 1965, was the mechanically inclined child working with her hands to create silver, lapidary and hammered copper objects as well as jewelry. She even repaired mechanical devices such as washing machines. She married **Rudolph Schmid**, a commercial artist, in 1924, and had a daughter, **Margaret Schmid McInturff**.

Ferdinand L. Hotz, who continued his father's business, attended two years at Armour Institute (now Illinois Institute of Technology) and after one year of work completed studies in business at the University of Chicago, graduating in 1927. He also attended and later taught at the Art Institute of Chicago. His art was primarily watercolor and casein often of Door County and Chicago scenes done in a somewhat gloomy, dark style. He also experimented with less representational forms. He especially liked to paint and photograph boats of the Great Lakes and enjoyed operating and caring for old boats, outboards and a duck boat. His gloomy personality would have to be described as the opposite of his father's in that he admitted he did not like the

jewelry business and would have preferred architecture. He never married. He was a socialist rather than an entrepreneur, feeling that wealth was not an objective. Yet he carried out the business successfully using his artistic talent to design custom-made jewelry, and he traveled the Midwest to the established client list. He operated the Gibraltar Orchards, Fish Creek, during cherry season and kept the books for all of the Hotz enterprises. The business closed in 1994.

Margaret (Sissy) married **Arthur Klok**, a resort operator in Tipler, Wisconsin, and had two children, Arthur and Mary Klok Uhl. She also painted watercolors, was an accomplished quilter and knitter, and studied the cello. Her daughter Mary Uhl paints and exhibits her paintings nationally. Margaret died on September 27, 1987 and is buried at Blossomburg Cemetery, Fish Creek.

During World War II, Ferdinand was in declining health, having suffered several heart attacks. He remembered his cousins in Germany and sent many CARE packages (soap, sugar, coffee, etc.) to them. Because of this, the city of Wertheim named a street for him and Hotzstrasse is not far from his birthplace. On his physician's advice, he went to St. Petersburg, Florida in December 1946 to stay at the Sunset Hotel, operated by Leland Thorp of Fish Creek. There he died of a heart attack. A stone was placed at the family plot at Graceland Cemetery, Chicago, but his ashes were spread over his beloved Europe Lake.

—Leonard Apfelbach
grandson of
Ferdinand Hotz



Europe Lake pier and
boathouse. Remnants
of the pier can be
found to this day.

What Remains Today

Newport Village is gone, marked by a history kiosk. Two of the village buildings were removed and rebuilt: one cottage now on Sand Bay and a Hans Johson barn on Wisconsin Bay Road. The main beach entrance still utilizes the old Village road as the pathway to the beach. Newport pier is all gone. The submerged foundations of the Hotz Europe Bay pier remain towards the north end of Europe Bay beach.

The Europe Lake cottage is in its new location south of Sturgeon Bay. The stone gates that originally heralded the entrance to the Europe Lake cottage are visible from Europe Bay Road. The old log outhouse from the Europe Lake buildings has been resituated next to the Park Office at Newport State Park.

Newport State Park can provide historic trail guides leading to the original sites and the structures of Newport.



*A current look at
the stone gates to the
Europe Lake cottage.*



*Dr. Scheckler with park
water pump at the former
site of the Hotz cottage*



The NWS was founded in 1985 by friends and supporters of the wilderness nature of Newport State Park. The Society is a non-profit 501c3 organization formed to:

- 1 Help preserve Newport State Park as a minimal development natural Park;
- 2 Promote the study and preservation of Wilderness and Nature in Newport State Park and elsewhere in the County and State;
- 3 Provide volunteers to help the Newport State Park management with projects to maintain the Park and facilitate its proper use;
- 4 Develop other projects and programs appropriate for the Park as may be determined from time to time by the Board of Directors.

*Membership information is available at the park
office. New members are always welcome.*