

# St. Michael Historian



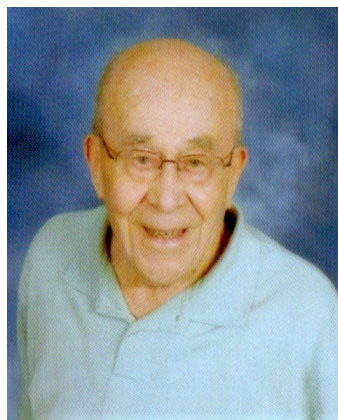
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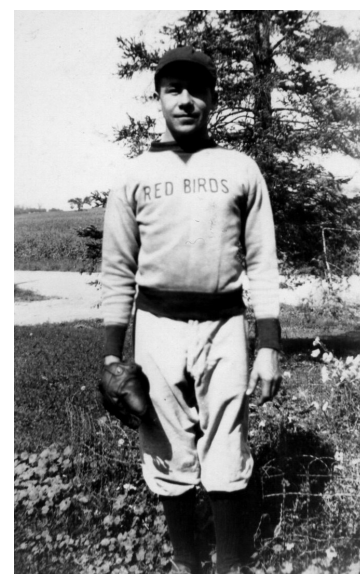
## What a Life!

By Bob Zahler



This past April 13 St. Michael lost one of its notable citizens, Oliver “Ollie” Schumacher. Having been born on March 26, 1918, Ollie lived 18 days past his 100th birthday. This achievement alone is pretty remarkable, but Ollie managed to do several things during his one hundred years that caused him to make his mark in St. Michael history. These achievements largely revolved around the areas of music and baseball, and while he didn’t become a national celebrity by any means, Ollie was well-known around St. Michael and even throughout much of Minnesota.

Ollie was born in Frankfort Township to Herman and Rose Schumacher on the family farm which was along Jamison Avenue just south of the current STMA High School. The Schumachers were a musical family. Herman, Ollie’s dad, played piano in an early St. Michael orchestra, at least as early as 1907 according to newspaper accounts. Ollie and his brothers Linus “Tiny” and Ermie grew up with music, and so it wasn’t too surprising that they would carry on the tradition. It was also with his brothers that Ollie started playing baseball. For the balance of this article, photos and captions will highlight some of Ollie Schumacher’s contributions to St. Michael history.



**Above left:** Members of the St. Michael Band about 1935. This group of men and boys were either self-taught or taught by their parents as was the case for Ollie Schumacher and his brothers. In some cases those who attend the Catholic school in town may have received some lessons from the nuns, but these were largely country school kids. **Top Row:** Meinrad “Boy” Daleiden, Joe Korte (Ollie’s future father-in-law), Richard Korte, Bill Kessler, Herman Schumacher, George Kessler, Gene Kessler, Dave Haberman. **Front Row:** Norman Steffens, Ermie Schumacher, Leon Weber, Alvin “Weiner” Eicher, Eddie Lenz, Ollie Schumacher, Neil Zachman, Linus “Tiny” Schumacher, Allen Jaeb, Victor Korte, and Roman Eicher. **Above right:** Here’s Ollie, again in 1935, this time dressed in his first baseball uniform. Ollie started playing ball as early as 1931 but started with the Red Birds in 1933. The Red Birds were a St. Michael team for teens, sort of a farm team for the St. Michael Saints, the town team. The Red Birds were sponsored by L.A. Dick, the Grain Belt Beer distributor. Thus, the uniform colors were red letters with black trim, the same colors as the Grain Belt label.



**Left:** the Wright County Rural School Band played for three days at the Minnesota State Fair in 1935. Ollie Schumacher and several St. Michael boys played with this group; many of the rest were from Buffalo. Ollie is in the center of the top row just under the “S” in “School”.

**Right:** The St. Michael Saints from about 1941. **Top:** Warren Zachman, Eldon Eicher, Richard Korte, Ervin Eicher, Tony Eicher. **Bottom:** Ollie Schumacher, Ermie Schumacher, Art Baker, Lewis Bloms, Harry Hengels, Eddie Lenz. **In front:** Joe Eicher, Les Gutzwiller



Ollie moved up to the regular town team in 1938 where he became an excellent pitcher. In August 1941 Ollie pitched in what was then one of the longest games in Minnesota amateur baseball history—18 innings! St. Michael faced the club from Nowthen and the score was tied at 2 apiece when after playing 3 hours and 40 minutes they agreed to call it off before someone hurt their arm as both starting pitchers had gone the distance.

**Right:** two ads from the *Buffalo Journal*; the first from 1940 and the second from 1941. By 1938 Ollie had started his own orchestra which was more formally known as “Oliver Schumacher and His Blackhawks”. Zahler’s Hall was the St. Michael Dancehall, owned at this time by Leo Zahler. Notice that in the second ad people were reminded that dancing was curtailed during the Lenten season. In other words, enjoy dancing while you still can!

**President Roosevelt  
Birthday Ball**  
**DANCE**  
FRIDAY, FEB. 2ND  
TO THE MUSIC OF  
**Oliver Schumacher  
AND HIS ORCHESTRA**  
At Zahler’s Hall  
**St. Michael**  
Adm. 25c  
**HELP FIGHT  
Infantile Paralysis**

**DANCE**  
AT  
**ZAhLER’S HALL**  
ST. MICHAEL  
Mon., Nite, Feb. 24  
Music By  
**OLIVER SCHUMACHER  
and His Orchestra**  
ADMISSION 20c  
**LAST DANCE  
BEFORE LENT**



**St. Michael Church Choir 1940**  
**Top:** John Jaeb, Walter Hartman, Richard Korte, Oliver Schumacher, Bruno Lenz, Leo Zahler. **Middle:** Mary Hartman, Dorothy Hackenmueller (Mrs. Elmer Beaudry), Gertrudis Goeb (Mrs. Loren Schendel), Lavina Korte (Mrs. Woody York), Annie Korte, Joseph Korte. **Front:** Leona Hartman (Mrs. Francis Haus), Hilde Korte (Mrs. Oliver Schumacher), Elanor Korte (Mrs. Earl Brixius), Victoria Korte (Mrs. Carroll Krieger), Rita Korte (Mrs. Lloyd Dick), Bernadine Elliot (Mrs. Richard Korte), Florence Hackenmueller (Mrs. Joseph Huber)

Ollie joined the St. Michael Catholic Church Choir when he was 18 in 1936. He would sing continuously as a part of either the main choir or in the “Resurrection Choir” (for funerals) until he was 98—eighty years of singing in the choir! Even after he moved to St. Benedict’s Senior Community in Monticello, Ollie continued to drive to St. Michael to sing with the choir. When he stopped driving at age 95, his son Ken would drive him to St. Michael to sing with the choir. In his final years, the staff at St. Benedict’s would tell family that they knew Ollie was having a good day because he was singing. The choir director in the 1930s and early 40s was Joe Korte; and although Ollie would never admit to joining the choir because he was sweet on the director’s daughter, Hilde; he and Hilde certainly shared a love of music. Ollie and Hilde were married in 1942.

## REDWOOD'S SCHUMACHER WINS 9, TOPS HURLERS

By GLENN GAFF  
(First hitting for Ted Peterson)

Pitching “barns” are legion in the Western Minnesota baseball league but the one everyone is talking about these days is a fellow who farms 120 acres of land and just takes the day off to pitch for Redwood Falls.

That would be Oliver Schumacher, who has racked up nine victories in 10 starts for Redwood Falls.

Ollie is no newcomer to state baseball circles. He is hurting his 11th year. Seven years he toiled in the Wright County and three more in the Independent Central.

For the last four years Ollie has been in the state tournament and he has high hopes of getting back there again this year. In 1943 he was drafted by Nowthen for tourney work, and in 1944 Schumacher was on the Monticello roster. The past two years he has pitched for Delano in the state meet.

This season in the 10 games he has allowed only 24 runs and 73 hits. He has chalked up 81 strikeouts and has been effective at the plate as well. In 37 bat appearances he has collected 10 hits for a .270 average.

The Western Minnesota may be a new league to Ollie, but he meets plenty of familiar faces. Graduates from the Wright County also in the Western Minny are Bob Hendrickson with Franklin and Earl Daniels with Gibbon. He won from both this year.

His latest feat was to stop New Ulm's winning streak at six straight with a 9-2 victory.

He yielded seven hits but fanned 11. Seven went down swinging and four heard the third out call.

**FENUGOS:** The best strikeout record reported in the state leagues Sunday was by Ernest Johnson of Gaylord in the Tomahawk league. He whiffed 22 Hanksa batters in a 13-4 victory. He allowed eight hits.

Doubles seemed to be the order of the week. . . . Clinton Dahl of Spring Grove in the Root River league hit three doubles in four appearances at the plate. . . . Blocker, shortstop for Hancock in the Pomme de Terre, had a pair of two-base hits in his five-hit out.

Barth, first baseman for Pine Island in the Southeastern Minnesota league got one double and three singles and drove in six runs as Pine Island downed Rochester 18-9.

Volkman, catcher for Forest Lake in the Independent Central league, had the best daily double as he slugged out three and a single in five trips to the plate as Forest Lake whipped Crown 8-4.

The teams in the 212 league worked overtime last Sunday. Two of the three games went into extra innings. . . . Hector defeated Stewart, 4-3, in 11 frames, and Buffalo Lake beat the Gibbon Moeltkes, 3-2, in 13 innings. . . .

Fergus Falls, in the North Central league, has signed up a heavy hitter in Buzz Wheeler of Minneapolis, but haven't been able to use him yet.

The league rules state that a new player must be idle one game before he is eligible for play. . . . So Buzz sat out the Breckenridge game last Sunday but will be ready to go next Sunday against Detroit Lakes. . . .

Wheeler hasn't had too much work this year because of a broken neck he suffered in football with the Gophers last fall. . . .

While in the navy he played for Northwestern and was one of the Wildcat's leading batters. . . . Harry Collins, who caught for the University last spring and who was a teammate of Wheeler's at Washburn high school, was the star for Granite Falls in the West Central loop last Sunday. . . . Granite Falls topped Benson, 2-0, and Collins singled home the two winning runs in the top half of the ninth inning with two men out. . . .

That game was also one of the shortest of the season as the two teams played the nine innings in 1 hour and 32 minutes. . . . A crowd estimated at 1,800 watched. . . .

The toughest game to lose was the one thrown by Earl Moszor of Austin in the Southern Minnesota loop. . . . Moszor only yielded three hits to Faribault, yet Austin lost, 3-1. . . . That game was played in 1 hour and 40 minutes. . . .

One of the hardest-hitting teams in the state is Winona in the Bi-State league. . . . In winning 10 out of 11 starts, seven of the regulars are hitting over .300. . . .

John Clerzan, slugging to a roaring 450, paces the batters. . . . Grant Barrett, the first baseman, has hit four homers in the league and three in non-league affairs. . . .

If anyone would like to test that power on either July 30 or Aug. 13 or 20, they should contact W. T. “Boss” Joswick, business manager of the team. . . .

One of the best seasons' strikeout marks in the state is owned by Dave Bolson of Greenbush in the Northwestern Border league. Bolson has struck out 56 men in 33 innings and has allowed only 17 hits. . . .

Chet Langaard, a very capable first baseman for Benson in the Central league, also proved he could do a little pitching last week against Granite Falls. . . . The southpaw let the Falls down with only three hits. . . . Frank Pugseley, Benson's regular pitcher, has a chipped bone in his right ankle and may be out for some time. . . .



**OLLIE SCHUMACHER**  
 In 11th year as state star

July 13, 1947 S MINNEAPOLIS SUNDAY TRIBUNE 3

### State Stars of the Week

**PITCHER OF THE WEEK:** Kolba of Hancock in the Pomme de Terre league. He was one of the almost half a dozen who hurled two-hit victories, but he also struck out 13 men in beating Hoffman 17-1.

**BATTER OF THE WEEK:** Kasch, third baseman for St. Joseph in the Lakewood league. He hit three triples in four trips to the plate as St. Joseph bowed to Foley 12-9. He made each triple off a different pitcher.

**FIELDER OF THE WEEK:** Brown, shortstop for Bayport in the St. Croix Valley league. Brown handled 14 chances, four put-outs and 10 assists, without an error as Bayport defeated Deer Park 5-2 in 11 innings. He was also the middle man in three double plays.

**Above:** This newspaper clipping is from the *Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* from July 13, 1947. It’s out of Ollie’s personal scrapbook. No, the newspaper did not print the wrong town name by mistake. Ollie’s pitching was so good in the 40s that he was frequently drafted by other teams to play in tournaments, for which he was paid handsomely. His first state appearance was in 1943 pitching for Nowthen. After his win he was approached by a Yankees scout who asked Ollie his age. “Twenty five” said Ollie. “That’s a little too far along,” said the scout. “You threw a mighty fine game. If you were a bit younger, we’d be interested.” Ollie relayed that story to the *Crow River News* in 1995 when he was inducted into the Wright Star League Hall of Fame. Ollie was drafted by other towns to pitch in the state tournament nearly every year for the next decade. In 1953 he played centerfield and was the relief pitcher for our own St. Michael Saints when they went to the state tournament that year. Ollie continued to play through 1956 after which he managed the Saints for one year in 1957. Ollie continue to watch town-team baseball for most of the rest of his life.

**Right: Oliver Shcumacher and the Blackhawks in 1938:** Ollie, Roman Eicher, Reggie Smith (drums), Tiny Schumacher, Herman Schumacher (piano), Ermie Schumacher.



After Ollie and Hilde married in 1942, children soon followed. Ollie and Hilde were also farming 120 acres, so something had to go, and it was the band. He continued his involvement in baseball, however, for several more years.

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.saintmichaelhistory.org](http://www.saintmichaelhistory.org)

Like us on **Facebook!**

Meetings are held on the second Monday of the month at the St. Michael City Hall in the Gries and Lenhardt Public Meeting Room adjacent to the library.

*This newsletter is published quarterly for the benefit of the members of the St. Michael Historical Society. Reprints of this or any other newsletter by the Society are not permitted without the express written consent of the St. Michael Historical Society.*

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Editors: Sheldon Barthel  
 Stephen S. Barthel

**Right:** In December 1956 Ollie was recognized for 25 years in baseball. Here he shakes hands with Rosy Ryan, the general manager of the Minneapolis Millers, while Angelo Guiliani, the scout for the New York Giants, looks on.



It should be noted that Ollie's life was more than baseball and music. He was also a farmer, husband and dad. Ollie and Hilde were married for 59 years before her passing in 2001. Together they raised seven children: Don, Ken, Jerry, Mary, Roy, Phil, and Ann. Ollie was kind and a good friend to many and that alone is a sign of life well lived.

**WANTED!!**

St. Michael-Albertville Schools is celebrating 50 years since starting a full k-12 program. Do you have any memorabilia that you could loan for an historic display in October? We're looking for anything that will help evoke memories of early STMA. Contact Bob Zahler: [zahlerb66@gmail.com](mailto:zahlerb66@gmail.com)

**Upcoming Events**

All events and meetings held at the Gries Lenhardt Allen Library Room at St. Michael City Hall

- June 11, 7:00 PM Regular Board meeting
- No meeting in July
- Aug. 13, 6:30 PM Stephen Barthel: Adding Memories (photos, documents, etc.) to Family Tree in familysearch.org
- Aug. 13, 7:00 PM Regular Board meeting
- Sept. 10, 6:30 PM Stephen Barthel: Adding and Attaching Sources to Family Tree in familysearch.org
- Sept. 10, 7:00 PM Regular Board meeting